

NEWSLETTER

# MICHAEL CLARK

PHOTOGRAPHY



SUMMER 2023



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SUMMER 2023 NEWSLETTER

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The 2023 International Red Bull Aerial Camp. I was lucky enough to be asked back to photograph yet another Red Bull Air Force training camp, but this one was an international version with aerial athletes from all over the World. Once again I was asked to create a mix of action images, portraits and behind the scenes lifestyle images of the athletes over the course of three days.

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A motion blur image of Richmond Champion bareback riding at the American Performance Horseman event in Arlington, Texas on March 11, 2023. This was part of an assignment covering the 2023 American Rodeo by Teton Ridge at Globe Life Field.

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The Taos Gorge as seen from a position just south of Taos, New Mexico on a stormy summer day. I saw the gorge light up while on an assignment for New Mexico Tourism and couldn't resist stopping to photograph it.

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*Cover Image: Mike Swanson swooping over the pond with a little smoke during the 2023 Red Bull International Aerial Camp in Eloy, Arizona. Opposite Page: Miles Daisher wingsuit flying during the 2023 Red Bull International Aerial Camp in Eloy, Arizona. This image was captured by hanging off the basket of a hot air balloon as Miles flew past us at over 100-miles per hour.*









## The Swing of Things

*A full slate of adventures in 2023*

**T**hings seem to have come back to normal finally, or at least as close to normal as possible since 2020. The number of assignments coming in and the frequency this year have been respectable. Also, it seems like in-person workshops have fully returned, which is great since those are always a blast. On average, I teach three to four (at most) in-person workshops each year on a variety of topics. This fall I have two coming up, an Adventure Sports workshop in Santa Fe, NM and an adventure travel workshop in Japan with Nobechi Creative. For the full details on those check out the Workshops section. There is also a very exciting workshop coming up in Patagonia next spring, which will be an incredible adventure.

As seen on the cover and in the main article in this issue, I once again was called in to photograph the Red Bull Air Force training camp with sky divers, wingsuit flying, and paragliders. It is always a radical experience being around such incredible athletes pushing their sports and this years training camp was no exception. I drove out to the camp with over 600-pounds of gear since I was asked to create studio portraits alongside the action images. Check out the full story starting on Page 20.

Over the last six or seven years, I have been working on a print archive of my best images. I have made hundreds

and hundreds of 17x22 inch prints for that archive and during the pandemic I upgraded my 17-inch printer to the latest Epson P900. In this issue, I review that new printer and assess the upgrade in image quality.

Those who have been reading the Newsletter for many years might have noticed that I missed the Spring issue this year. The reason was that there wasn't a sufficient number of images that I could publish in the Newsletter to create a full issue. Hence, I saved up those images and waited for the Summer issue. Part of this is that my commercial assignments have lengthy image embargoes so I can't publish the images created for that assignment until the product comes out. There will be a Fall and a Winter Newsletter later this year, so we will get back on track.

Thanks again for checking out the Newsletter. Here's hoping you enjoy this issue and it offers up an escape for an hour or two. Until next time....

*Opposite Page: Marco Waltenspiel swooping over the pond during the 2023 Red Bull International Aerial Camp in Eloy, Arizona.*

**Recent Clients:** Amazon, Red Bull, Fujifilm, Teton Ridge, New Mexico Tourism, New Mexico Department of Transportation and the Santa Fe Workshops.







## Photography Workshops

*An overview of workshops and online classes with Michael Clark*

**E**ach year I teach a few workshops on a variety of topics including adventure sports photography, digital workflow and artificial lighting. Below is a listing of the workshops I will be teaching in 2023 and 2024. For more information on these workshops, and to find out how to register, go to the [Workshops](#) page on my blog or click on the links in the descriptions below.

### **ADVENTURE PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP**

*Summit Workshops - Santa Fe, New Mexico*

*Instructors: Catherine Aeppel and Michael Clark*

*September 22-24, 2023*

Join Summit in Santa Fe, New Mexico for an adventure you won't forget! Adventure sports photography requires a host of skills, including technical excellence with the camera, knowing your equipment, the sport and your goals inside and out. This workshop concentrates on creating (not just taking) unique adventure sports and lifestyle images. The goal of this workshop is to help you start thinking more creatively in regards to setting up an adventure photo shoot, executing that shoot, and analyzing your images. We will be shooting assignments each day early in the morning or in late in the afternoon and evaluating our images via daily critiques.

Northern New Mexico has incredible locations in which

to explore all of these sports and we will be shooting with elite athletes each day. The high desert mountain environment around Santa Fe has it all in terms of adventure sports. From rock climbing on steep basalt cliffs to mountain biking through aspens at 10,000 feet in the Sangre de Cristo mountains right above Santa Fe. In addition to the adventures, Santa Fe is steeped in culture as the oldest capitol in the United States and there are a wide variety of world-class restaurants in every price range.

What you'll learn: The Business of Adventure Photography. How to photograph rock climbing, trail running, motocross, mountain biking and more!

We will discuss and work on research and preparation, angles, equipment selection and use, using natural light and fill flash as well as battery-powered strobes, understanding and experimenting with autofocus techniques, working with athletes who are putting themselves at risk, how to capture the intensity of the action as well as how to protect yourself and your photo equipment in harsh conditions. Each day will find us working with athletes in the outdoor environment. What these models can do may shock even the most experienced outdoor photographer.

For more information and to register for this workshop





*Daniel Coriz ripping it up at the Santa Fe Motocross Track in Santa Fe, NM. Santa Fe has an extensive motocross track right on the edge of town, offering us the opportunity to create some wild and crazy images. Having photographed here many times the class will benefit greatly from Michael's home turf experience.*

visit [Summit Workshops](#).

## **JAPAN: FALL COLORS OF SHINSHU AND HIDA**

*Nobechi Creative - Multiple Locations in Japan*

*October 20-29, 2023*

Join world-renowned photographer and instructor Michael Clark and creative director/photographer George Nobechi in an all-new photographic road trip adventure through the mountainous Shinshu (Nagano) and Hida (Gifu) regions of Japan during the glorious autumn, with wildlife, pristine mountains, lakes and rivers, and traditional towns. This special, 10-night journey is limited to a

maximum of 7 participants with Michael and George via private van.

Our expedition will begin at Tokyo Station on the morning of Friday, October 20th. (Nobechi Creative's Japan Association of Travel Agents certified travel desk will help you with Tokyo hotel arrangements conveniently located near Tokyo Station at various price points) There, we will board the Shinkansen (Bullet Train) to zip northwest to the mountain resort community of Karuizawa, a little over one hour from Tokyo. Karuizawa is the headquarters for Nobechi Creative and the location for Karuizawa Foto Fest (kff). As a bonus, photographs you make in

Karuizawa will be eligible for submission for the free call-for-entry for next year's festival. Located at 1,000m (3,300ft) above sea level on the southeastern slopes of Mount Asama, Karuizawa is full of hidden waterfalls, reflective ponds, forests, and sweeping vistas. Michael will teach you how to light-paint your subjects as well as photograph mountain landscapes.

Our journey will continue by private van north over the mountains to visit one of the homes of the Japanese macaque "snow monkeys" in surroundings of fall color, and then on to the castle town of Matsumoto.

From Matsumoto, we will drive south to the Kiso Valley, the historic home of the Kiso Kaido / Nakasendo Trail that connected the capital city of Edo (present-day Tokyo) to the old capital of Kyoto. This area is full of the best-preserved "post towns" of the Nakasendo Trail, retaining the ambience of the good old days of the Edo period. In addition to photographing the beautiful towns, we will work on portraiture here with natural and artificial light.

Our next stop takes us into Kamikochi, a stunning, high-elevation area within the Japanese Alps known for its alpen color, but also for its spiritual ponds with shinto shrines. Kamikochi does not allow private vehicles of any kind, making it a very quiet, beautiful slice of mountain paradise.

Our final destination will be to neighboring Gifu Prefecture and the quaint town of Takayama. With our many local friends and connections there, we will be spending a fun few days making environmental portraits of martial artists (including swordsmen), sake brewers, miso mak-

ers, ceramicists and Buddhist monks.

On October 29th, we will return back to Tokyo by bullet train and head out to a digital art museum in Tokyo with LED projections and more before our farewell dinner.

On the morning of October 30th, breakfast is included before we disperse.

Class size: 5 to 7 people (Minimum 5 people required for the class to proceed.)

Tuition: \$7,995 per person for double occupancy (+3% for credit card payments), \$8,695 per person for single occupancy (+3% for credit card payments).

Deposit: A \$2,500 deposit will be required to secure a booking. The balance will be due 90 days before departure.

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

## **PATAGONIA CLASSIC**

*Visionary Wild - Argentina and Chile*

*Instructors: Justin Black and Michael Clark*

*April 2-17, 2024*

*Note: This will be my first workshop with the incredible folks at Visionary Wild and I am very excited to head back to one of my favorite places in the world. I have done workshops in Patagonia before but Visionary Wild has it dialed to an incredibly high level so this one is not to be missed if you can swing it. If the weather cooperates, participants will certainly come back with stunning landscape images.*





*A steep staircase from the Kimpusen-ji temple that leads down to the Noten-okami temple in Yoshino National Park near Nara, Japan. The Fall Colors of Shinshu and Hida workshop will have dozens of fascinating mountainous locations like this that we will visit and photograph.*

Patagonia: the word is synonymous with awe-inspiring landscapes, and Torres del Paine National Park, Perito Moreno Glacier, and the peaks of the Fitz Roy region are the crown jewels. This hybrid program – part expedition, part workshop, led by acclaimed adventure photographer Michael Clark and Justin Black of Visionary Wild is designed to maximize opportunities to execute well-crafted and compelling photographs that capture the spirit of this incredible place. Participants will have ample time to get to know this sublime region during its colorful autumn splendor, and your photography there will benefit from the opportunity to revisit fruitful situations to apply lessons learned and to take advantage of changing weather

and light. Assuming the weather cooperates, moonless nights during our itinerary will mean excellent opportunities to incorporate the Milky Way in nocturnal landscapes. The goal is for each participant to come away from this trip with a strong body of work, a new body of knowledge, new friendships, rejuvenation, and priceless memories.

Torres del Paine National Park and Biosphere Reserve is the centerpiece of Patagonia – the ultimate distillation of the region’s most inspiring qualities. It’s one of those rare places that routinely exceeds the grandest dreams of even the most experienced photographers. Peaks and

spires thrust abruptly upward above turquoise lakes, forcing moisture-laden winds off the ocean to form soaring lenticular clouds that catch the fiery sunrise and sunset alpenglow. Glaciers spill down from the Patagonian ice cap, depositing cobalt blue icebergs on the shores of Lago Grey. Endemic lenga tree forests glow in hues of gold and copper in the southern autumn. Rivers tumble over cascading waterfalls as condors ride thermals on the flanks of the Cordillera del Paine mountains. Guanacos and foxes range over the golden pampas, and flamingos wade the lagoons. At this time of year, the days are a manageable length with extended periods of dawn and dusk, and the sun never rises more than 35 degrees above the horizon. The quality of light is spectacular.

Our trip begins in Punta Arenas, Chile, where our local guide team and driver – good friends of ours who are regarded as some of the very best in Patagonia – we will meet you at the airport and transfer you to Hotel Cabo de Hornos, a recently remodeled boutique hotel on the town's main square. We'll all gather there and go out as a group for a welcome dinner at one of our favorite restaurants nearby to get to know everyone. The next day we proceed to Torres del Paine National Park (with lunch at a restaurant along the way) where we'll check into Hotel Lago Grey, the first of three excellent lodges in the park that will serve as our base camps for the next seven days and nights – the others are the spectacularly located Hostería Pehoe, and recently upgraded Hotel Las Torres.

After Torres, we cross the border into Argentina, for a four-hour drive to El Calafate on the shores of Lago Argentino (a.k.a. Lago General Carrera on the Chilean side of the border). Our "basecamp" for two nights will be the beautiful four-star Alto Calafate Hotel, from which we

will make excursions by van to the expansive Perito Moreno Glacier framed in autumn color, as well as other scenic highlights.

Then it's on to El Chalten in Los Glaciares National Park, the gateway to the spectacularly soaring granite spires of the peaks Fitz Roy and Cerro Torre, renowned among alpinists as world-class climbs (Justin's mentor Galen Rowell made an ascent of Fitz Roy in 1985). For four nights, we will stay at Posada Lunajim Hotel, an excellent three-star accommodation. We will make use of this towering sublime mountain backdrop by making excursions to various vista points, rivers, lake shores, autumn forests, and more to find compelling foregrounds for our compositions. As our trip draws to a close, we will return to Calafate for another night at Alto Calafate Hotel before catching departing flights to Buenos Aires and home.

Michael Clark and Justin Black will lead the small group on field sessions adapted to make the most of the prevailing conditions each day. Emphasis will be on photography and hands-on mentoring in the field. We'll photograph when the conditions are good, and we'll gather in the lodge for presentations on light, composition, visualization, technique, and digital workflow at times when light or weather aren't as conducive for photography (during harsh mid-day light, if a rain storm passes through, etc.). We will also hold constructive critiques of participant photographs, and then head back out into the field to apply what we've learned.

Excursions will include a trip by ferry to visit the face of Glacier Grey and, in our comfortable group vehicles, spectacular locations that we have scouted in detail on prior visits. Some locations involve short hikes, but noth-





*The Cerro Torre and Cerro Fitz Roy Massifs as seen from the road coming into El Chalten, Argentina. Patagonia is one of my favorite areas in the World to explore. There are epic landscapes just about everywhere you go, but the Cerro Fitz Roy and Cerro Torre are perhaps the most famous mountains in the region.*

ing particularly strenuous.

After dusk each day, we will gather for a nice dinner and some good Chilean and Argentine wine. Then it's off to bed to rest, as most mornings we'll be out around 6:00am to take advantage of the incredible pre-dawn light. Breakfasts and lunches will be handled in relation to our photographic activities, served either at our lodges or in the field as a gourmet picnic.

The full itinerary and details on costs are outlined on Visionary Wild's website along with very detailed information on what to expect, the highlights of the trip, what's

included and what's not included, and details on accommodations. Also, there is a large gallery of images on their website showing what you can expect to photograph as well. This is going to be an epic adventure.

Cost: from \$13,995 to \$15,995 USD

For more information and to register for this fantastic workshop visit [Visionary Wild](#).

### **Workshop Testimonials**

"Michael certainly knows his stuff. From Capture to Print:

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

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

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

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

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

"Your workshop at Santa Fe was too good and I came away with a lot of knowledge and renewed energy. The level of expertise that you and Michael shared was top-notch and I hope to repeat this experience again. Thanks for such a great workshop!" – Participant in the 2008 Balloon Fiesta workshop taught by Andy Biggs and myself.

"My mind is still spinning and I can't help but smile every time I think of the wonderful experience garnered from our workshop. Between what I learned from the two of you, as well as from my talented classmates – this was a great experience, and I would do it again." – Participant in the 2008 Balloon Fiesta workshop taught by Andy Biggs and I.

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

As can be seen this section of the Newsletter, in-person workshops are spinning back up to pre-pandemic levels. There are some fantastic workshops and adventures on offer here and I will add more to the calendar as they are available. For more information on my upcoming workshops please visit the [Workshops](#) page on my blog.

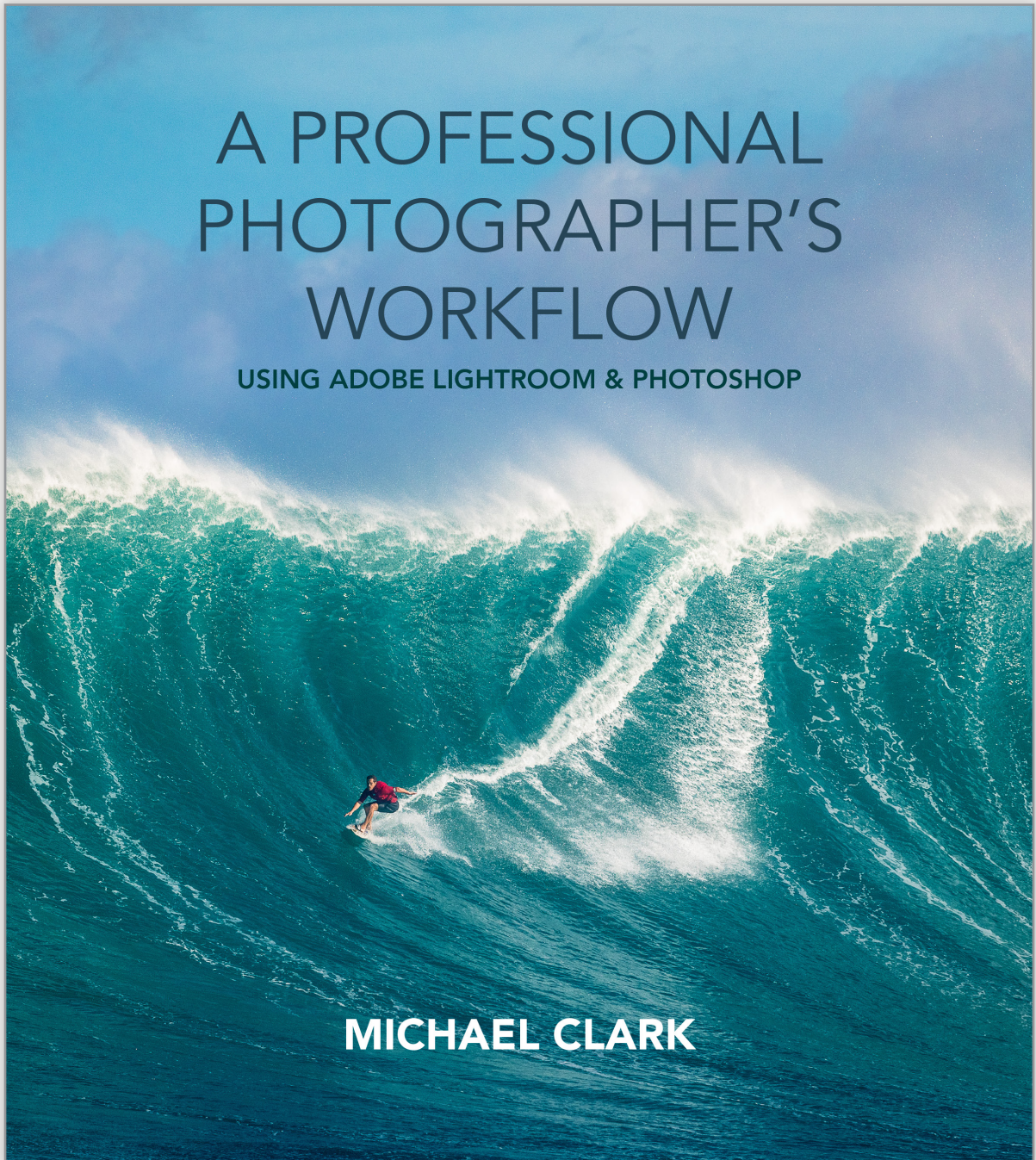


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## equipment review

# Epson SureColor P900

*A top tier 17-inch inkjet photo printer that produces gallery-quality prints*

**F**or almost a decade, my main inkjet photo printers here in the office were the Epson SureColor 3880 and the larger format 44-inch wide Epson 9880. In 2020, the 9880 started having some clogging issues that were going to be very costly to overcome so I gave that printer to a local print shop that already had a few other 9880s and were very well set up to maintain those printers.

I also decided at that point for the larger prints that I sell, those larger than 17x22 inches, I would outsource them to Blazing Editions in Rhode Island, who make the most color accurate prints I have

seen from any print house in the United States. I carried on with my little Epson 3880 for a bit longer but I did order some test prints from Blazing Editions both on paper and on metal to make sure the quality was up to snuff. When I got the paper print from them, I was blown away at how much higher resolution the print was than the

output from my 3880. I promptly called them to ask which printers they work with for their paper prints and the reply was the latest Epson printers. Hence, that is why I ordered the new Epson SureColor P900 (shown below). I ordered the P900 back in 2021 so this review is a bit late, but on the flip side, I have a ton of experience

with it and can offer up solid use experience.



To start with, the P900 is the first printer from Epson, or anyone, where I can actually visibly see a huge difference in print quality from the older generation of printers. It isn't just that the prints seem to

have a higher resolution (and seem visibly more detailed and sharper), but that they also seem to have a higher Dmax (i.e. dynamic range) than my older prints. Prints made on toothy watercolor fine art papers also seem to have less bronzing issues and more details in the shadows and blacks than on my previous printer.





*For my archival prints, I have been printing the images on 17x22-inch Baryta papers, including the new Ilford Gold Fibre Pearl and Gold Fibre Gloss. Those prints are stored in Archival boxes from Archival Methods with interleaving paper between each print. The prints from the Epson SureColor P900 are clearly better than those created with my older Epson 3880, though that is hard to show here in an article.*

One of the main reasons I stuck with the older 3880 for so long is that I live in the southwestern United States, where it is quite dry. Here in Santa Fe, we are at a considerable altitude of 7,000 feet (around 2,100 meters) so the temps don't get that hot in the summer but humidity hovers around 15-20% most of the year save for the summer monsoons. The 3880 was renowned for its ability to

keep on working and not clog up even in low humidity environments. Hence, I was worried moving to a new printer might make life more difficult. I can happily report that the P900 has had zero clogging issues—even when I forget to make a print for a few weeks. I do have a humidifier in my office that runs each day so that definitely helps but even so, the P900 has been remarkably easy to





*Above is a low-angle shot to show how these large prints are stored in the Archival Methods boxes. The interleaving paper is so thin that it is not even visible in the image show here. At this point I have seven of these boxes in the closet storing over six hundred archival prints.*

work with and I have had absolutely no issues with it so far over the last two years.

As with most modern printers, the P900 can go fully wireless, but I prefer to plug it into my computer to make sure I am getting the best quality prints. It also has a significantly smaller footprint than my old 3880, which is a welcome change. The printer itself does seem to be more plastic than metal but regardless, it is very functional. In use, the printer seems to print images slower than my old

printer, but that is probably part of the image quality boost. How fast the prints come out greatly varies depending on what settings are used in the print settings dialog. Here in this review, I won't go into all of the settings but when I make prints I use the highest quality settings available for each paper type—which is probably why the print times seem long to me.

There are ten ink cartridges in the P900. With the new UltraChrome PRO10 ink cartridges you no longer need to

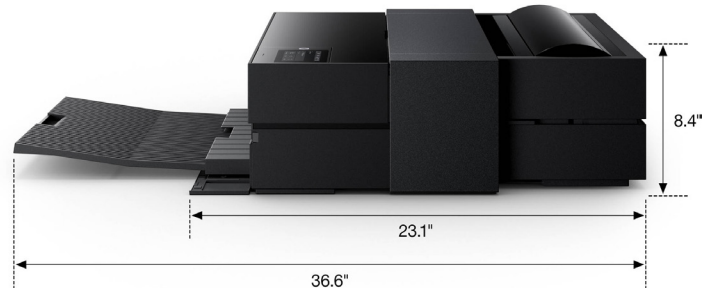


*Above you can see the ten different ink cartridges inside the Epson P900. I have been very impressed over the last few years with just how efficient the P900 sips the ink. It is also great to see both the matte black and photo black inks side by side so there is no wasted ink when switching papers and inks.*

swap out the photo black and matte black cartridges because they are both installed all the time. That alone saves ink. In my experience, even using the highest image quality settings (5760 x 1440 dpi) I can make an incredible number of prints before needing to swap out ink cartridges. I have been quite surprised at how much more efficient the ink usage is with this printer. For those of you looking to buy a photo printer, I would highly recommend getting the P900 over the smaller P700. The larger ink cartridges will save you money and pay off the difference

in price very quickly. When you buy a printer, you are essentially buying the ink cartridges and they give you the printer for free—knowing that you will spend much more on ink in the future. The P900 costs \$1,249 right now with a rebate. That isn't cheap but neither is printing.

The new inks also offer a much wider dynamic range and the new Carbon Black mode can deepen the darkness of the blacks, which works exceptionally well in the Advanced Black and White mode. Since I print mostly on



*Above are a few different angles of the printer, showing its paper tray and receiving paper tray. The overall footprint of the P900 is smaller than my older Epson 3880 as well, which is a welcome change. A roll paper adapter can be attached to the back of the printer but I tend to use cut sheets.*

Baryta papers I have not had many issues with dynamic range but for fine art papers with a watercolor paper texture the higher Dmax is quite noticeable.

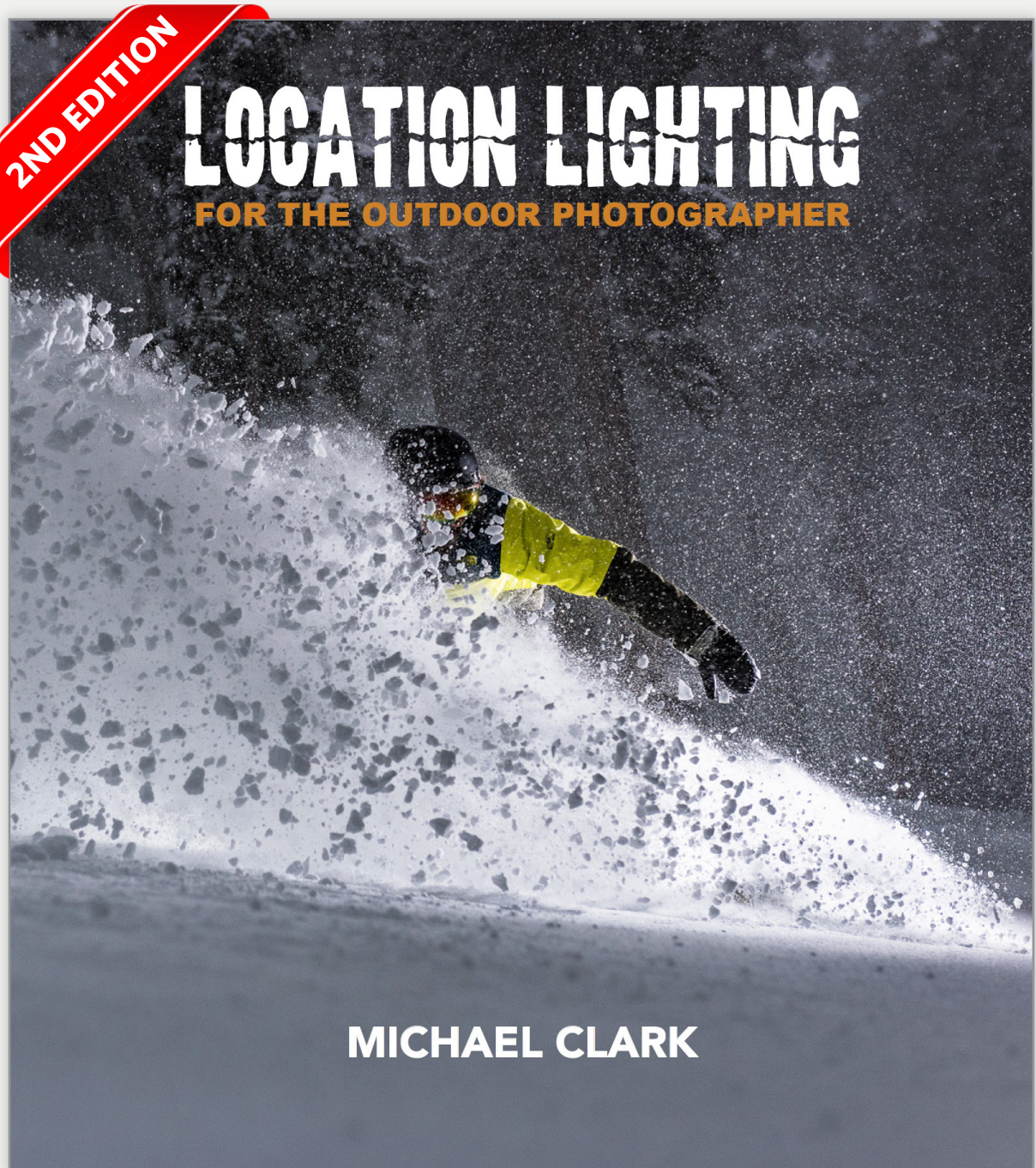
The P900 is very easy to use. The touch screen on the top of the printer is fairly intuitive and the user interface in Photoshop or Lightroom is not that different than on older printers. And because it is so easy to use, this is a big reason why you get such excellent prints. The prints

out of the newer Epson printers, including the P900 are the best quality prints I have ever seen. The clarity, created by the incredibly dense microscopic ink dots, is the best I have seen from any Canon or Epson printer. With Baryta papers, the extended dynamic range is gorgeous. I cannot recommend this printer highly enough. If you are looking for a high-end inkjet photo printer then this is it. Look no further. For more information on the Epson SureColor P900 visit [Epson.com](https://www.epson.com).



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*on assignment:*

# Red Bull®



**2023 INTERNATIONAL AERIAL CAMP**









I have been privileged to work with the Red Bull Air Force, a group of the best sky divers, BASE jumpers, wingsuit pilots and actual stunt pilots for over fifteen years now. Over that period, I have photographed four team training camps, many of them documented here in previous issues of this Newsletter. In these training camps, usually held every two to three years, the team really hones in on specific techniques, formations and new ideas to advance their craft and create something new in the world of sky diving. Earlier this year, once again I was asked to come document the 2023 International Red Bull Aerial Camp. This was the first ever international aerial training camp so there were athletes from all over the world in attendance.

As usual with these camps, my job was not only to document the action but also to create portraits of the athletes as well. Since this was held in Eloy, Arizona, which is a worldwide mecca for sky diving, I drove to the assignment with over six hundred pounds of gear (272 Kg)—most of which was lighting gear to set up a small studio in the hanger. In between the sky dives, I would pull in the athletes that needed new portraits spend five minutes with each athlete creating headshots and a few environmental portraits as well.

As part of this years training camp, we also used a hot air balloon to get something quite different. The wingsuit pilots jumped from above our position in the balloon and then flew past us, as seen on pages 3 and 27. To get a more unobstructed perspective, I brought some climbing gear and hung off the rigging outside the hot air balloon's basket. As can be seen on pages 32 and 33, the skydivers and the paragliders also launched from the balloon's basket as well. This was the first time we had a hot air

balloon at the training camp, but not the first time the team had jumped from one.

As usual with Red Bull, this collection of athletes from all over the world was a major event. Red Bull essentially built their own city on the edge of the SkyDive Arizona facility. This little city included dozens of rented RVs for all the athletes, a private chef to prepare meals, a large tee pee-style meeting tent and the Red Bull RV for senior staff meetings. Also SkyDive Arizona set up a swooping pond nearby for the athletes to play on during the camp. On the last few days while I was at the camp the team swooped through a giant wall of colored smoke as shown on pages 26 and 30-31.

For those not accustomed to the term "swooping" as it relates to sky diving, when coming in for a landing advanced sky divers will pull down on their canopy and fly at high speeds horizontally just before touching down and sliding to a stop. At this moment the sky divers can still be flying at speeds in excess of 60 mph (96 Kph). Hence, the term swooping is used to describe this dynamic landing maneuver.

On one evening, the crew got the idea to set up some pyrotechnics for the team to swoop through when coming in for a landing. This is not an unusual idea as I have photographed similar situations before with the Red Bull Air Force. But this was right at dusk, so the photographic challenges in low light were going to add up quickly making this a difficult scenario photographically.

In this instance, the crew were setting up the Pyro along a shallow pond right at sunset. The team went up on the last jump plane just before it started to get dark. Having







photographed this sort of scenario before (more on that later) I set up on the opposite side of the pyro and made sure we were well lit so the sky divers could see us as they came through. I had an assistant hold multiple bright headlamps right where we were positioned. The pyro was set up so it wasn't a dense wall but so that the sky divers could actually see through it. All went well with the first five or six skydivers as they came through the separated pillars of pyro. But just before Sean MacCormac came through a few additional pyrotechnics went off thereby creating a wall of smoke and bright white pyro, which made it very difficult to see anything on the other side for the photographers and the skydivers.

Because it was already pretty dark, I opted to use a 50mm f/1.2 lens, which meant being closer to the pyro than I really wanted to be with the oncoming sky divers swooping through. Three of us bunched together and crouched down to make ourselves as small as possible. The first several skydivers came through just fine—and were able to see us because there were gaps in the flying sparks. But when the additional pyro turned on and created a wall of white sparks and smoke Sean couldn't see anything. The image on page 23 was captured just as he blasted through the wall of sparks. As can be seen in the series of images on the following page, which were captured at 20 frames per second—he came right at us.

From experience, I knew the best option was to stay put so I didn't move. Sean, with his incredible reflexes pulled his legs to one side at the last millisecond so he didn't hit me squarely but even so he still clipped my camera, which collapsed the lens hood over the front of the lens barrel, and then scraped the side of my face. Behind me the two other people dropped to the ground and

thankfully didn't get hit. My camera was fine, the lens hood was shattered but getting a new lens hood is not expensive. Sean took a bigger hit than I did because the lens hood impacted his lower leg pretty hard. He had a big bruise on his shin. Because my face was bleeding I got patched up by the EMTs on site and checked for concussion. Sean got checked out as well and they used a pressure wrap to keep his leg from swelling. We both felt horrible about the incident and apologized profusely to each other, but I was really mad at myself for even putting myself (and two others) in that position as I should have known better and did know better.

A few years earlier, on an assignment for the Highlight Skydiving team I was in a similar situation where the sky divers were swooping through a wall of fire. In this instance, I was shooting with a 70-200 lens and stood quite a ways back from the flame anticipating the sky divers not being able to see us on the other side. Most of the sky divers came through and flew by our position easily but one came through and very narrowly missed my head by just a few inches while moving at over 60 mph (96 Kph). She moved her legs at the last second to avoid hitting us. I didn't move but felt her go by knowing it was pretty close. A few people standing about twenty feet behind were filming the whole thing and captured the near miss on video. I heard them exhale loudly right when it happened, which let me know it was closer than I realized. Luckily, it was only a near miss. I swore to myself I would never put myself in that position again. Hence, this is why I was so mad at myself after the accident with Sean MacCormac.

After the accident with Sean, I didn't check my camera or the images until after getting checked out by the EMTs. I





was perhaps still a bit dazed by the accident and everyone rushed over to check on us—and seeing blood on my face rushed me over to the EMTs. They did a comprehensive job checking me out and patching up my face. It was only after all of that when I checked the camera to see if we had captured anything and I saw the image on page 23. I was floored by the image as it happened so fast I just mashed the shutter release down and blasted away. I was also amazed that the image was in focus, especially since I was shooting at  $f/1.2$  in near total darkness. This was

definitely the best image of the entire assignment.

My sincere apologies to Sean for lining up in a bad spot. I am so glad that everyone, especially Sean, came away relatively unscathed. It could have been much, much worse. It was a blast to hang out with all of the athletes and the crew supporting them—and it was especially cool to meet and work with the international athletes. My sincere thanks to Red Bull for bringing me in yet again to create images with these amazing athletes.



































































portfolio









# The Editorial Conundrum

*by Michael Clark*

Last summer, I was commissioned by Outdoor Photographer (OP) magazine to write a feature article on Sea Kayaking. I have worked with OP since the start of my career. In fact, some of my first ever published images way back in 1996 were in OP. Over the last decade I have been writing articles for the magazine at least once a year. It was a great working relationship. Little to my knowledge last year, or to the knowledge of any other contributors, Madavor Media (who owned OP at the time) was in seriously difficult financial straits. The price of paper for the magazine tripled and became extremely hard to come by during the pandemic. This along with some other inflationary factors put the magazine into a serious cash flow crisis. The article I wrote was published in August 2023. Normally I would get paid within 45 days or so after the publication of the article and images. But, with Madavor Media in difficult waters no payment ever came. Fast-forward to this March and Madavor sold off all of their titles to the BeBop Channel Corporation.

Once the BeBop Channel took over, it became very clear that they did not do the due diligence researching the debts owed by Madavor during the purchase. They quickly let all the OP staff go and essentially killed off the magazine. Then, once they found out that magazine was well regarded amongst the photo community they brought the website back online to try and sell it off. All the while,

my article from August 2023 was the first thing you saw on that defunct website. Gregory Charles Royal, the CEO of BeBop, recently sent out an email to those contributors that are still owed money from the last year and essentially said, “contributors might best band together and consolidate their situation into a class action and contact an attorney” to sue Madavor Media. He basically said we are not paying so sue the people we bought the magazines from.

Herein lies the editorial conundrum as I call it. Magazines are going under left and right these days. Hence, for anyone considering working with a magazine the question becomes, “Is this magazine going to be around long enough for me to get paid for my work?” I have seen over and over the last few years magazines selling out to larger publishing entities and then getting killed off because that magazine wasn’t generating enough profit. Outside Magazine did this a few years ago and essentially killed off every Climbing magazine in the USA among other genres. As a working pro, there are only a few editorial clients I will work with anymore as I have to assess if that magazine is in a decent financial position and if it is worth taking the risk to work for them. Big magazines like National Geographic are pretty safe bets, but smaller magazines are much riskier to work with. I hate to say it but the days of working with editorial clients are numbered.





*The Taos Gorge as seen from a position just south of Taos, New Mexico on a stormy summer day.*



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