

Horses for courses

Mr Mustard and I recently returned from a most enjoyable week's diving the Santa Barbara area of California which includes kelp forests, sea lions and, believe it or not, diving under a working oil rig. Can you imagine getting permission to do that in the UK?!

But I digress. The point is we were both diving the magnificent kelp forests off Santa Barbara Island in near perfect conditions - he was shooting with strobes and I, as is usual, was shooting video using available light and a Magic Filter.

We were both having a great time photographically but Alex was finding that he was having to use much higher strobe powers to light up the wide scenery and the light absorbing kelp which was shrouded by a dense layer at the surface.

I on the other hand had the advantage of shooting video which, for some reason unknown to me, is capable of capturing moving images by available light much more effectively and without blur and this is especially true here in the UK with our much lower ambient light levels.

The added advantage I had was that the Original Magic filter, and this is true of all colour correcting filters, was able to capture colour

throughout the image and into the background where even the highest power strobes would not have been able to illuminate.

Don't get me wrong - Mr Mustard's images were, as always, rather good but we both agreed that the use of available light and a filter were much more effective at capturing the atmosphere of our dives and sometimes it is the sensation of the scenery and the feeling of 'space' which is more effective especially when the subject matter, in this case the kelp, can stretch from the seabed at almost 30 metres and rise majestically to a profuse, golden, sun dappled canopy on the surface.

The final advantage of video is that it can capture the subtlety of movement which still images can never. Movement, even very slight, is very important in creating atmosphere and a feeling of being there.

Ecclectic UWP

This issue of UWP has been especially pleasing to compile because it contains very well illustrated articles about not just

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taking images underwater but also about the thought process of choosing a location to describing the thought process some contributors go through underwater. Alex Tattersall makes the excellent point that when going to a new destination where the diving is much more physical, stick to the equipment and techniques you know and can do well. Then there's the excellent article on spawning aggregations where it all comes together in an instant to start new life. Fascinating

stuff. Cousteau came up with the term 'Silent World' and he was so right but it is also such an apt description for we can, as underwater photographers, totally immerse ourselves in what we like doing - interacting with the marine life and capturing images which reflect its beauty and infinite variety. It is only by indulging in such "me time" that we can return with images to justify our indulgence.

Enjoy.

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