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2011 iCONIC

PHOTO LOCATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA

A six-part series developed by the editors of *Digital Photo* to identify favorite photo locations of pro photographers around the U.S. and Canada.

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1. Ouray Ice Park, Ouray, Colorado – From December to March each year Ouray, Colorado is the epicenter of the ice climbing world embedded in the heart of the San Juan Mountains. **Recommended Vantage Point:** The Ouray Ice Park is in Box Canyon on the south side of Ouray just off Highway 550. The best vantage points are from the bridges that cross over the canyon and on the easily accessible catwalks that were built specifically for viewing the climbs. For this image, shot from a catwalk across the canyon, the ultra sharp and ultra wide Nikkor 14-24mm f/2.8 helped to show the entire ice climb and the exposed position of the steep ice climb. The 14-24mm with its two Extra-low Dispersion (ED) elements is optimized for corner-to-corner sharpness with FX-format Nikons—critical to make this composition work.

2. Crystal Cave, Jemez Mountains, New Mexico – The Land of Enchantment offers a phenomenal assortment of adventure sports locations like the super steep Crystal Cave (pictured here) located in the Jemez Mountains. **Recommended Vantage Point:** Located on the western edge of the Jemez

Mountains on Highway 4, just above Soda Dam, the Crystal Cave is a small but very difficult climbing area for experts only. This image was created with a Nikkor DX 10.5mm f/2.8 Fisheye lens and a few strobes. The Nikkor 10.5 is a compact, ultra sharp fisheye lens that offers a 180-degree field of view and incredible sharpness from edge-to-edge.

3. City Hall, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania – The entrance to historic downtown Philadelphia, City Hall stands out in stark contrast against the modern corporate buildings surrounding it. **Recommended Vantage Point:** As seen from Market Street the eastern visage is adorned with statues and Roman columns. It is certainly the most interesting building in downtown Philadelphia and at night it is lit dramatically. Undaunted by the rain, I shot this image at ISO 1600 with a Nikon D700 and a Nikkor 17-35mm f/2.8 lens. The incredibly low noise of the Nikon D700 allowed me to take this shot handheld at 8:30 PM in the dark. Water drops on the lens account for the wild flare effects in the image and really make the image quite a bit more interesting than it might be otherwise.

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Nikon Creative Lighting System

Great photography requires great light. Nikon's Creative Lighting System offers a comprehensive solution for creating the perfect light for your subjects. The system is a fusion of the latest technologies that allow your Nikon camera to communicate with and intelligently control Nikon Speedlights. The core benefit of the Creative Lighting System is that it uses readings from pre-flashes, along with data from the Matrix Metering System, to

automatically optimize flash output to match the scene for the most balanced background/foreground exposures possible. CLS also allows you to wirelessly control an unlimited number of compatible Nikon Speedlights in up to three separate groups, from up to 33 feet away. Each group's output settings can be remotely set by the

Master unit for the ultimate in creative lighting control.





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Michael Clark is an internationally published photographer specializing in adventure sports, travel, and landscape photography. He produces intense, raw images of athletes pushing their sports to the limit, and has risked life and limb on a variety of assignments to bring back stunning images from remote locations around the world that capture fleeting moments of passion, gusto, flair and bravado in the outdoors. Balancing extreme action with subtle details, striking portraits and wild landscapes, he creates images for the editorial, advertising and stock markets worldwide.



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5. Waimea Bay, Oahu, Hawaii –

In winter, the north shore of Oahu is a treasure trove of ephemeral big waves for surfers and photographers alike – the biggest of those waves form in Waimea Bay. **Recommended Vantage Point:** Waimea Bay is the obvious large bay just north of Haleiwa on the Kamehameha Highway. When big swells roll in the best vantage point is on the north side of the bay at the end of the guardrail. From this position you will need a big lens to capture the action, like the Nikkor 500mm f/4 used to create this image. With the MB-D10 battery grip attached to my Nikon D700 I was able to shoot at 8 fps to capture this fleeting wave that rolled through the bay just as the light hit the water at dawn. The MB-D10 battery grip and the Nikon D700 make for a very versatile setup allowing me to go with a lightweight camera (sans grip) when I need to and alternatively allowing me to blast away at 8 fps in situations like this one, where framing rate means the difference between getting the shot or not.

6. Mono Lake, California –

A high desert lake of uncanny beauty, set at 6,000 feet of altitude, Mono Lake basks in the ethereal light of the Eastern Sier-ras and supports an astounding array of flora and fauna including the fascinating tufa towers that surround the lake. **Recommended Vantage Point:** There are numerous access points for landscape photography via Highway 120, just south of Lee Vin-ing, on the south side of the lake and in my experience dawn is the best time of day to explore and photograph the lake. While exploring the lakeside tufa towers, I shot this image with a Nikkor 17-35mm f/2.8 and a Nikon D700. The extreme sharpness of the optics paired with the FX sensor allowed me to create an extreme sense of depth in this image, which was shot at 17mm.



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4. White Sands National Monument, Alamogordo, New Mexico

Sweeping vistas, subtle pastel colors and miles of stark white gypsum make White Sands one of the wildest places on earth – and one of the Earth’s great natural wonders. **Recommended Vantage Point:** White Sands lies 15 miles south of Alamogordo, New Mexico on Highway 70. Once in the park, aim your camera in any direction at dawn or dusk and you can’t go wrong. The best area for shooting in the park is in the backcountry campground since there are few people who hike out this area and hence, there are very few foot-prints to spoil the mesmerizing patterns in the dunes. A wide-angle lens, like the Nikkor 17-35mm f/2.8 used for this image, is a must to show the grandeur of the dunes and the light reflected by them just before sunrise or just after sun-set. The Nikkor 17-35mm f/2.8 features robust pro-grade construction that keeps the tiny gypsum particles from getting into the camera and lens.



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Picture Control

Available on many Nikon digital cameras—including the new Advanced Cameras with Interchangeable Lenses, the Nikon 1 J1 and V1—Nikon Picture Control allows you to customize the appearance of photos before you shoot. Six preset settings (Standard, Neutral, Vivid, Monochrome, Portrait and Landscape) let you change the look of photos depending on mood or subject, saving you post-capture processing time. Each setting also can be adjusted to provide additional control over sharpness, contrast and other effects. You even can create and save your own custom Picture Control settings.

