

ADEX 2006

& Celebrate the Sea

ADEX is tiny compared to shows in the United States and Europe, and I was told beforehand by more than one person to "not expect much." But what I discovered when I arrived was a tight network of dive operators, tourism representatives, manufacturers, distributors, publishers, editors, and photographers working together to further the industry as a whole (for the most part). Three days hardly seemed like enough time to meet and befriend all of the people I wanted to see, and evenings were spent out dining and hanging out at bars, often into the early hours of the morning. — Eric Cheng / wetpixel



Celebrate the Sea contest finalists



ADEX 2006 were held in the Suntec venue

We had waited two years for it to return to Singapore. When it did, on 21st to 23rd April, Asia Dive Expo (ADEX) 2006 turned out to be well worth the wait.

For one thing, it was ADEX's biggest showing in 12 years, bringing a record 9,200 visitors face-to-face with 809 exhibitors from 26 countries. There was something for everyone, from the novice diver looking for great deals on scuba gear and photographic equipment, to the dive professional looking to touch base with

industry peers and old friends at the Dive Business Seminars and the exhibition proper. School students got a taste of the action as well, at the ADEX Sea Star Programme where they took part in interactive talks and workshops. Even members of the public were able to take the plunge (literally!) for the first time, donning scuba gear and diving into a large see-through tank at the Asia Scuba Tour.

A main highlight at ADEX 2006 was the joint presence of Celebrate the Seas, the largest underwater film festival and competition in Asia Pacific. Held in conjunction with the World Festival of Underwater Pictures,

Celebrate the Seas comprises, among other things, a master photographers gallery, photo and video competitions, workshops, seminars and sales of imaging and dive equipment. That it took place alongside

ADEX was perfect, as a large number of divers are also photographers.

At least, that was what I had come to realise after manning the X-Ray Magazine's booth at ADEX. It was my first time as an exhibitor here, and it was enlightening to put a face to the people who read our magazine. All along, I knew that divers were a friendly bunch, but I had never been privy to it on such a large scale. It didn't matter which part of the world you came from, it didn't matter whether you had a camera hanging from your neck or a brand-new regulator in a shopping bag, we all spoke the same language and shared the same passion for the underwater world. There was a wonderful feeling of camaraderie, and I was forced to forget my shy nature as I made new friends in the industry and encouraged visitors to sign up for free subscriptions to X-Ray Magazine and DivePhotoGuide.com, an online resource for underwater photographers with whom we shared a booth.

And then, all too soon, it was over. Packing up (amidst lamenting the fact that ADEX lasted only three days), I was grateful that everyone I met was happy to welcome a newcomer like me into its midst, and I knew that I would cherish the experiences and friendships I had acquired here for a long time to come. ■

Where friends come to meet. Eric Cheng and Harald Hordosch of Seacam. Photo: Paul Ng



Papua New Guinea: Emily Kamioka (PNG Japan), Tim Rowland (Aqua Ventures), Vilia Lawrence (PNG Divers Association), Max Benjamin (Walindi/Febra/Star Dancer) Dive Expo - Singapore



Ron and Valerie Taylor talk about sharks