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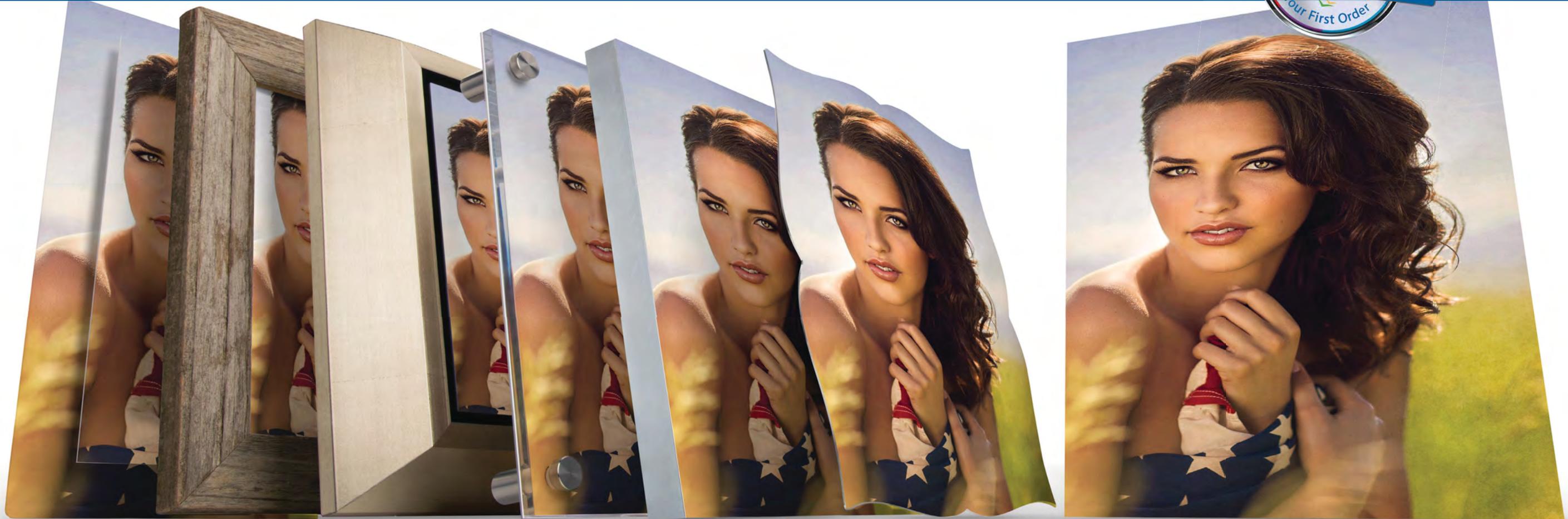
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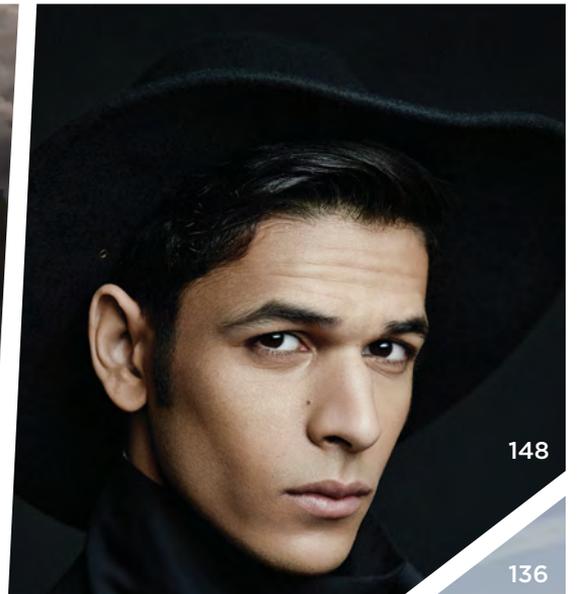
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Salvatore Cincotta
BEHIND THE SHUTTER

MISSION STATEMENT

Shutter Magazine's focus is on photography education. Our goal is to provide current, insightful and in-depth educational content for today's professional wedding and portrait photographer. *Shutter* uses the latest technologies to deliver information in a way that is relevant to our audience. Our experienced contributors help us create a sense of community, and have established the magazine as one of the leading photography publications in the world.

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THE COVER

PHOTOGRAPHER: Sal Cincotta | salcincotta.com

CAMERA: Phase One IQ3

LENS: Schneider Kreuznach 80mm

EXPOSURE: f2.8 @ 1/100, ISO 200

LOCATION: O'Fallon, Illinois

ABOUT THE IMAGE: This image was shot in-studio in June 2017. Special thanks to Morgin Riley for modeling.

LAUNCH POINT

A message from the editor-in-chief

Image © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

5 years
in the making.

Nothing worth chasing is ever easy.

- Sal Cincotta





MAKING
SOMETHING

OUT OF
NOTHING

with Raph Nogal



There is an expectation for professional wedding photographers to deliver our best work at every single wedding. Location can certainly help with this. It's a lot easier to create impactful images in the streets of Venice than Flint. Now, I don't know about you, but I rarely get to shoot in the streets of Venice, and still create artistic, impactful images for my clients on a consistent basis. You need to set yourself up for success. Try sending out a questionnaire to your clients prior to the wedding with not only questions, but also with a guide so that they understand what it takes to create the images they are hiring you for.

Experience, thinking on your feet, challenging yourself and a drop of "I can do this" all go a long way toward achieving this. But it seems challenges somehow always present themselves on the wedding day.

Here are some examples of how I managed to get out of a jam on the wedding day when the location was less than ideal.

THE PARTY ROOM

I arrived at the groom's condo and we all headed to a party room in the basement. I was taken aback by the extremely low ceiling and the collection of pot lights scattered throughout. This is where tools such as the Westcott Ice Light 2 and off-camera flash come in handy.

With a location like this, there was really nothing to work with. There were four walls, a couch, a table and a kitchenette. After doing some getting-ready images, I had the idea of using some of these elements in my shot to create something dynamic. I shot through the handle of the refrigerator. The highlights on the stainless steel created some interesting patterns. We lit the groom with off-camera flash.



Images © Raph Nogal



Images © Raph Nogal

RAINED OUT

Sometimes things get out of our control. On this wedding day, we got a torrential downpour. The first look was initially planned for an outdoor location in a nearby town, but that was quickly scrapped due to weather. We had to move indoors. Without a gorgeous, stunning venue, we still had to deliver great images, but we had to shoot them at the groom's parents' home. For bride and groom portraits, we settled for the dining room.

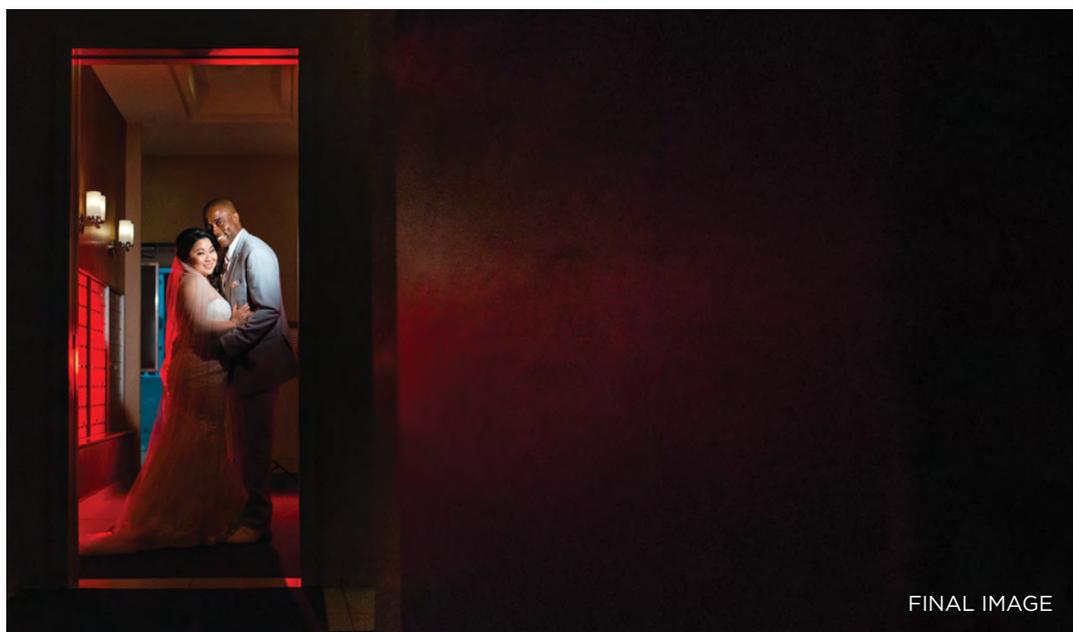
Fear starts to fade if you have the right tools in the bag, if you embrace spontaneity and if you have a vision.

I love dramatic images. Using off-camera flash and the right modifiers, we were able to cut out the messy bits of the room and focus our light on our bride and groom. I used a snoot and a grid on top of my speedlight to prevent the light from spilling onto parts of the scene that I didn't want lit. Grids are useful when you are working with existing light elements, such as existing ambient or natural light, chandeliers and wall sconces. You can see these elements and light up only the parts of the scene that you want.

In the dining room, I noticed two wall sconces and a light fixture above the dining room table. I asked my assistant Oliver to snoot and grid the speedlight to expose for the sconces and the light fixture and control that light beam. We were able to turn an ordinary dining room into something special. We repeated this process and shot into a mirror as well to create some complementary images for the wedding album and to carry the story along.

THE MAIL ROOM

The bride and groom finished their first look upstairs in the hotel room, and wanted to go downstairs for some photos. This condo, unfortunately, did not have any particularly stunning features, but I thought, “Wait a minute! There’s a mail room.” My clients gave me a puzzled look. I posed them, then used a red gel on the backlight and a grid on the keylight, creating a vibrant, cool image in the mailroom of their condo.



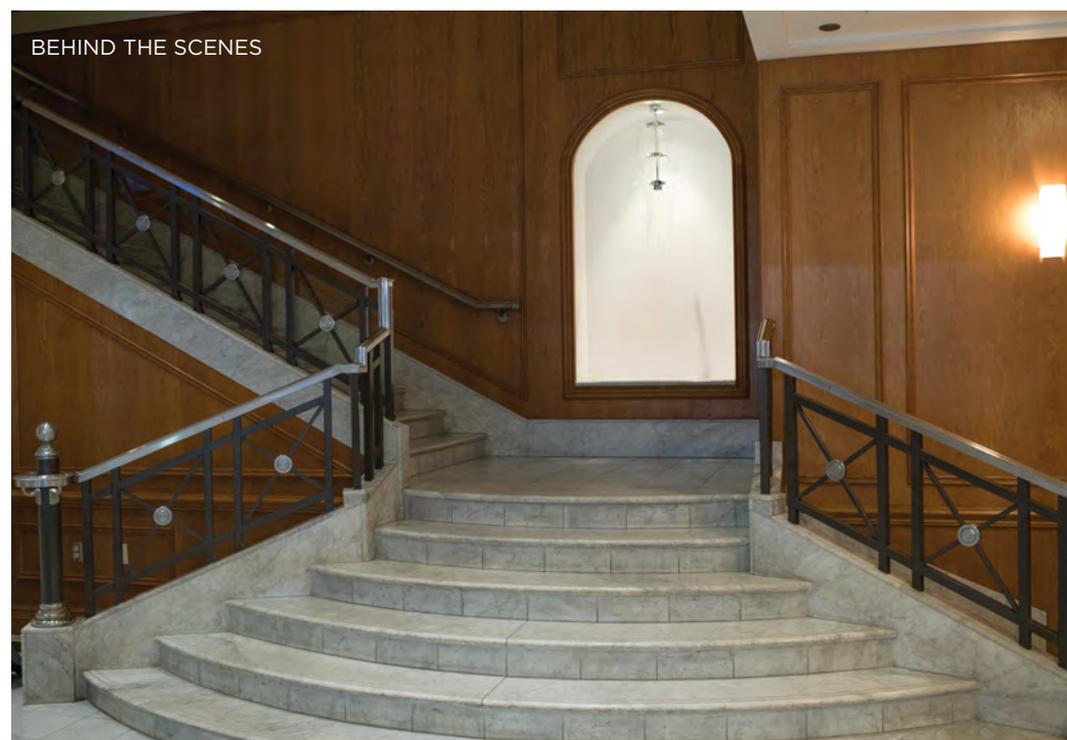
Images © Raph Nogal



THE HOTEL LOBBY

Hotel lobbies are packed with nooks and crannies for some great photo opportunities. You just have to find them. In this example, the bride was rushing away from the hotel into the limo to head to the first-look location. As I walked past this alcove in the wall, I knew I had to drag her back in to do a cool fashion-inspired image. I placed the bride in the alcove and made sure that her heels were visible and staggered. I tilted her face toward the light to create a beautiful jawline and cheekbones.

With the dress cascading off to the side, the image comes together. At the end of the day, we need to seize these opportunities not just to scratch our creative itch, but to give our clients our best.



Images © Raph Nogal



BEHIND THE SCENES



FINAL IMAGE

Images © Raph Nogal

The next time you find yourself in a location that is less than ideal, take two minutes to look around, think outside the box and see how you can make it work. There is always a way. Hold up a reflective surface, shoot through some clear bottles, take out a prism that's been sitting in your bag for a year.

As Sal Cincotta always says, innovate or die. I think that statement applies not only to our business, but to life. ■



Raph Nogal is an award-winning wedding photographer who has earned 16 WPPI awards and was named one of the Top Wedding Photographers in 2016 by Fearless Photographers. His style combines editorial with art-focused photojournalism. Raph is a Profoto PPC Trainer and an ambassador for Profoto Canada and MagMod.
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Rock
Your
Styled
Shoot
with Jewels Gray



My big thing is styled shoots. I love them. I love coming up with a unique concept, obsessing over the details, styling the models and working with vendors for a cohesive design.

They also give me a chance to shoot something I want to shoot (as opposed to weddings where I have no control over the timeline, lighting or weather), and they let me practice new poses and lighting ideas.

GETTING STARTED

When I started out on my own, I didn't have a full wedding to show. I had always been a second shooter, so I had a lot of detail shots and candids. I didn't have the wide money shots and portraiture to complete the collection. Styled shoots gave me something to show potential clients what a full wedding collection might look like. I still use the first one I ever did as an album studio sample.

Putting them together can be a daunting task. It can take months, but they're totally worth it, from building relationships with vendors to getting those photos published.



Image © Jewels Gray

WHAT'S YOUR CONCEPT?

First you need to come up with a concept. What inspires you? Is there something or somewhere you have always wanted to shoot? Perhaps you'd like a good excuse to get on a venue's preferred list. Or maybe you just want to do something crazy and different. I am inspired by unique locations, fashion and movies.

SO YOU HAVE AN IDEA — NOW WHAT?

I would start with research. Has this concept been done before? If so, what did you like and dislike about it? How can you make it better or different? Obviously, you wouldn't want to copy something someone else did. Put your twist on it. I wanted to do Bonnie and Clyde themed shoot at last year's ShutterFest. I love the styling of that era, their story, and all the details you could incorporate were awesome (guns, money, vintage car). Sure, it's been done, but I haven't seen a Bonnie and Clyde shoot that I was in love with; many aren't complete shoots with a tablescape, flowers and props.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

At this year's ShutterFest, I wanted something killer for the Rock Your Styled Shoots hands-on class. Last year I did get to do Bonnie and Clyde, but it rained buckets the afternoon of the shoot, so we didn't get to use the Model A I had lined up. I love using old cars as props, so I take advantage of every opportunity to incorporate one into a shoot. I was more determined than ever to make it happen this year.

This year, I wanted to execute an idea I've had for several years, something '60s mod/Elvis and Priscilla. I love rock and roll, big hair and lashes, and could easily pull the styling together. I also found out that May 1 would have been Elvis and Priscilla's 50th wedding anniversary, so it was perfect.

The story is that my young couple, Johnny and Presley, eloped and had a courthouse wedding, small and intimate, just the two of them. Later, they wanted to throw a party for their friends and family. The Union Station Hotel in St. Louis had all the perfect locations to tell the story—from the blue suede couch in an atrium to the natural light of the reception setup, the steps out front simulating the steps of a courthouse, to the grand archway where we parked the car, setting the tone of the shoot.

The logistics of putting it together were challenging, since I am in Denver and ShutterFest is in St. Louis. I had to put together my team of St. Louis vendors. I made a list of the ones I wanted to work with, and asked if they would be interested. A couple of them passed, but eventually I got everything I needed. Some of the smaller stuff I brought with me, but that's not possible with some things (cake, flowers, table, chairs).



Image © Jewels Gray



Image © Jewels Gray



Image © Jewels Gray

BENEFITS FOR VENDORS, TOO!

The benefit for vendors is that they get to show off their work, gain exposure for their business and get professional portfolio shots of their product. By tagging and linking to your vendors, you're building a relationship with them, and they're getting value. Inbound links to their websites help their SEO, and every time the shoot gets published, you're both getting inbound links and, hopefully, leads.

START HERE

The first place to start compiling your ideas is Pinterest. It's an incredible resource for collecting your ideas. I make a board and start pinning anything and everything to it that might work for the shoot. Then I start refining it by deleting those pins that don't necessarily work together. Sometimes I invite other collaborators to pin to the board; that way, you both see your ideas in one place so you can make them more cohesive.

Next, build your team. Make a list of the vendors you want to work with—your dream team. When you ask if they're interested, be enthusiastic. Sell them your concept and brainstorm how to make it work. If they're too busy or not interested, that's okay, don't get discouraged. Just move on to your next choice. Involving a planner is always helpful because planners help you with coordination and logistics of the shoot; it also gives you a chance to work together and build a relationship for future business. Building those relationships and providing a good experience will bring more referrals, and that is the best form of marketing.



Images © Jewels Gray

THE SHOOT

Executing the shoot can be an all-day affair, and sometimes multiple days. It snowed on the day of our Gold Rush shoot in Colorado several years back, so we had to do the outdoor portraits two weeks later. Thankfully, the models were down, and we shot at the Colorado Railroad Museum (which wasn't initially planned), and the pictures turned out awesome. Again, flexibility goes a long way.

Make a list of the shots you want to get so you don't forget. I also find it helpful to have a cheat sheet of poses, compositions and lighting I want to try. These images will be in the portfolios of your vendors, so get some killer shots for them. The shop that provided the dress and formalwear still uses my images in its marketing and has a huge print in its showroom.

PUBLISHERS

Publishers love details, the more the better. So my workflow on the day-of is to shoot wide, middle, tight, horizontal and vertical. This gives publishers options when they put their spread together. I also try to incorporate multiple elements of details into each shot. If I'm shooting a tablescape, I don't just shoot the place setting by itself. I have the top of the chair in the foreground and the centerpiece in the background. This gives your image depth and makes it more interesting. Next, narrow in on the place card and use the top of the plate in the foreground or off to the side, and use the flowers in the background. If you start with your wide shots and work your way down to all the tiny little details, you're bound to get lots of variety and not miss anything.



Images © Jewels Gray

EDITING

Now it's time to get to work editing and polishing the photos. They need to be ready to go to print once you submit them for publication. One of the biggest mistakes I made starting out was not editing the entire collection the same way. We would do a few signature edits, but then the rest of the collection would be kind of boring and less dramatic. Even though the concept was unique and we had lots of details and images to choose from, they wouldn't get picked up, and this is why. There has to be consistency.



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TWO BRIGHT LIGHTS!

My favorite platform for getting published is Two Bright Lights. It's efficient and affordable, and makes it easy to track what is going on with each submission. It brings the photographer and publisher to one convenient location. No longer do you have to go to each one, size the collection to their specs and submit them whichever way they prefer (Dropbox, email, zip file). All you have to do is upload the collection, enter your vendor team, include the story/details of the shoot/event and choose which publications you would like to reach. Done. They're sent all at the same time, and you can easily see which ones are accepted, rejected or otherwise. For more information, visit www.twobrightlights.com.

REACH

Right after ShutterFest, I posted a teaser shot on Facebook and Instagram. I tagged the models, the venue and all the other vendors involved. So far, the reach is over 4,000. That may not seem like a lot, but that's just from the first image.



Images © Jewels Gray



Image © Jewels Gray

SUMMING UP

The most important element of the entire process is to enjoy it and have fun. I keep a list of shoot ideas on my whiteboard in the office so I can constantly be thinking of the next one. There are a few that have been floating around in my head for a while, and I hope to execute them in the next year. ■



Jewels is an award-winning photographer and a licensed hair and makeup artist who specializes in weddings. She founded and produces the Eclectic Wedding and Event Showcase, a super fun show unlike any other. She is a California girl living in Colorado, an entrepreneur, artist and a mom who loves Halloween, rock and roll, and anything spicy.
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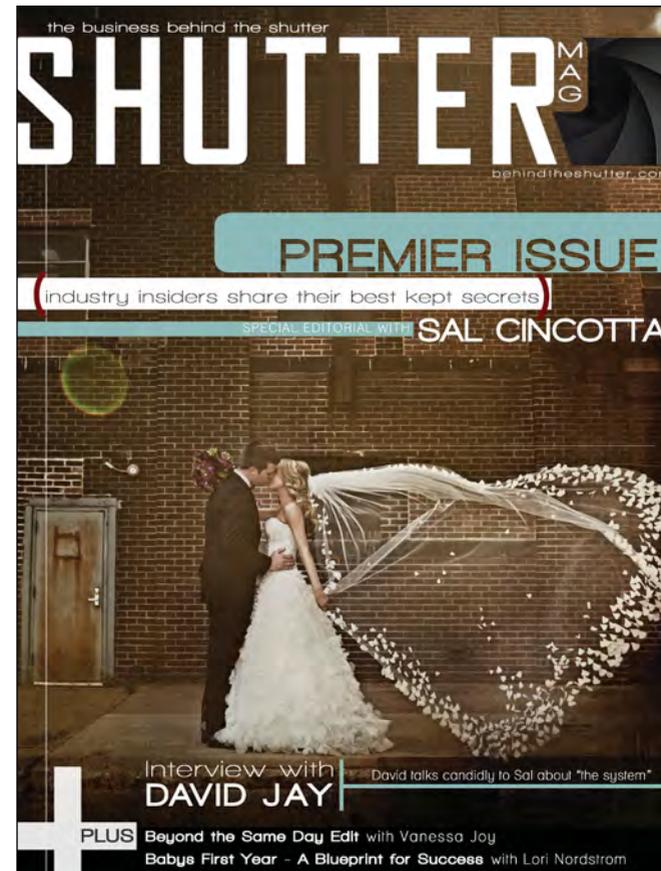
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THE PATH TO SUCCESS

with Sal Cincotta

As I sit here preparing to write my article this month, I am in awe of what we have accomplished in this short five years. You see, five years ago, I made a decision after my column in *Rangefinder* magazine was canceled that would change the course of my career and my company.

I was so pissed off when I got the news. I was told that my column was one of the most popular in the magazine. It was so popular that they'd offered me a second column. I was so proud and excited. It was still early in my speaking and educational career. Then, all of a sudden one day, I got the call about the cancelation. This was out of nowhere. I asked why, and the answer enraged me even more. I had too many companies and was becoming too successful, and that was a concern to some advertisers.

I would love to go back in time to see what I looked like when I heard that. I was so angry. I hung up that phone, looked at my team and said, "I want a solution for a digital magazine within the next 24 hours!"

Shutter Magazine was born 24 hours later. Not many people know our origin story, but there it is. *Shutter* would go on to be one of the largest professional photography magazines out there, with over 100,000 monthly subscribers.

So, who cares? Well, you should. There is a lot you can learn from my journey. Hell, there is a lot I have learned from my journey. Let's dig into some of the things that I think can help you no matter where you are in your career.

Throughout the article, I will use *growth* and *success* interchangeably—to me, they are so intertwined that I am not sure how you achieve one without the other.



GROWTH/SUCCESS IS PAINFUL

Make no mistake: If you want to grow as a person or as a business, the path is going to be a painful one. It is going to make you uncomfortable and force you to do things that are way out of your comfort zone. I have to constantly remind myself and my team of that reality. If it were easy, everyone would do it. I know how cliché that sounds, but it's true.

Most people give up when they start feeling pain. Not necessarily physical pain, but any type of physical or mental discomfort. It's uncomfortable, it's outside the norm, therefore it's painful for you on some level. That's the moment I push harder. Trust me when I tell you this is all mental. If you talk yourself out of it or if you are a pessimistic person, you will quit on yourself and your dreams.

Instead, I embrace the discomfort. I realize that if I am not uncomfortable, that means I am just coasting along, and that forces me to push harder. It's like being an adrenaline junkie. I need to feel the pain to know I am growing and pushing myself. We can all relate to that pain.

Find that place that makes you uncomfortable, and push the gas peddle. What you will find is that over time, less and less will make you uncomfortable and the things that once made you uncomfortable are now easy for you.



Images © Salvatore Cincotta Photography



Image © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

GROWTH/SUCCESS IS NOT AN ACCIDENT

If you find yourself wishing and hoping for your big break or looking at others and making excuses for their success, shame on you. People show their ugly side sometimes because of their own internal issues. Don't be that person. Don't be the photographer who looks at other photographers in their area and says, "I am better than him!" Who cares? No one gives a shit if you are better than them. You are not entitled to success. You have to go out there and grab it by the balls. If you want it, it is there for you. I can tell you that firsthand.

If you want success and growth, it's not going to just fall in your lap. It is not about "paying your dues." It is not about anything other than working longer and harder than your competition. So, if you see someone who is killing it and surpassing you, maybe, just maybe, they are working harder than you are.

Growth for me was not an accident. I wanted it bad, and, to this very day, everything I do I want to be the best at. That is my mindset. It forces me to work hard and plan. Where do you want to be today, next week, next month, next year? Getting there will not just randomly happen because you put it out there in the universe. What is your plan to get there?

You need a dose of reality. You need to surround yourself with people—friends, family and peers—who will shoot straight with you and not just be "yes" men. That is useless. I love having people around who push me and challenge me to plan for bigger and better things in life.

Start planning for success and putting together the blueprint for getting where you want to be. Work harder and longer than your competition, and you will start growing in leaps and bounds while everyone else stands around scratching their head at your success.



Image © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

GROWTH/SUCCESS WILL FORCE YOU TO RE-EVALUATE

This is something I have had to go through many times over the last 10 years. There is no right or wrong answer here. Ultimately, it's up to you. But make no mistake, you will have to ask yourself some tough questions along this journey. You will be forced to reevaluate everything you thought you knew, everything you thought you wanted. I know, because I have had to do this over and over again. Not just as a photographer, but as a college graduate who had a huge career in corporate America. I had to ask myself: Is this what I want?

The career question is the easiest of them. Are these the friends and people I want in my life? Are they cancer to my dreams, or are they lifting me up and helping me achieve them? These are all tough questions, ones that will undoubtedly impact your path.

This process is ongoing. I have to do this every few months to make sure the ship is on course. I do this for my business and my personal life. Get in the habit of searching for your own meaning. It will help give you some clarity on the path you are on and what you need to do to get to your destination. Now, you may never figure out the meaning of life, but this exercise is an important one on your journey. What is important to you? What do you want from life, career, family?

GROWTH/SUCCESS WILL REQUIRE CHANGE

This journey will force change upon you. There is no other way to tell you this. I look at the person, leader, employee I was 20 years ago and the person I am today, and they are very different people. I still have that fire in my belly. I am still extremely competitive, but I am also different. You will learn a lot about yourself. You will learn your strengths and weaknesses, and you will be forced to change in order to achieve those dreams.

If you are not where you want to be in your life or career right now, that means it's not working. Translation: Something has to change. Change your mental state. Change your surroundings. Change the people in your life. Change your attitude. Change *something*.

If you keep running into the same wall expecting a different result, well, we all know how that story ends. So, the choice is yours. You can sit there and bitch about other people. Hate on them for their success. Be that person who posts random passive-aggressive digs on social media. Or you can make a change in your life. The latter is by far the toughest. In fact, most people can't do this. That's your advantage here. A majority of people are incapable of this change. It's easier for them to blame the world and be negative.

Rise above this. Make the changes. And remember: This is a lifelong journey.

Image © Salvatore Cincotta Photography



GROWTH/SUCCESS IS A LONELY JOURNEY

Trust me when I tell you this journey of success and personal growth is a lonely one. I don't say that as a bitter person reflecting negatively on his life. I couldn't be happier with my life, career or future. I have never been so excited about where things are going.

But this journey is not for everyone. Throughout my career, I have been fortunate enough to work with some of the most talented, creative and giving people you could imagine. It's been an amazing ride, but not everyone is going to be on this ride with you. People will come and go. It's okay. This is not their journey, it's yours. Don't ever forget that.

The first thing you need to do is stop trying to make everyone happy. That has got to be one of the most exhausting endeavors known to mankind. Not only is it impossible, it's exhausting. You spend so much time trying to make everyone happy, and in the end, you will have failed everyone, including yourself, because you are still not happy. And isn't that the entire point of this journey — your happiness?

Whatever you do, don't lose sight of that. I know it sounds selfish, but you have one life. Live it for you. Live it for the people in your life who matter. The rest is just noise. ■



Sal Cincotta is an international award-winning photographer, educator, author and the publisher of *Shutter Magazine*. Sal's success is directly tied to the education he received in business school. He graduated from Binghamton University, a Top 20 business school, and has worked for Fortune 50 companies like Procter & Gamble and Microsoft. After spending 10 years in corporate America, Sal left to pursue a career in photography and has never looked back.

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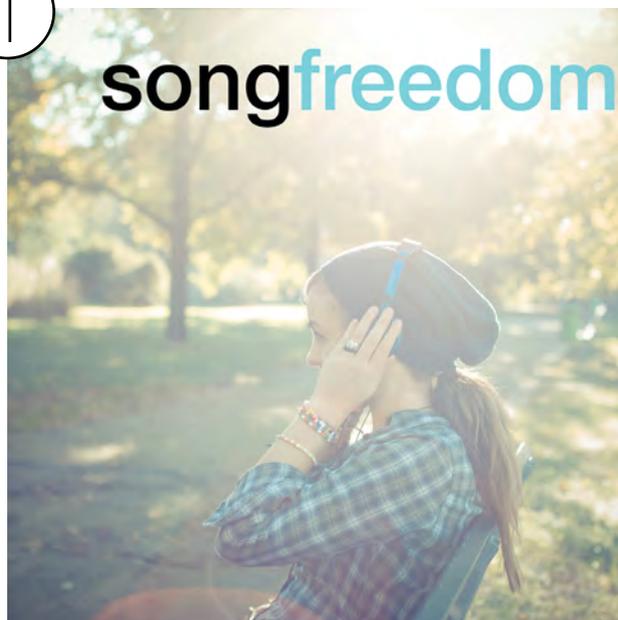
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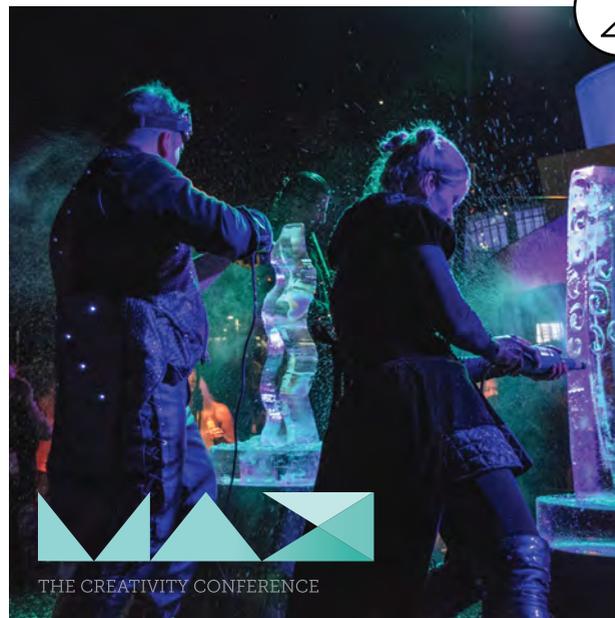
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2

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3



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4

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BUILDING BLOCKS

THE KEY STEPS TO STARTING YOUR BUSINESS

with **Skip Cohen**

It's the anniversary issue of *Shutter Magazine*, and that milestone is proof that time flies when you're having a good time. I've written for every issue since the very beginning five years ago, and couldn't be more proud to be part of the team.

Five years of continuous growth in the publishing industry is a remarkable accomplishment. Because it's an anniversary, I started thinking about what makes a business successful and able to grow year after year.

If you've met Sal or know his reputation, you know that he is proof that hyperactive kids grow up and have careers. Sal never sits still.

Five years ago, Sal started with an idea of an online magazine that later expanded into one of the most beautifully produced printed publications in photography today. That vision of a successful "how-to" magazine grew into a live hands-on educational event with ShutterFest. ShutterFest expanded with the more intense Lunacy. While *Shutter* and ShutterFest were growing, Sal built a community, demonstrated by the ShutterFest forum on Facebook all day every day.

This review of Sal's successes over the past five years isn't going to help you directly to build a stronger business. But hopefully it's inspirational. From virtually nothing, Sal and his team have established themselves as the leader in several industry categories. So, how can I help you think through the challenges of doing the same with your business?



A few weeks ago, I shared a classic guest post on the Marathon Press blog from one of ShutterFest's favorite educators, Lori Nordstrom. The topic was about how to start building your own dream business.

Lori wrote: "I hear from so many photographers who are ready to go from portfolio building to getting their business started, and even from established photographers who know they need to make changes in their business. The decision has been made, and the question is, where do I even start?"

"There is so much to do: marketing, pricing, selling, workflow, business management . . . so what's first?"

"Well, you've heard it before, and I'll say it again: If you fail to plan, you plan to fail. Yes, now you've heard it one more time: It starts with a plan. It astonishes me that we will plan a party, a trip, lunch with a friend, but we don't plan for a profitable business. Which is more important?"

There it is, the foundation for this month's article on developing a business plan.

Sal called me a month before he launched the magazine wanting to know if I wanted to write for *Shutter*. I didn't hesitate to come onboard. I won't speculate on the steps Sal took, from his first vision of *Shutter* to a tangible product. But let's look at the steps necessary to visualizing and building a professional photography business.

1. WHAT IF?

It's my favorite question when I'm thinking about any new project, and it's a part of how your dream probably got started. This is the perfect way to start any new project, business or career—allowing yourself to dream.

*"They who dream by day are cognizant of many things
which escape those who dream only by night."*

Edgar Allan Poe

Just as photographers visualize an image they want to create, you've got to do the same with the dream of your business. Surround yourself with positive people. Share that vision and keep asking yourself: "What if?"

2. SETTING GOALS

I'm a big fan of targets. Each target is a stepping-stone to turning a dream into reality. Think of targets like the rungs on a ladder.

3. ESTABLISH A TIMELINE

Nobody's ever been successful with just good intentions. Each goal needs to be processed and completed. That doesn't mean there won't be some steps that take longer to reach than others, just that each one is a critical component of a successful startup.

4. WRITE A BUSINESS PLAN

This is all thanks to Lori getting me thinking about my own business plans over the years, and it's critical to your success. So many of you launched your careers by establishing expertise in your skill set and then deciding you were in business without ever thinking through the steps necessary to being a success.

Can you run a business without a business plan? Of course you can, but you're also going to waste time and energy, and will be eating macaroni and cheese every night.

Here's a website that's essential to your success: www.sba.gov. This site for the U.S. Small Business Administration provides all the steps necessary to writing a business plan.

Let's look at the basics that site suggests.

COMPANY DESCRIPTION

Think through what the core of your product line is going to be. You know how to focus on your subjects, now it's time to focus on your core specialty and the logical spinoffs in your business. Specialties include weddings, newborns, children, family, commercial and editorial.

MARKET ANALYSIS

This is one of the most critical components of any successful business. It's also one that's most ignored by new photographers. It's important to examine the market, the competition, key price points and demographics. You've got to understand your target audience and the community you work in.

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

Even a one-person operation has to have organization and a support process or team in place. If you're a solo artist, that means relying on your network, lab, systems support, etc. You've got to think through how you're going to manage your business.

SERVICE OR PRODUCT LINE

What are you going to sell? What's involved in the delivery of the finished product or service? Here's another point often missed when an artist establishes a new business. As a professional photographer, what are the products you want to sell, and do you have the support and expertise in place to deliver? This is where you should include prints, albums, framed prints, video and slideshows.

MARKETING AND SALES

It's not who you know, it's who knows you that will make you a success. So, what's your plan? How are you going to market your business? I've provided suggestions in just about every article I've written over the past five years, starting with your website, blog and community involvement.

FUNDING AND FINANCIALS

The SBA puts them in separate categories, but for this article, I'm lumping them together. How are you going to make money? How are you going to price your work and services? Who are the vendors you need to work with to get the support you need to deliver the very best product at the most reasonable margin?

Here's what Sal said in one of the best videos I've ever seen on business practices: "Nothing can screw up your business faster than bad pricing." You're trying to build a business, not a charity. Remember, a business that doesn't make money is a hobby.

5. LAUNCHING THE DREAM

This is where I wrap things up, because my purpose is to get you thinking about success. Once you've completed your plan, it's time to revise your timeline and lay out the best route for your journey.

When you officially launch, the work really begins, and there's no turning back. There will be changes along the way, and each component of your business—your website, blog, network, publicity, partnerships, communication, customer service, skill set, vendor relationships—all require care and feeding.

"Faith is being sure of what you hope for and certain of what you do not see."

Anonymous

Owning your own business is a remarkable feeling. The keyword is *owning*. It's about service, building relationships and, most importantly, faith. Even more important than your business plan, you've got to have faith in your ability to build your business. ■



Skip Cohen is president and founder of Marketing Essentials International, a consulting firm specializing in projects dedicated to photographic education, marketing and social media support across a variety of marketing and business platforms. He founded SkipCohenUniversity.com in January 2013. He's been actively involved in the photo industry his entire career, and previously served as president of Rangefinder/WPPI and Hasselblad USA. He has coauthored six books on photography and is involved in several popular podcasts, including *Weekend Wisdom*.

skipcohenuniversity.com

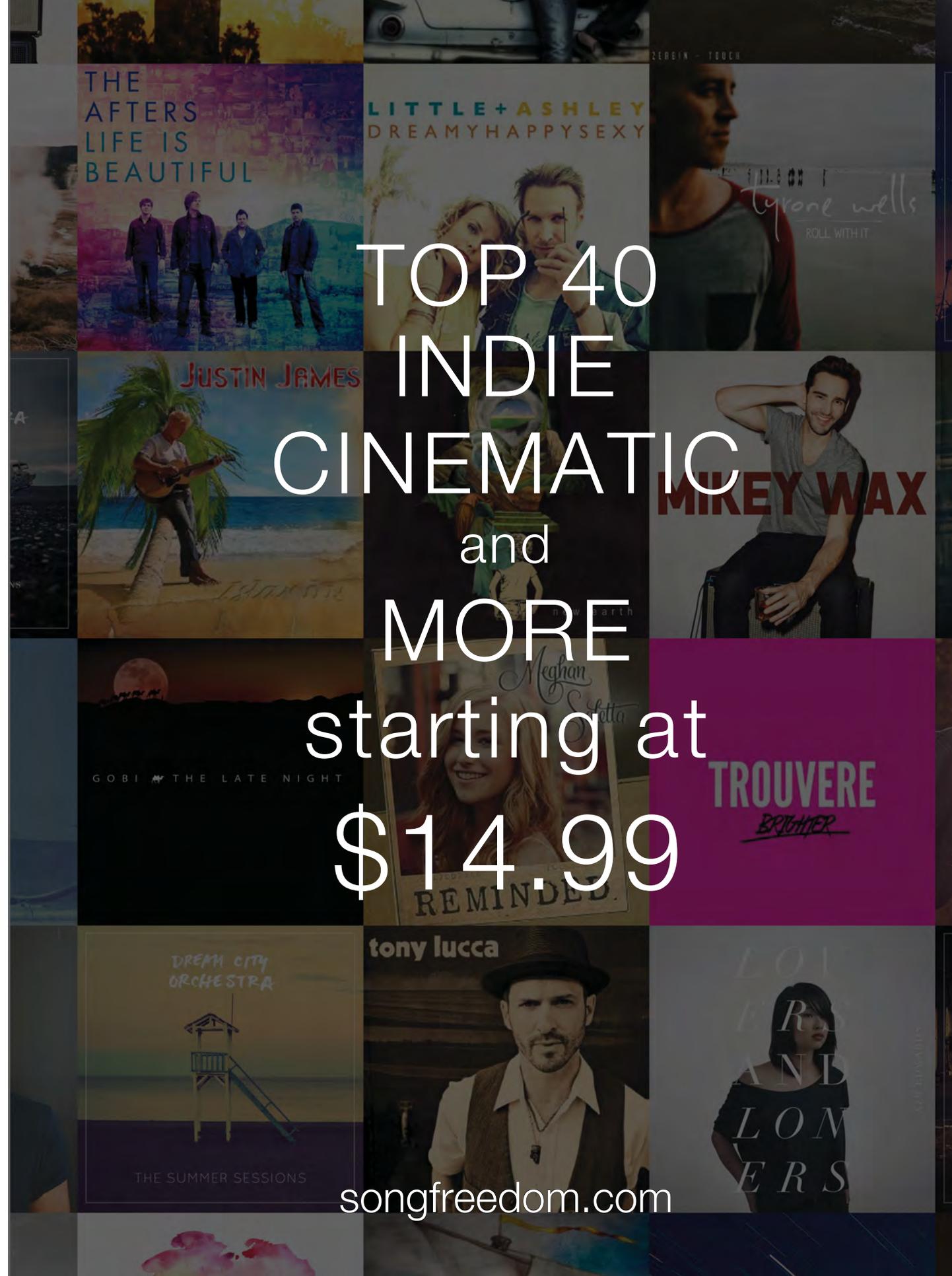
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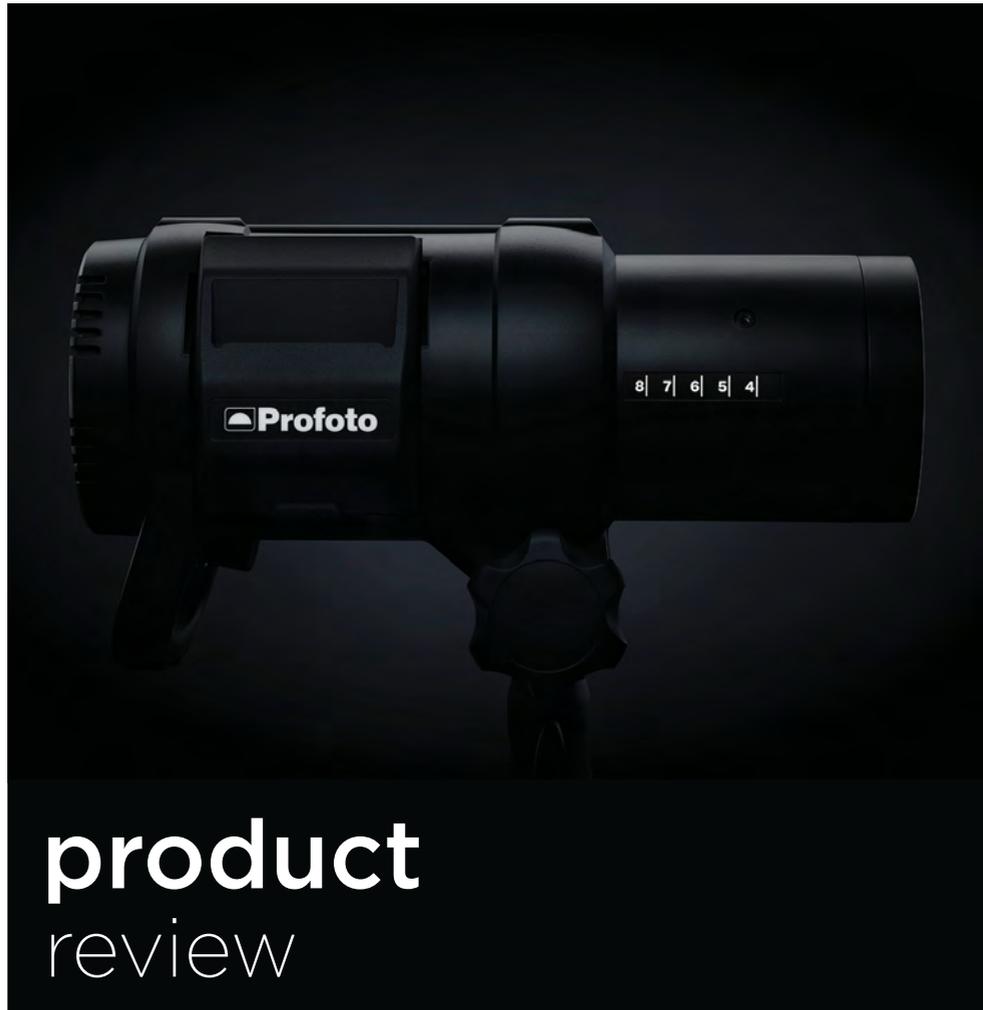
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Why the Profoto B1X?

A few weeks ago, I got to test Profoto's new B1X for the first time, and let me tell you, this bad boy did not disappoint.

Sure, it's a little pricey, but like most things in life, you get what you pay for. The power, the consistency, the quality of light—these are all things that should matter to you. If they don't, then why are you a photographer? Without light, we can't make images.

If you are a "natural light" photographer, don't be intimidated by alternate light sources—they can change your life. How cool would it be to have light when and how you want it? You can do that with an alternate light source.

Best of all, these are battery-powered. So, leave those cords at home and take your studio with you wherever you go. Most impressive was the quality of construction. It feels durable. It gives off an air of confidence, and feels like it will stand up to the test of time. So far, it has. I still have the original B1, and after three years of intense use, it's in near mint condition.

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BTS ON A BUDGET

with Phillip Blume

3 STEPS FOR CREATING **BEHIND-THE-SCENES CONTENT** THAT SELLS





Image © Blume Photography

I remember standing on my tiptoes staring down in shock and awe at the man squatting in the dirt. I was nine years old, and he was Javier Lopez, star catcher for the Atlanta Braves—and my hero. What is it about celebrity that turns a man playing catch in the dirt into a cultural icon? It comes down to face time. I saw Javier everywhere I looked: on TV, baseball cards, even on my T-shirt and lunchbox.

As photographers and business owners, we need to be celebrities of a sort—potential clients need to know and trust us so they feel confident enough to hire us (and rave about us to others).

It's time to start creating your fame through behind-the-scenes content. Here's where to start.

START SMALL

If you mistakenly think of behind-the-scenes content creation as producing a reality show, you're likely to become overwhelmed. Don't put that kind of pressure on yourself. Even if the content we create never approaches Hollywood caliber, that's all right. Our viewers understand that we aren't operating on a million-dollar budget. In fact, they're more accustomed than ever to consumer-grade content blended into their professional entertainment and nightly newscast.

So if you're a perfectionist like I am, loosen up on the "If you can't do it right, don't do it at all" attitude. I've taken that mantra too seriously throughout my life, and it just causes me to freeze up. My new mantra—the one that has found me a lot more success—is "Done is better than perfect." Go get it done.

Where do you start? Pick up your camera. You're a photographer, so you're already ahead of the curve. Yes, we're going to discuss more of my favorite gear for behind-the-scenes (BTS for short) content creation next. But you can start now, with almost any camera you have.



Image © Blume Photography

Start with still photos—especially on Instagram, where BTS photos of you at work should make up about 10 percent or more of your posts. But remember, video is king for online content. Video intimidates many of us, but hear me out. My first ever video camera was a Flip HD. Do you remember that camera, with its max 720p resolution, easy one-button recording and built-in USB adapter? No one dared imagine Wi-Fi for such devices back then. Flip was a hot commodity before iPhone showed up and transformed the market.

We apprehensively attempted our first video project in 2011, armed only with my old Flip and a new consumer-grade Nikon video camera. The Nikon D700's we shot professionally then did not even have video functionality, so you can see our Flip footage interwoven into most of the BTS promo videos on our About page at www.blumephotography.com/about.

Even as we advanced to DSLR filmmaking, video was so much easier to learn than I had feared. Some of you already know the story, how our freshman attempt at video shockingly resulted in a feature-length documentary that toured the U.S. and helped a cause we believe in. That experience alone was enough to inspire me to keep doing video production forever.

But there's more to the story that few of you know, an unexpected ending that I can only tease you with for now. Later this year, a Hollywood movie is coming to theaters near you inspired by the story we told through video—and even containing our original video footage. The screenwriter honored me with a cameo speaking role, too; but that was probably against the casting director's better judgment. Don't worry, closer to the movie's release date, we'll share more and give exclusive behind-the-scenes access to all of you who are part of our Blume photography online community.

Get ready for big possibilities when you simply take action and put yourself out there. You don't have to create a feature film to sell people on the value of your business, or even to change the world. Just pick up your iPhone and go.

Watch my video segment at the end of this article to see how I shoot for the edit with just my phone camera.



Image © Blume Photography



Image © Blume Photography

GEAR UP!

Of all the gear I've purchased or have received on loan to test, here is what I like best. I've compared so many options, and for my workflow, these tools are the most cost-effective, portable and simple to use. And I get killer results. Watch my video segment at the end of this article to see me demonstrate each.

DJI Osmo Mobile. My phone is my favorite camera for BTS. It's always handy, it's easy to use and the results are high quality. The only thing it lacks for video is cinematic motion and stability. That's where the Osmo comes in. It's loaded with the best gimbal technology from DJI's famous drone family. It's basically a motorized handle or selfie stick that attaches to your phone. For stability, it's so intuitive that you'll use it out of the box like a pro. But the features go way beyond that. With Osmo and the DJI app, your phone camera is suddenly able to track your movements, too: Mount it, and the camera follows you and stays focused while you're in action shooting or pacing. You can create precision motion time-lapses, something I couldn't do before without investing thousands of dollars in high-end sliders and custom motor tracks.

I prefer the Osmo Mobile over its bigger brothers (Osmo+, OsmoPro), mostly because of the cost difference. It's just \$299 compared to \$600 to over \$2,000. They're similar, but Osmo Mobile doesn't have the small built-in camera; it uses your phone. There are a couple cheap Chinese competitors on the market that I've tried, but their less reactive software and cheap plastic build aren't worth the small savings. Osmo Mobile is made of sturdy aluminum alloy and just works. Because it's not limited to a DJI camera, my Osmo Mobile is upgraded (not outdated) anytime I upgrade my phone.

Zoom H1. If you're looking for a pocket-size quality audio recorder, I have several for sale. That's because I've purchased quite a few makes and models that were recommended to me. Not that there was anything wrong with their quality, but I found the H1 to be the most compact and intuitive to use, without sacrificing quality. As a perk, it's also one of the more affordable in its bracket, and its stereo-positioned dual microphones are well protected when I toss it in my backpack. I have two of these, one of which I tape to the side of a mic during wedding toasts as audio backup so I'm not at the mercy of a DJ's unpredictable soundboard. If you want to hide the recorder and add a mic, be aware it has only a 3.5mm line input and no quarter-inch XLR. But that's no problem if you use the next item I'm recommending.

Rode smartLav+ (and adapter). Rode designed this quality lav mic (the kind you clip discreetly to your shirt) to fit the unusual headphone jack on Android and Apple smartphones. Yes, using your phone's voice memo app is a legitimate option of audio recorder, but not useful if your phone is already tied up as a video camera—the drawback of a multifunction device. At about \$79, it's a good value among lav mics. Also get the \$15 SC3 adapter so you can use this lav with your H1 and other recorders, as well as smartphones as backup.

Whatever you do, don't miss my hack for wireless audio in the video. It might save you \$1,000.

GoPro. There is nothing like a GoPro for all-terrain, wet-and-wild, creative BTS shots. I'm a big fan of the new touchscreen models, but I still don't own one. I've been happy with my old Hero, which must have been out of date when I got it because it came free with a Vimeo subscription. The simpler ice cube-size Hero Session is now just \$149. So worth it. With adapters to clip the GoPro to your camera or shoulder strap, you've got first-person perspective of your photo shoots in the bag with no effort at all. I love the integrated GoPro adapters Spider Holster is introducing for users of its camera holster systems. (I'll show you my unexpected solution for a GoPro stabilizer in the video below.)

Mobile phones and accessories. We've already established that your smartphone is a multimedia studio in your pocket. Take advantage of it. But treat it kindly. Invest in a good protective case. If you're a heavy BTS shooter, keep a good power core nearby for recharging on the fly.

Cell carrier plans are getting more competitive. Verizon now offers us a phone upgrade every 12 months, something I wouldn't have known if I didn't happen to walk in last week, ask about it and leave with a free iPhone 7 Plus. I'm loving my free new camera with 4K and stabilization. Check your plan.

DJI Spark. Drones are dropping fast—and I don't just mean GoPro Karma Quadcopters falling from the sky. They're dropping in size and cost. Drones like DJI's brand-new Spark are shaking up the industry. It fits in your palm and shoots stabilized HD with hands-free features that track you as you go. That's good for BTS footage. But battery life is still low, only 16 minutes in-flight for the Spark. Yes, aerial footage is now expected in many videos, but think before you bother with it for BTS. Unless you have just a couple specific shots in mind, the price, starting at \$499, may not work for you. But prices for new technology are always coming down.

PUBLISH SMARTER

All your behind-the-scenes still and video footage is only worthwhile if it sells you. The first step to selling yourself is knowing where and how to publish. I live by the "80/20 rule." Eighty percent of the payback you receive for your marketing efforts (time and money) usually comes from just 20 percent of the marketing channels you use. As you become more strategic, you can focus all your energy on just those channels that work best. Then you'll experience huge returns, and almost none of your time or money will be wasted.

It helps to know that Instagram, more than any other social media site, is a lifestyle medium. Polls and research tell us users who interact there love BTS photos and stories. It's why they're on the platform. In other words, start telling your BTS story on Instagram, and you'll gain a larger following. Otherwise, you aren't using it to its fullest potential.

Facebook promotes video content now through its algorithms. Take advantage of that while you can. Ads that contain your BTS video footage actually cost less than photo ads with a similar reach.



Image © Blume Photography





Image © Blume Photography

Focus first on an “about me” video that makes potential clients feel like they’ve met you, which can do the job of an in-person first meeting. But don’t let that video sit and rot on your About page. Link to it in your email signature. Make it the featured video on your Facebook page.

Maximize your efforts. Don’t be shy if you feel the video isn’t up to snuff. Remember, done is better than perfect, and potential clients know the difference between your pro work and promo work. Done is better than perfect for BTS. In fact, it’s incredibly powerful. ■



Phillip and Eileen Blume are award-winning photographers just crazy enough to believe art can change the world. Having transformed their small-town home studio into a top brand, they now work with clients worldwide. The Blumes specialize in wedding and fashion photography, and continue to focus on what matters most to them: charitable projects that include adoption advocacy and documentary filmmaking to benefit children living in extreme poverty. Phillip is a monthly contributor to *Shutter Magazine*, and together the Blumes speak at numerous top industry events, have appeared on CreativeLIVE and have shared their inspiring vision of more meaningful photography from the TEDx stage. They are owners of three photography brands, including a newborn studio, and are the proud founders of ComeUnity Workshops for photographers who seek balance. They live with their children in rural Georgia.

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Tamron SP 70-200mm F/2.8 Di VC USD G2 (model A025) | Focal Length: 200mm Exposure: F/2.8 1/250 sec | © Thomas Ketterer

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How to Make Sure You and Your Clients Are Speaking the Same Language

with Vanessa Joy

One of the hardest things for a photographer to learn is how to communicate with clients. Client communication isn't normally taught at tradeshows, in college or even in mentorships. What you should say at consultations and sales sessions, and even how to answer the phone, are often overlooked skills.

One of the best ways to remedy this is to ask a fellow photographer if you can eavesdrop on one of their consultations or sales sessions. I usually offer this to my interns, who more often than not respond with, "Oh yeah, I wouldn't have even thought of that!"

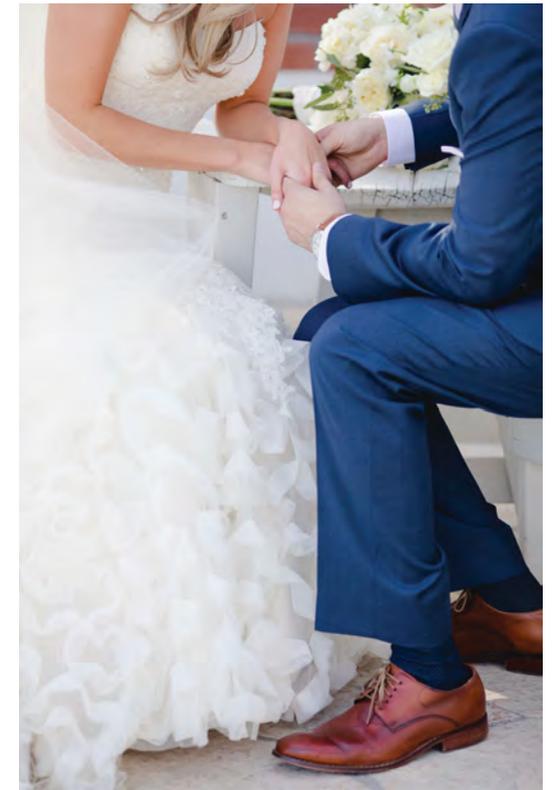
Effective communication between you and your clients cannot be taken lightly. This determines how pleasant your time with each client will be, not to mention a deciding factor for whether they will even work with you at all. If speaking to others isn't your forte, change that about yourself. I am actually a very shy person. I often worry about what others think of me, and would prefer to hide away in my home rather than have to be outgoing in social scenarios. Do you want to know my trick to overcoming shyness? I pretend I'm not shy.



Image © Vanessa Joy



Images © Vanessa Joy



One method I used for honing my people skills is by talking to strangers. I know, Mom would be horrified, but hear me out. One of the best ways I learned to speak to people was by traveling alone. I'm not talking about cross-country, though that helped me as well. It can be as simple as taking public transportation one day and striking up a conversation with a random stranger. I often take the train into New York City and find people to talk to on the way there.

Doing this boosted my confidence in speaking to people, and it also taught me how to talk to just about anyone. It's actually quite easy. First, I'd comment on an article of clothing they were wearing, or maybe a bag a woman was holding, just to break the ice. Then, I'd continue by asking them questions. It's all small talk, but that kind of small talk is all you get when talking with clients. You get just one first impression, and it's best to give it while not shyly stuttering. Just last month, I was on an airplane to Los Angeles. While I wanted to crawl into my hole and do my own thing, I decided to talk to the girl next to me. She turned out to be a food blogger with 235,000 followers on Instagram (@rachLMansfield), and I photographed her just last week. Score!

We'll take a look at the basic points of communication with your clients and go over best overall practices for communication throughout the relationship.



BASIC POINTS OF IN-PERSON CONTACT

Organize what you want to communicate, and then determine the most effective way of doing so. There are four main points of contact: the consultation, shoot, sales session and closing the relationship.

The Consultation

When I first meet with a client, I have two goals in mind. First, I obviously want to do my best to be appealing to them to earn their business. Second, I want to start setting expectations right then and there.

Setting the right expectations during this time is crucial. Talking through items like turnaround time, package contents and delivery schedule is the foundation for the rest of the relationship. Delineating realistic guidelines is how you lay the path to easily satisfying your clients and not driving yourself crazy later on.

During the Shoot

Obviously, most of this time is spent taking photos, but there is a great deal of communication here as well. I reassure my clients of the style and personality that they hired, and I never leave a session, engagement, wedding or otherwise, without giving them the next steps. Always be one step ahead of your clients so they're not left wondering what to do or, worse, constantly emailing you with questions you should've already answered.

Sales Sessions

This is similar to the initial consultation where I'm attempting to make a sale and at the same time educate my clients on products and process. By this point, I know my client fairly well, so I'm talking up the products so they fall in love with them. I clearly explain package contents, product sizes and options so there isn't any confusion about what they're getting.

It can be hard to explain albums. I sell albums by the page rather than the picture. It makes the most sense to count album pages like you count book pages, but it can be confusing for clients when they're looking at digital two-page spreads. I always reiterate this until it's clearly understood.

Closing the Relationship

When it's time to deliver your final product, it's not just a "Here ya go, goodbye." This is a good time to communicate next steps. Perhaps you'll introduce them to a referral or repeat client program. For wedding clients, I usually send them off with a "Dear John" letter and goodbye gift.



COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

Never assume your clients speak your photography language. Have you ever spoken to an IT person about a computer problem and it seems like they're speaking French to you? Photographers often make this same mistake by speaking to their clients in photography terms that most people either don't understand or misunderstand.

I'm not saying you need to talk down to your clients like an IT guy telling you to restart your computer (I hate that!). But you do need to make sure they comprehend the words coming out of your mouth.

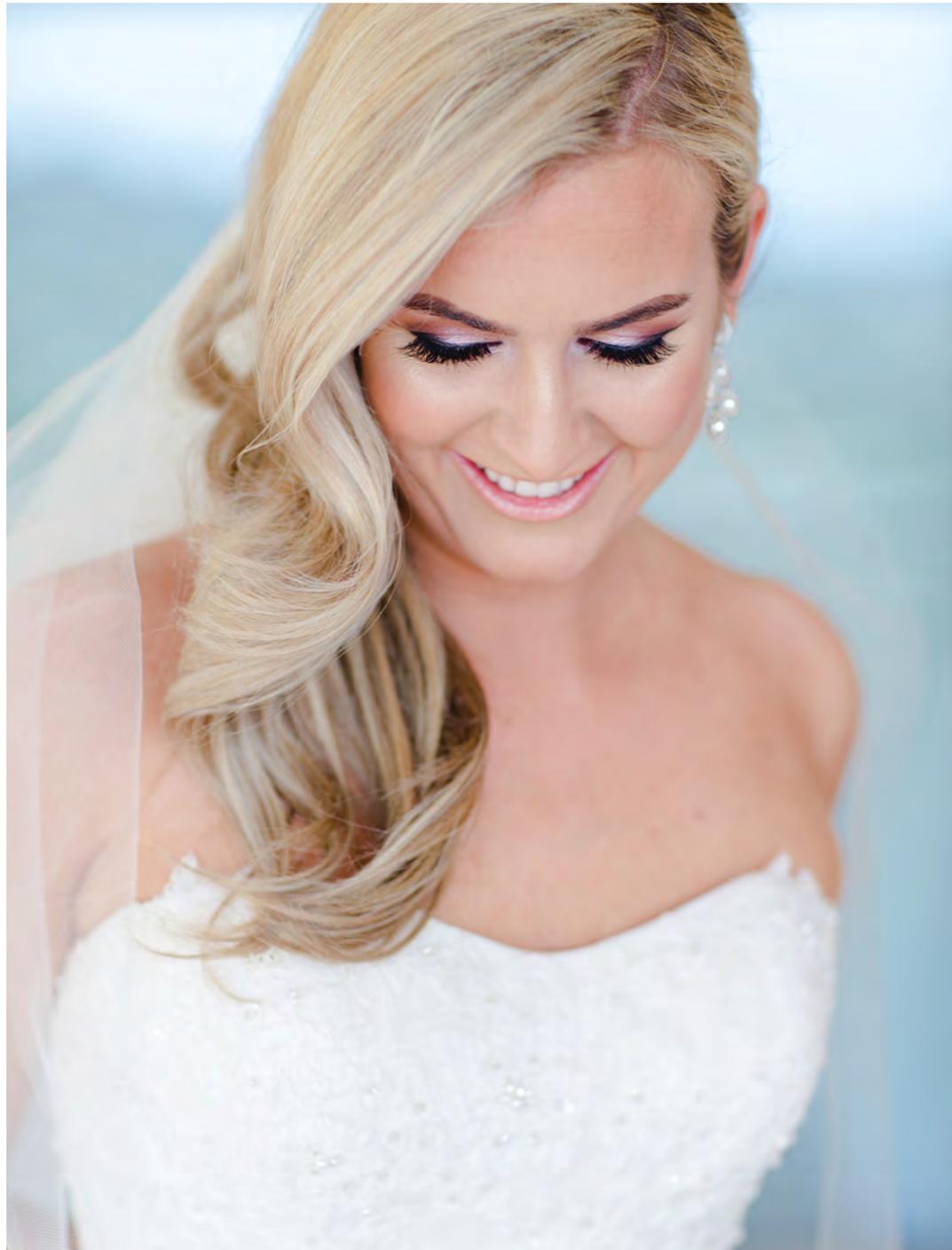


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Images © Vanessa Joy



Image © Vanessa Joy

Photojournalism is one of my favorite examples of this photog/client language barrier. I don't recall where this buzzword came from in the wonderful world of weddings, but somehow most brides think of it as the opposite of old-school wedding photography. You might be on one side or the other here. You can hit all the right keywords during a wedding consultation hoping they book you. Or you can educate the client, letting them know that some parts of the day are more candid, while others are more posed.

Check out the video to find out the three most commonly misunderstood photography terms. You'll want to set these straight to avoid setting unrealistic expectations for your clients. ■



Vanessa Joy has been a professional wedding photographer in New Jersey since 2002, and an influencer in the photographic community for years. Since starting VanessaJoy.com in 2008, she has taught photographers around the globe at almost every major platform in the industry (LearnPhotoVideo.com). Vanessa has been recognized for her talent and business sense at the renowned industry events CreativeLIVE, Clickin' Moms, WPPI and ShutterFest. Her peers love her informative, open-book style of teaching.

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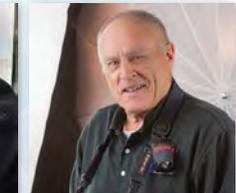
Scott Rovak

Scott has over 30 years of experience, specializing in sports photography. He is the St. Louis Blues & St. Louis Cardinals photographer, as well as a contract photographer for USA Today Sports Photos.



Stephen Weiss

Stephen is the owner of Creve Coeur Camera with over 35 years in the industry. He's also a track photographer for Gateway Motorsports specializing in NASCAR and NHRA races.



David Miller

Dave is a photographer from the Springfield, IL area with over 40 years in the business. He specializes in portrait, wedding and commercial photography.



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Power in all the right places Profoto B1X



Speed redefined By Profoto

There are those amongst us who push the envelope. They say, "good is the enemy of great." If there's a limit – they step beyond it. If there's a boundary – they cross it.

For the great photographers, challenges are there to be conquered. And for them, speed is more than the ability to freeze a moment of action or matching the fastest camera shutter. It's about setting creativity free.

Moving fast, delivering fast, capturing the seemingly impossible – fast. Taking light, and shaping something remarkable with it. Setting the bar higher – and then doing it all over again.

They redefine their craft every single day. And so do we. This is speed redefined.

Taking on-location shooting to new heights

[Read more >](#)





Taking on-location shooting to new heights With Tim Kemple

The shoot

Locations all have their own degree of difficulty. When your location is a sheer cliff above the sea in Mallorca, wind, glaring sun, wet, slippery rock and the chance that one false move means that someone falls into the water are among the givens. The ever-present possibility that a bad hand-off can mean a camera winds up sleeping with the fishes just adds to the fun. That's what action photographer Tim Kemple faced in Mallorca, the birthplace of deep-water soloing—rock climbing without safety ropes high above the sea.

The challenge

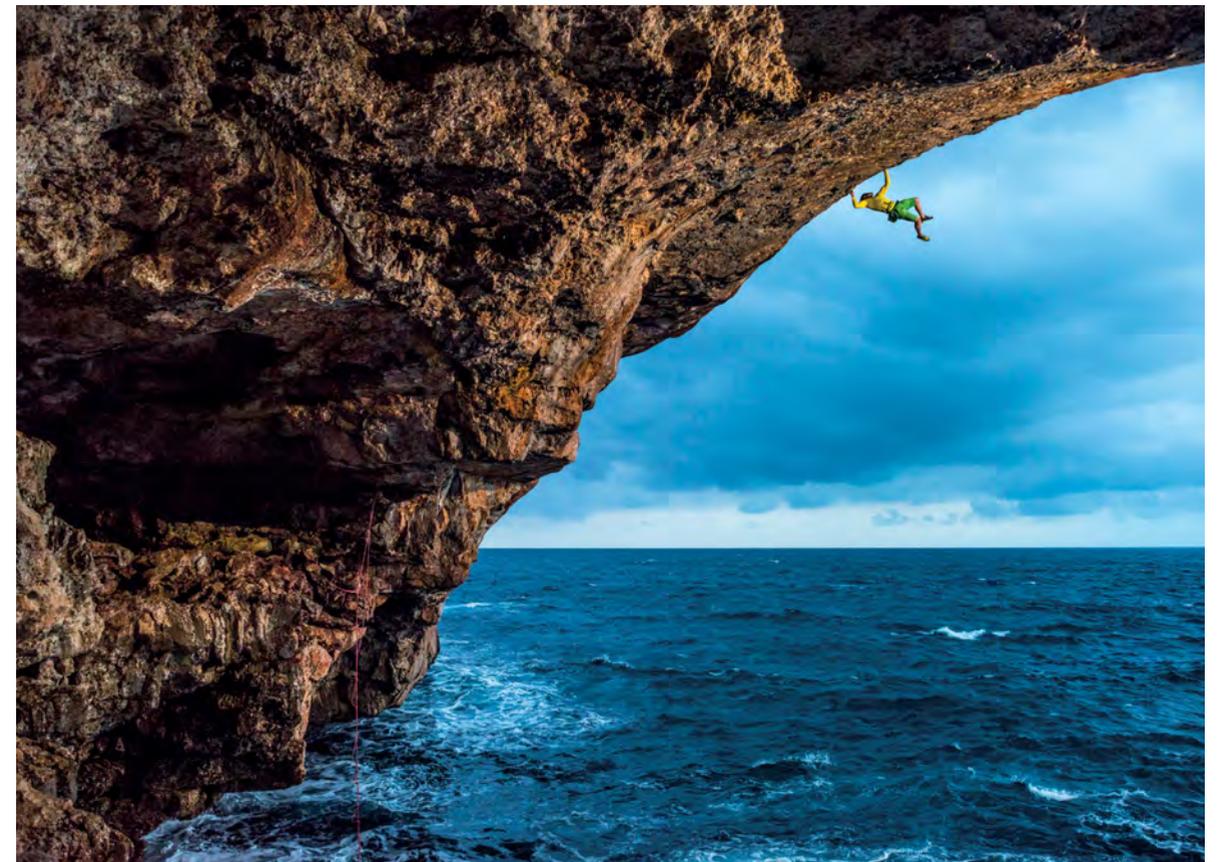
It's one thing to get trained rock climbers into position. But photographing them was a high-wire act for Tim. First he had to rappel into position to get his shots. Then he had to hang there with a flash and a light shaping tool strong enough to overpower the sun and mobile enough to have out there with him. For this shot, Tim's aim was to make professional climber Edu Marin stand out from the wall in the bright ambient light.

The solution

Tim used the B1X directly overhead as the key light and let the sun become the fill. To do this, he used the HSS function on the B1X and shot at 1/2500 of a second. The fast shutter speed allowed him to darken down the sunlight hitting the cliff. And by setting the B1X to the maximum power and using the OCF Zoom Reflector for an extra f-stop of light, he could spotlight Edu with the flash and overpower the sun.

The gear

- 1 × B1X Off-Camera Flash
- 1 × OCF Magnum Reflector
- 1 × Air Remote TTL-N



The best-selling battery-powered TTL flash

Profoto B1X

Quick to set up. Easy to use.

The B1X is a fully cordless light with simple, intuitive controls and a large easy-to-read LED display. So instead of tripping over cables or fiddling with sub menus or user manuals, you can focus on being creative.

Capture the moment with AirTTL

Finding the right exposure the first time can be a challenge when time is limited or the light is constantly changing. AirTTL automatically does it all for you, just point and shoot.

Shape light in broad daylight with HSS

No matter how bright the sun shines, Profoto High-Speed Sync (HSS) enables you to use your flash at shutter speeds up to 1/8,000s. Overpower the sun and shape your light even with large apertures in broad daylight.



Battery power you can rely on

B1X's rechargeable Lithium-ion battery provides up to 325 flashes at full power and tens of thousands at lowest power. And it recharges in no time.

Modeling light with power and quality

A powerful LED modeling light that enables you to preview your shot and evaluate how light and shadows fall on the subject. It's also useful as main or fill light in low light situations.

Explore your light shaping potential

Photography is all about controlling and shaping light. With the B1X it's easy to take your creativity to the next level with our dedicated range of compact, lightweight OCF Light Shaping Tools.

Photographer

© Tim Kemple
www.kemplemedia.com

Location

Mallorca, Spain

Discover the B1X and find dealer at profoto.com

Technical information



Features B1X

- Shoot with AirTTL or manual mode and connect wirelessly with other AirTTL flashes.
- Cordless design and wireless controls allow you to shoot without any restraints.
- 10 times as powerful as the average speedlight, with 500Ws adjustable in 1/10 f-stop increments over a 9 f-stop power range.
- Quickly exchangeable and rechargeable Li-Ion battery provides up to 325 full-power flashes and tens of thousands at lowest power.
- Fires up to 20 flashes per second, with flash durations of up to 1/19,000s and fast recycling times of 0.05-1.9s.
- Control ambient light with HSS and create crisp images without motion blur at shutter speeds up to 1/8,000s.
- Can be wirelessly controlled from up to a 300 m range with any optional Air Remote.

Specifications

Product numbers

901028 B1X 500 AirTTL To-Go Kit
1 × B1X 500 AirTTL
1 × Li-Ion Battery MkII for B1/B1X
1 × Battery Charger 2.8A incl. power cable
1 × Bag XS

901027 B1X 500 AirTTL Location Kit
2 × B1X 500 AirTTL
2 × Li-Ion Battery MkII for B1/B1X
1 × Battery Charger 4.5A incl. power cable
1 × Car Charger 1.8A
1 × Backpack M

100399 Li-Ion Battery MkII for B1/B1X

Size

14 × 31 × 21 cm (5.5 × 12.2 × 8.3 in)

Weight

3 kg (6.6 oz) incl. batteries

Information

Please note

Find the latest firmware upgrades on profoto.com/myprofoto

Short specifications

Max energy: 500Ws
Energy range: 9 f-stops (2.0-10)
HSS energy range: 9 f-stops (2.0-10)
Modeling light: 24W Tungsten balanced LED/ 2500 lumens output (equivalent to a 130W halogen lamp)
Battery capacity: Up to 325 full power flashes/ 120 minutes with max modelling light
Battery charging time:
Up to 2.5 hours with Battery charger 2.8A
Up to 1.5 hours with Battery charger 4.5A

Up to 3 hours with Car charger 1.8A
All other specifications: Same as Profoto B1

Recommended Air accessories

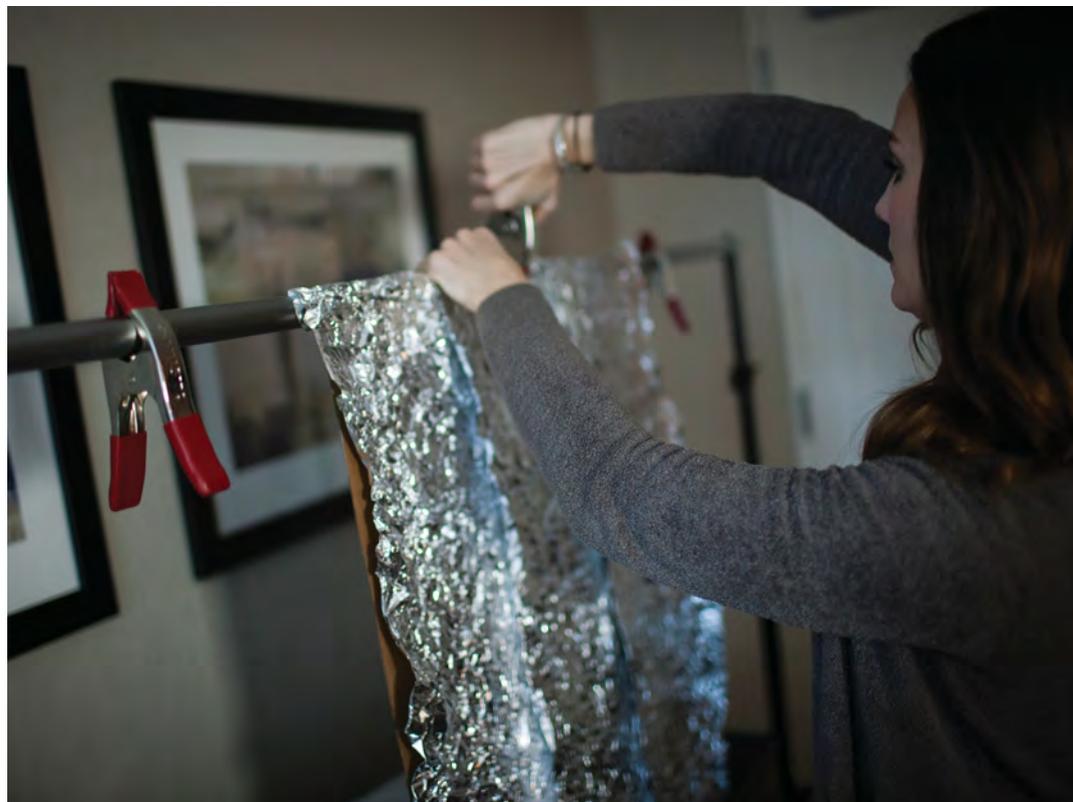
901039 Air Remote TTL-C for Canon
901040 Air Remote TTL-N for Nikon
901045 Air Remote TTL-S for Sony
901046 Air Remote TTL-O for Olympus
901031 Air Remote for most DSLRs and medium format cameras



5 TIPS FOR
GROOMING
the
PERFECT
ASSISTANT

with Alissa Zimmerman





All photographers have to start somewhere. Maybe you just picked up a camera for the first time and realized your passion for photography. Maybe you've been running a part-time studio out of your basement for the past three years and are bursting at the seams. Maybe you've been a professional full-time photographer with your own brick-and-mortar studio for 10 or more years and you're ready to take your business to the next level.

At some point in the journey of the creative professional, we need to bring in another body, whether part-time or full-time. It is the most responsible decision to be made for future growth. Hiring and grooming an assistant is one of the most daunting tasks for creative business owners—our businesses are our babies, our livelihood. How can we possibly bring in some stranger to manage the back of the house so we can focus on doing the things that bring in money?

There is an art to grooming and managing the perfect assistant. Let's be clear on what I mean by the perfect assistant. There is no such thing as perfect when it comes to an employee, but there sure as hell is a level of perfection for what you need to make your business more successful.

As the tables begin to turn for me, and I find myself in a position where I am looking to hire my first assistant, I have taken a great deal of time to reflect back on the top five most important elements of Sal's training process that molded me into the person I am today and the key role I now play within our organization because of it. These tips can be used in any profession, and if they are practiced diligently, they can create the harmony you're looking for.

#1: PATIENCE

There's nothing more challenging or more important than being patient when training your new assistant. My first year working under Sal was, in retrospect, a complete waste of his time and money. I was not doing anything proactively, nor was he assigning me any high-level tasks. As the employer, you have to be mentally prepared going into this relationship that it will take 10 months to a year of shadowing and learning the business before your assistant is of any actual value to you or your company.

In the beginning, it's important to set expectations. The first 90 days are meant for shadowing only—it's a three-month window where you're getting to know each other and figuring out if this person is the right fit for your company, as well as a time for your assistant to figure out if your company is the right fit for her. After that first 90 days, if you're both still on board, it's off to the races. The following nine months are all about learning your organization and setting up processes together that make your workflow and life easier.

Will there be bumps in the road? Absolutely. If you are looking for a scenario where there will be no hiccups, you should probably abandon the idea of managing an employee. As an employer, you need to set expectations for yourself as well in order to make this a successful relationship.

#2: CLEAR DIRECTION

As an employee, there is nothing more frustrating than trying to perform tasks with little to no direction. This vague type of management is only setting up your assistant for failure and creating an inevitable level of resentment between the two of you—ultimately leading to a complete failure in the role, whether your assistant ends up quitting or gets fired. All of this because of something that could have easily been prevented from the beginning.

Spend the extra five minutes to give clear direction in your tasks and what you're expecting in the outcome so you're not living in a constant state of unnecessary tension. This is especially critical in the beginning when training your assistant in how you expect things to be completed. If you decide to be half-assed in your task assignment details, you guarantee the same result from your assistant.

#3: ACCOUNTABILITY

This is my favorite subject. It took me so long to understand how I went from a seven-year work history of job-hopping and being miserable as an employee to this career I have built for myself where I can actually envision a lifelong future.

Creating an environment where your assistant is accountable to you and your business at the end of the day is pivotal in the success or failure of this person. It is something that has to be established from the very beginning, or you will lose your very short window to build this foundation and run the risk of your assistant not respecting you as a leader.

Your assistant can be your best friend if that's the relationship you want, but that person is still your employee and needs to understand that his job is to do what you tell him to do, and do it well. There has to be a certain level of fear in your assistant—a good assistant has to be afraid of disappointing you. If they don't have that fear, their lack of performance will come out as complete disrespect, which ensures things will go bad.



Images © Salvatore Cincotta Photography



Images © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

#4: REWARD BASED ON PERFORMANCE

I am a millennial, and understand my trophy generation all too well. Rewarding your assistant based on performance seems obvious, but it's one of the most difficult things to execute. As business owners, it's instinctual to want to give, give, give to make sure you're keeping employees happy. At a certain point, you'll realize the only thing you're doing by rewarding these people regardless of performance is building entitlement and creating a nightmare employee.

I've watched too many people come through our organization who were rewarded with expensive gifts when there was nothing exceptional done to deserve any of it. Obviously those people didn't last very long with the company. Who would stay once the work actually got challenging when they already got their Louis Vuitton?

Condition your assistant to understand that in order to receive any kind of reward, there has to be hard work that goes in first. It is your responsibility to train your assistant to be hungry in this dog-eat-dog world. There is nothing wrong with having ambition and drive to be the best; that should be something you're looking for in assistants as you're training them. The second you spot even a sliver of that competitiveness or hunger, embrace it.



#5: GET THEM VESTED IN YOUR BUSINESS

When I look back on the past six years I have worked with Sal, I can point to one thing that has made my perspective change from this being a 9-to-5 grind to the most fulfilling career and most rewarding experience of my life.

Getting your assistant vested in your business in that first year is essential to molding her perspective throughout her time with you and your company.

Once you're at the point in your business where you need to hire an assistant, you're more than likely at a point of enormous growth, bigger opportunities and an endless supply of new and exciting projects. This is when you want to make sure to include your assistant. As an employer, you want to make your assistant feel like she has an actual impact on your business, that her voice matters to you.

It may seem insignificant, but it is exactly what made me into the employee I am today. Obviously, Sal is a bit of an exception when it comes to the number of new projects happening at any given moment, but I can look at every single company that exists today under the Salvatore Cincotta brand and say, with pride, that I played a huge role in building them all from the ground up. That alone makes me treat each of these companies as if they were my own.

If you find an assistant who can get to this point, the light bulb of perspective will click when that person realizes she gets to be a part of all of the rewards without any of the real financial risks. ■



Alissa Zimmerman graduated with a degree in television production and has been a part of the Salvatore Cincotta team since 2011. Today she is behind the camera regularly as Sal's second shooter and as the executive producer and camera operator for Salvatore Cincotta Films, Behind the Shutter and Sal Cincotta's School of Photography. Alissa is the creative director for *Shutter Magazine* and serves as Sal's right hand, managing daily operations within the family of Salvatore Cincotta brands.

salcincotta.com



Work out
at the gym,
not the shoot.

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FUJIFILM X SERIES



Why Fujifilm X-T2?

New focusing system. New sensor. 4K video. And that's just the start of the brand-new X-T2.

My first impression was that it just feels right. The X-T1 always felt small in my hands. Admittedly, I have bear claws, but I still want to feel like I am holding something of substance. They have made significant improvements in the ergonomics of the X-T2, showing that Fujifilm continues to listen to the photography community.

And of course, as we've come to expect from Fujifilm, there are knobs and dials galore. The one thing I love about the Fujifilm system is the tactile feel, so you're not digging through the countless submenus on today's DSLRs.

With the sensor on the X-Pro2, you have the ability to produce 24mp images. Merge this workhorse with the fast XF50mmF2, and you are set to create some gorgeous images.

Other details:

- Exceptional autofocus system (AF) that increases the overall single AF points to 325, and the number of Zone focusing points to 91 (expanded from 49 in previous models). Approximately 40 percent of the imaging area (center area containing 49 focusing points) is covered with phase detection autofocus pixels to form a fast and precise phase detection autofocus area that can be used in a variety of scenes.
- The X-T2's electronic viewfinder, which is used to continuously track a moving subject, displays up to 100 frames per second, while maintaining a magnification ratio of 0.77x and a display time lag of 0.005 seconds.
- The magnesium alloy body makes it not only compact and lightweight, but solid and durable. It has weather-proofing at 63 points to achieve a high level of resistance to dust and moisture.
- The Vertical Power Booster Grip is dust-resistant and rugged, and can also operate at temperatures as low as 14°F. It fits two batteries, bringing the total number of batteries the X-T2 can use to three, including the one in-camera. The maximum number of frames that can be taken per charge is approximately 1,000 in normal mode.

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product
review

FUJIFILM X SERIES with *Salvatore Cincotta*



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3 WAYS TO FIND

CLIENTS

WHILE YOU

SLEEP

with Moshe Zusman

If you know me or have read any of my articles, you know I love taking pictures but that I also love the business side of photography. And as a businessman, you should know what I know: Time is money.

In order to practice my mantra of “Hold a camera, not a mouse,” I have to make sure I don’t spend too much time online looking for leads, booking clients and even marketing all my services to them. In the past, a lot of my bookings were done manually. A client would call, we’d discuss things and then I would invoice them. We’d have to remind them of their appointment before the shoot, make sure we collect the remaining balance, etc. Then, of course, wait for the deposit or payment, put their appointment in the calendar and, finally, execute the photo shoot.

Thankfully, life isn’t like that anymore. Now there are tons of ways for you to streamline your workflows and reduce the logistics you need to focus on so you can go back to holding your camera. Here are three things I use in my business to make money and get work done practically in my sleep.



Image © Moshe Zusman

THE 3 BASIC TOOLS

1. ONLINE BOOKING

Things have changed quite a bit in the past two years. I’ve discovered services for automating my leads and bookings. I use Square Appointments (SquareUp.com), a service that does it all for me. My favorite phrase is *one-stop shop*, and SquareUp is just that.

First, you’ll want to customize the booking site to reflect your business hours and services on SquareUp’s appointments site.

Once you’ve done all the initial customization, you’re all set. All this is on the admin side, behind the scenes. On the client’s side, it’s integrated into my website and the experience is smooth and simple. In fact, ever since I started using this service, my booking rate has gone up and client feedback about the overall booking experience is always positive.

After you’ve set up the backend, you’ll embed the Square Appointments code onto the booking portion of your website. It becomes a seamless booking experience for the clients, and a completely hands-off task for me.

The service sends clients reminders via email and/or text before the shoot. All I need to do is keep an eye on my Google Calendar (which I live by) and make sure I’m in the studio to meet the client. The time savings alone is a deal maker for me. I no longer have to email clients a reminder or remember to collect payments.



Image © Moshe Zusman



Image © Moshe Zusman

2. TARGETED ADS

Another way I save time is by not being online too many hours of the day to market myself. Instead I use Facebook, Google and Yelp ads. I have a monthly budget for those advertising tools, and each one is different—in its use and target market. So I diversify my marketing between the three. Here's how.

FACEBOOK ADS

I do a carousel of ads for specific demographics: people between the ages of 21 and 65 (because a 16-year-old high school student can't afford my services anyway), government sector, health, law and Realtors—the top clients in my area. The main reason is not to waste clicks on someone who's not a potential client and maximize the return from the ads. Using demographics means profiling your customers and placing the right ad in front of the right person.

GOOGLE ADS

Not everyone is on Facebook, believe it or not. So, for those “conservative” Google searchers, I want to be on the first page when they search for “headshot photographers” in the D.C., Maryland and Virginia areas. In addition to a great website with really good SEO, I want to make sure that my Google ads show on every search page. Google ads are perfect for that.



Images © Moshe Zusman



YELP

Yelp is a great way to advertise your services, especially in the headshot market. Unlike for wedding photography, people search for headshot photographers on Yelp because it is a quick service that's typically needed locally. I have never heard of a bride searching for a high-end wedding photographer on Yelp, but I do get a ton of inquiries for headshot services.

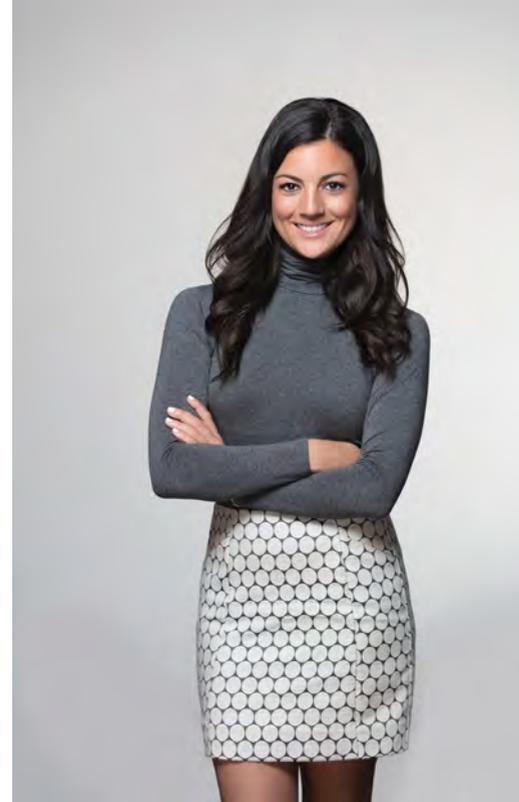
Yelp offers packages that include options like removing competitors from your page and the "request for quote" button. I use all of them. Yelp is great for metropolitan areas especially, because people in those areas love fast service.

All of the marketing outlets you use should be targeted locally to your geographical area. Don't market headshots in L.A. if you're a NYC photographer. No one hops on a plane to get a headshot across the country. Market yourself within people's reach—both financially and geographically.

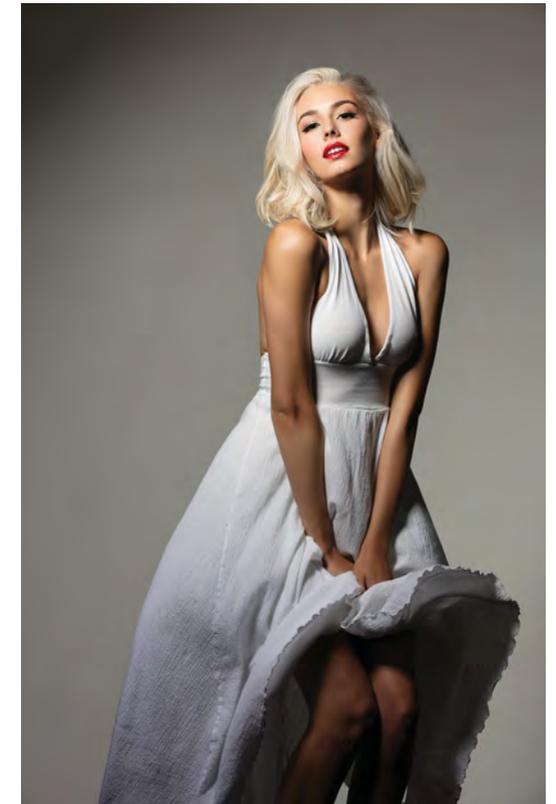
Another thing that's common to online booking and marketing is the idea that you "set and forget," or at least forget about it for a while. I tweak my booking site only if needed (hours change, I'm out of town, etc.) and my ads run for one to three months before I change them.



Image © Moshe Zusman



Images © Moshe Zusman





3. THE PERFECT ASSISTANT

To help you keep your hands on the camera and off the mouse, consider hiring a studio manager. If it's too early to do that, consider a virtual assistant. Even though the services above are "set and forget" and "one-stop shop," there's always going to be that one (or more) client who needs special attention, has questions or simply needs help with the booking process. For that, we have an email and a phone number where my studio manager is always there to take care of my clients while I'm away, out of town or holding that camera.

Check out the video to see my online booking experience in action. ■

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youtube.com/btsShutterMagazine



Moshe Zusman is recognized for his innovative, bold use of light and color with a distinctly modern edge. The Washington, D.C.-based Moshe has been shooting for more than a decade, and specializes in weddings, portraits, headshots and events. He has been featured at numerous workshops and conferences, including WPPI, PhotoPlus Expo, Imaging USA and ShutterFest, and also hosts his own workshops at his D.C. studio.

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tighter
up
the
loose
ends

Liquify Tool in Photoshop CC 2017

with **Dustin Lucas**

When you retouch clients, your changes can't be noticeable. When it's obvious that an image has been altered from reality, it's just tacky. The sensitivity of your client should come into play as well. The last thing you want to do is make them look 30 pounds lighter because you think they will be happier with their images. This is a bad move unless your client requests it.

If I haven't lost you with the title of this article and you think your clients should remain untouched, as they appeared through your lens, think again. Your lens distorts reality. Stop saying your photography is pure, and get up to speed with the industry. This article takes you through the do's and don'ts of Liquify and how to navigate through the Liquify panel in Photoshop CC.

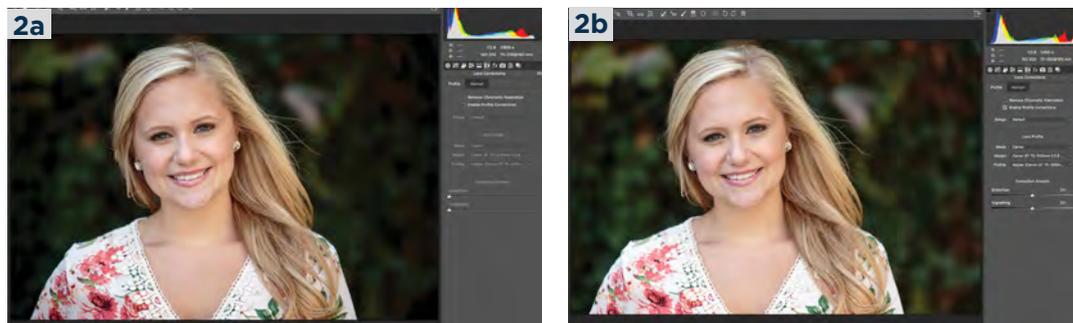
Reader beware: We are going to thin real clients and show what else this tool can do. Put your feelings aside and consider using these tips for your post-processing.

START WITH THE RIGHT WORKFLOW

You are probably wondering at what stage in the post-production you should start retouching. Make your life simple and edit from the Raw file that has been merely color-corrected for basic exposure, color and tone adjustments. Consider this workflow even when you have delivered creative edits to your client. Let's jump into Adobe Camera Raw (ACR) and review our settings. (1)

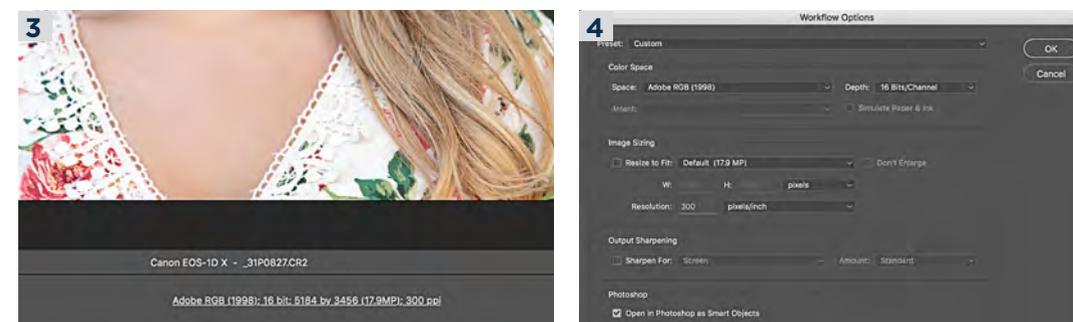


I typically leave Clarity and Vibrance set to zero when retouching images. Another important element is Lens Correction. We want to remove lens distortion altogether before we start slimming the face and body. Checking this box can sometimes be half the battle. For pincushion distortion, it's going to make the subject wider. Let's keep moving. (2ab)



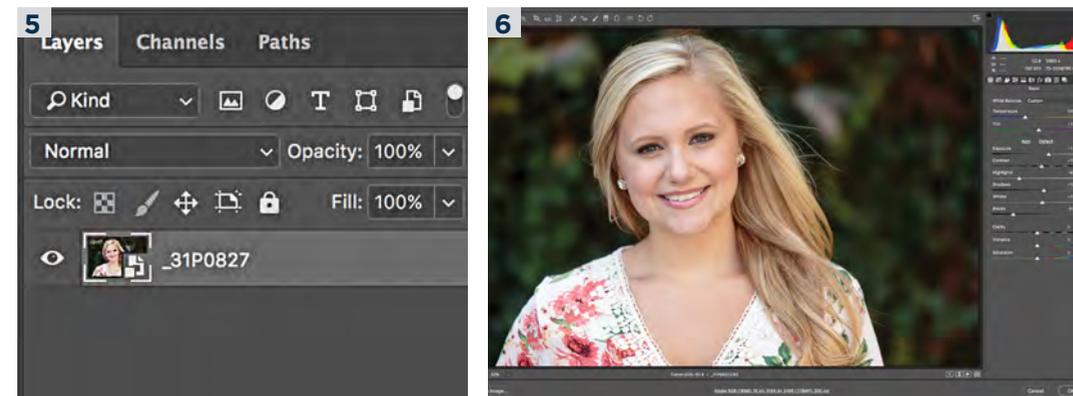
After making our basic color correction adjustments, we need to adjust some Workflow Options before opening our Raw files in Photoshop. Access these by clicking on the text at the very bottom of the ACR screen displaying color space, bit depth, resolution, camera sensor size and PPI. (3) You'll notice Adobe 1998 is default and is a suitable color space for a working image in Photoshop. I set resolution to 300 when I'm planning to print images. Don't worry about this—we are not adding or subtracting pixels here. I leave Output Sharpening unchecked because I will manually sharpen in Photoshop later.

As part of the most important feature of Photoshop, there is a checkbox for Open in Photoshop as Smart Objects. Here is a quick breakdown of what this unique file type does for us. Let's check this box and begin exploring. (4)



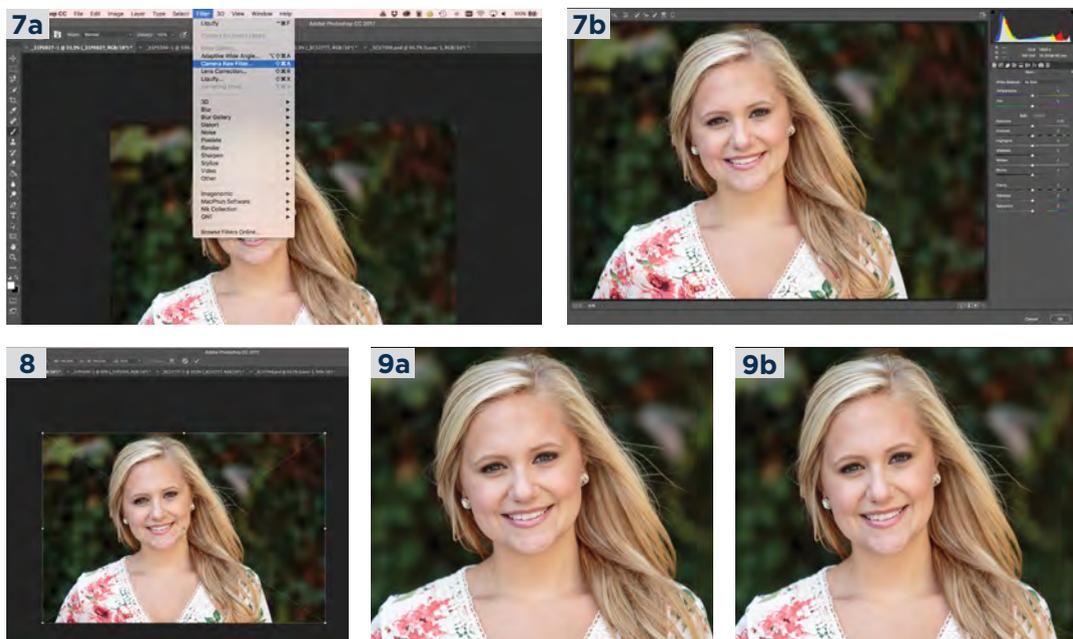
After your image opens, you'll notice the size of the document is larger than normal. This doesn't mean you just won free pixels from Photoshop. These Smart Object-type image files will get rather large; hopefully you have some decent processing power. Check out Adobe's website for recommended computer hardware.

Start by double-clicking the preview of your image on the base layer, and you are taken directly back into ACR with your settings still saved. (5) This is an awesome feature that allows for a nondestructive edit all the way back to your Raw settings. (6)



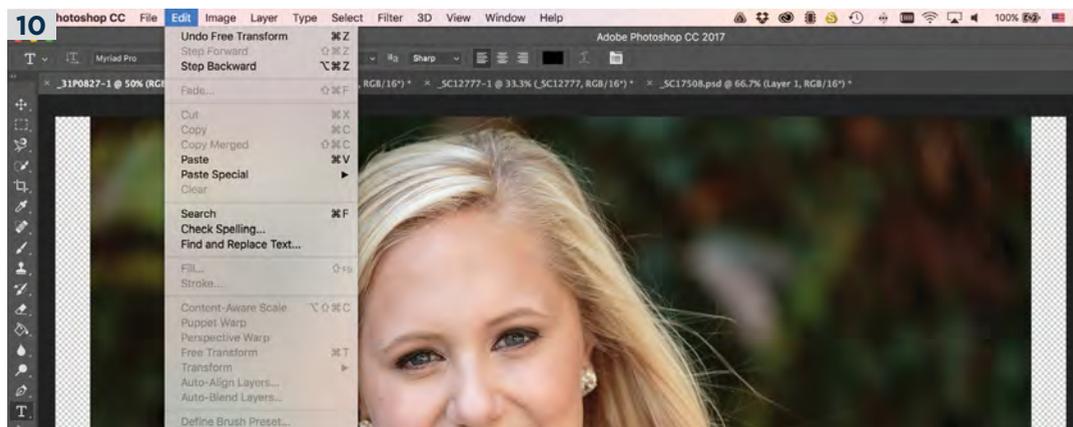
This is quite different from the Camera Raw filter in that you have to start from scratch since it's editing without the previous metadata applied. (7ab)

Remember, with Smart Objects, you are limited to certain pixel manipulation tools like Content Aware Scale. Why would this be a concern? You can use the very simple Transform tool for thinning, quickly accessed by holding Command and the "T" key. (8)



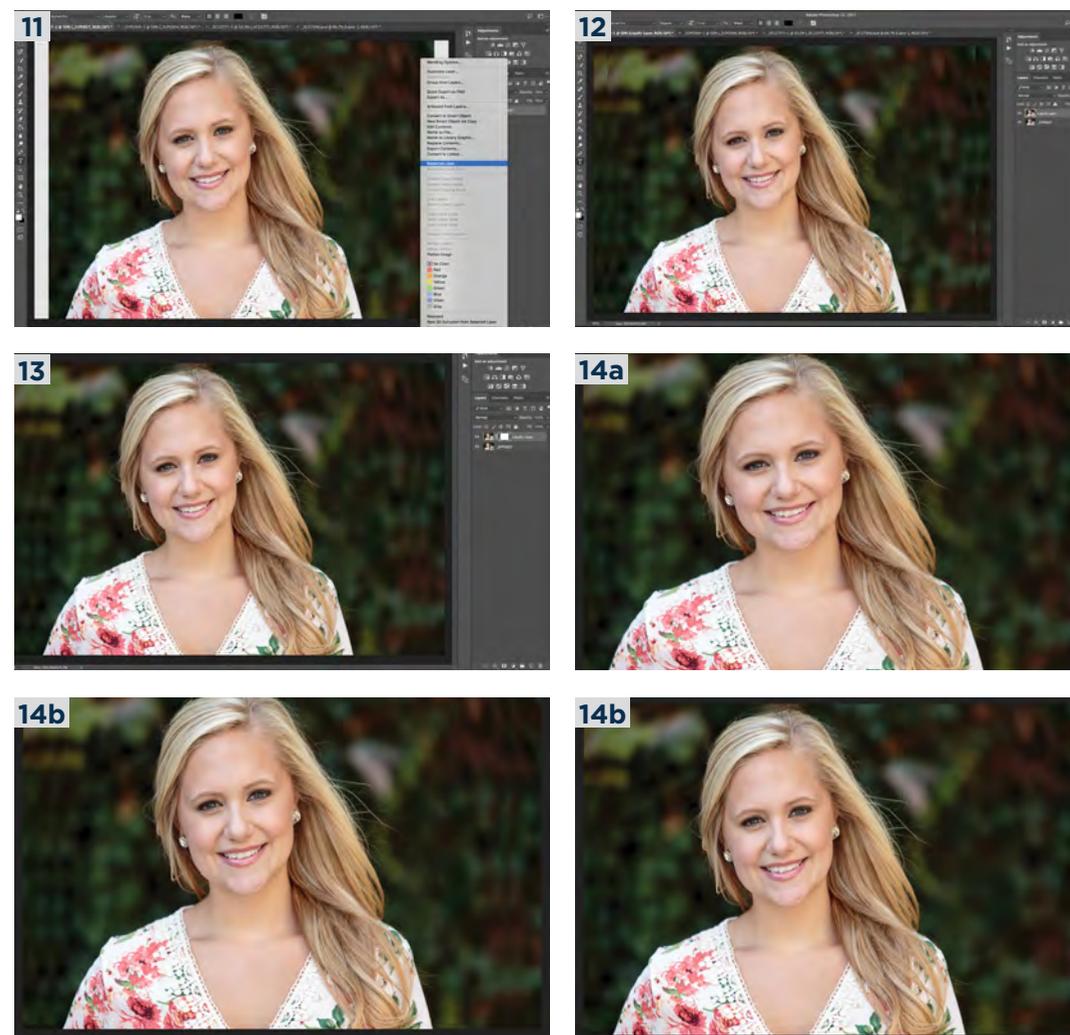
While holding the Option key, click on the centered square on the right side of your image and drag slowly toward the center of your image. We instantly can start slimming down your client. That's pretty easy. (9ab)

Now we need to extend our edge back to the original image dimensions. Enter the Content Aware Tool by going to the menu bar and clicking Edit. You'll notice this tool is grayed out. (10)



You must rasterize your layer first. This is why working on separate layers is so important. Always duplicate your base or background layer. (11) Click on the layer you want to duplicate and hold Option + Command while striking the "J" key. (12)

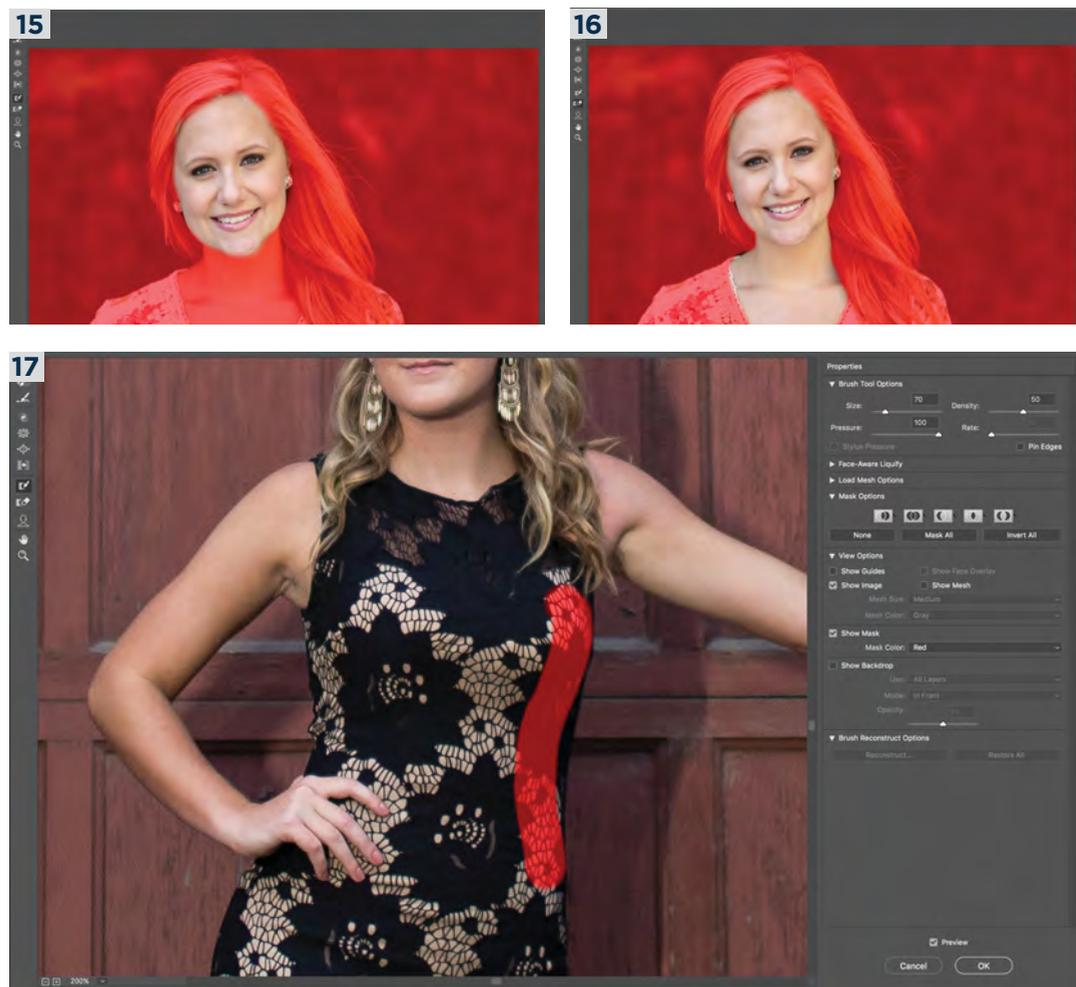
You could simply create a layer mask on your transformed Smart Object layer and paint in the base layer. I think this is a little sloppy unless you have a seamless backdrop. (13) Instead, right-click on the layer and choose Rasterize Layer. Now we can access the Content Aware Tool by holding Shift + Option + Command and striking the "C" key. While holding the Option key, you can click on the centered square on the right side of your image and drag slowly toward the edge of your image. Once you drag to the edge, hit Enter. (14abc) The last step is to right-click on the layer and click Convert to Smart Object. I'll explain why next.



MASKING MADE EASY: BRING OUT THE BRUSHES

With your newly converted Smart Object layer, hold Option + Command while striking the “X” key. Now we are ready to explore the Liquify tool. This panel has individual tools on the left, with settings and sliders on the right. Your mask tool has two options, Freeze and Thaw. The Freeze masking feature is accessed by striking the “F” key. This masks out areas you do not want to affect while using the Liquify tools. (15) Hold the Option key to access the Thaw mask feature. Thaw simply removes the mask altogether for refining your masked area. (16)

Now let’s put this tool into action by drawing the desired curve onto the subject’s body. In this pose, we can simply make the dress and her slightly more shapely. Be subtle with this. Don’t shrink the waist or simply enlarge the chest. I strike the “F” key and draw on my mask by starting at her chest and making the ideal curve down her torso to her hip. (17)



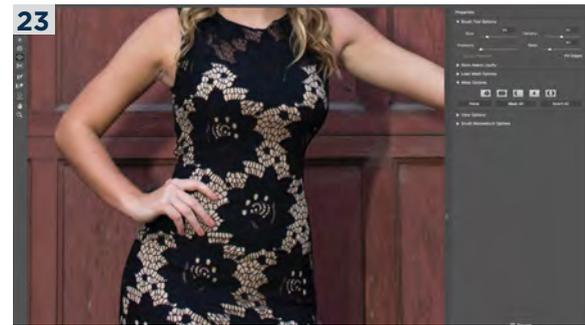
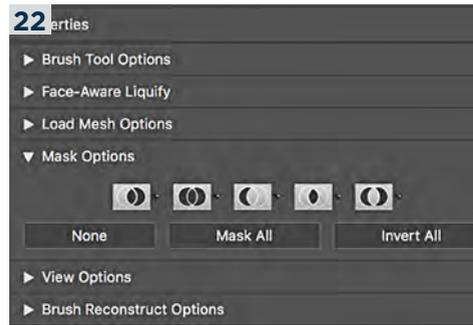
I tuck in her dress to give a slightly more flattering curve. Fill in this mask to the center of her torso so the Liquify tool does not distort other unmasked areas. (18) You can invert your mask to draw in a realistic mask. If you are planning to do this on both sides, you can essentially paint on a new dress. (19)

Once I am satisfied, I choose the Push Left Tool by striking the “O” key. This tool operates by clicking-and-dragging upward to push pixels to the left and clicking-and-dragging downward to push them to the right. I suggest enlarging your brush to more than double your widest area being pushed, and start at the bottom of your mask. Center the brush on the area and click-and-drag upward. (20) You should not follow the curve of the mask; instead, drag straight up, and that’s it. (21)



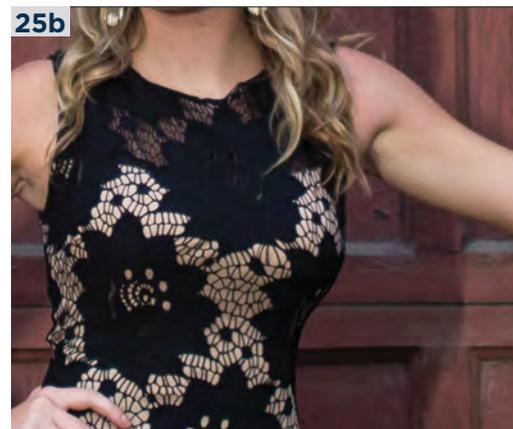
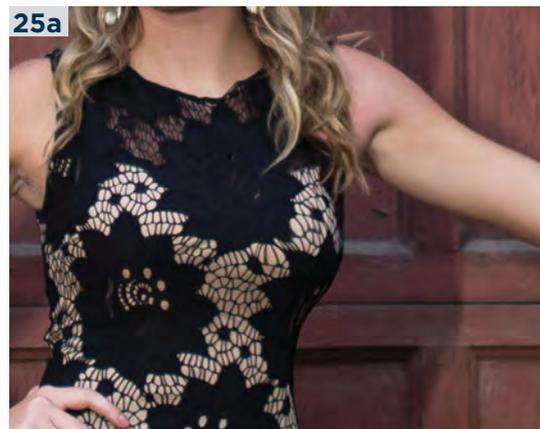
If you find yourself clicking and refining the Liquify tool, start over and make your brush bigger. This tool should get the job done in one run.

Now we need to turn off the mask. Do not waste time “thawing” it. Click None on the right side under the Mask Options panel. (22) We can now adjust the image more accurately with the Bloat Tool by striking “B.” This tool bloats, or causes a bulging effect, from the center of the brush. I can use it to fix some of the areas where the Push Left tool overworked the torso. (23)



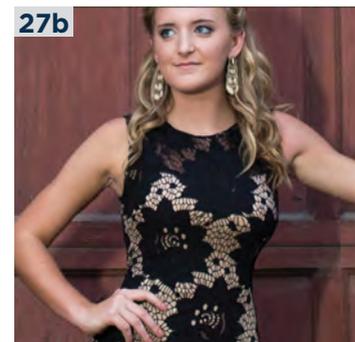
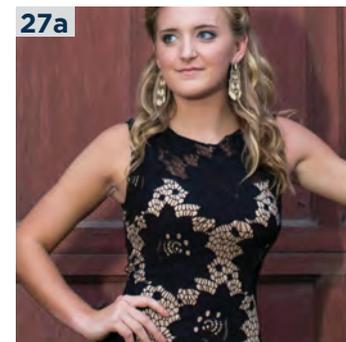
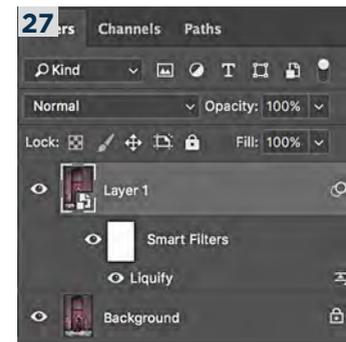
By holding the Option key, I can toggle the Pucker tool. This puckers, or shrinks, an area from the center. In the Brush Tools Options panel on the right side, I can lower the rate of this effect to allow more subtle adjustments. A bigger brush works best. (24ab)

Let's look at the Reconstruction and Smooth tools. These allow you to brush back in the original image's pixels. I love this feature because I can fix some of the overly edited areas that now look soft. (25ab)

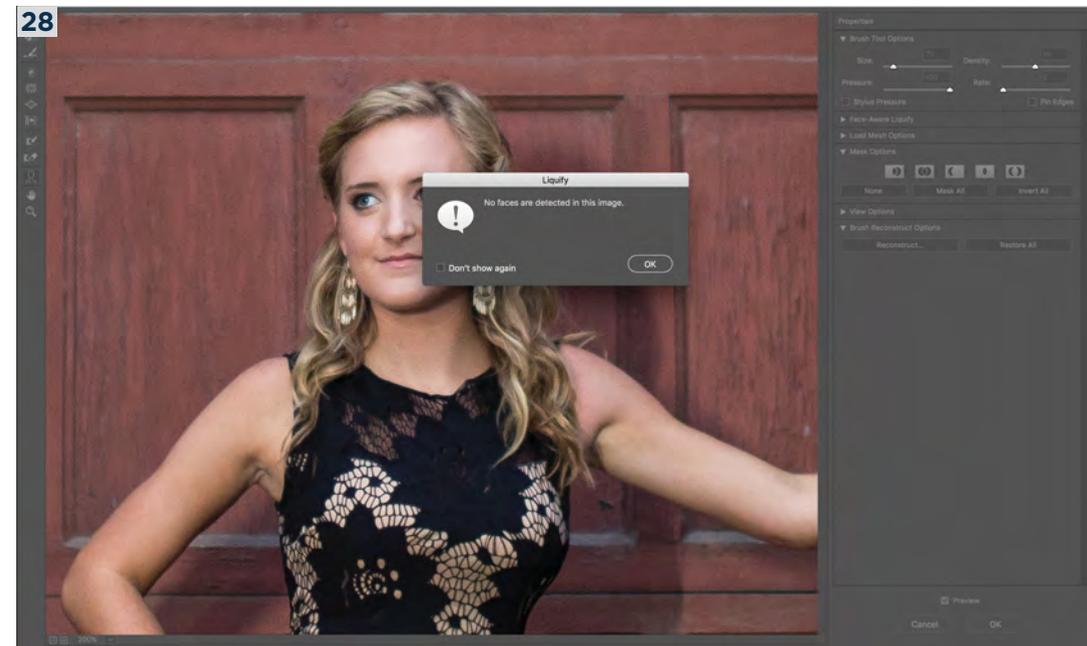


This tool is accessible by striking "R." This is important for working on a Smart Object layer. We can apply the Liquify tool by clicking OK and then come back to the original whenever we want. This allows more flexibility than using a duplicated background layer and having to mask areas in or out. It's a huge upgrade for this tool. (26)

The original Liquify tool is called Forward Warp. This is a free Transform-style tool that allows you to click and push pixels around. This works well for every slimming application. I applied some to the arms of the client and fixed any areas where we pushed in the waist. (27ab)



This tool works really well for reshaping the face to create a slightly slimmer jawline. For an image like this, we would have to do it by hand since the Face tool is not detecting the client's face. (28)

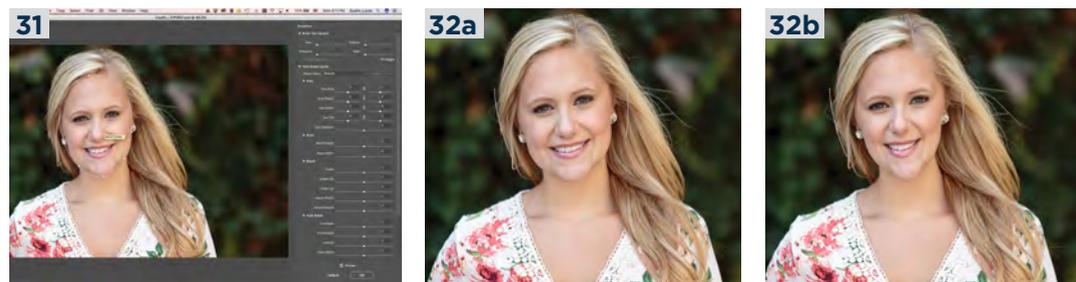


MOVE THOSE SLIDERS

Let's go back to the first image that we edited with the Transform tool and Content Aware Scale. We can twirl, or rotate, the entire face and specific areas with the Twirl tool. By default, this tool rotates clockwise, or counterclockwise by holding Option. I start with the entire face, then work the specific areas to align the face with the shoulders and make the facial positioning more appealing. (29) It is helpful to use a brush sized bigger than the area you want to affect so it looks cohesive. When I move eyes around, I cover the entire eye socket. (30)



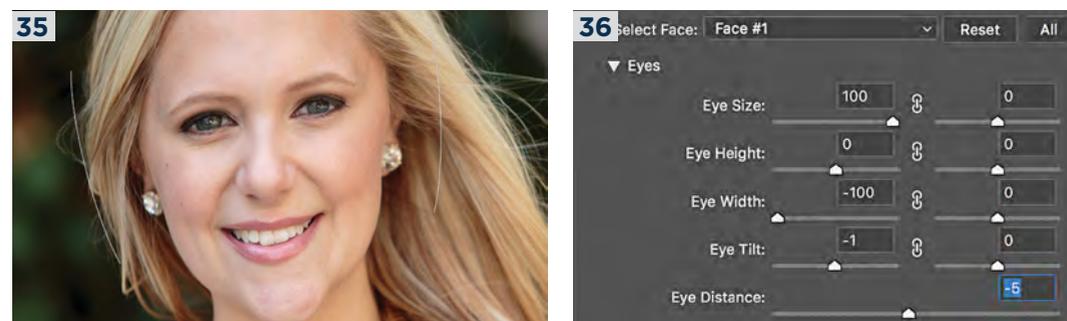
Strike the "A" key to access the Face tool. At last we have detected a face to begin processing. As we hover the cursor over each feature of the face, we can start clicking-and-dragging to transform the shape of the face, cheeks, eyes, nose and mouth. (31) This tool does an amazing job of slimming and elongating the face. Just be careful to not alter the essential look of your client's face. Fix the distortion of the angle and pose rather than reconstruct someone's face. (32ab)

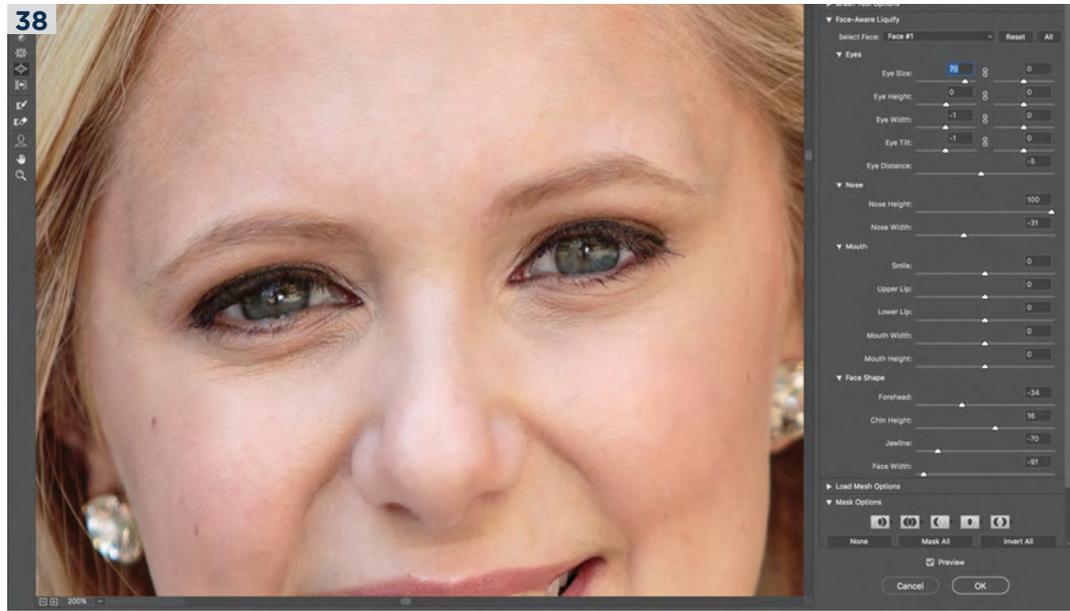


We can lengthen or shorten the forehead by clicking at the top and dragging upward and downward. You'll notice the slider panel following suit. (33) The same goes for the Chin Height found at the bottom of the highlighted face. The Jawline and Face Width can both be adjusted from the sides. You have to be careful when slimming the face because this does not adjust the neck. Adjustments need to be proportionate to other areas of the body. This is where the Forward Warp tool comes back into play: to lengthen the neck and adjust the width for the slimming of the face. Treat the Liquify tool like a scale, and maintain balance. (34ab)



You can open up the eyes if they're slightly squinted to bring them closer together. Rotate the eyes with the Twirl tool. I like to balance them as well. Eye Tilt can fine-tune this. Adjust it by clicking between the eye and the edge of the face and dragging upward or downward. (35) You can do this in the slider panel on the right side of the screen as well. (36) When you adjust the height of the squinted eye to match the other, compare how much larger the iris gets. (37)



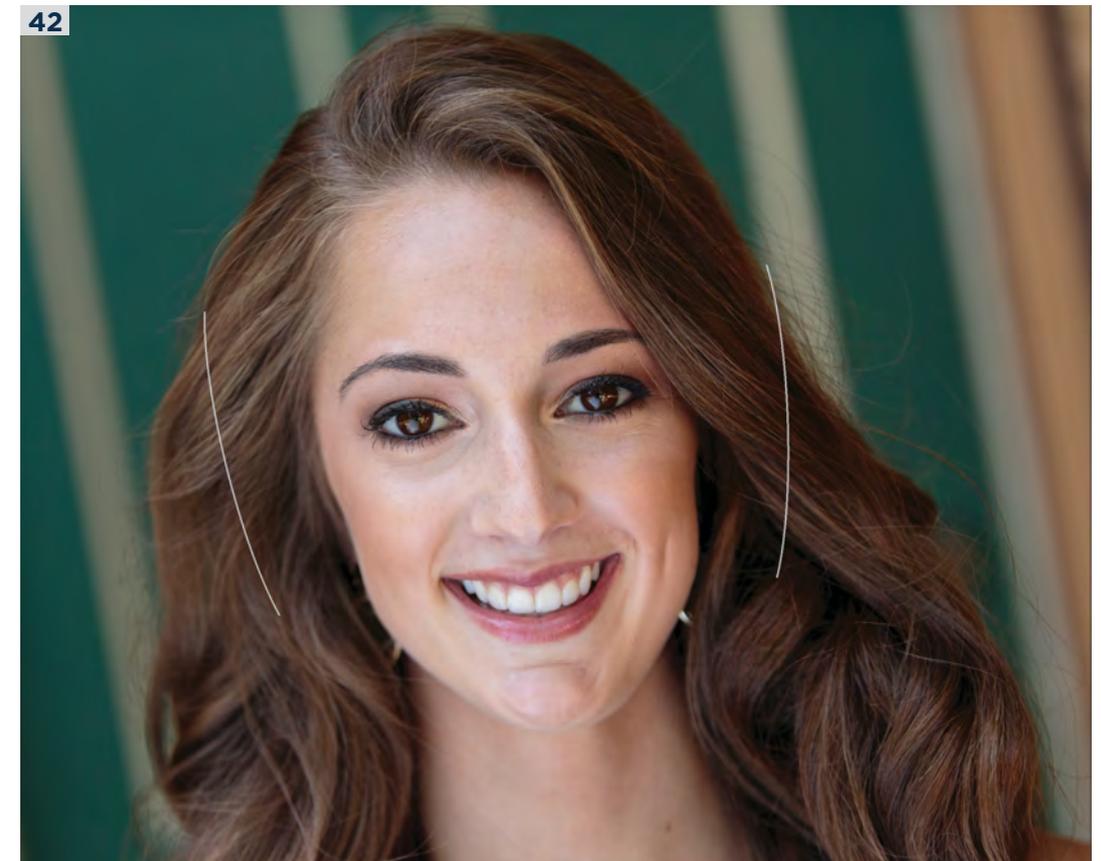
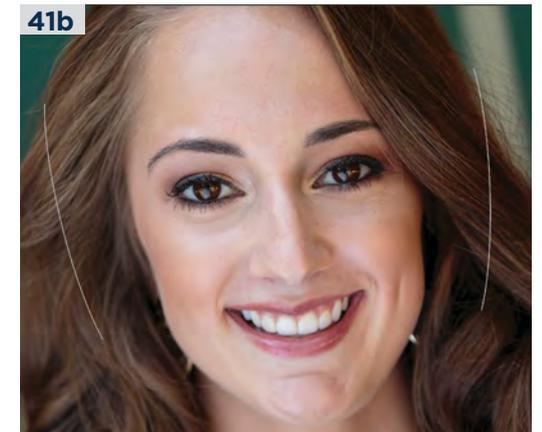


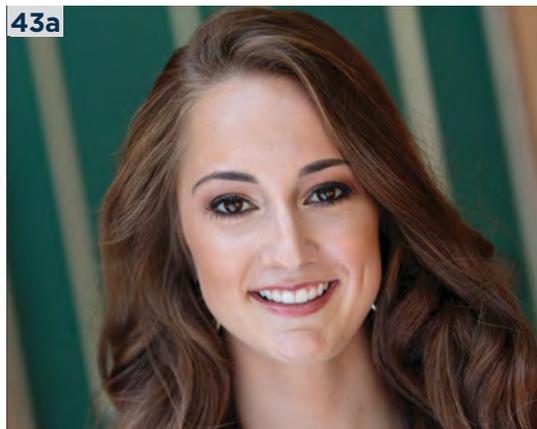
Use the Bloat tool to increase the iris of the other eye to better balance them. (38)

Perform a nose job for the client with two simple adjustments of width and height. Again, focus on proportion with the rest of the face. (39ab) This is a similar rule for the mouth except you can dramatize the smile. Let's exaggerate the smile on another image. (40ab)



This feature drags the corners of the mouth upward. Now we need to increase the size of the lips. (41ab) Make sure you are happy with the Face Width and Jawline, because we will need to adjust those first. (42)





Adjust the neckline with Forward Warp to make the slimming effect more proportional. Click OK, and you are done. (43ab)

THE RESULTS

You can spend a day trying to make a client appear more flattering than the pose and lens captured. Your clients do not need the level of Photoshopping typical of an editorial shoot. Keep it more natural. Remember: The more you warp the client, the more work you create. Liquify can be a dangerous tool. Keep it simple, and you can't go wrong. Start with the Transform trick, and work your way to the Forward Warp tool. ■



Dustin Lucas is a full-time photographer and educator focused on the wedding industry and the academic world. After achieving his master of fine arts degree, a career opportunity opened once he began working with Evolve Edits. Through teaching photography classes and writing about photography, Dustin continues to expand his influence on art and business throughout the industry.

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in Your Portrait Business

with **Norah Levine**



Pet owners consider their pets to be part of the family. They're certainly part of mine. Pets are often included in day-to-day activities, brought along on vacation and some pets even go to work with their pet parent. Each year, Americans spend a tremendous amount of money on pet food, bedding, toys, daycare, veterinarians, boarding, training and grooming. Pets are a big deal.

Including pets in your portrait sessions is a smart way to add variety, additional income and a hearty challenge. While I am not suggesting that every portrait photographer needs to become a pet photographer, including furry family members in your work is a fun way to expand your offerings.

As a portrait photographer, you should always look for reasons to give clients a "call to action" for scheduling a session. This article gives some call-to-action inspiration.

BEHAVIOR (YOURS AND THE PET'S)

Before I jump into some of the ways you can filter pets into your portrait business, a note about behavior.

No matter what you do, pay attention to the animal's behavior—how it is reacting to you, your gear, lights and the general situation. I won't dive deeply into animal behavior in this article, but use good judgment. It doesn't matter how incredible your idea is—stressing an animal or putting anyone in danger is not okay and won't get you a winning photograph.

When I photographed a dog with a family recently, I quickly learned that the dog was terrified of the lights (the owners had never used flash around the dog before, and weren't aware of this). While I was disappointed I couldn't continue to use my lighting setup, I had to adapt and move on with the shoot. Adapting is a large part of photographing pets.

PETS AND PEOPLE

People of all ages are often calmer in front of the camera when they have their pet with them. Focusing on their beloved animal allows them to forget about the camera and let their true self shine. Self-conscious individuals often relax and children often forget about overposing for the camera when Fido is near. While adding pets to any type of photo shoot can add a layer (or three) of complexity, it's well worth the effort.



Image © Norah Levine Photography

MATERNITY SESSIONS

I always hear from new and expecting parents that their pet is their first baby. Documenting this transition professionally and creatively while their first pet baby is still the only “baby” in the house can be valuable. During this time, there is a lot of emotion and excitement involved in the shift in family dynamics.

Your client may not initially contact you about including a pet in their maternity session, but you can make the suggestion (also add it to your portfolio), and they just might be thrilled about the idea.

Not all of the images in your session have to include fur babies, but you’ll be glad to have more options for your client both from a creative standpoint and in sales. Consider photographing the whole family together, looking at the camera and also engaging with one another and their pet.

Create images where the pet is engaging with the momma-to-be’s belly. Hide a treat in the expecting momma’s hand or ask her to connect with the dog or cat using special words or sounds to capture the pet gazing at their momma. (You can also ask your assistant to give you a hand with the attention-getting.) These sessions can be a lot of fun, and the couple will look back at these images with fondness.



Image © Norah Levine Photography



Image © Norah Levine Photography

NEWBORN SESSIONS

I love photographing lifestyle images of families as they welcome their new precious baby into their lives. Your clients are in the midst of a huge adjustment in their lives, one that many couples want to creatively document. Since pets in the family are adjusting to the new addition, including them in the session adds a layer of challenge, but if the situation is conducive to it, give it a go.

I have seen many photographs with both babies and dogs, and they’re quite sweet—but they make me nervous for safety reasons. I prefer to include pets and newborns in more of a lifestyle situation where I am not holding my breath hoping that the dog doesn’t accidentally knock over or harm the baby. I love dogs and cats, but they are animals with instincts and a level of unpredictability I’d rather not take chances with.

If you decide to closely pose a pet and a newborn, clearly communicate with the pet parents. Have a spotter on hand (preferably one of the parents) to keep a close eye on the pet’s behavior.

Another solution is to ask Mom or Dad to hold the baby and have the dog or cat positioned on the floor, couch or bed. The pet may be super interested in the baby or not at all. Where possible, encourage physical connection of the pet parents with the pet. Including pets in the frame on any level tells the story of this family and this chapter of their lives.

NEW PETS

New-pet photo sessions can apply to families with young children, couples or individuals adopting their first dog or cat. When a new pet arrives, a bundle of new memories is created that deserves to be captured by professional photography. You can document the day of adoption or arrival to the home, or have a session just a few weeks after the pet has had time to adjust. This is a very special time, another valuable call to action to keep in mind in your portrait photography business.

FIRST PETS

All pets leave their mark on our hearts, but first pets are a huge deal. This can be your client's first pet as an adult, or an elderly pet with whom they spent their childhood. These animals have been there for them during their formative years, and the photographs from these sessions are like gold to them. This is an excellent reason for a portrait session.

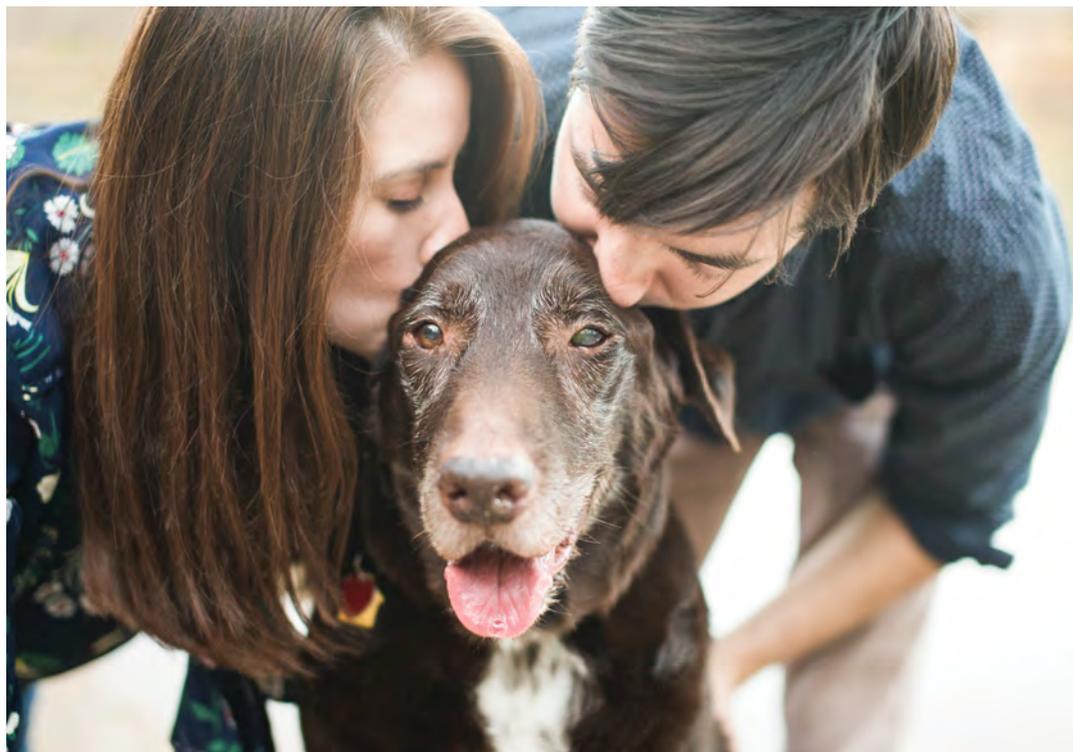


Image © Norah Levine Photography

CHILDREN SESSIONS

Pets are often like siblings to children. If you already specialize in photographing children, adding a pet to even part of your session can add a layer of sweetness and value for your client. Photograph the pet and child playing or cuddling together, or engaged in their favorite activity.

Depending on the age of the child, you can encourage interaction with their pet. Make it a game. Ask them to tell the dog a secret or offer the pet a treat if it sits. If you ask them to handle the pets in any way, encourage soft, gentle movements so as not to scare or annoy the animal.

STOCK

If you photograph stock imagery, consider using pets in your work. So many households own pets, and pet imagery resonates with them. You can create playful images of pets individually or pets being involved in everyday life. Pay attention to the commercial imagery you see that includes pets.



Image © Norah Levine Photography

ATTRACTING THE WORK

We all know by now that we need to show the kind of work we want to get hired to create. If you want to start including pets in your portrait business, start generating imagery that demonstrates your ability to do so. You may try it out and decide it isn't your thing, but if you are an animal lover and are up for a challenge, consider these and other ways to expand your portrait client options.

Adding Fifi to the mix may require an extra hand and will likely lead to some new skills. Practice until you've learned how to conquer the challenges of working with lighting, composition, directing, camera settings—and a dash of fur. ■



Norah Levine has been a professional portrait photographer for nearly 15 years. She is the author of *Pet Photography: The Secrets to Creating Authentic Pet Portraits*, and has instructed at Santa Fe Photographic Workshop in New Mexico and online for CreativeLive and Craftsy. Norah lives in Austin, Texas, with her husband and their five rescued pets.
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LIGHTING THE
ROCK & ROLL
FAMILY PORTRAIT

with Michael Corsetino



The guitarist for a band I shoot promo work for just welcomed a brand-new baby boy into the world with his wife. That offers the perfect opportunity for a family portrait session. Not just any old cookie-cutter family portrait—I want my portraits, family or otherwise, to reflect the individuality of the subjects.

Every person and every family is unique. Could I have gone the tried and true family-on-the-beach-in-khakis-or-in-the-park-on-green-grass route? Certainly. But then it would look like a million other family portraits. It wouldn't look like them. These guys are rock and roll, so the portrait needed to say that. What I'm getting at here is something I like to call portrait design. Rather than getting stuck following the pack, strike out on your own and produce portraits that tell your subject's unique story. Think about them more like environmental portraits than family portraits. With environmental portraits, you're doing your best to incorporate elements that help tell that story, whether it's the location, the props or the wardrobe.

My original plan was to put Eric's badass Day-Glo orange muscle car and the family in the middle of the road, and angle the car so that it crossed the double yellow line on the road. I'd stagger the family in a heroic pose, with Eric out front and Dani (his wife) and Asher behind him, and cross-light them with a broad keylight from one side, using the sun as a warm-toned kicker light from the other.

When my assistant and I arrived at the location, it quickly became apparent that none of that was going to work as planned. The yellow stripe on the road was only about 10 feet long, so it wouldn't create the front-to-back infinity effect I wanted. The road was more highly trafficked at that time of day than expected, which made putting the car and lots of gear in the middle of the road unrealistic. The sun was low in the sky but being blocked by trees, so my accent light was gone, and it felt like it must have been the windiest day on record, which meant the light modifiers I brought were going to be a complete bear to work with.

Luckily, I had four sandbags with me, not nearly enough, and one assistant, again not nearly enough with all that wind. With the family arriving shortly and the clock ticking for setup, I needed a new plan and I needed it quickly. That's often the case when unexpected environmental and location issues crop up. Having to change it up on the fly happens all the time. It's something you need to be prepared for. You have to be able to roll with the punches, think on your feet and produce even when you're thrown a series of curveballs. That's what being a professional is all about, especially on location.

There was an empty parking lot for a park right next to the road. It had a rustic enough look with its dirt floor, canopy of trees and a wooden fence that I could use to create leading lines in the composition. This proved to be a good compromise, one that provided a location that was consistent with my original concept for the portrait and that allowed us to work more relaxed and uninterrupted with plenty of room for gear.

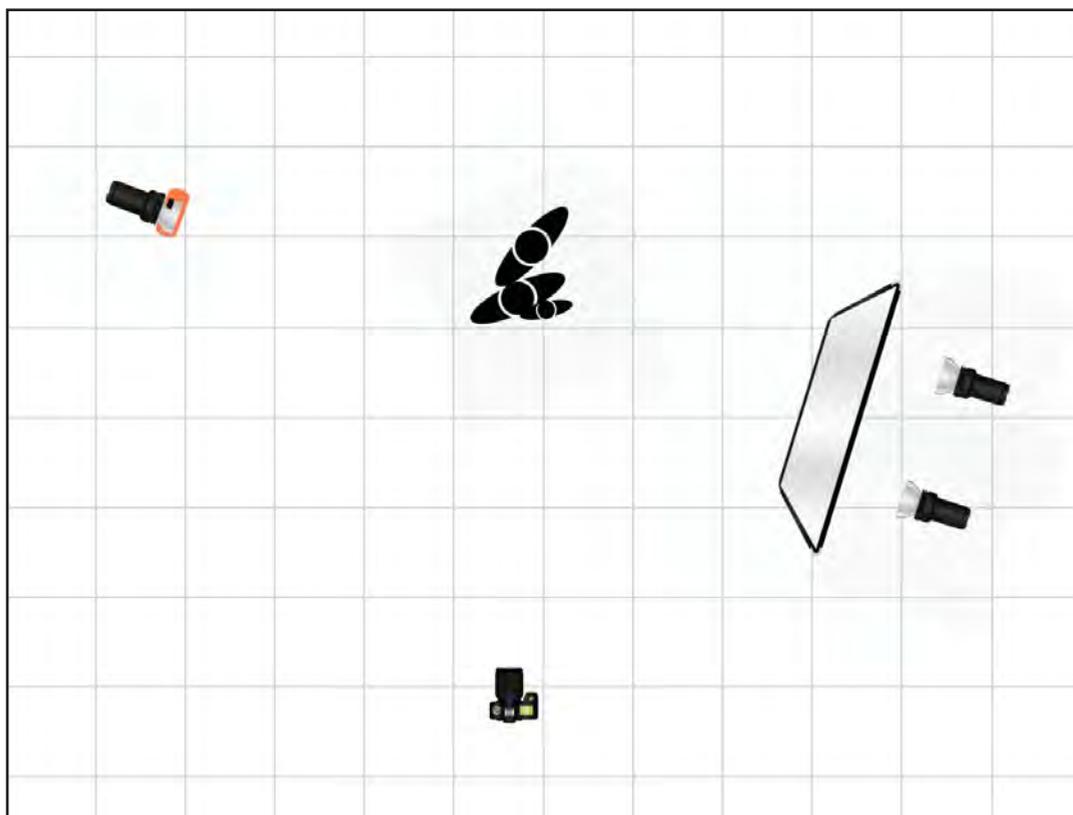


Image © Michael Corsentino

A 1,200-watt second battery-operated pack with the power split between two heads provided all the power I needed to evenly illuminate the scene.

Since I would be lighting a staggered grouping, I wanted to light them all fairly evenly front to back and also highlight Eric's badass car, the main prop and rock and roll element for the shot. When you're working with groups and you want even light, the inverse square law is your best friend. This scary-sounding term just means you'll want a fair bit of distance between your subjects and your light source to achieve even front-to-back illumination. The reason for this is that light energy or fall-off happens much more rapidly as it leaves a strobe than it does the farther away you get from it. In other words, from 1 to 3 feet in front of your strobe, your aperture reading could easily drop two full stops. From 8 to 10 feet away from your strobe, the energy or amount of light remains much more consistent as it travels, giving you a wider margin of space for even lighting. So what you're doing by working with distance is allowing a group of subjects to evenly share the same amount of light, more or less, from front to back.

To achieve this, I lit the group with an 8x8-foot scrim with two to three strobes fired through it from behind. I did this to create a large wall of light that provided enough coverage to illuminate the group with one source. I knew the light wouldn't have a ton of contrast since I was using a diffused white source, but I also knew I could always add additional contrast in post. By increasing my shutter speed to underexpose or "knock down" the daylight and my increasing flash power, I'd be able to create the dramatic look I wanted.



To evenly illuminate the staggered grouping, we placed a large, broad keylight 10 feet from the subjects. We put a 500-watt second strobe with a half cut of color temperature orange (CTO) gel opposite the keylight as a kicker light to replicate the warmth of the afternoon sun.



Image © Michael Corsentino

Using a stand-in is a great way to get dialed in before your subjects arrive. Here, we're testing the lights on a stand-in car. The third strobe pictured was moved and used as an accent light for the final setup.

Keep in mind when you're working in ambient and strobe situations that shutter speed controls the amount of ambient light contributed to an exposure, and that aperture (as well as strobe power) controls the amount of flash contributed to an exposure. The light from the setting sun was being blocked by trees and clouds, and was therefore unavailable for use as an accent light. To overcome this, I used an additional strobe in place of the sun. I gelled it with CTO to help replicate the warm look of the sun's light. I placed this accent light on the opposite side of the keylight.



Image © Michael Corsentino

Here you can see the accent light, which we placed opposite the keylight. This is a classic cross-light pattern that helps create a more dimensional, sculpted lighting effect (see the left side of Eric's face in the final image). I placed a half cut of CTO gel in front of the strobe to replicate the warm tone of the afternoon sun, which was hidden by clouds and tree cover.

I always bring along additional modifiers so that I have options and different looks at my disposal. I had a 20x50 strip box and a large deep silver interior umbrella and a 74-inch octabank. The wind rendered all of them useless. My assistant was having enough trouble managing the 8x8 scrim in the wind, even with four sandbags. That meant using only hard 7-inch reflectors on the strobes instead of the many modifiers I would have preferred. The wind forced us to improvise.

At the end of the day, I was able to create a compelling portrait that Eric and Dani loved. By shooting tethered, they were able to review images throughout the shoot. The key to working with babies is being ready to go when your subjects arrive. While getting as dialed in as possible with your lights, exposure and planned composition is a great practice and my standard operating procedure, when you're photographing a baby, it's essential. You have a very limited window of opportunity; once they get cranky and melt down, it's over.



Image © Michael Corsentino

A key factor in creating this lighting effect is how far the strobes are from the scrim. You need to assure enough distance for even coverage of the scrim with two heads. Distance also helps avoid potential hot spots from the strobes.



Image © Michael Corsentino

By placing the keylight 10 feet from my group of staggered subjects, I was able to create even light front to back across them. This technique is based on a principle known as the inverse square law. The farther your light is from your subjects, the more even the light is over a distance.

Capturing one image live where everyone has a perfect expression and their eyes are open can be a challenge, especially with a toddler in the mix. This is one of those fix-it-in-post opportunities. Developing solid compositing skills allows you to mix and match expressions, finding the best ones and combing them into one perfect image. ■

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Michael Corsentino is an Orlando, Florida-based editorial fashion and portrait photographer. In addition to his busy shooting schedule, Michael is a passionate educator, teaching workshops domestically and internationally. He is an author of two books, writes a monthly lighting column for *Shutter Magazine* and is a regular contributor to *Photoshop User* magazine and *JointheBreed.com*.

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with Jeff Rojas

In July 2012, I was handed a pink slip. It was the company's gift for exceeding my sales goals that year. It wasn't their fault. I was a regional sales manager for a company that relied on government funding; when their primary source of funding vanished, so did my job. That was the day I decided to become a full-time photographer.



Image © Jeff Rojas



Image © Jeff Rojas

Before I became a photographer, I had worked in various industries. When I first moved to New York City, I worked as an account manager for a data recovery company, where I was laid off 87 days into my 90-day period. I worked as an executive assistant at a bank when the housing market collapsed. I contracted as an executive assistant at a private equity company that canceled the contract after two years without explanation. All of this happened within a couple of years. Needless to say, it got old quickly.

I meet plenty of photographers who were born with a camera in their hands. I wasn't one of those people. I didn't pick up my first camera until the age of 22. Even then, I didn't see how anyone could make a living as an artist. The two most creative people in my childhood had full-time jobs to support their creativity. My mom, who's an amazing home decorator, is a human resources manager. My uncle, her brother, is a union electrician who can draw hyper-realistic images.

They're the children of immigrant parents. They were taught to follow in the footsteps of their parents: find a 9-to-5 job, collect a paycheck, go home. Rinse and repeat. It's been that way for generations. That mindset is about playing it safe. It didn't work for me, so I decided to try something new.

I'm happy to say that 2017 marks five years since I've received a W-2. While there are many other photographers who can say they've been shooting for decades, I can say I was able to build a business when everyone was doing it for free. On top of that, I didn't have the years of referrals, portfolio and experience to do so. Now, don't get me wrong, I'm not discounting tenure.

I admire those photographers who've paved the way, but for every person who had something positive to say, there were two dozen others who said the same old phrase: Things aren't what they used to be.

That's not my problem. I say that with the utmost respect. As with any business, the photography market changes. If you're on the winning side of it changing, you're happy. If not, you're pissed. If you weren't ready for change and failed, it's not the industry's fault—it's yours.

Let's say 20 years from now, every car manufacturer is making electric cars. Do you blame the automotive industry for the one mechanic who didn't adapt to the market and had to close shop? It's not the industry's fault; he didn't do his homework. The market doesn't wait for you. You need to chase the market. I want to provide both aspiring photographers and struggling professionals with the real-world lessons I've learned the past five years.



Image © Jeff Rojas

◆ DON'T EXPECT ANYONE TO SUPPORT YOU. JUST DO IT.

As an educator in the photography community, I receive an email at least once a week with the same story: "My family doesn't support my photography. What should I do?" Simple: Prove them wrong and stop looking for validation.

Friends and family want you to be successful. They don't want to see you fail at your dreams, so they urge you to take the safe route. There is no safe route anymore. The market has changed. We hear about people getting laid off from their 20-plus-year job every single day. Don't theorize how you'll be successful. Prove to them that you can make a living while you're doing it.

◆ PRODUCTIVITY IS THE ABILITY TO PRODUCE.

If you're not producing something, you're not productive. As a businessperson, if you're not producing, you're failing by the second. Spending two hours debating about gear on Facebook isn't making you any money unless you're selling your gear. The same goes for watching cat videos, memes, cooking videos. Stop wasting time.

There are 168 hours in a week. If you're spending 20 hours of that on social media and it hasn't made you any money, your priorities are off. Time is money. The more time you're spending on unproductive activities, the more opportunities you're missing. It's the very definition of opportunity cost. Figure out how you're spending your time, and restructure accordingly.

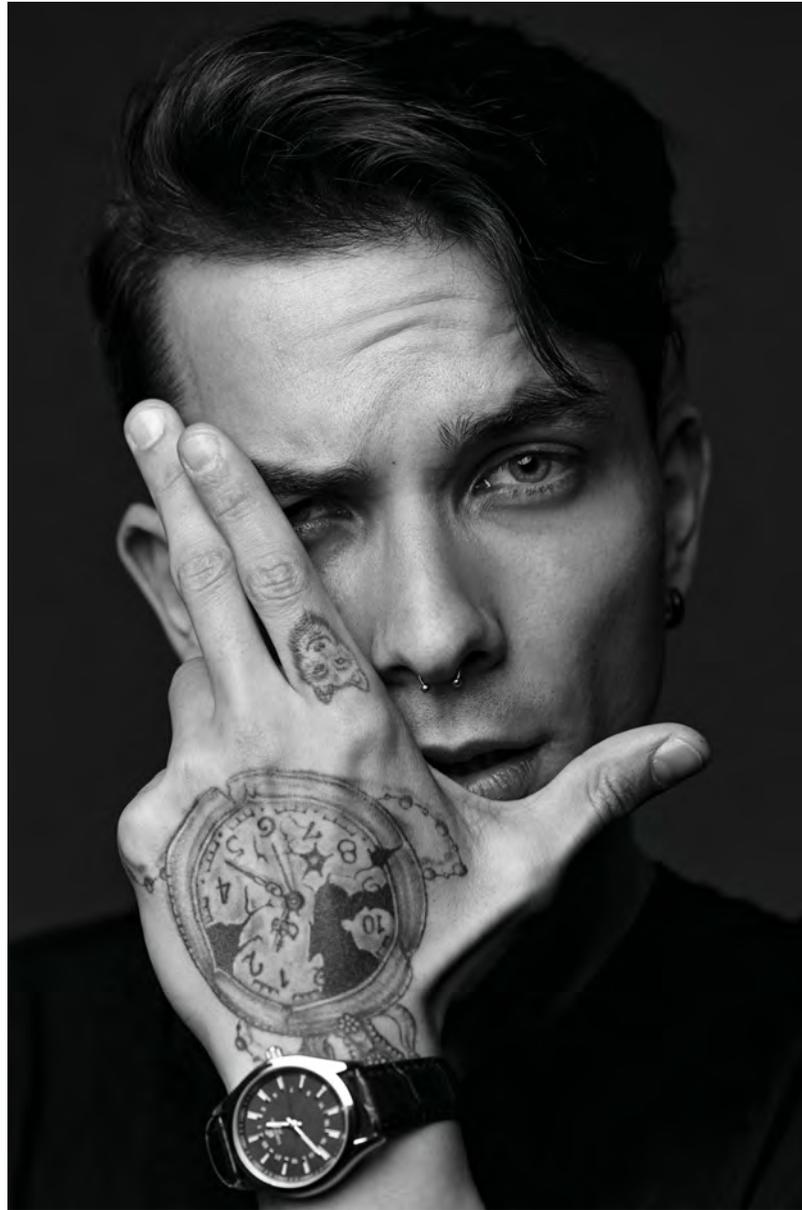


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◆ LEARN SOMETHING NEW EVERY DAY.

I have started reading a new book every couple of days, and I've learned so much in such a short time. Find books with a tangible guide to running your business. One of my favorites is *How to Set-Up Your Business for Under \$1000* by Dan Fleyshman and Branden Hampton. The book guides you through step by step, and does not spend time trying to sell mentoring sessions or other products.

If you're strapped for cash, no worries. iTunes U has free audio recordings from classes at some of the most prestigious universities in the country. There are so many invaluable free resources available online.



Image © Jeff Rojas

◆ SET OBTAINABLE GOALS AND STICK WITH THEM.

At one of the first workshops I attended when I picked up my first camera, I followed the instructor around like a puppy. After the class, I asked how he was able to turn his love of photography into a career. He admitted that he hadn't. His full-time job afforded him the luxury of new gear and the ability to be creative. In his words: "It's impossible."

Well, it's not impossible, it's just really hard. When you're starting out, every day is like a kick in the head, and you must be willing to stand up the next day and wait for the next kick to the head. This continues to happen until finally, one day, you stand up and there's no kick. That, my friends, is what it's like starting a business.

Few will talk openly about it. Running a business is one of the most stressful jobs in the world. You're in charge of marketing, sales, operations, finance—and then to top it off, you must be the visionary. It's a lot of effort just to avoid a 40-hours-per-week job. Are you willing to make that commitment?

Earlier, I mentioned the importance of being productive, but productivity without purpose is like running without a direction: You're going to get lost. I keep a to-do list with me filled with goals and objectives. I know what I want. I break those large items into small pieces and then I know that accomplishing those smaller objectives allows me to commit to a larger purpose.

Think about it like writing a book. Writing 45,000 to 80,000 words may sound intimidating, but if you break that book down into smaller sections, it sounds more manageable. The length of this article is around 1,400 words. If I wrote 30 of these articles or expanded on each element at length, I'd have a great baseline for a book.

Every big goal sounds intimidating until you break it down into smaller pieces. This goes back to my earlier point: If you're too intimidated to start, then you're not being productive.



Image © Jeff Rojas

◆ BE CONSCIOUS OF YOUR SHORTCOMINGS.

I cannot manage life without a list of things to do. I know that. It's the reason I keep a to-do list. It's the reason I set reminders and alarms on my calendar. If it's not on my list, it's not getting done.

When you're conscious of your shortcomings, you need to create systems to improve them. If you're terrible at cold-calling, don't avoid cold-calling. Spend more time doing it until you feel more comfortable. If that intimidates you, create a call script to read from. Have a system in place that you won't deviate from. Record your calls and learn from listening to them. This is the reason call centers record your conversation—"for quality assurance purposes."

Don't hide your shortcomings. Embrace and learn from them. ■

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Jeff Rojas is a photographer and author based in New York City. His primary body of work includes portrait and fashion photography that has been seen in the pages of *Elle* and *Esquire*. Jeff is also a photography instructor whose teaching credits include CreativeLive, WPPI, the PhotoPlus Expo, Imaging USA and APA.

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>>>>> TIPS FOR

BETTER LIGHTING ON LOCATION

with Michael Anthony



Being a location portrait photographer has its drawbacks. We are often at the mercy of our environment, which means we are going to be faced with lighting challenges. If your schedule is busy, you won't always have the luxury of planning all your sessions at sunset.

A few years back, we had to start stacking shoots in our calendar to accommodate all our clients. We had to book shoots at 1 or 2 p.m., in less than optimal lighting conditions. Being forced to learn to overcome these situations, I picked up a few skills that are sure to help any photographer overcome bad lighting on location.

>>> COME TO YOUR SHOOT WITH A PLAN

First step, know exactly what the lighting needs are going to be at your shoot prior to the day of. This means that you may need to make a quick scouting trip if it's a new location. After doing this a few times in your local area, you will have a clear idea of the lay of the land. If this is a wedding day, you could even offer to do a site visit with your clients beforehand.

Knowledge is power, and knowing what you would need for your shoot will help you to be efficient when the time comes to get out there and take amazing photos. Every time we have a shoot, I think about all the possible scenarios that we would encounter, and I pack accordingly for the session so I am not bringing equipment that I don't necessarily need.

For typical sessions, I bring three lenses: 135, 24-70 (or 50mm) and 11-24. I bring two cameras, and leave one locked in my car.

Lighting equipment changes depending on the situation, but I usually bring one B1 or B2 flash, a soft light modifier, a reflector and a gel kit.

If I am on a commercial shoot or a wedding day, the needs are totally different; now I bring speedlights, video lights and different modifiers.

For this recent shoot in San Francisco, I knew we would be working with cloudy weather all day, so I didn't see the need to bring along the extra weight of the B1 flash, and brought the B2 system instead, saving some weight in my carry-on.

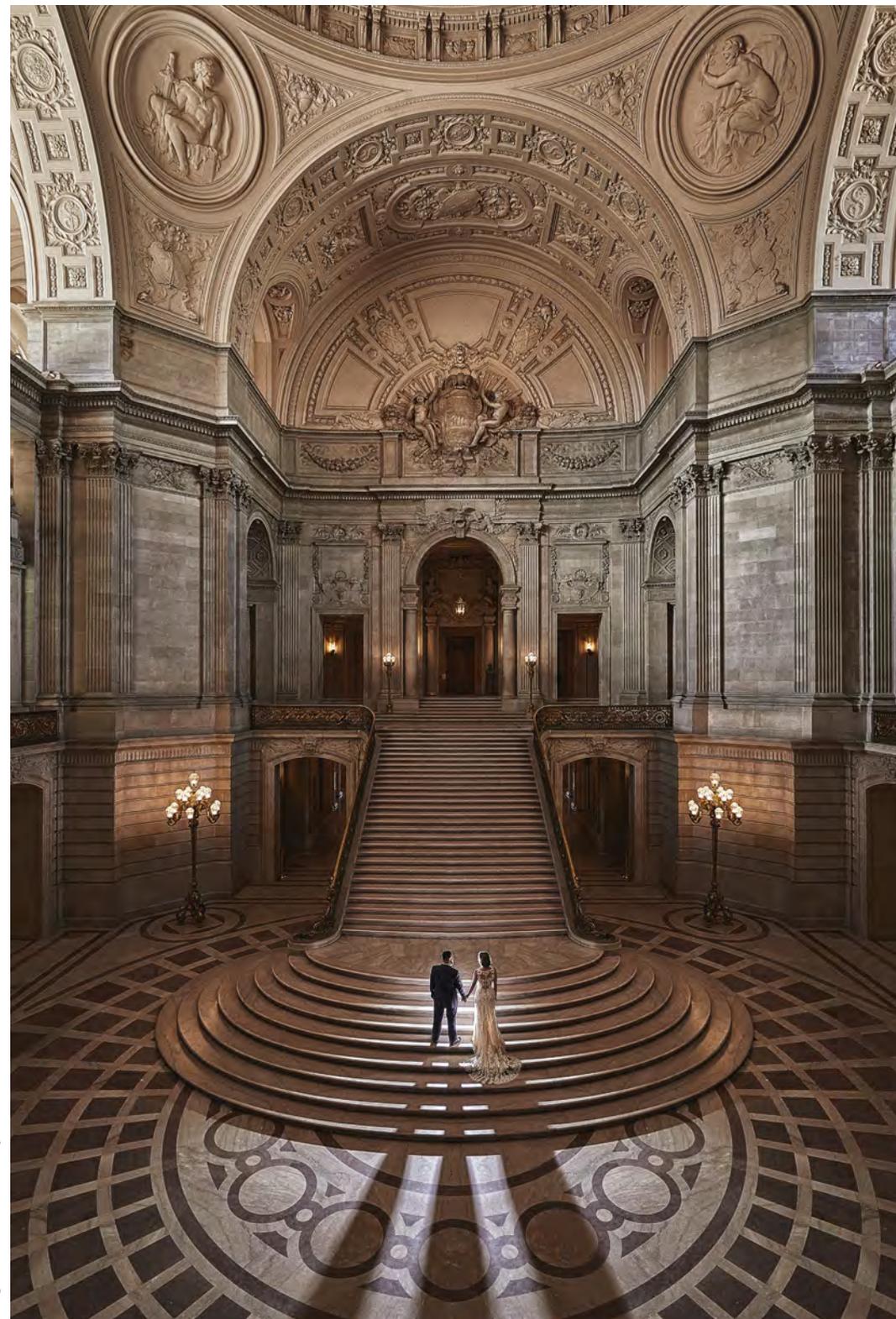


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>>> PURCHASE HIGH-QUALITY, RELIABLE EQUIPMENT FOR ALL SITUATIONS

A professional photographer should have the right tools for every job. By doing so, you will be best equipped to handle any situation. You will need to purchase artificial lighting at some point if you want to master all situations. We use three diverse types of artificial light in our kit. From lightest to heaviest, they are low-powered, mid-powered and high-powered.

These are the tools of your trade, and they need to be reliable, durable and future-proof. There has been a rush to buy imported knockoff flashes lately. I did it early in my career to save a few dollars, and had terrible experiences repeatedly: flashes not firing or syncing, and even one that exploded after just a week. I was embarrassed to explain to my clients why my flash head was smoking.

I have learned that it is just not worth it to buy equipment from non-name brands. While there are certainly higher-end brands for strobe gear, there are other reliable ones that are moderately priced. Find flashes that are TTL- and HSS-capable to help you get to the shot quicker.

Regarding modifiers, for location shooting, you will want to look for gear that is portable and easy to set up and break down when moving from spot to spot. I don't want to have to break down a softbox to walk 25 feet because my hands were full. I love photographic umbrellas. I prefer the silver umbrellas with the diffusion fabric to soften the light when needed. This allows you to get a little more specular output from your flash. You can also use it as a soft light at the same time. Profoto makes excellent umbrellas.



Image © Michael Anthony

>>> BRING AN ASSISTANT

This can be a tough one. I have had good and bad experiences with staffing. But the best thing that has helped me create beautiful images quickly and efficiently is a voice-activated light stand, or human monopod. Having someone who adjusts the light position when I ask means more time to interact with my clients and less time running back and forth between them and the light.

An assistant can hold a reflector or scrim, making it easier when you're starting out with multiple-light setups. You can have your assistant hold your keylight and keep your kicker on a stand somewhere. But how do you find a good assistant, and how much do you pay them?

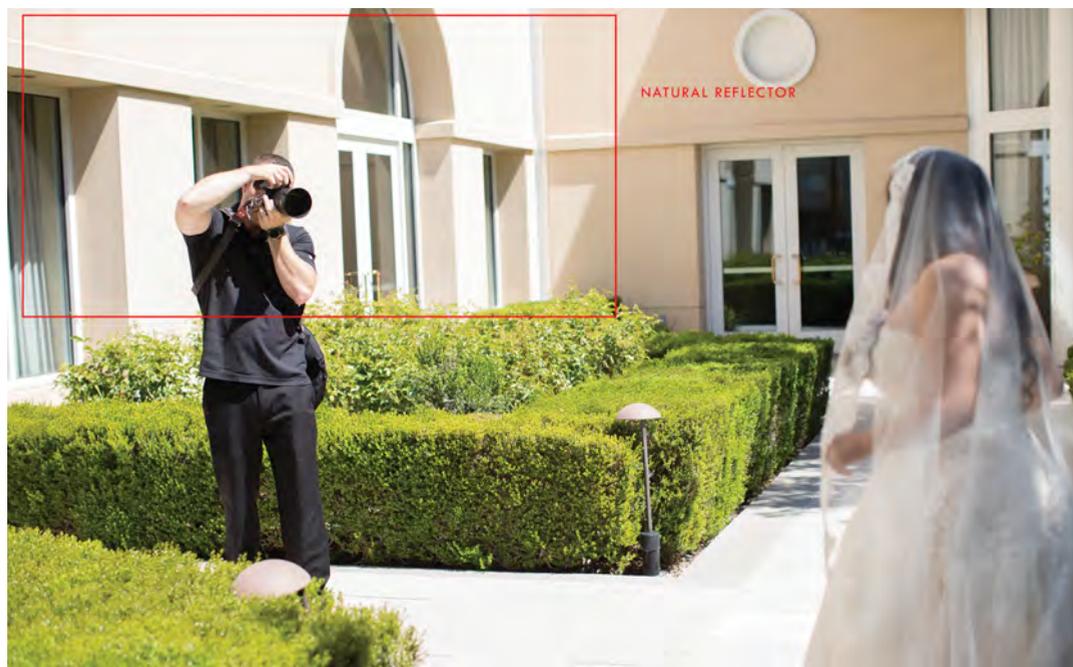
Looking for seasoned photographers in your network to assist you is a fruitless effort. For whatever reason, many photographers view assisting as a stigma. I never understood that, and it was the most problematic issue I ran into early on.

Look for talent in local schools. See if there are any students looking to enter the photography industry who would like to learn from you. Don't stop at just one, since it will be hard to sync up your schedule with theirs. Hire three assistants so you can choose between them whenever you need someone. Book them at least seven days out and compensate them hourly after they have proved they are reliable.

>>> LOOK FOR NATURAL LIGHT FIRST

If you have read my past articles, you know that I always say good light is about proper balance. Balance could mean anything related to the situation you are photographing in. When we are not shooting our signature-look portraits, we are shooting natural light, about 99 percent of the time. This means we look for good reflective surfaces in our environment to create directional light on our subject.

You can see in this image a neutral-colored wall with direct sun on it. My bride was standing in the shade in front of me, which allowed me to make her the brightest part of the image, as the light reflecting off the building fell off gradually into the background. There are surfaces like this in almost every environment. The key is knowing where to use them.



Images © Michael Anthony

>>> USE GELS TO CREATE FAKE SUN FLARE OR TURN DAY INTO NIGHT

I have talked about these techniques in depth in *Shutter* articles dating back to 2015. You can use either a half CTO gel, or a full one to mimic sunlight or to light a background. You can also use a creative white balance trick to turn day into nighttime using a CTO gel and the white balance settings in your camera when the light gets low.

To fake sun flare, place a high-powered flash like a Profoto B1 in the same direction that the sun would naturally be coming from. Placing it behind foliage creates a believable look that looks great. Next, use a half CTO gel on your flash, and expose your scene for natural light. From there, you can get a beautiful golden-hour sun when it isn't golden hour or when you aren't in the best position to take advantage of the early evening light.



Image © Michael Anthony



Image © Michael Anthony

You can also use your flash gels to light your background and create pretty silhouettes of your subjects. Place a speedlight on the floor facing upward, close to your background. Select the widest zoom on the flash and place your subjects in between the flash and the camera.

Lastly, to turn day into night when it gets late in the day, underexpose your scene by two to three stops. Set your in-camera white balance to 3200k. Place a CTO balanced flash to turn the light on them back to white. Optionally, place a bare flash behind your subjects to give them a beautiful blue glow. If you have a bit of the early dusk sky in the frame, you will get amazing results with this technique.



Image © Michael Anthony



Image © Michael Anthony

Location lighting doesn't have to be intimidating. You just need to have the right tools and knowledge. ■

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Michael Anthony is the owner of Michael Anthony Studios, a wedding photography studio based in Los Angeles. He has won multiple awards in international image competition for his creative use of light, storytelling and environmental portraiture. The five-member team at Michael Anthony Studios photographs around 60 weddings and over 200 portrait sessions a year.

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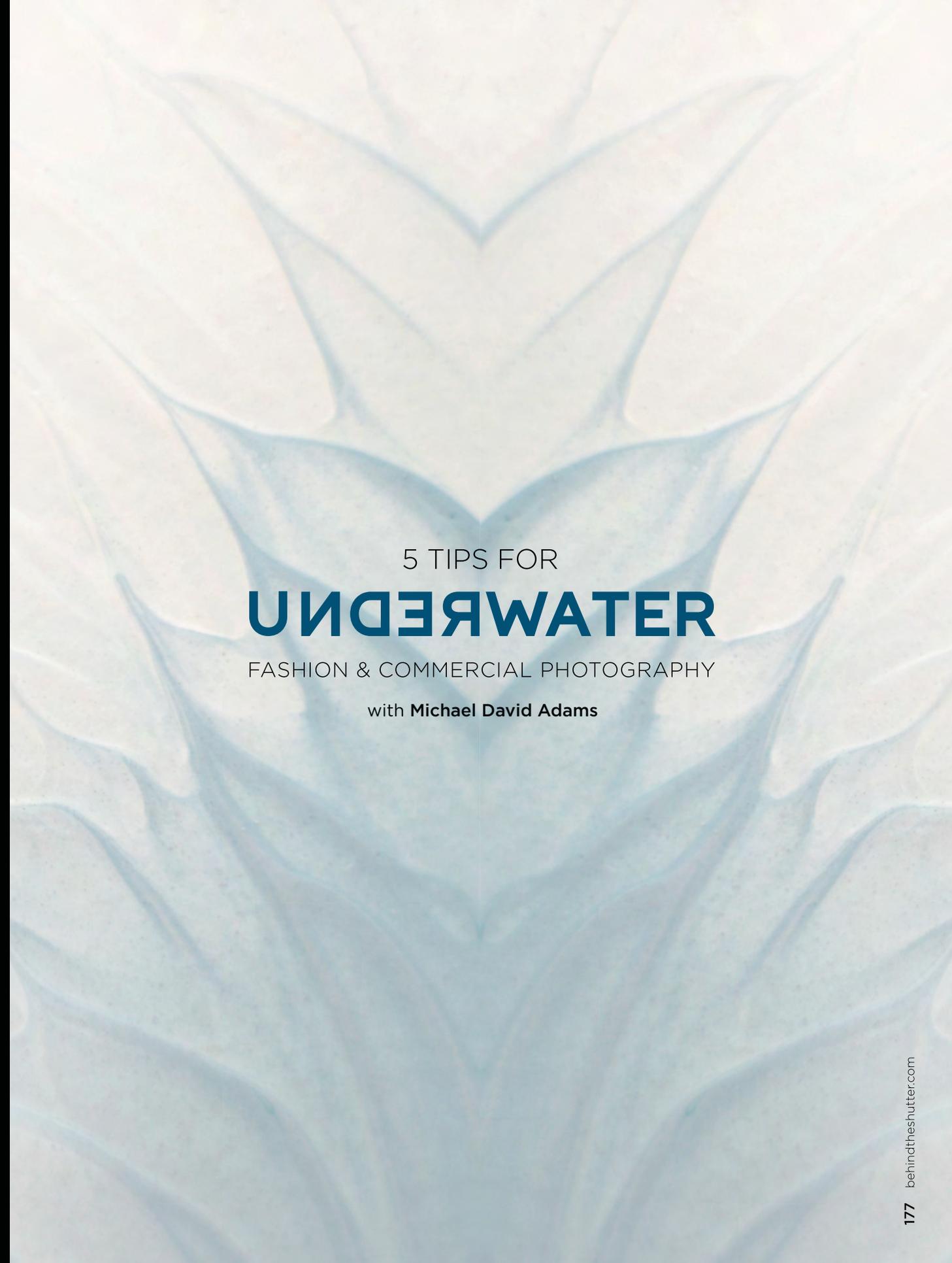


THE SIGNATURE COLLECTION
by Sebastian Curotta

ALBUMS
THAT SELL
THEMSELVES



Image © Michael David Adams



5 TIPS FOR
UNDERWATER
FASHION & COMMERCIAL PHOTOGRAPHY
with Michael David Adams



Image © Michael David Adams

I have always had a great love and appreciation for water in all its forms, whether it's the vast ocean or a calm inviting sea. My love for the tranquil visuals of water led me to underwater photography.

In 2010, while honeymooning in Croatia with my wife, Viktorija, who is a native of the beautiful coastal Mediterranean country, I had my first taste of underwater photography. A childhood friend of hers who is a scuba instructor and underwater wildlife photographer took us out to one of the many beautiful offshore underwater locations of Croatia.

It was at an ancient shipwreck right off the coastal town of Omiš, where my wife spent a lot of her childhood. We were free-diving in water that was 10 to 12 feet deep. It was easy enough to get to the bottom with the aid of a weight belt. A completely new world opened up in front of my eyes, and new photographic concepts came rushing to mind that would not be achievable without being submerged in water. As I stood on the bottom of that sea, with schools of fish swimming around me in the crystal-clear Croatian waters, I knew that this experience would be life-changing and add a new level to my photography and career.



Image © Michael David Adams



SNOW DROP COLLECTION

Snow Drop is a series from my *Story-Teller* project and something of a collaboration with New York-based fashion designer Morgane Le Fay. These are the latest images from my underwater collections.

The series explores the story of what is now more commonly known as *Snow White*, but in this collection, I have gone back to the original fairy tale entitled *Snow Drop* from Grimm's Tales. My vision and concept was to show Snow Drop when she was rendered unconscious by the Peasant's wife (the Queen incognito) who poisoned her. I portray her state of mind and awareness of her situation.

In "The Witching Hour" she is having an out-of-body experience, floating above the forest where she had been poisoned. We see the gown from Morgane Le Fay floating with all its beautiful layers. In "Lucid Descent," we see her consciousness during the same moment, knowing that she had been poisoned, and is portrayed submerged under the surface of the creek running through the forest (the water symbolizing the barrier of her consciousness); as she sinks deeper into her mental darkness, she's more awake and aware than she has ever been. It highlights the details of the delicate garment.



Images © Michael David Adams

UNDERWATER CAMERA SETUP

Equipment and lighting issues are always the two biggest questions I get about underwater shooting.

There are lots of different methods. I shoot underwater with the Nikon D800E and a 24–70 lens. I prefer zoom lenses because they allow you to change your perspective quickly. In the underwater environment, I find it works best for me if I'm as flexible as possible. In an instant, an unexpected movement or body position might look incredible at a different angle or lens perspective, and since you can't change lenses, it's best to have as much coverage with your lens choice as you can. I stay away from very wide-angle lenses because they distort the body too much. Wide lenses might be better suited for open-water situations rather than controlled pools, where I do most of my work.

If you are just starting out and have a small budget, the large Ziploc-style bags can be an option. But when you are ready to make a serious move, it's time to invest in a hard case with more precise controls.

I use an Ikelite housing with an 8-inch acrylic dome. The larger dome is great for less distortion overall, especially toward the corners of the frame. It also improves or removes color aberrations.

The Ikelite housing is nice, as it affords you the opportunity to see inside the case to be sure everything is okay with it and that no water is leaking in. I look forward to upgrading my system soon to the Aquatica or Subal cases. The internal gears are precise and effortless. Another great quality of the Aquatica case is that you can change the strobe port adapters for your lighting cables to accommodate different lighting systems, making it more versatile for multiple applications and environments.

When it comes to lighting, I keep it simple. I have a few Ikelite heads that I use underwater, and if I need any extra lighting topside, I use Profoto, which I also use for studio and location work.



Images © Michael David Adams



Image © Michael David Adams

UNDERWATER TECHNIQUE: STYLE

Flowing material is one element in underwater fashion photography that is always inspiring to see, as it is in studio and location shots. Achieving beautiful billowing fabrics underwater is challenging. I do a few practice runs with my models first to see how the material acts underwater, and then decide the best course of action.



UNDERWATER TECHNIQUE: LIGHTING

Remote sync/radio triggers do not work underwater, so you'll need a comprehensive set of cords and adapters to make all your lighting work the way you want it to. Always make a plan and diagram for your lighting well before the shoot. Test all adapters, cords and strobe heads before your shoot, and check all rubber O-rings for any wear.

UNDERWATER TECHNIQUE: EXECUTION

Another thing to keep in mind is the physical dimensions of the pool you are shooting in. You need enough room when working underwater, especially if you have multiple people down there with you. Pools that are 10 feet deep work the best for me. With a proper depth, the models have plenty of space to get their bearings and enough mental space to do the things that are asked of them. You will want to have some crossbars or a sturdy truss over the pool, or, if you're on a budget, the foam float noodles will work, so the models have something to hold onto between shots to conserve energy.

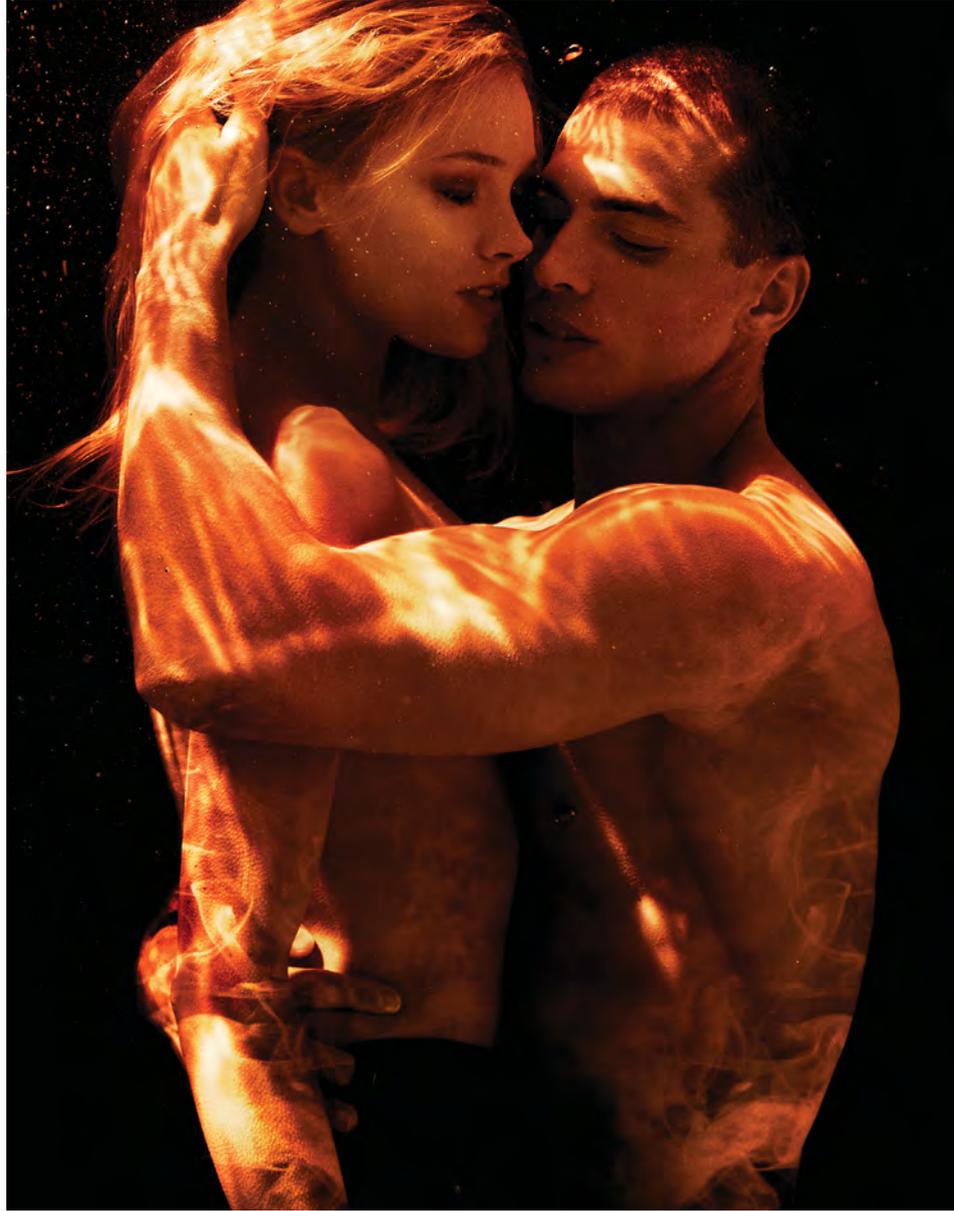


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UNDERWATER TECHNIQUE: COMMUNICATION

It's very important that you communicate clearly with your models before entering the water. They need to know exactly what you expect from them before making the plunge. Once you go underwater, a funny thing can happen to your brain. It's easy to forget everything you were thinking about before you broke the surface, so take it slow and talk through your goals. I do breathing exercises with the models before we go under so we are in sync. Having everyone use oxygen equipment makes it easier, but then you need an even higher level of communication.



Images © Michael David Adams



HEAVY LIKE RAIN COLLECTION

Heavy Like Rain is a series focused on the lone silhouette of a woman in stark black-and-white contrast. We can feel loneliness and solitude, but at the same time, we can interpret these images as displaying power and confidence. This series highlights jewelry as the fashion element, from necklaces to belts and full-arm bracelets and cuffs. It also plays with the elements of air bubbles and how they can assume the role of adornments of the face and body. They define the shape of the body, as if it is encrusted in jewels. I played with the abstract in this series. In an inspired moment, I photographed the chaotic nature of the surface reflections to masterfully take these images to another place.

Visit MichaelDavidAdams-Underwater.com and MichaelDavidAdams-FineArt.com to see more of my work from these and other collections. ■



Image © Michael David Adams

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We're thankful to have been with Shutter Magazine from the start. Over the years we have created many innovative products to help photographers deliver their images with style. Along the way, Sal gave us great input that definitely helped us up our game!

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Michael David Adams has traveled the world photographing fashion, travel and fine art in amazing locations, from the magical coasts of the Caribbean Islands and Mexico to awe-inspiring European destinations like Venice, Paris, Capri, the Amalfi Coast and Croatia. His work can be seen in U.S. and International editions of top fashion magazines, including *Harper's Bazaar*, *Vogue*, *Elle* and *Glamour*.
michaeldavidadams.com



INSPIRATIONS

Inspiration can come when you least expect it. As photographers, we are visual artists. We express ourselves through our camera and the images we create. Inspirations represents a sampling of our industry and the vision of professional photographers from around the world.

Congratulations to all our featured artists. Be inspired and create something that is *you*.

Sal Cincotta, *Editor-in-chief*



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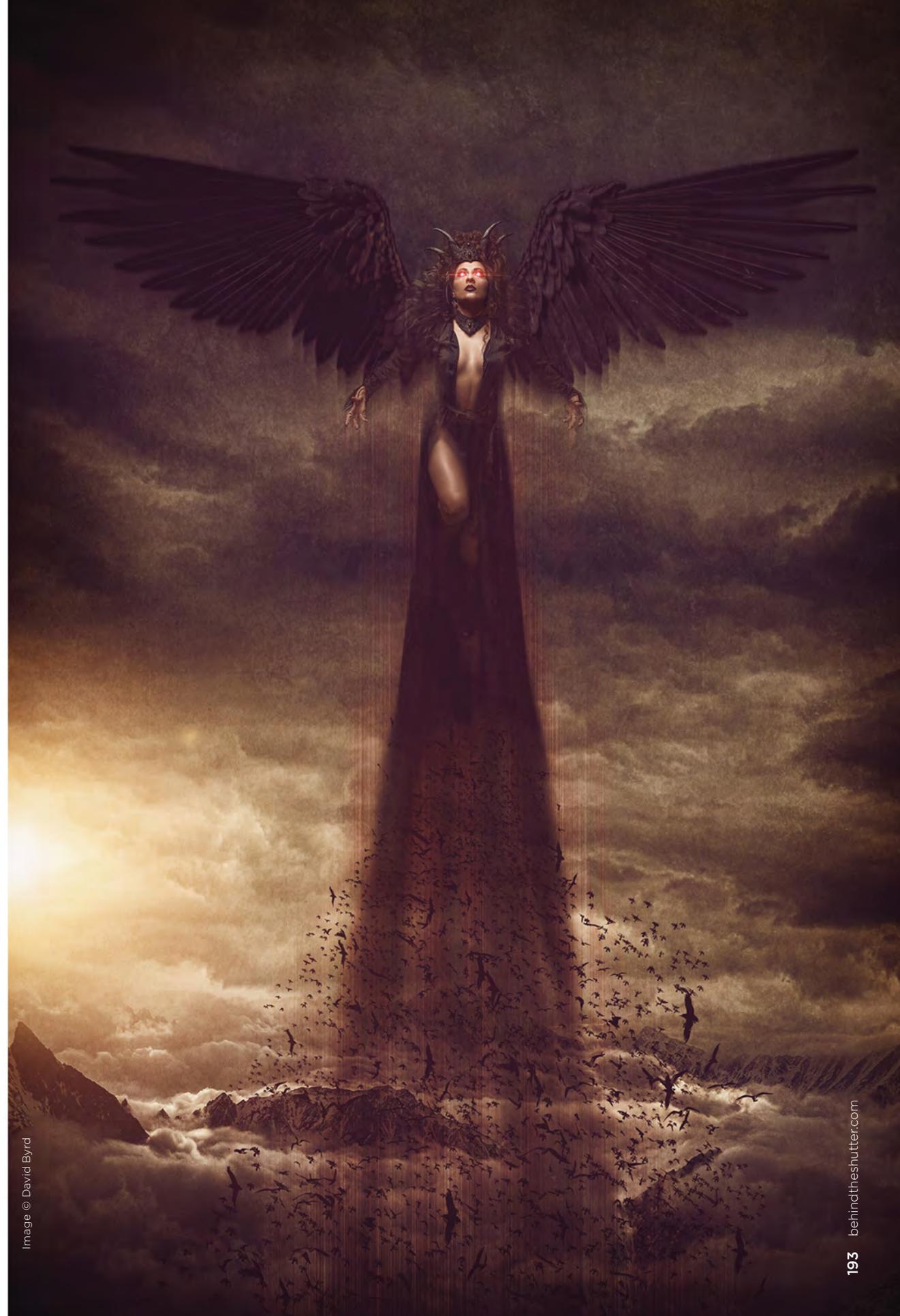


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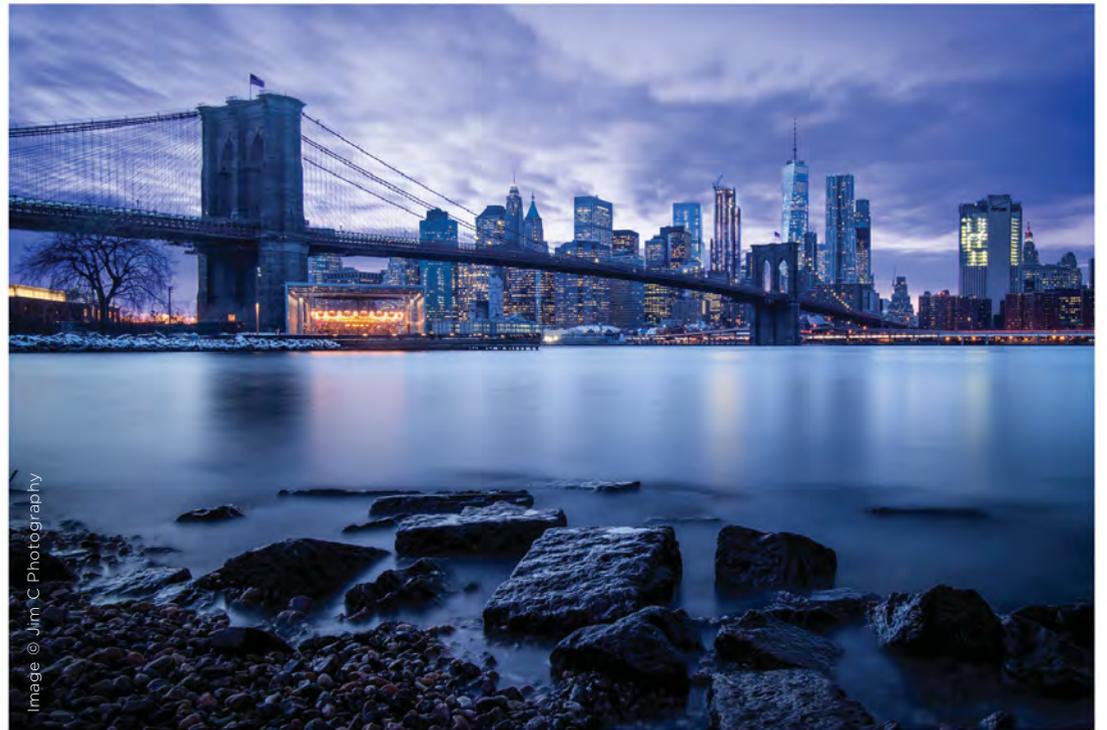
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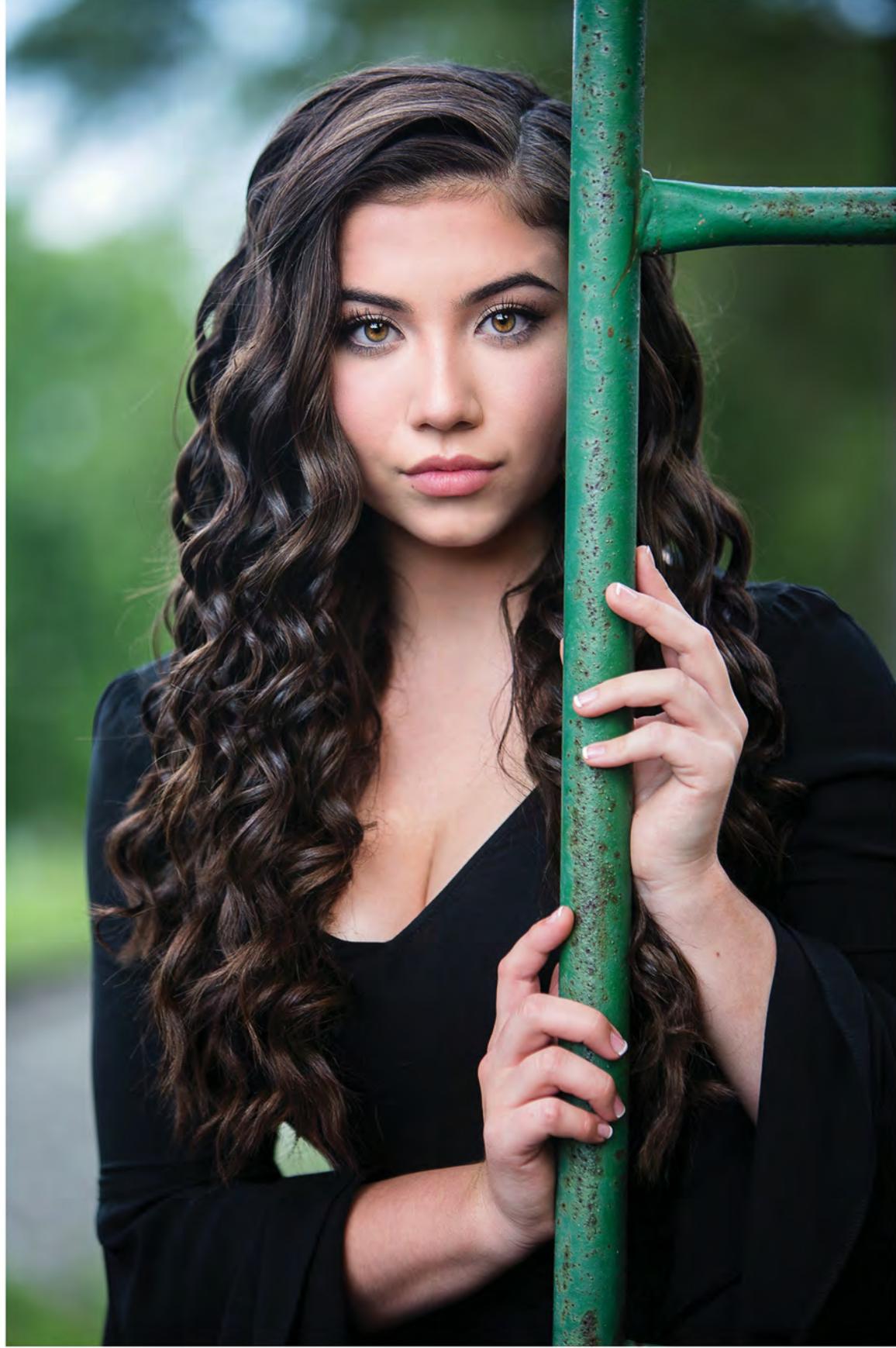


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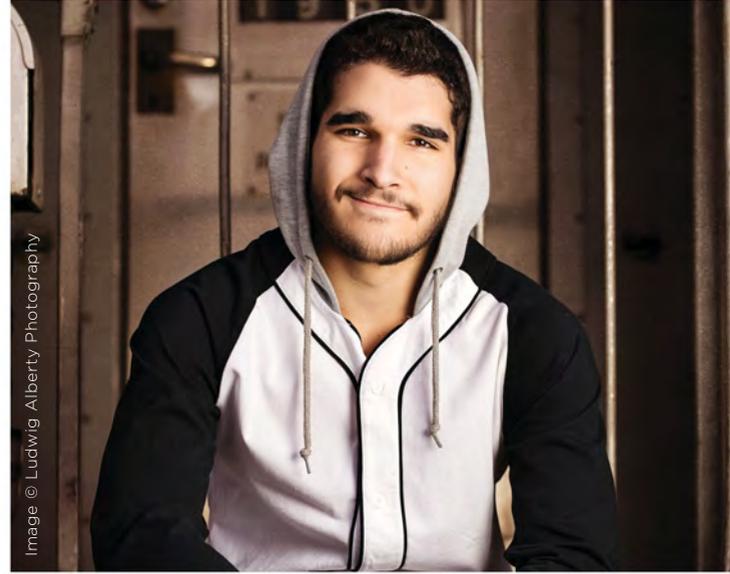


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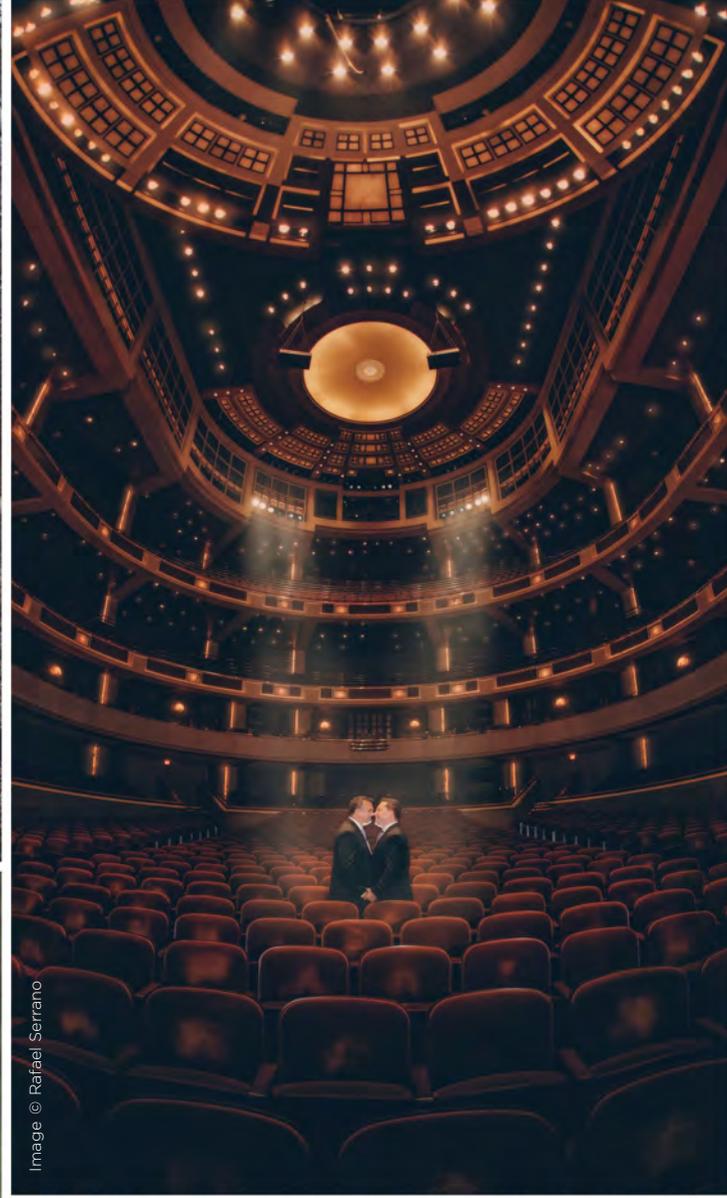
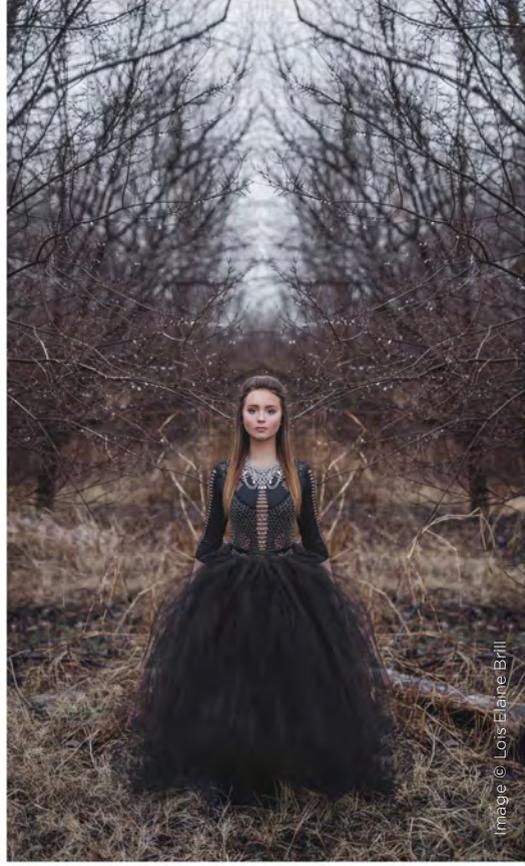




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Sue Bryce creates her own natural light Profoto B1



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