

The First Indonesian Mermaid Championship

in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of five-star Hotel Borobudur Jakarta

by Nicholas Kouvaras

The First Indonesian Mermaid Championship in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of five-star Hotel Borobudur Jakarta was held in March 2024.

DiveArts Academy & Hotel Borobudur Jakarta joined forces to present the inaugural “INDONESIA MERMAID CHAMPIONSHIP.” A celebration for the mesmerising art of mermaiding, where passion meets creativity.

On the 2nd of March in the pool area of the Classic 5* Hotel Mermaids and Underwater performers gathered from all over the world to showcase their artistic skills. The event started in the morning and continued until 22:00 in the evening.

The main event was the Competition but many happenings were going on during the day. Mermaid Bazaars, Workshops, Photoshoots, Trial classes, Tail trials and many more. The closing performance was an underwater fashion show. Almost 40 performers of

all ages dived in the beautiful pool of the Borobudur Hotel.

Hotel Borobudur is a five star hotel and serviced apartment located in Central Jakarta, Indonesia. Conceived in the 1960s by President Sukarno, it was meant to be the second international-standard hotel to be built in the newly independent country (the first was Hotel Indonesia). The hotel is located near Lapangan Banteng, which during the colonial times was the centre of what was the military-European colonial neighbourhood of Weltevreden. At its opening in 1974, as the Hotel Borobudur Inter-Continental, it was the largest hotel in Jakarta. The hotel is named after Borobudur temple, the famous 9th-century Buddhist monument located in Central Java. The pool was the ideal venue for the event. 50 metres of clear well treated water. Underwater lights at night and a very photogenic mosaic in the middle. The deep part of the pool was 3.8 metres that allowed performers to



Between the competitors more mermaids showcased their skills. Olympus OM-D E-M5 mark III with Olympus M.Zuiko Digital ED 8mm f/1.8 Fisheye PRO Lens behind a 4.33” Dome port in a Nauticam housing. f/2, 1/80 sec , ISO2000, P Mode



Every Performance started by the side of the pool. Sony ILCE-7RM2 with Sony FE 85mm F1.8 Lens. f/2.8, 1/125 sec, ISO800, P Mode



Mermaid Nami won the award for the best costume. Olympus OM-D E-M5 mark III with Olympus M.Zuiko Digital ED 8mm f/1.8 Fisheye PRO Lens behind a 4.33" Dome port in a Nauticam housing. f/2.8, 1/160 sec, ISO2000, P Mode



The curtain for the UW fashion show. It was messy in a beautiful way. Olympus OM-D E-M5 mark III with Olympus M.Zuiko Digital ED 8mm f/1.8 Fisheye PRO Lens behind a 4.33" Dome port in a Nauticam housing. f/2, 1/80 sec, ISO2000, P Mode

move freely. The depth in the middle was 2.0 metres and the shallow part was 1.2 for the classes and the trials.

The whole event was not just a championship. It was more like a community-driven platform where mermaid enthusiasts could showcase

their skills, connect with like-minded individuals, and explore the vibrant world of mermaiding.

It was not just the mermaid community, the freedivers also embraced the event. Most of the schools in Jakarta were represented

either in the media team or the safety team. John Henriano was leading the media team and his R5 was sending a live feed topside for the live stream, and for the big screen.

The international panel of the judges had a clear view



Neysa trying her new silicone tail. Olympus OM-D E-M5 mark III with Olympus M.Zuiko Digital ED 8mm f/1.8 Fisheye PRO Lens behind a 4.33" Dome port in a Nauticam housing. f/8, 1/1600 sec, ISO400, A Mode

of the performances along with the multitude of spectators. I was in charge of safety and was taking pictures.

I had the luck to shoot mermaids many times and the truth is that it can be stressful sometimes. A skillful mermaid will transition from pose to pose gracefully embracing the fact that everything underwater happens in slow motion. In such a case taking pictures is so comfortable. If on the other hand the mermaid is new or stressed or not so



Jhon with his R5 sending the stream topside. Olympus OM-D E-M5 mark III with Olympus M.Zuiko Digital ED 8mm f/1.8 Fisheye PRO Lens behind a 4.33" Dome port in a Nauticam housing. f/8, 1/160 sec, ISO400, A Mode

comfortable in the water the movements are erratic and rushed. The window to capture the moment is so small. The problem is that you have to have nice pictures of all the contestants and that makes the job stressful. The other problems are time, battery life and white balance. The media team had to stay in the water for more than 8 hours and change batteries 2 times for me and many times on the big setup of the R5. The event started after lunch under a bright sun, continued as clouds covered the sky, under rain, as the sun was setting and into the night. Every time the light changed we had to set the white balance again. Especially for the video it was very important for all the cameras to be set in the same way. For the pictures, post editing could smooth things out.

A very powerful fresnel light from the outside was the main source of light. John with the R5 had also a big led light on the camera. Me and the other

photographer didn't use any strobes or lights so we would not interfere with the image of the live feed.

The next day when I found the courage to start editing, I was surprised by the volume of pictures that I shot and choosing the best was not an easy task. Until next year.

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