

MICHAEL CLARK
PHOTOGRAPHY



NEWSLETTER



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Both images shot while on assignment for Adobe Lightroom in April 2006.

All images © Michael Clark Photography.

Batta-bing...batta-BOOM!

Keeping one nostril above the water line



The past three months have been one of the busiest periods ever in my career. Workshops, an assignment for Adobe Lightroom and several other assignments have kept my life exciting. As is detailed in this newsletter, I shot mountain biking for Adobe's new software named *Lightroom* which is still in Beta stage but making big waves in the digital photography world.

On top of the Adobe gig and other recent assignments and workshops, Nikon has chosen my work for their Summer 2006 issue of Nikon World Magazine and there are Podcasts and online commentaries in the works and due out soon as well. I have barely been able to keep up with it all but that is as it should be. So sit back and get ready - this issue of the Newsletter is packed with information and news about my recent work.

In an ongoing effort to bring you interesting and relevant information on the latest trends in digital imaging I have included a comparison of three of the highest resolving Digital SLR's on the market. The results are quite surprising and I think overall it will go a long way to give both photo buyers and photographers more confidence in the current quality of digital photography. I have also included a digital techniques article (see *Digital Dogma*) on sharpening images. There are many photo editors who are savvy with photoshop and some who are still struggling with the new digital submissions flying at them everyday. I hope this article will go a long way to make them more comfortable with preparing those images for print.

In the next issue I will write about upsizing digital images. Since digital images have no grain like film has you can upsize them quite a bit more than you might think! A perfect example is in this issue's equipment review where I upsized the lower megapixel cameras files to match their counterparts. And as you'll soon read in the comparison

that didn't really hurt the competitors at all.

Digital has come a long long way in a very short time but there are still many things that can be simplified and made better both in the cameras and in the software. This issues *Perspective* article will take a look at some of the lingering issues with digital and what's around the corner.

And finally, thank you for your feedback on my newsletter. I am continually amazed at how many people have seen my newsletter and how much it gets passed around after I send it out to the folks on my mailing list. Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to friends and family or anyone else that you think might be interested. If you received this newsletter from a friend and like what you see please contact me via email so that I can add your name to the mailing list. Thank you also for the incredible feedback and nice comments on my work. I very much appreciate it.

A lot of work goes into these newsletters but it is a lot of fun for me and every time I send them out I get new work - so that is a big reason why they keep coming. On top of that the newsletter helps to educate my clients in the topsy-turvy transition to digital. I hope you have enjoyed these newsletters and I invite all of you to contact me and let me know how I can make it better and what you'd like to see in future issues.

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On Assignment for Adobe Lightroom

Michael recently shot Demo Files for Adobe Lightroom in Moab, Utah



Michael Clark crouching down to photograph Ed Strang at Bartlett Wash near Moab, Utah. Both images by Leslie Alsheimer.

Michael recently shot demo files for Adobe's new digital specific software named "Lightroom" currently in beta stage. For this assignment Michael was asked to shoot mountain biking and freeriding, an extreme form of mountain biking involving jumping off rather large cliffs and taking big risks. We chose Moab, Utah as our location and mountain bikers Ryon Reed, Ed Strang and Kathy Parent. We shot at Bartlett Wash, the Fin near the Porcupine Rim Trail and up on the Chili Pepper trails above Moab. It was an exhausting 24 hours of shooting up at 4 AM and out till 10 PM the night before.

Adobe needed a series of exciting images for the upcoming launch of Lightroom and we got a good sampling of extremely risky mountain biking images to satisfy their needs. In all we shot over 30 GB of images

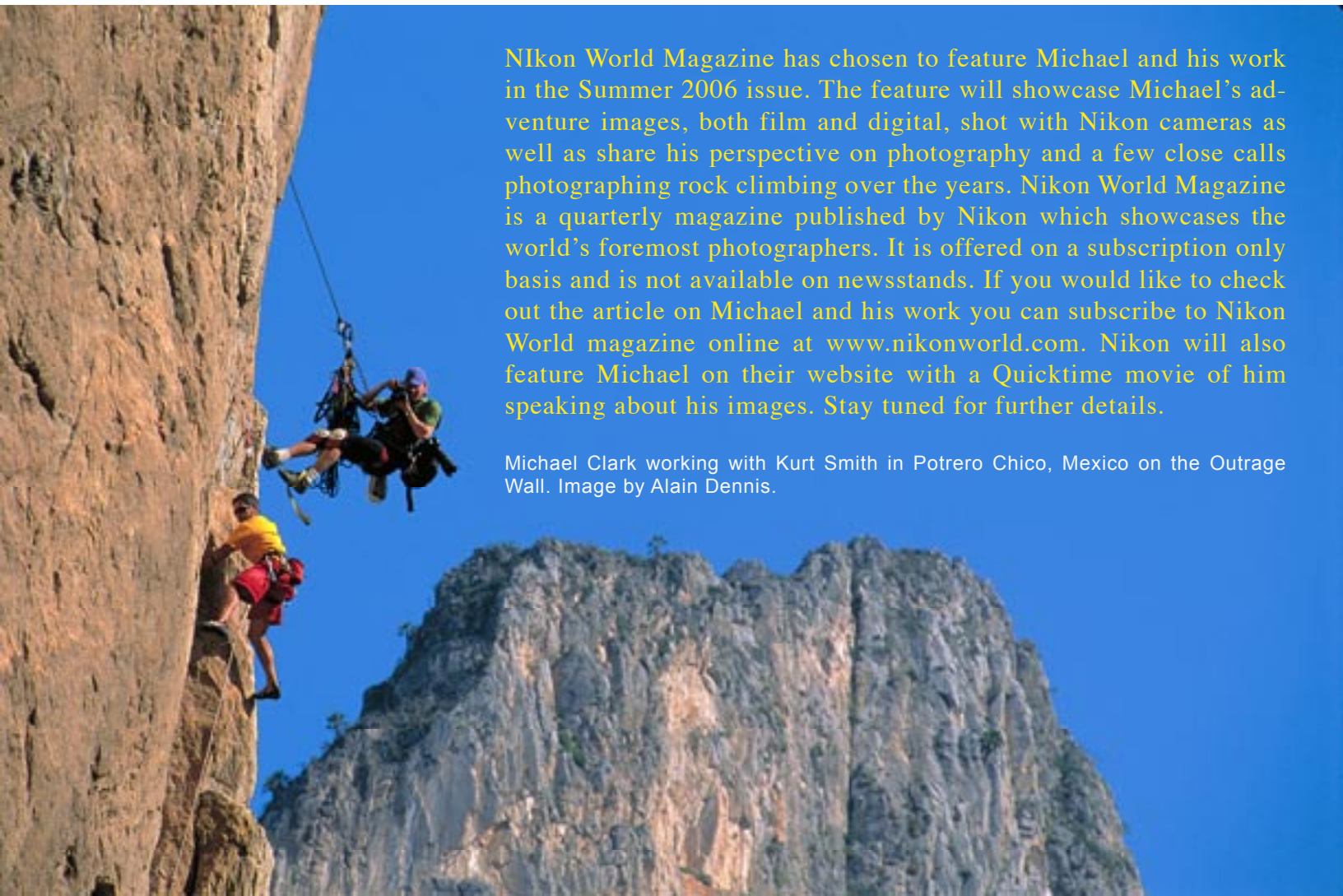
in a 24 hour period! That is over 3000 images with a Nikon D2x and D200. The images will be used on the box and a few will also be included with the software as sample images as well as to demonstrate the software.

It was a pleasure working with Adobe on this project! They gave me a lot of creative freedom to come up with exciting and visually stunning images. And I feel like I am ahead of the curve having used Lightroom extensively already and having had a personal demonstration by one of the Lightroom creators. Look for my Lightroom workflow later this year.

RECENT CLIENTS: Adobe, Nikon, Black Diamond, Mont-Bell, PC Photo, Backpacker, Alpinist, Climbing Magazine and the College of Santa Fe.

Nikon World Magazine

Michael will be featured in the Summer 2006 Issue of Nikon World Magazine



Nikon World Magazine has chosen to feature Michael and his work in the Summer 2006 issue. The feature will showcase Michael's adventure images, both film and digital, shot with Nikon cameras as well as share his perspective on photography and a few close calls photographing rock climbing over the years. Nikon World Magazine is a quarterly magazine published by Nikon which showcases the world's foremost photographers. It is offered on a subscription only basis and is not available on newsstands. If you would like to check out the article on Michael and his work you can subscribe to Nikon World magazine online at www.nikonworld.com. Nikon will also feature Michael on their website with a Quicktime movie of him speaking about his images. Stay tuned for further details.

Michael Clark working with Kurt Smith in Potrero Chico, Mexico on the Outrage Wall. Image by Alain Dennis.

iTunes Podcast from Adobe Lightroom

Michael talks about his work with George Jardine from Adobe

During my workshop on Digital Workflow here at the Santa Fe Workshops I also recorded an interview that is being prepped as a Podcast in which I talked about my work with George Jardine of Adobe. The Podcast will go live on iTunes sometime in June. To check for that Podcast go to iTunes and type in Adobe Lightroom in the search box and all of the Adobe podcasts will come up. The podcast is a lively discussion with George of some of my adventure images and includes those images in the podcast so the viewer can follow along. This is the first Podcast I have participated in and was a great experience and it is a great new form of marketing for my work.

I also sat in while Nevada Weir, with whom I was teaching the Digital Workflow workshop for the Santa Fe Workshops, taped her Podcast. Look for her Podcast as well - she had some very interesting comments on her work and the state of photography and her images are amazing! George also gave a very informative and exciting preview of Adobe's Lightroom for our workshop participants. It was great to see a demonstration direct from one of the creators - my workflow changed after his presentation! Thank you to George and Adobe for choosing myself and my work and for coming out to Santa Fe and participating in our workshop.

Sharpening 101 for Photo Editors

How to make those digital files look their best!

Back in the film days, a photo editor would send off their film to the pre-press and have it scanned for printing. The pre-press would scan the film, color correct it, size the file for the layout and finally sharpen the digital file for the size and paper it was printed on. Now, with just about all images being submitted as high resolution film scans or images captured digitally a lot of the pre-press workflow seems to have been lost. Sharpening is just as important as it ever was if not more so. And while many editors are super savvy to the digital workflow and the need to sharpen files before they go to press some aren't. Hence this article.

First let's differentiate between a film scan and an image captured with a digital camera. These days most photo buyers are requesting high resolution film scans rather than having to deal with the actual original film and with good reason. It takes away the liability of having the original film damaged or lost and it saves time. And since

“THERE ARE AT LEAST 30 DIFFERENT METHODS FOR SHARPENING IMAGES - ALL OF WHICH WORK WELL. FIND YOUR METHOD AND GET TO KNOW HOW IT WORKS.”

the photographer doesn't know exactly how their image is going to be used - i.e. what size, placement, etc. they end up sending what I'll call a RAW film scan. A RAW film scan is basically that. The photographer scans the film at the highest resolution their film scanner will allow, color corrects the image so that it looks like the film and then saves the file with no sharpening applied. A RAW film scan will need a significant amount of sharpening to look like the original film when it is printed and that sharpening should be the last step once the image has been resized and cropped. And in general with film scans they will need a hefty amount of sharpening.

Images shot with digital cameras on the other hand usually come out of the camera much sharper and require a lot less sharpening than a film scan but still require some sharpening to get the best possible print. Photographers add a little sharpening in the RAW processing which is barely noticeable and basically counteracts the blurring filter (aka anti-aliasing filter) inside the camera. Once again the image will need to be sharpened once it has been resized and cropped for placement but not as much as with a film scan.

There are at least 30 methods for sharpening images - all of which work well, some better than others. Unsharp Mask in Photoshop is the de facto standard and does a terrific job but it takes experience to sharpen the right amount without over sharpening. If you are a photo editor who is baffled by the whole sharpening deal and just wants an easy one click method I recommend *Pixel Genius' PhotoKit Sharpener* (\$99.95) - it has preset sharpening actions that will do all the work for you. Check it out at <http://www.pixelgenius.com/>. And if you need more help - call the photographer and they can help out.

The Resolution Roundup

A non scientific comparison of the Canon 1Ds Mark II, Nikon D2x and Nikon D200



Disclaimer: *This is not a scientific test. I wanted to see for myself just how big and what the differences, specifically resolution, are between these cameras. Both Canon and Nikon make incredible digital cameras and even though I use Nikon for my work I tried to give an unbiased eye to the final results of this comparison. Also, please note that I am well aware of the difficulties in comparing these cameras. There is a laundry list of differences that make it hard to get a true comparison. Those include: different sensor dimensions, different anti-aliasing filters, different optics, differing RAW file formats and on and on. In this test I have tried to keep the variables to a minimum by shooting with the same settings in all cameras, using similar lenses from each manufacturer, and upsizing the lower MP cameras to match file sizes. With each example I will explain why I have chosen to test them in a certain manner and exactly how the cameras and files were managed. I realize that this 'test' might be disconcerting to many of my readers and there are highly likely many other ways of comparing these fine cameras. Feel free to email me if you want though I can't promise I'll have time to respond to every email. Otherwise, sit back and enjoy the ride. I don't think there is any earth shattering info in this article but it is very interesting just how good all of these cameras are.*

As with any test, we have to start with some reasoning for the test. I own a Nikon D2x and D200 (with which I am very happy) and I wanted to find out just how much of a difference there is between these two cameras compared to Canon's top of the line 1Ds Mark II (here after 1DsII) not only for myself but also for my

clients. This is not a comprehensive evaluation or comparison of these three cameras, I have chosen to focus my efforts on comparing the resolution of the three sensors in real world usage. Of course there are many other comparisons that could be made but I feel those have already been well established by better testers than myself. For example, high ISO noise has been tested very well by the folks at dpreview.com. Even without their exhaustive tests it is well known the Canon 1DsII outshines Nikon's offerings in the High ISO department as to be expected. The fact that the Nikon D2x does so well with a DX sized sensor is an incredible engineering feat that Nikon should be very proud of. And maybe you are wondering why I left out the Canon 5D. The answer to that question is that I didn't have access to one.

Likewise a lot could be said about how each camera handles, the ergonomics and layout and design. As a Nikon user, I will admit I prefer the way the Canon pro bodies feel when I pick them up - but I have really big hands - and from an aesthetic point of view I prefer the way the Canon shutter button feels. On the other hand, I think Nikon did a much better job with the layout and controls of the camera, especially the manner in which you change autofocus points. The 1DsII and the D2x are both beasts of burden compared to the D200 but that's par for the course. I could go on and on about subtle differences amongst these cameras but lets get on to the test.

To compare the resolution of each camera I photographed a still life of a climbing rope, my Epson P2000 and a few other items. I have found my climbing rope is a great test subject for resolution as there are thousands of fibers that make up the sheath of the rope and it is

a perfect subject to show differences in resolution. Each image was shot with the mirror locked up at 1/13th sec. and f/8 at ISO 100. I took great care to make sure each camera was set up on a tripod and the angle of view was exactly the same for each camera. Of course with digital cameras it is hard to make exact comparisons. How much sharpening do you apply in the RAW processing to account for the different anti-aliasing filters? I applied the default sharpening of 25 to all images in the RAW processing and I used Adobe Camera RAW for all images. How do you compare images from cameras of different resolutions and with different pixel dimensions? The Nikon DX sensor is just slightly more rectangular than the Canon - only by a few pixels but that becomes significant when enlarging the images. Since I don't have weeks to compare these cameras I decided I would do three different comparisons - one of which would surely show me any difference their might be.

First, I compared the three images at 100% with the Nikon files upsized (via Bicubic Smoother in Photoshop's *Image Size* dialog box) to match the vertical pixel dimensions of the Canon. Why did I choose the vertical dimension? I chose the vertical pixel dimension because this gave a file size almost exactly the same as the 1DsMII and it gave the closest dimensions to the Canon sensor without cropping the Nikon image. I did this comparison on screen and on glossy prints made on my Epson R1800. I chose glossy prints because they show the most detail. You can see the screen shots of this comparison on page 8 - the middle row of images. And frankly on screen I was hard pressed to see much if any difference in resolution between the images - especially since no sharpening was added at this point save for that done in the RAW processing. Now at this point I can hear everyone saying that the Canon has a much stronger anti-aliasing filter than the Nikons and it does - so that might negate this test. I would counter that when you upsize an image with Bicubic Smoother in Photoshop it adds a fair bit of smoothing to the image as well - hence this comparison was a draw and if the Canon resolved more detail I'd need a microscope to tell the difference. The fact that I couldn't see a difference is why I chose to do two more rounds of testing.

For the second comparison, I upsized all images (again via Bicubic Smoother) to 30x45 inches figuring this would definitely show a difference. I compared the images without any added sharpening and with sharpening added to each image. The images were compared

in both print form and on screen, again on glossy photo paper. The on-screen version of this comparison without sharpening added can be seen in the bottom row of images on Page 8. I must add at this point that this newsletter at screen resolution is a horrible medium for judging resolution. But the end result isn't much different than what you see here - I could not see any noticeable difference in the on-screen comparison with or without sharpening.

Now I don't know about you but I was surprised I didn't see a big difference at this point. Upsizing the Nikon files should have given them a huge disadvantage compared to Canon files in the first comparison and again in the second comparison since the Nikon files were upsized by 3.16x (D2x) and 3.47x (D200) compared to the Canon file being upsized only by 2.7x in the second comparison.

In the print comparisons I had three different comparisons going: the first comparison, the second (both sharpened and unsharpened) and a third comparison in which I prepped each file individually with sharpening - to make them each look their best - and all the images were sized to the native file size of the Canon which in theory should give the Canon an advantage. In the second print comparison (sorry if this is getting confusing) of 30x45 inch prints on glossy paper I could only see a hair's breath of difference between the images *when looking at the prints with my loupe!* And that difference was so small it is hard to say there was a difference at all. That hair's breath difference was a little more noticeable comparing the D200 (10.2 MP) to the 1DsMII (16.7 MP) as I would expect but it was not anywhere near as big a difference as I would have expected. In my third print comparison it was the same story but even closer. Looking at the images with the loupe I was hard pressed to see any differences at all even between the 10 MP and 16 MP cameras! So what does this mean?

I tested the images just about every way I could think of. I am sure some could pick my testing methods apart but the reality is a difference of two or even four megapixels is a *very* slight difference! About the only advantage I can still give to the Canon is that it produces a larger file size without having to upsize the image. But as my testing has shown even that isn't a big advantage as I couldn't see a difference in resolution even when I upsized the 10 MP and 12 MP images to match the 16 MP image of the Canon! To see an appreciable increase in resolution you would have to double the MP.

(Continued on page 10)

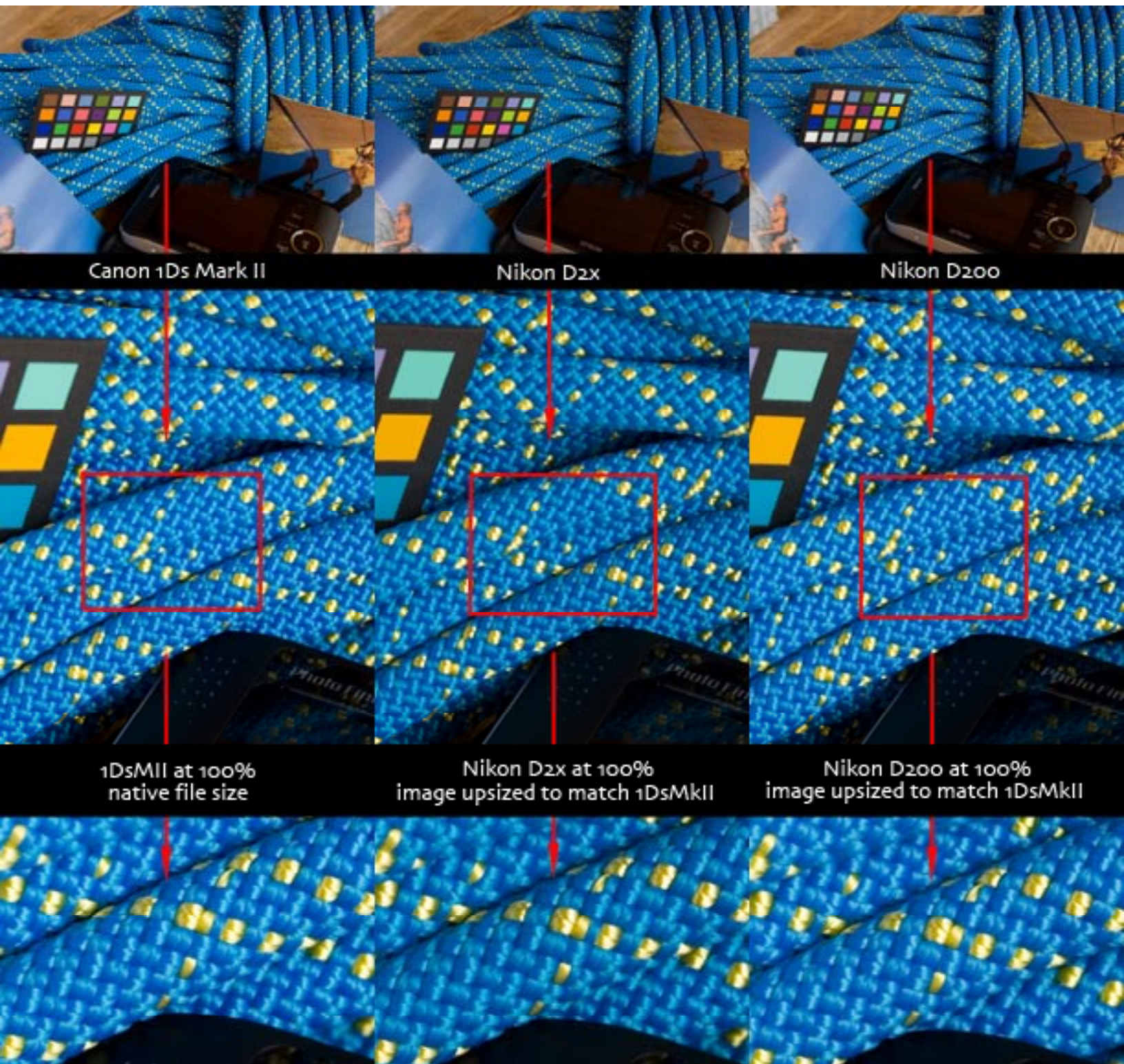


Figure 1: Still lifes of my climbing rope, Epson P2000 and a Gretag Macbeth mini color chart shot on the same tripod with a Canon 1Ds Mark II, Nikon D2x and Nikon D200. Each camera had the mirror locked up at 1/13th sec. and f/8 at ISO 100. Canon image shot with a USM 28-70mm f/2.8 zoom at approximately 70mm while the Nikons used a Nikkor 28-70mm f/2.8 zoom set at 47mm, thus keeping the angle of view consistent between sensors. Top image is the full image, middle images are a crop of the rope at 100% with the Nikon files upsampled to match the Canon file size. When I compared these middle images at 300 ppi all at the same resolution and pixel dimensions (or as close as was possible since the Nikon files have different pixel dimensions than the Canon) I could not see any difference in image quality - especially between the Nikon D2x and the Canon 1DsMkII. Hence I enlarged the three images to 30x45 inches to see if the differences became more apparent. On screen it was still hard to see a difference and honestly this newsletter and screen res samples don't show any difference that I can see. To see the real difference I had to print 30x40 samples.

Now I can hear all of the Canon aficionados going ballistic already - believe me, I was prepared for Nikon to get it's butt kicked. I'm frankly astonished there isn't a bigger difference myself between these cameras. I am not trying to say one camera is better than another with this review. I have no agenda. No one is paying me to do this comparison. I bought my Nikons at full price and a good friend of mine, Marc Romanelli, graciously lent me his Canon 1Ds Mark II to shoot with for this test. Under different conditions there might be a much different result but I would bet that isn't due to the sensors being different sizes.

In another test (see images at right), I shot some portraits of Marc Romanelli hand held with both the D2x and the 1DsMII as he held up a Mini Gretag MacBeth color chart. I used the same lenses as before and both images were shot at f/8 and a shutter speed of 1/500th a second. Now in this test - where again the Nikon D2x image was upsized to match the Canon file I can see a difference in sharpness but I am not sure it is due to the resolution of the sensors. Why can I see a difference in the sharpness here but not in the other images? I'd be willing to bet it is because I was hand holding the cameras - especially the D2x. In my experience with the D2x I have to be very conscious of the shutter speed if I want critically sharp images. Any lapse in my concentration or camera technique and the image quality suffers - the D2x is merciless when it comes to camera technique, much more so than the 1DsMII or any other digital camera on the market. Why? It all comes down to how big the pixels are on the sensor and the D2x's pixels are packed in so tightly, to the tune of 5.8 microns per pixel in diameter, that in lines per millimeter it's sensor actually out resolves anything else on the market and hence it is much more sensitive to camera shake. I've found that I have to use a shutter speed of 1/800th a second to get sharp images from

Figure 2: Another comparison between the Canon 1Ds Mark II and the Nikon D2x - this time a handheld portrait of my good friend Marc Romanelli. I used the same lenses as in the previous test and just as before the D2x image was upsized to match the Canon file. Both images were shot at 1/500th sec. and f/8. It is nearly impossible to see any difference in these images at right - especially in this newsletter - but the Canon was a hint sharper and had slightly more detail than the Nikon. Knowing my D2x and how sensitive it is to camera shake this test does not isolate the sensors resolution as the previous test did - but still in the real world where cameras are handheld this shows the Canon can resolve slightly more detail which is as expected from a 16 MP camera vs. a 12



my AF-S 80-200mm f/2.8 Nikkor zoom lens - that is if I want critically sharp images. Just as with film, there is a range of what is considered "sharp". I can shoot at slower shutter speeds and still get usable images but if I want razor sharp images where I can count the pores on someone's face then I need to pay great attention to my shutter speed. So in this comparison with the images shot handheld the Canon wins not because its sensor is out resolving the Nikon's but because of the Nikon's sensitivity to camera vibration even at 1/500th of a second shutter speed. This being a real world test everything counts and the Canon has a noticeable advantage. If I put both cameras on a tripod then that advantage goes away.

So what does all this mean? Well for one, the megapixel war, at least for 35mm cameras as I predicted a year ago is over. The Nikon D2x and the Canon 1Ds Mark II already out resolve many of the lenses both companies manufacture. Hence, an increase in megapixels will only push the current crop of lenses that much harder. At this point I'd say that more megapixels aren't going to necessarily increase image quality until we have better lenses to take advantage of more megapixels. I have heard rumors that Canon is introducing a 22 MP 1Ds-Mark III this fall and while I am sure it will be a great camera the actual image quality will not be much different than their current 1DsMII. Of course they may have added some other features that make it a must have like better color, real 16 bit images, better autofocus, etc.

Nikon on the other hand could if they so desired introduce a 28 MP full-frame DSLR based on the D2x with the same chip technology just expanded to full-frame. If you do the math that is what a 5.8 micron pixel size comes out as when you create a full-frame 35mm chip. I don't think we'd ever see that camera because if their 12 MP camera is so demanding on Nikkor lenses what would be the point of a 28 MP camera unless they build it with a medium format lens mount. Not likely.

All fantasies aside, the final verdict on this comparison is that all of these cameras are fantastic and I'd say all of these and most likely the Canon 5D as well are giving medium format resolution in a 35mm body. And that is great news for every photographer. Better image quality in a smaller package.

If you think my comparison has to be way off base then I would encourage you to do your own testing. I'm not the only one to say these cameras have remarkably similar image quality. There are quite a few very well

done tests and comparisons online. Check out www.dpreview.com's review of the Canon 1Ds Mark II where they also compare it to the Nikon D2x and find that you'd need to blow images up HUGE to see a real difference. I am guessing by HUGE they meant bigger than 30x45 inches as I saw very little difference at that size. Bjorn Roslett also published a very thorough and detailed comparison of the Nikon D2x and the Canon 1DsII on his website at http://www.naturfotograf.com/D2X_rev00.html.

And finally for you Nikon photographers out there wondering if the D200 is good enough compared to its much more expensive bigger brother the Nikon D2x you can take image quality out of that buying quandary. The bigger question is do you need superfast autofocus, a bullet proof camera body, and any of the other features that the D2x has above and beyond the D200. The D200 does have a black and white mode and has great autofocus as well, though not as responsive as the D2x. And the D200 is quite a bit lighter and a LOT cheaper! For the money, I don't think anyone would argue with me that it is the best deal going right now for a high end digital SLR. And it is built fairly tough itself and should be able to deal with many years of abuse.

As an aside, while on assignment for Adobe the Lightroom Product Manager, George Jardine, who was shooting with a Canon 5D remarked that he couldn't tell if an image was shot with a Canon or Nikon in terms of color. I know from my experience with Nikon that I have to custom white balance every 5 minutes or so near sunrise or sunset because the color temperature is changing so fast. This has become a major headache with digital and in a future issue I hope to compare the Nikon and Canon colors to see if there is a big difference in how they handle the golden hour.

Just as with film light can make or break a photo. With digital we have to get used to a whole new color palette and some of us old film dogs are taking a little longer than others to get use to the change. I miss the colors Fuji Velvia produced but the quality from digital is so much better on several other fronts that there is no going back - save for shooting medium format film which I still enjoy quite a bit. But as you can see from the Adobe images in this newsletter, many of which were shot at sunrise the colors are gorgeous.

So whether you are shooting Nikon, Canon or a Holga, get out there and make some nice images and forget about megapixels and all the marketing voodoo!

[PORTFOLIO]



[PORTFOLIO]



On Assignment: Adobe Lightroom

In late April Michael shot an assignment for Adobe Lightroom - producing demo images for the new software to be released later this year. The assignment was intense mountain biking and involved a serious amount of risk as is evident by the images. Riders jumping off 35-foot cliffs onto slickrock left little room for error. With only a few crashes the riders survived the photo shoot relatively unscathed. (Continued on next page)

This Page - Far Left: Series of Ed Strang jumping off the Mushroom. Left: Ryon Reed cruising on the Chili Pepper trail. Below: Kathy Parent taking in the scenery on the Porcupine Rim trail. *Next Page* - Ryon Reed in full flight off the Mushroom, just a walk in the park for Ryon who has jumped this drop many times.

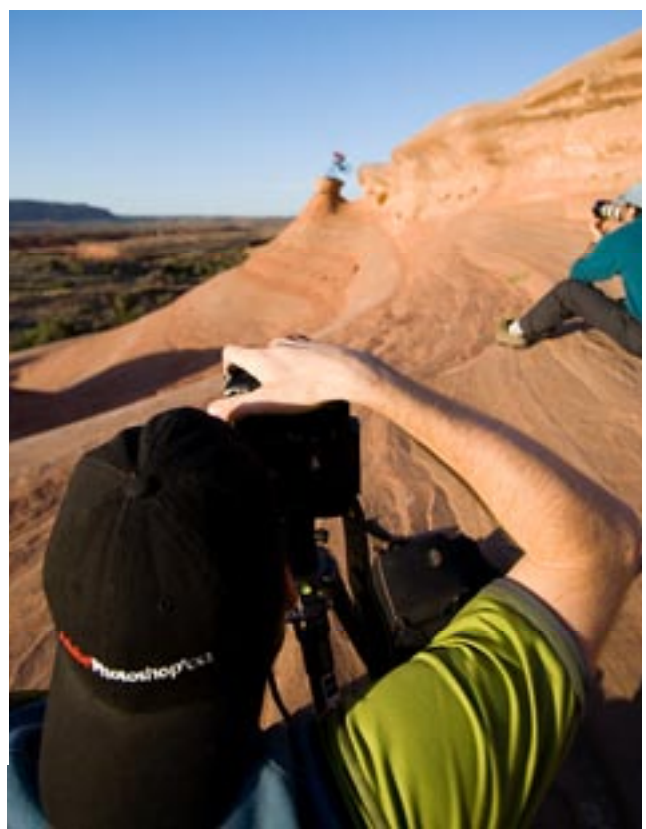
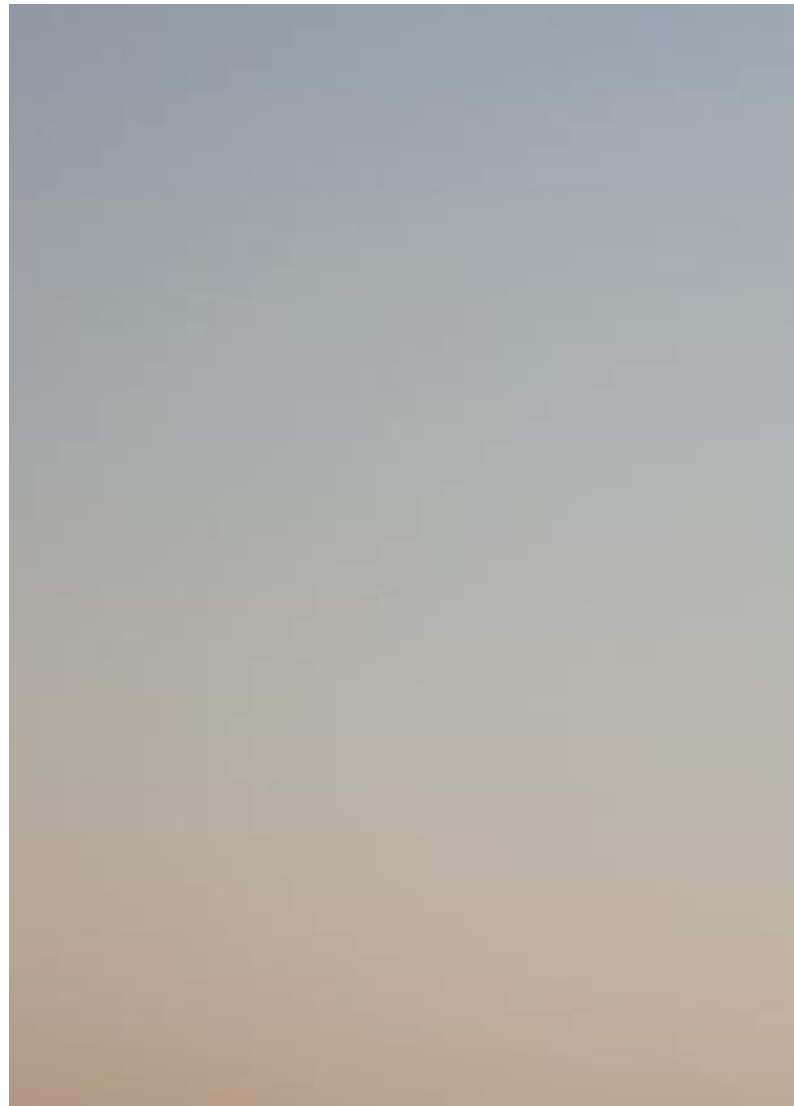


We started at 4 AM in the dark so we could get out to Bartlett wash just as the sun was rising. It turned out to be a particularly good day for Ed Strang who had never jumped off the Mushroom - which has become one of the classic mountain biking jumps. After warming up on smaller cliffs (see page 16) he gave the Mushroom a go and in pure Ed style nailed it no problem. I haven't seen him smile that big in a long time! Ryon Reed and Ed took turns on the Mushroom and each went off it at least five times. I think I can safely say George, the Lightroom Product Manager from Adobe, was blown away by the ability of these riders.

I thought I would take this space in my newsletter to show you a few of my favorite images from the Adobe assignment. There are also other images sprinkled in this issue of the newsletter including the cover, table of contents and the parting shot image. You'll be seeing these images and many others from the photo shoot soon enough when Lightroom is introduced later this year. Enjoy!

Thanks again to the riders: Ryon Reed, Ed Strang and Kathy Parent for all of your hard work and to my assistant Leslie Alsheimer.







Page 15: Top left: Ryon Reed popping a wheely and the gang following suit. Middle Left: Ed Strang dropping off the lip of a large sandstone bowl. Bottom Left: Ed Strang and Ryon Reed huffing their bikes back up the fin 'one more time'. Bottom Right: Michael (foreground) photographing Ed Strang as he jumps off the Mushroom at Bartlett Wash. George Jardine from Adobe on the right edge of the frame. Image by Leslie Alsheimer. **This Page:** Ed Strang warming up on a little cliff for the Mushroom just as the sun was coming up.

The Digital Toddler

by Michael Clark

Digital Photography has advanced incredibly over the last ten years, coming from a barely usable fringe form of capture to the norm. Now it is a well established form of image capture - no longer are there lingering doubts about digital's quality relative to film. In fact just the opposite, many editors are now asking for digital and are turning down film in favor of digital. If you are a professional photographer and aren't shooting digital then you have some serious catching up to do.

After teaching two digital photography workshops it became apparent to me that we are still in the infancy of digital photography. Digital photography is, so to speak only about two weeks old. The megapixel war may be over to a large degree but there are still a lot of issues to be worked out and a lot of improvements that can be made with the cameras, the software, color management, printing and the presentation of digital images.

“DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY IS, SO TO SPEAK ONLY ABOUT TWO WEEKS OLD. THE MEGAPIXEL WAR MAY BE OVER BUT THERE ARE STILL A LOT OF ISSUES TO BE WORKED OUT.”

In my last workshop after showing our participants my digital workflow (with Bridge and Photoshop) I gave them a demonstration of Adobe's Lightroom - there was a noticeable sigh of relief at how much easier it was to manage images in Lightroom than it was to learn how to use Bridge and Photoshop. The difference prompted a few students to ask, “So why would we use any thing else?” That is just one telltale sign that the software side of things is getting more intuitive and easier to deal with.

And while we seem to have plenty of megapixels digital SLR's still have quite a bit of room for improvement - better auto white balance, more accurate autofocus (a huge issue!), 16 bit image capture, better color accuracy and faster capture rates for high resolution cameras. I would love to have an 18 MP Nikon that can shoot at 8 frames per second with full 16 bit capture in RAW. I'm sure it won't be too much longer before that is available. And wouldn't it be nice to have a live in camera histogram visible in the viewfinder like many of the point and shoots already have?

As with any major change it takes time for everyone to get readjusted to the *new* way of doing things. Digital photography is no different and especially CMYK printing. It has been a nightmare for the magazines to deal with digital images and print them well but hopefully with the new digital standards (updig.com) those issues are becoming less and less of a problem. Now - hopefully! - photographers and photo buyers can get back to taking and looking at photos without all of the techno babble confusion. In the end, it is all about the image. How it was created makes no difference.

parting shot



Ryon Reed dropping the Mushroom at Bartlett Wash near Moab, Utah.
Image shot while on assignment for Adobe - shooting for Adobe Lightroom.
Nikon D2x, Nikkor 10.5mm f/2.8 DX Fisheye, Sandisk Extreme III CF Card

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