The Golden Trident Prize Awarded To Alessandro Marroni

The International Academy of Underwater Sciences and Techniques has awarded the prestigious “Golden Trident” prize to the president of DAN Europe, Dr. Alessandro Marroni. In the diving community many may be wondering what this prize is, and why it’s so important to those who love diving – so much so to be declared “the Nobel prize winner of diving.” We’ll present you with a clearer picture of the Academy and the Golden Trident prize.

To begin, we need to take a leap backwards 50 years, to 1960. Recreational diving is just beginning to emerge as a breakthrough sport on the Mediterranean coast. This image of the “diving hunter” seen as “a courageous challenger to the great Abyss, who descends into the deep blue with a tank on his shoulders to capture, with great struggle, large and dangerous prey” starts to become a trend and attracts the attention of many beautiful women on the beach. So much so, that in Italy this persona is celebrated in a popular song from the summer of 1962, “Pinne, fucile, ed occhiali” (“Fins, Spear and Goggles”), where “goggles” are what is soon to become known as the diving mask. With development in diving along the Mediterranean of France and Italy, they probably became the most advanced nations for the sport. A year before, in 1959, C.M.A.S. was founded in France, the first world confederation of diving, a product of the C.I.P.S., the world confederation of sport fishing. The first President of C.M.A.S. was the famous Commander Jacques-Yves Cousteau, an international point of reference for diving in the 1950s. The first Vice President and President of the Sports Committee was “frog-man” Luigi Ferraro, an Italian Commander.

Milan was already operative in diving for 10 years with the Goggler Club, founded by journalist Gianni Roghi. In 1959 there was even a magazine entirely dedicated to diving called “Mondo Sommerso” (Underwater World), founded by Goffredo Lombardo, patron of the cinematic society “Titanus.”

In short, those who deemed themselves the “tribes of the rocks,” saw in the 1960s a period of great growth, although the agencies weren’t many and the schools and groups still operated at an embryonic level.

A group of major players in diving choose to organize an “International Conference of Diving,” a meeting to bring together scientists, journalists, champions, hobbyists, photographers, filmmakers, writers, designers, and agencies. The common interest is a passion for diving… and they need a lot of it because the chosen location wasn’t a big city or a coastal resort, but a tiny, far off island in the Tyrrhenian Sea, called Ustica, which until then was known primarily as a place for political detainees.

In this incredible “diving capital,” (as it became known during the first conference, held in 1960) the first ever Golden Trident Prizes were awarded, created for this occasion intent on honoring those who dedicated themselves with great commitment to all aspects of the study and discovery of the ocean, from biology to archeology, to exploration in journalism, to photography, television documentaries and film, to medicine and engineering. The recipients of the prize became a part of the “International Academy of Underwater Sciences and Techniques” with the title of “Academic.”

Among the Academics of the first year there were, as expected, many pioneers from diverse fields related to diving: Raimondo Bucher, Jacques-Yves Cousteau, Hans Hass, Luigi Ferraro, Hannes Keller, Jacques Piccard, Walt Disney, Duilio Marcante, Enzo Maiorca, Gianni Roghi, Folco Quilici, Victor De Sanctis, Giorgio Bini, Nino Lamboglia, Goffredo Lombardo.

Through the years many “Academics” have widened the scope of the Academy, whose purpose always remains the development, knowledge and promotion of diving (scientific, technical, artistic, cultural, promotional and recreational), and spreading underwater culture in an interdisciplinary context. The Academy is also recognized by Réseau des académies des pays méditerranéens (The Network of Academics of the Mediterranean) of UNESCO and takes part in the advisory board of the Research Project Cognitive Robots for Cooperation with Divers in Marine Environments, financed by the European Commission.

This year the President of DAN Europe is also an “Academic.” The historic “Golden Trident” prize was actually awarded to him on September 27th with a ceremony held at the University Alma Mater Studiorum of Bologna, Italy.

The reasons behind the award are interesting: “Awarded to Alessandro Marroni, for providing medical and technical assistance to thousands of divers, and founding DAN Europe, of which he is President. Since the beginning he has been following diving activity in Italy, in deep water and saturation, in Italy and abroad. He has been committed to development in interdisciplinary diving research, and has brought his gained experience in the professional and recreational field to diving medicine and insurance services during the years of greatest development of diving activities. He has assumed roles as President and Director in leading international scientific organizations dealing with diving medicine and hyperbaric chambers. The Golden Trident prize is rewarded to the President above all for his great understanding and benevolence, but also praises him as the founder of DAN Europe, and is therefore indirectly an acknowledgement of the entire staff, who are always committed to diving safety, and to everyone who sustains DAN Europe. Congratulations to all!