



GUNILD PAK SYMES

Celebrate the Sea 2005

An Unforgettable Festival

Text by Michael Aw
Photos by Peter Symes

As another Celebrate the Sea festival wraps up, it is clear that with each year that passes, the show grows stronger and stronger. Staged at Singapore's Suntec City convention centre from June 3 -5, this year's festival was truly unforgettable.

The highlight of the event was an unprecedented evening in Asia Pacific on which three super-stars of the underwater world celebrated our oceans. Dr Sylvia Earle jump-started the evening with an inspiring talk on the sustainable use of our seas. She addressed pertinent questions like how can one person make a difference and surely there was not a dry eye in the house as she portrayed the bleak realities of shark finning.

More of a comedian than a maker of deep sea diving equipment, Dr Phil Nuytten then led us down with him through his journey in the depths of the ocean. To close off the evening, David Doubilet, the light magician, mesmerized us beneath the miracle waters of Africa with images captured during his trip to Botswana.



COURTESY OF DR PHIL NUYTEN

Dr Phil Nuytten in his invention, the *Newtsuit*

Public Access

The festival itself was free to the public, with bustling crowds of avid divers, nature lovers, photographers and shoppers streaming through the exhibitions. There was everything from eco-tour operators to dive resorts, photographic and outdoor equipment, shoes, watches, underwater housings and was even a tank in which one could experience the thrill of scuba diving for the first time.

But as always the focus of the festival is to praise the image makers that continue to capture the many faces of our ocean's beauty in the hope of preserving it. The

entries into this year's imagery competitions were astounding; hundreds of adults and children explored the prints in our public galleries while the slide shows and film festival kept viewers enthralled for three days straight.

Each year Celebrate the Sea offers a unique opportunity for divers, photographers and nature lovers to come face to face with the who's who of underwater imagery. In seminars and workshops diving and photography experts like Neville Coleman, Michael Aw, Jason Heller, Robert O'Toole, John Cosgrove and Tay Kay Chin entertained and interacted with their audience. From raunchy discussion about sex in the sea to internet marketing, capturing the essence of sea birds in one image, the latest photography techniques, night romps through Amazonian jungles and how to explore the ocean in an underwater sports car these seminars are crucial in cultivating our knowledge of the ocean.

Saving Sharks

The show was again used as a platform for OceanNEnvironment's Say No to Shark Fin Soup campaign. Our posters, video and life size shark in the foyer all highlighted the plight of the shark as it is slaughtered in the name of culture and nutrition-less soup that gets its flavour from chicken stock. With a Chinese restaurant right next the

Singapore city center



LEFT: A young staff member hands out fliers for a dive travel booth at the Celebrate the Sea 2005 show



Michael Aw and David Doubilet survey the photographic entries of the Epspn Award Finalists



RIGHT INSET: David Doubilet, Al Hornsby, Tay Kay Chin and Peter Symes (behind camera) in the jury room examining entries for the

festival that served shark fin soup, like most in Singapore, the matter could not be more poignant.

"There is a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and really genuine interest in what is going on, specifically with the business of shark fin soup...Singapore can be seen a model of stewardship for looking after the environment," says Dr Phil Nuytten, inventor of the 'Newtsuit'.

A truly international affair, Celebrate the Sea has established itself as the biggest and most exciting festival of its kind in Asia Pacific and will continue to grow in upcoming years. OceanNEnvironment would like to thank all our sponsors, those who attended, those who competed,

those who volunteered and most importantly those who came from around the globe to celebrate the ocean with us.

And as for the rest of you, see you next year at the unforgettable festival.

Imagery Competition

As the focus of the Celebrate the Sea festival, this year's imagery and film competition entries were of outstanding quality.

With the overwhelming number of entries in the many competitions judged at the festival, praise was given these artists who have endeavored to capture the ever-changing beauty of the ocean in the hope of preserving it.

The finalists from all the photography competitions were displayed in special public galleries through which hundreds of adults and children explored some mesmerizing images and creative takes on the natural world. Meanwhile, the slide shows and film festival kept viewers enthralled for three days straight.

With up to \$50 000 in prizes awarded to this year's winners, the judging was no easy task. Dr Sylvia Earle helped with the judging of the children's painting competition. The Artist of the Sea 2005 was a little girl named Lakshmishree from Bangalore India. Her whole village saved up enough money so that she could attend.

David Doubilet led the judging of the slides, revealing his admiration for photographers who are able to capture 'special moments' as he calls them. As for the films in competition, Dr Phil Nuytten said, "The entries were very good and it was a tough job, but the top notch ones stand out. The winner was crisp, sharp and spectacular."

Thank you to our sponsors and congratulations to those who won and for those who missed out on a prize, better luck next year! ■

Michael Aw, Dr Sylvia Earle and Shahram Saber, marketing manager of PADI Asia-Pacific





Posters created by children at the Celebrate the Sea 2005 show
www.celebratethesea.com

Children participate in the Save the Sharks poster contest aimed at raising awareness against the serving and selling of shark fin soup, which is considered a delicacy in Asia

CELEBRATE THE SEA FESTIVAL 2005

EPSON AWARD OF EXCELLENCE FOR BEST PRINT

Wyatt Chew, Singapore
 Prize: EPSON printer model R1800

BLACK AND WHITE PRINTS

Gold Medal: Darek Sepiolo, Poland
 Prize: DIVE KOMODO 5-night live-aboard dive cruise
Silver Medal: Alessandro Dodi, Italy
 Prize: Long Bow Micro
Highly Commended: Federico Cabello, Italy

MACRO PRINTS

Gold Medal: Andrey Nekrasov, Ukraine
 Prize: 5D/4N Diving package at Sipadan-Mabul Resort for one pax. Plus EPSON R800 printer

Silver Medal: Ernst Seeling, Austria

Prize: Long Bow Mini
Highly Commended: Jeff Yonover, USA, and AB Lee, Malaysia

WIDE ANGLE PRINTS

Gold Medal: Alessandro Dodi, Italy
 Prize: 4-day/3-night diving package at Asmara Dive Resort or similar for two
Silver Medal: Andrey Nekrasov, Ukraine
 Prize: Long Bow Mini
Highly Commended: Marc Nussaume, Thailand

NIKON AWARD OF EXCELLENCE FOR BEST SLIDE PORTFOLIO

Tobias Bernhard, New Zealand
 Prize: NIKON SLR FILM camera set
Silver Medal: Alessandro Dodi, Italy
 Prize: 7-day/6-night dive package full board at Kima Bajo & Spa Resort,

Manado for one pax

Bronze Medal: Amati Emrico, Italy
 Prize: SG \$500 Radiator product voucher

MACRO SLIDES

Gold Medal: Amati Emrico, Italy
 Prize: 10 day diving trip for two onboard the Citra Pelangi
Silver Medal: Tobias Bernhard, New Zealand
 Prize: Angsana two nights at Maison Souvannaphoum Hotel Luang Prabang
Highly Commended: Amati Emrico, Italy

WIDE ANGLE SLIDES

Gold Medal: Alessandro Dodi, Italy
 Prize: SG \$500 Radiator product voucher
Silver Medal: Tobias Bernhard
 Prize: Long Bow Mini
Highly Commended: Viora Alessio, Italy

ROLEX AWARD OF EXCELLENCE FOR BEST FILM

D.Lop and M.Boyer
 "Life at the Edge of the Reef"
 Prize: Return air Ticket to Mauritius 10-day trip for two and two weekend trip on *MV Grace*

FEATURE DOCUMENTARIES

Gold Medal: Thomas Behrend
 "Hunters at the Cape of Storm"
 Prize: MINAHASA Lagoon Resort 7-day diving and accommodation package
Silver Medal: Denis Legrange
 "Blue Pacific"
 Prize: Pulau Sipadan Resort 7-day diving and accommodation package
Bronze Medal: Ballsbio Osvaldo
 "Seasons of the Sharks"
 Prize: Long Bow Micra

SHORT FILMS

Gold Medal: Carlos Virgili
 "Mama"
 Prize: Pulau Sipadan Resort 7-day diving and accommodation package
Silver Medal: Josh Jensen and Liz Harlin
 "Encounters with Giants"
 Prize: 6-day / 5-night diving package full board at Redang Kalong or Diver's Den Resort for two
Bronze Medal: Josh Jensen and Liz Harlin
 "Underwater Beauty"
 Prize: Long Bow Micra

DIGITAL PORTFOLIO

Gold Medal: Wyatt Chew, Singapore
 Prize: ORIS TT1 Divers watch set
Silver Medal: Charles Hood, England
 Prize: Nikon Coolpix model TBA
Bronze Medal: Aaron Wong, Singapore

Prize: Epson Printer R800 plus Two-night stay at Raffles Marina

DIGITAL SHOOTOUT

Gold Medal: Tong Nguen Khoong
 Prize: EPSON PRINTER R800

OCEAN ENVIRONMENT / ASIAN GEOGRAPHIC ENVIRONMENT AWARD

Viora Alessio for print

BOOK OF FESTIVAL

101 Best Dives Sea Paradise

BEST WEB SITE

Jason Heller
 DivePhotoGuide.com