





WINTER 2006 NEWSLETTER

2 EDITORIAL

Hard Knocks. How much longer will photography last as a profession?

3 NEWS

Introducing Leslie Alsheimer and our new business venture.

4 WORKSHOPS

New Santa Fe Digital Darkroom Workshops for 2006.

5 EQUIPMENT REVIEW

The Epson P2000 portable Hard Drive sets a new standard and liberates the outdoor photographer.

6 DIGITAL DOGMA

The RAW misconception.

7 PORTFOLIO

Images from Mallorca, Spain; Joshua Tree and Yosemite, California and New Mexico.

9 PERSPECTIVE

Archival Stress. If you haven't backed up your image files here is your wake up call. You snooze, you loose!

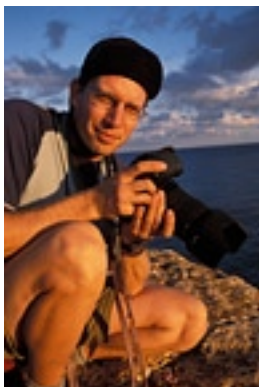
10 PARTING SHOT

The pastel colors of White Sands National Monument before sunrise shot with a Hasselblad 503CW and actual film.

Cover: Two cadillac's augured in near Amarillo, Texas at the Cadillac Ranch.
Above: Scott Cherry skateboarding at a skate park in Santa Fe, New Mexico.
All images © Michael Clark Photography.

Hard Knocks

The changing face of professional photography



The ASMP New Mexico chapter recently held a Digital Workflow Seminar for Professional Photographers here in Santa Fe. The seminar covered everything from billing for digital to working with CMYK offset printers and of course digital workflow. It was a great success; well attended by over 100 local photographers but one comment during the billing for digital session really shocked all of us who make our living as photographers. I won't give any names but the gist of the story is that at the start of the Iraq war, Getty Images queried several top photographers on what it would cost to hire them to shoot in Iraq and have all rights to the images they produced. One of those photographers quoted a price of \$25,000 per day but recognized that would never fly and added he might be willing to do it for around \$8,000 per day. In reply, Getty offered up that they were willing to pay up to \$12,000 per day for all rights to the images. A few weeks later that same photographer found out that Getty had contacted their list of photographers and offered them \$1,000 per day for all rights to their images of the Iraq War. Getty found plenty of photographers willing to accept that day-rate while shooting in an extremely dangerous war zone and giving up all rights to the images they produced.

I don't know about you but that story doesn't bode well for the future of professional photography. I don't blame Getty. They are just trying to get what they need for the least amount - like any of us when we have a large equipment purchase. I blame the photographers. Has this business become so chic and competitive that people are willing to seriously risk their lives and give up all rights to their livelihood for \$1,000 a day? I'm not here to tell anyone how to run their business but c'mon, I can hear the photo buyers laughing at us.

One thing I do know is that photographers are good at complaining - just read any on-line photography forum. I don't want you to think that is what I am doing here. In any business, one has to stay on top of the latest trends and assess how to continue making a profit. With the devaluation of photography over the last five years and the increase in overhead to the photographer it is getting harder and harder to make a decent living as a photographer. But if you are savvy you can turn all of this chaos to your advantage.

To that end this year I have signed on to teach quite a few workshops to help educate the masses on digital photography. In particular I am doing my own workshops with Leslie Alsheimer, a photoshop guru who has worked with National Geographic, Nick Nichols and Jay Maisel to name just a few. For more info on our workshops see the workshop description on page 5.

On that same note, photography is in such a state of upheaval with the onset of digital photography that an organization has developed standards for photographers and photo buyers. The *Universal Photographic Digital Imaging Guidelines* (UPDIG) has put together a very informative PDF document with a wide variety of standards for creating, submitting, printing and publishing digital images. To download the PDF go to <http://www.updig.org/guidelines/index.html>.

publisher, editor, and photographer
Michael Clark

Michael Clark Photography
4000 La Carrera, #924
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87507 USA
office 505.438.0828
mobile 505.310.4571
mjcphoto@comcast.net
www.michaelclarkphoto.com

The Santa Fe Digital Darkroom

Michael partners with Photoshop Diva Leslie Alsheimer for Digital Workshops



Leslie Alsheimer: photoshop diva, photographer, educator and expert kayaker posing for a portrait on a recent stock shoot.

Leslie Alsheimer and Michael Clark have combined their expertise and talents recently announcing a new series of Digital Vacation Workshops in Santa Fe, NM (see next page). We teamed up because we saw a niche that wasn't being filled - workshops that will amplify digital skills and knowledge, and take care of it's participants from start to finish. I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce Leslie, as she is a woman of many talents whom I have worked with on a number of projects. Not only is she the first person I call when I need expert Photoshop advice, but over the years she has also assisted me on photo shoots, and as has even modeled on occasion (as above). On top of all that she is a talented photographer whose clients include Nikon among many others. She has taught workshops for the

Maine and Santa Fe Photo Workshops, Anderson Ranch Arts Center and the Nikon/American Photo Mentor Series. In addition to our exclusive private instruction services, we currently have three workshops scheduled for this year and are developing several more exotic workshops in locations such as Russia, Italy and Southern France for this Fall and 2007. If you want to see what all the hubbub is about check out our website at <http://www.santafedigitaldarkroom.com>. For more information on our extensive workshops please email us at info@sfdigitaldarkroom.com.

RECENT CLIENTS: Nikon, Patagonia, Black Diamond, Prana, La Sportiva, Gregory Packs, Alpinist, Climbing Magazine and Bike Magazine.



The Digital Vacation:

A different light on Santa Fe

Workshop: 4-day intensive Digital Workshop

Location: Santa Fe, New Mexico

Instructors: Leslie Alsheimer and Michael Clark

Dates for 2006: May 11-14, July 13-16, October 5-8

A customized photography workshop designed to broaden and challenge your digital horizons in a relaxed group environment. Our workshops are unlike any others. We'll take you off the beaten path in northern New Mexico to locations few photo workshops have gone before. Come join us for a guided tour of the digital realm in the Land of Enchantment and create images you never thought you could.

This is a workshop for anyone seeking to master digital imaging from capture through post production and output no matter what skill level. We will cover everything from capture, workflow, camera raw, to using Adobe Photoshop and Bridge as a "digital darkroom" to enhance images for output in a calibrated environment. This exciting workshop will inspire and focus your skills via hands-on experience and a mixture of lectures, discussions, and critiques both in the field and in the digital darkroom. Leslie and Michael work in tandem to bring you the best of both their expertise and passion not only for photography and Photoshop but also by making sure your trip to New Mexico goes smoothly from the airport to your hotel and back.

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

feedback in the digital darkroom each day with lessons and tutorials designed specifically to enhance images from each day's capture.

Come experience the light in the City Different with the Santa Fe Digital Darkroom.

Leslie and Michael have taught numerous formal and private workshops at the Maine Photographic Workshops, The Santa Fe Workshops, and Anderson Ranch Art Center.

Package Price: \$850

Go to www.santafedigitaldarkroom.com or call the us at (505) 438-0828 for more information.

Leslie Bryn Alsheimer is a dynamic and patient instructor who facilitates the learning process with fun and enthusiasm in a relaxed environment. She has worked extensively with many of the foremost digital image makers in the country and specializes in helping photographers and artists transition into digital technology and processes with ease, using collaborative image processing and printing techniques in a calibrated workflow.

As a professional freelance photographer, a member of the *Adobe Photoshop Beta Testing Team*, and an instructor with the *American Photo Mentor Series*, Leslie's knowledge and expertise of both traditional and digital photographic darkroom techniques allows her to bring significant passion, experience and enthusiasm to all she does in this field.

Michael Clark is an internationally published outdoor photographer specializing in adventure sports, travel, and landscape photography. His clients include National Geographic, Sports Illustrated, Outside, Men's Journal, Patagonia, Nike, Nikon, and DuPont. He has risked life and limb on a variety of assignments to bring back stunning images of extreme athletes in remote locations around the world. For a full bio visit his website at www.michaelclarkphoto.com.

The Epson P2000

Epson's P2000 liberates the outdoor photographer & sets the standard for portable Hard Drives.

When I dove into digital a few years ago I knew that lugging a laptop around with me wasn't going to be an option for a lot of my work. Hence, I had to find a way of storing my images safely without the bulk or battery drain of a laptop computer. Enter the Epson P2000, announced about the same time as the Nikon D2x came out this combo was what really sold me on the viability of digital in remote locations. I have been using the P2000 for about a year now and it has served me very well. My first big trip with it was rafting the Grand Canyon. I took a spare battery and had plenty of power for the two plus week trip.

In the past portable Hard Drive storage devices have been less than stellar. Normally they are clunky, slow and have poor LCD's or none. The P2000 far surpasses any other portable storage option I have seen yet. The P2000 has a 3.8 inch LCD that is by far the sharpest I have ever seen on a hard drive and it is much better than most desk-

top LCD's as well. The P2000 is a 40 GB model and Epson just released the P4000 which is the same set up but with 80 GB of storage. So far I have yet to fill up the 40 GB model on any one photo shoot.

My workflow with the P2000 is to shoot on compact flash (CF) cards then download then to the P2000 and keep shooting on new CF cards - that way my images are both on the CF cards and the Epson P2000 which is safer than film ever was. If I am on an expedition or away from the computer for a few days or weeks I take two portable hard drives and back the CF cards up to both devices before erasing the CF card. I can work this way without a laptop because most of my clients don't need immediate turn around. I realize this won't work for many photographers but if I can save myself from having to carry a laptop and everything that goes along with it that lightens my pack considerably.

The only downside to the P2000 or any a portable hard

drive is the fragile nature of an electronic piece of equipment. And since your images are stored in it, It is a good idea to take it easy on the unit. So when I know I'm going to be in rough weather conditions I carry it in a micro Pelican box (Model #1060) which protects it from the elements and adds quite a bit of padding. As with any hard drive they are either working or not working and sooner or later every hard drive fails so I would be careful about putting all your images on the



P2000 or any other device and trusting it. So far the Epson has been fantastic and it also doubles as a great way to show off my images to art directors and models.

One other caveat is with the Nikon D2x and some of the higher resolution cameras you can't zoom into the RAW files as you can with jpeg's, and not all RAW file formats are viewable on the P2000 but for me this is a non-issue as I am usually trying to conserve battery power and not looking at the images save to make sure they are saved on the device. The P2000 also has a USB 2.0 connection for downloading to computers and it is faster than any of my card readers.

There isn't really a lot else to say about the P2000 - it just works and that is about the best endorsement a product can get. It's simple and easy to use and you can load movies and music to it as well so leave the iPod at home for those long trips. For more info on the P2000 go to www.epson.com.

The RAW file misconception

Some Photo Buyers are now requesting RAW files, but do they really want them?

Recently, a few photo buyers have stated that they will require a photographer to submit the RAW digital file if they choose to publish an image. I am not writing this article to debate whether or not a photographer should give their client a RAW file but to educate you the photo buyer on just exactly what a RAW file is and why in most cases it's probably not what you want. A high resolution TIFF file is more likely what you really need.

A RAW digital file is the raw data straight off a camera's digital sensor. A CCD or CMOS chip only reads the intensity of light and wavelength. In it's basic form a RAW digital image is actually black and white, contains no color space and is akin to color print film in that it will need to be processed to create a final image. To get a color image from a RAW file you have to process it with RAW processing software. Adobe Camera Raw (ACR) is the most popular RAW processing software but there are 10-20 different RAW processing software makers and each one processes an image a little differently. On top of that, each camera has a different RAW file format.

“A RAW DIGITAL IMAGE IS ACTUALLY BLACK AND WHITE, CONTAINS NO COLOR SPACE AND IS AKIN TO COLOR PRINT FILM IN THAT IT WILL NEED TO BE PROCESSED.”

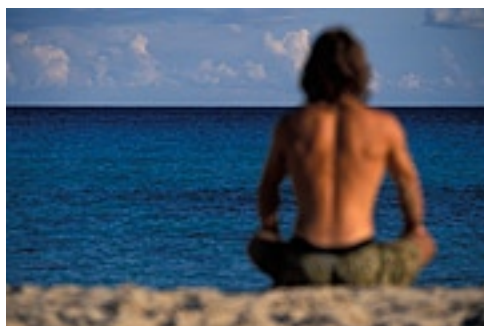
Hence, there are a few problems you might face when you request a RAW image file. You might not be able to open it because your software won't work with the file format or the camera the photographer used. RAW files also look pretty bland before they are converted to Tiff's and since you weren't there at the time the image was shot you won't know how exactly to process the image if you want to be true to the original scene. Sure you can run it by the numbers and odds are you'll be pretty close but only the photographer (if they know what they are doing) can dial it in perfectly. And lastly, for many photo buyers they don't have time to mess with all of this or they may not even know how to process a RAW file correctly.

There seems to be a misconception with photo buyers that the RAW file is the highest quality file format and they need to request the RAW file. Shooting in RAW mode is the highest quality capture format for a photographer and allows the photographer complete control over the final image. It allows the photographer to adjust exposure, white balance, saturation, contrast and color balance after the image is taken - basically all of the same things we used to do in the old days in the darkroom printing color negative film. For those of you worried about the photographer taking great liberties and manipulating the image requesting the RAW file along with a processed high resolution TIFF will reassure you that the image was not manipulated in Photoshop. Otherwise the only time you would likely need or even want the RAW file is if you are trying to sell RAW processing software.



[PORTFOLIO]

[PORTFOLIO]



Archival Stress

by Michael Clark

In the same ASMP New Mexico Digital Workflow seminar I spoke of in my editorial, Marc Mintz (<http://themacosxperts.com>) gave a doomsday presentation on how to store our digital images and it wasn't pretty. At first I thought he was just trying to scare us, so he could make some money with his consulting business, but my own experiences and advice from other computer experts leads me to believe he wasn't exaggerating at all. Each photographer chooses their own method of preserving their digital files, usually a combination of multiple external hard drives and DVD/CD's. But the gist of Marc's presentation is don't trust anything. A few choice quotes by Marc including "It is not a matter of if your data will become corrupted, it is when" and "If you lose your files - you lose your business" woke us all up pretty quickly. The scary news is the latest

"IF YOU USE YOUR HARD DRIVE OFTEN AND IT IS ON ALL THE TIME, YOU HAVE A 50/50 CHANCE OF FAILURE AFTER JUST SIX MONTHS. NOW THAT IS SCARY!"

research shows that all media, be it hard drives, DVD's or CD's, if loaded up and stored in a hermetically sealed safe for five years without any use have a 50/50 chance of failure. That's with no use! If you use your hard drive often and it is on all the time you have a significant chance of failure or corrupted data after just six months! Failure rates for hard drives run about three to five percent and normally if a hard drive runs ok for the first six months it will be ok for quite some time. Hard drives usually fail in the first six weeks if they are faulty. But even if the hard drive is not faulty every hard drive is susceptible to data corruption. If that isn't scary for the digital photographer I don't know what is.

Marc recommends a minimum of three backups, usually two hard drives and on DVD. He also recommends replacing all hard drives every 18 months to two years just in case. In addition it is also wise to have "on-line" and "offline" backups - meaning you have one back up in your office and another somewhere else off site in case of fire or some other disaster. And oddly enough, he does not recommend RAID 5 systems because they are so big you have to have two of them to have a back up and that is not the most cost effective method of backing up files. So, if you haven't gotten the point yet, be prepared to spend a lot of money keeping your digital images archived. This year I plan on spending a considerable amount of money on hard drive storage as my current drives are filling up quickly.

All of this may seem a little crazy. It did to me at first. After all, back in the "old days" just a few years ago we all stored our original film in filing cabinets - and nothing is as good as the original so if it all got burned up it all burned. All of the sudden with digital we now have backups just as good as the original and that has changed everything. Regardless, this is still planet earth and everything still obeys the third law of thermodynamics: everything tends toward chaos, meaning everything breaks down. And if you have ever had a hard drive fail, you know what a sickening feeling that can be if you didn't have it backed up as you should have.



Gypsum striations photographed in the wee hours of the morning
before sunrise in White Sands National Monument in southern New Mexico.
Hasselblad 503CW, 80mm f/2.8 Zeiss, Fuji Provia 100F