

# Dive the World

The inspiration behind a new dive magazine

By Jesper Kjøller, Editor in Chief

Since 2000, I've had the pleasure of being the editor of DYK, the Scandinavian Dive Magazine, published seven times per year in both Danish and Swedish. For the most part, DYK has been a regionally focused dive magazine with readership in Norway and Finland, too. With our readers in mind, we've always aimed to support the local diving business by writing about diving in Denmark, Sweden and the rest of the Nordic countries. But with artistic aspirations as big as ours are at DYK, it's been quite a challenge to portray Danish diving in an attractive way. Our goal has always been to create a visually pleasing and striking magazine so over the years we've frustrated many Scandinavian underwater photographers with high hopes of getting published because we've had to turn them down. The cold green waters, low visibility and rough diving conditions of Scandinavia make it really hard to consistently produce publishable images at the quality level we're looking for. Luckily, DYK also highlights tropical destinations, and

we've always strived to strike the balance between covering local and tropical destinations, green and blue water and wrecks and reefs.

When showing our Danish and Swedish magazines to people outside Scandinavia over the years at dive shows and on dive trips, we've been rewarded with some very encouraging reactions. Quite often, that reaction has been: I can't read it, but it looks very nice! Why don't you publish the magazine in English?

Our response was always that it would not make much sense to publish a Scandinavian dive magazine in English. After all, our *raison d'être* with DYK was – and still is – to create a magazine for Scandinavians. And really, who other than Danish wreck divers wants to read about wreck diving in Denmark? Well, perhaps a few keen divers. But our feeling was that an English version of DYK would not fly as a business model.

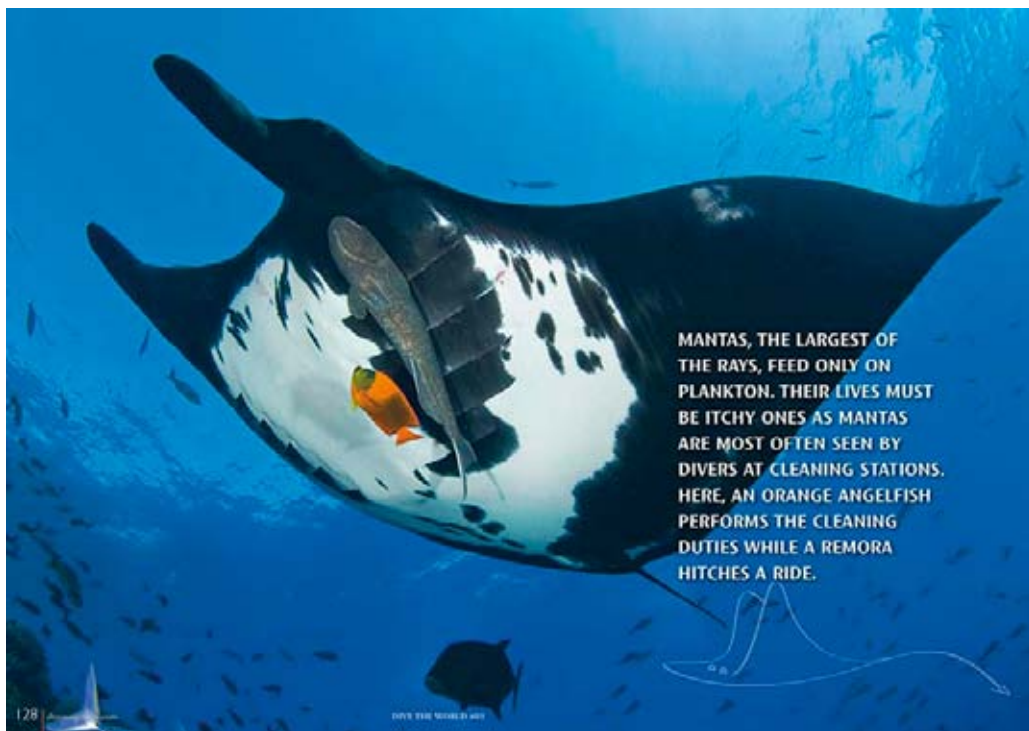
*DYK cover - Magnus Lundgren*

*DTW cover - Gerald Nowak*

*DTW spread - Alex Mustard*







*Several spreads in the magazine include a full-bleed photo that occupies the entire page. For this reason, many articles and images that are perfectly suitable for other magazines will not work in DIVE THE WORLD. Image by Alex Mustard.*

## Back to basics

Despite not seeing a future for DYK in English, we were bold enough to feel we had something to offer the greater diving world. We felt that our Scandinavian approach to magazine design and our editorial quest for excellent images could be transformed into something with global appeal. At its core, Scandinavian design is very simple, spacious and light. Whether in furniture, architecture or industrial

design, there's a distinct Scandinavian tradition – and it's a style and feeling that can also be seen in the way in which Scandinavian magazines are laid out. We decided that Scandinavian tradition is an excellent fit for a diving publication. After all, diving is a visual activity. And a dive magazine, first and foremost, should convey the feeling of being in the underwater world without too much clutter or distraction.

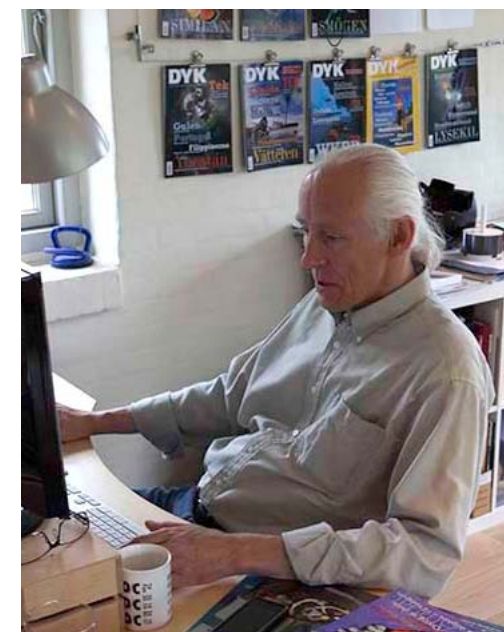
Many of the traditional



*The DIVE THE WORLD team in the office in Farum north of Copenhagen, Denmark. From left to right: Jesper Kjøller (editor in Chief), Charly Nielsen (art director), Christel Bengtsson-Skårup (production manager) and Martin Baadsgaard, (advertising manager). (Below) Art director Charly Nielsen has a background as a studio photographer His influence of the look and feel of DYK and DIVE THE WORLD can't be overstated.*

magazines have their roots in newspaper publishing – a Fleet Street tradition, if you will. It's a heritage that ensures strong writing with journalistic integrity, but often neglects the images. And while that strategy may work for some magazines, we feel that our clean and pure style is far more suitable to the portrayal of underwater images.

We wanted to do something new, so we asked ourselves: What was it that attracted us to diving in the first

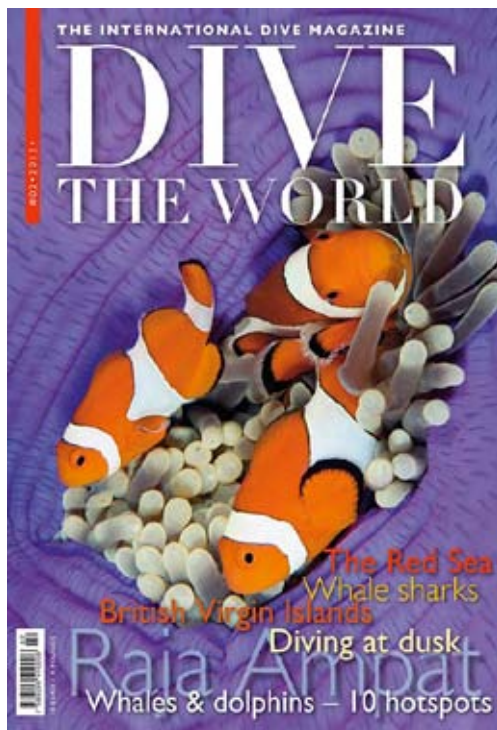


place? What if we started all over? What if we concentrated on working with the best photographers in the world and allowed them to tell great stories? What if we forget everything about local diving, equipment tests and technical stuff and just focused on one thing: the beauty of the underwater realm?

Then we took things a step further. What is it that a really good dive magazine can accomplish? It goes without saying that the magazine must be entertaining, surprising and enlightening. But ideally, the reader should be able to sit in an armchair or airplane seat and very nearly feel as if they are on a dive. If you can't go an actual dive, we decided, reading about it should be the next best thing. And it was with that inspiration that DIVE THE WORLD was born.

## Why a printed magazine in a digital area?

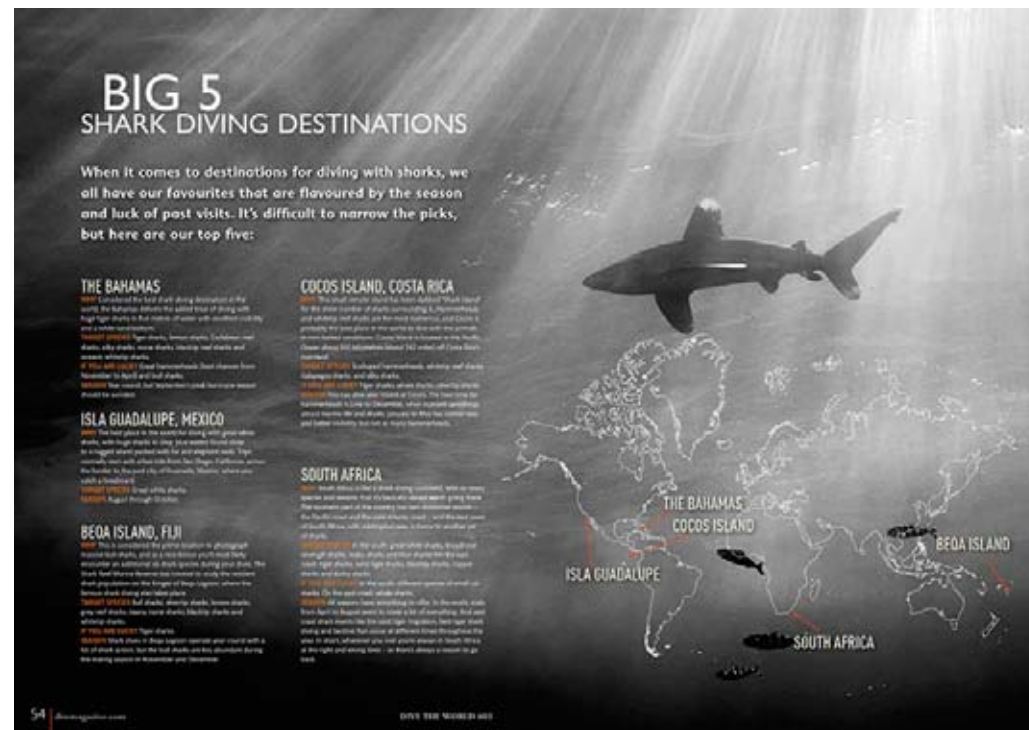
A typical article in a typical dive magazine usually has a word count in the neighbourhood of 2,000 to 2,500 words spread over four to six pages, with some (and more likely, many) advertisements in between. A typical story might contain 10 or 15 images. In DIVE THE WORLD, the word and image count of articles is roughly the same. The difference is that we're spreading the material over four times as many pages. And we never put ads



*We concentrate on making beautiful covers that look as good on the newsstand as on your coffee table.*  
Image by Franco Banfi.

within the articles. Our ideology is simple: If the image is fantastic, let's give it the space it deserves. And if it is not fantastic, it doesn't belong in DIVE THE WORLD.

We're often asked why we bother producing a printed magazine. Why not just make a digital publication or a tablet-based magazine? Why produce something as old fashioned and atom based as a printed magazine – and a thick and heavy one, at that?



*We have far more material than we can publish. But we encourage photographers with material and ideas in keeping with our agenda to contact us with suggestions.*  
Image by Magnus Lundgren.

We are as hip to the latest gadgets as anyone. We love our iPads and we read many magazines and newspapers online. But while computers and tablets are great for news and searching for quick information, nothing beats the visual experience you get from good print. Diving is a cinematic activity – it needs a broad format, large pages and glossy print to let the images shine.

And while we are currently evaluating which platform to use

for a digital edition of DIVE THE WORLD, we consider it a logical supplement – not a substitution – for the beauty of print.

## A luxury problem

Before the advent of digital cameras it was a major accomplishment just to exit the water with a reasonably sharp and well-exposed photo. Today, digital technology puts cheap and user-friendly cameras in the hands of



almost every diver. Even beginners can get remarkably good results on their first dives. That's all well and good, but the result is that the bar is now set much higher than it once was. After all, who wants to pay for a dive magazine just to see images that hardly exceed the quality of the snapshots they took on their last dive trip?

It goes without saying that the images need to be striking when they take up as much space as they do in our magazine. We can't design our way out of lesser images. Several spreads in the magazine include a single full-bleed photo that occupies the entire page. For this reason, many articles and images that are perfectly suitable for other magazines will not work in DIVE THE WORLD.

When we began this project, I feared that we wouldn't be able to maintain the quality with close to 150 pages published four times a year. After the first couple of issues hit the newsstands, however, many photographers interested in contributing – well-known talents and talented newcomers among them – approached us. That's obviously very encouraging for us, but it leaves us with a luxury problem. There's only enough space for five or six articles per issue, and we obviously need to include a range of destinations and themes. We have far more

material than we can publish. But we encourage photographers with material and ideas in keeping with our agenda to contact us with suggestions.

Our first two issues focused on tropical destinations. But as our title suggests, we aim to show the beauty of the underwater world wherever it exists, and that means in colder water and more unusual destinations, too. Our third issue features articles on diving in the Alps and Tasmania and future issues will take readers to cold-water destinations like Norway and Iceland.

### Cover shots

As evidenced by the shelves at your local newsstand, a magazine cover is both a science and an art form. Most magazines – whether with a gadget, lifestyle or sports slant – feature a celebrity or a girl in a bikini on the cover (or, preferably, a celebrity in a bikini). It's difficult to sell dive magazines in that environment. Dive magazines generally don't have the possibility (or budget) to put movie stars on their covers. Instead of Jennifer Aniston, we have an image of a fish...

As a result, dive magazines in competitive markets need to advertise their content as loudly as possible to entice potential readers to pick up their magazine instead of the competitor's version. With DIVE

THE WORLD, we have the luxury of removing ourselves from that battle and can instead concentrate on making beautiful covers that look as good on the newsstand as on your coffee table. We're always looking for potential cover candidates, and now that we've published three issues it should be fairly obvious what we have in mind. Clean striking images with plenty of space around the subject are the standard. If you have shots that you think would work – macro or wide angle, with or without divers – feel free to submit them.

### Mission accomplished

One of the really satisfying things about working on this project has been the way the first few issues were received. Watching people thumb through the magazine the first time they have it in their hands and seeing that immediate emotional response has been a wonderful sensation.

People seem to immediately get the idea behind the magazine, and they always react with broad smiles and a "Wow!" We know for a fact that we have readers who are not even divers but simply appreciate the quality of the images and the design. The response that makes me most proud, however, is when non-divers say "This makes me want to dive!" after seeing our magazine. That's

when I know that we've accomplished our goal.

And as for DYK? It is still alive and well. We continue to publish our Scandinavian magazines with unique content. And since there's no overlapping content between DYK and DIVE THE WORLD, our loyal readers in Scandinavia can double their inspiration.

And one more thing: Starting from issue four, we will be publishing DIVE THE WORLD in a German version, too.

**Jesper Kjøller**  
[www.dtwmagazine.com](http://www.dtwmagazine.com)

*Jesper Kjøller was originally a professional musician, Jesper fell in love with diving 20 years ago – an experience that changed his life. He became a PADI Instructor in 1994 and a PADI Course Director in 1999. Since 2000, he has been the Editor in Chief at DYK – the Scandinavian Dive Magazine. In 2011, he and his colleagues started DIVE THE WORLD – the International Dive Magazine. Jesper is as happy on a tropical reef as he is on a deep, technical wreck dive in Scandinavia, and still finds time to teach PADI Instructor Courses and GUE Fundamental Courses once in a while, too.*