

Parting Shot

My annual liveaboard holiday had started on a real high note - the check dive was on a cleaning station and the mantas were there in numbers. At one time we had 10 in sight and there were others we saw during the dive. During that first dive I took over 160 pictures - I still wonder how I'd ever managed with my old Motormarine II - even though a good number were later discarded.

The rest of the week didn't disappoint. We snorkelled with two whale sharks, saw good numbers of white tip reef sharks, got close to a number of turtles most of whom ignored us, and saw loads of small critters.

But my favourite photo was taken on the last day before flying home after all the diving was finished. We'd done one last dive on the cleaning station but the mantas had been scarce and only paid a fleeting visit. As a last opportunity to get wet a few of us took the opportunity to snorkel at Bandos house reef. I'd been there before and knew that black tip reef sharks were around as well as many of the regular reef fish. The weather was awful that day and it rained most of the time.

I left the camera on manual white balance and took a few shots of the fish and reef whilst diving down a few metres. I rested at the surface for a few seconds to get my breath back and check my bearings and then looked down again for my next subject. A 2.5 to 3 metre manta had appeared below me and was moving slowly parallel to the drop off. I finned after it taking a few shots while I did. Then it turned upwards and starting beating its wings really fast. Realising it was about to jump, I lifted



my head and camera, pointed it in the right direction and grabbed the shot - I didn't even look at the screen as there wasn't time.

I checked the shot while at the surface and it looked OK, but when I looked properly back on the boat (that's the Sea Spirit in the left of the shot) - I saw that I'd managed to get the manta in mid air.

The camera is a Canon Ixus 75 in a Canon

housing and I had an Inon wide angle lens on. The camera was set to Manual for the white balance but I had not changed anything else. Looking back it was 1/100 at F8. The curves adjustment feature has been used in Photoshop and the image has been cropped.

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**Do you have a nice shot with a short story behind it?
If so e mail me and yours could be the next "Parting shot".**

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