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38.3 MEGAPIXELS



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GFX 50s

august 2017

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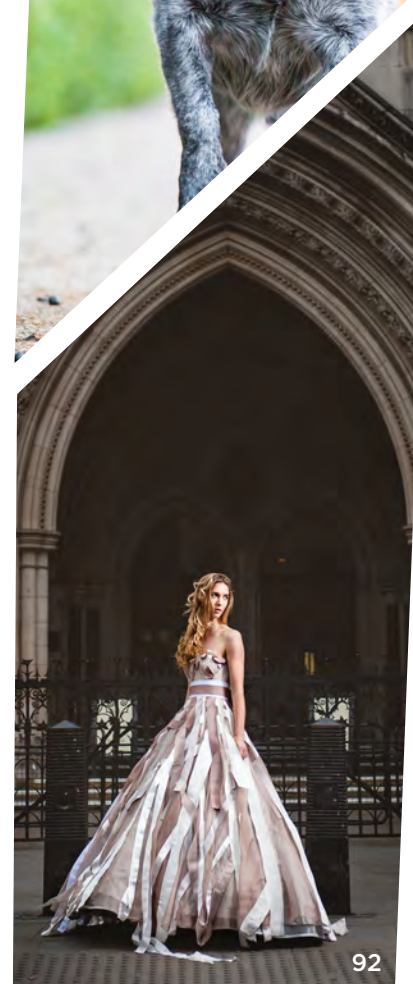
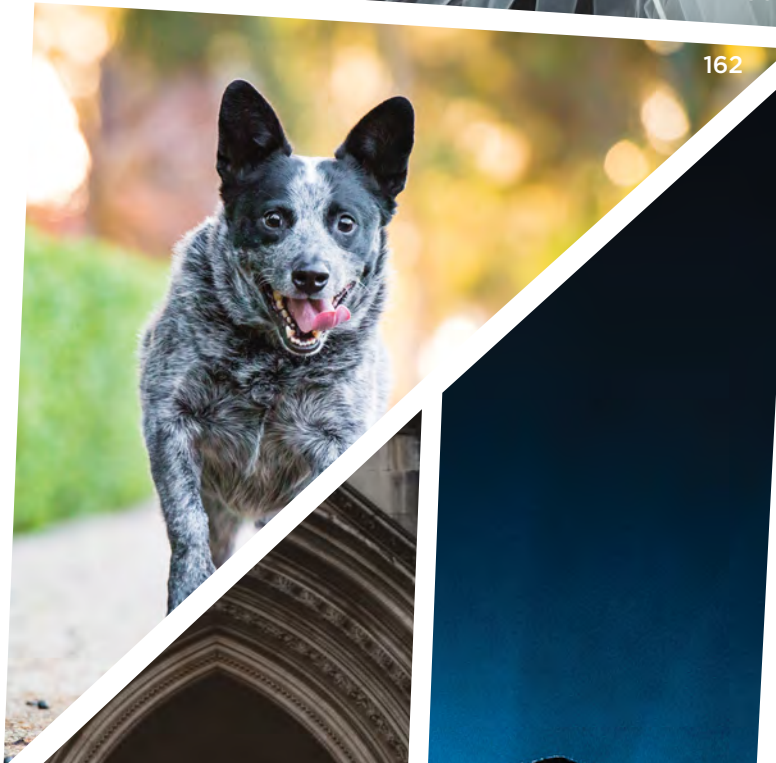
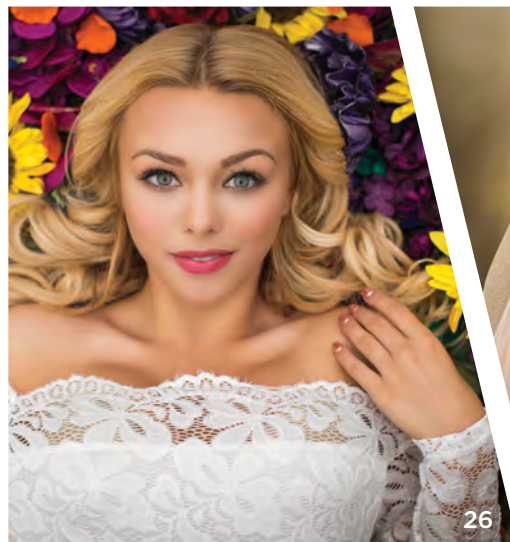


AUGUST 2017 | ISSUE 059

# shutter

magazine

- 12 | **A Beginner's Guide to Migrating From Lightroom to Capture One** – Dustin Lucas
- 26 | **How I Got the Shot** – Sal Cincotta
- 38 | **Adobe MAX** – Product Review
- 40 | **Mastering the Golden Hour** – Brian MacStay
- 52 | **Beauty Lighting Made Easy** – Michael Corsentino
- 64 | **Light Through a Wedding Day** – Christine Yodsukar
- 80 | **Using Consistent Lighting to Brand Your Business** – Vanessa Joy
- 90 | **The List** – August 2017
- 92 | **Powerful & Portable Lighting for Destination Photography** – Phillip Blume
- 106 | **Using Off-Camera Flash to Create Dramatic Images** – Raph Nogal
- 118 | **Choosing the Best Off-Camera Lighting for Your Budget** – Michael Anthony
- 130 | **3 Go-To Setups for High-Volume Headshots** – Gary Hughes
- 140 | **Creative Lighting for Self-Portraits** – Sarah Clements
- 150 | **Mastering Natural Light** – Twig & Olive Photography
- 162 | **Lighting for Dogs** – Professional Pooch
- 176 | **Westcott Deep Umbrellas** – Product Review
- 178 | **Inspirations** – Our Readers
- 200 | **Light Up Your Business: Building Brand Awareness With Marketing** – Skip Cohen





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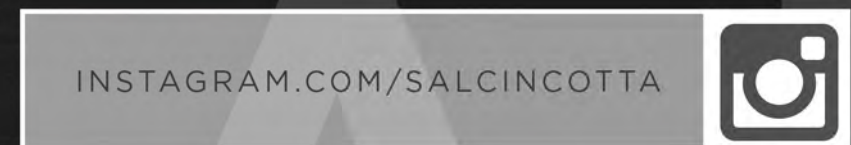
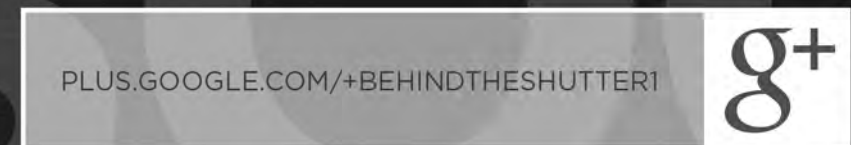
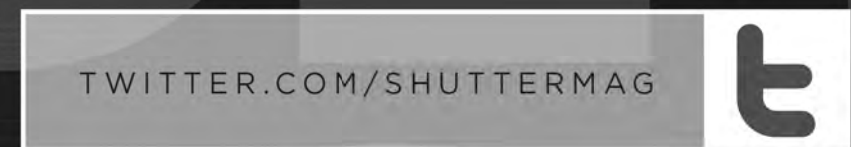
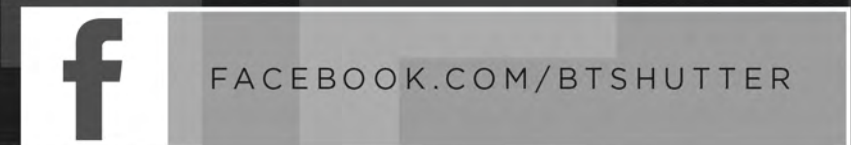
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*Salvatore Cincotta*  
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### DESIGNER

Alicia Simpson

### DESIGNER

Brooke Happekotte

### DESIGNER

Isabelle Woollett

### COPY EDITOR

Tom O'Connell

### ACCOUNT SPECIALIST

Christine Gill

### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Vanessa Joy, Michael Anthony, Sal Cincotta, Skip Cohen, Raph Nogal, Brian MacStay, Christine Yodsukar, Gary Hughes, Michael Corsentino, Professional Pooch, Twig & Olive Photography, Dustin Lucas, Phillip Blume and Sarah Clements



## THE COVER

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

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**ABOUT THE IMAGE:** This image was shot at Peter Hurley's studio in June 2017. Special thanks to Bella Chadwick for modeling.

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A message from the editor-in-chief

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# A Beginner's Guide to Migrating From LIGHTROOM TO CAPTURE ONE

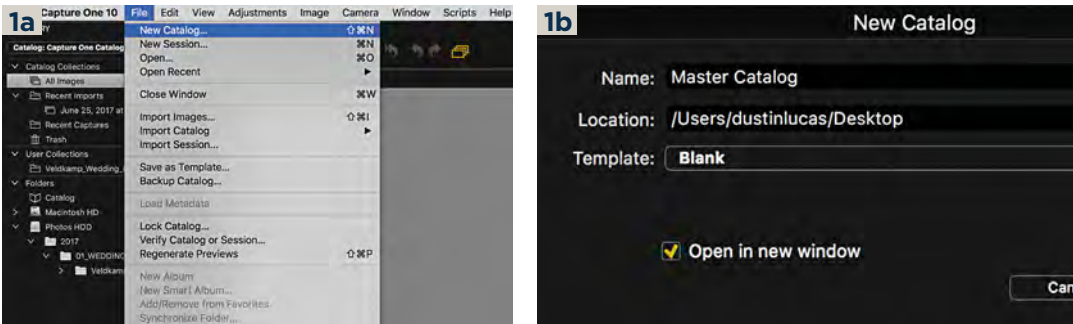
with **Dustin Lucas**

For all the Lightroom users out there, take a deep breath. This is gonna get messy. Over the past year or so, I have been reading a lot on Raw processing programs and been encouraged to revisit Capture One. Coming from a long history with Lightroom and understanding the limitations of this very efficient software, I am constantly looking for a package that produces better-quality images at the same pace.

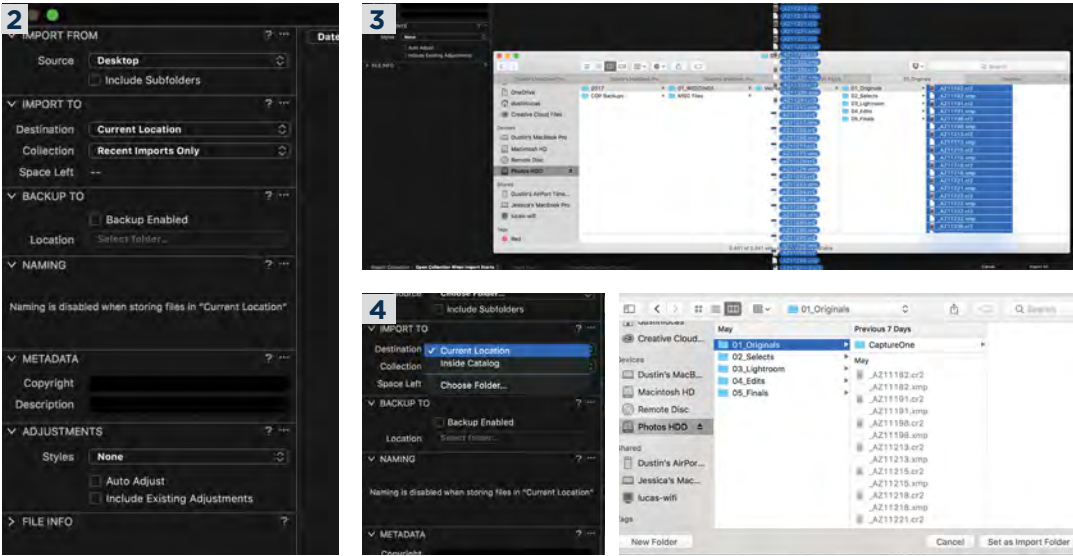
I am not officially letting go of Lightroom. With this article, I intend to show the possibilities of migrating from Lightroom to Capture One. I am not here to bash on Lightroom for quality or on Capture One for user efficiency. Everyone wants to spend less time editing and still deliver a quality product. If you haven't already familiarized yourself with Capture One, download a free 30-day trial and watch the knowledge-based videos.

LEARNING THE BASICS

Once you launch your trial version of Capture One, you are ready to create your Master catalog. There’s a familiar term for you, *catalog*. You can save the catalog on your computer’s hard drive and not worry about running out of space. (1ab) We are ready to import files into our newly created catalog. So far, everything emulates the Lightroom file-ingesting process. These images I am importing have been preculled in another program. You can’t beat Photo Mechanic for speed and price.



The import module is a lot different from working in Lightroom. Let’s go through the options. (2) First, we must choose the location of our Raw files. On the top left-hand side of the window, it starts with Import From. Click in the dropdown box next to Source. A more efficient way is to find the files in Finder, drag and drop the folder, and Capture One starts populating the files. (3) The Import To section is next, and defaults to “Current Location.” This simply means the Raw files will be added to the catalog much like in Lightroom. You can copy files from a memory card or a hard drive to a new location by clicking “Choose Folder.” (4) There is a third option to save the files inside the catalog file. I find this to be useless, and recommend not doing so for the sake of backup.



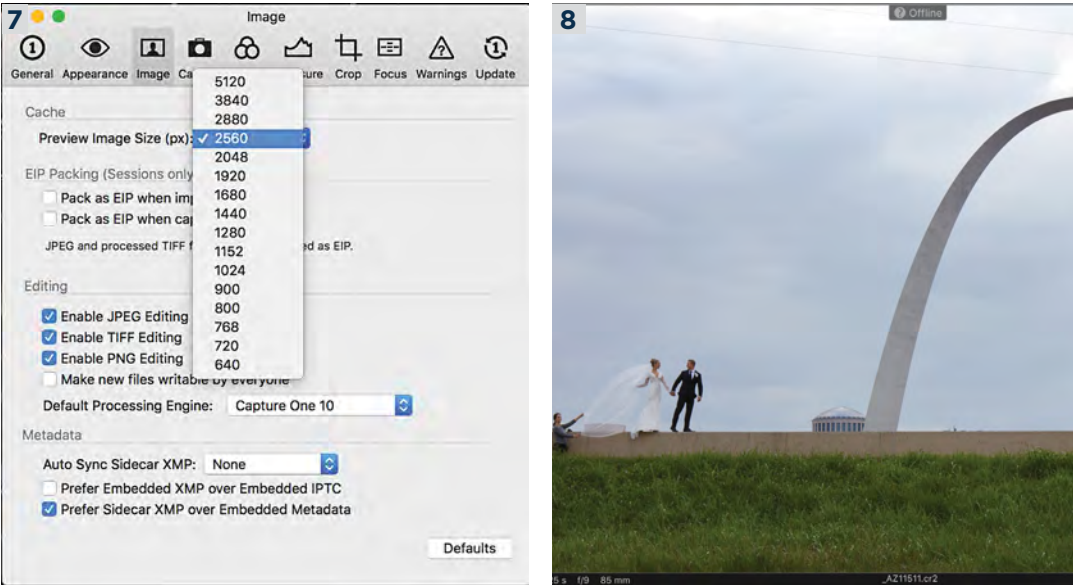
Many of the same options from Lightroom are here as well, like Collections, File Backup, Naming, Metadata and applying import presets. Presets or Styles can be created the same way with specific settings applied to all images entering Capture One. Along with presets, you can choose Auto Adjust for quick histogram-based adjustment of exposure, contrast, brightness, highlights and shadows. Now we are ready to import our files. The only missing option in this step is choosing type of previews to build.

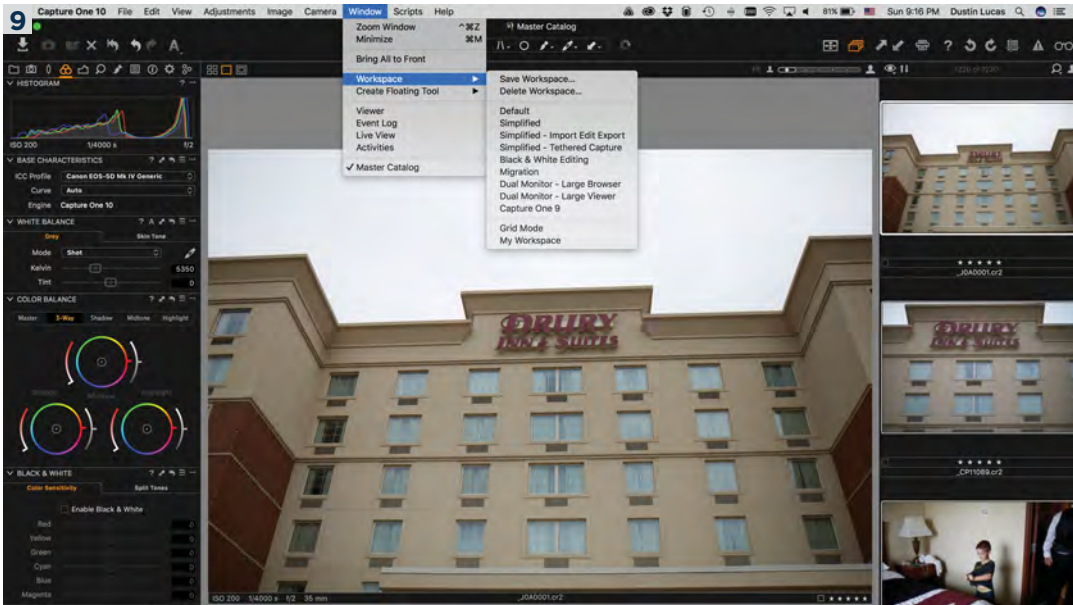


Previews are handled differently in Capture One and Lightroom. Lightroom allows you to build standard and 1:1 previews, requiring the original files to be linked to your catalog. (5) In preferences, you can set the dimensions and quality of standard previews to lower the time it takes to generate each preview. (6) Smart previews are championed in Lightroom because you don’t need the originals to make metadata and develop adjustments. These actually allow you to sync capture time without the original linked as well.



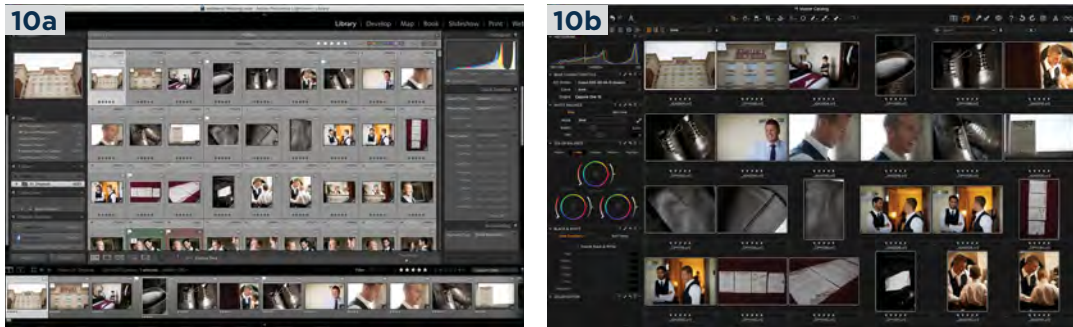
Okay, great, so what are our options in Capture One? In Capture One’s preferences, under the Image tab within the Cache section, you can choose the preview’s long-edge dimensions. It’s defaulted at 2,560, which is almost the same as the dimensions for Lightroom Smart Previews. (7) You can increase this file size if you find yourself needing a 1:1 or 100% preview of the file; otherwise, keep it at 2,560. Like Lightroom, once the previews are built, you can disconnect your external hard drive and work offline. (8) This is no longer a bonus feature. It’s an industry standard set by Adobe. Now let’s dive into the unfamiliar user interface.





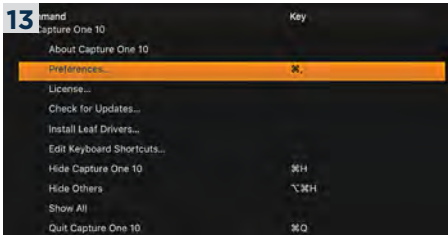
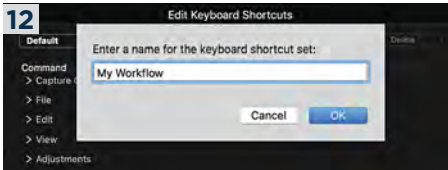
## CUSTOMIZE YOUR WORKSPACE

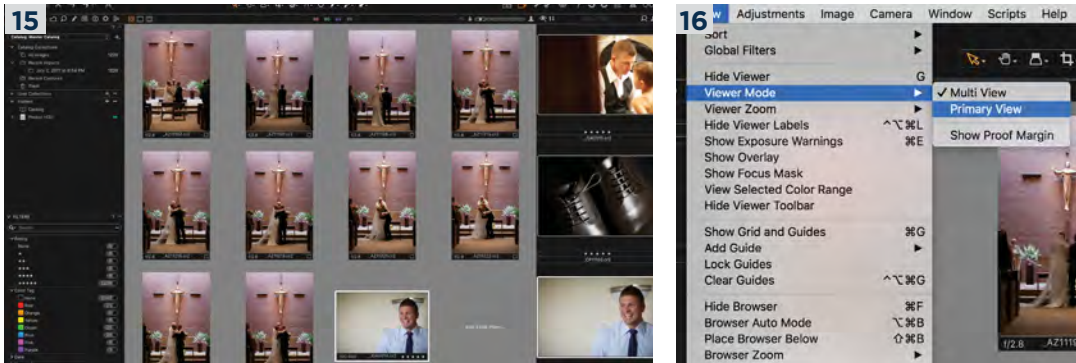
First things first, we have to change this layout, or what Capture One refers to as the Workspace. (9) I prefer the Lightroom-styled layout, but if you are working on a single monitor, you don't have the option of toggling multiple screens. (10ab) There are plenty of custom workspaces built for previous Lightroom users. Google "capture one workspace lightroom" and "capture one keyboard shortcuts lightroom" to get started on the right path. Here are some quick changes I made to get us more familiar with Capture One.



I want access to modules like Library and Develop, as well as shortcut keys for syncing images. These options make Lightroom efficient for me. Let's change the keyboard shortcuts by clicking in the menu bar Capture One 10 and selecting Edit Keyboard Shortcuts.... (11) In the newly opened window, click Create and name it. (12) Below there are two categories: Command and Key. Click the ">" next to each command to access each keyboard shortcut. (13) You'll notice the command names match the menu bar: Capture One 10, File, Edit, View, etc.

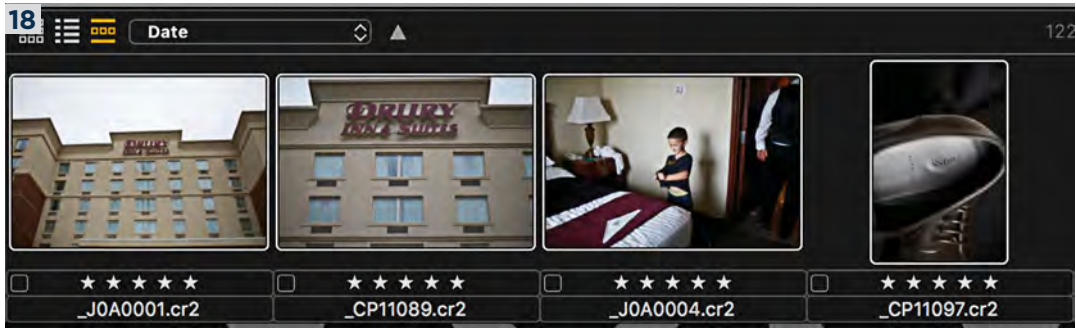
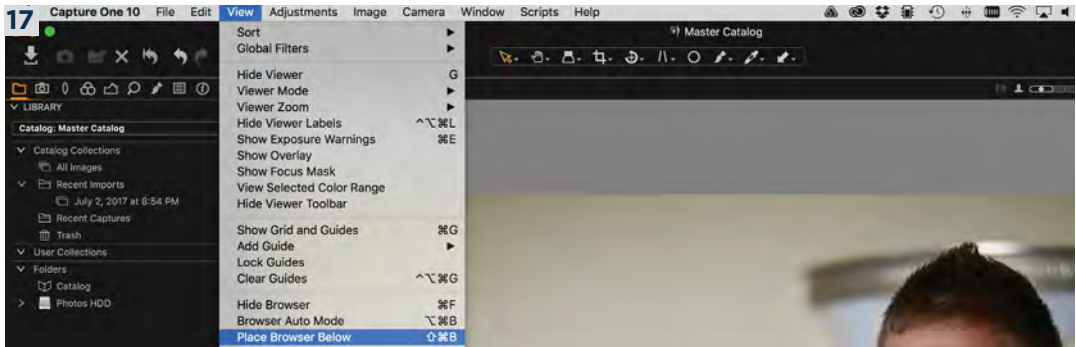
Under the View category, we want to mimic "grid mode" from Lightroom. The Library module in Lightroom can be used as "Viewer" in Capture One. Choose the Show/Hide Viewer command and assign "G" to it. (14) Now we have grid mode whenever we want. So how can we toggle grid mode and our Develop module like in Lightroom? We need to further customize our workspace to get better acquainted with editing in Capture One.





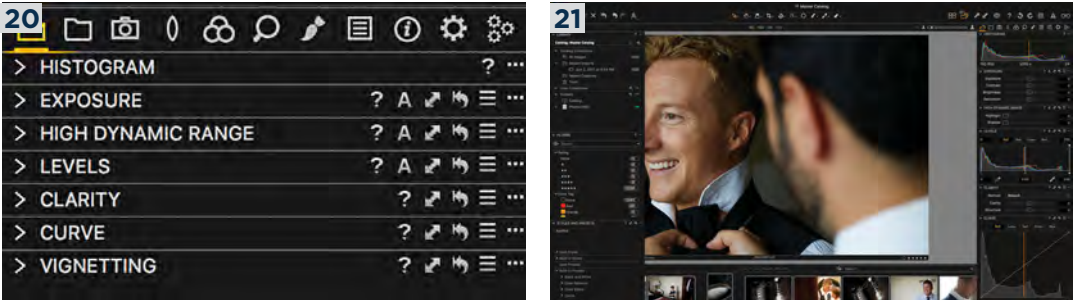
For starters, the filmstrip is vertically positioned on the right side. It looks like Library is on the left, and I am seeing a small grid of my images in the middle. (15) I need to see one image at a time when editing, so let's change that first. Navigate to your menu bar, click on View, hover your cursor over Viewer Mode and choose Primary View. (16)

We need to move the filmstrip to the bottom of our screen. Click on View in the menu bar and click Place Browser Below. (17) You'll notice you cannot cycle through the images like a filmstrip. We need to change the Browser to Filmstrip Mode by clicking the appropriate symbol right above the first image in the filmstrip. Now we can cycle to the left and right easily with the keyboard arrows. (18)



Now we need to move our Tools to the right-hand side for quick access. Click on View in the menu bar and click Place Tools Right. (19) You'll notice at the top of this panel there are symbols to click in order to move into different modules. These are called Tool Tabs. These can be customized by order of importance: Add tools, remove tools and even remove whole modules. (20) I like Library on the left and my editing tools on the right. This is how I customized my layout to better match what I am used to. It is simple to click on an individual tool and drag it to another location, and that is precisely what I did with Library and Presets. (21) The only final adjustment I need to make is to drag the entire window from the left so the image isn't cut off. (22)

Lastly and most importantly, save you Workspace by clicking Window in the menu bar. Hover your cursor over Workspace and select Save Workspace. (23)

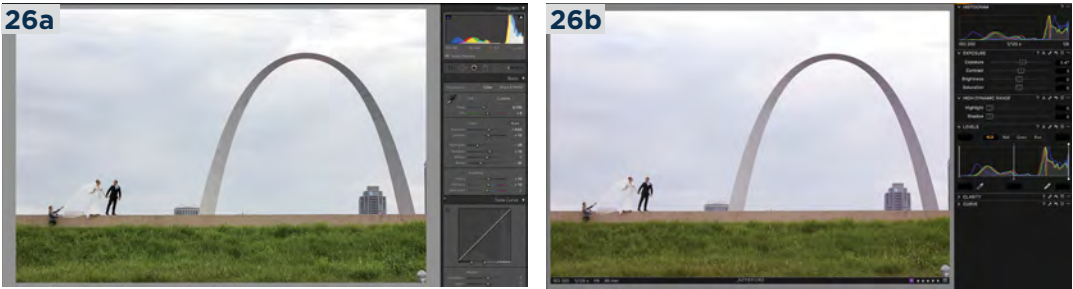
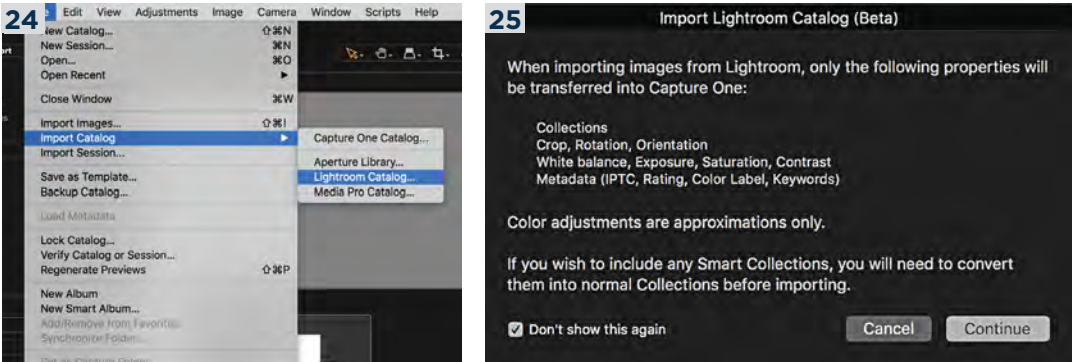


MIGRATING FROM LIGHTROOM TO CAPTURE ONE

Now we are ready to import existing Lightroom catalogs into Capture One. Before proceeding, you have to understand that Lightroom and Capture One are proprietary RAW processing programs. Lightroom saves our .xmp files, while Capture One saves .cos files. This means they save metadata differently and some information is noninterchangeable. Also, your Lightroom catalog must be linked to your original files. Smart Previews are rendered virtually useless for Capture One catalog importing.

With your Capture One catalog open, click File in the menu bar, hover your cursor over Import Catalog and select the Lightroom catalog. (24) You'll notice a dialog box stating what metadata will be imported. You can turn off this dialog window for future catalog imports by checking the box in the lower left-hand corner. (25) Now let's continue by choosing the Lightroom catalog and waiting for the import process to complete.

After importing the catalog, we can start to refine the edits and even compare our results with Lightroom. (26ab) I do not want to get into a long-winded debate on which image is better or how we can get them to more closely match. Just keep in mind that things like highlight and shadow recovery, clarity, vibrance and camera profile are not applied. Capture One also has different default settings for sharpening, noise reduction, lens correction and camera profile. Let's move on to more ways to make Capture One more friends among Lightroom users.



TIPS AND MAJOR DIFFERENCES

Make Capture One more personalized and efficient for your editing needs. Don't get caught up in all the default tools in the Tool Tabs. Remove tools you do not need for editing and expand the ones you need. I match the Lightroom Develop module with the following tools: white balance, exposure, high dynamic range, levels, clarity and curve. (27)

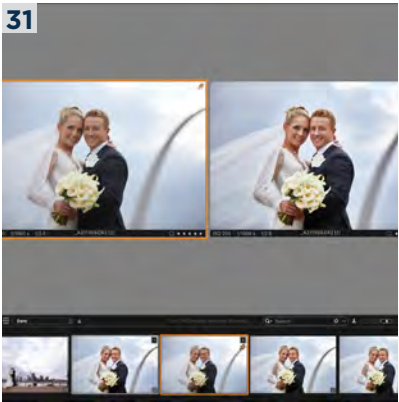
One thing I am stuck on is syncing edits between images quickly by holding Shift and Command while striking the "S" key. Bypassing the copy and paste settings is a two-step process. There is an option called Copy and Apply Adjustments in Capture One that we can assign that same keyboard shortcut to. (28) Now we can simply edit one image selected in the filmstrip, click the last image in a similarly shot sequence and sync images. This editing workflow is crucial for me in Lightroom. (29ab)



One big difference is the lack of before and after previews in Capture One. While this seems like a purely cosmetic difference, inevitably I need to see the as-shot image to compare it to the edited one. There is a workaround by creating “variants” that are comparable to virtual copies in Lightroom. To select all images, hold Shift + Command while striking the apostrophe key. (30)

I have not had success doing this to 1,200 images. My catalog freezes every time. If I want to see my image as shot, I have to hold Command and strike the “R” key to reset it. Then I can reapply the edits by holding Command and striking the “Z” key. Not the worst thing in the world, but it’s frustrating they will not implement this user option. (31)

Much like Adobe Camera Raw’s editing interface, you are stuck clicking on a slider and adjusting with your mouse. There are convenient but expensive specialized keyboard and midi systems for more efficient editing. Why can’t I just hover my cursor over a tool’s slider and use arrow keys to adjust the settings? I can reset the slider by double-clicking it, and temporarily reset the slider by clicking on the name listed to the left. This is helpful, but I can’t rely on keyboard shortcuts for each individual slider. I guess I just have to get used to it.



FINAL THOUGHTS

The change from Lightroom to Capture One is a challenge at first. They look completely different, and I am sure you had the same feeling before you used Lightroom for the first time. Learning the interface, customizing your Workspace and designating keyboard shortcuts will save you the most time. With the integration of Lightroom catalogs, you can simply import all of your previously delivered catalogs. ■



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Dustin Lucas is a full-time photographer and educator focused on the wedding industry and the academic world. After achieving his master of fine arts degree, a career opportunity opened once he began working with Evolve Edits. Through teaching photography classes and writing about photography, Dustin continues to expand his influence on art and business throughout the industry.  
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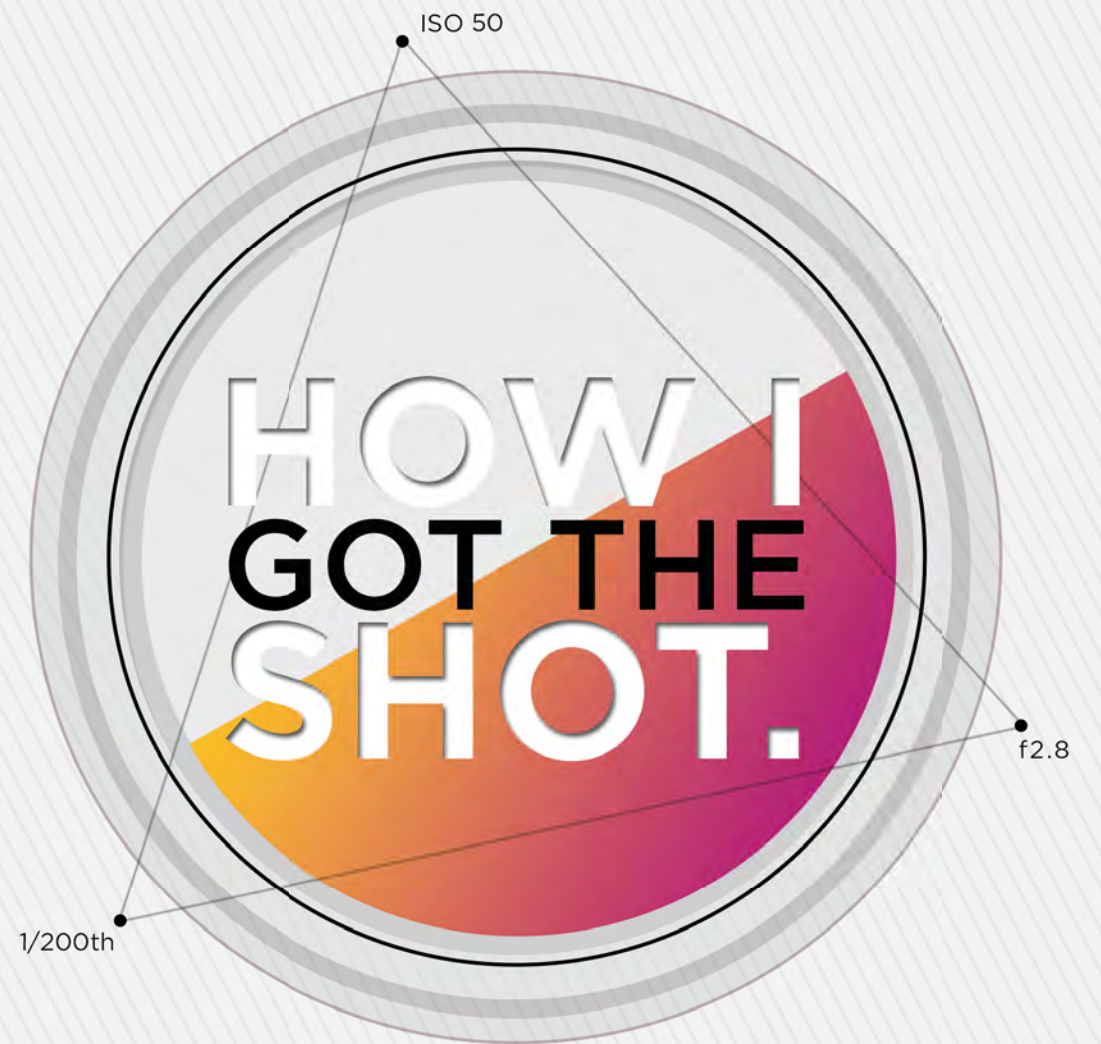
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- 26 | **How I Got the Shot** with Sal Cincotta
- 40 | **Mastering the Golden Hour** with Brian MacStay
- 52 | **Beauty Lighting Made Easy** with Michael Corsentino
- 64 | **Light Through a Wedding Day** with Christine Yodsukar
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- 150 | **Mastering Natural Light** with Twig & Olive Photography
- 162 | **Lighting for Dogs** with Professional Pooch
- 178 | **Inspirations** from Our Readers



Image © Salvatore Cincotta Photography



with Sal Cincotta

Recently I had the honor of working with and photographing the beautiful Bella. I met Bella and her family at ShutterFest 2017. She was one of the models for the event. At the time, I didn’t have a chance to work with her one on one, but I knew I wanted to spend some time and try some new concepts with her.

I started the “How I Got the Shot” column years ago during a quest to better my craft. I figured I would take you along for the ride every month as I try new things, and we could learn and grow together.

Concept

This was a concept from Alissa, my second in command and all-around boss-lady. She saw some ideas for a flower wall, and we went from there. While there are sites that produce flower walls, they are usually complete crap. They look and feel cheap. They photograph poorly. These flowers you are seeing are all fake.

On sites like Etsy, you will find a huge variety of options and price points. You usually get what you pay for. For this shoot, we didn’t overspend. We went with middle-of-the-road pricing. The total cost was just around \$200.

Bella is lying on a green indoor/outdoor rug to ensure that we don’t see the floor through the flowers, thus creating more post-production work and cost. (We picked up that rug on Amazon.)





Image © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

Location

This was shot indoors at a studio in NYC. This allowed us complete control of the environment, which is very important on a shoot like this. You want to be able to take your time setting up and getting dialed in with your lighting, posing, etc.

The ceilings were white and about 15 feet high. This played into our lighting decisions.

Makeup

For shoots like this, I try never to cut corners. Invest in the details. Hair and makeup are crucial. Bella has gorgeous skin, but the camera and lighting can be unforgiving. I need to be as close to perfect as possible in-camera so I don't have to spend countless hours fixing things in post-production. The soft light and makeup really paid off.

Lighting

This was a fun shoot. The lighting was very different than our usual. Normally I would set up a few softboxes and call it a day, but for this one, I wanted a really soft natural-light look and feel.

So, how did we do it? We started with a Profoto B1 flash and Manfrotto Nano Stands. We fired the strobes into the ceiling to create a giant softbox.

Someone asked me recently if I could accomplish the same thing with speedlights. It depends. With this type of indirect light, you are losing a ton of light in the distance to the ceiling because the light has to travel from your strobe to the ceiling and back down to the ground. Factors that impact this include the height of the ceiling and the reflective nature of the paint. So you could need more power than a speedlight can put out, but it might work just fine.

You just have to test your setup.

This was an easy enough setup, but I had never tried it before this shoot. The first time’s a struggle, but that’s how you grow. Now I have a new lighting setup in my arsenal.

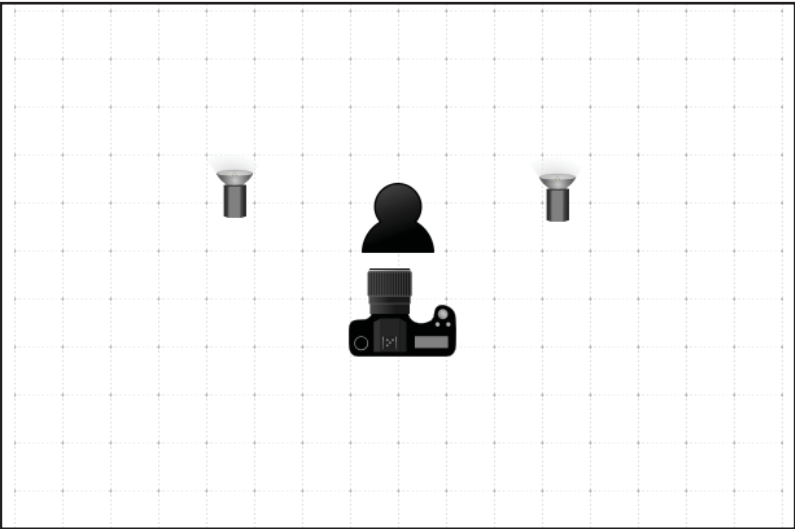


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Final Thoughts

Try something new every month. Work on your portfolio. Get out there and practice. That is the only way to grow as a photographer. I love challenging myself each and every day to be better than the day before. I love the process of failing because there is always something new on the other side.

To watch the full video of the shoot, visit [sopsc.com/bella-nyc](http://sopsc.com/bella-nyc). ■




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

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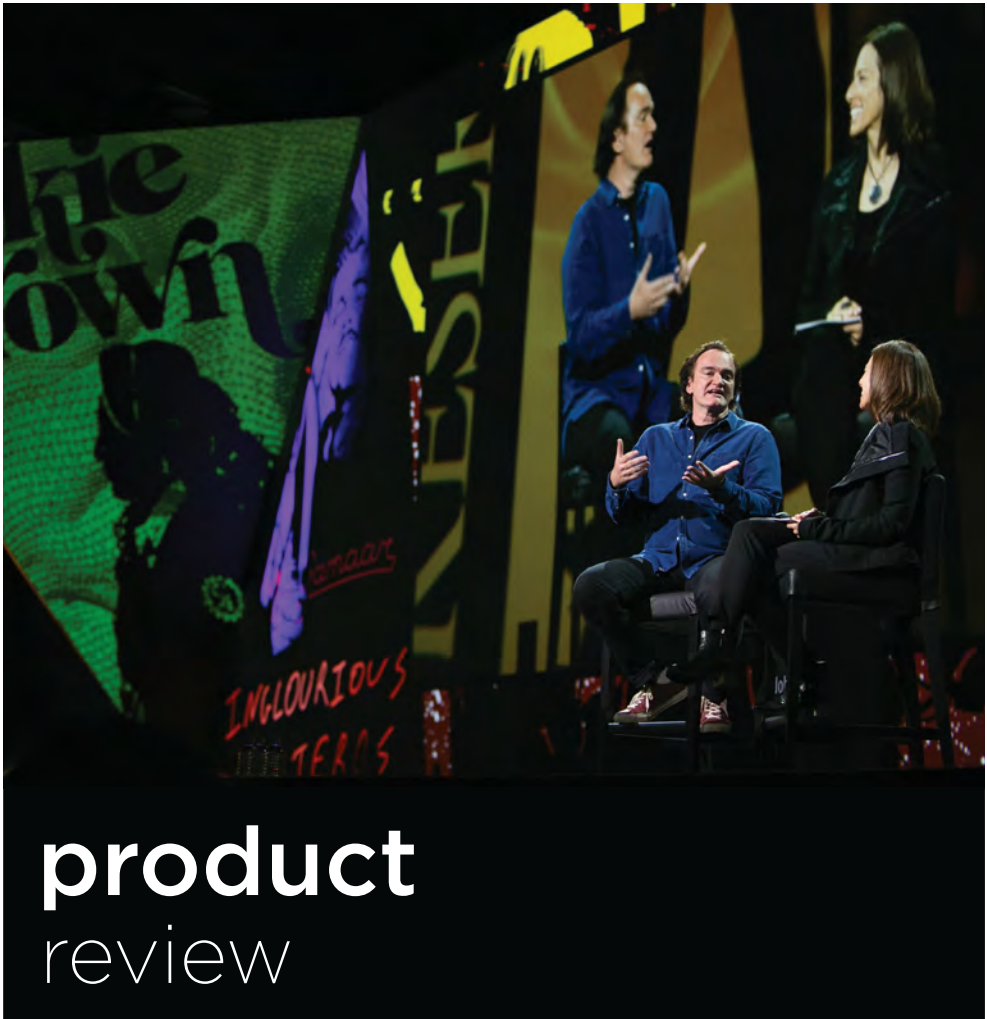
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MASTERING THE  
*Golden Hour*  
with Brian MacStay



Settings: Leica 35mm, f/2.0 @ 1/250, ISO 200

Image © Brian MacStay

If you’ve been a wedding photographer for any length of time, you’ve surely experienced the anxiety of watching the sunset of the century fade while your couple sits listening to Uncle Bill’s 35-page toast at the reception. You can actually feel the points being deducted from your next WPPI Award as the light fades. “Let’s plan to do your portraits in the evening when it’s cooler and the light is prettier,” you told your couple months ago when they were building the timeline. But the day is here, and the sun is going to go behind that mountain very soon. When you get the chance with them, time will be short. Are you ready?

THE VERSATILITY OF GOLDEN HOUR

Why do we covet those last few minutes of light at the end of the day? The golden hour light is much easier to work with. We cherish its beauty and versatility. It gives us more options for creatively capturing our couple’s love story. But we are rarely offered a whole hour to photograph our couple during golden hour. We are working under pressure, so it’s helpful to have a handful of go-to techniques for maximizing our limited time. Light is directional. Where and how you place your subjects in the light can make a big difference in how your images will look and feel.

HAVE A PLAN—WELL, SORT OF

The key to successful wedding portraiture at golden hour is flexibility. You must think and work fast on your feet. Draw from your experience by creatively customizing deliverable portraits using previously practiced and planned techniques.

In all honesty, I hardly ever have a plan for exactly what I will do during my couple’s golden-hour portraits—meaning I have no idea where I will take them, how I will pose them or what the composition will be until a few moments before we start shooting.

Why don’t I have a plan? Two reasons. First, as you see from the example above, plans change. Often. Weddings aren’t a moving portrait session. You are often at the mercy of the time that’s been handed to you. Setting the timeline for “sunset portraits” is merely a guideline. It’s not set in stone, so you don’t actually know how much time you will be given with the couple until the moment they step out the door of the reception venue with you. Second, you don’t know what light you are dealing with until you actually see it. So, although I don’t have a plan for exactly where and when I will take my couple during their golden-hour portrait session, I have a list of go-to scenarios and techniques I use to take advantage of the beauty and versatility that this light provides.

THE NOT-SO-GOLDEN HOUR

Again, we are at the mercy of a changing timeline. Catering is suddenly saying that the food is not ready, so the planner is asking if I can take the couple out an hour early for portraits since there won't be time later in the evening. I am now shooting at the very beginning of golden hour, when the light can be more difficult to work with. It's time to improvise and make the best use of the light and time I am given.

The key to working with the beginning of golden hour, when the light can be harsh, is to put the sun behind your subjects and set a dark backdrop behind them. This does two things. A dark backdrop, such as trees or a structure, filters the light a little, providing relief from the light entering straight into your lens, still allowing the backlight to hit your subjects. A dark backdrop provides a nice canvas for your couple's background. As the light hits them from behind, it makes your subjects pop off this background for a beautifully rim-lit portrait.



Settings: Nikkor 85mm, f/1.6 @ 1/2500, ISO 100



Settings: Nikkor 85mm, f/1.6 @ 1/2000, ISO 200



Settings: Nikkor 85mm, f/1.6 @ 1/2500, ISO 200

Now what? I have fallen back on my go-to back-lit sun-behind-the-couple light-filtered-through-the-trees technique. This always works, and it only improves as the light falls. But what else can be done when the light is still harsh to maximize our time and give the couple some variety in their portraits?

CREATING DRAMA

Harsh, direct sunlight is a great tool for creating drama. When the sun is too high in the sky to look at, you can still use the light on your subjects' faces, as long as their eyes are closed. The hard directional light is also great for creating lines that lead to or frame your subjects. Don't be intimidated by harsh, direct sunlight. Use it to create visually impactful images.



Settings: Nikkor 35mm, f/1.4 @ 1/4000, ISO 100

SILHOUETTES

The sun can still be very high in the sky, and with some creative compositions and exposure settings, you can create unique and beautiful natural-light silhouettes. I have three techniques, based on the light that I'm given, for creating a silhouette of my couple.

First, when the sun is still in the sky, I include it in the image, perhaps using a smaller aperture of f/16 or less to create a star. I then use creative posing and an artistic composition to give the image impact.



Settings: Nikkor 85mm, f/10 @1/4000, ISO 200



Settings: Leica 35mm, f/11 @1/750, ISO 320

Images © Brian MacStay

My second technique is to not include the sun in the image, but simply to place the dark outline of my subjects in the brightest area of the image. I then expose for the highlight, creating the extreme contrast of dark and light.



Settings: Leica 35mm, f/2.0 @1/1500, ISO 200

The third technique I use is a rim-lit silhouette. I place my subjects in front of a dark backdrop, like a tree or a building. I allow the very bright backlit sun to hit them, while increasing my shutter speed to its maximum setting. This makes the image almost entirely dark, except for the light outlining my couple.



Settings: Nikkor 85mm, f/2.0 @1/8000, ISO 200

Images © Brian MacStay

A FLAIR FOR FLARE

As the sunlight falls—and if your style calls for a bit of sun flare in your images—you can use the light entering your lens to produce interesting and dynamic images. Use trees, buildings and other structures, or even the couple, to block the sun. Allow only a bit of light to enter your lens to create sun flare. This technique is perfected with a lot of practice, but can often be hit or miss. The key is to wait for moments and constantly move and shoot as you search for the right balance of light entering your lens, based on your manually set exposure settings. My preference for these photos is to use prime lenses—35mm, 85mm, 105mm, etc.—shot wide open.



Settings: Leica 35mm, f/2.0 @ 1/1000, ISO 200



Settings: Nikkor 85mm, f/1.4 @ 1/1600, ISO 200



Settings: Nikkor 85mm, f/1.4 @ 1/640, ISO 100



Settings: Nikkor 24mm, f/3.5 @ 1/1250, ISO 200

Images © Brian MacStay

IN YOUR FACE

As the sunlight hits or falls behind the horizon, it not only changes color and gets softer, it also allows you to turn your couple around to face the light. The sun is no longer as blinding, so their eyes can be open as their faces turn into the light. With your couple's faces in the sun, you can create that warm romantic glow on their faces, which provides a completely different look, feel and mood from your prior images.



Settings: Nikkor 85mm, f/1.4 @ 1/4000, ISO 200

Image © Brian MacStay

SAME PLACE, SAME LIGHT, DIFFERENT EXPOSURE, DIFFERENT MOOD

Sometimes simply changing your exposure can create remarkably different images. The images below are examples of using the same light, in the same location, at the same time of day, but adjusting exposure settings to get a completely different look.



Settings: Nikkor 85mm, f/1.4 @ 1/640, ISO 100



Settings: Nikkor 85mm, f/1.4 @ 1/4000, ISO 80

Images © Brian MacStay



Image © Brian MacStay

Settings: Nikkor 105mm, f/1.4 @ 1/1000, ISO 160

## BE READY TO RUN

Chasing light is a real thing, especially for wedding photographers. And I don't mean just "Look, the good light is over there. Let's wander over." I mean running to get to it. A few weeks ago, I had a wedding where the couple decided at the very last second they wanted to do sunset photos. I ran to the window to see how much light was left. Not much, and the light I wanted was a good 300 yards away. So we bolted down the elevator and ran, with my gear clanking on my sides, the dress bunched up on the bride, to get to the light before it was gone. When we all got there, completely out of breath, we had three or four minutes of light before it was gone. We captured some beautiful sun-filled portraits. It was worth it. (See above image.)

The coveted golden hour and time crunch at a wedding can be stressful, no doubt. The light is beautiful, and the couple's expectations are high. After all, they hired you to make them look amazing. Having a handful of ideas and techniques that you can draw from when (not if, when) the timeline for your golden-hour portrait session goes haywire will help guarantee your success. ■



Brian MacStay spent the first part of his career as a marketing consultant managing multimillion-dollar books for Fortune 500 insurance companies in California and Colorado. Today, he and his wife and three kids live in the San Francisco Bay Area, where Brian runs a thriving, award-winning wedding and event photography studio.

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# Beauty Lighting

Made Easy

with Michael Corsentino



Photographer: Michael Corsentino | HMUA: Audra Seay | Stylist: Rachel Nicole Valez | Model: Danielle Budd

DEFINING BEAUTY LIGHT

In beauty light, there are several tried and true tools and techniques guaranteed to create gorgeous light every time. In this article, I demonstrate the basics of beauty lighting, lighting pattern and fill light options, introducing accent lights and best tools and techniques to get the job done right.

At a bare minimum, to create beauty light, you'll need to start with one keylight above your camera position angled down toward and directly in front of your subject. It's typically a strobe modified with a beauty dish (more on this later).

Next you'll need fill light to open up the shadows created by the keylight under the subject's chin and eye sockets. This can be either a reflector (silver, white or, in rare cases, gold), or a second strobe modified with a small strip box or softbox. The fill source is placed below the subject's face, waist, etc., just outside the frame and facing up toward the keylight at relatively the same opposing angle. This over-and-under lighting pattern is known as clamshell. It's a classic beauty light technique that creates a flattering, even and forgiving effect.

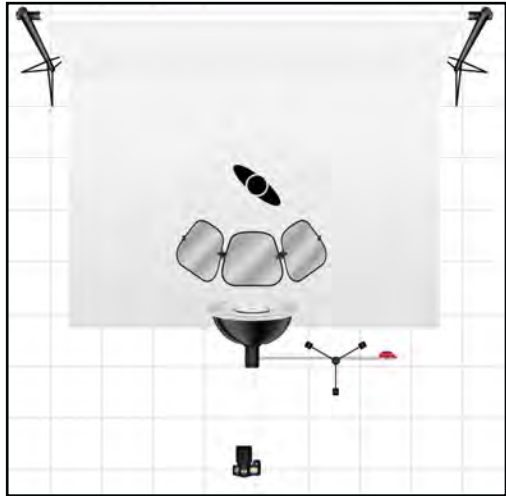
The reason for this is the relative lack of direction from the key and fill light sources, which are essentially creating a flat light. The less directionality a light source has in relationship to a subject, the flatter the light it creates and the fewer shadows it introduces. Shadows are great in many portrait scenarios but not with beauty lighting. The goal is to minimize the skin imprecations, wrinkles, large pore structures and facial lines that shadows can easily accentuate. The flatter the light, the more forgiving the light.

BEAUTY LIGHTING STEP 1



Basic beauty lighting starts with a properly placed keylight (see lighting diagram). The strobe, typically modified with a beauty dish, is placed above the camera position, angled down at approximately 45 degrees and aimed directly at the model. I'm using a Mola Softlights Demi beauty dish. Note the dark shadows under the model's chin and eye sockets; we'll correct for that in Step 2.

BEAUTY LIGHTING STEP 2



Adding a reflector from below opens up the shadows the keylight creates under the model's chin and eye sockets. I'm using the white side of a Lastolite Triflector. I like this reflector because it allows you to articulate three separate panels so you can place or remove fill light around the entire face (see the catchlight detail image). If you find you're not getting enough fill light, try using a silver-surfaced reflector, but beware overly bright lower catchlights.



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

You'll need a few essential tools. The first is your keylight source. I recommend a strobe or hot shoe flash. While great for many applications, constant light sources aren't ideal for beauty portraits because they're typically shot tight, which can cause the subject's pupils to dilate. In beauty, large pupils are preferable over the small dilated pupils you get with a bright constant light source. So you'll also want to avoid using an overly strong modeling light on your strobe.

There are all sorts of modifiers you can use, but for the best results, you'll want to use its namesake modifier, the beauty dish, the majority of the time. Specifically designed for its ability to produce flattering beauty lighting, the beauty dish delivers soft, even light with moderate contrast and falloff. The light can be further softened using a diffusion sock placed over the front of the dish. These reflectors are available in a variety of sizes and with white or silver interior finishes. For the softest effect, I use a white interior beauty dish with a diffusion sock. My go-to is the Mola Softlights 22-inch Demi reflector with a white interior. For those of you working with speedlights, Mola also offers the optional Lumi bracket for hot shoe flashes.

The easiest way to work with a beauty dish above your camera is to use a medium to heavy light stand with a boom arm and counterweight. This way, your stand is off to the side and you can easily position and adjust the dish above the camera as needed. My brand of choice is Kupo Grip; these stands are rock solid and very reasonably priced for the performance they deliver.

To create fill light from below a strobe, use a reflector. I start with a white-surfaced reflector and work from there. If I'm not getting enough reflected light, I switch to a silver reflector for more output. The distance between the reflector and the keylight also plays a role in the amount of fill created, so adjust as needed.

If you're still not getting the fill light you want, use a second strobe for fill instead of a reflector. (See lighting diagram to the right.) This allows you to precisely dial in the amount and quality of fill light desired. My fill strobe is either on a floor stand or boomed in from the side using a C-stand with a grip arm for easy vertical adjustments without getting in the way of the camera. Keep in mind each fill source will create a second catchlight in the lower half of the subject's eyes. I like to keep this subtle, but it's completely subjective. The source you choose will impact the brightness of the catchlights, and the modifier used will dictate their shape and contrast. Typical modifier choices include softboxes and strip boxes. I use either an Elinchrom 2x2-foot softbox or 14x35-inch strip box.

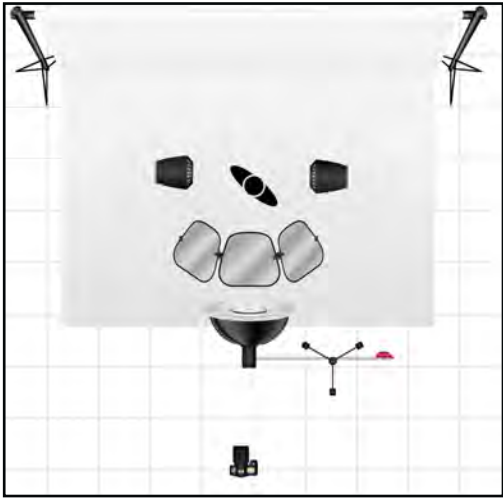


ACCENT LIGHTS

So far I've covered the basics of beauty lighting. You can see that it doesn't take a ton of gear to create and that there are plenty of options. The next step—and a surefire way to amp up your beauty lighting—is the addition of accent lights. In the sample image included for this article, I've added two accent strobes, one left and one right, to act as sidelights. These were each fitted with a 14x35-inch strip box and a LightTools 30-degree soft egg create grid. The grids helped channel the light exactly where desired, while illuminating any unwanted spill onto the background and other areas. Typical modifiers for accent lights include the strip boxes used here, as well as reflectors, reflectors with grid spots and gels.

Again, as with fill lights, you have a lot of options. It really all depends on the quality of light you're trying to create. Obviously if you're after a softer look, you'd be well advised to look at softboxes/strip boxes to modify your accent lights, while a harder, more contrasty look would necessitate smaller reflectors with silver interiors.

BEAUTY LIGHTING STEP 3



The addition of accent lights left and right takes this image to the next level. In addition to the keylight and fill reflector, I'm using two Elinchrom 14x35-inch strip boxes placed on the left and right sides of the model. To constrain the light into narrow vertical beams, each strip box is fitted with a 30-degree LightTools soft egg crate grid. Small reflectors also work well as accent lights, but with a harder look. Alternately, use a softbox or strip in place of a reflector for added control (see lighting diagram on page 54).



Image © Michael Corsentino

LENS CHOICES  
& TRIPODS

Beauty images usually show three-quarter length or less of the subject, as opposed to a photo showing the subject’s entire body. For this reason, I opt for longer lenses in the 80mm to 200mm range, depending on the camera format and system. The other best practice is using a tripod or studio stand. This is something that took me a while to get used to, but now I wouldn’t want to work any other way. A tripod or a studio stand allows you to easily create a consistently composed series of images. If you’re handholding your camera, there’s just no way to be as consistent frame to frame. This becomes important when you’re producing images where text for mastheads or magazine spreads will be added, or for images intended to be used in a series, such as layouts and composites.

POST-  
PROCESSING

Beauty images are close to the top end of the retouching food chain, second only to cosmetic advertisements. This kind of attention to detail requires a considerable amount of time and skill to execute professional results. If you’re not a retoucher, consider hiring one. They’re worth every penny. When I have the time or the project doesn’t have a budget for outsourced retouching, I use an inexpensive Photoshop plugin by Retouching Academy called Beauty Retouch. It’s an awesome timesaving tool that I couldn’t do without.

For this kind of retouching, you’ll want to master a technique called “frequency separation.” But that’s a topic for another month. Have fun and get after your beauty lighting chops.



Image © Michael Corsentino

Beauty is typically shot fairly tightly to focus on the face. Here I’ve added considerable impact with a tighter crop. Shooting wider and cropping in post provides multiple options.



*In these before-and-after color-grading examples, you can see how subtle changes in color add impact and polish. Color grading was performed in Capture One Pro 10.*



Images © Michael Corsentino

Again, in these before-and-after color-grading examples, you can see how subtle changes in color add impact and polish. Color grading was performed in Capture One Pro 10.

Post your images to the ShutterFest Facebook page and tag me—I can’t wait to see what you come up with. ■

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

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© Thomas Kettner Focal Length: 200mm Exposure: F/2.8 1/125sec ISO: 400

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Image © Christine Yodsukar

# LIGHTS

**THROUGH  
— A —  
WEDDING  
— DAY —**  
with Christine Yodsukar

You may be me five years ago. I loved photography, but I wasn't as quick to understand technical jargon like my colleagues. I felt my palms sweat every time someone asked me a question about my equipment. Most of the time, I couldn't answer them. Going to school for my BFA in acting taught me that if I wanted something to become a part of me, I had to do it over and over again until it was no longer just an idea I had in my head.

Understanding lighting was overwhelming for me, but just like with acting, if I did it over and over again, it would no longer be technical jargon that I couldn't grasp. It became second nature. In other words, forget what I don't know and just do it over and over until I do know it. So if you're overwhelmed by the technical side of lighting, don't fear. You can try these simple approaches to wedding day lighting. Just make sure you don't give up on the first or second try, because the 10th is when it will become second nature.

As with every part of the wedding day, I apply in-studio lighting techniques to my photographs using my keylight (the main light), hair light (light that separates the subject from the background) and fill light (fills in the shadows). The mood I want to create changes throughout the day as the story I am telling changes, so my light sources vary from natural to artificial.

 **BRIDAL PORTRAIT**

At the beginning of the day, I focus on the bride getting ready and capturing stunning portraits of her that her grandchildren will fawn over someday as they pour through her wedding album. The mood I am looking to create here is one of optimism and love. I want to give her grandchildren the warm fuzzies.

To achieve this look, I create a photo that is bright and soft by using available window light and positioning my bride either next to or in front of the window. The window light is my keylight, and the closer she is to the window, the harder the light and shadows will be.

 **STUDIO HOTEL**

To create a studio right in the bride's hotel room, I ask a bridesmaid to hold the window curtain out behind the bride, which serves as a clean and simple backdrop for my portrait. The inside of hotel curtains are usually white to keep out light and heat, but for me it acts as a giant bounce pouring light onto the back of her head. This is my hair light.

Because I like to work on a wedding day with as little gear as possible, I use a clean white bath towel as my fill light. I use this trick at almost every wedding. I call it my Studio Hotel. No matter where I am, I can create consistent and beautiful photographs for my clients. Who thought a curtain could be so versatile?



Image © Christine Yodsukar

GROUP PORTRAITS

For group photos in the hotel room, I use the same exact light as the bridal portrait. I simply drop the curtain and use the room as my background. This is great for the bridesmaids helping the bride into her gown.

Backlighting offers a simple way to fill your photograph with light. To do this, I place my bride with her back to the window. I can then bring light back onto her face with a white bounce or by utilizing white walls and doors behind me.



Images © Christine Yodsukar



BRIDAL DETAILS

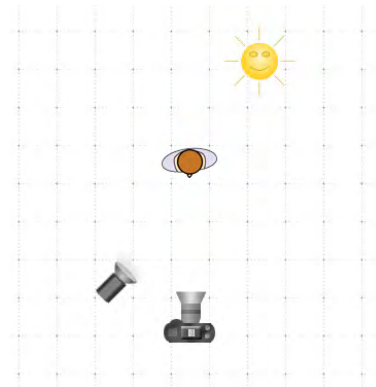
To photograph details like the bride’s shoes, I find something small that I can use in place of the curtain as my “studio backdrop,” usually either the bride’s dress or veil, or a bridesmaid’s dress. The window is next to the shoes, acting as my key, and the pillow propped up next to the shoes opposite the window is my fill light.



Images © Christine Yodsukar



Image © Christine Yodsukar



Images © Christine Yodsukar

**COUPLE PORTRAITS**

Taking portraits of the couple is always my favorite part of the day. If there is only one photo that will be passed down through the generations, it will be one of these. I keep my basics the same with my keylight, hair light and fill light. I go for more of a commercial look that is bold and crisp. Unlike my wide-open aperture during bridal portraits in the hotel room, I stop down my aperture. This allows me to capture more in focus with details in the sky and highlights.

When outside, I position the couple with the sun acting as my hair light. I use a studio strobe as my keylight and place it at a 45-degree angle in front of the couple, creating dimension on their face and body. To travel light outdoors, I use only a reflector on my strobe and feather the light across their bodies and away from the couple to create the softness that I am missing without a softbox. I then make the power of my strobe match the power of the sun. This technique works even if the sun is at the dreaded High Noon horror, and alleviates any raccoon eyes that may be trying to make an appearance.



Image © Christine Yodsukar

RECEPTION DETAILS

Unlike the bright shoe photos, I want the details inside my ballroom receptions to feel magnificent and sexy. You can’t possibly capture this depth of color and shadow with ambient light and a high ISO.

First, manually find your proper settings to capture the ambient light. I start by setting my aperture between f2.8 and f4, then base my shutter speed and ISO off of that. Place one light either in front of (keylight) or behind (hair light) the subject at a 45-degree angle from above. This angle once again creates depth in the light and shadows. I place my light behind the detail I am photographing, which mimics that evening glow receptions often provide.



Images © Christine Yodsukar





Images © Christine Yodsukar

## FIRST DANCE AND TOASTS

Something you may not know about me is that I work almost every single wedding with a cinematographer who hates when his reception footage is littered with a flashing strobe. He asked if I would try using hot lights instead. Lucky for him, he is my husband, and I obliged. This request transformed the way I directed my reception lighting. Not only do the hot lights make my amazing cinematographer husband happy, but they helped me create the exact mood I wanted for my reception photos: warm, romantic and cinematic.

Don't be afraid of hot lights. They are actually much easier to work with than strobes because you can see how and where your light is falling and the strength of it. I also love the warmth of my hot lights. The tungsten white balance "fits in," or seems more believable to the eye in the setting of a reception, where chandeliers, uplights and house lights are often tungsten as well.

To set up my lights, I am again utilizing my keylight and hair light setup. I place my lights opposite one another in the ballroom facing the center of the dance floor. I then have a speed light on camera with a CTO gel as my fill light. The gel warms up my flash to match my hot lights. This setup allows me to move around the dance floor as my two lights morph between keylight and hair light, depending on where I am standing. It works for the first dance, parent dances and toasts.

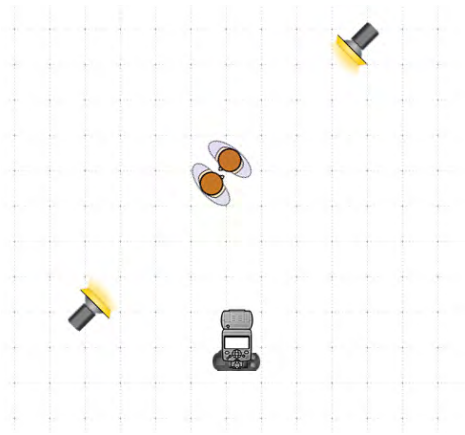


Image © Christine Yodsukar



**PARTY AND DANCING**

There is nothing like getting deep into the dance floor and capturing the fun. But I despise flat on-camera flash. My secret weapon? I take my speedlight in hand, connect it to my camera with a cord and place a flash disc (which acts as a portable softbox) on it. I hold the light 45 degrees and slightly above my subjects. This mimics the setup I use during couples portraits. Instead of using the sun as my hair light, the room is filled with subtle ambient light from chandeliers, candles and uplights.

The results are gorgeously lit photos that actually look like you’re in a dimly lit wedding reception. People go crazy over them. Do I look ridiculous taking these photos? Definitely. Are the photos outstanding? Every time. Do they end up as upgrade spreads in the wedding album? Yes, they do. Make that money.

By slowly adding these lighting setups into your wedding day routine, what was once daunting will now be simple. Don’t worry about what you don’t know. Instead, just do it over and over again. Soon, it will become second nature. Trust me. Not too long ago I was exactly where you are. ■



Christine hails from Boston and currently splits her live/work/play time between Los Angeles, Portland, Oregon, and the rest of the world. Along with her husband and business partner, she took her wedding business from \$100 weddings to a six-figure income in three years. She’s passionate about sharing her knowledge and can be seen frequently on WeTV as a wedding photography expert.  
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USING  
**CONSISTENT LIGHTING**  
TO BRAND YOUR BUSINESS  
with Vanessa Joy



When I saw the topic for this month’s *Shutter*, I immediately started thinking of lighting techniques and skills like off-camera flash and using reflectors. I thought about what was most important in the lighting realm these days, and then it dawned on me: Nothing affects your ability to gain and maintain business like learning how to light in a way that defines your brand image.

Ten to 15 years ago, this didn’t matter. I wish I had access to famous photographers’ old websites, because I could show you just how differently photography was portrayed then. But more and more people aren’t even going to your website. They’re checking out your other portfolio: Instagram.

Instagram can be a photographer’s best friend or worst enemy. Thanks to this social platform, users can take a look at our most updated portfolio in a millisecond. We’re judged only by the last six pictures we posted, or, if we’re lucky, by one or two scrolls of the thumb. When potential clients are looking at our images that quickly, displayed on that tiny mobile screen, there’s one thing that will stick out in their minds: “Does this brand look put together?”

Make no mistake, photographers (and all businesses) on Instagram are viewed and evaluated as a whole, not by single images. Consumers are wise to what a good, cohesive, consistent, branded business looks like. They expect it, even if only subconsciously. In addition to looking at how many followers you have to determine if you’re a reputable business, they will look at your images as a collective.

Scared yet? You shouldn’t be. This is your strong suit. If you haven’t honed in on your photography brand image yet, now is the time to start. You have control over lighting like no other businessperson does. There are three easy ways you can start displaying a strong brand using lighting as your guide.



Images © Vanessa Joy



Image © Vanessa Joy

FINDING AND CREATING CONSISTENT LIGHT

This is where it starts. Your effort here must be intentional and not haphazard, or you won’t see a good outcome. I’ve decided that my images are to be bright, vibrant and soft. So, when I’m deciding where to photograph details, the bridal party or the bride and groom, I place them (and any other light that I’m using) fairly consistently in the same kinds of places. If I’m looking for a spot for the bride and groom, I’m looking for a background that is backlit, and I plan on filling in the light in their faces with a reflector or off-camera flash. If I have a more moody style in my imagery, I might look for a contrasting background with light coming more from the right or left.

This isn’t to stifle creativity. Not every picture you take must look exactly the same. Of course I take pictures that are more moody, while other photographers take pictures that are more bright and light. But the overall body of your work should be collectively parallel. Not only for social media branding, but so that you fulfill the expectations you’ve given your clients. After all, if you have nothing but dark and moody pictures on your website, but then half your pictures are light and airy, you probably will have clients wondering what happened to the photographer they thought they hired.



Image © Vanessa Joy

EDITING CONSISTENTLY

The next step to creating consistently lit photos is in the post-processing. As we know, there are limitless ways to edit, enhance and potentially destroy a photograph. This is where I see most photographers make mistakes. Just scroll down my Instagram feed, and you’ll see my all-over-the-place editing and posting (@vanessajoy).

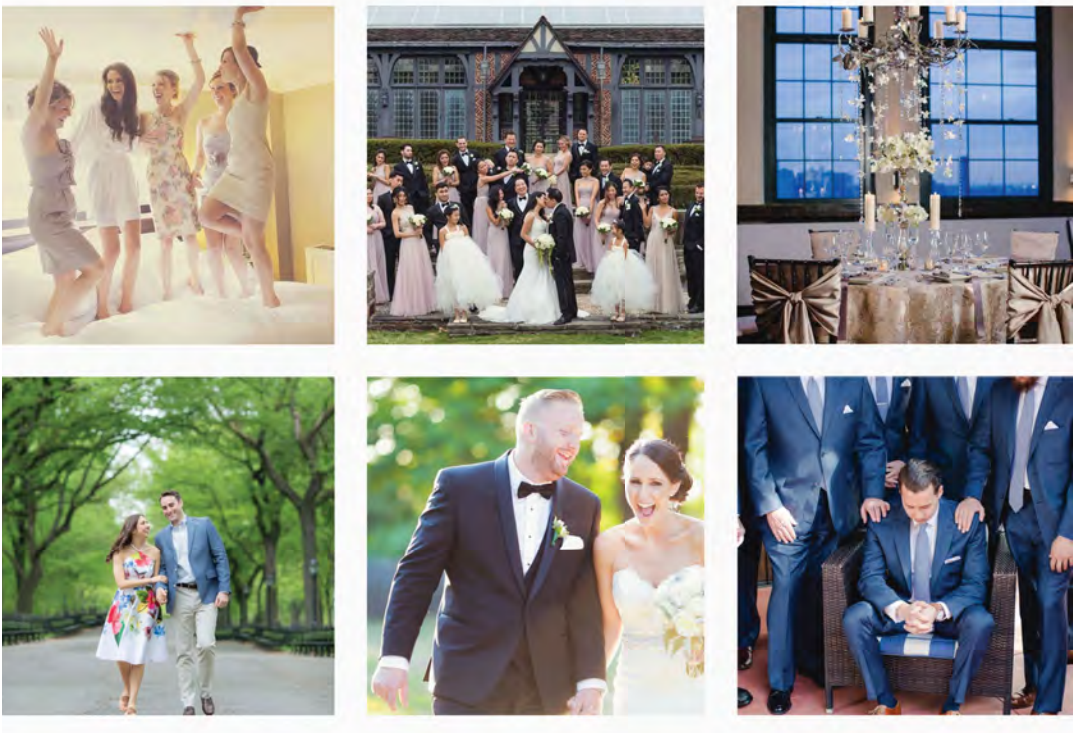
Thankfully, post-production companies can take up the slack. When you send your work out to be edited by another company, one of their primary goals is to give you consistent editing. This teaches photographers the importance of editing consistency.

This is where decision-making has to take place, either with your editing company or on your own. As much as one photo might look killer, with a vintage edit on it, it just won’t work to have it sitting next to a vibrant, colorfully edited image. Make a decision about what you want your images to portray, and stick to it.

Again, this isn’t to put you into a box of any kind. You can change your editing and lighting style, but these kinds of changes should be done gradually, not daily or whenever the feeling arises.

CHOOSING IMAGES FOR DISPLAY

The last aspect we’re going to talk about is choosing images for display, especially on Instagram. You may want to show off every photo you’ve taken at a wedding, but you need to carefully choose what you show and when. Here are four insta-branding rules to follow.



Images © Vanessa Joy

1. DISPLAY ONLY IMAGES THAT ARE COHESIVE WITH YOUR BRAND IMAGE.

Look at my Instagram on June 12 of this year (top left image). See how strange this photo of an older editing style, even though it’s a good photo, looks next to all of the brighter, more vibrant images around it?



2. DON'T POST A TON OF IMAGES FROM ONE WEDDING ALL IN A ROW.

This gets boring and doesn't show that you know how to create consistent imagery over multiple weddings.



3. IF YOU WANT TO CHANGE UP YOUR POSTING STYLE, POST IN STYLE BLOCKS.

I did this during Father's Day week this year, posting only black-and-whites for a little while.



4. CHOOSE HOW YOU'LL FRAME PHOTOS, AND STICK TO IT.

I use the whole square box. Some people like putting a border around their images. Others post only vertical images, and others only horizontal. They are all good choices. Just pick one and stick to it so when people look at your profile, it doesn't look like a jumbled mess.

Another smart move in the Instagram world is to set up your first six pictures perfectly if you have a marketing push coming. For example, if you know that you're going to have an ad running, or anything that'll drive traffic to your profile, make sure you've set up your profile spectacularly. Remember, most people won't even give you a scroll—they see only the first six images you've posted. So, if you're making an effort to push people to your Instafeed, make sure those first six pictures are amazing—individually and collectively.

Check out this video to see how I edit and choose my photos consistently and purposefully with branding in mind. Happy lighting! ■



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Vanessa Joy has been a professional wedding photographer in New Jersey since 2002, and an influencer in the photographic community for years. Since starting VanessaJoy.com 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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# the list | august 2017



Bay Photo’s Xpozer Expo Display Kit is now available in 7 configurations for up to 20 feet of pipe and drape! Xpozer’s low cost, gorgeous look, and unique portability makes the Expo Display Kit the perfect solution for exhibitions or bridal show displays. Each Kit includes hanging hardware specifically made to easily display multiple Xpozer Prints on pipe and drape.

[www.bayphoto.com/wall-displays/xpozer/](http://www.bayphoto.com/wall-displays/xpozer/)



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[profoto.com/us/d1](http://profoto.com/us/d1)



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POWERFUL AND PORTABLE

# LIGHTING

FOR DESTINATION  
PHOTOGRAPHY

with Phillip Blume



Image © Blume Photography

I got excited when her name showed up in my inbox. I’d expected no reply. Was this the chance we’d hoped for? Or perhaps just a polite refusal? I didn’t want to get my hopes up. So I curbed my enthusiasm and clicked the email.

“Hello, Phillip. So lovely to hear from you!!!! Yes, it will be amazing to work with you. I have around 15 dresses that we can play with. Thank you so much for thinking of me... Alida.”

It feels wonderfully strange to be on a first-name basis with Alida Herbst, the South African-born celebrity fashion designer. My wife Eileen and I are wedding photographers first, and we met Alida when she dressed one of our brides in London. Bridal preparations on the wedding day were at Alida’s eclectic London studio, and we were immediately charmed by the talented designer’s easy smile and down-to-earth personality—not to mention her great South African accent. Our three young children, who travel the world with us as we work, even began referring to her as their “fairy godmother” after she sweetly invited them to play among her boxes of buttons and shiny broaches.

Our next adventure would take us back across the pond to Alida’s studio, but with a different photographic aim: a fashion-forward approach where we’d feature several of Alida’s dress designs while shooting models on location in London and Oviedo, Spain. We knew one thing: We didn’t want to travel so far (with three children in tow) just to botch the job. So we called on Phottix to help us do it right.

As a photographer known for my creative use of small “pocket” flashes, I long resisted transitioning into the world of larger studio strobes. But I did my research and became intrigued by Phottix’s system. When Phottix agreed to sponsor our fashion shoots by sending lighting equipment, I began to feel more confident that I would have sufficient power and flexibility to execute my vision—even under narrow constraints of time and location. I was impressed with the tools we sampled (more below). If you shoot like I do, Phottix may be your ideal all-in-one setup for powerful, portable destination photography.

PHOTTIX INDRA500—WORLD’S BEST MONOLIGHT?

To rank the many competing studio-style strobes (or monolights) on the market, I consider three factors: power, portability and features. In terms of power, many of the top names in lighting offer some version of a 500Ws strobe. This number translates to a very bright light capable of lighting subjects dramatically even under bright outdoor conditions, and it’s the reason for the name Indra500.



Images © Blume Photography



POWER

This “Ws” number (or “megawatts per second”) is the objective measure by which you should judge a light’s power, whether that light is a small flash or a larger monolight. Too often, marketers try to draw your attention to the “Gn,” or “guide number,” to describe a light’s power. Beware. The Gn is not an objective number by a long shot, and marketers attempt to make lights appear more powerful than they are by manipulating the distance or light modifier used in determining the Gn for their product. It’s easiest to remember that almost every small pocket flash (the kind you attach to your camera’s hot shoe) is between 50 and 60Ws. So an Indra500 is equivalent in power to almost eight or 10 pocket flashes together.

Having access to that much power doesn’t mean you actually have to use it all, although the Indra500 can handle 400 full-power flashes on a single charge of its standalone battery. More often, that much power allows you to count on faster recycle times and a more fluid photo shoot. For my style (especially during weddings), I prefer to mix in a lot of ambient light, but I still darken my ambient exposure just enough so I can see detail in the brightest highlights. In these cases, the Indra500 can be used at lower power and last for thousands of shots.

For fashion photography, I do want a more dramatic light ratio: darker shadows and a brighter keylight, as you see in the photos here. So in Europe I often shot close to one half or even full power. Yet I never experienced overheating or delays in recycling. I was easily able to shoot images under one second apart, capturing multiple exposures and expressions while a model spun in her gown. I never lacked strobe power, and I did not have to retake a shot due to battery recycling issues. I wasn’t accustomed to that as a small-flash shooter, and I was spoiled by it. The shoot went so smoothly because it revolved around my interaction with the subject rather than equipment trouble-shooting. That’s freeing for an on-the-run photographer.



Images © Blume Photography



Image © Blume Photography



Image © Blume Photography

PORTABILITY

Immediately noticeable, the Indra500 is not as portable as other small flashes. For the first time, we traveled with two carry-ons full of camera equipment, rather than our usual one bag, which was significantly more difficult. On the other hand, this monolight is smaller than the eight or more flashes it replaces—and in that sense, it offers a lot more bang for your buck. (Brand-name hot-shoe flashes go for up to \$700. Multiply that by eight. The Indra500 is just \$1,300, including battery.)

There are a few features that improve the Indra500 above some other monolights. For one, it does not have a built-in battery. I realize its external battery pack is a turn-off for many photographers who’d like to see an all-in-one design, but I have a different viewpoint. Take, for example, Profoto’s B1X (the new upgraded version of its popular B1). It’s another 500Ws strobe and likely the principle high-end competitor to the Indra500. The B1X has a built-in battery as one of its main selling points. Although I think this strobe is one of the best-made available, as a traveling photographer, I prefer an external battery. Let me explain.

I think like a backpacker. Size and weight matter to me. Although battery-inclusive designs look sleek, consider the specs. First, on location, I loved that the Indra500 (at just 4.6 pounds) weighed at least 2 pounds less than its popular competitor. Of course that measure is negated if you count the external battery, but I can put an external battery wherever I want. If my light is on a stand, it is now 2 pounds less top-heavy and less prone to tipping, and I can use the battery as a “sandbag” attached to the bottom of my stand for counterbalance. More importantly, I generally have a human light stand on set who’s much happier if she doesn’t have to hold a 2-pound battery over her head throughout a workday.

Second, the Indra500 is a couple inches shorter and narrower (and many cubic inches smaller) than some strobes, because it has no battery cavity. In flight, batteries come out anyway, and a large monolight with empty space inside just takes up too much room in my carry-on. I also love that the Phottix battery pack slides apart at the middle, giving it a better form factor and extra safety.



Image © Blume Photography

Image © Blume Photography



FEATURES

The Indra500 has nearly all the important features you’d find in any of its competitors, including TTL and high-speed sync up to 1/8,000, which I used extensively (I was very pleased with how undimmed the light remained as I shot at f/1.8 and 2.8 for creamy backgrounds without using obnoxious filters), and a “freeze” duration of up to 1/15,000 second at low power. In layman’s terms, this light simply “kept up with me” whatever I tried, and I eventually got used to not worrying about my light on our shoots.

I am disappointed that the Indra500 does not have a feature to save the last-used flash setting. Profoto apparently innovated this feature, which allows a photographer to take a single TTL shot, then step back and continue shooting at the same power without the usual inconsistencies of TTL. It speeds up a location shoot’s momentum considerably. I imagine this must be a simple firmware update, and I hope Phottix is able to get onboard.

As a Nikon shooter who is also interested in new Sony camera products, I’m very happy the Indra500 communicates with both camera systems, as well as with Canon. In other words, while some lights will work with only one brand, you can invest in an Indra with peace of mind that you will keep your light even if you switch cameras later.

Impressively, the battery’s capacity and recycle times come out slightly on top of even more expensive strobes. Yet at \$1,300, the Indra500 and battery still manage to come in about \$800 cheaper than the B1X. I can’t quite explain this. The build quality of all things Phottix strikes me as top-notch. It was Phottix’s attention to detail in a simple multiframe adapter I once bought that originally piqued my interest in the brand. Not only is the strobe rigid and easy to grip, but its accessories and cords are smartly designed, with self-clipping connectors so nothing comes loose. This design follows all the way through to the Mitros+ system, which makes Phottix stand apart.

MITROS+ SYSTEM

I continue to be a small-flash guy in most of my work. I love being able to carry several small lights on my Spider Holster, then snap them off to create a multilight setup in an instant. Or to fit a light in any small space for more creative shots. But I could never find a monolight that played nicely with my pocket flashes.

That’s where the Mitros+ got me hooked. I enjoyed using these pocket flashes, and actually preferred them to brand-name flashes. Their menus are more intuitive, their build quality is second to none I’ve tried and the rubberized locking mechanism—where the foot fits into the camera’s hot shoe—is strong and stable. I was tired of wobbly flashes and loose connections; every on-camera flash should have this smart design element.

Best of all, I can use one Mitros+ flash to control the others. Or I can use a Phottix Odin II transmitter (also more intuitive than any other controller I’ve used) to control both my Indra500 and Mitros+. That’s right. I can’t emphasize enough how game changing this is for us—one single system that I can use for any kind of shoot, one ring to rule them all. It had me feeling more confident when I incorporated gelled Mitros+ flashes into our shoot for rim light at St. Paul’s Cathedral and elsewhere.

A fully featured Mitros+ flash for Nikon lists around \$399, or even less with occasional sales. Compare that to hot shoe flashes from camera name brands, and you may be shocked how much you can save. My advice is to trust camera companies to specialize in cameras, and trust top lighting companies to specialize in lights.

Image © Blume Photography





Image © Blume Photography

ACCESSORIES & LIGHT MODIFIERS

Phottix lent us several accessories and light modifiers, some of which we didn't care for and others we can't live without. View this article's video to learn more. Then visit us this month at [bit.ly/blume\\_phottix](http://bit.ly/blume_phottix) for a comprehensive review of several different lighting systems we've used over the years, and what you should start buying now on a budget. You'll also receive our welcome gift and lots more. ■



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[youtube.com/btsShutterMagazine](http://youtube.com/btsShutterMagazine)



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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with Raph Nogal

Light is pretty much everywhere, you just have to find it. Just because you find light doesn't mean it is good light. As a full-time wedding photographer, it's part of my job to find the best light to flatter my subjects. My groom wants to look cool and my bride wants to look beautiful. When good light is available, I'll certainly use it, but it's not always there. But guess what is always available? My off-camera flash.

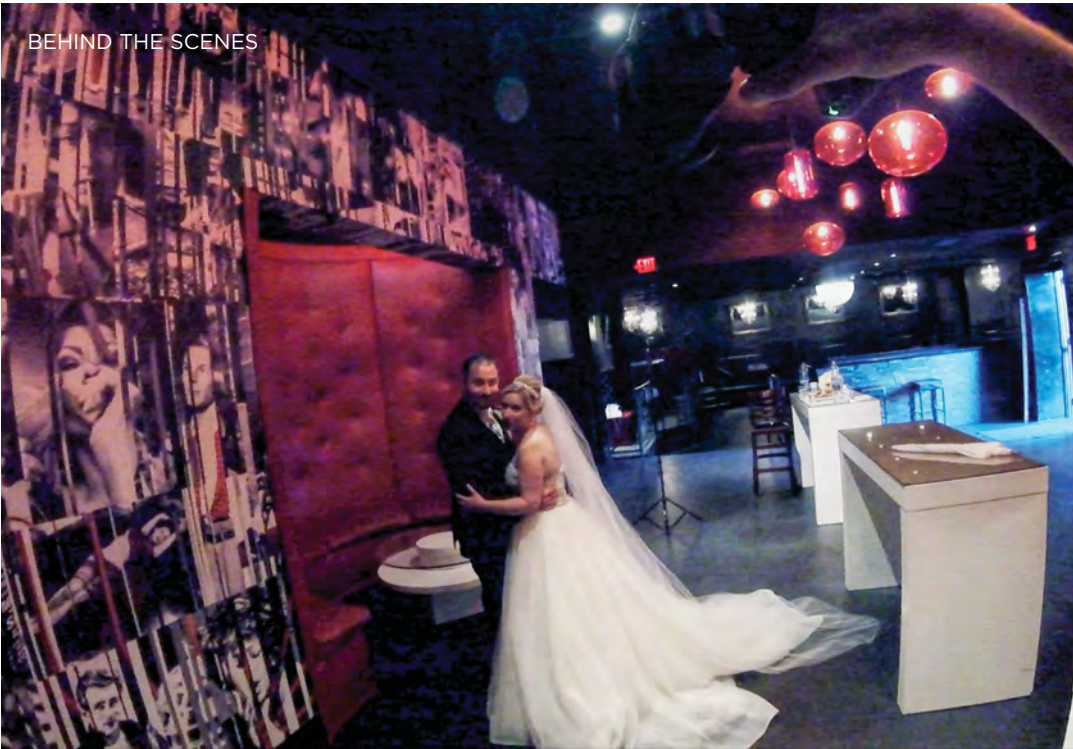
What if you had the ability to put light wherever you wanted? A spotlight here, a wash of light there, a different color somewhere else, and so on. There is only one way to free yourself from the traditional sense of available or natural light, and that's with off-camera flash (OCF).

At first it may be daunting to get into OCF, with all the choices of flashes, strobes, triggers, receivers, transceivers.... Start with a single light and a single system. I've done OCF since the second wedding I ever photographed, in 2008, and still use one single light about 90 percent of the time. Once you understand and have some practice balancing light (available and flash), the possibilities are endless.

I use OCF to create dramatic and edgy images for my clients—the hero shots—but I also use it a lot just to add that extra not-so-obvious sparkle to my images. Over the years, I've learned not to just settle for what's in front of me when I'm about to take photographs. I think beyond the obvious and create something that isn't really there. Flash is almost instantaneous: 1/250th of a second is pretty darn fast. So things are not obvious when the flash goes off, especially to an onlooker, but they look incredible after the fact.

IN THE CLUB

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.



Images © Raph Nogal

FINAL IMAGE: f/2.8 @ 1/320, ISO 1250

BEHIND THE SCENES: f/7.1 @1/250, ISO 80



Image © Raph Nogal

### GROOM AND THE BOYS

This photo was taken during the morning portion of guys getting ready. After working in the house for 45 minutes, we had some time to explore our options outdoors. When you start implementing OCF into your workflow, even when you become proficient, it always helps to have enough time to let you brain work out all the possibilities while still under pressure. I ask for about an hour with the groom getting ready in the morning, and more time with the girls to set myself up for success.

For this shot, we were in a subdivision, so all we had to work with outdoors were neighboring houses, driveways and all of the subdivision glory. I noticed the dramatic clouds in the sky, found an opening between the houses and trees, and placed the guys so that the photograph featured just them and the dramatic sky. By adding OCF, I was able to retain the details in the sky and use a Profoto B2 OCF with a silver beauty dish with the front panel removed for a slightly stronger output and to produce a more contrasty light. I think the look suits the guys.

STAINED-GLASS WINDOW & SILHOUETTE

When I walk into any venue or church, I’m looking for possibilities, predominant features and also spaces that most would walk right by. In this case, the stained-glass windows immediately caught my attention. This church was especially important to this couple, and I wanted to create an artistic photo for them with that in mind.

I placed the couple on the left side of the frame and had the beautiful window on the right. Exposing for the window brought the exposure of the entire scene down to almost pure blackness, with very little detail. While I could have used OCF to light the couple, I wanted to maintain the drama of the image and decided to use some complementary light behind them, creating a silhouette. I used the MagMod system to create this image. I also used a MagGrid and placed the MagShere on top to feather out the tight beam and create a soft and gradual falloff from the center.

BEHIND THE SCENES



Images © Raph Nogal



BEHIND THE SCENES



FINAL IMAGE: f/5.0 @ 1/200, ISO 1250

Images © Raph Nogal

## FOGGY NIGHT

After a few dances at the reception, while guests were mingling around the bar, I saw some fog rolling in. We were in an outdoor tent right by the water. As I entered the street just outside the reception area, the fog was growing quite thick. I immediately thought: backlight!

I rushed over to get Oliver, and we went out in the middle of the street and did a few test shots. After we got what we were looking for, I grabbed my clients and we did this shot in literally 10 seconds. I used a bare backlight about 10 feet away from the couple, and zoomed the flash to 24mm to get a wide spread of light. This created a stunning silhouette as the light also lit all the water particles in the fog and created some major drama. I then added a main light camera left and added a full CTO gel so I could have more yellow/orange light on the couple. Setting the white balance to tungsten made the white light from the back flash blue.

It's all about thinking past the obvious, challenging yourself and not just seeing light, but seeing the possibility of light. Off-camera flash can take you from mundane to extraordinary. ■



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.  
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When I started in photography, I was a young buck. I was a 26-year-old police officer who was in shape and ready to conquer the world. Over the past six years, photography has taken its toll. Carrying heavy equipment down mountains and trekking through foreign countries with bags of equipment have worn down my body at a faster pace than I would have liked.

This means I don't always want to carry the biggest and heaviest lights on my shoots. Thankfully, we have so many lighting options. If light is just light, then do we need to invest five to seven times more for a light that puts out the same amount of power? While the differences in reliability and build quality are shrinking between affordable and expensive lights, there are a few key things to keep in mind.

We use a variety of lights, including speedlights and mid- and high-powered strobes. We are currently going through a lighting revolution. Off-camera flash technology is progressing quickly. The technology for low-noise, high-ISO sensors has improved over the past five years. Flashes are becoming less expensive and coming with more features.

If you are not using off-camera flash, there has never been a better time to start. Here are a few of my recommendations for equipment. It's important to note while the inexpensive offerings all have even more inexpensive options, I chose to review lights that have both TTL and high-speed sync capabilities.

SPEEDLIGHTS



My first speedlight was the Canon 580EX version 1. They have always been reliable and have always worked well in a pinch. The radio triggers built into the newest iterations are reliable and work well in different groups. They can be modified with the MagMod system, which is one of my favorite portable modifiers.

Newcomers to the speedlight market include Godox and Yongnuo. Many of these brands have basically copied Canon's technology, and in some cases have added more features, such as lithium-ion batteries and, in Godox's case, integration into a larger ecosystem of lights. Now, while this all sounds good, I have tested these lights, and where they falter is in reliability, especially in trigger reliability. Don't let that dissuade you, because when they work, they work well, and can save you a ton of money. Just keep their reliability in mind when you have to grab a crucial shot.

I have recently tested lights from Godox, which is now a popular brand. It's obvious after you turn on a Godox that the company copied the entire menu system of the Canon 600RT. I know this is the norm right now, but it bothers me when a company uses reverse-engineered technology. But there are benefits to the Godox that older flashes lack. Watch my video for my review.



MID-POWERED STROBES



BRONCOLOR SIROS

PROFOTO B2

GODOX A200

INDRA360

These lights are some of my favorite to use because they combine power and portability. First thing first, I need to cover a very important fact. Do not judge the power of a light by its watt-seconds. I have tested a few of these lights, and you will be surprised by the outcomes. These lights are very portable, and can be used to balance the lighting of the sun with your subjects in harsh lighting conditions.

The great news is that now photographers have a ton of options. We have been big users of the Profoto system for years, and to this day have nothing but great things to say about it. But there are less expensive options for photographers who are just starting out.

The results of my testing of the Godox AD200 surprised me. The light is extremely powerful because of the Fresnel head when you are using bare flash, but it's also surprisingly efficient and inexpensive. There are downsides to this product that make it tough for me to recommend to commercial or high-end wedding/portrait photographers, which I cover more in my video, but as a starter monolight, I highly recommend this to a photographer buying a first flash.

When you get into mid-powered strobes, you must take into account the ecosystem of the product, meaning the modifiers offered and the integration of the product into your lighting landscape. The big brands like Profoto and Broncolor have a variety of modifiers available. Profoto enjoys an interface that is second to none. This may come secondary in importance to photographers looking to get good light at an affordable price; for those photographers, Godox and Phottix are great alternatives.



Image © Michael Anthony



Image © Michael Anthony

HIGH-POWERED STROBES



BRONCOLOR SIROS      PROFOTO B1X      GODOX AD600      INDRA500

Profoto pioneered portable monolights with the original B1, and competitors soon followed suit. While my recommendation for the B1X stays the same because of its portability, modifiers, etc., we are so lucky to now have other options.

These high-powered monolights are heavy, but there can be no substitute when you need power in a pinch. While it may not be easy to pack them, when you are setting up for a commercial job or when you need to overpower the sun using a modifier, these are the products for you.

I have not had a chance to review the Godox or Phottix offerings yet, but in all my research, I have seen that these lights are very powerful and offer the benefit of the overall flash ecosystem of Godox and Phottix. A photographer who uses these strobes daily will say that reliability is a major concern, which is why we have stuck with the Profoto brand. (Profoto doesn't pay me to say that to you. I truly believe in the product and have seen much success in my business because of these lights.)



Images © Michael Anthony

EXPENSIVE VS. INEXPENSIVE

This is a question that you are no doubt asking yourself. Three years ago, when I started upping my game in flash photography, the expensive options were the only ones available to me, and I am thankful for it, because it allowed me to innovate my lighting and take my brand to a whole new level. Since then, we have become a prominent studio in Los Angeles, and our clients expect high-quality service, which determines how we operate.

Had the inexpensive offerings been available to me at the time, I would have gone that route, but I am glad I didn't. As you will see in my review video, the inexpensive solutions have major reliability problems that would hamper my ability to provide quality service for my clients.

Reliability could come secondary to getting the shot at all, and if you are a photographer starting out in flash photography, or if you are a hobbyist, the offerings from Godox and Phottix are great options. I am especially impressed by the AD200. I wish the reliability of the triggering system and build quality were a bit better, but I consider this an extraordinary product.



Image © Michael Anthony



Image © Michael Anthony

We are in a renaissance of lighting technology, and it's getting easier and easier to create beautiful portraits with high-speed sync, TTL and portable lighting. But as with any renaissance, we must find new ways to reinvent our style or risk becoming irrelevant to our clients. ■

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

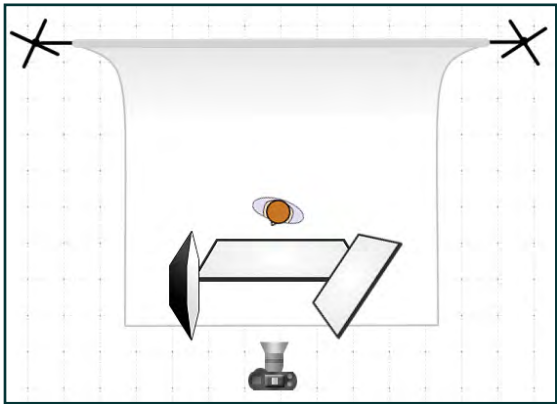
## — FOR — HIGH-VOLUME HEADSHOTS

with **Gary Hughes**

For 10 years, my wife, Julie, and I have made headshots the primary focus of our business, Hughes Fioretti Photography. As a matter of fact, my first paying gig as a photographer was shooting headshots of doctors at a medical convention, packed into a tiny corner of a trade show booth. Back then I didn't quite understand the impact that type of situation would have on my methods of lighting. Every technique I developed over the next decade was based around learning to shoot a great, professional portrait quickly and in just about any location.

I've since refined the process, and have found that most of my lighting for volume headshots can be categorized into three main techniques.

1. THE LIGHT TUNNEL



By far the most versatile and useful of my go-to setups, the light tunnel has the distinct advantage of being accomplished with only one light. More often than not, when on location, my team and I use nothing but speedlights to get the job done. This enables us to be compact, very mobile, flexible and fast. Almost nothing is more valuable to big corporate clients than efficiency, and this configuration offers exactly that.

I begin with one light with a small to medium-size modifier. Any strobe you have will be fine. The light and modifier I use most often in this situation is a Canon 600EX-RT Speedlite and a Speedbox 70 from XP PhotoGear. Whatever you use, this is your main light. With the subject seated (which makes shooting volume much easier), position your light about arm's length from the subject and angled directly across the face, perpendicular to the direction of the face. This allows the soft light from the edge of the modifier to illuminate the face evenly on both sides of the nose while providing soft, directional light. The bottom edge of the modifier should be about level with the corner of the subject's eye. This position creates the right direction of light, slightly down and from the side. Watch the shadow of the nose to make sure it isn't angling up. This is how you know if the light is too low. Make sure the shadow of the nose is angling down, somewhere close to 45 degrees.

Next, use a reflector on the opposite side of the subject, directly opposite your light but angled slightly toward the face. I recommend white reflectors for beginners. They do a great job and reduce the risk of overfilling with light. Overfilling occurs when the reflector is too close, if a material is very reflective or both. This makes the fill light brighter than the main light, which breaks down the lighting pattern, creating undesirable results. Use the distance of the reflector to control the depth of the shadows. It's a very simple way to give an image more or less contrast, also known as lighting ratio.

Finally, add a reflector (white for beginners) underneath the face, a bit below chest level. This adds some beautiful fill light from underneath, reducing shadows under the eyes and providing a nice highlight in the bottom of the iris. If you place the subject close enough to a simple seamless paper, canvas or muslin, you will find that the light coming from your strobe and reflectors can give a satisfactory amount of illumination for the background. If you need a little more separation from the background, you can easily add a second light to the ground behind the subject.

The benefits include being able to work in tight spaces and the use of minimal equipment to achieve a traditional look.



Images © Hughes Fioretti Photography

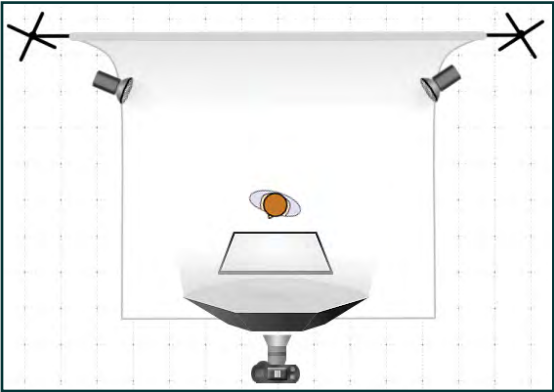


FLYING SAUCER SETUP



FLYING SAUCER SETUP

2. THE FLYING SAUCER



Out of my main setups for volume headshots, the flying saucer has the biggest wow factor because of its unconventional look in the world of professional portraits and because of the way the setup looks in person. The flying saucer can be a bit of a spectacle. To achieve it, I suspend a very large modifier (like the 8-foot Large OctoDome from Photoflex) from a boom arm in a clamshell configuration. It has drawn more than a few strange looks from clients and photographers, but the results speak for themselves.

Using a boom arm properly is an advanced technical proposition in any situation, let alone in a high-volume setting. It requires careful attention to detail and the correct support equipment to counterbalance the weight of the light. Practice using a boom extensively before using it with a client.

A clamshell setup, also known as beauty or butterfly lighting, is usually executed by suspending a small modifier, like a beauty dish, from a boom arm directly in front of and above the subject. A reflector or a second light source is added underneath the subject to fill in the inevitable harsh shadows from the small modifier. Beauty lighting is one of the most commonly used techniques in commercial portraiture, but only recently has it started to make its way to professional portraiture. A small light source like a beauty dish can cause harsh shadows on the face of a subject, and without proper fill, it can make your average person look ghoulish.

I used this technique many times before rotating it into my professional portraits on a regular basis if the

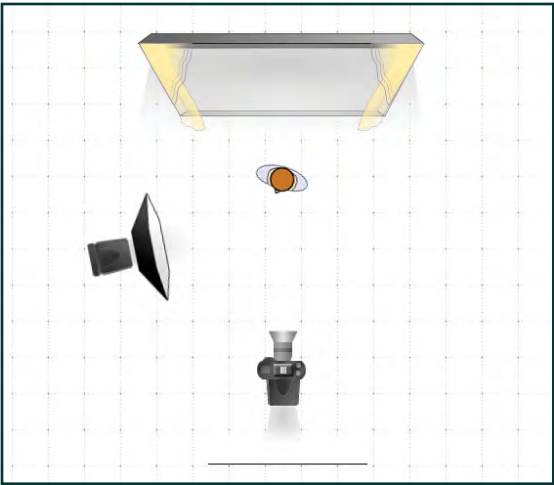
subject would be flattered by it. Eventually I increased the size of the light source to the biggest one I could find. I discovered that the same configuration that is so harsh when using a smaller source becomes a look that makes almost everyone look great when that source is much, much bigger.

Angle the main light 15 degrees or so up, and suspend it so the lower end is at the head height of the subject but closer to the camera. Place the higher edge above the subject but about 6 to 10 inches from the tip of the nose. The bulk of the light from the modifier will end up hitting the ground unless you place a reflector underneath the face of the subject at just under chest height. This scoops up that light and bounces it back up, filling the shadows and resulting in a beautiful soft light that wraps around the face of the subject with subtle shadows under the nose, cheekbones and chin.

Beware of hanging the light over the head of the subject, which can result in the loss of the catchlights and dark pockets for eyes. Every subject has a different face shapes that receives light differently. A more prominent brow could make it more difficult to get the light in the eyes, so some adjustment might need to be done. Almost any background will work for this setup. Mostly I use a black or dark gray background and add either a hair light or a light on the background to get adequate separation.

With this pattern you get stylish, modern results that stand out from most professional headshots. It's just difficult to set up properly with the boom, and requires lots of space.

3. THE BOUNCE FILL



It’s no secret that I spend a lot of time shooting in offices and boardrooms. Sometimes they are huge, with floor-to-ceiling north-facing windows, and sometimes they are about the size of a broom closet. When I need to shoot a lot of people in a tight space quickly or move to different places around an office with almost no setup and breakdown time, my Speedlites come out and bounce fill saves the day. With one flash on camera and one off, I have created some of my favorite corporate images. As a bonus, shooting with TTL-capable lights like a Speedlite allows you to balance flash with the outdoors for some great backgrounds.

Using a Speedlite, a small modifier (my Speedbox 70 from XP PhotoGear works well here) and a stand as

my main light, I can create exactly the look I want by filling in the shadows with a flash on camera. In most cases, it’s possible to bounce the on-camera light off a wall behind me or a ceiling above me, but when that’s not possible, I soften the light with a small modifier. I keep a Rogue FlashBender in my case for situations like this. It’s also possible to use any bounce card or white construction paper. I have used this setup more times than I can remember, and I am always surprised by how great the results are with such a simple approach. The bounce fill is by far the most portable and fastest setup in my arsenal.

The setup is portable, fast and easy, and requires very little space. A downside is that the Speedlite runs on AA batteries and has slow recycle times.



Images © Hughes Fioretti Photography



Image © Hughes Fioretti Photography

One of the best parts of shooting for a living is that we are constantly learning new techniques. When it comes to high-volume corporate headshots, it’s important to remember that efficiency is the name of the game.

It’s easy to get so wrapped up in gear and technology that you overlook the simplest way to get the job done well. Gather all the information, formulate a plan, be flexible and execute some great headshots. ■



Master photographer, lecturer and author Gary Hughes has become one of the industry’s leading headshot shooters. His work has garnered local, national and international awards, and has been featured in *Professional Photographer* magazine and *Huffington Post*. He founded Hughes Fioretti Photography in Orlando, Florida, with his wife, Julie, in 2008.  
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# CREATIVE LIGHTING FOR SELF PORTRAITS

with Sarah Clements

Self-portraits are not easy. They’re hard mentally and emotionally for myriad reasons, and they’re hard physically (especially if you don’t use an assistant). Lighting doesn’t have to be difficult, though. On the contrary, lighting your self-portrait should be a fun challenge. I’m going to outline some ways I’ve lit my own self-portraits to give you a good foundation.

ONE-LIGHT SETUP

The one-light setup is by far the most common lighting I use for all of my portraits, especially self-portraits. It’s timeless. I can use my AB400 and beauty dish to emulate a Renaissance painting, or I can move it around a few inches and make the image incredibly dramatic.

My go-to is typically a Rembrandt style of lighting. To achieve this look, you need a strobe and a modifier such as a beauty dish or softbox. Set the light to one side of the subject, approximately three quarters. You’ll want the light up high and tilted down. This gives you that lovely triangle of light on the opposite cheek—aka Rembrandt lighting. Or turn your face a few inches and get that beautiful loop lighting. These types of lighting will never go out of style and are easily achieved. From a headshot for your website to a painterly work of art, this setup is all-encompassing.



Image © Sarah Clements

Alternatively, just shifting your light by a few inches can create some serious drama. Pulling your light up higher and having it more directly overhead can give you dramatic butterfly lighting. This style looks especially lovely in high-contrast images and black and white. This look was popular in Old Hollywood; the screen sirens of the past were the epitome of glamour and class. Use this setup to create an image worthy of the big screen.

Now you know how to effectively use a single light and modifier to take some classic self-portraits. Let’s move on to something more creative.



Image © Sarah Clements

NATURAL LIGHT

If you are a natural-light photographer, you can still get some killer self-portraits. Not having a light is not an excuse. In fact, whether you have a light or not, I encourage you to get creative and see the light. Look through your studio, through your house or outside. Challenge yourself to shape the light and create something grand. And don't think you're limited to a certain time of day. Sure, the golden hour is gorgeous, but there's zero challenge in that. Use direct sunlight. Use filtered light. Use shadows. You shouldn't be afraid of these things. Use them to your advantage.

For these example images, I used light from my window in my living room. The sun was shining straight through, so I used this to my advantage. The light was coming through the mini blinds in a perfect way, creating delicious shadows, so I set my camera up in the window and positioned myself below the window pane, with the blinds angled down toward me. I also used the hat I was wearing to add an extra shadow and create more dimension.



Image © Sarah Clements

In this second example, the sun was rising and I didn't have the awesome shadows I had just minutes before. I still had one sliver of bright light coming in. I knew this could really pop if I could position my eye in just the right spot. I accomplished this by lying on the floor and holding my Canon 6d right above my head. (Bonus about self-portraits: No one is there to see how ridiculous you look. Double bonus points for not dropping your camera on your head.)



Image © Sarah Clements

These were just two quick shots I took in my living room. I didn't even bust out my tripod or go look in a different room. The possibilities are endless for natural light. Ask yourself how you can use traditional crappy light to your advantage. Learn to see it differently and watch a new world open its doors to you.



Image © Sarah Clements

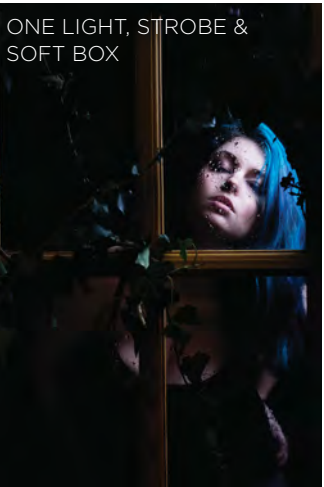
## CREATIVE LIGHTING

So you can take photographs with studio lighting and natural light, now what? Now it's time to get creative. Push yourself and see what's available to you. How can you think outside the box?

Do you do in-person sales using a projector? That's a fun new light source. Hook that sucker up to your laptop and pull up a picture of something fun: funky tree silhouettes, an underwater image, gorgeous clouds. Use your imagination to create a real-time in-camera overlay.

For this image, I put on a YouTube video that showed ink being splashed in water. I used Chromecast to play it through my projector and sat on my bed and posed away against my white wall. The different colors were so much fun to work with; it added a new dynamic that I hadn't tried before. Try some looping videos of colorful glittery animations. Get creative with this one.

A projector is only one way you can use alternative lighting. What about the bedside lamp? Create something moody and warm. Remember all those cellphone selfie ring lights everyone had at ShutterFest? Guess what? They also work with a regular camera. Just clip it to something near you (or have an assistant hold it) and play around until you get a dramatic shot. The possibilities are endless if you open your mind.



Images © Sarah Clements

Photographing yourself is a richly rewarding experience that every photographer should do at least once. It helps you direct your subject once you realize how hard it is to be in front of the camera. It helps you empathize with how vulnerable it feels to be in front of the lens. And there's something satisfying about finishing an image of yourself that you're proud of. It's a lot of work, it's not easy, and you'll likely feel like giving up. But don't. Step outside your comfort zone and use some things you've learned in this article to create an epic image—of yourself. ■



Sarah Clements is an award-winning fine art photographer who merges romantic fashion photography with what she calls “a dark, often devious dream world.” She values the support she has gotten from her photography community, and believes in sharing her secrets with other artists at workshops. Her work has been seen in galleries around the country.  
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STICKY  FOLIOS

# Mastering Natural Light

with Twig & Olive Photography





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In this issue, you're reading exceptional advice on shaping light with strobes, softboxes and speedlights. But what if you're limited to available light? There are unique challenges. What you gain in reduced gear, setup and purchases, you lose in flexibility. Yet there's a distinctive beauty in using only the sun. With care, it can produce timeless imagery.

## USING NATURAL LIGHT OUTSIDE

Natural light photography is at the mercy of the intensity of the sun. Harsher light is generally to be avoided. Take into account the following.

- Midday light, when the sun is directly overhead, creates unforgiving shadows and squinting in subjects. Even retreating to dense trees can create unflattering dappled light that is impossible to correct in editing. While some photographers can embrace the bold look of full sun (and absolutely rock it), it doesn't create an ethereal, dreamy look.
- While it's generally best to avoid midday light, sometimes it's unavoidable, like at a wedding. In these situations, shade from buildings will be your best solution. In a pinch, use a large scrim to block the sunlight directly over your subject.

- Evening light is idyllic and coveted among natural light photographers. It does require compromises, however. Golden hour—the last hour before sunset—can occur late in the evening, which, for family portraits, can happen after bedtimes. You'll need the trust of your clients to adjust sleep schedules as needed. Clients will trust you if your golden hour portraits are part of your brand. They'll put off beddy-bye to capture the gold.



- One problem natural light photographers run into with evening light is how to properly angle shots. It's generally desirable to backlight subjects, but shooting straight into the sun can create haze and loss-of-subject issues. To counter this, place the sun slightly to the left or right of the subject, about 10 degrees.

- Your lens choice can have a profound impact on the whimsical characteristics of your shot, desirable or otherwise. Wide-angle lenses, such as a 35mm, can allow for more sun streaks, ghosts and flares (which may or may not be part of your brand), while a more compressed lens, like the 85mm or 70–200mm (and especially coated versions), avoid these but suffer from more hazing.



Images © Twig & Olive Photography

- Once the sun sets, you no longer have the powerful direct source of light, and all benefits of rim lighting are gone once civil twilight begins. Turn your subject around and have them face where the sun was. Faces will be lit but not overexposed.
- Cloudy days lack grandiosity for sun-drenched pictures, while suffering none of the aforementioned limitations. You can typically count on shooting most any time of the day (though civil twilight will likely be unavailable) because the clouds act like a giant softbox for the sky. Some photographers have built brands just by shooting subjects on overcast days, yielding breathtakingly moody images.
- Not all clouds are created equal. With thinner clouds such as cirrostratus or altocumulus, you are better served by shooting as you would during civil twilight to avoid poorly illuminated faces. Heavier clouds, such as nimbostratus and cumulonimbus, can be trickier to work with not just because of impending rain, but because they can darken the landscape so much that shadows become unrenderable. Carefully observe eyes and other darker areas on your subject before shuttering.



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The topography of your location also has a large impact on how and when you can shoot.

- The tilt of the Earth relative to the plane of our solar system gives rise to our seasons and creates great variance in the intensities of light, depending on where you are. Equatorial areas between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn have intense directional light year-round. In the Southern United States, the effects are similar, resulting in light that can be too bright to photograph in all but the last hour of the day. In contrast, as you head farther from the Equator, the sun is lower on the horizon, allowing a bit more forgiveness for late afternoon and evening photography. This is especially useful as you start approaching the Arctic and Antarctic Circles, where sunsets become unreasonably late for some clients. This softer light can confidently be used at earlier times in the day.
- Natural light takes on the qualities of the surfaces it reflects off. Forested areas can help block intense directional light, but areas with green undergrowth should be avoided so you don't create green color casts on your subjects. Beaches provide no respite from intense light, and the surface of the water intensifies the problem by reflecting even more. The warmth of sunset is magnified as it passes over the water, and can be best captured during this window and again during civil twilight. Deserts are similar, offering a narrow window of time for the best light.

USING NATURAL LIGHT IN A STUDIO

It's possible to shoot natural light in a studio setting if you have the right windows. All the directionality and geopositioning of shooting outdoors is rendered moot. You need to figure out how to get light to where you need it. With directional window light, the inverse square law plays a role. Reflectors should be a part of any natural light setup.

- Use studio lighting to shape light, be it directional or uniform. Using light from one window creates falloff on your subject the farther away they are from the source. While Rembrandt lighting may be desired for your brand, you can also even out the light by placing a reflector opposite the window.
- Large windows are preferred for this studio setup. If you have too much light coming through, use one or more shear curtains to diffuse the light on bright days. If sun streaks start creeping into your studio, add a large scrim to your window to block them.
- One challenge facing naturally lit studios are dark and cloudy days. You don't have to cancel shoots on days of reduced available light. Set up a reflector outside your window and bounce in additional light.



Images © Twig & Olive Photography





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### THOUGHTS ON GEAR

While natural light photographers tend not to carry an arsenal of lighting solutions, gearing choices are crucial to the success of your shoot.

- The biggest challenge for cameras is to be able to resolve the extremes of light and shadows, and some cameras perform significantly better than others. Both highlights and shadows can be too extreme for a camera to capture in a single shot, something referred to as its dynamic range. Some solutions have been to bracket different exposures and merge the images in post—a time-consuming process. Another solution is to select a camera with a large dynamic range and simply adjust the highlights and shadows in post. While this may flatten the tonal curve initially, it's easily compensated for and can create beautiful images in one shot. Remember that more details are typically preserved in shadows than blown-out highlights, so it's best to photograph one to two stops underexposed.
- Some photographers use reflectors to bounce light back onto their subjects. Larger ones can be cumbersome in the field unless you have an assistant. A handheld silver reflector often does the trick.

It's an oversimplification to suggest that using only available light is a simpler and less technical solution to shaping light artificially. Mastering the sun to illuminate your subjects and produce intense, beautiful images takes great care—and some compromise. ■



Twig & Olive Photography is a fine art studio specializing in custom editorial weddings and portraiture. Bobbi, Courtney and Doug bring an authenticity to the genre that sets them apart from the competition. They're based in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, with a satellite studio in Winter Park, Florida, and are available worldwide.  
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LIGHTING FOR  
**DÖGS**  
with Allison Shamrell and Terran Bayer



Image © Allison Shamrell and Terran Bayer

If you’ve never photographed a dog before, it’s an experience fairly similar to photographing a toddler—except we think it’s way more awesome, because dogs give kisses and have wiggly butts. (And they’re sometimes better behaved, too!) But, we digress. Dogs and toddlers are similar in that they’re both always on the move, can be bribed with treats of all kinds and often have very little training. Yeah, we said training. Is that awful? It’s probably awful. But we’re dog photographers, and canine-speak is our language.

What makes photographing dogs different is that their bodies are low to the ground, they have fur of all colors, some listen better than others and, because of all these factors, we have to think a little differently about lighting.

### CREATE SPARKLY CATCHLIGHTS

We all know that catchlights add life to any subject. Even if you’re well versed in creating beautiful catchlights with your human subjects, dogs can be a little challenging.

To start, dogs’ eyes are shaped differently than a human’s. Different breeds reflect light differently, and some dogs have eyes that are set very far back or they have bangs or heavy eyelids that make getting light into them a challenge. With each new dog you photograph, it’s important to pay close attention to how the light is reflecting in their eyes.

Your best bet for creating sparkly catchlights outdoors is to look for open skies to face the dog into; or, if you’re backlighting and don’t have open sky, think about adding a reflector or flash.

If a dog has bangs (like a schnauzer), we style them out of the way with some water. Otherwise, it’s not only hard to nail focus but the photos simply aren’t as impactful as those in which the viewer can see the eyes.

Indoors, a large light source is your best friend. Lights that create beautiful, well-sized catchlights in humans can look too small in a dog’s eyes. Of course, the distance between the light source and the subject is still paramount, and we try to keep the light at a comfortable distance to create those catchlights (usually 3 to 8 feet away).

If you’re photographing a dog up close, it’s important to pay attention not only to what’s in the background of your image but what’s behind you as well. Owners in bright-colored clothing, messy landscapes, parking lots or even your own clothes/silhouette may create distracting reflections in the dog’s eye. Our crew always wears black or neutral clothing to help keep the attention where it should be: on the dog.



Images © Allison Shamrell and Terran Bayer



## USE BACKLIGHTING FOR DREAMY SPARKLES

When out on location, one of our favorite ways to use sunlight to our advantage is to backlight our subjects so we can get the most beautiful, sparkly rim light all around the dog. Fur reacts to backlight the same way that human hair does—but we think it’s even better because it surrounds their whole body! Plus, dogs don’t have flyaways that require retouching.

We look for areas where the sun is filtering through trees or other natural surroundings. Combined with a wide aperture, telephoto lens and the sun at just the right angle, the background will be a sea of dreamy bokeh, allowing our subject to stand out.

A key point to keep in mind with backlighting is that the subject should still be properly lit. We achieve this through a few different methods, including use of a reflector, adding in a touch of fill flash or simply by positioning the dog at the edge of the shade, facing an open light source, such as a wide-open sky.



Images © Allison Shamrell and Terran Bayer



Image © Allison Shamrell and Terran Bayer



Image © Allison Shamrell and Terran Bayer

## USING REFLECTORS ON THE GO

Reflectors offer a fantastic way to easily add light when you’re on the go—which is all the time with dogs. An assistant is necessary for shooting with a reflector, though, because you need someone to easily shift the light as your subject takes an unpredictable step forward or if the sunlight changes.

Another benefit of the reflector is that most dogs couldn’t care less about it as long as you don’t pop it open suddenly. The whoosh and sudden movement of a reflector shooting out of its case is scary stuff for a dog, who definitely didn’t see that coming. Anytime you’re working with animals, it’s important to take things slow, stay calm and not do anything that could frighten them. Be sensitive to what might be considered unexpected, and don’t treat your reflector like a fun new toy unless you want a few bite marks in it.

We typically use the silver and white sides of the reflector, but we’ve also been known to use the diffuser portion to soften some of the light falling onto our canine subjects. Reflectors reduce shadows and can help the camera capture detail (especially in brown and black fur) that would normally be lost in situations such as backlighting, side lighting or harsh lighting.

Reflectors are great for adding a sparkly little catchlight in the eyes. Just be mindful of where you’re holding it since catchlights are always more flattering higher than they are lower or to the side.



Images © Allison Shamrell and Terran Bayer

Also, consider the fact that most dogs have longer noses than humans (think Labradors, not pugs). That long nose can wreak havoc on your lighting. Forget about side lighting (unless that’s the specific look you’re going for) because a dog’s nose casts a major shadow on the opposite side of its face. But fear not. Enter the trusty reflector.

Another bonus of the reflector? Holding one is a great job to give a helicopter parent; dog moms can be just as overbearing as regular moms.



Image © Allison Shamrell and Terran Bayer

## MEMORABLE SILHOUETTES

Sometimes lack of light can create stunning results. When you have a beautiful sky, lots of color or interesting lines, a silhouette can create an extremely powerful image.

One of the toughest aspects of dog silhouettes is that the dog must have defined separation between its body, legs and the background. Dogs want to sit or stand square, which can create a big unidentifiable blob in the image. We always try to have some space between the subject’s legs (walking or running is great for this, since their legs naturally separate as they move) and have their head in a direction that lets us see their ears or profile, so the viewer can easily see that the subject is a dog.

Silhouettes can be tougher with dogs than with people because they’re so low to the ground and you need to be careful about where the horizon is hitting them. This often means putting the dog on something higher or getting down very, very low. We’ve both been covered in sand and soaking wet after lying on the ground to create silhouette beach shots, but that’s what it took to get the shot.



Image © Allison Shamrell and Terran Bayer

## QUICK AND EASY STROBE SETUPS

When we use strobes, nine times out of 10, we’re in the studio. The vast majority of our canine clients have little to no training, and we can’t ask them to stand on a mark, turn this way or that, and look at the camera. Our strobe setups have to be versatile enough to capture them whether they’re smack-dab in the middle of our backdrop or completely ignoring us 3 feet away from where we wanted them.

We often opt for a slightly more head-on light setup to offer maximum flexibility. It’s always nice to have some shadows to add to the dog’s shape, though, so while our main light is just a bit camera-right or camera-left, we like to add a second light source, whether another strobe or a large reflector, on the side opposite side of our main light to make sure we’re capturing all the details.

Strobes can also be used outdoors, but it’s necessary to have a knowledgeable and quick-reacting assistant to hold and move the light if, for example, the dog decides the perfect place to sit is over there, not over here. Leashing the dog or putting it on an object, such as a rock or tree stump, can help keep it in one place, making strobe placement easier. This can be a tricky technique to master, with all of its moving parts, but it can achieve stunning results.



Image © Allison Shamrell and Terran Bayer



Image © Allison Shamrell and Terran Bayer



Image © Allison Shamrell and Terran Bayer

## IN CONCLUSION

Photographing dogs requires a shift in thinking and a good dose of patience to create gorgeous portraits that show off their personality. We hope these tips have helped you expand your knowledge and avoid some of the major pitfalls of lighting dogs. With a little creativity and a helper, you can create some stunning portraits of our furry best friends. ■



San Diego pet photographers Allison and Terran operate Allison Shamrell Pet Photography and Westway Studio, respectively. They work with all kinds of pets (especially dogs) for private and commercial clients. They've also teamed up to create Professional Pooch (ProfessionalPooch.com), an educational resource designed to help other photographers achieve success in the quickly growing pet photography industry.

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### Why Westcott Deep Umbrellas?

The Westcott Deep Umbrella is portable and well built. Price? Can you say affordable? Take price off the table for a moment. I’m the first to admit I have a gear problem. We all do. Ultimately it’s about quality, performance and results. For this review, I tested the white and silver 53-inch Deep Umbrellas. The results were spectacular.

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## INSPIRATIONS

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

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

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

BEST LIGHTING IMAGE





Image © Keefer Photography

Image © Brandon S. Hunter



Image © Indigosilver Studio



Image © Brandon S. Hunter



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NEXT MONTH  
**SEPTEMBER 2017**

THE  
**BLACK & WHITE**  
EDITION

# BUILDING BLOCKS

## LIGHT UP YOUR BUSINESS: BUILDING BRAND AWARENESS WITH MARKETING

with **Skip Cohen**

With lighting as the theme this month, it couldn't be more appropriate to write about lighting up your business. So many of you have taken the approach of simply kicking back and waiting to see what happens to your business "naturally." Guess what? Virtually nothing happens naturally in this business, which is why God created marketing.

It's August, and September kicks off the last segment of the year loaded with opportunities for you to grow your business. So, you have a choice to make: Be aggressive and start planning some activities to keep building your business and brand awareness, or kick back and be natural. After all, sooner or later the phone should ring, right?

Just like building your skill set, marketing never stops. The minute you slow down and don't have something going on, your business steps back into the shadows. That's the last place you want to be for your target audience to find you and get excited about what you're doing and the products and services you offer.

Let's come up with a game plan or at least a checklist for you to work with the rest of the year.



🌀 PARTNERS

Great businesses are built on relationships—not just with your clients but with other vendors. Going into the fourth quarter, look for some partners to help you develop some cross-promotional opportunities. For most of you, your target audience is Mom—so what’s she interested in most? What does she need?

There are opportunities with spas, salons, florists, boutiques, restaurants. Set up a cross-promotion with a florist that ties into something from them when a client schedules a sitting with you, and something from you when they purchase a holiday centerpiece. If nothing else, just work with them, so each of you appears on each other’s site as a suggested vendor.

🌀 SEASONALITY

The end of the year brings a wealth of opportunities, so start planning now. You’ve got to plant the seed using your blog for ideas for family portraits, photography gift ideas, slide shows and ways to capture memories over the holidays.

How about a day-in-the-life session for Mom, Grandma and the kids working on preparations for Thanksgiving dinner? There’s so much great potential for storytelling with a slide show as the finished product. A service/ product like this lends itself to a small album rather than just a few prints.

🌀 BACK TO SCHOOL

It’s the perfect time for that last family portrait of the summer. Come up with a promotional offer supported by some solid blog content about capturing memories, and let’s get those portraits of the kids updated.

🌀 COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Along with the kids going back to school comes a long list of opportunities for you to get involved in, everything from United Way events to school programs.

You’ve got to be involved in your community. You’re looking for the community to be good to you, so you’ve got to be good to it. It doesn’t mean you’re always there with a camera in your hands. Look for opportunities to volunteer and put in a little time, even if it’s just serving hot dogs at Friday night football games.

🌀 HAVE YOU CALLED YOUR LAB?

Labs are always coming up with new products for printing and presentation of your images. All it takes is a phone call and one question: “What’s new?”

New products give you a chance to create some excitement in your market for your clients. But don’t forget about some of the old favorites. You might be tired of canvas prints, but that doesn’t mean your clients are.

🌀 IS IT TIME FOR A FACELIFT?

I’m not talking about your face, but the face of your business. Your website and blog are as critical today as bricks and mortar were 20 years ago. Your website has the potential to capture new views from potential clients. That means a visit to your website or blog needs to be an experience.

Remember, your website is about what you sell and your blog is about what’s in your heart. They have to work together and have design continuity. Image quality should be top-notch, and the sites should be easy to navigate. In the same way you like shopping at your favorite department store, make your sites enjoyable to visit.

🌀 DIRECT MAIL

Start designing an oversize postcard for a fall/holiday mailing. Think about how much email you never open. Direct mail is back with a vengeance, but you have to do it right.

I’m a big fan of the many different products Marathon Press offers, starting with postcards. And, with every project you’ve got, their full team of designers and marketing experts can help you create a mailing piece that gets through the noise and grabs the attention of your target audience. All it takes is a phone call to check out what they can do to help you build a stronger business. Check out [www.marathonpress.com](http://www.marathonpress.com).

🌀 UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

Who’s shooting the Kiwanis holiday party this year? From the various organizations in your community to the Chamber of Commerce, fund-raisers and the like, get your name out there by photographing at these events.

 DIVERSITY

It’s important to have a specialty at the core of your business, but don’t be a one-trick pony. Diversity helps you grow and establish a stronger relationship with your clients. For example, let’s assume you’re a wedding photographer. Why wouldn’t you want to be there when the first baby was born? After all, you have a great relationship with the couple from the wedding, so show a little diversity and work to become each client’s first choice for any photographic needs.

If you hate the idea of diversifying, then at least develop a referral network with other photographers who complement your weaker skills. The whole idea is to make sure you never say, “Sorry, that’s just not my specialty.” You always want to give clients a solution, whether it’s utilizing your skill set or another artist’s.

 HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSES

Just because you work out of your home doesn’t mean you can’t host an open house. A studio or retail space is a natural place to host an open house and show your work. If you work out of your home, look around the area for a location suitable for a gallery event, such as a hotel or a restaurant with a private room.

 HOLIDAY CARDS

I’ve written about doing your own holiday cards at least a half dozen times over the last few years. No photographer should ever send out a store-bought card. Use your own images for holiday cards and stationery. On the back, at the bottom of the card, just like the Hallmark label, goes the name of your business, website and phone number. There isn’t a better way to remind clients what you do for a living.

Lighting up your business is all about marketing and sharing your passion with your target audience. It’s an all-year thing, even though I’m sharing several ideas more relevant to the end of the year. A strong, successful business is about building relationships and creating an experience for every client you work with—even those who meet you initially only through your website and blog. ■

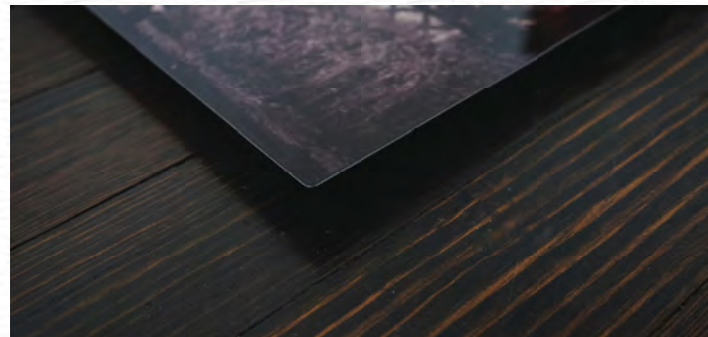


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Skip Cohen is president and founder of Marketing Essentials International, a consulting firm specializing in projects dedicated to photographic education, marketing and social media support across a variety of marketing and business platforms. He founded 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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# final inspiration

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image title    briella louise  
exposure    f5.6 @ 1/125, ISO 50  
lighting    profoto b1  
location    washington university | st. louis, mo  
gear    canon 5d mark iv | canon 70-200 f/2.8





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