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MAY

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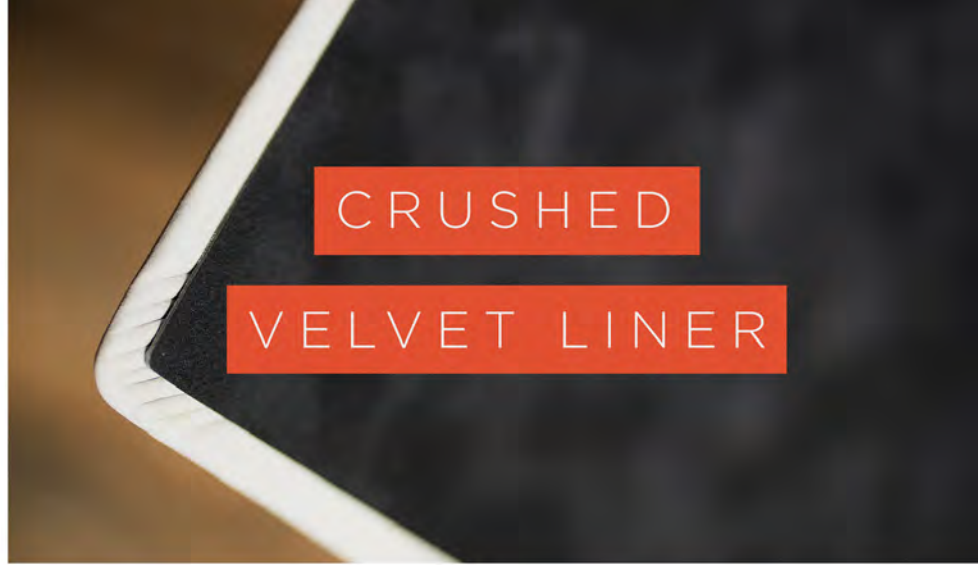
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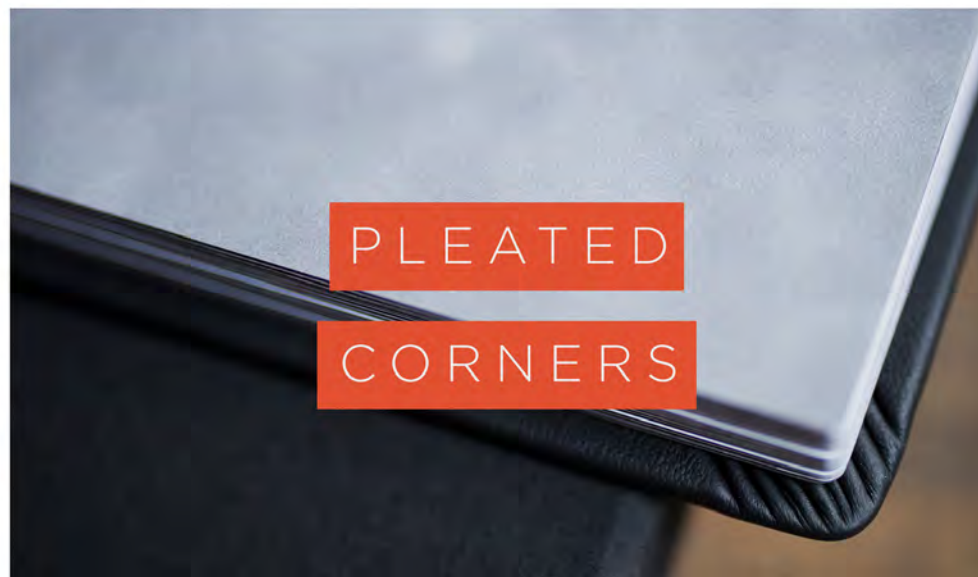
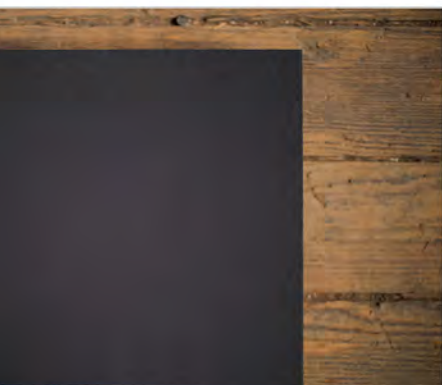
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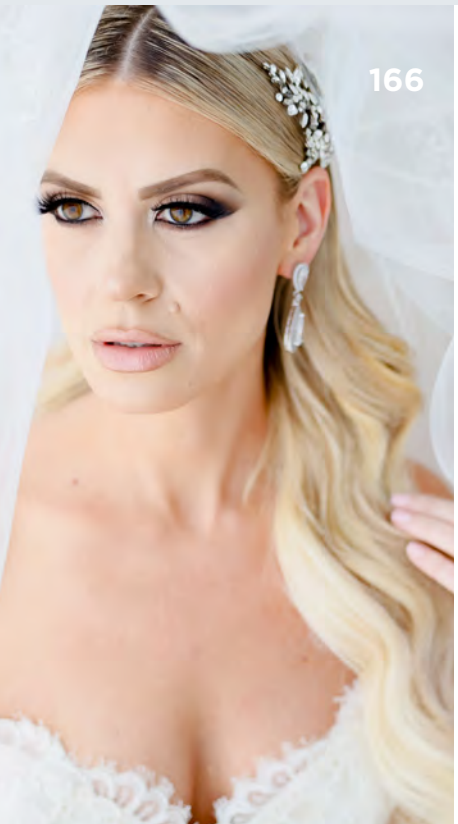
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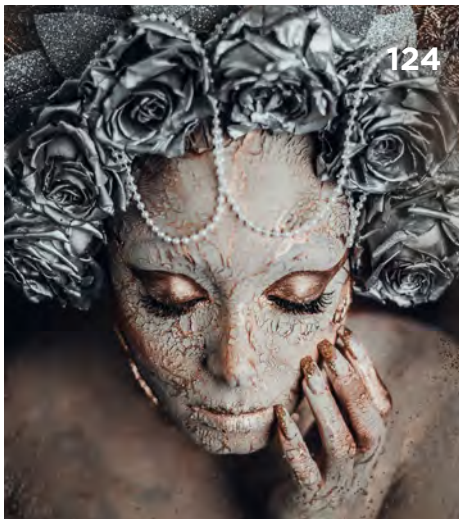
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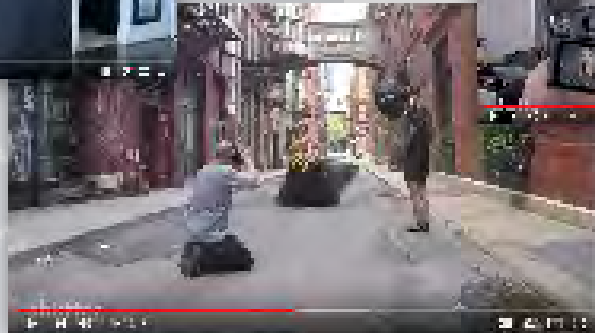
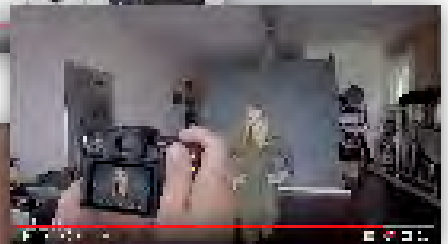
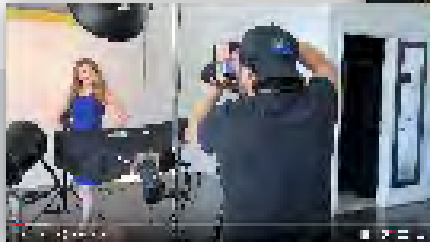
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MISSION STATEMENT

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.

PUBLISHER
Sal Cincotta

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Alissa Cincotta

SENIOR DESIGNER
Ellie Plotkin

COPY EDITOR
Allison Brubaker

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Alain Martinez, David Byrd, Dustin Lucas, Justin Haugen, Jessica Robertson
Lisa Jones, Michael Anthony, Pam Fields, Ray Alvarez, Vanessa Joy



THE COVER

PHOTOGRAPHER: Barbara MacFerrin | barbaramacferrinphotography.com

CAMERA: Nikon D750

LENS: Nikon 24-70, f/10

EXPOSURE: ISO 100, f/10, 1/200

LIGHTING: Paul C. Buff White Lightning X 800

ABOUT THE IMAGE: I wanted to experiment with a local model using simple props such as cheesecloth and fabric to create semi-nude, surreal and painterly style portraits that evoke story and emotion. This particular image was inspired by the work of Joyce Tenneson, an accomplished American photographer whose photographic style is seen as ethereal and even haunting. Using Photoshop and texture overlays, I wanted the subject to appear like a statue made of the Earth, yet soft at the same time.

MODEL: Tatiana (IG: @tatiana886)

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message from **sal cincotta**

publisher



A photograph of a lush garden with a stone staircase and a red umbrella in the foreground. The scene is brightly lit, with sunlight filtering through the green foliage, creating a bokeh effect. A red umbrella with a gold tassel is partially visible on the left side of the frame. The background shows a stone staircase leading up a hillside.

THE ART OF
UNPOISING
YOUR CLIENTS
YOU'LL NEVER HAVE TO
REMEMBER ANOTHER POSE

with Alain Martinez

Image © Alain Martinez Photo and Cinema



Posing couples is a subject widely coached and sold. There are countless training videos for sale out there on this subject, but how effective is it remembering these poses? And once you remember a handful, how hard is it to not fall into the same poses time after time? I remember I bought a DVD around 10 years ago at a tradeshow with over 500 poses—500 POSES! Today I don't think I remember or use a single pose from that DVD. Today I focus on creating moments, finding good light and letting the uniqueness of each couple be the key ingredient to yield fun, creative and different portraits everytime—and THAT I call the art of UNposing.

What if I told you that remembering a few different techniques will give you countless unique portraits and you'll never have to remember another pose again? If you like more candid, fun and not-so-perfect, natural-looking portraits then read on, this article is just for you. If you like the classical, perfectly-posed photo that perhaps your parents had, or that you get in a studio, then this article is not for that, but I suggest you read anyway as it may give you some techniques for a completely different style and a new perspective that you might like.

The following portraits were taken through the art of UNposing by creating moments that are fun and interactive. I can tell you that all my clients love these more than any posed photo because they feel they are "candid." If you consider that we chose the background, the lighting, and told them what to do, it makes these shots less candid and more produced. However, because of the techniques I'm about to share next, they look totally candid as if I was a fly on the wall while these clients enjoyed their big day.





WHAT ARE THESE TECHNIQUES?

Before you start clicking pictures and telling your clients to move, you have to find good lighting, and even though lighting is beyond the scope of this article, I'll tell you a few things to keep in mind and some things to avoid.

- Put bad lighting behind the subjects and fill in with reflector or flash.
- Side light is always sexier than front light.
- Find darker backgrounds than the foreground and expose for the faces.
- Avoid harsh overhead lighting that causes unattractive shadows. Nothing makes a photo more unattractive than deep, sharp and dark shadows under the eyes, nose and chin.
- Avoid blown out backgrounds.

Lighting could be its own separate article, but these five tips above are very helpful to remember. Now that you have good lighting, or at least are avoiding bad lighting, here's what I do every single time to UNpose our clients.

WALK, WALK, WALK, EVEN RUN.

Walking is one of the most natural things people can do to achieve candid photos. Do all the above mentioned to put them in good lighting first and just have them walk at a normal pace towards you. Give them instructions to look at each other, look towards the light or anywhere they want to. These are meant to look like candid photos and thus the less they look at you, the better. Instruct them not to talk, just smile—the perfect frame may catch them with their mouths open talking and may ruin a great shot.



Image © Alain Martinez Photo and Cinema

After I've gotten a few walking shots, if I feel it's right and the client could pull it off, I'd even ask her to run away from me and towards me. That's not something you see every day, so the shots will be full of motion, fun and definitely unique.

Image © Alain Martinez Photo and Cinema



IF YOU NEED TO, REPEAT, BUT DON'T WASTE AN OPPORTUNITY! SHOOT FROM BEHIND AS WELL.

Sometimes they walk out of your frame or they look down the whole time, or for whatever reason you need to do it again. Use this opportunity to shoot from the back as they walk away from you to do it again. Ask the bride to look back at you every few steps for some very cute photos.



Image © Alain Martinez Photo and Cinema

USE DRESS MOVEMENT FOR EXTRA FUN.

If the bride's dress is looser and allows for movement, then tell the bride to move that dress from side to side as she walks towards you; that movement will create very fun portraits and create an opportunity for her to show off her shoes. She's going to need both hands, so if she's holding a bouquet, the groom can hold it for her as they walk and have fun for your camera. She can look wherever she wants, but not down the whole time.

Image © Alain Martinez Photo and Cinema



HAVE THE BRIDE TWIRL.

These brides have been dreaming of this day for years, and in some cases, most of their lives. Nothing says fairytale more than a bride twirling a dress around like a princess. Have the groom step back a bit to enjoy the moment, and guide him to get in a relaxed stance. Tell the bride to grab her dress and twirl while smiling and enjoying the moment. If she gets caught in her veil you might have to do it a few times. These will be beautiful and fun shots she will love.



PUT THE GROOM TO WORK AND SPIN THAT BRIDE.

It's time for the groom to do some work! Have the groom (if able) hug the bride right above her butt, pick her up and spin her all the way around. This is the time for the bride to express how much fun she's having. Tell her to put her flowers up, look up and smile. She'll feel like a Broadway star or a princess, and the pictures will reflect her feelings. In this scenario she'll be prone to look down at him, and the chances for her to create a double chin are very likely. Looking up or not so far down will take care of that.





Notice that all these techniques are counting on natural light. I don't use any flash for these pictures so it's vital to find good lighting first. You'll need to use burst mode on your camera to shoot multiple pictures and then select the best ones during post-production.

Focus is very important as well. Auto-focus is definitely a must for these. When they are walking towards you or away from you, face tracking and fast auto-focus is important. If your camera has AI Servo, I recommend that you use it. AI Servo is found in different places for each camera and if selected it will keep the area under the focus spot in focus the entire time you have the shutter suppressed. I use this all the time, especially when shooting with prime lenses at 1.2.



Images © Alain Martinez Photo and Cinema

Image © Alain Martinez Photo and Cinema



The key in all these scenarios is to have fun. The time will fly if they are having fun and it will show in the pictures. Most grooms don't like long photo sessions, but I've never had a complaint using these techniques. Practice these techniques next time and once you get used to creating natural moments you'll realize you'll never have to remember a pose again.

If you have any questions, you can shoot me a DM through my instagram @AlainMartinezStudio. I would love to see results from some of these techniques.

Have fun clicking out there, Alain ■



Alain Martinez is an international wedding and lifestyle photographer and educator. Since starting his career in 2005 he has traveled to more than 120 destinations thanks to photography. His creativity and keen eye continue to attract the most discerning clients around the globe where he continues to spread knowledge so other photographers can build an amazing life like the one he has created for his family.

website: alainmartinez.com [instagram.com/AlainMartinezStudio/](https://www.instagram.com/AlainMartinezStudio/)



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TWO LIGHTING STYLES, ONE JOURNEY OF EDITING

with David Byrd





Photography has so many disciplines to master if you want to move freely between lighting styles, composition, story, genres... It feels almost endless. That's why it's often recommended to focus on one genre of photography so you can master all of the elements that are typical to that genre. Creating artwork in Photoshop, however, is much, much easier because it's simply a journey of asking yourself some questions about the art you want to see, and you can often use the image itself as your guide to answering those questions. Let's start the journey today by looking at a recent boudoir image shot in natural light.

ADDING LIGHT TO NATURAL LIGHT

When it comes to editing natural light images in any digital photo editor, it is vital that you remember one major principle: It is always easier to add light than it is to take it away. Look, let's just establish the obvious that you need to get a proper exposure to an image if you want to create some great artwork with it. Yes, raw files give us the option of bringing an image back from the depths of under/overexposure hell, but just because that is an option doesn't mean you can't drop your guard as a photographer.

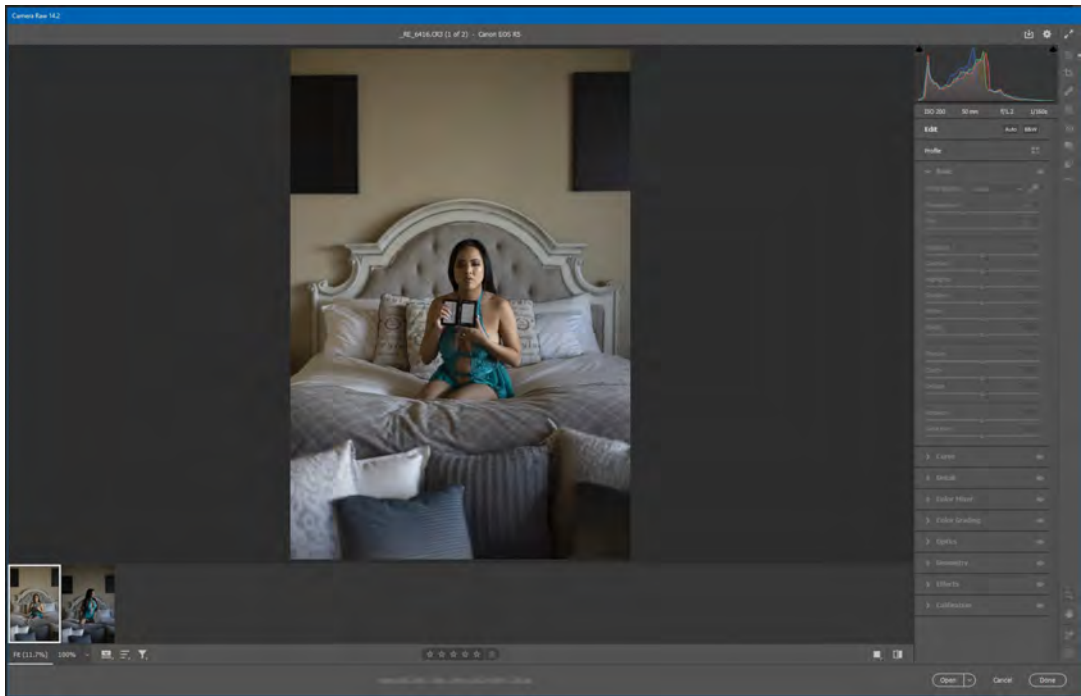
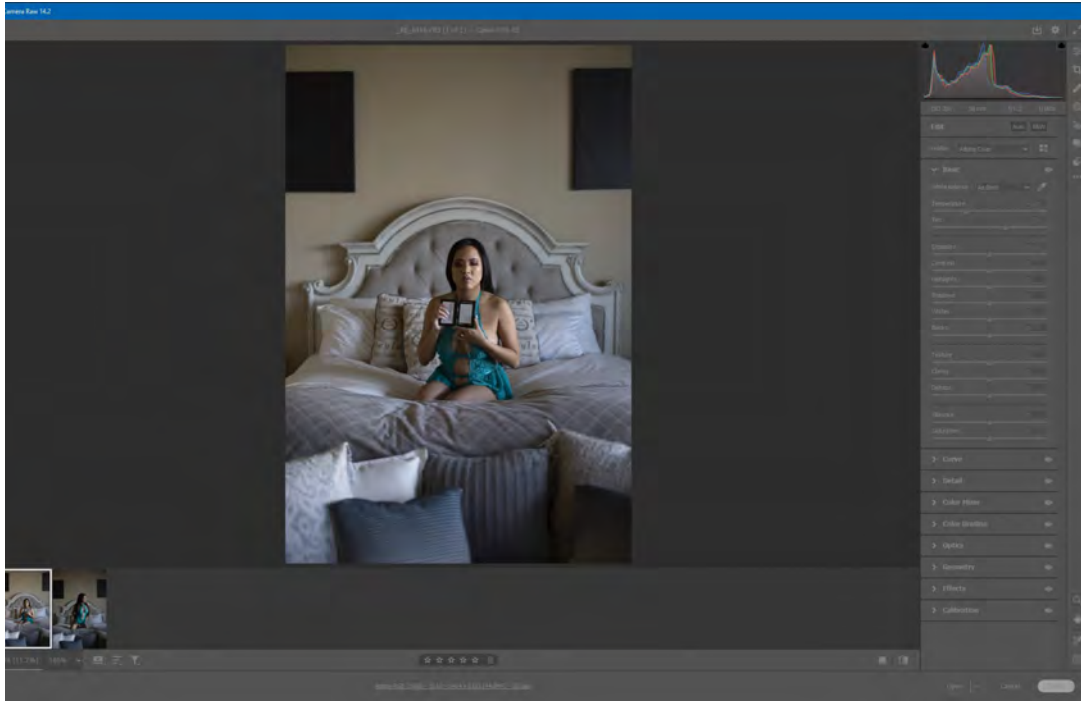
It's all about the data that is captured and what consequences you have to pay, depending on the exposure error. Either way, over/underexposing the data is going to be "damaged." Meaning that it's going to go through a significant transformation when you try to reduce or add more light to the image. The biggest area where this is noticeable is in the color data and subsequently is why overexposure is worse than underexposure. Reducing the light requires colors to be rebalanced and since they are overexposed, accurate color is virtually lost. Skin tones will be off, clothing, background elements, everything. However, when light is added to an underexposed image, the general consequence is seeing a lot of noise in the darkest parts of the image as you increase the exposure. That noise is filled with color data damage, but it's generally minimal and can be cleverly hidden with attention to contrast.

With that in mind, my recommendation is to always capture natural light just a touch underexposed, so you have good data to work with in Photoshop. Now let's dive into the natural light image of Sarah and get to work. The image we'll work on was captured with a Canon R5, the RF 50mm F1.2 prime lens, shot at ISO 200, f1.2 and a shutter speed of 1/160th of a second.

The first step I want to take with the image of Sarah is to get a proper white balance by sampling the gray card image I took before we began our series. In Adobe Camera Raw I will use the eyedropper tool to sample the gray card and establish a new white balance, which will also affect the color of the scene. It's important to note that the original temperature of the color and the tint (before a proper white balance) are 4950 and +28 respectively.

After the white balance, the new values are 5300 and +25, which is adding a bit more of an orange/yellow tone to the colors and a little more magenta rather than green in tint.

To add these new values to the actual image of Sarah we want to edit, I simply select both images and hit Alt/Option and the letter S for synchronize.



Most of the foundation of artwork to this image will happen right here in Adobe Camera Raw. This dialogue is identical to the Develop module in Lightroom, so you can work in either program to achieve these next steps. Since I chose to underexpose this image slightly, I want to address that first. But rather than turn to the Exposure slider, Highlights or Whites—I'm going to bring back the details found in the shadows and give the "illusion" that the image is brighter. Let's take the Shadow slider to the right and land at +80 to get back all the details. Let's continue by reducing the black point in the image, by taking the Blacks slider to the right and landing on +50, then balance that with a +30 increase to the contrast. This step will return the rich tones to the black and white points in the image and enhance the overall color.

Now let's actually add some light to the image. I'll increase the Whites slider to +20 to give some of that vibrant luminescence to the scene and balance that by reducing the Highlights slider to -15 value. Finally, make a gentle lift to the global exposure by taking the Exposure slider up to a +15 value.

We've addressed light, now let's address details and color to complete the trifecta of fundamentals in Photoshop. Increase the Texture slider to +10 and the Vibrance and Saturation sliders to a +5 value. With those changes, let's take the base image into Photoshop and get to the real work.



Image © Reality Reimagined

After a proper retouch using Frequency Separation, Dodge and Burning techniques and some enhancements to the eyes, it's time to evaluate the image in preparation for the color grade. If you are not familiar with Frequency Separation or retouching in general, hit up my YouTube channel to watch the sixteen-video-long retouching series at www.youtube.com/c/realityreimagined.

LET'S COLOR GRADE

My first issue with this scene is how strong the teal color is in her lingerie and how it stands out a little too much. This will pull the audience's focus to her body and yes, that's part of the allure of boudoir photography, but I want the audience to see her face and eyes first before they travel. To that end, we need to do something with that color. Should we tone down its luminosity values so it isn't so bright? Yeah, we could, but I like the light values and how they easily connect to the light source in this image, which are the windows off camera right. After a moment it hits me—it isn't the brightness, it's the color of the lingerie. It doesn't match any other colors we see in the scene. We have muted blues in the bedroom décor (shout out to Robert Orcutt and his beautiful home studio of Studio at Boulder Mountain) and the teal is too close to green to work. Time for a color change. There are many ways to achieve this and the easiest is to use Adobe Camera Raw as a filter. I'm going to duplicate the image and open that duplicate into ACR by going to Filter/Camera Raw Filter. Once in ACR I'll go to the Color Mixer and select the Teal color dial. I'll slide the Hue to a value of +65 and reduce the Luminance slider to a -10 value. Back in Photoshop I can do a quick before and after to make sure nothing else in the scene changed and it didn't; the teal color was truly just in the lingerie.

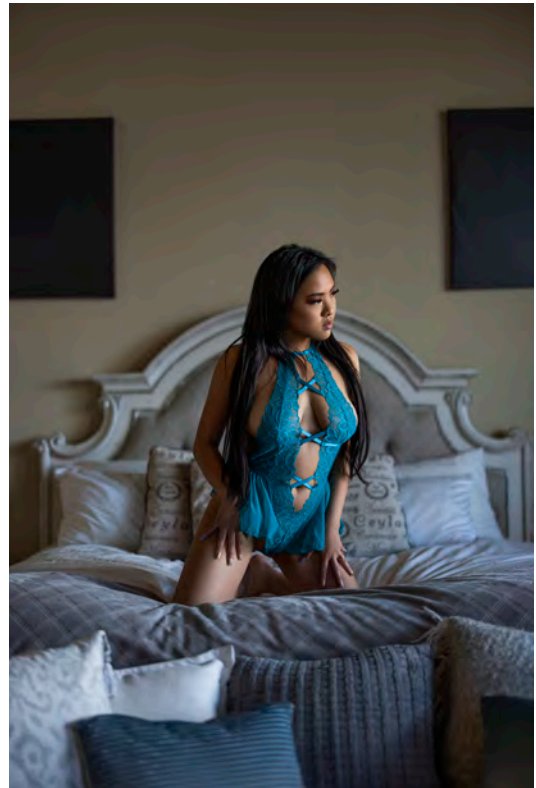
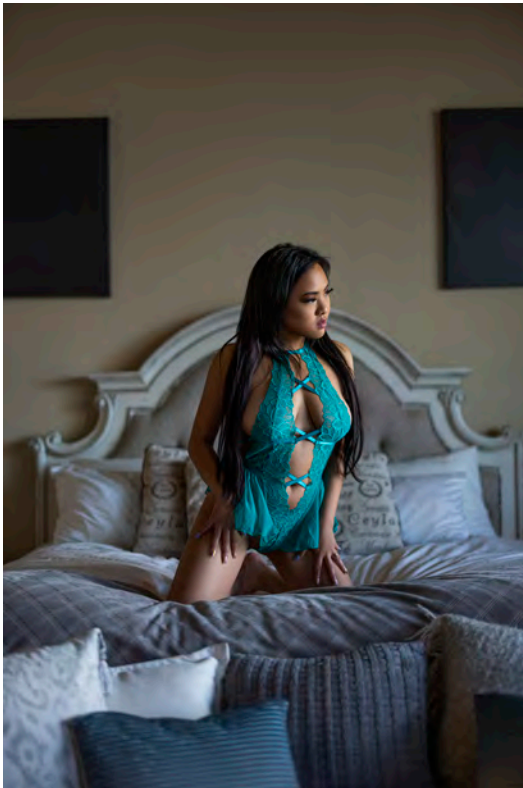


Image © Reality Reimagined

Color grading is only as hard as you make it and truly is the most rewarding part of any artwork created in Photoshop. There is so much you can explore with presets, Color Look-Up Tables, actions or even third-party plugins like the Reimagined Art Plugin I created to make color grading an easy process. However, let's do it all by hand and use some of the most basic tools in Photoshop to achieve it: Adjustment Layers.

To get started with making decisions about what colors to infuse into the color grade, we have to identify what dominant colors we see in this scene. Blue/teal is an obvious color and the orange/yellow/red we see in Sarah's skin tone are the other colors of significance. That's why I love this master bedroom set because the color choices in the space are neutral with blue muted tones throughout. Blue is the opposite color of orange on the color wheel and thus any human being in this room will have color harmony immediately with the scene. That's also why I selected the teal lingerie when Sarah offered me a choice from her wardrobe.

So let's add some more blue and orange tones to this image and make some color graded art. Solid Color Adjustment layers are your best friend when it comes to this process and the easiest to work with. I'm going to make two of them and use her skin tone and lingerie as the base in the Color Picker. To do that, simply make a Solid Color Adjustment layer (which will be whatever color you currently have selected as your foreground color) and click OK in the Color Picker window. Now your image will be filled with one single color. Turn off this layer by clicking the "eye" icon next to it. Then double-click the icon of the Adjustment Layer and that will reopen the Color Picker. Now we can use the eyedropper tool to select a color from the image. I chose a deep blue/teal from her lingerie and will change the layer's blending mode to Lighten and reduce the opacity of the layer to 35%.

Now let's add that harmony of the orange family by repeating the same process of Adjustment Layer creation. I'll sample the lighter colors of her skin from her forehead and use a Blending Mode of Soft Light rather than Lighten. I want a touch more contrast in the shadows of the scene, so I'm going to use a Brightness/Contrast Adjustment Layer set to a Blending Mode of Luminosity and a value of +15 to the Contrast only. The final touch will be adding a simple vignette to the scene to augment the impact of the natural light in this scene and direct the audience's focus to Sarah.

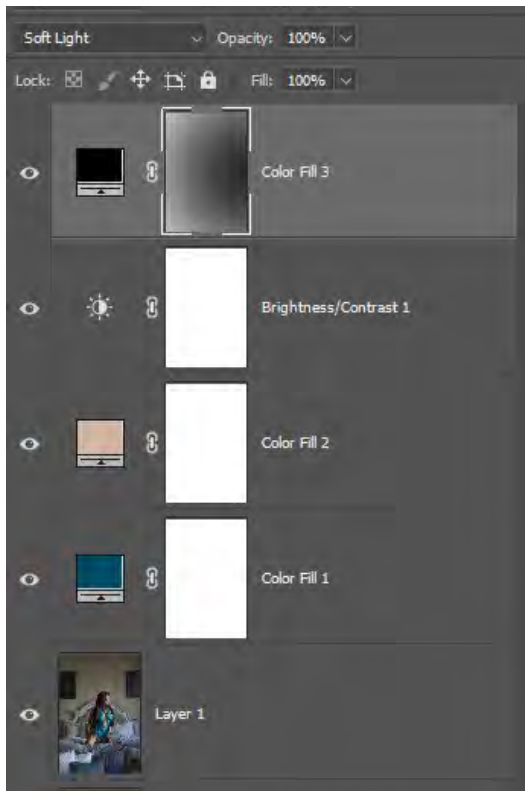


Image © Reality Reimagined

This process of color grading is practically the same for an image illuminated by strobes, as is the case of this image of my wonderful friend Kiarra.

The environment for this session is vastly different from Robert's stunning studio. The scene is very rich in warm tones of red and orange, so I asked Kiarra to balance that with the navy blue lingerie. Those are the same colors that I turn to when I make my Solid Color Adjustment Layer choices. However, for this image, I want a further lift of the shadows and contrast, so I'll use a Curves Adjustment Layer on a Blending Mode of Soft Light. Lifting the shadows on the Curve by 50% will give me the results I'm looking for.

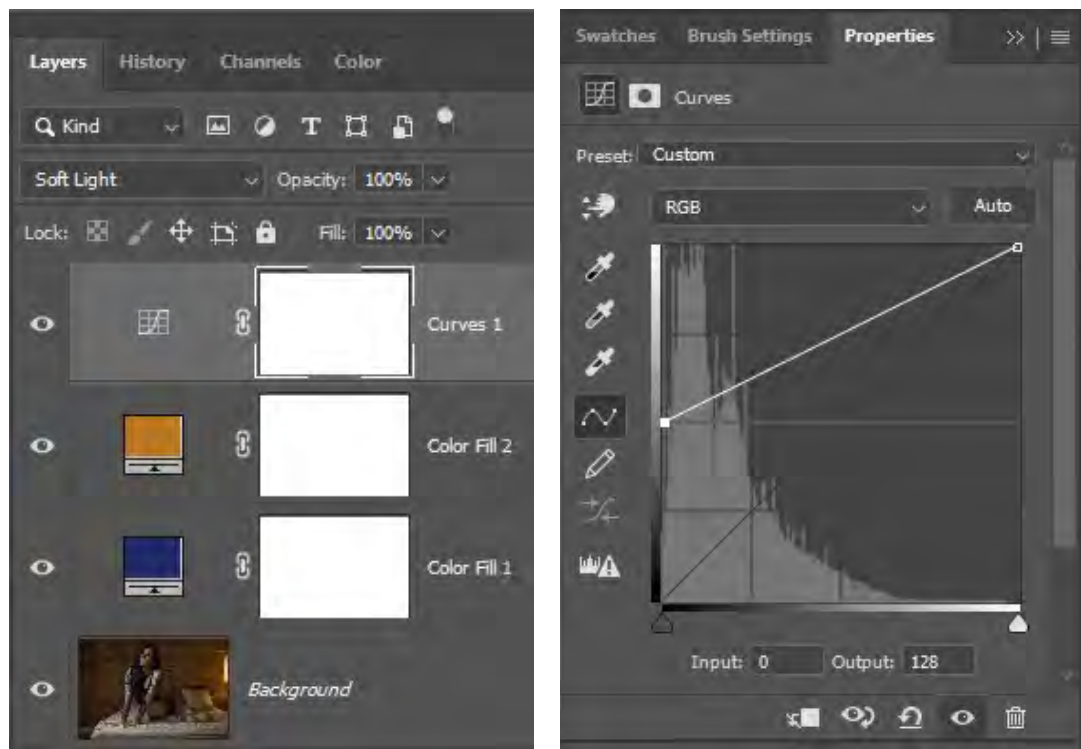






Image © Reality Reimagined

FINAL THOUGHTS

It's so easy to feel lost or overwhelmed in digital photo editing. Whether it be a mental block of "I can't learn this program; it's too hard!" or a creative block of "What do I do now?"—both are completely within your control. I teach my students to approach Photoshop systemically, by asking yourself some basic questions about what you see in the image for light, color and details. Then problem-solve each of those steps, utilizing the basic tools found in Photoshop. More complex and creative editing will be further along on your journey, but it all begins here with the basics and your imagination. ■



David is an award-winning photographer, Photoshop artist and educator who specializes in unique portrait and photo manipulation art. Through his brand Reality Reimagined, his artwork spans the genres of fantasy, glamour, fashion and all the stories found therein. In 2018, he received the Grand Award from the ShutterFest image competition and is currently nominated for a Grand Imaging Award through Professional Photographers of America. The center of his universe is his wonderful wife Bethany, who reminds him to never be afraid to fly. Together they have traveled the world and continue to explore all the possibilities of Reality Reimagined and the imagination it is based on.

website: realityreimagined.com **instagram:** [instagram.com/realityreimagined/](https://www.instagram.com/realityreimagined/)



TOP 5 STEPS TO LEARN **LIGHTROOM CLASSIC**

with **Dustin Lucas**



Whether you are new to photography or have been in business for a while, you've likely heard of Adobe Lightroom. It's one of the industry's leading photo editing software for photographers and certainly a tool you want to add to your bag. To be clear, we are talking about Lightroom Classic, which is a subscription-based program used on your computer, not the mobile-oriented one called Lightroom CC. If you are already a subscriber to the Adobe ecosystem, you likely have access to Lightroom Classic already, but if not, it's \$10/month and a no brainer. In this article I am taking you through the top five steps to learn Lightroom Classic so you can be equipped to save time editing without losing quality this year!

First, we need to start with creating a catalog and importing your images. Second, we will be able to organize thousands of files and even cull out the bad ones you don't want to show your clients. Third, we will dive into Develop Mode to learn the basics of editing. Fourth, we will dive deeper to learn advanced techniques of editing in Develop Mode. Last but not least, we gotta export our edits to send them to the lab or direct to customers.

1. CREATE A CATALOG AND IMPORT PHOTOS

Lightroom Classic is a Digital Asset Manager, or DAM for short, and uses Catalogs to store your metadata for ratings, labels, keywords, develop adjustments, presets, etc. When you install the software and open it for the first time you are required to create a catalog, typically called Lightroom catalog. (Fig. 1) Simple so far, right? Every time you open the program this catalog will open so you don't lose track of your work. This is where you have your first decision to make: Create a single catalog or master catalog for all your work or create a new catalog per shoot. Let's stick with a single catalog workflow moving forward as this will apply to most of us. Now this catalog is saved on your computer's local hard drive and you will want to back up to an external location. (Fig. 2) If you have onsite storage in mind, make sure to point the backup location there. I like to use cloud storage to store them so I have access from anywhere if needed. Regardless, backup is key and it should be done for all images and catalogs at this point. (Fig. 3)

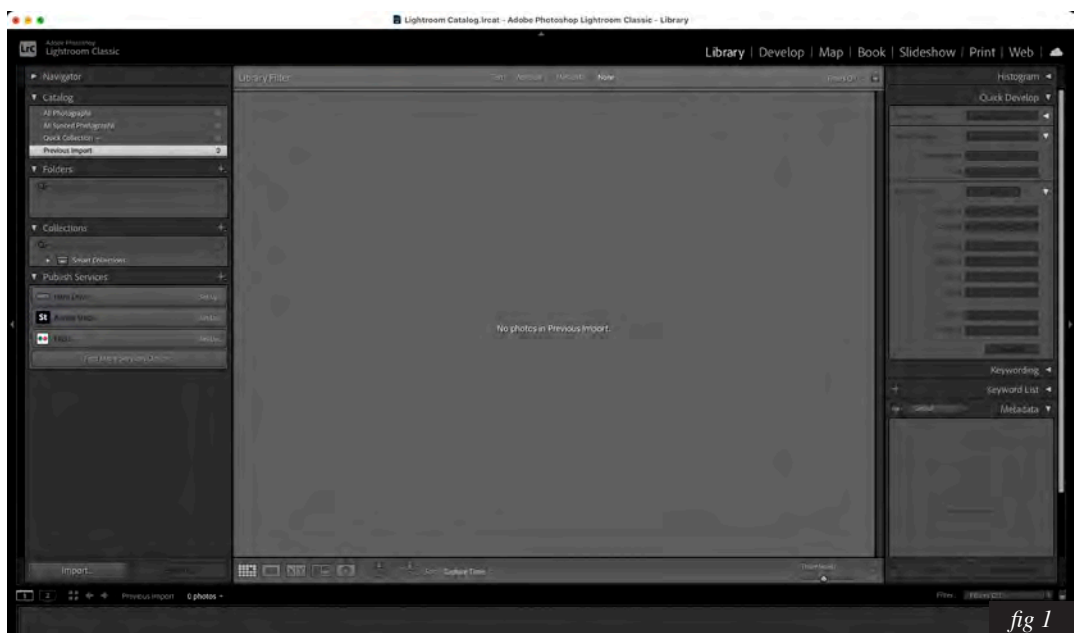


fig 1

Back Up Catalog

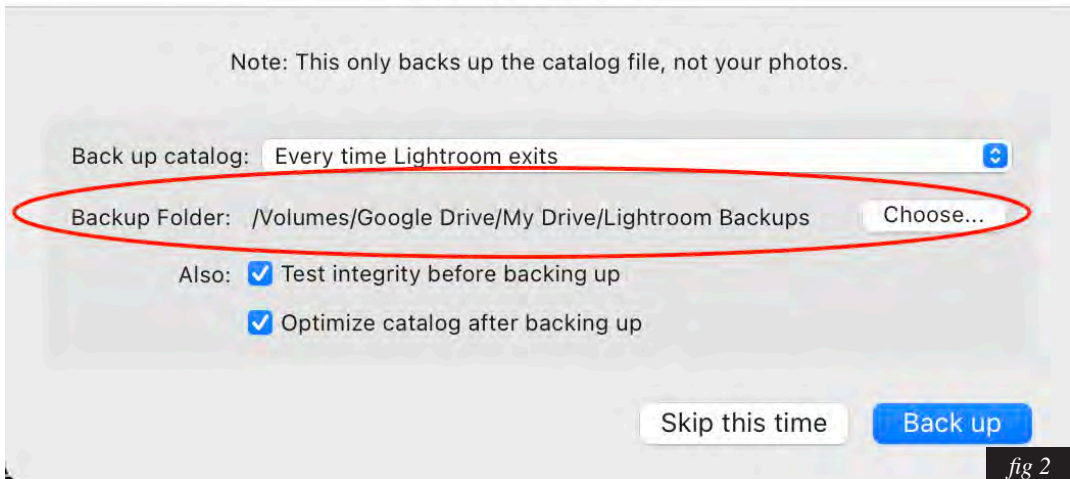


fig 2

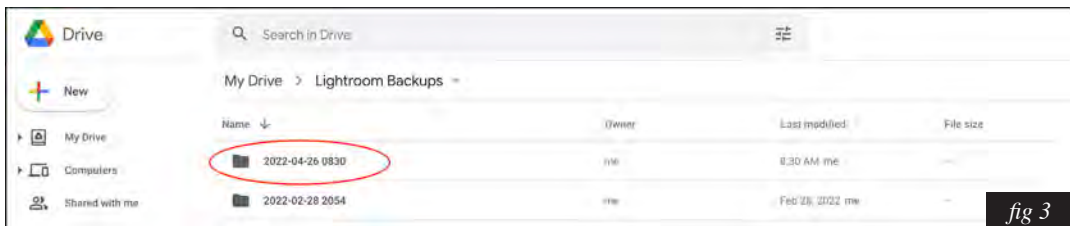


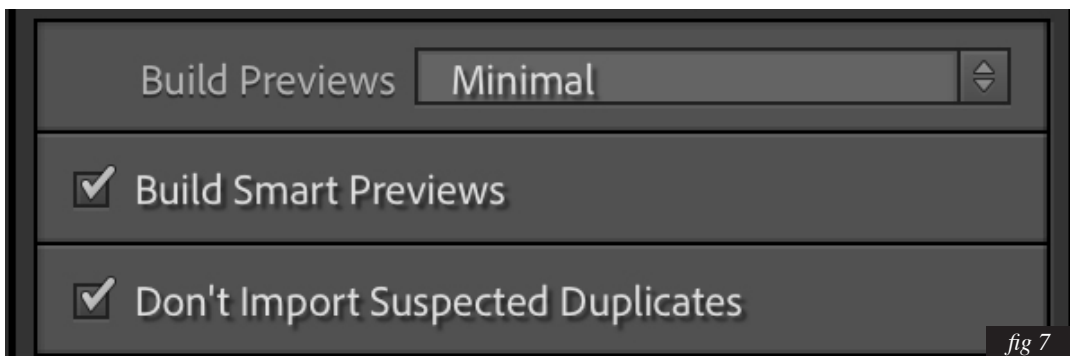
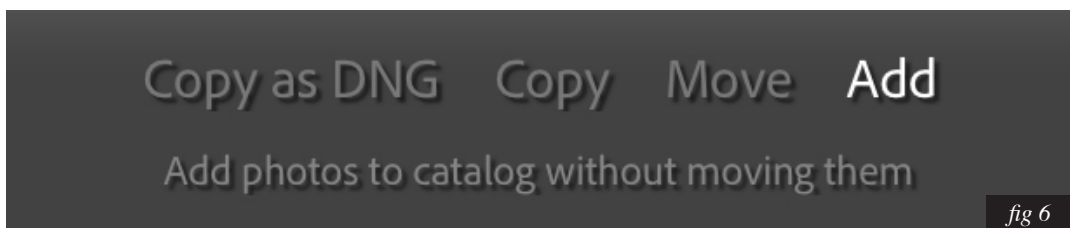
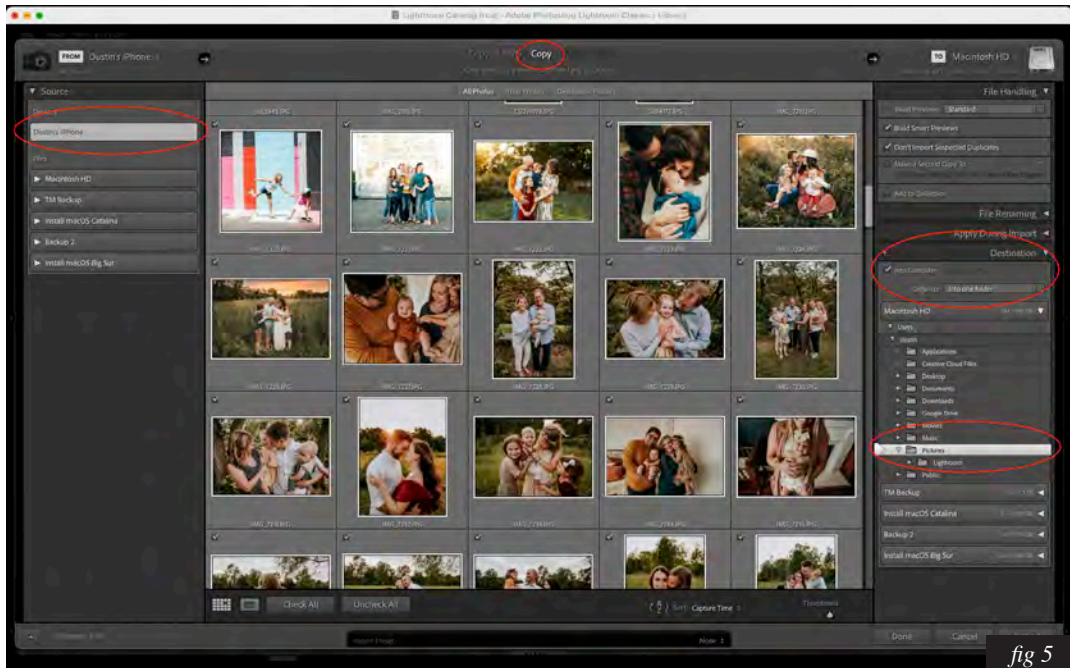
fig 3

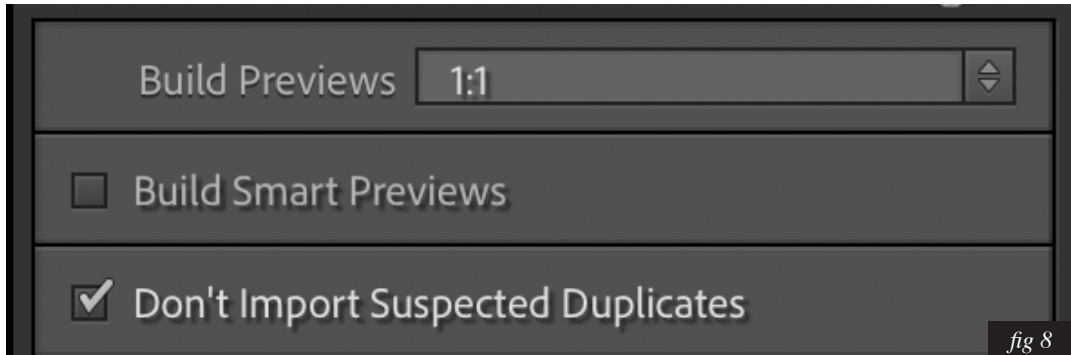
Lightroom Classic requires images to be imported into a catalog and stores all metadata. (Fig. 4)



fig 4

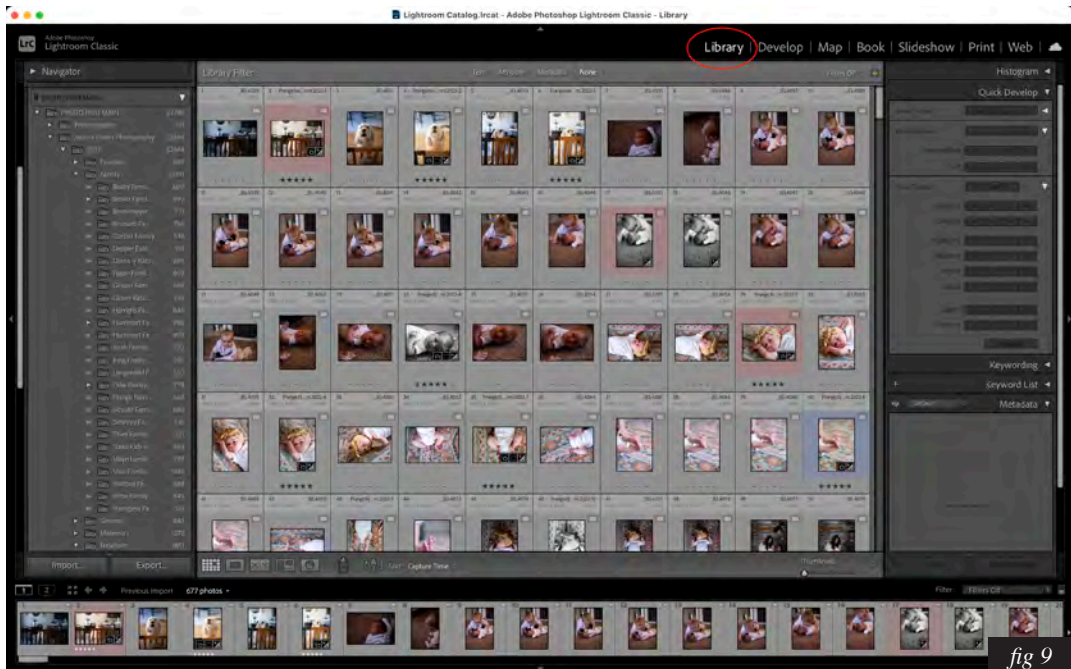
You can import direct from memory cards or external storage—keep in mind your options for importing will shift depending on this. If you import from a memory card, the files have to be copied to a hard drive and you can custom name the folder. (Fig. 5) If imported from another storage device, you can simply add the images and it's faster. (Fig. 6) It's important to utilize the File Handling panel to chose the right Previews. If you plan to work mobile, check the Smart Previews box so you can disconnect from storage after import. (Fig. 7) If you plan to work with your raw files connected, build 1:1 so it's fast after import. (Fig. 8) Make a plan and choose how you want to work in Lightroom. I prefer editing from Smart Previews and disconnecting from the storage device so I can work faster.

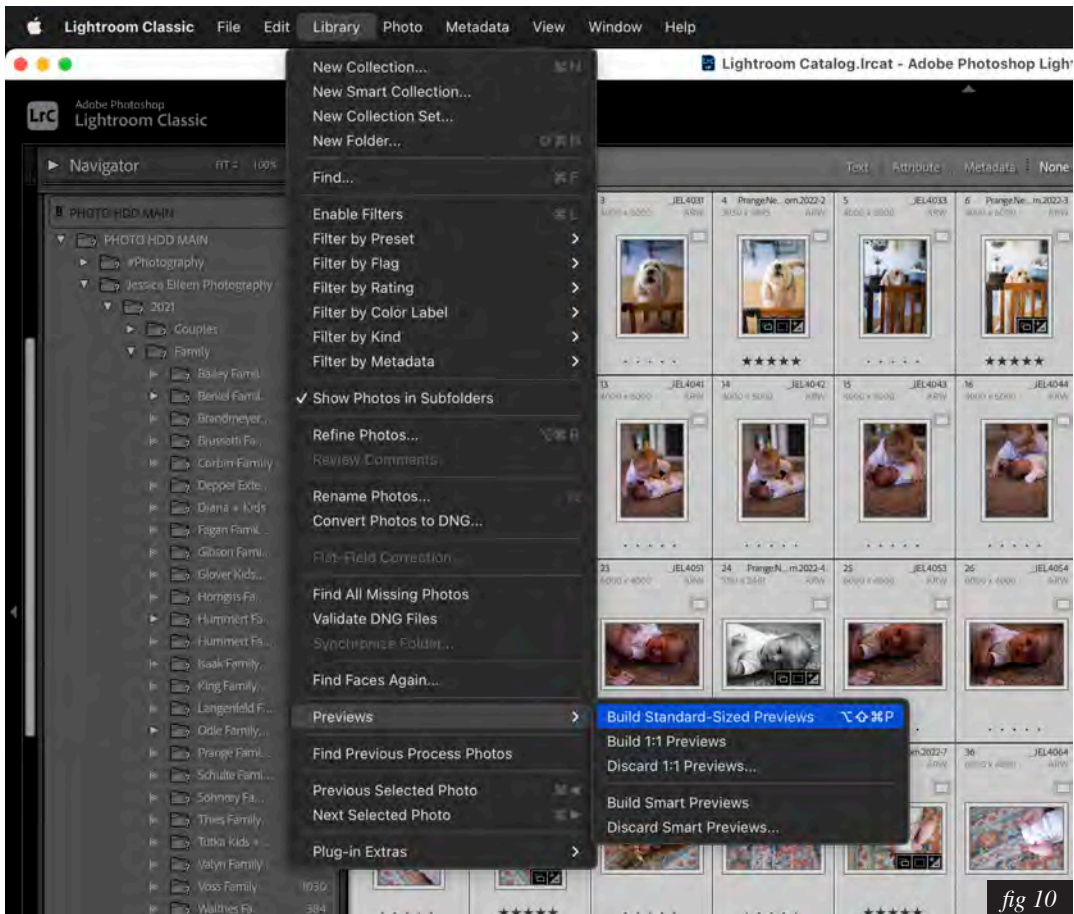




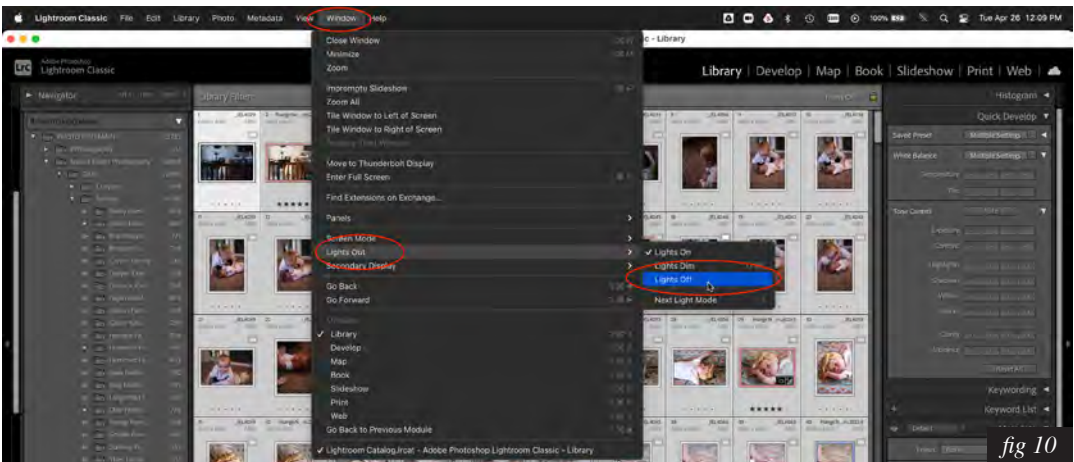
2. ORGANIZE PHOTOS IN LIBRARY MODE

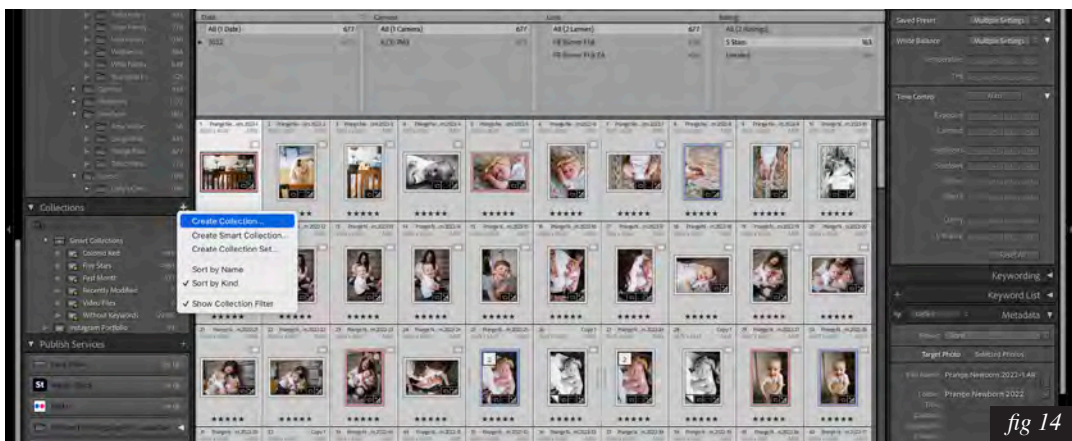
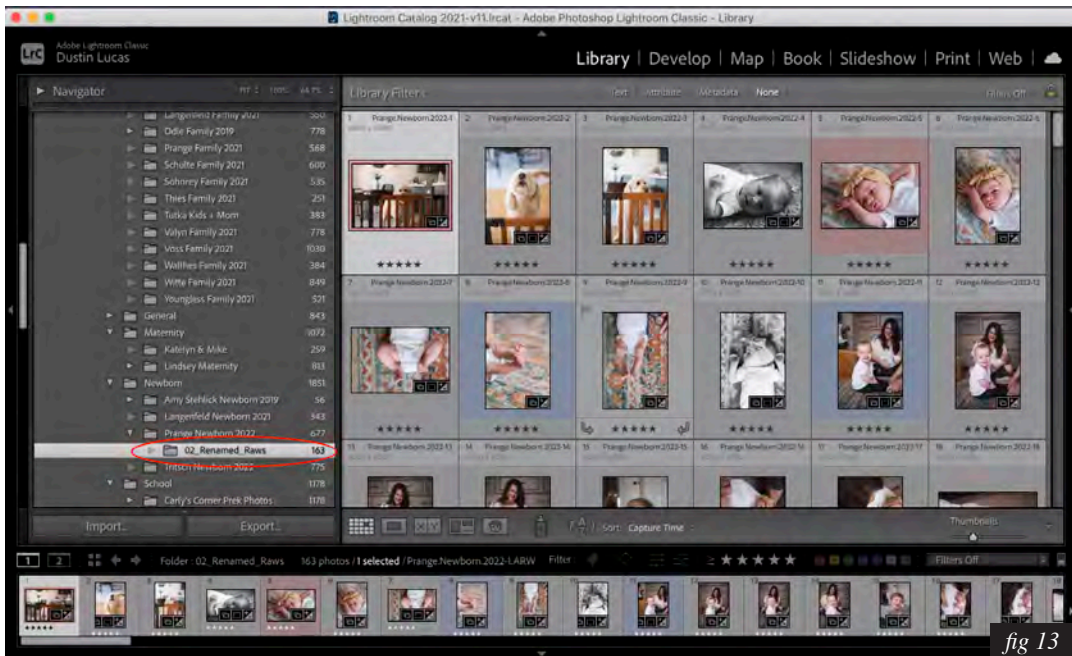
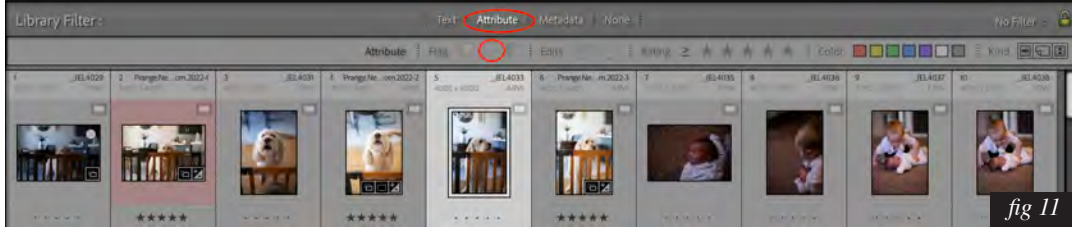
Now that we've imported our images, we can add ratings, color labels, keywords and flags as well as move images around. This is all done in Library Mode and we can even cull out the bad images. (Fig. 9)





When culling, I like to wait for Previews to be built and use Lights Out Mode so I can work faster. (Fig. 10) Typically, I would start by removing images I don't want as a first pass. To do this I turn on a Library filter called Filter By Any Flag Status so when I apply a flag it's removed from my view. (Fig. 11) Then when I am done with my first pass, I refine my final selection with five-star ratings. (Fig. 12) Once I reconnect my storage I can rename these files and move them to their own folder called 02_Renamed Raw's. (Fig. 13) If I move them to a Collection I can custom sort them easily as well. Collections are like digital folders that don't move your files, but allow you to organize specifically inside the Lightroom catalog. (Fig. 14)





Once we are ready to edit, I like to add color labels for samples or anchor images. Red would be my choice for samples and this can be applied with the 6 key and after selecting the first of every image per lighting change. (Fig. 15) Now we are ready to jump into Develop mode and color correct.

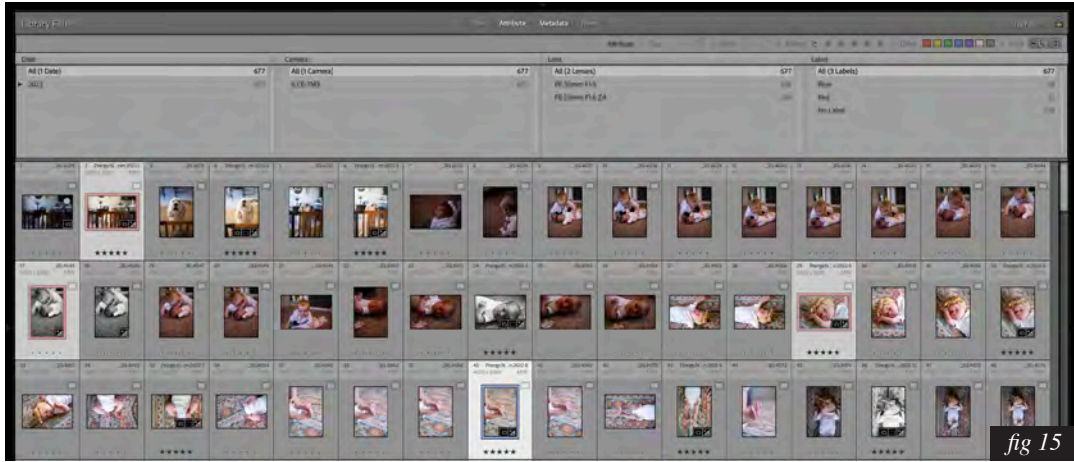


fig 15

3. DEVELOP MODE - THE BASICS

Now that we have images selected for anchor images, let's pick one in the most even lighting. I like to use outdoor open shade or something similar. Before we dive into the editing process, you have to think about this program in the most efficient way. There are a ton of sliders you can tamper with and continue to for hundreds of images, never really liking what you apply. (Fig. 16) This is why Develop presets are so powerful to apply to all your images before you start individually editing each image. Whether you purchase some from a colleague's recommendation or you want to make your own, let's dive in.

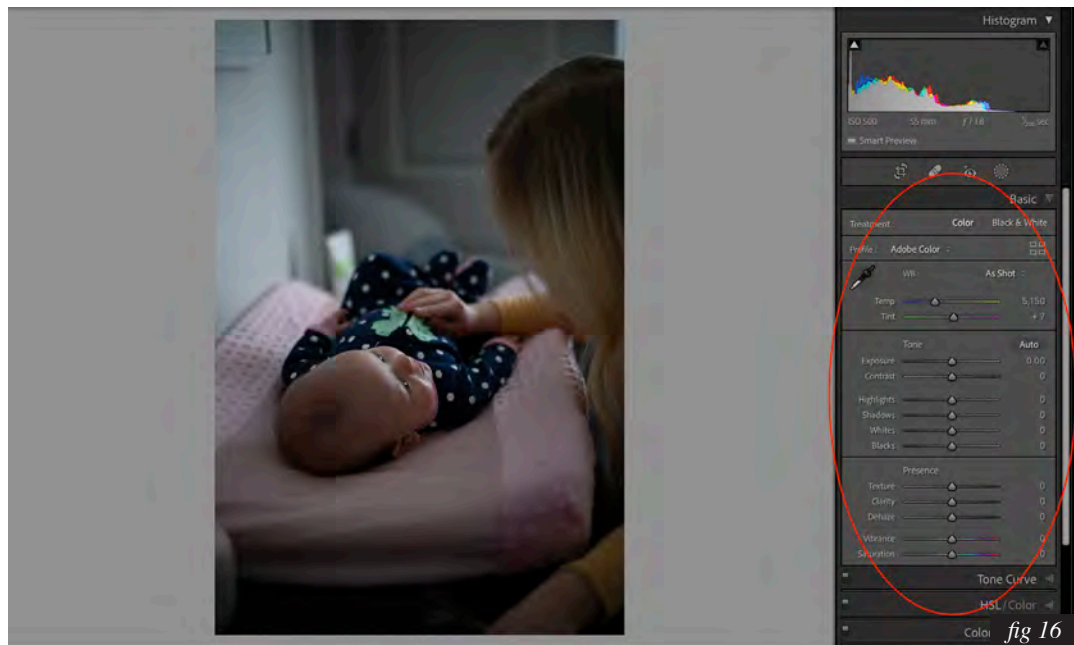


fig 16



fig 17

When making a preset, you want this to be an overlay to enhance your raw image to apply a profile, increase contrast, recover highlights, shadows, add some punch, sharpening, fix lens distortion, vignetting, etc. Nothing too creative here, just a starting point I use often for all images to get color corrected. (Fig. 17)

Now we need to follow a proper order of operations when color correcting. First thing is we need to examine exposure to make sure the subject's face is properly exposed. (Fig. 18)



fig 18

Image © Jessica Lucas



fig 19

Then we can move to white balance starting with temp and tint. (Fig. 19) Last but not least is tonal adjustments to fine-tune clothing and other secondary elements. (Fig. 20) I start with highlights followed by shadow recovery. Now, when it comes to the white and black sliders this is very tricky because it can affect skin very negatively. A quick tip is to hold Shift while double-clicking them to achieve a true white or black. On screen it almost looks blown out so use to your discretion. (Fig. 21) Another quick way to edit is using the Histogram at the top of the panel. If you click and drag the cursor over each highlights section it moves the corresponding sliders. From left to right you can adjust the black point, shadows, exposure, highlights and white point. You can also use the White Balance Selector tool by striking the W key to click on a neutral or true white object. It's not perfect by any means but helps lead you to neutral if used correctly. (Fig. 22)



fig 20



fig 21

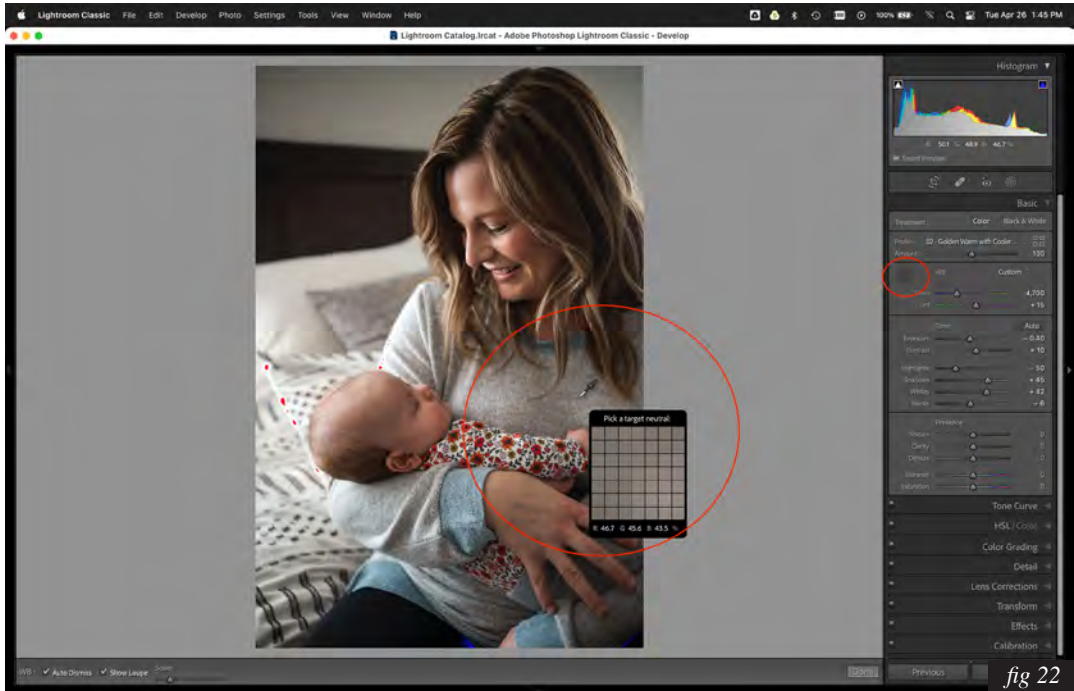


fig 22

Image © Jessica Lucas



After you apply a preset to all images, color correct the first evenly lit image you can utilize in Reference mode by holding Shift and striking the R key. Then drag your edited image into the left preview pane. (Fig. 23) Assuming you are still filtered to only the red label images, you can arrow right to edit each image pre-selected for anchor images. This is a simple way to edit consistently and save time syncing later. (Fig. 24) Once you're finished with anchor images, filter to all five-starred images and begin syncing settings. To do this go back to Library mode and into grid view. Then select a red label image, hold Shift and click on the last image after it in the sequence leading up to another red label image. (Fig. 25) To sync them hold Shift, Option and strike the S key. Then you can select the develop settings you altered to sync those specifically. (Fig. 26) Now repeat this through the whole folder of images. Last but not least, go back into Develop mode and mildly adjust each image to match. Boom—you are now color correcting faster than ever! (Fig. 27)



Image © Jessica Lucas

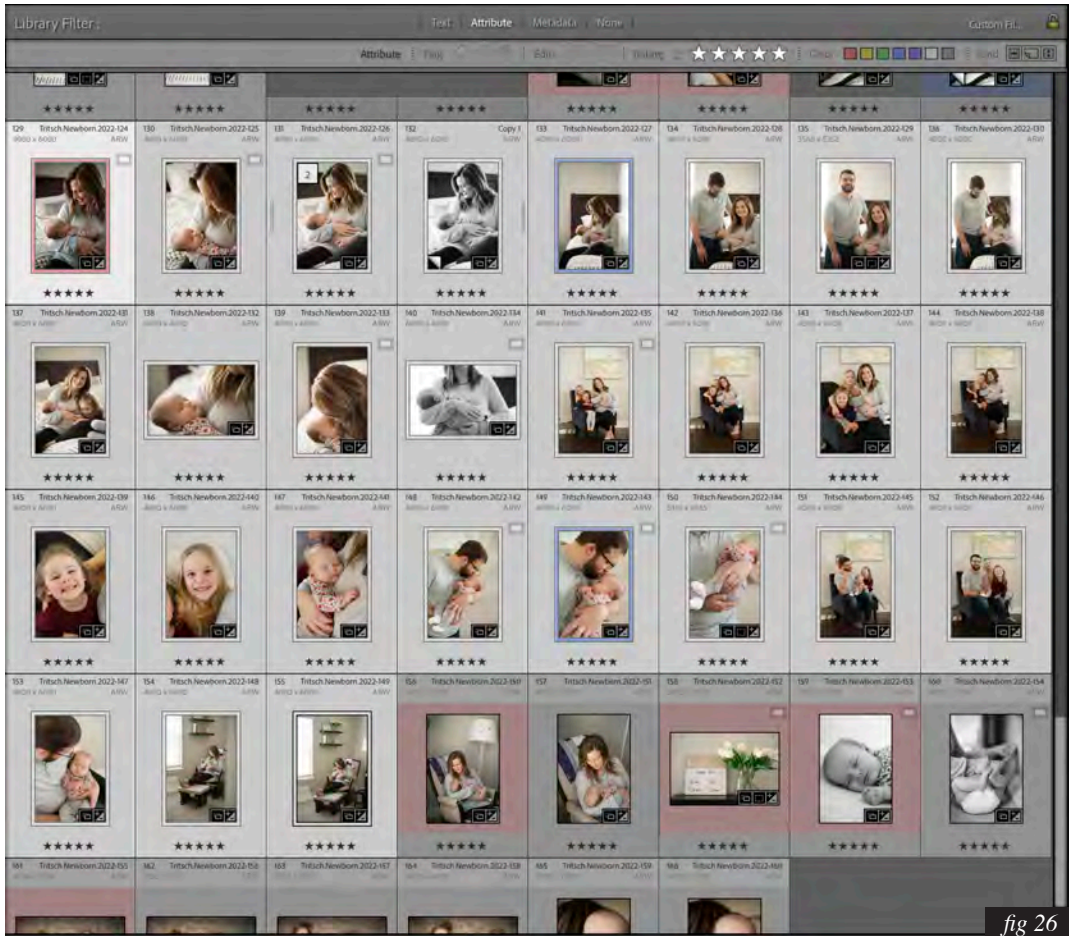


fig 26

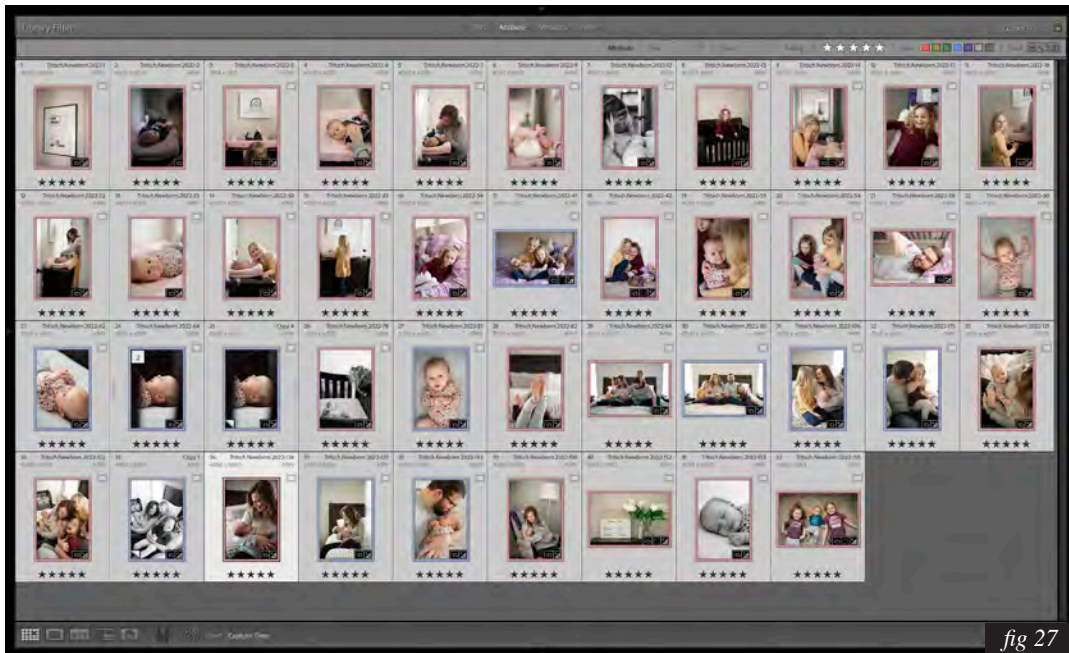


fig 27

4. DEVELOP MODE - ADVANCED

Now that we've gotten the basics down, let's dive into the most advanced features of Develop mode like profiles, color grading, target adjustment tools and masking. Starting from the top, profiles serve as a gateway to color correction, but before you change from Adobe Standard you might want to do some research on third-party profiles you can purchase to emulate different styles. These can vary from traditional films, trendy toning and color matching. Here is the difference in changing the profile to Kodak, Fuji, DVLOP and Color Fidelity. These have distinct color characteristics and can help enhance the color of your raw images. (Fig. 28)



Color grading is a more selective tool for manipulating Hue, Saturation and Luminance per tonal region like shadows, mid tones and highlights. Like in cinema, color grading is a creative tool to tell a story and really make your media stand out. I like to use the global section, click on the color presets and use the color picker tool. This lets me shift the image based on a sample color to quickly shift this image into the creative color sphere. Going to any region you can simply move the sliders by clicking the inner circle to simultaneously adjust saturation and hue. A classic style is cooling down the shadows and warming the highlights. (Fig. 29) You can play with the blend and balance sliders to shift the image from one tonal region to the other. I prefer using the target adjustments slider to manipulate color more effectively.

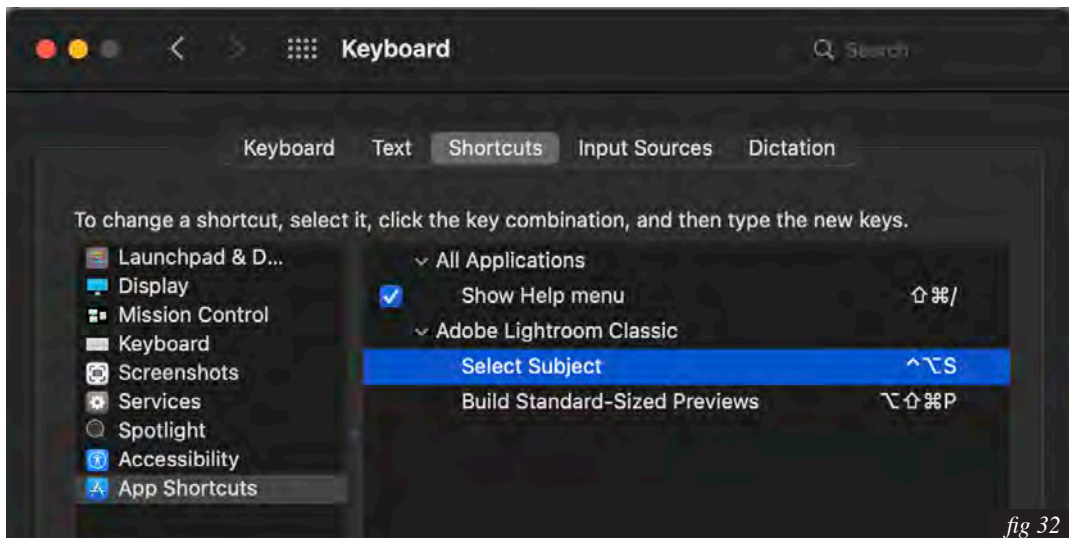
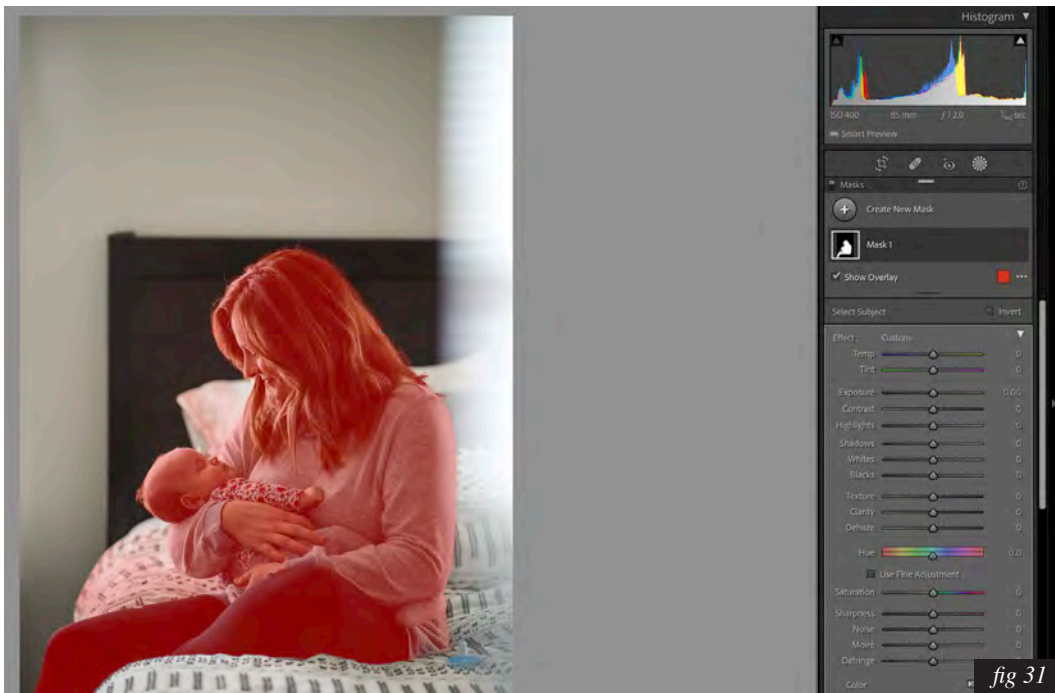
The target adjustment tool lets me click and drag to affect one to two specific colors. This is utilized best in the HSL panel and we can remove color casts, desaturate orange tones, etc. What's great is you can independently adjust Hue, Saturation or Luminance per sampled color or colors to quickly adjust images. Clicking and dragging downward decreases the slider's value and dragging upwards increases it. Keep in mind that it pulls from the entire image, not just the sections you click in when targeting colors. (Fig. 30) The more advanced tool in Lightroom Classic is the masking tool.



Image © Jessica Lucas

First things first, you have artificial intelligence or AI at your fingertips with the subject and sky select feature in the masking tool. This is very powerful and is simple to activate. By holding Shift and striking the W key you engage the masking tool.

The standard way is to click on Select Subject to quickly have a mask automatically overlaying your subject. (Fig. 31) Since there isn't a shortcut for this we can make one rather easily. Open System Preferences on your Mac computer, go to Keyboard and Shortcuts. Next select App Shortcuts, click on the + button and choose Adobe Lightroom Classic. Last, we need to select Adobe Lightroom Classic in the list, click the + symbol again, enter the exact menu title name, "Select Subject" and a shortcut command you can recall. (Fig. 32) Then, relaunch Lightroom Classic and you now have a very powerful shortcut to quickly apply a mask for just the subject. Add a subject mask by holding Control, Option and striking the S key. (Fig. 33) You can duplicate the mask and invert, then drop exposure to burn down the background. Now you have an image that really stands out! (Fig. 34)



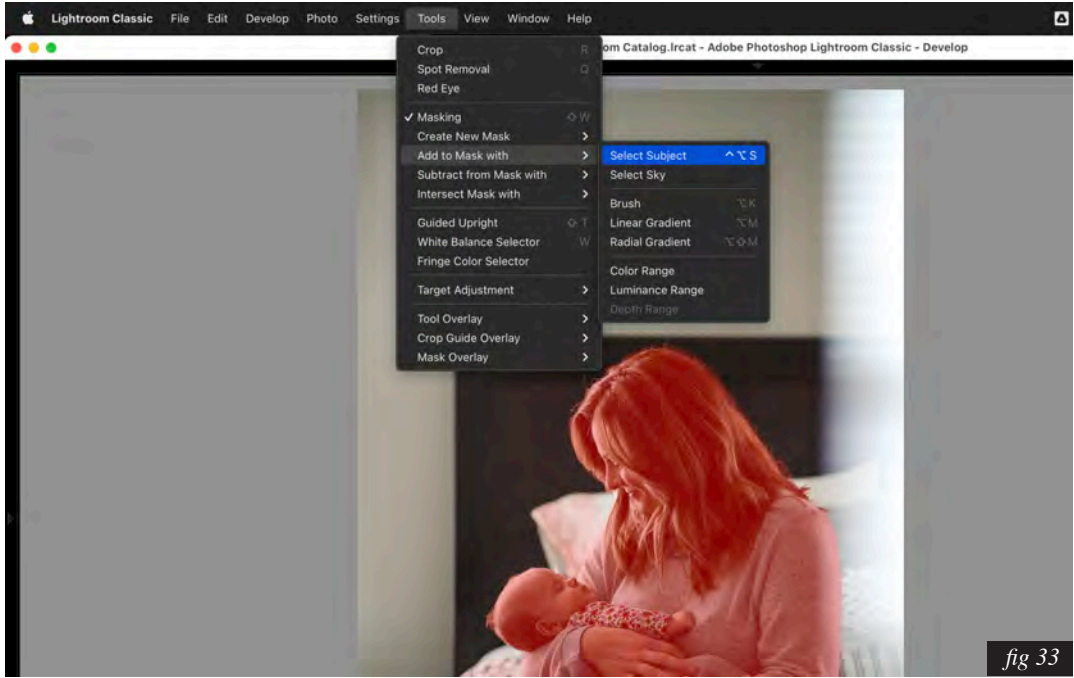


fig 33

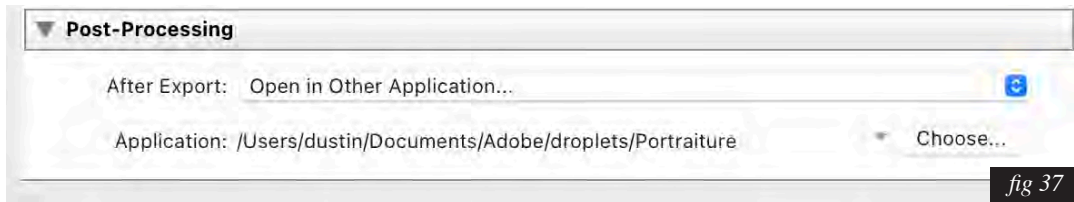
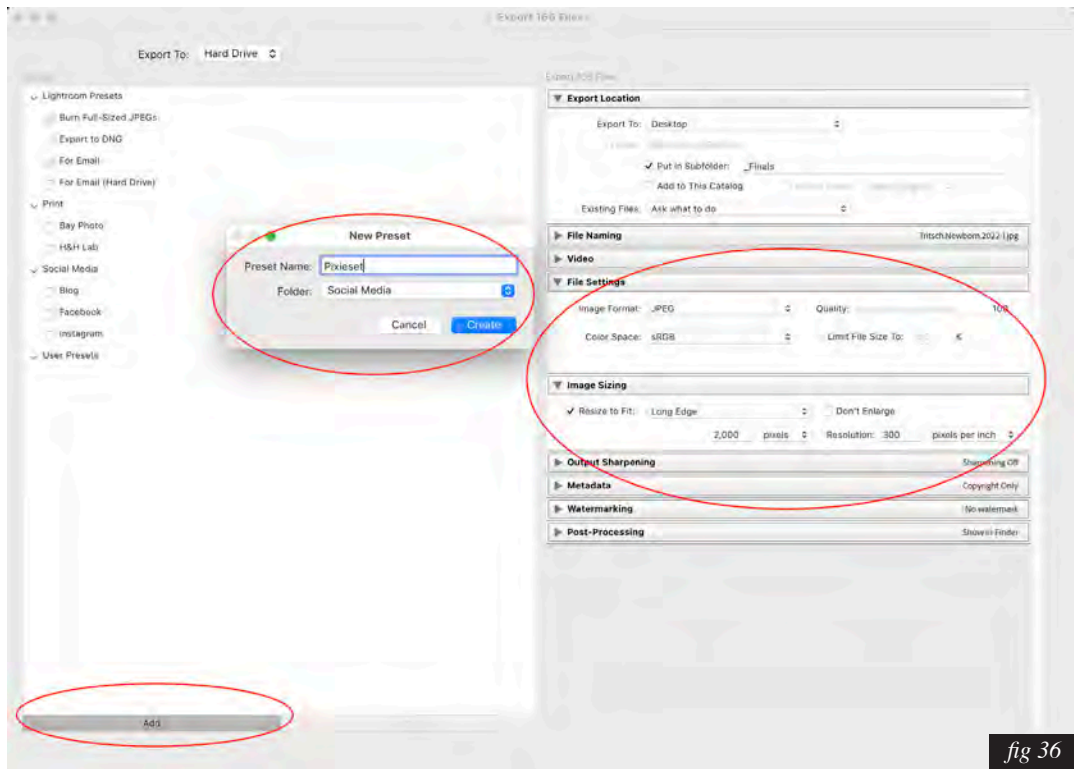


fig 34

Image © Jessica Lucas

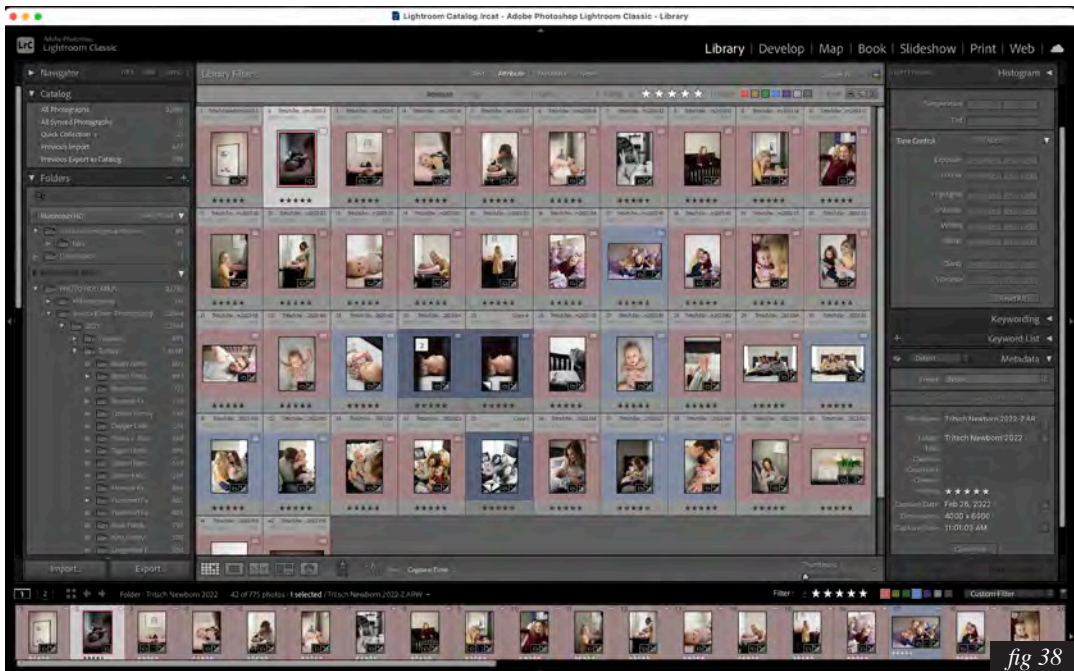
5. EXPORT IMAGES

When I am ready to export, I typically rename my files in Library Mode. This provides a professional look to your images and personalizes the final product. With all the images selected and sorted by Capture time we can simply hit the F2 button to open the rename photo option. I typically rename with the date, last name, event name and sequence start at 1. For example this would look like “072322_Kelli_Styled_Shoot_001.” Now keep in mind we just renamed the raw files in their original folder. Now let’s jump into the Export module. (Fig. 35)



The reason we have to export is so we can output edited files to vendors and customers. This is where we choose location, file settings, image sizing, etc. Location is pretty straightforward and you likely already have a finals or edited folder-naming structure. File settings are important and depend on where these images are going. Most applications would require JPEG and sRGB while the quality can be turned down to 90 if you exceed size when uploading. Image sizing is helpful for setting resolution to 300 for printing or limiting the long edge to 2000 if you are posting proofs to a client gallery. For each output method you can save presets to quickly recall these settings. (Fig. 36)

For more advanced workflows, if you want to apply a watermark or run Photoshop actions afterwards automatically, you can. This would require you to first save a Photoshop droplet. Then in the Lightroom Classic export module under Post-Processing you can choose to open in another application and select the droplet. This would be how I would export JPEGs and then have Portraiture and some other actions ran on all my images. (Fig. 37) Boom—you are done! (Fig. 38)





THE RESULTS

If I haven't been clear, Lightroom Classic is the go-to program for editing efficiently while retaining quality. It is just built better than most raw processing software out there. Understanding how to set it up and work efficiently is key. Now that you have the tools to import, organize, edit and export, what are you waiting for? This is the busiest wedding year in decades. Save yourself some stress this year and learn Lightroom. ■



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.

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LIGHTING IN CHALLENGING SITUATIONS

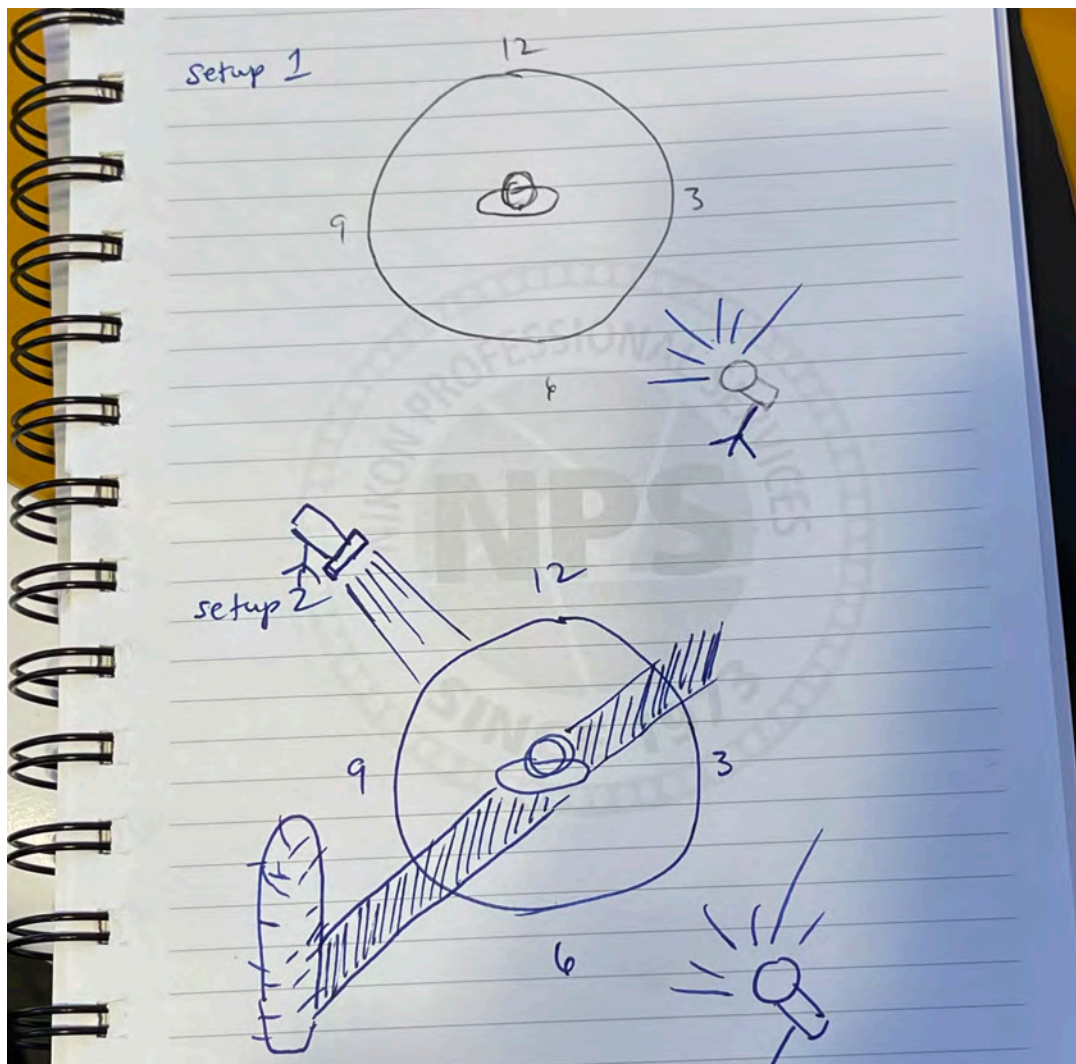
with Justin Haugen



Off-camera lighting is easily the most challenging and rewarding experience any photographer can endeavor. One misstep and it punishes you with mediocre results that make you feel like a complete novice all over again. Conversely, it rewards you when all the pieces fall into place and you look at the back of your camera to discover you are in fact a talented, capable photographer. Just when you think you've got a game plan, you're blindsided by a new situation that presents a variable you're completely unprepared for.

In this article, I'm going to help you navigate some of the trickier lighting scenes we encounter by identifying the challenges they present and giving you a roadmap to light your way out of any situation!

As I think back on all of the lighting situations that have come up over the years, there are two scenarios in particular that tend to trip up emerging photographers everywhere.



Pre-visualize your lighting setups! A tip I learned from MagMod wizard, Trevor Dayley, is to imagine your subject at the center of a clock and your camera is at 6 o'clock. You can now refer to your lights as time on the clock. In setup 1 our light is placed between 4 and 5 o'clock. In setup 2, our lights are positioned roughly at 5 and 10 o'clock.

MIDDAY SUN

This is every photographer's worst nightmare. Your client wants to shoot at 12 p.m. despite all of your objections and you're losing your mind over it. Why are photographers so scared of high noon? Well for one, we probably think we're just not equipped for it, and this is often true. Bright, uncovered daylight poses a very tricky technical hurdle we have to overcome. We know that right off the bat, our baseline exposure is going to be somewhere in the ballpark of ISO 100. If you can go lower in ISO on your camera, by all means go for it. My Sony A1 has a lowest ISO setting of 50, which I'll happily use when the situation calls for it.

Next, you're going to be at shutter speed around 1/200th of a second due to the limitation of max sync speed. What's max sync speed? It's the speed at which a camera's shutter mechanism can drop the curtain to expose the sensor, allowing the momentary blast of light from your flash to reach the sensor. The second curtain drops to cover the sensor, ending the exposure. You've seen that dreaded black bar at the bottom of your image. It's the result of exceeding your camera's max sync speed, not allowing the sensor to be exposed to the entire flash duration before the second curtain drops. Some are lucky to have 1/250, 1/320, or even 1/400 (Sony A1) at their disposal. Great. You're going to need it.

Now, you're going to select an aperture. You know that fancy lens you spent \$2,000 on because it shoots at f1.2? It's useless here unless you have a neutral density filter or a powerful light with high speed sync (HSS). I won't get into those methods, but you should know by now that if you have an ISO of 100 and a shutter speed of 1/200th of a second on a bright day, you're going to be in some realm of f8 to f13 that you loathe. Tough kittens, we're trying to use flash on a bright day.

So what's your objective here? For me, my goal is to get my ambient exposure a half to a full stop underexposed from a properly exposed image. Why? In the absence of light, you get to make creative decisions about the light in the scene.

Imagine a completely dark space with zero light. This is a blank canvas for a photographer. Everything is a creative possibility in this situation. The problem with midday sun is that our canvas is FULL of paint and how are you going to notice the paint you're about to put on that canvas if there's all this bright colorful paint competing with it? This is why we're trying to get the ambient exposure to look slightly darker (or really dark if you're feeling moody) than a baseline exposure. There are levels to this and you can have a more ambient/flash balanced image where the flash is almost imperceptible to the untrained eye, or you can go off the deep end and underexpose your ambient scene so your flash use will be very apparent. Both methods are a look, and both work depending on your vision or client needs.

How about the flash you're using? It's important to know right now that flash effectiveness is governed by a few things: the power of the flash, distance from your subject, and any modifiers you put in front of the flash. If you brought a speedlight to this party, you're gonna have a bad time. The output of this flash at full power can be observed in midday sun, but your flash is going to need to be really close to your subject—and good luck putting any diffusers or softboxes on it. These will eat up precious output, rendering the effectiveness of the flash almost unusable in this scenario. This scene really calls for a higher output light, like a portable strobe with upwards of 400w/s to 600w/s of power, and even then you would want more power so you can have more flexibility in placing the light further from the subject or using large modifiers.

How did I approach this situation in these photos? I didn't bring the most powerful lights in my arsenal, but I definitely brought the most versatile. I'm a big fan of the Flashpoint eVOLV 200. It's three times more powerful than a speedlight while taking up about the same amount of space in my bag. We're talking 200w/s of power here. Not a lot, but enough. Normally in these lighting situations we make the decision to put the sun at our subject's back, bringing the ambient exposure down with our settings, and using the flash to fill in the heavily underexposed subject's face and body. For this photo, I decided against that and chose to have the sun be part of the exposure, acting as fill light with the eVOLV 200 acting as the main light. The benefit of working this way is that my shadows are not so underexposed, making my lights work extra hard to fill in all of the shadowed areas.



Image © Justin Haugen Photography

Create an environment of light for your subject to occupy within the frame

My task here was to photograph a local hiking influencer in her natural habitat. The goal was to photograph her in these conditions while showing her playful side and even capture a little motion. My light setup was very simple. I positioned my eVOLV 200 a few feet camera right of the portion of the trail that she would be walking through. Using only a MagSphere 2 as my main modifier, I pointed the light in the area I hoped to capture our influencer within the frame. I set the flash to ½ power knowing that I could only realistically pop off two exposures before she'd be out of the area of usable light from my flash. Not ideal, but not impossible. It wasn't fun for our talent, but about 10 quick walkthroughs got us at least a few frames we'd be able to choose from. Once we got the walk down, we tried some jumps, kicks, and I asked her to vibe with the music we were playing on a speaker nearby. Good timing and anticipation is key!



Timing is everything. With a flash at 1/2 or full power, you only have one or two frames to pull off the exact moment you want.

Images © Justin Haugen Photography

Once you have your light and your shot lined up, let your subjects express themselves. You've made the perfect setup for what you envisioned, and now you can collaborate and let the subject bring what they have to the images you're making!

Sometimes you'll get lucky and nature or architecture will provide you with an extra tool in shaping your light in this nightmare lighting scenario. In this photo, I noticed the saguaro was casting a human sized shadow and used it to take away the ambient light from our influencer. When there is darkness in a frame, we get to make creative decisions on how to light that part of the image.



Image © Justin Haugen Photography

Enlist the aid of a nearby structure or tree to place your subject in shade before lighting them with your flash

I placed my eVOLV 200 with a MagSphere 2 just out of frame, camera right about 7 feet high, and 6 feet from my subject. I then positioned a second eVOLV 200 with a MagGrid 2 directly across from the first light, aimed toward the back of her head. I love to use two lights this way to sculpt out the human shape and make it look more three dimensional. You get a key light on your subject, a strip of shadow, and a thin strip of light on the back edge of the subject away from the key light. It's subtle, but it makes a difference when you get used to seeing it in your images!



When using two lights, imagine both lights are opposite ends of broomstick, facing towards your subject. You'll achieve this nice cross light effect with a nice directional shadow from your main light, and a subtle accent light off the opposite side of your subject.

Image © Justin Haugen Photography

THE DREADED SUNSET WEDDING CEREMONY THAT'S ACTUALLY A NIGHTTIME CEREMONY!

Does your blood pressure elevate at the mere mention of a sunset wedding ceremony? Sure, if everything goes as planned, the ceremony will end just as blue hour is dwindling and you're anxiously shooting exposures at ISO 6400, f1.4, and the most carefully held 1/20th second exposures you've ever pulled off. What do you have up your sleeve when the rabbi is a wordsmith and instead of 20 minutes, the ceremony is 50 minutes?

In a pinch, don't forget that trusty on-camera flash. Slap that puppy on your camera with your favorite diffuser and get to work. You can't blow this because you didn't prepare for dark conditions. It's not going to be pretty and although it's better than missing the memories altogether, you didn't come here for on-camera flash tips. Let's figure out a plan to help you get good looking photos in near or complete darkness.



Note the position of the rear lights. If only the light had remained this way for the entire ceremony!

Image © Justin Haugen Photography



The third light positioned at the front of the ceremony site, acting as a kicker light when shooting the procession

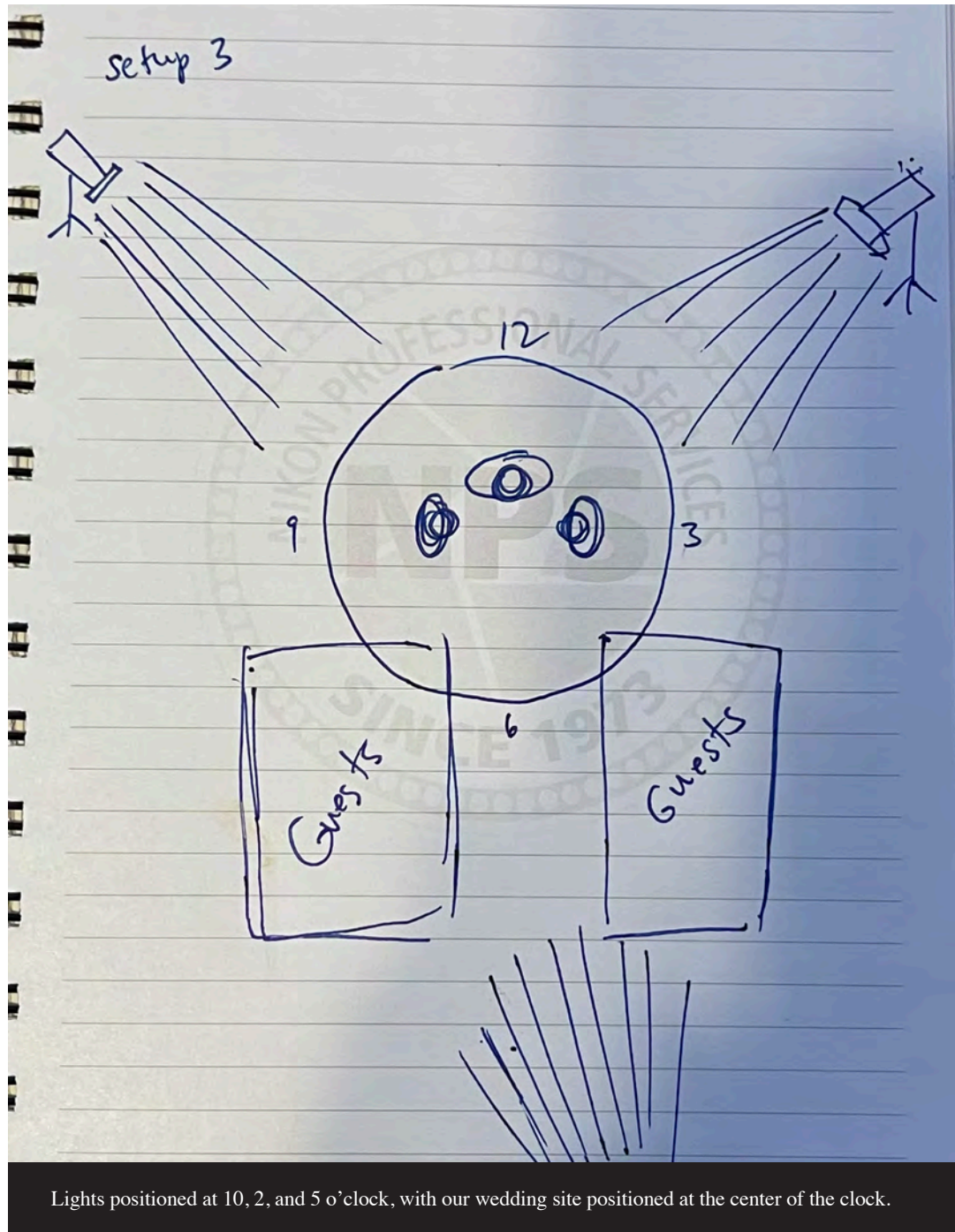
The wedding I'm sharing here had a late start. It was clear before the beginning that I wouldn't have enough available light to get a decent or meaningful exposure. I quickly came up with a plan to light the most important parts of the ceremony with my flashes. Again I enlisted my favorite light, the eVOLV 200. I could have pulled this off with speedlights, but the extra power really helps in these situations for faster recycle times.

The key thing for supplying all of the light in a scene is that we have even lighting on our subjects and all the key people around them. By now you've got a reasonable understanding of the inverse square law. It's that stuffy technical term that explains the way light falls off over distance. Basically, every time you double the distance from your light source to your subject, the light reaching your subject is only 1/4 as intense.



Because of the distance of the two lights camera left, the fall off past the bride and groom is less dramatic, allowing us to see the guests.

Here's where the inverse square law plays heavily into my lighting decisions in this scene. If I were to place the lights very close to my subjects, the light hitting them would then rapidly fall off just past them. You'd end up with well-lit subjects, and anything around them would quickly fall into darkness. It's not a great look if we're trying to see more of the scene. Placing the lights further away, while making the lights work a little harder to overcome the distance, will allow the light falloff to be less drastic. The further lights are, the more even the light falloff is.



Lights positioned at 10, 2, and 5 o'clock, with our wedding site positioned at the center of the clock.



environment of light, you can focus on capturing moments without concerning yourself so much with what the lights are doing.



Nighttime ceremony? No problem.

Images © Justin Haugen Photography

Looking at the diagram, you can see I placed the lights in a triangle formation with a MagGrid2 on each light to control the spread of light to only the ceremony site. Two lights are behind the ceremony site aimed toward the procession walkway, and one more light at the front of the ceremony site aimed towards where the bride and groom are standing. This placement helps me cover ALL angles. At the start of the procession I was shooting at ISO 3200, f2.8, and 1/200th of a second. With the flashes all around 1/16th power, I was able to photograph the procession and the ceremony no matter where I was positioned.

Once your lights are in position and all your settings are dialed in, you can focus on your job and capture memories in this fully controlled lighting environment. Who needs the sun?



Image © Justin Haugen Photography

For this photo, I disabled the light at the front of the ceremony site to get a moodier image, allowing the candle light to be the dominate light source on the rabbi and getting some nice accent light on our bride and groom from the two rear lights.

CONCLUSION

Whether your problem is too much sunlight or not enough, you're going to need a plan to produce results. It's important you know the limitations and strengths of your gear. Practice with your lights so you can understand the relationship between distance, power, placement and modifier selection and the small changes that will affect the final result.

You don't have to wait for a nightmare scenario to present itself to challenge your ability and try to pull a rabbit out of a hat. It costs you nothing to bug a friend (okay, maybe a promise of lunch or happy hour) to let you practice lighting on them on a bright, cloudless day. Perhaps the next family bbq is a great opportunity to bring your lights and practice a nighttime lighting setup. With practice comes confidence, and the next time a couple tells you their wedding ceremony is at sunset or your client insists on a 12 p.m. photo session, you'll be able to meet them at their request and produce images that they'll never forget! ■



Justin is a wedding and portrait photographer currently living in Tucson, Arizona. Starting his career photographing motorsports and feature cars for automotive publications, it wasn't long before he found his passion in connecting with people and capturing their stories on camera. His current obsession is teaching photographers how to use off-camera lighting and will be teaching at ShutterFest 2022. Justin is sponsored by Tamron USA, MagMod and HoldFast Gear.

website: justinhaugen.com Instagram.com/[photowarlock/](https://www.instagram.com/photowarlock/)

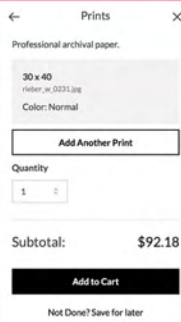


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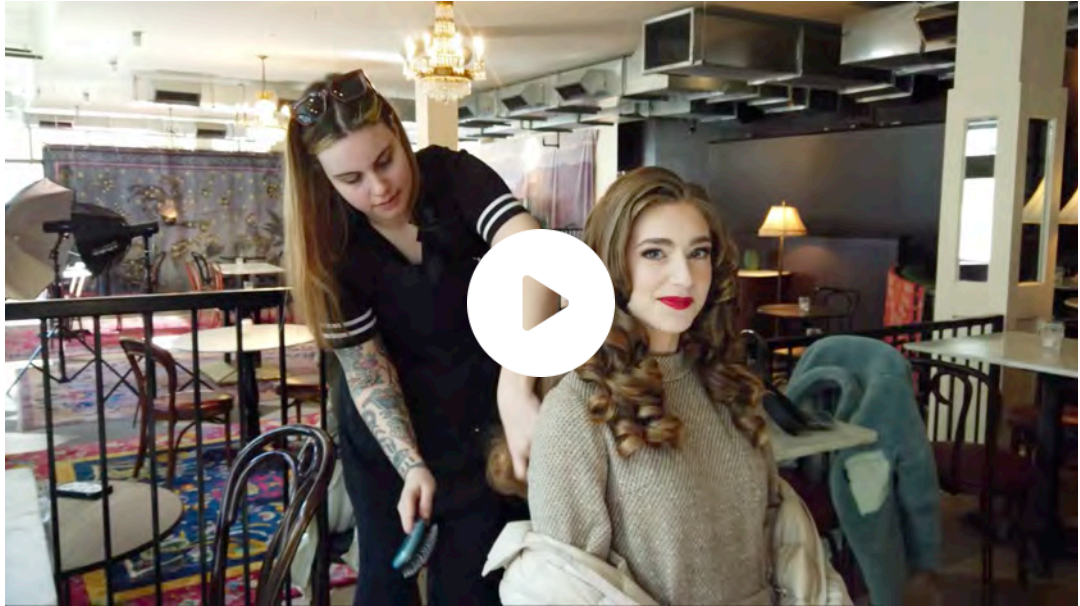
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REEVALUATE YOUR
SENIOR
EXPERIENCE

with Jessica Robertson





How often do you have an interaction with a business that just totally WOWS and AMAZES you? Have you ever had an experience that affects you so very much that you want to reevaluate your own business's customer experience and every aspect of how your business functions? Honestly, it is so incredibly rare but it happened to me and it completely changed my business model.

Recently I interviewed three orthodontists with my oldest daughter. The first two experiences were as I would have expected: The doctors were professional and the environment was sterile and appropriate. The third orthodontic practice we went to was AMAZING and FUN in every single aspect. When I contacted the practice, the reception was enthusiastic and the representative asked very caring questions about my daughter's feelings toward dental work. He followed up, as promised, with some online forms but said we could also just fill them out when we came. On the day of the consultation, we pulled into the parking lot and noticed the parking spaces were outlined with hundreds of painted teeth on the pavement instead of just basic lines, which we thought was a fun detail. Per instructions, we waited in the car until we were texted to come in. Before we reached the door, the door opened and a smiling face greeted us, "Hello, Jessica and Grace, please come in!" The interior of the practice was bright with natural light and upbeat music was playing in the background. We walked past a white board with a joke of the day and an ice cream cart. We were guided into a room with a glass door where we were once again welcomed kindly with a big smile and an enthusiastic demeanor.

At this point, I thought to myself, "These people are all so happy and cheerful, have they been using some of that laughing gas too?" I could go on and on about the experience which included state of the art technology, making a seemingly boring process super fun, and top-notch professionalism of the staff and orthodontist. In the end, I was simply blown away! As I am not typically impressed with most customer service experiences, I ended up telling our orthodontist, who is also the original founding doctor for the practice. And the best thing happened... He shared his secret. The basis of his practice started with a book called "Fish! A Proven Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results." He thanked me for my feedback and said, "I'll send you a copy." And a few days later, it arrived along with a fun book for my daughter as well.

I have been a professional photographer for nearly 22 years and this very short book has changed how I am running my business. I asked my two team members to read the book as well and then we had a planning meeting to reevaluate and reimagine our business. Yes, the book was affirmational in the sense that we are doing many things really well for our clients, community and as a team, but it challenged us to think of how we can be better. So when we, as photographers, think about client experience, how can we be and do better for our clients?

Here are a few ways we have improved our client experience, the interactions we have with our community, and very importantly, how we are ensuring that the studio is a place where we want to come to work.



Images © Jessica Robertson Photographic Artistry

1. CORE VALUES AND COMMUNITY

Before you can give a great experience, I believe you must be secure and intentional in the business you want to create. What are your business's core values? Have you written them down? Do you share them with your clients? Do you run your business with them in mind? If you have employees, do they function daily with the core values in mind? My team currently includes Robin and Karen. Robin has been with our company for 13 years and Karen for 10 years. Thankfully, our team is strong, but we gathered recently to discuss our core values. When I started the studio, I established what I thought they should be, but the creative process of establishing our core values as a team was very valuable. You might notice that "love" is in the center of our core values. We show love for one another and we act lovingly towards our clients. These core values guide us daily in our interactions with each other and our community. We share these core values with our clients so they understand the kind of business they are working with.

To remind us to "choose our attitude" (which is a lesson from the book), we made this fun sign to represent our team. Our goal each day is to "make someone's day." We genuinely care about each and every client.

Our studio is on the main road in our town and the train runs through the center causing cars to back up in front of the studio. We wanted to spread a little positivity, so we installed a light-up sign with a positive message that we change each week. We encourage community involvement by inviting them to submit quotes. Small touches can have an impact too!

2. MARKETING AND FIRST INTERACTIONS

For many of our senior clients, their first interaction with us is through our Friend Sessions. We start each new senior class with a selection of models. Those models receive a complimentary Friend Session with whatever theme they want to plan. My goal for each Friend Session is to connect with the seniors, have fun, and become the person they want to create their senior portraits. I guide them in posing, authentically compliment them, and get them comfortable with being photographed. People do business with people they know, like and trust. I want to be that person.

The second way many seniors find us for their senior portraits is through previous clients. Referrals are still alive and well in our business. Honestly, I love hearing the referrals because it is an affirmation that our clients are genuinely happy with the experience they have had with us. You can't buy that kind of marketing, so make the time you invest in each client memorable, genuine and fun!



Image © Jessica Robertson Photographic Artistry



Image © Jessica Robertson Photographic Artistry

3. CONNECTION: MAKE A FRIEND AND BE GRATEFUL

More than ever, connection is important. Covid has changed each of us and many of us want to feel seen, valued and celebrated. We have that opportunity with every single interaction. When the phone rings or an email comes in, we want that client to feel as if they are our only client and the most important person. We want to hear about their child and show a genuine interest in being their photographer. It is critical that we start the flow of excitement from the very first connection we make with them. While we do have a process in place for things that should be covered in the initial interaction, we want an organic and authentic conversation to take place. We want to become people that they want to do business with because we are showing that we care about them.

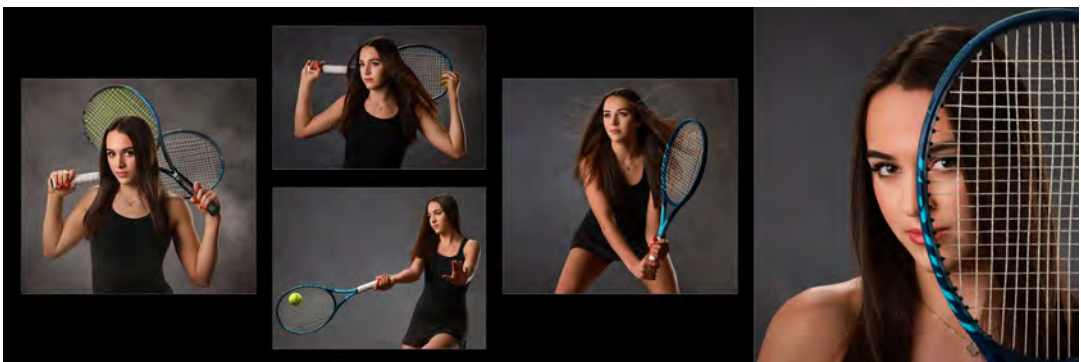
For several years now we have been more intentional with showing our gratitude towards our clients. We thank them for thinking of us for their portrait needs throughout the process. We express gratitude for referrals and for being a returning client. Clients appreciate the fact that we do not take them for granted and we are thankful they have chosen us for their portrait needs.

4. CONSULTATION: LISTEN, GENERATE VALUE AND BUILD TRUST

Inviting clients to collaborate and plan their unique portrait session adds value to the services and products you provide. Consultations are critical to the success of our sessions and are an integral part of our client experience.

“Hi, thank you so much for coming in today to chat about your portraits. It is so nice to meet you!” This is how I typically start my consultations. I might add in a compliment upon looking at them like, “Oh my goodness, you have such beautiful eyes.” I’ll continue by asking them to tell me about their vision for their portrait session. “What ideas do you have?” I use an information sheet we send prior to the meeting as a starting point. If they give me a blank stare, I will draw questions from their hobbies and interests to get the conversation started. I see myself as a vehicle in the creation of their vision and it is my job to execute and collaborate on those initial ideas.

Ultimately, the goal is to create an authentic visual representation of who that person is. Sometimes it is subtle and comes down to an expression that takes a mother back to when her child was little. And other times, it is more overt in terms of documenting an athletic interest or hobby. The location might be significant or hold a special memory. My goal is to truly “see” the individual so that the portraits we create are a true reflection of the individual. I discuss this intent with my clients. I want to create authentic portraits and capture the senior’s true self.



Images © Jessica Robertson Photographic Artistry



The second part of the consultation is to educate the client about our product offerings with full disclosure of pricing. It is essential to help the client imagine their images with the products being offered. If a client plans to be photographed in a prom dress or a more formal look, I want to educate the client that a special art piece would be a perfect way to display that type of portrait. Or if they are an athlete, I would recommend and show examples of our 10"x30" sports composites. Both of these are wonderful ways of expanding and maximizing a sale. In terms of the process, we show our offerings and hopefully have our clients fall in love with certain items and then go over pricing in full. By doing it in that order, the client has envisioned their senior in a product and most will figure out a way to get the products they fall in love with.



Images © Jessica Robertson Photographic Artistry



5. A TEAM APPROACH ADDS TO THE EXPERIENCE

During this process, I make sure they know they are hiring a team, not just me. I introduce them to Robin who does our sales and initial image processing. I also introduce them to Karen who does all of our design work and editing. Our team is rounded out with our makeup artists and our clothing stylist, who owns a local boutique. The team approach adds value and each of us has our area of expertise.



Image © Jessica Robertson Photographic Artistry

6. ONCE IN A LIFETIME EXPERIENCE

I recognize that the senior portrait session we provide is a once in a lifetime experience. I want their session to be one of the best experiences of their life where they are genuinely happy and feel celebrated. I start each session by telling my client that I am excited and I have been looking forward to their unique session. Typically, this does two things. It makes them realize that they are special to me and I am intentionally going to give everything I can to make them have the best session possible. Some people will express nervousness at this point. I will ease their discomfort by telling them I will take care of them and guide them through the entire process of posing and it is my job to bring out the best in them. Sometimes I joke around at this juncture to put them at ease by saying something like, “And I would be the worst photographer ever if I couldn’t get some great images of you. You are beautiful.”

Throughout the session I want them to feel that I am truly connected with them and that nothing else is of concern to me other than them! I never check my cell phone and I am constantly asking them questions about their life and future plans. It is their day and it is my job that they feel all the good things!



Image © Jessica Robertson Photographic Artistry

7. CREATE AN EMOTIONAL CONNECTION TO THE EXPERIENCE

I have thought long and hard about this for many years, and this year we have added something different. There is something so special about the emotional impact we can have on high school seniors. I take this very seriously! In my experience, the emotional high of the senior’s experience is when we are concluding the session. The senior feels beautiful/handsome, confident, loved by their parents and celebrated. I have typically ended sessions by asking if they had fun and are happy. I always thank them genuinely and express our sincere gratitude.

This year we are going a step further. At the end of the session, I will ask them how they feel. My hope is that the opportunity of a genuine conversation about how I see them will follow. I want to lift them up and verbalize the things that I think are unique and wonderful about them. I will then give them a stone engraved with the word “remember” and ask them to always remember how they feel in this moment. They are special and while some experiences can be tough, I want them to always remember they are loved and are a unique gift to this world.



Images © Jessica Robertson Photographic Artistry

8.TREAT YOUR CLIENTS LIKE YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE TREATED: MODIFIED IPS

My team and I often ask, “How would I want to be treated?” If I were a client looking into our services, what would result in a great experience with awesome images? I would want to feel beautiful/handsome. I would want my images to reflect my uniqueness. I would want to have help positioning my body in a flattering way. I would want to have a clear understanding of the process and pricing. I would want to have positive and happy memories of the day so that when I look at the images, I smile! Our process takes all of this into consideration and with these guidelines we have much happier clients.

One of my biggest concerns with the traditional in-person sales method is that clients feel pressured, rushed through the decision-making process, and many end up with buyer’s remorse. I want my clients to invest thousands of dollars with us and feel secure in their purchase. While I do believe the traditional in-person sales process can work if you have a small number of images, I don’t believe it is a universally effective process. For example, our senior sessions can have hundreds of images with seven to 10 outfits. It would overwhelm most people to make decisions on that volume of images within an hour or two. So, with our Modified IPS process, our clients view their images online one week after their session. The password-protected gallery is hosted through N-Vu and the following week they return to the studio for the ordering session. Our goal is that our clients never feel pressured. When they come in for their ordering session, we are there to help make decisions about how to best use their favorite images in the products we offer. Our clients feel relieved that we have a no-pressure sales process and I think this is a significant factor in clients referring us, returning to us, and investing in our portraiture confidently.



Image © Jessica Robertson Photographic Artistry

Image © Jessica Robertson Photographic Artistry



9. ARCHIVAL ART IS A PART OF THE EXPERIENCE

Many of our clients have not experienced printed photographs outside of their school pictures. I can't say this enough: If you are not offering products that display your imagery in the very best way possible, you are letting your clients down and you are not maximizing your sales. PERIOD! I am a print artist and memories deserve to be preserved through wall portraits, archival albums and memory preservation boxes.

I believe that many photographers fail because they don't know what to sell and they have not selected products that highlight their imagery.

When reevaluating our products and considering new ones, I ask the following five questions:

- **Does this product match our imagery?**

We recently added a new product from H&H Color Lab because it highlights our imagery in a unique way. It is a wood float block that highlights a gorgeous metal print with reclaimed redwood from aging structures in the San Francisco Bay Area. The wood is weathered and has colors ranging from grays to browns. It is an add-on art piece that coordinates with some of our more rustic, country scenes that are common in our portraits. With many of our clients decorating in a farmhouse style, it also goes perfectly with my clients' decor.

- **Does it work in a typical client's home?**

We offer three main options for portrait finishing. For a more traditional option, we offer textured prints from ACI and these require framing. With a more modern, clean decor we recommend our acrylic portraits from Acrylic Press. And our last option, canvas gallery wraps from Richmond ProLab, falls somewhere in between. Typically, these are displayed in cluster groupings. By offering the three different options, most of our clients will find something they love.

- **Does the quality match our brand?**

For over a decade, we offered very simple, generic albums. We didn't sell many because we focused on wall portraits or groupings. My mindset needed to change. I should not be selling either a wall grouping or an album but rather I should be selling both because they fulfill different needs. A wall grouping is great for parents, but the album is a keepsake for the senior.

We went on a search for the perfect albums to match our brand. While we still offer a more basic album, we offer upgraded albums like the Stitched Leather Album from H&H Color Lab. Our clients love the idea that they get to have a photo cover with their choice of leather. And always wanting to have three levels of quality, we added a high-end option featuring the Salvatore Albums from H&H Color Lab with custom designed album box options. These are high quality products that match our quality brand.

• Do we love the product?

Yes, it is true that you will sell what you show, but it is also true that it is much easier to sell what you love. Do you believe in the product and would you like to see it in your home preserving the memories of your family? In my home, I have several different types of products and each works well in the space while matching the imagery. From Richmond ProLab, I have canvas gallery wraps in my more casual spaces and framed Protecture portraits in the more formal entry area of my home. I also have 3XM Memory Preservation Boxes archiving our Christmas portraits. My most recent art piece for my home is a black and white portrait of my daughters in a Classic Modern Framed Torn Edge from H&H Color Lab. It hangs in our formal dining room and it is gorgeous. (No bias of course with the subject matter.) I can discuss my family's portraits with clients and that brings a sense of comfort. Our clients feel reassured in their purchase, knowing that I have chosen these products for my family's memories.

• Does this product fulfill a missing piece in our product line?

Last year I went looking for something totally different to add to our product line and found a perfect fit with the Classic Modern Framed Art Piece from H&H Color Lab. Within the shadow box frame there is a hand-torn watercolor print supported by gorgeous matting. The watercolor substrate is soft and feminine, which compliments so many of our portraits. We like to recommend this product for portraits with flowers and images that have a boho feel. This art piece has a real wow factor and many clients have not seen something like this before. This product fulfilled a missing piece in our product line, plus it offers an opportunity for higher sales, and our clients are happier! Win! Win! Win!



Image © Jessica Robertson Photographic Artistry





Images © Jessica Robertson Photographic Artistry

10. DELIVERY: FINISH THE EXPERIENCE

At our portrait delivery appointment, we display and review all of the images with the client. We make sure they are 100% happy with the portraits and products we are delivering. We literally give them the white glove treatment by wearing them as we display their portraits. This appointment is our last opportunity for additional sales and therefore we are sure to offer frames and a memory preservation box (3XM).

We have been providing framing for our clients for over fifteen years. It is very much appreciated by our clients because we deliver a ready to hang product. While initially intimidating, the process is actually very simple and requires very little equipment. (See a step-by-step tutorial on how to properly frame through our Facebook group, Shoot it Straight with Jessica Robertson.)

We package up their portraits in beautiful portrait boxes with tissue and put the larger portraits in frame bags from Tyndell which are adorned with our logo.

With each order we include a written thank you and we also verbally thank them and express our gratitude that they have trusted us to be their visual storyteller for this momentous time in their lives.

Now is the time! Reevaluate your processes and how you can improve. Reevaluate your business's purpose and core values. Reevaluate your product offerings to maximize your sales and benefit your clients. All of these areas affect your client experience. We are now reaping the benefits of a serious reevaluation of our business and we hope you will too! ■



Jessica Robertson is an award-winning photographer, educator and business coach. She owns and operates Jessica Robertson Photographic Artistry in Ashland, Virginia. If you want to see more behind the scenes from Jessica's Friend and Elite Sessions, you can follow along on Instagram: [JessicaRobertsonPhoto](#) or her business Facebook page: Jessica Robertson Photographic Artistry. Find out more about Jessica through her Facebook group, Shoot it Straight with Jessica Robertson.

website: [jessicarobertson.com](#) [instagram.com/JessicaRobertsonPhoto/](#)

SMALL-SPACE, **SINGLE-LIGHT** **STUDIO SETUP**

with Lisa Jones





Image © Lisa Jones Photography

As a professional portrait photographer, the bulk of my work is done in my studio by choice. From the beginning of my photography career, I have been in love with studio portraiture. As a new photographer, I was eager to learn how to light my subjects through tutorials, online classes and workshops, but the demonstrations were typically held in large spaces with high ceilings. I did not have access to a large studio space, so I knew lighting my subjects in the manner I was most drawn to would be one of my biggest challenges.

My first studio space was a small bedroom in my home, which was only 160 square feet with an 8-foot ceiling! I worked out of that bedroom for several years. Three years ago, I converted my garage into a studio for my photography work. This move gave me an extra foot of ceiling room and an additional 500 square feet of working space. While the addition now allows me to offer studio portraits to families, it's still not very large... especially when you consider furniture, props and equipment taking up some of the floor space. Over the years, I have learned to adapt lighting to fit my small spaces, which in turn has allowed me to create beautifully lit portraits and headshots for my clients.

In this article I would like to introduce you to three simple setups that can be used in small spaces for portraits as well as headshots. You'll only need one light and minimal equipment. I'm also going to tell you about my three favorite light modifiers that I will never be without! Whether you are using an area in your home or your client's home or office, being limited in space doesn't mean that you must be limited in the variety and creativity that you can offer to your clients.



Images © Lisa Jones Photography

BOUNCING LIGHT

When I started my photography career, I did not immediately go out and buy an arsenal of equipment. I started with my camera and one light, then added more as the need arose—and as I could afford the purchase. If you have a dedicated shooting space where you can paint the walls, paint them white because one huge advantage to working in small spaces is the ability to bounce light! If you have only one light source (strobe or constant light), you can use that light as your main light for your subject while bouncing light onto a white wall or corner which will become your fill light. A fill light is very beneficial because it can fill in shadows and help separate your subject from your background. If you are renting and can't paint your walls or if you are working on location, there are still several ways you can bounce light back toward your subject, so do like I did and get creative!



One of the most used pieces of equipment in my studio are my “redneck” V-flats. (In the first image, you’ll see what I mean!) The cost of one of my homemade V-flats was less than \$20. It’s 12 pieces of white foam core from the dollar store that I taped together with white duct tape. I use it ALL THE TIME! I have a black wall in my small studio which subtracts light, so when I need to bounce light back onto my subject, I simply spread out my redneck V-flat and place it against the wall or stand it in a V shape opposite the direction of my main light.

Any white surface, including your ceiling, will bounce light without altering the color of the light bouncing back onto your subject. If you are working on location, you can purchase foldable V-flats that are transportable; however, a large reflector with a white surface can be your best friend. These reflectors are inexpensive, foldable, easy to transport and can be used for multiple purposes. Pop open the reflector, lean it against a wall and start bouncing some light!



My favorite light modifier to use in the studio with my redneck V-flat is a 42" Glow EZ Lock Collapsible White Beauty Dish.

Image © Lisa Jones Photography

Image © Lisa Jones Photography



A Godox AD400Pro, 25" Glow EZ Lock Collapsible White Beauty Dish, small reflector and the Westcott X-Drop backdrop system was used to capture this portrait in a small apartment setup.)

CLAMSHELL LIGHTING

I love this lighting scenario, especially for up-close portraits and headshots because this setup works very well if you have a limited amount of space! While many photographers will use two lights to create the clamshell lighting, my setup includes a single strobe equipped with a 25" Glow EZ Lock Collapsible White Beauty Dish. This modifier is the little brother of my larger beauty dish and is the perfect travel companion, so I take it with me for all my location work, which for me is typically corporate headshots.

My strobe is placed directly in front of my subject with the bottom rim of the modifier at a height that falls just above my subject's head and then angled down. The degree of the angle can change depending on my client. I use the modeling light to look for catchlights in the eyes and a small butterfly-shaped shadow under the nose. If either of these is missing, I adjust the exact placement of the light until the catchlights and shadow are present. I then place a Westcott Eyelighter under my main light, below my subject's waist. The Eyelighter bounces light back up and softens the shadows under the chin. If you're on a budget, the Eyelighter could easily be replaced with a small reflector or piece of foam board. This lighting setup creates what is called a "Paramount" or "Butterfly" lighting pattern on your subject and is used to carve out the cheeks and jawline of the client, making it a suitable lighting setup for men and women. I was in a situation recently with a corporate headshot job where I literally had only a corner to work, so using this simple setup, a corner was all I needed to get the job done!



MIMICKING WINDOW LIGHT

In a perfect world, I would have a studio with a large, floor-to-ceiling, north-facing picture window that created the perfect natural light. I don't have anything close to that, but I do love big, soft light, so one way that I mimic the look of natural light is by using a 7' Impact Parabolic Umbrella. This is not a "shoot through" umbrella, but a "bounce" umbrella. In other words, your strobe is shot into the umbrella, the light fills up the space and bounces back out, creating big, soft, beautiful light.

The challenge in small spaces can be the size of the umbrella, but if your space is large enough, this is a modifier that I would never be without. This large umbrella can fill up a small space with all the light you will need! You can then experiment with moving the umbrella to change the direction of light, thus creating a variety of lighting patterns.

Using this modifier on my strobe, I place the light in front of my subject but off to the side at a 90-degree angle. I want the light to "feather" across my subject without necessarily lighting my background. If, however, I need a bit of light to spill onto my backdrop, I can place the subject a few feet away from the backdrop and rotate the light so that it's at a 45-degree angle to my subject. The light will wrap around my subject and "kiss" the backdrop. This will create a bit of separation that will keep your subject from blending into the backdrop, especially if you are creating low-key images, which is the bulk of my work. At times, I will add in a V-flat and bounce some light back onto my subject for the same purpose. This modifier offers a lot of variety, so not only do I use it when lighting a single subject, but this is the light modifier I use when photographing families and groups.





A 7' Impact Parabolic Umbrella was used beside a black faux wall to mimic window light.



Image © Lisa Jones Photography

While I told you about my favorite modifiers, I did not mention the light itself. There are a vast number of lighting options available from various brands, all of which would serve you well, but if I were starting over and knew that I would be working in a small space and could only invest in one light, it would be the Godox AD400Pro or AD600. Over the years I have accumulated quite a few strobes and constant lights as I have needed them, and I have found that the AD400 and AD600 are both excellent choices that will provide plenty of light for small-space studios. As a great bonus, both are extremely portable if you are working on location.

When working in small spaces, there are many other considerations including backdrops and lens choice, but those are topics for another article. If you are new to photography or new to offering studio portraits and headshots, don't assume that you must have a large studio filled with expensive equipment, because it's not necessary! I've built a successful photography business offering studio portraits working in small spaces with minimal equipment and you can too! ■



Lisa Jones is an award-winning, certified professional portrait photographer in Cullman, Alabama. A recent recipient of her Masters accreditation from PPA and Portrait Masters, she specializes in studio portraiture with a goal of recreating a love of printed portraits and wall art among her clients.

website: ljonesphotography.com/ [instagram.com/lisajonesphotographer/](https://www.instagram.com/lisajonesphotographer/)



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A sunset over the ocean with a white wedding veil on a sandy beach. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow over the water and sky. The veil is draped on the sand in the foreground, partially obscuring the view of the beach. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds, and the water shows gentle ripples and a shimmering reflection of the sun.

5 MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN BUILDING YOUR **WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY BUSINESS**

with Michael Anthony



It's been quite a while since I have written an article for Shutter Magazine. A little over a year in fact. During this time, so much has changed in the wedding photography industry that has helped me to gain a new perspective on the business and fine-tune many different aspects to build a more sustainable career, and more importantly, teach others how to do the same.

For those of you who have never read an article of mine, I am a Los Angeles Wedding Photographer and entrepreneur. Our studio, Michael Anthony Photography, offers photography and cinematography to wedding couples all around the world. In 10 years, photography has taken me to many different countries, and I have had the opportunity to serve couples on all ends of the budget spectrum. But the most important thing that I have learned about this industry is that building a business that can sustain a full-time career is not difficult and can be very rewarding. Over the years I have tried to teach photographers how to structure their wedding photography businesses in such a way that they can meet their income goals consistently.

With that being said, I constantly see photographers making the same mistakes in our industry, causing stagnant growth or worse: burnout. Being an educator in this industry has allowed me to analyze the things that create success and failure, so that I can better teach business-minded photographers how to find that success and sustain it over many years.

With that being said, here are the most common mistakes that wedding photographers make when building their wedding photography businesses.

MISTAKE #1: PRIORITIZING ART OVER BUSINESS

This is the most common mistake I see in the photography industry in general, but especially in wedding photography. I understand that we get into wedding photography because of the artistic nature of it. I understand that capturing weddings can satisfy the inner artist in most of us.

But the biggest problem with adopting an art-first mindset is that it changes the course of your business decision-making.

Now, you may think that you don't suffer from this, but I can promise you that the vast majority of photographers, myself included, do make this mistake from time to time.

Examples of this kind of mindset would be:

- Investing in new camera equipment over new marketing collateral
- Investing in editing courses over business courses
- Attending workshops taught by great artists who have not ran a successful business
- Not attending networking events
- Spending hours on YouTube looking at camera reviews rather than marketing techniques

Don't get me wrong, doing any of these things occasionally isn't a bad thing. I do them all myself. However, not prioritizing business first will have long-term devastating effects on the quality of your business.

MISTAKE #2: NOT DEFINING YOUR CLIENT

Every single business owner needs to define their ideal client and create a profile of them. Doing so will direct you on how to market your business so you can get in front of your ideal client.

Make no mistake about it, you do not want to work with EVERY bride. In fact, you probably only want to work with a small subset of brides, which is why it's crucial to define exactly who that person is.

If you have been doing this for a long time, it's not hard to find who your ideal client is. The best way I have found to do this is to look at your past clients. Find the ones that you enjoyed working with the most. You may use your CRM to find these people based on the revenue from their wedding, or you may just simply remember your best clients. In 10 years of doing this, I can identify my top 20 clients. These are the people that have referred the most people, invested the most with our studio, and generally have been the best to work with.

Make a list of these people and start looking at the commonalities between them. Start defining your clients using those commonalities.

For instance...

“My ideal client is an engaged bride between [age] who is interested in [interests]. They likely identify themselves with [brands they identify with]. They prioritize [priorities].”

In my business, this client avatar looks like this:

“My ideal client is an engaged bride between 26 and 34 who is interested in fitness, fashion and social trends, and likely identifies themselves with brands such as Lululemon, YSL, Chanel, Tesla and Apple. When it comes to their wedding they prioritize physical artwork, a luxury experience, and moment-based images.”

See, once you have this avatar built, you can start creating the marketing for your business based around this person. One thing that all of the brands I described above that my client identifies with have in common is exclusivity (usually because of the price). So that helps me to understand what that client is looking for in their photographer.

Without doing this exercise you will attract the wrong clients into your business that will eventually lead you to burnout.



MISTAKE #3: NOT INVESTING IN YOUR PORTFOLIO

Not unrelated to mistake number two, the third mistake I often see is that photographers do not spend enough time or money investing in their portfolio.

Think about it this way: Most photographers want to serve luxury clientele. It's not hard to understand why. They spend more money and their weddings are typically nicer. That's just the truth when it comes to the wedding industry. But as I described above, clients that value luxury products and experiences do so because they are exclusive.

But creating an exclusive photography experience revolves around the ability to create unique and inspiring images. In order to attract these high-value clients, you have to show work that stands out.

In California, the "trendy" look is that light, airy aesthetic that so many brides today identify with. The luxury client looks at that and scoffs because that style of photography has become a commodity. Everybody can do it, it's easy to shoot, and therefore, photographers have made it "trendy." Because of that, more and more luxury clients are looking for something different.

So, if you are reading this today and you want to identify with these luxury clients, you need to evaluate your portfolio and really ask yourself, "Does this pass the exclusivity test? Is there value in this work that a luxury client would pay for? Can they realistically get this photography elsewhere?"

This requires a gut check. It requires you to be honest with yourself. If you can't be honest with yourself, you will have a hard time finding success in business. A wise entrepreneur once told me that your success in business comes down to your ability to have difficult conversations with others. I would venture to say that it also comes down to your ability to have difficult conversations with yourself.

So let's say you come to terms with the fact that your portfolio is not up to par. Now it's time to invest in it. But where do you start?

Start with your client avatar. But for the sake of this article, let's say your ideal client is like mine. Exclusivity is the biggest determinant of them wanting to work with you. So, you may set up stylized shoots at luxury hotels with lots of florals.

Let's say you want to be a destination wedding photographer. You can probably guess where this is going... You might have to self-fund some destination shoots. The adage of "show what you want to sell" could never be more true.



Image © Michael Anthony Photography

I will tell you right now that if you want to be successful, just shooting beautiful images is not enough. If you are in a moderately busy market (most of you are) then the post-production will be equally important.

Here is where the art-focused photographers will stop reading this (see mistake #1)....I know because I actively sell and promote editing tools and I deal with Facebook trolls all the time.

If you think that just “getting it right in camera” is enough to set you apart, then you are mistaken. You are competing with amazing photographers in your area, so creating great images in camera is only part of the equation. You will have to use creative post-production to bring them to the next level.

While Evolve Edits has been a crucial part of my business’s success over the years, and I can’t speak highly enough about them, you don’t need to have the same style as myself, Sal, or any of their customers to create sellable, luxury images. You just need to use post-production to further define your style so that it becomes recognizable in your local market. When a market can look at your images and identify them as yours without seeing the name, then congratulations, you now have created exclusivity through your portfolio.



MISTAKE #4: FAILING TO PUT TOGETHER A MARKETING PLAN

OK, so here comes the part where many of you are currently struggling. Most of us don't go to business school and decide to start a photography business. (Sal may be the only one that I know of who did.)

Being that is the case, a skillset in marketing is likely something that we need to learn along the way.

The VAST majority of photography studios use an "if I build it, they will come" mindset.

Sorry to break it to you, but the real world isn't a field of dreams. If you build it, it doesn't change the fact that nobody knows about it. You need to market yourself. Perhaps I can dedicate future articles to marketing a modern wedding photography business, but for this article I just want to change your mindset so that you put together a marketing plan, which could consist of the following:

- Digital Marketing (Directories)
- Venue Books
- Referral Marketing
- Bridal Shows
- SEO
- Social Media
- Email Marketing

For the sake of brevity here, let me break this down. If you want to find success in marketing, you need to be doing all of the above. It's a lot of work, I get it. I stress about it every day, but that stress keeps my business alive and thriving. If you work a little bit harder than your competitors at the things I mentioned above, and you do it for a long enough time, you will find success too, but consistency is key, and make sure that you don't give up.

MISTAKE #5: FAILING TO OFFER PRODUCTS POST-SALE

I have news for you all reading this. I don't care what any photographer has told you, if you want to run a successful wedding photography business, you need to be centering your business around physical products.

Here is the problem. Many of you reading this are going to agree. You are going to say, "I know I should be offering albums, but there are a few things I need to do first."

I would be willing to bet that a year ago, you knew you should be offering albums.

The one thing that separates successful entrepreneurs with people that just have great ideas is execution. Successful entrepreneurs execute on their ideas and put them into action. Having a great "business idea" is worthless. It's blue sky, blank paper, just a trivial anecdote in the book of life. But when that idea is put into action, if it sticks and finds ground, it creates a cascading effect of success that inspires confidence to be repeated.

If you are not offering products to your customers, you are missing out on an enormous opportunity.

I have news for you. If you are making the majority of your revenue as a wedding photographer, you have six other days of the week you are likely not earning money. So in order to make sure that the cash flow in your business is consistent, you have two options: Diversify your offerings, which you should be doing anyway, or offer products to your clients to increase the bottom line revenue per client.

In our studio, our average associate photographer wedding contract is around \$5,000. After I pay expenses, talent, and subtract my soft costs, we substantially reduce the revenue we make. But by offering products throughout the client lifecycle, we are able to increase that average revenue per client to over \$10,000 while giving the clients a better experience and products to remember us by.

It's a win-win for them and a win-win for you.

Now, there are a lot of classes on IPS, album sales, etc. If you are unsure where to start, you have a lot of options, but the most important action you can take is just that... ACTION. Start working now to expand your product line, and the entrepreneur you a year from now will thank you!





Image © Michael Anthony Photography

It's great to be back writing for *Shutter*, and to all of the readers out there who have read my articles in the past, I am happy to bring you a new post-pandemic perspective to the business of wedding photography. I love seeing your successes in our industry and have enjoyed watching all of you grow into amazing artists and business owners.

Thank you for reading and if you have any topics you would like me to write about in the future, you can email me at mike@elevateyourphotography.com. ■



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.

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A woman in black lace lingerie is sitting on a bed in a dimly lit room. The room features a white nightstand with a geometric pattern and a pink crystal. The overall mood is intimate and artistic.

A BOUDOIR

PHOTOGRAPHER'S GUIDE TO

NOT POSING

with Pam Fields





This is not your typical posing article. There will be no list of my top, best, most sellable poses for everybody, flattering every shape, every client. This article is more about getting you to think about posing variations and categories of poses so you can be mindful and shoot with intention.

How many images do you show to your clients following a session? Is it 60 to 120, more or less? How can you memorize that many poses? Let me share a secret with you: You don't have to! It really can get overwhelming with all the books and posing guides available. Have you written your shot list? Have you gotten your Pinterest board all set? Have you gotten your session started, and BOOM, you go blank? To keep the flow of the session going, you might start shooting all willy nilly or maybe you have your shot list handy so you pull it out for a look. What can you do differently? The first thing is to take a deep breath and calm your brain. Look at the scene, look at your subject, and think through what you are doing.

I've studied posing, I've practiced, and I've studied some more. You can have stacks and stacks of pages of poses or flip open the laptop and go straight to your secret Pinterest board. I've heard a recommendation to put your inspiration images on a card and review them on the back of your camera during your session. Clever, yes, but there's a better way. One thing that has stuck is something Sal Cincotta, publisher of Shutter Magazine and head honcho at ShutterFest, taught as he explained his process: Get the camera settings dialed in, take a shot, look at the back of the camera, and make adjustments to the settings. Then, repeat. Once your settings are dialed in, follow that process and look at the foreground, the background and the subject. Click, look and adjust. Seems simple enough, right? Well, it still takes a plan and it still takes knowledge!

Before we talk about posing and what works for boudoir, I think it's important to know what doesn't work. In most posing guides, you will often see women with long, lean legs in archy-back poses. Jen Rozenbaum notes that: "A woman's clothing size doesn't determine how to pose her... It doesn't account for how long her legs are... if she is more curvy or straight. I need that information before I can decide what poses will work." That's right for both women and men! We need to go in with a plan but until we see our subject and see them move, we are flying a bit blind because posing is not a one size fits all thing.

Each session is an individual challenge. I focus on the categories, sets and moves while also thinking about groups of images (for their album). While I don't come up with lists upon lists of poses, I do plan out my sessions. Most of my consultations are not in person, so when I first see my clients, I have to be focused and observant. I go in with a plan and I quickly work to further develop that plan. It's less about having a list of memorized poses and more about becoming an effective observer, communicator, coach and director.



Image © Pam Fields Photography

I have several different sets in the studio, and I work in hotels and homes. I study the scene and decide where to start and with what base pose. As soon as I get my client in front of the camera, I can follow with “click, look, and adjust,” then I get on with individualizing the variations based on how my client naturally moves. Have you ever had a set of images where a favorite shot was the one that wasn’t planned or when your subject wasn’t expecting the shot? You picked up on their body language cues and saw something worth capturing. When it comes to being mindful of posing direction, it’s important to spend time studying body language and build on that. Memorizing posing routines can limit creativity and sessions can become robotic. Clients don’t want to feel like they are in a “boudoir mill.” They want to feel special and have an experience! We can individualize and tailor sessions specifically for every client we have. The result is getting all the images needed to show and sell and the client gains confidence and loves their session.

After the setting, I focus on categories of poses such as sitting, standing and lying, after which I set the base pose. I like to begin with the sitting or standing poses. Standing is usually in front of a wall but it could also be standing on the balcony, in the bathroom or at a vanity. Sitting (also kneeling) can be on the floor, bed, chair or sofa/chaise. Then, I move on to the lying poses. Again, the lying base pose can be done on multiple sets with only minor adjustments. All of the poses can be done with or without clothing. All of them can be done with men and women. Even when working in the smallest of hotel rooms, apply the same elements for sets to get images of each category: sitting, standing and lying.

I begin to build the base pose and quickly review from head to toe. I work to get something going on with the face. Is there an expression or an emotion? Is the tone playful, intense, suggestive, sensual? What adjustments need to be made? Again, there are pages and pages of posing prompts, but even having casual conversation, joking or hyping up the session can pull out some great looks and set the mood! Why do I start with the face first? Talking though the expression or emotion sets the mood for the rest of the body. If the face is sensual so are the hips and the hands.



Images © Pam Fields Photography



I also keep in mind that from one base pose I can usually get the following images: full-body, detail, portrait, half or three-quarter body, eyes open (away or toward the camera), eyes closed (away or toward the camera), anonymous/bridge of the nose down, angled from above, and angled from below.

By being mindful of how your client moves and how to make adjustments from your one base pose in each category, you will produce more impactful images that your clients will love. So, what kinds of adjustments am I referring to? Once you have your base pose, you will want to do a head to toe review after you check the foreground and background for anything that might be “off.” Remember, click, look, adjust. The more you do it with mindfulness, the faster you get.

While you make the rundown from head to toe, pay attention to the core of the base poses and look for the natural shapes: the triangles and the curves. You know the saying: “If it bends, bend it.” Your subject can form triangles with their hands on their waist or their foot propped up on a chair. There are so many ways to form a triangle! Then, the curves. There is the curve of the shoulder, the hips, the small of the back—so many curves!

As you continue your review, you can make adjustments to the chin and neck. Keep taking images: face towards/away from the light, mouth open/closed, eyes open/closed, and on and on from this one base pose. Adjust the arms and try an in-body arm pose and an out-of-body arm pose. Then, again, quickly scan and make any adjustments to the head, face (mouth, eyes, nose), shoulder, elbows, wrists, fingers, hips, legs, knees and feet. Keep taking images and keep adjusting.

There are a few things to be aware of when working to have an image lean more feminine or more masculine. For instance, pointing the toes creates a more feminine image while more masculine poses will have feet and toes that are more neutral. When it comes to hands and fingers you can have a more feminine pose with the hands framing the face. There is so much that you can do with just adjusting your hands, arms and fingers. Sometimes clients overthink their hands and you can shift their focus by directing them to play with their hair, pillow, sheets or clothing.



Images © Pam Fields Photography



Image © Pam Fields Photography

It is important to develop a few standard poses for each base pose in the three categories. I have my “go-to” poses for men and women. I don’t think my list is necessarily the list for you because we all have our unique styles. My core list also changes with every client. The key is to take the base pose and keep making adjustments. You will get so many amazing images that your clients will love and they will be a part of creating something beautiful. They will see that you are individualizing their session by how you are guiding them and observing and adjusting to get the best images.

So, as you can see, it’s not just “jump on the bed and look sexy”; it takes work and it takes guidance from photographer to client. ■



Pam is an award winning boudoir and erotica photographer and educator based in Las Vegas, Nevada. After attending her first ShutterFest in 2016 as a hobbyist, Pam is now a full-time professional photographer. She’s at home using both natural and studio lights, and she specializes in working with men and couples—something that can’t be said of every boudoir photographer.

website: pamfieldsphotography.com [instagram.com/pamfieldsphoto/](https://www.instagram.com/pamfieldsphoto/)





THE CREATIVE PROCESS
BREAKDOWN
FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS

with Ray Alvarez

After a year or two of learning photography, developing my style and finding my artistic vision. I finally decided what I wanted to shoot, other than weddings. I wanted to be a creative photographer. Using a mixture of off-camera flash and Photoshop, I wanted my work to stand out and be different from the usual. Photography is art and art is subjective, as everyone else says. I like to express my vision, ideas and mind via my photography.



While I was working with many different subjects and models, my wife (Kay Alvarez) was also sharpening her skills as a makeup artist. She had always been a fan of makeup and the cool and beautiful looks you can create with it. During that time, we started to offer “makeup” as an upgrade or add-on to the photoshoot services I was providing. It quickly became not only a beneficial add-on but a popular choice between all of our clients/models.

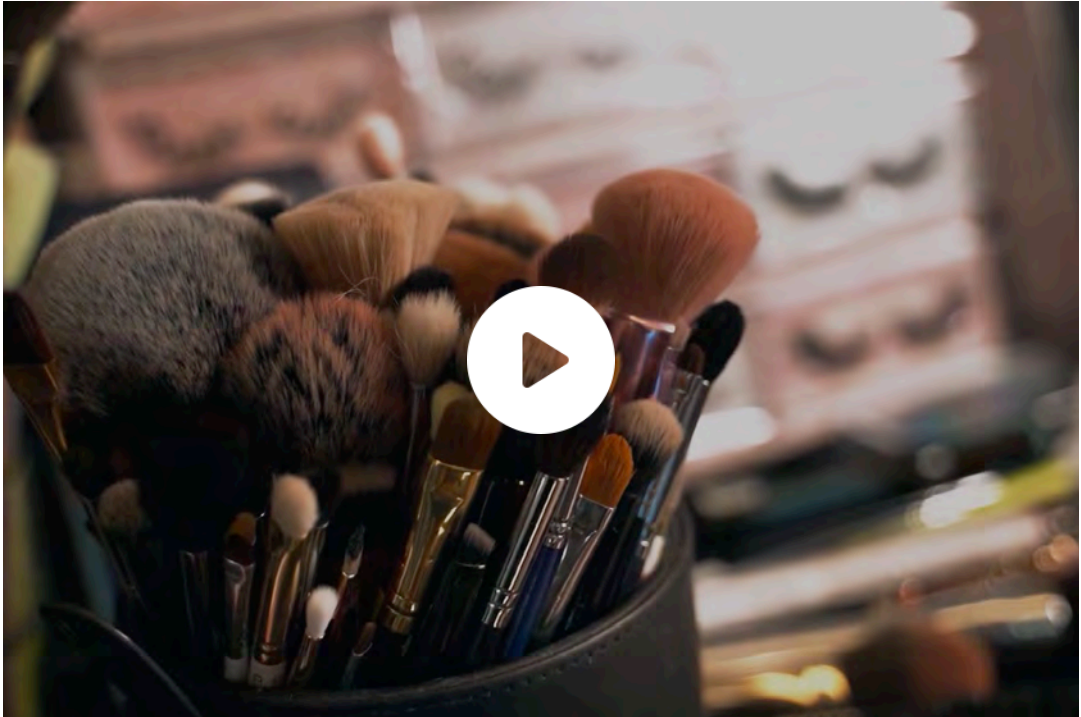


My wife, who was becoming quite creative with her makeup styles, had grown fond of being in front of the camera. She loved to showcase/model her different makeup creations. Every time she came up with a cool or creative “look” she would say, “Hey Ray, let’s shoot!” As time went on we created so many different themed shoots or makeup styled shoots. Using different strobes, lighting systems, backdrops and props we would create some amazing looks together. We would share lots of our work on social media platforms like Facebook or Instagram and people would be impressed by her different looks and would contact us because they too wanted to feel beautiful, cool or creative. She was basically a billboard for both her services and mine.



Image © Shoot With Ray Studios

As time went on, we quickly and unofficially became “The Duo.” People loved our creative work, especially when combined. Me for my vibrant and colorful photography and Kay for her unique and also vibrant makeup styles. Most of my photo packages included Kay as the makeup artist, and depending on the package the client went with, they can either have Kay apply a “neutral makeup look” or a “glam makeup look.” We would get even more creative each shoot, especially when it came to Kay’s looks. She titled herself “The Makeup Model” because she would always model her makeup looks in different scenes and themes, both in studio and outdoors.



After a while, Kay and I developed a creative flow and process. Sometimes our ideas would come up randomly. Times such as: while driving long distances, in bed before sleeping and even while using the restroom (lol). We had an office area/mini studio space setup in our home we would use for our photoshoots. At times our ideas would be formulated while just sitting and chatting in the office area. An addition to the creative process are Kay’s headpieces. Kay would create unique headpieces which the shoots were based on too. The cool thing was that sometimes we never really planned the final vision of an idea together. It just became something that came together during shooting. For example, Kay would have a makeup concept in mind, we go to the studio and while she is applying makeup, I would ask questions like: Is it indoors/outdoors? What is the main color? What does the outfit look like? I would base the choice of backdrop, choice of lighting or even the scene off of the answers provided. Sometimes, I would be in the studio with a client anticipating her arrival after the session. She would come in dressed up, face full of makeup and say, “I’m ready.” So I quickly come up with the scene, theme or concept and get right to work with backdrops and lighting. Not every look deserves the same lighting. The choice of lighting always depends on what areas I want to highlight and the overall look and mood. For example, the image below was lit using a one-light setup. I used a 7’ parabolic umbrella camera right and slightly behind me in order to fill the entire subject with light but with a dramatic shadow onto left (subject’s right).



I remember this one time, our aspiring model friend Courtney came over to hang out. At one point we were listening to “Girls Just Want To Have Fun” by Cyndi Lauper. Court had some drinks and there was a Polaroid camera I recently purchased, which I eventually wanted to use as a prop for a shoot. Kay says, “Let’s shoot!?” And we all agreed. So we were all feeling an ‘80s vibe. Kay got right to work and created an awesome Polaroid feel to the makeup look. We quickly got in the car and drove to the studio where I had some random outfits. With an ‘80s theme in mind, I quickly thought of purples, lasers and hair spray (because of the style Courtney had that day). Using one 600w light (Flashpoint AD600) along with a 7’ silver lined umbrella, we came up with our ‘80s look.

Images © Shoot With Ray Studios



Of course the neon lasers were added in post, but I thought that and the hairspray were a great idea and a great way to describe the ‘80s. Here is another photo, but this time with the Polaroid camera as a prop.

Being creative comes with its own set of weird looks too. Sometimes people think we are crazy. There was one time Kay was developing a headpiece for our next shoot. She had to buy about 25 dolls and chop off the heads. We had a few people come by during those days and everyone who saw the dolls’ heads laying on the table thought Kay had finally lost it. However, the look turned out really nice, creepy and creative.



To add to the creative process, I always want my work to stand out and be visualized differently than the usual trending themes. While many creatives try to remain “viral” I sort of take a different approach. The final set of images must meet three requirements before I can accept them myself: 1. They should impress my subject, make them feel like a piece of art with whichever creative look we go for; 2. The set must have a minimum of one light that was used. Why? Simply because it wouldn't be a creative set (in my opinion) if you didn't play with light and your settings on your camera to obtain your final vision. Don't get me wrong, not saying you can't get creative with natural light or any other lighting conditions. However, I am a user of light and with light the creative possibilities are endless. I don't want to add to the stigma that anything can be done with an iPhone; lastly, 3. The subject or client must feel like they just wrapped up on a movie set. They have to feel great. See, we don't offer a photoshoot, we offer an experience. We want our clients to walk out of our studios feeling like they just invested in an heirloom for themselves. If my client didn't have a good time or doesn't enjoy the images, then I simply feel I didn't achieve the results we aimed for.



Nine years ago I picked up a camera. I found myself, my style and my art about three years ago. It's been a few years, but Rome wasn't built in one day. It took me a while to get to where I am creatively, but I have a long way ahead of me as I'm learning everyday. I've been lucky enough to have a partner (my creative makeup artist wife) assist me and eventually become a part of my creative process. I hope that by reading this I've inspired you to come up with a flow and also inspired you to establish connections in order to add to your creative process. Thanks for reading. ■



The Dynamic Duo, both originally from New York but now located in Orlando, Florida, consists of spouses Ray and Kay Alvarez. Ray is a creative fashion, beauty and wedding photographer. Kay is the in-house professional special effects and glam makeup artist. Both crafts combined add fuel to their passions to create. Together they create the perfect look using top of the line cosmetic products followed by an amazing, quality photoshoot.

website: www.shootwithray.com [instagram.com/shootwithray/](https://www.instagram.com/shootwithray/)

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INSPIRATIONS

BEST WEDDING/ENGAGEMENT IMAGE

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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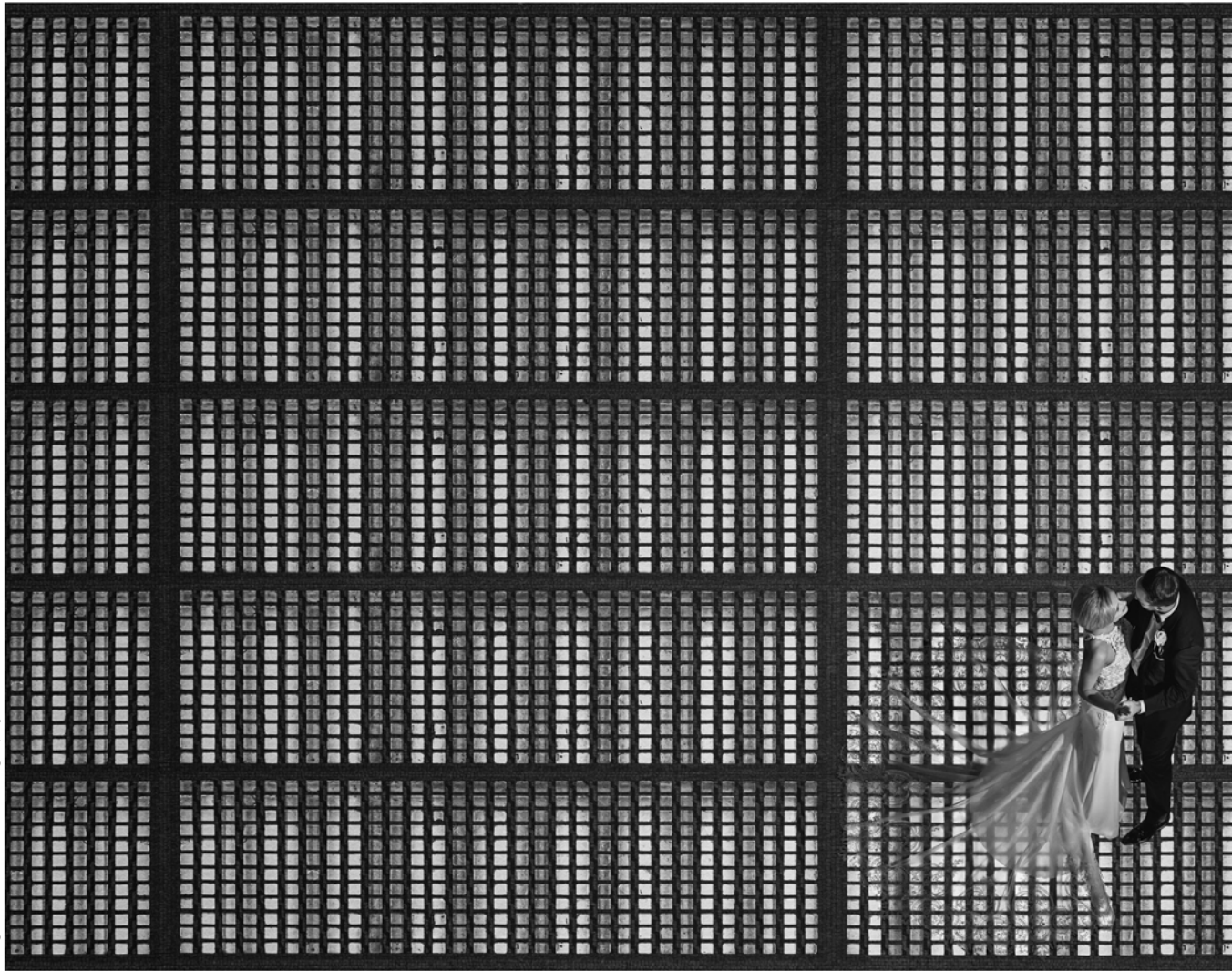


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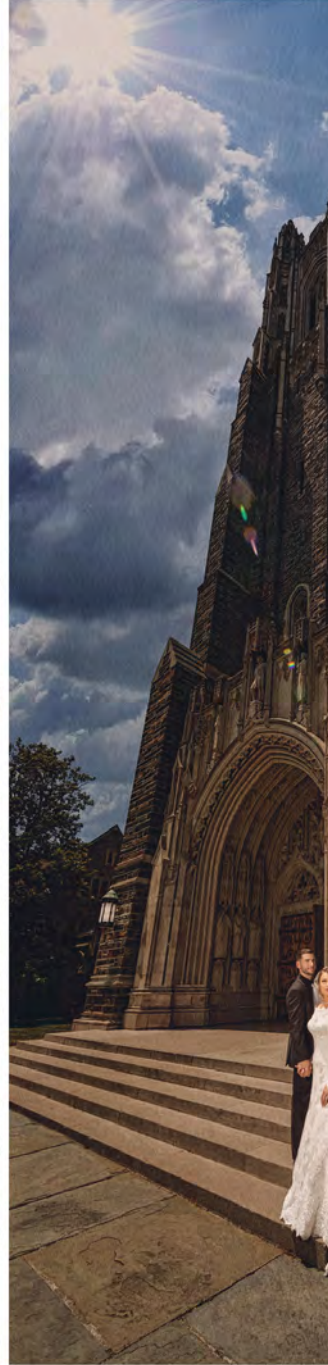




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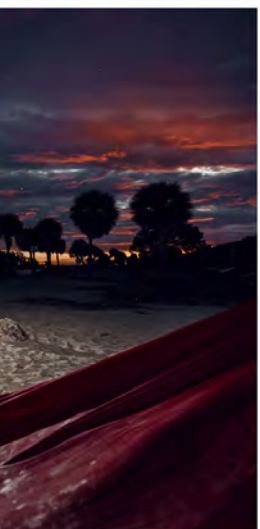
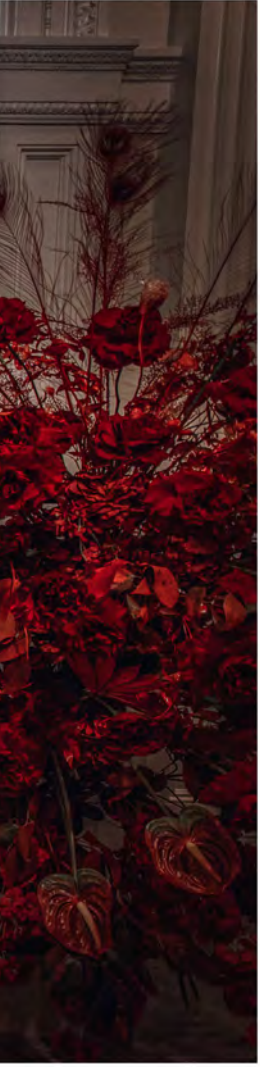


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A woman with blonde hair is shown from the side, wearing a white lace wedding dress. Her right hand is resting on her hair, and she is wearing a diamond ring on her ring finger. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

THE GREAT "I.S.O." VS. "EYE-SO" DEBATE

with Vanessa Joy

Okay, this is something I need to address. I've put it off for far too long, but now is the time.

The I.S.O. vs. "eye-so" debate. Let's go.

If you're new to photography, here's a brief recap for you: The proper pronunciation of ISO has been quite a debate in the industry for several years. It's not a big deal in the grand scheme of things, but you have your diehards on both sides. Some adamantly proclaim that the right way to say it is "I.S.O." (like an acronym), while others take their stand with the "eye-so" camp.

So which one is actually correct? Just to be clear, I'm not hating on anybody. You can say it either way and still be alright in my book. But for what it's worth, here's my take on the whole debate (because all of the videos I've seen on the subject have it completely and totally wrong).



Image © Vanessa Joy

FIRST THINGS FIRST: IS ISO AN ACRONYM?

Right off the bat, let's be clear about this one point: ISO is definitely not an acronym—at least, not when photographers use it. In the world of photography, ISO doesn't really stand for "International Organization for Standardization" (which would be IOS in English, anyway). It refers to a light sensitivity scale for your camera. True, the International Organization for Standardization sets the standards for a camera's ISO—but that doesn't mean it is the camera's ISO.

So does that mean that you shouldn't pronounce the term "I.S.O.?"

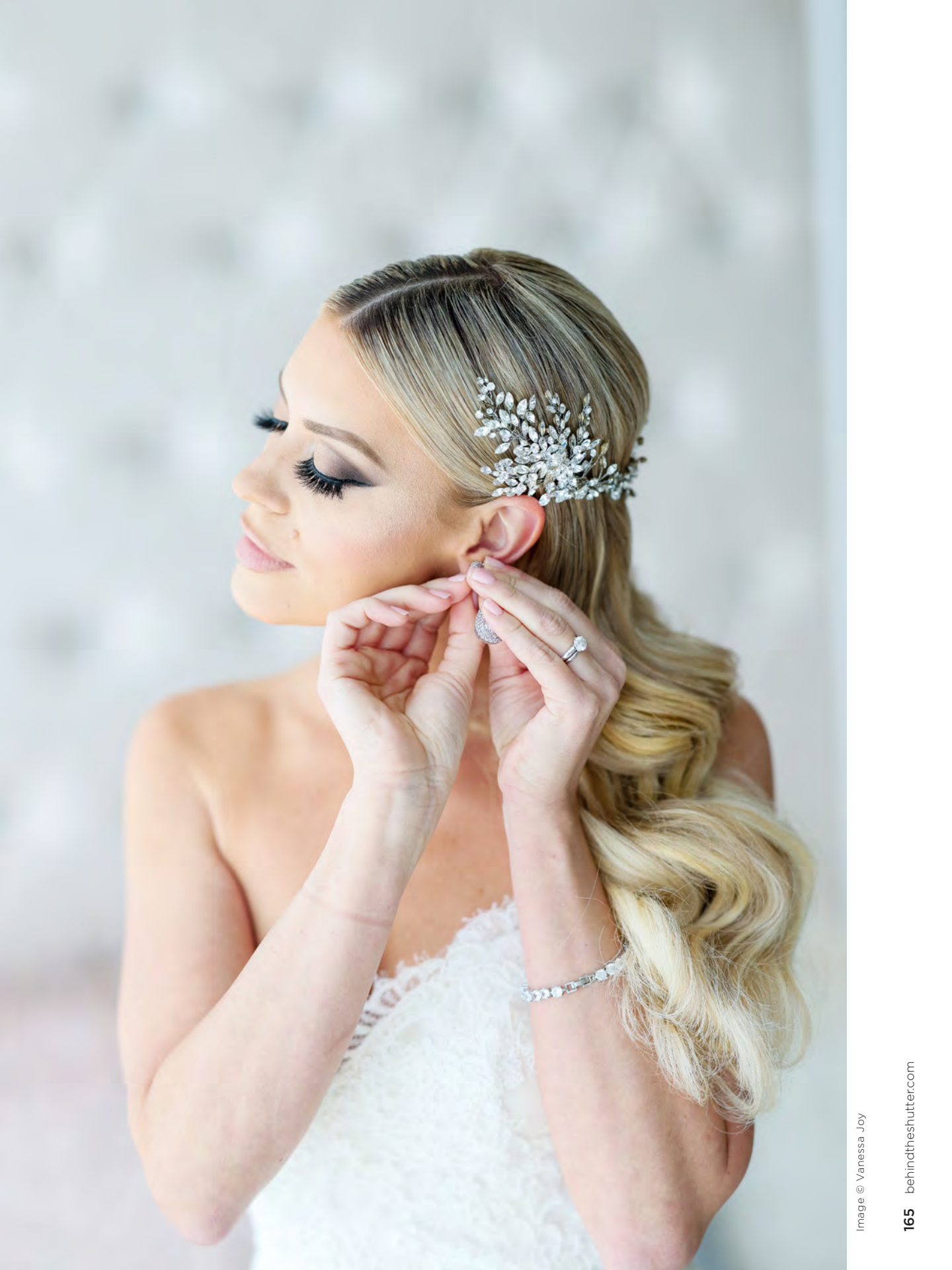




Image © Vanessa Joy

A LITTLE BACKSTORY ON THE "I.S.O." VS. "EYE-SO" DEBATE

I've been in the photography business for a long time. I've been around a lot of seasoned photographers, and I've met a lot of novices who are just beginning their photography journey.

I still remember the first time I heard someone pronounce ISO as "eye-so." To me, that virtually screamed "newbie." The reason being, a photography novice would look at their camera, see this unfamiliar term, and think to themselves: "That doesn't look like aperture or shutter speed, I wonder how I should pronounce it?" And then they'd do what everyone does when they don't know the answer to a question: they'd Google it.

And on Google, they'd come across an article that explains how ISO (in photography) is not an acronym, or a video from a professional photographer like Tony Northrup or David Bergman that explains how the term ISO (again, in photography) doesn't really refer to an organization, but just to a camera's light sensitivity setting. And they'd take that newfound knowledge and say: "Well, I guess the correct pronunciation is 'eye-so,' so that's how I'm going to say it."

And while that reasoning is technically correct, it is also completely wrong. "Huh, what?" you're probably saying right about now. Don't worry, I'll break it down for you.



Image © Vanessa Joy

GRAMMAR VS. CULTURE

Okay, I'm going to toot my own horn a little bit here: I have a bachelor's degree in Spanish and an associate's degree in modern language. The point is, I know a thing or two about language and linguistics. And anyone who's studied linguistics knows that culture is just as important to any language (if not more important) than grammar. Think about it for a second. Which one is correct: "soda" or "pop"? "Hoagie," "hero," or "sub"? "Y'all" or "you guys"? "N'orleans" or "New Orleans"?

Grammatically, each term may or may not be technically correct. But culturally? They are all 100% valid. And if you think I'm wrong, try asking for a "pop" down South, or a "sub" in Philly. (You may end up with something very different from what you wanted!)

So what does all of this have to do with the "I.S.O." vs. "eye-so" debate? Simply put: You have to take the "culture" of photography into account when deciding how to pronounce ISO.

The fact of the matter is, "y'all" to the South is what "eye-so" is to photography newbies. But for those of us who were involved with photography back in the days of film (remember those?), we would always use ISO along with the term "ASA." And ASA actually is an acronym: it stands for American Standards Association, and we'd use the ASA scale to determine a camera's film speed.

So when we put those two terms together, it was just more natural to say "A.S.A., I.S.O." It just kind of rolled off the tongue. "A.S.A., eye-so" just doesn't have the same ring to it.

The point is, our "culture" back then was to pronounce ISO as "I.S.O."—even though we all knew it wasn't technically an acronym like ASA. It's just what we did! It sounded better, and it was commonly accepted among professional photographers.





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SUMMING UP

With all of the foregoing in mind, we can sum up the whole "I.S.O." vs. "eye-so" debate like this:

"I.S.O." is culturally correct, but grammatically incorrect.

"Eye-so" is grammatically correct, but culturally incorrect.

It's pretty simple when you think about it that way, right?

So when you hear a photographer say "I.S.O." instead of "eye-so," there's no reason to cringe, or even correct their pronunciation. Odds are, that photographer is deeply rooted in the industry, and has been working in the field for years—maybe even as far back as the days of film.

And if you hear a photographer pronounce it "eye-so," then sure, they may be new. Then again, they may just be sticklers for pronouncing ISO the technically correct way.

Either way, the important thing is that we as photographers understand what ISO actually does, and how we can adjust it to get the clearest, brightest and most exceptional shots for our clients. At the end of the day, it doesn't really matter how you pronounce it.

If you're a diehard for either "I.S.O." or "eye-so," here's my advice to you: Relax. Get over yourself. Stop majoring in the minors. Both are wrong, and both are correct. As long as you're happy and your clients are happy, call it whatever you want.

Alright, I've finally said my peace on the great ISO pronunciation debate. Now I can move on with my life. This feels good; I'm in a good place right now.

But wait a second... is it "said my peace" or "said my piece"? Let me Google that one real quick... ■

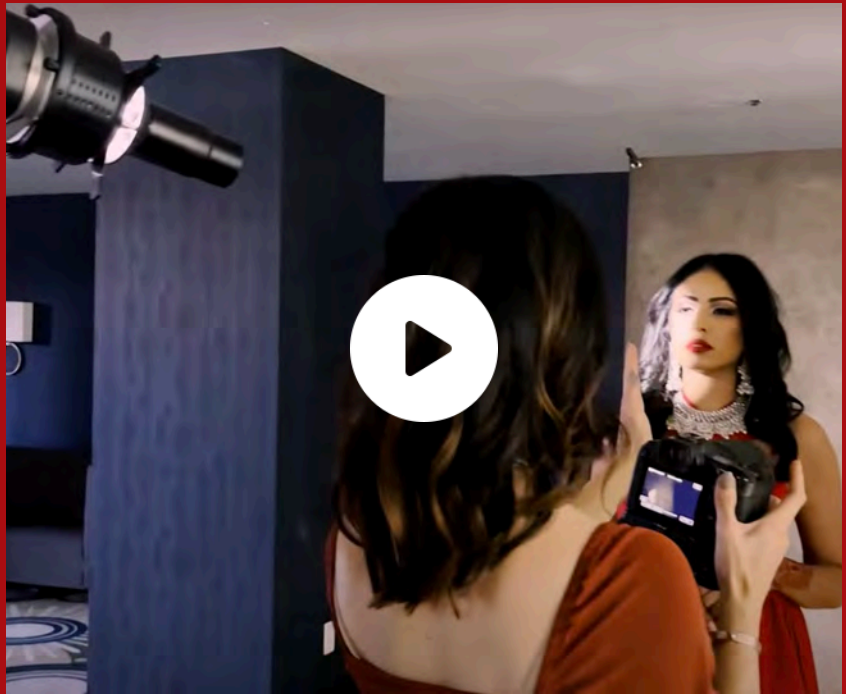


Vanessa Joy has been a professional wedding photographer in New Jersey since 2002, and an influencer in the photographic community for years. Since starting VanessaJoy.com in 2008, she has taught photographers around the globe at almost every major platform in the industry (LearnPhotoVideo.com). Vanessa 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 Instagram.com/vanessajoy/

final inspiration

photographer | alissa cincotta
website | salcincotta.com



model | jasmin jain
exposure | f/1.8, 1/800, ISO 800
lighting | westcott fj400 with optical spot
gear | canon eos r5
canon rf 85mm f1.2 l usm



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