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12 | Unlimited Background Colors With Gels - Michael Corsentino

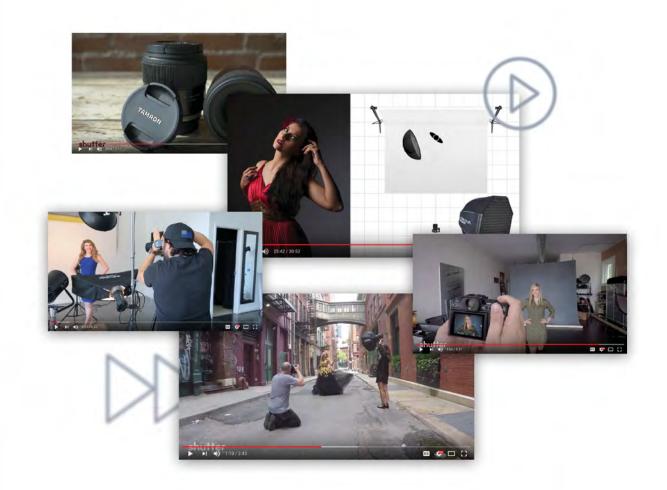
- 20 | How to Market in the Second-Busiest Time of Year Skip Cohen
- 30 | The Ins and Outs of Image Competition Michael Anthony
- 46 | Getting Started in Destination Wedding Photography Sal Cincotta
- 56 | N-Vu Product Spotlight
- 58 | Traveling Smart as a Destination Photographer Michelle Turner
- 72 | Tips for Photographing in Empty & Abandoned Buildings Scott Detweiler
- 86 | Changing Gears as Elopements Take Over the Industry Dawn Kelly
- 100 | 8 Tips for the Traveling Photographer Alissa Zimmerman
- 114 | Travel-Sized Equipment That Won't Break the Bank or Your Back Phillip Blume
- 126 | Hit the Road: Working With Models on Destination Shoots Nino Batista
- 140 | 5 Travel Tips for Photographing Destination Weddings Raph Nogal
- 156 | Inspirations Our Readers
- 178 | Unleash Your Creativity With Skylum Luminar 2018 Dustin Lucas
- **194 | Datacolor** Product Spotlight
- 196 | Family Photos Fast Vanessa Joy





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Shutter Magazine's focus is on photography education. Our goal is to provide current, insightful and in-depth educational content for today's professional wedding and portrait photographer. Shutter uses the latest technologies to deliver information in a way that is relevant to our audience. Our experienced contributors help us create a sense of community, and have established the magazine as one of the leading photography publications in the world.

Shutter Magazine: By photographers, for photographers.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF / PUBLISHER G Sal Cincotta

CREATIVE DIRECTOR Alissa Zimmerman

LEAD DESIGNER Alicia Simpson

COPY EDITORACCOUNT SPECIALISTTom O'ConnellChristine Gill

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS Vanessa Joy, Michael Anthony, Sal Cincotta, Skip Cohen, Michelle Turner, Scott Detweiler, Nino Batista, Raph Nogal, Michael Corsentino, Alissa Zimmerman, Dawn Kelly, Dustin Lucas and Phillip Blume



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The world is an amazing place. Find what makes it unique and tell a story. - Sal Cincotta

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LAUNCH POINT

A message from the editor-in-chief

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UNLIMITED Background Colors



with Michael Corsentino

You can never have enough background colors to choose from in the studio. The background color that performs perfectly for one outfit, complexion, hair color, makeup style or concept will likely fall flat for another. You can invest in an endless assortment of colored rolls of seamless paper, but at anywhere from \$50 to \$100 each, this rainbow requires a pot of gold.

Not only that, but as good as colored seamless is for numerous tasks, they take up a considerable amount of space as your collection grows. They also need to be carefully stored so they're not ruined by creases. Stored rolled and upright, you need ample ceiling height. The space for one, two or even five rolls is typically no problem for moderately sized studios. Increase the number of colored seamless paper to 10 or 20 rolls, and you've entered a whole different ballpark. Even in my decent-sized studio, I keep just six rolls of white, black and dove-gray seamless on hand at any one time.

Seamless paper is also a consumable, meaning it doesn't last forever. As you use it, it can get wrinkled, dirty and scuffed. Once all the clean seamless runs out, it's time to buy another roll. Fear not. There is another way. This month, I show you how to create virtually any color you want without the cost or clutter of seamless paper.

GELS TO THE RESCUE

With one or two reasonably priced packs of colored gels used in conjunction with a dedicated strobe to illuminate the background, you can create almost any color imaginable. You certainly could use a speedlight, but I find that a strobe produces more consistently accurate and stable color. With speedlights, the color produced from the gel can shift over time as the battery power fluctuates, impacting the amount of light being output.

The one light source I don't advise using with gels is any constant light that produces heat, which can easily and quickly melt gels placed in front of them. Even with strobes, you'll want to turn off built-in modeling lights to avoid a gel flameout.

I use gels by Rosco, which are available in rolls or sheets. For most applications, I use gels from one of Rosco's 12x12-inch gel pack kits, available in a variety of color combinations at a reasonable price point.

HOW IT'S DONE

At its most basic level, this is a simple but powerful technique for creating colored backdrops to your heart's content. You'll need a few things to do it right, starting with a white background. This can be a wall, sheet of foamcore or a roll of white seamless paper. White provides a neutral base that won't impart unwanted color casts or change the color of your gels in unpredictable ways.

Next you'll need a strobe (I use a 500WS Profoto B1), a colored gel of your choosing and a short light stand. Place the strobe behind where your subject will be standing and tape the gel to the strobe head at the top. The best way to keep white light from spilling out from the strobe and contaminating the background is to simply use one piece of light-tack gaff tape. The Profoto B1 is perfect for this because of its flat-fronted diffusion disc and wide spread of illumination when unmodified.

The distances between the background and each of the lights on set impacts the color saturation. As a general rule, the more distance you have to work with, the better. I placed my background light and gel at approximately 7 feet from the background to achieve an even, well-saturated effect. As you move the background light closer to the background, the light gets brighter at the center and darker as it falls off. The farther away it is, within reason, the more even the coverage and color will be.

Ideally, you want to treat the background as a separate lighting zone and avoid contaminating it with light spilling from the keylight or fill lights. This is easily achieved using distance and V-flats. The more space you have from the background, the better. My model, keylight and fill light were each placed about 10 feet from the background, but I still had issues with light spilling onto the background, partially washing out the color from the background light.

This can be corrected in a few ways: adjust distance; move the keylight/fill lights closer to the subject and turn down their power to reduce spill; use V-flats behind the lights to block them from contaminating the background; or a combination of all three. I opted for all of the above, which provided the most saturated background color possible.

BLOCKING THE BACKGROUND LIGHT

There are several ways to illuminate a background with your desired colorcast. You can use multiple lights and V-flats to block them, especially useful for full-figure work, but I wanted to demonstrate the simplest and least expensive way to do this. In this case, we're using only one light and relying on the model's body to block it from the camera's view. You'll need to pay special attention to your model's movements because these shifts can easily reveal the light behind them.

This is a delicate balancing act that requires continued direction between the photographer and the model. You can determine whether the background light is hidden or visible only from the camera position.

COLOR CONSIDERATIONS

There are numerous things to consider when adding color to either background or background and subject. What colors work best together? What colors work best given the subject's complexion, hair color, makeup and wardrobe? You can work intuitively, but as you learn how to work with color, you may find it helpful to consult an online color wheel chart.

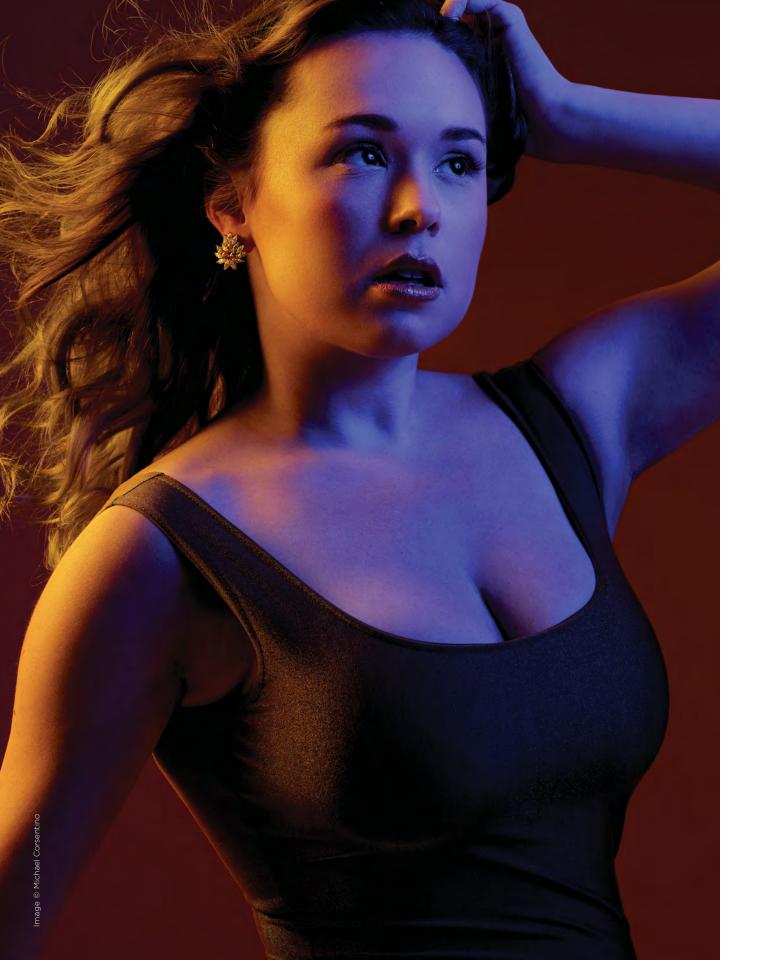
Even if you have just one pack of gels, you can easily create multiple colors with each gel—or, more accurately, varying degrees of color saturation with each gel. This allows you to produce multiple colors. Just adjust the power of your strobe from low to high, easily taking a red gel from deep burgundy to bright red or all the way to pink. The same principle applies to any colored gel. The amount of light you put through it determines the amount of color saturation.

MODIFIERS

There is no shortage of lighting modifiers that work well with gels. Lately I've been getting good results with umbrellas. These modifiers do a great job of amplifying color. If you're looking for a very saturated effect, give them a try. For this shoot, I used two medium Profoto white umbrellas. White provides the neutral base needed to accurately reflect the colored gel. If you need more contrast, swap in a silver umbrella on one or more lights.

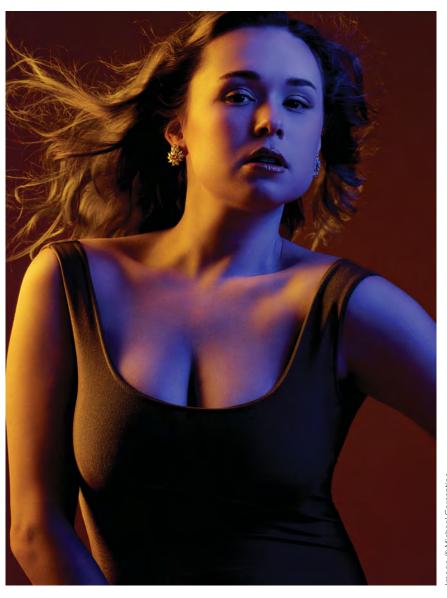
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LOOK #1

For this dramatic look, I used a classic cross-lighting pattern with white bounce-back umbrellas on the key and fill lights, and complementary colored gels. This setup produces plenty of saturation and moody shadows.



LOOK #1 GEAR

- · 3 Profoto B1 strobes
- $\cdot\,2$ V-flats to keep the light from the key and fill from spilling onto the background and desaturating its color
- \cdot 2 white Profoto medium umbrellas, one for the keylight and one for the fill
- \cdot Rosco gels for each of the strobes



LOOK #2

For this second beauty-inspired look, I used classic clamshell lighting. The key and fill lights are stacked in an over-and-under arrangement at the camera position.

LOOK #2 GEAR

- \cdot 2 medium Profoto white bounce-back umbrellas to maximize color saturation of the key and fill
- · 3 Profoto B1 strobes
- \cdot 2 V-flats to keep the light from the key and fill from spilling onto the background and desaturating its color \cdot Rosco gels for each of the strobes

As you can see from this fun shoot, with a pack of gels and a few strobes, the world really is your oyster. Now that you know how to rock colored backgrounds without a studio full of colored seamless paper, go get your color on!





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 MARKET IN THE SECOND BUSIEST TIME OF YEAR

with Skip Cohen

The expression '*Tis the season* normally applies to November and December, but April is the second most significant stretch of seasonality in our business.

Coming up across the United States is prom season, Mother's Day, graduations and Father's Day. It's also the launch of what we all hope is the busy season as weddings and children's and family portraiture start to ramp up.

It's spring—time for you to start claiming a few customers of your own. Unless you get busy grabbing new business, all of it's going to be going on around you rather than walking through your door. As Tina Fey once quipped, "You can't be that kid standing at the top of the waterslide, overthinking it. You have to go down the chute."

With the second-quarter seasonality come some amazing opportunities for great content, direct mail and partnerships. There's a lot to think about, and although you're coming down to the wire since it all starts ramping up in the next few weeks, you've still got time to do a lot.

I want to help you thrive in 2018, not just survive.



BLOG CONTENT

I'm starting with blog content because although it's an indirect message, it's one of your most powerful tools. You have to plant the seeds for ideas in photography and educate your client.

Gift ideas: There isn't a grandparent on the planet who wouldn't appreciate a family portrait—and, again, you have to plant the idea. Get your clients thinking about the last time, if ever, they did an updated professional family portrait.

In blog content, each post becomes the greatest subliminal message of all because you're showing one idea after another for gift ideas. Here's where you can shine, showing some of your work framed and on the wall, in a tabletop frame, and as stationery and thank-you notes. Share tips on framing and hanging prints.

Canvas prints may be old news to you, but they may be fresh and new to your clients. Be creative and show canvas prints hung in your home or a past client's.

Another creative idea I love is a custom poster for graduation, save-the-date, Mother or Father of the Year—the list goes on and on. Check out Marathon Press's Bella Art Prints, then get creative and put together a couple of movie posters to show your clients in a blog post.

Slideshows are hot right now, especially hybrid and mixed with still images, short video clips and great music. They work great as a blog post that shows off the concept together with your images.

Need more product ideas? Call your lab and ask, "What's new?" Thanks to technology, there's a steady supply of new post-capture ideas, and they're stunning. Many labs will reduce the cost for a sample if you're going to be showcasing the product to clients.



Photo tips: There are things you do every day that you take entirely for granted. It's time to help make your readers become better photographers, and it's so easy to do. Show before-and-after images with minimum text.

Talk about fill flash and when to use it. Don't just show camera images. Use your cell phone. Your target audience, in most cases, is Mom, and she's not going to open a studio down the street and steal your business. Be helpful. Let's make her a better photographer.

Then do a post on composition, reminding your reader that what they see is what they get. Have some fun with an exercise Roberto Valenzuela does with an image. Show one wide-angle shot and then break it down into several images, each one different because you've zoomed in to tell a better story.

Share some tips about posing. Show a family grouping lined up firing-squad style and then mix it up using triangle posing, with no two heads on the same exact plane. It's so easy to create "a-ha" moments with your clients, and with every image, you're showing your work and demonstrating your skill set.

Your list can include depth of field, storytelling and even things to do with their images, including advice on printing. Sharing it on your blog demonstrates your skills and willingness to be helpful.

Locations for portraits in the community: You don't have to give up your secrets, but share a couple of your favorite places.

When I moved back to Cleveland many years ago, I spent a day with an old buddy driving around downtown. I was blown away by the number of old brick walls and incredible lighting almost everywhere we went. Then, as we headed out to the suburbs, we hit stunning fields and parks. Each was perfect for a classic family portrait session.

Share your portraits as content about places in your community to photograph. Again, Mom isn't going to open a competing studio; you're merely planting ideas for an updated family portrait.

Finding a photographer: Do a blog post on what to look for when hiring a photographer. Of course, your skills and offerings should check every box on this list.

Clothing tips: Since many of you do this already, why not make it into a blog post? Again, we're talking about tips to help your clients.

Pet portraits: The hierarchy of why people hire a professional photographer goes brides, babies, pets—in that order. You have to show pet portraits to get your clients to think of you as their pet photographer. What you show on your website and blog is what people are going to consider.

I've written about this so many times before: Do a series on your blog of pets around the community. Take advantage of nice weather and demonstrate your skill set by capturing the personalities of adorable local pets.

DIRECT MAIL/PARTNERSHIPS

Direct mail comes back with a vengeance every spring.

Think about how many emails you never read. We trash anything we're not interested in judging just by the subject line, or our spam filters catch it for us. At the same time, there's a lot of material that shows up in our physical mailbox that's boring. Most of us never bother to even look at postcards with dull images or just plain text.

Direct mail presents an opportunity to create a mail piece that grabs attention because of the impact of your artwork. A 5x7 or 6x9 postcard combined with a creative promotion cuts through the noise and gets the spotlight.

Here's where partnerships start to earn their value. You can do a direct mail campaign on your own and also pick up all the costs, but why would you want to? Bring in a couple of great partners with a three-way split on a postcard to reduce your costs for design, production and postage.

Here's the best part about partnerships: Each of you becomes an ambassador for the other two partners. Plus, you can purchase lists together and combine your mailing lists for greater reach.

A wedding photographer, florist and limo service can team up. As the photographer, you provide all the images for the direct mail piece, which further builds the relationships with the other two companies—and highlights your work.

Here's where you can get creative. Do a branding campaign to get each of your names out there, or cross-promote between each company. Customers who buy flowers from the florist receive a certificate for something special from the photographer and the limo company, and so on with the other partners.

You can also share content on each other's blogs. Think of it as a hard sell disguised as a soft sell that offends no one. Publish a guest post on your blog from the florist with tips on centerpieces or seasonal ideas about ways to get more value from floral purchases. The florist can put up a guest post from you with photography tips.

A few months ago, I shared a short video on my blog featuring maternity and newborn photographer Ana Brandt. She said something in the beginning that stuck in my head: "No one regrets taking photos. People only regret *not* taking photos."



© Thomas Kettner

No one regrets taking photos.

People only regret

not taking photos.

-Ana Brandt

Everything in this month's article is about ways you can remind your clients about the importance of photographs. And you've got to remind your target audience that nobody can do a better job of stopping time and capturing memories than you.

You know how to focus your camera. Now it's time to focus on every message you can get out there to your next new client.





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 photo 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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THE

OF IMAGE COMPETITION

with Michael Anthony



Early in my career, I had a hard time discovering what made my work unique. I would ask friends and family for advice but could never get consistent critiques that would allow me to develop my photographic style into what it is today.

I had discovered the Fearless Photographers group on Facebook, and decided to sign up and enter my work among some of the best photojournalists in the world to get an idea of where I stood among my peers. Sometimes, without knowing it, we develop an emotional connection to the stories we tell and the artwork we create, and you don't know that you are making consistent mistakes in your imagery until someone without that emotional connection gives an objective review of your work.

I am a competitor and always have been. It started in my days of athletics in high school. Little did I know that it was engrained into my personality. When I took the Clifton StrengthsFinder test, I was not surprised that competition was my number-one strength. Some may look at my competitive nature as overbearing or petty, but other competitors understand that desire to be the very best in whatever it is we do. That has been a driving factor in my success over the years, and I wouldn't trade it for anything.

When I started entering image competitions back in 2013, I quickly realized I had a lot of room for improvement in my work. Over the years, that realization is always revisited when I see the beautiful work hanging in the winners gallery at competitions.

Make no mistake. Image competition is difficult and frustrating. It can also be expensive and seem unnecessary. Image competition is one of the best investments I make in myself every year. It's not about winning awards, which is the biggest misconception. Image competition is about furthering your growth as an artist, gaining inspiration and pushing the envelope to become better than you were yesterday.

Friends and peers ask me all the time why I spend so much time and effort on something that seems to be good only for bragging rights. My answer is that I would not have created half of the imagery that is in my portfolio without learning the skills set that I have learned at image competition. Image competition has made me a better storyteller. It has taught me to see the art in a scene, made me appreciate the craftsmanship that goes into making an image from capture to print.

So as a new photographer, how do you get started with image competition? What competitions do you enter? How do you shoot for competition? How do you learn and grow from your experience in image competition? I am here to answer all of those questions for you today.

The first step in your process is to understand which image competitions to enter. There are competitions popping up every day, and you don't want to waste time entering ones that don't have quality judges or provide a method of getting feedback on your imagery. That defeats the purpose.

Here's a breakdown of the current image competitions I recommend. If you are based outside of the United States, there are other competitions in your country that may be a good fit for you.

SHUTTERFEST CREATE

ShutterFest Create is an annual competition that features judging by experts in the industry. The judging panel uses PPA's elements of a merit image as a guideline for scoring, and features photographers who have had success in image competitions and business as both chairpersons and judges. The judging is live and features categories for first timers, as well as individual categories for a variety of wedding and portrait genres. The competition is tough and primarily digital based, making it easy for pros and beginning photographers alike to enter. Judging is recorded live and allows entrants to hear feedback on not only their images, but on all of the images in the competition.

WPPI'S FIRST HALF, SECOND HALF AND 16X20 ANNUAL COMPETITION

WPPI's image competition is one of the most competitive competitions in the world. The first and second half are digital based, and the 16x20 annual competition is widely known and entered by photographers from all over the world. WPPI uses its own scoring system, which is heavily influenced by impact, which means year after year, this competition seems to get more competitive.

Judges come from every genre of photography, and are switched out on their panel often. Like ShutterFest, WPPI has a panel of judges with one chairperson, and automatic challenge rules to make sure that scoring remains as consistent as possible. WPPI features a point system that encourages longevity in the competition by allowing you to receive a "designation" based on the points that you score year after year. WPPI changes its rules almost yearly, so it's important to stay up to date with the most current version of the rules in order to make sure you are properly entering your images into the correct categories. WPPI allows you to attend in-person judging and the first- and second-half competitions usually provide feedback as well.





PPA'S IPC

PPA's IPC is a prestigious image competition that is entered by photographers all over the U.S. PPA focuses heavily on technique. PPA uses its "12 Elements" system to determine a score, and has provided schooling for photographers all over the world on how to recognize a proper score through its judging school. PPA allows you to enter four images every year, and you can enter either a printed or a digital version of your image. High-scoring, well-executed images may be picked for PPA's loan collection, which features beautiful images every year. PPA's entry cost is very reasonable. Also look for local and district competitions.

FEARLESS PHOTOGRAPHERS (WEDDING)

The Fearless Photographers online competition is held bimonthly. It primarily celebrates photojournalistic achievements in the wedding genre. The Fearless Competition's judges are curators and experts in wedding photojournalism. To enter, sign up for a Fearless Photographers membership. After you're accepted, you can enter a number of images during every award cycle. While judging is a bit different in this competition, rest assured that the awarded images are some of the best photojournalistic wedding images you will ever see.



SHOOTING FOR IMAGE COMPETITION

One of the most effective ways to grow as an artist is to actively shoot for competition every year. This can happen with your clients or in shoots created specifically for image competitions. Either way, by actively creating new content for image competition that follows the elements of a merit image, you will constantly be searching for new and fresh ideas that will eventually translate over to your clients so you can provide them with unique and fresh work.

For the last three years, Jen and I have planned international shoots that serve as both portfolio imagery and image competition entries. More importantly, it allows for inspiration that can keep the sometimes repetitive nature of photography fresh and different for us so we always love what we do and we never lose the passion for creation.

Shooting for image competition also teaches you an important skill. It teaches you how to plan and execute a vision, which is a skill your clients will cherish for years to come after you create beautiful artwork for them.

THE ELEMENTS THAT GO INTO AN AWARD-WINNING IMAGE

1. Impact

Impact is the greatest influence on your image scores, and comes down to one question. Is your image an original use of the creative process? Does it inspire the judges, or does it bore them? Impact has the largest effect on your score, and is subjective. The competitions I listed above allow for multiple judges, which helps keep the scoring consistent. Make images that inspire conversation, and you will have successfully created an impactful image.

2. Technical excellence

Did you utilize correct technique to execute your message? This is an easy category to fix, and one of the quickest you will learn from in image competition.

3. Creativity

Much like impact, does your image inspire judges? Did you find a different way to tell your message that is consistent with the image?

4. Style

Does the choice of technique match the message of the image? Does your light match your subject's expression? Style, again, is another subjective category, but once you learn how to apply the correct style, your image's messaging becomes more clear.

5. Composition

Does the image's composition tell the correct story? Does it lead your viewers to the intended subjects?

6. Presentation

How did you present you image? Was the paper choice appropriate for the look of the photo? Did you use good materials?

7. Color balance

Does your image have a correct balance of color appropriate for the scene? Does the color palette inspire the judges? Again, this is a subjective element, but an important one in the overall image.

8. Center of interest

Where is the eye supposed to go in the image? Is the objective met in the overall composition? Can we get to both the primary and secondary elements in the image?

9. Lighting

Lighting makes an image; without light, we don't have one. Lighting conveys a message—does the light used match the overall message?

10. Subject matter

Is the subject matter in the image clear and consistent with the other elements discussed above?



11. Technique

Does the overall technique-lighting, posing, printing, presentation-give an appropriate display of the final product?

12. Storytelling

Does the image tell a story? Does it evoke imagination? Is it easy to understand the message? There is no right answer, except that your image should inspire feelings and ideas in your viewers.

UTILIZING IMAGE COMPETITION AS A VEHICLE FOR GROWTH

Never take your scores personally. In the beginning, I lost faith in myself as an artist whenever I scored low on an image that I loved. Early in my career, the assessment of the judges would often be correct. In more recent times, I have realized that a low score has more to do with impact, or what was viewed before my image, than what was or was not technically wrong with an image, or what category I decided to put an image in.

This past image competition cycle, one of my favorite images I have ever created was my lowest-scoring image in WPPI's competition. While I didn't agree with the judging on that image, I did learn that I need to create something even more unique in order to score.

A pretty bride in a pretty place with a simple story isn't enough to wow a panel of judges these days, and that is a good thing. It is good because it inspires me to push the envelope to make something extraordinary next year, and even if I think it's amazing, I am going to push harder to make it even better. That is how you grow from competition.

The scores you receive can sometimes be discouraging. If you receive a lower-than-expected score, give yourself a few days to take it in, but once you are done feeling sorry for yourself (we all do), allow that feeling of disappointment to motivate you to make something better than you have ever done before. Don't allow the feeling of defeat to consume you and deflate your motivation, because if you do that, you are letting image competition hinder your growth instead of propel it.





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.

michaelanthonyphotography.com



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Featuring

46 | Getting Started in Destination Wedding Photography with Sal Cincotta

58 | Traveling Smart as a Destination Photographer with Michelle Turner

72 | Tips for Photographing in Empty & Abandoned Buildings with Scott Detweiler

86 | Changing Gears as Elopements Take Over the Industry with Dawn Kelly

100 | 8 Tips for the Traveling Photographer with Alissa Zimmerman

114 | Travel-Sized Equipment That Won't Break the Bank – or Your Back with Phillip Blume

126 | Hit the Road: Working With Models on Destination Shoots with Nino Batista

140 | 5 Travel Tips for Photographing Destination Weddings with Raph Nogal

156 | Inspirations from Our Readers

GETTING STARTED IN DESTINATION WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY

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with Sal Cincotta

Getting Started in Destination Wedding Photography | Sal Cincotta



Do you like to travel? Do you like adventures? Do you love different cultures and cuisines? Do you want to see the world? Then maybe you, like me, will love destination wedding photography.

Sure, you have to work and you are not going to spend your time tanning, but if you are going to work, why not have the world as your backdrop? That's pretty much been my philosophy for the last seven years. Seeing the world is one of the single most enjoyable things I do in my life. I just love it—the culture, the food, the people. Knowing that I have made new friends all around the world is such an incredible feeling.

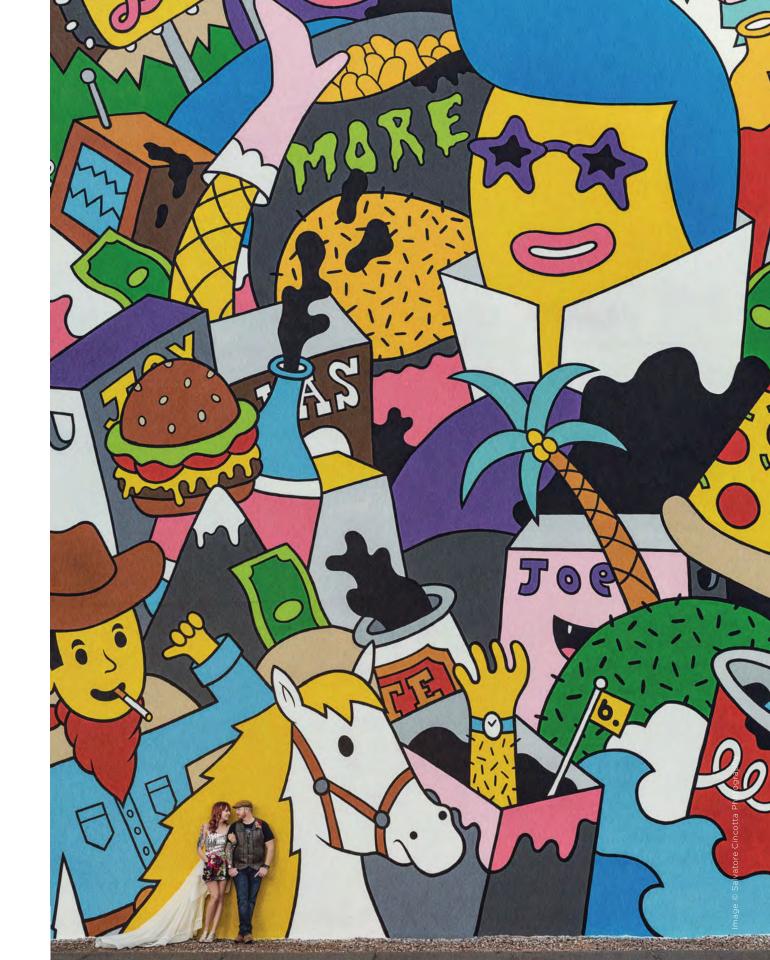
I say it all the time: We have the best jobs in the world. Destination photography is an incredible gig if you can get it. And make no mistake, it's not merely about international travel. Domestic travel is equally as rewarding.

In order for any of this to happen, there are some basics you need to achieve your goals. These are some tips and tricks I have learned along the way. Avoid the mistakes I've made, and your travels will be safe, secure and, most important of all, rewarding.

Show it to sell it.

You are probably so tired of hearing things like this, but just like with any sales, you have to show exactly what you are selling. Do you think people are going to hire you for a destination event if you don't have a single picture showing your work? Good luck with that. Destination work is grueling: long hours, lots of travel, lots of improvisation. I am not trying to dissuade you from this life, but I want you to enter it with eyes wide open and prove to your clients that you can deliver on an event like this.

Your website needs to be a showcase for your destination photography, both domestic and international. If you don't have any work to show, that is a problem I address later in this article.





Book your first destination shoot.

I'll never forget my first big break. We had a bride and groom getting married in Europe. It was a dream come true. I was dying to shoot overseas, and this was my first chance.

So what's your first destination wedding worth to you? To me, it's priceless. But you've got to work on that portfolio and reach out to the right people to get there. Do whatever you have to do in order to book that first destination wedding. For my first one, I broke even after the costs of travel, hotel, time away from the office and the significant discount I offered the client.

We realized that getting that first wedding under our belt was priceless. You need this for your portfolio, experience, website, etc. If you can end this first job breaking even, then you have won, my friend. If you can do it and turn a profit, more power to you. I was happy to get all this knowledge and experience and do it without losing money. It was the beginning of what would end up being a huge part of my business—and the most rewarding.

Let the world know.

You need to let everyone know by any and all means necessary that you travel and love doing it. Let them know on your social media channels, website, blog, everywhere.

Website. Set up a separate page that talks about destination photography and showcases your destination work. Talk about each trip you have been on and what you loved most about it. It is a dedicated gallery of destination work. Be blunt about it: "We travel the world. Wherever you go, we go."

Blog. On your blog, you should have a dedicated post for every place you have traveled. Make it personal. Don't just show wedding work. Showcase the architecture and the streets, and tell me a story about why you loved this place and what you enjoyed most during your adventures there. This presents you as an expert to anyone looking to travel there. Of course, your blog should contain SEO for these key terms so you get some traction.

Social media. This is where I like to show my personal side: behind the scenes, funny moments, food, sightseeing, touristy things. Not everything we do has to be so formal. We need to show that personal side of ourselves. The couple that hires you to travel around the globe with them on their special day are signing up to have you be part of their family for a day. Your personality is a big part of the equation. Never underestimate the importance of your personality to the final decision.



Knowledge is power.

Do your homework. I cannot stress this enough. Think it's going to be as simple as "have camera, will travel"? Think again. This is hard work. There is a lot of preparation that goes into every destination shoot. Domestic and international travel require the same level of preparation.

Permits. Every country and every city is a little different. In NYC, put a tripod down, and you need a permit. Same location, no tripod, it's a public place? Have at it. Traveling to China? Better not point your camera at a government building. You will be in jail. Los Angeles? You need a permit to get off the plane. Seriously, that city is not photography friendly at all. You get my point. Do your research to avoid looking foolish with your clients.

Local customs. You need to understand local customs and traditions. In Iceland, people just don't care where you shoot, which is great for us. In certain states in the U.S., if you see purple stakes or flags, that means you will be shot if you trespass. In Japan, they take security very seriously, and you will be chased out of public spaces very quickly.

Language. Learn at least some of the basics in any language. Want to piss the French off when shooting in Paris? Speak to them in English without ever trying to speak a word of French. I have shot in Paris over 10 times. Never once have I had an issue with a Parisian. I find them to be very helpful and friendly, but then again, I at least attempt to be courteous and speak some very bad French. They usually appreciate the attempt and have always been friendly back and very helpful.

Location scouting. Use the Internet—yeah, that thing you spend half your life on liking pictures of cats and watching dumb videos. Use it to help you make money. Google travel blogs in the city you are traveling to. Ask your clients if there are any local landmarks they want incorporated into their shoot. Use Google Maps and Street View to get a better lay of the land.

Cost of travel.

How much should you charge? That is always the million-dollar question. Everyone does it differently. Here's how I do it. First, *never* let your client book your travel and hotel. You will regret it almost immediately. One time, I had a client book an international trip for me, and what would normally be nine hours of travel was now 23 hours of travel. Why? Because he saved \$300 on the ticket. I guess my time was worthless to him. That was the first and only time that ever happened to me. After that, I took control over my travel.

Domestic travel. I add \$1,000 to any package. This is usually more than enough to get me a night's stay in a hotel, rental car, food and airfare on Southwest. Remember, this is work, not a vacation. This makes my clients very happy because they don't have to worry about any of the details.

International travel. I get a quote from the airline for airfare, a hotel close to their location and basic food and travel fees (rental car, etc.). I am transparent with the costs and let them see everything—but I still will not let them book it. If there are delays or flight changes, you cannot make these changes without involving them since it is on their credit card. Own your own travel, and you also get all the travel points and frequent flyer miles.

Keep your costs down. Travel costs for me are a break-even. I am not looking to make it difficult for my client to book me versus a local photographer, so keep costs reasonable. Stay in an average hotel. You are not there to vacation. Keep costs low and make your money on the actual wedding.

That said, I like to add personal time to every trip. I have to absorb the cost of this. Here is my thought process: If a client pays for me to travel halfway around the world, adding a few extra personal days where all I have to cover is the hotel is a no-brainer. This gives me time to be a tourist or even schedule some personal projects to work on. This is how I have built such an extensive portfolio of destination work.





Where do you want to go?

Every year, we pick a country we want to shoot in and we make it happen. All I need is one client to bite, and the trip is usually paid for. Once you have the tools, you will be able to make it happen, and the only question will be: Where do you want to go? You will have a network of clients who will want to travel with you or even coordinate their trips around your schedule.

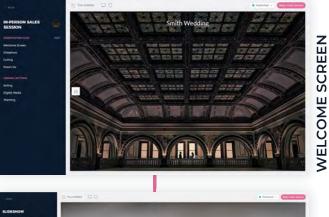
The rest of that time is mine to shoot other clients, build my portfolio or just enjoy the place, the people, the cultures, the food. This is my favorite thing. Life is an adventure. Get out of your bubble and enjoy this incredible planet we share. You will soon realize how similar we all are. Everyone should travel and learn that most vital of lessons.



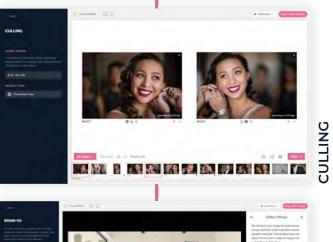


Sal Cincotta is an international award-winning photographer, educator, author and the publisher of Shutter Magazine. Sal's success is directly tied to the education he received in business school. He graduated from Binghamton University, a Top 20 business school, and has worked for Fortune 50 companies 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.

salcincotta.com







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Dual-Vu: Client screen

Dual-Vu: Admin screen with order notes

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spotlight

with Salvatore Cincotta

TRAVELING SMART As a DESTINATION PHOTOGRAPHER

with Michelle Turner

1. Autority



I am a destination photographer. I photograph weddings, portraits and commercial gigs, and the one thing that is consistent across all genres is that I travel quite a long distance to most of my shoots. As a destination photographer, I'm constantly trying to simplify and protect my gear as I travel—it's my goal to arrive at my destination (and back home again!) with all of my gear undamaged and my images intact.

I'm normally on bigger planes, but sometimes I'm on small regional planes. I've been rerouted on 10-seater planes, night buses and crowded commuter trains. I've traveled across international borders on the top of buses and on foot after my original travel plans were interrupted. I try to be prepared for any scenario, and follow four rules when I pack my bags:

- 1. My gear needs to be easy for me to carry.
- 2. It needs to fly under the radar of potential thieves.
- 3. It needs to be protected from the elements.
- 4. It needs to fit on even the smallest (or most unconventional!) vehicles while remaining in my possession.















I plan for the smallest vehicle on which I might find myself, and I choose my bag accordingly.

I like my bags to be small and light rather than overstuffed. Since most airlines allow two carry-on bags (even on international flights), I carry a backpack and an ONA bag. The great thing about this is that if I end up on a smaller plane that allows only one carry-on bag, I can condense them into one bag by fitting the ONA into the expandable backpack. No matter what, I make sure the backpack can fit under the seat in front of me since overhead space is unpredictable. Both bags are international carry-on compliant just in case they are ever measured (this has never happened to me, though, because my gear never looks oversized).











I am a gear minimalist. I shoot mirrorless (Fujifilm), so my gear is already smaller than most, but I also shoot mostly primes and I carry a total of two bodies and four lenses, even to the most extensive shoots. With the exception of family portraits (which I photograph exclusively wide), I shoot every scene two ways: wide and tight. I'm a two-body shooter for weddings and commercial gigs, so that works out well-I have a wide lens on one body (the 16mm Fujifilm, which is a 24mm equivalent) and a longer lens on the other (the 56mm Fujifilm, which is an 85mm equivalent).

As with every session, I have backups. While the 16 and the 56 are my most-loved and most-used lenses, I occasionally need to shoot wider or tighter, so the two other lenses in my bag can serve as backups for my primary lenses in case one of those breaks either mid-shoot or en route.

Every piece of gear needs to serve a very clear purpose, but in order to have a backup, I choose gear that overlaps when I select my third and fourth lenses. My clients expect to see wide and tight options, so I also carry a Fujfilm 10-24mm and a 90mm. Those two lenses allow me to shoot wider and tighter than my primary lenses, but they can also take the place of those primary lenses if I break either one.

In other words, I have something else that will do the job and will allow me to provide what my clients are expecting without carrying an exact replica. This allows me to maximize a limited amount of space in my bags.

Because I frequently travel to a location for a shoot that will occur on just one day (no rescheduling or reshoots!), I need to be prepared to create my own light. Mother Nature doesn't always cooperate, and I need to provide images with beautiful light even if the natural light isn't all that beautiful or golden hour never comes. I choose the best light I can that comes in the most portable package, so most of the time I travel with three Profoto A1's. Because space is at a premium, I work with umbrellas-I carry both a translucent and a reflective umbrella, which cover all of my needs for my style in the field and are completely collapsible and can be strapped to the side of my backpack.

Whether I need to spread or contain the light, I'm covered. With a collection of corrective gels, I can match or create any temperature of light that I need, and I can even recreate golden hour. I carry a monopod if I need to hold my lights myself, and a small light stand in case I need to set up my light farther away. I don't work with an assistant for most of my shoots, so I always have a roll of duct tape and a bungee cord/carabiner on hand to help me secure my light stand/gear to something (they are also helpful for making repairs).



age © Michelle Turne

Finally, there are a few accessories I bring on location. My laptop goes into either of my bags. My bags also include three times the backup batteries and three times the memory cards I think I'll need (all precharged and preformatted large-capacity cards). That way, I'm never in a position where I feel like I need to charge batteries or format cards while on location and when I need to change cards on the fly. I've found that most memory errors stem from operator error rather than memory card failure—after all, I'm most likely to make mistakes or misplace something when I'm under pressure—so I minimize the need to change or format cards.

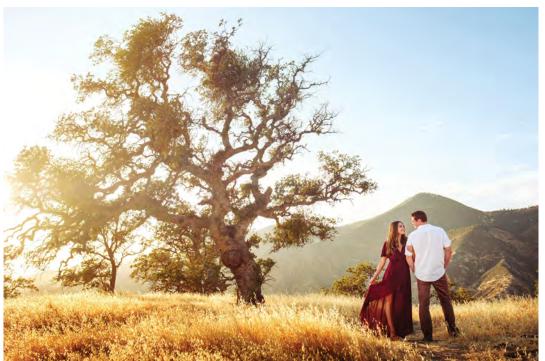
I have the once-in-a-lifetime shoot mentality, so I'm shooting backups. In other words, I photograph one card in my dual-slot camera in Raw and one card in the other slot in JPEG. While I prefer to use the Raw files, I'm comfortable using either if one card fails.

My post-shoot workflow is just as important as the gear I bring. I want to protect my gear, but I also want to protect my images on the way home. Because of that, I make a copy of my cards on an external hard drive, and then I separate out my files and keep them in three places. My hard drive lives in my backpack, my Raw cards live in my ONA bag and my JPEG cards are in a small card holder in my jacket pocket (on my body).

That way, if one bag (or even both) gets stolen or damaged, I always have another copy of my images. I'm less worried about my gear on the way home because I'm well insured. The gear can be replaced with an insurance claim, but the images can't be, so they are my top priority. If I have fantastic Internet access while on location (very rare), I upload my JPEG files to my PhotoShelter account, which gives me unlimited image storage.







ige © Michelle

When I get home from the shoot, I store my Raw cards off-site until I can process the shoot. Only after I'm finished with the images and everything has been delivered to the client do I bring the cards home and format them and put them back into rotation.

Make it a habit to check and clean your gear after every location shoot—you can't imagine the amount of dust and sand that accumulates in a bag while on location, and it's a nasty surprise to find that you have a dirty sensor when you are shooting stopped down in the field without any sensor cleaner. My gear always travels in tip-top shape so I can focus on making great images.



Michelle has published three books about fashionable wedding photography and speaks at conventions and events throughout the year on posing and off-camera flash. She is an alumna of Brooks School and Georgetown University, and also studied at Dartmouth. She lives near Santa Barbara, California, and splits much of her time between Maine and Puerto Vallarta. Her photography work takes her all over the world.

michelleturner.com



Stand Out from the Crowd.

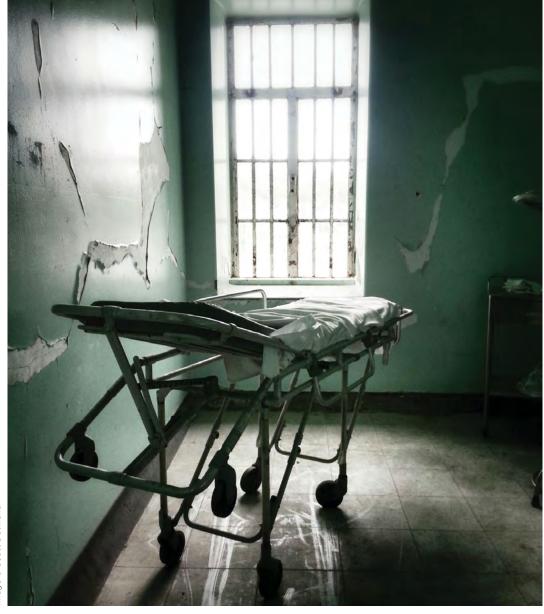
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Many photographers dream of working on location in incredible places where one might encounter the occasional giraffe or dolphin. A few years ago I was exposed to the dark side of destination shoots when I was invited by my good friend Brett to shoot inside a vast abandoned insane asylum in West Virginia erected before the Civil War. Since then, I've had the urge to visit destinations where I am more likely to get tetanus than to see a family of elk.

There is a strange allure to working on location in these abandoned buildings. Part of it is the architecture and history of the building. But to be honest, I'm mostly into it for the spooky factor. At the asylum, my mind was free to ponder the 100,000 souls who died there. It makes one look at the extensive doctor's lavatory with a different mindset. This massive sink-adorned room is where doctors would start their day, wash up between operations and chat with other physicians about patients. When I walk through the halls of places like this, I let my mind wander to the history. I also think about the architectural workmanship of those who are long dead and forgotten.

In the solitary confinement room, the name of a nurse was carved into the concrete floor. That gave me an odd, ghastly feeling. Perhaps I was feeling what those gizmos adorned with a lot of blinking lights measure on those ghost hunter shows.





Most of the subjects I enjoy shooting fall into two distinct categories: those that complement the place and those that oppose it. Shooting high-fashion and artistic nudes contrasts strangely with the destruction all around the subject, and that dichotomy is interesting to me. The other category embraces the nature of the place, and that is where I get into my arcane mood and work on somewhat disturbing images that evoke an emotion. I am not into gore or blood, but enjoy the more subtle ways of giving those little hairs on the back of the neck a workout. Creating spooky images and seeing the proper response is more natural than some other forms of art where pretentious people come up with all sorts of wild reasons you made an artistic choice. In this case, they just drop their glass of wine and freak out, and you know your mission is accomplished.

I embrace the feeling I get from a specific location. Most of the time, this isn't going to be a happy one. We might as well call it creepy. As you can probably guess, I love creating images filled with emotion in places like these. Most of mine also include a figure, which might be wearing something that fits the theme, or a beautiful nude. Another common reason for risking entry into these abandoned locations is the sheer wealth of goodies for compositing. I have found unique textures and scenes that just don't come along frequently, and capturing them adds a unique character to my images.

You're probably wondering if I believe in ghosts. I don't, but I have been in many places that should be on any respectable ghost's list of places to haunt.

Now that you know the reasons I enjoy it, you are probably ready to grab your camera and find some busted house for your next photo session. Before you do that and end up in jail, or worse, let's talk about some of the things you need to know before you venture forth. Keep in mind this isn't an exhaustive list, and I am not an expert like some hardcore "urbex" photographers.



Image © Scott Detweil





age © Scott Detweiler

DON'T GO INTO BASEMENTS

There are structural concerns in most of these places, and being on the bottom of the pile doesn't give you the best odds of survival. Secondly, if there are ne'er-do-wells, wild animals, crazy spiders or exploding fungus, this is where they prefer to live. Bring a sword and a torch or two if you plan to venture down those stairs alone, because I am not coming with you.

THE OPPOSITE OF THE BASEMENT IS THE ROOF

The roof is often the weakest part of the structure for load bearing. Walking on an old roof is a riskier dice roll than the band of stupid adventurers that went into the basement.







Shutter Magazine . April 2018

80

ages © Scott Detweiler







DON'T GO INTO HOUSES

Houses are where people are likely to be living (duh). After the last legal residents have moved on, homeless people often take their place, and they don't much care for visitors. Unless you are an aspiring crack dealer or have a death wish, just stay out of houses. They also have some of the weakest floors and decay much more quickly than their commercial counterparts.

One of the phrases I have heard uttered is "Breaking and entering is a felony, but trespassing is a misdemeanor." Now, I am not condoning you enter places illegally, but keep in mind that you are probably breaking a law or two in most cases. Be especially careful at federal properties, like abandoned post offices—entering those places is a felony even if the front door is wide open or even missing.

CITY PERMITS AND SAFETY

There are plenty of abandoned buildings you can enter for a small fee and enjoy a day of photography without fear of being hauled away in handcuffs or face a hefty fine. Contact a city's film and television office and ask about an urban explorer pass or permit. They often have lists of locations and descriptions of the safety of those spots.

behindtheshutter.com

Just because you have permission doesn't mean you are safe from those willing to do you harm and take your camera gear. Use common sense, be aware of your surroundings and don't go alone.



WEAR PROPER CLOTHING

Many of these places are downright dangerous. Wear safety shoes to protect your feet from rusty nails, strategically hidden poo and other scary things you probably should kick before they bite you. Change your shoes after you leave the building. You don't want to track whatever you stepped in all over anyone's house or car.

DON'T DO DAMAGE

Even if you are in a place that is filled with graffiti, you are there to explore and document, not to alter the location. Be a ghost. Don't disturb anything. Every time you move something, you stir up dust that can contain a lot of things you probably don't want to breathe into your lungs. Consider wearing a mask. Fungal spores, mold and lung-shredding particles of asbestos are often prevalent. Depending on your research of the location, any or all of these safety precautions are things you should consider. As I have said before, use common sense.

Magazine . April 2018



Many of the most exciting places are those off the beaten path. Most cities have buildings that might still have their original furnishings and equipment, or be in pristine but aged condition. These are goldmines that are closely guarded secrets among those who discover them. A little research can open a door (literally) that would not otherwise be available. Having a robust portfolio of work can also talk you into locations where they know you will respect their property. That portfolio can get you out of a situation with the law when they can see your work and know you are not the type of person they would want to arrest. Of course, all of this goes out the window if you happen to be in a place where the owner of the property wants to wreck your life and sue you to set an example.

Keep all of these things in mind. Have a plan, do your research and work quickly. The less gear you take with you, the better. Best of luck if you choose to follow this path, worthy adventurer.



Scott is a conceptual portrait photographer based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Along with his original approach to portraiture, he excels at fashion, boudoir and occasionally weddings. When he's not shooting, Scott turns his studio into a classroom where he holds workshops on subjects like lighting, conceptual work and boudoir.

sedetweiler.com

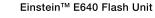
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with Dawn Kelly



When your business is struggling, you have two choices. You can whine about how unfair it is or you can get up and fight for what you've worked so hard to build. Like most of you, I built my photography studio from nothing. In 2005, I had two things: a used camera and what Mark Cuban of *Shark Tank* calls "the hustle." With pure sweat equity, I grew a thriving business, almost lost it in the recession, then spent years rebuilding.

In 2016, when my business started to struggle again, I was not going to let it die. I still had that hustle. I knew it was time to innovate, but I didn't know why or how, and I needed to come up with something quick. Then a couple hired us to photograph their elopement in Yosemite. As I shot their ceremony at Cathedral Beach, with El Capitan looming over us, I knew how I was going to save my business.

I grew up in and around Yosemite. I've loved it for 37 years. Why hadn't I thought of it before? It was a virtual goldmine waiting for me to dig it up. I know that park inside and out, that living, breathing place. I quickly realized how valuable that knowledge is.

The wedding industry has seen some serious changes since 2016. The biggest change came about when same-sex marriage was legalized on June 26, 2016. There were suddenly thousands of couples who wanted to get legally wed, and they were in a rush to make their relationships official. This created a huge surge in elopements, and a trend was born. Suddenly, all types of couples were getting hitched at elaborate city halls, majestic national parks and on top of mountains in Iceland. Simply put, people caught on to the fact that eloping is easier.

I hear the same thing from every one of our couples: They just want to keep it simple. Some have been married before and have already "done the big wedding." Some want to save money, happy to skip the expensive reception. I've asked each couple why they chose to elope. They all say they don't want to deal with the stress. As we all know, weddings are extremely stressful. Stress is going out of style.

HOW TO CHANGE GEARS: AN ACTIONABLE PLAN

1 DO YOUR RESEARCH.

The first thing you have to figure out is where people are eloping in your area. Do you live near a national park or other popular destination location for elopements? If you live in a big city, you probably have a gorgeous City Hall. If you live in a tiny town in Arkansas, you're surrounded by beautiful mountains, rivers and maybe a lake. You don't have to live near a national park to build an incredible elopement business.

Spend at least a month researching these things:

- Popular elopement locations in your area
- Interests of your target clients (i.e., hiking and camping in Yosemite)
- Who else photographs elopements in your area, and what do the photos look like?
- What is required to photograph in these areas? Will there be hiking involved? Are permits required?Do the same research on Instagram
- Brainstorm how you can make it completely different

2 WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT YOU?

What makes you irreplaceably valuable to clients? What will make them think they cannot get married without you? For me, it's the fact that I grew up right outside of Yosemite, spending much of my childhood there. Not only do people immediately think of me as the Yosemite Girl, but they realize their experience with me will be special because I see the park through my unique local eyes. These eyes saw the park with my family, classmates, friends and husband. I have a lot of love for Yosemite.

So, what is unique about you?

Have you been married more than once? If so, you have unique insight for couples who choose to elope because they already had the "big wedding" and they want to keep it simple this time. Most of our elopement clients had been married before.

Are you plus size? Use that to market to full-figured couples who are looking for someone who understands their feelings and can truly flatter them. This group is often overlooked.

Are you skilled and talented while working with same-sex couples? Not everyone is, so advertise that.

3 GET OUT THERE AND SHOOT

Of course, you are going to need photos for your portfolio. Ask your past clients if they'd like to model in styled shoots. Reach out to couples who didn't have a lot of time for portraits on their wedding day. Offer free portrait sessions to at least five couples. Of those five, three will work out. Get in touch with a florist you love working with, explain your vision and ask if they'd like to provide the flowers for the styled shoots. Do the same with hair and makeup stylists. This is a great way to start building a team.





4 CREATE YOUR SPECIAL ELOPEMENT GUIDE

An Elopement Guide is a dedicated page on your website that has comprehensive information and photos about eloping at one venue or location. This will not only build incredible SEO, but it establishes you as an expert. Here's what to include in your elopement guide.

At the very top, explain why they should hire you, including the things I mentioned in step 2.

Use photos that show off the beauty of the venue or location. Include wide shots with a lot of landscapes. In a way, you are advertising the location. Beautiful photos will make someone want to elope in that location, and if they see you as the expert, they will want to work with you.

Don't share too much valuable insider information and tips. You don't want to give up all those secrets that make you so valuable. I advertise an exclusive planning booklet that only our clients receive.

Share as much info about the location as possible. Not only will this show off your expertise, but it will considerably boost your SEO.

5 PUT TOGETHER YOUR TEAM

Look back through your year and make a list of the vendors you loved working with. Ideally, your team should include two of each vendor type: two hair and makeup artists, two videographers, two officiants, two florists. Reach out to each vendor and pitch your idea. Then set up a meeting or conference call so everyone can discuss ideas, policies and pricing. Negotiate pricing for weekday all-inclusive packages, and collect everyone's pricing, contracts and information so you are familiar with how they run their businesses.

CREATE YOUR ELOPEMENT PACKAGES

The average cost of a wedding has been hovering around \$26,000 since 2014, but 44 percent of couples spend less than \$10,000. An elopement is a great way for a couple to come in under that \$10,000 budget without sacrificing the designer dress, gorgeous scenery or high-quality photography. When we surveyed them, 95 percent of our couples said they are happy to pay for one of our luxury packages because they aren't spending money on a reception.

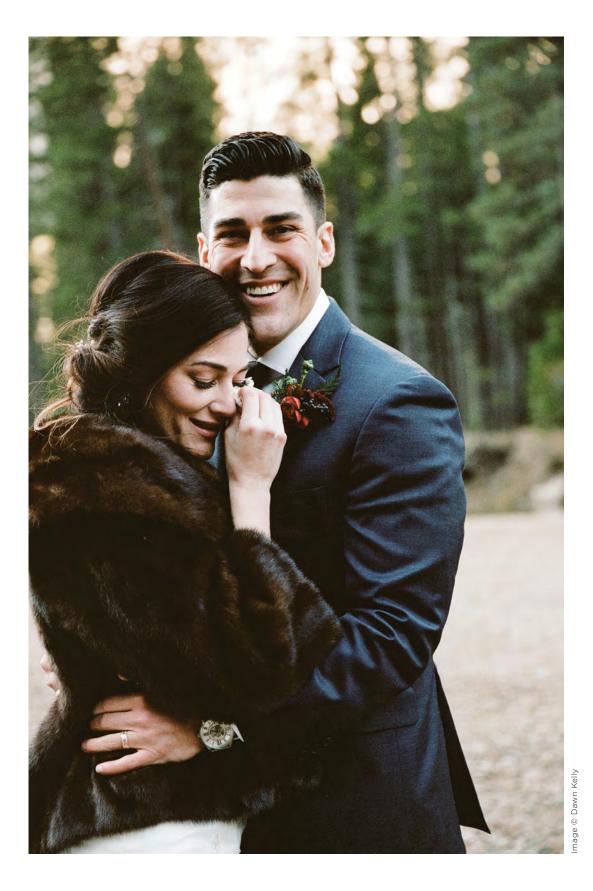
Our most popular package includes:

- Planning
- Travel

6

- 5 hours of photography coverage
- 20-page handmade Italian photo album with dust jacket
- Professional hair and makeup for the bride (by outside vendors)
- Officiant
- Luxury bridal bouquet and groom boutonniere (by outside vendors)
- Slideshow

When you put the packages together, have your lawyer go over your website and pricing copy, contracts and policies. This is extremely important because the wrong wording can make you responsible for other vendors' business practices.





Magazine .

Shutter

94

7 CREATE YOUR CUSTOM INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT

Instagram is the new Google. Most millennials use Instagram as a database to find products, watch tutorials and search for vendors. The millennial generation is all about elopements. While it's true that hashtags are incredibly powerful, account handles are even more powerful while searching. I chose @yosemiteweddingphotos as my handle because any time someone types "yosemitewedding" into IG's search panel, my account pops up above any of the hashtags.

Link your bio to your free elopement guide. Once you set up your account, it's time to research hashtags and set up your Instagram workflow.

8 CREATE YOUR NEWSLETTER SIGN-UP PAGE

This is a landing page where you can send people to sign up for your newsletter. Include great sales copy explaining why they should sign up, how often you'll be sending emails and what they'll be receiving for free. You should also include a newsletter sign-up form on your elopement guide and at the bottom of your blog posts.

9 **BLOG REGULARLY**

You had them sign up to receive your newsletter for a reason. They don't just want to see your latest work. They want value. When they are planning their wedding, brides want help. Give it to them. The more help they receive from you, the more they will trust you and want to work with you. The theory of reciprocity is strong in regard to blogging.

Some things to blog about:

- Insider tips, such as where to stay, what to eat and where the cleanest public bathrooms are
- Free checklists of what to bring
- Permit and license information
- Tips on how to choose the right dress to wear for that area
- The most popular flowers and how to make them unique
- Photos of secret spots that only you know about (do not reveal where the spots are)
- Weather and seasonal changes
- Lists of activities in the area
- Personal experiences you've had in the area



10 DEFINE AND DOCUMENT POLICIES AND WORKFLOW

When inquiries start rolling in, everything should be set up, including a sales funnel and a plan to produce the best customer service possible.

Here's my workflow.

- 1. Inquiry is received and automatically logged into Táve.
- 2. Return email with request for a phone consultation with the bride.
- 3. Have phone consultation during which I answer questions and explain my expertise.
- 4. Check availability of team members.
- 5. Book the job.
- Send email that includes: contract, liability waiver, retainer invoice, helpful planning links, digital Yosemite Elopement Planning Guide and anything else we spoke about in our phone consultation.
- 7. Confirm with vendors. Send emails that include: event date, location, bride's contact information and job details.
- 8. Contract, liability waiver and retainer fee received.
- 9. Hold a video chat planning session with the bride and groom. Answer questions and decide on the ceremony location, ceremony time and spots we will visit for portraits.
- 10. Put together a timeline. Email your client the timeline along with other resources they requested.11. Follow up with vendors.









Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity to reshape your business as the wedding industry continues to change. If you follow the steps above, you can create a whole new section of your business you didn't even know was possible. Feel free to hit me up at dawn@dawnkellyphotography.com with questions and info about upcoming workshops.



Dawn Kelly is a wedding, elopement and boudoir photographer based in Modesto, California. She grew up in a tiny town in Mariposa County called Coulterville, with no gas station and one stop sign. Yosemite National Park was her school and backyard for almost 20 years. Now she helps couples' dreams come true of eloping in Yosemite, which she thinks is one of the most majestic, breathtaking places in the world. She also opens her home studio for workshops on branding, blogging and social media marketing.

dawnkellyphotography.com

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April 2018



Traveling the world doing photography is one of my favorite parts of the job. Many of us are wary of all the hassles and unexpected challenges of travel photography. It's not always glamorous, and it takes time to learn how to manage the chaos. Here are my own hard-won Top 5 travel tips for photographers anxious to hop on a plane and cross an ocean with a bunch of gear in the overhead

1. BE REALISTIC ABOUT TRAVEL TIME

It doesn't matter if you're driving, flying, taking a train or walking—you have to be realistic about time. I use Google Maps to plan trips. If Google Maps says it will take three hours and 45 minutes to get from point A to point B, I allow an extra hour or two for stops along the way, traffic and any miscellaneous event that can happen that's out of my control. This ensures I'm not scrambling to get somewhere on time (which can get you two speeding tickets in one trip, which I heard happened to a photographer recently, but, ahem, I'm not saying who it was).



2. PLAN YOUR DOWNTIME

Being realistic about downtime is also important. Let's say you have five days in one city. It's instinctual to want to plan photo shoots and excursions every single day you're there to take advantage of the locations. There's nothing wrong with that, but after years of trying to do it, we have realized that everyone needs down days. For us, a down day doesn't mean watching TV in bed all day. We have a business to run back home, so staying caught up on email and tasks is vital to the success of the company (which is ultimately what allows you to take these trips, right?).

Nine out of 10 times, a down day means pajamas and no showers while checking email. Comfort and relaxation is important to the creative process, and you've got a jam-packed schedule full of photo shoots that require all the creativity you have. You also need coffee. Lots of good, robust coffee.

3. BE REALISTIC ABOUT EATING

No one wants to work with a hangry photographer. Whenever Sal and I land in whatever city we're going to, we get to our hotel or Airbnb, drop off our bags and go to the nearest market to load up on snacks and meals for the time we're there. Think about the days you're on photo shoots just as much as your down days so you don't have to keep making trips to the store when you run out of food.

Our essentials:

- Coffee (hopefully your hotel or Airbnb has a coffee maker for those down days when you have no intention of getting out of your pajamas)
- Breakfast stuff
- French bread and cold cuts with cheese for sandwiches (keep it simple)
- Wine (for me, mostly)

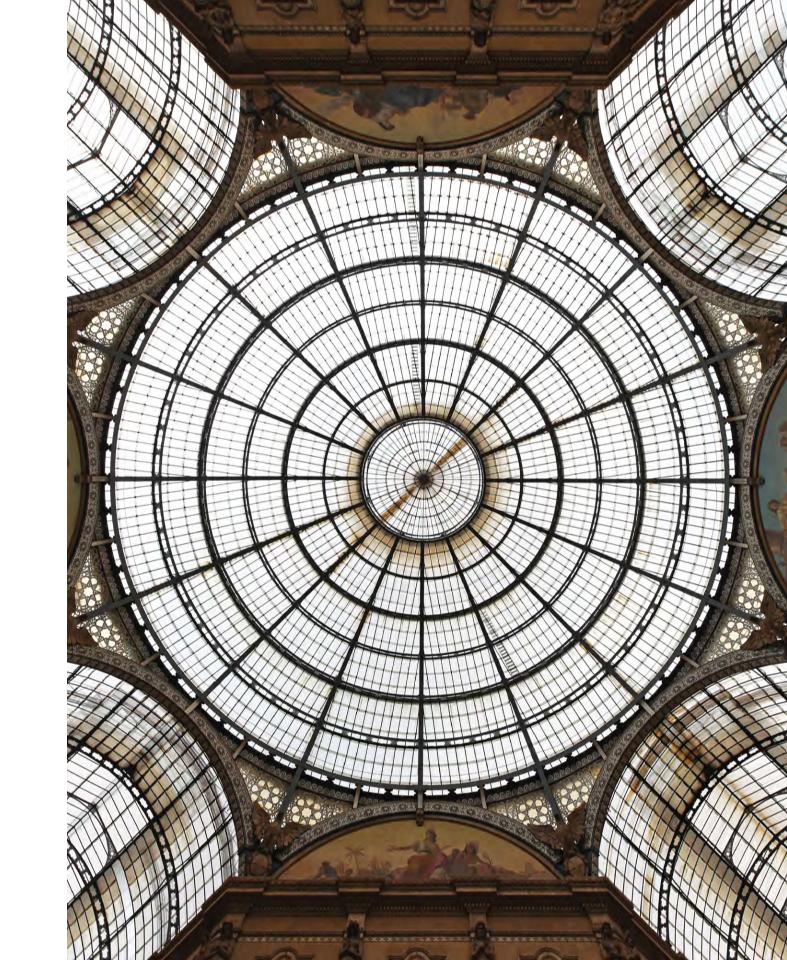




4. BE REALISTIC ABOUT LOCATION SCOUTING

Most of the time, we don't have the luxury of knowing what's around these cities outside of searching online and using Google Earth. I add on at least a half day on the front end of every city to give us time to scout locations in person (or at least check our prescouted locations in person to make sure they exist and they look like the images we found online).







5. BE LOYAL TO COMPANIES AND REAP THE REWARDS

Loyalty in the travel world pays off in so many ways while you're on the road (or in the air). Do the research upfront and select the company with the best rewards programs.

For airlines, we started our international travel with United Airlines back in 2013 and have been consistently booking our international flights with them ever since. The points add up. We're able to upgrade to business class on 14-plus-hour flights. There's nothing better than getting upgraded for a flight when you know you're going to be thrown into chaos the second you hit the ground. Side note: Be careful with the upgrades. Once you've flown the friendly skies in business class, economy class will never be the same.

For domestic flights, we have been using Southwest Airlines for the past six years. That loyalty has earned us access to a companion pass, which allows me to fly for free anywhere Southwest flies as long as I'm flying with Sal. Huge perk.

Hotel member benefits are more of a comfort thing, honestly, but the comfort matters after a long day of travel. It comes in handy when you're on a trip that requires a lot of gear or suitcases. We are Diamond members with Hilton, which usually means we get upgraded to a suite or larger room at no additional cost. The extra space is awesome, especially on those down days when you're spending the entire day in the room.

6. NEVER SACRIFICE YOUR COMFORT

When we first started traveling internationally, we tried to cut costs every chance we got. Obviously, this will be the case for many of you as well. But after years of cramming too many people into a small room with one bathroom, spending way too much time trying to shove eight suitcases into a tiny car and more, we realized our comfort was well worth the extra couple hundred dollars.

If you're traveling with two or more people (and don't share a room with that person already), rent an Airbnb rather than multiple hotel rooms as a major cost saver and a good way to live like the locals.

If you need to rent a vehicle for on-location photo shoots, spend the extra money on a mid- to full-size SUV. This gives you plenty of space for suitcases and gear and plenty of legroom. You can lay out dresses and other wardrobe across the back row of seats to avoid wrinkling.





7. THE INTERNET IS YOUR BEST FRIEND

I cannot stress enough the importance of research before going on any kind of trip, large or small, domestic or international. You have the breadth of human knowledge at your fingertips. You have no excuse going unprepared.

I read reviews of everything when we travel, including reviews, forums and blogs on restaurants, hotels and other services. I use TripAdvisor.com religiously overseas. Sure, it's littered with nonsense and terrible information, but if you get smarter about the phrases you use when searching, the results can be a game changer for you. Just type in the exact question you have in your head, and you'll be amazed at how many other people posted the exact same question.

Don't ignore blogs. I spend hours reading travel blogs about other people's experiences at our planned destinations. This is a great way to get real-world advice from someone who has been where you're going. There's a lot of crap out there. Weed through the ones that don't fit what you're looking to accomplish, and you'll find some gold.

8. PACK SMART AND LIGHT

I have a routine that works pretty well for me. It's time-consuming, but it works. I lay out anything I might need for the length of time I will be gone-dressy outfit for a nice dinner? The essentials? Shoes? Check. Round one: complete. From there, I start narrowing it down to what I actually need until I get it to under 50 pounds. Put the priority on things like laptops and hard drives that you won't be able to replace at your destination. Things like clothes are much easier to replace.

The number-one tip I can give anyone, not just photographers, who are traveling: Pack smart and light. There is nothing more obnoxious than having to lug around three or four suitcases in and out of airports, onto trains and into taxis.



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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TRAVEL-SIZED EQUIPMENT

THAT WON'T BREAK YOUR BACK - OR THE BANK

(68,8)

with Phillip Blume

and the second second

If we are living in the Golden Age of mobile photography, 2018 has shaped up to be its best year yet, by far. New technology is turning photographers' dreams into reality with gear that's more advanced and less expensive than ever.

Many of these items were just announced last month at the WPPI show in Las Vegas, where I was an instructor, and I can't wait to share them with you. We're talking pro quality that's accessible to virtually anyone—and that fits in your backpack.

For 10 years, my wife Eileen and I have photographed destination weddings, fashion and nonprofit work around the world. At the start of our career, trips required multiple cases packed with heavy gear. As recently as a few months ago, we were still forced to carry separate cases for lighting equipment alone. Video was even worse, with the bulky rigs required to create different controlled motion.

As a minimalist, the weight, complexity and price of camera gear drove me crazy.

No more. Yes, the big expensive stuff is still available if you want it. Knock yourself out. But the measurable difference between big brands and value brands has shrunken into oblivion—and the so-called value brands seem to be innovating the most.

If you're part of ComeUnity, our private online education group, you've probably watched me rig gear to save money and still get the results I demand. I've taped pocket flashes together with cross-wired triggers to outperform studio strobes; converted backpacks into better camera bags; and maintained the same old camera bodies for more than a decade. If it works, why replace it?

Guess what, my friends: This is the year I upgrade. And I couldn't be more excited.

I'll always preach against gear addiction. (It's your vision, not a camera, that defines great work.) But in case it's time for you to upgrade, here's my definitive short list of must-have products to make your work easier, lighter and way more fun. (Learn more about my "bag list" in my video at bit.ly/blume-gear.)





GODOX AD200 STROBE

What qualifies someone as a photographer? Pressing a camera button doesn't do it. A photographer is someone who draws with light. If you're going to do a better job lighting your images intentionally to tell a story, you need a versatile and reliable off-camera flash.

Enter the Godox AD200, the very first powerhouse strobe that can fit in your pocket. At full power, this bad boy packs the strength of three or four speedlight flashes combined, but in a lightweight package that won't tip your light stand.

The AD200 was released a few short months ago, and it has already upset the market as the biggest innovation in lighting for what felt like ages of mediocrity and price gouging by the big brands. You can snag this full-featured light—yes, it's loaded with manual, TTL, high-speed sync and more, all controlled from a simple camera trigger—for as little as \$299. Similar lights from one brand-name competitor range from \$1,000 to \$2,000 without any remarkable new features. Yeah, you read that right—not even in the same ballpark.

Did I mention the AD200 has a built-in modeling light, an interchangeable head for studio modifiers and a Li-Ion battery that lasts me through multiple weddings without a recharge? After waiting 10 years for something like this, I think I've finally found the perfect flash—hidden in the small pocket of my carry-on. And because it's shaped like a small speedlight, all my MagMod modifiers fit it like a glove. (More on that below, or at bit.ly/blume-gear.)



GODOX XPRO TTL CONTROLLER

If you start using the AD200 (or any compatible Godox speedlight), get the xPro Controller. Its usability ranks high compared to other on-camera triggers. It's streamlined and just feels luxurious. Every channel has its own physical button on a large viewing screen. Its ergonomic design means my forehead doesn't accidentally mess up my flash settings when I press my eye to the camera.

The price runs about \$25 more than a Godox X1T Controller, which has mostly the same options plus the advantage of a hot shoe to attach a manual flash. But the xPro is a killer value at under \$70, well worth every penny for how much easier and faster it is. Just remember that, unlike the AD200 flash (which is compatible with many camera makes and models), you will need to select the unique controller model compatible with your specific camera brand.

SONY A7III

I watched Sony unveil this surprise camera just last month at WPPI in Las Vegas. Jaws dropped. This new Alphaseries camera has professional specs but comes in at less than half the price of the Alpha a9 top-seller released just last year.



Why mirrorless? As a traveler, I can fit several of these small cameras in my bag with room to spare. And for now at least, I get chased out of public spaces less often because smaller cameras don't intimidate security guards like my oversize Nikons do. As a wedding photographer, I love how quiet and discreet mirrorless is.



Of course, Sony has dominated the mirrorless market, selling more mirrorless cameras than all other brands combined, and for good reason. Their tech is so superior, no one can seem to catch up. (Also during WPPI, Canon finally unveiled its first mirrorless camera aimed at pros, but it doesn't measure up. As a long-time Nikon user, I was extremely frustrated that despite a long period of vague promises, it also hasn't announced a single pro mirrorless option to date.)

In the past, the only thing that held me back from switching to Sony was cost. There's no way I'm going to mix cameras in my bag. I want a simple, unified system, so I would need to replace four camera bodies. But at almost \$4,500 a pop for the a9 model, I thought I'd have to keep dreaming.

Besides, I own a decent collection of Nikon lenses. Although I could still use Nikon glass on a Sony camera with an adapter, the focus speed would suffer.

But today I'm all out of excuses. I put my hands on the Sony a7III, and found that it has all the features I could possibly need: faster focusing even with a lens adapter thanks to 693 focus points (same number as the luxury a9), updated focus tracking for native lenses, a full-frame 24MB sensor (the sweet spot for resolution, in my opinion), crazy ISO lowlight capability, the same highly improved battery life of the a7RIII and internal 4K video.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention two more standout features that every photographer will benefit from: built-in five-axis SteadyShot stabilization (I don't need to spend extra money on stabilized lenses now) and an impressive 15-stop dynamic range to capture highlights and shadows, which digital had always struggled to do as well as film.

All of this, astonishingly, for under \$2,000. I'll be honest with you: I don't know how Sony can offer this kind of value without undercutting its expensive higher-end cameras. I'm buying a few of these now before they change their mind.



DJI Mavic Air

DJI Mavic Pro

DJI MAVIC AIR

Also raising the bar within the last few weeks, famous drone maker DJI unveiled its newest full-featured drone, the Mavic Air. In case you didn't know, drones aren't just for videographers anymore, and they aren't toys either. In an increasingly video-centric world, we all need better video to make our marketing stand out in creative ways. This one breaks the "drone barrier" for many of us.

Even if you're a new pilot, using this thing looks and feels like magic.

Beyond its intuitive controller, you can also control the Mavic Air with hand gestures that make you look like a Jedi master. A palm up, and it stops in midflight. A hand swipe to the side, and it obeys your command—or even flies a preinstalled flight pattern according to your instructions. With 21 minutes of flight time per battery, I'll be pulling this little toy out of my pocket for all kinds of video movements that once required large tripods and motorized slide rails.

It shoots spectacular 4K video on a three-axis mechanically stabilized gimbal, keeping it above the Spark and lesser drones. It sports cutting-edge visual and obstacle-avoidance, too. Yet the whole thing weighs less than one pound and folds up into a soda can-size bundle that makes the tiny Mavic Pro look like a giant.

I'm continually amazed by companies like Sony and DJI, which have no real competitors in their specialty markets yet continue to compete with themselves. I was just about to buy the Mavic Pro when DJI announced the Air.

The only drawback that might impact your purchasing decision is that the Mavic Air has a maximum range of about 3 miles, whereas the Mavic Pro can travel 4 miles. A 3-mile range at up to 42mph is all I need. I consider the Mavic Air an overall upgrade, although it costs \$200 less than its big brother. Wow.

utter.



DJI OSMO MOBILE 2

Pay attention to this amazing stabilizer for your phone camera. I've owned the older model for almost two years, and I take it with me everywhere.

Every professional photographer who wants to make more impact on social media should own this gizmo. And videographers might even find it proficient enough to replace some of the heavy DSLR's and rigs we've relied on in the past.

As my phone camera has advanced (currently it shoots 4K), my Osmo Mobile effectively has, too. That's why I prefer it over the pro version with the built-in camera (which is also a lot more expensive). I slip this "stick" into a pouch on my Spider Holster and then whip it out instantly for quick-draw wedding clips or epic BTS shots as I travel.

The Osmo Mobile 2 is a gimbal that stabilizes your phone camera like DJI's drone camera gimbals. You can wiggle, bump and run, but your footage stays silky smooth and raises production value. The Osmo Mobile 2 also boasts tools perfect for modern live-streaming, making it your social media personal assistant.

It smooths out your video in stabilized selfie mode (portrait or landscape). It tracks your face, so I can mount it to a light stand and it automatically follows me back and forth as I pace through how-to videos. Or I can set it up in a matter of seconds to take various types of time-lapse videos, including motion time-lapse in which I set the in and out points of my shot with a simple tap of the screen. Incredible advancements.

I've tested the Osmo Mobile against its most popular competitors. Although the costs are comparable, I haven't found anything that can keep up with its tracking speed and app usability. And you guessed it: Like the other products we've reviewed, DJI lowered the price on this upgraded version. The Osmo Mobile 2 will soon be sold for a mere \$129, a huge drop from the \$200 older version. No wonder the tech sites are calling it the best value of any smartphone accessory.

KENORA BACKPACK BY PORTAGE SUPPLY CO.

Where do I put all my high-tech camera gear on the go? These days I don't need three or four pieces of luggage. The most advanced and most compact gear is finally affordable. So now I fit it all in this specialized backpack, the Kenora.

Like many photographers, I've had something of a camera bag fetish over the years, and I've used a lot of them. But the bag I always drooled over was a \$500 designer backpack my friends had, made of beautiful vintage materials like canvas and leather, with an accessible layout for my gear.

I'm glad I didn't spring for it back then. Because with a lot of patience and searching, I finally found an almost identical bag (with upgrades) for just \$129 from a smaller manufacturer called Portage Supply Co. This is one of those great finds I'm so happy to share with the world.

This bag has the top-quality materials, workmanship, heavy stitching and rugged hardware—everything other than the excessive designer price tag. And it's even more smartly designed, with access pockets to get into lens compartments directly without opening the whole bag. As the cherry on top, it even has a soft protected 15-inch laptop compartment built in.

It's my favorite bag ever. It has so many pockets for my cameras, lenses, flashes, strobes, accessories, and other bits and pieces for weddings and international carry-on travel.







BEST SMALL ACCESSORIES FOR THE BIG LEAGUES

We're out of room in this issue. But wait. You can download my entire gear list ("What's in My Bag?") right now at bit.ly/blume-gear. It's a free gift from us, the Blumes, and includes links to the best prices we've found.

Take a look at the best affordable lenses, compact light modifiers (MagMod and other traditional options), tiny audio equipment and the most unexpected items in my bag—including Silly Putty and 3M strips, and how I use them.





Phillip and Eileen Blume are award-winning photographers just crazy enough to believe art can change the world. Having transformed their small-town home studio into a top brand, they now work with clients worldwide. The Blumes specialize in wedding and fashion photography, and continue to focus on what matters most to them: charitable projects that include adoption advocacy and documentary filmmaking to benefit children living in extreme poverty. Phillip is a monthly contributor to *Shutter Magazine*, and together the Blumes speak at numerous top industry events, have appeared on CreativeLIVE and have shared their inspiring vision of more meaningful photography from the TEDx stage. They are owners of three photography brands, including a newborn studio, and are the proud founders of ComeUnity Workshops for photographers who seek balance. They live with their children in rural Georgia.

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hit the road: working with **Description Description Descrip**

with Nino Batista



It's one thing to be a portrait artist who uses modeling talent in your work regularly, but it's very different when you take that show on the road. Shooting locally is complicated enough, but things become exponentially more complicated when you do the same thing out of state, and especially out of the country.

Each new project in each new town presents new problems. But all model photography requires a lot of the same concerns and methods. In this article, I approach these from the artist side of things, which is how I've been approaching travel for about half a year now exclusively. I am going to focus on planning and executing amazing projects on the road, but not how to get paid model photography work on the road (something I don't do anymore, but that's another article).



mage © Nino Batista

LOCATION IS EVERYTHING

Long before you start approaching modeling talent on the web, on social media or from personal referrals, you need to plan some locations at your destination. This is actually quite difficult to do with any consistency, despite all the tourism info available online about every small town to major city.

It all comes down to "local intel," as I call it. You can find tons of information about cool spots, trendy areas, tourist traps, entertainment districts, national monuments and parks online. But it's harder to find hidden location gems no one talks much about, rules or expectations regarding certain locations (permits are a thing), areas that are "over shot" by local photographers, or even simply finding out the process involved in shooting in a really cool vintage warehouse everyone loves because you won't know the property owner to even ask.

So how can you circumvent this? Honestly, you can't on your own. So my recommendation is to start (or refocus) your travel projects around cities you know somebody in. With social media, it's all but guaranteed you know someone online in another town. Reach out to online friends, and if they're not annoying, invite them to shoot with you under the premise of collaboration. This gives you local intel right out of the gate, and it can be hugely beneficial to maximizing location scouting in a place you've never been.

Don't know a single person in Tacoma? Don't plan that city yet. Perhaps you know two or three photographers in St. Louis via social media, and you can reach out to them. Inside knowledge of St. Louis beats going into Tacoma cold.

To be clear, it is bad form to ask photographers in other cities for advice and tips but not try to include them, especially if they are acquaintances and not close friends. If you are going to take the time to reach out to St. Louis associates, I promise you they will be far more willing to help if you offer a collaborative shoot or project during your upcoming trip there. They may even be excited to meet you and show you around because you humbly asked their assistance and want to work with them, as opposed to asking for all the information you need upfront and then ignoring them when you visit.

Focus on photographers who work in your genre. Avoid asking models or anyone who doesn't work in the industry, which can get you skewed results. Photographers know what photographers are looking for.





TALENT SCOUTING

If you've worked in model photography, you are familiar with the many channels available online for finding modeling talent. Obvious choices like Model Mayhem have fallen out of favor in recent years, but on occasion that website can be a decent window into who is available at your upcoming destination. Social media is another obvious option, mostly based around Instagram and Facebook.

Cold-calling models can yield mixed results. One reason is that local models are so used to being inundated with shoot requests from all manner of photographers on a daily basis. They have heard every proposed shoot concept, promise of publication, compliment and even the occasional "Do you shoot nude?"

Your approach has to be professional and concise. A model needs to know the pertinent information upfront, in detail, but don't overstate things in a thousand-word dissertation because it's going to sound like a scam really quick (models get scam messages on the regular; welcome to the internet). Don't overpromise anything to a model you are contacting for the first time—they won't believe you because of all the reasons I've already mentioned. Be honest in describing your vision and expectations for the project, and don't embellish. These are professionals like you. Treat them how you expect to be treated.

Here's what models want to know upfront:

- Who are you? Your portfolio, résumé, web and social links, etc.
- Where do you plan on shooting? This is why location is priority before finding talent.
- What are your dates? If you're flexible, offer at least day and time options to start the conversation.What is the idea or concept? Obviously.
- What is your offer to them? You can offer pay or a trade proposal, but be clear about it upfront.

And remember, when you successfully schedule your first model for an out-of-town project, it is the ideal time to try for more models (if you need more for different shoots while on the trip). You've made a solid connection with a model who lives there, so they're likely to offer help. Once you've booked that first model, they can vouch for you to other area models, thus expediting your scheduling. In fact, if a model refers model friends, they may all feel more comfortable coming as a group to work with you, which is never a bad thing.

In a perfect world, you could also simply bring a model with you who you know to be reliable and good at what they do. My colleagues and I refer to this as "bringing a captive model" (but I would refrain from using that expression publicly). If you can afford to bring a model or two with you, then you're already ahead of the game. I know that's not always practical, but it's a great idea if you can afford to do it.











EQUIPMENT

If your style of shooting is totally natural light with minimal or no reflectors or modifiers, then carry on. Pack your camera case and head out, and feel free to skip this section.

But if using lighting equipment is your preferred way to shoot, then you're going to have to contend with the inconvenient fact that lighting gear is annoying to travel with. Your worst travel enemies in your lighting kit are your modifiers. Modifiers are often larger than most luggage can handle, and certainly well beyond carry-on size. Even most 22-inch beauty dishes break all size dimension barriers for luggage, and require an oversize baggage fee if you find a case to fit it. Never mind softboxes—even the foldable ones collapse only so much.

To keep things (kinda) simple, here's my own travel gear list that I've used as the basis for more than 100 flights over the past six years:

- 1 or 2 strobes with built-in batteries (or speedlights)
- 2 collapsible light stands
- 1 smaller beauty/silver dish, 16 or 18 inches
- Sandbags (collapsible stands tend to be lightweight and less stable)
- Medium parabolic umbrella with diffusion fabric (not ideal for outdoors, but they break down into a tube)
 Small or medium 5-in-1 reflector kit
- Medium or large diffuser or scrim (the kind that folds up into a circle)
- Wireless transmitter and receivers/transceivers for every strobe you bring (don't count on an optical slave to work outdoors consistently)

I can make just about anything happen anywhere with the items on this list, and I often don't even bring everything on the list. I know not everyone owns strobes, or even strobes with built-in batteries, but remember that battery packs and even speedlights solve that problem easily. While speedlights are lower power than small strobes, if your priority isn't about overpowering a midday desert sun, you will be fine with them and some decent modifiers.

Remember the local associates I suggested you approach about location information? By including them in your plans, you may be able to borrow their gear while on set, thus solving the gear packing problem before it starts. I'd sooner borrow a single strobe, light stand and dish, working with that setup exclusively, than bring my own arsenal of lighting options that I may or may not use. You can get pretty creative with limited gear.

If you're headed to a city to work exclusively in a photo or production studio, you're likely going to be perfectly ok with lighting gear. That said, book studios that include decent lighting equipment as part of their rental fee, thus making your flights far less annoying and costly. It can cost more, but the savings in hassle-free travel may be worth it.

YOU'RE AN ARTIST

As you're doing all the complicated planning for your destination shoot, don't forget that you're an artist. You can get so bogged down with travel details, gear organizing and packing, all the costs piling up, travel fatigue, sleeping in uncomfortable or strange places, communicating repeatedly with local talent, eating on a decent schedule and all the rest-that you can end up forgetting you're an artist.

As you trudge through your first out-of-town shoot, you may get overwhelmed and find yourself unable to get into the zone to work the way you're used to. You start to second-guess yourself, and doubt sets in because you're so damn tired from all the nonsense involved in getting to this point, finally, where you're on set, camera in hand, with a model in front of you.

This was something I totally overlooked when I started traveling for projects, and I learned the following lessons very quickly.



DON'T SHOOT ON A TRAVEL DAY

Plan an entire day, wide open, for actual travel and settling in. Land at the airport, get some dinner, find your accommodations, have a shower and go to sleep at a decent hour. You need to be rested for your shoot tomorrow. Overlook or downplay this, and your work will suffer.

Did I mention not to shoot on a travel day? This includes the day you leave. Your shoot immediately before your flight will be marred with concern about missing said flight, and make it feel rushed. Try to fly out in the morning, on a day exclusively for travel, and get home at a decent hour (unless you're traversing major oceans, of course).

Get some rest at every opportunity. If you're the partying type, scale back a little. You're here to make art, not get shit-faced and shoot while nursing a hangover. Even if you're just overly tired from lack of sleep, your next day's shoot will suffer.

Travel can be exhausting to your body in a more profound way than you realize. This is why we often come back from vacations more obliterated than when we left. You have to work at relaxing on trips, take time to eat well, stay hydrated and rest. Even the most hardcore rock star has to sleep on the tour bus now and then.

Once reasonably rested, work to get into your creative zone, and tune out the fact that you are in a new city. Travel expands your consciousness, but while you're not in tourist mode, you need to be in artist mode. The view may be staggering, the location more beautiful than anything you've ever seen, the weather perfect. But disconnect from the awe of it all and focus on creating images. This is harder than it sounds, but will get easier with time.

Bring a laptop or tablet so you can review your shots every evening. This is crucial on your first forays into traveling for model photography because you will want immediate feedback (from yourself) on how your work is looking. For the reasons I mentioned above, you need to see, clearly, if what you are doing is successful. Eventually your confidence in new locations will increase and you won't have to rely on this as much.

Don't overwork yourself or your models. A great location is inspiring. You may be tempted to schedule a 12-hour marathon shoot in an amazing place you may never get to see again. Resist the urge. That's a bad idea even in your hometown, let alone on the road when you're even less rested. Overwork leads to annoyed models.

If you get insane in the brain and try to shoot nonstop for 12 hours, all your work after around hour five won't be your best because everyone's fatigued and not in their best mood. Instead, try a three-hour block, then a two-hour break to review and refresh (and eat!), and then another three-hour block.

Freshly rested models and photographers do much better work in less time.



ge © Nino Bā

CONCLUSION

Information is your main ally. You cannot go into a city cold and ask local talent, "Can you shoot this afternoon? And do you have a location you can recommend?" You can't invade and conquer a new territory without some inside intel. Bolster those connections for a successful destination model shoot.

And don't forget to eat and rest.



Nino Batista is a commercial glamour and exotic automotive photographer based in Texas. His work is regularly published in lifestyle and men's publications all over the world, and he is regarded as one of the premier glamour photography and retouching educators in the United States. Nino is a senior writer at FStoppers.com.

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with Raph Nogal



ge © Raph Noga

Destination weddings can be downright amazing—new places, new sights and sounds. They can also be stressful. With the right preparation, you can make it an unforgettable experience. From my travels to Mexico, Honduras, the Dominican Republic, Thailand and other countries, I have gathered these five tips I wish I'd known before I shot my first destination wedding.

1. LEAVE THE FAMILY AT HOME

In this example, the bride and groom chose a pretty cool venue for their wedding photos. It was a typical wedding hall, but it was attached to a private lounge. The club offered various options for some creative images, but I wanted to think beyond the obvious. I noticed the cool and unique light fixtures and changed my position by laying down on the ground so I could get the light fixtures to line up in the frame and lead the eye into the couple. I placed the couple on the left side to balance the frame. I used OCF fitted with a grid to narrow down the light beam so that it hit only the couple. The result is a different perspective and something unique given that the space had a lot of usable nooks and crannies that most photographers will default to.



2. BRING ONLY THE ESSENTIALS AND PACK WITH PURPOSE

I'm terrible at packing and tend to overpack. When you pack for a destination wedding, you need to think and rethink everything. Clothes all go into one checked bag. I have nice wedding clothes and everyday clothes. If that checked bag is lost, I can always buy clothes when I arrive. All the equipment goes in the carry-on with me. I travel light with just a Lowepro backpack and a personal-item messenger bag where I split up some of the gear. For the Thailand trip, I packed the following gear:

- Nikon D750 X2
- Battery grip + batteries x2
- 105mm f2.8 macro
- 85mm f1.4
- 50mm f1.4
- 35mm 1.4
- 20mm f1.4
- Profoto B2 + extra battery
- Profoto AirTTL remote
- Generic speedlight + transceiver x2
- Profoto medium reflector
- Batteries & chargers
- MacBook Pro

It looks like a lot, but it all fit in my backpack and messenger bag. I also used every single piece of equipment I brought. If my 85mm lens craps out, I still have a 105mm for the long end. If my 35 craps out, I can go 20mm or 50mm-not the same but I can still make it work. It's essential to bring two camera bodies and plenty of batteries. Pack with purpose and put the clothes in the checked bags.









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3. BACK UP EVERYTHING TO MULTIPLE PLACES

When things are good, there are no issues, but when something goes wrong, you could be in a whole lot of trouble. With digital files, it's easy to make multiple copies, so just do it. Here's my backup plan for travel and destination weddings:

Shoot to dual cards, making an automatic copy in-camera (copy 1)
 Transfer one card to laptop (copy 2)
 Copy files to an external drive (copy 3)
 Back up to the cloud (copy 4)

So now, I have one original and four copies. Is it excessive? Maybe, but I'm not taking any chances. Let's look more closely at the steps above.

When storing to dual cards, I like to set both to Raw so I have a true backup of my negatives. You could do RAW + JPEG, but only if it's part of your workflow and you see some kind of benefit (which I don't). A key component of shooting to two cards and having exact copies is that you keep one set of cards (the originals) and store them somewhere other than with your camera gear or laptop, and you can always give the second set of cards to the couple's parents, maid of honor or anybody who is part of the wedding that you trust.

As for your original cards, put them in your dirty clothes pile if you have to. Think of the worst-case scenario: Your room is robbed and they get your laptop and camera gear, but they didn't touch your dirty clothes pile. Your (insured) equipment is gone, but your files are still here and you can deliver what you promised to your clients.

I transfer the original files on the card directly to the laptop. That way I have fast access to the files so I can do a teaser or anything else I need. I can also start culling the photos. If you have a few days left before you fly out, there are worse ways to spend your time than culling wedding images poolside with a margarita.

As additional backup (copy 3), I always make a copy of the Raw files to a small SSD drive. I use the Sandisk Extreme Portable SSD. After I copy the Raw files to it, I secure it separately from my laptop and gear—sometimes in the hotel safe with my passport.

Using cloud storage is also an option if you have a good Wi-Fi connection. If you have a few days before you fly out, you can do a few overnight transfers to the cloud to further ensure the files are safe and sound.

April 2018

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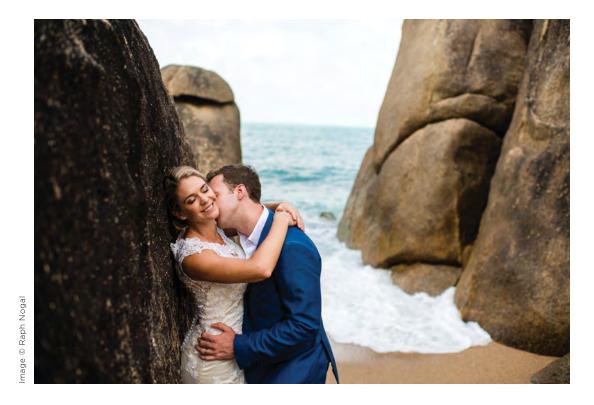
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4. ADD A SECOND DAY OF SHOOTING WITH YOUR CLIENTS

Destination weddings offer a great way to explore a new location. In addition to the wedding-day coverage, get your clients to do a location session. Suggest places that get your creative juices flowing. Have fun with it and always make it fun for the couple. This is another opportunity to create something awesome for you and your clients, with no pressure, unlike the wedding day.

In Thailand, I took my couple all over Koh Samui, an island we spent half a day exploring. We rented a van that took us around to several shooting spots.

















. April 2018

Shutter Magazine

152

5. SHOOT FOR YOURSELF

It is very likely that you will have some time to yourself. My destination weddings last five to seven days. The wedding is just one day, which leaves me time to explore on my own. On this trip, I wanted to take in some culture. I'd never been to that part of the world and also hadn't done much street photography, and Thailand presented a perfect opportunity.

I took a small camera with me and shot everything in black and white in camera. I wanted to capture a "street" feel and thought black and white was the way to go. I photographed at the airport in Hong Kong (my stopover), outside my hotel in Koh Samui, on the beach and on the streets of the Fisherman's Village. The experience was exhilarating. I highly recommend shooting in unfamiliar places.









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I hope these tips were helpful and that you're super excited to photograph a wedding in a new place. It's a lot of fun, but don't forget: You're there on business, so don't let those margaritas tempt you until after the wedding.



Raph Nogal is an award-winning wedding photographer who has earned 16 WPPI awards and was named one of the Top Wedding Photographers in 2016 by Fearless Photographers. His style combines editorial with art-focused photojournalism. Raph is a Profoto PPC Trainer and an ambassador for Profoto Canada and MagMod.

raphnogal.com



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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.

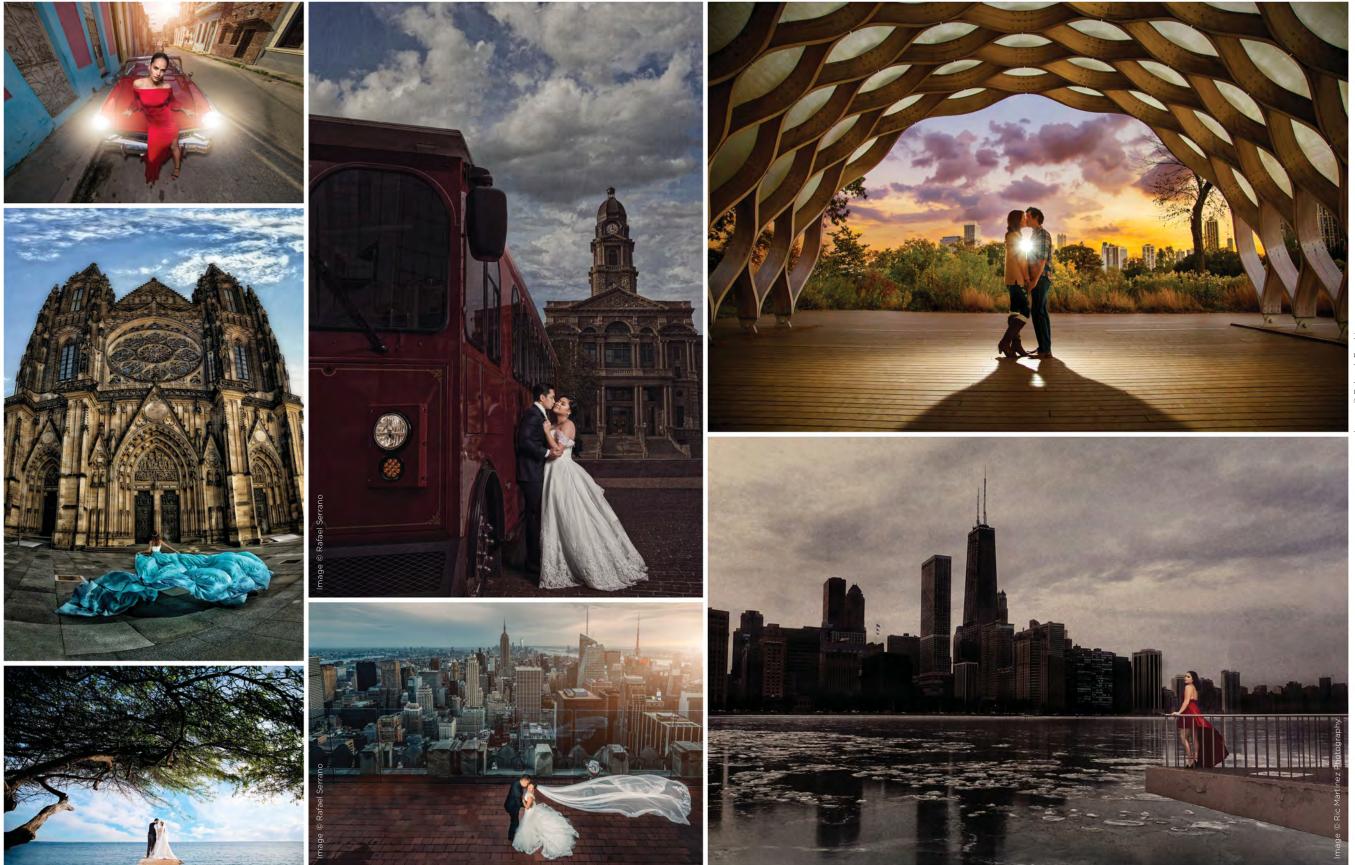
IMAGE

TRAVEL

BEST

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

Sal Cincotta, Editor-in-chief



Inspirations | Our Readers



Barrera Image









Image © Kim Avars Photo

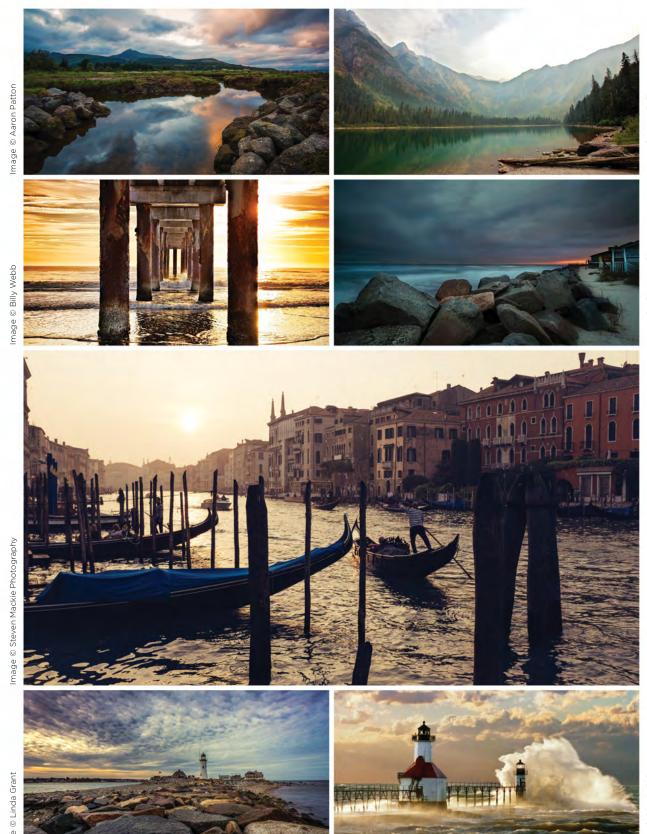
Image © Kim Ayars Photography



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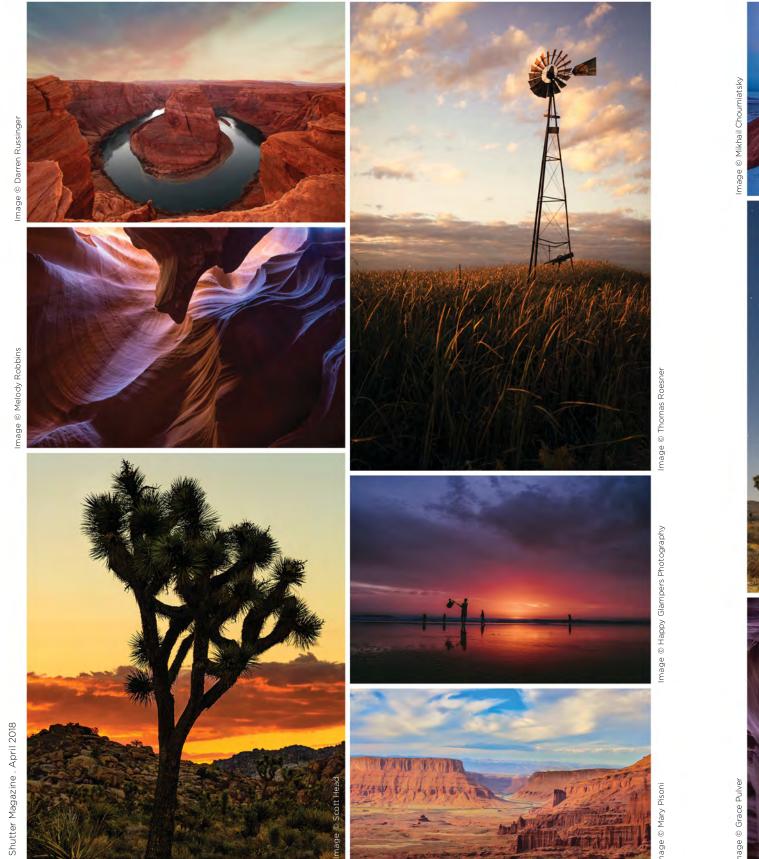




Magazine . April 2018

Shutter

162









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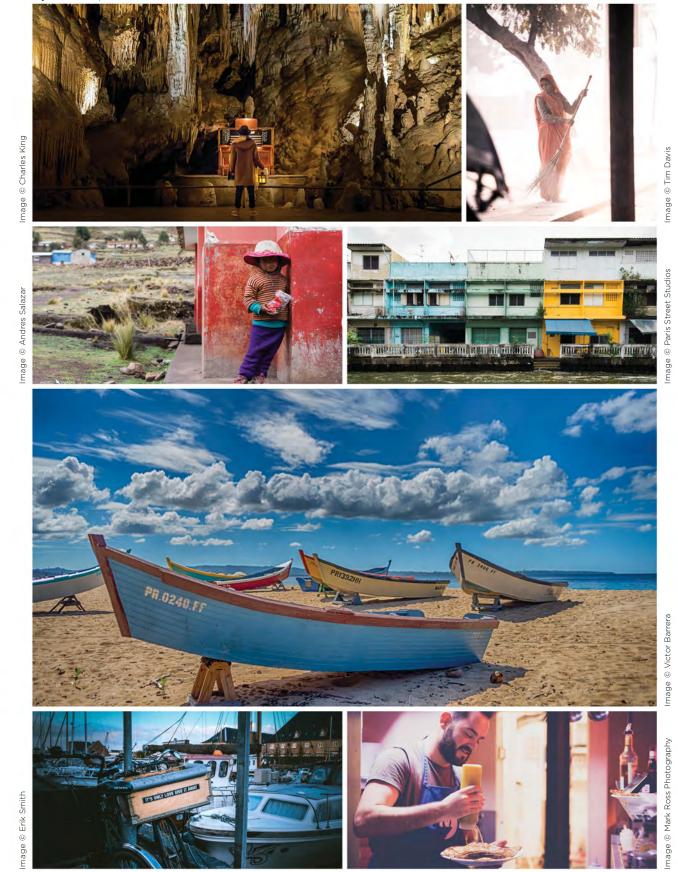
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9 Image © Angeline Photography

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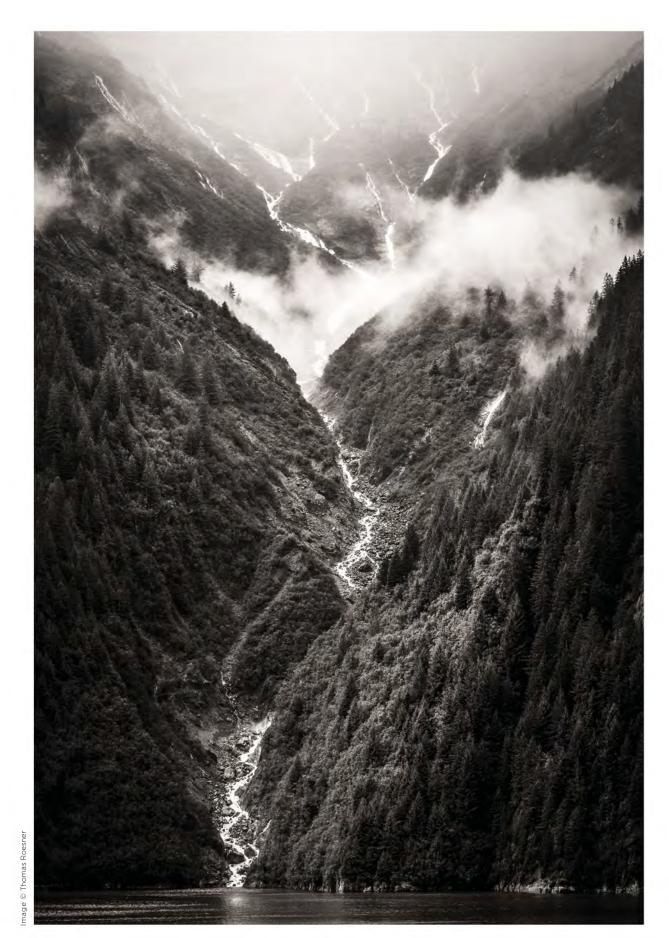


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170 Shutter Magazine . April 2018





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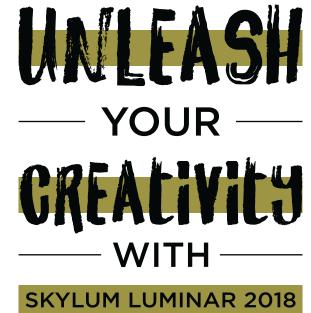


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with Dustin Lucas

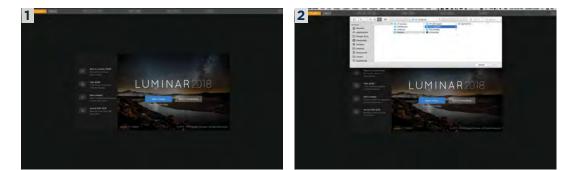
Of all the editing tools at our disposal, not all of them make sense for every task. Lightroom is not the end-all/ be-all program—even though I use it for almost everything. It's important to try out other programs, especially when you want to push the envelope and unleash your creativity. To bring out structure and details in an image, I have always relied on plugins like Macphun Intensify (recently renamed Skylum Intensify).

With the release of Skylum's Luminar, I can now edit with all the tools I need in one place. Once I have finished selecting my best shot of the shoot, I am ready to launch Luminar and get working. Let's get set up and familiar with Luminar to get a better feel for how we can attack this image.

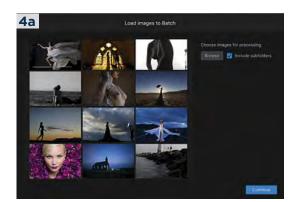
A QUICK LOOK AT LUMINAR

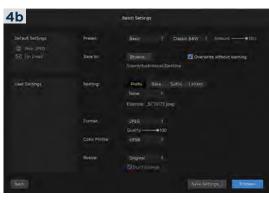
Right out of the gate, it was simple to download and install a trial version of Luminar. My first impression was that it has a simple, clean interface. (1) Now let's open our images (rather than import them, like in Lightroom). (2)

I have some quibbles with this software. Working in Luminar Version 1.1.1, I can view just one image at a time to edit. There is no filmstrip of images and you can't sync develop adjustments between multiple images. (3)









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We're working on a fantastic digital asset manager ("DAM") which will work like magic with the hard drives you already own and with any cloud storage platform you want to use. You'll even be able to run it along with your LR library to compare both DAMs side by side and choose the one that works best for you.

This feature will be added to Luminar in 2018, and will be a free update to everyone who owns Luminar 2018 Supernova. We know that there are many companies who try to convince you to move from Lightroom, but we want to ensure we get it right and provide you with a tool that you'll enjoy and use every day. We'll be releasing more details soon.



Another option is to Batch Process with a preset. (4ab) Hm, that doesn't sound good at all, does it? Breathe deeply. Exhale. This software is constantly morphing, and is looking to incorporate a digital asset manager, or DAM. Much like the Library module in Lightroom, you will use it to organize, tag, apply keywords and apply global develop settings and presets. Be on the lookout for this update in the near future. (5)

We can select multiple images to open, similarly to Photoshop, and cycle between them by holding Command and striking the single quotation mark key. You can also view all images as tabs like in a web browser. To do this, go to the menu bar and click Window < Merge All Windows. (6)



Now things are starting to look familiar to Photoshop users, and we're ready to get started. You'll notice there aren't multiple modules or workspaces to cycle between. There are workspaces, but not in the same sense as Lightroom. At the top there are tools for zooming, previews, history, crop, transform, clone, erase, presets and filter panel.

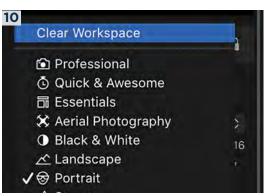
As with Capture One Pro, you can customize your workspace to fit your editing needs and quickly recall tools to apply to each image. As you'll notice, you can choose either Add Filters or Tool Panels, or click the arrow next to Workspace to choose a prebuilt one. (7) There are quite a few combinations of filters per workspace. Quick & Awesome, which caught my eye as the second option, has quite an interesting filter called Accent – AI. (8) When I lift the Boost slider to 100, it automatically adjusts the image based on the content. This compares to applying Auto-Tone to the same image in Lightroom; it does a nice job of pulling details and tones for the landscape, but makes the subject look rough. (9ab)

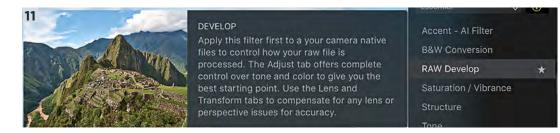






Remove this filter, and our image resets so we can explore the other workspaces or create our own by clicking Add Filters. (10) Now that all filters are listed, you can sort by Favorites, Recent, Essential, Issue Fixers, Creative, Professional and Utility. With the information button turned on by default, you can hover over each listed filter to read its description. (11)

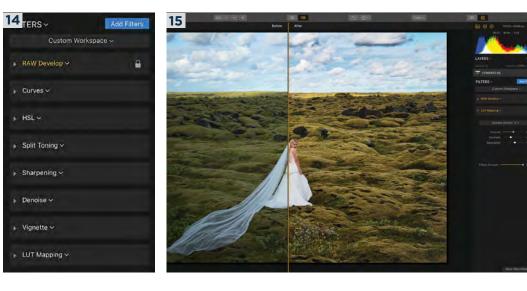




Rather than go through each one, I want to share similar filters I use from Lightroom as well as some more creative ones. The RAW Develop filter gets what the Basic Panel does minus vibrance and saturation. (12) It also includes manual Lens Correction and Transform, although it would be nice to have a default correction automatically applied. (13)



Similar to the Develop module in Lightroom, these are available in other filters as well: Curves, Sharpening, Denoise, HSL, Split Toning and Vignette. (14) Users of VSCO and other custom camera profiles will need to research LUTs, or "lookup tables." I will circle back to this later. (15)



When you are finished editing in Luminar, you can export your Raw into a JPEG, TIFF, SD, etc. (16) Unlike most Raw processing programs, Luminar does not offer a sidecar metadata file to sit alongside your Raw file. Instead, a proprietary image file is created containing all the history and workspace adjustments. This is important when you're working on large groups of images that fill up your hard drive. This software is valuable to anyone who wants more creative control and wants to stay away from Photoshop—but it's not for everyone. (17)



PUSH PAST PRESETS AND CREATE YOUR STYLE

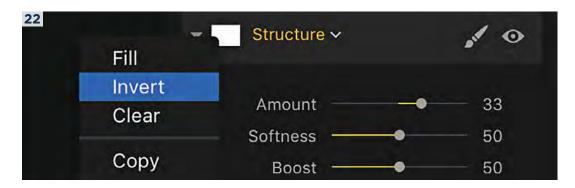
There are countless prebuilt presets to help guide your creativity. For portraits, especially those focused on skin tones, I am not impressed with the defaults, (18) but we can apply filters, tweak the sliders and save a custom user preset to use on other images. Much like saving a custom workspace, these two options cut down on editing time per image. Let's look at the creative tools for an image like this. (19)



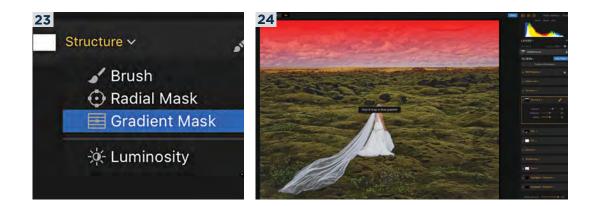
The creative filters include Structure, Matte, Advanced Contrast, Adjustable Gradient and Dodge & Burn. I'll throw in a B&W Conversion from time to time, but these are my main filters. (20) Using Matte and Structure together achieves a nice effect. (21ab)



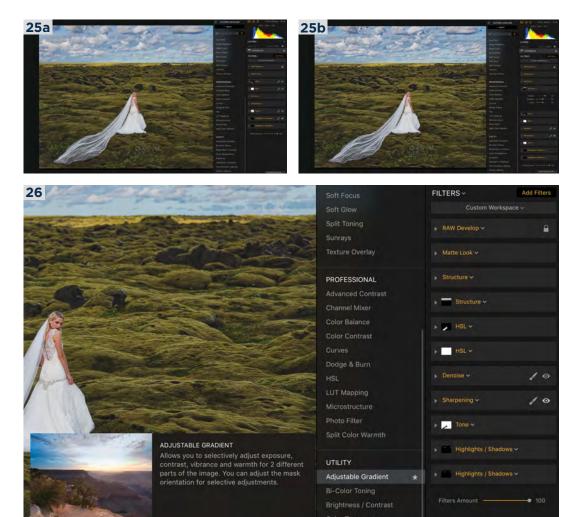
You can see that the ground has a lot more bite than the sky—not to worry, because we can duplicate the Structure filter and mask out the ground. You can fill or invert your mask depending on the area you need to paint out. (22) In this case, I chose Invert to turn the entire mask black, which removed the effect and allowed me to paint in the areas I wanted to.



Click on the brush icon, and you have the choice of Brush, Gradient or Radial Mask. (23) For a sky, I lean to a gradient mask because it gives me a natural feathered edge at the horizon line. Simply click at the top of the image and drag to the horizon line to apply the effect. (24)



We can even change the level of feathering and end point of the mask. This is way better than painting with a brush. (25ab) Another useful filter is the Adjustable Gradient, which allows me to offset effects independently for the top and bottom of the image. (26)



Shutter Magazine . April 2018

186

It's a two-in-one tool: I don't have to paint one mask for the top on a filter—just add another and paint the lower mask. I highly recommend using this for ground/sky images and any bisected images that need different applications of exposure, contrast, vibrance and warmth. (27ab)

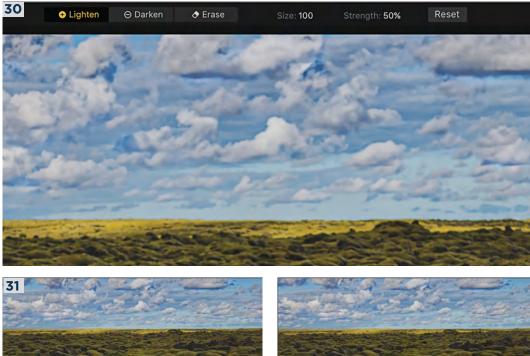


I'm a huge fan of the NIK Collection. It allows contrasting into tonal areas, which give me a lot of flexibility in editing. With the Advanced Contrast filter, I can adjust Highlights, Midtones and Shadows separately. (28) Along with Structure and that old faithful Dodge & Burn, these filters are a major part of my creative editing. Experiment with filters in Luminar to unleash your image. (29)



Much like in Photoshop, Luminar's Dodge & Burn filter works as a dual adjustment on a single filter. In Photoshop, you'd make a new layer, change the blending mode to Overlay and check Fill Neutral. This allows you to paint on a single-layer mask to dodge and burn in one fell swoop, toggling white and black as the foreground color. Luminar makes it even easier to Lighten, Darken or Erase the effect. Using the brush couldn't be any easier—just toggle the "X" key to switch between modes. (30)

I save most of my burning until the end, when I can see hot spots and where my eye naturally leaves the subject. Brighten up the face and skin, and we're done. (31ab)

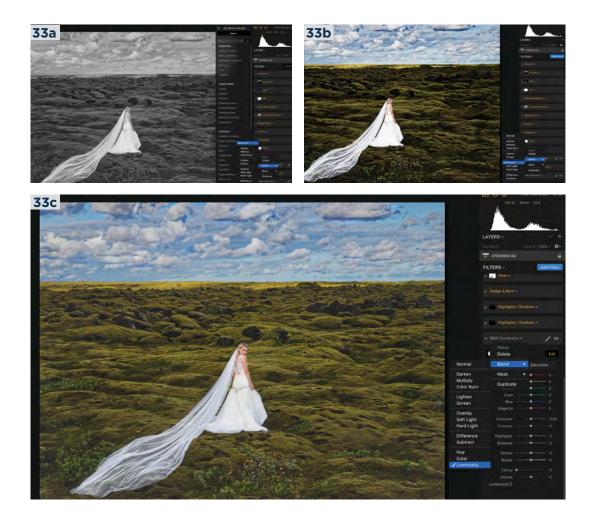


DIAL IN YOUR CREATIVITY LAYERS & LUTS

Masking is pretty straightforward, with options to fill, invert, reset and choose the right tool for painting. This becomes flexible for localized adjustments with filters as well as duplicating filters. There is even a luminosity mask that targets brighter or different opacities of light. (32)



Tune in for future *Shutter Magazine* articles for more info on how to utilize this feature. Blend modes offer a lot of interesting effects, and, with the addition of true layers, we start to see the Photoshop advantage in completing our creative workflow. (33abc)

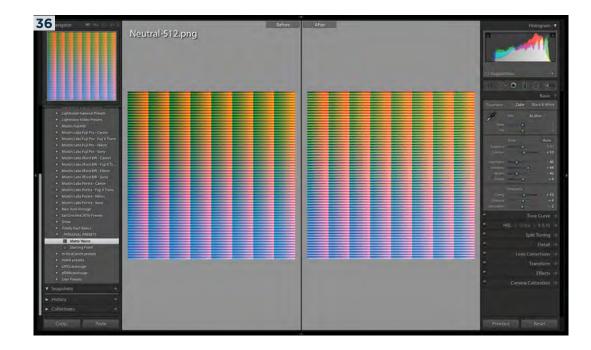


Adding a layer is easy. Click the "+" icon next to the Layers panel and choose New Adjustment Layer, New Image Layer or Create New Stamped Layer. (34) The best practice when working with layers is to never, under any circumstances, manipulate your base (background) layer. You should always duplicate this layer, make a blank layer or add an adjustment layer. Of course, you are probably laughing since I have fully edited my image on the base layer like a rookie. In this case, my best option would be to duplicate the background layer and clear the workspace. This would double the file size but get me to a nondestructive image. (35)



Let's move on to those "lookup tables," or LUTs for short. These come from video post-production during the color grading of movies. What does this mean for our images? We can convert Lightroom presets into LUTs. That's right, you can use your purchased and prebuilt presets from Lightroom. This means the color, toning and pixel-based effects from Lightroom can be applied in Luminar. First, you will need to Google "lut generator" and research how to convert your Lightroom presets to CUBE files.

Once you've found a LUT app, you can generate a HALD PNG file, import it into Lightroom and apply your preset to it. (36)



Then simply export the file as a JPEG in sRGB at a resolution of 72dpi. Launch your LUT generator app and choose to generate a CUBE file that will be acceptable for Luminar. Choose the newly exported JPEG from Lightroom. Now add a LUT mapping filter in Luminar, drop down the LUT choice options, choose Load Custom LUT File, select the CUBE file and click Open. (37ab)



The effect is at 100% right out of the gate, so dial it back to 50. We have the same masking and blending tools to tweak this image. (38ab) Lastly, open the image into Intensify, apply a custom preset and we're done. You'll notice this automatically creates a separate opacity layer that can be turned down or off altogether. (39ab)

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THE RESULTS

There's still more to come with this software. Download the trial and give it a spin. This is a powerful Raw processing application, and it's not going to run at the expected efficiency of Lightroom. You have to come to the table looking at this as an all-in-one utility. It runs sluggishly on my 2016 MacBook Pro, but these aren't built for heavy lifting. You have to save the proprietary file while working nondestructively, just like in Photoshop, saving as a TIFF or PSD, but it's just massive in size.

So to whom is this software marketed? Much like ON1 RAW 2018, this is for users wanting an easier interface with a majority of heavy lifting Photoshop can perform. If you are a diehard Capture One or Adobe Camera Raw to Photoshop editor, this software seems like an easy pass. Everyone who wants to unleash a portfolio image with the ease of prebuilt filters, presets, layers and LUTs should get Luminar today. It's only going to get better with the launch of a new DAM and improved performance.





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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product spotlight

datacolor with Salvatore Cincotta

Why the Datacolor Spyder5?

I am constantly shocked by the number of photographers who don't invest the time to learn how calibration works. We live in a world of delivery media that include social media, cellphones, fine art prints, photographic prints and, of course, the never-ending supply of monitors, all with different settings. I can tell you what we do. We calibrate every single monitor in our studio. This ensures that we are operating at a consistent baseline.

In this month's Spotlight, we take a look at the Spyder5 by Datacolor. I want you to see how easy it is to calibrate your monitor, along with a before and after. Having your equipment properly calibrated ensures consistent results no matter how you deliver your images.



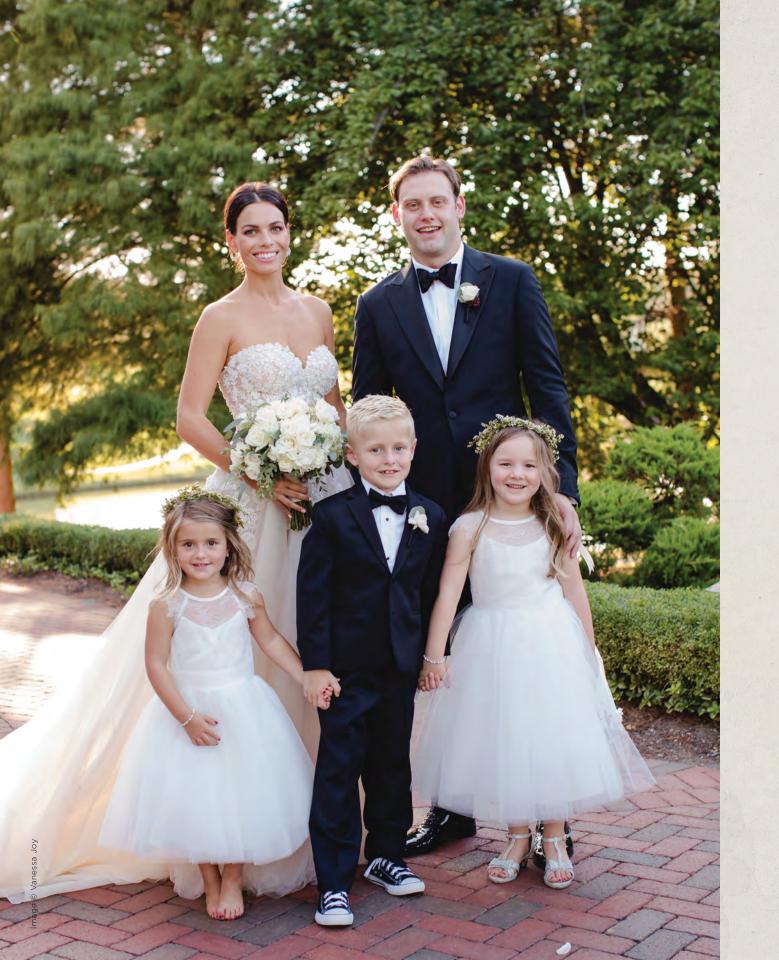
You wouldn't take pictures with a blurry lens, would you? So, why would you edit pictures without color accuracy?

The details:

- · Advanced color accuracy solution for all of your laptop and desktop displays. See, share and print your images just as you intended with confidence. It's fast and easy, and full calibration takes only about five minutes to ensure color accuracy.
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- · Datacolor and Adobe work hand-in-hand to offer a complete package for your photography workflow. Get a complimentary three-month Adobe Creative Cloud Photography plan with your Spyder5 purchase. A redemption code will be sent upon Spyder activation.



For more information, visit datacolor.com/shutter



FAMILY PHOTOS

with Vanessa Joy

197

April 2018

Shutter Magazine.

198



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"Wedding photography is all about the bride and groom," said no real wedding photographer ever. Many of us would like nothing better than to take pictures of the bride and groom all day, and perhaps some pretty reception details here and there. Well, my friends, that's called a styled shoot, and an actual wedding requires a lot more than just the fun stuff.

When you shoot weddings, it's a family affair. In this article, I show you my methods of pulling off family photos like you're pulling off a Band-Aid—the fast way. Don't get me wrong. I don't hate photographing families. But when you're gathering a group of potentially rowdy people who haven't seen each other in a while, it can be difficult to get them to do the opposite of what they'd like to be doing.

The next time you've got a priest breathing down your neck telling you to hurry up with family photos, breathe easy. Here are my magic ways of getting through it with flying colors.









HAVE A LIST

Being prepared is always the first step in family photos. The last thing you want to do the day of is to miss an important family photo because you're relying on your memory of the bride's on-the-spot recollection of whom she wants photographed. It'll be your fault if anything gets overlooked, and you don't want that.

Don't open a can of worms by asking your bride for her family picture list. That is not a good idea because your bride has likely never put together a family list and will spend hours upon hours thinking of every possible breakdown of her family to be photographed. Then you'll need to waste your precious breath trying to explain to her that 100 family photos will not fit in the 15-minute slot allotted to taking them. You'll wind up redoing the whole list for her anyway.

Instead, help create the family list for them. I ask my clients for their immediate family members' names, and then I create a realistic picture list and offer revisions to the list. During consultations, I mention the complimentary family photo list as an added bonus.

Download my free guide to family photo lists at www.breatheyourpassion.com/family.



April 2018

Magazi

Shutter

200

HAVE A PROCESS

It's not enough to just have a list. Lists are great, but having a process for going through family photos can mean the difference between an organized 15-minute session and an hour of utter chaos.

The best way I know how to run through any type of photo situation is to make sure that you move everyone as little as possible, especially the bride. The more people who move, the longer it takes and the more opportunity for a mess.

Start with either the bride or groom's side of the family, and then do the other. Think of the photos in a "build up, break down" process so you're starting with just the bride and groom and then adding the bride's parents, then siblings, the sibling's spouses and kids and grandparents, and then possibly one with aunts/ uncles/cousins. Then, start the breakdown process by taking out the groom, then the aunts/uncles/cousins, then the siblings, then the parents. Then you switch and do the opposite for the groom's side of the family.

That may seem confusing, but my family photo list guide that you can download puts it all in black and white for you. The video with this article runs through a family photo session I did from start to finish so you can see the whole process.





April 201

Magazi

Shutter

202





HAVE A DRINK

Don't actually have a drink. Just act like you did. Smile, be charming, keep your cool. Don't let the stress of family photos get you down so it shows all over your face. Act like you're a member of the family. My best family photo sessions are always with the families that I have the best relationships with. Why? Because they trust me, but mostly because I'm not an outside force breaking up the fun; I'm having fun right along with them.

This is about more than just putting on a fake smile. It's putting yourself in their family. Be happy to be there. Be honored that you're a part of an amazing time. Be a part of the side conversations happening throughout the group. Be present and feel the high that everyone else is happily living on in the moment. It'll help you have fun with family photos and create a great (potentially first) impression on every person in the room.

Family shoots give you the perfect opportunity to present yourself to potential clients. These are the sisters who are getting married next. They're the aunts and uncles who are marrying off their son next year. They're the mom and dad who are going to buy another album themselves or for the grandparents. If you act like the family photo session is a mini-consultation session while you're shooting, you'll realize just how important it is to get as close as possible and make the best impression.





Family photography separates the pros from the faux. Too often I've seen photographers run family photos sessions with no control over what's going on. It's like they felt they were giving their client the control—but the client doesn't hire you so she can do parts of your job for you. And even if they want that control, they have it by working with you on a list before the wedding, not running it during the wedding.

There's nothing attractive about a bride screaming at her family members to get in position. It's your job to get them in position with calm and tact and a smile on your face.



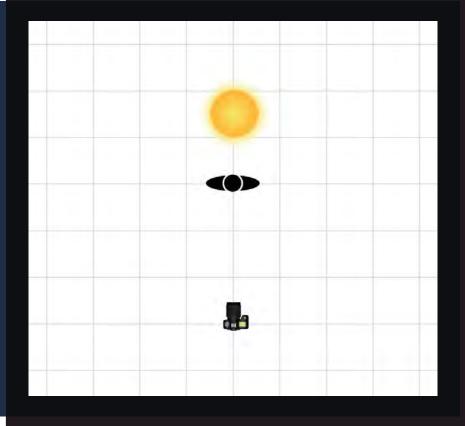


Vanessa Joy has been a professional wedding photographer in New Jersey since 2002, and an influencer in the photographic community for years. Since starting VanessaJoy.com in 2008, she has taught photographers around the globe at almost every major platform in the industry (LearnPhotoVideo.com). Vanessa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

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