

NEWSLETTER

MICHAEL CLARK

PHOTOGRAPHY



WINTER 2018



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Cover Image: Ben Rueck working the moves on Homoculus (5.14a/b) at Rifle Mountain Park near Rifle, Colorado. Opposite Page: Cobin Hall skiing at SkiSantaFe, the ski area above Santa Fe, New Mexico. This image was shot to test out the Nikon D850's autofocus.





editorial

Hang Ten

Better late than never

Happy New Year! This issue of the Newsletter is a little late in coming as it was originally meant to be the Fall 2017 issue, not the Winter 2018 edition, but as they say “better late than never.” Last fall was quite busy, and packed with a ton of travel. Hence, the delay. 2017 turned out to be one of the best years of my career. It was filled with a number of career highlights and adventurous assignments as well as some incredible speaking engagements.

I was honored to finish up 2017 by speaking at the [National Geographic Exodus Aveiro Photo Fest](#) in Aveiro, Portugal. That festival was an incredible experience, both because of the amazing people who set up the festival, and also because of the attendees, who were amazingly hospitable. Kudos to Bernardo Conde and his team for putting on what was one of the best photography festivals I have ever been a part of. In addition to the festival, it was very exciting to hang out with some of my peers during the festival and afterwards on the five-day road trip set up by the organizers. It isn't often you get to compare notes and have in-depth, face-to-face discussions with your peers like we did at the Exodus Fest last month. I came back inspired and extremely motivated to get to work in 2018!

Aside from being buried in work last fall and seemingly

traveling non-stop, I was also waiting for the [Elinchrom Adventure School](#), featured here in this Newsletter, to go live online—and it did so in mid-December. The image on the cover of this issue and on the next page are both from a shoot I did for the Adventure School last summer. And the feature article in this issue of the Newsletter is about that shoot.

This issue of the Newsletter also includes a review of the Nikon D850, announcements for some exciting new workshops I will be teaching next year and also an excerpt from my updated e-book [Location Lighting for the Outdoor Photographer](#), which came out late last summer just after I released my Summer 2017 Newsletter. My Location Lighting e-book got a massive update and now includes detailed info on some very advanced lighting techniques and a whole lot more. I hope you enjoy this issue of the Newsletter. Let me know what you think!

Opposite Page: Delaney Miller working the moves on Homoculus (5.14a/b) at Rifle Mountain Park near Rifle, Colorado.

Recent Clients: Red Bull Photography, New Balance, Sekonic, Mac Group US, CreativeLIVE, New Mexico Magazine, Santa Fe Institute, B&H Photo & Video, Getty Images and Foto Care NYC.



Location Lighting for the Outdoor Photographer

A massive update to my Location Lighting e-book

Over the last five months I have been slowly updating and adding tons of new content to my e-book entitled [Location Lighting for the Outdoor Photographer](#). I am happy to announce that I have finished updating the e-book and the new 2nd Edition is now available for purchase on my website. I have updated every chapter in the e-book and have massively expanded a few of them as well, including Chapter 1, which covers lighting gear, and also Chapter 7, which covers Advanced Lighting Techniques.

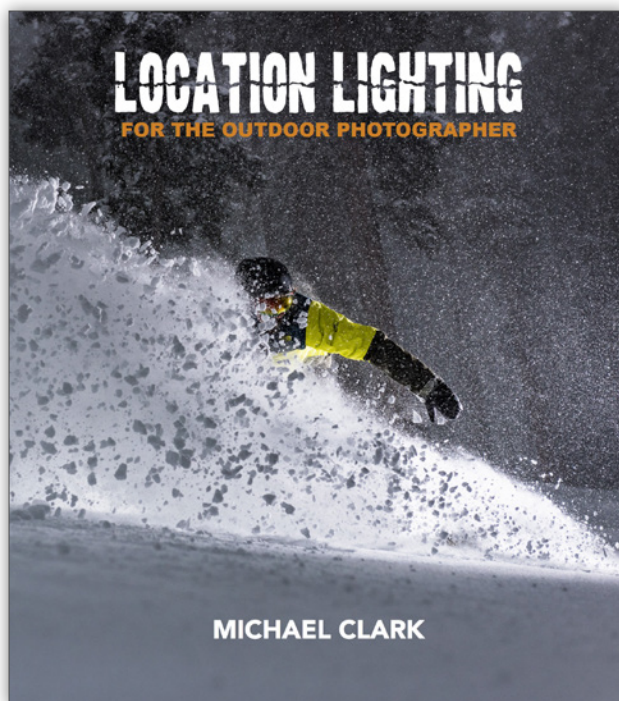
There are so many lighting books to choose from these days you might be wondering, “How is this one different?” This is the only book that I know of that concentrates on lighting techniques for the outdoor and adventure photographer specifically. This book gets down to the nuts and bolts of using artificial lighting in remote locations. As with my other books, I hold nothing back. The opening chapter has a detailed analysis of all the

battery-powered strobes on the market today and compares them head-to-head to help you make a smart decision when considering new gear. In that chapter, we also discuss flashlights, reflectors, and Speedlights. 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 using artificial lighting for the outdoor photographer.

When I published the first version this e-book, way back in February 2013, Elinchrom’s Hi-Sync and Profoto’s HSS technology didn’t even exist yet. Elinchrom hadn’t brought out

the ELB 400 and Profoto had not yet introduced the B1. Hence, in this new updated version of the Location Lighting e-book, I have massively expanded those chapters dealing with these new advanced lighting technologies and I discuss in-depth how some of my best known Hi-Sync images have been made. This e-book includes

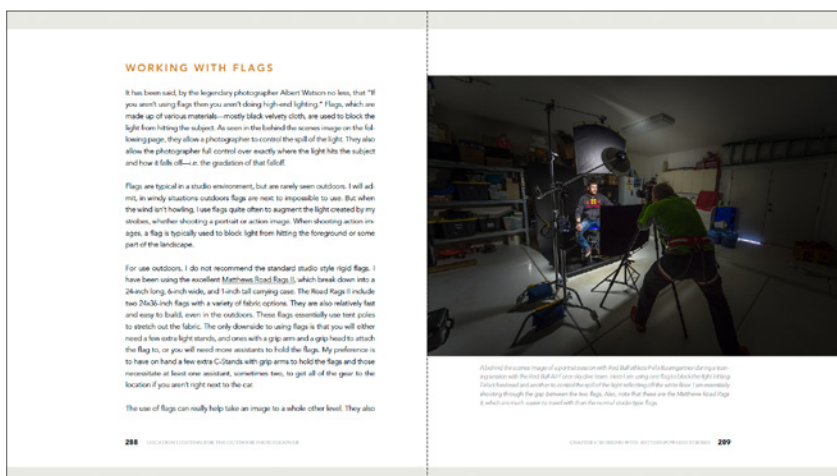


step-by-step instructions on how to achieve an accurate flash exposure when using Hi-Sync (HS) techniques. For a full list of all the updated and new sections in the book pop on over to my [website](#) for the full description.

If you are looking to take your photography to the next level this book can help you accelerate that progression. For photographers, both amateurs and working pros, looking to take advantage of the new technology built into the latest battery-powered strobes, this book will help you to figure out how to use these technologies and also how to take advantage of them to create new and exciting images. Over the last five years or more that I have been playing with Hypersync and Elinchrom's Hi-Sync, I have created an entirely new portfolio of work that really stands out from anything I did before. Especially in the adventure photography and location portraiture genres, these new high speed flash sync technologies are allowing photographers to create images that were never possible before.

Above are a few screenshots of double-truck spreads from the updated e-book. As you can see this is no fluffy e-book. With 361 pages, this is a full on book and it is significantly longer than many printed books on similar topics. This e-book is high resolution and looks great on any computer, tablet or mobile phone.

To purchase the updated e-book [Location Lighting for the](#)



[Outdoor Photographer](#) visit my website. Download this e-book and take your photography to the next level. If you'd like to see a sampling of what is included in Location Lighting for the Outdoor Photographer you can download the Introduction and Table of Contents [here](#).

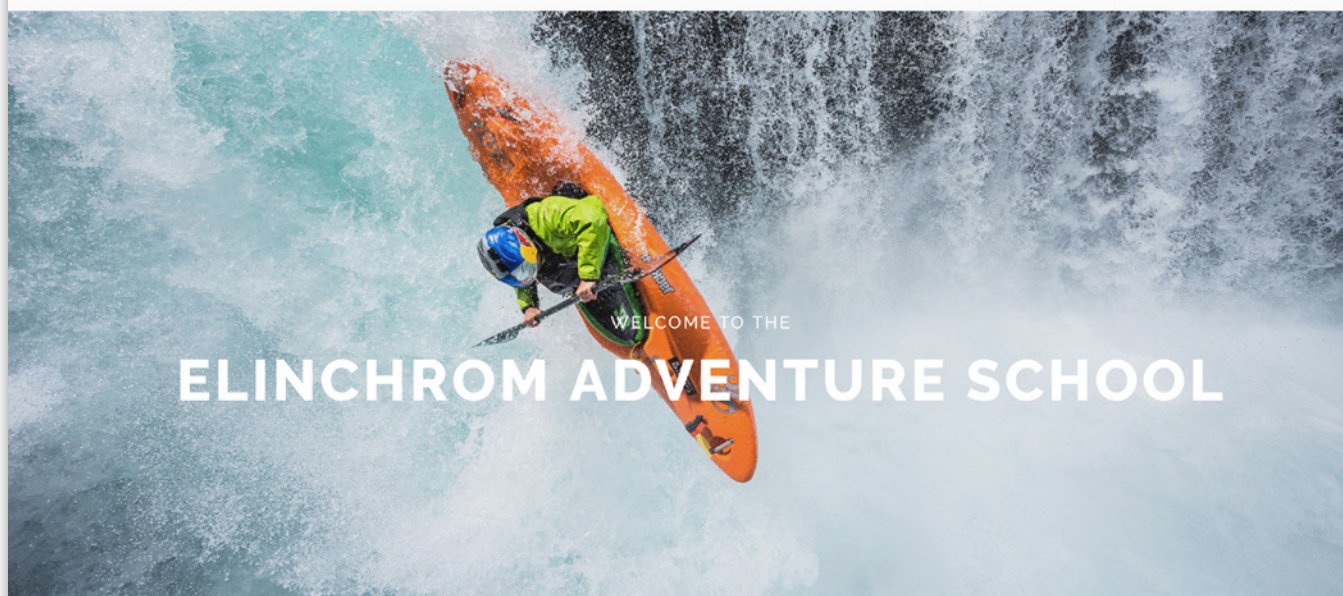
Also, please note that I have increased the price of this e-book to \$28 USD, which reflects the incredibly hard work put into it over the last five months. Also note that there is no discount or upgrade offer for the new version of the book because I have added so much more material, revamped the entire book and it took so long to put it together.

Elinchrom Adventure School

The Elinchrom Adventure School website launches with two projects by Michael Clark



HOME ARTICLES



“Adventure sports photography is a demanding genre that requires not only excellent photography skills but also a deep understanding of the outdoors. Our goal is to inspire and educate you while promoting passion, dedication and craftsmanship.”

— MICHAEL CLARK, ADVENTURE SCHOOL DEAN AND REDBULL PHOTOGRAPHER

The [Elinchrom Adventure School](#) is a free, online educational website for photographers looking to take their adventure photography to the next level. To access the website, you will have to input your name and email address. That is the only cost to enter. Once inside, you will find an array of behind the scenes videos detailing the gear used for each photo shoot, behind the scenes videos showing exactly how each shoot was pulled off and of course the

final images produced. In addition there are links to a wide range of other articles showing how Elinchrom lighting gear was used to create some adventurous images.

For more info on the Adventure School check out the behind the scenes article starting on page 26. Check out the content on the [Elinchrom Adventure School](#).

2017 International Photography Awards

Ice Climbing image featured in Extreme Sport and Editorial Sports Categories



I am honored that the image above was included among the winners of the 2017 International Photography Awards in both the Professional Sports/Extreme Sports category and also in the Professional Editorial, Sports category. There are some stunning images in this years [collection of winners](#). The Mission of the International Photography Awards, from their website, is to “salute the achievements of the world’s finest photographers, to discover new and emerging talent and to promote the appreciation of photography.” In addition to being among the winners on the IPA website, my image along with many of the other winning images will be exhibited in an

exclusive show in New York, during the week leading up to the Lucie Awards gala. The Best of Show will then travel to various countries to be included in photo festivals, galleries, and other photography related events.

This image got third place in both categories. My thanks to the IPA Jury for selecting my image to be included among so many amazing images. It is always a thrill to have your work recognized, and especially so in such a prestigious photography competition like the IPA awards. Check out all the winning images on the [International Photography Awards website](#).

workshops

Photography Workshops

An overview of workshops and photo treks with Michael Clark

Each year I teach a few workshops on a variety of topics including adventure sports photography, big-wave surfing photography, and artificial lighting. Below is a listing of the workshops I will be teaching in 2018. For more information on these workshops, and to find out how to register, go to the [Workshops](#) page on my blog.

Cutting-Edge Lighting Techniques

Santa Fe Workshops - Santa Fe, New Mexico

July 29 - August 3, 2018

How do you separate your work from the pack? Do you want to break down the barriers that are keeping your photography from standing out? In the last five years, flash manufacturers have added some incredible technology to their strobes. Michael has been working with these new flash technologies for more than seven years and has even helped perfect the technology. High Speed Sync and Hi-Sync (HS) allow us to freeze action like never before, light subjects from ridiculous distances, and easily create lit portraits with incredibly shallow depth of field. In short, we can create images that were never possible before.

Designed for intermediate to experienced photographers, this 5-day workshop concentrates on creating unique images using cutting-edge lighting technology. Working

with elite athletes, dancers and models both in the studio and out on location, we aim to create images that are not easy to duplicate. Topics covered during the week include high speed sync flash techniques, multiple exposure flash techniques, freezing motion, stroboscopic lighting, advanced portrait lighting, motion blur and rear curtain strobe techniques, and mixing continuous lighting with strobes.

Classroom time includes daily editing, group critiques, and one-on-one meetings with Michael. In addition, Michael shares his insights and experiences in the photo industry, including career development, portfolios, and how to shoot for editorial and commercial clients.

Cost: \$1,695 + \$325 Model & Location Fee

Visit the [Santa Fe Workshops](#) website for more information on this workshop and to register.

Adventure Sports Photography

Summit Workshops - Jackson, Wyoming

September 8 -13, 2018

Instructors: Corey Rich, Lucas Gilman, Brad Smith, Dave Black, Jen Edney, Ryan Taylor, Bo Bridges, Scott Willson, Ron Taniwaki, and Michael Clark



An image created during the CreativeLIVE class entitled "Advanced Lighting for Adventure Photography." In this image, Ian Caldwell is climbing Rude Boys (5.13c) at Smith Rock State Park near Redmond, Oregon and is lit by a single Elinchrom ELB 1200 strobe. For more information see the description on the previous page.

Action and Adventure Junkies Rejoice! Set out on a photography journey in the Grand Tetons with our faculty of adventure photographers and editors from National Geographic, Red Bull, The North Face, and more. Work with the expert photographers and learn the shooting and scouting techniques that they use to land their images in top publications, meet the editors behind some of the world's most daring photography expeditions and learn how they hire photographers, and even spend a night

camping with the faculty as you network with them throughout the workshop.

In this workshop, you'll be exposed to every aspect of adventure photography, from adventure and outdoor sports photography to product and outdoor commercial photography. The Adventure Workshop is for any and all photographers, and although some hiking is required, there is no recommended minimum level of fitness.

Cost: \$1,995.00

Go to the [Summit Workshops website](#) for the specifics on what is covered and what isn't. Please note that this workshop is taught by ten outstanding photographers and photo editors and offers an incredible opportunity to learn from not just one but many experts.

Advanced Lighting for Adventure Photography

CreativeLIVE (www.creativelive.com)

Last Summer I taught a two-day live class on advanced lighting techniques for CreativeLIVE and Red Bull Photography, which was broadcast live on July 17th and 18th, 2017. This class is available for download on www.creativelive.com. While this isn't an in-person workshop, like the others listed here, it is a resource that is available online and can be downloaded and watched anytime.

Cost: \$79 USD

Note that CreativeLIVE often runs sales so the class might be discounted below this price.

Workshop Testimonials

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

"Michael set an incredibly high bar for his workshop. He

gave 110%, covered a broad range of topics and did an outstanding job." - Chris Council, Adventure Photography Workshop, Summer 2010

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

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

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

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The Nikon D850

A review of the best DSLR ever made by anybody. Full-stop. Period.



Disclaimer: For the last fifteen years I have worked on and off with Nikon. I have been one of their featured photographers and have also spoken on their behalf. Regardless, at the moment I am not one of their Ambassadors and purchased my Nikon D850 cameras (both of them) at full price. This review is an abbreviated version of the full review, which can be found on my blog [here](#).

After three months of waiting, I finally got not just one but two [Nikon D850](#) camera bodies and the

Nikon [MB-D18 battery grip](#) that goes along with the Nikon D850. My thanks to [Roberts Camera](#) and [B&H Photo](#) for getting me those two D850s. Having put my order in only one day after the camera was announced, you can tell just how popular this new Nikon has been. There is still huge demand for the Nikon D850.

On specs alone, the D850 is a powerhouse. Building upon the exceptional legacy of the Nikon D800 and D810, the D850 again pushes the boundaries of



Previous Page: A shot of the pull-out LCD screen on the back of the D850 and also the illuminated controls on the top and rear buttons of the camera. Above: The D850 has very similar ergonomics as the D810 had, but with the addition of a movable LCD screen (as shown at left) and a much deeper, easier to hold onto grip. The D850 also loses the pop-up flash, which I never used. Overall, it is a tougher, more weather-resistant camera body that handles very well. It is still a heavy beast, but all-in-all, I love that I can pare the camera down the smaller body and also attach a battery grip to access the top-end 9 fps frame rate.

high-resolution camera technology. So far, in my testing, it lives up to the hype. The Nikon D850 is the culmination of everything Nikon has learned about building DSLRs. I realize these opening paragraphs sound more like a “fan-boy” review than a critical look at the D850, but don’t worry, we’ll get there.

For myself, as an adventure sports photographer, I have always had two different types of digital cameras. One was a camera with a fast frame rate specifically for photographing sports and the other, especially since the D800 came out, was a high-resolution camera for sports that didn’t require super fast frame rates and also for portraits, landscapes and lifestyle images. Along the way, I fell in love with the image quality of the Nikon D800 and D810, especially when I needed to make large prints. My Nikon D4 has been languishing of late as I rarely use it unless I absolutely need the 11 fps frame rate (as when shooting surfing). In the last few years I also bought a Hasselblad H5D 50 MP camera, which has really spoiled me on the image quality front. With the introduction of the D850, Nikon produced a camera yet again that was

better than I had expected. In fact, it is a camera that I have been dreaming about for ten years now, one with both incredible resolution and a decently fast frame rate.

Over the last month I have done some fairly extensive testing with the D850 to see if it can replace not only my Nikon D810 but also my D4, which is my stalwart action camera. I was pretty sure before I even got the camera that it would replace my D810, but I wasn’t so sure it would be able to best my D4 in terms of speed or low noise at high ISO settings. Without further ado, let’s get down to business and dig into the D850.

ERGONOMICS

From the first moment I picked up the camera it felt great in the hand. I have large hands so the deep grip on the D850 fits really well. Ditto for the MB-D18 battery grip. The pull out LCD on the back of the camera is also a welcome change. I am not sure why it took so long to add a movable LCD onto the back of pro cameras but there are plenty of times that it comes in handy. The touchscreen



LCD and touchscreen menus are also a huge time saver. The first time I saw the scroll bar to go through images my mind was blown. Any other method to scroll through images seems crazy now. Also, the touch menu layout is massively faster than pushing buttons and dials. I can change setups in less than half the time using the touchscreen menu options. The touchscreen in particular really made going back to the D810 or the D4 painful.

There are all kinds of other little features that have improved the camera as well, but have also taken a little time to get used to. Nikon switched the position of the ISO button and Exposure Mode buttons and I have been constantly pressing the wrong button with the camera to my eye for the last month. I am just now getting used to

the new button placements—and they make sense. Having the ISO button right there behind the shutter release is much better than where it was on my D810 or D4. The D850 also has more custom function (Fn) buttons than the D810 and D4, which is nice for accessing custom functions I use often. There are so many ergonomic improvements that until you use the camera for a while you just don't realize how much better it is than earlier models.

IMAGE QUALITY

With 45.7 megapixels, the Nikon D850 isn't lacking in image detail. The Nikon D810 had and still has remarkable image quality. The D850 has a lot to live up to.

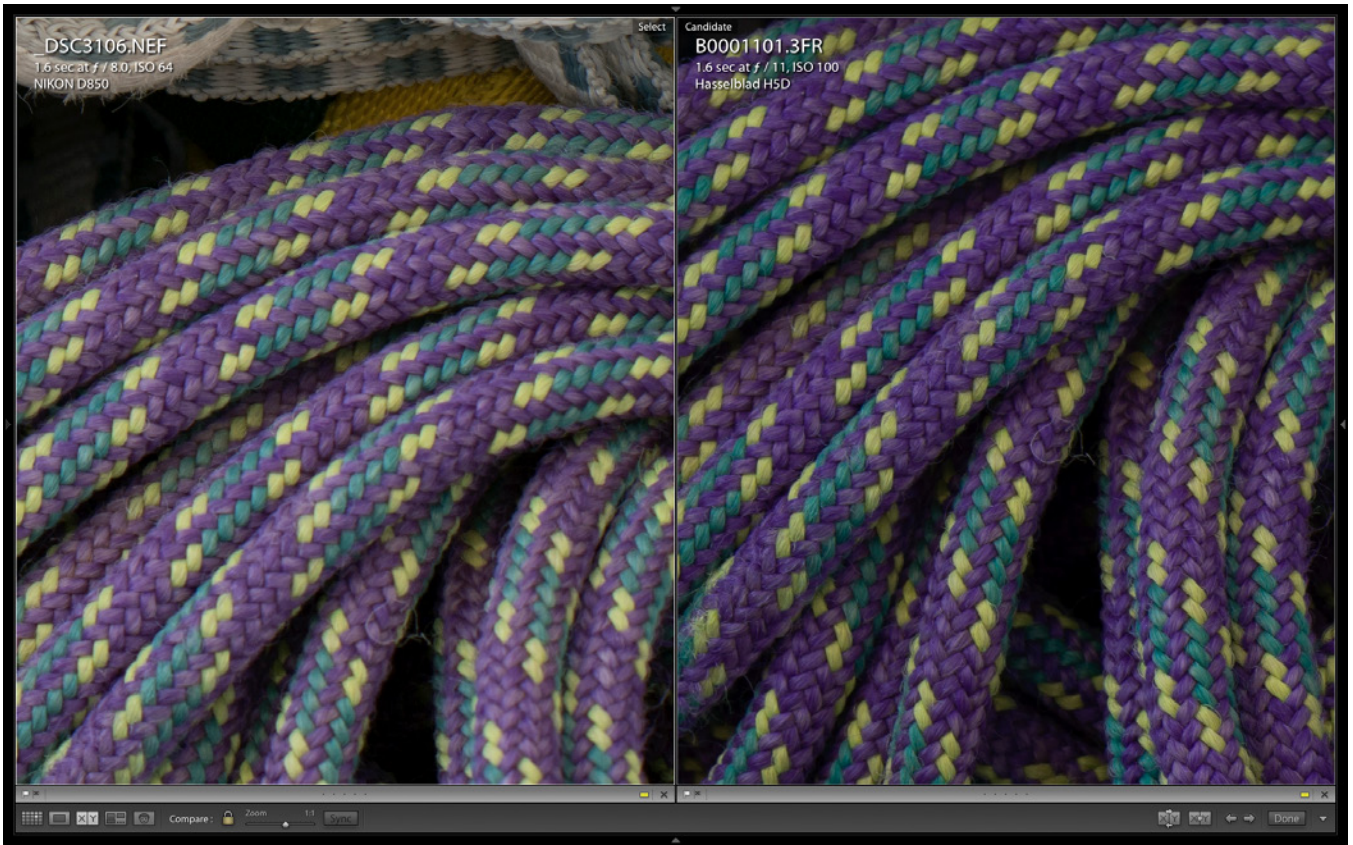


Above: This panoramic image was created with five vertical D850 images stitched together. The resulting image is 22,511 x 7,794 pixels, which equates to a 175 MP image. As can be seen above, the image quality is stunning. The Dynamic range is also quite incredible as the exposure was set for the sky and the darker foreground was pulled up in post. This vista is from the Torre atop the Serra da Estrela mountain range, which means the “Star Mountain,” in central Portugal. At an altitude of 1,993 meters (6,539 feet), it was quite cold on the morning of this shoot hovering around 2 degrees Celsius.

Luckily, the D850 is just as good if not better than the D810 in almost every regard. The Dynamic Range of the camera is almost identical to the D810, the noise is well controlled over the entire ISO range (up to ISO 12,800), and the overall image quality is technically superb.

In tests against my Hasselblad H5D 50c WiFi, the D850 fared extremely well against the much more expensive Hasselblad. In the center, the images were almost identically sharp when comparing an ISO 64 D850 file against an ISO 100 H5D image file. The H5D image was cleaner overall in terms of noise but that is to be expected. As

shown in the screenshot on the next page, where the H5D really outshines the D850 is in the corners. The D850 (on the left) was noticeably softer in the corners than the Hasselblad H5D (on the right). For this comparison no sharpening was applied to either image. I realize comparing the D850 to a top-end medium format camera costing nearly five times as much as the D850 seems a bit overkill but many will be wondering just how well it does in this category. Note that in this test I chose an aperture of f/8 for the D850 and an aperture of f/11 for the H5D giving an approximately similar depth of field. The Nikon D850 had the excellent Nikkor AF-S 85mm



Above: A comparison of the Nikon D850 (left) and the Hasselblad H5D 50c WiFi (right) showing the extreme far right corner of the image. The Hasselblad is noticeably sharper than the D850 in this example. Note that the D850 was shot at ISO 64 and the Hasselblad was shot at ISO 100. Similar focal length lenses were also used for this test, an 85mm f/1.4G Nikkor at f/8 on the D850 and a 100mm f/2.2 HC at f/11 on the Hasselblad.

f/1.4G lens on it and the Hasselblad had the remarkable HC 100mm f/2.2 lens attached to it, which offers a very similar field of view as the Nikon 85mm lens.

What I have found so far, and I have only been shooting for a month with the D850, is that this camera is pushing Nikon's best lenses quite a bit harder than the D810 did. All of my lenses are the top-end Nikkors, so I have the best lenses Nikon makes, but I can see that if Nikon (or any camera manufacturer) wants to push the resolution boundaries higher than 50 MP they are going to have to re-vamp their lens lineup with higher quality glass. This isn't to say that the Nikkor lenses are bad, just that the cameras are now at the point that the lenses really mat-

ter—even more so than with the Nikon D810.

Another factor when it comes to image quality, which was the case with the D810 as well, is how you handle the camera. The D850 isn't a standard 35mm DSLR. You can't think of this as a "run-and-gun-it" style camera like the Nikon D5 or any other sub 24 MP camera. The D810 was comparable to a 4×5 film camera in terms of resolution. The D850 is somewhere between a 4×5 camera and an 8×10 camera in terms of resolution. Because of this much higher shutter speeds are required when handholding the camera to get sharp images. When was the last time you saw someone handholding a 4×5 camera? Think of the Nikon D850 as an 8×10 field camera and

you'll get the best image quality out of it. If you are shooting handheld, I highly recommend shooting with a minimum shutter speed at least four or five times the focal length. For example, if I am shooting with my trusty 24-70mm f/2.8 zoom, the bare minimum shutter speed I would handhold that lens at would be 1/250th second and even that would be dicey in terms of getting a tack sharp image. With my Nikon 70-200mm f/2.8, I wouldn't dream of handholding that lens at anything less than 1/800th second—even with the Vibration Reduction on. If I want to assure tack sharp images with the 70-200 I aim for 1/1,000th second or even faster shutter speeds like 1/1,500th sec or higher. To get tack sharp images at lower shutter speeds the D850 would need in-body stabilization like that found in it's mirrorless counterparts.

For landscape photography, Nikon has done an excellent job reducing the shutter bounce and vibration in the D850. But, with that said, you will need to lock this puppy down on a serious tripod if you expect to get tack-sharp images at any shutter speed below 1/125th second. And by serious, I mean a beefy heavy-duty tripod. None of those wimpy tripods with extendable top tubes need apply. I use the same Gitzo GT5541LS tripod that I use with my Hasselblad when shooting landscapes with the D850, and I also use a large Kirk BH-1 ballhead to make sure everything is locked down tightly. For the best results, just as with my D810, I also use the mirror up option along with Exposure Delay mode (3s) and the Electronic front-curtain shutter mode to eliminate any vibration.

This isn't to say that I shoot with the D850 on a tripod all the time. It has quickly become my all around camera and I shoot most often with it handheld, especially when shooting adventure sports. I just make sure to use a fast

enough shutter speed, as noted above, to make sure I counteract any camera shake that might introduce motion blur into the image. I am definitely not the steadiest photographer out there. I drink way too much caffeine. The upshot here is that when care is taken, the D850 produces absolutely stunning images. From what I have seen so far, the D850 has the best image quality Nikon has ever produced in any of their DSLRs. According to DXO-Mark, the D850 has the best image quality of any full-frame interchangeable lens camera on the market.

AUTOFOCUS

When the Nikon D5 came out, I shot with it for several days during a [DPReview Field Test](#). The D5's autofocus was astounding. One of the biggest draws for me with the D850 was that it has the same AF module as the Nikon D5. Having a camera with best-in-class AF, along with the 9 fps, and 46 MP resolution makes for a pretty alluring piece of technology. That was pretty much all I needed to hear to get excited about the D850. The big question: Does the AF in the D850 live up to the D5's autofocus? I haven't done enough testing to know for sure if it is on par with the AF incorporated into the D5, but compared to the D810 and my much older D4, the D850 AF is a giant leap in performance.

Over the last month since I got the camera, I was doing a few demos for Elinchrom with their new ELB 1200 battery-powered strobe kit. For the first two demos, both done in a studio setting, I used my Nikon D810 and even with the strobe's modeling lights on the camera had some difficulty tracking the athletes we hired to do a variety of martial arts maneuvers. I used the D850 for the last demo and it had no difficulty whatsoever tracking



Above: The D850's autofocus is far superior to the D810 or my venerable D4. The above image was shot in the studio that wasn't well lit, save for the strobes, and the D850 had no problems tracking the movement of the martial artist and nailing the focus. Similarly, the skiing image on Page 3 of this Newsletter was shot using the D850's 3D Tracking mode and nailed the focus on this difficult ski shot where the skier was coming straight at camera.

wild movements in the studio as can be seen above. This image was created using the 3D Tracking AF mode. When I shot with the D5, the 3D tracking AF mode seemed like it could read your mind and kept whatever you locked onto tack sharp even with extremely fast moving subjects. The D850 seems to do incredibly well with the 3D Tracking AF mode as well, and this will come in handy for recomposing while tracking fast moving subjects. Also, note that the ski image on Page 3 of this Newsletter was shot using the D850 in 3D Tracking mode as well. That image was even more challenging as the skier was wearing black clothing with a cluttered

background behind him and the D850 still nailed the focus on his face—even with all the snow flying straight at the camera.

Autofocus has always been something that tied me down to a few focus points when shooting action. Before the Nikon D5 and its 3D Tracking AF mode, I had never seen an AF mode that allowed you to concentrate on the composition and forget about AF like with the D5. There are lots of folks online who have run tests on the D850 comparing it's AF to the Nikon D5 and found the D850 not quite as good as the D5. I am not shocked by that, and so

far that is what I am finding as well. The D850 has more than twice the resolution and a slower frame rate than the D5. The higher resolution sensor is more sensitive to AF errors, which means the D850 has to have way more accurate AF than the D5—because you will see those inaccuracies clear as day when you zoom into 100% on these image files. Regardless, the AF of the D850 is utterly superb.

As with the D810, I highly recommend fine tuning the AF for each lens you own and use. With the D850, it is quite a bit easier to fine tune the AF for each lens than it was with the D810 because Nikon has included an AF fine tune option in the D850 as they did with the D5 and D500. PetaPixel posted a great article entitled [How to Use Auto AF Fine Tune on Your Nikon DSLR the Right Way](#). I highly recommend watching this video and dialing in the AF Fine Tune settings for all your lenses. This will make the AF much more accurate.

DYNAMIC RANGE

There are other websites, notably DPReview and DXO-mark, who have done extensive testing on how the D850 compares to the Nikon D810 and other cameras in terms of dynamic range. I won't get too crazy here but in my experience so far the D850 matches the D810 in terms of dynamic range. The D810 was a class leader in this respect and that was a big reason for the fanfare over that camera. Having a camera with such an expansive DR allows me to capture incredible detail in both the shadows and the highlights by exposing for the highlights and then pulling the shadows up in post. With the D850, I have been able to pull out at least four stops or more from the shadows just as with D810.

As can be seen in the image at the top of pages 16 - 17, the D850 has excellent dynamic range. For this image, shot on the Torre atop the Serra da Estrela mountain range in central Portugal, I exposed for the bright sky and then pulled up the shadows in the mountains. At ISO 64 the D850 has nearly 15 stops of dynamic range which is among the best of any camera out there and comes close to rivaling the best medium format cameras.

HIGH ISO IMAGE QUALITY

When I purchase a new camera, one of the standard tests I run on it is a still life shoot at every ISO setting to see just how much noise builds up as I crank up the ISO settings. Check out the [full review on my blog](#) for an in-depth study of the High ISO noise on the D850.

VIDEO

The D850 is the first Nikon camera to have full frame 4K video. What this means is that the low noise output comes through in the 4K video just as it does in the stills. I haven't used the video feature a ton just yet but from my testing so far the D850 has the best video output I have ever seen in any Nikon camera. It also has focus peaking, which is a huge bonus, but the focus peaking only works in 1080p. Why it won't work in 4K I have no idea. If Nikon can upgrade that in the firmware I think they would have a lot of very happy customers. Because of this, I still use a SmallHD monitor when shooting video with my DSLRs.

The image quality of the video is very good and the Flat picture profile allows for capturing a wide range of tones. The Flat picture profile also makes it easy to work up the video files in post. The H.264 video format is a solid

codec. The 4K format is UHD, meaning it is capturing 3840 x 2160 pixels. I would prefer that Nikon chose the DCI 4K resolution, which is 4096 x 2160 pixels as it scales down to 2K output better. In 4K mode, you can only record at 24p, 25p and 30p but in Full HD 1080 mode you can record in slow-mo up to 120p. The D850 video data rate is also 150 Mbit/sec, which is higher than on Sony's A7 cameras. It still has a video out plug on the side of the camera and a mic jack and a headphone jack.

The EOS HD website did a great review of the video features on the D850 in a blog post entitled [The D850 vs. Everything](#). In that article they said, "The image quality in full frame 4K mode is truly incredible, the best I've yet seen from any DSLR since the Canon 1D C...the D850 is WAY ahead of the Canon camp." That is pretty high praise coming from a website that is highly critical of Nikon's video output in all of their other cameras. Nikon has truly done a great job with the video options on the D850. For a look at some video footage check out [Little Shao's promotional video](#) shot with the Nikon D850 in UHD 4k mode.

MB-D18 BATTERY GRIP

One of the huge selling points for me with the D850 was the option to add the [Nikon MB-D18 Battery Grip](#) and get a frame rate of 9 frames per second. It is this 9 fps frame rate, and its stellar AF performance, that makes the D850 usable for sports photography. The 7 fps frame rate without the grip is ok, but since I have gotten used to much faster frame rates with the Nikon D4 and D5, a minimum of 8 fps would be the lowest I would use to shoot sports. Hence, at 9 frames per second the D850 is just over that. Next to my D4 or a D5 blasting away at 11 or 12 fps the

D850 seems a little sluggish, but I have found that all those extra frames just add up to more headaches in post trying to edit images down to the top selects. If I was shooting more normal sports like football, basketball or the Olympics those faster frame rates might be required. For most of my adventure sports assignments if I can't capture the image at 9 fps then I have more important issues to consider than which camera I am using. And if I really need those extra high-speed frame rates above 9 fps I can borrow a D5 from Nikon or rent it.



Those extra two frames per second come at a steep price. The price of the MB-D18 Battery Grip is \$399.95 USD just for the grip. To actually allow the D850 to get up to 9 fps you will also need the [Nikon EN-EL18b](#) battery (the one used for the Nikon D5, which goes for \$149 USD) and

the [BL-5 Battery Chamber Cover](#) (another \$24.95 USD) to hold that larger battery in the grip. You will also need the [Nikon NH-26aAK battery Charger](#) to charge those larger size batteries and that charger is rather pricey at \$369.95 USD. Adding that all up, to get to 9 fps you will have to spend an additional \$943.85 USD. That is unless you already own a Nikon D4 or D5, in which case you will already have the batteries and the battery charger. That is a lot of money to gain a few extra frames per second.

Aside from the expense, the MB-D18 battery grip is very nice and certainly enhances the ergonomics when shooting vertically. The grip also seems more stable than the D810 grip and has a much better button layout on the back of the grip which mirrors the layout when shooting horizontally. The grip is also extremely comfortable in the hand and allows my pinky to rest in a very natural spot when shooting horizontal as well as vertical. All in all, the grip is a great addition for those that need it.

BUFFER DEPTH

The buffer depth of the D850 is quite good considering the size of the 46 MP image files. In Continuous High mode, without the MB-D18 Battery grip, and shooting only to a wicked fast XQD card, you can get up to 51 or so frames at 7 fps before the buffer kicks in and slows down the frame rate. Sadly, one of the very few knocks I have against the D850 is that when you bolt on the MB-D18 and use the EN-EL18b battery to gain the 9 fps frame rate, the buffer slows down the frame rate after only 20 to 23 frames. So, essentially you get about 2 seconds of shooting at 9 fps before the buffer kicks in. It makes total sense, after all we are shooting 46 MP images at 9 fps. I have just gotten used to the seemingly endless buffer in

the D4 and D5 cameras—but they were shooting much lower resolution image files. Even with this limitation, the D850 is still a marvel. To get 9 fps with 46 MP images is worth it even if the buffer isn't endless.

CONCLUSION

The D850 is indeed Nikons best camera ever. Having shot with it over the last few months it is very hard to go back to my D810 or my D4. The D850 does everything extremely well and it is the most capable Nikon camera I have ever shot with. As I write this conclusion, I have already sold both my D810 and D4. The D850 is simply that good. It is a better camera than either the D810 or D4. With the D850, it isn't just the image quality, or the 9 fps frame rate, or even the massively improved video options, it is having all of this and so much more in one camera body. As DPReview said in their analysis of the D850, "this just might be the most well-rounded stills camera ever...we're comfortable saying the D850 is the best DSLR on the market today." I heartily agree.

There are so many new features on the D850 that in the time I have had the camera I haven't even been able to test them all. I will certainly be testing the camera for some time to come. There are, if I am honest, more features in this camera than I really need. But, who is going to complain about that. For those pros or discerning amateurs the D850 is the pinnacle of camera design. It is so alluring that some who have crossed over into mirrorless have been coming back to DSLR world just for the D850.

With the D850 and the Hasselblad H5D 50c WiFi, all of my cameras (save for the GoPros) are at 46MP or 50 MP. I have become an addict to high resolution cameras



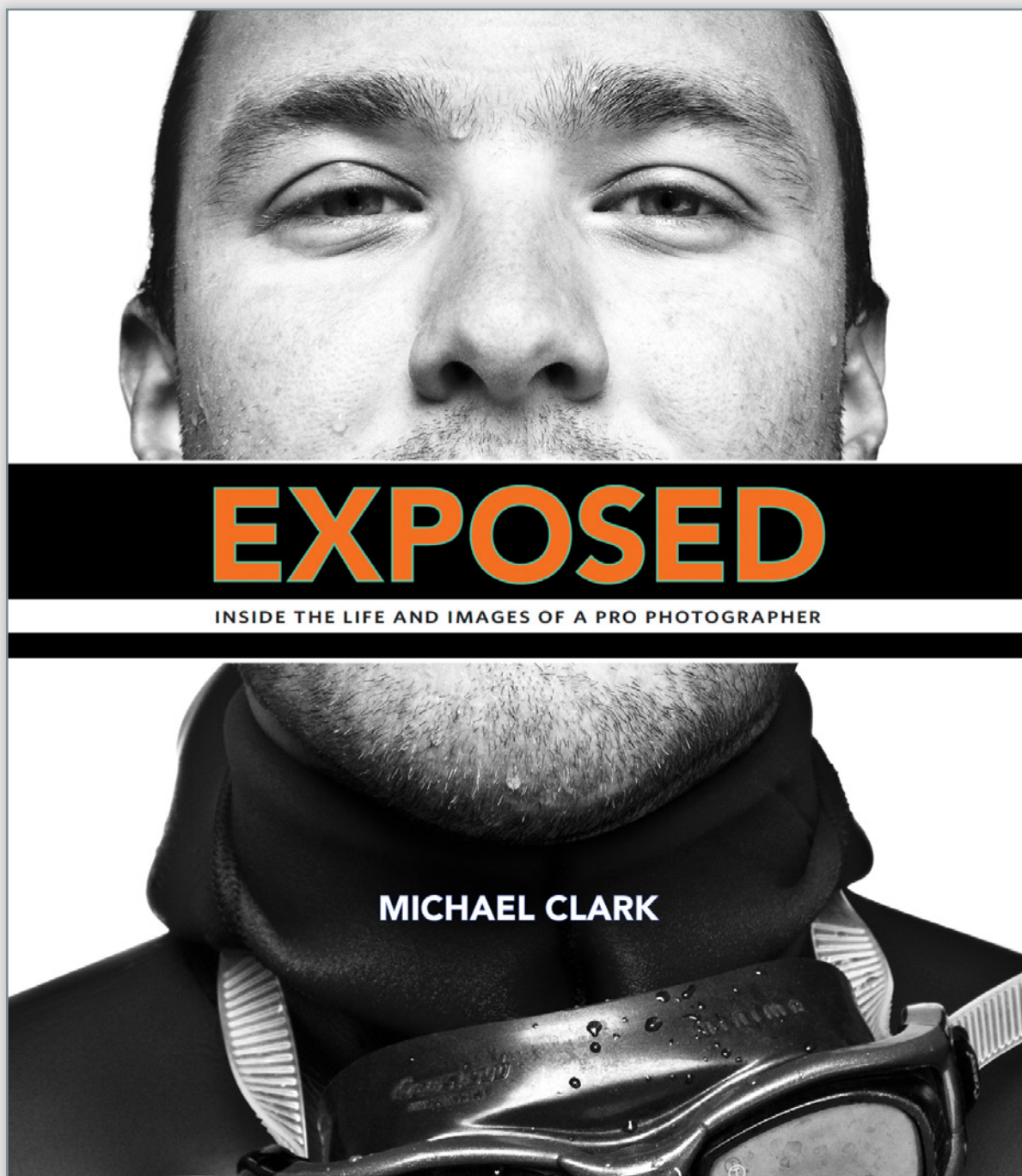
because the resulting images print incredibly well. With the 36 MP D810, I could print those images up to five feet (1.5 meters) long and they looked spectacular. With the D850 I can go even larger. Aside from the print resolution, the D850 also allows clients to take vertical crops out of horizontal images and still have plenty of resolution to work with.

One last note here, looking towards the future, I have a feeling the D850 will be my last optical viewfinder camera. I have no doubt that Nikon is working on a pro-caliber mirrorless option. I am hoping they release an incredible mirrorless option in 2018. With Sony chomping at the bit and releasing a whole slew of impressive cameras this past year, they are quickly changing the game and have been for years now.

I must admit, I much prefer optical viewfinders over EVFs, but the technology has gotten to the point where EVFs are acceptable and the mirrorless cameras have options that cannot be implemented into DSLRs. Unless you opt for a smaller sensor, the whole idea of weight savings with mirrorless cameras is a myth. Sony has proved this with their f/2.8 zooms, which are the same size as the Nikon and Canon options, if not bigger. Regardless, mirrorless cameras are the future. My hope is that Nikon can replicate the D850 in mirrorless form with dual XQD card slots, a body that is ergonomically excellent, and with a stellar EVF viewfinder. Kudos to you Nikon on the D850. You hit another home run with it. I can't wait to see what you come out with next. But, and this is a big one, whatever comes out next has an incredibly high bar to overcome. The D850 is just that good.

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ADVENTURE SCHOOL



Delaney Miller working the moves on Charleston Choss (5.13b) at Rifle Mountain Park near Rifle, Colorado.

Over the last eight months, I have been working with Elinchrom and MacGroup (the Elinchrom Distributor here in the USA) to help build the [Elinchrom Adventure School](#), which is a website filled with tutorial videos and articles showing extensive behind the scenes footage from a variety of adventure sports photo shoots.

The Elinchrom Adventure School is a free, online educational website for photographers looking to take their adventure photography to the next level. To access the website, you will have to input your name and email address. That is the only cost to enter. Once inside, you will find an array of behind the scenes videos detailing the gear used for each photo shoot, behind the scenes videos showing exactly how each shoot was pulled off and of course the final images produced. In addition there are links to a wide range of other articles showing how Elinchrom lighting gear was used to create some adventurous images.

As stated in the screenshot shown on Page 8 the goal of the Elinchrom Adventure School is “to inspire and educate...while promoting passion, dedication and craftsmanship.” With the launch of the Elinchrom ELB 1200 battery-powered strobe kit, both Elinchrom and I feel that there is no better strobe option on the market for the adventure or outdoor photographer. I have written at length about the ELB 1200 in my [Summer 2017 Newsletter](#). In the in-depth behind the scenes videos on the Elinchrom Adventure School website you can see me put the ELB 1200 through its paces. This new strobe kit has allowed me to create an entirely new portfolio of images this year, and many of those can be seen in the Adventure School.

Right now, the Elinchrom Adventure School website will

seem like the “Michael Clark” show. That isn’t what it is supposed to be. More episodes featuring shoots by other Elinchrom photographers are in the works and will be added to the Adventure School as they are created. Hence, this is an ongoing project and not just a one-off deal. Elinchrom and MacGroup have invested heavily into this project to help you get the most out of your strobe equipment and show some possibilities. At the moment, there are two main segments to the website: one detailing a rock climbing shoot at Rifle Mountain Park near Rifle, Colorado and the other detailing the Lighting the Spirit whitewater kayaking shoot that was part of the promotional materials for the ELB 1200. Both shoots relied on the ELB 1200 battery-powered strobes.

In addition to the behind the scenes videos there is also an incredible interview on the Adventure School with Rob Haggart on “The Evolution of Adventure Sports Photography.” Rob Haggart currently runs the [APhotoEditor.com](#) website. If you don’t know about this blog I highly recommend checking it out. Aphotoeditor.com is a blog that dives deep into the photo industry and reveals a lot of critical information for pro photographers to help them understand how the industry works from the vantage point of a photo editor or art buyer. Rob is also the CEO of [Aphotofolio.com](#), which is one of the leading professional website template companies. As a disclaimer, I have used Aphotofolio website templates for the last eight years or more and they have been a great boon to my career.

In addition to Rob’s current work, he was formerly the Director of Photography for Outside Magazine and Men’s Journal Magazine. Combined he has worked as a photo editor for more than ten years with some of the top outdoor magazines and he has seen the arc of the adventure



Above: A portrait of Ben Rueck at Rifle Mountain Park near Rifle, Colorado. For this portrait I used the Elinchrom ELB 1200 and a Hi-Sync flash head with the Deep Octabank softbox attached to it. Tech Info: Nikon D810, Nikon 24-70mm f/2.8 lens, 1/800th second at f/8, ISO 500. Right: A behind the scenes shot of me checking the rear LCD on my Hasselblad HSD 50c WiFi camera. Here I was seeing what the lighting looked like on Delaney and also checking sharpness.



sports genre like few other photo editors in the industry have. He was also instrumental in my evolution as a photographer because early on he advised me to buy some strobes and a medium format camera and figure out artificial lighting so that I could produce decent portraits. His exact words were, "You adventure photographers can't light your way out of a paper bag." He was right. At the time I was terrified of flash photography. A few months later, when I could afford it I took his advice and bought my first strobe kit and a used Hasselblad.

"This interview with Rob Haggart is a gold mine of great information for any photographer looking to push their craft and especially for any aspiring pro adventure photographers."

Even if you could care less about using strobes, this interview with Rob Haggart is a gold mine of great information for any photographer looking to push their craft and especially for any aspiring pro adventure photographers. I would recommend signing onto the Adventure School just to watch this video alone as it contains so much great information.

It was a great honor to interview Rob. He is truly an astounding resource in the photo industry and he has done a lot for photographers through his blog APhotoEditor.com and also via APhotoFolio as well. Rob has also worked with many of the top photographers across many genres in the photo industry. He has seen it all. He has also helped start the careers of a few very notable adventure photographers. I am praising him here quite vociferously because he deserves it. If you are a photographer, and especially one interested in adventure sports photography, do yourself a favor and check out this interview

on the Elinchrom Adventure School.

For the Rifle Mountain Park assignment we worked with professional climbers Delaney Miller and Ben Rueck. Delaney and Ben climb a lot at Rifle. I have climbed and photographed climbers there several times myself. On the day of the shoot, we started off by checking out a variety of potential climbs. The point of the shoot was to create images that were quite different than your normal rock climbing images, mostly because they would be lit with

the Elinchrom ELB 1200 strobes. Rifle, for those that are not climbers, is a very steep cliff with many different caves, where the routes are steeply overhung. When lighting rock climbing I typically look for an arete or a cave entrance that can be lit up and provide stark relief with the background. At Rifle, there are very few if any aretes, so we mostly worked in caves as can be seen in the images included with this article. We started out trying to light the climbers on their warm-up route and Andrew Bisharat, my assistant for the day, and a wicked good climber himself, helped out by posting up the light on an adjacent route, as can be seen on page 34.

Afterwards, we concentrated on a few routes in the Well-Dunn cave. This small cave stood out to me because it has a very steep roof and would allow me to light the climber on an interesting move out at the lip of the cave. Having lit up a number of similar caves I knew that if we massaged the lighting and found a route with interesting

Continued on page 36



Ben Rueck working the moves on Bite the Bullet (5.13c) at Rifle Mountain Park. For this image I used one Elinchrom ELB 1200 and a Hi-Sync flash head with the high performance reflector attached to the flash head. The flash head was setup on a hillside just next to the route so that it was on level or just a little above Ben's position. Tech Info: Nikon D810, Nikkor 24-70mm f/2.8 lens, 1/1,250th second at f/4, ISO 1600.







Page 32-33: Ben Rueck on Charleston Choss (5.13b) at Rifle Mountain Park. I used two Elinchrom ELB 1200s and two Hi-Sync flash heads, one with a standard reflector and the other with a high performance reflector, to light up different sides of the cave and Ben on the lip. Tech Info: Nikon D810, Nikkor 16mm Fisheye f/2.8 lens, 1/2,000th second at f/5.6, ISO 400. Above: A behind the scenes image of Ben Rueck warming up on Genesis (5.12a). Andrew Bisharat is seen here hanging off the anchors of an adjacent route and holding the ELB 1200 to light Ben. Right: A behind the scenes shot of me working with the Hasselblad H5D 50c WiFi camera with my assistant Andrew Bisharat standing next to me.



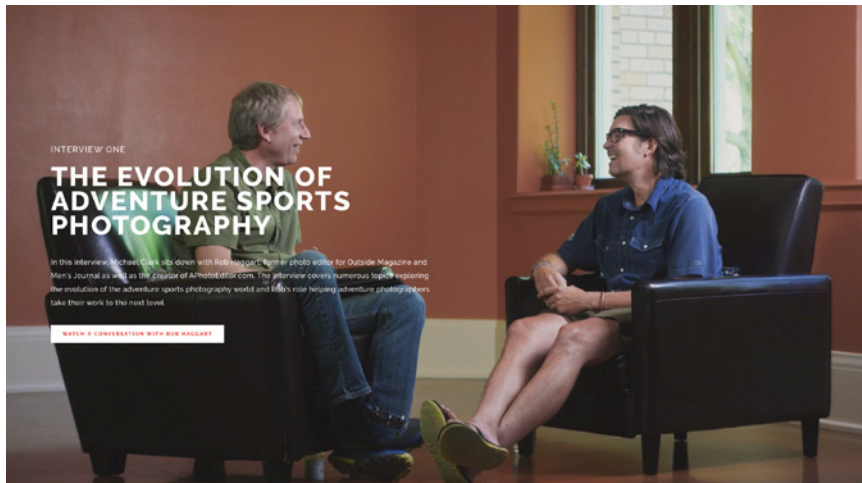
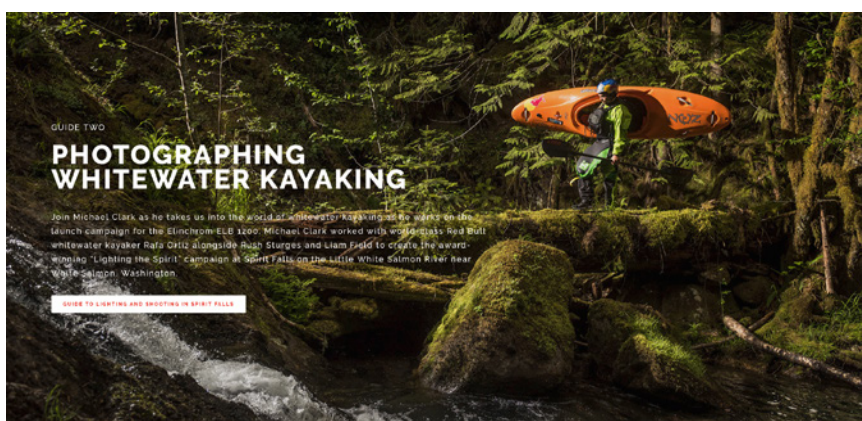
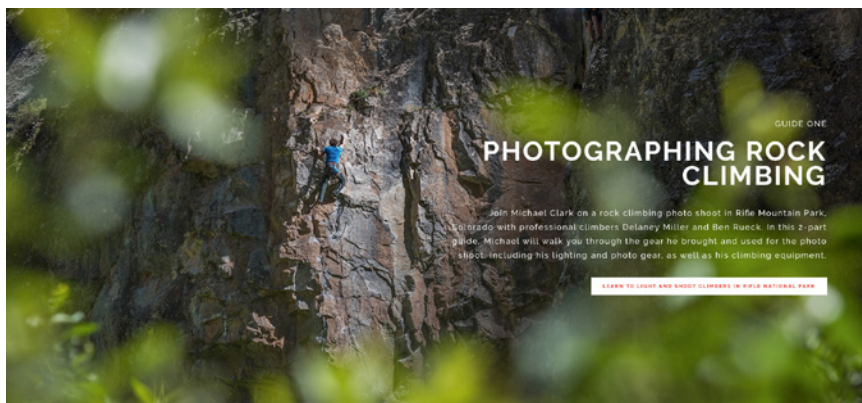
Right: A behind the scenes shot for the Adventure School video where we showed all of the gear I brought for the shoot. In this image, I am opening up my Pelican 1510 case that holds all of my Hasselblad camera gear. Below: Delaney Miller working the moves on Bite the Bullet (5.13c) at Rifle Mountain Park. For this image I used one Elinchrom ELB 1200 and a Hi-Sync flash head with the high performance reflector attached to the flash head. Tech Info: Nikon D810, Nikkor 24-70mm f/2.8 lens, 1/1,250th second at f/4, ISO 1600.



movement it would be relatively easy to pull this shot off. We photographed both Delaney and Ben on the route Charleston Choss (5.13b), as seen in the double-truck spreads on pages 26-27 and 32-33.

For this assignment I was working with both 35mm DSLRs and medium format digital cameras—i.e. my Hasselblad H5D 50c WiFi, which also has leaf shutters. I worked with both cameras in the cave to get different looks. When working with my Nikons, I used the HS (Hi-Sync) flash heads on the ELB 1200 flash heads on the ELB 1200 strobe pack and when shooting with the Hasselblad and it's leaf shutter lenses, I used the Action flash heads, which have a much faster flash duration. Both flash heads allowed me to overpower daylight from considerable distances and since rock climbing is a relatively slow sport, the slower autofocus of the Hasselblad was a non-issue.

For the cave shots the biggest issue is balancing the ambient light outside the cave with the artificial light we were introducing via our strobes. I won't go into the nuts and bolts of how we dialed in the exposure or set up the lighting as it is discussed, and shown, in the videos on the Adventure School website. The upshot of this is that with the Hi-Sync capabilities of the Elinchrom ELB 1200 I can overpower the sun from up to 60-feet (18 meters) away.



That gives me a lot of room to play with in terms of how I place the lighting.

After we shot in the cave, we moved onto capturing portraits. Portraits of climbers outdoors is always tough. It is tough to make it look natural, especially when using

artificial lighting. It took me a while to get something that felt right, in terms of the composition and the lighting, but when we found it I saw that it was working right away. As can be seen in the image of Ben on Page 29, I had the climbers sit down as if they were watching a friend on an adjacent route. The lighting needed to be subtle as well, so they didn't look like a deer in the headlights.

more diffuse and softer—i.e. not blasting him with hard light as I did here.

In the interview with Rob, we talked about how artificial lighting for adventure photography is in it's infancy. We are still trying to figure out how to implement it so the lighting doesn't look like what Rob termed "alien abduc-

In the interview with Rob, we talked about how artificial lighting for adventure photography is in it's infancy. We are still trying to figure out how to implement it so the lighting doesn't look like what Rob termed "alien abduction lighting."

For the last shot of the day, I wanted to get above the climbers and light them from the side. We found a cliff where the ground angled up next to the route so that we could place the light on the same level as the climber and not have to kill ourselves getting the light up on the cliff. This route, named Bite the Bullet (5.13c), as shown on page 31 and 35, was steeply overhanging. For all of these climbing images I only used one light and that was on purpose. We had three ELB 1200s with us, so we could have gone crazy, but to make the images feel at least somewhat natural I find working with one light source mimics what could happen if the sun were in the right place. Hence, for these images shot from above the climbers I imagined that the sun was streaking in and just hitting the climber and part of the route, but not blasting the base of the route. In all honesty, not many climbing photographers use artificial lighting and we are all still figuring out what looks natural, or would be considered "good" lighting. The image on page 31 is one of the best images we got from above the climbers and with more time I would have modified the light a bit more to make it

tion lighting." For some sports, like ice climbing and whitewater kayaking, I think we have figured out some pretty amazing lighting scenarios. For other sports, like rock climbing, it is a bit harder to make the artificial lighting look natural—or what I would consider "good" lighting. It is a very exciting time in adventure photography in that we now have much more powerful battery-powered lighting options, that are also lighter than they have ever been, like the ELB 1200.

As new content is added to the Adventure School, I will definitely make note of it on my blog and also on social media channels. I want to thank all of the athletes and assistants that have helped on these photo shoots including Tom Bear and Andrew Bisharat. Lastly, the bulk of the hard work in creating these videos was done by [Bill Stengel](#). Finally, thanks to everyone at [MacGroup](#), who have worked tirelessly on this project and to [Elinchrom](#). I hope you enjoy the [Elinchrom Adventure School](#)! If you have any feedback on the Elinchrom Adventure School please [send me an email](#) with your thoughts.

portfolio





What is “Good” Lighting?

An excerpt from my updated e-book [Location Lighting for the Outdoor Photographer](#)

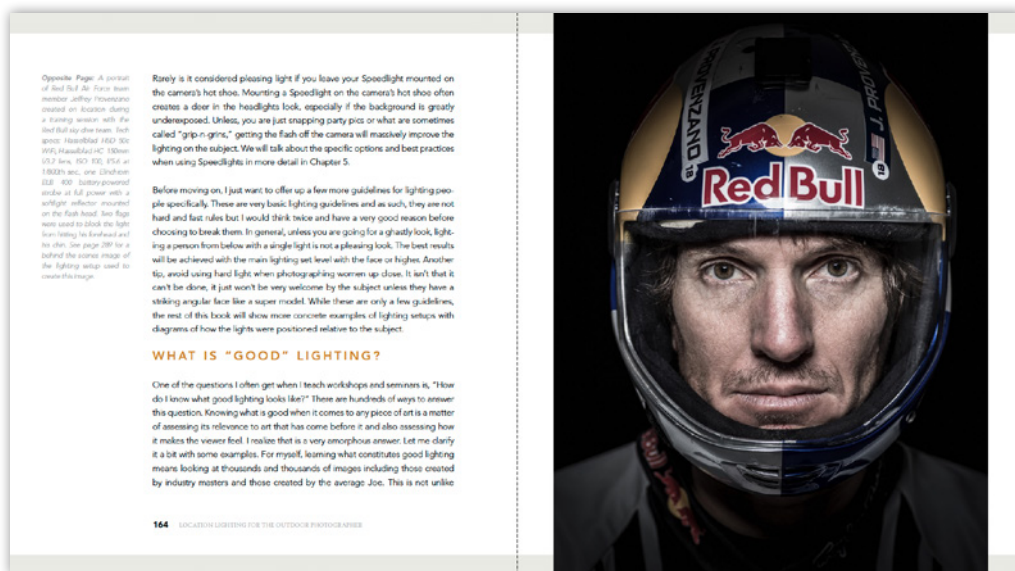
This is an excerpt from Chapter 2 of my recently updated e-book [Location Lighting for the Outdoor Photographer](#). The updated e-book is 361-pages and covers location lighting from start to finish. It starts out with a comprehensive chapter on equipment and ends with an in-depth chapter on the most advanced lighting techniques available today. For more information about *Location Lighting for the Outdoor Photographer* and to purchase a copy please visit my [website](#).

One of the questions I often get when I teach workshops and seminars is, “How do I know what good lighting looks like?” There are hundreds of ways to answer this question. Knowing what is good when it comes to any piece of art is a matter of assessing its relevance to art that has come before it and also assessing how it makes the viewer feel. I realize that is a very amorphous answer. Let me clarify it a bit with some examples. For myself, learning what constitutes good lighting means looking at thousands and thousands of images including those created by industry masters and those created by the average Joe. This is not unlike learning what makes a great photograph. Master photographers are considered masters for a reason, just as “classic” novels are considered classic for a reason. Whether or not said master photographer’s work inspires me is unimportant, it was deemed important enough in the context of photography to elevate

those images to a certain status and as such there is a lot to be learned by analyzing that work and how it was created. Hence, my answer is to look around you. Look at those photographers whose work you enjoy and are inspired by, also look at all types of art, and figure out what you like and how you can implement that inspiration into your own work.

Portrait photography in particular is an interesting example. There are a lot of standard rules for lighting a portrait—to the point that it can become fairly formulaic. Just as with photography, or any other art form, you need to learn those rules before you can knowingly break them successfully. Learning “good” lighting techniques therefore involves a lot of research, a fair bit of experimentation on your own and a process of discovery that not only informs your skills but also your taste. To that end, I highly recommend buying a variety of fine art photography books, or checking them out at your local library, and taking in as much as you can. Alternately, tracking down a wide variety of “master” photographers online and spending significant time studying their work is also extremely valuable. I personally prefer books for this exercise as that allows me a lot of time to sit with the images and assess them in a much higher quality format.

On my bookshelf, I have a wide variety of books from



how it was processed after the fact, which is a significant factor in this digital age. As with any subject, intensive study will lead to improved understanding, which will help improve your own skills and inform the final image.

Excellent lighting takes time. Unless it is a set

up that a photographer has worked with often, no matter what type of lighting used, it slows you down—and that is generally a good thing as it makes you think. Using artificial lighting, of any sort, is one big giant experiment and time is required to dial it in. Often, when experimenting, you don't fully know what the results will be or what you are looking for but by continually experimenting and pushing your skills you will find new methods and new looks. Photography is an ever evolving art form. With new technology, new options are available to the photographer that have never been possible before. That creates opportunities to push the art form to a new place.

I also want to emphasize here that learning to use artificial lighting is a process. You won't learn it all here in this book by any means. Learning to use artificial lighting is going to take many years, and the learning process never ends. The lighting masters became masters because they spent decades learning how to tame their lighting. This book will most likely accelerate your skill level but really learning actual techniques can only be accomplished by doing and practicing.

The more experience you have using strobes, Speedlights or any artificial lighting tools, the more you will be able to glean from looking at other photographers work. With experience, you will be able to better analyze how an image was created, how it was lit, and even to some degree

photographers and painters alike. Among those are photography books by Brassai, Helmut Newton, Ansel Adams, Sebastião Salgado, Steve McCurry, Dan Winters, Annie Leibovitz, Albert Watson, Howard Schatz, Platon, Andrew Eccles, Marco Grab, Gregory Heisler, Jay Maisel, and Galen Rowell among many others. I also have a wide variety of art books covering artists like Dali, Picasso, Van Gogh, Leonardo da Vinci, Michaelangelo, Monet, Andy Warhol, Matisse, Degas, Georgia O'Keeffe and on and on. In addition, I have hundreds and hundreds of my peers websites book marked and I often look to see what new work they have produced. I am constantly looking at photography, art and cinema for inspiration and to further my own understanding of the craft. Taking in as much as possible will not only improve your lighting, but also your photography.

up that a photographer has worked with often, no matter what type of lighting used, it slows you down—and that is generally a good thing as it makes you think. Using artificial lighting, of any sort, is one big giant experiment and time is required to dial it in. Often, when experimenting, you don't fully know what the results will be or what you are looking for but by continually experimenting and pushing your skills you will find new methods and new looks. Photography is an ever evolving art form. With new technology, new options are available to the photographer that have never been possible before. That creates opportunities to push the art form to a new place.

Setting Goals

by Michael Clark

Early on in my career I bought a dorky book on “How to make money as a photographer.” On the cover it had some dude with a camera hanging around his neck throwing money up in the air. It was totally cliché. But somehow I still bought that book. The only thing I remember from it was the admonition to make goals and to write them down. Dutifully, I followed the advice and wrote down my goals, not just for that year but also for my entire career. I dreamt big, huge in fact. A few of those goals at the outset of my career were to work with National Geographic, work with Nikon, etc., etc. While it took quite a bit of time for those goals to come to fruition, within the first ten years of my career, nearly every goal on that original list had been achieved. I am not writing this to stroke my ego, but to convey what that cheeseball book got right. By writing down your goals, and keeping those in front of mind, and by working extremely hard, you will be amazed at what can be achieved.

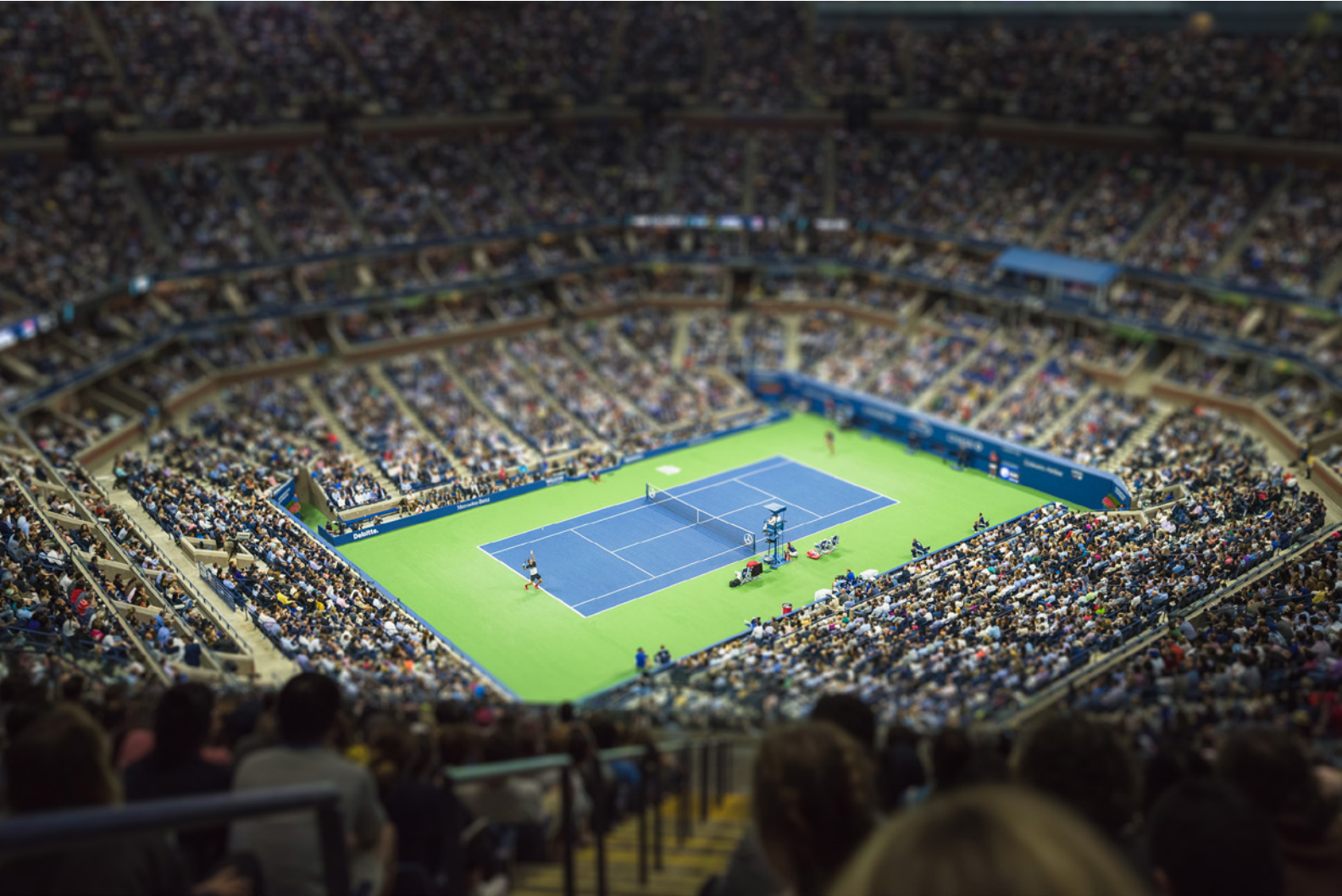
Every year, between Christmas and New Years day, I set aside some time to reflect on the previous year, look at the list of goals I had for that year and see what was achieved and what wasn't. I also take a long look at my accounting to see where my income came from, what direction my business is going financially, and how I can ingest that information to help make the next year even better than the last, not just financially but creatively. It is

a time of year that I really look forward to. As this is the start of my 22nd year in business as a pro photographer, not only is there pride in still being around doing what I love, but there is also a huge satisfaction in seeing my career grow and evolve just as my skills have evolved.

This past year, I had some longtime career goals come to fruition. Some of those were financial goals, some were creative goals, and some were goals to work on big projects with clients like Elinchrom and CreativeLIVE. Other goals were personal, like the image shown on the next page—where I went to a Roger Federer quarterfinal match at the U.S. Open. Regardless of the goal, if I hadn't written it down, it probably never would have happened.

In addition to my yearly goals, every five years I do a career assessment, where I work up my next five-year plan. This five-year plan is an opportunity to point the ship in the direction I want my career to go. With this long-term view, I can more easily draft my yearly list of goals to make sure I get where I wanted to go in that five-year span. Of course, setting goals doesn't always mean you achieve all of them. I rarely achieve half of my goals each year but that just leaves something to work towards in the next year. As the new year gets underway I encourage anyone reading this to write down their goals and pursue them with vigor. Dream big. Start now.

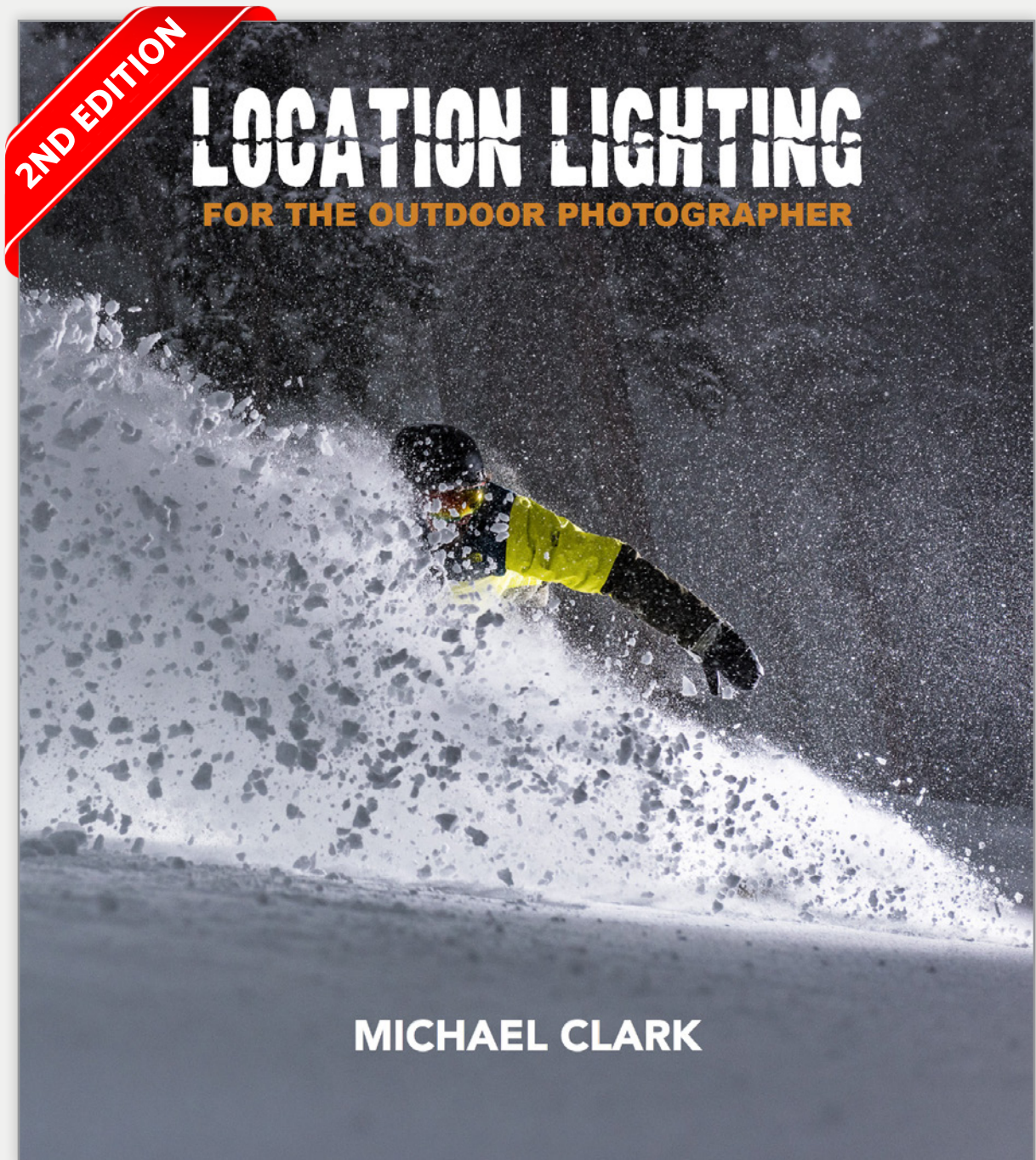
parting shot



A shot from the 2017 U.S. Open tennis tournament in New York, New York during a night match between Roger Federer and Juan Martin Del Potro. Tennis is one of my great passions. I have always wanted to see Roger Federer play live and this was my first chance. Sadly, Roger lost this match, but it was still an exhilarating four set quarterfinal. A few sections below me the Argentines were going crazy as Juan Martin squeaked this match out.

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