



## Darran Leal's PHOTO TIPS

# 4 - MIRRORLESS - as of January 2019 updated 16.1.19

A series of quick tips to help you improve your photography and  
inspire you to new results.



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*Note that the following information is general in nature due to the many different cameras available and situations to shoot.*

## **BUT DARRAN YOU SAID...**

Yes I announced earlier in 2018 that I was going Mirrorless. The next question is - "how did that go for you Darran"?

Not good...

Unfortunately I ran into an issue that first appeared for me in the early 1980's - Keratoconus

Keratoconus is a progressive eye disease (genetic) in which the normally round cornea thins and begins to bulge into a cone-like shape. This cone shape deflects light as it enters the eye on its way to the light-sensitive retina, causing distorted vision. Keratoconus can occur in one or both eyes and often begins during a person's teens or early 20s.

That's me in a nut shell. I only discovered this while looking through a camera while living in Perth in 1983. It explained when Jeff Thompson was bowling at me - I had trouble... (1978.) Bummer...

Yep it has been a bane in my life but one that I just accept. However, it really comes forward as a bigger issue when I try to look at and use non optical devices. TV is fine, the iPhone is fine but the 'cyborg' type view in current Mirrorless cameras simply does not work.

## **RESULT**

My youngest son Frazer has a fantastic top of the line Sony kit - **on loan!** I went back to Canon for another year - but as of early 2019, due to Canon (& Nikon) announcing new mounts, I have sold all of my Canon gear and have decided to go Mirrorless, no matter what. It is clear now that everyone is on board, that this is the future. This is great news for us all.

## **BUT...**

Frazer had a new learning curve to master. He spent quality time at locations around our place coming up to speed with how the system worked. He contacted Sony Ambassador Mark Galer for help and watched tutorials on the web. He also undertook several tours with me in 2018, this helping him to fine tune his love of Sony and the Mirrorless world.



Can you see the message:

1. Moving to Mirrorless will have a learning curve!
2. You need to buy a kit (brand) that can achieve your aspirations. This leads to...

## **NOT ALL MIRRORLESS SYSTEMS ARE THE SAME...**

I have watched a lot of photographers in the field and all Mirrorless users have some difficulties, no matter what brand.

### **Mirrorless is not the magic bullet to make you a better photographer!**

But, Mirrorless systems do offer a lot of positive features and new creative options. So, be careful of those glossy brochures, or those slick tongued salesman in the camera store, or the 'influencer' at the camera club who says - you must - I have...

Here are common difficult points:

1. Ease of use and camera handling - this always has variables from person to person.
2. Complex menu's - this is clearly one of the biggest problems. Point in case is Olympus. Great gear, but a very complex menu system. Unless you are good at solving the menu to understand it, you will most likely become very frustrated, very quickly!
3. Sensor size - most photographers buy Mirrorless to go lighter in weight. Yet I commonly see that person with 2 kits, often two different brands of camera. Is that saving weight?

## **DID YOU KNOW...**

Full size 35mm sensor Mirrorless kits are only a small amount lighter than many current 35mm DSLR's. Shock horror!



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Here are some weight/price comparisons for commonly used kits as of early 2019:

CANON 6DII -	35mm - 26.2MP - 765 g - Price \$2,500 (With one battery.)
SONY a7III	35mm - 24.2MP - 735 g - Price \$3,000 (With 2 batteries to equal Canon.)
LUMIX G9	50% to 35mm - 20.3MP - 750 g - Price \$2,100 (With 2 batteries to equal Canon.)
CANON 24-105mm lens	- 820 g - Price \$1,300
SONY 24-105mm lens	- 663 g - Price \$1,900
LUMIX G 12-60mm (24-120mm)	- 320 g - Price \$ 900
CANON 100-400mm lens	- 1,570 g - Price \$2,600
SONY 100-400mm lens	- 1,395 g - Price \$3,500
LUMIX G 100-400mm (200-800)	- 985 g - Price \$1,900
TOTAL CANON -	- 3,155 g - Price \$6,400
SONY -	- 2,793 g - Price \$8,400
LUMIX -	- 2,055 g - Price \$4,900

Jumping into Mirrorless for it's weight and pricing has variables as you can see above. Look at the weight and price differences above from the full frame (35mm) sensor Canon to the Micro Four Thirds Panasonic Lumix.

The Olympus kit below, is half the weight of the Canon kit. Olympus, Panasonic, FujiFilm are all smaller and lighter systems. (Although Panasonic has just announced a 35mm sensor system.) This is only possible due to the sensor size. With a small sensor comes a slight drop in quality in low light shooting. However, the same quality for all other use. Grab any of these camera's and shoot 3200ISO and you will see that they do not hold up to the quality of a 35mm sensor. (They are always improving with each model.)



## FRAZER'S EXPERIENCE

My timing of not using the Sony, was perfect for him. His kit is:

1. Sony a7RIII body - 42MP
2. Sony 12-24mm
3. Sony 24-105mm
4. Sony 100-400mm
5. Sony small flash
6. Sony camera grip

All of this gear costs a lot of money and is only a small amount lighter than the example full frame (35mm) Canon, which I used recently in Greenland and Iceland as a second body. It is heavier than the Lumix G9. How can that be? Answer: they are both 35mm sensor systems and the G9 is a smaller sensor.

OF IMPORTANCE - Frazer's Sony a7RIII (42MP) is just a very small number of Mirrorless camera's to truly compete with the big selling DSLR Canon's and Nikon's.

The key difference is speed! All of the earlier generation Mirrorless cameras, are slow to focus and use. As of the 2018 models (top end models, not cheaper models) for Panasonic, FujiFilm, Sony and Olympus - things changed. Frazer found out about Mirrorless limitations (as of mid 2018) when he started to post images on a Sony FaceBook group. He quickly noted that few action images were being posted. Flying birds, running lions, fast moving sports cars etc. This was all due to the fact that many Mirrorless systems are not as intuitive, or fast focusing/tracking for action shoots. As mentioned, this has now changed with the higher end Mirrorless cameras.





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So, for static subjects, which is the majority of most photographers work, they will shoot a great image with the right settings, with few complications. It is speed and more complex shoots that you will need to learn how to manage this new technology and in particular, buy the right camera.

## WHAT TO CONSIDER

What ever camera system you have or are buying, it is a tool only. The person behind the camera is the most important point. The right tool to do the job is of high importance and understanding how to work it will help you to reach your creative goals. So, if you are about to buy a new system (as many photographers are), then take your time to handle the camera and lenses. Don't base your purchase on someone's point of view!

## IMPORTANT

**Two points to know.**

**1. All the brands offer very sharp high quality lenses.**

**No brand is sharper than another.**

**2. How much information do you need to capture?**

**Do you need a 20 - 40 - 50 - 100 MegaPixel sensor?**

**Of course this comes down to use. The common size most photographers use is A4. 4MP will print to this size.**

THIS BRINGS US TO... DARRAN'S NEW GEAR

I have decided to get a Panasonic Lumix kit as of the beginning of 2019. In fact, I will be hybridising the G9, Micro Four Thirds system (I call it a half frame camera due to its 2X magnification factor) and the Panasonic S1R, which is a 35mm sensor system.

The G9 will have a general purpose 12-60mm (24-120mm) lens and the Leica 100-400mm (200-800mm) lens. Perfect for my two Africa tours, followed by two India tours to start the year. Plus I will eventually get a macro lens. The Panasonic 35mm size sensor S1R (47MP) will run a super wide and general purpose lens. This will be more suited to the Patagonia tour in April. As per all trips, I will target gear to suit the location and my interests and leave some gear at home.

This is why I have no issue dropping my MegaPixel amount. The 20.3MP Lumix G9, is low compared to my more recent 36 and 50MP cameras. I make up for this with a super sharp, very fast focusing 800mm focal length super telephoto lens that is under 1kg! (Yes that it correct.) My previous longest focal length was 560mm. Plus, the G9 has an 80MP function for high definition results. This is suited to landscapes. On a tripod, you take 8 images and it blends these together for a huge amount of detail - perfect.

## FUTURE

Everything is all changing as I write this feature. We are in the greatest era of change to photography equipment and perhaps photography itself.

TIP: The key point, **you get what you pay for**, so buy the top end Mirrorless cameras, not the cheaper (older technology) models, especially if you require fast focusing and use.

This will only improve on all fronts for all brands - or, the brand will disappear. Yes this is what I predict, we will see a couple of camera brands collapse or merge in the near future - no name is safe.

Finally, I love new tech and often I will buy early into that tech. I was one of the early photographers to change from Canon FD manual focus in the 1980's to Canon EF mount systems. I remember it had issues with fewer lenses available - think I have heard similar recently... LOL

As Nikon and Canon have finally offered more serious Mirrorless systems, (they have both had Mirrorless for years) we can say that the playing field has changed, yet again.

**I have now handled and seen every camera system in the field. ALL work well with a photographer who understands the basics of photography and the camera menu. However, some cameras are definitely not the best camera for some operators. This is the dilemma - what camera and system works best for you?**

My best tip - wait until you are ready. Then read up - BUT - far more importantly, go to a camera store - put the camera and lenses in hand that you are considering and make sure that it is everything you hoped. Don't let a salesman tell you something is better - you decide!

How complex is the Menu? Does it feel balanced in your hand. Can you use it easily? Does it focus as well as you thought? Quality time in store, will answer a lot of these questions. Then, be prepared for a new learning curve!

*More of these tips will be added from time to time. Please check our websites. Another great option is to download my eBook - it's FREE and loaded with more than 100 pages of information to help you shoot great images. It is fantastic on your phone as a quick reference or motivational guide.*

*Enjoy...*