

BOOK DETAILS:
The Art of Diving
 By Nick Hanna and
 Dr. Alexander Mustard
 272-pages, 8.7 x 11 inches
 Soft cover, available via Amazon.co.uk

From the endless creative juices of Nick Hanna, diving journalist magnifique, and Alex Mustard, underwater shooter extraordinaire, comes *The Art of Diving*. Never before has a book about scuba diving been so beautiful, so literate — and so spot on.

Initially, the title confused me. Is it a technical manual explaining gear configuration? Is it a systematic guide about how to be a so-called better diver? I wasn't interested in a lecture.

However, after flipping through the book and seeing Mustard's images leap off the pages, a thought occurred to me: This is way too pretty to be a training manual.

Soon after, I read Hanna's claim that diving is "an art form requiring grace and agility, a waltz with water and the creatures who live in it. The art of diving is more down to attitude than technique. It embodies a certain approach, an ability to embrace the spirit of the sea."

So...*The Art of Diving* is a manual — but a different kind of manual. Less technical and more spiritual, less Doing-It-Right and more Enjoying-It-More.

Hanna and Mustard suggest that it doesn't matter how you do it, so long as you treasure the experience for what it is — an invigorating return to nature...and to yourself.

A *Walden* for bubble blowers, the 272-page book is so well written and so beautifully photographed that it could convince a hydrophobe to rush headlong into crashing surf at high tide. In driving rain. Naked.

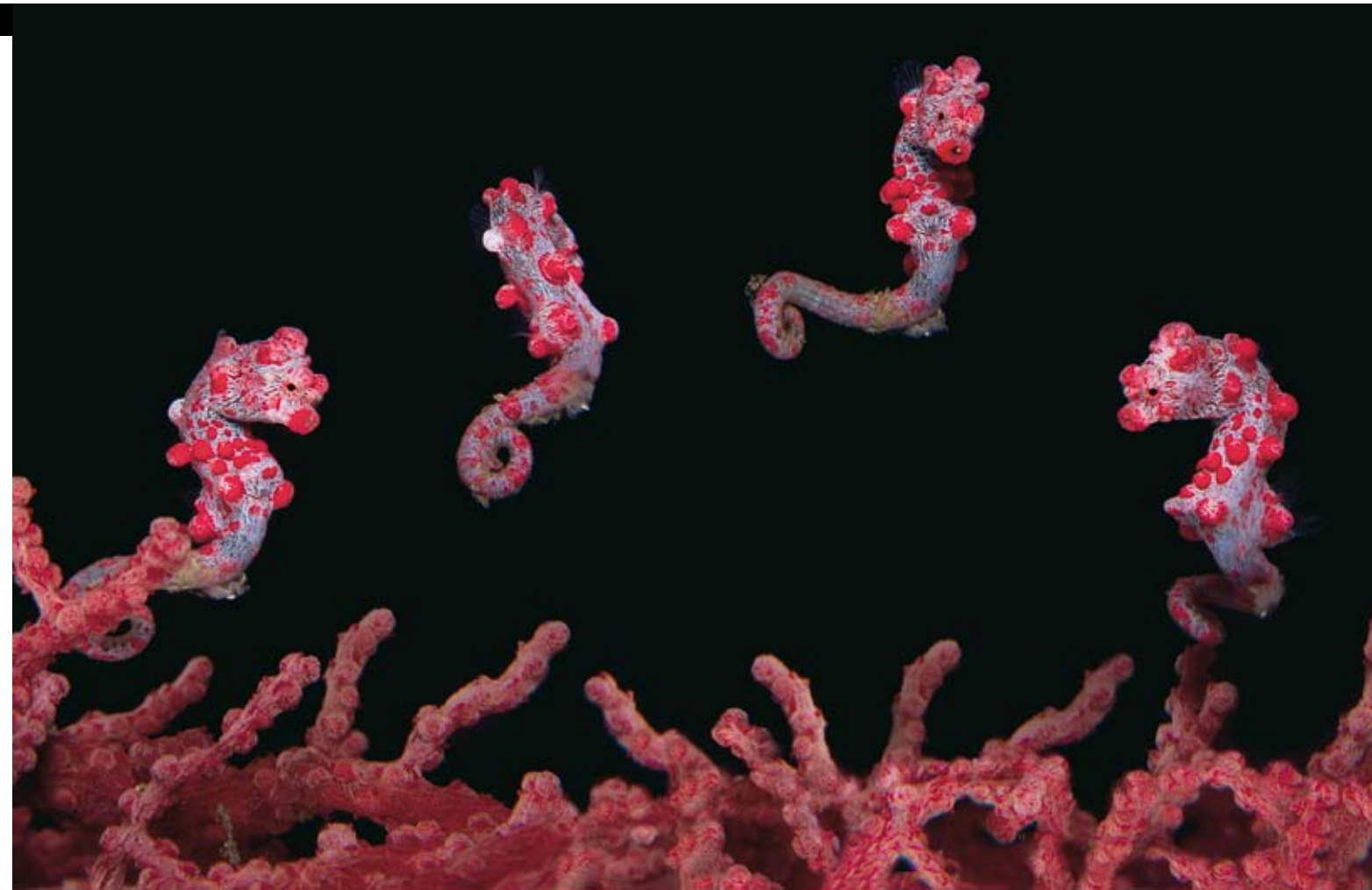
The book opens with a history of the sport. However, Hanna doesn't just report on how people transformed diving. Rather, he focuses on how diving transformed people.

From Beebe, to Cousteau, to Haas, and so on, we see towering figures turn into whimpering addicts, craving to crawl into the water. Overcome by the magnetism of the sea, these monumental figures were powerless against its pull.

Unlike with most books about diving, Hanna and Mustard delve into the soothing, mystical aspects of the sport. Emphasizing the importance of the emotional experience of a dive, the pair explains why diving is so powerful. It's not merely pretty down there; it's in our blood.

For stoic divers who refuse to acknowledge that diving can be soul-softening, Hanna and Mustard have outed you.

For divers who want to nurture the ego-shedding side of the sport, Hanna and Mustard provide numerous tips on how to connect directly to your spiritual, playful self.



Just as intriguing as the text are Mustard's images. Evocative and interpretive, Mustard's pictures — pleasantly greater than the sum of the individual images — deliver a powerful message: the underwater world is dynamic, alive — and worth visiting.

What sets the images in this book apart, however, is that many of them have people as their subjects. In this way, Mustard reminds us that the joy of diving isn't just about seeing marine life. Rather, diving is an extraordinary sensory endeavor in which divers are fully engaged.

We've all read that Cousteau said, "Underwater man becomes an

archangel." Mustard subverts Cousteau when he writes, "Cousteau was wrong. Underwater man becomes a big kid."

In fact, Mustard's joke rings true and his fanciful images remind us that diving, while often a time for quiet introspection, is supposed to be fun, too.

And his images are delightful. From shots of divers walking underwater, to images of divers flying along a coral outcropping, Mustard reminds us that much of the fun of diving is, well, diving.

People who purchase *The Art of Diving* receive a code that unlocks the Members Area of TheArtOfDiving.com.

Offering behind-the-scenes access to the making of the book, technical details about every image in the book, and photo tips to help you create your own sizzling shots, the website gives the careful student a unique opportunity to learn a lot.

For the cost of the book, readers get an entire online tutorial. The book is worth the price of these tips alone!

Pick up a copy for yourself and you'll see that *The Art of Diving* is perhaps the most magical, most beautiful, most insightful book ever written about scuba diving — the perfect coffee table book, and also the perfect justification for why you simply must go diving this weekend. ☉