

My year on the wing!

Frans Dely

It's when you get to the end of a year and look back over the previous 12 months, that you get the full picture and significance of what went down and when.

What better way to reflect on what was achieved than to view images taken over that period.

From all the times my finger was busy causing my trusty Nikon shutter to drop, there has emerged a collection which not only has variety, but also produces a visual celebration of what is now evident as an awesome year of pictures.



What now seems to be an eternity away, and with the 2009 event about to take place, January 2008 began with me strapped to the wall of a SAAF C130 at 14,000 feet, in position to capture some pretty unusual views of 200 skydivers exiting the ramp.



It was then off to the land of sand, Al Ain Aerobatic Airshow in the United Arab Emirates, where the beauty of the desert floor provided an awesome canvas to a variety of aircraft and performances from around the world.

These included performers like Skip Stewart from the USA, Zoltan Veres from Hungary, the UK Guinot Wing Walking Team, although only two aircraft, wing walker Peggy Krainz and her Stearman from Germany, the Saudi Hawks, Jordanian Falcons, a colourful European skydive team, FAI aerobatic contestants managed by Jurgis Karys, and lastly but by no means least, a South African team consisting of skydivers for an inverted paradrop from two Pitts Specials and joined by the Extra 300s for an impressive aerobatic sequence.





Shortly after that I again found myself in the UAE, this time with Red Bull in Abu Dhabi. It was Glen Dells first Air-race and together with the Carte Blanche video team, we witnessed and photographed the first round of this spectacular world series.





Photo by Frans Dely/www.Avpix.co.za

With the official hand over of the first South African Gripen to the SAAF new media material was needed, and on a bumpy mid-February morning with Pierre Gouws in the L39, I captured SA01 over Union Buildings in Pretoria, and in a series of aerobatic manoeuvres over Loskop dam, some dramatic images were produced which I saw proudly displayed by SAAB in their brochures and on their impressive chalet at Farnborough in the UK.



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Media use around the world was also extensive and it once again proved the point that there is no substitute for great photography to get a message across. I was fortunate to be commissioned a second time by Gripen to photograph SA 01 and 02 in preparation for media material for Africa Aerospace and Defence (AAD) later in the year. Support from the SAAF for this exercise was, needless to say, excellent. Blokkies, Magnus, Jannie and all at TFDC - thank you.





The South African airshow scene unfortunately got off to a slow start with the first major of the season, Rand airshow in Johannesburg, being cancelled due to adverse weather. House of Paint airshow at Virginia however did not disappoint and produced visual material great for spectator and photographer alike.





Race of Champions saw a great number of entries and as usual, the helicopter chase work by Chris Briers was out of the top draw.





So too was the helicopter work by 22 Squadron with the SA Navy new Lynx helicopters. This gave me the opportunity to look around the new Corvettes and witness the first loading of the helicopter into the on board hanger.





Africa Aerospace and Defence (AAD) at Ysterplaat in Cape Town was also spectacular with the arrival of now four Gripens. I was again fortunate enough to find myself almost more in the air at AAD than on the ground. Although on an extremely tight schedule, exactly five days, with all stops pulled, we managed to not only photograph the new look SAAF Silver Falcons Team, but also produce a 28 page brochure, poster and signature card. From the SAAF CAF, the OC Langebaan, to Maj Scott Ternent and my pilot Capt Roy Sproul and the whole Falcon team, their professionalism made it a cinch.



SAA 737 aircraft and the Bombardier Global Express were fantastic to chase with Larry Beamish and the L39 ZUTEE while Pierre, also in ZUTEE, was in his element chasing the A340 and Silver Falcon formation.



Another highlight for the year was working with the North West Province Aerobatic Team of two Extra 300s, and the North West Province to promote the Mafikeng airshow. Use of great images again illustrated the importance to create meaningful impact in the media.



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Finally I get to December, and find myself in the company of a superb group of flyers at the final aerobatic competition in Brits, west of Pretoria. With a typical superb summer's day, hot and humid cloudy conditions that produce a quality of light that always help the already superb Nikon glass to create startling "3D" feel in images.



In conclusion to my year, I would like to thank everyone that had any hand in helping to create some of my most memorable flights and what has turned out to be some of the best images my Nikon has captured. The list is long and you all know what part you've played in the achievement and I hope, when you go through the images, that you will recall your involvement with deep satisfaction and a smile.

To you all, a very big thank you and wherever you are in the world, I hope you have an awesome festive time with family and friends and may 2009 be even more memorable.

After many requests for those who would like to learn more on photography, we are planning a series of workshops next year, details of which you will find on the website under [AVPIX School](#).

If you are interested, please register for us to get a feel for the level of interest in the what your particular preference may be.

So! Pour yourself a long drink, maybe two, sit back and be prepared to spend some time while viewing the galleries at <http://www.avpix.co.za/>

If you should find an image you really fancy, might even be of yourself, and would like to get a print (any size), please don't hesitate to email me at info@avpix.co.za

Enjoy!

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The banner features a dark blue background. On the left, there is a logo for AVPIX Photography School with a red airplane icon. In the center, a man in a white shirt and cap is shown from the chest up, holding a camera to his eye. To his right, a yellow and black Nikon logo is displayed. Below the man's photo, the text reads "Generate sustainable photography ideas that can build businesses!".

Welcome to AVPIX School

**If They can Fly it,
We can Shoot it!**

Over the years many people have approach me to learn more about photography. As I have been involved in the shooting business, both locally and abroad, it was difficult to find the time to devote to a project of this nature.

Although I have called it the AVPIX Photography School, it is in fact a series of workshops that we will put together during 2009. These will be designed to cater for the novice as well as the experienced photographer.

The registration form is designed to measure the level of interest, as well as the level of photographer, so that we can accurately offer what you want, to maximise both mine and your time spent. Once we have assessed the requirement, we will notify you on the dates, times, requirements and costs. Apart from giving you the tools to improve your shooting, high on priority will be a unique experience and a heap of fun.

We want each and everyone of you to end each workshop with a smile and a strong feeling of achievement.

FransDely *See you there!*

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" Nikon - at the heart of my images "