

the business behind the shutter | APRIL 2014

# SHUTTER

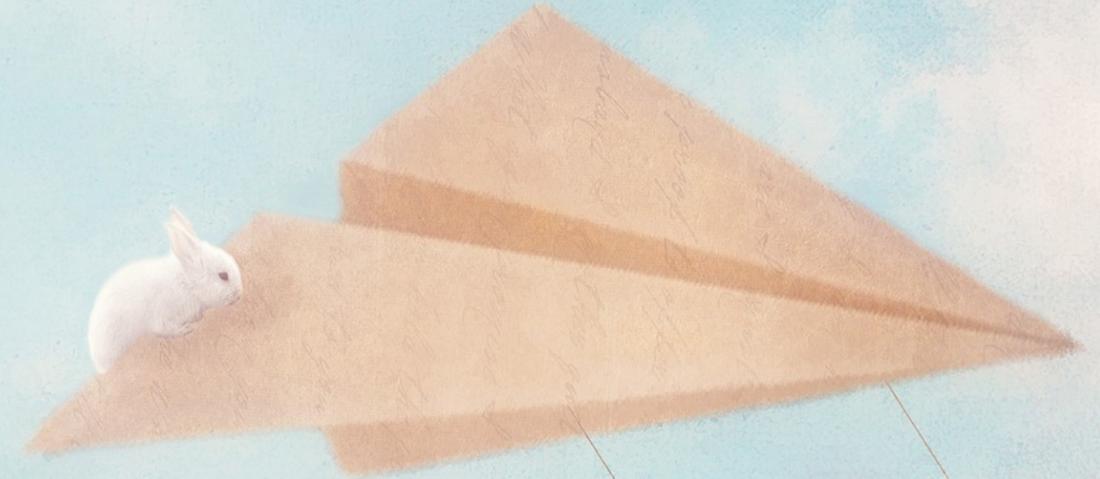
MAGAZINE

## DAYDREAM BELIEVER

FEATURE INTERVIEW WITH

**JULIE MCGANN**

BY SAL CINCOTTA



**+ High-End Sales**  
*with Lori Nordstrom*

**+ Do You Have a Contract?**  
*with Kristin Korpos*

**+ Back to Basics**  
*with Skip Cohen*



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# daydream BELIEVER

FEATURED ARTIST

## JULIE MCGANN

WITH SAL CINCOTTA

### FEATURE ARTICLES

- PHOTOSHOP:  
CONVERTING TO BLACK & WHITE**  
Damian Battinelli
- DO YOU HAVE A CONTRACT?**  
Kristin Korpos
- HIGH-END SALES**  
Lori Nordstrom
- YOUR FIRST SAME-DAY SLIDESHOW**  
Vanessa Joy
- EMPOWERING WOMEN  
THROUGH BOUDOIR**  
Stacie Frazier
- EDITING FOR YOUR BRAND**  
Blair & Suzanne Phillips
- BACK TO BASICS**  
Skip Cohen
- ESTABLISHING A WORKSPACE**  
Kristy Dickerson
- ONE-LIGHT WONDERS**  
Michael Corsentino

#### IN EVERY ISSUE

- PICTURE PERFECT**  
Roberto Valenzuela
- Q&A**  
Sal Cincotta
- INSPIRATIONS | PORTRAITS**  
From Readers
- WHAT'S IN THE BAG?**  
Damian Battinelli



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# LAUNCH POINT



“NOW IS THE TIME  
FOR ACTION

take action and stop procrastinating

make it happen-

**NOW.**



WITH SAL CINCOTTA

# ACCESS. ANYTIME.ANYPLACE.

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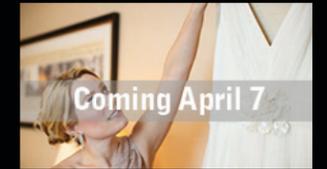
The Why



1 - The Iconic Bridal Portrait



2 - Shooting the Wedding Dress



Coming April 7

3 - The Girls Getting Ready



Coming April 21

4 - The Bridal Details



Coming May 5

5 - The Guys Getting Ready



Coming May 19

6 - The Processional



Coming June 2

7 - The First Kiss



Coming June 16

8 - Shooting Family Photos Quickly



Coming July 7

9 - Shooting the Reception Details



Coming July 21

10 - Iconic Bridal Party



Coming August 4

11 - Capturing Reception Uplighting

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Coming August 18

12 - The Cake Shot



Coming September 1

13 - The First Dance



Coming September 15

14 - The Flower Girl



Coming October 6

15 - Capturing Emotional Moments



Coming October 20

16 - The Cake Cutting



Coming November 3

17 - The Hora



Coming November 17

18 - The Night Shot



Coming December 1

19 - The Nighttime Portrait



Coming December 15

20 - The Sparkler Exit



©Kristin Korpos

# DO YOU HAVE A **CONTRACT?**

WITH KRISTIN KORPOS



BY KRISTIN KORPOS

Without written contracts, you expose yourself and your business to a number of risks. They include not getting paid; not maintaining copyright ownership of your images; failing to get a model release, which means you may not be able to use your images in marketing materials; and the biggest one: not setting proper expectations in writing. Setting up a clear agreement between you and your clients at the outset means expectations of accountability are set for both photographer and client. And if things go bad for either one of you, you the photographer have a written contract to protect you in a court of law.

## WHAT IS A CONTRACT?

A contract is an agreement that creates obligations enforceable by law. An enforceable contract must contain four legal elements: mutual assent (both parties agree), consideration (something bargained for and received), capacity (both parties are not minors and are of sound mind) and legality (lawfulness). A contract sets ground rules and is the heart of most business dealings. And it's just plain professional in a service transaction. Look at it from clients' perspective: Many have never hired a photographer before, and they are not even sure what to expect from the transaction. They think pretty pictures, but we all know there's much more at play, especially for event photographers. A contract tells clients what to expect. It states what you are going to do, and how and when you will do it.

The contract covers accountability and responsibility of both the photographer and the client. What if the client is late to a session? What happens if she cancels? What if the photographer cannot do the shoot and needs to send in a substitute photographer? When will the photographer have the images edited and ready? For what period of time will the client have access to purchase images? What specifically is the client getting for her money? When should payment for services be made?

Contracts also help educate clients on copyright. Many photographers get upset when they see clients using images in ways they shouldn't be used. The contract protects the photographer's copyright by educating the client on what that means, including not altering or duplicating images, or posting them on social media sites without your permission.



## WHAT SHOULD GO INTO MY CONTRACT?

My wedding photography contract is six pages long and contains 30 numbered items. Is that too intense? Well, probably not for an attorney. Not all of these items are legal clauses; some of them refer to specific policies, such as the use of print credits or how the album design process works.

Aside from the above types of considerations, here are the must-haves for every contract.

### [1] PARTIES INVOLVED

Name of photographer/photography business and name of client.

### [2] WHAT IS BEING AGREED TO?

The promised services and products the client is receiving for stated monetary payment that is being exchanged.

### [3] RETAINER FEES AND PAYMENTS

Whether retainer fees or payments are refundable; when and how payment of balances should be made.

### [4] EXPECTATIONS

Turnaround time, product delivery, proofing gallery information, ordering prints, album design, design changes, etc.

### [5] COPYRIGHT

Educate the client as to what copyright means and what constitutes infringement.

### [6] MODEL RELEASE CLAUSE

A model release clause should allow you to use any images you take in marketing materials or online promotion (especially important if you are shooting minors).

### [7] EMERGENCY AND “ACT OF GOD” SITUATIONS

Provisions for emergencies address what happens if, for example, the photographer gets sick and can't shoot the session or event; an “act of God” situation refers to a major weather event, earthquake, fire or similar event (“force majeure”) that prohibits providing the services agreed upon.

### [8] LIMIT LIABILITY

This clause should be in every contract to cap the amount of damages that can be recovered, limiting that amount to the fee charged for the underlying service. The sky is not the limit here; courts will look for whether this provision is unconscionable when analyzing your contract.

### [9] DISPUTE RESOLUTION INFORMATION

If a dispute arises, what will happen? Will it go straight to the courts, or into mediation or arbitration first, and where will these proceedings take place?

### [10] SIGNATURES OF BOTH PARTIES

The contract should be signed by both parties. If minors are involved, have an adult sign.



## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT ADDING...

Every contract contains standard legal boilerplate language. Then you notice additional policies contained within agreements, which are very specific, especially in certain industries. These policies help further set expectations.

**[1] CANCELLATION AND LATE POLICY**  
What will happen in the event the client cancels, is late to a session or needs to reschedule?

**[2] VENUES AND PERMITS**  
If there are restrictions at the venue, such as no flashes, it's the client's responsibility to negotiate with the venue. If any permits are required to photograph at a certain location, that is the client's responsibility as well.

**[3] ARCHIVAL PRINTS & ALBUM STATEMENT**  
While the photographer attempts to use the best archival papers for both prints and albums, color may fade over time. A statement may be included to limit such liability from fading or discoloring.

**[4] ACCEPTABLE IMAGES DEFINITION**  
Beyond travel for educational workshops and conferences, you can also deduct general travel for business. If you photograph a wedding that requires a five-hour flight and a few nights in a hotel, for example, those expenses can be deducted.

**[5] BACKUP POLICY**  
Tell clients it is their responsibility to back up any electronic files they are provided, and that the photographer is not responsible for maintaining them after a certain number of days. If you maintain electronic files forever, add a fee here so the client knows the cost of obtaining electronic files if they are lost.

### [6] VIDEOGRAPHERS

Educate your clients by including a statement that addresses the photographer's right to redirect videographers and their lighting if it is causing a conflict and restricting the photographer from getting important images.

### [7] ARTISTIC RIGHTS

Give the client notice of your right to discretion in selecting which images from the day will be released to the client, and their final post-production style and look.

### [8] MEALS

If you expect a meal during a long shoot, put it in the agreement. And if you want to make sure your second photographer gets a meal as well, note that.

### [9] TRAVEL FEES

State your policy on travel fees. This should include the charge per mile for road travel outside a particular area code.

### [10] INTEREST CHARGES AND COLLECTION

What happens when you run into an issue concerning payment? Set expectations with your clients regarding interest charges, and who will incur the expense of collection and attorney's fees if the matter escalates.



## CONTRACTS

This is a lot of information to take in, but do yourself a favor: Pull out your photography contract and give it a good read. Does it address these must-have items? Have you had an attorney in your state review it? Attorney review is especially important if you have copied your contract from another wedding photographer's website (and by the way, that was not a good move).

Your contract is the heart of your business; don't underestimate the inherent risks you and your business could face by not investing in the integrity of your contract. And keep in mind that it's not like upgrading to the newest camera body every few years. Your contract is usually a "do-it-once" type of thing. Do it right the first time, and you can rest easy knowing you have taken one of the most important steps in protecting your business. ■

*The information contained in this article is for educational purposes only, and not the provision of specific legal advice. Laws vary from state to state. You should not rely upon information in this article without seeking the advice of an attorney in your state. There is no attorney/client relationship created by the reading of this article.*



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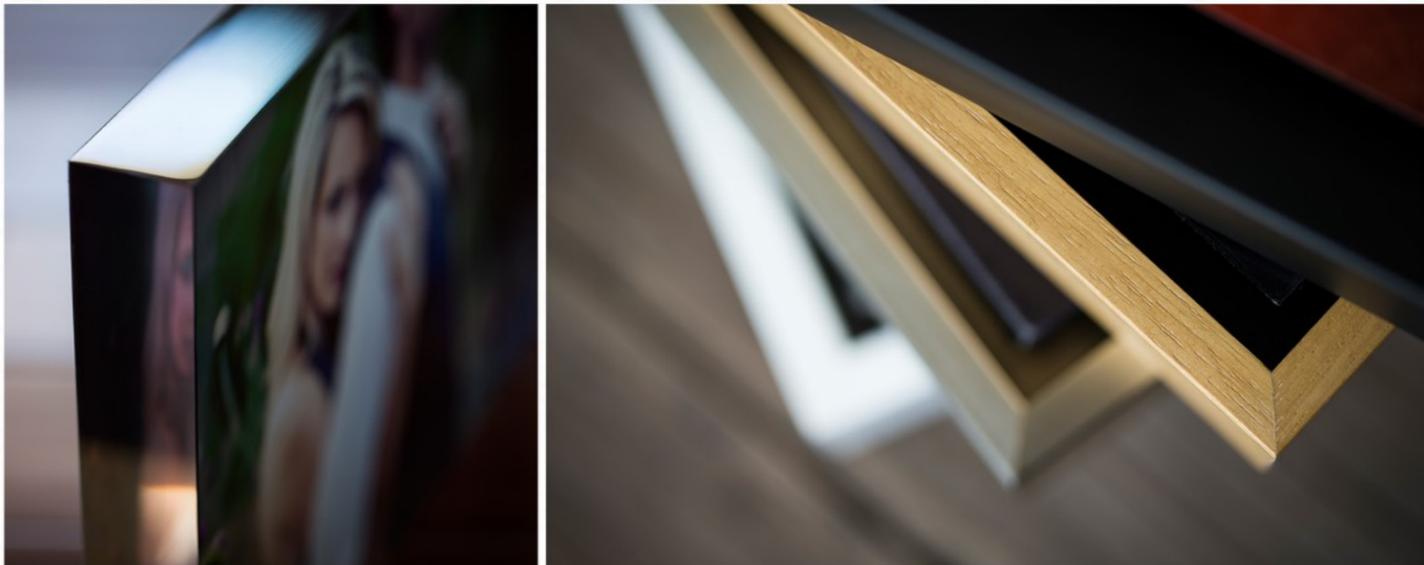


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**EDITING**

**FOR YOUR BRAND**

WITH BLAIR & SUZANNE PHILLIPS

BY BLAIR & SUZANNE PHILLIPS



When you start offering clients 50 different actions on 50 different images, their eyes glaze over. They get confused and can lose sight of your brand. If you want to get ahead of the game, clear up your schedule for more sessions or family time (which is our case), you have to be confident in your editing and other processes you use to achieve your brand's look. Here's how we keep our studio's images on-brand.

I'm Suzanne Phillips, Blair Phillips's other half in business, marriage and parenthood. Although our roles are extremely different at the studio, they complement one another in the final product. It's very simple: He photographs and I edit (and so much more, but that's another article in itself).





## GETTING STARTED

### ABOUT US, AND HOW I LEARNED TO EDIT

When we started our business 10 years ago, we had no clue about f-stops or Photoshop layers. Neither one of us went to school for what we do. I was a communications and marketing major, which has helped on the business side of things, and Blair was in the commercial glass business. So, everything we've learned along the way has been self-taught, and it feels so good.

When Blair got his first DSLR camera, straight out of the box, the default setting was JPEG. Neither of us knew the difference between RAW and JPEG. Blair just started shooting on the default setting. When I opened Photoshop 7, it was foreign and overwhelming. Back in 2004, there were very few tutorial videos on sites like YouTube, and Pinterest didn't exist. There were only dense books that didn't interest me. I wanted to learn, and I wanted to learn fast. I started playing with layers, desaturating images to turn them black and white, and using the Eraser tool.

That first year, I learned how to make images look better by enhancing color through color balance, filters, curves and levels. In March 2005, I learned about "actions"—which changed my life! I loaded a set of Kubota actions onto my PC. I scrolled down and saw the names listed in the Actions palette, but couldn't figure out how to use them. Later that year, we flew to a workshop in NYC where I learned that all you had to do was push Play in the Actions window. With actions, my editing time went from three hours to two hours per session. I was pumped!

The first several sets of actions—the very Kubota actions I use to this day—helped propel Blair's images to the top in our area. No one was close to replicating his style, lighting and, now, my editing. We were on top of our game, and my confidence never stopped growing.

So now it's 2014, and Blair is an amazing photographer who gives me wonderful images straight from camera. Blair still shoots JPEG, and is a big advocate of shooting that way. The JPEG images Blair gives me are sellable as is—they're just not true to our brand. Our brand is very specific; I never want a client to see an image and think, "That doesn't look like one of Blair's images." If a client ever says that, I have let down our brand.

Blair photographs a variety of images during a normal studio session: natural/reflective light, off-camera light, two- and three-light setups, and florescent light. It's my job to edit these images through color treatments to make them brand-specific. Whether Blair's photographing a newborn, a senior, a wedding or a family, every image will be known as one of "Blair's pictures." It's a high honor to hear people we've never met say, "I knew that was Blair's image as soon as I saw it." That's huge! That means we are doing what we are supposed to: staying true to ourselves and our brand.

How do we do this? It's simple. On the shooting end, Blair is always consistent with his lighting, posing and sets. A newborn is photographed on the same set as a senior or bride. Same lighting patterns, same everything. I edit them the same as well. You would never see Blair photograph a newborn on a white set with a white whicker basket. That brand may work for some photographers, but not us. Due to Blair's locations, our brand tends to go on the grungy but still elegant side. We refer to our brand as "eclectic elegance." When I edit, my coloration and textures have to match this brand.

I use very specific actions, or adjustments, on Blair's images. When I get a new set of actions, I spend a day testing them. I start with three photos: one underexposed, one properly exposed, and one that's overexposed. I run the new actions on the set of three images for off-camera lighting; then for natural light; constant light; and finally for fluorescent light. I want to see which actions will fit my brand with the types of lighting Blair uses. Actions and treatments can look so different depending on the scenario and lighting.

I choose my favorites, then narrow them down to seven to 10 actions and treatments I think will be best suited for our brand. Our brand isn't about natural light, fluffy, carefree—we're more on the dramatic side. So I need to choose actions and treatments that represent that (a little desaturation with some texture and grit to them).

## THE NEXT LEVEL



These days I can edit a set of Blair's images in 16 minutes. (He shoots around 90, from which I deliver 40 to 60.) How? I know my actions and treatments inside and out. I've got hot keys set up. I can edit with my eyes closed, and even carry on a meeting while editing. I follow a specific and rigid process. It's like a science, from inserting the media card all the way to burning the DVD of final images.

Another important element that makes us a successful working couple and team is trust. Blair and I trust each other completely. You've got to have trust and confidence in each other's work. Shooting and editing is a marriage. Blair never sees what I edit or even what we sell, and he never sees what clients hang in their homes. Blair sees what he photographs—that's his job. My job is to enhance what he shoots. Sometimes my edits push an image beyond what Blair had in mind.

But again, he trusts me. Blair photographs, I edit, Adam sells. Period. Everyone on a good team has to be able to do his or her job independently and efficiently—while staying on-brand. ■

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**ESTABLISHING**

A

**WORKSPACE**

with Kristy Dickerson

by Kristy Dickerson



The age of the corner photography studio is all but over. Photographers no longer require a brick-and-mortar place of business. As a mom, I love this because I don't want the added expense or the commute. Being able to work from home is what makes owning a small business so awesome. But when you also have a busy household, you face a juggling act.

Here are some pointers to help you achieve balance, creativity, success and efficiency in business and life.

>> **DESIGN YOUR WORKSPACE.** My office used to be on the main floor of my home, which turned out to be a horrible idea. If you don't have kids, it actually might be the perfect scenario, but for this momma, it was hard. The home phone would ring, the kids would need something, and right then I would drop everything to cater to the home needs. If I needed to have a client meeting, I would look at my home my two-year-old just ravaged, and realize that I'd have to clean for an hour to have that meeting. I also never want to tell my kids to wait because I'm working. I never want them to feel like something is more important than what they have to say to me. But if you put yourself in the middle of that situation, something will have to give. Either you tell them to hold on a second, or there goes your productivity. So designating a space within your home, preferably not in the middle of the living space, helps keep you focused while you are working. And then you can be engaged while at home. My workspace/office is over my garage. It was space that was just studded out when we moved into our home. I would rather invest in my home and create a space so that I can work from home rather than rent a space. It allows the craziness of my home to continue to happen even if I have a meeting. But it doesn't even have to be an office. It can be just a workspace. A desk in your bedroom or spare bedroom. The goal is to just have a space where, when you sit down, it is work time.



## ESTABLISHING A WORKSPACE



*You will be amazed,  
once you are organized, how free you feel.*



>> **DESIGNATE OFFICE HOURS.** This might sound silly, but setting work hours even if you work from home is a must. Not having a work life balance, or at least not striving for one, can lead to a failed business, a struggling marriage or parental guilt. I set my hours around my kids' schedules. I want to be a stay-at-home mom, but I also want to work. Designating office hours and waking up early are what allow me to do that. When my kids are both in school, I then have more work hours in my week, but for now I have to get my work hours in when I can. When they are at school, napping or even still sleeping, that is my office time. Of course there are times during travel, lunch or other circumstances that I bust out my laptop and knock off some things from my to-do list, but isn't that the beauty of being able to work from anywhere? The goal of setting office hours is to maximize efficiency and minimize the hazard of your small business pulling you away from family time.

>> **ORGANIZE.** Being a creative, organization is something that often gets overlooked or pushed to the side. Creative individuals often struggle with organization, efficiency and productivity. I know some of the most creative individuals who struggle to run a business because their brain doesn't operate on what it takes to run a business. But here is the thing: You are running a business, and in order to succeed, organization is a must. Lay out your workspace to maximize efficiency. The more organized your space is, the more room you have to be creative instead of worrying about all the things on your to-do list. Here are a couple areas requiring organization. If you don't have this done, put it on your calendar and make it happen! You will be amazed, once you are organized, how free you feel.

- >> Computer folders, files and images
- >> Backups and storage
- >> Bookkeeping, inputting and documents filing
- >> To-do list and project plans

>> **INSPIRE YOURSELF.** Decorate your office space with things that inspire you. Use colors that are light and airy. They say darker colors can actually affect your mood and productivity. So pick colors that are light or vibrant, and choose office decor that sparks inspiration and creativity. I prefer white or light walls decorated with pops of color. When I step into my office, it is like I go to another place. Although I literally just walked out my backdoor and went above my garage, to me it feels like I left home. My home has a very cozy feel, and I wanted my office to be a bit more modern but still have the same characteristics of my home that I love so much. But this space for me is where I can show my more hippie side that my husband doesn't like so much. Again, if this is just your workspace and you won't be meeting clients there, still decorate it with things that inspire you, and decorate with your brand in mind. Which brings me to my next point.

>> **DECORATE WITH YOUR BRAND IN MIND.** Spend a little extra and decorate your home office with not only things that inspire you, but, if you are meeting clients, make sure it is an extension of your brand. If you have a very modern, editorial-looking website and brand, I think your office decor should be modern. Branding is not just about your website. When you are meeting clients in your office space, that space then becomes a part of the experience for that client. Look up DIY projects online. Personalize your space for next to nothing with DIY & used items. I made these shelves for less than \$15! Check out some of the DIY projects I have done: <http://kristydickersonblog.com/index.cfm?q=DIY>



*Personalize your space for next to nothing with DIY & used items.*



## ESTABLISHING A WORKSPACE

*I like it to be a cozy space  
where I can get to know them.*

### CREATE A MEETING SPACE.

This is not for everyone. I know a lot of photographers who use their home office space only to work, and they meet clients somewhere like Starbucks. But if you do meet clients in your home office, designate a location for meeting/selling, and have that location set up for clients to see samples of products. Clients won't buy if they can't see. I like it to be a cozy space where I can get to know them.

Photography is something we do because we love it. But if you're not careful, photography can affect relationships and home life. Having a home office or workspace that separates your home and work life—and also aids creativity—can be just what you need to find success in both home and work. Happy decorating.



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Jen Bebb



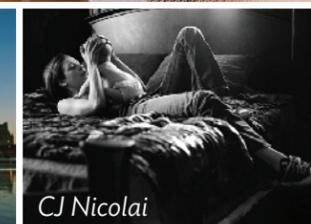
Sue Bryce



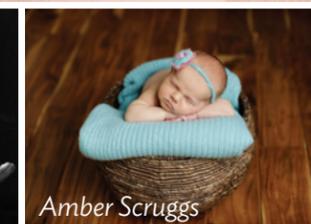
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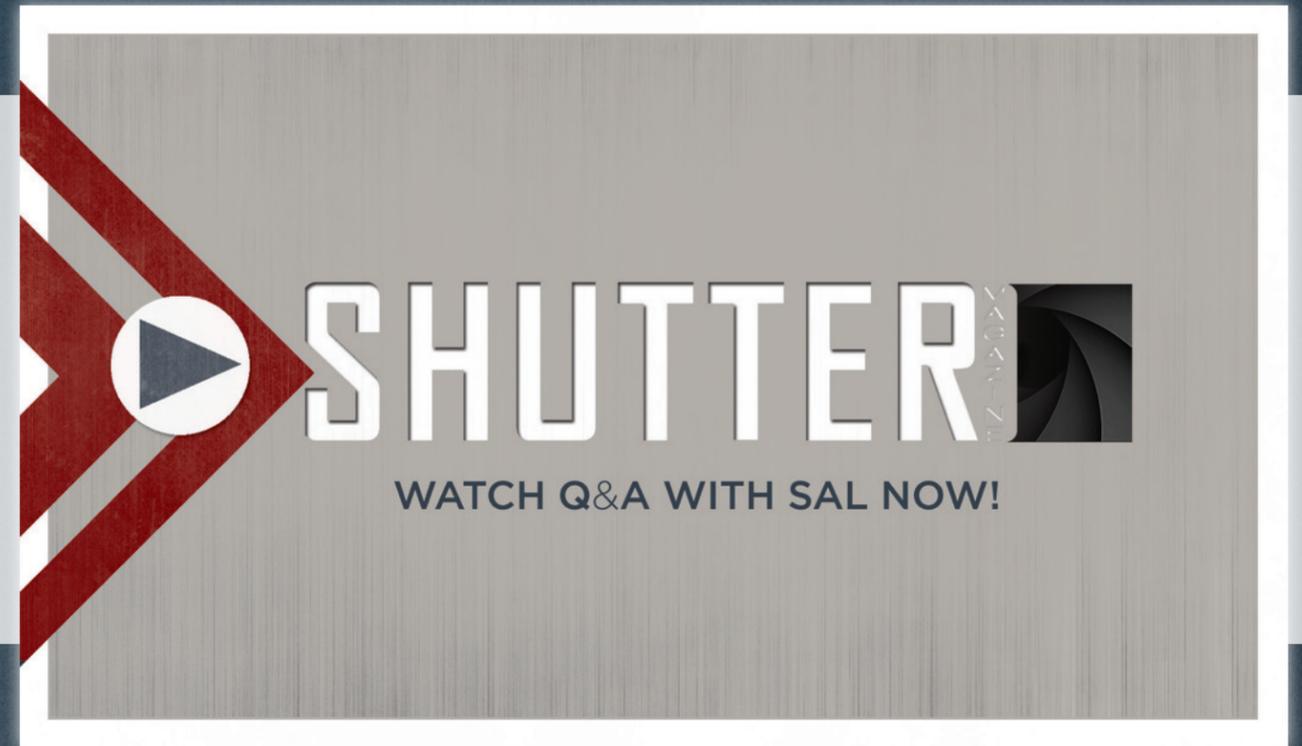
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# QUESTIONS

- + Tips for building a staff into your business
- + How to know when you're making a profit on specialized shoots
- + How does Sal deliver his products to his clients?
- + Marketing boudoir photography as a male photographer
- + When does Sal use medium format vs. 35mm?
- + How to run a shoot without an assistant
- + How to offer high end products to your clients
- + Dealing with low-budget destination weddings
- + Tips on what lenses to use for specific print sizes
- + What to do when your projector fails at a wedding

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**QUESTIONS?**  
WE'VE GOT  
**ANSWERS**



Q  
&  
A

WITH

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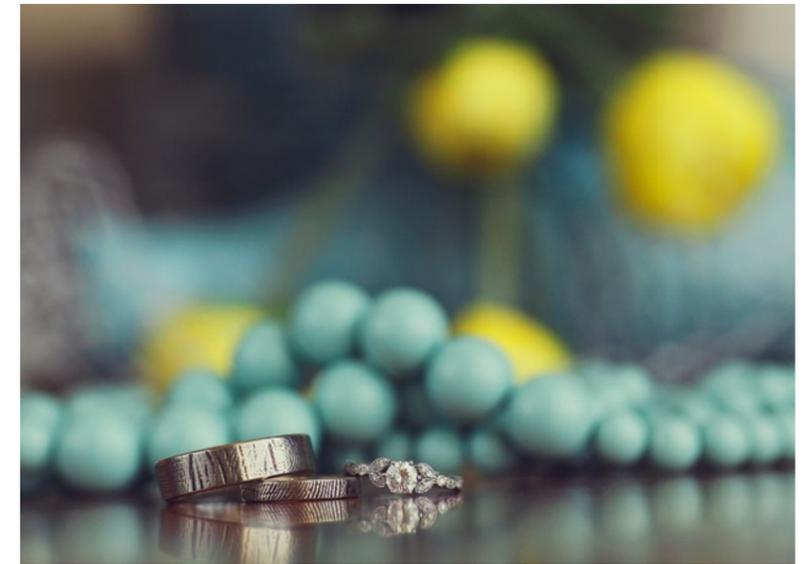
— SAME-DAY —  
SLIDESHOW

WITH VANESSA JOY



BY VANESSA JOY

Same-day slideshows were originally created as a marketing tool aimed at wedding reception guests. While they also wow the bride and groom, the primary benefit is being able to show off your work to their friends and family—free, very effective advertising during a time of high emotion. In fact, it’s one of the best marketing tools out there, and one that doesn’t cost us a thing. The same-day edits process can be intimidating at first, but it shouldn’t be if you’re just starting out. You can do just 10 percent of the process and still gain incredible brand recognition that will result in leads and bookings down the road. I can’t tell you how many inquiries I receive that tell me that they, or their friend, or even their mom saw my pictures at a wedding. This method works.



### TAKE THE RIGHT PICTURES

There are three types of pictures you need to take for a successful same-day slideshow. The first is obvious: pictures of the bride and groom that will tell their story.

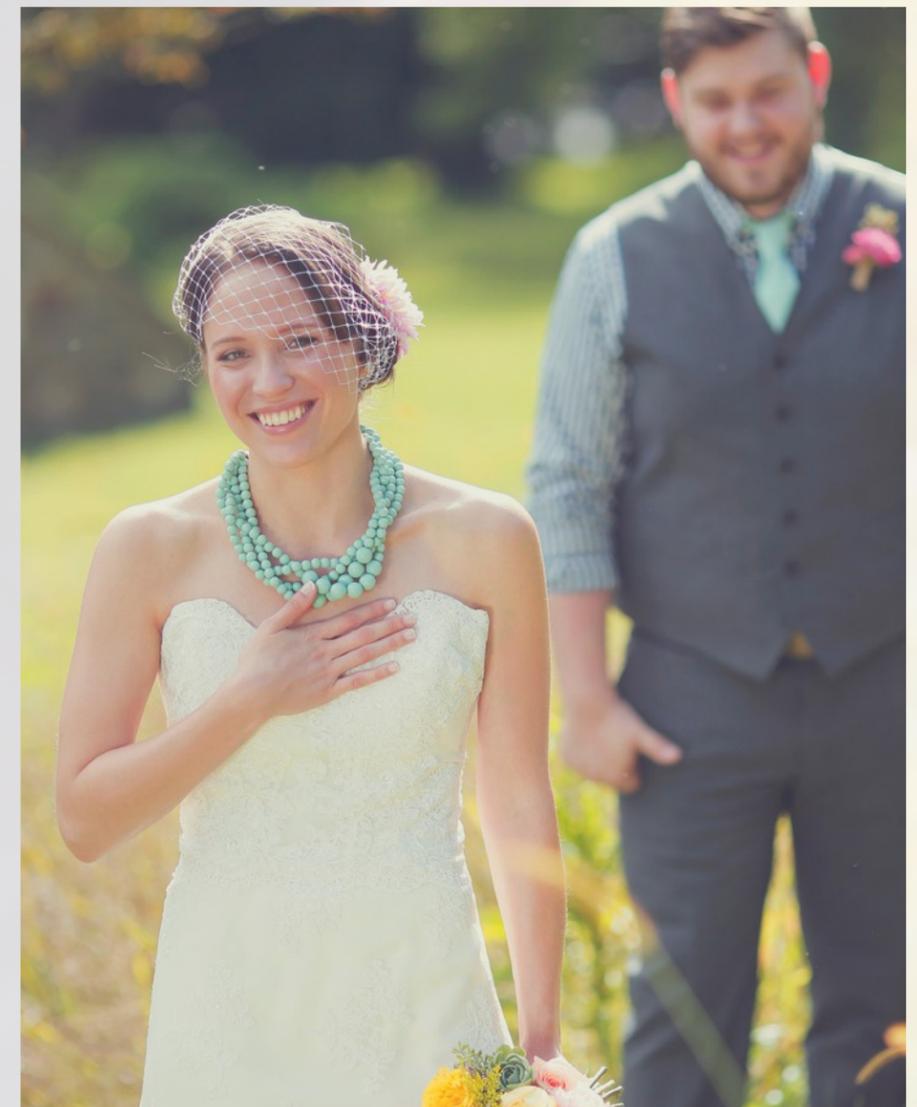
Secondly are the guests. When you show pictures, everyone’s secretly hoping to see themselves. Think about every time you’ve been in a group picture. Who do you look for when you see the image the first time? Yourself. Include a few candid shots of guests, and you’ll have them even more interested in your work.

Third, make sure you take pictures of the details. Shoes, dress, rings, cake, invitation, centerpieces—everything. You might not put too many of these pictures in the actual slideshow, but they’re a must-have for submitting to publications after the wedding, and great for adding color and detail to the album design. Your clients have also put a lot of time and thought into these things. They worked hard on each and every detail before the wedding, and they’ll want to remember them afterward.

## COPY A FEW PICTURES FROM YOUR MEMORY CARD

I shoot with the Canon 1D Mark IV, so I have dual card slots. Ideally, you'd shoot RAW for the main pictures and JPEGs for your same-day-edit pictures because the JPEGs are faster to work with on the spot. If you don't have that capability, it's not the end of the world. It'll just take a little bit more time for your laptop to handle the larger RAW files.

During the cocktail hour or at the beginning of the reception, I sit down with my SD card plugged into my laptop and use Photo Mechanic (CameraBits.com) to quickly select the pictures I'd like to use for the slideshow. I normally end up using 60 to 80 photos, but that's a lot. For your first time, 10 to 20 pictures will do just fine. Your editing speed will help you determine how many pictures you should use in your same-day edit. When you've chosen the images, just copy them onto your hard drive.



## EDIT YOUR PICTURES-QUICKLY.

The next step is a bit subjective, depending on how you edit and your personal style. If you like editing in Photoshop, use it. If you like editing in Lightroom, use it. If I have the time, I like to use both (I balance and retouch in Lightroom—but more on that in another article) and then throw them through a few actions in PS to finish them off and give them my style. A lot of photographers are worried about not being able to spend enough time editing the photos for the same-day edit. It can be of particular concern if the bride has rough skin or not-so-white teeth. Normally, you'd have to take extra and more lengthy steps in PS to do that. Now, thanks to the brand-new Lightroom Retouching Toolkit, we can retouch our pictures right in LR better and faster than the existing brushes have allowed in the past. This is a huge (and necessary) time saver for your workflow over all, but especially for same-day slideshows. I'll show you how that new program works in this article's video. (If you want to try it for yourself, use code SHUTTER10 at [LightroomRetouching.com](http://LightroomRetouching.com) for \$10 off.)

## ADD YOUR LOGO.

Every time you display your photos, your logo needs to be attached to them for branding purposes. If the viewer doesn't know who took the photos, there's really no point in showing them at all.

Since by this point you're probably nearing dinnertime, you need a fast way to add your logo and arrange the photos nicely. I use Blog Stomp, which offers the easiest and fastest way to do this (I'll show you just how fast it can be in the video at the end). To top it off, Blog Stomp can integrate with your blog and Facebook Fan Page so you can upload your finished images right to the sites from the program—an easy way to get Monday's work started sooner. (For 20 percent off Blog Stomp, use the code VANESSAJ0Y20 at [BlogStompOnline.com](http://BlogStompOnline.com).)



*DISPLAY YOUR SLIDESHOW  
WITH YOUR BUSINESS CARDS.*

There's only one step left—the best one! Set up either your laptop or a digital picture frame on a cocktail table with your business cards nearby. If you have taken engagement pictures of the bride and groom, display a few for an extra-special touch. Then, just watch people “wow” and “awww” over your photos of the day. You'll have crowds of people watching and telling other people about it in no time.

If you use your laptop to show the pictures, you have more display options. If you have Internet access, you can easily make a polished Animoto slideshow. If you just want to keep it simple, use the LR slideshow feature or the same in Finder. Whatever you choose, make sure the table is in an area with high traffic—but not in the way of guests or staff. ■

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# INSPIRATIONS

# Inspiration comes to us in many shapes & sizes

Put 10 photographers in a room and ask them to shoot a paperclip, and there's no telling what will happen. And that, ladies and gentlemen, is why I love being a photographer. We all see the world in our own special way. Ultimately, though, nothing is truly new or unique. Everything is inspired by something that came before. In that spirit, this month we asked you, our readers, to submit some work you thought would inspire your peers. What you gave us blew away the staff here. *Enjoy!*



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Thank you to everyone who submitted images this month

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Salvatore Cincotta  
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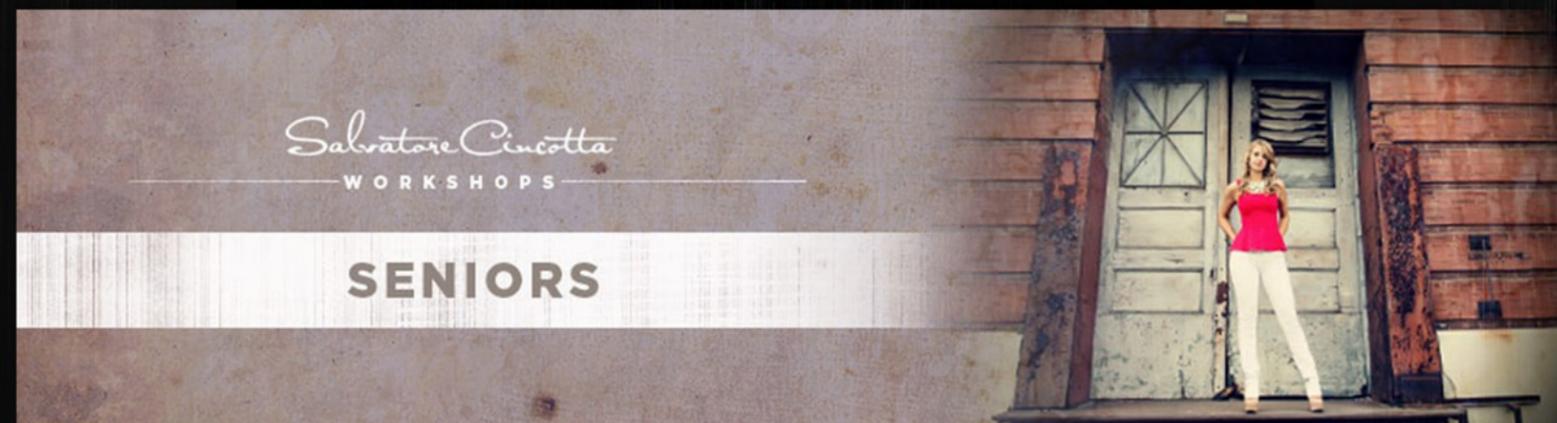
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WITH DAMIAN BATTINELLI

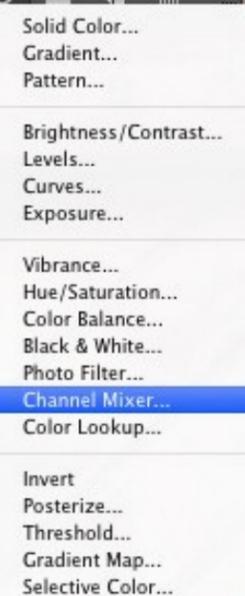
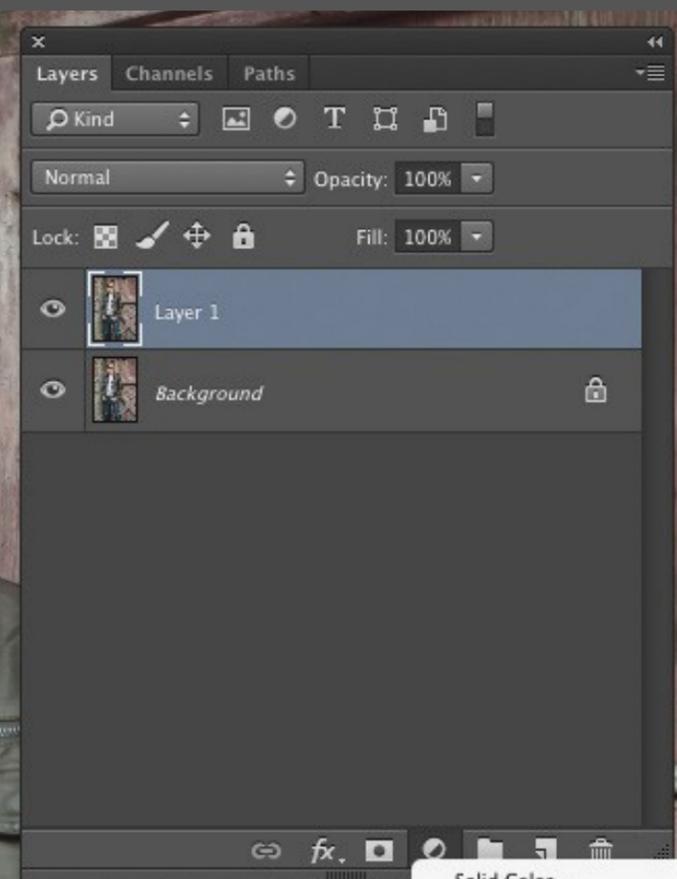
# PHOTOSHOP

CONVERTING TO BLACK & WHITE

BY DAMIAN BATTINELLI



[ FIG.1 ]



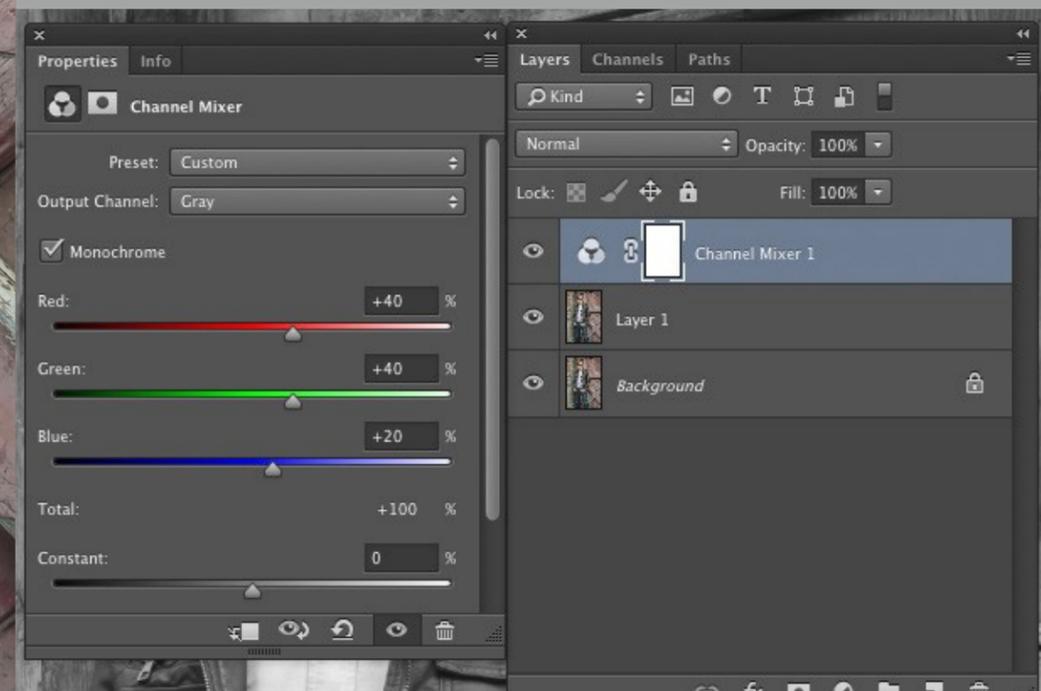
When I create a black-and-white image in Photoshop, a small part of me giggles like a schoolgirl. Something about the mood it radiates can be quite powerful. I'm swept back in time to my days in the darkroom. I can almost smell the fixer in the air (but thankfully not on my hands!).

Changing color images to black and white can have a dramatic impact on the feel, or emotion, of the image. Maybe you shot it for the sole purpose of converting it to black and white, or maybe a color image just doesn't exude the emotion you intended. I'm going to show you how to tackle the latter case: to convert to black and white in Photoshop without just selecting the Desaturate option. I'll go over how to stylize it with a few options using the Channel Mixer and Contrast adjustment layers, and by adding a grainy film effect using Noise.

Press Command + J to make a copy of your image. (Get into the habit of always working on a copy rather than the original.)

Select the icon at the bottom of your Layers panel (Fig. 1). You'll notice the color options red, green and blue, as well as Presets, Output Channel, Monochrome and Constant. Check the Monochrome box. The Output Channel now reads Gray (Fig. 2). Now you have a few options. You can play around with the presets, such as Black and White, Infrared, and different-colored filters. The presets are a great starting point.

[ FIG.2 ]



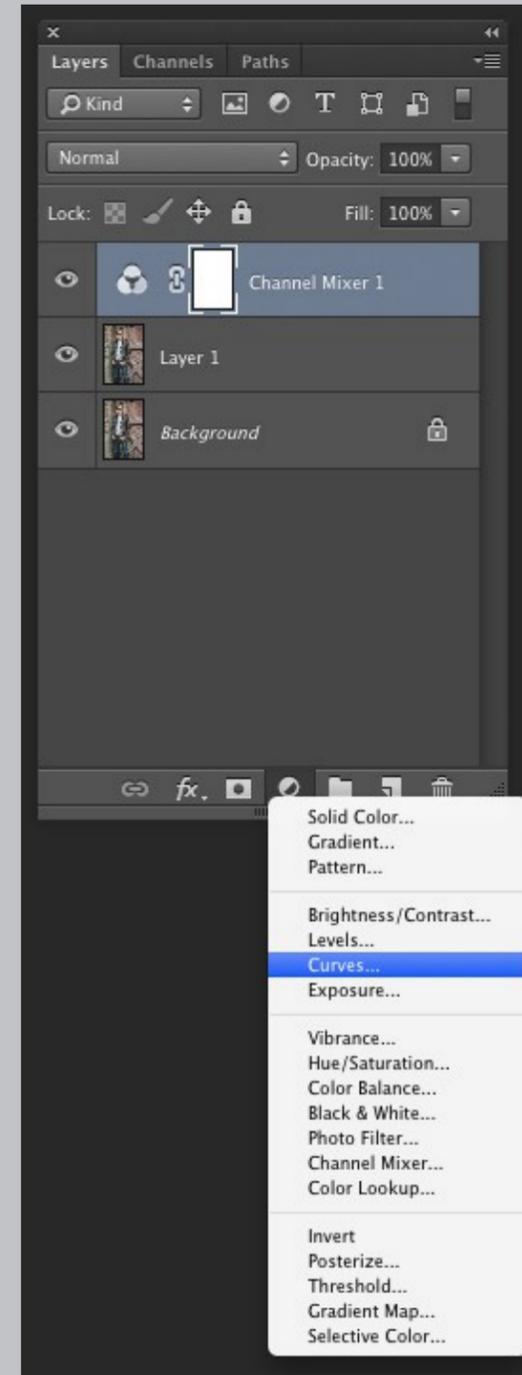
To get a completely customized look, keep Presets on Custom. As you move the sliders on each color, you can watch the effect on your image (Fig. 3). What's happening is you're manipulating the color tones that fall into that specific color family. So, if there aren't any greens in your original image, you won't see a change. The Constant slider changes the overall brightness of the image. Play with all these options until you're happy. Remember, this is an adjustment layer, so you can always come back to make tweaks.

Let's say you want to darken the background of the image to separate your model a bit more, to make your subject "pop." One technique is to use a Curves adjustment layer on top of the copied image layer and under your Channel Mixer adjustment layer; then, mask out the areas you want to stay.

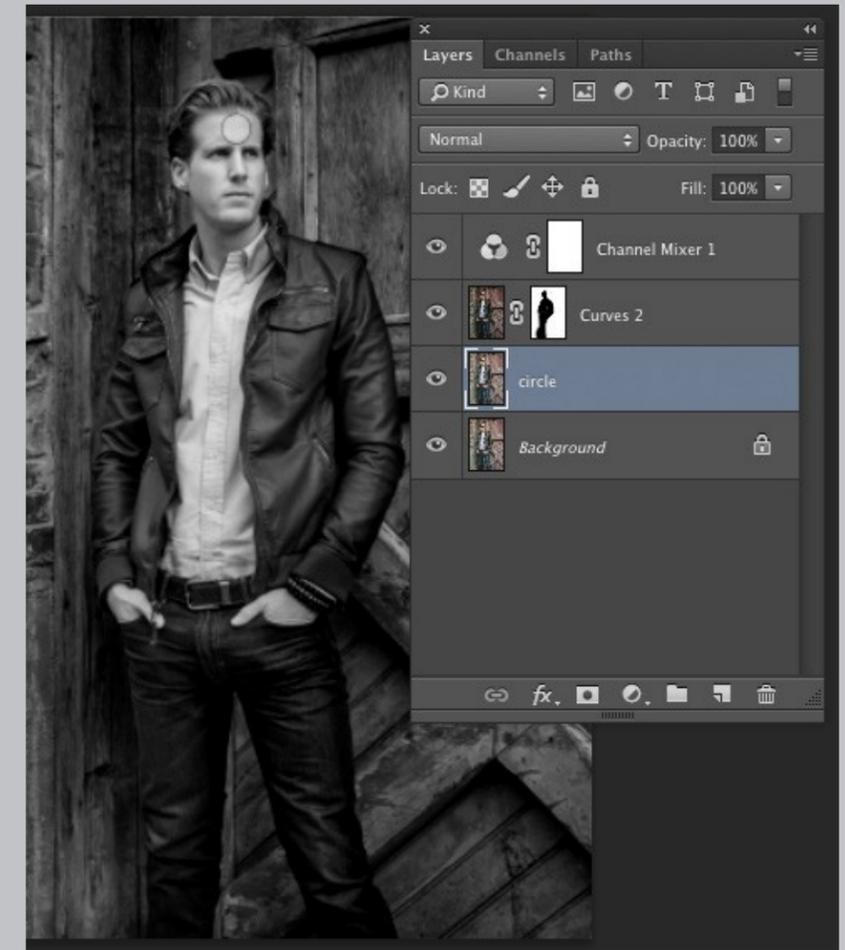


[ FIG. 3 ]

[ FIG. 4 ]

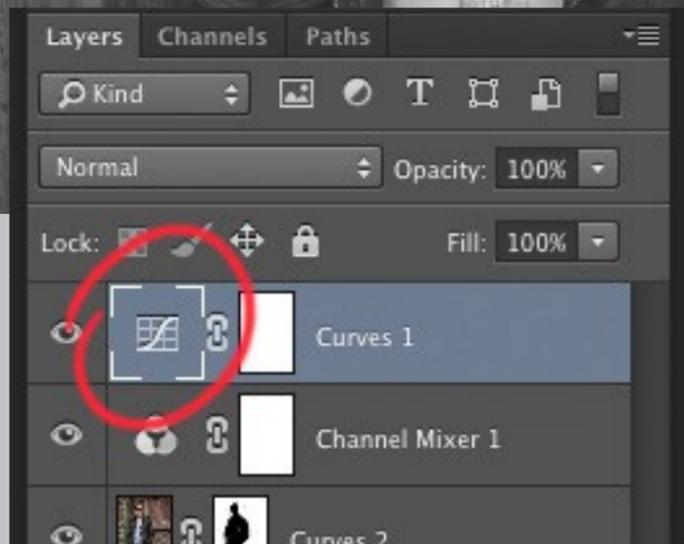


[ FIG. 5 ]



Click the Adjustment layer icon and add a Curves adjustment layer (Fig. 4). The goal is to darken the entire image. One easy way is to select Darker (RGB) within the presets. On this layer, click the Mask icon to the left of the Adjustment layer icon. With your brush set to black, paint over the areas you want to reveal or make lighter (Fig. 5). Change the size and hardness of your brush for the finer details, keeping in mind that black reveals and white conceals. I usually concentrate on the face and upper body. If you want to make the background darker, you can always duplicate this new layer and adjust the opacity of the layer. You can also brush out more, creating a vignette with another copy.

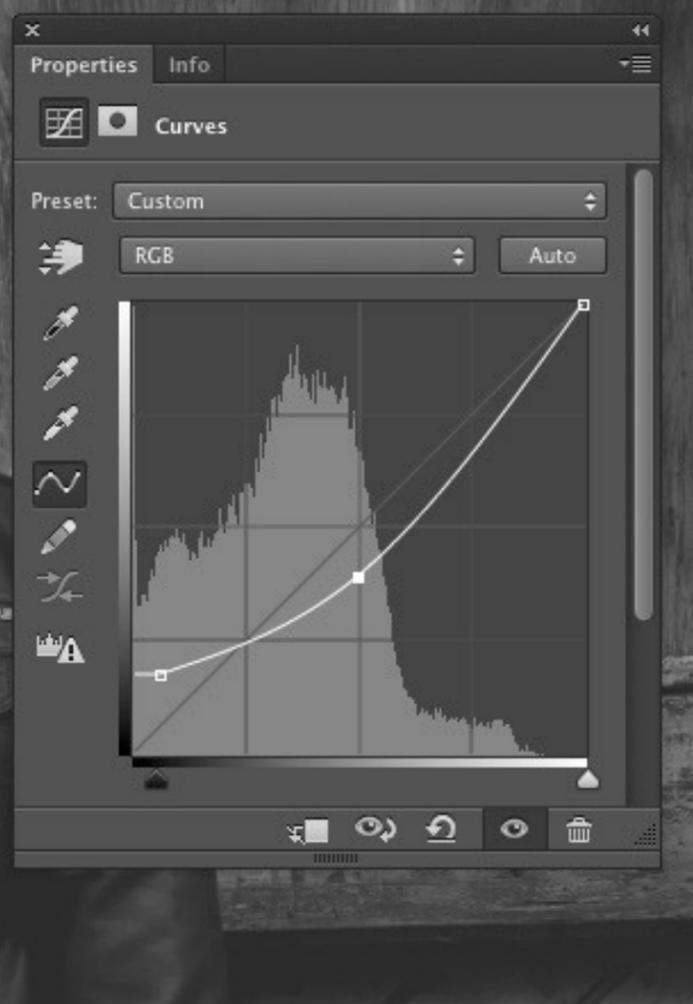
[ FIG. 6 ]



The next step in stylizing your black and white might be the most dramatic adjustment so far. Adding another Curves adjustment on top of all the layers allows you to adjust the contrast of the image as a whole. You can create a super-contrasty image, muted tones or anything in between. In this example, I'm going for the ever-popular high-fashion muted look.

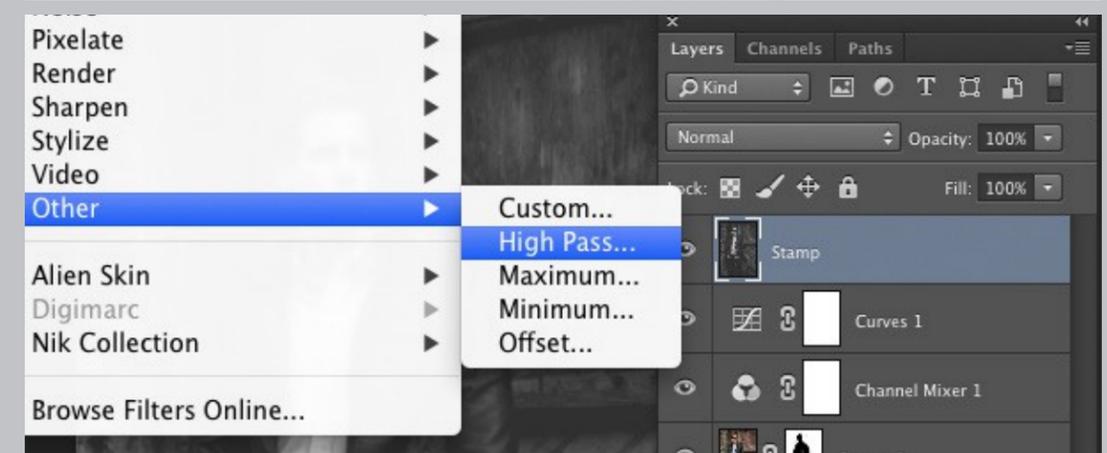
Add a Curves adjustment layer on the top of the other layers. Open the adjustment options for that layer by double-clicking the Curves icon to the left of the Curves Mask that was created (Fig. 6). Notice the diagonal line. The very bottom left corner is the image's shadows; the upper right is the highlights; and everything in between are the remaining tones. Drag the lower left of the line (shadows) up, and you'll begin to see the darkest tones of your image become more and more muted—or gray. I did not touch my highlights since I'm fairly happy with how they are. To control the midtones, click on the center of the line and drag it around, creating a curve in the line (Fig. 7). If you wish, you can drag yours down to lessen the intensity of your highlights. Keep in mind that this will affect the brightness of the overall image. There's no right or wrong way of doing this, so get creative.

[ FIG. 7 ]



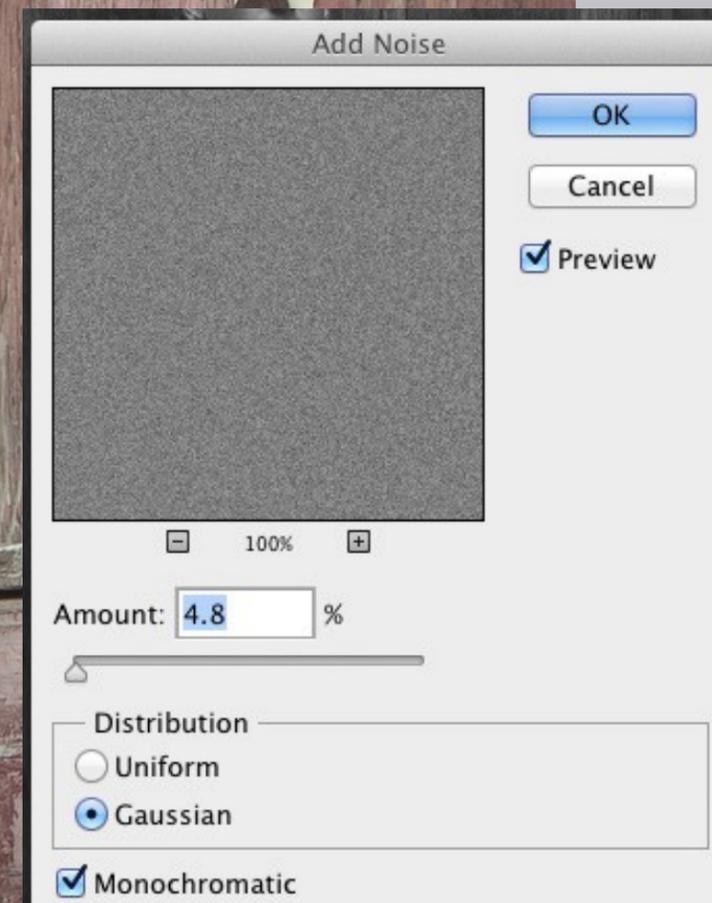
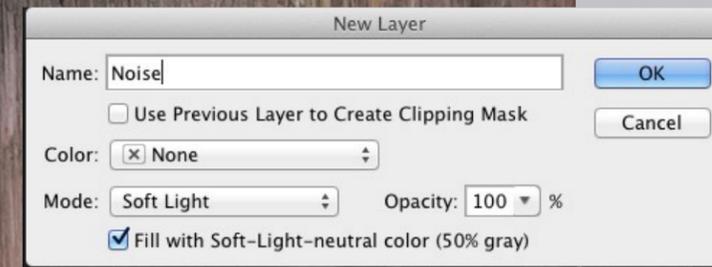
At this point, I wanted to sharpen my image a bit. I did this by creating a stamped copy of the image (Command + Alt / Option + Shift + E). This creates a copy of all the layers in one (Fig. 8). Make sure this new layer is on top of all the layers. Now go to Menu > Filter > Other > High Pass (Fig. 9). Depending on your image, enter a radius that barely shows the image, and press OK. This allows for a better sharpen. My image was about 1.5 pixels. Now you'll need to change the blending mode on this layer, located at the top of the Layers Panel, to Overlay or even Linear Light. Try both.

[ FIG. 8 ]



[ FIG. 9 ]

[ FIG.10 ]



[ FIG.11 ]

If you've noticed, true black-and-white images created from film contain a bit of grain—that gritty, speckled look. Film grain, or granularity, comes from the particles of metallic silver from processing the film. We can create this look using the Noise option. There are a couple of ways to do it. Here's my favorite.

Press Command + Shift + N to create a new layer. Make sure this layer is on top of all the other layers. This opens an options window for the new layer. Rename it "Noise." Change the Mode to Soft Light, check the 50% gray box and leave the Opacity at 100% (Fig. 10). Go to Menu > Filter > Noise > Add Noise. I adjusted my amount to 4.8%, chose Gaussian because I liked it better for this image and checked the Monochromatic box since this is a black-and-white image and I don't want to introduce any color (Fig. 11). This is all adjusted to taste. You can now adjust the Noise layer's Opacity if you'd like.

I hope you can see the differences in the mood of your image. Don't be afraid to experiment with multiple layers—and have fun! 🎨



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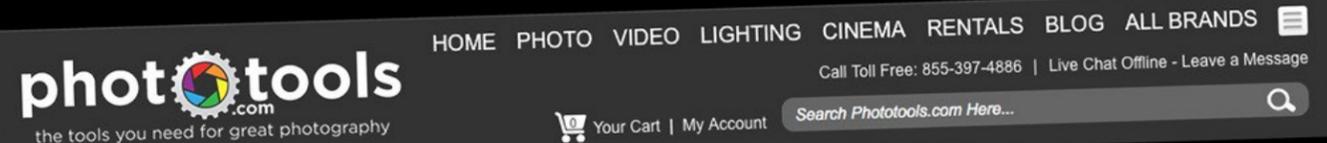
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- 5 | Spare Memory Card
- 6 | Kata Camera Bag
- 7 | 3 Legged Thing Tripod (Brian)
- 8 | Nikon 28mm f/1.8
- 9 | Small Plastic Clips
- 10 | Nikon 85mm f/1.4
- 11 | Lens Cloth
- 12 | Backup Battery w/charger
- 13 | Business Cards

WITH DAMIAN BATTINELLI



daydream  
**BELIEVER**

FEATURED ARTIST

**JULIE MCGANN**

WITH SAL CINCOTTA



BY SAL CINCOTTA



As photographers, business owners and artists, we have to find our niche. What is it that makes you stand out from the crowd? How will you differentiate yourself in an increasingly competitive market?

Julie McGann seems to have figured it out. Her work is limited only by the imagination. She loves making her clients' dreams come true in a way no ordinary photographer can. She uses all the tools available to her in a way that truly allows her work, and studio, to stand out.

Recently, *Shutter* caught up with Julie to ask her about her studio and work, and to get some guidance for photographers. Regardless of your style of photography, there is always something new to learn from our successful peers.

Enjoy.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sal".



TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR STUDIO.

My name is Julie McGann. I'm a creative photographer and digital artist based in Rochester, New York, specializing in whimsical fantasy portraits. I bring children's imagination to life worldwide through illustrative portraiture. Part painting, part photograph, my whimsical creations have captivated families across the globe! Children are dreamers—I capture the art of childhood and make a keepsake to cherish forever.

Each picture is completely different and custom made to the child's imaginary vision. The possibilities are endless! I love to share children's ideas on Facebook so everyone can see how we worked together to make their very special portrait. The photo sessions we have together are the most unique sessions they will ever experience. The best part about my job is that I can offer these unique portraits to any child anywhere in the world using their personal photos.

I create whimsical fantasy portraits for newborns, babies, toddlers and young children. I create nursery art from the imagination of parents for their newborns and babies. The toddlers and young children are the ones who tell me their wildest dreams, and I make them come true! This is the age when they have the greatest imagination ever.

I'm also always open to special requests. Recently, a request came from a pet owner who loves her dogs as if they were her children. She really wanted to have a portrait of her dogs having an elegant tea party, so I made that happen for her!



## HOW DID YOU GET INTO PHOTOGRAPHY?

Although my formal educational background is in music education and music therapy, I have always been interested in the visual arts. It wasn't until my children were born that I realized just how much I loved taking pictures. Not only did I enjoy photographing my children posing for me, but I began to chronicle their daily activities. That is when I got my first DSLR camera and really began the process of learning about photography.

Before becoming a photographer, I was a K–12 special education music teacher for children with emotional behavioral disability. Music is a calming tool that soothes anxieties and stimulates nonverbal communication and self-expression. In return, they show improved self-esteem. I enjoyed bringing smiles to children's faces in the midst of their emotional turmoil. I feel the same way with my photography. I can make the impossible possible for children—just as I brought on the smiles for these children. Photography is my dream job. I couldn't imagine doing anything else!

## TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR UNIQUE WORK AND STYLE.

After having read so many books to my children when they were little, I am drawn to magical fairytale-style photography. I loved the stories, and how my kids would want to be friends with the characters. Since childhood, I have approached life in a positive way. When I make portraits of children, I like to channel my inner little girl because it brings me back to a happy place. I love seeing the joy in children's faces when they describe their most fascinating fantasies. My pictures always include some aspect of their favorite animal, usually doing something unusual based on the child's idea.

My children are my inspiration. They have such vivid imaginations when they are little, and I just wanted to capture their adorable thoughts at that moment and hold onto them forever. Soon they will grow older and realize those dreams were a fantasy and can't happen. I decided to write down their thoughts and ideas and turn them into whimsical fantasy portraits that can be revisited for a lifetime. Children are dreamers, and I really wanted to find a way to make their fantasies come true just once by capturing the art of childhood.

It brings me great joy making these pictures for children, because they are so cute and sometimes so comical. I hope to bring smiles to children when they see their impossible dreams become realities on paper. I want to make a keepsake that parents can cherish forever. Kids are only little for a short time before those imaginations become less spontaneous and free. I find joy in being the one to document each child's early fantasies as a keepsake for the entire family.



## HOW DO YOU APPROACH SALES OF WORK THAT USES THIS TECHNIQUE?

Because I am making a piece of art, I only offer one portrait per session. My commission fee includes unlimited concept ideas prior to the start of the project, and I offer them a low-res file for Facebook sharing. The client can choose one of three print sizes to purchase, which is printed on museum-quality watercolor paper that is matted and hand signed by me. After the initial purchase of that matted print, I have several bonus items that the client can buy, including additional prints in various sizes.

## GIVE US A LITTLE BACKGROUND ON ONE OF YOUR FAVORITE IMAGES.

For *Miss G's Giraffe*, the little girl absolutely adored Fancy Nancy. She truly wished she could be Fancy Nancy. Her favorite animal was a giraffe, and she really wanted to have a pet baby giraffe that she could walk on a leash. And so the picture idea was born: What would Fancy Nancy look like if she had a pet baby giraffe that she walked with a leash? I envisioned this little girl dressing herself up anyway she chose to be as fancy as her idol. The setting would be a sidewalk near a park so she could show off her giraffe to her friends. Her giraffe would have a giant elegant bow as a leash, and the picture would be very soft pink in color.

My portraits are not just clicks of a camera. They are combinations of many pictures painstakingly blended together into one portrait of an imaginary, otherworldly place. I took about eight different images to create this imaginary world for her in Photoshop. I then go one step further and add artistic coloring and painterly effects to make it that much more unique, giving it that whimsical watercolor feel that I love so much.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS WHO ARE NEW TO THE INDUSTRY OR WHO WANT TO TAKE THEIR WORK TO THE NEXT LEVEL?

Once you have discovered your passion for photography, test out every area. You need to have tried everything to find your niche. Once you find what you enjoy, learn as much as you can about it. Take workshops and learn from online tutorials. Find a photography style that sets you apart from all the other photographers in the world. ■

LEARN MORE ABOUT JULIE & SEE MORE OF HER WORK BELOW:

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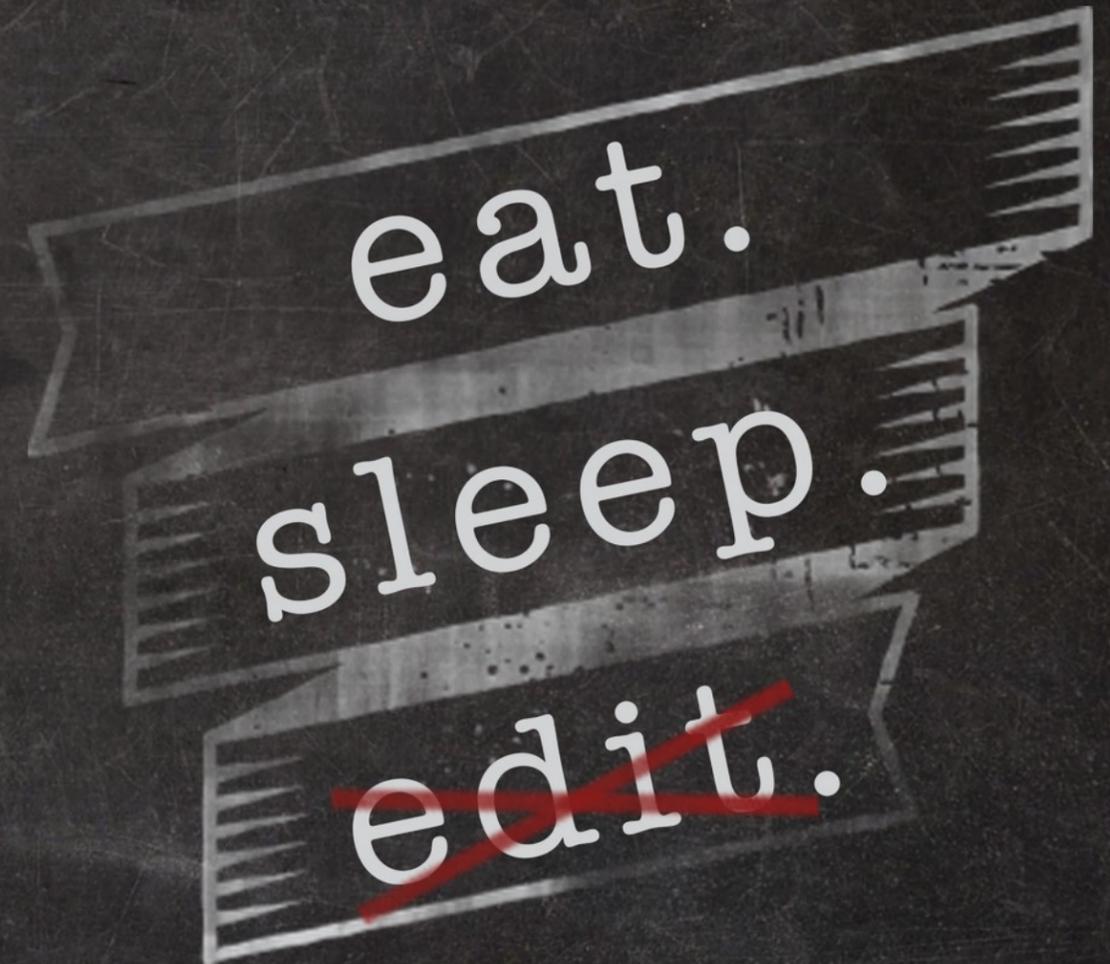
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BACK

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BASICS

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WITH SKIP COHEN

---

BY SKIP COHEN



Despite the abundance of photography blogs, websites, webinars and workshops, too many photographers seem to be missing a long list of basics. I'm not talking about social media, networking or even all the exciting new technology. What so many people seem to have forgotten are the most basic fundamentals of business and communication.

These are in no particular order, but each one can make a serious difference in your attitude and your effectiveness in building a stronger brand.

## Outsource!

None of you would defend yourself in court. You'd hire an attorney, because a lawyer has expertise you don't. So why, then, would you spend hours working on various aspects of your business that you're not good at? An old buddy, Jeff Jochum, is the first person I've ever heard refer to it as "right sourcing"—and that says it all.

Why waste time trying to reinvent the wheel when there are experts out there to help you? I see photographers wasting valuable time designing everything from logos to blogs to websites. Hire an expert. Companies can help you with virtually every aspect of your business.

## Say, "Thanks!"

There are few things more powerful in this email and texting age than a handwritten thank-you note. If somebody has done something really nice for you—a client just gave you an awesome referral—write a note. It couldn't be more basic.

## Use Your Own Images

I've written articles on this one. That thank-you note needs to be on your stationery and contain your own images. Holiday cards and stationery are perfect for showing your own work rather than Hallmark's.

## Use the Phone

Texting is great now and then, but we're slowly losing touch with the art of conversation. Pick up the phone now and then. Just call somebody when you have a question. And, if there's no question at all, use the phone to keep in touch, and don't forget about Skype.

There are people you "talk" to all the time on DMs and email from all over the world. Why not Skype with them? I regularly used to talk to the son of a good friend in Japan who was studying for his English exam.

My buddy Paul MacManus and I Skype every now and then just to catch up. We met online when he asked me a question about going pro. He's an Irishman living and teaching in Spain, and I'm here in the U.S., but what a kick to have a friend "on the other side of the pond."

I have a podcast on the site with Trevor Yerbury and his wife, Faye, who are in Scotland. It was a kick to do. Another one is with Don Komarechka from Canada. It's exciting to simply make the world a smaller place. With every one of these conversations, I've learned something new about the business of photography.

## Less Is More

I actually did a Google+ Hangout last year for Panasonic's LUMIX team where we talked about fine art. I couldn't help myself, and reminded people that if the image is bad, it's simply bad. My exact words were, "You can't buff a turd!" Sure enough, the next day I got an email with a link to a *MythBusters* episode in which they proved you could buff a turd, but my point still stands.

If it's a bad image, then give up being a filter junkie and overdoing it with special effects. Instead, learn from your mistakes and raise the bar on your skill set so it never happens again. Work to get clean images right out of the can, and then use technology to enhance the image, not build it from scratch.

Nothing trumps quality! So learn to be the best—it's that simple.

## Direct Mail Is Back

This is another one I dedicated a whole article to, but here's my point about back to basics: Look for partners to share the cost. Other photographers, vendors and community associations are all dealing with the same challenges you have in reducing their costs. You don't need to do a mailing by yourself.

## Be Involved

Nothing beats community involvement to help you build brand awareness. I love these quotes on the subject:

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

—Winston Churchill

"Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth."

—Muhammad Ali

Look for ways to give back to your community, and don't be afraid to talk about them. Cause-related marketing can be a key to your successful business. Plus, giving back without any expectations will also make you feel good.

You're looking for the community to be good to you—so you better make sure you're being good to your community.

## Promote - Promote - Promote

On my way to Vegas last month for WPPI, the flight attendant came by and handed every passenger a little box from the Cosmopolitan Hotel. It contained mints and a half dozen 2-for-1 cards for various things around the hotel, including dinner entrees.

The idea was brilliant. But now scale it down to your business and your community. You can do the same type of thing with an image box containing several blank matts with a certificate for something related to your business. It could be anything from holiday cards for your clients to a canvas print to a portrait sitting.

When I moved years ago, a basket from the Welcome Wagon showed up on our doorstep. It was loaded with coupons and invitations from various vendors in the community. Why wouldn't you want to be the leader in your area and develop the same kind of package for various target groups in your community?

You need to have people talking about you all the time. Build a promotional calendar so that at the very minimum you've got something going on each quarter.



## Communicate With Your Family

Many of my colleagues don't seem to share enough of what's going on in their business with their family, especially their spouse. This is about the most basic "back to basics" thing I can think of.

I'm hardly perfect. I regularly make mistakes, but I do my best to keep Sheila plugged into virtually everything I'm working on. She has no professional photography experience, but years of background in sales, HR and the legal field. Her input has been invaluable, but if I don't share things with her, then she can't understand my frustrations or be an effective partner.

## Who's Your Backup?

I know you back up your files and all your data. You've got backup gear when you're shooting a big job or even the smallest wedding, but what happens to your business if you're down for the count? What happens if you're injured, ill or stuck in an airport when you're supposed to be photographing an event?

You've got to do lifeboat drills on a regular basis. Arrange for somebody you trust to pay the bills, talk to clients and back you up if you can't meet a commitment. This is simply about running your business. It goes all the way back to Hillary Clinton's famous comment about it taking a village.

Get your "village" in order so that when an emergency happens, you've got friends to watch your back, a network of supporters who can step in and help.

Remember Murphy's Law: "If anything can go wrong, it will." But don't forget what has often been said: "Murphy was an optimist!" ■



Ready and very steady.

©André Costantini Focal Length: 600mm Exposure: F/16 1/800 ISO 1250

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---

ONE  
LIGHT  
WONDERS

---

WITH MICHAEL CORSENTINO





In this ongoing series, I'll explore what's possible using only **one-light & some creativity.**

BY Michael Corsentino



Back in the Sept. 2013 issue, I explained how to create high key studio lighting that produces magazine-cover results. The setup involved three individual lighting zones, four umbrellas, four reflective panels, two subtractive panels, a beauty dish, a softbox and about a gazillion studio strobes (actually eight). This all probably left more than a few heads spinning. I did, however, promise to revisit the topic at a later date and provide a stripped-down version. One that anyone could easily replicate with a very short equipment list that most photographers already have on hand. A promise made is a promise kept, so this month I'm making good and sharing a super-simple one-light setup. It doesn't get any simpler than that. The big question: Can one light really give you high-end lighting results that come even remotely close to what's possible with eight lights? I'll let you be the judge of that, but I'm betting the big results from this little setup will surprise you.

I'm all about shadowy dramatic light, but in the world of fashion/glamour magazine cover lighting, which is essentially beauty lighting, flat lighting seals the deal every time. The technique I'll share with you this month produces beautiful, broad wraparound light with evenly distributed fall-off from a single light source that originates with anything but those characteristics. In fact, because it is one speedlight or bare-bulb strobe (either will work), by nature the light starts off as a small, hard source.

First, an important aside about session workflow. One of the first things I do before capturing a single image is get a signed model release from every person I'm photographing. (The iOS app Easy Release is worth looking at. I use it because it's simple and fast. Using an iPad or iPhone, I can quickly take a picture of the model, which automatically shows up on the release, obtain real-time digital signatures and email a PDF to all pertinent parties. All this is accomplished with a few quick taps and swipes. Easy Release also has optional cloud storage.)



## V-FLATS

How can you modify one small, hard light source and turn it into a really large, soft, broad source without a softbox anywhere in sight? One word: V-flats. These are some of the least expensive and most useful tools you're likely to find in a studio. Just gaffe-tape together two 4x8-foot sheets of white/black double-sided foamcore to make a reversible 8x8-foot folding panel that provides a ton of options. V-flats can be used folded in half as 4x8-foot white reflectors or black subtraction panels; unfolded to create large 8x8-foot white reflective and black subtraction panel walls; or semifolded in a V shape to bounce light back and create some pretty respectable results. That's the technique I'm using for this shoot. The V arrangement of the panels creates a massive white chevron-shaped reflector that takes the light from one small, hard source pointed into it and bounces it to create a large, soft light source that looks like a million bucks.

V-flats can also be used in combination to create other amazing results. They're essential studio gear no one serious about lighting should be without. Because of their size, these large sheets of foamcore can be very pricey to order and ship, and typically require purchasing larger quantities than you'll probably need. Your best bet is to pick them up individually at photographic rental houses, expendables outlets and larger art supply retailers. Expect to pay around \$25 per sheet. Thicker, more rigid sheets of Poly Board are also an option. If you're in a rural area, look for white or paintable sheets of rigid insulation at a home supply store. If you need to travel with your studio, collapsible reflector panels like those from Sunbounce, Photoflex and other manufacturers are lightweight and easy to transport, and can be clamped together into a V formation anywhere you need it.



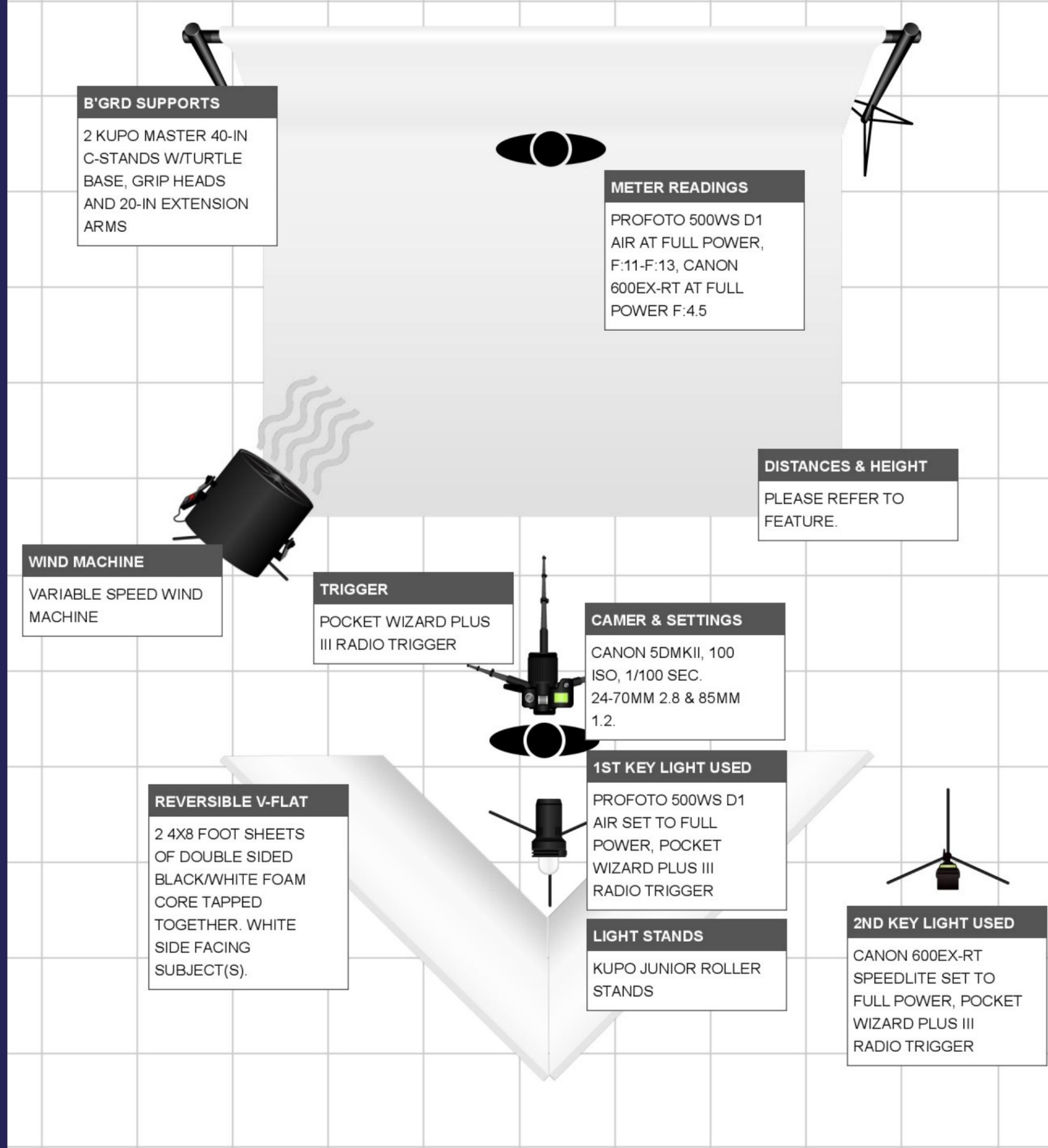
## SETUP, FLASH & CAMERA SETTINGS

With the model release signed and hair and makeup completed, we were ready to rock. My camera was set to an ISO of 100, and I was shooting with a Canon 24–70mm 2.8 for medium shots and an 85mm 1.2 for tight shots. The V-flat was positioned 9 feet away from the model, and the light position inside the V-flat was dead center about 17 inches from the narrowest point of the V. This placed the model and background 8 to 9 feet from the light source. Because the light was pointed into the V-flat’s white interior and not directly toward the subject, a significant amount of power output was needed to create the bounce light required. I used two different key light sources independently: a Profoto 500WS D1 Air and a Canon 600EX-RT Speedlite, both used at their maximum power outputs, respectively. Each light was used separately so the results could be compared. For both setups, the height of the key light was approximately 53 inches off the floor. I started with the Profoto 500WS D1 Air at full power and metered f:11, which was right where I wanted to be. My working aperture for this setup ended up being f:11–f:13. Owing to the fact that it’s a studio strobe, the Profoto 500WS D1 Air delivers about 10 times as much power as the Canon 600EX-RT Speedlite. So, when I switched to the speedlight setup, everything else being equal, I needed to adjust my aperture to f:4.5. I wanted to keep things consistent for testing, but I certainly could have increased my ISO to 200 to achieve narrower apertures with the speedlight.

A quick note regarding off-camera speedlight use. You’ll want to be sure to disable the Auto Sleep feature present on most speedlights. This is typically on by default to help save battery power, and isn’t an issue with a speedlight connected to the camera’s hot shoe. Pressing the shutter button automatically wakes the flash. Off-camera, this isn’t the case—there’s no shutter button to automatically wake the flash, so your speedlight just goes to sleep and stays asleep until you start pressing its buttons and yelling at it. The Auto Sleep feature can end up being a real head scratcher if you’re not familiar with it.

When I describe this setup to my lighting-geek friends, they always ask if I’m blocking any of the light because I’m standing in front of it as I shoot. This is a great question, and here’s the answer: Yes! But it’s not an amount significant enough to cause a problem. Because the light source ends up being so large due to the V-flat bouncing light, you’ve got oodles of illumination wrapping right around you and bathing the model in gorgeous flat, even light. That said, if you shift to the right or left of the light and stand inside the V-flat as you shoot, you’ll notice a 1 to 1.5 stop increase in light intensity.

In either case, both lights were manually triggered using Pocket Wizard Plus III radios. I did this for several reasons. With the power output of each light being set manually at the source, manual triggers (those that send only on/off commands) fit the bill. Working this way also allowed me to take wireless meter readings. My meter of choice, the Sekonic L-758DR, has a built-in radio chip that communicates with Pocket Wizards, so handheld flash metering is a snap.



## ONE-LIGHT WONDERS



© Michael Correntino

Because this was a fashion/glamour/beauty shoot, I gave Chelsea's hair some life with a studio fan to help complete the look. (Some studio fans can reach well above \$1,200, while others are cheap, underpowered and lacking variable control. I'm for all paying for quality, but \$1,200 was pushing it. I hate knockoffs, but for this shoot I picked up the \$330 pro-quality Studio Wind Fan, available at Profotoconnect.com. It's got everything I need: power, size, variable control, and a 5/8 light stand mount. All at a price point that's not cheap but also not insane.) Be careful with wind machines, fans, etc., as they can be taxing on a model's eyes and can also freeze out your talent. Use them sparingly, turning them on and off as needed, and check in with your subjects often to make sure they're comfortable.

That wraps it up for this month! I hope you've been inspired by what's possible with this cool one-light setup, and that you've learned a few things along the way. Catch you next month! ■



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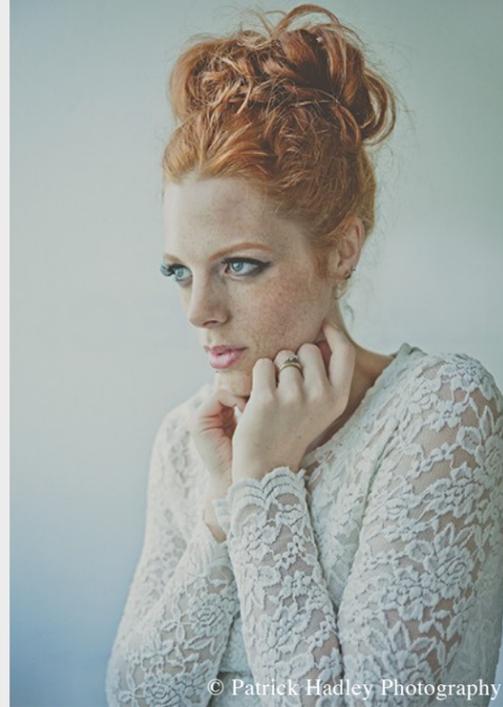


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I have always been an advocate for the invaluable educational opportunity that image critique can bring. **I think it's one of the very best ways to understand your work.** Having your photos critiqued can bring to the surface both weaknesses and strengths you might not even know are there. Equipped with this knowledge, you can work on those aspects that need fine-tuning. Most of the issues with images fall into four main categories: technical, location, background and pose/expression.

**Every month, I will critique five images chosen by Shutter from reader entries.**

The best part is that I will critique them on video, and use PhotoShop to draw callouts to show you where the issues lie. It'll be as if we were sitting in the same room going over your images together. I love this industry, and I have dedicated many years to pushing my fellow photographer friends to invest in their education and prioritize their skills and mastery of the art. ■

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*Empowering  
Women*

THROUGH

BOUDOIR  
PHOTOGRAPHY

WITH STACIE FRAZIER



BY STACIE FRAZIER

As boudoir photographers, we have the unique opportunity to empower our clients to be their sexiest, most confident selves possible. Women come to us yearning to find that spark within that has been beaten down by not just the media but by day-to-day life. Women are trained to be the good girl: humble, quiet, avoid making a scene. The end result? Complete discomfort in our own skin! Everything that makes us individual and uniquely feminine is suppressed, and we find ourselves shrouded in self-doubt. By the time your client arrives at her session, she's ready to overcome all that—with you as her guide.

Without us even trying, a boudoir session presents organic opportunities for empowerment. From the primping and pampering through hair and makeup, the carefully curated lingerie and jewelry she adorns, the sexy poses you coach her in, to even the sensual ambiance in your boudoir studio—all these things contribute to that empowerment.

But how to achieve even better, farther-reaching impact? Read on.



- **Help your client be as prepared as possible.** Women who invest top dollar in luxury services enjoy doing thorough research and reading more about their investment. Give her lots of pertinent information that will fill her with confidence before her session with you. When our clients book, we send them a copy of my e-book, *How to Be a Boudoir Bombshell*, which contains tips on prepping for the shoot, from skin and hair care to choosing lingerie that best complements her body.
- **Be encouraging.** Give her sincere and genuine compliments during the shoot. Let her know she is doing a great job.
- **Make her comfortable.** Never push for a pose or expression that makes her uncomfortable. As soon as she begins to feel self-doubt, you must quickly work to regain her trust. Avoid that.
- **Know your equipment.** Develop a routine so your focus stays on her and not on the technicalities of the shoot. If you are constantly fiddling with your camera settings or lighting, she could lose interest in the moment.
- **Get to really know her.** Talk about her life, her joys, her dreams. Keep it positive.
- **Celebrate her.** Let her know the session is all about her. It's a day she will remember fondly well into her later years.
- **Play music.** Create a playlist of music that takes her on a sensual journey of empowerment. Song selection can help set the mood and give a nervous client confidence. (My playlists include songs from the convenient Triple Scoop Music licensing service.) She will hear the tunes again on her slideshow reveal, which will make the emotional impact even stronger.

What can we do to empower her even more? It begins long before she ever makes contact. Clients often watch you from afar for up to two years before scheduling a boudoir shoot. She will regularly check for new content on your blog and stalk your social media outlets, all in an effort to get to know you better. She wants to be sure she can trust you with this intimate, stressful decision. Make sure the message you are sending is one of trust.

## *How to empower her* *—to book her boudoir shoot!*

- Post actual clients on your portfolio and blog (with permission, of course). Not just professional models or the women you personally find the most attractive, but women she can relate to. Show women of all ages, shapes and sizes. When women look at your work, they want to find a piece of themselves peering back at them. And when she finds it, she's all yours!
- Showcase women who have that look of empowerment clients seek for themselves. I polled my clients to determine how they dream of being portrayed in photos. The top three descriptions given were *confident*, *sexy* and *happy*. This is exactly what we are empowering them to be! With positive coaching, you can bring these traits out during her session. Showcase that look of empowerment heavily in your body of work.
- Show your personality. Share your own journey in finding empowerment for yourself. You don't need to pretend to have already found it—after all, it eludes most women, which is why boudoir is so powerful. She'll most likely be able to relate if you transparently share your own struggles.
- Be mindful of how you talk about other women on Facebook and Twitter. When you make fun of someone for having or needing plastic surgery, or joke about a woman gaining weight or being too thin, you turn women away. Be a supporter of all women.
- Go after your dreams. Nobody wants to see your posts about how you are working day and night on retouching. Women look to you for inspiration to get out there and live their own amazing life. Step away from the computer!
- Be charitable toward women. Donate to female-friendly charities. Better yet, let your audience see you volunteering your time with these organizations.
- Celebrate other women! I have done this in the past with my What's Sexy Now blog series, in which I interview and feature prominent businesswomen in my area. This is a great way to find out what other women are thinking and feeling.





## *Building an Empowered Community*

Women often feel empowered in groups. Through my business Haute Shots, I'm always looking for ways to build community with both past and potential clients. We use a technique called peripheral marketing to offer clients something of value en masse that has nothing really to do with our day-to-day photography business. The general public has become so marketing-savvy that it simply tunes out messages that feel like an ad. Appeal to clients in a way that empowers them instead.

Here are a few examples of some of the projects we have used to build our community.



## *The No-Makeup Pure-Beauty Challenge*

What began as a personal project turned into one of the most soul-fueling experiences for past clients, my team and myself. Throughout the span of one year, we began photographing past and current clients without the glossy makeover that is a huge part of boudoir. These brave women allowed us to photograph them in one of their more vulnerable states—completely undone. No concealer, no lip-gloss, no hairspray. The response was incredible. Our clients felt completely liberated. Where they felt empowered with boudoir, this took it a step further in celebrating them in their most natural state. We celebrated the final project entries with a no-makeup group event with shooting stations, makeup remover (for those who thought they might cheat a little), champagne to celebrate each of them, as well as a lingerie trunk show in case they wanted to splurge on a new outfit. This was the most incredible bonding experience for everyone involved. The sense of empowerment was incredibly strong, something we all still talk about to this day.

## The Boudoir Body Challenge

The casual comment “I need to lose five to 10 pounds” is the No. 1 reason women give when asked why they haven’t yet booked their session. Haven’t they heard of Photoshop? All kidding aside, my team and I created the Boudoir Body Challenge campaign to motivate those who have some “vanity pounds” to lose. We created a Facebook group specifically for it, and assigned Ambassadors to help keep the energy high. Then we set about motivating members of our new group to be the best version of themselves they could possibly be by encouraging them to be active, eat healthier, etc.

We gained over 250 members from all over the world! What was even more amazing is that, while we initially thought it would be mostly women who were looking to tone up or who had goals to book a shoot afterward, we found that the group actually brought in women (and men) of every fitness level, from beginners to seasoned pros. Even more inspiring, we had multiple members who had been on their own journey previously and had already lost over 100 pounds each. We made many new friends and even more potential clients. Most importantly, we helped empower these amazing women in a way we never expected. What an incredible feeling that was—and I even lost 10 pounds!

So, what are you doing to help encourage your clients to be more confident and happy, and to own their sex appeal once and for all? What can you do today? There are so many ways to empower a woman, but the first step is just being mindful that you, in fact, do have the power to change a woman’s life. So get out there and start inspiring your audience! ■

▶ **SHUTTER** MAGAZINE

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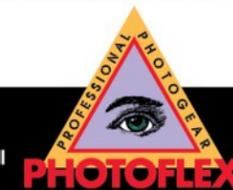
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# HIGH-END SALES

BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND

with Lori Nordstrom



BY Lori Nordstrom

When you want to sell big, the sale has to start from the very beginning. Photographers often expect their images to “sell themselves,” and while this desire is admirable, it’s not sustainable when running a business. High-end sales start with marketing and branding. What image of your business does the marketplace have? What messages is it getting from your marketing?

When our branding and marketing send the right message, the phone calls that come in start to be more qualified, right from the start, and that should be a goal of any high-end photographer. But what about when you’re just not there yet? You want to start selling big, but need to make the transition with old clients—and with new ones calling to inquire about your pricing and services.

The initial phone call can make or break your final sale. Our language on the phone, how we treat our clients and the process that is delivered to them are all important factors in how clients perceive the value of what we do.

1. Little things matter. Greet your caller with a smile.
2. Ask clients questions to start building the relationship and to find out what is important to them.

“How did you hear about me?” This creates common ground. What friend or business relationship do you have in common?

Find out what is going on in their lives: “Tell me about who we are going to be photographing.”

Use their answers to communicate the value of what you can do for them.

3. Start the sales process with a simple question: “Have you thought about where/how you will display your portraits?”

The answer to this question is rarely yes, so start giving them ideas. Ask for snapshots of your clients’ walls so you can offer suggestions on products and placement that will complement their style and colors.

4. Discuss the consultation call or meeting.
5. Let your client know about your viewing and ordering process. Use phrases like “let me tell you what will happen next” to grab their attention and set the tone for what you’re about to tell them.
6. Create a client envelope or worksheet so you can follow the workflow and progress of your client throughout the process. Take notes from your call to refer back to.



After the first phone call, you'll want to start preparing for the consultation call or meeting. My clients come from a distance, so I have always done consultations over the phone. If you are able to meet with your clients in person, even better. I plan the consultation call after I have snapshots of my clients' walls where they are considering hanging their portraits, and I have designed a wall concept for them on each of those walls. I use PreeVu software to design these concepts to scale for my clients.

*(See Lori's video this month for her complete process on preparing for the sale.)*

During the consultation call, I show my clients their wall concepts and give the pricing for each when asked. Typically clients send three to five snapshots of walls or rooms. I design one concept for each room. This allows me to take control, and shows off my expertise. I explain my vision for each grouping that I present. For example, if I'm photographing a family of four and showing a grouping of five images, I might say, "For this grouping, I'm envisioning the family together in the middle, an image of each of the kids alone, mom and dad together, and then an outtake of the whole family or something of the kids together. This will tell a really nice story of your family that you'll love seeing every day." By planning in this way with my clients, I am selling to them before I ever shoot. When they can start visualizing their family's story, they become much more committed to the process and to that final sale. We will then talk about clothing, backgrounds or locations that will work for that room.

I've found that this process allows the client to start narrowing down and making those tough decisions before the order appointment. They will love everything I show them, and some will end up with everything. But most clients will eliminate something, and this makes them feel really good about the final decisions. Doing this before the session allows me to plan better for the session, and doing it before the sale allows the hard decisions to be made so that the order time is fun.



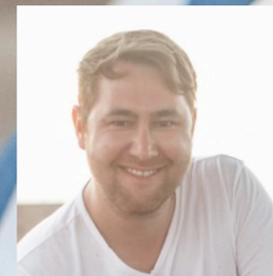
## HIGH-END SALES

Try writing a script for your first phone call. Think about the things that need to be communicated, and how they can be communicated in a way that benefits the client. Any time a question comes up, write it down and think about how you will answer that question in the future, or how you will work the answer into your conversation before it comes up.

It's been said that "you don't close a sale, you open a relationship." If you think about the sales process in this way, you will not only profit in business, but you will create clients for life. ■

# Beetle Kill Wood Boxes

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LOCATION: O'Fallon, IL

PASSION: Weddings & Seniors

Sal was exposed to photography at a very early age and has been in love with our craft ever since. He can still recall the smell of the chemicals in his aunt's makeshift dark room in the basement. However, a career in photography would elude him for over 20 years.

Graduating from one of the top 25 business schools in the country, Sal pursued a corporate career with his photography becoming more of a hobby. In 2007, he left corporate to pursue his dream of a career in photography and has never looked back.

Today, Sal Cincotta and his wife Taylor own and operate a very successful studio in the St. Louis metro area. Salvatore Cincotta Photography, Salvatore Cincotta Films, and BehindtheShutter.com.

Focused on wedding and senior portraiture, Sal has had the opportunity to shoot for corporate clients like Nordstrom's and the St. Louis Cardinals to elite sports celebrities and the White House, photographing President Obama.

FEATURED ARTICLES

Daydream Believer: Featured Artist Julie McGann  
Q&A with Sal Cincotta



## DAMIANBATTINELLI

[www.damianbattinelli.com](http://www.damianbattinelli.com)

LOCATION : Plattsburgh, NY

PASSION : Composites

In 1995, my father bought me a 35mm SLR. We drove down to NYC to pick up the camera and I will never forget walking past the twin towers and looking up. I remember almost falling over trying to look up! They were massive. I would have never, in my wildest dreams, known that those same towers would have such an impact on me one day.

I took photography all through high school in Peru, NY. Developing, enlarging, dodging, and burning. I was smitten. I also attended Champlain Valley Educational Services (CV-TEC) for graphic design in Plattsburgh, NY. This is where I would find another passion, design! I was introduced to Adobe Photoshop. I learned that if I scanned images into a computer, I could manipulate them.

I graduated from Peru in 1999 and entered the military one month later as a graphic designer at the 105thAW, Stewart ANG in Newburgh, NY. I attended Defense Information School (DINFOS) at Ft Meade, MD. Only a few short years later, I met up with those same towers from years earlier, no longer massive but scattered at my feet. I spent 2 weeks at ground zero days after the attacks. Fast forward several years, 13.5 years of service to be exact, I exited the military.

By this time, my knowledge of digital photography, design, and editing were strong. I was able to take my love of art and photography to a new level and launched my business. I am still learning and growing as a photographer/artist and embrace this rebirth with open arms.

I am an Associate and Mentor for Peter Hurley's PH2PRO

## FEATURED ARTICLES

Photoshop: Converting to Black & White





SKIP COHEN

[www.SkipsPhotoNetwork.com](http://www.SkipsPhotoNetwork.com)

LOCATION : Sarasota, Florida

Skip Cohen is President/Founder of Marketing Essentials International, a marketing consulting firm specializing in projects dedicated to photography, primarily photographic education. ([www.mei500.com](http://www.mei500.com))

He is also the founder of Skip's Summer School ([www.mei500.com](http://www.mei500.com)), the founder of the Akron Photo Series ([www.AkronPhotoSeries.com](http://www.AkronPhotoSeries.com)), and the co-founder of GhostRighters ([www.GhostRighters.com](http://www.GhostRighters.com)), a content resource for professional photographers needing help with editorial content, web re-design and marketing. His blogs, [SkipsPhotoNetwork.com](http://SkipsPhotoNetwork.com) and [PhotoResourceHub.com](http://PhotoResourceHub.com), is read by thousands of professional and aspiring photographers. On May 21, MEI launched [PhotoResourceHub.com](http://PhotoResourceHub.com) a new content site for professional photographers with video, podcasts, blog posts and an ongoing calendar of industry events.

He has been a recipient of ADL's Torch of Liberty Award and Foto Imagen Magazine's Man of the Year Award and in 2001 he received PPA's Legacy Award for his work in support of PPA Charities. His images have been published in a long list of photographic trade magazines, including: Rangefinder, Shutterbug, Foto Imagen, Studio Photography and Design, Petersen's Photographic and The Hasselblad Forum. He's also competed in print completion in both WPPI and PPA's national conventions.

In addition, he has written six books on photography: The Art of Wedding Photography, The Art of the Digital Wedding and The Art of People Photography with Bambi Cantrell: Don Blair's Guide to Posing and Lighting Body Parts: and Wedding Photography from the Heart, co-authored with celebrity wedding photographer Joe Buissink. Book number six, GoingPro, co-authored with Scott Bourne, was released by Random House in October 2011 and remains on the photography book best seller list at Amazon..

#### FEATURED ARTICLES

Back To Basics



## MICHAEL CORSENTINO

[www.CorsentinoPhotography.com](http://www.CorsentinoPhotography.com)

LOCATION: Petaluma, California

PASSION: Lifestyle Photography

Michael Corsentino is an award-winning, contemporary wedding and portrait photographer. He is an American Photo 2013 Top 10 Wedding Photographers nominee, Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Lightroom expert, Capture One Pro Certified Professional, author, contributing writer for Photoshop User Magazine, Shutter Magazine and Resource Magazine, speaker and international workshop leader.

Based in Northern California, Michael has been shooting digitally since 1999. His love affair with the magic and science of photography is more passionate today than ever. Stylish, dramatic, edgy and modern images set Michael's photography apart. His award-winning photojournalism, fashion and editorial styles have made him an in-demand portrait and destination-wedding photographer. Passionate about education, Michael loves to share his lighting and posing secrets, post-processing techniques, time-saving workflow strategies and shooting philosophy at workshops and speaking engagements.

### FEATURED ARTICLES

One-Light Wonder





## STACIE FRAZIER

[www.HauteShots.com](http://www.HauteShots.com)

LOCATION: Henderson, Nevada

PASSION: Boudoir

Stacie began her journey as a graphic designer, who needed to learn photography for her duties as a designer, in 2004. The first photo Stacie ever took in her career as a designer was published in Lucky magazine, which catapulted her into taking photography more seriously. She ventured into boudoir photography in 2009 with the launch of her business, Haute Shots, and rapidly gained acclaim as a true professional in her field with the ability to bring out the beauty in every woman, no matter her age, shape, or size. Since then, Stacie has built a loyal and diverse international clientele.

Stacie is the Boudoir Expert for MpixPro, has been featured in “Boudoir Photography: The Quick-Start Guide For Professional Photographers” by Ed Verosky and “Canon Speedlite System Digital Field Guide” by Michael Corsentino, as well as numerous magazines and reality tv show sizzle reels. The future is looking bright for Haute Shots as more and more opportunities present themselves to Stacie, enabling her to share her passion for boudoir with the World.

### FEATURED ARTICLE

Empowering Women Through Boudoir Photography

CONTRIBUTORS





## KRISTY DICKERSON

[www.KristyDickerson.com](http://www.KristyDickerson.com)

LOCATION: Atlanta, Georgia

PASSION: Weddings & Engagements

Kristy Dickerson is the founder and CEO of Fisheye Connect ([www.fisheyeconnect.com](http://www.fisheyeconnect.com)), professional laundry sorter, CFO of multitasking, wedding photographer, mom of two, and a wife who is never wrong... never. Upon earning her degree in finance and business management, she started her photography business after the birth her first son. As if she didn't already have enough on her plate, in June 2010, Kristy launched Fisheye Connect for other photographers, like herself, looking for quality education. Fisheye Connect allows aspiring photographers to connect with photography industry experts by location, instructor or interest. It is a searchable database for photography workshops/ events, along with services that help instructors manage the marketing and financial aspects of their businesses. Merging Kristy's business sense with her passion, Fisheye Connect has become a thriving community of photographers learning and growing together.

### FEATURED ARTICLES

Establishing a Workspace





VANESSA JOY  
[www.VanessaJoy.com](http://www.VanessaJoy.com)

LOCATION: Freehold, New Jersey

PASSION: Weddings

14 Years of photography, eight years of shooting weddings, three years of business ownership (not to mention five college degrees)

Vanessa is a trilingual (English, Spanish and a bit of French), award-winning photographer, living with her husband, Rob Adams, in the great state of New Jersey. She has studied photography since 1998 and has spent most of her life running a successful wedding photography studio that shoots 35 weddings a year (at a premium price). In her first three years of business, Vanessa achieved honors such as: 20+ publications in print magazines (including three cover photos and interviews in *PDN* and *Rangefinder*), a Grand Imaging Award from PPA and a second-place wedding Image Award from WPPI.

Vanessa enjoys speaking across the country at venues such as CreativeLIVE, Clickin Moms, WPPI, Imaging USA, PPA-related conventions and personal workshops. She is recognized for her talent and even more for her business sense. Vanessa's clients love working with her, and industry peers enjoy learning from her generous, informative and open-book style of teaching.

FEATURED ARTICLES  
Your First Same-Day Slideshow



## KRISTEN KORPOS

[www.NiftyKnowledgeRocks.com](http://www.NiftyKnowledgeRocks.com)

LOCATION: Boston, MA

PASSION: Business

Kristin Korpos is the founder of Nifty Knowledge Rocks, which provides business, legal and tax information to photographers. She is an attorney licensed to practice in New Jersey, and holds a Masters in Business Administration as well as a Masters in Accounting.

In 2009, while trying to find a creative balance to her corporate career, Kristin started a photography business in the Boston area ([www.kristinkorpos.com](http://www.kristinkorpos.com)). She quickly became a much sought-after wedding photographer whose work has most recently been featured in *Rangefinder*.

With the success of her own photography business, Kristin has become passionate about empowering other photogpreneurs with the knowledge necessary to run healthy, legitimate, successful businesses. Through the NKR podcast, videos, and blog, photographers can gain knowledge on a variety of topics. Other resources, including contracts, legal forms and sales tax guides are available in the Nifty Knowledge Rocks Shop ([www.niftyknowledgerocksshop.com](http://www.niftyknowledgerocksshop.com)).

### FEATURED ARTICLE

Do You Have A Contract?





**LORINORDSTROM**

[www.NordstromPhoto.com](http://www.NordstromPhoto.com)

**LOCATION:** Winterset, Iowa

**PASSION:**

Babies, Families, Weddings & Seniors

Lori Nordstrom {M.Photog.Cr., CPP, ABI} owns a boutique studio specializing in children and family portraits located in the picturesque town of Winterset, Iowa. Lori is a PPA approved business instructor and marketing consultant for Studio Management Services. Sharing with other photographers and small business owners is one of the things she most enjoys. In 2009 Lori started Photo Talk Forum, an online community of photographers working together to grow their businesses.

Lori has always had a heart for children and believes in giving back. She has run a successful fundraising campaign for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LLS) for 10 years. In 2011 Lori began her own non-profit organization, Dando Amor which focuses on helping orphaned children in Ecuador. Lori and Travis Gugleman hit their goal of raising \$100,000 the first year of Dando Amor existence. You can find out more about going to Ecuador or making a donation at [www.dandoamor.org](http://www.dandoamor.org)

**FEATURED ARTICLE**

High-End Sales



## BLAIR PHILLIPS

[wwwBlairPhillipsPhotography.com](http://www.BlairPhillipsPhotography.com)

LOCATION: Landis, North Carolina

### PASSION:

Seniors, Babies, Families & Weddings

Blair's team includes four employees plus Blair, who photographs 20 to 30 weddings and 500 studio sessions per year. Blair has a passion to teach photographers how to express themselves in ways they can't find with traditional training. He speaks to and teaches thousands of photographers and digital artists each year at national conventions and expos including WPPI, Imaging USA, SYNC Seniors, and various PPA conventions.

Blair and Suzanne's "eclectic elegance" style and positive energy educate and inspire photographers, while allowing them to stay true to themselves. This young team pushes the envelope daily with creativity and positive inspiration. As a side note, after 10 years of marriage, Blair and Suzanne welcomed Ava Blair Phillips into the world on August 3, 2011.

### FEATURED ARTICLE

Editing for Your Brand





**ROBERTO VALENZUELA**  
[www.robertovalenzuelaphotography.com](http://www.robertovalenzuelaphotography.com)

LOCATION: Beverly Hills, CA

Roberto Valenzuela is a wedding and fine art photographer based in Beverly Hills, CA. Roberto Valenzuela is a 70-time International award winning photographer and three-time International first place winner. He serves as a photography judge for the 16x20 WPPI (Wedding and Portrait Photographers International), PPA (Professional Photographers of America), and various European photography competitions. Roberto's private photography workshops and speaking engagements are held worldwide. His goal is to encourage and inspire professional photographers to practice their craft when not on the job, as any other artist must do so in order to perform. He is an active teacher and platform speaker at WPPI and has served as the keynote speaker at other International photography conventions.

#### FEATURED ARTICLES

Picture Perfect Critique

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