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- Gary Hughes | Photographer, Business Owner

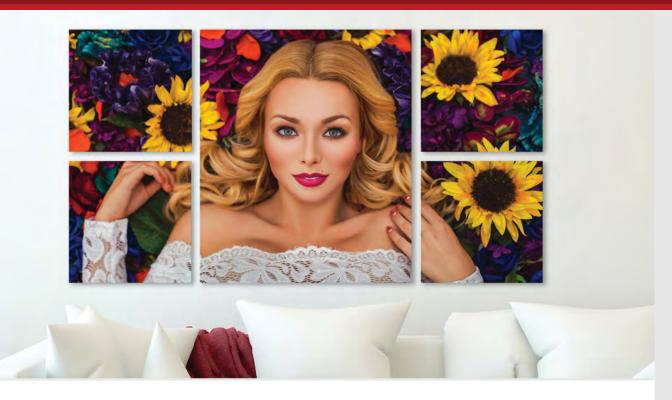
Read more about Gary Hughes' journey as a small business owner at:

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Let's Talk Leads



Leads are the lifeblood of your business. This month, business experts Amanda and Donovan answer questions about lead management.

Amanda and Donovan, COO & CEO of 17hats

What is lead management, anyway?

Donovan: By taking a systemized approach to capturing, responding to, and evaluating leads, you make the most of every opportunity.

Amanda: That's what we mean by lead management. It's one of five systems at the heart of 17hats that give you a better way to do business.

Is it really that important to systemize my response to leads?

Amanda: Yes! You'll never a get a second chance to make a great first impression. 17hats automatically replies to every inquiry, conveying professionalism.

You'll stand out among competitors who are slow to respond.

Donovan: The fact is, without lead management, terrific opportunities are destined to slip through your fingers.

What are the upsides to lead management?

Donovan: Not only are you capturing all the pertinent information, but you're evaluating leads, too, with an automatically triggered questionnaire.

Amanda: Their answers to those questions will help you identify your best prospects – all without lifting a finger!

Lead management is as easy as 1-2-3: Capture, respond to, and evaluate your leads.

1) Capture. 17hats lets you embed Lead Capture Forms into your site, gathering the key info.



Hello Anna,

Thank you for contacting me about photographing your wedding.

At Sarah Bellum Photography, we do all we can to ensure a stress-free wedding journey, and wedding day. Our approach to your Bridal, Engagement, and Wedding photography includes your signature books, thank you cards, printed wall art, and, of course, preserving your happiness in our keepsake albums.

On average, clients spend about \$8,000 on this memorable event.

I would love to get to know you and your ideas for the wedding. Please complete the questionnaire below, and I'll give you a call.

Here's to preserving cherished memories,

Sarah

Complete Our Questionnaire

3) Evaluate. An automated Questionnaire goes out to every prospect, so you can evaluate each lead.

2) Respond to. 17hats automatically sends a reply (even while you're asleep!) expressing your enthusiasm for the job.



Manage your leads. Master your business: *Visit 17hats.com/leads*



shutter

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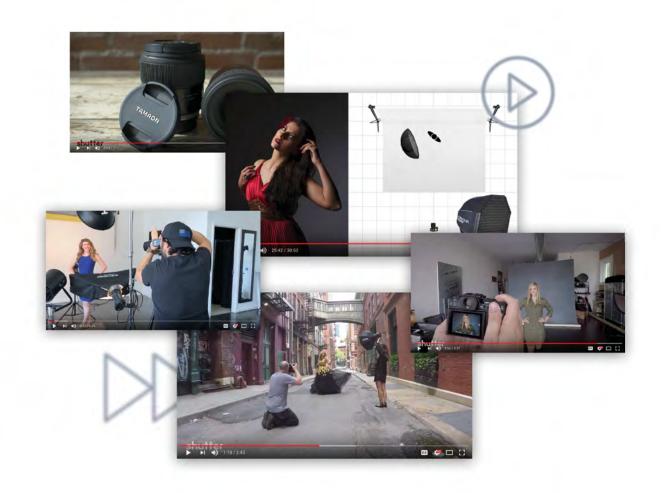
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MISSION STATEMENT

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

Shutter Magazine: By photographers, for photographers.

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LAUNCH POINT

A message from the editor-in-chief

Be bold. Be beautiful. Find the beauty in everything and everyone. - Sal Cincotta









After all these years writing articles for *Shutter Magazine*, I'm surprised there's still something left to write about. And while I've covered some of the points in this month's article, this is the first time I've shared a list of things you need to do to kick off the new year right.

It's the slow season for many of you, so it's a good time to build a stronger business and work hard to make 2019 your best year yet.

Every year, business gets a little harder. It's the natural progression of consumer trends, technology, marketing and business. While it's getting tougher, there are also more tools to help you build your business and your brand.

Think about the power of your website and blog. You've got more reach than businesses have had at any time in history. A well-structured website, blog and social media activity can give you a level of reach that just a few years ago was reserved exclusively for magazines.

It's January. Take the first week of the month and kick back. Daydreaming is an art form. While we were all told as kids to pay attention, dreaming about the future is a key to your success. If you're not happy with what you're doing, if your heart just isn't in it, this might be the break you need.

You can't create images that tug at people's heartstrings if your own heart isn't in it. Here's a list to tackle in the weeks ahead.

1. YOUR WEBSITE

When was the last time you checked how your website was working?

Load time – I know you like the music and ego-stroking introductions, but don't get carried away. If it doesn't load quickly, you'll lose a customer.

Image quality – I'm amazed to see how many photographers simply load in images to fill up space. If it's not your very best work, don't put it on your site. Every image needs to be a "wow" print.

Diversity – Show diversity in your technique—black and white, infrared, classic portraits, great lighting. If you're going to show diversity in your specialties, make sure they relate to each other. Landscapes don't belong in a mix of wedding, family or children photos.

Contact information – Give people a way to respond and talk to you live. We're in a service business, and nobody has confidence in an email contact system by itself. Let people call you.

Images – A picture's worth a thousand words. Give people more images than text.

Shutter Magazine January 2019

2. YOUR BLOG

I've written so much about blogging. Here's my main point one more time. Your website is about what you sell, but your blog is about what's in your heart.

Consistency – If you're posting once every full moon, then you might be hurting your business instead of growing it. Blog a minimum of twice a week at the same times and days.

Good content is king – If they are not relevant to your readers, mediocre images are just taking up space in your galleries. You've got to see the world through viewers' eyes and share posts that are relevant to them.

A picture's worth a thousand words – It applies to your blog as well as your website. If you're sharing interesting content, you don't need posts any longer than 200 to 500 words.

Be helpful – A good blog is about information that helps its readers.

Build a stash – All your posts don't have to go up in almost real time. Build a stash of 20 posts in the pipeline. This allows you to pull something interesting out of your stash when you don't have time to write a fresh post.

3. YOUR NETWORK

Trade show and convention season is ramping up. It's one of the best networking experiences in professional photography. You don't need to build your business alone. Take advantage of the wealth of information available through contacts you make at every function you attend. Obviously, ShutterFest is a key event, but don't forget the other national shows and your state conventions, along with monthly chapter meetings of local photography groups.

4. SOCIAL NETWORKING

Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram and Twitter all have a place in your network. Get active in a couple of forums where artists with similar interests hang out. Ask questions when you need help. Participate in consumer forums that have a common interest with your target audience and build a reputation for being helpful.

5. READ AND LISTEN

We don't do enough of it, and there's a ton of great information out there, much of it written by very talented photographers. People like Sal Cincotta, Lori Nordstrom and Bambi Cantrell have great material to help you build a better business, including videos and books. Check out the wealth of information being shared online in podcasts and YouTube videos. Two of my favorite podcasts are "Mind Your Own Business" on PhotoFocus.com and "Beyond Technique" on PhotoShelter and PhotoFocus. (I have a lot of fun as a cohost.)

6. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

You want your community to be good to you, so you have to give something back. Get involved. Do volunteer work. Let people know they can count on you for support—and I'm not talking about donations of money, but giving your time for local charities, the Chamber of Commerce, the school system, etc.

7. ADD-ONS

What are you offering your client base? Offer as many products as you can. Consider frames, albums, image boxes and canvas prints. There's a ton of research showing an increase in satisfaction when consumers can accessorize their purchases. If you're having trouble figuring out what to offer, call your lab and your album company. New products are introduced every day.

8. RIGHT-SOURCING

It's an expression borrowed from my old buddy Jeff Jochum. Think about all the time you spend on projects that could be spent marketing yourself. If you're spending hours every week working on your images when you could be turning them over to a good lab, you're missing an opportunity to promote yourself and your work.

9. BACK TO BASICS

Too many photographers spend too much time on mouse clicks instead of shutter clicks. It's time for you to take a refresher course on photography basics. You won't need to clean it up in Photoshop if you get it right in the first place. You've got to practice constantly.

10. TAKE A BREAK

On those days when you feel like you're going to crash and burn, go out for a day with your camera. Or go out without a camera for some alone time and ponder the meaning of life. Whatever it takes, recognize the signs of exhaustion and learn to shut off the business for a little while.

11. PHONE A FRIEND

You should have a few lifelines, including a best friend. Most of us have one or two people in our lives who we trust with our secret goals and ambitions. You don't have to work out your problems alone. You need a sounding board, somebody to help you through the rough spots.



12. WHERE'S SKIP?

I admit there are days when it's like finding Waldo, but I always return calls and emails. I'm pretty easy to find on Facebook, Twitter and SkipCohenUniversity.com. Don't be afraid to reach out for advice or just an ear to vent frustrations to.

These aren't the only tools to help you deal with the challenges of your business and growing your skill set, but they are 12 of my favorites. The most important thing is to get in the habit of staying active and not getting complacent. Procrastination is not an art form or a business tool.

You're part of a fantastic industry. As I've written before, you can stay on the sidelines and watch the parade go by, or you can be in it.





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*.

skipcohenuniversity.com



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product spotlight

Panasonic with Salvatore Cincotta

LUMIX





Why the Lumix Micro Four Thirds F2.8 Lenses?

Variable aperture is a complete waste of money. I know what you might be thinking: Fixed apertures are very expensive and bulky. But Panasonic might have something to say about that.

Why did you become a photographer? Because you want to make great images. If that's the case, the last thing you want to do is buy an "economical" lens only to find it doesn't meet your needs. You know what happens then? You sell your lens for a loss on eBay—or you buy the right lens in the first place.

I'm not looking to gear-shame you. I am merely offering you some advice after 12-plus years of doing this. If you don't have the budget, that's fine, save your money and invest in the right piece of a equipment when you cantrust me, it's cheaper in the long run.

As a wedding and portrait photographer, I need focal length range. I need to be able to capture something wide and incorporate architecture and get a nice portrait with something tight, all with a fast aperture, the faster the better. These two lenses give you incredible speed, performance, clarity and focal length for most of your work.

Details:

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- Panasonic POWER O.I.S. compatible with Lumix Dual I.S. 2.0 mirrorless cameras
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There is nothing simple about digital asset management. It is easy to get hung up on equipment, shooting and editing, but managing Raw files is the most neglected part of my workflow. When I'm in a hurry, I drag my Raws in a file browsing application from the memory card to some random folder to get started editing. I feel like I always rush to import my Raw files, bypass backup and fail to organize my photos in Lightroom so I can start editing immediately. That has to stop.

As soon as you corrupt/crash a hard-drive or lose your originals altogether, you are screwed. There is no excuse you can give to your client, and you will have to reshoot for free. In this article, I show you how to manage files simply from a single session and archive this session catalog into a master catalog where all your work should live before you prep files to deliver.

First, we need to establish a game plan. Open Lightroom, create a catalog and save it to a local hard drive. You will save your Raw files on a separate hard drive while the Lightroom is saved locally.

IMPORTING

Let's start in Lightroom. Open the new catalog and click the Import Images button to begin ingesting Raw files from your memory cards. Having a multiple SD card reader is handy for weddings, but for this engagement session, we have a single card. Select the proper source and begin choosing import options. Since we are not going to keep the files on the memory cards for obvious reasons, we have to copy our images to a new destination. I will forgo Copy as DNG since this makes no sense for converting our Raw files. On the right side of the Import module, let's go through each panel to determine the best ingesting options. (1)



It is important to choose the right destination folder for these Raw files. This folder is where the catalog is connected to your Raw files. Many photographers have some sort of DAS or NAS system for their Raw files; this article is not going to get into which one is right for you, but it's worth researching if you have no clue. I have a simple multi-bay DAS where a main and secondary disk are mounted as RAID1. Basically Lightroom writes to the main disk and the RAID1 software mirrors this data to the secondary one. This is not a method for backup, and I do not treat it as such. We will get to the backup settings in the File Handling panel later.

I use folder naming to organize my Raw files. I need the date and client name to refer to later, so here is my name structure: yearmonthday_event_clientname. An engagement session my wife photographed last October would be named 20181007 E Ryan+Sanli. (2) This is the main folder that will contain multiple subfolders named as such: 01_Originals, 02_Selects, 03_Lightroom, 04 Export, 05 Creative, etc. I create these folders after I am in Lightroom, and I create the 01_Originals folder for my Raw file import.



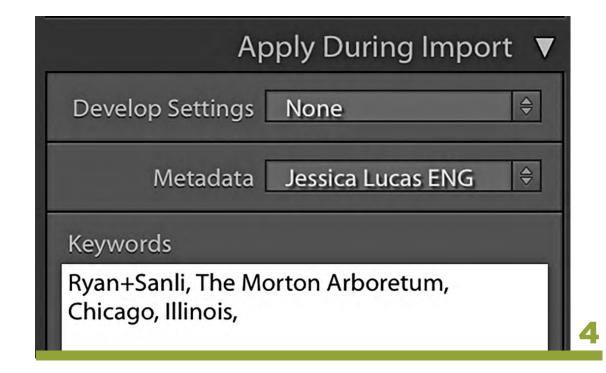
In the Apply During Import panel, we apply develop

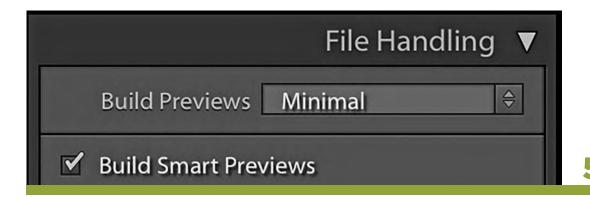
and metadata presets to cut time. Using keywords for who, what and where you photographed as well as

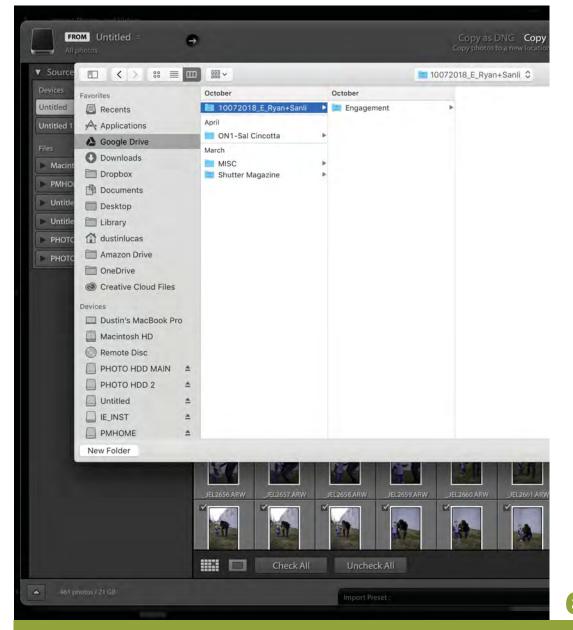


File Handling is our last panel, and this includes options for building previews. I am not going to get into the pros and cons of these, but must stress the importance of Build Smart Previews—check this box. (5) For the time being, I leave the Build Previews setting at Minimal; do your research on these options if you are unsure. Backup is hidden in this panel and easy to forget since it's unchecked at default. Use a separate external drive to create a second copy or, in my case, a third. You should have three storage options, two on site and one off site. Cloud storage ¬is a popular option for off site that you can sync with an external drive in your studio to run hourly. (6)

Now click Import and go have a coffee.



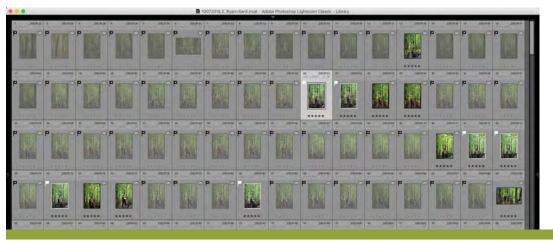


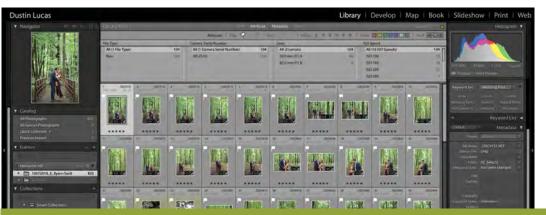


GET ORGANIZED IN GRID MODE

Once your images are fully imported and your Smart Previews have finished building, we are ready to cull the images. I make sure my Lightroom preferences are set for a speedy selection. (7) Another handy tip for culling like a champ in Lightroom is to turn on your caps-lock key and use flags. Flagging images is simple: Strike "p" to keep an image, and Lightroom auto-advances to the next photo; strike "x" to cull one out and "u" to unflag an image. This speeds up your culling time. Once you finish culling, start to create new folders in the Grid/Library module. (8)



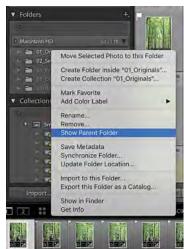


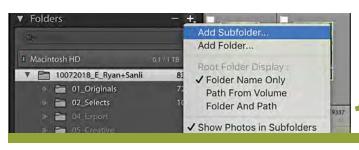


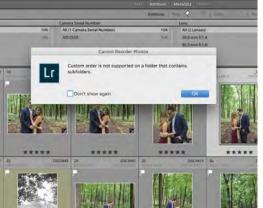
The best way to do this is to filter out all unflagged and rejected photos to select all the images remaining. (9) On the left side in the Folders panel, right-click the 01_Originals folder, select Show Parent Folder, select the parent folder and click the "+" button at the top of the panel. (10ab) Choose Add Subfolder so this new folder stays in the same folder tree as 01_Originals. This is how you keep things organized. Enter the new folder name as 02 Selects and check the box to include Selected Photos. Click Create to move the Raws into the 02 Selects folder so you still have a version to work from. (11)

At this stage, we don't want to rename files just yet in the event we cull more images while we edit them. We can finish adding the remaining folder to prepare for our export and creatives later. I like to Custom Order the images, especially when I've synced the capture time and I want to break up the detail shots, bride and groom getting ready, etc. To move files around, select and click an image to move it to a different spot. If you are working in a folder that doesn't allow Custom Sorting, you can add all the images to a new collection. (12) Select all images and click the "+" button in the Collections panel. Include selected photos and click Create. Now you can click and drag individual or groups of images to Custom Sort. (13)

Now we are ready to edit in the Develop module.



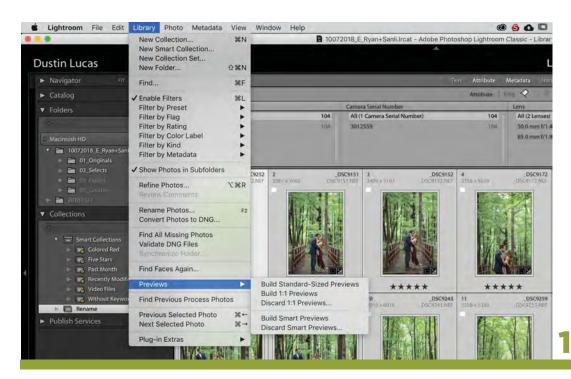






For smaller sessions like this, I apply my standard starting-point preset and tweak the HSL settings on the first image to dial back any unwanted green tones in the images. (17) When this image looks right, I select the remaining images and globally sync the Color Adjustments settings only. (18) For sessions where I have more than one photographer with me, I choose an image from the beginning of each sequence and/or lighting change per camera. To make sure I choose each actual camera, I choose the Library filter: Camera Serial Number. This is a personal preference for making sure I balance each camera consistently from the start. (19) Spending more time doing this means I can quickly sync large batches of images per camera and quickly dial in each image.

Along with presets, this is a great time saver for editing.



Develop

Enable hover preview of presets in Loupe

Use Smart Previews instead of Originals for image editing

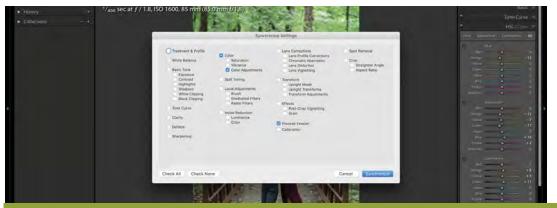
This will allow increased performance, but may display decreased quality while editing. Final output will remain full size/quality.



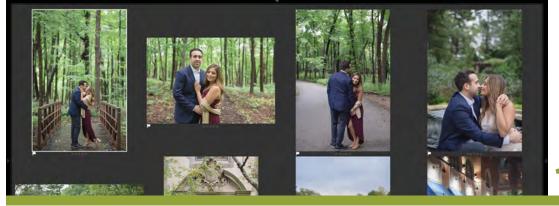
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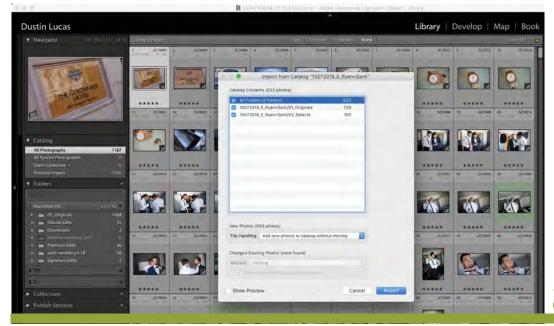
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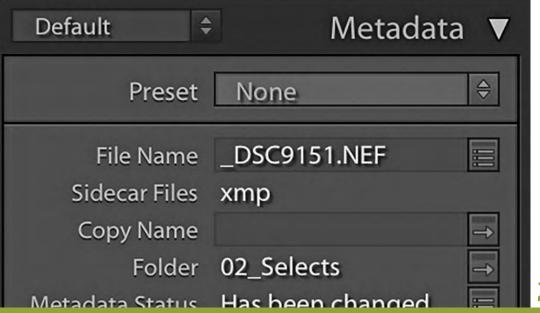
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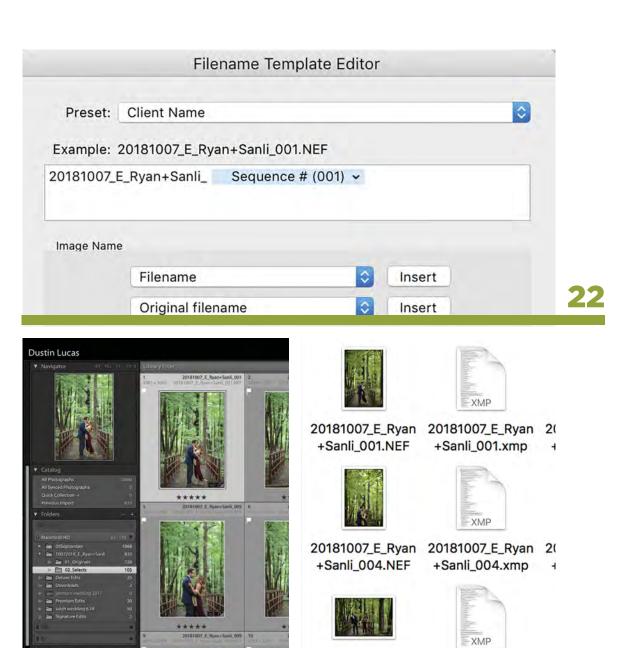
19



20



21



23a

Now that the newly edited session is in the master catalog, rename the Raw files based on the folder names we created earlier: 20181007_E_Ryan+Sanli_0001, 20181007_E_Ryan+Sanli_0002, etc. (21) In the Filename Template Editor, create a preset for this naming structure to recall for future orders. This speeds things up and maintains consistency job to job. (22) It is important to rename the Raws before exporting files because if you rename only the exported JPEGs being delivered, it is difficult to match files later. This also sets you up to dump unkept Raw files after a certain period of time since you've already delivered the files. (23ab)

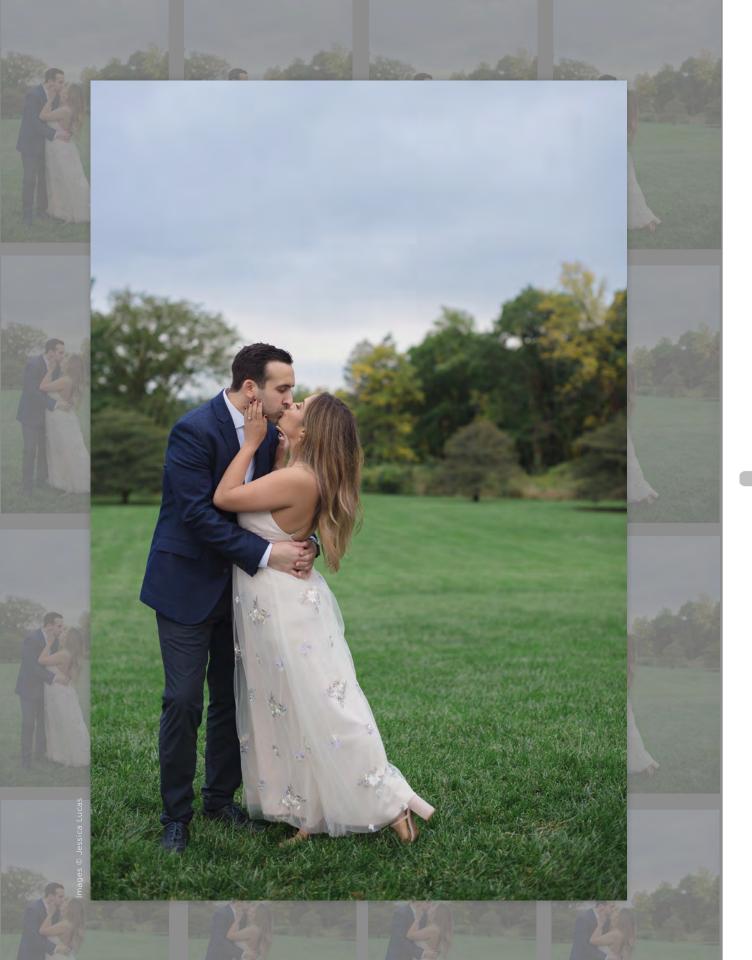
20181007_E_Ryan 20181007_E_Ryan 20

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THE RESULTS

Now that we've gone through the process of ingesting our Raws and archiving the final catalog, we're all set. This is a simple start to how you want to manage your own Raw files. There are a lot of options for storage management, and they all have their pros and cons. Use Lightroom to copy and back up files, and back up your files off site as well. Set up a plan you can follow and stick to it. Consistency is the most important part of the process. Keep it simple and repeat.





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.

evolveedits.com





I often kid that I don't understand photographers who work with babies. I don't have the time or patience to do what they do. They are masters at their craft. Those same photographers would cringe at the thought of working with a bride and her family on a wedding day—not because they are incapable, but because these are just the things we love to do.

I have worked on fine-art nudes for the past two years. Not because we have a huge demand for it from clients, but because Alissa and I find it challenging and rewarding. After 12 years, I can shoot weddings with my eyes closed. Fine-art nudes, on the other hand, are not easy. There are so many variables that go into making a beautiful and tasteful portrait. And that is the point, right? I don't want to create porn. I don't want to create hot. I don't want to create sexual. I want to create something that makes someone think, "I want to hang that in my home as a piece of art. It is gorgeous."

This year, we will be introducing this type of portrait to our wedding clients. How will it go over? That has yet to be seen. I am hopeful that instead of the boudoir lingerie shots that are typical, this niche will allow us to yet again stand out from our competitors.

Here are some tips for finding your niche in the beauty market



We all have our own version of beauty. Some people like thin, some like curvy, some believe less is more, etc. No one is right or wrong. Beauty is how you define it through your own eyes. Our job is to capture that beauty for our clients.

That is what you have to spend your most time flushing out. Sure, if a size-zero model with big fake boobs shows up in lingerie, you might be thinking, "Oh, boy, pretty girl," and you would miss everything I am telling you and fall into the category of creeper. Let's not do that.

Instead, take your vision of beauty and merge it with your client. What does that mean? Every person on this planet has something beautiful about them. Their eyes, their smile, their shape and curves. Our job is to figure out what that is. When I am working with my subjects, Alissa and I are creating a figure study. We are looking at their face and body structure and thinking about how we will use light and shadows, posing, the environment and editing to create the perfect portrait.

Sometimes it's a natural-light portrait and other times it's a full-on studio lighting setup.

The key takeaway is to spend time thinking about what you want your final images to look like and how they will evoke emotion from your clients. Ultimately, it's your vision of the female form they are buying.



BE CONSISTENT.

This is a recurring problem I see in almost every photographer's business. They are all over the place with their style and editing. You cannot be everything to everyone. You are not Wal-Mart, you are an artist. People are not coming to you because you are a jack-of-all-trades. Well, if they are, I would imagine you are struggling to raise prices and make a living. Unless you want to run a volume studio business, which is fine, then you have to find a way to be consistent in your images and brand. It starts with your photography.

I recommend you not add nudes, boudoir and fine-art images to your site. This will confuse your clients and they won't know what to expect from you. Worse yet, you will lose potentially good clients because they can't make sense of your offerings and just get turned off.

It is important that once you know what you will be offering to your clients that your site and messaging is all tied together to drive that point home. There should be no guessing what you do.

If a client wants hot boudoir for Valentine's Day, we are probably not the studio for them. I have no idea how to shoot that, and it's not something I want to offer my clients.

This is hard. I am a male working with female clients. I am trying to communicate to them what I want—contorted poses—that doesn't feel comfortable to the body, all while working with clients who are not professional nude models and have their own body issues. We are all insecure.

When I say practice, it's not just about practicing with your camera and exposure. It is about practicing with your communication, efficiency and vision.

The last thing you want to do is struggle with your gear while a client is standing there nude. This stuff needs to be flushed out before you have your client in frame. When I am working on location, I get everything dialed in before my client gets naked. This ensures my time spent with them is focused on communication and shaping their body and not tinkering with my camera.



DON'T BE A FREAKING WEIRDO.

I know this is hard for some of you, but for crying out loud, stop acting like a freak. I have seen women who are as bad as men. Yes, naked body. Yes, beautiful males and females. Hold it together and be a professional.

I am never alone with a client. That should be obvious. Having a female assistant present puts your client at ease and protects you from any claims of inappropriate behavior, which is not something you want to be dealing with.

I have always had female assistant on these shoots. Afterward, the clients tell us how comfortable we made them feel. That is huge for your business and reputation.

If you find yourself wondering if something you did or said qualifies as a creeper comment, chances are that you have already crossed the line.

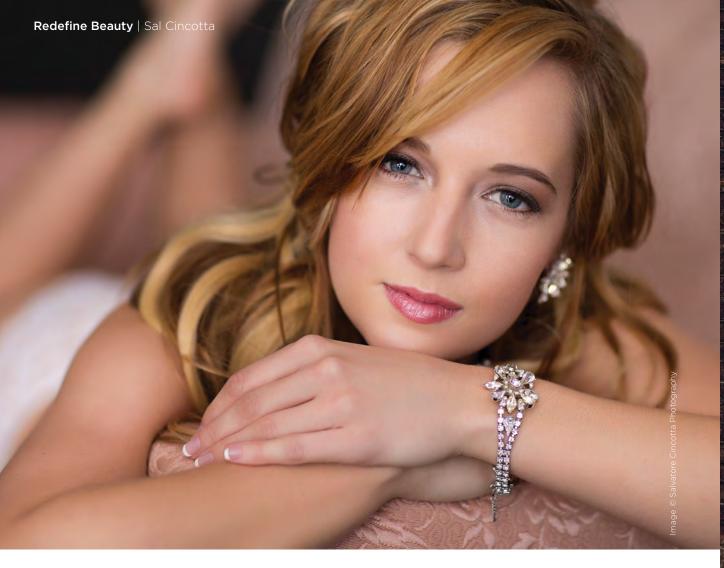
Be professional. Create a be Be professional. Create a beautiful portrait for your client. That's the job.

MARKET IT.

It's not all about pretty pictures. We have to let people know we exist and that we do this for money. We need money to run our business and buy new toys. If you don't market it, you won't make it. Clients won't be posting these shots to their social media and be like, "Look at me naked!"

You will need a full-blown marketing plan. I market this to my existing clients. Marketing for nude shoots doesn't go down well on Facebook or Instagram. My existing clients are attracted to it because they know and trust me.

If this is your main line of business, you will need a dedicated website with good SEO. Spend money on Google AdWords and other marketing to drive traffic to your site. Attend bridal shows with a booth.



Whatever you do, be creative about it. Do not sit back and hope people refer you. That is not a sales strategy at all. That hope-and-pray strategy rarely works.

I hope this gets you excited about offering your clients something unique. Hopefully over the coming months, I will be able to report back that our clients are loving this offering.



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

salcincotta.com



How does Sal Switch?

Sal Cincotta switches light inserts on his Rapid Box Switch between studio strobe when he wants more power and speedlites when on location.

The new Switch Series for Rapid Box and Beauty Dish offers 13 interchangeable light mount inserts for 9 versatile light modifiers. Pair with new egg crate grids for total lighting control like never before.

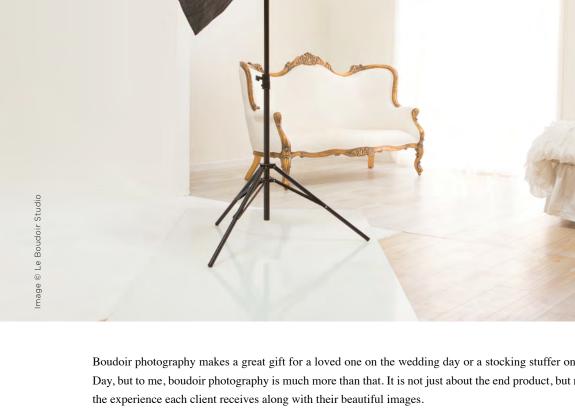
When will you make the Switch?

FJWESTCOTT.COM/SWITCH









Boudoir photography makes a great gift for a loved one on the wedding day or a stocking stuffer on Christmas Day, but to me, boudoir photography is much more than that. It is not just about the end product, but more about

The experience starts with our booking process. From the start, we want to get to know our clients. We want to find out who they are and what they want out of their experience, what they find alluring and sexy about themselves, and what they're not all that confident about. Do they want the shoot to celebrate a weight loss journey? Is it a confidence booster? Some are going through a divorce or turning 50, or celebrating their bodies after having a baby. We want to know everything. The time we spend getting to know them before they come in helps in the comfort-building process and adds to the overall experience.

Our studio is 2,000 square feet with two dressing rooms, an office, a cyc wall and 13 sets, from light and bright to dark and sultry. We use natural light as our main source of light on several of our sets. We have built our space to accommodate different backgrounds. We have custom-designed sofas that match our specially designed wall decor for a home-like feel for most of our sets.

We confirm appointments digitally. Our confirmation email is extensive, with a plethora of information the client needs to prepare for their session, starting from where to shop (with some coupons from lingerie stores we have partnered with). The email requests that they not get a spray tan before the session and that they get their hair blow-dried straight.

They need to show up ready to start their hair and makeup. Our artists are the best in our state. We select them based on their abilities to produce amazing coverage, blend a smoky eye or create a pinup look. We give our clients leeway in how they want their hair and makeup done, but we guide them through the process, suggesting what will look good for their facial features. They sit through hair and makeup for around an hour and half, which allows them to get more comfortable. We put on a music station of their choice to help them get in the mood for their session.





We have a specialized boudoir dressing room with accessories, kimonos, robes, oversized sweaters, jewelry, thigh-highs and props. We also carry high heels in different sizes so they do not need to worry about bringing them. Our priority is to make their experience worry free and comfortable, with little to stress about. Clients can bring champagne or wine to their session to calm their nerves and celebrate. Being in lingerie with someone they just met is one of the most vulnerable things a woman can do, but we are here to make her feel at ease throughout the whole experience.







After our clients have their hair and makeup done, I go into their dressing room and guide her in choosing the outfits and sets that will work best for her figure. We are there to encourage her love her body and her images right out of the camera. We design our sets to flatter women at their best angles and we alter poses for each body shape. We keep in mind the things she does not love about her body, and we accentuate the things she does. We want our clients to feel confident and inspired during their shoot. Kimonos are great for covering up areas of concern (tummy, arms) but also add an element of mystery and flirtiness.





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I guide and pose my client throughout the entire session, adjusting her hair, arms and legs and showing her, often with my own body, exactly what pose I want her to do to ensure she looks amazing. This sets us apart from other studios.







After the shoot, the client gets dressed and packs up. We set an in-person viewing appointment for her about a week from the session date and go over products and packages. I offer a same-day discount for certain upgrades on her session date. Because I have shown her a lot of her images throughout the shoot, she will already have an idea of how many images she likes and will be more likely to buy more products. We specialize in print products at Le Boudoir Studio and encourage our clients to upgrade to custom albums before getting digital images.

At the in-person viewing, we display a slideshow of our favorite images, fully edited and airbrushed. We do not over-edit our images. I enjoy watching their excited reaction to this beautiful person they have transformed into. The more excited I am, the more excited she will be about her photos. Most women come in with mixed emotions—it is not every day that they see themselves like this. When they see those images, all of their fears and nerves are calmed and they are thrilled to display the goddess who lives within.



Traci is the co-owner and lead photographer of Le Boudoir Studio in Scottsdale, Arizona. She has been shooting boudoir for nine years. She says she is goal-driven and passionate about building women's self-confidence and empowering them to feel their best and know that they are worth it. Her goal with boudoir is to help make women feel amazing just the way they are.

www.leboudoirstudio.com



GALLERIES IPS TOOLS ROOM-VU STATS DUAL-VU LIGHTROOM PLUGIN ORDER & IMAGE NOTES CUSTOM ORDER TRACKING















Have you ever felt you're failing as both a parent and businessperson? As if the two are impossible to balance? My wife, Eileen, and I sure have. But there's good news. While we're still far from being perfect parents (like light years away), we've learned a number of habits over the years that make a world of difference for us and our three children. Actually, I think my own parents taught me most of these habits—it just took me half a lifetime to realize it.

There's no secret formula to parenting. Unlike in my other articles, I don't have a three-step system for you this month. But I would like to speak to you from the heart, one parent to another.







WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH

When I was a child, my dad ran his home business from a spare room in our drafty 100-year-old farmhouse. His office was the only air-conditioned room in our home. During muggy Georgia summers, my siblings and I retreated there. Lego bricks lay scattered across my dad's drafting table, kiddie songs played over his vintage turntable and G.I. Joes hung on strings from the A/C unit that rattled in the window. He should have been furious. Instead, I mostly remember hearing his laughter and catching him gazing at us with pride in his eyes. It was the best of times and, though my dad never complained, it was the worst of times.

When I was seven, my mom was diagnosed with cancer. Dad's meager income could no longer feed our family of six, much less pay doctors' bills. So he abandoned his dream of self-employment and took any work he could get. He got a job as a salesman, hawking vacuum cleaners house to house. His vacuum demos were in the evenings, when people got home from work. For the first time in my young life, our family gathered around the dinner table without Dad.

The Blume family had always formed a full circle around our table, filling the room with laughter that convinced us everything would be okay. Now my dad's empty chair sat as a silent reminder that the future was uncertain. I stretched further than usual across the table to reach my mom's hand, then listened to her voice in place of his as she gave thanks. But I didn't feel thankful. I felt alone and scared.

The first thing I want to say to you is this: You are doing a great job. None of us is a perfect mom or dad. All of us have failed many times—missed a ball game, lost our temper, forgot to pick our kids up after school. Stop beating yourself up. You love your children, and that's why you work so hard for them. They know you love them, too. Even if you can't be at the table for dinner right now, never stop putting it all on the line for your family.



THE TOUGH GET GOING

Today Eileen and I run four businesses together: three studios and an educational platform to help other photographers find success. We also parent and homeschool our three children. How do we do

First, and more important, is why we do it. Our mission is simple: to help hardworking photographers find healthier success so they don't have to choose between putting bread on their family's table and being at the table themselves. Some personality types live for the hustle. But if that's just not you, you're in good company with us. During this too-brief stage in life, we are living for the precious moments we share with our kids. They grow up way too fast. You may have just a few sacred summers left to enjoy and influence your children before they are independent. Don't miss it.

So back to how we do it. To be honest, sometimes we don't. Some days we still fail. But I will tell you it gets better. If you're in a rough patch and overwhelmed, don't accept the status quo. It's not inevitable. It's time to get tough, get disciplined, make changes. You and your kids are worth it.

Without a doubt, being both a parent and a self-employed artist is a huge challenge. Here are a few tips we hope will help you.











BE A PROFESSIONAL

As we began the process to adopt our third child, our agency enlisted us in a ton of parental training and counseling. To our shock, we spent more time that year attending adoption seminars than photography conferences. The new perspective and tools we walked away with were so amazing that our only regret was that we hadn't invested in counseling before.

Have you ever thought of parenting as an art form? It is. Or, if you have your kids at home full-time like we do, have you thought of parenting as your other profession? Have you invested nearly as much time in reading, listening and training yourself to be a parent as you have in being a photographer? If not, start simply. Get a great parenting book. We love The Connected Child. It was written to help parents of children who have suffered trauma, and is a brilliantly researched look into basic human behavior and emotional health that has changed how we parent our kids.



BE PRESENT

One of the most impactful tools we've gained is emotional presence. It means giving 100% of your attention to the person you're interacting with, and it has a powerful impact on families (in business, too). We never valued this technique with our eldest daughter. She was the first baby who grew up staring at our backs from her play mat while we stared at monitors, unable to keep our heads above the editing flood in our first years as photographers.

She was naturally compliant and yearned to please. As soon as she walked, we could yell instructions to her across the house, and she'd hear and obey. We took full advantage, constantly multitasking and, as we now realize, neglecting important parts of our daughter's emotional development.

But when our second girl came, it became frighteningly clear we were out of our depth with this born artist. No matter how loud I yelled or how angry I sounded, this child would act as if I didn't exist. We had her hearing checked, but it was perfect. She spent a significant percentage of her small life in timeout, but it was useless. I regret the anger and harsh words I heaped on her little heart during her early years. Now I know her incredibly imaginative mind just works differently. When she's at play, she is fully tuned out—no less (maybe even more) than when I am on my smartphone and fail to feel a little hand tugging on my shirt.

With our second daughter and now with our son, we've learned our behavior was the problem. Instead of shouting to stop them playing ball near my camera lenses again, I only need to step away from my computer and get down on their level. On one knee, I gently lift my daughter's chin with my hand so our eyes meet. She sees a look of loving concern in my eyes, not anger. I talk more softly than usual, not louder. And, miracle of miracles, she hears me. The more consistent I am, the more responsive she is.

HANDS UP, BACK AWAY FROM THE PHONE

Smartphones are toxic for kids and you. They are more than a bad habit—they're proven to be chemically addictive. That hit of dopamine your brain gets every time you flip on the blue screen is a mind-numbing drug.

Eileen and I have struggled with this addiction. If you need a support group to keep you accountable, join us anytime. Our kids have made their feelings on the topic clear: "Mommy, look at me. Get off your phone." "I hate your phone, Daddy." Kids are perceptive. If confession is the first step to correction, let's admit we're a neglectful generation of parents. They see what's going on better than we do at times. And to think we have even let them watch our phones for extended periods to distract them while we worked. It's like sharing needles with your kids.

To combat the addiction, we've taken drastic, firm steps.

First, smartphones live outside our bedroom. Use an old-school alarm if you need it and break the addiction. Secondly, at the table, I want my kids to see their parents laugh and interact the way my folks did, so no phones at the table. Not even in our pockets. Studies show that people's IQ drops simply by having physical contact with their phones.

Beyond the phone, computer work ends at 5 pm. If we can't finish by 5 on most days, it tells us that we are being inefficient and distracted or we are taking on more work than we can handle, in which case it's time to choose another task to outsource or scale back. Listen to this, because almost no one says it: Yes, it is possible to accept too much work. It's called making priorities. And sometimes our priorities as parents require us to turn down money.

It may sound crazy, but we finally removed the TV from our home. We still allow some shows on the iPad. But it's amazing how infrequent the pleas for shows has become since we removed the 52-inch temptation. After a couple days of complaining, kids relearn how to make-believe. All of us feel like our brains are healthier as a result, too.













We make occasional exceptions to the 5 pm rule during busy portrait season. But when there's an exception, we're dedicated to giving our kids at least one available parent at all times. Eileen and I switch roles through the day. In the morning, she homeschools the kids while I work on marketing and email replies.

We eat lunch together. Then in the afternoon, she works on editing, design and product orders. Besides, it's better when we aren't hovering, critiquing each other's work. It's a trust thing.

What about photo shoots? There was a time when my parents were able to help. But seasons change, and now they need more of our help. Our kids have learned to be great travelers, joining us on most of our global adventures, attending conferences with us when we speak and even tagging along for weddings and fashion shoots. Although we usually get sitters during photo shoots, we'll never forget moments like when fashion designer Alida Herbst played fairy godmother to our kids in her London studio, sharing her collection of broaches with them while we shot models. It's your family and your business. It's what you make of it.

BELIEVE IN THE DREAM

Only God knows why Eileen and I dared start both our photography business and a family at the same time. But this very month, as we celebrate 11 years of marriage and business together, we're thanking him for three pairs of little hands that join ours around the table every night. God also knows we wouldn't change a thing. We're parents first, photographers second. But even when it's hard, it's pretty cool how blessed we are to do both together.

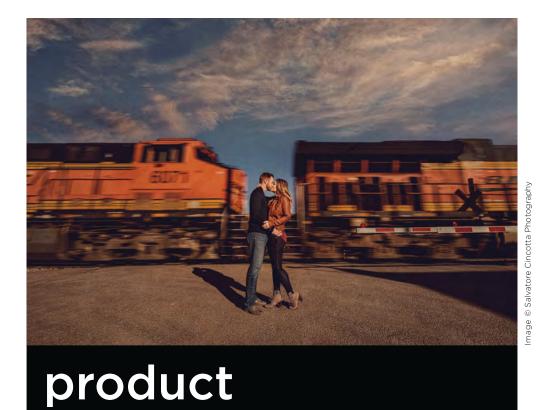




Phillip and Eileen Blume are award-winning photographers just crazy enough to believe art can change the world. Having transformed their small-town home studio into a top brand, they now work with clients worldwide. The Blumes specialize in wedding and fashion photography, and continue to focus on what 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.

theblumes.co





spotlight

TAMRON with Salvatore Cincotta

TAMRON

Why the Tamron 15-30mm F/2.8 Lens?

One of the drawbacks of wide-angle lenses is softness and skew on the edges, making subjects and anything with a straight line look almost cartoonish. Not so with the Tamron 15–30. This lens is a beast. I was impressed by its ability to keep skew on the edges at an absolute minimum.

Not only is the glass fast at f 2.8, but I found it useful on an engagement session at 15mm, 20mm and 30mm. The skew at 15mm was minimal, so it works great throughout the range.

Here's something that's not seen with a lot of wide-angle lenses: The sharpness on the edges was something worth noting and definitely got my attention.

This is an all-around great lens for anyone shooting architecture or environmental portraits where the landscape is incorporated into the shots.

Details:

- Super high-quality high-speed ultra-wide-angle zoom lens The Model A041 is an F/2.8 ultra-wide-angle lens with a focal length starting at 15mm and offering high resolution even in the peripheral area of the image.
- Newly developed AX Coating The AX (Anti-reflection eXpand) Coating is especially effective for wide-angle lenses, which tend to let in harmful light from peripheral areas. It was developed to control rays that affect image quality.
- VC promises sharp images for all kinds of shooting Tamron released the first high-speed F/2.8 ultra-wide-angle zoom lens in the world, equipped with a VC (vibration compensation) mechanism in the original model A012.
- High-speed, high-precision AF Superb AF speed and precision is delivered with a
 Dual MPU (micro-processing unit) system and an enhanced AF control algorithm to
 improve performance.
- Vastly improved, highly durable fluorine coating Abrasion resistance has been vastly
 improved on the new model A041. The front surface of the lens element has a fluorine
 coating based on a newly developed fluorine compound with high water- and oilrepellent properties.
- Moisture-resistant construction Seals are located at the lens mount area and other critical locations to keep out moisture. This feature affords an additional layer of protection when shooting outdoors under adverse weather conditions.













Glamour photography has evolved in many ways over the years. At the heart of it is strength, beauty and a magical je ne sais quoi in the person being photographed. We see these images in makeup advertisements in magazines, on TV and on billboards. They tell us what it means to be a strong, beautiful, magical woman. But what about the times in our lives when we don't feel anywhere near this ideal we see everywhere—like when we have just had a baby and are too overwhelmed to even take a shower or brush our hair daily; or we have just experienced a major loss and could care less how we look because we feel so miserable; or when illness takes over our body, mind and soul? I specialize in shooting glamour for women in that last scenario.

In May 2017, I was introduced to an organization in my community called Breast Friends of Oregon, which ensures that no woman goes through cancer alone. It was founded by friends Becky Olson and Sharon Henifen as they experienced life-changing diagnoses. Breast Friends is a place where women can talk openly about what they are feeling, thinking and experiencing with other women who have lived through it. Women with a new cancer diagnosis are often reluctant to talk about it with friends and family because they don't want to burden them, but having someone there who understands the feelings and emotions and decisions to be made is an invaluable resource.

After I shot their annual fundraising gala, they asked me if I would take over as the photographer of their Bald Is Beautiful program. Women undergoing cancer treatment who have lost their hair come get their hair and makeup done and receive a photo session. I loved this idea, and I wanted to build on it. I wanted to give these women the same five-star experience I give all my portrait clients, from discovery phone call to photo reveal.

THEIR EXPERIENCE

The women I photograph for Bald Is Beautiful come to my studio a little apprehensive. Most have never been shot professionally, but there's more: They're bald, sick and overwhelmed. These women have had so much thrown at them in such a short amount of time that taking even a moment for themselves is a struggle. We try to slow things down from the moment they walk through our studio doors.

These beautiful women are greeted by a handful of women including myself, our hair and makeup artist, and some women from Breast Friends. We hug them, welcome them in, ask them how they are feeling today. It is an interesting moment for someone who is not privy to this secret sisterhood of cancer fighters and survivors. That simple question is different for them. There are dry mouths, painful incision points, watery eyes (not from emotion), cold heads, too many appointments. There is skin falling off, weight gain and family members who don't understand. When people who do understand ask them how they are feeling, you see their shoulders relax, their breath deepen and a sense of comfort come over them. There is no better way to start a session.

They sit down in the hair and makeup chair with the nationally renowned stylist Tracy Shulz, whose work has been seen on billboards in Times Square and on magazine covers and in advertisements all over the world. She also has a heart of pure love. She makes them feel more comfortable about the five lone hairs that have stood strong on their head, the constant watery eyes and the person they don't recognize in the mirror. She asks them what they normally do with their makeup and how they would like it done. Through some form of sorcery, she creates eyelashes and eyebrows that you wouldn't know were false from a few feet away, and somehow matches the skin on their head to the skin on their face (not something you'd normally think about, but a very real concern for these women). Simply put, Tracy blows them away every time, setting the stage for me to create some magic for them.

For their shoot, I focus on their face. I learned to do that from one of my very first phone calls with a woman from my first Bald Is Beautiful shoot. I was wondering how the heck I should photograph these women to show their strength and their journey, and she said something I will never forget. When I asked her, "What would you like people to know when they look at your photos?" she responded: "I want people to know that I am not my cancer. I am me." And that was my lightbulb moment. I was not photographing their cancer. I was photographing them.









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The photos are technically simple. I use natural light in my studio, a 55mm or 85mm lens, and a black V-flat as my backdrop. The emotional connection is where my skills come into play. The skill takes time to develop, but it's pretty simple: I talk to them. I talk to these women and empower them to feel their strength, their sadness, their beauty, to feel proud of how far they have come on their journey. The photographs that result are ones I actually dreamed of creating early in my career, photographs that show someone's soul, their troubles and triumphs, all wrapped into one. Because that is what we are. None of us are all wins and successes, and none of us are all failures and falls. We are all a beautiful and powerful combination of all of our life experiences, and that is what makes us the unique and magical beings that we are.

While glamour photography is all about showing a woman's strength and beauty, it goes a few steps deeper with the women I have the privilege of photographing for Bald Is Beautiful. Instead of focusing on the cancer that has brought them to my chair, the cancer is just one piece of their story. It does not define them and it never will, because their journeys will continue long after they sit in front of me and my camera, and it will continue long after the daily radiation appointments or weekly chemo appointments, and after scars have healed. The photographs they take home from my studio will be printed and hung on walls. They will be pulled out when family members want to tell stories to her loved ones about how brave their grandmother was, how smart she was, how much she loved them. They will look at these photos and say, "She was so beautiful. She was so strong. And she was so many other things too. Let me tell you about her life."









Images © Christ

Being a part of this program has changed me as a photographer and as a person. Each client is more precious to me now, and, oddly enough, I am more precious to me now. These beautiful women have shared their journey with us, and for that I cannot thank them enough.

Here is how one client, Haley Hardin, described her experience with me.

When I was going through chemo last January, one of the hardest parts was losing my hair. It felt like a part of me was missing and it was hard to feel like myself or feel beautiful. Putting on makeup to compensate for the loss of hair is exhausting when your body is going through treatment. You can feel just as terrible on the outside as you feel on the inside. Christine changed that feeling for me. Being in her studio after getting professional makeup done was a blast and has had a lasting impact on me. I've never felt so beautiful, and at a time when I walked in feeling my worst! Her energy is so positive and enthusiastic. She kept telling me how great I looked. The day we did the photo reveal, I cried because of how great the photos were and how gorgeous I felt. I wish every woman going through chemo could experience this. So many patients wear wigs or cover their heads for fear of judgement and lack of confidence in their beauty. But they are just as beautiful as they always have been, and it is such a freeing feeling to embrace our beautiful bald heads! Bald Is Beautiful is a warm and positive experience in my cancer journey that I will cherish forever, and I will always have the beautiful images to look back on.









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We now photograph three women every month for Bald Is Beautiful, and hope to shoot many, many more. Learn more about Breast Friends of Oregon at www.breastfriends.org.





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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FAKING IT TILL YOU MAKE IT

IS BAD FOR BUSINESS

with **David Byrd**



How many times have you heard "You gotta fake it until you make it"? Want more clients? Simply tell the new client you are targeting that you've already worked with dozens of clients just like them. It's been tossed around in my neck of the woods since the beginning of our business many years ago. And I've hated it since the first time I heard it.

Need to sell 10 portrait sessions fast? Advertise an exaggerated call-to-action that there are only three spots left when, in reality, no one has booked a single session. Some would argue that it's just another marketing strategy. Well, sort of. Marketing strategies are often about creating urgency around the product and then using clever pull-through incentives to seal the deal. But there is a big difference between "Act now!" and "There are three spots left!"—and that difference is the emotional fallout you have to deal with.

That, my friends, is called cognitive dissonance, or the difference between something we know or think to be true and what we claim to be true.

"WHEN PEOPLE LIE ABOUT OR EXAGGERATE THEIR EXPERTISE, IT CREATES COGNITIVE DISSONANCE, WHICH FEELS BAD—AND IT IMPACTS PEOPLES' LEVEL OF MOTIVATION AND THEIR SELF-ESTEEM,"

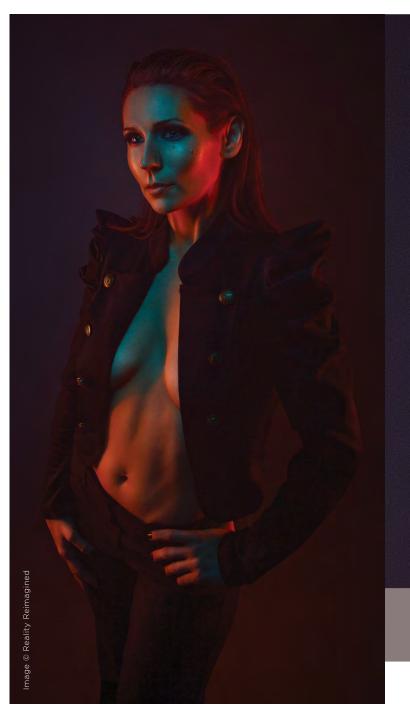
says Dr. Glenn Doyle,
Chicago psychologist

"ACT NOW!" VS. "THREE SPOTS LEFT!"

Let's use the example of "Act now!" versus "Only three spots left!" to demonstrate Doyle's point. Advertising that your services are a great value that shouldn't be missed is a marketing practice called the "urgency principle." This principle taps into consumer behavior by circumventing analytical thought and motivating us to attain that value before it's too late. It is the most common form of advertising and has many facets. It manipulates the behavior of consumers. When you employ the "Only three spots left!" mentality, you alone know the actual truth of that statement. You are attempting to manipulate your prospective buyer, but you also are manipulating yourself into believing you are succeeding when you aren't.

This illusion of success, if not kept in check, can spill over into your everyday life and conversations. We're all guilty of this in some fashion, and we all have really good reasons why we've done this. Think back to those times when you've run into a fellow small business owner who inevitably asked you, "How's business these days?" How often did you smile and say something along the lines of, "It's going great—sometimes I feel like I can't keep up!" The conversation is about encouragement, which is wonderful for our self-esteem. Sadly, we need that encouragement more and more because our self-esteem has been damaged by our own manipulation of it. Why? Because we keep trying to fake it until we make it.

That is the precise reason I don't like the idea of faking it until you make it: It's a lie. It perpetuates more lies, and before you know it, you've programmed yourself to lie about your business. Perhaps most damaging of all, you've become programmed to lie to yourself.



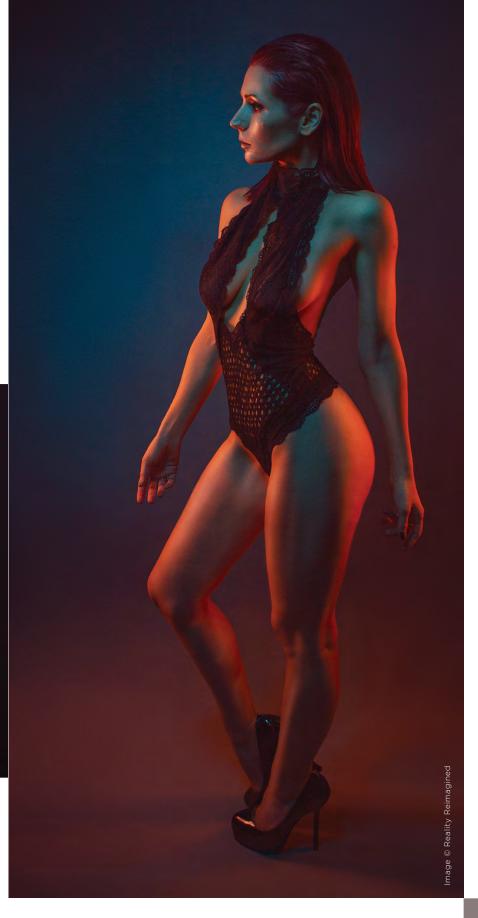
"GENERALLY SPEAKING, OUR SELF-ESTEEM DOESN'T LIKE IT WHEN WE'RE NOT BEING AUTHENTIC. EVEN WHEN WE'RE 'FAKING' SOMETHING FOR WHAT WE THINK IS A POSITIVE EFFECT, IT TENDS TO GRIND AWAY AT OUR ESTIMATION OF OUR SELF. IT'S HARD TO ESTEEM YOURSELF WHEN YOU'RE NOT BEING AUTHENTIC WITH YOURSELF AND OTHERS. I TELL PEOPLE ALL THE TIME [THAT] WHAT THEY SAY, BOTH TO THEMSELVES AND OTHERS, REALLY MATTERS. WHAT WE SAY, AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN, BECOMES PROGRAMMING. — Dr. Doyle

YOUR SELF-ESTEEM KNOWS

The first time this practice was suggested to me was in regards to my high school senior portrait sessions. I did volunteer work at a high school in my former hometown and often chatted with students. I was advised to tell them that I was busy all the time shooting portraits of students: "Sorry, kids, I have to leave early today. I've got another senior portrait session this afternoon." That was lie number one. "You'd better hurry and book with me like you said you wanted to before I'm out of sessions." Lie number two. The rest of the lies came when the students asked what popular spots I used for my sessions, what others were wearing and if they should call their parents at work and have them book.

"YOU CAN HAVE HUMBLE, REASONABLE, REALISTIC FAITH IN YOURSELF AND YOUR ABILITIES WITHOUT HAVING TO BUY INTO SOME ELABORATE FANTASY. BUT YOUR SELF-ESTEEM WILL NOTICE WHEN IT CAN'T TRUST YOU TO TIE YOUR STATEMENTS AND YOUR JUDGMENTS TO REALITY. IT'LL NOTICE, AND IT WON'T LIKE IT."

- Dr. Doyle



I got the business I was looking for. The experience and sales were great. But I felt empty and defeated because I had to lie for success.

"You can have humble, reasonable, realistic faith in yourself and your abilities without having to buy into some elaborate fantasy," says Doyle. "But your self-esteem will notice when it can't trust you to tie your statements and your judgments to reality. It'll notice, and it won't like it."

Glamour and boudoir photography is new to me. I'm working to find my voice in it. The images in this article are from my second attempt using gelled lighting for a session, a double challenge. I told the model about my inexperience and my vision for the session. It was a collaboration, and it boosted each other's self-esteem. If I had lied to her, I would have been alone struggling to find the images.

nindtheshutter.co



BEING HONEST

One of the greatest conversations I ever had was when I told the ugly fear-inducing truth. I was working on a play with a group of high school seniors. They had a familial connection with our brand. I photographed their performances, created fantastic posters that made them feel like stars and donated a lot of my time coaching and directing their artistic competitions.

While we were taking a lunch break on a long Saturday of set construction, they asked me, "How's business?" Our senior portrait season had started strong but tapered off quickly, and we weren't reaching our sales goals. We were heading into the fall season, and if we didn't do something radical, we were going to end the year badly. I was a little worried, and I decided to tell the kids the truth.

I didn't give them a sob story. I told them how excited I was to photograph some fun fall sessions. I told them how much I love walking the beautiful park paths connected to our studio and the smells, colors and sounds of fall. I showed them sample images of fall fashions that I had saved on my phone and told them how excited I was to recreate the spirit of those images. I described the fun group shoot I had in mind of the students having a pumpkin-carving contest in the park. I described another idea of a student sitting by a window in a coffee shop writing poetry as a soft rain hit the window.

I told them that we didn't have a lot of folks calling to book those sessions, and that I was worried I wouldn't get to bring them to life. The kids were into it. I gave them a call-to-action, and that Sunday night, we had the bookings we needed to potentially reach our sales goals. As each session wrapped up, I asked the parents to tell their friends and family how much fun they had, how much they loved the experience. I asked them to help our studio grow bigger and better into the new year. The parents looked at their smiling kids' faces covered in pumpkin guts and saw the joy we had brought to their lives. They excitedly accepted the role of championing our studio, and did exactly what I asked them to.

A BUSINESS BASED ON TRUTH

I told the truth and gave the parents a reason to believe in our studio and a cause to fight for. Never once have I used the phrases "Act now!" or "Only three spots left!" Most importantly, I gave myself a reason to continue believing in our business and goals. This practice didn't work with every potential client we encountered. We had our fair share of clients who bought into the urgency that other studios were creating—mainly because of the pull-through of discounts.



We ended our portrait business to build up our second brand, Reality Reimagined. When we closed the doors, we did so with pride because we had run our business based on truth—for our clients and ourselves. We gave our clients a great experience and beautiful artwork, and we never pressured them to "Act now!" to secure memories that last a lifetime.



David Byrd has an overactive imagination and has used that gift in his art. He has a degree in theater, and worked as an actor and director before turning his attention to photography and Photoshop. It was through those collective disciplines that he realized he could tell stories from his imagination through photography, similarly to how he once did it in the theater.

realityreimagined.com

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with Casey Dittmer



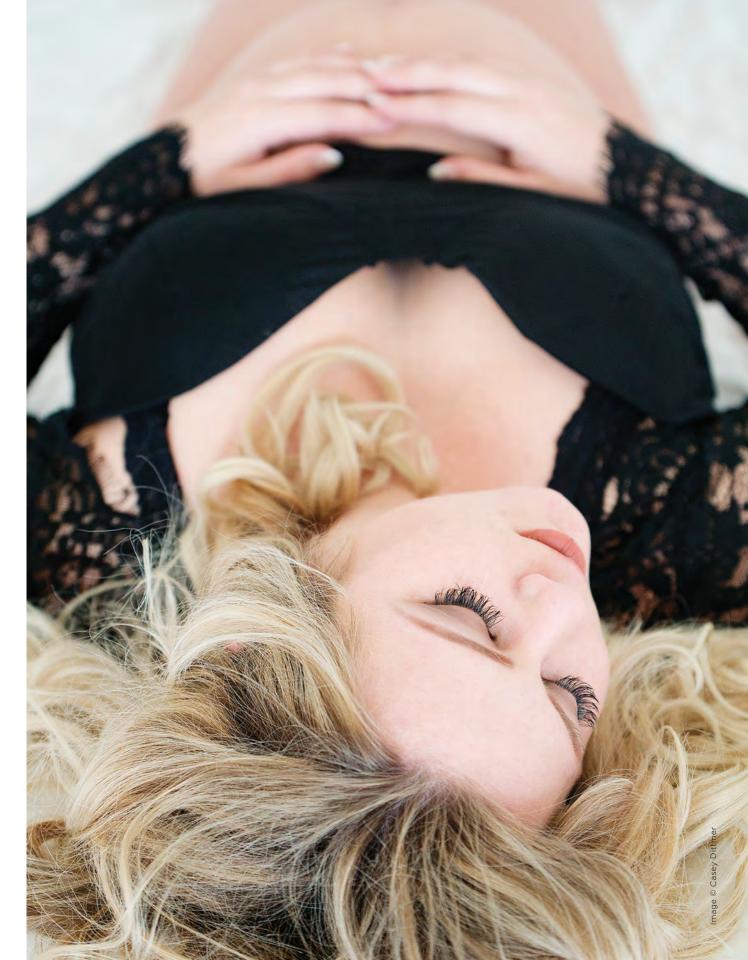
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There is no better boudoir client than an expecting mother. Most women are rocking a shape much curvier than they normally have and they love being reminded of the sexy, gorgeous individuals they are.

I find many similarities between boudoir and maternity. You have to be conscious of the individual's body from head to toe. You are creating and controlling shapes using posing, lights and styling. Maternity and boudoir portraits are usually kept between the couple. They are intimate sessions. Crossing the two is a match made in heaven.



Those curves are made for boudoir. What an amazing thing to help boost an expecting momma's confidence in her temporary body. Having someone trust you with such a vulnerable and exposing session is a big deal. It's a great way to build a client bond. You can shoot these in your studio or in the client's home. Make it a day of pampering and upsell them on hair and makeup services. They will enjoy the experience and look finished for the shoot. Encourage them to have a date night afterward since they will look so fabulous. This is a great promo for those colder months when you are not able to shoot outside. It adds a new element to your portfolio.





Here are four things to give you a head start on fantastic maternity boudoir sessions.

1. BRING IN THE BLING.

One of my favorite things in boudoir photography is to focus on the small details. It could be jewelry, shoes, an element of their wardrobe, any little thing. For maternity photography, I love blinging out the belly. The stark contrast of over-the-top statement pieces perfectly balances with the pregnant belly.

If you have a large unbroken, undefined skin surface, it will look large and heavy. So if you have a momma doing bouldoir and you have her baby bump bare and front and center, chances are she will not like how large she looks. You have to use things to give the belly shape and cut the size. It doesn't have to be a bulky piece of fabric. Just giving some defining lines and focal points will do the trick. She will feel superstar-gorgeous and love that it pushes her outside her normal box. Collect pieces from the clearance aisle, Amazon, anywhere you find them. Having them at your studio is a great bonus.

2. KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF.

Push yourself to use nontraditional posing. It's harder than you think. Essentially you are doing a normal boudoir session and the client just happens to be pregnant. You wouldn't have a regular boudoir client hold their belly the whole time. So change it up for your mommas. Play with their hair, hold onto their clothes, find new purposes for their hands. Jackets and long necklaces are great tools. You can bring the arms across and break up the body without having to put your hands directly on the belly. You still want to be mindful of their placement. Look at the bodylines and think in terms of shape.

3. FREE THE GIRLS.

One thing I hear from nearly every pregnant momma is: "Man, my boobs have never looked this good." Embrace it. Let them out. Free them. Use them. I'm not talking full-frontal tacky shit, I'm saying don't underestimate the sexiness of a little side boob. It's all about shape. You have this beautiful round belly and then the shape of the chest. It's complimentary and balancing photographically. Most women's nipples get larger and darker through their pregnancy. Keep that in mind as you pose and light. Straight on is not your friend—boobs will be distracting. Shoot side angles and use hands, hair and strategic placement of clothing to hide the nipples. I have always thought it sexier to leave a little to the imagination. That rule applies here.

Always ask your clients how much they are comfortable showing. I never start off with these poses in the beginning. Work up to it. I gauge clients' comfort level and trust, and can usually convince them to do at least a couple of artistic nude poses. I reassure them that if they don't like them, they don't have to choose those poses at the viewing, but we should at least shoot a few and see how it goes. Hands down, it's always one of the top 10 at the end of the day.

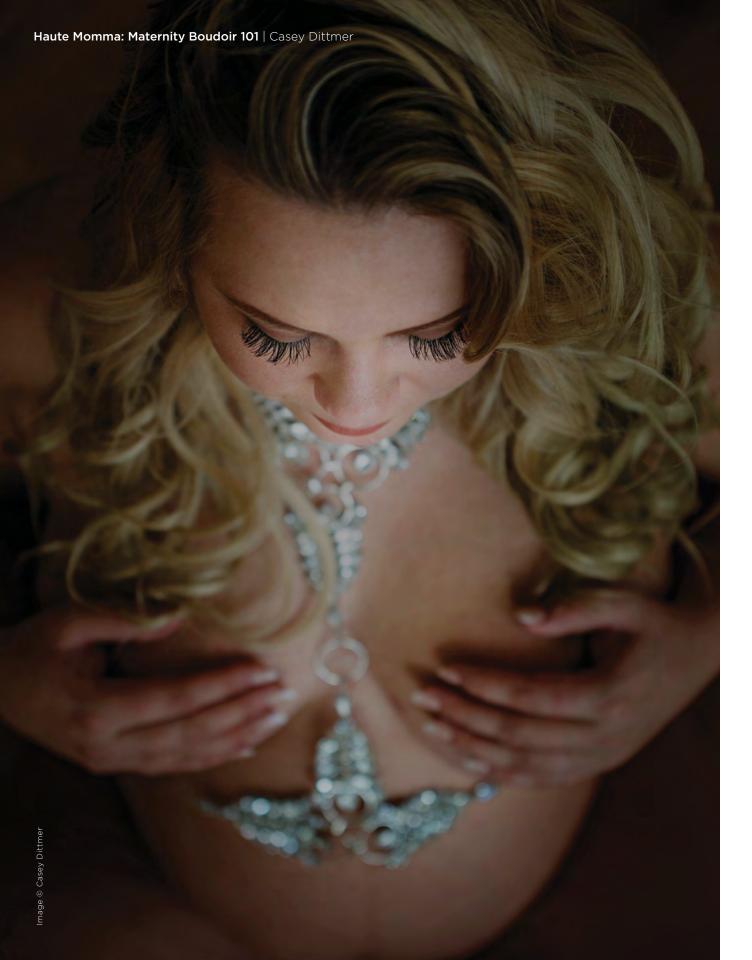




4. LIGHT THE SHIT OUT OF IT.

This is so important for boudoir sessions, but even more so with maternity. If you do not light correctly, in flattering ways, it will be a disaster. Shape their body with light. Hide the unflattering parts in shadow. Accent and give the belly shape with highlights and gradients. It's tricky because you must light the face and belly equally well. Flat light does not work. They will just look thick, not pregnant. Embrace shadows and dynamic light. Butterfly, Rembrandt and short light are your best bets. Rimming the belly is always beautiful. Get creative. Use gels and light temperature settings to change the mood. Silhouettes are amazing. Flares can be used to cut the torso and give illusion. Have fun with it.





BE IN CONTROL

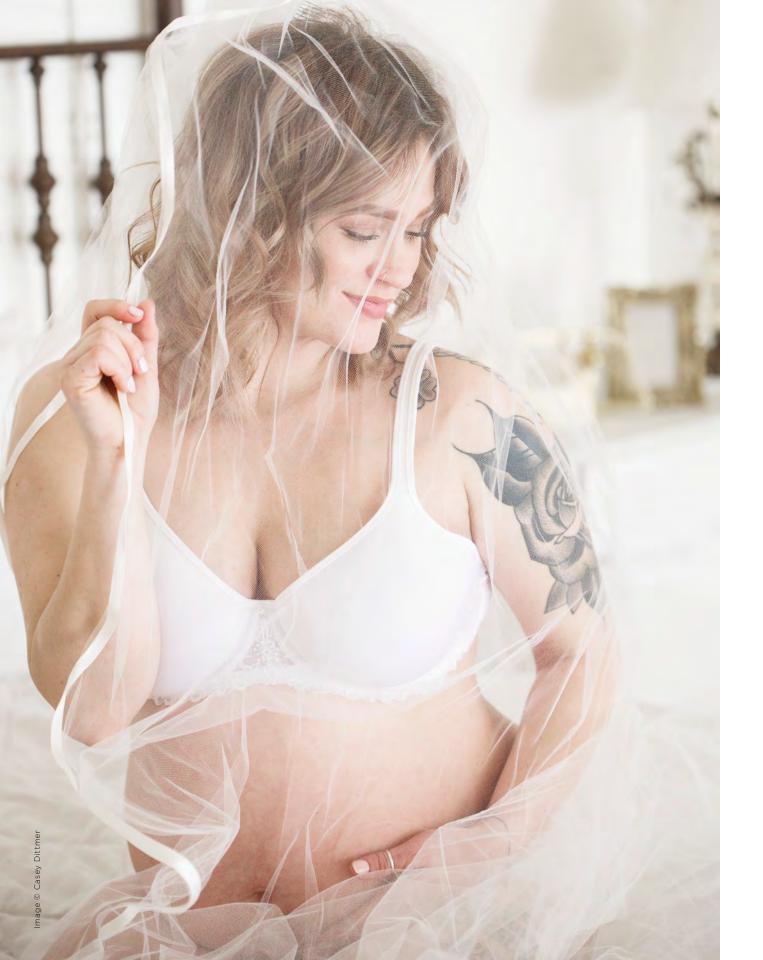
You must have a plan. Guide your clients in choosing wardrobe. Do not be afraid to tell them no. Wardrobe pieces are important and you are the professional. Do your job and tell them what would be best. One-piece stretch garments are understated but photograph wonderfully. The texture of lace on the belly is a great detail to capture, and Mom will feel comfortable starting in something more conservative.



age © Casey Di

BE REASSURING

We are asking a lot for an expecting momma to bare it all. Guide her in her posing. Tell her she is doing great. Show her images as you shoot so she can see how beautiful she looks. You will see her confidence and trust grow, which will show in the images. If she is self-conscious about stretch marks, remind her of your editing process. Use her concerns to show her how much you care. It will mean a lot.



PAY ATTENTION

The small stuff matters. Slow down and check her head to toe, down to how she is breathing. It will show. Foot flexed the right way. Hand placement. Chin. Hair. Lipstick. Fingers. It all builds to the perfect image. Do it right. Watch for fatigue. It's hard work when you are packing a human being in your midsection. Give her breaks. Watch for Charlie horses. Work efficiently so you don't keep her in a pose for too long. Ask her how she is doing. Offer water. Be there for her.

Now you have shot a killer sexy momma shoot. So how do I sell it? The same as you would a boudoir. Think about how they will use these images. Books are perfect. I always sell a book. It's private, secure, no fear of one finding its way out of the house by accident, and it's a great experience for the individual viewing the images. All those little detail shots you took, the bits and pieces, artistic abstracts and anonymous body parts, will complement each other wonderfully on the pages of a beautifully designed book or album. Encourage wall portrait sales by shooting images with specific groupings in mind.

People struggle to visualize what to do with their images, which can kill the sale. Shoot to sell. Show to sell. You have no excuses now. Get out there. Market. Shoot. Sell these amazing sessions to add a great feature to your business. The sexy mommas are out there waiting for you.



Casey Dittmer is an award-winning published photographer from western Colorado. As a 17-year veteran of the photographic industry, Casey has seen trends, economies and businesses come and go. She loves traveling and sharing her knowledge in the hope that it will help other photographers build a strong base for their business and avoid some of the roadblocks she has encountered.

cdittmer.com



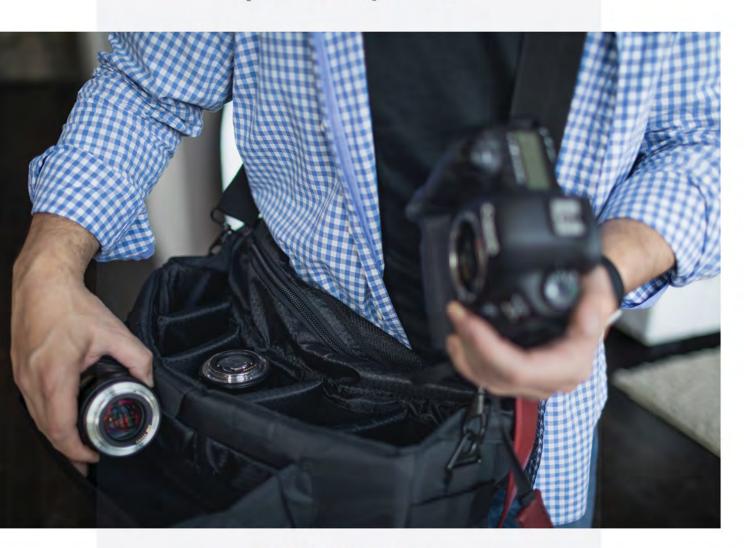
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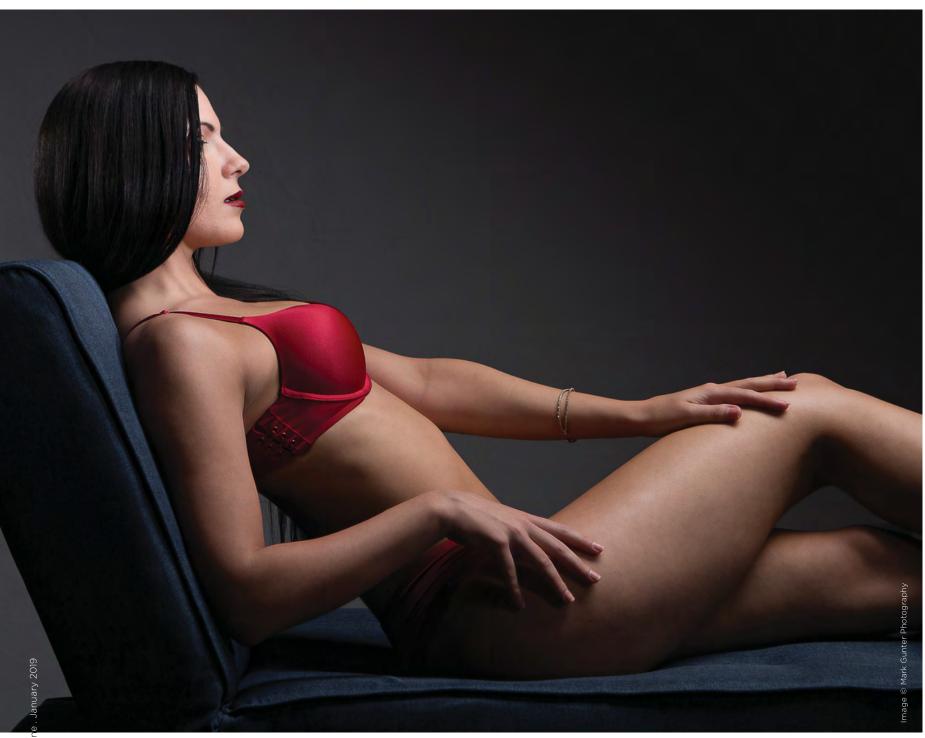


INSPIRATIONS

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

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

Sal Cincotta, Editor-in-chief













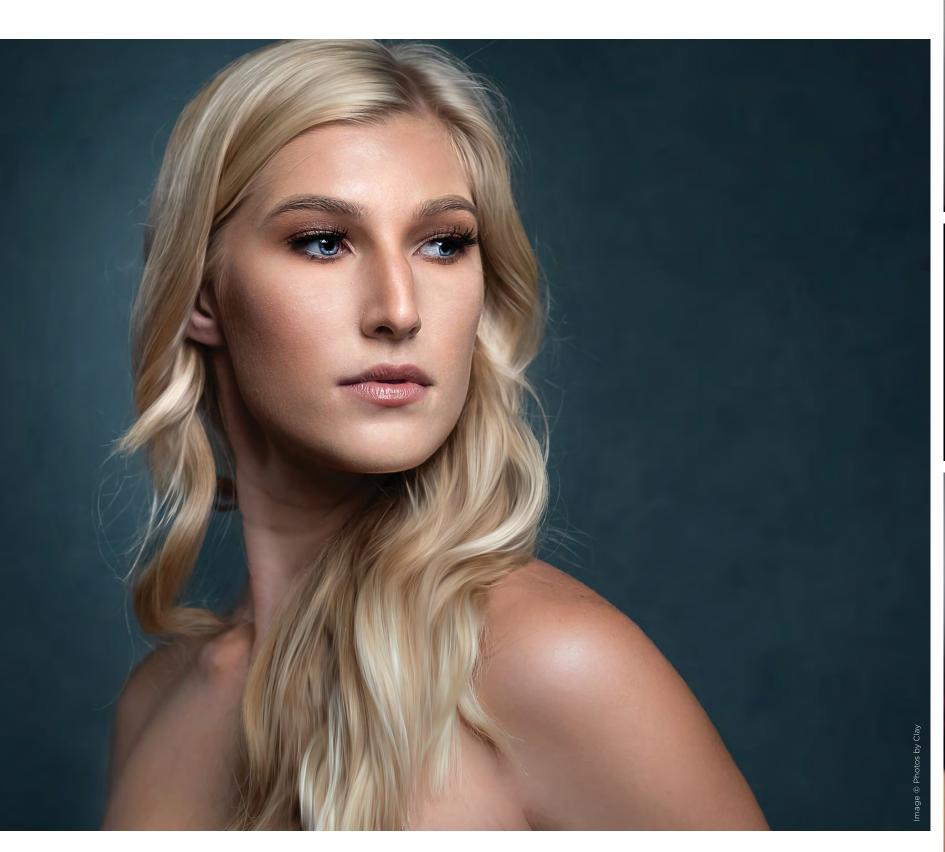








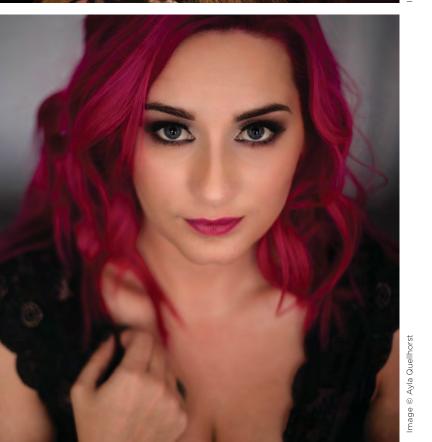




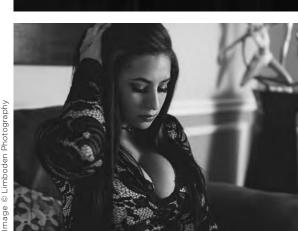








mage © Frank Ca





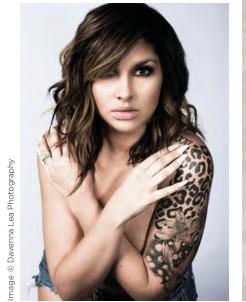














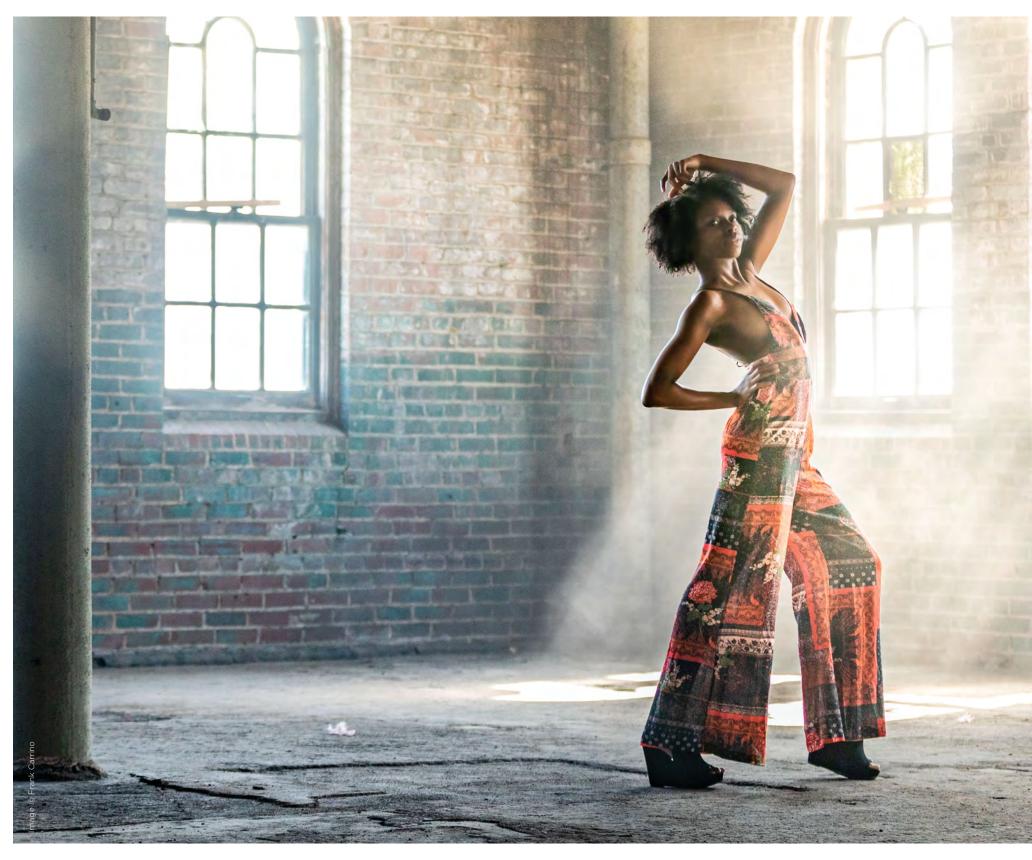








































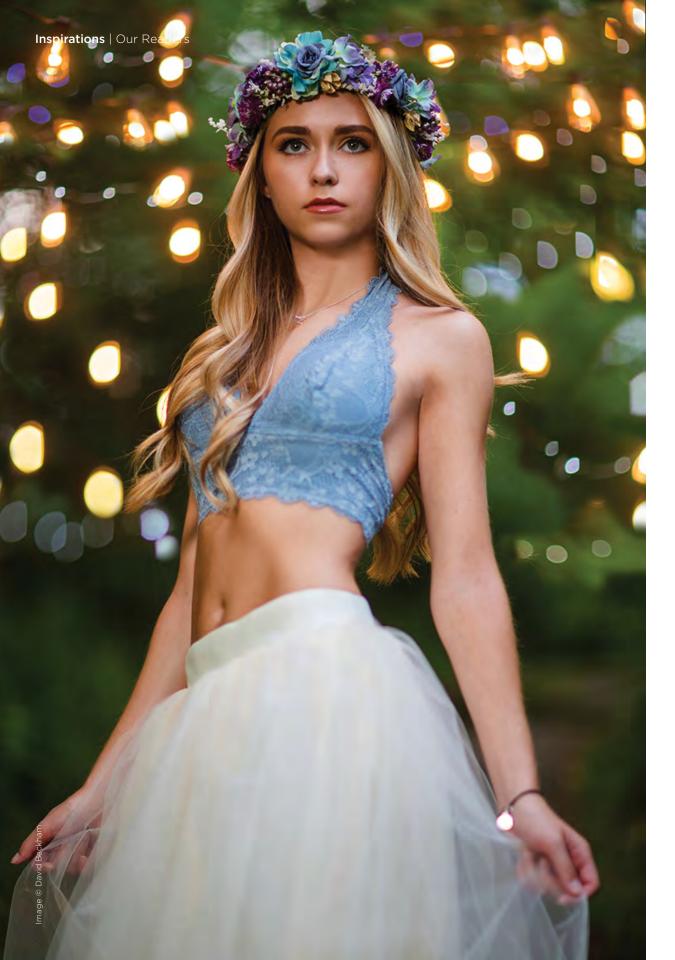


































SALES & MARKETING
EDITION







OBVIOUSLY DIFFERENT

If variety is the spice of life, too much variety is the killer of sales. When Jeff and I mentor photographers on their pricing, we frequently see photographers offering too many products, and the products are not different enough from one another. This leads to confusion and fatigue for your client. Photographers love to offer their clients multiple album options. These options often have very subtle differences, such as paper type and printing (press versus fine art)-technical details only photographers care about. If you have to explain to your client how the albums differ, they are not different enough. You are making the client work too hard to buy the album. If your client can clearly see the difference between your album lines without any explanation, then you may have viable variation. But even if they are obviously different, having multiple album lines is superfluous. A more suitable variation would be offering obviously different styles of wall portraits. Clients can easily see the difference between canvas and metal, and will choose whichever they like best.

Photographers must pare down the number of choices for clients. We geek out over technical details our clients don't care about. Or we are afraid of making the wrong decision: "What if my clients want X but I only offer Y? I should just offer X and Y, and maybe also Z and W and V just to be safe." If we suffer from analysis paralysis when making our own price lists, imagine how our clients feel. We must choose the best options rather than pass that work on to our clients. This is your studio. You are the artist. Narrow it down to the option you like best.

Next, simplify your product lineup by removing products or options that are too similar, keeping only options that are obviously different.

GOOD / BETTER / BEST / WHOPPER

Once you've pared down your offerings to those that are obviously different, let's create a hierarchy. There should be a linear progression of size and quality of the options you do have, and this hierarchy should be apparent to your client.

DO: Album hierarchy

Good: 8x8 / Better: 10x10 / Best: 12x12 – The hierarchy in sizes is clear. The client understands why each option costs more than the previous one.

DON'T: Album hierarchy

8x8 and 9x7 – These are simply different. There's not one that is better than the other. The pricing feels arbitrary. Jeff and I recommend having three or four options when offering a variation. Clients will avoid the largest option, so if there are only two options, they will choose the smallest. If there are three, they will gravitate toward the middle. If you go with four options, make the top option extreme in size, quality and price. This is called the whopper. In the album scenario above, a whopper could be a 16x16 album that includes 10 extra pages and a cover upgrade. It will immediately make your "best" option much more reasonable, and it will show off your best options.

Ensure that any variations you offer have a clear hierarchy so the client understands what they are paying for.

VOTE THE CANNIBALS OFF THE ISLAND

Recently, a photographer Jeff and I met at ShutterFest asked for some mentoring on her price list. One of her struggles was in selling packages that included portrait albums. Clients were consistently avoiding albums and any package that included albums. A review of her price list revealed a nasty cannibal: She had a competing product on her price list that served the same function, but at a much lower price point.

Your client may view your products by their function. The function of a portrait album is to get multiple images in a single product. But other products serve this same function: accordions, folios, collages, album blocks, print boxes. The other multi-image product on her menu cost her much less, so she was selling it for much less than the album (cost-based pricing). Clients were comparing two products that both got them the same number of images, and were choosing the cheaper option. One solution would be to raise the price of the cannibal so that price was no longer the determining factor. Since she never loved the cannibal to begin with, we removed it from her product lineup. She began selling albums and tripling her sales average overnight.

View your product lineup through your clients' eyes. Do you offer multiple products that serve the same function? If so, remove the products that are cannibalizing your sales.



What's left?

At this point, you should have a small list of your flagship products. For the average wedding and portrait photographer, your à la carte list most likely includes:

- Wall portraits in a handful of sizes, at most three styles
- A single album line with three to four sizes
- The complete set of digital files, but not individual files

And that's it. Your list may not match the list above, but it's probably pretty close. Pretty boring, huh? But it's supposed to be. Remember that you want your clients to purchase from within your package system because that is where you are most likely to reach your target sales. You are going to lure your clients into your packages with more interesting products, more variety and better deals.

Speaking of deals...



MARK IT UP TO MARK IT DOWN

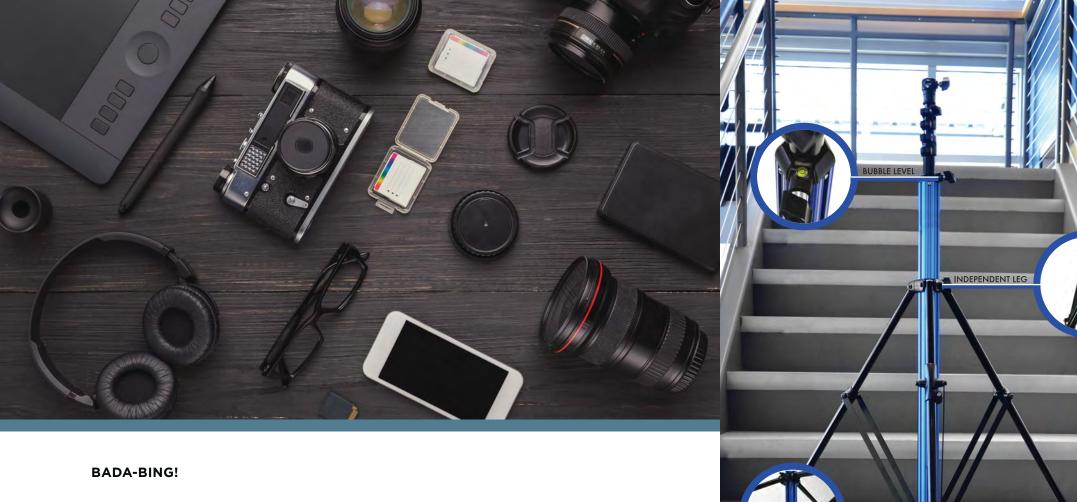
Now that you have finalized the products that will make up your à la carte list, it's time to set the pricing. Over the past three months, you've worked hard to come up with profitable pricing for each product. There's only one step left to go. The price you've come up with is the bottom-dollar price that you can accept. This means you cannot discount the item within your packages; instead, you must mark it up for the à la carte list.

Clients expect packages to cost less than à la carte, but how much less is important. Too little difference, and the client is not incentivized to purchase a package. Too much difference, and the client will be mistrustful of all the pricing because it will seem arbitrary. As a rule of thumb, packages should be "discounted" about 20% from the à la carte price. This is flexible, of course, but it's a good starting point. Now we just need to figure out how to mark up the à la carte price so the package price you've already calculated is 20% less.

Let's say you need to sell Product X for \$1,000 to be profitable. That means Product X will cost \$1,000 within the packages but will cost more à la carte. To figure out the markup, simply divide the package price by 0.8 (or 80%, which is 100 minus 20%, the amount of your target discount):

With this math, you can reverse-engineer the à la carte price to be \$1,250. Then, when the package is discounted 20%, you are still selling Product X for your original goal of \$1,000.

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Your à la carte list is meant to be three things:

- 1. Easy for your client to understand
- 2. A tool to guide your client into your package system
- 3. Profitable

By limiting your product offerings, keeping things simple and marking up your à la carte products, you are primed for success. Join us next month as we delve into sales strategies to create packages that are profitable and sell themselves.





Just a few years after Jeff and Lori found themselves struggling to survive while living in the basement of their studio, back in 2012, they are the proud owners of a brand-new home on the coast of North Carolina. The owners of Wilmington's Indigosilver Studio offer boutique boudoir portraiture and wedding photography. They are also the founders of The Shoot Space, their educational resource for photographers. Their Shutter Magazine column, The Business Corner, is dedicated to helping you grow your photography business.

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How will YOU Be Better In 2019?

with Vanessa Joy

hutter.com









It's the end of the year. There are plenty of New Year's resolutions, tons of hopes and lots of forgiveness for last year's failures. Will you really change this year? Will this be the year you see your business double? Or will you once again forgive yourself for not crushing it and promise to do it better next year?

It is likely that you will fail miserably at all the goals that you've just set for yourself. Why? Because they're not actually goals, they're dreams. And dreams are nice, but they're not actionable. Dreams are precursors to goals, and goals happen only when you have the balls to make them happen. Success does not fall in your lap.

Success is not a result of the perfect New Year's resolution. Success comes from hard work. It's the kind of work that throws a wrench in your personal life, the work that does not stop day in and day out, work that causes the magical equation where one day off equals one month of making up for it. But most of all, it's the work that we don't want to do.

You're a photographer and you do work that you love and blah blah. But here's the truth: Work that leads to success is so often work that you do not want to do. So here is a list of things you need to do this year that suck.











GO TO THE GYM

Yup, that's right. I know you thought I would start off ripping some work-ethic stuff in your face. Before you were a businessperson, before you ever dreamed of picking up a camera to earn money, you were a human. And humans need a few things before they can do anything else.

Your wellbeing matters more that anything else. If you can't get up, you can't work. If you don't feel good about yourself, you can't be creative. If you're not taking care of you, it's impossible to take care of your clients.

I have two favorite workouts that fit my lifestyle. I love Beachbody, which I can do in my own home, in my own time. And I love yoga—yogaforphotographers.com, to be specific. I maintain strength with Beachbody for carrying heavy camera gear, and then balance myself mentally and physically through yoga.

Do whatever works for you, but do something. If you give your body the finger, eventually it's going to give it right back to you, and you'll need something a lot lighter than a mirrorless to keep working.



- Friends who enable you to be lazy or stupid
- Family members who don't support you
- Your excuses that you think are reasons
- Your reasons for not pushing forward
- Time killers—I know *Game of Thrones* is out in April, but if you don't win your business throne during the week, you don't get to watch *GOT* on the weekend
- Get off social media unless you're working; pay someone to do it for you for just one month this year



ANNOUNCE YOUR GOALS

Nothing gets you closer to your goals than accountability. Make what you want public. Ask for what you want from the people who can give it to you. Have someone you can confide in about your failures.

Don't make this a publicity stunt. This isn't about getting anything off your chest, and it's not about attracting sympathy or support. It's about you creating tangible goals, defining a timeline for working on those goals and facing the fact that if you don't meet those goals, it's your fault and no one else's.











GET GOOD THINGS IN YOUR LIFE

I told you to cut out a lot of things, but you'll want to replace them with good things. Here are some things to add this month.

- Friends and family members who support you, and who slightly intimidate you into moving forward
- Sleep—I like the Calm app and SomaLunex for my crazy insomnia
- Time boosters—find ways to get more than one thing done at a time or get things done faster
- Positivity list

Let's talk about that last one. I am not a dream-board-building, positive-vibes-chanting bite of crunchy granola. But there is so much negativity thrown our way, and we spend way more time believing it than we should. Recently I've started taking screenshots of positive things people say to me and saving them in an album on my phone. It's a conscious choice to believe those things versus the negative things. Make that choice for yourself.







Image © Vanessa

I know this is a massive list of things you do not want to do and that will never inspire you to roll out of bed in the morning. But because these are the hard things is exactly why they are the things that will make you successful. Anyone can roll over and do the easy stuff, and that's why everyone isn't going to make it the way you will if you do the hard stuff.

If you don't want to look back this time next year and regretfully and shamefully forgive yourself for not reaching your goals, it's time to make these changes. No excuses.





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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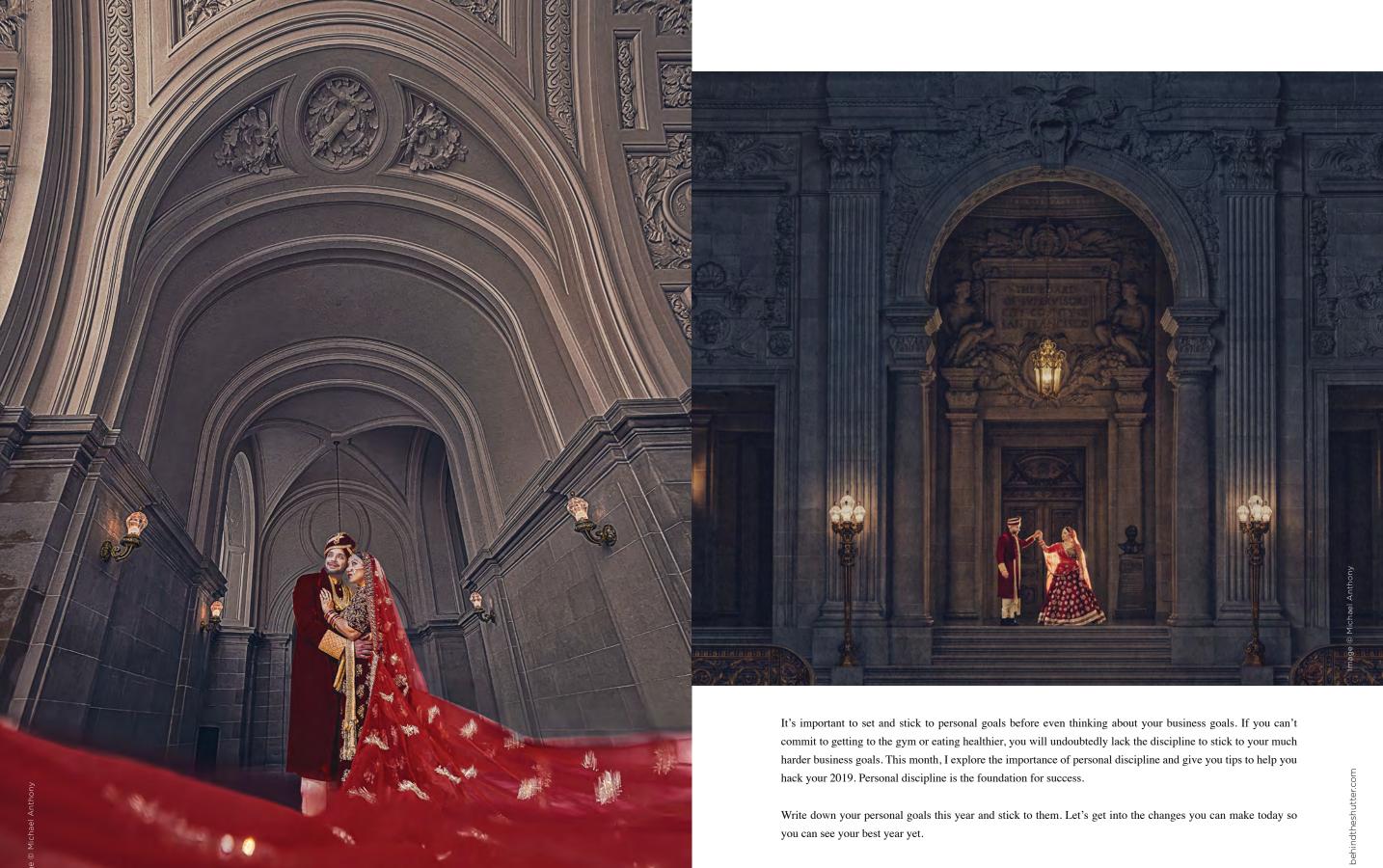
*Can not be combined with any other offer.

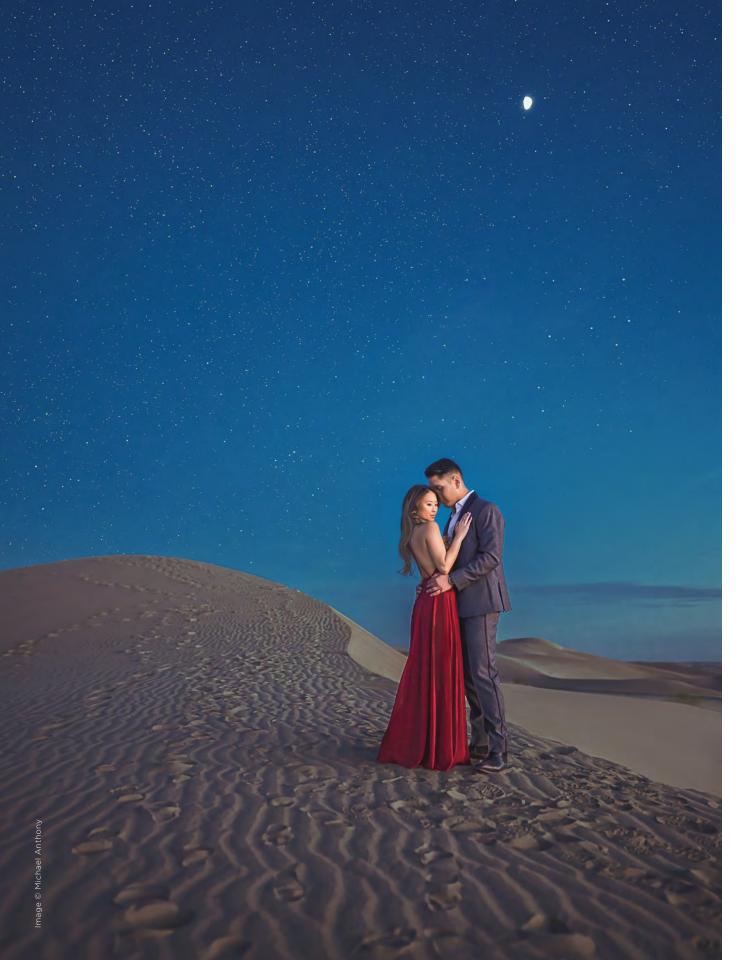
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TIPS TO START OFF 2019 WITH A

with Michael Anthony







1. PUT TOGETHER A MARKETING CALENDAR

Trying to run your business without a marketing calendar is like trying to steer a boat through a canyon with a blindfold on. You may get to your destination, but there will be a lot of bumps along the way.

Split your business into your subcategories: weddings, portraits, etc. Put together a plan that runs in three- to four-month cycles. Your plan should include advertising, referral marketing, vendor networking and client retention strategies. Create repeatable campaigns in which you advertise to your current and past clients so you don't have to reinvent the wheel every year. If you are not doing any marketing, this will be the roadmap to your advertising success, much like a business plan was when you started out. This will be your foundation in business.

2. PLAN YOUR BUDGET

The beginning of the year is typically expensive for photographers. We have taxes due soon, we have very little money coming in and ad contracts must be renewed. And there's stuff we have to buy. How will you ensure profitability without a plan? If this is your first year in business, it may be hard to plan a budget without first knowing what being in business will cost you. You can do this based on past years' numbers, then look at your projections for the next couple of quarters. It's easy for wedding photographers because we book clients six to 12 months in advance. Portrait photographers can do it too; you will just use revenue tracking as a method of projection.

When you finish your budgeting, make sure you are accounting for business savings every year. You should have money put away for a rainy day, but hopefully you'll never need to use it.

Hire a great CPA to take care of your books. Some can help you plan a budget, but if they can't, then your local Small Business Administration or Chamber of Commerce can. Take a few days to consider your budget, which will drive your growth this year.

3. IMPROVE YOUR CRAFT.

One of the core values of our business is one I took from my career with LAPD, and that was maintaining quality through continuous improvement.

In case you live under a rock, photographers are getting much better at art, but not business, which means that the price of better photography is lower than it ever has been. To stay at the top of your market or get there in the first place, you have to offer a better product than your competitors. And for clients, the difference has to be noticeably good. A single image will not create confidence in your ability to deliver on their wedding day; that will come down to your brand and consistency in all that you showcase.

Every year I invest in training for me and my team. Training doesn't always mean workshops (although it did in the beginning). We are in Italy as I write this; we've invested heavily in creating shoots where we can try new concepts, shoot for new markets and create new techniques that I can bring to my clients back home. The trip is a significant investment every year. But not only is it something to look forward to, it's essential to my growth as an artist.

I also recommend that you enter image competitions. Naysayers knock image competition, claiming it's just a bunch of divas looking to win awards. Nothing can be further from the truth. The reason we enter image competition is personal growth. Performing poorly at an image competition is the biggest motivator to get out and create new, better images. It's a testament to the work I put in every year. If I don't do well, I become inspired to come back strong the following year.



4. REEVALUATE YOUR TARGET CLIENT

Pro tip: Don't look within the photography industry for inspiration on how to create sellable images. In the Instagram age, photographers have become addicted to earning praise from fellow photographers, but the trends we see in image competition and from our favorite photographers do not always translate into a style that will resonate in your market.

Take my work as an example. Darker, dramatic portraiture performs well with our audience of photographers, but performs poorly in our testing with clients. For the market that we have carved out, colorful, neutral-toned imagery performs best. So how did we find this out if we consistently received higher social engagement with the darker, dramatic imagery? We did so by using Pinterest vision boards for our current clients; we noticed what they liked and didn't like through their comments, along with their purchasing decisions during their ordering sessions. We tailor our style of coverage to an individual client's style of photography, and have found there is a consistency to what they love.

5. MAKE BETTER USE OF YOUR TIME

The last and most important thing on this list is to make sure you are managing your time wisely. You got into this industry to create a better life for you and your family. Too often we waste time posting on Facebook and Instagram. Use those tools for business growth, but limit your time on them beyond that.

Cut out redundant tasks in your business like editing. Sorry, control freaks, but it's time to let go. I get nothing for telling you that hiring Evolve Edits was the best thing I ever did for my business. We would not have scaled to where we are today, and we would not have infrastructure for my vision of tomorrow, without Evolve. They are our biggest partner; to scale to 150-plus weddings a year with a staff of one plus my wife is unheard of in our industry. Without the time that I earned back from outsourcing our color correction, exporting, culling and album design, I wouldn't have been able to build half the relationships that are vital to our success.

Do you love your business enough to let go? If you are shooting enough weddings to earn a full-time income, you cannot afford to not outsource your wedding editing.





I hope these five tips help get you started on your 2019 plan. Don't let your goals get stale this year. Discipline breeds more discipline, and I want to see *Shutter Magazine* readers crush it this year.





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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CREATING GREAT LIGHT

with Michael Corsentino







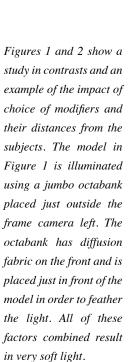




Figure 2 shows a three-light setup. The keylight is a 22-inch silver interior beauty dish for contrast. On its front is a 30-degree grid spot to confine the keylight's beam to a small circle. Behind the subject on the left and right are medium strip boxes, each with a 30-degree egg-crate grid. These accent lights illuminate the edges of the subject, a technique known as rim light.

What is great light and how do you create it? First, learn how to think about light and develop a lighting vocabulary. This will help you make informed decisions about tools and techniques. When you're developing an understanding of lighting, the fundamental concept to embrace is that there is no one-size-fits-all solution for every situation or subject matter. In fact, that kind of shotgun-style lighting creates a homogenous—that is, boring—look. Different subjects call for different lighting treatments—lighting a band's edgy promotional images versus lighting a soft, feminine editorial portrait, for example. Learn how to tailor light to your subject matter. Your options are limited only by your imagination.

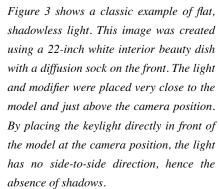
Developing a lighting vocabulary is all about being able to define, identify and create the quality of light you want for a given situation. Every lighting choice you make results in a different effect and look. Applied thoughtfully and wisely, these effects should support the feeling you're trying to convey about your subject matter. This creates images with a tailored look for the emotional impact appropriate to the subject matter. An image with lots of contrast and deep shadows conveys a different visual feeling and emotional impact than a flatly lighted image.

Two of the most common terms used to describe photographic lighting are *hard light* and *soft light*. These terms identify the way shadows and highlights transition from one to another. In soft light, shadows gradually transition into highlights, resulting in a soft, pleasing effect. Hard light's transitions from shadow to highlight are rapid and sharp. This creates an edgy, specular (contrasty) look.









No discussion of modifiers would be complete without talking about distance. The distance between a modifier and the subject plays a key role in quality of light. The rule of thumb is the larger the modifier and the closer it is to the subject, the softer the quality of light. Conversely, the smaller the modifier and the farther away it is from the subject, the harder the quality of light.

The interior finish of a modifier impacts the quality of light. White interiors create a softer, less contrasty light. Silver interiors create a more specular, contrasty effect with added luminance (light output). Optional interior and exterior diffusion fabrics allow for further fine-tuning. Diffusion fabrics can be added and removed in stages, starting with either interior or exterior fabrics. Less diffusion increases illumination on the subject with harder, more direct light. Adding diffusion creates a broader, softer effect by reducing light.



Figure 4 shows another example of how modifier choices make all the difference. Just as in Figure 3, here we have flat, shadowless light coming from the camera position, but the quality of light is completely different. That's because we are using a ring flash for our modifier/lightsame light position, different light. That's the power of modifiers.

The next piece of the lighting puzzle is the position of the light and modifier in relation to the subject. The easiest way to think about this is to imagine an invisible circle around your subject from front to back. Directly in front of the subject and facing the camera position is the 12 o'clock position. A strobe and modifier placed at the 12 o'clock position, typically above the camera, angled down approximately 45 degrees, creates the flattest light. The lighting effect is nearly shadowless, perfect for beauty and some portrait applications. An absence of shadows reduces the appearance of wrinkles and facial imperfections.



nage © Michael Corsentino

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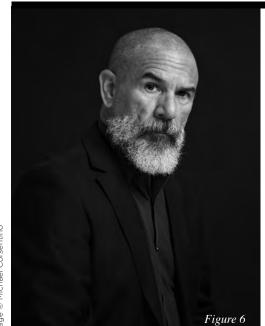


Figure 6 shows an example of what can be achieved using multiple layers of diffusion. The keylight is a white interior 22-inch beauty dish placed just outside the frame, camera right. A double layer of neutral-density gel was placed in front of the beauty dish with a 3x3 diffusion scrim in front to further broaden and soften the illumination.





Figures 7 and 8 show examples of short light and broad light, respectively. In Figure 7, the shadowed side of the face is oriented toward the camera, giving the model's face a slimmer appearance. In Figure 8, the keylight is placed on the opposite side of the model's face. In broad light, the illuminated side of the model's face is oriented toward the camera to give the model's face a fuller look.

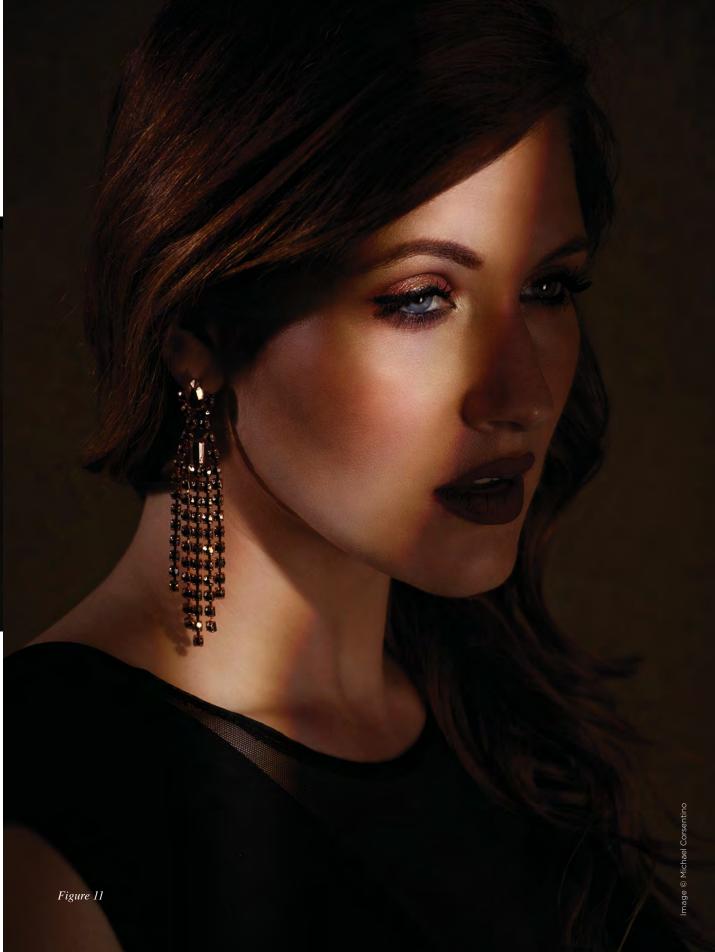


For this rock-star family portrait, an 8x8-foot scrim was used camera right to diffuse three strobes fired through it. A kicker light with color temperature orange (CTO) gel was used camera left to create depth and dimension and add a touch of warmth.

Figures 10 and 11 illustrate the power of the direction of light. Each of these images has a distinct direction that adds shadows and drama. The light is perfectly placed using grids and Fresnels.



Continuing with our imaginary circle, the farther left or right along that circle that you position your keylight and modifier, the more shadows will be introduced. This is known as directionality. Giving your light direction in relation to your subject introduces shadows, and shadows create dimension and depth. Shadows can be intimidating for the uninitiated, but trust me, they're your friend.





The size, distance and position of the modifier play key roles. A medium silver-interior octabank provides the circle of coverage needed for the group. Silver adds punch and contrast. The octabank was placed 10 feet away to heighten the specular effect. Placing the keylight camera right added the shadows necessary for the dramatic result.



Figures 3 and 13 both use a 22-inch beauty dish as their keylight modifier. The only differences are the distance from the subject and the interior finish: white for the model and silver for the boxer. The beauty dish in Figure 3 was placed very close, and in Figure 13, the beauty dish was placed twice the distance between the subject and keylight for contrast.

Photography is the visual representation of shadows and highlights. Shadows add drama and create more compelling images. Avoiding them is a mistake. Use them judiciously to your advantage. When your light is placed on one side of the subject's face, the other side of the face will fall into shadow. The shadowed side of the face can be too extreme and lose important shadow details. This is easily remedied by adding a reflector to the shadowed side of the face. This adds fill light by reflecting light from your keylight back onto the subject's face. White fabric produces softer light and silver fabric produces harder light with more contrast and power.

The position of your strobe and the side of the subject's face that's illuminated in relation to the camera is noteworthy. When the side of the subject's face that's facing the camera is the shadowed side of the face, this is known as short light. When the illuminated side of the subject's face is toward the camera, that is referred to as broad light. Short light creates a thinning effect in the subject, while broad light results in a fuller effect.

All of these techniques apply in equal measure whether you're in the studio or on location. If you're mixing ambient and flash, you need to control each source separately. I've covered this recently. The big takeaway is that shutter speed controls the amount of ambient light contributed to an exposure, while flash power and aperture control the amount of flash contributed.

If you're after dark, foreboding skies, increase your shutter speed, which reduces the ambient light. High-speed sync allows you to use shutter speeds of up to 1/8,000 of a second. If you are after a more open, airy effect, use a slower shutter speed for more ambient light. Keep in mind that in ambient and flash situations, the ambient light is typically your dominant light source. Flash control in these scenarios is simple: Dial it up or dial it down.

To assure great results, always have a plan. When you know what you want—hard light or soft light, flat light or shadowed light—you can map out the tools and techniques you'll need. I can't emphasize enough how important this is and how much better your lighting will be if you adopt this practice. Previsualize lighting and create a lighting roadmap for great lighting.





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

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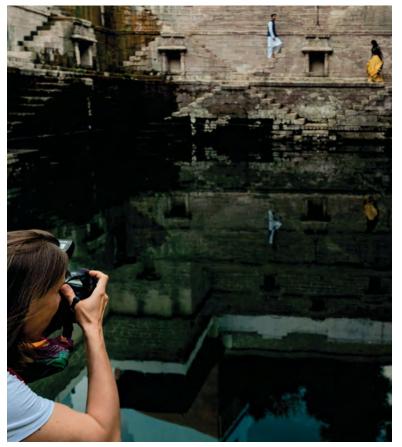


exposure | f1.2 @ 1/100, ISO 100 profoto b10 with ocf beauty dish lighting profoto a1 x3 with cto gel location city museum | st. louis, mo. canon 5d mark iv gear canon 85mm f1.2L













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