

MICHAEL CLARK
PHOTOGRAPHY



NEWSLETTER



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spring 2007



SPRING 2007 NEWSLETTER

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Blogosphere

The Web Log craze kicks into Overdrive



About a month ago, while updating my website I decided it was time I started a Blog in tandem with my website which would give an inside view of what it is like to be a professional photographer, basically an extension of my Behind the Scenes web page so to speak. While I was doing research on blog sites and how to create a blog I noticed that a large number of photography blogs have sprung up within the last six months. It's official! Blogs are hip.

Setting up a blog site is ridiculously easy. I went with blogger.com to host my blog because I liked their clean understated look and the text options. So, this is the official unveiling of my new blog. I am still figuring out how often I will update the blog and what exactly it will be - but it will certainly be a more frequent extension of this Newsletter. Don't worry, I'm not killing the Newsletter off. The Newsletter is a bit of work but it is also my best marketing vehicle so it will be around for some time to come. Plus it is also the best way of getting my new images in front of clients and educating those clients that are interested on the latest digital trends, workflow and gear.

In fact, I get daily emails from folks all over the world asking to sign up for the Newsletter which is very encouraging. And on top of that my Adobe Lightroom Workflow eBook has sold to buyers from all over the world including China, Sweden, England, Mexico, Switzerland, Canada and many other countries. The workflow has also gotten rave reviews from pretty much everyone who has read it. And word of mouth has resulted in an amazing number of sales all with very little promotion on my part.

These last few months have been very busy with assignments, stock shoots and even a few private workshops. I'm trying to stay on top of it all with the large number of digital images I've produced and which need to be

worked up. I'm also revamping my archiving and storage methods here in the office and I'll share my experiences with that in the next Newsletter and on the Blog site.

Back to the blog site, feel free to make comments on my posts. If you have any questions for me you can comment on posts and I can reply to the blog so that other readers can chime in as well. I have moved many of the old "New Work" articles to the blog in an effort to clean up my main website - and I will be adding new articles on recent photo shoots more frequently now to the blog.

I have also added an article to my website about shooting on assignment for Adobe Lightroom last year. The article gives all the gory details on the who, what, where, when and how of that high profile assignment. You can check out that article on my website and images from that assignment in the Lightroom Portfolio.

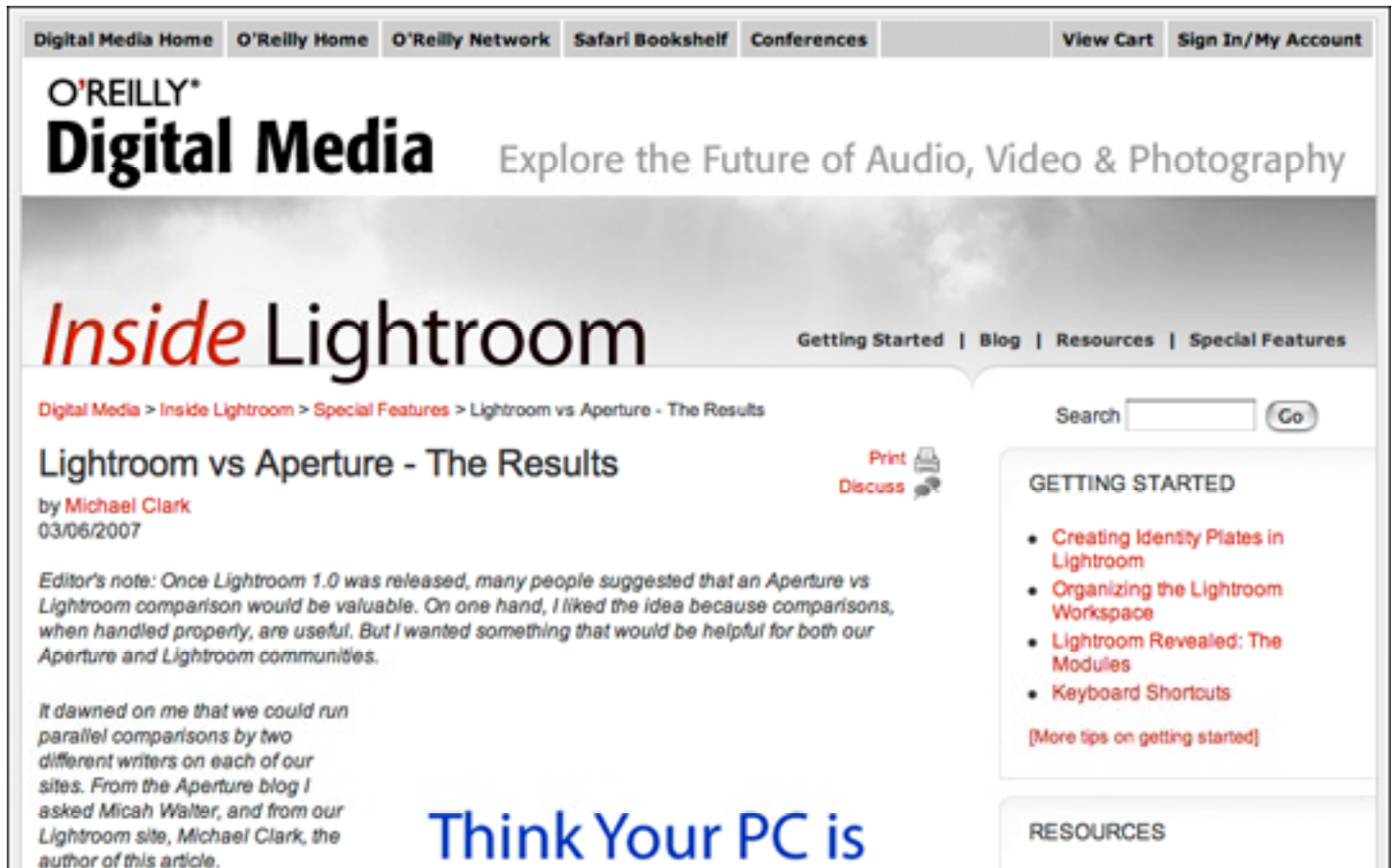
As always, I hope you enjoy this issue of the newsletter. This Spring issue is a little late this year because I have been so busy recently. I'll be out in Los Angeles next month giving a presentation to the ASMP - Los Angeles group. If you are out that way and wish to attend (June 5th) I'd love to meet you face to face. You can find more details on that presentation on my blog and on the ASMP-LA website. Until next time, adios. Now, step away from the computer!

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Lightroom vs. Aperture Comparison

Michael publishes in-depth comparison of Lightroom and Aperture



A screen shot of my Lightroom vs. Aperture comparison on O'Reilly Digital Media's Inside lightroom website. The comparison is an unbiased conclusion for myself and my work after spending two weeks using both software applications.

Michael recently wrote a Lightroom vs. Aperture comparison article for the O'Reilly blog site *Inside Lightroom* which has created quite a buzz. In tandem with my comparison, Micah Walter, from the *Inside Aperture* blog site has also written a comparison of these two software applications. Together our two comparisons paint a fairly complete picture of the differences and what works for each of us.

In my conclusion, I wrote "A big part of why I chose Lightroom in the first place, and why I will continue to use it for my workflow, is because I came from using Adobe Camera Raw, so I'm comfortable with the sliders. I prefer Lightroom's simplicity of design and its user interface. Another big reason I choose Lightroom over Aperture is the issue of speed. It works faster and it works on all of my computers. The fact that I already know the software to some degree having come from

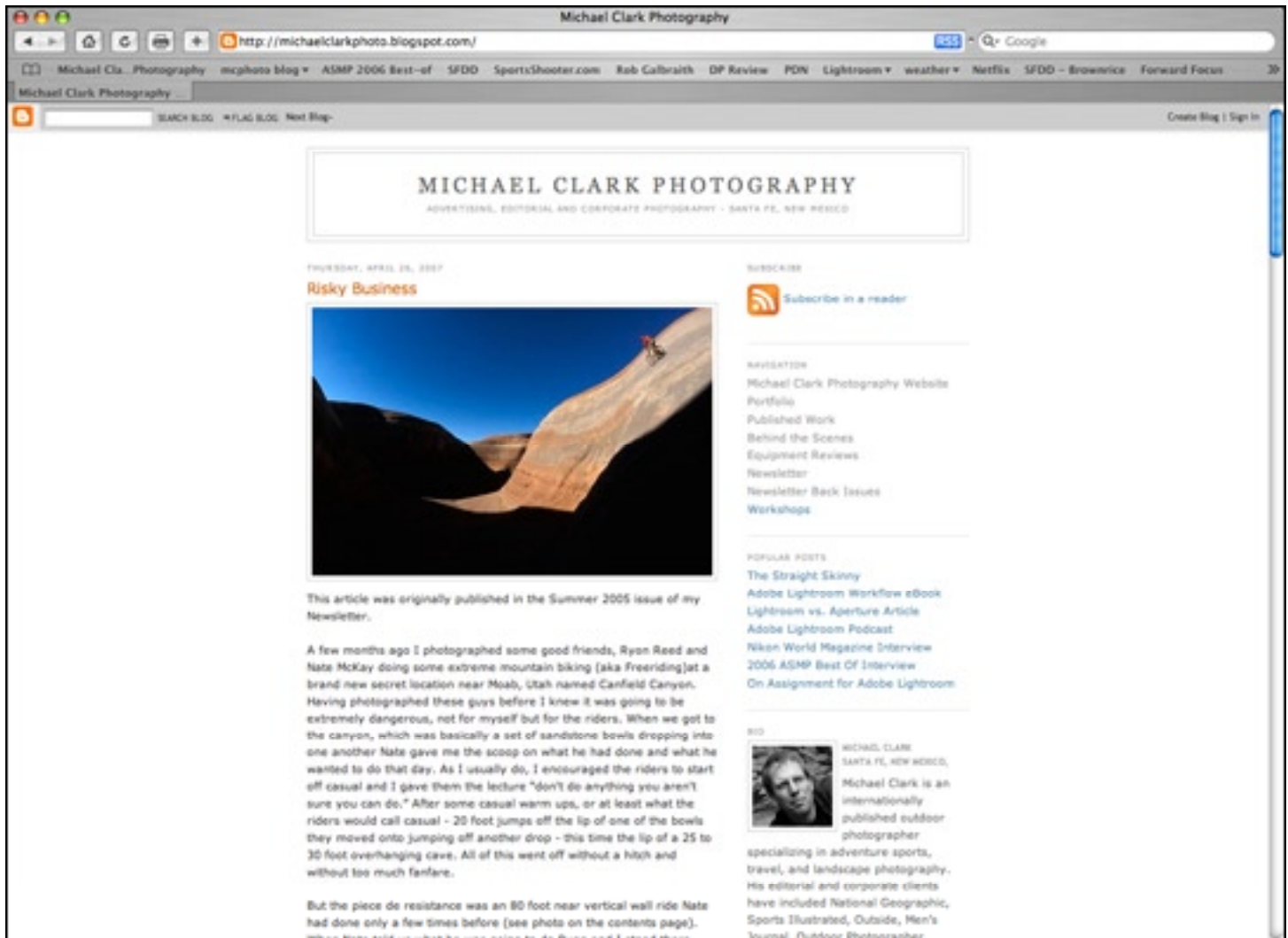
ACR means I don't have to learn a whole new way of dealing with my raw images. As a professional photographer, this point cannot be underestimated. I have clients to deal with, assignments to shoot, process and get out the door, and most importantly invoices to keep track of. Digital photography has cut into my time behind the camera because I'm now at my computer dealing with images. And that is the real reason I choose Lightroom over Aperture or anything else for that matter. It allows me to concentrate on photography again!"

To read the entire comparison go to <http://digitalmedia.oreilly.com/2007/03/05/lightroom-vs-aperture.html>.

RECENT CLIENTS: Gatorade/Propel, Patagonia, Cloudveil, Gregory Packs, Bike, Backpacker Magazine, Women's Health, Climbing, New Mexico Magazine and O'Reilly Digital Media.

Updated Website and a New Blog

In case the newsletter isn't enough, I've added a new Blog & updated my Website



A screenshot of the new Blog site for Michael Clark Photography which is accessible via the updated website at michael-clarkphoto.com. The new Blog site allows me to easily post articles about my recent work, inspirations and influences.

I have recently updated my website and added a blog site as well. The website has needed some house cleaning for a while now and I hadn't posted any new work or Behind the Scenes stories in some time. Hence, I have added some new images and content to the site. I have also moved the New Work section over to the new Blog - which allows me to post updates much more easily and also allows them to be archived and found without too much hassle.

It seems like everyone and their dog is starting a blog these days, I hope mine will be interesting enough that folks can come back from time to time and check it out. I'll try to add new posts on a weekly basis when I am able and there are lots of good links as well.

ASMP - LOS ANGELES PRESENTATION

Michael has been asked to speak to the Los Angeles chapter of the American Society of Media Photographers on the topic of digital workflow on June 5th, 2007. The presentation will be held at Digital Fusion in Culver City (part of West LA). The presentation will start at 7 PM officially and will go for three hours. Michael will cover his digital workflow from shooting through processing and final preparation of his RAW images using Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop as well as his cataloging and archiving systems. If you'd like to attend you can get more information through the ASMP LA chapter and on their website at www.asmpla.org.

The Epson R1800

A superb high end ink jet photo printer for the pro photographer



I'll admit, an ink jet printer is not the most exciting piece of gear in my office. I don't do a lot of printing. But on occasion, when I make prints for the athletes I work with or for the occasional fine art print client I turn to my trusty Epson R1800 ink jet printer. I have had the R1800 for a little over a year now - a client of mine bought it for me because he needed 40 large prints (13 x 19 inches) made and it was cheaper to buy a printer and do it myself rather than farm it out. Plus, I could deliver higher quality prints being able to control everything in house. That client was blown away by the print quality as was the framer he worked with.

Epson is well known for its high end photo printers so it is no surprise to see that the R1800 produces incredible high quality prints. When I chose the R1800 I had several reasons why I did not go for the Epson 2400. Chief among those was the fact that the R1800 could print onto CDs and DVDs. In this digital age, all of my images go out on DVDs or via FTP. It is very rare that any film leaves the office these days. Hence, I wanted my DVDs to look good and I wanted all of my information to be on each DVD since clients tend to hold onto these for quite sometime. The other reason I chose the R1800 is that it prints on glossy papers with an overcoat that really simulates glossy photo prints like few other printers I've ever seen. I like glossy papers, but my favorite papers are semigloss. The Epson 2400, in comparison does an admirable job with glossy papers

but it is much more suited to fine art matte papers. While I like matte papers, most of my work gets printed on semigloss or Epson semi-matte proofing paper (for match prints) and the R1800 does an admirable job with those papers. In fact there isn't that much of a difference that I have seen between the 2400 and the 1800. There is a lot of hoopla that the 2400 will print black and white images without a color cast but in my experience I haven't seen a huge difference between the two printers. If one needs pure black and white prints from any ink jet then in my experience you'll have to use a RIP like Image Print. Nevertheless, I've found black and white printing with the R1800 to be fairly good with only a minimal color cast - as in the image below.

Also, when printing with Epson papers on the R1800 I have found the Epson profiles to be very very good.





Above is a sample image of a print of Nigerian artist Rafini Mustriphe posing for a portrait in Santa Fe, New Mexico. With a little sharpening the print held ridiculous detail - enough so that you could count pores on his face! At left, on the previous page, is a print I made from a recent landscape shoot at Plaza Blanca near Abiquiu, New Mexico. Plaza Blanca (the White Place) is a canyon made famous by Georgia O'Keefe who lived nearby and painted here often.

I do print on a few non-Epson papers from time to time including Moab Entrada and Moab Kokopelli for some fine art prints. The Moab printer profiles are pretty good for the R1800 as well.

Overall, I have had very few issues with the R1800. From time to time I have to clean the ink jet nozzles and as is standard with all Epson printers if I haven't printed anything for a while I will have to go through a few printer head cleanings to get the best print quality. The ink can dry up just a bit inside the cartridges if they aren't used often - hence the cleanings.

And the print quality is just stunning I have to say - this is standard for all Epson Photo printers but everytime I see a print come out I am a little amazed at how good we have it these days. With a Nikon D2x, Photoshop and the Epson R1800 I can make prints that would have cost a fortune in the past and they have the resolution of medium format film

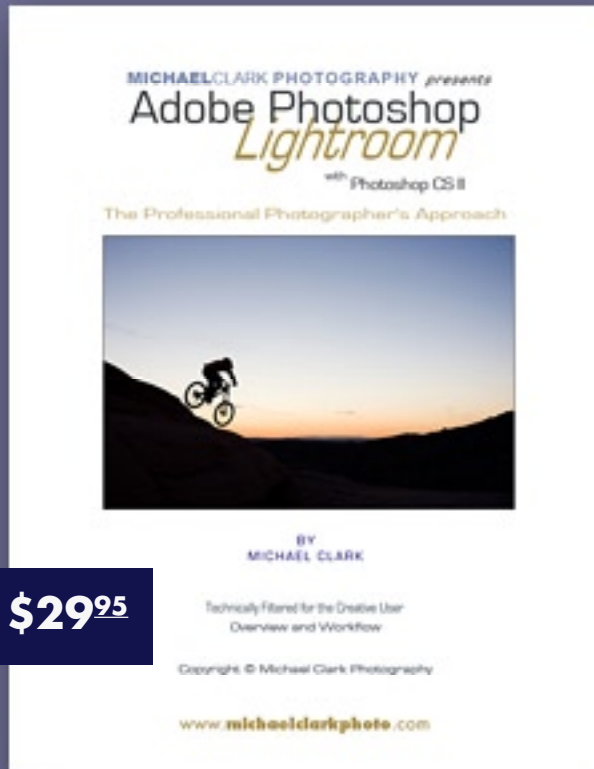
images. The R1800 prints up to 13 x 19 inches, includes a roll paper adapter, a DVD/CD print tray and is small enough to actually fit on a desk.

There is a lot of competition with ink jet printing these days, most notably, HP and Canon have produced some incredible printers - even one with profile management built in which will really revolutionize the printing game. All of this competition will only mean that printers will be much better in the future.

I realize this hasn't been a technical review of the R1800 - there are plenty of those online - but if you prefer glossy or semigloss papers you'll be hard pressed to find a better printer. With a little education you can easily produce prints worthy of any gallery. And on top of that prints from the R1800 have been rated by the Wilhelm Imaging Research group to last from 80 to 200 years depending on the paper used. For more information on the Epson R1800 go to www.epson.com.

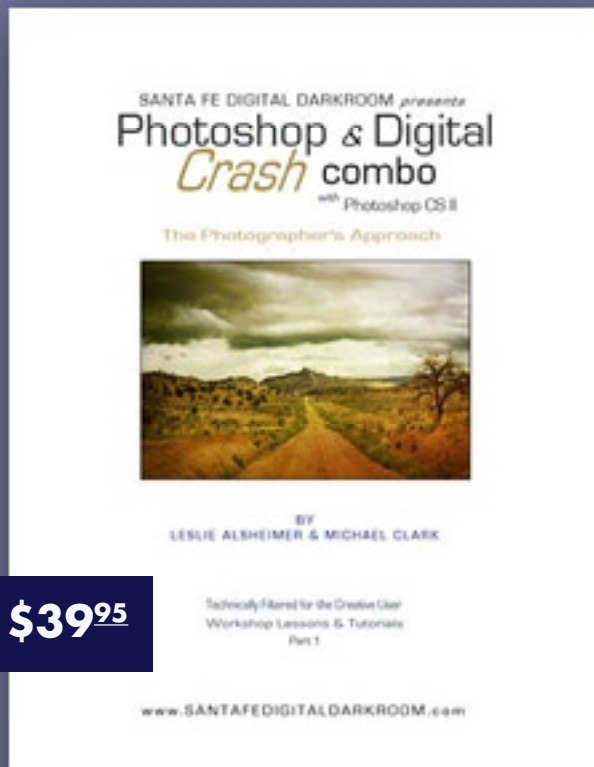
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equipment review

The Pocket Wizard



The Pocket Wizard is a radio system for remotely triggering cameras and strobes. These puppies are worth their weight in gold. I'm not giving them a whole lot of space in the newsletter because there isn't a whole lot to say - they just work. And they pretty much work all the time except when the batteries run down. All in all, these are one of the most dependable pieces of gear a photographer can own. I own the PW Plus transmitters and receivers, but they just came out with the Plus II model which will do both because it has an auto sensor to detect which mode it needs to work in. Either way, these will allow you work wirelessly with your strobes and remote cameras.

The parting shot image in this newsletter (page 13) is a good example of what these can do. I had a strobe set up behind the rock climber coiling her rope to separate her from the background and simulate another climber's headlamp pointed her direction. With up to 1,600 feet of range they even work from quite a distance. For more information on the invaluable Pocket Wizard go to www.pocketwizard.com.

CMYK Conversions

Critical reproduction for off-set presses starts with careful RGB to CMYK conversions

Converting RGB images to CMYK for printing on off-set web presses is often misunderstood and is sometimes very poorly done. If you generally crank up the saturation in your images quite a bit to make them look like Fuji Velvia film the odds are good that when converted to CMYK there will be a number of areas in the image that are out of gamut and will need some tweaking. In this months Digital Dogma, I will outline a method to check and see which colors are out of gamut and how to correct them for CMYK.

Let's just jump right into it. First things first, you'll need to get the ICC CMYK color profile from your client for their print house. If they don't have it you might need to talk with the printer. Or you can check with your client and see if they have an in-house tech person who deals with their RGB to CMYK conversions - if so then they can take care of this process and your job is over. But for those of you that really want your images to print well in magazines and books, read on. Many clients will appreciate if you at least check for out of Gamut colors and correct those for a standard CMYK profile such as U.S. Web Coated SWOP v2.

"IF YOU GENERALLY CRANK UP THE SATURATION IN YOUR IMAGES TO MAKE THEM LOOK LIKE VELVIA THE ODDS ARE GOOD THAT SOME AREAS ARE OUT OF GAMUT."

Once you have the CMYK profile you are converting your image to, follow these steps:

- 1) Duplicate your image. Image > Duplicate.
- 2) Go to View > Proof Setup > Custom and choose the CMYK ICC profile that you will be converting your image to, then click save.
- 3) Now, choose View > Proof Colors, then View > Gamut Warning. The colors that are out of gamut will appear as gray spots in your image. Now we need to select these colors so we can bring them into gamut.
- 4) To select the out of gamut colors, go to Select > Color Range and toggle down to Out of Gamut.
- 5) Now that you can see which colors are out of gamut use the Hue and Saturation sliders to bring those colors back into Gamut for your CMYK profile. Once you have finished go to Select > Deselect.
- 6) Use the hue and saturation sliders again to bring the image back to the way it looked in RGB. You can also use Image > Adjustments > Selective Color to work with the image as well.
- 7) And Finally you can convert the image to CMYK by going to Edit > Convert to Profile and select the CMYK profile.

As you can see this is an involved process and different for each image so you cannot automate the process. But your images should now print very nicely without any funky colors showing up.

Glossary:

CMYK: Color Space used by most if not all off-set presses, Cyan-Magenta-Yellow-Black.

Color Space Conversion: A method using Photoshop of changing the color space used in rendering an image. Color spaces contain differing numbers of colors with CMYK being the smallest and Pro-Photo RGB being the largest.

[PORTFOLIO]





It's all about the Color *by Michael Clark*

While scanning some film recently, I had an interesting revelation about my sense of color and how it has changed three or four years after converting to digital. When I first started experimenting with digital photography back in 2003 I was less than excited about the new color palette that my digital camera produced. It wasn't just the camera mind you, I was still learning how to process those RAW images and it took some time to feel comfortable with "digital" colors. And as an outdoor photographer, I had been shooting the supersaturated and contrasty film Fujichrome Velvia. Initially, I tried to make all of my digital images look like Velvia did. That was what I was used to and that is what my clients expected. Pushing digital files to look like Velvia presented a few problems - first of which it was difficult to get that Velvia feel and second, it often led to out of gamut colors when the images were converted to CMYK for printing.

"NOW, FOUR YEARS LATER, I FIND THAT I PREFER DIGITAL'S COLOR PALETTE. IT JUST LOOKS DIFFERENT & IT IS EXCITING TO EXPLORE ALL OF THE POSSIBILITIES."

Now, four years later, I find that I prefer digital's color palette. Hence, while I was recently scanning some medium format film I found myself trying to make the film colors look digital. I've scaled back on the amount of contrast I put into my digital images and I've gotten used to the clean subtle colors and detailed shadows that digital photography produces. And I suppose all of us are seeing more and more digital images in magazines and on the web; which has altered what is considered pleasing to my eye.

Don't get me wrong, Velvia still produces some amazing and dramatic color but I shoot so little of it now that I have forgotten on some level exactly how it looks compared to digital. One of the other interesting trends with digital and color is the desaturated look that seems to be showing up everywhere. A few good examples of this technique are the recent movies "300" and "Letters from Iwo Jima." Both movies were shot entirely with a desaturated look. This is kind of the anti-Velvia look. And if I had to guess where and why it started, I'd say for sure it was because digital skin tones, especially those strange pink skin tones produced by Canon digital cameras, were easily dealt with by desaturating the image just slightly or sometimes massively. I can't say I haven't desaturated images myself - the table of contents image and one of the images in this issue's portfolio were both desaturated slightly.

Regardless of how we fiddle with the colors produced from digital cameras, the reality is we have a whole new color palette. It just looks different and it is exciting to explore all of the different possibilities. I think I have only just started to become comfortable with "digital" color, especially as the reproduction of digital images improves and the digital color palette becomes more accepted.



Michelle Brugiére coiling her rope in front of Bridger Jack Mesa after
a long day of rock climbing in Indian Creek near Monticello, Utah.
Nikon D2x, Nikkor 70-200mm f/2.8D VR ED-IF, DynaLite Uni400jr, Sandisk Extreme III CF Card

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