

Shooting Magic DVD



Alex Mustard and Peter Rowlands have teamed up to produce a 90-minute guide to underwater imaging using their Magic Filters. I had the opportunity to review the first copy to come to the US and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

I have never used one of the Magic filters and Alex thought it would be good to have a member of his target audience take a look.

The DVD is structured around six dives with Alex in his underwater studio that give you the feeling you're

along for the fun. Three DSLR dives and three with a point & shoot camera demonstrate how to make the great images possible with the filters.

After each dive, the video follows Alex back on the boat to review the images shot and you're looking right over his shoulder at the Lightroom software on his laptop as he critiques and tweaks the images. We are taken along for dives on a shallow reef wall in the Red Sea, the wreck of the Giannis D and the famous Ras Mohammad site.

The video format, beautifully shot by Peter with a Magic filter on the camera, provides an incredible way to learn the correct approach to getting the most out of the filters. It turns out they aren't magic after all.

Alex shares, with terrific examples, his approach to the light in his images, the different effects shooting into and across the light have and the small but powerful adjustments he makes to create compelling images. Many of the benefits of shooting filters that had somehow escaped me in the past are immediately obvious when you watch the DVD. "Hey, he's not lugging strobes around." "There is no backscatter, none." "He can fire as many shots as fast as he wants."

The quality of the colors in the video is great even on the NTSC version. The comparison shots with

filter, no filter, and white balance only, make it immediately apparent how the filters work and the benefit in using them.

In addition to going diving with Alex, the video extras include the answers to the frequently asked questions like; do I really need a filter? How often do I set White Balance? And many more including my favorite, why aren't my photos like yours? I bet he gets that a lot.

Alex also walks through his five favorite filter images and describes why they worked. The extras even include a demonstration of installing the filters on almost every lens a Nikon shooter could use. The Canon folks are on their own. Maybe he figured the Canon shooters could read the instruction pamphlet that comes with each filter, just a guess. Oh yeah, don't miss the outtakes with the exploding lobster.

The video worked for me on many levels. Putting the filter aspects aside, it was fun and educational just having the opportunity to watch a pro at work. The chance to dive with someone who makes their living with underwater photography is pretty rare; I have a few thousand dives under my belt but I never saw anyone conducting fish like an orchestra leader so they would all line up to get their picture taken.

New U/W photographers can

learn a lot just by noticing when Alex breathes. The DVD captures some of the invaluable knowledge of someone at the top of their game and who clearly enjoys every minute of it.

I have always been hesitant to try the filters because I assumed they would have a big learning curve and I wasn't willing to use my valuable dive vacation time to learn the "Magic" involved. After one viewing, I'm confident I have all the knowledge I need to give filter photography a try.

If Alex and Peter's intent in making the video was to get more divers interested in Magic Filters (they aren't trying to make a killing on the DVD at only £15 or about \$24 a copy), I think they've succeeded brilliantly. The *Shooting Magic* DVD is available from their website

www.magic-filters.com

Steve Williams



www.uwpmag.com

Guidelines for contributors

The response to UwP has been nothing short of fantastic. We are looking for interesting, well illustrated articles about underwater photography. We are looking for work from existing names but would also like to discover some of the new talent out there and that could be you! UwP is the perfect publication for you to increase your profile in the underwater photography community.

The type of articles we're looking for fall into five main categories:

Uw photo techniques - Balanced light, composition, etc

Locations - Photo friendly dive sites, countries or liveaboards

Subjects - Anything from whale sharks to nudibranchs in full detail

Equipment reviews - Detailed appraisals of the latest equipment

Personalities - Interviews/features about leading underwater photographers

**If you have an idea for an article,
contact me first before putting pen to paper.**

E mail peter@uwpmag.com

How to submit articles

To keep UwP simple and financially viable, we can only accept submissions by e mail and they need to be done in the following way:

1. The text should be saved as a TEXT file and attached to the e mail

2. Images must be attached to the e mail and they need to be 144dpi

Size - Maximum length 15cm i.e. horizontal pictures would be 15 cm wide and verticals would be 15cm.

File type - Save your image as a JPG file and set the compression to "Medium" quality. This should result in images no larger than about 120k which can be transmitted quickly. If we want larger sizes we will contact you.

3. Captions - **Each and every image MUST have full photographic details** including camera, housing, lens, lighting, film, aperture, shutter speed and exposure mode. These must also be copied and pasted into the body of the e mail.