

NEWSLETTER

MICHAEL CLARK

PHOTOGRAPHY



SPRING 2017



contents

SPRING 2017 NEWSLETTER

4 editorial

Deep Powder. An introduction to this issue of the Newsletter along with a list of recent clients.

6 news

Recent news including a promo and an interview sent out by Ilford showcasing myself with a large print and my thoughts on printing images.

8 workshops

Detailed information on upcoming photography workshops and seminars I'll be teaching in the Lofoten Islands of Norway and at the Exodus Aveiro Photo Festival in Aveiro, Portugal.

12 equipment review

A review of the latest Wacom Intuos Pro graphic tablet, which is a necessity for high-end retouching in Lightroom and Photoshop.

16 on assignment

A recent assignment for Red Bull, where I spent two and a half days capturing images of the Red Bull Air Force at their annual training camp in southern Arizona.

28 portfolio

Ripples in the gypsum with the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in the background at White Sands National Park near Alamogordo, New Mexico.

30 perspective

The Purple Cow. An editorial on Seth Godin's book about the changes that have happened in advertising and how his conclusions relate to the photo industry.

31 parting shot

Ski Patroller "Hawk" celebrating a fall while skiing a steep run at Angel Fire Resort in Angel Fire, New Mexico. This image was shot while working on assignment for the Angel Fire Resort, which had two-feet of fresh powder.

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Cover Image: Zach Vanderlei snowboarding in Shane's Glade on a very snowy day at Angel Fire Resort in Angel Fire, New Mexico. Opposite Page: Kirby Chambliss, of the Red Bull Air Force team, practicing maneuvers with the team members at his ranch near Eloy, Arizona. Newsletter edited by Katherine Mast.





Deep Powder

A spring filled with powder skiing, gypsum dunes and sky divers

For most of the western United States, this past winter was epic with many ski areas reporting record snowfalls. Here in New Mexico, it was a decent winter but not as incredible as seemingly everywhere else. In late February we were lucky to get a huge storm, which dropped upwards of two feet (0.6 meters) of snow. As seen in the cover image and in the parting shot in this Newsletter, I took advantage of that storm to shoot for Angel Fire, a ski resort in northern New Mexico. The wet snow was rough on the gear but allowed us to get some amazing images. All the gear survived just fine.

Just before this recent ski assignment, I worked again with the Red Bull Air Force, which is always a fun gig. Working together, we created a wide variety of images for Red Bull including portraits (like the one on the next page) as well as out-there action images. Check out the full story on that shoot starting on page 16. I was also able to get out and do a landscape shoot this spring in White Sands National Monument near Alamogordo, New Mexico in between shoots for Red Bull and Angel Fire Resort. One of the images from that trip is included in the Portfolio section.

For the last month or so I have been in the office setting up various assignments, speaking engagements and workshops for the next four months, as well as revising

one of my books and doing office work. It is amazing to me, how intense time in the office can be. The last several weeks have been filled with thousands of emails, numerous online Skype meetings, and pre-production planning for several photo shoots coming up. As I once write in a blog post on the [realities of working as a pro photographer](#), shooting is sometimes a small part of the job. Nevertheless, I am really excited to get out of the office and work on upcoming projects.

The Newsletter turns fifteen this year. That seems like a long time! For the first three years it was a printed Newsletter, mailed to art buyers and photo editors. In 2004, it became a PDF magazine and the back issues can be [downloaded](#) on my website for free. As usual, this Newsletter is packed with news, workshop information, equipment reviews, a behind the scenes article and a few editorials. Here's hoping you enjoy this issue!

Opposite Page: Portrait of Red Bull Air Force team member Jeffrey Provenzano created during the 2017 Red Bull Air Force training camp near Eloy, Arizona.

Recent Clients: Red Bull, Cordura, Angel Fire Resort, Sekonic, Mac Group US, Men's Health, Men's Fitness, Dorado Magazine, Quinonez Industries, B&H Photo & Video, Getty Images and FMS Global Media.



Ilford Promo and Interview

A recent promo by Ilford showing a large print and my thoughts on fine art printing

As can be seen on the next page, [Ilford](#) recently ran a series of ads and e-promos with an image of me holding a large print. A few years ago I signed on with Ilford as one of the Ilford Masters. It is an honor to be among such an elite group of photographers working with Ilford including Sebastião Salgado, Eric Meola, Gregory Heisler, and Seth Resnick among others. The caption at the top of the ad reads:

“When you print an image you see things you don’t see in the image on a monitor. A print feels more valuable because of the effort associated with making the print and because you are seeing the final image the way images were “traditionally” meant to be seen. The paper lends the print a lot of value as well, especially if it is a thick fine art paper that helps make the image look better. Not only do you get a tactile feel for the image but you can interact with the image in a way that is not possible on a monitor. Also, the size of the image lends a huge amount to the impact it makes on the viewer. When printed large, some images come alive like they never can on any monitor. As a photographer, the emotional response is one of pride in the image. For my customers, they hopefully have a sense of awe about the image and the effort that went into it.”

Ilford also recently posted an interview with yours truly on the [Ilford Blog](#). You can also find that interview on

[YouTube](#) in a higher resolution. That interview gives some insight into how I got started as a photographer, how I produce my photo shoots, and how printing my images is a key part of my digital workflow. The interview also discusses how I found Ilford papers long before I was ever a part of the Ilford Masters program.

My favorite papers from Ilford are [Gold Fibre Silk](#), which is my mainstay go to paper for large fine art prints, [Gold Mono Silk](#) for black and white prints, and [Textured Cotton Rag](#) for those times when I want a beefier, textured fine art paper. I also use a few other papers like their excellent [Semigloss Duo](#) and [Gold Raster Silk](#) in my portfolios and for test prints here in the office. If you haven’t ever printed your images before, I highly recommend the papers listed above. Gold Fibre Silk in particular makes your images come to life and reproduces extremely accurately the colors I see on my monitor. With my digital workflow and color management dialed in, I almost never reprint images as they come out looking stellar on the first print.

My thanks to [Peter Ogilvie](#) who helped me out by shooting this portrait in his studio. Also, my thanks to Ilford for all their support over the last few years and for the amazing paper. If you would like to order a fine art print of any of my images all of the details are on my website [here](#). Any and all of my images are available as fine art prints.

ILFORD

■ ■ When you print an image you see things you don't see in the image on a monitor.

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Michael Clark ILFORD Master



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workshops

Photography Workshops

An overview of workshops and photo treks with Michael Clark

Each year I teach a few workshops on a variety of topics including adventure sports photography, big-wave surfing photography, and artificial lighting. Below is a listing of the workshops I will be teaching in 2017. For more information on these workshops, and to find out how to register, go to the [Workshops](#) page on my blog.

Sailing in the Lofoten Islands

Lofoten Islands, Norway, August 25 – September 1, 2017

Now in its fifth edition, our sailing and photography expedition to the Norwegian Arctic islands of Lofoten is a rare chance to photograph pristine coastal locations which are inaccessible to others. To us, sailing rather than driving is the most logical way to fully experience and explore these beautiful mountainous islands. Between us, the team members here at Vertical Shot Expeditions have undertaken more than twenty journeys to Lofoten during the past decade—so we can certainly say that this stunning mountainous archipelago, with its islands rising straight from the sea, is our second home.

This small-group expedition (with a maximum of six participants) will use a very comfortable 47ft (14m) yacht built in 2012. The group will be led by the legendary American outdoor photographer Michael Clark. The adventure starts in Svolvær, the capital of the Lofoten

Islands, and follows the coastline of the awe-inspiring mountainous islands, wild fjords and passages.

This sailing adventure is suitable for people without any previous sailing experience. However, participants should be adventurous by nature and ready to endure long days. This expedition is about chasing great light and experiencing places that most people never get to see. Whilst this is an expedition designed for photographers (rather than a photography workshop), you will still get loads of hands-on one-to-one instruction in the field.

Sailing presents us with plenty of opportunities to take photographs from unusual viewpoints and to reach wild locations only accessible by sea. In addition to the yacht, we will use an inflatable boat with an outboard engine. This will enable us to land at pristine beaches and explore our surroundings on foot. There will be a good chance that we will be able to observe whales and orca as well as dolphins and seals. On our previous sailing expeditions in Lofoten at this time of the year, we have experienced magical displays of Aurora Borealis lasting for hours.

Workshop fee: \$3,570 per person plus Boat Bank of \$320/person. Please Note that this expedition is being run by Vertical Shot Expeditions, which is a European company so payments will be sent to Europe.



Sailing in and around the Lofoten Islands in northern Norway in the arctic summer is an amazing experience. In this Vertical Shot Expeditions workshop we will have ample opportunities to get amazing images and talk about a wide variety of topics. For more information see the description on the previous page.

For more information on this exciting workshop visit the [Vertical Shot Expeditions website](#).

Adventure Sports Photography: A Masterclass

Exodus Aveiro Festival - Aveiro, Portugal

December 3, 2017

This 3-hour seminar is part of the [Exodus Aveiro Photo Festival](#) in Aveiro, Portugal. Adventure 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 a sport, and the ability to be mindful of your goals and your safety at all times.

In this 3-hour Masterclass, Michael shares his experiences working in the adventure marketplace, and

photographing for stock, editorial, and commercial clients. Topics covered in this seminar include research and preparation, composition and camera angles, equipment selection, use of natural light, fill flash, and battery-powered strobes, advanced lighting techniques, and autofocus techniques. In addition, Michael will cover some of the basic aspects of running a photography business including career development, marketing yourself and your work, and dealing with the ups and downs of the freelance lifestyle.

Participants will leave this Masterclass with solid information and insights into the adrenaline-pumping and potentially lucrative world of adventure photography.

For more information and to register for this three-hour seminar go to the [Exodus Aveiro Fest website](#).

Workshop Testimonials

"Within the short time I've been studying and practicing photography, I have had teachers who are good educators, but not great photographers, and vice versa, but few who are both. Count yourself in these narrow ranks...I went through 4 years of college and several careers getting less candid advice and encouragement than I got in 4 days with you. For what it is worth, thank you for that." - Brandon McMahon, Adventure Photography Workshop

"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

"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 the 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

"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

"Thanks for running such a great workshop. I couldn't have chosen better photo shoot locations, and the post-shoot 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

For more information on my upcoming workshops, or to read more testimonials, please visit the [Workshops](#) page on my blog. Hope to see you at a workshop here soon!

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The Wacom Intuos Pro

A review of this recently updated, industry-standard Graphic Tablet



A few years back, a fellow photographer gifted me his old Wacom tablet. I had resisted them for years, but with his generous gift I thought I should really give it a try. I had heard several of my peers talk about how it completely upended their retouching habits and skills once they got the hang of using a pen tool. That old Wacom tablet was a model from the early 2000s. I think it was the second generation Wacom tablet—but it still worked just fine. I was warned by those same peers that recommended it that it takes some time to get used to. Some of them even said, give it at least two months before you make a decision to stop using it. I am glad they

told me that because at first I hated it. That old Wacom tablet had such a slippery surface that it was nearly impossible to use with sliders in Lightroom. Nevertheless, after a few months I started to get used to it and while I didn't use it in Lightroom very often, it was a godsend for Photoshop, especially when doing any sort of retouching, making selections or dodging and burning. In the end, it did totally revolutionize my digital workflow for the better. Once I got used to it I was hooked.

A few months ago, while working on the Red Bull Air Force images featured here in this newsletter, my old



Above is a detail shot of the Pro Pen 2 that comes with the latest Wacom Intuos Pro tablets. The pen has been redesigned, as has the base, and both are a significant upgrade from earlier designs. On this new tablet the nibs do seem to get worn down rather quickly with the more textured tablet surface, but I feel like I can make much more subtle adjustments, especially with sliders, than I could with my older Wacom tablet. As can be seen below, this new tablet is very thin, which is great for travel and it blends into my black desktop like a stealth computer accessory.



Wacom tablet started to come apart. It was time for a new one. Wacom had just updated their very sleek Wacom Intuos Pro tablets, which have Bluetooth built in, and I ordered one without hesitation. I am not sponsored by Wacom in any way. I paid full price for the new tablet. I ended up getting the medium size, which seems perfect for my desktop and for travelling.

Wacom is a brand that is synonymous with high-end photography retouching and illustration. The [Wacom Intuos Pro graphic tablet and pen](#) (shown on the previous page and above) have been a staple for digital artists for more than a decade. I have heard top-end retouchers say things like, "If you aren't using a Wacom tablet for your retouching then you aren't doing high-end retouching."

Four years ago, I might have had issues with that statement, but now I understand what they were saying.

The new Intuos Pro tablet is gorgeous. The surface is flush with the rest of the tablet so I don't foresee any delamination issues with the active surface, which is what happened with my older version. One of the big reasons I went with the latest version is the built-in Bluetooth connectivity. It is wonderful to have the tablet free of any cables or dongles. It pairs wirelessly with my Macs and never seems to skip a beat. The buttons and the touch ring on the new Intuos Pro are nicely manufactured so that they are flush with the surface and easy to manipulate. They are also highly customizable, just as with prior wacom tablets, for each software application.



As seen in the image above, the buttons and the touch ring on the new Intuos Pro are flush with the top of the tablet, making it look and feel incredibly sleek and stylish. These buttons are also extremely customizable, which helps speed up my digital workflow and post-processing.

The surface of the new Intuos Pro is not nearly as slippery as my older Wacom tablet. I would call it coarse or granular, which allows for much more control with the pen. What this means for my workflow is that I am now able to very accurately move sliders in Lightroom and pretty much never put the Wacom pen down. That, for me, is a huge improvement. In addition, the new surface and pen seem to be much more accurate than my older tablet.

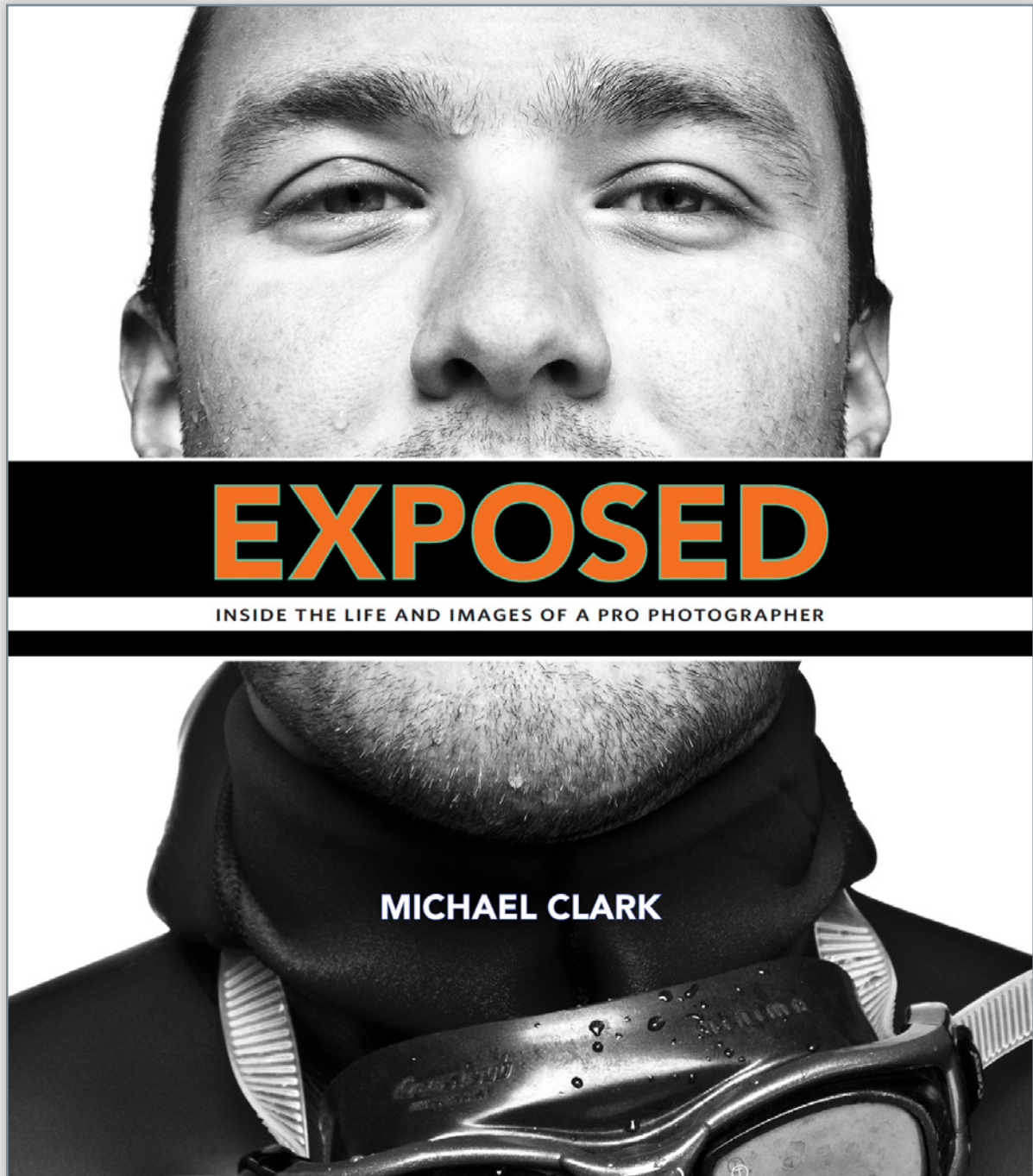
The only drawback to the new coarser tablet surface is that you will go through nibs on the pen faster. As I am not a power user like a full-time retoucher, this won't be a huge issue for my work, but it is something to keep in mind. If you prefer the smoother surface, you can order it

and change it out on your tablet. The tablet also works with multi-finger gestures, which means you can use it just like your MacBook Pro's trackpad. All in all, the new Wacom Intuos Pro is a huge step up from my ancient Wacom tablet. No surprise there.

If you are looking to up your game on the post-production side of things, I highly recommend the Wacom Intuos Pro tablet. While I have only had it a few months, I am very impressed. If you are an artist, who wants to draw straight onto a tablet they also have a Paper Edition, where you can draw on a piece of paper that sits on the tablet and it automatically digitizes that drawing as you create it. For more info on the Intuos Pro visit www.wacom.com.

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on assignment:



2017 TRAINING CAMP





Kirby Chambliss winding around two Red Bull Air Force wingsuit pilots while practicing maneuvers at his ranch near Eloy, Arizona.

This past January, I was again honored to work with the Red Bull Air Force at their annual training camp near Eloy, Arizona. I have worked with the Red Bull Air Force on a half-dozen occasions over the last ten years or more. I consider many on the team to be good friends and it is always a great time hanging out with this crew. The Red Bull Air Force is far and away one of the best group of sky divers anywhere in the world, which is why when Hollywood needs B.A.S.E. jumpers, wingsuit B.A.S.E. jumpers or sky divers, they usually work with a few members of the Red Bull Air Force. As an example, Jon DeVore was recently in the new Point Break movie, and he and Mike Swanson were also in one of the Transformers movies where they flew wingsuits through downtown Chicago. When the Red Bull Air Force starts thinking of ways to push the envelope, you can be assured that the envelope is being seriously expanded, as I hope you see here in these images.

I previously photographed the Red Bull Air Force training camp in 2014, and featured those images in my [Winter](#)

[2014 Newsletter](#). On this recent assignment, I spent two and a half days with the Red Bull Air Force. In these training camps, the team is focused on perfecting new routines and maneuvers which are then performed at the openings of major events around the world. For example, the Air Force might do a routine at the start of a World Cup Soccer match or at the Super Bowl.

For years, they have been perfecting a tandem wingsuit flight with Kirby Chambliss flying a helix around a pair of wingsuit pilots in his stunt plane, as shown in the image on this double page spread. This is an incredibly tricky and dangerous stunt. At one point during the training camp, a GoPro camera showed that Kirby came within twenty or thirty feet of the wingsuit pilots. But as with everything the Air Force does, they seem to pull it off with incredible precision.

For this training camp, most of the team was present. It was again held at Kirby Chambliss's home and private airfield. In addition to the team, we were joined by Felix

Baumgartner, one of Red Bull's most famous skydivers. Felix was part of the Red Bull Stratos project, where on October 14, 2012, while skydiving out of the stratosphere he became the first human being to break the speed of sound in free fall. That event was streamed live on the internet and was watched live by over seven million people. Since the Stratos project, Felix has been concentrating on helicopters and has become an expert, world-class helicopter pilot. He came to the training camp in one of Red Bull's acrobatic helicopters, ready to work with the team.

When I arrived, I was greeted with high fives and hugs. The team really made me feel like part of the gang, which is the benefit of having worked with them so often. Every member of the Red Bull Air Force is incredibly passionate about life and their job. They are consummate pros, but they are also so stoked on life that they can barely contain themselves. Being able to work with these guys is always an amazing experience, not just because of what they do but also because they have an attitude that anything is possible.

On this assignment, I shot over 21,000 images. The bulk of those images were shot with GoPro action cameras, which were mounted everywhere on Kirby's plane and on many of the athletes' helmets as well. The GoPros are small enough (and light enough) to allow Kirby to do pretty much anything with his plane, whereas larger DSLRs, like my Nikons, would really limit what he was able to do. I also shot with my Nikons and the Hasselblad. In total, I worked with three different camera systems on this assignment, including multiple GoPro Hero 5 action cameras, a Nikon D4 (and also a D500 and D810), and a Hasselblad H5D 50c WiFi medium format digital

camera. Each camera offered a different way of working, and by using such a wide variety of cameras, I could capture an incredible range of images from top-end portraits to impossible-to-reach points of view.

In the past, I have not used GoPro action cameras that often. But at the request of Red Bull, I employed them this time around to get something quite different than the last time I shot with the Red Bull Air Force. I have to say, I am extremely impressed with the GoPro Hero 5. I had the GoPros running for long periods of time, shooting thousands of images each go, and the images we were able to capture are simply stunning. The GoPro Hero 5 can shoot raw images but in timelapse mode it will only shoot jpegs. I was able to color correct the jpegs and optimize them with a little touch up in the post-processing quite easily. As shown on the next page, these little cameras offered a very unique perspective.

For this assignment, I wanted to not only capture unique action images, but also document the skydiver lifestyle and create some dramatic portraits of each team member. For the action images, I mounted cameras—both the GoPros and my Nikon D500—on team members' helmets and the on the wings of Kirby's plane and shot out of open doors of the helicopter and the jump plane.

Once we got rolling, the team was continually thinking about creating new and unique images. They, particularly Jon DeVore, who has worked on a lot with Hollywood feature films, were dreaming up ideas and worked with me to figure out how I could capture those ideas. In one instance, Jon had the idea to have a few team members jump off the skid of the helicopter as Kirby flew just under them. This was a complicated stunt to pull off safely,



Above: This image was a photo op dreamed up by Jon DeVore. To capture this image we attached a GoPro camera to the bottom of the Red Bull helicopter and then had the crew hang from the skids before dropping into a sky dive. From left to right are Jon DeVore, Sean MacCormac, Charles Bryan and Jeffrey Provenzano. The helicopter was being flown by Felix Baumgartner. The GoPro was set to timelapse mode and shot 2 images every second.



Right: Kirby Chambliss releasing a smoke screen while performing radical maneuvers in his stunt plane during the Red Bull Air Force training session at his ranch near Eloy, Arizona.



*Jon DeVore and Luke Aikins jumping from the
skid of a Red Bull helicopter, flown by Felix
Baumgartner, with Kirby Chambliss flying a stunt
plane just below the heli.*





Above: A behind the scenes shot of a portrait session with Felix Baumgartner, one of Red Bull's most famous skydivers. He was also a part of the Red Bull Stratos project, where on October, 14th, 2012, he became the first human being to break the speed of sound in free fall, while skydiving out of the stratosphere. In the above behind the scenes image some have noticed that I am wearing a climbing harness. The reason I am wearing a harness is that between portrait sessions with each Red Bull Air Force team member I was jumping in and out of airplanes and helicopters where I was clipped in while shooting out an open door of the aircraft. The portraits, as shown here, were captured in between flights on an ad hoc basis. I was wearing a harness for most of the assignment. Opposite page: The resulting portrait of Felix Baumgartner from the portrait session shown above.

much less to photograph, as it entailed three different air craft and two skydivers. The tricky part was that Kirby would have to slow his plane down so that he could fly at a similar speed to the helicopter. Once we got that dialed, we had to sync everything up so that I would be in the right place at the right time to actually capture the images. I was shooting from the jump plane through an open door. Making it all come together at just the right moment took a few tries but amazingly we got synced up pretty quickly and had some success on the first go. The amazing image from that scenario can be seen on the

previous double page spread (pages 20 and 21).

In yet another photo op dreamed up by Jon DeVore, we attached a GoPro camera to the bottom of the Red Bull helicopter and then had some team members hang from the skids before dropping into a sky dive. This image can be seen on Page 19. This image gives an idea of how the shoot went for two days. A team member would come up with a plan or an idea and I would figure out, with their help, how to get that image. Some of them worked better than others, but in the end we got an incredible number



of wild action images. It was on me to ask the team members to pose for portraits and initiate the lifestyle images.

For the portraits (a few of which are shown here in this Newsletter: one of Felix Baumgartner on the previous page and also one of Jeffrey Provenzano on page 5), I set up a mini studio in Kirby's garage (as shown on page 22). This was a simple portrait setup with a black background and one light. I used a few flags to keep the light from hitting the background and asked the athletes to bring their helmets with them so I could shoot portraits with and without the helmets. As can be seen in the behind the scenes image on page 22, I am wearing a climbing harness because I was constantly jumping in and out of airplanes and helicopters where I was clipped in while shooting out an open door of the aircraft. The portraits were captured in between flights on an ad hoc basis. I was wearing a harness for most of the assignment just to keep up with the action. All of the portraits and lifestyle images were captured using the Hasselblad. Red Bull Photography actually [published an article](#) about how I shot everything on this assignment as it is unusual for a photographer to be using such a wide variety of cameras, both large and small, to cover an assignment like this.

Because I have shot the Red Bull Air Force training camp before, I worked hard not to replicate images I created the previous time around. But, when you have a group like this together, it is hard not to try and up the ante on previous images. One of the best images from 2014 was of Kirby flying just above the team as they walked up the runway in a similar style to the pilots in the movie "Armageddon." This time around we wanted to have Kirby going vertical just above the team members. That image, shown

on the next page, is pretty compelling. We shot a few other variations on this but it is hard to beat the symmetry of Kirby rocketing into the sky above his teammates.

One of the major issues with this assignment was editing the images down to a manageable number and finding the jewels among the 21,000 images. As you might imagine, the smaller and faster the camera the more images I shot with it—especially since I was shooting in timelapse mode on the GoPros at two frames per second. I shot just over 15,000 images with the GoPro action cameras and approximately 5,800 images with my Nikon DSLRs. In contrast, I shot only 400 images with the larger and slower focusing Hasselblad. In the end, it took nearly a week to edit down the images and work up the best of the best. For the GoPro images, instead of going through and looking at each image individually, I built timelapse videos of each sequence so that I could quickly go through and find the dynamic and interesting images. Once I found those images I would then scroll to that section of still images and find the exact ones that showed the height of the action.

As usual with Red Bull assignments, I came away with some pretty insane images. In particular, the portrait of Jeffrey Provenzano (Page 5) and the heli jump image (The double page spread on pages 20 and 21) are two of my favorites. I have already added both to my online portfolio. After this amazing shoot, I am already looking forward to working with the Red Bull Air Force again in the future. My thanks to Red Bull for this assignment, and to the Red Bull Air Force for your passion and hard work to make these images come to life. If you would like to see more images and see a few more behind the scenes images check out the [Red Bull Photography](#) article.





Previous Page: Kirby Chambliss going vertical just above the Red Bull Air Force crew as they walk down the runway. Above: Portrait of Red Bull Air Force team member Kirby Chambliss at his ranch near Eloy, Arizona as he gets ready to take off. Right: Kirby Chambliss practicing his spiralling maneuvers at his ranch near Eloy, Arizona.



Right: Red Bull Air Force team member Miles Daisher practicing a low altitude B.A.S.E. jump maneuver having just jumped off the skid of a helicopter. Below: Portrait of Red Bull Air Force team member Sean MacCormac hanging out in the dropzone plane.



portfolio





The Purple Cow

by Michael Clark

Over the last few weeks I have been reading Seth Godin's book, *The Purple Cow*. Originally published in 2002, it is not a new book by any means, but it's still just as apropos as when it was first released. The premise of *The Purple Cow* is that old ways of marketing are no longer working in the same way they did back in the television age pre-2000. Without giving anything away, the upshot is that the marketing starts when you are designing and building a product. In other words, making a "remarkable" product is the key to good marketing, not some fancy commercial or advertisement trying to convince would be consumers that they need a certain product. This idea of building a product that consumers want and will appreciate is not a new business idea. But, with the marketing madness that seems to evolve around every product these days, building a product that clearly stands out, as would a purple cow, and basically markets itself is a shift in thinking. Apple, who makes the iPhone, might be the most obvious example of this type of thinking.

I have been saying for years right here in this editorial that for photographers, the best marketing tool you have is to create unique images that will stand out from the crowd. Obviously, creating a purple cow product is not easy to do. For photographers, this means creating an image or set of images so unique that they make art directors and photo editors sit up and pay attention—and not

only that but to create images that make the phone ring or the emails pour in. I follow Seth Godin's excellent blog and check it everyday, but somehow I missed this book. Recently, I saw a video where Tim Tadder was [talking about this book](#) and I purchased it after seeing that video. Tim has created a few purple cow type images, like his [Water Wigs](#) series. Seth Casteel's [Underwater Dogs](#) images also come to mind as stand out purple cow type images. His images of dogs jumping into a pool, shot underwater, went viral on just about every social media feed, and I hope that work made his phone ring and his email inbox fill up.

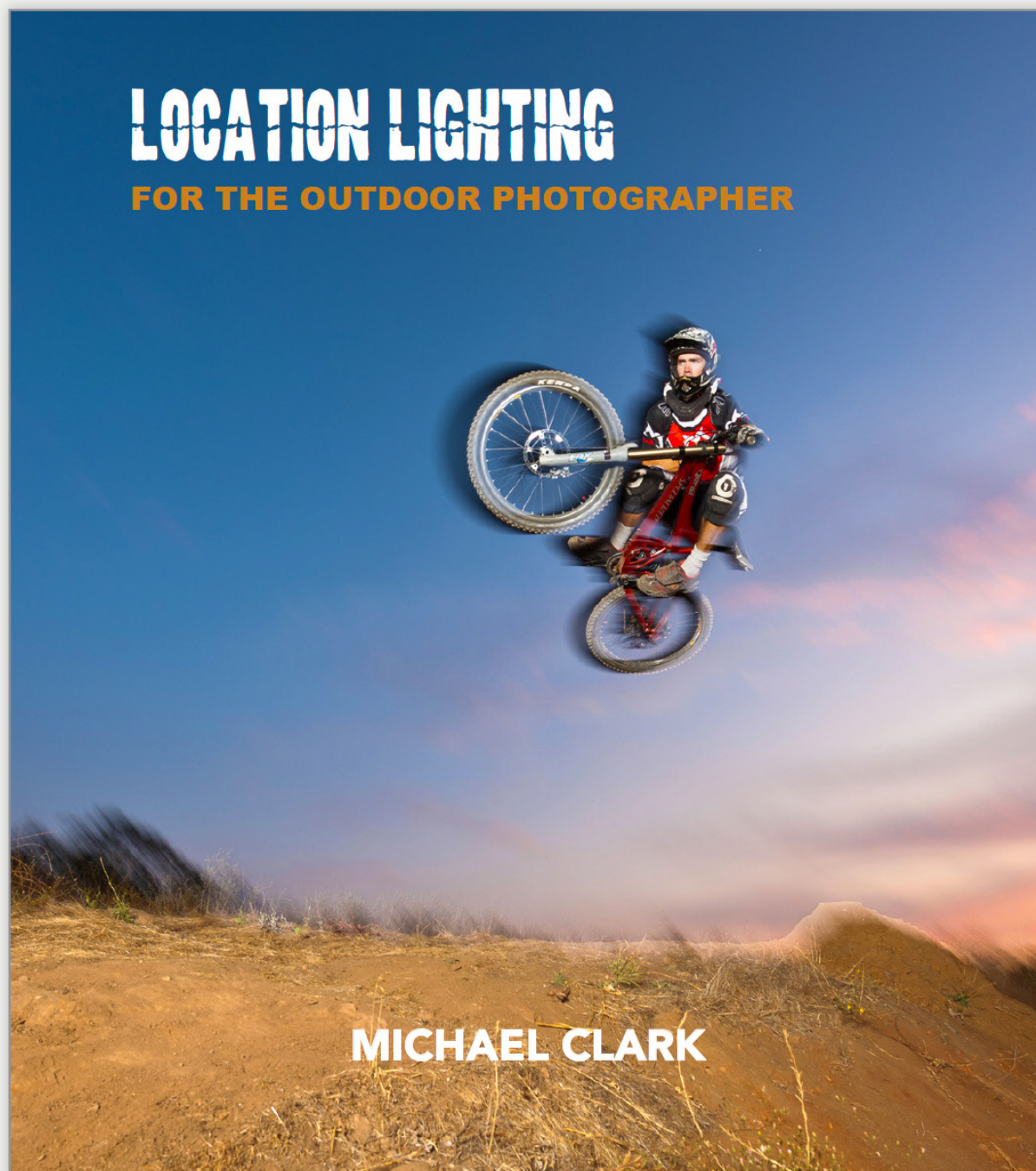
Three or four years ago, I realized that some of my most in-demand images were self-assigned. After realizing that, I started pouring more and more money into personal shoots because I wanted to create stand out images. To what degree that has been a success is debatable but I can directly link back several of my current clients to personal shoots I did three or four years ago. It is getting harder and harder to create unique images. If you are on Instagram you already know this. The level of creativity in the industry right now is frankly astounding. If you are interested in pushing the limits of your creativity and thinking differently about business I highly recommend getting a copy of Seth Godin's [The Purple Cow](#). My thanks to [Seth Godin](#) for all of his wisdom and this book.



Ski Patroller "Hawk" celebrating the deep powder after auguring in while skiing a steep run at Angel Fire Resort at Angel Fire, New Mexico.

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