

the business behind the shutter | AUGUST 2013

# SHUTTER

MAGAZINE

INDUSTRY INSIDERS SHARE THEIR **BEST-KEPT SECRETS**

## MAKING THE MOST OUT OF **CLIENT** INTERACTIONS

**Dealing With Difficult Clients**  
with Vanessa Joy

**Working With Senior Moms**  
with Lori Nordstrom

## PLUS+++ **PRODUCT GUIDE**

THIS MONTH FEATURING: *Cameras & Accessories*

+ feature articles from Phillip Blume, Skip Cohen & more!

Panasonic

STAYING STILL IS NO  
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THE LUMIX GH3.

CHANGING PHOTOGRAPHY **G**



Sal Cincotta  
reviews his  
Editor's Pick  
GH3



LUMIX  
Luminary  
Suzette Allen  
answers  
"Why Go  
Hybrid?"



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LUMIX **G**



DEALING WITH DIFFICULT CLIENTS  
Vanessa Joy

WORKING WITH SENIOR MOMS  
Lori Nordstrom

# PRODUCT GUIDE

CAMERAS & ACCESSORIES

## GET 'ER DONE

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- SELECTIVE COLOR**  
Kristina Sherk
- SENIORS: DIY SETS**  
Blair Phillips

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- WHATS IN THE BAG?**  
Sal Cincotta



# LAUNCH POINT



## WHAT WOULD HAPPEN

*if we celebrated together?*

Instead of attacking each other,

**what if we HELPED one another?**



WITH **SAL CINCOTTA**



e·volve

EVOLVE  
/i'völvr/

VERB

1. Develop gradually, esp. from a simple to a more complex form.
2. (with reference to an organism or biological feature) Develop over successive generations, esp. as a result of natural selection.

# EV

YOUR BUSINESS

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YOUR WORKFLOW



BEFORE

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BEFORE



## DIY SETS



BY BLAIR PHILLIPS

Keeping pace with seniors can be a full-time job, requiring more than a simple backdrop to stay competitive. Often, companies that go out of business failed to recognize the changing needs of the marketplace. Photographers will continue to face this challenge, but not all can afford to run out and buy new things every week. I began building my own sets and backgrounds a few years ago, and it has become a major part of how I do business.

I used to travel to various locations for nearly all of my senior sessions. It was so nice being able to have a bunch of different options, but it presented its own set of issues. After looking at all the extra time I was spending for each session, I found I was not as profitable as I thought I was. My seniors were having to change in their hot cars, I was roasting in the heat, and it added a few more hours to my workday. On top of all that, I became aware of the insurance risks. I also wanted to work less in order to spend more time with my new daughter.

My solution? I built a bunch of sets on the half acre of land behind my studio. Now I'm able to photograph nearly all of my senior sessions in a controlled environment.



# DIY

I began building  
**my own sets &  
backgrounds**  
a few years ago,  
& it has become  
a major part of  
**how I do business.**

## Creating your very own photography oasis may not be as far out of reach as you think.

Instead of hiring someone to come in and build backgrounds and sets that may not meet your expectations, **have a go at it yourself.**

The sun is one of the most important things to consider when building a senior shooting area. You want to position your subject in a way that makes best use of the light during your normal shooting times. Almost all my outdoor sets are positioned so they are facing south or north. This way my subject never has direct sunlight on her face.

One of the first DIY projects I put together featured a 1961 Ford truck. I wanted an old rustic truck to photograph with here at my studio, and found the perfect one at the junkyard. (I told the owner what I wanted it for, and he actually offered to let me use it for nothing but the cost of a tow.) We parked it behind the studio and let the grass grow up really high around it. My seniors absolutely love it. Next we acquired a 1941 Chevrolet car from the same junkyard. We made it multipurpose by painting a different theme on each side—a rustic British flag and a flower garden.

An old country store is a great backdrop for senior portraits. I got a great price on rough-cut lumber from a saw mill, and we constructed a porch, a wall with double doors, and a tin roof. Our country store even has a set of steps that lead to the porch. We stained the wood with vinegar and steel wool. If you put No. 2 steel wool and apple cider vinegar together in a bucket for 24 hours, you get a substance that you rub on the raw wood to give it a perfectly rustic look. I found an old Coca-Cola cooler for the porch and several old ad signs.

Linoleum flooring can become one of your finest assets. Start with remnant pieces that measure 10 feet square. Flip the linoleum over on its backside, and you have a perfect piece of material on which to paint custom backgrounds. This way you don't have to be an artist to create these—most of mine are design pieces that don't have clean lines. I've also commissioned a high school art department to paint them. After you've photographed with these hand-painted backgrounds for a year, you can simply paint another design over them. Linoleum also holds up well in the outdoors.

# DIY



## DIY SETS

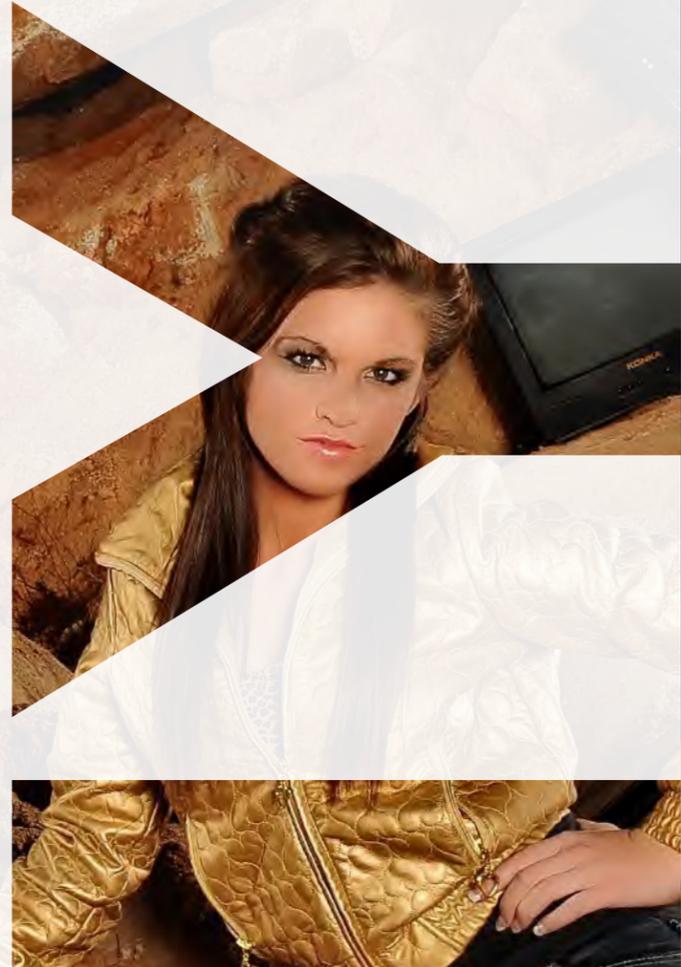
“ Sometimes the best results are yielded from our **creative thinking** & **hard work.** ”

Scrap yards have quickly become one of my favorite places to search for props and backgrounds. A recent find was a huge high school scoreboard I got for less than \$200. It's a perfect background for my senior athletes. I also asked the guys at the scrap yard to be on the lookout for some gym lockers—sure enough, they found some.

Wooden pallets are always easy to find, and are usually free. You can randomly stack them to create an instant set. Old roofing tin can make an interesting background. I found some from a farmer who'd removed it from an old barn. The years of weather have aged the tin to perfection. I created a set from a bunch of vinyl records and record covers. I built a 10-foot by 10-foot wall and randomly nailed the covers to it, then scattered the records on the floor in front of the wall. For props, I used an old drum set, guitar, and amplifier. Old interior doors from condemned houses make awesome backgrounds too. I found a house that was in the process of being demolished. With a little persuasion, I was able to go in and remove all the doors. Mixed together, they have a lot of unique character. I also use large bifold doors, painted in several vibrant colors, as a clever background.

Just going out and buying everything is not always an option, or not the best option. Sometimes the best results are yielded from our creative thinking and hard work. When things are not coming together as you'd hoped, doing it yourself may be the best way to go. ■

 **SHUTTER** MAGAZINE  
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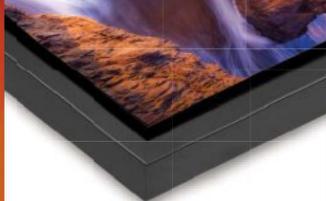
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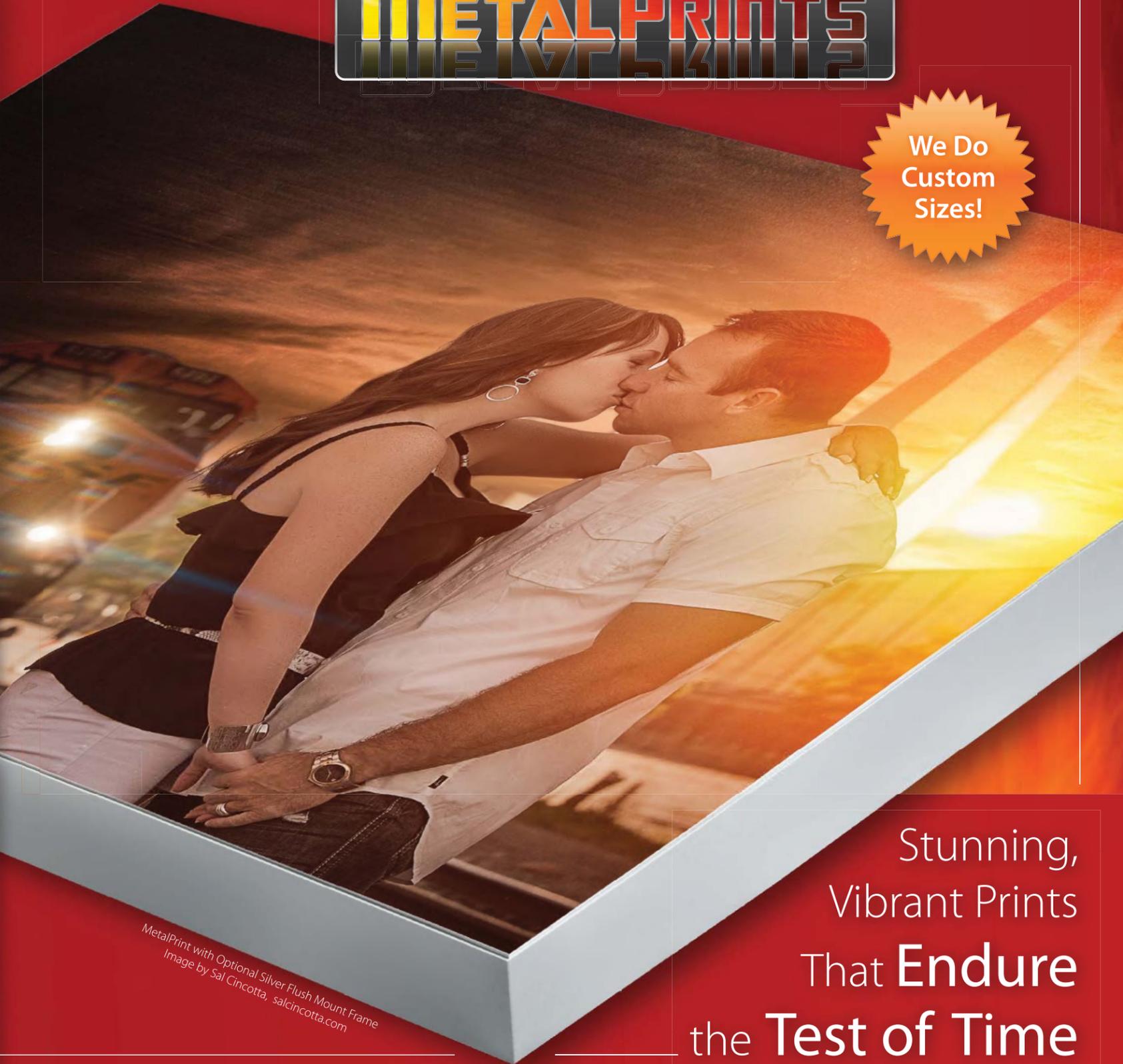
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# HOW TO shoot for FRIENDORS

with Kristy Dickerson



## SHOOTING FOR “FRIENDORS”



by Kristy Dickerson

In the July issue I described “friendors,” or vendors who are friends, and I gave some points on how to establish and maintain the relationship. A few readers had questions about this topic, so this month I am going to describe how to shoot around the schedules of friendors.

Again, referrals are the best way for any business to earn new customers. You have a unique opportunity on the day of the wedding since you’re able to professionally capture images for other vendors.

### THE BIG DAY

Before the wedding, build out a schedule and make sure there is time on it for you or your schedule shooter to capture “details.” This means shooting things that go beyond the bride’s personal story, such as Grandma’s brooch, the bouquet, or the wedding rings.

I always leave 30 minutes before the ceremony to capture details. (This also allows time for the bride to be tucked away as the guests arrive.) If the reception is at the same location as the ceremony, you can always slip away and get some of those details out of the way.

Ask ahead of time if there are details the couple wants to be shot. These can include everything from flowers, to the cake, to clothes, the tables, jewelry, stationery, food, drinks, and even the band.

If the reception is at a different location, I typically have my second shooter go there to capture the room while it’s empty. I like to capture the venue sign, the venue exteriors, the overall interior, half the room from different angles, the cake table, cake details, and table details—flowers, place settings, menu cards, candles, and, of course, the sweetheart table. A lot of people forget the food. Shoot the food tables and then some details of the food. The more details, the better!

Once you think you are done, look around and think outside the box. Is there an outside window from which you can shoot the room? Is there a balcony overlooking the ballroom, or a neat mirror you can use to get a reflection of the room? This is your opportunity to shine. I love shooting details and being the first shooter. I don’t always get all the time I want. When I arrive at the reception location, though, I sweep the room. Although my second shooter has gotten it, I go through at a low aperture and get a couple more angles.





## AFTER THE WEDDING

Now that the wedding is over and you have all these amazing details, use that to your advantage! You got to shoot everyone else's work that day—coordinator, florist, designer, caterer, dress designer, band, pastries, and the venues themselves. They worked just as hard as you did. I always say we are just honored to shoot their hard work. I always hear vendors say they have a hard time getting great images of their work. I don't understand that at all. These people should be your BFFs.

First, send an individual email thanking each vendor. Send digital images of their work and invite them to use the images in their own marketing. (I use TwoBrightLights.com, but you can always just email or DropBox them.) I also ask them to credit any images they use to my website, KristyDickerson.com.

This is the biggest must-do: Be open and share. Vendors want to work with people who are generous, with no strings attached. I share freely with no expectations.



*This is the biggest must-do:*  
**Be open and share**

## SHOOTING FOR "FRIENDORS"

Second, if this is a vendor I want to work with again, I design a vendor card. And when I say "design," I mean I use a simple template (like this one from Christine Bentley), and I just pop my images inside. If it is the florist, I showcase all the flowers. If it is a designer, I showcase the overall room and then some details. I also always stick in at least one creative shot of the bride and groom to tie them to the wedding and to showcase me as well. I place the text "Images by KristyDickerson.com" in the bottom corner of each image.

Spend a little money and have them made up by a professional lab. This is direct marketing. I package them in my branding, write a thank-you note, stick some cards inside, and mail them directly to that vendor.

They don't expect it. This separates you from the crowd, and helps further define your brand. Keep thinking outside the box and looking for any and all opportunities to create new business and stay ahead of the pack. ■



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WITH KRISTINA SHERK

# SELECTIVECOLOR

# SELECTIVE COLOR

by Kristina Sherk



Don't let the title of the article scare you. It's not about desaturating an entire image and leaving only one thing (ahem: the bouquet, apple, baby's hat) in color. Contrary to common belief, that's not the main use of the Selective Color adjustment tool in Adobe PhotoShop's CS6. Now before you move on to the next article, give me a minute to convince you to keep reading.

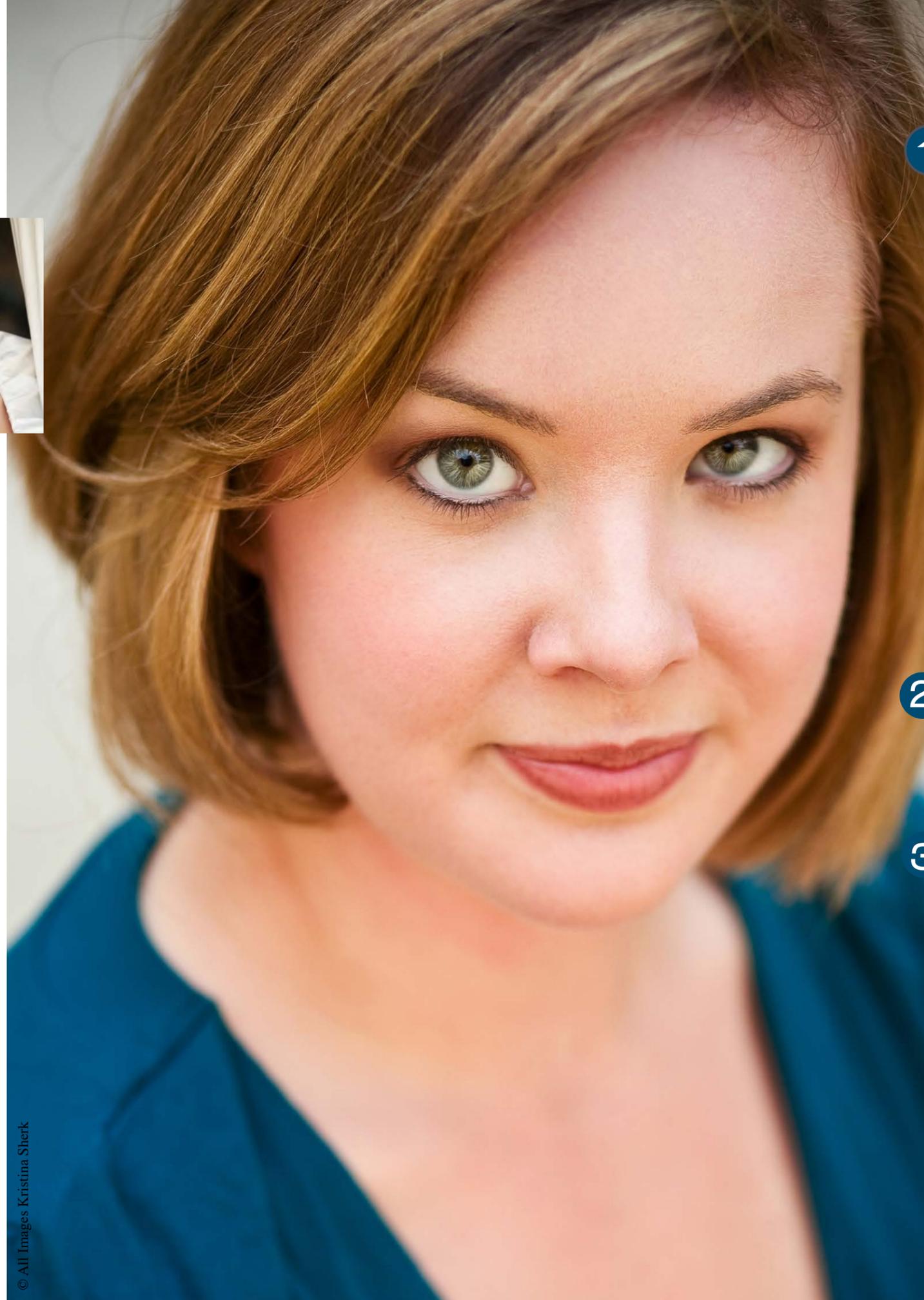
This tool will save you time. If you learn to use it right, you'll find countless scenarios in which it will prove indispensable. I'm going to show you just a few of its capabilities.

First a little background on the tool. It was originally used to help printers run their presses. Since most printing is done in the CMYK color space, there were times when one of the colors (or channels) needed to be tweaked slightly. Using this tool, the printers could go into the image and affect a specific hue by either adding or subtracting colors from it.

This tool isolates the colors in your image and divides them into reds, yellows, greens, blues, and magentas. It also divides your light and dark tones into three groups: highlights, midtones, and shadows. Then it allows you to tweak the CMYK (cyan, magenta, yellow, and black) values within each of those colors, wherever they appear in your image.

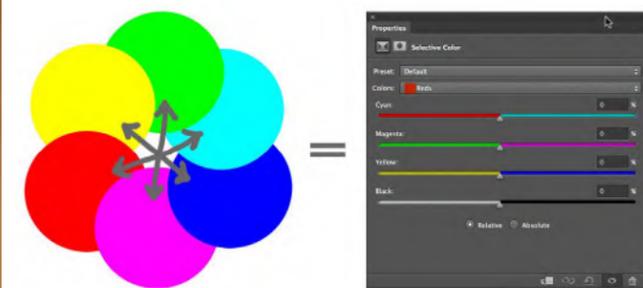
I like to think of this tool as a color balancer on steroids—it combines the versatility of the color balance tool with the ease of isolating specific colors through the Select -> Color Range menu item to create your mask. And ultimately, when you combine the two steps into one, you're bound to save loads of time.

© All Images Kristina Sherk



1

Let's review color theory and complementary colors. Below, you'll see a color wheel on the left with cyan, magenta, and yellow, and their complementary colors red, blue, and green. On the right you'll see the Selective Color tool properties window. I've colorized the sliders to help you better visualize what they do. There's also a blacks slider in each of your colors. If you increase the slider in the positive direction, you'll darken the color, ostensibly adding more black. If you pull it to the negative direction, you lighten the color, or subtract black.

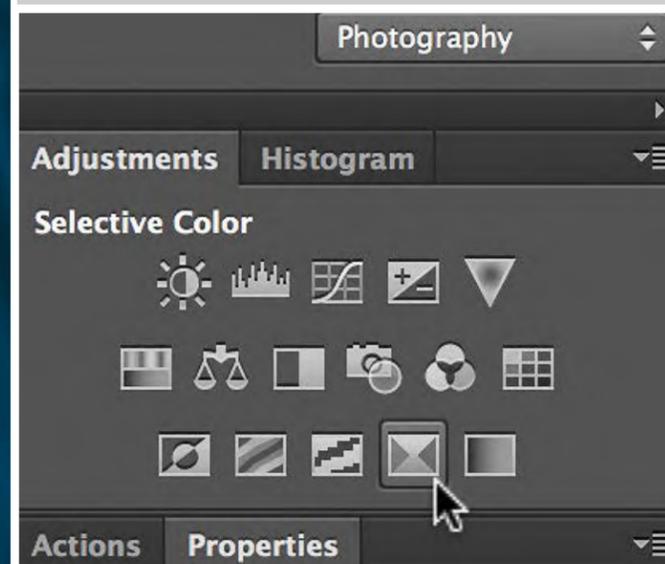


2

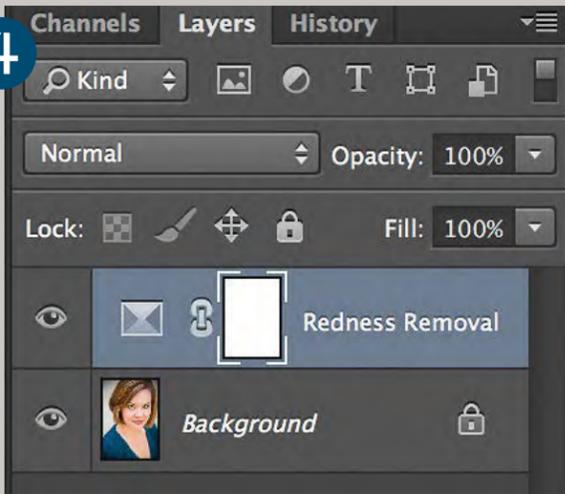
Now let's see this tool in action. I'll open a headshot I took for a girl's acting portfolio. As you can see, she's got some redness in her face because it was pretty sunny that day. Now, with one step, I'm going to remove the red from her face.

3

First I'll need to click on the Selective Color icon in the adjustment pallet.



4



A Selective Color layer appears in your layers pallet. Let's name it "Redness Removal" for bookkeeping purposes. Double-click the name of the Selective Color layer and replace the text "Selective Color 1" with "Redness Removal."

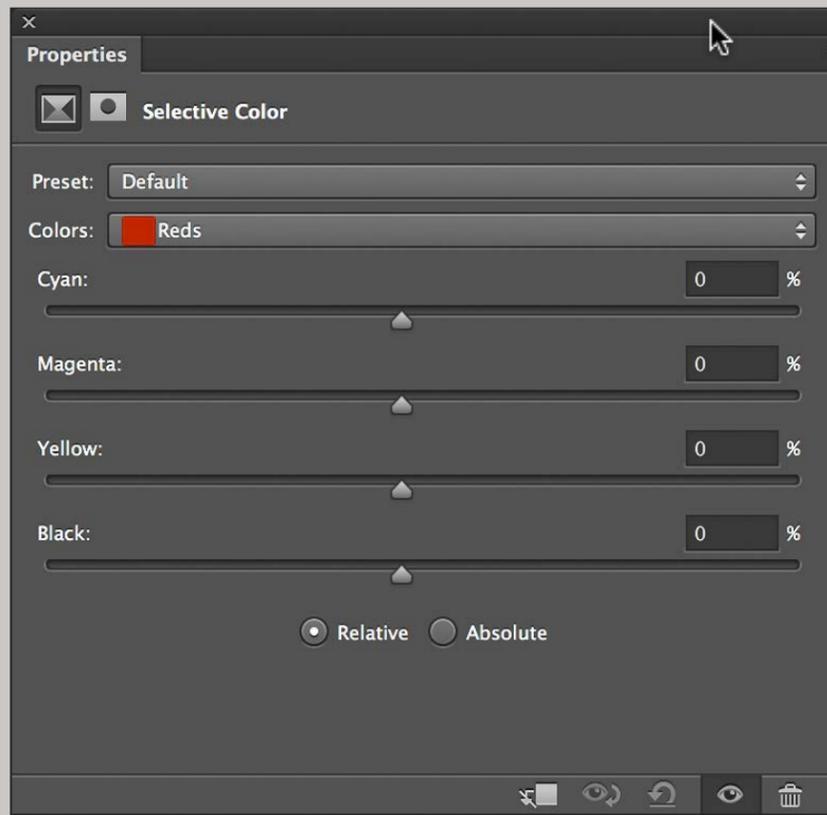
5

If you're wondering if you should have Absolute or Relative checked at the bottom of the Selective Color box, here's a quick explanation.

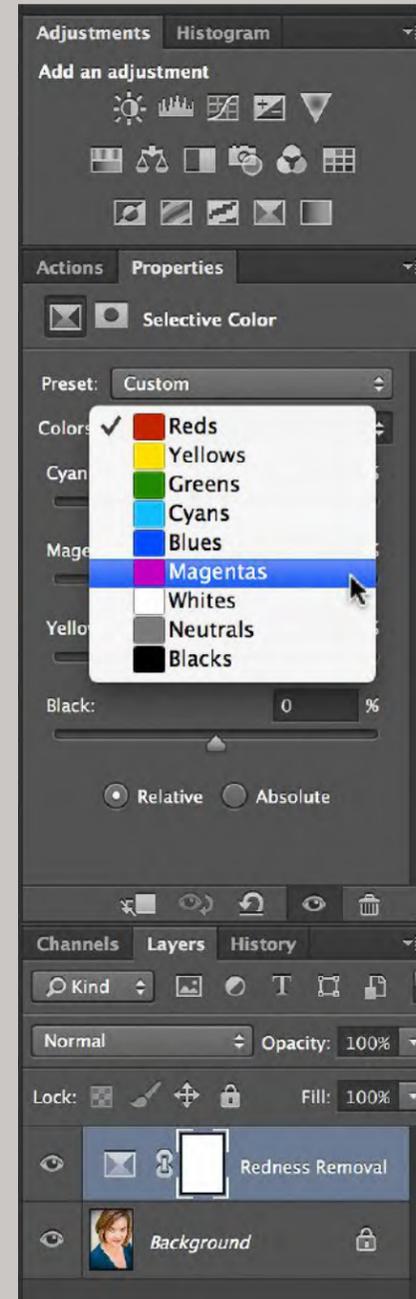
**In Relative mode:** If you have only 30 different values of magenta in your red colors in an image and you increase your magenta slider by 50%, then you are ultimately increasing the magenta values inside your reds by 50% of however many values of magenta are already present. In this scenario, that would be 15.

**In Absolute mode:** It doesn't really matter how many different values of magenta you have in your red colors in the image. If you increase your magenta slider by 50%, then you are ultimately increasing the magenta values inside your reds by 50% of all of the values of magenta in the magenta spectrum. This is much more extreme and heavy-handed versus Relative mode. I usually check Relative rather than Absolute.

Now that the layer is renamed, we can play around with the settings. By default, the red colors are selected from the color dropdown menu when you first activate the Selective Color tool. Conveniently, that's what I'd like to use for this example. If for some reason you can't see the properties box, which looks like this . . .



. . . then make sure that you have a check mark next to the Properties box in the Window dropdown menu.



6

I'll start by decreasing the magenta slider in my reds by -15, and then I'll pop over to my magentas in the Color dropdown menu. To access the other colors in your Color dropdown menu, click the word "Reds" to reveal the other colors, and then choose magentas.

7

Once I've activated the magentas in my image, I'll decrease the magenta slider in my magentas by -25. So I've pretty much removed the red in her skin in two (or I consider it one) easy step(s)!

In an effort to save you even more retouching time, I suggest you create an action that automatically adds this adjustment layer to any image. Then, if it's too heavy, you can easily use the opacity slider in the Layers Pallet to find the perfect amount.

*Here's the before and after of the headshot with the selective color applied:*



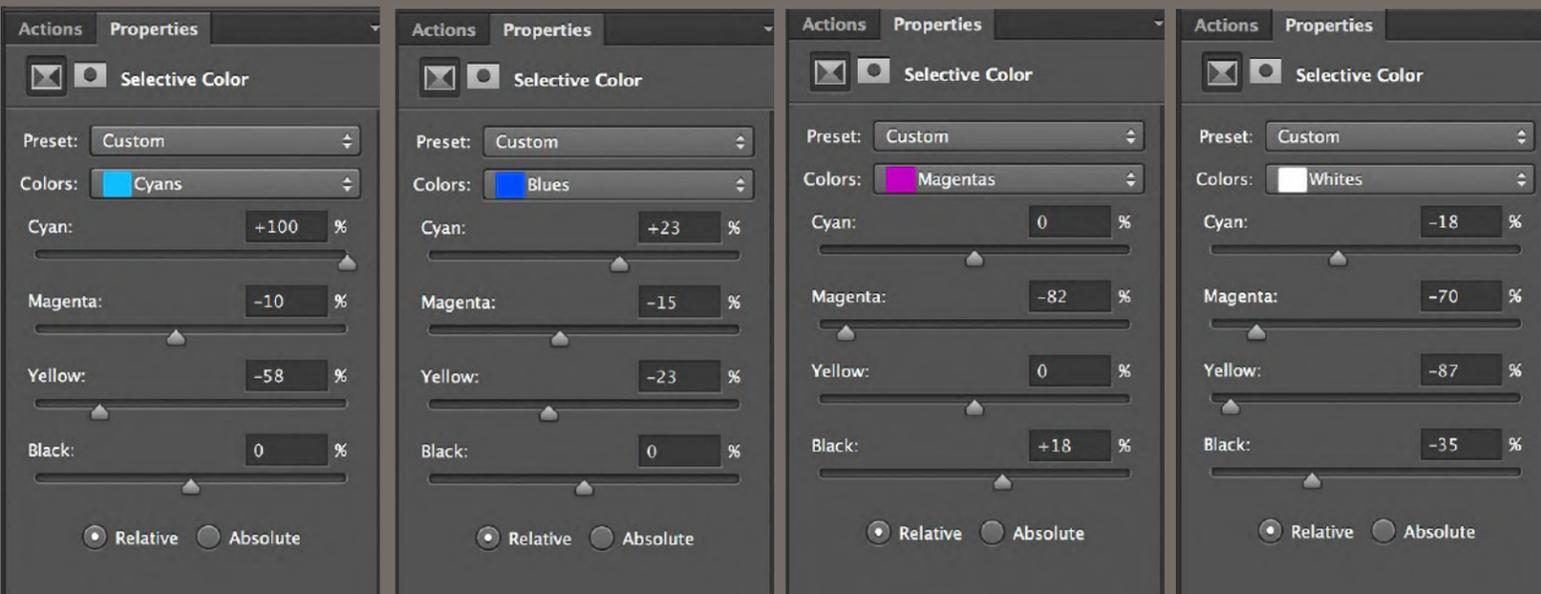
I hope you can see the differences between the two images. While they're slight, I'm sure for you photography people, this will come in extremely handy in the future.

For our next example, I'll use a photo I took while sailing in Antigua. As you can see, there's some color contamination in the clouds and the sky. They have some sort of magenta tint to them that I'd like to get rid of.



© All Images Kristina Sherk

I created a Selective Color layer and played with the cyans, blues, magentas, and whites. I chose Relative for all the color sections. Here are my snapshots of each:



Here's the image once the color tweaks are applied. I was able to get the contaminating colors out of the specific colors I wanted, and did absolutely no masking. It's pretty awesome stuff. I'll be including the beach image with this tutorial so you can try it out yourself.



As I progress in my career as a retoucher, I keep finding little uses for the Selective Color tool here and there. It can become a real asset if you begin to focus less on learning PhotoShop and more on maximizing the time you spend editing. I think this tool offers the perfect mix between global and local adjustments. It allows you to isolate a part of your image without masking anything, which we all know takes loads of time and something I try to avoid whenever possible.

Stay tuned  
& watch me turn this fashion image  
from this... to this!



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Salvatore Cincotta

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# SHUTTER MAGAZINE

# PRODUCT GUIDE

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CAMERAS & ACCESSORIES

# 1 CAMERAS

it's a tool of the trade. We can't do our jobs without one. Like any tool, the right one makes our jobs that much easier. Check out our list of cameras in this month's guide.

## EDITOR'S PICK Panasonic® CAMERAS

Let's be honest: These days, the last company you may look for the latest in DSLRs is Panasonic. Well, be prepared to have your minds blown! I know mine was. When I received the GH3, I was pretty indifferent to it. I mean, I use a real camera for my video, right? How can this little thing be better?

Wow, was I blown away when I started playing with the camera! Within 10 minutes, I had most of the major features figured out.

Whether you're just getting into video or are an established event cinematographer, you need to get this camera now. Panasonic touts it as great for hybrid video, such as the slide shows created by software like Animoto, with images and video mixed together.

The biggest thing that sets this camera apart is that it has no recording limit. Have you ever tried to film an entire ceremony with a DSLR? Good luck with that. This feature alone makes it worth its weight in gold. But wait, there's more.

The other features continue to blow my mind. Check this out: The camera also has autofocus that actually works. So, when your bride or couple is walking toward camera, it's in focus the entire way, using the built-in tracking focus system.

The focusing system is top-notch, offering touch-screen focusing. So I can pull focus from one subject to another just by tapping the back of the screen.

And the list of boring features continues, with things like 1080p at up to 60fps, HDMI output, and independent mic and headphone inputs.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE!](#)



| Canon EOS-M |

With Movie Servo AF and STM lenses, DIGIC 5 processing power, and advanced CMOS sensor technology, Canon's EOS-M brings full HD video capture to life with smooth and quiet continuous autofocus. The camera pulls together an array of key technologies to provide both professionals and consumers with high-quality stills and video.

| Nikon 1 V2 Mirrorless |

Nikon's 1 V2 provides the market with outstanding speed and performance in an impressively compact size. For the shooter wanting much more control of images, this camera offers a variety of professional-level enhancements to improve creativity, comfort, and flexibility in your workflow.

| Sony Alpha Nex-6 |

This compact camera takes things to the next level, loaded with features comparable to those of many big cameras. With a large APS-C image sensor inside, Wi-Fi connectivity, and Sony's outstanding XGA OLED electronic viewfinder, you will easily get the quality and performance of a DSLR without being weighed down.

| Fujifilm X-e1 |

The Fujifilm X-e1 was designed for both professionals and enthusiasts seeking an upgrade from the standard rangefinder concept. This camera offers an impressive electronic viewfinder and professional-grade metal body, at a price that can't be beat.

| Olympus E-pm2 |

In low-light situations, this camera stands up to the test with its incredible speed and responsive touch shutter. Compact and trendy, the Olympus E-pm2 delivers impressive images and video, all while allowing you to explore your creative side with its built-in Art Filters.



The right

**CAMERA**

can make your sessions run smoother,  
resulting in

**BETTER IMAGES**

*and ultimately*

higher sales...

*it's kind of a no-brainer.*



# LENSES

it's all about the glass. it's probably the single best investment you can make when it comes to your photography. As you upgrade from camera to camera, your glass will remain the constant. Check out some cool new glass from our industry leaders.

## EDITOR'S PICK TAMRON®

LENSES

When I was starting out, the biggest challenge was quality gear at a reasonable price. Something that seemed impossible to find. Inexpensive meant cheap. Cheap meant slow. And that meant my image quality was going to suffer. Those two things are no longer mutually exclusive.

Tamron is not a lens I would typically think of for the full-time professional. I really did think it more of a kit style lens. I was blown away when the SP 24-70 2.8 arrived. The first thing I noticed was the weight. It didn't feel cheap or inexpensive. It felt like my other glass. The build is quality construction—definitely something that will handle the ins and outs of the professional shooter.

I shot a few frames at a 60th and 80th of a second, and the image stabilization took over, giving me a tack-sharp image. Something else that really stood out to me was the focusing motor: I never heard it. This thing is ninja quiet. Just sneaks up on you, and bam, it's in focus.

While this may be categorized as an economical choice over its rivals, coming in at almost \$1,000 cheaper for the same glass from Canon or Nikon, this lens can play with the big boys. Best of all, it comes with a six-year warranty.

WATCH NOW

| Canon |

EF 70-200mm f/2.8L IS II  
Telephoto Zoom Lens

Speed, performance, and consistency have made this one of the most highly sought lenses on the market. With built-in image stabilization, the reliably sharp image quality that comes from Canon's 70-200mm lens sets the standard for zoom lenses across the market.

| NIKON |

17-35mm f/2.8  
Super Wide Angle Zoom Lens

Nikon's 17-35mm lens is quick, consistent, and well built. It provides superior accuracy in performing at maximum aperture throughout its full zoom range, and offers an M/A mode, allowing photographers to quickly and seamlessly switch from automatic to manual focusing.

| SIGMA |

35mm f/1.4

Sigma's 35mm lens is lightweight and durable, and provides photographers with a high-end artistic quality at an economic price. It's part of Sigma's Art Line, ideal for portraiture and in-studio photography.

IT'S **ALL** ABOUT THE

**GLASS.**

**BIGGER**  
**IS**

**BETTER.**

YEEEEAAAAHHHH.

# TRIPODS

Get the support you need.

This month's guide shows you some of the best sticks on the market. A lightweight and versatile tripod is priceless for the photographer on the go.



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For me, tripod size matters. I want something that is compact, lightweight, and fits in my travel bag. As a wedding photographer, I do plenty of destination work. Today, checking bags is a nightmare. At 3.5 lbs., Benro's new tripod folds to just over 17.5 in. and is so compact that it allows me to put it in my suitcase and check it with the rest of my luggage.

Next up on the feature list, a built-in monopod. You read that right, the tripod breaks down into a monopod in seconds. It's an absolutely incredible feature that allows me to have two pieces of heavy equipment in one.

Clearly built for the on-the-go photographer, the Benro tripod comes in an aluminum or carbon fiber option. And for the nature lover in you, the monopod also comes with a compass handle.

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EDITOR'S PICK

| Vanguard Alta Pro 263AB 100 |  
Stable, reliable, and durable, this piece of gear is everything you want in a tripod. It's lightweight and easy to use, with easy release buttons that make setup extremely efficient.

| Manfrotto |  
BeFree Compact Travel Photo Tripod  
This aluminum-alloy pod is uniquely designed to fit the traveler's needs. BeFree offers patented leg selectors that allow you to quickly select between leg spread angles, while its Italian design combines style and performance.

| Flashpoint |  
F-1228 Carbon Fiber Tripod  
Made to Adorama's specifications with both the beginner and professional photographer in mind, the Flashpoint F-1228 provides durability with features that bring ease and efficiency to your workflow. The carbon fiber makes this a lightweight yet extremely durable piece of equipment to add to your collection.

““ ARE  
3 LEGS

BETTER  
THAN 1?

YOU BE THE JUDGE.””

# ACCESSORIES

We all love our toys, and some of these toys are legit business tools that can make our lives easier and more productive. Check out some cool products sure to make you envious.

## EDITOR'S PICK SPIDER CAMERA HOLSTER

ACCESSORIES

We have all had the question posed to us. You are stranded on an island, what do you bring with you?

I'd bring the Spider Holster, designed by photographers for photographers. I found myself playing gunslinger all day. My staff took it away from me before I could hurt someone.

Besides being fun to play with, it's a practical tool. When I'm shooting, I'm constantly taking my camera off my shoulder or putting it on the ground. I have kicked my camera, dropped it, and a host of other things I still can't bring myself to talk about. Ok, if you insist. This one time I was in church shooting a wedding and put my camera on the pew. While walking by, my foot caught the strap and slammed the camera into the tile floor. All things that would never have happened had I been using the Spider Holster.

The one thing that really stuck out was the quality of the construction. It would make sense since we are entrusting our most expensive asset to the holster. It has to be able to support the weight without risk of dropping. The belt, holster, and locking system are all top-notch, and I would trust my most expensive equipment to the belt.

The Spider Holster will change your shooting workflow, allowing you to free up your hands and free us from those awkward upper-body contortions we have all become so accustomed to.

It's without a doubt one of the most effective holster systems on the market, and it's even extremely comfortable to wear.

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WATCH NOW

The photo-booth craze is taking over the country. Every bride I run into wants it in one form or fashion. We have tried everything from studio strobes to kit booths, and there was always something missing: ease of use.

Tether Tools has the answer. VuBooth offers a quick, easy, and inexpensive way to create a photo booth for any event. It's a modular system that's easy to transport and works with a tripod.

The kit includes a mount for your monitor, a magic arm to position your camera quickly and easily, a pro clamp, and a camera platform to secure your camera.

Use your existing camera equipment and get your photo booth set up now.

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| TETHER TOOLS |



| Lowepro Pro Roller x200 |

This camera bag is a professional studio on wheels that comes with a limited lifetime warranty. The x200 is easy to work out of, fully customizable, and great for the traveling photographer—the Reserve Pack even unzips into a backpack from the rolling case!

| Sima |

Ultra Bright Video Light SL-20LX

This rechargeable video light comes packed with 36 LEDs that don't get hot, and is shoe-mount compatible with all professional and consumer camcorders as well as DSLRs. It is perfect for on-the-go photographers and cinematographers who need a lightweight option for gorgeous lighting.

| SpyderLENSCAL |

CreativeMotionDesign specializes in portfolio website designs for photographers. It offers HTML5, Flash, unlimited pages, easy content management, a splash page, HD video pages, and a built-in photo cart.

| ColorMunki |

It's crucial to work with a correctly calibrated monitor. ColorMunki provides creative professionals an all-in-one solution to color control and creation that can easily meet the specific needs of your daily workflow.

“ ACCESSORIES OF RIZE.”

(JAZZ-HANDS!)

# RENTAL

We have all been there. Whether it's an emergency or just wanting to test some new products before you buy, renting is a great way to gain access to gear, might normally be out of reach.



This company, founded in 2006 by Paul Friedman, is no stranger to making things happen and providing amazing service. I have known and worked with them for the past three years, and am proud to say I knew them when. See, this is a business that was started out of Paul's spare bedroom and fueled with a passion to be the best!

LensProToGo is a national photo and video rental company that does things differently. It's staffed only by professional photographers, so you'll be sure to have top-notch customer service—and a fun conversation.

They ship anywhere in the U.S., and two-day shipping is included with every order. No gotcha pricing! All orders also ship in Pelican cases. Nothing but first class for their glass.

Truth is, I started renting a few years back when my business grew to a point where I needed extra equipment for my second shooters, my weddings, my video jobs, etc. It just didn't make sense for me to buy new gear when I might only need it for a weekend or two.

Another brilliant strategy, if I do say so myself, is I typically rent gear before I buy it. This lets me get my hands on it for a few days to play with it before I make a major purchase. Try before you buy.

LensProtoGo is currently rolling out an iOS app that allows you to check out gear prices and rent right from your iPhone or iPad. It doesn't get much easier to get gear in your hands and be completely prepared for your next event.

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EDITOR'S PICK

If you live in Southern California, Samy's is a name you likely know and trust. It's been around for 37 years, which is no small feat, and is the ultimate resource for professionals and amateurs alike.

It carries an extensive selection of DSLRs, lenses, and point-and-shoots from every major manufacturer. Samy's realizes that professional photographers, amateurs, and students are always in need of the most advanced, current technology.

When you are looking to purchase equipment, you should be looking for a partner that strives to understand your business and give you the service we all demand. Samy's is up for the challenge.

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### | B&H |

B&H started out in 1973 as a small photography shop on 17th Street in New York City, and went on to become a major supplier of photo, audio, and video equipment to the industry, with a strong Web presence and huge Manhattan storefront. Pros and amateurs around the world use B&H, which has its own team of in-house experts available by phone call, a click of the mouse, or a personal visit.

### | Adorama |

Adorama is a large New York City-based retailer that's been supplying the industry from its NYC storefront for 30 years. The store promises to always have in stock "the must-haves, the smart add-ons, and the unexpected surprises." It has a large rental and used department, as well as experts to help you find what you need both online and in person.

### | Borrow Lenses |

Borrow Lenses offers a wide range of photography gear for sale and rental, from lenses to underwater photography housings and everything in between.

It boasts locations on both coasts (San Francisco and Boston), and offers a 10 percent membership discount on rentals. The shop makes renting easy with its credo of "Shop, ship, shoot, send back."

### | Dodd Camera |

If you're based in Ohio or Chicago, you're familiar with Dodd Camera, founded in 1891 in downtown Cleveland. Dodd has locations across Ohio and one in Chicago. The family-owned chain offers a huge selection of gear for sale and rent, and is known for its friendly customer service.



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*- Blair Phillips*

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# HOW TO CAPTURE

*A CEREMONY*

with Rob Adams





by Rob Adams

The wedding ceremony is the centerpiece of most wedding films. It is a source of great anchor story because it provides dialogue that can be used throughout a highlights film or the full feature. It also can be sold as a documentary edit that stands on its own. If filmed cleanly and correctly, the footage and audio can greatly enhance the production value of your overall video, adding great emotion. What makes our work look cinematic and polished is our professional camera work. The shots are solid and well composed. We come up with a plan and stick with it.

Let's imagine that our example ceremony is fairly standard. The church has an altar or other area where the couple, the officiant, the bridal party, and the readers stand at some point during the service. It doesn't matter whether it's a church or on-site ceremony—our approach is always pretty similar. There's a seating gallery for the guests, an aisle for participants to walk down, and side wings on either side of the action. Some churches have a balcony in the rear of the sanctuary. We may use this, depending on the situation and the number of cameras being used.

**Tech Specs**

In this example scenario, we have three DSLR cameras. For the purposes of this article, I'll focus on lens choices and my method of employing them in ceremonies.

**In this case, for video we have:**

- 3 Canon 5DM3
- 3 tripods
- 3 monopods
- 2 Canon 70-200 IS f/2.8
- 2 Canon 135mm f/2.0

**For audio acquisition, we have:**

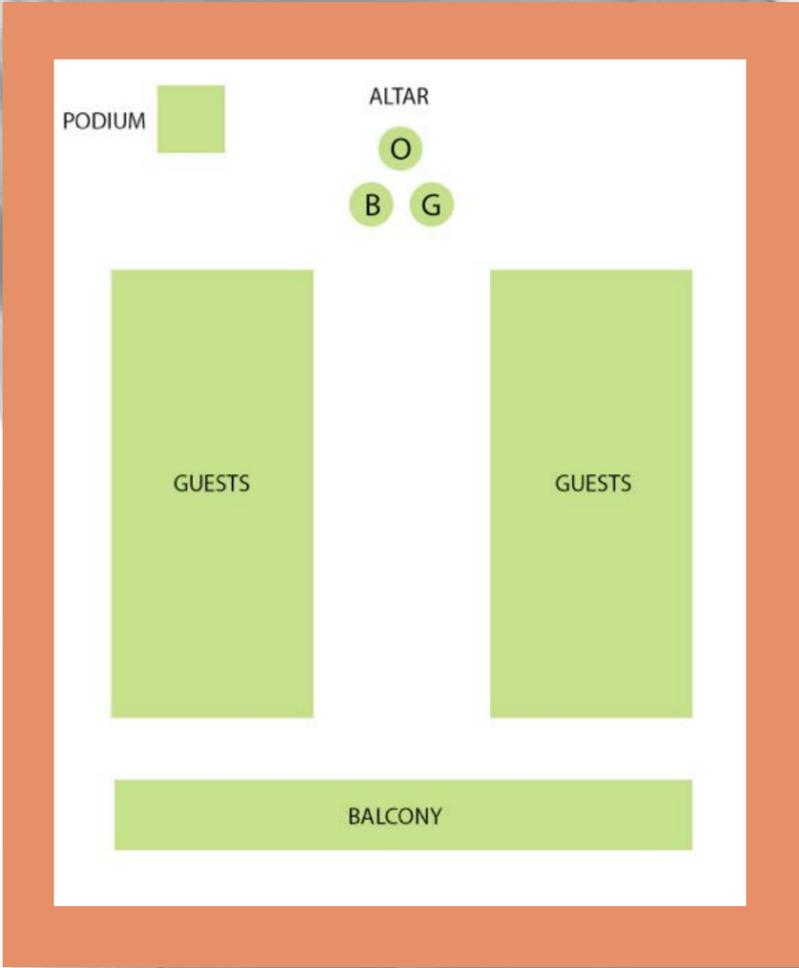
- 4 Roland R-05 digital audio recorders
- 4 Tram TR-50 lavalier microphones

Each of the cameras has a Rode VideoMic Pro attached to the hot shoe and plugged into the camera's external audio input jack.

**Here's where I place my microphones and recorders:**

1. Each Tram TR-50 is hooked to a Roland R-05 recorder.
2. Two recorders go on the groom.
3. One microphone is clipped to each lapel (one higher than the other to account for the bride's height), and one recorder is in each jacket pocket.
4. One recorder goes on the officiant and the other on the podium. If there is no podium, we place this recorder next to the ceremony sound speaker. This is to capture anything said into the standing microphone placed by the venue or deejay. This is a great setup for surprise readings by cousins and poems read by aunts.

The choice of lenses varies widely depending on the size of the venue and the distance from the front of the aisle to the rear of the ceremony space. We normally use 70-200 f/2.8 on all cameras to give us maximum zoom range at all times.



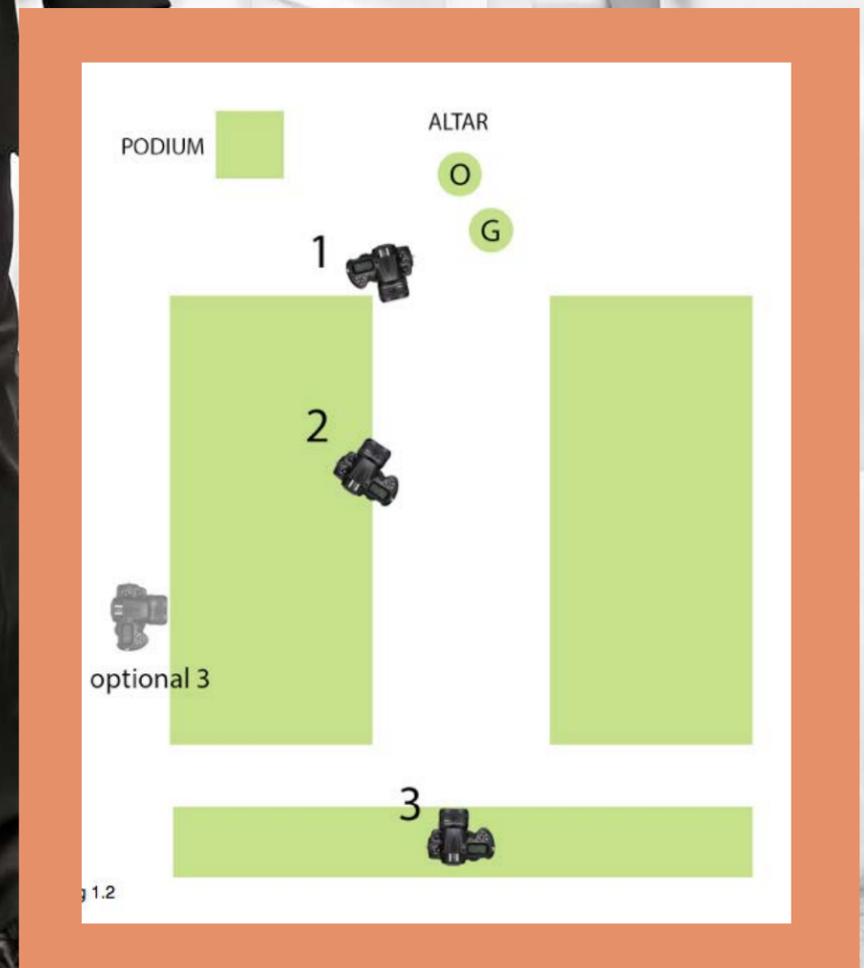
»» *The Processional*

I typically place my three cameras in various places along the aisle in order to create maximum coverage. While I want to film the aisle at all times from different angles, I also want the shots to be distinctive and creative. The first camera (let's call it Camera 1) is placed at the front of the aisle, toward the front of the church but slightly off to the side, opposite to where the groom will stand when he comes out at the start of the ceremony. Sometimes the groom marches down the aisle by himself or with his parents, and other times he may walk out from a door behind or to the side of the altar. We place Camera 1 where it has a good view of the aisle for the processional and is able to film the groom's arrival and his reaction when the bride appears at the back of the ceremony aisle. We certainly don't want to be dead center on the aisle, which would either block the groom's view of the action or upset the officiant.

The second camera (Camera 2) is placed about halfway up the aisle on the same side as Camera 1 and somewhat embedded with the guests. Use a monopod here, since you don't want to risk getting in Camera 1's shot. This gives us a nice over-the-shoulder shot of the groom's reaction while the bride and Dad walk into the foreground of the frame. With practice, this is a very effective and beautiful shot. Typically, Camera 1 zooms in to frame a tight shot on the groom, and holds the shot until the processional is about to begin. Once we rack our focus and set our exposure, framing the shot, we don't move.

Camera 3 is generally positioned in the back of the church, in the upper balcony, or on the side of the aisle facing in to cover the aisle profile. If you do place the camera on the side, elevate it as high as possible to get over people's heads when they stand for the bride's entrance. If you can't get this camera up high, aim between the guests with a medium-range focal length. Prefocus on the aisle.

Once the bride meets the groom at the front of the aisle, Camera 2 holds its shot steady as Dad gives away the bride. Camera 1, meanwhile, peels back and widens its frame. The Camera 1 operator can capture a great perspective by maintaining position and staying tight on the give-away. Either way, Cameras 2 and 3 don't move, giving you options in the edit.



>> *The Readings and Homily*

There's usually a short pause as the guests are instructed to sit and the officiant transitions to the meat of the ceremony. Camera 1 recedes back from the aisle toward the left wing of the front of the ceremony space. Camera 2 moves to the back of the church to avoid crossing in front of the guests, and then walks the left aisle up to the front, where it's set up on a tripod next to Camera 1. Camera 1 focuses a nice medium closeup on the readers and officiant at the podium as they speak. Camera 2 locks down a shot on the bride and groom as they watch. Once the readings are done, Camera 2 makes its way to the opposite side of the church, effectively mirroring the position of Camera 1. If Camera 3 is in the balcony, it can stay there; if it's on the side of the aisle, it can be moved to the center of the aisle about halfway back to get the action dead-on.

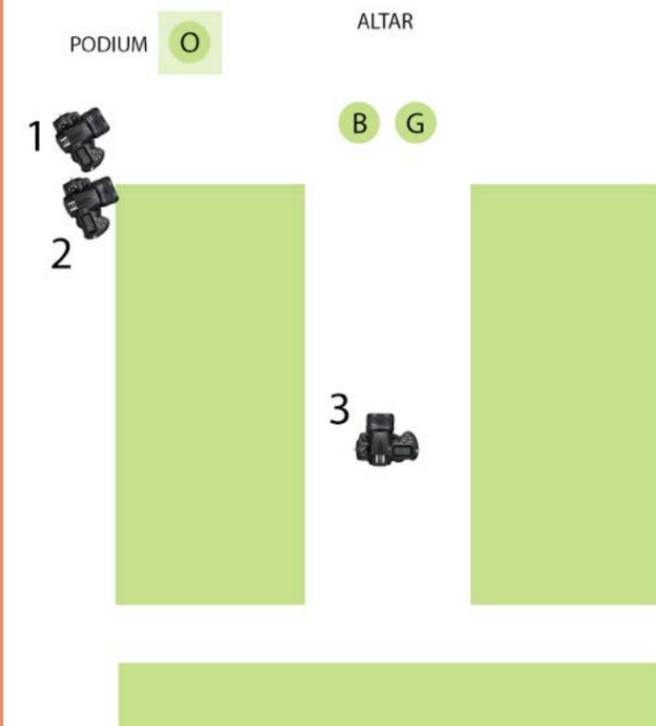
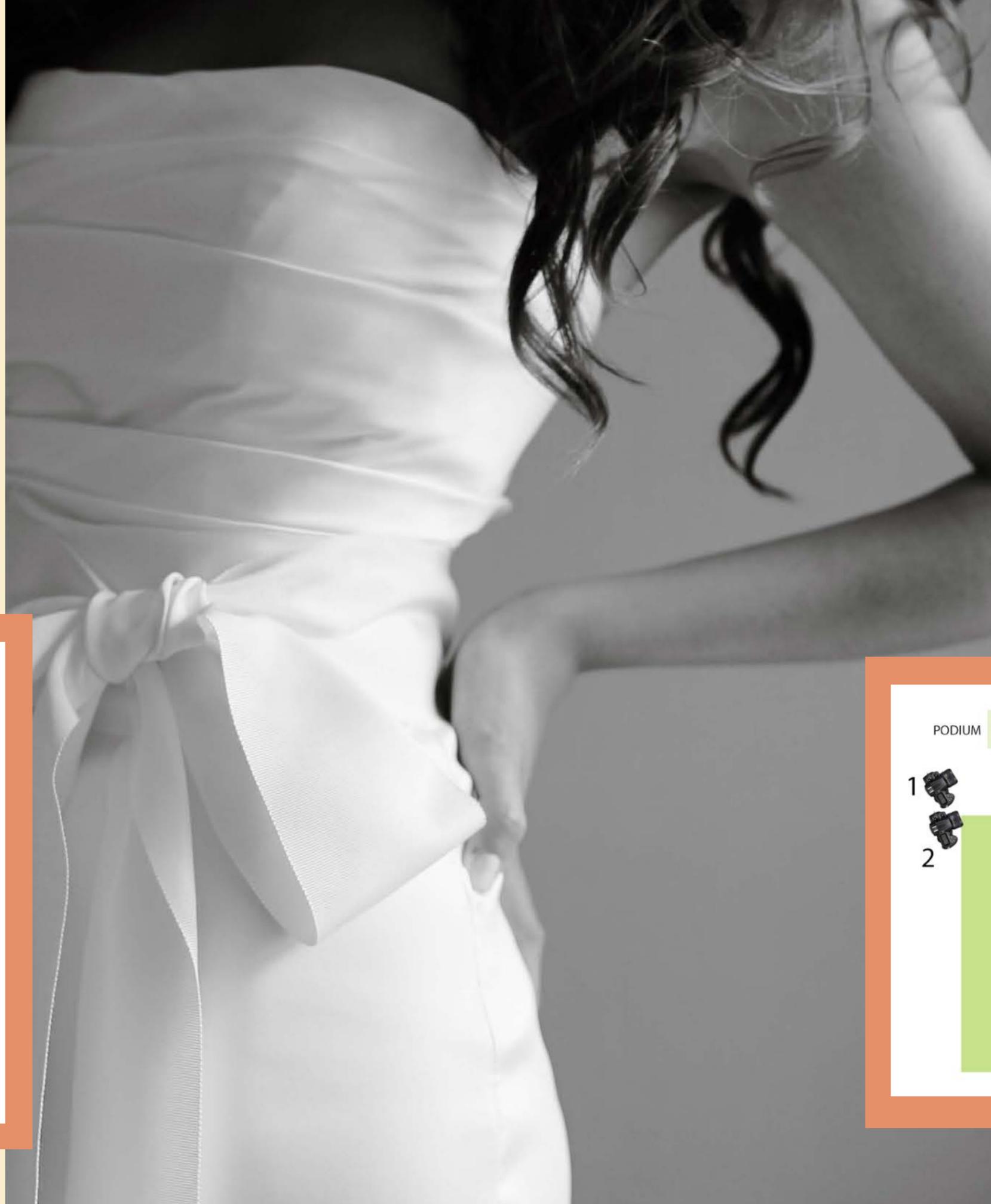
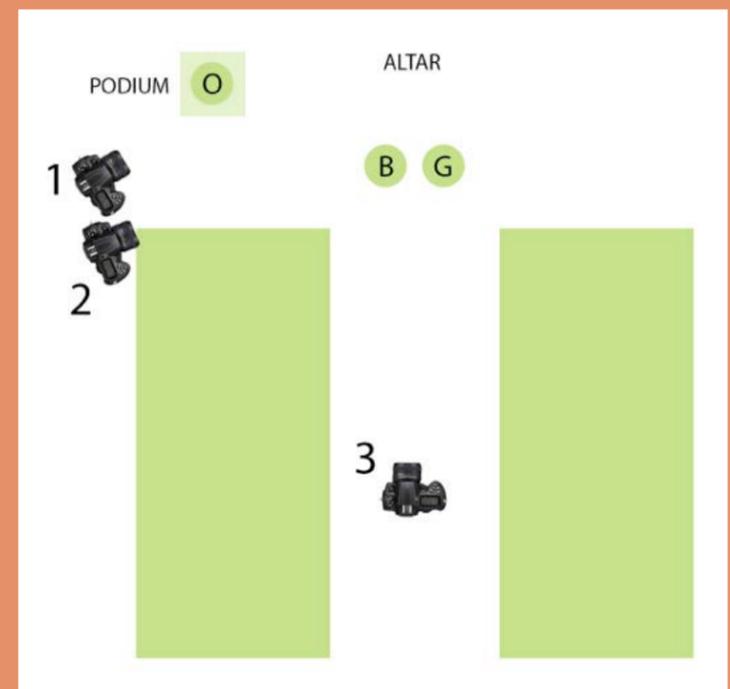


Fig 1.3



>> *The Vows and Ring Exchange*

Along with the homily, the vows are the other most important part of the ceremony. Nailing the vows and ring exchange with solid shots and nice composition will give you plenty to work with. Once the vows start, the best advice I can give is this: Don't move! Get your shot in the moments leading up to the vows, and stay on it. Have the camera operators take turns setting their frames. Take the time to observe each other while filming. If one person is moving his camera, the others should not move. Practice this, and you will greatly minimize the chances of all the cameras moving at once.

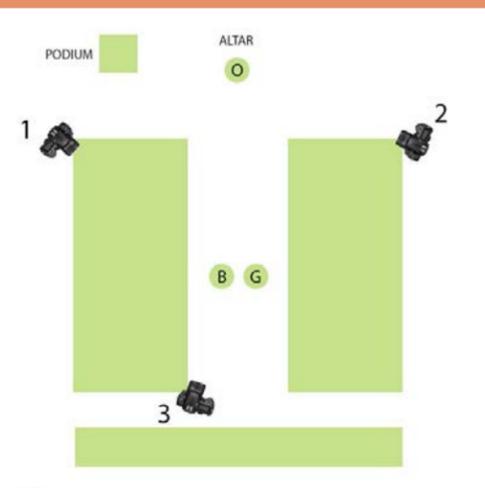


## CAPTURING THE CEREMONY

### >> *The Kiss and the Recessional*

At the end of the service, keep it simple. If you try to complicate things, you will fail—at least in the beginning. Hold the same positions you had during the vows. When the bride and groom are pronounced husband and wife and they kiss, you'll be in prime position to capture it all. Halfway through the kiss, Camera 3 quickly moves to the back of the church and slightly off to the left side. Set its focal length to 100mm and prefocus halfway up the aisle. With luck, the processional should walk directly into the focal plane.

If you focus on capturing only the main action and resist the temptation to shoot other eye candy during the processional and ceremony, you will come away with at least two or three good camera angles the whole way through. The key is to have a plan of attack and stick with it. ■



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WHEN

LIFE

GETS IN THE WAY

with Laurin Thienes

## WHEN LIFE GETS IN THE WAY

by Laurin Thienes



What does not kill you makes you stronger. This chestnut rings true both in business and one's personal life. Distractions and speed bumps are without a doubt going to hit your business. How you overcome them is what defines you as a businessperson. Over the past year, we have faced distractions big and small, and when the pain of distraction has gone away, we've always come out stronger, more prepared and focused to deal with the next unforeseen issue. Let's talk about five common distractions that small photography studios face.

## MOVING

If you have to relocate, choose the right time to do it. You have two options of time frames for a relocation: a bad time and a really bad time. We relocated twice in six months. The first time was 2,000 miles cross country; the second was 800 feet down the road. Both caused massive disruptions to our business. In the cross-country move, we chose a time to be down and offline during a period that was traditionally slow: after Christmas and over the first couple days of the new year.

Even after we'd carefully thought through every aspect of our second move, which was just a few blocks away, we hit a bump that I thought would bury us: It took 21 business days to get the Internet turned on because there had never been a line run into the building.

When there are pieces of your puzzle that depend on other people, do not assume you know what the lead times are. Confirm and double check everything far in advance. It will make your life much easier and save you from some inadvertent gray hairs.



## LOSING AN EMPLOYEE

For a larger studio with a handful of employees, losing a staff member hurts, but usually just requires you to do a balancing act while looking for a replacement. For a small studio, the loss of your studio manager or assistant usually means that you are losing 100 percent of your workforce. Not easy to overcome, especially if it is unexpected, with little to no lead time. Turn this experience into a positive by using the unexpected loss to evaluate areas of your business where you could be operating more efficiently and leaner. What you may find is that you never needed the employee in the first place, or perhaps some of the more menial tasks can be outsourced. If the employee was your assistant on photo shoots, look to colleagues or interns to help you out. Finding a replacement can be difficult, but it's not the end of the world.

## TIME OFF

Taking time off and going on vacation is necessary but extremely tough, especially when family members are pulling you in multiple directions. Balancing life with self-employment requires understanding from your family and friends. They have to understand it's not as easy as just punching out on the time clock and walking away. Staying connected with your customers and clients is paramount to success. It's important to make sure your business does not suffer when you are away. Remain consistent in email response times, and make sure any projects are still moving forward or client expectations are set in advance of your absence. Nothing's worse than missing client deadlines, which can quickly wreck your reputation.

## WORK OVERLOAD

"How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time," goes the old saying. Having too much of a good thing is still a problem—being buried under your workload can be detrimental on many levels. When everything is a priority, how do you prioritize? This has been one of my biggest failings. I have always had to regroup mentally and start knocking out my to-do list—one bite at a time. If it is a temporary overload, roll up your sleeves, stop complaining, and get to work. Put in the long hours necessary to be successful. You can't think 9-to-5. If the overflow is permanent, this is even more of a good thing, though you have to stop the bleeding immediately. Attack the most pressing issues—usually customer satisfaction issues—and find ways to work more efficiently.



WHEN LIFE GETS IN THE WAY

## BAD PUBLICITY

Not all publicity is good publicity, contrary to what is often said. In today's anonymous online world, businesses are publically bad-mouthed and torn down with a few keystrokes. Negative reviews are extremely hurtful, and can be damaging. If you get slammed online, do not hide from it—take the conversation out of the public eye. A dispute out in the open just makes you look stupid. Pick up the phone and call your accuser. Rectify the situation offline. In those situations you cannot fix offline, go to your fans—not your family and friends, but real clients who love your work. These are the people who can really help change public opinion when things go south.

I recently had a conversation with a colleague who had relocated his photography studio. He was not running away from anything bad; he just wanted a change. The recurring theme of our conversation was the disruption to his current clients, as well as the frequent travel back and forth while fully transitioning to his new location. Being able to plan ahead for the disruption is important, though it is not necessarily the end all, be all. There is always the unknown, and it's a challenge to stay focused and ensure that you take something away from each disruption to your business so that you learn from each scenario. ■



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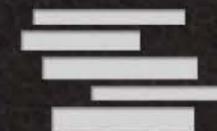
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BY *Salvatore Cincotta*

# same-sex **WEDDINGS**

*Unique Aspects, Posing & Marketing*

PART 2



BY KRISTIN KORPOS



If you've ever been to a same-sex wedding, you have a good idea how they differ from traditional bride-groom weddings. If you haven't, read on for a walkthrough of some of the key differences, followed by a discussion of posing and marketing tips.

### WHAT'S DIFFERENT?

#### *What makes a same-sex wedding different?*

One bride may be wearing a gown while the other is in a tuxedo, or both may be in a gown or dress (which may not be white). You might see two suits or tuxedos (which will be worn by either men or women), or any mix of the above. This is a modern wedding, and your brides and grooms will be wearing what makes them feel most comfortable. The traditional wardrobe may be thrown completely out the door! Don't make any assumptions. Ask your couple beforehand what they will be wearing so you can visually prepare your mind and know what to expect.

The wedding party may be quite different as well. Members of the party are generally referred to as "attendants" because the term is gender neutral. Couples might have a mix of male and female attendants. They may have a best man or maid of honor, but it wouldn't be unusual for you to also hear terms such as "best person" or "man of honor." The attendants may or may not be wearing matching suits or dresses.

Unlike straight couples, same-sex couples often do the "getting ready" part of their day together, in the same room. This is a great time to capture images of their wedding wardrobe together, in one image.

A photographer can expect differences at the ceremony as well. First off, same-sex couples tend to serve their guests a signature cocktail or glass of champagne upon arrival. This is a modern touch that I have rarely if ever seen at a straight wedding.



Always ask about the structure of the ceremony before the big day. Many same-sex couples decide to use two aisles for the processional. They may simultaneously walk down their own aisle alone or escorted, and meet together at the altar. In this case, there should be two photographers to cover the processional.

Depending on the state in which the ceremony takes place, it may be conducted by a friend, justice of the peace, celebrant, or even by a church minister (Unitarian Universalists, Lutherans, and Episcopalians perform same-sex marriages). In Massachusetts, individuals can apply for a one-day license that allows them to perform a marriage for a specific couple, so you see many close friends and family members performing same-sex weddings there.

The ceremony program is often more personalized and creative, often written entirely from scratch between the couple and celebrants. Inquire about this beforehand so you can be prepared to capture the various rituals and anticipate that pronouncement of marriage or first kiss!

Same-sex wedding receptions are all about celebrating, just like straight weddings. You probably won't see a garter toss, but if you have two brides, you may see a dual bouquet toss. Everybody, not just the ladies, is usually invited to the dance floor for a chance to catch a bouquet.

Emotions run high at same-sex weddings. One really important difference to keep in mind is that some key family members may be absent because they disapprove of or don't understand same-sex marriage. And those who are in attendance may still be dealing with the fact that their family member or child is gay. On the other hand, I have seen some amazing things that have brought me to tears, such as a once disapproving mother making an impromptu speech acknowledging her love for and acceptance of her son and his new husband. Stay alert and feel what is going on around you.

There is also a great amount of celebration due to the simple fact that these couples now have equal rights. Being able to finally share the same marriage rights that straight couples have had for years creates an intense amount of joy. You will be able to feel this throughout the day at a same-sex wedding, so capture images that reflect this joy.

## POSING

Photographing a same-sex couple is not that different from photographing a straight couple.

Create a rapport, get to know them, how they interact together, and how they show their love for one another. Don't presume they are the "lovey-dovey" kissing and hugging types. Same-sex couples may be more hesitant to show their affection for one another in public. As their photographer, you need to know their comfort level.

At the beginning of every portrait session with a same-sex couple, I say something along the lines of, "I want to capture your love for each other but I want you to feel comfortable with how affectionate you are in front of the lens. Feel free to kiss one another and snuggle up as much or as little as you want to."

This statement elicits some thought and laughs. Most people haven't been photographed professionally, and don't know what to expect. By making this statement, the couple eases up, gets more comfortable, and shows you who they are as a couple. If they don't want to kiss, don't make them kiss.

Do not make any assumptions about gender roles, meaning don't presume that two masculine men won't be affectionate, or that the woman wearing pants will take a more masculine role. Challenge yourself as a photographer. The ability to capture a couple's love for one another goes far behind the act of kissing and far beyond gender roles.

Photographing the wedding party and attendants may also feel different. Instead of several men in tuxedos and women in purple dresses, you may have some men and women in pants or suits, some women in dresses, and an overall mix of clothing styles. Rather than lining up "like-dressed" people, focus on creating a visually compelling image by mixing things up. Be creative, use your artistic eye, and have fun with it.

You are confident and ready to shoot a same-sex wedding, so the next big question is: How do you market your services to same-sex couples?

Search around your local market for vendors who work with same-sex couples, such as a celebrant who officiates mostly same-sex weddings. This is a person you should network with. The list may also include florists, planners, DJs, venues, and caterers. Work with these vendors to put together a wedding resource guide for same-sex couples in your city or state. This guide can provide specific information on the marriage or commitment ceremony laws in your state, as well as a directory of vendors, along with tips, ideas, and images for couples to consider as they plan their wedding.

There are also gay wedding directories that will list your business for a fee. They vary in quality, so do your research on how much traffic their online directory receives on a daily basis to determine if it is worth your investment. More reputable directories include EquallyWed.com, GayWeddings.com, PurpleUnions.com, and a Vote and a Vow.

Consider setting up a booth at either a gay wedding expo or a local pride celebration. RainbowWeddingNetwork.com organizes expos throughout the year across the United States. One of the largest is the GLBT Expo, which takes place every March in New York City. Local pride celebrations often have booths available for local businesses as well, so get in touch with local gay organizations and find out if there are pride celebrations in your area.

Consider donating your services to a gay nonprofit. These organizations hold dinners and other functions throughout the year, and need event photographers. Through donating and volunteering, you will be able to introduce your gay-friendly photography business to people in the community.

These are just a few marketing ideas to get you started as you target your photography services toward this new market. This is such a unique time in history; over the next few years, the same-sex wedding industry will account for billions of dollars in revenue. I hope this information helps you expand your photography business and grow your profits as we enter an exciting, more equitable future. ■

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# CHANGE<sup>THE</sup> WORLD

*...while growing your business*

WITH PHILLIP BLUME



BY PHILLIP BLUME

### *THE BACKGROUND*

Can anyone's eyes be so dark, yet so full of light? This is my very first experience shooting video. So I peer out from behind my camera, still rolling at 24 frames a second, to assure myself it isn't a trick of the lens. The eyes I look into aren't those of a bride or another client who has walked into my boutique photography studio. They belong to a boy, swaying meditatively back and forth on the blackened ground of Guatemala City's most violent slum, "Paradise."

Worn but brightly colored laundry flutters in the shaft of light over his head, flags suited to his 10-foot-square cinderblock fortress, a humble home that he now leans back against. His gaze pierces me, seeming glassier now than when the actual wall glass within my camera stood between us.

Here, where gang members can expect to live fewer than 23 years, it's not uncommon to find a burnt or bloodied corpse left over from the previous night. Nathan Hardeman is a humanitarian visionary whose organization, Engadi Ministries Intl., we have come to document. He is tired of burying boys. He speaks of them as sons. His eyes grow bright with tears and with a deep, abiding determination.

It's the same determination I see in the eyes of this nameless boy. The same hope. That is why I don't hesitate to bury my knee in the gravel, brace my camera, and stare into the face of someone whom it is easier to ignore. He is no longer a statistic. He sits in front of me. He deserves to be heard. While I look at him, everything collapses—my need to establish a brand, to double my bookings next year, to increase my income or my "likes" on social media.

Gone. Who cares?

Self-importance, but also self-doubt, crumbles. I no longer need anyone to know my name. But when it comes to this boy, nobody and no perceived inability of my own better get in the way.

## THE MIDDLE GROUND

Is it the same for you? For me, the sparkle of the photography industry and the frenetic demands of business quickly distract from what really matters: life. On the road, I hear it said a hundred different ways: “I don’t love photography like I used to.” “It’s hard to feel inspired anymore.” “My business is taking over our family.” “This work is starting to feel empty. Isn’t there something more?”

There is! Much more. Sadly, in our culture, we’ve deified the pursuit of comfort, unaware it’s an idol that robs us of real happiness and, yes, even of the greater successes we could enjoy.

The solution is not a quick fix, and it deserves the closer, detailed explanation we are going to give it. But just so you know, what I’m getting at isn’t purely philosophical. In fact, it’s pretty simple: personal projects. That’s it.

Personal, *namely charitable*, projects are the foundation on which my wife, Eileen, and I have been able to build both a happier, more meaningful life *and* a business that’s thriving beyond what we ever imagined.

It’s the “both/and” that’s important. It’s useless to neglect one—your personal life or your business—in favor of the other. The goal is a holistic approach in which the two are balanced and enrich one another. You won’t sustain financial success if you become burned out or depressed. Even if you can, who wants to live like that? But neither can a starving artist feed the hungry. Financial stress can smother your personal life, too, which is why it’s the leading cause of divorce in the U.S. Let’s get our priorities straight, folks!

It’s silly, yet so human of me. I too often determine my priorities with questions like, “Am I booked for as many weddings as he is? Is my work up to par with hers?” That’s my mindset when I’m shooting for the status quo. I need to think outside the box: *What do I want out of life, not just out of business? Who do I want to be?*



CHANGE THE WORLD



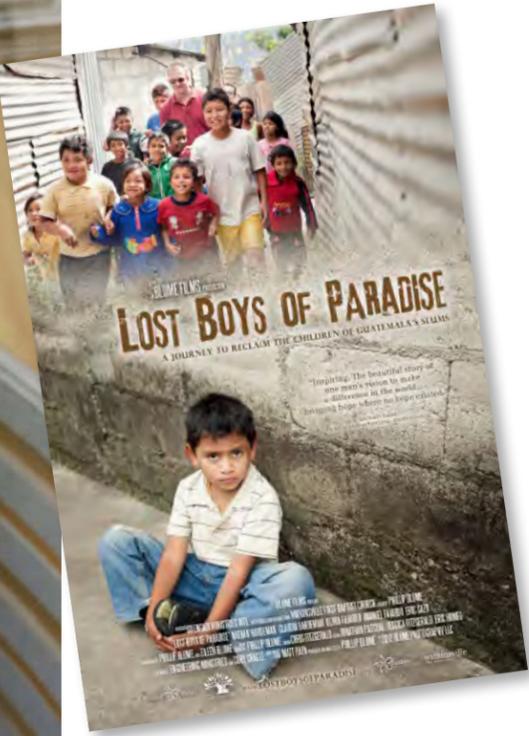


Eileen and I are full-time wedding photographers and parents of two young girls. How can we afford time to spend with our daughters, much less to travel for personal projects or fight humanitarian battles? Isn't it time I learned my place and just started seeking out rich, beautiful women in white dresses?

There is no middle ground for you, not if you're a person who wants to excel at work and life. You must decide daily whether you'll wear the chains of false comparison, sacrificing personal relationships and time to mirror others' achievements, or whether you will make your business *work for you*—reflect your values.

This is where perspective is critical. We could compare ourselves to Salvatore Cincotta (this magazine's editor and a generous mentor to us), and it would seem we're growing too slowly. After all, Sal was able to take his studio from a blip on the map to a multimillion-dollar brand in a few measly years! You can bet we soak in all the business advice we can get from Sal and others.

But when it came to plotting our own path, we started with these two crucial steps: 1. We determined our ultimate goals, and 2. We planned small, attainable moves to put us closer to our goals. Go ahead and try it. Take out a pen and paper and write down what you're after. But think big! Your goal can't be to outshoot Joe Schmo down the street next year. Perhaps your goal is to regain a normal family life. You can take steps to increase your price point and decrease your workload. Perhaps your goal is to travel. You can take steps to pursue mainly destination weddings.



We look to our early goals, and we recognize both our personal and financial blessings have been astonishing. Within a year of restructuring our business model and pricing, our income nearly doubled, while we significantly cut our workload. We finally had the time and money for travel, which allowed us to begin our project in Guatemala in late 2011. That project, whose intended result was a four-minute video, instead evolved into a feature-length documentary film, *Lost Boys of Paradise*, which is helping kids escape the slums in favor of a safe home and education. It has been screened in over 20 states, from New York to New Mexico, at film festivals, colleges, churches, and theaters. We've shared the project at WPPI in Las Vegas and live on NBC. We never would have taken on such a project if we knew all that beforehand. It would have sounded too ambitious. Instead, we took on a low-pressure personal project that resulted in a whole new skill set and confidence to accept we are capable of bigger things than we realized.

CHANGE THE WORLD

If you shoot higher or in a direction all your own, thats when you'll hit the mark.

You'll achieve more & inspire others to strive toward better goals.

Shooting in a different direction is what landed Eileen and me in gang territory. It also took our business and souls to new heights.

So let's get practical. This is big-picture thinking. But what can you expect to see in the foreground—the up-front, visible benefits of a *personal project*? How can “charity” work for your business? That's exactly what we'll pick apart in Part II of this series. Next we'll discuss how to launch your first low-pressure, high-reward project. Then we'll explore ways to leverage that experience to earn credibility, increase your studio's revenue, broaden your networks, get better jobs, and inspire more creativity. ■



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A graphic for a video player. It features a play button icon on the left, the word "SHUTTER" in large, bold, white letters in the center, and a camera aperture icon on the right. Below the text, it says "LEARN MORE! CHECK OUT THIS VIDEO...". The background is a dark, textured brown.

# DEALING

WITH DIFFICULT CLIENTS

*3 easy steps*



by Vanessa Joy



We've all been there. The stress, anxiety, and heartbreak you feel when one of your clients is upset with you, or worse, is flat-out angry and lashing out. If you haven't had a client turn from Jekyll to Hyde, then consider yourself lucky. Fortunately, we can head off clients' problems before they start by following three easy steps. Failing that, I have six steps for a quick fix that'll leave you and your client happy.

## 1 — Decide & spot your red flags

Hindsight is 20-20, so learning to spot a problem client before he becomes a client can be tricky, but it'll save both of you a lot of misery later on. You have to decide what the red flags are for you, since they're not always the same for everyone. Some photographers might consider a problem client to be someone who hands them a list of 100 pictures she demands to be taken. Others would see that as a plus. One photographer may think that a client who insists on nothing but candid pictures is the perfect client, while another photographer would only want clients who give them at least an hour of photo session time.

So determine your red flags—clashing personalities, an uninterested groom, an overbearing mother of the bride, etc.—and decide at that point whether or not you want to work with the client. There's no sense in taking on a client who will make both of your lives miserable for the next 18 months—it's not worth the paycheck. But if you do decide to take the client, note the red flags and use them as guides to anticipating problems before they start so you can head them off ahead of time.

## 2 — Develop a communication system

Having a system within the office that pertains to your postproduction workflow is one thing, but developing a system for clients is a completely separate task. You want to have a system that keeps communication open with your clients at all times so they know what to expect and when to expect it. This builds trust between you and your client, and heads off the problems that can arise when there is a lack of communication.

### In my studio, here's what my client workflow looks like:

- 1 • Client books
- 2 • Send thank-you email that starts conversation about scheduling the engagement session
- 3 • Send client a surprise gift
- 4 • Engagement session
- 5 • Send engagement session FAQ webpage after session is scheduled
- 6 • Confirm session a few days before
- 7 • At end of session, let them know when they should expect to see their pictures
- 8 • When proofs are almost ready, send an email letting them know, and schedule their viewing appointment
- 9 • Wedding
- 10 • Send prewedding email eight weeks before with wedding FAQs
- 11 • When saying goodbye at the wedding, tell them to expect an email with the next steps
- 12 • Send postwedding email the week after the wedding letting them know when to expect their proofs, and get started on their thank-you cards
- 13 • When proofs are almost ready, send an email letting them know, and schedule their album design viewing appointment
- 14 • Let them know when to expect any other products or services, and provide tracking numbers if available

You can see how having consistent communication and keeping them informed of what's happening can head off not only potential problems, but a slew of emails and questions from clients.

## Give them your best — 3

When it comes to consumer psychology, how a client feels is everything. So, make them feel important by giving them your best. Obviously, we want to give clients our best photography, but to them, that's what they're paying for. Find ways to exceed their expectations elsewhere and look for opportunities to make them happy. I like to do this by giving surprise gifts, like a marriage book when they book with me, a same-day album the night of their wedding, and occasionally a freebie upgrade (that doesn't cost me much, but means the world to them). When you underpromise and overdeliver, you'll find happy clients every time.

Sometimes no matter how hard you try, you end up either accidentally messing something up, or a client is simply not satisfied with you for a reason you couldn't anticipate. When this happens, it's important to remember that it does happen and to treat it as an occupational hazard that will undoubtedly come at one time or another. Don't worry. You're not alone. What draws the line between mediocre and amazing businesses is not if you have a problem, but how you handle one when it arises. Here are six steps to help you deal with an upset client.

### **First: Don't take it personally**

It's only natural to take everything clients say or feel to heart at first because we've invested so much of our time and artistic souls into trying to make them happy. Regardless of that, try to separate your emotions from the problem as much as possible. Not only will this help your stress level, but it will help you think more rationally about how to fix it and move on with your business and life.

### **Second: Don't be defensive**

Guilty! I know that my first inclination is to defend and justify my actions when someone is addressing an issue with me, whether in business or in life. But justifying yourself to your client is only going to make her angrier because what she wants in complaining to you is to feel validated for why she's upset. You have to be the bigger person here.

### **Third: Communicate better**

A lot of frustration comes from a lack of communication. Do a better job of it. This may mean that a phone call or meeting is necessary, because we all know how emails can be misconstrued. When you do speak, ask your client why he's upset, and just let him get it all out to you, without interruption. Nod and give other signals that say you understand his concerns. When he's finished, repeat the client's problem back to him, but in your own words: "I can see that you're upset about \_\_\_\_\_, is that correct?" This lets him know that he was heard and understood, and helps eliminate any confusion about the problem so you can effectively fix it later on.

## DIFFICULT CLIENTS

### **Fourth: Apologize**

The old saying “The customer is always right” is wrong, and we all know it. But you can make clients feel validated in their anger by apologizing to them. Don’t get me wrong, you’re not a doormat and absolutely shouldn’t apologize for something you didn’t do wrong. However, a simple phrase like “I understand why you’re so upset and I’m very sorry that this is happening” can diffuse a client’s anger without telling them they’re right about something that they’re not.

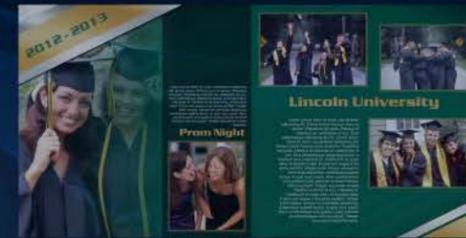
### **Fifth: Make it right—quickly!**

Your goal should be to solve the problem as best as you can and as quickly as you can. The longer the client sits there stewing, the more angry she will become and the harder it will be to please her. Neither you nor the client really wants to be unhappy for a long, drawn-out period of time, so the faster that you can resolve the issue, the better it is for everyone involved. A way to speed this up is to simply ask, “What can I do to make this right for you?” Nine times out of 10, their request won’t be unreasonable, but if it is, simply say, “I can’t do that, but I can do \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_. Which would make you happiest?”

### **Sixth: Overcompensate**

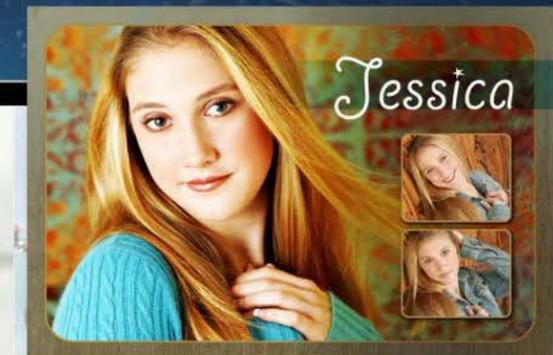
If all you do is fix the problem, then all you’ve done is justify the client’s issue with you. You haven’t transformed her negative thinking about your company into positive thinking. You want to get your client to be delighted with you again. A great way to do that is to overcompensate. This doesn’t necessarily mean to overcompensate in the way you fix the problem. It could mean that you throw in a free canvas or buy her a surprise gift thanking her for her patience while the issue was resolved. It’ll mean the world to your client, and it’s worth the money and time spent knowing that your client will rave about you to her friends again rather than complain about you.

Occasionally there are times when we need to flat out say no to our clients. There’s an art to doing this in a way that doesn’t leave the client feeling rejected, but instead feeling good about your “no” response. Take a look at this video to see how I tell my clients no by saying yes. ■



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THE MOM  
FACTOR

*WORKING WITH SENIOR MOMS*

with Lori Nordstrom

“The parents  
are the ones paying,  
and most often  
the ones marketing  
for our business.”



BY Lori Nordstrom

We're in the middle of senior season right now, a time that I've learned to love more and more each year. Over the years I've also learned that while I want our seniors to have a great time and be happy with the choice they made to work with me, it's even more important to me to have moms on board. The parents are the ones paying, and most often the ones marketing for our business.

Working with Mom starts with the first phone call. I want to find out as much as I can about her and her precious one. It doesn't matter how old they are, moms love to talk about their kids! I ask lots of questions and write things down as we chat the first time. I want to find out what her senior is into, what her personality is like, what she does for fun, what she is most excited about for senior year, and all of the other details Mom will share with me. I take notes that I'll refer to throughout the process.

Recently I've noticed moms showing hesitation on price because the seniors are all photographing each other. Of course everyone is a "photographer" these days, so I wanted to come up with a way to convey that what we do is different.





## WORKING WITH SENIOR MOMS

Now, if a mom mentions friends or a teacher or another mom who's doing photos, I'll tell her, "Being picture happy is going to be a fun part of Madison's entire senior year! She'll be able to post those pictures on Facebook and share them with her friends. But what I want to do is create something really special for you, something that you will enjoy every single day after Madison goes off to college."

Then I'll bring up something from my notes: "I want to make sure we really show off Madison's personality in her images, and I love that she's so into writing! Have her bring a journal and her favorite pens, and we'll capture some images of her writing. Does she usually write in a certain place, or is there any kind of ritual she goes through before writing?" I then use those cues and tie as many personal things into the images as I can.

I also start planting seeds for certain products: "Madison is going to love our senior albums. We really work to personalize them, and I'd love to scan one of her favorite poems or stories to incorporate into her book." All of these things lead Mom further into becoming invested and taking ownership in the process, getting her excited about our products.

Two of my own children are in their twenties, and I know that no matter how old they are, it's always nice to hear a compliment about your kids. At shoots, I talk to moms during clothing changes and while walking to a new location. I want her to feel very involved in the process. I talk to Mom about the kind of person her child is: "Madison seems to have such a good head on her shoulders! I'm really impressed that she has such a determined plan for her future." Many moms tell us what a great time they had at the shoot, that it will be a day spent with her daughter or son that they will always remember. When you can add that kind of value, clients aren't worried about price anymore!

I want to communicate what I'm seeing during the session, and then the next step is to write Mom a handwritten note after the session. In it I mention again something positive about the senior. I might mention the interaction I noticed between Mom and child. I love looking at family dynamics, and learning to voice the things you see can be very powerful. Start by looking for just one thing to talk about after each session. It will get easier each time you do it. When moms become invested in the process and invested in you as the photographer, the sales process is fun and enjoyable. You're no longer selling—you're helping people get what they want.

## WORKING WITH SENIOR MOMS

Moms are great marketers for the studio. They're much more likely to send in business than the senior is. The senior may show off her images to friends, but Mom is the one who is going to gush to other moms about the great experience and about how it's worth every penny. She's going to remember how you made her feel and how you made her daughter feel when she looks at the pictures.

When we can communicate what we see in our subjects, those feelings are going to be a part of those images every single time our clients look at them. Pretty powerful stuff when you stop to think about it.

**Build value at each step when you're working with high school seniors' moms.**

1. The first phone call
2. The consultation call
3. During the session
4. With a handwritten note
5. During the order appointment.
6. Follow up

**Make a game plan and answer these questions about your business:**

- > What little things can you do to make the experience a win-win for both Mom and the senior?
- > What products will work best for your high school seniors? How can you promote those products as a win for your client?
- > What can you do to ensure that both Mom and senior will want to talk about what you do and share your business?
- > What items will you put in Mom's hands to equip her to share your business?
- > How will you reward them? ■

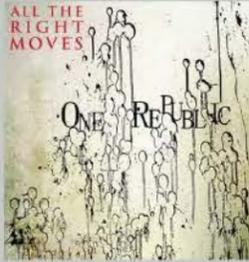


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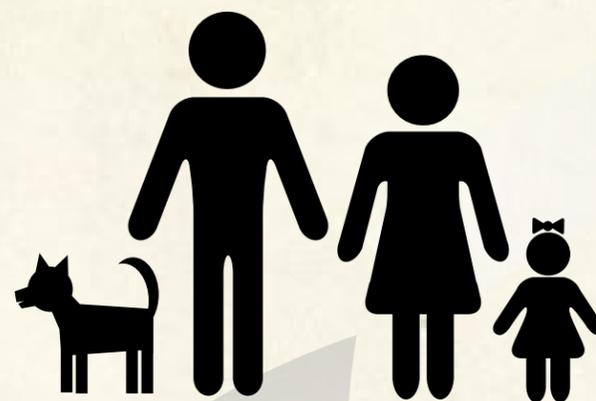
   
 


info@songfreedom.com

# BENEFITS OF A LITTLE DIVERSITY

BY SKIP COHEN



BY SKIP COHEN



Our industry is constantly changing. The economy, technology, social media, and consumer trends create a never-ending stream of reasons photographers have to stay on their toes. With all the changes and the almost daily paradigm shifts, I'm convinced you've got to be diverse in your photographic skill set to maintain a strong business model and revenue stream.

There's a lot of discussion and disagreement on this topic, especially when somebody throws out the idea of expanding your business to make you more than a one-click pony. There's nothing wrong with being a good solid wedding photographer, for example, and I'm not suggesting you stray far from your core expertise. However, if you did a great job at the wedding, then why wouldn't you want to be there when the first baby is born?

As a family grows, so does its need for photography. Kids change the dynamics of a couple, making them a family. Families get pets. Kids grow up, become students, and then seniors. Seniors get older, get engaged, and the cycle starts all over again.

During this cycle, there are nonstop photographic needs. The parents might have a business with needs ranging from product shots to head shots. Houses will be bought and sold, and with each sale comes the need for property images. Throughout the family's growth, there will be anniversaries, special events, and milestone birthdays.

Diversity applies to all specialties, but wedding photography makes a great example.

Recall the hierarchy of why people hire a photographer in the portrait/social categories. It goes brides, babies, and pets, in that order. That's the "Big Three," and I don't believe it's changed in the 20 years since Kodak first did the survey. While there's no new data that I've seen, I'm convinced that in fourth through seventh place are children, seniors, family, and boudoir.

So, let's take a good solid wedding photographer in an average community in a small to midsize city anywhere in America. You did a great job at the wedding and developed a great relationship with the client. What are the steps in diversity I'm suggesting you consider?

**As a family grows,  
so does its need for photography.**

**Kids** change the dynamics of a couple,  
*making them a family.*

Families get pets,

**Kids grow up,  
become students, & then seniors.**

Seniors get older, get engaged,  
*& the cycle starts all over again.*



## ANNIVERSARY PORTRAITS

It's actually an idea that David Ziser talked about years ago. On a bridal client's first anniversary, he talked about contacting the couple. Here's the way I'd approach the client:

"I can't believe it's been a year since you guys were married. What a wonderful wedding. I so appreciated having the opportunity to be with you and meet your family. And since it's your anniversary, I'd like to come by and give you a gift of an anniversary sitting."

Now, think about the impact that call would have on a recently married couple! Remember, the younger the bride, the more friends she has who are going to be married in the coming years. This is a word-of-mouth business, and news that a bride is excited about is going to be shared with all of her friends.

So, one ideal addition to your skill set is on-location portrait shooting.

On the commercial side, the legendary Dean Collins used to take the same approach at holiday time. He'd contact the president of any company whose annual report he had photographed during the year and offer to do a holiday portrait of his or her family. It was simply a complimentary show of appreciation for the company's business.

*You don't have to shoot everything  
that comes through your door;  
just don't ever say  
"No, I don't do that kind of photography."*

**YOUR GOAL is to always give  
potential clients a solution,  
even if it's not something you're going to do yourself.**

## COUPLES START FAMILIES

For the next step in expanding your skill set, let's talk about baby and family photography.

There's some amazing data I read years ago suggesting that around 90 percent of brides age 25 to 30 started families within two to four years of their wedding. Think about your clients and that typical life cycle.

Jonathan Canlas, a wedding and family photographer out of Utah, reminds every couple whose wedding he photographs to call him when the contractions are a couple minutes apart, and he'll be at the hospital. He stays in touch with all his bridal clients for all their photographic needs.

The next step in diversity...

Do you know what you're doing when you've got a baby in front of your lens? Great baby portraits, especially those of newborns, are in a specialty class all by themselves. Not everyone's cut out to photograph babies. If you hate the idea of working with new moms and babies, don't worry about it, but don't miss the opportunity to keep being a part of each client's life. Find another photographer whose work you admire, and team up for referrals.

You don't have to shoot everything that comes through your door; just don't ever say "No, I don't do that kind of photography." Your goal is to always give potential clients a solution, even if it's not something you're going to do yourself.

The better answer is to say, "Sorry, I don't do that kind of photography, but I've got an associate who does, and I'll introduce you." You're turning down the job, but giving them a solution.

## BABIES BECOME KIDS . . .

## KIDS MAKE FAMILIES . . .

## FAMILIES GET PETS

There's a logical connection between the stages that define a family's development. So, why shouldn't a photographer build a relationship with a family in the same way a doctor or dentist does, often over several generations?

Again, I'm not suggesting you become a pet photographer if you hate pets, or children's photographer if you hate kids. However, the challenge in a tough economy is being able to provide as many solutions as possible for every client's needs. I don't want to see you turning down business just because you didn't know how to do something.

## BENEFITS OF DIVERSITY

Let's go one step further in an explanation for why I'm so optimistic about the potential growth of every photographer's business with a little diversity. A little Googling provides these revealing tidbits:

- There are approximately 2 million weddings a year, and the number has remained pretty stable.
- The birth rate in the U.S. may have hit an all-time low in 2011, but there were still 4 million babies born.
- In 2012 there were 49.8 million children expected to attend public elementary and secondary schools, and another 5.3 million in private schools.
- In 2012 there were almost 15 million kids in grades 9 through 12.
- There were approximately 3.4 million kids in the class of 2013.
- Six out of every 10 American families have a pet.
- Americans spent \$41 billion on pets last year.
- Americans own an estimated 165 million dogs and cats.

Yeah, I'm optimistic about business this year, but it won't happen by itself. Business is out there, but you have to work to find it. In fact, for the past few years, whenever photographers have told me they're having a pretty good year, they always add, "But I've never worked so damn hard in my life!"

Diversity can help you even out the peaks and valleys in your business, but you can't just decide you want to say yes to any assignment that comes your way. You've got to make sure you have the skill set to deliver images that exceed each client's expectations. You've got to be so good that your clients are excited each time they see you with a camera in your hands.



# Print & Flash Wood Boxes

Inspired by... **twin lens**  
artful documentary



Craig Fritz and Kitty Clark Fritz of Twin Lens are known for their uncanny ability to capture emotions ranging from joyful to somber and from subtle to overwhelming, they work unobtrusively without interrupting the beauty of real life as it unfolds. They spend much of the year photographing destination weddings throughout the U.S. and beyond.

Inspiration from our amazing customers drives us to keep developing the best possible products we can! Twin Lens approached us seeking a way to deliver pro grade select prints and flash to clients in custom wood boxes - that inspired us to develop a whole new product line!

Photoflashdrive.com helps pro photographers deliver their digital images beautifully while marketing their studios. Our Pro-quality USB flash drives & unique beautiful packaging can be customized with your logo or design at *no additional charge, no minimum order quantity or set up fees!*

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SALCINCOTTA

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

LOCATION: O'Fallon, IL

PASSION: Weddings &amp; 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

Whats In The Bag  
Q&A with Sal Cincotta





**ROBADAMS**

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

LOCATION: Freehold, New Jersey

PASSION: Weddings

“Wedding films are my life. It’s all about the the story-telling. The art of seeing action, drama and beauty unfold and then harnessing the emotion of it all and the making it come to life on screen...that’s why I do this.”

Rob Adams began his video career in television over 15 years ago. Four years after that he merged into the wedding industry and eventually started his own business in 2006. Recently, Rob filmed and directed his first full-length feature film that was premiered at Robert DeNiro’s personal screening room in New York City.

Because Rob is on the cutting edge of the DSLR video revolution, his business has grown rapidly over the past few years and his passion for finding new creative ventures in the field has as well. His main goal, along with making sure that every product that leaves his studio is amazing, is to teach other wedding film-makers how to bring their work to the next level. Speaking around the world at venues such as creativeLIVE, WPPI, Imaging USA and more, he wants to see each and every film-maker learn about the little things that make filming and editing go from “good” to “the best in your market.”

FEATURED ARTICLES

Shooting the Ceremony



## PHILLIPBLUME

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

LOCATION: Athens, GA

PASSION: Weddings

TaylorPhillip and Eileen Blume exemplify a new generation of innovative, socially conscious wedding photographers. They not only push boundaries to create unforgettable imagery, but also draw on a diverse skill set to address poverty and impact the world for real change. Since opening Blume Photography in 2009, the pair has grown the home-based business into a successful boutique studio, photographing clients in New York, London, Manila, Antigua and beyond. In 2011, they released their first feature documentary film, Lost Boys of Paradise, which screened across the United States to raise awareness about children fighting to survive in Guatemala's post-civil war slums. By implementing sound business principles and catering to a select number of wedding clients, Phillip and Eileen strike a balance that affords them time and resources to invest in what they value most – parenting their two young daughters, involvement in their community, and personal projects. As educators, the duo accepts invitations to speak to students and photographers about the art and business of photography. They have appeared at WPPI in Las Vegas and, in early 2014, will premiere their new studio space in Athens, GA, as well as their workshops for photographers.

### FEATURED ARTICLES

Change The World



## CONTRIBUTORS



## 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

Benefits of Diversity



## 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

Shooting For "Friendors"



## CONTRIBUTORS



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  
Dealing with Difficult Clients



## KRISTINKORPOS

[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

Same-Sex Weddings: Part 2





## 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

Working with Seniot Moms





## BLAIR PHILLIPS

[www.BlairPhillipsPhotography.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

Seniors: DIY Sets



CONTRIBUTORS



## KRISTINA SHERK

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

**LOCATION:** North Bethesda

**PASSION:**  
Photoshop

Great photo retouchers are ghost artists. The viewer rarely has any idea the amount of work that goes into making a picture after the photographer has clicked the shutter. And that is way it's supposed to be.

Kristina studied digital art and photography at Elon University in North Carolina and then interned and assisted for DC-based photographer John Harrington where she learned the business behind the art. Since she was a photographer before she started retouching nine years ago, not only does she understand her role as a retoucher, but she also understands the aim and vision of the photographers she works with (in other words; 'she speaks camera'). She also makes certain always to stay within their photography style. Her clients hail from all over the world and include National Public Radio, Sports Illustrated, Time, Inc., XM Satellite Radio, onOne Software, Cotton Inc. and Hasselblad USA.

### FEATURED ARTICLE

Selective Color





## LAURIN THIENES

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

LOCATION: Portland, Oregon

PASSION:  
Weddings & Engagements

Laurin Thienes was 17 when he photographed his first wedding – 20 rolls of Porta400VC. Never looking back he went on to study photography with some of the most well-known photography studios in Oregon as well as leaving the state to study still photography at Brooks Institute in Santa Barbara, CA. Upon returning to Portland, Laurin was the studio manager of Holland Studios, a high-end, high volume wedding photography studio photographing over 250 weddings per year. After his departure from Holland Studios, he has continued to work as a contract and freelance photographer, having work published in *Grace Ormond*, *Men's Style*, and *Rangefinder*. Most recently, Laurin is the co-founder of Evolve, a premier wedding and portrait post-production service in Portland, OR. Outside of photography, Laurin also likes to cook, travel, and spend time with his wife and young daughter.

### FEATURED ARTICLE

When Life Gets in the Way



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**SEPTEMBER  
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