

Warren's word

The Less Money Bite Back

In the Cape of Storms, South Africa, most dive operators choose Yamaha outboards. On a day when the seas were hinting that they might live up to the name, our boat was asked to escort another vessel back to port.

Unusually it didn't sport Yamahas - and it had engine trouble. Michael, our Cox, nodded towards the boat. "Less money motors", he stated dismissively. "You pay less money for them and then you have less money forever more while you try to keep them up and running".

Would be underwater photographers often fall into the same trap. I did myself. As a kid I went through a succession of underwater cameras. I started with a Nemrod Siluro. The flashgun never worked underwater and while I could afford film, my pocket money would never stretch to processing. Next I had a Kodak pocket camera in a Scubisnap housing. It was secondhand and when my father wound it on the film advance lever fell apart. On the one trip I did with it I could take only one shot per dive.

It was like having everlasting film. Next I upgraded to an Agfamatic 4000 camera in a Guppy. I got great pool shots for my college project. But the housing lacked clips and as I rolled backwards off the boat the housing parted in the middle and I had my first soggy camera. Then there was the Praktica BCX in a EWA Marine housing. At 12 metres the operating glove bonded to my hand like a superglued phropholactic. Focusing using the special toothed ring was similar to pushing a ferris wheel round by hand.

For all of my many systems and cumulative expense, my sum

total of underwater pictures probably numbered fewer than fifty shots. I'm particularly proud of one picture which almost shows my diving partner. Those who knew his Cressi Pinocchio mask could often guess his identity after gentle hinting from this single darkly green image.

Now of course I own Ocean Optics and with that comes access to unbounded technology. And guess what? Now I have in focus properly exposed pictures. Of course, all of this comes at a cost. In my case I bought a business. Most underwater photographers don't go that far. But the successful ones may well have several thousand pounds tied up in camera equipment. Why so much? Because that is simply what it costs to get good underwater images.

At Optics we regularly run into the "Less Money" aftermath. There was the Dive Show classic. A guy got an F90 housing system. Unfortunately it was a model that had been found wanting and had been rapidly replaced. The dealer was probably ecstatic to stick someone else with the housing he himself had previously been stuck with. Even happier to ditch the miniature macro strobe. We found out about this when the happy owner called us for a flash cable. We had to tell him we didn't carry that housing brand, and why, and that he'd got an old under specified model.

Then we had to tell him that his macro strobe was not going to do much for his 20mm wideangle lens. All information we could have freely given him before he'd made his purchase.

Then there was the gentleman with the secondhand Subal housing bought from one of our competitors.

Armed with their advice, he had acquired a very nice (and expensive) Nikon autofocus zoom. Eventually, in desperation, he called Optics. Why, he demanded to know, would his zoom not couple properly to his housing? Because, we explained, no housing permits use of pull/push zoom lenses. Only rotary action models.

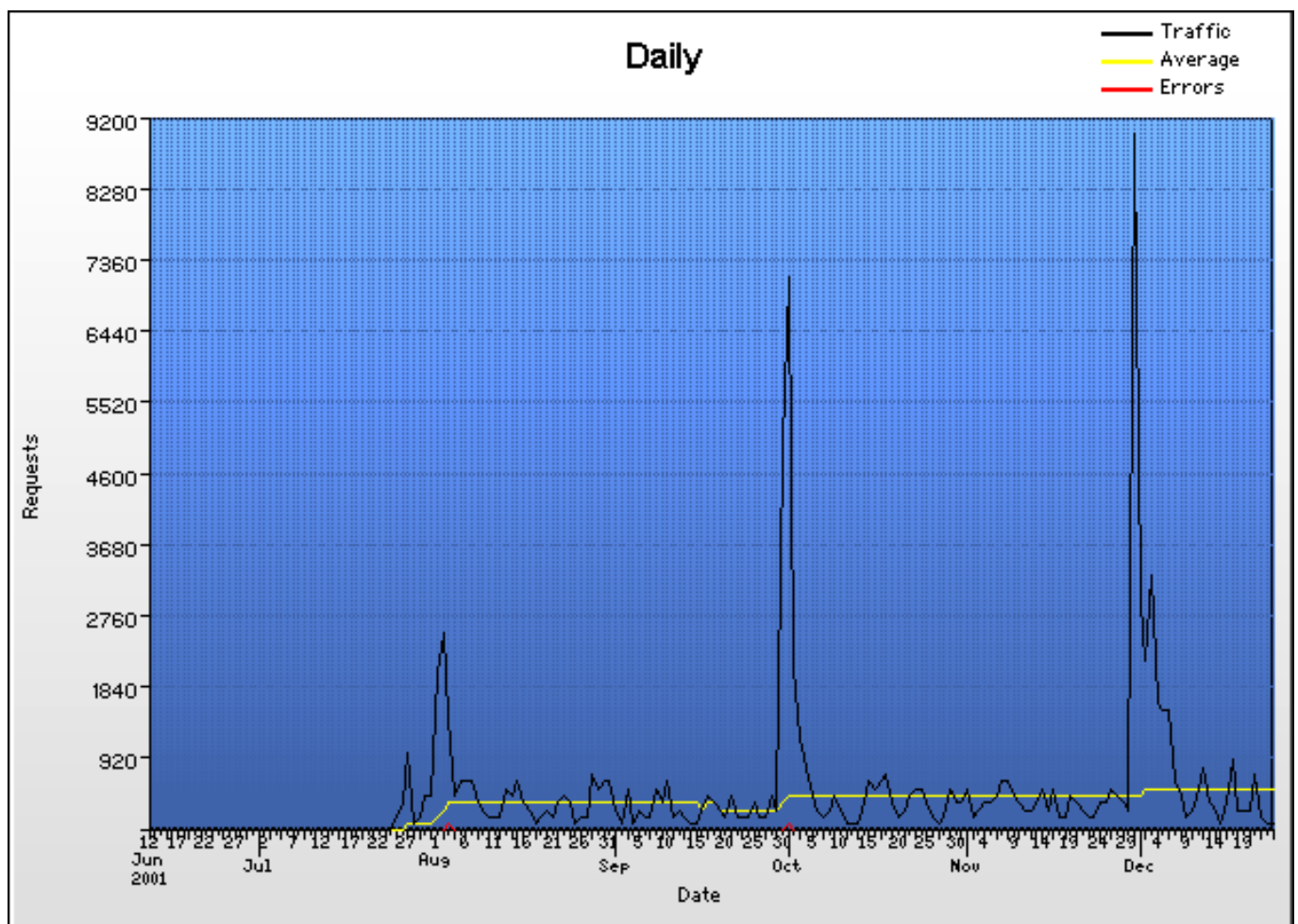
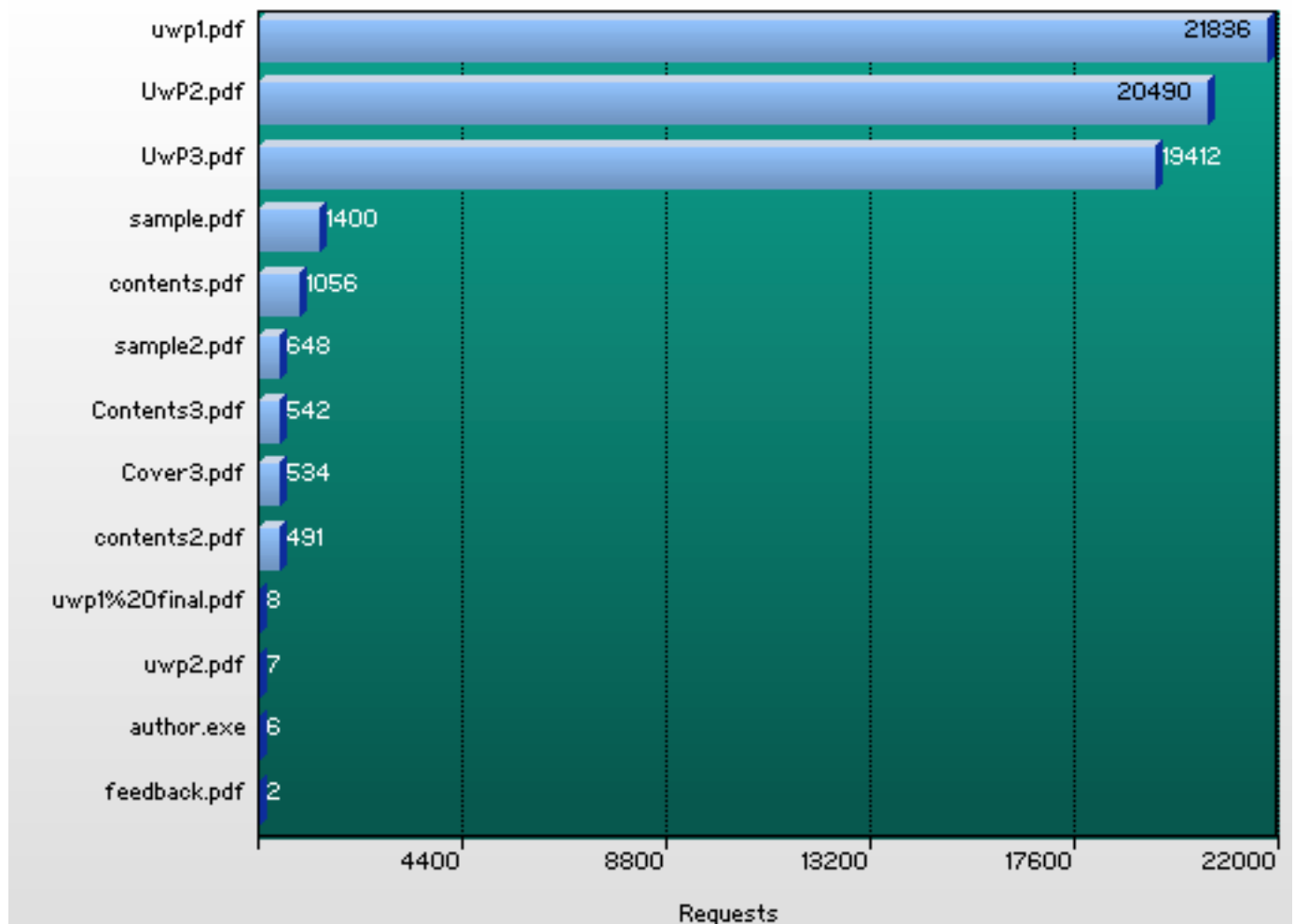
The stories continue unabated. Time and again we are confronted by people who got great deals elsewhere but have this minor problem.... The moral is pretty clear.

Don't equate a great price with a great deal. The best deal puts you in the water with equipment that works.

Steve Warren



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Reason for sale: changing systems
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e mail Curran@altc.freemove.co.uk

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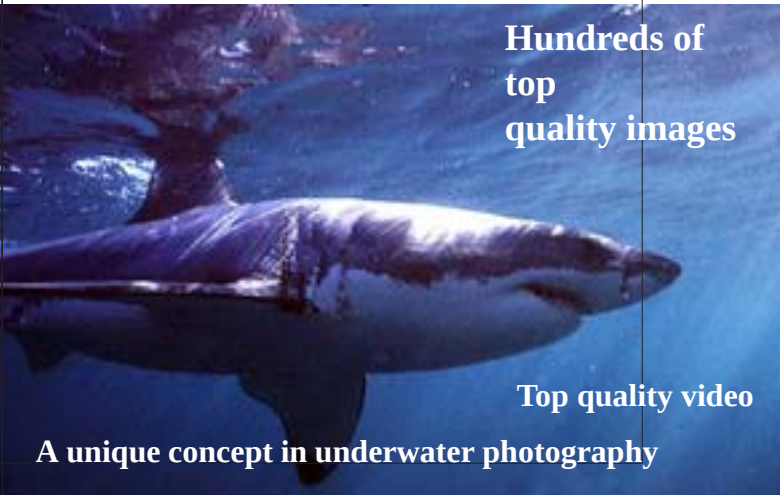
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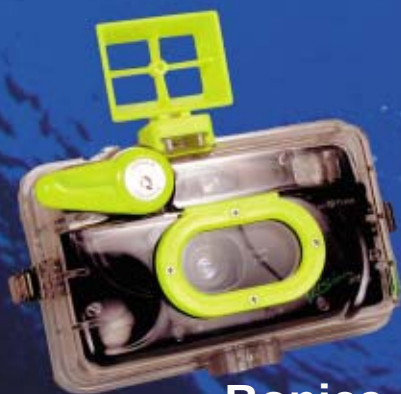


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