



Landscape

Photography Magazine 2014 EDITION

The Big **FREE** Edition
Celebrating 3 successful years

201 pages loaded with
highly inspirational content

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Welcome

Dimitri Vasileiou



Hello everyone

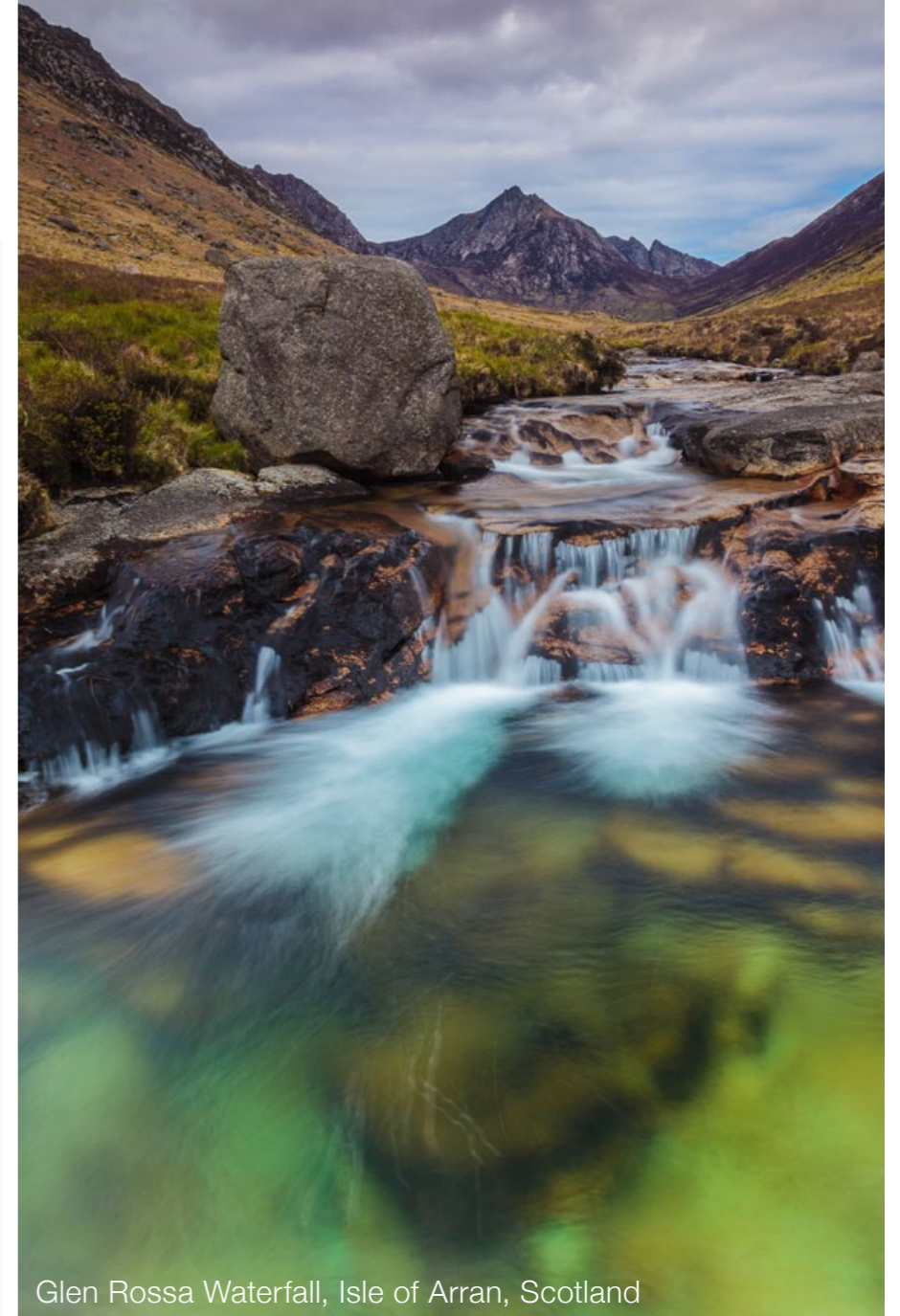
You might recall that in the last editor's letter I mentioned that LPM is now three years old. To celebrate our three successful years, we

decided to release a special edition of the magazine and share it with all our followers absolutely free. I hope we can do this once a year to celebrate LPM's anniversary. I need to bring to your attention that every month we release one feature as free content for all our followers to read. I also need to mention that all material in this special edition has already been published for free within the last year. Now we decided to put all that free content together in one handy special edition.

We tried to include a variety of subjects and interests and I believe that we have managed to create an edition full of highly inspirational content with breathtaking images from around the world.

Finally, I wish to take this opportunity to offer you our gratitude for supporting us in the last three years and I sincerely hope we'll be together for many years to come.

Enjoy



Glen Rossa Waterfall, Isle of Arran, Scotland



Faro de Cabo de Gata

Spain
Cover image by LPM reader ...
Javier Rupérez Bermejo.

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www.landscapephotographymagazine.com

Both images ©Dimitri Vasileiou



Loch Maree Sunrise, Scotland

First Frame

Cerces lake, French Alps, France by Marco Barone from Italy



Editor's Choice



LEE Big Stopper, LEE 0.9 ND Soft Grad
Nikon D3X, Nikkor 24-70mm, 81 sec @ f/11



LEE Big Stopper, LEE 0.9 ND Hard Grad
Nikon D3X, Zeiss 28mm Distagon, 30 sec @ f/11



LEE Big Stopper, LEE 0.9 ND Soft Grad
Nikon D3X, Zeiss 21mm Distagon, 30 sec @ f/11



LEE Big Stopper, LEE 0.9 ND Soft Grad
Nikon D800E, Zeiss 28mm Distagon, 106 sec @ f/11

BIG STOPPER

In my work I try to achieve space and simplicity by transforming the locations I choose into elemental shapes and forms. To achieve this in-camera I mostly work in the early morning light, using long shutter speeds to transform seas and skies into surreal, ethereal forms, which then by default lend space to the composition and draws attention the subject.

Filters are an important part of the process too, and I choose to use the LEE Big Stopper to give me the very long shutter speeds I require. Unlike screw-on filters the Big Stopper lets you recompose and check focus in seconds. As part of the LEE Filter system one can also use the Big Stopper with LEE ND grads easily and painlessly, which, when you're working in temperate conditions, is a real bonus. Wherever I travel, whether it be Greenland, China or Tanzania, the LEE Filter system is always in my camera bag.

Jonathan Chritchley
www.jonathanchritchley.net



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Portfolio

ZSOLT ANDRAS SZABO • ROMANIA



My name is Zsolt Andras Szabo and I am a landscape photographer from Romania. Since my childhood I was always attracted by images.

My passion for mountains and wilderness played an important role in becoming a photographer. I am a self taught photographer and I have improved through plenty of practice. The photography of Marc Adamus had a major influence on my work. I always try to express the feelings and impressions I experience while standing on location, watching the different faces of nature.

www.szabozsoltandras.ro

IN THE BAG

Canon 5D Mk II
 Canon 17-40mm f/4L
 Canon 70-200mm f/4L
 Hoya 77mm CP filter
 Hoya NDX 400
 Manfrotto 190CX pro3 tripod
 Manfrotto 494 RC2 ball head



BUCEGI MOUNTAINS, ROMANIA

Canon 5D Mk II
 Canon 17-40mm f/4L @ 40mm
 f/14, 1.3sec, ISO 100

All pictures © Zsolt Andras Szabo







RODNEI MOUNTAINS, ROMANIA

Canon 5D Mk II

Canon 17-40mm f/4L @ 20mm

f/14, 0.4sec, ISO 100





I always try to express the feelings and impressions I experience while standing on location, watching the different faces of nature



RIGHT • OASULUI MOUNTAINS, ROMANIA

Canon 5D Mk II,
Canon 17-40mm f/4L @ 17mm
f/14, 1/5sec, ISO 100

OPPOSITE TOP • FAGARAS MOUNTAINS, ROMANIA

Canon 5D Mk II
Canon 17-40mm f/4L @ 19mm
f/13, 25sec, ISO 200

OPPOSITE BOTTOM • CIUCAS MOUNTAINS, ROMANIA

Canon 5D Mk II
Canon 17-40mm f/4L @ 40mm
f/14, 0.8sec, ISO 100

ABOVE • RETEZAT MOUNTAINS, ROMANIA

Canon 5D Mk II
Canon 70-200mm f/4L @ 109mm
f/14, 1/20sec, ISO 100





ABOVE • FAGARAS MOUNTAINS, ROMANIA

Canon 5D Mk II
Canon 17-40mm f/4L @ 17mm
f/14, 30sec, ISO 200

BELOW • RETEZAT MOUNTAINS, ROMANIA

Canon 5D Mk II
Canon 17-40mm f/4L @ 17mm
f/14, 2.5sec, ISO 100



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Milos

Aegean's Geological Masterpiece

Having already visited the Greek islands of Santorini, Mykonos and Corfu, fertile places for images of whitewashed houses and tiny domed chapels set among brown rocky slopes, the golden sunsets and azure seas are virtually guaranteed. Would Milos be the same?



Article written by Mike Bell, Elizabeth Restall, David Hay and Dimitri Vasileiou »

When imagining what photographic opportunities a new location would reveal, it is inevitable that past experiences would play their part. When we flew to Milos this year, all of us had already visited and photographed extensively on the Greek islands of Santorini, Mykonos and Corfu. These are all popular tourist destinations and fertile places for images of whitewashed houses and tiny domed chapels set among brown rocky slopes. Golden sunsets and azure seas are virtually guaranteed. Would Milos be the same?

When we were invited to join a reconnaissance trip to Milos by the founder of the "Inspiring Photography" workshops, and LPM editor Dimitri Vasileiou, the first stop was the Internet. A quick check for images of Milos found plenty of holiday snaps but we soon found a site with more promising photographs. Although they were, to some people's taste, over-saturated and some had been subject to HDR treatments, the locations and content of the photographs looked very promising. There were photos of a shipwreck, white sculpted rocks, an old jetty facing the sunset, several churches and, most strikingly of all, a psychedelically coloured rock on a beach with a wave breaking over it. All of these locations looked to be worth a visit.

Our first overnight stop was Varkiza, Dimitri's birthplace and former hometown. We were invited to stay there overnight and catch the next day's afternoon flight to Milos. This is when we tasted the genuine Greek hospitality, as well as an extended barbecue meal complete with

plenty of Greek spirit (the alcoholic kind).

Next morning we had a lovely walk along the shore and a chance to see Varkiza's market and local culture. Time really flies when you are having fun though and soon we were at Athens airport once again. From the hustle and bustle of Athens we were transported to a different world in just 40 minutes in a twin-propelled, 37-seater plane.

Borne on a light breeze, delicate aromas of wild herbs, thyme, oregano and curry assailed our senses on the short drive from Milos airport to the hotel. The sun shone from a deep blue sky and the Aegean lapped gently along the shore.

The island has quite a small population of local people, less than 5,000. This meant that, away from the few towns, we had the scenery to ourselves; »

PREVIOUS PAGE • THE WAVE

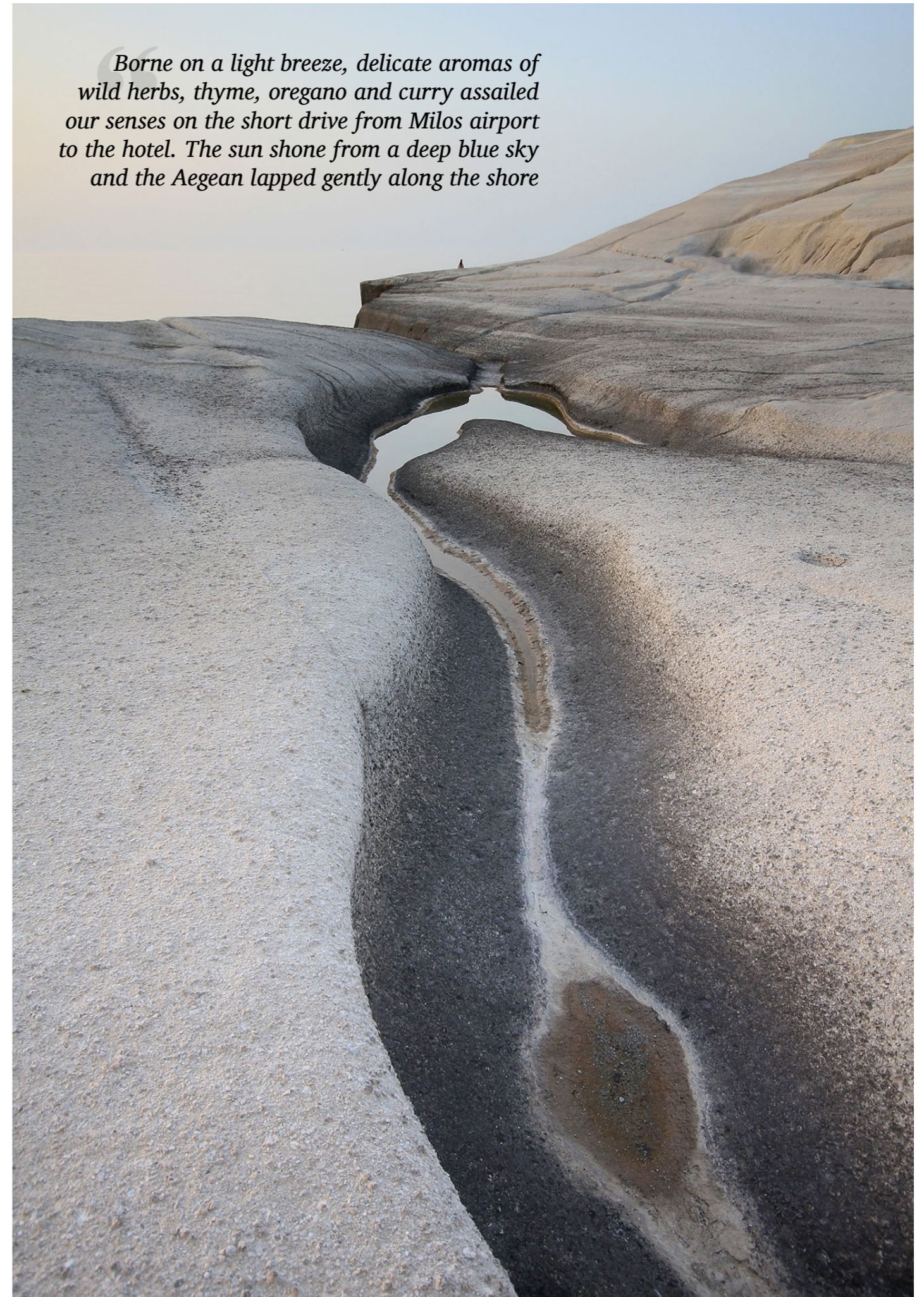
Dimitri Vasileiou, Canon 5D Mk II
Canon 24mm f/2.8
f/16, 3.2sec, ISO 100

RIGHT • SARAKINIKO

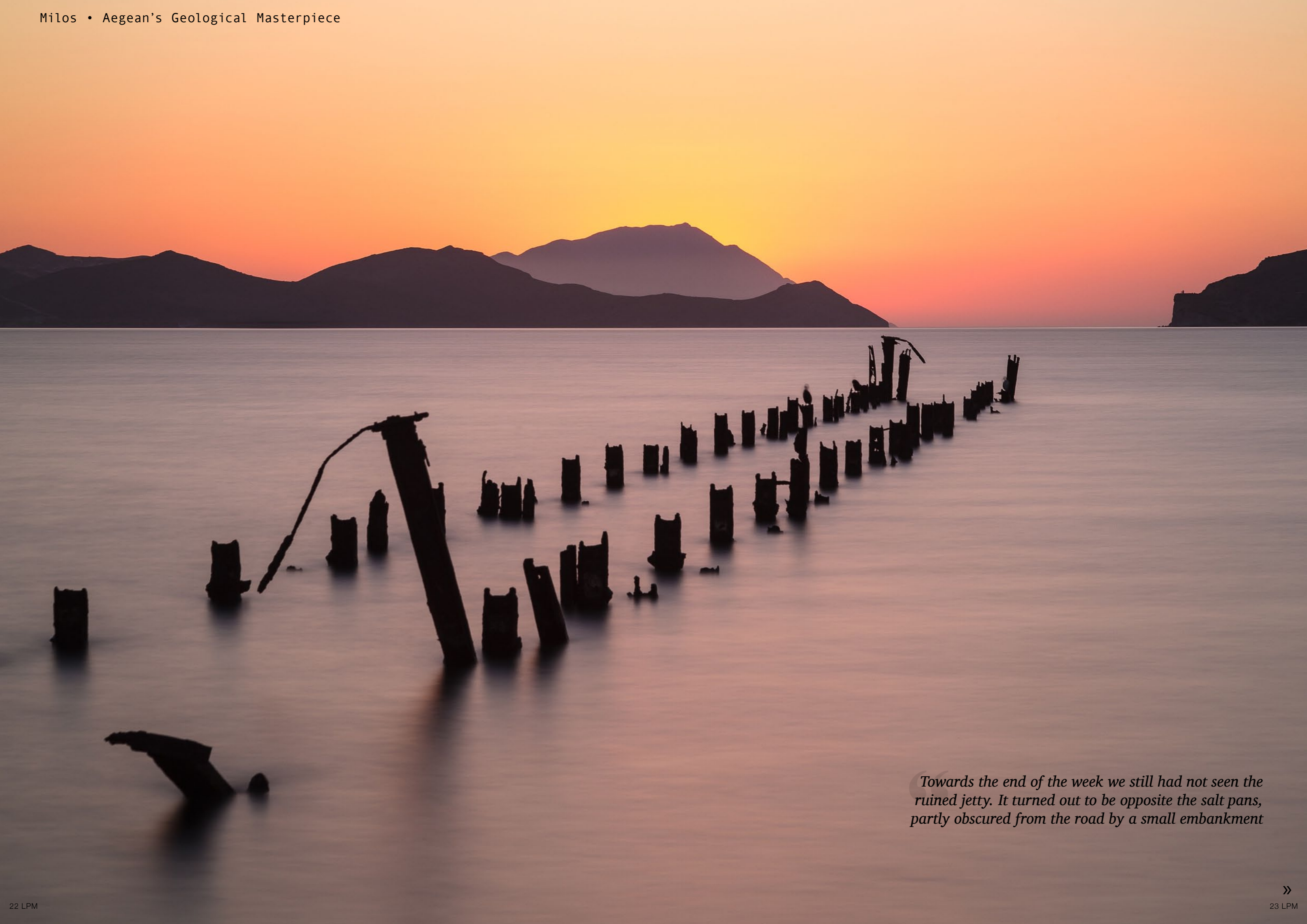
David Hay, Canon 60D
Canon 10-20mm @ 14mm
f/5.6, 1/50sec, ISO 200

BELOW • VIEW FROM CHAPEL

Mike Bell, Canon 5D Mk III
Canon 70-200mm f/4L IS @ 200mm
f/11, 15sec, ISO 100



Borne on a light breeze, delicate aromas of wild herbs, thyme, oregano and curry assailed our senses on the short drive from Milos airport to the hotel. The sun shone from a deep blue sky and the Aegean lapped gently along the shore



Towards the end of the week we still had not seen the ruined jetty. It turned out to be opposite the salt pans, partly obscured from the road by a small embankment

» this is always a bonus for landscape photographers. Tourists are still something of a rarity on Milos. The driver taking us to our hotel was genuinely curious about where we had come from. He explained that Milos shares the economic pain of the rest of Greece and that tourism is important to the inhabitants, but not to all the landowners on the island. Perhaps the big mining companies would prefer to keep the island to themselves.

Mining has always been important on the island, ever since Milos was the main source of sulphur to the Ancient World. Milos is not a pretty island in the same way, for example, that Santorini might be described. Yes, it has whitewashed houses and an abundance of blue paint, but the architecture has no particular style to give it a specific identity. What the island does have, though, is a spectacular coastline and an almost entirely volcanic geology like no other.

The abundance of minerals is the key to the visual uniqueness of Milos. Like its neighbour Santorini to the east, it is a volcanic island, but has a much greater variety of minerals and, ultimately, a larger variety of colours to offer. If you know where to look, there are landscapes unlike anywhere else in Europe. At one point we were reminded of the desert rock formations of the South West of the USA, with rich reds, golds and yellows every bit as vivid as those found in the national parks of Utah and Arizona. On other occasions

we saw lava fields eroded into natural arches just like those found in Iceland.

Mining activities are still being carried out in the interior and the mines revealed the most striking aspect of Milos, the geology. The colours present in the rock strata are truly remarkable. There are many places in the world where landscape photographers can photograph colourful rock structures but these are usually in desert areas, sometimes in remote places that are difficult to access. There »

PREVIOUS PAGE • OLD JETTY

Dimitri Vasileiou, Canon 5D Mk II
Canon 28-200mm f/3.5/5.6 @ 90mm
f/16, 30sec, ISO 50

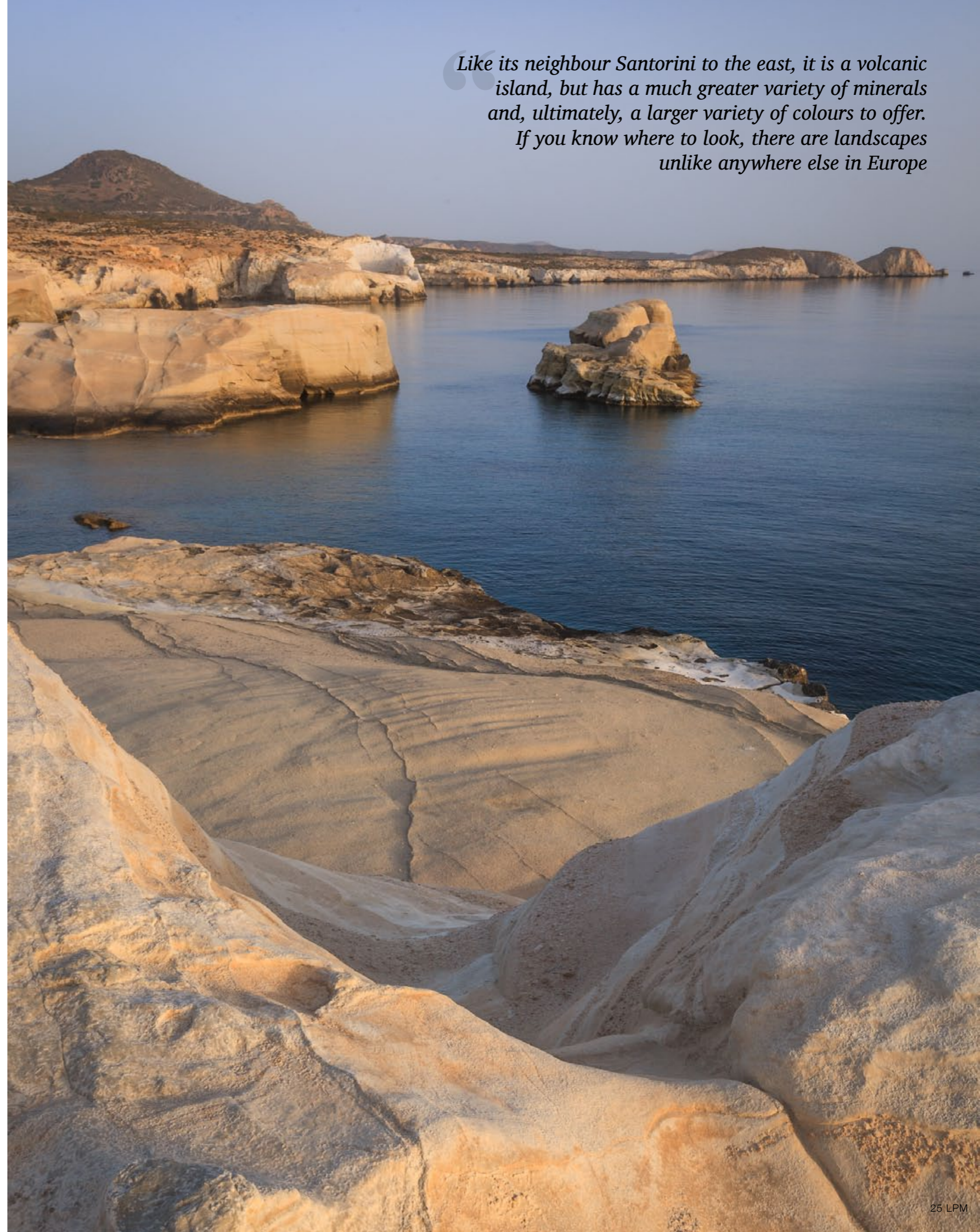
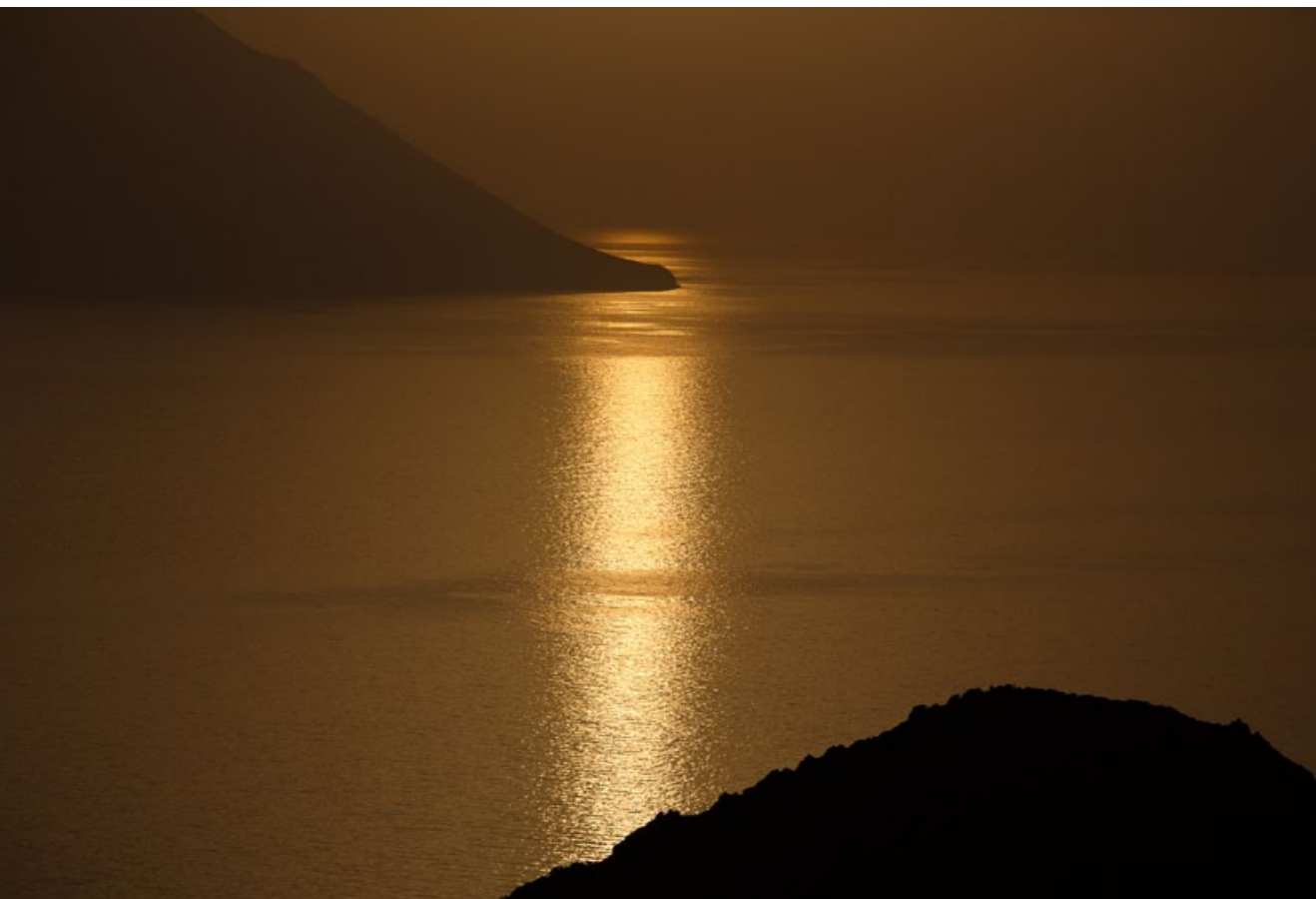
RIGHT • SARAKINIKO

Elizabeth Restall, Canon 5D Mk II
No EXIF available

BELOW • SUN REFLECTIONS

Mike Bell, Canon 5D Mk III
Canon 70-200mm f/4L IS @ 200mm
f/11, 1/1250sec, ISO 100

Like its neighbour Santorini to the east, it is a volcanic island, but has a much greater variety of minerals and, ultimately, a larger variety of colours to offer. If you know where to look, there are landscapes unlike anywhere else in Europe





» are also many places in the world where coastal, long exposure photography can be practised. But we had never experienced the combination of photo opportunities found on Milos where dramatically coloured rock structures are found right on the shoreline. With long exposure images being the latest fashion in landscape photography, Milos can be described as the ultimate photographic destination.

The photographic opportunities on the island are endless, as we discovered on our first evening's exploratory visit to Sarakiniko. Lying before us was a large area of white volcanic rock which, because of a total absence of vegetation, resembles a lunar landscape. In fact, the rock formations, arches and pillars are layered deposits of pumice and ash sculpted by erosion. The rocks pick up and reflect all the colours at sunrise and sunset. On one occasion, an iPhone app indicated that, just after sunset, a full moon would rise behind us. We were able to try landscape photography by the cool light of the moon, absolute utopia. Several visits were made to this area alone, but even those were not long enough to do the place justice.

One morning after a dawn shoot, while searching for somewhere to have breakfast, we were directed to a local establishment, which sparked one of those exciting moments of serendipity. Without the kindness of the lady cooking omelettes for us and the direct result of telling her that we were photographers, we may not have discovered a hidden area of white and red rock, which thrilled our eyes once more, challenged our creative skills, and demanded more visits. The soft early morning light seemed to give the best results as it kissed »

RIGHT • THE CHANNEL

Dimitri Vasileiou, Canon 5D Mk II

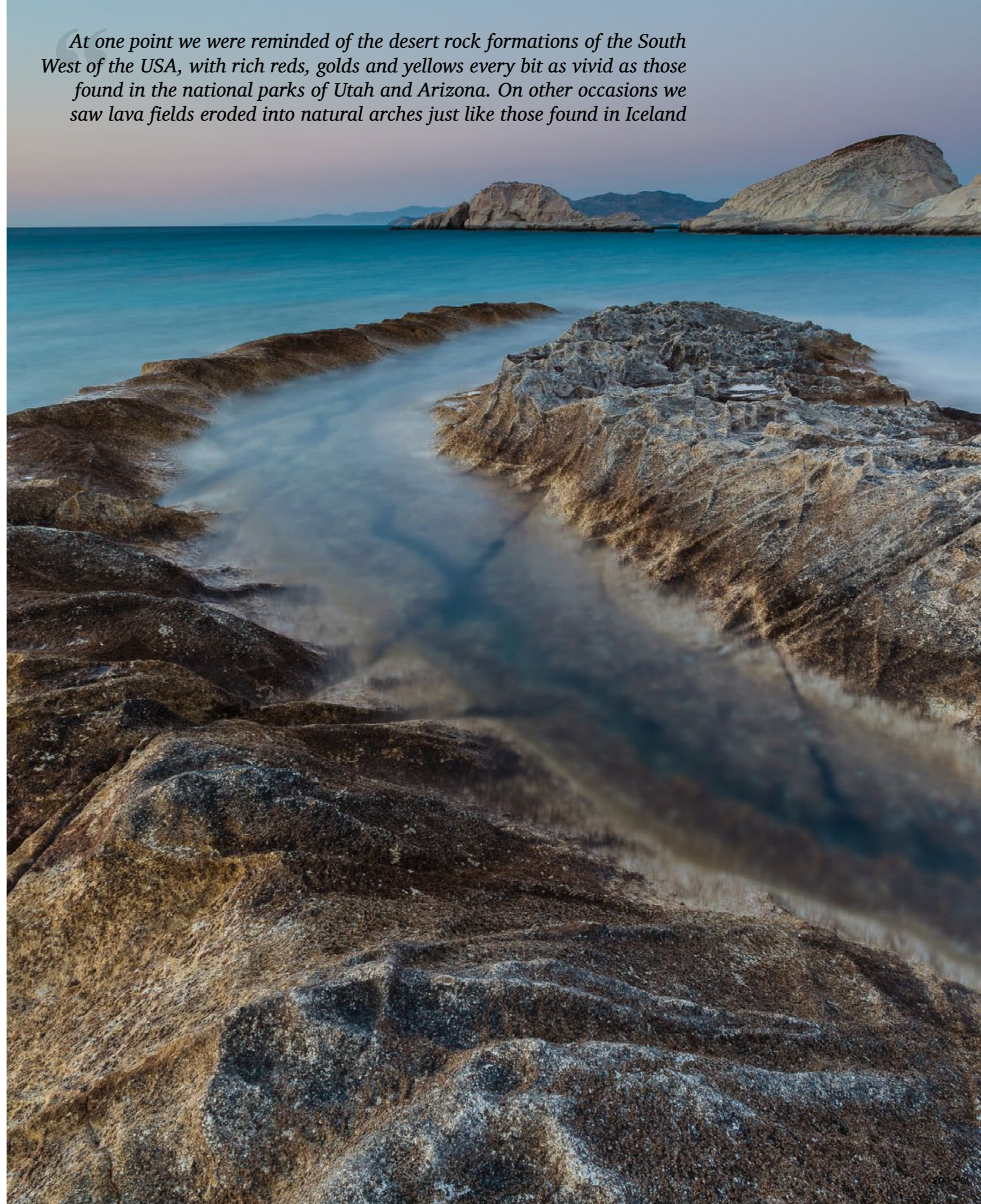
Canon 24mm f/2.8

f/22, 60sec, ISO 100

BELOW • COLOURFUL MILOS

Elizabeth Restall, Canon 5D Mk II

No EXIF data available



At one point we were reminded of the desert rock formations of the South West of the USA, with rich reds, golds and yellows every bit as vivid as those found in the national parks of Utah and Arizona. On other occasions we saw lava fields eroded into natural arches just like those found in Iceland



» the stone gradually and added warmth to the colours. We named the place “The Wave”.

Once off the tarmac we travelled on narrow, rough terrain, never quite knowing what was around each corner; a 4 x 4 vehicle was essential. We discovered many delightful spots, some of which had photographic potential, others not, and some which were accessible to view only from the top of a cliff or from a busy road.

Where tourism has flourished (relatively speaking) is in the main port of Adamantas and the hilltop capital Plaka. These have many fine restaurants and hotels. Adamas or Adamantas (as it is known) was a good place to have a long, lazy Greek meal at lunchtime. Sitting in the shade beside

the calm Aegean, while waiters scurry across the road between traffic to deliver a variety of Mezze dishes, is a good time to reflect upon the morning's photographic shoot and decide where to go later in the day, perhaps to the white hill-top capital town of Plaka for dinner. Speaking of lunch and dinner, we tried a different local dish almost every day. We were not disappointed, as the local cuisine is superb and most of the dishes could be described as gourmet food. This alone is a good excuse to visit the island again next year.

The sunset from the church above Plaka's old town is spectacular. There are also narrow alleys with lovely painted doorways to explore. Whitewashed chapels can be found all over the »

The soft early morning light seemed to give the best results as it kissed the stone gradually and added warmth to the colours. We named the place “The Wave”

SARAKINIKO

Dimitri Vasileiou, Canon 5D Mk II
Canon 28-200mm f/3.5-5.6 @ 32mm
f/13, 25sec, ISO 100

» Greek islands and Milos has its share, with many of them alone in the stark volcanic landscape, clear of all the modern clutter that can ruin photographic lines of sight on other islands. There is even some mining heritage to explore. Sulphur is no longer mined on Milos but the abandoned sulphur mines to be found down a tiny rocky track on the east coast are an evocative reminder of harsher times.

The shape of Milos is similar to a horseshoe, with the sea enclosed on three sides. The west side of the island is more rural and has fewer main roads, making travelling more adventurous, but it was here on the coast at Ebourios that we found a tiny community of houses and goats with a disused but immaculately maintained lighthouse, which provided innumerable graphic photographs.

Towards the end of the week we still had not seen the ruined jetty. It turned out to be opposite the salt pans, partly obscured from the road by a small embankment. When we checked it out in the early evening, a Greek Navy ship was anchored in the bay. While having a meal we met the sailors from the ship, who confirmed it would sail at dusk. We were able to get some great photographs that evening, both with and without the ship.

STONE SCARS

David Hay, Canon 60D
Canon 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 IS @ 18mm
f/11, 1/6sec, ISO 200



So, why is Milos not better known to landscape photographers? It is because of the difficulty in accessing the best locations. Apart from a few main routes and some improvements made by the mining companies, the roads on Milos are narrow, winding, gravel tracks reminiscent of the tracks in the deserted interior of Iceland. The photographic gems are quite literally off the beaten track.

During the week we were there, we covered the whole of the island looking for photographic locations. Only the very best locations were selected for the forthcoming photographic workshop by "Inspiring Photography". That is the advantage of going on a professionally organised workshop: all the legwork has been done for you and you will be taken only to the best locations at the most photogenic times of day. So, do we recommend a photographic trip to the island of Milos in Greece? Definitely, yes. ✦

For further details and to book your place for this upcoming Milos photographic tour with "Inspiring Photography" click the link below.

<http://inspiring-photography.com/workshop/milos-aegeans-geological-masterpiece/>



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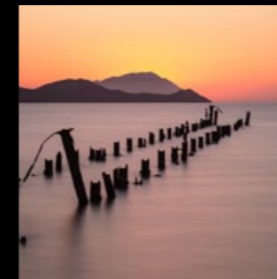
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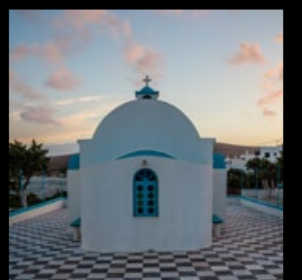
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Kevin McNeal

Originally from Vancouver, Canada, and now residing in Seattle, **Kevin McNeal** is fortunate to live in close proximity to the Great Cascade Mountains with their amazing scenery and vast amounts of potential for landscape photography

Interview by Dimitri Vasileiou

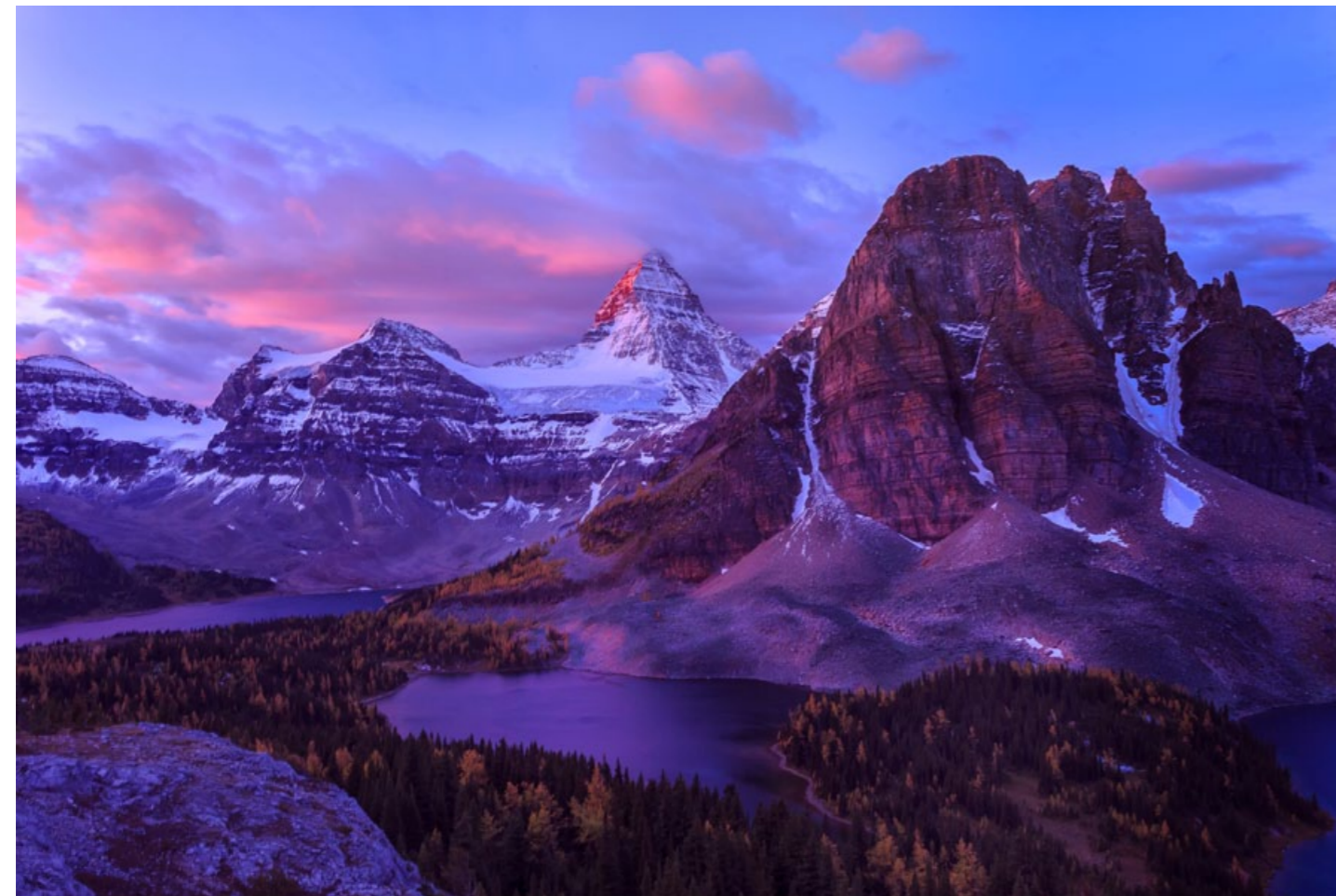


This first question might be the toughest of the lot but... why landscape photography? The reason I love landscape photography so much is because I absolutely love to be outdoors. I like the solitude and quietness you achieve when you are by yourself out in nature. Another reason I enjoy landscape photography is because it is a good reminder of all the stunning locations that I have witnessed so far.

If not landscape photography, what other genre?
I did try wildlife when I first began but just didn't have the patience or the money for it. Besides, no matter how quiet I tried to be I always made too much noise and scared the wildlife away. I was not too popular with other wildlife photographers.

Looking at your images, it is obvious that you are in love with landscape photography. Is this love passion or obsession?
I think it is a bit of both. It is the passion that gets me up at 3am to drive all night but the obsession to get better and better. With photography there is always something you can learn and do better the next time. One of the ways I try to get better is by examining the work of other photographers and seeing what they are doing; that makes it so special for me. It is always nice when one's work is well rewarded and people enjoy it.

All pictures © Kevin McNeal



Can you recall when you started falling in love with photography?
I fell in love with photography when I was working as an assistant cruise director on a cruise line that was sailing around the world. Up to that point I had not seen much of the world and had been very sheltered. Working on the cruise ship opened my eyes to the stunning beauty that is all around us. I needed to find a way to capture this to show the people back home the things that I had seen. Photography was the medium. The problem was that I had taken all those images on the ship with a point and shoot camera and none of the images came out, so that's what inspired me to quit the cruise ships and start photography full-time.

You are a resident of the Pacific Northwest. Tell me about the area.
I am originally from Vancouver, Canada but met my wife while working on a cruise ship that went to »

PREVIOUS PAGE

Mt Seymour Provincial Park, BC, Canada

RIGHT

Abraham Lake, Canadian Rockies, Alberta, Canada

BELOW

Mt Assisboine, BC, Canada



» Alaska. A few months later we were married and, when it came down to deciding whether to live in Vancouver or Seattle, I chose Seattle because of its proximity to the Great Cascade Mountains such as Mount Rainier, Mt St Helens, and Mt Baker. One of the things I love most about the area I live in is the diversity in seasons and variety of colors, from vivid greens, to pink reflected snow, to the mountain wildflowers. And, if I get bored of that, I am only two hours away from the Olympic Peninsula.

You travel all over North America with your wife by your side. Are there any downsides to this?

There is no downside to my wife being with me on my travels. She is my best friend and she is somebody I love being with every minute of the day. She carries an iPad with her wherever we go so she always has something to read or do. Luckily for me she is a very patient girl and finds things to do while I am shooting.

You have been asked to join the International Environment Photographers Association. A few words on this?

It is a big honor for sure. If there is any way or anything I can do to spread the word that our planet is worth saving, I will do it.

Your favourite photographer?

For sure, my favorite photographer is Marc Adamus. He pushes all the boundaries of creativity and new levels when it comes to landscape photography. I have never met someone who does more to achieve his dreams and goals than he does. He inspires me every day to keep pushing myself to new levels. I also look up to the other photographers in my Photo Cascadia group. They all show so many different talents when it comes to landscape photography.

Your favourite image?

When it comes to my favorite image from another photographer that would have to be just about any image from Marc Adamus. His images tell a story and, when you know how much dedication went into each image, it makes it that much more special.

Your own favourite image?

The one on the right is one of my all time favorite images. »

RIGHT
Coastal Mountains, BC, Canada

BELOW
Picture Lake, North Cascades NP, Washington, USA







» What camera gear are you using and why did you choose it?

Currently I am using the Nikon D800 with the Nikon 14-24mm lens. My favourite style of landscape photography is the near-far perspective. Thus the wide-angle lens exaggerates the foreground and really pulls the viewer into the image. Having a wide-angle lens like this allows me the opportunity to really tell a story with my images. Until a few months ago I had always used Canon and really enjoyed using it. The reason I switched to the Nikon system was that I needed more megapixels for clients wanting larger print sizes. The Nikon D800 allowed me to achieve that size. So far I am very happy with the results.

Working as a pro photographer, what are the pros and cons you come against on a daily basis?

Without a doubt the pros to doing this professionally is making your living in nature rather than in an office. The cons are that there are so many good photographers in this business that it can be stressful at times. When it comes to the business of landscape photography there is never enough time. The problem of this business has always been how to separate your time out in the field from time at home and time on social media. Finding that balance has always been tough for me. I enjoy my time in the outdoors so

much that business sometimes falls behind.

Besides Marc Adamus, which other photographers influence and inspire you?

There are so many photographers that influence me and inspire me every day. It is those photographers that continually push me to keep going and getting better and better. The photographers in my group Photo Cascadia are always coming up with stunning work.

Sometimes I don't feel I can keep up. There is just not enough time in the day to keep up. I find the photographers that you feature in Landscape Photography Magazine of the highest caliber and all of them make up my favorite photographers. »

PREVIOUS DOUBLE SPREAD

Vik, Iceland

ABOVE

Maroon Bells Aspen, Colorado, USA

RIGHT

Two Medicine Lake, Glacier NP, Montana, USA



» Are you a self-taught photographer?

I am indeed a self-taught photographer. I picked up photography while working on the cruise ship and learned Photoshop at the same time. I started doing photography as an activity on the ships. I would take passengers out on excursions while we were in port and then, during the days at sea, I would teach Photoshop with the images they took on the trips.

Your favourite location in the Pacific Northwest?

My favorite location has to be Mt Rainier. It has so much diversity from season to season and is always changing in terms of the landscape. There is so much to cover there that it never gets boring. My second favorite is the Palouse in the springtime because of the stunning greens.

Very soon you will be in Tuscany, Italy. I know you love the Palouse, does this trip have anything to do with the location's similarities with that region?

It is funny that you mention it. This is the very reason that drew me to Tuscany in the first place, the similarity with the Palouse. The green rolling hills and the way the light changes the

landscape. This has always been what draws me to both Tuscany and the Palouse.

You will be visiting Norway in 2014. Are you planning on photographing the country during the winter months?

My favorite type of landscape photography has always been winter photography. I love shooting sunrises and sunsets in the winter months with fresh snow. Seeing the images that came from Norway during the wintertime was something I fell in love with. To this day I keep a file of all the images that inspire me from there. This is what drives me and allows me to pre-visualize »



RIGHT
Steptoe Butte, The Palouse, Washington, USA
BELOW
Death Valley, California, USA





» the images, so I am hoping to come away with some images from there. I will also be visiting Finland and Sweden during these coming winter months.

Dream location that you wish to visit at some point in your life? Some of the dream locations that I hope to visit at some point are any locations that have northern lights and fresh winter snow. I love the way the northern lights reflect on fresh white snow in places such as Iceland, Norway, Yukon, and Alaska during the winter months.

You must have a photographic experience that will stay with you forever, can I hear the story? I have so many stories and I am not sure why they always happen to me but they do. One particular event that happened to me this last month was when I was hiking a fairly lengthy trail and ended up pushing the front of my toes into the hiking boots to the point that my boots filled up with blood. With four miles to go and not being able to walk anymore in my hiking boots, I walked the rest of the way bare-footed. It was very difficult and hard on

the feet to walk over the rocks. I became delirious and fatigued from the hike and eventually I passed out and injured my replacement hip in the last half-mile and pulled the hip out of the socket. I spent the following week in bed, not even being able to go to the bathroom without help.

Another funny story happened a few years ago while I was in Hawaii with my wife. We were making our way down a steep

Some of the dream locations that I hope to visit at some point are any locations that have northern lights and fresh winter snow

I had noticed I had come across a group of naked people swimming at the base of these falls. As I screamed for my wife to come down and help me she noticed the naked people and refused to help, insisting I only wanted to look at the naked women. Without

cliff to the bottom of a very famous waterfall. Just as I was nearing the bottom of the trail, I slipped and broke my foot in six places. It was at this time that

hesitation she headed back up and assumed I was stalling. Not being able to move, I had to ask for assistance from these women to get me back up the hill, as my wife had left me at the bottom without helping me. I finally made it back up the hill by crawling on my hands and knees for the next two hours. When I finally arrived at the top I was met by my angry wife, who did not believe me about my foot. She only came to believe my story a few days later when we finally saw a doctor and he told my wife that I must have been super brave to crawl back

up that hill with my foot broken in six places. Needless to say, I have never let my wife forget that story! »

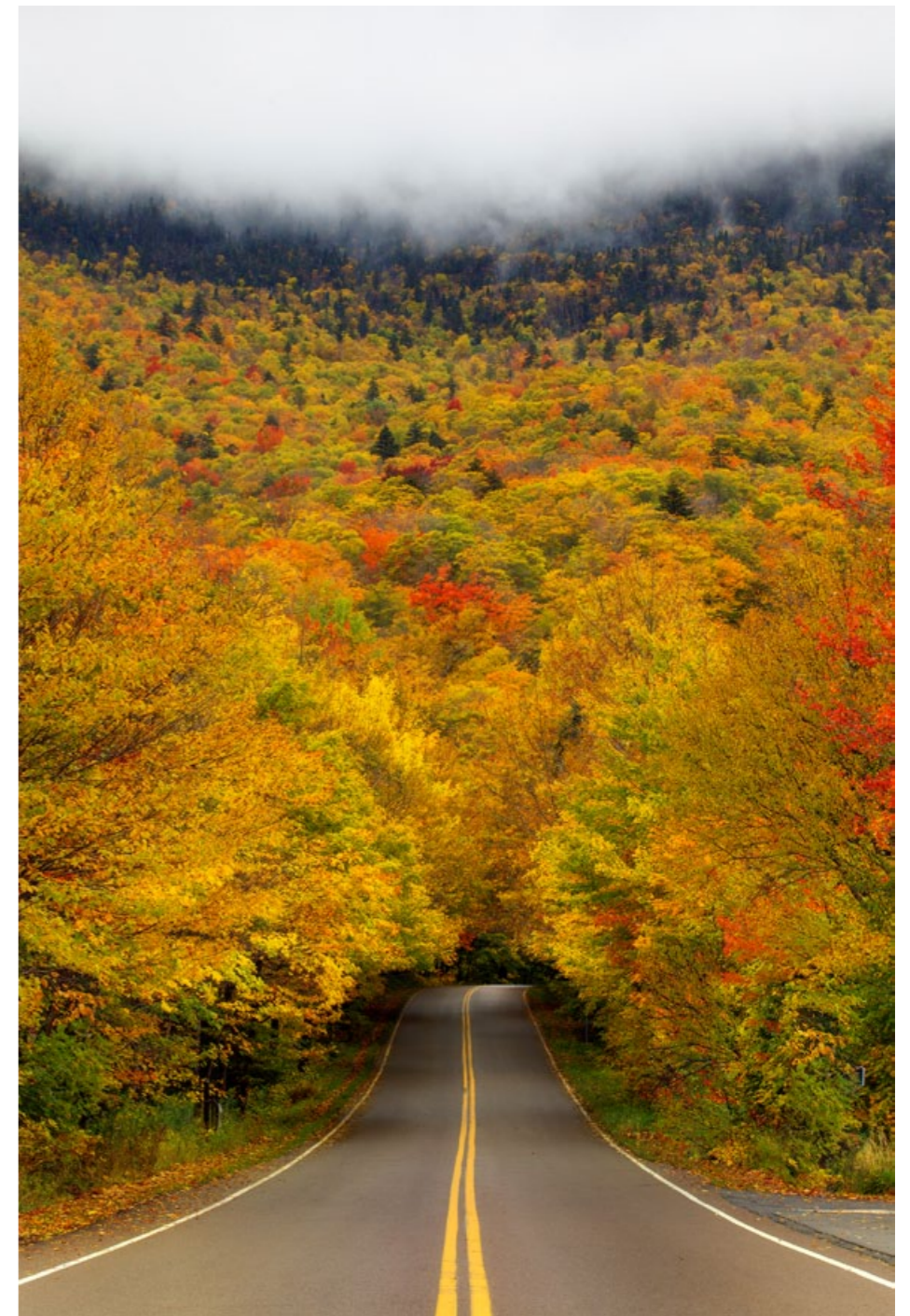
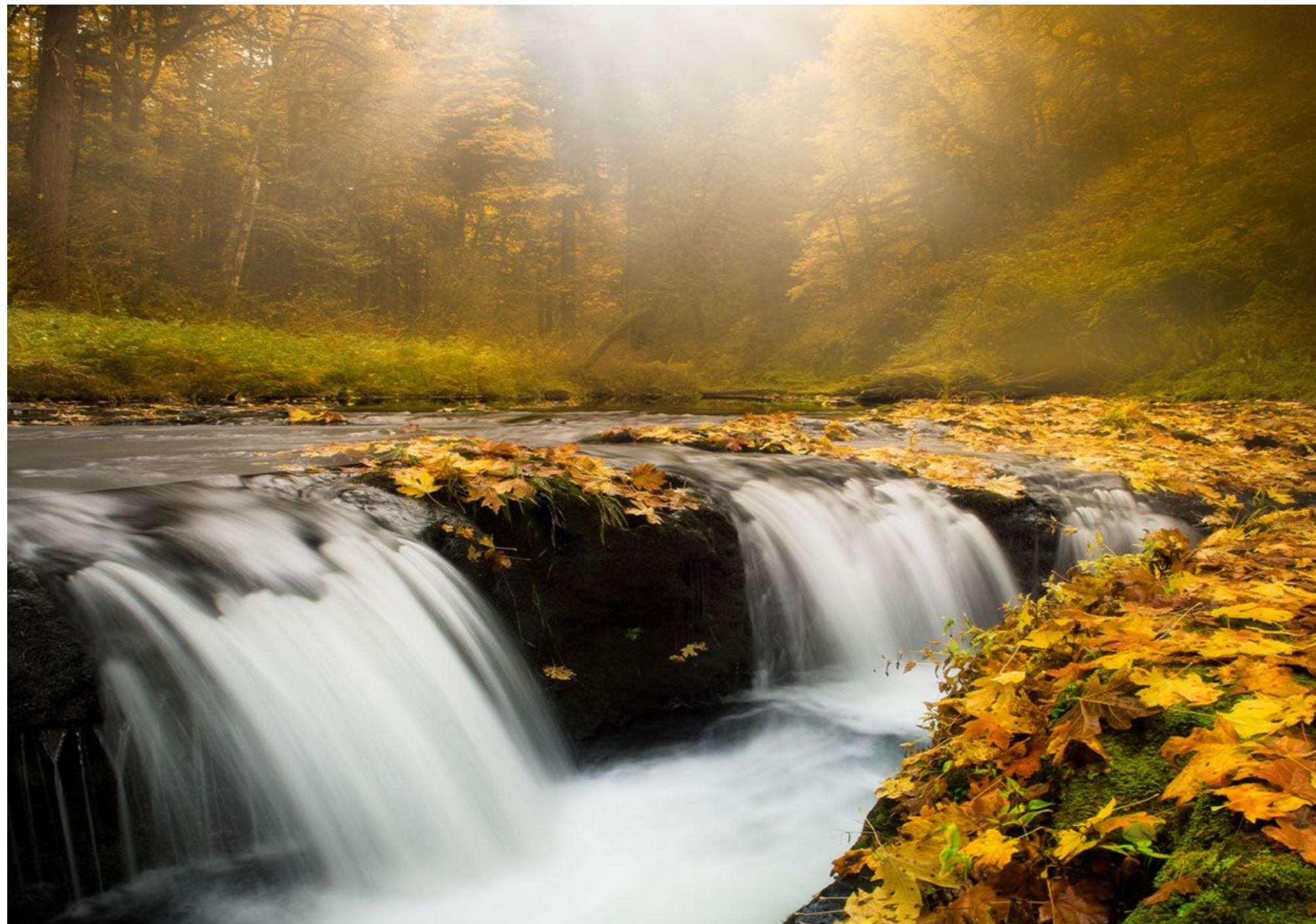
PREVIOUS DOUBLE SPREAD
Yosemite NP, California, USA

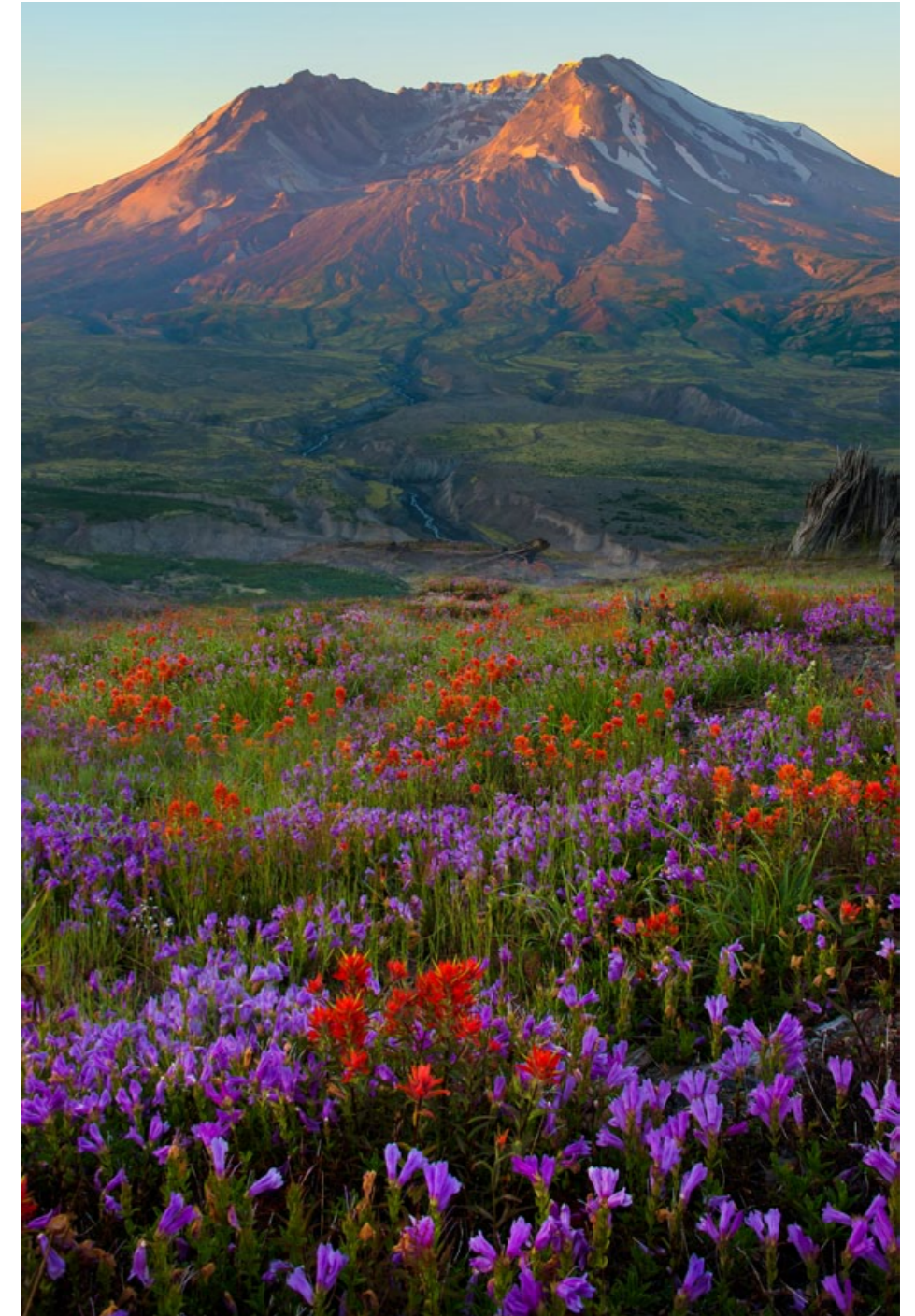
BELOW LEFT

Silver Falls SP, Oregon, USA

BELOW RIGHT

Smugglers Notch, Vermont, USA





» You have been teaching workshops for the last couple of years. Are they successful and why? I love teaching during my workshops, especially to people who are as passionate as I am. It is nice to work in close quarters with people that have the same interests as you. The workshops have been a success over the last few years but, with the amount of workshops now being offered by others, it makes it tougher and tougher every year to raise the bar. Many people run workshops and many have

no experience when it comes to landscape photography.

You also teach Adobe Photoshop classes. Any really good tips to share? There are so many tips when it comes to Photoshop that I would love to share. The most current one that I use is focus stacking and the auto-align. I take three to five images at f/9 and combine them for great depth of field. The results are fantastic, and with a 36-megapixel camera, the finished result mirrors that of medium format. From this point

I use layer masks and blending to really highlight the subject. I also like to use the vibrance tool in local adjustments to really draw the viewer's eye where I want to in the picture. I really try to get most of the image done in Camera Raw so it is less destructive.

You have been published in several magazines including National Geographic. Are we going to see you writing articles about the locations you visit for Landscape Photography Magazine perhaps? That would be fantastic. My main

goal when shooting landscapes is to enjoy the moment and not worry about whether the image will work or not. At the end of the day I am still getting out in nature and seeing things that most of the world will never see.

Any plans on publishing a book? I would love to publish a book but I can't seem to stop myself from getting outdoors. The constant challenge of getting a better image always works at me so I never end up working on the business aspect of it. I love being in nature shooting landscapes

so much that I don't really have a concern whether I make a lot of money, as long as I continue to enjoy what I am doing.

Any regrets so far? I have no regrets so far and every experience has been an important one. I have always felt that every experience is one to learn from. These days I am learning more than I ever have, especially from the mistakes I make. »

ABOVE
Johnston Ridge
Mt St Helens, Washington, USA

ABOVE LEFT
Indian Henry
Mt Rainier NP, Washington, USA

» If you could turn back time, what advice would you give to a younger Kevin about photography? I wish I could go back in time and tell a younger Kevin to start photography as soon as he can, because it is something that will change his whole outlook on life. Unfortunately, I don't think I was ready at the time to see all the positive aspects of photography. I was too busy chasing girls and traveling the world.

How do you see your photographic future? You never know what the future of photography will be. With

everybody owning a digital camera these days, especially with more and more megapixels and cameras that do all the work for you, I might not have a job in a few years time. So, I am enjoying it while it lasts.

What advice would you give to our readers? Not to take it too seriously. I see many photographers these days base their success on the images they bring back home and not the experience. For me, it is all about enjoying the moment. There are so many benefits to being out in nature that I can't ever imagine doing anything different. ✦



Kevin McNeal
Kevin is a landscape photographer who resides in the Pacific Northwest of the USA. He focuses on grand colorful landscapes that reflect the most unique places on earth. Kevin travels all over North America, shooting diverse landscapes and finding remote places to bring the message to the public that this Earth is worth saving.
www.kevinmcnealphotography.com

I wish I could go back in time and tell a younger Kevin to start photography as soon as he can

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Making Portfolios

Portfolios are collections of images sharing a common theme, be it subject matter, style or narrative. This simple definition, however, fails to express several important aspects of image portfolios that are worth considering by those looking to advance their work once such goals as technical excellence are achieved. Guy Tal has the story

I like to think of photography as an expressive medium, in the sense that images can be a means of communicating notions, facts, thoughts and feelings. In this context, I can draw parallels to other media such as spoken or written language. Where single images may express succinct statements or the significance of singular events, portfolios can encompass richer and more complex stories, unfolding over time and geography and the evolution of the artist's own skills and sensibilities. Herein lies the true value of portfolios: they impose a very different mind-set and mode of work than the pursuit of single images. The focused exploration of a given subject, place, or theme enriches the understanding of both the viewer and the artist alike.

Working on portfolios also decreases the reliance on unique conditions and technical qualities of images. Like any story, some images play lead roles and others offer context, sub-plots and supporting characters. The resulting work goes far beyond superficial impressions of places and subjects made on a random visit. Instead, the artist may express an intimate relationship with the work, evolving through closer and more frequent interactions. As expressed by photographer Minor White: "The meaning appears in the

space between the images". Some photographers think of such efforts in terms of projects, which may be true in some cases. However, projects start with a defined end-goal in mind and a set of arbitrary constraints (time, cost, features, etc.). My own portfolios are very different from projects, in that I do not have an end-goal in mind other than evolving a better understanding of my subject, however long it takes. I work on them not for the sake of accomplishing an end-product, but because they are interesting and rewarding to me and because I care about them. My goal is to share with my audience my own impressions and revelations in the hope that I can make them care about the subject in the same way that I do. This is a very different approach than working on a project.

Having realised the personal and expressive advantages of working on portfolios rather than single images, this had been my primary mode of work in the last few years. Being a writer, I can also draw a parallel between portfolios and books. Often, books begin with a general concept. In the writing process, the book takes on a life of its own, new themes and ideas present themselves as the work evolves; gaps become more obvious; and the story becomes richer and more compelling. The same works

with portfolios. At any given time, I have a few themes on my mind, portfolios at varying levels of maturity, making me more attuned to new concepts and possibilities that may fit into one or another, enhancing both the work and the story as I go along. With a few images identified as the seed for a portfolio, new ones seem to emerge on their own and often without deliberate effort, resulting not so much in working on the portfolio as evolving it.

For those who wish to

venture beyond "hit singles", portfolios offer a wonderful way to turn photography into a more personal and significant pursuit. Pick a theme, place or subject that you care about and to which you have on-going access, and tell its story over time and from different perspectives. Visit it often and seek new interpretations and views you had not explored before. I am confident you will find the experience very rewarding. ✦

With a few images identified as the seed for a portfolio, new ones seem to emerge on their own and often without deliberate effort, resulting not so much in working on the portfolio as evolving it



© Guy Tal



Guy Tal

Guy Tal is a professional photographer, writer and naturalist living and working in the Colorado plateau, a scenic and diverse desert region of the western United States of America. To view his images or book one of his workshops visit

www.guytal.com

Featured Artist

BRAD ELLEMENT • UK



I am a keen and dedicated landscape photographer based in Dorset, UK.

I am in the privileged position of being within range of beautiful

landscapes and seascapes

right on my doorstep, and I love being able to get out and about as often as possible. I've always had an interest in photography, which has been born from my love of the outdoors.

An article of mine has been published within the pages of LPM and two front covers. Also, I have taken part in exhibitions with the National Trust.

I currently use a Nikon D300s and a D90. My lens of choice is the Sigma 10-20mm which offers me superb opportunities to get those wide angle captures. I also use ND graduated filters in order to balance exposures, and a cable release for minimising camera shake in order to make my photographs as sharp and as crisp as possible.

www.braddellementphotography.co.uk

IN THE BAG

Nikon D300s

Nikon D90

Sigma 10-20mm

Nikkor 18-135mm

Nikkor 70-300mm

Lee Filters

Tamrac Expedition 6x backpack



All pictures © Brad Ellement



When did you start photography?

I began photography in 2009. It all stemmed from my love of the outdoors and nature. Being a keen angler, I often sat on the riverbank at dawn in stunning conditions. One day I picked up the camera in an attempt to try to capture these conditions and, since then I have never looked back.

How important is photography for you?

Photography is extremely important to me and I really feel that in today's world it is ever more important. We live in a world where people are becoming increasingly disconnected from their surroundings and nature. Photography reminds us of the beauty of the natural world we live in.

Your favourite image of all time?

The Frozen Forest by David Clapp is my favourite image to date. The Aurora is absolutely spectacular and there is so much energy and life in the image.

Your favourite and most inspiring location?

I have been overawed by Norway, but also love Corfe Castle in Dorset. When the conditions are right, it is like being in another world. Standing on top of the hill next to the Castle above the mist is so surreal and utterly stunning; it is a magical place.

Your favourite photographer?

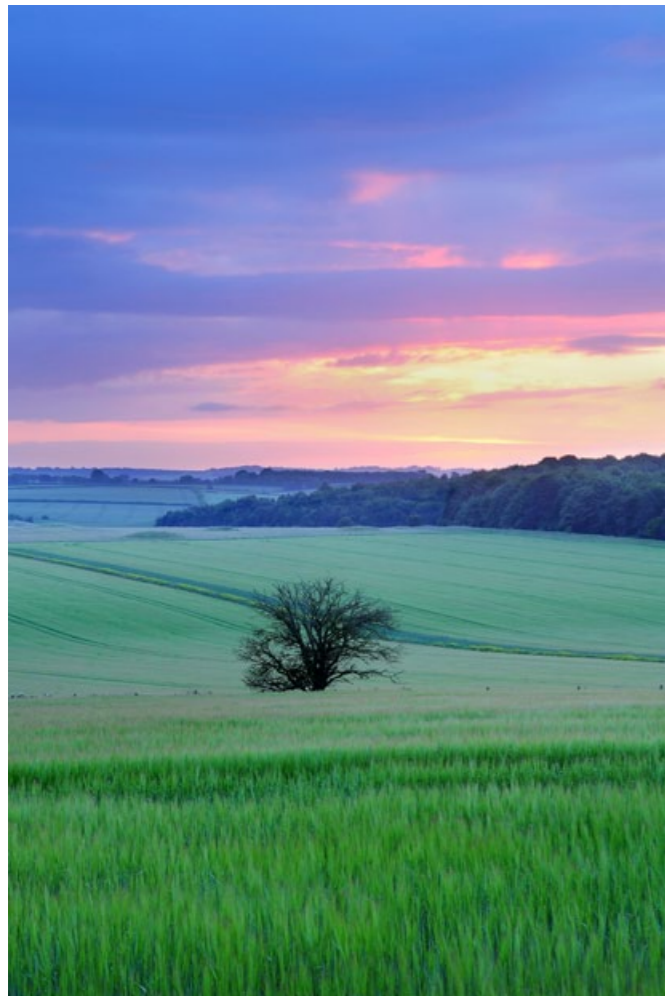
At present for me, in the UK, it is David Clapp. His work is incredible, technically excellent and every image so well crafted. Worldwide, Guy Tal's work impresses me hugely, along with Marc Adamus. I also love Ole Salomonsen's Aurora work from Norway – both his images and timelapse sequences.

What are your future photographic plans?

I have a trip planned next year to Yosemite National Park and Death Valley, which I am looking forward to immensely. I also want to concentrate further on building my technical skills. Along with this I am looking to write more about my photography in an aim to inspire others. So, lots planned.







We live in a world where people are becoming increasingly disconnected from their surroundings and nature. Photography reminds us of the beauty of the natural world we live in



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Dedication To Duty

Sometimes, amazing events and colour displays can happen just after a heavy storm, and such displays enable the creation of inspiring and unique landscape images. **Dimitri Vasileiou** was faced with one such event recently; here is his story

It was the middle of March, 2013 and, as in the previous five years, I was on the Isle of Skye in Scotland running a photographic workshop.

If I said that the weather was very unpredictable at this time of year, it would be an understatement certainly; beautiful sunny days, glorious light sometimes and, even, sudden snow storms. Not that we should complain about the snow storms; after all, they cover the mountain tops with that lovely white velvet blanket which looks so lovely when caught by the first or last rays of the sun.

It is a fact that a landscape photographer's schedule can be harsh, especially outside the winter months, when sunrises are very early in the morning. However, it is something we have to do, as the best light is found during the early hours and, as it is said famously, at the crack of dawn.

This time it was no different either, as the alarm went off at 05:00. I met the rest of the group outside the hotel and we set off for our 20 minutes' drive. Our destination was Loch Fada, on the north-east part of the island, and it was still dark when we arrived. I prefer to arrive on location with plenty of time to spare and to prepare, rather than rushing around trying to catch an event that is taking place already. Usually, the best colour displays can be found around 30-40 minutes before sunrise. You have to be there and ready if you want to capture the display and, most of all, enjoy it at the same time.

I explained to the group that, if we were lucky, we could catch some amazing reflections of the Old Man of Storr on the still waters of Loch Fada. The Storr is a prime example of the Trotternish peninsula landslip, the longest such feature in Great Britain. The area in front of the cliffs of the Storr is known as the Sanctuary. This has a number of weirdly shaped rock pinnacles, the remnants of ancient landslips. The most famous of these, and by far the largest and most apparent when approaching from the south, is known as the Old Man of Storr. We discussed a few options on composition and then, all we had to do was to wait for an interesting display of light.

As it was getting brighter, we could see storm clouds approaching from the distant horizon behind the Storr.

My initial thought was that it was time to pack our gear and go away. In a matter of minutes, a snow storm had started and we had to run for shelter under the nearby trees, as much shelter as trees can provide anyway. It was time for decisions; do we stay, wait and ride out the storm (the day had turned to night at this point) or do we walk back to the minibus and call it a day, or at least a morning. Hot breakfast and a cup of coffee seemed to be a superb idea. I explained that, sometimes, amazing displays happen just after storms such as these and it would be wise to persist, but at first this storm did not seem to be going anywhere.

The snow storm had arrived fast, lasted for a little while, and then left as fast as it had come. We could see the sky clearing in the distance and, within a few minutes, the storm had passed but left some clouds hovering around Storr, by which time the sun was above the horizon. A splash of early morning light turned the hill to

a bright pink and then to an orange glow. It was time to reach for our cameras and start taking pictures of the distant hill; the entire display lasted less than a couple of minutes. I was lucky to catch the second part of that glow with the orange hues, and this month's picture is the result.

Within minutes, the morning had turned into a gorgeous new day, and it was time to capture the second picture of the morning. Persistence pays off; well, sometimes. ✦



Dimitri Vasileiou

Dimitri is the editor of Landscape Photography Magazine, a landscape and outdoor

photographer, writer

and workshop tutor. Dimitri is the owner and tutor of Earth's Beauty Tours, a photographic courses and workshops company.

www.earthsbeyoutours.com



RIGHT • LOCH FADA

Isle of Skye, Scotland

Canon 5D Mk II

Canon 24mm f/2.8

f/16, 1/125sec, ISO 100

BELOW • STORR

Isle of Skye, Scotland

Canon 5D Mk II

Canon 28-200mm f/3.5-5.6

f/8, 1/30sec, ISO 100



© Dimitri Vasileiou



Global Arctic Awards

Conquering the cold heart of the Arctic is a very tough challenge, but nothing is impossible for those truly in love with the North. This new project was supported by the accreditation of the international photo-associations: FIAP, PSA, UPI

The results of the first International contest of the North and Arctic images "Global Arctic Awards" have been finalized! The contest collected together the best images, depicting Northern and Arctic regions in their full splendour.

The gallery of the images of "Global Arctic Awards" consists of the 10 category winners and other images honoured by the members of the jury. The winners from 12 countries, that have submitted the most distinguished images of the picturesque Arctic, were awarded 63 international prizes, additionally they will receive trophies and gifts from the contest partners. The winner of the "Northern lights" category is awarded with a trip to Finland by the "Visit Finland" company.

The images were judged by people truly

passionate about photography. For full details see the "Global Arctic Awards" website.

Entries, that passed the selection round were accepted into the catalogue "The best images of Arctic – 2012" and were also honoured by the Diploma of Global Arctic Awards.

Starting in March of 2013, the winning images of the "Global Arctic Awards" contest are travelling to various countries in a series of exhibitions.

The project was performed with the participation of the United Nations Information Centre, UNESCO, and government of the Yamalo-Nenetskiy autonomous region.

Here we present to you our selection of the best images in all categories.

ABOVE • SLEEPING POLAR BEAR

Svalbard, Norway
Ole Jorgen Liodden from Norway

RIGHT • BEACHED JEWELS

Jökulsárlón Strandur, Iceland
Christian Klepp from Germany



www.arcticawards.ru







TOP • HARD JOB
Greenland - Dmitriy Martynov from Russia
ABOVE • MOONRISE ON THE ICE.
Greenland - Sebastian Copeland from USA
RIGHT • THE LONG & WINDING ROAD
Iceland - Raymond Hoffman from Iceland
FOLLOWING DOUBLE PAGE • SPIRIT OF TRAVEL
Icebreaker "Kapitan Dranitsin" on the ice of the Arctic Ocean
Franz Josef Land, Russia
Vadim Balakin from Russia







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PREVIOUS DOUBLE SPREAD • KILOPÄÄ
Lapland, Finland
Christian Schweiger from Germany
ABOVE • CRYSTAL OF THE NORTH SEA
Jokulsarlon, Iceland
Victoria Rogotneva from Russia
LEFT • THE CRYSTAL GROTTO
Svínafellsjökull Glacier
Skaftafell, Iceland
Christian Klepp from Germany
BOTTOM LEFT • AUSTFONNA WATERFALLS
Svalbard, Norway
Ivan Starastin from Russia



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 - Jason Savage Photography

Read his complete review here: <http://www.jasonsavagephotography.com/gura-gear-uinta-review/>

Photo by: Jason Savage Photography



ABOVE LEFT • THE CALM BEFORE THE POLAR NIGHT
Svalbard, Norway
Stuart Thomson from UK
ABOVE RIGHT • FRESHLY BORN HARP SEAL PUP
Madeleine Island, Quebec, Canada
Gunther Riehle from Germany
FAR RIGHT • ICE REFLECTIONS
Ellesmere Island, Canadian Arctic
Sebastian Copeland from USA
RIGHT • ICE DREAM
Svalbard, Norway
Benoist Clouet from France





ABOVE LEFT • CATEGORY ETHNOGRAPHY

A Nenet's raindeer
Yamal Peninsula, Russia
Denis Sinyakov from Russia

ABOVE RIGHT • CATEGORY PORTRAITS OF NORTHERN PEOPLE

The son of white vertices
Mikhail Vershinin from Russia

FAR RIGHT • CATEGORY NORTHERN CIVILIZATION

Guests from above
Tazovskaya Tundra, Yamal, Russia
Danil Husainov from Russia

RIGHT • CATEGORY MAN AND NATURE

Give me the winter
Sermilik Fjord, East Greenland
Alessandra Meniconzi from Switzerland

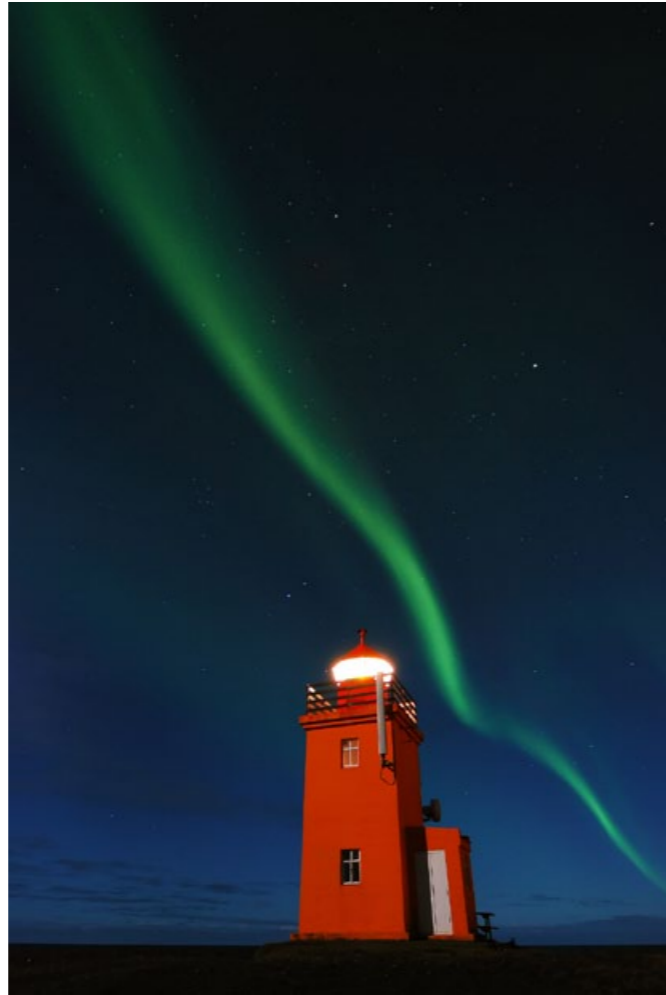


RIGHT • GREEN MILE

Iceland
Piotr Latkowski from Iceland

BELLOW • MANTA RAY

Skaftafell National Park, Iceland
Raymond Hoffman from Iceland



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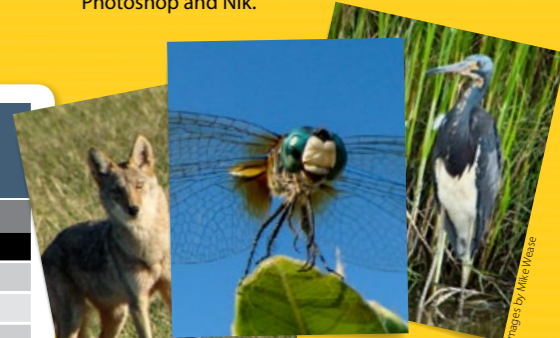
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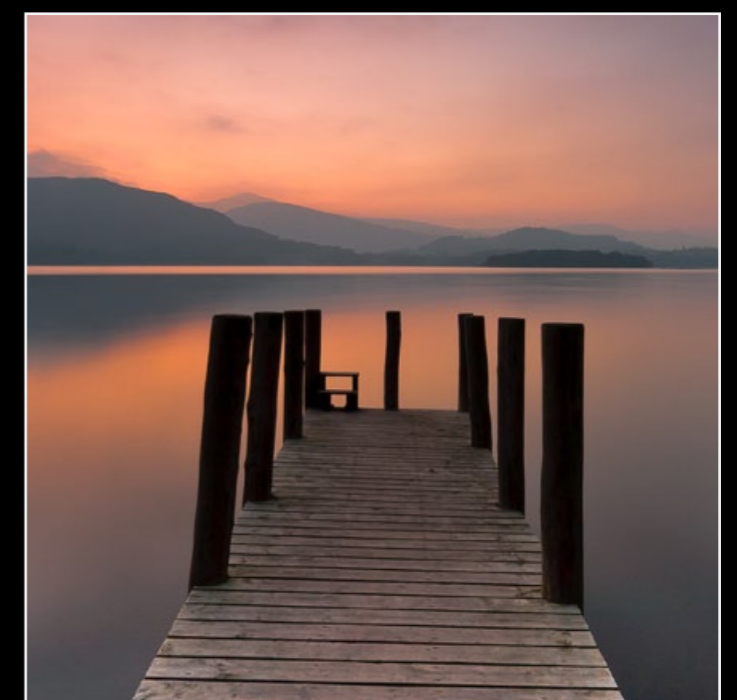


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Portfolio

KONSTANTINOS VASILAKIS • GREECE



Born and raised in Athens Greece was probably the governing factor why my love for landscape photography grew strong. Living in the concrete jungle always urged me to try and find an escape and photography was the means for me to achieve this. I am very fortunate living in a country that has pretty much everything alas in a much smaller scale, which by itself is a challenge since beauty needs to be found, and that is no easy task in a country where its people do not have much respect for the environment they live in.

I started photography in my youth experimenting with my dad's camera which eventually became my own. I took my baby steps in the film era and developed my skill much faster during the digital age.

www.konstantinosvasilakis.com

IN THE BAG



Nikon D3s
Nikon D200
Nikkor 24mm f/3.5 PC-E
Nikkor 17-35mm f/2.8
Nikkor 70-300mm f/4.5-5.6 VR
Tokina 12-24mm f/4
Singh-ray colour intensifier
Nikon MC-36 shutter release

METHONI CASTLE

Southern Peloponnese, Greece

Nikon D200

Tokina 12-24mm f/4

f/6.3, 59sec, ISO 100

9 stop ND

2 stop ND grad soft

All pictures © Konstantinos Vasilakis





I took my baby steps in the film era and developed my skill much faster during the digital age



OPPOSITE • METEORA

Central Greece
Nikon D3s
Nikkor 70-300 f/4.5-5.6 VR @ 230mm
f/11, 1/350sec, ISO 200

TOP • MESSOLONGHI LAGOON

Western Greece
Nikon D3s
Nikkor 17-35mm f/2.8 @ 30mm
f/11, 30sec, ISO 200
Cir-Pol, 1 stop ND grad hard

LEFT • TYMFI MOUNTAIN

Epirus, Greece
Nikon D3s
Nikkor 17-35mm f/2.8 @ 17mm
f/16, 2sec, ISO 100
Cir-Pol, 2 stop ND grad soft





OPPOSITE • VIRGIN FOREST OF FRAKTO

Central Macedonia, Greece

Nikon D3s

Nikkor 24mm f/3.5 PC-E

f/11, 3sec, ISO 200

CP filter, Singh-ray colour intensifier

1 stop soft grad ND

RIGHT • GHOST SHIP

Peloponnese, Greece

Nikon D200

Tokina 12-24mm f/4 @ 24mm

f/11, 57sec, ISO 100

12 stop ND, 2 stop ND grad soft

BELOW • CHIOS ISLAND, GREECE

Nikon D200

Tokina 12-24mm f/4 @ 12mm

f/11, 119sec, ISO 100

9 stop ND, 2 stop ND grad soft





VALIA KALDA NATIONAL PARK
Epirus, Greece
Nikon D3s
Nikkor 24mm f/3.5 PC-E
f/16, 1/20sec, ISO 200
CP filter, 2 stop soft grad ND



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Photographing Namibia

If vast empty spaces, striking sand dunes, amazing wildlife and impressive sunrises and sunsets are your kind of thing, then Namibia should definitely be on your list of places to visit. LPM reader **John Freeman** has the story

*The water and sky merged together
in a shimmering expanse of
azure, white and mineral yellow,
the horizon lost in the vibrant,
blinding haze*

All pictures © John Freeman

Namibia, a land of contrasts, is a vast and largely uninhabited country located in the south west corner of Africa, taking its name from the only true desert in southern Africa, the Namib. In the native Nama language, this word means “open space”, so Namibia is the “land of open spaces” and its name could not be more appropriate. Largely covered by desert, rugged mountains and arid plains, it is the most sparsely populated country in the continent. And, while it is also one of the driest countries in Africa, it has a 1500 km long Atlantic coastline, a foggy, barren wasteland strewn with shipwrecks, the entire length of which has been designated a national park. The country borders with Angola and Zambia to the north, Botswana to the east, South Africa to the south and the Atlantic Ocean to the west.

Until a few days before booking the Namibia trip, I knew relatively little about the country. I knew it was a pretty cool place for photography and remembered seeing haunting pictures of dead trees in the Namib Desert as well as shipwrecks along the Skeleton Coast. Also I had watched some astonishing footage in the BBC documentary “The Living Planet”. But after a quick search of the internet I discovered that, with its

teeming wildlife, stunning landscapes and ease of self-organised travel, Namibia in fact is a photographer’s dream. So, finding ourselves with a couple of weeks free in May 2009, the temptation of a surprisingly cheap flight with Lufthansa (Bologna-Munich-Johannesburg-Windhoek) proved too hard to resist. We realised it would be the perfect destination for a first foray into Africa, booked our flights there and then and began organising the trip.

As luck would have it, May is a very pleasant time of year to visit. Being in the southern hemisphere, Namibia’s hot and relatively humid summer lasts from October through to April. May is therefore the beginning of winter and is dry, cool and relatively green, without the dust that can occur often between June and August. Although the best time of year to view wildlife is slightly later on during the drier months of the year when water in the north of the country dries up and animals are forced to migrate southwards towards the waterholes around Etosha, there still are plenty of opportunities for viewing wildlife.

We soon realised that two weeks really is the bare minimum for a trip to Namibia. So, to make the most of the time available, we decided to focus on »



» three specific destinations: the Etosha National Park, the Skeleton Coast National Park, and the Namib-Naukluft Park. I was especially keen to visit the area of the Namib Desert around Sesriem and Sossusvlei in search of the haunting dead trees and giant dunes I had seen in photographs, but we managed to stay also for a couple of nights in the Naukluft mountains on the way. With three weeks or a month available, other compelling destinations would include: the north of the country with the Caprivi strip and an incursion into Zambia and/or Zimbabwe to view the Victoria falls; and the south, with the Kalahari desert, Fish Canyon and the ghost town of Kolmanskop, an abandoned mining village famous for its brightly-painted houses slowly sinking into the sand.

As Namibia's tourist industry is extremely well-organised and the country generally is safe to travel around on your own, we opted for the independence of a self-drive tour, booking a 4WD Nissan Double Cab from the capital, Windhoek. These specially converted vehicles are ubiquitous in Africa and are fitted out with everything you could possibly need for camping: two fold-out roof-top tents (ideal for keeping well away from snakes and insects), as well as comprehensive camping and cooking gear, including sleeping bags, tables and chairs, saucepans and a gas cooker. We were able to book almost all of our

accommodation (including campsites) in advance over the internet via Namibia Wildlife Resorts (NWR) which manages the national parks (www.nwr.na.com). In some locations, such as the Skeleton Coast, accommodation is very limited, so it is worth booking as early as you can.

After staying a night in the capital, Windhoek, to recover from our overnight flight, pick up our 4WD Nissan and buy food, we set off northwards for the six-hours' drive on the B1 highway towards the Etosha national park.

Etosha National Park

Etosha, which means "Great White Place" is a largely dry salt pan desert about 120 km in length. Part of the Kalahari basin, the salt pan covers about 25% of the park. At the time of our visit it consisted mostly of »

Previous page • The shallow water of Etosha pan reflects the sky in a dazzling mirage, the horizon lost in the blinding mid-day haze

Right • 900-year-old camel thorn tree skeletons stand like sentinels in the Dead Vlei clay pan

Below • The archetypal African landscape: a lone tree at sunset



» dry salt and mud, but with a shallow layer of water shimmering mirage-like in the distance.

There are four rest camps in Etosha, all run by NWR: Onkoshi, Okaukuejo, Namutoni and Halali. We stayed three nights, each night at a different rest camp. Each of the rest camps has its own waterhole, where animals converge to drink at all times of day. They are also floodlit at night, allowing excellent opportunities for watching wildlife (not so great for photography though due to the limited spectral range and strong yellow cast of the floodlights).

While the landscapes in Etosha are interesting in their own way, the real reason for visiting is the wildlife. Zebras, springboks, wildebeest, giraffes, kudu and elephants all abound, but also we saw rhinos at the waterholes and lions on a night safari. I regretted not having a lens longer than 70-200 mm, although many of the animals come so close that the 70-200 mm was fine, at least for shooting wildlife within a natural habitat.

Pure landscape photography in Etosha is a little more challenging. The terrain consists of flat, dry savannah, and for most of the day the light tends to be very harsh. Another difficulty is that, while visitors are free to drive around the park to view animals and the landscape, getting out of vehicles is dangerous and strictly

forbidden except in designated fenced-off areas. This tends to limit compositional scope for landscapes, much of which has to be done by manoeuvring the car to get a good angle and leaning from the window. The main features of note are the classic mopane trees and herds of animals grazing on the softly swaying, pale yellow grassland. The salt pan itself is fascinating and offers scope for interesting abstract compositions. When we were there around mid-day, the water and sky merged together in a shimmering expanse of azure, white and mineral yellow, the horizon lost in the vibrant, blinding haze.

Skeleton Coast National Park

Leaving Etosha and its wildlife behind, we set off westwards towards the coast through the solitary region of Damaraland. This is a semi-desert region in which rugged granite mountains gradually give way to coastal sand dunes. The road west from Outjo via Kohirxas is rough, rugged and almost totally deserted: we encountered almost no human or animal presence apart from a few baboons calling out from the granite outcrops on the distant mountains.

The Skeleton Coast Park stretches from the Kunene River in the north for approximately 500 km to the Ugab River in the south, and protects »



Above • A solitary mopane tree growing near the Etosha pan
Below • Zebra and wildebeest graze in the burning afternoon sun





» about one-third of Namibia's coastline. It is a remote, desolate, windswept area known by the Bushmen as "the land God made in anger". The coast takes its name from the bleached whale and seal bones left on the beaches by the whaling industry in the nineteenth century, but the only skeletons left now are those of more than a thousand shipwrecks littering the coast.

It takes the best part of a day to drive to the Skeleton Coast from Etosha. Unless you fly in, access is via one of the two entrances to the Skeleton Coast National Park (the Ugab River in the south and Springbokwasser in the east). We entered the park via the eastern gate shortly before it was due to close at 3.00 pm, and eventually reached the ocean near the settlement of Torra Bay. By this time it was almost completely dark. We drove the last 20 km through the pitch-black desert to the fishing resort of Terrace Bay in a state of mild apprehension, awed by the sheer scale of the wilderness and the sensation of shadowy, sharp-fanged presences crouching in the darkness.

We stayed three nights in Terrace Bay in a camp run by NWR, sleeping in rather elderly prefabricated bungalows. It is a fascinating area with an end-of-the-world feel. Although the bungalows themselves are a little run-down, the hospitality and restaurant more than make up for it.

The multi-coloured black and ochre sandy

landscape is dotted with small pink and white salt pans, while the dull roar of the Atlantic is an unceasing presence. The weather and lighting conditions are changing constantly as fog rolls in off the ocean. Invariably, each morning we were there was foggy due to the cold offshore Benguela Current in the Atlantic meeting the extreme heat of the Namib Desert. Namibia's coastal regions can experience over 180 days of thick fog a year, an invaluable source of moisture for the flora and fauna. The combination of dunes, the ocean and salt pans offers some unique photographic opportunities, especially at dusk when the sand gleams like tiny jewels in the low angled light.

Leaving Terrace Bay, we drove southwards along the Skeleton coast, passing through a stark, forbidding landscape of gravel and gypsum plains punctuated by the occasional bleak rest station and road signs to points where shipwrecks can be observed. We made an obligatory stop at Cape Cross, home to one of the largest colonies of cape fur seals in the world, which, if you can put up with the stench, offers the opportunity to view up close and photograph these fascinating animals. »

Left and Below • Quiver trees and euphorbia in the Naukluft mountains at sundown





range of hiking trails and some great spots for viewing and photographing quiver trees (*Aloe dichotoma*) at sundown. Although the famous Quiver Tree Forest, a national monument of Namibia, is located in the south of the country, plenty of Quiver trees are located in the Naukluft mountain area. These arboreal aloes are astonishingly photogenic, and at sunrise and sunset their flaky, deep red bark, succulent green leaves and bright yellow flowers stand out vividly against the intense blue mountain sky.

During the trip I found myself taking lots of pictures of solitary or small groups of trees, whether quiver tree groves in the Naukluft, lone mopane trees in Etosha or long-dead camel thorn trees in Dead Vlei. Partly this is because there simply are lots of lone trees in Namibia, and partly because a solitary tree set against a huge sky is the archetypal image of the African landscape, encapsulating a sense of vastness and solitude. Small groups of trees on the other hand seem to express a longing for companionship shared by the wild animals and humans, a kind of small tribal »

The sense of sheer isolation of camping alone in the depths of the African night, surrounded by the sounds of nocturnal animals and gazing at the stars of a southern sky was an unforgettable experience.

Left • Salt pan in moonlight, Skeleton Coast
Below • Salt pan at sunset, Skeleton Coast

» The coastal towns of Swakopmund and Walvis Bay are well worth a visit. Former German colonial towns, they feature rather incongruous Teutonic architecture with palm-lined sandy streets, alongside black townships that are not even marked on the tourist maps.

Namibia's main harbour, Walvis Bay offers some great photographic opportunities, including the birdlife (pelicans, flamingos and smaller waders) and some very distinctive wooden structures. The mornings with the fog banks and pinkish dawn light are particularly atmospheric.

One of the most popular holiday locations for Namibians, the area around Swakopmund and Sandwich Bay, also is a Mecca for tourists, drawn largely by the so-called West Coast Recreational Area, an area of coastal dunes offering a variety of recreational pursuits including sandboarding, quad bike tours, dolphin cruises and hot air balloon trips. We did not quite have time to organise a balloon trip and this, apart from being unable to stay for at least a month, was my biggest single regret of the entire Namibia trip. The balloons launch just before dawn and soar across

the Namib Desert as the sun rises, offering, from the pictures I have seen, stunning opportunities for photographing the landscape from above.

Namib-Naukluft Park

Our last destination, the Namib-Naukluft Park, is the largest conservation area in Africa and the fourth largest in the world and was the real highlight of our trip. To be sure of having the opportunity to visit the famous vleis (Sossusvlei, Dead Vlei and Hidden Vlei) at dawn, dusk or preferably both, we booked to stay three nights at the Sesriem rest camp.

Travelling inland from Walvis Bay towards Sesriem, we stopped off for a couple of nights at the Tsauchab River Guest Farm <http://www.tsauchab.com>, a unique destination on the banks of the Tsauchab River surrounded by the Naukluft and Tsaris mountains, where in early May we were the only guests. The sense of sheer isolation of camping alone in the depths of the African night, surrounded by the sounds of nocturnal animals and gazing at the stars of a southern sky was an unforgettable experience. The area offers a wide



» community grouped together for solidarity in the face of a harsh, unforgiving natural environment.

We arrived at Sesriem in the mid-afternoon, checked in at the rest camp and headed off straight for Sossusvlei and Dead Vlei.

Although the name Sossusvlei (meaning “dead end marsh”), strictly refers to a specific salt and clay pan located at the far end of the ephemeral Tsauchab River, it is used also for the whole of the surrounding area. It is famous in particular for two things: the deep-red giant sand dunes and the dry mud pans with dead camel thorn trees known as vleis, “marshes” in Afrikaans, the most famous and photogenic of which unquestionably is Dead Vlei.

From the park entrance gate at Sesriem it is about 66 km to Sossusvlei. The road along the dry valley bottom of the ephemeral Tsauchab River is stunning, winding amongst towering dunes and grazing springbok and oryx. Coloured deep orange-red from iron oxide in the sand, the unique star-shape dunes are reputed to be amongst the oldest and highest in the world, rising to a height of 300-400 metres. We stopped off at the famous Dune 45 (so-named as it is located 45 km along the road from Sesriem), the only dune that visitors are permitted to climb. Rising to a height of 150 metres, it offers stunning views of the surrounding desert, the dunes stretching out as far as the eye can see in all directions.

After 60 km of tar road (usable by normal 2WD sedan cars), you have to negotiate a further 5 km track through deep sand to the 4WD car park at Sossusvlei, so a serious 4WD vehicle is essential. After parking at Sossusvlei, we dashed off on

foot in the direction of Dead Vlei, completing the 1.1 km just as the shadows were falling over the pan. Dead Vlei itself is an astonishing, haunting place, where long-dead, dried out camel thorn trees stand like contorted presences in a surrealist painting by Dali or De Chirico. Dead Vlei, which in a mixture of English and Afrikaans means “dead marsh”, is a white clay pan that formed originally over a thousand years ago due to flooding of the Tsauchab River after rainfall. Pools of water accumulated and camel thorn trees grew in the rich sandy soil. But the surrounding dunes encroached gradually on the pan and around 900 years ago diverted the course of the river, cutting off the water supply and causing the trees to die. Over the centuries, they were baked and blackened by the sun, leaving the charred skeletons that can be seen today. This tree graveyard is a photographer’s paradise, offering endless opportunities to explore and juxtapose the stark forms of nature: the geometric tessellations of the clay pan floor, the tortured dark shapes of the trees, the deep orangey reds of the surrounding dunes and the intense blue of the sky, occasionally with fluffy white clouds or even fog to lend further mystery to this already surreal location.

I located some promising looking trees, set up my tripod and took some shots as the low sunlight illuminated the intense orange dunes behind the vlei. It was an astonishing experience, but within »

Left • Oryx graze at the foot of a giant sand dune along the tar road from Sesriem to Sossusvlei

Right • Late afternoon light makes the Sossusvlei dunes glow, bringing out the deep red colours of iron oxide in the sand
Below • 900-year-old camel thorn tree skeletons



» 10 minutes the light was gone. Dawn and dusk at the tropics are very brief affairs.

This brings me to an issue of logistics. Although the light at Dead Vlei unquestionably is best for photography at sunrise and sunset, actually it is quite a challenge to be there at those times. There are two gates at Sesriem, an external gate and an internal gate. The external gate opens at dawn and closes at dusk and allows access to the visitor centre and camp ground. The internal gate allows access from the camp ground to the park itself and is open from 5.15 a.m. in the morning until 6.30 p.m. in the evening. The trouble is that dawn is sometime between 6.00 a.m. and 6.30 a.m. and sunset between 5.00 p.m. and 5.30 p.m., leaving about an hour to negotiate 60 km of tar road (with a 60 km/h speed limit) followed by the 5 km sand track to Sossusvlei and the extra 1.1 km on foot to Dead Vlei. That makes it quite a rush either to get there in time for dawn or to get back before the gate closes if you choose to wait until sunset. To tell the truth, probably it is impossible if you observe the 60 km/h speed limit, which few people do, but you have to watch out very carefully for animals, especially in the dark. Actually, we arrived back a bit after 6.30 p.m. on two occasions, but fortunately the gate was still open and the attendant was not too bothered.

As for photographic gear, Namibia was the first opportunity for me to make serious use of my brand new Canon 5D Mk II. I took a 15 mm

fish-eye, a 17-40 mm wide-angle, a 70-200 mm telephoto and the 100 mm macro. In the end I made use almost exclusively of the 17-40 mm and 70-200 mm lenses. The wide-angle was great for capturing the wide open spaces of the landscape, while the 70-200 proved vital for capturing images of animals within their natural habitat. For serious wildlife shooting, one would need at least a 400 or 500 mm lens, or possibly the 70-200 with a 2x converter.

All in all, Namibia is a fascinating location that offers a wealth of opportunities for the landscape photographer. Due to its modern infrastructures, ease of travel and relative safety, it is also the ideal destination (as in our case) for an unforgettable first visit to Africa. ✦



John Freeman

John is a nature and landscape photographer based in northern Italy. He first became interested in photography as a teenager, but began photographing the natural world more seriously in the early 1990s.

To see more of John's work visit

www.naturalperspective.com

In-rushing sea, Skeleton Coast



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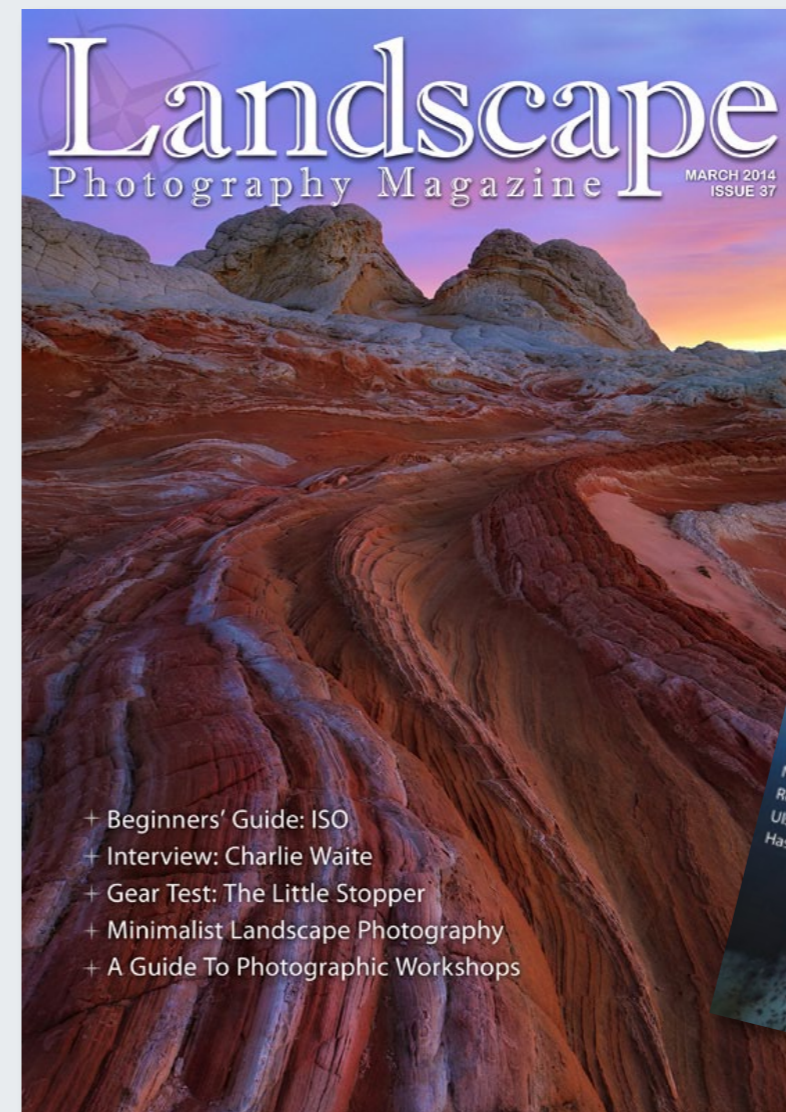
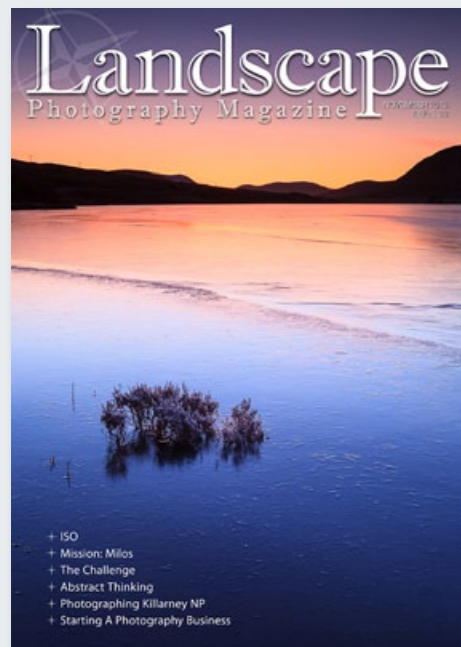
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PENTAX 645D

Larger image sensors seem to be the way forward, but is there still a place for medium format in the digital age? **Keith Wilson** couldn't wait to photograph the landscape with this 40MP camera

Introduction

In the middle of the last decade, Pentax appeared to be playing a guessing game with the market by twice unveiling prototypes of a 645 format DSLR, only to put production on hold. This was due to the speed of the 'megapixel race' as successive generations of Nikon and Canon 35mm format DSLRs kept overtaking the pixel count of the larger Pentax sensor. It says a lot about the sensibilities of photographers (and camera makers) that in the digital age the pixel count is considered more important to a camera than the size and format of the image sensor. After all, in days of film, the Pentax 645 and 67 series were two of the best medium format cameras around, championed by landscape, travel and location photographers for their quality of construction and performance. So, adopting the smaller of these two formats to a digital sensor seemed like a logical step forward for Pentax to pursue.

Despite the false starts, the Pentax 645D finally ran off the assembly line in late 2010, with a whopping 40MP image sensor, measuring 44x33mm, nearly twice the area of 35mm format. The 645D has since won numerous awards from esteemed European, American and Japanese magazines more used to handing out such prizes to the smaller DSLR and compact system cameras (CSC). This shouldn't be surprising because the specification, design and build quality of the 645D is comparable to the offerings of the Nikon D4 and D800, or the Canon EOS-1D X and 5D Mk III. Of course, there are obvious differences too. In truth, the 645D's direct like-for-like competitor is none of the above, but the Hasselblad H4D-40, also a 40MP medium format DSLR with a 44x33mm sensor. However, unlike the 645D, it cannot claim to be designed with the outdoor photographer foremost in mind.



The Bottom Line

Regular readers of LPM camera tests will know that this section is essentially a preview of the overall result, thereby determining whether you should bother reading on. Well, whether you're a Pentax user or not, a medium format user of old or not; whether you can afford the £6,000 body only price tag or not, I definitely think you should read on! Whether as photojournalist, writer, magazine editor, or camera reviewer, I have used and abused dozens of cameras of all makes and formats over the years and the Pentax 645D is one of the very, very few that I just couldn't stop picking up. It was a joy to handle and I loved using it. In the way that some novels are considered "unputdownable", the same can be said for the 645D. Despite its obvious bulk and weight, it is a pleasure to hold. And that's before I have even described the joy of examining every detail of its magnificent 7264x5440 pixel image files. So, have I convinced you to read on? Ok, consider this: the 645D is the most affordable medium format DSLR on the market and costs half the price of its Hasselblad equivalent.



All pictures © Keith Wilson

The 645D includes a tripod bush and raised plate on the left side of the camera so you can make portrait format compositions without changing the position of the tripod head. Magnifying this image from Holmwood Common in the Surrey Hills revealed every fine branch of the bare tree.

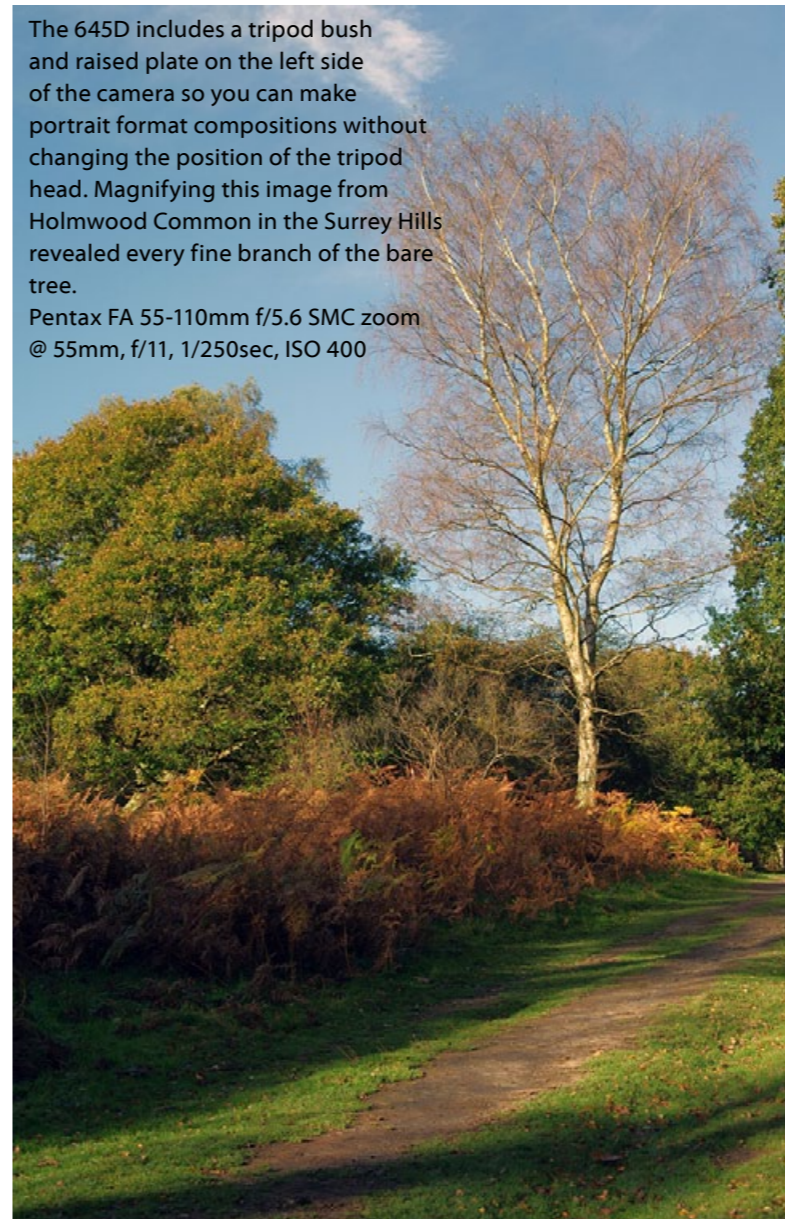
Pentax FA 55-110mm f/5.6 SMC zoom @ 55mm, f/11, 1/250sec, ISO 400

Features

While the 40MP image sensor is the main selling point (and rightly so), landscape photographers will also note the 77-segment multi-pattern metering system, as well as centre-weighted and spot; exposure compensation of +/-5 EV in a choice of 1/3 and 1/2 stop increments; 11-point autofocus sensor points (with nine cross-type) in the central area of the frame; dual SD/SDHC memory card slots to split file storage when shooting RAW+JPEG; and nine exposure modes including Shutter/Aperture Priority (TAv), which automatically adjusts the ISO rating so you can retain manual control over aperture and shutter speed selection. There is also Sensitive Priority (Sv) mode for locking in the ISO value.

A blast from the past is the mirror lock-up function to prevent blur caused by movement of the mirror during long exposures, a facility I remember using repeatedly on the old Pentax 67. There is also a second tripod bush on the left hand side of the camera for composing 'portrait' format images, and a depth of field preview, which can be neatly activated by pushing the on/off switch beyond the on setting.

The ISO range of 100-1600 may not be as great as most 35mm DSLRs, but for a medium format camera designed primarily for use on a tripod, any perceived exposure advantage beyond ISO 1600 becomes a somewhat moot point. White balance options are plentiful with presets for daylight, shade, cloudy, fluorescent, tungsten and flash, as well as three colour temperature selections. Finally, the 3.0in TFT LCD monitor may not be any bigger than those found on a typical 35mm DSLR, but the 32x magnification capability is startling and becomes a key component of the camera when out in the field.





» In Use

It's not often that merely picking up a camera creates such a positive impression, but the 645D was a revelation. The grip moulded so well to the palm of my hand that I felt completely at ease carrying the camera in one hand when out in the field. Yes, it is bulky, but the weight is evenly distributed, making it feel lighter than it looks. This might sound extraordinary for a medium format camera, but I have no hesitation in saying that the 645D sits more comfortably in the hand than any camera I have ever used.

As I said in my introduction, the Pentax 645 and 67 medium format film cameras were popular with landscape and travel photographers. Pentax hasn't lost any of this knowhow as the design of the 645D clearly has the location photographer in mind. The camera's suitability for the outdoors is reflected in its robust construction: a rigid aluminium diecast chassis with a magnesium alloy body casing that has been weather-sealed to resist rain, dust and snow. Pentax claims the 645D is tolerant in working temperatures from -10°C to 40°C. I didn't have the best of weather for my shoots – a soggy Surrey Hills, windy Sussex Downs and just a glimpse of light when the sun sunk below the clouds at day's end in the New Forest – but not once did I fear that the camera would not cope with the wintry weather.

There were no operational dilemmas when using the 645D for the first time. This is because

the positioning and layout of buttons and dials looked rather familiar; they are configured in a very similar way to most 35mm and APS-C DSLR cameras. In fact, when viewed from the back, the 645D merely looks bigger than the rest. But in so many ways it handles better because none of the controls are too small, too close, or too fiddly to manipulate. For example, the exposure mode dial (capture control in modern parlance) is substantial enough to get enough purchase for turning even with gloves on – similarly, the metering dial protruding immediately behind it. A nice touch is how the top plate slopes towards you for easier viewing. While the optical viewfinder is wonderfully clear and bright (and serves to remind me of the major deficiency of mirrorless cameras with their fuzzy electronic viewfinders), I was disappointed that the field of view was 98% and not 100%. It may seem like the smallest of margins but with such a huge pixel array advantage, I just don't see the logic of not providing the full view for each of one.

The ease with which the 645D can be used handheld is substantiated by the position of the two input dials – at the front and back of the grip for index finger and thumb. Such design practically encourages you to eschew the tripod and I am not ashamed to say that I did so for a number of the images in this review. I wanted to see what would be the acceptable

exposure limits when working handheld. A bright late autumn day in Richmond Park provided the opportunity for a mixture of contre-jour landscape photography and shots of grazing deer. Reviewing my images up to 32x magnification on the high resolution 921,000 dot 3.0in TFT LCD monitor proved more than ample for determining image sharpness and picking up movement. With the FA 55-110mm f/5.6 SMC zoom attached and ISO set to 400, I found shutter speeds of 1/400sec or faster were perfectly acceptable for sharp results, handheld. In addition, the 77-segment multi-pattern metering handled backlighting remarkably well.

The 645D shoots 14 Bit RAW files in PEF and Adobe DNG, as well as multiple JPEG image processing modes, including Bright, Natural,

Landscape, Portrait, Vibrant, Muted, Reversal Film and Monochrome. This choice of in-camera processing options is intended to reduce the need for post-production manipulation and enhancement. There is also in-camera HDR image capture, which blends three consecutive frames of varying exposure into one blended image. Not being one to 'over-egg' my images, I eschewed the HDR possibilities and set my JPEG processing mode to Natural for most of my days out.

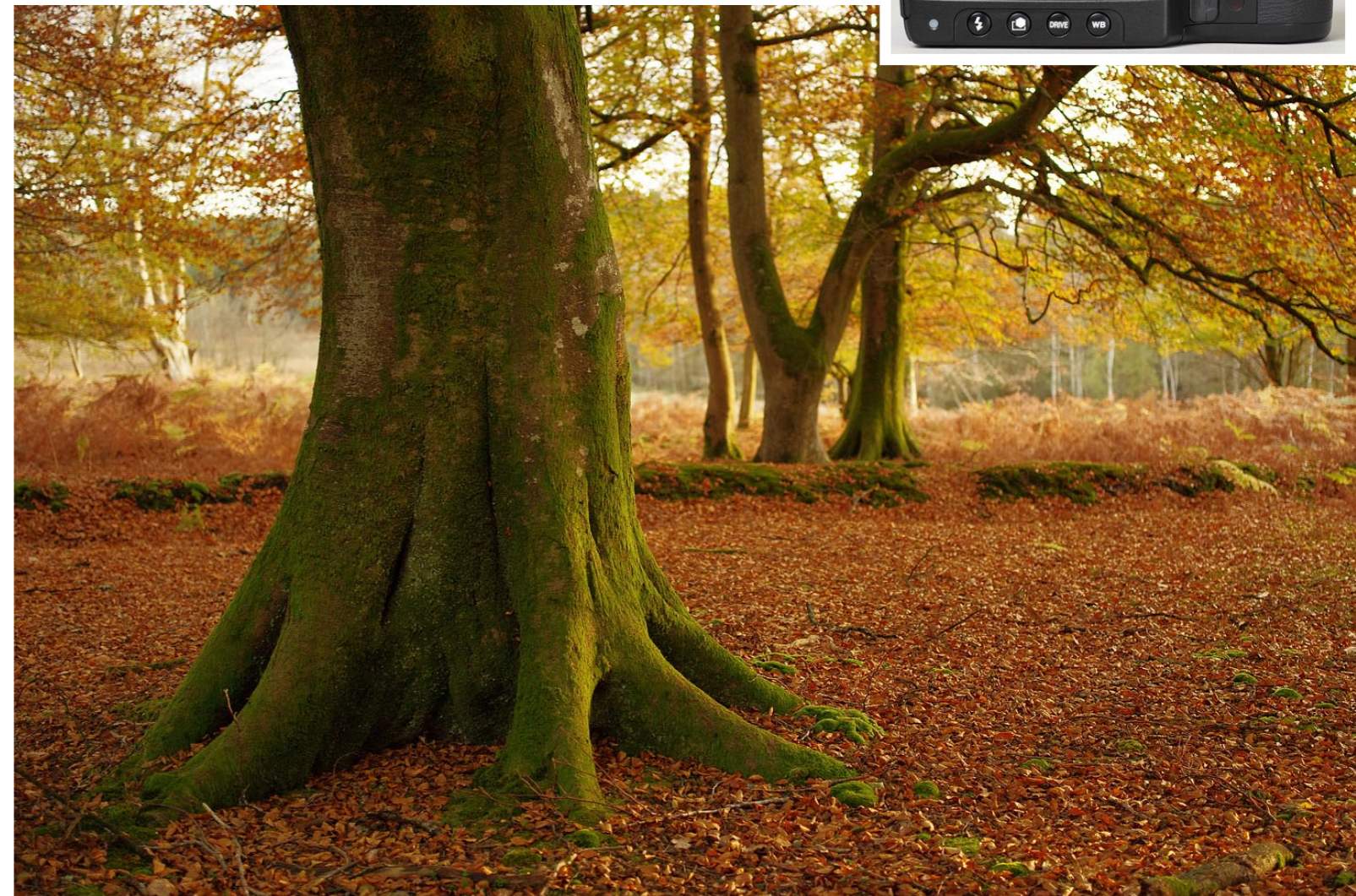
Another feature of the camera that proved really useful was the electronic level. Whether on tripod, monopod, or handheld, I always referred to this in the viewfinder, checking the line of little red bars beneath the viewfinder and making sure just one stayed lit in the centre below, indicating the camera was level. It proved very reliable.

Opposite • For all its bulk, the 645D is designed like a larger version of a 35mm DSLR, and handles like one too. A bright day in Richmond Park gave me the chance to use it handheld and get close to the local wildlife, such as this red deer stag.

Pentax FA 55-110mm f/5.6 SMC zoom at 110mm, f/11, 1/500sec, ISO 400

Below • The New Forest is one of the loveliest places to be in late autumn. Even at ISO 1000 natural colours were faithfully rendered with plenty of detail and little evidence of noise.

Pentax D-FA 55mm f/2.8 AL SDM AW, f/2.8, 1/250sec, ISO 1000



» Performance and Image Quality

Of course, the stand-out feature of the Pentax 645D is the 40MP sensor. Without sounding pedantic, the sensor's dimensions of 44x33mm aren't true 645 format. The frame size of the 645 film cameras of old was larger, measuring 56x42mm, but the aspect ratio of 4:3 is the same for both. What this means is that when fitting older Pentax 645 lenses to the 645D, there is a crop factor of 1.3x. The 645D is supplied with a new D-FA 55mm f/2.8 AL SDM AW lens, which provides an angle of view equivalent to a 70mm lens on a 645 film frame, or a 44mm lens on 35mm format.

As standard lenses go, the D-FA 55mm f/2.8 is a wonderful optic. It uses the Pentax designed SDM motor for silent autofocus operation and has an O-ring on the mount to preserve the camera's weather-seal credentials. More importantly, the image clarity and sharpness are superb. I was particularly impressed by the beautiful background bokeh when close focusing: subjects like tree lichen, where focus depth was shallow, seemed almost three-dimensional when enlarged. Now, a larger sensor has the effect of reducing depth of field for a given aperture value, so close focusing requires greater care. It is also worth noting that this is the first Pentax lens to have a rounded

diaphragm, ensuring even smoother light edging.

That said, the most important factor contributing to the sharpness and detail of images produced with this camera is the absence of a low pass filter on the 645D sensor. Low pass filters are found on nearly all DSLR sensors in order to minimise moiré and colour casts, but they also soften the image. With such a large sensor and pixel count, Pentax decided not to compromise image resolution and chose to omit the filter in order to maximise sharpness. It was absolutely the right decision.

This becomes really apparent when shooting at top resolution of 7264 x 5440 pixels and using the powerful magnification capability on the LCD monitor to examine the resolving power of this sensor. The detail and level of sharpness at maximum magnification is incredible. It really is a case of seeing is believing. Furthermore, the quality of the monitor and the level of magnification means you can begin to see how images can be cropped in several ways to create alternative compositions. And because the sensor is so big, it is possible to make quite severe crops later on the computer and still have files that are big enough for most reproduction needs, as my examples here



testify. The other benefit of not having a low pass filter, is that the resulting improvement to image sharpness virtually eliminates the need for sharpening in post-production.

Some reviewers have made direct comparisons between the 645D and flagship 35mm DSLR cameras such as the Canon EOS-1 DX or Nikon D4 and immediately commented on the superiority of the latter's autofocus and continuous shooting capability. True, 1.1fps is pedestrian, but the 645D was not built to lure sports and action photographers. It is not that type of camera. The autofocus sensor – the 11 area SAFOX IX+ – is also used on the highly rated Pentax K5. It is not the speediest, but I found it to be more than dependable for my purposes of shooting landscapes with a sensor that resolves image detail like no other.



The detail and level of sharpness at maximum magnification is incredible. It really is a case of seeing is believing

Opposite • Some specification deemed 'old fashioned' such as mirror lock-up and depth of field preview are conspicuous inclusions on the 645D and proved useful for framing this tranquil scene on Rushmere, Wimbledon Common.
Pentax FA 55-110mm f/5.6 zoom at 68mm, f/25, 1/200sec, ISO 1000

Above • Pentax claims the weather-sealed 645D can operate down to -10°C. It wasn't that cold for this shot of the Ouse Valley, but the bitterly cold wind whipping across the South Downs certainly felt like it.
Pentax D-FA 55mm f/2.8 AL SDM AW, f/7.1, 1/400sec, ISO 800



» **Final Thoughts**

I am obviously a big fan of the Pentax 645D. It is comfortable and easy to use and handles like a 35mm DSLR. The extra bulk has been turned to the photographer's advantage by ensuring all the exterior buttons and controls are substantial and well positioned. Nothing is fiddly. The file sizes are a joy to work with and the image detail mouth-wateringly good, thanks to that large sensor, authentic white balance, accurate metering system and absence of a low pass filter.

Now comes the rub. Even though Pentax dropped the kit price of camera body and D-FA 55mm f/2.8 SDM lens by £3,000 in October, many may still consider the £7,000 price tag to be too steep. This is only because they are comparing the 40MP 645D to the 36.3MP Nikon D800, which can now be bought new for under £3,000 with lens. Such a price comparison is misleading as the two cameras are not like-for-like in format, construction, scale and purpose. By contrast, the Pentax 645D is now half the price of the Hasselblad H4D-40, making it the most affordable medium format DSLR on the market. As a landscape photographer looking for the generosity of detail and dimensions provided by a 44x33mm, 40MP sensor, the Pentax 645D is the only medium format DSLR for me. Big is beautiful. ✦

In Favour

- Superb handling
- Image files rich in detail
- Excellent build quality
- Faithful white balance
- Magnification power on LCD monitor
- Compatibility with older Pentax 645 lenses
- Weather-sealing
- Multi-pattern metering performance
- Electronic level

Against

- 98% field of view – should be 100%
- Lack of AF points beyond centre of frame
- No Live View

Rating

- Features: 8.5/10
- Handling: 9/10
- Performance: 9/10
- Image Quality: 9/10
- Value for Money: 7/10
- Overall: 42.5/50



Keith Wilson

Keith Wilson is the founder of both Outdoor Photography and Black + White Photography magazines and former editor of Amateur Photographer. He is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and on-line tutor in travel photography at My Photo School. For more information or to book a place on Keith's 4-week course, go to...

Travel & City Break Photography Course

- Depth of field is shallower with larger format lenses and I wanted to focus as closely as the D-FA 55mm f/2.8 AL standard lens would allow me for this shot of tree lichen. The focus falls away quickly from the centre and background bokeh is very smooth.
- The sectional enlargement shows just 7% of the main image area (yet still measures 1656 x 1680 pixels). The ability of the 645D sensor to capture minute detail is there for all to see. (Both images) Pentax D-FA 55mm f/2.8 AL SDM AW, f/4, 1/400sec, ISO 1000



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"Josh and Jim were GREAT. Easy to talk to and had a lot of enthusiasm toward instruction. [They] made us feel comfortable and were more than willing to share their knowledge and creativity. They made a point of spending time with each participant."
– Bob and Paula S.

Charlie Waite



For the past 30 years, Charlie Waite has been one of Europe's most prolific landscape photographers. Now, with the launch of USA Landscape Photographer of the Year, he reveals his hopes for the competition, his favourite location and why he will never retire

Interview by Keith Wilson

How did you become interested in pursuing photography professionally?

My father had always enjoyed photography and helped me set up a darkroom in my bedroom, but despite my fascination with the apparent magic of it, I did not envisage photography as being a career for me. In the late 60s I joined the Salisbury Repertory Theatre and while working there, I became intrigued by the way in which the lighting director can bring a play to life. I continued on in the theatre for a further 12 years and throughout this time, I was photographing fellow actors for their publicity. Finally I took a studio in Battersea in London and began assisting work for studio commercial photographers. I still have great respect and admiration for commercial photographers.

Why were you attracted to landscape over other genres of photography?

I had always enjoyed photographing actors but it was not until I accompanied my wife when she was filming the BBC series The Onedin Line that I had time to roam around Devon where much of the filming was taking place. It was then that I began to respond, with my Nikon F and a 105mm portrait lens, to the landscape around me. I grew fond of sheds, long snaking hedgerows and noble trees. Within a year I had been given a commission to do all the landscape photography for a book called the National Trust Book of Long Walks with a superb writer called Adam Nicolson. We then went on to do three more books together.

Do you ever tire of landscape photography?

No, I never do. It seems to me to be a constant pursuit to get better and learn more and be able to produce more images that have total parity with ones previsualised as opposed to near misses. The higher and the more unreachable one's standards are, the better.

Do you have a favourite location?

I have always loved France and care deeply for the variety of landscape that one can find there without having to drive long distances. But, of course I have a great love of England and parts of Scotland and The Lakes. »

“I have always loved France and care deeply for the variety of landscape that one can find there without having to drive long distances”

All pictures © Charlie Waite unless stated

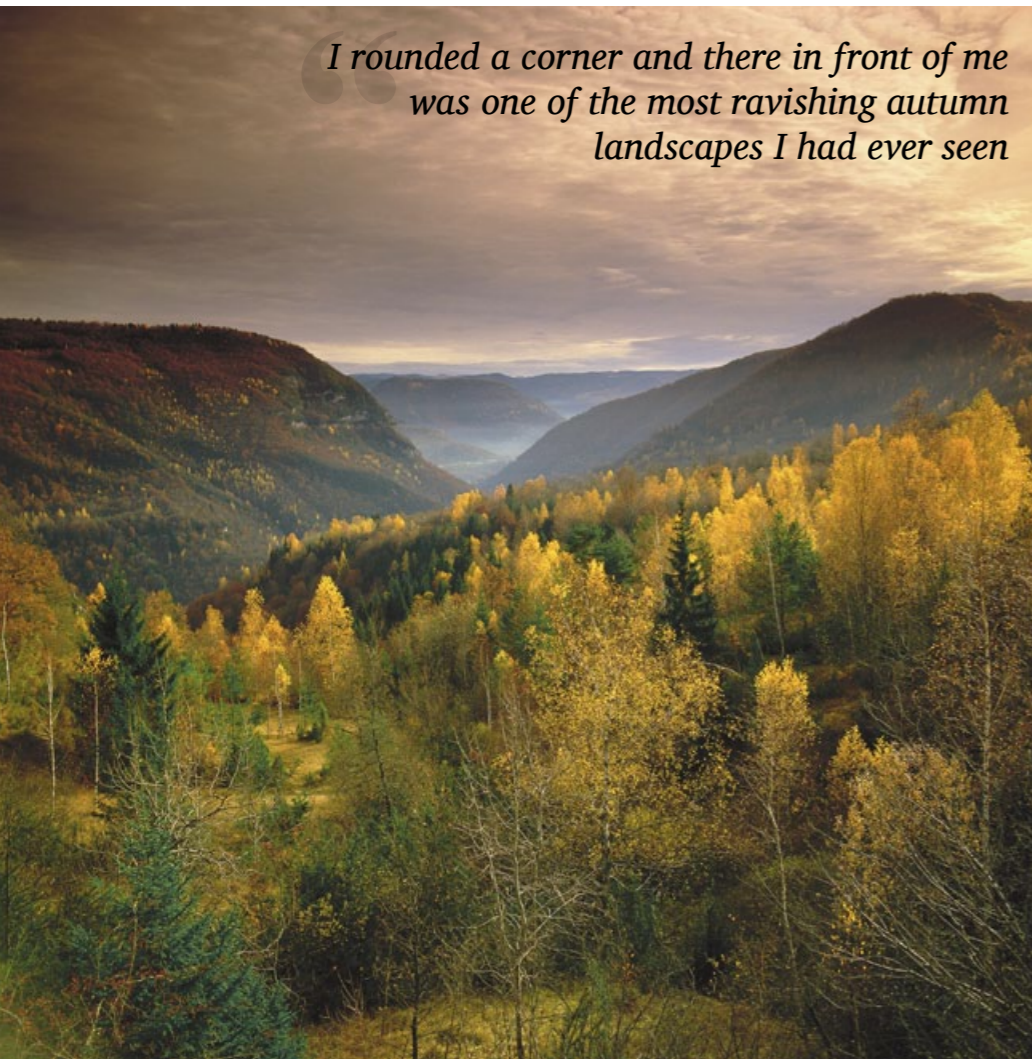
» Is there a photographic experience you will always remember?

I remember when working on a book Landscape in France that I had become very melancholic due to five days of relentless rain. I began to think that I should retrain and start a new career when I got back to the UK. I felt that I was not really contributing to society much and that I should work for a charity. On the fifth day, just before dawn, I headed back from the Jura in eastern France feeling very depressed. Suddenly, I rounded a corner and there in front of me was one of the most ravishing autumn landscapes I had ever seen. It appeared to me to be one of nature's most perfect performances, suspended and presented there in its entirety just for me. I often think that this was a sign written in the sky for me to carry on and to continue with landscape photography.

Take a View - Landscape Photographer of the Year - is now entering its eighth year. Can you tell me why you decided to do it? I first had the idea in 2003 and after a long slog managed to secure a sponsor in the form of the AA in the UK. Then I needed a media partner and of course a gallery for the exhibition which I was keen to have. Finally, I needed a tip-top creative project director who I found in Diana Leppard. She had huge experience in photography, having worked for a good many years with stock photography libraries. »

PREVIOUS PAGE • GRAND TETON
Montana, USA
RIGHT • EL CAPITAN, YOSEMITE
USA
BELOW • ST CLAUDE VALFIN, JURA
France

I rounded a corner and there in front of me was one of the most ravishing autumn landscapes I had ever seen



» If one can measure success, how successful do you think it has been? To me the success of Landscape Photographer of the Year can be measured in two ways. It has elevated the hugely talented photographers who have participated in the award and brought the art of landscape photography to a much wider public. Many hundreds of thousands of people have seen the Landscape Photographer of the Year exhibition at the National Theatre.

So, who are the rising stars of landscape photography that we need to look out for?

I think that Britain can boast many very talented landscape photographers who are in some cases quite anonymous. They have all the tenacity and passion that is needed to produce great and enduring works. So, the answer is, all the many photographers who have consistently shown a very high standard of work.

I want my competitions to be a springboard for the success of other photographers

And now you have launched USA Landscape Photographer of the Year. What are your hopes for it and who else is involved in supporting it? As with UK Landscape Photographer of the Year, I want the competition to inspire the next generation of photographers, to reward the great and diverse talent that exists within the world of photography, often struggling for recognition. I want my competitions to be a springboard for the success of other photographers. I also would love to see more female photographers rising into the ranks of the major prizewinners.

I have a vision that as the years go by with USA Landscape Photographer of the Year, we create a visual legacy that surpasses anything that exists today, documenting the amazing rural and urban landscape of the USA and the response of both its own citizens and international visitors to the country. The annual collection of winning images from the UK Landscape Photographer of the Year, and the greetings card collections that have emerged from it, represent amongst the best photographic record of the British Isles. I hope for the same for the USA.

Who can enter?

Anyone! The competition is open to photographers from around the world (of course, the ability of a winner to receive the cash prize fund is subject to their national laws). We have

both an adult title winner, and a youth (under 21) winner, and the competition is equally open to professionals and amateurs.

How similar is USA Landscape Photographer of the Year to the UK version in categories and entry criteria?

The broad concept is the same: to celebrate the rural and urban landscape and reward and recognise talented photographers. In both cases, images have to have been made within the last five years, be images of the USA or UK (obviously depending on which competition is being entered), and are open to photographers from around the world.

The biggest difference is that the title award in USA Landscape Photographer of the Year (for both the Adult and the Youth winner) will be based on the judges' assessment of a portfolio of three images. The category awards are based on single image entries, and whilst some of the categories are the same, there are also categories unique to each of USA and UK Landscape Photographer of the Year. The category awards for USA Landscape Photographer of the Year are: Classic View, Black and White, Landscape on the Move, My USA, and Urban Landscape.

Of course, the American landscape is very different to Britain and a vast area. Are you expecting a different type and style

of imagery from this competition?

The best images that are entered into UK Landscape Photographer of the Year show creativity, a visionary ability to pre-visualise and manage multiple elements of composition together with immaculate technical expertise. That is what makes the winning images stand out. I expect very similar traits will feature in the winning images of USA Landscape Photographer of the Year. Of course, the American landscape offers so much more variety, scale and wilderness opportunities than does the UK, so it will be wonderful to see what is made of that by photographers from around the world.

One category in particular, My USA, is designed to give photographers the full creative license. We say in the rules, 'anything goes!' So I am very much looking forward to seeing the creative, personal and imaginative images entered into that category. »

BELOW LEFT • BADWATER LAKE
Death Valley, California, USA
BELOW • AUTOIRE, THE LOT
France





» Interestingly, there does seem to be a cultural trait that does distinguish many photographers in the USA. Perhaps due to the vastness of their landscape and the deeper colours and higher contrasts that naturally exist in the varying seasons and light that the USA enjoys, in contrast to the often watery, muted colours in much of Northern Europe. So we do often see images that appear to the northern European eye to be surprisingly saturated. We have a mix of American and English judges, so it will be very interesting to see how these cultural differences translate as the images are assessed.

*Will there be an exhibition too?
Will it show at other venues?*

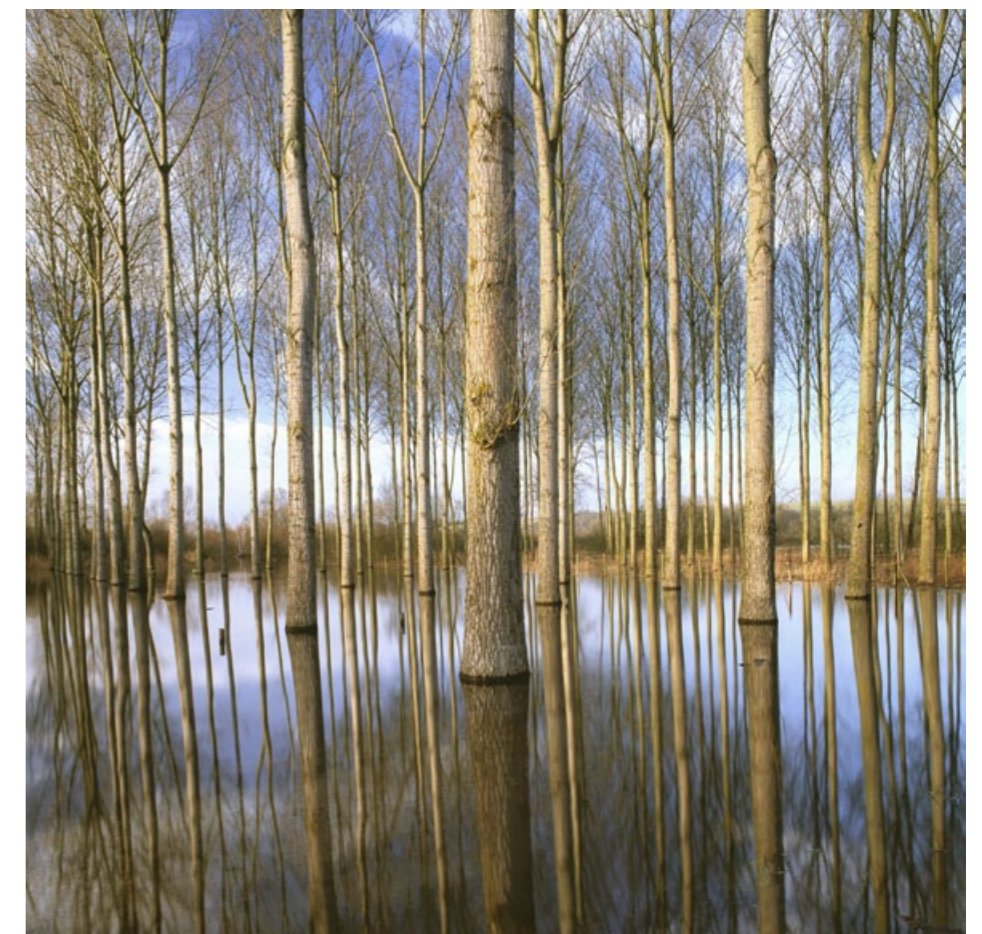
One of my main motivations for the USA Landscape Photographer of the Year, is to give photographers who otherwise struggle the chance to have their wonderful images seen by a wider audience, the opportunity for significant exposure of their work. Of course, everyone appreciates that there are many stunning

images that do not win the main prizes and are deserving of a platform for appreciation from a public audience. Therefore, I have arranged with USATODAY.com that up to 200 of the semi-finalist images will be featured in an on-line gallery, a sort of on-line exhibition, which encourages readers of USA Today to engage with the images. I am hopeful this will give many photographers a chance they would not otherwise enjoy, to have their photography seen by a wider public, and perhaps may open up other opportunities for them.

The winning images will be showcased in the USA and Europe, including the World Travel Market in London on 3 – 6 November 2014. »

**LEFT • ASTORIA BRIDGE, OREGON
USA**

**BELOW • AMIENS
The Somme, France**



Enter USA Landscape Photographer of the Year!

Entries are now being received for the inaugural USA Landscape Photographer of the Year competition, a celebration of the rural and urban landscape of the USA.

Entries are open to photographers from anywhere in the world, with images of the USA made within the last 5 years.

The closing date for entries is April 17, 2014

Competition founder Charlie Waite has assembled a distinguished assembly of judges, comprising some of America's finest landscape photographers, including David Muench, Marc Adamus, Tim Fitzharris and Art Wolfe.

There is a cash prize fund of over \$14,000, including \$5,000 to the overall competition winner. There are category awards for Classic View, Black and White, Landscape on the Move, My USA, and Urban Landscape.

Winners will be announced in USA Today on May 30, 2014 and showcased in the July edition of Popular Photography. An exhibition of the winning images will be shown in both the USA and Europe. In addition, up to 200 images from the competition will feature in an on-line image gallery at USATODAY.com

Details of the competition can be found on the dedicated website...

www.usalandscapephotographeroftheyear.com



The American landscape offers so much more variety, scale and wilderness opportunities than does the UK »

» Now, the controversy about the 2012 Take a View competition when the winner was disqualified: what went wrong, why was that decision taken, and what have you learnt from it? It is probably best to first say that the image was excellent but sadly had been entered into the wrong category, which did not allow for such major manipulation. The post-production process was done very well indeed however and the judges were not alerted to the fact that the image had been manipulated until after the winner had been announced. We have learned to ensure that photographers take special note of category stipulations.

Do you still get time for your own photography? Where have you photographed most recently? I get more time now thankfully and a few years ago, I enjoyed working in Libya for a month, which was very rewarding. Then just recently I went to Tunisia on a Light & Land recce. It was wonderful.

How many books have you had published now? Are there plans for another? I think it is 28 in total, which is nothing like as high as a wonderful photographer called Mike Busselle who published more than 50!

Do you still use film? Yes, I do but only about 20% of the time. Film brings about a decrease of recklessness.

What about digital? You use both systems, I was wondering if you could tell me what gear you use and when you switch between the two? I like to continue to use my 500CX Hasselblad along with a Nikon D3S. I have been using

the square format for over 30 years and I will remember that for landscape it was thought of as being rather odd. Now, photographers are adopting the square format all over again, which is good to observe and rather gratifying.

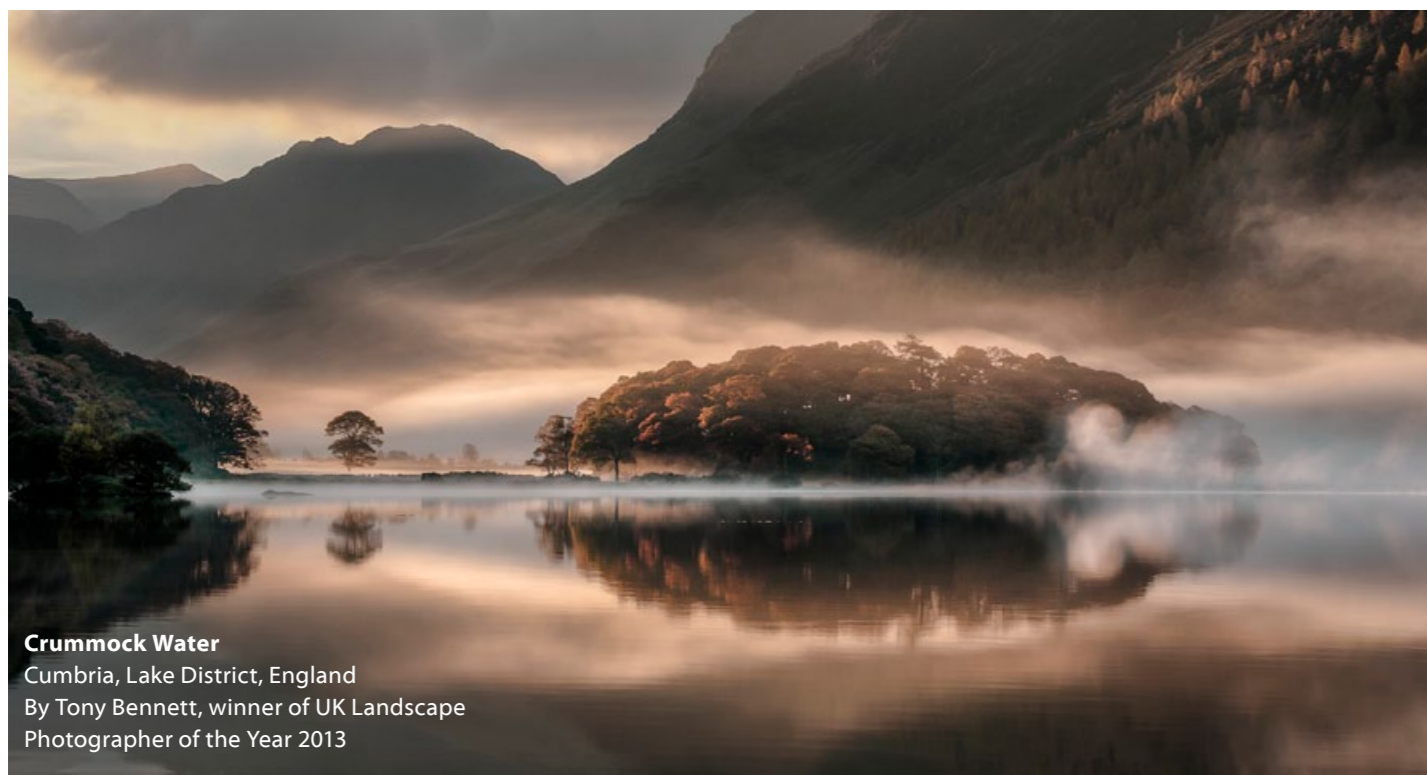
Will you ever retire? No. Photography continues to tantalise and fascinate me.

Finally, if you could have your time over again, what advice would you give a young Charlie Waite? Specialise and put your personal vision first, ahead of financial reward, if you can afford to do that. That will ensure your creative integrity remains intact. This is a difficult balance to maintain, but one which I have found essential to pursue for my own peace of mind. The voice you have is the only voice you need.



Charlie Waite

Charlie Waite is firmly established as one of the world's leading landscape photographers. In a 30-year career, Charlie's images have been published in numerous books and exhibited in the leading galleries of the UK, Japan and USA. He is an honorary fellow of the British Institute of Professional Photographers and the founder of Take a View, Britain's biggest landscape photography competition, now in its eighth year. In December 2013, Charlie launched USA Landscape Photographer of the Year, an international quest to honour the best images of the American landscape. www.charliewaite.com



Crummock Water
Cumbria, Lake District, England
By Tony Bennett, winner of UK Landscape Photographer of the Year 2013

TAKE PART

Every month we feature stunning work from award winning photographers and authors. This is one of the reasons thousands of readers love our publication, and this makes us proud.

We are also proud of our efforts to promote lesser known enthusiasts and people who are trying to find their way around the photographic industry.



This article was written by our reader Brad Ellement

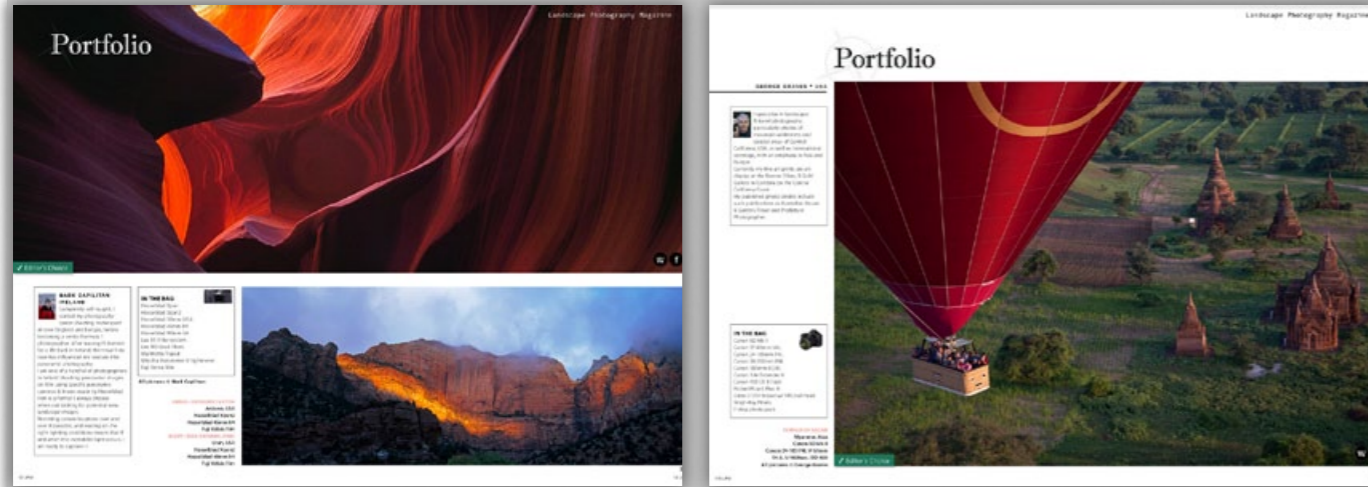


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Portfolio

Your chance to have your landscape photography featured across multiple pages of our lovely magazine.

First Frame / Final Frame

Display your best landscape image in these sections.



Aperture

There is a whole world of landscape photography and many of our readers love to write their views and thoughts. You can share your stories and thoughts by contributing your article to this section.

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Share your inspirations with the world. Submit your picture and tell us what inspired you to achieve your creation and how you did it.



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Landscape Photography Magazine

Next Month
APRIL 2014 • ISSUE 37

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Microphotography

Women in Landscape Photography

Sometimes, it can seem that landscape photography is a man's hobby / profession. We strongly believe it is not. Both sexes have equal rights and can be equally artistic. This month's 'Aperture' article has been written by Beata Moore and Vanda Ralevska and is dedicated to women all around the world



Aperture • Women in Landscape Photography

Landscape photography can sometimes seem to be a bit of a boys' club. From time to time, comments appear about the apparent paucity of female landscape photographers. Practical reasons have been suggested, including the size and weight of early equipment, historically unsuitable attire, and concerns over personal safety. There is even some academic discussion which has suggested that women have traditionally had only a "conditional presence" within the landscape, being restricted to work in and around the home, and discouraged from travelling far, at least without the protection of male family members.

So where are the women? Pregnant and barefoot in the kitchen? After all, it is only within the last decade that photo magazine covers have stopped

being dominated by images of women - though the magazines are still very much stuck in the men's interests section in most newsagents. Are they too feeble to carry the gear or drag themselves out of bed at an unsociable hour and tell their partners to get their own breakfast? Discouraged by the ever increasing explosion of equipment and the potential "techno geek" factor? Do their eyes and brains perceive things differently? Does the 24-hour media circus focus so much on bad news that they feel it may not be safe out there? While setting out alone to explore a remote area can seem contrary to what we may have been warned against from an early age (and one wonders how the withdrawal of children from playing outdoors or even travelling independently to school may affect »

FAR RIGHT • LOST IN CLOUDS

Vanda Ralevska, a photographer with a true passion for landscapes and the great outdoors, finds her inspiration in grand views, quiet landscapes, and the intimate details that abound in nature. "I have always felt that women in landscape photography are not being given the visibility they deserve. When Beata and I started the group we hoped to change this perception. At the same time, it is very satisfying to see it develop into a friendly group of individuals who inspire one another and give one another support." <http://mylandscapes.co.uk>

Nikon D600 + 28-300mm f/3.5-5.6 @ 300mm, f/11, 1/1600, ISO 800

BELOW • FROSTY MORNING TRIPTYCH

Alyson Fennell tries to combine a love of nature with fine art. Her artistic flair is reflected in her unique images, which are often created using soft, gentle light and pastel colour tones.

<http://www.alysonfennellphotography.com>

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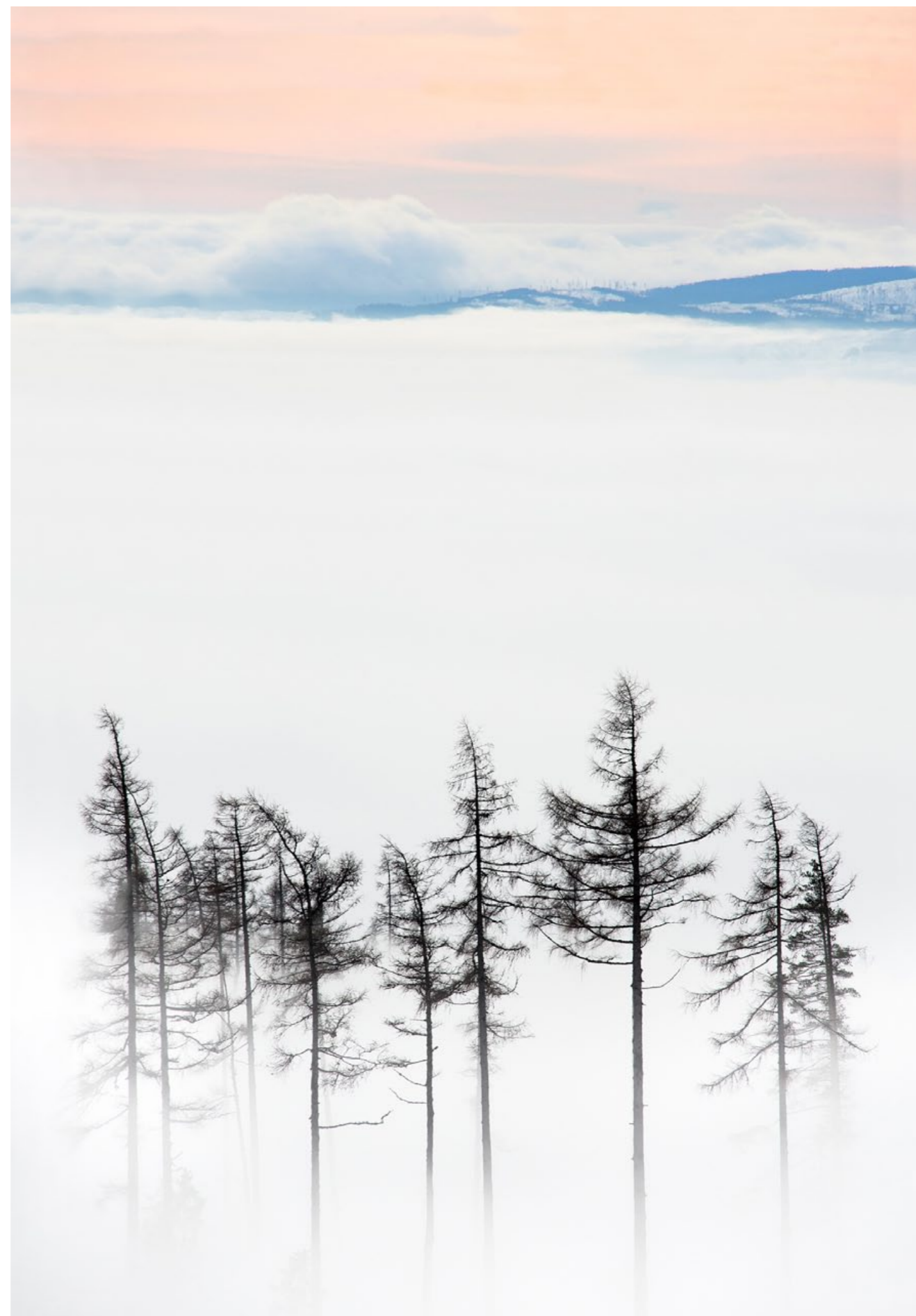


PREVIOUS PAGE • OWLER SUNSET

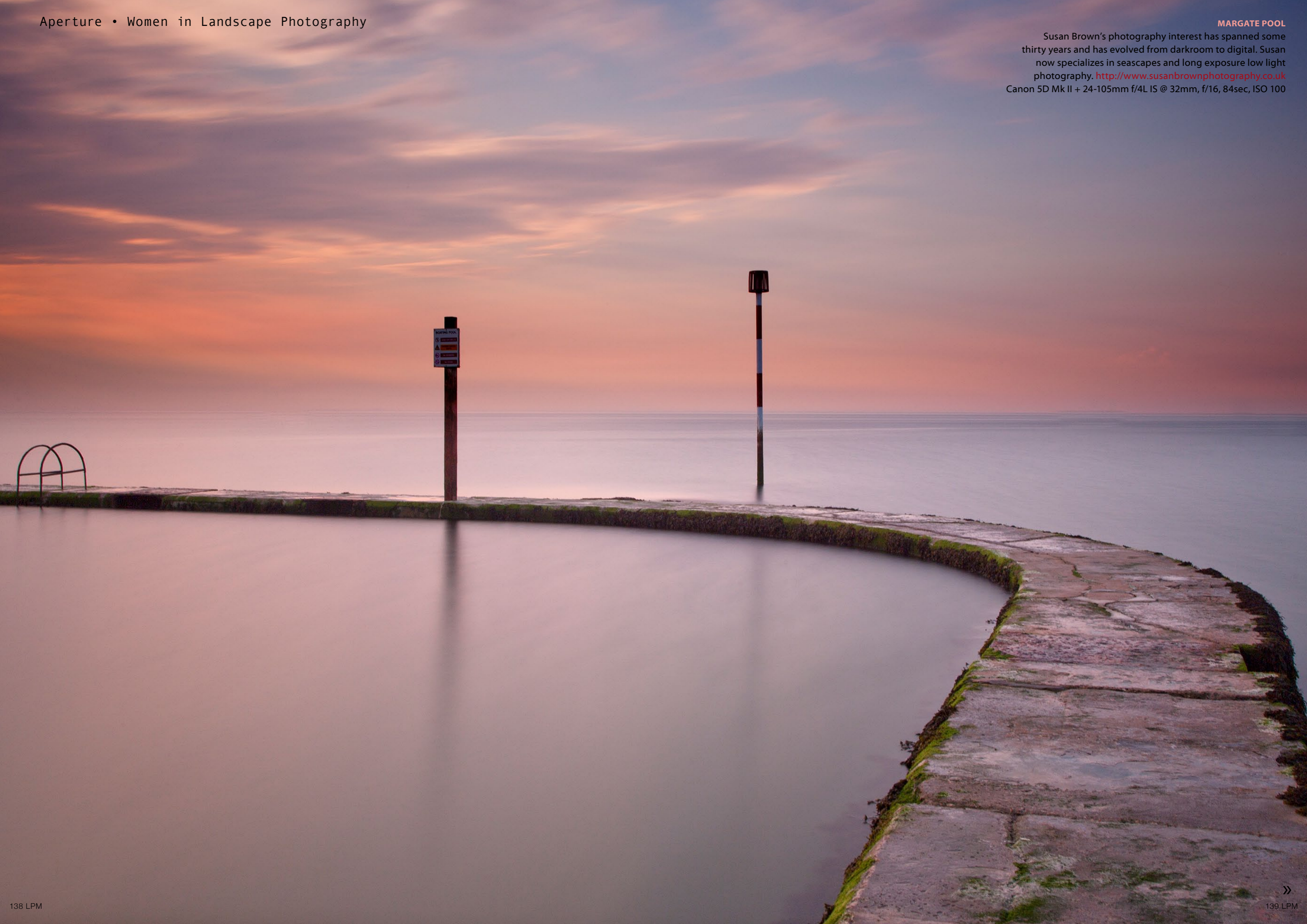
Karen Frenkel, who has recently written and illustrated two award-winning books, says "It's like being constantly on call. As soon as there are interesting conditions, I feel I have to drop everything and everyone and get out there to photograph it before it changes. There are many female landscape artists, but not photographers. Perhaps it's because, in order to succeed and create, we have to be out there at a precise moment, however anti-social, remote and time-consuming that may be."

<http://www.karenfrenkel.info>

Nikon D200 + 18-70mm f/3.5-4.5 @ 24mm, f/11, 0.7sec, ISO 200



Susan Brown's photography interest has spanned some thirty years and has evolved from darkroom to digital. Susan now specializes in seascapes and long exposure low light photography. <http://www.susanbrownphotography.co.uk>
Canon 5D Mk II + 24-105mm f/4L IS @ 32mm, f/16, 84sec, ISO 100



Aperture • Women in Landscape Photography

» younger generations), those of us that do would probably argue that we feel safer here than in towns and cities, and an early start can often bring an exclusivity that shooting sunsets may not offer.

There may be many reasons, and the juggling act of 21st century work-life balance that both sexes have to deal with does not help. But perhaps two others may be more significant: the fact that many women often put their hobbies and interests on hold to fulfil other commitments first; and the fact that many men are much better at self-promotion.

While it's true that some women may feel more comfortable with the more controlled environment

and the greater social interaction associated with portrait or wedding photography, scratch the surface and it is increasingly apparent that there are a large number of women interested in landscape photography, so perhaps it is simply that they have not so far been well represented in media, galleries and exhibitions.

One attempt to counter this is "Landscapes by Women", an online photographic community dedicated to showcasing some of the best images created by women, which to date has a [website](#), [Facebook](#) page and [Flickr](#) group. The community, established at the end of 2012 by »

BELOW • SLIEVE BINNIAN AND THE MOURNE MOUNTAINS

Fran Halsall, an author of three books, admits, "It is a very demanding career choice that is incompatible with having a family. Arguably there are fewer female role models in the world of landscape photography to draw inspiration from and this is compounded by the infrequent mentions of historical women photographers in the press. Everyone recalls Ansel Adams, and rightly so, but how often is Fay Godwin, a major force in British landscape photography, mentioned in contemporary media?"

<http://fran-halsall.co.uk>

Canon 5D Mk II + 17-40mm f/4 @ 22mm, f/14, 1/13sec, ISO 250

RIGHT • FROM THE JETTY

Jeanie Lazenby has a passion for capturing the light and mood of the beautiful English countryside and coast. "My work consists of minimal post processing, and I try to capture the image in the camera rather than 'work it' later."

<http://www.jeanielazenby.co.uk>

Canon 30D @ 15mm, f/16, 10sec, ISO 100



Linda Wevill enjoys experimenting with shutter speeds, which enable her to capture the movement of the sea and the atmosphere of the landscape.

<http://www.lindaweivillphotography.com>

Canon 5D Mk II + 24-105mm f/4L IS @ 28mm, f/22, 5sec, ISO 100



Aperture • Women in Landscape Photography

» Beata Moore and Vanda Ralevska, aims to bring together, encourage, and raise the profile of female photographers, initially within the United Kingdom though this may later expand into Europe and beyond. Already there are more than twenty extremely talented **contributors**, both professional and amateur; and the group continues to grow. Members' perception of photography as an art form is incredibly varied, however all share the same endless passion for capturing the outside world with its wide variety of colours, ever changing light and extraordinary atmosphere.

Our growing community proves that there are more women landscape photographers than has been perceived by the outside world. Our aim is to celebrate this fact and bring our unique

and compelling images to a wider audience.

If you would like to find out more about us, please follow the hyperlinks (marked in red) in this article. ✦



LEFT • CAMELTHORNS

Lizzie Shepherd's photography hinges on looking for compelling patterns through colour, light and texture. "I think it's fantastic that Landscapes by Women is continually growing – embracing both professional and amateur photographers, all very skilled in their craft and all sharing a great love of landscape and nature. I have no doubt it will go from strength to strength."

<http://www.lizzieshepherd.com>

Nikon D800E + 24-120mm f/4 @ 82mm, f/10, 0.6sec, ISO 100

BELOW • CROPSTON

Annabell Ison has a huge passion for the outdoors. "My aim wherever I am is to hopefully make the ordinary that little bit extraordinary in some way. Most of all, it never ceases to be the most wonderful experience when I capture a beautiful sunrise or sunset, or find a detail you could only realise through a lens."

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/anniison>

Nikon D7000 @ 10mm, f/22, 1.3sec, ISO 100

RIGHT • LAKE BUTTERMERE

For Sarah Hare, photography is about capturing the transient light. "I love watching the light on a scene evolve. I love to photograph anything bathed in beautiful light, from macro pictures of little bugs, to sweeping vistas in exotic locations."

<http://sarahharephotography.webs.com>

Canon 40D + 17-50mm @ 23mm, f/10, 1/30sec, ISO 100



BELOW • WINTER ABSTRACT

Marianthi Lainas draws endless inspiration from our coastal areas. "For me, photography is a wonderful way of connecting to nature. I love the breathing space and sense of calm that being out in the landscape gives me and hope to reflect some of these emotions in my photography."

<http://www.openspaceimages.com>

Canon 5D Mk II + 24-70mm f/4 @ 24mm, f/16, 1/125sec, ISO 400



RIGHT • HARVESTED FIELDS

Sue Bishop, an inspirational lecturer, workshop leader and author of three books says "I've come across so many highly talented women photographers over the years. It's lovely that there is finally a forum where we can showcase our work and get to know each other!"

<http://www.suebishop.co.uk>

Nikon D2X + 80-400mm f/4.5-5.6 @ 135mm, f/22, 1/5sec, ISO 100

BELOW • MARSCO, ISLE OF SKYE

Susan Rowe, despite being ambulant disabled and having to walk with two sticks, has a great affinity to hills and mountains.

"Photography may seem a strange choice when my mobility is restricted; however, it keeps me in touch with landscapes I enjoy, and it is a challenge to achieve images that are recognisable but sometimes from a different perspective."

<http://www.susanrowelandscapephotography.co.uk>

Nikon D60 @ 40mm, f/16, 1/25sec, ISO 100





LEFT • ICE ON RUST

Drawing on her background in design and the environment, Michéla Griffith enjoys both the experience of quiet time outdoors and the creative opportunity that photography offers. Her preference to become familiar with small areas, combined with an eye for detail, has often resulted in more individual interpretations of the landscape.

<http://www.longnorlandscapes.co.uk>

Canon 5D Mk II + 24-70mm f/4 @ 24mm, f/16, 1/125sec, ISO 400

RIGHT • YSTRADFELLTE MOORS

“I have felt for a long time that to be a female landscape photographer is not the easiest of things to be in an excellent but traditionally a very male-dominated genre, but I feel that is slowly changing” says Mari Owen.

“With the rise in the digital age and in social media, we are seeing more and more talent coming to the fore in the shape of the woman landscape photographer”, she adds. <http://www.mariowenphotography.com>

Canon 5D Mk II + 17-40mm f/4L @ 17mm, f/13, 1/400sec, ISO 200

BELOW • HARRIS DREAMS

Ruth Fairbrother is a bold, innovative and experimental landscape photographer. Painting with her camera, Ruth aims to capture spirit rather than reality – moments of colour, impressions of views, abstracts of texture. <http://www.ruthfairbrotherphotography.co.uk>

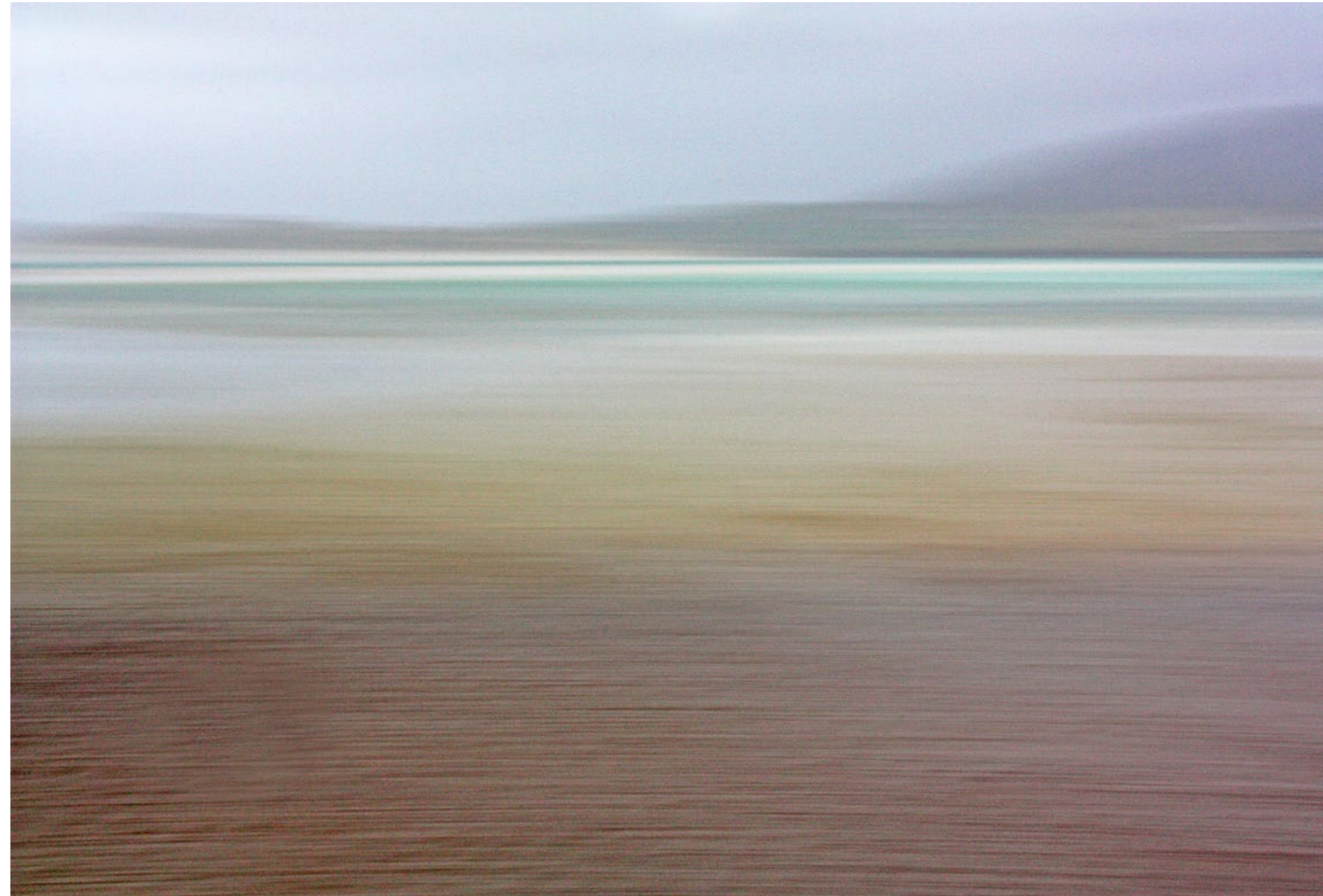
Canon 450D @ 44mm, f/32, 1/8sec, ISO 800

BELOW LEFT • HOMECOMING

Lynne Douglas’ imagery is inspired by impressionistic paintings, from the colourful movement of Monet’s gardens to the sweeping power and light in Turner’s seascapes. Colour and movement strongly influence her photography. Lynne loves remote places, places “free of human touch, where time seems to be standing still”.

<http://www.crionnaphotography.com>

Canon 5D Mk II + 24-105mm f/4L IS @ 24mm, f/16, 6sec, ISO 100





LEFT • TRAIGH IAR SUNSET

Tamara Kuzminski, unusually for today's digital age, predominantly uses a film camera as she enjoys the process and physicality of it. On the topic of women in landscape photography she says, "There is a stereotype that it's a very male dominated hobby or profession. I will admit that safety concerns have stopped me going out alone, but that's more from the perspective of getting myself into trouble (falling and breaking a leg) than being attacked by a stranger lurking behind a bush."

<http://www.tamarakuzminski.com>

No EXIF data available

RIGHT • BUACHAILLIE ETIVE MOR

Angie Latham is passionate about the ancient and Celtic corners of Britain. "Folklore, myths and legends have a great influence on my work and I have always been interested in and drawn to the mystical and the magical. I like to portray the landscape as I 'feel' it rather than how others might 'see' it."

<http://www.celtic-photography.co.uk>

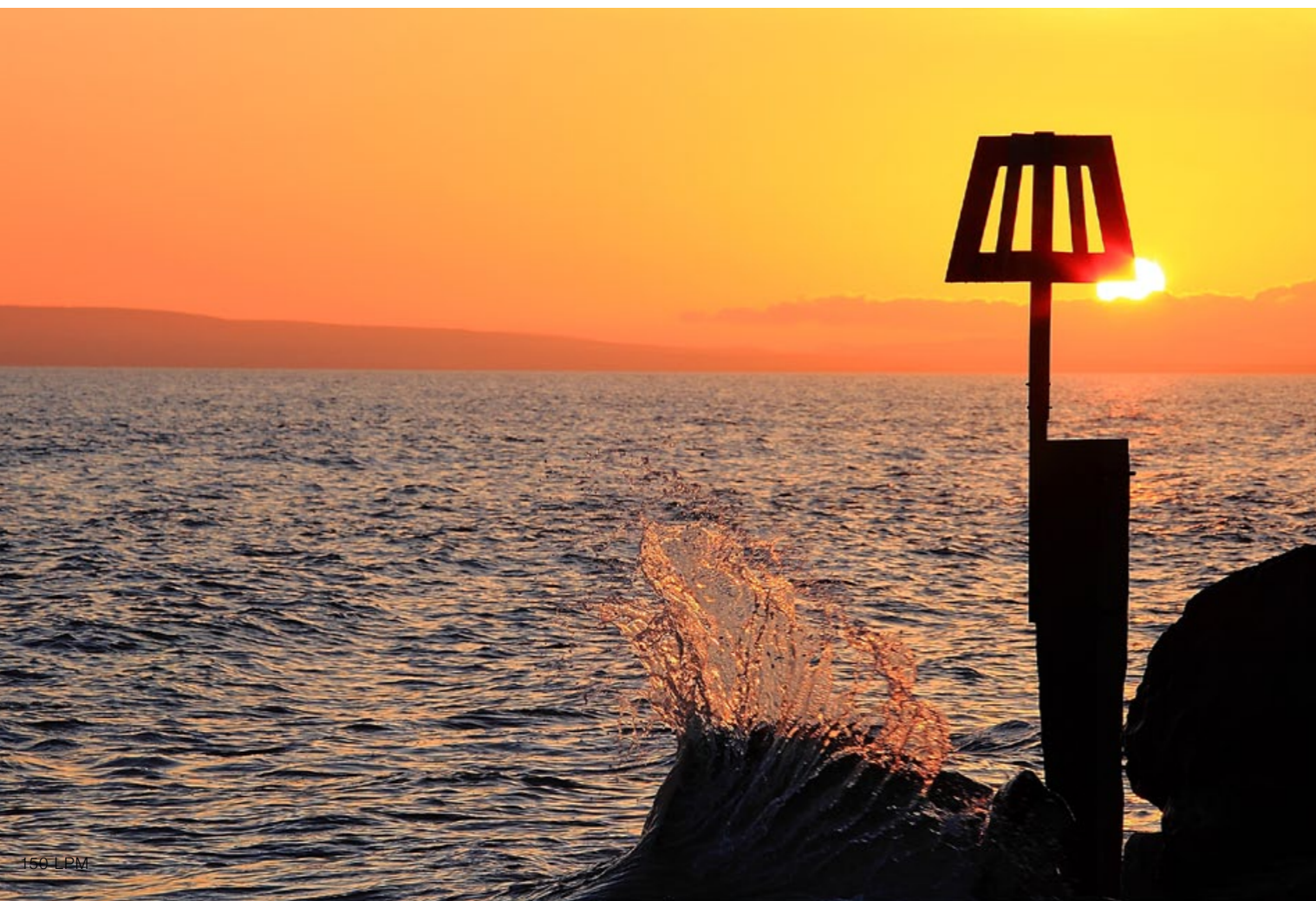
Canon 400D + 10-20mm @ 10mm, f/16, 1sec, ISO 100

BELOW • THE SPLASH

Beata Moore, an author of six books, is deeply passionate about the environment and nature. "Being a landscape photographer means that I am often out and about very early in the morning or late in the evening, which may be an obstacle for women with small children. Physical strength may be an issue for some, but nowadays there is no need to lug a very heavy gear around. Safety is probably another issue, although England itself is a very safe country."

<http://beatamoore.co.uk>

Canon 5D Mk II @ 165mm, f/13, 1/200sec, ISO 320





ABOVE • SUNRISE OVER MAM TOR

Cheryl Hamer is kept very busy running landscape workshops, including ones that are both “mixed gender” and exclusively for women. Cheryl finds a spiritual quality in making photos. She says “It’s where I ‘connect’ with something ‘bigger’ than myself and my day to day life. I guess there’s a spiritual element to it and it feeds my soul.”

<http://www.cherylhamer.com>

Panasonic DMC-GH2

BELOW • ST. MARY’S LIGHTHOUSE

Charlotte Gilliatt’s images often depict our urban surroundings. “I try to capture the charm of the City and our built environment, finding beauty in the most unlikely of places.” <http://charlottegilliatt.com>

Canon 400D + 10-20mm @ 10mm, f/16, 1sec, ISO 100



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www.OutdoorPhotoWorkshops.com



Counterpoint

Composition can be difficult enough to understand, let alone master, but it is worth the effort. In this article, **Ian Plant** explains the use of the 'Counterpoint Concept' in photographic composition and its relationship with music

Composition is a vitally important part of the photographic process, but unfortunately one which often is ignored or misunderstood. Composition is your way of telling a visual story to your viewers. A snapshot shows the world what your camera sees, but when you create a composition, you show the world what you see.

In my eBook '[Visual Flow: Mastering the Art of Composition](#)', I discuss an important key to successful photographic composition, getting the viewer's eye moving between multiple visual elements within the image frame. If all visual interest leads to one point, then the viewer will lose interest quickly. Create two or more points of interest, however, and the viewer's eye will become trapped within the image frame, holding interest over time. This juxtaposition of two or more points of interest is called counterpoint.

Actually, counterpoint is a concept which originates from the musical arts, and was made famous especially by the likes of Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven. Wikipedia defines counterpoint as "the writing of musical lines that sound very different and move independently from each other but sound harmonious when played simultaneously". The term originates from the Latin *punctus contra punctum*, meaning "point against point". Think for a moment about some of the famous symphonies you have heard. The greatest ones might have a simple master theme, but they do not stop there. Rather, the master theme is transformed from something simplistic into something rich and sophisticated instead, by inclusion of an extra counter-theme (or two) in the background. The interaction of multiple themes gives a musical composition complexity and energy, creating something far greater than, for example, the "dah-dah-dah-duh" of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony ever could do alone. Take away the counterpoint, and the Fifth is nothing more than a repetitive dance beat; the audience might have shuffled along for a while, but no-one would be listening still several hundred years later.

Thinking about artistic composition in terms of counterpoint is rather useful. The idea is the

same as it is with music, except visual elements substitute for musical notes. In this sense, "visual counterpoint" occurs when one prominent visual element of a composition is set up in contrast or interaction with another. This contrast can be in terms of shape, luminosity, clarity, colour, or relative positioning. Counterpoint, in its most visually powerful form, is a way of positioning elements within the image frame, relying on the spatial relationship between visual elements to create compositional structure and interest.

The image accompanying this article is a very simple illustration of the concept of visual counterpoint. Hopefully, the primary counterpoint relationship should be obvious: the rock in the tidal pool in the foreground is the counterpoint element to the prominent sea stack to the right of the background (and vice versa). There is another counterpoint element in this composition, the cloud in the sky to the left. Actually, the three counterpoint elements, working together, keep the viewer's eye bouncing between the three areas of the image frame, locked within the composition.

Okay, so you understand the concept of counterpoint, but, when you have two counterpoint elements, where should you place them relative to each other within the image frame? The concept of opposing

diagonals is a good way to think about the placement of counterpoint elements: by placing two eye-catching and important elements opposite each other, you can create an engaging, yet balanced, composition. The reason I use the word "diagonal" is that more often than not, by placing the counterpoint elements opposite each other diagonally, as opposed to horizontally or vertically, a more energetic composition is the result. This is exactly what I did here, especially with the foreground rock and the sea stack to the right. The diagonal relationship between the two is reinforced further by the trail of water

leading from the tidal pool into the wet surf. A small touch, to be sure, but when making compositions, sometimes the little things matter most.

Without an understanding of composition, your photographs will never be more than mere snapshots. With it, you unlock the keys to your true artistic potential. ✦



Ian Plant

Ian is a full time professional nature photographer, writer, and adventurer. His work has appeared in numerous magazines, books and calendars. He is also the author of a number of ebooks and digital processing video tutorials.

www.ianplant.com

SAMUEL H BOARDMAN STATE PARK

Oregon, USA

Canon 5D Mk III

Canon 24-105mm f/4L IS @ 24mm

f/16, 1.6sec, ISO 50



The Ghosts of Competition

Competition can be good. It can motivate us to leave our comfort zone, push our boundaries and work harder. However, says **Rafael Rojas**, if it's not kept in check, competition can also lead us to a more sinister destination

In his book "Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience", the author Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi tells us that one of the ways to find happiness in our life is by reducing our dependence on external rewards, and focusing instead on nurturing a system of values which is based on internal rewards which only depend on ourselves.

We humans are social animals, and the society we live in imposes a strong influence on us. We tend to look over our shoulder to see what others are doing. We are prone to imitation and repetition. Sometimes, we obtain inspiration in what we see and, through combining snippets of information we create something new, which may even be better, by raising the bar of common knowledge yet higher. It could be said that it is through those particularly human traits that our species has evolved the way it has. Instead of starting from scratch each time, we rise on the shoulders of giants and evolve.

For creative individuals, like photographers, this is especially true. Never before in our history have we been as 'connected' as we are today. We can

Submitting our work to the judgment of society can be beneficial, since it can give us useful feedback, help us to build our confidence and also provide publicity and commercial exposure

create a photograph, post it on a social network and it will be seen by thousands of people all over the planet. Day in and day out, hundreds of photographs pass before our eyes on social media, forums, online communities and magazines. Inspiration is everywhere, and we can share our knowledge, vision and passion with everyone, easily and rapidly.

One of the consequences of this has been an increase in competitive feelings amongst photographers. Competition can be good. It can motivate us to leave our comfort zone, push our boundaries and work harder, which helps us to make the most of our skills and potential. However, if it's not kept in check, competition

can also lead us to a more sinister destination.

Being obsessed about what others are doing, we can very easily get lost and confused. Imitation and repetition are parts of any learning process, and all budding photographers start by imitating other artists whose work they admire. But sooner or later, however, they need to start working with their own vision, allowing that inner voice to break through the noise of the community. When this does not happen, chronic artistic constipation is the result. There is no way to follow your path through any creative endeavour when you are constantly looking at the sides of the road.

Competition can also lead us to another slippery slope. When tinted with a certain amount of ego and vanity, competition can turn photography into a need to prove to others how much better we are at creating images than the rest of our fellow photographers. As a consequence, the internal rewards that photography provides are quickly exchanged for external ones which rely solely on society. When before we enjoyed the virtues of photography (being able to see, feel, express ourselves, create and share with others the results of a stronger connection with our environment), now we only photograph to obtain approval and admiration from other people. Soon, the pleasure of photography fades away, and an ever-growing feeling of discontent and dissatisfaction fills our spirits.

Submitting our work to the judgment of society can be

beneficial, since it can give us useful feedback, help us to build our confidence and also provide publicity and commercial exposure. However, if while photographing a landscape we find ourselves thinking about the reaction of the public when we post that image on a social network, then it is clear that we have gone too far. At those moments, it is essential to disconnect our mobile phones, go to an isolated place, pitch our tent under the stars and re-evaluate why we started photographing in the first place.✦



Rafael Rojas

Rafael Rojas is a fine art photographer, author and lecturer, whose work has been awarded in the most prestigious international photography competitions. His Fine Art prints, sold internationally, form part of numerous private and public collections. He has published several books and recently started the new series of electronic books "A photographer's vision".

www.rafaelrojasphoto.com

BLACK TWILIGHT, SWITZERLAND

Nikon D800e
Nikon 70-200mm f/2.8 VR II @ 135mm
f/10, 1/13sec, ISO 200
CP filter, Graduated ND filter



© Rafael Rojas

How Fine Art Photographs Are Sold

We need to be inspired in order to be creative, says **Alain Briot**. Inspiration drives creativity and creativity is key to making fine art photographs that go beyond the surface of the subjects and the locations we photograph

The goal of these stories is to show you how fine art photographs are sold and what happens when they do sell. The goal is also to demonstrate some of the most important aspects of marketing and salesmanship. To this end, each story focuses on a specific aspect of the selling process.

Telling Stories to Sell Your Work

Telling stories about your work carries a lot of weight in the eyes of your customers and collectors. The story of how you created a particular piece can be anything from the final push a customer needs to make a purchase to an enlightening moment that reveals something about the piece

that can be life changing to a customer. Stories sell the art by making the photograph come alive and by giving the customer a narrative he or she can share with family and friends.

A couple once asked me if I remembered the exact date when I took a specific photograph. It was a photograph of the Grand Canyon at sunrise created from Hopi Point, one of the overlooks on the West Rim Drive of the Grand Canyon. I did not know why they wanted this information, but I proceeded to give them the information they asked for. Fortunately, Natalie was with me and she remembered the exact month, day, and year when I captured the specific photograph they were interested in.

Seeing that they were fascinated with the image, I did not stop there.

I continued by explaining how I woke up early that morning and hiked to the overlook in the dark, carrying my camera gear and hoping that the sunrise would reward my efforts. The hike is uphill and even though the rim road goes right next to the overlook, the road is closed to private cars; back when I created the image there was no shuttle bus until 9 a.m., much too late to capture sunrise. I explained how I set up in the dark and how I used a panoramic camera, a Fuji 6x17 with a 90mm lens in this instance, because I wanted to capture the entire panoramic view from east to west.

I explained how the print was created to express how I felt that morning, and that the colors on the horizon show the transition from

day to night – day on the right side, which faces east, and night on the left side of the image, which faces west. I explained how the clouds on that particular morning formed a V shape right in the center of the image, offering an ideal composition for a panorama, and how the colors in the clouds complement the colors in the landscape itself, the colors of the canyon buttes and formations, and the color of the Colorado River, forming a coherent and aesthetically pleasing color palette.

They listened intently, staying quiet the whole time, taking it all in. When I finished talking they asked to be excused so they could talk to each other. When they returned they simply said, “Can we take this one with us?” I was surprised at the question because this was my largest piece, over 7 feet wide plus framing, and most people had it shipped because of the difficulty of taking it with them while travelling. I was also surprised because this was a four thousand-dollar piece and usually people either negotiated the price, or at least discussed it before making a decision. Not this time. I did not even have to close the sale. They did this on their own, having already decided they were going to purchase it.

I said sure, then asked, “Do you have a vehicle large enough to carry it?” They said that they drove a full-size pickup truck and that it should fit inside. They then looked at each other and the man said, “I proposed to her at this overlook on that day. Not at sunrise, but later in the day. We have been looking for a photograph of this overlook ever since and you are the only one who has one, plus it is beautiful and it was taken the day I proposed. There is no way we can pass on it.” As he said this he gave me his credit card. I mentioned the price, plus tax since it wasn’t shipped out of state, but I don’t think that it mattered at all. Clearly, the decision was not made on the basis of price.

I am sharing this with you to show how important telling a story, as accurately as possible, is when selling fine art photographs, or any other type of fine art for that matter. Had I not told that story, or had I simply said, “It was taken at Hopi Point at sunrise,” I would not have made the sale. The story not only mattered to them, it was the reason they purchased the piece. I am sure they continue to enjoy it to this day. In fact, I received a letter from them a few months later in which they wrote how much the piece meant to them and they enclosed a photograph of the artwork displayed prominently in their home over the fireplace.

A story such as the one I just mentioned is really a narrative about your work. I write narratives about most of my pieces. Often, it is these narratives that make the sale because they provide the little extra push collectors need to make a purchasing decision.

I encourage you to tell stories about what inspired you to create a specific photograph. While a collector might be originally attracted to your work for aesthetic reasons, a story can go a long way towards transforming their initial attraction to an emotional response that leads to a buying decision. Knowing behind-the-scenes details about

Be enthusiastic when telling the story of a specific photograph, enthusiasm is contagious

a piece that only the artist can share goes a long way towards generating a feeling of ownership and of privileged relationship with a specific piece. While viewers are initially involved with the work on a visual level, after hearing the artist’s story they are engaged on an emotional and intellectual level. This raises their level of involvement from simple curiosity to serious consideration and, if you do a good job, to a desire to own the piece that has by then become part of their experience.

Be enthusiastic when telling the story of a specific photograph. Enthusiasm is contagious, so if you are enthusiastic about your work, your listeners – your clients – will in turn become enthusiastic about it. Enthusiasm ends with -iasm, which stands for I Am Sold Myself. You must

be proud of your work in order to sell it and nothing achieves this goal better than being enthusiastic about your photography!

Selling your photographs is challenging and requires specific knowledge. This story is only one aspect of the process of selling your work. If you want to learn more about how to sell your photographs, read my book *Marketing Fine Art Photography*. It is available in eBook format on my website and in printed version

on Amazon and other bookstores. The reviews have been excellent and it is regularly ranked in the top 10 books on professional photography on Amazon. A free sample chapter and the full table of contents are available for download at: <http://www.beautiful-landscape.com/Ebooks-Books-1-2-3.html>



© Alain Briot



Alain Briot

Alain Briot creates fine art photographs, teaches workshops and offers DVD tutorials. Alain’s 3 books are available as printed books on Amazon.com and as eBooks on Alain’s website. You can find more information about Alain’s work, writings

and tutorials as well as subscribe to Alain’s Free Monthly Newsletter on his website.

Alain welcomes your comments on this essay as well as on his other essays available. You can reach Alain directly by emailing him at alain@beautiful-landscape.com

www.beautiful-landscape.com



MARK PAYNE • UK

My Favourite Location

THE QUIRAING, ISLE OF SKYE, SCOTLAND



The Quiraing is a landslip on the eastern face of Meall na Suiramach, the northernmost summit of the Trotternish Ridge on the Isle of Skye. I returned there for the 3rd time this year to capture the sunrise, and the scenery never ceases to amaze me. As you can imagine, this place looked just the same 1,000's of years ago.

Nikon D800
Nikkor 24mm PC-E
f/8, 1/6 sec, ISO 64



© Mark Payne

Send us 'Your' Favourite Location picture

The Art Of Adventure

Bruce Percy took the decision to print his first book on high quality paper, based on only 40 pictures, limited edition of 1,000 copies and a fairly high price tag. David Hay reviewed The Art of Adventure and shares his thoughts

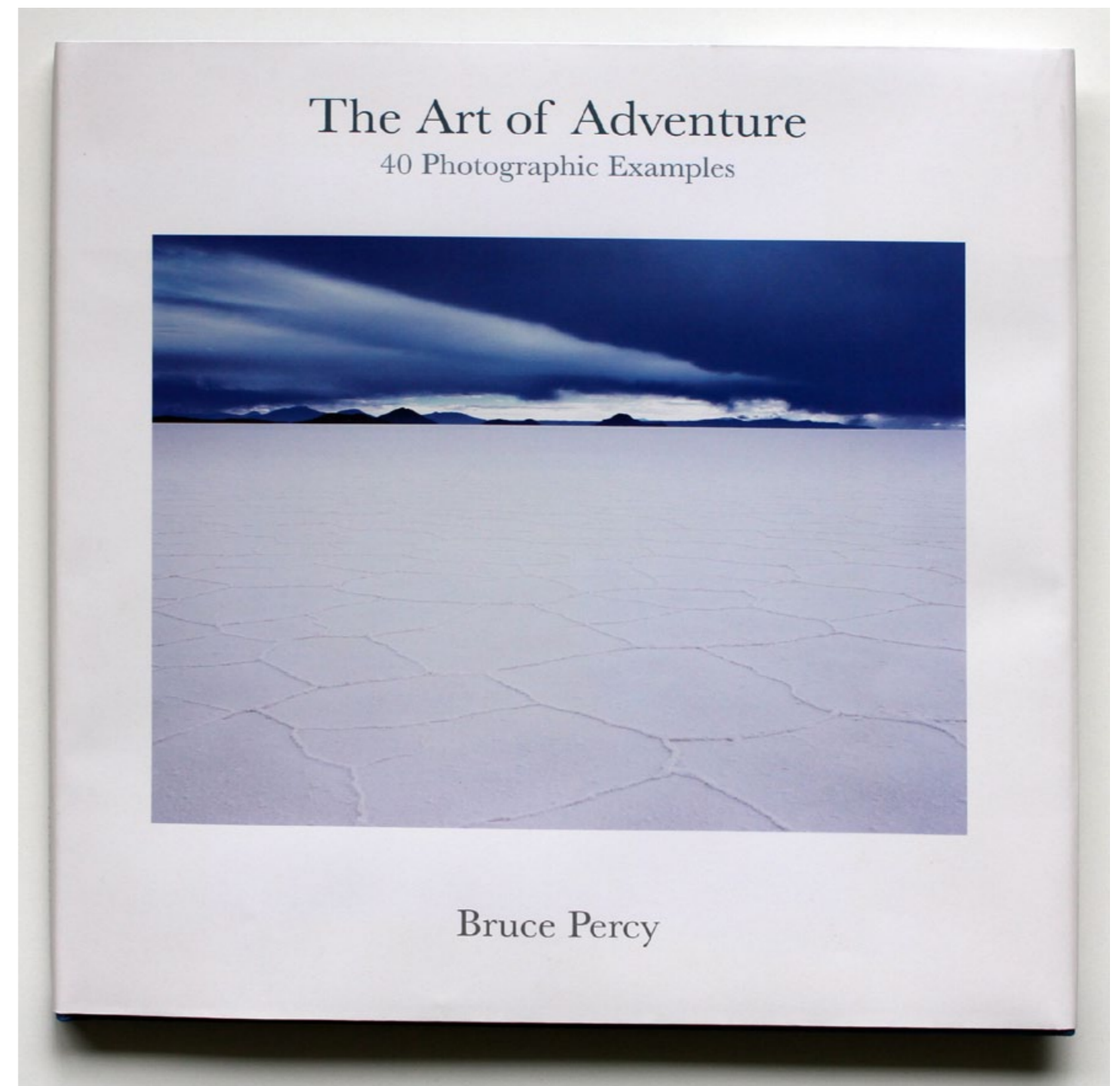
This book is a collection of forty of the best photographs taken by Bruce Percy, accompanied by short essays about the taking of each photograph. The author acknowledges a debt to Ansel Adams who used the same format in his book 'Examples - the making of 40 photographs'.

Layout

In many photography books it is more common to have the photographs displayed on the right-hand page with any title or caption shown opposite. However in this book the photographs are displayed on the left-hand page with a detailed

description of the circumstances surrounding the taking of the photograph, and sometimes an additional smaller photograph, on the right-hand page. I felt this worked very well as the reader can concentrate on the image after turning over the page before going on to read about the thoughts of the author as he went about making the photograph. The photographs are beautifully displayed with substantial white space surrounding them on almost square pages.

The same subtle colour of blue has been used throughout the book for all the image titles, page numbers and location details. However, »



40 Photographic Examples
By Bruce Percy
Published by Half-Light Press
310mm x 325mm
87 pp
Foreword by Michael Kenna
£50
Limited edition of 1000 copies

» the main text is in black which helps legibility, given the relatively small font used. Despite the modest number of pages in this book, there is a surprising amount of reading.

Technique

The author shot all of the images on Fuji Velvia film with a variety of cameras such as a Mamiya 7, an Ebony 45 and a Contax 645. He points out that the film he used had a very small

From the point of view of composition, he is a fan of the 'less is more' philosophy. "As I progress in my photography, I find that I am looking for simpler and simpler compositions", he says

dynamic range, as little as 4 stops. Most of the photographs in the book were taken in low contrast conditions such as early or late in the day and the portraits were taken away from harsh light.

Percy likes to work with only a small set of lenses: "I think too much equipment is a bad thing and I have often found that having less is actually more." Although his photographic expeditions are well planned, he feels that, "There are some photos that just can't be planned. It's really a case of simply being in the right place at the right time".

His best work is done when he is alone: "I find that solitude heightens my awareness and this makes a direct impact on my photography". However, he also describes sometimes feeling

unwell in isolated locations and just trying to carry on regardless. Because he cannot see his images while he is on location, there is sometimes a substantial period after his return before he sees the results. He feels that this may actually be an advantage as he can look at the developed images more dispassionately and see which ones work best.

From the point of view of composition, he is a fan of the 'less is more' philosophy. "As I progress in my photography, I find that I am looking for simpler and simpler compositions", he says. "Effective composition is often about extraction, removing what is unnecessary in order to make a simpler, bolder statement."

Although he takes some time setting up his camera for landscape pictures, he also recommends, "When approaching

any landscape for the first time, I try to make a point of noting what grabs me immediately". However, when shooting street portraits he says, "Composition comes quickly and I am aware that many photographers take far too long with this. You really need to be instinctive and quick." He also advises that, "It's very tempting to think that, because you have been down a street once, it will not hold any further surprises on a repeat visit."

Content

Although the cover and many of the internal images are of landscapes, there is also a collection of striking street portraits spread throughout the book. At first this seems an odd mixture. However the



predominately cool-toned landscapes, which are mostly blue and white, are interspersed with strongly coloured images of Indian people in their brightly coloured clothes. In combination, this mixture of subjects gives the book more visual diversity. I presume that the forty images chosen were his favourite images, but the order in which they have been displayed has been carefully considered.

Conclusion

For anyone interested in the work of Bruce Percy this book is a must buy. Apart from the beautiful photographs, his often introspective text tells us much about the creative processes involved. His philosophy is best summed up by a quote from the book where he says, "I just love knowing that there are many unborn images still waiting for me out there in the world, and they will only become visible to me as I make my way through life."

Reproduction

The book has been printed on heavy stock paper with the images so finely screened that the printing process is invisible to the naked eye. The images just look like exhibition prints. There was just one tiny printing flaw on one of the images in the copy I reviewed.





© Andy Brown

ADVICE OF THE MONTH

Sense Of Scale

Translating a three-dimensional scene onto a flat image can be problematic. Luckily, our brains are exceptional at recognising the indications of depth and perspective that we as landscape photographers employ while shooting. You may, for instance, shoot a line of trees running off into the distance, each of similar height and equidistant spacing. In both reality and the finished picture, the first tree appears visually larger than the last – yet your senses interpret this disparity and relay the correct impression that they are in fact the same. The brain performs corrective feats so effortlessly; it comprehends and makes allowances for such situations because, even when viewing a photograph, it has the real world to benchmark from.

Understanding this opens possibilities to the canny photographer, especially when you realise that what is lacking in the example described is a true sense of scale. Imagine you are on a beach, photographing a foreground rock set against a backdrop of others in the sea. When viewing the final image, your brain understands that the foreground rock isn't actually as big in relation to the backdrop as it might appear, but it can only estimate the scale. Rocks (just like trees) come in a variety

of sizes after all. The trick is to include something in the frame that has appreciable scale. Try moving in close and replacing that rock with, say, a starfish, and suddenly you have introduced it. In your photograph, the starfish may even take more space per inch than your backdrop, yet you have provided a useful reference point for your brain to analyse the rest of the scene.

Of course, you could take it further still by simultaneously providing a point of recognisable scale in your background – especially if your brain knows it is physically larger than the object in your foreground. ✦



Andy Brown

Andy is a UK based landscape photographer. His primary fervour and passion is for mono and split-toned, ultra long

exposure imagery. To see more of his images visit his website

www.andrewrobertbrown.com

Canon 5D Mk II
Canon 17-40mm f/4L @ 17mm
f/13, 145sec, ISO 200

Inspirations

Camera: Canon 5D Mk II
Lens: Canon 70-200mm f4L IS @ 147mm
Aperture: f/7.1
Shutter: 1/2sec
ISO: 250



NAVIN SARMA • USA



My Inspiration

As I continued to watch the waves building and smashing against the coast, I was intrigued by the way the water collected its momentum. Just outside the cove of King's Bath seemed to be a drop off in elevation of rock. As water receded, it began to collect and form new waves that, in turn, came towards the shore. This repetitive process was mesmerizing and slightly different each time. Sometimes the water would curl up and fold, and other times it would take interesting wheel like shapes as it charged forward. Here is such a wheeling motion behind the sheen reflection of the warm sunset light.

Technicalities

Using a remote cable I was able to capture several versions of this image until I found one that I felt best captured the sunset light and motion.

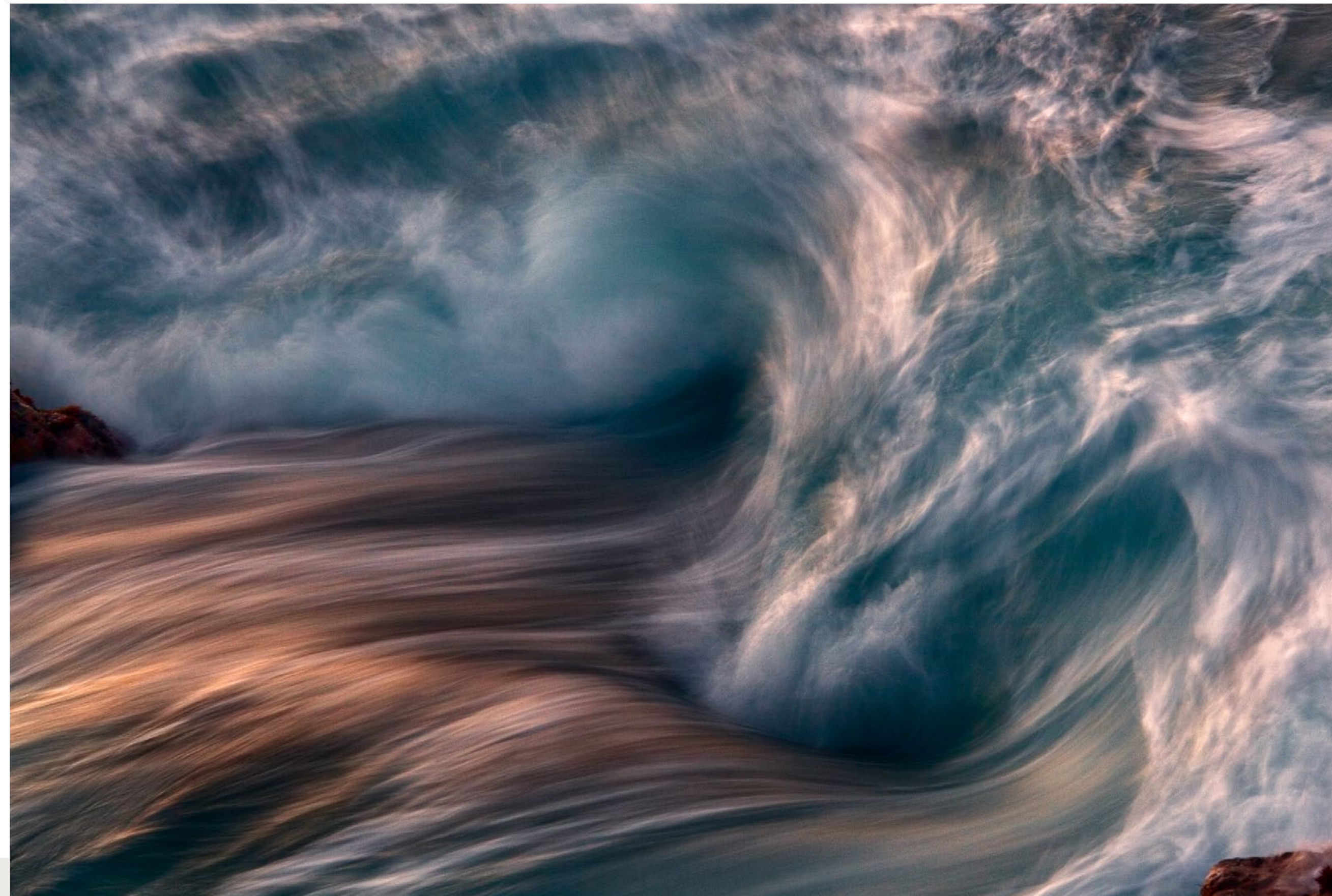


f-stop

Each month LPM publishes our readers' inspirations. Enter the Inspirations section and, besides having your picture displayed in the world's leading online photography magazine, you could also win a f-stop Black Box Multi

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Take part in our 'Inspirations' section
Click [here](#) for full details



Submit your best picture and win a f-stop backpack

King's Bath, Kauai, Hawaii, USA • ©Navin Sarma

The Meaning of Letters

IS – VR – OS – VC. What do these letters really mean and are they of any value to landscape photographers? **David Hay** expresses his thoughts on what these days we call 'Image Stabilisation'

All these letters describe the same thing, a form of image stabilisation that allows sharp, hand-held photographs, to be taken at lower than normal shutter speeds.

The different names are used by Canon, Nikon, Sigma and Tamron to describe very similar technologies, each designed carefully to avoid the patents of the other companies.

My first encounter with Image Stabilisation (IS) was at a Nature Photography Fair in 1995 where Canon had a demonstration 75-300mm IS zoom lens on show, the first IS lens available. When I fitted it onto my camera, and half-pressed the shutter release, there was a loud whirring noise and the image in the viewfinder wobbled around queasily before settling. Panning the lens caused the image to stay still initially then eventually catch up after panning had stopped. From this unpromising start, I felt that the technology could have some benefits and soon bought one of the lenses.

Like many 75-300mm lenses, the performance was good from 75-200 but fell away towards the 300mm end. At full aperture (large) at 300mm there was some softness which disappeared once the lens was stopped down to f/8 - f/11. Image stabilisation allowed me to hand-hold the lens at the optimum aperture and get sharper photographs. The sharpness gain was not due to reducing camera shake, just by allowing the lens to be hand-held reliably at the best aperture. This was before the days of digital photography when you could change ISO values for individual pictures.

As the technology improved, shutter speed gains rose from 2 stops to 3 stops, and eventually to 4 stops, as is the case for most recent IS lenses. This does not mean that the full 4 stops benefit over the normal

1/focal length minimum shutter speed is guaranteed. It depends on how steady your hands are, how windy it is, whether you are on a moving platform, and so on. However, if you take several pictures, even at very low shutter speeds, the chances with IS are that at least some of them will be sharp.

How does this affect landscape photographers?

Often they use sturdy tripods for every picture and some would say they have no need for IS lenses. In fact, the early IS lenses actually could reduce the sharpness of photographs taken on tripods if the IS was left switched on. This was because a feedback loop could develop in the absence of any movement causing the IS group to hunt around. Most modern IS lenses automatically sense tripod use and switch off the stabilisation.

A number of current lenses, such as the 70-200mm models, have available both IS and non-IS versions, and the difference in cost often is considerable. If you use a tripod all the time, you could save money and get the non-IS version, but often I take pictures, especially early and late in the day, that capture a fleeting moment which would be gone before my tripod was erected. I depend on IS for these pictures and

would not be without it now.

Both photographs this month are hand-held at slow shutter speeds with IS lenses. The photograph of moving water was shot balancing on a slippery rock. I dropped the shutter speed as low as it would go (1/10th second), to gain the feeling of movement in the water. The second image shows water (from a watering can) bouncing off a Shasta daisy. It was taken at 1/30th of a second at 277mm focal length, equivalent to 443 mm on full frame.

I tried a range of shutter speeds from 1/8th to 1/250th

but this one was the best, combining the movement of the water and the tracks of the splashes without the flower head moving about during the exposure. ✦

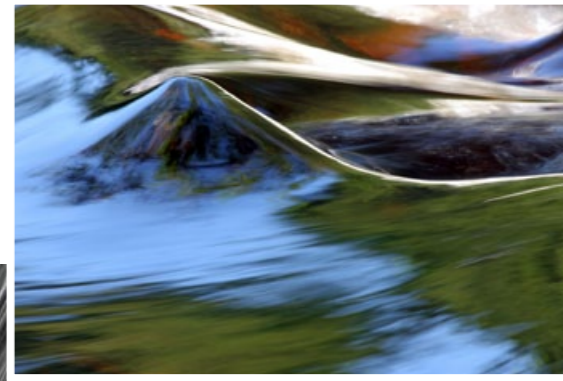


David Hay

David is a retired biologist who specialises in nature and travel photography. He is based in Pitlochry,

Scotland where he runs workshops in digital photography. To view his gallery visit

www.imagepro.photography.com/davidhay



Right • Canon 60D
Canon 70-300mm f/4-5.6L IS @ 277mm
f/13, 1/30sec, ISO 100
Top Right • Canon 20D
Lens @ 190mm
f/14, 1/10sec, ISO 100

© David Hay

Portfolio

ELISABETTA ROSSO • ITALY



I was born in 1976 in Italy. Engineering graduate but now working as a professional photographer.

I'm focused on reportage, studio (for personal photo projects), wedding and nature/travel photography. In the last 2 years I worked on some reportage in USA, Africa, Brazil, Iceland, Vietnam, Cambodia and I have published some of my pictures on various photography magazines and web sites around the world.

www.elisabettarosso.com

IN THE BAG

Nikon D700
Nikon D300
Nikon D50
Nikon 16-85mm f/3.5-5.6
Nikon 24-70mm f/2.8
Nikon 50mm f/1.8
Nikon 70-300mm f/4.5-5.6
Sigma 70-200mm f/2.8
Sigma 50-500mm f/4.5-6.3
LensBaby composer + lens
FishEye 10mm



Kenya, Africa

Nikon D700

Sigma 50-500mm f/4.5-6.3 @ 170mm

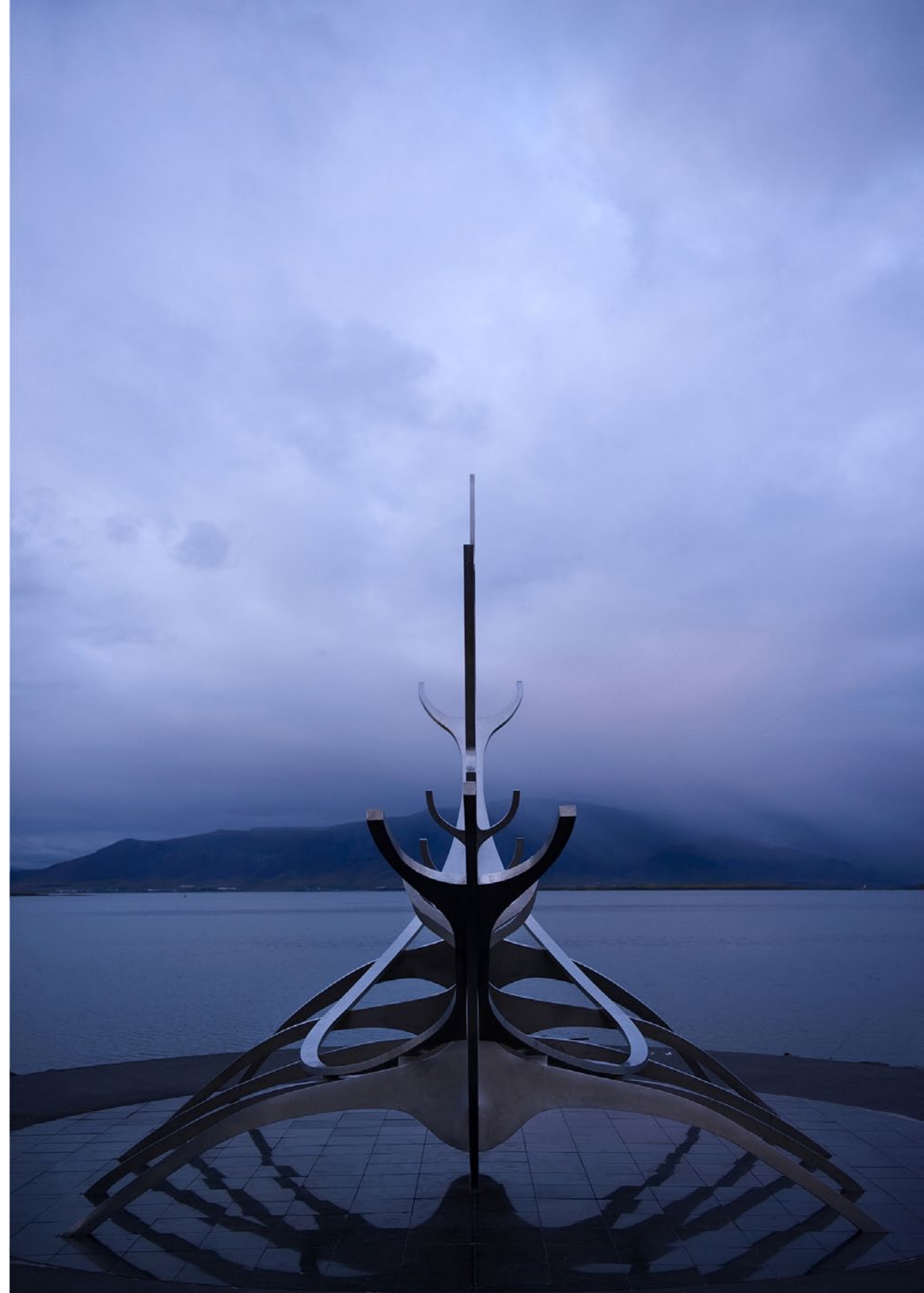
f/10, 1/640sec, ISO 400

All pictures © Elisabetta Rosso





Top • Skogafoss, Iceland
Nikon D700
Nikon 70-300mm f/4.5-5.6 @ 82mm
f/5, 1/100sec, ISO 200
Left top • Jokulsarlon, Iceland
Nikon D700
f/3.5, 1/1600sec, ISO 200
Left bottom • Jokulsarlon, Iceland
Nikon D700
Nikon 24-70mm f/2.8 @ 26mm
f/22, 1/250sec, ISO 400
Opposite • Reykjavik, Iceland
Nikon D700
Nikon 24-70mm f/2.8 @ 36mm
f/2.8, 1/100sec, ISO 320



Yellowstone, USA
Nikon D300
Nikon 16-85mm f/3.5-5.6 @ 16mm
f/13, 1/80sec, ISO 160

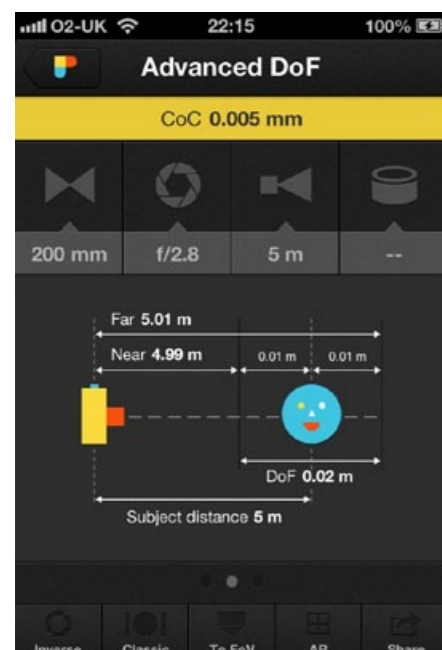


Photopills

Most serious landscape photographers use The Photographer's Ephemeris app to plan location shoots. Now, there is a new kid on the block that promises to do a lot more. The question is whether Photopills is worth the hype. **Mike Bell** investigates

Photopills is a powerful new smartphone app combining sun and moon position prediction, location shoot planning and instant calculators for exposure, depth of field, time lapse sequences and much more. Not only can it predict the position of the sun and moon at any time anywhere on Earth, but actually allows you to specify the exact celestial alignments for a perfect composition you have pre-visualised and then tell you exactly when to turn up for the perfect previsualised picture. As you set up, you can point your smartphone at the scene and use Photopills' augmented reality feature to watch how the sun and moon will progress through your composition when the time comes. Later, you can save your plannings, add photos and then share them on social network sites.

Many of you will already have used The Photographer's Ephemeris (TPE) to plan location shoots and will want to know how Photopills compares.



Like most serious landscape photographers, I have been a big fan of TPE for years and it is a tough act to even equal, never mind surpass. TPE is so good at what it does that none of us is going to bother with an app that is just another TPE clone. When I began assessing Photopills for this review, I was sceptical, but within a week it won me over; I will explain why as best as I can.

At first sight the two apps do look similar. Both have map page layouts with two moveable pins, one for the camera position and another (Photopills calls it the obstacle pin) for something in the landscape that you want to feature in your composition (mountain top, natural arch, island etc). Lines on the map show the directions of the sun, moon, sunrise, sunset, moonrise and moonset on the chosen day. Altitude information is extracted from the map data so that you can take into account the effect of relative elevation on the timing of moonrise, sunset etc. You can manipulate the timeline using your understanding of celestial movement (or by trial and error if you are like me) until everything lines up just as you wanted.

Both apps are equally powerful and use similar buttons and menus. Where Photopills surpasses TPE is that you can specify what direction and elevation you want and do a search for dates and times when they occur. You can fine tune the search by altering the allowed error (default 2%); the search results for both sun and moon give a nice visual representation of the light quality

(daylight, twilight, 'golden hour', 'blue hour' etc), and the phase of the moon is also shown. If lots of results are returned, you can alter the error % or re-order the list to prioritise the best light or the fullest moon, or whatever you want. In seconds you have the best possible date and time that you need, with no need to 'play about with the sliders until it looks right'.

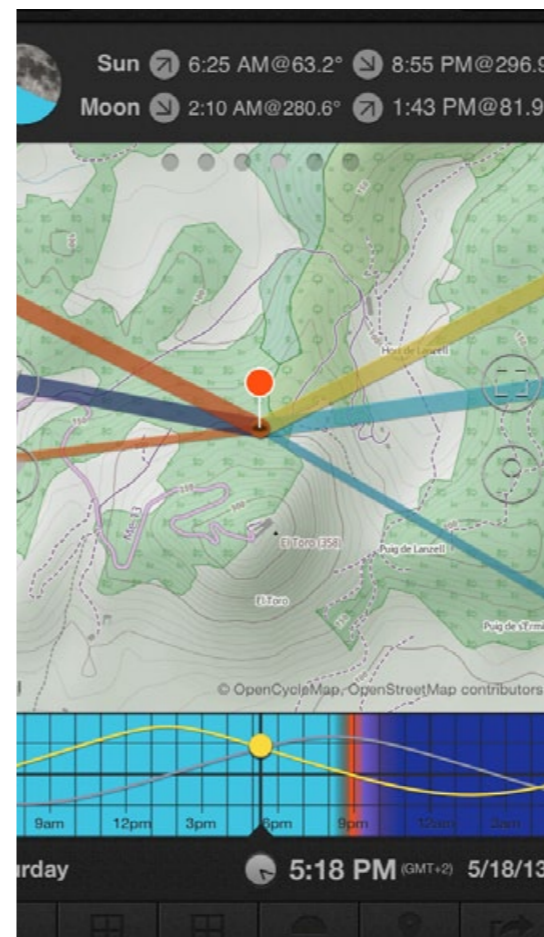
This is a real game changer. Here is a real example if you are sceptical. On the Photopills map, I chose an exotic location where a famous mountain is reflected in a lake. I positioned my virtual tripod on the lake shore and placed the objective pin on the mountain top. This told me the precise direction and elevation, which were then automatically imported by Photopills into my planning search. I manually tweaked the elevation up a couple of degrees to allow space for a moon just above the summit. I wanted that moon illuminated by a rising sun behind me. Probably not a common occurrence I thought, so I set the date search limits to five years (the maximum allowed), clicked the search button and Photopills took just four seconds to tell me what I needed to know. It turns out that the precise moon alignment that I wanted will occur about 20 times in the next five years, but on only one date will there be a full moon at sunrise. I know that date but I am not telling you, you will have to buy the app to find out.

The range of map options are the three default Apple maps and three versions of the open

source maps OpenStreetMap or OpenCycleMap. Unlike TPE, Photopills does not offer Google Maps yet. Google Terrain is my favourite map for location planning, but OpenCycleMap's landscape version comes pretty close as you can see in this screen grab. The advantage of open source maps is that once accessed they remain for a while in the cache memory so are still available even if there is no phone network at the location.



Another feature of Photopills that I was a bit sceptical about initially is Augmented Reality. This uses astronomical data plus the smartphone compass and gyro sensors to show you celestial features in the sky as you point the phone at it. If you have the excellent astronomical app Night Sky, you will know exactly what I mean. The nice part is that the paths of the sun and moon are overlaid over the smartphone camera view so that you can see how they will move through the sky as the day (or night) progresses. Photopills do warn that inaccuracies occur due to electrical interference and limitations in the phone sensors, so I would regard this



feature as not essential but quite fun and reassures that your plan is really going to work.

In addition, Photopills contains a number of handy application modules for photographers. 'Exposure' can be used to calculate the shutter time for a long exposure based on a test shot taken at a fast aperture and high ISO – very useful. 'DoF', 'Hyperfocal Table' and 'FoV' are pretty self-explanatory and do a good job. I particularly like the way the developers have incorporated a way of adjusting the CoC value in their 'Advanced DoF' calculator by allowing the user to input camera sensor size, print size, viewing distance and even visual acuity. The 'Night Augmented Reality' and 'Star Trail' modules really allow you to visualise how a star trail picture will look. The 'Time Lapse' module takes all the hard calculation work out of planning a time lapse sequence.

The app has excellent help files built in and the developers' web site at www.photopills.com contains useful video tutorials including one about the planning and making of this spectacular sunset through a

natural rock arch, taken at Pont d'en Gil in Menorca by Spanish photographer Antoni Cladera.

Photopills retails on iTunes App Store at €8.99 in Europe, £6.99 in the UK and \$9.99 in the US and is available in English, Spanish and Catalan. I think it is priced very competitively for such a seriously useful app. The developers are all photographers and are committed to further enhancements in the future. They tell me that an updated version to utilise fully the higher resolution iPad screen will be out later this year and they are working on an Android version also. If you do not already have TPE on your iPhone, it is an obvious choice. Even if you do have TPE you will not be wasting your money. Like me, you will soon appreciate just how much further this great little app goes. ✦



Mike Bell

Mike Bell is a semi pro landscape photographer, author, workshop tutor and a resident of Scotland. He

is highly passionate with landscape photography and loves spending time outdoors.

To see more of his work visit

www.discovered-light.co.uk

PONT D'EN GIL ON MENORCA

Sunset through natural stone arch

Image by Antoni Cladera

www.antonicladera.net



Tripods

For many, lugging a tripod around is a cumbersome nuisance – for others, it is an essential tool. We are testing six tripods that are sturdy, well priced and suitable for most landscape photographers

For landscape photographers a tripod is pretty much essential – at least if you want to avoid nasty blur due to camera shake. Even the steadiest of hands will give some shake as soon as you start shooting below certain shutter speeds, which is often the case at dawn/dusk or other low light situations. Likewise, capturing close-up macro images is pretty tough to get right without some sort of stability. While many people find lugging a tripod around a heavy and cumbersome nuisance, it is much better than having to ditch 90% of your pictures because they aren't sharp enough. Also, using a tripod is a useful technique for slowing yourself down a little if you are in the habit of jumping out of your vehicle and immediately getting snap happy.

When buying a tripod it is certainly worth getting your hands on one first to see if you like the feel of it. See if you can manage the weight and check it folds down to a size you are going to be able to carry, whether it's in your hands or strapped to your pack. You also need to be able to operate the tripod quickly to avoid missing that rare shaft of magical light shining through the clouds and, if you live in Scotland like we do, you'll want to try it out with your gloves on, to make sure it still functions just as smoothly.

Before buying be sure that it is the right tripod for your camera and lens(es) combination (specifically the maximum load bearing, and that it has a minimum/maximum height that you are going to be able to work with). Consider whether or not you would benefit from the centre column having the ability to be used horizontally or not.

We have tested some of the affordable tripods on the market today to give you a quick-look guide to what is available.



Manfrotto 055XPROB

With 496RC2 compact ball head
 RRP: £174.95
 Max height: 142cm
 Min height: 10cm
 Max height (extended): 178.5cm
 Folded length: 65.5cm
 Weight: 2.4kg/5.3lbs
 Max load: 7kg/15.4lbs
 Types of grips: flip-lock
 Ballast hook: no
 Type of feet: rubber
 Leg angles: 4 leg angles
 Leg sections: 3 total
 Tripod head: not included

While many people find lugging a tripod around a heavy and cumbersome nuisance, it is much better than having to ditch 90% of your pictures because they aren't sharp enough



The Manfrotto tripod makes for a sturdy workhorse with an impressive build quality. Its three faceted central column allows it to pack neatly and conveniently away. It offers a horizontal mode, which allows for versatile set up and positioning and is especially handy for close up and low level captures. It is easy to operate and doesn't require any dismantling of the components. The

tripod doesn't appear to have a hook for weighing it down, and neither does it come with tools or a bag, but these are trivial issues when compared to the overall quality. It has two leg grips and standard flip locks and is also very stable, with a good locking system for the leg angles. This has the highest RRP out of all the tripods we tested, although in the long-term it's worth the investment.



Vanguard Alta pro 263AGH

RRP: £289.99 (widely available at £159)
 Max height: 175.5cm
 Min height: not specified
 Max height (extended): not specified
 Folded length: 72.5cm
 Weight: 2.64kg
 Max load: 6kg/13.2lbs
 Types of grips: flip locks
 Ballast hook: yes
 Type of feet: adjustable solid/spike
 Leg angles: 3
 Leg sections: 3
 Tripod head: included in price/weight stats



The Vanguard tripod comes with quite an array of features, including a unique press re-lease system for adjusting the leg angles, built-in interchangeable feet that can be converted to spikes and a bag that can be attached and filled with heavy objects for ballast. Like the Manfrotto, it also has a centre column that can be rotated easily into a horizontal position without dismantling other parts. Comes complete with bag and toolkit. It has three all weather leg grips and is a good all-round solid tripod. With the ball head included in the RRP it's also good value for money.



Induro ATT114 BHL 2ball head

RRP: £98.00
 Max height: 129cm
 Min height: 15cm
 Max height (extended): 151.6cm
 Folded length: 49cm
 Weight: 1.5kg/3.3lbs
 Max load: 6kg/13.2lbs
 Types of grips: twist grips
 Ballast hook: yes
 Type of feet: solid

Leg angles: 3
 Leg sections: 4 legs
 Tripod head: not included



The Induro is a great compact tripod and has all the requisite features you would hope for, including a reversible centre column, ballast hook and a well-located spirit level. It has tac-tile twist grip locks on the legs for simple pinch free adjustments. There is a comfortable grip/warmer on each leg for handling in poor conditions and it's a very portable piece of kit which also includes a robust carry bag and tools in the box. As the cheapest tripod we tested, albeit without the ball head, it offers good value.

The Slik is an impressively solid tripod, well built and low on gimmicks. It comes with 3 oversized leg grips, which make handling in poor weather easy. The centre column unscrews to give a lower minimum shooting height if necessary. It is constructed of a special aluminium/magnesium/titanium compound, claiming a 40% greater strength to weight ratio, and has grooved legs to eliminate leg twist. A couple of key features are missing in that it doesn't have a spirit level or ballast hook, although it does come with a bag. Very reasonable price for a complete kit.

Slik Pro 500 DX Complete

RRP: £129
 Max height: 134.4cm
 Min height: 47cm (or 35cm using shorter centre column adjustment)
 Max height (extended): 164.5cm
 Folded length: 69.5cm
 Weight: 2.73kg/6lbs
 Max load: 4.5kg/9.9lbs
 Types of grips: clips
 Ballast hook: no – double check
 Type of feet: solid
 Leg angles: 3
 Leg sections: 3
 Tripod head: included



The Giotto is an impressive looking tripod with wide tubes, flip-lock clasps and three leg warmers. Whilst not heavy on gimmicks it has a couple of unique features – one being the y-shaped centre column for improved packability and the other calibration marks on the lowest leg section to help with accurate levelling. It also has the option of swapping the solid feet for spikes. If a straightforward and solid tripod that is undeniably pleasant to handle is what interests you, this is a very good piece of equipment. The tallest of the tripods on offer, with a very impressive maximum load, it is also priced very competitively. The toolkit is included.

Giotto YTL9213 Silk Road

RRP: £130
 Max height: 163cm
 Min height: 15cm
 Max height (extended): 194cm
 Folded length: 69cm
 Weight: 2.08kg/4.59lbs
 Max load: 10kg/22lb
 Types of grips: flip-lock
 Ballast hook: yes
 Type of feet: solid, spike available as option
 Leg angles: 3
 Leg sections: 3
 Tripod head: not included





MeFoto A2350Q2

RRP: £124.95
 Max height: not specified
 Min height: not specified
 Max height (extended): 163cm
 Folded length: 41cm
 Weight: 2.08kg/4.6lbs
 Max load: 12kg/26.5lbs
 Types of grips: twist lock grips with anti-rotation system
 Ballast hook: yes
 Type of feet: solid
 Leg angles: 2 locking leg angles
 Leg sections: 5
 Tripod head: included in price



The MeFoto tripod stands out first of all for its compactness, an important consideration for many, due to its unique foldaway system, which gives it an impressive folded length of only 41cm, easily small enough to fit in your carry-on luggage. It also boasts an impressive max load bearing in relation to the weight. With five leg sections there are a lot of twist lock grips to undo in order to reach maximum height, and there is only one foam grip. On the plus side it can also convert to a monopod without tools. There is a decent spring-loaded hook in a recess in the centre column, which enables you to attach something to give extra stability. It doesn't come with a toolkit but a neat and substantial carry bag is included. With the ball head included the MeFoto is very competitively priced.



Morag Paterson Ted Leeming

Based in the Galloway Hills in rural southwest

Scotland, photographers Ted Leeming & Morag Paterson have been working collaboratively for six years capturing the beauty of the natural world in their striking and evocative photographic images. To see more of their images visit

www.leemingpaterson.com

Conclusion

All the tripods we tested offer a steady and reliable platform for landscape photographers. It's a matter of individual preference as to whether to choose a heavier and more stable tripod or sacrifice a bit of sturdiness for something that is easier to carry. Best in test we have given to the Manfrotto tripod for its overall build quality, versatility and price.

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PRO Feedback



Rebecca Wilks • USA

I have been an avid nature and travel photographer since I was a teenager. I am an MD, retired from the practice of Obstetrics and Gynecology and I live in Peoria, Arizona, USA.

The combination of photography and international humanitarian work is a passion. Published work has supported several nonprofits, including The Guatemala Literacy Project and The Open Arms Home for Children in South Africa.



Mark Bauer, UK

Mark Bauer is one of the UK's leading landscape photographers with work published worldwide. He is the author of 3 books, including 'The Landscape Photography Workshop' (with Ross Hoddinott).

To see more of his work visit

www.markbauerphotography.com



Ian Plant, USA

Ian is a full time professional nature photographer, writer, and adventurer. His work has appeared in numerous magazines, books and calendars. He is also the author of a number of ebooks and digital processing video tutorials.

www.ianplant.com

This is an image which immediately grabs the attention, largely because of its strong composition. The lines in the bottom corners pull the eye into the picture towards the foreground focal point, the large boulder sitting roughly a third of the way into the frame. The eye then travels along the shoreline of the lake, finishing up on the distant hills. There is a satisfying sense of completion, with plenty of interest along the way, and reasonably good use of texture. The sky looks a little bland, so Rebecca did exactly the right thing by keeping the horizon high in the frame to minimise the impact of the empty space above the landscape. Technically, the image is good, being well exposed and sharp from the foreground through to the horizon.

It's been processed well, with natural colours and contrast – it's good to see proper shadows. Some of the lighter tones are on the bright side, so I might pull those back a little, if possible.

The main thing I would change about this image is the light, which is a little harsh and coming from the side and front. Shooting when the sun is lower in the sky and if possible, coming from the side, would really enhance this composition by providing greater modelling of the landscape. Colour saturation would improve, as would the texture of the rocks. The result could be a striking image.

Ian Plant



Canon 5D Mk III
Canon 24-105mm f/4L IS @ 24mm
f/16, 1/8sec, ISO 200

Need a hand to improve your photography? We are here to help. Send us a selection of your pictures and our pros will give you constructive feedback. [Click here](#) for details.

Portfolio

GEORGE GRAVES • USA



I specialize in landscape & travel photography, particularly photos of mountain wilderness and coastal areas of Central California, USA, as well as international coverage, with an emphasis in Asia and Europe. Currently my fine art prints are on display at the Bronze, Silver, & Gold Gallery in Cambria on the Central California Coast. My published photo credits include such publications as Australian House & Garden/Travel and ProNature Photographer.

IN THE BAG

Canon 5D Mk II
 Canon 17-40mm f/4L
 Canon 24-105mm f/4L
 Canon 70-200mm f/4L
 Canon 300mm f/2.8L
 Canon 1.4x Extender II
 Canon 430 EX II Flash
 PocketWizard Plus III
 Gitzo G1297 tripod w/ RRS ball head
 Singh-Ray Filters
 F-stop photo pack



TEMPLES OF BAGAN

Myanmar, Asia
 Canon 5D Mk II

Canon 24-105 f/4L @ 67mm
 f/4.5, 1/1000sec, ISO 400

All pictures © George Graves





ABOVE • CIVITA DI BAGNOREGIO

Italy

Canon 5D Mk II

Canon 24-105 f/4L @ 105mm

f/4, 1/125sec, ISO 1600

ABOVE RIGHT • BASALT COLUMNS

Canon 5D Mk II

Canon 24-105 f/4L @ 47mm

f/8, 1/80sec, ISO 400

Singh-Ray CP filter

RIGHT • NAFPLIO

Greece

Canon 5D

Canon 24-105mm f/4L @ 47mm

f/8, 1/60sec, ISO 100

Singh-Ray CP filter

BELOW RIGHT • CALIFORNIA

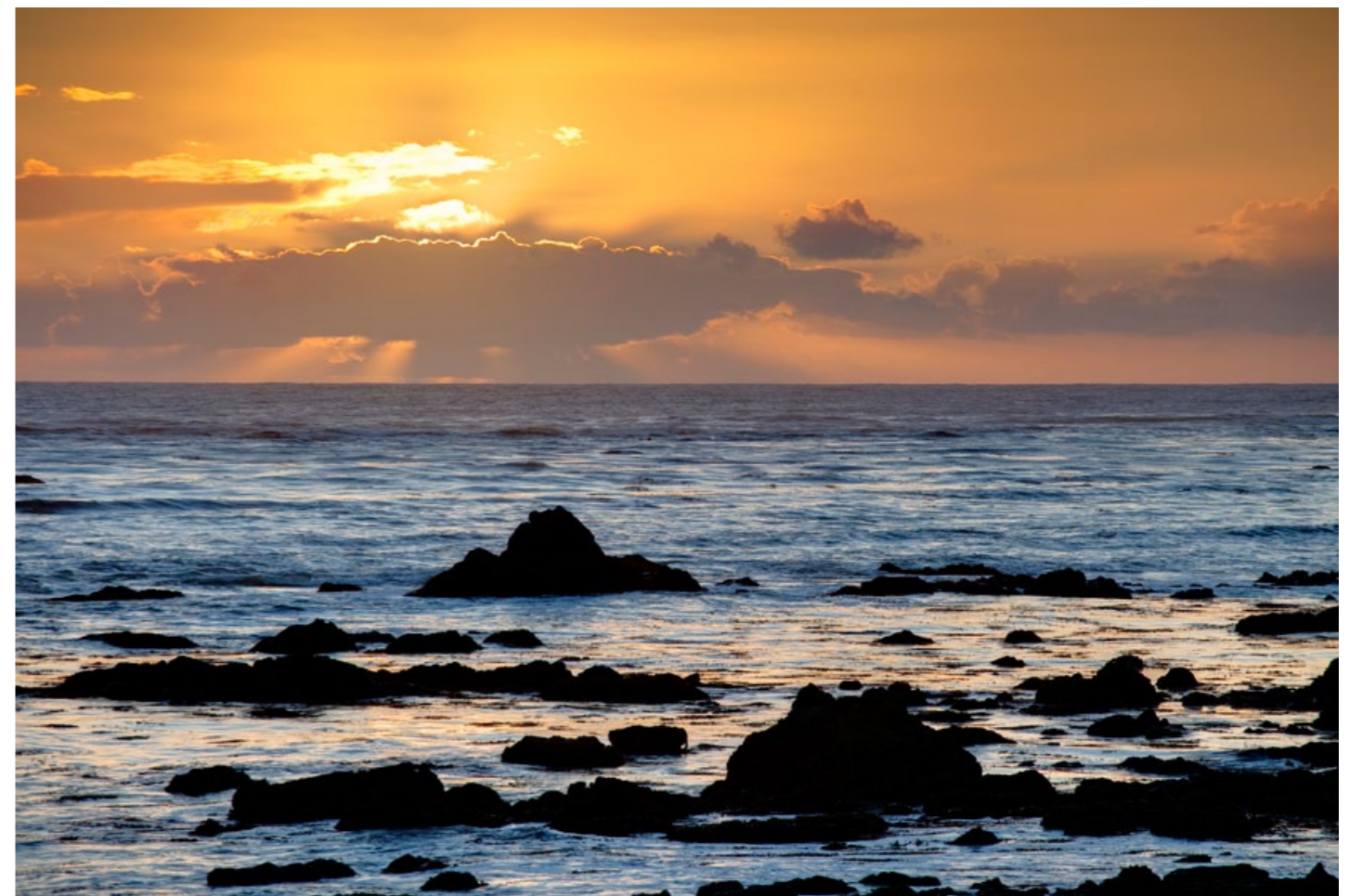
Cayucos, USA

Canon 5D Mk II

Canon 200mm f/4 @ 200mm

f/8, ISO 100

Singh-Ray GND filter





JADE DRAGON MOUNTAIN, YUNNAN PROVINCE, CHINA

Canon 5D Mk II

Canon 24-105 f/4L @ 60mm

f/8, 1/200sec, ISO 100

Singh-Ray CP filter





LEFT • HIGH COUNTRY, YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

California, USA
Canon 5D Mk II
Canon 24-105 f/4L @ 50mm
f/5, 1/50sec, ISO 100
PP: Topaz Simplify & Color Effex Pro

BELOW LEFT • BINALONG BAY

Tasmania, Australia
Canon 5D Mk II
Canon 24-105 f/4L @ 24mm
f/13, 1/200sec, ISO 400

BELOW • WILLOW CREEK, SIERRA NATIONAL FOREST

California, USA
Canon 5D Mk II
Canon 24-105 f/4L @ 65mm
f/11, 2 sec, ISO 100
Singh-Ray CP filter



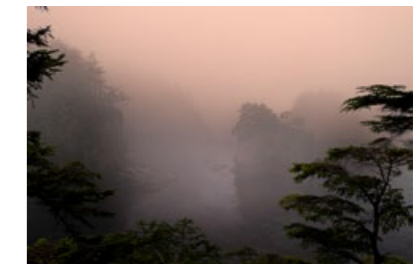
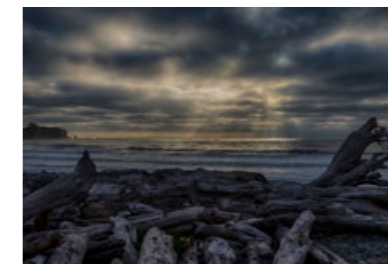
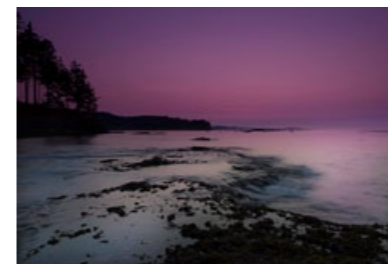


Washington State

The north western part of Washington State has an ever-changing ecosystem and the best photographic opportunities come from exploring just around the next bend. **Michael Leggero** has returned recently from the area and has the story

As I landed in Seattle I was tired and cranky from the long flight, but I met the Bigfoot researchers and settled into my hotel. First, I must say, these people are interesting; probably that is the most polite way I can describe them. For those of you wondering, no, I did not see Bigfoot. I have one picture that has an odd shadow in it, but that is all. On this trip I learned that

people who are devoted to finding a Sasquatch will convince themselves that it is there. My closest encounter was while driving up a winding mountain road, when, far in the distance, a black shape crossed the road quickly in front of us. My companions instantly became excited; “Sasquatch” they exclaimed. As we drew closer we saw a huge flock of crows in the field and realised



that the birds had formed the black shape. But, as I said before, these people wanted to see Bigfoot so made all kinds of crazy statements, such as, “there is no way a flock of crows can move like that”, and “the crows are here investigating something left behind by the Sasquatch”. They spent about 3 or 4 hours wandering around the area finding bent over grass and “footprints” in

all sorts of places. They even went so far as to have a big guy run across the road several times, watching him from different angles, to see if a human could imitate what they saw. Of course they could not; humans cannot imitate crows. I must remain impartial to the “Finding Bigfoot” expedition I was on: who knows, maybe they were right and my vision is just »



pools and rock formations. Be sure to check for low tide and plan your trip around these times, which will give you the best opportunity for finding small creatures in the tide pools and allow you to get much closer to the rocks.

Travel along the northern coast on Route 112 and eventually you will reach Neah Bay and Cape Flattery, the most north western part of the continental United States. From the parking area you can walk on a wonderfully maintained trail about a mile to the edge of the land where you will be treated to the sight of huge cliffs and hundreds of sea birds. The lucky few that get here on a clear day can photograph a very interesting looking lighthouse.

Lake Crescent, along Route 101, is a giant lake with wonderful mountains in the background. The mountains protect the lake from the wind and the water surface is often very calm and flat, offering wonderful reflections catching the light of the rising or setting sun.

Using Forks, a logging town that is now famous for being the setting of the "Twilight" books and movies as a base for operations, allows access to several beaches and the Hoh Rainforest, where you need to be prepared to get wet. Bring plastic Ziploc bags for your equipment and there should be no problems. Typically, most rainforests only have short periods of rain so you will not be in a torrential downpour all day and, if you are lucky, you will not face any rain at all. Two trails I recommend are the Spruce trail and the Hall of Mosses trail. Here you will see trees covered completely in moss; even the floor of the forest has a beautiful green moss carpet. Be on the lookout for the elusive

Banana Slug. These creatures grow 6-8 inches long and allow you to explore your macro skills. They are only found in this area so enjoy them.

Western coastal beaches are spectacular here. First, Second, and Third Beach are your target areas. Huge driftwood trees line the beaches and islands, and odd rock formations become great subjects to photograph. Second Beach has good tide pools that are accessible easily. Rialto beach is close by also and has rock islands and driftwood beaches. However, it also has a dead tree forest on the beach that makes for a great silhouette against stormy clouds.

There are many other sites around, but these are just a few that I recommend. Waterfalls are everywhere; one I recommend particularly is Salmon Cascade, which is just as the name conveys. Salmon swim upstream here and with some patience you can capture a picture of one jumping up the waterfall.

I found myself using only three main lenses, a 16-35mm, a longer 70-200mm and a macro lens. A tripod is definitely necessary here as it is often foggy with low light conditions and handholding is not advisable. Polarising filters are also a good idea to reduce glare on the water surface, and neutral density filters for the many waterfalls you will encounter.

Washington State was not entirely what I expected. I read a lot about it but unfortunately many of the articles were written long ago. It has an ever-changing ecosystem and the best opportunities come from exploring just around the next bend. ✦

» going with my old age. I have to thank these people though; they enabled me to go to Washington State and to have the opportunity of some spectacular landscape photography, which, finally now, this article will be about.

The north western part of Washington State is really beautiful and its inhabitants are some of the nicest people I have met in my travels. They realise that tourism is important to their economy, but have not become obsessed with tourists, like some of the larger more popular national parks, so they still treat people nicely.

Getting around Washington State is simple; you do not need a big SUV with four-wheel drive, any normal car will do. The drawback is that almost everything good to see is not right beside the road, hiking is a necessity, but since most of the land belongs to the national park, the trails are very well maintained.

North western Washington has two main towns/cities where you can stay and use as a base for operations, Port Angeles and Forks. From either of these places you can travel to wonderful photographic sites and then back to a hotel each night; no wilderness camping required.

First we shall plan from Port Angeles. This is the main entrance to Olympic National Park, which

itself has very few roads and is considered just a starting point for hiking adventurers. It is not like Yellowstone or Death Valley, so there are really no great vistas or wildlife encounters by the roadside. I do not recommend travelling into the park from here as there are many better locations for photography.

Salt Creek recreation area is one of my favourite places for sunrises and sunsets. The area is a campground for RV's and tents but is open to the public. Locate Tongue Point and walk down to the ocean edge for beautiful tide

PREVIOUS DOUBLE SPREAD

Nikon D800E + Nikon 70-200mm f/2.8 @ 70mm
f/8, 1/8sec, ISO 100

ABOVE

Nikon D800E + Nikon 16-35mm f/4 @ 16mm
f/8, 1/60sec, ISO 200

OPPOSITE TOP

Nikon Coolpix AW100
f/3.9, 1/60sec, ISO 125

OPPOSITE BOTTOM

Nikon D800E + Nikon 16-35mm f/4 @ 32mm
f/5.6, 1/60sec, ISO 200



Mike Leggero

Mike Leggero is a landscape and wildlife photographer who is very observant of our ecosystem. He teaches workshops several times a year and details of his adventures can be seen at www.thephototrips.com



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Final Frame



Brantwood Jetty, Lake District, England

Graham Moore from the UK

