

In the music business the second album is always seen as the most important in a band's career. The overwhelming success of their groundbreaking debut album has to be followed with something equally amazing. I am really delighted to report that 'your' second year UPY entries have more than surpassed last year both in numerical and consistent quality terms. You blew us away last year and this year you blew our visual minds.

If ever there was a testament as to the healthy state of underwater photography worldwide, this 2016 Yearbook is the showcase and, for me, the most exciting part is that I suspect the majority of the images in here, and the thousands of entries, were taken in the last 12 months. If this trend continues we will all be part of an annual 'state of the nation' event.

Judging such a prestigious competition is both an honour and a responsibility in equal measure. We three judges have far too many years of uw photography experience between us; years which have moulded our visual tastes without introducing inflexibility for the latest equipment and techniques;

years which, despite their increasing numbers, never cease to provide genuine excitement before viewing each year's UPY entries.

As a result of the above I would like to say 'Thank you' to all those who entered this year but a more focussed (pun intended) 'Thank you' to all those who entered but whose images are not in this Yearbook. The overall standard of entries this year was a big notch higher than last and the increased number of entries made it, quite literally, a fierce competition to judge but that is the very nature of a successful competition.

The other point to make to those whose images are not in this Yearbook is that images are always, and will always be, subjective. Your work was judged by just three people. Put your same work in front of another three experienced underwater photographers and there would almost certainly be a different order; that's the nature of competitions.

I hope this 2016 Yearbook will serve as a reference work that will inspire you to produce even greater images for next year.

Black is the new black

Trends come and go in underwater photography and the latest must surely be deepwater night photography.

This probably started in Hawaii and involves diving at night tethered to a boat with a downlight to attract deepwater life. The subjects are certainly different and, from what I have read, the senses are on full alert in anticipation of what will suddenly appear. It could be anything from small pulsating planktonic life up to large predators speeding in for an evening snack.

Photographically it is a challenge with the size of your subject unknown and, with no natural light or reference, your sense of scale is distorted.

In the UK we have some good locations to practice this style of photography and the west coast of Scotland has probably the best combination of terrain and planktonic life.

Judging from the results I have seen, the hard work seems well worth the effort and some extraordinary marine life is being captured, sometimes for the very first time on jet black, inky black backgrounds.

Every now and then I get an email with an image attached asking if I could use it in UwP and the answer in the past has usually been that we are looking for illustrated articles with several images.

Historically the Parting Shot at the end of each issue of UwP was intended for single images where there is a 'story within a story' but when Tony Myshlyaev sent me his lovely shot (page 73) soon to be followed, coincidentally, by Shane Wasik's (page 74) I thought I'd start "My Shot" as a good place for those single images.

So I'm encouraging you to send your "My Shot" which can be a particular favourite of yours or one which brings back particular memories and should be sent with around 300 words of explanation together with camera details and settings.

I think we've all got a "My Shot" in our archives which deserves to be dusted off and put on show for all to appreciate.

I look forward to hearing from you.

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You can download all of the 80 winning images from UPY 2016 at
www.upylondon.com/2016yearbook.aspx