

The Belle of the Hour, The One Armed Bandit, and an OTS for the Books

The outcome of the Master Cup competition is often tied up with the results of the On-the-Spot competitions. With the end of the monthly competitions in September, the list of top ten finishers was more or less firmed up. Annabelle Chavez had firmly secured third place with a gap of more than two points from Joey Antonio who was in fourth, but there was a strong possibility that whoever would end up in first and second place – Javi Flores or Paul San Pedro – was still a toss up, to be decided by the results of the last two OTS of the year: Lipain September and Siargao in October.

As of September, Javi was ahead by a point against PSP, but the latter's lowest score in an OTS was a respectable 7.3. If he could score anything above 8.4 in either of the remaining OTS, PSP had a chance of running away with the year's Master Cup. The last two OTS were therefore crucial. The OTS that Almost Did Not Happen

The LipaOTS was originally scheduled for September 15-16, but super typhoon Ompong's sudden trespass into the country forced the Club to reschedule the event to September 21. (That's a lot of non-refundable bookings.) The LipaOTS coincided with the Annual Golf Tournament of the

Club, now already in its 8th iteration under the able stewardship of King Reyno. Around 30 participants, members and non-members, played at the award-winning links of the Malarayat Golf and Country Club.

Twenty-One members joined the Lipa OTS. Going around, Annabelle felt that Lipadid not provide much places of interest, so she asked an owner of a farm if she could shoot inside. The owner obliged. There she found a farmer, his son and a carabao, a deadly OTS trinity. Annabelle set her aperture somewhere around the region of f16, and positioned her subjects with the low morning sun behind them. Her efforts were rewarded with a photo of her subjects against a natural sunburst complimented by the rays of the sun streaming through the smoke-drenched canopy. Annabelle dropped by the Lipa Cathedral on her way home, perhaps to pray for luck, but when she saw the area devoted to votive candles, she was amazed at the interplay of the gorgeous wall fresco and the religious statues. The candles gave the scene a natural vignette that improved its mood. She was so awed that she

almost forgot to snap a picture. Thankfully she did.

With those two photos, Annabelle won both First and Second Place Top Photograph of the Lipa OTS to gain an aggregate score of 9.1012 to win the OTS Top Photographer. With the stunning



Annabelle Chavez



Joey Antonio



Raffy Santos

The Belle of the Hour, The One Armed Bandit,....

victory of Annabelle Chavez at the LipaOTS, she not only cemented her right over the title 'OTS Queen,' she swept the entire OTS competition to lay claim to the title of OTS Photographer of 2018 – even with one more OTS to go.

Previous to this, she also conquered the Bali OTS with a score of 9.1049. “My only secret is preparation,” says Annabelle, explaining her phenomenal win. “I do not go anywhere unprepared. I usually plan ahead.”

Manny Gaite knew the picture he wanted to take in Lipa– a rooster crowing at sunset with Mt.Malarayat as a background. He wanted the cock standing on a fence whose lines lead to the mountain. He asked the mayor of Lipa (his fraternity brother) where he can find such a scene, and he was led to a place that was like a subdivision of cock farms. Manny felt as if he woke up to a dream of hundreds of cocks. He took his photo at 4pm with a tobacco filter. With this photo, Manny bagged Third Place Top Photograph for the LipaOTS and, together with the score of his other photograph, Manny easily slipped into Second Place Top Photographer of the OTS.

Javi scooped up whatever the two OTS veterans (appropriately dubbed OTS King and Queen) left behind: the Third Place Top Photographer of the OTS. Javi obtained an aggregate score of 8.2987 for the OTS, which replaced his previously lowest OTS score of 7.6312, netting him an increase of 0.6675.

PSP was not going to go gently into the night however, which kept the drama alive. The day of the judging of the LipaOTS coincided with the finals for the Single Shot Color Print Photograph of the Year. PSP won First Place with an

almost abstract-ish shot of a silhouette of a man in front of a colorfully lit arc that is also reflected in a puddle of water. The win gave him an additional 0.6 points effectively negating Javi's gains.

This meant that the last OTS would decide the fate of the competition. Javi's one-point lead could easily be surmounted. PSP had already purchased his ticket. There was a slight hitch as the date of the competition coincided with the date the Club was supposed to receive the Lucie Spotlight Award from the International Photography Awards, and of course PSP had to be there. No matter. The Contest Chairman extended the dates of the OTS so that those who needed to go to New York to receive the award would have time to participate in the seventh (7th) OTS of the year.

The Last But Not the Least OTS Javi, Jay Jaucian, Nap Venturina and Ed Banaga (who showed up but did not submit any entry) found themselves the only members of the club in their part of Siargao, with Manolo Roxas elsewhere in the island with his family. They began to wonder if the rest of the members had already parachuted in before them and just failed to register online. It turns out however that no one else but them had flown in. (Any dinner together was thus a “common dinner”.) PSP, despite having purchased a ticket, decided not to go and focus all his attention to the exhibit of the Club at the UN Headquarters in New York and the Lucie Awards at the Carnegie Hall, but this would not be apparent until much later.

That makes the Siargao OTS one for the books. With Ed not submitting any entry, it is perhaps the least attended OTS of

all time, with only five photographers participating, one of them, Jan Aliling, for only a few hours as he arrived in the afternoon of the last day of the competition. There is a confluence of factors that enabled this low turnout, one of which may be OTS fatigue, this being the last of seven OTS for the year.

Siargao, however, deserved a bigger crowd. For all the accolades it has earned, it was surprisingly laid back. It has all the trappings of almost-rustic-but-not-yet-overly-developed surfer's paradise. It was the kind of OTS that had utterly no pressure in it, like a couple of friends just lounging on a beach, but in the end, it was still some sort of a contest.

Jay Jaucian, the one-armed bandit, – one-armed because his right hand had been broken into so many splinters in an accident– did an 'Annabelle': he convincingly won First and Second Place Top Photograph to bag the Top Photographer award. Jay submitted a photograph of a tree-lined shore reflected on a plane of clear water that lay still atop a bed of seaweed. It was a winner from the get-go. His other photo was a stack of colorful surfboards arranged like the letter 'A' viewed from the side. “Both of my photos were taken within the popular Cloud 9 area,” says Jay. “I was lucky that the splashes from the usual Siargao surfing waves were absent that day. The calm, still waters during low tide provided the perfect canvass for the reflection photo. The surfboards photo, on the other hand, was taken mid day, by the beach.”

Jay, however, was more ecstatic that he got to spend quality time with Ed Banaga, who regaled the former with stories of why we have *leche flan* (it is because the friars used the egg white as binder for building churches), or tidbits

on why Cambodia's demographics constituted more females than males, or how Mao Tse Tung became one of the most powerful men in the world. Jay – ever the fan – took it all in, with much gusto, even taking videos of Ed while the latter did his monologues. Jay even credits Ed as the inspiration for his winning photographs.

Nap took the Second Place Top Photographer for the OTS into custody with his photo of a lone swimmer buffeted by rocky waters shot from the top and of a surfer at daybreak silhouetted against a yellow morning sky. “As someone from the province myself, this is a place I could get used to,” says Nap Venturina, who was planning on going back even before he had left the place. “I am at peace here,” he adds. Nap's philosophy in taking photographs is to take in what he sees and let the camera fix the moment in eternity. He prides himself in being a purist.

Manolo Roxas rounds off the winners when he snared Third Place Top Photographer of the OTS with his photograph of the seashore taken from the Cloud 9 Tower and children jumping off a tree into a river.

On The Spot, Finally

The day of the judging of the Siargao OTS was also the finals of the OTS Photograph of the Year. Dindin Lagdameo bagged the First Place OTS Photograph of the year with her long exposure shot of the Hong Kong Observation Wheel taken with a wide-angle lens. The photograph easily spellbinds the viewer, as the Wheel had become one giant red ball, hemmed in by two towers. Since 2014, Dindin had known that a giant Ferris wheel would be built by the HK harbor so she watched out for it every time she was in HK. During the OTS, the wheel was at the top

of her shot list. It was worth the 4 year wait, she says.

Jay Jaucian's shot of the Siargao shoreline reflected on a bed of seaweed did a second take when it won Second Place Top Photographer for the OTS of the year Award. Joey Antonio's photo of children in Bali splashing water against the background of a waterfall tied with Jijo De Guzman's photo of the silhouette of a bird circumscribed by a yellow yolk of a sun. Does anyone actually read these descriptions?

Finally, On the Spot

With all the scores in, with all modifiers accounted for from the finals, the annual master cup competition has drawn to a close. The victor is certain: Javi Flores wins his second Master Cup.

Javi has exhibited a consistent streak

throughout the campaign beginning with the initial salvo in January of this year when he won his first Top Photographer of the Month Award. He never relinquished pole position since then.

MASTER PHOTOGRAPHER'S CUP SEPTEMBER

RANK	PHOTOGRAPHER	TOTAL
1	Flores, Javi	85.42640
2	San Pedro, Paul	84.41480
3	Chavez, Annabelle	81.91200
4	Antonio, Joey	79.58580
5	Cancio, Tony	79.03570
6	De Guzman, Jijo	78.90900
7	Lagonera, Jake	78.53640
8	Lilles, Tony	77.71870
9	Ortiz, Rey	77.45220
10	Villarica, Udsie	77.31340
11	Aliling, Jan	77.27440
12	Santos, Raffy	76.53610
13	Gaite, Manny	76.15140
14	Garbanzos, Gino	75.76990
15	Viñas, Chito	75.07270
16	De Leon, Rudy	74.97900
17	Grabador, Evan	74.87570
18	Lagrimas, EJ	74.76880
19	Yuson, Fred	74.68310
20	Balagtas, Kiko	74.60140
21	Jaucian, Jay	74.52180
22	Apuya, Armand	74.49270
23	Del Rosario, Fred	74.17580
24	Benitez, Manette	74.15930
25	Uy, Patrick	74.08440
26	Mondoñedo, Billy	73.14950
27	Bautista, Emir	71.07070
28	Gutierrez, Gutch	71.02940
29	Quimel, Lito	70.19530
30	Buenaventura, Jorge	69.85260
31	Reyno, King	69.43600
32	Yu, Philip	69.02470
33	Venturina, Nap	68.70770
34	Bautista, Bien	67.97440
35	Sison, Bob	66.20340
36	Castillo, Quincy	66.04800
37	Valmonte, Cha	65.60930
38	Serrano, TG	65.33720
39	Montalban, Joey	64.42430
40	Guingona, Jojo	62.51130
41	Cumagun, Jaime	61.71540
42	Riingen, Leo	61.57620
43	Roxas, Manolo	61.27070
44	Mesuga, Boyet	61.03750
45	Santos, Tito	58.71180
46	Valera, Stephen	58.25710
47	Lagdameo, Dindin	54.93450
48	Paraan, Renee	51.23060
49	Burgos, Mark	49.36120
50	Hermogenes, Jimmy	48.47370
51	Ocampo, Nesty	46.37400
52	Mills, Vicente	45.86220
53	Gozum, Lito	44.31860
54	Garrido, Jun	41.86420
55	David, Ruth	41.03650
56	Littaua, Raoul	40.80780
57	Fidelino, Boyet	40.39900
58	Samson, Adel	40.20030
59	Castro, Gerry	39.26030
60	Montifar, Raul	37.79620
61	Cruz, Erikk	35.79940
62	Cachero, Eric	34.50760
63	Velasco, JR	30.50260
64	Chan, Rocky	21.50470
65	Sto Domingo, Raymond	20.25190
66	De Vera, Arps	20.19250
67	Ressureccion, Paul	20.14540
68	Bautista, Mark Victor	13.49850
69	Ang, Garrick	13.46290
70	Buendia, Paolo	13.32000

CONTEST				
BALI OTS				
DIGITAL FILE				
RANK	PHOTOGRAPHER	ENTRY 1	ENTRY 2	TOTAL
1	CHAVEZ, ANNABELLE	4.6622	4.4427	9.1049
2	SANTOS, RAFFY	4.3287	4.4750	8.8037
3	UY, PATRICK	4.2747	4.4677	8.7424
4	ANTONIO, JOEY	4.5750	4.1505	8.7255
5	YUSON, FRED	4.3755	4.3497	8.7252
6	TAN, TEEJAY	4.1747	4.3250	8.4997
7	JAUCIAN, JAY	4.4152	4.0402	8.4554
8	ORTIZ, REY	4.0872	4.3252	8.4124
9	VELASCO, JR	4.2622	4.0877	8.3499
10	VILLARICA, UDSIE	4.3747	3.8797	8.2544
11	LILLES, TONY	3.9905	4.2275	8.2180
12	BURGOS, MARK	4.0030	4.1527	8.1557
13	DE LEON, RUDY	3.9777	4.1372	8.1149
14	FLORES, JAVI	4.3002	3.8127	8.1129
15	APUYA, ARMAND	4.0902	3.8277	7.9179
16	VENTURINA, NAP	4.0027	3.8402	7.8429

CONTEST				
SIARGAO OTS				
DIGITAL FILE				
RANK	PHOTOGRAPHER	ENTRY 1	ENTRY 2	TOTAL
1	Jaucian, Jay	4.4755	3.9797	8.4552
2	Venturina, Nap	3.4135	3.6782	7.0917
3	Roxas, Manolo	3.3052	3.3032	6.6084
4	Flores, Javi	2.5525	3.9415	6.4940
5	Aliling, Jan	2.5157	2.8562	5.3719

CONTEST				
LIPA OTS				
DIGITAL FILE				
RANK	PHOTOGRAPHER	ENTRY 1	ENTRY 2	TOTAL
1	Grabador, Evan	3.7642	3.5725	7.3367
2	Reyno, King	3.6500	3.5675	7.2175
3	Roxas, Manolo	3.4037	3.7975	7.2012
4	Yuson, Fred	3.3667	3.7695	7.1362
5	Cruz, Erikk	3.5715	3.3577	6.9292
6	Valera, Stephen	3.5112	3.2637	6.7749
7	Buenaventura, Jorge	3.2587	3.2452	6.5039
8	Serrano, TG	3.0782	3.2630	6.3412



OTS Behind the Scene

