

PHOTOGRAPHY

MASTERCLASS

featured

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CREATE LIGHT
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MASTERCLASS

HOW TO CREATE BEAUTIFUL ANIMAL
RIM LIGHT SHOTS





PHOTOGRAPHY

MASTERCLASS

MAGAZINE



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EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to this edition of Photography Masterclass Magazine

If you've spent any time looking at wildlife photography, you've probably seen a rim light shot, an animal outlined by a glowing halo of golden light. It's a technique that adds instant depth, drama, and mood, but it can be tricky to pull off when your camera turns the scene into muddy silhouettes or flare. In this issue, we break down the core principles behind rim lighting and how to take control of exposure so you can reliably capture that perfect halo effect.

Also in this issue, we interview UK-based landscape and seascape photographer Simon Berry, whose work is deeply inspired by the wild

beauty of Scotland, particularly the Outer Hebrides. Drawn to shifting light, dramatic weather, and the ever-changing character of the coast, he creates images that balance atmosphere, movement, and strong composition. Influenced early on by his father's landscape paintings, Simon approaches photography with both careful planning and instinctive response, capturing not just the appearance of a place but its energy, mood, and spirit.

We hope you enjoy this issue. If you try out any of the techniques mentioned, we'd love you to see your results, so please do share them with us in our [readers' Facebook Group](#), or on Instagram using hashtag #PhotographyMasterclassMagazine

Happy Shooting!



Gill



MESSAGE FROM GILL ROBERTS
THE EDITOR

EDITOR'S CHOICE

A Hand-Picked Selection of
our Favorite Photos



By: Anthony Delanoix
Shot Details: Canon EOS 5D Mark II,
at 28mm, f/9, 1/200 sec, ISO 100

[Instagram](#)







EDITORS CHOICE

By: Eduard Pretsi
Shot Details: Sony a7 IV, at 50mm,
f/4, 1/200 sec, ISO 320
[Instagram](#)

EDITORS CHOICE



By: Lhon Karwan
[Instagram](#)







EDITORS CHOICE



By: Spencer Plouzek
Shot Details: Sony a7C, at 40mm,
f/8, 0.3 sec, ISO 100
[Instagram](#)

INSPIRATION:

The Excuses Killing Your Photography
(And Mine)



VIDEO: THE EXCUSES KILLING YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY (AND MINE)

by FIRST MAN PHOTOGRAPHY



I haven't picked up my camera almost two months, and I've got a whole list of perfectly "good" reasons why. In this one I'm being honest about the excuses that quietly kill our photography, the ones I keep telling myself, and what I'm actually going to do about it.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

I'm Adam, owner of First Man Photography, which is your gateway to capturing beautiful images every time. We have everything you need to take the next step in your photography journey. With tips, tricks, reviews and tutorials, we have something for everyone. Follow First Man Photography for the latest updates on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Medium](#) & [YouTube](#), or get the [book](#).

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THE LOWDOWN ON THE POLARPRO LITECHASER 17 LENS KIT FOR IPHONE

By Ryan Sitzman



Around a year ago, I was doing some research for an article about a unique camera, the Yongnuo YN455. It was quite interesting, as it had a very large back screen and it ran Android as an operating system. As

I noted then, the YN455 is basically a camera masquerading as a part-time cellphone. It seemed like a really cool device, although the “camera” aspect definitely took the spotlight over the “cellphone” part.



My interest was therefore piqued again when I discovered that I would be writing this month's article on the PolarPro LiteChaser 17 kit for iPhone, as this kit essentially does the opposite of the YN455: it lets you convert your iPhone into a full-on camera, while still retaining all of its cellphone capabilities.

The PolarPro kit is quite practical, and it has the potential to appeal to a larger audience than the YN455. I don't want to throw any shade at the Yongnuo camera because I think it's actually really cool. In fact, I'm on the record as thinking that almost all cameras and photography gadgets are really cool - I just can't afford the vast majority of them. That's why I was pleasantly surprised once again when I discovered that the PolarPro LiteChaser kit is actually affordable.

PolarPro has been making iPhone accessories for several generations of Apple phones, and their online store sells kits and cases for iPhone 15, 16, and 17 models, as well as case options going back to the iPhone 14. I'm still rocking an iPhone 12 Pro - hey, it's got a lot of storage and a great set of cameras - so that's maybe why the LiteChaser kits haven't showed up on my radar until now. And that's my loss, because it seems like these products are accessible, intuitive, and useful.

One thing I like about the PolarPro gear is that it seems unpretentious and practical. The company accepts the fact that many people these days, including professional creative types, are increasingly leaving their still cameras and video cameras at home, and those users are now making more and more content with their cellphones.

I personally respect the "Old School" approach, especially when it comes to learning about photography and making pictures, and there will always be a place in my heart (and my bag) for a camera of some type. But unless I'm on a trip or at a special event, I've also started taking the majority of my everyday pictures with my cellphone. That's why it's so cool to see these LiteChaser kits: if we're going to use our cellphones to take most of our pictures and videos anyway, then we might as well make them as great as we possibly can, right?

All of the LiteChaser kits start with a case. At just under \$70, the basic case isn't cheap, but it's heavy-duty, and the model for the iPhone 17 is also MagSafe compatible, so it's also not outrageously expensive. It's also important to note that you won't be able to attach any of the other accessories to your phone without the case, so it's a must-buy if you're getting into this whole system.

There are two main elements that make this case special: the area where you can attach filters, and the area where you can attach the grip and shutter release. Let's look at the filter system first, and we'll talk about the grip a bit later. The case has a couple of rectangular openings near the top, including one around the lenses, and another around the back light and sensor. The opening around the lenses is where the filter magic happens.



The LiteChaser uses a "slide-lock filter system." Normally, if you want to use a traditional filter with a lens, then you need to screw it onto the threads at the end of the lens. It's not always the smoothest or quickest operation. With the LiteChaser, on the other hand, the filters come attached to metal rectangles that easily slide and click into the housing on the case, thereby covering the iPhone lenses.



Some of the filters, such as the CineGold and CineBlack filters, are rectangular, while others, such as the variable neutral density or polarizer filters, are circular. Still others, such as the "Refract" or "Warp 2X" lenses, are circular lenses mounted inside of a click-in rectangle.



Directors Kit Includes:

- LCP17 Pro Case
- LCP17 Grip
- LC Bluetooth Shutter
- LC VND 2-5 Filter
- LC Shortstache Everyday Filter
- LC CineGold Filter

It's worth noting that the circular filters slightly jut out from two sides of the case. You'll probably recall the adage about fitting a square peg into a round hole - well, it turns out that there are similar issues with fitting a round filter over a rectangular phone case.

This could potentially lead to the lens snagging on straps or not fitting easily into a bag or a pocket, but that seems like the kind of unlikely problem that only afflicts people in late-night infomercials.



Plus, if you really want to store your phone and kit while it's still completely assembled, then PolarPro also sells a fashionable sling/pouch bag that lets you conveniently store and carry everything.

On the other hand, if you break down the kit before putting everything into your gear bag (or into your pocket, in the case of the cellphone), then the filters come with padded cases to keep them protected when they're not in use.

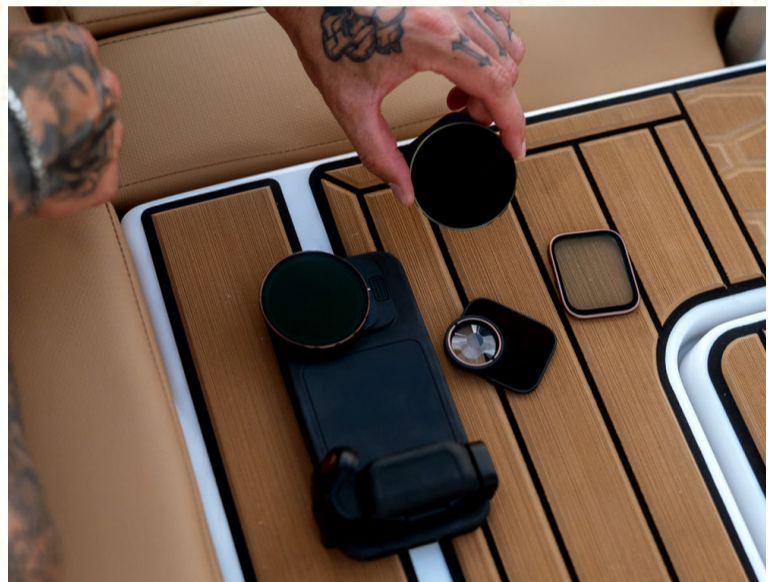
One other note about the filters: the LiteChaser system is compatible with 67-millimeter filters. That means that if you really want to get freaky, you could also potentially use other filters, or even adapters for larger or smaller filters. It might look strange to have an 82-mm filter just hanging out on the edge of your phone, but then again, it might also look strange to have an iPhone with a grip.

Which brings us to the second special aspect of the LiteChaser kit: the grip and the Bluetooth shutter button.



Personally, I've always been a fan of a camera that has a substantial grip. It just feels more professional and serious, and when a camera doesn't have a grip, then it feels like I'm using a toy camera. So while it might seem a bit silly to add a grip to an iPhone case, I'd argue that for me, the grip is actually a stronger selling point than the lens filter system.

You can easily and quickly attach or detach the grip from the case by squeezing on the sides, and then the Bluetooth shutter slides in on top of the grip. In just seconds, you've transformed your phone into a much more stable, ergonomic, and convenient camera, and you finally have a place to conveniently put your fingers - no more pinching the edges of your phone and sticking out your other fingers like you're at a formal tea party!



The Bluetooth shutter also eliminates the need to constantly tap the screen to take photos or to start or end video recording. The grip and the shutter both include a threaded hole for a tripod or other accessory, and if you don't want to use the shutter, then you can use the cold shoe on the grip to mount a different accessory such as a microphone. The most impressive part is that the grip and the Bluetooth shutter cost only \$50 together, and you can even get them for a bit less if you buy them as part of a gear kit.

Speaking of prices, you can buy any of the individual accessories on the PolarPro site separately, but there are also two main options if you're looking to bundle accessories.



The first is the Filmmakers Kit, which includes the case, the grip, the Bluetooth shutter, and the VND filter, and which sells for \$150. The other bundle is the Directors Kit, which costs \$250 and includes all of the items from the Filmmakers Kit, as well as a CineGold filter and the "Shortstache Everyday Filter." Surprisingly, those prices remain the same whether you're buying your gear for an iPhone Pro or the larger iPhone Pro Max. I've written about camera gear for so long that I'm honestly taken aback by how reasonably priced some of these accessories are.

You've probably noticed that I've only mentioned using LiteChaser accessories with iPhones, and that's because this gear is currently only compatible with iPhones. If you don't have an Apple phone, then you're out of luck here at the moment, unfortunately.

I don't have any insight into PolarPro's business plans, but I wouldn't hold my breath waiting for them to release Android-compatible products. The Android market is so fragmented between

dozens of phone manufacturer brands and countless models, so I can imagine that it would be nearly impossible to make cases that are customized to fit with so many models.

Of course, PolarPro could create some kind of adjustable case that could work with a range of products, but there are already other options like that on the market, so I'd guess that they might just stick with iPhones for the time being.

If you have a newer iPhone and you're ready to push its photo and video capabilities to the next level, then you should definitely check out the PolarPro LiteChaser kits. Many photographers - myself included - will always retain a special fondness for traditional photography with "normal" cameras, and that's fine. But I think it's high time to embrace the idea that cellphone photography and videography can also be unapologetically great, even though it's made with a different tool. And accessories like the LiteChaser kits can help make those tools even better.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Ryan Sitzman splits his time between the coffee fields of Costa Rica and the mountains of Colorado. You can find him on one of his [several websites](#).

VIDEO POLAR PRO LITE CHASER 17 FILTERS AND PRO GRIP FOR IPHONE IS HERE REVIEW

by DESMOND WONG



After months of waiting - my Polar Pro Lite Chaser 17 kit for the iPhone has arrived!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

I'm Desmond, your tech and travel companion on this adventure. Dive into the world where cutting-edge tech meets wanderlust. Join me as I unpack some of the coolest everyday tech, share gadgets for on-the-go creators, spill the beans on my favorite travel gear, and explore everything from the best travel cameras to must-have Tesla accessories. . Visit my [Youtube](#) channel, [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

VIDEO: IPHONE 17 FILTER AND LENS OVERVIEW

by POLARPRO



LiteChaser 17 was built for photographers and filmmakers looking to mount pro glass in front of their iPhone 17 Pro lenses. Whether you're shooting travel, commercial work, or everyday content, this system transforms your iPhone 17 into a cinema rig you can take anywhere.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Find more about PolarPro on their [website](#).

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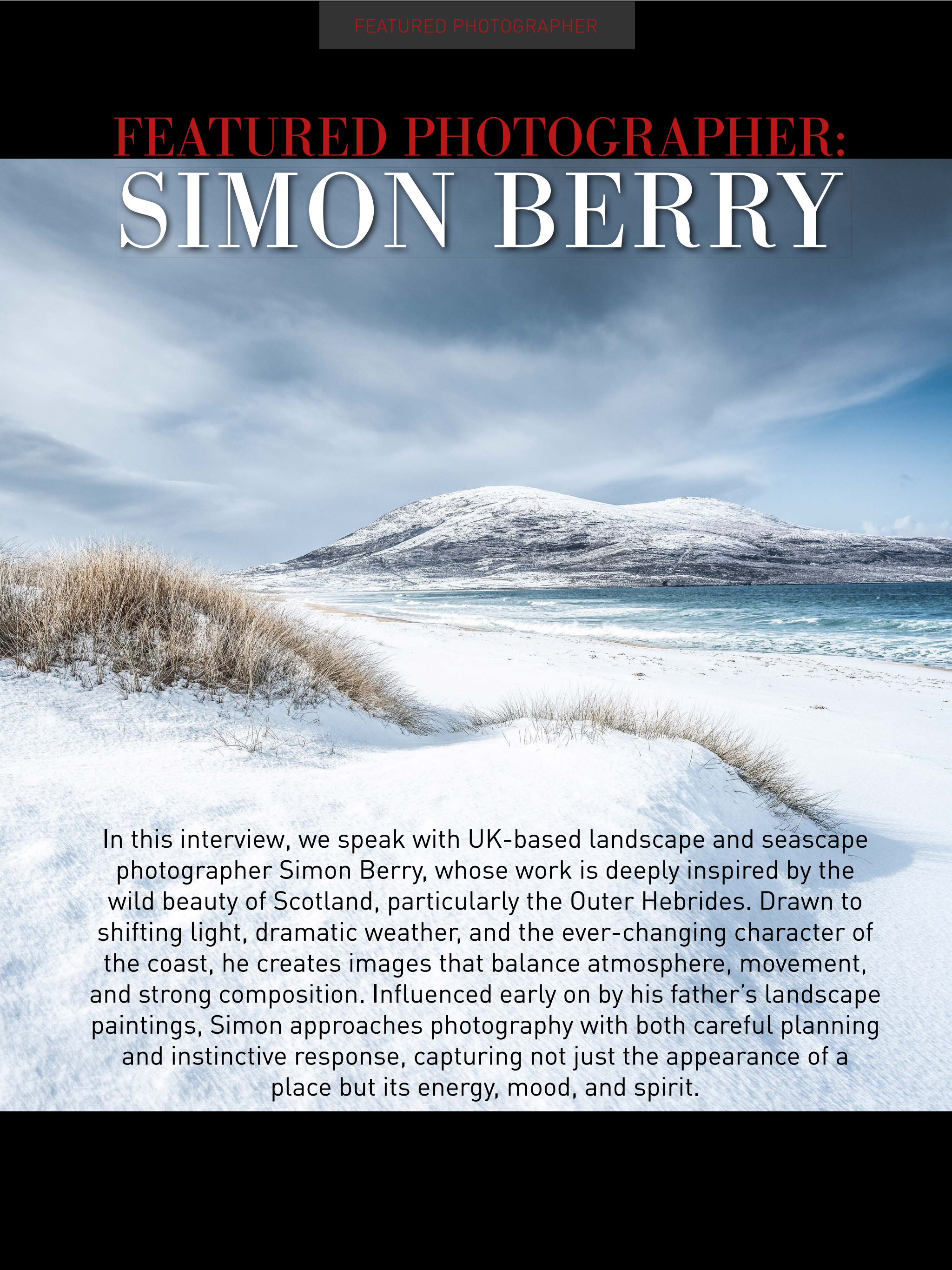
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FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER:

SIMON BERRY

A wide-angle landscape photograph showing a snowy beach in the foreground with clumps of dry grass. The ocean is visible in the middle ground, and a large, snow-covered mountain dominates the background under a cloudy sky.

In this interview, we speak with UK-based landscape and seascape photographer Simon Berry, whose work is deeply inspired by the wild beauty of Scotland, particularly the Outer Hebrides. Drawn to shifting light, dramatic weather, and the ever-changing character of the coast, he creates images that balance atmosphere, movement, and strong composition. Influenced early on by his father's landscape paintings, Simon approaches photography with both careful planning and instinctive response, capturing not just the appearance of a place but its energy, mood, and spirit.





Photographic Speciality/Style:

Landscape and Seascape Photography

Short Bio:

Simon Berry is a UK based landscape and seascape photographer, known for his love of Scotland.

He is devoted to capturing the raw energy, shifting light, and elemental drama of Scotland's far western edge. With a deep, personal connection to the Outer Hebrides, Simon Berry's work reflects both a profound respect for nature and a relentless pursuit of atmosphere.

Driven by patience and an instinct for timing, Simon frequently works in challenging conditions, braving high winds, incoming tides, and fleeting

moments of light to create images that feel alive and immersive. His photography is characterised by strong composition, dynamic movement, and an emphasis on mood, drawing viewers into the sensory experience of the Hebridean coast.

At the heart of Simon Berry's photography is a passion for storytelling through landscape. Each frame seeks not just to document a place, but to convey its spirit, the solitude, resilience, and wild beauty that make the Outer Hebrides one of the most compelling environments in the world.

Through prints, exhibitions, and commissioned work, Simon Berry continues to share his vision of these extraordinary islands, inviting others to experience their energy, drama, and timeless allure.





How did your love of photography start, and what first drew you to landscape photography?

My father painted landscapes and we were lucky to have many of his works around the home. I think I fell for the wildness of Scotland and its rugged landscape.

Your photography is deeply rooted in the landscapes and seascapes of the Outer Hebrides and you mention enjoying challenging conditions and dramatic weather. What is it about that part of the world that draws you in as a photographer?

Everytime I visit the Outer Hebrides I'm so excited to see and work in the challenging conditions that are so common there. The weather constantly changes and almost everyday there are dramatic conditions, you never know how it will develop, you just need to be prepared.

The beaches of Harris are all so different and change so much each day with different winds. The turquoise water, white sandy beaches and the hills all make for great opportunities to capture the beauty of Harris.

How do you decide when a scene has the right balance of light, movement, and atmosphere to become one of your final images?

I'm looking for balance, dynamism and great light. Sometimes you're so close to capturing your planned image but I like to produce the best I can on any given day.

The experience and effort are not always obvious but I often choose images that come a little harder. The elements fighting you and the ability to visualise the final idea in such challenging conditions feel more worthy.









Can you talk us through your approach when photographing in fast-changing conditions such as incoming tides, high winds, or fleeting light?

Staying calm and anticipating what is happening around you. It can be difficult to stay focused if you're waiting for a composition to come to life but looking around and being prepared to adjust to

the light to capture a strong image is really important. I plan as much as I can, but you need to be flexible and adjust when necessary to capture your shot.

When shooting near the coast you always need to watch the tide as you will get rogue waves that can very quickly catch you out. Having an escape plan and being cautious in the roughest weather is really important.





Your images have a strong sense of mood and energy. How much of that comes from planning, and how much comes from responding instinctively in the moment?

A little of both, I look for the more challenging days as they often provide opportunities for better images. I use plenty of Apps to plan the tides, the wind direction and of course the expected weather, but you still have to respond to what's actually happening, not what you want to happen.









What's your favorite photo that you've ever taken, and why?

My favorite image (which you can see on this page) is the one I took that changed my approach to photography. Many people are not so keen but to me it was fundamental. The image was taken on Horgabost, the tide had recently gone out and left a lovely glassy sheen on the beach. The sun was just rising and

it left a beautiful shape on the sand - I think most people would have missed it.

I was taking more time to plan and visualise my image, something I was maybe guilty of before was expecting the image to be there and be obvious. It wasn't, but once I'd seen it I photographed it on my Hasselblad and also my digital camera.





Looking ahead, what would you most like to explore or achieve next in your photography?

To develop my style and visit much more of Scotland. There is so much beauty there and I've only scratched the surface.

Different areas require a different approach and being able to feel how I want to convey that is something I'm really looking forward to doing.

What's inside your kit bag, and what's the one piece of kit you couldn't do without? And is there anything you don't currently have that you'd love to add?

My tripod is so very important. A Gitzo 5563GS. It's a brute to carry but can withstand the battering I receive in the winter weather.

I'm looking to go back to using medium format and hopefully will be using the new Hasselblad X2D by the end of the year.







When you return to locations you know well, how do you keep finding fresh ways to photograph them?

Even when you return to the same locations they are always so different. The light will be different, the wind direction. In all the years of visiting the Outer Hebrides the beauty and changeability make it so different.

For photographers who want to create more powerful seascape and landscape images, what practical advice would you give them?

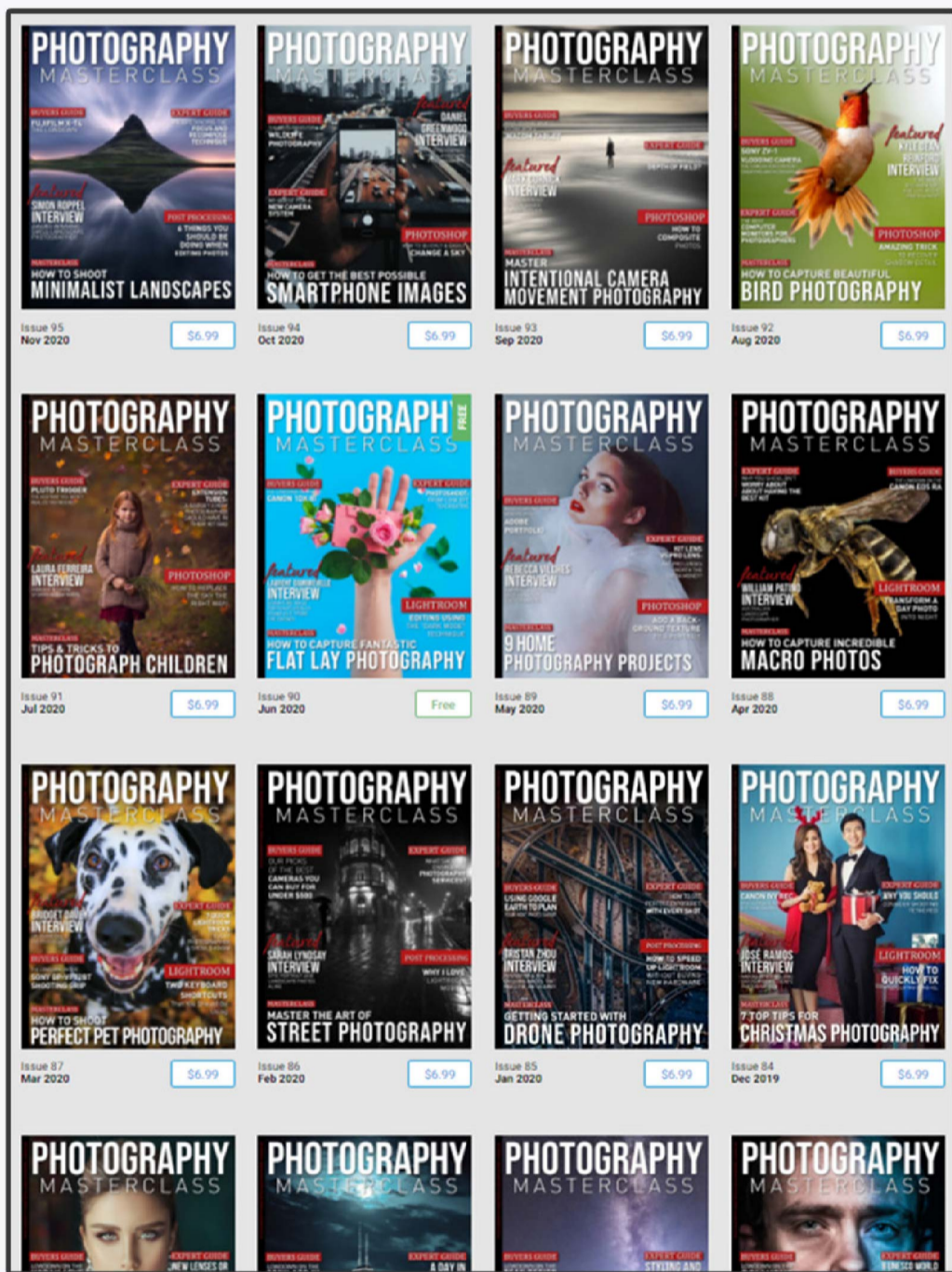
Don't rush to capture your image. Sit and watch what is happening in front of you and try to visualise patterns and composition. Start with what appeals to you and try to make an image by changing your height and moving small degrees left and right. You'll soon get a feel of what attracts you and is a worthy composition.





Follow more of Simon Berry's work on his [website](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)

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BUSTING THE BOKEH MYTH

WHY YOUR SENSOR SIZE ISN'T THE WHOLE STORY



Photo by: [Dev Asangbam](#)

Walk into any camera store, scroll through any photography forum, or chat with fellow enthusiasts on a photo walk, and you will inevitably hear the same piece of undisputed "wisdom."

It usually goes something like this: If you want a truly shallow depth of field and that beautifully creamy background blur, you absolutely need a larger sensor. Upgrading from a crop sensor to a full-frame camera is often touted as the holy grail for portrait photographers chasing the ultimate bokeh. Some even look beyond full-frame, dreaming of medium format systems to completely obliterate their backgrounds.

But what if I told you that this widely accepted truth is, fundamentally, a myth? To help illustrate exactly why the photography community has gotten this so wrong, I've included a fantastic video alongside this article. In it, you'll see a real-world portrait shoot comparing a full-frame Sony setup against a medium-format Hasselblad. The results completely defied the expectations of the photographer's audience, with most viewers guessing the gear completely wrong. Watch the video on the following page to see the visual evidence, and then read on as we unpack the science, the math, and the reality of what actually creates that magical subject separation.

VIDEO TUTORIAL: CROP SENSOR VS FULL FRAME- THE TRUTH ABOUT BOKEH

by TONY & CHELSEA NORTHRUP



In this video, I compare two very different camera systems, full frame and medium format, during a recent portrait photography shoot. We'll explore how depth of field and focal lengths play a critical role, and why many viewers incorrectly identified which camera took which picture. This discussion also touches on camera sensor differences and apertures.

ABOUT THE VIDEO AUTHOR:

Chelsea and Tony Northrup are photographers based in Connecticut. They are the creators of the top-rated photography book, "[Tony Northrup's DSLR Book: How to Create Stunning Digital Photography](#)" which features over nine hours of video training and free lifetime updates. To see more of their tutorials and photos you can follow them on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#)

THE ANATOMY OF A PERSISTENT MYTH

Let's start by acknowledging where the confusion begins. The idea that a larger sensor yields a shallower depth of field isn't entirely fabricated; it's a misunderstanding of a technical truth.

If you take a crop sensor (APS-C) camera and a full-frame camera, slap a 50mm f/1.8 lens on both of them, and take a photo from the exact same spot, the full-frame image will indeed look different.

But here is the catch: the framing changes. Because the crop sensor magnifies the field of view (usually by a factor of 1.5x or 1.6x), you have to physically back away from your subject to get the same composition you achieved on the full-frame camera.

When you increase the physical distance between your camera and your subject, you increase your depth of field. Therefore, the full-frame camera, which allowed you to stand closer, produces the image with the shallower depth of field.

The sensor itself didn't magically melt the background; your physical distance to the subject did.

THE ANALOGY OF SPEED

In the accompanying video includes a brilliant analogy that perfectly crystallizes this concept. They compare comparing f-stops across different sensor sizes to comparing the speed of American cars versus European cars.

Technically speaking, an American car traveling at 100 miles per hour is going faster than a European car traveling at 100 kilometers per hour. But stating "American cars go faster at 100" makes absolutely no sense in practical conversation. You cannot separate the number 100 from its specific unit of measurement.

The same logic applies to lens apertures. A f-stop number is a ratio, and its practical visual effect is inextricably tied to the "unit" of the sensor size it's paired with. When photographers say medium format inherently has a shallower depth of field than full-frame, or full-frame inherently beats crop sensors, they are divorcing the f-stop number from the crop factor mathematics that govern the final image.

THE MATH OF EQUIVALENT APERTURES

To truly understand how much background blur a lens will give you on a specific camera, you have to apply the crop factor not just to the focal length, but to the aperture as well. This gives you the equivalent aperture in standard 35mm (full-frame) terms.

For example, if you are shooting on a Micro Four Thirds camera (which has a 2x crop factor) with a 50mm f/1.4 lens, your full-frame equivalent is a 100mm field of view. But to understand your depth of field, you must also multiply that f/1.4 by 2. Your depth of field will look like an f/2.8 lens on a full-frame camera.

This brings us to the ultimate truth: Depth of field is dictated by the lens, not the sensor size.

The video showcases a 100mm f/4 lens on a medium format camera. Because medium format sensors are larger than full-frame, the crop factor is actually a multiplier of less than one (typically around 0.79x). While that gives you a slightly wider field of view and a slightly shallower depth of field equivalent than an f/4 lens on a full-frame camera, it completely falls apart when compared to the vast array of ultra-fast lenses available for smaller formats.

The medium format system simply couldn't compete in the bokeh department, compared to a full-frame camera equipped with a massive Sigma 135mm f/1.4 lens, for example. The sheer size of the aperture on that specific full-

frame lens completely overpowered any slight advantage the medium format sensor possessed. The resulting bokeh was bigger, bolder, and smoother—despite being shot on a smaller sensor.

WHY DOES SENSOR SIZE MATTER, THEN?

If a full-frame camera with a fast lens can out-blur a \$10,000 medium format setup, and an APS-C camera with an ultra-fast f/1.2 lens can go toe-to-toe with standard full-frame primes, why do we bother with larger sensors at all?

Because sensor size does matter, just not for the reasons we usually think. As the video rightly points out, choosing your camera format is about matching the tool to the specific job.



THE FULL-FRAME SWEET SPOT

Full-frame has become the industry standard for a reason. It currently boasts the most robust ecosystem of ultra-fast lenses (like f/1.2 and f/1.4 primes). If your absolute top priority is isolating your subject with razor-thin depth of field, or capturing fast-moving action with lightning-fast autofocus systems that manufacturers prioritize on their 35mm flagship bodies, full-frame is where you want to be.

THE MEDIUM FORMAT MAJESTY

Medium format cameras aren't built for speed, and as we've learned, they aren't even necessarily the kings of bokeh. But they offer things smaller sensors struggle to match. The larger pixels on a medium format sensor gather light in a way that produces incredibly smooth color transitions, deeper dynamic range, and remarkably rich, pleasing skin tones.

Additionally, many medium format systems (like the Hasselblad used in the video) utilize leaf shutter lenses. Unlike the focal plane shutters in standard DSLRs and mirrorless cameras, leaf shutters allow you to sync your flash at incredibly high shutter speeds - sometimes up to 1/2000th of a second. If you shoot portraits in bright midday sun and need to overpower the ambient light with a strobe, a leaf shutter medium format system is an unparalleled tool.

THE CROP SENSOR ADVANTAGE

While the video focuses on full-frame vs. medium format, the lesson trickles down perfectly to APS-C and Micro Four Thirds. Crop sensors offer incredible reach for wildlife and sports photographers. They allow for smaller, lighter, and vastly more affordable camera bags. And yes, if you invest in the right lenses, you can still achieve beautifully blurred backgrounds.

IN CONCLUSION

The next time you find yourself lusting after a larger sensor simply because you want "better bokeh," take a step back and look at your lenses. Are you maximizing your current format with fast, high-quality glass?

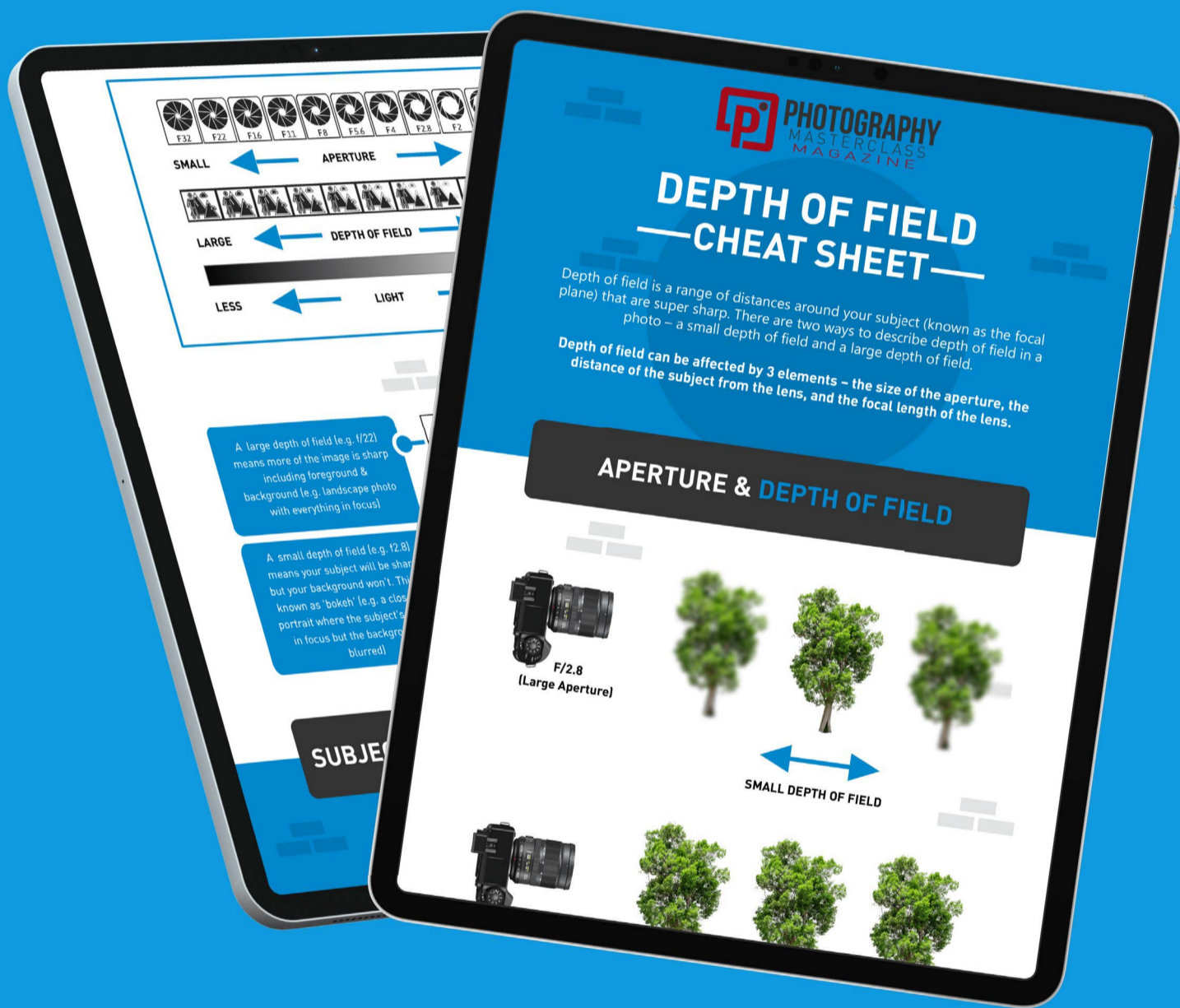
A camera system is a symbiotic relationship between the body and the lens. You cannot judge one without the context of the other.

The sensor captures the light, but it is the lens that shapes it, bends it, and ultimately decides how much of the world falls away into a beautiful, creamy blur.

Choose your gear based on things like flash sync speeds, autofocus needs, and budget - but leave the bokeh myth behind.

PHOTOGRAPHY MASTERCLASS MAGAZINE

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UNLOCK THE SECRET TO IRRESISTIBLE BACKGROUND
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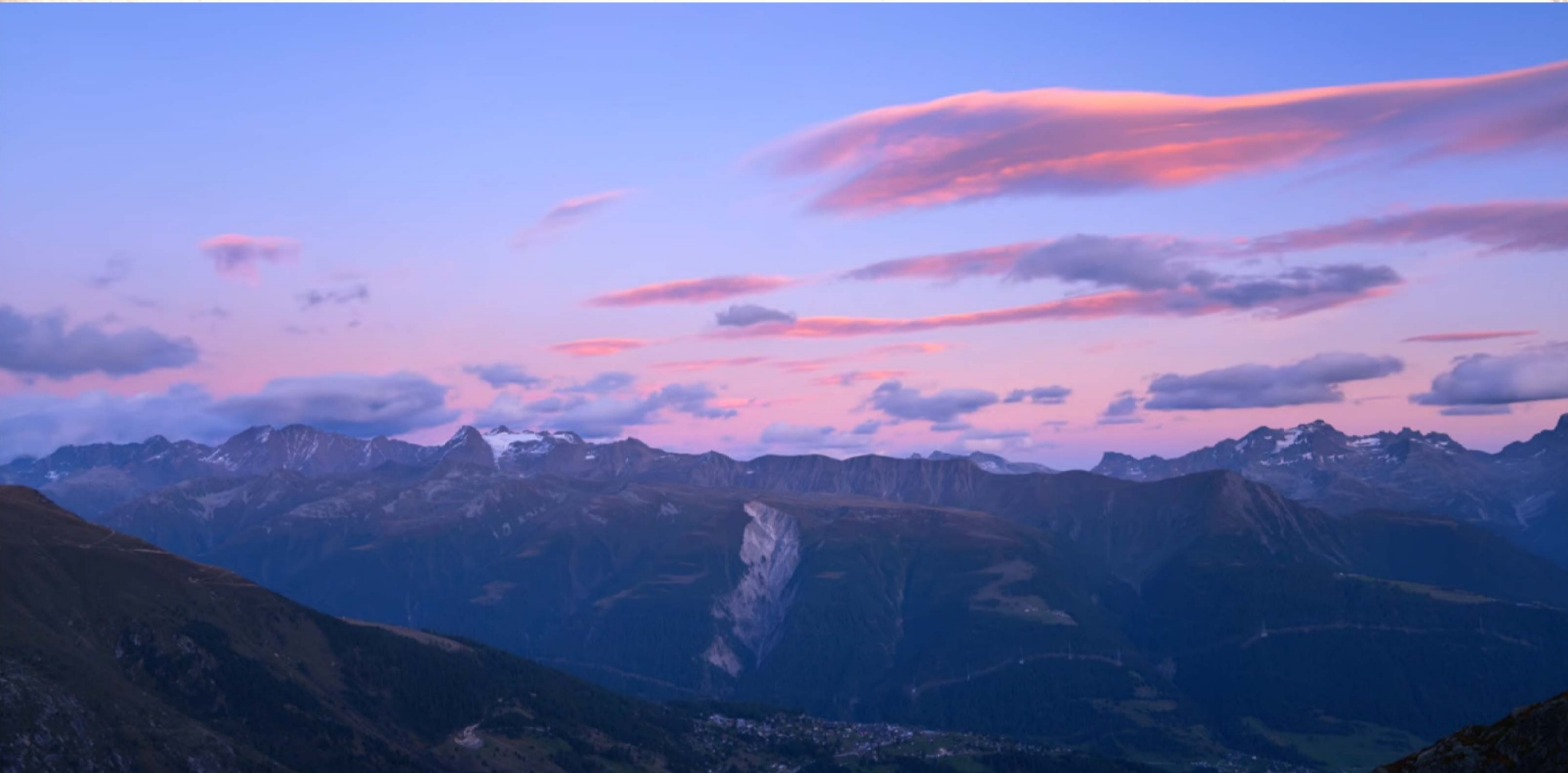
A TIME-LAPSE ADVENTURE

by MORTEN RUSTAD



Experience the Swiss Alps in breathtaking 8K, a time-lapse journey of soaring peaks, shimmering glaciers, and mirror-still lakes captured on location in Switzerland.

BEHIND THE SCENES:
MORTEN RUSTAD'S
“ALPS 8K - A TIME-LAPSE ADVENTURE”



This video aims to portray the magical Alps with its mountains, glaciers and lakes in glorious 8K quality.

The time-lapse was shot with a workshop group with people from all over the world on a fantastic trip to Switzerland over the course of a week.

Music by [Musicbed](#).

For licensing of the clips in up to 8K resolution, see <http://www.mortenrustad.com>

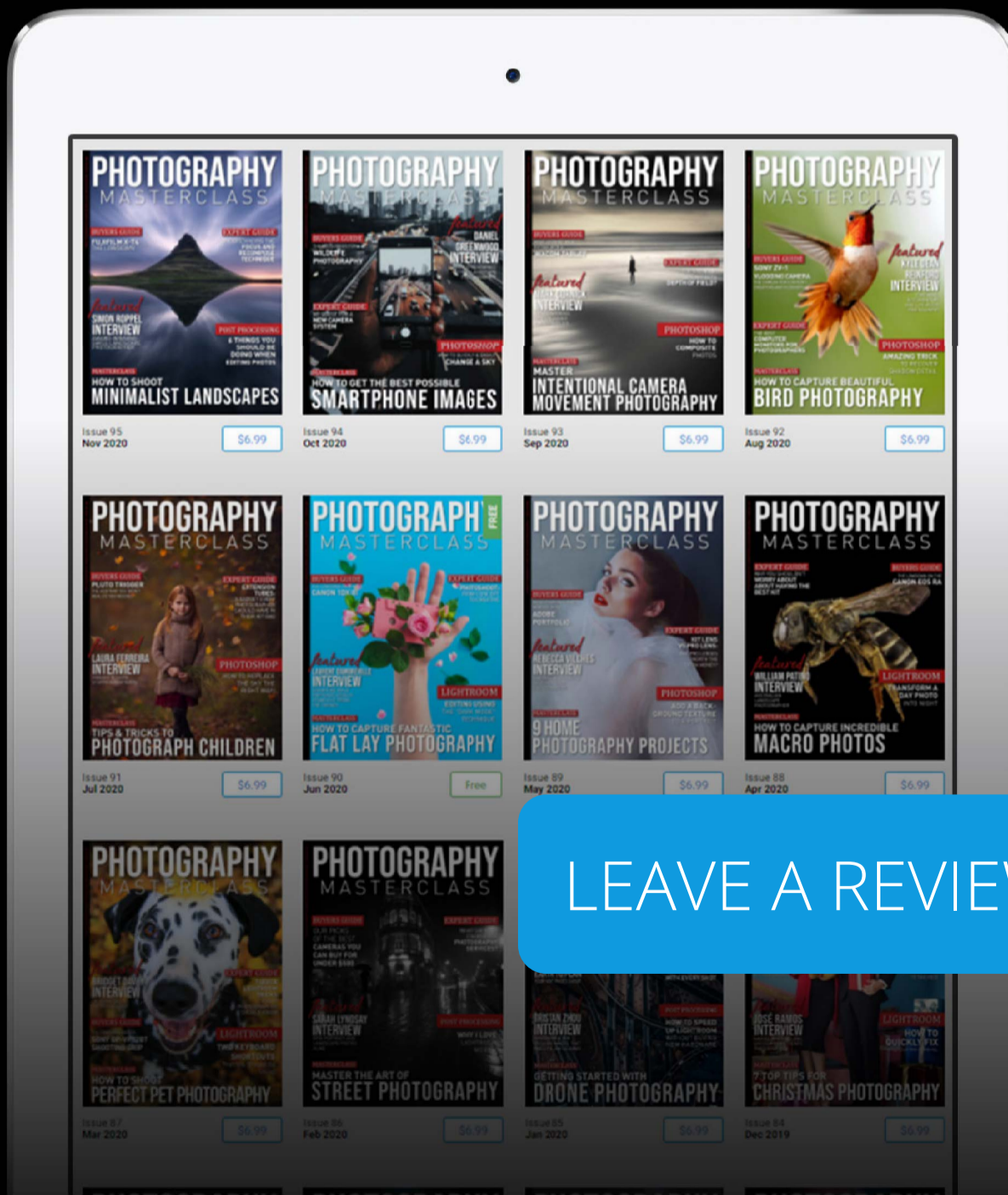
Produced by [VJUS](#)

ABOUT:

Follow Morten Rustad's adventures on his [website](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

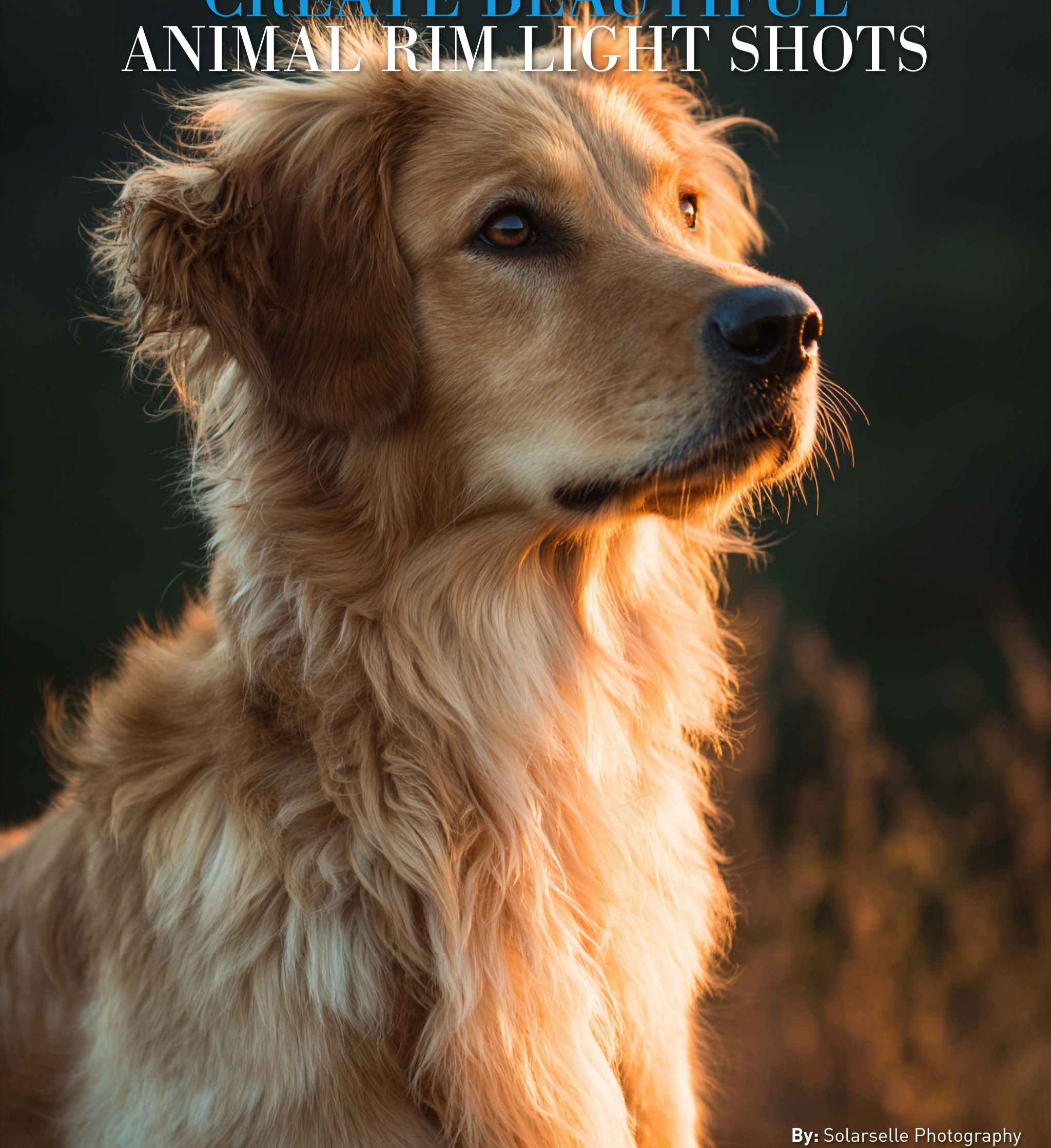
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MASTERCLASS

MASTERCLASS CREATE BEAUTIFUL ANIMAL RIM LIGHT SHOTS



By: Solarselle Photography
[Portfolio](#)





By: ZHRO Photography
Shot Details: Nikon D5200, at 400mm,
f/6.3, 1/800 sec, ISO 1600
[Portfolio](#)



By: Rafael Hoyos Weht
Shot Details: Nikon D7500, at 135mm,
f/2.8, 1/2000 sec, ISO 250
[Portfolio](#)



By: Jed Owen
Shot Details: Nikon D90, at 210mm,
f/5.6, 1/200 sec, ISO 100
[Instagram](#)



By: Diana Aishe
Shot Details: Canon PowerShot G3 X,
at 149.3mm, f/5.6, 1/160 sec, ISO 125
[Instagram](#)





HOW TO SHOOT BEAUTIFUL ANIMAL RIM LIGHT SHOTS



Photo by: Duncan Van Gortel

If you've spent any time looking at animal or wildlife photography, you've probably seen a rim light shot. You know the ones: a grizzly bear shaking off water, outlined by a brilliant halo of golden light, or an egret stepping through the shallows, its feathers glowing against a pitch-black background.

Rim lighting is one of those techniques that immediately separates a standard snapshot from a striking, professional image. It adds depth, drama, and mood. It isolates your subject and can turn an ordinary shot into pure magic.

But if you've ever tried to shoot it, you also know it can be incredibly frustrating. Cameras get confused, subjects turn into muddy silhouettes, and lens flare can ruin an otherwise perfect frame.

Don't worry. Nailing rim light isn't about luck, but about understanding a few core principles and knowing how to outsmart your camera's automatic settings.

Let's break down exactly how you can get that perfect halo effect in your own animal photography.

THE INGREDIENTS: WHAT YOU NEED FOR RIM LIGHT

To get a great rim light shot, you need three main things to line up perfectly: the

right light, the right subject, and the right background. Let's look at each one.

1. THE RIGHT LIGHT (AND POSITION)

Rim lighting is basically backlighting on steroids. For the halo effect to work, the light source (usually the sun) needs to be directly behind your subject, or just slightly off to the side, pointing back toward your camera.

Because the sun needs to be low on the horizon to hit the animal at eye level, you're almost exclusively looking at shooting during the golden hours: the first hour after sunrise and the last hour before sunset. If the sun is too high, it will light the top of the animal's head and its back, but you won't get that clean, outlining glow.



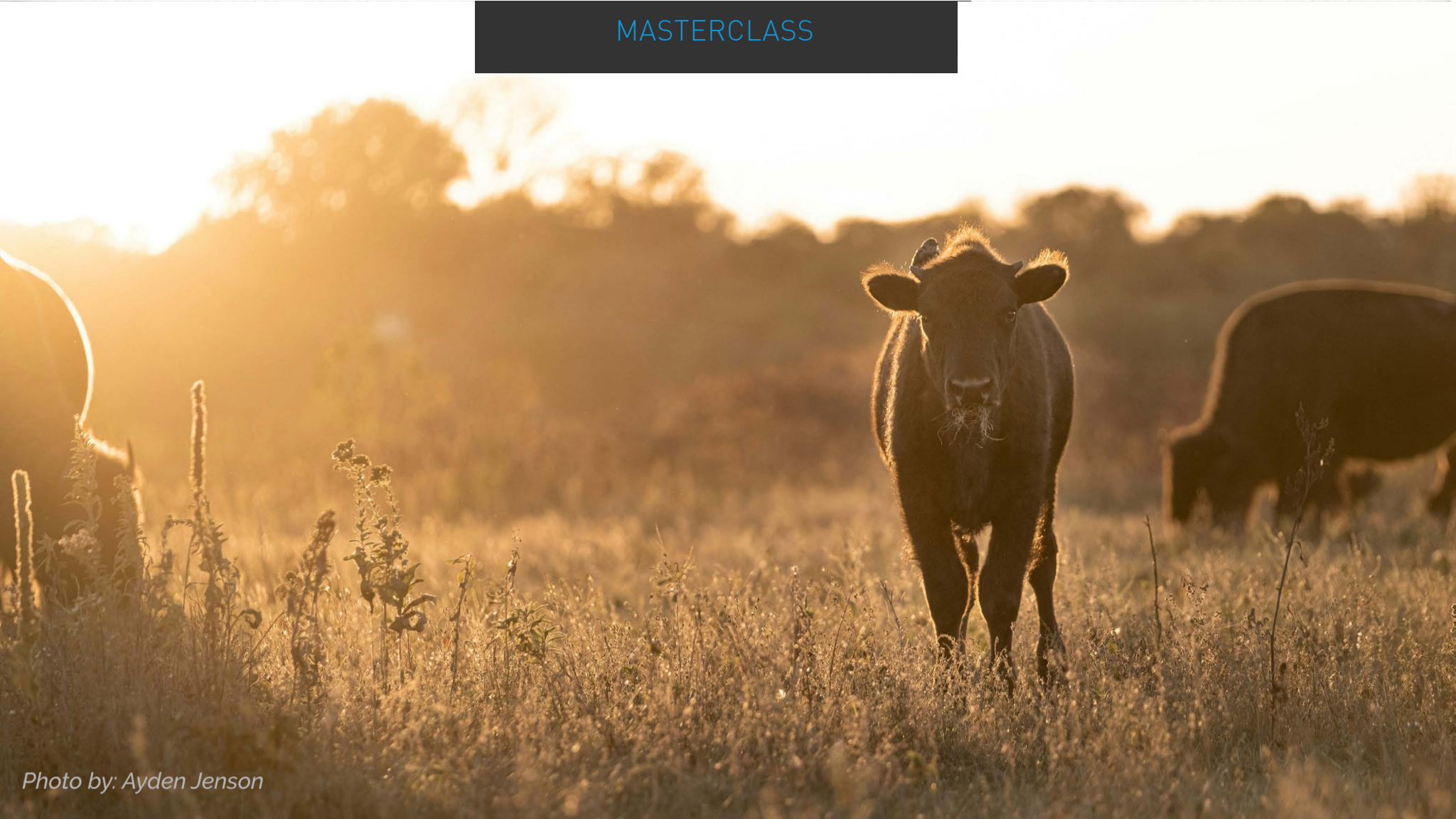


Photo by: Ayden Jenson

2. THE RIGHT SUBJECT

Not every animal looks good backlit. A rhino or a smooth-scaled snake isn't going to give you a glowing halo because they don't have anything on their edges to catch the light.

Rim light works best on subjects that are fuzzy, furry, or feathery. Think about a coyote's thick winter coat, the fuzzy antlers of a buck in velvet, or the translucent feathers of a heron. The light hits these fine details, scatters, and creates that brilliant glowing edge.

It also works phenomenally well if the animal is interacting with the environment. For example, dust kicked up by hooves, breath in the cold morning air, or water droplets flying off a wet coat will all catch the backlight and glow.

3. THE RIGHT BACKGROUND

This is the secret sauce. You can have perfect light and a perfectly fuzzy subject, but if your background is a bright, washed-out sky, your rim light will completely disappear.

For the glowing edge to stand out, you need a dark background. You want your subject positioned in front of a shadowed tree line, a dark hillside, or deep brush. The contrast between the sunlit edges of your subject and the dark background is what creates the drama.

When you are out in the field, you constantly need to adjust your own position. Sometimes, moving just three feet to the left can change your background from a bright, distracting sky to a beautiful, dark patch of shaded woods.

NAILING THE EXPOSURE

This is where things usually go wrong. If you leave your camera on its default evaluative or matrix metering, it will look at all that bright light hitting the lens and panic. It will try to darken the whole scene, leaving you with an underexposed, muddy mess. Alternatively, if it meters off the dark background, it might overexpose everything, completely blowing out that delicate rim light.

Here is how you take control:

SWITCH TO SPOT METERING

Spot metering tells your camera to ignore the overall scene and only measure the light on a tiny specific point - usually your focus point. Place that spot directly on the brightest part of the animal's rim-lit fur or feathers.

USE EXPOSURE COMPENSATION

Even with spot metering, you usually need to tweak things. I almost always shoot rim light in Manual mode or Aperture Priority. If you are using Aperture Priority, you'll likely need to dial in some negative exposure compensation (usually somewhere between -1 and -2 stops).

Why? Because you want the shadows to be dark. You aren't trying to show every detail in the animal's face. You want the shadowed side of the animal facing you to be dark and moody, allowing the glowing edges to be the star of the show.

By underexposing, you protect those bright highlights on the edge of the animal from blowing out (losing all their detail and just becoming solid white

pixels) while simultaneously darkening the background.

WATCH YOUR HISTOGRAM

Don't trust the image on your camera's LCD screen, especially in bright morning or evening light. Your eyes will trick you. Rely on your [histogram](#). You want to make sure the data isn't climbing up the right side of the graph (which means your highlights are blown).

A classic rim light histogram will often have a big spike on the left (the dark background and the shadowed side of the animal) and a smaller trail reaching over to the right (the rim light).

OVERCOMING THE PRACTICAL CHALLENGES

Shooting directly into the sun comes with a few physical headaches. Here is how to handle them.

LOCKING FOCUS

Autofocus systems rely on contrast to lock onto a subject. When you shoot directly into the sun, the resulting glare drastically reduces the contrast in your scene, and your lens might start hunting back and forth.

To help your camera out, try to place your focus point right on the edge of the animal where the dark shadow meets the bright rim light. That hard line of contrast will give your autofocus system something to grab onto. If your camera still refuses to lock on, be prepared to quickly switch to manual focus and dial it in yourself.

MANAGING LENS FLARE

A little bit of lens flare can look artistic, but a lot of it will just wash out your image and ruin your contrast.

First, always use your lens hood. It's your first line of defense against stray light. If the sun is still hitting the front element of your lens and causing flare, you have to get creative.

If you're shooting on a tripod, you can use your hand or a hat to cast a shadow over the front of the lens (just make sure your hand doesn't end up in the frame).

Alternatively, try shifting your position slightly so the sun is blocked by a tree branch or even positioned perfectly behind the animal itself.

BRINGING IT TOGETHER IN POST-PROCESSING

A good rim light shot is made in the camera, but it's finished in your editing software. Because you are shooting a high-contrast scene, RAW files can sometimes look a little flat straight out of the camera.

When I pull a rim light image into Lightroom or Photoshop, my goal is to enhance the drama without making it look fake.

HERE IS MY TYPICAL WORKFLOW:

- 1. Bring down the blacks and shadows:** This helps push the background into darkness and cleans up any washed-out areas caused by minor lens flare.

- 2. Protect the highlights:** If the rim light is a bit too bright, I'll pull the highlights slider down to recover any lost details in the glowing fur or feathers.

- 3. Warm it up:** Rim light is usually golden hour light. I'll often tweak the white balance slightly to the warmer side to really emphasize those golden, amber tones.



4. **Targeted adjustments:** I love using a soft radial mask or a brush tool to slightly lift the exposure on the animal's eye. Even in a silhouette or a moody backlit shot, catching just a tiny glint of light in the eye helps the viewer connect with the subject.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Shooting rim light takes practice, patience, and a willingness to delete a lot of bad photos. You are purposely shooting in tricky lighting conditions and asking your camera to do things it wasn't strictly programmed to do.

But when it all comes together - when the background falls into shadow, the exposure is locked in, and the edge of your subject suddenly catches fire with golden light - it's one of the most rewarding experiences in animal and wildlife photography.

Next time you're out in the field and the sun starts getting low, resist the urge to keep the sun over your shoulder. Walk around your subject, shoot directly into the light, and see what kind of magic you can capture.



VIDEO TUTORIAL: HOW TO GET PERFECT RIM LIGHT IN YOUR WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY

by Adorama

**GET
PERFECT
RIM LIGHT**



If you are not yet a master of rim light, you are truly missing out on one of the most incredibly powerful and impactful techniques available to make your photographs absolutely amazing. Many photographers tend to focus their attention on the subject. However, if your aspiration is to create photographs that are on the next level, that truly stand out and

impress, you should instead be looking for the light that is already present, the light that is shaping your subject from behind and around the edges. This is where the magic truly happens. This video is presented by Peter Bredahl Dam - a professional nature photographer with over 10 years of experience in nature photography, corporate photography, and videography.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Shop [Adorama](#) for a powerhouse lineup of cameras, lenses, cinematography gear, studio lighting, tripods, pro audio, computers, printers, and every cutting-edge accessory you need to manifest your creative vision.

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We want to see your own masterclass shots! If you've put the techniques from this issue to the test, share your results with us. Use the hashtag #PhotographyMasterclassMagazine on Instagram for a chance to be featured. We can't wait to see your stunning shots!

#PhotographyMasterclassMagazine



READERS GALLERY

Your Very Best Shots Showcased

**TASIA SUTFIN, BOULDER BEACH,
BOULDER CITY, NV**

By: Celina R. Gomez Olivas

Shot Details: Canon EOS Rebel T3i,
at 13mm, f/5, 1/500 sec, ISO 100





SUNSET AT LYTHAM ST ANNE'S

By: Gerard Hopkinson

Shot Details: Song a7R IV, at 24mm,
f/16, 1.3 sec, ISO 100, -0.5 EV

[Portfolio](#)





FROSTY MORNING

By: Francis Parker

Shot Details: Canon 5D Mark IV,
at 124mm, f/7.1, 1/8000 sec, ISO 800

[Portfolio](#)



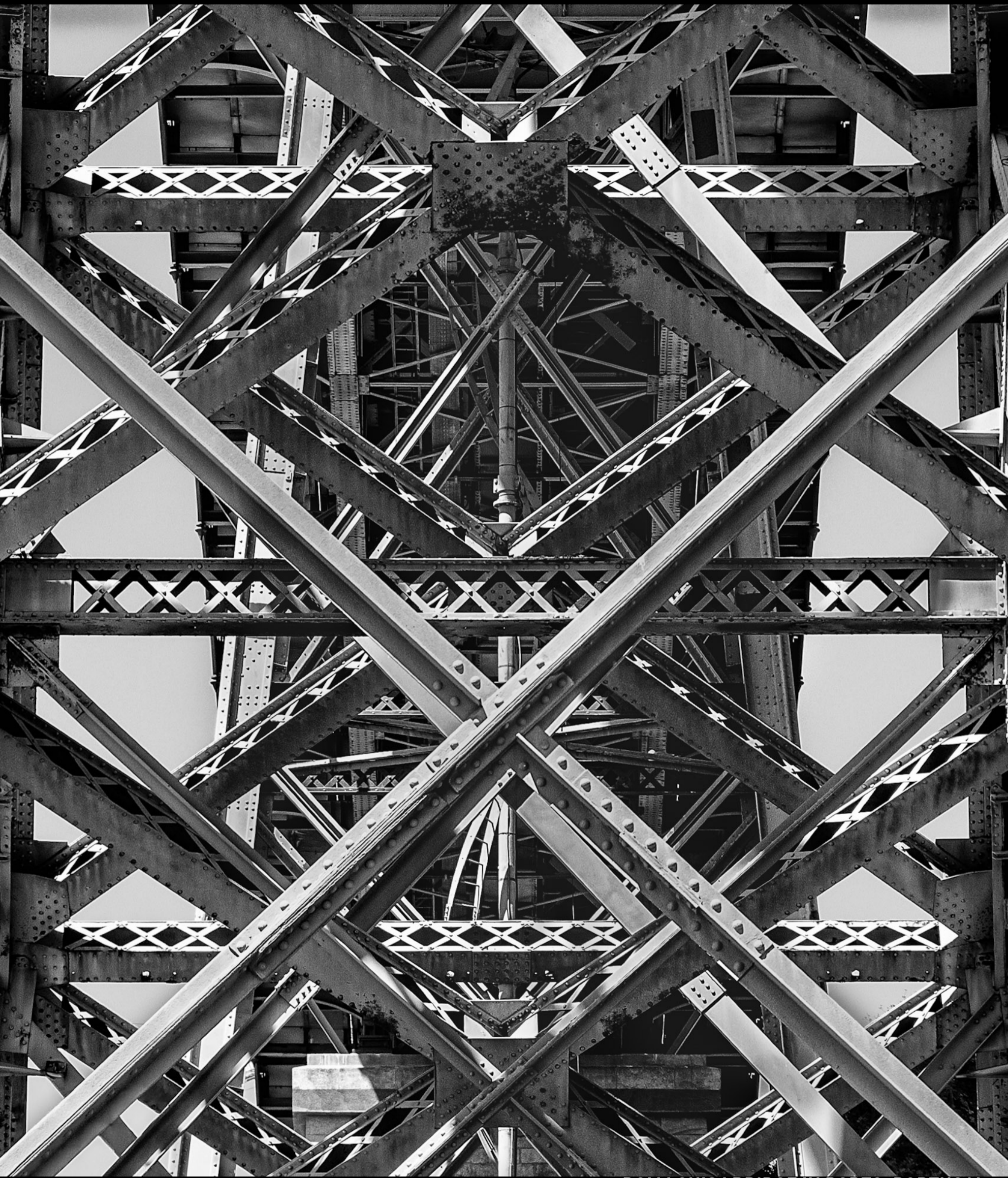
DANDELION WATER DROPLETS

By: Francis Parker

Shot Details: Canon R5, at 100mm,
f/4.5, 1/20 sec, ISO 125

[Portfolio](#)





DOM LOUIS I BRIDGE IN PORTO, PORTUGAL

By: Peter Eckstein

[Instagram](#)

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HOW TO CREATE LIGHT BEAMS IN LIGHTROOM

by The School Of Photography



Light beams can transform a flat woodland scene into something magical. The shafts of sunlight filtering through trees create atmosphere, depth, and a sense of mystery that makes your image come alive.

But capturing those light beams naturally is rare. The weather, time of day, time of year, and location all must line up perfectly. You also need misty mornings, low sun, and clear patches in the canopy. So, getting all those things to line up might not be practically possible.

Fortunately, Lightroom allows you to recreate those conditions digitally with just a few smart adjustments.

And please note: Post-processing isn't about faking light; it's about enhancing the light that was already there. In this tutorial, we'll show you how to add realistic, natural-looking light beams to your photos using Lightroom's Masking tools. This technique is quick, effective, and perfect for forest or woodland photography.

DO WHAT YOU CAN IN CAMERA FIRST

You don't need any special gear for this technique, but getting the right photo to begin with will make your results more convincing.

1. A GOOD BASE IMAGE

Start with a well-exposed image that has a clear light source. This is typically the sun peeking through a gap in the trees. This will make your added beams look natural rather than artificial.

When framing your image in the field, think ahead: compose with the light source in mind. In this example, the

sunburst was deliberately placed in the top-right corner, setting up a natural direction for the beams to travel through the scene.

2. SHOOT IN RAW

RAW files preserve the detail and dynamic range you'll need when adjusting light and shadow in post-production.

3. ADOBE LIGHTROOM CLASSIC

You'll need the Masking tools in Lightroom — specifically the Brush and Luminance Range masks.

Tip: Get it right in-camera. Know where your light is coming from before you shoot, and you'll have a much better foundation when editing later.



Our starting point — a simple woodland scene with natural light coming from the top right



The final image — soft, realistic light beams enhance atmosphere and depth.

BASIC EDIT IN LIGHTROOM

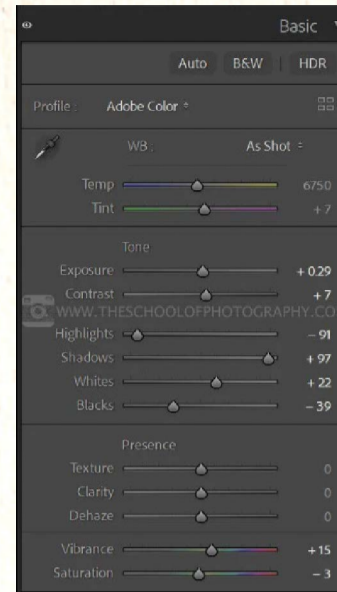
Begin with your base edit. Balance exposure, contrast, and color before adding any creative effects. You can see the difference between the raw image and the final version — the light beams add atmosphere, but the foundation of the shot remains solid.



Raw image before basic edits



Base edit

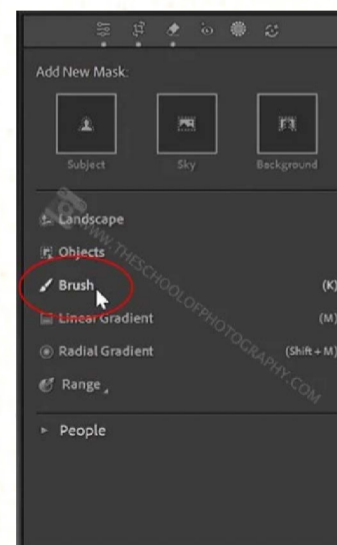


Lightroom Edits in the Basic panel

CREATING THE LIGHT BEAMS

Now for the fun part — let's create those beams.

1. Open the Masking Panel: Click the masking icon, then delete any existing masks.
2. Select the Brush Tool.
3. Set the following Brush settings:
 - Feather: 100
 - Flow: 100
 - Density: Around 90



Open the Masking panel and select the Brush tool — this is where your light beams begin

Now identify your light source in the image (for example, a gap in the canopy).

4. Create a small brush > Click once near the light source.

5. Move down to where you want the beam to hit and enlarge the brush.

6. Hold Shift and click again — Lightroom will draw a perfect, tapered beam between those two points.

7. Repeat for additional light beams where natural highlights occur on the forest floor.

Tip: Light beams should enhance, not overpower. Look for areas already catching light and use them as guides.



Hold Shift and click to draw perfect, tapered light beams from your light source into the scene

REFINING THE BEAMS

Once your beams are in place, fine-tune the effect:

8. Lift Exposure and Highlights slightly to make them glow.

9. Adjust the Amount slider to control strength.

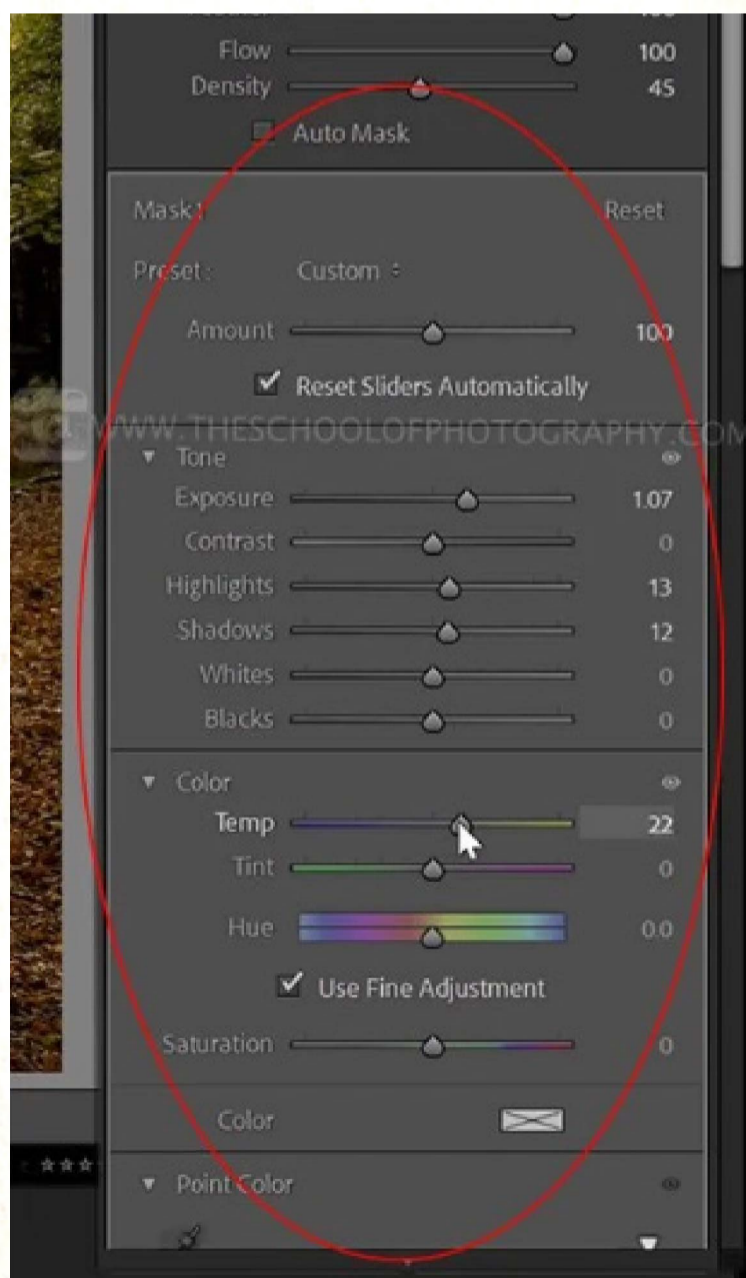
You can also gently paint in extra light around bright spots to balance the composition — for example, where sunlight might scatter through mist or branches.

ADDING WARMTH

Natural sunlight is warm, especially during golden hour.

10. Increase the Temperature slider slightly toward yellow/orange to make the light feel more realistic.

Toggle the mask on and off — you'll see how those subtle beams completely change the mood of your shot.



Brush masking settings

MAKING THE BEAMS INTERACT WITH THE SCENE

To keep things believable, light shouldn't fall where it logically wouldn't — such as behind a tree trunk or under dense branches.

11. Make sure you are still selected on your beam mask.

12. Click Subtract > Object.

13. Paint over the tree or branch that should block the beam. Lightroom will automatically detect the object and remove the light beam from that area.

14. For smaller details, choose Subtract > Brush and paint manually to remove light from under branches or shadowed spots.

These refinements make the effect look natural — as if the beams are weaving through the trees, not over them.



Use Object Masking to remove sections

ADDING A LUMINANCE RANGE MASK

To add a warmth to the main light source itself (like a warm glow at the top of the frame):

15. Create a new mask and select Luminance Range.

16. Use the eyedropper to click on the brightest area of your light source.

17. Adjust the range slider to narrow it down to the highlights.

18. Increase Temperature for warmth and Saturation if needed.

This small touch adds richness and realism — making your light source match the tone of your beams.



Luminance range mask

EXTRAS - THE POWER OF HDR EDITING

If you're shooting into the sun, you'll often get strong contrasts and dark tree trunks. This is where HDR helps.

By blending three bracketed exposures (one normal, one underexposed, and one overexposed) you can retain detail in both highlights and shadows. Lightroom's HDR Photo Merge feature makes this simple. With the HDR base, your edited beams will sit naturally within a balanced tonal range.



-2 stops



0



=2 stops

CONCLUSION

Still life flower photography is one of the most rewarding ways to develop your eye for detail and composition. It slows you down and encourages you to think about every aspect of the image — from how the petals curve to how light falls across the vase. By experimenting with lighting direction, aperture, and arrangement, you'll soon start to see how subtle changes can transform a simple setup into something extraordinary.

Whether you're shooting in a lightbox or by a window, the goal is the same: to create images that feel timeless and intentional. Don't be afraid to play with textures, try new lighting angles, or edit your shots with a fine-art finish. The more you explore, the more you'll refine your creative voice.



Final image

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

The School of Photography deliver high-quality photography courses online, in person and in books, and are a leading provider of photography education to schools and colleges in the UK. You can follow more from The School of Photography on their [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouSTube](#).

VIDEO TUTORIAL: **CREATE LIGHT BEAMS** IN LIGHTROOM!

by THE SCHOOL OF PHOTOGRAPHY



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