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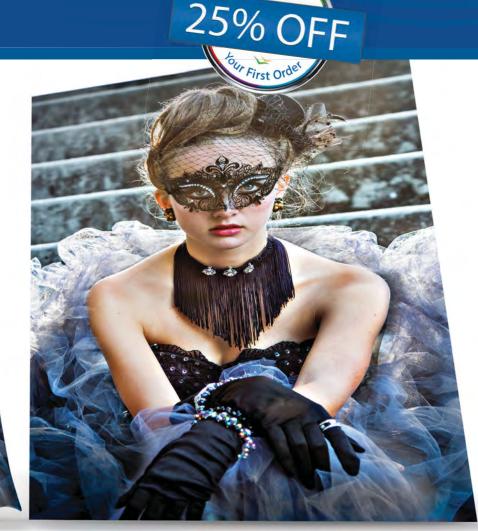
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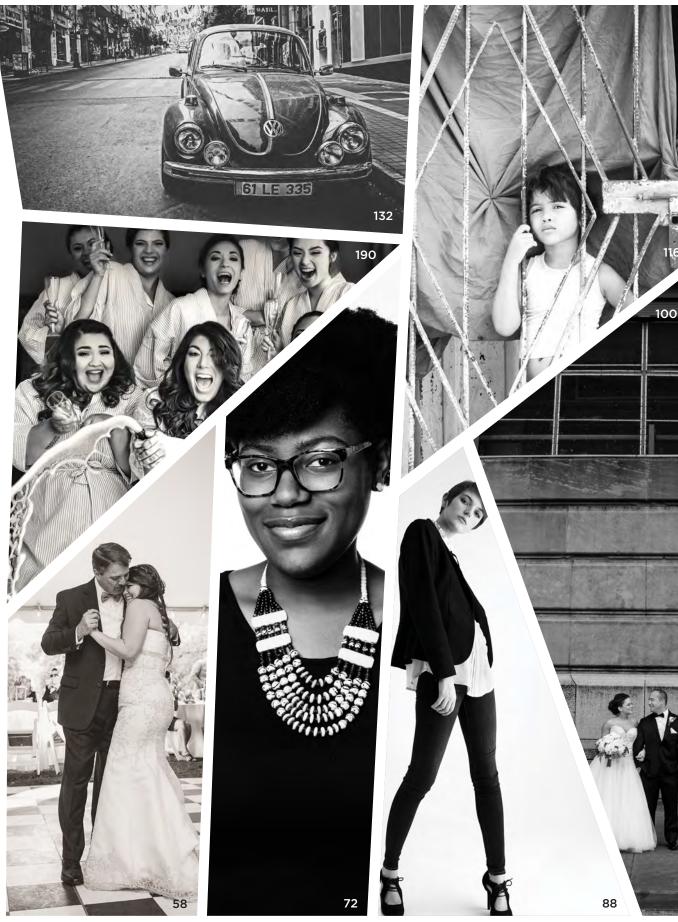


"17hats has been a complete game-changer for our business. The ability to streamline and automate our workflows allows me to focus on shooting and the experience I provide for my clients while 17hats handles the rest." - **Sal Cincotta**

shutter

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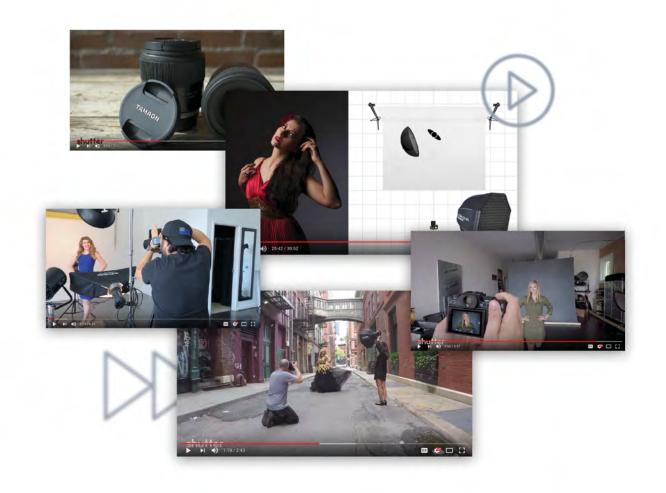
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MISSION STATEMENT

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

Shutter Magazine: By photographers, for photographers.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF / PUBLISHER

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Sal Cincotta

Alissa Zimmerman

DESIGNER

DESIGNER

Alicia Simpson

Isabelle Woollett

COPY EDITOR

ACCOUNT SPECIALIST

Tom O'Connell

Christine Gill

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Vanessa Joy, Michael Anthony, Sal Cincotta, Skip Cohen, Nino Batista, Moshe Zusman, Laurin Thienes, Michael Corsentino, Chris Lettner, Dustin Lucas Phillip Blume and Unmesh Dinda



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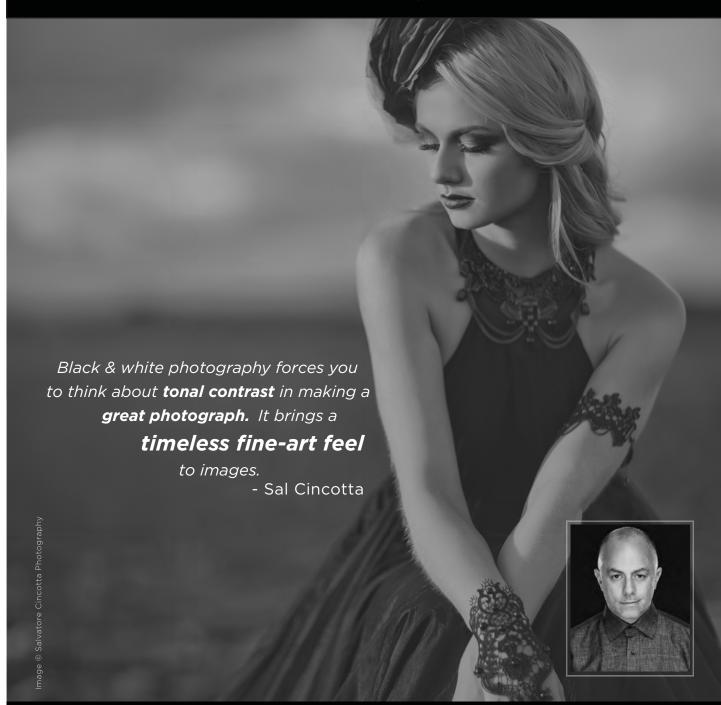
ABOUT THE IMAGE: This image was shot at golden hour

using natural light, August 2017.

SHUTTER MAGAZINE | BEHIND THE SHUTTER
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LAUNCH POINT

A message from the editor-in-chief





SHOOT FOR SUCCESS WITH SELF-PROMOTION

with **Skip Cohen**

Many photographers act as if they've got a top-notch publicist on their payroll, and do nothing to promote their business or brand. They act as if *self-promotion* is a dirty word and not something worthy of their time, when in reality it's one of the most important aspects of building any business.

So, let's get proactive and put you and your skillset in the spotlight.





VIDEO/SLIDESHOWS

Nothing demonstrates your skillset better than a self-promotional slideshow, together with the story of your business. Great images combined with a few short video clips and good music creates an instant demonstration of your skills, enthusiasm, commitment and passion for the business.

Being a storyteller is one of the most important traits of great photographers, so learn to tell your own story. Here are the magic ingredients to telling your story.

- Your skillset: If your images are at best mediocre, stop adding insult to injury. Don't show images that are less than terrific. You can sneak in a couple that might not be outstanding only if they're part of a storytelling sequence. The majority need to be "wow" images—photos so good you'd have to show just one of them to get hired.
- Timing: Keep your self-promotional slideshow under three minutes. I shoot for two minutes or less.
- Music: Your choice of music will make or break your video. Stay focused on your target audience, which for most of you is Mom. Pick music that stays in the background, that isn't distracting, that adds to your story instead of taking attention away from it. You want people to remember the whole story and the images, not just the music.
- **Diversity:** While a little diversity is great, don't go overboard. Stay true to your core specialty. If you're a wedding photographer, stay with weddings and people. If you're a children's photographer, stay with kids and families. It throws people off when an artist includes fine-art landscape images when their core business is weddings, children or fashion.
- Location, location: Just as a retail store needs a visible location with high traffic, you have to think about your Internet real estate. Don't bury your video in your website. Put it right on the home landing page. Make it the first thing people see when they walk through the door.

The timing this month is purely coincidental, but we're working with Photodex on a self-promotional video contest. We're in search of the best self-promotional video from a photographer.

Here's your chance to put together still images, a little video and great music for a shot at seeing your work highlighted online. But that's not all. The amazing grand prize package is a Panasonic Lumix GX85 camera, an SP45mm lens from Tamron, a \$250 credit for Bella Art Prints and Albums from Marathon Press, a new state-of-the-art Illuminati color and light meter and a year's subscription to ProShow Web from Photodex. The package is worth almost \$2,000.

The winning slideshow will be announced in November and shared on a number of websites, including those for Photodex and SkipCohenUniversity, and there will be an industry-wide press release.



YOUR BLOG

Even if you've been a little behind on your blog, it's never too late to crank up the volume.

- Build a stash: One of the most important keys to a strong blog is consistency. If you've been posting every full moon, you're wasting your time and cyberspace real estate. To make sure you've got something to post at least two days a week, build a stash. Your blog posts don't have to be in real time. If you have an inventory of at least 20 posts, you can maintain a consistent presence and not lose momentum.
- "But Skip, I've got nothing to write about." I've written about this before, but let's hit a few ideas again.
 - Holiday gift ideas: We're coming into the fourth quarter, and this is your opportunity to plant a few seeds. Share ideas on picture frames, canvas prints, albums, posters, etc. All it takes is one call to your lab with the question "What's new?"
 - Picture-taking tips: Start helping Mom with ideas to raise the bar on the quality of her pictures, even if she's shooting with her cellphone. You've got the expertise to help with composition, lighting, posing and even exposure. This is great content to share because it puts you in a position of being helpful to your readers and begins to establish your expertise.
 - Contests: Launch the occasional photo contest. It's the perfect interactive way to get your readers involved. The grand prize winner gets a free portrait sitting.
 - Community events: It's time to bring back the old town crier. Share information about things going on in your community. Do things like walkathons. Help out the hosting association with your photography. The public loves to see local businesspeople giving back.
 - Personal experiences: There's nothing wrong with getting personal on your blog as long as you're relevant. Know your target audience and share events in your own life they can relate to. Don't get too personal. Show that you're human and you understand the frustration of finding balance in your life, etc.
 - Throwback Thursday: I love throwback images as a marketing tool. Once every week or so, share a few old images to get your target audience thinking about those important memories. Write about how fast time goes by, how fast kids grow up and the importance of capturing those moments. Use throwback images to plant the seed for the importance of an updated family portrait.
 - Use your pictures: Share images that demonstrate a point—what to wear on a portrait shoot, posing the kids with Grandma and composition. This is also a chance to demonstrate your ability as a storyteller with each image.
 - How to hire a photographer: Share objective tips on what people should look for when hiring a photographer.



YOUR GALLERIES

Your galleries have an incredible level of power in helping to build brand recognition and appreciation for your abilities. You have to keep your images fresh and appealing.

- Outdated material: Start by pulling old images off your site. Unless the image is one of the most incredible you've ever captured, it doesn't belong on your website.
- Number of images: You need only eight to 10 images in a category to demonstrate your skillset. Wedding photographers don't need to break out images into subcategories like "getting ready," "the ceremony," "the reception," "bridals," etc. Everyone knows the timing of events at a wedding. Break it down to no more than two or three groups, and show the images in sequence.
- "Groomals:" So many photographers want to share their brides but forget about the grooms.
- Diversity: Show your skillset, but don't go overboard. Black and white, color, UV, macro—they're all part of who you are. Just be careful that you don't turn your galleries into a Photoshop demo.
- **Albums:** I love when artists show an actual album. No matter your specialty, building an album demonstrates your skills as a storyteller and can help plant the seed of other ideas with your target audience.
- Size matters: Pay attention to how your images are displayed. So often I find a website where the images are too big and extend beyond the bottom fold of the page, or they're too small and I don't get the full impact.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Fall is a great time to get involved in your community. The kids are heading back to school and nonprofits are launching campaigns. If you want the community to be good to you, you've got to be good to your community. Get involved.

Share announcements about upcoming events on your blog. Share images of events you're supporting. Get to know the staff at those nonprofits you believe in, and let them know your willingness to help out at any time, with or without your camera.

One of the most important tools for building brand awareness is your relationship with members of the community. Here's your chance to be more than just another vendor or retailer.

September is the perfect time to do a little fine-tuning and plant a few ideas with your target audience. It's not hard, but it does take time. Nobody knows your business like you do, and nobody but you can get people excited about your work.

Amazon founder Jeff Bezos is responsible for one of my favorite business quotes, which puts everything I've shared today in perspective:

"We see our customers as invited guests to a party, and we are the hosts. It's our job to make the customer experience a little bit better."

- Jeff Bezos

There's a party coming in the last three months of the year, and you're the host. Let's make your fourth quarter the best.





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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If you're a seasoned wedding photographer, you already know that the last quarter of the season can get tough. Maybe you took on too many weddings this year, or maybe you feel a bit of longing with the end of wedding season in sight. Whatever it is, wedding professionals typically look forward to a little bit of a break come winter—except for those in warmer climates who are just getting started.

In the Northeast, weddings in September and October are ideal because of the pleasant temperatures and bright colors. The last thing we want to give our clients is a tired-out photographer. Here are my tips for making it through the last stretch of wedding season.



nages © Vanessa Joy

1. THROW OUT THE COOKIE CUTTERS

At this point in the season, you've perfected your wedding routine. You can do your photo session with your eyes closed and nothing can surprise you the day of. This is a good thing, but it can also lead to some serious boredom. Do yourself a favor and pick up your favorite fashion magazine, or scour the Internet for new ideas that you can try at your last few weddings of the year. Whether it's a new posing technique or lighting trick, or simply a different way of shooting, now is the time to throw a few curveballs into your game since you have the basics down pat. It'll give your clients images that don't look exactly like everything you've shot that year, which will be great for social media.

As I write this, I'm getting ready to attend a two-day photography workshop to give myself a boost that I'm in dire need of. I can't wait to get those creative juices flowing and bring new techniques to my remaining weddings this year.











2. AVOID BURNOUT

Burnout happens when we've been doing something too long, or when we've been doing it without taking a break. I feel it toward the end of the season, and I know I'm not alone. If you're finding yourself getting easily irritated, tired or frustrated, you're probably getting close to burnout. Don't wait until you actually roll your eyes in front of your bride when she asks you to copy that stupid Pinterest picture; deal with it before then.

The best thing you can do, whether you're already in burnout mode or feel yourself inching toward it, is to take a break. Some photographers like to still hold a camera, but do something more creative with it outside of paid work. Others, like me, need to put the camera away and completely detach from the photography world. Get a massage, take a nap in a park or just spend a day binging Netflix shows and eating chocolate—whatever gets you the recharge you need to give your couples your best work and your best you.

Here's the big key to this step: You must not feel guilty about this off time. For a long time, I felt a great deal of shame when I took days off. Consequently, it made the time I took off completely useless because my body may have rested, but my mind didn't. Human beings are not wired to never take a break.

Breaks and boredom are what give our minds the free space to be creative, come up with ideas and get inspired. Even workaholic Sal Cincotta can attest to this. Sal has said that when he lays his head down at night, when his mind and body have been given that break, is when his best ideas start flowing. Alissa can second this because that's when Sal starts texting her all his new business ideas. Rest-good things will come of it.





. KEEP IT AT 100%

It's easy to start slacking off at the end of the year. A well-established shooting routine comes with a little bit of laziness. A lot of the wedding becomes second nature, so it's tempting to be a bit lackadaisical about it. If you give into that mindset, things could start slipping.

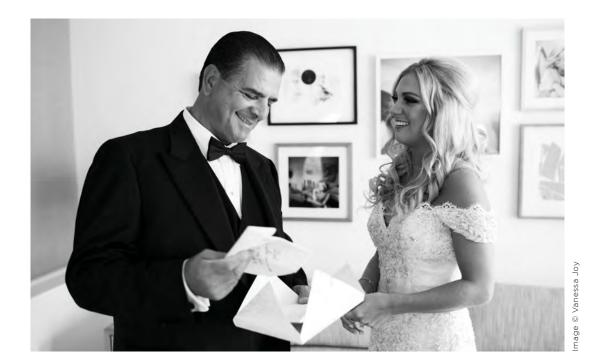
I often see this happen not at the wedding itself, but before and after. When things appear simple, it's easier to procrastinate. A little pressure keeps people on their toes. If you have staff, now is a good time to get them motivated so they don't slack off either.

There are lots of ways to motivate yourself and your team. I offer incentives to look forward to, like an end-of-year party, or surprise them with little gifts here and there. It's motivating for me to give of myself and my money, and I know they love the sentiment behind anything we do. And things we do together are great for team-building and studio morale.

Staff meetings are another good way to boost morale. Keep your team in the know about how the company is doing, what goals have been reached and what lies ahead. These are wonderful ways to keep everyone on the same page and pushing the company forward together. Even if you're a team of one, sitting down and looking at the year as a whole will motivate you.

If you have some staff, even if it's just second shooters, read the book *EntreLeadership: 20 Years of Practical Business Wisdom From the Trenches*, by Dave Ramsey. It's chock-full of amazing business advice, including help with financial and ethical questions. The sections on team building are solid. After reading it, you'll be anxious to start implementing the ideas in your studio.





End-of-the-year burnout often results from taking on too much work. While having work is a blessing, it can also be a curse. One of the earliest decisions I made was to make sure I wasn't overloading myself with weddings because I didn't want to have a short career. Doing too much is a good way to find yourself hating what you do.

If you think you're being overworked, you're likely being underappreciated as well—and likely undervaluing yourself. The best cure for both of these things is to—gasp—raise your prices. You and your staff are worth the raise. Your clients are worth you not hating working their wedding. Your family and friends are worth the free time you'll be able to spend with them.

Time is your most valuable asset. Make sure it's going to something of value at all times.





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

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A valuable lesson for any artist is that you will never learn it all. You will never get to a point where you are completely comfortable. If you do, then you stopped growing a long time ago. Instead, we need to understand that this is a journey that we are all on. And we are all at different points on this journey.

The things I know today as second nature, I vividly remember struggling with eight years ago. So that leads us to the next questions. How do I become better? How do I prevent burnout? How do I chart my career?

Never stop learning.

I have said this before and I will say it again. Business, photography, life—it's not a destination, it's a journey. Get your mind right. You will never know it all. Being a better photographer is not about any one skill. I started when I was 16, and I have seen an industry go from film to digital. I have watched business and marketing strategies evolve in ways I never could have dreamed.

I have learned to enjoy the journey of learning. I can't say it loud enough. There is no better feeling in the world than that moment when the light bulb goes off and you realize you've learned a new concept. I am addicted to that feeling. Accept that you will never stop learning. Don't let yourself stagnate. That's the worst thing that can happen to an artist.

Explore. Experiment. Fail. Repeat.







Make a list.

So what do you need to learn? For some of you, the answer might seem to be everything. I have been there. Hell, I feel that way on a daily basis. It can be overwhelming. With the speed at which business and technology change, it can feel like this to a seasoned professional, so trust me, you are not alone.

How do you manage it all? Make a list. Think about it this way. College students pick a major. To earn a degree in that major, a student has to learn, well, everything. At least it feels that way your freshman year. There is seemingly no end in sight and you feel like you may never graduate. But a carefully developed university curriculum provides a list of classes and requirements, a handy roadmap to aid you on your learning journey.

Put together your own list. This list will change every four to six months. No matter where you are in your career, you still have more learning and room for growth. Your list is based on where you are right now.

Pick five things you want to learn now. Not next year, next month or someday. Now. What do you need to focus on? And while you may need to learn "everything" because you are a freshman today, we've already established that you can't actually learn everything. A list of five things is pretty reasonable.

Be relatively specific with your list. Don't just put down "lighting." What kind of lighting? Off-camera flash? Great. What do you need to learn there? Again, the more specific you can be, the more realistic and manageable it all becomes.

Shiitter Magazine Sentember 2017

Education.

Armed with your list, start soaking up knowledge from every source possible: YouTube, conferences, hands-on learning, workshops, books, magazines. Start planning your year ahead. It's not going to just happen.

Shutter Magazine is a great source of information, and of course I will shamelessly plug ShutterFest. This is one of the only hands-on photography conferences on the planet. One fee gets you access to over 250 models, wardrobe, concepts—and everything else you might need. This is how you learn.

I want to stress the importance of *how* you learn. While we all receive education and knowledge in our own ways, for me it's a multistep process.

That process is one part reading and three parts hands-on. This is so important. Theoretical knowledge is great, but there is nothing like practical knowledge. You have to know how to do something in the real world.

I remember coming out of college with my degree after nailing finals, thinking I was hot shit. Then I started my first day in corporate America, and I was like, *what*?! I had no real-world experience. Everything I knew was out of books. You have to take those things you are reading about, watching videos on, sitting in conference rooms hearing about...and put that knowledge to actual use.

How do you do that if you don't have clients yet?





Practice.

Wait, you thought you were just going to read a book or watch some random video by your favorite educator or photographer, and you were going to magically get it?

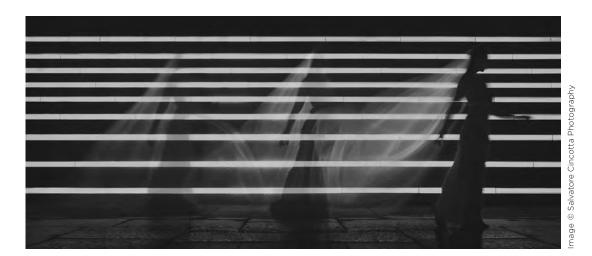
About five years ago, I realized that if I was ever going to be the master of my craft, I was going to have to invest time in me. Not my clients, but me. In order to do that, you need to set up scenarios to practice. Do not—I repeat, do not—practice on your clients. This is a really bad way to learn. I am not saying don't experiment with clients. Magic happens when you do that. But practicing something new can lead to disaster, panic and a loss of confidence when the results don't look the way you had hoped.

Maybe you can adapt my process. Every year, I carve out two to three weeks, pick a new destination somewhere in the world, and set up shoots with models and clients who are willing to experiment with me, knowing things will be much slower-paced. This exercise has singlehandedly led to my growth as a photographer and artist. My work today is far better than it was five years ago.

During these shoots, I have a concept, style and location all predetermined. I slow down. I don't allow myself to be rushed. I conceptualize a shot in my head and then I work methodically to execute it. Do I fail? You bet. Do I always get the shot I saw in my head? Nope. Do I learn from it? Always.

As long as I am a photographer, I will make time for me. This is so important to personal growth. Try it, and I guarantee you will see results almost immediately. This has allowed me to grow more confidence, build my portfolio and perform better when working with actual clients.

Try this. Schedule two days of shoots over a weekend. Try three locations each day, with three different concepts. You will walk away with six different images for your portfolio, but more importantly, you will have learned more than any workshop can teach you. And that's just two days. Imagine doing it two weeks a year.



Curiosity.

Finally, never lose that curiosity. I am as curious today as I was the day I started. I love learning new things. I love watching new photographers, learning from them and how they see the world. There is so much out there we can all learn, and it starts by being curious.

The day you lose that, everything else becomes much more difficult. It's hard to care about getting better and growing when you just don't care or aren't inspired anymore. Staying curious is important in preventing burnout. At least it has been for me.

We all work hard in our own way. For me, the desire to learn something new and the curiosity about how things work keeps me excited every single day. If you're like me, you go to bed at night thinking and excited about the next day.

Keep it fresh and don't ever lose that spark. It'll keep you going. It's the one thing I hear most from my clients about hiring me. They love my energy and passion. You just can't fake that. ■

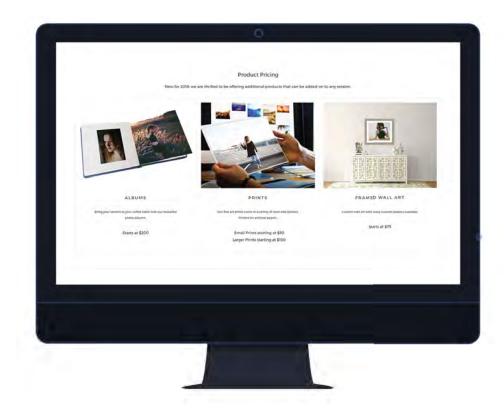




Sal Cincotta is an international award-winning photographer, educator, author and the publisher of *Shutter Magazine*. Sal's success is directly tied to the education he received in business school. He graduated from Binghamton University, a Top 20 business school, and has worked for Fortune 50 companies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

salcincotta.com







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BLACK & WHITE EDITION

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GLAMOUR PHOTOGRAPHY IN BLACK & WHITE

with Nino Batist



A black-and-white image causes a different reaction in your brain because everything about the shot looks like reality except there isn't any color, and therefore it is unmistakably not reality. That's obvious enough, but somewhere in that odd mix of suspension of disbelief and perception lies the magic of a monochrome image.

People tend to automatically label black-and-white images as "dramatic," but that doesn't reduce the undeniable impact of a good monochrome image. In my main genre, glamour photography, black and white makes few appearances. Most of my work is styled on set for color, as is common in commercial glamour.

That said, I do enjoy producing black-and-white work. I find myself doing it more and more, and I have developed a very specific approach. It varies quite a lot from my color imagery. It was a game changer when I figured out that my best black-and-white work stemmed from intentionally trying for, planning and executing shots as monochrome. Before, I would change an image to black and white in post-production simply because "I didn't know what else to do with it."

This was a major mistake, and that is what this article is about: deliberately shooting for black and white in glamour, and how it can make your monochrome work that much better.





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BE DELIBERATE

As I said, I've been guilty in the past of converting an image to black and white simply because I was unsure what else to do with it in post, and I know that is something almost every single digital photographer has done as well. Photographers find themselves torn between the color version of their edit and a black-and-white conversion of the same shot (you even see photographers post both versions on social media, asking their followers which one they prefer). This is almost certainly indicative of a photographer making the unfortunate mistake of not having a complete vision for a shot up front. While you can convert an image to black and white arbitrarily and find success with it, I find far more consistent results when you set out to shoot monochrome from the start. But where do you start?

First, let's analyze what black-and-white photography is. The total absence of color, or tone, means we are perceiving an image of something strictly in millions of different values. Sounds simple enough, but the absence of color means we need to focus on other things when we set out to shoot monochrome, because color palettes and other color theory considerations go right out the window.

The key elements I focus on when I am trying to craft a black-and-white image are contrast, geometry, texture and mood. I am speaking in generalities here. There are many examples of black-and-white images that do not adhere to my preferred approach to the style. Let's break these down and see how they affect the final black-and-white image.

CONTRAST

First off, I do not mean boosting contrast in post-production. I am speaking to the idea of shooting with contrast in mind on set: specifically higher-contrast lighting setups, scenes, wardrobe or posing. Once your image is converted to black and white, any power or impact that color elements had immediately vanish, and you are left with only value to work with. As such, higher-contrast images generally lend themselves to black and white pretty well. You are letting highlights and shadows take center stage, so you need to plan how you want them to play off of each other in your shot. The simplest way, though not the only way, is to set up something with strong contrast.

One of my favorite methods to achieve instant contrast is to use hard light. It can be totally bare, open sunlight or a strobe with no modifier. That's not to say hard light is the only way go about getting a great monochrome image, but it's one of my preferred ways.











A perfectly clean image with immaculate wardrobe, makeup, hair and scene can make for a powerful, angular type of contrast. A dirty scene, with dust, dirt, mud, stained clothing and a wrecked environment can evoke a gritty vibe. Both approaches play on contrast and geometry in very different ways.

My favorite texture is skin. I am obsessed with retouching skin in a way that preserves and perfects texture (note I didn't say "smoothing"). A black-and-white conversion can bring out the failings in a bad skin retouch more than just about anything.



to convey emotion, is far more crucial in a black-and-white set than in a color one. You can't always nail this down, of course, but when I dive into a black-and-white set, I am almost always thinking about some heightened

emotional themes.



CONCLUSION

I believe that these four elements can come together to benefit your black-and-white work, especially when you apply them up front. When you find yourself doing the black-and-white conversion in post-production because that was your plan all along, then you know you may be on to the next level of black-and-white photography portraits.



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

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Capturing Authentic Moments on a Wedding Day





Shutter Magazine . September 2017

"Where's the authenticity in this photograph?" I've probably asked myself that question 100,000 times since my wife Eileen and I opened our studio, Blume Photography, almost 10 years ago. Our pursuit of authenticity has remained our North Star, steering us toward a lot of success in art, business and life.

If I can identify authenticity in one of my images, I know that no matter what technical imperfections it may have, I've found a keeper—an image that is a real contender for my portfolio, website or a publication. Authentic images are the ones our clients want to buy. Never underestimate that. You could say authenticity puts bread (and sometimes even steak) on our family's table.

So how do you learn to recognize authenticity in a photograph? Even more challenging, how do you then re-create authenticity in image after image for your many clients? It's a hugely important question for your business. So let's talk about six ways Eileen and I capture authentic moments.

℅ 1. STAY ALERT

For me, authenticity means that an image invokes an emotional response in the viewer. The viewer sees real emotion being expressed somewhere in the image, and then reacts by experiencing that same emotion. This is why I love photography. Authentic images act as reverse mirrors—we reflect what we see in the frame.

To capture authentic candid moments inside a bigger composition, think ahead. When you see perfect moments taking place within perfectly composed images, it may look too good to be true. Surely that shot was set up, we assume. But it really just takes a little forethought.

For example, I always take at least an hour to scout locations before shooting a wedding. I find as many good compositions as I can, not just the spots I'll eventually use for portraits. Later in the day, as events begin to unfold in these locations, I reframe for the compositions I already planned. Now it's just a waiting game. Wait for a guest to walk through the frame laughing. Wait for the bride to pass by escorted by her father. Wait for the dance floor to clear enough so the couple is framed by the crowd. *Oh no, the bride sneezed just as the crowd cleared*. Don't panic. This takes patience. But no rule says you must take 10 images a minute. Slow down, and the goods will come.

Curiously, humans have a tendency to repeat themselves—a lot. If you saw a moment pass by but your camera was down, get ready and hope it will happen again. Did you just miss the flower girl making hilarious faces at herself in the mirror? Yes, she already ran away, but she'll be right back to do it again. Did the groom just wipe away a perfect tear at the altar? Quick—frame up your storytelling shot, and get ready. He will probably wipe away the next tear more dramatically and with better expression.







Images © Blume Pho

behindtheshutter.cc







% 2. INJECT EMOTION

If you stop here, you might mistakenly believe authentic photography is synonymous with candid photography. Nothing is further from the truth. Candid photos can turn out completely bland and emotionless. (Just look at any of my early work as a photojournalist. Those random bystanders, sidelined athletes and frowning farmers never should have made the printed page.)

On the other hand, you can inject authenticity into portraits that you take the time to pose. That's the signature technique we've taught to workshop students around the world for years (and we've felt flattered to see those lessons imitated a few times since). When you stop posing and start playing, you make sessions fast and fluid, and full of authentic emotion your clients will feel deeply—and remember fondly when it's time to order prints.

There isn't nearly enough space here to describe our complete "Posed to Playful" system. But that's why we wrote it all down for you in our *Posed to Playful* eBook. Feel free to download all 34 interactive pages of our best tips and favorite role-playing scenarios now. Take a moment to bookmark it at http://bit.ly/dontbeaposer. Enjoy it now before it goes up on our paid store this fall.





3. PUT YOUR SUBJECT AT EASE

Most of us don't shoot professional models. But I actually prefer it that way. What's the biggest difference between an experienced model and a first-time portrait subject? Confidence. That's all. Spoil your clients by instilling confidence, and they'll surprise you with their performance.

Confidence is never created with false flattery. "Wow, that dress makes you look so skinny" comes off as an insult to a heavyset subject, for example. Instead, explain to your clients what you're doing behind the lens. Direct her by saying, "Stretch your spine up and twist your shoulder toward me. Wonderful. That's perfect. Now keep that stellar posture, and just break at the waist like Betty Boop. When you lean toward me, it's super flattering and really brings your gorgeous eyes into focus."

See? You've allowed her to feel that you're in control, that you know what you're doing. You've complimented her posture and playfully compared her to Betty Boop, which begins to replace a person's often negative self-perception with a more positive mental picture of herself. You might even model the Betty Boop pose yourself. The goofier you're willing to be, the more your subject will loosen up.

To create an instant connection with any subject, your smile is your most disarming and powerful tool. A slightly bashful smile is my nuclear option. I don't have time to compliment and direct all 200 guests on a wedding day. But I can make ole-sour-face Grandma my best friend by grinning at her from across the room. There's psychology to it. When I catch her gaze, I raise my eyebrows shyly and keep smiling. She now views me as a fellow human who will thoughtfully defer to her, rather than a prodding pro who's there to boss her around. I lift my camera as if offering it to her, and she approvingly smiles like no one has seen her smile all day. It works like a charm on anyone, even the grumpy church lady, whom I always make a point to smile at before I walk down the aisle beyond the permitted distance.



4. MINIMIZE YOUR GEAR

I lust over the newest piece of shiny camera gear just as much as the next guy. But through the years, I've realized I can create more authentic work with less gear. There's no sacrifice in quality. I carry all my gear in a single shoulder bag and in the Spider Holster around my waist. I feel liberated when I walk into a conference with just a small bag while my fellow photographers are pushing their equipment around on pallets.

At a wedding, bounce flash is your best friend. I use it through 80 percent of the day. Bounce flash is a basic on-camera flash technique that gives you similar results as off-camera flash.

This minimal setup helps me capture more authentic moments because it allows me to remain less conspicuous among the camera-shy. It never keeps me disengaged while I'm setting up off-camera lights (which I reserve mostly for posed portraits).

Here are two pro tips for bounce flash. First, use a bounce card—but not in the way most photographers use it. You'll typically see photographers Velcro a white rectangle of paper or plastic behind the flash head. The idea is that the card reflects some light into the subject's face to fill in shadows. Most of the light comes from whatever object the flash is directly bouncing into. Oddly, I often see amateurs firing their flashes into the air outdoors, using a bounce card as the only source of light. Don't do this. This drains your batteries and has no desirable effect in any scenario (and makes you look silly).

Instead, attach your bounce card to the front of your flash head, between your light and the subject. You get great results partly underexposed indoors. Bounce cards usually provide too much fill light on your subject, which can look similar to flat, on-camera flash lighting. But if the only keylight comes from a more dramatic 90-degree angle, its "shaping" effect will be more three-dimensional and beautiful.

My second tip is to generally point your flash in whichever direction your subject turns his nose. It's easy enough to swivel your flash head left-right, back and forth throughout the day. I feel as free as if I'm shooting natural light, but with much more consistent, professional results. To light a big group evenly with the same effect as a giant softbox, just point it back over your shoulder toward the ceiling. You won't miss a moment.

Finally, I can't recommend Spider Holster gear highly enough. A lot of companies send me gear to review, but I've never been so impressed by the design and functionality of equipment before—it has made my entire shooting workflow quicker, and helps me stay present in the moment. Goodbye, bags.



5. REFINE YOUR STYLE

Style is defined largely by the camera and flash settings you become comfortable with. For authenticity, consider long "compressing" lenses to create intimate photographs without getting in your client's face. If you like to use wider lenses, that's fine. I often shoot a 24mm lens, which creates a fun distortion effect up close, almost like a funhouse mirror. Within this range, I almost always want my subject laughing or at least smiling big to suit the visual mood. Make sure your clients are comfortable with you, because you will need to get in close to crop out the distractions in wider compositions.

Black-and-white photography lends itself to authentic imagery. That's why we often peg all deeply emotional photos we come across for black-and-white processing. It removes distractions and allows the viewer to soak in the feeling.







% 6. BE CRAZY

This last technique is my favorite. It involves chasing cars, climbing trees and talking to strangers. Click my video this month to hear this bonus tip, and I'll see you inside.

It's also the first and most important question I ask myself when judging images for print competitions.





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.

blume photography.com







When you think about creating a black-and-white photo, ask yourself, why black and white? Some clients simply want it for a particular marketing look or just for the love of black and white. Either way, you should know why you're shooting in this style.

In this article, I focus on a recent black-and-white project I did for a commercial client. Whitman Walker is a healthcare provider focused on the LGBT community. They found me through a black-and-white series on my website, at https://www.headshotdc.com/black-white/.



The client showed me a mood board that demonstrated an attention to details, light and contrast, especially high contrast. Black-and-white photography is great at emphasizing these things. After brainstorming with Whitman Walker, we determined that the most important element for the campaign featuring volunteer patients of the provider was the natural feel and look of people and their expressions.

We scheduled the patients to come in and out all day in groups of one to three. We photographed them fairly quickly so they wouldn't get even more nervous about the process while waiting. I spent five or six minutes photographing each person or group, and then I spent a few extra minutes showing each person their images on the big screen. They wouldn't get to pick their images—that was the job of the PR team—but I love getting my subjects excited about a project.





The most important element in the campaign was to make people look real, natural and not like models. My lighting had to be simple and versatile, with minimal adjustment of contrast and exposure between sittings. I used the Profoto D2 Air 1000w/s and a 3x4 softbox about 2 feet camera right and 3 feet above camera. A second moonlight was behind my subjects, lighting the plain white backdrop. Then all I had to do was direct people, make them feel comfortable with me and the camera, and encourage them to have some fun.

















iges © Moshe Zusr

There are many way to convert a Raw file to black and white, but this article is not about that. You can use presets, actions, plug-ins or even do it manually. After the PR team selected the final images for the campaign, we reverted them back to color. My retoucher cleaned up the images and we presented them to the client. After their OK, we converted them back to black and white. I created a preset in Lightroom that worked perfectly. I had to adjust exposure and contrast where needed.

It's awesome to see your work printed so big, and used for a great cause.

4 TIPS FOR BLACK & WHITE COMMERCIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Tip 1 - Identify the style and concept with a mood board.

I hate wasting my clients' time and my time. Setting the general idea and look helps me focus on what I need to do.

Tip 2 - Create contrast—not in post, at least not yet.

Create it with light. When you photograph black and white, contrast is key. Light your images with more contrast lighting than normal. Feather the light differently or create a greater ratio between your key and fill lights.

Tip 3 - Focus on the eyes.

You don't have color in your images. The viewer's eye is more drawn to shapes and lines, but the most known shape is the eye. There are always exceptions, like when people don't look at the camera or laugh with their eyes closed. But for the most part, the eyes are extremely important in black-and-white portraits.

Tip 4 - I shoot in Raw.

That means we shoot black-and-white photos in color. I create a quick preset in Lightroom and show the client the proofs in black and white, even when I tether in the studio and show them the images on the spot. I don't want to distract them with color. I want them to visualize the images already in black and white.













Good luck on your next black-and-white project, and check out this video for more.



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

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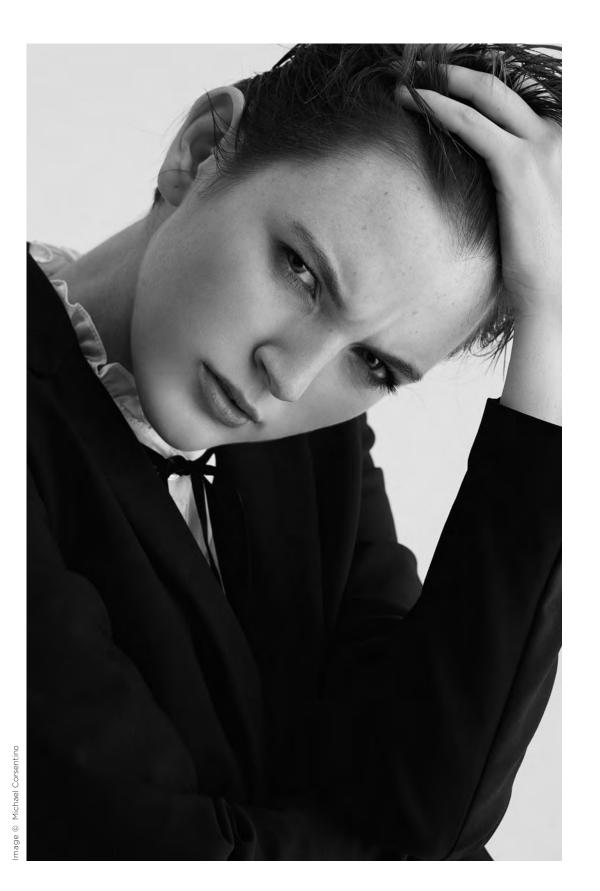
CREATING DAYLIGHT WITH STORY BY STORY

I've seen this sun-drenched looks-like-daylight-but-isn't look used often in Gap ads. The light created for these images has the open, airy quality you get from daylight streaming in through a large window. It's perfect for Gap's brand.

I've always loved this quality of light and wanted to use it in my own work. How they did it was the big question mark. I did what I always do when I'm trying to decode or reverse-engineer how an image was lit. I grabbed similarly lit images on Google and began my detective work, looking at the direction the shadows were coming from and zooming in on the catchlights in models' eyes for clues about the light sources and modifiers used. After exhaustive research, I had some clues but no clear answers about how these images were created.

I reached out to friend and fellow commercial photographer Jeffry Salter, who clued me in on the essentials. Never be afraid to reach out to people. You might end up connecting with someone willing to answer your questions or point you in the right direction. People are often more willing to help when they know you've done your homework and aren't asking to be spoon-fed their hard-won secret sauce.

Having a previsualized lighting concept allows you to create a plan of action and create a roadmap to get there. This way of working gives me results that are always better than just flying blind. Start by asking yourself what quality of light you want, and then figure out what tools and techniques you'll need to get there. You always achieve superior images when you start with a solid plan.



nutter Magazine . September 2017



Jeffry explained I'd need to create a wall of light by fashioning an oversized DIY softbox using two 4x8-foot V-flats, an 8x8-foot scrim and four strobes. Position a pair of bare strobes inside this softbox, one pair on the left and one pair on the right, and aimed toward their corners, away from the scrim and the eventual position for the model. In this arrangement, the light from the strobes bounces back off the V-flats, hits the scrim and becomes broadened and diffused, creating a gorgeous, even, soft wash of illumination resembling window light.

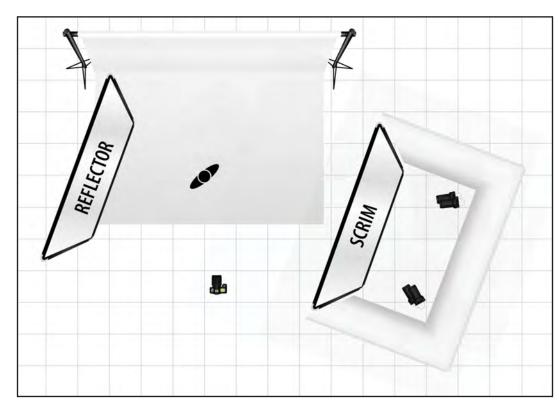


In order to stack two strobes on one stand in an over-and-under arrangement, I used a Kupo 3-Way Clamp (KG900412) on each C-stand. This clever piece of equipment allows an additional strobe to be supported from a C-stand's riser. With this clamp, you can easily use two stacked strobes—one mounted on top and one supported below it using the clamp rather than additional light stands and grip arms crowded together. I also use this setup when creating blow-away white backgrounds.

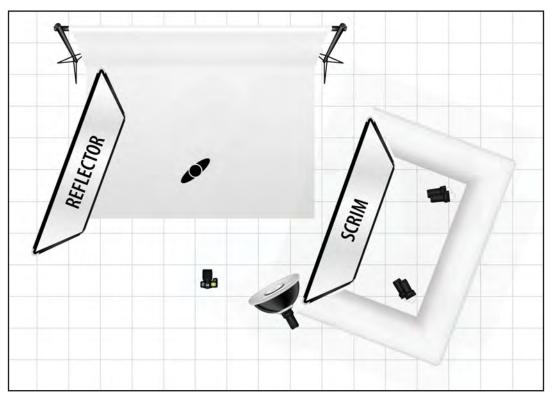
DIY alternatives for the 8x8 Sun-Scrim include easily sourced translucent fabric or everyday shower curtains supported by a frame made from PVC pipes. Westcott's Scrim Jim is a good option, and can be rented. Don't focus on the gear you don't have; focus on the techniques covered here and improvise where needed. I used shower curtains for years.

For the strobes I used four Profoto Pro Heads powered by two 2400WS 7A generators and two heads per pack, with the power split evenly between each head and equal power settings on the left and right sides. Equal power provided the coverage I needed. A 1/8 power setting on each generator provided more than enough juice to get the job done at f16. Lower-powered 500WS mono heads would make a fine alternative. So would handheld flashguns (requiring higher ISO and wider aperture).

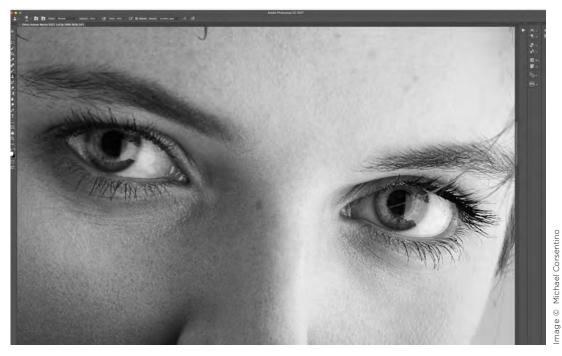
Since the light created using this method is broad and diffuse, an optional beauty dish can be employed to create additional localized contrast on the subject's face. I set up a Mola Softlights Demi beauty dish (see the alternate lighting diagram), but ended up not needing it.



In this diagram, you can see that while this lighting technique requires a fair amount of space and gear, at the end of the day, it's a technically simple and straightforward style of lighting.



I also set up a Mola Softlights Demi beauty dish in case I needed additional localized contrast on the model's face. This is a great option, but one I didn't end up needing.



The resulting catchlight created in the model's eyes is soft and broad, and resembles window light.

THE SHOOT

With the V-flats, strobes and scrim positioned, I angled the entire arrangement toward the model's eventual position to create a beautiful raking side light with plenty of soft wrap. As you can see, this created the bright, crisp, light-drenched look I was after.

I knocked out a few quick meter readings and we started capturing and reviewing images on the studio's tethered shooting monitor. I added a 4x6-foot Sunbounce Pro white reflector on the opposite side of the keylight to open up the shadows on the left side of the model. I was pleasantly surprised that this cool DIY wall-of-light setup provided enough light to create a nearly white backdrop without a separate set of lights.



Using a very broad source like this one makes capturing anything from close-ups to full-figure images easy. It illuminates the background and provides enough coverage to properly light the model, while allowing her freedom of movement within a relatively large "box of light."

With our lighting nailed down, we did a black-and-white conversion in Capture One Pro 10 and then proceeded with the rest of this fruitful shoot.

Grab a set of V-flats, a scrim or a couple of shower curtains, and a bunch of lights, and try your hand at this awesome lighting technique. I'm betting you'll love it as much as I do. ■





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

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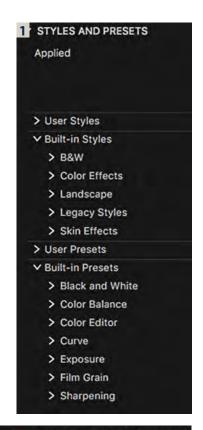
Whether you are shooting for grayscale or converting images due to horrible mixed lighting, you need a good workflow for black-and-white editing. Any good workflow requires efficiency and simple execution. Capture One Pro 10 offers a wide range of flexibility, convenience and, most importantly, simplicity. Before my fellow Lightroom and third-party plugin users walk away, hear me out.

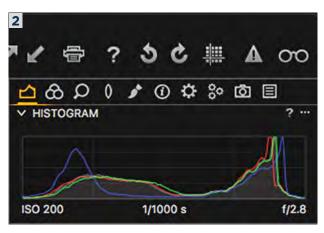
Capture One Pro 10 is simple to customize and make your own. Check out my piece in last month's *Shutter*, "Migrating From Lightroom to Capture One," to familiarize yourself with Capture One Pro 10 for Lightroom or Camera Raw users. Capture One Pro 10 has made it simple to do a large majority of your black-and-white editing without the need to edit in another software or plugin. This article shows you how to use the presets, styles and tools of Capture One to make your black-and-white editing not only easier, but prettier.

SINGLE STEPS WITH PRESETS

Like my fellow Lightroom users out there, I am comfortable using presets. They are the epitome of efficiency for my workflow, and the only way I can process 800 wedding images and deliver them to a client, proof ready, in under two hours. In Capture One, presets are used to apply single tool adjustments. It's easy to create them, and they can easily be applied in steps or stacked. (1)

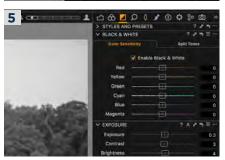
You'll notice there is a tool tab for each type of adjustment, like Exposure, Color, Details, Lens and Local Adjustments, but there's not one for black and white. (2) Right-click on any of the default tool tabs, and a drop-down menu appears. Hover your cursor over Add Tool Tab to select Black & White. (3) Now you can reorder these tool tabs by holding Option, clicking the one you want to move and dragging it to where you want. (4) Let's click on the Black & White tool tab, drop down the Black & White tool and check the Enable box. (5)



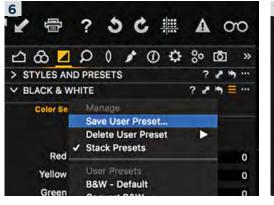




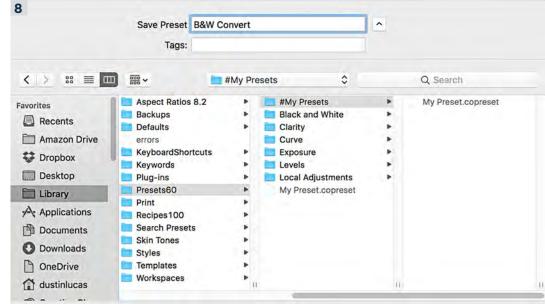


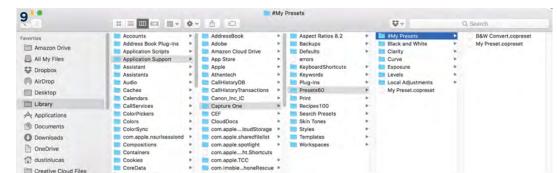


Now we can save our first user preset. Click on the Manage Presets button in the upper right corner of the Black & White tool and choose Save User Preset. (6) Check off the adjustments within the tool to save in the preset. (7) You can name the preset whatever you want, and you'll notice that it's automatically saved into a folder. This is to organize your presets into specific tool-named folders. If you want to view your presets similarly to your user presets made in Lightroom, simply choose to save the preset in the "Presets60" folder. I named this folder "My Presets" for quicker access to my globally applied presets. (8) Here is where they are stored locally on your computer to further customize and organize your preset menu. (9)







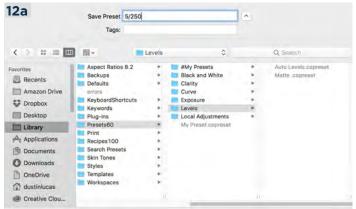


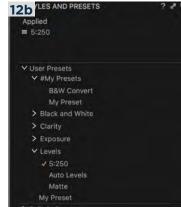
10 EVELS



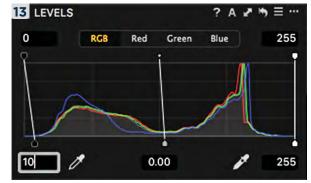


Spend some time creating your own presets for your single step changes. Make presets for different tool settings in varying increments, with Levels, Clarity, Structure, Sharpening, Curve, etc. You can create quick matte and high-contrast presets with Levels and Curves. (10) Simply drop down the Levels tool and set the Output RGB values to 5 and 250. (11ab) Then create a preset from this Tool and name it "5/250" if you plan to keep it in the Levels subfolder, or click on your Custom folder and name it "Levels – 5/250." (12ab)

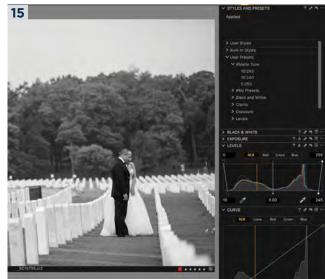


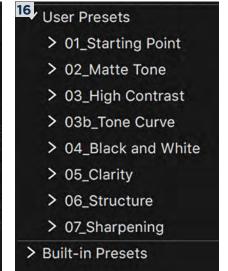


Follow the same steps by incrementally lowering the RGB Output values, like 10/245 or 15/240. You can even set just the black point to matte the dark tones for a setting like 10/255. (13) These presets can be organized in a Matte Tone folder. (14) Work on the opposite end and adjust the black-and-white points to increase density. (15) You can save these in a folder named "High Contrast". Experiment and make your own set of custom presets. (16)









Another efficient option is to create specific default settings that apply to your images automatically. You can remove or adjust the defaults for each of your cameras. (17) Start with the Sharpening and Noise Reduction Tools, and drop to 0 or begin to set camera-specific defaults. (18) You can do this for the Exposure, High Dynamic Range, Levels, Curve, Clarity, Sharpening, etc. Just apply some generic settings in a tool and click in the upper right corner. Then select Save as Defaults for Camera Model, and these will save as your default settings. Remember, this has to be done for each Tool you want to change.





> STYLES AND PRESETS

? 2 5 三

> BLACK & WHITE

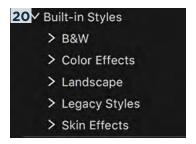
What does that mean exactly? When you reset all adjustments for an image, it will revert back to these settings. (19ab)



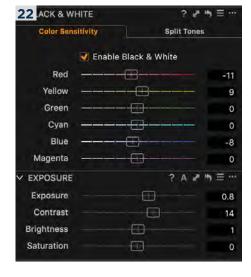


THERE'S NOTHING SUBTLE ABOUT STYLES

Moving into Styles, we can get very creative by applying multiple tools and adjustments in each with a single click. Let's start by examining the default one listed under Built-In Styles. You'll notice they aren't categorized into the tool names, but organized by B&W, Color Effects, Landscape, Legacy Styles and Skin effects. (20) Let's look at the B&W to see if there is anything usable for wedding creatives. (21)







The Portrait 0 style is a pretty simple application that converts to black and white, drops the red and blues, lifts yellows, and adds contrast and a hint of brightness. (22)

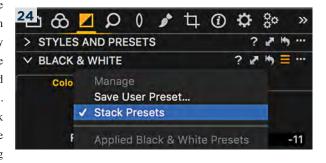
You can see the difference by hovering your cursor over each Built-In Style, and even compare with multiple images at once. Select a handful of images and change the Viewer Mode to Multi. Now hover your cursor over each Style to see how it looks on your set of outdoor creatives. (23abc)



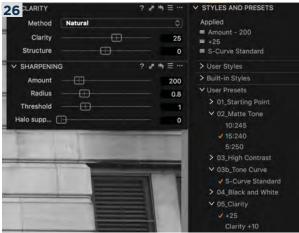




Let's work on creating a variation of Portrait 0 with the preset adjustments we made previously. We can stack presets on top of each other to construct a style that will quickly apply all these tools together. (24) I like to apply the matte effect made with the Levels tool and apply a Curve to further adjust the dark tones. (25) I do not want to lose detail in the dark tones; by adding clarity and structure to the image, we retain the detail lost with our toning application. (26)

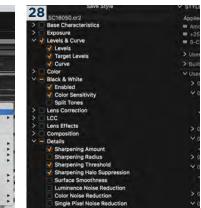


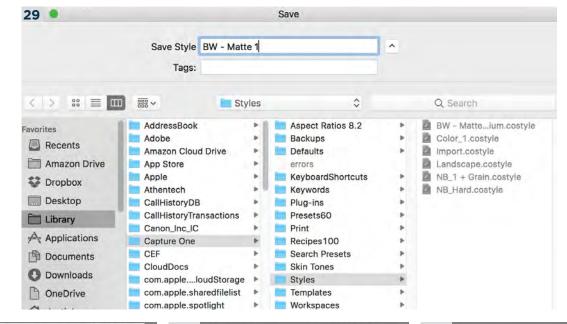




After we apply all the tools, we can save this style for future use. Go to the menu bar, click on Adjustments, hover the cursor over Styles and click Save User Style. (27) This is the tricky part because you have to select each adjustment that you want to save. Remember that the preselected options do not reflect the changes you made. (28) When you are finished, click Save. (29)













I like to create low, medium and high versions of styles. Since we just created a style titled "Matte Medium," we can add 30% of each effect for the Matte High and 30% lower for the Matte Low. (30abc)



TIPS & TRICKS

Once you invest time in the setup, it's a simple click from there to apply your adjustments. An alternative is to purchase styles through Capture One or other reputable vendors. Capture One offers five different packs: Cinematic, Seasonal, B&W, Matte and Essentials, priced at \$69 each. Do some research and find some other options for black and white, like Silver-Lux, 1Styles.pro and Image Alchemist.

Presets and styles can be used when importing images into Capture One, but you can choose only one. Apply a style to incorporate multiple starting-point tools. (32) You can reset all the settings or specific tools if the predetermined settings do not fit the image. Remember that you can create custom default settings for your camera as well. These two combinations become very important to efficiency.



You can utilize custom keyboard shortcuts for the Auto tool to crank out some quick edits as well. The ability to custom-assign the "A" key to apply Auto adjustments makes it even easier. You can even select multiple images in a set and apply this. Quickly choose what adjustments you'd like to auto-adjust. (33ab) This tool is even useful when converting outdoor creatives with a large sky to black and white. (34ab) This too can be applied at import separately from your style or preset.









Customizing your workspace can mean the difference between editing in minutes or hours. Take the time to set it up. Do not be afraid to drag tools onto your images to better dial in settings. This is a cool feature of Capture One.



THE RESULTS

Try Capture One Pro 10 today for 30 days. Presets and styles will be your go-to for editing. From there, it's a simple click-and-go with black-and-whites. There's no need to edit in another program and lose the nondestructive editing capabilities of a Raw file. I am a huge Nik Silver Efex Pro 2 user, but Capture One gets me the results I need, faster.





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

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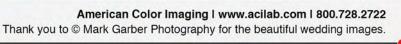
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ALWAYS CARRY A CAMERA

In my first photography class in journalism school, our teacher asked us to carry a camera around with us at all times during the semester. I thought this was a bit extreme at first, but in the end, I was one of the only students who really tried. It made me look at the world in terms of motives, frames and potential pictures. It made me think about photography much more, and it forced me to practice. You never know what unexpected event or curious scene you might come across.

The shots on this page, of a man brushing his teeth at a public fountain and a baby in a box at a market stand, are from the same walk to a market in Myeik, Myanmar.





I took the picture above through a window from the street in Budapest, Hungary. It shows a theater audience watching two actors onstage. The street serves as the backdrop; as the audience reacts to me taking pictures from outside, the actors start involving me in the play. Not everything can be planned.

Most great pictures don't just happen like that. I've taken a camera on countless hikes, nights out and trips to the supermarket, and most of the time I come home with nothing. Increase your chances of capturing great pictures by always having your camera on you.



DON'T BE AFRAID TO TALK TO STRANGERS

You have to be open and forward to realize the difference between taking photos at a cafe on Main Street and getting access to people's homes, weddings or saunas. Make friends, build relationships and say yes if someone invites you along. Even if you don't speak the language, you can usually get a long way with sign language and silly drawings.



The shot above is of members of a military band at a football game in Shiraz, Iran. My friend and I came across Hafezieh Stadium by accident, having followed the noise. Western visitors are rare, and when we walked in, the crowd gave us a warm welcome cheer. After taking photos with many people, we met Pourya, who spotted us in the crowd and invited us to the press stand. We spent the next week on an epic desert road trip (below) with him and his 1979 Chevy Caprice he called Titanic, with its New York state number plates.





GET CLOSER

Keeping a distance is more polite and more comfortable, especially when you're with strangers. But the closer you get, the better the pictures. I find it helps if you don't come with a big DSLR, lights flashing and the sound of the shutter constantly going off.



The photos on this page are from a series that shows people's emotions close up while they are experiencing the show of Prague's Astronomical Clock. The show happens every hour, 12 times a day, and larger crowds gather each hour. Statues move about for 13 seconds. I enjoyed capturing the wonder in the faces of people oblivious to their surroundings as they watched, which makes this a prime spot for both photographers and pickpockets. I took the shot from about 4 feet away. If you want to ask for permission, you can always do that after.





USE SMALL CAMERAS

Small cameras freak people out less and they are less heavy, so it's easier to carry them around all day. They tend to raise fewer suspicions from bouncers, security guards and law enforcement, so it's sometimes easier to get them into places, and it takes longer for you to be kicked out.

In other words, sometimes it's better to look more like a tourist than a professional.

I take most of my photos with the same fixed-lens Fuji X100S, occasionally switching to analog cameras or the even smaller and cheaper Sony DSC RX100, which almost fits in jean pockets. There are limitations in terms of image quality and versatility, but I've still never owned a DSLR.

BLACK & WHITE

Shooting real life, as opposed to in a studio or at an on-location shoot, you have little control over colors and lighting. Taking images for black and white can help deal with the difficulties of color composition on the street or in crowds, and in bad artificial lighting.

The next three shots document a Moravian wine tasting at the Čevela family vineyard in Hodonín, Czech Republic. The damp cellar is lit by two lamps mounted on the ceiling, the kind you might find in a garage or a mineshaft. The plastic shades on the lamps give subjects' skin an artificial, unhealthy-looking orange. Black and white solves this problem, giving images a feel that corresponds to the bare, archaic space.











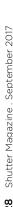




Chris Lettner studied journalism and communications in Vienna and Prague, where he currently lives. He travels a few months out of the year, and is interested in places undergoing rapid transformation. Recent trips have taken him to Cuba, Iran, China and Burma. His work has been published by CNN, the BBC and Vice.

chrislettner.com















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- · Convex or concave curve type







The problem is that we have just one slider for each. When it comes to black-and-white conversions, the more controls you have, the better. How about having four sliders? In the following steps, I will show you how to utilize the power of the Selective Color Adjustment Layer to better control how colors are rendered. I also have a bag full of nifty tricks to spice up your image and give it an exquisite film look. Let's get started.

STEP 1: IMPORT

In Photoshop, go to File > Open. Locate the image and hit Open. (Download the sample image at https://www. pexels.com/photo/red-volkswagen-beetle-parked-at-road-side-near-pedestrian-lane-131811/.)

You can also minimize the Photoshop window, locate the image in your system and then drag and drop it into Photoshop. If you already have another image open in Photoshop, do not drag and drop over that canvas, as it will open the image as a layer above the previous image; drop the image outside the canvas (release the mouse when the cursor shows Copy or Move).

The exception is that if you are importing a Raw image, it will open up in Adobe Camera Raw. In that case, perform your adjustments or leave it as it is. Hold the Shift key. You will notice that the Open Image button has now changed to Open Object. Click on Open Object. The image will now open up as a smart object. If you double-click on that layer, it will again open Adobe Camera Raw, with all the settings you made intact, in case you want to change something.



STEP 2: ADD THE GRUNGE

Make a copy of the Background layer by making sure that the layer is selected, and press Ctrl/Command + J, or simply drag it and drop it into the new layer icon in the layers panel (the one beside the trash can). Name this new layer "Details" by simply double-clicking on the text of that layer.

Skip this step if you had opened a Raw image. With the Details layer selected, go to Filters > Convert for Smart Filters. A dialog box will pop up. Click OK. You can also right-click on the Details layer and choose Convert to Smart Object. Converting to a smart object means that any adjustment or filter you now apply to the layer is nondestructive, so you can simply go ahead and edit that later.



Go to Filter > Camera Raw Filter. (For Raw, just double-click the layer thumbnail.) This might sound a little odd, but it will make sense later: Increase the Clarity all the way to 100, then click OK.



In this image, we want to draw the attention of the viewer to the car; one of the things that determines where the attention goes is details. We don't want the viewers to focus on the background, do we? We achieve this by creating a mask.

Hold the Alt/Option key and click the Mask button, as shown in the image below. This creates a negative mask, which you can see beside the layer thumbnail.

Right now, it might seem that the Details layer is gone, but it's actually still there. Masks allow you to control the areas where the layers appear or disappear. In a mask, black are the areas where the layers disappear and white are the areas where the layers appear. Since the Details layer has a completely black mask, it is just not appearing.



With the mask selected, select the Brush Tool. Make sure the foreground color is white; if not, press D to reset the swatches and Press X to toggle between the foreground and the background color.

Decrease the Opacity to 100% and Flow to around 20%, and paint with white over the car (with the mask selected, not the layer thumbnail). This brings out the detail in the car. Make the Details layer more visible at the area you paint. You can then paint with black over the areas where you don't want details to show up. Too many details in the number plate make it look funky, so I painted black over it.





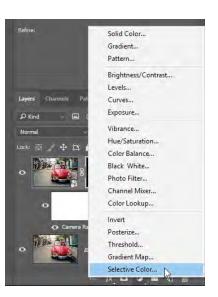
As said before, white are the areas where a layer appears and black are the areas where a layer disappears. We just painted the car area white, and that's why the details are showing up.

You can also use adjustment brushes inside of Camera Raw to increase Clarity (details) selectively, but this method allows you to do it in real time since we later might have to look at the complete image and adjust it.

STEP 3: PUTTING LAYERS TO WORK

Create a Selective Color adjustment layer above the Details layer by making sure that the Details layer is selected. Click on the adjustment layer icon (to the right of the mask button) and choose Selective Color. You can also create this by clicking on the Selective Color icon in the Adjustments panel (if you cannot see it, go to Windows > Adjustments).

Without making any adjustment, create another Hue/Saturation adjustment layer on top of that by clicking on the adjustment layer icon and choosing Hue/Saturation.



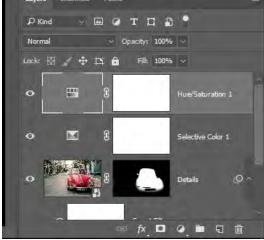




We normally use the Selective Color adjustment layer to selectively target a color, and manipulate it by using the four sliders. In this case, we will do the same, but here's the trick. We will take away the saturation by using the Hue/Saturation adjustment layer. So the color manipulations will show up, but only as black and white. To simplify, we are using Selective Color to manipulate the colors and Hue/Saturation to take away the colors and leave the manipulation.



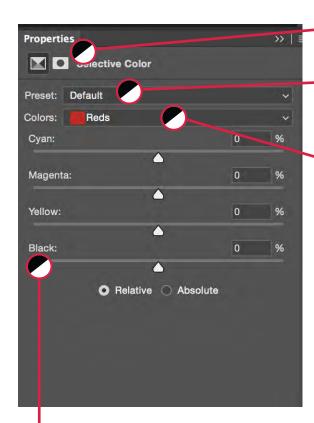




Open up the properties of the Hue/Saturation adjustment layer by double-clicking on the layer thumbnail if it's not already visible. (Tip: To open up the properties of any adjustment layer, double-click the adjustment layer icon in the layer thumbnail.) Take the Saturation slider all the way to the left to -100.

140

Open the properties of the Selective Color adjustment layer by clicking on the Selective Color adjustment layer icon. Let's have a better look at the panel, from top to bottom.



The top two icons allow you to toggle between the properties of the mask and adjustment layer.

If you move a bunch of sliders, you can save your settings as a preset. It will appear in the Presets drop-down list.

The Colors drop-down list is very important. It allows you to target a color in the image. Click on the drop-down menu, and then choose from a bunch of colors, like Reds, Yellows, Greens, Cyans, etc. If you chose Yellows, now it is fixed and targeted; whatever you do with the four sliders happens to only the yellow areas of the image.

Turn off the Hue/Saturation adjustment layer for a second to understand what's happening here. Do this by clicking on the eye icon beside the Hue/Saturation adjustment layer, and get back to the properties of the Selective Color layer.

The Four Sliders: Select Red in the Colors drop-down list (see the above step). If you take the Cyan slider to the right, it introduces more eyan into the red areas of the photo. If you take the slider to the left, it introduces more red in the red areas. That's because red is the opposite of cyan.

Remember: RGB is the opposite of CMY, where R (Red) is the opposite of C (Cyan), G (Green) is the opposite of M (Magenta) and B (Blue) is the opposite of Y (Yellow).

Similarly, moving the magenta slider to the right introduces magenta in the red areas because we have chosen Red as a target color in the Colors drop-down menu. Moving it to the left introduces green because green is the opposite of magenta, and so on. Turn back on the Hue/Saturation adjustment layer.

Moving the black slider to the left makes the red areas brighter; moving it right right makes it darker. (Note: it is equivalent to the luminosity sliders in Lightroom, ACR or even in the Black and White adjustment layer, given that the Hue/Saturation layer is turned on.)

You can choose Relative or Absolute as a setting. Relative is subtle, Absolute is aggressive. Play with the sliders with both settings to see which one works for you. For this image, let's choose Absolute (Image).

Let's start with Reds. Choose Reds from the Colors drop-down list, and start playing with the four sliders. This is not rocket science. I could go on and on about which sliders to move and why, but more often than not, we find ourselves accidentally moving a slider and doing a thing that instantly makes our images amazing.



Select the next color and repeat the same. My favored settings for each color are as follows:

Reds: C = +55, M = -30, Y = +18, B = -2**Yellows:** C = +35, M = -5, Y = -100, B = -15

Greens: C = 0, M = 0, Y = 0, B = +100

Cyans: C = +50, M = 0, Y = 0, B = +20

Blues: C = +20, M = 0, Y = +5, B = 0

Magentas: C = 0, M = -100, Y = -60, B = -10

Whites: C = -100, M = -70, Y = -20, B = 0Neutrals: C = +10, M = 0, Y = 0, B = +4

Blacks: C = +20, M = +30, Y = +8, B = 0

Now, you might notice something interesting. Apart from all the regular colors, there are three things that might look striking in the Colors drop-down menu: Whites, Neutrals and Blacks. Whites target the bright areas, Neutrals target the midtones and Black targets the dark areas of the image. Simple enough?

Chilter Magazina September 2017

STEP 5: SPECIAL EFFECTS

Create a new Curves adjustment layer between the Hue/Saturation and the Selective Color adjustment layer by clicking on the adjustment layer icon in the layers panel and choosing Curves. Open up the properties of the Curves. **Note:** In this image, I have brought the Curves properties aside for a better view.

In the RGB channel (selected by default), just click and drag at several parts of the curve to brighten up the highlights, darken the shadows and make the blacks a little brighter to give a faded film look.



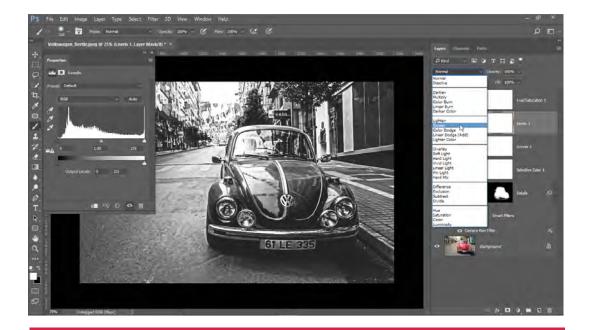


In Curves, to the right, you have bright pixels. To the left, you have dark pixels. If you want to make the bright areas brighter, pick a point on the right and drag it up. If you want to make midtones darker, pick a point in the middle and drag it down.

To add extra shine, create an adjustment layer above Curves but below Hue/Saturation. It might sound odd, but create any adjustment layer. To avoid confusion, let's create a Levels adjustment layer.



Change the blend mode of the new adjustment layer to Screen. Everything brightens up. But we want to limit the effect to particular areas of the image. We do that with masks.



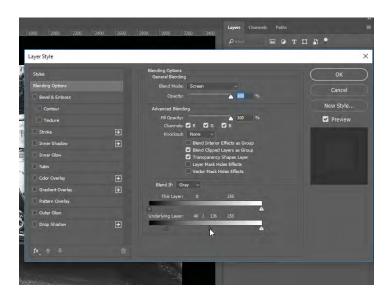


Screen is a blend mode that brightens, Multiply is a blend mode that darkens. Overlay increases contrast. Soft Light creates a little contrast.

Select the brush and make sure the foreground color is white. If it's not, press the letter D to reset the swatches and X to toggle between the foreground and background color. With the Flow at 10%, paint around in the areas where you want to bring out the highlights.



To add more drama to the highlights, double-click on the right side of the layer or right-click on the layer and choose Blending Options. This opens up the Layer Styles dialog box.



Push the slider of the underlying layer from left to right. This automatically removes the shine from the areas that are already dark. But the selection is quite harsh. Hold the Alt/Option key and click on the slider to break it apart. Push the slider farther to smooth the transition between the areas that are visible and invisible.

To make the "film look" more realistic, let's darken the overall highlights. Create another Levels adjustment layer just below the Hue/Saturation adjustment layer and above every other layer. Push the bottom right slider to the left, as shown in the image.





In levels, the bottom left slider makes dark areas brighter. The bottom right one makes bright areas darker. The top left slider makes dark areas darker. The top right one makes bright areas brighter, and the middle one controls the midtones.



Press Ctrl/Command + T to Transform the vignette into any shape or size you want. I have made it oval and placed it a little bit to the right from center. Hit Enter.



Open up the mask properties by selecting the mask of the current Levels adjustment layer. If you don't already see it, go to Windows > Properties.

Increase the Feather of your mask to whatever number you like, depending on how smooth you want your vignette to be.



You can still transform and move the vignette. You can also go back to the levels adjustment layer properties and add some contrast to the vignette. These are the settings I liked.



STEP 7: THE FINAL EFFECT: FILM GRAIN

Select the topmost layer (the Hue/Saturation adjustment layer). Press Ctrl/Command + Alt/Option + Shift + E. This creates a new merged layer, a single layer comprising everything you see on your canvas right now.

Convert this layer into a smart object by going to Filter > Convert to Smart Filter. Click OK. We did this because we wanted the layer to be nondestructive. Anything we apply to this can be changed and modified.

Again, with the layer selected, go to Filter > Filter Gallery. Under the Artistic tab, choose Film Grain. Make sure you've selected just one filter.

Play with the three sliders to see which values work best for your image. It isn't rocket science. My values are as follows: Grain: 5, Highlight Area: 6, Intensity: 2



Click OK when you are satisfied. Anytime you want to change the values, just double-click on Filter Gallery under the layer. Save the file as a PSD. Go to File > Save As and choose PSD as a format in case you want to work on it later. Save it as a final JPG or PNG by going to File > Export > Export As and choosing your desired settings.



Unmesh Dinda is a commercial retoucher and Photoshop educator based in India. His first experience with Photoshop was at age eight when his dad brought home the family's first computer. He runs a popular Facebook page on photography called PiXimperfect, and is a winner of Nikon's #IAMShutterbug contest and the All India Gold Medal in Digital Painting. His YouTube channel has 200 videos on Photoshop and Lightroom, many of which have been featured on popular photo sites like SLR Lounge.

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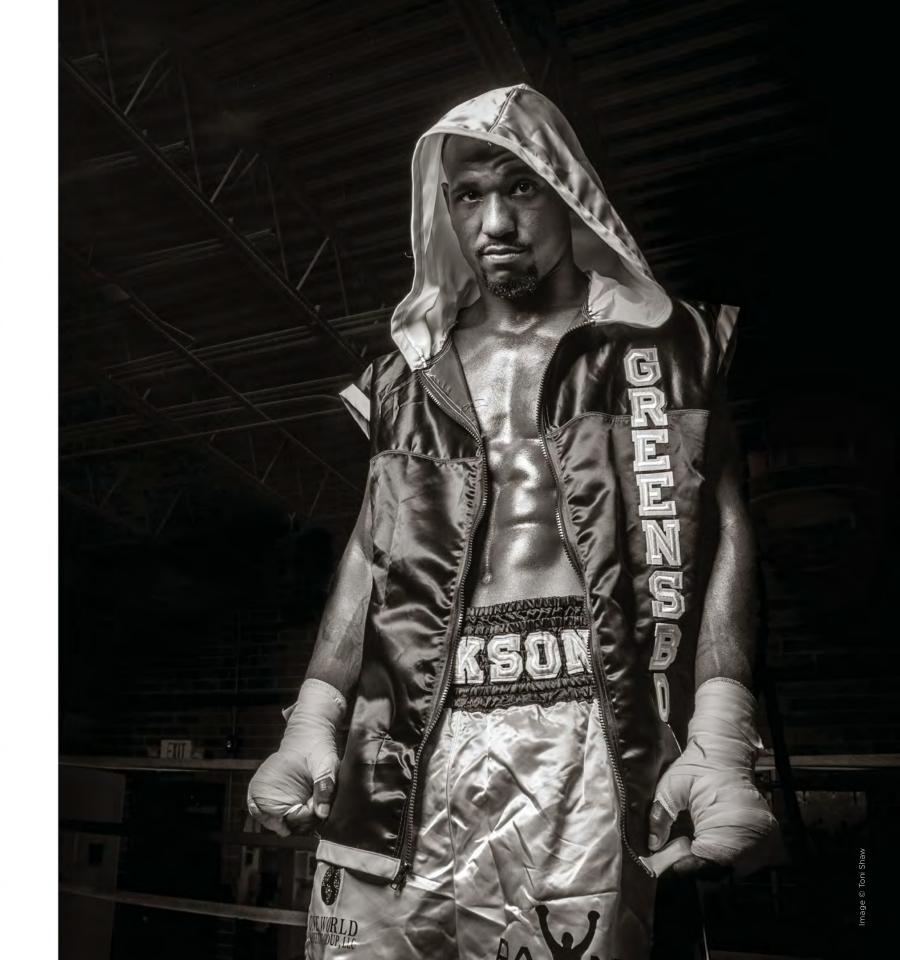






















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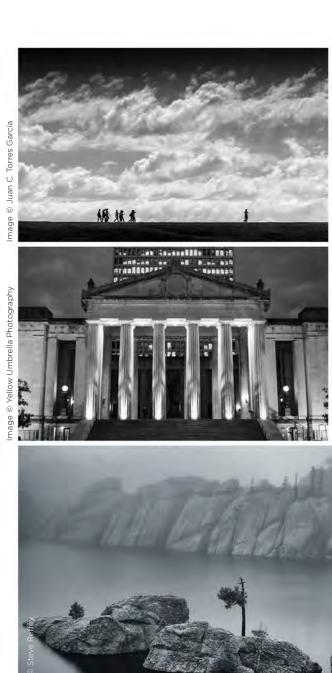






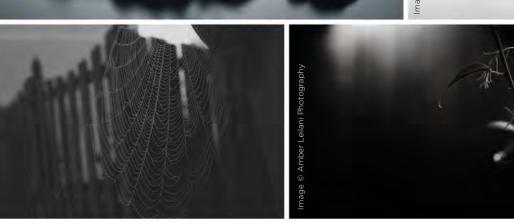


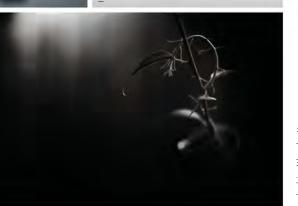












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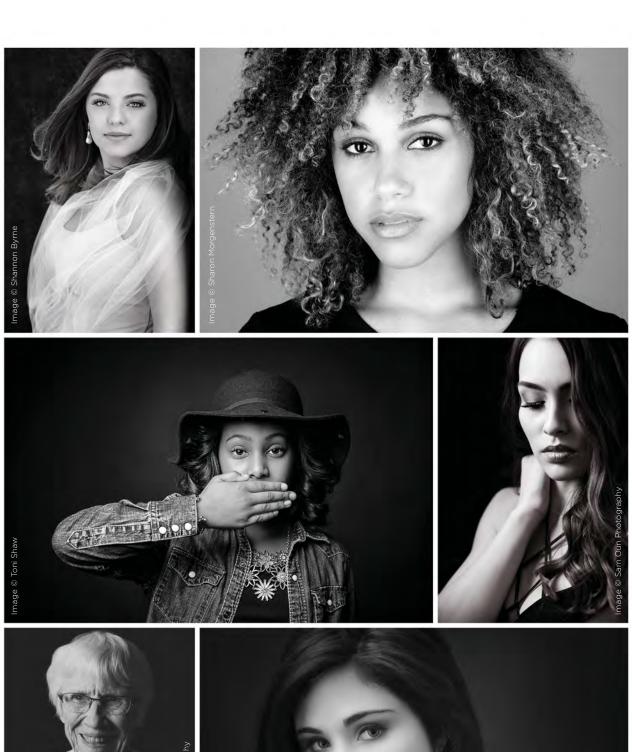


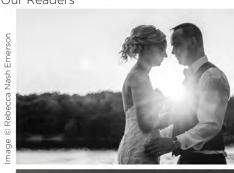




































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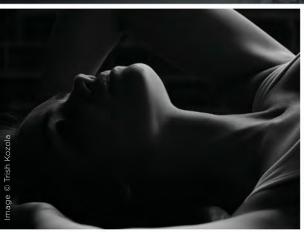






















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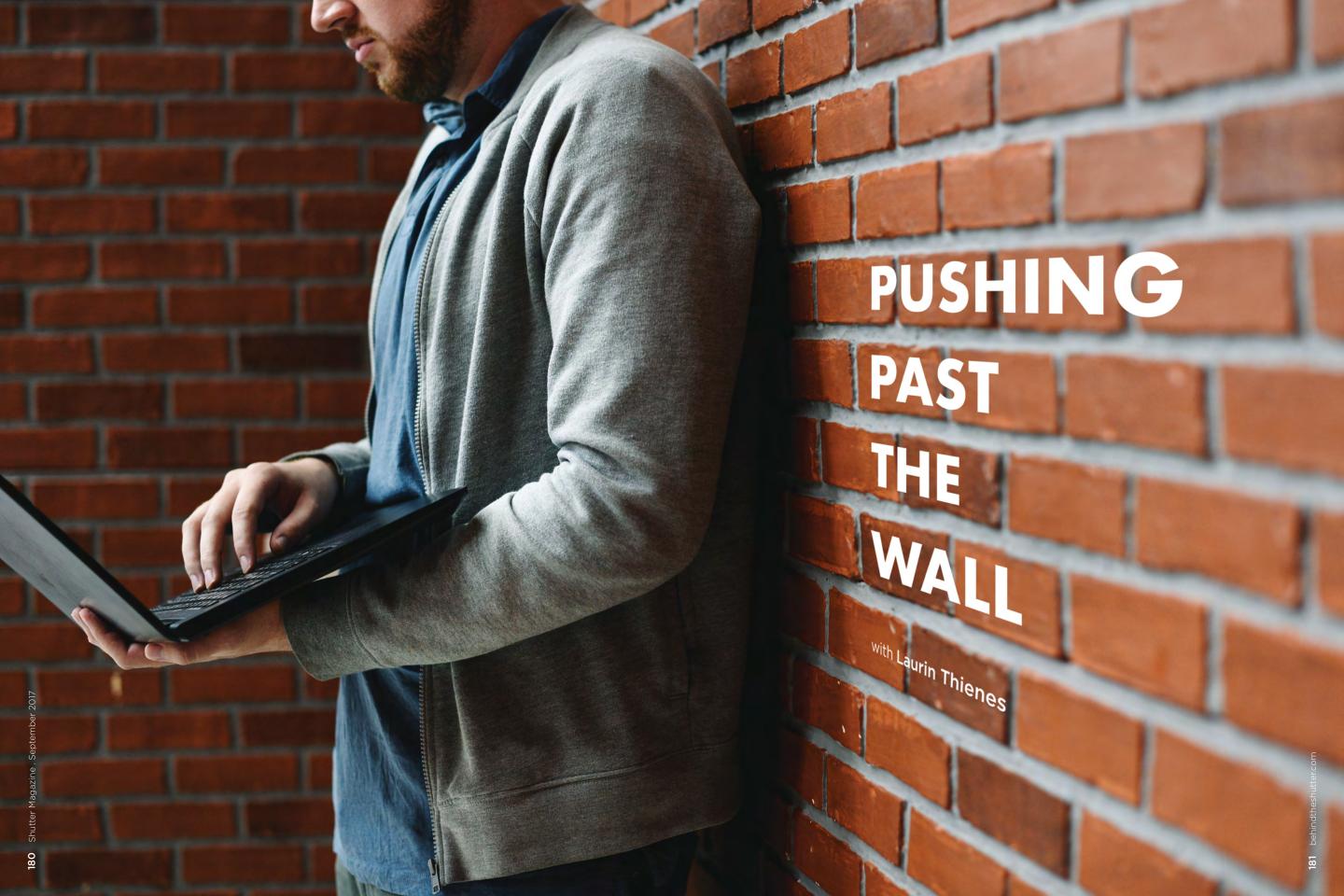
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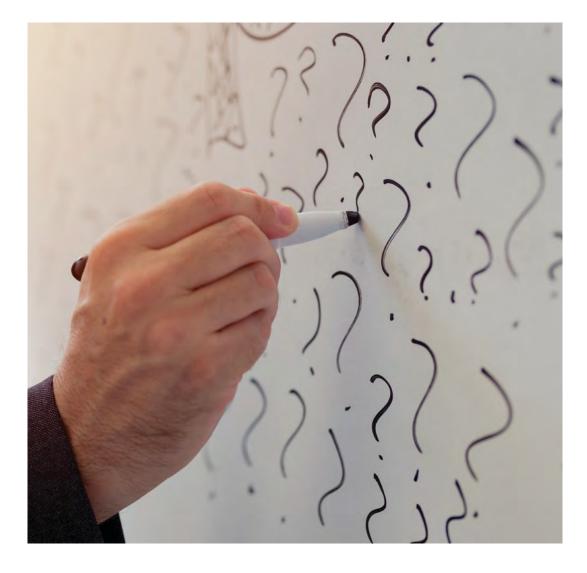
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You can read every business book until you're blue in the face, but what happens when that isn't enough, when you are stuck in a rut while just starting out, or, worse, stuck at a plateau after establishing your business? Here are five ways you can push past what seem like your limits.



RISK

As a small business owner, you have to know when to be risk-averse. Taking risks is what got you to this point. But if you feel like you are in a rut or reached a plateau in your business, you may have stopped taking risks. You've started to take the easy way out. You focus on what you know, and you do things with the mantra "That's how I've always done it."

News flash: If you are not taking calculated risks, you are no longer growing. You are complacent, and someone is going to steal your lunch money. So what causes complacency and this apprehension to risk? The simple answer is: fear of failing.

FAILURE

There should be memes of me as the poster child of failure. Failure is normal, natural, inevitable. You are going to fail. Period. Once you have accepted your future failure, you can focus on moving forward. Dedicate your time and energy to making sure you do not fail at the same thing twice. This requires you to be both introspective and forward thinking.

No business is perfect. There are always things that can be improved, like process, automation, service, product. Each change is seeped in the prospect of failing. That means change equals risk. You can overcome this fear by thinking through what is required to make the change. Determine on a scale of 1 to 10 how bad things really would be if you did fail. Your irrational idea that the world is coming to an end is probably realistically a 2 or 3 on the chart if your idea fails.







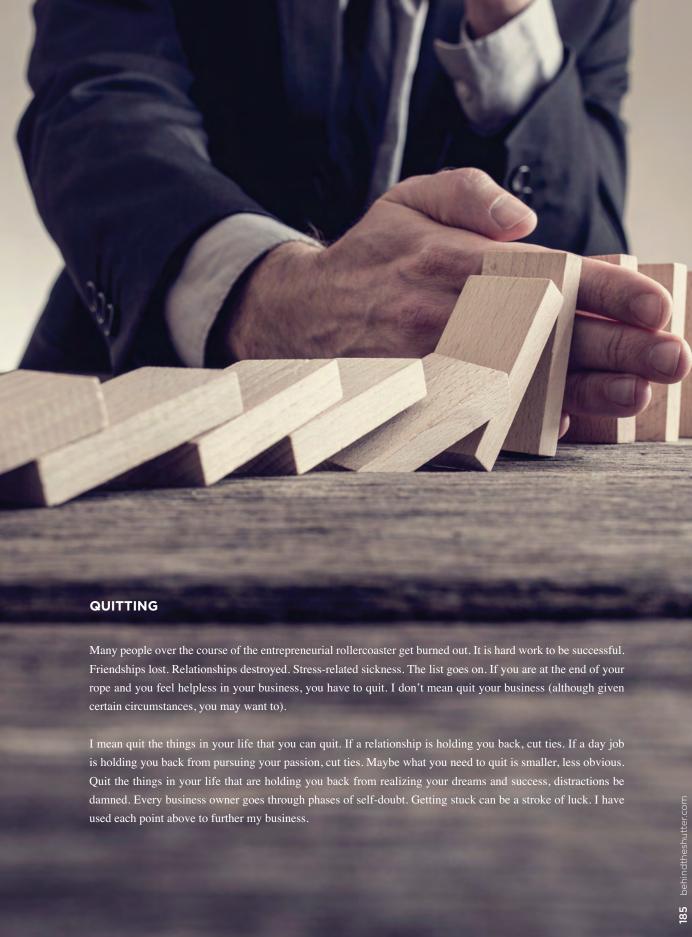
INSPIRATION

When you feel stuck, where do you turn? For many, it's social media, but that often turns into venting about how tough things are rather than providing you with real, true inspiration. If you have an issue that challenges your creativity, make a list of creative brands and individuals you can look to for inspiration. If you have challenges with your business skills, look to those outside your field who have solid business skills. I find the most useful information in small chunks. Trying to read a book often puts me to sleep. I prefer to read ideas and comments from business leaders about how they do things, where they find inspiration, how they focus on important aspects of life or just what makes them tick. Can you take away just one small piece of advice and use that as the stepping stone to help you move forward?

REINVENTION

There comes a time in business when you you don't feel you need to be risk-averse or fear failure. Instead, you're in a position of complacency, and, dare I say, boredom. This is an ugly place to be. And it might just be time to look inward. Maybe it is time to reinvent your business. Are you doing the same things everyone else is doing? Are you priced the same way?

If you feel like your business is no longer unique, it is time to change. It might be a minor change or a shift toward something different altogether. Change is okay. What is the worst that can happen when you reinvent a part of your business? Chances are the worst that can happen likely won't, and even if it does go sideways, it likely won't be remotely as bad as you thought it could be. And this brings me to my last point: quitting.





I'll leave you with a short story. I was presented with a remarkable opportunity, something that fell out of thin air, but it was risky. The risk factor was through the roof. This opportunity easily could have bankrupted me had it all gone sideways. But I calculated it closely and carefully. I made sure to pro/con it.

I knew that if I failed, the likelihood of total catastrophe was less than 10 percent. So I jumped. But I had to face failures. But are failures really that negative? I had to focus on those failures as educational opportunities. Reinventing who I was required me to quit certain aspects of my life. This was not easy. In fact, to this day, it has resulted in some of the hardest life lessons I've ever learned.

Luckily, utter catastrophe did not result. The risk paid dividends. At the end of the day, you can't look back in self-pity. You can only look back in an effort to grow, learn and become better for it.



Laurin Thienes is the cofounder and director of operations for Evolve Edits, the leading post-production house for wedding and portrait photographers in the U.S. He studied photography at the Brooks Institute of Photography, and has been photographing weddings for 15 years. The native of Portland, Oregon, currently lives in O'Fallon, Illinois, with his wife, Melissa, son Lukas and redheaded 6-year-old daughter Sophia.

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Shutter Magazine . September 2017

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

choosing the best cameras for wedding photography

with Michael Anthony







Shitter Magazine Sentember 2017

2017 is a great year for photographers. Technology has advanced at such a rapid pace, and continues to offer some of the best tools available to do what we love doing. With all the options, how do you choose a primary camera system? Wedding shoots comprise a mixture of product, portrait and action photography—so how do you know which system works best for all these needs?

I recently tested multiple camera systems to see which came out on top. Since we are comparing cameras for wedding photography, I will focus on full-frame or larger sensors. Most full-frame sensors today give better overall low-light performance than APS-C or Micro 4:3 cameras. While I love some of the options in those categories, full-frame cameras are favored by professionals.

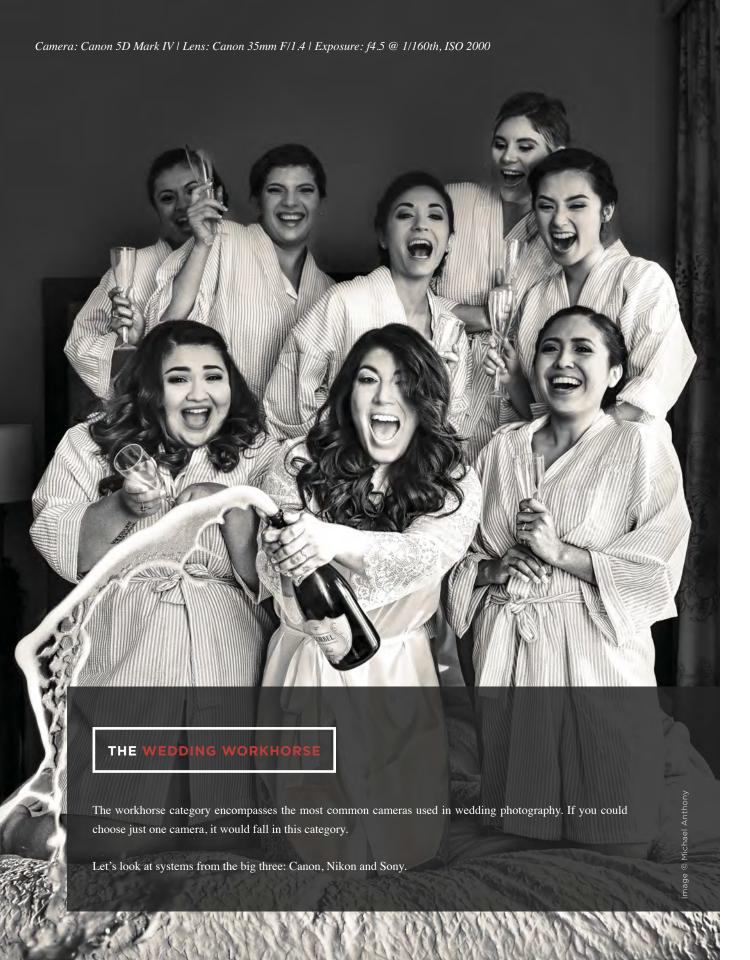
I've broken the article into two broad categories of wedding cameras: what I call the "wedding workhorse" and the "speed demon." Within each category, I unpack four attributes: image quality, autofocus performance, low-light ability and ergonomics.



Camera: Fujifilm GFX50S | Lens: Fujinon GF23mm F/4 | Exposure: f6.4 @ 1/125th, ISO 125



Camera: Fujifilm GFX50S | Lens: Fujinon GF110mm F/2 | Exposure: f2 @ 1/125th, ISO 320





CANON 5D MARK IV
\$3,499 MSRP

MAGE QUALITY | 4/5

AUTOFOCUS PERFORMANCE | 3.5/5

LOW-LIGHT ABILITY | 4/5

ERGONOMICS | 4/5

I was an early adopter of the Canon system, so this one was high on my list. Last year, I purchased a 1DX Mark II as my main wedding camera, but when I had the chance to get my hands on the 5D Mark IV, I was amazed at how awesome it was. First, the ergonomics are what we expect from a Canon body. Little has changed in the 5D series, or any Canon body for that matter. You can look at this as a good thing or a bad thing, depending on how large your hands are, but the 5D has always fit well in mine. It has great weight distribution compared to a mirrorless option, like the Sony a7 or a9 series, which is something I had taken for granted in DSLR cameras. This is the only camera in the series that has a legit touch screen that operates as well as your phone. That is a great feature once you're familiar with it. Canon wasn't the first to use a touch screen, but it has one of the best I have tested.

Image quality is awesome. Canon has improved Dynamic Range in this edition, a blessing for wedding photographers. Details render sharply, and Canon has the best selection of glass on the market, rivaled only by Nikon. Sony is catching up in this department, but options are still limited and Sony lenses are still 20 percent more expensive than Canon and Nikon's.

Color depth is excellent, and its sensor was rated by DxOMark as the best that Canon has ever made. The system falls a bit short of the Sony a7R II in that test, but is still perfectly acceptable as a wedding camera.

Autofocus is fast and clear. Canon uses a 61-point autofocus system and optical viewfinder, which technologically is a bit long in the tooth when compared to some of the newer options. But most importantly, the autofocus is accurate and allows easy switching between single shot and continuous focus points by mapping the DOF preview button. Canon also offers dual-pixel autofocus, which makes live-view focusing incredibly accurate. It's one of my favorite features of this camera.

Low-light performance is awesome, and Canon really did listen to its users. Each iteration of the 5D series keeps getting better. ISO isn't a problem until you get into the 8000 range as long as your subjects are properly exposed. As of the writing of this article, this is my favorite option for photographers looking for a single wedding camera.



SONY A7R II \$2,899 MSRP **IMAGE QUALITY | 5/5** AUTOFOCUS PERFORMANCE | 2/5 LOW-LIGHT ABILITY | 4/5

ERGONOMICS | 3/5

I chose this camera because Sony just introduced another camera into its lineup, the a9, which has been marketed as a sports camera. We will get to that in a minute. The a7R II was revolutionary, much like the 5D Mark II was years back. This camera features mirrorless technology, is incredibly compact in size and has a 42mp sensor that allows for beautifully resolved photographs that can print large and edit well. It has 14 stops of dynamic range, the same as many medium-format cameras on the market. This means you have much more latitude in post-production. The color depth on the Sony is the highest of all the workhorse cameras. Low-light performance is exceptional, with minimal noise in well-exposed images at 6,400 ISO. I was surprised by how it handled high ISO at high resolution. The a7R II has a feature called Eye-AF that allows you to use a separate button on the camera to lock focus on the eye. This excellent Pricewise, Sony doesn't currently have an option feature is so useful in photographing people.

There's no question that the Sony has the highest image quality in this category, but it is far from the best option for wedding photographers. The a7R II lacks in some key features we require. Solid autofocus is the big one. The menu system is clumsy, and in order to change focus points, you have to map custom buttons and use your dials to change them, which takes two to three button presses each time you want to make a

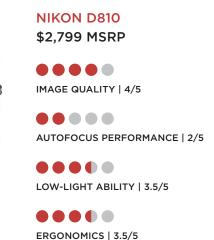
change to your selected focus point. That's not too big of a deal once you get used to it, but it was a problem that bothered many photographers, which is why Sony added a joystick to the new a9. The autofocus is a bit slow and struggles in low-light environments. Glass options are limited, but Sony is quickly rectifying that with its G Master line. By the time you're reading this article, Sony will have released the 16-35mm, 24–70mm and 70–200mm trinity of pro lenses.

When shooting with the a7R II, one of the biggest things that worried me was the lack of dual card slots, which, again, was corrected in the latest iteration of the a9. This is a crucial feature, and almost all cameras released today have it. The a7R II and the a9 are an excellent combination for those with bigger budgets.

for photographers looking for a full-featured wedding camera that compares with the offerings from other manufacturers.

Battery life is a major problem with this camera because the size of the battery is small to match the size of the camera. Mirrorless systems eat battery life, and you will find the need to replace the batteries in the a7R II three to four times during a wedding.





This camera is a bargain at its current price, and is set to be replaced in the near future. It is a very good all-around option for those in the Nikon system. Dynamic range is only a hair short of the a7R II, and the camera has better battery life than both of the other options in this class. The Nikon sits between the other cameras in terms of color depth. It has very high ISO performance, but is bested by the 5D Mark IV in this category.

The Nikon is a bit heavier than the Canon and much heavier than the Sony (although weight evens out on the Sony once you add a G Master lens).

Where the Nikon currently falls short is the autofocus system. The autofocus has just 15 cross-type autofocus points, which are the only ones worth using. The LCD screen is dated with poor resolution. It's not touch capable, but image quality is still excellent.

Nikon, like Sony, does not have the service options available for professionals like Canon does. Canon offers quicker turnaround times and overall better service options, such as equipment loaners and overnight shipping.

The Nikon is still the best bet for those invested in that system. Although there have been rumors of the company's financial outlook, I don't see them going out of business anytime soon, so I wouldn't base my purchasing decision on the rumor mill.

Of more concern is Nikon's lack of innovation. While people may claim the same of Canon, that is not the case. Canon's business strategy has been market segmentation, holding back features from one camera to encourage users to buy other cameras in its lineup, specifically in the video features, but Sony has consistently improved its cameras with each new release. Many photographers and videographers may not like that strategy, but Canon is adding innovative features to its cameras—just not combining them into a single option.

The reason people have been worried about the innovation from these two companies is because they are comparing them to Sony, which is updating its camera line and releasing new options almost yearly. Sony is a newcomer to the professional imaging world, so it's racing to put a product line out there to encourage purchasing. Once it diversifies its product line, its innovation and rate of updates should be on par with the other companies. This happens a lot in technology. Look at Apple shortly after it released the iPhone. The iPhone was updated with a new version in the first three years. Then the iPad came along to rock the device market again, and innovation slowed in order to make the most revenue out of the current technology.

As I am writing this, Nikon has just released a teaser trailer for the D850, which will be the successor to this camera. The specs haven't been released yet, so one can only hope that it'll be amazing.



\$4,495 MSRP

IMAGE QUALITY | 4/5

AUTOFOCUS PERFORMANCE | 5/5

LOW-LIGHT ABILITY | 4/5

ERGONOMICS | 3/5

This camera was just announced, and the specs look incredible. It features 20FPS shooting, which is revolutionary. With no blackout of the shutter, it's the only camera that can capture live action without any blackout in the screen whatsoever.

The a9 has 693 autofocus points compared to Canon's 61. It has all the features we were missing in the a7R II, including dual card slots, better battery life (only half of the 1DX, however), dynamic range close to the 1DX, plus lower and higher ISO. The camera is fast and renders beautiful photos. Sony added custom menus, and it still has the ability to map custom keys to different functions. In other words, the user interface is greatly improved.

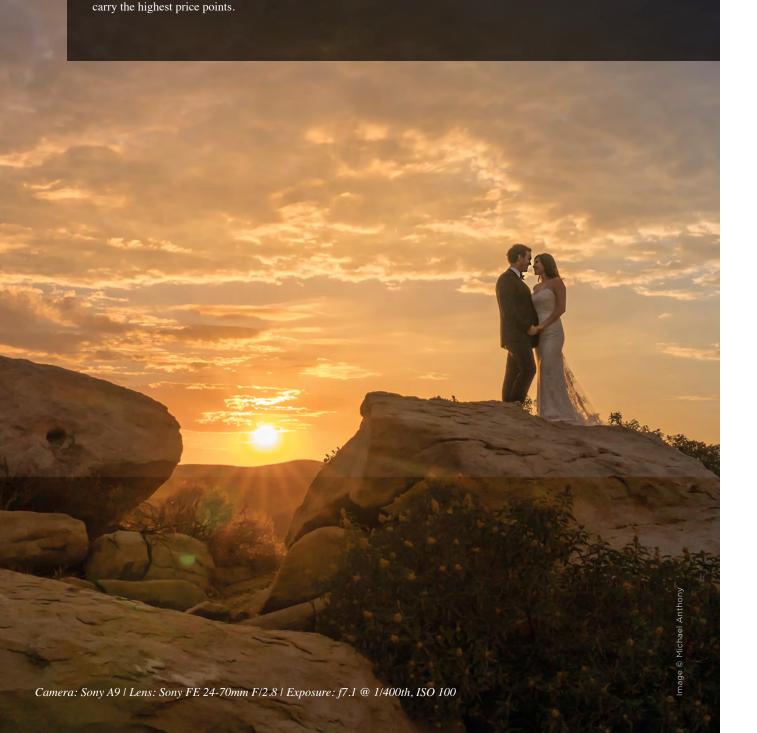
The autofocus system is known as being incredibly accurate. Using this camera in continuous mode blew me away. After using it for a few weeks, I can say that the innovation packed into this camera lives up to the hype. Tracking running subjects with a shallow depth of field yielded incredible accuracy. You can tell with the release of this camera that Sony is not holding back in innovation.

As with all new technology, this camera does have some bugs, but I am confident Sony will release firmware updates to resolve them shortly.

First, it had a hard time locking focus using a native 70-200GM lens during a simple studio headshot in low ambient light conditions. Next, and this is a big one, when shooting a couple's first dance, the camera was performing impeccably, but when switching over to AF-Continuous mode and high-speed shooting, the camera locked up and shut down in the middle of my shooting sequence. Thankfully I had my 5D on my other hip to finish the sequence, but that was unacceptable for a wedding photographer. (Disclaimer: After I reset the camera, this didn't happen again. The camera went into "data recovery" mode and recovered most of the photos leading up to the failure, but it seems that everything that was on the buffer was not recoverable.)

I wouldn't let this experience dissuade you from buying it. It is exceptional, but it's also brand-new, so these little things will likely be fixed with firmware updates. I have continued to use the a9 and have not experienced this problem again in over a month.

I am impressed with what Sony has done for the price point. This is an excellent camera for receptions and ceremonies. One of the biggest gripes people have with it is that Sony doesn't currently have the glass to accompany it. But Sony's G Master trinity of lenses, along with the 85mm F/1.4, should be enough to cover most people's needs.



This category features cameras that are geared toward action. Autofocus and frame rate are priorities, as are build

quality, battery life and longevity. Camera manufacturers consider these cameras their flagships, and they often

THE SPEED DEMON

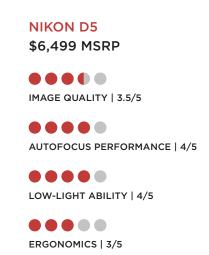


This camera is legendary among professionals. This is Canon's flagship series, and I used it and its predecessor for years. The 1DX is built like a tank, but that comes at a cost in terms of size. In the past, professionals didn't care about size as much. As mirrorless technology increases in popularity, people are starting to enjoy the benefits of size and weight savings.

This camera has incredible ISO performance. It's got a dual processor, with one processor dedicated to the AF system alone. Dynamic range is the best in this group of speed demons, and the battery life is excellent, but not on par with the Nikon. Wedding photographers don't need all of this camera's features, like GPS, but the speed helps capture important moments.

This camera is compatible with Canon's incredibly diverse line of lenses, and features a blazing-fast 16FPS.





The D5 is Nikon's flagship and most recent pro body release. The D5 is also the most expensive in this group. It has 153 autofocus points, which is excellent for a DSLR. It is completely weather-sealed, like the other two bodies above. The D5 can shoot at 14FPS, which is very fast. Color depth is outstanding, and it has a slightly higher resolution than the 1DX, but not as high as the a9.

The D5 does not have as good a dynamic range as the other two cameras in this class, which is one of the reasons I would put it at the bottom of the list. That being said, its 12.5 stops of dynamic range is still very good, considering how far we have come the past few years.

Ergonomically, this camera is comparable to the 1DX Mark II, which means it is heavy and bulky compared to the a9. You may or may not like a larger camera. I keep my wedding cameras as light as possible because I am holding onto them all day long.

The differences between the 1DX Mark II and the D5 are marginal. If you are considering either of these cameras, you are probably well invested in one of the system's glass. I wouldn't consider jumping ship for either of them.





FUJIFILM GFX50S
\$6,499 MSRP

MAGE QUALITY | 5/5

AUTOFOCUS PERFORMANCE | 3.5/5

LOW-LIGHT ABILITY | 3.5/5

ERGONOMICS | 5/5

In early 2017, Fuji broke new ground with its release of the GFX 50S. While digital medium-format systems have been around for a while, this is the first time a manufacturer was able to make the price competitive. At \$6,500, this is not an inexpensive tool, but in the medium-format world, it's a bargain. The Hasselblad H6D-50c, which uses the same sensor, was \$25,995, but it recently dropped to \$17,995. Hasselblad was no doubt feeling the pinch of competition for the first time in this arena. I include this camera here because at its current price point, it's available to many professional studios.

The term *medium format* refers to the sensor size of the camera. To be classified as medium format, the sensor has to be larger than full frame 35mm, but smaller than 4x5 large format. The Sony sensor inside the GFX is not as large as the 100mp Phase One, but it is larger than a full-frame 35mm. Sensor size impacts overall image quality and tonal range, and offers more dynamic range and color depth.

After I first got to play with medium format last year, I knew I had to have one. I considered financing for the Phase One system, but then concluded that as a wedding photographer, it was just not a big enough need in my business to justify the enormous cost. That

changed with the GFX 50S. After I picked one up, I was amazed by the quality of the images. The color tonality is just amazing.

The GFX 50S is a mirrorless system, which makes it no bigger than your standard DSLR. The GFX solves a major pain of medium-format systems by introducing a 425-point focus system, along with a joystick and touch-to-focus technology. It has face detection as well.

While most medium-format cameras have slow autofocus, the GFX is incredibly accurate, even when using the touch screen. Rather than a traditional optical viewfinder, it has a removable electronic viewfinder that allows you to save space if you need to pack light. The electronic viewfinder has WYSIWYG exposure and color previews, so the need for test shots with natural-light images is essentially moot.

Ergonomics are incredible, and this is my favorite camera to hold. It fits perfectly in my hands.

I highly recommend this camera to any higher-end wedding studio that is looking to expand its offerings. We use this system for our wedding portraits, in-studio shoots and portfolio work.

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ROUNDUP

If you're considering a move to Sony, the a9 could be the camera that helps you make that leap. The new iteration of the a7 on the horizon will hopefully add dual card slots that make use of the new battery and the a9 autofocus. Once that happens, Sony will have a good all-around system.

I own cameras from Sony, Canon and Fuji, and have used both Nikon and Panasonic. Canon has the most well-rounded set of lenses, lighting, camera bodies and support for the professional wedding photographer.

While the size of mirrorless units is a plus, as soon as you add the glass to the body, the size difference becomes negligible.

When you factor in user interface, Canon Professional Services support and its diverse line of lenses, Canon currently has the best offerings for wedding shooters. This can change as other manufacturers quickly catch up with their offerings, but Sony has announced that it is expanding professional support in North America. Sony is also working hard to diversify its lens lineup, and Nikon is vowing to rock the photography scene with new innovation soon.

As I said at the top, it is a great time to be a professional photographer.





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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