

NEWSLETTER

# MICHAEL CLARK

PHOTOGRAPHY



SUMMER 2016



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SUMMER 2016 NEWSLETTER

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*Cover Image: Shiprock rotating under Polaris, the north star, on a clear spring night. Shiprock (which means "rock with wings" or "winged rock" in Navajo) is a monadnock rising nearly 1,583 feet (482.5 m) above the high-desert plain of the Navajo Nation in San Juan County, New Mexico, in the southwestern United States. Opposite Page: Mt. Sir Wilfred Laurier, the Kiwa Glacier and the Premier Range looming above Kiwa Lake in British Columbia, Canada. Newsletter edited by Katherine Mast.*









# Non-Stop Travel

*A whirlwind of a summer traveling for assignments, workshops and portfolio shoots*

**T**his Newsletter is late in coming. As the title suggests, I have been traveling nearly non-stop for a good portion of this summer. For the last month I have had only a day or two here and there between assignments, workshops and various other commitments. This summer has been hands down the busiest of my entire career. It seems like I have said that every summer for the last few years, but this one takes the cake. I am pretty happy to finally be home and have some time to recover before the next adventures begin.

Earlier this summer, I got a call from Digital Photography Review (DPRReview.com) asking if I wanted to participate in a "Field test" video review of the Nikon D5, which involved shooting a variety of adventure sports here in Santa Fe. I said yes pretty much immediately because I wanted to try out the D5 and also because DPRReview is one of the largest photography websites on the planet. We had a blast shooting together and getting some stellar images. You can read my review of the Nikon D5 starting on Page 14 and you can check out the 14 minute Field Test video [here](#).

I also had a few assignments with Red Bull this summer and one of those, the Red Bull Summer Solstice Photo Challenge, is covered here in this Newsletter starting on Page 20. For this assignment, I worked with my good

friend and world-class windsurfer Levi Siver out in northern California. From there, I flew directly to Zapata, Texas to shoot with Jonny Durand, a world champion hang glider pilot.

Also this summer, I had an assignment with New Balance photographing ultra-marathoners Dominic and Katie Grossman. An image of Dominic from that assignment is on the next page. These athletes were leaping and flying all over the place like gazelles having fun out in the wild. Since there isn't enough room here in the Newsletter to feature all of the images I have produced this summer, you can check out a brief overview of the New Balance assignment on my [blog](#) and see more images on my [website](#). As usual, this Newsletter is packed with info on a variety of topics. I hope you find it interesting and engaging. Thanks for taking the time to check it out.

*Opposite Page: Dominic Grossman trail running in the Aspens just above Aspen Vista in the Sangre de Cristo mountains above Santa Fe, New Mexico. This image was shot for New Balance to promote the Ultra Santa Fe 50-mile race.*

**Recent Clients:** New Balance, Red Bull, Apple, Elinchrom, Mac Group US, X-Rite, National Geographic, Digital Photo Pro, Angel Fire Ski Resort, Outdoor Retailer, and Vertical Shot Expeditions.







## Stepping Up to Medium Format

An article in Digital Photo Pro detailing the addition of a new medium format kit



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Michael Clark is an internationally published adventure sports, travel and landscape photographer, who has traditionally shot in the 35mm format, but has an interesting perspective about the role and possibilities of shooting medium format digital photography. For full disclosure, while Clark is sponsored by a number of companies, including Nikon, he is not sponsored by any medium format company, and he "paid for the camera [in this article] in full." As a long-time, established DSLR shooter, he recently shared his thoughts about purchasing a new medium format system on his blog, and we asked him to share those thoughts. — Ed.

### NO MATTER HOW COMPLEX

cameras may be technologically, they're just tools. They're really just black boxes with a lens in the front and an imaging surface in the back. There are some cameras that have more bells and whistles than others, but in the end it is the photographer who chooses the correct tool to realize their personal vision.

Over the last year, I have been testing out a wide variety of cameras from the latest mirrorless offerings, all the way up to the top-end medium format digital cameras. DSLRs are very mature imaging machines, and it will take some serious innovation to improve upon their already phenomenal image quality and their amazing array of features.

Recently I've shifted a portion of my photographic work to medium format digital, inspired by some medium format digital cameras that I tried out. There is a tangible difference in how you shoot when working with a medium format camera, which isn't to say the images produced using medium format cameras are better than those created with DSLRs, but the workflow is different.

Back in the film days, I owned and used a number of different medium format rigs including the Mamiya 7II, a Hasselblad 503CW and the Mamiya RZ67. The Hasselblad 503CW was a gorgeous, elegant camera and shooting with it was such a pleasure, not unlike my current Hasselblad. The viewfinder was so large. It felt like you could take a walk around the image inside that viewfinder. Regardless of how

Anton Miller climbing on the Crystal Clear Arête (9,126) in Diablo Canyon near Santa Fe, New Mexico. This image was shot with an L100 Vant seconds strobe mounted high on an adjacent cliff above my shooting position. SHOOTING INFO: Hasselblad H5D 50c WiFi, HC8 24mm lens, f/7.1 at 1/800th second at ISO 800

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In the July/August issue of Digital Photo Pro, I have an article entitled, "Stepping Up to Medium Format," which details my adoption of a new medium format rig. As is made clear in the article, I have not converted 100% over to medium format capture. I still use my Nikon DSLRs for the majority of my work but I have added the Hasselblad H5D 50c WiFi kit along with four lenses for those situations that don't require wicked fast autofocus

or lighter weight cameras. Above and on the next page are a few screenshots of the article as it appears in the magazine. If you are interested in medium format, especially now that Hasselblad has announced the X1D, I highly suggest picking up a copy of Digital Photo Pro or reading the article online [here](#).

I know many will ask, why would an adventure sports





Sandy Hill climbing the outside structure of Elmer Studios in Albuquerque, New Mexico. SHOOTING INFO: Hasselblad H5D 50c WiFi, HC 50-110mm lens, F11 at 1/2500th second at ISO 100, Elincchrom ELB400 Strobo

After a few years with it just sitting in the closet, I decided to sell it since I wasn't using it. To this day, the only camera I regret having sold is that Hasselblad 503CW.

At the end of 2015, I decided to purchase a Hasselblad H5D 50c WiFi. This was no small decision. While testing out various medium format cameras, I had a month of nearly sleepless nights mulling over the options and my own reasoning for even considering such an expensive purchase. I put a small note about that purchase in my Winter Newsletter and within hours of sending it out, I received several calls asking why I purchased such an expensive camera and what it does that my DSLRs can't?

Many people also asked if I was planning to use this camera for my adventure sports photography. For those sports in which the athletes are not moving haphazardly or I can

fun it was to shoot with, scanning film in the digital age became a royal pain and I stopped shooting with it because of that one issue.

predict where they are going to be, I will certainly shoot with medium format when it is appropriate. But, for sports like whitewater kayaking, BASE jumping or surfing, where I need wicked-fast autofocus, I will choose the much more advanced autofocus built into my DSLRs.

I will admit that the top 1/8000th second shutter speed of the H5D is somewhat limiting when it comes to stopping fast-paced action. The new H6D and Phase One XF, which have top shutter speeds of 1/2,000th second and 1/4,000th second respectively will do a bit better in this respect.

I need to emphasize that just because I have a medium format system, that won't make it my main go-to camera for everything I photograph. As an adventure sports photographer, full-frame DSLRs are supremely versatile and for a significant portion of my action photography they are the cameras of choice. 35mm DSLRs are lighter, easier to shoot with and have a wide array of advanced features, including lightning-fast autofocus. For situations in which medium format can work, and will help to create unique images, then that will be the tool of choice. All I have done

by purchasing a medium format digital camera is to add another tool to the camera bag.

While testing out cameras over the last year there were several factors that made me seriously consider a medium format digital camera system. First, whether you are shooting on medium format film or digital, the larger image format gives a different look to the images. In part, this is because there is significantly less depth of field than with 35mm DSLRs. That shallow depth of field, created by the larger sensor of a medium format camera, helps isolate the subject when shooting portraits or any time you are using a large aperture. This is not to be understated. Medium format has a certain look that is quite different. I realize that only a small percentage of clients will be able to see that difference, but for those that can (or even if they can't), if it makes the viewer look at the image just that much longer then it makes the image more successful. As I am already working with discerning clients who are looking for the best image quality possible, this new acquisition is another tool I can use to keep those clients and find others like them.

David Coriz riding BMX at the Trash Pit, a local dirt jump bike park, in Santa Fe, New Mexico. For this image I used the fast flash sync speeds all the way up to 1/8000th second to stop the motion of the BMX rider. SHOOTING INFO: Hasselblad H5D 50c WiFi, HCD 24mm lens, F16 at 1/8000th second at ISO 800, Elincchrom ELB400 Strobo



photographer opt for a heavy, slow medium format camera? The answer to that question is a long one, and part of that answer was addressed thusly: "While testing out cameras over the last year there were several factors that made me seriously consider a medium format digital camera system. First, whether you are shooting on medium format film or digital, the larger image format gives a different look to the images. In part, this is because there is significantly less depth of field than with 35mm DSLRs. That shallow depth of field, created by the larger sensor of a medium format camera, helps isolate the subject when shooting portraits or any time you are using a large aperture. This is not to be understated. Medium format has a certain look that is quite different. I realize that only a small percentage of clients will be able to see that difference, but for those that can (or even if they can't), if

it makes the viewer look at the image just that much longer then it makes the image more successful. As I am already working with discerning clients who are looking for the best image quality possible, this new acquisition is another tool I can use to keep those clients and find others like them."

Along with the article, Digital Photo Pro also included a healthy number of images to show the wide variety of action, landscape and lifestyle images I have produced in the six months that I have had the camera. I have to say that in such a short time I have already produced some amazing work – work that I look at and really love, which is not always the case with my own images as I am a very harsh critic. My thanks to David Schloss and Digital Photo Pro for running this article.

# Rock On: A Career on the Precipice

*Interview in Professional Photographer Magazine*



Professional Photographer Magazine, which is the magazine of Professional Photographers of America (PPA), featured a profile of my work in the May 2016 issue. The profile, entitled “Rock On,” discusses a wide variety of topics including several close calls, a few specific pieces of gear I use, my Newsletter, how I market my images, and also a few behind the scenes stories from recent assignments. To give you a taste of the profile, here is an excerpt from the opening paragraphs: “I consider my job not a job but a lifestyle,” Clark says. Besides daredevil feats that most photographers couldn’t stomach, it requires the flexibility to travel nearly constantly. “I just got back from Patagonia, now I’m going to Hawaii, and I’m




back one day and then I go to Colorado,” he says. It also calls for a deep understanding of adventure sports, a passion that drew Clark to photography in the first place.

PPA is a professional photographers organization that caters to wedding, portrait, senior and family photographers so my work was quite a departure from their normal fare in the magazine. With over 29,000 members it is also one of the largest professional photography organizations in the world. Thanks to Amanda Arnold for tracking me down and crafting this profile and thanks to PPA for featuring me in their magazine. Check out the full article online on the [PPmag.com website](http://PPmag.com).



# Red Bull Illume: What's in the Bag

*An interview discussing gear and the challenge of adventure photography*



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## Michael Clark: What's in the bag?

Red Bull Illume's exploration into the bags of action and adventure sports photographers continue, as we take a look at what outdoor photographer and former physicist Michael Clark has stashed in his bag.

07/05/2016

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### Do you have a go-to body and lens combo?

"I'm not sure – I tailor the cameras I take to each assignment and shoot a wide variety of adventure sports. If I'm shooting fast-moving action, then I go for the Nikon D4 and a 24-70mm or 70-200mm Nikkor. If it's a slower adventure sport like rock climbing or ice climbing then I would take the Nikon D810 and the 24-70mm or the 14-24mm Nikkor.

For portraits, lifestyle and predictable adventure sports I will also add the Hasselblad kit and a few lenses. If I'm shooting portraits, the Hasselblad is my main camera with the ridiculously sharp Hasselblad HC 100mm f/2.2 lens, which is the equivalent to an 80mm f/1.0 lens in 35mm terms. The Nikons are still my go-to kits for 70% of what I shoot. At a bare minimum, I'll take a Nikon camera body and the big three zoom lenses – the 14-24mm, 24-70mm and 70-200mm."

## MORE STORIES

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Michael Clark: What's in the bag?

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Get a sneak peek of the submissions!

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[Next »](#)

Earlier this summer, Red Bull Illume posted a blog post about "What's in my [camera] Bag." I have done a few of these in the last year, notably one on [ShotKit.com](#), and now this one on Red Bull Illume. This equipment overview also discusses some of my most challenging assignments, my recent medium format purchase and also my go to kit for various action sports. While short, it is a fairly insightful interview. Check out the full interview along with images on [Red Bull Illume's website](#).

I talk a lot about gear on my blog and in my Newsletter. Like many photographers, I am a gear head but everything I use is just a tool to create images. If you are really interested to see the gear I use check out the [Gear page](#) on my blog. You can also find reviews of the gear I shoot with on my website in the [Behind the Scenes section](#). My thanks to Red Bull for featuring me on the Red Bull Illume website. My advice: Don't get too wrapped up in the gear. Just go out and create stellar images.

## workshops

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# Photography Workshops

*An overview of workshops and photo treks with Michael Clark*

**E**ach year I teach a few workshops on a variety of topics including adventure sports photography, big-wave surfing photography, and artificial lighting. Below is a listing of the workshops I will be teaching in 2016 and early 2017. For the full description of these workshops, and to find out how to register, go to the [Workshops](#) page on my blog.

### **Mentor Series Photo Trek - Myanmar**

*Myanmar - November 3 – 12, 2016*

Abounding in temples, pagodas and renowned spiritual and archaeological sites, the varied landscape of Myanmar is a wonder to behold. A trek through the countryside yields images of rice fields and floating gardens, exquisite colonial architecture, mountaintop monasteries, and a land of a thousand temples.

The workshop will begin in the city of Yangon, where we will experience the 2,500 year-old Shwedagon Pagoda. Known as the “crown of Burma,” the grand pagoda is plated in gold and decorated with thousands of diamonds, rubies and sapphires. Also in Yangon, we will photograph the city’s pristine colonial architecture, the 2,000 year-old Sule Pagoda, and the reclining Buddha at Chauk Htat Kyi. In Mandalay, the workshop continues with stops at the Mahamuni Pagoda, the Golden Palace Monastery,

and the Kuthodaw Pagoda, where we will have the opportunity to photograph dancers dressed in traditional costumes. We will also visit Mahagandayone Monastery to observe a morning meals procession, and the Bodhi tree forest, where many Buddhists come to pay homage and seek enlightenment.

At Inle Lake, we will explore the beautiful floating gardens and the colorful markets of the local villages, with an opportunity to witness the unique technique of leg rowing.

The city of Bagan is known as the city of four million pagodas. Our mentors will provide techniques for capturing the extraordinary landscape scattered with thousands of brick temples, and we will have an opportunity to explore the temples and archaeological sites of this captivating city along the Ayeyarwady River.

Myanmar is a wonderful and largely unexplored destination for many photographers and travelers. [Click here to sign up today to join the Mentor Series in Myanmar!](#)

Cost: \$4,425 includes 5 star hotel accommodations for 9 nights (based on double occupancy), breakfast daily, 4 lunches, 3 dinners, private boats on Inle Lake, private horse cart in Bagan, entrance fees, English-speaking guides, motor coach transportation to all shooting



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# Myanmar

November 3-12, 2016

"The treks are well planned and very educational. The mentors are great and its an awesome experience being able to spend time with professional photographers. The knowledge that I have gained is invaluable."  
—Ed Stone




Photo credits clockwise from left: © Steve Wallace

Abounding in temples, pagodas and renowned spiritual and archaeological sites, the varied landscape of Myanmar is a wonder to behold. A trek through the countryside yields images of rice fields and floating gardens, exquisite colonial architecture, mountaintop monasteries, and a land of a thousand temples. In November 2016, the Mentor Series and Nikon professional photographers Michael Clark and Reed Hoffmann travel to Southeast Asia for an exclusive photo workshop in Myanmar.



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## Photographing Annapurna's Secret Landscapes

*Himalayas, Nepal - April 3 - 18, 2017*

The mighty Himalayas: home to the world's highest mountains, sacred Buddhist monasteries and the few tribes accustomed to living permanently in the thin air. On this photography expedition, we will venture deep into the lands of the snow leopard while trekking from one stone-house village to another. This is not a standard Annapurna Circuit trek. After a month-long scouting expedition in 2015, we noted many side-trails and places to

stay that most trekkers never get to visit.

Led by adventure photographers Vlad Donkov and Michael Clark, together with one of the best Nepali guides around and a team of porters, you will have the chance to photograph some of the most interesting locations north of Annapurna and improve your photography over the course of a fortnight of shooting.

The expedition is designed in a way that lets you acclimatize gradually. At the highest point of the expedition, we will stand at an altitude of about 4,800m / 15,750ft. During the first two days of the trek, we will save a lot of time by using 4x4 vehicles to cover the first part of the Annapurna Circuit trail, which is already connected by a dirt

road and is frequented by trekkers. We will also use jeeps for one more day on the way down: this strategy will let us spend the majority of our time photographing in the high-alpine areas above the regular trail. For the remaining ten days in the mountains, we will be trekking with light camera backpacks for four to seven hours a day. We will stay in six teahouses (and a monastery) and two hotels over the course of fifteen nights.

For a detailed itinerary and much more information on this exciting workshop visit the [Vertical Shot Expedition website](#).

Workshop fee: \$4,950

*Please Note that this expedition is being run by Vertical Shot Expeditions, which is a European company so all payments will be made via wired transfers to Europe.*

## Workshop Testimonials

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

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

"I just finished Michael Clark's Adventure Photography

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

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

"Thanks for running such a great workshop. I couldn't have chosen better photo shoot locations, and the post-shoot critiques were invaluable. It's the first time I've had my work reviewed, and I learned a ton from each session. While I didn't go into the workshop expecting to pick-up too many marketing and business tips, I've come out of last week inspired to set-up my photo website in earnest." - Jeff Hylok, Adventure Photography Workshop, Summer 2010

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



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# The Nikon D5

*Nikon's ultimate professional action camera*



A few months ago I received a call from Eric Becker at [We Are Shouting](#), a production company that works with [Digital Photography Review](#) ([dpreview.com](#)). They were working on a full-fledged review of the Nikon D5 and wanted to do a Field Test video review of the camera with a pro photographer to go along with their in-depth report. For these Field Test video reviews,

DPreview sends out one of their top editors to shoot alongside a pro photographer and discuss various features of the camera. Rishi Sanyal is the deputy editor and technical editor at DPreview.com and is the most knowledgeable person I have ever met when it comes to digital camera technology. He and the video crew came down to Santa Fe, New Mexico and we worked side-by-side for



*Above is an image of Daniel Coriz riding motocross at the Santa Fe Motocross track in northern New Mexico. To create this image I shot with the Nikon D5 and a Nikkor 14-24mm lens set to 14mm. We had Daniel ride by our position several times and fired away at 12 fps to capture the fast-paced action.*

three days shooting a variety of fast-paced adventure sports including BMX, whitewater kayaking and motocross. These are three of the toughest sports to shoot as far as autofocus and keeping up with the action, so they were an extreme test for the Nikon D5. The in-depth [Nikon D5 review](#) went live a few months ago. The Field Test video featuring Rishi and I went live just a few days ago. You can find the Field Test video review [here on the DPReview website](#).

I have been working with the pro Nikon digital camera bodies since the D2x came out over a decade ago. My main workhorse action camera these days is the Nikon D4, which is no slouch. The D5 is the culmination of everything that Nikon has learned since they introduced the Nikon D1 way back in 1999. The D5 is not the highest resolution camera they offer, nor is it the lightest or most ideal camera for shooting in the studio. This is a camera designed for photojournalists, sports and action



photographers, and photographers who need a super-reliable do-anything camera. For portraits, I would reach for my Nikon D810 over the D5. But when it comes to action sports, especially when it is happening in less than ideal lighting, the D5 is the camera I would reach for. Here in this review, I am not going to pixel peep and get deep into the technical aspects of the camera; The folks at DPR-view have done an excellent job discussing the nitty gritty details already. Here, I am going to give the pro perspective on this new camera body and how I feel it stacks up against the Nikon D4.

Let's just get one thing out of the way right off the bat. The autofocus built into the Nikon D5 is by far the most incredible autofocus I have ever seen in any camera bar none. It blew both me and Rishi away. With all of my Nikons, I have either used single point AF in AF-S mode or Dynamic AF in AF-C (Continuous mode) and have found those to be super reliable. With the D5, Nikon has taken 3D AF tracking to a whole other level where it nearly completely frees you up from focus points and will follow the action from edge-to-edge in spectacular fashion. With 3D tracking, you have to initiate the AF on your subject and then from that point on it will track the subject anywhere in the frame. The image on the previous page is an excellent example of this, where I followed the rider into the frame then selected my composition and let the 3D tracking stay with the motocross rider, Daniel Coriz. There were very few situations where the 3D Tracking AF missed focus. Rishi and I also tried out Auto AF in AF-C mode, which is an autofocus mode I generally would never trust with previous Nikon models, but it was ridiculously accurate for quite a wide variety of scenarios allowing us to focus on composition. To sum it up, I don't know how autofocus could ever get any better than this.

The autofocus in this camera alone is reason enough to upgrade or add a D5 to your camera bag if you shoot action.

As further proof of the autofocus accuracy, the image on Page 26 of Daniel Coriz riding motocross shows just how good the D5's AF is. Daniel was moving so quickly relative to the camera position that we had to shoot at 1/8,000 second or he would have been soft due to motion blur. This image was shot wide open at f/1.8 with the Nikkor 24mm f/1.8 lens and it is tack sharp where we want it to be, right on his face. I don't think my Nikon D4 could have kept up anywhere near as well with this sort of scenario. This was also quite a dangerous spot to shoot from; Rishi had a sizable rock that shot out at him from under the bike's tire like a bullet. Luckily it hit the camera and not his head. The camera was fine. The Nikkor 24mm f/1.8 was getting a bit beat up with all of the dirt flying straight at the lens.

The only time I saw the autofocus fail was in a few very specific scenarios while shooting whitewater kayaking. I consider whitewater kayaking to be the ultimate test of autofocus. There are splashes of water popping up all over the place between the camera and the subject, and very few cameras stick with the subject if a splash of water pops up in the frame. With more time though, I think I could have tweaked the "AF Lock On" custom settings in the D5 to overcome this scenario and have it stick with the subject regardless of the water splashes. Other than in this very specific situation, the camera still did phenomenally well. It still did better than my D4 or any previous Nikon camera could in this scenario.

Nikon offers the D5 with either two CompactFlash



*Above, John Fullbright is whitewater kayaking at a surf spot named "Sleeping Beauty," which is a play hole on a section of the Rio Grande river near Taos, New Mexico. To create this image I used an Elinchrom Ranger battery-powered strobe and "Hi-Sync" flash methods to freeze the motion.*

memory card slots or two XQD memory card slots. Since the Nikon D5 is built for action, I have no idea why anyone would get one with CompactFlash card slots instead to the XQD. The XQD cards make this camera lightening fast. Though, in our testing, Rishi and I found out that having the latest, fastest XQD cards was important. My older XQD cards that I got for my Nikon D4 were so slow that it took several seconds for the images to be written to the cards whereas the latest XQD cards that Rishi was using never skipped a beat or slowed him down at all. In

fact, even after shooting a ridiculous 100+ images at 11 fps the images were written to the card by the time he took his eye away from the viewfinder and looked down at the back of the camera. My recommendation is to get the XQD version and buy new memory cards, otherwise you will be limiting the potential of this camera.

There has been a lot of hype out there that this camera doesn't have the dynamic range of some of it's predecessors, and that may be the case in the laboratory, but I





didn't notice it to be an issue in real world usage. Granted, I wasn't shooting landscapes with the D5. For landscapes, I would be shooting with a D810 anyway. With my D4, I tend to shoot at ISO 400 and above about 75% of the time, and I am often shooting at ISO 800 and above. Hence, at those higher ISOs the dynamic range is quite good on the D5 as it is optimized to be used at higher ISOs. So, at least for me and the way I shoot with the pro body cameras, the dynamic range is not an issue.

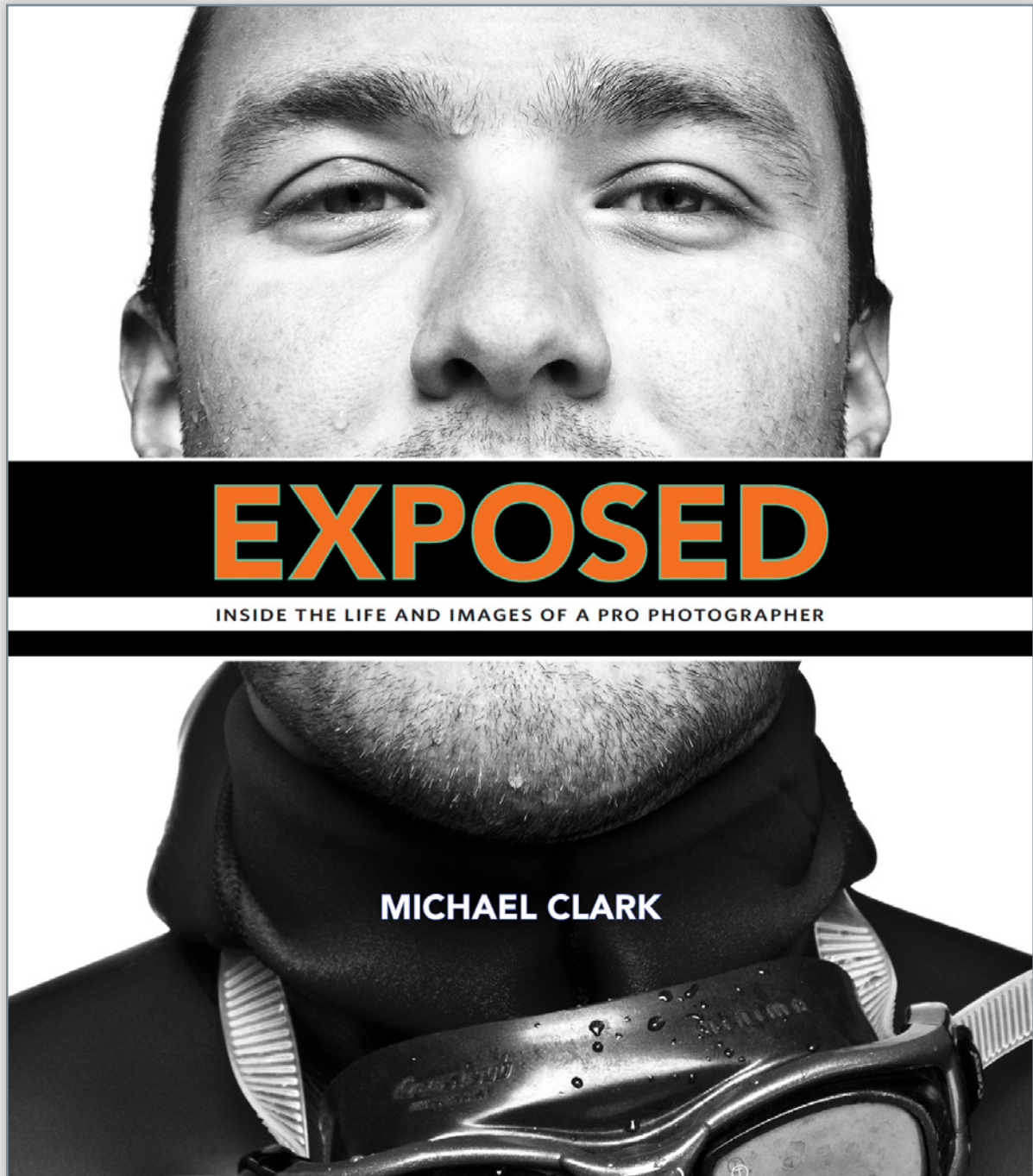
I don't want to make this a long-winded review because DPReview has already posted the most extensive review of the D5 you are likely to find and you can check it out on their [website](#). For myself, I was blown away by the speed at which this camera operates and of course its autofocus abilities as well. Will I upgrade? That is the question. I still have [another camera purchase](#) to pay off before I buy any

new cameras but at some point I will definitely be adding a new action camera to the bag and this will most likely be it. [I am still excited to test out the Nikon D500 as well since it is a nice, lightweight camera that incorporates many of the same features found in the Nikon D5 including the new blazing fast autofocus module.]

My thanks to DPReview and We Are Shouting for pulling me in to do this Field Test with the Nikon D5. Not only was it a great chance to test out this new rig, but we also managed to get some pretty cool images in the process. Also, thanks to the athletes who worked with us including Daniel Coriz (BMX and Motocross), John Fullbright and Aren Rane (whitewater kayaking). Without their hard work these images wouldn't exist and the video would be a lot less interesting. To find more info on the Nikon D5 visit [www.nikon.com](http://www.nikon.com).

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*on assignment:*



A **RED BULL** ASSIGNMENT WITH WORLD-CLASS  
WINDSURFER LEVI SIVER IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA





A few months ago I was out in San Francisco, California working with Red Bull for their 2016 Summer Solstice Photo Challenge. For this event, ten photographers were each paired up with a top Red Bull athlete and each photographer-athlete team was tasked with creating a variety of images on the day of the summer solstice. I was paired up with my good friend [Levi Siver](#), who is a world-class wind surfer and with whom I have worked on a previous Red Bull assignment. (This competition was also a way for Red Bull to celebrate a new kiwi flavor, which will be available only for the summer, as far as I understand it.) Each team had until 2:30 PM on June 20th, the summer solstice, to create five different images for five different categories, which would be judged that afternoon for an awards ceremony that evening.

The day was fast-paced and stressful from start to finish, as we were racing against the clock and the less than ideal wind surfing conditions to create and deliver amazing images. Nevertheless, it was great to reconnect with Levi. We work incredibly well together and have a lot of fun in the process. Since it was summer in the San Francisco Bay area, there weren't a lot of waves to work with, but we ended up having better than average windsurfing conditions. With Levi's incredible skills we were able to get some fairly respectable windsurfing images.

We started out from the hotel ridiculously early on the morning of June 20th. Levi and I left at 4 AM for a morning portrait and lifestyle session on Treasure Island, though some teams left the hotel as early as 2:30 AM. Some of the other incredible athletes participating in this event were Robbie Maddison (motorcycle stunts), Ian Walsh (big-wave surfer), JT Holmes (skier/BASE jumper), Meredith Kessler (Ironman triathlete), Joey

Brzezinski (skateboarder), Corey Bohan (BMX), Steel Lafferty (wakeboarder), and Giselia Pulidia (kite Surfer). Among the photographers were Christian Pondella, Zak Noyle, Chris Garrison, Chris Tedesco, Trevor Clark, Nick Teller, and Jeff Landi. Because there were such a wide variety of sports, crews were running all over the San Francisco area and beyond.

Early in the morning with the bay calm and still, we elected to shoot portraits of Levi looking out over the bay. As you can see in the two images on the next page, since wind surfing is an afternoon sport, we got quite creative with double-exposure images of Levi with his board and sail and the skyline of San Francisco. [Windsurfing is an afternoon sport because that is when the winds start to ramp up.] Note that these double exposure images were created in-camera and no Photoshop was used to create the double-exposure images shown in this article.

After our portrait session, Levi and I headed down the coast to a wind surfing spot just north of Davenport, California. We were quite lucky with the conditions as it could have just as easily been windless and flat on the ocean that day. Jet ski restrictions in the bay area, as well as the limited amount of time, killed all of our ideas to have Levi wind surfing under the Golden Gate bridge or off Alcatraz Island. We were fairly limited in what we could do in and around San Francisco. Nonetheless, as you can see in the action images Levi was able to get out and have a pretty amazing wind surfing session considering the off-season, non-prime conditions. He still caught some serious air and worked every possible wave to get as creative as possible.

While we were out shooting we were also posting





Page 20 (opening spread): Levi Siver wind surfing in and around San Francisco, California on June 20, 2016. Above: Levi Siver taking in the view of downtown San Francisco from Treasure Island in this double exposure image. Right: Levi Siver taking in the view of downtown San Francisco while standing with his board and sail at sunrise on Treasure Island. Both of the images on this page were created using an in-camera double exposure technique that is built into the top-tier Nikon cameras. No Photoshop was used to create these images.





*For this lifestyle image, which we shot for the “Best Can in Hand” category, we created an in-camera double exposure of Levi Siver with the skyline of San Francisco below him. This image really helps promote the new Lime flavored Red Bull while showing the location and the athlete.*

behind-the-scenes video footage via Facebook Live. The Facebook crew came out with us and were there to help promote the event. Out on the coast we didn’t have cell reception which prevented us from posting much but you can find the behind the scenes videos on my [Facebook page](#). My apologies for the sound on those videos as they were done with an iPhone and no external microphones. To see some of the other images each team produced that day, do a search for the hash tag #givesyouwingssf

on Instagram or Facebook.

All in all, this event was a total blast. We were free to get as creative as we wanted, and collaborating with a top athlete to craft a set of images on a tight timeline was both intense and hugely fun. In particular, because it was a competition, it forced all of us to ramp up our game, especially since we were expecting poor wind surfing conditions. So, to overcome the poor conditions and still





*Levi Siver catching some air while wind surfing in and around San Francisco, California on June 20, 2016. This was the image we submitted for the "Best Action Image" category. This was also the biggest air that Levi was able to launch off the rather small waves.*

come back with interesting images, I really worked hard to come up with new ideas and had researched in-camera double exposure images the night before the shoot. As a result, I am inspired to try this technique again and perfect it to a larger degree.

Working with Levi is always an awesome experience and, while working together on this shoot, we came up with quite a few ideas for future projects to work on. In the end

we were all exhausted from a 15-plus hour day on the go but it was a lot of fun to hang out with my fellow photographers and also several athletes with whom I have worked on other projects.

Congrats to Nick Tellez and Corey Bohan (BMX rider) on winning the photo competition! My thanks to Red Bull for making this happen and bringing us all out to San Francisco, California.



portfolio







# The Next Level

*by Michael Clark*

Last month I took a photography workshop with the legendary [Albert Watson](#). If you are a photographer and don't know of Albert Watson, look him up. You have seen his work before. I guarantee it. He has been called one of the top 20 photographers of all time. That is some pretty rare air. He is also an incredibly personable and genuine person. And, he is one of a handful of photographers I would call a true lighting master. As is evident in his images, he sees light in a way very few photographers do or can. Hence, taking a workshop with Albert was a great honor and a huge learning opportunity.

This was the second photography workshop I have ever taken and it was through the Santa Fe Workshops. It was also the highest level workshop I have ever been a part of. Everyone in the class was either a working pro or a very advanced amateur, but most were working pros. Once Albert started showing us his basic lighting techniques, most in the class were completely blown away, myself included. Even my good friend [Robert Reck](#), one of the top architectural photographers on the planet was muttering, "I can't believe it" after the first lighting demo. Most of Albert's lighting is done with one strobe head and a beauty dish, and the light is then bounced off white and black foam core to create a custom lighting setup for each image. What he was able to create with a very affordable amount of foam core was absolutely astounding.

I took this class to help push my portrait photography skills to the next level. In the workshop, we talked about a wide range of subjects and Albert also critiqued our work and websites in front of the whole class. While looking at my images for over an hour he loved a few of my portraits and harshly critiqued quite a few of them as well. The constructive criticism was what I was there for and will help me work harder to create higher-end portraits.

One of my mantras is "Never Stop Learning." If I ever did stop pushing to learn new techniques or expand my skill set I feel that my career would be in steep decline soon thereafter. Improving my portraiture, and my lighting skills, has been a decade-long endeavor so far and will likely continue for many more years to come. One of the big take aways from this workshop was not a photographic technique or any lighting setup per se, but the urging by Albert to think more artistically when creating images. Albert noted that we as photographers get so wrapped up in the technique that we often lose sight of the creative side. Going forward, I really want to push the envelope creatively more than I ever have. What that exactly means is something I am still figuring out. This, my 20th year as a professional photographer, has been quite busy but I have also taken the time to seek out and find inspiration. My thanks to Albert Watson for taking time out of his busy schedule to inspire and challenge us all.



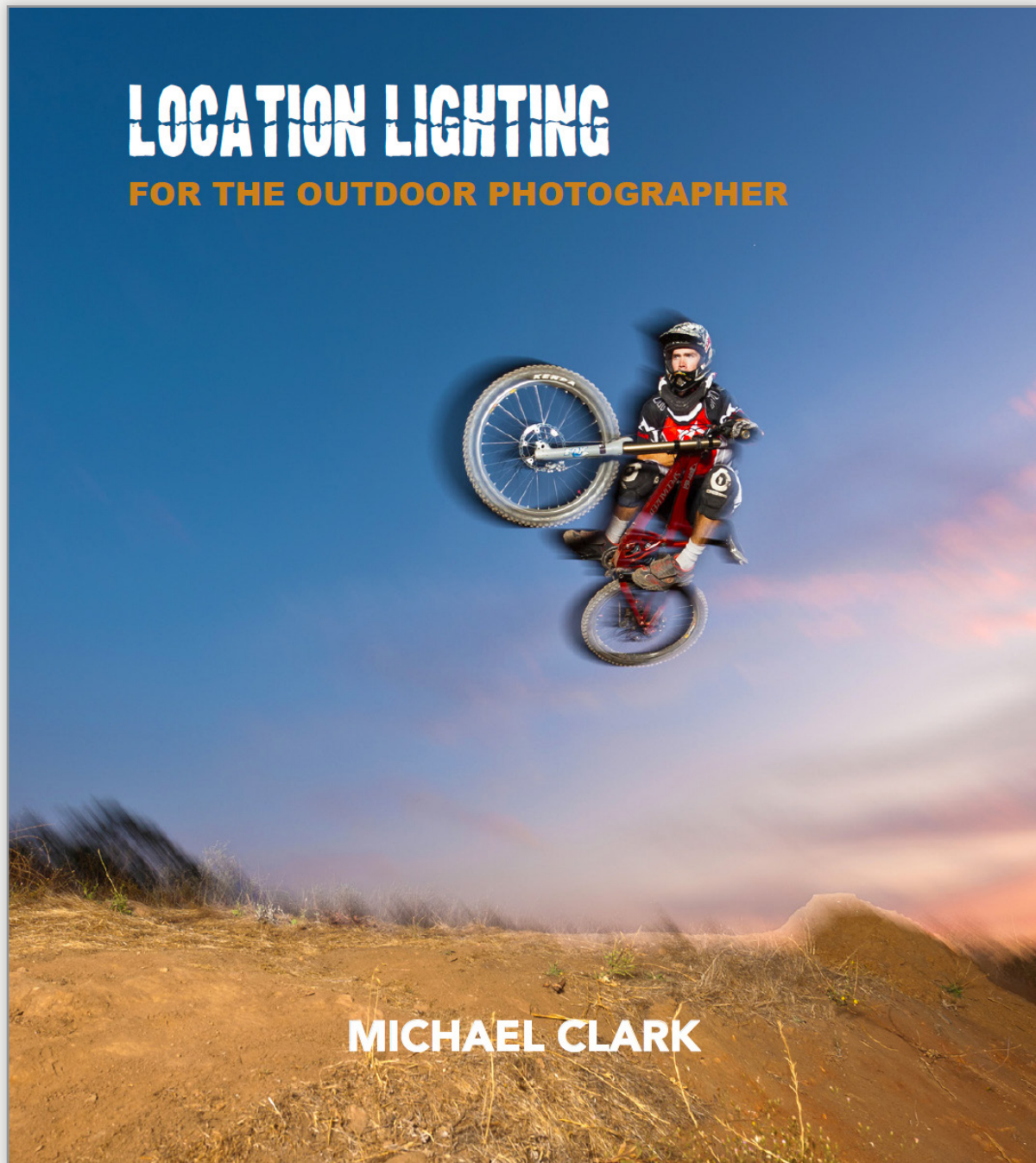


*Aaron Miller climbing on the Crystal Clear Arete (5.12c) in Diablo Canyon near Santa Fe, New Mexico.*



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