

Getting Started in U/W Photography

By Jack and Sue Drafaahl

Divers often hesitate to get involved in underwater photography simply because they don't know how to get started. The list of initial questions can be overwhelming. What camera do you buy? How do you use it? What kind of film do you use? Which lens is best to start with? How much will it set me back? Of course, every photographer you ask will have slightly different advice, but the solution is actually quite simple. The key to an easy entry into underwater photography is a system that can adapt and grow as your experience increases. It must be simple and easy to use, but allow you added creativity as your photo skills evolve.

The Sea & Sea Motor Marine II-EX is an easy to use system with professional caliber features. The camera is totally amphibious, with a built-in 35mm lens and flash so you can easily take pictures both underwater and topside. The Motor Marine II-EX is also a sophisticated system that offers additional lenses, strobes and accessories that allow you to take it to a high level of photo expertise.

Access to the film compartment is through a single O-ring sealed back plate. Sea & Sea uses a very pliable blue ring with a special grease that provides a surefire seal. To open the camera, simply move the right locking lever forward and the backplate swings out of the way. Drop a roll of film in with the leader across the drive spool and close. Pressing the shutter once will advance the film and you are ready to go. A DX code reader automatically sets the camera to the correct ISO. The camera reads ISO 50, 100 and 400 films.

At the time the Motor Marine II-EX manual was printed, Sea & Sea recommended ISO 100 film. In recent months, both Kodak and Fuji have come out with some very fine grain ISO 400 films that produce excellent quality prints. We are so impressed we often use these films on assignment and would highly recommend them as a starting film for your Motor Marine II-EX camera. The increase in film speed will give you a better flash range, smaller f/stops and faster shutter speeds. At ISO 400 on land the internal flash can cover from 4.6 to 9.5 feet; underwater from 2.3 to 5 feet. That's pretty impressive for a camera small enough to fit in your BC pocket!

Focus is controlled with a knob on the side of the lens that

operates from infinity down to one meter. A special position below the one meter mark allows a special close-up lens inside the camera to move into position behind the main lens. This feature allows you to easily capture pictures of critters only 20 inches from the lens.

Exposure is maintained with the shutter speed control on the top of the camera and the f/stop control on the side of the lens. The f/stops range from f/3.5 to f/22; the shutter speed dial has a range of 1/15 to 1/125 second. If you want to take pictures using the internal flash, you merely move the shutter speed dial to the position marked by a lightning bolt symbol.

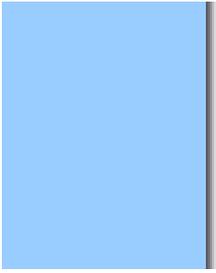
The autowinder makes the camera great for those fast action available light photos. Inside the viewfinder you will see four lamps in the lower part of the window. These give you an accurate reading of how to adjust your f/stop or shutter speed to achieve great available light photos. If the red light is illuminated when you depress the shutter halfway, you need to open the aperture until the lamp turns off. When the red lamp does not illuminate, the correct exposure has been achieved.

The sophistication of the Motor Marine II-EX system comes into play when you add any of the accessory dual TTL electronic flashes. Sea & Sea also offers a wide variety of accessory arms.

There is also a variety of macro and wide angle conversion lenses to fit just about any type of shooting situation. And, all of the lenses can be changed underwater. If you are using the built-in close-up feature and a Manta comes in to keep you company, just grab one of the lenses off the lens caddy and you've got it covered. In future articles we will take a closer look at all these accessories and discuss some basics of underwater photography using the Sea & Sea Motor Marine II-EX system. So, stay tuned and learn how to use TTL flash, improve your techniques with wide angle lenses or make macro photography fun and easy.

No two divers will ever agree on the best dive site or which film gives the best results, but we think all divers can agree that the fabulous times we spend underwater are always too short. You need to make every moment count. Bring back those special diving experiences on film so your memories won't fade. The Motor Marine II-EX offers a simple yet sophisticated underwater camera system designed to capture the good times. For more information, contact Sea & Sea Underwater Photography USA, 1938 Kellogg Avenue, Carlsbad, CA 92008; (760) 929-1909, fax (760) 929-0098.

Sea Quest Computer Correction: Our April article on Affordable Computers contained an error. We stated the Sea Quest Favor "must be activated before entering the water...." This computer, however, activates itself upon submersion (although it can also be activated by touching the contacts with moistened fingertips). Although it was not stated, the price quoted was for the computer



in the console pictured. We apologize for any confusion this error may have caused.

For more information on the SeaQuest line of dive computers, all of which are self-activated, please contact the company at 2151 Las Palmas Drive, Carlsbad, CA 92009; phone (760) 438-1101 or fax (760) 438-3142.