

Spotlight on...

Jamie Hall

Every month we interview inspiring photographers and shine the light on their influential work

This month we introduce **JAMIE HALL**, a dive instructor and ocean conservationist, who recently won first place in Scuba Diving Magazine's 2018 Underwater Photo Contest

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HOW DID YOU START OUT?

I have been away from my home country (England), travelling and living abroad for the seven years. Before I left, I invested in a reasonably decent hybrid camera. I had no idea what I was doing, but wanted to capture some of the memories and places I was seeing. As time went on, a couple of friends and family would give a compliment or two and say they enjoyed the short stories and explanations I accompanied with the photos. Not long into my travels I became quite into Scuba Diving so I invested in an underwater camera and started to capture as much of the wildlife that I encountered as I could.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT PHOTOGRAPHING WILDLIFE THAT YOU LOVE?

I love shooting marine life specifically as it something that not everyone gets to see first-hand. The underwater world is full of untold beauty, the colours and evolutionary ability of some of the creatures is nothing short of incredible. There is a tranquility and calmness in the ocean, everything floats and glides by. I try to capture as much of that as possible in the images and I love to be able to show this to people.

DO YOU SET YOURSELF CREATIVE CHALLENGES?

Definitely. The slow moving creatures can be relatively easy to capture but it is

always a challenge to try and get the right angle. The real challenge however comes with the extremely fast and shy characters. Marine life that live in holes or that never comes to close can be a constant game of patience. The majority of fish don't ever stay still and won't head directly towards you. Calmness and learning their behaviour is key.

WHAT IS YOUR NEXT DESTINATION/



VENTURE?

I recently submitted an image to a photography competition and was thrilled to take the top spot in the category. Very generously the 1st place prize is a diving trip in Honduras so I am hoping to be able to get out there as soon as possible. They have quite a few sharks there and most UW photographers dream of shooting them, with a lens of course.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST TECHNICAL CHALLENGE YOU'VE FACED SO FAR?

UW photography is as much about your skills as a diver as it is a photographer. It requires a huge amount of patience and control whilst in the water. For the most part, underwater life; corals, fish and invertebrates are very fragile. It is very important to be aware of the surroundings and to make sure you are not causing any harm or damage. »







» Solid diving skills are integral to being a responsible and good UW photographer.

WHAT IS YOUR MOST USEFUL PIECE OF KIT AND WHY?

The smallest and most inexpensive piece, believe it or not, is my diffuser. Underwater photography equipment is ludicrously expensive and until very recently I haven't had the funds to invest in an underwater flash. Lighting is everything and even more so underwater, especially deep where a lot of light is lost. Added light in underwater photography is essential to getting accurate colours and quality images.

WHO OR WHAT MOTIVATES YOU?

I have spent a good portion of my time diving involved in various ocean conservation projects. Ocean health is one of the very biggest problems facing the world and something I am very passionate about. With plastic, oil spills, over-fishing, and all other types of pollution, the future of the ocean and the marine life that inhabit it, along with all the people that rely on it, is in jeopardy. Raising awareness of this is without doubt my biggest goal and motivator. I am touched when I receive messages from both friends and strangers saying that my photography inspires them and makes them want to dive. Many have said they have a fear of the ocean but it makes them want to conquer the fear. This is the greatest reward - the more people diving the better. There is an amazing world under there, we can all be a guest in it and I urge everyone to see it for themselves.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE AND HOW DO YOU HOPE TO DEVELOP?



I try to keep my style relatively 'true'. Close-up/macro and singling out the subject has been where most of the attention comes from - really showing that detail and texture on sometimes very small animals. The flipside is to try and show the ocean as a whole for what it is in wider framed images; truly marvellous and stunningly beautiful. It is my hope to continuously invest in my equipment, which will in turn allow me to adapt and improve

my style to show parts of the life and landscape that I am not currently able to capture. ■



JAMIE HALL

I am a full time scuba dive instructor, a part-time travel and underwater photographer and a passionate ocean conservationist. I hope to work, travel and shoot in as many countries, oceans and seas as possible. My dream would be to work full time capturing images from all over the world.

