diving situations and shallow diving quite well.

I frequently read Thom Hogan. His take on DX vs. FX is pretty much mine, that is, manufacturers make more money selling full frame bodies so they promote them more. Thus, they push them as being better in quality. As Hogan says, "Basically what's happening right now is that camera makers are preying on your "wants" and not your "needs." Put another way, if everyone wasn't so lusting over full frame bodies Nikon would have had to have come out with the crop sensor D400 and some more DX lenses by now." I have a pretty full range of lenses that work fine, especially underwater, with DX including the Sigma 8-16, Nikkor 10.5mm and 14-24, Tokina 10-17, Sigma 8mm full frame fisheye, A Nikon 10-24 and a few others. With a wide array like that to choose from, FX looked too limiting for my underwater needs. (… and as I write, Nikon has announced yet another new FX-format DSLR called the Nikon Df DSLR… I rest my case.)

So with DX D7100 cameras in hands, it was time to set up the underwater housing. As I said, my go-to wides are the Nikkor 14-24mm and also Tokina 10-17 and Sigma 8-16mm and for macro I like the Sigma 50mm macro and Tokina 100mm macro. I also use the new Aquatica close-up kit a lot. It has been invaluable in shooting macro life around Guam for my new book about the island's marine preserves.

The Aquatica AD7100 housing is a good looking housing, a bit larger than the AD7000. I like this extra room as, among other things, I can put my car key inside when I go beach diving or snorkeling in Guam. I also like the fact that at night, with Aquatica large macro ports, the Nikon modeling light lets me shoot critters that are shy of a modeling by using the camera's on board focusing light. Aquatica also coats the housings with a baked on, tough as nails, powder coating. I can tell you my AD7100 housing is a jet black and way cool.

Aquatica has always had a high standard of quality. This translates into a housing that goes much deeper than I do. It has a depth rating of 300ft/90 meters, and the AD7100 and others are upgradeable to 425ft/130m. Since I figured the deepest I would be going in the next two months was 30m, I was covered well in the depth department. It also seems a bit heavier, like a D200 housing, which I like for shooting video. Makes it a bit easier to steady the shot.

I've been using Aquatica gear for a long time. Thus, I can use every current port I own, so no extra accessory expense is incurred in updating a

housing body. Aquatica gets input from underwater photographers, the ultimate end users, and actually puts that feedback into their products. As a result, this housing was thoughtfully designed with a lot of great ideas that I could see immediately while taking it out of the box and unwrapping the swaddling paper. The shooting right side was uncluttered with some redesign that allows very quick and easy access to the controls with a lot of one and two finger controls functions. Large buttons for important functions and different-sized playback and function buttons highlight the right side keys.

The rear button array on the left hand side is angled at 15 degrees for ease of access, and the Multi Controller assembly has been redesigned to feel more natural. This very important control is accessed via 5 individual buttons on the camera body, giving the user an intuitive feel when going through menus or when reviewing images. Frontal controls benefit from newly designed 3 spring arrays, ensuring smooth precise operation of the crucial shutter release, as well as nearby video record and exposure compensation levers. Transmission of the aperture value is now through an accurate belt system.

I liked the larger body for one reason especially, the use of the 8" dome is now possible without an extension ring. The AD7000 required a small extension. And on the AD7000, the dome lock release was very hard to get to. Not so on the AD7100. Changing ports is simple and they lock quickly and securely into place. I had to make a quick adjustment on the steps of the whale boat and was able to do this without climbing back on board for a lengthy procedure.

I found my favourite workhorse lens, the Tokina 10-17mm, will fare very well without the 18456 extension. This made for easy handling and nice CFWA images. It helps to be stopped down (f/8 or smaller) to get the corners in line.

Yap's great Vertigo shark dive sometimes requires some fast exposure changes. You shoot into blue water, into the reef and into the sun depending on how you have positioned yourself. And there are lots of grey reef and blacktip sharks that swim by you, around you and over you. With the AD7100, functions are clearly identified with permanent pad printed paint for quick visual identification.

This also eliminates the frustration of searching for relocated controls. I was able to go from shooting into the sun to shooting 6 stops difference at the reef in a couple of finger moves without even moving my eye from the viewfinder. Very handy for these kinds of fast action situations.

Dual optical strobe connectors come standard with the housing, and can fit the popular optical cords available on the market. For the classic strobe connectivity that I prefer with my trusty Ikelites, or those that prefer electrically connected TTL

converters, the housing can have a classic Nikonos or Ikelite type connector.

Truth be told, I normally use my housing like a Nikonos, with everything set on manual. So this allowed me to set things up for macro at Yap's Slow & Easy dive site for nudibranchs, leaf fish and wire coral gobies. The housing body has an extra mounting point on top for a focus or video light (or other accessories). I used my L&M Sola for spotting. There are three additional mounting points underneath for various brackets or for attaching a tripod for vids.

Aquatica housings have been available with a lens release for a long time now and there is also a moveable focus knob to move the focus gear away from the lens gear. For something like the monster 14-24, this allows removal of the lens through the front of the housing. But, for the handy 10-17, the controls provide a quick extract of the camera from the rear without removal of the lens.

Viewing on the Aquatica AD7100 is through a Galileo type eyepiece and this was great not only for macro, but also for viewing whales. On one session trying to snorkel like a mad person

while trying to keep up with a mother whale and her frolicking, breaching calf, I was able to easily look in to change the F-stop and grab a shot from surface level of the calf just leaving the water. When shooting the big cetaceans, you sometimes have to quickly look away to make sure you're not getting too close to the whales and then look back to compose. The housing can come with the Aqua Viewfinder as well.

I tried shooting some shark video in Yap as well as my first whale video in Tonga. I managed to get a small speck of dust on my lens for the whales so the video isn't perfect, but I had fun with it anyway. (see Vimeo: https://vimeo.com/78398214) I worked in TV news for many years shooting video

and the new 1080P video makes this camera a real tool. I am exciterd to try more.

I think this may be the best designed housing Aquatica has come up with in recent editions. How they keep up with all the various cameras, I don't know. But this one is truly a winner.

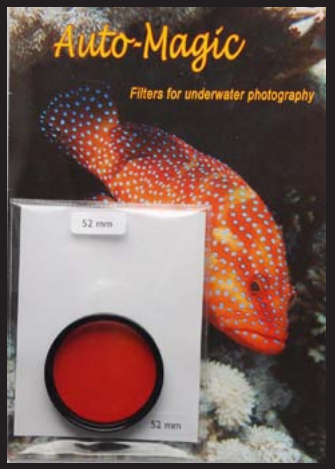
Tim Rock

See a gallery of images from Yap and Tonga all shot with Nikon D7100 camera and Aquatica AD7100

http://timrock.photoshelter.com/gallery/AD7100-Images-Tonga-Yap/G0000wiOll6f23GU

We've got you covered!

Magic filters are now available in 3 options. Original Magic for use in blue water with DSLR and compact cameras with Manual White Balance, Auto-Magic for compact cameras in automatic point and shoot mode. GreenWater Magic for use in green water with DSLR and compact cameras with Manual White Balance. Prices start at just £19.



The Auto-Magic formula is now available in a Plexiglass filter that can be added or removed underwater.

www.magic-filters.com

Nauticam vacuum check and leak detection system

by Phil Rudin

DEMA, (The Dive Equipment & Marketing Association) show was held once again during November in Orlando, Florida USA. Every November dive equipment manufactures from around the globe meet for the United States largest diving event. Included in the show is a large image resource center dedicated to the art of underwater photography and videography. This years show much like past shows debuted many new and interesting products for underwater photographers & videographers including the new Nauticam Vacuum Check and Leak Detection System.

Most camera housing floods occur as a result of total pilot error and are therefore very much preventable when you are using proper techniques while assembling housing components. These floods can occur with both experienced and novice photographers especially if you are in a rush, experiencing jet lag, in unfavorable lighting, not well rested, have had a few to many mojitos or any combination of these and other contributing factors.

The Nauticam vacuum check and leak detection system is a simple and comprehensive system that confirms the watertight integrity of your Nauticam housing before entering the water. Vacuum systems are not new to the underwater photography world but have just recently begun to gain some traction among the mainstream. In the past most underwater photographers have relied on a sound maintenance program and a proper insurance policy to cover loss as a result of flooding. No vacuum system can replace proper maintenance and I myself have lost far more equipment to theft around the world than to floods so I would not suggest it replaces a need for insurance.

What the vacuum system will do is provide additional peace of mind by confirming that you have in fact properly assembled your equipment prior to entering the water thus avoiding lost dive time as a result of minor equipment malfunctions.

The Nauticam vacuum check system has three basic parts, the electronic monitoring circuitry with warning lights, the one way vacuum

valve and a simple light weight pump. The electronic monitoring circuitry looks very much like the leak detection circuitry which has come in all of the past Nauticam housings. The new vacuum system uses the same type of warning light and audible alarm found in all current Nauticam housings. The noticeable difference is the new on and off switch now located inside the housing.

The sophisticated new circuitry is very compact and integrated into the leak detection and warning light system. The advanced circuitry includes temperature compensation capability which will prevents false positive alarms as a result temperature

changes within the housing which may be caused by heat from running cameras. The on/off switch is used to disable the system while not in use and conserve battery power provided