

NEWSLETTER

MICHAEL CLARK

PHOTOGRAPHY



SPRING 2011



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SPRING 2011 NEWSLETTER

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Cover Image: Thorsten Schwander warming up on a steep ice climb in the Ouray Ice Park in Ouray, Colorado. Image shot as part of a personal project focused on the sport of ice climbing. Opposite Page: Casey Shaw leading a steep pillar of WI 4 ice in the Ouray Ice Park just outside of Ouray, Colorado.





Spring is in the Air

The Latest news on Past and Future Happenings

This spring has been a roller coaster ride of exciting projects, none of which I can share with you here in this issue of the Newsletter just yet. Just about all of the assignments I have shot in the last three months or more are still in the pipeline and will appear in advertisements and articles this summer. Hence, I'll include those in the Summer 2011 issue of the Newsletter. The past few months have had me hanging in the sky to shoot paragliders, hanging off numerous cliff faces to photograph ice climbers (as you can see in a few images in this issue of the Newsletter), and working with a huge production crew to shoot an ad. This has already been a banner year for us here at Michael Clark Photography. And that is just the tip of the iceberg. There are many more exciting projects to come, and sadly, I can't tell you about those just yet either. Stay tuned to the newsletter and blog and you'll hear about all of these exciting developments soon enough.

One other big change up with the Newsletter is the completely new and improved layout and design. For years now I have been thinking about how I would like to redo the Newsletter with a more modern design and make it easier to read, especially for those of you reading this on a computer or iPad. And coming soon, I'll also have the Newsletter available in a print version available via MagCloud.com for a very reasonable price. I am not offering

the print version to make money off the Newsletter, just to offer up another, perhaps easier to read version for those that have been asking for it.

The perspective column in this issue is also a very "relevant" and timely topic for many. It covers several topics and points made in a recent talk I gave to the local ASMP chapter entitled, "Staying Relevant in the Current economy." In that talk I presented "10 ways to stay Relevant in the Current Economy." The talk went fantastically well and I have boiled it down here for the masses. As a side note, I have to say how thankful I am for the community of professional photographers we have here in New Mexico and how thankful I am that they are so open and willing to share their knowledge and experiences. Their willingness to share helps all of us stay up to date with new photography and business techniques. If you are a professional photographer and are looking to change things up I can't recommend ASMP or a similar professional organization high enough. *Opposite Page, Katherine Mast taking a stroll in White Sands National Monument near Alamogordo, New Mexico.*

Recent Clients: Apple, Nikon, Red Bull, Smartwool, The Gate Worldwide, State Street Global Advisors, Pixiq.com, Lark Photography Books, National Geographic, Stab Magazine and Nikon World Magazine.



PDN Photo Annual Award

Michael's website recognized in the 2011 PDN Photo Annual

Last year, I spent over three months crafting an entirely new unified look starting with my logo, then my website and blog, as well as new business cards and stationary. For the new logo I worked with [Brian Hoff](#), who is an excellent graphic designer and came highly recommended. His input and eye for design was the cornerstone of my new look. I will say it was a wild process and it involved a lot of hard work coming up with the new look and logo.

Once we finished the logo, I moved on to the website redesign. For the website, I chose a template offered by Rob Haggart's company [APhotoFolio.com](#) after looking at several of his websites on a 30-inch monitor and wondering how the images could be so huge and load so quickly. One of the other features of the new website is the "Fullscreen" option which is awesome (for lack of a better word). You can find this in the lower left corner of the website. It will basically fill up your entire screen with the website and you can turn it on and off at any time. Surprisingly, even though it is a Flash based website, all of the text carried over quite well and there is an HTML site running in the background that shows up on iPhones and on any other non-Flash compliant devices.

After all that hard work last year, I was honored to be included in the 2011 Photo District News (PDN)

Photo Annual, which is one of the biggest photography competitions for professionals anywhere. My website was one of a few dozen that was chosen out of hundreds for inclusion in the Photo Annual. Creating the new look was a lot of hard work and it is nice to see it recognized.

On the opposite page are two screenshots of the new website. I must say that the new look has been a key part of my marketing strategy over the last year and it has really helped boost my business to a level I have never seen before. I regularly get nice comments on the new logo and website. It really does make a big difference when you use a professional graphic designer to create new marketing materials.

My website includes a lot of images and information. There are pages that talk about everything from the gear I use and the books I have written to Behind the Scenes stories and upcoming workshops. The website serves as the home base for all of my marketing and pretty much any and everything I am up to is on the website or blog - or in this newsletter.

My thanks to Brian Hoff and the folks over at APhotoFolio for all of their help making this come together. If you would like to check out the award winning website go to www.michaelclarkphoto.com.

MICHAEL CLARK
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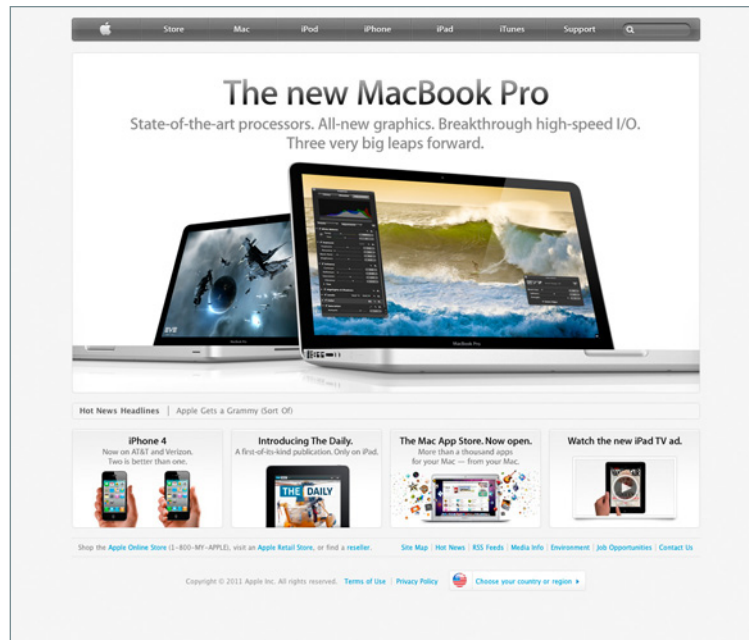


New Client: Apple

Michael's surfing image used to promote new MacBook Pro

Apple featured one of my images on the latest generation of MacBook Pro computers that were announced in February. This wasn't a huge surprise as I sent the photos to them for this usage over a month before they appeared on the website but it was nice to see it come through. If you are wondering which image is mine it is the one on the right computer. This surfing shot was captured the day before the 2009/2010 Eddie Aikau when the waves were still peaking at around 30-40 feet. You can read all about the new MacBook Pros on the Apple website [here](#). And

you can see my image on their website on the Performance page [here](#). Strangely enough just after I took



screenshots of my image on the Apple MacBook Pro web page, my MacPro tower's main hard drive crashed and I had to restore it from the backup (created with SuperDuper). Such is life. I also had a hard drive failure in my RAID 5 array just a few days earlier. It is amazing to me how unstable hard drives

are these days. I can't wait for affordable solid state drives with decent storage capabilities to become available but sadly I think that is still a ways off.

"Extreme Photo of the Week"

Red Bull image makes the cut on National Geographic's Website

An image I produced last year for Red Bull is on the National Geographic website on the "[Extreme Photo of the Week](#)" Page. This image (see the screenshot on the next page) of Jon DeVore jumping off a 3,000-foot cliff in a wingsuit was shot in southwestern Utah last summer. As usual with Red Bull, it was an amazing

assignment full of exciting moments. Working with the Red Bull Air Force team is never dull. To create this image I shot at 8 frames per second with a fisheye lens and then composited a series of images together in Adobe Photoshop to show the trajectory of his fall. This jump was incredibly technical. In total the top of the cliff was 3,200

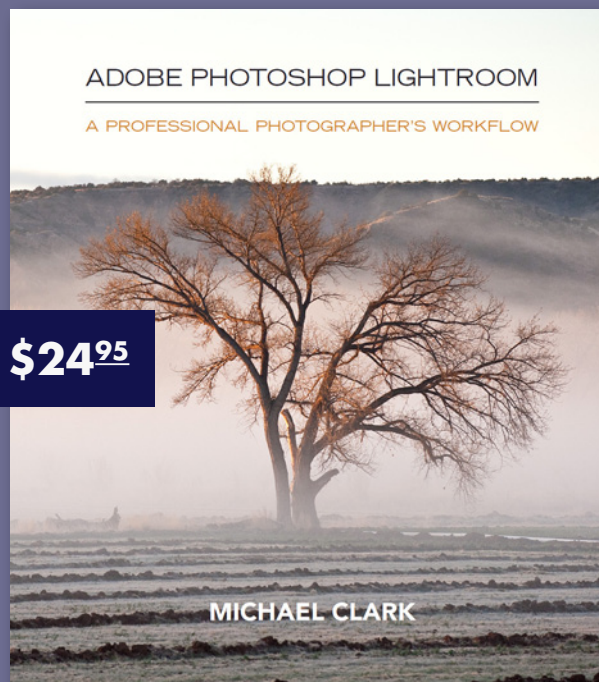
feet above terra firma. About 1,000 feet below the top of the cliff there is a 50-foot ledge and the crew had six seconds to get enough air under their wings and start flying away from the cliff or they would hit the ledge. And on top of that they had to make a hard left turn fairly quickly since they were jumping into a rather narrow canyon.



In all, I had a total of nine seconds, yes, nine whole seconds, to get the actions shots on this assignment. With three BASE jumpers and three jumps each, I had one second with each individual jump before the jumper was a dot in the canyon. To maximize the number of images I could get on each jump, I had two cameras set up to shoot simultaneously from two different angles for each jump. The image chosen for the "Extreme Photo of the Week" was shot with a Nikon D300s at eight frames per second with a Nikkor 10.5mm Fisheye lens while I was hanging over the edge of the cliff just next to the BASE jumper. For the full story on this shoot check out my [Summer 2010 Newsletter](#).

ADOBE LIGHTROOM WORKFLOW

A COMPLETE WORKFLOW FROM CAPTURE TO OUTPUT BY MICHAEL CLARK



\$24⁹⁵

UPDATED FOR LIGHTROOM 3.4 AND PHOTOSHOP CS5

The Adobe Photoshop Lightroom Workflow, a 353 page e-book, is a workshop in book form. Updated for Adobe Lightroom 3 and Photoshop CS5, this e-book was completely re-written and presents a workflow that can be adapted by any photographer, professional or amateur. I can honestly say that I have not seen any other book on the market today that includes as much detailed and comprehensive information as this e-book does on digital workflow.

To purchase *Adobe Photoshop Lightroom: A Professional Photographer's Workflow* click on the website link below. Payments can be made with any major credit card or via your PayPal account. For more information on the workflow and exactly what is covered go to Michael's website.

WWW.MICHAELCLARKPHOTO.COM

workshops

2011 Photography Workshops

An overview of workshops taught by Michael Clark

Each year I teach several workshops on a variety of topics including adventure photography, digital workflow and artificial lighting. Below is a listing of the workshops I will be teaching this year. For the full descriptions about each of these workshops and to find out how to register for these workshops go to the [Workshops page on my website](#). I hope to see you out there in the field this year.

Adventure Photography

Santa Fe, New Mexico — June 19-25, 2011

Adventure sports photography can be an adventure in itself, involving breathtaking locations, extreme conditions, and working with elite athletes in risky situations. It requires a host of skills, including technical excellence with the camera, familiarity with the sport, and the ability to keep your goals and safety in mind throughout.

Designed for intermediate to professional working photographers, this workshop concentrates on creating unique adventure sports and lifestyle images. We focus on four outdoor sports: rock climbing, white water kayaking, mountain biking, and trail running. Using elite athletes as our models and northern New Mexico's incredible landscape as our backdrop, we explore innovative ways to capture the essence of each sport.

Topics covered during the week include research and preparation, composition and camera angles, equipment selection and use, using natural light, fill flash, and battery-powered strobes, and autofocus techniques. We also learn how to work with athletes who are putting themselves at risk and how to capture the intensity of the action. Each day finds us in a new location working with expert athletes.

Classroom time includes editing and critiquing images and one-on-one meetings with Michael. In addition, Michael shares his insights and experiences in the adventure marketplace, including career development, portfolios, and how to shoot for stock, editorial, and commercial clients.

This workshop is hosted by the [Santa Fe Workshops](#). For more information or to register for this workshop visit the Santa Fe Workshops website [here](#) or call them at (505) 983-1400.

Surfing Photography Workshop

Oahu, Hawaii — January 12-15, 2012

Join legendary surfing photographer Brian Biemann and adventure sports photographer Michael Clark for an exciting one-of-a-kind workshop that delves into the world





of surfing photography. Brian is a top surfing photographer who has been shooting the sport for more than 25 years. Michael brings his adventure photography skills and knowledge as well as his in-depth experience with digital workflow to round out the workshop.

This 4-day workshop combines daily photo shoots at world-class surfing locations and classroom instruction. We will be spending half of our time shooting in the early mornings and in the late afternoon and evenings when the waves and the light are at their best. The other half of the workshop will be spent in the classroom and our time there will be centered around image critiques, discussions on gear, strategies and the business of photography as well as in-depth discussions on shooting surfing. We'll also cover digital workflow in detail using Adobe Photoshop Lightroom Version 3.x.

The workshop is scheduled during a period where large waves hit the north shore frequently. Though we cannot predict or guarantee the wave size or surfing conditions, the north shore of Oahu serves up sizable waves on a nearly daily basis. The workshop is being hosted at the Turtle Bay Hilton Resort on Oahu's North Shore.

The cost of this workshop is \$995 per person. A nonrefundable deposit of \$350 is required to secure your spot on the workshop. If you have any questions or would like to register for the workshop send me an [email](#).

Adventure Photography

Rockport, ME — August 21-27, 2011

Adventure sports photography can be an adventure in itself, involving breathtaking locations, extreme conditions

and working with elite athletes in risky situations. It requires a host of skills, including technical excellence with the camera, familiarity with the sport and the ability to keep your goals and safety in mind throughout.

Designed for intermediate to experienced photographers, this workshop concentrates on creating unique adventure sports and lifestyle images. We focus on outdoor sports like sea kayaking, mountain biking and trail running. Using athletes as our models and Maine's coastal landscape as our backdrop, we explore innovative ways to capture the essence of each sport. Topics covered during the week include research and preparation, composition and camera angles, equipment selection and use, using natural light, fill-flash and battery-powered strobes, and autofocus techniques.

We also learn how to work with athletes who are putting themselves at risk and how to capture the intensity of the action. Each day finds us out in new locations and in the classroom editing and critiquing images, and meeting one-on-one with Michael. In addition, Michael shares his insights and experiences in the adventure marketplace, including career development, portfolios and how to shoot for stock, editorial, and commercial clients.

This workshop is hosted by the [Maine Media Workshops](#). Register for this workshop [here](#) or contact them via phone at (877) 577-7700.

Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta Workshop

Albuquerque, New Mexico — October 7-9, 2011

This extended weekend workshop will be a combined classroom workshop with outdoor photographic shoots.

The workshop coincides with the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, which is the world's largest balloon festival. We will be shooting at the Balloon Fiesta for two days in the early hours of the morning as hundreds of Balloons rise into the sky. All classroom instruction will be centered around Adobe Photoshop Lightroom 3.x. The Balloon Fiesta is an incredible event to photograph for any photographer no matter what your experience level or specialty. Come join us for this very exciting workshop in the Land of Enchantment.

The Cost: The cost of this workshop is \$495 per person. The same rate applies for each participant regardless of whether they are doing photography and participating in the workshop, or not. A nonrefundable deposit of \$125 is required to secure your spot on the workshop. Final balance will be due no later than September 1, 2011.

Registration: If this workshop has your name on it, then now is the time to register. Remember, there will be limited space available for this workshop. When they're spoken for, that's it. [To register follow this link to Andy Biggs website where you can register and pay via PayPal.](#) If you have any questions before registering, send us an e-mail with any inquiries to info@andybiggs.com.

Adobe Photoshop Lightroom

Salt Lake City, Utah — June 11-12, 2011

Minneapolis, MN — July 30-31, 2011

New Orleans, LA — November 5-6, 2011

Lightroom is the essential software of choice for digital photographers. This unique hands-on application experience is an intensive two-day workshop focused on Adobe Photoshop Lightroom 3.x, in which participants learn to

download, organize, manage, develop, and present digital photography using their own laptops.

We begin with an introductory overview of Lightroom, which starts with covering the database components, catalog files, previews, the metadata structure, and the steps for setting up application preferences specific to your personal workflow requirements. Topics include digital camera setup, choosing appropriate file formats for image capture, efficiently downloading images from the camera or a hard drive, sorting, rating, editing, global tone and color corrections, critical local corrections, input and output sharpening, presenting slideshows, and printing photographic images using Lightroom from start to finish. Under Michael's expert guidance, participants come to see why Lightroom puts deliberate focus on the word "speed". This program allows photographers to spend less time in front of their computers and more time behind their cameras.

Cost: \$295.00 with early registration. Register online at Lightroomworkshops.com. In 2011 I'll be teaching this workshop in Salt Lake City, UT on June 11-12, 2011, in Minneapolis, MN on July 30-31, 2011 and in New Orleans, LA on November 5-6, 2011. Please check my website for more information about the workshop.

The Adobe Photoshop Lightroom workshops are taught as part of a larger series of workshops on Adobe Lightroom via Lightroomworkshops.com. Other instructors, including Nevada Wier, George Jardine, Rob Sylvan, Jennifer Spelman and photoshop guru Jerry Courvoisier, will be teaching the same workshop at other locations. For a complete overview of locations and instructors visit the Lightroomworkshops.com website.



equipment review

My Favorite Camera bags, Part II

The LowePro Pro Roller x200 and the LowePro Street and Field System

Disclaimer: I am sponsored by LowePro. Even though I have bought a fair number of their bags at full price I have also received quite a few of their bags as part of our working relationship. If you are looking for a comparison of all the camera bags on the market this isn't it. I have been using LowePro bags long before I was sponsored by them and even back when I was paying for camera bags I tried them all and found LowePro bags to be the best built and most useful for my needs. I received both the LowePro x200 and Street and Field system from LowePro at no charge and I have supplied them with detailed feedback.

In the [Fall 2010](#) issue of the Newsletter I wrote an article about my favorite camera bags and how I transport my photo equipment for various assignments. That article was also published on [Pixiq.com](#). Since then I have had the opportunity to try out two new bags from LowePro: the Pro Roller x200 and the newly redesigned Street and Field (S&F) System. Because these bags are so well made and have become a mainstay in my basic kit I thought I would write another article discussing these two excellent offerings here in the Newsletter. I have been using both the Pro Roller x200 and the S&F series bags quite a bit since I got them and I have to say they have changed how I pack for assignments considerably. Using these two bags in combination with each other is the key and I'll outline here how I pack these bags.

Let's start with the Pro Roller bag. I have to say the Pro Roller series of bags are one of the best products LowePro makes bar none. As the name suggests, this camera bag is a rolling case. It is very well made, looks sleek and is a great size for any photographer that needs to move and protect a large amount of gear, especially when flying. As an adventure guy, I don't normally roll my gear that far but I have had a slew of assignments lately that were quite a bit tamer than normal and I have been using the Pro Roller x200 a lot. It is a fantastic and incredibly durable camera bag, especially for how light it is. And it doesn't really look like a camera bag at all. It looks like the average overhead carry-on that everyone else takes on a plane. Only the LowePro logo on the front gives it away.

In fact, I have not been using the Pro Roller as a camera bag at all. I have been using it mostly to carry my lighting gear. It works great as a camera bag too, but for my work the S&F system works better for me in that respect to carry actual camera gear. For lighting gear though the x200 is much lighter than my 1610 Pelican cases (reviewed in the Fall 2010 Newsletter) and it protects the lighting gear very well — not as securely as the Pelican cases but it is robust enough that I would trust it to protect lighting gear as checked baggage and that is saying a lot. In fact there is very little that separates this bag from the Tenba Air Cases when it comes to durability.

I have packed (see image on the next page) two full Elinchrom Ranger Quadra RX setups into this bag with a host of lighting accessories and attachments and there is still room to spare. I have also packed the larger and much heavier Elinchrom Ranger RX Speed AS pack and head system into this bag and it does very well, though it might be a better candidate for the larger x300 version of this bag. In fact I am so enamoured with this bag I will probably pick up the bigger x300 and move all of my lighting gear into these bags permanently, only using the Pelican cases when the weather conditions absolutely call for them.

The x200 has a removable backpack as well as many other well thought out features like a kickstand, a tripod socket on the top of the extendable handle and a padded laptop compartment in the top lid. I will say that the backpack is a minimalist design (as one would expect) and it isn't designed to carry gear long distances but it will work in a pinch. Of note, you can remove the backpack and still use the rest of the bag as a normal rolling carry-on type bag which is very handy for those times when you need an extra bag.

The construction and padding in this bag is also better than that found in any other LowePro bag that I have

seen. Each of the main padding inserts has a stiffener in it so that every section is very well protected. The bag itself is also very stiff and I have applied extreme pressure to the bag to see how it would hold up to abuse while fully loaded. The upshot is it would be very difficult to deform the bag. This last discovery is what gave me the confidence to pack it with thousands of dollars worth of fragile lighting gear and check it to my destination when flying to recent assignments. So far the lighting gear, and the bag as well, have been unscathed. This is going to be a bag I use a lot and I am amazed it took me so long to try

the Pro Roller bags. Do yourself a favor and check these out as they are stand out products and I say that as someone who is very critical of gear, especially camera bags.

If you read the article in the Fall 2010 issue of the Newsletter, then you know I am a big fan of LowePro's modular Street and Field camera bag system. I take the Toploader Pro 75 AW, the S&F Deluxe Waist belt and a few lens cases with me on just about every assign-

ment. Hence, when LowePro announced the new Street and Field (S&F) Transport Duffle and a host of new modular S&F camera bags to go into it, I requested those bags right away. I will admit that I was doubtful as to how useful this system would be, mostly because it isn't the most



The LowePro Pro Roller x200 (above, left) and the LowePro Street and Field Transport Duffle (above, right). The Pro Roller series bags have become one of the mainstays of my camera bag arsenal, especially for carrying lighting gear. The Street and Field series bags, including the Toploader Pro 75 AW and the Transport Duffle have quickly become a favorite as well, especially because it easily fits into overhead compartments on regional jets.

comfortable backpack to carry. There is no suspension built into the duffel and there is no waist belt. It is just a duffel with a padded flap and shoulder straps and the flap opens on the side with the shoulder straps. But when you load the Transport Duffel with padded camera and lens cases they stiffen up the duffel and it actually carries better than you would think. It could definitely still use a waist belt attachment but as is it works fairly well.

Where this really works for me though is on those outdoor “adventure” shoots where I will need to break down my gear into a climbing pack or into smaller segments. I shot ice climbing recently and this system allowed me to quickly and easily tailor the camera gear I needed just by picking those items out of the duffel and dropping them into the climbing pack along with all of my ice axes, crampons, climbing gear and ropes. When I travel on



Above is my LowePro Pro Roller x200 loaded to the gills with two Elinchrom Ranger Quadra RX battery backs, two Quadra strobe heads (one with a reflector adaptor mounted on it), strobe cables, battery chargers, both Elinchrom and Pocket Wizard radio triggers, a Minolta IVF light meter and a Nikon SB-900 flash. And even with all of this there is still room for a laptop and quite a few other accessories as well (not shown here).

assignment I normally take a backpack like the LowePro Vertex 300 AW with all of my camera gear and then pack the Toploader Pro 75 AW and several lens cases into my other checked baggage. Now with the S&F Transport Duffle I consolidate all of that camera gear into the duffle and have less to cart around with me while on assignment.

One addition that would improve the transport duffle would be to add a waist belt, even if it is a light-weight rig. An even better option would be to put a padded flap of material that accepted the S&F Deluxe Technical Belt or the lighter S&F Light Utility Belt. That way you don't have to add any weight to the backpack and still have the modular system working together. Adding the waist belt option would also make this an easier pack to take on flights and longer trips because standing with the pack fully loaded at the airport or when traveling gets pretty tiresome with all that weight on your shoulders.

All of the new lens pouches and such work great as well. I feel like I can get more gear into a pack like the LowePro Vertex 300 AW but that isn't the point, having it all broken up and modular is really useful for a lot of

assignments. On one of my last assignments I also found out that with the Transport Duffle fully loaded it will fit perfectly into the overhead compartments of regional jets. That is a huge deal for me as there are precious few camera backpacks (none that I have found so far save for this one) that will fit into the overhead compartments on regional jets. This fact alone will make this my go to bag since it seems I find myself on regional jets quite often flying in and out of Albuquerque, New Mexico and many

other smaller regional airports.



The LowePro Transport Duffle (shown above) can easily carry the Toploader Pro 75 AW, a 70-200mm f/2.8 lens and lens case, a lens case with my 14-24mm lens, a lens case with my 85mm f/2.8 PC-E lens, a second Pro camera body, an SB-900 flash, and a lens case with a 10.5 mm fisheye lens. My main camera body goes into the Toploader Pro 75 AW with a 24-70mm f/2.8 zoom attached and a 1.4X Teleconverter in the bottom of that bag. All of the miscellaneous accessories like compactflash cards, lenspens, extra batteries and such can also be stored in the Toploader Pro camera bag.

The final realization with this combo of bags was that I can carry both onto a flight. The Transport Duffle acts as my "personal bag" and the Pro Roller acts as my carry on. Thus I can carry a lot more gear, more securely than I was able to in the past. And if I have to gate check one of the bags I can hand over the Pro Roller knowing that it can stand up to a fair bit of abuse. Hence, this is a great combo that will get a

lot of use because they are such versatile camera bags.

If you'd like to get more information on these innovative camera bags visit the brand new LowePro website at www.loweepro.com. Now that I have written more about camera bags than I ever thought I ever would I'll lay off this topic for a while. [M]



The Photo Editor's Perspective

An interview with Sabine Meyer, National Geographic Adventure

This interview is an uncut version that appeared in my book *Adventure Photography: Capturing the World of Outdoor Sports*, which was published in early 2010. The interview was originally conducted in April 2009 but nevertheless the information here is still very relevant and should provide some serious incite for anyone working as a professional photographer or as a photo editor. Of note, in late 2010 *National Geographic Adventure* announced that they would be folding the print version of the magazine but would still keep it in one form or another on the *National Geographic* website.

Sabine Meyer is the Senior Photo Editor at *National Geographic Adventure* magazine, formerly one of the top adventure magazines on the planet and kid brother to *National Geographic*. I was honored to have her talk with me for this interview and share some of her insights on the adventure photography industry. She has been a photo editor since 1992, and has been with *National Geographic* since 1999.

Michael Clark: What qualities should a photographer have if they want to shoot for *National Geographic Adventure*?

Sabine Meyer: An adventure magazine caters to a lot of different readers and publishes a certain number of

stories every month that each have a different definition of what adventure is. So I tend to look into three different pools of photographers: outdoor sports photographers, photojournalists and adventure travel photographers.

I am looking for people with a very strong visual identity, but who have a lot of [outdoor] skills and can also shoot action, lifestyle, portraits, landscapes, great moments, and details. I am also looking for people who are very enthusiastic, easy to work with, independent, problem solvers, good communicators, people who are going to be team players and who are able to deal with the set of cards they are dealt. We are looking for people that are in touch with the type of stories we write about. And in some cases, it's a story that requires very specific athletic skills – like dealing with high altitude or being able to do an Eskimo roll and kayak while shooting. The photographer needs to be geared up for that.

Is it a bonus if a photographer can shoot action and high-end portraiture?

Yes, I don't just hire adventure photographers. I think in the ten years I have been here that the definition of "adventure" photographer has changed. I think that everybody out there knows that to be an adventure photographer you need to be able to shoot action, you need to be

able to set up lights and do a great portrait, you need to have a little bit of a stylist eye and you also need to be a little bit of tech head and play with rigging. You also need to be a journalist so you can create a narrative and understand what the story is about. It's not just about taking pretty pictures.

Are you and your staff constantly looking for new photographers? Or is the market already saturated with plenty of talent? Where do you look for new photographers?

The market is obviously saturated with photographers, period. But there are a lot of geographical pockets where there is not a lot of really good talent. There are parts of the country (the U.S.A.) where, should you want to assign a local photographer, it is really hard to find, at least for me, the right talent for the kind of photography I am looking for. That would be the southeast, the center of the country and the south. There is a plethora of great photographers on the west coast, in the Rockies and in the northeast and northwest. We are always looking for new talent because the way the budgets are going these days we have to hire locally. We are not in the position to say, "Who is the best for this job" no matter where the assignment is. That has always been the way we have operated.

Where do we look for photography? We get e-promos. It

is up to the photographers to reach out to us. Also, we constantly look at all the different magazines that make up our world and our competition. We really look at everything and filter what works for Adventure.

What is the best way for photographers to market themselves to you? Postcards? E-promos? A link to their website?

These days I definitely tend to favor e-promos because I can see a photo and then click on it and go to a website. Basically it is immediate portfolio viewing. That is more efficient than just a postcard that shows me one or two

photos. I'd much rather see a website because I think that a postcard is very misleading. You might think a photographer shoots a certain way because you see one or two photos and then you go on their website and you realize that the rest of their work is not

at all what you thought it would be. So that person who you thought could be right for your magazine is actually not.

I think I get a much more complete sense of who a photographer is and what they shoot when I look at an e-promo and link into a website. It is immediate. And since I am staring at a computer 8 or 10 hours a day, it becomes second nature, when I am multi-tasking, to check e-promos. When I see something I like, I definitely put that photographer on my "hot" radar or I contact the photographer if I want to see more images of a certain project.

"These days I definitely tend to favor e-promos because I can see a photo and then click on it and go to the website. That is more efficient than just a postcard that shows me one or two photos."

Now, that said, I do still get a lot of postcards and once in a while if I really like one I put it on my wall. I have this sort of wall of fame in my office. The first thing I look for is a URL on the postcard. The postcard leads to the website.

How many e-promos do you receive a week on average?

Print promos?

We get about 25 e-promos a day, if not more. Up to say 200 or more per week. I probably get thirty printed promos each week.

Do you have any advice on how to make promos (email and print) better and more interesting for you? Or on the flip side are there some definite things not to do?

The main important thing is, especially for photographers who use Agency Access or Adbase, is to make sure that they target their clients. I do get emails from photographers that do high-end beauty or cosmetics or car advertising and they are a waste of my time. Even if I have to spend five seconds, that is too much time. I want to see things that catch my attention obviously and are also really good photos. I think it is pointless to just send average photos to keep on someone's radar – because I will look at it and think "it's not so great". Why would I bother clicking through to this person's website? Do your homework. Send fresh material that is relevant and build your e-promos so they load really fast.

Do you ever call in photographers print portfolios when considering photographers for assignments? How important is a photographers website when it comes to assigning work?

No, we don't. I think that is something of the past. Why spend the money on Fed Ex with the liability of potentially losing that portfolio somewhere in transit? I think that may be a system that is still valid for commercial advertising work. I never call books in anymore. On a website, you can have a projects link, where I can look at separate individual projects and I can see 20 to 25 images for one project and it really gives me an idea on how this photographer potentially would cover or execute an assignment if I were to higher them. That is not something that you tend to get in a book because there are too few images.

When it comes to photographer's website, what are some of your pet peeves?

Websites should be very simple, easy to navigate and clean. The website should be pleasant to look at. I am very suspicious if there are too many gizmos and embellishments because often that distracts from the quality of the photos. I care very little about the technology. I just want to get to the photos as fast as possible. And I want to be able to navigate back and forth between the home page and the portfolios and different projects very easily. I personally hate it when there is an email box set up on the website. Why can't I just use my own email client? Just give me your email address. It just seems silly to me. And also, sometimes there isn't a phone number, which is really annoying. Some photographers don't specify where they are located, which I can understand, but for me it is highly critical to know where a person is located. I don't want to have to play a guessing game with their area code.

Obviously, fast loading images are critical. I also personally like a bit of caption information somewhere near the

photos because it is the type of information I look for when I look at someone's portfolio, especially for people who shoot projects and stories. That may be my background as a journalist, but that is one of my pet peeves.

Do you ever read photographer's blogs?

I have to say I wish I could spend more time reading photographer's blogs but I just do not have the time. But I do think it's a good window into people's personalities because I don't often meet the photographer's I work with.

How important is it for photographers to make the effort to meet with you in person?

It is pretty important. I like to meet someone face to face when we've seen a lot of their photos and bought some of their stock on a consistent basis or when we've done a very small project with them. If we know this person has the right eye for us we always make efforts to meet face-to-face because it is a little personality check. Is this person going to be ok if we send them on a two-week assignment with a bunch of people they have never met? Also, because they will be representing *National Geographic*, we want to make sure that we are on the same wavelength.

Any advice for photographers just starting out?

The most important thing when you start out is to be fully committed to making the best possible photos you can.


Right now, photographers should strongly think about diversifying by doing multi-media, HD video, recording sound and taking notes for lengthy caption information. It all depends on your goals and what you aspire to do as a photographer.

Any advice for those that are already well established in adventure photography?

I think they need to assess if their photography is still fresh in terms of style and technical qualities? I think if your career is just not happening, working on a personal project is very important and can reinvigorate the cre-

ative juices. Try to find new ways to tell a story, like using still images to create moving content. You can never take anything for granted. The media world moves and evolves so dramatically, even in just the last few

months, that no one can say, "ok, I've mastered digital photography, I'm set for the next 30-years." That isn't going to cut it. No matter what, you just have to be in love with photography and breathe it non-stop all day long. It's not a job. It's a way of living.

My sincere thanks to Sabine for this interview. Even though it has been published in the book and on several blogs it continues to resonate with readers. If you would like to purchase a copy of *Adventure Photography: Capturing the World of Outdoor Sports* you can find it on [Amazon.com](#) and also on [Barnesandnobles.com](#). You can also read more about the book on my website [here](#). 

portfolio





Staying Relevant

by Michael Clark

I recently gave a talk at an ASMP meeting here in New Mexico on how to stay relevant (as photographers) in the current economy. ASMP by the way stands for American Society of Media Photographers – it is the largest organization for professional photographers in the world with over 6,000 members. This topic came about while sitting in an ASMP board meeting and realizing that many of the folks sitting around the table weren't using all of the resources available to them to market their skills and their images. In particular, many were finding it difficult to use social media channels to reach out to art buyers and photo editors. Hence, in my presentation I gave a run down on what I thought the economic situation is for photographers these days and also included "10 Ways to Stay Relevant in the Current Economy."

Without going into every detail of the presentation, a few of the ways to stay relevant that I spoke about were to perfect your craft, consolidate your brand, diversify your income, do your homework (on your competition), build a following and to work hard. Of course these lessons apply to anyone working as a freelancer and I don't think this is anything really revolutionary. Some other advice I gave in the presentation was to keep your overhead as low as possible, to learn from other photographers, to think big and to never stop learning or making your business more efficient. I basically boiled down what I have

learned in the last fifteen years as a professional photographer and how I have made my business successful.

Of course, it is no revelation to anyone that the supply and demand curves for the photography industry are not helping us out. There has been a massive increase in supply the last five or ten years (since the dawn of digital) and very little if any change in demand for images. One of the best quotes in the presentation came from Clay Shirky, "Collapse is simply the last remaining method of simplification. When an ecosystem (or economy) stops rewarding complexity it is the people who figure out how to work simply in the present, rather than the people who mastered the complexities of the past, who get to say what happens in the future." That pretty much sums up the entire presentation.

It isn't only the mega corporations that are trying to figure out how to do more with less. Everyone is figuring this out right now. For my business I am seeing incredible growth, which signals to me that the economy is recovering but I am not hearing that sentiment from a lot of other folks out there. Times are still hard but there are also lots of art buyers needing excellent images. There is a culling effect happening in the photography industry right now and those who produce top notch images, work hard and are savvy marketers will still thrive.

parting shot



Thorsten Schwander and Casey Shaw enjoying a brew at the Ouray Brewery after a long day of ice climbing in the Ouray Ice Park in Ouray, Colorado.

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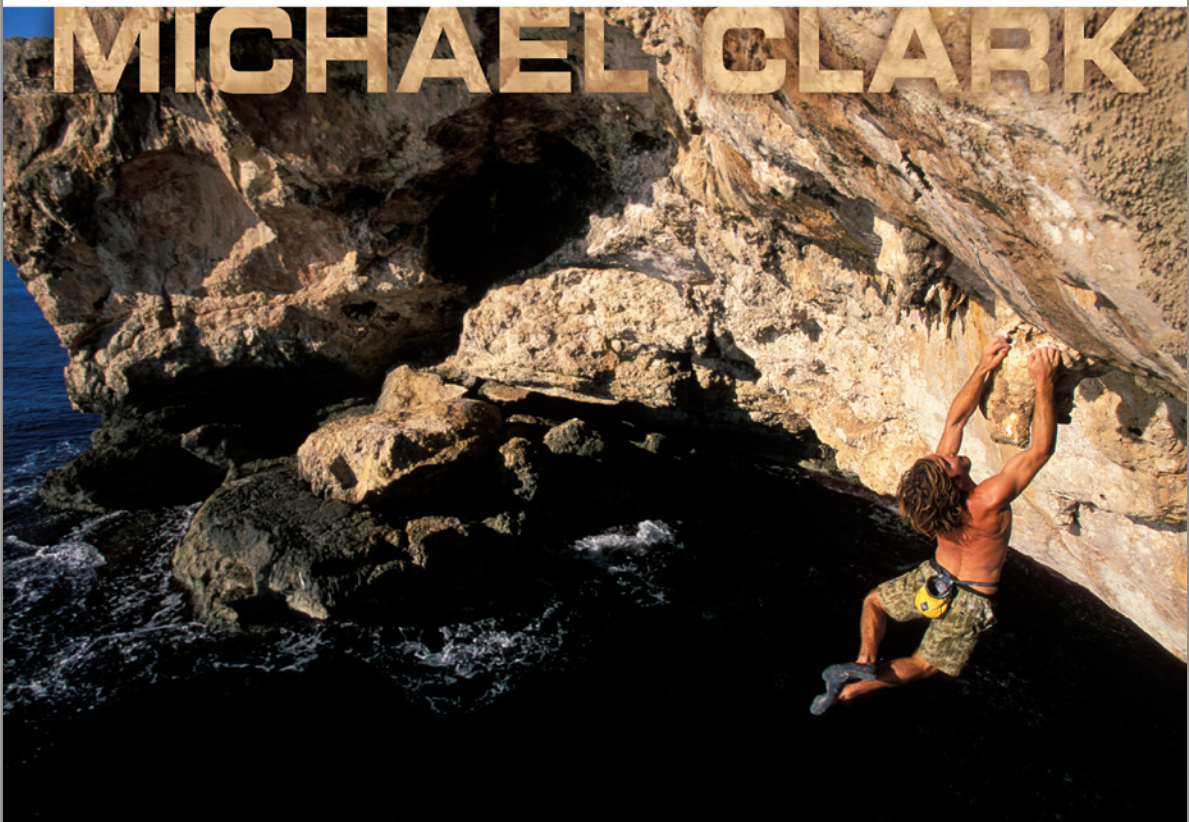


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