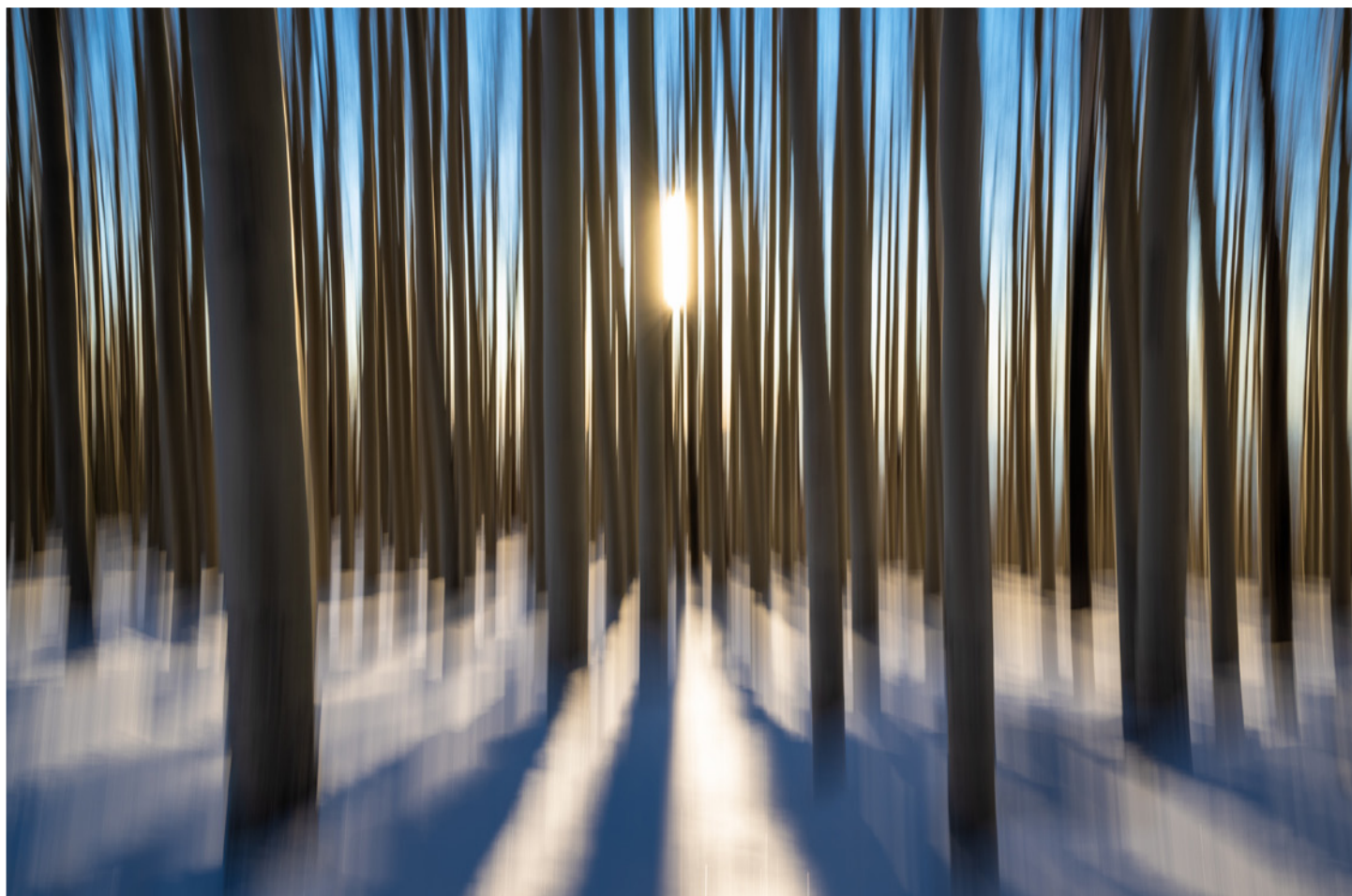


NEWSLETTER

MICHAEL CLARK

PHOTOGRAPHY



SPRING 2022



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Aerial shot of Luke Aikins and Andy Farrington on the Plane Swap run in Eloy, Arizona, USA, on April 24, 2022.

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Cover Image: Aspens on the Alamos Vista Trail above Santa Fe, New Mexico on a winter day. Opposite Page: A self-portrait created while navigating a narrow path in Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument near Chochiti, New Mexico.





Three Year's In

Back to Normal? The Light at the end of the Tunnel?

Piecing together this newsletter during the pandemic has been challenging. Not because putting it together is tough, though that is a lot of work, but generating content and finding content I can share that isn't under some sort of embargo has delayed just about every issue of the Newsletter over the last two years. After the World shut down in March 2020, assignments pretty much stopped completely for three or four months. Luckily, work picked back up after that but it has gone in waves as you might imagine, depending on how bad the case counts were and what we were able to do. Of course, even when there are not assignments on the calendar, I am still out there creating new work.

Here in the USA, most folks seem to be acting like everything is back to normal. In some States it has been that way for quite some time. We, as a society, have certainly done well in creating vaccines and drugs to deal with Covid-19, but we aren't out of the woods just yet. Early on in the pandemic, in March 2020, I was able to attend a virtual meeting hosted by the Santa Fe Institute with some of the top epidemiologists in the World, who put together the modeling for the forthcoming pandemic. Notably they were modeling out to 18 months and still showing considerable spikes in cases. At one point a scientist said generally pandemics last anywhere from three to five years before the disease becomes endemic. That

was the case with the Spanish Flu in 1918. They also predicted 800,000 deaths in those 18 months (just in the USA) so their models were sadly right on target. I bring this up not to add a dark shadow over this editorial but to give perspective. As I try to plan out the rest of this year, I keep this information firmly in the back of my mind. Last week in fact, we had to quarantine for five days because dozens of folks we were around came down with Covid. I personally know more people right now that currently have Covid than at any time so far in the pandemic.

This spring has had some pretty epic assignments to say the least—most of which I can't talk about. Even so, this issue of the Newsletter is packed with some fun news, reviews and stories. I am very excited to see a few of my images get some recognition in the 2022 Communication Arts Photo Annual (Page 6) and I am still going through a little bit of withdrawal from not being able to fly around in a helicopter everyday with a World-Class pilot (See page 20 for some insight into that topic).

Opposite Page: Images of various birds from the Bosque del Apache near Socorro, New Mexico.

Recent Clients: Red Bull Media House, National Geographic, Fujifilm, John Templeton Foundation, Creative-LIVE, Santa Fe Institute, and New Mexico Tourism.



Communication Arts 2022 Photo Annual

Images from a New Mexico Tourism assignment to be included in illustrious photo annual

I am very excited to announce that the image on the next page of Mike Shinabery in an astronaut suit at White Sands National Park near Alamogordo, New Mexico (along with four other images from this assignment) has been chosen for inclusion in the 2022 Communication Arts Photography Annual, which will be published in the July/August 2022 issue. The Communication Arts Photography Annual competition has been held for the last 63 years making this one of the oldest photography competitions in the World. From the Communications Arts press release, "Of the 2,241 entries to the 63rd Photography Annual, only 117 were accepted, representing the work of 115 photographers, making the Photography Annual the most exclusive major photography competition in the world."

For those not familiar with Communication Arts, here is a description from the press release of the magazine, which is more like a high-end book than a magazine: "Communication Arts is a professional journal for designers, art directors, design firms, corporate design departments,

agencies, illustrators, photographers and everyone involved in visual communications. Through its editorials, feature articles and the annual competitions it sponsors,

CA provides new ideas and information, while promoting the highest professional standards for the field. With a paid circulation of 25,000, CA has a rich tradition of representing the aspirations of a continually-growing and quality-conscious field of visual communications. Now in its 63rd year, CA continues to showcase the current best—whether it's from industry veterans or tomorrow's stars—in design, advertising, photography, illustration, interactive and typography."



For me personally, getting the email that this series of my images made it into the 2022 Photo Annual is a confirmation that we knocked it out of the park on this assignment for New Mexico Tourism. This is my fourth time being featured in the CA Photo Annual. Big props to Bill Stengel, Mike Shinabery and the New Mexico Tourism team for bringing this assignment to life and for all the hard work to help create these images.



workshops

Photography Workshops

An overview of workshops and online classes with Michael Clark

Each year I teach a few workshops on a variety of topics including adventure sports photography, digital workflow and artificial lighting. Below is a listing of the workshops I will be teaching in 2022. With Covid still ravaging the World, my workshops are a mix of in-person and online sessions depending on the workshop, the location and the current state of the Pandemic. Hopefully the latest round of Covid won't shut everything down again and folks will have received their vaccine boosters before the virus mutates further. For more information on these workshops, and to find out how to register, go to the [Workshops](#) page on my blog or click on the links in the descriptions below.

ONE-ON-ONE VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS

Online via Skype or Zoom

Email info@michaelclarkphoto.com to Schedule

With the Covid-19 virus running freely yet again here in the USA, I am doing quite a few online tutorials and workshops. If you would like to set up a one-on-one Skype or Zoom session to discuss any photography related topics please [contact](#) me. From portfolio reviews to digital workflow, lighting techniques and career development and anything in between we can set up a session and cover whatever you want. If you have any questions about these sessions please don't hesitate to reach out. I have

found that we can cover a wide variety of topics in these one-on-one sessions and well, like many of my peers, at the moment I have a lot more time to give than normal.

Pricing for online sessions starts at \$100/hour and discounts apply for multiple hour sessions.

ADVENTURE PHOTOGRAPHY

Summit Photography Workshops

Jackson, Wyoming

September 7 - 11, 2022

Set out on a photography journey in the Grand Tetons with our faculty of adventure photographers and editors from National Geographic, Red Bull, The North Face, and more. Work with the expert photographers and learn the shooting and scouting techniques that they use to land their images in top publications, meet the editors behind some of the world's most daring photography expeditions and learn how they hire photographers, and even spend a night camping with the faculty as you network with them throughout the workshop.

In this workshop, you'll be exposed to every aspect of adventure photography, from adventure and outdoor sports photography to product and outdoor commercial photography. The Adventure Workshop is for photographers



Kayakers surfing the Big Kahuna, a low-water surf hole, while whitewater kayaking on the Snake River near Jackson, Wyoming. This images was captured during the 2021 Summit Adventure Photography Workshop which took place in Jackson, Wyoming.

of all ages and skill levels, and although some hiking is required, there is no recommended minimum level of fitness.

Topics covered in this workshop include: The Business of Adventure Photography, How to Shoot Trail Running, Climbing, Kayaking, Lifestyle, and more! We will also discuss the following: How to Light Outdoor Action and Adventure Sports. How to Pitch an Adventure/Expedition Shoot to an Editor. How to Effectively Shoot Outdoor Product Photography. Film making Techniques. How to Solve Real Life Problems On-Location. Freelance Photography and How to Sell Your Photos.

*** Covid Note: Some classroom activities such as lectures and portfolio reviews may be held in person or remotely before/after the workshop via Zoom, depending on Covid restrictions that might be in place at the time of the workshop. For the time being these activities have been left off of the schedule and we will keep everyone updated as the summer progresses.*

Workshop Instructors: Jen Edney, Savannah Cummins, Ted Hesser, Elise Streck, and Michael Clark.

Cost: \$1,895.00



A steep staircase from the Kimpusen-ji temple that leads down to the Noten-okami temple in Yoshino National Park near Nara, Japan. We have been waiting three years to hold this workshop in Japan. Fingers crossed it goes this fall. We are currently waiting for the Japanese government to open up the country to foreigners.

Notes: You do not need to be a climber, hiker, kayaker, or adventure athlete to participate in this workshop. However, expect to hike, move across steep terrain, get wet, get rained on, and probably snowed on.

For more information and to register for this workshop visit the [Summit Photography Workshops](#).

JAPAN: THE ART OF MOTION

Nobechi Creative - Multiple Locations in Japan

October 2022

Instructors: Michael Clark and George Nobechi

Not just a travel photo tour, not just a lighting workshop, but a unique opportunity to photograph Japan in Motion: Martial artists, theatre performers, bullet trains and festivals to create a strong, dynamic body of work that will have your friends and colleagues in awe of your photography, while learning invaluable lighting techniques courtesy of Michael, and diving deeply into the beautiful Japanese culture through George.

Japan is a country constantly on the move. With the fastest bullet trains in the world, and sports old and new, there are ample opportunities to create ambitious images of both the modern and ancient Japanese culture in motion. In this photography workshop with Michael Clark

and George Nobechi we will push ourselves to create dynamic images that impart motion into the world of still photography. Using advanced lighting techniques*** with both strobes and continuous lights (not to worry if you are new to lights—Michael and George will be there to help you), incorporating motion blur, and featuring incredible athletes and martial artists we will set up a wide variety of scenarios to produce stunning images.

Michael has spent the entirety of his career capturing images of athletes in motion in remote locations for some of the most prestigious clients in the World including Apple, Nike, Nikon, Fujifilm, Red Bull, Nokia, National Geographic, Sports Illustrated and many more. In Japan we will adapt his techniques to a wide variety of traditional sports, performances, culture and events in stunning locations. The aim of this workshop is to craft images that are dramatic, unusual and out of the norm—images that stand out and grab the viewer's attention but are unmistakably Japanese.

We will start with a few days in Tokyo, where we have access to some phenomenal athletes and performing artists in a variety of venues. For the second part of the workshop we will head out into the beautiful Japanese countryside and work with martial artists, dancers and traditional performers. In addition we will have the opportunity to photograph an exhilarating festival, where we will be able to take the techniques we have learned and use them in an uncontrolled environment. Throughout the workshop we will have plenty of time to really get creative and explore the possibilities in each location.

Of course, throughout the workshop, Michael will also share his extensive knowledge of digital workflow and

show participants how he works up his images to a very high level. Each day will find us on location capturing powerful images in addition to image critiques, discussions on various techniques, and thinking through the types of images we hope to create that day. Michael first visited Japan in May of 2019 and enjoyed the country so much he immediately hatched the idea to coordinate with George on creating this unique workshop. George, with his extensive knowledge of Japan, and its culture, will be our guide to help us stay true to the traditions and also dial in our experience so that we not only come away with incredible images but also get to experience a side of Japan that is rarely seen by tourists. George will also instruct you in filling out your Japan portfolio with carefully crafted landscapes, environmental portraits and still-life shooting around the main workshop photography led and taught by Michael.

Class size: 6 people (Minimum 5 people required for the class to proceed -- Note that this workshop has already met its minimum.) All lighting will be provided by Elinchrom Japan.

Cost: TBD

For more information and to register for this workshop visit the [Nobechi Creative website](#).

Update on the status of this workshop: We have been waiting three years to hold this workshop in Japan. Fingers crossed it goes this fall. We are currently waiting for the Japanese government to open up the country to all foreigners. Currently the country is only open to verified business travelers. As the pandemic wanes the hope is that Japan will open up soon.

Workshop Testimonials

"Michael certainly knows his stuff. From Capture to Print: The Complete Digital Photographer's Workflow is delivered in an easy to follow and comprehensive manner that covers many things that you may not expect - such as how to choose proper lighting to view and evaluate your prints or what color shirt to wear when you're correcting images. I really appreciated that this is a pro workflow course delivered by a pro photographer. Michael is also a superb teacher, a superb communicator, who is welcoming and inviting of questions from all his participants. I took this workshop in June of 2020, using Zoom software. I was really amazed by how Michael made it seem like he's been doing these workshops forever this way! Thank you Michael! It was a great pleasure being part of this workshop with so many other amazing photographers and a great pleasure to meet you. I learned much which is valuable to me and enjoyed doing so at the same time. And just to reiterate, as to the workshop: I'm impressed." - Stephen Starkman, Toronto

"Michael is the best instructor I have taken a workshop from." - Participant, Cutting-Edge Lighting 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

"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 four years of college and several careers

getting less candid advice and encouragement than I got in four days with you. For what it is worth, thank you for that." - Brandon McMahon, Adventure Photography 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

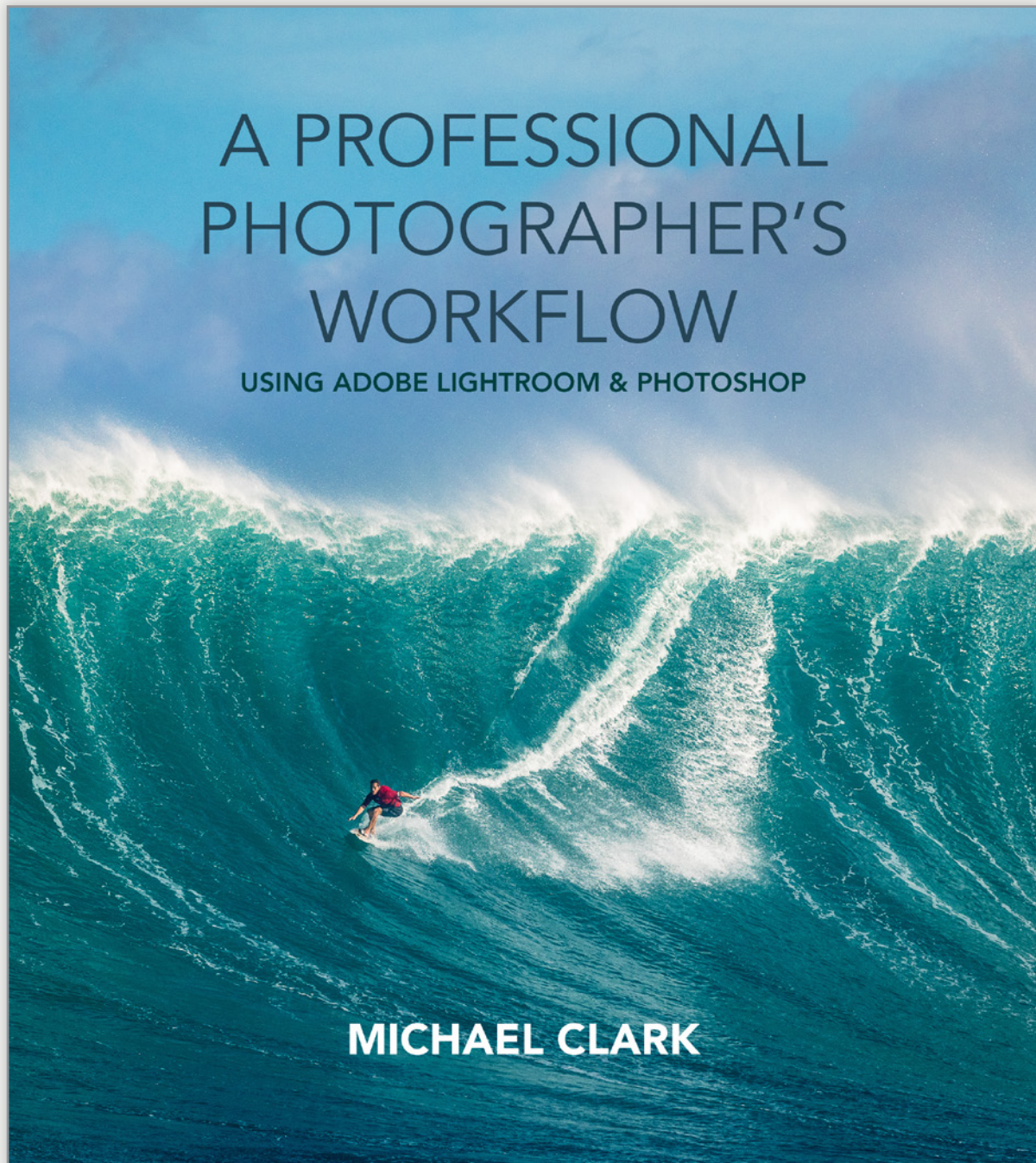
"Priceless chance to learn from the absolute best. Every photographer should take this class!" - Jill Sanders, The Professional Photographer's Digital Workflow available on CreativeLIVE

"Michael is a true professional and readily explains all of the nitty gritty issues of a photographer's digital workflow, including important things like Color Management, Lightroom workflows, Printing, and more. He has a thorough knowledge and passion that he loves to share. He can get way deep into the subject, which I found fascinating. You can tell Michael has great experience in teaching and also likes to learn from his students. He is very authentic, honest, and direct. I highly recommend this class, and look forward to another one of Michael's courses in the future!" - Kristen, The Professional Photographer's Digital Workflow on CreativeLIVE

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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equipment review

Aquatech EDGE Pro Water Housing

A review of Aquatech's new water housing for the FUJIFILM GFX100S



***Disclaimer:** I was provided this water housing for the GFX100S by Fujifilm USA and Aquatech. Regardless of that fact, this review is my honest opinion of the product having owned five different water housings (from various brands) over the last fifteen years.*

A few months ago, Fujifilm sent me an Aquatech EDGE Pro water housing for the GFX100S camera system, which was provided to them by Aquatech. This is a fairly new surf housing from Aquatech and I was really excited to try it out. [Note this housing has a depth rating



Hudson Ruiz Fly-fishing on the Bitterroot River south of Missoula, Montana. Tech Specs: FUJIFILM GFX100S, GF80mm f/1.7 lens, ISO 100, f/2.5 at 1/4,000th second. I held the housing just above the water to focus and then pushed it halfway underwater to get the ripples of water to build up on the lens port and create the light refractions on the lower portion of the frame.

of 33 ft or 10 meters and is not a scuba diving style water housing.] Although I have only had a few scenarios where I have used the housing so far, I have enough experience with it to write this review—especially since I have owned and used quite a few other water housings. Previous to using this new Aquatech housing I have used SPL water housings (on just a few occasions), I owned a CMT carbon fiber super-light water housing (for my Nikon D4) and I have a variety of Ewa-Marine water housings as well as my favorite for going light and fast—the Outex water housings. I have used my Outex water housing

with my larger GFX100 camera while photographing the Marine Special Forces (MARSOC) and it worked beautifully. But this hardshell Aquatech housing is by far the sleekest, and best designed housing I have worked with.

While the “soft shell” Outex housing works quite well for a wide variety of scenarios, sometimes you want or need a hard shell water housing like the Aquatech which offers a bit more protection for your camera. I have played around with the older Aquatech housings in the past but never actually had one in the water. The older style

Aquatech housings were pretty heavy, and because of this most of the top water photographers in the surfing world stayed away from Aquatech housings—at least the ones I know on the north shore of Oahu. But with this new EDGE series (which have been out for a few years now) Aquatech has reduced the weight significantly and at this point pretty much all of the top water photographers I know in Hawaii are using the new Aquatech housings.

When I first got the housing I was really impressed with all of the function buttons and just how much you can adjust the camera while it is in the housing. My older CMT carbon fiber housing had minimal control buttons so you had to be very diligent about your camera settings. With the Aquatech, I can adjust just about any setting and even go into the menus if needed though that is probably not something I would do while bobbing around in the ocean. The blue rotating knobs also allow for changing the aperture or shutter speeds via the rear command dial (depending on how you have the camera set-up) and you can also push it in to zoom into images if you are reviewing them on the back of the camera.

The GFX100S water housing also includes a blue front rotating knob as well, which is designed to work with zoom gears so you can change the focal length with zoom lenses in the housing. Sadly, Aquatech (at this point) doesn't have any gears that work with the GFX zoom lenses so this option isn't really a feature that works. Hence, if you are using a zoom lens you essentially have to make a decision as to which focal length you want to use and set the zoom to that focal length before putting the camera in the housing. Hopefully at some point in the future Aquatech will offer a few zoom gears to make this

feature work. The Aquatech GFX100S housing is quite new so this might be part of the reason there are no gears for the GFX zoom lenses yet. At the very least it would be great to see gears for the GF32-64mm and GF100-200mm zoom lenses.

The slide in mounting system incorporated into this EDGE water housing is super simple and really lines up the camera perfectly inside the water housing. With this system, you bolt on the mounting plate, which is similar to an Arca-swiss style tripod mounting plate, and then slide the camera into the back of the housing on the rails built into the base of the housing. This is far better than any other system I have seen. With my old CMT housing you essentially just jammed the camera in the housing and lined it up as best you could—the camera fit so tightly in the housing it didn't move around a lot but you really did have to pay attention so your lens wasn't off center or angled in the housing. In comparison, the Aquatech is a breeze to install the camera.

By far the best feature on the Aquatech EDGE housing are the closure clamps. The two clamps on the top of the water housing simply clamp down (very tightly) and engage the silicon o-rings to make the housing water tight—at least on the back end. These clamps also have a simple locking mechanism on the top of the clamps so you can't accidentally flip one up and disengage the clamp. The back plate has a tongue and groove system for the lower part of the clear plate that holds the bottom tight as you clamp it down. I also love that the rear plate has no bolts or giant thumb wheel screws on it. This makes it a much safer housing when swimming out into big waves where you want to keep the housing away from your face so you don't have one of those giant metal screws (as was the



Above are four perspectives on the Aquatech EDGE Pro water housing for the FUJIFILM GFX100S. The lower right image shows the back clear plate and how it attaches to the back of the water housing. The lower left image shows a small lens port attached to the housing and the top two images show the clamps, shutter release, grips and all of the buttons on the back of the housing.

case with my CMT housing) take a chunk of your face off. The lens ports for the EDGE housings seem very well made and are quite robust. I have found the acrylic glass on the front of the lens ports provide excellent image quality—they quite possibly are the best lens ports I have ever used. I found that there were no aberrations or vignetting with any of the lens ports I used. This is partially the excellent quality of the acrylic glass and partly the way the camera is lined up so specifically in the water housing itself. Regardless, when using a 102 MP medium

format camera it is great to see that the image quality shooting through a thick piece of glass is preserved. Aquatech offers lens ports for just about every GFX lens as well so you are covered no matter what the setup.

The lens ports are possibly the weakest link of the water housing in that if you don't tighten down the lens port crazy tight, you might get some leakage between the lens port (which screws into the front of the housing) and the housing itself. My good friend Brian Biemann, a

legendary surfing photographer with a 40-year career, switched to the new EDGE water housings a few years ago and on his first outing had the housing leak. It was because he didn't screw in the lens port tightly enough. Luckily, he saw the issue right away and no cameras were harmed but it just goes to show that with any housing you have to really make sure all of the seals are cranked down tight. Having heard his story before I got this housing I had no issues at all with water getting into the housing because I cranked those lens ports down wicked tight. Since I had a very expensive camera rig in the housing I also tested the housing beforehand (without a camera in it) to make sure it was water tight—as is recommended by every water housing manufacturer.

The shutter release buttons on the EDGE housing are on the front right of the housing and on the bottom of the housing—and that bottom shutter release interfaces with the excellent pistol grip that mounts on the base of the housing. The release on the top of the housing is a stretch to get to but the side handles help a lot to securely hold the housing and depress the shutter button. The pistol grip is by far the best I have ever used. It is sculpted to fit your hand and allows for a very secure grip and the shutter release itself (like the other one on the front of the housing) is a two stage trigger that allows you to engage the autofocus before releasing the shutter. The pistol grip also easily bolts onto the bottom of the housing without having to play any games or impact the water tightness of the housing.

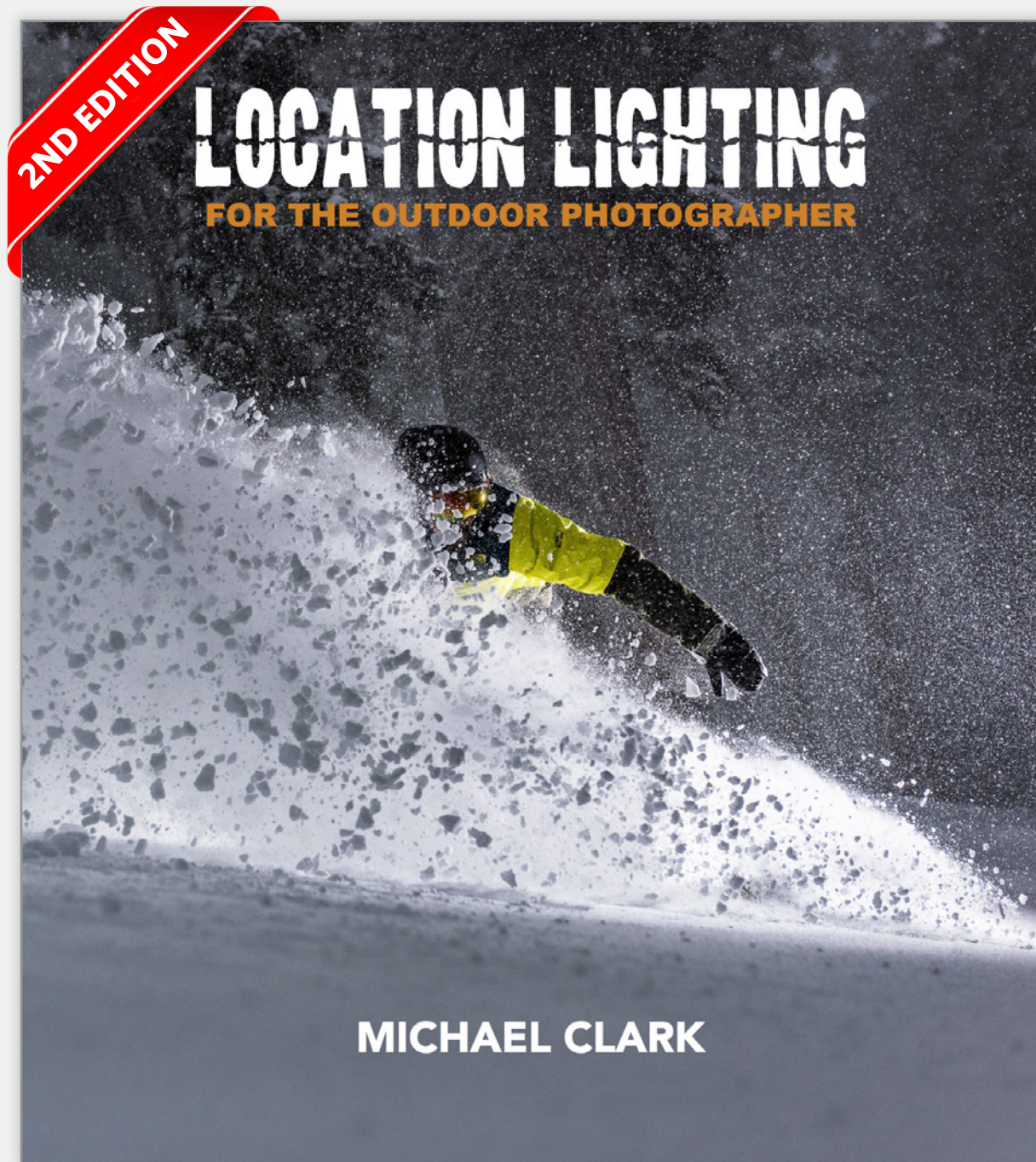
If there is one thing that I was really surprised by, it was the weight of the housing with the GFX100S camera in the housing. For the image of the fly-fisherman on page 15, I had the GF80mm f/1.7 lens mounted on the camera

in the housing. All together the whole setup weigh in at nine pounds! That is quite heavy and the 80mm lens isn't that big or heavy. Granted, this is the first time I have had a medium format camera in a hardshell water housing so that might just be how it is with medium format cameras, but even so I am not sure I would swim out with this setup in giant waves at Pipeline. I tried this kit out with the GF100-200mm lens as well and it was only slightly heavier—maybe a pound or two heavier with the bigger lens and larger lens port. I'll have to do more testing to see how this weight reacts in the water. I can imagine swimming with this housing would be slightly tougher than with a smaller format camera. It does have a certain amount of buoyancy in the water so it won't be that big of a deal swimming with it but hoisting it over your head while treading water will be quite the workout. In comparison, my old CMT carbon fiber housing for my Nikon D4 weighed half as much as this Aquatech housing but it was also much more fragile and much harder to get the camera set up inside the housing.

Wrapping up, the Aquatech EDGE Pro housing is by far the nicest and easiest to use hardshell water housing I have ever used. I can't wait to get this in the ocean and use it in some more intense scenarios. For those that want and/or need this level of water housing and want to shoot in the water with an expensive medium format rig like the FUJIFILM GFX100S the Aquatech EDGE Pro is the housing to get. My thanks to both Fujifilm and Aquatech for allowing me to test out this incredible water housing. Check out Fujifilm's website for more info on the [GFX100S camera system](#) and Aquatech's website for more information on their impressive [EDGE Pro series water housings](#). I will definitely be creating more images with this amazing piece of kit soon.

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on assignment:

AARON FITZGERALD

WORKING WITH A WORLD-CLASS HELICOPTER PILOT

Aaron Fitzgerald performing his aerobatic helicopter show at the Red Bull Air Force Training Camp in Los Alamos, California on April 6, 2021.



THE FLYING BULLS

Having worked with the [Red Bull Air Force](#) (skydivers and B.A.S.E. jumpers) and [The Flying Bulls](#) (airplane and helicopter pilots) on more than a twenty assignments over the last thirteen years, it is always nice to get the call for another gig with the team. I have gotten to know the crew pretty well over the years and even wearing a mask and a hat they recognized me instantly when I showed up at the 2021 Training Camp in Los Alamos, California last year. Imagine working with Superman and Superwoman on your next photography assignment and that gives a sense of what it is like working with the Red Bull Air Force and The Flying Bulls.

In this article I want to show a host of images of [Aaron Fitzgerald](#), one of the very top helicopter pilots on the planet. He is one of only a handful of pilots to ever do a back flip in a helicopter (as shown on page 30). From his bio on The Flying Bulls website, "Aaron has primarily focused on flying for the film and television industry; he has performed and filmed for over 100 films and television shows. Besides this he has also flown in various other capacities such as utility flying in mountainous terrain and offshore support. He is part of our helicopter team since 2018 and is representing us in the USA as an airshow-pilot for helicopter aerobatics at the Red Bull North-America."

He performs his aerobatic show in a [Messerschmitt-Bölkow-Blohm Bo 105](#) helicopter, which is a helicopter made in Germany. From The Flying Bulls website there is a description of this amazing helicopter that Aaron uses for his aerobatics: "As the first light helicopter in the world, the BO 105 was fitted with two engines, dual hydraulics as well as dual electric supply. These innovations paved the way for aerobatics. The BO 105 is still the only

helicopter that can perform the same maneuvers as conventional planes." All that is to say it can go inverted, with the right pilot.

I recently worked with Aaron again for the Plane Swap project and over the course of ten days this spring I was shooting out of the helicopter pretty much every day for a few hours. [Note that there are no images from the Plane Swap project—save for the Parting Shot at the end of this Newsletter because I was in the helicopter.] I will admit it is fairly exciting to fly with a pilot of Aaron's caliber. Beyond the normal range of stuff we work on, every time we go up we get in a few fun maneuvers. As Aaron likes to say, "If Red Bull is painted on the side of the helicopter you can't just come in to land like any other helicopter—you've got to buzz the crowd, pull a few G's and put on a show." And I love it when he decides to pull a few G's, especially when I am strapped into the back seat with a few different tethers and my climbing harness with the door open.

Since Aaron has thousands of hours working for the film and television industry, he can certainly put you anywhere you need to be with great precision. In fact his team is the crew that dealt with all of the aerial "air-to-air" photography in the latest Top Gun movie. Earlier this year when I shot promo images for the Plane Swap project, Aaron was incredibly precise in putting us in just the right place to get the images Red Bull needed. On that gig we went up at dawn to 10,000-feet and when I opened the door the temperature with the blades rotating just above plummeted well below zero Fahrenheit. I was wearing enough clothing to summit a 6,000-meter peak in the Himalayas. Aaron froze up front with thin gloves on to have precise control of the helicopter. Luckily, when we

*Aaron Fitzgerald doing a back flip right in front of
a hot air balloon at the Red Bull Air Force Training
Camp in Los Alamos, California on April 6, 2021.*



went up again later that evening it wasn't quite so frigid. My apologies for torturing you with the cold open doors the last few years Aaron!

On an assignment last year with the Red Bull Air Force, I spent quite a bit of time sitting in the back seat of a helicopter photographing Aaron flying his aerobatic routine. To document Aaron in the Red Bull helicopter I worked mostly from another helicopter and flew alongside him while strapped in and shooting out an open door. On the first evening of that assignment we went out at sunset and buzzed a hot air balloon (see Page 23) and Aaron did back flips in the helicopter right next to the balloon. All I can say is the folks on that balloon ride got one hell of a show!

“As Aaron likes to say, ‘If Red Bull is painted on the side of the helicopter you can’t just come in to land like any other helicopter—you’ve got to buzz the crown, pull a few G’s and put on a show.’ ”

A few days later, after having spent a considerable amount of time flying back seat with Aaron in the Red Bull helicopter, he told me to come up and sit left seat after I had been flying with him all afternoon. He wanted to take me up to do his entire aerobatic show, which lasted about six minutes and involves several 360 upside down maneuvers—in a helicopter! My first reaction was, “That sounds great, but I don’t want to puke in your helicopter.” Aaron assured me it wouldn’t be too bad and instructed me how to follow the horizon from the windows above and below the front seats to keep ourselves oriented and our stomachs at bay. I told myself, “Well, if there is ever a time to do this, then this is it—and Aaron is one of the best pilots in the World.” I trusted him completely.

Once I got strapped in and locked down with the five-point harness I grabbed my Nikon Z7 II and a fisheye lens to document the experience. On Page 30 you can see a fisheye image of us inverted (note the horizon). I kept my camera firmly on my lap—so as not to injure myself or cause any mayhem in the cabin—and shot series of images during each maneuver. I knew that if I tried to raise the camera at any point and we shifted our position quickly at the same time I could nail my face with the camera or worse. I had the camera tethered to my harness as well so it couldn’t go on walkabout in the cabin and result in a catastrophe. In all we did at least a dozen or more inverted aerobatic maneuvers and with Aaron calling them out I was able keep the horizon locked in and hold onto my lunch.

There are only a few helicopters in the World capable of going upside down and even fewer pilots skilled enough to pull off this maneuver. Helicopters technically are not supposed to be able to go upside down. Once we landed, Aaron congratulated me on being one of a very small number (a few dozen) to ever go upside down in a helicopter. That six or seven minutes was definitely a highlight of that assignment for me and gets stacked on many other amazing experiences I have had working with the Red Bull Air Force and The Flying Bulls.

My sincere thanks to Aaron and the entire Red Bull Air Force team as well as The Flying Bulls for allowing me to come out and work with them. It is a supreme honor to fly

Continued on page 30

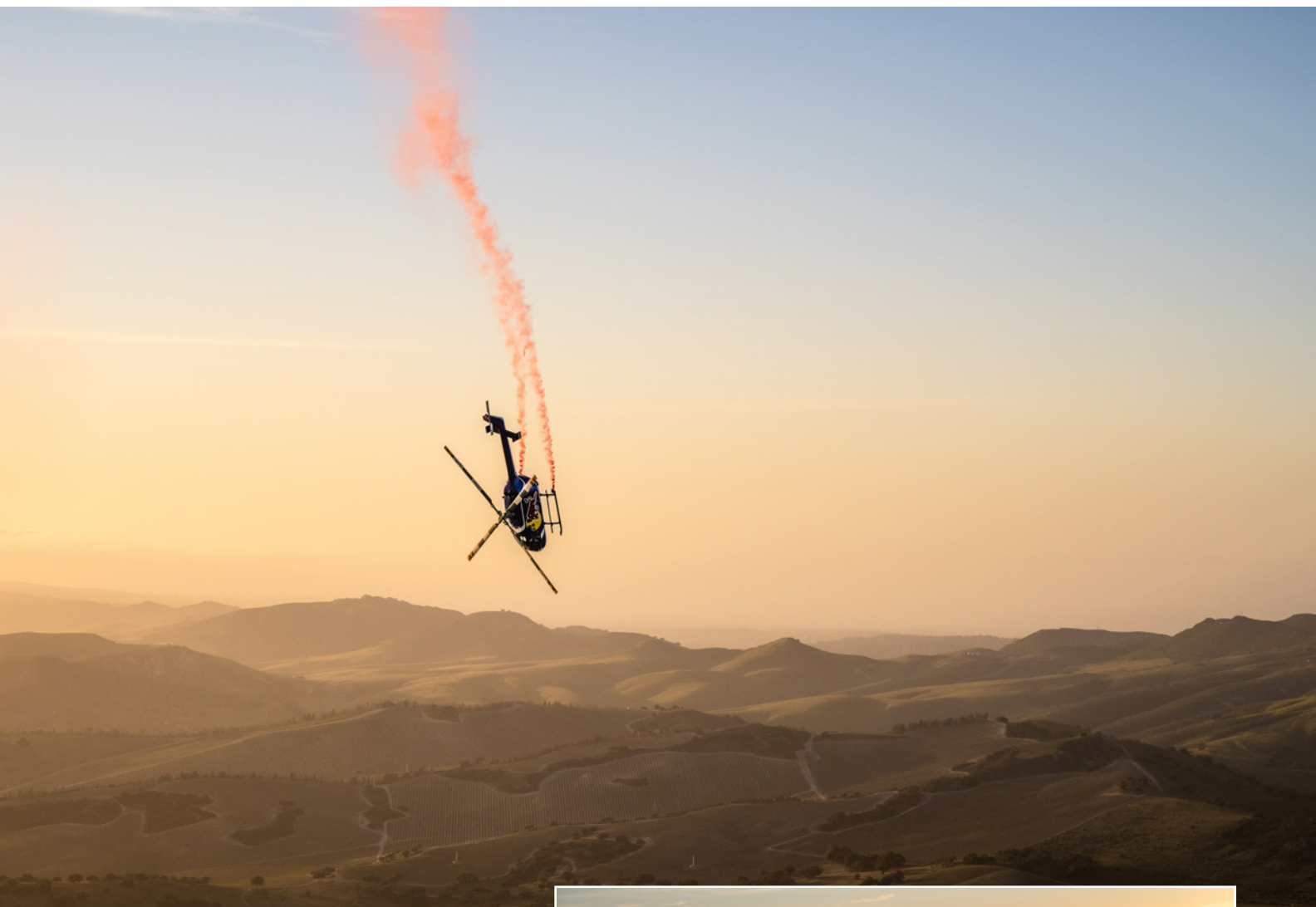
A portrait of Aaron Fitzgerald.



Aaron Fitzgerald waiting for me to climb into the Red Bull helicopter during the Red Bull Air Force Training Camp in Los Alamos, California on April 6, 2021.







Above: Aaron Fitzgerald performing his helicopter acrobatics show at the Red Bull Air Force Training Camp in Los Alamos, California on April 6, 2021. Right: Aaron Fitzgerald flying his Messerschmitt-Bölkow-Blohm Bo 105 helicopter over southern California in the late evening.



Right and Below: Aaron Fitzgerald performing his helicopter acrobatics show at the Red Bull Air Force Training Camp in Los Alamos, California on April 6, 2021. Page 30: Aaron Fitzgerald and I going inverted in his MBB Bo 105 helicopter at the Red Bull Air Force Training Camp in Los Alamos, California on April 5, 2021. Page 31: An image showing what going inverted looks like from the ground as Aaron performs his aerobatic maneuvers.





with such a skilled pilot—and to get to know Aaron and his family. They are an amazing family and his two boys are already incredibly skilled pilots themselves with very bright futures.

At this point in my career I don't take anything for

granted. I am far enough along on this journey that after twenty seven years as an adventure photographer, when I have a big assignment and find myself in incredible scenarios—as when I get to fly with Aaron—I know it and I savor every adventure. I look forward to working with Aaron and the Red Bull crew again. Until next time....



portfolio





The end of an Era

by Michael Clark

This morning as I was scrolling through Facebook and I happened upon a link sharing the sad news that Outside, “recently sold by owner Larry Burke to a firm backed by venture capital, is closing print titles “80%” across the company and lots of people at all levels have lost their jobs.” This quote comes from [Adventure-Journal](#) who was reporting on the news. Further reporting indicated “The print titles ending monthly publication are: *Backpacker*, *Climbing*, *Trail Runner*, *Beta*, *Peloton*, and *Oxygen*. Some will still produce one or two annual issues.” Hence, we will see what happens and if any in print versions of these magazines ever surface again. This is indeed a sad day for those of us that have loved *Climbing* magazine (and others like it). I started my career shooting specifically for *Climbing* and *Rock and Ice* magazines. My first ever published image was in *Climbing* magazine way back in 1996. Seeing that image get published was the impetus for me to start my career!

It is not a shocker that the magazine business is a tough ordeal these days. People just don’t read long format anything anymore—or so it seems. Readership of this Newsletter has nose-dived as well but I still produce it since it is a great marketing piece and still has a loyal following. The part that really stings with Outside ending print versions of 80% of it’s magazines is that this new venture capital version of *Outside* magazine bought up just about

every outdoor publication there was—and now they are just ending those iconic brands in one fell swoop. *Climbing* magazine was the last climbing magazine in the USA that covers all forms of climbing. The only climbing magazine left standing is *Alpinist*, which as the name suggests mainly focuses on mountaineering. *Alpinist* is a spectacularly beautiful quarterly magazine, which feels more like a soft-cover coffee-table book. It is a great publication.

As someone who worked their ass off and nearly died on at least one occasion to create images for *Climbing* magazine, I sincerely hope that some third party comes along and revives these titles. I also sincerely hope this world can be saved from the crazy ADHD mentality foisted on us by social media and learn to read again—not just for the sake of magazines and books but for the sake of learning and education. For myself, I still love print. But I also accept that digital versions of magazines might be a better version for the environment. Regardless of how it is presented, a well-written and appropriately edited long-form article that dives into a complex topic is a joy to read. Fingers crossed that at the very least Outside decides to create at least one or two print issues of *Climbing* magazine and continues to pay content providers respectable rates for online content, but I will be very surprised if that happens. For all those that lost their jobs today, I am very sorry. You deserved better than this.

parting shot



Aerial shot of Luke Aikins and Andy Farrington on the Plane Swap run in Eloy, Arizona, USA, on April 24, 2022.

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