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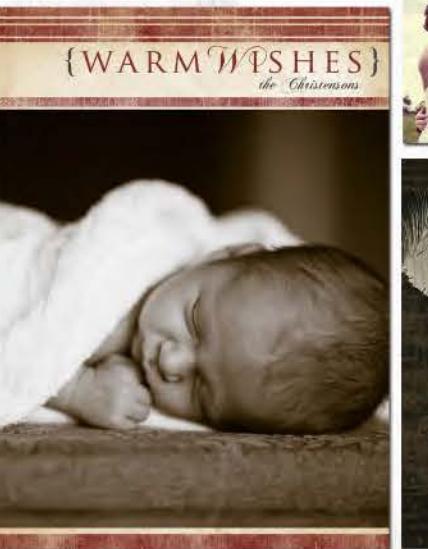
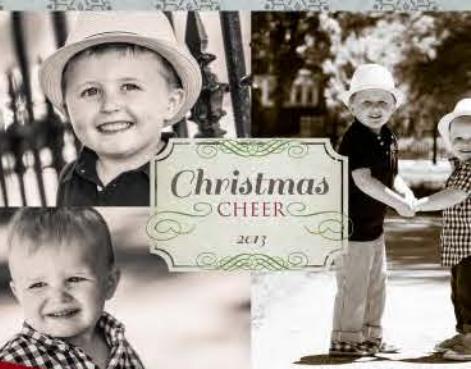
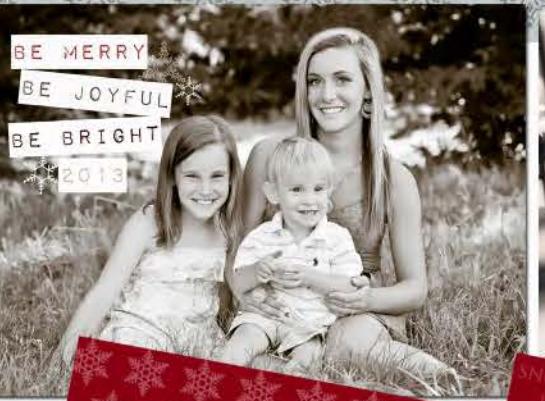
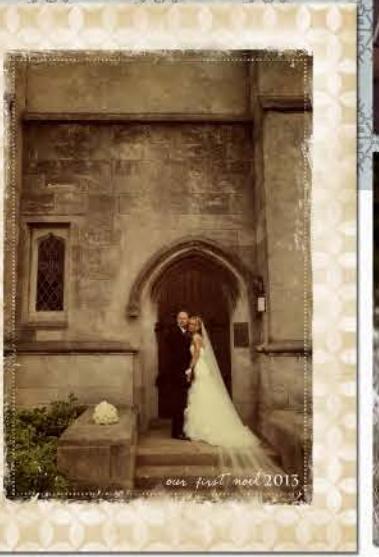
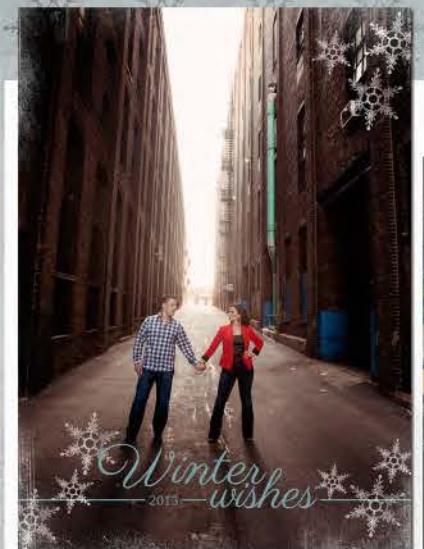
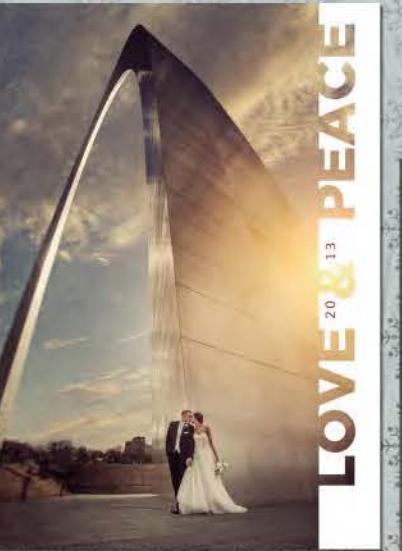
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S C O N V I T E N T S



PART ONE **FINDING SUCCESS** DOESN'T HAVE TO BE HARD

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THE LIGHT YOU WANT

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INSPIRATIONS

From Readers

Design: Jenny Grumblng
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PROJECTIONS



with Lori Nordstrom





BY Lori Nordstrom

It's that time of year. I really can't believe that 2013 is almost over and it's time to plan for 2014. It feels like I was just planning for 2013 and getting my projections on paper for the year!

Planning for the year to come has many advantages. Statistics show that those who plan ahead financially are more than twice as likely to see those plans come to fruition.

What are your financial goals for 2014? Many photographers go into the year with no plan at all. Sessions are scheduled randomly and pricing is guessed at. Set aside some time to think about 2014 and what you would like to earn, and work through the following steps to write out your financial projections for 2014.

STEP1

Let's start planning for your portrait business. First, think about how much you want to earn (owner's compensation + net profit). This often means asking yourself, "What would it take for me to quit my full-time job?" Or, "What is the number that my husband/family needs to see to make what I'm doing worthwhile?" Or even thinking about how many hours you put in each week and how much you want to make per hour. What are the things that are important to you, and how can your photography business help you get there?

Write down that magic number.



2014 SESSION PROJECTIONS

PROJECTIONS

PRODUCT LINE	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
BABY PLAN									STEP 2			
# Of New Clients												
# Of Repeat Clients												
Total Spent												
CHILDREN									I want to make _____ in 2014 (Owner's Compensation + Net Profit).			
# Of New Clients									(home studio) x 2.5 OR (retail location) x 3			
# Of Repeat Clients									= Gross Revenue Needed to Reach My Goals			
Total Spent												
FAMILY									STEP 3			
# Of New Clients												
# Of Repeat Clients												
Total Spent												
SENIORS									Gross Revenue =			
# Of New Clients									Divided by Number of Sessions =			
# Of Repeat Clients									Session Average =			
Total Spent												
WEDDING									Imagine you want to make \$40,000 in profit. (Most people are able to do photography full time at this profit point.) To reach that goal, you're going to need to bring in about \$100,000 for a home-based studio. This takes into account your cost of sales, general expenses, taxes and so on. If you've decided you can do 100 sessions over the year (seven to nine sessions each month), you'll need each session to average \$1,000.			
# Of New Clients												
# Of Repeat Clients												
Total Spent												
EVENTS									Example:			
# Of New Clients									\$100,000 goal for \$40,000 profit			
# Of Repeat Clients									100 sessions/year = approx. 7 to 9 sessions per month			
Total Spent									100 sessions @ \$1,000 average will reach my goal of \$100,000			
OTHER												
# Of New Clients									\$100,000 goal			
# Of Repeat Clients									25 weddings per year			
Total Spent									=\$4,000 average per wedding			

PROJECTIONS

Here's what I do every year. I sit down and go through each month of the year and determine how many of each type of session I'll be doing and what each of those sessions needs to average. This is called a projections calendar. It's a working calendar, meaning it's going to be readjusted as the year goes on. But I want to set goals and start with the end in mind. By doing this in advance, I can also put my marketing calendar together for the year and strategically plan when I will be marketing and networking in order to bring in the number of sessions that I have planned.

Once you've planned out how much your sessions need to average, it's much easier to plan your pricing. How will you reach those session average goals? How will you lead clients through the process so they are comfortably spending what you need them to spend to reach your average? Think about structuring your product menu so that clients see the most value exactly where you want them to spend.

Start the new year right with some planning. Sit down alone in a cozy place. Turn off all distractions and think about making 2014 your best year yet! ■

Follow along in this Projection Consultation video, in which I work with Aaron to put his projections for 2014 on paper.



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RETOUCHING

PHOTOGRAPHY

WITH DAMIAN BATTINELLI



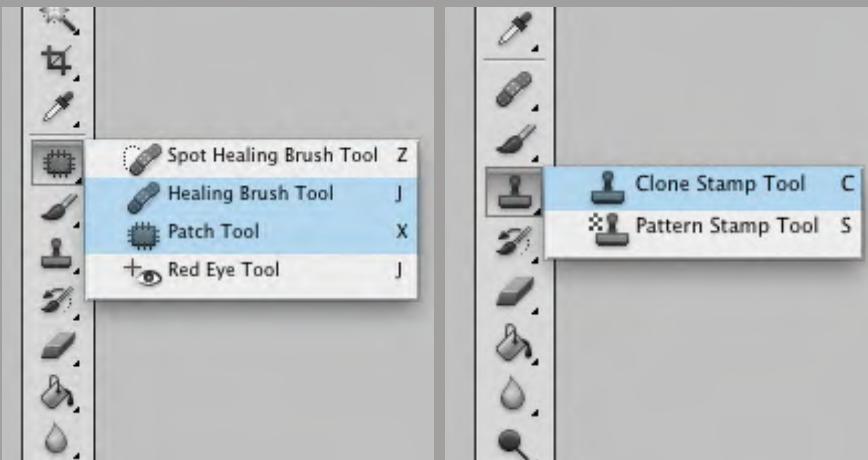
BY DAMIAN BATTINELLI

In our industry, some degree of retouching is expected. Subtle retouching can have a very pleasing result for the client (key word being *subtle*). In October I wrote about retouching stray hairs. In this article, I tackle skin and eye retouching. I'm going to show you how to subtly retouch skin in a way that's not distracting or unrealistic. I'll also show you some techniques for retouching eyes and adding a slight pop.

Retouching has been quite the hot topic lately. Recently, Lady Gaga was up in arms over her image on the cover of *Glamour*. In my opinion, retouching isn't really the issue—irresponsible *over-retouching* is.

What exactly is considered over-retouching? In my view, it's anytime a body or face is manipulated to seem drastically thinner. When skin is so smooth you can't see its natural texture. When shadows in and around the eyes are completely removed, causing eyes to fall flat instead of looking spherical. When hair is so badly retouched it looks like a helmet. Editors for years have literally painted a picture of what "perfection" is.

1 I always begin with the skin. The tools I use for skin retouching are the Healing Brush, Patch and Clone Stamp.



© All Images Damian Battinelli



I start with the Healing Brush, which samples the neighboring texture that you'll be selecting, and replaces the area with the exact texture. Hover over the skin you want to sample from. While pressing Alt, click on the skin. Move your cursor over the blemish and brush over it. The sampled skin replaces the blemish with all its texture intact. Continue around the face until you've cleared the blemishes.

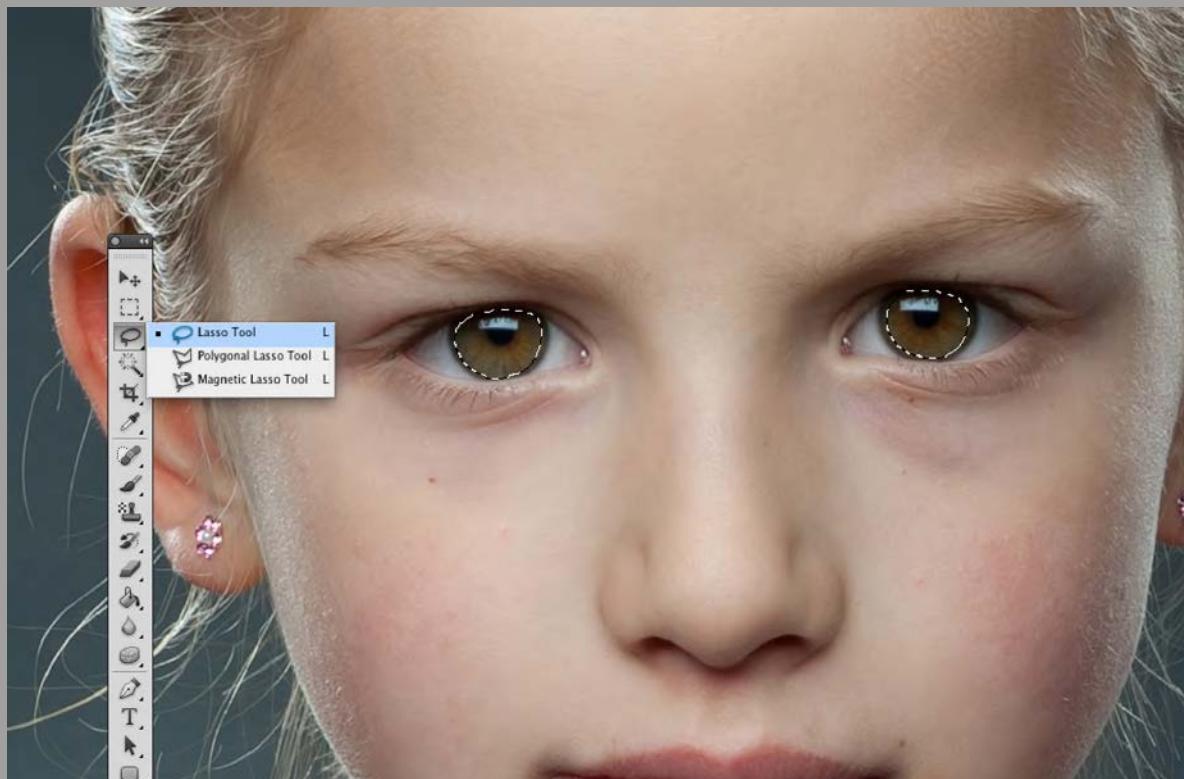
To fix larger blemishes like red swelling, try the Patch tool. Circle the entire red area and release. Move the selection to a local area that is blemish-free, and let go. PhotoShop does a great job of replacing this area. You may have to repeat this a few times to completely clean the area. Be careful to not come too close to non-skin areas. This tool samples pixels in a certain radius, and can pull an unwanted area into your selection.

When it comes to editing eyes, I have a bit of a pet peeve. Eyeballs are spherical, so they create shadows. They're also recessed in the cranial orbit (eye socket). Darkness under the eyes, to a certain extent, is natural, but conditions like fatigue and allergies can make it worse. My peeve is when the dark areas are completely removed so the eye looks flat and loses its natural spherical shape. Remember, the goal is subtle retouching.

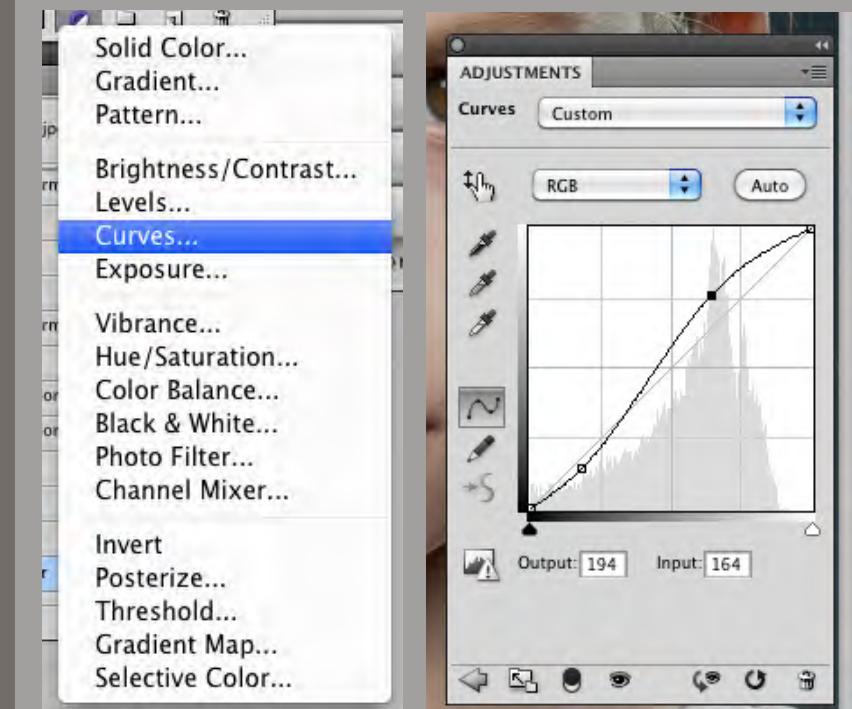
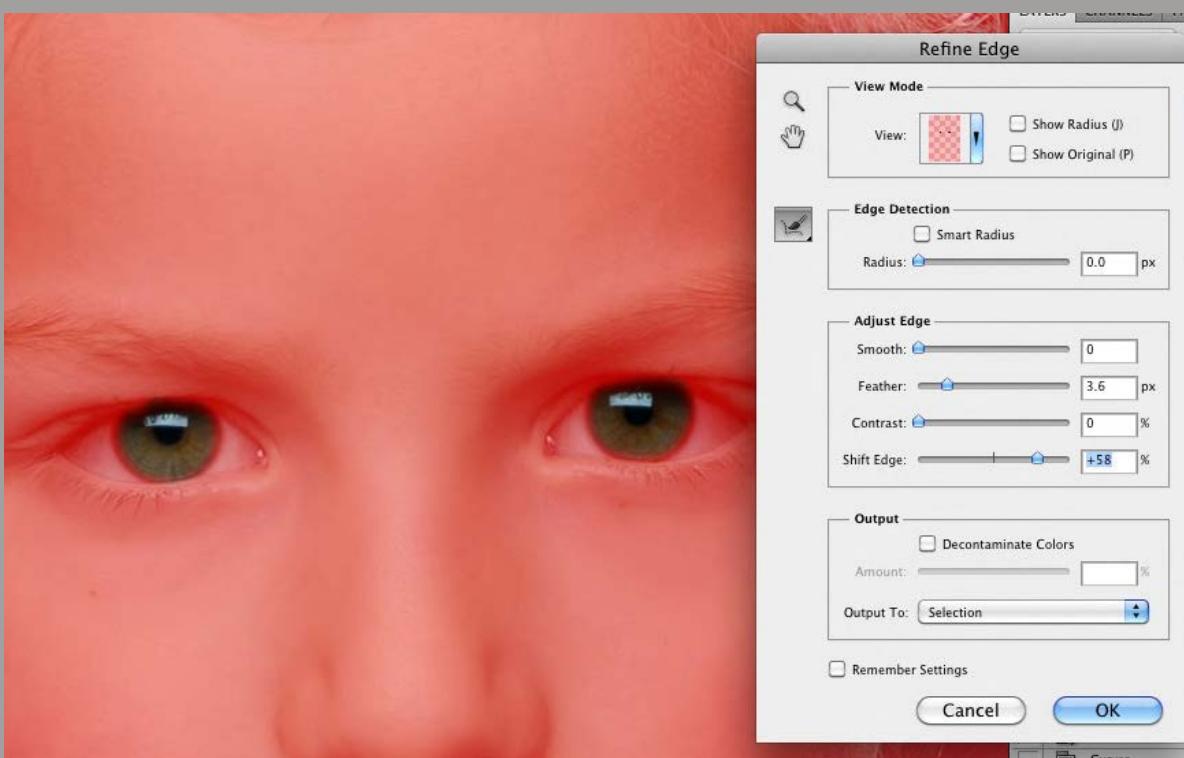
There are a few ways to edit eyes. I use the Lasso tool while editing the eyeballs and the Clone Stamp to take care of dark skin under the eyes.



Select the Lasso tool and encircle the iris just inside the edges to create a selection.



Hold Shift to add the other selection of the second eye. With the two irises selected, go to Menu > Select > Refine Edge. I like to use Overlay view. Use your sliders under Adjust Edge for this. Slide your Feather slider to the right for a nice soft edge. Then move your Shift Edge slider to the right until the feathered edge comes close to the edge of the iris. You'll be able to watch as this happens. Pay close attention so you don't go too far and end up outside the iris. Press OK.

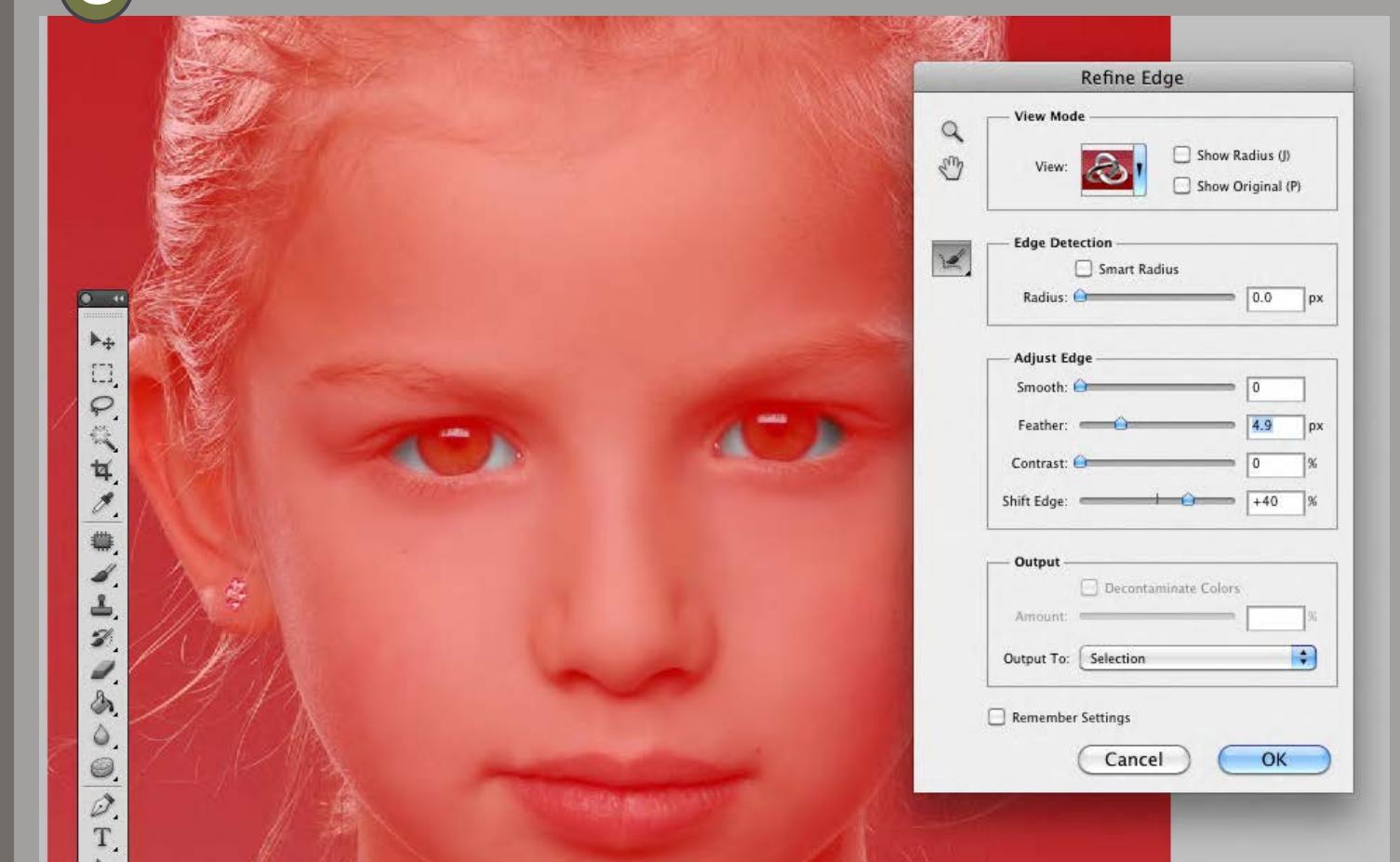


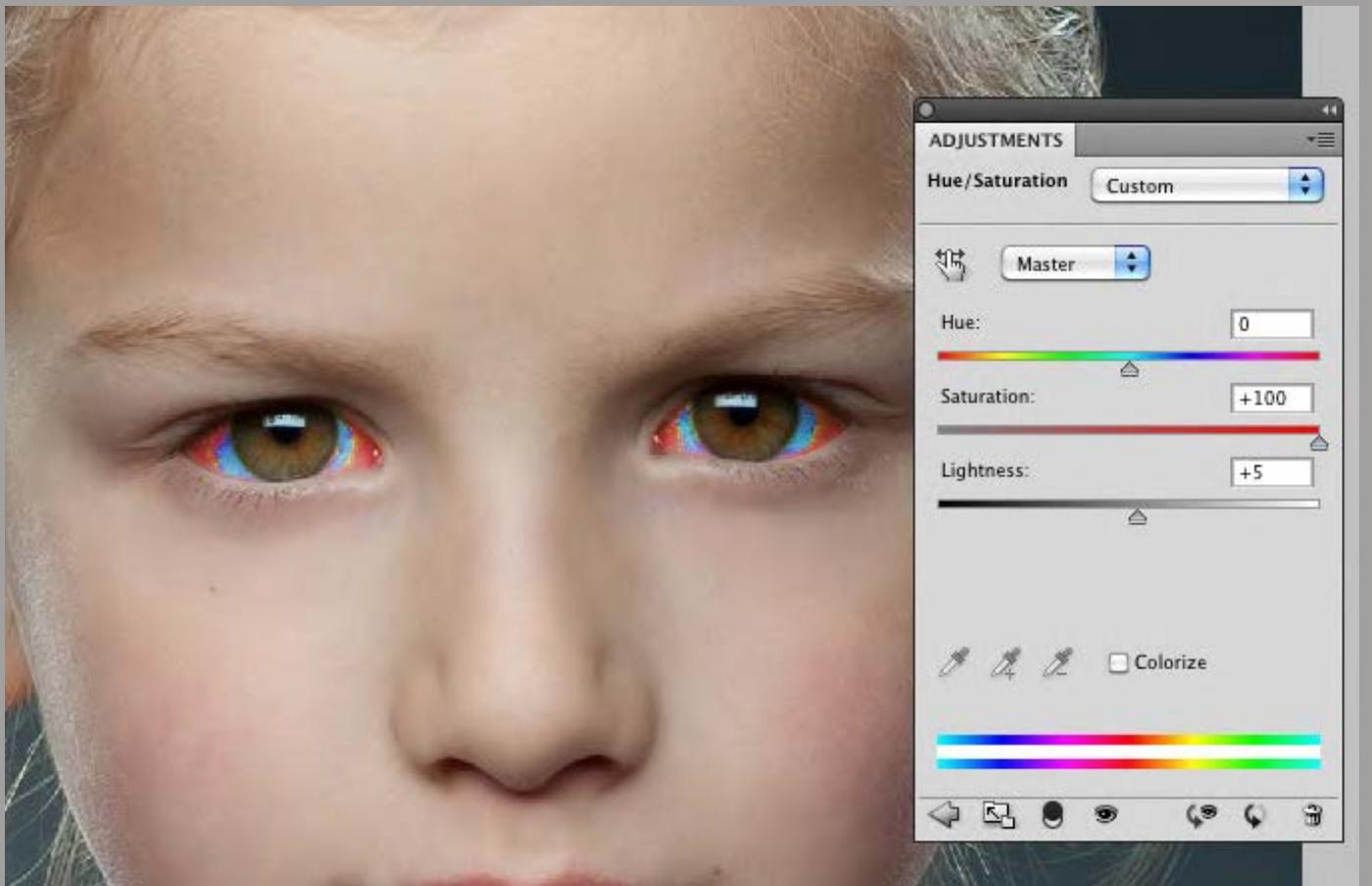
At the bottom of your Layers panel, select the New Layer Adjustment button and select Curves.

You'll now have the ability to change the tonal values of the irises in a nondestructive manner. The lower left is your black point and the upper right is your white point and all remaining tones in between. By grabbing the line and pulling, you'll notice the line bend. Pull the lower left part of the line diagonally right, and you'll see the dark tones get darker. Pulling the upper part of the line diagonally left increases the highlights.

To get a nice pop in the eyes, brighten the highlights more than you darken them. Be careful, because this technique increases saturation. You may want to add a Hue/Saturation layer adjustment afterwards to decrease the overall saturation.

3 The next step is to retouch the whites of the eyes. Use the same Lasso technique to select the whites.

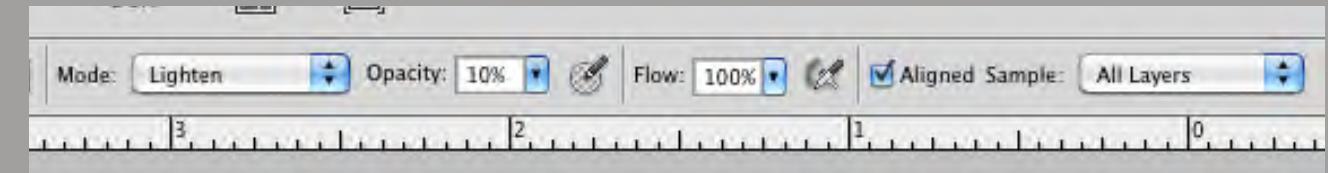




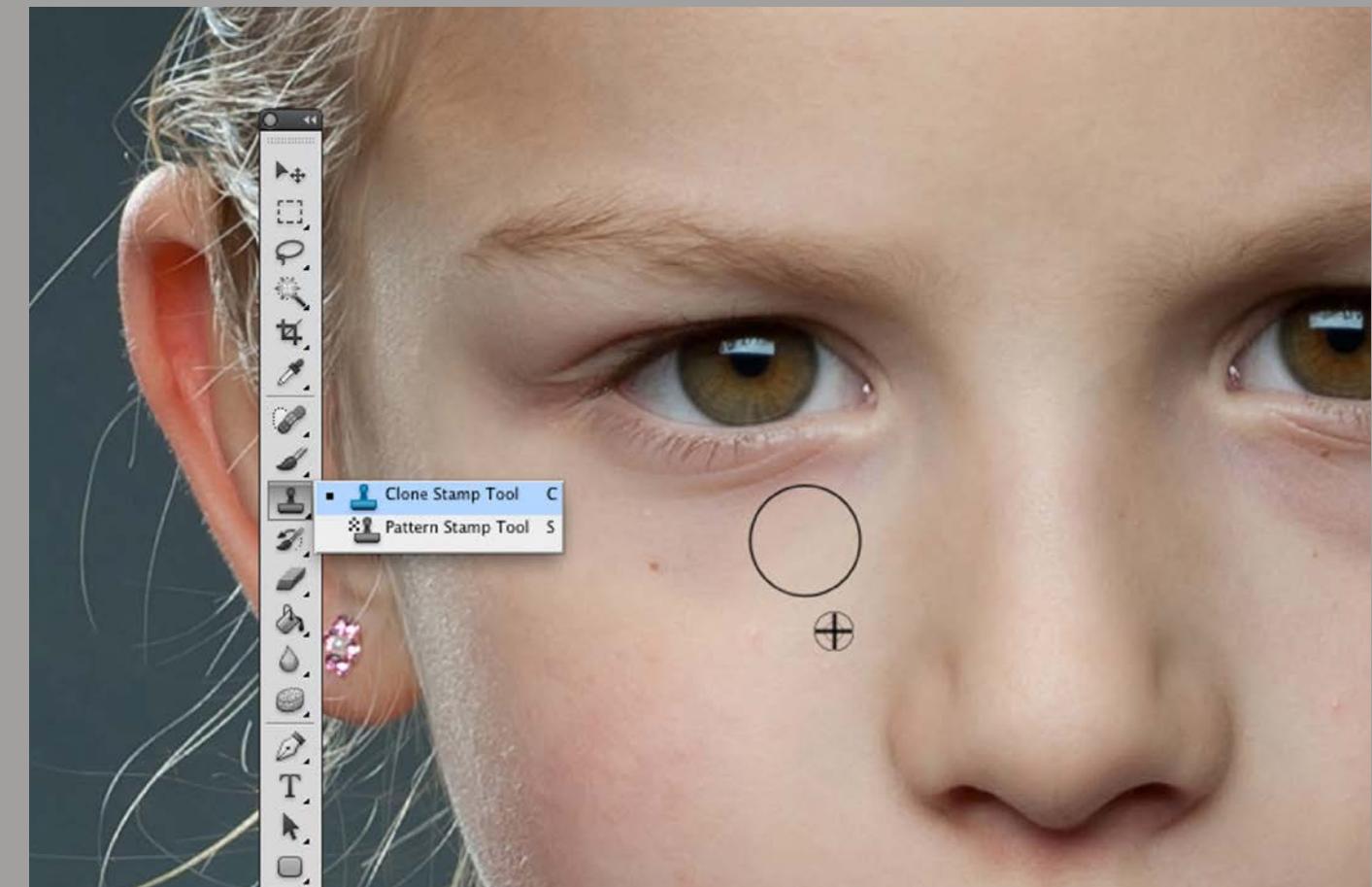
This time, add a Hue/Saturation layer adjustment to the selection. In the second drop-down menu, select Red and pull the saturation slider to the left to decrease the redness subtly, and the same for Yellow if needed.

4

Now it's time to diminish the dark areas under the eyes. For this, use the Clone Stamp tool. Change the mode to Lighten. Reduce the opacity anywhere from 5 to 10 percent, and make sure you're sampling All Layers.



Using an appropriately sized soft brush, hold Alt and select a clean area with similar texture. Start brushing over the dark areas, and you'll notice they start to lighten.



If you push it too far, the whites will end up unnaturally gray, so pay close attention. If the whites need a bit of brightening, change the menu selection to Master and move the Lightness slider to the right slightly. Because you've made a layer adjustment, you can fine-tune it all by selecting the mask it created in your Layers panel and brushing in white or black.

Don't go too far and completely remove them. Remember, they're natural and they show dimension. Less is more. This technique can also help with red areas, which are common in the cheeks.

With these techniques, you can create a very nice, subtle retouch. Zooming out occasionally will help you get a better feel for your overall progress. Now, go put these techniques to good use and stop over-retouching.

PHOTOSHOP

Here's the before and after of the headshot with the skin retouching:



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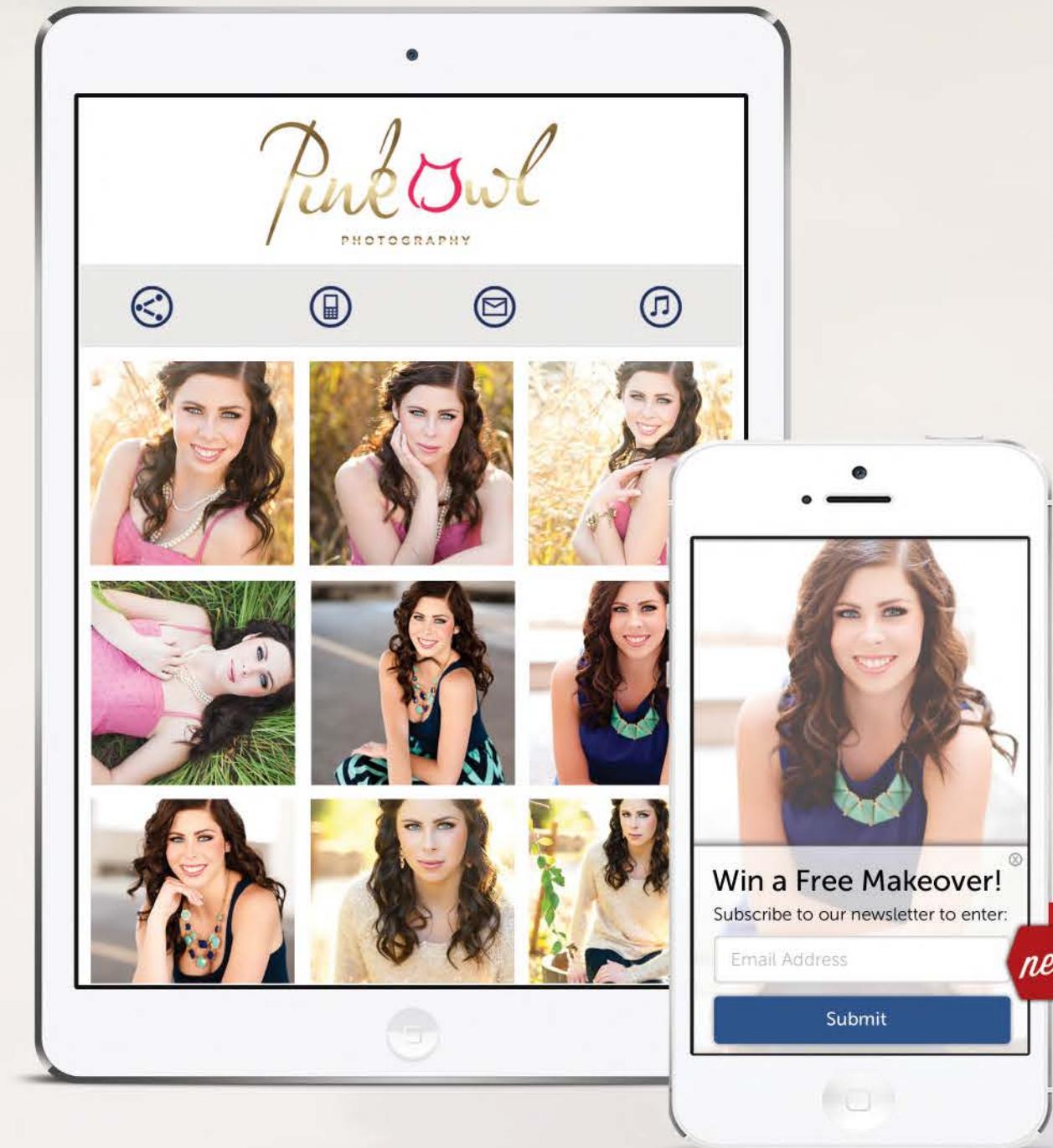
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Kim Ortiz
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PART ONE

FINDING SUCCESS

DOESN'T HAVE TO
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WITH SAL CINCOTTA



FINDING SUCCESS

BY Sal Cincotta



Being a professional photographer is a dream for a lot of us. I think it represents hope. Hope that there is something beyond that desk job. I know I for one had that hope for many years as I dreamed of becoming a professional photographer. What drove me was my love and passion for photography. I still remember those days. Every waking moment was spent reading, learning, practicing and dreaming of the day I would be on my own to chase my dreams. Even when I should have been working at my real job, I was playing photographer on the side.

One day I punched out and left that corporate job. I have never looked back. And make no mistake, there is not a day that goes by I don't realize and appreciate how very lucky I am to have a successful studio in this world of "everyone is a photographer." I have heard many of you cry, "You don't understand, Sal, no one wants to spend money in my market." "We live in a depressed part of the country." "People don't appreciate photography where I am from." "Everyone is a photographer!" And on and on and on. All excuses.

This month, I want to share with you the success of others. I want to reinstall hope. I want you to see that others who have embraced our strategies have found success in their market, and not only changed their business, but transformed their life. Success can be yours. You just have to want it more than you want anything else.

Here are their stories, as told to the Shutter staff.





www.HOLLYIRELAND.com

When I first met Holly and her husband, Bruce, they had done 17 weddings with an average booking of \$2,500 each. They were doing 50 to 60 family shoots running an average \$350 each. They were basically running shoot-and-burn sessions. Another part of their business is dance studios generating \$6,000 to \$10,000 a year.

What's new for 2014?

We are so excited for 2014! Since mentoring with Sal, we have booked 10 weddings with our new package pricing, averaging over \$5,000 a wedding, doubling last year's averages. And we are moving into the months when we usually book most of the brides for the year.

Our averages for family shoots went way up. I was not meeting with clients after the shoot, just giving them the images. Now with in-person sales, my lowest sale was for \$650 and highest \$2,500. Most spend between \$650 and \$1,250—way more than I thought possible! My dance studios are about the same, but what has changed with those is how I market to those families.

All the new branding and marketing materials helped with packaging the dance photos. This holiday season, a majority of my new families found us through flyers I packaged with the dance orders.

What are some of the things you took away from training with Sal?

The biggest was meeting clients in person. In-person sales was something I avoided. I didn't think it fit my personality. After seeing Taylor do it, I felt like I could totally do it! I have taken so many classes and workshops from different accomplished photographers who say it works. If I hadn't seen it in person, I probably would never have tried it. When I got back from Sal and Taylor's, I rented an office space and my first family that came in ordered my top package. I was sold.



FINDING SUCCESS

HOLLYIRELANDCONTINUED



What was the biggest challenge you had to overcome?

It was confidence in pricing, for sure. Along with the fact that it's OK to say no. I was discounting clients a lot just to get their business. But when I broke down the hours of how much I was working versus how much I was earning, it just didn't make sense. I was afraid to set my prices high for fear no one would book or order. And on top of that, I was afraid to say no. After changing my packages and pricing, I did lose some repeat clients, but then gained others who value photography. I was actually getting burned out on the family shoots since I was working hard and not making much. Now I love them again. I am making more and outsourcing all my editing. I can enjoy the process and my family more.

Anything else?

Marketing. I was basically operating via word of mouth. But these past six months, we've been advertising in two San Diego wedding magazines, doing the big bridal shows and going to all the bridal networking events we can. Also, Justen Hong of VisualLure.com worked with us on our branding, logo and website. After all the money we have poured into our marketing, we are now seeing the results. I can't say which one is working the most, but they are all working together!

After all the money
we have poured into our marketing,
we are now seeing results.

I can't say which one is working most,
but they are all working together!





www.JEFFANDJEWELS.com

Jeff and Jewels are extremely talented artists. I met them more than two years ago during our first wedding tour on the Denver stop. I hit it off with them from the get-go. Jewels was so hungry and energetic. All she wanted to do was learn and get better. One problem: She was getting in the way of her own success. She and Jeff were overthinking everything. It was your typical analysis paralysis. The biggest mistakes I see small business owners make is operating out of fear. Fear never leads to the right logical decision. I would rather make a decision and fail than make no decision at all. I am happy to report that last year, Jeff and Jewels took a chance, and they succeeded.

What's new for 2014?

(Jewels:) Since discovering Sal and Taylor, we are a completely new business. Basically, we started over. Our pricing now makes sense, and we were able to track sales, averages and totals much better. We streamlined our organization and workflow along with our business model, direction, marketing plan and goals. We both have clearly defined roles and the tools we'd always been looking for to take our business to the next level.

We have simplified the markets we are focusing on to three categories: weddings and engagements, seniors, and glamour and families. Compared to two years ago, the year I found Sal and Taylor, our number of wedding bookings are still where they were, but we're making more, as our package prices have increased. Post-shoot sales averages have skyrocketed by 824 percent! Overall, our average spent per wedding client is up almost 20 percent. Since we are doing more portrait sessions as well, our bottom line has increased by 36 percent.

We also went from pretty much nonexistent on Google to the top half of page one for the searches "denver wedding photography" and "denver wedding photographer." We have gotten featured in print for the first time for a stylized shoot, and have been published online more times than I can count.

We are working on our scalability plan, and have hired our accountant full-time. Getting an intern or assistant in the office and for shoots is next on the list, along with trying to figure out a way to get our business out of our home.

Looking toward 2014, we have a clear marketing plan and are ahead on bookings for this time of year. Our sales average is up 5 percent already from 2013. Our new website, VisualLure.com, is getting close to launch, and we have a very good feeling that we'll finally reach our goals. We have both become better photographers, business owners and business partners.





**Nothing worth doing is ever easy,
and you'll never make anything happen
unless you take a risk.**

What was the biggest thing you took away from training with Sal?

Of course it's hard to pinpoint just one, but what immediately comes to mind is seeing them in action in the sales room. One thing I had always hated was feeling like I was being a pushy salesman. I hate it when people do that to me, so the last thing I wanted was to be that. Going into it with the mindset that you're the "trusted advisor" and that you're just walking them through your packages and showing them the features of each item made sense. I then had the confidence to pull it off. That translated into how we do booking meetings and consultations, along with my mindset at bridal shows. Those are all Jeff's "no-fly zones" [laughs].



©Jeff & Jewels Photography

What was the biggest challenge you had to overcome?

There have been many challenges. The biggest one for me personally was to not be so competitive. I used to get so worked up when potential clients would choose another photographer—I hated the rejection, and I let it put me into a funk. Now, we understand that not everyone is "our client." Again, it applies to my mindset at bridal shows—I can tell pretty quickly if someone isn't a good match for us. Understanding that there's plenty of work out there for all of us has helped with this; we just need to figure out how to get a bigger piece of the pie.

Anything else?

Just. Do. It. Life is too short! Don't be afraid to be yourself. Nothing worth doing is ever easy, and you'll never make anything happen unless you take a risk. Practice, practice, practice, and sleep when you're dead! I wish Sal and Taylor and creativeLIVE were around when we started our business so we could have done it right from the beginning!



WWW.PHOTOSBYRACHELLE.COM

Rachelle is one of those people you just never forget. She is an absolute sweetheart with a heart of gold, that person you just have to cheer for. When I first met her, she was a full-time graphic designer. Her goal was to punch out and run her own studio, but again, the path to quitting that guaranteed payday was not a clear one. She lacked confidence and a plan. I worked closely with Rachelle to hatch a plan. She built up that confidence, and today things are more than looking up.

What's new for 2014?

I'm very excited for 2014, as I am currently a few weddings short of what I booked for the entire year in 2013. My engagement-session sales have increased by four times, and I offer an album that I didn't offer before. My wedding packages have doubled, and I'm now focused on delivering albums and prints to my couples rather than leaving it to them to print from a CD and not even knowing where they are printing it or the quality. I have also expanded and added a line that I just recently launched with dogs. I am a huge dog fan myself, and very excited to have my first booth at the big pet show in April. I'm working on designing more samples and the booth design. I'm applying the tips Sal has shared with me for my weddings and engagements.

What was the biggest thing you took away from training with Sal?

Mentoring one on one with Sal has been huge for me, the best thing I have done for my business. Being able to get help with specific areas and having the best cheerleader ever, along with someone to always keep me on my toes, has pushed me even more. I recently got the opportunity to second-shoot a wedding with Taylor, and loved every second of it. Again, having that one-on-one time was so valuable. I have taken many of their workshops, and all their tips and tricks are so helpful to me. I'm so grateful to have a mentor, and continue to learn from the best in the industry.

Staying INSPIRED

throughout the entire year is a must!

There is so much changing,
so much to continue to learn

no matter what stage you are on.

What was the biggest challenge you had to overcome?

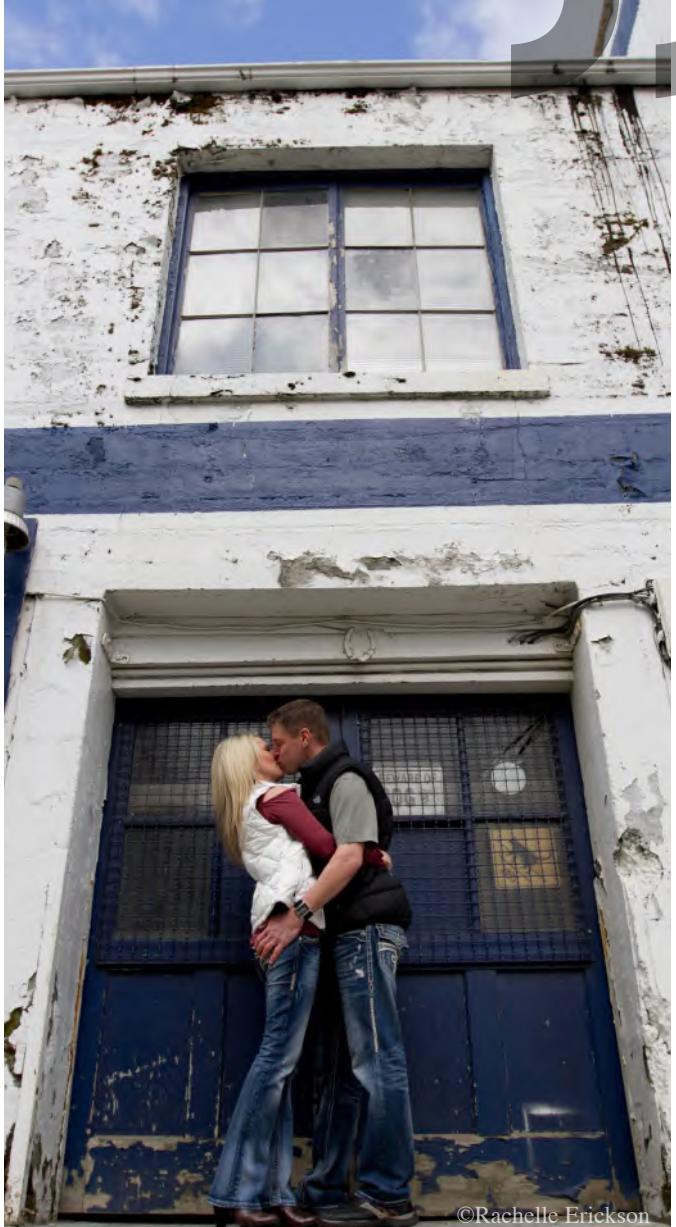
Having years of design and branding background, I sold many packages and didn't even flinch if the client or company had questions about the pricing. I knew right then it wasn't the right client. I knew I was worth it.

Finding my "right client" in photography was different because I was shooting images *thinking* I was making the client happy. Spending time educating the client has been beneficial for me. Making sure they understand the value you are worth and the time you are spending on their session, designing their album, quality wall products, etc. Being patient is key, but that has definitely not been the easiest. Sal always says, "Find your bride." You definitely need to make sure it's the perfect fit. If this means having another photographer there for the big day, then you have to know that it's OK.

Anything else?

Staying inspired throughout the entire year is a must. There is so much changing, so much to continue to learn no matter what stage you are on. I'm looking forward to continuing my growth through creativeLIVE and attending WPPI, and now I'm very excited for ShutterFest in April.

Piece of advice: Never give up! Doing what you love for couples who value what you do couldn't be more rewarding. I'm currently trying to figure out how to bottle up Sal's energy so I can keep going nonstop all year long too. I'll keep working on that one!



©Rachelle Erickson



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Robert
ROBERT
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I met Rob at my Canada workshop this past summer. We also hit it off right away. Rob was so thirsty for knowledge, and I wanted to give him every ounce I had. See, something most people don't realize is that there is no better reward for a teacher than seeing the success of his students. In fact, I have often been chastised for teaching. I've been told, "You are the problem with our industry. You are creating more competition for all of us!" Well, I suppose there is some truth to that. But here is the thing: There is nothing you or I will ever be able to do to stop the influx of new photographers into our industry. That being said, doesn't it make sense that we teach them how to do it right? Doesn't that benefit us all? Look what's going on today. Everyone is a "photographer," and many with that label don't know what they are doing—they're letting clients down, going out of business, giving poor service. That reflects poorly on all of us. We can be part of the problem or part of the solution. I want to be part of the solution.

When I first met Rob, he was in a business partnership, which makes my job harder because it limits your control. Everything has to be decided by committee. This usually results in nothing getting done and a business that just lingers. Unless your partner is bringing something extremely unique to the business, hire employees. You can fire them if they suck.

Rob had four weddings on the books for an average \$1,000 each. No post-wedding sales. No wedding albums. And no growth plan or profits. He was just existing. Today it's a very different story.



What was the biggest thing you took away from training with Sal?

To narrow down the single most important thing is hard. The amount of information that was offered to me at the Vancouver workshop was incredible. I felt like a sponge that wanted to soak up every idea and then apply it as quick as I possibly could. I remember talking to Sal in the hotel lobby for about 15 minutes at the end of the first day, and he was genuinely interested in my business. I think that's what made the difference. For those of you who have been fortunate enough to talk to Sal in person, you know exactly what I'm talking about. Here's a guy with several very successful businesses, he works so hard at everything he does, he's taught a workshop all day long, and yet he still is genuinely interested in what you have to say. It's that part of Sal that I connect with, and it really made everything click for me.

What's new for 2014?

April 2013 was the turning point. I watched Sal for the first time on creativeLIVE, bought the course, learned a ton, managed to convince my wife to fly to Vancouver for one of Sal's workshops. I learned even more, broke away from the partnership, rebranded and renamed my business Robert Roscigno Photography, got a new website and developed a business plan. Now my pricing and packaging are solid, I'm booking work and my life has been changed drastically for the better.

Here's a snapshot of what 2014 has lined up: As of November 12, I have five weddings on the books at an average of \$3,380 each. The last two I am most proud of: Within one week, I booked both weddings in my top package (\$5,500). In addition to the weddings, I have been booking family, newborn and maternity shoots at \$350, with \$200 in post-sales average.

Prior to restructuring my pricing, brand, etc., my weddings were a shameful \$1,000, but now I offer three packages at \$2,500, \$3,500 and \$5,500, and all include an album. My goal for 2014 is 15 weddings at a \$4,500 average and somewhere around 20 to 25 family/newborn/maternity shoots at a \$600 average. I'll start off the year in January with two bridal shows (the first two I've ever done), and I'm so excited to have my sample albums (from scalbums.com) and set up my booth. It's time to go big or go home!

We as photographers capture our clients' memories. We offer them pieces of art that they and their family will treasure. We sometimes are the shoulder for them to lean on. We offer support and build up their confidence. We are their trusted advisor. We see them laugh and we see them cry. We connect with people. It's the foundation of a successful business—and even of life. We connect.

Since the Vancouver workshop in July, my entire demeanor has changed. In the past, it's been really hard, being an Italian from New York, to take the time to connect with clients. Everybody around here wants everything to be done yesterday. It's amazing what a cup of coffee for your client and 15 minutes of your time will do for your business. I may not have 50 weddings for 2014, but the last two clients genuinely appreciated the coffee and the time that I took to hear about their special day. For me, the payoff was huge—not because they both booked my top package, but because I took the time to connect.

What was the biggest challenge you had to overcome?

Pricing and packaging. I was so used to thinking that if I'm doing something that I love to do, then I really don't need to get paid that much for it. I almost felt guilty to charge the little that I did, but then I would feel resentful when it would take me longer than I had anticipated or when the client would ask for something additional. Pricing had never been anything that I spent more than 30 seconds coming up with. It was a huge obstacle that I was afraid of facing. Sal broke everything down step by step, and by the time I left Vancouver, I pretty much had most of the structure complete. I'm not going to lie, it took some time and thought, but it was so worth it! The confidence that comes from having it all in place is priceless. When I present my clients with my price list (on my swanky leather folio from scalbums.com), I feel so proud of the product that I offer and all the work that has gone into creating it. I never second-guess any of my prices, and feel that I'm being compensated fairly for my product. Will I raise my prices? Absolutely! Sal taught me that the price list is an ever-changing document, but as long as the basic structure is there, it's much easier to work with.

Anything else?

So here's the part that sounds like Sal slipped me \$20 to say: Take one of his workshops. I'm not kidding. It'll change your life. Sal and his team, aside from being some of the best people I've ever met, are extremely knowledgeable and so willing to help. I think that if I had connected with Sal in some way (workshop, creativeLIVE, books, etc.), I could have avoided most of the problems that I faced in the very beginning. Another thing that I wish I had done sooner was set a list of priorities for my business. If you're starting off, you don't need the newest gadget, flash modifier or that 300 millimeter lens. Put your money into the areas of your business that are going to drive your business forward. Your logo and website are so important. Establish your brand!

Lastly, be thankful—whether it's for information you received, a favor that someone did for you, someone who modeled for you or just gave you words of encouragement. A little thanks goes a long way. This seems like a pretty appropriate time to once again thank Sal and his team for all that they have done for me. I certainly wouldn't be where I am right now without them.



Watch in January for **PART 2**

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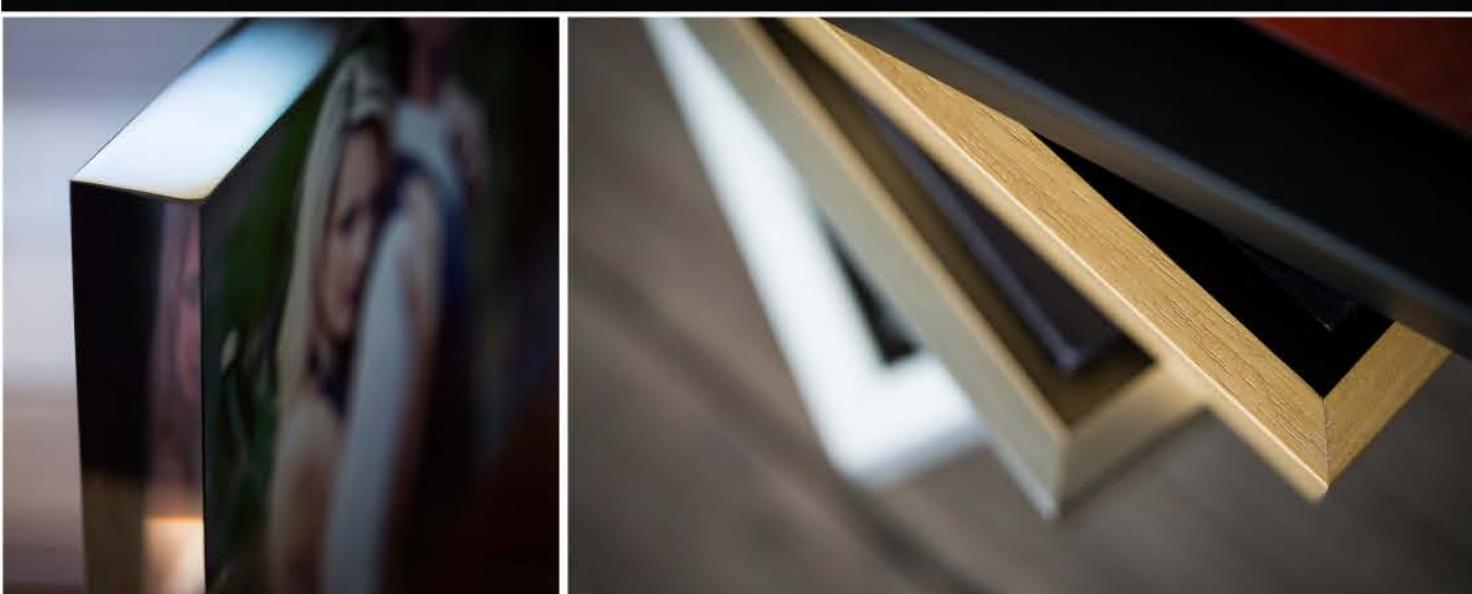
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TOP 10 TAX DEDUCTIONS FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS



WITH KRISTIN KORPOS

“

The sheer uttering of the phrase
income tax makes many of us cringe.

*Nobody likes the thought of the tax man
taking their hard-earned money out of their pockets.*

But with tax deductions, you can limit the tax man's take.

”



BY KRISTIN KORPOS

The sheer uttering of the phrase *income tax* makes many of us cringe. Nobody likes the thought of the tax man taking their hard-earned money out of their pockets. But with tax deductions, you can limit the tax man's take.

A tax deduction reduces the amount of revenue subject to tax for specific types of expenses that were incurred to produce the income. These expenses are entered into a “schedule” in your tax return.

Let's say you spent \$5,000 on equipment this past year, and your business had revenues of \$30,000. You can take a tax deduction for that full \$5,000 so that you will only have to pay income tax on \$25,000. This means you are going to have to pay tax only on the amount of money your business actually made in a given tax year. Well, sort of.

Not all expenses qualify as deductions. Federal and state tax laws detail exactly what deductions can be taken. The following deductions are ones that every photographer should know about.

[1]

EQUIPMENT

The purchase of various types of equipment can be deducted from taxable income. However, you can only deduct a portion of the cost of the equipment each year; this is referred to as depreciation. Different types of equipment carry different schedules for depreciation, as detailed in IRS tax booklets. There is also a special law referred to as the Section 179 Deduction that allows you to expense up to \$500,000 (for 2013) annually. This means that if you spent \$3,000 on a camera in 2013, you can expense that amount for 2013.

[2]

ADVERTISING FEES

Any fees related to advertising can be deducted. This includes paid ads on Facebook and Google, on blogs, in magazines and for directory listings such as The Knot. You can also deduct expenses for business cards, websites, marketing materials such as brochures and signs, logos, promotional purchases and giveaways. Basically any type of business-related advertising is deductible as a business operating expense.

[3]

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

Have you taken one of Sal's workshops this past year? Did you pay for a pass to WPPI or PPA? These expenses are tax deductions when you can show that they maintain or improve skills required in your photography business. And guess what? You can also deduct travel expenses for these workshops and conferences.

[4]

TRAVEL EXPENSES

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

[5]

AUTOMOBILE EXPENSES

Photographers who do not photograph strictly in their home studios tend to travel heavily. This may entail driving to a client's house for a family session, or driving to a church and then to a venue to photograph a wedding. This type of travel can be expensed as well.

There are two choices: 1) track miles traveled and deduct the standard rate the government allows per mile in a given year (56.5 cents per mile in 2013); or 2) deduct the actual cost to operate your vehicle for the year, and calculate the percentage of use (portion of expense) for your photography business. With either method, you need to keep a record of miles driven and where you drove in case you are audited.

[6] SUPPLIES USED IN A PHOTOGRAPHY BUSINESS

Supplies that can be deducted include printer ink, paper, DVDs, labels, boxes, bags, pens, folders, stamps, mailers and other shipping materials, and memory cards. The list goes on.

[7] RENTAL EXPENSES

Do you rent lenses or other photography equipment? Do you rent studio space for shoots? Do you rent a storage unit for your photography gear because there is no more room in your home for it? If so, good news: These expenses are tax deductions!

[8] INSURANCE

Every photography business should have insurance, no excuses. This expense is also a tax deduction. The same is true for health insurance and long-term care insurance.

[9] LEGAL AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

You can deduct fees paid to lawyers, accountants, consultants and other professionals as business expenses. The fees must be related to your photography business. For example, you may hire an attorney to review a contract or an accountant to prepare your income tax returns. These expenses are tax deductions.

[10] MISCELLANEOUS OPERATING EXPENSES

There are some expenses I do not want you to overlook. You can deduct credit card processing fees (including PayPal fees), books and magazine purchases and subscriptions that are specifically related to your photography business, fees paid to join professional organizations such as PPA and WPPI, subscription fees for message board forums like DWF or Clickin' Moms, cell phone lines dedicated to business, data plans for iPads used for business purposes, copyright registrations, tax return software and business-related gifts for clients. This is not an exhaustive list, but just some more expenses I wanted to point out.



TAX DEDUCTIONS



This is by no means a complete list of deductions. Taxes are confusing. I suggest taking things one step at a time. Also know that, while an accountant can be a huge help in preparing tax returns, you do not necessarily need one. I definitely advise hiring a CPA who is knowledgeable about photography businesses, but tax preparation software has come a long way. Several programs each walk you through various business expense categories, one at a time, while explaining in detail what information you need to provide. You can also turn to various IRS publications specifically geared toward small business owners. The IRS Small Business and Self-Employed Tax Center (<http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&-Self-Employed>) has a wealth of information.

I would like to leave you with a couple of final important takeaways. First, do not buy things just to get a tax deduction. If you buy a \$2,000 computer, you will probably be able to deduct only about half the cost. That means you are still spending \$1,000 on something you do not need. Second, save your receipts and record all your expenses. One of the biggest mistakes photographers make is not keeping good records. That causes not only concern for tax preparation, but also concern as to whether you know your numbers as a business owner. And if you don't know your numbers, you do not have the data necessary to know what state your business is in. Are you even profitable? At the very least, get yourself an accordion folder for a given tax year, and label each section a deduction category.

You can do this. The more you understand what tax deductions are available, the more money you'll have to put back into your business and your life. ■



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with KRISTY DICKERSON



BY KRISTY DICKERSON



When I was in New York recently for PhotoPlus Expo, the situation back home suddenly turned dire. My husband left our boys with my parents and then joined me. Two days into the four-day conference, my mother called to say my youngest, August, had been to the doctor and had an ear infection, fever and strep throat.

It seems every time I go out of town, the kids get sick. This time it was worse: spiking a high fever, developing the croup and struggling to breathe. Mom called a second time in the middle of the night saying she didn't think August was breathing and that she was rushing him to the hospital. It's rare to hear Mom panic, so naturally I went straight into panic mode. So at 4 in the morning, with every ounce of my being, I was searching for any flight to get me home ASAP. I got the first flight home and was back in Atlanta by eight in the morning. August ended up needing some steroids and stronger antibiotics to help him bounce back.

This is exactly what happens when you are an entrepreneur and a mom. Not working means you're not producing. When life or the kids pull your attention away from work, what is the opportunity cost for your business? When you find out you are pregnant and you take three months off your schedule, who will pay maternity leave, who will answer the emails, who will report quarterly taxes? When there is homework to do, dinner to cook and the phone is ringing, who will take that call without the client hearing all sorts of noise in the background? Is being an entrepreneur and a mom good for anyone?

Just being a mom is a full-time job. Being an entrepreneur and a mom is not for everyone, but it perfectly fits my personality. Being a stay-at-home mom can be one of the most rewarding "jobs." Here's why.



Just being a **MOM**
is a full-time job.
Being an **entrepreneur**
and a **mom**
is not for everyone...



You get to set your own hours! I typically get up early and work for a couple hours. Get the kids off to school, get in a quick workout, then work solid until about 2:30 in the afternoon. The morning is my most productive time. Next it is bus stop, homework, dinner, family time and then typically work on a few things before I wrap the night up with a movie, book or TV. That personal time at the end of the night is so important for me to reset. Hands down, the flexibility and control that being an entrepreneur gives me is the most important positive aspect. I get to set my own schedule and be involved with my kids' lives while still being able to do what I love and make a living at it! It is the perfect combination.

Setting your own schedule enables you to be more of a hands-on parent. If my son has a field trip, I can adjust my schedule and be a chaperone. If one of my boys is sick, I can take him to the doctor and keep an eye on him at home. You get full control of your life, and that is kind of awesome.

Running a small business and running a family are actually very similar. In a business, you set budgets, forecast, pay bills and take income. All of which you do for your family. In a business, you set mission statements and growth goals, and follow to-do lists. You also do this with a family. If you have the personality and spirit to be an entrepreneur and a stay-at-home mom, it can be one of the most rewarding and fulfilling jobs. Because of my work, I am a better mom, and vice versa.





So what are a couple of things you can do to stay on track while working from home?

CREATE TO-DO LISTS

This is huge. I use Evernote.com for all my higher-level goals, checklists and tasks. For my daily to-dos, I actually like using a pen and paper. I like to physically see the things I need to accomplish and cross them off as I do them. It keeps me on track and focused throughout the day.

OUTSOURCE OR ASK FOR HELP

For a couple of hours on Monday and Wednesday mornings, I have help with August so I can take meetings, make phone calls and knock out big projects. I also work early before the kids wake up. I believe in outsourcing tasks within your business that are not key to your success, such as editing a wedding.

Being a mom is the hardest role and biggest responsibility in my life. Couple that with being an entrepreneur, and it's not easy. Some days are harder than others. It is the most rewarding role and calling that I will ever have both as a mom and a photographer.

I want my kids to always know me as Mom first. I want my office floors to be covered with crayons and, more importantly, for my kids to be happy and fulfilled. Before becoming a parent, my view of the world was vastly different. Now, my first thought in every situation that arises is not how it affects me, but how it affects my children. Of course there are challenges, tears and struggles along the way, but I would not change a thing. ■



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THE
LIGHT
YOU WANT

without the lights you don't

WITH MICHAEL CORSENTINO



HOW TO

Light & Shoot Wide



BY
Michael Corsentino

Recently I had the pleasure of being the first photographer in the United States to field test Profoto's B1 Air 500 TTL Off-Camera Flash. One of the images from that shoot, taken on location in the historic Dumbo neighborhood of Brooklyn, has garnered a lot of questions about how I lit such a wide shot without any lights appearing in the image. I achieved it with a simple technique that, when properly planned and executed, opens up a "wide" vista of creative possibilities for lighting on location.

Let's deconstruct the shoot.

[LOCATION]

Location plays a major role in carrying off this technique with maximum wow factor. I look for strong architectural elements with leading lines and sweeping landscapes, and place subjects accordingly. Think about your locations like movie sets. Wider is better for added drama and a sense of grandeur. The low vantage point used here helps create a larger-than-life feeling that fits the cinematic feel.

[THE PLATE]

For this technique, you first shoot what's called a "plate," a term I first heard used by commercial and celebrity photographer Art Streiber. Shoot a frame of the background alone with no subjects and no lights, just the final background or stage you want in the image. This image is married later in post with the subsequent images containing your subjects, lights, stands, assistants, etc. The trick is keeping all the images framed at exactly the same position, height, angle, focal length, etc. This makes properly aligning or registering the images to one another in post much easier.

The one essential piece of equipment for this is a tripod lightweight enough for easy transport but sturdy enough to provide a solid foundation, avoiding any unwanted movement. A tripod that permitted ground-level shooting was necessary for the low vantage point I wanted. I used a MeFoto RoadTrip carbon-fiber tripod kit that includes a balled Arca-Swiss type quick-release plate, allowing me to easily compose and shoot 15 inches above ground level.

THE LIGHT YOU WANT



© Michael Corsentino

[EXPOSURE&FOCUS]

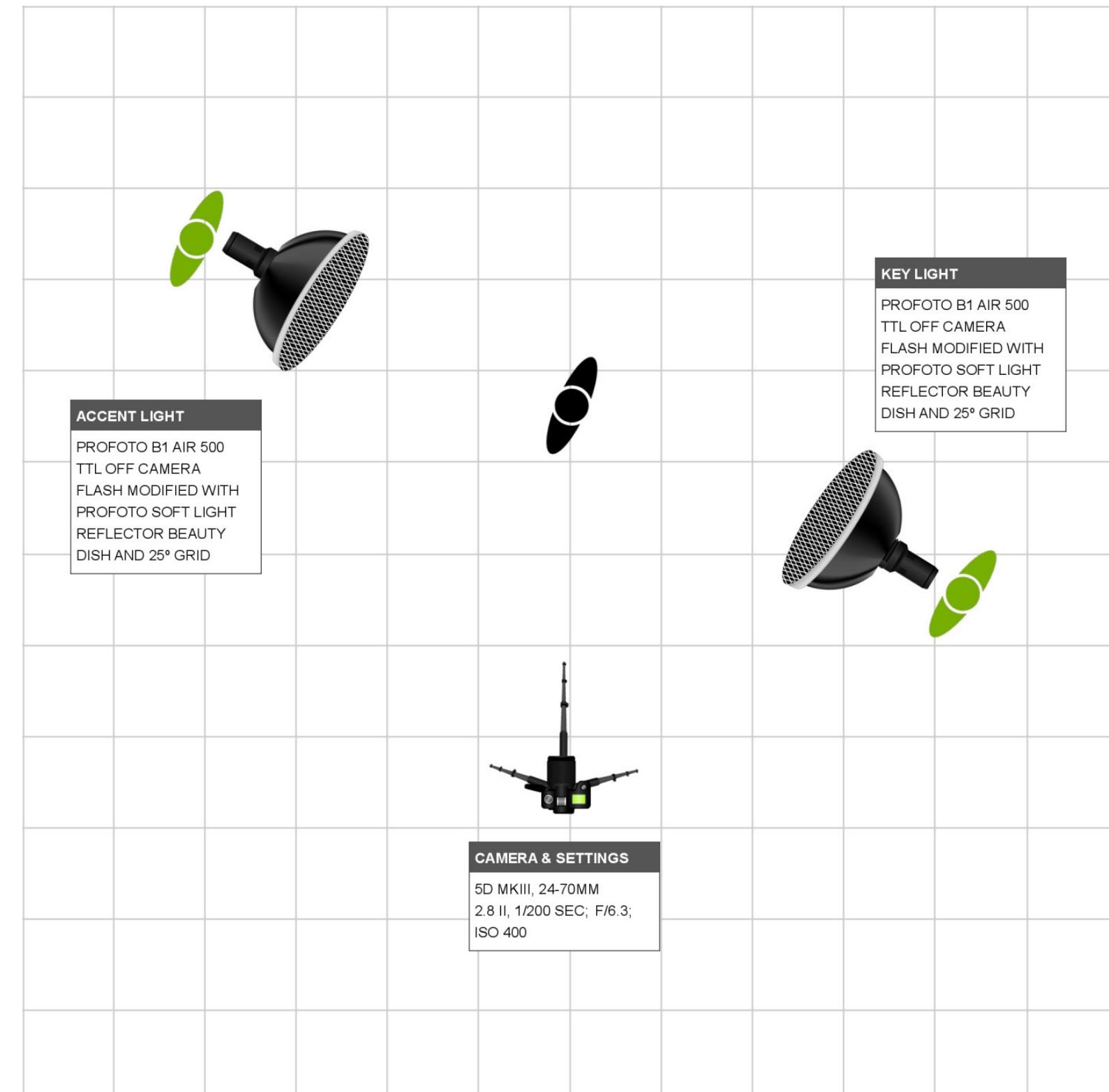
This first image is an ambient exposure, which I typically underexpose by a stop or two to add drama and accentuate any clouds. Once you have your plate image composed, there are a few simple but important factors to consider regarding focus. For this wide scene, captured using a Canon 24–70mm 2.8 lens, the majority of the detail was in the distance. I used auto focus via the center point to lock the focus, and fired off a few frames of the empty background.

The next step is to leave your camera in exactly the same position, and make only one change: Switch your lens to manual focus. You need to do this to focus on the subject. Your camera is now officially in lockdown mode in order to maintain the proper alignment and angle between what you just shot and what you're about to shoot. If you move the camera to position its AF center point over your subject and focus, you won't be able to accurately recompose and replicate the prior composition with the precision required—believe me, I've tried. You need to rely on manual focus. This can be tricky, so I recommend tethering to a laptop via a Tether Tools Tether Pro Cable or wirelessly to an iPad using CamRanger. Unfortunately, I had neither, so I double- and triple-checked a test shot at the largest magnification allowed on the Canon 5DMKIII's LCD monitor. Tethering can't be beat for accuracy and peace of mind when you need to confirm critical focus.

[LET THERE BE LIGHT]

Now that you have your background image in the can and you've switched over to manual focus, it's time to bring in your subject, lights, light stands, modifiers, assistants, etc.—all the things you need to nail the light you're after, and all the things we'll be hiding later during postprocessing. Because we were shooting in the street without a permit, I had assistants hold each of our two lights above the ground on C-stand risers. It gave my assistants a serious workout, but more importantly it sidestepped the permit required in most cities once any light stand touches the ground.

The lighting pattern was a classic, simple and very effective two-light sandwich with the model between both lights. Each Profoto B1 flash was facing the other, and was modified with a Softlight beauty dish and a 25-degree grid. The beauty dish provided light with soft transitions and just the right amount of contrast. The grid reined in the light spill, creating natural-looking, in-camera light fall-off.



THE LIGHT YOU WANT

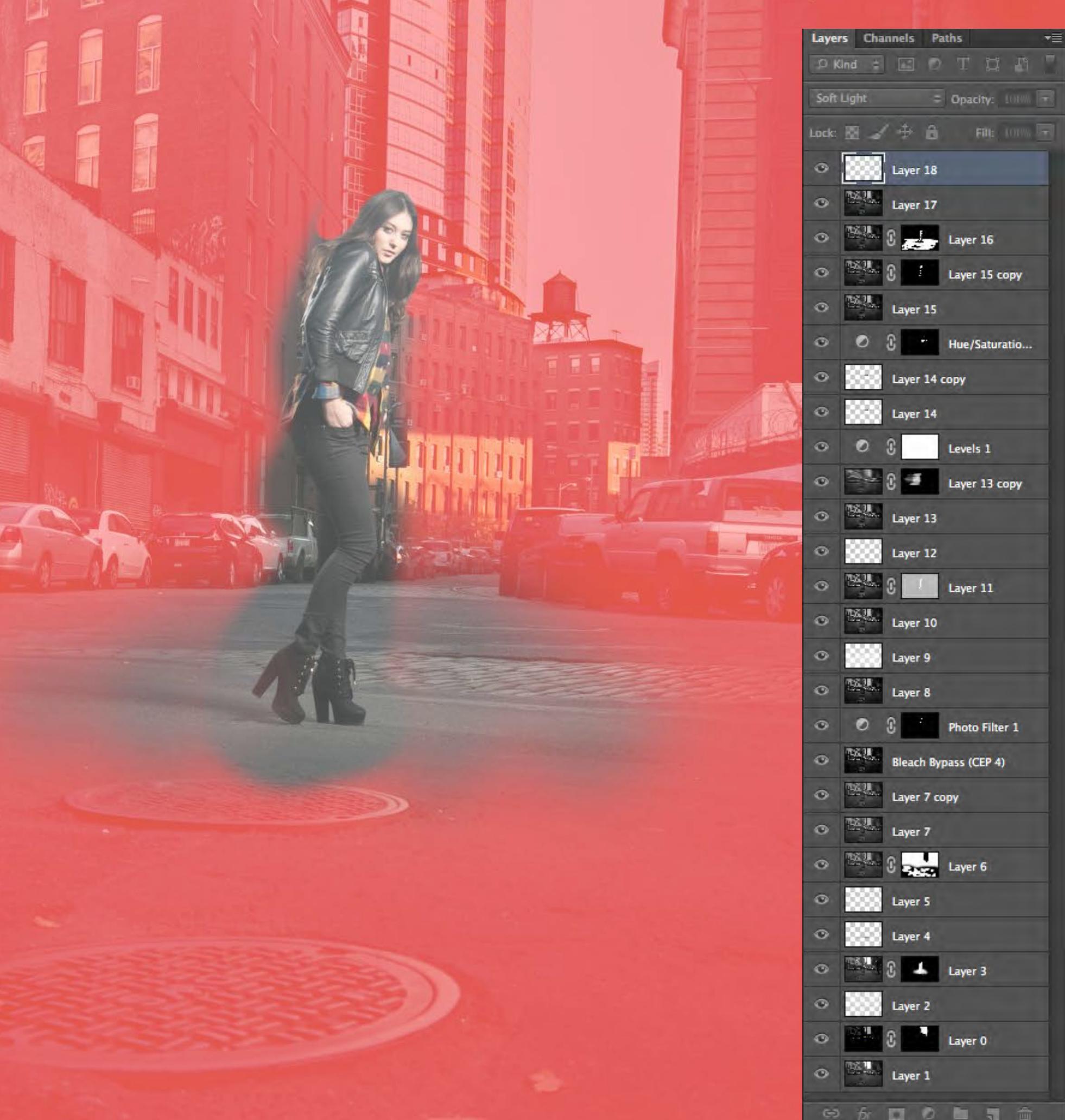
[TAKE THE SHOT]

Your ambient exposure captured, the flashes are now up at bat. Since the B1s are TTL-based flash units, no handheld meter was required to dial in my flash exposure. When working with TTL, you rely on your aperture and the camera's flash exposure compensation setting to control the contribution of artificial light to the exposure. With manual lights, you need to use a handheld meter, not the worst thing in the world! Remember, in the TTL world, shutter speed controls the ambient contribution to the exposure and aperture controls the flash contribution.

[LINING IT ALL UP]

We've now got the two images we need: the background plate image (this is our ambient image) and the lit shot of our model (the one with great light, but also all the junk we want gone). Fast-forward to postprocessing. Open both images in separate PhotoShop windows. Shift-drag the lit subject image's base layer in PhotoShop on top of the ambient image's PhotoShop window; this places it on top of the ambient image and in the center of the canvas. Since both our images (background plate and subject shot) were photographed in perfect alignment, they should now match up perfectly with one another.

The only thing is, you can't be sure they're lining up because one image is on top of the other. I've got a trick for that. You can easily double-check the alignment of the top image with the bottom image by changing its blending mode to Difference. The entire image turns a weird semitransparent black and white, allowing you to see how it's lining up with the image below it. Use your keyboard's cursor keys to make any necessary adjustments to the alignment. Change the layer's blending mode back to Normal when you're finished.



THE LIGHT YOU WANT



[STRIPPING AWAY UNWANTED ELEMENTS]

This last part is where the magic happens. Select your top layer in the layer stack. This should be the one with the great lighting, the model and all the things—lights, light stands, assistants, etc.—that you want hidden. All we want is our lovely model bathed in gorgeous, edgy light. Select the top layer. Hold down the Command key and click the mask icon at the bottom of the layer's palette. This applies a black mask to your subject layer, hiding it entirely from view. Now all you see is your background image.

[BRING IN THE MODEL]

Select a medium soft-bristle brush filled with 100 percent white paint, and start painting over the part of the mask containing the model. Like magic, your beautifully lit subject begins to appear before your eyes, while everything else going on around her is hidden from view. Finesse your mask around the edges and shadows by changing your bush between black and white. See the Mask Panel for additional controls.

We put the finishing touches on the final edit using Nik's bleach bypass effect modified with a reduced opacity, a healthy dose of burning and dodging using Soft Light blending mode layers, and sharpening with the Unsharp Mask filter. Check out the layer stack screen capture for an overview of the process. And be sure to watch the video, in which I walk you through lighting and postprocessing.

I hope you give this fun technique a try. Now that you know how to hide your lights, you can shoot as wide as you want and still have beautiful light. ■

*Wishing you all a wonderful holiday season.
See you next year!*

SHUTTER
MAGAZINE
LEARN MORE! CHECK OUT THIS VIDEO...

Final Image Camera Settings 1/200 sec; f/6.3; ISO 400

Schoeller&Stanzwerk Print Boxes

Inspired by...



Syed Yaqeen of SYPhotography is a NYC-based wedding photographer who is particularly adept at capturing the strong emotions of a couple's special day. He is an Award-winning wedding photographer, seen in Grace Ormonde, who loves to travel to shoot weddings throughout the US and internationally.



Award winning photographer Syed Yaqeen (SYPhotography), inspired us to expand our distinctive Schoeller & Stanzwerk line of handmade European boxes to include a version that would work for 5x5 prints. Syed's direct input has resulted in the development of a keepsake quality, customized box.

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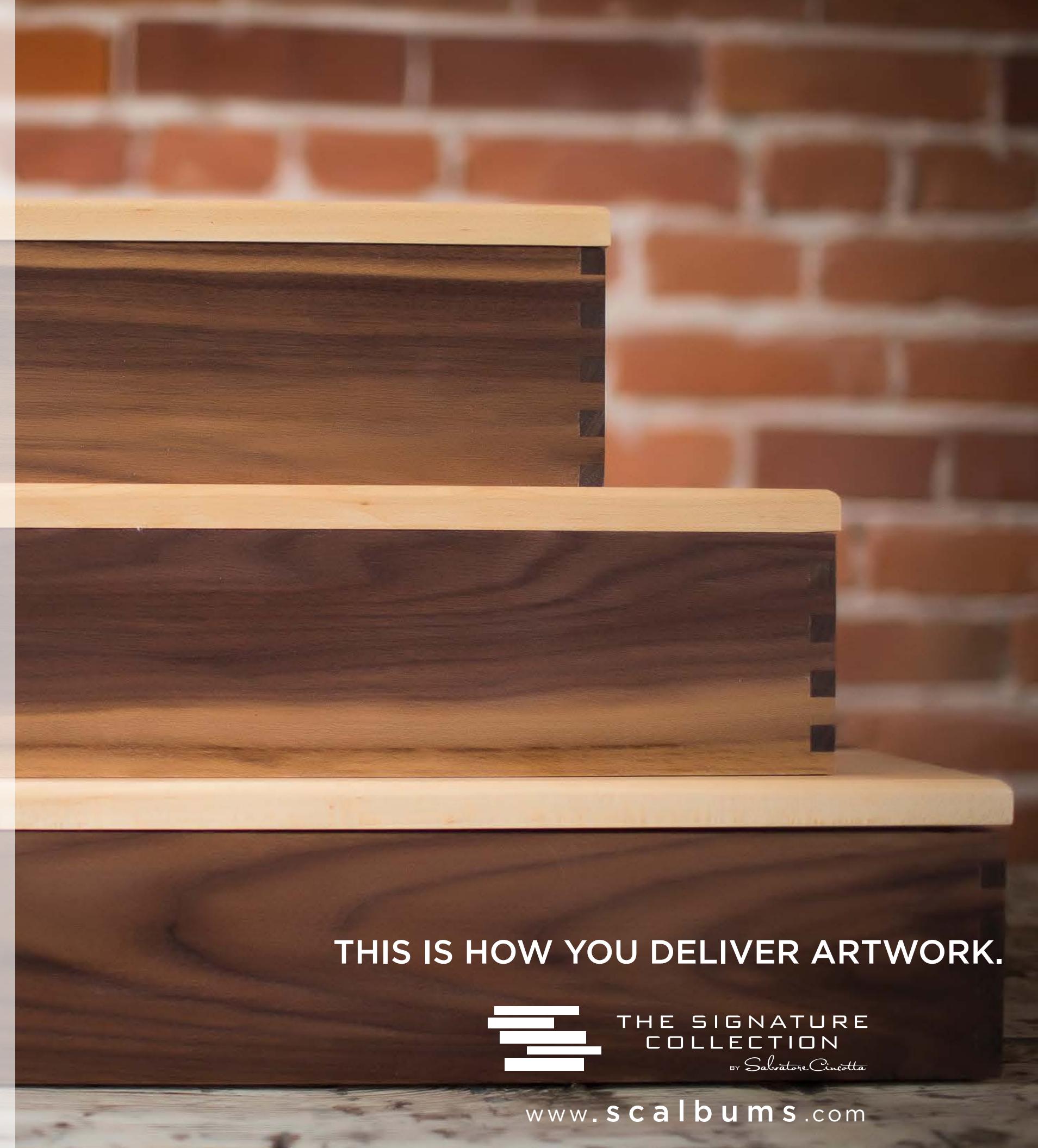
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Inspiration comes to us in many shapes & sizes

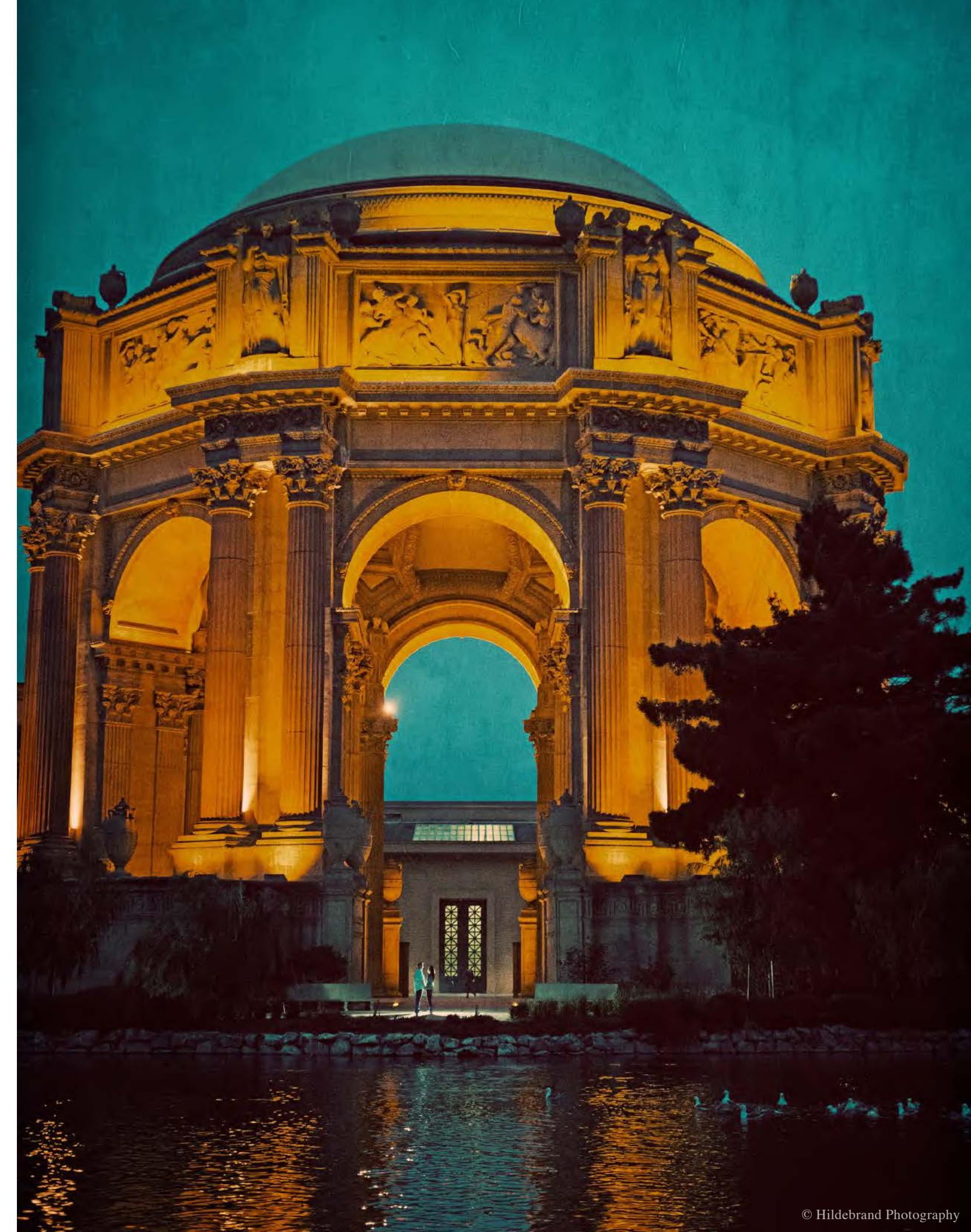
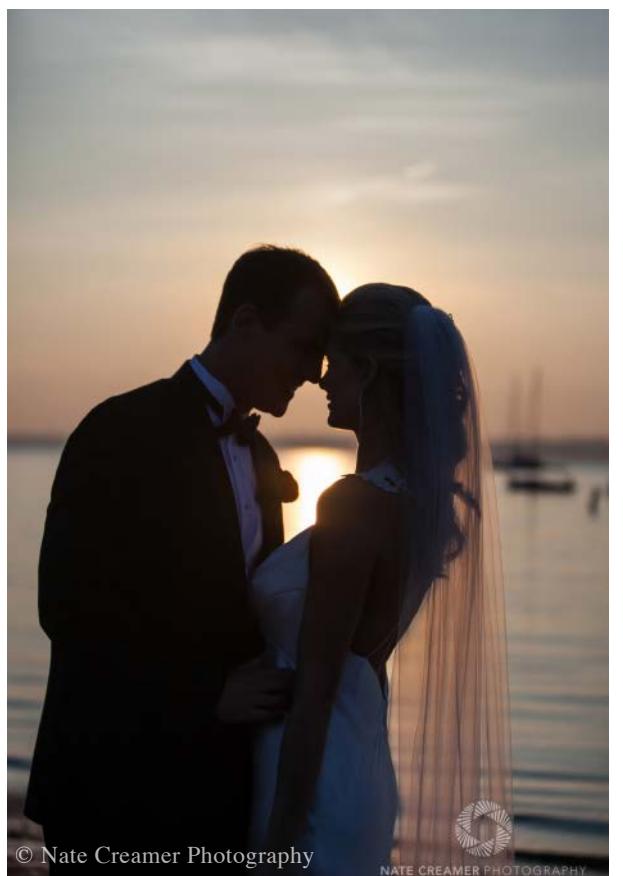
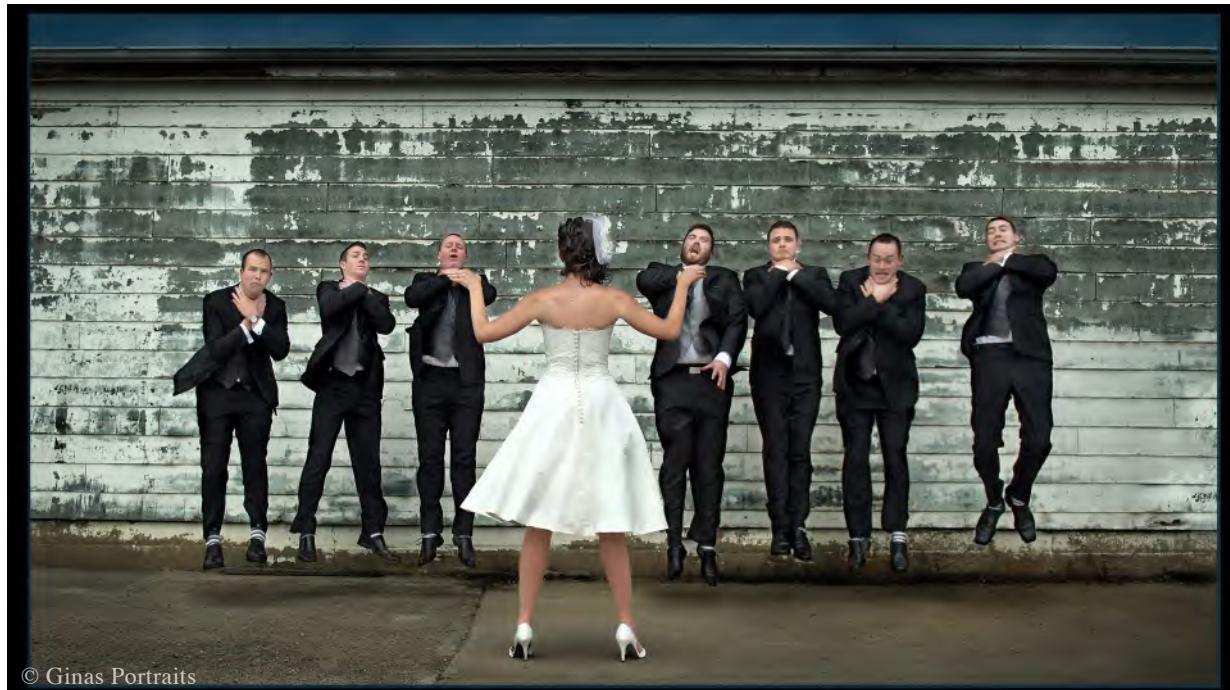
Put 10 photographers in a room and ask them to shoot a paperclip, and there's no telling what will happen. And that, ladies and gentlemen, is why I love being a photographer. We all see the world in our own special way. Ultimately, though, nothing is truly new or unique. Everything is inspired by something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



© Rafael Sotomayor Photography

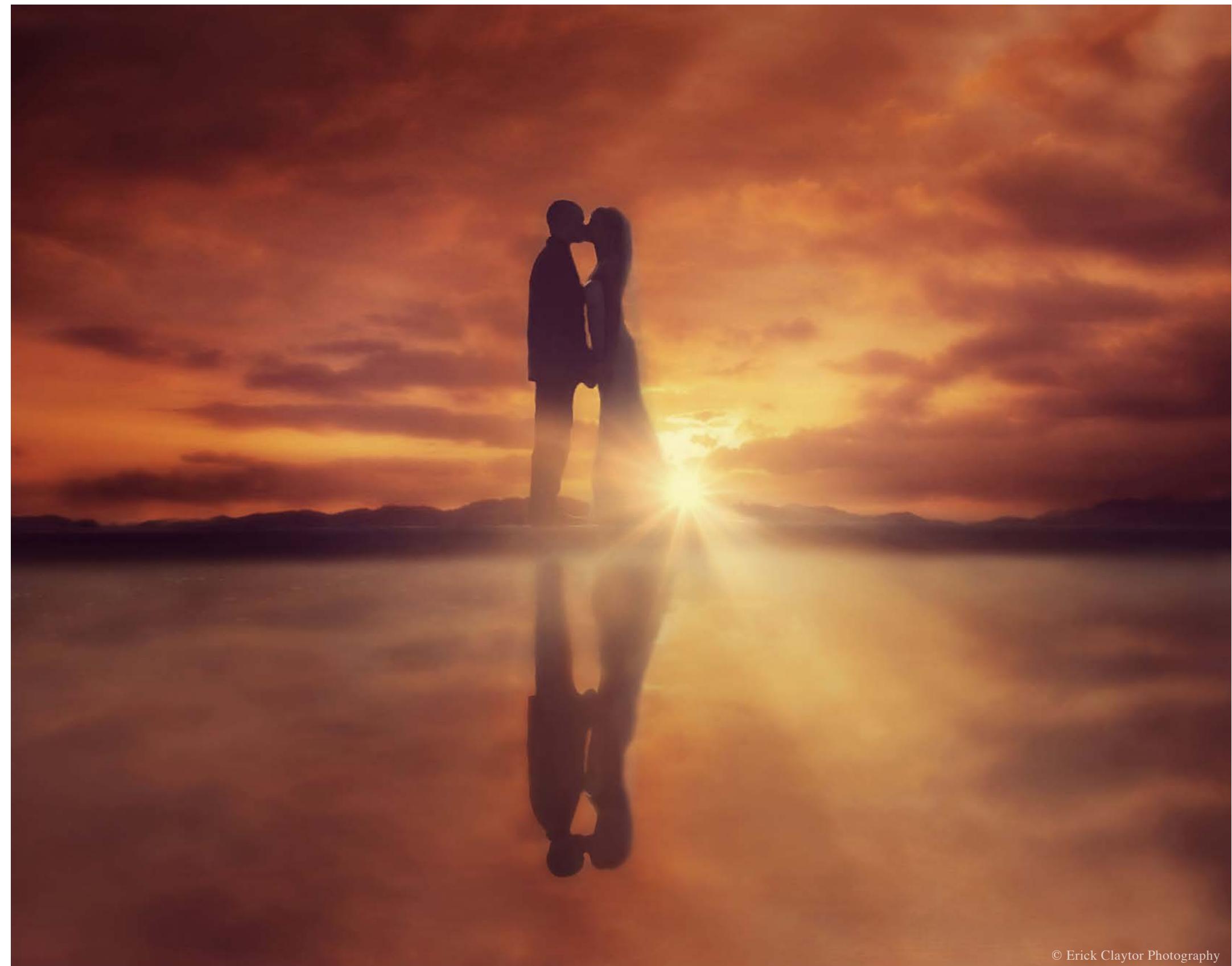


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INSPIRATIONS



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Thank you to everyone who submitted this month
& a special congratulations to Jonathan McInnis whose image we chose for our cover this month! 

>>[WATCH FACEBOOK.COM/BTSHUTTER FOR OUR CALL TO SUBMIT IMAGES NEXT MONTH!<<](#)

MYTH #260

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CLICK HERE to see Sal Cincotta in action using the Phase One IQ260 in NYC for this image!

KEEP YOUR CAR AND GET INTO A MEDIUM FORMAT CAMERA

LEARN HOW



IT'S TIME FOR A
BRANDING
TUNE-UP

WITH **BLAIR PHILLIPS**



BY BLAIR PHILLIPS



It's easy to get so wrapped up in creating unique images that you forget about the business side of things. That goes for both beginning professionals and seasoned veterans. There just doesn't seem to be enough hours in the day.

Let's talk about what branding means to you. To me, branding describes my character and the way I carry myself when no one is watching. In other words, integrity. Integrity is a direct extension of your brand. It is what comes into people's mind when they see your work, hear your name or receive promotional items from your studio. Your message has to be crystal clear and consistent, because there's a constant battle for customers.

Branding is not an easy process. It's an art. Let's break it down a bit.

GET FEEDBACK & DEVELOP KEYWORDS

When you are trying to establish, maintain or tune up your brand, rely on the help of some of your closest friends and family. Give them some of your most favorite work to evaluate. Ask them for keywords that come to mind when they look at your work at first glance. These people will give it to you straight, not just tell you what you want to hear. Those important keywords are going to be your roadmap in branding.

EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

You can never hide from your brand or chase a brand that is not genuinely you. You will always find yourself returning to what is most comforting to you. Look for ways to create and establish credibility with your clients. Successful brands connect with people on an emotional level. Customer loyalty is created through motivational methods.

IMAGE

The way you dress, wear your hair, the car you drive, the television shows you watch, the foods you eat and even the kind of computer you have are all part of your own personal branding. These things might seem distinct from your brand, but they are all part of your core. Think of the core values your products and services actually represent. If it takes you more than a few minutes to come up with those values, they're probably not genuine to you. What really excites you? What are you really good at creating?

IDENTIFY WEAKNESSES

Search your business for what you are not really that great at. This allows you to brand yourself in a way that focuses on your strengths, and to figure out what your specialties will be. Knowing the areas in which you excel allows you to stop putting so many irons in the fire and actually begin branding with a purpose. You would not get in your car and take off on a cross-country trip without first planning a route; you should treat the branding of your business the same way.





COVER ALL YOUR BASES

Correct branding is a great way to build a positive company asset. Branding carries a certain level of expectation to your clients. Your company should constantly strive to maintain that expectation, and to bring better products to the marketplace. If you are not 100 percent happy with all the images on your website, you are not practicing good branding. Make sure your brand is carried throughout your website by uploading only your strongest work. Your website may represent the only chance you have to make a first impression. Clients are harder to please visually these days, so the images you shot three years ago must be updated. There's no excuse not to, especially with all the template-based website platforms available. Find a website that matches exactly who you are. Failing on the web can lead to a brand identity crisis that confuses potential and existing clients.

MARKETING PIECES

One of the biggest brand disconnects I see these days involves marketing pieces. This is the one area you can't be afraid to spend a little money on. If all your marketing pieces are printed on an 8.5-inch by 11-inch piece of copy paper, you are not doing your brand any justice. My brand shines in every marketing piece we create. Our business cards are printed on pearl cardstock paper and then finished off with a rhinestone. Our appointment cards are a folded pearl business card finished off with a rhinestone. We send out thank-you cards every week that match our brand.

WORKPLACE

Your workplace is a direct extension of your brand. That doesn't mean it has to be posh. Use your creativity to place you and your workplace in perfect harmony. Your clients will feel more secure and it will build amazing loyalty if everything matches. Lead your customers on a journey in which they anxiously look around every corner to see what is next.

BRANDING



EMPLOYEES

If you ever find yourself in need of an employee, it is very important not to hire someone on just skill. A person may be the best in the world in a certain field, but you will have huge problems if their brand does not match you and your photography. They need to be able to genuinely identify with your brand in a way that becomes a part of who they are.

REBRANDING

Branding is a constant uphill climb that's never completely finished. Once you feel like all your branding is finally done, it's time to rebrand yourself and start over again.

Branding is one of the most important aspects of any large company. Take a look at how Fortune 500 companies are always making changes to their brand. There's always room for improvement. If everything that was successful right now would always remain that way, there would be no need for television commercials. There is no shortage of commercials, so I guess my theory works out. ■



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 - 7 | Rogue Flash Gels
 - 8 | Phase One iq260 with Schneider 150mm 3.5
 - 9 | Cyclone Battery Packs
 - 10 | Canon 600 Speedlites
 - 11 | Canon Speedlite Transmitter
 - 12 | Lens Cloth
 - 13 | Flashlight
 - 14 | Memory Case
 - 15 | Canon 24mm 1.4
 - 16 | Canon 85mm 1.2
 - 17 | Canon 100mm Macro 2.8
 - 18 | Canon 16-35mm 2.8
 - 19 | Schneider 80mm 2.8
 - 20 | Schneider 28mm 4.5
- *not shown: canon 50mm 1.2, schneider 55mm 2.8



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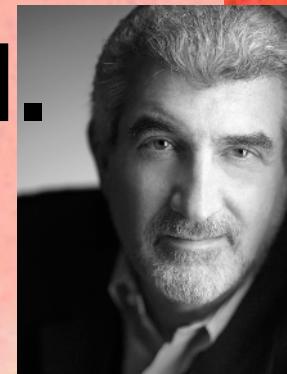
WAYS TO
GET THE MOST
OUT OF A
TRADE SHOW

WITH SKIP COHEN

There's a great expression in scuba diving:

PLAN YOUR DIVE, DIVE YOUR PLAN.

BY SKIP COHEN



There's a great expression in scuba diving: Plan your dive, dive your plan.

Whether you're into scuba-diving or not, you can appreciate the challenge. You're headed to the bottom of the ocean for a very limited time. You've got a tank on your back with a fixed amount of air, and how long that air lasts is totally dependent on how deep you go, together with your skill set in terms of buoyancy and breathing.

Unless you're a complete hot dog, you're always diving with a buddy. The two of you are a team, not only looking for things that interest you in the ocean, but watching each other's backs and following the rules of safe diving.

If you stick to your plan, the dive has all the potential to create some great memories; but change your plan midstream, and it can become a complete waste of time. Here's an example.

Early in my diving career, actually on one of my first dives, I decided to chase an angel fish for a picture. I was swimming with a Hasselblad H38 underwater housing, which was anything but petite and easy to maneuver. I didn't stick with the plan, and wound up going deeper than anticipated. I was just about to run out of air when I realized the stupidity of what I'd been doing.

I came up from the dive sharing air with my buddy. No real damage done except to my ego, and I learned a lesson that I never forgot. And, oh yeah, I never did get the shot I wanted—nobody wins chasing any critter that can swim faster.



This little guy was photographed on a night dive, but we never would have found him if we hadn't gone into the water with a plan of where to look beforehand. Finding great products and ideas at a convention is no different. You've got to plan your trip.

+BRING A BUDDY

Every year I see photographers walking the aisles of a trade show by themselves. There's too much to see, and you see miss so much without a friend along who shares the same interests and challenges. Bring another photographer with you and attack each show with a solid plan of what you want to accomplish.

It's no different than working a big event with a second shooter. What one of you misses, the other is likely to catch, especially if you've planned in advance.

+PREVIEW THE EXHIBITOR LIST

Check out the exhibitors before the show, keeping in mind where you need the most help with your business and your skill set. Walking into a big trade show without a plan is like going to a great restaurant and simply saying, "I don't know what I like and I don't care about the cost. Just surprise me!" Pay attention to those areas you're weakest in, and look for products and services that can help you build a stronger business.

+START FROM THE BEGINNING

I know it sounds simplistic, but hit a show starting in one aisle, and walk the entire show. Again, we're back to your original plan—you've got to allow enough time to really see the show, and that means looking at every booth there.

So many photographers immediately head directly to one particular booth and, in the rush to get to their favorite, miss some incredible products and people.

+NEVER EAT ALONE!

I don't care what meal it is—networking is one of the best benefits of any convention. Talking over a meal is a great way to get time with both old and new friends.

+SET UP MEETINGS IN ADVANCE

So many walk into a trade show like kids in Toys R Us a month before Christmas. You have no idea what you want and are completely overwhelmed by the selection in front of you. Take the time before your trip to go through everything you use in your business, not just your camera gear. Think about things you don't have but need. Then match up your lists with the categories of exhibitors. Contact exhibitors you'd like to talk to before the show to find out more about who's going to be there and what they're showing.

If nothing else, you'll at least have a contact name of somebody you've already met over the phone. It'll speed up the process of building your network and getting you the help you need most.

+GET APPROVED FOR CREDIT

Need new gear and your cash flow is limited? Before you go to any major trade show or convention, get yourself approved for a credit line for a leasing company. Know your buying power before you get to the show. This helps you better define your purchase needs and your buying power. Plus, leasing gives you a chance to utilize somebody else's cash.

+TALK TO THE ICONS

I'm always surprised by how so many people suddenly shy up when meeting their icons at shows. At every convention, the icons attend as artists just like you, or they're there as a speaker or instructor. The photographers you admire most give up time to teach because they believe in giving back to the industry. So many of them have never forgotten their roots and those photographers who helped them along the way.

When you see a photographer you admire, take the time to introduce yourself. Don't interrupt if they're talking with somebody else. Just wait your turn and look for an opening.



+SEND A FEW THANK-YOU NOTES

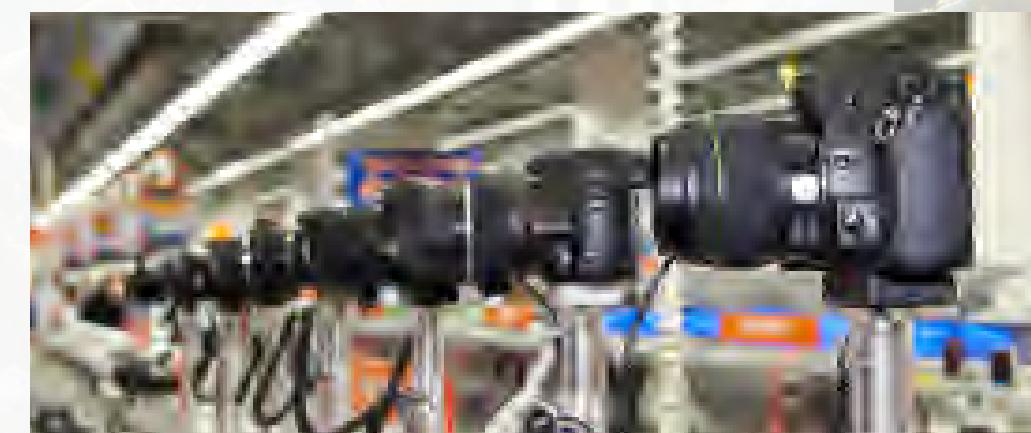
There's nothing that beats a good thank-you note when you get back from a convention. It means so much to get a note from somebody you met, somebody you may have talked to only for a short time, only to find that they remembered and appreciated their time with you.

+TAKE NOTES AT THE END OF EACH DAY

Jot down the highlights. This is something relatively new for me, but I've found it's so helpful. I carry a small journal-sized book, and at the end of the day, I make a note of whom I talked with, products I saw and follow-up I might want to do when I get home. It's a great way to maintain the enthusiasm you feel when walking a show, and not forget ideas you might have had along the way.



Photonbleu - Fotolia.com



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+TAKE THE WORKSHOPS YOU NEED

Don't just take the workshops everybody's flocking to. Every convention has great workshops to help you build your skill set in dozens of areas. Many are taught by photographers you might not know. Choose your workshops by the topics you need help with, not just by the popularity of the speakers. Also, always pick at least one program that's completely out of your comfort zone.

Here's a great example. Let's say you love to shoot weddings, but would rather have a root canal than photograph babies. The hierarchy of why people hire a photographer goes brides, babies and pets. Even better, they're all related—brides become moms and families have pets. Build your skill set a little for that unforeseen moment when you might need to shoot something different for a client.

The last part of your trip simply involves a little logic. Make hotel and transportation reservations now. Don't wait until the last minute when the rates jump up, and then you're kicking yourself because everybody else on the plane paid less for the flight than you did.

Shutterfest, the newest addition to the U.S. workshop/convention schedule, is coming up in April. This great event was put together by none other than Sal and Taylor Cincotta. Nobody does it better! 



Legendary Songs

Today's Talent

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12/2/13*

A close-up photograph of a bride with dark hair and blue eyeshadow, wearing a white wedding veil. She is smiling broadly, showing her teeth. In the background, a groom in a dark tuxedo and white shirt is partially visible, though blurred. The setting appears to be outdoors with greenery.

THE FUTURE

OF VIDEO

with Rob Adams



BY ROB ADAMS

It's holiday time, and the newest electronics are on store shelves beckoning you to become the first of your friends to have the next-generation game console, television, Bluetooth stereo or home security system. You also may have noticed the sudden appearance of 4K televisions that are now available with a whopping \$5,000 to \$6,000 sticker price. I hate to say it, but by this time in 2015, our current standard of high-definition video (1080) is likely going to be viewed as the ugly stepchild of ultra-high-definition video.

4K is just what it sounds like: roughly 4,000 pixels of moving-image bliss. Chances are, you've already witnessed a full view of 4K goodness at the movie theater. Most cineplexes are now outfitted with digital 4K screens and projectors that show vivid, wickedly sharp and detailed images at 3840 x 2160. Why not exactly 4,000 pixels? It comes down to aspect ratio. Depending on the output format of the film or video, you can have resolutions ranging from 4096 x 3072 to 3840 x 2160, and anything in between. But I digress.

So what does this mean to you (the TV owner), you (the photographer) and you (the video producer)? In short, it means: Brace yourself.

TV The TV owner should expect to see some serious 4K content rollout over the next two years. Sony is rumored to be working on a new optical media format similar to Blu-ray that will accommodate 4K playable discs, and content producers will begin offering 4K digital downloads with relative ease. That new HD-enabled 4K TV will eventually be able to download and play 4K content over your high-speed Internet connection too.

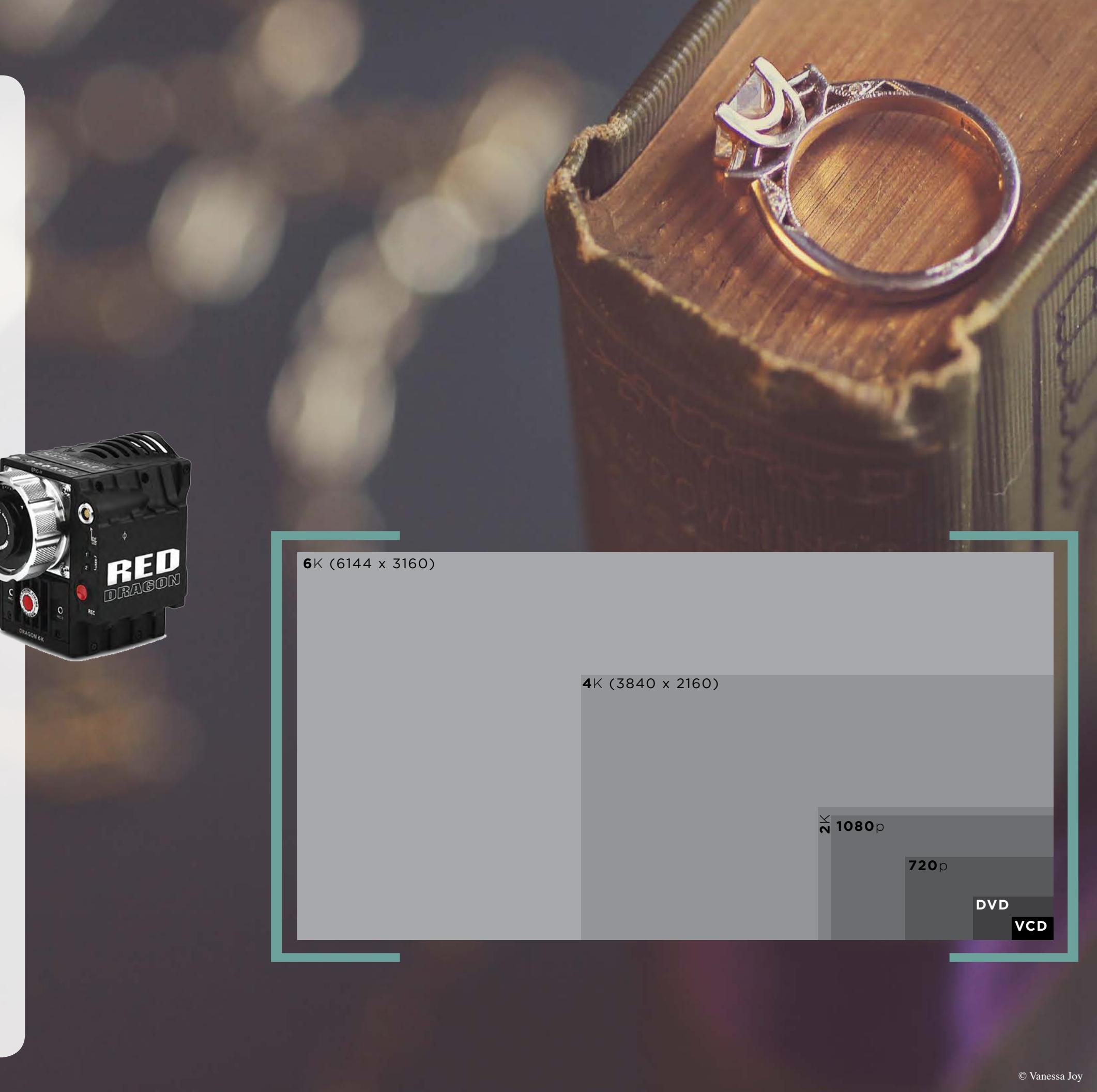


THE FUTURE OF VIDEO

Photographers won't have to worry too much about video stills replacing print sales. The native resolution of even the highest video resolutions at this point barely holds up against the resolution of a large JPEG. The amazing thing here is that some 4K and 5K cameras, such as the Red Epic, produce RAW video images that have as much digital information as a RAW still photo, giving content creators the ability to produce some pretty amazing still photos, where they were extremely limited just three or four years ago. The event industry will probably see the most tug-of-war here since videographers will be able to print stills from video at a much higher quality than ever before.

For the video producer, whole new doors are being opened. While the price points of higher-quality 4K cameras are hovering in the \$10,000 to \$35,000 range, lower-cost options like the Black Magic Cinema Camera 4K and the Sony FS-700 (which is promising a future 4K update, although the price is unknown at this point) are very attractive to indie filmmakers. These cameras are still out of range for many event cinematographers, though, since many of them use multiple cameras during an event. In order to keep quality consistent between cameras, one would have to make a very sizable investment. The alternative for event producers are Canon's C100 and C300. Both have an identical 4K large-format CMOS sensor, but output only to 1080p or regular HD resolution. The C300 offers more-advanced features but at a stiffer price (\$5,500 and \$14,000, respectively). The Canon 1DC offers 4K Motion-JPEG recording, but, again, the price point—\$12,000—is formidable.

Postproduction of 4K content for event cinematographers and indie filmmakers is also raising some eyebrows. With four times the data in resolution from typical 1080 HD, today's current Macs and PCs likely won't summon the rigorous processing power needed to push such footage with ease—especially after editing and effects filters. Apple is rolling out its new Mac Pro, which claims to be the 4K content producer's dream right out of the box. With its 12 cores of processing power and dual GPU working in tandem to deliver fast performance, it's likely the way to go at the indie and event levels. But the price tag for a Mac Pro—on top of the cost of outfitting new 4K cameras—can kill the deal.



CLIENT DEMAND?

The questions I ask myself when pondering all of this amazing eye candy are: Are my clients going to notice a difference? Are my clients going to be demanding 4K? Probably not. Not yet, anyway. I anticipate that only my highest-end clients over the next two years will possess a 4K TV. But will they really want to see themselves in that much detail? I asked my wife if she would want to see herself up close on a 61-inch TV screen in 4K. She took no time answering with a firm "no." Case closed.

BUY NOW, OR WAIT?

If it's not going to amount to an immediate ROI, why spend all the money to upgrade to a resolution that still has people asking, "Is this necessary?"

I just invested in three Canon C100s for my event cinematography business. I'm getting beautiful 24-bit 1080p images captured by a 4K sensor, plus an amazing 11 stops of dynamic range and incredible low-light sensitivity to boot. While I admit my old Canon 5d Mark IIs had to go, I just couldn't justify a full-fledged move to 4K. Not yet.

I plan to revisit this topic in about two years. In the meantime, head down to the electronics store and take a look at the new 4K televisions. The clarity will surprise you. ■



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QUESTIONS?
WE'VE GOT
ANSWERS

QUESTIONS

- + How to properly price session fees
- + How to use a watermark and when to sign your art pieces
- + Sharing your photos with vendors without being taken advantage of
- + Tips on designing album spreads to create the best look for your clients
- + The importance of having signed model releases from your clients
- + Senior market in other countries outside of the U.S.
- + Starting from scratch: what would Sal do differently?
- + Creating a timeline for your businesss
- + Presenting medium format imagery to your clients
- + What sizes should creatively edited images be printed on?

WITH
Salvatore Cincotta



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SEO STRATEGIES

USING GOOGLE+

WITH JUSTEN HONG

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Are you the business owner?

Feedback



BY JUSTEN HONG

Do you have both a personal and a business Google+ page? If not, you needed them both yesterday!

You need to use Google's social platform in order to set up Google Authorship and acquire "+1's" (Google's version of Facebook "likes"), which are a ranking factor for Google's search results (for SEO). I have found it to be the quickest way for Google to index new websites and content.

GOOGLE AUTHORSHIP

Have you ever done a search on Google and seen a person's headshot in the organic results? That was placed there using Google Authorship. Google uses authorship to verify that the original content you publish on your website or blog was created by you. Statistics also show that people are visually attracted to and more likely to click links with Authorship due to the headshot graphic even before higher-ranked sites.

STARTED

First, create a personal Google+ page and a Google+ business page. Old Google Place pages have recently been converted into Google+ pages, so before you create a new Google+ business page, verify that one does not already exist. Even if you didn't create one, one may already be there, so do a search in Google+ for your company name before you create a new one. If there is one, verify that you are the owner or proper manager of that page. You can do this by getting a PIN number from Google, usually through a text message or by requesting a postcard (which Google sends to the address that is used on the existing page).

Now go to the About tab in the top menu. Below, there is a box called Links, and inside is a field called Contributor To. Add your website URL there, and title it something like St. Louis Wedding Photographer John Doe. You need to complete the entire Google+ profile. Start posting and adding pictures. Because your profile photo shows up very small in Google's results, use a headshot photo with a simple background. This must be a headshot rather than a logo or other graphic.

Copy the long number in the URL from the address bar of your browser, and place it in the code below where I have typed "00000000000000000000000000000000".

Once you have your Google+ number, go into your website and add the following code into your header somewhere. The code looks like this: <head> _____ </head>:

```
<link rel="author" href="https://plus.google.com/00000000000000000000000000000000/posts">
```

If you have a WordPress site, log in to the admin section and select the Appearance tab, then Editor. From there, you should have a file named Header (header.php) on the right-hand side. Not all WordPress sites are built the same way, so it may be named something else. Click on the header file and then add the following code with the number you copied from Google+ somewhere in between <head> and </head>.

It should look something like this:

```
<head>
  <meta http-equiv="X-UA-Compatible" content="IE=edge,chrome=1" />
  <meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=utf-8" />
  <title><?php wp_title('::') ?></title>
  <?php wp_head() ?>
  <link rel="author" href="https://plus.google.com/00000000000000000000000000000000/posts">
</head>
```

In the same admin section, you should also have a Footer file. Click it. Somewhere in your footer, add a link to your Google+ business page, not your personal page. You can get that number the same way you retrieved your personal number. The link should look something like this:

```
<a href="https://plus.google.com/00000000000000000000000000000000" rel="publisher">Google+</a>
```

WordPress also has some Google Authorship plugins that can do this, but I found it easier to do manually. Here is a link to instructions for adding it to WordPress if you have SEO by Yoast or All in One SEO plugins installed: <http://rwebdesign.com/blog/?p=2307>. I found that it only added authorship to the blog post and not the home page or other pages.

If you feel this is a little over your head, any programmer should be able to assist you with adding it. Keep in mind that your headshot won't show up in Google's results until Google crawls your website again.

REVIEWS ON YOUR GOOGLE+ BUSINESS PAGE

Now that you have a Google+ business page, post your best photos, place links to your latest blog post, etc. It is also very important that you receive positive reviews. Google+ business page reviews can show up in search results, and can affect your website's search ranking. They have been proven to affect consumers' decisions.

HOW TO DEAL WITH NEGATIVE REVIEWS

If you have a negative review that you can't get changed or removed by contacting the reviewer, it's not the end of the world. You just need to make it a priority to get enough positive reviews to kick it down the list and raise your ranking back up to four or five stars.

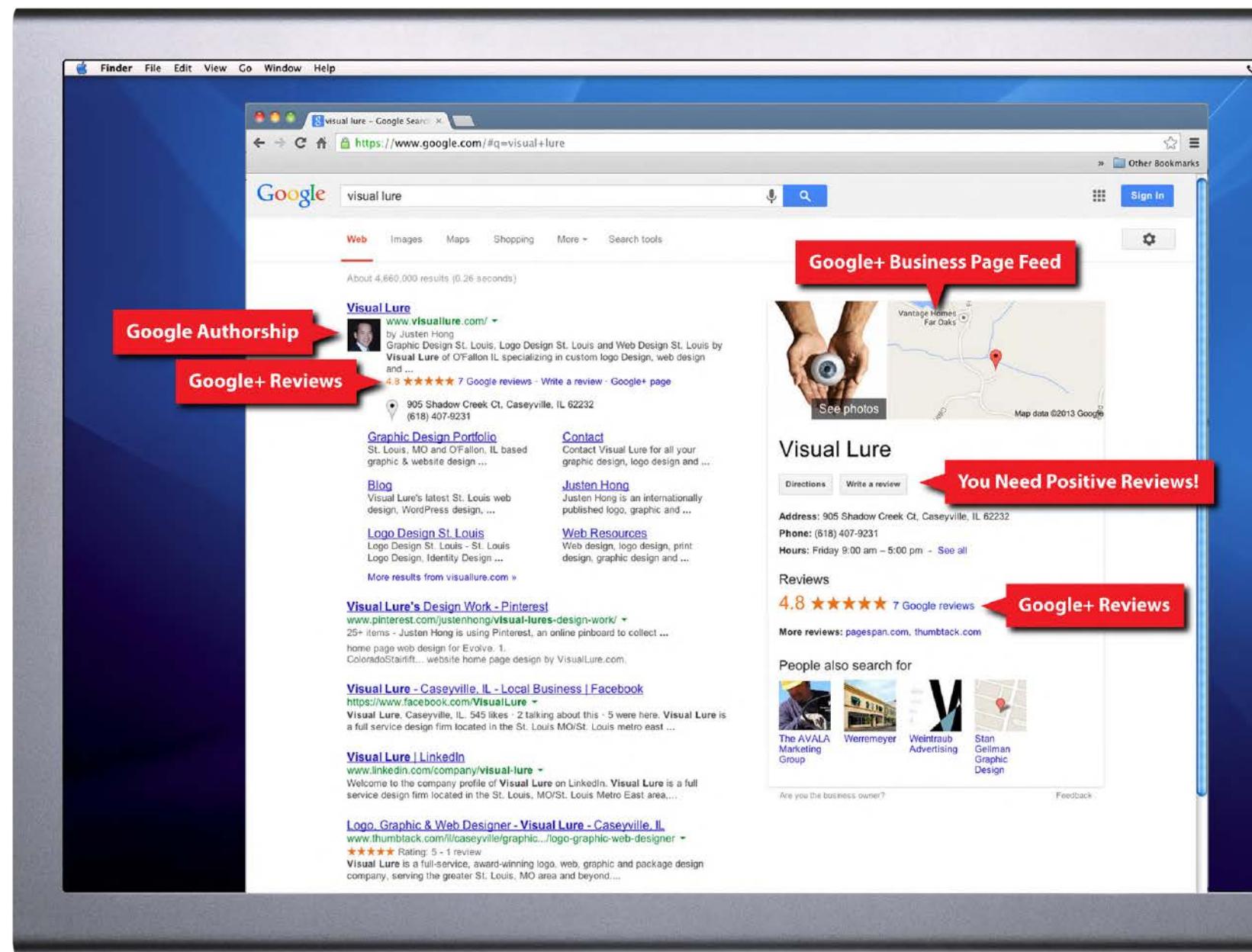
HOW DO YOU GET REVIEWS?

You need to request them. If you don't, the only ones you are likely to get are negative ones. People don't often go out of their way to write a review if they are happy and satisfied, but they surely will if they are highly dissatisfied or upset. Give satisfied clients a free picture (maybe an 8-by-10) if they provide a review. Send out an email after every sales session thanking your client for an order and asking for a review. Better yet, get on the phone and ask clients if they had a positive experience. If they say yes, ask if they would be willing to write a review, and then send them the link to your page.

Do not get your new reviews all at once. Google puts up a red flag when that happens because it appears to be unnatural. Spread them out over time and add the request for reviews by your clients to your regular workflow.

GOOGLE+ COMMUNITIES

Within Google+ there live Communities. These pages focus on everything from cities and hobbies to photography and SEO. Join some based on your interests. It is a great resource, especially for SEO. Professional photographers would want to join all the larger photography communities that relate to their targeted fields, and share photos with links back to their website and blog. This is another way to gain content-related inbound links.



YOU DON'T HAVE TIME TO POST TO YET ANOTHER SOCIAL PLATFORM

With blogging, Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Instagram, etc., you may feel like there are just too many platforms to post to and it takes way too much time to do all of them. I post to almost all of them, and it only takes me a couple of minutes, not including the time it takes to set up the profiles and create the actual blog post.

Here is how I do it: I use a WordPress plugin called ShareThis that automatically creates social share buttons under every blog post. When I have completed a new post, I simply go to that page and share it using those buttons. It takes less than five minutes. By doing this, I have created multiple inbound links to my blog post and my website, which is very important when building a long-term SEO strategy.

SEO TIP: When sharing, make sure you are on the actual single-post page as opposed to your main blog page. That way, the links are directed to the actual post, and not your blog, because the post on the blog page will move down and eventually off that page. Use your targeted keyword phrases in your Google+ post, keeping in mind that the first sentence of your post is used in the Google+ title tag. Just don't keyword stuff, and make sure it reads naturally.

Follow or add me to your Google+

Once you are set up on Google+, feel free to follow or add me to one of your “circles.” I post my latest design projects there, and I also provide SEO tips from time to time. I may “+1” one of your photos or posts, which helps with search engine optimization. Feel free to ask me questions on there too.

You can find me at <https://plus.google.com/u/0/+JustenHong/about>.

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A wide-angle photograph of a couple walking hand-in-hand on a long wooden pier extending from a beach into a body of water. The pier is supported by numerous dark wooden pillars. In the background, there are several layers of lush green mountains under a clear sky. To the right, a large, rustic wooden building with a thatched roof sits on stilts on the water. The overall scene is bright and scenic.

PICTURE PERFECT

CRITIQUE

WITH ROBERTO VALENZUELA



© One Picture



© James Minor



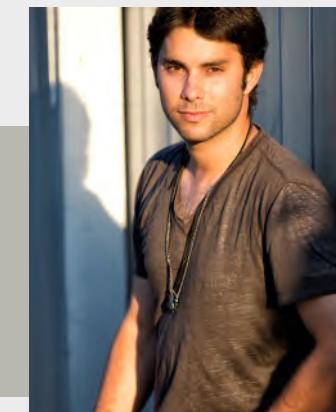
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brentshumaker



BY ROBERTO VALENZUELA

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

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

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

>>WATCH FACEBOOK.COM/BTSHUTTER FOR OUR CALL TO SUBMIT IMAGES NEXT MONTH!<<



EMAIL GROUNDRULES

WITH VANESSA JOY





BY VANESSA JOY

The digital age has changed the way we communicate, and in some ways has made it more difficult. It's hard enough trying to communicate in person and through spoken words, but now we need to learn the art of communicating through email and written text, where 80 percent of what makes up how people hear you (body language) is nonexistent. I'm sure most of us have been there, reading or writing a text message that came off the complete opposite of what it intended to say, and accidentally starting World War III.

Most of us are not writers; we're photographers, and those two art forms do not often reside in the same person. Even writing things like blog posts is a tedious task for me. So how do we master the art of email communication?

Let's first cross some key items off the list, bad email habits that must stop. Here are my Top 5 no-nos of email etiquette.

1

ALL CAPS

I debated on even including this one because I think it's a no-brainer. But I changed my mind after just this week after receiving an email in all caps. DO NOT WRITE ANYTHING IN ALL CAPS UNLESS YOU ARE YELLING AT SOMEONE! First, it's hard to read. Second, it's portrayed as yelling. Third, it has the potential to completely change the meaning of a sentence. Compare these sentences:

- I would've loved to take that picture of you and your aunt during the family session, but your aunt left after the ceremony.
- I WOULD'VE LOVED TO TAKE THAT PICTURE OF YOU AND YOUR AUNT DURING THE FAMILY SESSION, BUT YOUR AUNT LEFT AFTER THE CEREMONY.

See how the first one looks more like a sympathetic statement and the second almost like a sarcastic one? There's more we could do to that first statement to make it even better, but more on that later.

EMAIL GROUND RULES

2

FORGETTING TO FILL IN THE BLANKS IN YOUR TEMPLATES

» Nothing is going to turn a client off more than making her feel unspecial. And nothing is going to make her feel more unspecial than getting a cookie-cutter email response that you didn't even take the time to complete. If you often forget to fill in the blanks, rewrite your emails so they don't contain blanks, or use a program like Text Expander that'll prompt you to fill them in.

3

NOT PERSONALIZING EMAILS

» There's definitely a time and place for template emails. In fact, a good majority of your regular emails should be from templates. Just be sure to add a quick sentence or two that personalizes that email. Something as little as, "It's so great that you guys are high school sweethearts!" can go a long way.

4

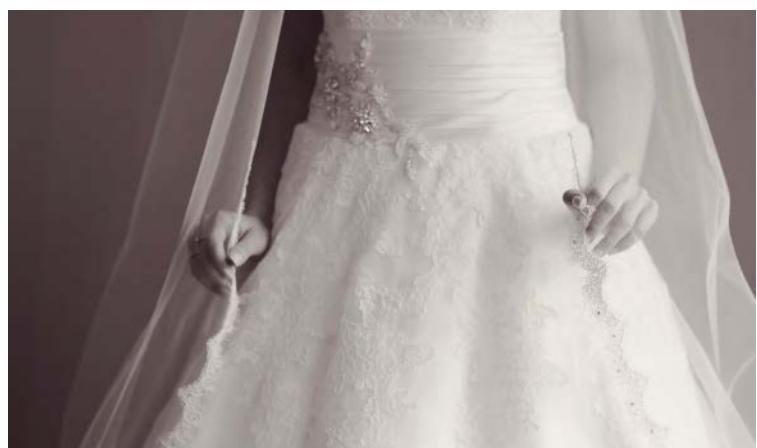
MAKING THEM TOO BRIEF

» Again, we're all busy and shouldn't be spending an excessive amount of time in our inboxes, but responding to an email with too much brevity will leave your client feeling neglected and sometimes even offended. Brief emails can come off abrupt, rude and condescending if you're not careful. Let's take a look at the same sentence that we used above, but in both a brief and expanded sentence.

I would've loved to take that picture that you wanted of you and your aunt during the family session, but your aunt left after the ceremony before we had a chance to grab her.

I would've loved to, but your aunt left.

The first sentence took all of 1.5 seconds to write, but will send a much more caring message across to your client than the second sentence, which makes it sound like you just don't care and it's not your fault anyway.





5

GEAR FAILURE

>> Nothing screams unprofessionalism like an email full of typos and grammatical errors. In fact, it's one of the leading characteristics of spam emails and scam solicitations, which are definitely email genres you want to avoid. A recent bride of mine just last week was complaining to me about her DJ because of typos and grammatical errors in her emails, so I know it definitely makes a difference.

Take the time to quickly read over your emails before you send them. Scan for typos, bad auto-corrects and grammatical errors.

The biggest grammatical errors I see are homonyms like “there, they’re, their” and “your, you’re.” Another big one everybody seems to get wrong is the difference between “its” and “it’s” (hint: “it’s” with the apostrophe always means “it is”). Here’s how they should be used properly.

- >> I would like to take the picture of my aunt over *there*.
 - >> Do you think *they're* happy with the photos?
 - >> My clients are on *their* honeymoon.
-
- >> *You're* the most beautiful bride ever!
 - >> *Your* camera takes great pictures.
-
- >> The camera is on *its* tripod.
 - >> *It's* a beautiful day for a wedding.



EMAIL GROUND RULES

After we've cut out the bad habits in our emails, we want to replace them with good ones that create a positive vibe that our clients can feel right through the computer. Ideally, you'll tailor these suggestions to your personality and brand. Here's what has worked for me.

EXCLAMATION POINTS & SMILEY FACES

Adding appropriate punctuation and emoticons to our emails can help better communicate our meaning and tone. Let's go back again to our example sentence, but this time sugarcoat it a bit and expand it to more of an email form.

Hey Tracey!

Thanks so much for taking the time to write me. I'm so happy that you're in love with your wedding pictures. :)

I would've loved to take that picture that you wanted of you and your aunt during the family session! But your aunt left after the ceremony before we had a chance to grab her. :(

If there's anything I can do to make that up to you, do let me know. I'd be happy to make you happy!

Love Life,
Vanessa Joy

This email, especially since it's dealing with a client complaint, seems much more positive and lighthearted with the extended punctuation. It shows empathy for the client and encourages positive communication. Just be careful not to overdo it!!!!!!! :) :) :) :) :

AGREEMENT WORDS/STATEMENTS/REFLECTIVE LISTENING

Partially, this has to do with client communication in general, but sometimes we remember to do this in person and forget it via email. In any type of communication with a client, not just when responding to complaints, it's important to reflectively listen and validate what they're saying with positive words of agreement and by repeating what they said to you in different words. This lets them know that they were heard and understood, and helps you clear up any potential miscommunication.

SMILE

It's easy to hear in someone's voice when they're smiling as you speak to them over the phone. Although you can't hear a smile through email, actually being excited or smiling while writing an email will definitely help you better communicate a positive attitude, and that upbeat vibe will be felt on the other side of the screen.





KNOW WHEN A PHONE CALL IS BETTER

Normally I respond to my clients in the same way that they contact me. If they email me, I email them back. If they call, I call back. But every once in a while, you have a client email you and in response you really need to pick up the phone. Occasionally, you just can't communicate effectively via email. If you can anticipate not being able to properly respond to a client via email, pick up the phone to save you both time and a potential headache.

TIMELINES

I think getting back to your clients on business days within 24 hours is appropriate. Often I fail at this because I use my inbox as a task list, and I want to get back to my clients when I've completed whatever task they've asked me about. Problem is, then it can be two or three days until I write them back, and that will leave my client feeling neglected. If that's the case with you, just write your client a quick note back telling them you're working on it, keep the email as unread, and get to the actual task when you can. This way, your workflow doesn't change much, but your client feels taken care of.

Another way to improve the timeliness of your email response time is to use a template-based program like Text Expander. This program will save you hours of time, and it's light-years faster than any copy-and-paste method for template emails that you're using now. Just download the free trial. You can thank me later.



EMAIL GROUND RULES

AWAY MESSAGES

Away messages are an important tool, but not one that should be abused. During a wedding weekend, you shouldn't be checking and responding to email while you're working, but you don't want to neglect your clients either. Often, our clients forget that we shoot weddings on the weekends and aren't usually reachable during that time. A kind and informative email reminding them that you're out doing what you do best should be put up on the weekends.

What I don't condone is an away message that is on all the time, which tells your clients that you're too busy to answer their emails in a timely manner. It's annoying to get an auto-reply for every email that a client sends, and it can advertise that you're not managing your time and business very well.

Lastly, an away-message no-no that I personally need to work on is not responding to my clients while I'm supposed to be away. This is confusing for them, and, before you know it, you will have trained your clients to ignore your away message and expect a quick answer from you even if you're on vacation, and then become frustrated if you don't. If you're away, be away. If you have time to respond to their emails, then do it and save them as drafts to send all at once when you're "back."

Above all, use common sense. If you're not sure, read your email aloud to yourself or have someone else read it to see if it can be taken in a way that you didn't intend. There are three key moments when you should never write an email. Check out this video to see what they are. 



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SAL CINCOTTA
www.SalCincotta.com

LOCATION: O'Fallon, IL

PASSION: Weddings & Seniors

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

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

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

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

FEATURED ARTICLES

Finding Success Doesn't Have To Be Hard
Q&A with Sal Cincotta



©Vanessa Joy



ROB ADAMS

www.RobAdamsFilms.com

LOCATION: Freehold, New Jersey

PASSION: Weddings

"Wedding films are my life. It's all about the story-telling. The art of seeing action, drama and beauty unfold and then harnessing the emotion of it all and 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

The Future Of Video



DAMIAN BATTINELLI

www.damianbattinelli.com

LOCATION: Plattsburgh, NY

PASSION: Composites

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

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

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

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

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

FEATURED ARTICLES

Photoshop: Retouching



CONTRIBUTORS



SKIP COHEN

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)

He is also the founder of Skip's Summer School (www.mei500.com), the founder of the Akron Photo Series (www.AkronPhotoSeries.com), and the co-founder of GhostRighters (www.GhostRighters.com), a content resource for professional photographers needing help with editorial content, web re-design and marketing. His blogs, SkipsPhotoNetwork.com and PhotoResourceHub.com, is read by thousands of professional and aspiring photographers. On May 21, MEI launched 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

To 10 Ways To Get The Most Out Of a Tradeshow



©Skip Cohen



MICHAEL CORSENTINO

www.CorsentinoPhotography.com

LOCATION: Petaluma, California

PASSION: Lifestyle Photography

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

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

FEATURED ARTICLES

The Light You Want Without The Lights You Don't!





KRISTY DICKERSON

www.KristyDickerson.com

LOCATION: Atlanta, Georgia

PASSION: Weddings & Engagements

Kristy Dickerson is the founder and CEO of Fisheye Connect (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

Mom First - When Mom & Entrepreneur Collide





JUSTEN HONG
www.VisualLure.com

LOCATION : Caseyville, IL

PASSION : Logo Design

Justen Hong is a St. Louis area-based, award-winning, internationally published graphic designer with works in multiple LogoLounge books, The Big Book of Packaging, plus logos that will soon be featured in a new book published by Artpower International publishing out of Hong Kong. Justen is the owner and head designer at Visual Lure®, which specializes in logo design, graphic design, web design, search engine optimization (SEO) and packaging design, with his true passion being logo design. Justen has a studio art background with a degree in graphic design and a printmaking minor. He also loves art, photography and architecture.

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by Justen Hong

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KRISTEN KORPOS

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). 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).

FEATURED ARTICLE

Top 10 Tax Deductions



CONTRIBUTORS



VANESSA JOY

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

Email Ground Rules



LORINORDSTROM

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

FEATURED ARTICLE

2014 Projections



**BLAIR PHILLIPS**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

Time For A Branding Tune-Up





ROBERTO VALENZUELA

www.robertovalenzuelaphotography.com

LOCATION: Beverly Hills, CA

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

FEATURED ARTICLES

Picture Perfect Critique





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