

NEWSLETTER

MICHAEL CLARK

PHOTOGRAPHY



WINTER 2015



contents

WINTER 2015 NEWSLETTER

4 editorial

Looking Back, Looking Forward. An editorial about making goals and thinking about long-term ambitions.

6 news

A new blog post on B&H's Explora blog with my 2015 New Year's Resolutions and announcing two new seminars I will be giving as part of the National Geographic Traveler Seminar series this spring.

8 workshops

Detailed information on upcoming photography workshops and seminars I'll be teaching in Boston, Washington DC, Santa Fe and Jackson, Wyoming.

12 equipment review

A review of the Other World Computing ThunderBay 4 RAID enclosure, which has become the heart of my digital content storage and archiving system.

16 on assignment

In the Fisher Towers with the Red Bull Air Force. An in-depth look at my latest grueling assignment with the Red Bull Air Force crew in the Fisher Towers near Moab, Utah, where I documented their BASE jumps and wingsuit flights off the Titan and the Kingfisher towers.

34 portfolio

A black and white landscape image of the Titan, a tower of hardened sandstone and mud, rising nearly 1,000 feet above the surrounding river valleys and canyons, in the Fisher Towers near Moab, Utah.

36 perspective

Are you Indispensable? An editorial about the new realities of working as a pro photographer and digital content creator in a world where technology is improving our tools at an incredible pace.

37 parting shot

Michael Clark set up with a Nikkor 200-400mm f/4 lens and a 1.4X Teleconverter while shooting Miles Daisher, Andy Lewis, and J.T. Holmes during a B.A.S.E. Jumping shoot in the Fisher Towers near Moab, Utah.

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Cover Image: Andy Lewis and J.T. Holmes circumnavigating the Titan while B.A.S.E. Jumping off the Fisher Towers near Moab, Utah. Opposite Page: A surfer watching the waves and assessing the best entry point at Pipeline, at the end of the rainbow, on the north shore of Oahu, Hawaii. Newsletter edited by Katherine Mast.





editorial

Looking Forward, Looking Back

Making goals for the New Year and thinking about long-term ambitions

In a recent post for B&H Photo & Video's blog *Explora*, I laid out my New Year's Resolutions for 2015, which included items like shooting more personal and motion projects, getting less stressed out on assignments, printing more of my images, meeting with clients in person more often, and continuing to have grand adventures. That blog post started out with the following: "At the end of each year, usually between Christmas and the New Year, I take some time to consider the previous year and plan for the next. During this time, I consider not just the business side of my photography career—but also the creative side and where I would like to steer my career and my work for the next year. To that end, I usually look at my five-year plan and then craft the next year's goals in light of those long-range ambitions. Hence, this list [of New Year's Resolutions] is a gathering of on-going thoughts I have had looking toward the New Year."

It is amazing to me how making goals and writing them down can be such a huge influence. I would not be where I am today without this yearly exercise. Having concrete goals written down reminds me of my dreams, my ambitions and where I want to go. I have my yearly goals hanging up next to my desk so I can refer to them often. Over the course of my career, I have achieved many of the goals written down on these lists but there are always new horizons and new goals to go after.

The list hanging next to my desk is much longer and more detailed than the ten items I wrote about in the B&H *Explora* blog post. I don't necessarily achieve every goal on the list each year. Some goals take a few years or several to check off. Generating this yearly list of goals forces me to analyze where I am at and how I fit into the photo industry, allowing me to make changes to further my career. It is also a good kick in the pants to get me motivated about personal projects and pursuing new assignments.

2015 has already kicked off with a few exciting assignments and the next few months are jam-packed with portfolio shoots, assignments, and seminars and workshops. Next month I have an ice climbing portfolio shoot and a few weeks shooting surfing in Hawaii. Here's hoping the ice is fat and the waves are huge. I hope you enjoy this issue of the Newsletter and are inspired by the radical images of the Red Bull Air Force crew.

Opposite Page: Miles Daisher, of the Red Bull Air Force, inflating his canopy while B.A.S.E. Jumping off the Titan in the Fisher Towers near Moab, Utah.

Recent Clients: Apple, Nokia, Microsoft, Red Bull Photography, Red Bull, CauseCentric Productions, New Mexico Magazine, Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, International Corporate Art, and the Adventure Cycling Association.



B&H Photo blog Post: New Year's Resolutions

Taking time to consider the previous year and plan for the next

Late last year, I was asked by B&H if I would work up a blog post in the style of New Year's Resolutions. Over the course of two weeks I assembled ten topics that I wanted to work on in 2015 on both a professional and personal basis. These resolutions included everything from shooting more personal and motion projects to getting less stressed out on assignments. What follows are a few clips from that blog post.

Shoot more personal projects: The past few years have shown me that the images I produce when shooting for my portfolio are quite marketable and often end up being licensed to a wide range of clients. In light of this fact, and because shooting personal projects and portfolio images allows me to push the envelope creatively, I need to free up some time to shoot for myself. For 2015, I need to plan some photo shoots that continue this tradition and push me on a technical and creative level to create something new and noteworthy.

Meet with clients in person: Some things never change. In the end, working as a pro photographer comes down to relationships with clients, athletes (for a lot of my work), models, and everyone else that I work with. I have found that meeting with people face to face and showing them my print portfolio in person is not only a fun exercise, but it is also still the best form of marketing.



The screenshot shows a blog post on the B&H Photo website. The header includes the B&H logo, 'The Professional's Source', and a 'DealZone' banner. Below the header is a navigation bar with links to 'Shop', 'Used List', and 'Explora'. The main content area features the title 'Michael Clark: New Year's Resolutions' and a sub-header 'By Michael Clark | 4 days ago'. The first image is a wide-angle shot of several skydivers in formation against a blue sky with wispy clouds. Below the image is a large letter 'A' followed by the text: 'At the end of each year, usually between Christmas and the New Year, I take some time to consider the previous year and plan for the next. During this time, I consider not just the business side of my photography career—but also the creative side and where I would like to steer my career and my work for the next year. To that end, I usually look at my five-year plan and then craft the next year's goals in light of those long-range ambitions. Hence, this list is a gathering of on-going thoughts I have had looking toward the New Year.'

1. Shoot more motion projects

I have been learning and working with motion and video on projects over the last four years or more; shooting these projects with both **DSLRs** and larger digital cinema cameras. These days, quite a few of my assignments include a motion or video aspect. I am not always the one shooting the footage, but motion is often a component of larger projects. As such, I need to carve out some time for personal motion projects to flex some creative muscle, further improve my skills in this area, and galvanize my go-to team for video and motion projects.

2. Shoot more personal projects

The past few years have shown me that the images I produce when shooting for my portfolio are quite marketable and often end up being licensed to a wide range of clients. In light of this fact, and because shooting personal projects and portfolio images allows me to push the envelope creatively, I need to free up some time to shoot for myself. Over the course of my career, I have created a number of images that had never been done before, like using powerful **strobes** to light up paragliders in flight. For 2015, I need to plan some photo shoots that continue this tradition and push me on a technical and creative level to create something new and noteworthy.

3. Expand my skill set

Below the text are three images of a person in a Red Bull wingsuit, standing on a reflective surface. The person is wearing a blue and red wingsuit with 'Red Bull' logos on the chest and arms. The background is a plain white surface.

Continue having a grand adventure: One of the reasons I photograph adventure sports is that I love being adventurous. Having an adventure is inspiring and makes me feel alive. On my trip to the Amazon this past year, we had a discussion about what constitutes an “adventure.” Some of us talked about risk, some of us talked about things not going as planned, but I think the best

summation was that an adventure begins when the outcome is unknown and you step out of your comfort zone. I hope to be out of my comfort zone quite a bit in 2015.

My thanks to B&H Photo & Video for including me in the mix alongside thirteen of my peers. To read the entire blog post and those of my peers visit the [B&H website](#).

National Geographic Traveler Seminars

Michael joins fellow National Geographic photographers to give one day Seminars

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Topics Covered

Anticipating Great Moments

Set yourself and your camera up to capture the decisive moment in any situation, from riding a wave to catching a moonrise. Understanding and anticipating the action that's unfolding is just as important as having your camera ready to shoot. Hear how a pro makes sure his mind and equipment are set to not miss the shot.

Sharpen Your Focusing Skills

Whether you're using autofocus, manual focus or any other method, it can be difficult to nail the focus on every frame. Hear insider tips on three different methods for capturing movement in sharp detail, beating blur, and when and where each technique is most effective.

What Makes a Great Adventure or Landscape Image?

Discover the critical elements that create stellar photographs: the right timing, moment, light, composition, and most essential of all—inspiring content. Learn how combining these elements will help the images you bring home truly reflect the once-in-a-lifetime moments and vistas you experience.

Finding the Right Perspective and Composition

The composition and perspective you choose can make or break your image. Broaden your ability to bring home more dramatic, inspiring images through a variety of unexpected perspectives and then composition techniques, using both wide-angle and telephoto lenses.

The Secret Power of Flash Photography-Outdoors!

Adding artificial lighting to your images can take them to a new level and open up a whole new world of artistic opportunities. Learn the basics of using both small and large flashes to augment natural light whether you're shooting sunny skies, glistening glaciers, shady forests, or shoreline sunsets.

Still have questions? Check out our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page or email [info@ngstravelseminars.com](#)

I am happy to announce that I will be part of the [National Geographic Traveler Seminar](#) series in 2015. It is an honor to work with *National Geographic* on these seminars. I will be giving a half day seminar in Boston on [Outdoor Adventure Photography](#) and a full day seminar with my good friend Nevada Wier in Washington D.C. on [Adventure Travel Photography](#). These one day seminars cover a lot of ground and are jam packed with information and entertaining stories. These seminars are aimed at amateurs who want to improve their photo skills and take their photography to a whole other level. They include technical details as well as inspiration—and they are quite affordable. See the next page for more information on these seminars and my upcoming workshops.

From the National Geographic Traveler website: “If you’ve ever wondered what it is that makes a photograph great—or more important, how you can make a great photograph—here’s your opportunity to learn from our experts. National Geographic’s renowned photographers shed light on every phase of the art and science of picture taking.” I hope you can join us for one of these wonderful seminars in the Spring of 2015. See you out there.

workshops

Photography Workshops

An overview of workshops and seminars with Michael Clark

Each year I teach several workshops on a variety of topics including adventure sports photography, big-wave surfing photography, camera technology, digital workflow and artificial lighting. Below is a listing of the workshops I will be teaching and seminars I will be giving in 2015. For the full description of these workshops and seminars and to find out how to register, go to the [Workshops](#) page on my website.

National Geographic Traveler Seminar: Outdoor Adventure Photography

Boston, MA - March 22, 2015

Creating images that capture incredible outdoor adventures requires technical savvy, familiarity with the environment, and an eye for composition. National Geographic photographer Michael Clark will inspire you with the drama of his adventure photography. You will learn how to apply his techniques to take your own outdoor photography skills to a new level—whether it's kayaking a canyon, hiking a mountain, exploring a National Park, or simply taking in a breathtaking view near your own backyard.

For more information on this one day seminar visit the [National Geographic Traveler Photography Seminar](#) website.

National Geographic Traveler Seminar: Adventure Travel Photography

Washington, D.C. - April 12, 2015

If you've ever traveled to an exotic location or dream about exploring one, this seminar will give you tools to capture the true adventures you experience more skillfully. National Geographic photographers Nevada Wier and Michael Clark will share strategies and techniques to help you become a more versatile photographer when you travel to new surroundings. Learn how to capture the essence of new cultures and people, take great action shots, and work with any type of light. With insights from the pros, you'll come away with a creative approach that brings more emotional impact to your images and enriches your journeys.

For more information on this one day seminar visit the [National Geographic Traveler Photography Seminar](#) website.

Adventure Photography: A Multimedia Experience

Santa Fe, NM - May 11-14, 2015

Adventure photography can be an adventure in itself, involving breathtaking locations, extreme conditions, and working with elite athletes in risky situations. It requires a

host of skills, including technical excellence with the camera, familiarity with a sport, and the ability to be mindful of your goals and safety at all times. Capturing motion footage and still images adds even more complexity and equipment.

During our five days together, we work with incredible athletes in easy-to-access locations to create stellar still images and compelling motion footage. We concentrate on creating unique images of rock climbing, whitewater kayaking, mountain biking, and trail running. Working with elite athletes and using Northern New Mexico's breathtaking landscape as our backdrop, we explore innovative ways to capture the essence of each sport and location.

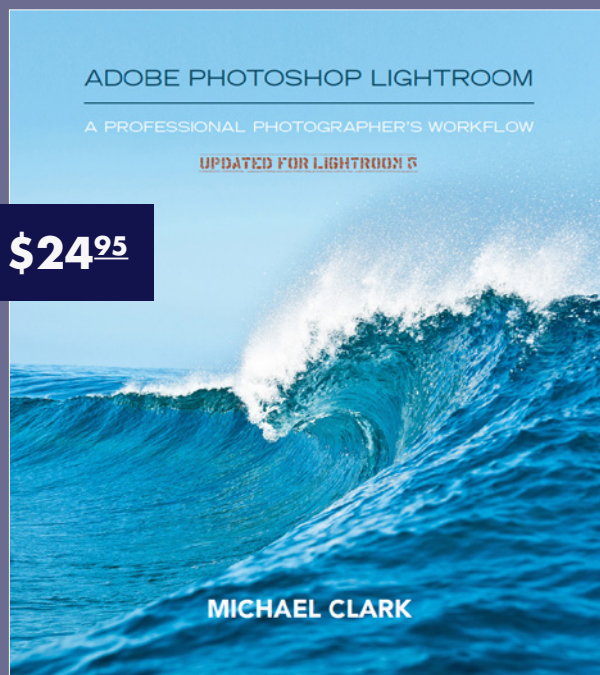
Topics covered include research and preparation; composition and camera angles; equipment selection and utilization; use of natural light, fill flash, and battery-powered strobes; autofocus techniques; and the all-important time management. Classroom time involves daily editing and critiquing sessions, as well as one-on-one meetings with Michael. In addition, Michael shares his experiences in—and insights into—the adventure marketplace, elaborating on career development, portfolios, and how to photograph for stock, editorial, and commercial clients.

Bring the excitement of adventure sports to your work as you master the skills to create top-notch still and motion content.

To register for this workshop please visit the [Santa Fe Workshops](http://SantaFeWorkshops.com) website. To get an idea of the types of images we will create see the next page.

ADOBE LIGHTROOM WORKFLOW

A COMPLETE WORKFLOW FROM CAPTURE TO OUTPUT BY MICHAEL CLARK



\$24⁹⁵

The Adobe Photoshop Lightroom Workflow, a 435-page e-book, is a workshop in book form. Updated for Adobe Lightroom 5 and Photoshop CS6, this e-book was completely re-written and presents a workflow that can be adapted by any photographer, professional or amateur. I can honestly say that I have not seen any other book on the market today that includes as much detailed and comprehensive information as this e-book does on digital workflow.

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

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Aaron Miller climbing Crystal Clear Arete (5.12c), an exposed route with a steep arete in Diablo Canyon near Santa Fe, New Mexico. This image gives you a taste of the types of images we will create during the Adventure Photography Workshop at the Santa Fe Workshops in Santa Fe, NM.

Mentor Series Photo Trek – Grand Tetons

Jackson, WY - June 25 – 28, 2015

I will be leading this Photo Trek with fellow photographers Layne Kennedy and Bob Smith. A message from Bob Smith: "Nature photography has been my passion for the past 20 years. Our subjects will include iconic landscapes along with huge scenes of the West"

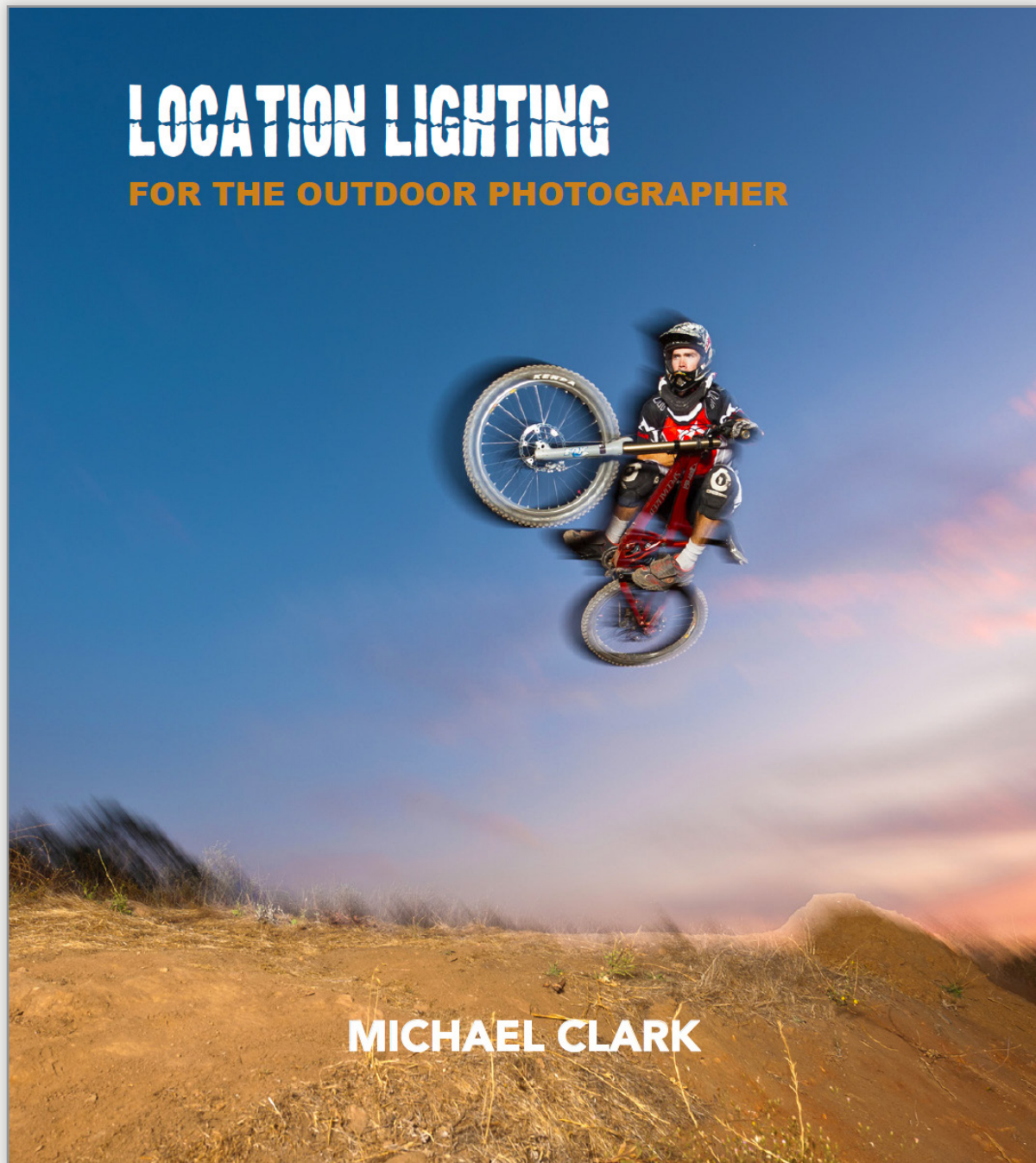
Highlights of the workshop will include sunrise shoots at Glacier View Turnout and Schwabachers Landing, where you will witness the mountain peaks and early morning light perfectly reflected in the glass-like surface of the Snake River. Photograph the iconic barns and homesteads

at Mormon Row and views of the Cathedral Group of peaks from the Chapel of the Transfiguration. We will be on the lookout for moose, elk, deer, eagles and American bison at Jenny Lake, and beavers tending their dams at Oxbow Bend.

A visit to a local ranch will provide an exclusive opportunity to photograph fly fishermen and ranchers with their horses and other livestock, as well as cowboys in their typical gear. Experience the quiet beauty and history of one of our nation's most cherished national parks and emblems of the American Frontier. For more information and to register for this photo trek please visit the [Mentor Series](#) website. **Use Code "MC50" for a \$50 discount.**

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equipment review

Other World Computing ThunderBay 4

A review of OWC's top-end, large-capacity storage solution

TECHNO-BABBLE DISCLAIMER: *This article contains quite a bit of jargon about RAID enclosures. For those not familiar with the various forms of RAID and how a RAID system works, I highly recommend reading the excellent [Wikipedia](#) page that discusses RAID in detail.*

Last fall, I upgraded my entire computer setup and with that upgrade I was also forced to replace the hard drives and RAID enclosures that I use to store and backup my images and motion content. I realize a review of an external hard drive enclosure is not as exciting as a review of a new lens or camera, but for the pro photographer, having a fast, robust and well-thought out backup and storage system is paramount. Hence, when I upgraded my computer system, I set out to find the fastest and most reliable storage option available that could deal with huge image files and the 6K video footage produced by the RED Epic, which I use for motion projects..

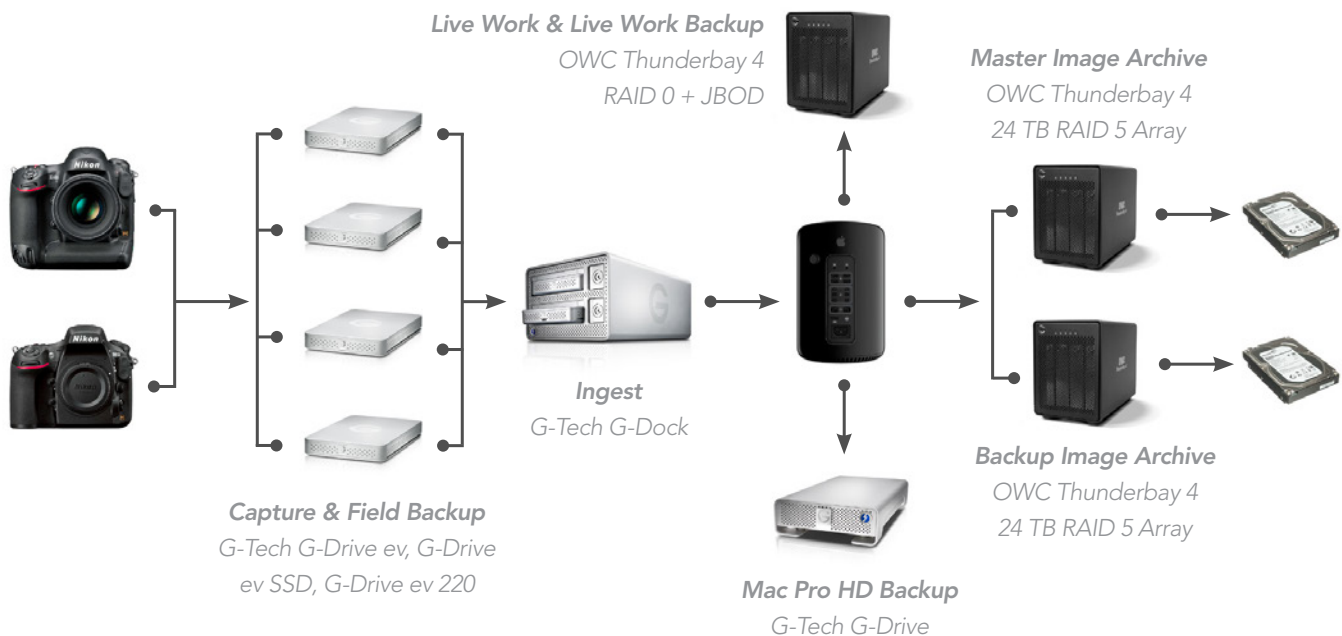
My old system was an Apple Mac Pro tower with multiple internal hard drives and a series of external RAID 5 enclosures, which were all connected to my tower via Firewire 800. My old Mac Pro didn't have the option to connect Thunderbolt devices. With the new computer, I chose to update all of my external RAID enclosures and all of my external hard drives with Thunderbolt or Thunderbolt 2 devices. My new system is a top-end, maxed



The Other World Computing (OWC) ThunderBay 4 enclosure (shown above), which can hold up to four 6 TB hard drives. The ThunderBay 4 can be configured in just about any RAID configuration you can dream up and it can also house both Solid-State hard drives or Hard Disk Drives for the ultimate in flexibility. Combining powerful software with blazing I/O speeds and a Thunderbolt 2 connection, this unit is hard to beat at any price-point.

out 15-inch Retina Apple Macbook Pro laptop, which is wicked fast. I have the Macbook Pro mounted in a [Henge Dock Vertical Docking Station](#), which helps to keep all the connecting cables coming out of it organized and out of sight. At some point, I may bring in an Apple Mac Pro for the office if I need more computing power, but for now the Macbook Pro is working quite well for my needs.

After a ton of research, including setting up a spreadsheet to calculate, quantify and compare the Input/



Backing up huge quantities of images can be daunting. For most amateur photographers, the fewer number of images and hard drives can greatly simplify this process, but for the pro the terabytes add up quickly. Above you can see my entire storage and archive workflow. I use the G-Tech G-Dock and various portable G-Drive ev HDs to backup my images in the field and this system allows for a very quick and simple ingest workflow once I am back in the office. My office storage consists of three OWC ThunderBay 4 enclosures: one with a RAID 0 configuration and two with RAID 5 configurations. All of my images are also archived onto individual 3 TB hard drives and stored in a safety deposit box at my bank.

Output (I/O) speeds of various RAID enclosures vs. the price/terabyte, I purchased three of the [Other World Computing \(OWC\) ThunderBay 4 RAID](#) enclosures. In my research, I found quite a few respectable and very capable RAID enclosures that would work for my needs. CalDigit, G-Technology, and Areca all make fantastic products that will work for storing and backing up images in a robust manner, but it was the OWC ThunderBay 4 that was the most economical, and even more important, allowed for a much more flexible storage solution. The OWC ThunderBay 4 connects with a Thunderbolt 2 connection, which means it is a bit faster than the normal Thunderbolt options and also allows for a 4K monitor to be added to the daisy chain of hard drive enclosures. Going with a Thunderbolt 2 connection also means that the

I/O speeds of the second, third, fourth and fifth hard drives connected in a daisy chain setup won't suffer too much in terms of transfer speeds like they would using the older version of Thunderbolt. Thunderbolt allows up to six devices to be daisy-chained to one port.

The ThunderBay 4 can hold up to four 6 TB hard drives whereas some other Thunderbolt 2 RAID enclosures would only work with 5 TB hard drives. On top of these features, the ThunderBay 4 allows the hard drives to be set up as a JBOD (Just A Bunch of Drives) system or in any type of RAID configuration you could ever need. In fact, you can set up two of the drives as a RAID 1 or JBOD and the other two as a RAID 0 all within the same enclosure. Practically any configuration you can dream up is

achievable with the OWC ThunderBay 4. This is possible because the ThunderBay 4 uses [SoftRAID](#) software to build and maintain the RAID configuration. In the past, software RAID systems have been less than reliable and a fair bit slower than hardware RAID solutions. SoftRAID has changed all of that so that the ThunderBay 4 is as fast, if not faster, than many hardware RAID enclosures (depending on the drives you put in the enclosure) and is just as reliable, if not more so, than their hardware RAID counterparts.

The SoftRAID software is very easy to use and also comes with some very advanced features, including the ability to monitor all of the hard drives in any and all RAID configurations, a much faster rebuild time than a normal hardware RAID if a hard drive fails and the software also has the ability to predict when a hard drive is about to fail so you can replace it before you get into too much trouble. One of the issues with using a program like SoftRAID is that you have to be careful when updating your computer operating system (like MAC OSX). Luckily, the fine folks at SoftRAID are super attentive to these issues and you can check their website for the latest info on when it is safe to update your OS, and if there are any issues, how to deal with them.

Aside from the stellar RAID configurations and the incredible versatility of the ThunderBay 4, it is also a very well built enclosure with all metal construction—save for the rubberized feet. It also includes an excellent cooling fan that keeps the HDs cool and is very quiet for how effective it is. I have these three enclosures sitting on my desktop just next to my monitor and while they are audible, they are a quiet whisper compared to my older RAID 5 enclosures. And since most hard drives fail due to

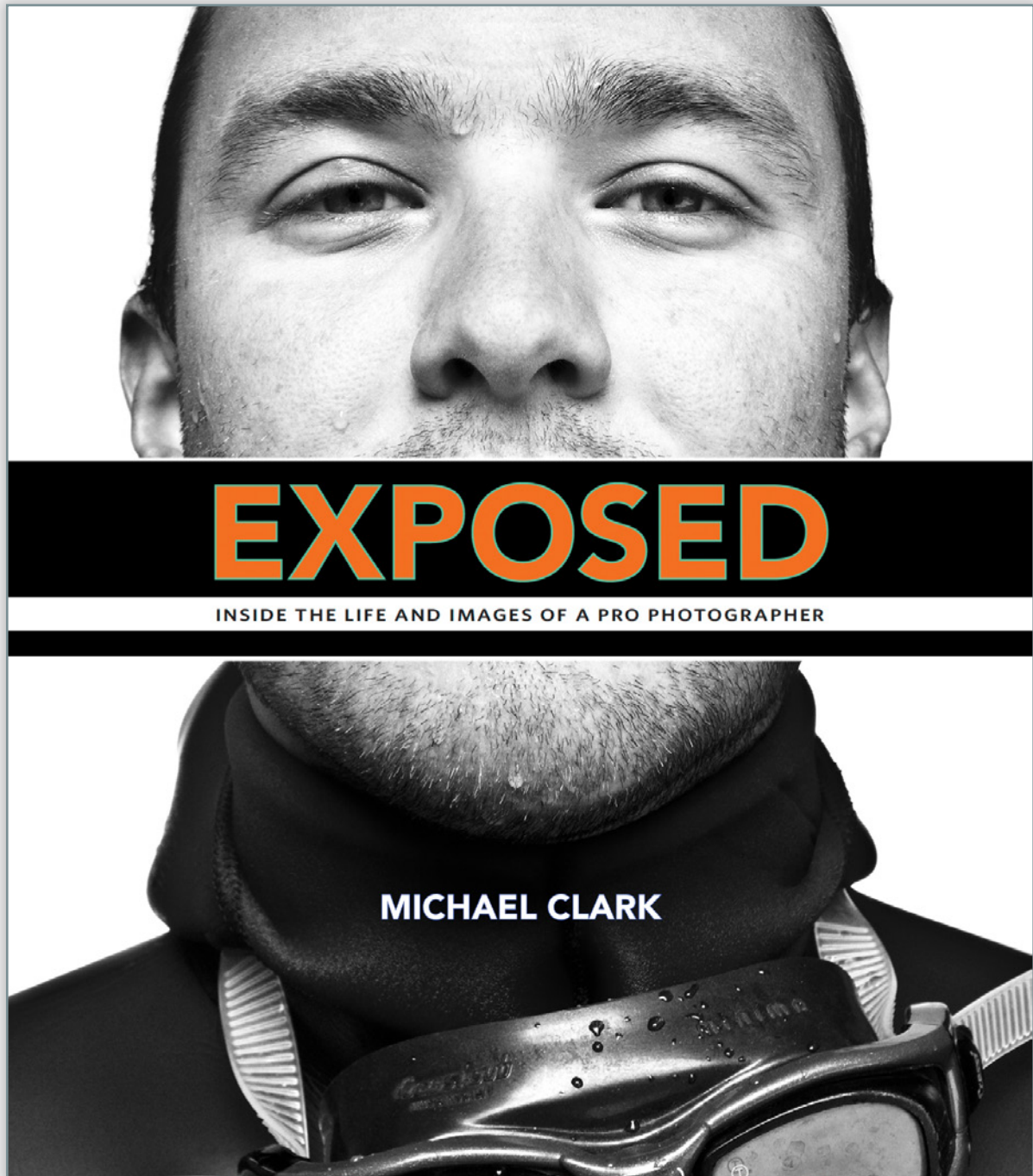
overheating, I am pretty impressed with how cold these enclosures keep the hard drives. The ThunderBay 4 enclosures also have vibration dampening built into the enclosures, which helps to keep the hard drives safe from vibrations that might affect the needle reading the hard disks inside the hard drives.

In terms of speed, my 12 TB RAID 0 enclosure achieves read/write speeds of around 600 to 750 MB/sec, which is blazing fast for a non-SSD hard drive set up. My 24 TB RAID 5 enclosure clocks in with read/write speeds in the neighborhood of 490 to 580 MB/sec. For comparison, a normal hard disk drive on it's own has read/write speeds anywhere from 80 to 180 MB/sec depending on the hard drive and the connection. With the blistering read/write speeds of my ThunderBay 4, I can easily work with high bit-rate, 1080p video in real time. These units also make data transfers a very quick and painless process.

As I said earlier in this review, there are many good options out there for storage, what you choose comes down to your needs, what you can afford and the options you need. Hence, this isn't one of those reviews saying this is better than everything else out there. This is a review discussing how the ThunderBay 4 is more flexible than most other options and just as robust and secure. All of the other options I found on the market for RAID enclosures offered either RAID 0 or RAID 5, and a few offered JBOD as a separate option, but none of them were flexible enough to offer JBOD and RAID in the same enclosure. Besides flexibility, the hardware RAID options were anywhere from 50% to 110% more expensive than the OWC ThunderBay 4. In the end, it was a no-brainer to go for the ThunderBay 4. For more information on the OWC ThunderBay 4 visit the [Other World Computing](#) website.

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on assignment:

FISHER TOWERS



*J.T. Holmes flying around the Fisher Towers after B.A.S.E.
jumping off the Titan near Moab, Utah.*



MILES [̄]ABOVE

THE RED BULL AIR FORCE

Over the last five years, I have had the honor of working quite a bit with the Red Bull Air Force, which is an elite team of aerial acrobats. Last fall, I got the call to work with them again. For this assignment, Miles Daisher and J.T. Holmes were looking to B.A.S.E. jump off several of the tallest formations in the Fisher Towers near Moab, Utah. The Fisher Towers are giant sandstone pillars that rise over 900-feet above the canyons around them. For rock climbers these formations, make up some of the scariest climbing anywhere on Earth.

The idea for this shoot was that Miles and J.T. would climb the towers and jump off them. Chris McNamara, a well-known, hard-core Yosemite climber who has also done several routes in the Fisher Towers, was on board to set up the ropes we would climb using “ascenders,” which grip the rope and allow us to climb the fixed ropes to the top of the tower. Andy Lewis, known by his nickname “Sketchy Andy,” also joined the team as he had jumped from the towers several times before and as a local, had quite a bit of knowledge about the area and the possibilities. Over the course of three days Miles, J.T. and Andy jumped from the Titan and Kingfisher towers, making more than half a dozen jumps on each tower.

As a climber, I have always found the Fisher Towers to be a mystical and beautiful place. They are much more majestic than many of the formations in the nearby National Parks. While I was only ascending ropes with mechanical ascenders, a.k.a. “jumars,” and not actually climbing the formations directly, it was still a wild experience to get on top of these famous formations. Just getting on top of these towers is pretty epic, no matter what the means of ascent. Watching Miles, J.T. and Andy jump off made the experience even more phenomenal.

This shoot was incredibly taxing and difficult, as are all B.A.S.E. jumping shoots. There is generally only a second or two to catch all the action before the jumpers are just a dot in the sky below. In the case of this shoot, ascending close to a 1,000-feet to get to the top of the Titan was a four-hour ordeal that took its toll physically. On the first day, the wind shut us down fairly quickly. Andy and Miles both jumped that first day but reported that conditions were quite serious and not optimum for multiple jumps.

On the second day, Miles did a wingsuit B.A.S.E. jump off the Titan. As you can see on the next page, he didn’t just jump off it, he did a full gainer (a backflip) off the top and flew into a nearby canyon. When jumping off the Titan, one has to get some distance away from the cliff face as there are parts of the tower jutting out below the launching point. This fact, and Miles’ choice to do a backflip, made his wingsuit flight one of the most spectacular feats of the entire 3-day shoot. For this shot, I was stationed on a rib of the Titan with a 400mm lens and blasted away at 11 frames per second to create this composite image showing his movement. For the second day, I purposefully stayed off the top of the Titan because Red Bull brought in a Cineflex helicopter designed for aerial cinematography to cover the action.

Also on the second day, Andy Lewis made a successful jump off the top of a nearby mesa and landed on top of the Kingfisher Tower. After repacking his parachute on top of the Kingfisher, he then B.A.S.E. jumped off it. This is only the second time anyone has ever landed on the Kingfisher Tower because it has a very small landing zone with an extremely high risk factor if anything went wrong. Andy ended up landing on the smallest part of the tower’s summit, which was about four feet wide. His feet



were right on the edge of the cliff when he touched down, and luckily his parachute continued forward, pulling him farther onto the top of the tower. If anything had gone wrong on this landing Andy would have most likely fallen to his death. "Sketchy Andy" certainly lived up to his name with this jump, but even more so, he showed his incredible flying skills.

On this assignment I was shooting still images alongside the Red Bull video crew, who were working on the last episode of the [Miles Above](#) series. Miles Above is a ten part video series that goes in-depth with members of the Red Bull Air Force and shows what they do on a day-to-day basis. Click on the [video screenshot](#) (at right) to watch the last episode of that series, which showcases the Fisher Towers and all the action depicted here. This last episode is the longest in the entire series and really shows the action from the Fisher Towers well from a wide variety of perspectives. It also helps to make sense of some of the wild stunts these guys pulled off during this shoot.

As always, when working with a video crew, it is a partnership where we try to stay out of each other's way. While I always like to be as close to the action as possible, for parts of this shoot it just wasn't possible to get into position because of time constraints and because I was working alongside the video crew. As a result, I was

often shooting from the ground with a Nikkor 200-400mm lens, a 1.4X Teleconverter and a giant tripod.

For part of this assignment, I was often in places that the video crew wasn't willing or able to access. On the last day, I climbed the Titan with Miles and Chris. I photographed Miles on our ascent as he climbed the fixed lines below me. It was a long haul to get to the top of the Titan—just before sunset but we made it. While Miles checked out a few other exit points, I got into position to get a shot of Miles B.A.S.E. jumping off the same exit that he used for his wingsuit flight. After four hours of work getting to

the top of the Titan, I shot one sequence of images as Miles leapt over the edge. After Miles jumped, Chris and I spent the next few hours rappelling off the Titan and walked out in the dark. It was a rough hike out as the easy hiking trail seemed much more

complex than I had remembered in the dark.

As always when shooting with the Red Bull Air Force, and especially with Miles, whose passion is effusive, there is never a dull moment and I relish the time I get to spend with them. It was also great to meet and work with J.T., Andy and Chris, who aren't members of the Red Bull Air Force but came on board to support and participate in this adventure alongside Miles. For more information on the Red Bull Air Force and their latest exploits check out their website at <http://redbullairforce.com>.

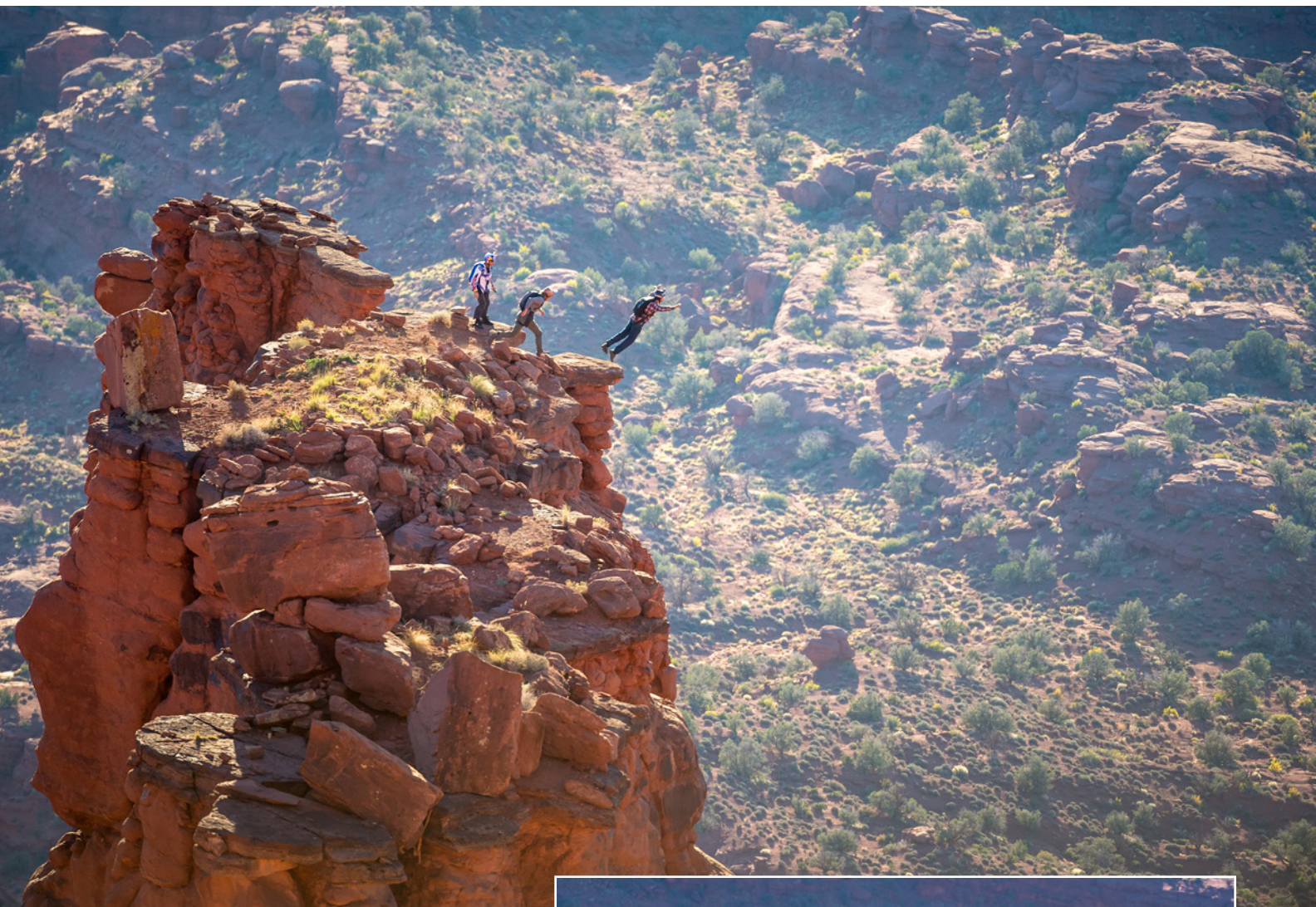


Click on the image above to check out the last episode of the Miles Above series that featuring the Fisher Towers. Above, Miles flies his wingsuit. Image via his GoPro.



Page 19: A composite image of Miles Daisher doing a full gainer (a.k.a. backflip) while wingsuit B.A.S.E. jumping off the Titan in the Fisher Towers. Above: Miles Daisher checking out an alternate exit point on top of the Titan just before B.A.S.E. jumping off it in the Fisher Towers near Moab, Utah. Right: The Titan rising above the Fisher Towers at sunset.





Above: J.T. Holmes and Andy Lewis getting a running start to their B.A.S.E. jump off the Kingfisher Tower in the Fisher Towers, while Miles Daisher looks on. Right: Andy Lewis coming in for a spicy landing on top of the Kingfisher Tower after launching from a nearby cliff face. Andy stuck the landing, repacked his parachute and then B.A.S.E. jumped off the Kingfisher.



Right: A sign pointing the way to the Fisher Towers. Below: Miles Daisher launching off the Titan at sunset with Fisher Valley and Castleton Spire below him. After this image was shot, Chris McNamara and I spent the next three hours rappelling off the Titan and hiking back out to the cars.



"People ask me if I am crazy. If you aren't doing what you love then I think you're crazy!" – Miles Daisher

portfolio





Are You Indispensable?

by Michael Clark

Every four years, I start working on a new five-year plan to help me make sense of the industry, consider my place in it and to help chart the path I need to take to achieve my goals. From my conversations with camera manufacturers, it is my understanding that they intend to build cameras that can replicate a scene as well as our eyes do and, from what I can tell, they are not far off from that goal. Hence, the question for most professional photographers, and the one I posed to myself in my latest five-year plan, is how do we survive in a world where anyone can produce good images? Please understand that I don't mean to infer that excellent cameras make excellent photographers. We all know this is far from the truth, but we also know that "good images" are good enough these days for an increasing majority of clients.

Over the last few years, I have done some serious thinking on this subject. What I have come up with is that we as professionals have always had to be more than just great photographers. We need to create stand-out, top-quality images but we also have to be professional, easy to work with, excellent problem solvers, fun to be around, and we will have to expand our skill sets into areas that have a greater barrier to entry—like high-end video work. In this social media landscape, we will also need to build a following of people who are not in the photography industry, so that our clients have a built in "bonus" marketing stream just by hiring us. In the end, art buyers and art

directors still need to rely on professionals who can come back with the goods. Being a professional photographer has always been a service industry, and now more than ever, what type of service we provide and how well we are equipped to help solve our clients' problems is just as important, if not more so, than it has ever been. More than ever, we need to make ourselves an indispensable part of our client's team. Perhaps this really is nothing new; succeeding as a pro photographer has always been about hard work, exceeding your client's expectations and delivering jaw-dropping work. These days the industry is just more crowded than in years past, which means it is even harder to stand out from the crowd.

Our individual personalities now matter more than ever. Working as a pro these days it feels more like a popularity contest than at any other time I can remember in the last eighteen years. Maybe it always was a popularity contest. Those photographers who have excellent relationship skills, those who are very persuasive, and have the talent to create excellent images, will be at the head of the class. Going forward, I can see a time where only a handful of the top photographers in each genre are able to make a full-time living and everyone else is scrambling for work or working part time to make ends meet. How do you make yourself indispensable? I believe the answers lay in the paragraphs above, and in working harder than your competition in every respect.

parting shot



Michael Clark set up with a Nikkor 200-400mm f/4 lens and a 1.4X Teleconverter while shooting Miles Daisher, Andy Lewis, and J.T. Holmes during a B.A.S.E. Jumping shoot in the Fisher Towers near Moab, Utah.

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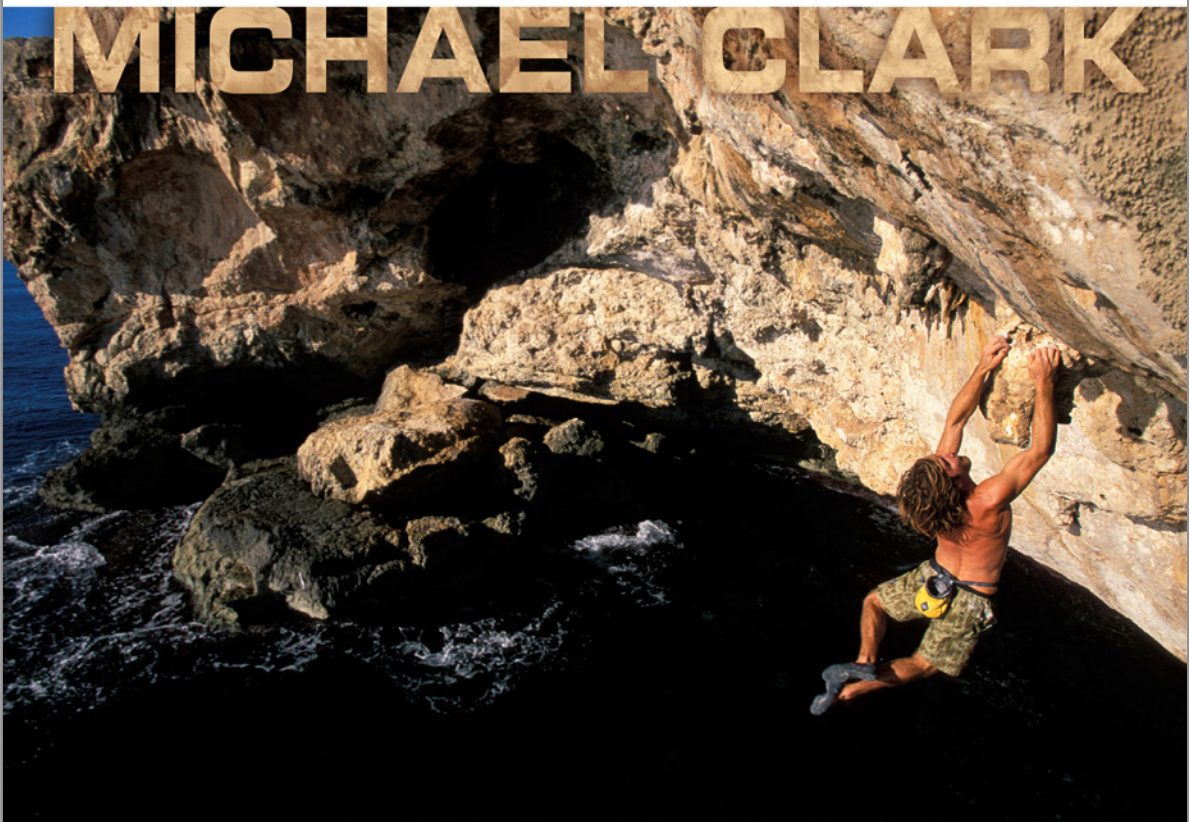


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