Visions in the Sea Review

The Visions in the Sea 2009 underwater photography festival was held in Manchester over the weekend of the 7th & 8th November and was a huge success. With a packed out audience at every talk, wonderful entries and winners in the international photography competition, fantastic presentations, Gala Dinner, stands and an in-water tuition afternoon – Visions in the Sea had it all for every level of underwater photographer.

With all that – we also raised over £2000 for the Shark Trust – by auctioning off prints, books, lessons and dives at the Gala Dinner (Duxy and Ali worked their charm to get as much money for this important charity) generously donated by our guest presenters, holding a quiz, and selling limited edition 4th Element T-shirts that were designed by Jim in person especially for the event. These are still available!

Cathy Church, who had come over from the Cayman Islands to support the event, opened proceedings with a rare appearance for her in Europe with a brilliant talk on" getting up close". She also assisted divers in the pool to get some great shots of our artificial reef that will stand them in good stead the next time they go diving.

This was followed by the ever popular Duxy showing us that you do not need to break the bank to get great photos. Martin Edge inspired us with shallow natural light techniques that could be used by free divers as well as scuba divers. Martin also got into the pool on Sunday to teach willing students these techniques using imitation Jellyfish floating at the surface. After a well earned lunch we were back at it with a superb lesson on how to master our strobes by Alex Mustard. Alex also succeeded in donating the print that raised the most money at our auction – with competitive bidding for his wonderful shot of a weedy seadragon reaching £370.

Jukka Nurminen showed us the treasures found beneath the Baltic Sea, Ali Hood from the Shark Trust informed us about the important work of this organisation and reminded us why we were all there. The day then the day reached it's climax with a talk on Wreck Photography by Charlie Hood. On Sunday we sprang back into action with wonderful shots of Pilot Whales in Gibraltar by Mark from Ocean Optics, followed by Maria Munn showing us how to get the money shots with a compact camera.



Cathy Church and Alex Mustard



Peter Scoones

Peter Scoones provided the grand finale by showing his award winning filming of wildlife around the world. He also allowed lucky participants at our in-water teaching session the chance to use his underwater video equipment that he used for iconic BBC series such as Blue Planet and Life.

The 3 hour long in-water tuition session saw Steve, from Ocean Optics, using an underwater comms system, take a group of divers to try out different INON lenses and strobes with tuition using an artificial reef system sunk to the bottom of our 5m pool. Martin Edge and Cathy Church also got in to assist our underwater photographers in macro and wide angle techniques. Nick, from Frogfish Photography, assisted with those that wanted to photograph our professional model (Amy Finnimore) who also wore a monofin provided by the British Freediving Association. Another diver model from Orca Divers (Dawn Ticehurst) provided delegates the opportunity to practise various shots and poses. Orca Divers



Best in Show, Judged by Martin Edge, winning a trip with Worldwide Dive and Sail was Rene Kral with a great shot of a Whale Shark dappled in sunlight.



Suunto British Open, judged by Charlie Hood, 2nd place winning a D6 is Mark Thomas with a shot of a Tompot Blennie



O'Neill Open Macro, judged by Dr Alex Mustard and Cathy Church, winning an O'Neill wetsuit was Thomas Vignaud's shot of a small group of fish taking shelter in a jellyfish taken in the south of France.

also provided scuba equipment for those that wanted to get in and have a go. Duxy, from Cameras Underwater, provided surface advice before each diver got into the water. The Cayman Island Department of Tourism also provided artificial coral from their Dive Show stand.

As well as the Visions in the Sea International Underwater Photography Competition, visitors could peruse the stands by the Shark Trust, Frogfish Photography, Ocean Optics, African Space, Cameras Underwater, Cayman Island Department of Tourism, Dive Quest, NUPG and BSoUP. With lots of underwater photography and videography equipment on display for visitors to look at, places to go for wonderful underwater photographic opportunities and the companies to help then get here and underwater photography clubs from both the north and south of England as well as a display of the competition prizes to whet their appetite for the next event alongside Peter Scoones' underwater video equipment that he designed himself. A photographic "Dive Safari" with Andrew Woodburn was a very popular holiday option being offered by African Space and Frogfish Photography for September 2010.

www.visionsinthesea.com