



# HOUSINGS

A waterproof **HOUSING** is an **ABSOLUTE ESSENTIAL** for photographers that bring their cameras into the ocean. In this edition, OG's Honorary Editors & Associates reveal their housing of choice and share **ESSENTIAL** tips for aspiring underwater photographers.



## LAURENT BALLESTA

*OG Honorary Editor, professional underwater photographer*

### Housing of choice:

"Of course, my Seacam with 45° viewfinder and super dome."

### Why:

"Because, it's the safest when you're deep, the strongest when you're not cleaning it every day, and with all controls available, and because the manufacturer listens to our demand for perfection; each time we tell him our requirement, he will deliver something better the following year. With each year, Seacam housings get better and better."

### Essential tip for budding photographer:

"Don't try to just make the same photos better. Try instead, to find new subjects even if at the beginning, the quality is poor. The subject is more important than the photo. Once you have a new subject, you will find time to make a good photo."



## DAVID DOUBILET

*OG Honorary Editor, National Geographic photographer -in-residence*

### Housing of choice:

"Seacam."

### Why:

"The Seacam housing is designed for professional shooters that demand the best in fit, finish and function. Zoom and focus control at my fingertips are critical for me in low light conditions, and for creating half-and-half imagery. In addition, Seacam viewfinders are superb. Seacam is a precision instrument in the world of underwater digital imagery."

### Essential tip for budding photographers:

"Shoot your passion. Push your camera, push your mind. Make mistakes and learn from mistakes. An image should have passion; tell a story within a frame. Find a subject that you love to shoot and tell your story. Editors will notice."

## MICHAEL AW

*Publisher, Ocean Geographic, professional underwater photographer*



### **Housing of choice:**

“Seacam.”

### **Why:**

“Like cars, there are many options, but I am discerning in my choice. Seacam is technologically advanced compared to many others in the market. It balances perfectly in and out of water, all controls are easily accessible and it is fast to start up.”

### **Essential tip for budding photographers:**

“Compose your picture like an artist on canvas. Explore and pursue your passion. Be prepared - practise, practise and practise for that ‘lucky shot’. Shoot with your heart. I suggest getting a copy of the ‘Essential Guide to Digital Underwater Photography (AW/MEUR)’.”

## AMANDA COTTON

*Professional underwater photographer*



### **Housing of choice:**

“Seacam.”

### **Why:**

“I love how my housing feels in my hands. I have smaller hands and have found some housings difficult to manipulate because of this; having the ability to quickly and easily access all the pertinent buttons is essential to capturing the perfect moment, and my Seacam housing allows this for me. I love the high quality parts and materials used in Seacam housings and products.”

### **Essential tip for budding photographers:**

“I’d say separating yourself from the pack by finding a niche; something you particularly love, focus on shooting it and fine-tuning your skills in this area. Stay true to what you feel passionate about and let that reflect through your work. When you’re passionate about the messages you’re putting out through your imagery, you’ll be less likely to allow the inevitable setbacks to slow you down.”

## STEPHEN FRINK

*Publisher, Dive Alert*



### **Housing of choice:**

“Seacam.”

### **Why:**

“I have been shooting with Seacam since the early days with film in my Nikon SLR. Why have I never changed? The precision of manufacture and brilliance of design with Seacam have kept me a loyal user all these years. In far and distant places, where we all go to shoot, there aren’t many housing repair shops. I want gear I can trust to perform, and with ergonomics that facilitate my pursuit of images. I want a housing that works with me, intuitively, with controls that logically fall to my hand and finger placement. Plus, they offer the very best viewfinders. You can’t shoot what you can’t see; the S180 and S45 Seacam viewfinders are reason enough to embrace the product line.”

### **Essential tip for budding photographers:**

“It is harder now to find a good market for an underwater image. The industry doesn’t treat photography with the respect it once did. A photographer needs to not give away their work and always be vigilant to protect their rights. Those who publish for ego gratification in the end will get what they deserve – no money and more importantly, no respect.”

## TRACEY JENNING

*Serious shooter*



### **Housing of choice:**

“Seacam with super dome and S45 viewfinder.”

### **Why:**

“When I decided to upgrade from Ikelite, I looked at several models. It was the simplicity of the Seacam design that impressed me. As an engineer, I appreciate the solid feel and the ease of assembly. I have not been disappointed – each dial and button engages first time, every time.”

### **Essential tip for budding photographers:**

“Shoot manual, take a course / workshop / trip with a professional to understand the basics, and never miss a dive. The more time spent in the water the more chance there is to observe something amazing and to improve technique. This doesn't necessarily need to involve travel to exotic locations. One of my pictures recently featured in Nat Geo's Daily Dozen, and in the Telegraph, was taken when I was snorkelling next to the dive boat whilst everyone else was having breakfast.”

# ALEXANDRA ROSE

Ocean Geographic Science Editor



**Housing of choice:**  
"Ikelite."

**Why:**  
"I've had the same housing for the last four years and haven't been tempted to switch. I like the clear acrylic and the fact that it allows you to see what's going on inside the housing at all times. This same fact also makes this housing easy to get comfortable with in the first place, so is particularly conducive to learning how to use the system quickly and confidently."

**Essential tip for budding photographers:**

"Ask questions. Most professional photographers are happy to point a novice in the right direction and give them helpful suggestions. Of course it is important to first have a working knowledge base that can be derived from books, online resources, and one's own photo experimentation, but after that just don't be afraid to ask for a bit of guidance. At worst you can be ignored, at best you can improve your photos, so there's nothing to lose by being inquisitive."

# MATTHEW SMITH

Australian Geographic Photographer of the Year



**Housing of choice:**  
"Aquatica."

**Why:**  
"Aquatica housings are built like bricks; made out of a high grade anodized and coated marine aluminium and they are made for maximum protection. Aquatica's housings have uncompromised access to all the functions I need."

**Essential tip for budding photographers:**

"Like anything worth doing, it takes time and practice. Many people ask "How many pictures did you take to get that one?" And truthfully, the answer is often, "Thousands." Pressing the shutter on the chance of a lifetime image is commonly the last link in a long chain of events that led to being there in the moment at the right time. Before you even pick up a camera, you should thoroughly research your subject. Learn its behaviour and where it is most likely to be at any given time. Be prepared for many early mornings and unsociable hours. Then when you get your shot, you really feel like you've earned it - and rightly so. The difference between a beginner and a master is that the beginner has made a few mistakes, but the master, millions!"

# ALEX MUSTARD

Professional underwater photographer and educator



**Housing of choice:**  
"Subal ND4s."

**Why:**  
"I have used Subal housings since the 1990s when I retired my Nikonos RS, and I have never had to have one serviced or repaired. They have never let me down on a shoot and I find their ergonomics for getting the shot the best in the business. Most years I shoot with many brands doing reviews and I always look forward to getting my own housing back in my hands."

**Essential tip for budding photographers:**

"Make friends with the ocean. Learn to be a good diver first, so that you can devote your attention to photography. Learn all you can about marine life and you will get photo opportunities that others never see."

## SANDY YOU

*Serious Shooter*



**Housing of choice:**

“Seacam.”

**Why:**

“User-friendly design, good buoyancy in the water for control, good quality.”

**Essential tip for budding photographers:**

“Improve the buoyancy, try different subjects. Study the pictures of professional photographers. Watch more movies and observe paintings.”

## STEVE JONES

*Ocean Geographic Contributing Photographer*



**Housing of choice:**

“Seacam.”

**Why:**

“I spend a lot of my time involved in deep technical diving (often with thick dry gloves). The Seacam is perfect for this as it is extremely tough, can operate very deep and has intuitive, easy-to-access controls. Furthermore, they have a fully integrated system with components that work seamlessly together, from the bright S45 viewfinder through to their advanced S150D strobes. Their optical glass ports are the best around, and this is all backed up by a level of after-sales service that is second to none.”

**Essential tip for budding photographers:**

“Buoyancy, buoyancy, buoyancy! Your diving skills must come first - this is a fundamental for safe and easy diving. Excellent buoyancy control means a calm dive, which in turn means the reef won't get damaged and the marine life will be more relaxed around you, allowing you to get closer with your camera. Being relaxed and in control underwater will also allow you to concentrate more on your image making, lead to less mistakes, as well as allow you to manoeuvre into positions that lead to the best compositions.”

## GILLIAN MCDONALD

*Ocean Geographic Feature Editor*



**Housing of choice:**

“Nauticam.”

**Why:**

“I have tried others but the physical sensation of Nauticam in my hands just feels right to me. It fits my hand size and my way of working. Not to overlook the high-end technical specifications and robust, sleek build as well as the excellent system of add-on diopters and accessories which are really easy to manage under water. The final thing which clinches is the customer service. Every order is dealt with efficiently and any query or request will be handled professionally.”

**Essential tip for budding photographers:**

“Get involved with other underwater photographers. This is by far the best way to learn, and pick up tips and ideas. People who are passionate about photography invariably want to talk about it, so never be afraid to ask. Also, take a course with a professional – attend a workshop.”