

Sea & Sea DX-2G

by Peter Rowlands

Compact digital cameras and their small underwater housings have revolutionised not just the underwater photography world but also even diving itself. They are available in almost every dive shop at a price and with a performance that make them hard to resist. However, not all combinations of camera and housing are perfect but when one comes along from Sea & Sea you have to take notice because they are an underwater housing producer rather than a camera manufacturer and that is an important difference.

I think it's fair to say that, for a while, during the evolution from film to digital, Sea & Sea lost the plot a little. I suspect they were caught out by the speed of change and for a manufacturer it's a slow process to change production schedules and turn the ship around. Fortunately, for us, they did and their product range is right back on target with excellent housings for DSLR and video cameras as well as strobes and video lights.

In the compact camera world, being a housing manufacturer first and foremost, Sea & Sea has a big advantage in that it can look at the camera market for a model best suited to underwater photography and then make a housing for it.

Unless I am very much mistaken (which, to be honest, is not unheard of) the camera inside the Sea & Sea DX-2G is a rebadged Ricoh Caplio GX200 and right from the start this is a very well specified and to my mind often overlooked camera in the land market. It's right up there with the Canon G10 and



Panasonic LX3 – that's how good it is and on what level it competes but from now on it's a Sea & Sea 2G and the housing is a DX-2G.

Compact digitals at this upper level provide most capabilities but the 2G has some nice additional touches which impressed me. Firstly, for land use, there is the ability to use an optional external electronic LCD viewfinder for both previewing and post viewing images. Anyone who has tried to see the LCD screen in bright sunlight and then tried to view the resulting image will understand how virtually impossible it is. This optional LCD viewfinder will transform your enjoyment of photography on bright days. Second is the ability to pre-assign 2 Function buttons to your most needed controls. For me it is Manual White Balance





and Flash Output and being able to ‘one touch’ these controls makes shooting so much quicker. Thirdly there is the ability to switch between 3 “My” settings for differing shooting situations. This saves time having to scroll through menus. Fourthly you can switch from 1st curtain to 2nd curtain flash sync and finally, to prove where I come from and how easily I’m impressed, there is the ability not only to shoot 4:3 and 3:2 format but also 1:1. I know this is achieved by simply cropping full image and that I could easily do that in post processing but the camera does it for you and lets you compose in

a square format. That’s the format all the great 60’s photographers used and it still impresses the hell out of me.

Aside from my rambling minutiae the 2G’s main features are that it has a 12 megapixel sensor, a very useful 24-72mm lens, RAW and/or JPG shooting a 2.7” LCD screen and SD/SDHC/MMC card slots. It can be powered by AAA batteries or an optional rechargeable Lithium-ion battery which is to be highly recommended and Sea & Sea UK can supply this for a very reasonable £20 when buying the camera/housing.

Optically the DX-2G produces excellent results up to 400 ISO but, in common with most small chip compact cameras, above this speed, colour noise becomes noticeable. A workaround is either conversion to black and white or use post processing software such as Noise Ninja.

Moving onto the housing this is where you see the big advantage in having a housing manufacturer as the designer because it is designed to get the best out of the camera’s performance whilst underwater. In addition to being able to control all of the camera functions, it is designed to expand to suit your

needs with the ability to fire external slave strobes as well as being able to attach an accessory wide angle lens and a small strobe on the accessory shoe. These are capabilities which place the DX-2G housing well ahead of most of the competition.

The build quality of the housing is extremely high and the design is ergonomically excellent making the camera almost easier to operate underwater.

If there are any downsides the 2G cannot shoot HD video and it would have been nice to have a 16:9 shooting format even by simple cropping as with the 1:1 so if these are really important to you then the Sea & Sea DX 1200HD would be worth considering.

Pricewise at £869.95 it’s more expensive than most other camera/housing combinations but I doubt if they will have the build quality, camera performance and photographic expandability which the Sea & Sea DX-2G combo has in spades.

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New! Mangrove Universal Video
Housing- Advanced control



Basic



Standard



Explorer



Flying Fish
Focus Light
Auto cut-off! Funky colours!



Fuji FXF- EXR200



Panasonic DMC-MCTZ7



Fisheye G10



Canon G10 (WP-DC28)



Sea&Sea DX-2G



10bar LX-3 housing with TTL



Ewa-Marine new SplashiX
Universal compact housing
Max depth 6m



Aunoc 1CR
240m depth!



FIX LED1000DX



45 degree DSLR viewfinder
removable underwater!



M67 port for
Ikeite G10



New! Big Eye Dome Lens
for Canon G10



Strobe Bonanza! Many brands!!!!



Peak Performance Buoyancy!
Floats and buoyancy arms from StiX, Inon, ULCS



UK Light Cannon 100



Custom TTL solutions
New !!
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macro
adapter
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