

Parting Shot 1

It was with a nervous excitement that we all gathered at the Jetty before our night dive in Tioman, Malaysia. The boat that was to pick us up at 630 pm was nowhere to be seen and over 12 of us were joking about how this operator calculated time just as we do in India, where most people are invariably or purposely late for a meeting or a social gathering. At 7 pm just before complete darkness we could see the dive boat approaching. Once firmly set up against the jetty, we quickly jumped on, checked our gear, torches, signals, etc. Buddy teams were next on the agenda. Usually I was always the last selected to buddy up with, given the size of my camera gear, my ants pace underwater and the role of an underwater nurse that my buddy had to play for me, much to his or her chagrin. Jumping in and moving through the water I quickly found some really interesting subjects, a beautiful crimson and beige goatfish followed by a porcupine puffer and a large filefish. Having shot the last two many times, abstract was in my mind and I was trying to go really close to shoot only the side or the back of these fish with the macro lens in order to get something different. The dive continued at a really slow pace, sometimes with my buddy totally engulfed by the darkness and nowhere to be discerned except by a really dim light in the darkness getting brighter as he came close, banging on his tank to show me something new. This was our understanding underwater, if I was taking pictures, I would have to stay there if my buddy went looking out, till he/she would return! On one such occasion, I saw a sudden and fast movement to my right. Shining my three lamps in the direction,

I saw a small shark going completely crazy over a stag horn coral. It would swim frantically in one direction over the coral and would bounce back in the opposite direction. Some thing was also hanging out of its mouth, which looked like a piece of fish or something similar. I thought it was in hunting mode. As I silently moved towards the coral, the shark was becoming even more frantic as I got closer. Slowing down to a near standstill, I put all but one torch off, so as not to stress out the shark and saw the shark slowly come to rest on the coral breathing really hard. Taking a long detour around the shark so as not to disturb it or scare it away, I closed in from the opposite direction. Alas, much to my dismay and sadness, I realized where the problem emanated from and why the shark was moving only within the periphery of this coral head. It had a hook deeply embedded in its mouth attached to a line entirely tangled in the coral. All the frantic movement that I saw earlier was its feeble attempt to set itself free, injuring itself in the rather one-sided bargain. And the piece that I thought was a fish was in fact a little bit of the sharks flesh dangling at the side. Rather than disturb it, or stress it any further, I took only one photo and quickly gestured to my buddy to follow me to our team leader and instructor, who has far more experience in these matters than myself. And to cut a long story short, he managed to remove the hook and set the coral cat shark free!!! Off it went, at a speed I thought was faster than light, enveloped by the comfort of darkness, free again, with a second lease of life that the species rarely gets in today's ruthless fin hungry world! Some knowledgeable people in the group later told me that sharks have an uncanny and innate ability



Oly E330 Camera, 10 Bar housing, single Inon Z240 50mm Oly 2.8 Macro lens 1/125, ISO 100, f11

to heal really fast and that this particular species is called Coral Cat Shark. My prayers were with the shark.

The beers were on me that night and all 12 divers slept in the comfort of the knowledge that a good deed was done.

Digant Desai

www.uwpmag.com

Parting Shot 2

Four dives, three strobes and a flood: that was the cost of these images.

It's no secret that we are in the age of the snoot, but I've always preferred wide-angle photography having started as a British wreck aficionado; it's not too strange that I've ignored snoot-ology in favour of the next big thing - the off-camera strobe.

My first attempts, early last year, were in a cold Lancashire quarry. A certain bug-shaped German car sunk several years ago to attract divers has attracted a truly ridiculous procession of well-known photographers trying to light it in novel ways. I didn't really contribute much.

Playing in a pool, I found that Inon S2000 strobes have very sensitive slave sensors and need to be dialed right down as they are surprisingly bright, even hidden behind the target.

The next time was a dive at the BSoUP "splash-in", when I attached one S2000 to a GorillaPod and hid it behind pieces of wreckage on the British favourite, the wreck of the liberty ship James Eagan Layne. It might have been better if I had been able to persuade a buddy to swim past, but that's competition fever for you...

... then I had the bright idea hiding the strobe in the wreck's donkey boiler to get a jet of light coming out of the interesting holes. This turned out to be a big mistake. Even 70' under the surface there's an English channel swell and I watched the S2000's cheerful red indicator light being swept into the boiler: just out of reach! One day, when the boiler rusts a little more, some diver may have a

pleasant surprise.

I rather like the S2000 for macro photography, so, of course, I had to buy another. It sat in a box, quietly, through the winter. Then a group of us thought that some pool photography with an attractive model and off-camera lighting might be fun. It certainly was...

... until my lovely dome port fell apart, much to the surprise of the photographer below, who watched a glass bowl and some rubber rings drifting past his mask!

I'll save any embarrassment, but the UK agent lent me another dome and I set off a couple of months ago to the Sudanese Red Sea. I'm fascinated by the pioneering dives of Hans Hass on the wreck of the Umbria in Port Sudan, and of Jacques Cousteau at Sha'ab Rumi, and it's a privilege to dive these sites. The Inon S2000 was now firmly mounted not only to its tripod, but also to a 2lb weight. These are the results, inside the Umbria and at the site of Conshelf II.

Tim Priest

www.flickr.com/photos/timsdiving



Fiat cars in the Umbria.

*D300s, ***** housing, Nikon 10.5mm, ISO200, 1/60 f9.*



Cousteau's tool shed.

*D300s, ***** housing, Nikon 10.5mm, ISO200, 1/200 f11.*

Parting Shot 3

I have been a fan of Burt Jones and Maurine Shimlock since I bought their book *Secret Sea* more than ten years ago. I finally met them a couple of years ago when they were delivering copies of their new book *Diving Indonesia's Raja Ampat* to the live-aboard that I had just gotten aboard in Bali's Benoa harbor. At that point, after meeting them, I decided that I would endeavor to join a trip hosted by them as soon as I could. As things turned out I got an email from them earlier this year announcing that there had been a couple of cancellations for an April trip to Raja Ampat on the 7 Seas. What could be better than diving Raja Ampat with the folks who wrote the book? So, I signed up.

The trip was everything I expected. We visited sites with huge schools of chevron barracuda, sweet lips, batfish etc. It was like the "old days" before factory ships and reef dynamiting. As I am a real muck diving fan one of

the sites I was particularly looking forward to was the Waigeo pearl farm pier. I dove this site on a previous trip to Raja Ampat and knew that there was an abundance of weird and wonderful creatures that made the pier home. Burt and Maurine were also looking forward to the pier as the 7 Seas folks had found a type of frogfish there that incubates its eggs on its side on a previous trip and Burt and Maurine wanted a shot for a new book to be published later this year. Since the pearl farm is a business with lots of boat traffic the management prohibits diving around the pier until most of their activity has ceased for the day for safety reasons. This meant that we would only be able to do one afternoon dive and one night dive on the site.

There was great anticipation at the beginning of the afternoon dive. Would the frogfish still be there? Will it still have eggs? Will it be in a position that photos



Nikon D7000, Ikelite housing and single Ikelite DS-161 strobe set to TTL with a -1 strobe adjustment on the housing (Nikon/Ikelite TTL combination seems to overexpose without some adjustment. Doing it on the housing is much easier than trying to change the camera during a dive).

could be taken? Lo and behold the frogfish was still in the same spot that he/she had been on the previous 7 Seas visit. Unfortunately, the eggs were gone. Burt and Maurine were most unhappy. Discouraged, they decided to sit out the night dive. Things on the night dive progressed

as I expected. There were lots of neat things to shoot. Near the end of the dive I observed lights flashing and heard tanks banging so I swam over to investigate. Todd, one of the other divers on the trip, had discovered another frogfish, and this one still had its eggs as you can see from the

accompanying photograph. Burt and Maurine are going to use this shot in their book and they tell me that Gerry Allen also wants to use it in a book he is working on. Sometimes all it takes is a little luck.

Dave Reubush

www.uwpmag.com

Parting Shot 4

A Striated (Hairy) Frogfish that was about 10cm long took up residence at one of the dive sites in Dumaguete, Philippines, so I set out in the morning with the Nikon 60mm lens to get the usual shots and also took a snoot along with me for some shots with a different lighting style. Once these were in the bag I was thinking of ways to shoot him with a different perspective. I had previously got some good macro wide-angle images using the Nikon 10.5mm fisheye lens with 1.4x Teleconverter behind a mini dome port. This set-up enables you to focus very close to the port, so you retain the detail of a macro lens, but can also incorporate the environment into the scene. To light the subject evenly with this set-up, you need to place your strobes close to the port on either side or you will get a darker patch in the middle of the frame. I have found however that it is very easy to over-expose light coloured elements of the foreground, so I switched the diffusers on my Inon Z240's from the usual -0.5 to a more opaque -1.5 to calm down the light a bit.

When we arrived at the dive site in the afternoon, I started taking some test shots to dial in the correct exposure. An aperture of f.8 provided the depth of field that I wanted and with the strobe power set to low, I got good exposure on the frogfish. I then started adjusting the shutter speed, settling on 1/80th, which gave me deep-blue coloured water in the background. After balancing all the elements of the exposure, I felt there was something lacking from the image and wanted to put a diver into the frame to improve the

composition. But this is where I encountered a slight problem; I didn't have anyone to model for me! I thought back to an article I had read by Keri Wilk where he used the self-timer on his camera to enable him to model for himself and thought I'd give it a go. I positioned my camera in the sand, digging the handle in to hold it in place and set the self-timer to its maximum duration. This gave me 20 seconds from pressing the shutter to quickly swim into the frame. It took a few shots to work out the best position for me to be in, how far off the bottom I needed to be to be and also the distance from the camera, to be nicely placed in the water column. Trial and error eventually got me there, and luckily I was only in 5m of water, so frantically swimming backwards and forwards didn't drain my air too quickly. There were a few decent shots amongst even more that ended up in the trash, where the composition didn't quite work. This is my favourite shot of the series and quite unique, as I don't have any other underwater shots that I have both taken and modelled in!

Alex Tyrrell
www.atlantishotel.com



Do you have an interesting shot with a short story behind it?
If so e mail us and yours could be the next "Parting shot".
peter@uwpmag.com