

And the winner is...

As the disgruntled Athenian said on eyeing the approaching bus, 'It's been a long time coming'.

After frantic voting which almost brought the TradeWinds server to a standstill, the world's largest international shipping newspaper is finally poised to announce the winner of the world's most popular international maritime photography competition. A day ahead of schedule too as we just couldn't wait to tell you! (Well, that and a public holiday around the world wound things on a little!)

Although the competition was about as fierce as a US presidential election, the tightness of the final outcome was not quite of the Florida variety. Our readers have spoken – well, written at least – and chosen a clear and worthy winner from a stunning array of visual maritime treats.

[Cue drum-roll; awed hush; Billy Crystal opening the golden envelope]

The winner is....PICTURE 'K'!

Our congratulations go to Egor Ryabchenko, an Erasmus University student of maritime economics and logistics, who coolly scooped the booty with his picture of a frozen ship deck. His snap netted over 34% of votes and certainly exhibits the harsh reality of life at sea and hints at the ultimate power of nature over even the sturdiest of human constructions.

Here is Egor's masterpiece in all it's glory:



A 10.2m pixel Nikon D80 digital SLR camera, or desired equivalent-value unit, together with the inaugural TradeWinds Maritime Photographer of the Year trophy will soon be making their way to our lucky winner.

In second place was Tom Jacob of German shipowner and manager Ernst Jacob who grabbed 19% of the vote with picture 'H', an iconic image of a whale's tailfin rising from the ocean with a vessel silhouetted in the background. Many readers pointed to the expression in this photograph of man's twin need to serve nature as it serves itself.

Cruise vessel captain Jarle Jensen took third spot with picture 'D' gaining 10% of votes. It shows his vessel rendezvousing with another cruise ship in serene Atlantic seas, completely at odds with the harsh conditions often associated with the maritime industry.

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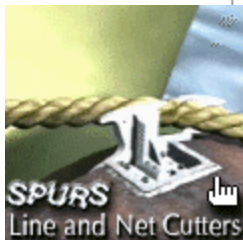
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Tom Jacob's entry.

Some late voters picked out other entries for particular praise. Baltic Exchange member Dimitris Iliou took a shine to picture 'F' taken by Dag Dvergastein, master of the Seven Seas Voyager. "A frightening combination: The unavoidable technology – a sign of the future (?) – and the tranquility of nature - a sign of the past." Hopefully the shipping industry won't be entirely to blame for wiping out Norway's entire population of reindeer.

ABS vice-president Stewart Wade took time out of his busy schedule to comment on all the photos, but

we will only include his take on one, if for no other reason but that some others came in for some rough treatment! Wade was drawn to picture 'M' by Stolt tanker master Jevgenijs Makarenko "because it is the only one with a heart and with an understanding of what seafaring and ultimately shipping is all about.

"Yes, shipping is about floating pieces of steel and yes it is all about the extraordinary beauty (both hostile and serene) of nature but it is people who crew the ships, it is human beings who face the dangers, who are separated from home and their families, who often suffer severe deprivation at the hands of less scrupulous owners; it is the ship's crew that increasingly face jail sentences for their actions and it is the crew that ultimately deliver the world's goods safely."

Another armchair critic is Craig Jallal of Clarksons Research who gave particular kudos to Stergiou Stylianos, master of an Aegean Bulk vessel. "As a shipping analyst I sit at my desk watching the rain and wonder how wet I will get on the way home. And then I look at Photo G and the twist in the deck and the tonnes of water crashing over the hatch covers and I realise it's a soft life being an Excel spreadsheet jockey."



Capt Jarle Jensen in third spot.

Let that comment, and the quality and volume of entries received at TradeWinds for this competition, be an inspiration to all you desk-hugging photographer wannabies to get out there and capture as best you can whatever the hell it is you do in this bubbling business.

A special thanks once again to all those who took part in the competition and our online poll and be on the look out for another chance to put the photography skills of the shipping community to the test.

By TradeWinds staff

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