

I was delighted when Alex Mustard invited me to be a judge of this years UPY Competition (see page 39 onwards) because I still enjoy underwater photography in British waters and I saw it as an opportunity to highlight the talent we have and also the variety of subjects on our doorstep. I was, as I hope you will see from the final images, not disappointed.

In addition, as a previous winner of the prestigious Brighton Award, I was in tune with Alex's aims to not only link UPY to the groundbreaking era of the Brighton Festivals but also to be involved in what I saw as a refreshingly new way to organise an underwater photography competition.

There have been several ways in which Alex and UPY have redefined how such a competition should be organised.

Firstly the prizes are 'complete' in that they include flights to dive trips.

Secondly they have worked with just a few quality sponsors and kept the emphasis that this was first and foremost a competition to win rather than about the prizes which were up for grabs.

Thirdly the judges spent two days face to face in a viewing room to give all of the entries the time and

respect they deserved and I think I can say on behalf of all of us that it was a most enjoyable, exciting and tiring experience to view nearly 2500 images at least once and usually many times before finalising our decisions. In the end we were unanimous but had been overwhelmed by the overall standard of entries.

The presentation of the winners at the London International Dive Show (LIDS) was, in part, reminiscent of the Brighton Festivals where underwater photographers from around the world met to not only hear and see the results but also to meet other underwater photographers face to face to form bonds of like minded enthusiasm. In addition there was an opportunity to meet the judges and discuss and get feedback about the entries

Finally my involvement has produced the pdf Yearbook of all of the finalists images. It is the first time that not only the winning images but also all those who were highly commended and commended have been compiled to celebrate the quality of the entries but also it provides a unique publication for future competitors to learn visually what and why some images are more successful than others. I hope you enjoy the

presentation of the images from the 2015 UPY competition.

You can download it at:

www.upylondon.com/2015yearbook.aspx

UPY has been refreshingly innovative and I am proud that I and Underwater Photography magazine have played a part in it's formation but what excites me most is how it will inspire underwater photographers in 2015 to work towards their entries for UPY 2016.

I really think that UPY is the competition that we all deserve.

Quality not quantity

Whilst on the subject of UPY, I thought the British Water Compact Category was especially interesting in that the winning shot was taken with a 4mp camera; so you don't need mega mega pixels to win. In addition all of the images in that category were indiscernible in terms of photographic quality from all of the other entries.

Equipment is not the be all and end all. The finger on the button is the true talent.

If you thought digital stills photography had specification differences which deserved to be discussed to death such as megapixels, RAW, jpg, 8bit, P&S, 2/3", 1", 4/3rds, MIL, DSLR, APS-C, DX, FX, CCD, CMOS, X3, x sync, TTL, eTTL iTTL, DOF, bokeh, dome, flat, WB, MWB, CFWA, LCD, OM-D, LX, RX, NX, EOS, ASA, ISO, 4:3, 3:2, 16:9, 1:1, SD, SDHC, SDXC etc, etc, spare a thought for all those suddenly entering the video world because we have ALL of the above PLUS 1920, 1080, 720, 2k, 4k, DV, HD, UHD, 24p, 30p, 60p, 4.2.0, 4.2.2, h264, AVCHD, MOV, MP4, XAVC, XDCAM, ProRes, Long GOP, Mbps, LUX, XLR, Lanc, AV, HDMI, SDI, ND, °K etc, etc. (You can take a breath now).

You'd have thought it was all enough to put you off right from the start but with video there is one big difference and that is, you have to 'tell a story'. It's a simple as that. No one ever watched a movie and said the story was good but the frame rate was wrong or the Mbps was a bit low.

It all starts with an idea. A simple idea.

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