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Inspiring Images

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The Rule of Thirds

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Focal Point

BY **NORM ROSEN**, EDITOR | editor@photonews.ca

BE THE PHOTOGRAPHER...

Have you ever noticed that every family and every group of friends seems to have one individual who always has a camera ready to capture life's most significant moments?

These thoughtful and creative people linger in the background, observing the events that will form lasting memories. Always behind the lens, and rarely the focus of attention, the "designated photographer" documents the sights and emotions that chronicle the generations and ultimately form a visual history of the family.

Like many of our PHOTONews readers, I enjoy my role as the family photographer, recording the passage of time as it gently transforms infants into children, teenagers into adults, and parents into grandparents.

Along the photographic road to adventure we all acquire skills that enhance the impact of our images. We learn something from every photograph that causes us to stop and study the content, composition, and technique that draws a viewer into the scene.

Our goal at PHOTONews Magazine, at our website www.photonews.ca,

at the new YouTube channel *PHOTONewsTV*, and the Facebook, Twitter, and flickr® groups, is to inform, entertain, and inspire photo and video enthusiasts to achieve the best visual images possible. We focus on the techniques that will help you enhance your skills, whether you shoot with a basic camera or a top-of-the-line model, and we present some of the most spectacular images – including many from Canadian readers just like you. Our creative team includes some of Canada's best photographers and photojournalists, all dedicated to the pursuit of the passion for photography.

If you are one of the lucky individuals designated to view the world through the lens of your camera, this magazine is for you... please enjoy the words and images and share them with your friends.

A very wise friend once told me – "if you are going to be the photographer, **BE the Photographer!**" Take the time to study the scene, observe your subject, and make every image a lasting memory.

Enjoy PHOTONews on-line at the website www.photonews.ca, where you will find a wide range of information expanding the scope of the magazine, as well as a full archive of our digital editions – available to you FREE of charge. To join us in the continuous adventure of photography, please visit the PHOTONews Gallery flickr® group – www.flickr.com/groups/photonewsgallery/ where you can participate in our interactive discussions and meet some of Canada's most enthusiastic photographers.

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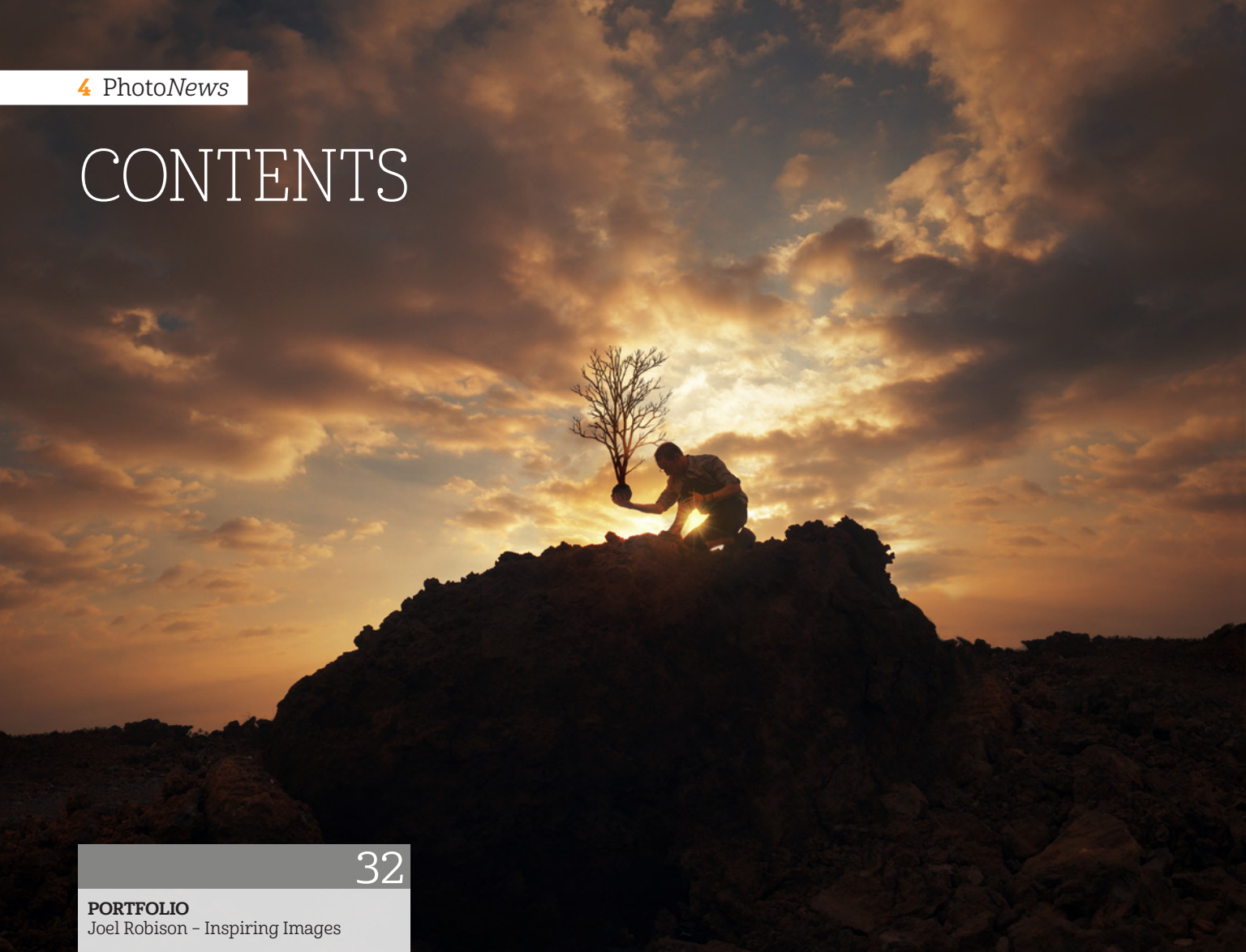
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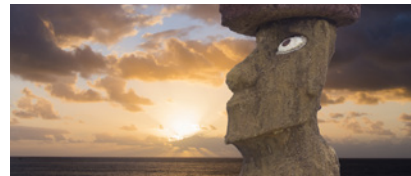
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ITS WAY AROUND THE WORLD.

HORSESHOE BEND
PAGE, ARIZONA

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Tamron Wins EISA Award

The Tamron SP 15-30mm F2.8 Di VC USD ultra-wide-angle zoom lens has won the prestigious EISA "European DSLR Zoom Lens 2015-2016" award. This marks the 17th time that Tamron has won an EISA Award, and the 10th consecutive award since 2006.

The lens, currently available in Nikon and Canon mount for full-frame DSLR models, is the world's first F/2.8 ultra-wide-angle zoom to offer image stabilization (the Sony mount model SP 15-30mm F/2.8 Di USD, to be announced at a later date, does not include VC since the Sony bodies include image stabilization).

EISA – the European Imaging and Sound Association, presents awards each year to products that are judged to be the best in Photography, Hi-Fi, Home Theatre Audio, Home Theatre Display & Video, In-Car Electronics and Mobile devices categories. An international panel of more than 50 editors from leading

magazines in the imaging, sound, and electronic industry in 20 countries reviews and votes to determine the leading products on the market.

In the Award Citation, the EISA Jury issued the following comments on the lens: "the Tamron SP 15-30mm F2.8 Di VC USD is quite simply a revolutionary design, being the first wide-angle zoom to combine a fast f/2.8 maximum aperture with optical stabilization. It covers a focal length range suitable for landscape photography, interiors and architecture thanks to the low optical distortion, but can also be used for street photography and atmospheric portraits. The optical performance is exceptional and provides a high level of contrast and detail. The autofocus and image stabilization systems are highly effective, too. Build quality is high, with moisture resistant construction. It's a large and heavy lens, but great value for money."

For more information on Tamron lenses please visit www.tamron.ca.



Tamron SP 15-30mm
F2.8 Di VC USD



High Performance Travel Zoom

Tamron has introduced a new high-performance 18-200mm zoom F/3.5-6.3 Di II VC (Model B018) autofocus zoom lens with Vibration Control (VC) for APS-C DSLR Canon, Nikon and Sony cameras. The new all-in-one™ 11X zoom lens uses the most modern optical and mechanical design to achieve compact size and high performance.



Tamron 18-200mm F/3.5-6.3 Di II VC

Featuring 16 elements in 14 groups, the 18-200mm VC uses an LD (Low Dispersion) lens element to minimize chromatic aberrations, and delivers amazing overall optical performance for an all-purpose lens. A circular, seven-blade aperture diaphragm maintains an almost perfectly round shape even at two stops down from its maximum aperture, providing desirable and beautiful bokeh with point light sources blurring into naturally rounded shapes.

The new lens is the lightest zoom in its class, weighing only 400 grams. Estimated street price will be \$299.99.

For more information please visit www.Tamron.ca

Studio to Go!

Bring the versatility of a studio to your location lighting assignments with the new series of Lite Panels and kits from Aurora Lite Bank.

Perfect for adding fill, bounce lighting, or diffusing light in the studio or outdoors, Aurora Lite Panels are the perfect solution for shooting better images with portable flash. Lightweight and affordable, they provide high quality and effective lighting accessory system for a wide range of assignments.

Available in a range of sizes from 80x80cm to 100x220cm, Aurora Lite Panel kits include a carry bag, portable stand, nylon support rods and one of six reversible Lite Panels: Silver/Black, Silver/White, Black/White, Silver/Gold, Soft Gold/White or Translucent.

Aurora Lite Panel stands include a ball head, so you can aim your reflector and then lock it in place.

For more information please visit www.auroralitebank.ca



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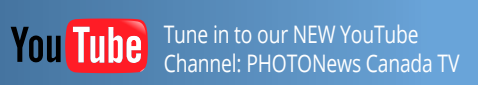


Photo: Jean-Denis Boillat



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NiSi Square Filter System



The new NiSi 150mm Square Filter System includes a high-quality CNC machined aviation grade aluminium filter holder and a selection of filters including gradient neutral density, neutral density and circular polarized filters.

The precision crafted holder fits onto the lens and is held firm by a double-clamp system, leaving the lens barrel unblemished. The holder accepts up to three filters, which are held in place with a four-part friction fit device. The holder rotates 360 degrees, allowing for precise adjustments.

NiSi Gradient Neutral Density filters are the world's first Nano-coated square optical gradient filters created from environmental optical glass, with up to 5 f-stops light reduction. A Reverse Gradient filter is available - perfect for sunsets. The NiSi GND filters have double-sided anti-electrostatic and water-proof coating for excellent dust and moisture resistance, and deliver high definition and low colour cast.

Neutral Density Filters are available in up to 15 stops, and feature double-sided anti-electrostatic and water-proof coating for excellent dust and moisture resistance, high definition, and low colour cast.

The NiSi Circular Polarizer Filter features high definition Nitto Polarizing Film, and Black-rimmed Glass.

The NiSi 150mm Square Filter System is available for the following lenses: Tamron 15-30mm F/2.8 Di VC; Nikon 14-24mm f/2.8 ED; Canon 11-24mm f/4; Canon 14mm f/2.8L II; Canon TS-E 17mm f/4L.

For more information, please contact your local dealer or email info@nisidigital.ca

LumiQuest UltraStrap

Fans of flash photography know that the best way to control the harsh output of on-camera flash is to add one of the LumiQuest flash modifiers – the popular portable solutions to soften and direct light - but many people have been reluctant to stick Velcro® mounting strips on their flash units.

LumiQuest has addressed the need for a better mounting system with the LQ-126 UltraStrap – a removable neoprene-backed Velcro® band that wraps around your flash, making it easy to attach and remove a range of LumiQuest products.

Whether your photo requires the large, soft light of the Softbox LTp, the direct Snoot XTR or a compact Pocket Bouncer, the UltraStrap makes the LumiQuest system an even better choice for flash photography. Now available with all new LumiQuest Flash Modifiers, and as an accessory for your existing LumiQuest products.

For more information and an excellent series of lighting tutorials please visit www.lumiquest.ca



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Compact System Cameras

BY **PETER K. BURIAN** FOR PHOTONEWS

TEN TOP MIRRORLESS CAMERAS

Digital SLR camera systems are very popular because they provide great versatility with interchangeable lenses and a wide range of features. On the other hand, they are also quite bulky and heavy. That's why Panasonic and Olympus introduced an entirely new concept in 2009, with cameras that omit the pentaprism and the reflex mirror mechanism. This design reduced the distance from the lens mount to the sensor, making it possible to design camera bodies that are much slimmer as well as lighter than DSLR models, with correspondingly compact lenses.

These small but fully-featured cameras were well received by enthusiasts throughout the world. Other manufacturers released mirrorless cameras, employing their own technologies and designs, and the term Compact System Camera (CSC) was coined. These cameras do not have a traditional DSLR type reflex mirror or pentaprism. The CSCs provide live view via the LCD screen. Many models are equipped with electronic viewfinders (EVF) or with a port that accepts an add-on EVF. The result is a very capable and versatile concept – with reduced size and weight, the mirrorless cameras offer the potential for DSLR-type features and accept interchangeable lenses.

Many of the CSC's accept an optional adapter that allows for using a DSLR lens on the small camera body. Initially, there were relatively few lenses but now, most of the mirrorless systems include every lens you are likely to need. The multi-purpose lenses—such as Tamron's rugged 18-200mm f/3.5-6.3 Di III VC model—are particularly versatile. This zoom lens, with a very effective VC stabilizer features an impressive optical formula with two LD, four aspherical and one XR element.

Digital SLRs still outsell the Compact System Cameras but the mirrorless category has been growing rapidly for the past three years. Many are purchased by families trading up from point-and-shoot cameras. However, during a series of presentations at camera clubs, I found that a surprising number of long-time shooters have traded in their DSLR systems for a comparable CSC kit. Other photo enthusiasts have retained their DSLRs but have added a mirrorless camera for use during family outings. There was a clear consensus on the motivation by both factions: the great portability of the CSC bodies and lenses is a benefit that is available without a compromise in speed, versatility or image quality.

Top Ten Compact System Cameras

Check out the offerings on a large photo retailer's website and you will find dozens of mirrorless camera models. Some manufacturers are particularly prolific, with five or more current models available spanning a wide range of prices and feature sets. When selecting the top ten, we considered aspects such as functions, performance, advanced technology and image quality. The following ten include cameras for the most serious shooters and more affordable models that are suitable for families and for budding photo enthusiasts.

Bio

Peter K. Burian is a stock photographer whose work is marketed by three stock agencies, and a Contributing Editor with several publications in Canada and Australia. Check out his work and his bio at peterkburian.com



FUJIFILM X-T1: Resembling a classic SLR with analogue controls, this 16 MP semi-professional model features a well-sealed magnesium alloy body and employs an X-Trans sensor. This unique chip eliminates moiré without an optical low pass filter in order to provide maximum per-pixel resolution. The X-T1 features a large (2.36 million dot) electronic viewfinder, a tilting (1.04M dot) 3-inch LCD and an AF system that is incredibly fast. Extras include Wi-Fi, Full HD Movie mode at 60p, hot shoe for external flash, a flash sync cord socket and a small clip on flash (included). With the latest firmware, the 49 plus 77 point Hybrid autofocus system provides quick response; Continuous tracking AF is available even when shooting at 8fps.



NIKON 1 V3: This 18.4 MP flagship of the line offers DSLR-style controls and comparable speed and versatility. To keep the magnesium alloy body compact, the electronic viewfinder and grip (included) can both be removed when desired. The 3-inch (1,037K) LCD offers touch screen controls. Thanks to the 171 plus 105-point Hybrid AF system and fast 4A processor, the V1 can shoot at 20fps while maintaining autofocus or at 60fps with focus locked. Useful amenities of this enthusiast-oriented camera include Full HD 60 fps Movie mode with electronic stabilizer, a 120fps slow-motion 720p movie mode, built-in Wi-Fi connectivity, pop-up flash and a hot shoe.



FUJIFILM X-T10 Although it employs the same highly-rated 16.3MP sensor as the flagship X-T1, the new magnesium alloy X-T10 resembles a rangefinder camera with three metal dials. To appeal to a family market, this Fujifilm model is more compact and affordable. It is equipped with a 77-point AF with new tracking AF modes to keep a moving subject in focus, a 3-inch (920K-dot) tilting LCD and a large (2.36M-dot) OLED viewfinder. In addition to a fast 8fps continuous drive mode, Wi-Fi and Full HD 60p video, many modes, functions and overrides are available.



NIKON 1 J5: A more family-oriented 20.8 MP camera with many modes and overrides plus special effects options, the new J5 with aluminum chassis is equipped with a 3-inch (1.037K dot) LCD that can be rotated within 180°, including facing forward. It provides the same super fast continuous drive as the V3, and benefits from the Hybrid AF system with 171 plus 105-point technology. Since there is no low-pass filter, maximum per pixel resolution is provided. The J5 can shoot both UHD 2160p/15 video and Full HD 60p movies. Wi-Fi with NFC and Snapbridge connectivity offer great versatility.

NEW



OLYMPUS OM-D E-M10 MARK II: This version II of the 16MP enthusiast grade, retro-styled E-M10 with Micro Four-Thirds sensor, retains the large analogue controls, the tilting 3" (1.04M dot) touchscreen LCD, the pop-up flash, FAST AF system with 81 contrast-detection points, built-in Wi-Fi and numerous special effects Art Filters. It's even more desirable however, with improved aspects. These include the more effective 5-axis image stabilizer, faster 8.5fps continuous drive (4fps with AF-C), and a larger viewfinder with higher (2.36M dot) resolution. Entirely new features include a 4K time lapse video mode, a focus bracketing function, an electronic shutter with silent mode and much faster shutter speeds, additional HD movie options, and a new AF targeting pad control on the touch-screen LCD.



Panasonic Lumix DMC-GF7: A much smaller retro-styled 16MP magnesium alloy camera, with a rotating 3-inch (1.04M dot) touchscreen LCD that can be set for selfies, the GF7 includes built-in flash but no hot shoe. The viewfinder was also omitted for the sake of compact size. It's super fast, able to shoot at 39fps when the electronic shutter is used (or 5.8fps with mechanical shutter). The long list of features includes contrast-detect autofocus, Creative Panorama mode, three beauty modes to enhance portraits, a Silent shooting mode and Wi-Fi with NFC. Several creative options are provided in Full HD 60fps Movie mode, including special effects filters.



Olympus PEN E-PL7: Resembling a classic rangefinder camera with a flash hot shoe, large metal dials, leather trim and metal accents, this 16 MP premium model is very compact but full-featured. It is equipped with a 3-inch (1.04M dot) touchscreen LCD that rotates and can be set for taking selfies. Important amenities include a 3-axis image stabilizer, Wi-Fi, 81-point contrast-detect AF with improved subject tracking, 8 fps drive mode with continuous AF, Full HD 30fps movie mode, as well as creative options: Panorama mode, HDR, Photo Story and special effects options. The kit ships with a small clip-on flash unit; an optional electronic finder VF-4 is available.



Panasonic Lumix DMC-GX8: Boasting 4K video capability, and a 4K (8 megapixel) photo mode with 30fps continuous drive, this is a new 20.3 MP semi-pro camera in a splash/dust proof magnesium alloy body. It features a (1,040K dot) tilting electronic viewfinder and a rotating 3-inch (2,360K) OLED touch-screen monitor. There's an image stabilizer in both the body and in most of the Lumix lenses for a dual benefit. The fast processor allows for shooting 20.3 MP photos at 10fps (6fps with continuous AF). An improved 49-point Depth from Defocus contrast-detect AF system enables focus in very dark conditions and ensures effective tracking AF. Extras include Wi-Fi with NFC, convenient Panorama mode, 22 filter effects options and a hot shoe but no built-in flash.

NEW

Canon EOS M3: Just introduced, this improved model boasts 24.2 MP resolution, a fast DIGIC 6 processor for 6.2fps drive and DSLR-style features and controls for photo enthusiasts. The M3 employs the same large sensor and much of the same technology as a DSLR, including the extremely fast 49-point Hybrid CMOS III AF system. There's a 3" (1.04M dot) tilting touch-screen LCD, Full HD Movie mode, built-in flash plus hot shoe for an external EX flash unit or for the optional EVF-DC1 electronic viewfinder. Wi-Fi with NFC is also available. The M series employs M-mount lenses but, with an optional adapter, also accepts many of the EF and EF-S lenses, allowing for greater versatility.



SONY A7R II: The first camera with 24x36mm sensor to provide full-frame 4K/30p (UHD) video capability, the new magnesium alloy a7R II boasts 42.4 MP resolution. The low-pass filter over the huge BSI sensor was omitted for maximum per-pixel sharpness. Competitive with DSLRs in feature set, this model with (2,359K dot) EVF and a 3-inch (1.23M dot) tilting LCD features Wi-Fi with NFC, 14-bit Raw output, ISO levels to 102,400, and an AVCHD Full HD movie mode. Its very fast 399 plus 25-point hybrid AF allows for continuous AF in 5fps drive. The shutter, rated for 500,000 actuations, produces 50% less vibration; for silent shooting, select the electronic shutter option. The body is equipped with a new 5-axis image stabilizer and a hot shoe, but no built-in flash.



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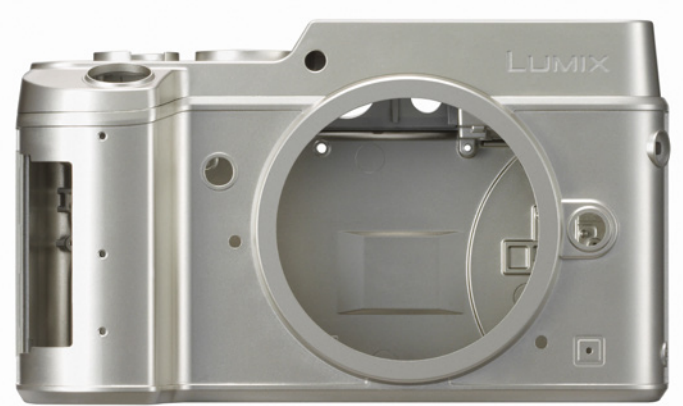
LUMIX GX8 MIRRORLESS

The Lumix mirrorless camera line has been pushing the boundaries of expectations since it was first released in 2008. With the newly announced Lumix GX8, Panasonic is releasing its first 20MP Four Thirds sensor. The camera hosts a variety of other features, most notably, an all-weather magnesium alloy body, Dual Image Stabilization as well as the 4K Video and Photo modes that were recently announced in the Lumix G7.

The new Lumix GX8 boasts a 20MP mirrorless sensor that produces life-like images with greater clarity, colour and resolution. Along with the stunning details captured, the GX8's new sensor features edge to edge sharpness that will delight still photographers.

The GX8 also has a newly integrated Dual Image Stabilization system that works with any optically stabilized Lumix Lens. By attaching a stabilized lens to the camera, the body stabilization then works in conjunction with the lens to produce stunning images with little or no shake.

The new Lumix GX8 is expertly engineered with an all-weather magnesium alloy body perfect for any weather the Canadian landscape throws your way.



With three new 4K Photo Modes, never miss a moment by capturing burst shooting at an astonishing 30 fps. Extract an 8MP still from any frame to get that perfect moment that would have been impossible to capture with conventional burst shooting.

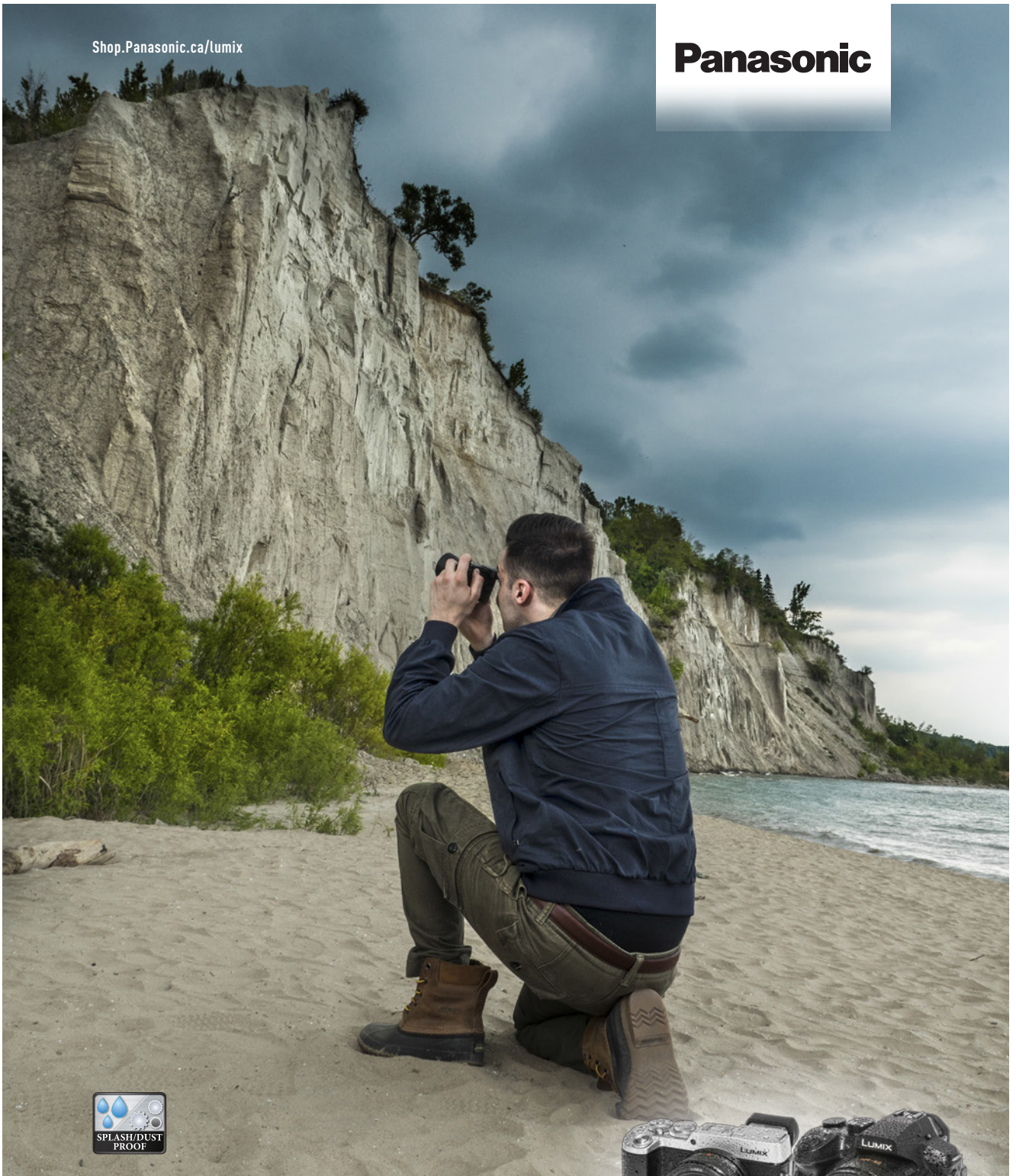


LUMIX

4K

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Canadian weather is unpredictable

You may not be able to count on the weather forecast but you can count on the rugged weather sealing of the new **Lumix GX8** and **FZ300**. The magnesium alloy bodies are not only lightweight but splash and dust proof too. So don't be afraid to expose your camera to the elements.....it can handle Mother Nature and the family vacation. In addition, both models feature **4K video** and **4K Photo Mode** to capture all of those fleeting moments, whether it's a lightning flash or a brilliant sunset. Trust Lumix to get the shots that memories are made of.

Photography © Johan Sorensen



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Challenge

Congratulations to the winners of the PHOTONews "On Vacation" Challenge, who participated in the contest thread at our flickr® group at www.flickr.com/groups/photoneWSgallery/.

Our winning photographer will receive a special prize – a Lumix LX100, from Panasonic Canada, our PHOTONews Challenge sponsor for 2015.

You could be the winner of the next PHOTONews Challenge and have your photo published in the Autumn issue – please see page 66 for details.



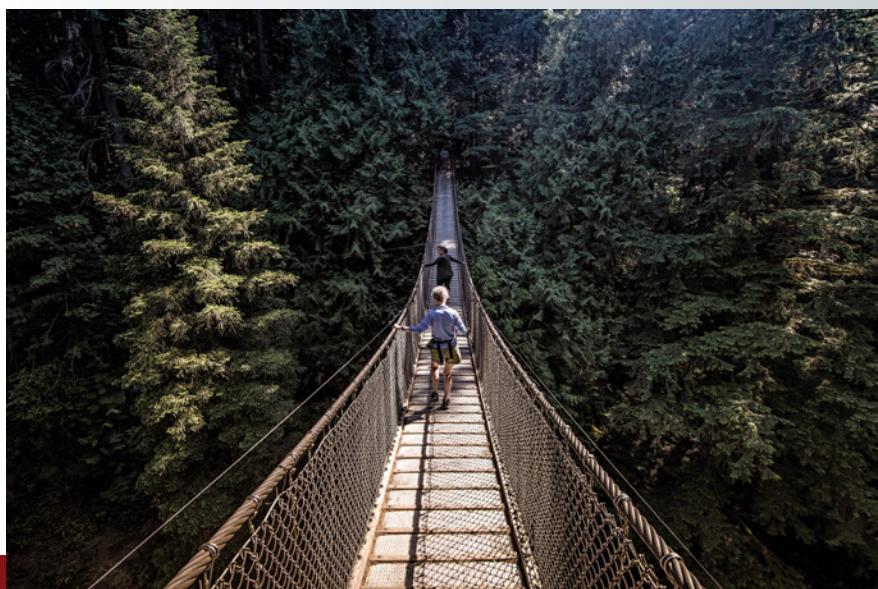
Winner

That's the Life!

Nathalie Duhaime of Ste-Adele, Quebec, captured this image of a woman relaxing in a hammock with a Nikon D7000 and 18-105mm zoom at 48mm, f/11, 1/500 second, ISO 125. "I was strolling on the boardwalk when I saw this woman relaxing in a beautiful turquoise hammock. The scene was so nice that I could not resist capturing the moment."

Tight Rope

Jean-Philippe Castonguay of Montreal, Quebec, captured this image of the Lynn Canyon Suspension Bridge in North Vancouver with a Nikon D600 and 18-35mm wide angle lens, shooting at 1/80 second and f/6.3, ISO 360. "I wanted to capture the depth, length and height of the bridge and I felt that was best shown by cropping the image around the edge of the trees".





Brant Street Pier

Paul Pascal of Vaughan, Ontario, captured this image of the Brant Street Pier in Burlington, Ontario, with a Nikon D810 and 16-35mm zoom lens, shooting at $f/16$, for a 20 second exposure at ISO 64. "I used a tripod for the long exposure, and post-processed the image in Photoshop Lightroom."



Cool Water

Werner Maurer captured this mid-morning lake scene at a campground near his Oliver, BC home, shooting with an Olympus TG-620 in program mode set to ISO 100. The exposure was $1/10$ second at $f/5.6$. "I manually underexposed by $2/3$ stop to enhance the effect of the reflection".

East Coast Beach

Suzanne Blais of Lac-Mégantic, Québec captured this image of the beach on the American East Coast with a Fujifilm Fine Pix HS10 and 24-700mm lens, at focal length 24mm, shooting at $1/150$ second and $f/6.4$, ISO 100. "It was a beautiful day at the beach!"



Each issue, PHOTONews presents a gallery of spectacular images from our readers, as posted in the pool at the flickr® group.

To view the full array of images from PHOTONews readers, please visit the pool at www.flickr.com/groups/photonewsgallery/pool

Creativity

Nathalie Duhaime of Ste-Adele, Quebec, captured this image of dandelion with a Nikon D7000 and 18-55mm zoom at 55mm, plus Raynox Super Macro Lens, shooting at f/9, 1/500 second, ISO 320. *"It is only recently that I discovered the fractal treatment. I think it's a nice way to present flowers or other subjects in a more artistic form. I played with the colours and shades to achieve this result."*



Flying Lady

Denis Rule of Ottawa, Ontario, shot this image for his SnapShot web TV show episode featuring a tutorial on lighting. *"The Flying Lady was illuminated using three speedlights, two of the speedlights were in an Aurora Lite Bank Firefly Duet box (32 inch) on a boom stand to the left and slightly in front of the model, and a fill flash was placed in a Firefly 2 box (26 inch) located to the right of the camera and forward of the model."* Denis used a Nikon D750 with a 70-200mm f2.8 VR II lens and shot at 1/200 second, f/10, ISO 160.

Rolling Hills

Yi Jiang of Thornhill, Ontario, captured this image with a Canon 5D Mark III and 100-400 mm lens, shooting at 0.3 second and f/16, ISO 100. *"I shot from a hilltop in Steptoe Butte State Park, overlooking the rolling hills of Palouse WA. I love the effect of the golden light of early morning. Palouse is a gift of Mother Nature."*



Before the Gold

Andrew O'Brien of Sundre, Alberta, shot this image of Mount Rundle reflected in one of the Vermilion Lakes in Banff National Park. This image was shot using an ultrawide zoom at 10mm and f/22, ISO 100, exposure time was 304 seconds. *"Setting up before sunrise and battling mosquitoes was a small price to pay to witness the changing sky at this iconic location in the Alberta Rockies."*



The Call of the Road

Gordon Hunter of Victoria, BC, captured this image of light-trails and a moonlit mountain near Lillooet, BC with a Nikon D5000 and a Nikon 10-24mm lens set to 10mm, f/3.5 and ISO500. The exposure took 30 seconds.

"At first I thought those overcast skies were going to ruin my moonlight photography fun, but a break in the clouds lit that mountain and right on cue a car came by to add the foreground light-trails."





The Pier

Neil Kan Hai of Waterdown, Ontario, captured this night shot of Burlington Pier with his Nikon D7000 and 11-16mm zoom, shooting at 11mm, 20 second exposure, ISO 100. The final image is a composite created in CS5.

Skin and Bones

Jean-Philippe Castonguay of Montreal, QC, captured this image of the old Windsor Train Station in downtown Montreal with a Nikon D600 and 18-35mm wide angle lens, shooting at 1/2 second and f/9, ISO 160. "I wanted to capture the lines, symmetry and complexity of this interior architecture, of what is now a historic building".



Fargo Sunset

Ryan Wunsch of Leader, Saskatchewan, captured this sunset image of an old Fargo truck along the river hills as a storm moved in from the west. "I used a Canon 6D and 16-35mm Lii zoom and a solid tripod, and took 7 bracketed exposures for HDR blending to catch the full range of highlights and shadows during the sunset. Shortly after this picture was taken the lightning started, and I managed to catch a bolt in the next series of shots. Sometimes timing is everything."

Skimming Eagle

Andre Secours of Kitchener, Ontario, captured this image with a Nikon D3S and 70-200mm f/2.8 Lens, at 130mm, f/2.8, ISO 800. "This photo was taken very early in the morning with no wind so the reflection would be ideal. Many thanks to Howard Brodsky for giving Bea Binka and myself an executive workshop at the Canadian Raptors Conservatory."





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Special Feature

BY MICHEL ROY

THE MAGIC OF LIGHT

From the mystical images of renaissance painters to the striking photographs of modern masters, the magical quality of a spectacular scene lies in the art of capturing the subtle nuances of light... understanding how the angle, intensity, and quality of light affects your photograph is the key to creating outstanding images.



Bio

Michel Roy, from Quebec City, is the owner of Digital Direct Photos & Videos, specializing in a full range of photography and video from corporate assignments to weddings. For a visual adventure, visit the website at www.digitaldirect.ca.

The technique of creating a spectacular image varies depending on the subject and the situation. In some cases you may want to capture the drama of a scene by shooting with high contrast light, but for other subjects, like the portrait of a child, soft and diffuse light will work better.

Many books have been written on the techniques of using light and shadow to create photographs that make viewers stop and stare, intrigued by the impact of the image. This is the magical spell cast by a skilled photo artist - it is the foundation of photography and it is always effective. Let's look at some principles.

Sunset on the river, the best time of the day to get great light! (HDR image)



Cloudy overcast days can be a blessing for the photographer, clouds act like a big diffuser - add a dash of contrast and you are all set.

There are no real rules for mastering light. Your success depends on the story you want to share through your pictures. When you study the way the light adds dimension to your subject and the scene, you progress beyond point and shoot photography and the basic rules of composition to build a story. You are no longer just taking a picture – you are making a piece of art in much the same way as a classical painter, or a motion picture genius like Spielberg, would create a scene in a movie.

Natural Light

The quality of natural light depends of the weather and the time of the day. During the early morning hours and at the end of the day the sun produces soft light; during the core hours of daylight the sun casts strong light with hard shadows; on days when weather may cause you to hesitate to pick up a camera,



Sometimes the light is perfect, so I use HDR to get all the dynamic range possible.

the diffused light of a cloudy or rainy day can evoke images that convey their own subtle form of magic. Is there an ideal time for photography? No. You can always create an image... if you learn to master light.

The first thing we learn as novice photographers is that a nice portrait outside at noon is difficult to accomplish because your subjects will have the sun in their eyes and big dark shadows on their faces. Most photographers will look for shadowed areas to pose their subjects – photo magicians will use fill-in flash, reflectors, and skillful composition to transform a difficult scene into a striking image.

For dramatic images find a dark place like an underground parking garage. Use one softbox and lots of contrast, make a vignette by darkening the edge, and you have a winner!

When clouds are present, they diffuse the light, and the softer light provides a great opportunity to shoot a wide range of subjects. Overcast daylight can be a little flat, but this can be an advantage for photographers. Keep in mind that there is always a direction of the light even if it is diffused by big clouds. The city may look flat on a cloudy day, but get into the woods and close to a river and a nice overcast sky will produce perfect photography.

Obviously, the Golden Hour is the ultimate time for shooting in natural light, so sunrise and sunset are popular times to shoot striking photographs.

Artificial Light

Photography is like cinema, there are many ways to add light and shadow using flash, continuous light sources and accessories. Yes, it is easier to use only the natural light from outside, but

Whenever they can, professional photographers use quality flashes - often as many as three flashes to control light perfectly: main, fill and hair light combine for a classic look.



a creative photographer will know how to produce light with the right intensity, colour, and direction to enhance any scene.

Professionals always prepare for their assignments with the quality of light in mind. In a professional studio all the flashes, soft boxes and modifiers will be ready to add or subtract light to create the perfect image. For location shots outside the plan takes into consideration the quality of ambient light at various times of the day and night, and the lighting, reflectors, and accessories that may be required to create the desired effect.

Adapting to Light Intensity

When the light intensity is low, at sunset, sunrise or on a cloudy day, the obvious decision would be to use a tripod to allow slow shutter speeds, or raise the ISO. Professionals almost always use a tripod and keep ISO low to have a better quality image with the least amount of grain.

When we use only ambient light, many factors affect the image. Here are some photo facts to keep in mind:

- **The intensity of the light**—from a single candle to a bright sunny day, the range of light in your scene can vary tremendously.
- **The size of the light source affects the quality of light** – the smaller the light source, the harder the light, the larger the light source, the softer the light.





- **The distance between the subject and the light (or diffuser)** – The closer the subject is to the light, the softer the light will be; the farther the light source is from the subject, the harder the light will be.

With artificial light, it is easy to manipulate the flashes to your taste, but with natural light, you may have to move your subject and your camera to a different position to get a nice shot.

All photographers will produce better images if they study the direction of light and how the shadows fall on their subject. Moving the lens a bit or turning the model toward the light just a bit will make a big difference in the final result.



When I shoot weddings I like to use a big source of light from the side. In this shot, a huge window did the job perfectly. The carpet color from The Fairmont Le Château Frontenac was changed in Photoshop.

Simple on camera flash with manual setting can save the day. Using full power from the flash, compose with the sun at the side of your models so they won't close their eyes.

Backlighting can be a lot of fun, and it is a great way to add a few interesting shots at the end of the day, or for capturing a mood and adding a dash of mystery to the subject. I use this technique in corporate photos and videos to add a bit of lighting magic to complement the traditional images.

If you are shooting a portrait in natural light, try to use diffused light from a big source, like a big window, and place the subject close to the light. This always works very well. Everybody has seen a nice picture of a bride looking out a window – it is a bit cliché, but it is always a crowd pleaser.

The Colour of Light

We have all seen the beauty of light at the blue hour, just before sunset, or a beautiful gold sunrise, a blue image from the winter cold or a warm picture from mid day.

Light comes in different colours, and while we can adjust the white balance for a precise colour effect, most photographers use RAW images so they can correct the colour balance in post processing.

One thing you don't want to do (unless the effect is wanted!) is to mix different light source colours in the same image. Like in video production, if the background is a daytime colour, use lights with the same colour temperature.

The new cameras are amazing at capturing the wide spectrum of light, and new techniques like HDR make impossible images possible. Never let shadows and highlight alerts from your camera stop you from attempting a shot - you will often be surprised at how it good it turns out!

The next time you get ready to take a picture or go on assignment in the field, take a minute to think about the lighting. Whether you shoot in natural sunlight or take a portable studio lighting kit, keep in mind that the magic of photography is often a matter of mastering light.



Photo Destination

BY WAYNE LYNCH

RAPA NUI ISLAND OF MYSTERY

The Polynesian Triangle sits in the center of the Pacific Ocean. The Hawaiian Islands are at the top of the triangle; New Zealand marks the lower left corner, and Rapa Nui the lower right corner. Rapa Nui is the Polynesian name for a volcanic wedge of land just 25 kilometres long and 12 kilometres wide, lying 3,500 kilometres off the coast of Chile—the most remote inhabited island on Earth. No other island in the Pacific has generated the historical excitement, ecological speculation and strong tourism interest that Rapa Nui has.



Bio

Natural history writer and wildlife photographer Wayne Lynch has travelled the world, sharing his knowledge and photographic skills. You can see more of Wayne's work at www.waynelynch.ca

Rapa Nui, better known as Easter Island, is synonymous with mystery. American anthropologists Drs. Terry Hunt and Carl Lipo, who have studied the island for decades aptly explain. “The mystery surrounds how so few people on a remote, treeless, and impoverished island could have made and transported hundreds of eerie, gargantuan statues,—called *moai*—for which the island is famous. The awe-inspiring, multi-ton stone statues, some standing nearly 40 feet [12 m] and weighing more than seventy-five tons, were carved out of the island’s quarry of compacted volcanic ash and then transported several miles over the island’s rugged terrain... To see these statues is to sense a hidden drama of compelling human proportions calling out for explanation.”

The story of how ancient Polynesians colonized this isolated speck of land, thrived for centuries, and then succumbed to the collapse of their environment offers a fascinating glimpse at humanity and a poignant travel experience. It’s little wonder that Easter Island is frequently listed by travel magazines as one of the “must-see” destinations in the world.

Many believe the Polynesians were the most skilled ocean navigators of all time, colonizing, within a period of 500 years, all of the major island groups in the Pacific, the greatest of all oceans. They travelled in immense outrigger canoes, navigating solely by the stars, the sun, wind, and waves. These brave, hopeful colonists carried everything they needed to thrive in a new island paradise. Their staple foods included taro, sweet potatoes, yams, cassava, bananas and coconuts, as well as chickens, pigs, and edible Polynesian rats. When they first landed on the shores of Rapa Nui, perhaps 1000 years ago, the island was a lush tropical rainforest of palms. The rich surrounding waters supported screaming colonies of seabirds and teemed with tuna and mahi-mahi.





Moai, Akivi, Easter Island

The Polynesian colonists imported not only their agricultural lifestyle but also their spiritual beliefs and practices, including the ritualized worship of their ancestors. To honour deceased relatives and chiefs, they carved immense stone statues, called moai (pronounced MOE-eye) and prominently erected them along the coastline next to their villages. Modern day researchers have found the remains of over 800 such statues, the carving of which stopped mysteriously in the late 1600s. Experts still argue over what exactly happened to this vibrant island culture but certain facts are clear. At the height of the island's splendour there may have been 15,000 inhabitants. To support themselves, the forests were stripped, seabird colonies were raided, and the imported rats bred to proliferation, feeding on seedlings which prevented the forests from regenerating. With no trees to build boats, the islanders could no longer fish, or escape. Uncertainty, hunger, conflict and bloodshed consumed their days.

When the first Europeans arrived in 1772, fewer than 3,000 inhabitants remained. By then, most of the moai had been toppled. On an island where disregard for sustainability had already struck a heavy blow to the culture, European explorers, whalers and slave traders added further hardships. Ultimately, by the late 1800s, fewer than 150 native Rapanui had survived the gunfire, epidemics, and enslavement. Today, the island is healing. Many moai have been restored and erected and the world universally recognizes and celebrates the island's rich cultural past. Each year, over 80,000 tourists make the long, costly flight to Easter Island to reflect on one of the great cultural icons of humanity.

This is the rich historical background I faced when I learned that I had been hired to take a small group of tourists to this celebrated destination. Those of you who follow my column

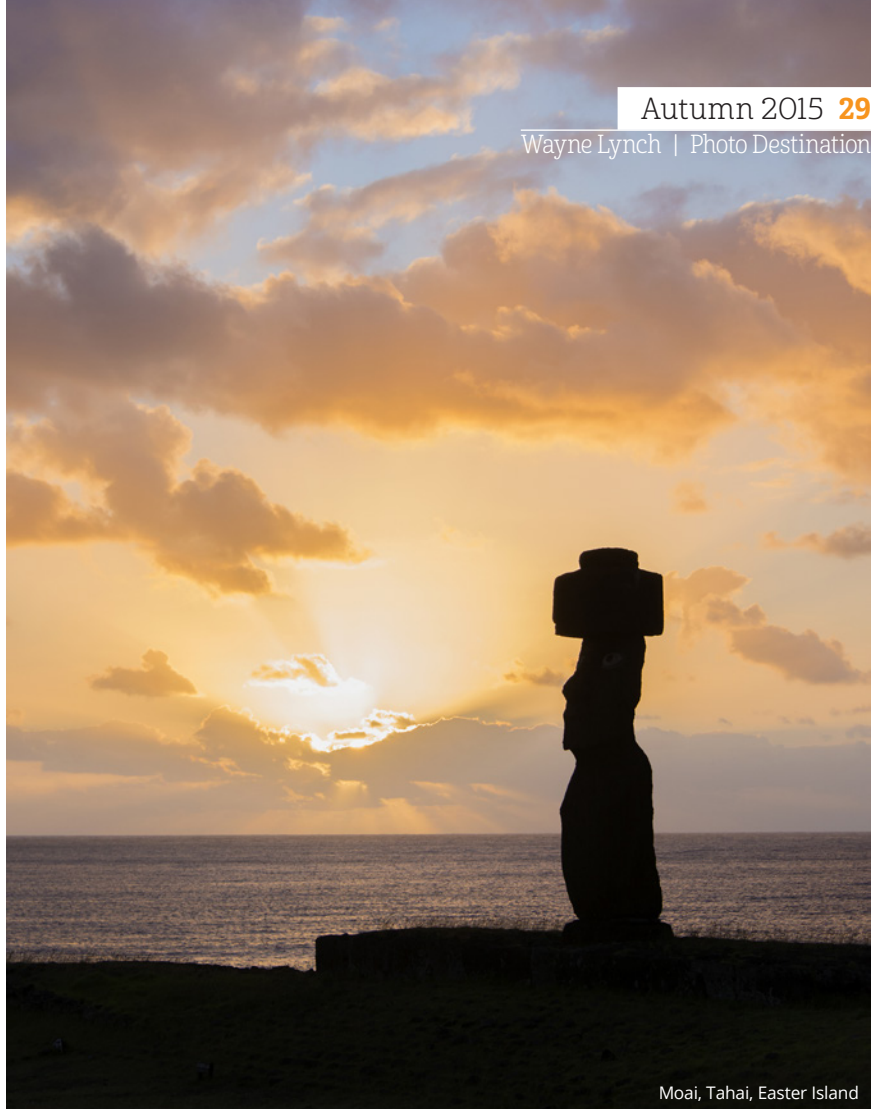
Moai, Tongariki, Easter Island



know my principle photo interests have always been wildlife. Easter Island was going to be totally new territory for me and a challenging photo experience. I wanted to push myself artistically to do the best job I could. I decided to embrace the newness of the situation as an opportunity for photographic growth rather than as an intimidating labour. If I wanted to come home with images that would excite me I knew I had to do some homework beforehand. The research I did might be helpful to any photographer planning a trip to a new, unfamiliar destination.

Through Other Photographer's Eyes

The hilarious American comedian W.C. Fields once quipped, "I never heard a good joke I wouldn't steal." Now, I'm not suggesting that you should steal another photographer's images but everyone initially learns the art and craft of photography by reviewing and analyzing the work of others. Before I flew to Rapa Nui I wanted to study as many images of the island as I could. How had previous photographers captured the island's spirit? What kind of light had they preferred? Had they used zooming techniques, panning, soft focus, or



Moai, Tahai, Easter Island



Anakena Beach, Easter Island



Red-tailed Tropicbird

panoramas? With the new low-noise camera sensors was there something I might try that others had not?

I sell my photographs globally through several dozen photo agencies so the first thing I did was go to their websites to see what other photographers had done before me. Images from all of the biggest international agencies including Getty, Corbis, All Canada, Alamy, AGE, and Superstock, can be reviewed online with no obligation.

Next, I thumbed through all of the Easter Island books that were in the Calgary Public Library system and Googled travel magazines that had

done stories on the island. Even after my plane landed I didn't stop searching and one of the first things I did at the airport was to peruse racks of local postcards to see what kind of images were selling. From all my research I got many ideas on how I might bring a fresh approach to the photo challenge ahead of me. I viewed photographing the moai as an exciting opportunity to capture "the same old wine, in a brand new bottle."

When Does the Wind Blow?

Since I was hired to lead a trip I didn't have any choice when to go. I went in the last days of November which is spring in the Southern Hemisphere. From the internet I learned I could expect mixed weather with some rain and clouds but also some days of sunshine. I was happy. Day after day of blue skies is not always ideal. Fast-moving storms, sweeping through, can generate exciting light conditions, adding great interest to the sky and creating a dramatic backdrop to architecture.

Sunrise, Sunset...

Because the first and last light of the day generates the warm tones and long shadows that are so pleasing I wanted to know the exact times of sunrise and sunset so I could schedule my photo outings at the best time possible. Once again, the internet saved the day. I also added tide charts to my files as well as phases of the moon in case I might need to know such trivia to capitalize on a situation.

The Magic List

The final thing I did before I left home was to make a detailed shot list that included all the major statue areas, photo ideas I wanted to try in those locations, and the best times to be there. Such careful planning prevented me from missing several great opportunities and I came home a happy camper.



Moai, Tahai, Easter Island



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Portfolio JOEL ROBISON

Joel Robison is a Canadian photographer based in Cranbrook, B.C., whose images have been seen in more than 90 countries. As a creative artist, his work inspires students of the art form... as a professional photographer his images span the full range of experiences and genres – including covering the 2014 FIFA World Cup Trophy Tour as the lead photographer.

Small Discoveries

I shot this shortly before moving to England. I'd been travelling around the world for the year prior and the globe was starting to feel a bit more like home than my actual home. I wanted to show how small I still felt even though I'd been lucky to see so much of it. Sony A99, 85mm f/1.4 lens.



Opening Pages to the Past

This image was created at the amazing and somewhat haunting Hore Abbey, Ireland's last medieval Cistercian monastery, which was founded in 1272 on the edge of Cashel and sits in the shadow of the impressive Rock of Cashel. The clouds pelted us with rain and birds were watching our every move as we wandered through the ruins of the abbey. Places like this make me feel connected to history - my footsteps echo thousands of others within these stone walls.



Like Ships in the Night

Shot in Spain for a workshop class, paper boats have always represented people in my work. I think we are like paper boats - we are all the same starting out, but depending on how we are folded, how we are put together, we can become something with purpose. I lit the boats to have them glow almost like beacons for other ships to find their way.

Photo News asked Joel to share some of his favourite images, and his thoughts on the creative process.

I have spent the last six years fully immersing myself in photography, in the community of photographers that exists worldwide and it has completely changed my life. When I began photography, I was a shy and introverted "photographer". I wanted to share my ideas and dreams and even fears with other people, but felt like I couldn't ever find a way to visualize it, until I picked up a camera. Over the course of the last six years of my life I have been able to use my camera

not just as a tool to create images, but to change my life. It felt as though each image I created, each series of shutter clicks and filled memory cards, was teaching me more and more about the world around me and about myself.

Photography, and art in general, has this fantastic way of allowing both the creator and the viewer a chance to experience an image or art piece together. But what they experience can be vastly different and that has always interested me. I enjoy creating my images from a place within myself that I don't often let many people into, but sharing it with others as a visual is easier than explaining with words, and quite often other people see other messages or themes or stories in the images than I had intended.

I have been fortunate during the last few years to follow this passion into a life of art, to become my own boss and to travel the world surviving and thriving on my photography and my love of exploring new places and meeting new people. This confidence, wanderlust and passion grows each time I am able to share my work with people who appreciate what I do and it is an empowering way to live for sure. For me, the creative process has been a valuable way for me to connect with the world around me in a way that I hadn't really experienced before. I use natural light in the majority of my work, and this allows me the opportunity to really pay attention to the natural world, to watch where and when the sun sets, when the leaves start to change, to anticipate clouds and flowers and even animal migration patterns. My photography has become a therapy, it's a chance for me to spend a few hours a day inside my own mind, interpreting and working through things that may be bothering me or inspiring me, it has allowed me a way to work through the difficult times in life in a proactive and productive way.

Currently I have embarked on a workshop teaching tour across Europe.

Teaching and sharing knowledge is a passion of mine and to be able to meet like-minded photographers from around the globe and share with them all I know is so incredible, to hear their stories and see their creativity flourish is a beautiful feeling. Alongside that I have begun two passion projects that I hope will merge some of my other interests in connection with photography.





Shine Bright

I was inspired by the model in the photograph, a friend from Florida who was having a hard time in his life. We were talking about staying bright, keeping the light on and letting it attract other light until it grows and gets brighter.

I have started a book themed project, interpreting my favourite books that were written by British authors in a photo series. I've been visiting the homes, offices, and favourite spaces of these authors and witnessing their inspiration, and what helped them create. It has been an amazing way to connect my love of reading and creativity with photography. My other project is a portrait themed project connecting people who have been active in establishing positive change in the world through social media. My entire photography journey began and continues to grow via social media and I think that there is a growing community of people who have been able to change not only their lives but the lives of other people by using the Internet to create social and global change and I'd love to highlight these people in a creative way and share their inspirational stories with others.

For more visual inspiration from Joel Robison, please visit his website at www.joelrobison.com



Circle of Knowledge

I was inspired by the model in the photograph, a Canadian photographer himself, and someone who is constantly learning and wanting to expand his own circle of knowledge.



Another Cup

I've always been inspired by Lewis Carroll and especially the Mad Hatter, I wanted to show the idea that what we see can be created - almost by what we don't see.

A Classic Journey

I have been taking a lot of train trips lately, into London to visit friends, to explore the city and enjoy being in this new place. I am learning to love the trains, I like to sit in a comfortable seat and watch the beautiful English countryside fly by.



Finding Lightness

Shot as a demonstration photo during a workshop in Washington D.C., this image is centred around the idea that magic can happen anywhere, at any time - if you believe in it.



Lost and Found

This photo was taken from the top of Hawaii, overlooking the clouds, and closer to the stars than I have ever felt.



Perspectives


BY KRISTIAN BOGNER

CAPTIVATING LANDSCAPES

The recipe for a great landscape image usually combines fantastic natural elements with dramatic lighting. I generally look for landscapes that have a great deal of depth, with a strong foreground, middle ground and background – this makes for a three dimensional experience that draws the viewer into the scene.

Bio

Kristian Bogner is a commercial, architecture, adventure, fashion, sports photographer, and brand Ambassador for Nikon Canada, Broncolor Canada, and other suppliers. For some inspiration and more pro tips check out kristianbogner.com or attend one of his photography workshops: photographicrockstar.com



Dramatic lighting can usually be achieved by shooting early in the morning before and after sunrise, and late in the evening before and after sunset. During these times of day the sun is lower and more dramatic, casting a longer shadow and giving warmer colours. This is also the time when those magical colourful hues come out, especially where the light is reflected off the clouds, water, and other elements of the scene.

Excellence in, Excellence Out.

I use the term “excellence” frequently in articles and presentations because I believe they are words to live by and certainly goals to photograph by. If you shoot with the mindset that you will just take a picture and “fix” it in Lightroom or PhotoShop later, then you are greatly limiting your image potential. For that reason, I spend a few seconds more to dial-in every photograph with all the great capabilities my camera has to offer. I love my landscapes to have a lot of punch so I set my Nikon D810 saturation to full and sharpness to 7 out of 10 in my camera picture control settings. Sometimes I will add a bit of the new clarity setting as well, to give some extra impact. These settings will immediately allow my images to pop with colour right out of the camera. This means I have much less to do, if anything, in post processing, and I also get to see how amazing the image is going to look right on the back of the camera. A quick glance at the LCD in image review can encourage me to continue to tweak settings and adjust the image on the fly until I feel it is perfect.

Golden Sunset

I had just finished shooting some epic ski images way up in the mountains and this was a quick pullover and shoot hand-held. I used a cloudy white balance to further warm up the golden light.

Nikon D800 with AF-S Nikkor 70-200mm f/2.8 ED VR II lens, f/11 at 1/1250 second, ISO 100.



The Creation

This was a great example of going outside of my comfort zone. I am known for big illustrative colour but also love to switch my camera to monochrome and shoot black and white images from time to time. I increased my contrast in my picture control settings and shot this water/rock scene with movement in the outer ocean and still water in the foreground lit by my flashlight and the full moon.

Nikon D3 with AF-S NIKKOR 24-70mm f/2.8G ED lens, f/16 at 15 seconds, ISO 250.

Get Creative and Be Adventurous

Be playful with your photography, experiment and try different techniques at every opportunity. Try switching your picture control setting to Monochrome to get some black and white images right out of your camera. You can play with your contrast, sharpness and different filter effects to create some powerful imagery. Remember—if you are shooting monochrome in RAW you can always switch it back to colour later with your computer software. Again, seeing the results on the back of your digital camera at the time of shooting lets you tweak as you shoot which can make the difference between a good and a great image! Let your imagination run free—paint mountains with a powerful flashlight, try in-camera HDR to get more dynamic range, or shoot multiple exposures with water or other subjects. Get creative, try to see the world and capture it from as many

different perspectives as you can. Be adventurous, climb a mountain or get down really low on a still lake to shoot a reflection. Unique angles and compositions add impact and interest for the viewer and make exciting images.

Gear Tips

I highly recommend using a tripod and a cable release or camera remote for your landscape photography. A tripod opens up the possibility to shoot at a low ISO with longer exposure times. I generally shoot my landscapes between f/8 and f/11 at 100 ISO with whatever exposure time I need to get the correct exposure. With a tripod you can also use long exposure times to create some amazing effects like star trails or smooth water or waterfalls moving by exposing for several seconds. I also use virtual horizon on my Nikon to ensure that when I set up on my tripod my camera is perfectly level so I get a nice straight horizon line.

With higher megapixels, camera shake can really show up in your image, so when using a tripod I also like to use my cable release or Nikon WR-R10 + WR-A10 Wireless Remote Adapter to ensure tack sharp images. If you don't have one of these you can use the exposure delay mode on your camera which you can set to have a short pause after you press the shutter release.

Another tip is to bring a flashlight or headlamp so that if it gets dark you can find all of your equipment and set the

Pastel Oceanscape

I set up on a tripod and shot at f/22 so that I could have the maximum length of exposure to give the waves a misty smooth artistic effect. I didn't have any neutral density filters with me but if I did, I would have used them to get the longer exposure instead of such a small aperture. *Nikon D3 with AF-S NIKKOR 24-70mm f/2.8G ED lens, f/22 at 1.3 seconds, ISO 100.*





Ladakh by Moon and Sunset

This was shot at high altitude on an expedition at the world famous Pangong Tso Lake in Ladakh near the India/China border. I had my tripod right in the water and exposed for a long time to make the water appear really smooth. Having the moon and the wonderful after sunset colours in the shot gave this landscape some interesting elements.

Nikon D3X with AFS-Nikkor 14-24mm f/2.8G lens, f/22 at 6 seconds, ISO 100.



focus distance manually on your lens in case there is not enough light to autofocus.

Commit to Carrying a Camera

Have you ever seen something really beautiful and not had your camera with you to capture it properly? For me, there is nothing worse than missing an amazing photo opportunity, so I am committed to carrying my camera with me most of the time, even if it's just my Nikon D750 which is relatively lightweight and has phenomenal high ISO capabilities in case you don't have a tripod with you. If I am only bringing one lens attached to my camera, for landscapes it would be my Nikon 24-70mm lens. I find that is a really nice zoom range for most applications. I also keep my tripod in the back of my car so I am always ready to capture that spectacular image.



Ha Ling Sunset-7235X

I used In-Camera HDR to create this image and capture the high dynamic range from the top of Ha Ling in Canmore. My saturation was cranked all the way up. It is a steep 2 hour hike up but well worth lugging gear. When you get carried away with the sunset like I did make sure you bring a headlamp for the hour and a half hike down.
*Nikon D800E
with AF-S NIKKOR
24-70mm f/2.8G
ED lens, f/8 at 0.5
seconds, ISO 100.*

There are hardcore landscape photographers who really take the time to plan landscape shoots, travel, etc., but I have honestly captured some of my best images by just carrying my camera with me on short hikes, skiing, bike rides or in the car so when the lighting and subject present themselves I am ready to capture the image.

In-Camera HDR

I mentioned In-Camera HDR earlier but wanted to go into it in more detail as it has become a very valuable tool for me to get great higher dynamic range images right out of my camera. I set my camera to TIFF so I get a larger file, HDR Mode to on (series), Exposure Differential to 3EV, and Smoothing to NORMAL (but I experiment with this setting depending on the subject). The camera actually takes two exposures at 3 stops apart and blends them together. An example where this is really useful would be alpenglow on the mountains, where the last golden-amber light is hitting the mountain tops but the trees below are very dark and sky is much lighter. If I want detail and richness in both the sky and the trees HDR will help me achieve that. I highly recommend a tripod for this or you might get a multiple exposure looking effect. You can also try using Nikon D-Lighting along with In-Camera HDR to bring out even more dynamic range in your camera.

Finishing Details in POST

I am often asked how I get so much colour in my images. The answer is simple and I mentioned it earlier. I start with an excellent image right out of the camera. I ensure I have the perfect exposure and lots of saturation and sharpness along with the

right amount of contrast out of the gate. Then when I bring my image into Nikon View NX2, I might just increase saturation or colour-booster and contrast to get the results I am looking for. If I want to do more enhancements like darken the sky or add detail to a specific spot I use the Google/Nik Viveza plug-in for Photoshop or Lightroom with colour control points to specifically tweak points on the image. Colour control points are incredible tools and give you control over the hue, saturation, brightness, RGB values, warmth and detail of specific points on the image and are great for fine tuning. I really try to do the least amount of POST by getting it as good as I can in-camera so that I can spend more time shooting and less time in front of the computer, however sometimes the computer is necessary to push your image past the camera's capabilities.

Hopefully these insights will help you on your journey to photograph the beauty in the world with excellence.

Happy Shooting!

For more landscape photography tips and videos check out Kristian's photo blog at kristianbogner.com or sign up for one of his photography courses in the Rocky Mountains and throughout Canada at photographicrockstar.com

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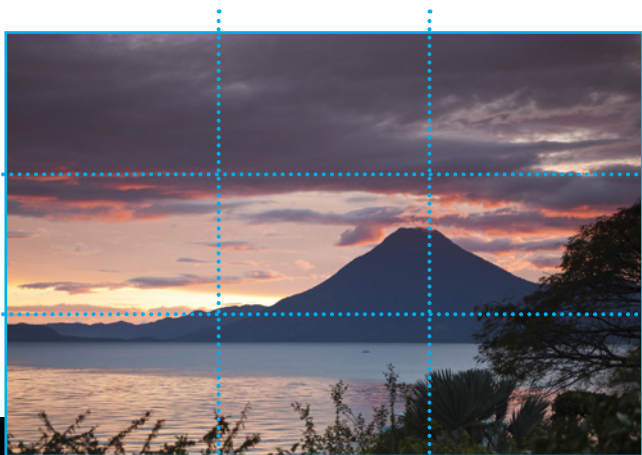


Shooting Tips

BY MICHAEL DEFREITAS

THE RULE OF THIRDS

TIC-TAC-TOE YOUR WAY TO BETTER PICTURES



A lower, level horizon emphasizes the dramatic sky. Nikon D700, zoom lens at 56mm, 1/100 second, f/2.8 at ISO 200.

The rule of thirds is one of the basic principles of photographic composition, but some photographers seem to have difficulty with the concept. After years of teaching photography, I realized that many photographers find the phrase “rule of thirds” a bit too mathematical and intimidating, so in my workshops I renamed it the “tic-tac-toe” rule.

The concept stems from the natural tendency of humans to quickly focus on certain “areas” of an image or



The mother's eyes are in the dominant intersection but unfocused, so emphasis is on the baby's eyes which are on the lower right intersection and sharp. Photographed at a distance of just 1.25m with a Nikon D700, zoom lens at 70mm, 1/160 second at f/6.3, ISO 200.



scene. The longer it takes a viewer to find your point of interest the less visual impact your image will have. The renaissance masters knew that if they positioned their subject or point of interest in those areas of the frame where humans naturally focus, their paintings would have more impact.

Early painters prepared a blank canvas as if they were starting a tic-tac-toe game with two vertical lines crossing two horizontal lines, forming four intersection points. They

painted their subjects on the intersecting points of the "game" lines and the rule of thirds was born.

For many years, camera manufacturers designed their viewfinders with a split screen focusing pattern in the centre of the frame, literally forcing photographers to place their subject in the centre of the picture. You had to make a conscious decision to focus on the subject then shift your composition to place the subject on one of the intersection points of the "rule of thirds".

When camera manufacturers invented multiple focusing points, it made "off center" focusing easier. Today, most DSLRs have a menu function that overlays a tic-tac-toe grid pattern on your viewfinder or LCD screen to make it easier to see where the lines intersect.

Okay, enough of the history and theory, let's get practical. If your camera has a grid view function, select it and try to compose images that place your main subject at one of the points where the grid lines intersect. If your camera does not offer a grid view function, you may be able to move the focus indicator to one of the key "rule of thirds" points, and imagine a tic-tac-toe grid when composing.



China, Suzhou. A vendor in Shan Tang Street looks into the frame. Nikon D2X, zoom lens at 155mm, 1/250 second at f/3.3, ISO 160.

Points of Composition

Since human eyes are drawn to the grid intersecting points, that's where we need to place our subjects for the greatest impact. For portraits, try to place your subject's eyes on one of the grid intersect points (the top two points work best). Also, have your subject looking or moving into the frame or at you, not out of the frame. If you are shooting someone running or a racing car moving across your frame, make sure it is entering and not leaving the frame, otherwise you risk leading the viewer out of the frame - defeating the main goal of keeping a viewer's attention focused "inside" the frame.

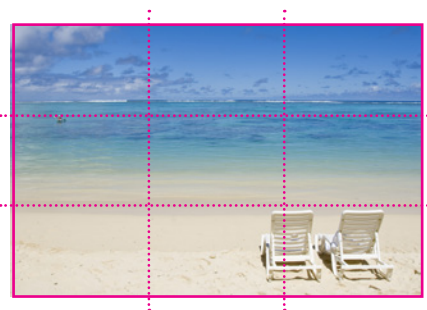
Is there hierarchy for the grid intersecting points? Yes. A subject placed at one of the grid intersecting points has a stronger visual impact than one placed on one of the lines. In English speaking countries we read from left to right and top to bottom, so the upper left intersection point is usually the more dominant place for single subject composition.

If you have two subjects at equal distance from the camera and both are on top intersecting points of the grid, the upper left subject will appear more prominent in the viewer's mind. However, if one of the subjects is closer to the camera, the closer subject will usually have more prominence regardless of the location within your composition.

Also, in images with two subjects, a sharply focused subject will usually overpower a softer or unfocused subject re-

gardless of its position. The same holds true for colour. A brightly coloured subject will usually overpower a duller subject regardless of which of the grid intersection points it is on.

Please note that you will have to adjust the hierarchy of the composition grid concept for cultures with right to left or bottom to top reading. Typically, the dominant intersecting point will be in the corner where you typically start reading.



Cook Islands,
Rorotonga. High level
horizon emphasizes
the beach and chairs.
Nikon D2X, zoom
lens at 17mm, 1/125
second, f/16, ISO 100.



Lines of Composition

When shooting landscapes, try not to place the horizon in the middle of the frame. Place it on the top or bottom third line. Placing the horizon on the bottom third line emphasizes everything above (sky) while a position along the top emphasizes everything below (foreground). The bottom line position is more dominant. Also, make sure that the horizon line is level. A skewed horizon will negate any positive visual impact created by using a third line.

These and the following tips should help you get comfortable with the tic-tac-toe rule. Keep in mind that in photography rules are meant to be broken, but it's best to learn them first.

Ready to take it to the next level?

GEAR UP

Okay - so you didn't use the tic-tac-toe rule and you created a fantastic portrait of a smiling Tibetan monk with glistening gold teeth - right in the centre of the frame. Well don't fret, image-processing software like Adobe Photoshop Elements, Lightroom or Photoshop, allows you to crop your potential award-winning portrait on the computer when you get back home. These software programs also allow you to correct colour, saturation, sharpness, etc. Elements (\$120) is ideal for casual shooters with few images to correct. Adobe Lightroom (\$280) is great for batch processing and managing large image collections. If you're an avid shooter that makes a lot of gallery-type prints you'll need Adobe Photoshop (\$600).

PRO TIPS FOR SHOOTING DETAILS

A few simple tic-tac-toe techniques.

- When shooting a family of four or more, try to have at least one person on each intercept. Never line them up in a straight line.
- When shooting a sailboat at sunset, place the hull on the bottom third line and the main mast on one of the vertical lines.
- Shoot people with pets with the person in the dominant position (upper left or right intercept). People tend to look at people first.
- For really tight portraits place the eye closest the camera on the intercept. Make sure it's sharply focused even if other parts of the face are not.
- If you do place a subject moving or looking out of the frame you can place a less conspicuous (smaller/unfocused/distant) subject or point of interest on the opposite side of the frame to add balance and keep the viewer engaged.
- When shooting someone riding a bike or paddling a canoe, make sure that the person's head is on an intercept point and not the bike or canoe (especially if the person's face is visible).
- For multiple subjects place the more dominant one in the foreground and on the lower right or left intercept (right is a bit more dominant).

China, Zhenjiang.
Jinshan (Golden Hill) Temple. Two subjects - both on intercepts but the left one is closer and sharper and therefore more dominant.
Nikon D700, zoom lens at 185mm, 1/30 second, f/2.8, ISO 400.





CANADIAN ANGLES

BY MICHELLE VALBERG

HOOKED ON LAKE PHOTOGRAPHY

A loon calls across the lake, pauses, and calls again. Nearby, an osprey splashes into the mirror-still water, searching for food. I feel the soft burr-burr-burr of a dragonfly's wings next to my face before I see it.

Amid the sounds of cottage life, I make my own music. My shutter whirrs again and again, capturing an eagle soaring above the tree line, turtles convening a meeting on a floating log or a pompous bullfrog gruffly announcing his presence.

"Heading to the cottage" is as Canadian as sticky August afternoons, turning leaves in fall and playoff hockey in winter. Cottage country offers fantastic opportunities to capture the beauty of our land and its wildlife. Whether it is spring, summer, winter or fall, wildlife abounds and the landscape wonderfully transforms before us providing a virtual art gallery of opportunity.

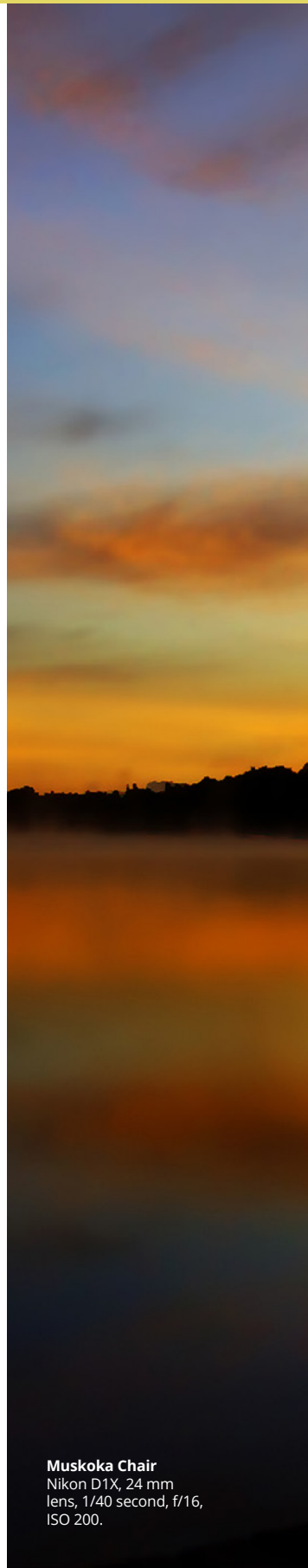
Out of the estimated two million lakes in Canada, we have our own little slice of paradise on Sharbot Lake, in Ontario's rugged Canadian Shield. Surrounded by soaring stands of pine, punctuated with pink and grey granite outcrops and dotted with junipers, blueberries and endless tangles of bracken, it is a place where my heart swells whenever I visit.

Whether it is an insect, a bird, family, friends or scenery, my camera is never far from my reach. Even in the winter I feel the same way and I love all the challenges it can bring.

Like most photographers—amateur or professional—I always seek the perfect shot, that image that will finally capture the place, the moment and the feelings it evokes. For me, a beautiful summer morning wake-up at 5am is the ultimate way to begin the day with a coffee, a camera and a kayak. In the summer, a sunrise on pristine calm water (which you always hope for at 5am) with only the sound of birds is where I find the ultimate solitude.

Bio

Michelle Valberg is the founder of Valberg Imaging, Ottawa, a Canadian Nikon Ambassador, and an award-winning Canadian photographer. Renowned for her soulful portraiture, majestic wildlife and stunning landscapes, Michelle recently published her third book, *Arctic Kaleidoscope: The People, Wildlife and Ever-Changing Landscape*.

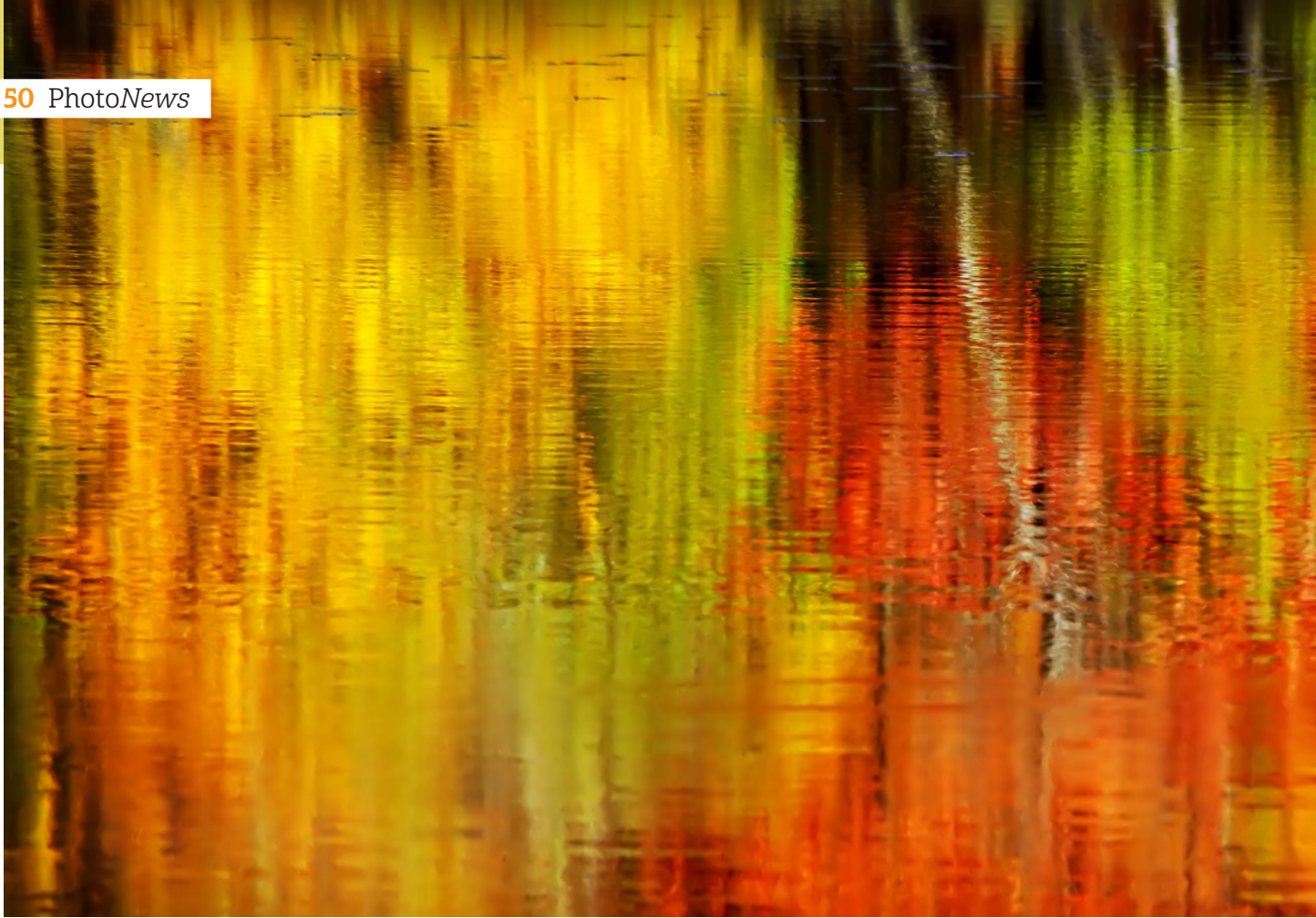


Muskoka Chair
Nikon D1X, 24 mm
lens, 1/40 second, f/16,
ISO 200.

*“Stay close to nature,
it will never fail you.”*

Frank Lloyd Wright





Sharbot Lake Reflection

Nikon D3X,
400 mm lens, 1/640
second, f/9, ISO 800.

Most often, my Nikon D4S and 80-400mm join me in the kayak in search of the magnificent light. I listen for wildlife, watch for movement and follow my senses. I am comfortable in my kayak and I make sure I move slowly to ensure my camera remains dry and not at the bottom of the lake! I usually start with 800 ISO so I can keep my shutter speed at a minimum of 1/500 second. A fast shutter speed will help minimize camera movement.

Using a variety of lenses ranging from wide angle to telephoto can give you different perspectives. I will often challenge myself to only use one lens on a particular day. It may be a wide angle, macro or long lens. A macro lens

allows you to look intimately at nature and see what the naked eye doesn't, especially when you see the textures in a butterfly wing or the eye of a dragonfly. I try to always be distinctive in my approach and search for the unseen.

Likewise, a telephoto lens will give you an altogether different perspective and allow you to get in closer to your subject. We have eagles on our lake. Whether they are in the nest or fishing,

Michelle Kayaking

Nikon D810,
200 mm lens, 1/640
second, f/5.6, ISO 500.



**Loons**

Nikon D4S, 400 mm lens,
1/800 second, f/6.3, ISO 2000.

I prefer to use a longer lens, like the 600mm—but this requires a tripod and can be tricky if you are in a small boat. Many nights I will sit on the dock set up with the D4S and 600mm on a tripod and wait for the expected wildlife activity at dusk. I like to be ready for anything that might happen!

Big challenges reap big rewards in photography, and that is so true of capturing an insect in flight. Photographing their motion takes great practice

Painted Turtles

Nikon D4S, 300 mm lens, 1/1600 second,
f/7.1, ISO 800.



**Blue Heron**

Nikon D4S, 400mm lens, 1/1000 second, f/9, ISO 640.

and requires a lot of memory – I shoot on continuous and often fire off hundreds of frames to get the desired shot. Once again, a high ISO is important so you can use a really fast shutter speed, such as a minimum of 1/2000 second.

Photographing during the magic hours – either early in the morning or late in the day is best for light and seizing the mood, showcasing the serenity and revealing the clarity in the light.

I love to use a versatile waterproof/shockproof camera such as the Nikon AW1 for photo-ops of kids playing in the water or going underwater to capture a frog, lily pads or fish.

Whether you photograph freckled kids leaping joyfully off the dock, paddle silently through an early morning mist to become part of the environment, or stare down your lens into the face of a wayward moose, there is just one rule, regardless of your equipment... live in the moment. Connect in the immediate with the world around you. Explore. Not only will your heart sing, but your images will, too.

Northern Crescent**Butterfly**

Nikon D3X, 70-300mm zoom at 270 mm, 1/60 second, f/8, ISO 800.



FIVE TIPS FOR BETTER LAKESIDE IMAGES

1. Photograph with the best light in mind

Early morning or late afternoon light is ideal for photographs. Angles of light are lower and this creates more texture and interest in your image. Shadows and contrast are increased when the sun is low in the sky, and you typically get more wildlife activity in the early or late day since it is feeding time. Play with front, back and side lighting to see how you can photograph your landscape scene or wildlife in different ways. Most important – watch and change your camera settings to get better results.

2. Composition

Pay close attention to your background and positioning of your subject when photographing wildlife. Perhaps experiment with different foregrounds or backgrounds to create interest. Put your subject off centre (opposed to the centre) using the rule of thirds which will allow the viewer to wander through the image. Change your vantage point often. Composition can make or break your image and it is critical to creating and capturing that first class photograph.

3. Change Perspective

Photograph your subjects with a wide lens to showcase them in their environment and then zoom in with a telephoto to get up close. Eye to eye contact with animals in your image grabs attention. Look for ways to capture motion – whether it is a bird in flight or a waterfall. Remember your tripod and change your shutter speeds to achieve different effects.

4. Anticipate Behaviour

Watching animal behaviour and anticipating their next move can help you get better results. Pay close attention to what your subject might do next, where it might go and how you can best capture it. An animal can change the tilt of its head ever so slightly and it can go from achieving a good image to a fantastic one. Watch a bird's wing position or how an animal walks or swims. Remember to always keep a watchful eye on your subject.

5. Shoot, shoot, shoot!








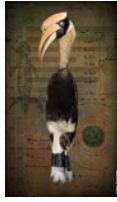

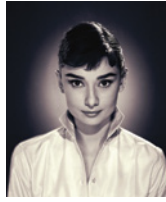



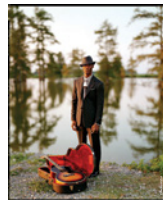


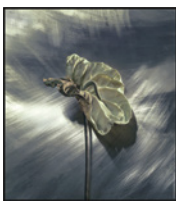




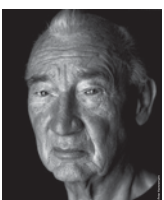
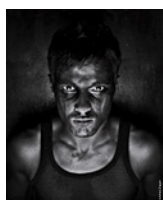
Don't stop shooting until you have your ultimate image. Always carry a lot of memory cards so you don't have to worry about how many images you can take. The beauty of nature is all around us and you don't have to travel long distances to photograph it. Photograph in your backyard, a park or on a trail. Pay close attention to your ISO, shutter and aperture, and always experiment, practice and continue to learn. Try to be unique and creative with your approach so your images stand out and command your viewer's attention.



Hahnemühle

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SPECIAL FEATURE | TECHNIQUE

BY FRANCIS AUDET

CAUGHT IN THE WEB

The spider's patience and architectural talents create some of the most wonderful and delicate pieces of art found in nature and a real challenge for the avid photographer. Here are a few tips to capture magical images of spider webs.

Spider webs are very light, so even the gentlest gust of air will make them move and vibrate—often just enough to lose your focus. This has several implications when you embark on a web photography adventure. First, you need a windless day, and the best time to shoot is typically before dawn when the air is usually very still. Second, the draft of your own movement or even your body heat on a cool day can cause the web to shake. To avoid this, stay as far from the web as possible and do not breathe towards the web. You might assume that it is only logical to use a macro lens to capture these works of art, and you would be correct, but this type of shot can be tricky and a long macro lens is the preferred choice, but you can get great results with a range of equipment. One method I like is to use a telephoto lens with extension tubes to decrease the minimal focal range. Fill your frame, or frame just a smaller part of the web and the patterns that you see there. In this way you can end up with some real detail and abstract composition.

Bio

Francis Audet, a master of light and perspective, is the founder of the Photo Planet Project, and a leader of seminars and webinars on a wide range of photo topics. For a stunning array of visual images, please visit francisaudet.com

Nikon D7100, 70-200 zoom
at 70mm, 1/200 second,
f/4, ISO 2000

Wet Web

Nikon D3100, 17-50mm f/2.8 zoom at 50mm, 1/400 second, f/10, ISO 800.



One of the best ways to isolate the web is to have a narrow depth of field (DoF), but this alone is not sufficient. Try to get a dark and uniform background in order to avoid distracting the viewer's attention. Narrow DoF can be achieved with a large aperture, or a long focal length (or extension tubes as mentioned above). Try to use a fast shutter speed since inevitably the web will move!

Because of this narrow DoF, only shooting the web straight on will give you the entire web in focus. Not that this is required, but keep in mind that if you are playing with angles to have a different composition, only a limited

portion of the web will be in focus. Work your subject from both sides—you might get a better background.

The slightest change in focusing will have a great impact, so avoid this by using a tripod and a remote shutter release. Keep in mind that even the act of squeezing the shutter release on the camera can cause the camera to move when you trigger the shot. Use manual focus once the composition is done, because the very fine strands of the web are difficult to focus on, and if they are even slightly out of focus this can ruin your shot.

Photographing water droplets on a web is a classic and beautiful shot. The droplets can come from dew or very fine misting rain. In addition to their beauty, they make the web stand out more and make it easier to focus on. Rain can often destroy parts of the web, so the best time of day for water pearl webs is in the morning when you can capture the dew. As soon as the sun comes out, dew will dry, and the warming air may cause air shift and make the web move, so get out there before dawn if possible. If you do find a great web on a bright sunny day, and you want pearls on it, you could very carefully use a water mister, but many people frown on insect photography techniques that may endanger the subject. Another trick is to dust the web with corn starch, sieved through a sock or a piece of cheesecloth held a few inches above the web. The starch will stick to the web, making it thicker and brighter – but again, keep in mind that this may harm the spider, so use restraint and just the minimum amount of material.

Photographing the spider's web is a real challenge – master this assignment and your images will captivate your friends!



SPECIAL FEATURE | TECHNIQUE

BY JOHAN SORENSEN.

4K TECHNOLOGY

Technology and art work hand-in-hand in today's society and photography is at the forefront of that combination. 4K Photo has created a new standard of quality in still photography and can make it easier to capture motion.

Drum

For this image I used HMI movie lights in a split lighting setup. The plastic confetti was captured at 1/1000 second, ISO 200, Panasonic GH4 with Leica DG Nocticron 42.5mm f/1.2 lens.

I have been doing photography for over 35 years and have seen many changes in the industry. For the last few months I have been exploring 4K photography and I am impressed with the opportunities it provides.

4K photography does not replace the creative process involved in capturing special moments, but it does help to freeze the exact frame that best conveys your message.



In the Wind

With fans blowing the model's hair, I shot at 1/1000 second at ISO 800 with the GH4 and Lumix X Vario 12-35mm f/2.8 lens. I used two softboxes, one for the main light at 45° high, and the other as a background fill light.



Tattoo Splash
For this image I used two HMI movie lights in a split lighting setup. The model was coated with baby oil and posed in front of a black background – the only way to capture the glistening effect of water droplets. GH4 with Lumix X Vario 12-35mm f/2.8 lens, 1/1000 second, ISO 200.



With 4 times the resolution of Full HD, 4K brings a level of clarity that surpasses anything you have seen before with richer detail and more true-to-life images. 4K also offers more options after recording.

You can now shoot video at 30 frames a second and very easily extrapolate one or multiple frames in camera and save them as SMP still images. This new technology is fun and so simple to use.

Photography is always exciting when you are doing action shots but getting a “perfect capture” of splashing water or an explosion of confetti in the past was very laborious and time consuming.

The photographs shown here have been captured perfectly in 4K Photo Mode with the Lumix GH4 and Panasonic's Leica 42.5mm F1.2 lens. The photograph of the drum with coloured confetti was a fun project. I shot it in studio with two lights at 1/1000 shutter speed, F2.8 at 400 ISO.

I shot the setup a few times with different amounts of confetti to see the results. The lights were placed at 90° from my camera on each side of the subject matter about 6 feet away. It is important when you shoot something with a lot of texture that you place your lights at the side so that you can see the depth of the subject you are photographing.

I challenge the reader to try this technique yourself – 4K photo mode is perfect for occasions such as weddings or your children's sports events, when capturing the “moment” really counts.

**Ribbons**

I used one 6-ft octagon softbox at 45° above the model, and a 4 x 8-ft. reflector on the other side. The model was posed 6 feet in front of a white background. GH4, Lumix X Vario 12-35mm f/2.8 lens, 1/1000 second at ISO 400.



The Dream Lens Trio

BY **PETER K. BURIAN** FOR PHOTONEWS

TOURING EUROPE WITH “FAST” TAMRON ZOOMS

These rugged lenses provide major advantages thanks to their wide, and constant, f/2.8 maximum aperture, VC stabilizer and high-tech optics



Shooting the interior of a cathedral is a difficult assignment, as tripods are generally not permitted. The ultra-wide f/2.8 lens solves the problem, and if you hold the camera so the sensor is parallel to the vertical elements of the scene, you can capture the magnificent view.

The vast majority of zooms feature a small maximum aperture because most digital SLR camera owners demand compact, lightweight lenses.

A typical zoom lens is designated as f/3.5-5.6 indicating that the maximum aperture is quite small at the short end and becomes very small at longer focal lengths. On the other hand, some lenses boast a much wider maximum aperture of f/2.8, offering significant benefits discussed a bit later.

For a long stock photography trip through Europe with a full-frame Nikon D800, I took three such lenses, the Tamron f/2.8 Di USD VC zooms: the 15-30mm, 24-70mm and 70-200mm model. This trio was an ideal travel companion because f/2.8 is available at all focal lengths. And since a tripod is not allowed in cathedrals and palaces such as Stephansdom and Schönbrunn (Vienna), Tamron's VC feature providing image stabilization that lets you shoot about four shutter speeds slower than non VC lenses was a definite asset. These features made it possible to often use ISO 400 or 800 in such locations and in urban night photography.

Thanks to the pro calibre optical elements, I was confident of excellent image quality even at maximum aperture. Naturally, the rugged construction and moisture-resistant design were a bonus. It was great to be able to continue shooting in rain, as I did for an entire evening in the historic centre of beautiful Prague in the Czech Republic.

Bio

Peter K. Burian is a stock photographer whose work is marketed by three stock agencies, and a Contributing Editor with several publications in Canada and Australia. Check out his work and his bio at peterkburian.com



Travelling with a range of zoom lenses makes every shot a breeze. The 24-70mm focal length range is ideal for general scenes, like this one.

Wide Aperture Benefits

Serious photographers appreciate wide aperture lenses for their greater light-transmitting ability particularly in low light situations. When shooting indoors without flash for example, an $f/2.8$ lens allows for using faster shutter speeds without the need to set a very high ISO level. That's why lenses of this type are called "fast". They can be valuable in producing sharper photos with less blurring from camera shake and/or subject motion. Autofocusing is also quicker and more reliable in dark locations because a wide aperture lens transmits more light to the AF sensor.

An image made at a lower ISO level will exhibit less digital noise: the "grainy" pattern of random, coloured specks that can obliterate intricate detail. While Noise Reduction processing (in the camera or in software) can provide smoother high ISO images, the effect is achieved by blurring the "grain" pattern. That also smudges fine detail reducing resolution. On the other hand, a low ISO image will be "cleaner" with greater resolution of intricate detail.

In addition to providing a brighter view of the subject in the viewfinder, $f/2.8$ also allows for images with shallower depth of field (selective focus effects). Especially at focal lengths of 135mm or longer, it's possible to render a cluttered background as a soft blur of colour which is less distracting. The effect is most obvious when the subject is no more than two meters from the camera. When it's sharply framed against a soft backdrop, the centre of interest immediately attracts and holds the viewer's attention.

The "Fast" Tamron Trio

Let's take a look at these three $f/2.8$ lenses with fast Ultrasonic Silent Drive AF, manual focus override in AF mode, high-grade optics and advanced multi-layer coatings to resist flare. Models in the Canon and Nikon mount are also equipped with a Vibration Compensation stabilizer to minimize the effects of camera shake. The VC system makes it possible to get sharp photos at surprising long shutter speeds in hand-held shooting.

Note that all three are multi-platform zooms. The shorter duo is ideal for full-frame DSLR owners, while the 70-200mm zoom is equally desirable with DSLRs employing a smaller sensor. With such cameras, this is a 105-300mm or a 112-320mm $f/2.8$ equivalent, making it a perfect choice for sports, journalism, fashion, weddings, or intimate landscape photos.

WHY WE SHOOT AT $f/2.8$

For the average photographer, shooting with a conventional zoom lens can produce excellent results within the operational range of the lens. The best aperture settings are generally in the middle of the scale ($f/5.6$ - $f/8$), and this lets you shoot most subjects at reasonable shutter speeds in bright daylight... but for low-light conditions, as well as high speed sports, wildlife, and photography of active subjects, advanced photographers and the pros prefer a "faster" zoom lens, with a constant $f/2.8$ aperture.

Shooting with the $f/2.8$ zooms lets you capture higher shutter speed images at lower ISO settings, often resulting in cleaner, sharper images than you can achieve with the $f/4$ and "slower" zooms, which often have variable apertures that can be $f/5.6$ or smaller at the longest zoom settings. An $f/2.8$ zoom that offers a constant aperture throughout the focal length range can be several f /stops faster than a variable aperture zoom lens—this makes it essential for low-light or action photography.

The characteristics of an image shot at $f/2.8$ compared to an image shot at $f/5.6$ can be quite dramatic. Pros take advantage of the shallow depth of focus available at $f/2.8$ to isolate their subjects from the background—creating images that "pop".

The $f/2.8$ zooms are specialized lenses, designed for people who earn their living through photography. The $f/2.8$ zooms are premium lenses with pro quality optics, materials and build characteristics, often featuring faster autofocus, better lens coatings, and more aperture blades to produce beautiful bokeh.

Is it worth the price and the extra weight to carry the faster zoom lenses? In most cases, the avid enthusiasts and professional photographers will answer with a definite "YES!"



Tamron SP 70-200mm f/2.8 Di VC USD

Slightly smaller than other lenses in this category, this tele zoom with solid construction boasts one piece of Extra Low Dispersion glass and four Low Dispersion elements. It is also equipped with an iris diaphragm with nine aperture blades to render defocused highlights as circular instead of octagonal for a more pleasing background “bokeh”. While all three of the f/2.8 lenses feature a circular diaphragm, this aspect is particularly important with a tele lens. A removable tripod mounting collar is included. Internal focusing ensures that the length/weight distribution remains constant and also helps assure fast autofocus.

The high tech optical elements minimize chromatic aberrations so even my images made at f/2.8 exhibit no apparent colour fringing, as well as very high sharpness in the central 70% of the image area. At most focal lengths, stopping down to f/4 or a smaller aperture ensured that edge sharpness was also outstanding. For stunning, pro calibre sharpness across the frame at 200mm however, I stopped down to f/5.6 or f/8. While there is some vignetting (darkening at the corners) as with nearly all zooms, this is minimal by f/5.6. Note too that most current imaging software provides a feature that can correct vignetting.



Tamron SP 24-70mm F/2.8 Di VC USD

A “standard” zoom with internal focusing and the most popular focal lengths on a full-frame DSLR, this was my most frequently-used lens in Europe. It is the only f/2.8 model in its class to feature an image stabilizer and the barrel contains a particularly impressive optical formula. It includes three Low Dispersion elements, three Glass Moulded Aspherical plus a Hybrid Aspherical lens and two pieces of Extra Refractive Index glass to compensate for aberrations and distortion. The combination makes it competitive with some single focal length (prime) lenses especially at 35mm.

At maximum aperture, sharpness in the central area is high, and by f/4 edge sharpness is equally impressive. There is some vignetting at wide apertures (easily solved later in software) but this disappears by f/5.6. The 24mm focal length provided a wide field of view, adequate for most interiors. Some barrel distortion was visible at the shortest focal lengths, as with most such zooms, also easily corrected with software. The 70mm end was perfect for portraits. All in all, this lens provided versatility and fabulous image quality, at a price that’s lower than those of its camera-brand competitors.



Use the perspective compressing capability of the 70-200mm zoom at 200mm to capture the activity along the canal.



The 24-70mm zoom, at 24mm, is wide enough to frame a spiral staircase, and long enough to give you a clear view of the floor.



Tamron SP 15-30mm f/2.8 Di VC USD

A true rectilinear lens, well corrected for linear distortion, with a super wide 110° field of view at 15mm—mechanically and cosmetically, this is clearly a pro-calibre product. Since the front element protrudes, filters cannot be used but there's a built-in hood—as well as eBAND and BBAR coatings—to minimize the risk of flare. Instead of a lens cap, Tamron provides an innovative cover that slips right over the hood.

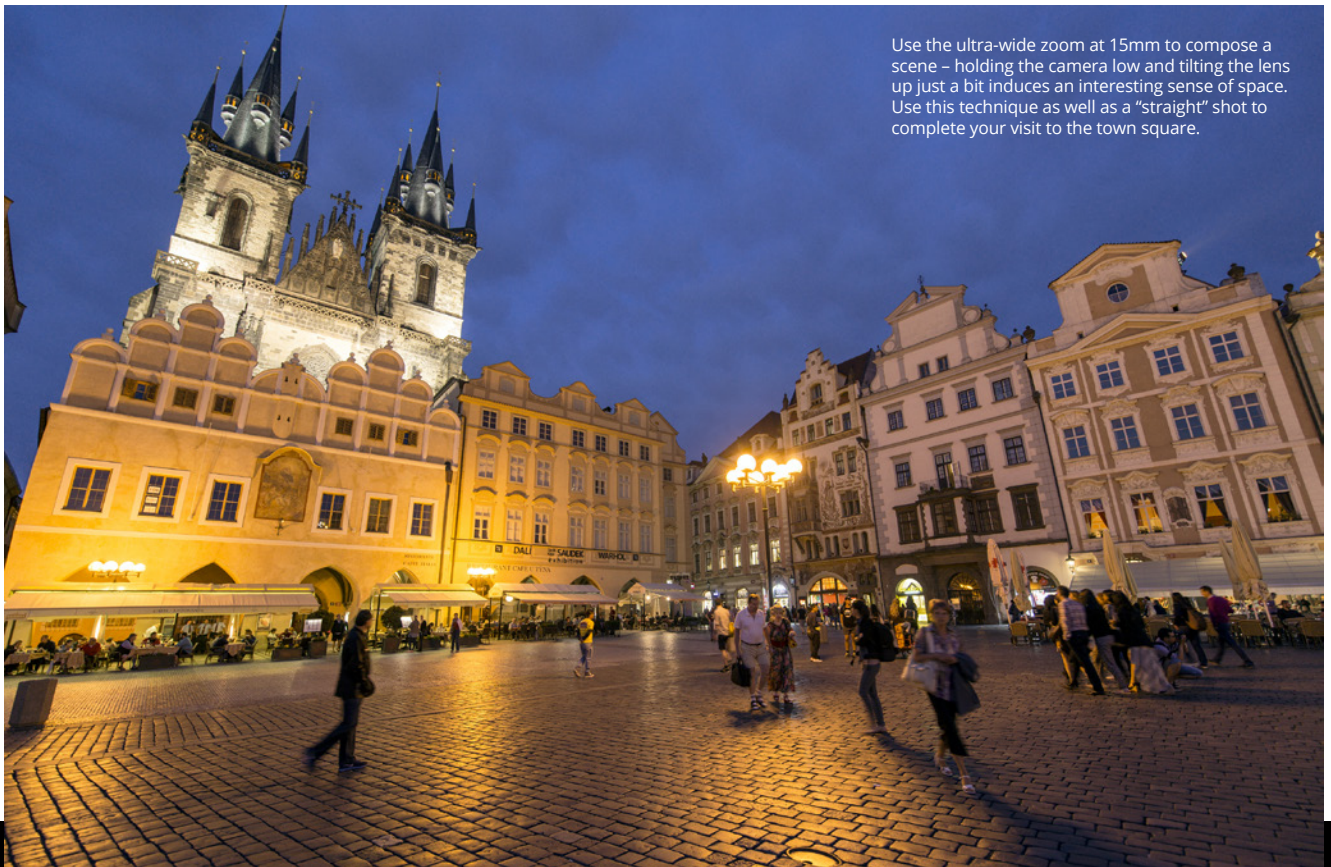
The optical formula includes two types of high tech elements: an XGM Aspherical plus three pieces of Low Dispersion glass to minimize all types of aberrations. These are intended for high edge-to-edge sharpness and to minimize distortion, the bending of straight lines near the edge of the frame. All short focal length zooms exhibit “barrel distortion” (bending of lines near the edges of the frame) to some extent, but this is obvious only in formal architectural photographs.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The three Tamron f/2.8 Di USD VC zooms were ideal for use in Europe helping to make images that I was proud to submit to a stock agency for sale to discriminating photo buyers. Naturally, they're equally desirable closer to home. Experienced photographers appreciate the advantages of a fast lens, especially one with professional attributes in build and optics. If you fall into that category, or if you are a photo enthusiast who is ready for superior quality, check out these zooms at a nearby photo retailer. Though not inexpensive, they offer great value, paying dividends with technology that will complement your creative vision.

Of course, any ultra wide produces “expanded perspective” and the so-called “perspective distortion” when we tilt the lens upward as I often did for creative effects. Since this is not caused by any optical flaw, it is easy to prevent by ensuring that the camera back is perfectly level.

I often used f/2.8 while recording the vast, dark interiors of Gothic churches and the images exhibit outstanding sharpness even at the edges of the frame. My best compositions made for excellent 16x24-inch custom prints with great definition of intricate detail. At longer focal lengths, the central 70% was very sharp but for greater edge sharpness, it was worth stopping down to f/4 for superb results across the entire frame. Darkening at the corners is visible in images made especially at f/2.8 in the 15-20mm range, but is not visible by f/5.6 and any vignetting is easy to fix with software, such as Silkypix Developer Studio for Tamron that is included with this lens.



Use the ultra-wide zoom at 15mm to compose a scene – holding the camera low and tilting the lens up just a bit induces an interesting sense of space. Use this technique as well as a “straight” shot to complete your visit to the town square.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

ALLYSON IN WONDERLAND

Allyson Matos is a 28-year old photographer from Surrey, B.C. who began her photographic career working as a photo and electronics specialist at a camera shop, and developed a distinctive style that she applies to a range of subjects from weddings to newborns and headshots.



We asked Allyson to share a few images from her Alice in Wonderland series, and a few thoughts on the assignment.

I have always wanted to do an Alice shoot (what photographer doesn't?) but everything out there has been very vintage and dark—I wanted to create a whimsical, happy and fun feeling because that is what Alice is all about!

For this assignment, the costumes were made by my friends, and I created the Mad Hatter look and did the makeup for him, and I made the hat and some of the decorations. I Photo-shopped hair on the Cheshire Cat just to make it more real.

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This photo shoot showcases some young photographers who are the next generation to get into the scene. I believe that as an artist you have to have some degree of Peter Pan syndrome... You don't ever want to grow up.

I feel that photography leaves a mark on this world, and I would like to think that one day, when I am gone, people will see my work and say "hey, that's by Allyfotografy!"

For more images from Allyson, and information on Allyfotografy Media Company, please visit allyfotografy.weebly.com/



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Tech Tips | Flash In the Field

BY CHRISTIAN AUTOTTE

CHOOSING THE RIGHT FLASH

Where there's no light, there's no photograph. As simple as this truism may be, it gains full meaning when it comes time to choose a flash.



Left: add a flash accessory that will extend your reach, like the "Better Beamer" and you can fill-in the shadows on a distant bird. Adjust the flash for slightly less output, and bracket exposures if possible. Most wildlife subjects seem to be oblivious to a quick burst of light.

Right: without the flash modifier, your bird photo remains backlit and natural, but not as impressive as the shot with fill-in flash.

Also called "speedlights", hotshoe mounted flashes come in many shapes and sizes. Some flashes are meant for specific uses while others are more versatile. Which flash to choose depends largely on the photographer, their needs and their budget. Speedlights are generally rated by their "Guide Number (GN)" (see sidebar) – the higher the GN, the higher the power output of the flash. Flash model numbers generally reflect their GN.

The obvious first choice is the standard "cobra" flash, so-called because the shape resembles the head of a cobra about to strike. The simplest models, like the Metz 36, are usually less powerful and more manual in their settings than the more advanced models. The ISO must be set with a manual slider and the zoom head pulled and retracted according to the focal length being used. This is the type of flash designed for the occasional photographer or one with a tight budget.



Intermediate flash models are more versatile – the Metz 44 is a good example. It remains very simple for beginners yet offers enough possibilities to make it very interesting for more advanced photographers. The Metz 44 is a fully automatic flash that uses the camera's TTL (through the lens) information to adjust to the ISO and aperture selected on camera; its head also zooms to follow the lens itself as it is zoomed in or out. It is also more powerful and features a head that can tilt and swivel (the 36 can only go up and down, not sideways). The 44's usefulness is also enhanced with the possibility to use it re-



Metz 15 MS-1

Metz 64 AF-1

Metz 52 AF-1

Metz 44 AF-1

Metz 36 AF-5

motely as a wireless “slave” flash. Slave flashes will fire at the same time as a “master” flash attached to the camera and in many cases these slave flashes can be controlled by the camera’s built-in flash. Wireless flash can be used in manual or full TTL, compatible with most major brands.

With the Metz 52 and 64 we enter the level of advanced portable flashes. Not only are they more powerful and functional, but they can also be used as “master” or “slave” as needed.

Why would you need a more powerful flash? Here’s the obvious answer: to light something far away. Press photographers and wildlife photographers often use flash outdoors to add light and fill-in shadows. Wildlife photographers often use a powerful flash with a Fresnel attachment to throw light on backlit birds. The birds don’t seem to mind and the added light can make all the difference between a dark, underexposed picture and one that pops with colours.

Another advantage of a powerful flash is power control. Having power to spare means that the first picture taken doesn’t empty your reserves, so a second picture can be taken – maybe even a third and a fourth – before the flash is drained. This depends on the flash Guide Number and the flash-to-subject distance. A further advantage is that with more power you can add modifiers such as diffusers, bounce cards, or umbrellas in order to diffuse the light. Diffused light is more pleasant and usually preferable for portraits or some product photography.

Another way to get soft diffused light is the use of specialty ring flashes like the Metz 15 MS-1. Designed primarily for macro photography, these flashes are typically not very powerful as the subject tends to be very close. However, some photographers do use them for portraits with a different twist.

What’s the best all-around flash? I tend to say: the biggest flash you can afford, both financially and for the weight that must be carried. Smaller flashes are limited: light can’t reach as far as their big counterparts and adding diffusers or umbrellas usually means increasing ISO substantially to counter the resulting loss of light. A larger flash can be used to light a bird or an athlete 20 meters away, while also powering down to properly light a small flower a few centimetres in front of the lens. Bounce a large flash off an umbrella (or a white wall) and it can adequately replace a studio flash for the occasional portrait, giving off a nice soft light without being forced into those noisy high ISO. For active photographers looking for that extra “pop” in their images, a good flash is the ideal addition to your camera bag!

GUIDE NUMBER (GN)

The guide number is a simple formula to calculate how far a flash can light a subject at a given aperture. The formula is: $GN = \text{distance} \times f\text{-number}$. Or in reverse, to find the distance you divide the known GN of a flash by the aperture: $GN 52 \div f5.6 = 9.28$ meters.

GN is usually given for ISO 100, so you can “cheat” by increasing the ISO. By going from 100 to 200, the aperture can be closed down by one stop or the distance increased by a factor of 1.4. Why not double the distance? It’s because of another mathematical law called the “inverse-square law”: if you double the flash to subject distance you decrease the amount of light by its square ($2 \times 2 = 4$ times less light).

“COLOURS”



Cycle Racers Don Janus of Vancouver, BC, captured this image of the Women's race at the annual Global Relay Gastown Grand Prix. Using an Olympus OMD E-M10 and an Olympus M.40-150mm f4.0-5.6 R zoom lens, shooting at 1/500th second and f/5.4, ISO 1000. *"I positioned myself by the hairpin turn to capture the intensity of the moment and the concentration of the racers."* The image shows how a relatively wide aperture can be used to creatively separate a subject from the background—the image works because the colours draw your eye to the racer in the red outfit, positioned at the left vertical position of the “rule of thirds” grid.

The PHOTONews Canada Autumn 2015 Challenge theme is “Colours”. Your assignment: to capture an image that relies on the impact of colour.

The contest is open to all Canadian photographers. You may enter by finding us on Facebook at PHOTONews Canada, then click on the Photo Contest tab, or join our flickr® group at www.flickr.com/groups/photoneWSgallery/ and look for the Autumn 2015 “Colours” Challenge discussion thread, where you will find additional details, samples, suggestions, and technique tips.

It's fun, it's free, and it's a friendly environment for photographers of all ages and skill levels.

The contest deadline for entries for the “Colours” Challenge is October 16, 2015.

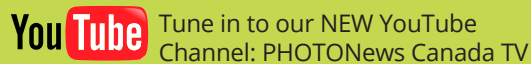
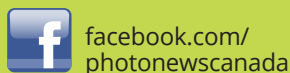
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