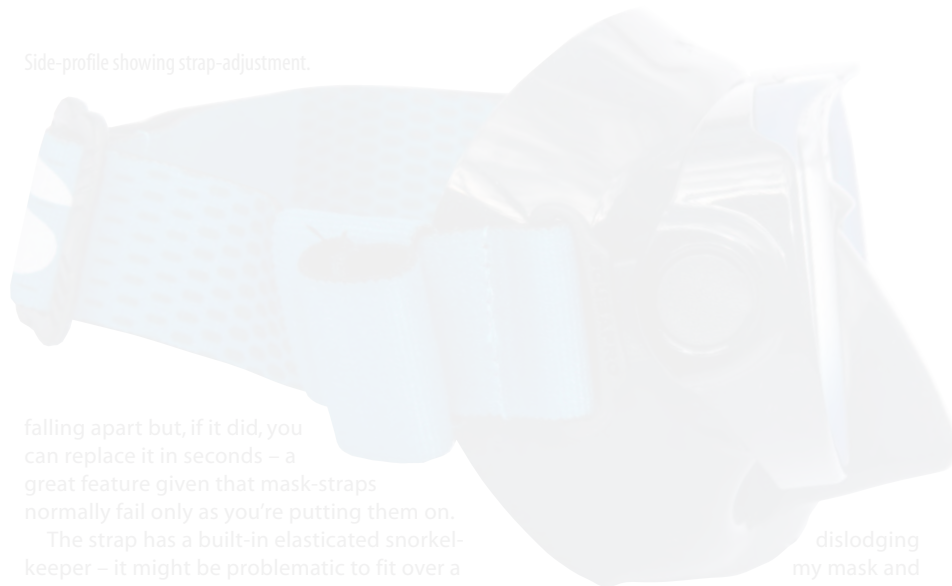


Side-profile showing strap-adjustment.



falling apart but, if it did, you can replace it in seconds – a great feature given that mask-straps normally fail only as you're putting them on.

The strap has a built-in elasticated snorkel-keeper – it might be problematic to fit over a snorkel with a top valve, but mine doesn't have valves and it fitted fine.

I don't get why divers would wear a snorkel on their mask while scuba-diving. When I tried it, decades ago, it just kept hitting things and

dislodging my mask and flooding it. But I do carry a folding snorkel in my BC. It has a soft barrel, and I thought the Zoom EVO's comfort-strap snorkel-holder might cause it to collapse and impede breathing, but it didn't.

SPECS

TESTER » Steve Warren, photography Nicky Martinez

PRICE » £39, replacement lenses £27.50 each, GoPro mount £9, comfort-strap £16.50

LENS » Twin

LENS RANGE » -1.5 to +4

WEIGHT » 210g

COLOURS » With black frame – blue, silver, yellow, red, pink, turquoise and purple. With clear frame – blue, yellow or silver

CONTACT » scubapro.com

DIVER GUIDE ★★★★★★☆☆

Conclusion

The Zoom EVO fulfils its role as a mask into which corrective lenses can be easily and swiftly installed, removed and swapped very well indeed. It also seals well, is easy to clear and comfortable. The comfort-strap works perfectly.

The field of view is just a little narrow, but few people will really notice this. ■

GLOVES WATERPROOF G50 BASIC SPORT SERIES WET

I'VE NEVER REALLY LIKED DIVE GLOVES. The water has to be 12° or below before I reluctantly reach for a pair. But in the days when I was regularly instructing at UK inland sites in the winter months there was no alternative.

When it's that cold, your fingers will hurt and become claw-like eventually, even through thick wetsuit gloves.

Design and Use

Waterproof is a Swedish manufacturer of wet- and drysuits and is considered a high-end brand. The G50 gloves are the least expensive in its range.

They are made from double-lined 5mm neoprene, with a plasticised non-slip panel over the palm and undersides of the fingers and thumb for grip and durability.

The seams are dry-stitched, and the cuff-edge isn't bound. The G50 just pulls on and off – there are no expanding gussets in the cuff that then need to be cinched down with straps or zipped tight.

To test the gloves for dexterity, I went through a full function check of my underwater camera. Watching my menus, I turned dials, flicked levers and, most tellingly, pressed push-buttons, all intricate operations.

How easy they are reflects partly on the glove and partly on the housing controls. I have one video housing that's so badly designed that the



run control button sits low enough to be almost impossible to depress through a 5mm glove.

More realistically for normal diving, I tested the G50 with the routine gearing-up and dekitting operations involved on any dive. ■



Manipulating camera controls.

I checked to see if I could fit my mask-seal under my hood and adjust the strap, close and release BC buckles and don and doff my fins.

The G50 gloves allowed me to complete all

these tasks very easily, helped by a good fit. Some gloves are too long for my fingers, so fingertip control becomes very difficult.

I liked the uncomplicated cuff, too. I'm sure I'm not the only one, especially as a solo-diver who struggles with the one-glove-on syndrome – you know, that situation where

you've zipped or strapped on your first glove, and now need to take it off in order to put on the second!

A nice touch is a bit of cord that lets you link the gloves together and hang them up for drying.

SPECS

TESTER ▶ Steve Warren

PRICES ▶ £35

SIZES ▶ XS-XXL

COLOURS ▶ Black

CONTACT ▶ cpspartnership.co.uk

DIVER GUIDE ★★★★★★★★★★

the gloves together and hang them up for drying.

Conclusion

Towards the end of a long dive, I took the gloves off. It was then that I really felt the shock of cold water on my hands. G50s might be low-cost, but they are effective. ■

FINS MARES EXCITE & EXCITE PRO

MARES IS SYNONYMOUS WITH one of the very few diving products to have become iconic – the Plana Avanti fin, launched more than 30 years ago. And ever since, Mares has struggled to eclipse the Avanti's reputation and entice divers with a completely new type of fin.

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, Mares must feel very smug. There are lots of Avanti knock-offs out there. The Avanti and its immediate successor, the Avanti Quattro, have been immensely popular, and versions of the Quattro remain in the company's current line-up. It was a fin I owned and liked very much.

Mares' success in fin design came with innovative technology that enabled it to blend different materials. This allowed the blade to flex and cup water in a way that was more efficient than competitors' fins moulded from a single slab of plastic or heavy rubber.

Design

The Mares Excite and Excite Pro reviewed here also blend different materials together, in this case rubbers and thermoplastics. They are graceful-looking fins with sleek, narrow lines and long blades.

But looks aren't everything. The three main functions of a fin are comfort, propulsion and manoeuvrability. Has Mares got these right?

The short answer is unequivocal – yes. In performance tests under water, it seems form does follow function. I used the Excite and the Excite Pro over about half a dozen dives, but the one that confirmed their performance for me was a hard-swimming yomp into deep water against the clock.

On that dive, I covered around half a kilometre with the Excite Pros. I was able to glide along at a cracking pace, helped by the easy-breathing regulator I was testing.

Like the Avanti, the Excite's blade has flexible panels that deform to scoop the water, direct it behind you and increase thrust, while reducing effort.

Part of the secret to good fin performance is to reduce turbulence. Turbulent water impairs the efficiency of your fin, and Mares has worked hard to minimise this. The Excite's foot-pocket blends seamlessly with the blade to help water flow smoothly onto the blade.

Side-ribs, much deeper on the fins' underside, channel the water-flow along the length of the blade and help to keep it from uselessly spilling off the sides.

Even the ribs that provide rigidity and divide the flexible blade panels have tiny winglets to further direct the water – at least, that's what I assume they do.

In Use

These are easy fins to use when adopting a crawl stroke, frog kick or, with a little practice,

when reversing. Swimming backwards, apart from letting you show off to dolphins, which have yet to master the art, is a useful technique. It enables you to get very close to something like coral, then gently back away without harming it.

I use this skill when shooting close-ups and also when filming, when I need to keep people swimming towards me in frame. The blades don't hook up on each other as you swim, as

