

Voila! Perfect Photos

Image Doctor: Miraculous image-perfecting software

BY JACK AND SUE DRAFAHL

When we lecture at the various scuba shows, one area of great interest is the various plug-in filters that are Photoshop-compatible. We are currently writing a book about this subject, which will be

available in the spring of 2004. During our research, we have found almost an endless supply of filters that apply directly to underwater photography. One of the most powerful programs we have discovered is Image

Doctor: Many times the difference between a really nice underwater image and one that's never shown can be a small white obtrusive area somewhere in the scene. Common causes are bleached coral or light-colored rocks overexposed by the flash.

Image Doctor, designed to work with Adobe Photoshop and Elements, is comprised of a series of four plug-in filters: JPEG Repair, Scratch Remover, Smart Fill and Spot Lifter. JPEG Repair reduces the jaggedness caused by saving images at high JPEG compression settings. Use Scratch Remover for really large scratches that cannot be removed with scanning software. Spot Lifter reduces skin blemishes, so it's probably not much help for fish portraits. Smart Fill is the filter that addresses the problem of small white distracting areas in underwater scenes. Smart Fill's technology is miraculous to behold and incredibly simple to use.

Simply load your image into your computer and bring it into Photoshop or Elements. Select the area to be removed and use sliders to adjust the effect of the filter. Then just sit back as the processor does its job. Before you know it, new coral has grown before your eyes!

Download a trial version from www.alienskin.com. Better yet, you can order a full version of the Image Doctor for \$129 or a sidegrade for \$99.

For more info on our books and upcoming trips, visit www.jackandsuedrafaahl.com.

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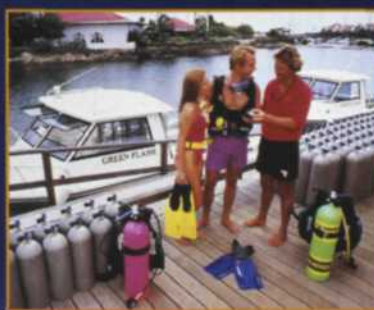
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VIDEO

Extended Warranties: A Wise Investment

BY CLAY WISEMAN

A couple of years ago I found myself gearing up for a dive trip to South Australia to film great white sharks and leafy sea dragons when tragedy struck. My camcorder was broken, and I needed it fixed, fast.

What possessed me to purchase the extended warranty for my Sony PD100a camcorder I cannot say, but it was well worth it. I located the nearest Sony repair facility by going to www.sony.com. Under the conditions of the extended warranty, the \$1,000 repair was completed within three weeks for free.

To see video footage from that South Australian odyssey and to get the full scoop on what to do when your camcorder breaks, go to www.sportdiver.com.