

ARTFUL PAGE-TURNER

The Art of Diving brings together the well-honed journalistic skills of Nick Hanna and undoubtedly fine photographic techniques of Alex Mustard.

I compliment the author on the extensive research that allows him to quote some obvious and sometimes less obvious sources, and the photographer on the remarkably clean look of the pictures, and graphic simplicity that never fails to draw the eye.

Although I can't see this book really appealing to anyone who has no personal experience of the underwater world, the clear intention is for it to be read by an audience beyond that of divers.

If Hanna can persuade the wider public to read it, I am sure it would do wonders in promoting our underwater activities.

It may look a little like a coffee-table book, but any divers who start browsing will soon find themselves reading it like a novel. Hanna has skillfully woven quotes from divers into a well-constructed narrative. Two Cousteaus, Hans Hass, Howard Hall, Ned DeLoach, Trevor Norton, Cathy Church, Arthur C Clarke, Sylvia Earle, Eugenie Clarke, Thor Heyerdahl and even HRH Prince Charles are among many, including

a raft of lesser mortals too numerous to name, who have added to the text wittingly or unwittingly.

In fact, it's said that Hanna has been astute in quoting so many people, because if their mothers all buy the book, sales can't fail to be impressive!

More seriously, the journalistic approach has avoided that pompous, pseudo-poetic text that all too often accompanies the colour plates in otherwise worthy books of underwater photos.

Tim Ecott is reported to have said of this book: "*It beautifully reveals the deepest secrets of our love affair with the liquid world.*" He may be right.

With 270 pages filled with interesting quotes and jaw-dropping illustrations, if you liked Ecott's *Neutral Buoyancy* this is similar but in glorious Technicolor! An excellent book.

John Bantin

★ *The Art of Diving, Adventures in the Underwater World* by Nick Hanna (Ultimate Sports ISBN 0954519922). Hardback, 272pp, £20

