



Search for 'perfect reef' takes film crew to Bermuda

By Tricia Walters

Bermuda is to feature in two of a series of documentaries about coral reef ecosystems around the world.

Award-winning filmmakers Guy and Anita Chaumette from Liquid Motion Film – a British-based documentary film crew – spent part of last summer working off Bermuda's reefs on 'The Reef Series'.

They also spent time at the Bermuda Biological Station of Research (BBSR) collecting information, interviewing and diving with scientists.

The first of the films, 'The Circle of Life' was filmed in part in Bermuda and features local scientist, Dr. James Wood's research, while 'The Perfect Reef' features Bermuda and the work done by BBSR.

Producer Guy Chaumette said 'The Perfect Reef', which is currently in post-production, looks at a range of issues highlighting the fact that corals are tiny animals that need our urgent protection.

"We looked at the animal itself as well as the threats it faces including bleaching, human impact by over-fishing and pollution and the action required to save it," he said.

Mr. Chaumette said they scoured the islands between The Bay Islands and Bermuda in search of the 'perfect reef' and noticed a strange phenomena.

"A place or an island that appeared completely idyllic, with no mass tourism, no industry and no pollution would be where one would expect to find the perfect reef, but that wasn't the case. It could almost be said, that

some of the healthiest reefs discovered, surprisingly turned out to be around the Bermuda Islands, which is highly developed with important infrastructure, mass tourism, cruise liners, industry and a dense population," he said.

He and his wife Anita turned to the BBSR for answers.

"We could never have anticipated the kind of interest or support that came from this prominent scientific research station, or the level of involvement their world famous marine scientists would give to their work," Mr. Chaumette said.

He said it wasn't often that he got to work with professionals who understood the oceans and about the life they support, or who are as passionate about the subject as he is.

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BBSR scientists involved in the Marine Environmental Programme at the time of filming included Dr. Ross Jones, Dr. Samantha De Putron, Dr. Hank Trapido-Rosenthal, Dr. James Wood, Dr. Joanna Pitt, Nellie Brylewski and Alison Shadbolt. The programme was sponsored by the Bermuda Government.

Mr. Chaumette said BBSR provided firsthand, up-to-date scientific data and information about the world's coral reefs and

their contributions led to the completely accurate portrayal of the reefs in the Caribbean and also answered the numerous phenomena noticed underwater.

The BBSR has been in operation since 1903 and has dedicated itself to not only oceanography and marine research, but also teaching.

Dr. Ross Jones, who worked with Mr. Chaumette, said he found the film crew to be very charismatic, energetic and keen to work with, in a "Jacques Cousteau way".

"They were fascinating to work with and the issues they're addressing in the films are relevant across the world, not just in Bermuda," he said.

Mr. Chaumette said 'The Circle of Life' looked in more depth at life on the coral reef and the lifestyle of its many fascinating

creatures.

"The most fascinating aspect of being in Bermuda was the incredible coastline and fascinating, jagged reef systems around the Island, which compares to nowhere else," he said.

He added that the biggest challenge working in Bermuda was undoubtedly the need to carry all their own filming equipment and do everything by scooter.

The Reef series included 'The Perfect Reef', 'The Circle of Life' and 'Talking with Fish' which recently won the Gold Remi Award for underwater and marine science in the Houston Film Festival or Worldfest as well as an honourable mention for best underwater photography at the International Wildlife Film Festival in Montana.



Good reef!: From left, Liquid Motion producer Anita Chaumette, BBSR intern Tim Noyes, Dr. Samantha De Putron, Dr. Joss Jones and Masters' student Nellie Brylewski of BBSR and Liquid Motion Guy Chaumette enjoy a lighter moment from their schedule.