MICHAEL CLARK
PHOTOGRAPHY

summer 2007

Michael Clark Photography

Summer 2007 newsletter

Cover: A local surfer rolling up on a wave at Moonlight Beach in Encinitas, California.
Above: Laura Perfetti checking out the waves at Swami's beach near Encinitas, California .
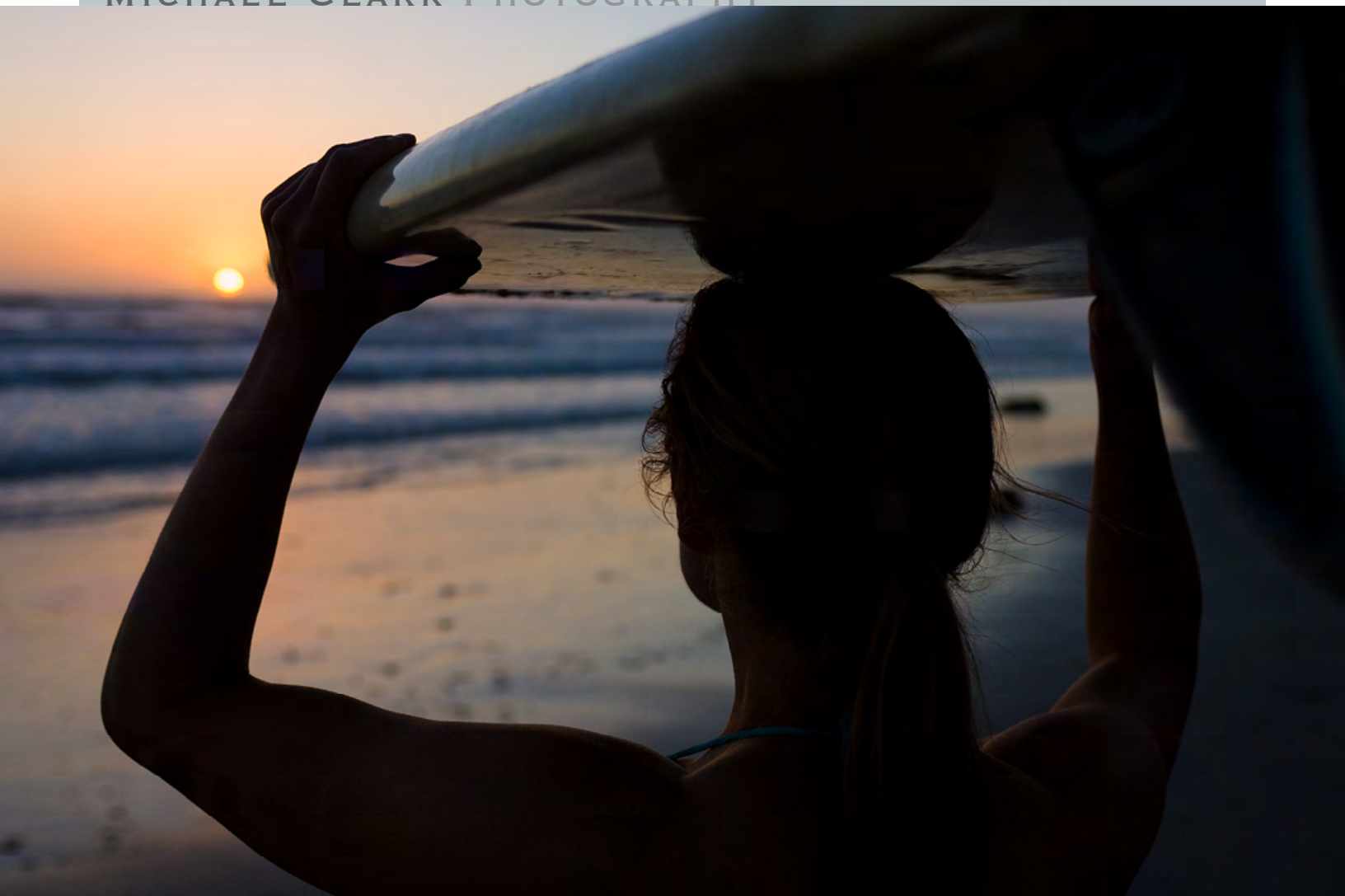All images Copyright © Michael Clark Photography.

Knee Deep...

REVAMPING PORTFOLIOS, SHOOTING NEW STOCK IMAGES, BLOGGING & THE NEWSLETTER

At the moment I am surrounded by fine art portfolio prints laying all around me. Sticky notes abound on my desktop and I am constantly reminded of the impending workload that needs to be dealt with. It's not as bad as it might sound - just another normal workday here in the office.

I am working on a new portfolio to go along with a new marketing campaign. And inherent in the portfolio process is laying out and printing a large number of images - I am going for a new high end book to compliment my already finished Asuka Books (asukabook.com) which are bound portfolios that look like a published book. At the same time I have several stock shoots in the works: some fly fishing, a little rock climbing and some dare-devil mountain biking. It has been a busy summer and it looks like the rest of it will be action-packed as well.

This issue of the newsletter includes images from a recent surfing stock shoot, an assignment for Women's Health Magazine and various other images from recent articles including a New Mexico Magazine article that featured my work.

This newsletter is also the first of a new breed. It may look the same but it is a higher resolution version - just slightly. Instead of 72 pixels per inch (ppi) which is screen resolution on most monitors I have used 125 ppi. This will help the overall appearance and allow users to zoom into the images a bit to check out the detail. Of course there are some issues with going to a larger resolution - mostly bigger file sizes to deal with and protecting the images. To deal with the larger file size of the PDF document don't be surprised to see a download link in your email instead of the file itself. As soon as you click the link the newsletter should start to download as a .zip file. And in terms of protecting the images contained in the newsletter I will be adding security to the PDF file so it cannot be printed or copied. If you are one of those people who prefers to print this out and read it the old fashioned way drop me an email and I can give you the password so you can print it out.

The newsletter remains an incredible marketing tool and I thank all of you that write in asking to subscribe, including quite a few clients. Every time I send it out I get new work. If I didn't I wouldn't keep producing it beacuse it is a lot of work. Well over 1,300 people from all over the world are on the mailing list for the newsletter including photo editors, art buyers, professional and amateur photographers and photo enthusiasts. If you have any peers, cohorts or friends who you think would be interested in my work or in the newsletter please pass this issue onto them.

Be sure to check out the *Parting Shot* image at the end of the newsletter. The image of Timy Fairfield involved some serious sweat factor to create. It was 90 degrees at 7 PM for this evening shoot and I had to lug 200 pounds of lighting and photographic equipment up into the Crystal Cave. Timy cruised the 5.13 route with aplomb even though it was quite sweaty. After a few hours of load hauling and equipment set up the image on page 14 is the result. If you would like to license any of the images in this newsletter please drop me an email or give a call.

Michael wins Teva Games Photo Comp
IMAGE OF CHRIS SHARMA WINS BEST OF SHOW AND BEST IN CATEGORY

Michael's winning image of Chris Sharma hanging from a big tufa - the biggest hold on the entire route - on Big Momma (5.13d/14a) in the Tarantino Cave on the island of Mallorca in the Mediterranean Ocean.

Michael was just recently awarded the overall grand prize "Best in Show" in the Teva Mountain Games *Zest for Adventure* Photography Competition for his image of Chris Sharma deep water soloing on Big Momma (5.13d/14a) in Mallorca, Spain (see image above). The image also won "Best in Category" for the Ice & Rock section of the competition as well. With close to 400 images submitted it is a great honor to have my image chosen as the "Best in Show". This is one of my favorite images from an assignment shot for Men's Journal in 2004 on a deep water soloing expedition - at the time deep water soloing had never been photographed by a professional photographer.

Deep water soloing is a form of rock climbing where climbers climb solo, i.e. without a rope above the ocean. Normally climbers dare not climb above 100 feet be-cause falling above 60 feet becomes very dangerous. In the photo above, Sharma was nearing 70 feet above the water. The rout climbs out of a 50-foot horizontal roof not visible in this image.

The image of Chris Sharma, who was also awarded an Everest Award for "Male Climber of the Year" will appear in Outside Magazine this summer. For more info on the Teva Mountain Games and the winning images visit the following link:

http://www.tevamountaingames.com/ev_photo.cfm

RECENT CLIENTS: Patagonia, Bike Magazine, Backpacker Magazine, Women's Health. Climbing, Paddler, New Mexico Magazine, ALP Magazine (Italy) and O'Reilly Digital Media.

New Mexico Magazine Portfolio
'FOCUS ON THE EXTREME: THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF MICHAEL CLARK' IN NM MAGAZINE

Above is the opening spread of the New Mexico Magazine article and portfolio of Michael's images - all shot in northern New Mexico. Here is the link to a PDF of the article: http://www.michaelclarkphoto.com/nmportfolio.pdf.

In the July 2007 issue of New Mexico Magazine, Michael Clark's work is featured in an article entitled *Focus on the Extreme: The Photography of Michael Clark*. The article, written by Steve Larese, details some of Michael's more harrowing adventures and dispels several myths about being a professional photographer, especially in the adventure genre. The six-page layout also contains a nice set of images shot in New Mexico and a portrait of the photographer at work while shooting images on assignment for Adobe Photoshop Lightroom in Moab, Utah.

The teaser in the table of contents reads: "See the heart-stopping action shots of Michael Clark of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and learn how this avid climber made the journey to become one of the country's top adventure photographers."

And the opening few paragraphs set a super-hero tone: "Whether it's photographing a mountain biker launch-ing off a 40-foot-high cliff, kayaking through boiling Class IV rapids or rock climbing with nothing but 200 feet of air between himself and oblivion, for Michael Clark, it's just another day at the office."

"Santa Fe-based Michael Clark has made a name for himself in the world of extreme sports by capturing beautiful, death-defying shots of athletes pushing the limits of their physique and, some might argue, sanity. If you've ever breezed through any climbing magazine, Bike, Men's Journal, National Geographic, or have seen ads for Patagonia or other outdoor sports companies, chances are you've seen Clark's work. When editors or marketing teams need big air or whitewater, Clark is high on their list of shooters to call."

To read the rest of the article pick up a copy of the July issue of New Mexico Magazine or check out a PDF version of the article available for download from my website - the link is in the caption above.

Photo Arts Santa Fe
ASMP NEW MEXICO HAS A GALLERY OF MEMBERS IMAGES AT PHOTO TRADE SHOW

The New Mexico chapter of ASMP (American Society of Media Photographers) recently participated in Photo Arts Santa Fe, a 10-day event which ended with a tradeshow attended by Nikon, Canon, Adobe, Apple, Leica, Olympus, Epson and many other photo industry manufacturers. In all, well over a thousand people attended the trade show and there were numerous photo workshops, seminars and break out sessions.

ASMP NM had a booth as well as a gallery opening at the trade show with images printed on 8-by-4 foot canvas banners from 17 New Mexico ASMP members, mine is pictured at right. The banners will be going on the road for a few extra gallery openings in both Santa Fe and Albuquerque. Each banner included the photographers website and phone number as well as the ASMP logo in an effort to promote professional photography and ASMP in New Mexico. And we had a half-dozen photographers join ASMP during the show!

Also during the trade show I had the opportunity to interview Tom Hogarty, the Adobe Photoshop Lightroom, DNG and Adobe Camera Raw product manager. The interview will be published on O'Reilly's Inside Lightroom website in August. My thanks to Tom for taking the time to sit down with me for the interview.
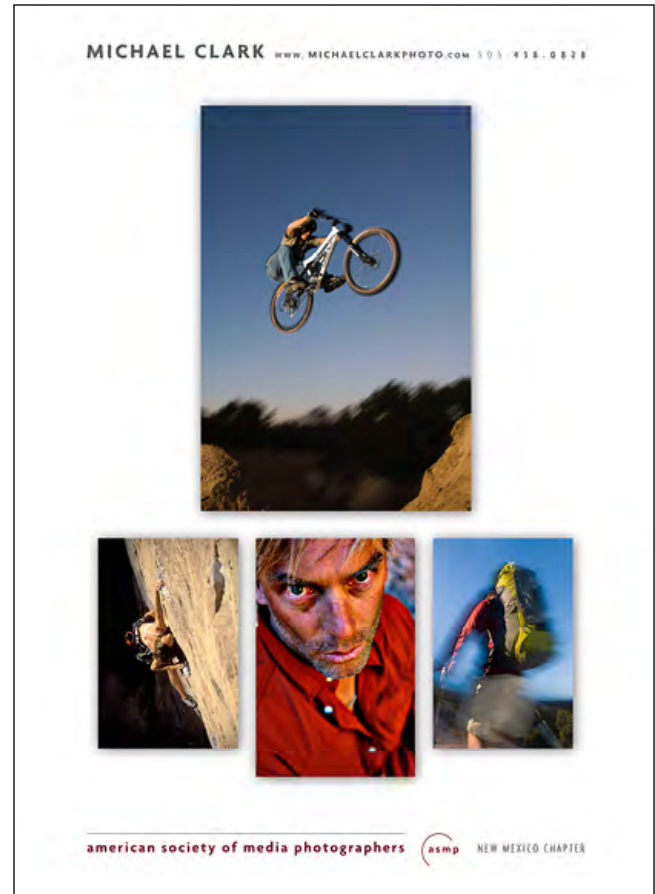

Adobe Photoshop Lightroom eBook Updated
THE UPDATED LIGHTROOM WORKFLOW NOW COVERS VERSION 1.1 AND PHOTOSHOP CS3

I have revised the *Adobe Photoshop Lightroom: A Professional Photographer's Workflow* eBook so that it now covers Lightroom Version 1.1 and Photoshop CS3. New topics covered in this workflow include: Lightroom catalogs, five ways to speed up Lightroom, synchronizing folders, an in-depth explanation of the Clarity slider, an in-depth examination of the new sharpening sliders, an explanation of the new lens correction controls, Lightroom 1.1 and Photoshop CS3 compatibility and much more.

Also, since I have sold an incredible number of these eBooks I
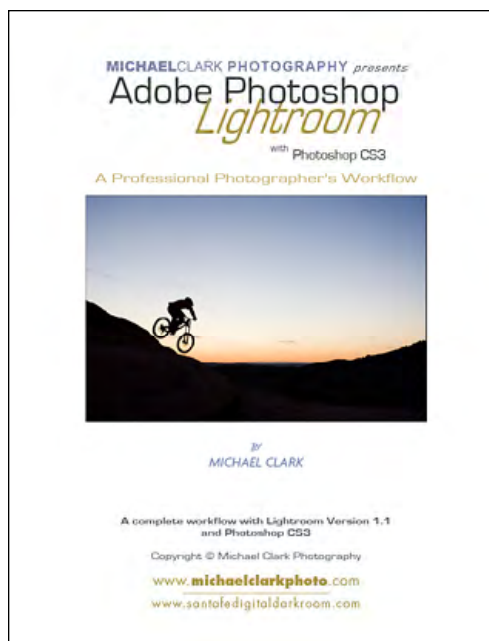
thought I would offer it at a new lower price. The new lower Price is only $24.95.

To purchase the e-book contact Michael directly at mjcphoto@comcast.net or buy it on the Santa Fe Digital Darkroom website. Payments accepted via PayPal or with a credit card on the Santa Fe Digital Darkroom website. Drop me an email and I can send a payment request to you directly via PayPal.

Also, for those of you that have bought a previous version of the workflow eBook - drop me an email and I can send you the upgraded version for only $12.95!

Photoshop CS3

IS IT WORTH THE PRICE OF AN UPGRADE?

With the arrival of Photoshop CS3 a few months ago, every Photoshop user on planet earth has to decide whether it is worth it to purchase (or upgrade) to CS3. I normally wait a few months before upgrading any piece of equipment just so manufacturers can work out the bugs. I have seen a lot of posts on forums, especially sportsshooter.com, reporting bugs and horrible difficulties with the latest version of Photoshop - but Adobe has dealt with those issues quickly so the chatter has died down. Hence, last week I went out and plunked down my contribution for the CS3 Creative Suite Design Premium Edition upgrade.

I'm not really planning to write an extensive review of Photoshop CS3 here. I just wanted to toss out a few reasons why I found the upgrade worth the price for my workflow. Right off the bat, I have to say there are several features that make upgrading a worthy endeavor. First, the seamless integration between Lightroom Version 1.1, which is the heart of my main raw processing workflow, and Photoshop CS3 is about as good as it gets. Many thought Bridge would die a lonely death but it has snapped back with some powerful features including a speedier interface and a new look so that it remains the hub of the Creative Suite. Second, I got addicted to making panoramas (samples above) with the Beta version of Photoshop CS3 several months ago - in fact that is all I used the beta version for as it crashed a lot. The crashing is no longer an issue and after a few months of missing the panorama feature I figured it was time to upgrade. And I am very happy that I have. Adobe now offers a lot of options on upgrading so you can choose any price or version you like. Photoshop CS3 comes in two versions, CS3 Extended and the standard version. The extended version has a few extras: 32-Bit support, some motion graphic and video editing features, more advanced cloning and healing tools as well as a few other advanced features. The 32-bit mode is nice. Perhaps one day we'll see digital cameras with a super high 32-bit depth though I figure that is a long ways off.

Bridge CS3 has also seen a major upgrade. It now runs significantly faster especially on the new Intel Macs. Bridge now also has "stacks" as an option so that you can stack similar images together. And one of the coolest new features is the Photo Downloader which allows one to download images off a card reader, back them up to multiple locations, add metadata and open the images in Bridge all in one step. For those of us already using Lightroom it has a more advanced version of the Photo Downloader built in but it is nice to see these extras built into Bridge as well. Lastly, Bridge is now color managed so that image thumbnails and previews appear just as they do when the image is opened which is a small but important improvement.

It is also very nice to have the exact same Raw image adjustments in Adobe Camera Raw 4.1 (ACR) as we have in Lightroom so if I decide to go back in and work on one image I can just open it in ACR instead of having to import it back into Lightroom to work on that image. And I can now open jpeg and tiff files in the ACR dialog as well - this is a great feature for working up film scans which I have until now pulled into Lightroom so
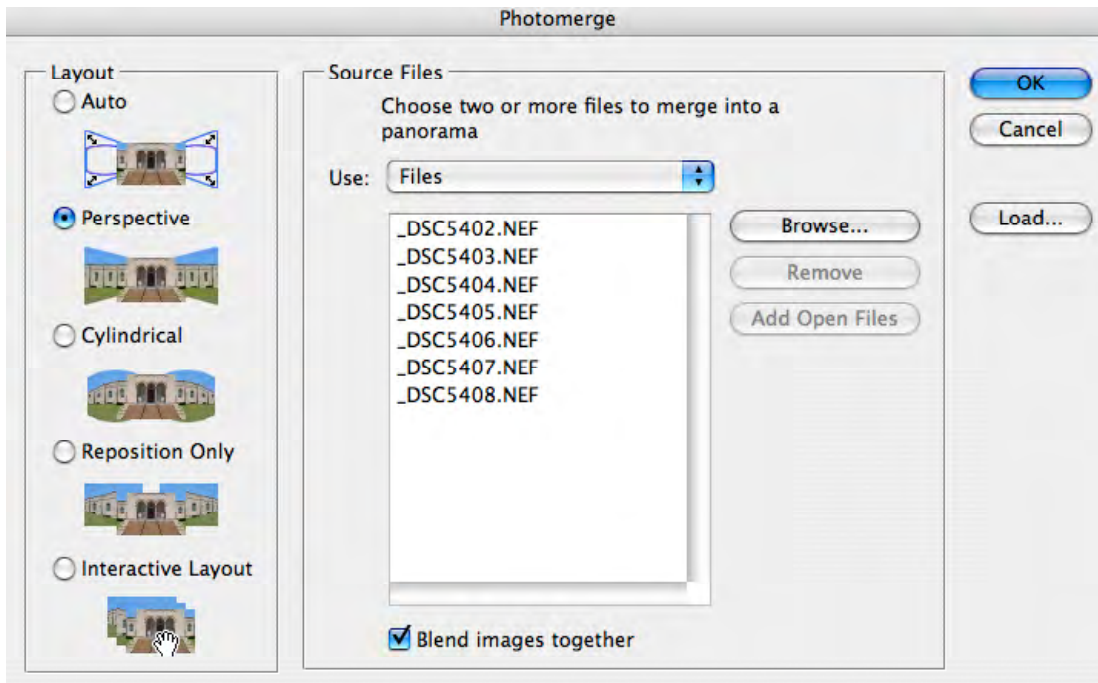
At left is the Adobe Photoshop CS3 Photomerge dialog box which is commonly used to create panorama images from multiple digital image files. To use this feature choose your images in Bridge CS3 (raw, jpeg, tiff or psd files) and select Tools > Photoshop > Photomerge (as in the image below). This dialog will appear and you can choose how the image will be assembled. For most of my work I use the Perspective setting so that everything lines up. Click ok and voila, Photoshop begins building your image.
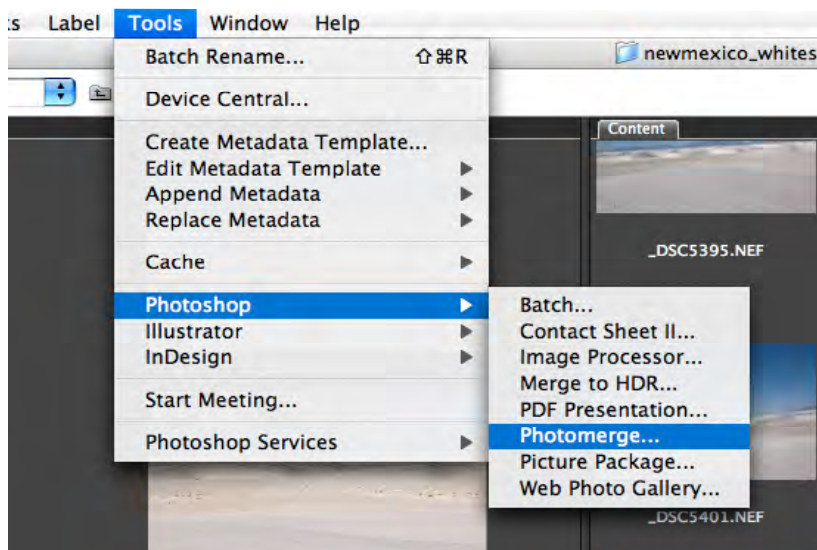
that I can adjust white balance, tint, clarity, vibrance, etc. with more control than I normally could.

CS3 also has more advanced selection tools including a new *Quick Selection Tool*, a refine edge dialog that allows you to refine selections easily, new algorithms for the Brightness and Contrast sliders so they are now usable, new levels and curve dialogs, better photomerge (panoramas - see above description) and a Zoomify export option which allows you to create web galleries where you can zoom into the image to full resolution. There is a lot more in terms of new additions to CS3 - not the least of which is a very powerful Black and White conversion dialog box as well.

One brand new tool in CS3 that I didn't mention above is the new Smart Filters option. This allows us to use filters in a non-destructive manner. It is like creating an adjustment layer just for any filter you want to use without having to create an adjustment layer - pretty slick and very powerful. Thankfully it can be turned on and off just like an adjustment layer. Hence, if you

want to ad some sharpening but don't want to double the file size with an adjustment layer you can use smart filters.

Hopefully I haven't overwhelmed anyone with the short list of new items in Photoshop CS3 above. In this new digital age using Photoshop is an art form in itself and as a professional photographer every advantage we can get puts us farther along in the pack. For my images, I'd rather get it right in the camera than have to spend hours mucking around in Photoshop, but even basic color management and local color correction can get tricky. Hence a lot of these new features really come in handy, especially the new *Quick Selection Tool*.

So, if for nothing else than making kick ass panoramas without a tripod or any forethought at all, Photoshop CS3 is worth the price of an upgrade in my opinion. Of course you don't have to take my word for it because Adobe has 30-day trial version available for download on their website at http://www.adobe.com.

Backing Up

KEEPING IMAGES AND BUSINESS INFORMATION STORED AND ARCHIVED IS PARAMOUNT

If you've never had a hard drive fail then you might be under the impression that all of your images and important information is completely safe on a hard drive. Well, it isn't. Hard drives crash much more often than most would like to admit and when they do it isn't pretty. A few years ago I wrote a fairly intense article in the Winter 2006 issue of my newsletter entitled *Archival Stress*, which talked about the statistics related to CDs, DVDs and hard drives. It didn't paint an inspiring picture.

Recently I have had a few hard drives crash and I thought I'd revisit the topic in light of some new options. First off, let me share my current archival strategy. I have all of my images on two hard drives and also backed up to DVD. The hard drives live in-house and the DVDs go off-site just in case of a fire or other mishap. I also back up my main working machine and laptop every night using Silver Keeper from LaCie. This backs up everything on my desktop so in the rare occurrence one of my computers crash I can

> "If you've never had a hard drive fail then you might be under the impression that your data is safe on a hard drive. Well, it isn't"

get back to where I was without too much hassle, at most I would only lose a days work. When I am working on big jobs I will back up my desktop more frequently. I am currently looking into SuperDuper which makes a bootable copy of your computer - this sounds like an even better option as you can reboot from an external hard drive in the event of a main hard drive failure and be working just as you were before immediately.

It's about that time again where I need to buy new hard drives. I currently use Seagate Barracuda 500GB and 750 GB internal hard drives - and I have a few external 750 GB Seagate drives as well. I have been using MacGuru's Port Multipliers and mirroring each set of drives with the built in RAID feature in Apple's Disk Utility. The upside to using this system is it attaches to my G5 tower via an eSATA connection which is about as fast as it gets at 3 GB/s. In comparison, a Firewire 400 connection is approximately 400 MB/s so the eSATA connection is 7.5 times faster than FW 400. This is critical as otherwise I'd spend a lot of time waiting around for images to open due to the connection speed of the hard drive - it may not sound like a big deal but it adds up quickly. I also prefer the internal SATA drives because I have found them much more dependable than external drives. The port multipliers also have a fan that cools each hard drive individually and all of the drives are temperature regulated which is a must for longevity.

RAID 5 is another great option for backing up images. It is critical to find one with a fast connection speed and a RAID 5 controller so the set up doesn't impede your computers operating speed. The nice feature of RAID 5 is it backs up itself. I would still back up to DVD but as long as two hard drives don't fail at the same time everything is kosher. The downside to RAID 5 is that it normally costs twice as much as any other backup solution and it is very expensive to get a connection speed similar to an eSATA connection. The upside is that RAID arrays can deal with large amounts of data storage. I'm looking into RAID 5 for my next set of hard drives.

While we have more options than ever these days with Network Attached Storage systems, RAID 5, and port multipliers I would recommend going with the best solution you can afford. In the end it just means less headaches.

Glossary:

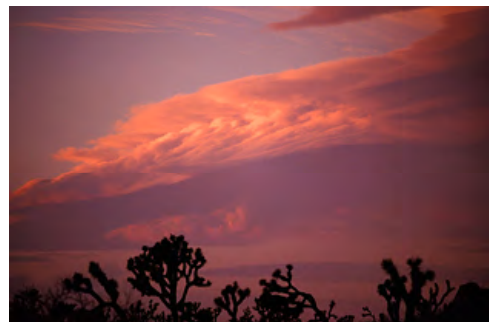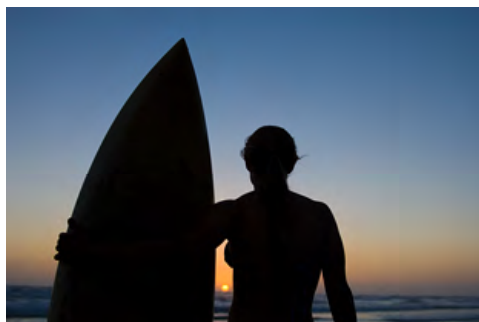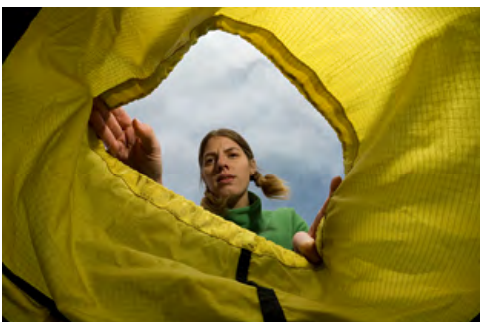*RAID 1: Redundant array of 2 hard drives that are set up to mirror each other.*

RAID 5: Redundant array of hard drives, minimum of 3 drives, set up so that data is stored on all three drives along with parity information - so that if one drive fails it can be replaced with a new drive and the lost data is rebuilt from the parity drive.

Santa Fe Digital Darkroom
THE DIGITAL VACATION: A DIFFERENT LIGHT ON SANTA FE, OCTOBER 4 - 7, 2007

Workshop: 4-day intensive Digital Workshop
Location: Santa Fe, New Mexico
Instructors: Leslie Alsheimer and Michael Clark
Date: October 4-7, 2007
Advanced Photoshop Extension: October 8-9

The Digital Vacation is a customized photography workshop designed to broaden and challenge your digital horizons in a relaxed group environment. Our workshops are unlike any others. We'll take you off the beaten path in northern New Mexico to locations few photo workshops have gone before. Come join us for a guided tour of the digital realm in the Land of Enchantment.

This is a workshop for anyone seeking to master digital imaging in the field through post production and output. We will cover everything from capture, workflow, camera raw, to using Adobe Photoshop and Bridge as a "digital darkroom" to enhance images for output in a calibrated environment. This exciting workshop will inspire and focus your skills via hands-on experience and a mixture of lectures, discussions, and critiques both in the field and the digital darkroom. Leslie and Michael work in tandem to bring you the best of both their expertise and passion not only for photography and Photoshop but also by personalizing your entire workshop experience.

New Mexico light has a quality equaled by few places on earth and we are here to make sure you capture the "Golden Hour" in exciting locations. We tailor the shooting and the post production digital lab time in Photoshop to suit your interests with a unique flexibility that few other workshops can provide. Our workshops focus on an array of photographic styles so you can get a taste for what is possible and have instant feedback in the digital darkroom each day

with lessons and tutorials designed specifically to enhance images from each day's capture.

"I thought I knew a lot about Photoshop and digital photography. I'd read a lot of books and have been using Photoshop on an advanced level for several years now. I had gaps in my understanding I didn't even know I had. The Digital Vacation Workshop filled in a tremendous amount of missing knowledge. I was blown away by how much I learned in the Digital Vacation Workshop!" - Ira Estin

The SANTA FE DIGITAL DARKROOM Photography Workshops provide professional individual and group training in digital photography, Photoshop, Lightroom, workflow, fine art print making, and NGO photography through our customized Digital Vacation, Forward Focus, and Private Workshop Series. Working collaboratively with you, in Santa Fe and around the globe, we specialize in providing a personally tailored workshop experience to suit each client individually.

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SANTA FE
digital darkroom
PHOTO WORKSHOPS

PRICE: $995 + $200 LOCATION FEE
ADVANCED PHOTOSHOP EXTENSION: $400

For more information on this and other Santa Fe Digital Darkroom workshops check out our website at www.santafedigitaldarkroom.com or call us at (505) 438-0828 or (505) 670-9898. The October Digital Vacation runs in tandem with the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta.

Chained to the computer, again! *by Michael Clark*

With the onset of digital, photography has undergone a massive change for both the professional photographer and photo editor. Now, for every hour I am out shooting I spend at a minimum two hours sitting in front of the computer processing those images. More often I end up spending half a day per hour out shooting. Most clients understand this and thankfully allow us to charge for the time it takes to work up images, the equipment involved and expertise needed. For some large photo shoots where I am gone for a week or more this means a week or even longer in front of the computer when I get back into the office. Thankfully for photographers, Adobe has created Adobe Photoshop Lightroom that has cut down my image processing time considerably but nonetheless the job is far from finished for pro photographers after they capture the images.

> "I THINK FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS AND PHOTO BUYERS WE'VE ENDED UP IN A CAREER THAT PUTS US IN FRONT OF THE COMPUTER MORE THAN WE EVER THOUGH IT WOULD."

Likewise, for photo editors I can commiserate with their new digital world. In the old days, the film showed up and they could get away from the computer and edit very quickly looking at transparencies on a lightbox. The selects were then sent off to the pre-press to be scanned and prepped for printing. Now with digital, they have to open and look at thousands of low res images on a computer. Once they decide on a few images they have to go back and get the high res versions from the photographer and then finish the prep work on the image for printing. I don't envy them being in front of a computer day in and day out - all day long. That is one reason I started this newsletter to try and help them out - at least on a technical level. The learning curve for everyone, photo editors and photographers has been incredibly steep but after a few years I think most have gotten a hold of it. But the reality is all of our jobs are quite a bit different than they were back in the film days.

I think for both sides, we've ended up in a career that puts us in front of the computer more than we ever thought it would. I can't complain. We now have more creative control over our images than ever before. We now have better resolution and image quality than we ever had with film (at least for a 35mm to DSLR comparison). And of course for most of us we have these sweet super fast Apple computers that are great to work with. I just find it somewhat comical that it is generally easier to communicate now via email than it is using a telephone. And half the time with email I find that everyone is sitting in front of their computer just as I am.

Our new world is much faster than it used to be which is both good and bad. I know I wouldn't trade my digital camera for my old film counterpart but hopefully the folks at Adobe are working on speedier image processing software that can do most of the work for us!

Timy Fairfield hanging from the lip of the Crystal Cave on "Super-Dope" (5.13b) near Jemez Springs, New Mexico.
Nikon D2x, Nikkor 10.5mm f/2.8DX Fisheye, Dyna-Lite Uni400jr Strobes, Sandisk Extreme III CF Card