



Close-Up



Inside:
Medieval Times in
Australia
Photographing
Spring Flowers
Can I come Along?
Back-up your Data
Shoots Around
Victoria
Beginners' Corner
Investigating Noise
.... and more

Medieval Times in Australia,
"The Swashbuckler". An
exploration in creative
imagery. These images
are based on character
recreations at a medieval fair,
then modified with texture
screens . See page 5.

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Victoria Camera Club



Close-Up is the magazine of the Victoria Camera Club,
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 Mailing address: 2642 Quadra Street, PO Box 46035, Victoria, BC, V8T 5G7.
 Deadline for submissions for the April issue is March 5th 2013.
 Editor, Richard James, e-mail to newsletter@victoriacameraclub.org
 for submissions or to advertise in *Close-Up*.

Established in 1944, the Victoria Camera Club is a group of people who share the love of photography. We come together to appreciate each other's images, to learn, both from the feedback on our own images and from the images of others, and to exchange tips on how and where to take effective photographs. Our focus is on continuous learning. Our media include both film and digital and our expertise ranges from novice to master.

Events

We hold a number of events including:

- Three meetings a month from September to April (excluding December)
- Field trips
- Workshops
- Special Interest Groups (SIGs)
- Competitions within the club and externally

Meetings begin at 7:30 PM at Norway House, 1110 Hillside Avenue, Victoria, BC.

Membership

Annual fees include all workshops (except studio shoots and special events), meetings and all field trips unless travel/accommodation is involved. Annual fees are: Individual, \$85; Family, \$128; Student, \$43.

For Current event information and locations please go to the website victoriacameraclub.org where you can also read or download the colour version of *Close-Up*.

For additional information: please contact the appropriate Committee Chair:

- Membership:* membership@victoriacameraclub.org
 - Workshops:* workshops@victoriacameraclub.org
 - Field Trips:* fieldtrips@victoriacameraclub.org
 - Meetings:* meetings@victoriacameraclub.org
 - Website:* webmaster@victoriacameraclub.org
 - Close-Up:* newsletter@victoriacameraclub.org
- or call Lois Burton, Vice-President at 250-652-6940.

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The Victoria Camera Club is a member club of the Community Arts Council of Greater Victoria (CACGV), Canadian Association for Photographic Arts (CAPA), and the Photographic Society of America (PSA).



Calendar

Our workshop and field trip program is too extensive to list in *Close-Up*. Please go to the calendar page on the website (www.victoriacameraclub.org) for the latest details of all our workshops, field trips and meetings.

Thursday, March 7th; Competition Night

Presentation of the results of the February competition and submission of March entries. The theme subject is "Time." One of the judges will review selected images.

Thursday, March 14th; Presentation Night

Architectural Photographer John Taylor will make a presentation on his work. John is an accomplished commercial and contemporary artistic photographer, having won numerous awards in each field. His work has been exhibited in a solo show at the Contemporary Art Museum of Houston, as well as the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography in Ottawa.

His old school approach necessitated lugging a 4x5 monorail camera and tripod around Italy for four months to capture the essence of his subject in f64 detail. Photographing every building with its unique point of view and story to tell resulted in over 500 negatives to be scanned to digital files.

Currently John is working on a book proposal and takes us inside the process to view his research notes and editorial selections for the publishers prototype. He will discuss the concept of sacred geometry and illustrate how these principles apply. The project draws inspiration from ten years of independent research. Visit the John Taylor Architectural Photography website at johnaylorphoto.com.

Thursday, March 21st; Members' Night

Presentation of members' and field trip slides, prints or short technical topics.

Featured workshops:

Nature and Creative SIGs

Featured field trips:

Tuesdays downtown: subjects, are "Minimalism Redux" and "Ducks and Herons."

Meeting, field trip and workshop visitor policy:

Visitors are welcome to attend any three events in a 30 day period subject to the availability of space and a \$20 per session fee for workshops.

Editor's Message

Occasionally we switch from a President's message to a message from the Editor; this is one of those months. I will take the opportunity to outline the evolution of *Close-Up*.

Close-Up has been changing ever since the first newsletter was published in June 1946, two years after the club was formed in 1944, as a one-page flyer announcing the monthly meeting, "Animal Portraiture", and a photo shoot held at a member's studio. Growth was swift, the next issue in July was two pages and announced the monthly competition and meeting. There was also a call for the design, to be based on a BC Indian motif, for an award sticker for prints to be hung in the International Salon that the club was hosting. By March 1947 the newsletter had grown to four 8½" x 11" pages and was officially named "*Close-Up*" with a photograph on the front cover.

Sometime in the intervening years the format was changed to 5½" x 8½", and when I took over as editor in November 2008, was generally around 16 pages per issue. Over the years the format and content has changed and expanded, hitting 36 small format pages last year, changing to 8½" x 11" with a colour cover and centrefold this year, and with this issue, 24 full-size pages equivalent to 48 pages in the old format.

The content has also changed as our members needs have changed, and as printing technology has made things easier. In the early 1980's I was on the editorial team and responsible for advertising, soliciting it and in some cases producing the copy for our advertisers. Does anybody remember Lettraset, Kodalith film and PMTs for printing? Now, most of the ads are assembled by the advertisers, transmitted electronically, and placed in an electronic document to be sent to the printer online. When finalized they are converted, to the web versions that are available to our members, and anybody visiting our website, or in print at one of our advertisers store's downtown.

The content has evolved from more of a historic record of the previous months' events to providing information produced by members to inform the membership in general, and our non-member readers, of significant aspects of photography that are of interest to them. Part of this evolution has been made feasible by the development of our comprehensive website providing the most timely information on our meeting, workshop and field trip programs. *Richard James, Editor*

by Wendi Donaldson

Living in Australia, the state of South Australia in particular, for a year and a half provided me with a unique opportunity to see the area not from a tourist point of view but from a local one.

One side trip I took was to the small rural community of Gumeracha (pronounced gum er ACK' a) The best guess at population today is 731. It is in the Adelaide Hills northeast of Adelaide. Gumeracha is one of South Australia's oldest settled areas, dating back to 1839. The town is known for its giant wooden "toy" horse that sits outside the wooden toy factory and alongside the Wildlife Park, where you can feed the roaming kangaroos, wallabies, birds and enjoy the native flora.

In recent years, the community has become known for another reason. Each year Gumeracha plays host to a two-day medieval fair. The fair is attended by hundreds

of medieval aficionados from miles around, with many participants wearing traditional costumes and some not so, along with lots of interested observers. Some of the events throughout the fair demonstrate occupations, traditions and culture of the times: archery, jousting, fencing, blacksmithing, chain maille artistry, fortune telling, dancing, traditional music, etc.

The day I visited was not idyllic, with drizzle and mist throughout the day, and in fact we almost didn't go because of the weather. The lack of sun turned out to be beneficial because of the lack of shadows and glare. The event took place in three large grassy fields, which became very wet as the day went on.

Nonetheless, most of the participants were enthusiastic and thankfully for me, they were also amenable to having their photograph taken. Using a long focal length (300mm) lens as I toured around the fields



Sir Roderick of Gumeracha



The Cook



The Chain Maille Maker

allowed me to take shots of the many “characters” without being intrusive. Naturally, the “backgrounds” of the shots were often not in keeping with the period and instead were dotted with booths selling jewellery, trinkets, costumes, hot dogs, etc. Anachronisms abounded with people dressed in their finery enjoying candy floss, hot dogs and even ice cream cones, hence the tongue-in-cheek theme “Medieval Matriarchs”!

I was impressed with the obvious passion the participants had for the event with their wonderful costumes. Reviewing the images later, inspired me to create “period” portraits.

I realized the distracting “modern” backgrounds had to be removed and the subjects isolated to create the look I wanted. Even after isolating the subjects in their costumes, they still had a modern feel. I then decided that if I used layers of textures from my own texture



Tete-a-Tete

portfolio and applied them both over and under the subject, using a variety of opacity and blending modes in Photoshop CS5, I could create the antique look I was after. I have titled these images but not with any historical accuracy.

All images were taken hand-held with a Canon EOS 5D Mark II and the EF70-300mm f4-5.6L IS USM lens.

An additional 7 images from this series were published in CAPA’s quarterly magazine, Canadian Camera, Winter 2012 (See capacanada.ca for information on CAPA’s programs.)

The full collection of Wendi’s images can be seen at www.redbubble.com/people/wdonaldson. The Gumeracha Medieval Fair is held in early May at Federation Park, Gumeracha, SA. The fair’s website is at: www.medievalsa.org.



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by David McLean

Over the next few months our native wild flowers will be in bloom and will provide many opportunities for photographers to capture their beauty in pixels. While Garry Oak woodlands provide an abundance of colour and variety of plants throughout the area, fir and cedar woodlands will typically provide pockets of flowers in open spaces and rock outcrops, with the occasional bloom springing up within the shaded forest itself.

The variety of ways to capture the beauty of these flowers is only limited by the imagination and the number of lenses you possess. There is no “right way” for photographing plants and flowers; however, having said that, pictures taken from a standing position are generally boring. You normally want to get down low and take the picture from a different angle or perspective.



Olsynium douglasii douglasii “Satin Flower”

Before you head out, you will also want to pack a few supplies to ensure yourself the best chances of success:

- Tripod – as you’re going to be shooting low to the ground, the tripod should either not have a centre column, or it should be removable so that it will not limit how close to the ground you can go.
- Use either, mirror lock-up, a remote shutter release or the self-timer on your camera to limit vibration.
- Consider bringing a reflector and a diffuser. The reflector will provide additional light if your subject

is in the shade. The diffuser can be used to shade your flower if it is in the harsh midday sunlight, and can be used to reduce movement by sheltering your subject from the wind.

- Using a right-angle viewer, or “live-view”, will make it much easier to frame your picture if your camera is close to the ground, which it often is in flower photography.
- Knee pads, or foam, will help save your knees and/or back. I purchased a camper’s sleeping mat and cut it in half. One half is used for kneeling, or sitting on, while the other half is used to put my camera bag on. If the ground is clean and dry, I will put the camera bag on the ground and use both pieces of foam to kneel, sit, or lie on. You might also consider a sheet of polythene, it is light and more compact than the knee pads or foam.
- Bringing your flash(es) will also increase your options, as we are not always guaranteed the lighting we desire.

If you’re heading “off the beaten path” for your pictures consider also bringing:

- Headlamp or flashlight so that you can find your way in the dark, especially if you’re taking pictures in the gorgeous light near sunset.
- Survey tape so that you can mark your trail if you are in unfamiliar territory.
- If you’re in a park, and there is a map of the area posted, take a picture of it, so that you will always have a good idea where you are. Also visit www.crdatlasc.ca where you will find printable maps of the CRD parks in the region – including the Gulf Islands; additionally municipalities may have their own maps for parks in their area.

Native spring flowers provide opportunities to make effective use of your regular, macro and telephoto lenses.

Use your mid-length lens to get pictures of the entire bloom-filled meadow, or a single flower. Use a small aperture and bring the entire meadow into focus, or shoot wide open and focus on a single flower, leaving the rest of the meadow a colourful blur. As Donna Roberson discussed in a recent presentation, try putting your lens right in close to a flower, or foliage, and experiment with vignetting, or as Lloyd Houghton presented in a recent workshop, experiment with intentional camera movement for an abstract result.

Use your macro lens to focus on a single flower, or even a part of a flower. When you have a macro lens, you will start noticing numerous small things that you wouldn’t

otherwise have even looked at. Look at the bees, bugs and wasps that are attracted to the pollen and nectar of the flowers. Rather than being a nuisance, these insects provide great photo opportunities that most people never really see or appreciate – some of these insects are also very colourful. Once you've taken pictures of the flowers and bugs that are attracted to them, look to the moss growing on rocky outcrops and trees and observe the miniature spore capsules growing from it. Lichen and fungus also grow on the north slopes and shaded areas of the rocks and trees.

Your long lens, with its narrow depth of field, can be used to isolate a single flower leaving the rest of the meadow a colourful blur. You can also photograph bees, wasps and bugs from a safe distance. There are two approaches to taking pictures of bees and wasps visiting flowers. The first approach is to compose your picture with the flower and wait for the bee; the alternative, for those with less patience, is to follow the bees and then take the shot.



Lilium columbianum “Columbia Lily”
with Hummingbird

Keep an eye open for a variety of birds that inhabit the surrounding area, this is where your long lens will show off its capabilities.

Walk around and determine what your subject will be. Set up your camera, tripod, etc. Before you hit the shutter button, take the time to look through your

viewfinder and carefully evaluate your framing, your focus and see if your frame is clear of any unwanted items: sticks, weeds, grass, spiderwebs and other debris that may ruin a perfectly good picture, or require unnecessary editing later. Remember that you can't edit objects out later in “Nature” competition images!



Calypso bulbosa “Calypso Orchid”

Additionally, look at the plant itself; is it wilting, does it have brown spots, or other imperfections, are unwanted insects on the plant/flower? You want to deal with all these items prior to pressing the shutter. You can brush insects or dirt off the flower, remove twigs, bend grass & weeds to remove them from the field of view, and if you have a pair of scissors you could do some minor “gardening.”

If you are using live-view, magnify the image and scan the scene for any imperfections, before you shoot, that could ruin your picture, or lead to hours of editing time later. Otherwise look at the magnified image on the display.

After you take your picture, look at the RGB histogram to ensure that you have pushed the exposure to the right (if not saving only jpg images in the camera) but have not blown out any of the colours. As Herman Surkis says, “do it right in-camera!”

A field guide to Pacific State or BC Coastal wildflowers is useful to determine what species you have found. You can also use the E-Flora website at linnet.geog.ubc.ca

External Competitions: “Showing our Images on a World Stage”

by Ian Faris, Competitions Committee

VCC has been entering competitions as a Club since the 1940s. This is my third year on the Committee as External Competitions Coordinator. I took over from the esteemed Michael Lambie, who last filled this post in 2009-2010, a banner year for the VCC.

There are a multitude of reasons for competing in External Competitions including: exposure for the Club nationally and internationally, comparing members' photographic skills (as measured by judges' scores) against the skills of other photographers, the occasional thrill of winning, the chance of seeing one's winning image in a magazine or in a travelling show of top images, etc.

Entering as a Club involves several steps: choosing competitions to enter, soliciting and selecting images, preparing and submitting entries, preparing and presenting results, and posting to the website (thanks to Garry). We have several ways of selecting images: general calls for images, review of top placed images in internal competitions, and requesting specific images from members. Images are then critically reviewed and a selection made for the competition, each of which has its own rules to which each individual or club entry must adhere.

CAPA (Canadian Association for Photographic Art) asks member clubs to host Competitions. The Competitions Committee and three judges judged 198 images from 33 Clubs for the March 2012 Digital Open competition.

In each of the last three years, the Club has entered six CAPA Competitions: Lions Gate Camera Club Celebration of Nature, North Shore Challenge, and the Victoria vs. Eastwood Challenge (Glasgow, Scotland). In 2009 we took first place in the Club Category in the Nature's Best Photography Magazine Photo Contest (this competition has since been discontinued).

The Club typically places within the top ten Clubs. Recent placings have included: 2nd in the 2012 LGCC Celebration of Nature, tied for 2nd in the 2012 North Shore Challenge, and 2nd (Silver Certificate) in the CAPA Theme “Architectural Interiors.” The Victoria vs. Eastwood Challenge has been a closely fought contest since its inception in 2007 with each Club placing 1st three times. The Club's entries and club results are on the website under “[Galleries – External Comps](#)”.

January 2012 Competition Judges

We would like to thank our January Competition judges: Dan Jones, Len Staples, Isabelle Dhavernas, Francois Clecroux and Arnold Lim, plus our three Novice category judges, Mike Wooding, Don Peterson and Doug McLean.

Dan Jones (Camera Club of Ottawa – Intermediate Creative and Theme): Dan is a master photographer in slides, colour and b/w prints, and has led the club's critique group for 5 years. Dan has been involved professionally in photography since 1994, working with several stock agencies. His latest venture is the production of archival, fine art prints which have appeared in many galleries in Southern Ontario. danjones@videtron.ca

Len Staples (Camera Club of Ottawa – Advanced Creative and Theme): Len embraced photography to record the impact and interpret the meaning of Canada's unique landscapes. His prints are on display in many Canadian diplomatic missions worldwide. Len has exhibited in solo and group shows. The Canadian Consulate in Shanghai exhibited his work in 2003. A number of his architectural images were displayed at Expo 2010 in Shanghai. lenstaplesphoto@rogers.com

Isabelle Dhavernas (Camera Club of Ottawa – Intermediate Open and Nature): Isabelle's artistic life has been expressed through writing & photography. She has been the editor of the Club's “Shutter Release” for four years. She organized a Club exhibition in 2010 at the Orange Gallery, Ottawa, and exhibited her own photos at the Cité Collégiale in 2007. dhavernas@rogers.com

Francois Clecroux (Delta Photo Club – Advanced Open & Nature): Francois has worked as a professional photographer, is a member of CAPA, RPS, NAPP and Past President of Delta Photo Club. He is a Certified CAPA Judge and teaches workshops. His work has appeared in “Canadian Camera” (CAPA), “Popular Photography” and “Digital Photographer” (UK). Francois has done volunteer photography for the Sierra Club and the Western Canada Wilderness Committee. francois@eyesonphoto.com

Arnold Lim (Victoria - Intermediate and Advanced Prints): Arnold is based in Victoria and is a staff and freelance photojournalist and videographer for newspapers including the Globe and Mail, Times Colonist, Black Press and others worldwide. He was the Photo Manager for B.C. Place Stadium for the 2010 Olympics. Arnold is also the Photojournalism instructor at Western Academy of Photography. www.arnoldlimphotography.com



*Advanced Monochrome Print - 1st
“Geometry Lesson” by Hanna Cowpe*

Judge’s comments: There is a photojournalistic edge intertwined with a beautifully captured graphic art piece that is enjoyable to watch. I love the image.



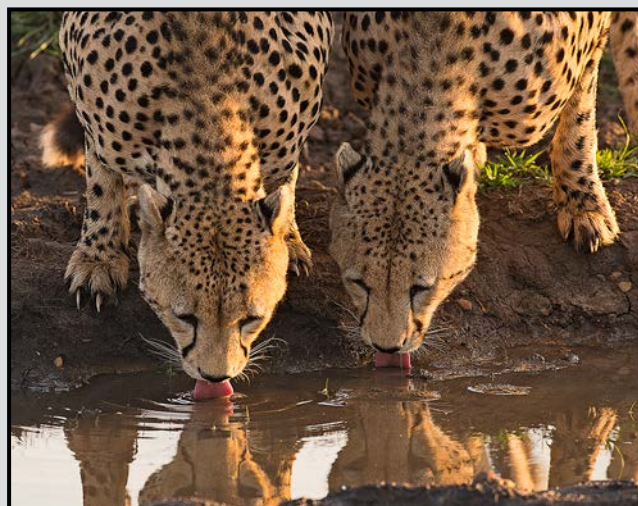
*Advanced Digital Nature - 1st “Those Coyote Eyes”
by Ken Meadows*

Judge’s comments: This is a wonderful image of a close-up of the Coyote showing great detail. The image is very sharp, well exposed and well composed with an appropriate amount of DOF.



*Advanced Digital Creative - 2nd “Guiding Light”
by John Lockyer*

Judge’s comments: A dramatic image partly due to the creative choice of colour and viewpoint.



*Advanced Nature Print - 1st “Cheetah Brothers”
by Elaine Freedman*

Judge’s comments: This is a great moment. The simultaneous lapping of the water is nicely captured here. Good photograph of a great moment.



Advanced Open Print - 1st "Rite of Passage"
by Lois Burton

Judge's comments: This is a strong image. The background is clean, the focus is on point, and the subject is engaging.



Intermediate Digital Nature "Just Arrived"
by Allan Ng

Judge's comments: This image deserves the highest score, background is perfectly blurred, the sharp dragon fly is perfectly sharp, well done.



Intermediate Digital Theme - 1st "Airtime"
by Jonathan Adams

Judge's comments: Great timing to capture action, perfect exposure and lighting to show detail in white water, subject is large in frame to create great impact.



Intermediate Nature Print - 1st "Black Bear (Ursus americanus)"
by Jacqui James

Judge's comments: Nicely done. I like the crispness of the wet paws and the bear meandering toward the salmon.



Intermediate Open Digital - 1st “Eye-Popping Buttons” by Nick Watkins

Judge’s comments: Intriguing image, wonderful color schemes, top of image and bottom give something different in the composition which is pleasing.



Novice Digital Open - 1st “The Grind” by Chelsea Smyth

Judge’s comments: I like almost everything about this image! Exposure is perfect with nice detail evident throughout the dynamic range. Focus is also excellent the focal point, the left foot of the climber in sharp focus. The photographer made a several good choices.



Intermediate Open Print - 1st “Back to Nature” by Richard Webber

Judge’s comments: There is an interesting theme of yin and yang here contrasted both in the colour and the black & white imagery coupled with the nature vs. man made theme in this photograph. The extra sharpening in the imagery adds an interesting texture to the wheel. A well done still life.



Novice Open Print “Male Rufuos Hummingbird” by Steve Lustig

Judge’s comments: The shot captured the hummingbird in a great pose and it’s well placed in the frame. The bird is absolutely sharp showing the fine detail in feathers of the body and head. The colour is accurately reproduced on the print with the clean complimentary background. Multiple flash helps fully illuminate this quick little bird. A beautiful shot demonstrating a high degree of technical expertise.

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Photo by Jason Kazuta, 2012

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Partners



by Paul Ross

This is part three of a continuing series documenting our travels across North America in 2011 and 2012.

When my son was in grade 4 we decided that when he graduated from high school we would travel for a year. That turned into "we will circumnavigate North America in our truck and trailer." I turned that into a photo project "I was going to get pictures of all of the Provinces and States". In this part we start in Newfoundland and head home for a conference at the end of October and Christmas.

After the ferry from Newfoundland and a quick stay in North Sydney, NS and then with friends in Pictou, NS, we moved onto Prince Edward Island. It was already September 20th so we had to start heading east.

PEI is an interesting place. Where Newfoundland was barren, rocky, with short trees and ponds (lakes), PEI is green and red farmland with farms and small towns dotted all over the island. At any point you can pull over and get an award winning photograph, farm fields with the ocean as a backdrop, or century old churches on a cliff above the sea. It was strange to get a provincial PEI map that folded out to the same size as a British Columbia map but you can drive the length of the island in less than a day.



Once again however, our time was limited as the campground was shutting down for the winter season and we were one of a few campers left (September 20th).

We started heading south, from PEI to St. Martins, NB, on the Bay of Fundy. There we walked on the sea floor and explored the sea caves when the tide went out. Here, even with the rainy and foggy weather, there was lots to photograph, including covered bridges and boats sitting on the sea floor when the tide went out.

From St. Martins we continued south. We made a stop in St. John, NB to see the reversing falls. When the tide comes in, the sea level is higher than the water level of the river, so it pushes the river upstream and the incoming tide goes upstream (tidal bore) over a fall.

We crossed the US border and headed south. We had a quick stop in Maine to set up all of our cell phones and iPads on the US network and then headed further south. We stayed in Massachusetts for a couple of days where I spent the days getting pictures of all of the surrounding states. One of the goals of this trip was to get pictures from 49 of the states; in particular I was looking for old barns and farm houses. In one day I was able to get pictures from Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island. Once again the campgrounds were closing and we had to head further south.

I had hoped to be getting pictures of the fall leaves on the east coast but it was late September and we were just a week or two early. We also ran into issues left over from Hurricane Irene. Campgrounds were closed or still very soggy even though the hurricane was late August and it was now early October. We ended up in Cooperstown, NY, the home of the Baseball Hall of Fame. During Hurricane Irene Cooperstown got 18 inches of rain. Roads were closed and bridges were washed out. We did spend a day at the Hall of Fame which provided a variety of photos. This was my first trip to the east coast and it was different seeing buildings and structures that were built in the 1700's and early 1800's.



We moved further south to Harrisburg, PA. This campground was open all year and most of the campers were full-timers and they were packing up and heading south to the warmth of Florida. We spent

a day in Gettysburg, PA and did a treasure hunt put on by Lincoln's Lost Treasure (lincolnslosttreasure.com). This gave us opportunity to explore the whole town while searching for a "treasure." I also spent a couple of days barn hunting in both Pennsylvania and Maryland. Crossing the state line into Maryland takes you across the "Mason-Dixon Line" which was the division between the north and south during the American Civil War.

We started to head west and moved quickly through West Virginia into Kentucky. Here the weather broke and we enjoyed the warmest weather since Whitehorse, YT. Kentucky was beautiful. Big horse farms, green fields and driveways that lead to houses that can't be seen from the road, oh, and a Jack Daniel's Whiskey plant just down the road.

We could have spent the winter in Kentucky but we had to be home in less than a month so we continued west, sort of. The interstate was closed to the west of us because a bridge over the Ohio at Louisville, Kentucky was closed so we had to detour south west and then north to get back on track.

We cut through southern Illinois where I was able to find a few barns for my collection and then it was off to Missouri. Everything was getting flatter. I spent several days driving down country roads searching out old barns and the occasional nature sanctuary. As we moved into Kansas and headed toward Colorado the road appeared to be flat but we were climbing all day and we were at over 5,000 feet by the end of the day. This also meant that we had freezing temperatures overnight even though it was only October 10th.

The drive from Kansas into Denver was spectacular. At first you can only see the tips of the snow capped peaks of the mountains, and as you get closer to Denver you can see more of the mountains beyond Denver. You could spend a lifetime taking pictures of Denver and the area surrounding it, unfortunately I only had a couple of days and then we moved on.

We drove north to Wyoming (we do this drive again later in the trip) and cut through the Rockies (it was very windy and they have a variable speed limit based on the wind) and then through northern Utah into Idaho.

The area around Twin Falls, ID, is a great area to stop. The Snake River goes over Shoshone Falls and is a spectacular sight. I was lucky to capture some rainbows in the mist from the falls. In addition, this is

where Evil Knievel tried to jump the Snake River on his (rocket powered) motorcycle. In town they have a bridge over the Snake River where they allow Base Jumping. I got some pictures of 4 guys jumping off the bridge. The last guy walked along the railing before he jumped.



The freeway at this point follows the Old Oregon Trail and there are remnants of covered wagons, old farm houses, barns and other antique farm equipment on display along the road way.



We cut up through Moses Lake, WA, and then to Osoyoos, BC. Here we were in the desert and it was cool at night but warm during the day. The campground in Osoyoos was open all year and is a Snowbird winter destination. Not as warm as Arizona but with lakes, wineries and clear blue skies, it was a great place to spend a couple of days taking pictures. From there we went to Kamloops for a conference and then headed home.

This was the end of our first of three loops of North America. Our next loop will take us south to LA where we will turn left and head for the Atlantic Ocean.

Backup Your Data

by Richard James

First, a question, "You do back up your valuable data don't you?" If you answered yes, skip to the next paragraph, if not read on. It is a given that all and every device will fail at some time in its life. This applies to hard drives, DVDs and USB drives as well as other components of your computer. The only question is when; "dead on arrival" (DOA) is simple, it just doesn't work when you buy it. The problem arises when a device fails in service at an unpredictable time. Now that we understand what the problem is, we can talk about how to back up your valuable data.

If you bought an "off-the-shelf" computer it is most likely that it has one physical hard drive which is probably not even split into separate partitions (think of the drive as a filing cabinet, partitions as drawers and file folders as folders). The problem here is that the operating system, programs and your data are all in one box. If that box fails, or the operating system gets so corrupted that it has to be reinstalled, then there is a very good chance that either you've lost all your data or it will cost you a lot of money to have it recovered by a data recovery service.

The solution to this is to store your data on two independent devices. This means two physical hard drives which may be one inside the computer and one outside in a "drive dock," both internal to the computer or both external in drive docks. Adding an external drive in a drive dock is both cheap and simple. You need the drive dock which can have a single or double bay, and a "bare" 3½" drive. You simply plug the drive dock into a spare USB 3 or eSATA 6 GB port on the computer, plug the power supply in, carefully insert the drive into the drive slot, and you're pretty well in business. You can also buy proprietary solutions which come complete with a drive in a case and proprietary software, but the cost is much more significant than doing it this way.

Now you have to devise a backup strategy that you are comfortable with. My backup system has two primary components. The operating system, software and my "business" files are backed up every night to alternate external hard drives with an automated process. My image files are backed up manually every time I finish an editing session. I simply copy the entire folder I have been working on from the "working" drive to the "backup" drive. You can use the file manager that came with your operating system for this or, you can use a number of

other tools. The one I use is a file manager that shows you two different drives at the same time and you can simply drop and drag folders from one to the other. The way I do this only overwrites changed or new files and does not delete anything from the backup drive.

Either way, I always have access to the last version of whatever it is I've been working on. The worst-case scenario is if the working drive fails and I have not yet copied the data to its backup. In that case all I've lost is what I did since the last backup. In addition, for my non-image files, I can use the backup software to retrieve previous versions as it does not overwrite them, it only appends newly changed files.

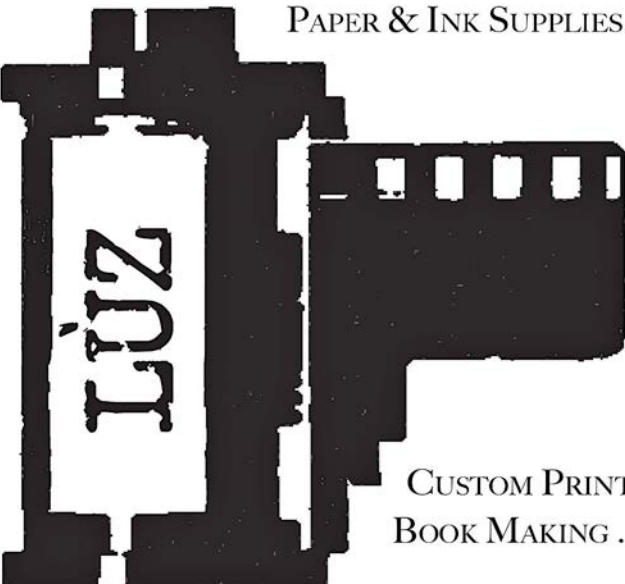
Ideally, you should keep one copy of the files "off-site" so that if your house burns down after the earthquake, your other data-set is more easily retrievable.

Prices fluctuate but you should be able to buy a good quality 1 TB hard drive for \$100 and a two-bay drive dock for \$50. The backup software I use retails at \$120 (for Windows and Mac computers). The file manager that I use is \$38 and has many more features than the file manager provided with the Windows operating system.

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Floral Dream

by Donna Robertson

I enjoy photographing nature in general and flowers in particular in unique or unusual lighting situations. In this image taken at Government House, the light shining through the flower caught my attention.



This image was taken with a Pentax K20D camera with a 100 mm macro lens at an aperture set at f4 to get shallow depth of field, so the detail of the flower would fade into the softness of the background.

I often add textures to an image in Photoshop to create a painterly effect. I have collected a variety of textures that I can apply to images to create different effects. These textures come from a variety of subjects found in different locations, for example, particle board photographed in the Yukon and paint from a junkyard on Hornby Island. I always keep my eye open for interesting textures to add to this collection.

There are several ways to create different effects using textures. In this image, I added two layers of textures to create the effect I was seeking. The textures are added to the original photograph of the flower as individual layers. If the colour of the texture is inappropriate or too strong, it can be changed or modified in Photoshop using a hue/saturation adjustment. Also, the effect of the texture can be further modified to create a more subtle effect by adjusting either the opacity of the texture layer or its blending mode from normal to overlay or soft light. Conversely, the impact can be heightened using the multiply or hard light blending modes.

The important thing is to experiment with the textures in different ways to find a result that pleases you and creates the effect you want.

Light in Yonder Window

by Penny Coddling

This image was made on January 13th as part of the field trip for the recent HDR workshop. It was a dull day and images that had a wide enough range of light to require HDR were scarce. However, I have always been attracted to images taken through windows, whether I am inside or outside the building. As dusk fell, I noticed the lamp in the second story window of Standard Furniture at Store and Fisgard Streets.

I particularly liked the contrast between the curving shape of the lamp base and the lines formed by the window frame and the interior walls. The matching colours of the bricks and the lamp shade also attracted my eye. The image was bright, so my five HDR shots were taken at -2.5 to +1.5 EV.

I used Photomatix to merge the images; tone mapping started with the preset "Painterly 1." I made a few adjustments to improve contrast and detail.

Because the shot was taken by shooting up from street level, I had to adjust perspective in Photoshop. I did this using Free Transform after placing vertical and horizontal guides. The image was then cropped to 8 by 12 inches. Two other adjustments were made: I desaturated the image almost 50% to tone down the reds and added a curve to enhance contrast. The final image captured the glowing nature of that lamp as the darkness advanced.



March Tuesday Shoots

by Caspar Davis

Minimalism was the topic for January's first Tuesday shoot, but the shoot was canceled because of heavy rain. We will therefore have another Minimalism shoot on March 5th.

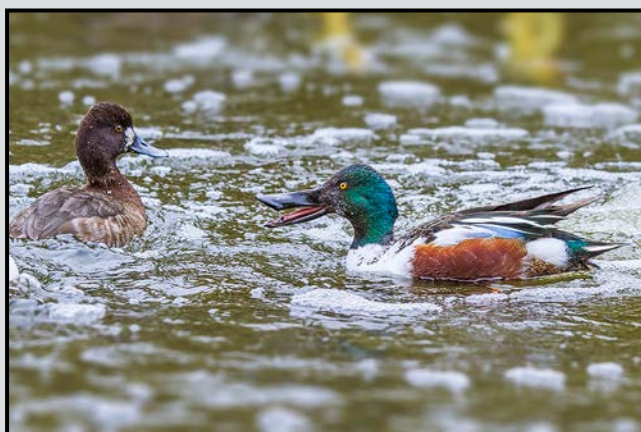
I have posted detailed information about Minimalism on the pop-up page on the club calendar, but I would also refer you to the excellent short essay at digital-photography-school.com/forum/94015-post1.html.

For the second shoot, on March 19th, the theme will be Ducks and Herons. The most obvious place to find them is Beacon Hill Park, although there may also be some ducks in the Inner Harbour.

The Great Blue Herons are nesting in the tall trees on the North side of the big pond in Beacon Hill Park, and there should be opportunities for shots of herons in flight, including some with nest-building materials in their beaks.

Ducks are harder to catch in flight because they need to fly fast to keep their heavy bodies airborne, but there should be a good variety of them on the pond, including my favorite, the colorful Northern Shovelers.

Birds are a favorite subject for photographers because of their natural beauty, and they always offer interesting challenges. To capture flying birds you have to pick them up quickly and pan to follow their flight. Use continuous focus if your camera supports it. If the background is



the sky, or bright water, you may have to increase the exposure by as much as two stops if you want to get detail and not just silhouettes. But you need to reduce the exposure when shooting them against trees or rocks

Downtown Streets

by Richard James

There are lots of photographic opportunities on streets downtown. There are all sorts of subjects varying from "Street photography" (see the article by Don Peterson in the [December 2010 Close-Up](#)), urban architecture (buildings), and isolated details of building features or other objects. You can also throw in subjects like the waterfront, reflections, store windows, and generic street scenes.

I covered "Grand Buildings" in the [January 2013 Close-Up](#), so I will leave them aside. For streetscapes and architectural details, or buildings on a larger scale, Fan Tan Alley and the adjacent block of Fisgard Street have numerous opportunities. Remember that Fan Tan Alley is reputed to be the narrowest public street in Canada. Both areas give you the opportunity to shoot architectural details and storefronts including produce on the street, as well as some of the characters that inhabit the area.

Close by is lower Johnson Street (Lo-Jo) between Government and Wharf with numerous buildings whose facades have been restored to something like their original grandeur.

To me, one of the problems shooting here is, "What do you do with the cars?" Perhaps shooting very early in the morning, or late at night, when there are fewer vehicles parked may be a solution.

Another issue on this street, and downtown streets in general, is that the South face is in shadow except for about an hour in the morning and evening during the summer when the sun rises or sets far enough north so that the light falls on the building facades, ideally at a shallow angle emphasizing the surface detail.

Two good locations for shooting the downtown waterfront are at the Delta Ocean Point Resort on Songhees Road, and the Inn at Laurel Point on Montreal Street. Both work very well at sunset with the soft warm light on the buildings across the harbour. If you time it right, there are one or two days a month where you might be able to get the full moon rising above the buildings.

When setting up for these shots, you might want to consider perspective correction and HDR as noted in the Grand Buildings article that I referred to.

Choose Which Matters Most

by Nancy MacNab

So you've found a wonderful subject, located the ideal angle, and framed your perfect shot. The light is beautiful, with shadows carefully controlled and placed. Now to capture it in your camera!

Now you have to decide on the exposure. Check out the colour tones in the picture. Are they predominantly light shades? If so, your camera will want to make them look darker, so you will have to add light, or over-expose, to have them remain light in your photograph. If most of the picture will be dark tones, then the camera will try to make them look lighter, so you will have to do the opposite and subtract light, or under-expose, to maintain the dark shades. You can do this by adjusting your aperture or shutter speed, or by using exposure compensation (check your manual for how to do this).

Which should you set first, the aperture or the shutter speed? That will depend on a couple of factors: how much of the photo from the point nearest to you to the point farthest from you do you want to have in focus? Known as depth of field, this factor is controlled by your aperture.

Is your subject stationary or moving? Remember, flowing water also counts as a moving subject, and the wind could cause movement in something that is otherwise inanimate. Do you want that movement to be frozen or blurred? This aspect is controlled by your shutter speed.

Another question is whether you are moving while photographing. Taking pictures from a moving vehicle or boat will also require you to increase your shutter speed. Using a tripod or other support to stabilise your camera and lens allows the use of longer shutter speeds, while getting a sharp shot with a hand-held camera requires a faster shutter speed.

Remember that you have a third variable that you can change to get the exposure you want: ISO. If you cannot get the shutter speed you want at your chosen aperture, then you can increase the ISO in order to do so. Your aperture, shutter speed and ISO work together to allow the same amount of light to reach the film or sensor. As the sensitivity of the film/sensor increases, it requires less light to create the same exposure.

This is accomplished by using a smaller aperture (bigger number, such as f16, or f22), or a faster shutter speed. If you want to have a shallow depth of field by using a large aperture (smaller number, such as f 2.8 or f4), you will need a faster shutter speed than if you want great depth of field. If you want to blur motion by using a slow shutter speed, then you will need a small aperture (big



number) and a less sensitive ISO, such as 100 or 200.

The photo of the squirrel monkey was taken from a canoe with other photographers also in it, using a hand-held camera, on a day when it was overcast and drizzling. What were the factors that needed to be considered when setting the exposure?

The subject, the monkey (one of a troop) may be small in the frame (requiring cropping), sometimes stationary and sometimes moving, with the speed varying from very limited (moving leaves to find food) to leaping from branch to branch. The light level was low due to the heavy cloud cover, and the monkeys were moving along the edge of the Amazon jungle, so there was a lot of shadow in the area, which contributed to the low light level.

I did not have a tripod, so motion blur from hand-holding the camera also had to be considered, as did the movement of the canoe, both due to the water and due to movement of the other people in it.

If I wanted to freeze the motion of a quick-moving monkey, or at least get a recognizable subject rather than a brown blur, I needed a fairly fast shutter speed. Because shutter speed and aperture work inversely together, that meant an open aperture for shallow depth of field, which helps to isolate the monkey from the background.

Because of the low light, I had to increase the ISO in order for the other two factors to fall into place. Final settings: ISO 1600, aperture f6.3, and shutter speed of 1/640 second with the lens set at 200mm on a camera with a 1.5 crop factor (300 mm equivalent).

So in summary, if you are using a tripod and photographing a beautiful landscape, flower or other unmoving subject, you will usually set your aperture first. If you are shooting a moving subject, decide whether you want to freeze or blur the motion and set your shutter speed accordingly. And if you are moving, you will need to increase your shutter speed in order to freeze your own movement.

by John Coenraads

I confess! I'm a hardcore pixel peeper. At the risk of becoming paranoid about what Photoshop is doing to my precious pixels, I sometimes examine an image at 400% to see what I can learn. Studying the noise in a dark field image (lens cap on, 1/60 second) proved to be instructive. Figure 1 compares two dark field images shot at ISO 100 and ISO 1600. Derived directly from Raw data files, repeated application of Levels has brought out each and every non-zero pixel. As expected, at ISO 1600, pixels showing at least some noise are much more prevalent than at ISO 100 and the reason is well known. Shooting at a higher ISO really means shooting an underexposed image, by four stops in this case, which is then electronically amplified to compensate. In the same way that turning up the volume on a soft piece of music brings out the background hiss present in every amplifier, amplifying the sensor output also brings out the electrical noise that is always present.

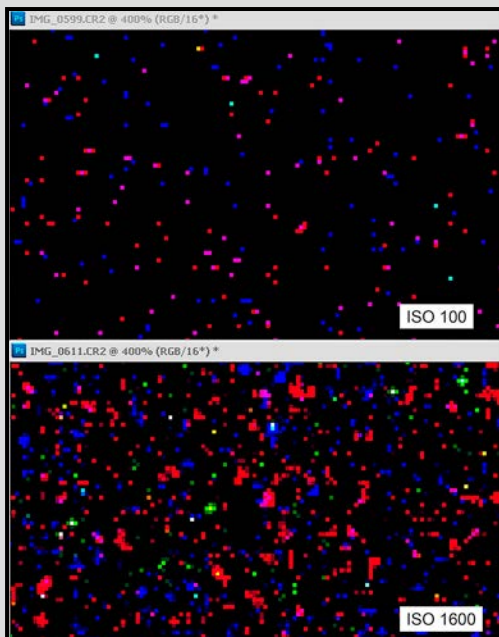


Figure 1: A comparison of noise at ISO 100 and ISO 1600 in dark field images. The effect has been highly exaggerated for clarity.

Colour Channel Differences

At low ISO, the red noise pixels outnumbered the blue noise pixels by a ratio of about two to one. At higher ISOs, this ratio starts to approach one to one. By contrast, as can be seen in figure 1, green noise pixels occur much less frequently, by a factor of about ten.

There are various reasons for this, but the main reason for the disparity between the green channel and the others must certainly be due to the Bayer array. For each red and blue pixel, there are two green pixels. The demosaicing algorithm thus has double the information to work with in interpolating the green pixels. For a red (or blue) pixel, three pixels need to be computed by interpolation. One might expect that a noisy pixel would “bleed” into neighbouring pixels during interpolation but an examination of figure 1 shows that, fortunately, this is not the case. It makes sense then to apply noise reduction selectively to the red and blue channels. Noise reduction inevitably results in a softening of edges and detail and since the green channel makes the largest contribution to luminosity (perceived brightness), leaving it untouched will minimize any impact on the sharpness of the image.

Noise and JPEG Conversion

Unfortunately, bad things happen to noise during JPEG compression. Figure 2 shows some dark field noise before and after conversion to JPEG by Photoshop. In both cases, Levels was used afterwards to bring out the details.

It is clear that each individual noise pixel has ended up leaving a footprint in its 8x8 pixel neighbourhood. That this happens is not surprising since part of the

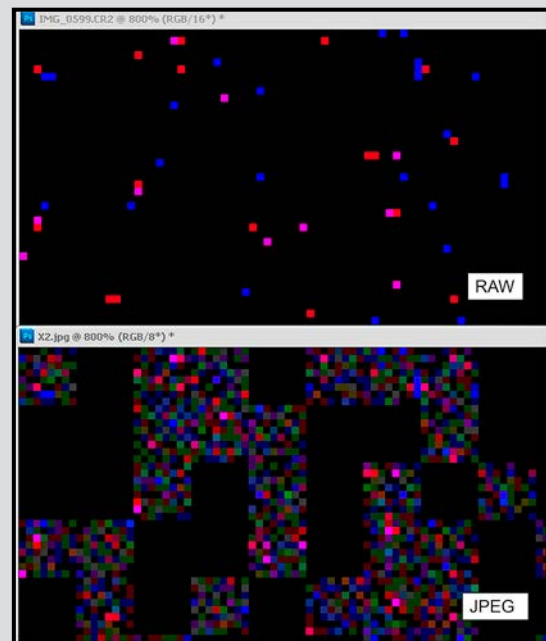


Figure 2: A greatly exaggerated example of how (noise) pixels get “smeared out” during JPEG compression.

compression process involves analyzing the image using a grid of 8x8 pixel squares.

Reconstructing the image, involves the “layering” of so-called basis functions which have a difficult time reproducing something as detailed as a single noise pixel. The result: the noise has now contaminated its surrounding pixel blocks.

What this shows is the importance of applying noise reduction right after Raw conversion before any other processing takes place and certainly before any compression. The difficulty of reducing noise after JPEG conversion may be compared, crudely, to the difficulty of cleaning up after your dog after having stepped in it.

Another worrisome observation is that the noise, mainly in the red and blue channels, has somehow “bled” into the green channel. My suspicion is that this occurs during the colour space transformation from RGB to YCbCr where Y represents the brightness (luminance) of a pixel made up mostly of green but also some red and blue. During decoding back to RGB, some cross contamination remains.

At low ISO and normally exposed images, noise is usually not an issue. But when bringing out detail in shadows or catching the action of a bird in flight, noise reduction can reduce the mottling in the shadows or bring back that silky-smooth blue sky. It is also just one more reason to shoot Raw.

For Canon Users Only

Every digital photographer knows that with increased speed (ISO number) comes increased noise. So I was very surprised to learn that for some Canon shooters (I don't know about all models) matters may not be that simple (March/April 2011, Digital Photo Pro: *The Truth About Digital ISO*).

Testing our Canon EOS 60D, I shot a dark field image at every possible ISO setting from 100 to 6400 in both RAW and JPEG. I looked at each histogram and (with statistics turned on) decided to use the average pixel value to measure the amount of noise in each JPEG image. The results, plotted on the graph in figure 3, were not what I expected.

Apparently Canon, in its infinite wisdom, handles the base ISO values (100, 200, 400, 800,...) differently from the 1/3 stop intermediate settings. Images shot at

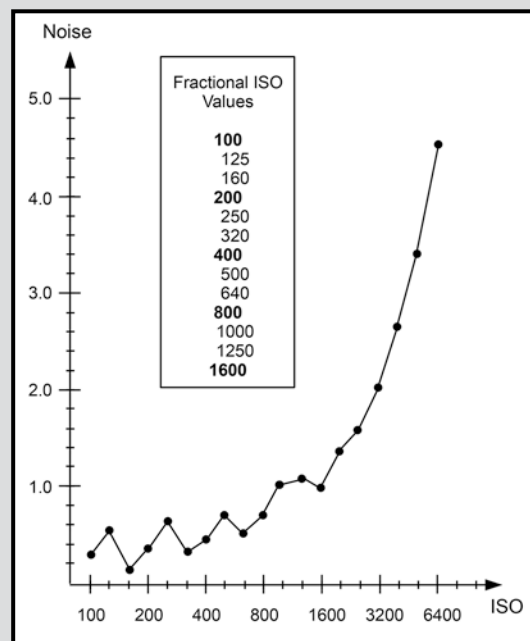


Figure 3: Graph showing how noise levels fluctuate as camera ISO increases.

the base ISO values have the sensor output multiplied by an analog amplifier before sending it to the Analog to Digital Converter. But an image shot at ISO 125 (100 + 1/3 stop) is actually shot at ISO 100 and then digitally multiplied (pushed) to ISO 125.

In the same way that pushing film results in extra grain, pushing a digital image amplifies any noise that is present. On the other hand, shooting at ISO 160 (200 – 1/3 stop) involves digitally pulling an image shot at ISO 200 resulting in reduced noise. Similarly, doublings of ISO 160 (320, 640) also benefit from this reduction in noise.

So if one is trying to bring out fine detail in deep shadows, the reduced noise at ISO 160, 320, 640 may be worth pursuing. But there is a downside: shooting at ISO 160, 320 or 640 does result in a 1/3 stop decrease in dynamic range, i.e., the ability to capture details in the deepest shadows without blowing out highlights. But when a typical dynamic range is 10 or 11 stops, a loss of only 1/3 stop may be a small price to pay.

When I repeated the experiment using a Canon EOS 30D, I obtained similar results. It is also worth looking at Tony Lorentzen's ISO Noise Test Video (vimeo.com/10473734). Although he was shooting video with a Canon EOS 7D, it very graphically shows the noise levels tracking the exact same pattern seen in figure 3.

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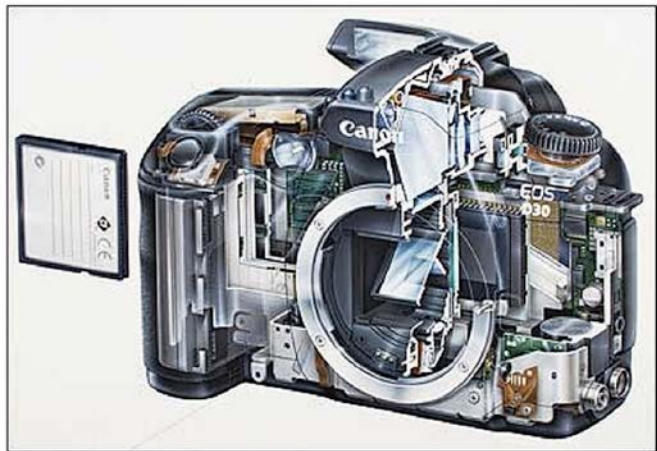


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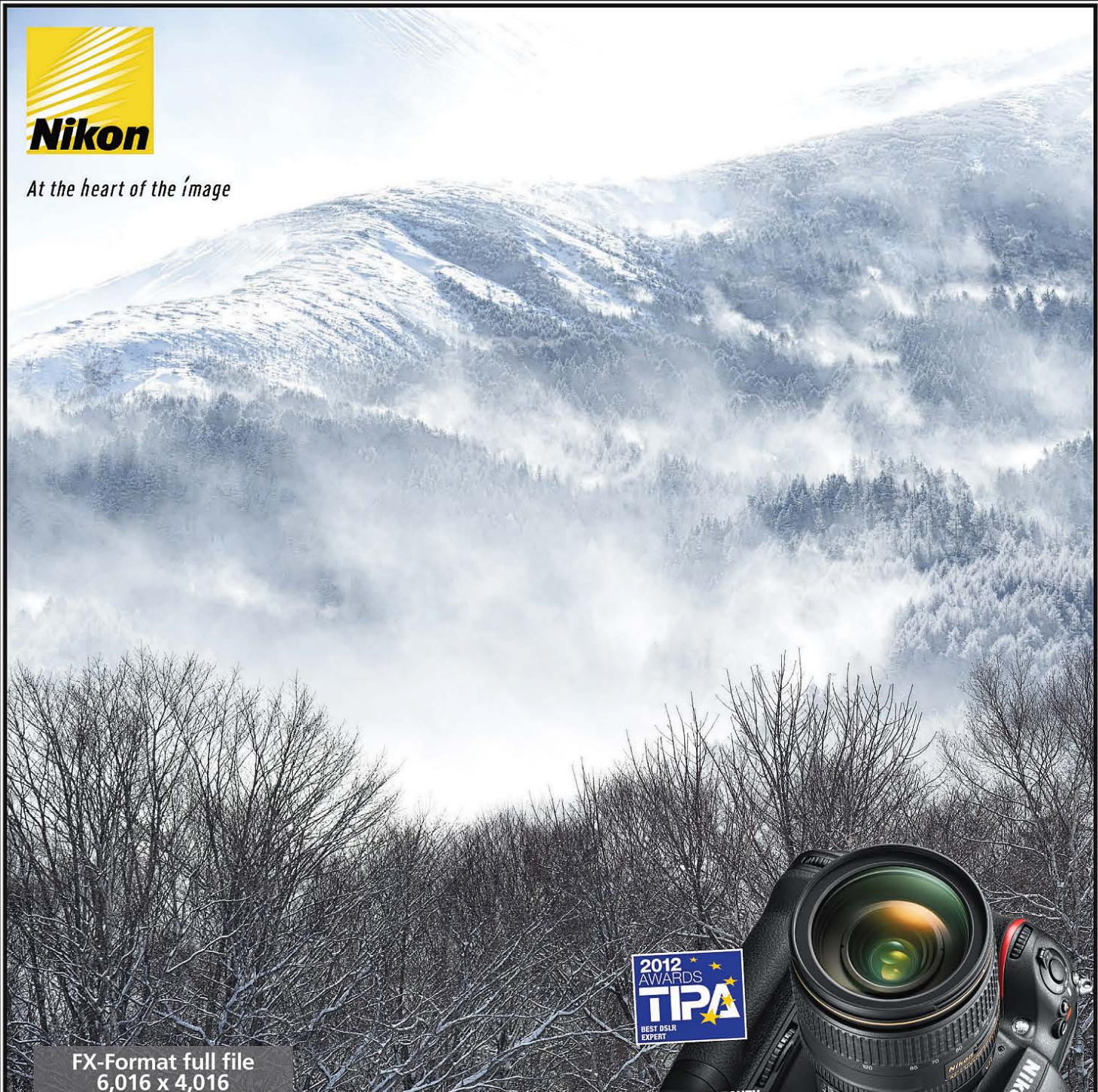
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