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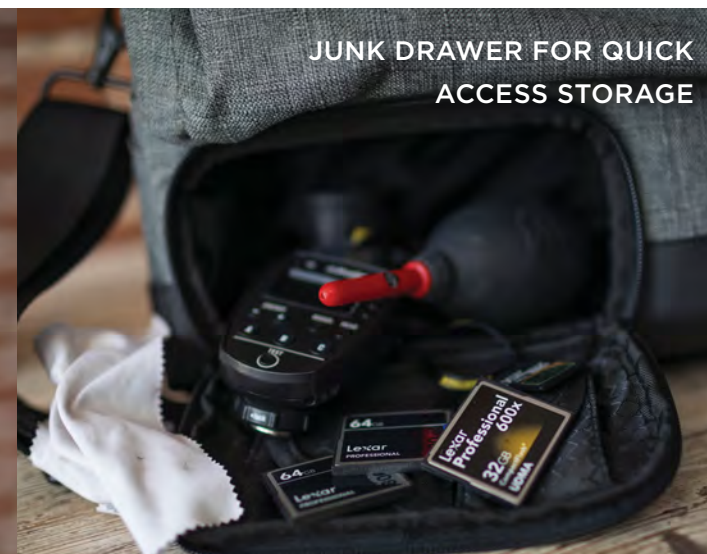


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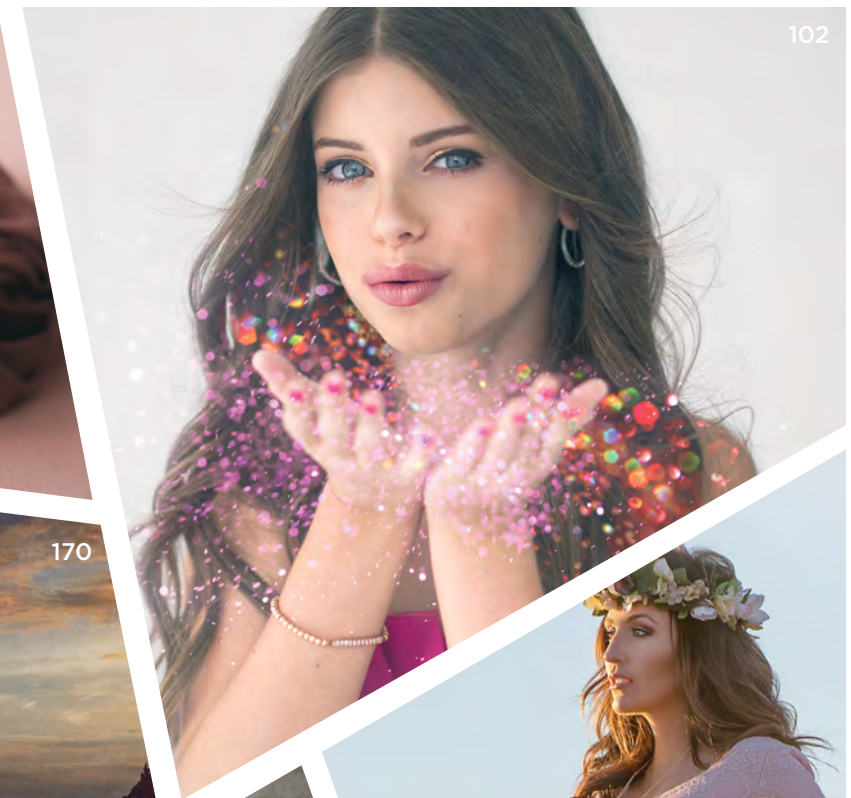
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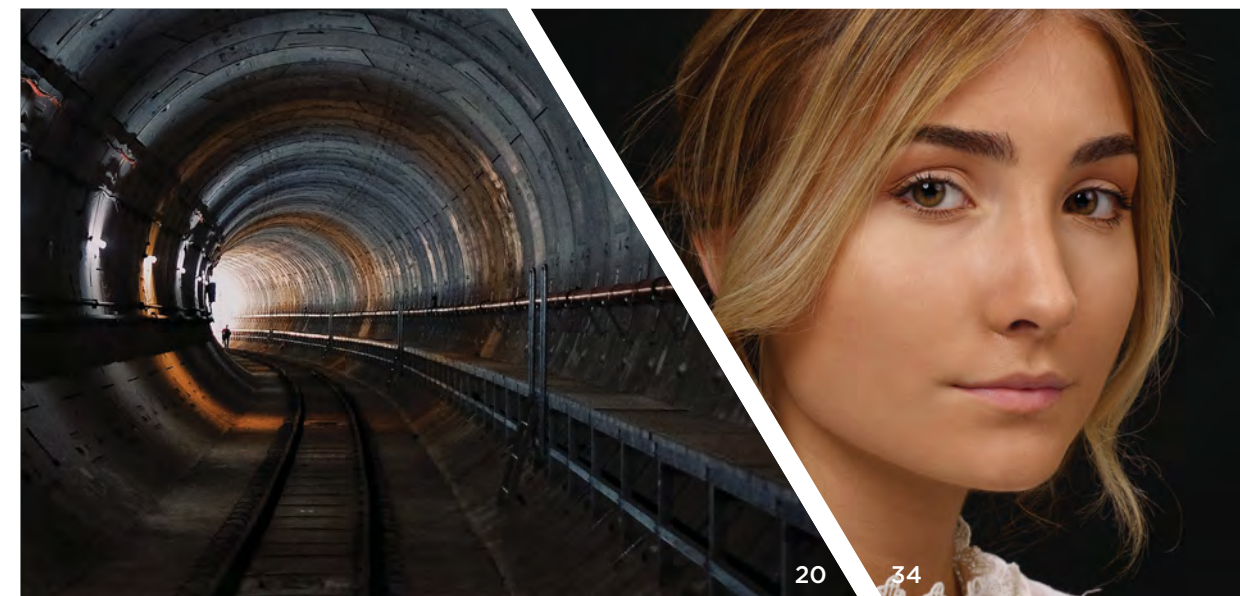
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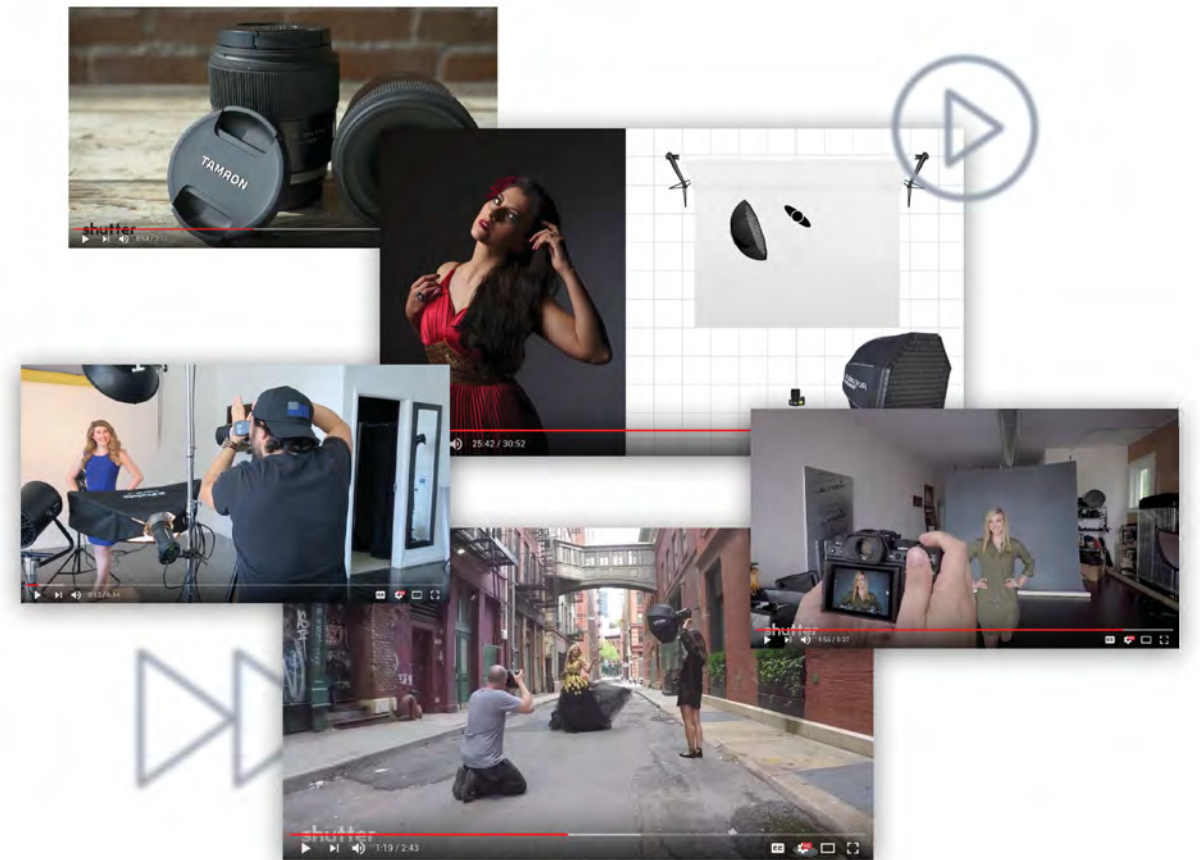
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# MISSION STATEMENT

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

Shutter Magazine: By photographers, for photographers.

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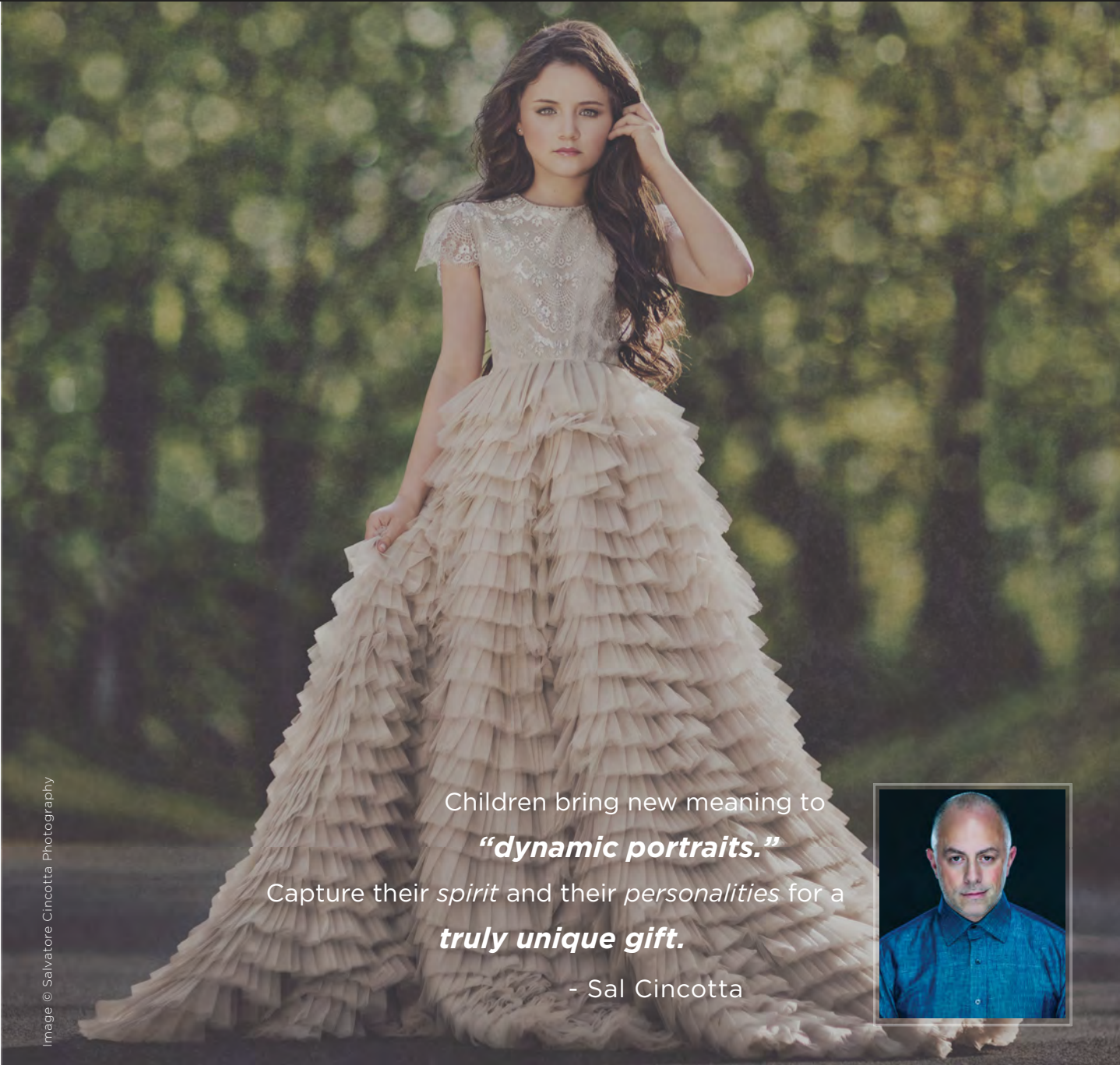


# THE COVER

**PHOTOGRAPHER:** Sal Cincotta | [salcincotta.com](http://salcincotta.com)  
**CAMERA:** Canon 5D Mark IV  
**LENS:** Canon 85mm f/1.2  
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**ABOUT THE IMAGE:** This image was taken in May 2018 in O'Fallon, Illinois.  
**MODEL:** Ali LaBove  
**HAIR & MAKEUP:** Makeup Artistry by A & C

# LAUNCH POINT

A message from the editor-in-chief



Children bring new meaning to  
**“dynamic portraits.”**  
Capture their *spirit* and their *personalities* for a  
**truly unique gift.**  
- Sal Cincotta

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# THINK YOU'RE READY TO BE A PHOTOGRAPHY EDUCATOR?

with Skip Cohen



Along with writing your own book someday, many of you aspire to be a speaker. But being on the road as a speaker and educator falls under the umbrella of “be careful what you wish for.”

To begin with, let’s define *speaker* as the word applies to the speaking industry. Anybody with enough confidence can get up and speak about a topic, but in professional photography, you need to be an educator. You need to provide people with relevant content that attempts to elevate photographers’ game.

I’ve often seen photographers who, because they scored well in print competition or landed the biggest contract of their career, decided they were ready to be a public speaker and educator. In most cases, they died an ugly death onstage.

So let’s get you on the right track if you’re interested in doing public speaking.

HAVE YOU SPOKEN IN PUBLIC BEFORE?

Just because you’ve received recognition for your work doesn’t mean you can teach. If you haven’t taught a class or spoken in front of a group, then it’s time to begin building your résumé.

Start with your local community. Parents want to learn how to take better pictures of their kids. Church youth groups want to know how to take better pictures of their potato-sack races. Every little thing you take for granted about what you do can be shared in a workshop setting.

BABY STEPS

You don’t just start out speaking at ShutterFest. You build up to it. Start presenting and teaching locally, then build up to regional conventions. Eventually you’ll be ready to go national. Hold back from trying to speak at national conferences and shows until you’re ready and have a reputation.

DO YOU HAVE A RELEVANT TOPIC?

Everyone thinks they have something poignant to say. We get so wrapped up in our own issues that we forget our challenges aren’t necessarily everybody else’s. It’s also terribly embarrassing to get your own program at a conference and find out the speaker before or after you is hitting the same topic.

You’ve got to be relevant and share knowledge that helps your target audience do something in their life or business better. This is just like building a house. You want a solid foundation you can expand on. Think through the topics you’d want help with, and then make sure as you develop your program that you’d be willing to sit and listen to yourself.

ARE YOU A GOOD SPEAKER?

This is tough to define, and being a good speaker requires practice, practice, practice. You need to rehearse and then rehearse more. Listen to criticism from your friends. Learn to stay focused and cut out all the “ums” that are the trademark of less seasoned speakers.

Your message needs to flow naturally without sounding nervous. Prepare for the worst AV problems. I once heard Denis Reggie present an entire program without one slide when the AV system blew up. He never missed a beat, and the audience never cared. His message was solid, and he knew his material so well he didn’t need his slides.

There are some great presenters out there, and you need to attend their programs. At the risk of alienating friends I don’t have room to list here, a few of my favorites include Sal Cincotta, Joe McNally, Tony Corbell, Michele Celentano, Bob Coates, Suzette Allen and Scott Bourne. The secret ingredients are enthusiasm, passion, sincerity, style, content. And the confidence that tells you they know their stuff.

These speakers are comfortable sharing everything they have to offer on whatever topic they’re speaking about. They’re relaxed and their audience knows they want to be there.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

You already know the importance of understanding the demographics of your target client. In the same way, you need to know who’s in your audience. The more information you can get in advance, the more you can tailor your program to best meet their needs.

You should be most interested in two different areas. Their level of expertise is important because you don’t want to talk over their heads, but you also don’t want to be too basic. You never want to be perceived as talking down to your audience. Second, pay attention to the specialties represented in the crowd. I like to start out with a show of hands as I click through each category in professional photography. This tells you what points to hit hardest in your program.

I like to ask how many people shoot tabletop work. Virtually no hands go up, which is when I remind the wedding shooters in the audience that they do one of the most challenging images at every wedding: the tabletop shot of the cake, often in horrible lighting conditions. Yet most wedding shooters will never take a class in commercial tabletop lighting.



**GET TO KNOW THE DECISION MAKERS**

Don't be disappointed if you get turned down the first few times you put in a request to speak at a regional or national venue. You get business through relationships. It's that extra ingredient that gives you an edge versus somebody making a cold call. Build relationships with the people you're hoping will hire you as a speaker someday. Get to know them and what they're looking for. You're out to develop a long-term relationship, not be a one-hit wonder.

**ARE YOU SPONSORED?**

This is a big one. Budgets are tight everywhere, especially for those associations and organizations that sponsor the convention where you want to speak. That means if you have some sponsors to underwrite the cost of your speaking engagement, the association can pay you less and put the money back into another aspect of its convention. You have a better chance of landing a program if you're sponsored.

That said, some conventions seem to have lowered their standards, and if you're sponsored, you're almost sure to get a speaking slot. My only request would be if you think you're in over your head but you have a company that wants to sponsor you, tackle this like it was the most important thing you've ever done. Work hard to make your presentation flawless and worthy of every guest's time.

**DON'T GET TOO MANY SPONSORS**

Too often, photographers align themselves with too many different companies, and the result can be devastating. Being another hired gun doesn't give you credibility. Trying to mention too many sponsors in a program is like watching all the logos at a NASCAR event. Nobody gets enough recognition for their product or service.





BE CAREFUL WITH YOUR SPEAKING FEE

When you do get a shot at speaking, go easy on what you think you're worth. I've seen so many speakers lose sight of the value of their message and suddenly hit the wall because they've priced themselves out of business.

Being a photo educator/speaker is about fame, not fortune. Learn to appreciate the growing recognition you're getting because of the message you're sharing, not the deposit slip for your speaking fee—at least when you're starting out.

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR

Your message is only as good as its validity. It's not enough to lecture about great photography; you have to be a great photographer. Once you step too far away from your core business as an artist and spend too much time lecturing, you lose credibility as a speaker. If you're not careful, you'll join the ranks of too many photographers who started to believe their own press releases. A few came close to losing their business and family because they were so focused on the circuit.

Being a public speaker is incredibly rewarding, but it's not for everybody. If you think it's something you want to do and can do well, go for it. But attack the challenge the same way you've worked to build your business. The key word here is *build*. Take your time, put speaking projects together brick by brick, and build them on a foundation of enthusiasm, professionalism, passion and solid, relevant content.

And, if you need a little help here and there, you know where to find me. ■



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

with Sal Cincotta





I have worked my ass off building a very successful business, one that has been featured on the Inc. 5000 list of fastest-growing companies three years in a row. But it hasn't been easy. The last two years have been enough to break the strongest-willed person. I have gone through a somewhat public divorce and then a business breakup with a longtime friend and business partner. Dealing with these things alone is hard enough, but the added pressure of feeling like the world is watching is enough to make you crazy.

So, what do you do? I am sure as you read this you can relate on some level. You have had things go wrong in your life or business. We all have. I don't have all the answers. All I can do is share with you my lessons learned and how I have managed turmoil, adversity and negativity in my recent past.





Roll with the punches.

One thing I have come to realize is that you just have to roll with it. I don't know, maybe it's just experience that has led me to this conclusion, but what are you going to do? Give up? Whatever you are doing in life or business, it is going to be met with some level of friction. It's impossible for it not to. I stress this to myself and my team constantly: "If it were easy, everyone would do it."

That's not just some cliché line. Think about it. The people who are successful are there not because they are the best or the smartest. Many times it's because of their sheer will to do things that others are unwilling to do.

All too often, I see entrepreneurs struggle when they hit pain or friction. The first "no" they hit, they just sort of panic and give up. You just need to tell yourself, "I got this" and roll with it.

Don't let the negativity get you off your game. And by the way, that negativity can come from friends and family, not just "haters." Once you start climbing your success ladder, people will become very negative and very few will truly be happy for your success. I have found that circle in life to be very small.







### **It's not me, it's you.**

When adversity strikes, you have a choice to make: cower in the corner with fear and panic or strike back. My philosophy has always been: I didn't start this, but I sure as hell am going to finish it.

We are all entrepreneurs. The challenges I am speaking of impact you whether you are building a business or a career. Corporate America is cutthroat. I know, I spent 10-plus years in it. Climbing that corporate ladder? Rest assured, there is someone trying to chop your legs out from under you. You have either felt it or experienced it. If not, then I promise you, you are not the rising star in your circle.

I believe in success for all. I don't believe your success comes at my failure or vice versa. Not everyone feels that way. Is it jealousy? Or is it pure laziness? I believe it's laziness. You may want success but are too damn lazy to go out there and work your ass off to get it. Many of us make excuses to make ourselves feel better. "Oh well, he got the promotion because he is a kiss-ass. I am more qualified"—I guess that's one way of looking at it. Or, "He got the promotion because he spent more time selling himself, making sure the people in the office knew how qualified he was, and spent time networking with the key people in the office." See my point?

Is photography really any different? I had to laugh when I was reading in a local St. Louis photography forum about a photographer who was a guest at a wedding I was shooting. He was mocking me and my business because we were supposed to be a high-end studio, but I was wearing Chucks at the wedding. How unprofessional of me. Really? That's all you got? You are sitting home broke, your business is failing or struggling, and your thing is I am wearing Chucks. So you are better than me because of that?

We all know what it is like to deal with the cattiness of our peers. Do not let it break your spirit. Instead, realize that this comes from a place of negativity and a refusal to accept that they are where they are in life and business because of the decisions they make. It's not you. I promise you. It's them.

Keep that in the back of your mind. These people are pathetic, they are jealous, they are a cancer in your life. Disconnect from them. Disconnect from these groups. Focus on what you are doing because you are doing something right.





**Deal with the hand in front of you.**

I have learned in both business and in life that I can’t always control what lands on my doorstep, but I can sure as hell handle how I respond. I believe in fighting fire with fire. You come at me, I am bringing the heat back at you. I will never run from a fight. I am just not wired that way. Now, that might lead you to think I like conflict or adversity.

Actually, nothing could be further from the truth. I would much rather have peace around me. You can’t control what the people around you do. I have learned that over and over again. But you can control your own destiny. You will be dealt a hand and then have a choice to make. Fold and run or stay and play it out.

If you decide to fold and run, you are not meant to run a business and you will struggle your entire life to find success at any level. Harsh? Perhaps. Reality? Most definitely.

Success is not easy. It’s hard. It’s messy. It’s a struggle to get there and even harder to stay there. You need to learn how to fight for what you want when it gets tough. Most importantly, you need to learn when to bring some offense to the fight so you’re not always playing defense. An attack will come fast and furious at times, and you will need to take what you have been dealt and make the most of it.

Fight the fight, and, most importantly, fight to win. Let everyone around you know that you are in this to win and that if they come at you, you will push back on them even harder.





Shit happens—keep pushing forward.

On your journey through your career, you will be faced with adversity on many levels. Do not let these moments break you. It’s hard, I know. But it gets easier with every passing day. You are not alone. Everyone’s dealing with their own demons. It can feel like the weight of the world is on your shoulders at times, but you can do it. You can push through this. Just stay positive and surround yourself with positive people who want the same things. You will soon realize that your circle should remain tight. Keep the cancer out.

Remember: If it were easy, everyone would do it. It’s true. People are lazy. They want the fruits of success without the incredibly hard work that is required to get there. If you are one of those people who gets this and understands that success is not about luck but about working longer and harder than your peers and doing the things that no one wants to do, I am speaking to you.

Success is there for you. Work hard, and when you feel like quitting, push even harder. Pull an all-nighter. Do what you need to do to achieve your goals. When those around you are laughing at you, mocking you, telling you it can’t be done, use that as fuel. Prove them wrong. Be motivated to show them you will succeed. The ways you handle the pressure will become your defining moments. I believe in you.

And by the way, I am wearing Chucks as I write this. ■



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

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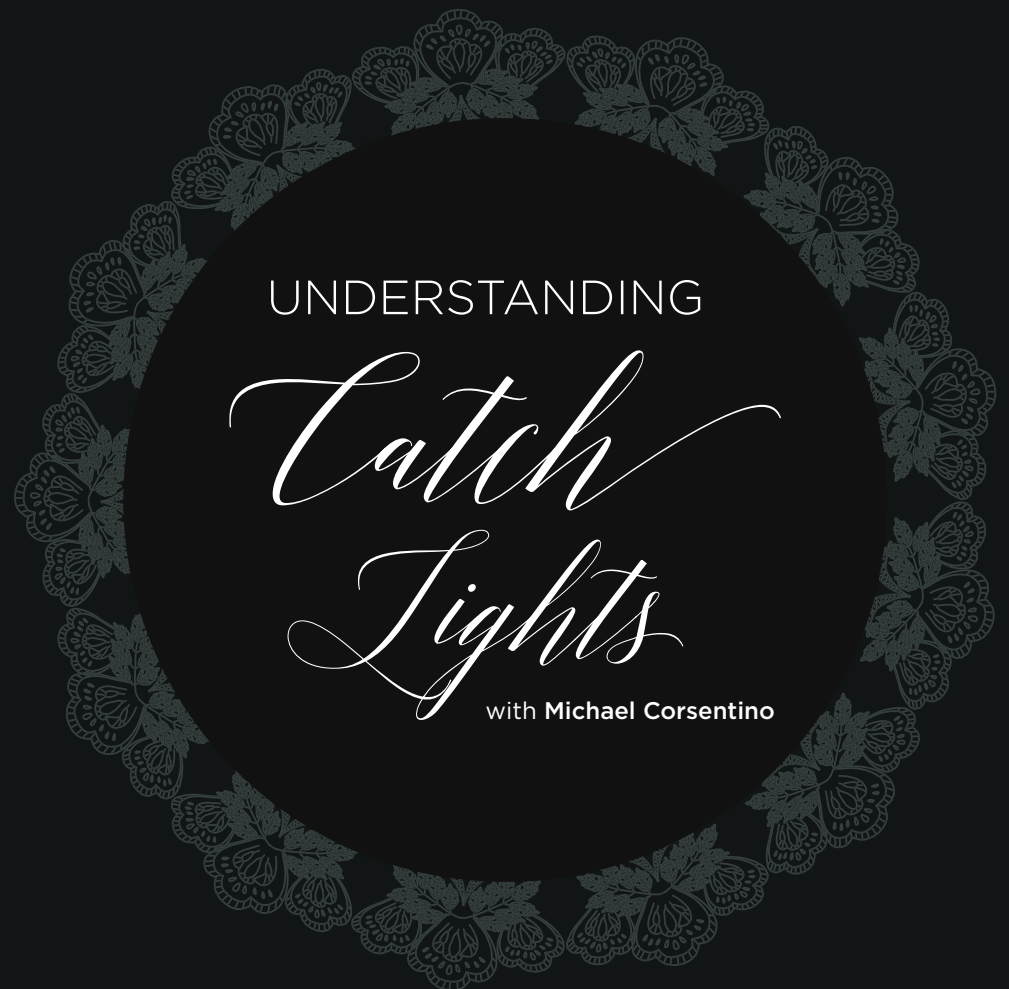
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Catchlights are the lights reflected in a subject’s eyes. I normally use strobes to capture them. Catchlights add life and sparkle, while their absence can result in dull, lifeless images. There are no hard and fast rules, and sometimes you may want dead and lifeless. It’s all about knowing what you want, why you want it and how to create it. But portraits are almost always better with catchlights.

Regardless of the light source used, the goal remains the same: replicating what exists in nature. In nature, we have only one light source, the sun, and there’s only one. I’m not a fan a multiple catchlights. There are exceptions to this, notably in the studio with certain fashion, cosmetics and beauty lighting applications, so we’ll look at them both ways. While studio lighting is a bit more forgiving in the catchlight department, my preference is still a single catchlight created by an overhead keylight. A single catchlight is more natural looking. Multiple bright lights reflecting in a subject’s eyes screams artificial lighting.

Catchlights are best positioned in your subject’s eyes at either 10 or 2 o’clock, just like the ideal hand positions on a steering wheel. Use 10 and 2 as your catchlight position guideline. There’s one more position, the one you never learned in driving school but use every day: the 12 o’clock position. You want your catchlights creating crescent shapes at the tops of the eyes. So 10, 2 or 12 are the ideal positions for catchlight reflections in a subject’s eyes. As long as you stick with those three positions, you’ll be on solid ground.

Rarely do you want a catchlight in the lower portion of the eyes, under the retina. This occurs when a light source is placed below the subject’s eye line. We’re attempting to replicate what happens in nature, with light always coming from above. Lighting a subject from below creates a ghoulish effect, but there are exceptions to every rule. When you add a second light above that acts as a dominant keylight, you get a pleasing over-and-under effect known as clamshell lighting. I cover other lighting patterns and their catchlights below. In any lighting pattern, any secondary catchlight should be subtle and subordinate to the power and appearance of the keylight.

The position of the catchlight reflected in your subject’s eyes is a direct result of the height, angle and position of the keylight in relationship to the subject. The 10, 2 and 12 catchlight positions are created using these classic lighting patterns: Paramount/clamshell light (12 o’clock) and Rembrandt/loop light (10 and 2 o’clock). If you want a catchlight at the 2 o’clock position in your subject’s eyes, move your light to the same position left or right around the circumference of your subject. The same is true for the 12 o’clock position of the catchlight created with Paramount and clamshell light—simply position your light source above your camera positioned directly in front of your subject. To control where the catchlight falls height-wise, raise and lower your keylight until the catchlight is where you want it. For me, that’s a crescent shape at the top of the eyes.

To fill in the shadows on the side of the face opposite the keylight, you’ll need a reflector, which provides subtle fill without distracting secondary catchlights. Reflectors are incredibly flexible despite the fact that they don’t have their own power source or light modifiers. With reflectors, you use distance to control the amount of light they contribute. The closer a reflector is to the subject and keylight, the brighter the fill light. Conversely, the farther away the reflector is from the subject, the less light it contributes. You also have a range of fabrics to choose from that reflect light with different efficiency, intensity and contrast. The basic rule of thumb is white fabric for a softer, more subtle effect and silver when you need more light and contrast.



Clamshell lighting made with a keylight above the model’s face and a white fill reflector below. Note the single catchlight at the 12 o’clock position in the model’s eyes. The use of a reflector for fill instead of a strobe results in subtle fill and fill catch light. Refer to my companion video on Behind the Shutter’s YouTube channel and the catchlight detail images.



This image was created with a keylight and a white reflector on the opposite side of the model. Note the single catchlight in the model’s eyes. Moving the fill reflector closer to the model and keylight creates a brighter fill light than in the previous image. Changing the distance of the fill reflector changes the amount of illumination provided.



Clamshell lighting using a keylight above the model’s face and a white fill reflector below results in a single catchlight in the model’s eyes and a subtle fill from below. The strobe above the model is an accent light for her hair.



For this Rembrandt style lighting setup, I’m using a keylight and white fill reflector. Changing the distance of the fill reflector changes the amount of illumination.





Image © Michael Corsentino

*In this image, we used two 14x35-inch strip boxes, one on the left and one right of the model. This is a popular editorial portrait style that creates flat lighting with a double rectangular catchlight in each eye. It's perfectly acceptable if you don't mind the number of catchlights or their shapes.*



Image © Michael Corsentino

*Strip boxes used on the left and right of the model create flat lighting with a double rectangular catchlight in the eyes. The strobe above the model is an accent light for the model's hair.*





Working with a second strobe for fill is perfectly acceptable as long as a second catchlight is created. As you can see in the four clamshell-lighting step-by-step images, varying the power of the fill light lessens or heightens the amount of fill and resulting catchlight created.



The best practice when dialing in a fill strobe is to work one light at a time. Here I've turned off the keylight to better judge the contribution of only the fill light.



Finding the right strength for the fill light is a balancing act between enough fill and a secondary catchlight that's not too distracting. The brighter the fill, the brighter the catchlight. In the following series of images, you can see the effect that varying the power of the fill has on the catchlight. The fill light in this image is the brightest of the three.



Here I've reduced the power of the fill light to soften the resulting catchlight in the lower portion of the model's eye.



Here I've again reduced the power of the fill light to further soften the resulting catchlight in the lower portion of the model's eye.





Image © Michael Corsentino

*I prefer one catchlight in the eyes, so I often use a large white or silver reflector opposite the keylight to fill in the shadowed side of the face. Here I'm using a second strobe for fill that's modified with a medium octabank. The power of the fill light is approximately half a stop less than the keylight, resulting in brighter fill. Despite the double catchlights created in the model's eyes, the lighting effect is clean and open. It's all about personal preference—if you like this look, now you know how to create it.*



Image © Michael Corsentino

*In this BTS image, you can see the keylight on the left and fill light on the right. A reflector is placed below the model's face for fill as well.*

The ideal catchlight shape is a matter of personal taste and is dictated by the shape of light modifier on your keylight. There are a few modifiers that are perennial favorites based on the more natural-looking catchlight shape they create. Octabanks were invented for this very reason. Their octagonal shape creates a natural-looking reflection in contrast to that of square or rectangular softboxes. The beauty dish is another modifier favored for the circular catchlight it creates. Umbrellas are another option; they don't provide a lot of control in the way of light spill, but they are a large round ball of light not unlike the sun. Square and rectangular softboxes can be used, but the reflections in your subject's eyes will mirror those shapes. It's all about individual preference.

Ring flash and ring lights are niche lighting tools that are in a category all their own. These lights create a signature doughnut-shaped catchlight dead center in a subject's eyes. Stylistically, there isn't much middle ground with ring flash and ring lights; people either love or hate the catchlights they create. I love them.





Image © Michael Corsentino

Catchlights are also useful when you’re trying to decode how an image was lit. They provide telltale clues about the lighting tools and techniques used. You can make educated guesses about what kinds of lights were used, how many were used, how they were modified, what their positions were and how far they were placed from the subject. So when you’re trying to reverse-engineer lighting you see in a magazine or on a movie poster, look to the catchlights. ■



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

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



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# THE CHILDREN EDITION

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A pregnant woman with long dark hair is standing in a bamboo forest. She is wearing a vibrant green, long-sleeved, off-the-shoulder maternity dress with a full skirt. She is looking upwards and to the left, with her hands resting on her belly. The background is filled with tall bamboo stalks and green foliage. The lighting is soft, creating a serene atmosphere.

# MARKETING FOR MATERNITY PORTRAITS

with Karen Bagley





You have heard me say it once, and you will hear me say it at least a million more times. Maternity portraits are huge. Pregnancy and everything that goes along with it is a multibillion-dollar industry. I don't know about you, but I want a slice of that cake. The mindset that women will not invest in maternity portraits because they want to put their real investment in newborn portraits is hogwash. How do I know? Because I am living proof that these soon-to-be mommas will spend big bucks on their maternity portraits.

So now comes the huge question: How do we find those expecting mommas who want to drop some serious bills for their maternity portraits?

It's that million-dollar word: *marketing*. For many, that word is overwhelming. We all know (or should know) that marketing is largely the key to our success. For someone like me, in a very niche field, it not only is the key to success, but is vital to the growth and well-being of my company. This article gives you a few marketing tips to help you not just find those women (really, they will find you), but book them as well.



MARKETING MATERIAL

First, we need to discuss your marketing material. If it’s subpar, you are making things harder for yourself. This means if the images you are using are not unique in any way, it will be much more difficult to make your mark in the maternity field. Locations, wardrobe and the way you are posing your clients have a huge effect on your marketing game.

You should be using your very best work to market yourself. If you don’t have anything that you feel represents you well, go shoot and build that portfolio. Do not be afraid to let your creative side run a little wild (notice I say a *little* wild) to get yourself noticed. And that is what this game of marketing is all about: getting noticed.



Image © Karen Bagley



GET CREATIVE

My underwater portraiture is a huge part of my marketing. Even though I photograph many clients underwater, many potential clients have called me because they saw an underwater maternity portrait of mine but didn’t necessarily want an underwater session themselves. They were lured in because of the uniqueness of those shoots. They were unlike anything they had ever seen. That led them to investigate my website and then want to book me for their outdoor maternity sessions.

Let your creativity be what draws clients to you. That doesn’t mean you have to shoot something underwater to market yourself. It just means do something outside of the norm to get your work noticed. It could be as simple as investing in a couture gown, taking a six-hour road trip for a location you have had your eye on forever or trying a stylized session, like maybe a milk bath. Set yourself apart from the crowd, and you will get noticed.

Image © Karen Bagley





ONLINE MARKETING

Now that we have that first little piece to the puzzle set, let’s break down marketing into two categories: offline and online. Online marketing is everything you do on your website and social media platforms. The foundation of it all is your website, which is where everyone will wind up. So first and foremost, let’s make sure everything is up to date on your website, especially your images. Again, your website is the foundation; if your gallery doesn’t blow away potential clients, if it doesn’t represent your best work, redo it. Having tons of images that look all the same is not what we want. Quality over quantity is our goal.

Next, blogging is everything. It helps with your SEO, and you never know when a blog you have written could get picked up and shared. Blogs keep your website fresh and show potential clients you are active and busy.

Finally, work toward an SEO-optimized website. My company outsources this, but if it is something you understand, by all means take the time to do it. SEO is the lifeblood of your company. It allows people to find you through keyword searches, and can lead to some of your best clients.

It is not enough to have only one source of marketing. Spread it out. Don’t put all of your eggs in one basket.

Now let’s talk about the big one, social media. Social media is very difficult for so many. Focus on one platform at first. Remember, we do not want all of our eggs in one basket. That would be marketing suicide. To keep yourself from getting overwhelmed and to get the best results, put your focus on one in the beginning, master it, then go to others. Understanding the platform you start with is the main goal.

Instagram was my focus at first. I learned that posting at the same time of day, every day, helped my posts get seen. Consistency will always be the key. I realized that my feed was all over the place. I needed to clean up my page, make sure half the posts weren’t personal and the other half business. Potential clients want to know what you are all about within the first three seconds of looking at your page.

The biggest and most helpful thing I learned was that hashtags matter. I could not just put a hashtag in front of a word and expect potential clients to find me. Hashtags have a purpose and are like keywords in SEO. They must make sense, be used locally and actually have relevance. Avoid the large overcrowded hashtags—you will get lost in the numbers.







Aside from people finding me organically, I like to use Instagram and Facebook ads. Understanding how to use those ads is an entire article in itself, but here are a couple of tips that might help you get started. First, understand that you should be very specific with how you target your ad. Make sure you are targeting the right crowd; if you don't, the money you invest will bring you nothing. Second, use video to grab people's attention. Use some behind-the-scenes video clips or video you have taken of your clients at the session. People love to see how your work is created.







OFFLINE MARKETING

As we move on to offline marketing, it’s important to remember that there is not one area of marketing that is unimportant. You want to be wherever your clients are. Offline marketing is going to expos and OBGYN offices. It’s about good ole hustle and attitude. You have to put yourself out there and interact with people. If you are an introvert, you’ll have to work at it. Look at it as an opportunity to grow. You cannot be afraid of the word no—you have to just keep at it keep hustling.

I left my very first expo in tears because I booked no one. But I realized I had to change my viewpoint and not give up on expos. The second I realized it is not about booking people, that it’s about all of the eyes seeing me, learning my brand and networking with other companies, I began to benefit from them. People now expect me to be there, which leads to client bookings. I have developed relationships with businesses that have marketed for me. That is how I landed my images in OBGYN and pediatrician offices.

Getting into offices is hard work. There is no special trick or phrase that will magically get you in with these offices. I basically just continued asking and explaining the benefit of having my artwork displayed in their offices. It takes patience and persistence. These offices are where my clients are. Tell yourself that you must be up on their walls. If you want these mammas who are willing to spend big dollars on maternity portraits, you can’t afford to not even try to be on those walls.

Every form of marketing your maternity work is worth your full attention. If you follow these marketing tips, I promise you your maternity clientele will grow. Go out there and photograph those mamas. ■



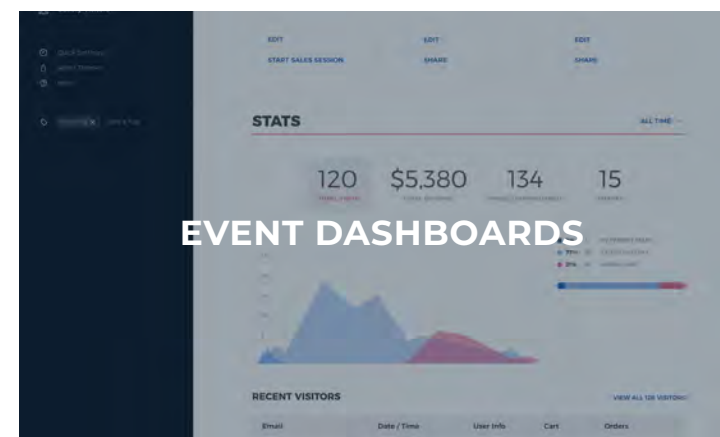
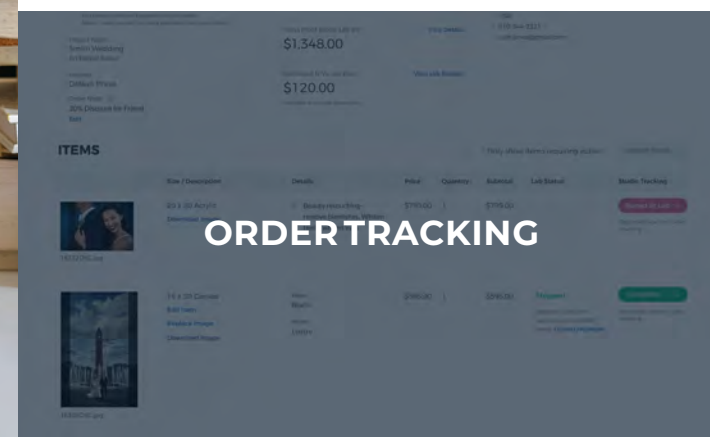
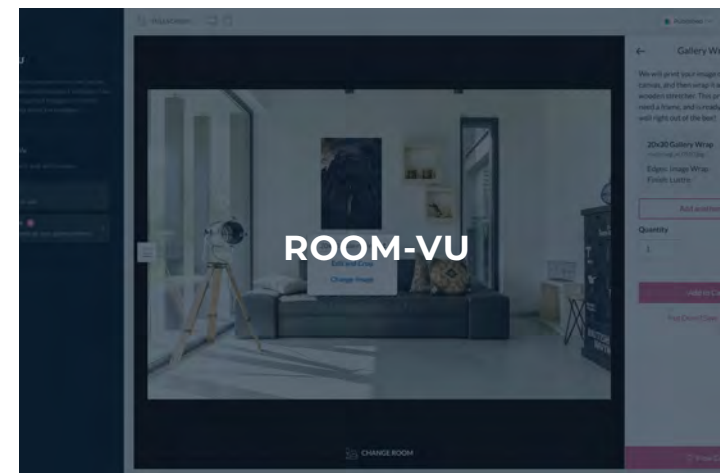
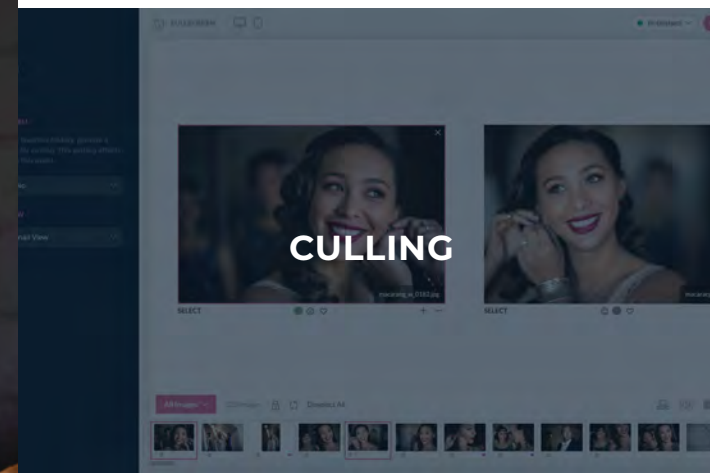
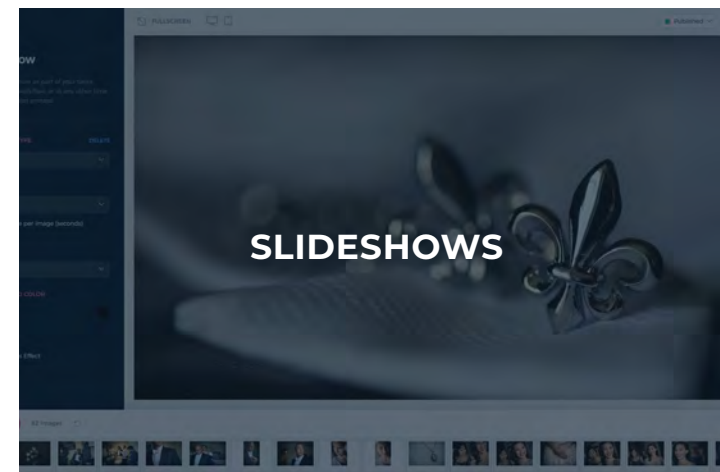
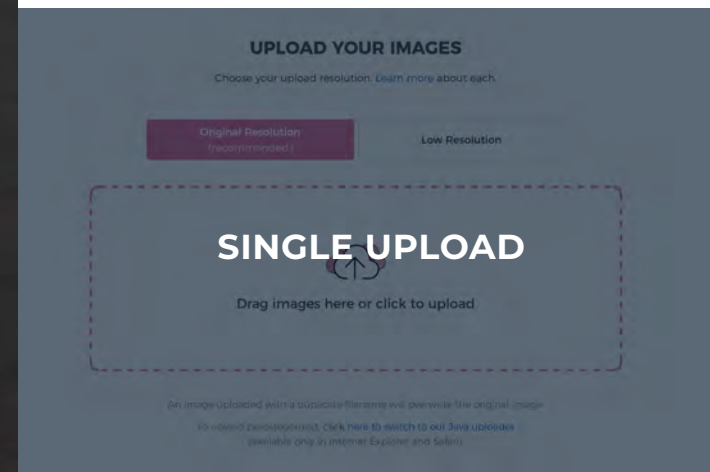
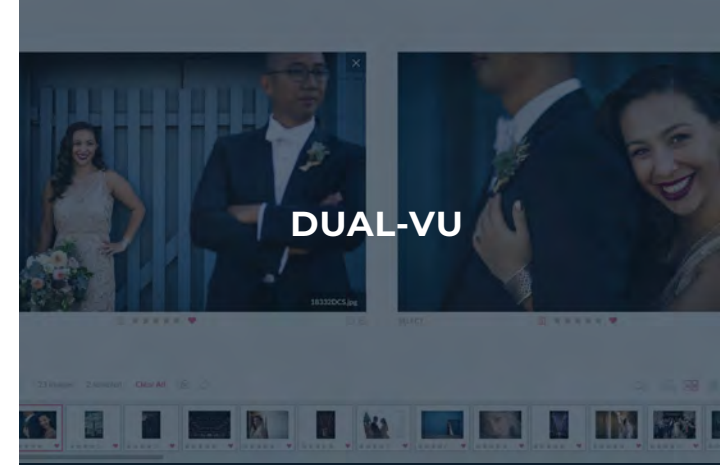
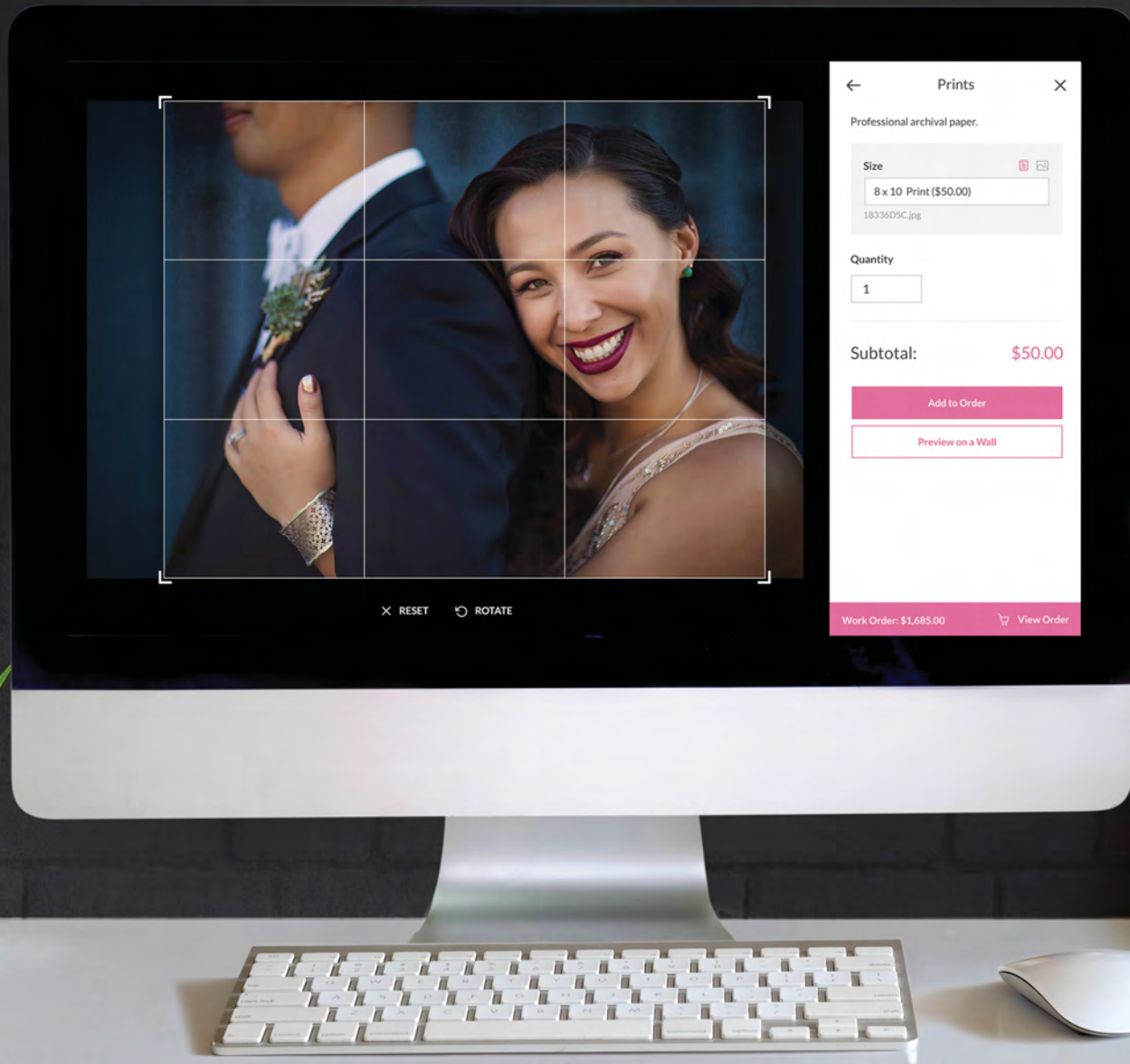
Karen Bagley, owner of Significant Moments Photography, is an award-winning photographer specializing in maternity and underwater portraiture. She is a married mother of two girls, and she loves speaking and sharing her knowledge with other photo professionals.  
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STUDIO WORKFLOWS FOR

# SMOOTHER NEWBORN SESSIONS

with Eileen Blume







### A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE (NEWBORN) EVENTS

Your client has just arrived 30 minutes early for her baby’s newborn session and you are nowhere near finished setting up. After hastily greeting them at the door, you scramble, trying to think of where in the world to start.

Your client begins taking her baby’s clothes off, and the baby is wailing because it is chilly in the room. You spot the beanbag posier from the corner of your eye, and decide to begin the shoot there. You throw a single blanket on top of the beanbag, and your client hands over her naked baby.

Now you place the baby on the blanket and she sinks in the middle. You grab some towels and receiving blankets and stuff them underneath the blanket to prop the baby up on the beanbag. Meanwhile, the baby is crying and you spend the next 10 minutes trying to soothe her.

Finally you get her settled, but now she is not posed correctly, and the blanket she is lying on has shifted. You stuff more washcloths under the baby, desperately trying to smooth the backdrop. After 10 more minutes, you have something that slightly resembles a decent newborn portrait. But as soon as you pick up your camera to capture the shot, the baby pees all over herself.

Does any of this sound familiar? I know most of us newborn photographers have experienced a few—or, let’s face it, all—of these misfortunes. The good news is that you can help prevent these problems by implementing some simple techniques to streamline your newborn sessions.

Layering materials, rotating through stations and transitional posing all contribute to a smoother studio workflow.



LAYERING MATERIALS

The beanbag posers is one of the first items we newborn photographers buy, but that doesn’t mean any of us automatically knows how to use it. My newborn sessions took the longest when I didn’t layer my materials properly. I wasted so much time stuffing and restuffing, trying to get the baby propped up. At the beginning of the article, my mistake was using a single blanket. This will easily slip and shift around, with nothing underneath to act as a grip. The solution is to layer blankets—lots of them—on top of a stuffed beanbag.

BLANKETS

Start with a thick king- or queen-size blanket folded into a rectangle shape that covers the surface of the beanbag. This large blanket acts as a good base for posing. Next, if you have a flokati (shag rug), turn it upside-down and place it on top of the folded blanket. If you don’t have a flokati, just use a thick blanket (not very plush), and layer six to eight backdrop blankets on top (my favorite blankets are from FreebirdShoppe.com). The multiple layers make the surface look smooth and less likely for any stuffers (like towels and washcloths) to become visible as they would behind a single thinner fabric. The last two or three blankets you place on top are your backgrounds, so plan accordingly when layering.

STUFFERS

Besides using rolled-up towels and cloth diapers, I’ve found that the Newborn Cloud Posing Pillows (NewbornCloud.com) work incredibly well as stuffers. They don’t slip and they retain their shape, making it easy to transition between poses. If you find that constantly shifting materials eats up your shoot time and patience, you’ll want to invest in stuffers like the Posing Pillows, which give a consistent contoured shape and stay put.

PEE PADS

But what happens when the baby pees or poops on the top blanket? The answer is pee pads. I use the Four Paws X-Large Wee Wee Pads, which you can order from Amazon. The key is to place a pee pad underneath every couple of blankets. If you place it under just one blanket, the shape of the pad tends to show through, especially if the backdrop is a little sheer. Just start with your main backdrop blanket you’ll be shooting against, then layer in a “liner” blanket, then the pee pad. Underneath this trio, have another backdrop blanket, a liner blanket and then a pee pad. If there is an accident, that first pee pad keeps all the blankets below spotless. Simply remove the soiled blankets on top, and you’re ready to go again. No more switching out blankets to replace with new ones, which wastes time. Layer and shoot.



Image © Eileen Blume



STATIONS

Stations help me determine the order in which to take portraits. When a client arrives (or when you arrive at your client’s home), the first thing you should do is greet her, bring her to the sitting area and, if you’ve prepped her beforehand, instruct her to give her baby a full feeding. When the baby is full and at her sleepiest, take her through the different stations.

BEANBAG

I start every shoot with solo shots of the baby. When the baby is nice and sleepy, I’m able to mold her easily into cute positions and pose her on the beanbag. Starting with the beanbag also allows time for parents and siblings who are being photographed to get settled, changed and freshened up for when it’s their turn.



Image © Eileen Blume

FLOOR

Right next to my beanbag are my floor drops. This is where I do my bowl, bucket and shooting-downward shots. With the floor station set up next to the beanbag, you don’t have to move your studio light very far. I gradually add on other family members, such as mother with baby, and then siblings with baby for the lying-on-back poses. If you have hard floors like I do, add a cushioned layer, like this foam egg crate ([bit.ly/egg-crate-twin](https://bit.ly/egg-crate-twin)), underneath the baby.



Images © Eileen Blume



BACKDROP

After I’ve gotten all my individual portraits of the baby, I move on to family group portraits against a backdrop. These include parents with baby and the family with siblings. I use a neutral-colored, seamless paper backdrop that coordinates with any colors the family is wearing, and it’s large enough (107 inches) that I don’t have to Photoshop the background ([bit.ly/savage-backdrop](https://bit.ly/savage-backdrop)). If you don’t have a backdrop or a light, just find a clutter-free spot in front of a large window. Designate that area your station for family portraits.



Images © Eileen Blume



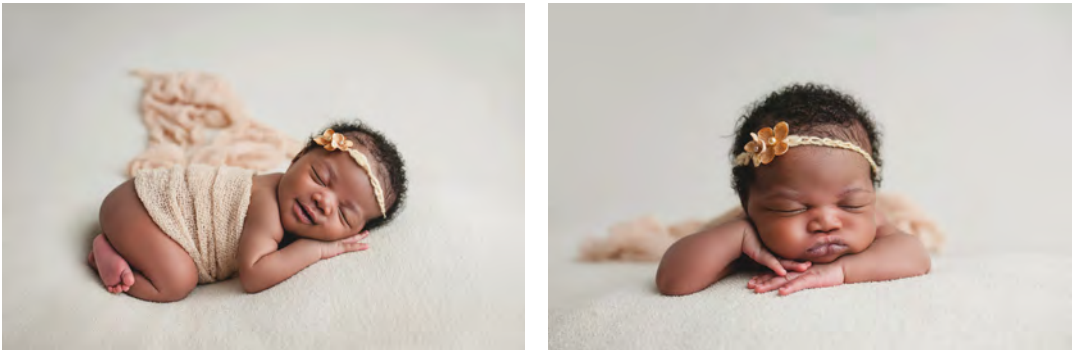
TRANSITIONAL POSING

To simplify posing, start with the easy shots first and end with the harder ones as time allows. This allows you to create much more variety than if you had gotten stuck and frustrated on difficult poses—with not much to show for it.

When taking individual portraits of a baby, I usually start with comfortable tucked positions. With the baby belly-down, you can get a variety of poses all while he is in this position (taco pose, bum up, chin on hands, etc.). After you feel you’ve gotten enough tucked and cozy shots, move on to poses with the baby on his back. Lastly, hit those harder poses that require assistance (holding the baby’s head for the froggy pose) or compositing (combining two or more images to make a single picture).

If at any point the baby is being fussy and won’t calm down easily, move on to wrapped poses to keep up the momentum. Remember, you’re not there just to take pretty pictures of your client’s newborn. You’re also there to assure your client that you know what you’re doing and you’ve got the session under control.

Images © Eileen Blume



Images © Eileen Blume



Image © Eileen Blume



CONCLUSION

Layer your blankets, rotate through stations and start with the easy poses. The last thing you or your client wants is a long drawn-out newborn session where everybody (including the baby) ends up frustrated and tired. With systems in place before you begin your shoot, you ensure your clients will have an enjoyable experience that they will feel good about. ■



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

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# IN-STUDIO PORTRAITS WITH SAVAGE SEAMLESS PAPER



with Sal Cincotta  
Wedding & Portrait  
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## Why do quality backdrops matter?

Quality matters. And while seamless paper is relatively inexpensive, we need to understand the importance of overall quality and how it will impact your final images. Paper thickness can impact the transparency of the background and ultimately the reflective color.

Finding balance between cost and quality was what drew me to Savage. The final results speak for themselves. We use Savage products in our studio and our clients love the results.

The product is easy to use—but, more importantly, it gives me the quality and diversity I need when making a great image.

If you shoot in a studio, you know lighting and backdrops are part of the equation. Your backdrop, second only to your subject matter, can set the tone of your image. Will it be light and playful or dark and moody? Select the wrong-color backdrop, and you just might miss the mark.

In our studio, we photograph everything from commercial headshots to high-school seniors. The backdrop sets the tone in every one of these shoots. Can you imagine a professional headshot on a pink backdrop?



## Why use seamless backdrops at all?

It's a valid question, and the answer is quite simple. I love the diversity it gives me and my clients. You never know what a shoot will require. I want to be able to quickly choose from color options that match the needs of the shoot. And then, of course, there is always the need for the basics: black, white and gray.

This leads me to my next point: cost. Cost is always a factor for any studio. Seamless paper is a cost-effective way to offer your clients diversity without breaking the bank. You can easily stock your core colors of black, white and gray. Then you can add colors as they make sense. I keep vibrant colors in the studio like their Gulf Blue and Primary Red to make any senior portrait come to life.



Savage Widetone Seamless Background Paper has been the professional photographer's top backdrop choice for over 60 years. Their seamless paper is hands-down the most cost-effective solution for creating smooth and even backgrounds for portraits, commercial photography, product photography, videography and much more. It's also an ideal tool for other applications, such as theater productions, special event decorations, display banners, posters and even video projection screens.

Savage Seamless Paper is a high-quality, nonreflecting paper background with an exquisite, fine-tooth feel that belies its inexpensive price tag. Seamless Backdrop Paper is core-wound and comes wrapped in a plastic sleeve, and is produced on site for the highest quality. Colors run from the basics to the exotic and just about anything in between. Need a special color for a special client? We have 65 to choose from, including Tech Green and Studio Blue for chroma key work.



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3 HIDDEN BENEFITS OF

MASTERING  
*Maternity*  
PHOTOGRAPHY

with Casey Dittmer



Many photographers seem to think that maternity work is too niche, too cliché, too Pinteresty. Why would you want to add it to your portrait business? Sure, the maternity portrait industry is pretty much one note—same poses, same outfits, same editing style—but your images don’t have to be. Creating a signature style, an outstanding client experience and showstopping imagery can produce higher sales and also bring you three hidden benefits.



Image © Legacy Photography



Images © Legacy Photography

1. You will create an unmatched client bond while helping your client feel empowered and beautiful.

Pregnancy can be tough on women emotionally and mentally. Yes, some get that “I love everything about being pregnant” glow, but not everyone. Most women are insecure about their body. Each day they see a different stranger in the mirror. It took me five months to not be surprised when I woke up and caught a side glance at myself in the bathroom mirror.

Trusting someone to take your picture is a big deal any day of the week, but when you are unsure about your body size and shape, it’s even scarier. Your job is to create amazing images but also to make her feel amazing about herself.

Meet beforehand to address clothing choices. Bad clothing is the worst for a maternity session. Choose flattering colors, listen to her hesitations, help her feel at ease. During the session, be bossy. Tell her how to pose, how to stand, how to breathe, whatever it takes to make her look her very best. She came to you for a reason. Mommas appreciate honesty—“Let’s lift that chin a bit.” They know you have their best interests at heart. Encourage her. Tell her she is doing great.

Make sure she takes breaks between poses. Most clients won’t tell you they are getting sore or tired. Just assume that they are, and be considerate of the strain that her body is already under. Shoot the shit out of that bump. Make images that are creative and timeless, but also true works of art. Show her how the amazing shape she currently rocks is the perfect match for your artistic vision. Use traditional understated poses and a mix of dynamic supermodel poses. Use that gorgeous shape to your advantage.



2. Maternity portraits are a gateway to lifelong client relationships.

Building her self-esteem and confidence while you make her look amazing will create a strong client bond. She will want you for all her future portrait needs—you just made her love her maternity session, where she is 20 pounds heavier, more than any other session she’s had.

Many people feel that maternity is not a good fit for their business model or that it’s too specific to make a difference in their business. Consider this: I had a prospective client come to us for maternity portraits. She’d had a less than great experience with her wedding photographer, and was drawn to our dynamic style and loved the experience we provided during the planning consultation. We created a fun session that built a bond with her and her husband. Even though it was more traditional in style, we created some great art pieces and unique images.



The newborn session soon followed, and we provided a detailed and thorough service. The clients loved their images and were eager to return for our Limited Edition Santa Event that same year. A few months later, it was time for baby’s one-year session.

Time flew by, and we saw the client four times in a 14-month span, including for a boudoir session for the husband’s birthday. She knew she could trust us with such a vulnerable and personal session because we had worked so closely with her and her family over the past year and a half. In her mind, there was no question of going to anyone else. We were her go-to, and we would make her look fantastic. They were floored over how sexy and classy the images turned out.

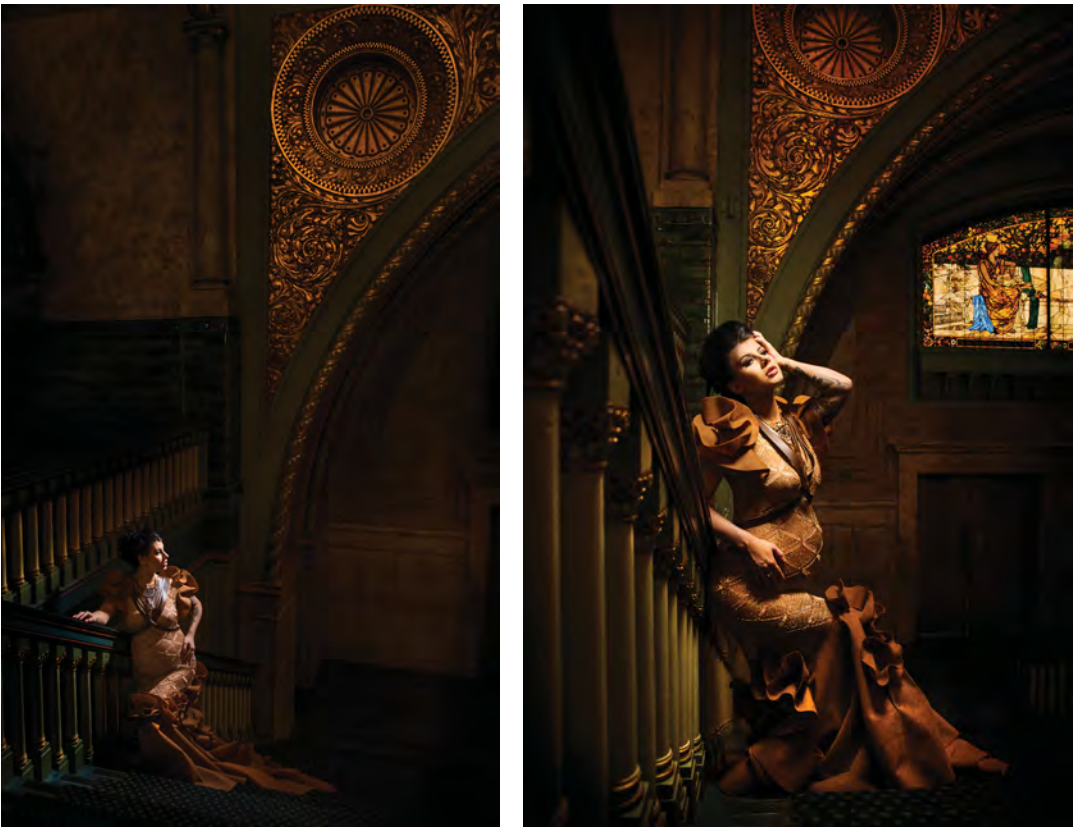




Next thing we knew, we were honored to get the call that baby number two was cooking and this time she wanted the full Goddess Experience. We went to work designing a stylized session that fit her personality and also made her step outside her comfort zone. I knew I could push her through posing and styling, since we had worked together so many times, and the trust was there. She let us choose the gown, the location and everything else. She knew I would make it perfect just for her. We are excited to meet baby number two and continue this lifelong partnership in capturing memories.



A client’s loyalty grows stronger each time they use your services. With each visit, images are shared, people are referred and their impact on your business grows. Don’t forget to consider the financial impact of this repeat customer. She is already qualified. She already knows your process, products and prices. Solidifying her experience and trust with us during the maternity session has now grown her initial investment into a \$10,000-plus client, and we’re not done yet. That’s much better than trying to capture new leads. Make the most of the ones you already have.



3. High-impact maternity portraits stop the scroll and bring in clients of all genres.

We are constantly being bombarded with images and they all start looking alike. But these images make people stop, stare and click. The key is beautiful locations stylized meticulously and purposefully and edited in a timeless yet eye-catching way. These images stand out in a sea of pictures, making people take notice and remember you when it comes time for portraits.

Callers tell us all the time that they were drawn to us by a maternity image they saw. They are calling for family portrait info, but those maternity images were just amazing. Just today, a client told us during a wedding consultation, “I am obsessed with your maternity images. I told myself, heck, if they can make a pregnant woman look like that, just think what I will look like in my wedding images. I told my fiancé we had to have you.” Still thinking maternity is not for your business?





Image © Legacy Photography



Find something that inspires you and create a session around that. It could be a movie, a fabric, a location—whatever it is, push yourself to create at least one conversation image, an image that will make people take notice and talk. When you start hearing, “I’m done having babies, but I would have another just to have one of these sessions,” you are on the right track.



Images © Legacy Photography





These benefits are just a few reasons to stop making excuses and embrace the bump, but you can't do the same old thing as everyone else. With the same dresses and tacky, cliché Pinterest poses, expect tacky results.

Clients can get those anywhere. It won't make them value you as a unique asset or a hot commodity. They will keep scrolling because they saw images just like yours five times already that day. Dare to be different. Swim upstream. Make a statement. Kick some ass. ■



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.  
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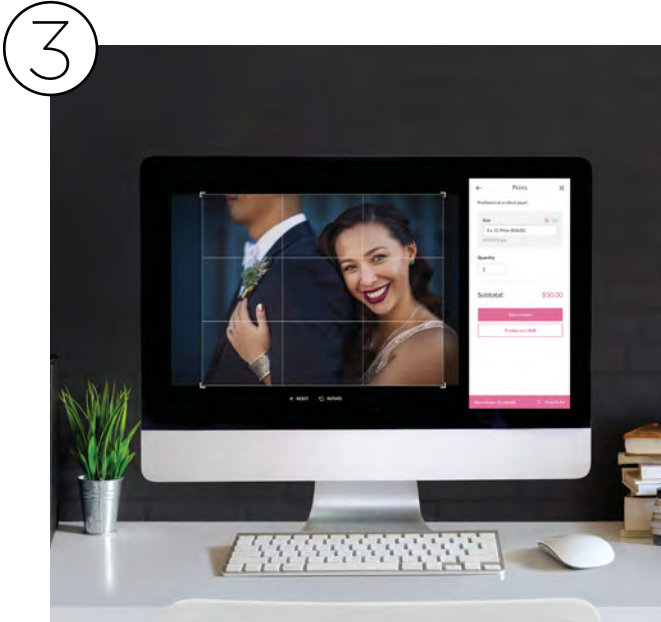


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MAKE THEM WANT IT: 7 STEPS TO

# SELLING WITH EMOTION

with Christine Yodsukar



People want to buy things that make their life better. They aren’t interested in how epic your photography is or how many awards you have. Those are amazing bonuses, but the real reason they are looking for a photographer is because something or someone in their life is incredibly important to them and they want to celebrate them. So why do we focus all our efforts on taking a cooler photo than Joe Shmoe down the street when we should be focusing equal amounts of energy (if not more) on finding out what our clients want and how we can give it to them?

I’ve done the research. I’ve done the things that didn’t work, and then, after years of trial and error and studying, I figured out a way of doing things that works for me, for my clients and for my business. I sell with emotion. I make my clients want to invest in high-quality artwork that is profitable for my business. I am selling them what they actually want—not what I want them to want.

What do our clients actually want? First, let’s clear away what we want them to want. What do we want our clients to want? We want them to want to hire us because they saw our photos and thought, “Isn’t Christine Yodsukar just the most talented photographer I have ever seen? I didn’t want photos before, but because her work is just so out of this world, she deserves all of my money!” If you are laughing as you read this, then you already know this is not why people call us for a photoshoot, even if it’s what we are secretly hoping.

The truth is that people set out to hire a photographer because there is something that means the world to them and they have chosen photography as the way to put love into that something. Now that they have come to us for the photos, it is our job to make them want the artwork.

SELLING WITH EMOTION

I’ve broken down selling with emotion into seven simple steps that you can follow to get amazing artwork in your clients’ homes and revenue in your bank account.

STEP 1: FIND OUT WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO THEM

This requires that you ask your prospective clients questions. This is the part of dating where everyone is deciding if they actually want to go on a date. We want to woo our client by doing the things no one else is doing, asking them important questions and listening to their answers. We also need to decide if this potential “date” is something that we want as well. By asking them questions like, “What is it about your oldest child that makes you proud to be their mother?” we can gather a lot of information about the type of client they might be. Are they willing to answer your questions? Are they excited to talk about their children? Or are they too bothered by the questions and only want to know if you can give them three outfit changes and a disc for \$79?

As you prime them for this amazing emotional journey you are about to take them on with your thoughtful questions, you are secretly getting your shot list of all shot lists.



Images © Christine Yodsukar



**STEP 2:** PHOTOGRAPH WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO THEM

Shot list, you say? This is not the 75-item shot list from everyone’s favorite wedding blog. This shot list is going to give you a huge sale and give your clients exactly what they want. As you ask them those questions we talked about before, write down what they tell you. Is the mother proud of her daughter because of the way she takes care of her younger brothers by helping them get dressed and ready for daycare each morning? You better believe we are going to photograph her daughter helping the little brothers get dressed. That is how we build the shot list of all shot lists. They will tell you exactly what means the most to them, the things that will grow and change and ultimately cease to exist in a matter of time, and that is what we must photograph to give them this amazing emotional journey.



Image © Christine Yodsukar



Images © Christine Yodsukar

**STEP 3:** GET THEM INVESTED EARLY

After you ask them questions before the photoshoot, get them thinking about where they would love to hang their artwork in their home. A lot of photographers I work with ask me: Don’t I need to sell them on the idea of artwork before I ask them where they want to put it? The answer is no. You don’t need to sell them on anything, because artwork is normal, remember? Everyone gets artwork (or at least that’s what we need to believe when we are starting out with product sales). So if getting artwork from your photographer is as normal as getting tires on your new car, why would we need to preface anything? We don’t need to ask if you want tires on your car. We only need to ask which tires you want on your new car. By asking them where they want to hang their artwork in their home, we are not only making artwork the obvious result of this photoshoot, but we are also having them sell the artwork to themselves by choosing which wall it will hang on.



**STEP 4:** TIE IT ALL TOGETHER

At your in-person sales session, you tie everything from the first three steps together into one powerhouse sales technique. You are taking the things that are important to them (that you got from asking them questions) and putting them into your artwork pre-designs (because you photographed the things from your special shot list that they unknowingly gave you), and you are showing it to them on their wall true to size in all its glory using artwork design software.

Remember why this client came to you? They had something in their life that is incredibly important to them and they wanted a way to celebrate it. You have now photographed that thing and created a stunning custom artwork display that they are now looking at on the wall they chose in their home. That is amazing service. You are giving them exactly what they want.

**STEP 5:** USE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE TO CALM OBJECTIONS

Take your clients away from being analytical and toward being emotional to calm any objections they might have during the IPS session. A common objection is that it is a big investment, and after college and the mortgage, it isn't fiscally responsible to make such a large purchase right now. Bring them back to the reason they came to you. What is the result of them having this artwork? It will always be more valuable to them than the result of not buying it. Not buying it saves money, but buying it means their child grows up with self-confidence and feels like an important part of the family because their photos were proudly displayed as a focal point in their home. Is your child's lifetime of self-confidence and feeling loved worth a few thousand dollars? You betcha it is.



Images © Christine Yodsukar



Image © Christine Yodsukar



**STEP 6:** GUIDE THEM TO CLOSE THE SALE

Control your own emotions and be confident that this is what they want and need in their life, and that is why they came to you. State your pricing confidently so that they are confident in it too. Ask for them to pay in full in a way that makes it normal and standard, not as if it's the most money you've ever seen in your life. Be calm, direct and to the point. Smile, shrug your shoulders and wait for them to say something first after you've given the price.



Image © Christine Yodsukar



Image © Christine Yodsukar

**STEP 7:** SHARE THEIR EMOTIONAL STORY

Create a neverending cycle of artwork-loving clients. Document and share clients' emotional stories and how the artwork they invested in has changed their life so that other people can see that and want it for themselves. When new people contact your studio, repeat this simple process. These prospective clients will know that artwork is normal and that it is changing your clients' lives because of all the meaning it holds for their family. ■



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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.  
**theyodsukars.com**





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SIGMA with *Salvatore Cincotta*

SIGMA



Why the Sigma 135mm Art Lens?

I have been champing at the bit to play with this lens from the minute Sigma announced it. The 135mm is an incredible and often underutilized focal length that gives you compression and a very shallow depth of field—the best of both worlds.

It is an all-purpose lens, but I recommend using the 135mm for mid shots. While we might use an 85mm for portraits, the Sigma 135mm adds more compression to the shot, and at f1.8, it’s one of the fastest in its class.

Technical details:

- The Sigma 135mm F1.8 DG HSM Art is a medium-range telephoto prime lens designed for modern high-megapixel DSLRs.
- The new large Hyper Sonic Motor (HSM) delivers ample torque to the focusing group for outstanding speed, ensuring exceptionally stable performance even at lower speeds.
- This state-of-the-art prime lens touts a dust- and splash-proof mount for guaranteed performance in any conditions.
- Its large 1.8 aperture allows for more creative control over imagery.
- A stunning compression effect makes the Sigma 135mm F1.8 Art the ideal portrait lens, while its large aperture makes it perfect for event photography and much more.



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# TOP 10

THINGS  
YOU NEED  
TO KNOW  
ABOUT

**TWEEN  
PHOTOGRAPHY**

with **Audrey Woulard**



When I decided to specialize in tween photography, it was hardly new. Tweens were often photographed as kid models. So the need for headshots for their comp cards was a need. During the middle school years, parents would purchase the school pictures because that would usually be the only time their kid’s age was documented.

I consider the tween genre to be a “Blue Ocean.” I originally heard of the Blue Ocean Strategy from Sal Cincotta at a small event. When Sal mentioned the strategy, it hit home for me and my niche.

The Blue Ocean Strategy is a marketing theory coined in a 2005 book of the same name. It refers to a market for a product or service that has little to no competition.

In our industry, there are times in life that are routinely photographed because that is how our society is conditioned. When a couple is married, they will always hire a photographer. When a baby is born, that newborn is photographed. As that baby grows, they will be professionally photographed because that is what parents do. There is this mysterious gap between a small child and a senior when the child isn’t routinely professionally photographed. Then, when the child is a senior, the professional shoots start again.



Those gap years are the tween years, that time between 10 and 14 years that is routinely ignored when parents think about investing in professional photography. Why is that? The one reason I hear most often is that those are considered the “awkward years.” When I hear that, it sounds so incredibly negative.

As my business and family grew older, I began to notice how neglected this genre was. When social media started to become the norm, I quickly learned how loud this genre is, and how much power tweens possessed. Three years ago, I gave my first keynote about tweens. It was such a new genre that I was worried no one would show up, not to mention that my presentation was scheduled for 7:30 am. Who would show up for that? I was amazed that I was speaking to a standing-room-only crowd of over 400 photographers. That morning, I also learned that photographers are quickly learning how powerful this genre is, but many photographers were confused about how to begin.

Let me give you some quick background. I began my career 16 years ago in Chicago as a photographer of babies, children and families. I didn’t begin to gain leverage until 12 years ago. That would make many of my current clients tweens. I have been blessed to have a loyal client base, and have watched them grow each year. When I started to cater to this genre exclusively, I was also a parent to three tweens, so I had an inside position as a businesswoman and a parent.

Here are the top 10 things I learned that helped me master the tween market.



# 01

I learned the importance of client loyalty. I photographed many tweens yearly as newborns, babies, toddlers and small children. At the time, I never would have imagined that the newborn I was photographing would be one of the people that would create word-of-mouth advertising for me. Photographers tend to give that role to adults and young adults (seniors).



# 02

The tween years are the last time these humans are considered kids. It is the last time a kid may sit on a parent's lap. This may be the last time they regularly hang out with their parents. It represents a time of change. Parents of tweens are hyperaware of this, and they often do not know what to do. It is as fleeting as a newborn growing into a baby. A parent will look at their kid one day and notice their child no longer looks like that young kid they just saw a few months ago. Puberty sets in, and now they look like teenagers. Parents want nothing more than to capture this. Parents do not often know how to articulate that. That is where we step in to tell them. It is a key point to make when you want to book the client.



Images © Audrey Woulard

# 03

We are living in an age when if there isn't a picture, it didn't happen. Tweens live and breathe this, so it's easy for a photographer to be seen as a needed asset. Because tweens love to talk, they are instant word-of-mouth generators. They talk more than seniors do. My motto is the photographer markets to the tween, but you do your convincing to the parent. What convincing can you do? See point 2.



04

Tweens want to look cool, and they understand the unspoken rules of social media better than anyone. There are few businesses that can cater to this want better than photographers. Even if you do not want to specialize in this genre, tweens are able to fill in the gaps for any photographer having a slow season.



Images © Audrey Woulard

05

Speaking of slow season, tween season is January through March. Some may worry about winter weather during that time, and I understand that. I live in Chicago, and that time frame is in the middle of winter. If that is the busy season for me, then it can be for anyone.



Images © Audrey Woulard



06

Photographers are looking for tweens now more than ever. Those who make contact with them early will usually be the photographers who keep them when they are seniors. Senior photographers will soon feel the effects of this market shift. You cannot market to tweens the same way you do seniors. They simply do not respond the same from a monetary standpoint. It is important to understand your “why” when servicing this market if you are a senior photographer, and approach them accordingly.

07

The tween years are some of the last years that self-esteem can be organically built. Photography is powerful, and offers a great way to give tweens a self-esteem boost.



Images © Audrey Woulard

08

Don’t underestimate the buying power of tweens. Although they do not contribute to the household income, they certainly can control it. Parents want nothing more than to make their child happy. Tweens are the poster child for the word *persistent*. They will bug their parents for a thing that they want, and they won’t stop. I see this with my own children. When one of my boys begs me for the latest sneakers or a “skin” from the game *Fortnite*, I often cave when they continue to bug me about it. When a photo session with you is at the top of their list, guess what that does? It places your business in front of their faces on a daily basis. Parents especially cave to their children’s desires when they are able to see the good that can come from them (see point 7). Do not feel that you must discount your pricing in order to book tween sessions.



Image © Audrey Woulard



10.

If you want to stretch your wings with an editorial/fashion flair, tweens are a great start. They are usually up for anything.

Images © Audrey Woulard



00

If you are a children’s photographer who wants to grow with your clientele, servicing tweens can grow your client base because it places you in front of their friends. This opens the door to you for more family sessions. All children portrait photographers know there is a lot of money in family sessions. There is even more money with family sessions and older children.



Images © Audrey Woulard



Images © Audrey Woulard





Image © Audrey Woulard

Tweens are such an underserved market. This genre can help your business while you make a difference in young lives. ■



Audrey Woulard is a portrait and commercial photographer specializing in tween portraiture who works out of a natural-light loft in the Loop of downtown Chicago. She is an industry speaker and educator, traveling the world to share her knowledge with other photographers. [alwphotography.com](http://alwphotography.com)





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“ I’ve learned that people will forget what you **said**,  
people will forget what you **did**,  
but people will **never forget**  
**how you made them feel.** ”  
-Maya Angelou

Maya Angelou hit the nail on the head with this quote. When we enter a session, we are not only taking pictures, we are creating memories that last a lifetime. Our clients will remember the variety of feelings they experienced while in our care. We need to make it a pleasurable one so they sing our praises to their friends and family. Good reviews travel fast, but bad reviews travel faster.

When a potential client contacts me for a session, the first thing they usually ask is my pricing. I send them a link to my website’s Investment page and congratulate them on their upcoming arrival. I ask them when they are due and if they would like me to mail them a contract to proceed with their booking process. Yes, I said mail. I worked for the Postal Service for 16 years and am old school as far as business goes, and I still prefer to have paper in hand, but I digress. I then offer to speak with them on the phone because I want to get a feel for what the client is looking for in their session. Some take me up on this offer and some don’t. The ball is in their court and I await their decision on whether or not to choose me as their newborn photographer.



Image © Lisa Rapp



Image © Lisa Rapp

If they choose me, I mail them a contract and receive a retainer. I add them to my calendar, get their phone number and begin to make a personal connection. When scheduling the session, I mark out five days before and after their estimated due date. I then make the call, touch base with my newest client and gather a few details.

“Is this your first child, second, third...seventh?” If they have other children, what are their names and ages? “Will we be doing sibling shots?” “Where will you be delivering?” “Who will be delivering?” “How have you been feeling?” “Have you given any thought to the color scheme of the session?” “If you were to hang an image in your home, what colors would go best with your home?” “What color is the baby’s nursery?” “What poses are your favorite?” “Would you like any prop shots?” “Which of my packages were you planning on going with?”

I cover the whole spectrum of the actual session now because after the baby is born, Mom is preoccupied and has her hands full. They are investing in me, so now I must invest in them. This is when you find out if your client is nervous, excited or uptight. I explain to them the optimum timeframe in which I prefer to photograph the baby, and why—the baby sleeps better, the baby is “curlier” or, if the baby is a boy and gets circumcised, we need to wait for it to heal.

I then ask them to keep me informed as they progress because there is a possibility of their going into labor early and surprising everyone. I want to make sure I am available in case this happens. Making a personal connection is vital to the experience. Making them feel valued and appreciated is important. How you make them feel during this entire process is what they will remember most.



I don't schedule my newborn sessions until the baby arrives. Some babies decide to make an early entrance into the world and throw everyone's plans out the window. Some babies wait until after their due date. This method has worked out very well for me. I have already established a connection with my newest client and have contacted them a few times to check in on them, so they feel comfortable calling or texting me when they go to the hospital.

Fast-forward to the client calling me to inform me they are home. In the past, I used to send my parent prep list with the contract, but this never worked out. It usually got misplaced or lost, so this is when I go over parent prep. I keep it short. I explain why (again) I am making these suggestions: to help them prepare for a successful session.

**PARENT PREP LIST**

1) Bring baby in a sleeper that zips or snaps up the front, with no onesie under (so I don't have to pull anything over baby's head).

2) Keep baby awake for an hour before you head to the studio (unless you live over an hour away, because she will sleep in the car anyway).

3) Either feed baby right before you leave or right when you arrive at the studio. A full belly plus a tired baby usually means a sleeping baby.

4) I keep the studio between 75 and 80 degrees, so dress accordingly. Babies tend to sleep better when they are cozy warm.

5) Baby will more than likely pee and poo on everything. Don't stress about this. It all comes out in the wash.

6) You just had a baby. Rest, and I will do all the work. Your job is to sit, watch and take a nap if you need to.



Images © Lisa Rapp





I prepare my setups the day before the session. This is when I go through all of my fabrics, furs, wraps, props, headbands and outfits and put everything together. I mix and match items by putting them all side by side to make sure the colors, textures and sets flow. I make a mental note of which wrap, headband, etc. goes with which pose. I check my light to make sure it is working properly (in case my trigger battery needs changed or bulbs need switched). I keep everything I will use during the session on a rolling cart so it is easily accessible and within reach.



NEWBORN STUDIO NECESSITIES

- Baby wipes
- Hand sanitizer
- Posing beans
- Receiving blankets/flour sack towels
- Lulla-Vibe
- Gloves
- Shusher
- Puppy pads
- Face masks (when requested)
- Hand towel for messy accidents







Image © Lisa Rapp

During the session, check on Mom repeatedly and keep her hydrated. Ask her how she is doing and see if she needs a snack or drink (which I provide). I have a recliner and couch in the studio in case they need to relax. Remind her how beautiful her baby is and how well her baby is doing. I usually show her the back of the camera once to build anticipation and show her that the session is progressing nicely. Even if the baby is fussing and not cooperating, reassure her that this is how it goes and her sweet little bundle is doing just fine, even if you are crying inside too.

Before Mom leaves the studio, I remind her that I will post a sneak peek for her on Facebook or on my website and when she can expect her gallery to be done. This helps prevent the “When will the images be ready?” text two days after the session. Cut her some slack. She is excited to see her beautiful baby’s pictures and show them off to her friends and family.



Images © Lisa Rapp





Image © Lisa Rapp

When my editing is complete, I message the client and send them a link to their gallery. This is when they choose the images they want and order prints and other products. Then I give them their password for any downloads they have purchased. If they have ordered product, it comes to me so I can look at it to make sure it is what they ordered and it is packaged up, so they can either pick it up in studio or have me send it in the mail, in which case I include a personal thank-you note.

My clients become extended family members and I reach out to them to see how they are doing. Many of them come back to me for family and milestone sessions, and, in a short amount of time, they are bringing me their next little bundle of joy. If I have done my job well, they tell all their friends and family about their wonderful experience and beautiful memories I captured.

They sing my praises and do some of my best advertising by letting everyone know just how good I made them feel by trusting me with their entire world: their baby. ■



Lisa Rapp is the head chick in charge at Little Chics Pics, which specializes in newborn portraiture. The Southern Illinois shooter has been passionately photographing newborns since 2011. She has been married for 23 years, has two boys, loves ice cream, says inappropriate things and has a serious prop addiction.

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

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PHOTO: Kimberly Nail    MODEL: Mary Catherine Freeman

ISO: 250    SS: 1/160 sec.    Aperture: f/11    Focal Length: 35mm



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# INSPIRATIONS

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

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

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

BEST CHILDREN IMAGE



Image © Kim Ackerman



Image © Beth Hrachovina



Image © Katie Clarkson



Image © Brynne Owen



Image © Keri Malinowski

Image © Shellie Lynne Photography







Image © Justin Yoder

Image © Jenny Robertson



Image © Laura King



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Image © Aurora Shae Photo & Design



Image © Patton Portraits



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# 5 THINGS

WE'VE LEARNED  
FROM OWNING A

# SHARED STUDIO SPACE

with Jeff & Lori Poole



When Jeff and I created The Shoot Space, we were the first shared-studio concept in Wilmington, North Carolina. In fact, there was really only a handful in the country, according to what we could find on Google. When researching the concept, we reached out to Bud Thorpe, owner of the Studio of Photographic Arts (SOPHA) in New Hampshire. Bud graciously offered us some advice on how to get started.

While the sleepy little beach town of Wilmington is not quite big enough to support an operation like SOPHA, we’ve managed to put our own spin on the share concept and keep it going for five years so far. Since those early days, several shared-studio concepts have come and gone in Wilmington. In this article, we share what we’ve learned and offer some tips on creating your own shared space.

1. BE SWITZERLAND

Jeff and I own Indigosilver wedding and portrait studio. Bud wisely advised us that other photographers in our market would not be keen on the idea of bringing their clients to a shoot at a building with our name plastered all over it. So we named our studio share The Shoot Space, which is a separate business and a neutral brand. This means that Indigosilver pays rent to The Shoot Space. It’s a bit complicated, but it all works.

We are also careful to keep our roles as The Shoot Space and Indigosilver separate. We do not openly promote Indigosilver inside the building. If The Shoot Space receives an inquiry for photography services (which does happen), we refer out to all of our member studios.

The building carries the Shoot Space brand, and all public/shared areas are labeled with neutral branding as well. Member studios have their logos on the front-facing window so clients know they are in the right place.



Images © Indigosilver studio





Image © Indigosilver studio

2. KNOW WHAT YOU ARE

A shared studio space can mean a lot of things. It can mean that a few people share an area just for shooting. It can mean that there are offices there. It can involve a sales room. It can offer gear and space for rent. It can offer props and backdrops, or just be an empty shell. The studio can host workshops, classes, lessons or mentoring. What do you want your studio to offer?

At The Shoot Space, our fee structure is similar to cell phone plans, and users pay for a certain amount of studio use. Our users are tenants, members and single-use renters. Tenants rent an office full time and have a key to the building. There is no cap on their studio use. This is like the unlimited data plan. The Shoot Space has three tenants with private offices (including Indigosilver).

Monthly members do not have an office, but instead have a certain number of allotted hours to use in the shooting bay or sales room per month. They must schedule their rentals during business hours. The monthly memberships are on a sliding pay scale, where their monthly payment is set depending on the amount of use they choose. There is a charge for overages. They commit to a yearlong membership in exchange for reduced rental rates.

Single-use renters pay for their rentals only as needed, but the cost per hour is higher. This is the most expensive per-hour cost because there is no commitment. It's the "burner" no-contract plan.



Image © Indigosilver studio

3. KNOW WHAT YOU ARE NOT

Our goal for The Shoot Space is to offer a resource for local photographers, help pay the rent and maybe make a little extra on the side. But Jeff and I have never wanted to stop being full-time photographers.

Running and marketing a larger studio operation would require a lot of time. In fact, it could easily be a full-time job itself. If Jeff and I were truly dedicated to growing The Shoot Space, we could hire employees to run it, take reservations, check members in and out, and market the business. And it would probably be very successful. We prefer to focus our efforts on our photography, and we are okay with letting The Shoot Space simply be a side hustle.

Because of this, and perhaps because Wilmington is a smaller area, the monthly memberships and single-use rentals comprise only a very small part of The Shoot Space's income. In fact, it would be difficult to support the studio on this alone, and we suspect that is why some of the other share spaces in Wilmington have suffered. Instead, rent from tenants is The Shoot Space's biggest source of income.

It's ok for this share concept to be a side hustle, or just a way to help split the bills. Or you may decide you're ready to dedicate 100 percent of your time to this idea, maybe even sacrificing your personal photography business along the way. Maybe you've got the resources to hire staff to run this new venture. That's cool too. It's important to have realistic expectations about how many businesses you're going to commit to running.





4. HAVE RULES

Even if you’re only sharing your studio with a couple of other photographers, it’s important to lay out some ground rules. Here are some we’ve found to be useful.

- Each photographer must clean up after themselves. The shooting bay and sales room must be tidied, swept, wiped and otherwise cleaned at the end of each rental. Leave it ready for the next person to use.
- Rental time includes setup and breakdown. If a rental is from 4:00 to 6:00, that photographer cannot set up before 4:00, and they must be broken down and cleaned up by 6:00. This makes scheduling easier.
- All photographers must play nicely with others. At any given time, the offices, shooting bay and/or sales rooms may be in use, so it’s important that each photographer is mindful of noise, client traffic, etc.
- Each photographer is responsible for any damage caused by themselves, their clients, models, assistants and guests.
- Standard rules apply regarding rent/membership payments. Pay by the fifth of the month or face late fees and/or cancelation.
- Tenants must keep their belongings contained within designated storage areas. Members and single-use renters do not have storage on site. For us, this is simply a matter of space, but we’ve considered having lockers for members who are here frequently.





5. HAVE STANDARDS

If you’re planning to offer your space to locals, it’s important to have a minimum standard of who can and cannot rent. Your studio will attract photographers with a wide range of experience levels. Decide ahead of time what level you are comfortable with.

We do not babysit photographers. Every photographer must take a quick orientation and demonstrate a basic proficiency in setting up light stands and sandbags before we turn them loose. We don’t judge their skill or style, we just want to make sure they’re not going to break things.

On a related note, be mindful of your potential impact on the photographic community. We created The Shoot Space as a resource for our fellow photographers to help them grow their businesses. It’s important to us that the studio not hurt the local market.

As the studio grew, we started attracting more and more photographers with less and less experience. It’s not uncommon for new photographers to operate without a license, not pay taxes and shoot for cheap or free, undercutting their colleagues and devaluing the market. We started to question whether offering a professional studio to those who were clearly not professional was helping or hurting. The final straw came when we received an inquiry from someone wanting to rent the studio for family portraits. I asked if they were looking for a photographer or a studio to rent. They said, “Oh, no. We want to rent the studio so we don’t have to pay a photographer.” Nope, nope, nope. All the nos.

Since that day, we have decided to require that all renters carry professional liability insurance and list The Shoot Space as an additional insured. While it’s no guarantee that each photographer is not undercutting or hurting the market, it’s a pretty good sign that the photographer is taking their business seriously and running a legitimate business. It also has the benefit of additional insurance protections in case a liability issue arises.





SET FOR SUCCESS

Whether you’re looking for a way to share your rent costs or open a full studio-share concept, we’ve given you the top five things we’ve learned while opening ours. Of course, our goal is not to give you a set-in-stone template for your studio, but to give you the points you’ll want to consider as you create your own version of a studio share. ■



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



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.  
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THE VALUE OF

RELATIONSHIPS

IN THE PHOTOGRAPHY

BUSINESS

with Michael Anthony







Image © Michael Anthony



Image © Michael Anthony

Photography is an incredible hobby and profession. We get to visit amazing places, document memories for people, create art and even travel all over the world. But the business side is a different story. To finance this amazing hobby and turn it into a living, we have to charge livable wages. If you are in business, then your hobby is also your profession, which means you have to charge enough to not only finance that shiny new camera with eight lenses, but also pay for taxes, insurance, rent, utilities, employees and the many other costs that you never think about when you go into business.

In six years, our business has grown from hobby to profession to one of the leading wedding photography studios in the country, and we continue to see growth every year. What people don't see is the rest of the iceberg: patience, risk and countless hours of testing marketing theories. In the end, your success is measured largely by the quality of your professional relationships.

Love for photography makes it a very desirable career—if you do what you love, you never work a day in your life. With competition at an all-time high and thousands of new photographers entering the market every year (because they all see you on Instagram traveling the world taking photos of people), how are you going to build a solid foundation in business? The answer involves taking the time to focus on your professional relationships. There are two types of relationships in business: those with your clients and those with your peers.



PEER RELATIONSHIPS

Peer relationships mean working with local professionals who serve the same market you do. For a wedding photographer like me, that includes gown makers, DJ’s, planners, catering managers and wedding blog publishers. I know what you are thinking because I remember feeling the same way: As a new photographer just entering the market, how are you going to convince other pros of your professionalism and have them refer you to their clients? They require their own strategies, and I will tell you from experience how we went about it.

When I started my business, my wife, Jennifer, was studying to become a nurse. So, since she was a full-time student and I was a police officer, we struggled to find time to build the business and nurture relationships. We also needed to build a portfolio to market to new brides.

We started in our immediate area. Jennifer called a prop rental company, visited the store that she bought her own wedding gown from, and reached out to a makeup artist who was also starting her career, a florist that we hired for our wedding and a real couple that agreed to model in exchange for images.

Jennifer agreed to trade imagery with all of these vendors. She was successful in planning this shoot because she painted a clear vision and plan, which demonstrated professionalism, allowing clients to trust her. The images we made from that one shoot helped define our portfolio and get our foot in the door with local vendors.







Image © Michael Anthony

Now we live in Santa Clarita, California, a large suburb north of Los Angeles. It’s not the most ideal place to market a wedding photography business because we live so close to the city and its exclusive high-dollar zip codes of Beverly Hills, Malibu and Santa Monica. I knew that starting close was essential to developing relationships with my peers.

I joined the local networking group Santa Clarita Wedding and Event Professionals, which I am still a part of. The group helped kickstart my relationships with many of my local vendors. The key isn’t just being present. The key to building quality relationships is giving without expecting reciprocation. There are many vendors that I refer to my couples without receiving a single referral in exchange.

So how do you adopt this strategy as a portrait photographer? If I were primarily a portrait photographer, I would target clothing manufacturers, shopping center store owners, local OBGYN’s for maternity photographers, gym and fitness center owners for boudoir or fitness photographers, etc. Where do these vendors congregate? Local business chambers are a great source, but more often than not, it will take legwork beating down doors and being turned down repeatedly. Every successful business owner has to understand how to hustle. At some point you will be able to hire people to do it for you, but in the beginning, it will be you breaking bread with business owners, and that is a good skill to learn.

How are you taking care of your vendors? Every year around the holidays, we invest up to \$4,000 in gifts for local vendors. We ship a gift basket and a card to out-of-town vendors, and we hand-deliver gifts to local vendors. This year we hired an employee dedicated to building and nurturing relationships with local vendors. Her job is to connect clients with vendors that would be a great fit for us. That creates a great client experience and shows your vendors that you care about their success, which will often benefit your own success.

Here is a tip I know you will love. Create a questionnaire titled Wedding Worksheet that you send to your clients from your customer relationship management (CRM) system. This worksheet asks for their vendor information, email address, contact and phone number. Don’t know who to contact at a venue? Now you do. From there, you can market directly to those vendors and bring them prints and products after the wedding. You can also build a database of vendors to refer your clients to.



Image © Michael Anthony

CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS

The same strategies will apply to your clients as well. Don’t allow your wedding clients to go to other photographers for portraits. That is one of the most frustrating things I see on social media. It means that we messed up somewhere in the retention process. It has taken me years to learn strategies for retention of that work, and I am still learning—but let me save you time with these ideas that work.

GIFTS

Spoil your clients. Wedding clients should be getting a gift three months and two weeks before the wedding.

BIRTHDAY REMINDERS

Ask for their birthdays on your questionnaire and have your CRM send an automated birthday email to them.

THANK-YOU CARDS

Send your clients a physical thank-you card after a purchase or their shoot. Ask for referrals on it.

REFERRAL PROGRAM

Offer clients an incentive to refer people to you. The offer has to be irresistible, like \$500 to \$1,000 in product if someone books a wedding with you. Sound like a lot? Make sure your margins can cover a large product credit, and trust me, it works.





Image © Michael Anthony

Lastly, I want to stress that building relationships takes time. You don't go from first date to marriage after one month. You need to foster relationships for a long time before you see results.

If you are selfish all the time or get offended that a vendor won't refer you over someone they have been working with for years, you are kidding yourself and setting yourself up for disappointment. I have been working with some vendors for years without a referral back from them. One day they may come around, or they may not, but at least I have built a relationship that I can use to add value to our client experience.

Keep working hard, keep hustling and never give up. And when you see results, it will be so gratifying to know that your cherished hobby can also be a profitable business. ■

 **LEARN MORE.**  
Click here or check us out at  
[youtube.com/btsShutterMagazine](https://youtube.com/btsShutterMagazine)



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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A high-angle, close-up photograph of a person's hands working on a silver laptop on a dark wooden desk. The laptop screen displays a vibrant image of a galaxy or nebula. To the right of the laptop is a white computer mouse. In front of the laptop is a black drawing tablet with a stylus. To the left of the laptop is a spiral-bound notebook with a red pencil. The person's left hand is resting on the laptop's trackpad, and their right hand is holding the stylus over the drawing tablet. The person is wearing a black smartwatch on their left wrist.

# PIVOT YOUR POST-PRODUCTION WITH PRESETS & PROFILES

LIGHTROOM CLASSIC CC 7.3.1

with Dustin Lucas





Image © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

For many of you working in Lightroom and resisting Classic CC, it is time to pivot. (1) Mind you, this is not an article about signing your life over to becoming a monthly Adobe subscriber or a debate on why they stopped a standalone version of Lightroom. This is about efficiency and the best results you can achieve with a working knowledge of Lightroom. With the recent enhancements to the layout and edit-ability of your Raw files, there’s even less reason to resist.

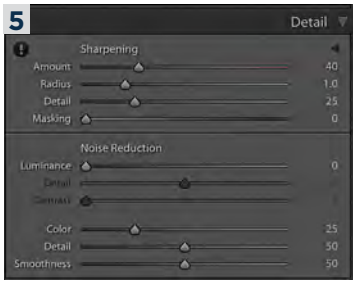
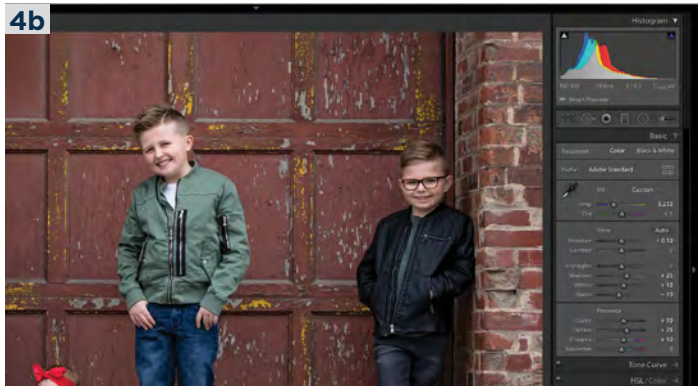
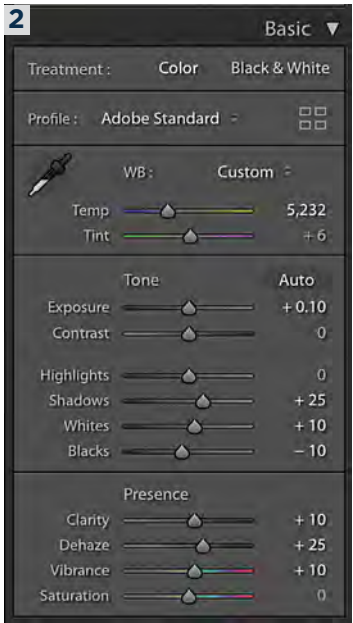
Lightroom Classic CC 7.3.1 has restructured the tools in the Develop module to get us exactly what we need and faster access. Along with the new layout, there is a ton of new presets provided by Adobe and a greater supply of creative options with a single click. Not to mention that preset files get converted instantly to XMPs to make applying global settings to your images more compatible between Adobe Camera Raw and Lightroom. Camera Raw and Creative Profiles are now at the top of the Basic panel for more image control right out of the gate. This facelift is just what we needed. It also includes a larger Tone Curve panel for more meticulous adjustments, and a Dehaze tool was added to Presence in the Basic panel for added tonal adjustments.

After reading this article, you will be ready to pivot to Lightroom Classic CC to fully experience the changes Adobe offers. Let’s dig into the new Develop module layout and get our editing bearings.

DIGGING INTO THE NEW DEVELOP MODULE LAYOUT AND SETTINGS

Adobe has certainly been listening to the concerns and requests from photographers. The first thing I noticed was the addition of Profiles in the Basic panel, and all I could say was, finally. (2) For years I’d have to scroll to the bottom of the Develop module to Camera Calibration, make changes, scroll back up, etc. (3) The intuitive Profile Browser allows me to preview different options, including new Adobe Creative profiles, which I will touch on later.

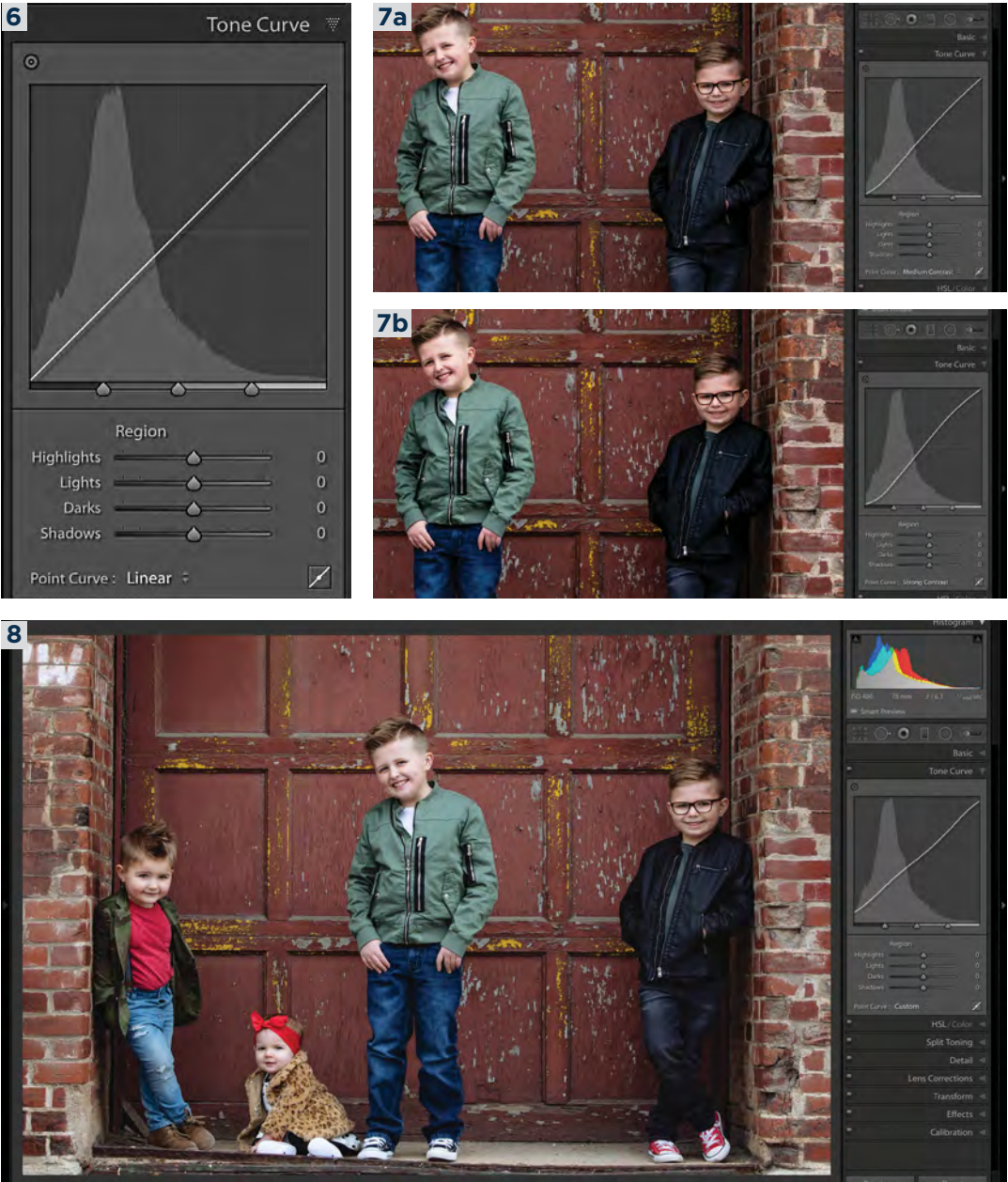
You’ll notice right away that the Presence panel has incorporated the Dehaze tool, and rightfully so. This is very useful in bringing definition back into those soft areas lacking density. Much like the Black Point tool, this ensures you have true black tones and lets you pull on your midtones to extend your dynamic range. (4ab) Another change is in the Details panel, where the Sharpening Amount defaults at 40. (5) Tone Curve allows more room to play with your tone range.





In the Tone Curve panel, you now have more flexibility with a larger area when creating a custom Point Curve. (6) Typically you would use the Point Curve or Tone Region sliders to push the dynamic range, but you can also use prebuilt Point Curves. After clicking the linear listed in the dropdown box, you will notice the top two options: Medium and Strong Contrast. (7ab) These provide a simple S-curve style boost in contrast. You'll notice the long list of film names. Much like in Photoshop, these film-style curves migrated into the Tone Curves panel automatically to allow us to start creatively developing the look we want. (8) One feature that would be very beneficial is the ability to hover over a prebuilt curve and see it applied on our image.

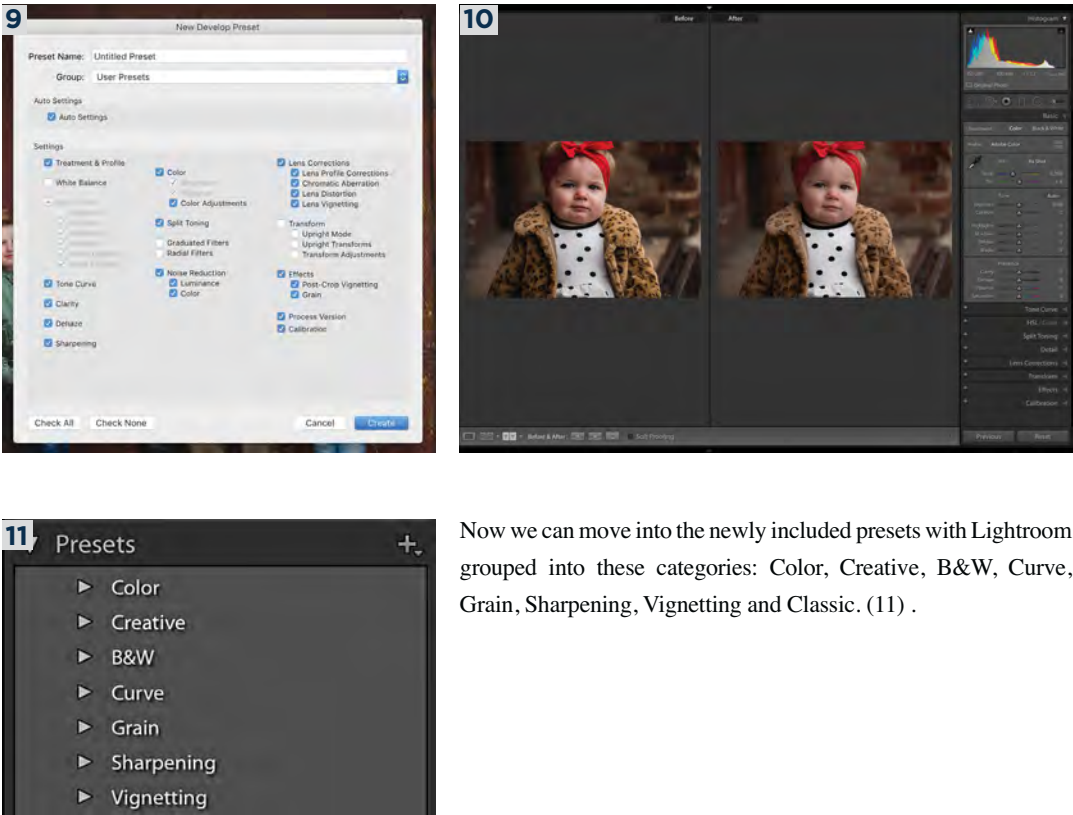
Now that we're more familiar with the change in the Develop module, let's push through our post-production with presets.



PUSH THROUGH POST-PRODUCTION WITH PRESETS

When it comes to efficiency, there is no better way to save time than with presets. From import to editing and finally export, there are options to save settings as a preset. This allows you to recall these settings and even apply them to selected images. You can create presets in the Develop module and apply them at import or during your develop processing. Let's go over some workflow tips with presets.

I recommend that you not apply presets at import, which can add problems to the mix. Everyone has an opinion about this, and it can save time if you understand the limitations. Here is what I mean: If you apply a develop preset, it is the as-shot version of the file, and you cannot revert them globally. (9) Another issue arises when you use any Auto features with import presets—you will notice inconsistencies in setting syncing due to Lightroom wanting to autocorrect the image. (10) Be mindful that your import preset requires more rendering power for previews because your computer has to load the processed before and after preview.



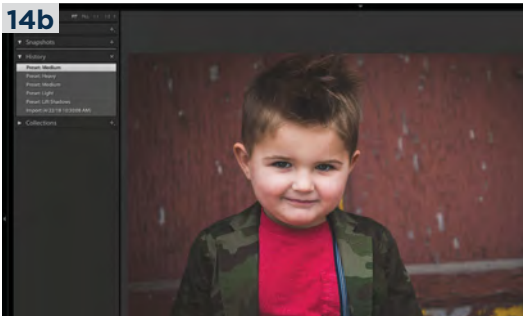
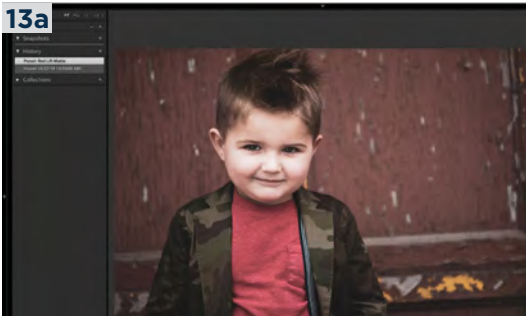
Now we can move into the newly included presets with Lightroom grouped into these categories: Color, Creative, B&W, Curve, Grain, Sharpening, Vignetting and Classic. (11) .



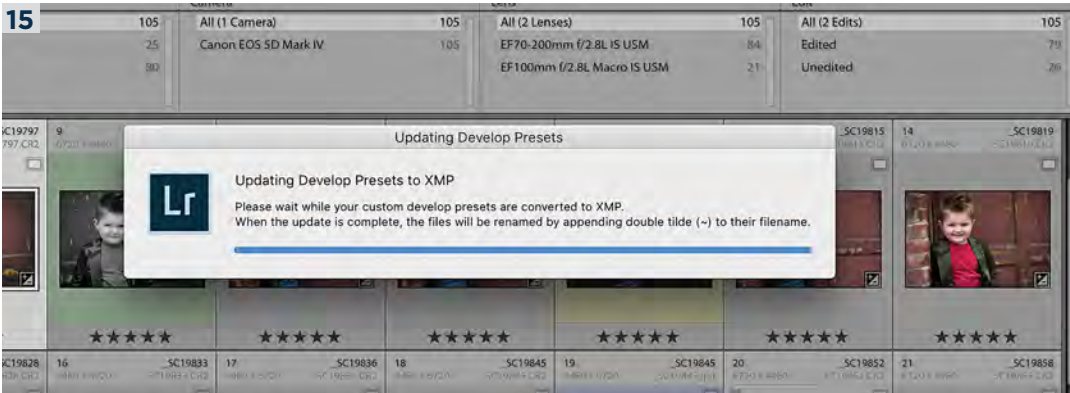
We can now hover the cursor over each preset to see in real time what the effect provides our image. (12)



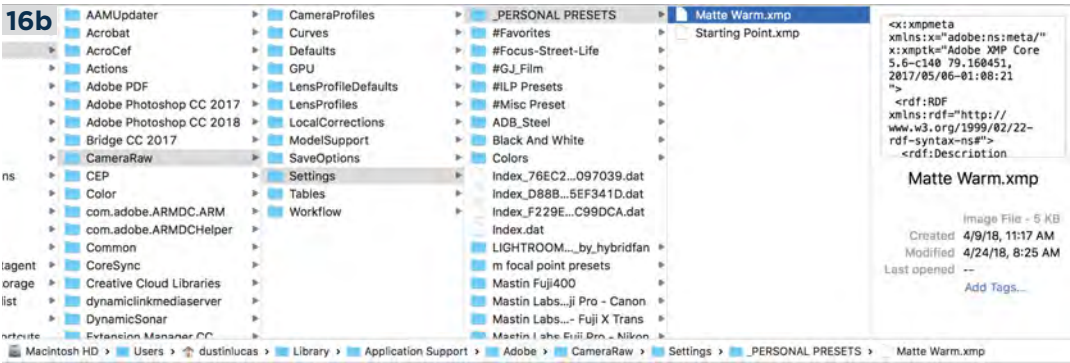
It's achievable only with the Navigator panel and it is way too small to preview. You'll notice that Color, Creative and B&W incorporate multiple settings and are more of a complete package versus being stackable. (13ab) This is where Curve, Grain, Sharpening and Vignetting allow you to apply specific image correcting tools to fine-tune. (14ab) You can create ones for Lens Correction, Noise Reduction and HSL, which can come in handy.



Another massive shift is your previous and new Lightroom presets get converted to XMP files and saved in the Camera Raw settings folder. This allows a more fluid transition between Lightroom and Camera Raw when applying prebuilt settings. Not to worry: You still have your presets in older versions of Lightroom; you will just notice when opening Lightroom Classic CC 7.3.1 that a pop-up notice will convert them automatically. (15)



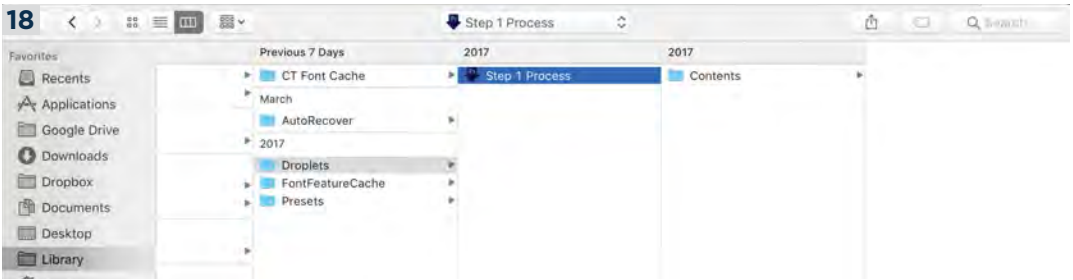
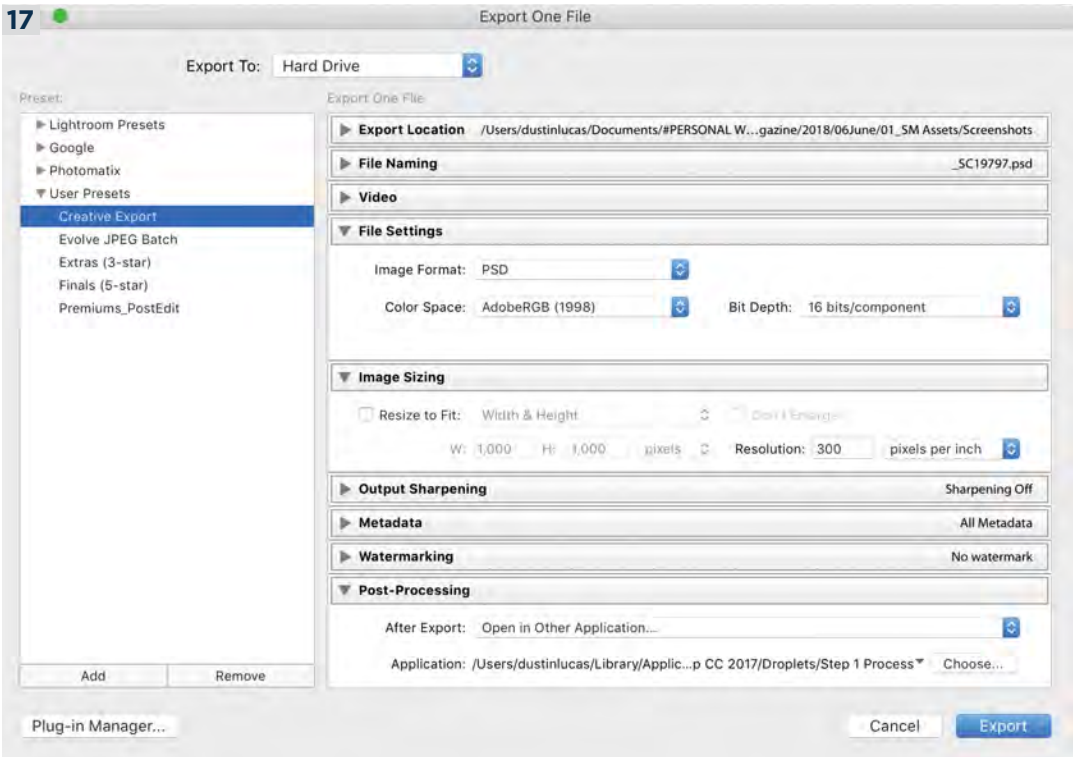
All your previous presets will be renamed and left in your Lightroom develop presets folder for older versions to use, and the new ones are stored in the Camera Raw settings folder. To find these, right-click on a preset in Lightroom and choose Show in Finder. (16ab)





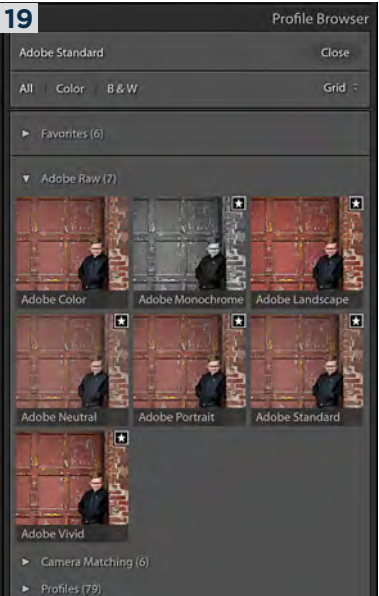
Just as with import develop presets, you can create export presets for simple output methods. This allows you to quickly choose the location, file naming convention, file format, color space, image size and even what to do once the file export opens into Photoshop. (17) I like to run a Photoshop droplet to allow the exported images to immediately batch-process an action to all images and save them in one fell swoop. This is massive for my workflow and allows me even more flexibility with Lightroom and Photoshop. (18)

With this recent change, there have been some setbacks with the 7.3 release that Adobe addressed in the 7.3.1 update in April. Not to worry: Your presets should be converted properly to XMPs, and massive issues with B&W presets have been resolved. Let’s look at the biggest change in Lightroom: the Camera Profile Browser feature.



CONTROL COLOR AFTER CAPTURE WITH CUSTOM PROFILES

Adobe’s release of Lightroom 7.3 provided a more intuitive and comprehensive way to apply camera profiles in the Basic panel. The first thing you’ll notice is that profiles are now readily accessible, and a new interface with the Profile Browser gives you the ability to preview color profiles and introduce a ton of creativity with new ones. (19) Let’s dive into the default profiles to get accustomed to what options we have beyond Adobe Standard.



Speaking of default profiles, Lightroom introduces Adobe Color to push the tonal range of your images right out of the gate. You’ll notice this slight push when reverting back to Abode Standard. (20ab)



Images © Salvatore Cincotta Photography



Along with these Adobe profiles, you have your choice of landscape, neutral, portrait and vivid. These profiles did not shift too much; for now, I think I will stick with Adobe Color unless I purchase a third-party profile or make one with the Xrite Color Checker software. (21abc)

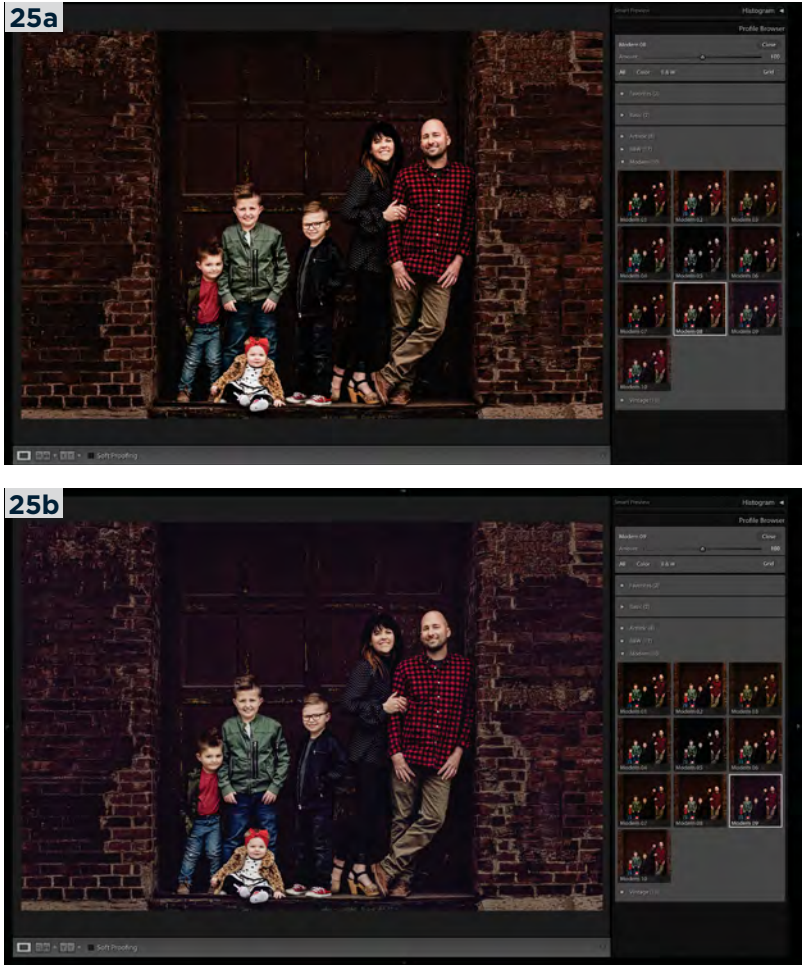


The Profile Browser lets you scroll over each profile to preview each one in real time. This is a huge workflow change for profiles and presets alike. No more click, undo and repeat until you find the right one. (22)

You'll notice that all these Adobe profiles are at the top because they have favorite stars applied. Simply click any starred profiles you wish to remove from your list and add any to quickly apply your most used ones. (23) I highly recommend adding color and black-and-white profiles. You still have the Camera Matching profiles, including the popular Camera Standard. These never felt useful enough to implement. Moving into the general Profiles and Legacy, we can apply our trusty VSCO, DVLOP, Huelight, etc. profiles purchased from third-party developers. (24abc) The Legacy profiles seem to group all the black-and-white profiles separate from the color ones, which helps tremendously. Organization with the Profile Browser is a great upgrade.







THE RESULTS

I highly recommend updating to 7.3.1, with its new features and recent bug fixes. All of your trusty tools, presets and profiles are there, and with the newly updated develop module, you can view changes by scrolling over each option. You can finally ditch the Adobe or Camera Standard profile and start using the Adobe Color for better color tone. ■



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Dustin Lucas is a full-time photographer and educator focused on the wedding industry and the academic world. After achieving his master of fine arts degree, a career opportunity opened once he began working with Evolve Edits. Through teaching photography classes and writing about photography, Dustin continues to expand his influence on art and business throughout the industry.

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6 TIPS FOR **ROCKING**

YOUR NEXT **ALBUM DESIGN**

with Vanessa Joy



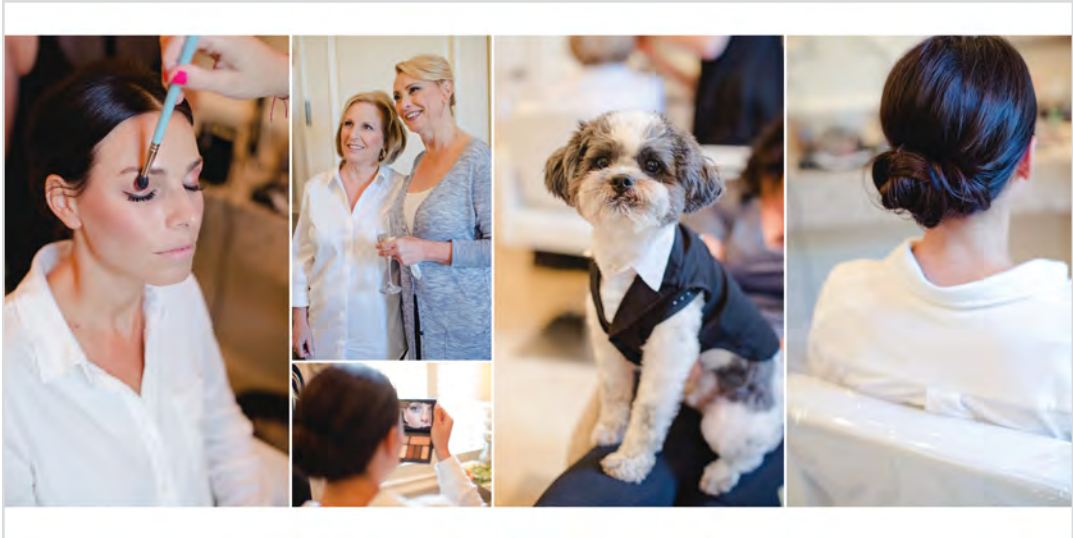
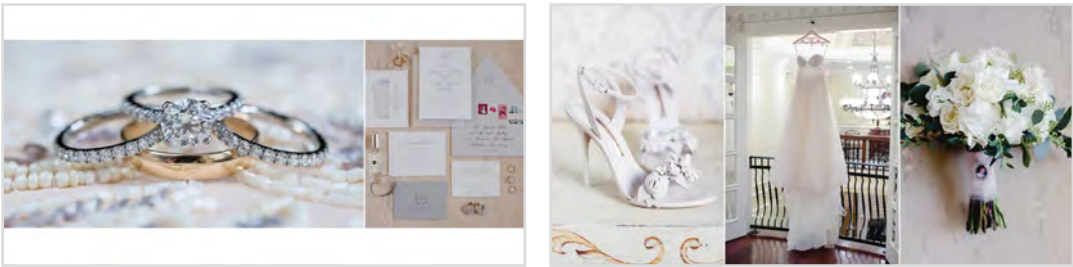
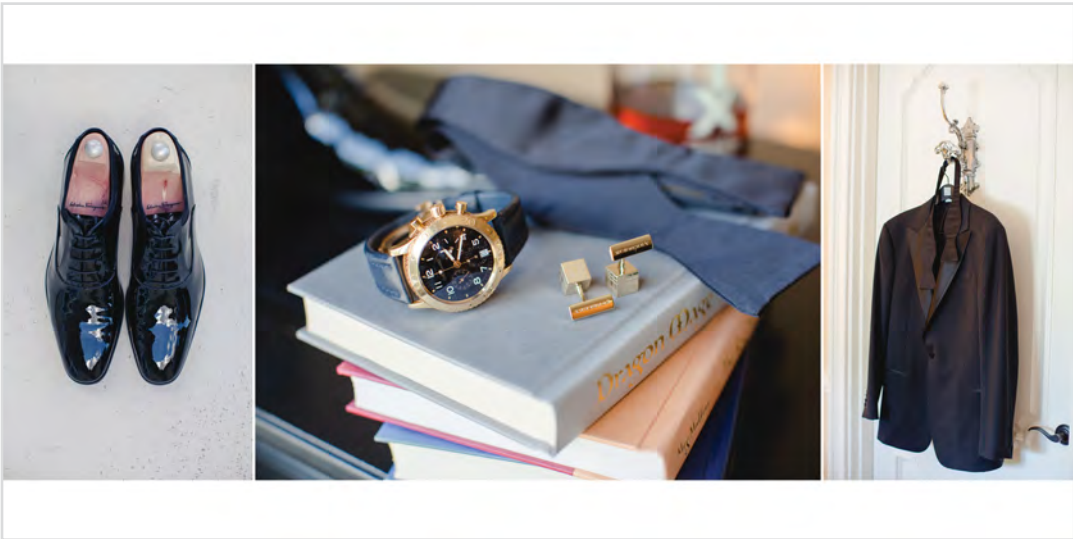


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I remember the very first “professional” album I designed. It was in a program called LumaPix, and it was horrific. I’m talking fades, star fades and layers upon gaudy, hand-colored layers. It was the early 2000s, so it was groundbreaking at the time.

Thankfully, albums have adopted a cleaner, timeless look and can be assembled much more easily and quickly. If you’re not doing albums, shame on you. Not only is it a disservice to your lifestyle and family income, but it’s a disservice to your clients. Aside from the money to be made on albums, memories are best preserved in a tangible, clean format that’s easy to flip through. It’s your job to preserve those memories as best you can, and albums are an excellent way to do it.

Whether you’re a beginner or a pro, here are six tips for making a great album.



Images © Vanessa Joy

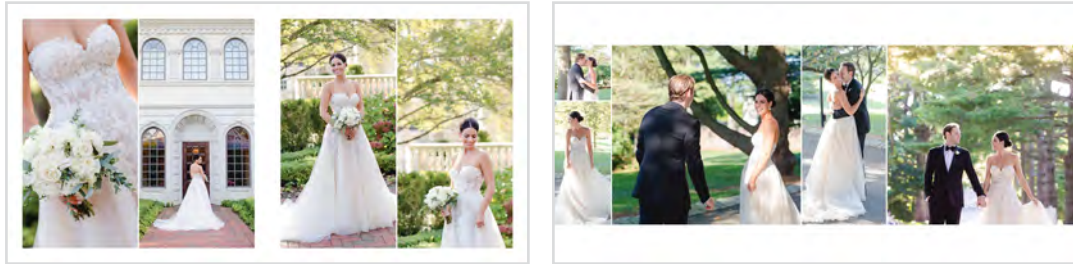
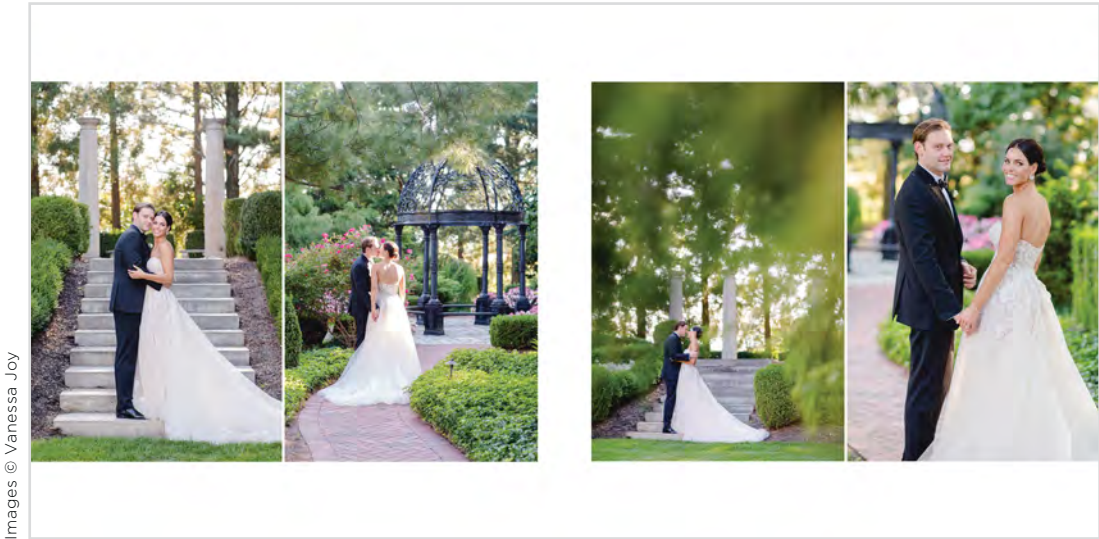




1. SHOOT FOR THE ALBUM

You’ve probably heard this one before. Most people will tell you to shoot for the album, making sure you cover every important event, detail, etc. Others will say you should be shooting close-ups, along with medium and wide shots, to arrange as sequences or full spreads. But go one step further and identify what’s important to your clients before even picking up your camera.

I recently photographed an engagement session, and I wasn’t happy with the results. I didn’t quite understand what my couple wanted until the very end, and that led to mediocre photos. While they loved them, I knew I could do better. Now I send out a questionnaire to my couples before I photograph them. I ask them what they love about each other. What is their favorite way that their significant other tells them they love them without words? Anything that will help me understand their personalities and capture the details of their relationship. Grab that side of your subjects, and there won’t be enough pages in the world to add to their album.

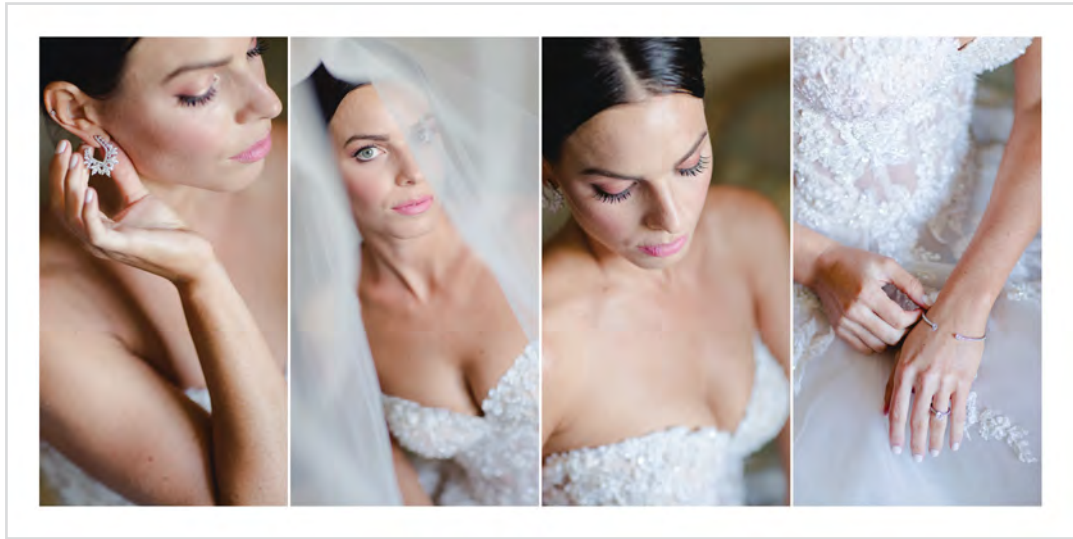


2. INCLUDE THE RIGHT PICTURES

When I was designing my own albums (I have a graphic designer do them now), I tended to pick my own pictures over my second shooter’s. That was stupid. Naturally, we gravitate to our own photos—not because we have huge egos (ok, maybe a little), but because we’re familiar with them and they’re easier to pick out when sifting through a ton of photos.

Don’t do this. Your couples relate emotionally to your second photographer’s photos just as much as they do yours. Plus, your other photographer’s angles add a beautiful perspective to the book, and more pictures. More pictures means more pages, which means more money for you.

If your second shooter isn’t doing their job right, just send them over to this e-book and I’ll straighten them out for you: [www.breatheyourpassion.com/shoot](http://www.breatheyourpassion.com/shoot).







Images © Vanessa Joy

If you’re a list person, here are the guidelines I give my graphic designers when predesigning wedding albums. All are a minimum of one spread each, unless otherwise indicated. Everything should be designed in chronological order (even if not listed that way below).

- Bridal details
- Bride prep
- Bride alone
- Groom details
- Groom prep
- Groom alone
- First look (if applicable)
- Ceremony details
- Ceremony entrance
- Ceremony vows/rings/etc.
- Ceremony exit
- Bride’s family photos
- Groom’s family photos
- Bridal party photos (2 spreads)
- Bridesmaids photos
- Groomsmen photos
- Bride and groom photos (3 spreads)
- Reception details
- First dance
- Parent dances
- Toasts
- Dancing
- Cake-cutting
- Bouquet/garter/anniversary dance
- Nighttime shot or epic landscape-type shot (always the last page)



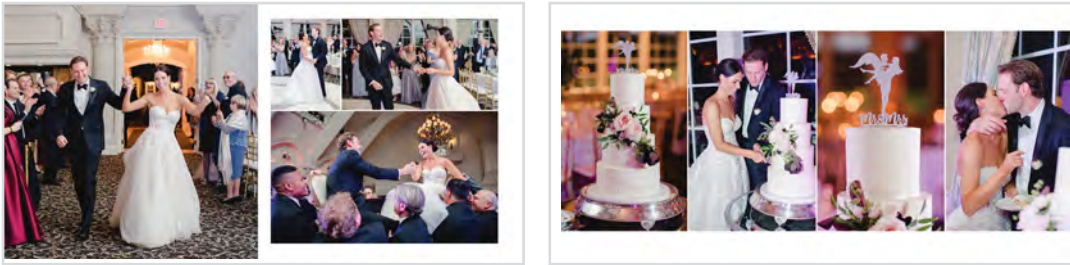
3. GET THE LAYOUT RIGHT

I’m not going to tell you how to design your albums aesthetically. If you’re still into the layers thing, hey, that’s your thing and you should rock it. But I do have this magical little trick that will make your clients want every page.

Bounce the eyes. This is really a video term (thanks to my hubby for teaching it to me), but it applies to album design as well. Essentially, you want the viewer’s eyes moving around every time they turn the page. So make sure you:

- Don’t have two of the same design layouts right next to each other.
- Use at least three full spreads in the album.
- Never repeat a prominent or larger image in the same spot on the page in consecutive spreads.
- Vary the number of images per spread.

These quick four tips will ensure that your client’s eyes are moving around with every page flip, decreasing boredom and increasing the uniqueness of each page.



Images © Vanessa Joy



accent image



accent image

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4. PROVIDE THE RIGHT SERVICES

I run a high-end wedding photography business, so I believe in providing the best possible quality to my clients without nickel-and-diming them. That means any retouching they ask for is included in any image they order in their album or in print. I do no retouching unless asked, but I always remind them that they can request it during their album design session.

I almost never have to retouch photos. I retouch roughly 6 percent of the photos that go into albums. It’s never a big deal if I send something off to be retouched. I’m more than happy to do it and even happier to provide it free to my clients.

5. USE THE RIGHT WORDS

I didn’t know about this until last week when I was chatting with my friend Christine Yodsukar. I was asking about her stellar album selling methods, and the following tip hit home. I implemented it right away.

Our words have power, and we don’t have to get all used-car salesman to use them effectively. The two words that you can start using in your album process right now are *delete* and *toward*. Change your pricing to say that it includes “30 pages toward your wedding album” instead of saying that it includes a “30-page wedding album.” And when you’re going through the album revisions and they want to take away a page, don’t say “remove,” say “delete.” I used those two words in my last engagement session album consultation and sold a 56-page engagement album; 56 pages, and I’d taken just 100 photos. Amazing.



Images © Vanessa Joy



Images © Vanessa Joy

6. SELL IT

I’m a huge believer in predesigning an album. Not just because it sells more, but because it looks better too. By predesigning, I get to have an album sales session where we complete the album design right then and there. Making more money does not mean just raising prices. It means cutting costs as well. Cutting down on the back-and-forth of mutually irritating emails (or even online design proofing software) is a win for everyone.

Check out this month’s video to see me pull together an album design with all the important elements. ■



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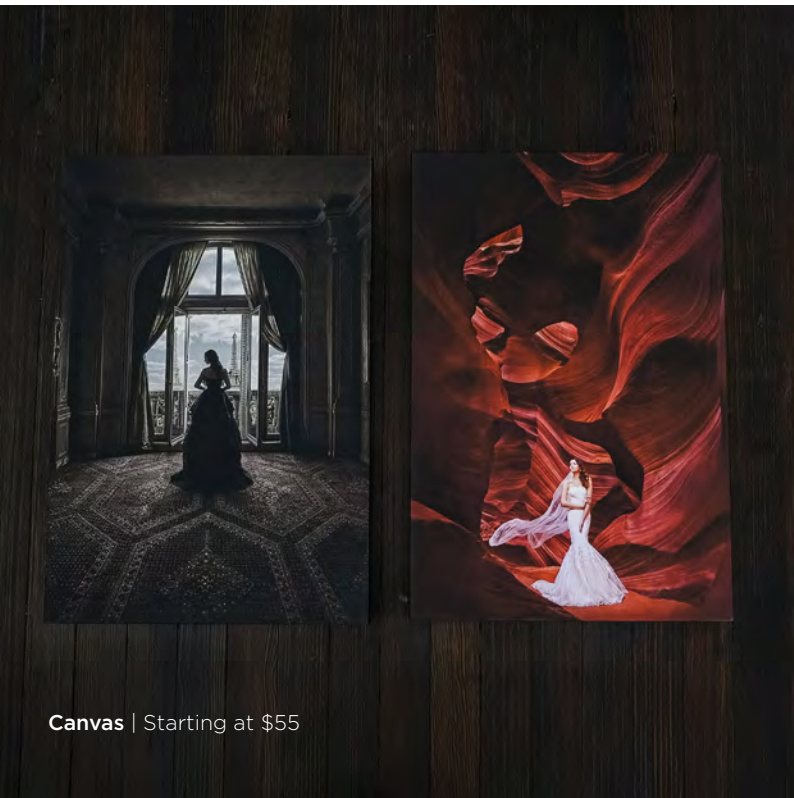


Vanessa Joy has been a professional wedding photographer in New Jersey since 2002, and an influencer in the photographic community for years. Since starting [VanessaJoy.com](http://VanessaJoy.com) in 2008, she has taught photographers around the globe at almost every major platform in the industry ([LearnPhotoVideo.com](http://LearnPhotoVideo.com)).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

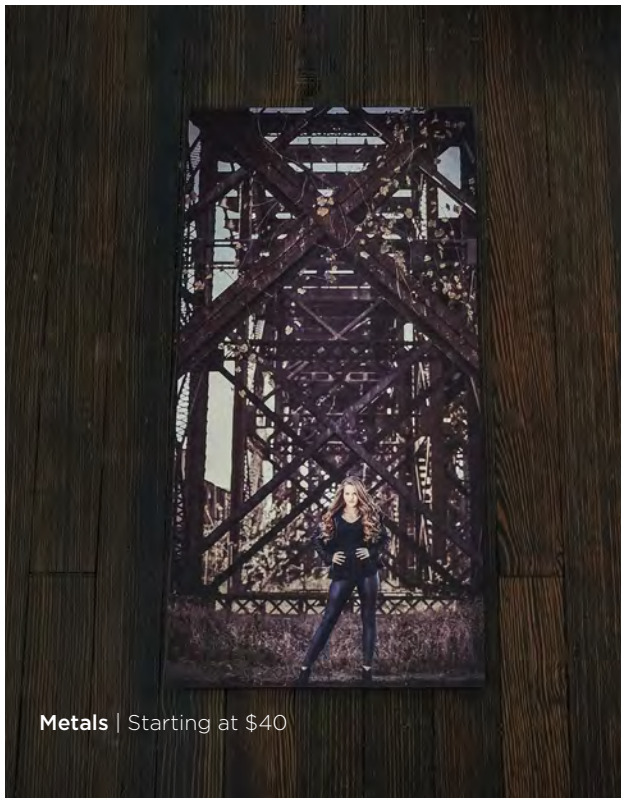




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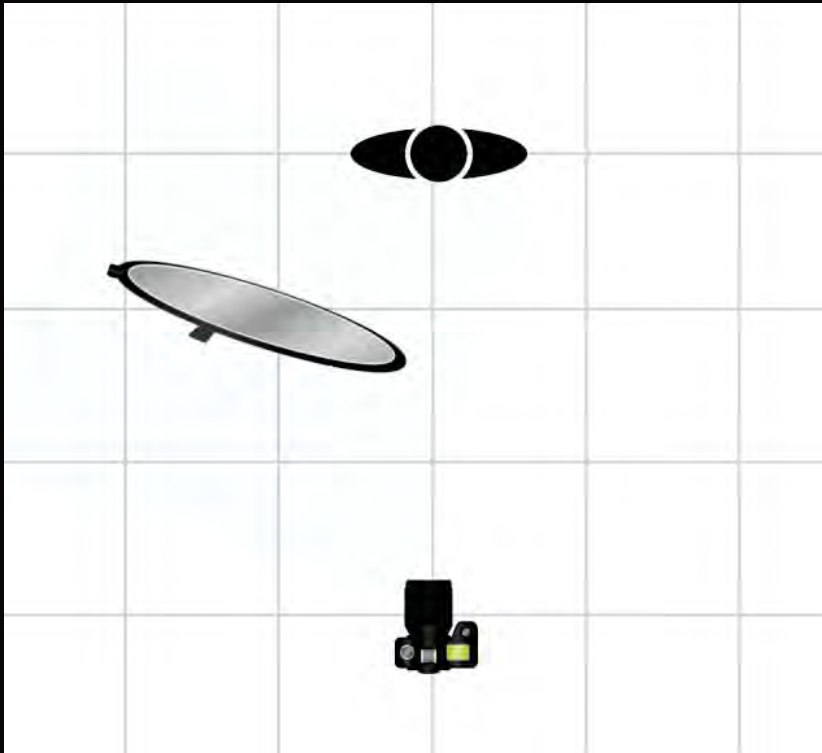
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# final inspiration

photographer | salvatore cincotta  
image title | paxton



exposure | f2.8 @ 1/1000, ISO 200  
lighting | profoto reflector, silver  
location | st. louis, missouri  
gear | canon 5d mark iv | canon 70-200 f2.8







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