

Nauticam White Balance Port

By Peter Rowlands

When I first saw the Nauticam White Balance Port I thought that it was a great idea but that it solved a problem that didn't exist but that was a couple of years ago when, in a strange sort of way, underwater photography was quite different.

Since then we have seen SLR cameras become capable of shooting HD video footage as well as stills and that has made this white balancing port take on a new lease of life.

When shooting stills, each image is a standalone product but with video it is the opposite. When compiling an edited film, each clip must not only work in itself but it must also work with the clips before and after it in terms of storytelling and colour matching and this is where the Nauticam White Balance Port really comes into its own.

Operating the White Balance Port is as simple as turning a knob and the iris

shaped translucent petals close to cover the lens. Once a white balance reading has been taken, the same knob is rotated backwards to clear the lens. In addition there is some clever internal machinery that not only opens and closes the petals but it also pushes the whole mechanism forward to go in front of the lens and then retract so that it doesn't give cut off with ultra wideangle lenses. The whole operation takes literally seconds and becomes second nature after a while. The translucent mask that covers the lens creates a white 'card' and produces images that are much more consistently balanced for light recording.

I field-tested the port in the Red Sea recently and I am grateful to Nauticam UK's Alex Tattersall for making it available. I was shooting a Canon 7D in a Nauticam housing (again thanks to Alex) with a Tokina 10-17mm lens used at the 10 end all the time. All footage



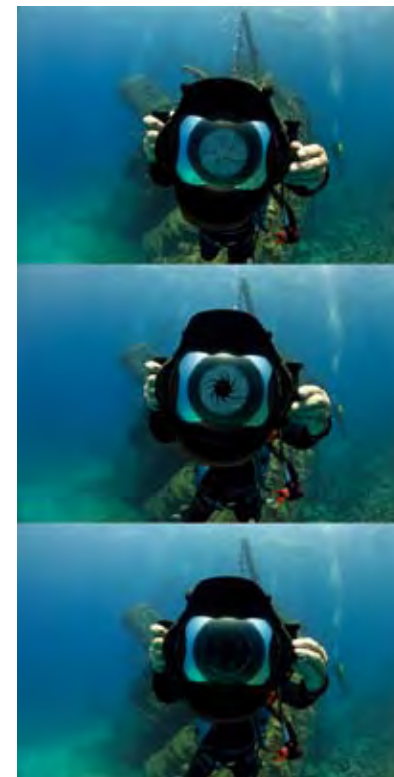
was shot by available light with an Original Magic Filter. The port made my footage much more consistent colour-wise and eliminated the need to colour match on post production. This alone saves an inordinate amount of time, and time, as they say, is money so this port pays for itself in its time saving capabilities.

The Nauticam White Balance Port is an acrylic 8.5" dome on an aluminium body with an ABS shade and it

retails for around \$1300. This is considerably more than the standard 8.5" dome port but in terms of its white balancing capability it is priceless.

You can see my finished footage taken on the wreck of the Giannis D by following the YouTube link below and all of the footage is totally as shot with no colour matching needed.

This port is a real time saver and will improve the



The port in use.

Photo by Alex Mustard

consistency of your video footage and since your SLR also takes stills, it will help them too!

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www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZEHRkxt6ag

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