

MICHAEL CLARK
PHOTOGRAPHY





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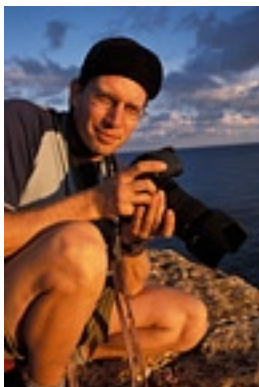
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Ed Strang dirt jumping near Santa Fe. Image created with the Nikon D2x and a Dyna-Lite Uni400jr strobe.

The Year of Stock

Stock photography has become a major force in the photo industry...



It has been one year since my newsletter went to this PDF magazine format and I have heard from a lot of people that they find this informative and inspiring. I have also had rave reviews from people that are not on my mailing list but received it from a friend - so, if you know of others who you think would be interested in this newsletter please feel free to pass it on. As a good friend and mentor once told me “..there is room for all of us.”

This year I have been traveling a bit less than I normally do because I have been focusing on outdoor action and lifestyle images for my stock agencies. In this ever changing profession I have decided to diversify my work so that I can dip my toes into other markets and I have focused a lot of my energy on portraiture. With action adventure photography it is fairly easy to create intense dramatic images but with lifestyle and portraits the impetus is on you as the photographer to come up with an interesting image. Hence, it has been a very nice change to challenge myself as a photographer - and I am very happy with the results.

I am currently represented by four Stock Agencies: WorkbookStock, Aurora [The Outdoor Collection], Getty and Alamy. Two of my agencies, Aurora and Workbook sublicense images via Getty - and that has been the impetus to produce more stock images. Getty, as the largest provider of images in the world, is quickly changing the landscape of the photo industry and as a professional they cannot be ignored unless I want to miss out on a large avenue of income.

The stock world seems to change on a daily basis and I fear where it might go. Getty has already announced radical new royalty free pricing schemes that are going to take a large bite out of rights managed image sales. And in a recent panel discussion at the PhotoPlus Expo in New York, sev-

eral of the top stock agency execs including Getty, Corbis, Workbook, Image Source, Alamy and others participated in an open forum. Of note, Jeffrey Burke, senior VP of Jupiter Images said “Work for hire, I believe, is about to become a very popular idea.” This along with the fact that Getty has already been working with many photographers on a “work for hire” basis has already sent shock waves throughout the industry. When a giant in the industry like Getty can get photographers to give them all rights to their images for \$250 - \$350 per event that makes it incredibly hard for the individual photographer to compete. Welcome to capitalism - I wouldn’t expect anything less and for those of you just starting out be careful.

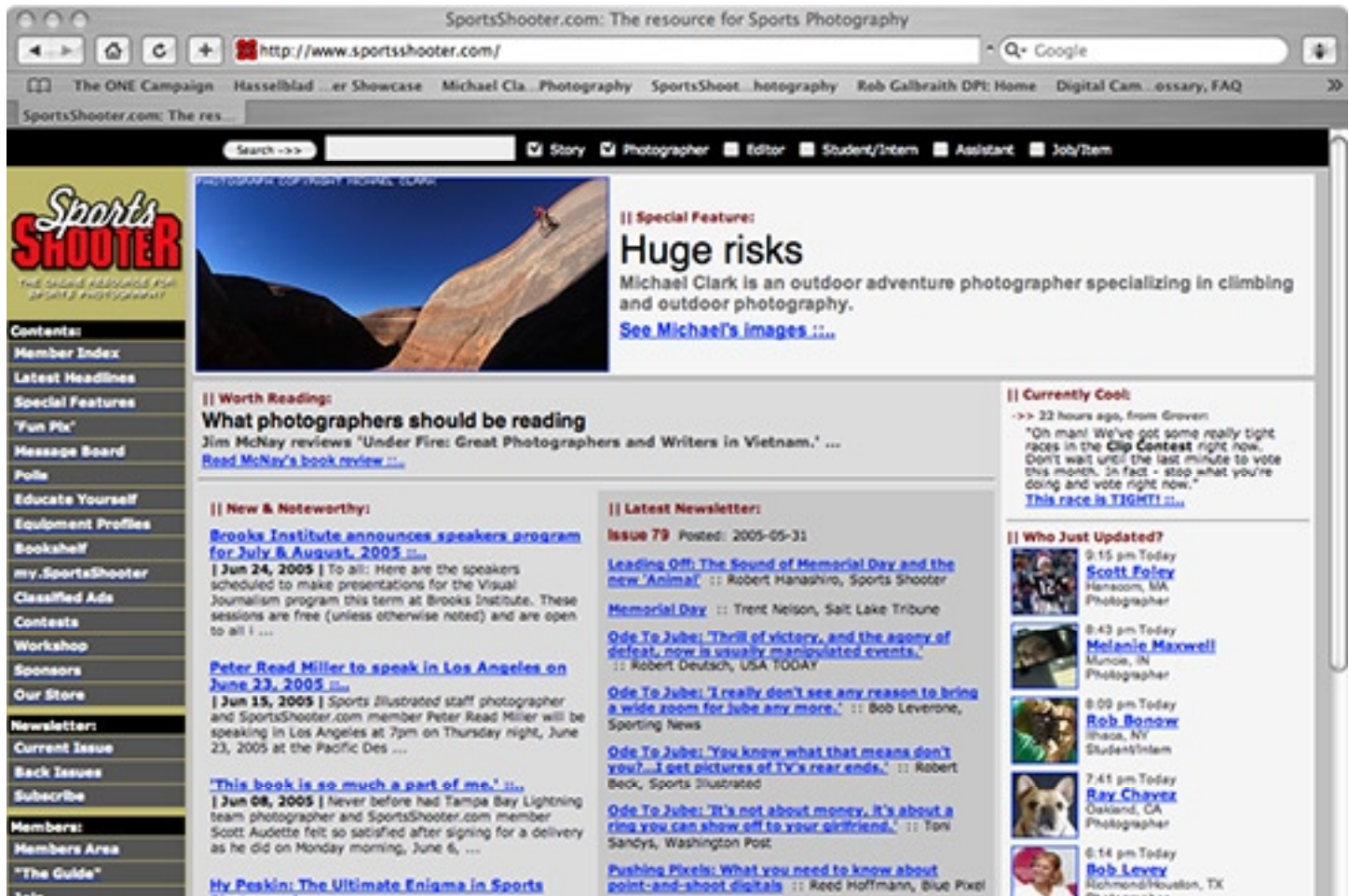
As another avenue of diversification, I have taken on a number of workshops next year with the Santa Fe Workshops, Far Flung Adventures and The Digital Darkroom. I am excited about teaching as it is one of my strengths and it’s a good learning experience for all involved. See the workshop details on page 5 and stay tuned for more details. For all of you out there that enjoy my adventure photography please don’t worry about me neglecting it - adventure photography is why I became a photographer and I will always shoot adventure images - I am just looking to expand into other areas of photography while continuing to shoot the action.

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Sportsshooter.com

Michael's work recently featured on the front page of Sportsshooter.com



SPORTSSHOOTER: Earlier this summer Michael's work was highlighted on sportsshooter.com's website with an image on the front page from a recent extreme mountain biking shoot. Sportsshooter.com is the world's largest organization devoted to sports photography with over 7,000 members worldwide. It is one of the best resources for professional or aspiring professionals to learn more about any aspect of photography - especially the latest real world digital know how.

The "Huge Risks" link took you to my ten image portfolio and member page on Sportsshooter.com. You can still see that portfolio at www.sportsshooter.com/members.html?id=2043. Michael has been a member of Sportsshooter for three years and is also a member of ASMP, Editorial Photographers and the Travel and Outdoor Photographers Alliance (TOPA). Sportsshooter.com is one of those key organizations that keeps me aware of what's going on in the industry.

NEW WORKSHOPS: Michael has joined forces with renown photoshop guru Leslie Alsheimer to create a digital photography workshop for 2006. The workshops will teach the entire gamut of digital photography from soup to nuts in four and five day workshops. We are currently coming up with pricing and dates so stay tuned for that information. I will have all the details ready for the Winter newsletter. Right now we are planning on a workshop in Santa Fe in mid May and another in the fall in Moab, Utah for 2006. Leslie has worked with Jay Maisel, Nick Nichols and has also worked with National Geographic. To find out more about Leslie go to www.sfdigitaldarkroom.com.

RECENT CLIENTS: Nikon, Outside, Patagonia, Climbing Magazine, Bike, SharpEnd Publishing, The College of Santa Fe and Resort Condominiums International.

Nikon has chosen this image of Ryon Reed descending a ladder near Moab, Utah for their 2006 Full Line Product Catalog. This is Michael's first image in the Nikon Full Line Product Catalog though he has also had images published as magazine ads by Nikon. This image was shot with a Nikon F5, 16mm f/2.8 AF Nikkor Fish-eye, and Fuji Provia 100F film. Check out the new Nikon offerings in their latest catalog at your local camera retailer or contact Nikon directly for a catalog.

Nikon 2006 Catalog

Nikon uses Michael's work in 2006 Catalog

Workshops for Spring 2006

Digital Workflow with Nevada Wier and Adventure Travel Photography in Big Bend NP

A Digital Workflow Intensive: Two-and-a-Half Days of Information and Inspiration

Location: Santa Fe Workshops, Santa Fe, New Mexico
Instructors: Nevada Wier, Michael Clark, and Jerry Courvoisier
Dates: May 5-7, 2006

Many photographers have asked for shorter workshops. This digital workflow course provides a wealth of information, inspiration, and the taste of the week long workshop experience in two-and-a-half days.

Internationally renowned photographers Nevada Wier and Michael Clark inspire participants and share their personal approaches to digital capture, workflow, and the use of alternative software, while The Workshops' digital guru Jerry Courvoisier helps participants ease into the digital workflow techniques we use in this workshop. Their mutual goal is for participants to become comfortable with their cameras and the workflow process so they can focus on making successful images.

Topics covered include digital camera tools; file formats and sizes; successful digital capture; basic image adjustment; batch processing; and Web application features. Assignments and field trips are a part of this intense program. Evening presentations take us on the road as workshop leaders and fine-art photographer Joan Myers share their experiences with digital shooting in the field.

You may wish to explore Santa Fe and northern New Mexico, visit one of our renowned spas, or take a cooking class before or after immersing yourself in the exciting world of digital photography. You might also extend your visit to include a week long entry-level Photoshop workshop with Genevieve Russell, or take your camera on the road to capture the magic of northern New Mexico with your enhanced photographic skills.

Who Should Attend: This workshop is for photographers just entering the digital camera realm as well as those who already have one foot in the digital door.

Package Price: \$395

Go to www.santafeworkshops.com or call the workshops at (505) 983-1400 for more information.

Adventure Photography Workshop on the Rio Grande in Big Bend National Park, Texas.

Location: Rio Grande River in Big Bend NP, Texas
Dates: March 31 - April 3, 2006

Join Michael Clark and Far Flung Guide Service on a 3-day canoe trip down the Rio Grande in the scenic and little known Big Bend National Park, Texas. Big Bend is one of the jewels of the national park system and provides a remote, rugged high desert and canyon landscape for our Adventure Photography Workshop.

Workshop Description: Travel and adventure, when put together make for a very photogenic experience. This exciting workshop will hone your adventure travel photography skills via hands-on experience while canoeing down the Rio Grande in Big Bend National Park with Far Flung Adventures. We will explore how to create exciting landscapes, photograph people in the outdoors, the tools and equipment involved, basic lighting skills with reflectors and fill flash, drawing the viewer into the image with remote camera techniques and capturing the action of a river trip.

Michael's workshop concentrates on anticipating and creating powerful adventure images. The goal is to get everyone thinking about how they can make a good image even better and then pursuing that image. Students will be pushed to get creative with angles, lighting, and composition as well as capturing the intensity and subtle beauty of the adventures we experience while on the river. Michael will also delve into career development and all that entails if participants are interested.

Who Should Attend: This workshop is for photographers of all abilities who are interested in invigorating their adventure travel photography. Both film and/or digital cameras are acceptable for this workshop. A 35mm SLR camera, either digital or film is recommended though point and shoots that can be controlled manually are also acceptable.

Package Price: \$725

Go to www.farflungoutdoorcenter.com for more information or call the Far Flung Outdoor Center to reserve your spot at (800) 839-7238.

Digital Workflow Revolution

Michael's latest experiments and workflow with Adobe Camera Raw and Nikon Capture

Digital workflow is the hot topic these days among photographers. It's even a buzz word and what it exactly means depends on how deep you probe for answers. There are workshops and seminars on 'workflow' everywhere you look - and I will be teaching one along with Nevada Wier and Jerry Courvoisier at the Santa Fe Workshops next May (see page 5 for details). And now, with the announcement of Apple's Aperture software due out in December 2005 the mix has gotten even more complicated.

Workflow is much more than how you process the images - it starts with how you have your camera set up; your color space, color mode, RAW or JPEG, etc. and it follows all the way through to how you process and print the image. I don't have the room to go into detail - that alone would be a long tirade - but I'll pick on a few of the bigger issues and give you some links to get you thinking. The best bet is to take one of the many workshops available.

Here at Michael Clark Photography we have done our own testing and experiments to see which program does a better job at processing RAW images: Nikon Capture or Adobe Camera RAW. The verdict? Well, that depends on the image. For most images I prefer Nikon Capture's (NC) colors, but for images with a lot of white or highlights Adobe's Camera RAW (ACR) is hard to beat for it's abilities to recapture highlights. The basic problem is this: with a digital camera - any digital camera - when you expose for an image you have to watch your highlights via the histogram on the back of the camera. If you want to preserve your highlights this might mean radically underexposing the image so as not to blow them out. But under exposing your image with digital also means you increase the noise in the final image when you bring the exposure back up to normal in the RAW

processing - not the best option. It is much better to shoot at the correct exposure - with the histogram towards the right side as much as possible - which might even mean overexposing and recover those highlights in ACR.

ACR unlike any other RAW processing software on the market can pull back two or more stops of highlight information and extend the dynamic range of a digital camera significantly. This is especially useful for shooting rock climbing where the climber's hands are covered in white chalk or any winter sports involving snow. I would highly suggest reading the White Papers Adobe has on Digital Workflow on their website - one of those is a paper titled "Highlight Recovery in Camera RAW." Go to www.adobe.com and search for white papers.

An efficient workflow is a must for a professional photographer - especially now that we are the photo lab as well as the photographers. The most efficient and customizable workflow I've seen is Seth Resnick's CS2 Digital Workflow. [You can download it for \$24.95 at www.d-65.com.] It is comprehensive and easy to implement. There is much more to creating and customizing a digital workflow than what Seth covers but it is a great place to start.

For photo buyers digital workflow is even more important than it is for photographers. After talking with several photo editors the consensus is just opening and looking at digital submissions is a major pain - they are overwhelmed. On top of that the CMYK conversion headache just adds to their workload. I wish there was a workshop specifically for photo buyers but as of right now there isn't anything specific enough to cover their needs. Maybe I'll just have to design one and market it to all of you photo editors so you can get a handle on dealing with digital images. I'll keep you posted on that!

Most often asked questions about digital?

How do I expose properly?

How do I deal with these blown out highlights?

How do I convert images to CMYK or sRGB?

What's the best RAW processor?

RAW or JPEG?

How do I profile my monitor?

The DynaLite Uni400jr

The ultimate tool for location lighting when weight and portability are a factor

After extensive research into location lighting gear and specifically monolights I could run on lightweight batteries I chose the Dyna-Lite Uni400jr. It wasn't the lightest option but at 10 pounds total (for a one light set up) there is nothing else out there that can match it's light quality and robust build. I have since taken this lighting set up on a two week rafting trip down the Grand Canyon and have hiked it 10+ miles into the backcountry. Sure there are more powerful location kits out there.

The Profoto 7b is probably the king of location lighting but at 35 plus pounds that is not a kit I want to lug into the backcountry with me.

You might be thinking that 400 watt/seconds of power doesn't seem like much but I have found the Uni400jr's 400 watt/seconds equal to or more powerful than many other manufacturers monolights. For my work, I am not lighting sports arenas and 400 watt/seconds of power is overkill for

90% of my work. I generally use the unit at 1/8 to 1/2 power so I can take advantage of it's short flash duration (up to 1/2200 sec) to stop any movement - especially when shooting digitally with the Nikon D2x which has a top synch speed of 1/250th a second. The unit is also perfect for creating a ghost lighting effect with fast moving sports - to create that effect I crank the unit up to full power and the slower flash duration of 1/675 second creates a ghosting effect as illustrated in the parting shot image in this newsletter on page 14. The flash duration range is a key feature of this monolight - one that's not available in any other monolight on the market (in this weight class).

Another great feature of the Uni400jr is the jackrabbit battery pack for shooting without AC power on location.

The Jackrabbit provides approximately 80 full power flashes with a full charge. At 1/4 power that number jumps to 180 which is more than sufficient for my average stock shoot. If I need more juice in the backcountry, I take an extra battery with me. The downside to the battery is that it lowers the full power output to 320 watt/seconds - this hasn't been that big of an issue so far as I generally am using the Uni400jr in early morning or late afternoon lighting conditions. And at only

3 pounds the battery weighs less than any of my cameras and it's tiny.

Dyna-Lite is well known as one of the top lighting brands on the market and I have found that the Uni400jr is true to their name. It produces incredibly consistent silky smooth light and Dyna-Lite also has an extensive array of light modifiers to shape the light as you need it for each set up.

I find that for shooting adventure sports on location my favorite modifier is the Dyna-Lite 18" Soft Light Reflector with a



silk diffuser. It is a metal reflector 18" in diameter designed for fashion photographers. It softens the light dramatically, weighs only a pound or so and since it is metal and smaller than a big flapping soft box it catches less wind. Hence, I don't have to worry as much about the lights taking a "digger" when it gets a little windy. Plus it attaches to the flash head in seconds and makes set up easy when I am trying to get the perfect lighting combination just after the sun has set.

The only nagging I've found with the Uni400jr were that I had to send it back for repairs twice after buying it because the Jackrabbit battery plug was mis-aligned. It was finally taken care of on the second repair and since seems to be working just fine. I have heard from many that they found the Jackrabbit battery to be really



Above is a perfect example of what the possibilities are when you have a ten pound location lighting set up. Here Brett Seymour poses for a portrait while out riding his Harley south of Santa Fe, New Mexico. I used a Nikon D2x, 17-35mm AF-S Nikkor lens, the Uni400jr and the jackrabbit battery which was hanging on the light stand for easy transport. To soften the light I used Dyna-Lite's 18-inch Soft light reflector with the silk diffuser and a 1/4 CTO gel to warm things up a bit.

finicky. My experience has been if you follow the instructions it works just fine. The only caveat is that when you recharge the battery you have to charge it exactly five hours - any more and you'll blow the battery - any less and you'll lower it's capacity. If you aren't sure you can deal with the five hour charging time then Dyna-Lite offers a more sophisticated charger as an option with an auto shut off function.

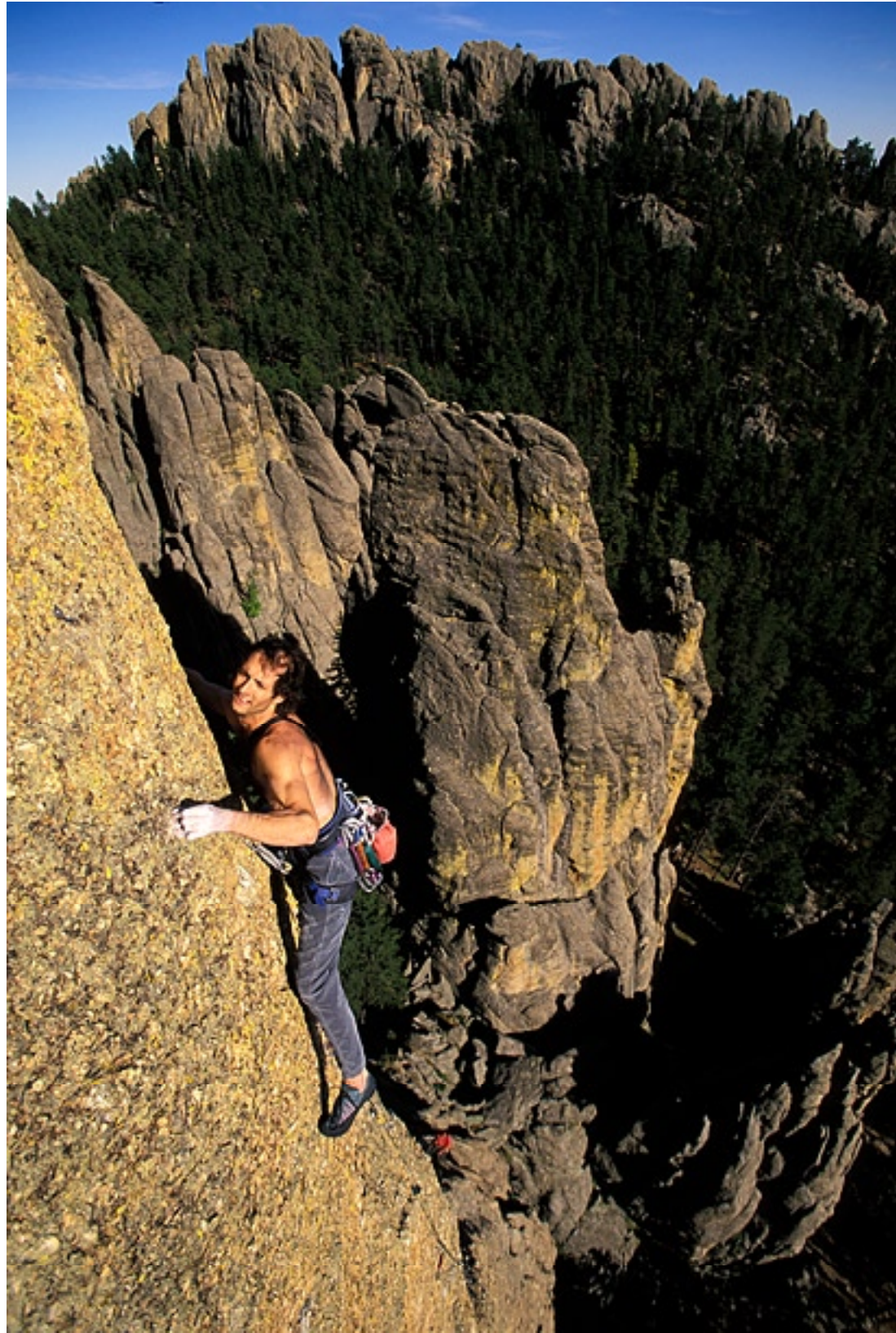
The Uni400jr also runs off AC power so it's as versatile in the studio as it is in the field. At full power plugged into AC the unit recycles in about a second which is fairly fast. With the Jackrabbit it takes closer to three seconds at full power and even faster - around 1 second at 1/4 power. The modeling lamp and audible ready signal only work when it is plugged in to AC but

otherwise the Uni400jr works the same whether it is running off AC or the battery.

Overall the Uni400jr is a welcome addition to my equipment arsenal and it has allowed me to pursue images I couldn't create otherwise. It also allows me to differentiate my work from other outdoor photographers that don't have the skills or equipment to shoot on location with strobes. If I was in a studio I think I would need more power and prefer a pack and head system but for in the field - in the back of beyond - the simple and reliable Uni400jr does it's job very well. I'm sure you'll be seeing a lot of images shot with this strobe in the future. For more info on the Uni400jr you can check out Dyna-Lite's website (www.dynalite.com) or better yet look it up on B&H (bhphotovideo.com).

[PORTFOLIO]





[PORTFOLIO]

[PORTFOLIO] INDIAN CREEK



Last month I spent four days in Indian Creek, Utah photographing some friends rock climbing on splitter sandstone cracks and exposed towers on Bridger Jack Mesa. The scene at the creek has changed quite a bit since I was there last - it is now an international destination for climbers. Camped next to us were climbers from Norway and the camping was packed just off Beef Basin Road - luckily the climbing is still some of the best on planet Earth. And even shooting digitally it is still possible to produce top notch images at high noon due to the red sandstone [see photo at right].

As usual, if any of these images interest you for upcoming catalogs or ads or for your magazine please contact me. Until next time...





Captions: Page 11 - Top Left: Gabriela Baumeister on the exposed 3rd pitch of Thunderbolts (5.10-) on the "Easter Island" spire on Bridger Jack Mesa, Top Right: Haj Khalsa postulating about the benefits of natural foods in between crack climbs on Bridger Jack Mesa, Bottom Right: Gabriela Baumeister on an unnamed 5.10+ at the Original Meat Wall. This Page - Top: Haj Khalsa rappelling off "Learning to Crawl" (5.11) on Thumbelina on the Bridger Jack Mesa, Bottom Left: Gabriela Baumeister belaying Haj Khalsa on "Sparkling Touch" (5.10a) on the Bridger Jack Mesa, Bottom Right: Haj Khalsa giving us an education on healthy eating at the Bridger Jack Mesa.

Finding Inspiration by Michael Clark

Digital photography is addictive. Once you make the switch going back to film is tough. Or so that seems to be the consensus. I've done a few stock shoots lately where I shot both digital and medium format film and shooting both, while not difficult, requires a shift in thinking. With digital we now have more information than we've ever had about images we captured seconds before. And after running tests (see last month's issue) - shooting 35mm film seems like archaic quality compared to the medium format resolution on double digit pro digital SLR's. I hate to say it but digital is where photography is going - the quality is better, it's faster and it has an unlimited horizon for improvement in image quality and resolution.

But all of that pales in comparison to the fact that digital makes photography fun again in ways film never could. Instant image re-

“ANOTHER HIDDEN BONUS WITH DIGITAL IS GETTING YOUR SUBJECTS INVOLVED IN THE IMAGE CREATION PROCESS. IT LEADS TO MORE INTENSE AND EXCITING IMAGES”

view on the back of the camera invites a photographer to experiment. Once you get the image the client has requested you are free to "get whacky." And with the image review you can perfect your idea on the spot and much quicker than with film. If you need that image on film you can perfect it with the digital and then switch over to film for the final capture.

Another hidden bonus with digital is getting your subjects involved in the image creation process. Being able to show your "talent" the images on the spot often leads to more intense and exciting images than you could have produced otherwise. It's not unlike being on a movie set where the actor and the director can sit down after each shot and review video footage, make some aesthetic decisions and improve upon the performance. On top of that it adds excitement to a photo shoot. When I work with someone I haven't photographed before I have to prove myself to them - and the image review on the back of the camera's LCD goes a long way in that regard. I'll tell the athlete what I am trying to do and then show them that we got it. That leads to instant respect and often inspires other images *they* want to help create, be it my idea or theirs. The athlete becomes not just the "model" but a partner in the creation of the image and that is the most important step in producing high end imagery.

For the photographer, I feel there is a new found freedom with the new technology and that freedom is hard to let go of. So here's to digital. Thank you Nikon for kicking off the digital revolution way back in 1999 with the world's first affordable digital SLR the Nikon D1. The medium has come a LONG way since then and has jump-started one of the most exciting eras in the history of photography.

parting shot



Ed Strang taking to the skies while dirt jumping BMX style on his mountain bike at a local freeriding spot near Santa Fe, New Mexico. Nikon D2x, 17-35mm f/2.8 AF-S Nikkor, SanDisk Extreme III CF Card and Dyna-Lite Uni400jr Monolight with 1/4 CTO and soft light Reflector.