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april 2017

# shutter

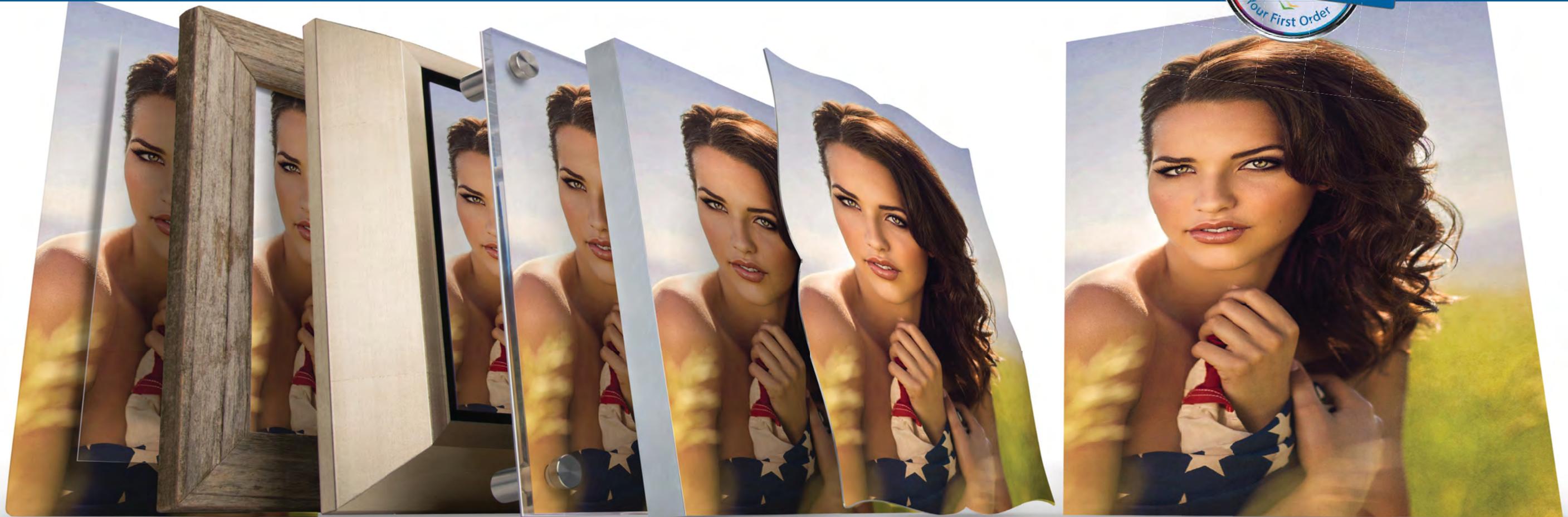
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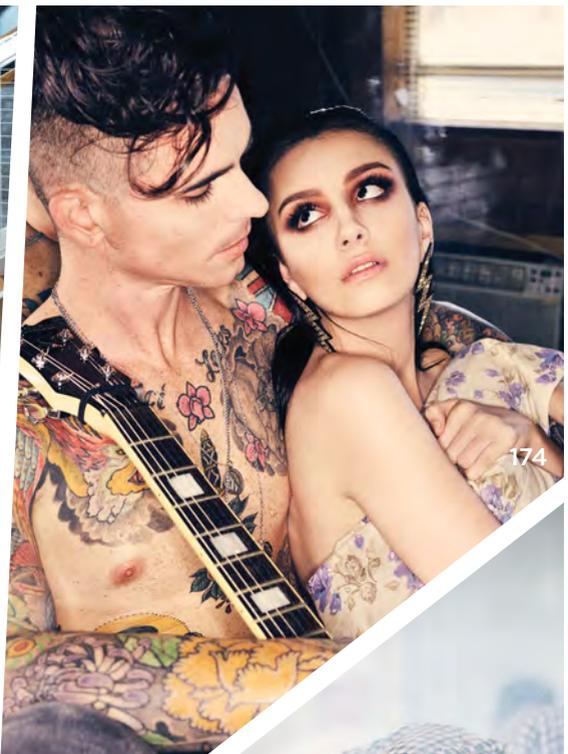
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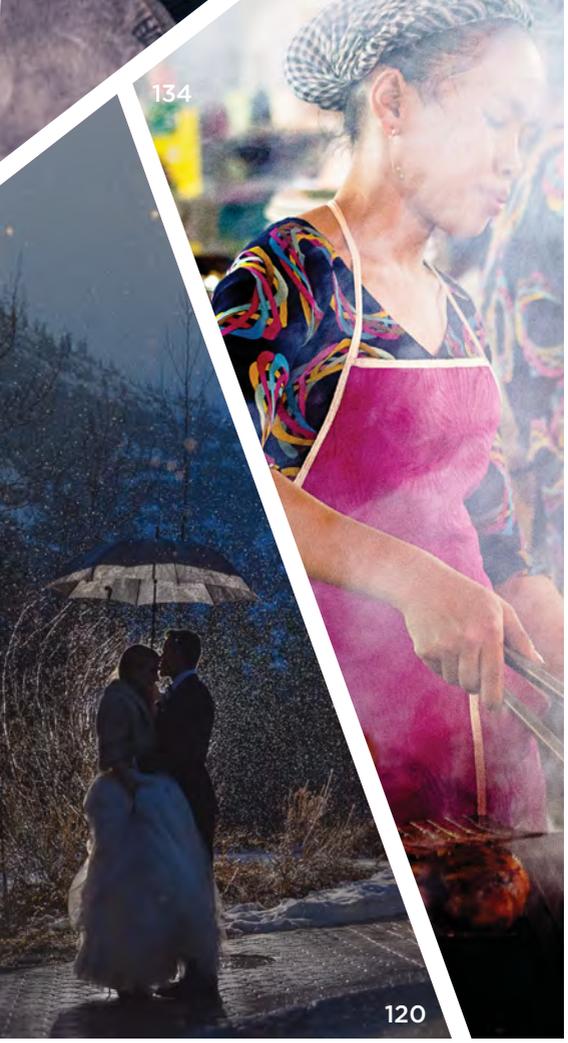


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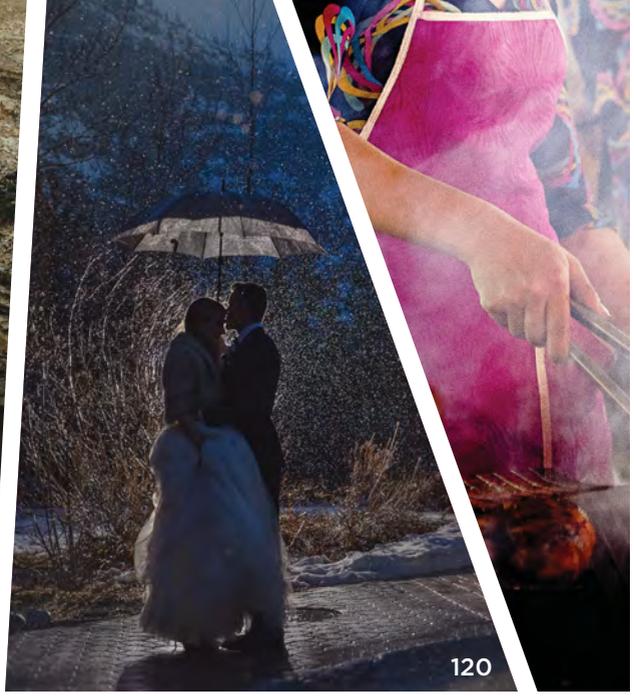
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*Salvatore Cincotta*  
BEHIND THE SHUTTER

## 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.

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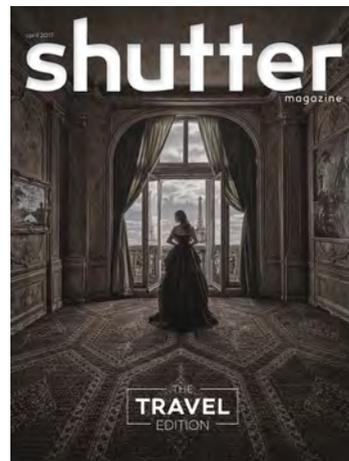
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## THE COVER

**PHOTOGRAPHER:** Sal Cincotta | [salcincotta.com](http://salcincotta.com)

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**LENS:** Schneider 28mm

**EXPOSURE:** f4.5 @ 1/160th, ISO 400

**LOCATION:** Paris, France

**ABOUT THE IMAGE:** This shot was taken in Paris, France in September 2016.

# LAUNCH POINT

A message from the editor-in-chief

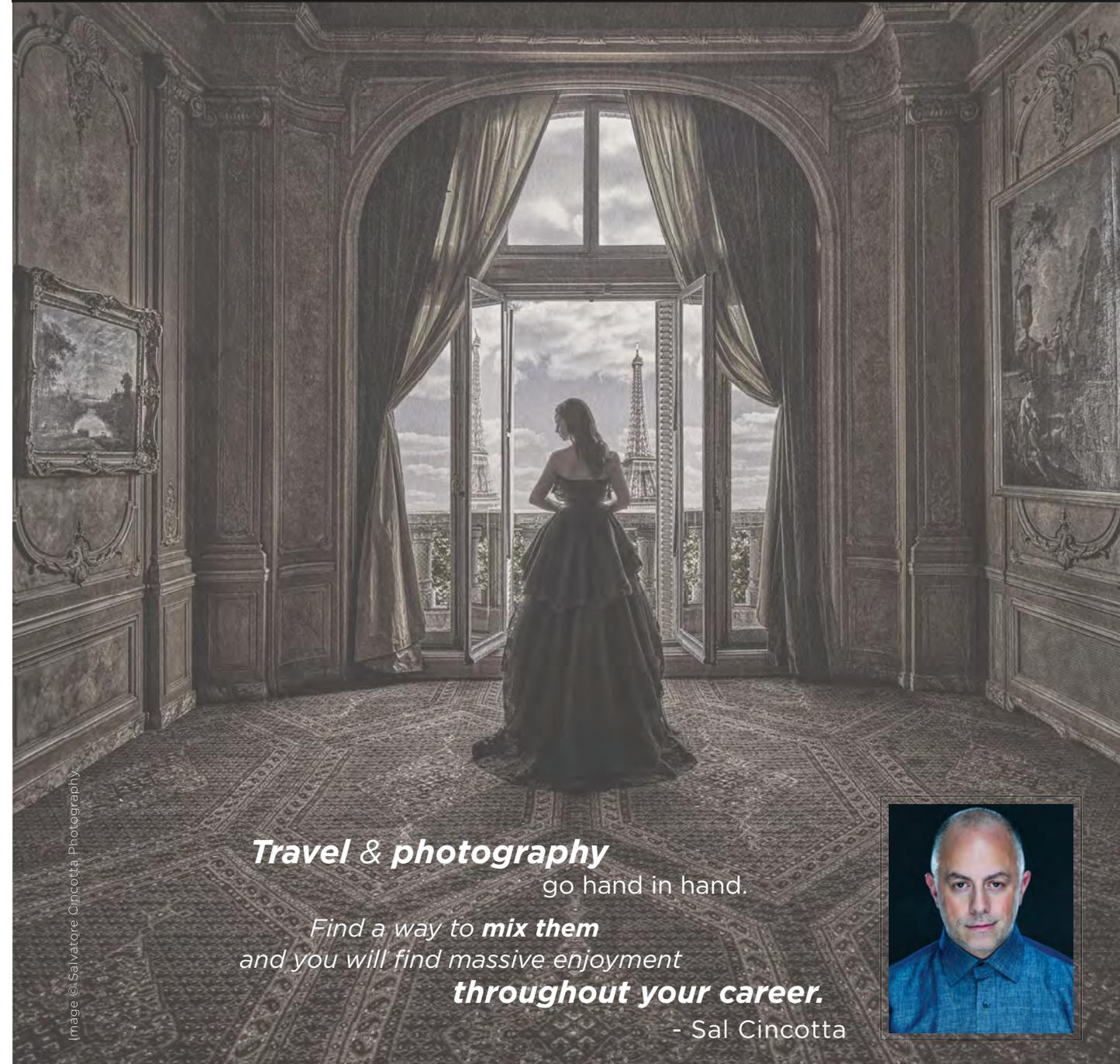


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- Sal Cincotta



FREE YOUR CREATIVITY



WITH LIGHTROOM & PHOTOSHOP

with **Dustin Lucas**

April is here, and we know what that means: weddings, weddings and more weddings. Hopefully you spent your time off focusing on last season's successes and failures. In our studio, the motto is "Hit a new wall." Hopefully for some of you traveling these past few months, your experiences have allowed you build your portfolio, sharpen your skillset and free your creativity. What better time of year to let go of what's safe then now?

Along with freeing up your creativity, you are about to go into survival mode with weddings nearing. While the door hasn't closed just yet, I am going to show you how to waste less time and design a workflow that actually works.

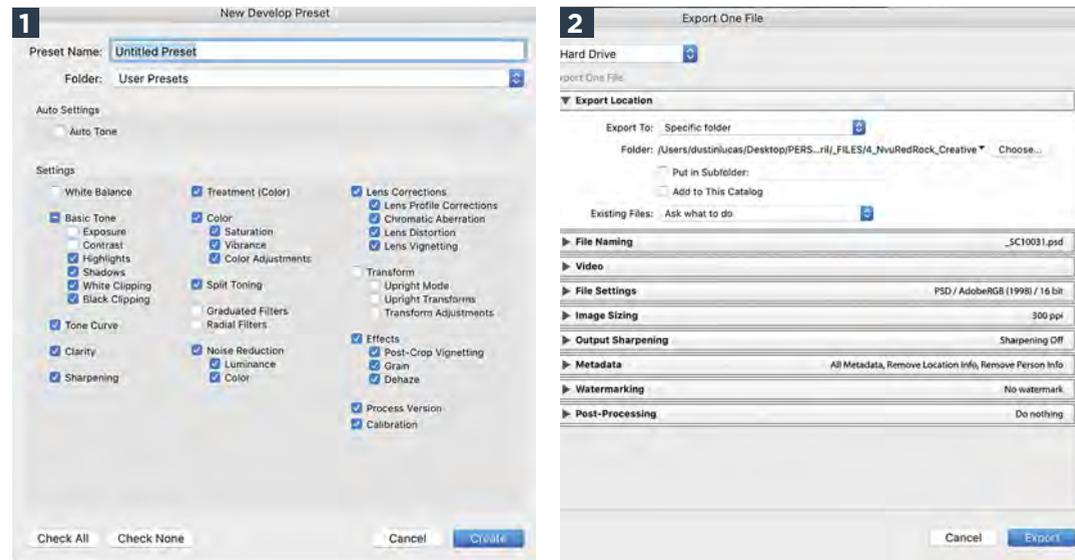


## PLAN AHEAD: PRESETS, ACTIONS, DROPLETS

Planning is the first step to editing, and it's all about efficiency. And don't forget creativity and quality—those are a given. Lightroom is where we will import, organize, select, color-correct and send right to Photoshop for more hands-on editing. Refer to my previous articles for extensive import and culling workflows. We need to start building presets for color correction.

Making a preset is simple in Develop mode: Hold Shift and Command while striking the “N” key. (1) Determining what settings get applied is the task at hand. You need to think a few steps ahead. When your instinct is to do as much as possible in Lightroom, remember that you will be processing in Photoshop later. Be easy with tonal adjustments and recovery tools. Photoshop is the wheelhouse for tonal applications. Let's keep things simple to start.

Our next task is to make an export preset once we have completed our basic color correction. Select the image(s) and hold Shift and Command while striking the “E” key. First we need to set standardized settings like Export Location, File Settings, Image Sizing, Output Sharpening and Post-Processing. If we are going into Photoshop, we do not want to change the file size and we must rasterize the Raw file into a PSD. Choose Adobe 1998 for the color space since we are still editing, and set the DPI to 300 so the image is sized into standard dimensions. (2)

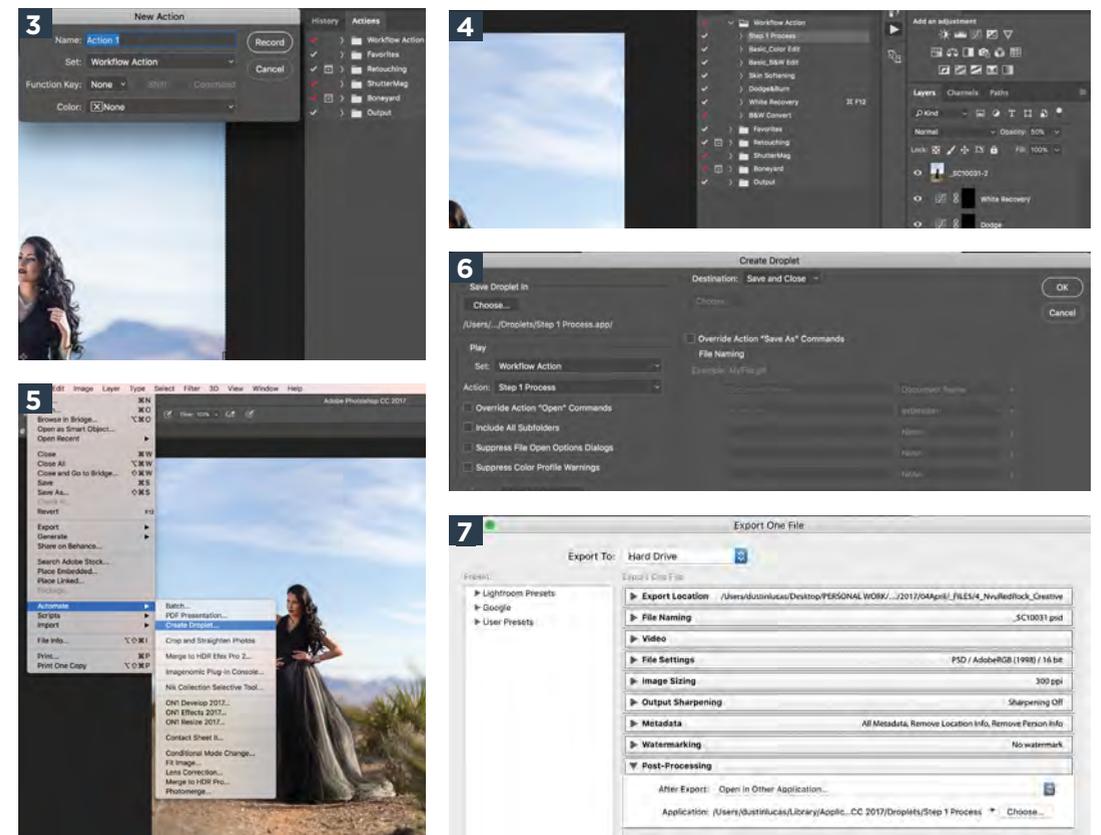


Post-processing is an option that allows you to export from Lightroom and quickly open images into Photoshop while applying an action to them all in one fell swoop. First we need to open Photoshop to create our editing Actions, and then save a Droplet for Lightroom to run during export.

In the Actions panel, we can create new sets like workflow, favorites and retouching to organize our actions based on their function. To do so, click the folder icon in the bottom of the palette. Once you create Actions, highlight one of the sets and click the icon to the right of the folder you previously selected. (3) You are now recording and ready to start adding adjustment layers, duplicating your base layer, adding masks or anything you want to apply to multiple images. Think of this in steps: What do you typically do first? For me, it's applying skin softening with a mask turned off and separate dodge and burn layers. I would name this action “Step 1 Edit” so I know to apply it to all my images. This leads us to creating a Droplet for Lightroom to use. (4)

To create a Droplet, navigate to the menu bar, click on File, hover over Automate and click Create Droplet. (5) You can choose where this file will save first; make sure it's in a folder you would not accidentally delete. Then choose the Action set and the Step 1 Process action. The last setting that is important is Destination. The default setting “None” opens the image immediately into Photoshop after applying the action. This is useful only if you are opening 10 or fewer files. I recommend the “Save and Close” option here so your computer doesn't freeze mid-process when you accidentally export 50 PSDs from Lightroom. (6)

Now we can finish our Lightroom Export preset with this Droplet file saved. With our images selected for export, hold Shift and Command while striking the “E” key. After you have chosen all the previously mentioned settings, drop down to the Post-Processing menu. Click in the box to the right of After Export and choose “Open in Another Application...” Click Choose Below and select the recently saved Droplet title Step 1 Process. Now we are ready to see all the work in action. (7)



## COLOR-CORRECT FOR A CREATIVE EDIT: LIGHTROOM ONLY

In Develop mode, the Basic panel will handle 90% of my adjustments for what I need out of Lightroom. I leave white balance, exposure and contrast all set to default values as shot. These are dependent on the lighting, and it would be foolish to adjust these blindly. As for the contrast slider, it's just not that versatile. Moving down to highlights and shadows, I land somewhere around 25 to 30 for each. Here, I have dropped highlights automatically to a value of -30 and shadows lifted to +30. Instead of contrast, I add white point and drop the black point. This gives me a more controllable contrast boost, and for Lightroom, my goal is to have clean density, meaning my histogram hugs the edges. Like I said, this is a starting point, and is not set in stone. (8)

Presence section is a give and take. For my preset, I leave these zeroed out. These sorts of settings can be globally applied in Library mode as needed.

I skip past all the localized color adjustments to the Details panel. We need some sharpening, and this is important for processing your Raw files. We've lost some sharpening along the way, so let's get it back. Placing the details to 75 is a moderate amount to add in some crispness. I also add a slight bit of noise reduction here and there. This was shot outdoors at a really low ISO, so it shouldn't have much noise if any at all. I like this subtle softening effect for skin tones coupled with the edge detail of the sharpening setting added. I typically land between 5 and 20 for Luminance in the Noise Reduction section. (9)

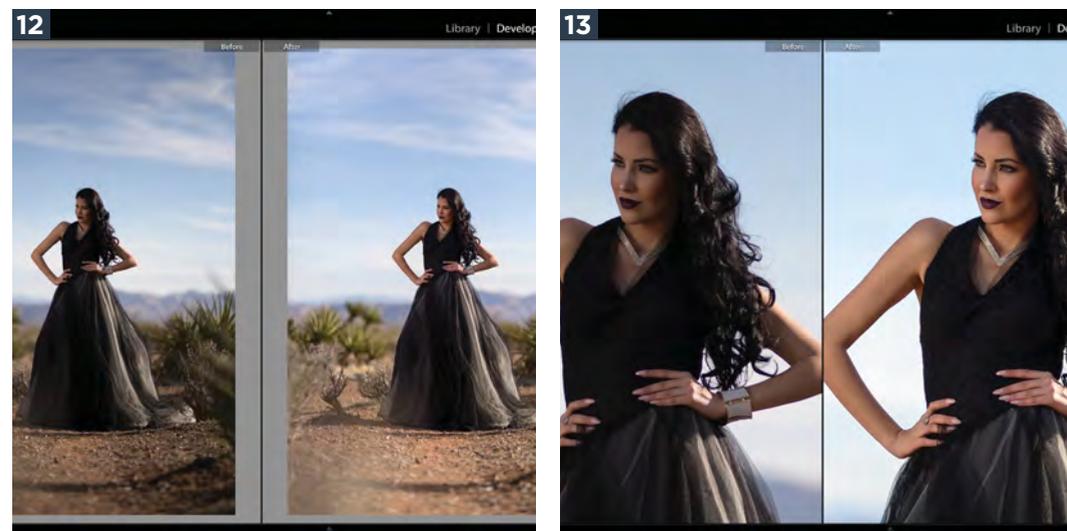
Lens Correction is next and almost always applied. I'm generally happy with Adobe's use of this tool and the range of lenses available at the click of a mouse. Chromatic aberration is a little more tricky to just globalize; I would still apply a subtle amount. (10)



Last but certainly not least, changing the Camera Profile in the Camera Calibration panel is a must. The "before" preview is our Raw file shown in Adobe Standard, and it's a deceiving preview. We have this muddy lack of true-to-life color image from an amazing camera. Something doesn't add up here. The default profiles are a huge step in the wrong direction when it comes to skin tones. Steer clear of those altogether. (11) We have a choice to make: Spend more money or live with Adobe Standard. I do not accept mediocrity.

X-Rite's ColorChecker Classic is a totally custom long-term solution. I show you how to use it in my previous article "Color Space Part 2: Getting Control With Your Color." Another highly recommended option is to check out <http://www.colorfidelity.com>. You can purchase camera-model-specific profiles as an alternative to the Adobe Standard one. I have applied the Standard version for my edit, and you can really see the results. (12)

All these settings are built into my preset. It gets me most of the way there in terms of color correction. All I need to do is adjust some minor color and exposure issues. Her skin is slightly red and underexposed. I can neutralize the tint down to +10 and the exposure needs lifted a quarter stop. That's it. We're ready to export. (13)



## MASKING AND BRUSHWORK: PHOTOSHOP ONLY

The first thing I do when editing in Photoshop is to close my eyes, open them and see what's pulling my attention away from the subject. Typically it starts with the bright areas needing toning down. Burn, baby, burn. Use a semisoft-edged brush and burn that sky and overbearing highlights. (14ab) Remember that we got rid of that pesky lens vignette in Lightroom, which makes burning down the image less artificial. (15) My next step is to isolate the highlights to burn down the hot spots even further. The reason is that when you burn, you burn it all, making the image darker. We still get stuck with the distracting hot spots and clipped black tones. (16ab)



After toning down the image, we have to focus on the skin tones. Before we soften, let's dodge the shadowy tones to even out the subject. Not only do we want to brighten the skin, but we need to bring some definition into the dress. It needs to have shape and not just fall back with other darker areas of the image. (17) Softening the skin here is a great touch to the portrait. Remember to not go too soft; since we have output sharpening to add, we don't have to be too lenient. Notice how it evens out the highlights on her skin and makes the lighting look even better. (18ab)



With the local exposure and skin softening adjustments out of the way, we can start our toning application. I have grown very fond of the free Nik Collection. Silver Efex Pro 2 still hails as one of my favorite plugins (19), along with some Color Fill layers and stylized Curves for the matted look. I did not want to strip all the color out of this image, but it is necessary to tone it back. It's hard not to get lost in the landscape and sky surrounding the subject. Proper editing allows the subject and surroundings to blend well. (20)



### ATTENTION TO DETAILS: FINAL TOUCHES

It's all about the details. We have some final work to do that will get this image ready for print. Start with some texture to get the smooth blue sky to blend with the landscape. This is a killer image. I like to add this effect for subtle grit in the image. (21ab)



During the color correction process in Lightroom, I already added input sharpening to regain some of the sharpness I lost when processing the Raw. Now I need to consider where this image is going and how to prepare output sharpening. For me, it's High Pass all the way. The only question is how much to account for. For screen, I am content right around 50%. Just know that when I export it, it will look sharper on screen. (22ab)





I have cropped this image a few ways, trying to push the rule of thirds versus the symmetrical composition it was captured in. I think this looks best with a symmetrical composition. (23abc)

**OUTPUT THOSE FILES: YOU'RE DONE!**

We're done, and in just five minutes. Once I am set up with presets, actions and droplets, it comes down to the brushwork and selecting a toning application. Take this tutorial with a grain of salt in that I didn't retouch the image.

Creative edits can be simple and executed with efficiency. Stop wasting your time and use the shortcuts here. It's gonna be a long season ahead if you don't plan a solid workflow. ■



Images © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

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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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Get Moving:  
*Add Motion*  
to Your Portraits  
with Michael Anthony



Posing is a tough subject for photographers. The problem is that a set of poses that works for one bride will not necessarily work for another. As professionals, we are supposed to look through the camera and determine the best look for the individual we are photographing.

The majority of people you photograph are probably not used to being in front of a camera. They are stiff and awkward, and their expressions look contrived and forced without proper coaching. You can work them into a more natural position, work their expression based on the basic foundations I laid out in my March and April 2016 articles in Shutter Magazine to get your basic and posed images out of the way.

I have found in the last year that every image that has a story tends to sell better emotionally to the viewer. Static subjects could work for your basic and dramatic images. But one way I have found to add interest to almost any basic image is to add motion to your poses.

You can do this two ways. The first is to put your subject in motion. This is by far the most effective way to get believable results. The second way is to pose your subjects static, but so they look like they are in motion. This method is much harder to achieve, and should only be used when option one won't work because you are in low light or your subject is somewhere where movement might inhibit the pose. There are a few other scenarios where this method works well, which we will get to later.



Image © Michael Anthony

## GET IN MOTION

Some photographers teach “flow posing,” which is to create a series of poses out of a single pose while transitioning from one pose to the next. That is different from what we are talking about. Motion posing means to photograph a series of images from a movement that your clients are doing. Let's look at an example here.



Image © Michael Anthony

This is a simple motion pose we use often. I have a couple walk away from me or toward me. I instruct them to look at each other and smile. While they are walking, I tell the groom to twirl the bride around like they are dancing. They do this correct 99 percent of the time. Meanwhile, I am shooting in continuous mode and capturing all the motion. Not every image in the series will be a winner, but you will always have enough to tell the story.

Simple motion like this allows for several things. First, it increases the number of proofs to deliver to your clients. Second, it helps capture genuine emotion. Lastly, it requires more than a single image to tell the story, which helps you drive album sales or multiple prints. It is important to educate them during the sales session that these images are meant to be displayed together. Remember, emotion is the number-one factor in determining your sales, while at the same time leaving you with happy clients, so use it to your advantage. It is always a win-win for you and your subjects.



I am writing this in February 2017, and you've probably heard about all the rain we are having in California. We found this gem of a location a quick hike behind our studio. For this image, I asked Jennifer to run barefoot along the hillside. She wasn't too happy about the rocks she was stepping on in the grass, but she obliged. The important part was to make sure she was working with the wind. I used a fast shutter speed to freeze the motion and waited until the light was even to shoot this image. It took three takes to get it right. Shooting in continuous mode allowed me to capture one image in a series where the dress was cooperating with the wind.

## GET SLOW

One thing we have been doing to add motion to our images lately, and will continue to experiment with all year long, is slowing down shutter speed to take advantage of the beautiful images we can create by combining moving elements in our images with a slower shutter speed.

It goes without saying there are a ton of challenges with a slower shutter image. It requires patient clients. Tell them that this will take a few tries to get right so they don't get frustrated.

As always, light is the first thing we look at. You need to understand how light works to effectively use a slower shutter speed. In certain instances, you may be working with a composite because keeping your subjects sharp is challenging. You need a sturdy tripod. Go with carbon fiber for location portraits to save weight but not lose sturdiness.



Images © Michael Anthony



Image © Michael Anthony

To set up an image like this, first we must survey our scene and find our vantage point. My goal was to showcase the moving water around our subjects. I chose a high vantage point because the motion would better emphasize the waves.

The challenge with standing on this rock was that I was not able to get my tripod up there. This meant that I would need to have exceptionally steady hands to keep my subjects sharp. I chose a shutter speed of 1/5th of a second.

Next I leaned up on a rock and put my camera into continuous shooting mode. This allowed me to shoot a series of images slowly without the motion of my pressing down the button affecting sharpness.



Image © Michael Anthony



Images © Michael Anthony

For this image, I set up the camera on a tripod. I used the same technique I showed you earlier with the twirling bride, except I did not ask them to walk first. I asked the groom to hold as still as he could, and asked the bride to hold her dress in one hand and twirl it in the other. The shutter speed was set to 1/3rd of a second.



This image was a bit more difficult. I was looking at the leading lines of the clouds, and wanted to see motion in the water leading up to our brides. That would put multiple leading lines converging on the couple. To get this look, I set the tripod in the rocky water with a slow shutter speed. I used flash to ensure the couple would be sharp, and took a separate exposure for the sky and water. I exposed for the sky and for the couple.

Making matters more difficult, I had to operate both the camera and the light, which was a handheld Profoto B2 with a softbox attached. I wasn't risking that light falling into the ocean. I set the camera to a 10-second delay and pressed the shutter speed. After a few attempts dialing in the exposure on the flash, I got my exposure of the couple and the sky.

To get the motion of the water, I set the shutter speed to 1.6 seconds and took a few frames until the light was just right.

You can see the cellphone BTS video of this image on our website, at [www.michaelanthonyphotography.com](http://www.michaelanthonyphotography.com) under the For Photographers section.



Image © Michael Anthony

## POSING STATIC MOTION

I use this technique sparingly because the results are not as believable, but it is required when you are too far from your subjects to provide direction, when you cannot get the fabric of a wedding dress correct or when there is not enough light to capture moving subjects when flash isn't required.

The best ways to use this technique is with closer images or standard walking shots.

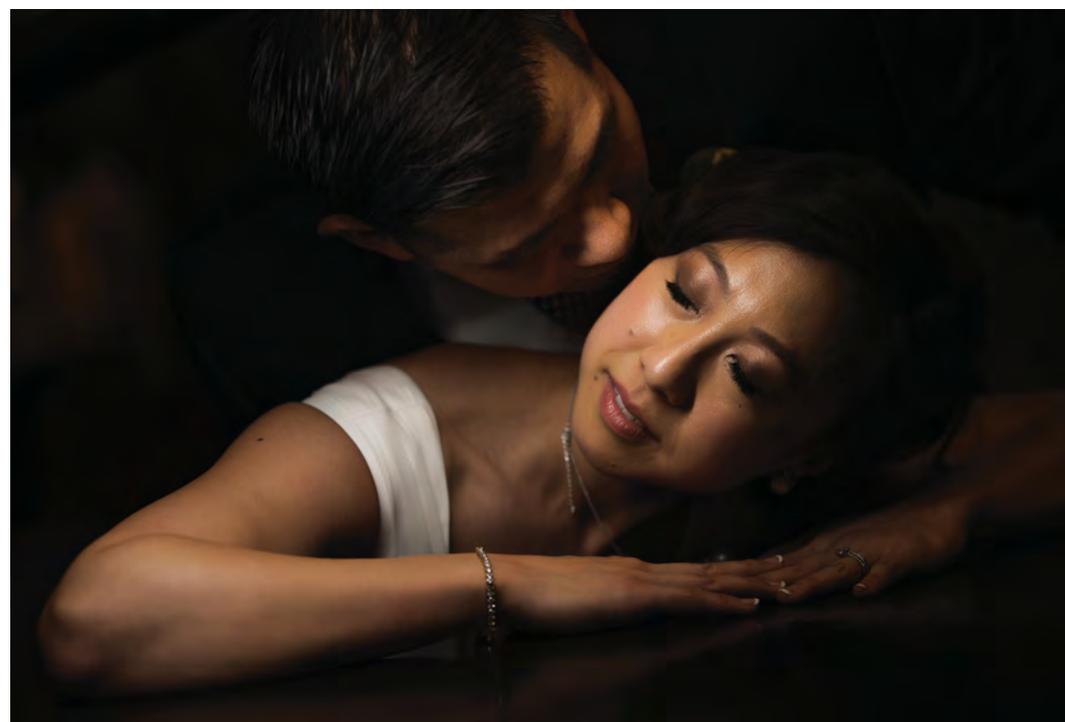


Image © Michael Anthony

I wanted to create a romantic image for the last spread of this couple's album, so I posed the bride on a reflective table, lying on her arms. I wanted to create a story of the groom coming down to kiss her on the cheek. The focus of the image would be on her, meaning I wanted most of his face to be in shadow. This was being lit with a constant light, and because the position of the lighting was crucial, I directed it as a normal pose. I had him kiss her cheek, and placed most his face into shadow while leaving some detail in the dark areas.



Image © Michael Anthony

For this destination wedding in Hawaii, I wanted to create an image of our brides walking down this path. I felt the image would be stronger using motion in the dress, so I had my assistant throw the dress. The dress was a little long in the front and we didn't want to drag it through the dirt, so we opted for a static motion pose. Our assistant was removed in post-production.

The key to static walking shots is the position of the legs and weight distribution. When people walk normally, their motion carries their weight forward. Therefore, it is advised with posed walking shots to put the weight on the front leg. Pose the outside legs of your couple forward so their bodies are facing each other. When people walk, their gait creates motion in their arms. This is extremely hard to pose. You can have your couple either swing their arms back and forth slowly, or give them something to hold, as we did here with one of our subjects. If you have tried this shot before and it didn't look like it should, it was probably due to one of the above factors not coming together.

Motion is a great way to add a storytelling element to all your images. If done correctly, it creates emotion in your imagery that will help drive sales. Practice these techniques. Incorporating motion can liven up the images you are used to delivering. ■

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Michael Anthony is the owner of Michael Anthony Studios, a wedding photography studio based in Los Angeles. He has won multiple awards in international image competition for his creative use of light, storytelling and environmental portraiture. The five-member team at Michael Anthony Studios photographs around 60 weddings and over 200 portrait sessions a year.  
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THE

**DON'TS**

OF

**DESTINATION PHOTO SHOOTS**

with Alissa Zimmerman



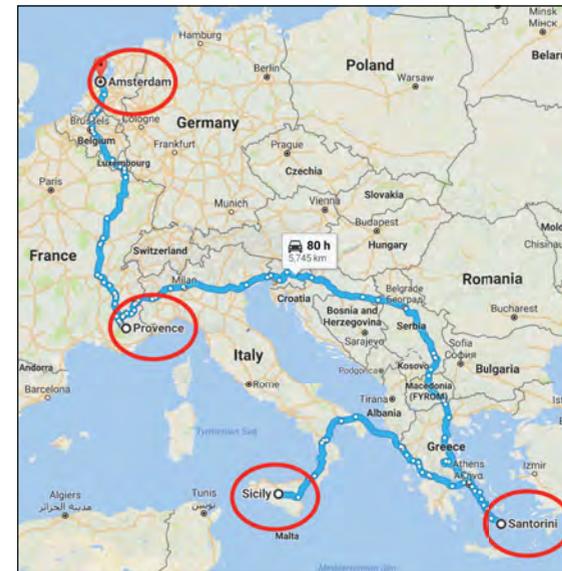
Planning a destination photo shoot can be extremely stressful, whether it's a bridal session, portfolio shoot or wedding. The devil is always in the details, and those details are even more important when you factor in the out-of-town and out-of-comfort-zone elements that go into planning these shoots. You'll find a great deal of information and tips on planning, but rarely will you find tips on what to avoid. Here are a few scenarios you may not have considered in your planning process.

### #1: DON'T CREATE AN UNREALISTIC ITINERARY FOR YOURSELF

Remember, you're supposed to actually enjoy doing this. Creating a 10-day itinerary with multiple shoots and moving parts crammed into each day is going to wear you down and make you wish you had just stayed home. The majority of people who do destination shoots travel with at least one other person; not giving yourselves enough down time during the trip will lead to tension and unnecessary fighting.

Traveling for photo shoots is all about being realistic with your time. I have been planning shoots and coordinating our travel for over five years, and still follow the same process, a process that has been refined more and more over the years. The five steps below will help you tremendously.

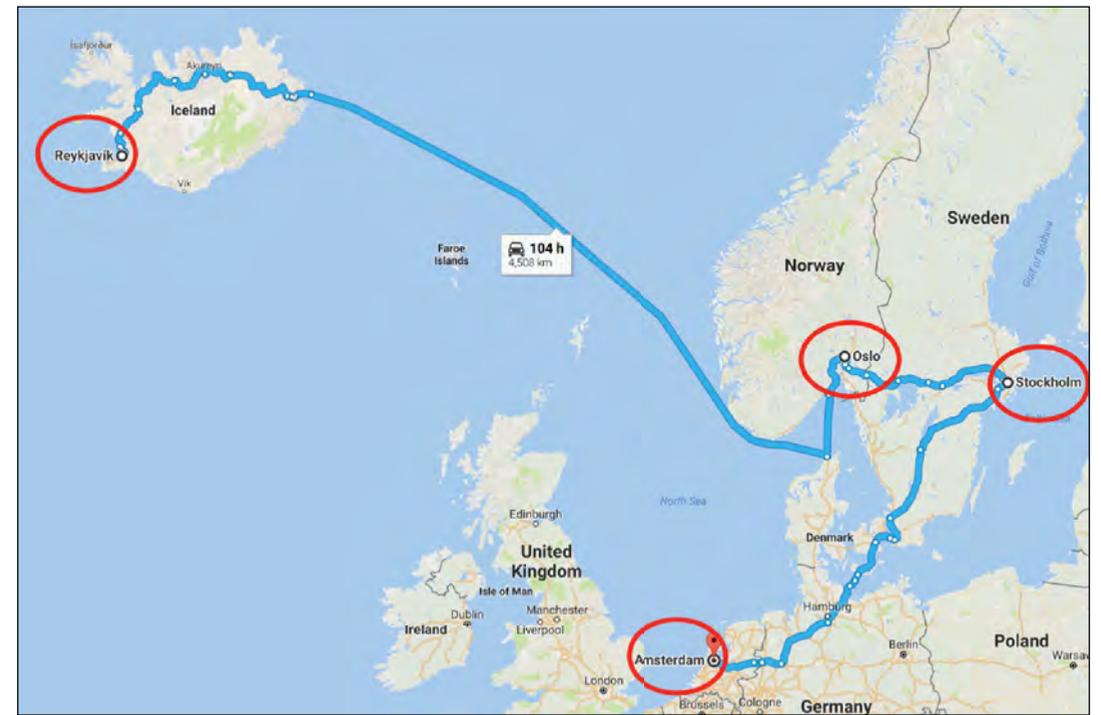
**1. Pick three to five "tours" you would like to go on for your trip.** I like to keep these all within one region so that travel between each city is minimal and easy to do (drive, train, etc.—I avoid flying between cities because you end up losing an entire day). For our 2017 trip, we originally had a client who wanted to meet us in Amsterdam for a bridal session. This is how I pitched the trip to Sal to gauge his interest in each tour.



PITCH #1



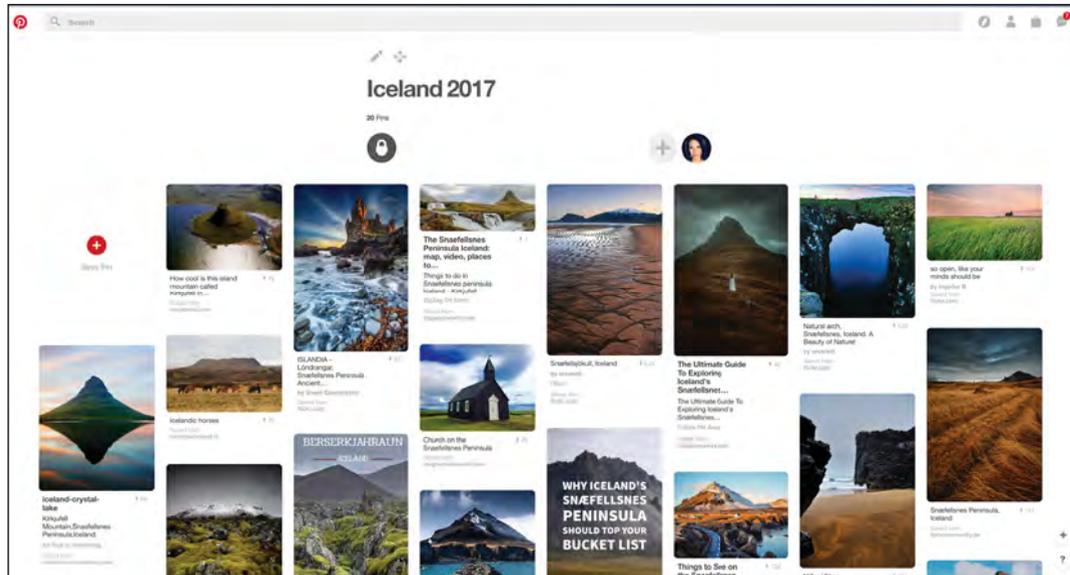
PITCH #2



PITCH #3

**2. Decide the amount of time you want to be gone.** We do a 30-day trip overseas every year to build our portfolio. Sal and I sat down with this pitch and decided we didn't want to waste any time traveling between cities this year. We decided to cut down the trip to two weeks and spend the whole time in Iceland exploring parts of the country we didn't get to see last time we were there.

**3. Make a list of your must-see places and things.** This is where you dream big. I'll use our trip to Iceland as an example. Start by simply doing a Google search for anything along the lines of "iceland unique locations" or "most beautiful places in iceland" and go from there. Compile a list, regardless of how outrageous or extreme the things may be, of places you want to go and/or things you want to do. I also use a Pinterest board for this, and start pinning anything and everything that grabs my attention. It's easy to narrow down a giant board of pins once you get to the next step.



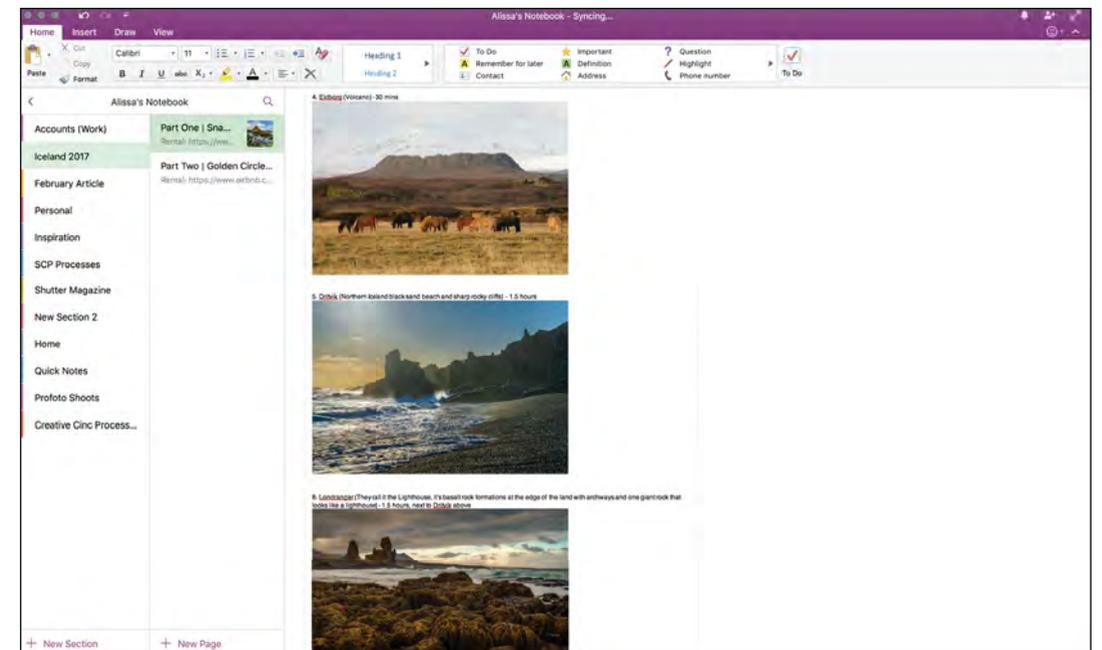
**4. Start mapping out your wishlist.** The map will be the determining factor for what's realistic and what's not. Start plugging each item into your wish list to see where they all land on the map. Half of what we wanted to see conveniently landed within less than one hour of each place on the Western Peninsula of Iceland. The other half was all located in the South, each place within 45 minutes' drive time.

**5. Based on your final location selection, determine where you want to stay.** Once all your locations are mapped out, you can get an idea of where you should stay to cut down on drive time. It is important to understand that something requiring more than a two-hour drive is going to eat up half of your shooting day. It's easy for people to forget the return trip is just as long as the way there.

## #2: DON'T LET YOURSELF GET DISORGANIZED AND OVERWHELMED

I'm not a big math person, but when it comes to planning destination shoots, spreadsheets and Microsoft OneNote are two of my best friends. It's the only way I can stay organized, and organization keeps me from getting overwhelmed.

Microsoft OneNote is great for organizing each shoot and incorporating inspiration images for a visual to present to Sal.



Once each shoot is finalized, I create a spreadsheet to track expenses, contacts (models and hair and makeup artists), and locations. I use a generic form for this; when a field is blank in the spreadsheet, it means I am forgetting something.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
	Date	Location	Concept	\$\$ Wardrobn	\$\$ Model(s)	Model(s) Contact	\$\$ HMUA	HMUA Contact	Transportation?	Misc	Total Cost
1											
2	27-Jul	Helinar	Bride Alone	\$ 180.00	\$ 500.00	Model First & Last Name   model@models.com	\$ 400.00	HMUA First & Last Name   hmua@hmua.com	\$ 75.00	\$ 113.00	\$ 1,268.00
3	28-Jul	Lava Fields	Fashion, Red Dress	\$ -	\$ -	Alissa	\$ -	Alissa	\$ -	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00
4											
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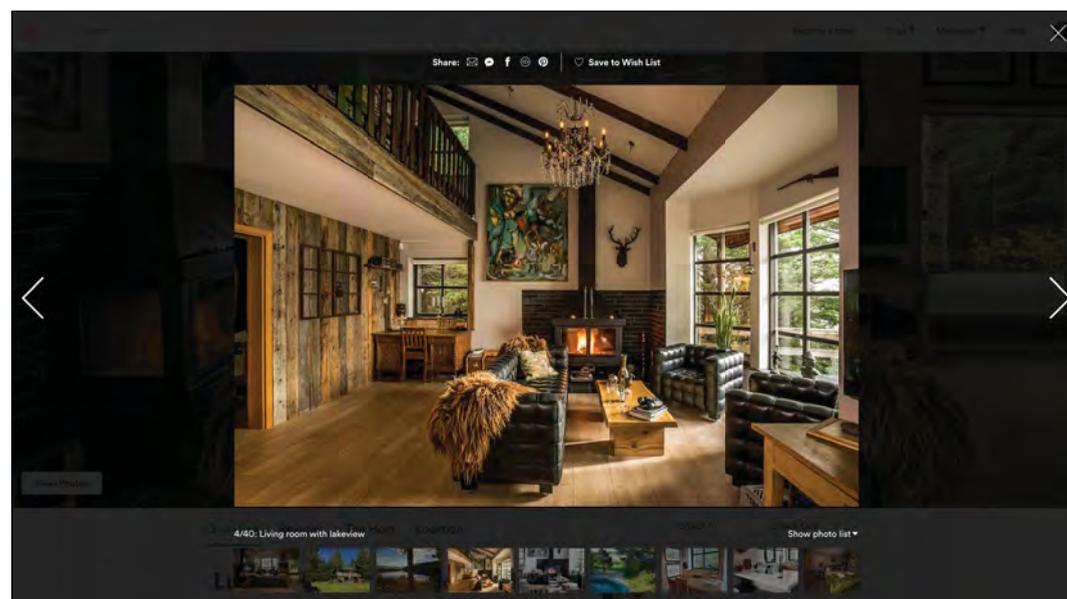
### #3: DON'T HIRE A MODEL WITH LIMITED LOOKS

Versatility is key when booking models. It's easy to come across someone who is gorgeous or has the perfect look for that one shot you want for your portfolio, but you have to think about your time wisely. Typically, models are for hire for eight-hour windows. Imagine the number of unique shots you could get out of one model in that time. This is why it's important to find someone who has a portfolio that shows his or her range as a model. Will this model be able to pose as a bride in one scene and do edgy high fashion in another? Find someone with multiple looks, or you'll be stuck shooting the same person with the same face all eight hours.

### #4: DON'T GO CHEAP ON HOTELS AND/OR APARTMENT RENTALS

Here's what many people seem to forget when booking travel: The hotel or apartment rental you select is your home for the next few weeks of your life. On top of that, you will more than likely be outside shooting from early morning to late evening, and will be exhausted when you get home. Book an AirBnB when traveling to a different country, which allows you to live like a local for a few days and get the most out of your experience. It also allows you to save some money because you can do your grocery shopping when you first get in, so you can cook decent, healthy meals at home and not have to dine out every meal.

If you want to cut costs, invite friends to join you on the trip to split the cost of housing. An added bonus: Travel with your photographer friends and split costs for models and hair and makeup artists.





## #5: DON'T KEEP YOUR CREW OUT OF THE LOOP

Communication is crucial for destination shoots, both internally and with your hired crew (models, hair, makeup). Provide models and hair and makeup artists with mood boards, and keep them in the loop during the concept-planning portion of the process, which gets them excited about and invested in the shoot. This ensures a more reliable outcome on the day of the shoot because once a person is invested in a creative project, they are less likely to bail or flake out the morning of the shoot.

Once confirmed, get all forms of contact from each person you're hiring: email address, phone number, backup phone number, etc. It's better to have too many means of getting ahold of someone than not enough. ■

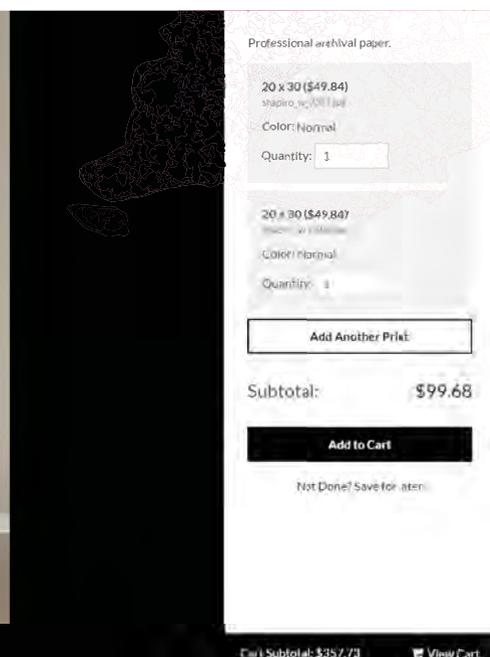
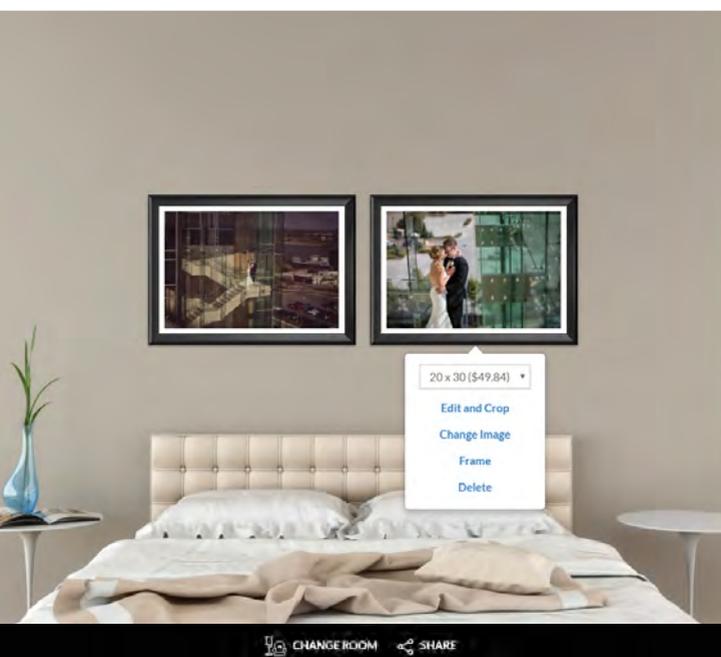


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Alissa Zimmerman graduated with a degree in television production and has been a part of the Salvatore Cincotta team since 2011. Today she is behind the camera regularly as Sal's second shooter and as the executive producer and camera operator for Salvatore Cincotta Films, Behind the Shutter and Sal Cincotta's School of Photography. Alissa is the creative director for *Shutter Magazine* and serves as Sal's right hand, managing daily operations within the family of Salvatore Cincotta brands.

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GALLERIES



ROOM-VU

- RE-VU
- Settings
  - Gallery Details
  - Access & Security
  - Digital Media
  - Purchasing
  - Room-Vu
  - Links & Video
  - Discounts & Coupons
  - Quick Settings
  - Preview and Theme
  - Music
  - Share
  - Products
  - Stats

Settings / Access & Security

### Gallery Expiration

Expiration \*

Re-Vu  After expiration, re-launch Gallery for 14 days and notify guests

[Customize Re-Vu Emails](#)

- Event Anniversary
 

Event Date	10.15.2016
Re-Vu Start Date	10.02.2017
Re-Vu End Date	10.15.2017
- Custom Date

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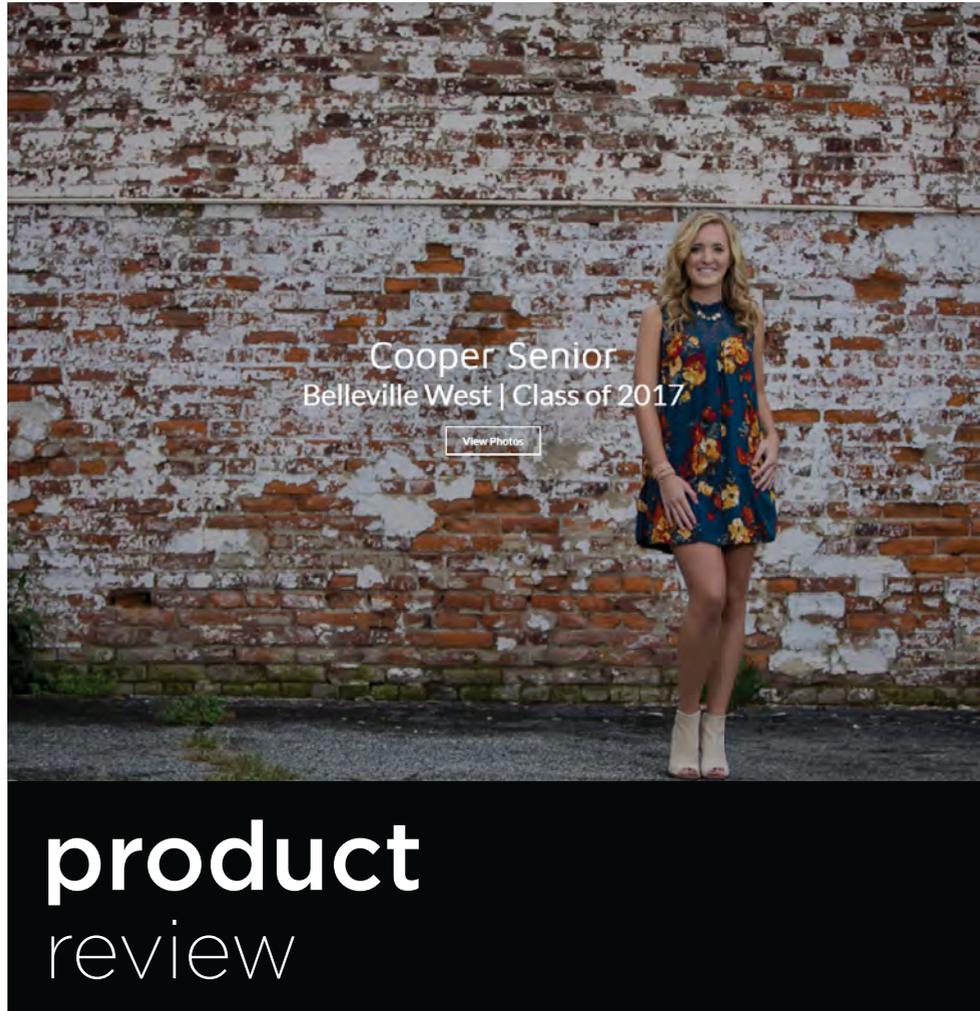
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with *Salvatore Cincotta*



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MIXING

# BUSINESS WITH PLEASURE

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR TRAVEL  
BY CREATING EPIC IMAGERY

with **Sal Cincotta**



I have been a full-time photographer for about 10 years now. I love every single minute of it. One of the things I love most about my job—or maybe better stated, life—is traveling the world and eating incredible food. My waistline is proof of that. Many of us started in this business out of passion. There is nothing wrong with that, but what else do you want out of your life and career? I would be perfectly content traveling the world, enjoying incredible food and cultures, and making epic imagery. That’s my list of priorities at the moment. If this is something that is of interest to you, keep reading.

#### WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO?

Map it out. Every year, we put together a list of destinations we want to travel to. It’s basically a wish list. That’s right, dream big, my friends. I have been to China, Iceland, France, England, Scotland, Japan, Ireland, India, Brazil, Germany, Amsterdam, Portugal and all throughout the United States. All on business. And it’s all tax-deductible.

This is where it starts. Where do you want to go? You have to set a flag out there that you are marching to. Until you do that, nothing will ever happen. Dream big and don’t be afraid to start planning today.



Image © Salvatore Cincotta Photography



## PASSPORTS AND VISAS

I learned about this the hard way. Depending on where you are going, you may need travel visas. And do yourself a favor: When you hit customs in a foreign country, do not say you are there for work. That will trigger an entire sequence of events that you will not be ready for. Foreign countries are very protective when you say you are there for work. Granted, we are there building our portfolios, but we look like glorified tourists. Embrace that.

Certain countries, like China and Brazil, require visas. The process can be simple if you plan accordingly and have all your paperwork in ahead of time. Of course, if you plan on being a world traveler, get your passport now. There's no sense waiting for this. These are all simple things, but all take time to process.

It reminds me of a recent trip to China where the process can take two to three months. We had to find a broker and pay them a rush fee to get our visas expedited. Now we have a five-year visa, but this took time and planning. Do your research. Every country is different. As of this writing, you don't need visas in Europe or the UK.

## MAKE THE MOST OF EVERY DAY

When I travel, I want to shoot every single day. Something has to happen, or I start to twitch. On a recent trip to Iceland, I was shooting 15 to 18 hours a day. It was amazing. Just start doing your research. Look for incredible locations at your destination. They are everywhere.

You have a decision to make. Are you going to be a tourist or a photographer? I lean more to the photographer side of things. Of course, we are all tourists in a sense, but I don't want to spend my days walking around every single tourist trap in the land. I want to have maximum exposure to the locale. I want to operate like a local where I can. This means using public transportation and not eating at McDonald's. Maximize your days. Sleep is overrated, and that's not why you are here. Sleep on the plane ride home.

Here's something else I like to do. In almost every country I visit, I look for a national gallery. There is nothing I find more influential than looking at the great painters of the past. Talk about talent. It's one of the most inspiring things I do for my own growth.



Image © Salvatore Cincotta Photography



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## PERMITS

Good luck with this. It's more than likely not going to happen, especially when you are working internationally. Again, do your research. Shooting in each country brings its own set of challenges. Shooting in China in front of a government building could end with you behind bars. In a country like Iceland, no one cares—about anything. You can shoot wherever you like for the most part. When we were photographing over there, we had no resistance. However, in Japan, we were stopped literally every place we shot. Even when we tried to get permits or permission, it ended with either a no or just no response. So tread lightly here.

In Japan, I created this incredible image of a bride walking up a set of stairs. Believe it or not, this was a train station. We were being very low-key and respectful of other travelers, but within five minutes, we were asked to leave. We begged for forgiveness and just another five minutes, and the security guard smiled and said ok. So you see, if you are respectful and courteous, you will get a lot farther.

Now, this doesn't always work. On a recent trip to Horseshoe Bend in Arizona, I was immediately asked to leave. I tried the same thing, asked for five minutes, and I was told no, absolutely not. The frustrating part was that I had gotten a permit, but that permit was only good for a certain area that was 100 yards away from where I was trying to shoot. Locations and permission and frustration are all interrelated. Get ready to adjust as needed.

## LOCATION SCOUTING

We have learned about this the hard way over the years. If you want to maximize your results, plan ahead. Do your research and location scouting. This extends well beyond your location. Check weather, time of day, sunrise and sunset times, etc. All this matters if you want to create something epic. We use Google to find great locations and then Google Earth to check the actual surrounding areas. This is incredibly useful in checking sight lines and obstructions well before you show up to the location.

There is a ton of apps to help you predict sunrise and sunset, and also to help you determine where the path of the sun will be. This is important. Think about it. If you want to create a silhouette shot, it's going to be almost impossible if the sun is in a location where it's front-lighting your subject and the background you chose. Why leave something like this to chance? Instead, we have a Word document we refer to as "the football" that has all our travel details, pictures, concepts, dresses, models, etc.

While we try to be very organized before the shoot, I would be lying if I implied that everything always goes smoothly and according to plan. That's laughable to even think about. Almost every shoot I go on has some level of adjustment, something we didn't plan for. #pivot.



Image © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

## CREATING SOMETHING UNIQUE

The formula for success is more than just showing up to a gorgeous location to take images. When I am traveling, I work with real clients: brides and grooms, seniors, commercial, etc. But I can't do 14 shoots all with clients. As much as I would love that, it's just not possible. Instead, I maximize my time at any location by booking models looking to collaborate and build their portfolio.

I take it a step further. I bring my own wardrobe. I use the site [EnceptionRentals.com](http://EnceptionRentals.com), created for photographers, to do just this. Build your damn portfolio. Stop talking about it. Go do it. Bring a wedding dress, bring a fashion gown, do something unique. I do this for my portfolio and for my actual clients. We create something they can't live without. We give them a unique, stylized shoot, something they are going to gladly spend money on. And think about the referrals. They will gladly spread the word to their friends and family. Best of all, they won't have to do too much bragging. When their friends and family see these exotic images, they will immediately want to know more.

Get out there and make your dreams come true. And if you don't gain at least 5 pounds on your next trip, you are not doing it right. ■

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Sal Cincotta is an international award-winning photographer, educator, author and the publisher of *Shutter Magazine*. Sal's success is directly tied to the education he received in business school. He graduated from Binghamton University, a Top 20 business school, and has worked for Fortune 50 companies like Procter & Gamble and Microsoft. After spending 10 years in corporate America, Sal left to pursue a career in photography and has never looked back.

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# product review

bayphoto.com with *Salvatore Cincotta*

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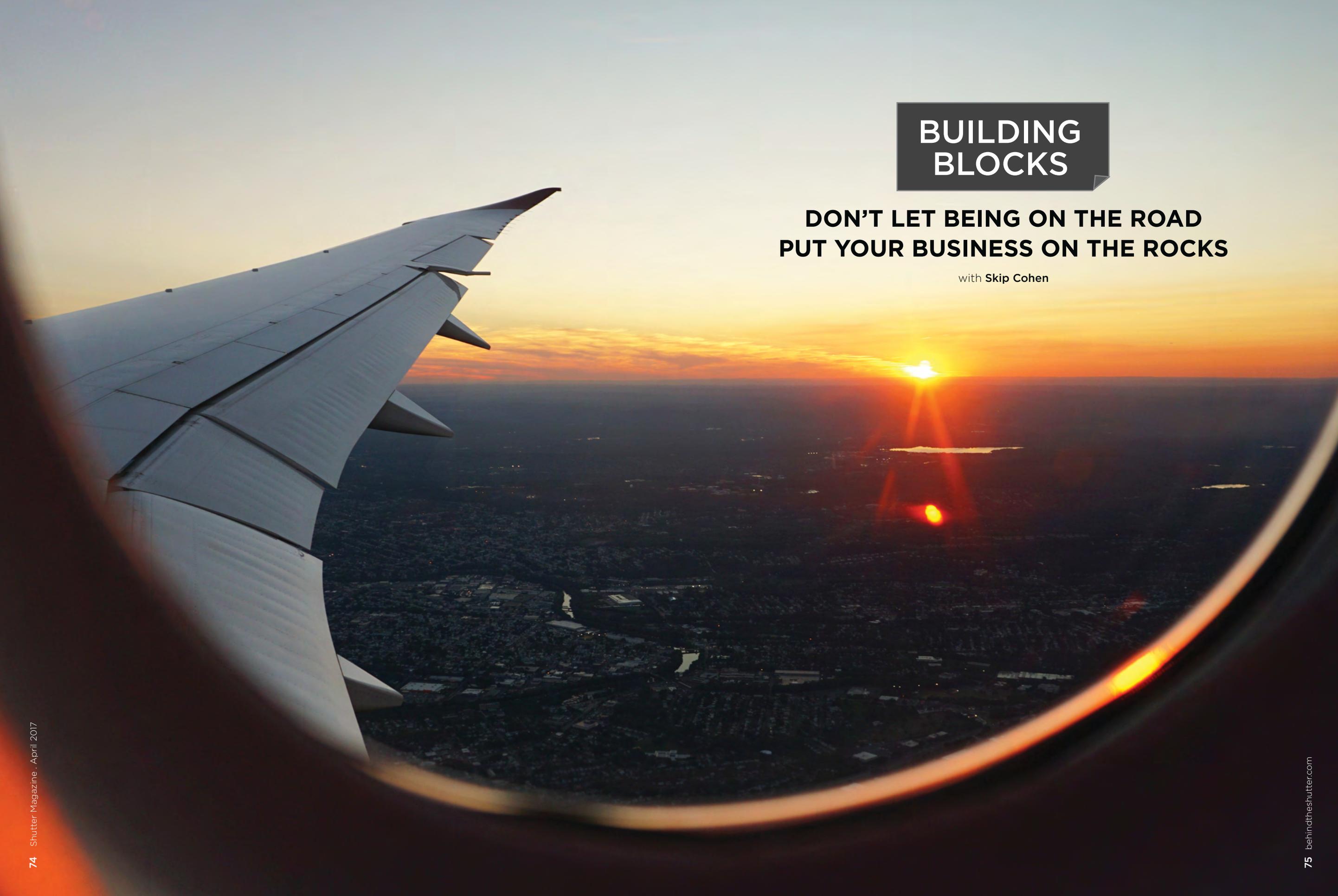
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An aerial view of a city at sunset, seen through an airplane window. The wing of the plane is visible on the left side of the frame. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright orange and yellow glow across the sky and casting a long shadow of the sun on the city below. The city lights are visible in the darkening landscape.

# BUILDING BLOCKS

**DON'T LET BEING ON THE ROAD  
PUT YOUR BUSINESS ON THE ROCKS**

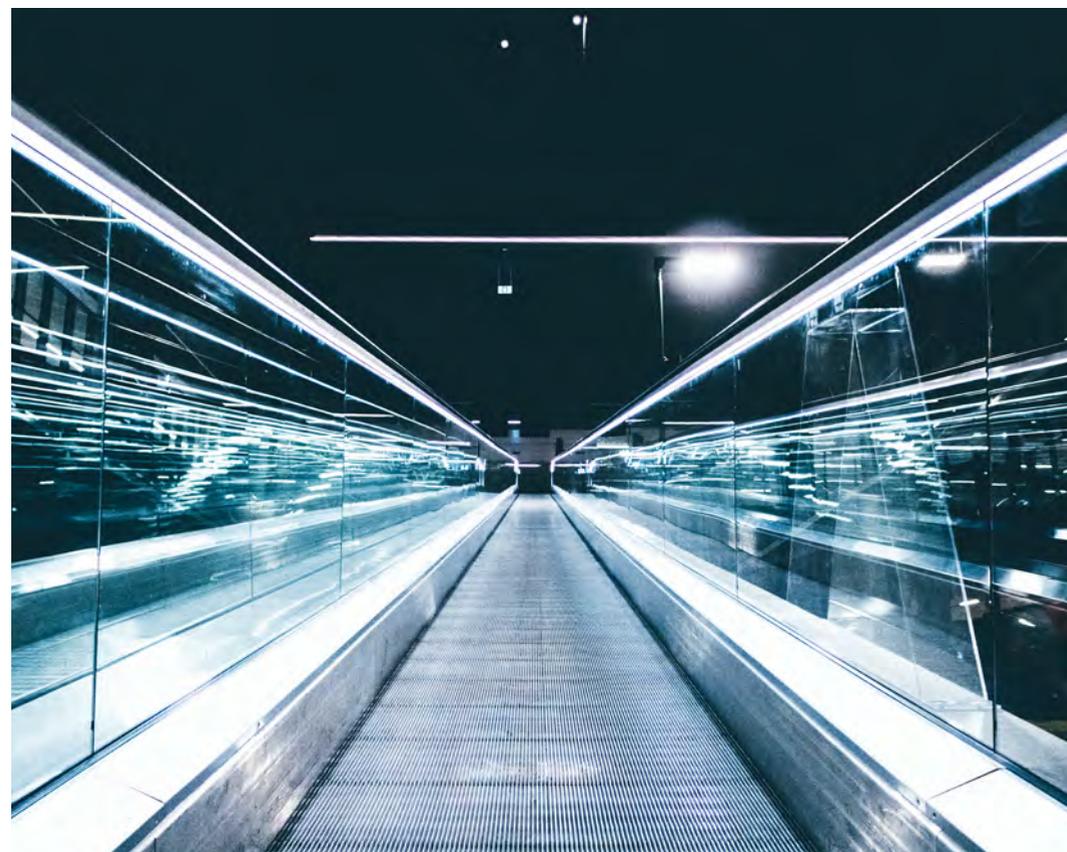
with Skip Cohen

The theme of this month's issue is travel, and it's a broad topic. Typically it covers everything from what gear to travel with to ways to get the most out of travel photography and expanding your brand.

If you've followed me long enough, you know I rarely follow what everybody else does. So, let's talk about travel from the perspective of what happens to your business when you're gone.

I'm tired of trying to contact somebody via phone or email and being told later, "Sorry, I was on the road." Just hearing that makes me wonder how much business photographers lose because they don't respond quickly enough to a potential client.

Think of this month's article as the business equivalent of the biggest buffet you've ever seen in Vegas—it has a little of everything. I'll let you pick the challenges where you need the most help.



## STAYING IN TOUCH

Years ago I interviewed Gene Ho, a wedding photographer from Myrtle Beach. For traveling, he's set up a system for an assistant back home to respond to emails and phone calls. The payoff comes with locking down brides quickly, often before other photographers have even opened their email. He has everything set up on his phone, and his assistant has the same. They never miss an inquiry.

If you don't have an assistant, then it's about discipline. You should never ignore a potential client. While out-of-office canned responses explain a delay, don't let it be your excuse to not respond to somebody. Even going off grid allows room for a system to make sure people get a personal response.

## DELEGATE DECISION MAKING

For those of you who have at least one person helping you, teach them to understand your priorities and goals for your business. Then give them the responsibility to make some of the key decisions when they need to. There's nothing worse than being an upset customer and learning you have to wait several days for the boss to return your call. The quicker you handle problems, the less complicated they'll be to resolve.

## CHECK YOUR INTERNET REAL ESTATE

Whether it's your website or blog, do a quick check at least twice a day to make sure everything is working the way it should. While I've brought up this topic under the travel umbrella, it's something you should be doing every day.

Recently I was helping a great small landscape company here in Sarasota with its website. We were in my office, and the owner was surprised by the way his site looked on my Mac versus her PC laptop. Even more alarming was the way the site looked on a cellphone.

Always check your links. I'm convinced when we're asleep, gremlins, hoping to grow up to be Russian hackers, practice on our websites by disconnecting links. They slow down the load time on pages and create a little cyber chaos on a grassroots level.

## CHECK ON DIFFERENT WEB BROWSERS

When you're checking your site and blog to make sure things are working right, check on at least two browsers. Google Chrome is America's most popular browser, followed by Explorer, Safari and Firefox. Don't forget the demographics of your target audience. If you're hitting an older audience, my guess is they're still using something other than Google Chrome.

## HOW'S YOUR INSURANCE COVERAGE?

Before you travel anywhere on photography business, make sure you're insured, especially for theft. Years ago, returning from a dive trip, we came back through Houston. There were four of us traveling on three different airlines, and we all lost luggage at customs. While two of us got our gear back, two others in our group lost camera gear. One of them got his travel case back with a different camera.

All it takes is a call to your insurance agent. Remember, your homeowner's policy does not cover equipment used for business.

## ON THE ROAD TEACHING?

Most hotels, if you're hosting any kind of conference, require a special liability policy. When I used to do Skip's Summer School, it was a standard clause I added each summer to make sure I was covered and in line with the hotel's policies.

## YOUR GEAR AND TRAVEL

First, think about what you're going to take. There are few things more pathetic than a professional photographer with unprofessional expectations of how their equipment is going to make the trip. Never take on an assignment without backup gear. Being a professional means handling any challenge that comes up. That means you need backup camera bodies, lenses, strobes, etc.

Murphy's Law states, "If anything can go wrong, it will." I subscribe to Murphy's Revised Law, which states, "Murphy was an optimist." Be prepared for anything to happen, from a jam to dropping a lens.

## RENTAL HOUSES AND CAMERA DEALERS

Make it a point to always know the major rental houses for photography gear in the area where you're on an assignment. It's a nice insurance policy if something goes wrong and you need to rent gear. Build relationships with the sales reps in your area who work for the companies whose products you use. You'd be amazed by what they can do for you when you're in crisis mode.

## PACKING YOUR GEAR

In my book, the standard was set by Lightware years ago, and I'm not convinced anything has ever surpassed their quality and durability. Your gear is your most important asset. Everything needs to be well packed and protected. Don't compromise on the quality of your equipment cases.

## YOUR CALENDAR

However you track your appointments and commitments, have your calendar with you when you travel. I've embarrassed myself too many times being on the road and forgetting something I had scheduled. It's so easy to check your calendar each day; set up your phone with reminders and never miss scheduled events.

## YOUR CONTACTS

Keep your address book up to date. The other day, I was trying to track down a photographer for a new episode of "Why?" and not one phone number out of three in my address book was accurate. I finally found him, but only after a search on the Internet.

## BACK-UP PLANS

Always have a Plan B. Just looking at the weather in other parts of the country reminds me of how many times I've had to change or cancel a trip because of a winter storm. Leave yourself room on the front end of travel just in case you have to change plans.

For wedding photographers, this means flying into a destination wedding a day or two early. Arrive at a local wedding a few hours early and always have client contact numbers on you. You never know when you might hit a speed bump that does more than just slow you down.

## YOU BACK UP YOUR FILES ALL DAY LONG — BUT WHO'S YOUR BACKUP?

Sooner or later, something is going to happen that forces you to miss an appointment. Years ago, I wound up in the hospital fighting with a gall bladder from hell. I won, but it put me out of commission for a week. My good buddy Scott Bourne stepped in to keep my blog up and running. When Joe Buissink was in the hospital years ago, Cliff Mautner and Bambi Cantrell jumped in to teach a class he had scheduled. When Calvin Hayes had a death in the family, Denis Reggie shot one of his weddings.

The list of friends watching each other's back in this industry goes on and on, but don't wait for a crisis to develop a solution to life's surprises. Come up with a few alternative plans. This is no different than the fire drills you did in elementary school—all you want is a plan for the unexpected.



### YOUR NETWORK

Whether you're traveling when something comes up or just dealing with the surprises of running a business, a good network takes care and feeding. Identify a dozen people you trust the most. Keep in touch with them and think through what you'd do in an emergency situation and the role they'd play.

As I've written so many times before, the best part of this industry has nothing to do with photography. It's about the friendships that develop out of everyone's love for the craft. Those friendships are all about support for each other and helping to deal with the surprises life throws our way. ■



Skip Cohen is president and founder of Marketing Essentials International, a consulting firm specializing in projects dedicated to photographic education, marketing and social media support across a variety of marketing and business platforms. He founded SkipCohenUniversity.com in January 2013. He's been actively involved in the photographic industry his entire career, and previously served as president of Rangefinder/WPPI and Hasselblad USA. He has coauthored six books on photography and is involved in several popular podcasts, including *Weekend Wisdom*.  
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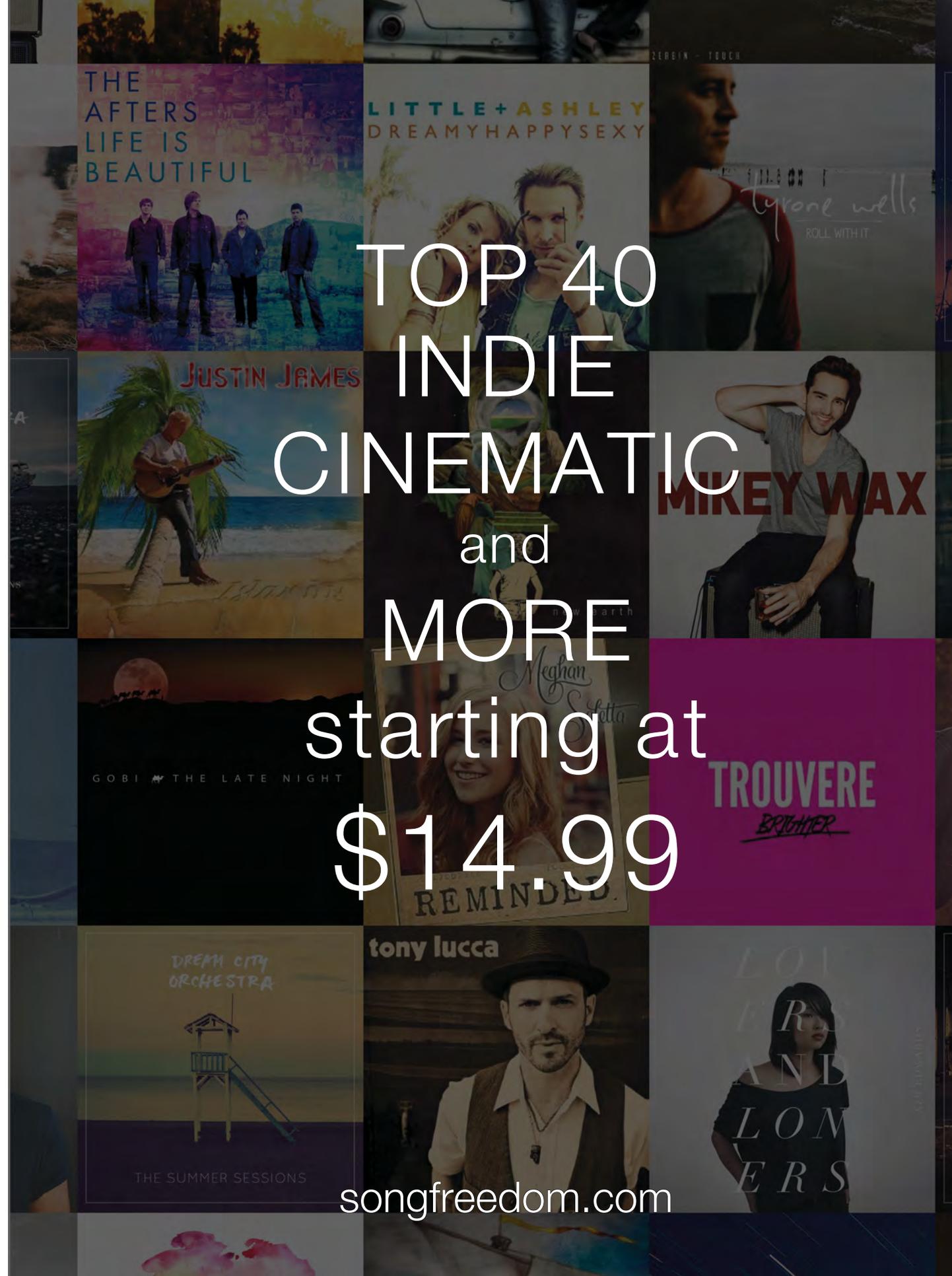
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# STOP PRETENDING AND START DOING

5 Tips For Running Your Business Like a Real Business

with Laurin Thienes

Photographers are some of the worst business people out there. Most lack the business background and knowledge to be as successful as they could be. No photographer ever woke up one day and said, “I want to own a business.” Instead, they said, “I want to be a photographer.” What most did not realize when they made this decision was that making a living doing what they love is not just about being a good photographer, but about not failing at business. If you want to make a living and not just be an artist, it is time to stop pretending you are a business owner, and start acting like it.

### **FAIL WITH PURPOSE**

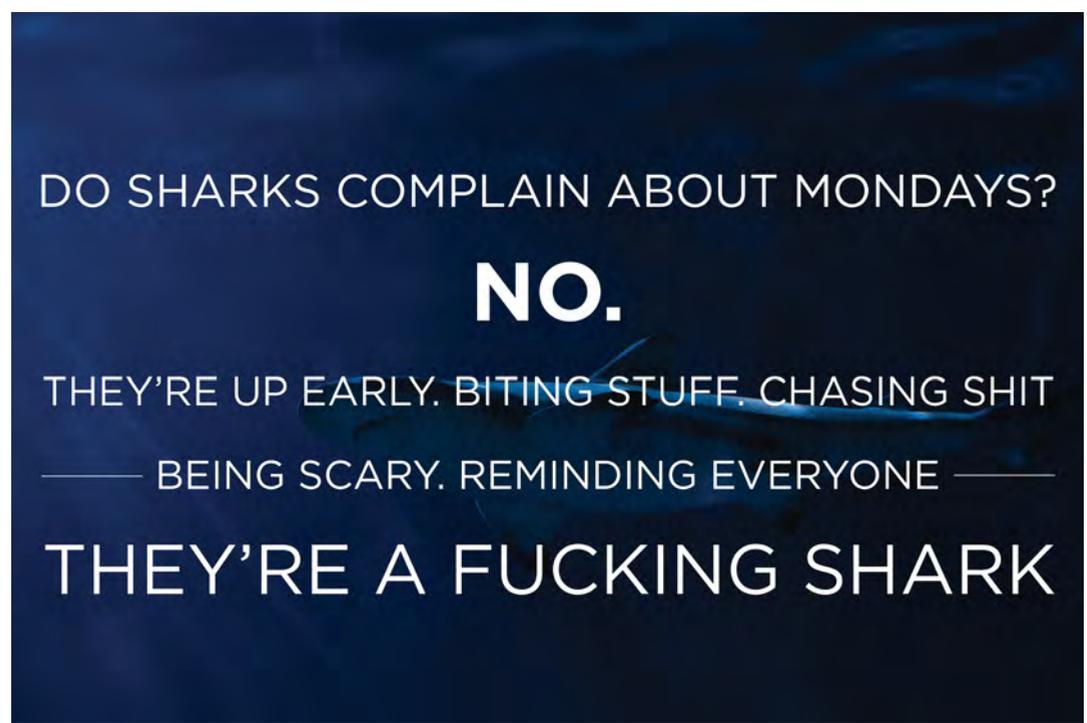
You are going to fail. A lot. Accept this fact. To do so, you can't fear failure. Failing is normal and expected. No six-figure MBA, no overpriced mentor session, no perfect handholding is going to save you from failure. But with failure comes knowledge, experience and the ability to change the way you approach the circumstances that caused a failure. If you just get discouraged, throw up your hands and succumb to the defeat, you are losing the battle to become better in the business game. We ingrain the phrase “Do not run into the same wall twice” in every employee, from entry level to CEO. Every failure is a wall. Sometimes that wall is going to leave you bloody, and it will be painful. Learn from your mistakes, get up and push through. I have failed more times than I can count. Some of those failures have had significant impacts on my businesses, staff, friends and family. After my failures, I am a different business owner, a more knowledgeable business owner.



## B.A.I.T.

What these four letters stand for is more important to the longevity of your business than your photography, by a long shot. They stand for “bookkeeping, attorney, insurance, taxes.” The reason the acronym is BAIT is because if you do not adequately address these items, your business becomes bait for a shark. You can either be a shark or you can be bait. I have failed miserably in all four of these areas at one time or another. Sloppy accounting can sink your business. At any given time, do you know how much income you’re bringing in? How about your expenses? Or do you wait until tax season? Habit-forming repetition is the key to making sure you are not letting your financial books go by the wayside. Not only is quality bookkeeping imperative to your business, it helps keep the tax man from your doorstep. Nothing can be more crippling for a business than ignoring tax implications of growth. I cannot stress this enough. Do not mess around with these two items.

How you handle insurance and attorneys is not as black and white as the above, but still an important area of your business structure. Put long-term solutions in place that protect you from the unknown “go to hell” scenario that you never thought was possible. All too often, the worst does happen, and being prepared puts you in a much better position to attack the unknown head on. Do it now and thank me later. Need some motivation? Search Google Images for the meme “Do sharks complain about Monday?” Download the best one to view daily, and remember that you do not want to be BAIT.



## GET INSPIRATION

Maybe there is a business leader you follow. Maybe there are authors you read. Business inspiration comes in many forms. I find applicable concepts from shows like *Shark Tank*. I enjoy the reiteration of sound business principles. Some of the more applicable things have come from the shows *Suits*, *Billions* and *House of Lies*. There is business advice embedded in these scripted shows. I have been surprised multiple times when the lightbulb moment goes off while I’m watching them. *Billions* recently taught me that when something is not working at all, you should go in the opposite direction.

## BLEEDING HEARTS BE GONE

No one loves your business more than you do. No one cares about your family more than you do. Protecting your business from your own lack of knowledge is often one of the slowest lessons learned. Likewise, having to protect your business from people you love is always a painful lesson to learn. People will always take advantage of generosity to the point of your detriment. And if they are not purposely taking advantage of your generosity, when push comes to shove, they will make the decisions that are best for themselves.

This holds especially true with staff. In a small business environment or studio, an employee can end up feeling like family or a good friend. In some cases, that employee is both. Once I had to terminate a good friend. I will spare the details, but the result of that situation became a failure moment in addition to a BAIT moment—a costly and painful one at that. From that experience, I learned that I had to change the way I operated as a business owner. I won’t tell you to never hire a friend or family member, because sometimes it makes sense. Just know that you have one mission, and the minute that friend or family member you hired gets in the way of your success, you have to put on your business owner hat and protect what you have built.



## OPPORTUNITY COST AND REPORTING

This is a basic principle that is overlooked enough that many business decisions are made without it being taken into account. If you choose A over B, you have lost the potential gain from B. You need to take opportunity cost into account when deciding how to price yourself and put a value on your time. Without valuing your time, you will find yourself doing tasks that make no business sense or, worse, taking on projects that end up losing you money even though they seem like great opportunities. There are entire courses on valuing your time as a creative. Understanding the concept of opportunity cost is a big part of valuing your time.

In addition to opportunity cost, you need to know what your overall costs are. Which costs are variable? Which are static? You do not have to be super analytical or a spreadsheet guru, but you do have to document your business metrics and set timely intervals to review your own reports. You can then start running your business on facts and not feelings. Feelings are the sentiment of a creative. Facts are the reality of the business owner.

Building your business acumen does not happen overnight. There is no magic class, no single book, no single mentor. It is about forming habits that give you consistency. It is about identifying where you are weak and making yourself stronger. It is not a sprint. It is a marathon. Soak up as much information as you can, but always remember that to find the success you are looking for, you should spend as much time focusing on your business as you do focusing on your craft. ■



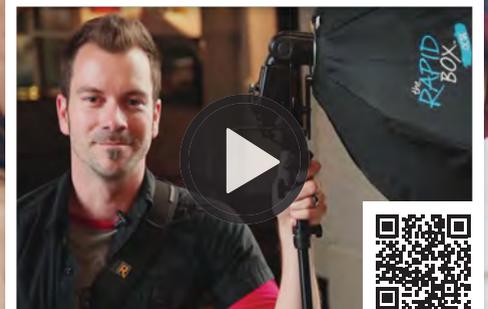
Laurin Thienes is the cofounder and director of operations for Evolve Edits, the leading post-production house for wedding and portrait photographers in the U.S. He studied photography at the Brooks Institute of Photography, and has been photographing weddings for 15 years. The native of Portland, Oregon, currently lives in O'Fallon, Illinois, with his wife, Melissa, son Lukas and red-headed 4-year-old daughter Sophia.

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# 6 TIPS

— FOR —

## SUCCESSFUL TRAVEL SHOOTS

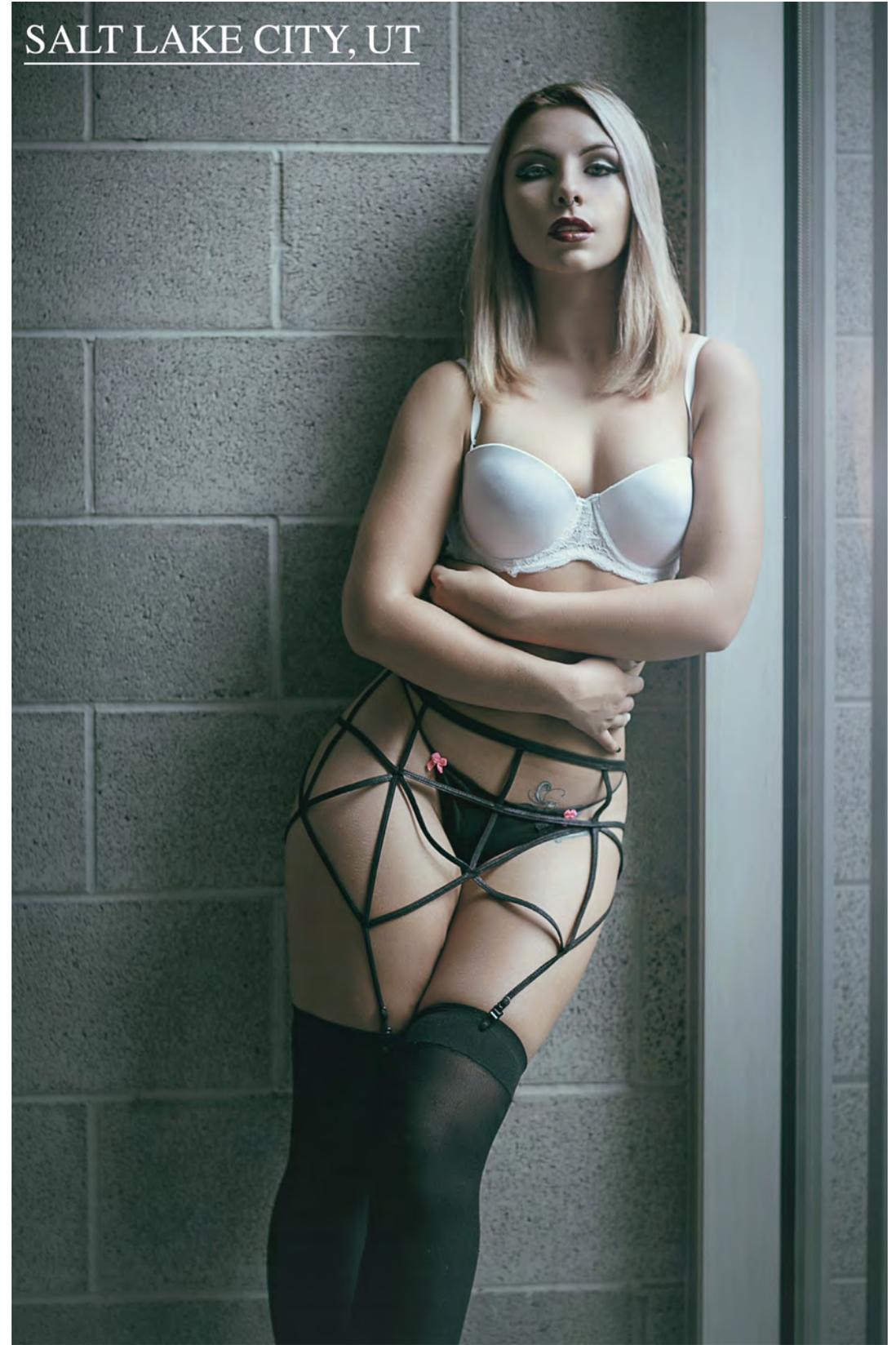
with Craig LaMere



One of the coolest parts of my business is all the traveling I get to do. I have been so lucky and blessed to have traveled from one end of the country to the other shooting, as well as a few other countries. When I first started traveling and shooting, I was so caught up in the excitement of it that I didn't plan well, and ended up packing the wrong gear or forgetting gear. This month, I give you six tips to help make your next travel shoot successful.



Images © Craig LaMere



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## GEAR BAGS AND CASES

One of the most important decisions you are going to make is the gear case you choose. If you saw my studio, you'd think I was a gear case hoarder. I have nine different cases, maybe more. I have a case that is built to hold a body with a grip and a 70–200. I have a small backpack that holds a gripped body, a 70–200 and two more lenses. I have a medium backpack that holds two gripped bodies and five or six lenses. I have a backpack that holds six heads. I have a huge rolling case I can put my whole studio in. The list goes on.

When you are choosing a case, think about how you are going to be getting around. If you are flying, you might want to choose a case you can carry on and not have to check. If you are going to be in places where you can't roll a case, you might want to get a backpack type. If you are driving to your destination and don't have to worry about size, you might want a case that can hold half your studio. When you travel by car, it is pretty easy to make choices because you have a whole car you can fill.

This kind of thinking will pay dividends later.



## CHOOSING BODIES, LENSES AND LIGHTS

When I fly, I take a carry-on case filled with two bodies, two light meters, some microfiber cloths, a tornado blower, and extra batteries for my camera, triggers and meters. That case never leaves my side. Because of the size limitation, you have to be very calculated when packing.

Once all the must-have items are packed, I have some decisions to make. This case has to fit all the gear for any shooting I'm going to do. I now have to decide, based on my shoots, what I'm going to pack in my bag. Every shoot has must-have gear and some problem-solving gear.

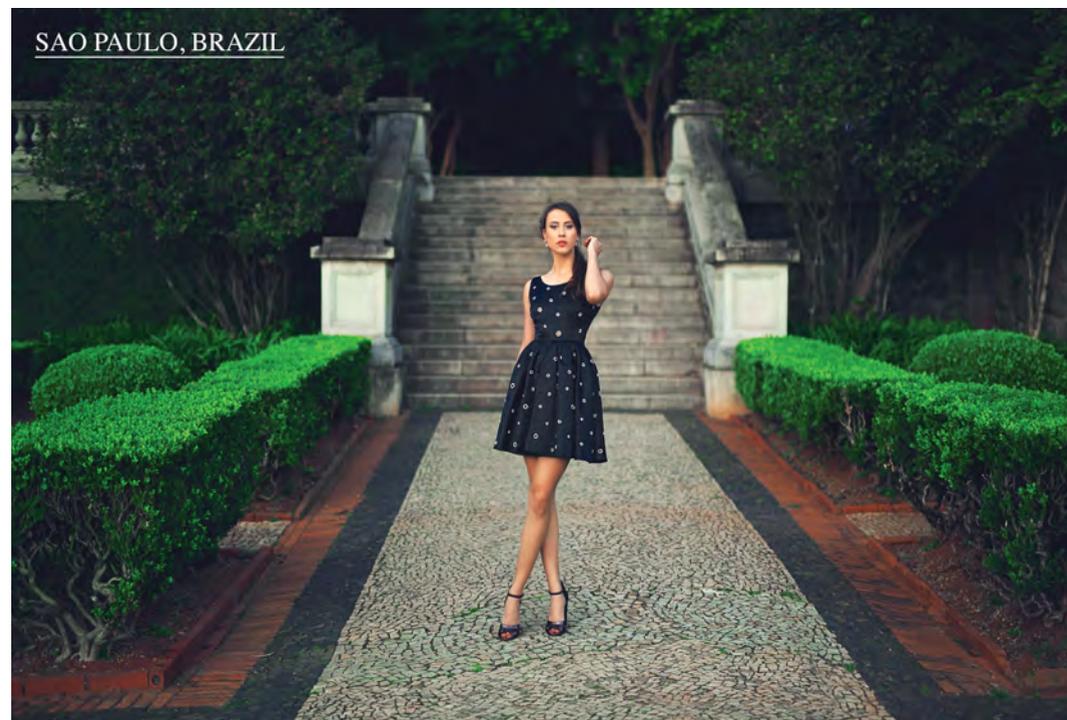
For destination weddings, I bring my Nikon 70–200 2.8 G, Nikon 105 2.8 G, Nikon 24–70 2.8 G and my Nikon SB-5000. My problem-solving lenses are my Nikon 50 1.4 G and Nikon 85 1.4 G. The workhorses for the wedding are the 70–200 and the 24–70. The 105 is for details. The SB-5000 is to bounce light if I need it. The 50 and the 85 are there if I find myself in a low-light situation where I need to open up more to get the shot and I can't use the speedlight to help.

When I travel to shoot portraits, fashion or boudoir, I have to bring lights that are going to do a little more than the speedlights can, so I pack my Profoto B1's. They are not small heads, and take up about half of the remaining room in my case. Because they take up so much room, I have to think carefully about the lens. I have four lenses that will get me through any portrait, fashion or boudoir shoot: my Nikon 85 1.4 G, 58 1.4 G, 50 1.4 G and 24–70 2.8 G.



HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SC

Image © Craig LaMere



SAO PAULO, BRAZIL

Image © Craig LaMere

## FLYING WITH GEAR

Consider the amount of gear you have to take, how much you can carry on, and if you will have to check any of it. I have never considered it an option to check my camera bodies and lenses. When I first started traveling, I would have up to \$6,000 in my bag. These days, it is closer to \$16,000 worth of bodies, lenses and lights. If I checked that bag, I'd have an ulcer by the time I got to where I was going.

When I'm flying and I am going to be shooting in a city setting, my case of choice is the Think Tank Airport International V2. If I'm going to be in locations where I will be carrying in my gear, my case of choice is my Lowepro backpack. It is carry-on size like the Think Tank. What I like about both cases is that either of them fit in 95 percent of the overhead compartments on most airplanes. The only time they have not fit in the overhead is when I have to fly part of the trip on a small regional plane. They don't do a regular bag check. They take your carry-on from you as you are entering the plane and put it underneath. That way, you know for sure that your bag is with you and will be there when you touch down.

## HARD GOLF CASE

Most of the time, one way or another, when I travel I have access to background stands, light stands, drops and light modifiers. On the occasions when I have to bring my own stands, drops and modifiers, I have a secret weapon for traveling: the hard case golf bag. I spent a long time looking for very large and long suitcases to travel with, and then I saw this case. The great part about it is it is very long and can hold a lot of weight and it is solid on the outside so you do not have to worry about the contents. You can put most modifiers and stands in one. The only modifiers you can't get into a golf case are beauty dishes. Even the standard 22-inch ones are too large.

When I first started using the golf case for travel, I learned a couple of good lessons. One, there are different rules for golf cases depending on the airline. Some have a 100-pound allowance for them, and some maintain the regular 50-pound limit. In the latter case, you can get stuck with a pretty hefty charge, so find out the limit.

The second lesson I learned was when I was checking my golf case and the ticket agent opened it and saw it was full of everything but golf clubs. At that point, my case ceased to be a golf case and just became a heavy and very, very expensive oversize suitcase. As luck would have it, the agent was super cool and told me I had to have some clubs in the case or I would get charged if I got caught again. She told me I didn't need the whole set, just some type of golf club inside the case. Now when I use my golf case, I have a putter and an iron inside—my lucky 7 iron, as a matter of fact.



Images © Craig LaMere

## RENT WHEN YOU CAN

When you have to have stands, modifiers and other stuff and you don't want to take with you, one of the best resources is equipment rental stores. If you are traveling to a bigger market, you have a great chance of finding a store that rents professional gear. If I am unfamiliar with the area, I look up stores to see what is available. I don't care about bodies or lenses—what I need are modifiers and stands. If I can find a rental store where I can get an extra large umbrella, a strip light or a couple of C-stands, that is a huge win. One of the things that surprised me the most was how economical it is to rent gear, especially if you need it for only a few days. The savings in time and energy in packing all that stuff around is worth the rental alone, not to mention the wear and tear on your gear.

## COLLABORATION

One of the best ways to shoot when you are traveling is to collaborate with other shooters in the area. Thanks to Facebook, Instagram and other social media platforms, it is pretty easy to reach out to other shooters and make plans to have a good time and create kickass images wherever you are visiting. Collaborating with a local is one of the smartest and simplest things you can do if you are portfolio building.

Local shooters know the lay of the land, have access to people to shoot and know makeup and hair people. It's often easier to collaborate with these shooters than ones in your area since you're not competitors. ■



Image © Craig LaMere



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Craig LaMere is an award-winning professional portrait photographer from Pocatello, Idaho. As well as running his full-time studio in Idaho, Craig is an international educator and speaker specializing in lighting and posing. He has two dogs named Logan and Steve and two cats named Emit and Martin.  
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# MAXIMIZE YOUR TRAVEL

The Art of Fitting SIX Trips Into ONE

with Phillip Blume



Image © Phillip Blume

Has the travel bug ever bitten you? If you're reading this issue of *Shutter Magazine*, I bet the answer is yes. Symptoms include feelings of discontent when standing still, reverse homesickness and increasing levels of poverty.

Although my local market boasts one of America's highest poverty rates, my wife, Eileen, and I have turned our studio into a successful brand that serves high-end clients worldwide—all while balancing life with our three young kids. We teach fellow photographers at every level of the game to do the same. Within our exclusive online community, we've been sharing some of our best travel secrets from our recent photo trips to the Grand Canyon, London and glorious Asturias, Spain. Check it out at [bit.ly/blumecomeunity](http://bit.ly/blumecomeunity).

In the meantime, I'm excited to share some of our foundational travel hacks with you.

As a high-school teacher turned aspiring photographer in 2010, I thought my travel days were over, especially once kids arrived. I never imagined exploring the globe would become my life just a year after we took our struggling studio full-time.

With these simple strategies, you can maximize your travel and enjoy the trip. I'm talking about maximizing your experiences, time and money, and maybe even turning a profit. If you're the type of person whose camera follows you wherever you go, you already have a giant head start on making your next trip a life-changing one. Let's talk about how.

## 1. IDENTIFY AN ANCHOR EVENT

I began traveling the world at just 12 years old. Every trip had a single purpose: a mission trip focused on rebuilding or feeding the hungry, study abroad or a vacation to visit family. Today, I expect much more out of my travel plans.

Take my trip to the Grand Canyon in November. I planned this trip, as we do all our travel, around an "anchor event." You can do this yourself. Early in the year, I start by filling my calendar with all the events and dream vacations I'd like to take. In my iCal, I label these events "yellow"—as in "Slow down, Phillip. You're dreaming. This probably will never happen." (I know. I'm such a pessimist, right?) True, most won't happen. But at least they're visible on the schedule. So now I'm opening my mind and the door to opportunities.

An anchor event isn't a random pipe dream. It's a real event that has value. For instance, you'll find every imaginable photo convention listed on my yellow anchor calendar. That's what led me to the Grand Canyon. I wanted to attend the Showit United conference in Arizona, where we spoke to and fell in love with the community the prior year. But it wasn't in our budget, and I couldn't be away from the studio an entire week for just one event. But wait. What if I could turn one event in Arizona into many simultaneous opportunities?



Images © Phillip Blume



## 2. CREATE A MODEL CALL

As a photographer and business owner, you have to be a brand expert. And remember, when it comes to selling your brand to attract potential clients, perception isn't just reality—it's the only reality. To book clients, you must exude credibility. To create credibility, you must demonstrate experience. So it's time to build your portfolio more intentionally, my friend.

I'm a wedding photographer. So I put out the call first to our "Blume brides," past and present: Who would like to meet us in Arizona for a Grand Canyon photo shoot? Fortunately, one of our already-engaged couples had ties to the state, and they were ecstatic at the prospect of visiting old stomping grounds and friends near the Grand Canyon. I had my models for a destination engagement shoot. That's now two good reasons to go to Arizona in November, if anyone is counting.

If you don't have a current list of brides or potential models (or if your list simply doesn't deliver a good prospect), put the call out on Facebook. It's astonishing how you can target a model call to a specific demographic and place. Ask for models to "apply," not to "book," your services. Get their headshots, be professional, and choose those that fit your brand. You're not likely to find paying clients for a specific date and in someone else's market that easily, but you will find aspiring models who will bite at the chance to build their portfolios.



Image © Phillip Blume



Image © Phillip Blume

## 3. JOIN A NEW FAMILY

When is the last time you got to visit a friend who moved away? Most of us lose touch with people who matter to us, instead saving our limited vacation days for generic trips to the beach.

Aside from writing events on my anchor calendar, I've marked open dates and slow off-seasons with the addresses of far-off friends we'd like to see. In the case of Arizona, I learned from my dad that I had a long lost cousin who lived just minutes from the Showit United conference. He and his sweet wife were more than happy to let us stay with them. Yes, that's a free room. But it's so much more.

I had so much in common with my cousin. And as it turned out, he had a daughter in high school who was getting into photography. What an awesome connection. Now I'm cheering her on when she posts work to Facebook. I often think about how sad it would be if I'd never left an opening in my life for these new relationships.



Images © Phillip Blume

#### 4. EXPLORE THE LOCAL FLAVOR

People are more transient than ever in the digital age, and we've been amazed to find family and friends living in almost every part of the world where we want to travel. But if you can't find a welcoming place to make your trip more worthwhile, have you considered building a relationship with your hotel or other local businesses?

Don't feel intimidated. Think like an entrepreneur, and remember that every business owner out there is just like you—they're working hard to succeed and will be so happy if you can offer them something valuable. You're a photographer. You have so much to offer.

This is the same way we share with fellow wedding vendors, isn't it? Stay at an iconic location, shoot the venue and share the images. Or instead of a big hotel chain with major ad contracts already in place, choose a local hotel or AirB&B to make beautiful through your photographs. Share the images with the owners as a gift, create a relationship, and you can usually expect kind reciprocation—if not now, then on your next trip back.

Do the same at restaurants and more. Photograph your own plate. Do it well. Now you're creating a portfolio within a new genre that you can use to impress prospective clients back home, who are likely to be impressed: "He created these great food shots at a five-star restaurant in Tokyo. Well, we definitely feel confident hiring him to photograph our menu then."

#### 5. DETERMINE YOUR PERSONAL PROJECT

When time allows, I make sure to return home from every trip with something personal—either an experience or something I've created for myself as an artist. Call it a souvenir. Sure, photographing food and people pays the bills. But creating landscape and wildlife photography feels as therapeutic now as it did 20 years ago, when I tried my hand at it for the first time in Alaska.

For my Grand Canyon adventure, my personal project was twofold. First, I invited my dad to go with me. It would be a priceless experience. He and I talked for years about hiking the Appalachian Trail together, but it never happened. You know how life gets away from us all.

I don't want that to happen to me. Eileen and I seek a life that is rich with meaning, not just money or other distractions. So by scheduling a few days between Showit United and my engagement shoot, my dad and I got to take the father-son trip we had dreamed of. Let me tell you, camping and hiking in the Grand Canyon was breathtaking.

Secondly, while hiking, I relied on my Spider Holster camera belt to help me easily pack in heavy DSLRs deep into the Canyon. I was able to capture wildlife and landscape images using the equipment I wanted. The result was a self-made nature photography calendar that we printed and sold online. Some of you may have purchased our last year's calendar, whose proceeds went to fund the adoption of our son. Our sweet three-year-old boy has been with us for 10 months now, and we can't imagine life without him. See how meaningful a personal project can be when you travel, and the community it can help create?



Image © Phillip Blume



## 6. CONNECT WITH SPONSORS

I mentioned Spider Holster and Showit United above. Eileen and I actually refuse to recommend companies in our industry unless we actually use them and love the way they serve photographers. I like to review gear on the road, where we really use it. In the Grand Canyon, I recorded video to show my Spider Holster's features that could serve as useful information to our ComeUnity Unifiers and, since it was a positive review, was also of value to Spider Holster.

Brands appreciate that, and if you're good enough or prolific enough, you may build a good relationship that way. Securing a sponsorship may seem like a career apex for many photographers. If that's you, fine. Even paid sponsorships are not the golden egg they're cracked up to be, but they can help you build credibility.



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## 7. BONUS

We have a lot more favorite tips. I mention one in the video below. For the rest, we invite you to join our ComeUnity group to learn more over the coming weeks, at [bit.ly/blumecomeunity](http://bit.ly/blumecomeunity). See you inside. ■



Phillip Blume is an international award-winning photographer and, with his wife, Eileen, cofounder of Blume Photography Studios and ComeUnity Workshops. In addition to photographing weddings and portraits worldwide, the Blumes focus their efforts on personal projects to help those suffering extreme poverty. As educators, the two have appeared on CreativeLIVE, and speak to thousands of photographers every year. They live with their children in rural Georgia. [blumephoto.com](http://blumephoto.com)

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For Destination Weddings  
with **Vanessa Joy**

When I started my photography career, the idea of a destination wedding seemed out of reach. It was so exclusive and elusive. Anyone who talked about going to shoot one seemed like they were at the top of their game. After all, you have to be an incredible photographer for someone to want to fly you out for their exotic wedding in a faraway land.

Fast-forward a couple of years, and I shot my first destination wedding in Saint Lucia. I was only a couple of years into my own photography business, so I shot it for the price of a week's vacation at a gorgeous resort. This is not that uncommon. But before you drink the Kool-Aid, get all the facts. This wedding was amazing. I shot it entirely by myself, and it was later published in *Destination Weddings & Honeymoons* magazine.

What I didn't know was that I had gotten off easy, or lucky. The next destination wedding I photographed was in Mexico. I charged my full rate and brought a second photographer. That's when I started realizing that destination weddings were not all they were cracked up to be.

In addition to losing income because I wasn't able to photograph another wedding back home, packing the gear (which I had a lot more of by that point) became one of the biggest headaches. Let's just say I didn't do my research, and had a bag whisked away from me at the gate because of some broken rules. Who knew you couldn't have more than four batteries in your carry-on?

Since then, I've become something of an expert. I've photographed weddings and engagement sessions all around the world and traveled with my gear to teach at conferences and workshops countless times. Thankfully, with that much air travel, I have status on United, which makes traveling with gear a bit easier, but it's not necessary for what I'm going to tell you. Here's what you need to know when traveling for destination weddings.

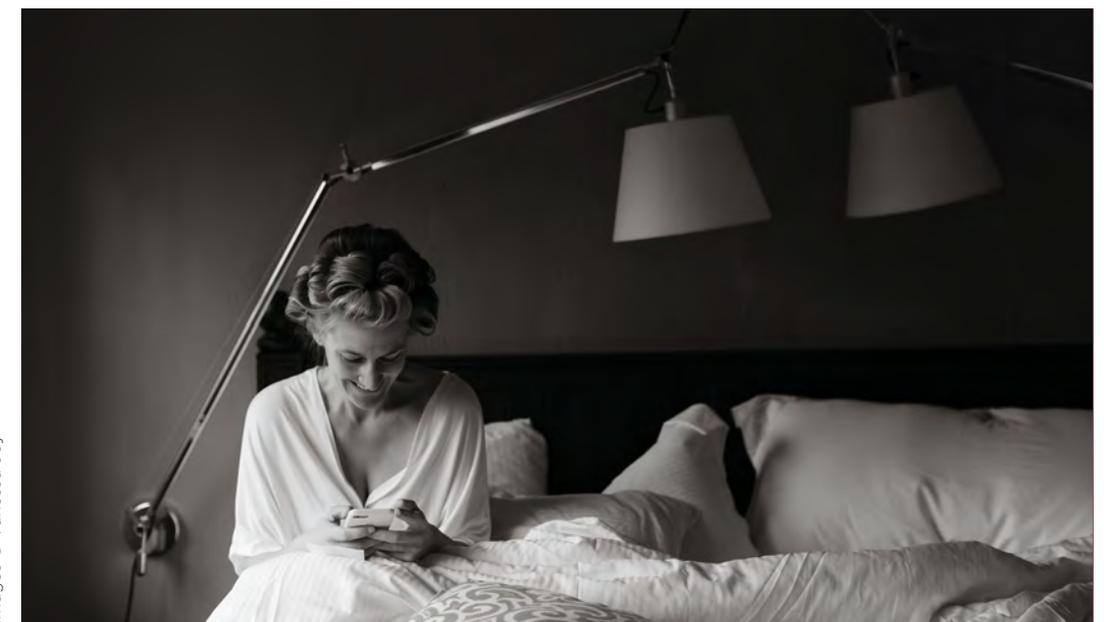
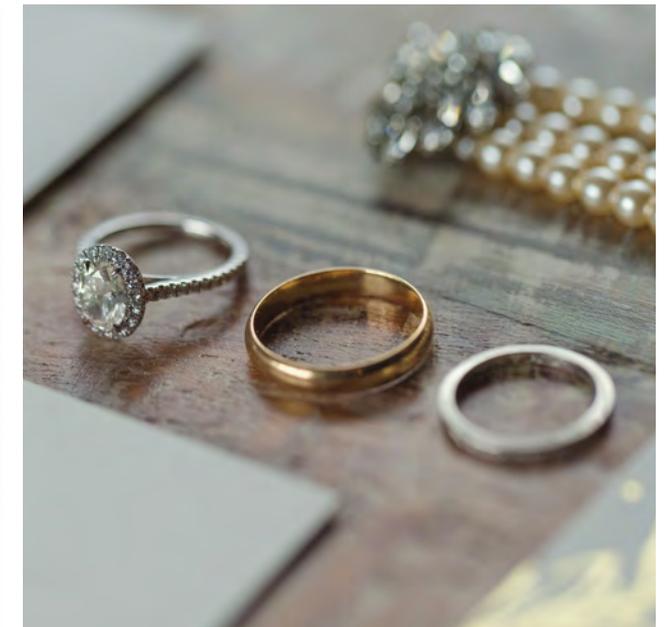


Image © Vanessa Joy



Image © Vanessa Joy

I mentioned before that it was nice having status on my airline, but now you can just buy priority status for under \$100 on most airlines. This is a must because one of the biggest problems when traveling with gear is that you run the risk of having to gate-check it because there is no overhead space. Spend the extra money and get to the front of that boarding line so you don't have to hand over your bag with tens of thousands of dollars of gear and risk it getting broken or stolen (it happens).



Images © Vanessa Joy

## TRAVEL LIGHT

This may sound like a no-brainer, but what you need to do here is think about how you can share gear with your second shooter. The last destination wedding I photographed, last month in Lake Tahoe, was with a second photographer who also shot Canon. Altogether, we packed:

- 2 Canon bodies (1Dx and 5DS)
- 50mm 1.2
- 24-70mm
- 100mm 2.8 macro
- 135mm
- 85mm 1.2
- 2 Speedlites
- 1 B2 head and battery pack with portable beauty dish shaper, grids and gels
- Batteries, memory cards
- Laptop and cardreader

That's it. We were super light and we shared that gear throughout the day. After all, we're pretty much together the entire time except for preps, so there's no need to double up on gear.

CUSTOMS AND VISAS

Speaking of tens of thousands of dollars of gear, this is where things get legal. Legally, you're not supposed to carry more than \$10,000 worth of goods with you into another country. It's not that you can't, it's just that they will likely tax you for it; assume you're going to sell it in their country illegally; or assume you're going to work in their country illegally (which you likely are). If you can, bring less than \$10K of gear, which, if you're sharing gear, shouldn't be that difficult. That problem is solved.

But what about the real problem of working in another country? I'm not going to tell you this is a gray area, because it's not. It's very black and white that when you go to work in another country, that country has rules for that and visas you probably need to obtain. They're very easy to look up online, but they're usually not as easy to abide by. Can you get around this by either lying at customs or paying off people at customs? Yes. And that's what most people do. But if you'd like to have a clean conscience or not run the risk of being turned away at the border (oh yes, that's also happened to photographers), then do the legwork and do it legally.



Image © Vanessa Joy

There are a lot of TSA rules regulating what you can bring with your when you fly. I'm not going to list them all here, but it doesn't hurt to check out their website to become familiar with them: <https://www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/prohibited-items>.

Here are the ones you need to know:

**Tripods and light stands:**

TSA doesn't point these out specifically, but they do not permit baseball bats, hockey sticks, etc. in your carry-on luggage. If you find yourself dealing with a strict TSA agent, they absolutely can ask you to check your sticks. The TSA website even states, "The final decision rests with the TSA officer on whether an item is allowed through the checkpoint."

**Batteries:**

According to TSA, "Spare (uninstalled) lithium ion and lithium metal batteries must be carried in carry-on baggage only. When a carry-on bag is checked at the gate or at planeside, all spare lithium batteries must be removed from the bag and kept with the passenger in the aircraft cabin." In my experience, airlines can also have rules for batteries. They typically don't check, but I've had my carry-on taken from me at the gate because I had more than four batteries in it.

Now, can you get away with these things? Sure, sometimes. But again, why run the risk when you can plan ahead and have peace of mind instead?



Images © Vanessa Joy



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## COMING BACK HOME

This one is the killer, and one that's usually not known until you're stuck at the check-in counter arguing with the ticket agent. Most European countries weigh your carry-on luggage on the way back. The U.S. doesn't have this rule, but a lot of other countries do.

Different airlines (and airplanes) have different weight restrictions, so read up on yours. Have a Plan B for things you can take out of your carry-on that will suffer the least amount of damage if they're mishandled in your checked luggage. The ticket agents are ruthless about this, and no matter how I explained the fragility or expense of what was in my bag, nothing made a difference. My husband did claim that, on the way back from a wedding in the Philippines, he was able to convince a ticket agent to let him keep his overweight carry-on. I'll just assume it was his charming good looks and crazy good luck.

Even though this article is about how to pack for destination weddings, I want to touch on how to charge for them. I'm not going to tell you what to charge for them, but I do want you to consider your expenses. Typically a destination wedding takes away your ability to book any other weddings that weekend. That can cost you \$2,000 to \$5,000 in profit depending on what you charge. Add to that the headache of traveling, and you'll want to make sure you're not losing money and hair on the deal.

That being said, if you're enthusiastic or just starting off or can make a vacation out of it, then that benefit could outweigh the expenses. Destination weddings can be quite a headache, but they look great in your portfolio. ■



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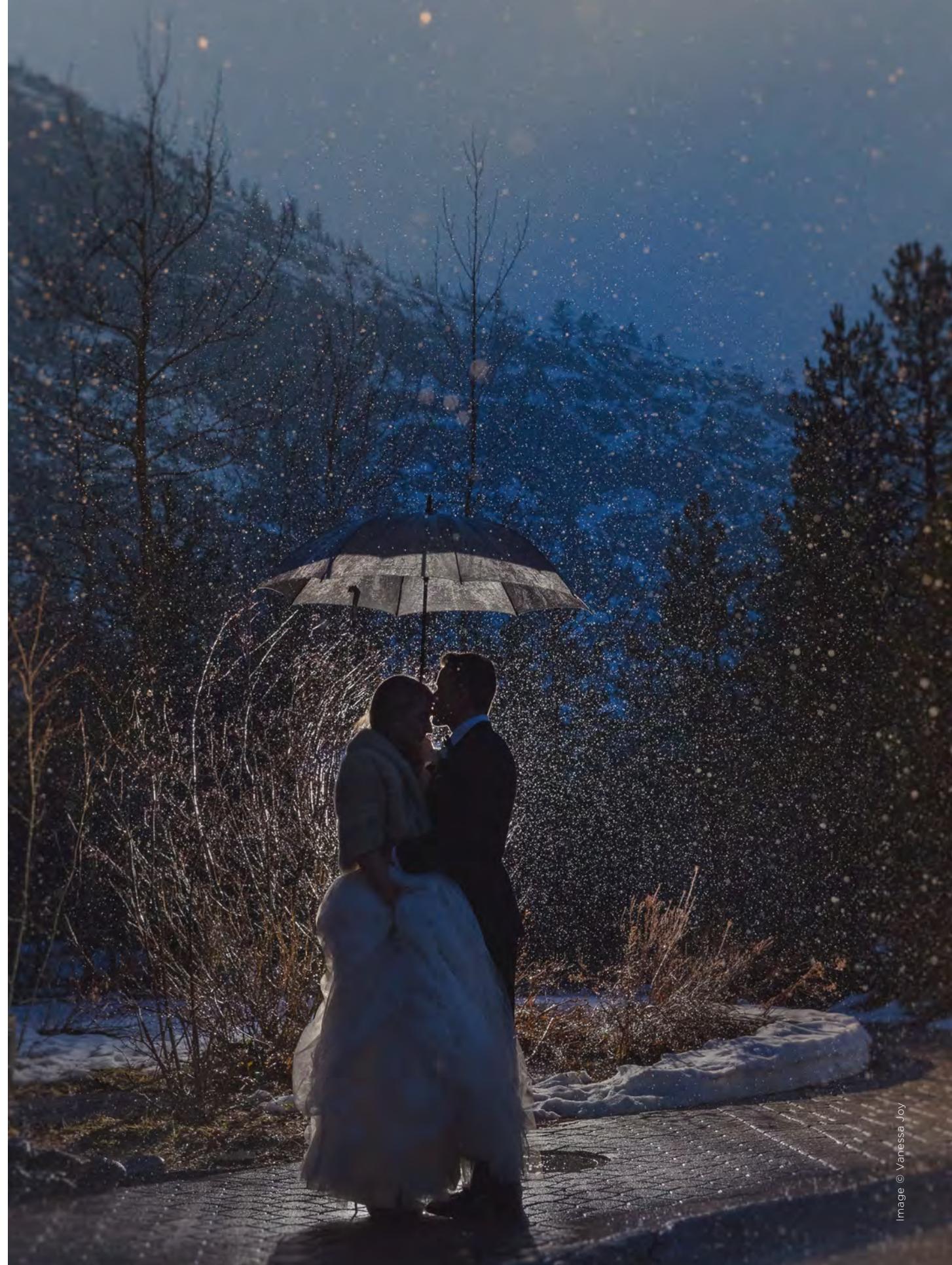


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Vanessa Joy has been a professional wedding photographer in New Jersey since 2002, and an influencer in the photographic community for years. Since starting [VanessaJoy.com](http://VanessaJoy.com) in 2008, she has taught photographers around the globe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

[vanessajoy.com](http://vanessajoy.com)

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**TOP 10 TRAVEL TIPS  
TO KNOW**  
BEFORE YOU HIT THE ROAD

with William Innes





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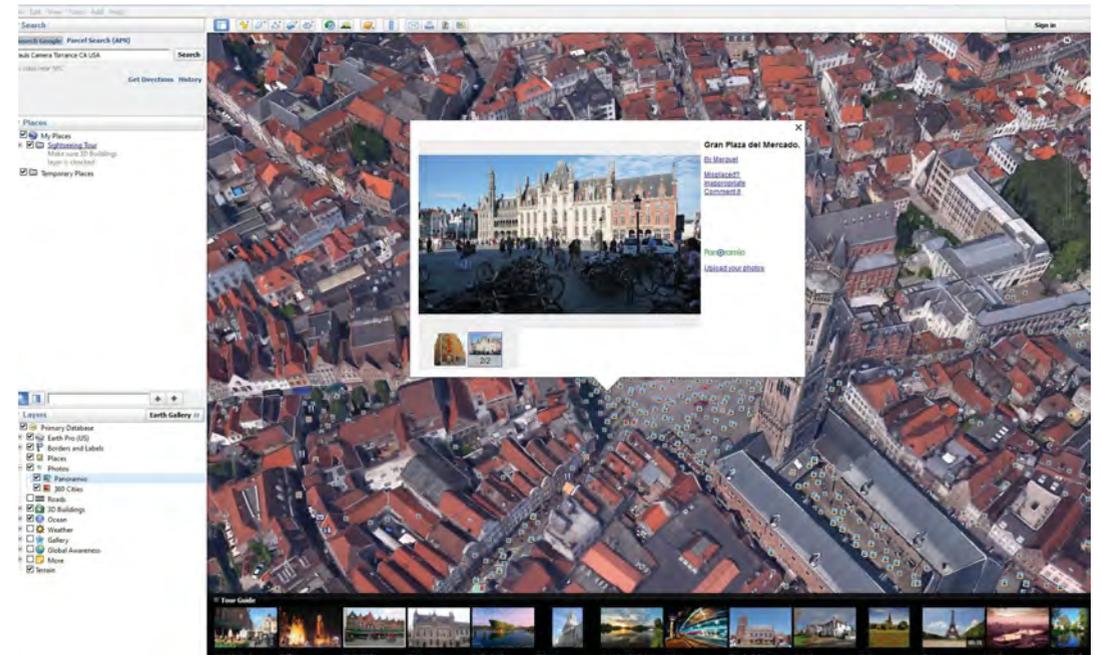
I make my living as a wedding photographer, but my passion is travel. I have been fortunate to visit 44 countries the last 20 years, and will be adding two more this year. After many years traveling as a business executive and the last 10 as a photographer, I have learned many lessons, some good and some bad. Here are some tips for things you can do before you leave that will help you capture awesome images as you trek around the world.

**1.** Don't rely on your memory. There is a lot going on before every excursion, so create a checklist. My very first solo trip was when I was a teenager. I was going to drive from Montreal to Virginia and camp along the way. (I couldn't afford hotels). I arrived at my first campsite and took out my tent, but had no tent poles. I had forgotten to pack them. Ever since that trip many years ago, I use a checklist for everything. I use one for all my professional shooting too. See the image to the right for my camera gear checklist.

PRE-EVENT CHECKLIST				
<b>EVENT:</b>				
Name:				
Date:				
Location:				
<b>CAMERAS</b>				
Clocks Synchronized	Camera 1	Camera 2	Camera 3	Camera 4
Resolution set				
ISO Set				
Sensor checked for dust				
Melior settings checked				
Camera Batteries counted and charged				
<b>CARDS</b>				
Counted and formatted	y/n			
<b>BATTERIES</b>				
AA Rechargeable: Counted and charged	y/n			
Turbo Power Packs - charged				
<b>GEAR PACKED</b>				
Lens - cleaned	y/n			
Camera bodies packed				
Light stands				
Tripod				
Cards				
Customer file and hard copy map				
<b>MISC.</b>				
Customer contacted via phone:	y/n			
Notes:				

**2.** Know where to shoot before you arrive. I always research my destinations. That way, I have a great starting point when I hit the ground in a new country. Some of the tools I use are:

- Google. Search for images of your destination.
- Books. They're old school, but travel books are awesome. Find ones with lots of pictures.
- Google Earth Pro. With this app, you can search a location and see geotags where photos have been taken. Click on a geotag, and boom—there's the image. It's like visiting a city without leaving your living room. The image below is a Google Earth shot of a favorite destination of mine, the city of Bruges, Belgium.



**3.** Learn what the little red button on your camera does. That's right, video. All modern cameras have a video function, and most are easy to use. Capture some video clips on your journey. They are so easy to mix in with still images when creating a slideshow. Using both stills and video creates visual interest. I use ProShow Web, which is stupid easy.



Images © William Innes

4. Leave your humongous DSLR and lenses at home. Traveling to cool destinations should be enjoyable, not like work. Lugging around 25 pounds of gear becomes miserable real quick. On one of my first exotic trips, to China, I packed every large film SLR and lens I owned. My backpack looked like I was going to climb Mount Everest. It got to the point where I become so tired and lazy that I would not change lenses when I needed to. Today it's all about mirrorless cameras. Two bodies and four to five lenses can easily fit in a small backpack, and weigh almost nothing. Now my choice would be the new Lumix GH5 and a smaller GX85 body. It's liberating. I took it even further last year when I traveled to Vietnam. We were there to document a trip with an organization call RAK-Life (Random Acts of Kindness). Our goal was to build a house for a family in need. I had to travel extra light, so I took two Panasonic Lumix LS100 point-and-shoot cameras. The camera has a 20-megapixel sensor and a 25–250mm Leica lens. The images on these pages were shot with the LS100.



Image © William Innes

5. Choose your camera bag carefully before you leave. Protect yourself against thieves. I experienced theft firsthand on a trip to Morocco a few years ago. My wife and I were exploring a souk (market) in Casablanca when I felt a tug on my backpack. I turned around, but it was too late. My zipper was open and my Beats headphones were gone—just like that. If I had not felt the tug, my camera gear would have been next. Think about where you are traveling, which will help you choose how to pack your gear. If you are traveling to remote third-world countries, use a crappy old looking backpack that will not draw attention. Use the inserts from a regular camera bag in the plain backpack to hold your gear. You will avoid that “rob me” aura. Another solution is a camera backpack I am testing right now, the Alta Sky series from Vanguard. These bags feature a full rear opening. The main compartment can be reached only when the bag is off your back; there is no front access to help crooks get your gear.

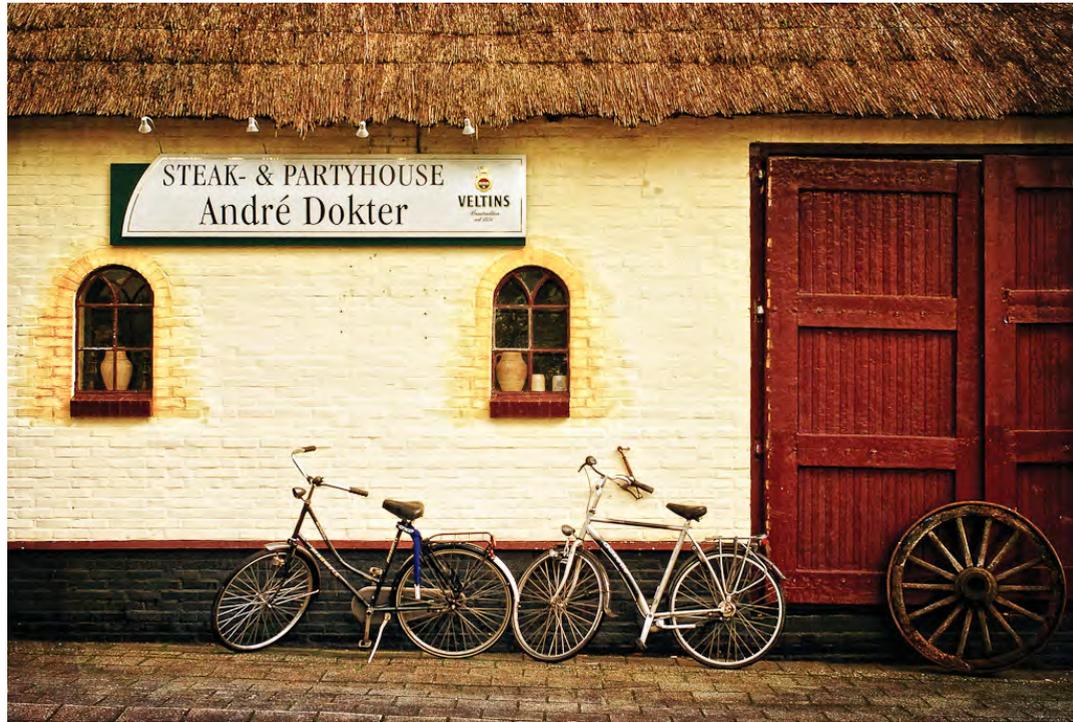
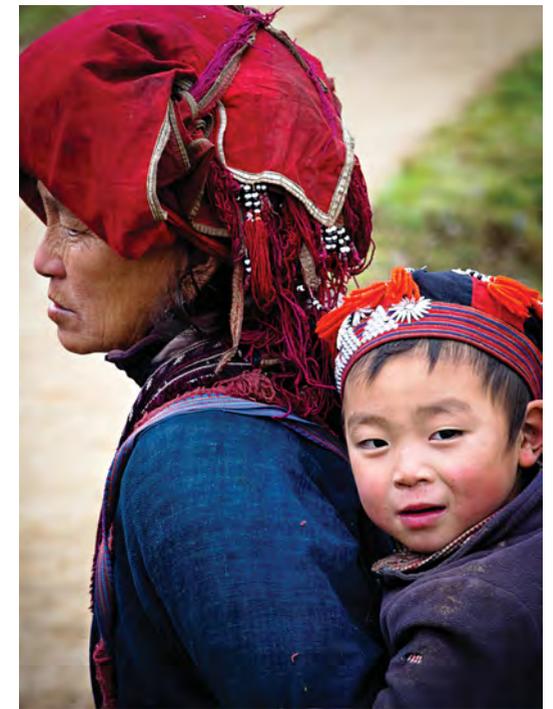


Image © William Innes

6. Book a photo tour at your destination. Years ago, my wife and I were driving to our hotel in Kauai, Hawaii, when we passed a sign for “Island Photo Tours.” My wife wanted to do it, but the first thing that popped into my head was, “I don’t need no crappy photo tour. Don’t you know that I am a professional photographer?” But knowing the secret to a great marriage, I instead looked straight into my wife’s eyes and said, “That’s a great idea, babe.” So we took a photo tour the next day, and it turned out to be awesome. Here’s why: We got to hang out with fellow photography enthusiasts and, more importantly, we quickly discovered the best places to photograph on the island. Some were hidden, and we never would have found them on our own. We spent the rest of our trip going back to capture images at our new locations. I have done this in many cities and countries.



Images © William Innes



7. Untrain yourself and go back to using your camera in automatic mode. I know using your camera in “P” mode feels unprofessional. I shoot all my weddings in manual mode. For travel photography, automatic can make sense for many images. Let me explain. For years, I would visit amazing places around the world and spend every waking moment walking around with a camera stuck to my face. Did I capture some great photographs? I sure did. Was I living in the moment and really experiencing the people and culture? Not at all. Afterward, the whole trip was a blur. The Lumix cameras I shoot have a mode called iA (Intelligent Auto). It’s your typical “P” setting on steroids. On a recent visit to Morocco, I decided before leaving that I was only going to shoot in iA. It was an amazing experience. I remember everything: the food, smells, people and mosques. I was present the whole time. When I saw something of interest, I would raise my camera and take the photo. There was no setting exposure, ISO, etc.—just shooting. The images below and to the left were taken on that trip using automatic mode. An exception may be if you are traveling for a professional shoot, in which case you need to use the right settings to satisfy your client’s requirements and expectations.



Image © William Innes

8. There are many ways to pack your gear. I will leave that to other articles and personal preference. But before you pack, lay out your gear in some kind of order. This way, you can easily tell if something is missing. Review your checklist. There's nothing worse than arriving without something important like battery chargers. Always pack your gear the same way every time. A quick scan will again reveal if something is missing.



Image © William Innes

9. If your destination is exotic or maybe there are language or transportation issues, hire a local to help you. The easiest way to do this is to contact your hotel via email. I have done this in places like Thailand and Indonesia. You can often hire a nice car and driver for very little money. I always instruct them not to take me to the tourist areas (as they will want to do in order to earn a commission). I ask to go to local places or a location they would frequent. Let them know there is a nice tip involved if they take care of you and show you the real deal.



Image © William Innes

10. Practice travel photography at home. You may be like me and shoot weddings, or maybe portraits or commercial work. There's nothing stopping you from shooting your community like it was a faraway destination. Photograph the iconic buildings in your city. Look for interesting people, signs, landscapes—anything different that requires a new skillset. Last week I spent a day and a night with one of my adult sons shooting downtown Los Angeles. We had a blast. See above image.



Image © William Innes

There is a lot to think about before heading out to see the world. I hope some of these tips are useful. There's a ton of information out there—and in this issue of *Shutter Magazine*—on ways to shoot and choose gear. Read it all, learn what you can, and most importantly, remember to have safe and enjoyable voyages. ■



William Innes is the principal photographer of William Innes Photography. His specialty is wedding photography in the Southern California area. He writes for several online photography magazines and blogs in addition to presenting photography related workshops. William is currently a member of the Panasonic Lumix Luminary team. He is a member of Professional Photographers of America and WPPI.  
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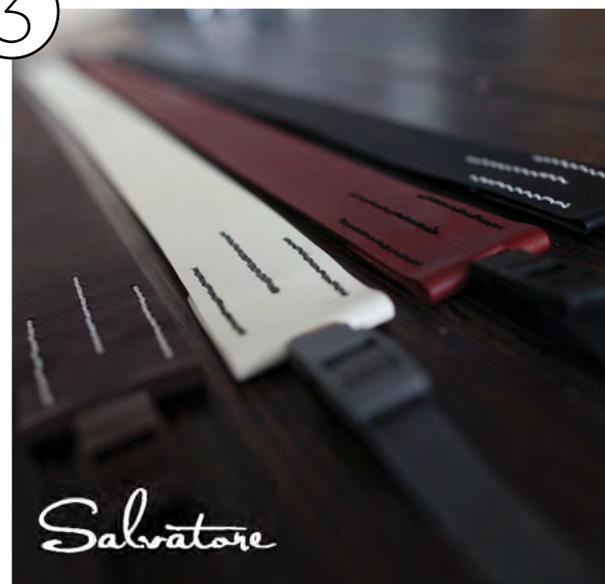


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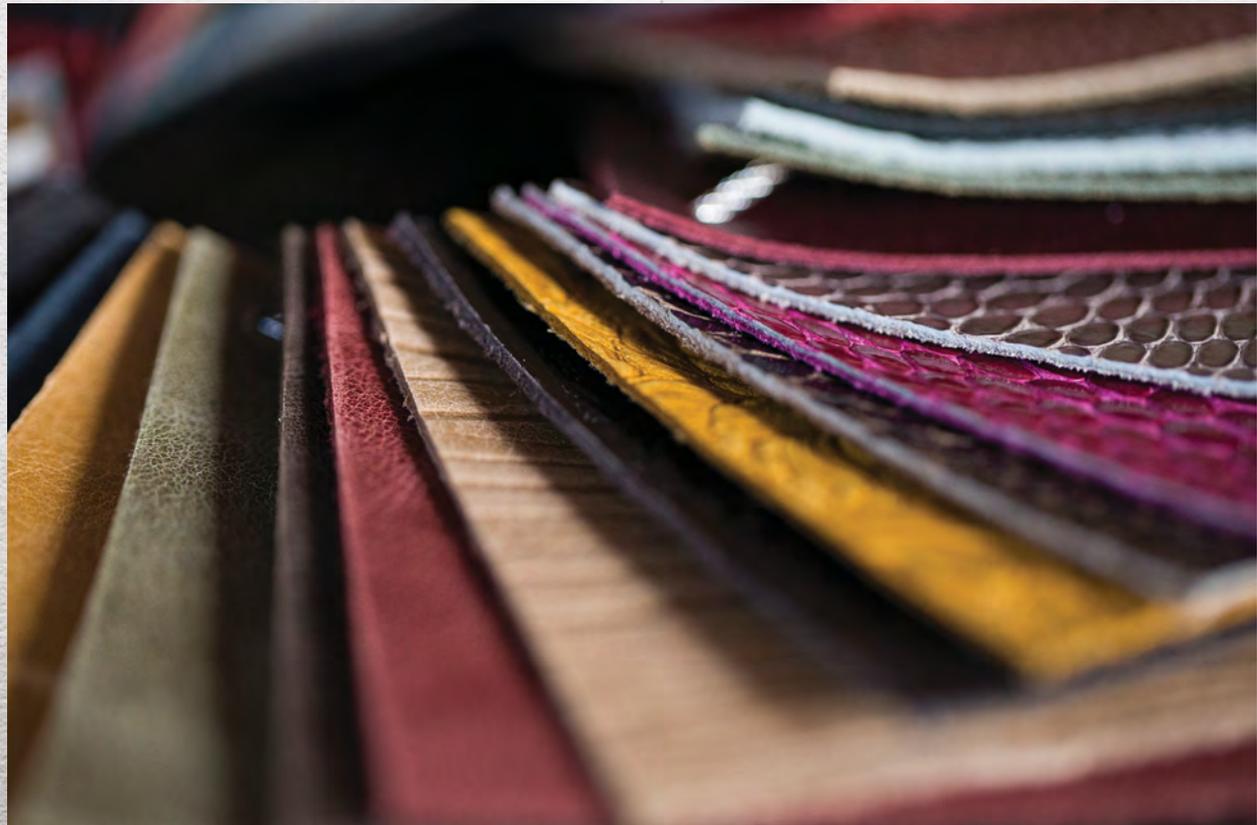


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# INSPIRATIONS

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.

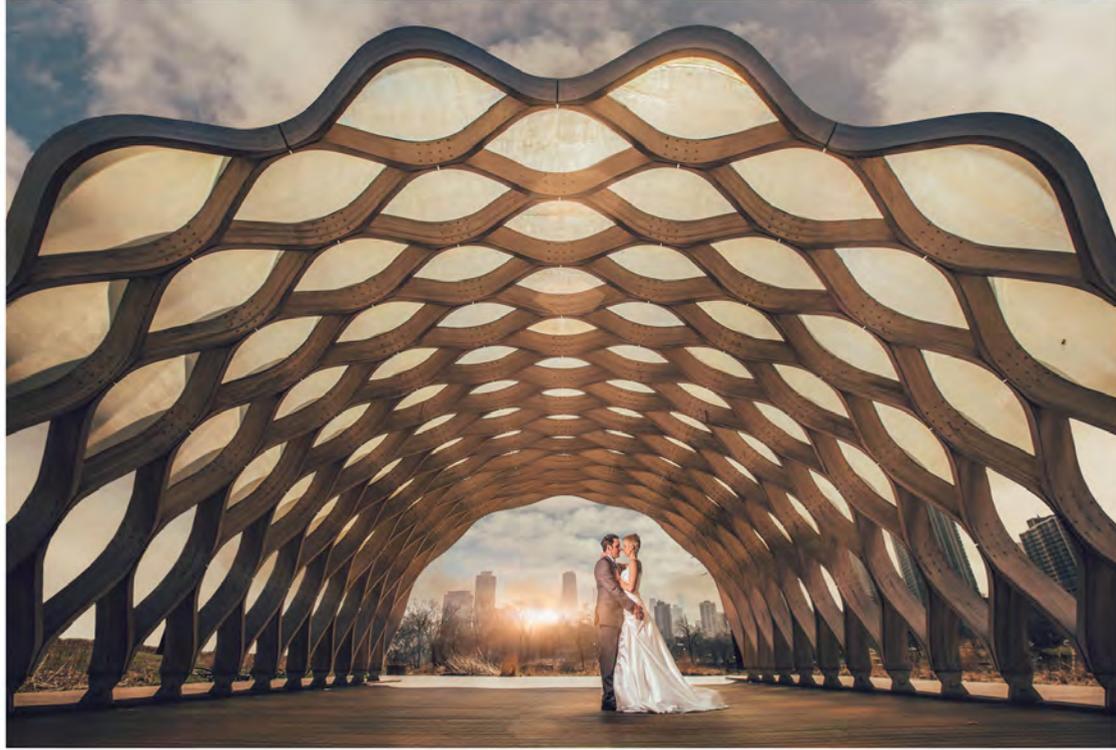
Congratulations to all our featured artists. Be inspired and create something that is *you*.

**Sal Cincotta**, *Editor-in-chief*

BEST TRAVEL IMAGE







Images © Rafael Serrano



Image © Rafael Serrano



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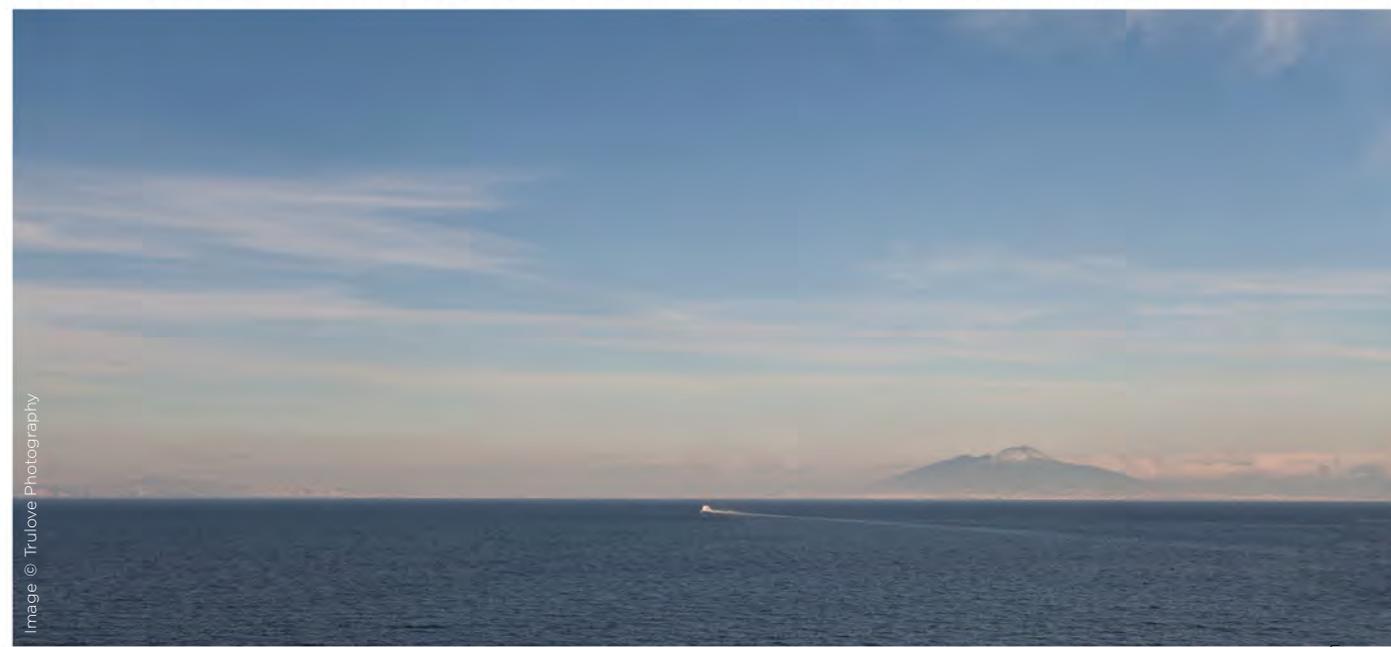




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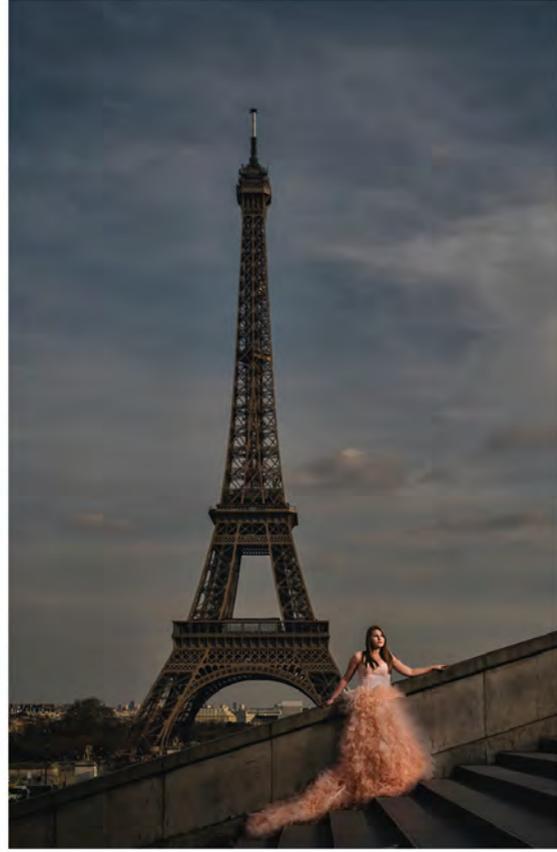


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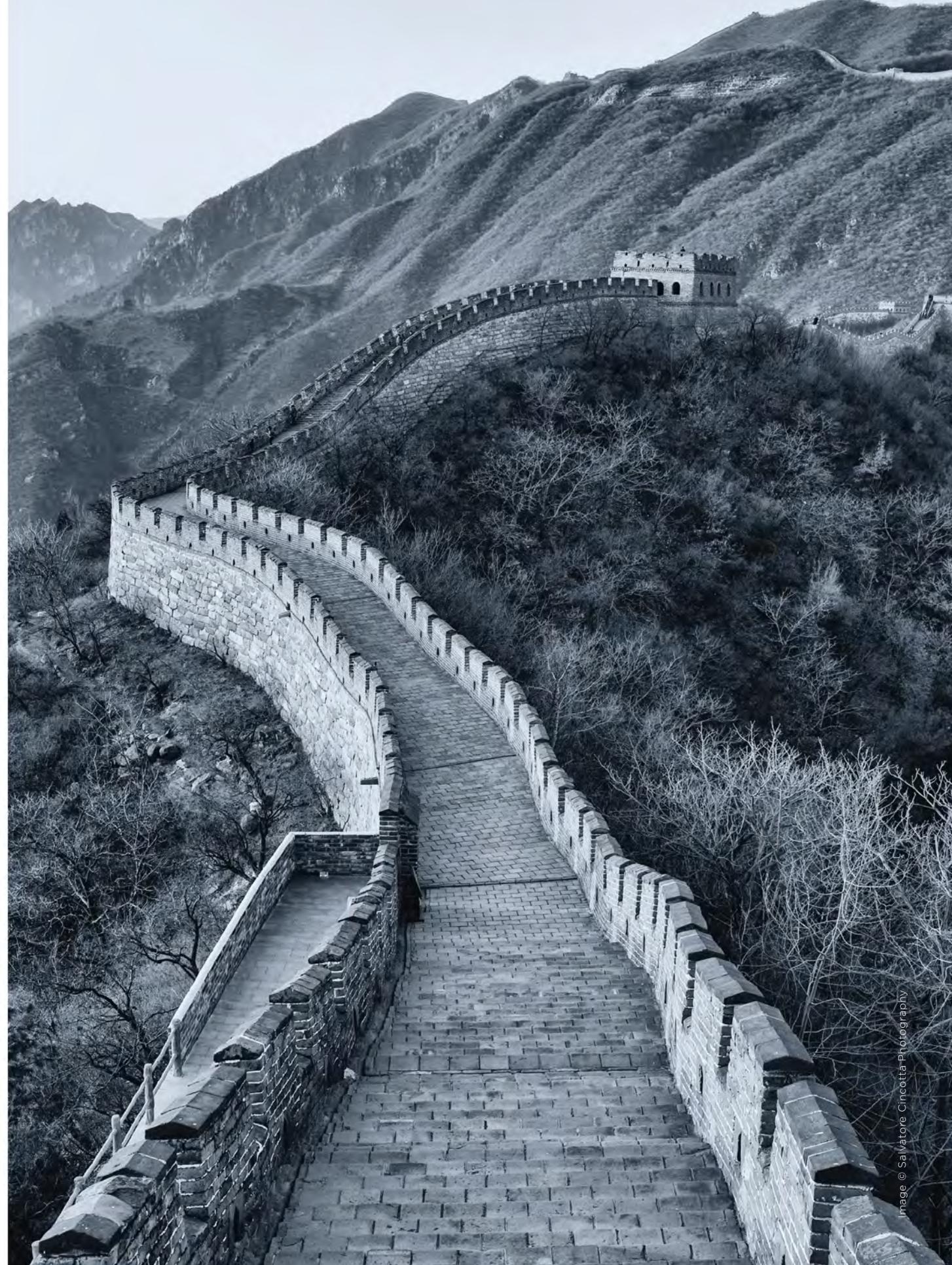


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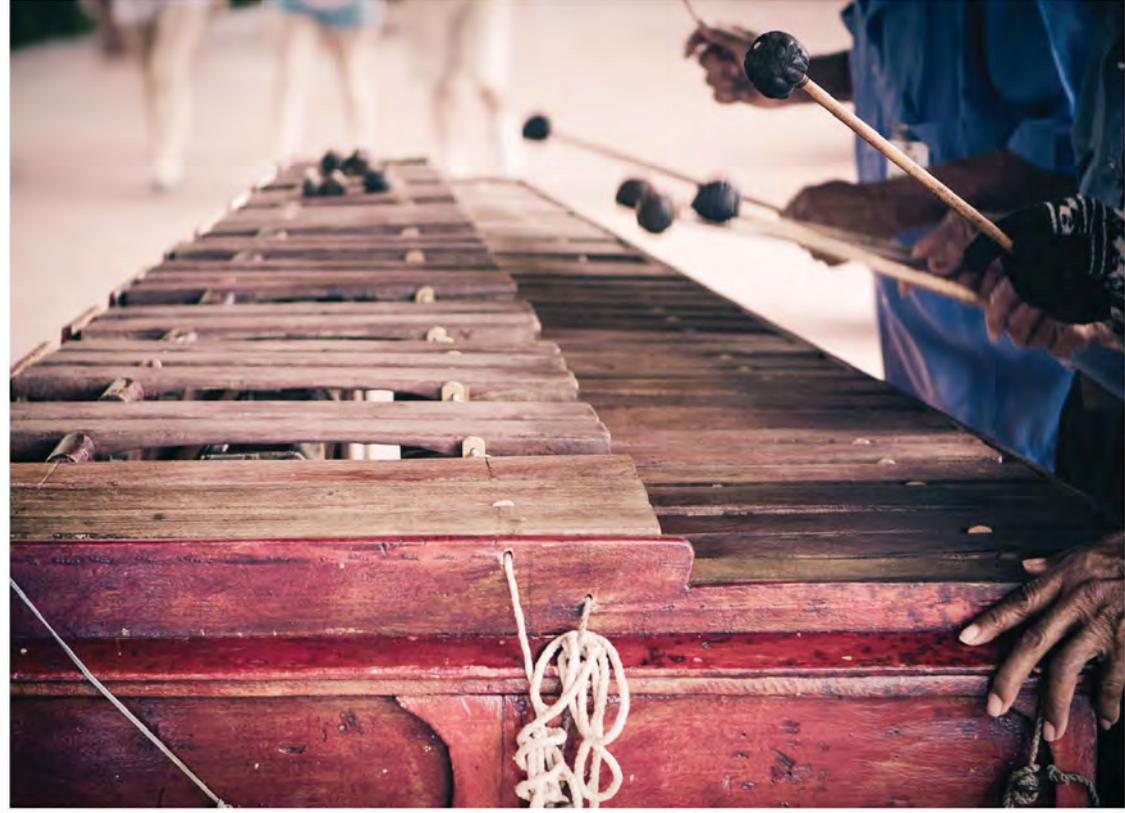


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NEXT MONTH  
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THE  
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EDITION



CHOOSING THE  
**RIGHT LIGHT**  
WITH MICHAEL CORSENTINO



## CHOOSING THE RIGHT TOOLS

With so many sources of artificial light at your fingertips and numerous ways these sources can be modified, choosing the best tool for the task can be confusing. HMI with focusable Fresnels, strobes, fluorescent lights, tungsten, beauty dishes, softboxes, barn doors—each has different characteristics and produces different effects. Developing a working knowledge of the differences between these tools and their results is the first step in choosing the right light.

Fresnels are for Hollywood glamour, fluorescents for soft beauty light, tungsten when it's all you've got, strobe for everything. Each artificial light source brings something different to the table, and that's before we even get to modifiers and the different ways they impact the shape and quality of the light.

The second step in choosing the right tools is to determine the effect you're after. Planning is key. This way, even if you don't have a working knowledge of every light source and modifier out there, you at least know the kind of light you want to create. Then it's simply a matter of reverse engineering how to produce that kind of light in the best, most effective way possible. Within each lighting category you also have additional choices regarding which tool is best for creating the effect you want. In other words, a strobe isn't always just a strobe.

There are a ton of strobe configurations, shapes and reasons one is more suited for specific uses than another. Let's look at the ring flash.



Image © Michael Corsentino



## THE RING FLASH

This specialty light, also known as ring light, is the perfect tool for a few essential but very niche applications, and not much else owing to its signature look. There's no slight intended in the previous sentence because, when it comes to lighting glamour and fashion and creating a hard-edged rock and roll look, nothing beats a ring flash.

They're used all time for shoots for magazines like *Rolling Stone* and *FHM*. This is one of those lights that can easily sit on your shelf collecting dust. But when you need it, you're instantly reminded why you'd never want to be without it. Unlike a traditional strobe, a ring flash has a circular flash tube situated inside a donut-shaped housing that fits over your camera's lens. It approximates the "flashy" look of on-camera flash, only much cooler looking.

The signature tells of a ring flash are circular catchlights in the eyes and a shadow cast around the edge of subjects. Bare ring flash can cause red eye in subjects' eyes. Be on the lookout for this and be ready to correct it in post as needed.

Most leading manufacturers offer some version of a ring flash, and there are adapters that can turn a speedlight into an ad-hoc ring flash. One of the reasons my preferred ring flash is the Profoto is the availability of two soft light reflectors, one silver and one white, that can be used to soften and modify the quality of light in varying degrees. This isn't an option I've seen offered by any other manufacturer. I didn't end up using either of these modifiers for this shoot, but they've been very useful on past shoots. In addition, the Profoto Ring Flash can be used with one of their companion high-power-output 1200ws battery packs, making sure there's plenty of juice.

Ring flash isn't a stationary light source like most traditional strobes, but one that travels with you and your camera. This creates a very different set of considerations with respect to exposure. Because it's a manual source (at least mine is), maintaining a consistent exposure takes practice and an awareness that any change in your distance from the subject will affect the exposure, either adding more light as you get closer or less as you move farther away. But once you've nailed down a solid exposure, as long as your distance from the subject remains constant, your exposure will remain the same.

Because ring flash is mounted on your camera, taking meter readings can be tricky. You'll need an assistant to take the readings for you or a tripod to hold your camera as you take readings; or you can simply work intuitively. I do a little of both, having an assistant pull a reading and then adjusting power as I move closer and farther away from subjects.

The same rules apply, when balancing ambient light and ring flash, as they do with other types of flash units. Aperture and strobe power settings control the amount of light contributed to the exposure, while shutter speed controls the amount of ambient light contributed.

With ring flash, you also have to be comfortable working with a source that doesn't afford you much in the way of control. There's nothing subtle about a ring flash, and that's kind of the point. Like an umbrella, it puts light everywhere. Unlike an umbrella, it creates a unique, harsh quality of light with specularities for miles.





Image © Michael Corsentino



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Image © Michael Corsentino

## TURNING CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES

Every location presents a different set of challenges that need to be overcome. It's overcoming these challenges—cracking the code of each location, finding the visual hidden gems, making magic with what you've been given—that's the fun, creative part of working on location. Everything else is just lots of heavy lifting, packing, unpacking and packing again.

The run-down motel that my producer and HMUA Audra Seay scouted for our Trashy Rocker shoot was perfect in every way, like it was right out of central casting. Add to that two of the most amazing models we've ever worked with, Sam and Christina, Audra's dramatic makeup, a vintage phone, a bitchin' electric guitar and the perfectly styled wardrobe pieces pulled by our stylist Rachel Nicole Velez, and we were ready to rock.

The tiny biohazard of a room was covered in mirrors. Every single wall had mirrors on it; hell, even the ceiling had mirrors. Very classy. After my initial shock, somehow I'd conveniently forgotten about the mirrors after seeing Audra's location pictures. I tried to wrap my head around how to shoot without being seen in the pictures and how to work with a ring flash blasting light everywhere in such a confined space with wall-to-wall mirrors.

Working around mirrors can seem challenging at first, but it's also an opportunity to be creative. Every obstacle is actually a chance to not only problem-solve but to be creative doing it. Once you flip things around mentally and look at challenges as opportunities to flex your creative muscles, you start to see all sorts of interesting options.

Mirrors can be used to create a variety of unique and otherwise impossible-to-capture images and perspectives—from mirror images to capturing reflections, or in our case shooting up into the mirrors on the ceiling to capture the subjects below. To avoid being in the pictures, I shot from angles that kept me and my ring light out of line of sight of the mirrors. When that wasn't practical—when shooting straight on at the models—I relied on height and the models to block my reflection. With this many mirrors and a team of people in the room, there is a lot of shifting of people back and forth to keep everyone but the models out of the images. You need to be extra vigilant and constantly check the reflections as you change shooting positions. That meant not only shifting people but also gear, cases and stands.



Images © Michael Corsentino

### SHOOTING EDITORIALY

Shooting for editorials has more in common with wedding shooting than you might think. Both are about telling a story. Both lead to a series of images destined for layouts. Both benefit from a variety of standalone as well as supporting images. Just like weddings, when I'm shooting an editorial, I'm thinking about the eventual spreads, so I'm mindful to shoot wide, tight, horizontal, vertical, portrait, 3/4 length, full figure and details to tell the story in the most visually diverse and compelling way possible.

Color and tone also play an important role in the emotional impact and success of the final product. Color grading that supports the creative mission of the images rather than intrudes on it in an obvious effects-driven way is my guiding principle. I want my post-processing choices to work in the background creating mood and texture without calling attention to themselves.

When I'm creating complementary color grading, like the black-and-white and cross-processed styles in this editorial, I choose effects that add to the creative direction of the project, in this case a grungy rocker motel, and I think in terms of what colors will work well next to each other in spreads. ■

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Michael Corsentino is an Orlando, Florida-based editorial fashion and portrait photographer. In addition to his busy shooting schedule, Michael is a passionate educator, teaching workshops domestically and internationally. He is an author of two books, writes a monthly lighting column for *Shutter Magazine* and is a regular contributor to *Photoshop User* magazine and *JointheBreed.com*.

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HOW TO OPEN A  
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with Moshe Zusman

When I started doing photography, my focus was mainly weddings, and I was working from home. Working from home was easy because I had no overhead and I was meeting my clients at my house or Starbucks. I just had to make sure the place was straightened up. After a few years, my business grew tremendously. I had maximized the amount of income I could make with just two hands and a living room.

My son was born in 2010 when I was doing 40 to 50 weddings a year. I'd been hiding my infant son in the other room with my wife while I was meeting clients in the living room. 2010 was a very busy year, and probably my most profitable year. But I felt like it was time to move to the next step and open a studio. Thankfully, I found a space that accommodated what I wanted and more.

Here are four things you should consider when you are thinking about opening up your own studio space.

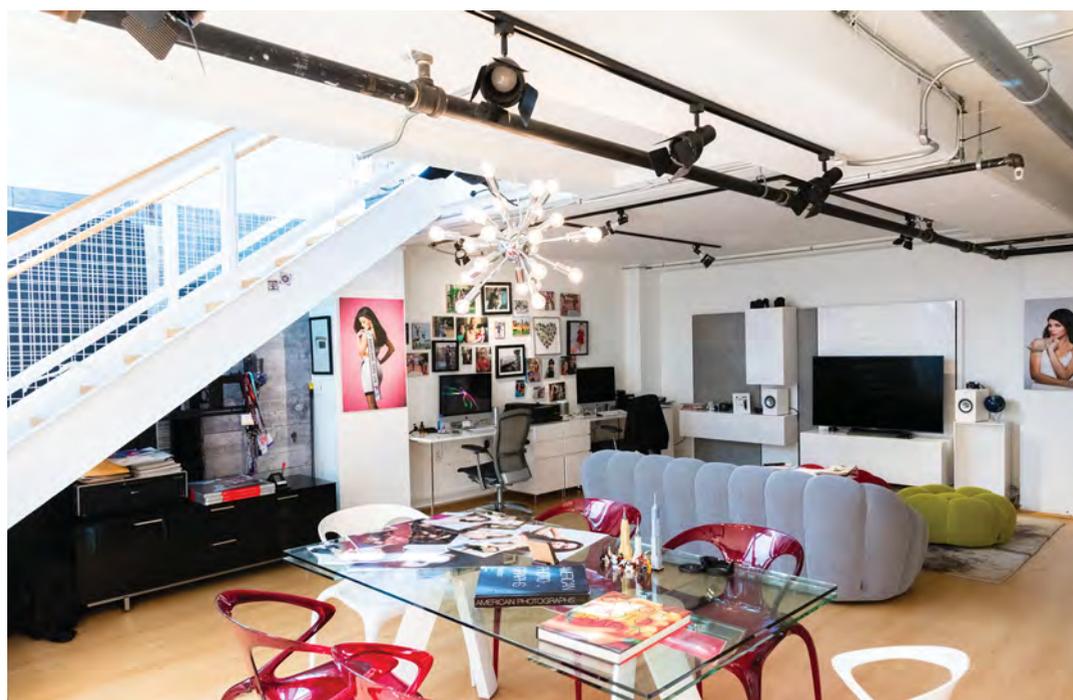


Image © Moshe Zusman

## 1. SHOULD YOU EVEN GET A STUDIO?

If you're shooting primarily weddings and don't feel like you need to upgrade your meeting space, you probably don't need a studio of your own. If you are doing other types of photography and feel like a studio would grow your business to the next level, look into it.

You first need to determine if you can afford a studio space. A lot of photographers don't realize when they look to buy or rent a studio that there's a lot more overhead than just rent. All of a sudden you have more bills, like heat and electric, that are separate from your household bills. It starts piling up to the point where you're actually working 20 extra hours a week or shooting five to 10 more weddings just to pay for the space.

I looked at my numbers and saw that with the new work I anticipated branching into, a studio would be extremely affordable.

## 2. NEEDS VS. WANTS

The gear you need for a new studio is only the gear that you will use in the studio. Ideally, a lot of what you have already you'll be able to repurpose. Don't invest in gear that only looks great and that you think you need because other studios have it. I've had a studio for six years, and I never built a cyc wall in it. I wasn't focused on fashion in the past, and never felt the need to invest in such a thing, even though most portrait studios have a cyc wall.

In the studio, you sometimes need two lights and sometimes five. Over time, I purchased as many lights as I needed, but I never bought all eight Profoto D1 strobes at the same time. I built up to it as needed.

Working in the studio is different than working on location. In the studio, you can have gear that's a little less portable but much more sturdy and easy to use on a flat surface. I use light stands on wheels (roller stands) that are easily moveable on my studio floor, but I don't take them on location.

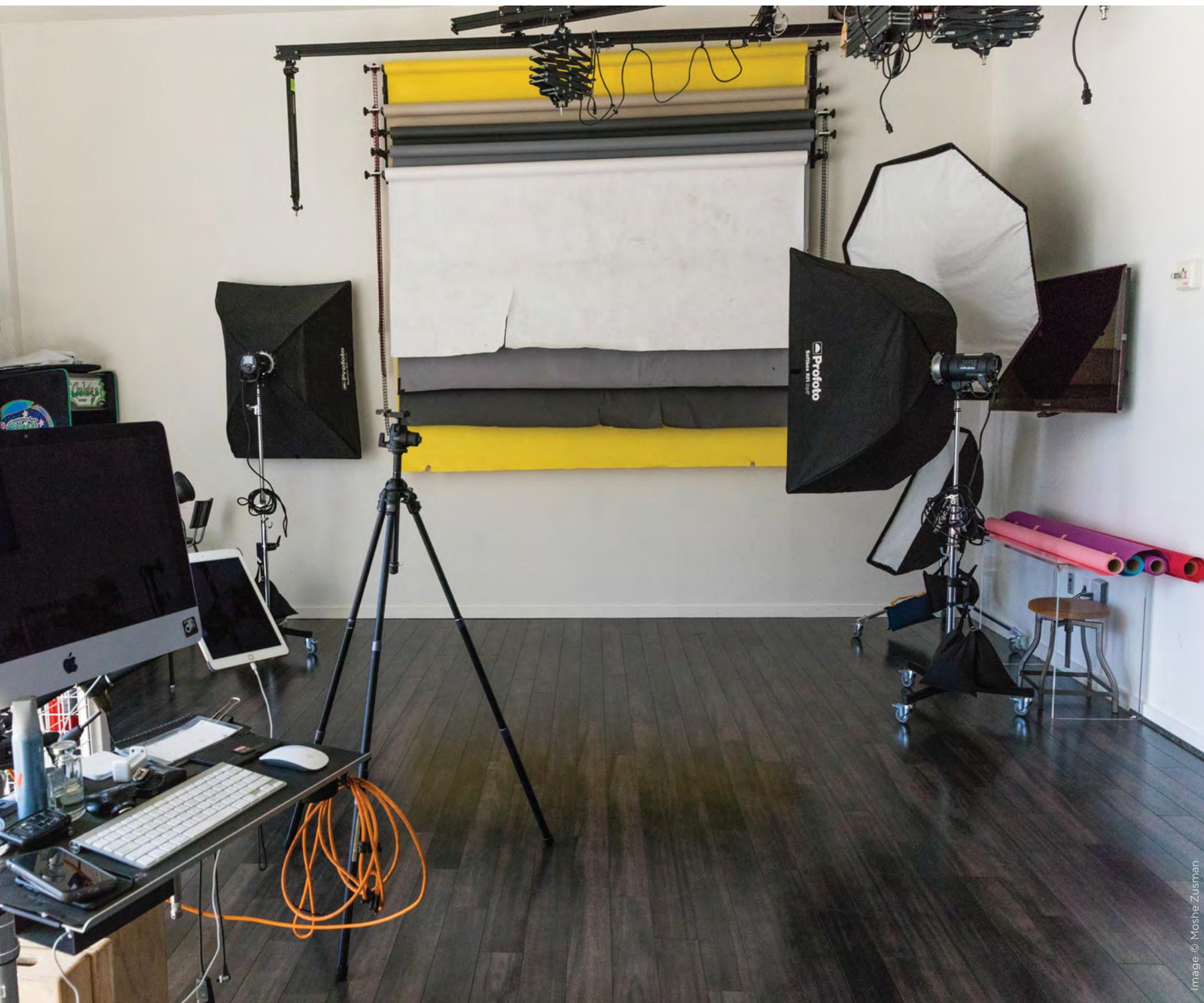
Another key element to making my studio location fun, easy and free of tech problems is the perfect tethering station I built. I enjoy building rigs for lighting, and the tethering station was one of my favorite things to build. I used a wheeled junior light stand and a couple of custom pieces from Kupo, Impact and Tether Tools to create the surface that holds my 21-inch iMac as well as a keyboard, mouse and all the other cool gadgets that Tether Tools has to offer. It even holds a printer on the bottom that prints proofs for my clients on an 8x10 print.

You may not be able to afford the fancy lights immediately or the expensive heavy-duty stands, but that doesn't mean you can't start working in your studio immediately with the gear you already have. I've seen photographers who do headshots with speedlights or AlienBees, and later grew up into Profoto and other superior brands.



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### 3. SPACES YOU NEED IN YOUR STUDIO

Your studio shouldn't have only a space to do photography. It should also become your office and a convenient area for clients to hang out while they're waiting for you. For fashion shoots, I use my extra space as a staging and wardrobe area. I've seen photographers who lease the studio space that was perfect for photography but was not convenient for clients to get to, or studios that didn't even accommodate a small space for a coffee machine.

In my studio, there are two full bathrooms, a mirrored area for makeup and hair stylists to work, a full kitchen, a living room and two workstations for me and my studio manager. The shooting area is 600 square feet, a 20x30 room that can accommodate shooting full length with a 70–200mm lens. It has 16-foot ceilings with a sky track system installed to avoid roller stands and clutter when I'm using a larger number of lights.

If you can't have all those spaces in your first studio, at the very least, have the room to be able to photograph what you need. If that means full length, you have to measure the space, including space for background light and backdrops, to make sure it fits. The secondary priority is a client area and a kitchen. Those are not as important, but they're great to have.

In the past, makeup artists would set up shop anywhere in the studio with their own portable lights to light up their workspace. Since I've gotten more into headshots, portraits and fashion, I built a very large makeup area for the artists to work in that includes lighting mirrors and countertops, outlets and even phone charging stations.

If you're looking into your own studio space, don't rush into it. Keep thinking about all the cons, not just the pros, of a studio space of your own. One of the best pieces of advice I received many years ago, when I was sick of meeting people at home and found an opportunity to share a space with another business, was from my mentor, Doug Gordon. He told me not to worry about inviting people to my home, that it's ok to show them that my home is my business, my business is my home.



Image © Moshe Zusman



Image © Moshe Zusman

That saved me a lot of money and prevented me from making some bad investments in shared spaces. Later down the road, I was able to afford my own space. Good luck to you if you're considering getting your own studio space. ■

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Moshe Zusman is recognized for his innovative, bold use of light and color with a distinctly modern edge. The Washington, D.C.-based Moshe has been shooting for more than a decade, and specializes in weddings, portraits, headshots and events. He has been featured at numerous workshops and conferences, including WPPI, PhotoPlus Expo, ImagingUSA and ShutterFest, and also hosts his own workshops at his D.C. studio.

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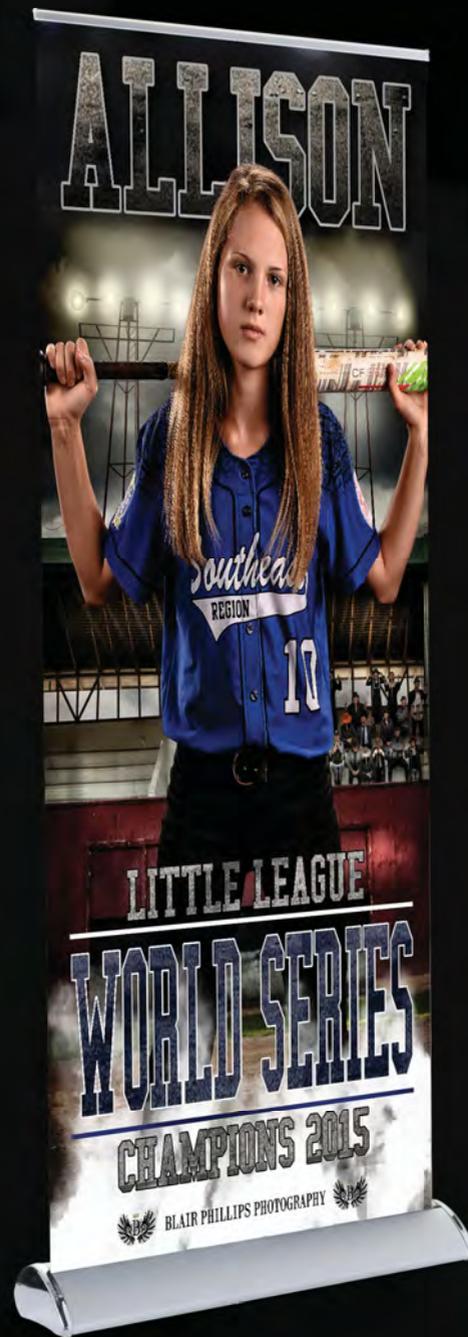


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# LONGEVITY

with Blair Phillips



Today's generation is one that is generally open and accepting to change. While that's a good thing, it also has its disadvantages. Your business could be here today and gone tomorrow. This is something I have learned in the volume photography world. When working to acquire new business, it is frustrating for people to not be open to a new way of doing things just because it has always been done a certain way. If you are the one already providing that service, it is good to hear that. If you are the one trying to gain that business, it can be frustrating to hear that. I have found it best to create a product that they cannot imagine not having any longer if the client chose to hire someone other than me. That is exactly what we have done with banners in our market.

It is no secret that today's youth like looking at themselves in pictures. They may not love how they look, but they sure take lots of pictures of themselves. The word *selfie* is now in the dictionary. We photograph all the team and individual images for every sport in every high school in two counties. That puts us in front of a ton of athletes three times a year. That is a large business, and I do not want anyone to take that away from me. These banners have helped secure my existence in this space.

We print an eye-catching banner for each individual senior in their sports environment. These banners hang wherever their sport is played throughout the season. The banners are printed on an outdoor material that withstands the elements. Seniors get to keep their banners at the end of the year. Most students tell me they take it home and hang it in their room. The banners have a brand-reflective look and design. If the images on the banners don't get the kids excited, they won't be as effective.

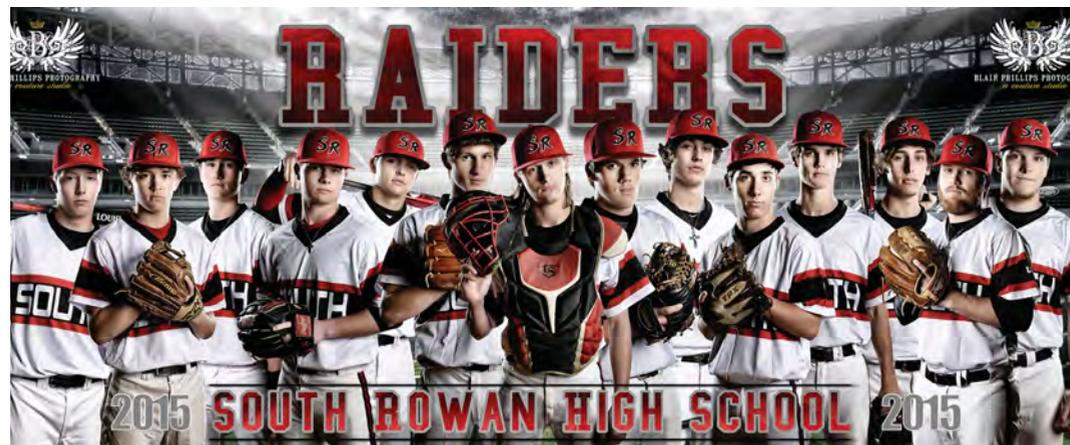


Image © Blair Phillips



Images © Blair Phillips

You may find that it seems impossible to convince the decision makers to let you photograph a sports team. I felt the same way when I began this venture. I went to the coach of a high school team and showed him an example of the idea I had in mind. I asked to borrow a couple of his star players to photograph as an example. This allowed me to do two things. It allowed me to show him what I could deliver to parents as an option for them to purchase. It also provided me images to work up into a banner that I could show as an example. The example is more powerful if you use one of the team's players. Showing examples of rival teams just doesn't get many prospective clients excited. When the coach was able to see the banner hanging on the fence and hear the response from the players, he told me that he had to have them. The icing on the cake was letting a few players' parents see the banners. Once the parents got involved, the banners turned into a must-have product.



Images © Blair Phillips

It is all well and good to create an awesome and highly desired product, but the toughest part is figuring out who is going to pay you for it. Some schools have booster clubs that raise a lot of money. For the schools with a good budget, the booster club buys them from me at cost. I am making my money on the team and individual images that I create and sell to parents. The banners are a way for me to give back to my schools with my skillset, rather than just writing a check that digs into my profits. The schools without much booster support have to have another option in order for the banner option to work. We sell the banners to these schools at cost too. The difference is that the parents have to buy their child's banner out of their own pocket. If that is not an option, the students can go out into the community and fundraise from local businesses to help them hang their banner. I am a firm believer that where there is a want and a will, there is a way.

Our schools and athletes have grown to love and expect these banners season after season. We have a system and a rock-solid product in place that runs like a fine-tuned machine. The thought of them not having the banners any longer is not something that would sit well with the students, coaches, and especially the parents. I love going to the Friday night football games and eavesdropping on the families commenting about the banners. These banners have made it tougher for another photography company to step in and take the business from us. We offer the banners only to the seniors. This gives them a little more meaning. It also creates anticipation and gives everyone encouragement and motivation to make it to that senior year, when their banner will finally hang proudly. The banners represent more than just a pretty picture. We market them to stand for commitment, perseverance, dedication and skill.

The great thing about getting into the school sports market is the number of opportunities you have to sell to them. They have three seasons at the high school level: fall, winter and spring. In the fall there are two football teams, two soccer teams, two cheer squads, a golf team, two volleyball teams and two track teams. In the winter, there are four basketball teams, a cheer squad, an indoor track team, a wrestling team and a boys and girls swim team. The spring season consists of two baseball teams, two softball teams, a boys and girls track team, a golf team, two soccer teams and a tennis team. If you can acquire a decent number of these schools, you can make a good living photographing sports three times a year. The trick is to be quick, efficient and very friendly. You must deliver a product they feel they cannot live without.



Image © Blair Phillips



Image © Blair Phillips

Confidence is a game changer in our everyday life. It has to maintain a balance within our business lives. Lack of confidence keeps us from growing our business in the direction we want it to go. Too much confidence causes us to lose sight of what is important, which leads us to stray from the details that helped get us the business to begin with.

Confidence is something we create for ourselves. No one can take away from you what they never gave you to begin with. Let your confidence be the motivation that keeps the ball rolling. Confidence alone is not enough, though. You have to search for the right product offerings that help you stand out in your market. Only then can you apply your confidence and drive home the big sale. ■

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Blair Phillips launched his business nearly 10 years ago in a small town. Since then, Blair Phillips Photography has become a beloved household name to its many fans and clients. Each year, Blair photographs up to 30 weddings and over 600 high school senior, newborn and family studio sessions. He has educated photographers all over the United States at events by WPPI, WPPI U, Imaging USA, SYNC Seniors and various state PPA groups.

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# final inspiration

photographer salvatore cincotta  
image title la vie en rose  
exposure f11 @ 1/500, ISO 100  
lighting profoto b1  
location paris, france  
gear phase one iq3 | schneider 55mm f/2.8





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