MICHAEL CLARK PHOTOGRAPHY





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Spring 2013 Newsietter

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Cover Image: Carlos Muñoz getting some air at Rocky Point on the north shore of Oahu, Hawaii. Opposite Page: Chelsea Yamase modeling for a few lifestyle images at Rocky Point on the north shore of Oahu, Hawaii.



editorial



Onward and Upward

Introducing yet another new book, a personal project and a revised website

ack when I started out as a photographer, more than 17 years ago, I used to think that once I had been shooting professionally for ten years or more I would be on easy street. I figured the assignments would be non-stop and I could just sit back and take the ones that interested me the most. Of course, the reality is this profession never gets any easier. It is a never-ending cascade of new challenges and hurdles to overcome. Mind you, I am not complaining. Currently, and for the last several years now, exciting and high paying assignments do come to me from out of the blue. I am very thankful for that. Nevertheless, there is always work to be done perfecting or expanding my skills, managing my marketing efforts and keeping up with the latest technology.

Photography as an art form has changed drastically since I started out. Aside from the art of photography itself, how we market ourselves and our work as photographers is a continually evolving process. The digital world we now live in has had an effect on almost every area of our economy—forcing many industries to adapt or die. Our industry is no different. As an example of keeping up with changing technology, over the last several months I have been working on an HTML 5 version of my award-winning Flash-based website. I really loved the look and feel of my old Flash website but it was a major hassle trying to adapt that Flash-based website to work with mobile

devices and tablets. By moving to an HTML 5 platform my website now looks the same across all platforms and I think the new HTML 5 version looks ever better than the older Flash version. The new HTML 5 version of my website went live a few weeks ago and you can read all about it in this Newsletter.

Just like every other professional photographer out there, I still have to work my buns off to keep things moving and shaking. So far this year, I have released yet another book, Location Lighting for the Outdoor Photographer, shot numerous assignments, revamped the website, taught a few workshops, and have also shot some personal work (as can be seen in the On Assignment article in this issue). There is never time to rest on any laurels, there is only the consistent push onward and upward. I hope you enjoy this issue of the Newsletter and it inspires you to get out and create some stellar images of your own.

Opposite Page: Portrait of professional South African bigwave surfer Josh Redman.

Recent Clients: Nikon, Red Hat, Nextera Energy Resources, Continental Tires, Schiesser AG (Germany), New Mexico Magazine, N-Photo Magazine (Germany), Digital Photo Magazine (Germany), Digital Camera Magazine (UK), and Nikon World Magazine.



A New Updated HTML 5 Website

The website gets a major overhaul, revamped portfolios and new web galleries



am very happy to announce the launch of my new HTML 5 website at www.michaelclarkphoto.com. I have been working on this new update to my website for a few months now in between assignments, photography workshops and all of my other projects. It has been a long process but the end result is a better, faster loading website that looks the same across all platforms. This new HTML 5 website was built using the stellar APhotoFolio. com Design X HTML 5 template.

In the process of updating my website, I have also gone in and revamped all of the web galleries to show off some of my latest work. The Portfolio, in particular, has been reshuffled completely and I feel that it is stronger than it has ever been. In addition to the Portfolio reshuffle, I have also reworked the specific image Galleries to include new work and a whole new category entitled "Industrial." Over the last few years, I have been hired to shoot a number of green energy industrial sites including a recycling plant in



MICHAEL CLARK



the Netherlands and wind turbine sites in Kansas. It seems that my climbing skills as well as my lighting and portrait techniques have caught the eye of a few green energy companies and I have gotten the call to shoot for them. While climbing up a ladder inside of a 400-foot wind turbine is fairly mundane when compared to hanging off a 3,000-foot cliff, it is still quite cool to stand on top of a modern wind turbine and take in the view. You can see the opening image in my new "Industrial" web gallery on the next page.

Of note, the only internet browsers that will work with HTML 5 websites at this point are Safari, Firefox and Chrome. In my testing, Chrome rendered my images the sharpest and surpassed all of my expectations. Safari, on non-Retina monitors, rendered my images quite soft when compared to Chrome and Firefox. Hence, to get the full experience of the new website, I highly recommend viewing it in either Chrome or Firefox. Also of note, the new website is optimized for Retina screens on the Mac-Book Pro and it looks phenomenal on those machines in all three browsers.

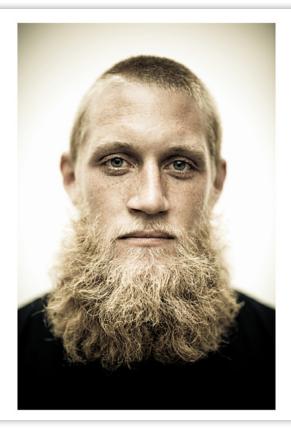
One of the main attractions to the new HTML 5 format was that I could have fullscreen images cycling on the home page. Two of the eight opening fullscreen images are shown on page 6 and at the top of page 7. These images appear fullscreen and I made sure that the menu and top logo are still clear and readable as the images cycle through. Once you click on any of the menu items in the upper left hand corner the fullscreen images slide to the left and you enter either a web gallery of images, a motion clip or one of the text pages depending on which menu item was chosen. The beauty of Aphotofolio's HTML 5 template is that you can have text, video and images all in the same web gallery. For example, when you click on Projects and go into the Eddie Aikau web gallery the first thing you see is some text that tells you about the significance of that event. In the future, I will be integrating both still images and video into these web galleries.

One of the main reasons I switched over to the new HTML 5 template was that the images load incredibly fast—much faster than they did on my Flash website. Basically, as fast as you can hit the "next" arrow the images load without hesitation and these images are even larger than those on my Flash website! The images are sized so that they look great on a 27-inch monitor or the new 15inch MacBook Pro laptops with the Retina screens. On the next page are a few images on the new website.

Video is also more easily handled with the new Aphotofolio Design X HTML 5 template. There are two video options but the easiest is to use open up a Vimeo account and let Vimeo transcode all of the video for all the different devices in use these days. The Vimeo integration is super simple to use and assures that the video comes through with the best possible quality on every device.

I have to say that the fine folks at APhotoFolio are continually improving their offerings and they are so great to work with that I can't imagine using any other website service. They respond to questions very quickly and will go above and beyond to help you dial in your website. My thanks to Rob Haggart and the folks at APhotoFolio.com for the new template and working with me on this new updated website. While I loved my old, award-winning Flash-based site from aphotofolio.com, I think this new HTML 5 site is quite a bit better.

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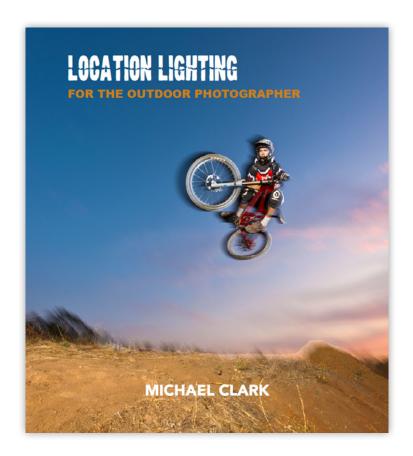
Location Lighting for the Outdoor Photographer

A brand new, exhaustive e-book about using artificial lighting in the outdoors

I am very happy to announce my new e-book entitled Location Lighting for the Outdoor Photographer. This book is a 277-page e-book and is packed with pretty much everything I know about using artificial lighting in the outdoors. If you are looking to take your photography to the next level and want to incorporate artificial lighting into your images then this book will give you all the tools to do just that. This e-book is filled with detailed lighting diagrams and examples, an extensive chapter on equipment and flash accessories, advanced flash techniques and so much more.

There are so many lighting books to choose from these days you might be wondering, "How is this one different?" This is the first book that I know of that concentrates on lighting techniques for the outdoor and adventure photographer specifically.

This book gets down to the nuts and bolts of using artificial lighting in remote locations. As with my other books, I hold nothing back and I share with you all of my lighting secrets and techniques. The opening chapter has a detailed analysis of all the battery-powered strobes on the market today and compares them head-to-head to help you make a smart decision when considering new gear. In that chapter, we also discuss flashlights, reflectors, and Speedlights. 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 using artificial lighting in the outdoors. This ebook is an entire week-long workshop in book form.



If you have read any of my other books or e-books then you know I pack as much as possible into them and cover all the bases. This book is no different. If you'd like to see a sampling of what is included in Location Lighting for the Outdoor Photographer you can download the intro and table of contents here.

The e-book is a high-resolution PDF file that can be purchased for the low price of \$21.95 on my website. As you can see on the next page, the layout and text has been optimized for the iPad, iPhone or a laptop computer. If you would like to learn more about this e-book or purchase a copy please visit my website.

already have a Speedlight or a strobe, or if you are looking to buy one. I highly recommend that you read the instruction manual or at least a big chunk of it. Doing so will elevate your lighting skills immensely. This book is not meant to replace your instruction manual.

A GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS

Before we discuss the actual lighting tools we need to define some technical terms so that we can gauge how one lighting tool compares to another. At this point, I am going to assume that you are an intermediate level photographer and have a solid understanding of how your camera works, i.e. aperture settings, shutter speeds and ISO settings. If you are a little muddy on these basic camera functions I would ask that you pull out your camera manual and read up on these three items. We will be using the terms from this section throughout this book. Hence, I recommend that you read this section carefully.









A Speedlight is a term used by both Nikon and Canon to describe their oncamera flash offerings. Both Nikon and Canon, as well as every other camera manufacturer, offer a variety of Speedlights to fit every budget and need. Aside from flashlights and reflectors, Speedlights are the lightest option available for

any photographer looking to start using artificial light. We will discuss these units later in this chapter. Note that Nikon uses the name "Speedlights" and Canon uses the term "Speedlites." These are trademarked names. In this book, we will use the term Speedlights to refer to these hot shoe mounted flash units.



A Strobe is a device used to produce regular flashes of light. The word strobe comes from the Greek word strobos, which means the "act of whirling." Techni-cally, a strobe light is a flash that fires at low power settings anywhere from 20 to 30 times per second up to 100 times per second. When a flash fires at these fast rates it creates what is known as a stroboscopic effect, thereby revealing the motion of a moving object. In other words, a strobe is very powerful flash that recycles very quickly.

In the photography industry, powerful studio and battery-powered flash units are referred to as strobes, even though this term may not be technically accurate. Nonetheless, some of these units can fire at up to 30 times per second or moreand therefore are technically strobes. Since this is a glossary of terms, I wanted to mention this disconnect as there is often confusion among photographers when the word strobe is used. In any case, most photographic strobes consist

CHAPTER I: LIGHTING EQUIPMENT 29

going to build a complex lighting setup then you are probably working close to the road or have a few assistants to help you out. Whatever the case, this can be a limiting factor because battery-powered strobe kits start to add up in terms of weight very quickly. I have had shoots where I hauled over 200-pounds of lighting gear to the location. If you have a complex lighting setup, I would highly recommend that you hire a few assistants or ask some friends to come help you out. Unless I am using a simple lighting setup, I almost always have an assistant with me on a photo shoot where I am using strobes. Instead of talking ad nauseam about when and where to use strobes I will offer up a few examples of situations where using a strobe kit offered a definite advantage over Speedlights or any other lighting gear available.

EXAMPLE 1



The image of a mountain biker jumping off a small 12foot cliff on the next page is a good example of an adventure sports image where you cannot get the light in close to the subject. For this image the light was 40-feet away from the mountain biker. I used an Elinchrom

Ranger 1,100 Ws strobe kit with a large octabank to light the mountain biker so that it looked as if the last light of day was sneaking in under the clouds. Though it may look like late evening this image was shot in the afternoon on a cloudy day. The ambient light was less than inspiring, which was why I chose to light the image. To create the orange glow of last light I taped a full CTO gel over the flash head in the softbox. The strobe was firing at full power and because I was using



at 1/250th sec., Elinchrom Ranger RX Speed AS strobe with a Ranger A flash head and an Octabani

workshops

2013 Photography Workshops

An overview of workshops coming up with Michael Clark

ach 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 in 2013. 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.

Nikon D800 Intensive

Santa Fe Workshops — June 17-18, 2013

The Nikon D800 is a marvel of technology; in terms of handling and image quality, it is unsurpassed. Housed in this professional-level camera body is a sensor with astounding resolution that can take your images to a new level. But the D800 is so much more than just a fancy, high-resolution imaging sensor.

Spend this two-day intensive getting to know—and getting the most from-your Nikon D800. We discuss the camera in detail and go on location in Northern New Mexico to photograph landscapes and portraits. We explore not only the camera itself but also how it interfaces with Nikon Speedlights, so bring a Speedlight or two if you have them. Among the topics Michael covers are getting the sharpest images possible, lens selection,

camera handling, working with Speedlights and strobes, autofocus options and techniques, metering modes, the D800's custom functions, and capturing video footage with the D800.

Our classroom time includes daily critiques and a demonstration on working up a D800 raw image file in Adobe Photoshop Lightroom. In addition, Michael is giving each participant a copy of his digital workflow e-book, Adobe Photoshop Lightroom: A Professional Photographer's Workflow. You leave with an excellent understanding of your camera's capabilities, knowing how to set it up in almost any scenario and how to get the best quality images you can.

For more information visit the Santa Fe Workshops website. Tuition & Fees: Tuition: \$575.00

Adobe Lightroom Intensive

Santa Fe Workshops — June 24-25, 2013

Advances in digital photography equipment and software mean that we are not only just photographers anymore, but also processing lab technicians. Adobe has given us a great tool with Adobe Photoshop Lightroom, but it's up to each of us to understand how to get the best results with our post-production tools. Far too often, a great image fails to achieve its full potential because the photographer flubbed the post-processing.

Join Michael for a two-day intensive exploration of the Develop Module, which is the heart of Lightroom. Participants are encouraged to bring photographs to work with during the workshop, and we'll concentrate on how to employ the Lightroom Develop Module to creatively adjust—and, in some instances, manipulate—your raw images to get the visual results you have in mind. We cover topics such as achieving an accurate white balance, learning the basic slider adjustments, working with curves, split toning, sharpening, noise reduction, localized adjustment tools, and much more. We also delve into a discussion on color management, which is critical for our work in the Develop Module.

In addition, Michael is giving each participant a copy of his 409-page digital workflow e-book, *Adobe Photoshop Lightroom: A Professional Photographer's Workflow*. Participants leave knowing exactly how to adjust their images for the best possible quality.

For more information visit the <u>Santa Fe Workshops</u> website. Tuition & Fees: Tuition: \$575.00

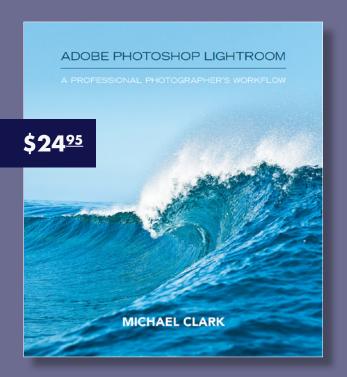
Adventure Photography Workshop

Maine Media Workshops — August 18-24, 2013

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

ADOBE LIGHTROOM WORKFLOW

A COMPLETE WORKFLOW FROM CAPTURE TO OUTPUT BY MICHAEL CLARK



The Adobe Photoshop Lightroom Workflow, a 409-page e-book, is a workshop in book form. Updated for Adobe Lightroom 4 and Photoshop CS6, 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

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. The workshop focuses on outdoor sports such as rock climbing, sea kayaking, and mountain biking. 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 the students 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.

The cost of this workshop is \$1,250. For more information or to register for this workshop visit the Maine Media Workshops website or contact them at (877) 577-7700

Surfing Photography Workshop

Oahu, Hawaii — October 30th to November 3, 2013

Join legendary surfing photographer Brian Bielmann 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.

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.

It is expected that you know how to download images from your camera to the laptop, know basic editing techniques using your software, and are able to organize the edited images for critiques. Also since surfing photography relies on large telephoto lenses, each participant will need to bring a telephoto lens that is at least 400mm. A 500mm or 600mm lens is preferred. If you don't own one of these lenses please rent or borrow one to bring with you. Please contact Michael or Brian with any questions about lens selection and rental options. Both B&H and Samy's Camera in the USA have rental houses that



can rent these lenses. We also have a special deal with Hawaii Photo Rental Oahu, who have 500mm and 600mm lenses for both Canon and Nikon and will be renting these to workshop participants at discounted rates ranging from \$323 to \$550 for the duration of the workshop. Call Josh Strickland at Hawaii Photo Rental Oahu at (808) 735-3838 for more information on renting one of these lenses.

The cost of this workshop is \$1,295 per person. A deposit of \$500 is required to secure your spot in the workshop. You can find more information about the workshop on my website, including detailed info on what we will be doing each day and the equipment you will need for the workshop. This workshop is very unique and it is one of the most exciting workshops anywhere in the world. If you have ever wanted to photograph surfing, I encourage you to come join us in Hawaii. You won't regret it. If you have any questions or would like to register for the workshop send me an email.

Workshop Testimonials

Feedback from recent Workshops

"Michael set an incredibly high bar for his workshop. He gave 110%, covered a broad range of topics and did an outstanding job." - Chris Council, Adventure Photography Workshop, Summer 2010

"Thanks for running such a great workshop. I couldn't have chosen better photo shoot locations, and the postshoot critiques were invaluable. It's the first time I've had my work reviewed, and I learned a ton from each session. While I didn't go into the workshop expecting to pick-up too many marketing and business tips, I've come out of

last week inspired to set-up my photo website in earnest." - Jeff Hylok, Adventure Photography Workshop, Summer 2010

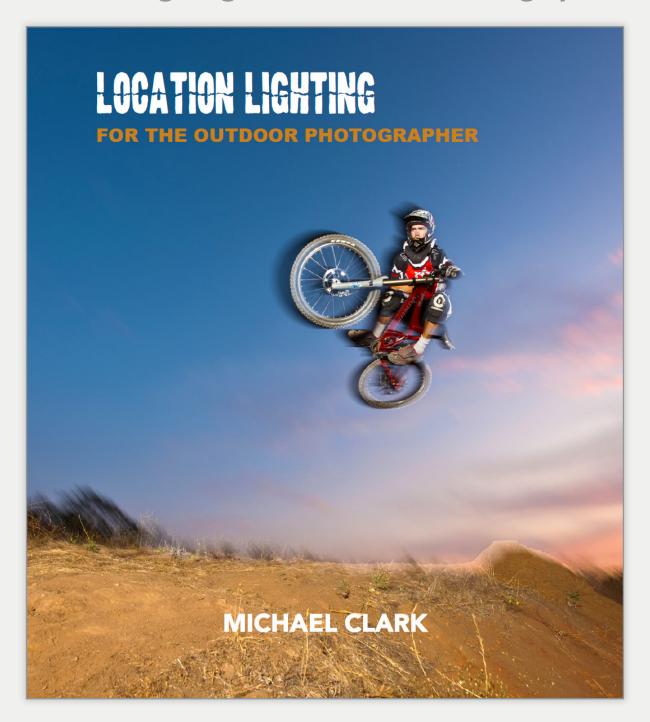
"I just finished Michael Clark's Adventure Photography Workshop at the Santa Fe Workshops in April 2013. I had a terrific time with the group of people - one from China, another from Seattle, another from Wyoming, me from Michigan - you get the picture that we came from everywhere. We came because of Santa Fe Workshop's reputation of presenting an intense learning experience guided by fantastic instructors. We got both. Michael Clark really knows his stuff and has a lot of excess energy, which he focused on us, and he can also teach. He read our skills and weaknesses quickly and went to work to improve each of us technically. He sorted out our individual goals, even when we couldn't really articulate them. Then he gave us plenty of time to address those goals and ask question after question after question. The rough environments in which we photographed were great fun to explore. Couldn't be better." - Tania Evans

"Thanks again for such a terrific workshop. I have taken one other two day Lightroom workshop, but your's is the best!" - Vance Thompson, Lightroom Workshop, 2011

"I really enjoyed the surfing [photography] workshop! It was great on every level. I really can't thank you enough and I hope to take another of your workshops in the near future." - Ben Reed, 2013 Surfing Photo Workshop

For more information on the workshops that I will be teaching in 2013 or to read more testimonials about my workshops please visit the Workshops page on my website. Hope to see you out there in 2013!

Location Lighting. For The Outdoor Photographer.



Realized. Shaping your Images with Light.

equipment review

TrekPak Inserts for Pelican Cases

A review of a brand new revolutionary divider system for hard shell cases

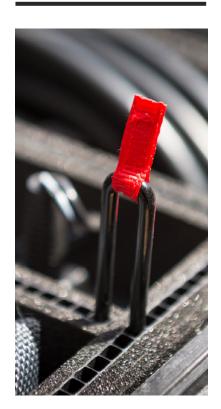
very once in a while you see something that is so simple and elegant that you smack your forehead and say, "why didn't I think of that?" Another photographer clued me into the TrekPak inserts for hard shell Pelican cases and after I checked them out online I purchased

a kit for my Pelican 1510 rolling case. My 1510 Pelican case, like all of my Pelican cases, came with a standard padded Velcro divider system that worked but left a lot to be desired when it comes to functionality. The padded inserts sagged and didn't always fit into the box the way I wanted them to and it is debatable as to how much protection they actually offered. The TrekPak inserts by contrast are incredibly easy to adjust, allow for ridiculous organization and are much lighter than the dividers that came with my Pelican originally.

The whole idea behind the TrekPak system is based on using metal pins (shown at right) to secure the dividers. When I got the TrekPak insert, it came with the divider set, a bag of the pins and a separate bag of red pull tabs, which can be slotted onto the pins to make them easier to pull out. It took me all of ten minutes to redesign my Pelican 1510 and dial in the divider set for my Elinchrom Quadra strobe kit (see the image on the next page). Once I had it all set up, I was able to fit more

equipment into my Pelican case than I could with the old dividers. The Trek-Pak system also holds my gear much more tightly and offers more protection than the old divider set ever did.

The relatively inexpensive TrekPak insert has breathed new life into my Pelican 1510 case and has really gotten me more excited to actually use these cases again. As we all know Pelican cases are quite heavy all on their own, much less when you start tossing in heavy camera equipment. Since I travel by air fairly often, the final weight of the loaded case is always a concern. If you have read my newsletter for any period of time then you have probably read a few different equipment reviews on camera bags that I use. I kind of go nuts with camera bags. It seems I am on a never



Above is a close-up shot of a pin used in the TrekPak system. Putting the dividers together is incredibly simple and the TrekPak is a very



Above is a shot of my Pelican 1510 case with the TrekPak insert set up to carry my Elinchrom Quadra lighting setup. As you can see, I was able to fine tune the dividers to fit the gear just as I needed it to. The TrekPak dividers even allow for diagonal dividers. To create extra space I added the diagonal divider next to the flash head so that I could store a few more cords—and maximize the usable space. If I need to re-organize the dividers, say for camera gear, it is just a matter of removing the pins and rebuilding the divider setup. If you have ever struggled with Velcro padded dividers being generally difficult to deal with then you will love the TrekPak system. You can easily place your gear as you want it in the main compartment and then add the dividers as snugly as you please.

ending quest for the perfect way to get my gear to the location since that is a huge part of my job. I love the protection offered by Pelican cases, but I don't love the weight. With the TrekPak insert, the 1510 is just a little lighter and a lot more organized and easier to use.

I haven't had the TrekPak insert that long so I can't speak to how durable it is. But from my limited experience it appears to be plenty durable. TrekPak started out as a Kickstarter project and these are practically made out of their garage up in Colorado. Once again, a small manufacturer came up with a brilliant idea and the marketplace has latched onto it with great enthusiasm. I just thought I would help spread the word. They make a variety of inserts to fit just about any Pelican case you might have. TrekPak also makes inserts that fit into soft-sided backpacks and also an insert that fits into just about any photo backpack if you are sick of your foam/Velcro dividers. If your Pelican case needs an overhaul I highly recommend checking out the <u>TrekPak website</u> and ordering an insert. You won't regret it! And your Pelican case will suddenly [M]be a lot more useful than it ever has been.

The Lens Align Mark II Focus Calibration System

An accurate device for fine-tuning the autofocus of your cameras and lenses

Since the TrekPak review was fairly short I thought I would add a bonus equipment review here. I give you the LensAlign Mark II Focus Calibration system. This focus calibration system was developed by Michael Tapes to deal with the frustrating autofocus issues that seem rampant in the digital SLR age. When I got the Nikon D4 and D800 last year, the autofocus was generally good but a few lenses exhibited some back-focusing. After reading a review of the LensAlign system on the <u>Luminous-Land-</u> scape website, where Michael Reichmann touted it as the "tool of choice" to fine-tune your cameras autofocus I thought I would give it a try.

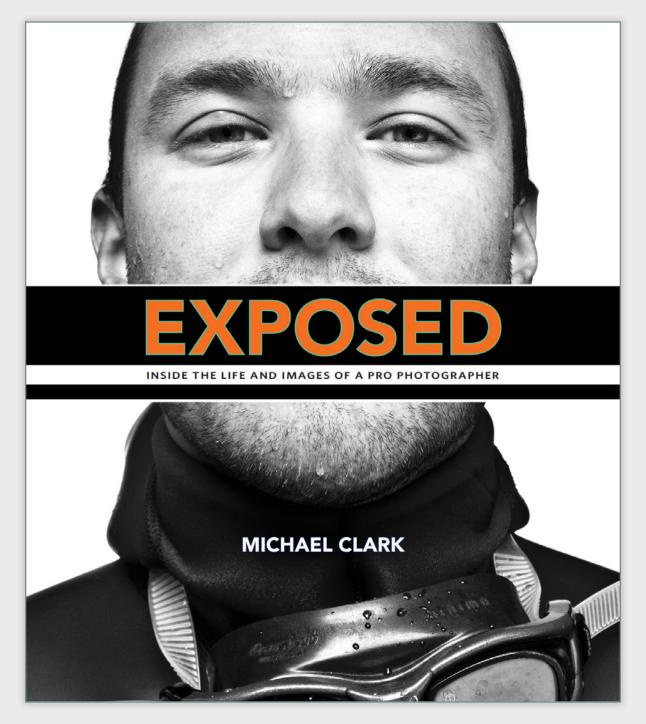


I will admit when you receive the LensAlign system, the plasticized cardboard construction seems a bit rinkydink, especially considering it costs \$80. Nevertheless, it assembles rather easily and works extremely well. Using the LensAlign involves carefully following the instructions that come with it and those that are available on Michael Tapes website. I will say that the instructions

that come with this system aren't very informative. I found much more detailed instructions online that helped me get everything setup. One of the keys to using the Lens Align system is putting it on a tripod with a ball head so you can align the target with your camera on a separate tripod. The LensAlign comes with a plate that attaches to just about any tripod mount. Another key point is to use the Distance Tool page on Michael Tapes website to figure out how far away to place your camera from the target. Once you have it all set up, which can take some time, the basic idea is to shoot an image of the target, download it and see how accurate your camera is focusing by viewing that image at 100% in Lightroom or Photoshop. If the focus is off then you can adjust the autofocus fine-tuning in your cameras custom menus and repeat this process. I will say that the whole process goes a lot faster if you are tethered to a computer and can zoom into the image in Lightroom or Capture One to see if the camera/lens is front-focusing or back-focusing.

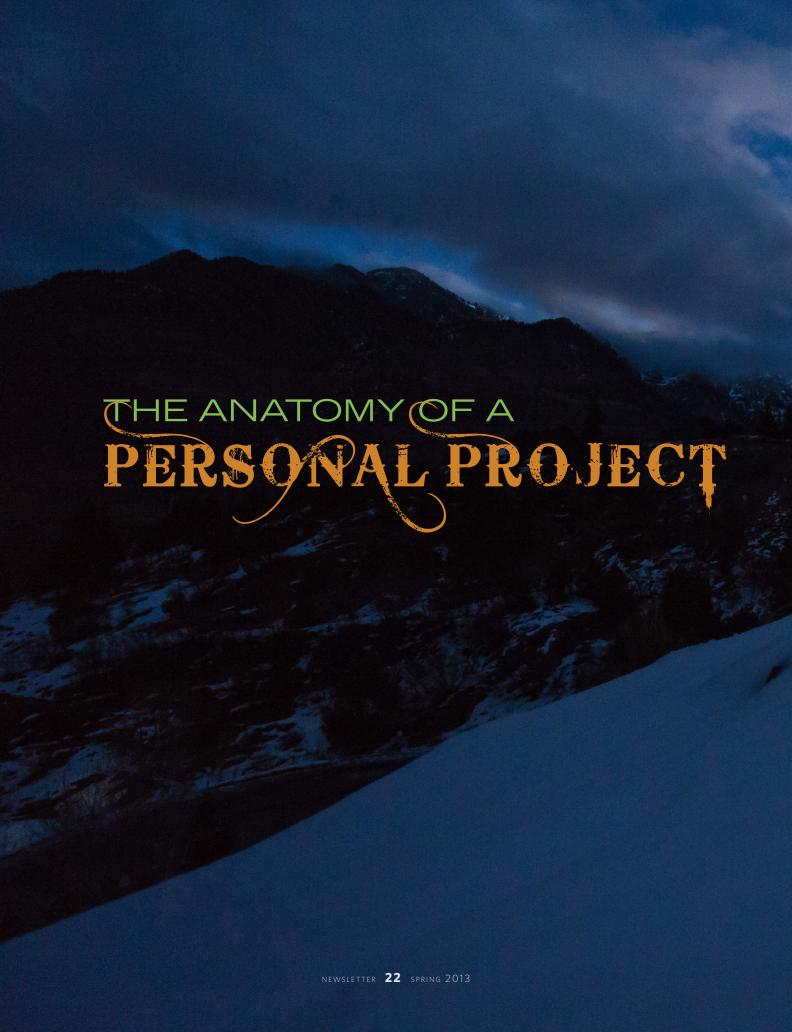
I went through this process with both my Nikon D4 and D800 with every lens I own and only a few of them were back-focusing. With the extreme resolution of the D800, even the slightest amount of back-focusing will result in an out of focus image, especially when shooting wide open with a lens like the Nikkor 85mm f/1.4. While it is a bit pricey for what it is, the LensAlign system works very well and will help you dial in any focusing issues you may have—as long as your DSLR has the autofocus fine-tuning feature. Check out the LensAlign Mark II focus calibration system on Michael Tapes website.

Exposed. The Life of a Pro Photographer.



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ne of my favorite outdoor pastimes is the arcane sport of ice climbing. There is nothing like it. How many sports involve stabbing something? The ethereal world of frozen waterfalls is a magical arena that begs the question, "What are we doing here?" Ice climbing is an advanced form of rock climbing. Falling is generally not a great idea. While climbing you hold two razor sharp ice tools that look like wicked instruments from a Hitchcock movie and strapped to your feet are crampons that could slice your calf open with very little effort. Ice climbing might just be the coolest sport ever invented. As such, over the last three years I have been shooting a personal

project to document the sport of ice climbing in all it's varieties.

One of the main issues with this personal project has been my inability to put the axes down and pick up the camera. Hence, I haven't shot as much as I would

have liked but that is perhaps why this has become a long-term personal project. At this point, pretty much all of my ice climbing images have been shot in and around Ouray, Colorado. Ouray is a "Mecca" for ice-climbers. Ouray has so much ice concentrated in such a small area that it really feels like cheating. Normally ice climbs are scattered to and fro, with serious approaches guarding their vertical terrain. Because of the large number of climbs in the Ouray area, it might just be the epicenter of ice climbing on Earth. And since it is only five hours from my home, it is also relatively easy to access.

At some point or another pretty much all of the world's

best ice climbers come through Ouray, which makes it an easy spot to meet up. It is also quite easy to set up a rope and shoot from above since you approach most of the climbs (in the gorge) from above. On multi-pitch ice climbs, getting above the climber can involve some crazy shenanigans. The most photogenic routes are generally the steepest lines and unless you are a stellar ice climber yourself setting up a rope generally involves some serious "post-holing" in deep snow. Jumaring off an anchor built with ice screws can also be a dicey proposition, which is why Ouray provides such easy access. Ouray also has a considerable number of "mixed" climbs where the climb-

er navigates overhanging rock faces between the ice.

Shown in this article are a smattering of images I have produced during the last three years while working on this personal project. Earlier this year I started to use artificial lighting, in the

form of Speedlights and strobes, to light up the climbers on the approach to the climbs and on the actual climbs themselves. Using strobes has added a whole new dimension to the images—and has also complicated the logistics considerably.

While some of these images have already been published by companies looking to promote their gear, the impetus for creating these images was to expand my portfolio and create some new and exciting images. In my book <u>Exposed</u>, I wrote about "keeping the [creative] fires stoked." This project has been one that both inspires and stretches me creatively.

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Previous Spread : Dawn Glanc ice climbing in the Ouray Ice Park in Ouray, Colorado. Above: Dawn Glanc working the 2011 Ouray Ice Festival mixed climbing competition route rated M10 in the upper gorge at the Ouray Ice Park in Ouray, Colorado. Right: Thorsten Schwander and Casey Shaw enjoying a brew and cracking some jokes at the Ouray Brewery after a long day of ice climbing in the Ouray Ice Park in Ouray, Colorado.





Choosing a Lighting System

An excerpt from my new e-book: Location Lighting for the Outdoor Photographer

his is an excerpt from Chapter 1 of my e-book *Loca*tion Lighting for the Outdoor Photographer. Chapter 1 is titled, "Lighting Equipment" and it discusses all of the lighting options available to the outdoor photographer looking to take battery-powered lighting gear into the outdoors. It also discusses in-depth reflectors, flashlights, headlamps and Speedlights. The e-book is available for purchase via my website. For more information about Location Lighting for the Outdoor Photographer and to purchase a copy please visit my website.

What follows are tidbits from two sections: the beginning of Chapter 1, where I give an equipment overview and the end of Chapter 1 where I discuss how to choose a lighting system. Note that Chapter 1 is the largest chapter in the book and is over 75 pages long. This chapter is an indepth discussion of the equipment options available for the outdoor or adventure photographer.

When it comes to artificial lighting there is a huge range of equipment that needs to be discussed. In this chapter, we'll cover the entire range of lighting equipment that an outdoor or adventure photographer would consider, everything from headlamps to the highest end batterypowered strobes. Obviously for the outdoor photographer, weight is always a major concern. Hence, we will discuss both light and heavy options. Along the way, I will

point out the gear that I use, but I am not here to persuade you that the gear I use is the only way to go. There are many different types and brands of lighting tools. In this chapter, I will present a wide range of options and let you decide which will work best for your needs.

EQUIPMENT OVERVIEW

For the outdoor photographer, the easiest method for modifying the light is to come back to the location at a different time of day. Whenever I am scouting a location, I always check to see where the sun will be at sunrise or sunset. If it is possible to shoot with the subject (or athlete) at sunrise or sunset then there is usually very little need to add artificial light to the scene. I normally use artificial lighting in the middle of the day, when the light is contrasty and dull or when I am looking to create a dramatic effect in the image. The tools I use will depend on many factors including how far the location is from the car, how much light I need on the subject, if I have an assistant, the terrain, whether or not the lighting gear will fit in my backpack and how much time we have to execute the image. In general, the farther away from the car we have to go the lighter my kit will be.

As you might expect there is a lighting tool for just about any situation. The biggest factor, among those listed in

the last paragraph, is how much light I need on the subject. In other words, I have to figure out how much light power I need to get the results I am looking for. The answer to this questions will determine if I can get away with taking just a reflector, a reflector and a Speedlight or two or if I have to take a hefty battery-powered strobe. For the outdoor photographer, every lighting tool has to run on batteries. Hence, in this chapter (and throughout this book) I will concentrate on lighting tools that are either battery powered or don't require any power at all.

Because we are completely dependant on the gear that we use, both for capturing images and lighting them, un-

derstanding how your equipment works and what it is capable of is paramount. I will confess I love talking about gear just as much, if not more, than the next photographer. But with that said, I am not a big fan of reading instruction manuals.

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That presents a problem when it comes to using artificial lighting. Save for reflectors and flashlights, which we will discuss shortly, the average Speedlight or strobe is a complex piece of gear and you will have to read the instruction manual to figure out how it works. Hence, if you already have a Speedlight or a strobe, or if you are looking to buy one, I highly recommend that you read the instruction manual or at least a big chunk of it. Doing so will elevate your lighting skills immensely and make the entire process a lot easier, especially when it comes to using Speedlights. This book is not meant to replace your instruction manual.

CHOOSING A LIGHTING SYSTEM

I realize that we have spent an eternity in this Chapter discussing the gear options for artificial lighting. There are a lot of options. Hence, the humongous size of this chapter. Without a thorough knowledge of lighting gear it is difficult to talk about how an image is lit. Hence, in this chapter we have built the base knowledge that will be used throughout the rest of the book. At this point, I want to talk about choosing a lighting system for an individual photo shoot. By lighting system, I don't mean a certain brand of lighting gear but the type of lighting gear that will actually be taken into the field. The later half of this

> book deals with this same topic and shows examples of images shot with specific lighting equipment to give you an idea of the possibilities. Basically, the decision is this, "Can I get away with a handful of Speedlights and a reflector or two?,"

or "Do I need the light power offered by a strobe kit?"

Sadly, for the outdoor photographer shooting lifestyle images, or the adventure sports photographer shooting action, often Speedlights won't give you enough light power if you are shooting in the middle of the day. If you are shooting adventure sports, most of the time the lighting setup has to be a certain distance away from the action, which means you will need a powerful strobe to get enough light on the subject, especially if your strobes are twenty or thirty feet away from the subject. If your shoot is happening early or late in the day and you don't have to overpower the full sun then you generally will have enough power to shoot with Speedlights. If you are shooting in a deep dark forest, Speedlights will work perfectly—especially if you have multiple Speedlights.

There are of course other options if the weather is overcast and cloudy. For those situations you can take three or four Speedlights or you can take a lighter strobe kit like the Elinchrom Quadra. I have shot a lot of advertising gigs with an assistant and one Elinchrom Quadra setup. The assistant had the Quadra power pack slung over her shoulder and walked around with a medium-sized softbox on the Quadra flash head. It was such a light set up that we could roam far and wide and shoot wherever we wanted rather quickly. With 400 Ws at our disposal, we shot all afternoon on or near full power with wicked fast recycling times and awesome light quality. The Quadra really presents a conundrum for me on these types of shoots. I could take three or four Speedlights and essentially do the same thing with a FourSquare. Both the Speedlight kit and the Quadra kit weigh about the same so it comes down to which light modifiers are required for the shoot.

Which lighting system you choose also depends on a number of other factors. If you need a fast recycling time



Above is a screenshot of a double page spread in Chapter 1 that shows the tech specs for all of the battery-powered strobes I reviewed in the book. By listing out the tech specs like this, along with the weights and prices of each strobe option, it helps you the reader to make a smart decision when choosing a strobe kit.

then you will have to take a strobe kit. If you are trying to bath your subject is soft light then you would probably choose a strobe kit, or you could work with a large number of Speedlights. It just comes down to what is more economical and how much it all weighs.

The price of all this stuff is a huge factor, especially since you will need to have at least a basic stable of gear if you want to go out and produce certain types of images. I know that not everyone will want to buy a \$5,000 strobe kit. Even so, if you just want to try working with Speedlights, a set of four Speedlights is going to set you back \$2,000—without even adding on any accessories. When

it comes to strobes, remember that you can rent them for a day or two. You don't have to buy an expensive strobe kit. If you don't have much in the way of lighting gear, I would recommend that you start with Speedlights and then see how that goes before

dropping huge amounts of money on a strobe kit. It all just depends on the type of images you want to produce. I know of some photographers who almost never use strobes anymore because they have a dozen or more Speedlights and are adept at using them in groups to achieve the same images they could with a strobe system. I will say that for the adventure photographer this would be difficult to accomplish for some action shots.

Note that I have not discussed continuous lighting in this chapter. For the outdoor photographer, who works with battery-powered lighting, continuous lighting just isn't an option at this point save for LED powered LitePanels and the new Broncolor Move 1200 L option discussed here, which can also put out 200 Watts of continuous light for approximately 2 hours. If you are shooting video in remote locations then you already understand the issues.

Wrapping up, there are many ways to skin this cat so to speak. How you choose to incorporate artificial lighting into your photography is up to you. I can guess that if you purchased this book then you have probably already been playing around with a Speedlight and are considering how to take your images to the next level using artificial

> lighting. After all, the entire point of this book is to take your images and your photography to the next level. I chose to incorporate Speedlights and strobes into my professional work to set my images apart from other photographers. In the next chapter, we will

jump into the basic tenets of artificial lighting, which are paramount for understanding how to create the look you are after.

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perspective

Taking Risks

by Michael Clark

hile teaching a photography workshop a few weeks ago at the Santa Fe Workshops, I gave a presentation of my work and then afterwards participated in a Q&A session with the three other photographers teaching that week. Each of us was asked what we hoped people would take away from our presentations and our work. It was a bold question, asked by an astute gentleman in the front row. As the other photographer's chimed in I remained silent, listening to their answers, and formulating my own. As an adventure photographer, my work was quite different than that presented by the other photographers, who created landscape, fine art and fashion images. Hence, my response was also quite different.

My answer was simple. I admonished the eighty or so folks in the room that evening to take risks and to live passionately. Now, of course, I wasn't advising everyone to run out and do something foolish. I qualified my statement, which seems to align with my work and lifestyle, by explaining that we all take risks everyday. I used the old adage every guide uses, "Driving your car is probably the riskiest thing any of us do on a regular basis." Of course, everyone there was pretty comfortable driving a car, but I used that metaphor to show that our confidence in our abilities informs us about the degree of risk we engage in. The images I presented that evening showed incredible feats of athletic ability, but what wasn't seen was all the

preparation and skill that the athletes had perfected through rigorous training. Adventure athletes take "calculated" risks—risks that have been thought out in great detail. It is only with experience that they have the confidence and skill to pull off the trick, the climb, the B.A.S.E. jump or the back flip. For the average person, not accustomed to an adventurous lifestyle, a risky proposition may be as simple as traveling to a foreign country, stepping outside your comfort zone or just doing something differently than you have done it before. Whatever the case, by changing things up and trying something new you are more "alive" than you would otherwise be.

Living passionately dovetails nicely with taking risks. I don't know of anyone who pursues a sport or an art form that isn't passionate on some level about their pursuits. Without passion it is hard to excel in anything. I presented this idea of taking risks as a lifestyle. A lifestyle where overcoming obstacles allows you to go farther than you ever thought you could in whatever discipline you participate in. I wasn't trying to tell anyone how to live their life, but I did make it clear that my lifestyle and my work is not possible without taking on risks and managing risk. After the Q&A session, I was thanked by several people for my comments. I was surprised by how my comments seem to resonate with so many people. It is my hope that my images on their own communicate this same message.

parting shot



Chelsea Yamase checking out the waves before a late afternoon surf session at Rocky Point on the north shore of Oahu, Hawaii.

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