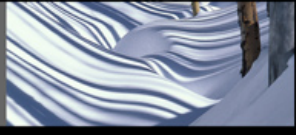


MICHAEL CLARK
PHOTOGRAPHY



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summer 2008



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Burning the candle at both ends

ON THE RUN WITH THE CREATIVE URGE



Between shooting assignments and stock images, rewriting my Lightroom eBook, working with a rep, printing promos, reworking my print and web portfolios as well as submitting images to clients on a daily basis this has been the busiest summer of my entire career so far. And the list I just rattled off is only about a tenth of what I have been working on the last few months. Everytime I think I'll have a breather another assignment comes in and they are always welcome. It has been an exciting summer and it isn't going to let up anytime soon. I have been logging twelve to eighteen hour days for months now it seems and I don't feel exhausted because I am so excited about the new developments. Some big things are in the works. I can't get specific at this point but of course you'll hear all about it right here in the newsletter soon enough.

So I thought that while I have a day or two when I am not under deadline I would whip out a newsletter that is already overdue. This issue won't be the biggest newsletter I've ever put together. It is going to be a quickie. But there are some fun articles and an extended portfolio section in this issue.

Rewriting my workflow eBook entitled *Adobe Photoshop Lightroom: A Professional Photographers Workflow* turned out to be a much more laborious task than I anticipated. There are so many new upgrades and changes in Lightroom that my digital workflow has changed quite a bit and that meant adding an additional 25 pages to the book and rewriting almost half of it. The end result is a much better product with even more information than the first version and they are selling like hot cakes so if you are a photo editor who needs a piece of software to keep track of images or a photographer who needs to streamline the digital workflow process this eBook is a great resource. Starting on page 6 you can read my thoughts

on the new version of Lightroom. I don't normally get really excited about computer software that often, well, never really. But I have to say that the new version of Lightroom is more exciting than any other piece of software I have ever used because it further streamlines my workflow and shortens the amount of time I have to sit in front of a computer.

Speaking of sitting in front of a computer, while working up the black and white portraits that fill this issue's Portfolio section I was struck right between the eyes with a creative spark I haven't felt in years. I had gone out and tried a new portrait lighting technique with a plan to create black and white images. Once back in office, I converted the images to black and white (in Lightroom) and continued working them up and retouching them in Photoshop. By the time I was done with the first image I realized I had stumbled onto a brilliant technique that was simple and resulted in some of the best portraits of my career so far. In fact, one of these is already in my portfolio. What got me so excited about these images, aside from the cool black and white look and feel, was that I really connected with the freedivers I was working with. They were the ones that told me that I had really "gotten" them that day. For more on this photo shoot turn to the Perspective article on Page 14.

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Adobe Photoshop Lightroom eBook Version 2.0

MICHAEL'S LIGHTROOM WORKFLOW EBOOK HAS BEEN REVISED TO COVER LIGHTROOM 2.0

Michael has recently revised and updated his eBook entitled *Adobe Photoshop Lightroom: A Professional Photographer's Workflow* so that it is up to date with the latest software and his latest workflow. This eBook is a 124 page PDF document which is basically a workshop in book form. The workflow covers the main topics of a shooting workflow then moves into a RAW processing workflow with Adobe Lightroom Version 2.0 and Photoshop CS3. This book gets down to the nuts and bolts of a real world workflow. With so many new updates and changes in Lightroom 2.0 this eBook was almost completely re-written and presents a workflow that can be adapted by any photographer, professional or amateur.

The eBook has recently garnered a lot of attention and received a glowing endorsement by *Inside Lightroom* blogger Ken Milburn. In his [review](#) he said, "I did get a chance to read the Table of Contents, Introduction, and his very, very professional procedures for setting up his camera(s) for the best possible RAW capture...including one of the most clear and understandable discussions of the importance of Histograms, how to read them, and how to expose in order to capture the most RAW data possible in order to be assured of having the most to work with when adjusting the image. It's all very scientific

and thorough, but totally understandable, logical, and just plain interesting. What I learned from the table-of-contents is that he seems to be covering a very complete suggested workflow that is specifically aimed at high-volume production, advertising, and editorial photographers who are expected to produce the very best

pictures and present them almost instantly. He also has an entire chapter devoted to what you should save for doing in Photoshop, when and why."

This is the only workflow book that I know of that gets very specific about a workflow starting with the digital camera and all the way through to preparing images for clients. It presents a comprehensive and tested introduction to the digital world from capture to output that photographers can implement step by step.

If you'd like to see a sampling of what is included in the workflow you can download the intro

and table of contents on my website. The book is available for immediate download on my [website](#). They have been selling like hot cakes and it seems to be a big hit!

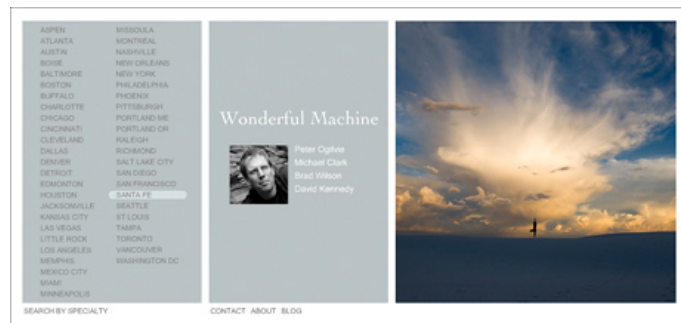
RECENT CLIENTS: Nikon, Adobe, Men's Fitness, Backpacker, Outside, New Mexico Magazine, PeachPit Press, Guardian (UK), ALP Magazine (Italy) and O'Reilly Digital Media.



Wonderful Machine

MICHAEL SIGNS ON WITH A NEW REP

Earlier this summer in June, I signed on with Wonderful Machine (wonderfulmachine.com) which is a web portal and photographer's representative all rolled up into one. I was approached by Wonderful Machine and it's owner's Bill Cramer and Neil Binkley back in the spring of 2008 and once I saw the phenomenal group of talented photographers they were putting



together I signed on. Wonderful Machine is a non-traditional rep meaning that they have a larger number of photographers who cover a broad spectrum of specialties and are based in different areas in North America. They have a pretty slick and simple flash website that links to every photographer they represent and they have a wonderful blog site as well that promotes their photographers. Clients can search by specialty or by region on the main website and they can contact the photographers directly. A few of the photographers they represent aside from myself are Robert Clark, Eric Russell, Brian Smith, Todd Meier, John Loomis and Andy Goodwin just to name a few. It is very good company to say the least. As they say on their website, "Wonderful Machine is dedicated to connecting North America's most talented photographers with the industry's most discerning clients."

And just to be clear with my existing clients, this new arrangement does not change our current working relationships. The beauty of working with Wonderful Machine is that while they promote myself and my work, they are also hands off letting the photographers work as normal and stepping in as a representative when needed. As with any new business arrangement we'll see how it goes but I have high hopes for this relationship. It is an honor to be among such a talented group of my peers.

ADOBE LIGHTROOM WORKFLOW

A COMPLETE WORKFLOW FROM CAPTURE TO OUTPUT BY MICHAEL CLARK



NEED A CUTTING EDGE DIGITAL WORKFLOW? CURIOUS ABOUT ADOBE PHOTOSHOP LIGHTROOM AND HOW IT CAN SPEED UP YOUR DIGITAL WORKFLOW?

The Adobe Photoshop Lightroom Workflow, a 124 page PDF e-book, is a workshop in book form. This workflow, while not exhaustive will cover the main topics of a shooting workflow then move into a RAW processing workflow with Adobe Lightroom 2.0 and Photoshop CS3.

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

WWW.MICHAELCLARKPHOTO.COM

Adobe Photoshop Lightroom 2.0

JUST A FEW OF THE NEW FEATURES IN LIGHTROOM 2.0 THAT MAKE IT WORTH THE UPGRADE

With the release of Lightroom 2.0, Adobe has created the ultimate raw processing workflow tool in my opinion. It isn't often, well never really, that I have gotten this excited about a piece of software but Lightroom 2.0 has streamlined my workflow like never before. There are a few features aside from the new localized adjustment tools that haven't really been advertised but for my workflow - and I am betting many other photographers' workflows - will be huge improvements. The

name, backup, rate, group, catalog, filter, archive and keep track of all my digital images which may be scattered across several hard drives. A DAM will also aid in creating image submissions for clients without me having to chase down all those images individually. In the last several years there have been two well known pieces of DAM software: iView Media Pro (now Microsoft's Expression media 2) and Extensis Portfolio. Apple's Aperture was also a potential candidate but it



Above, I have created a mask for a localized adjustment using the Adjustment Brush tool. By mousing over the control point (which is just to the right of the mountain biker) I can see exactly what areas of the image I have painted for an adjustment. Even with such advanced features Lightroom is still a very intuitive piece of software and dodging and burning in Photoshop seems archaic in comparison.

biggest of these improvements is that now Lightroom can handle seemingly any number of high resolution digital images, both raw and high resolution film scan files.

For a number of years I have been looking for a complete Digital Asset Management (DAM) tool. A DAM tool is a piece of software that helps download, re-

was so slow that it didn't take long for me to dismiss it as a contender. I tried iView and while it worked well I wasn't enthralled. I have heard good things about Extensis Portfolio but I never gave it a try. I was hoping Adobe Lightroom would step in and become the end all be all of digital asset management. Well, hold onto your hat, Lightroom version 2 is now a real world working

digital asset management tool for photographers!

When Lightroom was announced and even during the beta testing process over the last year or so (that I have also been a part of) I never heard anybody discuss this issue or talk about this as a feature of Lightroom 2. Previous versions of Lightroom choked with more than 10,000 high resolution raw images in a single catalog. That was the reason I had individual catalogs for each shoot. But now that Lightroom can seemingly handle any number of images it is a much more useful and versatile piece of software. I have a feeling 64-bit processing plays a big part in this new development.

I have to say this feature is the most exciting aspect of Lightroom 2 over and above any other feature bar none for my workflow. Being able to import all of my digital files into one catalog solves a lot of issues I had to work around in my previous workflow. As a result, my workflow has changed quite a bit. Gone are the days of having to chase down individual Lightroom catalogs. Gone are the days of having to look for images according to folder and file names. I'll just do a search with Lightroom's phenomenal new filter tool. And now that the Web module includes output sharpening I can filter images, make a collection and submit web galleries to clients all within the same program. It is beautiful!

I have over 40,000 high-resolution raw images in my Lightroom catalog right now. My catalog file size is 74.53 MB and that includes the standard previews. Another beautiful thing with Lightroom is that the image previews travel with the catalog. Hence, if I copy that catalog to a pocket hard drive and open it up on my laptop I still have access to all of the image previews and I can submit images when I am on the road. Or if I unplug some hard drives I will still have access to those images and their location if I need to access them again.

Yet another great feature in Lightroom is the ability to go straight from Lightroom into Photoshop to create panoramas directly from your raw, tiff or jpeg image files. Ever since the Photomerge feature appeared in Photoshop CS3 I have been shooting a lot more panoramas because it is so easy now to assemble a panoramic image from multiple vertical or horizontal digital images. And the Photomerge feature works so well that you don't even need to use a tripod anymore to get great results. Photoshop basically does all the work for you. If you still want to get technically perfect (and realistic to the scene) panoramas then I would advise

investing in a good tripod adapter made specifically for panoramas - something like the [Really Right Stuff Panning Clamp](#). This clamp works with your tripod head to keep everything level using a base plate to position your camera so that the optical center of the lens sits at the axis of rotation. For more info on this set up read Really Right Stuff's excellent tutorial on setting up cameras for shooting stitched panoramas.

To create a panorama just select the images you want to use for the image and go to Photo > Edit In > Merge to panorama in Photoshop. Check out my Fall 2007 newsletter for more info on building panoramas in Photoshop. Other options are "Merge to HDR" and "Open as Layers in Photoshop." Both are excellent options for going straight into Photoshop and working on images.

Of course the new localized adjustment tools are the most raved about feature in the new version of Lightroom and rightly so. The brush tool is easy to use, and allows the editing of contrast, exposure, clarity, saturation and sharpening on any area of the image. And any number of masks can be used as in the screenshot on the previous page. Once you start using the Lightroom brush tool, using Photoshop to dodge and burn is going to feel pretty archaic. Likewise, the gradient tool is just as easy to use as the adjustment brush and multiple gradients are snap to create. In just a few minutes I felt completely comfortable with these complex looking tools. I won't get into it here as describing how to use these simple tools makes them seem overly complex. Spending a few minutes with them will give a pretty good feel for how they work. As is standard with Lightroom, these tools are very intuitive. And I find myself taking my images much farther and into more creative directions than I thought was possible in Lightroom.

Lightroom is now a full meal deal that fulfills pretty much all the needs of a professional photographer save for advanced image editing and compositing in Photoshop. And since Lightroom and Photoshop work together seamlessly Lightroom just became the biggest dog on the block - not that it wasn't already. So jump in. The water is nice and cool here in Lightroom-land.

A large part of this review is a revamped excerpt from my updated Lightroom workflow eBook entitled Adobe Photoshop Lightroom: A Professional Photographer's Workflow. That eBook is available on my website [here](#). A fellow blogger, Ken Milburn, purchased the eBook and had many kind words to say about it. You can check out his [blog post](#) if you are on the fence.

Anatomy of a Portfolio

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT BUILDING A CUSTOM ADVENTURE SPORTS & LIFESTYLE PORTFOLIO

Over the last eight months I have been working on a new print portfolio. It has been a long and expensive process and these days the first thought most people have is “Why do I need a print portfolio?” I was asking myself that same question. Over the twelve or more years I have been working as a professional photographer I have only sent a port-

folio to a client on three occasions - all to secure an assignment and all successful. Most photographers rightly rely on their website to act as their main portfolio. In recent years a print portfolio has been a requirement mostly just for advertising photographers. In striving for continued and greater success while going after commercial assignments, I figured it was high time I created a custom portfolio that would satisfy even the most demanding high end ad agency art director. This is not to say that I have not had high quality portfolios in the past, but this new book is definitely a notch above anything I have ever put together. Hence, I

thought I'd share some of the process of putting together this portfolio and what I have learned from photo editors, art directors and consultants.

As is normal for me, I like an understated look. My website is evidence of this fact. And I was told by quite a few photo editors and art buyers to just go with a nice high-quality



folio to a client on three occasions - all to secure an assignment and all successful. Most photographers rightly rely on their website to act as their main portfolio. In recent years a print portfolio has been a requirement mostly just for advertising photographers. In striving for continued and greater success while going after commercial assignments, I figured it was high time I created a custom portfolio that would satisfy even the most demanding high end ad agency art director. This is not to say that I have not had high quality portfolios in the past, but this new book is definitely a notch above anything I have ever put together. Hence, I

black book for a portfolio. It is simple and clean and directs all the attention to the images. Art buyers and photo editors want to see great work. A fancy book is nice but if the work isn't up to par then it doesn't matter what the exterior of the book looks like. I figured a classic black portfolio in a slip cover would let my work shine and keep with my understated motif. Size is another big factor and I again heard from many photo buyers that it should be big enough to show your work off effectively but not so huge that it is hard to deal with or so heavy that just looking at the book is a royal pain. I chose a midrange size. The book is made by

Moab and is called the Chinle portfolio. It measures 13 x14 inches and comes with a fitted slipcase. The pages that fit inside are 12 x 12 inches. The width of the book is just under two inches with forty pages in it. I felt that a page size of 12 x 12 inches was perfect for my work. It allowed me to print the images up to 10 inches long and still have a nice clean border around the edges of the prints. I chose a book with the standard screw-posts which makes it easy to switch out pages and I had my logo foil-stamped onto the cover of

is a matte paper with a bit of tooth but it isn't like some of the Hannemuhle rag papers which are a little too thick for a portfolio and a little too close to a watercolor paper for my taste. The other nice feature of the Moab Entrada paper is that they are double sided and can be printed on both sides. At first I didn't like the way my images printed on the Entrada paper but the more I got used to it and worked with my images the more I came to like this paper. I realized that I see my images printed in magazines, catalogs, brochures



the book and the slipcase. With my old portfolios I found that I really prefer a square format instead of rectangular. I feel it gives equal billing to vertical, horizontal and square images. As an adventure sports photographer, I shoot a lot of vertical images so this was a particular concern when I started creating the portfolio.

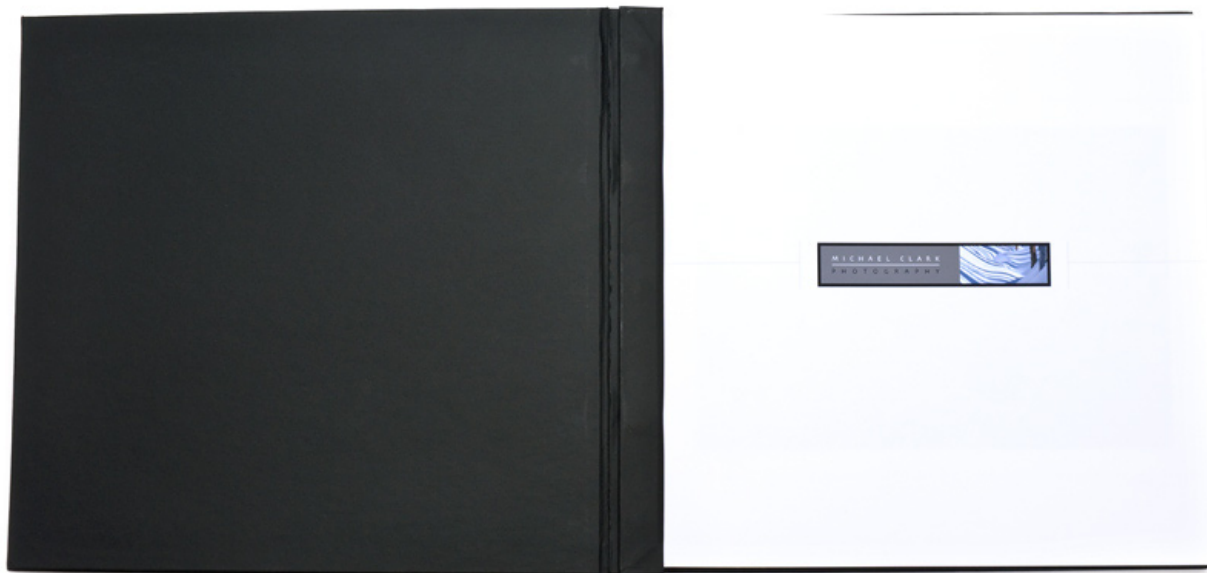
Another big reason I went with this pre-made portfolio is that Moab makes a paper that fits the book and the screw-posts perfectly. The paper is a pre-scored version of their fine art Entrada paper [Moab Entrada Bright 190] which is a favorite of many art galleries, giclee printers and artists. It

and books which is closer to a semi-matte or luster type of paper and hence it was a new experience to see them on a fine art matte paper. Once I got used to the paper and fine-tuned my images so they printed with the degree of saturation and sharpness that I am used to I found myself liking the regal look this paper lends to my images. The prints look like they could be pulled from the book, framed and hung in a gallery. Yet, another reason I chose to go with this paper is that I detest having plastic sleeves over my images. Plastic sleeves are hated by most art buyers and they get scratched up after just a few people look at your portfolio.

The Moab Entrada paper is fairly durable and when used with protective sprays the images can deal with a fair bit of abuse. I have been using the Hannemuhle Protective Spray and give each print at least two coats right after they come off the printer, then I leave them out to dry for twenty-four hours. Speaking of printers I printed all of my images on Epson printers, both the R1800 and the R2400. The black and white images were printed on the R2400 because it has far superior black and white printing capabilities than the

to get the top-notch prints I was after. But, again, that is just part of the game.

Initially I wanted to copy the look of my previous portfolios which were Asuka Books - basically finished and bound books that looked like they were published en mass. Those books had images on both sides of each page and there were many full bleed images and double truck spreads. It looked great so I copied this look for my new portfolio. But once I had the pages in the portfolio I realized there were a



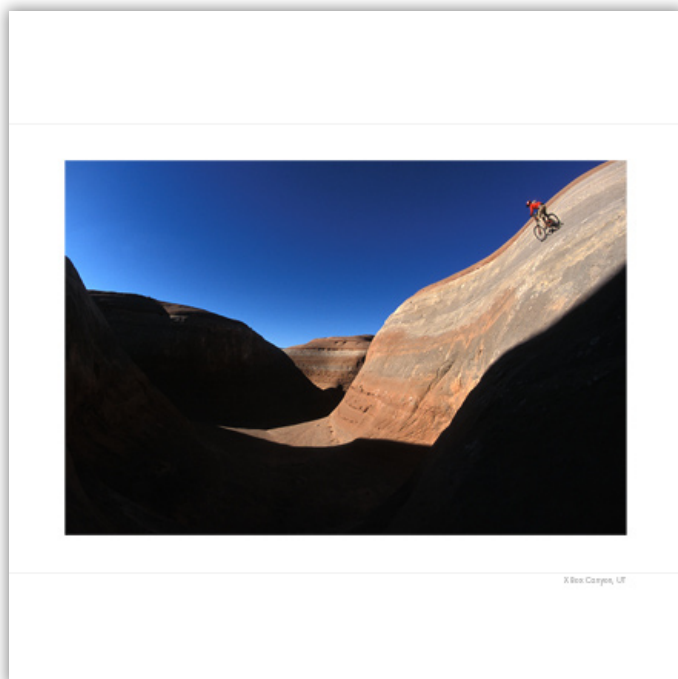
R1800. Yet another great reason to use this Moab paper are the excellent printer profiles that Moab supplies on their website. I also had a custom profile made here in Santa Fe that for about half of my images resulted in more accurate prints. As many of you know, printing is an art form in itself so I won't get too deep into the whacky world of printmaking. Suffice it to say that I made at a minimum two (smaller) test prints for each image that ended up in the portfolio. I printed each image with both the Moab and the custom profiles to see which I liked better and then went from there. The result was a lot of paper and ink was used

few issues with that design. First, since many of the images went right to the edge of the page, when someone looked at the book they would be touching parts of the images when they turned each page. This didn't seem like an issue immediately but I could tell that I would have to replace the images if I sent my books to clients very often. Second, I saw that it was going to be costly and time consuming to switch images in and out of the book because I would have to print four pages just to switch out one image. Hence, with those issues in mind I decided it was easier to print on only one side of the paper (mostly one image per page)

as you see in the sample layouts in this article. This layout also fit nicely with the understated look I was going for. And I also added a design element, in the form of two thin parallel lines, to each page to help the flow of the book. I also wanted to let the viewer see the wild locations that I have shot in so I labeled each image with a short caption that tells the location or person [for the portraits] in the image. The title page has my logo on it and the final page has a photo of myself and a brief bio as well as my contact

ize a book for a certain client before it goes out the door or before a face to face meeting.

Another important factor when building a portfolio is to take into account how it will be shipped and transported. I happened to have a few bright yellow padded Patagonia brand courier bags that fit the portfolio perfectly and they are very outdoorsy looking which fits with my images. Sadly Patagonia no longer makes this exact bag so I'll have to take care of the ones I have but they are a perfect fit

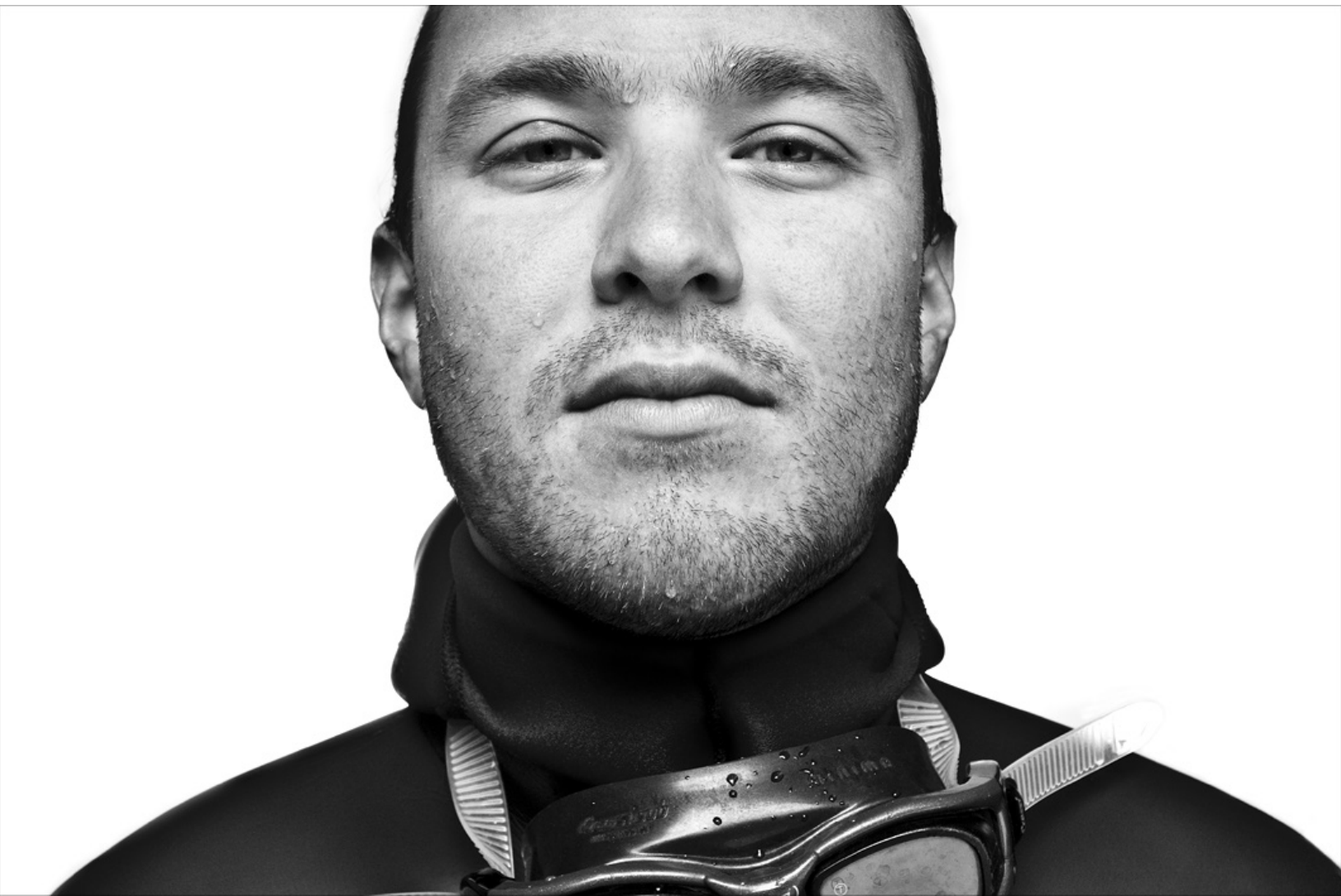


information [as a safeguard for the book].

Choosing images for the book was a grueling process because I wanted to make sure the images were on target with my marketing message. I also wanted to show the breadth of my abilities and talent so photo buyers wouldn't peg me as just an adventure photographer, but they would see that I can capture extreme action as well as outdoor lifestyle images and high ends portraits [mostly of athletes]. These choices were determined by the clients I am going after with this portfolio. And because I have three copies of this book, and chose the single page design it is easy to custom-

for protecting my portfolio - which is lucky because Tenba doesn't make a portfolio case that will house this size book. Shipping a portfolio to a client is as easy as dropping the portfolio into the Patagonia bag, then into a Large Fed Ex box. I am going to have the Patagonia bag embroidered with my logo as well so that everything matches. Time will tell how successful these portfolios are at getting me more work. I have found the best sales techniques are to meet face to face with clients and having a top notch print portfolio is a useful tool when clients have time to meet. So far clients have responded very well to the new book.

[PORTFOLIO]



[PORTFOLIO]





[PORTFOLIO]



Making a Connection *by Michael Clark*

In portrait photography the goal is to connect with your subject and capture a bit of their soul in a photograph. That is obviously pretty hard to do, especially when you have just met the person a few minutes before beginning the portrait shoot. As I am not strictly a portrait photographer it is rare I am shooting with a celebrity. Hence, most of my portraits are of adventure athletes and are shot on location. Luckily for me, I normally have plenty of time with the athletes since most of my subjects are good friends.

On a recent shoot with some freedivers, I decided that portraits would be more interesting than the action. And as you can see by the images in this issue's Portfolio section it worked out well. In fact, I'd say these are some of the best portraits I have ever shot. And

“BELIEVE IT OR NOT, WE WERE SET UP IN THE ENTRANCE WAY TO THE MEN’S BATHROOM - TALK ABOUT USING THE LOCATION TO THE FULLEST”

each person I photographed told me that I really caught a part of them that day. Nicolas Danan (page 10) gave me his blank stare that really catches him in a calm, collected moment as if just before a big dive. And the image on page 11 of Thorsten Schwander has gotten a lot of comparisons to the movie *Delicatessen* because of its quirky nature. Both Nico and Steve Hyde (pages 12 and 13) say that I really caught Thorsten in a moment being himself. And lastly Steve Hyde was in a rather sad mood the day we shot these images and I wasn't even aware of what was going on with him, but I definitely captured that mood in the images I shot with him.

Once I saw how solid these portraits were I went to my scientific reasoning to try and figure out how I captured these moments. After speaking with Nico, Thorsten and Steve and a few of my peers I realized there were several factors. First, it was a simple lighting set up with one strobe. That allowed me to concentrate on the subject and not have to worry about anything technical. Second, it was just me and the subject and hence there were no distractions. Third, we were working in close quarters because of the windy conditions at the location. Believe it or not we were set up in the entrance way to the men's bathroom - talk about using the location to the fullest. It was pretty comical and helped each subject let down their guard. Since I was only a few feet away from the subjects that really let me into their personal space as well. Fourth, I knew these guys really well which obviously helps. And last, I chose to photograph them after they came out of the water so they were a bit subdued. They had just dove to the bottom of the Blue Hole in Santa Rosa, NM which is an 80-foot free dive and requires holding their breathe for over two minutes. You can bet I'll be using this technique in the future as it is easy and results in stunning images that really make a connection between the subject and the viewer. And on top of that, these images have already generated some buzz with photo editors.



Tim Kelton kayaking backwards through some steep Class V whitewater on Oh Be Joyful Creek near Crested Butte, Colorado.
Nikon D300, Nikkor 70-200mm f/2.8D AF-S, Sandisk Extreme IV CF Card