



KEEP IT SIMPLE SHOOTER

THE GUIDE TO MAKING
GREAT IMAGES

Edition 11 – 2022

Darran Leal

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS K.I.S.S. Photography?

I have been teaching 'K.I.S.S. Photography' (Keep It Simple Shooter) since 1981. Today, equipment is more affordable and digital cameras allow for instant feedback. What a fantastic learning tool! However, when starting out, all of this technology can seem daunting for many.

Unfortunately, some educators make photography as difficult and complex as possible.

It doesn't need to be this way!



Read on, as I offer you simple but very effective ways to shoot great images. Note that the first few pages are for novice photographers. The information becomes more advanced as you progress through the book. I hope that this book motivates and helps you to understand photography better.

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FRIENDS OF WORLD PHOTO ADVENTURES

We have worked with many companies over the years from Qantas in the 1990's to Snap Happy the photography show today. Photography brings many people together as life friends and companies or individuals who help us, to help you.

See more details on pages 104 - 108.

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Adobe



“You must own a good camera?” – or – “Which brand of camera do you use?” This is often asked by non photographers and photo enthusiasts alike. Of course the answer is – who cares! Isn't it the person behind the capture device? The Photo Artist... I started as a professional photographer in 1980 and I first joined Warren Macris (pictured below) as his assistant photography teacher in 1981. My son Pearce joined our business in 2012. He enjoyed an apprenticeship working with me in the field. Second son Frazer has also just joined us (2018) in the same manner. The three of us are rare in the photography world. We travel regularly to amazing destinations and shoot a great diversity of subjects and situations. We share this love of photography with hundreds of photographers, who pay us to get them to stunning locations for unique results and to help them understand equipment and techniques. Personally, I love to use my experience to help others and I know Pearce and Frazer are really enjoying challenging novice and advanced photographers to ‘think differently’ when shooting.

We live in a very exciting era of photography.

Everyone can now take a great photo – age has no barriers and equipment can range from a phone, to top-line professional kits. In the end, it comes down to how you are going to use the results and what passion you have for reaching your creative goals.

I can not stress enough that a brand name is irrelevant! What does matter, is that you have the right gear to do the job for your interests and that you know how to use your gear. I hope you enjoy this small book. It offers over 100 pages of information that will help all photographers – from those starting in photography, to seasoned photo enthusiasts refreshing new K.I.S.S. goals.



ABOVE: Warren Macris is a master printer and photographer. Darran was Warren's photo workshop assistant in 1981/82. Warren printed Darran's images for Epson at a photo trade show in Melbourne in 2011.



ABOVE: Shot in Bhutan in 2013 while visiting a monastery. This looks like a complex photo, when in fact it was not. Read on, as I explain simple techniques to great results. Aperture Priority, 1600ISO 70-200mm lens @ 200mm, f2.8 1/125th of a second hand held.



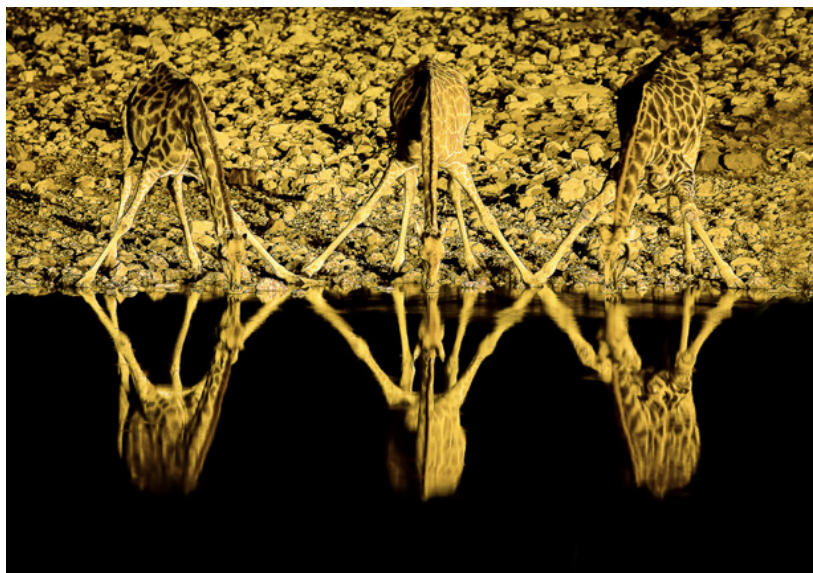
ABOVE: One of my first images published was in Australian Photography Magazine in 1984. In 2016, I had my 300th article and the cover in that same magazine. You never know where your photographic dreams will take you.

BELOW: You would not think that the shepherd was standing on a highway. Your choice of angle and lens can make a big difference to the result. Aperture Priority, 400ISO 24-105mm lens @ 57mm, f11 250th of a second hand held.



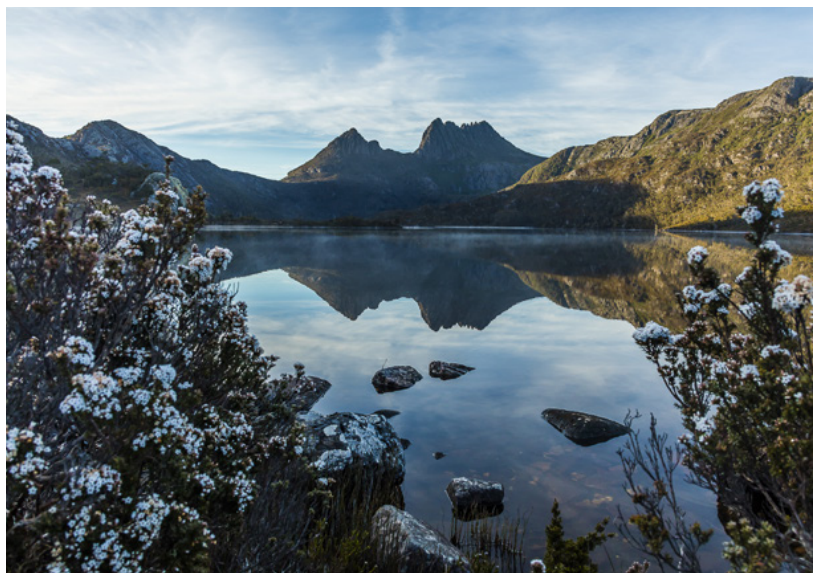


ABOVE: I love to return to locations and shoot the same opportunities. Different light, different conditions will guarantee, different results. Shot in Lower Antelope Slot Canyon in 2005, Manual Mode, 100ISO 17-40mm lens @ 20mm, f11 1 second with tripod.



ABOVE: All photography is about timing. You can have the most expensive gear, you can be in the right place, but if you cannot time your shot, then your success rate will be lower. This award winning image is one of my favourite. Not because of any awards, rather because of the challenge of the shoot. I was repeating under my breath, "don't move" for the three second exposure!

BELOW: I enjoyed the free feel of no tripod for this image framed by flowers. Aperture Priority, 400ISO 24-105mm lens @ 24mm, f11 125th of a second hand held.





ABOVE: Masked owls are common enough, but rarely seen. This young owl was shot in Tasmania at a wildlife park during the day. A combination of photo technique and processing offered the nocturnal look. Aperture Priority, 1600ISO 100-400mm lens @ 400mm, f5.6 350th of a second hand held.

BELOW: High contrast scenes with little colour often suit B&W. The active volcano was a great back drop in Guatemala. Aperture Priority, 400ISO 24-70mm lens @ 24mm, f11 125th of a second hand held.





ABOVE: A simple point and shoot image? No, I had the camera specifically set up with a flash and off camera cord system to offer this unique creative award winning result. With some experience, anyone could have taken this image. You just need to try. Manual Mode, 100ISO 100mm lens, f22 1/125th of a second hand held.

BELOW: Your choice of angle can make an important difference to your result. Aperture Priority, 400ISO 24-105mm lens @ 24mm, f8 350th of a second hand held.





ABOVE: Does everything need to be sharp? No, as photography is a creative art. Aperture Priority, 800ISO 50-500mm lens @ 460mm, f6.3 60th of a second, hand held with flash.

BELOW: The weight of your gear can make a difference when travelling. However, are you comparing 'Apples for Apples'? Is your camera bag too large and you are simply 'filling it up'?



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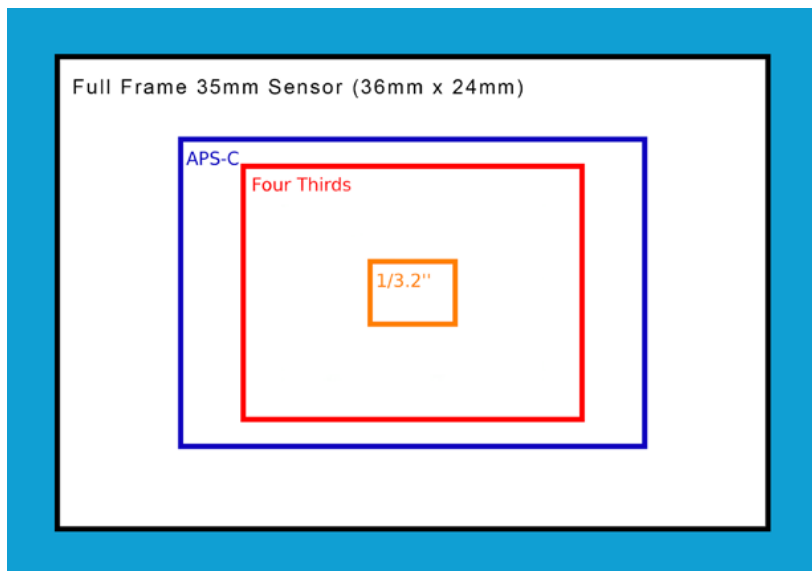
HOW IT ALL WORKS

THE MAKE-UP OF YOUR CAMERA ...

You might have the most expensive digital camera in the world, or perhaps a base version for a few hundreds dollars. Guess what? They all predominately function on the same basic principles. It does not matter which brand.

SENSOR SIZE ...

Did you know that photography offers different capture device sizes? All have positives and negatives. If we start with the traditional 35mm size, we can say that a 24-105mm is that range. If you have a sensor that is APS size, it has a 1.5X factor as it is a smaller sized sensor. (Nikon, Sony, Pentax...) APS-C size is Canon which has a 1.6X factor. So a 24-105mm lens (as shown on the lens), is in fact a 38-168mm for Canon. If you own a Four Thirds camera, like an Olympus or Panasonic, it is a 2X factor. Don't get hung up on the technicalities, rather does the gear do what you need?



Why so many different types? In the digital world, everyone is looking for an edge and will justify endlessly as to the positives of their system. Unfortunately, the negatives are rarely discussed. If you have specific goals in mind, then some sensor sizes are better than others. The best example is shooting in low light. Without doubt, a 35mm sensor is currently offering the best file quality in low light/high ISO shooting. For me personally, this makes a big difference when shooting nature and culture. This book is based on 35mm sensor size information for lens use. If you use a smaller sensor, please adjust to your sensor size. For example, I love the 16-35mm range for super wide angle work. On an Olympus camera, this would be an 8-17mm range.

VIEWFINDER (OR MIRRORLESS SCREEN)

Is a system made up of mirrors and/or a screen that helps you to see and focus the light as required. This is the small glass eye piece at the back of the camera body, or the view screen. We have three main systems of viewing our images today:

1. The traditional viewfinder.

This is a series of mirrors and glass prisms that offer a framed scene, similar to what you can see.

2. Live View via your LCD screen.

This allows you to view the scene via a panel on the back of the camera. This can be hard to see in bright light.

3. Mirrorless cameras.

This cuts out the traditional viewfinder and allows you to use a 'Live View' electronic simulated screen. I suggest that you test these cameras before purchase as they have some limitations. However, for other photographers, they might be perfect.



SENSOR

A light capture device. This is found in the camera body. You cannot see it easily, but it is there, (trust me). **WARNING** – do not touch the sensor or try to look at it other than as specified in your camera manual. I clean my own sensors, but I do this as recommended.



FOCUSING

Focusing is the ability to bring light rays together at a particular point – in this case – to the sensor. Today, most lenses use internal elements (glass) to move, thus focusing the beams of light. All lenses offer a focusing ring, so you can manually focus. However, most photographers will use the automatic focusing systems available in virtually all cameras. This is a fantastic point of this technology – you have the choice.



METER

Allows you to work out the amount of light available in a given scene in the viewfinder. You cannot see the meter, but you can read its 'suggested settings' in the viewfinder and/or outside camera display panels. Important point: the readings are a 'suggestion'!

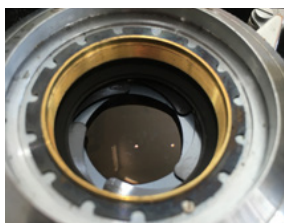
All of this is 'light tight', that is, from camera body to the barrel of the lens. This will allow you to work with the light that you see through your viewfinder only, or your viewing screen.

This is perhaps the most ambiguous piece of technology in a camera. Why? Because you cannot physically see it. However, it does exist and its job is to read the intensity and type of light, within the viewfinder scene. Most cameras offer three types of metering patterns: Multi-Pattern, Centre-Weighted, Spot.

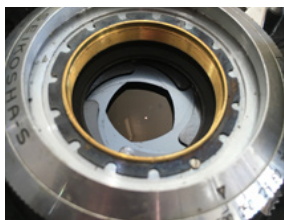
I keep to the K.I.S.S. principle and use one metering type over 90% of the time. That is, Multi-Pattern. I use the term Multi-Pattern to cover all brands; however, it is called a different name from camera brand to camera brand. Nikon 'Matrix', Canon 'Evaluative', etc ... Most cameras read the light in over 20, 30 and, for some, more than 50 sections of the scene. The one key point - your meter is super reliable for helping you to read the scene correctly. I talk more about this point later in the book.

WHAT IS AN APERTURE?

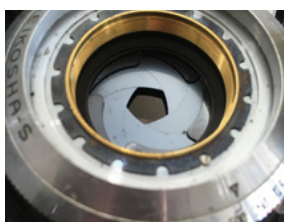
A lens aperture is like a diaphragm as per the images on the right. It has interwoven leaves of metal that offer a near perfect circle of control. That is, you can adjust the size of the aperture so that you let in more or less light. Some Mirrorless cameras use new technology to achieve the same – limiting light.



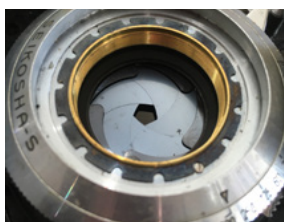
Aperture wide open f4



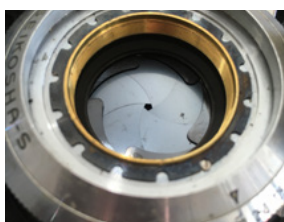
Aperture f5.6



Aperture f8



Aperture f11



Aperture f16

SHUTTER

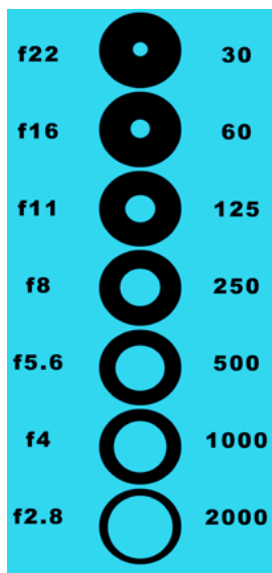
This is a series of metal leaves that open to allow in light that your aperture has allowed through the lens. So, this is your second control mechanism for the amount of light to reach your capture device. This can be controlled for various amounts of time, thus adjusting the 'intensity' of light. Again, we will cover this further in the next few pages.

Your aperture and shutter are key points to achieving your creative goals. I highly recommend that you spend some time on the following pages to help you understand their relationship, from simple shoots to more complex shoots.

COMBINING BOTH...

If you set your aperture to f11 and your camera meter offered 125th of a second, (as on the right) then the other combinations shown would also be available to use. In fact, each combination allows exactly the same intensity of light to the sensor.

I suggest that you do not allow the technicalities to over take the basic understanding of how 'it all works'. Simply understand that the higher the aperture number, the smaller the opening and visa versa. For the shutter, the higher the number the better chance you have of freezing movement. We look further into this in a few pages.



HOW IT ALL WORKS ...

We will start in the easiest mode – PROGRAM – because both shutter and aperture are set automatically. You look through your viewfinder, press the release button and the following sequence occurs:

1. Camera takes a meter reading.
2. This sets 'suggested' aperture and shutter settings.
3. Focusing occurs.
4. Aperture moves to the setting.
5. Shutter opens, (Fires).
6. Exposure takes place on sensor (as light is recorded).
7. Information is digitised and transferred to camera 'buffer'.
8. From buffer, it is transferred to memory card.

At this point, a couple of new words have come up:

1. Buffer – your camera initially stores image information to this device in your camera. This allows the camera to shoot large file sizes and/or many photo's per second. The negative of this system is that the buffer can be filled, before you finish shooting a fast sequence of images. New cameras and the more expensive versions offer better buffer sizes and speeds.

2. Memory card – several types are available. They get faster and larger in storage capacity each year. Note that a cheap or well priced card is often an older and slower type. In action shooting situations, this might cause frustration as the card is too slow to download the information from the buffer.

* Tip – buy the latest and best cards so that you can use such cards into the future. I have used Lexar cards for over 15 years.

WHAT IS A MODE?

Your camera offers several modes, or ways that you can use the features in your camera to prioritise your settings. You will adjust your mode to offer more effective aperture/shutter combinations, subject to what you are shooting and your creative interests. Lets look at the different types of modes ...

PROGRAM MODE

This is where your camera sets both aperture and shutter automatically for you. I use this mode for quick snap shots at family events and in particular for flash photography. I will explain this further in other sections. **WARNING** – do not use the 'Green Box' icon. This is auto everything, including resetting some camera features that you most likely do not want changed.

APERTURE PRIORITY MODE

You set the aperture and the camera sets the shutter automatically for you. This is the main mode I use. The reason is, because I get to control ‘the look’ of the photograph. Most subjects, but not all, will look best at particular apertures and with the right combination of lens, subject distance etc. Often my starting point is, ‘which aperture will do the job?’ I talk about this further throughout this book.

SHUTTER PRIORITY MODE

This is where you set the shutter speed and your camera sets the aperture automatically. I do not use this feature much at all. I use it with fill-flash, and for specific slow blur creative shoots.

MANUAL MODE

This is where you set both aperture and shutter controls yourself. I use this mode in difficult lighting conditions, or when I want to be ‘extra creative’.

STYLE PROGRAM MODES

This is where your camera sets both aperture and shutter automatically for you – BUT – to a particular style of photography. This could be Sports, Landscapes, Macro, etc. They are often shown as symbols for the shooting style. Sounds great, but a couple of problems occur:

1. Often, your camera custom default settings are reset during that mode and not necessarily to what you want.
2. It can make you a lazy photographer, inhibiting your creative growth as a photographer.

SETTING UP YOUR CAMERA AND STARTING

While each camera is different and each brand of camera has its own idiosyncrasies, in fact, all are very similar in base configuration. So, have your camera manual ready. You will go to MENU at the back of your camera and look for the following features. Once set, your camera will default to these and offer you either better quality or, more often, standards used by most ‘serious’ photographers.

It is important to realise that your camera comes set default to factory settings. These are not always what you would like as a more serious photographer.

In time, you might change more custom settings so that you can ‘fine tune’ your camera and how it works. I will only be covering the more important initial points in this section.

WHAT COLOUR SPACE DO I USE?

Your camera will come set to sRGB. Change this setting to Adobe RGB (1998). This is important if you are shooting JPEG files. It is not relevant if you shoot RAW files, but I like to set it anyway.

JPEG OR RAW

Most photographers start with JPEG formatted files. This is fine as it offers high quality results that you can use quickly. It is very important that the JPEG settings are set to the highest quality and that you set your colour profile to Adobe RGB in your camera menu! RAW files are unprocessed files that will offer you the highest quality. While a JPEG file 'throws away' some important data, a RAW file does not. The negative of using a RAW file is that it is larger and requires a little more work to process. I always shoot RAW.

NOISE REDUCTION

Your camera will have 'Noise Reduction' off. Some photographers turn this on. Most now work on reducing noise reduction (grain when using higher ISO settings) in a program like Lightroom.

HOW LONG UNTIL YOUR CAMERA SLEEPS?

To conserve battery life, your camera often turns off the meter and general functions at about 4/6 seconds, after pressing the button half way. This is too shorter time. I suggest that you set your meter to around 18 seconds activation time. Batteries are very good today and drain little power. Most power is used when looking at your results on the back of the camera screen.

AUTO FOCUS

This will be default set to multiple auto focus points, thus allowing the camera to pick what it thinks is the correct focus point. For general subjects, this will work. However, if you need to focus on a particular point (which is more often than not), then you might find this frustrating and the focusing erratic. I suggest that you change the focus system to:

One Shot – is the best default setting and is used mainly for stationary subjects. When you half-press the shutter button, autofocus locks on the subject. You can then recompose to have subjects off centre. Use this mode for photographing stationary subjects (portraits, landscapes etc.).

Continuous/AI Servo Focus – this mode is best used for 'tracking' moving subjects. It is great for sports, nature, racing cars etc.



WHAT'S IN MY BAG?

For me, less is best. The best gear and the most gear will most likely not make you the best photographer, or help you to reach your creative goals. So, while I am not saying my kit might suit your photo aspirations, I am saying that you should seriously consider what you buy.

I have one camera body. Pearce and I share an older body as a backup. This is most often in our suitcase and rarely used. I love a 16-35mm f4 super wide angle. I use a 24-105mm f4 as my general purpose lens and I have a 100-400mm f4.5/5.6 for telephoto work. Note the 25mm extension tube. I use this with my 24-105mm lens for macro work. Importantly, I have a fantastic bag that fits easily into any aircraft – a LowePro Pro Tactic 350AW backpack. Camera – I'll talk more about this in the book, except to say I like large megapixel (MP) cameras due to their outstanding cropping ability.

KEEP IT SIMPLE SHOOTER

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LET'S SHOOT

By now, you have set up the base features in your camera menu – you understand how your camera works in base form and are keen to take a few images. I suggest that you move out to the back deck or similar and take a seat. Pick one scene in the area with light that comes over your shoulders. That is, you do not want to be shooting into the light.

If this is your first time shooting a D-SLR, Mirrorless or more advanced camera – start in PROGRAM MODE – 'P'.

We are in the 21st century. Let the camera set Aperture and Shutter for you automatically. It will also focus automatically. Have some fun and take a few photos. You can soon move on to more advanced photo settings.

Press the Review/Replay button at the back of the camera. Amazing – you nearly get back what you could see in the viewfinder. You will quickly note how good your camera is.

CONTROLLING THE CAMERA YOURSELF ...

Lets now try to control the camera. Change the mode to Aperture Priority. Often shown as 'A'. Press lightly on your 'Shutter Release Button'. At first, you might accidentally take a photo. Don't worry, this is common. Very quickly, you will learn that it is just a feather touch. From half pressing, you can very quickly press down all the way, to actually take the desired image. Practise this for a while.

Once you have a little confidence, look through the viewfinder and concentrate on a key subject in the screen. Try not to move the camera, once you have picked that subject. In fact, if you have a tripod, use it. As before, lightly press the release button to activate the camera meter. In the viewfinder, you will note numbers and symbols appear. This offers you the aperture value - shutter value and will indicate if you have a focus lock.



ABOVE: A simple point and shoot image. I love it for content and timing – right place at the right time. I did not bother with technicalities – great! Aperture Priority, 400ISO 70-200mm lens @ 88mm, f11 1/1000th of a second hand held.

Turn the control wheel near the shutter release button. With your camera steady on the same subject, you will note that the numbers change. So, if you start at say, f5.6 as you turn the wheel, it will change to f6.7 and then f8. Or, the opposite – f4.5, f4 etc. As you change the f-Stop value, the shutter will change one step accordingly.

So in the example on page 15, our hypothetical meter reading in the camera viewfinder, was for f11, at 125th of a second, using Aperture Priority. However, we could choose to adjust to any of the other combinations. In fact, each combination allows through exactly the same intensity of light.

How? Well, note that as we change the Aperture value, it also changes the shutter. In Aperture Priority mode, it will do this 'one for one'. However, the difference is, that we change the look of the photograph or possibly, we do not have a fast enough shutter speed to freeze movement. This could be camera movement or subject blur.

Note that you have 'standard' aperture and shutter values and increments in between. The increments in between, allow for you to fine tune your exposure from time to time. I cover this in future sections.

WHAT APERTURES & SHUTTER SPEEDS WORK BEST?

When starting out in photography, I can't recommend the following tips highly enough as a basis for your everyday shooting needs. Each year, I tell hundreds of photographers the same principle and each year I see hundreds of smiling faces at the end of the day! Start with the following:

- 1. Use 400ISO as your default ISO setting. If you have very good light, you can shoot to 200ISO and likewise if using a tripod, 200ISO (see section bottom right for further clarification).*
- 2. Use Aperture Priority as your 'default mode'. You set the aperture and the camera sets your shutter speed.*
- 3. f5.6 for – any time you are moving or your subject is moving. It is also very good for tightly cropped people/portrait shooting.*
- 4. f11 for general and landscape photography. This offers more area of sharpness (depth of field). (But a loss of shutter speed).*

OTHER POINTS TO CONSIDER...

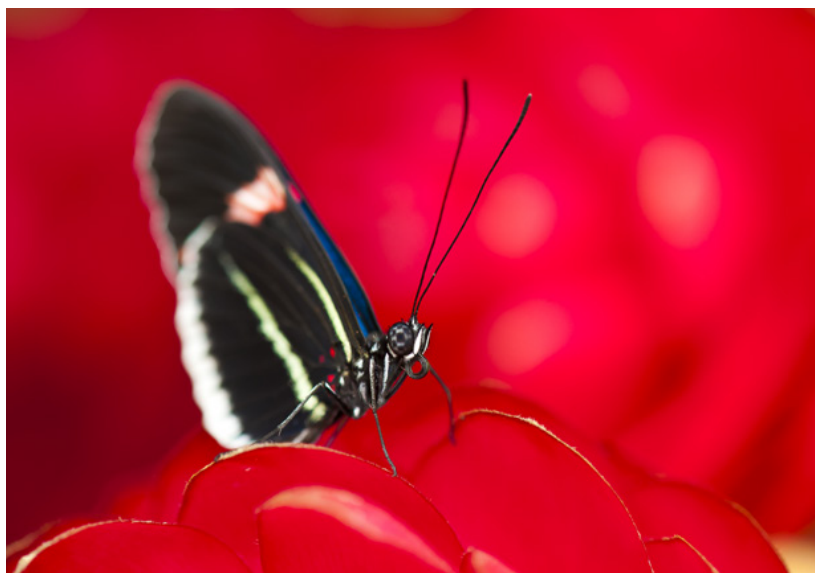
I would suggest that a good standard shutter speed is:

- 1. At least 125th of a second for stationary subjects is fine. If this is hard to achieve, either open up your aperture or increase your ISO.*
- 2. At least 500th of a second, when you or your subject is moving. I often try for around 1000th of a second or faster. Again, if this is hard to achieve, either open up your aperture or increase your ISO.*
- 3. I rarely use a tripod. It is easy to get lovely sharp results by holding your camera correctly – hold your breath and squeeze off the trigger. Many lenses or systems now offer image stabilisation as well. The result – you will be far more creative!*

PROBLEM SOLVE...

So if your photos are blurred, you need a faster shutter speed. If you are not getting as much of the image sharp as you would like, then you need to close down your aperture to a small opening (larger number).

REMEMBER – keep everything to the basics
(K.I.S.S.) before exploring too quickly.



ABOVE: Looks like a very difficult shot to get? In fact the only difficult facet was finding the opportunity. I used 'P' Mode – Program, with flash on the camera set to Auto TTL. Many 'advanced' photographers would be telling you to never use the 'P' Mode. I highly recommend using this mode for flash photography. Program, 400ISO 105mm lens, f5.6 1/60th of a second hand held.

ANOTHER CONSIDERATION ...

If you do not have enough light available (early morning, late afternoon, stormy weather etc.) then you might find the suggested settings left, hard to attain. One way around this, is to increase your ISO. My default setting is 400ISO.

As an example, if I need a faster shutter speed, but the light is too low, I could increase the sensor sensitivity to 800ISO, or even 1600ISO.

Each of these settings represents an increase of 'One Stop' of light. So, if I could only get f4 125th of a second at 200ISO and I needed 500th of a second, I could change to 800ISO, thus offering the desired f4 500th of a second combination. (f4 125th of a second at 200ISO – f4 250th of a second at 400ISO – f4 500th of a second at 800ISO). The key is, from this point in time, you will learn to make fine tuned adjustments, that will offer you greater creative freedom. However, remember that it is great to use base default settings, as often as possible. Less change, means more time to concentrate on being creative.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND TIME

One of the best creative tools for a photographer is the utilisation of time control via exposure, to get a desired result. How often have you heard the term - 'a moment in time'. Well that moment can mean anything from 1/12,000th of a second on some cameras, to hours. What is right for a given opportunity? Each subject may offer several ways of shooting, and your consideration of time is one key difference to how the result will look. I will cover this plus touch on the added dimension of digital techniques.

'NORMAL TIME'

I use Aperture Priority for most (not all) of my photography. I do this because I can control either the depth of field required, (area of sharpness) or to attain a desired shutter speed. The key is, I do consider shutter speed for every image I shoot, even if it is simply to get as fast a shutter speed as possible. When do I shoot Manual or Shutter Priority? Rarely, is the answer. I mainly use these two modes for difficult and or specific shoot requirements.

I am starting at 'normal time' because this is where the majority of photography is captured, but not necessarily the most creative. You know, those images shot at parties, back yards etc. This is by far the largest use of photography in the world. Putting aside long lenses and specialised needs, many subjects can be shot at around a 125th to 250th of a second. This is hand holdable and works well with subjects that are not moving fast or at all.

These same shutter speeds do overlap into 'going slow & freezing time'. Why? Because a speeding Formula One racing car or a galloping zebra will not be 'stopped' or frozen in frame by 'normal' shutter speeds. Yet these same shutter speeds might work for a person walking. The result might be a near sharp subject with blurred background. Sounding complex? Well, it is a little. See the examples on this and the following two pages – it should become clearer.

'FREEZING TIME'

You shoot a 4 second exposure of a city scape using a tripod. Everything is sharp. How is this possible? Easy, nothing was moving. So while we might think freezing time was related to fast shutter speeds, it does not need to be. To simplify the point though, I would say that on most occasions when I want to 'freeze time', it would be with a fast shutter speed like 1000th of a second or faster.



ABOVE: A simple shot in the South Island of New Zealand. This is a 'normal time' example image. Aperture Priority, 100ISO 50mm lens, f11 1/125th of a second hand held.

BELOW: I used a simple technique of a slow shutter speed - stable non moving camera – but some of the scene was moving – the lady. As a result (due to the slow shutter speed), the lady is blurred. The yak is sharp, as it did not move. Shutter Priority 1/15th of a second f16 hand held, 200ISO with flash. Yes, you can hand hold to slow shutter speeds – with practise and modern image stabilisation systems.





ABOVE: Siberian Tigers 'play fighting', required a fast shutter speed to freeze the movement. Aperture Priority, 400ISO 50-500mm lens @ 244mm, f5.6 1/1500th of a second hand held.

BELOW: The opposite concept to the tigers. Here I used a slow shutter speed to accentuate the running water. However, because the camera was on a tripod and not moving, the landscape is sharp. Manual Mode, 100ISO 17-40mm lens @ 22mm, f11 4 seconds with tripod.





ABOVE: You can still hand hold slow shutter speeds, as long as you understand the technique's limitations. For this image, my goal was to produce a creative blur image. Shutter Priority, 50ISO 100-400mm lens @ 400mm, f32 1/15th of a second hand held.

BELOW: Slow shutter speeds can offer fun creative opportunities as well. The camera is on a tripod and not moving. The long exposure of 10 seconds allowed me to sit in frame for about 50% of the exposure. I then stood up and walked out. The result: I am a ghost as I was not exposed long enough, yet the walls and door etc were.

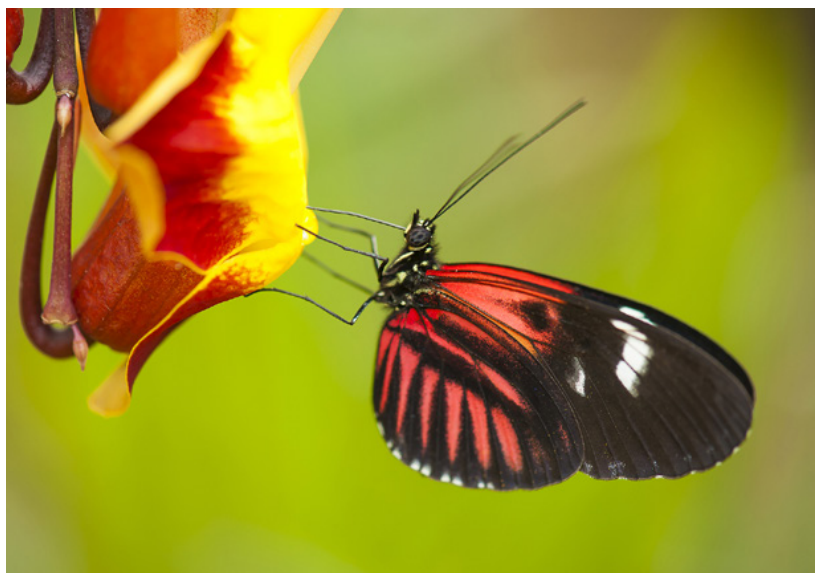




ABOVE: A simple point and shoot shot. Timing was the most important facet. Aperture Priority, 400ISO 24-105mm lens @ 35mm, f11 1/250th of a second hand held.

BELOW: As this heron was walking and fishing, a faster shutter speed was required. This same principle applies to people walking, running or any such situation. A negative is that the area of sharpness is limited. Or is it? Limited depth of field (D.O.F.) helps to isolate your subject. Aperture Priority, 400ISO 500mm lens, f5.6 1/1000th of a second hand held.





ABOVE: Macro photography creates complexities in attaining a sharp image. The best way around this is to use the limited area of sharpness to your advantage. How you approach the shoot will make a difference. Aperture Priority, 400ISO 105mm lens, f4.8 1/125th of a second hand held.

BELOW: Your choice of lens is important for all forms of photography. Sometimes a 'general range' will offer you the simplest and best results. Aperture Priority, 800ISO 24-70mm lens @ 51mm, f5.6 1/350th of a second hand held.



KEEP IT SIMPLE SHOOTER

GUIDE TO MAKING GREAT IMAGES

DEPTH OF FIELD (D.O.F.)

D.O.F. is also known as 'The Area Of Sharpness'. Along with understanding time and your exposure as per the previous section, D.O.F. is an integral part of being creative with photography.

The ability to use a 'LENS', an 'APERTURE' or the 'SUBJECT DISTANCE' is part of the formula to great images.

These three points can be used individually or together for unique results.

LENS ...

The focal length of lens that you use will help to 'control' your area of sharpness – D.O.F. A focal length of about 34mm on a 1.5X APS size sensor will offer about a 50mm focal length (in the old 35mm standards). This is approximately the magnification of our eye. Lenses under this, are classed as wide angle. Lenses over this, are classed as Telephoto Lenses. Put simply, the wider the lens, you will seem to obtain a great D.O.F. The greater the magnification (or telephoto effect) the less D.O.F.

APERTURE ...

We know that opening up your lens will help to let in more light. Obviously the opposite occurs, when you close down your aperture. The key here and dilemma of all photographers is that if we open up our aperture to get more light, helping to achieve a faster shutter speed to freeze movement – we also get less D.O.F.

CAMERA TO SUBJECT DISTANCE ...

So the last D.O.F. factor is the distance from your camera sensor plain, to your subject. As an example, the two most difficult pieces of equipment to manage a good D.O.F. are a long telephoto lens or a Macro Lens. This is because you are using high magnifications at either a long distance from your camera, or as with the macro lens, very close.



ABOVE: With a wide angle lens and the aperture closed down to f11, I could achieve my goal of subject sharpness from the foreground to the back ground. Aperture Priority, 400ISO 24-105mm lens @ 38mm, f11 1/500th of a second hand held.

BELOW: By opening up my aperture to f5.6, then camera to subject distance, with a focal length of 68mm, I could focus on the male, but allow the female to be diffused in the background. Aperture Priority, 1600ISO 24-105mm lens hand held.



DID YOU KNOW?

That you have 'standard' aperture and shutter values and increments in between. The increments in between make it possible to 'fine tune' your exposure from time to time.

ONCE YOU HAVE A LITTLE CONFIDENCE

With camera on a tripod and locked, look through the viewfinder and lock your vision on something in the screen. Try not to move the camera once you have picked that subject. As before, press the release button lightly, to activate the camera meter. In the viewfinder, you will note numbers and symbols appear. This offers you the –aperture and shutter value. A light and/or beep will indicate if you have a focus lock.

Turn the – Control Wheel – near the shutter release button. With your camera steady on the same subject, you will note that the numbers change. So, if you start at, say, f5.6 as you turn the wheel, it will change to f6.7 and then f8. Or the opposite – f4.5, f4 etc. As you change the f-stop value, the shutter will change one step accordingly.

In the example on page 15, our hypothetical meter reading in the camera viewfinder was for f11, at 125th of a second, using Aperture Priority. However, we could choose to adjust to any of the other combinations. In fact, each combination allows through exactly the same intensity of light. How? Well note that as we change the Aperture value, it also changes the shutter. In Aperture Priority mode, it will do this 'one for one' automatically. However, in Manual Mode, you would need to change both aperture and shutter, to either offer correct light to the sensor, or to purposely 'be creative'.

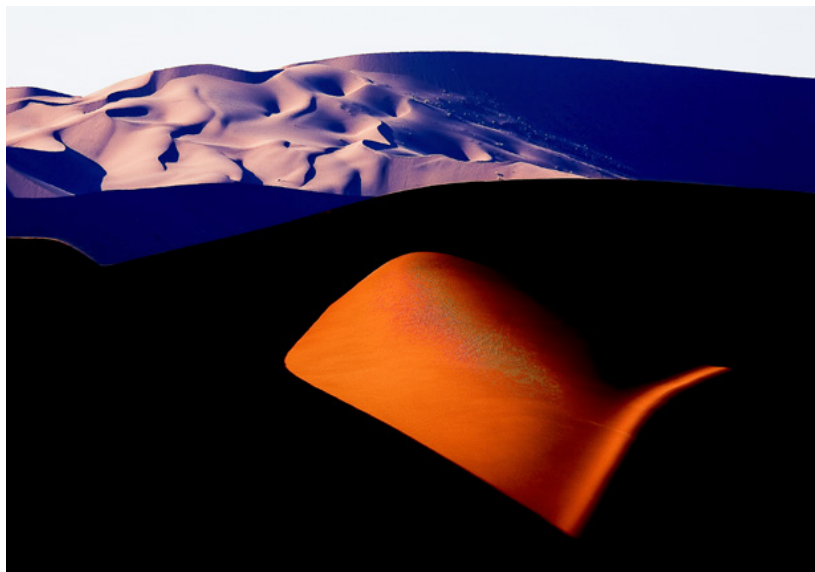
IMPORTANT: What you can see in the viewfinder is not what you will necessarily get as a result. The images right will help you to understand this important point further.

Did you know that ALL lens apertures are fully open when you are looking through the viewfinder, offering the maximum amount of light, to help you see your subject and for focusing. If your lens has a maximum aperture of f2.8, (for example) this is what it is default set to, until you press the shutter button to take the photo.



ABOVE: I wanted to retain the freedom of hand-held creativity so that I could position the sun and balance out the rest of the image. The super wide angle lens allowed me to open up my aperture. This was shot in 2007. Today, I would consider increasing my ISO. Aperture Priority, 200ISO, f5.6 1/90th of a second hand held.

BELOW: Similar landscape opportunity as above, except that I used a 400mm lens. The background dunes were at least 3 kilometres away. Aperture Priority, 100ISO, f11 1/180th of a second with tripod. Shot in 2007. Today I would increase the ISO and hand hold.



USING LIMITED D.O.F. TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

Now that you have a better understanding of the basics of D.O.F., you can use this to your advantage and be more creative. Look at the images on these pages and you will note a consistent technical point. That is, that each subject is 'isolated', drawing your eye to the key subject. This is very easy to achieve. Have a think about what you would need, both equipment and technique, to get good isolated results. If you said a long telephoto lens and a wide aperture, then you would be correct. By the sheer nature of using a focal length of at least 100mm, you will work at a greater distance from your subject than say a 35mm lens. So, for many specialist macro photographers, a 100mm macro lens (or equivalent) offers fantastic opportunities to shoot the micro world and a good working distance from the subject. We can then close down our aperture to increase D.O.F.

All cameras offer a D.O.F. preview button (check the manual). This button allows you to shoot at, say, f11 and see what area will be sharp and what area will not. As it relies on actually closing down your aperture to see this effect, the viewfinder will darken. Tip – allow your eye to adjust to the light for a few seconds – press and release the button a couple of times for the best results. Mirrorless cameras compensate for this, as does Live View in DSLRs. All of this is a bit more technical and something you can 'catch up with' a bit further along your photography adventures.





IMPORTANT: The top image is similar to what I could see in the viewfinder. However, as I closed down my lens to, say, f16, I change the look of the photo, even though I could see the above in the viewfinder on each occasion that I took a photo. The key here, is to understand that your choice of aperture will affect the look of your result. All three images were shot hand held.

TOP IMAGE
105mm lens. f5.6
1/750th of a second.



MIDDLE IMAGE
105mm lens. f16 1/90th
of a second.

BOTTOM IMAGE
105mm lens. f38 1/60th
of a second.



FAR LEFT
The angle that you approach your subject is very important. Here I maximised D.O.F. by keeping the camera 'parallel' to the subject. Aperture Priority, 100ISO 100mm lens. f11 4 seconds with tripod.

HOW DO I GET MORE D.O.F.?

You should now understand that D.O.F. can affect your creativity. However, with the knowledge of how D.O.F. works, you can 'get around' some of the technical limitations. Closing down your aperture will offer more D.O.F., as long as you are aware you will need more light or stability for your camera as your shutter speed will get slower. Maybe a flash will fix that? How you approach your subject is also important. I often like to shoot limited D.O.F. with the camera parallel to a key aspect of the scene.

USING D.O.F. FOR PROTECTION

Imagine trying to shoot a lion with a 24mm lens, hand held? No thanks! A long telephoto lens will offer you greater safety from dangerous creatures. However, it has limited D.O.F. You can use this to your advantage to isolate the subject. However, you need to focus carefully. If the eyes are not sharp, then you may not have a usable image. The snake image is a good example(right). In this case I used a telephoto lens to offer a reasonable working distance, yet achieve a high enough magnification to get the subject in tight. Limited D.O.F. dictated that I was careful with the focusing.

BELOW: The image below was shot with a long telephoto lens from a zodiac. This offered a limited D.O.F. and required a faster shutter speed for the movement of the zodiac. Aperture Priority, 400ISO 200-400mm lens with 1.4X @ 540mm, f8 1/1000th of a second hand held.





ABOVE: Limited D.O.F. allows you to become a story teller. You do not need everything sharp, in every image. Aperture Priority, 200ISO 70-400mm lens @ 105mm, f5.6 1/90th of a second hand held. Shot in 2008. Today I would increase the ISO.

BELOW: We can use photo technology and techniques to our advantage with dangerous animals. A long focal length lens will offer a safe distance and a wide aperture will help to isolate your subject. Aperture Priority, 1600ISO 200-400mm lens with 1.4X @ 513mm, f8 1/500th of a second hand held.





ABOVE: In low light, I use a tripod to help offer the sharpest results. I also try to use a tripod as little as possible. Balancing this can be a challenge. My answer: I always put creativity over technicalities.

BELOW: The light was very low for this image. I did not want to use a tripod so I increased my ISO to 800 and with a limited choice for aperture used f5.6. I made sure that I was reasonably parallel to my subject, maximising D.O.F. Aperture Priority, 24-70mm lens @ 24mm, 1/750th of a second hand held.





ABOVE: One of my favourite locations on earth is Patagonia, and Moreno Glacier is up there, as one of the most photogenic subjects. I often use a super wide angle lens to maximise foreground, mid ground and background. Aperture Priority, 200ISO 16-35mm lens @ 16mm, f11 1/45th of a second with tripod.



ABOVE: Maximising your D.O.F. can expand the story and allow the viewer to explore more of the image. Aperture Priority, 400ISO 16-35mm lens @ 23mm, f11 1/60th of a second hand held.

BELOW: I used a long telephoto lens to help isolate these penguins. The same principle can be used for people or nearly anything. Key here, is the background is several metres away, and I used an open aperture and long telephoto lens. Aperture Priority, 200ISO 150-500mm lens @ 500mm, f5.6 1/750th of a second hand held.





ABOVE: We love to shoot the famous Tango dance in Buenos Aeries and ideally, with a unique background. To limit the background from the key subject, we suggest to customers to shoot apertures wide open. Aperture Priority, 400ISO 70-200mm lens @ 200mm, f2.8 1/750th of a second hand held.

KEEP IT SIMPLE SHOOTER

GUIDE TO MAKING GREAT IMAGES

LIGHT

Photography can be a fickle affair for most photographers, bordering on a love/hate relationship with the most important element of our art - light. Seeing light and its many variables and then being able to utilise the opportunity with knowledge of equipment and techniques is something all photographers strive to master. Some photographers handle it better than others. Let's start with the basics of light and then use example images to help you see light for the art of photography.

Light is the essence of all photography. Being able to see its many variables and apply the right techniques for a 'pre-visualised result' is the difference between a point and shoot photographer and a serious photographer.

STARTING OUT

An important starting point is to understand that all cameras today offer excellent metering systems. Yes, gone are the days where we need to spot meter several times or compensate for most images shot. In fact, we can now shoot a high percentage of images (obviously depending on subject), virtually straight to what the meter suggests. A lower percentage of shots might need a small adjustment of say, plus or minus 0.5 to 1 stop of light – while fewer still are more than this. That's how good your meter is!

Combine this with instant review, your camera histogram and easy processing via Adobe Lightroom – you can safely shoot with digital in the most demanding situations – far beyond what film could ever offer.

In fact, we can sandwich images together in Lightroom or Photoshop to change the high contrast of a scene. Yes, we can change the light to shoot the shadows – shoot the mid tone – shoot the highlights and blend all three, to suit what you would like visually. This is HDR photography. Personally, I think a HDR image looks fake, so I rarely use this technique. I love shadows and places of mystery in an image.



ABOVE: This image shows the diversity of light that can face a photographer. From bright highlights, (whites) to mid tone and shadows that can lead to black, our cameras offer great light focusing features. Our sensors offer an incredible dynamic capture range. Combined with a great program like Adobe Lightroom, we can hold highlights, show more detail in shadows and optimise mid tone. This image is a single capture.

BELOW: Our modern equipment allows us to shoot in light that we once only dreamed of. These lions were shot before sunrise, using 3200ISO.



Light can be affected by many things, of which weather is perhaps the most obvious. It might be a storm – perhaps a cloudy day or the effect of wind blowing up large amounts of dust into the atmosphere. Have you ever tried to shoot a sunset without clouds? Often the result is a bit disappointing with muted colours and a lack of impact. This is light. Perhaps you have no light and so have a need to construct light. Again the most important facet is – can you previsualise a result, before even touching your equipment?

Our brain and eyes work together to see light. However, this is very different to what the photographic process can record. Yes, we have a few tricks like filters and now digital techniques, but all in all, you need to re-train yourself to pre-visualise a result. For me, I look at a subject quickly (usually) and work on what hits me first in my 'minds eye':

- 1. Why have I taken an interest in this subject?**
- 2. How can I utilise the available light?**
- 3. Do I need to add more light? Perhaps fill-flash?**
- 4. Perhaps a different angle is better for the given light?**
- 5. After all of this, I will then consider the technical needs of equipment and metering.**

Questioning why the subject interests you will often lead to the type of light available. Maybe (if possible), you can move to the other side of the subject and get 'better lighting'. This is the art of photography...

HAVE A GO ...

Start with a white piece of paper on a deck with even light. Use Aperture Priority mode - turn off your auto focus as you have nothing to focus on – aperture set at f5.6 with even light on your paper – 400ISO is fine – take 3 shots. Use your camera compensation button. It is usually shown as +/- .

1. First image to the suggested camera reading.
2. Then, use your EV Over-ride system (Compensation button) to plus one Stop.
3. And finally, plus two Stops.

Check out the results. The first image will look darker with the other two images progressively lightening up. This test will specifically help you to understand how your meter works.



ABOVE: This image shows the extremes of some scenes with the highlights of the sun through to dark water. Don't be scared to try shooting extremes. Generally, aim to keep detail in the highlights and mid tone. Let shadows and dark areas look after themselves. Aperture Priority, 200ISO 14-24mm lens @ 14mm, f8 1/125th of a second hand held.

BELOW: While the camera can capture a 'wide dynamic range' of information, we also have the choice as to what to target when processing. This means we can choose as to what we would like to see as offering the best detail. We can be creative...





ABOVE & BELOW: Sometimes you take a photo that seems to have lost the detail of what you could see in the scene. Or, the scene shows more than you would like. These variables in light can be used to your advantage with smart shooting skills and a base understanding of processing. My camera was set up for the interior lighting of this Ger. However, I spotted this unique opportunity into much brighter light. No issue, the technology handled it beautifully. Aperture Priority, 3200ISO 24-105mm lens @ 57mm, f5.6 1/2000th of a second hand held.





ABOVE: This is one of my favourite images. My first shot here in 1989 included a dirt road and no sun due to cloud cover. Decades later, I could update the new features of the road and enjoy great light. Photography records history! Aperture Priority, 200ISO 14-24mm lens @ 24mm, f11 1/1500th of a second hand held.



ABOVE: This is an easy shot with today's cameras. In this situation, had I lowered my camera, I would expose more directly for the dark area, washing out the colours in the sky. By shooting more of the sky, I retained the sky detail.

BELOW: Similar to the above image, but with the camels on the move, did I give consideration for the light and exposure? Guess what? I simply moved to the best creative location using the sand ripples as a foreground and let the light 'do the talking'. Aperture Priority, 800ISO 16-35mm lens @ 16mm, f8 1/500th of a second hand held.





ABOVE: Morocco offers incredible cultural experiences like this scene in Fez. I was attracted by the beam of light. I waited for the action using my favourite K.I.S. setting - Aperture Priority. 1600ISO 24-105mm lens @ 38mm, f5.6 1/1500th of a second hand held. BELOW: Aim and point the camera. Sorry, that is all I did to get this lovely looking image. Sounds easy, well the key was to be ready for this shot. Aperture Priority, f8 with auto focus set to continuous, so that it tracked the walking person.



KEEP IT SIMPLE SHOOTER

GUIDE TO MAKING GREAT IMAGES

COMPOSITION 'VISUALISATION'

'The look' of an image is so important. You can understand the complexities of camera gear, be an expert at locations, but if you do not get composition correct, then your images will not be consistently 'admired' and miss that 'wow' factor. Textbooks will have us shooting thirds of the camera frame. The intersecting points for this is the ideal location to place key subjects. I often agree with this simple equation. However, as a creative artist, I also like to think outside of this and at times go against the textbook.

***Textbook shooting, will offer you 'good looking results'.
Creative shooting will offer more interest and perhaps instigate
an 'artistic conversation' with the viewer.***

VISUALISATION

Visualisation is such an integral part of modern photography, yet it has been used since the very first images were shot. Ansel Adams was a great exponent of visualising an image in the field, with thought to processing that image, to allow him to adjust to a creative result. Yes, he manipulated and changed his images. 'Seeing the result' before you shoot, can make a huge difference to consistent quality of work. You might say, once you have base techniques and equipment sorted, this is the next major facet to photography and one that many photographers battle, especially those who over-complicate photography.

If you complicate photography, it is rare that you will be a good photographer! However, it is common for a photographer to have a low technical background, yet shoot great images.

My tip for those starting out, is that you look at your shoot opportunity, use those key two aperture values suggested (f5.6 or f11, as per page 22) and then aim to tell a story as often as possible. Aim to go beyond a snap shot.



ABOVE: A leading line into the scene can help to tell a better story. Again, this can be a cliché, so look beyond this, including processing for alternative options. Aperture Priority, 400ISO 24-105mm lens @ 46mm, f11 1/250th of a second hand held.

BELOW: Balancing out the rider with horse and accommodation in the background gives this image a more pleasing look and a full story. Aperture Priority, 800ISO 100-400mm lens @ 400mm, f5.6 1/350th of a second hand held.



Challenge yourself at every shoot opportunity. Ask yourself:

- * What is my interest in this photo opportunity?
- * What is the best angle/location to shoot?
- * What equipment will allow me to achieve my goal?
- * Importantly – what is in the background? Is it clean, interesting...?

The example images in this section and the book are a great guide to helping your interests in composition. As mentioned, visualisation is the key to helping your composition, so train yourself to think more, at any given shoot, before pressing the trigger.

I would suggest that you can even do this around your own back yard. Look at a bunch of flowers. Then look for the story, within the story. Try a new angle. Perhaps shoot from above, or while lying on the ground. Consider the 'thirds rule', but in the end, be creative and try something different. Over time, you will shoot an amazing diversity of imagery and as long as you love it – that is all that matters.

BELOW: I used a long telephoto lens, up close on this Puffin to isolate it and offer stunning detail. I had a lot of general images but this tight shot was unique. Aperture Priority, 400ISO 200-400mm lens with 1.4x @ 560mm, f11 1/180th of a second hand held.





ABOVE: You don't need to have everything large in your image. Space can tell its own story. Or, will a tight shot work best? Why not shoot both! Aperture Priority, 400ISO 100-400mm lens @ 400mm, f8 1/1000th of a second hand held.

BELOW: I used a wide angle lens and moved up close to the flowers, helping to limit the D.O.F. This technique can be very creative and allow you more options for composition. Aperture Priority, 400ISO 16-35mm lens @ 35mm, f8 1/500th of a second hand held.





ABOVE: A classic composition shot. Difficulty was, that it was candid, so I set my camera up and waited for the right moment to press the button. Aperture Priority, 1600ISO 24-105mm lens @ 105mm, f4 1/180th of a second hand held.

BELOW: Deadvlei in Namibia is an outstanding shoot location. Timing helped me to compose this scene, thinking in terms of – light – shadows – lens choice. Aperture Priority, 400ISO 200-400mm lens @ 232mm, f8 1/750th of a second hand held.





ABOVE & BELOW: Similar subjects, but different composition due to the patterns in each image. Lines, shapes and forms can mean that you change your height, or that you tilt your camera down, to get less sky and more foreground. I love using the latter to compose landscapes. Aperture Priority, 400ISO 24-105mm lens @ 24mm, f11 hand held.



KEEP IT SIMPLE SHOOTER

GUIDE TO MAKING GREAT IMAGES

CULTURE SHOOTS

TELL A STORY

Telling a story, is the key to great people/cultural images. Up until 1990, I had steered clear of photographing people. Sure, I had about seven weddings and an outback people shoot, under my belt, but I still preferred photographing animals of the feathered and furry variety. This changed, when it came time to offer a more diverse photo course program and, so like many photographers, I took up the discipline of people photography with some trepidation. However, I discovered very early that the difference between photographing a person and a bird (let's say) was very small indeed – virtually the same techniques, lighting and metering considerations, even composition and angle of the head.

EQUIPMENT

Any lens and camera combination can take a portrait. However, there are some very well defined equipment requirements that will allow you to take better images. I started with perhaps the best lens if you would like to specialise in people/portrait work – the 70-200mm f2.8. Yet Pearce prefers the 24-70mm f2.8 lens. He is happy to shoot wider stories, or be closer to the subject.

The telephoto range offers a good working distance that allows your subject to feel more relaxed. The 200mm focal length is excellent when used in conjunction with a wide aperture, say f5.6, for isolating your subject from the background. At f2.8, it can be awesome for dropping the background out even further and for low light shooting.

Some photographers love to use an 'all purpose' lens like the 28-300mm. It is an amazing range; however, be aware that if you love super sharp results, then at times, this lens will be a little soft. For some, this is not an issue. Let's talk as though we are on tour and go through some shoot scenarios.



ABOVE: I loved shooting this shot, as I could see that it offered the story of a proud Maasai warrior in his vast homeland. Aperture Priority, 400ISO 24-120mm lens @ 24mm, f8 1/1500th of a second hand held.

BELOW: Interaction with other people from around the world, is very rewarding. I do not walk up and start taking photos immediately. Rather I say hello (in the local language if possible), taking genuine interest in them and their surroundings, and in time, take photos. This helps to offer more realistic photo opportunities.





ABOVE: We were driving in Morocco in the 'middle of nowhere' when I spotted this guy on the side of the road. We stopped, asked our local guide to confirm if he would not mind us recording his work. He collects wood from the roadside. Aperture Priority, 400ISO 24-105mm lens @ 24mm, f11 1/350th of a second hand held.

BELOW: This man stopped me on the road in Havana, Cuba and was keen to show me his tattoos. I used a wide aperture to limit my D.O.F. so that he would stand out clearly. Aperture Priority, 800ISO 24-70mm lens @ 31mm, f2.8 1/90th of a second hand held.





ABOVE: I have visited the Himba people of Namibia many times. They find our visits just as much fun as we do. I am not visiting cultural groups just to take photos. Rather, I enjoy the interaction of finding out how other people live and discovering that the world is incredibly diverse. Yes, images help to bring those experience back over time. Aperture Priority, 800ISO 24-105mm lens @ 105mm, f4 1/350th of a second hand held.

One of the toughest countries in the world for people/cultural photography is Morocco. It is a beautiful country with great people. For some reason, the whole nation seems to have a dislike for photographers, which starts with your entry into Morocco customs. It required Pearce and I to think outside the square in regards to shooting. We tried as much as possible not to show faces, not to be obvious, and if someone clearly said no, respected their wish. With all of these perceived obstacles, we both thought we took some of our best cultural/people imagery ever.

TIP: Don't walk up to shoot opportunities with your camera up and ready to go. Rather, meet the people in a market, Ger, village with big smiles and show interest in them and their surroundings. It is amazing how, taking an taking interest in someone milking a yak, can suddenly lead to unique imagery. And finally, a great local guide can help break down the language barrier and open up to shoot opportunities. We always use such an expert on our tours and it is very rewarding for us to see a novice photographer shoot world-class imagery with just a few pointers and the correct way to approach the situation.

BELOW: I enjoy shooting some portraits, aiming to tell a story. This shoot was of a group of musicians in Morocco. Shooting the overall experience was a tourist shot. I visualised this shot before shooting as a B&W. Aperture Priority, 800ISO f4 1/750th of a second, 24-105mm lens @ 105mm, hand held.





ABOVE: This location offered stunning cultural shoots. Waiting at a corner for a unique opportunity became a relaxing way to photograph. Aperture Priority, 1600ISO 24-105mm lens @ 50mm, f5.6 1/750th of a second hand held.

BELOW: A candid shot of a barber in Cuba, through the glass window. I had my gear ready to shoot in a split second. Aperture Priority, 800ISO 24-70mm lens @ 38mm, f4 1/125th of a second hand held.



KEEP IT SIMPLE SHOOTER

GUIDE TO MAKING GREAT IMAGES

NATURE SHOOTS

The world of nature photography has changed dramatically in the past few years, due to digital photography and the great equipment available. What used to be a specialised field, is now open to everyone. I have seen some fantastic images with an iPhone!

Nature means many different things, to many different people. To some, it is the most pure form of unadulterated images shot in wild locations. To others, it is the sparrow sitting on a chair in the back yard, or perhaps 'setting up' a flower to shoot in a garden.

Today, it could be adding a bird into a beach scene, on your computer from two separate images. I will not enter into this argument now, but rather look at the many variables that go into getting the result you desire. You need a great image first...

MOST BIRDS & ANIMALS

Among the most popular photographic subjects are our many feathered and hairy friends. They come in all sizes, shapes and forms, but rarely are they easy to photograph! Knowledge is paramount in this field, as you must first of all be able to find your subject and have some idea of its everyday habits. This skill often comes from years of observation and general interest in birds.

With every trip, or sometimes even in your backyard, you will learn by simply watching. Another way to access great nature imagery is to join an experienced photo tour company. You then use the guides experience and save yourself a lot of time.

Photographic equipment is also paramount, as often a standard kit will not allow you to capture the images you desire. While some exceptions to this are found, on the whole, you need to spend 'a bit of money' to have the right gear.



ABOVE: As a professional guide, timing and locations are very important to the success of our business. Aperture Priority, 800ISO 70-200mm lens @ 205mm with 2x converter, f5.6 1/2000th of a second, hand held.

BELOW: Some nature photographers forget to 'tell a story'. Today it is easy to shoot straight high quality nature images. It is far more difficult to shoot great story images. Aim for an unusual angle, lens choice, or processing style to help your nature images stand out. Aperture Priority, 800ISO 500mm lens, f8 1/500th of a second, hand held.



Your choice of lens is determined by three factors:

1. What perspective you are trying to portray.
2. How close you can work, or not, to your subject.
3. Your budget.

TWO CONCEPTS

A smaller sensor like a Nikon APS size offers a 1.5X factor. So a 300mm lens is suddenly a 450mm lens and a 150 to 600 mm is a 300-900mm! Most cameras now offer around 24MP files, but a couple of the 35mm sensor cameras now offer 36 - 50MP files.

This is my current way of shooting. I enjoy the large MP sensor for cropping and, accordingly, can buy and use a smaller and lighter lens at the 100-400mm range. Crop the 50MP file 50% and I still have 25MP to use. You could also say that the 'used image size' is equivalent to using an 800mm lens.

LOW LIGHT

We now have amazing new technology for low light nature shoots. Light is paramount to freezing movement. One key advantage is that you can vary your ISO much easier than film for low light shooting. I have even started shooting before and after sunrise/sunset, because I can shoot 3200 and 6400ISO. This is only getting better year by year. Unfortunately, right now, the smaller sensor cameras are not handling such extremes. However, if you are not bothered with a grainy result, then does it matter? This point is an interesting conversation on our tours at dinner.

TARGETING THE RIGHT PLACE AND TIME

This is super important for nature. While I totally admit to, and love to be an opportunistic nature photographer, I also promote optimising nature shoots by checking on the best seasons and locations, to finding subjects and habitats.

My favourite form of nature photography is to simply place myself in a location of opportunity and be an 'opportunist'. Experience does help and now I often 'do things' without thought that leads to a better chance of me getting that unique image. (A bit of bloody mindedness goes a long way as well!) If I did not do this correctly, we would not have the successful tour company that we have today. I pride myself knowing what we will see in a location and then, with local experts, we aim for the amazing creatures offered. I then love to help photographers take images they only had dreamt of before.



ABOVE: How close is safe? I love to get up close and personal with nature. However, I am very careful and use my over 50 years experience of nature adventures. On tour, we listen and do what the local experts say. The same principle of using a long telephoto lens for safety is also applicable for difficult nature subjects. Aperture Priority, 1600ISO 200-400mm lens with 1.4x @ 560mm, f5.6 1/750th of a second, hand held.

WHICH FOCUSING MODE?

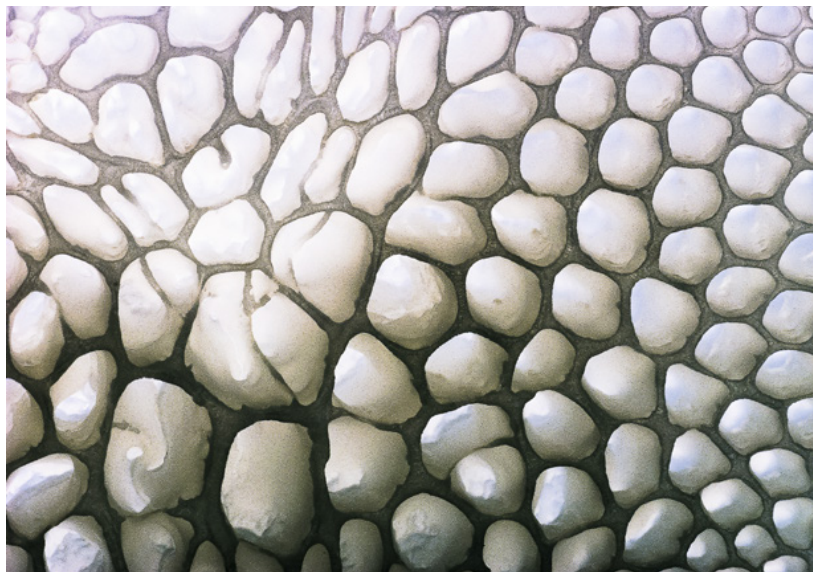
This very important point, has a few variables amongst the camera brands. Study up on your camera and system to be clear what is best for you. 99% of the time, your shoot situation is very clear as to using **ONE SHOT** – your camera focuses and locks on a subject or **CONTINUOUS FOCUSING** – your camera tracks and refocuses on moving subjects. Some camera brands show this in a different way, like Canon as ‘AI Servo’.

In Africa, I will most often use Continuous Focus (CF) as subjects move a lot. For birds in flight, I will most often use CF. However, for subjects that are not moving, or moving very slowly (like reptiles), I will use One Shot. This allows me to focus lock, and very quickly (and creatively) recompose the scene to have the subject away from the centre. Another method is to move your focus point. However, by the time someone does that, I have already shot a few images. It's your choice as to what suits you. Experiment in your back yard at home.



ABOVE: Right place at the right time, is so important. This image from Chobe National Park Botswana, was captured because I timed our boat to be at a particular location for sunset. Aperture Priority, 1600ISO 70-200mm lens @ 200mm, f5.6 1/500th of a second hand held.

BELOW: Nature offers amazing patterns and shapes. I like to use these and have found that over time, they are some of my best selling images. Manual Mode, 100ISO 100mm lens, f22 1/250th of a second with flash, hand held. Film image shot in 1988.





ABOVE: Modern technology has changed how we can shoot nature. This image was shot in very low light. Only a couple of years ago, this would have been a very difficult image to achieve without using flash, or increasing the ISO which resulted in a very grainy file. Compare the original file to the finished use. I used a 50MP camera, this allowing for good cropping. It is one of my personal favourite images! Aperture Priority, 3200ISO 100-400mm lens @ 400mm, f5.6 1/350th of a second hand held.

OTHER NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY ATTRIBUTES

Patience will allow the photographer to have more opportunities at taking that special image. While I have little patience for some things, nature brings out the best in me. Often, my best image is taken at the end of a long and fruitless day, waiting for my subject to 'do the right thing'. I have said several times (to myself) that 'it's time to pack up and go home', but I wait a bit longer and sure enough – snap, snap, snap!

OTHER TIPS

We all have an area of personal space, and animals are no different. Most animals will look at us as possible predators, so they can be difficult to approach. There are two ways of partly solving this problem.

1. Use the right equipment. Long telephoto lenses will offer images of animals in their natural pose. Why? Because they are relaxed.
2. Patience and cunning. I stalk many of the animals like a shooter, except unlike a shooter, I need to get even closer. Some of the small birds require a 3-4 metre distance so that they are large enough, while others need a unique approach to get that special result.
3. If you are after sharp results, three key points will achieve this:
A. Correct focusing. B. Fast shutter speed. C. Quality glass.

BELOW: Gorillas are found in very specific locations. Equipment is also a challenge due to low light. Aperture Priority, 1600ISO 70-200mm lens @ 200mm, f4 1/750th of a second hand held.





Shooting a sequence does not mean you require a motor drive that can shoot 10 frames per second. Over the past 10 years, most of my cameras offered around 5/6 frames per second. Likewise, I do not use the longest and most expensive telephoto lenses. Over the years, a 400mm lens has worked well and today, combined with a 50MP camera, I can shoot most situations with confidence that I will capture some unique imagery and have a large enough file for use.

This sequence of a Cattle Egret eating a scorpion, was shot in South Africa. On this occasion, I did use an expensive \$13,000 lens. My answer is, that if you regularly print large images and require a sharp image, then buy the big lens. Aperture Priority, 400ISO 200-400mm lens with 1.4X @ 560mm, f5.6 1/3000th of a second hand held.

KEEP IT SIMPLE SHOOTER

GUIDE TO MAKING GREAT IMAGES

LANDSCAPE SHOTS

Most photographers dream of shooting great landscape images. However, only a few can get the recipe right to achieve pleasing results. Read on, as I try to unravel the technical aspects of successful landscape images.

My first images around 1979/80 were shot around the middle of the day. I waited for over a week to get my results back and, of course, I was disappointed. The scene looked harsh with deep dark shadows, a blue cast over the image and a generally uninteresting feel to the final result.

Right, I said, 'I cannot afford to waste money' so after reading an article in a photo magazine, I decided to try the same image later in the day. I returned at 4pm and as someone who had never bothered to look at the quality of light before, I could see a dramatic difference.

Beautiful blue sky, deep greens and a sea that had colour. The sun was now behind me and Captain Cook's Lookout on Norfolk Island was a stunning scene. Whenever I return to this point, it brings back fond memories and a link to my early days of learning some of the basics required for landscape photography (applies to all forms of photography) – see light and its many variables page 42.

However, digital photography changed the above. On tour, it is still most common to aim for early and late light, but not essential as some very creative 'midday' landscapes can be shot. Especially when converting a scene to a B&W. This has become the interesting challenge of landscape photography for me personally – not adding special effects with plugins, rather shooting a great image, ideally at the right time and with techniques that have been available since the beginning of photography. Personally, my aim is to use minimal but smart processing techniques, with good shoot techniques.



ABOVE: Adding a person to a landscape can give a sense of scale and an interest point. I also converted this image to B&W as the location offered very little colour. Aperture Priority, 50ISO 16-35mm lens @ 16mm, f11 1/30th of a second with tripod.

BELOW: A technique that has been around since the beginning of photography, is to use slow shutter speeds with landscapes. Shooting in this way can open up options to shoot anytime of the day in any weather. I used a Hoya 400ND filter. Manual (Bulb), 50ISO 24-70mm lens @ 24mm, f16 49 seconds with tripod and neutral density filter.



EQUIPMENT

Any focal length can be used for landscape photography. However, I personally find that the main range I use, is in the wide angle spectrum. For over 10 years, my favourite lens has been 16-35mm. It is a corrected super wide angle lens, that offers fantastic diversity! Why is this type of lens so good for landscapes? Mainly because most landscapes are large, all surrounding subjects. However, not all are in this category and as individual thinkers, each photographer will tackle a subject from their own unique perspective.

THINK 3D

I like to think in terms of the old traditional text book way of –FOREGROUND – MID GROUND – BACKGROUND. Adding a key point of interest to the foreground can make for a more dramatic result. The image on the right was shot in 2005. I would use the same technique today and aim for a similar result. Often, I will look at a scene and aim for maximum D.O.F. As mentioned, I will most likely use f11 and then an old trick is to focus about a third of the way into the scene. With a super wide angle lens, 9 times out of 10, this will offer all subjects sharp.

f11 is the 'sweet spot' of your lens. In fact, it is for most of our camera types. If you don't feel confident and you definitely want everything sharp, then close down to f16. Technically it is not as sharp, but most photographers would be lucky to pick this.

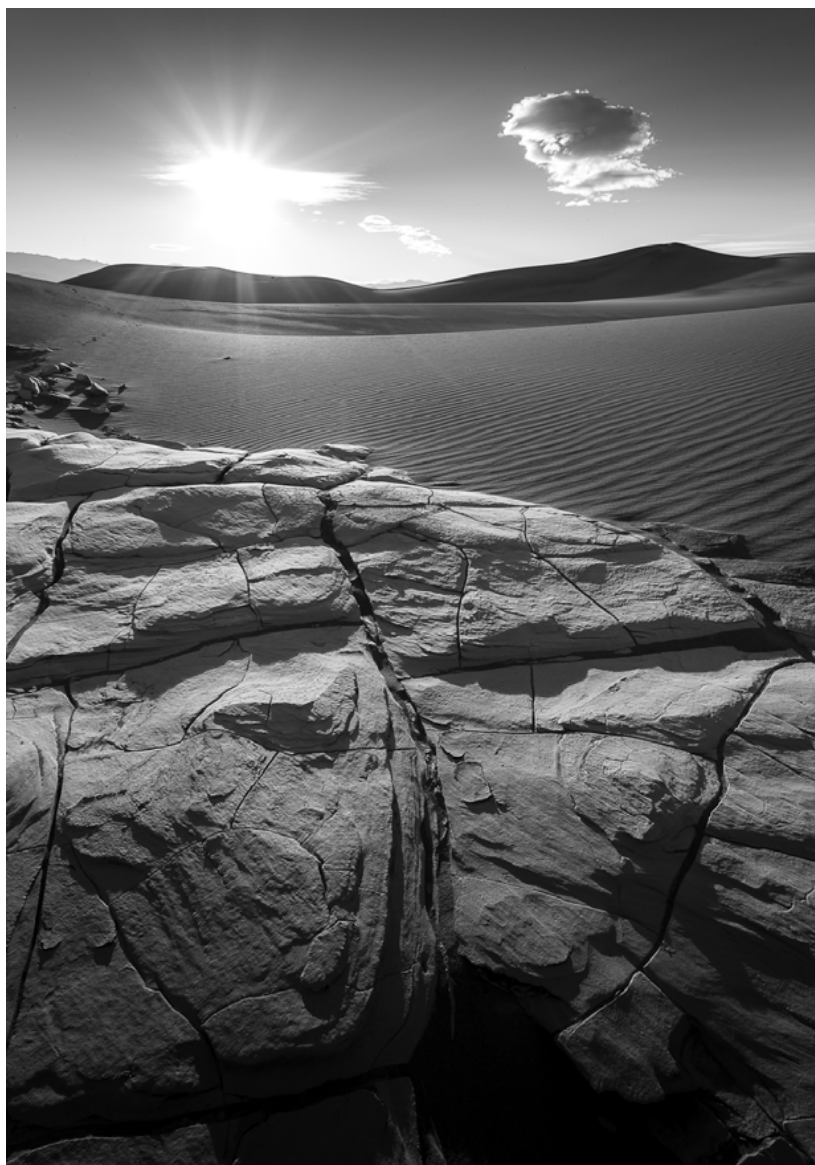
***Note how important clouds are in these example images.
I love cloud cover! It can add a touch of drama to
your final results.***

TILT YOUR CAMERA

If you set your camera up ready to shoot, the last point you might try is to tilt or exaggerate the camera down to gain more foreground. This works best with a good foreground subject. I even try to get the subject as close to the lens as possible. It offers stunning results for sand dunes.

SHOOTING INTO THE SUN

This technique can be very creative, as viewers love the starburst effect and often it will create interesting shadows. The contrast of light, can work well with B&W images as well. I also shoot trees/forests in the middle of the day and anything from people to nature, with the same base theme. Often Aperture Priority, f11.



ABOVE: A sense of depth, can make a big difference to the final look of some landscapes. Here, I used a super wide angle lens and moved in to be close to the clay pan, using its beautiful patterns. Once at the spot, I tilted my camera down, to help emphasis this further. So I was 'up and over' the clay pattern, balancing the rest of the scene. Aperture Priority, 100ISO 17-40mm lens @ 17mm, f16 1/45th of a second with tripod. Shot in 2005. Today I would increase the ISO.



ABOVE: A long telephoto lens, can help to bring distant subjects closer and to compress a scene. Aperture Priority, 100ISO 100-400mm lens @ 150mm, f5.6 1/90th of a second with tripod. Shot in 2007. Today I would increase the ISO.

BELOW: Opposite to the above, your choice of lens can affect your creative freedom. A super wide angle lens and low perspective, suited this creative option. I used the edge of a monument to help offer a star burst effect. Aperture Priority, 200ISO 16-35mm lens @ 16mm, f11 1/250th of a second hand held.





ABOVE: I combined a slower shutter speed to show water movement. For the best creative angle, I was kneeling down hand holding the camera. I was very close to the shell and of course had to be careful of water splash. Aperture Priority, 50ISO 16-35mm lens @ 16mm, f11 1/30th of a second hand held.

KEEP IT SIMPLE SHOOTER

GUIDE TO MAKING GREAT IMAGES

CREATIVE SHOOTS

Is photography, the most creative art form? Via programs like Photoshop, we can draw, paint, and via equipment we can capture long time periods, through to just milliseconds. Perhaps the greatest aspect of it all – creativity is open to anyone, with even a basic camera and skill level.

WHAT IS CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY...?

At some point in human history, we decided to go beyond markings on the walls of caves. Spiritual beliefs inspired our desire to explore artistic beauty and form, in the 'eye of the beholder'. Photography is just one form of creativity. I think a key starting point for you, is to understand the value of photography as a creative art form – it has no boundaries.

On that note, check out my good friend Russell Brown and his amazing creative magic – www.russellbrown.com

MASTER WHAT YOU LIKE – VISUALISE YOUR RESULT

A strong way to improve your creativity is to concentrate on one or a limited number of concepts and to master what is needed to reach set goals. I like to call these projects. Projects can help to direct your creative interests. They can offer a time line and a final outcome. Visualisation is the key here! Why do you think someone with very low technical skills can take super creative images? Because they can actually visualise a result and limit the technical requirements.

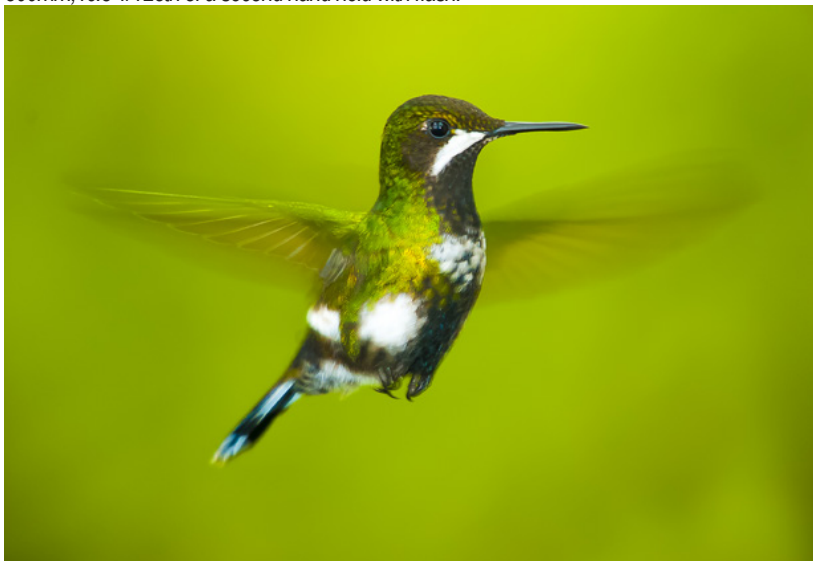
LEARN FROM OTHERS

I have enjoyed looking at many other creative works from photographers all over the world. It does not matter what experience you have or interests, you can always pick up something new, or simply enjoy a beautiful image. One of my key learning tools is the hundreds of photographers that I travel with all over the world each year. No two photographers shoot the same subject the same way.



ABOVE: Creative shoots can mean many different things to a photographer. I used a double exposure with the first image straight, and the second image was manually de-focused to offer a unique result. No Photoshop needed here. Aperture Priority, 200ISO 24-105mm lens @ 105mm, f5.6 1/125th of a second with tripod.

BELOW: Technique and subject allowed me to shoot a creative looking image. This hummingbird is the size of your thumb. My use of flash, helped to freeze the bird, but it was not fast enough for the wings. A long telephoto lens limited the D.O.F. Manual Mode, 400ISO 50-500mm lens @ 500mm, f6.3 1/125th of a second hand held with flash.



In recent times, my son Pearce has opened up my eyes to new ideas and to reboot old ideas. He loves to shoot film, processes the results and then scans select images. He is mixing digital with analog technologies and having a lot of fun. Hey, I remember the fun of doing that, around when Pearce was born, in the early 1990s.

A question that I am regularly asked: Are some people born creative? Yes, is the answer. What is possible though, is for a photographer who has a poor creativity level, to improve and become very creative. Hopefully this book will help both...

CHALLENGE YOURSELF

Photo competitions are a good way to learn and improve. They help you to select the right image for the competition theme. You can compare your images to your peers – what works and does not work. Be very open minded to this process as some competition judges and some viewers may not understand what you were trying to show and so, be negative. However, just as harmful, are those that say ‘everything is perfect’ and right. A constructive comment, with the chance for you to respond, is by far the best learning tool for everyone. Exhibitions are a great challenge. However, to put your work up as a collection, to a theme, is very time consuming and with several pitfalls. The final work up on the wall makes it all worth while!





ABOVE: For several years, I have been selling many of my images in a creative art form. Pixel Bender was a tool offered in Photoshop. It allowed me to use my photo skills and add a creative touch with modern techniques. Aperture Priority, 200ISO 100mm lens, f6.7 1/125th of a second hand held.

LEFT: Sometimes nature offers fantastic creative results with little processing. The slot canyons in the USA were super creative due to the shapes, lines and tones! Aperture Priority, 100ISO 17-40mm lens @ 40mm, f16 8 seconds with tripod.



ABOVE: The moment I shot this scene, I knew it would look great as a B&W image. The subject, with a clean surrounding area, amazing hair and the fact of shooting from the back angle, made for a creative result. Aperture Priority, 400ISO 70-200mm lens @ 130mm, f4 1/3000th of a second hand held.

BELOW: A key subject with a clean background will help to give a different look. Aperture Priority, 200ISO 100mm lens, f5.6 1/250th of a second hand held.





ABOVE: One of my best selling images is this very simple seascape. I think that is why people like it – simplicity. A slow shutter speed helped to give a sense of movement. A touch of unique light by a passing storm also added to the balance of the image. Maybe we do not need to overcomplicate an image, to make it creative. Aperture Priority, 50ISO 24-105mm lens @ 40mm, f16 1/3rd of a second with tripod.

KEEP IT SIMPLE SHOOTER

GUIDE TO MAKING GREAT IMAGES

TRAVEL ADVENTURES

I have been fortunate enough to travel to many destinations, since leaving the confines of school, back in 1978. It started as an adventure and led to my first job as a professional photographer on Norfolk Island, in 1980. Over 36 years later, I still look at each trip as an adventure! In 2016 alone, we are undertaking 17 major trips from King Island in Australia, to Cuba, Mongolia, Africa, Iceland, an Arctic cruise, Alaska and South America. Well over 300 tours around the world and Australia. The following will help you to get the most from your next trip no matter what your interest.

STARTING POINT – HOMEWORK

Your holiday can be expensive, depending on the style of trip, destination and your resources. With this in mind, finding out as much as possible about the destination, can help you to a more productive photographic adventure. That's one way of thinking. Another is to target a unique location, studying it a little and have no expectations. This is my preferred method, on a personal trip. I have a good basic understanding of opportunities, but I leave the rest to being 'johnny on the spot'. I love to problem solve and get the most from that time, as each season is different, everywhere around the world.

As a company, we have worked hard two years before a tour, preparing a great itinerary. With local experts, we maximise everything from airport pickup, to our final group dinner and, of course, the departure for home. Local people and their knowledge are by far better than Google, a textbook, or a visitor information centre. Another important travel tip, is quality time, in quality locations.

Visiting 10 countries in 12 days will not offer the same results, as one country in 12 days. If you can afford it, stay longer or see a little less. Your results will be better for that decision. I often spend around one week in just one region. Most of our tours, are 7 to 14 days. Any less time and you would not be able to appreciate the opportunities around you.



ABOVE: Travelling opens up new photo opportunities. It also opens up the chance to share the adventures with like-minded people.

BELOW: Targeting a great location at the right time, will offer you the best photo opportunities. It is then up to you, to use K.I.S.S. principles in the field, to help you attain your desired results.



EQUIPMENT

Budget, weight, flexibility, durability, quality are but a few of the points to think about. It is good to listen to other suggestions, and I often get asked about specific problems. However, at the end of the day, what fixes my problem, may not solve yours. Travel is very much a personal endeavour, (even if you are with a group), so treat what you hear as a suggestion and adjust to your own needs. For example, I recommend limiting your gear to one camera body and lenses, to 2-3 maximum. I use my iPhone for snap shots. Some love to take three bodies and five lenses, plus a compact camera.

When I'm travelling, I take all of my equipment with me all of the time, (see page 19). However, my kit is simple, not too large or overweight. For all destinations, I would have the following kit or similar: one body, 16-35mm lens, 24-105mm lens, 100-400mm lens, tripod, 1 x mini flash unit, an extension tube for macro work, cleaning cloths, 2 x spare batteries. In a smaller shoulder bag, I have my laptop computer and an external storage device. However, this is usually left at our on tour accommodation.

You may want a second body, but over the last 10 years, one body has predominately served me well. I sometimes carry a second body and leave it in my main suitcase. It can act as a backup camera.

I update my camera body every 2-3 years. Filters include UV protection filters on all lenses and a polarising filter for the wide and mid range lenses. Anyone who says no to a UV, obviously rarely shoots in the field.

All of this equipment fits into a fantastic backpack (currently a LowePro ProTactic 350AW) and is compact enough to be carried on to a plane as hand luggage, (the tripod goes in the luggage bag). On tours I also take a small bag that carries all the plugs etc needed for modern shooting and my laptop. It is airline friendly.

WEIGHT ISSUES

Photographers are always worried about limited weight for flights. I am rarely asked to weigh my hand luggage. The key is that my bag is not over sized. In fact, all my luggage is underweight and size, even for 2-3 months on the road. This is easier to achieve, than you might think. I recommend that you go to our website which offers free 'How To Pack' video examples:

www.worldphotoadventures.com.au



ABOVE: When possible, share your results with those around you. The interaction is priceless and you can learn what interests the locals. Aperture Priority, 400ISO 16-35mm lens @ 16mm, f11 1/180th of a second hand held.

BELOW: I wrote my first article in 1984. Over 300 articles later, in over 15 magazines, I can say that using your travel interests and seeing your images published is one of the greatest pleasures of photography. Australian Photography Magazine article shot with an iPhone 6.



ALTERNATIVE EQUIPMENT

A Nikon D5 is a heavy camera for travel work. The positive is, that they are rugged, so they take a few more knocks. But if you look after your gear, a lighter (and cheaper) camera, will do fine. Another difference with cheaper cameras, is that you might lose a couple of features. Flash synchronisation speeds of 200th of a second, instead of 250th of a second, as in the more expensive camera. For most travellers, this is not a problem, but it is a feature you need to consider. Lenses are changing every day it would seem. A 28-300mm lens is an amazing range. However, it is not as sharp as a 24-105mm f4 lens. Are your lenses 'slow' Darran? Yes, I rarely consider the need for a fast lens – say f2.8. I prefer the f4 version (my general purpose lenses is the 24-105mm f4). A 24-70mm f2.8 is often larger, heavier and more expensive, so again you need to balance out a formula, to reach your goal.

MY RECENT KITS

In the last few years, I have had Nikon and Canon large megapixel cameras. I have altered my equipment, techniques and visualisation to go with this new equipment. So, now I use the best lenses to a 50MP camera body. Note that older and cheaper lenses, are not as sharp, on the larger MP cameras. I am happy to crop more than ever before, as I have so much information available and sharp images due to the new generation optics. I talk about cropping more in the 'Processing' section, page 90.

HEALTH

As someone who has been to many countries, many times, I can offer a few clear health tips:

1. Your standard of accommodation and transport will limit your health risks. We often stay in 4 Star accommodation, with high quality 3 Star as a minimum. 99% of the time, this will reflect also in food quality.
2. I travel wearing long sleeve pants and shirts on most occasions. This offers the best UV protection and limits insect attacks.
3. See your doctor before departure. A quick check up and chat with your doctor will help with points that might affect you like altitude, immunisations etc.
4. If you travel regularly, then I highly recommend a full annual check up. Blood tests, heart etc.

Of course, all of this will help to optimise your photo interests.



ABOVE: Shooting a story will help you create more interest in your travel images. Instead of simply shooting the tobacco leaves by themselves in Cuba, I added the owner looking at the leaves for quality and finally, smoking his product. Aperture Priority, 3200ISO 24-70mm lens @ 45mm, f2.8 1/45th of a second hand held.

BELOW: An old Chinese gentleman, wanted his photo taken. Instead of a straight portrait, I set him against the furniture, with fan and as a extra touch, he was reflected in the mirror. Aperture Priority, 1600ISO 24-70mm lens @ 24mm, f4 1/60th of a second hand held.





ABOVE: Timing is so important! On our tours, we target stunning locations. In this case, we were the only people experiencing this section of the Great Wall. We always try to miss local holidays and aim for great seasonal opportunities like this fog. Aperture Priority, 200ISO 24-70mm lens @ 24mm, f11 1/2000th of a second hand held.

BELOW: Colour and a balance to the story, allowed this image to work for me. I did not need everything sharp like a point and shoot camera would offer. Aperture Priority, 800ISO 70-200mm lens @ 120mm, f2.8 1/350th of a second hand held.





ABOVE: Don't forget to add yourself into an image. I have used this image several times in magazines and even Kodak used it. Not because it was me, rather because it offered a story of someone enjoying a beautiful and surreal landscape. Shot with Kodak EPR100 slide film in 2001 and then scanned.

KEEP IT SIMPLE SHOOTER GUIDE TO MAKING GREAT IMAGES

THE POWER OF PROCESSING

Post visualisation has become such an important facet of our photography, that in recent years, I have placed it far more important than even metering. Your camera will often meter very well with little help. However, the ability to understand simple but effective processing techniques, can make all the difference between an average looking image and something that will take pride of place on your wall. The good news is that you do not need amazing skills, or lots of time to process your images. I often spend less than one minute processing an image.

K.I.S.S. PROCESSING & WORKFLOW

Some photographic educators are making a living out of making processing as complex as possible. For most photo enthusiasts, it does not need to be this way. Sure, after you understand the basics and you are achieving good quality processing results, it might be time to dabble into 'tricks and magic' techniques. For most imagery K.I.S.S., is the key! Adobe Lightroom is the premium choice of processing for Pearce and myself. We can quickly download our day's shoot to a folder that remains on our computer hard drive. We name this folder – 'ON TOUR IMAGES'. We then SUB FOLDER, to the name of the target destination. I have put this book together while on tour in Mongolia. So, my sub folder is – MONGOLIA. I then import all images from this tour into that folder. By default, they will be in date order.

IMPORTANT: As they download, I rate them. I personally use 1 Star as an initial indication that they are good and of interest. I will then move on, until they have finished downloading. Each night, I try to spend just 20-30 minutes downloading and processing a few of the more exciting images. If they are fully processed and ready for book quality publication, I give them a 5 Star rating – I simply hit the number 5 key – too easy...



ABOVE: The final facet to your photography is downloading, processing and storing your images so that you can find and use them. This is called **WORKFLOW**. This is the only time I really cross my t's and dot my i's. Why? Because this allows you to use your great images for projects, to print, to send to others. Finding them and having them well into the future is important for us all. It is apart of your history!

BELOW: Immediately on shooting this man in Mongolia, I decided he would look great in B&W. I often, but not always, try to visualise my image's creative result while shooting. This is the start of processing an image. Aperture Priority, 400ISO 24-105mm lens @ 62mm, f5.6 1/500th of a second hand held.



This disciplined approach, enables me to get home from each adventure with a load of images ready to show anyone, send to magazine editors etc. Back at the office, life changes and offers little time. If you would like to go a step further, (but only if you have a powerful up to date computer), Pearce and I also convert our RAW files to DNG files as we import. This means all of our processing work is embedded into one file, making it very easy for future transfers and file movements.

HISTOGRAM

Both your camera and Adobe Lightroom offer a graph called a histogram. They help you to achieve the correct, or best, exposure for your final image. Often an image just shot, is not 'quite right'. No issue, it is easy to fix by using Exposure, or Whites in Lightroom. Looking at a histogram (bottom right), the White Point, is to the right of the box as per the red arrow and to the far left of the box, is the Black Point. The middle section is your Mid Tone. Note that the image information in the example is not reaching the white point – it has a gap. Technically, this means it is underexposed.

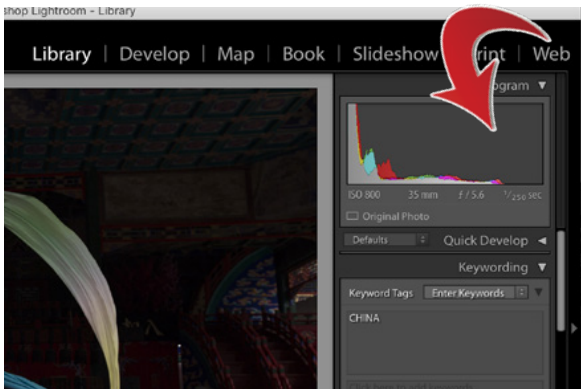
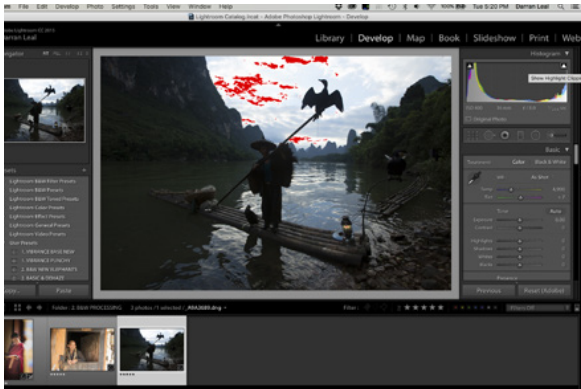
TIP: Light, Bright, to the Right...

I can not recommend this highly enough. After 'tweaking/playing' with the processing features available, the very final step is to check that the histogram is correct in Lightroom. This will offer you the best initial quality for printing and in my case, for a magazine editor. On most occasions, (but not all) you want your histogram nearly touching the White Point end of your histogram – 'Light, Bright, to the Right...'





I rarely bother to look at my histogram in the field. However, I place great importance on 'how it looks' in my final steps of processing. Your RAW or DNG files offer a great dynamic range of information. Adobe Lightroom, can allow you to access this detail in a very easy form. I encouraged everyone in my group to shoot the example image, with a view that the RAW file on the left, would look fantastic with just a few processing tools used in the Basic Module of Lightroom. Note the red area, indicates highlight detail loss. The shadows show little detail. The histogram in the bottom image, shows an underexposed image. (Gap to the right.) If I was to print this, it would look flat and as though 'something was wrong'. Often the printer is blamed, but it might be the file supplied.



Remember – Light, Bright, to the right...



ABOVE & BELOW: The image above, is the unprocessed RAW file. RAW files look flat and not like the scene you could see at the time. The image below has had a base Preset applied and corrected exposure. My base Preset starting in Lightroom at -BASIC - Contrast 30 - Shadows 25 - Vibrance 50 - I then leave all other setting to default until DETAIL. I then 'Sharpen' to the amount of 60 - Radius 1.3 and Noise Reduction - Luminance 25. I have this saved as my 'JPEG type file' Preset. Aperture Priority, 200ISO 80-400mm lens @ 375mm, f8 1/640th of a second hand held.





ABOVE & BELOW: When shooting this image, I was taken by the fantastic layered effect in the background of mountains and clouds. Yet in the RAW file, no clouds and a flat contrast to the real scene. I 'fixed this' by processing the file with my favourite Vibrance Preset. To reveal the cloud detail, I added a Graduation Filter and went minus with the exposure. This targeted just the top half of the photo. As a creative touch, I de-saturated that section as well. Finally, I added more 'shadows' to help highlight the horses. This sounds complicated, but is in fact easy to do and only took me two minutes.



B&W – THE CHALLENGE

The heading is wrong, as B&W photography is not as difficult as portrayed. Let's de-mystify this great creative form of photography. The initial key is to 'see a B&W image'. This is achieved best, by a shoot situation that is 'monotone in nature'. That is, it has limited colours, but interesting tonal range. Look at the RAW image on the right and at the final result below. In colour, it will process as an interesting photo that most people would quickly flick to the next page. In B&W, it offers a greater story.

In Lightroom, click on your image in the thumbnails and in –DEVELOP – directly under – BASIC – click on Black & White. In theory, the Basic panel will offer most of the features you will need. I suggest try adding more Contrast (20). Click on the White and Black names directly, using the slider to see the changes. You might like to go to – DETAIL – and add some Sharpening and Radius. Personally, I also like to add a little Clarity for B&W images.

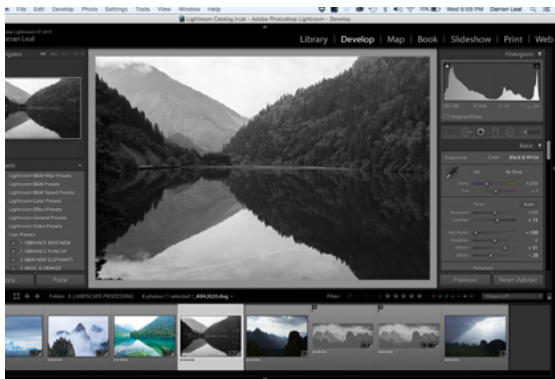
Another way – guess what? The combinations you can try are endless. This is where some educators like to make it complex! When starting out, go K.I.S.S. and, over time, expand your creative options.

TIP: go to www.jkost.com for great Lightroom tutorials.



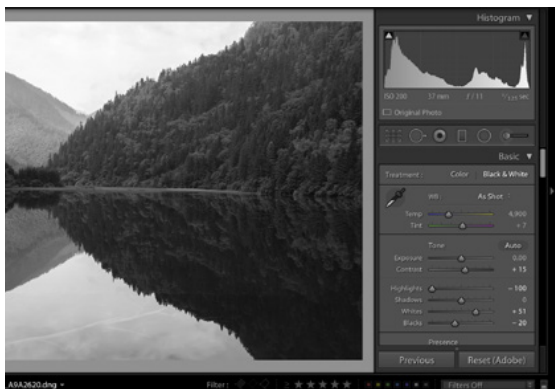


Your RAW or DNG files offer a great dynamic range of information. Adobe Lightroom can allow you to access this detail in a very easy form. I encourage everyone to download a 30-day FREE Trial Version. If you have Lightroom, but have not used it, try a beginners guide tutorial with Julieanne Kost, from Adobe.



On our events, we often have a tour member who has not used the program before and after just two short lessons, can get through the basics and have some fun.

In time, you will find that many images can be processed in seconds, allowing you to spend more time on special creative imagery.



Aperture Priority,
200ISO 24-70mm lens
@ 37mm, f11 1/125th of
a second hand held.

COMPUTERS & BACKING UP

Both points are very important! So many photographers, including those using a phone, do not understand the value of using a good computer and backing up images for photographic use.

As of early 2018, for the more serious travel photographer, I would ideally recommend a high level laptop computer. The reason is that this will help your workflow as you can download and process each day. This then opens up the chance for you to learn in the field! Pearce and I use MacBook Pro laptop computers.

As a minimum, a high quality mini laptop will work also, but be aware that for any of these devices, maximum RAM and at least one Terabyte (TB) storage space is important. Pearce and I also pay extra for Solid State Drives (SSD). Incredibly fast and no moving parts!

ON THE ROAD...

At night, while on tour, I download my images to my computer hard drive. I sort and rate the images. I then back up to a small external drive (SSD), so that I have a second copy. I will process images throughout the adventures. At home, I have a large multi Terabyte (TB) device that is my main back up drive. I copy my tour images to this. It offers a RAID system that automatically backs up all my information, (I have two copies). I also have my best imagery backed up to a 'Cloud' system. I use iCloud with Apple.

On my laptop computer, I keep it as 'lean and mean' as possible. The less information, the better. So I carry with me my office work, education images and my 'Hero Images'. I leave a lot of space to download my tour shoots. After downloading tour images to my main drives at home, I delete the old tour files from the laptop and get ready for my next adventures.

The above will cost you. However, the positive is that your initial investment will last a lot longer. You will not need to upgrade as often, this saving you time, money and future problems.

CROPPING

For years, I shot to exact final use of my images, as 35mm film and early small megapixel cameras required maximum detail, so that I could print the best quality. Today, a 10MP file can print easily to 1m long. Since most sensors are now around, or over 20MP, this means we can crop to maximise our result. How much information do you need? It depends how large you will use the image and for what application.

You have a couple of ways to crop your scene for the desired result:

1. When Shooting – crop 'in camera' with the best focal length.
2. When Processing – use the Crop Tool.
3. When Using Your Image – this book as an example, I cropped many images, often by a small amount, due to the image ratios.

HERO IMAGES

My last job in the 'processing workflow' is to finish rating my images. I want to be able to quickly and efficiently find my 'Hero Images'. I have made this easy by 5 Star rating the best images and 'Key Wording'.

BELOW: I use a large 50MP file that allows me to crop images. As an example, I often shoot one image and crop it to a 30MP file (instead of stitching two images together), this file being easily large enough to print and use. Aperture Priority, 400ISO 100-400mm lens @ 400mm, f8 1/2000th of a second hand held.



KEEP IT SIMPLE SHOOTER

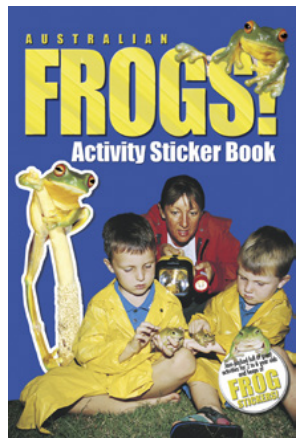
GUIDE TO MAKING GREAT IMAGES

USE YOUR IMAGES

In an era when it is so easy to take a lot of photographs, fortunately it is just as easy to do something with them. Via Adobe Lightroom, you can quickly export for other uses like Facebook, Instagram and you can even make your own book. I love to print my images with an Epson printer and I'm lucky enough to sell some of them. We have several in our house that are 1-2m long. Big is beautiful! Julia and I comment every so often – “gee that looks so lovely there”... For me, it brings back a moment in time. You can print an image for your own wall. Epson photo quality printers start, at just over \$100.00! I would recommend the A3+ printers as the best, starting at around \$400. I cannot recommend highly enough, that you produce a book from your adventures. How about a book of the family? Don't be shy to show off your best images. Editors are always looking for anything from one-off unique shots, to a great story and group of images.

I am often on the road travelling and working, or sending images and text to editors. In 2016, I enjoyed my 300th article in Australian Photography Magazine. Good images and adventures are in demand!





KEEP IT SIMPLE SHOOTER

GUIDE TO MAKING GREAT IMAGES

TOP TIPS

IS YOUR CAMERA READY?

My gear is put away, ready to use. That is, settings are ready, (Aperture Priority f5.6), all I need to do, is turn the camera on. I leave my 24-105mm lens on the body, as the default lens. My goal is to limit time, technicalities and allow me to optimise taking the photo.

TELL A STORY

This is the key to great photography! It is too easy today, to shoot a straight high quality image. From a macro shot of an insect's head, to a vast panorama, the image will be most intriguing to the viewer if it can tell a story. Personally, I look at a subject and work on what hits my 'minds eye' first:

1. Why have I taken an interest in this subject?
2. How can I utilize the available light?
3. How will I process the result?
4. Perhaps a different angle is needed?
5. After all of this, I will then consider the technical needs of equipment.

SET YOURSELF PROJECTS AND GOALS

A project, is a great way to explore photography. An easy project today is to put together a book from a recent adventure. Pearce and I often start a tour with the idea of a specific personal project in mind. Customers and work comes first, but we can often 'sneak in' some of our own imagery. This could be a B&W theme of the country visited, through to an article for a magazine. For example, as I write this book, I am shooting in Mongolia. I find I am regularly thinking in terms of B&W for the final results in this country.

PAGE 22

Page 22 of this book has the key K.I.S.S. information to help you shoot when starting out. I shoot this way myself! No need to complicate my shooting, which allows me to concentrate on that special moment in time and press the trigger.



ABOVE: My travel kit is simple, but very effective. It has changed over the years, but in fact by small points only. The less gear and weight you have, the better you will perform in the field.

TIMING

I have mentioned this before, but I can not stress enough how important timing can be for the best results. You can optimise this by being in the right place, by using the right equipment and visualising the result.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Don't be scared to try a 'different point of view' with your imagery. We encourage all of our customers to try different techniques and thought processes. Don't be like a sheep...

LAST TIP

Get out and shoot. As an example, you can never know what the world will offer, by sitting in a hotel room, just because of a few spots of rain. This is the adventure of photography!





WHY JOIN A WPA EVENT?

VALUE FOR MONEY...

We offer fantastic accommodation, beautiful meals and adventures that satisfy the most discerning traveller. We are proud of our history with unique events that has photographers and partners return again and again. Why join us?

1. We are a registered tour operator and have been operating since 1989!
2. We are dedicated to service – from the time you book, to maximising adventures, to helping you after the event – our service is second to none.
3. We offer locations that are world class for photography interests. We are adding new and exciting locations each year.
4. We use world-class photo guides, who will not treat the tour as a holiday – it is their passion to offer you the best value and opportunities, for your hard earned money.
5. Our local expert operators have taken us years to source. They offer expert local information from nature to culture.
6. Non photographers love our events!

The result: we are Australia's only registered photo tour operator dedicated to photographers, that has been running tours and workshops since 1989. We have a huge return customer database (one gentleman now up to his 60th event), who understand our value and in return we continue to offer the best adventures and service possible.

Why not join a WPA adventure....

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Darran has written over 60 articles for this fantastic magazine. It offers great photographers, tips and imagery.

<http://australianphotography.com>





THE IMPORTANCE OF PROCESSING & WORKFLOW

I started using Adobe products with Photoshop in 1993. I moved to Adobe Lightroom in 2007 and I use Adobe InDesign, Acrobat and Premier Pro. These are all important tools to my enjoyment and workflow in photography.

<http://adobe.com.au>

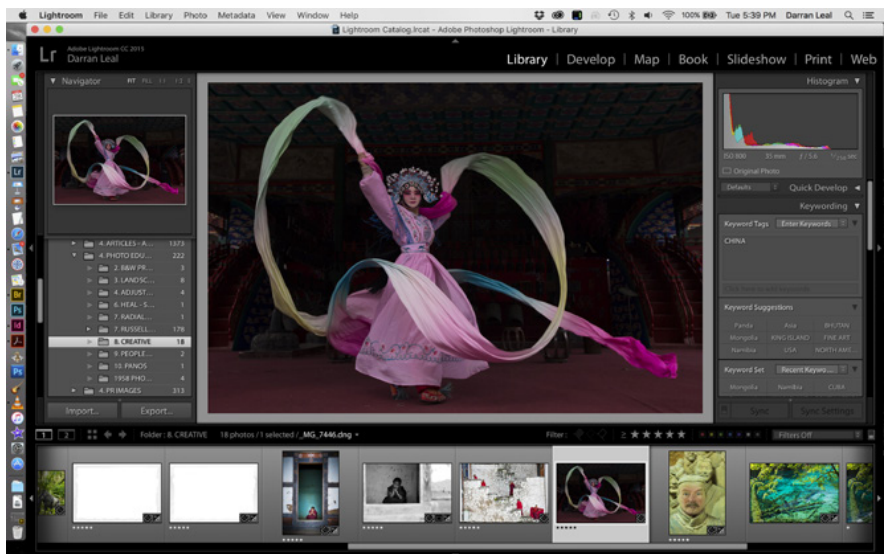




PHOTO EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

Darran first appeared on TV in 2005 on the popular travel show – Getaway. He appeared again on Getaway in 2008 and also for two book launches on Channel 7. In 2017 Darran and Pearce featured on Snap Happy the photography show. The owner Tim Robertson then asked Darran to be a presenter. You can see every episode, including other great photographers by visiting:

<http://snaphappytv.com>



