

THE ULTIMATE JACQUES COSTEAU COLLECTION SPECIAL EDITION

£149.99
available at www.deltamusic.co.uk

AS A SMALL boy (yes I was small once) I remember seeing 'The Silent World' in black and white on TV which like many people in those far off days got me hooked on diving. For a whole generation the name Jacques Cousteau was synonymous with diving.

Earlier he, along with the engineer Emile Cagnan, perfected what we know as the aqualung, self contained breathing apparatus or scuba for short. He made the first successful dives in the summer of 1943 however it was not until after the war in the late 1940s that he made the first underwater films.

What people forget is that Cousteau was a professional director and film maker before his love affair with the sea began during his naval career. His first major underwater film 'The Silent World' - actually made in colour - was given a general release in the cinema before being shown on black and white TV.

It was not until the late 1950s that he started making films for television and in those days these were eagerly awaited and commanded huge audiences.

Divers around the world watched in anticipation as in each of his new films there would be some innovation in the equipment.

In these cynical days we would dismiss this as product promotion since he was after all the chairman of the board of Aqualung, La Spirotechnique and eventually US Divers. However I don't mean that to sound like criticism he did invent diving as we know it so why shouldn't he profit from it. Besides there are lots of other things to

criticise him for but let's leave that for another day.

This 21 disc set of DVDs with a running time of 3820 minutes covers a period of 40 years when he, his family and the loyal team he worked with travelled the world's seas and oceans in search of adventures and to entertain us in the comfort of our own homes. In the early days adventure was the overriding factor with films about the search for famous wrecks like the *Brittanic*, which he found and dived with what we would now look on as primitive dive gear given that he was going to a depth of 90m.

The 60s were a very productive time for Cousteau and the crew of *Calypso*, his famous research vessel. You may find some of the early films a bit politically incorrect but you have to remember this was a different time.

However even then Cousteau was beginning to preach conservation and he became one of the world's most eloquent spokesmen for conservation.

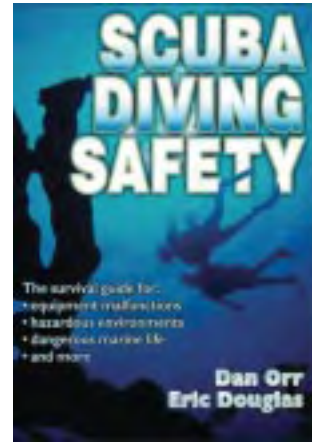
The Ultimate Jacques Cousteau Collection Special Edition is a huge collection and not all the films are underwater but mostly they do have some connection. It is a welcome relief from the great man's somewhat monotonous voice to have some of the films narrated by professional and rather good actors like Peter Ustinov.

Captain Cousteau was a pioneer of diving and had a serious conservation message to make but at heart he was a master storyteller and I think we can forgive him if he cast himself at the centre of his many adventures. After all he did give us the means to emulate his adventures and visit the undersea world to see it for ourselves.

Don Lees



The Jacques Cousteau collection will be one of the prizes in the raffle at the ScotSAC Dive Conference on November 3.



SCUBA DIVING SAFETY

(Dan Orr and Eric Douglas)
Copyright 2007 ISBN: 0736052518
ISBN13: 9780736052511
216pp Paperback £14.99

A NEW DIVING Manual arrived through my letterbox recently. 'Scuba Diving Safety' by Dan Orr and Eric Douglas is an A5 sized book of 200 pages. Dan Orr is President & CEO of Divers Alert Network (DAN) and Eric Douglas is Director of Training with DAN, so guess what, the manual is liberally sprinkled with references to DAN.

The book is basically a diving manual with an emphasis on self rescue, buddy rescue and resuscitation techniques. There are numerous pictures and diagrams but unfortunately they are all black and white. These days, rightly or wrongly, readers like colour and plenty of it!

The introduction briefly discusses the causes of diving accidents, backed up, in the next section, with DAN statistics. Following on from this we have sections dealing with the Diving Environment, Dive Planning, Pre-dive Safety Checks, Signals, Safety Procedures for the Dive and so on.

The following chapters are similar to those in any Diving Manual but with, as I said, an emphasis on Rescue namely: Equipment Use and Maintenance, Emergency Assistance Plans and Evacuation, Emergency Recognition and Prevention, Rescue Techniques, Diver Search, U/W Rescue. Towing and so on.

The book has been written for the North American market with many references to data researched and published in the US. All the emergency phone numbers etc are US numbers. Whilst some of the information might stimulate further interest, I feel that there are many better sources of information and theory training relevant to Scottish/British divers, for example the ScotSAC and BSAC diving manuals, RLSS, RYA and First Aid manuals, even the PADI diving manuals.

Having read most of the above named literary titles I feel that 'Scuba Diving Safety' is a bit of a waste of time. I wouldn't buy; in fact I wouldn't borrow it free of charge from a library.

'Scuba Diving Safety' is published by Human Kinetics - www.humankinetics.com

Keith Waugh

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