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Digital Day Dawning

Jack and Sue Drafahl

At a recent dive show, we saw some dramatic changes in the world of underwater photography. Everywhere we looked, the buzzword was digital. There were digital still cameras, digital video cameras, digital housings and digitally enhanced photos. Everyone was talking digital, but we saw the confusion in their eyes.



In reality, the progression from film to digital imaging will take many years and will be a source of confusion and controversy along the way. That's why we are proud to introduce this new column called "Digital Horizons," a feature that will be included in each issue of Sport Diver. It is designed to serve as an ongoing source of answers to your many questions about digital imaging.

We have been watching the technology changes in topside and underwater photography for years. Generally, it seems to take the underwater world about two years to incorporate innovations found in land-based photography. It is not for lack of interest, but rather an economic reality, as the underwater marketplace offers a much smaller domain. Yet manufacturers must feel that digital is worth the time and money invested in research and development as underwater digital camera housings are now being developed faster than we can review them!

The Digital Horizons column will consist of a series of short articles dealing with subjects specific to the world of digital underwater photography. For the first few columns, we will concentrate specifically on the underwater digital camera. We will discuss the differences between film and digital cameras and provide tips on how to buy your first digital camera and housing.

Digital cameras create a whole new learning curve when taking underwater pictures, so we'll help you get the most from your digital camera. We will assist you as you work with your digital files in your computer and provide tips on printing or sending them over the Internet. We'll discuss software, databases and a slew of other related topics for you to consider.

We are very aware that many underwater photographers will be slow to make the switch to digital and others never will. Don't worry, because this column is designed for you, too. Even if you never touch a digital camera, there will come a time when you need to input your film images into the computer.

Digital Horizons will provide tips and techniques to make scanning your film images easy. We'll address image resolution, file formats, compression techniques, file sizes, color balance correction, scratched image fixes, gamma correction, backscatter removal and much, much more.

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We are very excited about this new column and look forward to telling you about all the ways that digital relates to underwater photography. We'll work to help you understand all this digital jargon and decipher the confusing terminology. These are exciting times for underwater photography, so hang on tight because we are all going for an exciting new ride!

For more information about digital underwater photography equipment, classes and a newsletter, click onto Cathy Church's home page below.

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