

Parting Shot

by **Merche Llobera**

I was very pleased to win the Amateur Photographer of the Year 2023 in this year's Epson Pano Awards Competition.

In this image taken in Cabo Pulmo, Mexico, a breathtaking natural spectacle unfolds: a school of jacks forming a figure resembling a tornado. The jacks, with their silver and gleaming bodies, move in perfect synchrony, swirling and undulating in a fascinating aquatic ballet. The turquoise and crystal-clear sea provides the perfect stage for this incredible phenomenon.

The image was taken in October 2022 while scuba diving. It was a very fortunate day because the visibility was quite good, which doesn't happen often in Cabo Pulmo. We found the group of jacks very close to the sandy bottom, about 15 meters deep. I had my Sony A7III with the 16-35mm f4 lens, Isotta housing, and two Sea&Sea YS-D3 strobes.

The jacks mesmerized me with their incredible shapes and silver bodies. I took many pictures that morning, but undoubtedly, this is my favorite due to the composition and the beautiful and unique shape created by the jacks.

I like the 16-35 lens because it's very versatile, so unless I know I'll be very close to the animals, in which case, I would use the 8-15 fisheye, it's my preferred choice.

My settings for this image were 16mm, f13, 1/250, ISO 320. In the original image, the jacks are slightly underexposed because I didn't want to overexpose the highlights of the sun. For editing, I use Lightroom and Photoshop. I enhanced the shadows and added more warmth to the image to recover the true color of the fish and also added contrast, a bit of clarity, and removed haze.

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which has a story within a story?
If so e mail it with up to 500 words of text
and yours could be the next Parting Shot.**

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