

december 2020

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magazine

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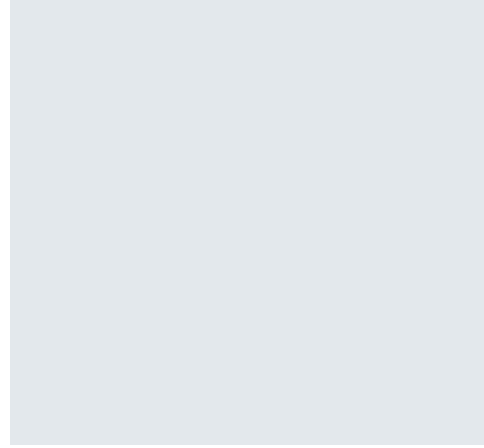
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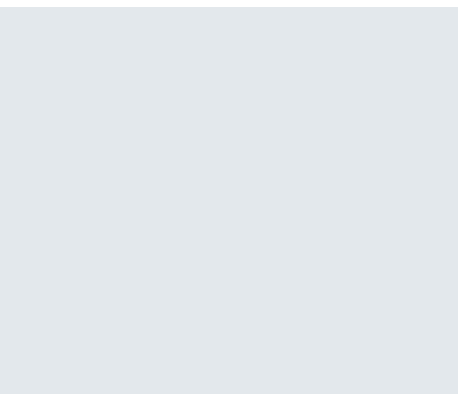
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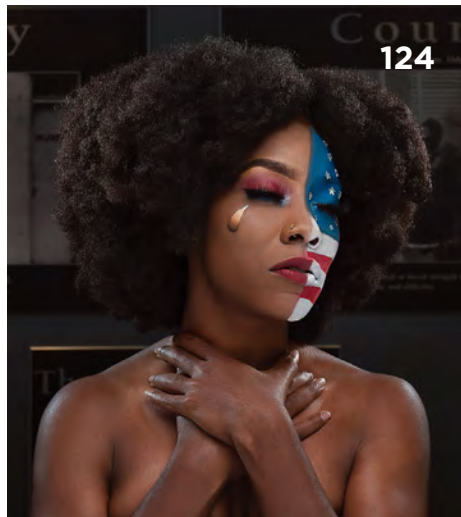
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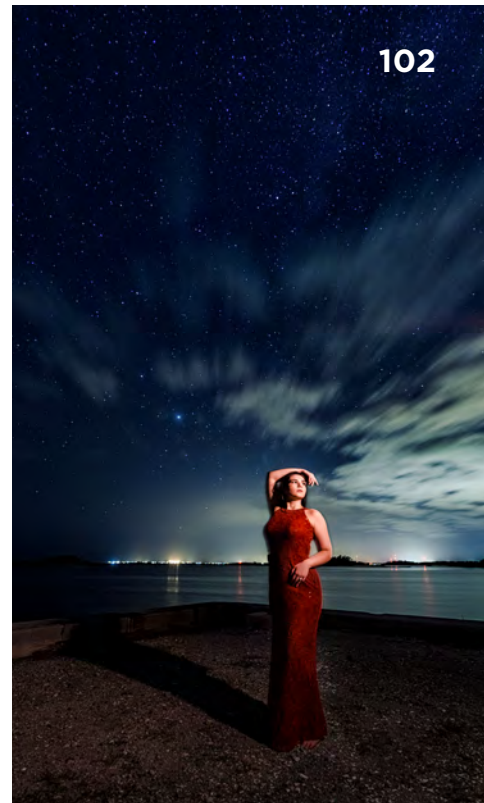
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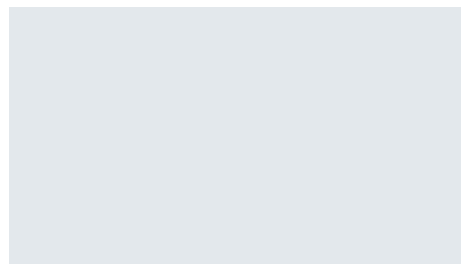
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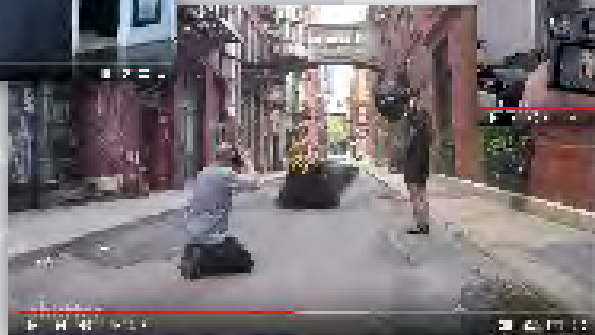
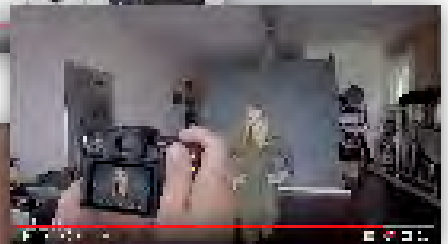
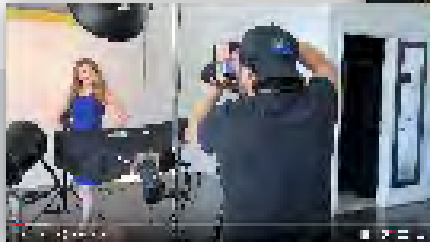


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*Shutter Magazine's* focus is on photography education. Our goal is to provide current insightful and in-depth educational content for today's professional wedding and portrait photographer. *Shutter* uses the latest technologies to deliver information in a way that is relevant to our audience.

Our experienced contributors help us create a sense of community and have established the magazine as one of the leading photography publications in the world.

***Shutter Magazine: By photographers, for photographers.***

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Rob Adams

Rey Benasfre

Sal Cincotta

Shannon K Dougherty

Vanessa Joy

Zsa'nee Gaines



## LAUNCH POINT

A message from the publisher

### **Everyone learns photography in different ways.**

Some learn by *reading*, some by *watching videos*, and some by *doing*. In this issue, we hope to help you learn in your own way "how to" be a better photographer, a better business owner, and how to grow your craft.

- Sal Cincotta

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## THE COVER

**TITLE:** flower queen

**PHOTOGRAPHER:** miguel quiles, @miguelquilesjr

**YOUTUBE:** youtube.com/miguelquilesjr

**CAMERA:** sony a7riii

**LENS:** sony 100mm 2.8gm stf

**EXPOSURE:** f/11 @ 1/160 iso 100

**LIGHTING:** profoto d2 inside of a mola Euro with diffusion sock, profoto d1 with a beauty dish gridded as a hair light, reflector below for fill

**MAKEUP/STYLING:** stephanie weiss, @stephwef\_

**HAIR:** sandy madanat, @sandy\_madanat

**ABOUT THE IMAGE:** This image was the result of a concept that my makeup artist came up with for my YouTube show "The Look."



**DO YOU NEED TO SELL  
PRINTED  
PRODUCTS  
AS A PHOTOGRAPHER?**

with **Vanessa Joy**

ASHLEY & VITO

ASHLEY & VITO

I firmly believe that wedding photographers who don't offer albums are not completing their job. The job of a wedding photographer isn't just to take pictures of the wedding, it's to document the couple's story and then tell that story visually. Everyone has digital devices now and can view digital photos, but there's still something magical about sitting around with the family and sharing photos of grandma and grandpa's wedding from the photo album. It's tangible. It's real. It's a bonding experience that we still haven't been quite able to recreate with digital devices.

So now that I've hopefully convinced you that selling albums is a worthwhile endeavor, let me explain to you how to do it so that you can maximize the benefit and experience for both you and the client, while ensuring neither of you drive each other crazy in the process.



Images © Vanessa Joy

## DON'T BE SALESY

It's always a good idea to avoid being overly salesy, but that is especially true in the case of a wedding album. This is going to be a family heirloom for them. You should take the time to show them how an album can tell their story. Although it's an additional expense, most of my clients end up purchasing the album because I've shown them that I care about the stories they will be able to tell more than I care about making the extra money. Your number one goal is to be their guide. Start with that, remember that, and you won't become a pushy salesperson giving a poor client experience.



## PRE-DESIGN THE ALBUM

If you've sold an album before, you'll know that clients can take forever to pick pictures. Sometimes it can be years after the wedding and you still haven't gotten the album completed. Part of the reason for this is that clients aren't experts. They don't understand how to tell a story with pictures. So picking the right pictures doesn't come easy for them. This is where it falls on you, as the professional, to understand where the lack of expertise will be a problem and make it easy for them. By pre-designing an album, you'll know exactly which shots are needed and be able to put the album together much quicker without wishy-washy input from the client. By pre-designing the album, you'll also be better equipped to show them exactly how their album will tell their story during the sales process.

I actually have a designer that works with me on the album design. It's nice to be able to outsource these things to someone who is really great at weaving a series of pictures into a compelling visual narrative. It provides an extra layer of expertise for my clients and gives me more free time to focus on other tasks. This obviously isn't something you have to do, but if you can find someone with expertise in album design that exceeds your own, it certainly becomes a worthwhile thing to consider.



Images © Vanessa Joy



## USE KEYWORDS

In order to understand a couple enough to tell their story, you need to understand their relationship style. I give my clients a questionnaire that gives me information about how their relationship works. Are they the romantic type, or more fun and quirky? This is extremely important in getting the couple to open up and pose for shots, but it's also important in determining how the visual narrative depicted in the album will flow. Also, when you are explaining the process and discussing the layout or which photos to keep, using keywords that relate to the couple's relationship style will help them engage and provide better feedback.



Images © Vanessa Joy

I have one other quick tip for using keywords. When customers are looking through the album photos and ask to remove photos, I never sugarcoat the terminology. I won't say "remove" to them the way I just did with you. Nor will I say other nice words like "take away." I always use the word "delete." When you ask them if they want to delete a photo, the permanence of it sticks with them and helps guide their decision. They will be getting the digital files, so none of their photos are actually deleted from existence, but they are deleted from the album. This is important because the album is what the family will keep going back to over and over again. They are going to want as many special moments in there as possible.

## FINISH THE DESIGN DURING THE ALBUM SESSION

Set aside a special time for the album shooting session and get all the shots you need then. This is another area where pre-designing the album will help out immensely, because you'll already have a good idea of the shots you need. These album shooting sessions can take around two to three hours. That may sound like a lot of time, but compare that to the two to three years it could take to finish an album as the couple drags their feet over selecting the photos to use from an improperly planned shoot.

I use Fundy album designer to show clients the process of page layout and photo selection. This has a multitude of benefits. The customer will better understand what is going on with the process. They'll understand what it takes to make changes, what looks good and what doesn't, and as a result, you'll find that they request far fewer changes.



Images © Vanessa Joy



## CREATE CHANGES THAT MAKE SENSE FOR YOUR CLIENT

Because of my location, I have many clients in Manhattan and New Jersey. These people don't have a lot of wall space, so I'm not trying to sell the giant wall prints that they can't use. Know who your clients are and tailor your sales process to that. Also keep in mind that you can always do a multiple-volume wedding album. Many times, I'll be designing an album for a couple and realize that we have more photos than we do page space because of the typical 100-page limit in albums. I could cut some of the photos from the project, but then the customer misses out and their memories get discarded. A multi-volume album is the perfect solution here because it allows me to expand beyond the original limitation. Changes like these are key to both you and the client getting the best out of the relationship and keeping the most of their memories.



## CONCLUSION

Too many wedding photographers make the mistake of thinking that the digital era has fully replaced traditional prints. At least for now, that's not the case. There's still a thriving market for wedding albums and other printed products. If you're not making yourself available in that market, then not only are you missing out, but so are your customers. Hopefully, this article has given you something to think about as you plan to include wedding albums in your list of offerings and as part of a sales process afterwards. The advice contained here has certainly helped me exponentially grow my own wedding photography business. ■



Vanessa Joy has been a professional wedding photographer in New Jersey since 2002, and an influencer in the photographic community for years. Since starting VanessaJoy.com in 2008, she has taught photographers around the globe at almost every major platform in the industry (LearnPhotoVideo.com). Vanessa has been recognized for her talent and business sense at the renowned industry events CreativeLIVE, Clickin' Moms, WPPI and ShutterFest. Her peers love her informative, open-book style of teaching.

**website:** [vanessajoy.com](http://vanessajoy.com) **instagram:** [@vanessajoy](https://www.instagram.com/vanessajoy)

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REBRANDING AS A  
*Luxury Wedding*  
BUSINESS IN 2021

with Michael Anthony





We made it. It's December, and for wedding photographers and cinematographers, this year has been one of the toughest challenges we may ever face. The pandemic shut down our businesses, and even as I write this, some of the best markets such as New York and California have a long road back before we are allowed to operate. The future is unknown. But with such challenges come great opportunities. We all have had areas of our businesses that we wanted to fix. Many of you have known for years that you want to transition to IPS, or that you want to break into the luxury market. This is the time to make the adjustments to restart in 2021.

A question I get all the time from photographers and videographers is, "How do we break into the luxury market?" That's a fair question... but first let's talk about why you would want to be a luxury wedding photographer.

## **INSPIRING WEDDINGS**

It's true that when you shoot luxury weddings, you will often have a lot of beautiful details to photograph. More budget sometimes means large floral arrangements, elaborate venues, intricate reception halls, expensive wedding gowns and exclusive designs by many of the vendors you work with.

## **DESTINATION WEDDINGS**

Many luxury clients will plan destination weddings that take place throughout the world. Having destination weddings in your portfolio will allow you to create unique images that will intrigue your local clients. Destination weddings are inspiring because you often find yourself in places that are very photographable.

## **EXCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIPS**

When you break into the destination market, now you have access to exclusive vendor partners. The luxury community is very, very small. Breaking in is tough, even in large markets. But once the high-end vendors see you at multiple events, now they will be a lot more willing to work with you. You will be able to develop relationships with people that you had not had a chance to meet with in the past.

## **HIGHER BUDGETS**

If you had a choice to provide the quality of service you want vs. being unable to go all out on an event because there is not enough profit margin, I am pretty sure you would pick the former. That is the biggest reason why I love luxury weddings. The ability to bring assistants and lighting equipment, and tell the full story through both photo and video allows you to produce an event that both you and your clients will love—as well as the next potential client that sees them.

So as you can see, there are a lot of reasons to become a luxury wedding photographer. As an artist, staying inspired is incredibly important. But as I said before, the luxury market is HARD to break into. Anytime there is a clique of vendors working together, they don't look kindly to an outsider, so you have to take a measured approach to breaking into that market.

Here are a few things you have to consider.

## **FIND YOUR TARGETS**

The first step to breaking into the luxury market is to find the vendors that could help you propel your business. Find the businesses you want to work with. Make a list in an Excel spreadsheet. Try to find 100 different vendors you want to work with. You can find these vendors on directories or by calling the high-end venues and asking who their preferred wedding vendors are. Once you have this list created, you will want to refer back to it constantly in your outreach efforts.

## **BEGIN YOUR OUTREACH**

First, you are going to want to reach out to the people who are most likely to provide you new business. Think about your planners, venues, gown shops, etc.

From here you are going to create assets. I recommend getting a magazine made that showcases your higher-end jobs. Show that your style of photography is unique, different, and matches the aesthetic of modern high-end magazines.

From here you will want to invest in branded thank you cards, packaging and other assets. You will want to create a package of promotional materials that you will mail out to these vendors. Invest in this part, because presentation is EVERYTHING. If you send a poorly designed magazine printed on crap materials, it is going to reflect negatively on your business, and this technique will hurt you more than it helps, so spend the money on a graphic designer and get this done RIGHT.

Now your job is to follow up. You will want to call these businesses and make sure they got your package. You can now extend an opportunity to work together, set up a meeting for lunch, offer to come and photograph their venue or details—remember the goal is to form relationships and to do that you have to understand the rule of reciprocity and give more than you expect to get.



Image © Michael Anthony Photography

## REVAMP YOUR PORTFOLIO

Now that you have made the proper introductions, it's important to note that you will need a portfolio that looks luxury. The old adage to show what you want to sell could not be more true than it is here...

In order to obtain luxury clientele, you need to show shoots that are shot in luxury environments. This will mean that you may need to book some styled shoots, come out of pocket to design elaborate sets, or maybe even attend some group shoots with luxury vendors.

Your portfolio is your greatest asset. It's something that will be with you your entire career, but here is the deal: **IT NEEDS TO BE UPDATED** constantly. Trends change and the most luxurious weddings are always following trends—so if you are still sitting on 5-year-old images and hoping that they are good enough for today's trends, it's time to update your portfolio.

In the era of the pandemic, we have a lot of time to spend working on these things. There has never been a better time to reach out to new markets and pursue new opportunities.





Image © Michael Anthony Photography

## REVAMP YOUR PRICES

This is the easiest thing for photographers to do that will have the biggest impact after the other steps above are taken. You can't be a luxury brand if you are not charging luxury prices, period. Hard stop. There is no way around it. One of the first questions that you will be asked when you connect with some of the vendors I listed above is, "What do you charge?"

Instinctively you might try to give them the lowest prices possible... That is a huge mistake. There is a strategic advantage to being the most expensive vendor in your area. There is literally no advantage to being the second most expensive.

Having a luxury price point will allow you to command more perceived value in your market. If your work follows, you can be sure that you will set the correct expectations of your business.

You have to be careful here, because you still need cashflow to operate, so you don't want to lose too much business. The way we do this is to have a starting price slightly higher than average, and then structure our business to offer a lot more value as clients step up through our packages. This could result in us doubling or tripling our sales numbers throughout the client journey with us, offering more value every single time.

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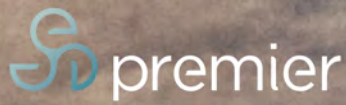
So for those of you who are considering jumping to the luxury market, these are the first steps that you need to take to be successful. Remember, everything you do from here on out has to be luxury—that includes what you wear to weddings and meetings, and how your client experience is with you at your studio.

Having the ability to offer your clients this first-class experience will lead to you attracting first-class clients in the future, and ultimately a much better lifestyle for yourself long term. ■



Michael Anthony is a wedding and portrait photographer based in Los Angeles, California. Michael is a monthly contributor to *Shutter Magazine*, and has spoken at international conventions including WPPi, Imaging USA, Photoplus Expo, and ShutterFest. Michael is an educator and founder of Elevate Photography Education, a company created to help photographer entrepreneurs achieve their goals and dreams in the photography industry.

**website:** [michaelanthonyphotography.com](http://michaelanthonyphotography.com) **instagram:** [@michaelanthonyphotography](https://www.instagram.com/michaelanthonyphotography)



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AFTER



BEFORE

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# THE **HOW-TO** EDITION

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- 168 | **Inspirations** from Our Readers



HOW TO SHOOT IN  
**HIGH-SPEED SYNC**  
WITH YOUR FLASH

with **Sal Cincotta**



Want to be a better photographer? There is truly only one way. Practice. We all learn in different ways, but no matter how you learn, you need to put it into practice. So, let's get into this.



## WHY?

Let's start with the why. Why would you ever want to shoot in high-speed sync? Well, for starters, we have to understand a little about our cameras and how they work. In order for flash and cameras to work together, they have to be working at the same speed. Think about the light coming from your flash like a car speeding down the highway. Flash is basically traveling at 1/200th of a second. And your shutter, let's think of it like a toll booth with an automated toll barrier that is opening and closing at 1/200th of a second.

So, everything works perfectly as long as your flash and shutter speed are... wait for it... in sync. Hence your sync speed. However, all sorts of chaos happens when your toll barrier is going up and down too quickly. For example, if your toll barrier were to open and close too fast, let's say 1/4000th of a second, your barrier would hit the car before the car could make it through the toll booth. Your flash and light work the same way. This is why your flash doesn't seem to work when shooting outside and your shutter speed is in the 1/8000th second, even when you go to your lowest ISO setting. Your only other option is to adjust your aperture, but we all know, no one really wants to shoot portraits at f11 or f16. So, what's a photographer to do?

This is why high-speed sync (or HSS) exists. It allows your flash and camera to understand one another and understand the new speed limit, so to speak. One problem is not every flash supports this, so make sure your flash supports HSS.

Now, in all fairness, we took a little bit of a detour here as I explained this. The real reason why you need HSS beyond the technical piece is the creative part of this. Typically, when shooting outside during daylight hours, if you want to use flash and shoot at a shallow depth of field, there is no scenario—not even at ISO 50—that you will get your shutter speed below 200th of a second. Instead, you are more likely going to be in the 1/4000th or 1/8000th of a second range. So, let's say you want to shoot at f1.8 or f2 to create some really cool depth of field—this is where you need HSS to shine.





*Camera exposed for the scene  
Settings: 1/1250 @ f7.1 ISO 50*



*Test shot, no flash  
Settings: 1/4000 @ f2.8 ISO 50*



*Test shot, flash  
Settings: 1/4000 @ f2.8 ISO 50*

## HOW?

The mechanics of this are not very difficult.

**Step 1.** Choose your aperture creatively. For me, I like a really shallow depth of field. I love the way my subject pops off the background.

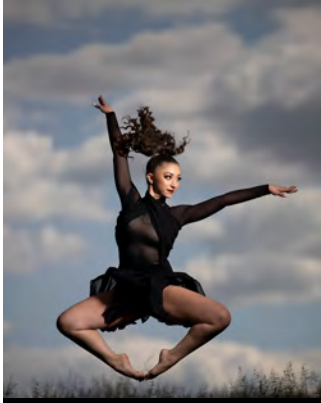
**Step 2.** Lower your ISO as much as possible. Most Canon, Nikon and Sony cameras support going below ISO 100 to ISO 50. While it might not seem like a big deal at first, you will realize that by lowering your ISO from 100 to 50 you are making your camera sensor 1-stop less sensitive to light. This is huge for this equation. Let's translate that to your shutter speed. By lowering your ISO by 1 stop it will slow your shutter speed down by 1 stop. So, now your shutter speed will go from 1/8000th of a second to 1/4000th second. Or from 1/4000th second to 1/2000 second.

Why is this so important? Because it's going to change how hard your flash has to work to illuminate your subject. And in this case, we want our flash to work as efficiently as possible. It will help it recycle faster and it will dictate how close or far the flash needs to be from your subject.

**Step 3.** Set your camera, if needed, and your flash and trigger to HSS mode. Every camera and trigger is different. Some automatically adjust, while some require manual changeover. This might be why some of you have struggled outdoors with flash and given up, claiming it's too hard. You might have to manually adjust your equipment. Refer to your user manual or a quick YouTube search and you will find the answer.



**Step 4.** Take a test shot. I can't underscore the importance of this step enough. Your test shot is going to give you a lot of information—most importantly, is there enough light? Your location flash can only put out so much light. So, in order to maximize its effort, you will need to do everything in your power to stop making it work so hard. If you followed Step 2 above, the only other way to make it work less hard is to either stop down on your aperture or move the light closer to your subject and remove the distance the light has to travel. Seeing as we chose our aperture creatively in Step 1, I don't want to adjust that. So after my test shot, if I have already raised my flash to full power, I will move my light source closer to my subject until I get the amount of light needed to illuminate my subject properly.

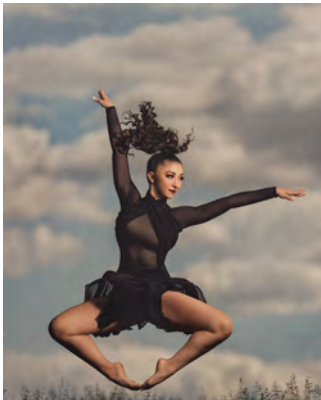


*Straight out of camera*  
*Settings: 1/2500 @ f3.2 ISO 50*



*Straight out of camera*  
*Settings: 1/4000 @ f2.8 ISO 50*

Images © Salvatore Cincotta Photography



*Final edited image*  
*Settings: 1/2500 @ f3.2 ISO 50*



*Final edited image*  
*Settings: 1/4000 @ f2.8 ISO 50*

That's all there is to it. The rest is seasoning to taste, as I like to say. Once you get the hang of it, you will wonder how you ever lived without it. From here you can experiment with all sorts of different lighting modifiers and light placements to get different looks and moods.

Good luck and get out there and practice! ■



**LEARN MORE.**  
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Sal Cincotta is an international award-winning photographer, educator, author, Canon Explorer Of Light and the publisher of *Shutter Magazine*. Sal's success is directly tied to the education he received in business school. He graduated from Binghamton University, a Top 20 business school, and has worked for Fortune 500 companies like Procter & Gamble and Microsoft. After spending 10 years in corporate America, Sal left to pursue a career in photography and has never looked back.

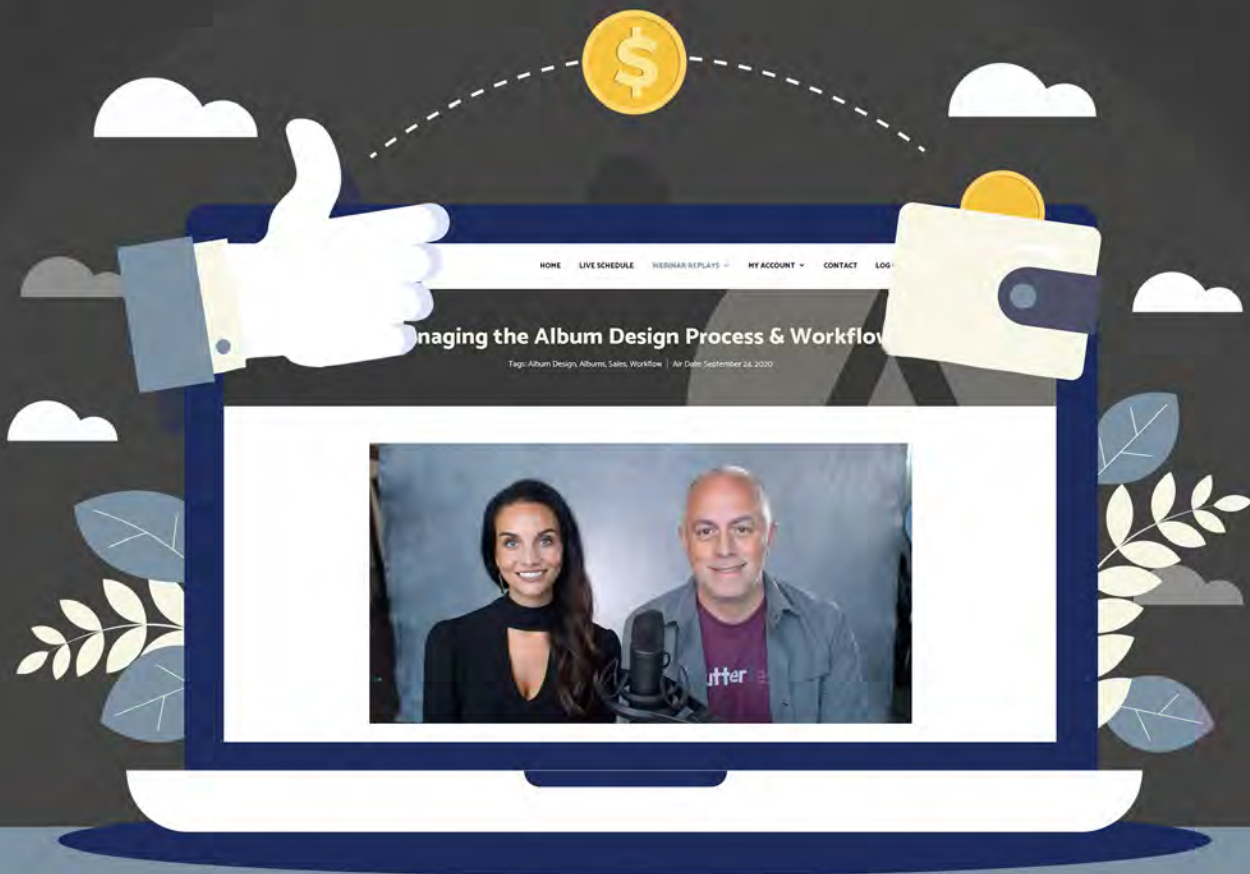
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RETOUCHING FOR  
*Realistic &  
Natural-Looking Skin*

with **Angela Marklew**







Image © Angela Marklew

I recently tested with a retoucher who was looking to join my team. I gave him an image from a recent test shoot and when he sent back the results, I was a little shocked. He had removed all of the models' beauty marks and freckles! When I asked him about it, he posited that he wanted to create "flawless" skin. I brought up the fact that I didn't consider these things "flaws," but rather attributes that made a person's face unique and interesting.

The point is, different people have varying aesthetics when it comes to retouching. But at the end of the day, my goal is to celebrate my subject's individual skin tones and textures, which brings me to my retouching process.

The first thing to remember is that everyone's skin texture is different. Not only that, but the skin textures on different parts of the face are also different (for example, the skin under the eyes doesn't have the same texture as the skin on the forehead). My goal is to keep the integrity of the subject's skin (both its texture and natural attributes), while making it appear flawless. I'm successful when you look at the final image and don't think about the retouching.

## STEP 1. INITIAL ADJUSTMENTS

I do a basic color correction in Lightroom (or Capture One) before exporting to Photoshop, which is where the real work begins. My first step is always Liquify. I mainly use this to give the hair a boost, as well as make minor adjustments to the eyes/catchlights, lip line, etc. This is one of those tools where you definitely need to use restraint as a little goes a long way. The end goal of this step is to make it look like you haven't done anything at all.



## STEP 2. FREQUENCY SEPARATION

This, along with Step 3, will make up the bulk of the work. There are a number of methods to approach skin retouching. I am an advocate of finding a method that works for you and going with that. For me, that's frequency separation (FS). Without going into all the technical details (there are plenty of online tutorials for that), FS is basically breaking the image into two layers, one for color/tones and one for texture. In this way, you can adjust the tones in the skin without affecting the texture and vice versa.



Images © Angela Marklew





Images © Angela Marklew

*Examples of skin retouching using only the FS layers*

I like the FS method because I find it to be the route that gives me the most natural results. I start on the texture layer and remove any blemishes (while keeping things inherent to the skin like beauty marks and freckles), then do an initial pass on the color layer to even out the transitions between highlights, midtones and shadows.

### STEP 3. LOCALIZED CURVES LAYERS

For more persistent areas of discoloration (the most common being under the eyes), I'll select the area to be modified, feather the selection so it has a super soft gradient edge, and then use curves adjustment layers. Not only will I adjust the overall RGB curve, but I'll open up the individual color channels for a more fine-tuned result. For example, under-eye discoloration can often be fixed by lowering the blue channel and increasing both the red and green channels. This applies to any areas of the skin where it looks either too red (mostly happening in the midtones) or too blue (mostly happening in the shadows). For any areas that look too yellow, I usually correct this with a color balance adjustment layer.





Image © Angela Marklew

*After FS, I used a curves adjustment layer to further fix the skin tone under the eyes. I lowered the blue and green channels, while very slightly lifting the overall RGB channel until it matched the rest of the skin tones.*



Image © Angela Marklew

## STEP 4. REMOVE DISTRACTING ELEMENTS

Now that you've completed the heavy lifting, the remaining steps are fairly simple. When I talk about "distracting elements," this includes things like cleaning up stray eyebrow hairs, bloodshot eyes, etc. I also use this step to remove any single strands of hair that I find distracting. Keep in mind, this will be a very subjective step, as one photographer's distracting element may not even register with another photographer. My favorite tool for this step is the healing brush (I will alternate between the healing brush and spot healing brush).

## STEP 5. DODGE AND BURN

I create a dodge and burn layer to bring up the highlights on the hair, as well as brighten the eyes and teeth. My method typically involves way more dodging than burning, and I almost exclusively only dodge the highlights. When I do use the burn tool, it's usually to darken the part in someone's hair or darken their eyebrows slightly, in which case I burn the midtones. In order to keep this from going too far, I leave my exposure set at 10%.



Image © Angela Marklew

*Using individual curves adjustment layers, I was able to further adjust the chest, forehead, and under eye areas to even out the skin tones after FS*



## STEP 6. FINAL COLOR PASS

Now that the skin has been perfected and all distracting elements removed, I move on to the final color pass. For me, this is a very simple step that involves increasing the contrast a bit (which will naturally add a bit of saturation), and sometimes adjusting the hue/saturation/lightness of the background. ■



Born and raised in Ontario, Canada, I knew from an early age I wanted to be a scientist. Starting my career in environmental chemistry, I ultimately ended up working with explosives for the Canadian government. I quickly realized I was not built for a 9-5, so I sold my house, packed up my things and moved across the continent to try my hand at photography.

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# product spotlight

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HOW TO POSE  
YOUR CLIENTS:  

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TIPS AND TRICKS  
NO ONE TALKS ABOUT

with **Antwon Maxwell**





Image © Antwon Maxwell Photography

So many elements and considerations go into the physical aspects of posing, from facial expression to the point of the toe. It's all important, but that's not what I am going to cover in this article. I won't bore you with the usual posing tricks and principles taught in most basic photography blogs or tutorial videos on the internet. I want to talk about some not-so-obvious aspects to posing that every photographer should be aware of, but no one ever talks about. These will be the drivers and underlying factors as to how your subject will physically pose.

The way your subject poses can mean the difference between your shoot being a huge success or a big flop. I've been shooting for eight years now. Over the years, I have seen a vast difference in the flow and success of a shoot based on how well the subject poses or how well I pose the subject. At the beginning of my photography journey, I mostly photographed everyday people. They always needed help with posing, and I would spend most of the shoot just getting them to feel comfortable in front of the camera. I did this for years before making the transition to where I am now. Now I shoot mostly models and celebrities, but even celebrities aren't models and sometimes need help posing. Knowing how to direct your subject is a critical part of being a photographer at any level of your career.

Most beginner photographers only look at the obvious physical and visual aspects of posing. Still, once your clientele elevates from everyday people to brands and businesses, your focus and eye for posing also have to elevate.

There are three significant factors in posing that you may be overlooking but should absolutely pay close attention to: lighting, mood and purpose. Let's get into it.



Image © Antwon Maxwell Photography

## 1. LIGHTING

Lighting is everything! This is my absolute favorite subject to talk about because it makes such a huge difference in an image's mood and feel. It also drastically affects how a model should pose. Tyra Banks from America's Next Top Model always told the models, "Find your light!" This may seem obvious, but it won't be to most people in front of your camera.

I love shooting outside in hard light when the sun is high. Most people don't like shooting at that time because it can create weird and unflattering shadows on the subject's face. When shooting in this light, I direct the model to keep her head slightly up towards the sun. This small posing adjustment will be the difference between taking unflattering photos with weird shadows and taking amazing photos with very editorial lighting.



I even like to recreate that high noon, hard outdoor lighting in the studio. Just like when outside, I pay close attention to make sure the model keeps her head slightly up and finds her light.

I directed the model to do very dynamic and editorial posing to go along with the hard, punchy lighting in this studio shoot. This is just another example of how lighting can inspire or dictate how the subject should pose.



Images © Antwon Maxwell Photography

In contrast, I love the way masculine subjects look in hard light even when their face is down or away. The deep shadows and contrast can create that rough and raw look most clients love for masculine shots.

Softer light is much easier for new or inexperienced models to pull off successfully. In this case, there is more room to play with posing and less room for error. This shot with soft lighting is of a new model on her very first photoshoot. I coached her to pose very delicately to complement the soft lighting. Her head's slight turn away from the lighting also creates a beautiful dramatic shadow on her left side, making this image more interesting than if she were posed straight on into the light in front of her.







Image © Antwon Maxwell Photography

## 2. MOOD

A model's facial expression, posture and posing positions depend on the mood and feeling the client wants to portray through the photos. I never start a shoot without asking the client for a visual representation of what they want. Everyone on your team should be super clear on the mood of your shoot well before shoot day. This is accomplished using a mood board. There are many reasons to have a mood board for your shoots, but posing inspirations is definitely a big one. This gives the model and photographer a clear direction on posing. Should it be young and fun or serious and sexy? It also serves as an excellent reference in case the model runs out of poses while shooting.



Image © Antwon Maxwell Photography

On this page you can see campaign photos I took for two separate cosmetic brands. Their brand voice and target demographics are very different, so the models' posing and mood are different. One brand is more fun and playful, while the other is more serious and lux. This was discussed ahead of time, so the models had plenty of time to practice their fake smiles in the mirror.

Here is another example of two fashion shoots meant to convey two very different moods. Even though both models are posing with their hands to their heads, their posture and body language are totally different, completely changing the mood of the photos.





### 3. PURPOSE

Your shoot's purpose should always be at the forefront of your mind and the model's mind while posing. If you are shooting a hair campaign, don't allow the model to pose where her hands or arms cover most of her hair. If shooting for a clothing brand, the model should never pose in a way that drastically distorts or covers the clothing. Make sure whatever item or feature you are trying to highlight can be seen clearly without distraction.

Here is an example of some content I shot for a swimwear brand. Here you can see one of the final images selected versus a behind-the-scenes photo that would never be chosen simply because her pose covers up most of the swimsuit.





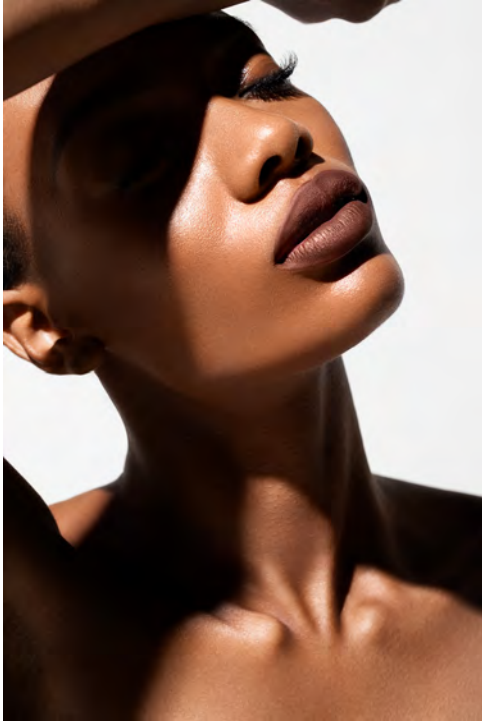
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If the shoot is for a fashion brand's lookbook, the posing will be very different from the brand's editorial magazine spread. Here you can see the difference in posing between these shots for a bridalwear brand. Both shoots are for the same brand, but the purpose of the photos is totally different. In the lookbook, the model is simply meant to be a beautiful hanger. The model is used to show off the details of the clothing, so her poses have to be conservative and minimal. The model in the editorial shot could be much more creative and abstract in her posing.



Image © Antwon Maxwell Photography



To bring my point home, I have one last image to share. It is a perfect example of how lighting, mood and purpose were all primary considerations for the posing. This photo was captured in-studio for a vegan lipstick brand. For this shoot, I did my signature hard lighting that mimics sunlight. I wanted the model to tilt her head up towards the light and pose with her arm creating a shadow across her face. The shoot's mood was lux and elegant, so her facial expressions stayed soft and graceful the entire shoot. The photo's purpose was to show off the lip color, so I ensured the model's poses and shadows were not blocking or distracting from her lips. This pose also prevents the viewers from being distracted by her eyes and draws you right into her lips where the focus should be.

The next time you do a shoot, I hope you have these three elements in mind. This will help you shoot with purpose and undoubtedly take your work to the next level. ■



Antwon is a distinguished Washington D.C.-based beauty and fashion photographer. He had spent more than 12 years in the IT field before redirecting his creative talents toward photography. His work, primarily trademarked by its tastefully fascinating and meticulously detailed quality, continuously reflects his mellow approach balanced by his perfectionist nature.

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HOW TO CREATE  
**IMPACTFUL PORTRAITS**  
IN A SMALL STUDIO SPACE

with **Shannon K Dougherty**

Working from home has become the new normal for many of us in 2020. I've always loved the challenge of setting up a studio in a small space. Small spaces do not mean that your work or abilities will suffer. I'm a big believer that you can run a successful studio with just a small amount of gear and a whole lot of imagination!



Image © Shannon K Dougherty

When I first started shooting photography on a professional level I was lucky enough to have access to a fairly large studio that had everything you could want—honestly, probably the studio we all have in our dreams.



Now fast forward a few years into my photography career and my own business where I didn't have a separate studio that I rented. I had to ask myself the tough questions about what the next step would be on having a studio space. I decided what would be best for myself and my business is to run a studio out of my home. In fact, I'm very lucky to have amazing light and space in my kitchen, so that is where my studio is set up. At first I worried what others and clients might think. I can say confidently that this is just a roadblock I had in my own head. I've never had any clients upset about coming to my home for a photoshoot (most actually love it and get to meet my cat)!



## BE HONEST ABOUT YOUR NEEDS AND YOUR BUDGET

Let's get the money factor out of the way. Studio spaces cost money. Depending on what city you live in, this could be a huge extra expense that you may not be able to afford at this time. Having a home studio can be a huge benefit with saving money in mind. You might be saying to yourself now, "But, I don't have a lot of space or an extra room. How can I run a studio?" I'm going to tell you that you don't need a lot to create impactful and beautiful images for your clients.







## START WITH THE BASICS

When I made the decision to shoot out of my home, I first had to decide where I would set up the studio. I also want to add that the space I use for my studio is only about 150–200 square feet. Not a lot of space! I'm a big believer in keeping it simple to start and then adding more as needed, especially with gear and props. If you are a portrait photographer, you really only need a few options for backdrops and maybe some lighting. As you get more comfortable with your small space, then you can add more options to change it up. This is important to keep in mind if you don't have a lot of storage, too. Keep it simple and rent items for specific photoshoots when needed. Also, try to keep the space clean and tidy as much as you can. Small spaces can feel overwhelming very quickly when they are cluttered. It's important to me that the space looks neat and tidy when my clients arrive.



Image © Shannon K Dougherty



Image © Shannon K Dougherty

## BREAK THE RULES ON WHAT A STUDIO SPACE IS

Just as I mentioned before, my studio is in my kitchen. This spot in my home spoke to me the most and it's one of the reasons I chose the place I am living in now. I also use my own bedroom when doing some boudoir (being a neat freak like me helps to minimize extra clutter), but I mostly just stick with my regular studio space. I had to get creative and set up my studio where I knew I could comfortably photograph my clients.

To keep everything in the same studio area, I often use my kitchen table as my office. I keep all hard drives labeled and organized so it's easy to grab what I need.







Images © Shannon K Dougherty

## CREATING YOUR OWN STYLE

After I moved into my home, I really had to tap into my creativity and find my style in a new environment. There was something about having space restrictions that really helped motivate me to try new things with my brand. I fully encourage taking the time to experiment. I'm lucky to have high ceilings in my studio space, so I build more upward in the space I'm shooting clients. I love the look of showing the whole space in my sessions and often have more of a deconstructed look and show my backdrops in the final images. Adding this look to my sessions has added to the storytelling element. Something that is important to me no matter what is sticking to my signature style while also being creative in my studio space.

I also cannot recommend enough to do a few test shoots in your space before you have paying clients come in. You'll be more likely to know how to create in your small space and look like the confident photographer you are for your clients.

## 4 PROBLEMS YOU MAY HAVE IN YOUR SMALL SPACE

**Wall Color** - One of the main issues I've run into with wall color is that it causes an odd color bounce onto my subject. This can be fixed in your post-production workflow or eliminated beforehand as much as possible. V-flats that are black on one side and white on the other are a huge help depending if I need to eliminate the color bounce from the wall with the black side or fill it more with the white side.

**Floors** - Ugly or damaged floors can put a damper on a shot. I use either a second backdrop that I've laid on the ground or snap-together flooring that can be bought at a hardware store. Both options are portable for use in a different space if needed as well.

Images © Shannon K Dougherty



**Low Ceiling** - Having a low ceiling when trying to do overhead light can definitely cause issues if your subject is tall. If this is the case I will either move my lighting to more of an angle and have a v-flat on the opposite side to fill in shadows or I will simply just have my subject sit. In addition to having a chair, I will also have stools, a ladder or apple boxes for my subject to sit or lean on.

**Storage Space** - This one was always the trickiest for me since I am naturally someone who likes things to be organized and out of the way. The items I use in my studio are labeled and tucked away in a corner. I also pick items that are multipurpose, such as furniture, and the client wardrobe I have is versatile for different shapes and sizes. I try to pull what I know I am going to use ahead of time before the client arrives so I'm not rearranging my neatly organized gear during their session. I've also invested in a chaise lounge for photoshoots that opens up for additional storage.



Image © Shannon K Dougherty



Image © Shannon K Dougherty

When you take the time to see your small space and what you can create, this opens up the possibilities you may not have seen before! Remember, you can create impactful images with a small space and a dash of creativity! ■

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Shannon K Dougherty is a portrait, editorial and boudoir photographer based in St. Louis, Missouri. She has been creating art all her life and picked up photography as her most loved medium. She has been published internationally and has won awards for her photography work. When she is not working with her clients at her studio, she is often photographing self-portraits or baking pies from scratch.

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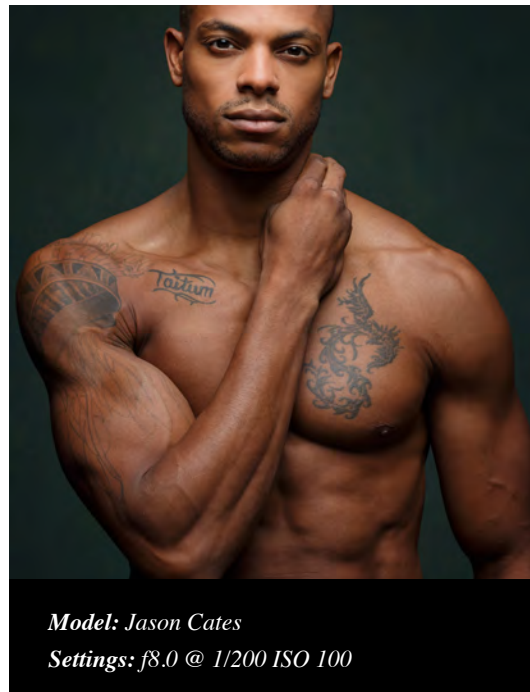
# ONE-LIGHT SETUPS

with **John Gress**

“What’s my motivation?” This is a refrain that we often hear from actors, but that phrase can mean a lot to photographers, too. Especially when trying to simulate natural light.

In the real world, sunlight comes through big windows. Sometimes there’s a curtain in front of that window. Sometimes the window is really small and sometimes sunlight bounces off of white walls and windows outdoors.

In today’s article I’m going to share with you four lighting setups and my motivation for each one.



## CAN I GET A WINDOW?

Everybody says that they love window light, especially people who are new to photography and don't have much experience using flash. As a young photographer, I heard from the older photojournalists I knew that you really can't beat window light, so just pose your portrait subject next to a window and that's all you need to do. In general they were right, but they were forgetting that there would be mixed lighting problems due to interior incandescent lights and an overall lack of brightness on overcast days. If you started out as a "natural light photographer" and your images are noisy, lack sharpness and/or have strange colors, now is the time to transition over into the world of flash.

The Dutch Masters would pose their subjects at a slight angle towards an open window to produce "Rembrandt" lighting. You can simulate this window light by using a softbox or an umbrella off to one side at anywhere between a 30–60-degree angle—the placement of which will depend on your desire to see shadows in your images. But no matter where you place it, you want to make sure that there is a light on both of the subject's upper eyelids. If you place your light too high, their brow will cast a shadow on their eyes and you're going to lose the catchlights as well. If you place your light too low, beams of light will illuminate the underside of their nose and cast a shadow from their nose going upwards, both of which can be seen as mistakes and can be regarded as unflattering or "spooky." I've heard other photographers say that the bottom of your softbox should be equal to the height of the subject's jaw, but I have always tried to have my flashtube higher than the subject's eyes. Regardless of your visual marker, you need to look out for catchlights and avoid uplighting.

By pitching your softbox downwards, you will direct your shadow downward and add more light to the lower part of your photo, slightly evening out your exposure from the top to the bottom, simulating a transom or high window. If you change the tilt of your softbox so it is perpendicular to the floor, the light will be more focused on your subject's face, simulating a low window.

You might also wish to use a boom arm and place your softbox or umbrella so that the light comes from the top. This will simulate light coming from a skylight. This light will often be very pleasing, especially if you're trying to accentuate a model's physique. When you place the light in this position, you want to make sure it's not too close to the subject, or their forehead will be too bright. Make sure that it's more in front of the subject instead of over the subject. This will allow for there to be light on the top of each eyelid. The further you move the light away from your subject, the less defined your shadows will be, but it will likely produce more pleasing light on their face.

**Pro Tip:** *Tilting the softbox slightly toward your subject and not completely perpendicular to the floor will result in more defined catchlights.*

## 1. SHEER CURTAINS

If we put sheer curtains in front of our window, it will soften up to the light greatly but reduce the overall exposure. The resulting light will be beautiful and hard to beat. In a studio environment we can recreate this by putting a translucent reflector or a scrim between the lights and the subject. However, you could use an opaque shower curtain, a bedsheet or an actual sheer curtain. Why go through the trouble of simulating what we can find in the real world with other objects when we can just use the object? The short answer is mostly because of the color or the mounting options. But I digress.

Lately, I've really gotten into using scrims in order to further soften the light—it produces nice diffuse soft lighting and it's a great way to mix things up.



Image © John Gress

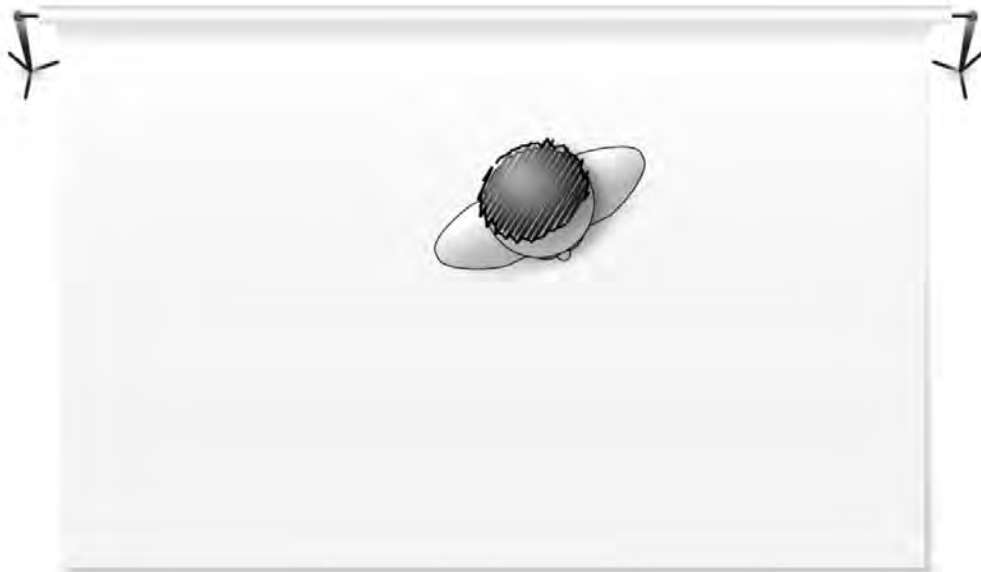


Image © John Gress

## 2. SMALL WINDOWS

What if we had a small window? It would produce a very directional shaft of light. You could get the same effect by using a small softbox, but in this example I want to share with you the specialty modifier that I've been using lately: a Nicefoto SN-29 optical snoot. It allows you project all kinds of shapes onto your subject or background by focusing shadows that are created by casting light through a metal stencil (commonly called a gobo, or go between). This modifier is fairly inexpensive and comes in a Bowens mount, which you can adapt to other brands.

In this example, I used Elinchrom's Mini Spot Lite to project a circle—simulating a theatrical spotlight—onto my model and then onto the background. It's a super easy and simple one-light setup that goes well beyond the norm.







*Model: Jon Becker*  
*Stylist: Pablo Roberto*



Image © John Gress

*Model: Hannah Harrison*

*Settings: f1.4 @ 1/8000 ISO 100*



Images © John Gress

*Model: Amir*

*Settings: f2.8 @ 1/200 ISO 100*

### 3. A WHITE WALL

We've all seen this in real life. Maybe you haven't recognized it, but if you start looking around you'll probably start seeing it everywhere. The sun shines onto a white wall and bounces light back into the shadows creating extremely beautiful light. In any city's downtown you will sometimes see the sun bouncing off of one building's glass façade and onto another, creating multiple shadows across the sidewalk as people walk through two or sometimes three beams of light at once. When I was photographing marathon runners, I would always seek out this type of lighting because it was absolutely magical.

Image © John Gress



*Model: Jude Hansen*

*Settings: f4.5 @ 1/600 ISO 100*

You can create your own magic anywhere you want with a battery-powered light and a small softbox or umbrella. When shooting outside, I love using the sun as my hair light and a softbox as my main light. No matter how bright the natural light is, placing the sun behind your subject will either create a subtle rim light on a cloudy day or a brilliant one on a sunny day. Then you can light up their face beautifully and perfect it with a softbox. Just be careful not to have a light source too small and too far to one side because if you do so on a sunny day, the shadows can be rather harsh and deep. So, just be cognizant of that possibility while you're shooting and review the images as you go to make sure that you're not making this mistake. If you find a composition that you really want to shoot but it means having the sun to your back, you can put the model in shade, perhaps by using the softbox or any type of flag from a reflector to a recycled cardboard box. Then you can light them perfectly with your strobe, eliminating the harsh shadows that you would get from natural light. ■



For over 20 years, Chicago photographer and director John Gress has created stunning photography and videos for some of America's largest companies and international media outlets. His work has included national lifestyle advertising, portraits and videos for the beauty industry, and action photography of professional athletes.

**website:** [johngress.com](http://johngress.com) **instagram:** [@johngressmedia](https://www.instagram.com/johngressmedia)

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# HOW TO TAKE A MILKY WAY PORTRAIT

with **Rey Benasfre**





Back in July I wrote the article on five tips for shooting the Milky Way.. In it we covered the basics of shooting this beautiful piece of our galactic home. I talked about gear, planning, safety, settings and how to set your focus for tack-sharp stars. Now I'm going to explain how to add a human subject into your Milky Way images. We are going to combine long exposure astrophotography with environmental portrait techniques such as lighting, posing and composition. Everything from my last article stays the same with a few additions in gear. It's easy to compose a landscape Milky Way image and drop a human into it to create an interesting story, but if you want to bring it from good to great you'll want to keep reading.



## PLANNING

In my previous article we discussed planning and safety. The same principles still apply here of course. You'll want to stay flexible and keep an eye on the weather. If the forecast calls for cloudy weather you aren't doing any shooting. If it's clear to partly cloudy you'll have a good shot. Also, don't forget the time of the year (February through October if you're in the U.S.), the moon phases, and the tools we use to track the Milky Way. You would plan this like you would any landscape Milky Way shoot, but this time you may have another human to coordinate with and be responsible for.

Make sure you educate your subject—whether it's a model or actual client—on what this shoot is going to be like. Most experienced models have never done this type of shoot and don't realize that they will be expected to stay completely still for up to 30 seconds in each shot. In many cases it will probably be a little chilly so have them bring a coat or blanket to keep them warm between shots.

Safety is especially paramount this time because now it involves another person who trusts you enough to travel to the middle of nowhere with you in the dark. Don't let them down by letting them get hurt during the shoot. Bring extra flashlights for them, watch your step and be mindful of local wildlife.







Image © Rey Benasfre Photography

## SETTING UP THE SHOT

A shot like this is meant to be epic. Just like any Milky Way image, you want to show as much of the sky as possible with enough landscape elements to make it interesting. Compose your landscape shot first and then decide where to place your subject. Do you want them closer to the camera or far away? Your subject has to compete with the majestic beauty of the Milky Way galaxy! To draw your viewer's eye toward your subject, look for elements in the landscape that will lead to them—maybe the leading lines of the street or the framing of a natural rock arch. You can even find ways to use the Milky Way itself as a compositional element to highlight your subject.

Remember, when setting up, take your test shots first and then adjust. When you've decided where to place your subjects go ahead and have them stand in frame wherever you need. I usually shine a flashlight to the spot I want them to stand on. Once they're there I use the flashlight to light the scene and double-check how everything looks on my viewfinder before taking the shot. Now we're ready to direct our subject in order to get the most out of this type of image.

## POSING TIPS

99% of the time your model or clients have never taken a picture like this before. They need to stay as still as possible for this to look good, otherwise they will look like a blurry mess in the final image. Don't get them in a pose that would be nearly impossible for them to stay still. Sorry, but I doubt even the most talented ballerina in the world would be able to hold themselves en pointe and stay perfectly still for 30 seconds.

The more stability you give them the easier it will be for them to stay perfectly still. What you want to do is get them in poses where they can naturally lean or rest on something. They can be leaning on a wall, sitting down, laying down (although it might be hard to see them), or standing with two feet on a solid surface. Don't forget the hands as well. It's easier to keep them still if they are resting on an object, on hips or in pockets. You can have them raise their arms up if it in some way adds to the story of the image, but just keep in mind there may be a little bit of motion blur.

One good way to reduce the amount of motion blur your camera picks up is to pose your subject further away from the lens. The more distance between the subject and the camera the less obvious smaller movements will be. Place your subjects further away from the camera if you plan on having them pose in a way that is not entirely stable.



Image © Rey Benasfre Photography

## LIGHTING

Just like regular portrait work, lighting can be used as a tool to enhance your subjects. Same goes especially for long exposure Milky Way portraits. Naturally of course, the scene we are shooting is totally dark. We always want our subjects to stand out and be the main focus. Lighting your subject is always a great way to make them stand out against a dark background. One thing to note is that while your subject is trying to stay still, the camera is using the long exposure to pick up any ambient light that may be coming off your subject. Your subject in most cases will come out as a muddy blur hard to make out against the dark backdrop. When you introduce a flash you are adding a bright pop of light during that exposure that will freeze your subject and make them look sharper in the image.

I highly recommend using off-camera flash to add dimension to your subject rather than lighting them straight on with a flash-on camera. I also recommend playing around with small speedlight modifiers such as grids and gels. The grids are useful for controlling light from easily spilling everywhere while gels are useful for changing the tone of the scene. I like to use CTO gels on my subject so that I can cool my white balance enough in camera to give me a starry sky with bluer tones. Just my preferred style. One last thing, while adding a light can look really good, consider adding a second light behind the subject as a kicker. This will highlight the edges of your subject and cause them to stand out against the dark background. Especially if they have dark skin or hair, you don't want them getting lost in the dark.

Here are a few settings I recommend for whatever lighting system you use. Start with the lowest power settings. I like to start off with 1/128 and never go stronger than 1/64 power. When shooting at super high ISO your camera will be very sensitive to light. With your camera's exposure settings almost maxed out it would be very easy to blow your picture out with flash. Keep the power low.

Secondly, you'll want to set your camera's flash settings to rear curtain sync. This will cause your flash to fire at the end of the exposure instead of the beginning. This is useful in letting you and the subject know when the exposure has ended instead of relying on the sound of the shutter closing. Especially in those cases where the subject is you during a self-portrait, you won't find yourself standing still in front of the camera for over 40 seconds wondering if it's okay to move now. It will also provide better results in reducing motion blur. When the flash fires in the default front curtain mode it will fire first, freezing the subject and then recording any motion following it. Your subject will have motion blur appearing to come out of them and will look like they have a ghost leaving their body—which can be kind of cool if that's the story you're going for. (That actually sounds like a cool idea so I'm gonna write it down for later.) But normally we don't want all that motion blur coming out of our subjects and would prefer it to be behind them. With rear curtain sync the flash fires when the rear curtain begins to move across the sensor at the end of the exposure. That pop of flash coming after any motion will keep the sharp details from that light in front of any motion blur.





Images © Rey Benasfre Photography

That's all for now. Like my previous article, I want to keep this technique as simple as possible. I hope you enjoyed this article and are able to go out there and create some epic Milky Way portraits. ■



Rey Benasfre is a wedding and portrait photographer based out of Jacksonville, North Carolina. While stationed in Japan in 2013, Rey started in photography while traveling and soon found a love for Milky Way photography. After chasing and photographing the Milky Way for over two years he began photographing families and weddings. As a full-time active duty Marine, he opened Rey Benasfre Photography and has been photographing weddings and families all across eastern North Carolina.

**website:** [reybenasfrephotography.com](http://reybenasfrephotography.com) **instagram:** [@reybenasfrephotography](https://www.instagram.com/reybenasfrephotography)



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# SIGNATURE WHITE SESSION

with **Zsa'nee Gaines**







Image © Kymora Jaxson Photography

## **SIMPLICITY IS KEY**

With my signature white session, it's all about my client. It has nothing to do with the background, the clothing or the jewelry. It's about HER. How can I show her natural beauty without bringing confusion, chaos or any distractions? My goal is for her to outshine everything. When you look at her you see beauty, you see strength, you see joy, you see flawlessness. I want you to feel her emotions and who she is.



Image © Kymora Jaxson Photography

## WHO IS THE IDEAL CLIENT FOR THIS SESSION?

My ideal client is the lady who doesn't think she is beautiful enough or worthy enough to be in front of a camera. The mom that feels overweight or worn down. The sister, the girlfriend, the aunt who just wants to be accepted and approved by society. This is why it is so important to eliminate all distractions, all backgrounds, all chaotic colors. She needs to know that she is the most amazing piece of art that has ever been created. When I have her in front of my camera, my goal is to prove to her how amazing she is. To show her how she shines and naturally radiates. She doesn't have to hide behind anything. She doesn't have to wear the fanciest outfit with the biggest headpiece or even expensive heels. If I can take all that distraction away and let it just be about her and prove to her that she is all of that and a whole lot more, then I have accomplished my goal, my desire and my purpose.

Image © Kymora Jaxson Photography



This session is so versatile that it can be photographed with anyone in mind. With most of my clients being female, can this be done with a male? Yes, it can. I photograph quite a few gentlemen with the signature white session. I use the same setup with the same thought process in mind. Yes, I am still a bottle of fun even with them. The only thing that's changed is they are not my girlfriends and we are not playing dress-up. We are accentuating his masculinity.

As a photographer, you have to be ready to photograph anyone and everyone. The goal should not be who they are, but how can I bring out their personality as well as their look.



Images © Kymora Jaxson Photography

## THE LOOK

This is the fun part: Talking to my clients about what they should wear. I ask a lot of questions and wait for them to tell me who they are and what they love and what makes them feel good. Then I respond with, “I love it. Now make sure it’s all in white. White pants, white shirt, white sweater, white dress—it doesn’t matter as long as it’s all white.” Then they say, “Oh my goodness, that’s so easy.” Yes, it’s that easy. Don’t overcomplicate this session. Focus on your client. Draw out the uniqueness inside of them. It can be as sexy or as playful as you want. It’s about what your client is looking for and what they need.

## WHAT'S MY SETUP?

With the signature white session, you don't need a lot of equipment. To be honest, you only need your camera. This can be photographed with a few different easy setups. For the natural light photographers, you can place your client with their back facing a solid white wall and their face towards a large window. The window light will act as your main light source. Be sure to place them far enough away to avoid any harsh direct sunlight. Remember they are wearing all white. You don't want to blow out the whites or the highlights. Also, your client should not be directly against the white wall. You don't want their white clothes to blend in with the white wall behind them.

For the photographers that love to use off-camera lighting, this is for you. This is a setup that I use the most. Again, my client's back is facing a white wall and their face is either towards the window light or to the side of them. Here I have added a one-light setup in front of them. I like to place my light at about a 45-degree angle from my client's face so the light is not flat. I like to see some sort of dimension in their face. In reality, we are not flat-faced people. I use a softbox to diffuse the light, giving it a softer look and feel. The window light will give that natural appealing look to their natural beauty and I want my off-camera flash to fill in any shadows and give me a crisper look to the image.

We can take this setup even further. Let's say you don't have a large natural window light source or you want to be a little bit more dramatic and less natural. This is where you would do a two-light or three-light setup. With your client's back facing the white wall, position two off-camera lights behind your client, one on each side pointed towards the white background at 45 degrees. Your client should be in front of the two lights—make sure they are at a nice distance so that there is no light spilled on them.

Again, have your main light in front of them with a large softbox. The backlights are going to make the white wall white and your main light in front will light up your client. The reason to keep your client away from the backlights is to avoid their white clothes blending in with the white background. The light will mesh it all together.

I love a shallow depth of field when I'm photographing because I love when my client's face just pops in the image. I honestly want the background to kind of fade away. I will typically photograph them at F1.8 or F2.8 depending on which lens I am using. Although I love my 70 to 200mm 2.8 lens, my go-to lens for the Signature White session is my 85mm F1.8 Prime. I love this lens for this look. However, don't be afraid to use a wider lens if you have a smaller space to shoot in and you're looking to capture their full body.

I am a huge fan of all setups. It honestly depends on where I am shooting and who my client is. If I'm in a tight space and the window light is large enough to give enough light without compromising the quality and grain in the image then I will go for a natural light setup. If I have plenty of room to back my client away from the window light then I will add in my off-camera flash and go for it. If I have no window light source at all, I will use my three-light setup to get the look. The goal is to simply just capture her in her beauty no matter where you're at.



## THE SHOOT

I am a photographer that truly believes taking pictures should be fun. I want to feel like I'm hanging out and playing dress-up with one of my friends. I don't want to feel like I'm going to work. Who wants to play dress-up with a boring person? Definitely not me. This means I need to convince my client that we are having girl time and I'm here for whatever is on her mind. I need to give my client a feeling of security and comfort. By the end of the session, I want her to feel like we are BFFs. This is the time to show your fun personality as a photographer. Have fun with the session. Don't just stand there and tell them to smile. How can I bring out your personality and who you are if I can't get you to relax and trust me? This is what this session is all about—who your client is and how you plan to present them to the world. So yes, most of the time I'm super silly. However, if I can break your wall down then I can capture who you truly are and not a pose I put you in.



Images © Kymora Jaxson Photography







Image © Kymora Jaxson Photography

## EDITING STYLE

For the photographer that doesn't like to do a lot of retouching, this is for you. I will be the first to tell you I absolutely love retouched images. I believe your images should be a fully completed product and not just straight from your camera, otherwise what separates you from the hobbyist? However, this session is classic, it's clean, it's simple. This is about minimal retouching. This is where you show her how beautiful she is without overdoing it. So for me, I like to do what I call just a cleanup. I want the eyes to pop and I want the skin to be flawless within natural reason. She needs to see that this is all her. Her beauty, her skin, her character, her personality. She needs to be able to see herself and fall in love. My image goal overall should be bright, happy, natural and showing strength, resilience and power all at the same time.

Image © Kymora Jaxson Photography



My job is to figure out who she is. What she is about. Why she is here being photographed. Then put all that together with a simple clean setup and let her shine. ■

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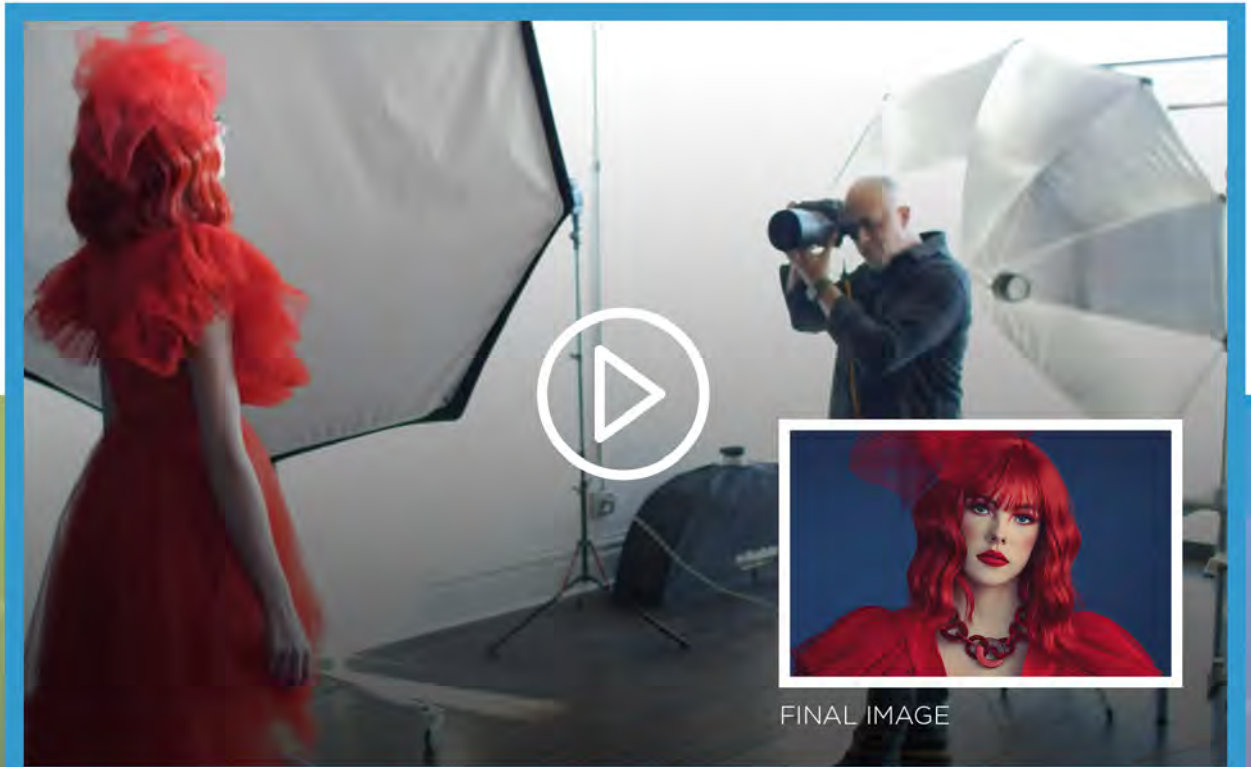
Zsa'nee Gaines is a multicultural Colorado-based photographer with a loud, crazy and energetic style that refuses to accept rules set by people. With a love and passion for photographing women of all ages, sizes, colors and backgrounds, she prides herself on helping women appreciate their natural beauty. She has traveled across the nation photographing various celebrities and her images have been featured in local and national magazines. Zsa'nee Gaines is a faith-based photographer who aspires to show all women they are perfect the way they are, which is fearfully and wonderfully made.

website: [kymorajaxsonphotography.com](http://kymorajaxsonphotography.com) instagram: [@kymorajaxsonp](https://www.instagram.com/kymorajaxsonp)



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# HOW TO FIND YOUR LIGHT

with **Brandon Hunter**

As photographers, one of the things we gravitate to is light. Makes sense right? Light is the foundation of an image. How you use light is what starts to help you develop your identity as a photographer. This comes before being identified or labeled as a wedding, portrait, newborn, maternity or any other photographer titles we are given. Overall, we are all artists painting with light, while using the world as our canvas.

Like other artists we have many tools at our disposal—the camera and lens are like a painter’s brush. We use our surroundings as our canvas, whether it is the external landscape or the indoor studio or location, this is our base or background to create our art. Last is light, which is our paint. This is what brings it all together, making or breaking the final outcome.



Images © Hunter Scott Imagery



It doesn't end there! So let's talk about light—the different types of light, the options available to help shape it, and light direction. The painter has his brush sizes, textures and bristle strength. (I'm not a painter, but hopefully you understand my meaning.) A writer has his pencil, ink, typewriter or computer. A photographer either uses natural, artificial or flash as their light source. What comes into play is how we as photographers shape it or use its direction to create our art.

A natural light photographer may look at time of day, direction, shade, surrounding area or even a white shirt to dictate the light in their frame, whether they are outside on location or indoors. They need to evaluate their surroundings and how light is behaving to create their image. A flash photographer or strobist brings his own light, using the various tools available to help shape their desired outcome. For me, those tools range from a speedlight to a large strobe or monoblock, in many cases using more than one. Then, as photographers, how do we shape it? The natural light photographer may use a white shirt, the wall of a building, a reflector, bounce card or a scrim. The strobist will use a variation of softboxes, umbrellas, cone reflectors, octaboxes, v-flats, flags, grides, snoots, gels—just so many options

How did I find my light? I looked at who and what inspired me and feverishly tried to find the setups they did, eventually realizing that just seeing the setups wasn't a guarantee. You have to understand light and how it behaves. You need to understand the benefits of using the different tools at hand. The present community is filled with skilled photographers with widely available content that breaks it down a little more in detail. The main factor is practice. There is no substitute. You can watch all the videos, do all the workshops, read all the articles. If you are not shooting, you are not learning to be instinctive or developing your style. In 2015, I shot one to three times every single weekend, using both natural and artificial light of all kinds. I began to favor photographers like Clay Cook and Felix Kunze. I was attracted to their style more and more. How they used soft light to create their imagery. I began to be influenced by the more dramatic lighting as time went on. Then later, I tried to combine the two styles by lighting in the way of Felix Kunze but still being dramatic or dynamic, which leads me to how I create today. Depending on the scenario or environment and what I am trying to accomplish, I favor several different modifiers.



Images © Hunter Scott Imagery

Sometimes I feel my strength is in the studio working on creative beauty, and full body creative fashion the most. Even then, the tools used are different. Let's start with the creative beauty pieces you see from me. The tools will be a small octabox and a reflector in a clamshell position. This will be the start and the base lighting for the image. You can absolutely use a second light instead of a reflector. The whole idea is to have light coming from below to fill the shadow as little or as much as you like. For me, it's the reflector or recently an Eyclighter if available. Placement is also key for the light in the octabox. I will always start with the octabox pointing straight down, lighting the subject with feathered light. I'm looking for that soft but dramatic look; for that soft shadow or gradual transition from shadow to light. Once that is set then it's about adding or subtracting light. Do I want to open shadows more using a white bounce card or v-flat, or do I want to subtract light and cause deeper shadows with black cards or v-flats? I favor using the white bounce versions. Next, I add a second light, usually with a grid, and then a third light on the opposite side.



Images © Hunter Scott Imagery



This past summer I created an image after being tasked to speak to current events through my imagery. I posted it on social media on the Fourth of July. I used this exact setup, minus the v-flats since I shot it in my kitchen area. The actual set up was a B1 in the octabox boomed above a medium-sized round reflector pointing straight down. After I got my base exposure I added two A1's for my second and third lights, because I couldn't fit full strobes behind the subject. This is essentially my studio setup as well as adding v-flats. Whether it's strobe or speedlight in the back, it's light, and I know what I want to see. That separation highlighting the hair and/or body. Here I am only looking for a frame no wider than the top of the chest. I am still looking for a catchlight but it's not a must and the shape of a person's face can make it hard to get the top catchlight in.





Image © Hunter Scott Imagery



Image © Hunter Scott Imagery



Image © Hunter Scott Imagery

For my full body or three-quarter portraiture I use one large umbrella, sometimes two, or an umbrella and a large octabox to get my base lighting on the subject. Both modifiers are feathered with the subject placed on the very back edge of one umbrella set in a split light position and the other boomed above pointing straight down. From here I add a third light as fill. Normally a strobe shooting through an umbrella or in a few cases bare bulb shooting at the wall behind me if it's white. A fourth light will either be placed directly behind the subject or to the shadow side of the face opposite the umbrella, trying to achieve that drama with soft shadows again. I don't always use four lights, but definitely two.



*Maternity couple*



*Maternity with red dress*



*Faren in her yellow dress*



*Pink dress*



*Cornfield*

Images © Hunter Scott Imagery

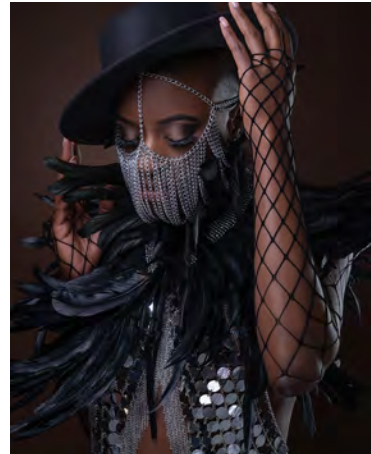


Image © Hunter Scott Imagery

For location work I almost never use a large modifier. Only if the location is indoor and even then it is rare. The two key choices here are Magnetmod MagBox or an OFC Magnum reflector from Profoto. In my outdoor location shoots there are two factors that dictate what I am using: time of day and logistics. I tend to mostly shoot in the middle of the day, with hard light, in which case I will use the Magnum reflector for light power giving me that punch I need. When shooting on location, I am mainly using one light as in the image with Faren and her yellow dress. I have a B1 in a reflector being held by my assistant, fellow ShutterFester and friend, Dez Merrow. I have Dez stand 90 degrees from me with the subject as the anchor point. I will still ask to feather the light to limit shadows and spill if necessary. If I'm in full sun it's rarely an issue. Simple setup: I direct the subject's chin from the light to the camera until I see the light carve out the face to give drama to the image. Using the Magnum reflector with the silver gives me that extra light power but it is also specular in nature, highlighting the dress in a fantastic manner. It makes the image so much more dynamic, as seen in the image in the cornfield. When the sun is not so high in the sky or it is more cloudy, the MagBox comes in handy with its two different diffusers. It gives me a nice spread when I do not need the punch of the Magnum reflector and want to balance more with the ambient light, as seen in the maternity image with the red dress. In that image the MagBox is blocked out of view by the pillars and gives me enough fill to mainly shoot using the natural light as my base. When lighting in open shade or guerilla shooting and avoiding attention I bring out the A1 with a MagMod sphere, only looking for fill or in some cases a little punch for drama. In both instances, I have the light placed 90 degrees from the subject. In the maternity couple's image I was placed in open shade using this setup and position. In the image with the pink dress I added the light to give me a little more punch, understanding I will edit it a specific way.



Image © Hunter Scott Imagery



Images © Hunter Scott Imagery

Feathered light and directional is my goal. The tools just help me shape it. Find your light! Then practice, practice, practice. ■



Brandon Hunter is a creative portrait and wedding photographer located in the heart of Washington D.C. Brandon first picked up a camera in October 2011. He absolutely loved photographing the dramatic environmental portrait and wedding imagery that you see in his portfolio. He also loved adding a fashion flair, whether for weddings, portraits, or even a creative beauty image. For the last few years, Brandon has found that this passion has placed him in a position to help other photographers.

**website:** [hunterscottimagery.com](http://hunterscottimagery.com) **instagram:** [@hunterscottimagery](https://www.instagram.com/hunterscottimagery)



ROCK YOUR

*Styled Shoot*

with **Jewels Gray**





## STYLED SHOTS ARE MY THANG. THEY ARE—I LOVE THEM!

They give me a chance to be creative and shoot what I want to shoot, rather than always just shooting someone else's wedding (maybe I should have been a wedding planner or designer in another life)!

The first thing you want to do is come up with your purpose. Why do a styled shoot? Is it to build your portfolio? To get a chance to shoot at a certain venue or work with certain vendors? Is it to get published? The beauty of styled shoots is that it can be all of these things and more!

Sometimes you might be the one putting it together, and sometimes you might get invited to be the photographer on someone else's vision. Either way, the benefits are endless.

If you're just starting out, this is a great way to build your portfolio. These images will give you something to show potential clients to prove you know what you're doing, and also give you content for marketing. You'll have something to show at bridal shows, post on your website and social media, etc.



Image © Jewels Gray

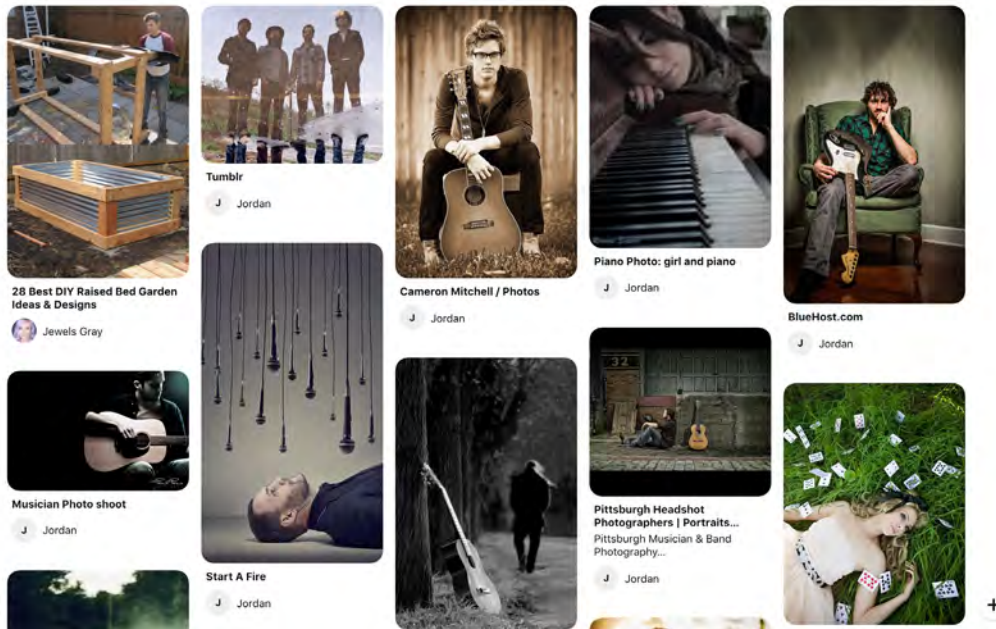
One of my first styled shoots called “Gold Rush Glam” was one I did with a wedding planner friend of mine. She did all the planning and designing, and I took over the timeline of the shoot. I made an album of this shoot and still show it today as a studio sample!

## I OBSESS ABOUT MY CONCEPTS

Coming up with a concept is half the battle. Where do you find inspiration or what inspires you? I love doing things that haven't been done before, or doing a theme that is played out but doing it in a totally different way. I find inspiration from movies mostly. I can't help but see it on the screen and think, "This would make a great wedding shoot!"

Once I come up with a concept, they live in my head for a while, sometimes years (some are still up there waiting for their turn in front of my camera). I lay in bed at night thinking about all the details... I call it "marinating." What kind of setting do I need? What would the flowers, cake, invitations, etc. look like? What about the models, the hair and makeup, lighting—I visualize the entire thing, top to bottom.

Once you have an idea, it is time to make it visual. A great resource is Pinterest, of course. Make an inspo board. I can easily spend hours getting lost in there—be warned, it's dangerous. It's a great way to get your ideas out of your head and into a place where you can share your vision. You may not see exactly what you want on there, but you can get a good idea down and you will need these images when talking to other vendors you want to work with.



Maybe you're not a creative person but you want to involve yourself in one of these? Reach out to venues or planners and let them know you are available and happy to help! Look up vendor groups in your area on Facebook and keep your eyes peeled for others looking for a photographer. This is also a great way to get your feet wet so you can see first-hand how they're done (or even what not to do).



Image © Jewels Gray

## GET ORGANIZED

I can't do anything without making a list. Making lists will help you stay organized and on top of your shoot. A lot of times, there are so many pieces of the puzzle. To pull it all together, it would be quite the feat to keep it all straight without some kind of "day sheet."

Make a list of every item you need and want for the shoot. I like to start wide and narrow it down into its prospective units by vendor.

The venue, the setting, the location. Is it a particular venue you want to work with because you can't envision your shoot anywhere else? Or is it simply "in a field" or "downtown"? Make a list of these locations. Your first choice might not pan out and you will need a Plan B or C. Keep in mind, you might have to be flexible and compromise to make it work. If your first choice doesn't work out, it's okay! You'll most likely find something better.

Think about what your setup looks like—do you have a tablescape? Lounge setup? Ceremony site? Food, bar, desserts? What about flowers?



Image © Jewels Gray

Start working your way down to the tiniest of details. From the model's shoes to details on the invitations, signage, and favors. What else can you do that will "make" the shoot? What is that piece that you can incorporate that will put it over the top—something that no one else will think about? Maybe it's an old car or an animal such as a horse or llama to use as a prop?!

## WHO DO YOU LOVE?

Time to build your team! Who do you want to work with? Make another list of those vendors that would be your dream team. Reach out to them with a clear and concise request detailing exactly what you're looking for, when, and where. Let them know what they can expect to get out of it. Setting their expectations this early in the game will make your life easier down the road. Include a link to your Pinterest board and a few images in the email that gives them an idea of what you're looking for from them.

You also want to give them a chance to be creative and put their own talent into it. Show them the vibe and anything specific, but let them do their thing. Chances are they will blow you away and it will be better than your vision!

Once you get your team together, complete your list of who is bringing what, what time they will be there or how long you expect things to take, such as any set up, and what you are responsible for bringing.

Make sure to reach out the week before to confirm any last details and see if they need anything. This is your vision—let them know you are there for them and ready to rock!



Image © Jewels Gray



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## MAKE THEM LOVE YOU

On the day of the shoot, be the first one there. It's your show—show them how excited and organized you are by being on time. This is imperative if it is your first time working together. Make a great first impression!

Shoot everything a lot. My approach is wide-middle-tight-vertical-horizontal. I start with the overall wide shots, then work my way down to the tiniest detail. Shoot at different angles and shoot for each vendor. Do each setup with and without models.

When shooting the models, shoot all their details such as the hairstyle, the jewelry, the makeup, everything. Make them look cool—think of a magazine ad or a fashion editorial and don't forget to shoot for yourself! Refer to your inspiration board for posing ideas, composition, lighting, etc. Get as much as you can! This is your chance—don't miss the opportunity! I like to take a more commercial approach for this section of the day to make things more dramatic and stand out from the rest.

After the shoot, send an email immediately and thank everyone for their time and talents. Better yet, send a handwritten thank you with a little gift. I make sure to get enough of whatever the “favor” is so that I can include it with the thank you card! It's an unexpected personal touch that is always appreciated.



Image © Jewels Gray

## TIME TO GET TO WORK

Polish, process and deliver the images to your team. I make them available for download on my hosting site and include both the high resolution images and the web ready files that contain my logo. Make sure to include a list of each vendor and links to their websites and social media pages so they can get credit. I prefer them to share the web ready images with my logo and give me a credit each and every time. They also have the full res files if they want to use them for marketing materials.

If you plan on submitting these to a specific publication for “exclusivity” make sure to let your vendors know they should not share them until they are published. This can take up to six months or more! If they are just for your personal branding or you submit them to anything non-exclusive, then share away! The more your vendors share, the more reach you’ll get, and hopefully more leads!

I also do a blog post on my website with the images, the backstory and all the vendor love.

Getting published can be a challenge, but don’t give up. Use a service such as Two Bright Lights to help you stay organized since every publication has different markets, timelines and submission guidelines. If you want to submit to something specific, it’s helpful to look up their requirements before the shoot so you’re getting the content they’re interested in.





Image © Jewels Gray



Images © Jewels Gray

## NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

Styled shoots are a fun way to build relationships with vendors, build your portfolio, practice and try new things, and gain some content for marketing. The key is to get and stay organized and deliver on your promises. This will make vendors want to work with you again and ultimately refer you! Better yet, you can use what you learn by doing styled shoots with actual clients and they will love you for it. Even as a seasoned photographer, I still do them! As I said before, the marketing opportunities are endless. Now get out there and have fun with it! ■



Jewels is an award-winning Denver-based wedding and portrait photographer and educator. She is also a licensed hair and makeup artist, Mama Bear, and badass biker. She believes in doing your best, finding your happy place, and that dogs are the best people ever!

**website:** [jewelsgray.com](http://jewelsgray.com) **instagram:** [@photosbyjewels](https://www.instagram.com/photosbyjewels)

# 4 STEPS TO USE THE **COLOR GRADE TOOL** **IN LIGHTROOM** **CLASSIC V10**

with **Dustin Lucas**





Before

After

Histogram

Basic

Tone Curve

HSL/Color

Color Grading

Adjust: [Icons]

Shadows

Hue 242

Saturation 43

Luminance 0

Blending 50

Balance 0

Detail

Lens Corrections

Transform

Effects

Calibration

Previous

Reset

With Adobe's recent October 2020 release of Lightroom Classic v10 comes the replacement of Split Toning with a new Color Grading tool. This is the tool many of us have been waiting for in Lightroom, and now we no longer have to go into Photoshop to utilize it. Of course, Split Tone and Tone Curve have the ability to color grade, but not like this new tool. Adding a cinematic or simply a unique look to your images is faster than ever. Let's jump into the four steps to color grade your images in Lightroom Classic v10.

Step 1 starts with using the individual panels to make detailed shifts in the color range for shadows, midtones and highlights. Step 2 is using the Luminance slider to adjust the brightness in each color range. Step 3 is choosing the Blending and Balance sliders to help dial in the look you need. Step 4 is creating presets so you can work fast when you are ready to finalize your best work. Let's jump into Lightroom and get started!

### 1. GET DETAILED USING INDIVIDUAL PANELS

In the new Color Grading tool in the Develop module there are three color range wheels to adjust your image. I find this view to be a bit clunky and would rather adjust my image per range. (Fig. 1) Clicking on the second option in the Adjust section, we have the ability to adjust shadows separately from the other ranges. (Fig. 2) My standard go-to is adding blues to the shadows while adding yellow to the highlights to create a split tone effect. In this panel I can experiment and see in real time what the best results are. Then we can shift into the midtones and highlights and do the same thing. (Fig. 3)

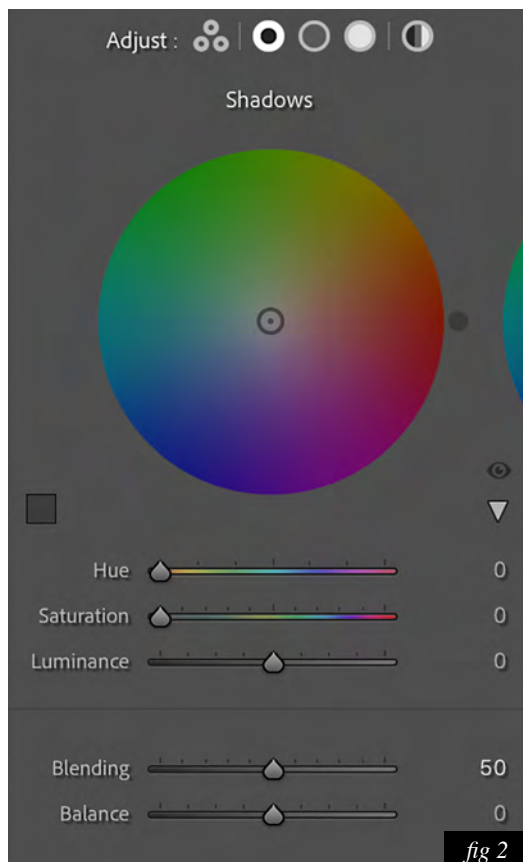






fig 3

Clicking on the dot inside the wheel I can move the Hue and Saturation sliders in one motion. If I want the saturation to stay the same and only move the Hue slider I just need to hold the Command key while moving. If you'd like to slowly move the Saturation slider, just hold the Option key to fine-tune. Whether you want to correct a color range to balance your color more effectively or be more creative, there is a lot of versatility with these panels. (Fig. 4) Next up is the Luminance slider to individually brighten per color range.



fig 4

Images © Jessica Lucas

## 2. BRIGHTEN UP WITH LUMINANCE

With the Luminance slider you can adjust your image's brightness per range individually. This can be done without the Hue and Saturation sliders applied if you prefer to simply boost the midtones. Now we have another way to recover tones and isolate them per color range. This is a similar tool from the HSL panel, however instead of being color specific, this is for tonal range. The basics of this slider are to move to the left to darken and to the right to brighten. You can also use the global view to adjust the entire image with one slider.

Another great use for this tool is to add some creative tonal shifts in your image as well as shift the color. (Fig. 5) Now that we've shifted the color and luminance we can begin to blend and balance.



## 3. BALANCING VS. BLENDING

The Balance slider lets you extend the adjustment to other ranges and can be quite useful for images in difficult lighting. If applying the color grade to the shadows, moving the slider to the left would extend to the other tones while moving to the right adds more of the effect to only the shadows. (Fig. 6) The opposite effect would take place if applying to the highlights. If you want to extend into the midtones and shadows you move to the right. (Fig. 7)



Images © Jessica Lucas

Blending does exactly what it sounds like—it blends or overlaps the colors. Moving this slider to the right creates more color between the color ranges, highlights, midtones and shadows. (Fig. 8) Dropping the slider to the left isolates the midtones so you can see this specific range affected without the others included. (Fig. 9) In order to see this at a masking level you can hold Option while dragging to see what areas will be affected. I mostly leave these at their default settings and adjust the sliders above. (Fig. 10)

Lightroom has a lot of fine-tune adjustments available to users. Take some time to see how they work for you.



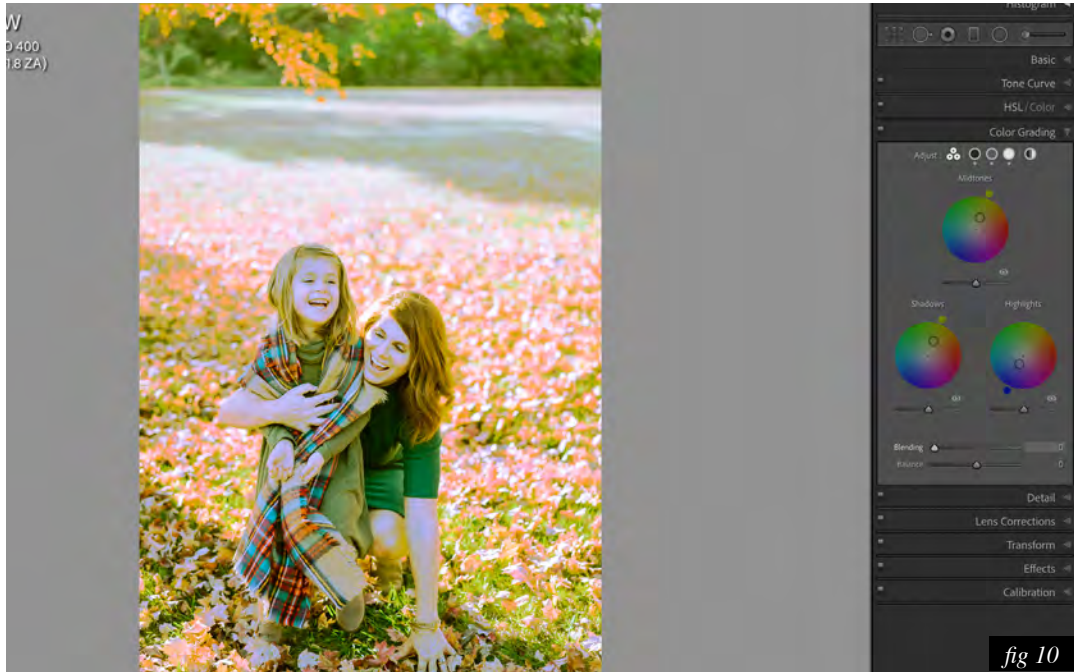


fig 10

#### 4. WORK FAST AND CREATE PRESETS

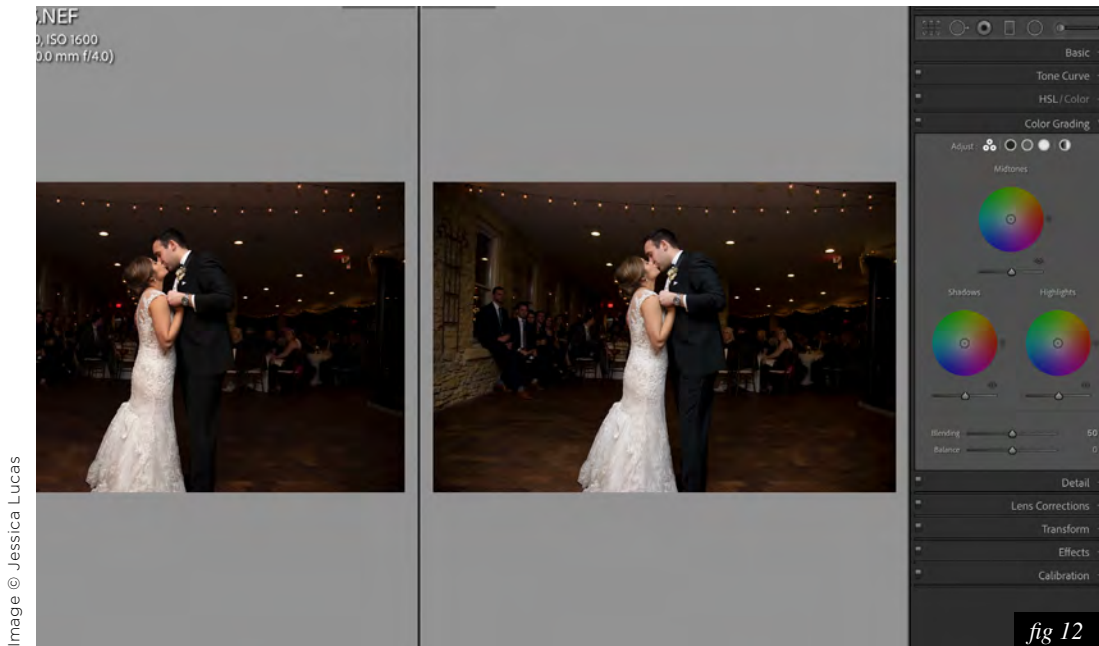
Now that you have learned your way around the basic features and functionality of the Color Grading tool, let's dive into putting it into practice. A classic look I like to apply for portraits of guys lit by a window is adding blue tones to the shadows and warming the midtones and highlights. (Fig. 11) I know this may shift the suit color—this is not ideal for a client, but it's a go-to for me. Using this tool is another great way to fix color and more specifically mixed lighting when you have warm background light and cooler daylight.



fig 11

Images © Jessica Lucas

That's where I like to use the global view to shift things warmer all over. Of course, you can correct color in multiple panels in Lightroom like white balance, presence and HSL, however we have more control of the color ranges here. Another way I like to correct the warm artificial lights at a reception is using the eyedropper tool, which can be found in any of the detailed color grades or global view. (Fig. 12) Simply click on the color swatch in the lower left corner of the color wheel and click and drag the dropper to any part of the image. This allows you to color grade to a specific color tone in the image. If it's too intense, lower saturation and adjust luminance for a moodier look. (Fig. 13ab)



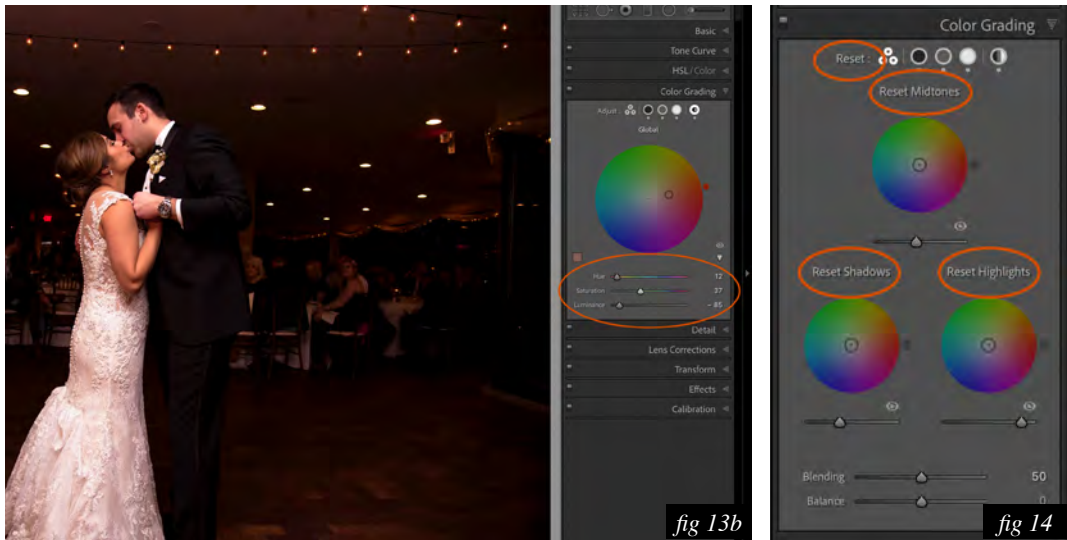
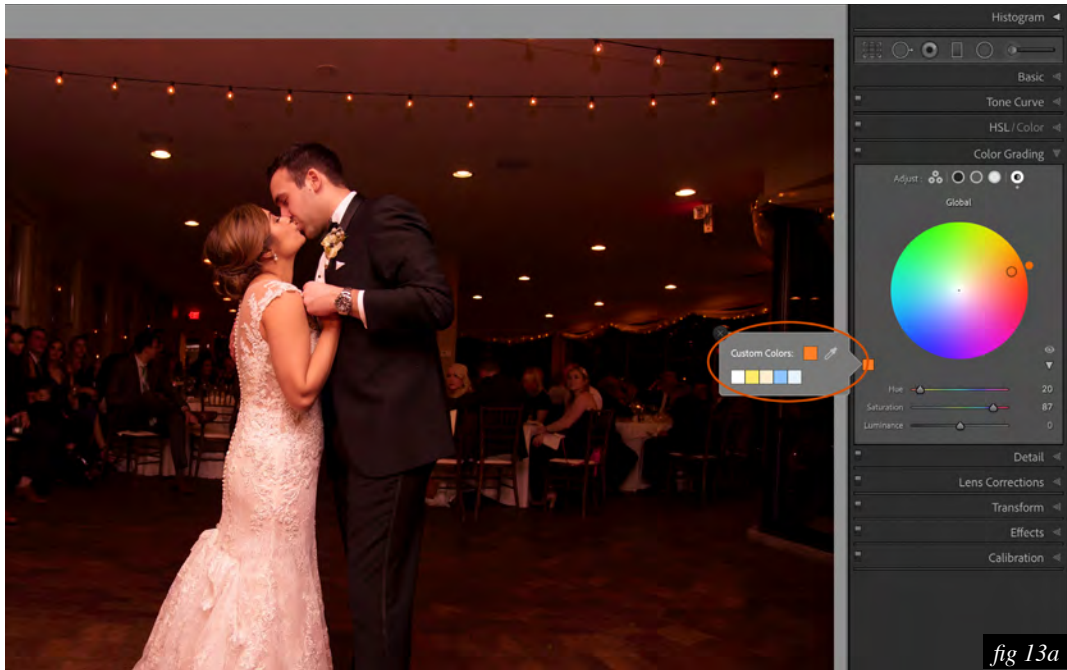


Image © Jessica Lucas

Resetting the adjustments is simple and can be done by holding Option while clicking above the color wheel to reset the adjustment made in the specific view or color grade. If you prefer to reset all settings, hold Option and click Reset next to all the views at the top. (Fig. 14)



fig 15

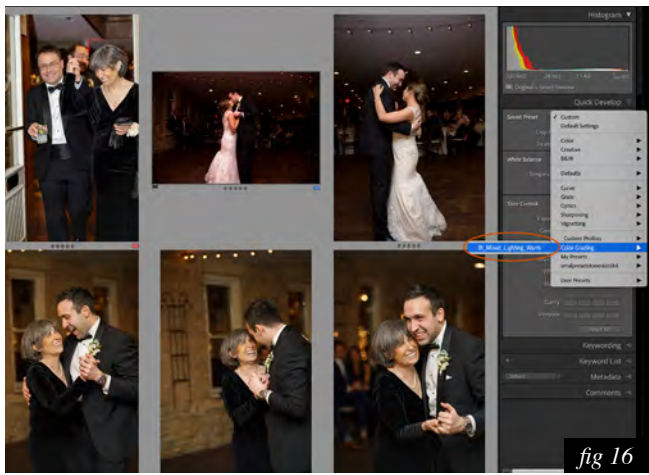
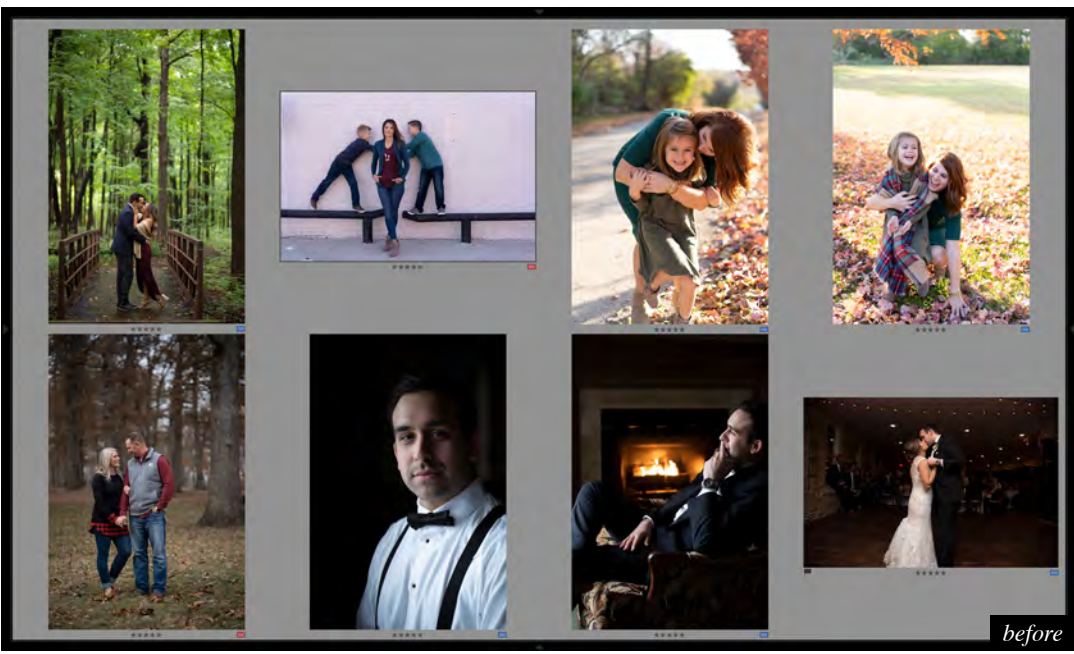
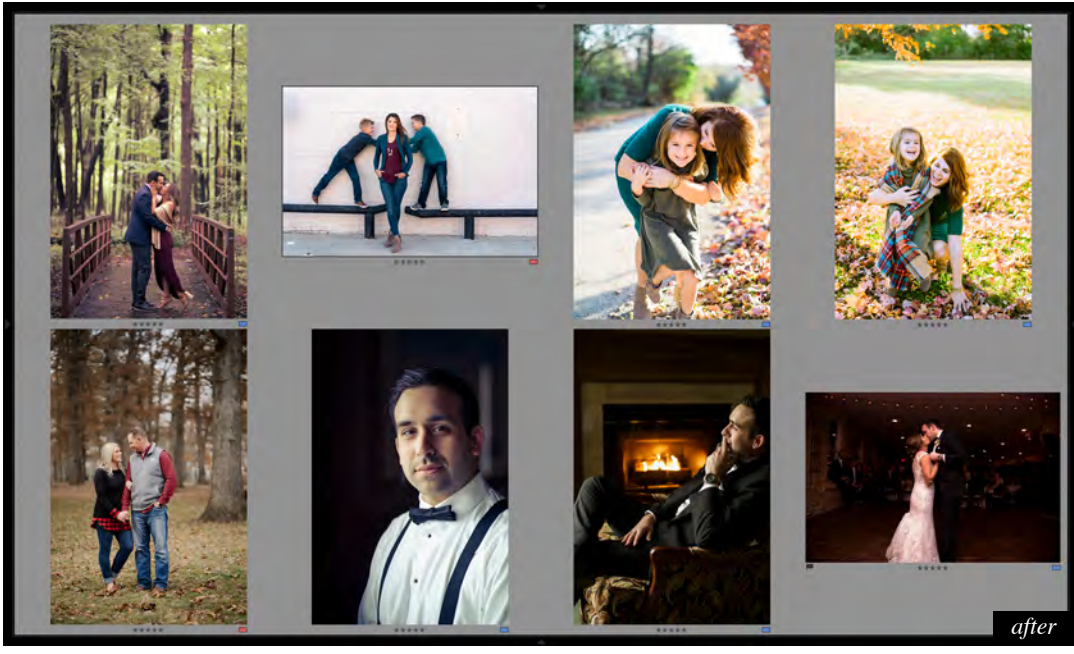


fig 16



before



after



Creating a preset is nothing new to many of you. You can create presets just for Color Grading settings to be applied. Simply apply the settings you want in the Color Grading panel and while in Develop, hold Shift + Command while striking the 'n' key. In the dialog box you can check just the Color Grading box, create a Color Grading group and name the preset accordingly. (Fig. 15) Then you can apply this in the library to multiple images at once. (Fig. 16) I prefer using presets this way since I typically apply this after I am completely done editing. (before and after)

## THE RESULTS

Now, before you go out and upgrade to Lightroom Classic v10 you may need some additional updates to your computer's operating system. Do some research and make sure upgrading makes sense at this time, especially during busy season. Many of you may wait and continue doing your color grading in Photoshop, which is fine. For those that have upgraded and been tinkering with the new features, this article will help you add it to your editing toolbox. Take some time to learn the editing views, color ranges, color wheel and editing sliders.

Most importantly, how are you using this tool: for creative effects, correcting mixed light or all of the above? I recommend building a few presets and batch applying this to multiple images at the end of your editing process—it's way faster to do in Lightroom vs. Photoshop. ■



Dustin Lucas is a full-time photographer and educator focused on the wedding industry and the academic world. After achieving his Master of Fine Arts degree, a career opportunity opened once he began working with Evolve Edits. Through teaching photography classes and writing about photography, Dustin continues to expand his influence on art and business throughout the industry.

website: [evolveedits.com](http://evolveedits.com) instagram: [@evolveimaging](https://www.instagram.com/evolveimaging)



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**MICHAEL ANTHONY**  
CINEMATIC PORTRAITURE USING OFF CAMERA FLASH

# INSPIRATIONS

BEST IMAGE OF THE YEAR

Inspiration can come when you least expect it. As photographers, we are visual artists. We express ourselves through our camera and the images we create. Inspirations represents a sampling of our industry and the vision of professional photographers from around the world.

Congratulations to all our featured artists. Be inspired and create something that is *you*.

**Sal Cincotta**, *Publisher*







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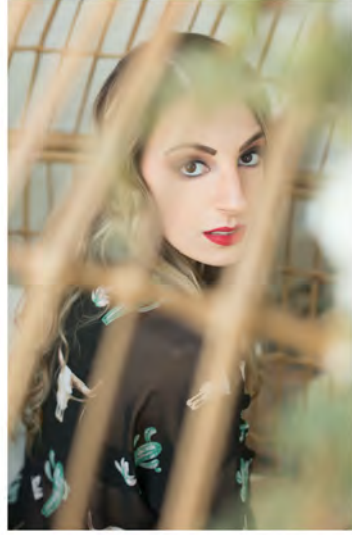


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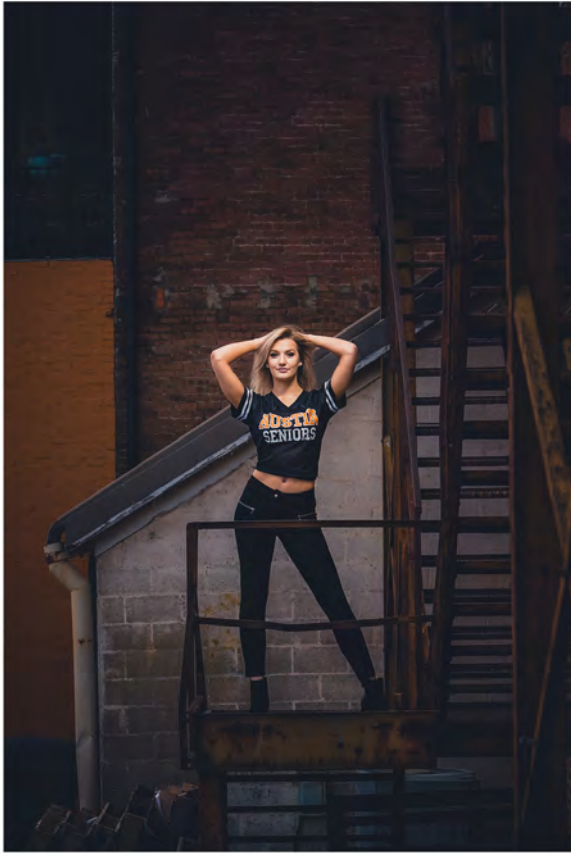




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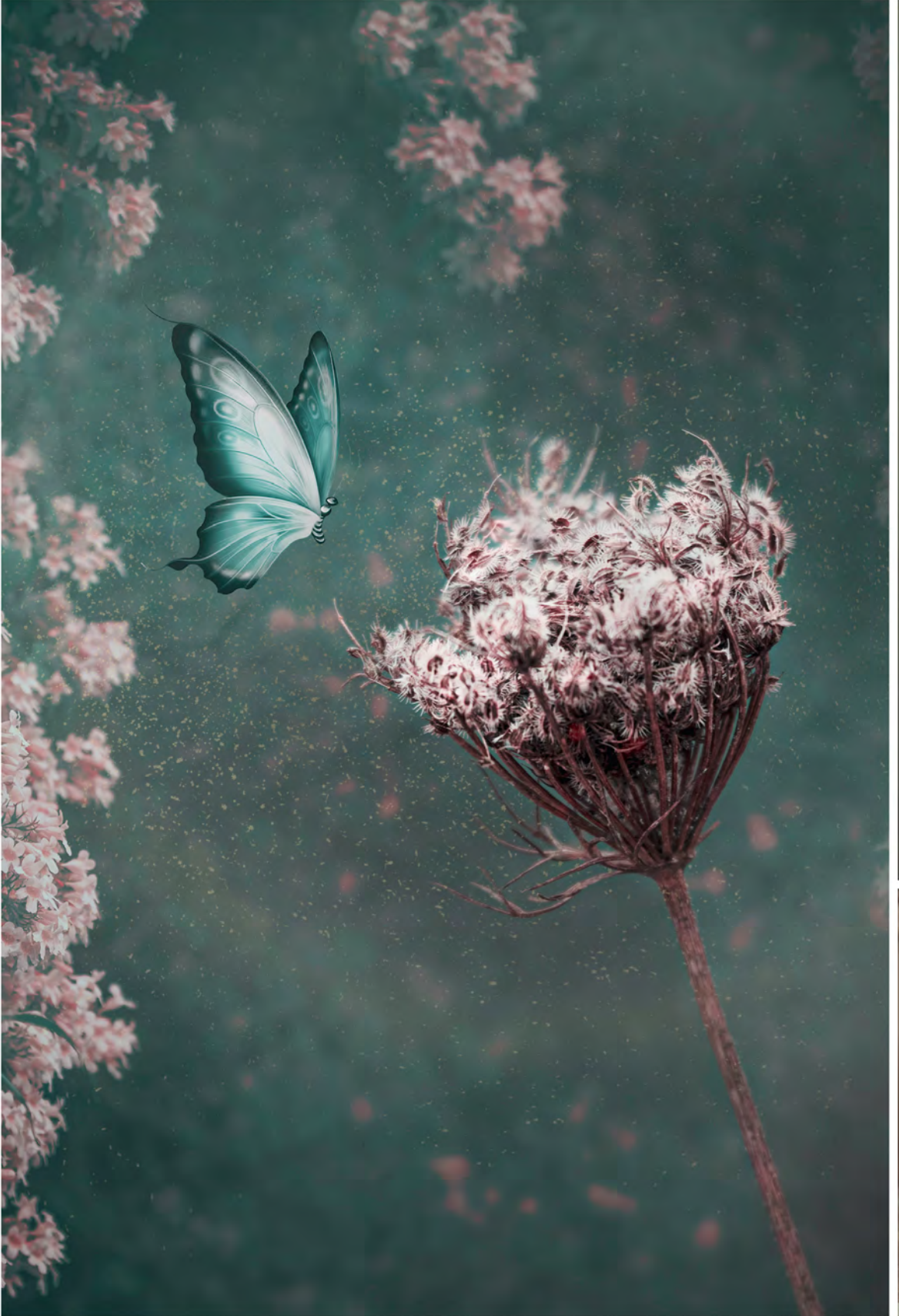


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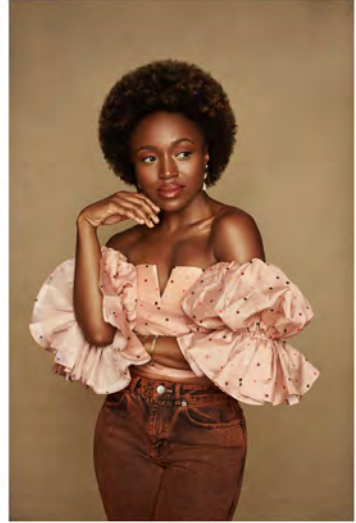


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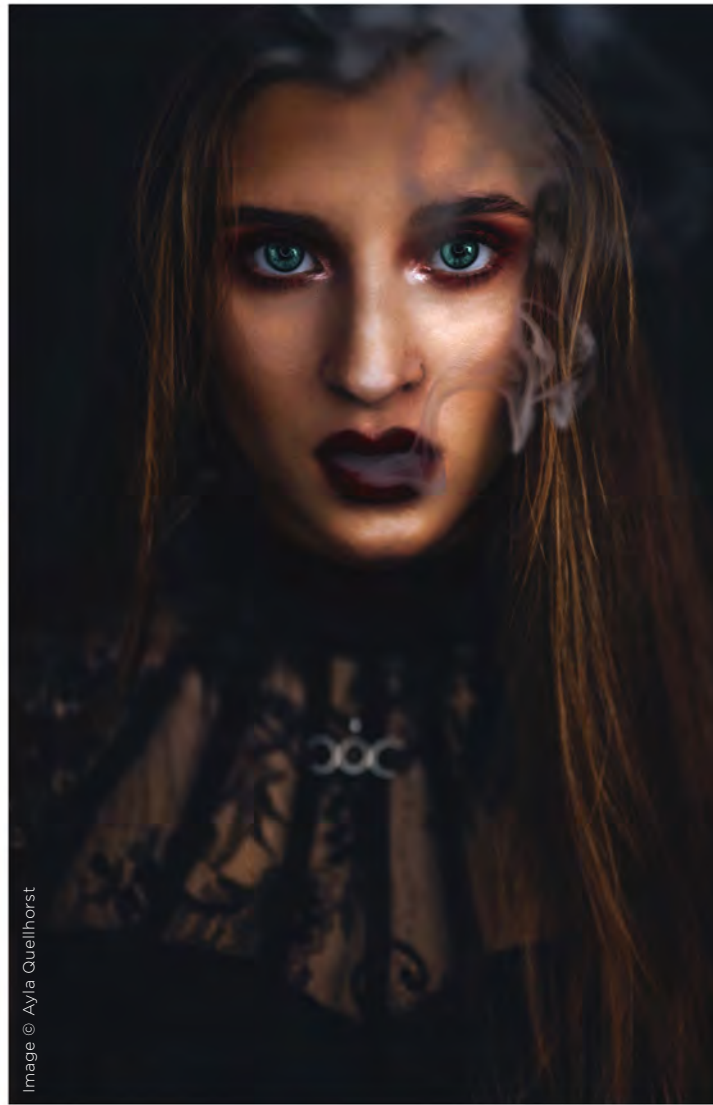


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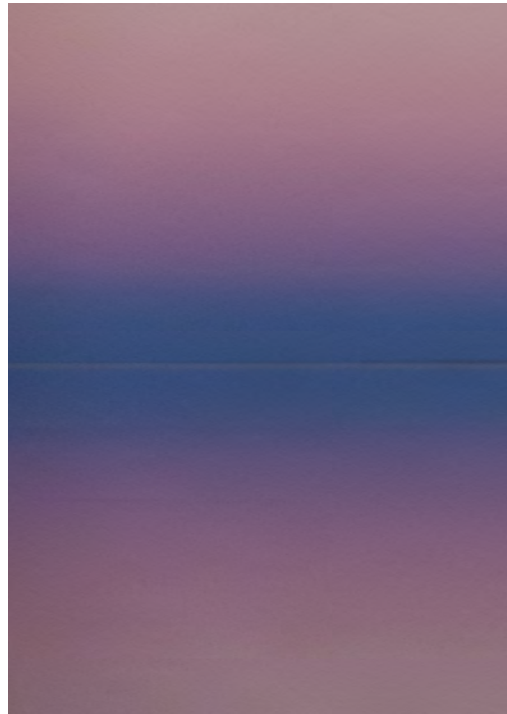
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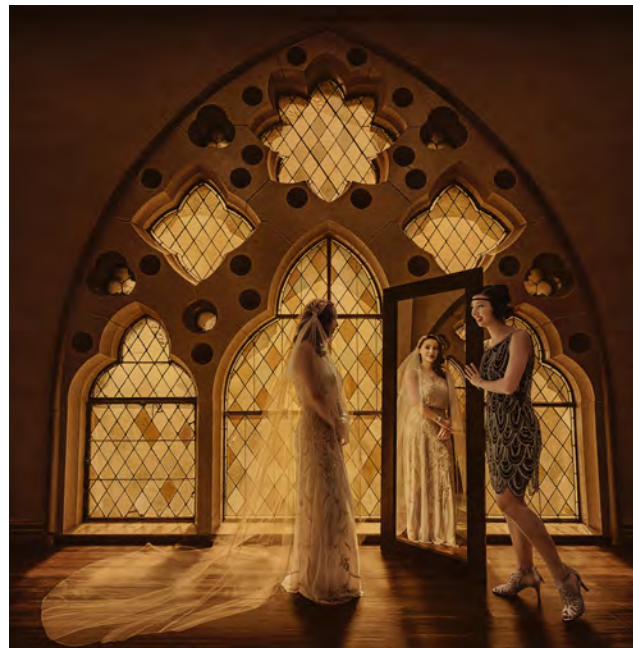
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# THE PANDEMIC VIDEOGRAPHER PIVOT

with Rob Adams







Sitting in a coffee shop a few years back I was having a conversation with an industry friend about the wedding industry as a whole when we got on the topic of the health of our operations. Not to brag, but things were going remarkably well in my videography business (her photography business, also) and I made some comment to the effect of, “I really feel that the wedding industry is recession-proof and somewhat impervious to up-and-down swings in the United States economy.” It was a fact-statement based on my more than 20 years of working in weddings and running my own successful venture for about 3/4 of that time period.

Little did I know that a few revolutions around the sun later I’d be sitting here in that same coffee shop writing this article admitting to you that I was dead wrong. Although it wasn’t the economy that changed and forced my business into utter disarray, it was this pandemic. A nationwide health crisis was the furthest thing from my mind when discussing the potential dangers to which our industry was vulnerable. I have to admit that I’m disappointed with myself for not considering it as a potential threat earlier; but here we are.

We’ve all had to pivot. We’ve all had to make adjustments in our schedules, our working and personal lives, our very way-of-life. We’ve also had to make new projections while coming up with new ideas just to stay afloat in this new paradigm of the wedding business. Here’s how I personally have taken a once unshakeable model for success and revamped it into a business that is not just surviving the Covid-19 crisis, but thriving in its midst.

My wife, photographer Vanessa Joy, said to me while I was complaining about the numerous cancellations and postponements we were both facing, “You should start reaching out to planners, event coordinators and venues about doing virtual events online. You know, leverage those connections.”

She was right. I set straight to work making a list of the wedding planners I’ve worked with in the past. Some of them I’ve built great relationships with and others were former brides. I wrote a blanket email and proposed my services for live-streaming, citing my years of experience working in the broadcast industry and running my own wedding-videographer-centric LIVE multi-camera video podcast for a time. I had lots of experience in the live-to-web space and I knew it could be of value during this whole debacle.

In the meantime, I sent those same planners micro-wedding packages that had trimmed-down offerings for video coverage and shorter highlights films targeting smaller in-person weddings. These types of events were eventually allowed in mid-summer 2020. These packages were less hours and less of a finished product, but the same high quality and creativity. Out of the 13 weddings that had postponed to 2021 or 2022 due to Covid-19, I booked six micro-weddings straight away. A couple of them were current clients who were modifying their plans and a few of them were couples moving their dates entirely but still having a smaller micro-affaire in 2020. So, in essence I was able to earn even more off of these clients because they are having a whole separate event next year for which I’m getting top-dollar pricing. In these cases, we simply kept the original package contract for the 2020 event and are charging a premium hourly rate for the coverage needed for the future event.

In addition, I began working on ways to offer wedding live-streaming as an emergency option to those couples who were hell-bent on having their 2020 wedding one way or another. Given my vast experience in this realm this was relatively easy. However, I knew one thing for sure. I did NOT want to handle the livestream while trying to film the wedding video under my original contracted service. I was fortunate enough to know someone who had all the right live-streaming equipment to whom I could outsource the broadcasting duties. We were able to offer three-camera ceremony and reception live-streaming to a private YouTube link that could be shared prior to the wedding with a placeholder for virtual guests to tune to when the day came. Through the use of a Sling studio switching device and wireless Camlink transmitters plus a LiveU streaming encoder we were also able to take existing Wi-Fi and ethernet service and bond it to two LTE cellular data services to ensure a high-quality stream under even the most signal-challenged conditions. In one case we had to rely on the cellular bonding service because the wedding was in the middle of a botanical garden with no Wi-Fi or electricity on site. The wedding broadcast went off without a hitch.



So, on these three fronts I was able to pack new business onto my calendar even in the middle of the pandemic. One of the planners came back to me with a lucrative virtual conference for which we supplied a studio broadcast to a worldwide Zoom meeting with more than 600 attendees. We handled the entire stream and all but locked in the business of servicing the in-person conference scheduled for 2021. Numerous planners got back to me with live-streaming weddings and some micro-film packages. I also managed to land a few commercial product video projects by bolstering marketing in this area while the weddings were down. My studio didn't actively seek commercial work before Covid. Now, it's becoming a mainstay of our marketing efforts. We pivoted. We pivoted hard and it's paying off big.



Here's a quick outline of my micro-wedding collections to help you organize your offerings into something deliverable and manageable. Consider that you are going to take a price cut and adjust your labor and expenses accordingly. Bear in mind that I always offer upgrades after the wedding so I always intend to shoot for the longest video I feel comfortable delivering and then present longer creative film edits and other options after the event to increase sales. I also don't offer documentary-style (cleaned-up) edits of the ceremony/reception unless I have a second-shooter. I'm not willing to risk trying to capture an entire ceremony or reception with multiple cameras while working solo. The creative video takes priority.

### **Option 1**

Single Videographer, Single Camera

Coverage for up to 6 Hours

Single Location Only

3-4 Minute Creative Highlights Film

4K Delivery (optional upgrade)

WedFlow Hosting (optional upgrade)

Raw Footage (optional upgrade)

### **Option 2**

Two Videographers, Multiple Camera

Coverage for up to 8 Hours

Multiple Locations

5-6 Minute Creative Highlights Film

Full Long-Form Ceremony and Reception

Events with Original Sound

4K Delivery (optional upgrade)

WedFlow Hosting (optional upgrade)

Raw Footage (optional upgrade)

### **Option 3**

Two Videographers, Multiple Camera

Coverage for up to 8 Hours

Multiple Locations

5-6 Minute Creative Highlights Film

Full Long-Form Ceremony and Reception

Events with Original Sound

4K Delivery (optional upgrade)

WedFlow Hosting (optional upgrade)

Raw Footage (optional upgrade)

Multiple Camera Live-Streaming to YouTube

**If a client is looking for live-streaming only we package it in three options:**

### **Option 1**

Single Camera Ceremony Live-Streaming to YouTube (up to 2 Hours)

2 Audio Sources

Available Wi-Fi or Ethernet Connection Only

Local Recording of the Ceremony for

HQ Delivery

### **Option 2**

Multiple Camera Ceremony Live-Streaming to YouTube (up to 2 Hours)

2 Audio Sources

Available Wi-Fi or Ethernet Connection

4G LTE Cellular Bonding

Local Recording of the Ceremony for

HQ Delivery

### **Option 3**

Multiple Camera Ceremony and Reception Live-Streaming to YouTube (up to 5 Hours)

2 Audio Sources

Available Wi-Fi or Ethernet Connection

4G LTE Cellular Bonding

Local Recording of the Event for

HQ Delivery



The funny thing is, even when the wedding industry returns back to whatever normal looks like, we will likely still offer these micro-wedding collections and the live-streaming options for as long as we feel it's profitable. In essence, you could say that out of Covid came some really good news for our businesses. This situation has offered us a way to expand our services while presenting to us a new demand within what I feel was becoming a stale industry pre-pandemic. Pivot and discover. ■



Rob Adams is a veteran wedding filmmaker and educator. During his 22 years filming weddings he has helped to define modern wedding storytelling with his blending of visuals and spoken dialogue. He has been a frequent contributor to *Shutter Magazine* and has spoken at various photo and video conferences around the globe.

**website:** [robadamfilms.com](http://robadamfilms.com) **instagram:** [@robadamfilms](https://www.instagram.com/robadamfilms)



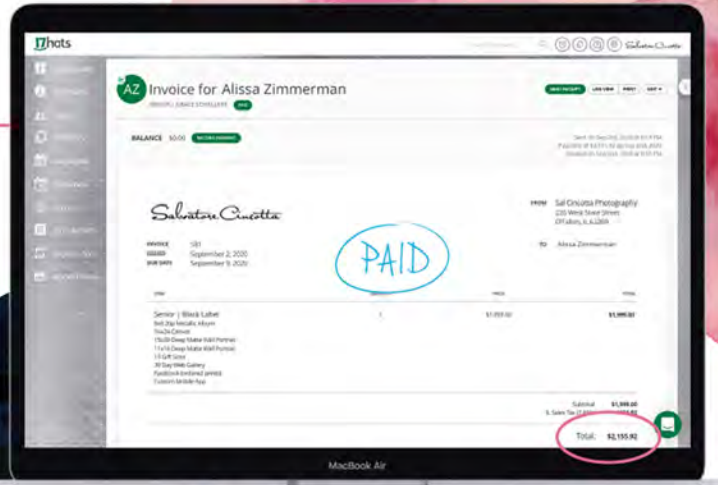
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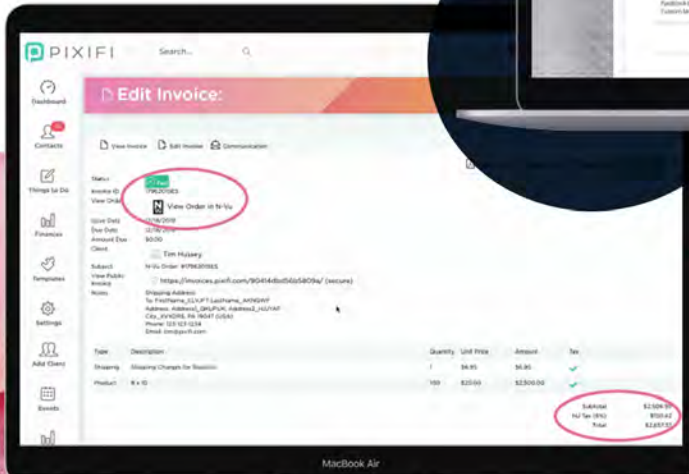
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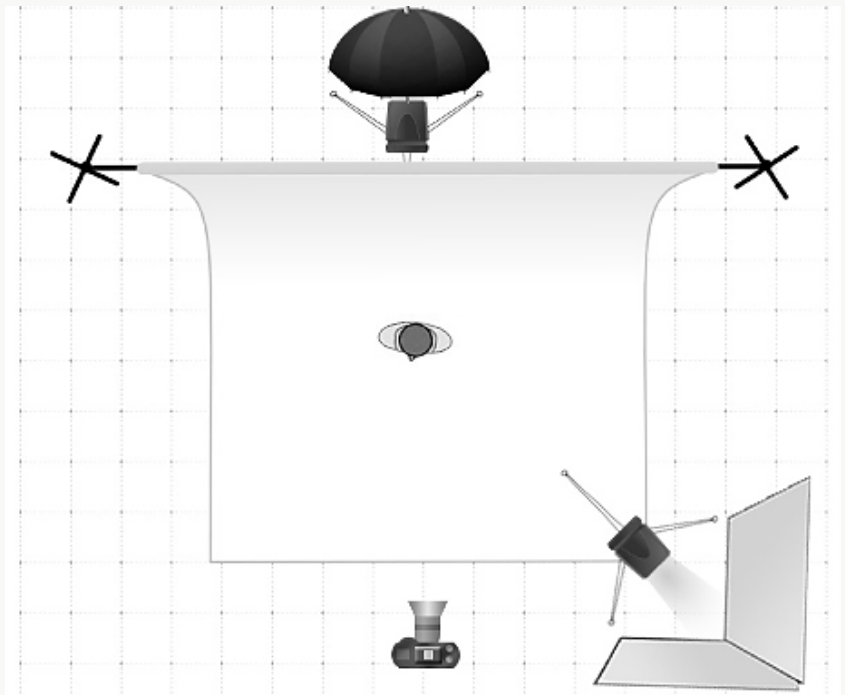


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# final inspiration

photographer | irina jomir, @irina.jomir  
website | irina-jomir.com  
model | anna russell, @poppyseeddancer



exposure | f/5.6 @1/125 iso 2000  
lighting | two light setup. one strobe with light modifier (large shallow umbrella) behind the backdrop, with double diffusion, slightly tilted down.  
location | oslo, norway  
gear | canon 5d mark iv,  
canon 85mm,  
photek softlighter  
elinchrom lights





# Profoto A10 the flash for life

How do you improve the best on-camera flash in the world? It's not an easy feat, but if there is one thing you can expect when you invest in gear from Profoto, it's quality and longevity. The A10 has got all the quality and performance of its predecessor A1X as well as Profoto's newest bluetooth enabled technology Profoto AirX built in. It enables you to unleash the full power of the A10 flash no matter what type of capturing device you use - now and in the future.



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 **Profoto**<sup>®</sup>

# Access the world of creative possibilities With the OCF Adapter



## Features

- Sturdy and user friendly design.
- Compatible with all OCF light shaping tools.
- Fits with any type of Profoto A-series flash.
- Easy to bring, mount and use.
- Integrated umbrella mount.

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