

## Bennie Bos

Readers will be familiar with the vibrant images of ballooning that regularly grace the pages of *Aerostat*, capturing as they do the essence of the sport – we meet the man behind the lens to discover the focus of his passion.

**Name:** Bennie Bos  
**Age:** 57  
**Location:** Emmen, The Netherlands  
**Profession:** Technician in a large A-brand dogfood company  
**Owner:** Bennie Bos Productions, photography and video in ballooning



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### How did you get involved in ballooning?

I made my first balloon flight almost 25 years ago. The pilot was a competition pilot and I really liked that. Within a year I was his Crew Chief and together we competed all around the world. This was the time that fresh world champion Dom Bareford was still carried on the arm of his famous world champion father!

### How long have you been a photographer?

I started in 2002 with the launch of my own *Hot Air Magazine*, a monthly digital ballooning magazine for the Dutch and Belgian markets. This became very popular over the next ten years. I wrote my own stories and needed photos to go with them.

### What are your memories of your first flight in a hot air balloon?

I was the coolest boy on the planet.

### Have you ever been interested in learning to fly yourself?

No, I never have. You need someone to fly the balloon and someone who takes the photos. I would make crappy photos if I needed to concentrate on flying also.

### What photographic equipment do you use?

When you fly balloons you don't want a huge camera that will hit the other passengers in the neck at landing; to change lenses all the time; to carry a huge bag with all those lenses; shaky photo/video, because there is always someone walking around in the basket; or to have limitations on your zoom range. So I bought the absolute best camera that I could get for ballooning. An award winning Sony Bridge camera with a built-in Zeiss lens with a 24–600 range. The best camera I ever bought.

### Do you have any tips for those who want to improve their ballooning pictures?

Make the composition in your head before you make the photo. Sometimes a step to the left makes all the difference. And don't focus too much on all the settings on your camera. Ballooning is slow moving so most of the time you can just shoot in automatic.

"I travel frequently and during my balloon adventures I post a lot on social media. The absolute best compliment I can get is 'we live your adventures through your lens, it feels like we are there with you'. And that's my style!"

### Apart from *Aerostat*, what markets exist for ballooning photography?

My photos are published in all major ballooning magazines and all kinds of media at the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta, such as the famous calendar.

### What other subjects do you photograph?

I don't understand the question. Is there anything else?

### Describe your most memorable flight.

That must be the Cross Channel flight last year. I was invited by the organiser to make official photos of this event. It was sooooo cool and a real privilege to fly with 82 balloons over the English Channel. But it's not only events that I cover. I also visit ballooning rides companies and live with them for a week. For example, I had a wonderful time in Cappadocia in Turkey, Bagan in Myanmar, and the amazing Masai Mara in Kenya, where I flew over so many wild animals.

### Have you ever experienced a scary moment in a balloon?

Yes, this happened during my 33-hour flight in a gas balloon, flying from Gladbeck, Germany to Norway. Overnight in the dark sky above Denmark it started to cool down, below zero. It wasn't midnight and I already had all my clothes on when I started to shiver. You sit in a small basket, no space to walk around to warm up,

feeling the draft from different wind layers. I started to panic. What if I need a doctor now because I get hypothermia? We are flying in the dark night and there is no option to land... The next second the fear was over when the pilot handed me a wool blanket. Oh, and did I mention a Splash & Drown last February? Wet up to my neck.

### What's your favourite humorous ballooning anecdote?

This also happened in a gas balloon, flying close to Berlin. After flying all night, 10 minutes before landing, the pilot said to me "I need to do a number two." My response, "No! No! You have to hold on till we land." "I need to go now," was his answer as he took the bucket that hung outside the basket and zipped open his thermoclothes. I remember standing in the corner, looking as far in the distance as I could, fingers in both ears and singing "lalalalala". Also remember, there is no wind movement in a basket...

### Who do you admire most in ballooning?

Wherever I go, it is always a pleasure to see so many well known faces. And I must admit, I forget a lot of names, but I always remember the smiling faces and the 'High Fives' when walking by on a crowded launch field.

### Your daughter is also involved in balloon photography. When did she first join you?

I've taken Nienke (28) with me to all kinds of balloon festivals since she was four years old. She has the same photo skills that I have, but she is more into little details. Because her English is perfect and her skill to write beautiful stories from the heart, she is the European correspondent for *Ballooning*, journal of the Balloon Federation of America.

### What's next for Bennie Bos?

I soon will travel again to the Balloon Capital, Albuquerque, as their official photographer and a few weeks later will show my daughter the stunning beauty of an event in Leon, Mexico. I've already started the planning for 2019; what events I want to visit, what companies I would love to hang out and do a photoshoot with. My wife is always happy when I leave the house for another adventure, but even happier when I come back in one piece!

You can find all Bennie's ballooning adventures collected on his website: [www.benniebos.com](http://www.benniebos.com)