

Tips for entering the Cathay Pacific Travel Media Awards 2017

Please read the entire entry form and be sure you understand and comply with all the terms and conditions. If you have any queries, please ask and I'll be happy to help. Entry forms are available on the website, if you are not able to download them please let me know and I will email you a set. The four entry forms are:

- Cathay Pacific Travel Writing awards – for travel writing published in a newspaper, magazine or online between 28/2/2016 and 28/2/2017;
- G Adventures Award for New Travel Writer of the Year– for entrants who have never had a travel story published;
- Cathay Pacific Travel Photography awards – five categories are for travel images published in a newspaper, magazine or online between 28/2/2016 and 28/2/2017. The G Adventures award for unpublished images taken between 28/2/2016 and 28/2/2017.
- The Best Travel Blog of the Year Award – for blogs published between 28/2/2016 and 28/2/2017.

For the writing and photography awards we will accept stories and images that have been published online. However, personal websites are not eligible. We are only considering valid third-party travel editorial websites. We ask entrants who wish to enter an online story or image to first obtain pre-approval by the Travcom awards sub-committee. All other conditions remain the same; for writing entries, we require 1 x hard copy, clearly showing the writer's name, date of publication and 1 x electronic copy in .doc format.

The Christchurch Airport Award for the Best Travel Blog of the Year has its own entry form and you can enter online and pay online, there is no need to send a hard copy in.

A few notes about the Blog award criteria that may be helpful:

- This award is open to individuals who are financial members of TravCom living in New Zealand or overseas. This differs from all other awards which require New Zealand-based entrants.
- The entry fee is \$10 per entry. An entry can be: a single post; a series of posts which follow a theme; or the entire content of a blog site
- Judging will focus on quality of writing and the expression of the blogger's unique voice and expression. The best blog will be entertaining and informative, well-written and well-produced, and demonstrate independent and original ideas and insights. Ideally, it will have been posted consistently and frequently during the preceding year. The judge(s) will also take into consideration the blog's appearance and use of photography/graphic imagery; engagement, interactivity; ease of use.
- The judge(s) will determine the winner on a points system, based on 70% content, 20% appearance, 10% engagement
- The blog / blogger may be self-published, unlike the writing and photography awards.

Judging

The judging is entirely independent of Travcom and of our sponsors. We encourage this independence and do not wish to influence the judging panels in any way. After the awards the judges may offer some constructive criticism and feedback in their speeches at the Awards presentation gala evening and usually a bit more in-depth feedback in the next Travcom newsletter.

Each category of the writing awards has one independent judge. The winning and runner-up stories from all categories are then sent to the chief judge to select the Cathay Pacific Travel Writer of the Year.

All judges are based off-shore. The judges change every year so that we get a variety of opinions and preferences on what makes a great travel story.

There are three New Zealand-based photography judges, one New Travel Writer of the Year award judge, and one Blog of Year judge. Judges are kept for a maximum of two years so that we always get a fresh perspective and a range of views in the panels.

Writing Awards tips

This year (2017) there has been a change to the format for entering the Writing Awards. As in the past, one hard copy is required and now, one electronic copy to be emailed. The electronic copy must be a plain word document file (.doc). No pictures are needed with the electronic copy.

- Ensure that the writer's name is clearly visible on the hard copy article and that the date of publication is shown. For newspaper articles include a masthead or other identifiers such as the paper's name, date of publication, section etc. For magazines, it may be necessary to include a contents page, cover page or credits published on a page other than the article. Photocopies are acceptable, we don't need original magazines and please don't send the entire magazine, just the tear-sheets or photocopies.
- If the article is reverse typed please ensure copies are large enough and legible enough for the judges to read easily.
- When thinking about which award to enter your story you might like to consider that the category with the most entries is the Best Travel Story under 1000 words and Best Travel Story over 1000 words. Other awards have fewer entries, so there is a higher chance statistically of winning.

It's important to select carefully which categories to enter as the Cathay Pacific Travel Writer of the Year winner is chosen from one of the following award category winners:

- **Ngāi Tahu Tourism Award for the Best Travel Story over 1000 words**
- **Spark Award for the Best Travel Story under 1000 words**
- **Heritage Hotels Award for the Best Travel Story about New Zealand**
- **Interislander Award for the Best Article about a Journey**
- **Tourism Ireland Award for the Best travel story written about Britain and/or Ireland**
- **NZ Māori Tourism Award for the best Travel Story about a Māori Experience**
- **Treadright Foundation Award for the Best Responsible Tourism Story**

Entering the new Best Responsible Tourism Story Award:

Responsible tourism is travel that is environmentally, socially, culturally and/or economically sustainable. Stories may be about a low-impact experience or destination, or an organisation or individual committed to sustainable travel; or they may be an analysis of responsible tourism issues.

The winners from the seven writing awards categories create the shortlist for the Cathay Pacific Travel Writer of the Year, so by thinking carefully about where to enter your articles and ensuring the right 'fit' you can increase your chances of success.

The NZ Māori Tourism Writing Award has the following guidelines:

- The story should describe a genuine Māori experience the reader could be inspired to participate in or empathise with. This can include discussion with Māori about the meaning and history of what they are seeing/doing (e.g. being shown around a marae, looking at carvings) as well as taking part in an activity.
- The experience should impart an understanding of Māori culture: present-day and/or historical.
- The Māori element may be just one component of a larger tourism experience, as long as it is authentic, meaningful and genuinely part of the experience.

Photography Awards

When thinking about which award to enter your images into you might like to consider that the category with the most entries is the Best Unpublished award, followed by the Outside NZ award with the New Zealand category and NZ Maori Tourism awards usually receiving the least entries. So there is more chance of winning if you strategically enter your images.

However, the Best Unpublished Travel Image award entries are no longer considered for the Cathay Pacific Travel Photographer of the Year award – that means that only work published in a newspaper, magazine or online (on a third-party editorial travel website) will be judged for the supreme award.

It will probably help to know how the judging process works.

The photography entries are all numbered on arrival and are presented to the judging panel completely anonymously so all identifying marks are removed. The judges do not know the name, location or the gender of the finalists or winner. Please do NOT stick the entry form or any identifying documents to the back of your images.

Each category is judged separately. Photographs are shown to the judges randomly, meaning a photographer who entered more than one image in a category probably won't have their entries shown consecutively. The top images are pulled forward, then a winner and runners up are decided for each category.

The categories are:

- **Heritage Collection Award for the Best Travel Image taken in New Zealand**
- **Air Vanuatu and Mangoes Resort Award for the Best Travel Image Taken Outside New Zealand**
- **AA Directions Magazine Award for the Best Travel Image with People**
- **G Adventures Award for the Best Unpublished Travel Image**
- **NZ Māori Tourism Award for the Best Travel Image that captures the Essence of Māori**

After the categories are judged, we put each photographer's portfolio back together for the selection of Cathay Pacific Travel Photographer of the Year (i.e. the overall winner). This is based on the published portfolio of work (i.e. entries in the Best Unpublished Travel Image are not included), and the judges review all portfolios - whether they consist of one or ten photos. The top ten portfolios are critically reviewed and the overall winner is chosen with runners-up decided.

The Cathay Pacific Travel Photographer of the Year has no relation to the category winners, unlike the writing awards, in as much as you needn't be a finalist in a category to win the Photographer of the Year. However, it would be unusual for a photographer to have an outstanding portfolio of work but poor individual images that didn't place well in the categories. If you wish to aim for the overall prize of Travel Photographer of the Year you may structure your entries differently than if you aim for various category awards – you would try to have a more complete 'story' to the portfolio and a range of diverse but complementary images.

Some More Tips:

We don't keep comments on the photos and we can't offer feedback to individual entrants. However, these general comments from the judges during the judging of the previous awards might help entrants:

- Size is important. Don't reduce your chances of success by having the wrong size, incorrectly sized photos really stand out when they are sitting next to the others in their category. The Travcom committee intend to be very strict on this and entries that are not within a few millimetres of the required size will be disqualified without reimbursement to the entrant.
- Presentation is important, some images have been poorly printed in the past. A random comment "I feel that it is unfair to judge this print amongst the others, it could be a winning shot but it has to be eliminated, the presentation is poor and the sizing is wrong."
- Judges felt that some images were entered into the wrong category and could have done better in another category.
- If you've spent the time framing the image then pay attention to detail. Yes, you can have white space around your image, the entry needs to be 8 x 12" but that doesn't mean the image needs to be that size, it can be smaller and framed by white space (or black).
- Positive comments "It has life", "something draws me", "it's fun", "I'd like to see that much bigger", "this makes me want to enquire, it'd drag me into a story", "has joie de vivre", "brilliantly composed", "technically good", "crafted well", "Presentation Plus!", "fresh", "Balanced"
- Not such positive comments: "clichéd, seen it hundreds of times", "does all the right things except excite me", "composition is important, and composition killed this one", 'colour balance poisonous', "the resolution's dreadful", "poorly cropped", "not well printed", "That has to be black and white on a colour printer", "undersized, disqualified".

The rules are very specific, and some entrants don't adhere to the conditions of entry. Most of the problems are in the following areas:

- A copy of the travel article or context in which the photographs appeared must accompany the entry (except for the 'Unpublished' category). The copy must clearly show when the travel article was published, the publication name and credit the photographer entering. Photocopies are acceptable.
- Each image may be entered into one category.
- **All single images must be on 8"x12" (20x30cm) photographic paper, mounted on sturdy mounting card with a minimum thickness of 3mm sized 8"x12" (20x30cm).** No framing or extra mounting is required.
- Only work published in a travel editorial context can be entered. Promotional or advertising work is not eligible.

To avoid disqualification and give your entries the best chance of success, please read the conditions of entry carefully. If you have any queries, please do ask and we'll be happy to help.

Sending Your Entries

Finally, a word about couriers – *please* do not send your valuable entries on the very last day, which this year is Friday 12 May, as it is not unusual for couriers to turn up late and the deadline is strictly adhered to.

I will then spend the weekend checking eligibility, registering the entries, sorting the categories, compiling spreadsheets and blacking out the names of authors or photographers on the writing entries.

If your entries arrive late then they have missed inclusion, and I do loathe having to advise people who have spent time and huge effort of entering that all the other entries have been sent off without theirs. You are very welcome to drop off entries to my house – or better still, send them early. I send an email receipt for all entries so if you haven't received an email please check that I've received your package.

Please make sure you use the right address – 62A Wainui Ave, Pt Chevalier, Auckland, 1022. Good Luck and best wishes for a successful year, remember I'm just an email or a phone call away if you have a query.