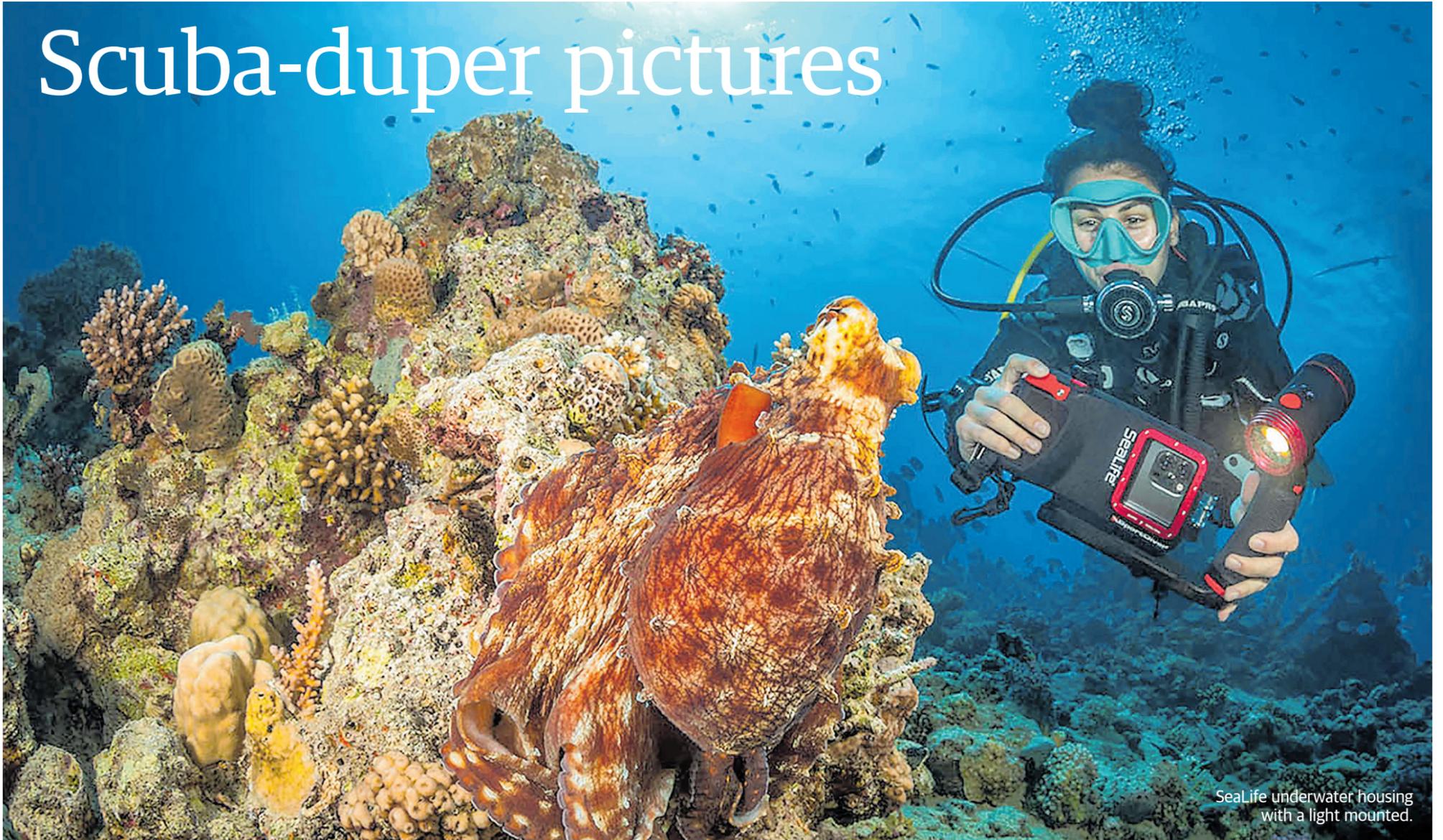


WET & WILD PHOTOGRAPHY

# Scuba-duper pictures



SeaLife underwater housing with a light mounted.

 **MOGENS JOHANSEN** takes a look at the best underwater housings for your phone and the best waterproof compact cameras

**L**egendary French oceanographer and filmmaker Jacques Cousteau's amazing documentaries fascinated me as a child and sparked a desire to explore the mysterious underwater world.

While some of Cousteau's adventures may be beyond many of us, the underwater world is not out of reach.

If you stick your head underwater anywhere along our coastline, it can literally open your eyes to a fabulous new world — and if you add an underwater camera to your snorkelling kit, you can produce your own Cousteau-like documentary. It's easier than you might think and it won't cost an arm and a leg — you can get into underwater photography for as little as a few hundred dollars.

In this article we will explore housings for your smartphone versus a tough underwater compact camera and a couple of action cameras.

Underwater housings are designed to keep your valuable phone and its contents dry . . . but you are putting a lot of trust in it and leaks can happen, as yours truly can attest to. (I accidentally drowned an expensive Canon EOS camera when the seal in the housing failed during a scuba dive.)

**AquaTec's Axis GO** is a waterproof case for the latest iPhones. It allows full access to the

phone's touchscreen (via a robust flexible rear cover), and has a large glass lens port that is waterproof so you can take advantage of all three lenses. It is waterproof to 10m and you can add various accessories like a handy pistol-grip and a dome port that allows you to capture over/under images in the waterline. Given its limited depth rating, the AquaTec Axis GO, pictured left, is best suited for snorkelling. It costs \$249.

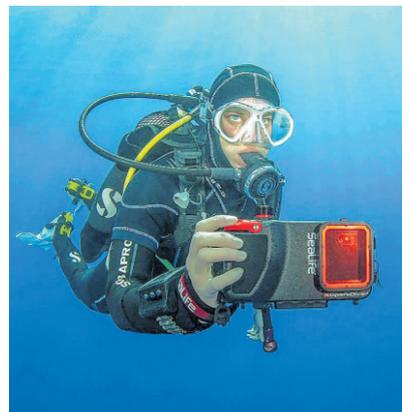


If you're looking for something a little better and more versatile, the **SeaLife SportDiver** underwater housing is compatible with most Android phones and all iPhones from 7 and up. It is depth-rated to 40m and has large shutter and control buttons to make it easier to operate underwater when scuba diving. It comes with a free SportDiver app that makes controlling your smartphone much easier underwater. It even has a leak alarm to alert you in case moisture or water enters the housing. The SeaLife SportDiver



housing costs \$589 but serious underwater photographers may want to consider the Pro 2500

SeaLife underwater housing with twin lights.



SeaLife underwater housing for smartphones.

underwater housing and light tray bundle for \$1249.

If you don't like the idea of taking your phone and all its contents underwater, there are several good, tough/action cameras that will do the job.

The **OM System Tough TG-6** is designed to take just about anything adventure junkies can throw at it. It is shockproof, freeze-proof, dustproof and waterproof to 15m (45m if you add a Pt-059 underwater housing). The Tough TG-6 can be fitted with a range of accessories like a tele-converter, fisheye converter, flash diffuser and the aforementioned underwater housing. The device sells for around \$649, the PT-059 underwater housing costs \$579, and the converter lenses start from \$129.

Action cameras like **GoPro** and **Osmo** are fantastic little devices that can be mounted on just about anything — yourself included. These amazing little cameras capture great video and stills, and they are also waterproof to about 10m without a special housing. But because of their small size, I find them a bit fiddly to use underwater. They do

## Tip

The key to keeping your phone safe in an underwater housing is always to rinse it with fresh water after you have used it, and keep the rubber seal lubricated with silicone grease. If you go the tough/action camera option, the same applies. Make sure it is washed with fresh clean water after use, then dry it and open the ports and lubricate the rubber seals.



OM System Tough TG-6.

come with apps that makes it easier to use them when they are strapped on to something. The latest GoPro Hero 11 Black will set you back just under \$600, and the Osmo Action starts from \$519.



Osmo Action 3.