Tuesday 10 February 2026

Amateur Photographer

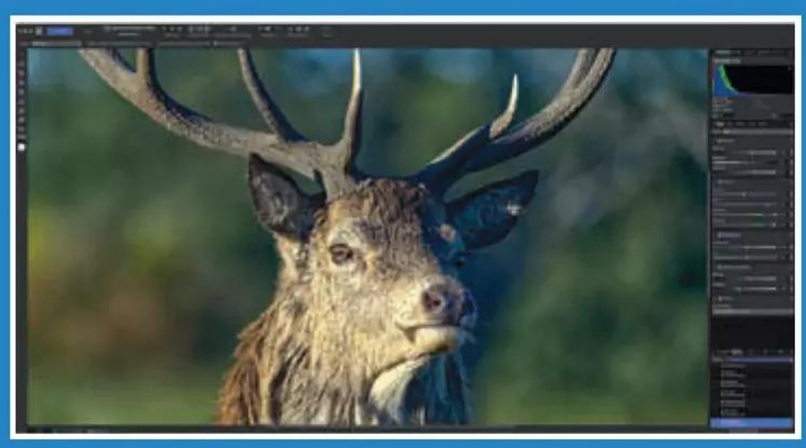
PREMIUM EDITION
FEBRUARY 2026

Passionate about photography since 1884

Stories on an epic scale

Nick Brandt on his latest project *The Echo of our Voices*, shot in Jordan's Wadi Rum desert

Editing special

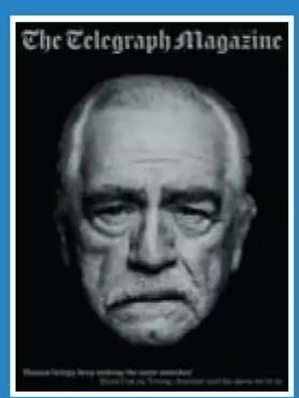


Affinity and beyond

Affinity Photo is now **FREE!** What else is new? We find out

DxO PhotoLab 9.3

The best raw editing software gets better in this new version

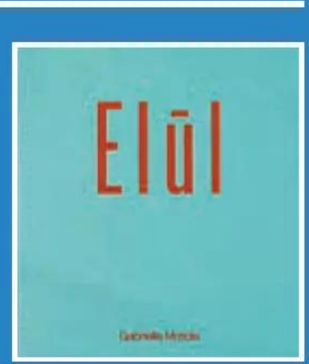


Picture editors

Is their role relevant in the modern world asks Peter Dench

Brought to book

Turn your projects into photobooks



Small wonder

The delightful new **Fujifilm X-T30 III** is pocket-friendly in more ways than one

KELSEYmedia 9 770002 684973 08 £5.99

Tested DJI Mini 5 Pro: superb 250g drone • Hohem iSteady MT3 Gimbal Pro Kit

Trade the camera you don't use for one you will.

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Time to change gear.

mpb

Inside this issue

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© NICK BRANDT

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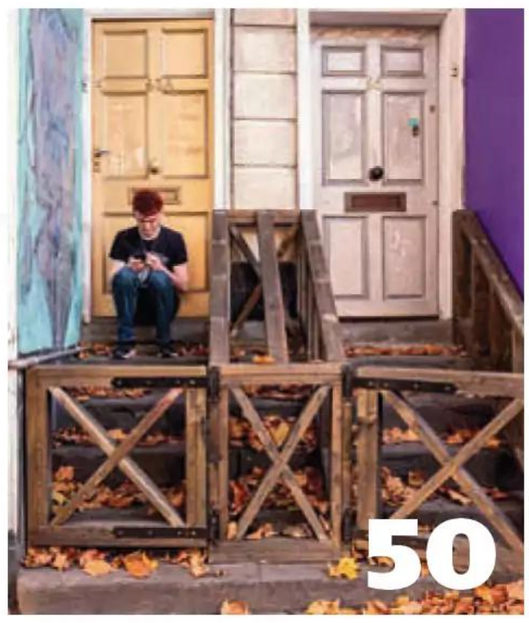

© BRYAN SUTTON

© WILL CHEUNG

Welcome

Whether you shoot with a camera or phone, picture editing is something most photographers do, to a greater or lesser extent. So this issue is dedicated to editing in all its forms, with a broad range of content. Peter Dench considers whether media outlets still need to employ human picture editors, for example, while we also look at the skills needed to edit a memorable photo book. Particular software packages are covered in depth too, with reviews of the (now free) Affinity Studio and the latest version of DxO PhotoLab. Our big review is the affordable Fujifilm X-T30 III, and we also check out the DJI Mini 5 Pro drone. Another big highlight is an in-depth look at Nick Brandt's latest project. Don't forget to get a discount on The Photography Show tickets – details on page five.

Geoff Harris, Deputy Editor

MAIN COVER PICTURE © COURTESY OF FUJIFILM. BRIAN COX PICTURE BY PHOTOGRAPHER PIP. PICTURE AT TOP OF COVER: © NICK BRANDT

Our cover image of the Fujifilm X-T30 III is courtesy of Fujifilm

THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS

ANDY WESTLAKE
Technical Editor

Andy tests the X-T30 III, Fujifilm's newest portable, stylish, sub-£1,000 DSLR-style camera

STEVE FAIRCLOUGH

AP regular Steve talks to Nick Brandt about his powerful work, The Echo of Our Voices

WILL CHEUNG

Affinity is a powerful program and it's now absolutely free. Top photo tutor Will takes a look

ROD LAWTON

Editing pro Rod delves into PhotoLab 9.3, DxO's flagship photo editor, and gives his verdict

PETER DENCH
Acting Features Ed

Peter Dench talks to picture editors to explore whether human judgement is still relevant

GABRIELLE MOTOLA

Photobook Club Collective member Gabrielle shares advice on how to make photobooks

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Another fast prime lens from Leica

Leica has announced the Noctilux-M 35mm f/1.2 ASPH lens to round out its existing range of fast prime lenses. The new lens, hailed as the 'pinnacle of optical craftsmanship', is the first 35mm in the Noctilux-M line-up, which already features some of the world's fastest aspherical lenses, such as the Noctilux-M 50mm f/0.95 and 75mm f/1.25.

The Noctilux-M 35mm f/1.2 ASPH

A floating element within the complex optical construction ensures consistent performance across the entire focusing range, Leica claimed, from the close focus distance to infinity. In addition, this is the first Noctilux lens to feature an extended close focus distance down to 50cm. When used with the new Leica M EV1 and its high-resolution integrated electronic viewfinder, focusing is facilitated across the entire focusing range. M cameras with a rangefinder can focus to a distance of 70cm via the optical viewfinder. (In the close-up range of 70-50cm, focusing is carried out via Live View on the rear LCD panel or the Visoflex 2 clip-on viewfinder.)

The optical design comprises 10 lenses in 5 groups, including 3 aspherical lenses, and a floating element which, as mentioned, is designed to ensure consistent performance over the entire focusing range. An integrated lens hood reduces glare and reflections.

The Noctilux-M 35mm f/1.2 ASPH lens is relatively compact, too, measuring just 5cm in length, with a diameter of 6.5cm, and weighing 416g.

It is available now for £7,700 from Leica Stores and authorised dealers (though the lens cap will cost you an extra £70).

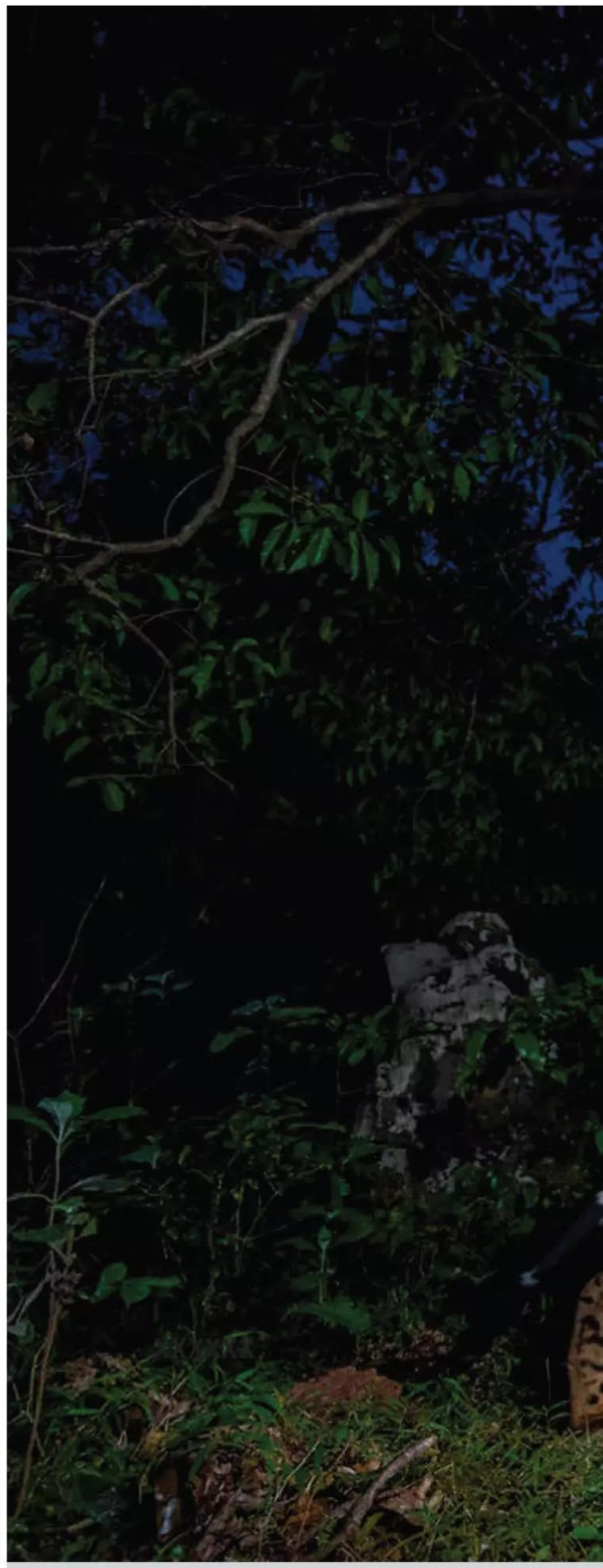
Bird contest winners announced

Gary Neville has been named overall winner of the Society of International Nature and Wildlife Photographers (SINWP) Bird Photographer of the Year 2025 competition. Gary, from Surrey, England, took the image at Lake Kerkini in Northern Greece, using a Sony Alpha A1 camera and Tamron 70-180mm lens (ISO 100, 1/400th sec at f/4).

'The lake, actually a man-made reservoir, is rich in wildlife and is especially renowned for its Dalmatian pelicans,' Gary explained. 'I captured this image while leaning over the side of a boat, keeping my camera away from the surface of the water, whist watching the Dalmatian pelicans slowly get closer and closer to the boat in anticipation of a fish from the boatman – the fish are considered low quality and unsuitable for sale, and are instead thrown back to the local wildlife.'

This year's competition attracted over 2,200 entries from all over the world. Since starting eight years ago, it has raised nearly £20,000 in support of vital conservation initiatives led by the RSPB. Second place went to Maggie Bullock from Cheshire.

© GARY NEVILLE
Gary Neville's winning image


© PRASENJEET YADAV

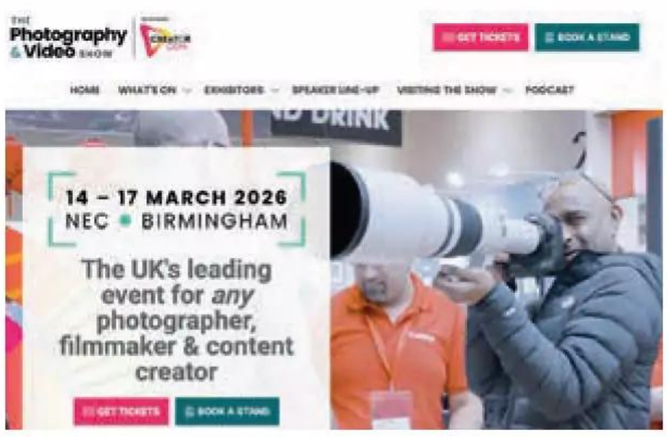
Tiger, tiger, burning bright...

'Dark Knight' by Prasenjeet Yadav from India is amongst the 24 images selected for the latest People's Choice Award in the Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition, run by the Natural History Museum in London. You can vote for your personal favourites either online (see bit.ly/wpotychoice) or via digital screens in the Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition at the Natural History Museum. Voting closes on Wednesday 18 March.

‘Dark Knight’ by Prasenjeet Yadav is one of the People’s Choice contenders in Wildlife Photographer of the Year

Save money on The Photography & Video Show tickets

The Photography & Video Show returns to the Birmingham NEC this year, taking place from 14-17 March. More than 250 brands, including Canon, Fujifilm, OM System, Sony and Nikon, will have kit ready to try out and buy at exclusive show prices. There will also be an extensive programme of over 500 talks and demos and AP will have a stand (A62). You can get 20% off advance tickets with the code AMPHO26. Just quote the code before 12 March – see bit.ly/tpsoffer



Get your AP discount on TPS tickets

Nikon ZR firmware update

Nikon has released firmware version 1.10 for its compact cine camera, the ZR. The update extends the maximum recording time to six hours and also supports timecode input over a wired connection via the external mic/line input connector, making it easier to synchronise with audio recording devices and other cameras. A file-naming convention similar to that of RED cameras has been adopted, too. For the full list of updates, see bit.ly/ZRfirmware

The Nikon ZR cine camera

Viewpoint
Jon Stapley

Why are so many younger photographers in particular still drawn to film photography?

A few years ago, I was in a rut photographically. So, I did something drastic, and sold some of my gear to buy a Pentax SLR and a few rolls and colour and B&W film.

Since then, I've not looked back. It's not just a nostalgia thing (I'm far too young, thank you)… , and while I still use digital cameras for work, all my personal and recreational photography is on film. Here are some of the reasons I love it.

First, film makes me a more considered photographer. I have no modern comforts such as high burst rates or AI-assisted AF, and there's a finite number of exposures in a roll. This makes me slow all the way down, and pick my moments. I'm a firm believer that great art springs from limitations.

No screens!

I spend my life looking at screens, but when I'm out with my film camera, I'm free of them. I see the world through my beautiful optical viewfinder, and when I think I have a shot, I freeze it in resolutely analogue chemicals, and later I turn it into a negative I can hold in my hand. If it's good enough, perhaps even a print on a wall. Then there is the excitement of trying new film stocks. Whenever a new one drops, the first thing I do is buy a couple of rolls and try it out. In the past half-year alone, we've seen the Harman Phoenix II, Kentmere 200, Kodacolor 100 and 200, and probably others I'm forgetting about.

Also, it's eminently possible to find old stocks you've never heard of. I've found Jessops-branded film in bins at flea markets, €2 rolls of Tudor-branded film in gift shops in Porto, old discontinued Fujifilm emulsions in batches on eBay. There's a true sense of discovery to it.

Plus, as film is unpredictable, the anticipation of seeing how your shots have turned out – the agonising wait between capture and development – never, ever diminishes. I've had loads of analogue shots that have done things I didn't expect and couldn't quite explain.

© JON STAPLEY

Tudor 200 film, Olympus XA2

Of course, there are downsides. First: the ongoing cost. While there are plenty of cheap film stocks, and various ways you can shoot film on the cheap, film is more expensive than it used to be, and development is more expensive too.

Then there is the difficulty in honing your craft. Especially for those who let their completed rolls of film languish in a drawer for months before developing them (guilty). It can be harder to improve when there's a significant gap between process and result.

Older cameras tend to break, too. While there are more new film cameras now, including the point-and-shoot Kodak Snapic A1, the half-frame Pentax 17 and the premium compact Lomo MC-A, most film shooters are likely using old models. Parts wear away, electronics stop working. It's a fact of life, and often a repair costs more than it would to source a used replacement. You can solve some issues creatively: a cheap light meter has hugely extended the life of my cameras.

But even with these little annoyances, I'm an analogue photographer for life now and I wouldn't have it any other way!

An avid film photographer, Jon is a freelance journalist who has been writing features and reviews for AP for over a decade, as well as many other photo titles.

Do you have something you'd like to get off your chest? Send us your thoughts in around 500 words to the email address on page 3 and win a year's digital subscription to AP.

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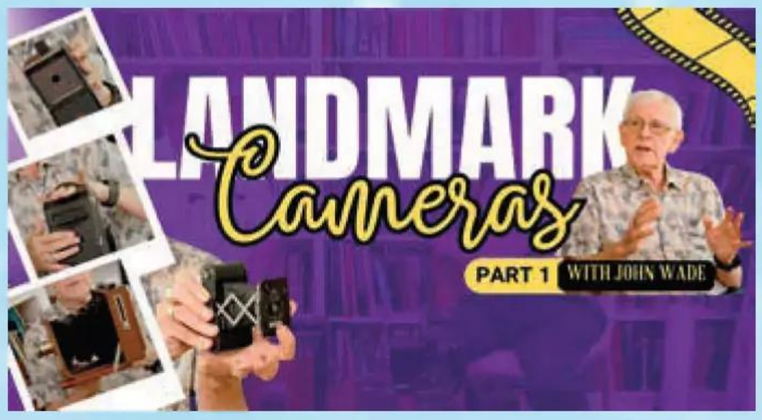

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Clockwise from left:

Bengal Tigers

Cheetahs

Lions

Jaguar

NINE LIVES One Photographer, Nine Persecuted Species

by Paul Goldstein

£25, Unicorn Publishing Group, Softcover, 160 pages, ISBN: 9781917458566

Driven by anger and conviction, *Nine Lives* sees Paul Goldstein go to extraordinary lengths to capture wildlife at its most powerful and vulnerable, says Peter Dench

Paul Goldstein is not a photographer given to understatement. *Nine Lives* is a wildlife photography book underpinned by a sense that time is running out for the species Goldstein has spent his life pursuing.

Nine persecuted animals are pinpointed, photographed by Goldstein across some of the world's most unforgiving environments. The images are visceral and confrontational, from lions glowering at the edge of human encroachment to polar bears dwarfed by melting landscapes. They are predators but vulnerable. Framed as embattled survivors.

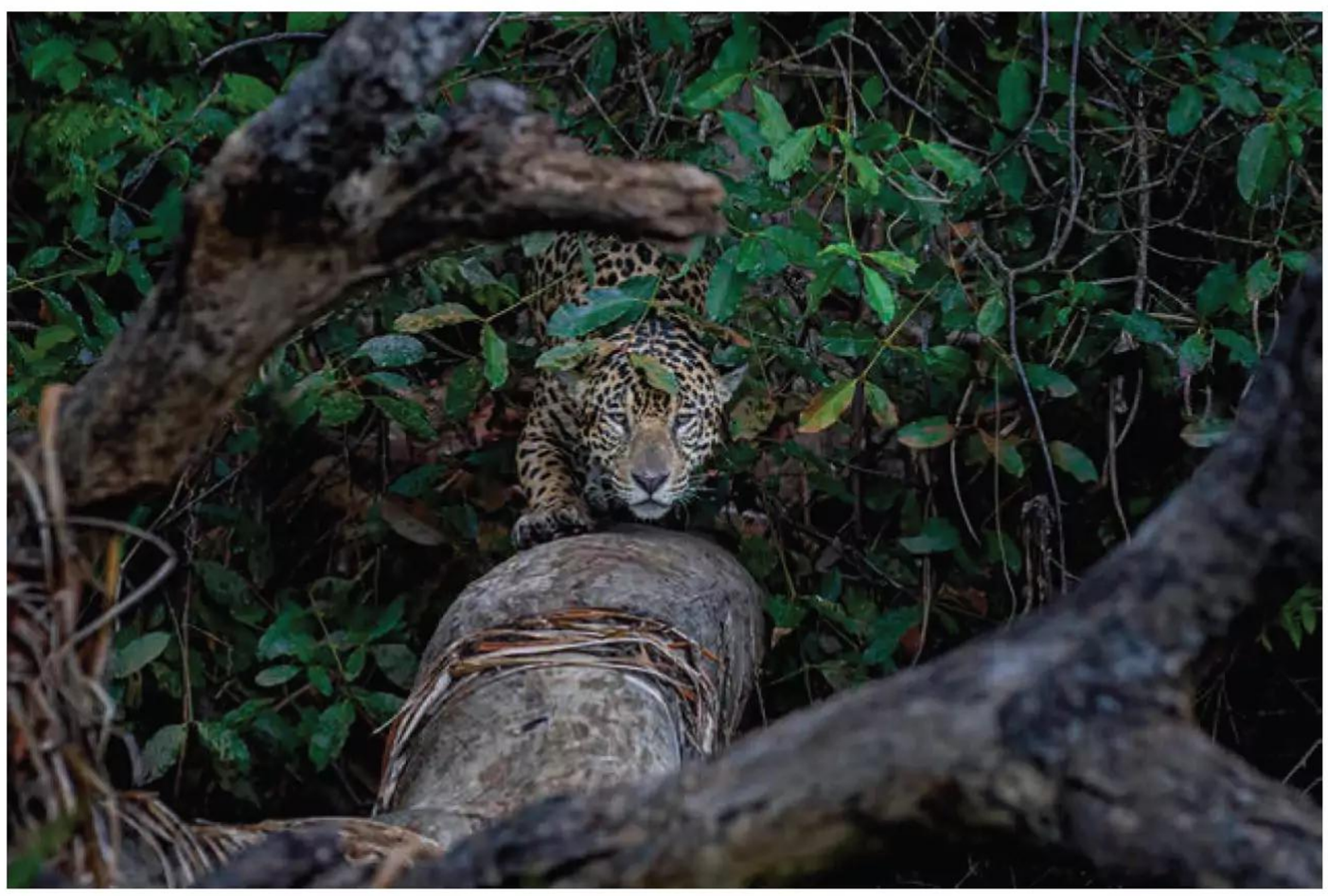
These are photographs made from proximity – physical, emotional and ethical. Goldstein's willingness to endure discomfort, exhaustion and put himself at risk is evident throughout the book.

There has been a shift in wildlife books over time, moving from placid to political. *Nine Lives* pairs the images with a fiercely opinionated text. No punches are pulled – it notes official inertia, environmental hypocrisy and humanity's role in the casual destruction of the natural world. The tone is abrasive at times but there is sincerity. Overall, it's a message that's impossible to ignore.

Goldstein's voice has built over time to balance charisma with confrontation. *Nine Lives* will not appeal to everyone. If you want a comforting observation of wildlife, perhaps look elsewhere. Goldstein uses his camera as a tool to effect change which gives the book energy.

The sequencing sustains tension throughout. Moments of drama are balanced with more reflective frames. There's Goldstein's familiar sensitivity to light, gesture and animal behaviour. Is it a crusade? Perhaps, but he doesn't abandon the craft of good photography.

Chris Packham provides the foreword which adds to the feeling of *Nine Lives* as a manifesto as well as photographic achievement. Studying the pages we are reminded that wildlife photography at its most powerful, is not just about beauty or access but about responsibility. Goldstein may divide opinion but leaves the reader in no doubt where he stands and why these animals matter.



Books & exhibitions

The latest and best books and exhibitions from the world of photography

UNTITLED FROM FISHWORM © PIA PAULINA GUILMOTH & JESSE BULL SAFFIRE

Fishworm by Pia Paulina Guilmoth and Jesse Bull Saffire

€48.00, VOID, Softcover, 232 pages, ISBN 9786185479466

Fishworm is an excavation of memory, community and identity. Not a conventional photography book, it's put together with discarded visual remnants from the lives of others. For more than seven years, Pia Paulina Guilmoth and Jesse Bull Saffire, scoured a 60-mile radius of their home in rural central Maine. They harvested abandoned prints and photographs along with mouldy boxes and detritus from old mill towns. Everything was then scanned on a battered photocopier they found outside a fire station. This added detail aligns with the book's fragileness and resourcefulness.

It's a very strange book. At times a compelling portrait of the Sandy River Valley and its tree-wrapped villages. The collage of faces, fragments, stains, textures make the pages feel dug-up rather than designed. This roughness is essential to the book's atmosphere. The photographs decay at the same pace as the towns that once held them. History is seen through the lens of loss.

Fishworm is a deeply personal endeavour. As gay and trans women living in a rural place, Pia and Jesse acknowledge there's unease threaded through their project. The book becomes a way of testing belonging. A visual world is pieced together from the cast-offs of a culture that hasn't always welcomed them. Their collages could be interpreted as an attempt to reconcile affection with alienation. Perhaps claim a home in a landscape that has shaped them but not always embraced them.

It's messy but undeniably tender. Unsettling and defiantly handmade. *Fishworm* may not be for the photobook purist, but as an archive and an act of self-definition it's certainly an inventive contribution to contemporary photobook making. **PD**

Miss Pinehair, 2021

At Marni Fashion Show, 2023

The Sartorialist: Milano
by Scott Schuman

£60, TASCHEN, Hardcover, 248 pages, ISBN: 978375440321

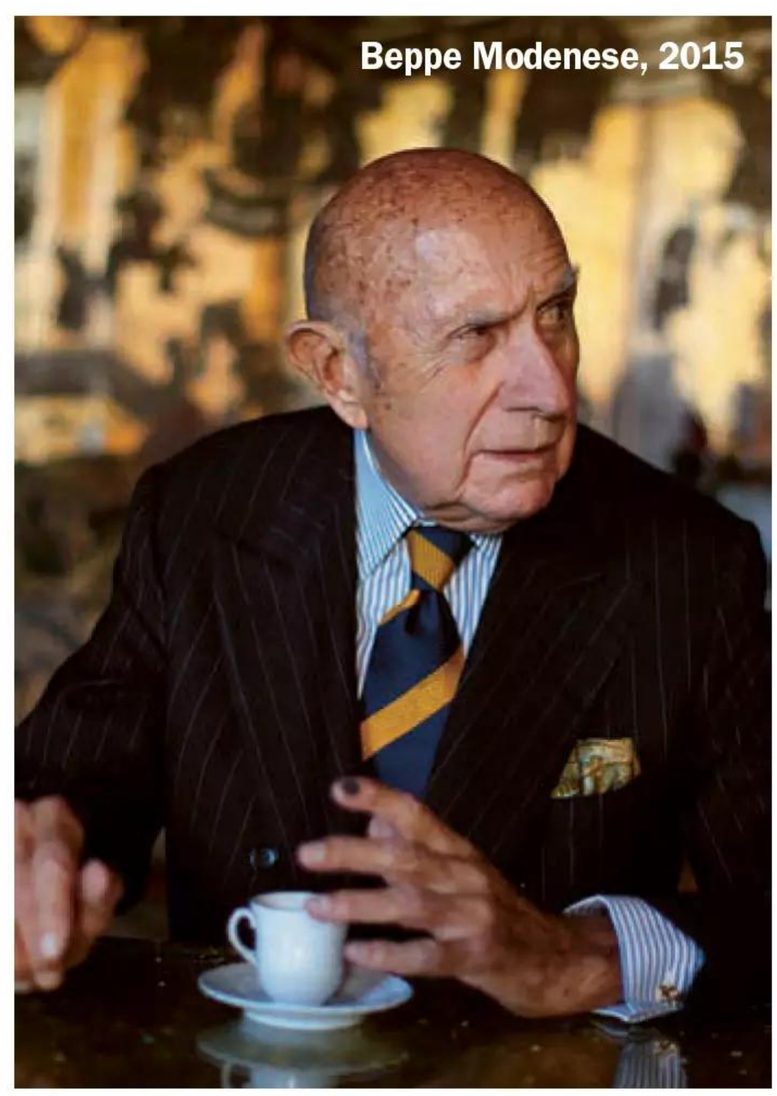
Camera in hand, prowling the streets of Milan for the best part of 20 years, Scott Schuman has been documenting the Italian city's famously well-dressed residents. Even the pensioners popping out for a cheeky Campari look as if they've been lightly styled by Miuccia Prada. For Schuman, better known as social media master The Sartorialist, it's fertile ground. He's made a career out of catching such people in their natural habitat.

Milan is a city where elegance is part birthright, part civic duty. *The Sartorialist: Milano* gathers the fruits of that long relationship. The images are trademark Schuman – precise and mostly flattering. It's fashion week on the street. A smallish man, Schuman has always been good at discretion, darting in, isolating his subject in the frame – presenting them as unique.

The book charts Milan's shift across time; it moves from lacquered old-school glamour to the loft-living, bicycle-pedalling creatives of the day. The foreword is provided by the late Giorgio Armani, an indicator of the cultural standing Schuman has earned.

Schuman's eye is sharp, his craft refined. Milan is his studio and the marble cafés, shadowy arcades, tramlines and geometry play their role. The photography can occasionally feel a touch too polished and eager to flatter. However, it's still a handsome tribute to a city that knows exactly who it is. Schuman might not be everyone's favourite person to photograph (I speak from experience) but there's no arguing with his knack for photographing everyone else.

Through Schuman's lens we are presented with a stylish, unmistakably Milanese chapter in his ongoing fashion odyssey. **PD**


Beppe Modenese, 2015

Left: 'Wild Bunch' and 'Roc It' Z-Boys Collaboration with Break dancers, Virgin Records, near Broadmead, Bristol, 1983

Above: Mark and the Meteors tattoo, Bristol, 1986

BEEZER Until Now:
Volume I: A Life in Photos 1982-1986

£35 - £110, PC Press, Hard and Softback, 396 pages, ISBN: 9781068340116

This is the first instalment of Beezer's long-awaited three-part series *Until Now* and it's a cracker. Open *Volume I: A Life in Photos 1982-1986* and you're slapped with the raw charge of early-'80s Britain, a time of political turbulence, creative rebellion and the combustible youth cultures that would shape the following decades. Beezer was there documenting Bristol's underground scene, revealing the truth behind what has endlessly been mythologised. It's not a purist's approach to photography but he records a time before anyone thought to call it history.

This opening volume is split into the Alpha and Beta books, charting Beezer's early years in Bristol, a time when punk, hip-hop, reggae, street art and protest culture collided. The pages are a staggering roll call of faces: Gil Scott-Heron, Robert Del Naja, The Wild Bunch, Ari Up, NFAK, Mark Stewart, the Fearless Four. Even a young Neil Kinnock slipping into the frame. This avoids being a celebrity scrapbook. Beezer tunes his eye to communities, clubs and carnivals, housing estates and heaving dancefloors. Places where politics and pleasure occupy the same noisy spaces.

The photographs are shot without restraint – sweaty, grainy, irreverent and unpolished. A current of outlandish 1980s fashions, DIY aesthetics and the early pulse of graffiti culture run through the images. There's Glastonbury mud, Notting Hill Carnival colour, Womad exuberance and the shifting cityscape itself. It's subcultural documented with an insider's trust.

This book is the start of a 40-year archive that will go on to cover London, New York and Tokyo. Beezer's impact on music, street culture and visual identity is already widely acknowledged by gatekeepers *NME, Vice*, NPR and the BBC. Countless exhibitions have told parts of the story but now we will get the definitive version, finally published in full.

Volume I is an essential addition to the story of early '80s Britain. A vivid reminder of how much noise, style and meaning can erupt from the margins. **PD**

It's good to share

Our favourite photos posted by readers on our social media channels this week

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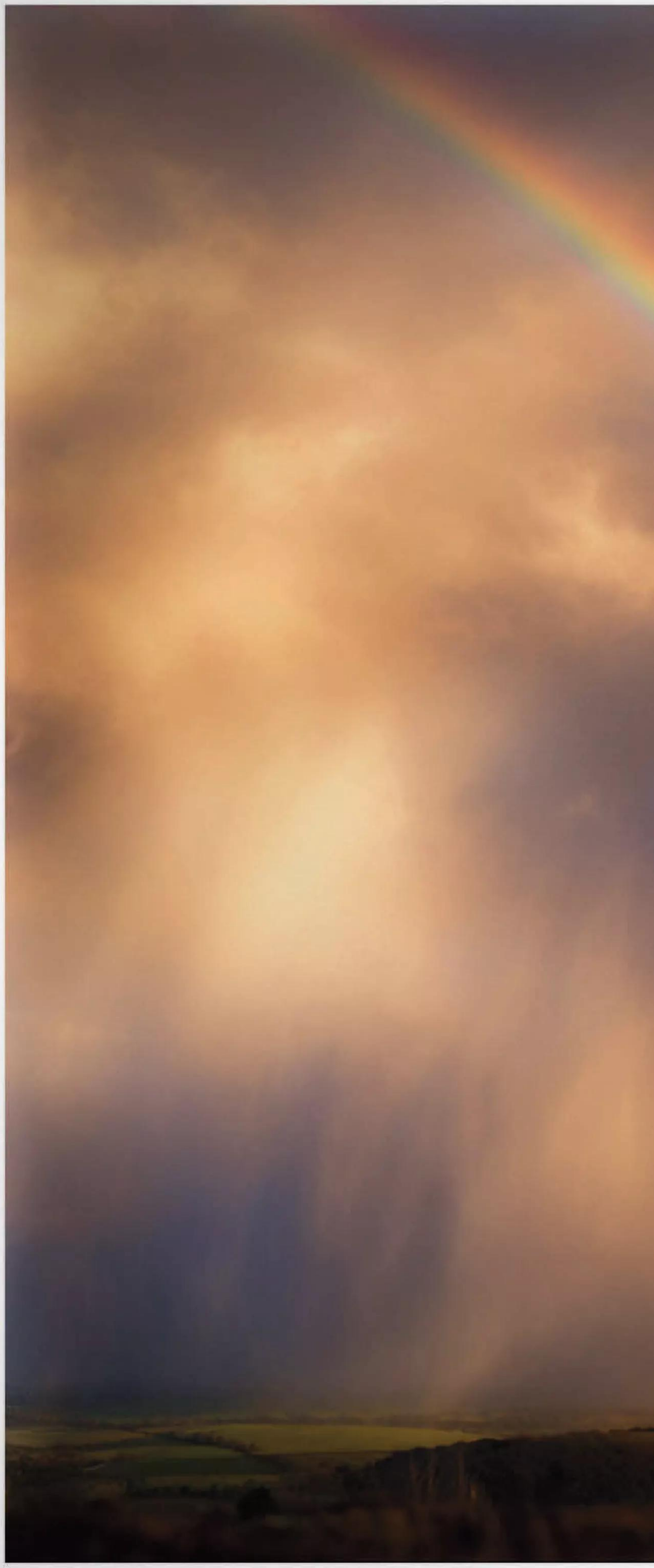
Under Ancient Skies
by Ashleigh Summerhayes

Canon EOS R8, RF 35mm f/1.8 lens, 1/1250sec at f/2.8, ISO 125

'Captured above Lostwithiel in Cornwall after passing rain and snowfall, this image shows a rainbow forming beneath shifting cloud and light. Rain and winter conditions collide briefly, reflecting an atmosphere in transition and the growing instability of weather patterns across an ancient landscape, seen from high ground after intense storms.'

Instagram: @asummerhayesphotographyuk



It's good to share

Brotherhood by Martina Romano

Nikon Z7, Nikkor Z 24-70mm f/4 S, 1/125sec at f/4, ISO 10,000, at 24mm

'A slice of daily family life capturing a playful moment between my son and our dog. It depicts the sweetness and innocence of trying to find a hiding spot behind a pane of glass.'

Instagram: @sifosseinfluencer

We also liked...

Droplets within a feathered crown by Joe Aggio

Canon EOS M6 Mark II, EF-M 18-150mm f/3.5-6-3

'This late-bloomer cygnet, I've known since it was a small cygnet and seen the cygnet mature. He/she is from a family of swans whose territory is mainly Hertford on the River Lee, but breed in and on the safety of The Meads on the New River. This is their fourth generation I've known since 2020, so I'm lucky enough to get close up too.'

Instagram: @35agg

Want to see your pictures here? Simply share them with our Instagram or Facebook communities using the hashtag **#appicoftheweek**. Or you can email your best shot to us at **ap.ed@kelsey.co.uk**. See page 3 for how to find us.

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Sense of connection

The Echo of Our Voices is the latest chapter in Nick Brandt's The Day May Break project. **Steve Fairclough** spoke to him to discover the inside story...

For nearly a quarter of a century Nick Brandt has been photographing his epic projects around the world. At the heart of his work is his burning desire to highlight environmental degradation and destruction. Given that, it's perhaps sadly fitting that as I'm talking to him via WhatsApp he's in Portugal, which is experiencing the effects of Storm Claudia battering it.

We're discussing the fourth chapter, The Echo of Our Voices, in his series The Day May Break. Chapter one was shot in Zimbabwe and Kenya in 2020; chapter two at the Senda Verde Wildlife Sanctuary in Bolivia in 2022 and chapter three – known as SINK/RISE – was shot underwater in the ocean off the coast of the Fijian islands in 2023.

Brandt began work on The Day May Break after finishing his stunning This Empty World project, which was also the first time he'd shot with digital cameras and in colour. He explains, 'Since This Empty World I've done the four chapters of The Day May Break. It was as a result of Covid that I came up with the idea. The visual catalyst was the fog with it being a visual metaphor that was symbolic of the disappearance of the natural world.' The fog he mentions was used in the images in chapters one and two.

He had previously trained his lens on animals as his main subjects, but reveals, 'The Day May Break was the first series in my career that I started photographing people as individuals in the foreground. I wish I had gotten to that much earlier, but I didn't have the confidence. Even though I was a director for all those years I didn't think I was good enough to take portraits of people.'

A place of fear

Brandt's humbleness is somewhat surprising, given that before his switch to shooting stills in 2001, he was a much-sought-after filmmaker, probably best known for directing Michael Jackson's *Earth Song* music video. But his humility is both endearing and searingly honest.

'With each body of work, I like to come from a place of fear. I like to step into something and not know how the fuck I'm gonna pull it off. I went in that way with "how am I going to photograph people underwater?" Then "how am I going to photograph Syrian refugee families in the desert on boxes?"'

Above: Women with Sleeping Children, Jordan, 2024

Right: Zaina, Laila and Haroub, Jordan, 2024

The Syrian refugees he's referring to are the subjects of The Echo of Our Voices. In 2024 they were photographed in the Wadi Rum desert in Jordan, where they are regularly on the move. Refugees from the brutal Assad regime in Syria, they currently live in one of the most water-scarce countries in the world.

Visual flow

His inherent desire to seek a clear difference in every shoot he does led Brandt from the waters off the Fijian islands to an arid desert in Jordan. He explains, 'The concepts come from what's troubling me in that moment. I remember coming up with the concept for SINK/RISE and my aggravation had switched into the oceans. Then it felt a natural

Nick Brandt

Nick Brandt was born in London, England, in 1964. He began his career as a filmmaker, directing music videos for pop stars such as Michael Jackson, Whitney Houston and Moby. In 2001 he began photographing the disappearing natural world in East Africa, which resulted in his book trilogy – *On this Earth, A Shadow Falls* and *Across the Ravaged Land*. In 2010 he co-founded the charity Big Life Foundation to help to preserve critical ecosystems in Kenya and Tanzania. His projects have also included Inherit the Dust (2016) and This Empty World (2019). His latest book, *The Echo of Our Voices*, is the fourth in his The Day May Break series, which highlights people and animals impacted by climate change and environmental degradation. **www.nickbrandt.com**

ALL PICTURES © NICK BRANDT

progression to talk about the aridification and desiccation of so much of the world.'

After searching around the world Brandt found himself drawn to the 'extraordinary mountains' of southern Jordan. 'Visually, I wanted this flow of people into landscape in shapes. As always with each chapter, a researcher went out for weeks beforehand travelling the country meeting people who had been impacted by climate change.'

Brandt's researcher for The Echo of Our Voices, Lubna Al Ajeeb, had spent years working with Syrian refugees and teaching art therapy with Syrian refugee children. She met and interviewed many Syrian families before the shoot.

Then, three weeks ahead of the shoot, Brandt travelled to Jordan to meet the families. 'I was travelling around the country going to the tents where they temporarily live. I found myself moved by the families. They lived their lives having to move to wherever there's been sufficient rainfall to get agricultural work and, also, they were displaced by war. The dual aspects of displacement did two things: It makes them quite extraordinary people and it means there is more emotional resonance, I think, to try and capture in their photographs.'

Epic proportions

The images Brandt has created for The Echo of Our voices retain his trademark epic style – most notably a panoramic-shaped photograph called 'The Cave', which sees 29 Syrian refugees sheltering in a cave within a rock formation.

Somewhat agitated, he states, 'Since 2019 the world has gone even more onto their fucking phones and this work is an absolute disaster – you can't see it on a phone. It just doesn't impact people when it's reduced to a stupid phone screen. But when you see the prints at the size they are meant to be seen at, like "The Cave" panoramic which is five metres long, then you're able to see each and every face. For me, what is hopefully powerful about this body of work are the emotions coming from each of those people.'

I mention to Brandt that the key thing that comes across within his photographs is the strength of the women. He replies, 'Abso-fucking-lutely. Every chapter

I've done around the world, consistently the girls and the women have, for me, had more emotional power. I think that they are less self-conscious and more comfortable in their own skins. Men are more awkward and more self-conscious.

'I never felt that more than in The Echo of Our Voices. If you look through the photographs you'll see it's only ever the women and the girls who are looking into camera. The reason for that is if somebody has the strength to hold the camera with their gaze, I look for that. I've always tried with boys and men and they haven't got it. Women and girls do. I like that it gives the women in those cultures the chance to, for a moment, be the centre of attention and to shine.'

Photographic jazz

Of the six-week shoot for the Echo of Our Voices, Brandt explains, 'I like to be very loose. I've got a pile of boxes and 40 family members each day and… let's see what happens. I compare it to "photographic jazz". I've got these musical notes, that are the people, and then it's trying to find a melody. There's a lot of failure. I did about 400 set-ups over those six weeks and I got 45 photographs out of it, so it's a one-in-ten ratio of "keepers". That's part of the creative process, but it's a very expensive way of doing it because, for me, the much more magical stuff happens by accident.'

Brandt admits, 'Sometimes I feel I just don't have the imagination to work it all out beforehand. But, in terms of the human specifics – or in chapters one and two, the human and animal specifics – I get so frustrated with people thinking it's Photoshop or, God help us, AI. I might as well not pick up a camera if I'm going to just do it in Photoshop.'

He expresses a preference for shooting with cloud cover, but the almost constant sun in Jordan made that impossible for The Echo of Our Voices. 'I like the sombre, soft tones and timelessness of overcast light. But if I'm photographing in the desert then, surely, I should be embracing this light that I normally hate? Two weeks into the shoot I finally took a photograph in a sandstorm. I looked at it that night and thought, "That's kind of cool. Okay. Fuck this, instead of doing call times later and later to avoid shooting in awful light, I need to learn to embrace the sunlight".'

Equipment and set-ups

To reinforce his point about avoiding Photoshop and AI, Brandt used five-second exposures for the moonlit shots during the desert shoot, but, out of necessity, he had to resort to some artificial lighting in daylight. 'I always wanted the mountains to be backlit, so it meant that the families were basically in very dark shadow. I had to use giant 12K HMI lights running off a generator to add fill light into them. I was quite apprehensive and very cautious. Even though I'm using lights, I want it to feel pretty naturalistic.'

All four chapters of Brandt's The Day May Break project were shot with the medium format Fujifilm GFX100 digital camera, paired with a 45-100mm lens. He reveals, 'I need to be turned on by a camera. This is the only digital camera I am turned on by, for one reason – the rotating eyepiece viewfinder. It's an accessory that you put on and you can rotate it and go from landscape to portrait in two seconds. It means that I'm always photographing looking. It's an electronic version of a ground glass [screen]. I've got no interest in looking at a wretched screen or holding the camera up to my eye. I'd rather stack shelves in Waitrose. As part of the turn-on process I need to look down, like I used to when I was shooting medium format film.'

Brandt adds, 'Another thing that was nice about shooting digital was the Syrian families were able to engage in the process. At the end of every session those who wanted to would come over and look at some of the frames that I'd just photographed. They're getting a

Above: The Cave, Jordan, 2024

Below: Ahmed and Sons, Jordan, 2024

better understanding of what we're doing, so they can collaborate more in the choreography. Also, they see that they are being presented and represented with, I hope, a level of respect and some dignity.'

Conveying a message

When I quiz Brandt about what he's trying to convey with the pictures from The Echo of Our Voices, he explains, 'I create for myself. I'm solely and purely motivated by expressing what I care about, am obsessed about, troubled by and moved by. Once the work is released, one would love if people were also moved. It can sound so pompous, pretentious and presumptuous, but it's to increase awareness, enlightenment, empathy and more engagement and dialogue about issues that matter to me.'

He reveals, 'If you look through the four chapters, I'm only photographing people in places with very low carbon emissions. They are amongst the people least responsible for climate change. Anybody who's at an exhibition or has got a copy of the book is automatically living a life of more privilege than the people in the photographs. I just want them to be aware of how climate change can impact certain people in such fundamental ways.'

Brandt adds, 'What's different in this chapter to all the others is this sense of connection. I didn't feel like I had the skill to choreograph those people. The reason I wanted that sense of connection is that, in all the previous work, everybody had kind of been in isolation. As the world grows darker with every passing year, I personally felt the need for what I'm expressing in those photographs, which is that connection with each other in the face of adversity. That's very much part of the way the Syrians are and the way they live.'

Major exhibition

The book of The Echo of Our Voices contains 70 illustrations and then, in April 2026, the Galerie d'Italia Museum (who partly funded the project) in Turin, Italy, will begin hosting an exhibition of work from all four chapters of The Day May Break. Brandt admits, 'In exhibition terms, it's a career highlight because it's a fantastic museum and I'm very proud to be in such amazing company. Right now, they're doing an exhibition of Jeff Wall. Previous to that it was Carrie Mae Weems and Gregory Crewdson. To follow in those footsteps is amazing.'

So, is The Day May Break project now at an end? Brandt replies, 'With every single one of those chapters I went straight from one into the next. They just flowed and literally the week I finished one, I would come up with the idea for the next, for four years. Then I broke my ankle, the house nearly got burned down and Trump got elected and we decided, "we've got to get the fuck out of this crazy country and move to Europe".'

He continues, 'I think that the four chapters have a certain balance to them now. It wasn't balanced until chapter four because you needed a fourth chapter with just people again. You've got the contrast of an abundance of water in SINK/RISE to a complete scarcity of it in chapter four. So, gun to my head, that's probably the last chapter.' AP

Above: Behind the scenes – F'taim and Family

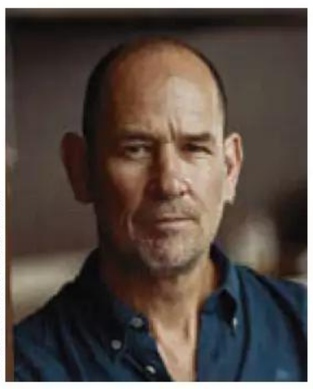
Below left: Rakan Sisters in Moonlight, Jordan 2024

The book *The Echo of Our Voices* by Nick Brandt (ISBN: 978-88-572-5394-7) is published by Skira Arte Books and has an RRP of £60.
www.skira-arte.com

The human edit

Peter Dench explores what does the modern picture editor actually do and is human judgement still relevant in visual journalism?

Is the role of the picture editor becoming obsolete or more essential than ever? To find out, I visited three very different editorial operations to speak with three picture editors and masters of their craft. From magazine covers to the relentless pace of the global news wire, these case studies offer a glimpse of what the modern picture editor actually does and why, for now, human judgement still matters.



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Andy Greenacre
Photography Director, Telegraph Magazine and Telegraph Luxury

The first thing that strikes you walking into the newsroom of the Telegraph Media Group in central London is not the bustle but the calm. In the hour I spend there, I don't hear one phone ring. The noise of modern publishing happens elsewhere, on Teams meetings, in email inboxes or shared systems that murmur quietly in the background.

From a streamlined corner, decisions are still made that will shape how millions of readers encounter stories, faces and ideas. Fresh in from a vape, Andy Greenacre, director of photography at *The Telegraph Magazine* and *Telegraph Luxury*, has been doing exactly that for nearly two decades.

Greenacre's career began as a picture researcher, doing what he calls the 'real legwork,' before freelancing, then picture editing roles and eventually becoming director of photography. In the mid-1990s he spent four formative years at Magnum Photos in London, first in the archive and later running the editorial department. He says he was lucky. Magnum was a finishing school in visual literacy, ethics and pressure that instilled qualities that still underpin his approach.

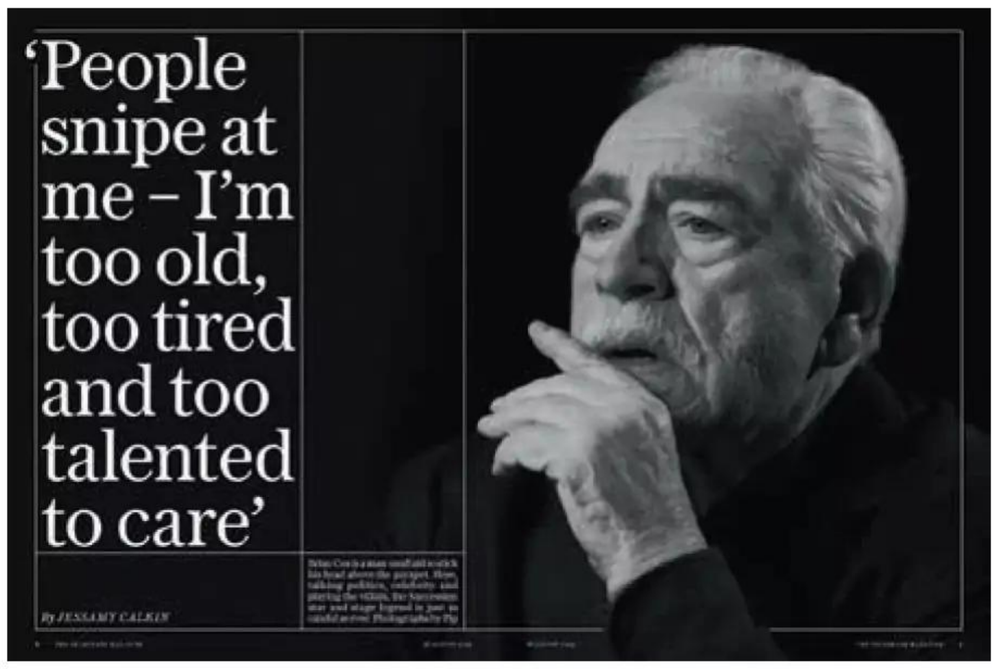
Greenacre is adamant that the essence of his job hasn't changed despite radical shifts in publishing. 'The biggest changes are not what I do,' he says. 'The actual job spec doesn't change.' Picture editing, at its core, remains about commissioning photographers, shaping visual narratives and making judgement calls under pressure. What has changed is the context: delivery is faster, platforms are multiple and the margin for error is smaller than ever.

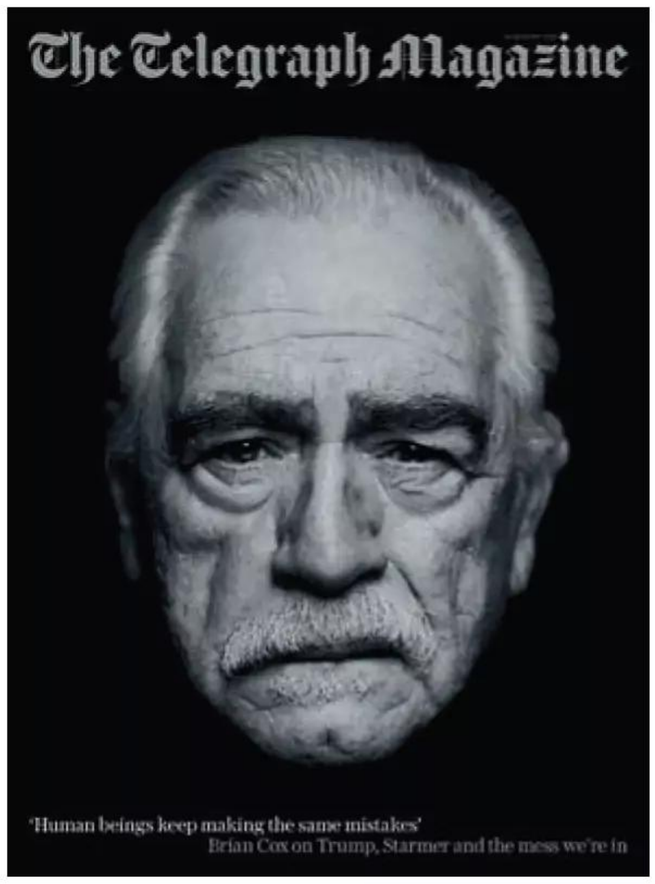
'I think in pictures, my language is pictures,' says Greenacre. That fluency and instinctive ability to read photographs not just for content but for nuance, tone and detail is something he believes can't be automated and is at the core of good commissioning. Increasingly, the value of a picture editor lies not in choosing from what's available, but in knowing who to ask, where to look, when to take a risk.

Resourcefulness matters, as budgets rarely allow for flying photographers around the world. Greenacre recalls needing a 'quirky, different' photographer for a shoot in Brisbane, Australia, hardly a traditional centre of the photographic world. When his first choice dropped out, he turned to his contacts and instincts rather than default to something safe. On another occasion, struggling to find a photographer in Saskatchewan, Canada, he contacted the University of Winnipeg and ended up commissioning their head of photography. 'You have to think laterally, there's always a way.'

Crucially, commissioning isn't just about aesthetic compatibility. It's about personalities. For a sensitive portrait of former One Direction band member Louis Tomlinson following a difficult year, Greenacre

'Greenacre's ability to read photographs not just for content but for nuance, tone and detail is something he believes can't be automated'





Above: The Brian Cox feature in the *Daily Telegraph Magazine*

Left: Brian Cox by photographer Pip. After a shoot, the edit is always a negotiation but Greenacre realised he could hand this cover decision to the art director because 'every frame was a banger'

Above and Left: Greenacre waited for the right subject, Jenna Coleman, when he gave Hollie Fernando her first major magazine commission

Below: A shoot with Erin Doherty by photographer Radhika Muthanna produced this cover

chose Neil Bedford, not just because of Bedford's photographic skill, but because both men were from Yorkshire. 'Put them together, let them riff, break the ice.' The shoot worked precisely because the match was human, not algorithmic.

Once a shoot is done, the edit becomes a negotiation rather than an act of authority. Greenacre typically asks for edits of 10 to 20 images, as different colleagues will see different things. He explains, 'What the photographer thinks is a good picture, what I think is a good picture, what the art director thinks, they're not always the same.' Some edits are obvious, others more agonising. A shoot with Erin Doherty by photographer Radhika Muthanna produced a single, striking image that 'shouted cover.' In contrast, a ten-minute portrait session by photographer Pip with actor Brian Cox yielded wall-to-wall brilliance. 'Every frame was a banger,' Greenacre recalls. He stepped back and handed the decision to the art director. Knowing when not to decide is part of his job.

Rewarding

Calculated risk-taking remains one of the most rewarding aspects of picture editing. Greenacre has 20+ pages (and counting) of photographers he uses, and speaks modestly about giving photographer Hollie Fernando her first major magazine commission after years of waiting for the right subject, actor Jenna Coleman. There was resistance from PR, concerns about track record, but the decision paid off. 'You have to take risks. And you've got to support young photographers.' Fernando even got the cover. In an economic climate where failure is no longer an option, those risks have to be carefully managed.

Ethically vigilant

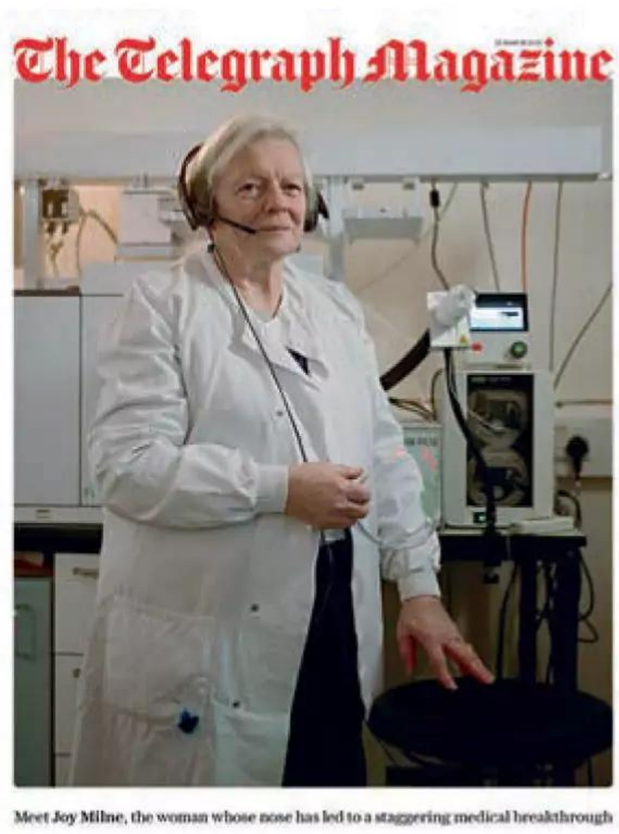
Greenacre is known to be ethically vigilant and draws a clear distinction between documentary photography and portraiture, which he describes as 'highly constructed by nature.' He argues manipulation is acceptable as long as it doesn't alter the meaning of the image. Trust matters and that trust extends to AI. While he assumes the photographers he commissions are producing original work, he knows the dangers. 'Integrity is everything. If you play fast and loose, you'll get caught out. It's a long game,' he stresses.

When Greenacre started at the *Telegraph*, there were five people on the magazine picture desk. Now it's just him and picture researcher Lina Darton. The pressure has intensified. Images must run. Deadlines are tighter. Digital lead images are critical for engagement. 'The stakes are way too high to mess up.'

In that environment, judgement becomes more valuable, not less.

For Greenacre, picture editing is a vocation not a job. It runs on relationships, trust and taste, elements that can't be reduced to prompts or presets. AI may be able to generate images, even commission them but it lacks subtlety and lived experience. 'There are too many nuances. It's a human decision,' he says and in this quiet corner of the office, those decisions continue to matter.

Neil Bedford's photo of Louis Tomlinson



Saesha Ward's cover photo of Joy Milne

© RUOTONG ZHOU

Cheryl Newman
Photography Editor of the Observer New Review

Cheryl Newman's approach challenges the stereotype of the picture editor as a decisive gatekeeper. A few months into her role as photography editor of *The Observer New Review*, her workflow is methodical and deliberately porous. At the offices in Soho, she works the picture desk alone.

Her calm demeanour masks an authority accumulated over decades of experience and belief that picture editing is more about conversation than control. 'I try to mix people that I've got a relationship with, because that's a joy to be able to work with them again and also to bring in fresh eyes and new people.'

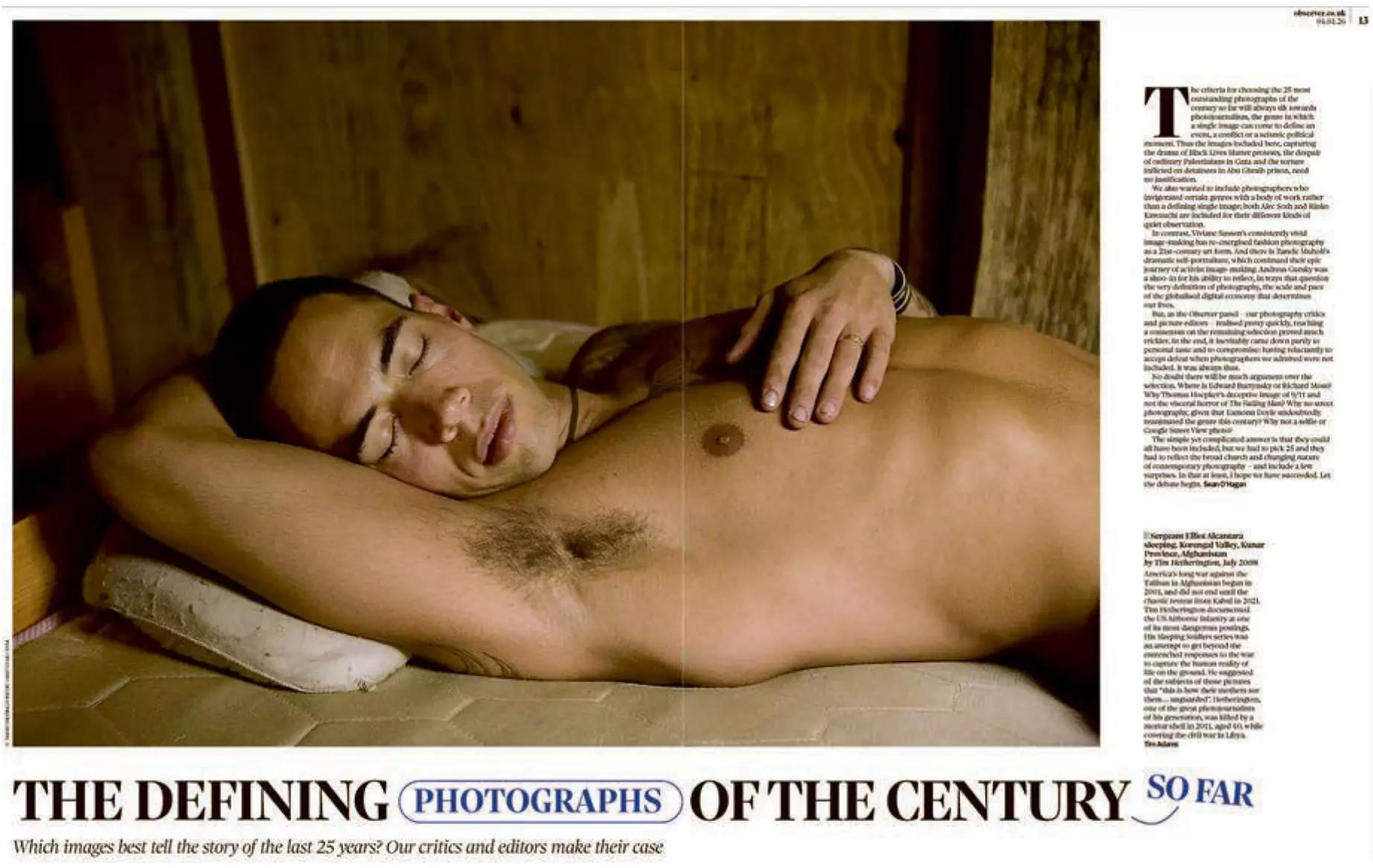
Newman studied fine art and worked as a photographer before transitioning to photo editing including 15 years as photo director of the *Telegraph Magazine* and supplements. She stepped away from the editorial desk to take an MA in Photography Arts at the University of Westminster. She worked with the Gaia Foundation to commission and curate We Feed the World, a global photographic project documenting the lives of family and peasant farmers, and curated 209 Women, one of the highest-profile exhibitions of 2018 in which all the UK Parliament's female MPs were photographed by women photographers to celebrate 100 years of suffrage.

The journey has shaped her process. 'I'm always thinking about the relationship between text and image,' she says. In a supplement known for its essays, profiles and long reads, photos are rarely asked to dominate. Instead, they are expected to sit alongside words, complement them, sometimes contradict them.

Throughout our interview, Newman often speaks about listening, suggesting her job is often to understand what a writer is really trying to say and then find a photographer who can extend that voice visually without overwhelming it. 'You don't want the images to do all the work but you don't want them to be decorative either.' Writers, editors and photographers are often brought into conversation early. Shoots are discussed, briefs are not dictated. Newman sees this as central to the role: 'If people feel invested, the work is better.'

That collaborative instinct guides how she commissions. Rather than maintaining a fixed roster of photographers, she responds to stories, believing the right photographer is rarely the most obvious one. Sometimes that means choosing someone whose style feels understated rather than spectacular. 'Not everything needs to be loud.'

Roberta Flack featured on the cover of *The Observer New Review*, remembering those who died in 2025



Sergeant Elliot Alcantara sleeping. Korengal Valley, Lunar Province, Afghanistan, photographed by Tim Hetherington, July 2008. The opening spread in *The Observer New Review* of the defining photographs of the century (so far!)

'For Newman, picture editing is an act of interpretation, looking for images that contain ambiguity, photos that invite the reader in'

In a media environment saturated with images, this restraint feels important and refreshing. Newman is wary of spectacle for its own sake, especially when it risks squashing complex subjects into visual clichés. She explains, 'You're always asking yourself, what is this picture saying and is it saying something useful?'

For Newman, picture editing is an act of interpretation rather than selection, looking for images that contain ambiguity, photos that invite the reader in rather than instruct them how to feel. Photos that reward attention over time interest her more than the thrill of an obvious cover image. 'If you look at it a bit longer and it opens up, it's usually a good sign,' she reveals.

It's about trust

Newman is comfortable allowing photographers and writers to take centre stage. Authority, in her view, doesn't come from imposing taste but from creating the conditions in which good work can happen. 'It's about trust,' she says, a mantra in the profession. 'People need to feel supported.'

That trust extends to photographers. A talented practitioner herself, Newman is acutely aware of the vulnerability involved in creating photographs, particularly of writers and public figures who may not be used to being photographed. Sensitivity matters, as does preparation. She values photographers who take an interest, do their research, read the article, understand the tone and approach the subject with curiosity rather than preconceptions.

Newman is lucid about the pressures facing picture editors today and how images must now work across print and digital platforms. Rather than seeing this as a negative, she views it as a call for greater clarity. 'You have to be really sure about why an image is there. There's no room for a filler.'

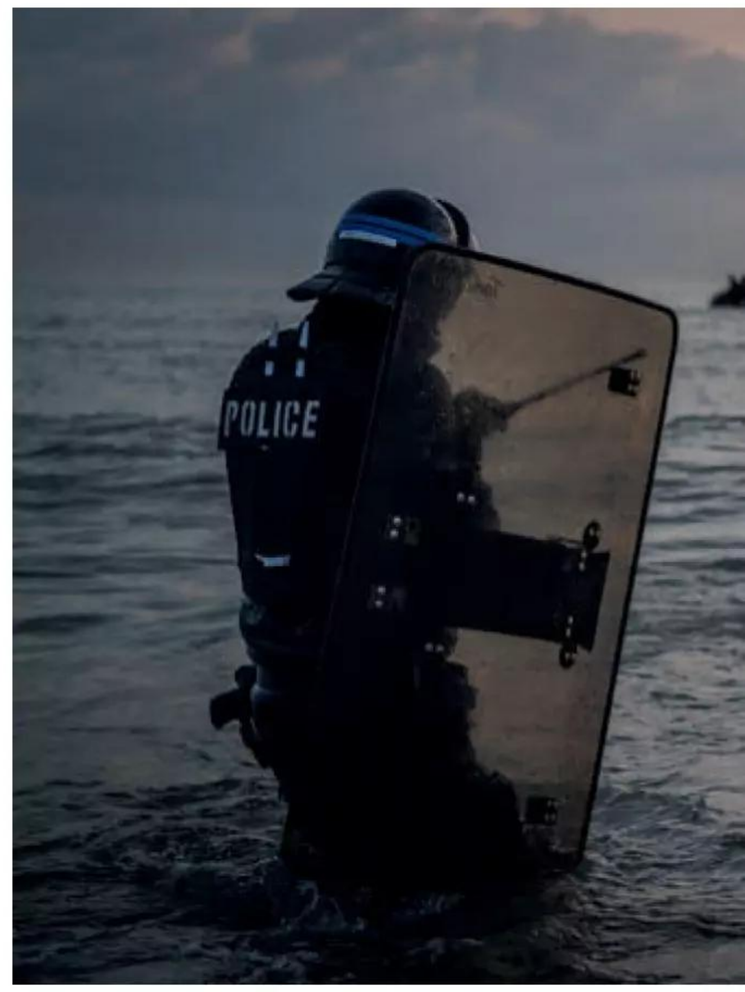
Thoughtful rather than alarmist, she recognises AI's inevitable growth in the visual ecosystem but questions whether it can currently replicate the subtleties she values most. 'So much of this job is about judgement. About knowing when something feels right or wrong,' she says. That kind of instinct, shaped by decades of looking, reading and listening, resists easy automation.

Picture editing to Newman is about allowing space for subtlety, for collaboration and allowing a degree of uncertainty. Her role demands confidence, her approach is responsive and reflective. Picture editing, in her eyes, is not about feeding an image-hungry machine. It's about slowing things down, paying attention, choosing images that respect the intelligence of the reader. In a media landscape ever more obsessed with speed and volume, that may be the most radical act of all.

Above: Matt Stuart shot this cover image to accompany a feature on London's Frieze Art Fair

Left: Noah Baumbach photographed by Christian Witkin for the cover of *The Observer New Review*

© MARTIN POPE/GETTY IMAGES



Jay Davies
Director of Photography, News EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa) at Getty Images

Above: Groups supporting Palestine Action protest against their proscription as a terrorist organisation. July 12, 2025. Photo by Martin Pope

In east London, where historic financial power meets a vibrant creative culture, Jay Davies operates on a different plane. His role isn't about shaping a single narrative, but about keeping a vast visual engine moving, issuing assignments at pace, across continents, all while maintaining editorial integrity.

Davies has been director of photography, News EMEA at Getty Images, since 2018, relocating from New York and transferring from Getty's Reportage division, where he focused on syndicating long-form photographic stories. His remit now is more immediate: news coverage for publishers and broadcasters who rely on Getty's wire service.

Getty's editorial operation is structured by both geography and subject area. Davies oversees news coverage across Europe, the Middle East and Africa, working alongside three assigning news editors and seven staff photographers, supported by hundreds of contributors and partner agencies such as Agence France-Presse (AFP). The scale is vast, the team making the calls is slender. Trust is everything.

A typical day follows a familiar path of hourly news events: the latest appearance by the prime minister, the arrival of a severe storm or the aftermath of a major crime. Plans can be obliterated in an instant by breaking news. 'We have to make real-time decisions about how to allocate finite resources and report on the stories that are most important to the bulk of our customers,' says Davies.

While meeting those customer expectations, they also try to carve out time for the topical feature that will speak to some recurring issue in the news and resonate with customers, even if they weren't expecting to see it that day. 'Sometimes we simply cover things because we think they'll make really cool pictures. We've always said, we give the customers what they want and what they didn't know they wanted until we gave it to them.'

Getty doesn't control how images are ultimately presented like a magazine editor does. Once pictures enter the wire, they can be used and contextualised by newsrooms with wildly varying priorities and politics. Davies explains Getty's role is to provide the ingredients of visual journalism. 'We're not telling the story for them. We're helping them build it.'

Davies admits he misses that loss of final control from his time working closer to publications, but it also sharpens the importance of Getty's editorial rigour. Ethical decisions about framing, captions and sequencing must be right before the images leave Getty's orbit. Once 'out there,' there's no second chance.

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© DAN KITWOOD/GETTY IMAGES

© CHRISTOPHER FURLONG/GETTY IMAGES

Left: French police enter the water to try to stop migrants boarding small boats, as migrants attempt the Channel crossing amid a fair weather spell. June 13, 2025. Photo by Dan Kitwood

Above: 'Unite The Kingdom' rally and counter rally by Stand Up To Racism takes place in central London. September 13, 2025. Photo by Christopher Furlong

The ability to file images directly from the camera, improved mobile connectivity speeds and integrated video workflows may have made coverage more efficient but not without consequences. 'What's made the job harder is the metastasising customer expectation.' Clients want broader geographic coverage and more variety. Having often already seen events unfold live on social media, they want it yesterday.

Davies is clear about priorities despite that pressure. 'We'd rather be a little bit later but be buttoned up on the accuracy and ethicality of the pictures we were making,' he says. Photographers are encouraged to fully explore a situation, shooting alternative versions of sensitive scenes so editors can make informed decisions about anonymity, consent and context. The responsibility is shared, but accountability ultimately resides with Davies and his team.

'Davies's team will also try to carve out time for the topical feature that will speak to a recurring news issue and resonate with customers'

The 2025 San Fermin Festival begins. Revellers hold up traditional red scarfs during the 'Chupinazo' of the San Fermin Running of the Bulls festival in Pamplona, Spain. July 06, 2025. Photo by Jeff J Mitchell

AI sits squarely within that ethical framework. Getty doesn't allow generative AI in its editorial or creative collection and Davies is unequivocal about why: 'The trust in our product is a human relationship.' For now, AI is simply another variable that requires vigilance. 'We have to communicate with the photographers more often about what our rules are, what tools are acceptable and which aren't, and how you use them.'

Trial and error

Davies' is insistent that good picture editing isn't inborn. 'I got into photography and videography through skateboarding, working on a school paper, then went to school for journalism with a photography concentration. Most of my jobs since school have been in visual journalism. Whatever skills I've acquired, are learned through practice and trial and error. A lot of errors,' he says with a grin.

For a news wire editor, success rarely arrives as a single, satisfying narrative glob. 'Every day is a tally of tiny victories and defeats, when you were trying to anticipate a picture that didn't present itself, or when you really nail something that you anticipated, got a photographer to the right place, had a conversation about what that picture would look like, and the technical decisions around it, and it pays off.'

Davies explains one such occasion during Queen Elizabeth II's funeral. From experience covering Prince Philip's funeral, Davies and his team anticipated a fleeting visual opportunity as the coffin passed through an archway at Windsor. They discussed composition and exposure with the photographer and when the moment came, the image arrived exactly as envisioned. 'That so rarely happens, but when it does, it's incredibly satisfying.'

Those moments don't last. The news cycle resets; attention scampers on. For Davies, that relentlessness is the job and why editing can't be automated away. Algorithms can sort, distribute or flag images but can't replace the judgement needed to balance speed with ethics; customer demand with editorial responsibility; volume with meaning.

In a business defined by velocity, Davies' role is to apply the brakes as well as press the accelerator. He ensures that, amid the rising ocean of images, someone is still asking the necessary questions in photojournalism: Why this picture? Why now? And what does it say?

Behind the cover

The making of the cover of the latest *Portrait of Britain* book, as told to **Peter Dench**

Jennifer Forward-Hayter didn't know if her Portrait of Britain winning entry would even make it to print. The photograph, a striking backstage portrait of drag artist Bimini Bon-Boulash, was already selected as the cover image for the accompanying book. A final, nail-biting detail threatened to derail everything. Bimini was mid-flight to Australia.

'I was waking up every hour, checking my phone,' Jennifer recalls. 'Literally thinking, has Bimini landed yet?' *British Journal of Photography* (1854 Media) needed explicit confirmation that the image could be used on the cover. Messages went unanswered. Friends tried too. Nothing. 'And then I find out she's on a plane. I was like, when does she arrive?' Eventually, exhausted after landing and switching their phone back on, Bimini replied. Permission granted. The presses rolled.

That fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants approach reflects the conditions in which the portrait was taken: fast, improvised and teetering on the edge of chaos. The photograph was captured backstage at the Pleasure Palace stage at Mighty Hoopla festival in Brockwell Park. The festival nearly didn't happen due to legal challenges regarding park usage. 'It was crazy,' says Jennifer. 'But it went ahead, and I pitched this little pop-up studio idea to them.'

Moving all the bins

The 'studio' turned out to be a white marquee next to where bins were stored. 'So I started my morning moving all the bins out of the way,' she laughs. With no assistant, no budget and just a squirt of sunscreen, Jennifer set up a single Profoto head bounced into a silver umbrella, working in full sun for two days straight. It was, she admits, the first time that particular flash was used. 'I'd ordered it from Scotland, it got lost, I hadn't tested it and suddenly it's a 48-hour outdoor shoot. But it did fine.'

Jennifer spent the festival running on instinct and adrenaline, scribbling performers' names on sheets of paper and physically chasing them down backstage. 'You're pitching the project to every single person, really quickly. They're only thinking about going on stage in front of a thousand people. You've got seconds to convince them to stop and trust you.'

That trust is negotiated in a liminal moment: seconds before or after performance, when adrenaline and vulnerability collide. Some performers arrive buzzing, others deflated. 'It really depends if it's before or after. But that moment, it's incredibly charged,' she says.

The portrait of Bimini was made just before going on stage. Towering in heels, she was at the far end of the backstage area. 'I was like, if you can physically manage it, can you walk over to the studio thing?' Jennifer had photographed Bimini before and knew she was comfortable in front of a camera.

While other drag performers gathered nearby, running late as drag

Above: Bimini Bon-Boulash. Another of the shots of Bimini made the *Portrait of Britain* cover

Left: Jennifer Forward-Hayter at her pop-up 'studio'. She set up a Profoto head bounced into a silver umbrella

Left: Selects from the rest of the two-day shoot

Below: 'You're pitching the project to every single person, really quickly,' says Jennifer

© JENNIFER FORWARD-HAYTER

performers famously do, Jennifer seized the moment. 'We just had a few minutes while we were waiting for the others. I'm so glad we did.'

The resulting image is tightly framed, confident and confrontational. Bimini clutches a necklace, her left hand concealing a penis-shaped charm. 'This is the only shot where she's holding it like that,' says Jennifer. 'And you can't see it too obviously, which works very well for publishing.' In total, she shot around five frames.

What makes the portrait resonate, however, goes beyond timing or gesture. Only later did Jennifer realise Bimini is wearing a Union Flag corset. 'I completely didn't notice when I entered it. I was more interested in her hair,' she admits.

Union Flag reclaimed

When the Portrait of Britain team pointed it out, the image took on a sharper political edge. 'The flag gets claimed as this very conservative, masculine thing. To have it on this beautiful drag queen in PVC, I hope it really annoys people. It reclaims it,' she suggests.

At the heart of Jennifer's work is a tension between humour, discomfort and critique. This portrait is no exception. She is drawn to performance, social ritual and what she calls 'social performance,' how people present themselves under pressure, expectation or scrutiny. ' So often at festivals people want to look like they're having fun. They go all smiley, thumbs up. And I'm like, no, look bored and miserable. That's much more interesting.'

Being selected as a Portrait of Britain winner was significant, and having the image chosen as the book cover the cherry on top. Portrait of Britain exists in highly visible public spaces. 'That's what makes it special. I grew up somewhere with no galleries, no museums, North Dorset. No billboards, no buses. So the idea that it's out there, in public, still really matters.'

For tech-heads, Jennifer paired the single Profoto B10 Plus head, bounced into a silver umbrella with a Canon EOS 5D IV and 24-70mm f/2.8L II USM EF lens. Shooting outdoors in harsh summer sun, she added a Neutral Density filter to help control exposure. The winning image is f/8, 1/60th, ISO 400. 'I really wish I could've had a big scrim but that would have taken up the entire backstage area,' she admits. The simplicity of the setup was fast to assemble, fast to dismantle and flexible enough to cope with a constant stream of performers.

Jennifer hopes something unsettles, or at least sticks, when passers-by come face to face with the portrait. 'The British character is naughty. The idea of the genteel, conservative Brit is a massive lie. We're anarchic. You can be eccentric and still find your place,' she says. If that sense of defiant, chaotic belonging flickers for even a second on a morning commute or trip to the shop, the portrait has done its job. AP

£27, Portrait of Britain Vol. 8, published by Bluecoat Press, features 200 shortlisted portraits, including winners. Hardback, 320 pages, ISBN: 9781908457790

Fujifilm X-T30 III

Fujifilm's smallest and most affordable DSLR-style camera gains updated autofocus and a film dial. Andy Westlake sees how it measures up

At a glance

£829 body only

£999 with XC 13-33mm zoom

- 26.1MP APS-C X-Trans CMOS sensor
- ISO 160-12,800 (standard)
- Up to 30fps shooting
- 4K 60p video recording
- 2.36m-dot, 0.62x viewfinder
- 1.62m-dot tilting LCD touchscreen

For and against

- ➕ Small size and light weight make it easy to carry
- ➕ Stylish retro design
- ➕ Engaging analogue controls, including film dial
- ➕ Attractive JPEG colour output
- ➕ Excellent lens range available
- ➖ Small viewfinder, and screen only tilts up and down
- ➖ Front dial too easy to jog inwards and switch between setting aperture and ISO
- ➖ No in-body image stabilisation

Data file

Sensor	26.1MP X-Trans 4, 23.5 x 15.6mm
Output size	6240 x 4160
Focal length mag	1.5x
Lens mount	Fujifilm X
Shutter speeds	15min-1/4000sec (mechanical), 15min-1/32,000sec (electronic)
Sensitivity	ISO 160-12,800 (standard), ISO 80-51,200 (extended)
Exposure modes	PASM
Metering	Multi, Spot, Average, Centre weighted
Exposure comp	+/-5EV on 0.3EV steps
Continuous shooting	8fps (mechanical), 30fps (electronic, 1.25x crop)
Screen	3in, 1.62m-dot tilting LCD
Viewfinder	2.36m-dot, 0.62x OLED
AF points	117 or 425
Video	6.2K 30p, 4K 60p, Full HD 240p
External mic	2.5mm stereo
Memory card	UHS-I SD
Power	NP-W126S Li-ion
Battery life	315 (425 in Eco mode)
Size and Weight	118.4 x 82.8 x 46.8mm / 378g

ALL PRICES ARE APPROXIMATE STREET PRICES

The Fujifilm X-T30 III is the latest version of the firm's smallest and most affordable SLR-style mirrorless camera. It includes all the same features as the entry-level X-M5 and places them into an SLR-styled body that's very similar to the previous X-T30 II, but now with a film dial on top. While this counts as a pretty predictable update, I don't think that's a bad thing at all, because it cements the X-T30's position as arguably the most likeable sub-£1,000 camera on the market.

At £829.99 body-only, and £999 with a basic kit zoom, the X-T30 III goes head-to-head with the likes of the Nikon Z50II and the Canon EOS R10. It'll also be up against older models such as the Sony Alpha A6400, Olympus OM-D E-M10 Mark IV, and Panasonic Lumix G95, but these have less sophisticated autofocus systems.

In this company, the X-T30 III's biggest attractions are its compact size, stylish retro design, and comprehensive lens range. Plus, of course, you get Fujifilm's famous film simulation colour modes. So how does it measure up to its competitors?

Features

In essence, the X-T30 III follows on from its predecessors in being designed primarily for stills photography, with an attractive retro-style body that resembles an old film SLR. It uses the same 26MP sensor as before, but that's now paired up with the latest X-Processor 5. This enables subject detection autofocus, using the same system as the firm's other current

The X-T30 III gives great colour output – this is Velvia film mode
Fujifilm X-T30 III, 13-33mm at 13mm, 1/1000sec at f/8, ISO 320

models. So you can tell the camera to focus selectively on animals, birds, cars, motorbikes, aeroplanes, or trains.

Most of the other photographic specs stay the same. But I don't think that's a problem, as the X-T30 III is still a well-spec'ed camera for the price. As before, the sensor offers a standard sensitivity range of ISO 160-12,800, with extended settings covering ISO 80-51,200 also available. You get timed shutter speeds from 15 minutes to 1/4000sec, with the electronic shutter further extending the top speed to 1/32,000sec. Continuous shooting runs at up to 8 frames per second with the mechanical shutter; 20fps with the electronic shutter; and 30fps with a 1.25x crop (which gives 16.6MP files).

Fujifilm has included the full set of its signature Film Simulation colour modes, with the X-T30 III gaining the attractive Reala Ace and Nostalgic Neg modes that weren't on the II. It also has the same support for three custom 'Recipes' that debuted on the recent X-E5. This allows users to fine-tune the output to their tastes for quick recall via the FS positions on the film dial. Personally, I love Fujifilm's colour science and see it as reason enough on its own to buy into the X system.

To cater for beginners, there's a switch on the top-plate that puts the camera into full Auto mode. As well as setting the exposure, this can automatically recognise the subject type for autofocus, and even choose what it considers to be the most appropriate film mode. There's no automatic subject detection option outside of this Auto mode, though; instead, you have to tell the camera what you want to shoot first. This is disappointing given that Nikon and Canon both offer auto subject-selection all the time.

As with other APS-C cameras at this price point, one feature you don't get is in-body image stabilisation (IBIS). This means you have to rely on in-lens optical stabilisation instead. You'll need to step up to the X-T50 to get IBIS in a Fujifilm camera.

As with Fujifilm's other recent cameras, the X-T30 III can print directly to the firm's Instax Link instant-film printers via a Bluetooth connection. New here, though, is the ability to select specifically matched aspect ratios from the onscreen quick menu, labelled Mini, SQ, and Wide. In effect, that adds a vertical 3:4 option for mini, and 16:10 for wide, on top of the existing options (Square is, of course, just the same as 1:1).

While the X-T30 III is primarily about stills, it has a respectable video spec too. This includes 4K recording at 60fps, and Full HD at up to 240fps for slow-motion effects. Like the X-M5, there's also the option to shoot vertical 9:16 clips in Full HD for social media, without having to rotate the camera. It even offers 6.2K open gate recording using the full sensor area, which allows footage to be cropped to a variety of different aspect ratios. You can connect an external microphone for higher-quality audio, but only via the 2.5mm remote-release socket, which will most likely require a 3.5mm adapter.

Smartphone connectivity is provided via built-in

The camera delivers great results at high ISO settings
Fujifilm X-T30 III, 70-300mm at 106mm, 1/320sec at f/8, ISO 12,800

Bluetooth and Wi-Fi, using Fujifilm's Xapp. First-time setup is very straightforward, after which you can proceed to use your phone as either a simple remote shutter release, or full wireless remote control. Then you can transfer your images across to your phone for sharing on social media. It's also possible to update the camera's firmware using the app, if necessary.

Build and handling

As previously mentioned, the X-T30 III employs essentially the same body design as the X-T30 II (and, indeed, the original X-T30). At 118x83x47mm and 378g, it's also exactly the same size and weight, which makes it one of the smallest and lightest cameras in its class. But while this may be an entry-level model, it really doesn't feel cheap, thanks to a metal top-plate and the array of control dials. I like the way it feels secure in my hand, too, thanks to the prominent finger grip and a sizeable thumb hook on the grip.

There's a small but carefully considered array of external controls, giving direct access to all the most important settings. You get top-plate dials for shutter speed and exposure compensation, with the film dial placed on the other side of the electronic viewfinder. A small joystick placed unusually low down on the back is used to select the focus area and navigate menus. Some people might find this fiddly, but I've found it easy enough to use.

There's no longer a drive mode dial, but as this option is now readily accessed via the Delete button on the back, I've never really missed it. Personally, I'm a fan of having a film dial instead, as it encourages you to experiment with Fujifilm's lovely colour modes.

Other settings are accessed by pressing the Q button that's prominently placed on the camera's thumb hook. Due to its exposed position, though, I found myself pressing this button accidentally all the time, and I can guarantee that you will too. But that's more an irritation than anything else – it doesn't do any harm, and a half-press of the shutter dismisses the menu.

While most of Fujifilm's lenses have aperture rings, the new 13-33mm kit zoom doesn't. This is also the case with the firm's other affordable XC lenses, and many third-party alternatives too. In this case, you have to use the small electronic dial on the front of the camera to set the aperture.

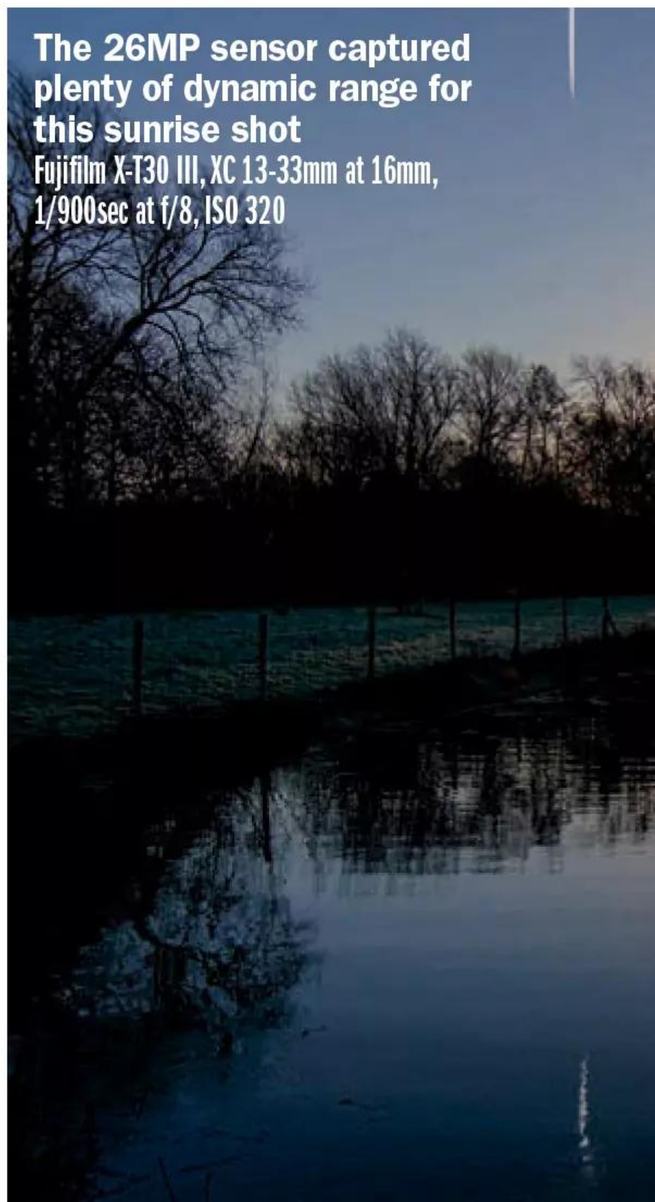
However, this dial is also used for changing ISO, and to toggle between the two you click the dial inwards. Unfortunately, I've found that it's much too easy to click the dial by accident and end up changing the wrong setting, which rapidly gets infuriating. Personally, I ended up disabling ISO setting with this dial, and using the Q Menu instead. Another option is to allocate ISO to the Fn button beside the shutter release.

Without doubt, though, you get the best shooting experience using lenses with aperture rings. It's a shame Fujifilm isn't selling the X-T30 III in a kit with the much nicer (but still small) XF 16-50mm F2.8-4.8 R LM WR zoom. There's also a strong case to be made for buying the camera body-only and pairing it up with a nicer lens, such as a used XF 18-55mm F2.8-4R LM OIS zoom, as these are plentiful and fairly cheap on the second-hand market.

Viewfinder and screen

Once again, the Fujifilm X-T30 III provides much the same electronic viewfinder as previous models in the line. It's reasonably detailed, at 2.36m-dot resolution, but distinctly on the small side, offering just 0.62x magnification. That's not unique at this price point, and it's adequate for the job. However, I'd much rather have the larger, brighter viewfinder that's on the Nikon Z50II.

On the back, you get a 3in LCD touchscreen with 1.62m-dot resolution – a step up from the X-T30 II's 1.04m-dots. It tilts up and down for waist-level or high-angle shooting when you're holding the camera horizontally, but is of limited use for vertical shooting. It also can't be



The 26MP sensor captured plenty of dynamic range for this sunrise shot
Fujifilm X-T30 III, XC 13-33mm at 16mm, 1/900sec at f/8, ISO 320

positioned facing forwards. This screen design is fine for photography, but for those who are interested in selfies or vlogging, a camera with a side-hinged fully articulated screen would make more sense.

Both the viewfinder and the screen give a good impression of how your images should work out. Fujifilm previews both colour and exposure, plus depth-of-field when you half-press the shutter button. All the expected compositional aids are available, including a choice of two types of electronic level, and a small live histogram for judging exposure. Helpfully, Fujifilm lets you select exactly what information you'd like to have displayed onscreen, without any artificial limitations.

Autofocus

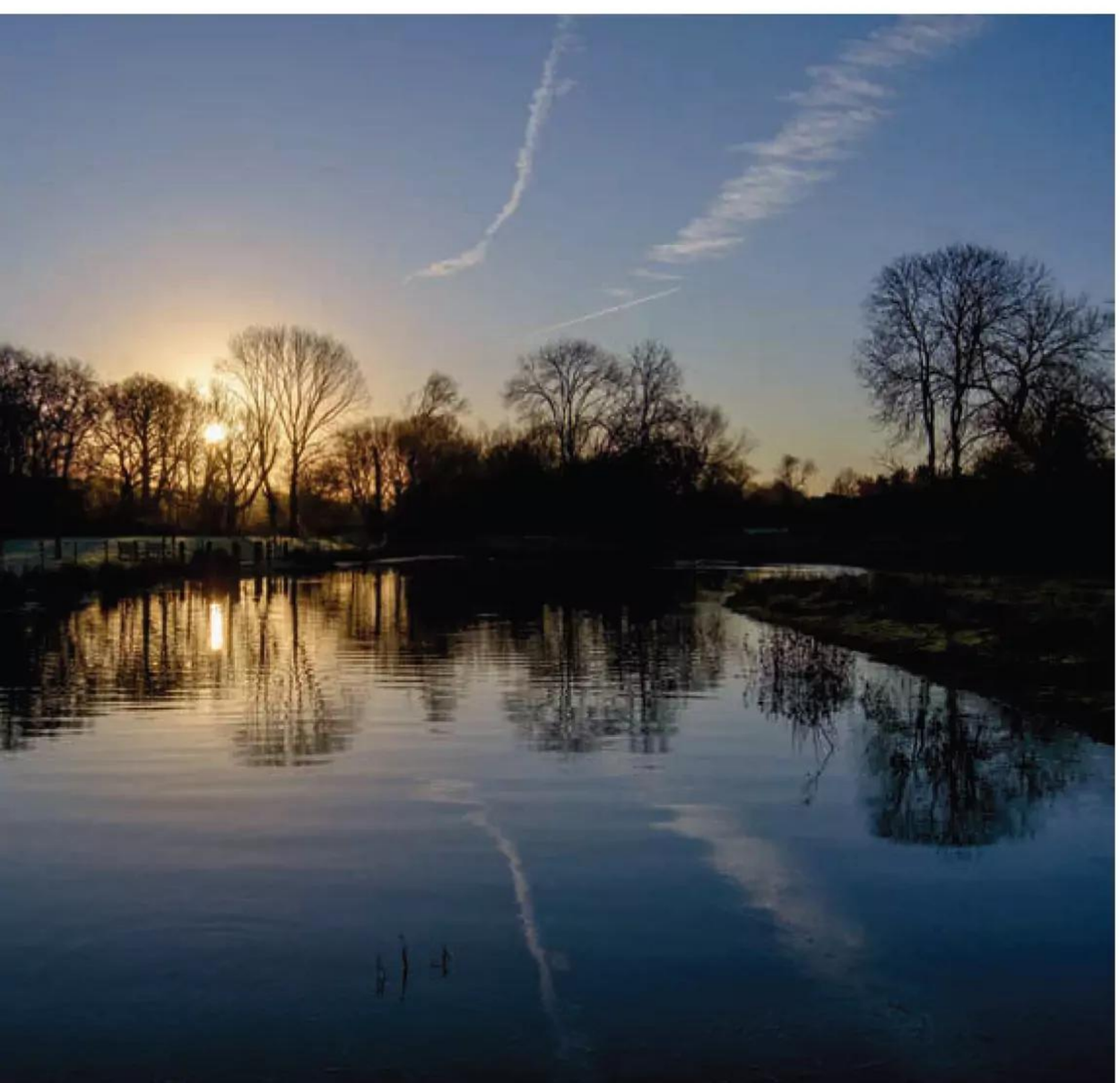
On paper, the X-T30 III has Fujifilm's most up-to-date autofocus system. When selecting a focus area manually, you have a choice of either 117 or 425 points in six different sizes, allowing extremely precise selection. For moving subjects, there are three 'Zone' options with different size square groups of AF points, plus three that are user-customisable in terms of height and width, alongside a Wide option that covers the entire frame.

Fujifilm makes it particularly easy to toggle face detection on and off, simply by tapping the small Fn button beside the shutter release. Meanwhile, subject detection modes are set using the Q menu. Face and subject detection are mutually exclusive – when you enable one, the camera turns the other off.

Fujifilm's AF system has an unfortunate reputation for being less reliable than its competitors. Personally, I've found that you can't simply engage face or subject-detection and expect it to work optimally, but will probably need to change other settings too. Most obviously, you need to ensure that the focus switch on the front of the camera is set to C, and I've generally got best results by selecting a large 'Zone' focus area.

To get a higher proportion of in-focus shots when shooting moving subjects, you'll need to change AF-C Priority Selection to 'Focus' in the AF/MF menu, rather than 'Release'. I also prefer to set Shutter AE in AF-C mode to 'Off', as otherwise, the camera will lock the exposure settings after the first shot. This can result in your subject being dramatically under or over-exposed if it moves into darker or brighter lighting.

I tested the camera's autofocus capability using the reasonably affordable XF 70-300mm F4-5.6 R LM OIS telephoto zoom to photograph birds in flight. This is a relatively tough test, and in its default setup, the



Focal points

The X-T30 III looks very much like its predecessor but brings some useful new features

Built-in flash
A small pop-up flash is built into the viewfinder housing, and released by a switch alongside the film dial.

Colours
The camera will be available in three finishes: black, silver, and charcoal silver.

Power
The camera uses Fujifilm's familiar NP-W126 battery, with a slightly improved stamina compared to its predecessor of 315 shots per charge, or 425 in Eco mode.

Connectors
Behind a door on the side, there are micro-HDMI, USB-C, and microphone/remote release ports. With this being a stills-focused camera, the latter is 2.5mm rather than 3.5mm.

Storage
A single SD card slot is found in the same compartment as the battery. It's UHS-I, so can't achieve faster file write speeds with UHS-II type cards.

X-mount
This is the best and most comprehensive APS-C lens range available, with 40 lenses from Fujifilm covering 8mm ultra-wide to 500mm ultra-telephoto; 28 third-party AF lenses from Sigma, Tamron and Viltrox; plus plenty of manual-focus options, too.

X-T30 III doesn't do particularly well.
But with the settings tweaks I've outlined above, it's much more successful. So the capability is there; it's just that Fujifilm doesn't necessarily set up the camera to make best use of it. As a result, users who want subject recognition and continuous AF that works easily out of the box would be better off with a Canon EOS R10 or Nikon Z50II instead.

Performance

In everyday use, the Fujifilm X-T30 III is a well-behaved camera that generally gets out of your way and lets you concentrate on shooting. It's ready to go a fraction of a second after you flick the power switch; indeed with the 13-33mm kit zoom, it'll probably take you longer to extend the lens from its retracted state. The shutter is pretty quiet and unobtrusive too, although not quite as soft as Fujifilm's more expensive models.

I noticed one small operational quirk, though. When you switch from using a lens that has an aperture ring to one that doesn't, the camera usually reverts to providing manual aperture operation via the front dial. But occasionally, and apparently randomly, it sets the aperture to auto instead. In effect, this means that sometimes you can find yourself in program mode rather than aperture priority for no obvious reason.

Battery life is perfectly acceptable in my book. Fujifilm rates it for around 300 shots per charge, which feels about right if you're generally shooting a frame or two at a time. You'll get many more if you shoot a lot of bursts. The NP-W126 has been around for a long time now, too, so spares are cheap and easy to find. You can also top up the battery from a powerbank via the camera's USB-C port.

Not surprisingly, the X-T30 III's continuous shooting performance can't match more expensive models. In my testing, it met its advertised speeds of 8 frames per second with the mechanical shutter, 20fps with the electronic shutter, and 30fps with a 1.25x crop. It's important to understand, though, that if you want to track moving subjects most effectively, you'll need to drop to 5fps, which provides live view between frames.

Buffer depth is pretty respectable, with the camera able to keep going for at least four seconds at 8fps before slowing down, when shooting JPEG and compressed raw together. At 20fps or 30fps, though, the buffer drops to 30 frames, so you need to be quite selective in how you shoot. As the SD slot is limited to UHS-I speeds, it also takes 15-25 seconds to clear all the files to card, although the camera doesn't lock you out of shooting during the process.
If you're going to be doing a lot of continuous shooting, though, the Nikon Z50II offers rather better performance.

One thing that's easy to overlook is the built-in flash, which is really rather good. It does a fine job of adding just a little blip of fill-in light to portraits, balancing faces nicely against backgrounds in low light. It's also capable of covering the full 20mm equivalent view of the 13-33mm kit zoom without any shadowing at wideangle, which allows you to shoot large groups.

As usual for Fujifilm, auto exposure and white balance both work well. Metering is usually very well judged, although it can be prone to overexposure if you place the focus point in a very dark area of the scene. But as you can see what's going on in the viewfinder, it's easy to correct using exposure compensation.

Auto white balance is also extremely reliable. I left it on the 'ambience priority' Auto A setting almost all the time, and got great results, both for the camera's JPG output and as a start point when developing raw files.

Fujifilm's autofocus system works best if you change some key settings
Fujifilm X-T30 III, XF 70-300mm at 300mm, 1/2000sec at f/6.4, ISO 12,800, 12MP crop

Thanks to Fujifilm's signature film simulations, the camera's colour output is particularly attractive, to the extent that some users may well be happy using JPEG files as a matter of course. There are multiple modes, and they can all be tweaked and fine-tuned to your heart's content. My personal favourites are Astia, Velvia, Nostalgic Neg and Acros for black & white, but the beauty is that there's no right or wrong answer in this respect.

Image quality

Fujifilm has used this sensor – or at least variants of it – in a lot of cameras now, going all the way back to the X-T3 in 2018, and including both previous generations of X-T30. Not surprisingly, the latest model's image quality follows on in a similar pattern to its predecessors, giving entirely usable results across its entire standard sensitivity range up to ISO 12,800. Personally I'd avoid going any higher than that,

Personally, I'd probably pair the camera with a different standard zoom
Fujifilm X-T30 II, XF 18-55mm at 55mm, 1/160sec at f/8, ISO 320

though; even with AI noise reduction, ISO 25,600 isn't very pretty at all.

At low ISO settings, you can also expect to be able to pull up three or four extra stops of detail in the shadows, when processing raw files. This is perhaps a little more than I was able to get from the EOS R10, but maybe not quite as much as from the Z50III. However in real-world use, these differences will rarely matter very much. Likewise, while the X-T30 III's 26MP sensor can record a little more detail than the either the 24MP Canon EOS R10 or the Nikon 20MP Z50II, the advantage isn't very significant.

13-33mm kit zoom

To go with the X-T30 III, Fujifilm introduced a new kit zoom, the XC 13-33mm F3.5-6.3 OIS. This offers an unusually wideangle range that's equivalent to 20-50mm in full-frame terms. Arguably, that's in keeping with what first-time users will have become accustomed to using on their smartphones. However, for every occasion when I've been glad to have that 20mm option, there have been plenty of others when I've felt restricted by the lack of any meaningful telephoto.

Measuring 62mm in diameter, 38mm in length when retracted, and weighing a mere 125g, the lens makes for a particularly small and lightweight combination when used with the X-T30 III. In a welcome change over the firm's previous XC 15-45mm F3.5-5.6 kit zoom, the zoom employs a mechanical, rather than powered design, which makes it much easier to set a precise composition. There's a 49mm filter thread, which you'll need to use if you want to add a hood.

On the whole, I've been quite pleased with the images I've got from the XC 13-33mm – it's decently sharp as kit zooms go. However on the X-T30 III, the lens does have a specific flaw. When it's set to 33mm, images shot at shutter speeds around 1/100sec show distinct blurring when viewed at the pixel level. Unfortunately, this is the minimum shutter speed that the camera will default to when set to Auto ISO, so chances are you'll shoot a lot of pictures with this combination. The effect isn't large enough to spoil your photos at normal output sizes, but it does limit your options for cropping or making large prints.

Thankfully, I didn't see similar effects when testing the X-T30 III with different lenses at similar settings, including the lightweight Viltrox AF 35mm F1/7 Air and the Fujifilm XF 18-55mm F2.8-4 R LM OIS zoom. The 13-33mm also appears to be much less susceptible to this effect when used on the X-T5, presumably due to that camera's softer and more refined shutter.

AP

Verdict

Amateur Photographer Testbench GOLD ★★★★★

WHILE the Fujifilm X-T30 III may not look all that different from previous generations, it gains some welcome updates and improvements that keep it right at the top of its competitive entry-level class. The addition of subject detection brings the autofocus more into line with its peers, and while the film dial will polarise opinions, it encourages users to experiment creatively with colour modes.

All the other ingredients that made the previous models such a joy to use remain in place. You get the same compact, lightweight body, stylish retro design, and engaging analogue control dials. There's a huge range of matched APS-C lenses to choose from too, giving buyers plenty of scope to expand their horizons.

At this price point, potential buyers will likely be putting the X-T30 III head-to-head with the Nikon Z50II, and perhaps the older but more expensive Canon EOS R10. In many respects, the Z50II is the more rational choice – its autofocus works better out of the box, and it has a larger, brighter, viewfinder plus a more versatile screen. But the X-T30 III is more charismatic, and you get Fujifilm's famously attractive colour.

Ultimately, while the X-T30 III may not bring anything particularly new to the table, I really do think it remains one of the most compelling models in its class. It may not technically be the 'best', but it's arguably the most enjoyable to use while delivering consistently attractive photos – and that's got to count for something. For those looking for a camera that's portable, capable and affordable, it should be right at the top of their wish-list.

FEATURES	8/10
BUILD & HANDLING	8/10
METERING	9/10
AUTOFOCUS	8/10
AWB & COLOUR	9/10
DYNAMIC RANGE	8/10
IMAGE QUALITY	8/10
VIEWFINDER/LCD	7/10

DJI Mini 5 Pro

Despite weighing less than 250g, the DJI Mini 5 Pro pushes the boundaries of drone technology. Angela Nicholson takes to the air to discover if it's worth your investment

At a glance

from £689

- 1in 50MP CMOS sensor
- 24mm equivalent, f/1.8 fixed aperture lens
- Up to 4K/60p 10-bit HDR video
- Omnidirectional obstacle sensing with LiDAR
- 36-minute flight time
- 42GB internal storage
- dji.com

Just when it seemed DJI couldn't cram any more tech into a sub-250g drone, the Mini 5 Pro arrived with a new 1in 50MP sensor, a 225° rotating gimbal and omnidirectional obstacle sensing that includes LiDAR for safer night flights. The takeoff weight is interesting as DJI lists it at 249.9g ±4g, which could technically push it over the 250g cut-off. However, it has C0 certification in the EU.

As the Mini 5 Pro arrived before the new drone regulations that came in on 1 January 2026, it doesn't have UK certification. But you can still fly it legally in the UK under that C0 mark. However, the new rules also mean that you must take a test on the CAA website to get a (free) Flyer ID before flying it – a rule that now applies to any drone over 100g in weight.

Physically, the Mini 5 Pro looks similar to the Mini 4 Pro, but it's actually a little bigger, measuring 157x95x68mm when folded without propellers (vs 148x94x64mm), and 304x380x91mm vs 298x373x101mm when unfolded with propellers.

As usual, the arms fold neatly into the body for easy transport, and conveniently, the drone starts up when they are unfolded.

The Mini 5 Pro's camera makes a nice step up for the Mini 4 Pro, with a 1in type sensor that enables you to capture 12.5MP or 50MP images. It delivers an impressive level of detail and dynamic range. What's more, the 50MP raw files are malleable in post-capture editing, and DJI claims up to 14 stops of dynamic range. The colour rendition of the JPEGs and video is also vibrant but not overly saturated, and 10-bit HLG or D-Log M profiles are available for serious grading.

There's also a good range of video capture options, with support for up to 4K/60p HDR

Buying options

The Mini 5 Pro is available in three kits, starting at £689 with the basic RC-N3 controller. The Fly More Combo with the same controller costs £869, while the top-tier kit with the RC2 controller, which has a built-in screen, is £979. Buying a Fly More Combo adds two extra batteries, a three-battery charging hub, a pack of three ND filters and a handy shoulder bag that fits everything.

and slow-motion recording at 4K/120p. Meanwhile, a 48mm mode provides a useful 2x digital zoom with minimal quality loss, adding flexibility for tighter compositions when you can't get as close as you'd like to your subject.

In flight, the Mini 5 Pro holds its position well, despite its low weight. You may see it being buffeted by a breeze, but the video is smooth. The new omnidirectional obstacle detection system, which combines cameras, LiDAR and infrared sensors, also works well helping to avoid tree branches and other obstacles. It also enables smarter navigation and safer flights at night – the Mini 5 Pro has the required flashing green lights for flying after dark. Meanwhile, the upgraded ActiveTrack 360° system performs well, keeping subjects nicely framed, although I found it sometimes mistakes house windows for cars.

The 225° rotating gimbal is another nice addition. As well as allowing for both horizontal and true vertical shooting, which is great for social content creators, it rotates smoothly for dynamic and impactful videos.

While the claimed maximum flight time of 36 minutes is very attractive, the most I was able to achieve was 29 minutes (with the low battery warning blaring), while 25-26 minutes is more common. That's still an impressive flight time, but those wishing for longer flights may be tempted to hunt down the optional Intelligent Flight Battery Plus which is claimed to extend it to 52 minutes. However, these batteries are not currently sold in the UK or Europe and they push the drone beyond the 250g weight limit.

If you've ever forgotten to install the micro-SD card in a drone, you'll appreciate the 42GB of onboard storage. That's genuinely useful as it's enough capacity for upwards of 600 DNG raw files. The images and videos can be downloaded direct from the drone by connecting it to a computer via the USB-C port on its rear – next to the micro-SD card slot.

Thanks to the 50MP 1in sensor, image quality surpasses previous mini drones
DJI Mini 5 Pro, 1/800sec at f/1.8, ISO 100

The drone folds up neatly when it's not in use

The gimbal can point directly down for overhead shots
DJI Mini 5 Pro, 1/160sec at f/1.8, ISO 120

Verdict

Amateur Photographer Testbench GOLD ★★★★★

THE DJI Mini 5 Pro is a genuine leap forward for ultra-light drones. It offers the kind of imaging power, intelligent automation and safety features that were once reserved for much heavier, more expensive models. It's a significant upgrade over the Mini 4 Pro, particularly for photographers and videographers who value image quality and low-light performance. If you've been on the fence about investing in a drone or upgrading from an earlier Mini, this might just be the perfect time.

For and against

- ✚ Superb image and video quality
- ✚ Excellent tracking and vertical shooting
- ✚ Bayonet-fit propellers for easy replacement
- ➖ Pricey with the superior RC2 controller
- ➖ Larger-capacity battery not sold in the UK

From hard drive to hard copy: The hardest part of making a photobook

Four members of the Photobook Club Collective reflect on photography editing challenges and the role of collaboration and community support in turning large bodies of work into photobooks, writes Gabrielle Motola

Editing a photobook is often the most challenging and emotionally demanding part of making one. To do it well, photographers must work from both a technical and a psychological position, and the work can suffer when those elements are not well integrated. Unlike a portfolio or an exhibition, a book allows for time, rhythm and narrative assembly. It asks the reader to enter a world rather than encounter a single moment. Shaping that world from thousands, often tens of thousands, of images into a coherent sequence can feel overwhelming even with guidance or companionship, and without it can be enough to stop any one of us from starting a project before it begins.

Here, four members of the Photobook Club Collective – Michelle Sank, Lottie Davies, Marc Wilson and myself – reflect on how they reduce large bodies of work into sequences that function across the pages of a finished book. Each of them brings a distinct perspective shaped by long-term practice and experience of publishing photobooks.

What follows is neither a set of rules nor a single method, but four perspectives on the same set of challenges. Whether read together or separately, they return to recurring concerns: the value of external eyes, the discipline of editing, the importance of world-building, and the reminder that bookmaking does not have to be a solitary act.

Michelle Sank

Michelle Sank is a photographer whose work centres on portraiture and social narratives, exploring the relationship between people and place through carefully constructed visual sequences.
michellesank.com

A photobook, for me, sits as a narrative object. It is where one builds a world for the viewer. The process involves visual and thematic flows – rhythms and rhymes – that create a cohesive voice, even if the imagery includes abstraction. Editing can be emotionally challenging: we are often attached to certain images and to the memory of making them, but those attachments can cloud the work. Two favourite images may weaken each other if they feel too similar, and sometimes a cherished single image simply does not serve the narrative.

When reducing hundreds of images into a tight edit, I make small prints of anything that feels strong or promising. I lay them out on a large table or the floor and spend days moving them around, pairing and sequencing, placing weaker images into a separate pile to revisit if needed. A common mistake is wanting to include everything – this overwhelms the viewer and dilutes the clarity of the story. I always consult someone I trust who understands my vision; external eyes are essential as the process develops.

Karl, Burnthouse Lane

Opening and closing images matter: they are what the viewer first encounters and what they carry with them when the book closes. The sense of a full circle is important. Technically, it is crucial to take control of file preparation

and colour space. All images should be balanced before going to print, and early proofs from the printer help ensure the work appears as envisaged. Unbalanced files can cause significant problems and frustration later.

The collective is a special group with a generosity of spirit and mutual trust. Feedback – even critical feedback – is offered with respect and good intentions. Requests for contacts, printers or guidance are always met with openness.

My three golden rules: Less is often more. Seek help from someone you trust. Prepare your files meticulously before printing.

Left: Dorcas in her back garden, Burnthouse Lane. This was taken during the celebration of her father's 40th birthday where the whole family dressed in traditional Nigerian dress

Right: Children enjoying the first day of Eid in the Playing Fields, Burnthouse Lane

Lottie Davies

Lottie Davies is an artist, writer and educator working across photography, moving image, text and installation, known for long-form projects that challenge the form of the photobook. **muttonrow.co.uk**

My experience of creating *Quinn*, differs from more traditional photobook processes. The project itself was created chronologically, over several years, with each chapter including large-format photographs, moving-image pieces and objects. So, for me, the sequence already existed within the structure of the story. The usual struggle of 'killing your darlings' did not apply for me, as those decisions happened much earlier in my creative process.

The real challenge was translating a three-dimensional, mixed-media exhibition into book form. My designer, Dean Pavitt, and I explored ways to expand what a photobook can do. To evoke the moving-image pieces, Dean suggested a series of screengrabs – cropped, repeated, partially missing – to create the sensation of a flickering film strip on the page. To build rhythm and promote a sense of discovery, we added throw-outs revealing images and narrative turns.

Quinn also comes in two parts: the main book and an insert printed on translucent paper. The insert functions as the protagonist's diary – the narrative past to the book's narrative present – inspired by my grandfather's Second World War field diary. The book needed to be small enough to feel intimate and portable, something the reader could hold close. Audio, accessed via QR code, allows the text to be heard rather than read, deepening the experience.

My advice is: Find the right designer; Allow three times more time than you think you need; Be on press; Never compromise on quality; and Remember that no one cares about your book as much as you do – advocate for it.

Above: Quinn on the road to Beinn Dearg Mòr in remote Wester Ross, Scotland

Above, right: *Quinn* by Lottie Davies, published by Mutton Row Books

Right: Quinn walking near Sandwood Bay in Sutherland, northwestern Scottish Highlands

Marc Wilson

Marc Wilson is a photographer working on long-term documentary projects that combine landscape, portraiture and oral testimony, and is the author of seven photobooks.
marcwilson.co.uk

For me, the essential element of making a photobook is collaboration. Without it, while a book may get made, it will never live up to the potential that the subject, storyline and narrative deserve. There are multiple processes involved – making the work, processing, editing, sequencing, layout, text, copy editing, translation, preparation, print, marketing, distribution and sales. Within all of this, the most emotional stage for me, on every book I work on, is the editing and sequencing.

At the start of this process, I ask myself: What is the work about? How do I want the subject to be seen or read? What emotion do I want to convey, and how do I want the reader to interact with the story? Is the edit and sequence to be led by history, chronology, geography, lyricism, emotion, time, or the seasons?

I edit in layers. First on screen, often by location, selecting the images that I feel work well for that place. Working in Lightroom, I tag images I like with two stars, then go through again to three stars, then four. For any given location, this might take me from between ten and thirty images down to four or five.

Then I move away from the screen and into print. I make small 6x4in work prints – about six pence each to print – giving me a pile of between 100 and 200 prints, depending on the scope of the project. These are laid out by location. Images that don't work at this stage are set aside in another pile, held together with a rubber band.

Then comes the decision: the sequence. Geography (*The Last Stand*), seasons (*The Land is Yellow, the Sky is Blue*), story (*A Wounded Landscape*, bearing witness to the Holocaust), lyricism (*Travelogue 2 – A Thousand Days of Longing*). Each location is laid out on a table or floor – all of them. I decide where to begin, move that location to the far left of my space, and lay the options out vertically. Pile after pile, held together with different coloured rubber bands.

Above: From *The Last Stand*. Portland, Dorset, England. 2011

Below, left: From *Travelogue 2 - A Thousand Days of Longing*

Below, right: From *A Wounded Landscape*

Each time, the final pile gets smaller, prints moving out and back in. The sequence is always chosen by me, but always with a second or third set of trusted eyes to help, guide, agree or disagree – my wife, a colleague from the collective, or family, depending on the project and circumstances.

I work until I reach a sequence I'm happy with – for that day. I look again a few days later and make changes. Once it's laid out by the designer, it changes again. Each time the work is viewed in a different format, there is the potential for further change.

I always collaborate. It is always my choice. Once everything is finished and the book is with me, I am happy – but only ever 100% for about one minute.

Gabrielle Motola

Gabrielle Motola is a photographer, writer and educator whose work combines portraiture and reflective text to explore intimacy, identity and emotional accountability through long-form projects.
gabriellemotola.com

Above: From *Elūl*. 'I remember wishing for easy love, like we'd had in France years before.' Grazelma, Spain. 2013

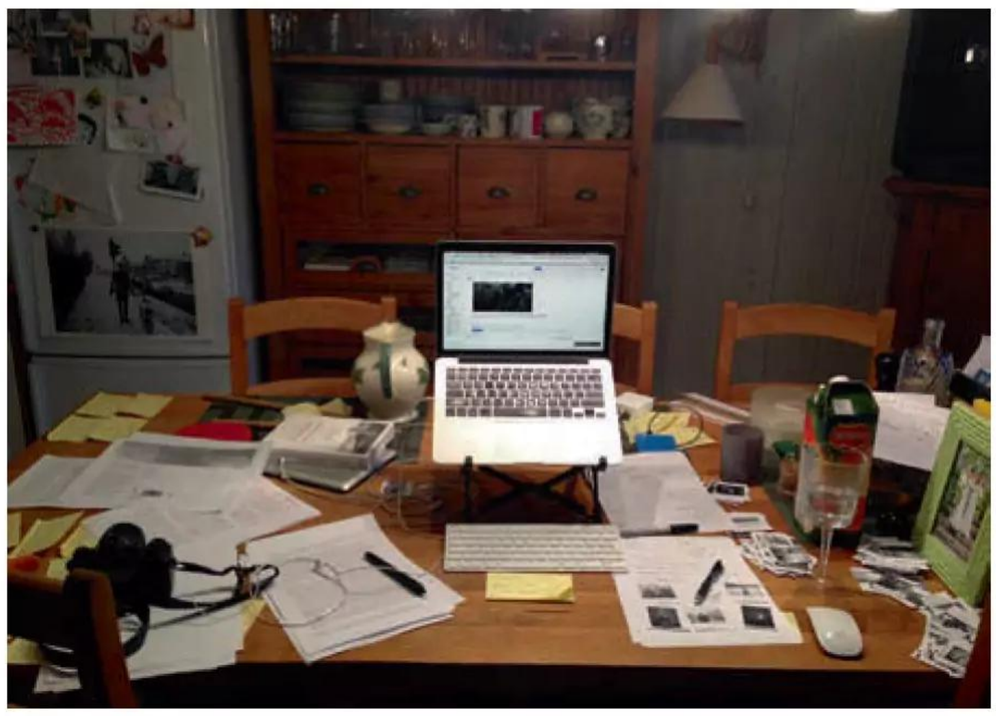
Right: *Elūl* by Gabrielle Motola

I've made two books, and the difference between them comes down to agency: working in isolation versus working in collaboration. Both took years to make, and both taught me different lessons about editing.

An Equal Difference was made over three years and self-published in 2016. I went to Iceland out of curiosity, not to make a book; it was only two years into photographing that it became clear one was necessary. I made around 26,000 photographs, which I eventually reduced to 165. Without a community to turn to, I assumed the role of my own photo editor.

I edited in Lightroom as I shot, organising images into collections. It was only in the final nine months, while living alone in a remote cabin in Iceland, that I began printing small black & white laser work prints. This was a practical decision: the printer was lightweight, inexpensive and easy to travel with. Now I would print in colour, but at the time it worked.

Moving out of the computer into physical prints made rhythm and narrative relationships immediately visible. I spread them across my dining table and returned to them most mornings, mug of coffee in hand. Sequencing became a daily, physical ritual: pairing and unpairing, moving and removing, testing what held.



Dining-room table while making *An Equal Difference*. Grímsnes, Iceland, 2015

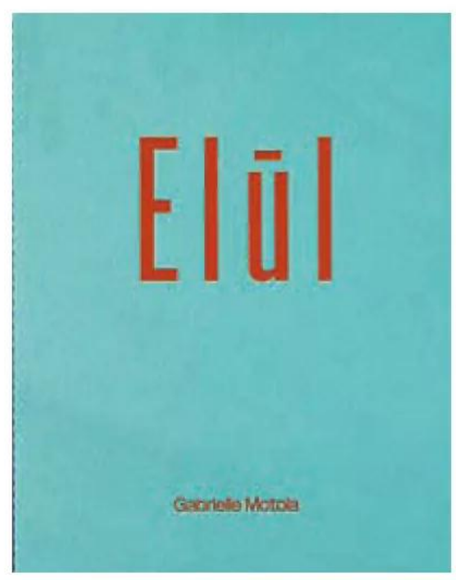
Partway through that process, I had an epiphany that I later wrote about in the book. I realised I had been unconsciously flattering many of the women I photographed rather than seeking out their character. When I revisited the archive, I found stronger portraits I had dismissed without noticing. Replacing images I liked with images that held their own changed the book – and my understanding of editing. Looking back, I can see how much sharper the sequence might have been with trusted outside eyes.

Elul, published nine years later, was shaped differently. The photographs were made between 2012 and 2014 without any intention to publish. Six years later, a book began to emerge through looking back and through dialogue. I shared early edits with my wife and colleagues, both within and beyond The Photobook Club Collective.

This time, I chose collaborators deliberately. I admired Marc Wilson's books and asked him about his designer, whose sensibility aligned with the work. From the outset, image choice and sequencing became a shared process. The singer-sewn binding imposed a fixed page limit, which meant the edit had to be tight: every image had to earn its place.

I was short on time and not on press, so I took more responsibility for file preparation and colour management, switching to Capture One to work with CMYK soft proofing alongside accurate monitor calibration.

The work was still demanding, but the experience – and the result – were fundamentally different. One process felt like being alone in the wilderness; the other was shaped by conversation and trust. As a writer, I crave solitude. For bookmaking, I choose collaboration.



Guiding principles: Work with people you trust; Trust your instincts while remaining willing to question them; and Calibrate your monitor. It establishes a reliable visual reference for colour, to be tested through proofing and dialogue with the printer. When possible, be on press.

Technical Tips

Before sending files to print, ensure colour is consistent across the sequence – nothing should feel out of place. Soft-proof using the printer's ICC profile to understand how images will translate to ink and paper, and request early proofs wherever possible. Physical editing with small work prints remains invaluable, allowing relationships between images to be tested away from the screen. And when time and circumstances allow, being on press offers the clearest connection between intention and outcome.

What matters most

There is no single way to make or edit a photobook. What matters is clarity of intention, a willingness to learn and unlearn, and an understanding that the edit is where meaning emerges. Community helps. Conversation helps. And the book becomes something none of us could have made entirely alone.

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

Hamza Yassin

Hamza Yassin's recent 'My Life Behind the Lens' talk to a full house in Perth Concert Hall was superb in every way. I expect it will be repeated in other cities and I'm sure all AP readers would enjoy it if they have the opportunity. It was about his own life from childhood to work experience, a little about photography and very much more about wildlife.

I was struck by how Hamza engaged the scattering of children in the audience, who obviously all loved it. I noticed how knowledgeable about wildlife those youngsters were, and in particular noticed that several said they dreamed of becoming wildlife photographers when they grew up. Hamza of course gave them real encouragement, and added that whatever their dream might be, they should really try hard to go for it.

Inspiring: Hamza is touring the UK

It seems that we can expect interest in photography and wildlife to continue and hopefully even grow as time goes on. **Simon Warren**

Charismatic wildlife cinematographer Hamza Yassin will be touring the UK throughout 2026. For dates, visit nothird.co.uk/live-shows/hamza-yassin or visit Hamza's Instagram at @hamzayassin90

LETTER OF THE WEEK WINS A SAMSUNG 256GB PRO PLUS MICRO SDXC CARD. NOTE: PRIZE APPLIES TO UK RESIDENTS ONLY

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The pleasure of taking photos

So quality photography is dead according to the head of Instagram? I used to be a judge in the Southern Counties Photographic Federation, but I gave up because I struggled to know what was AI produced and what was original.

I have always taken photographs primarily for my own enjoyment and for family and friends. I am a member of two clubs where I enjoy the social interaction as much as the photography.

I still enjoy taking photographs, and I have increased greatly my knowledge of the natural world too.

Before I retired, photography also kept me sane from the pressures of working as a people-centred lawyer. Long may photography continue in all its forms. **Ian Pratt**

To be clear, no one is going to stop you from taking whatever photos you like, but the article was highlighting what the head of Instagram deems to be 'good photography'.

Narrow view

So Gerald Buxton says smartphones are not cameras, their owners are not photographers and *real* cameras have interchangeable lenses. Really? Best I sell my Leica Q3 28 and Q3 43, along with my Fuji X100VI and GFX100RF. Personally I love *everything* capable of capturing an image. **John D Ryan**

YAPOY omission

Please can I ask you why you publish all ten placed photos from each round of the adult APOY contest, but only the first-place photo from Young APOY? My son is an enthusiastic young photographer who has come in the top ten in two rounds and he would have been thrilled to see his photos published. I bought the magazines but we were disappointed to see only the first-place photo shown. **Alison Salmon**

Space is always tight and we need to squeeze in enough variety of features to interest everyone, not just those who entered APOY. The 2025 competition is drawing to a close now but we'll see if we can find a way to include more youth entries when we launch the 2026 competition in April. In the meantime here's your son's excellent 8th-placed entry (R8, Movement) taken on the Millennium Bridge.

© NATHAN SALMON
Nathan Salmon's excellent photo – 8th, YAPOY round 8

THIS WEEK WE ASKED...

What's better: an expensive camera and cheap lens, or a cheap camera and expensive lens?

You said...

Stephen Baker
A camera is a box with a hole in it. The magic is always, definitely always, in the glass. Try Otus, or try a Planar 50/1.4 but don't argue...

Ronald C Krause Jr
Start by buying the best lenses one can afford. The pro-line of most lenses are also made considerably better, and can easily get 3x the life span. Exception, when one is limited for travel items, such as on an airline. Any above-average camera will do just fine. Don't bother with the continually upgrading camera bodies, most buyers will never keep up.

@its.a.lumix.moment
Depends if cheap = poor quality.

Bernardo Peters-Velasquez
A good photographer takes great pictures even with the crappiest camera.

Paul Weatherford
I generally tell people: buy the camera you need, *not* want, but buy the good lenses. You can upgrade your camera easier than lenses. You can also use the lenses on bodies as you upgrade bodies as long as you stay same brand and mount.

Adam Rhodes
World-class photos can be done with anybody & any lens combo. But the short-cut to great shots will always be the glass.

@whatamellowman
The lens is key for me.

Sergio Filippini
The camera will get old earlier than the lenses, and the image is made by the lens, always.

@sudden_sight_photography
Glass is always king.

Günter W Hieger
I don't see a point in either way!

John Chanik
I'd pick the latter to begin with. Then buy as you want to from there on.

Share your photos and comments with us on social!
See page 3 for how to contact us

Adri KC Haine
Get the best camera you can afford, worry about good lenses later.

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Having a good eye for photography to be able to take advantage of either one.

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Hohem iSteady MT3 Gimbal Pro Kit

Damien Demolder tests a clever gimbal with built-in subject tracking

● Approx £450 for Pro Kit ● hohem.com

We've seen AI tracking in gimbals before, but usually on smartphone gimbals or as accessory attachments for gimbals that hold larger cameras. What caught my eye about this Hohem iSteady MT3 Pro is that the tracking unit is built-in, and that the main control panel, which has its own monitoring screen, can be removed to be used as a remote.

We may not need AI subject tracking if we are skilled gimbal operators, but we don't all have time to put in the hours needed to become really proficient, so this feature has the potential to save a lot of time. It may also allow solo shooters to move around as they are recording themselves, to make their films more dynamic.

The Hohem iSteady MT3 Pro is capable of carrying up to 2.5kg, but while some gimbals designed for bigger cameras can't cope with small ones, this one can handle compacts and phones as well. It weighs 1,070g, and is pretty small compared to some of my other gimbals.

The exciting bit, though is the little camera unit next to the built-in RGB light at the top of the tilt arm, that's capable of detecting and tracking any selected object. We can either select subjects on the touchscreen monitor, or use hand gestures to get the gimbal to track us when we are filming ourselves. The camera automatically moves the main camera to follow, so we don't need to use the manual motion controls on the gimbal itself.

The feature is handy if we are circling a subject and want to keep it framed nicely without the effort of using the joystick, and it's also great if we are filming someone, or ourselves, talking to the camera while moving around. We can select the speed of reactions and the smoothness of the follow – and it works remarkably well.

Fill light
A built-in fill light offers colour temperatures from 2700K to 6500K, plus a wide range of RGB colours.

Subject tracking
A built-in camera automatically moves the gimbal to keep people, pets, cars and objects in frame.

Remote control
The removable control panel allows remote operation and monitoring the live view from up to 10m.

Accessories
The Pro Kit comes with a handle and a motor that can be used to control focusing, zooming or apertures on your lens.

Amateur Photographer Testbench Recommended ★★★★½

Verdict

I rather thought this AI tracking thing might be too good to be true. As someone who finds gimbals awkward and disagreeable, I'm doubly delighted that it works really well, and that we can have this feature in a gimbal that doesn't weigh much, but which can still hold a decent-sized camera and lens. It's pretty easy to set up too, with Teflon coated arms that slide nicely when small balancing movements are needed and an Arca-Swiss plate so cameras in cages can mount directly. This has been a very positive experience.

At a glance

- Hand-held camera gimbal
- Holds 2.5kg
- Weighs 1,070g
- Other kits available without accessories and with lower payload
- Available March 2026

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Tony Kemplen on the ...

Yashica Samurai 4000ix

Yashica's pocketable 4000ix from 1998, an APS film camera with a 4x zoom range

Each year I set myself a photographic project, and I decided to make 2025 the year of the APS camera. The Advanced Photo System, or APS, was introduced 30 years ago, and was mainly aimed at the snapshot market. It offered a number of unique features designed to appeal to a demographic keen to simplify their photographic experience.

The film itself is 24mm wide, meaning that cameras could be smaller than those made for 35mm film, the dominant format at the time. The new features promised by APS cameras were built around the fact that the film itself had a magnetic coating, onto which a host of information could potentially be written. Most innovative was the ability to choose from three different aspect ratios, labelled C, H and P. These were respectively a classic 4:6 ratio, HDTV 4:7, and finally a panoramic 4:12 designed for the 4x12in prints which were briefly popular.

The most basic APS cameras simply wrote the choice of format onto the film. But at the sophisticated end of the market, far more was on offer. At the time of shooting you could decide how many prints you wanted from each individual negative, and a host of predetermined or custom messages could be printed on the back of the print or onto the image itself. Large numbers of cameras were made and sold, and processing labs were forced to adapt their equipment to cope with the new demands. Often this meant buying completely new equipment, as although APS exclusively used film which was processed in industry standard C41 chemistry, dedicated machines were needed to read and interpret the accompanying magnetic data. All this investment was to be in vain, as just over the horizon were affordable digital cameras, which soon saw off the budding APS brigade.

Yashica's Samurai 4000ix fitted a long zoom into a small body

Camera production ceased in 2004, with the last film being made in 2011. The APS name lives on as a digital sensor size, the APS-C sensor being a little smaller than the film version.

Yashica first used the Samurai name in 1987 for a series of 35mm half-frame cameras which had the look and feel of the hand-held video camcorders of the era. The 4000ix from 1998 looks like a miniature version of these models, but whereas they were genuine SLRs, the APS version has a simple optical viewfinder. The exposure system and focusing are all fully automatic, with shutter speeds ranging from 3 seconds to 1/500, while the 4x zoom range is among the longest found in fixed-lens APS cameras.

Fitting easily in the palm, it's an eminently pocketable camera, making it ideal for day trips. This photo of my wife Sandra with some colourful sound sculptures, was taken at Wentworth Castle near Barnsley.

In all, I managed to use 24 different APS models in 2025. Sheepishly, I have to confess that 6 of these were new acquisitions. In my defence, they were very cheap, and I was offering them one last fling before they achieve the status of paperweights.

The camera's petite size makes it perfect for days out

See more of Tony's photos on **Instagram @tonykemplen** or at **flickr.com/tony_kemplen**

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APOY 2025

IN ASSOCIATION WITH...

Amateur Photographer of the Year

Here are the top ten images uploaded to Photocrowd from Round Nine, Urban Life, with comments by the AP team and our guest judge

Round Nine **Urban Life**

Urban life comes in every possible colour, sight, sound and texture, and it's no wonder so many photographers throughout the decades have been compelled to capture it. From the quirky to the classic, almost every human experience can be found on the street, and it's there to be captured by the keen-eyed among us, who have developed the ability to observe, anticipate and react to the action – often with split-second precision. It's not just about people, though – it's also about their interaction with their surroundings, or simply the surroundings themselves. Architecture and urban photography will always make a very strong pairing. This month's top ten images demonstrate that carrying your camera with you at all times pays dividends.

1 Wendy Davies, UK

Where did you get that hat?

100pts

Fujifilm X-T5, 18-50mm at 18mm, 1/500sec at f/11, ISO 6400

Wendy's excellent shot has instant appeal. The story is immediately clear, and her timing and compositional skills are spot on. This is the kind of image that unfolds only to someone who has their camera and settings at the ready at all times, and Wendy has made the most of the three rows of hats, placing the male figure, whose hat completes the scene, to fill what would otherwise be an empty space. A few inches to the right or left and all balance would be lost. The image has a definite Doisneau-esque feel about it, and even the tiny detail of the label on the man's T-shirt poking out adds to the overall charm.

2 Charles Ashton, UK
Traveller's Despair 90pts

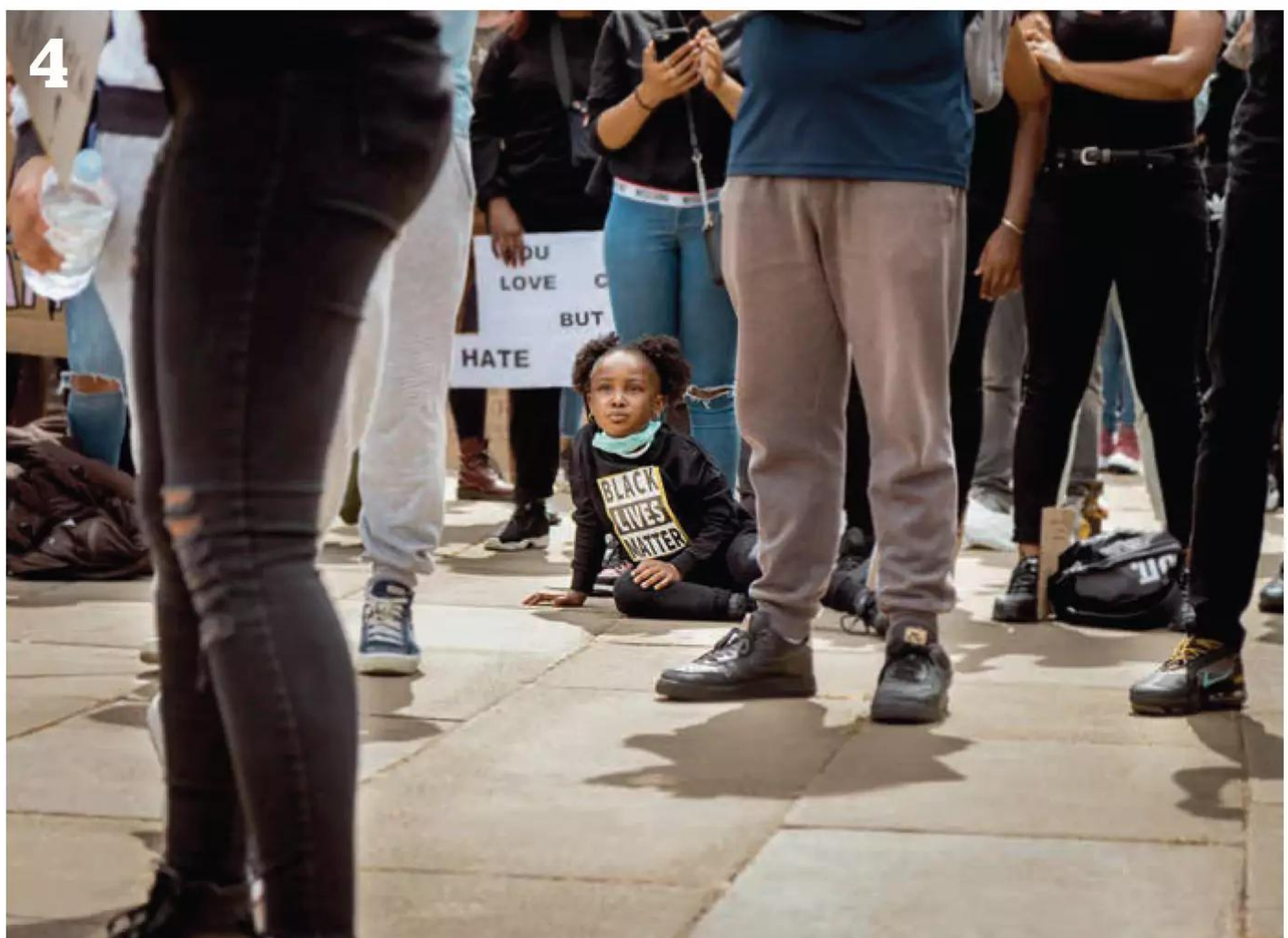
Nikon Z8, 50mm, 1/125sec at f/1.8, ISO 1250

If any image sums up urban life in 1/125sec, it's this one. Charles has captured a moment that many of us can relate to – a bus ride in the dark, alone and lost in thought. Is he heading home after a tough day at work, or is he on his way to a night shift? Perhaps something is going on in his personal life to make him frown. We'll never know, but Charles's picture has the ability to write a dozen or more stories. Despite the man being small in the frame, cropping to a tight square somehow creates a sense of claustrophobia and tension, a mood that is only enhanced by the red frame of the bus and the window within it. It might be a simple-looking shot, but it has a subtle complexity, too.

3 Rory Smith, UK
Seagull Looking Over a Window 80pts

Samsung SM-G996B, 13mm, 1/163sec at f/2.2, ISO 50

This cheeky seagull was a regular visitor to this hospital in Wales, and we imagine it did a good job of cheering up the patients. The judges loved how oblivious it was to Rory's phone camera, and the wide angle, looking down on the bird from above, only serves to emphasise the comical nature of the scene. Framing is strong, and Rory has made the most of the straight lines of the window sill to anchor the composition, and it's one of those rare situations where not going down to eye level has been more effective. A well-captured, comical moment.



4 Phil Tomlinson, UK
The Girl in the Crowd 70pts

Canon EOS 90D, 17-55mm at 55mm, 1/400sec at f/2.8, ISO 100

With so much going on and so many people, it can be tricky to pick out details when photographing at a demonstration, but Phil has done a great job of homing in on a quiet moment among the hordes. Crouching down to the girl's eye level is crucial to the success of the image, and the judges appreciated how he captured her rapt expression. Hers is the only face we see in the frame, which means there are no extraneous distractions – it's just about her and the moment she is experiencing.

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Best of the clubs

Each round, we shine a spotlight on a selection of excellent entries from the many camera clubs that enter APOY

Leszek Chrzastowski, Coalville and District Camera Club
The Redundant Dalek
Technical information not supplied
Witty, well seen, and a touch surreal – this image raises a multitude of questions that will probably never be answered, and that's what makes it so good.

Mike Woodman, Richmond and Twickenham Photographic Society
Just About Hanging On
Nikon D800E, 85mm, 1/200sec at f/7.1, ISO 100
A curious take on urban life that stands out for its originality. The climber's slip dress and the tattoos add to the overall effect.

CAMERA CLUBS LEADERS

1	Plymouth Camera Club	400
2	Launceston Camera Club	250
3	London: Hampstead Photographic Society	240
4	Mid-Somerset Camera Club	210
5	Kempsey Camera Club	200

Bryan Sutton, Wallingford Photographic Club
Autumn Bristol
Fujifilm X-T5, 16mm, 1/125sec at f/5.6, ISO 4000
The colour in this frame is very engaging – from the purple wall, to the golden leaves and the young man's red hair.

Steve Banner, Stafford Photographic Society
Lonely at Central Station
Technical information not supplied
What an intriguing shot. So many separate lives in one place, and what is the solitary bride doing there?

Kevin Leah, Truro Camera Club
Behind the Curve
Canon EOS 5D Mark III, 24-70mm at 70mm, 1/10sec at f/2.8, ISO 2000
An excellent composition that makes the most of the foreground curve. The blue tone adds atmosphere.

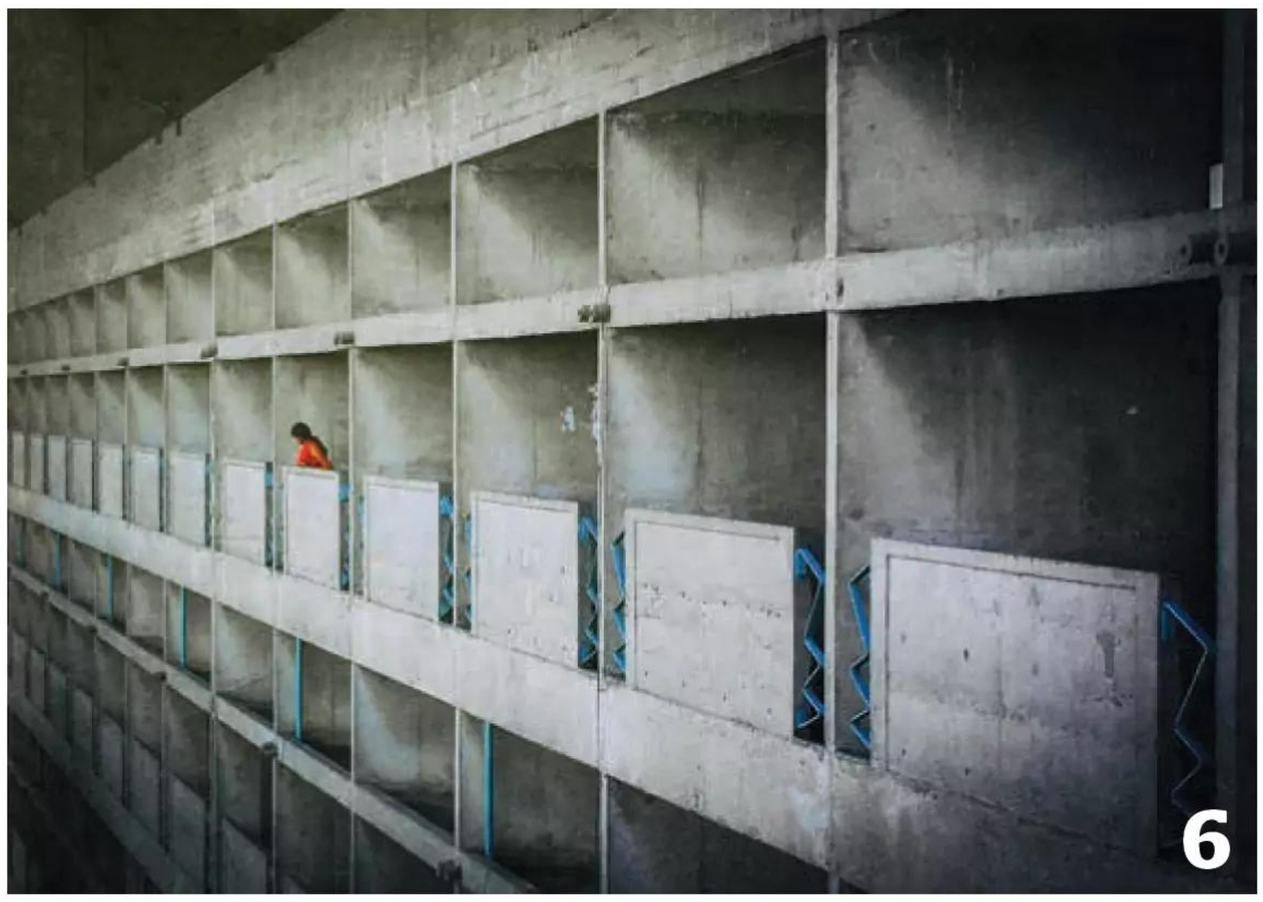
5 Bircan Harper, UK
Passengers, Havana 60pts
Ilford Delta 400

Guest judge Denise Maxwell says: 'Can you be conflicted about an image, and love it at the same time?

'Firstly, for the things I love about this image: I love the black & white, as it has a way of stripping an image to its core. The multiple framing is perfect to give enough context of the masked characters behind the glass as well as lead your eye to the main character of the frame. I love the fact that the subject is looking directly down the barrel; was this created or a chance capture? Overall, it's a great image.

'One of the things I am conflicted about with images like this is the Western gaze. I see a lot of images like this of brown and black children from poorer countries, but would we be as comfortable with posting images like this of unknown children from the Western world? I don't have all the answers, but I am conflicted.'

6 Paolo Magnone, Italy
Living in Concrete 50pts
Canon EOS 450D, 39mm, 1/125sec at f/8, ISO 200



This shot is just a small detail of Chandigarh, a city in India that was developed by Swiss French architect Le Corbusier. Paolo made the most of the repeating pattern of the straight lines and boxes within the frame, ensuring the diagonals move dynamically from right to left and out of sight. The triangles at the top and bottom of the left of the frame are important anchoring points, too, as they keep everything tight. Then, crucially, we have the figure in red, placed on the intersection of the thirds, to give interest and context. Without her, the image would be lacking that certain something.

Winning kit from Camera Centre UK

What gear did our top ten photographers use?

In first place, Wendy Davies used a Fujifilm X-T5 for her street shot. Described as a '40MP mirrorless sensation' in AP, this camera features a 40.2MP APS-C X-Trans CMOS 5 HR sensor, ISO 125-12,800, 15fps shooting and 5-axis in-body image stabilisation. AP's five-star review concluded, 'Ultimately, nothing else on the market can quite match the all-round package that the Fujifilm X-T5 offers enthusiast photographers at the price.' This model can be bought at Camera Centre UK for £1,579.

Fitted to Wendy's camera was a Sigma 18-50mm F2.8 DC DN Contemporary, which has a 27-75mm equivalent zoom range, constant f/2.8 maximum aperture and 12.1cm minimum focus (at 18mm). It is constructed of 13 elements in 11 groups and has an aperture diaphragm with 7 curved blades. Its review said it is 'one of the most attractive standard zooms available for APS-C mirrorless cameras'. The lens is available at Camera Centre UK for £474.

In second place, Charles Ashton shot his image using a Nikkor Z 50mm f/1.2 S. This outstanding lens is constructed of 17 elements in 15 groups, with 9 diaphragm blades, and has a wide f/1.2 aperture that makes it ideal for shooting in low light – as Charles has here. It is dust- and weather-sealed, too. You can purchase this lens at Camera Centre UK for £2,199.

To see the full range, visit www.cameracentreuk.com

7 Erika Howard, UK
Urban Reflections
45pts
Not supplied

Erika has shown amazing patience in waiting for everything to come together at precisely the right moment, and has been rewarded with a superb shot. We see four individual frames within frames and are offered a tiny glimpse into the lives of those she has captured as they go about their business.

8 Phil Tomlinson, UK
Dog Day Afternoon 0pts
Canon EOS 90D, 24-70mm at 70mm, 1/800sec at f/3.2, ISO 100

Who can resist photographing one cute dog, let alone two? Phil has maneouvred himself to make sure the dog's head fills the wing mirror and has allowed enough space for us to see the wider context of the queue of traffic. What makes the image is the shadowy silhouette of the dachshund bottom left, which adds another layer to the story and helps fill what would otherwise have been empty space. Shooting with a wide aperture is a large part of the image's success, too, ensuring our eye goes straight to the main character in the shot.

9 Shai Kedar, Israel
Mind Your Own Business
35pts
Sony A6600, 16-55mm at 32mm, 1/1000sec at f/8, ISO 320

People walking past posters is a common theme in street photography, so it takes a good one to capture the judges' attention – and this is a great example. Shai has played with light, shade, scale and perspective, from the model's eyes looming out of the top right of the frame to the triangular shadow that the silhouetted man on his phone is appearing to step out of. So much good street photography is about capturing a split-second slice of life that disappears as quickly as it appears, and that is what the photographer has achieved here.

10 Mike Byers, UK
What'll It Be? 30pts
Nikon D750, 70-200mm at 70mm, 1/800sec at f/2.8, ISO 100

A scene that could only have been captured in the UK, this is a picture that will be familiar – and evoke a sense of nostalgia – to many of us. There's a nice sense of interaction between the customer and the van owner, and the somewhat run-down housing in the background adds context.

ROUND NINE WINNER, YOUNG APOY

Duy Khac, Vietnam
Untitled 100pts
Not supplied

The judges loved the flurry of chaos in this entertaining image. Are the dogs fighting or playing? And has the one on the left had enough? The gritty grain of the black & white elevates this shot out of the ordinary, and as with so many other successful photographs of this type, it's the getting down to eye level that makes it a success.

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The 2025 leaderboards

As we head towards the final round of APOY 2025, things are hotting up at the top of the leaderboard. Depending on their scores in round ten, any one of the top four entrants could end up snatching the overall prize. Who will it be? We'll find out in a few weeks' time! We're in a similar position with Young APOY, thanks to the consistency of the entries from several photographers. It takes a lot to commit to entries across ten rounds, and all of our entrants – in both the main competition and Young APOY – deserve to be commended for their commitment to the competitions. The same goes for our camera clubs, whose images and dedication continue to inspire.

APOY

1	Bircan Harper	325
2	Azim Khan Ronnie	290
3	Philip Tomlinson	280
4	Erika Howard	240
5	Sara Jane Williams	180
6=	Lynn Fraser	170
6=	Matteo Strassera	170
8	Ales Krivec	160
9	Mats Carduner	140
10=	John Seager	130
10=	Sirsendu Gayen	130

YOUNG APOY

1	Ben Hancock-Smith	345
2	Matteo Botta	295
3	Charlie Gil	265
4	Hary Hammad	250
5	Edward Lee Davies	160
6	Duy Khac	150
7	Mac Motz	130
8=	Phoenix Ogilvie Robertson	120
8=	Zachary Beguin	120
10	Jake Randazzo	110

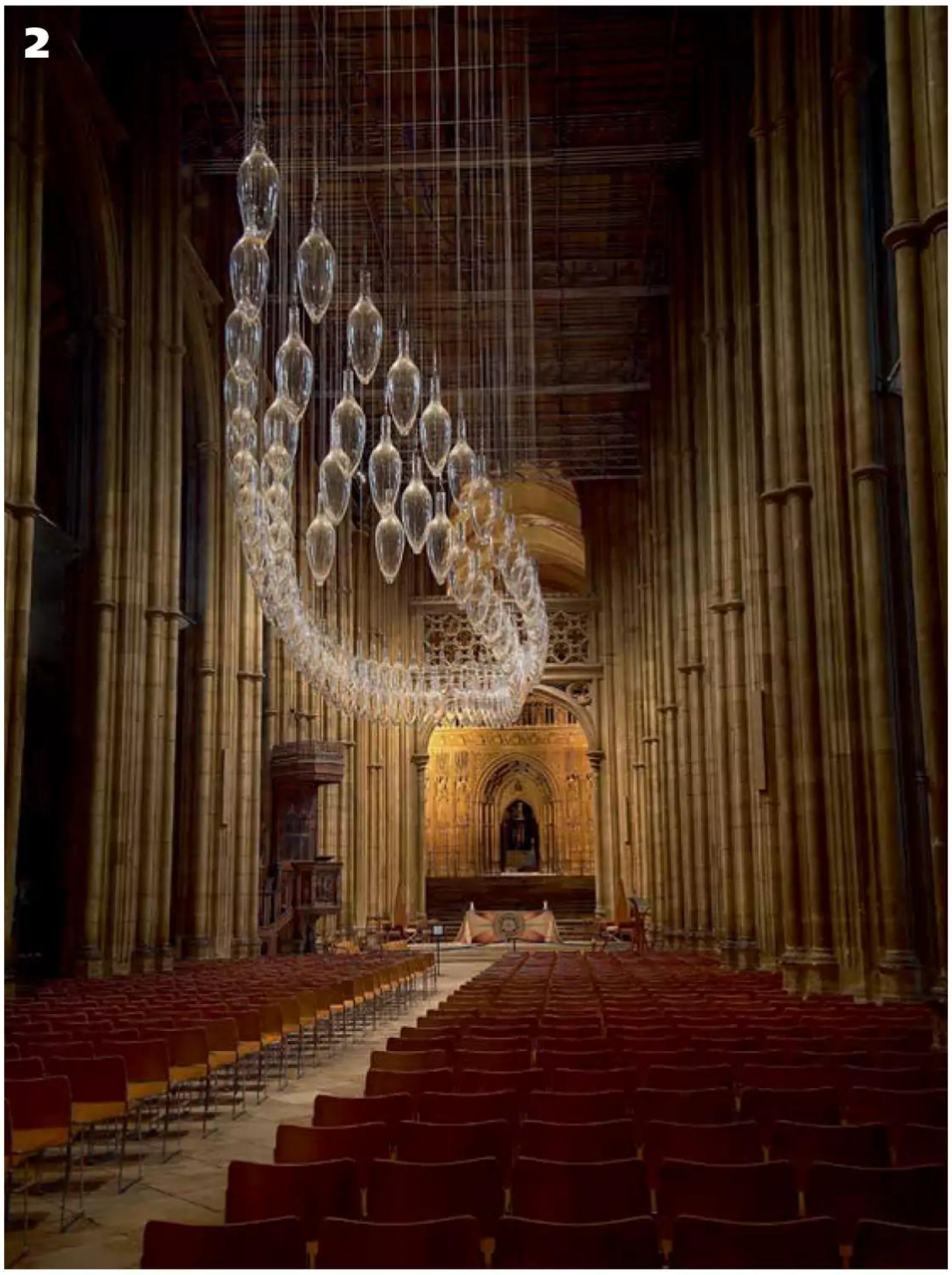
To see more images from APOY Round Nine and Young APOY, visit **amateurphotographer.com/APOY**

1 Ready Steady Go
by Bryan Organ

2 Glass Ship
by David Price

3 Naughty Or Nice
by Nigel Gooding

4 Infinity Bridge
by Ian Griffiths



Join the Club

This Wolverhampton club provides a range of activities to cater to members' interests

When was the club founded?
Tettenhall Wood Photographic Club was founded in the early 1980s. Prominent members at that time were Dr Doug Rawlings, Gordon Hayward, Barry Boyce and Dave Harrison. Plus, a substantial contingent from the local village of Pattingham.

Its home has always been The Institute at Tettenhall Wood, our local community centre. Over the past 45 years club members have served as officers of the community association. As the club grew and thrived, we held regular exhibitions at The Institute to increase the profile of the club and to raise funds for our local hospice.

We belong to The Midland Counties Photographic Federation and are affiliated to The Photographic Alliance of Great Britain.

What does the club offer to new members?
We welcome photographers of all skills and levels – the only thing that is needed is an interest in photography and a desire to share this with like-minded individuals. Our club offers an opportunity to socialise with, and to learn from, fellow photographers. Potential new members can attend three club nights without charge before deciding to join.

Those who wish to join in the club competitions are split into three sections, general, intermediate and advanced; which ensures that those who are less experienced are not overwhelmed. There is movement up and down between the groups to maintain a balance.

Describe a typical club meeting
A typical meeting will be from 7.30pm, until 10pm, on a Tuesday night from September to early June. There is an opportunity to socialise both before and after the meeting, as well as during the

tea break. Our club nights take several formats and are planned to provide a varied programme that appeals to the wide range of members' interests. This includes guest speakers – see the section below for more on this.

We have Competition Nights, where an external judge is invited to offer a constructive critique on the images presented to help members improve their skills. The top images are ranked by judges, which provides a great talking point. We enjoy seeing the talents of fellow members on display. Part of this series includes a themed night, and this year we have 'straight out of the camera', as we challenge our members to show us what they can achieve if they think about composition and light, rather than relying on the sliders in the editing suites.

There are Members' Nights too, where the more experienced members of the club demonstrate various skills – such as camera settings and/or post processing techniques – to entertain and improve our members' confidence, abilities and knowledge. Our next demonstration will include Delia Kingsbury demonstrating multiple exposure in using editing software.

We hold several studio nights across the year for those with an interest in portraiture. The models for the most recent session were steam punks in all their finery.

We also have monthly informal social meetings, at a local restaurant/public house for a catch-up and relaxed chat about anything, which is a great way to get to know people better.

Do you invite guest speakers?
Our programme this season has 15 guest speakers. These are usually either a digital format presentation, which can include a live editing demonstration, or are a 'print talk', with the opportunity to look closely at the speakers' work. Topics are diverse and range from astrophotography to black & white conversions to understanding where AI might unwittingly creep into our editing.

The club technical wizards learned how to run presentations using Zoom during the Covid lockdowns and we have continued to use this medium because it allows us to engage with speakers from further afield.

Do members compete in regional and/or national competitions?
Annually we have friendly 'battles' with two neighbouring clubs.

The club and its members are active in both competitions and exhibitions, run by the Midland Counties Photographic Federation, the Photographic Alliance of Great Britain and FIAP (Fédération Internationale de l'Art Photographique); with some of our members enjoying individual success in both national and international exhibitions.

How many members do you have?
We currently have 29 members and are actively seeking to increase our membership.

Are there any residential trips or outings planned?
Paul Reynolds is leading street photography workshops in Birmingham to provide those who are less confident about photographing people in public places with the chance to go out with an experienced photographer.

We organise outings that will appeal to members' interests and provide photo opportunities. Recently we have visited Pendeford Mill Nature Reserve to capture dragonflies and damselflies, if only they'll keep still!

An outing to Tettenhall Green recently was a good location to practise night photography and we were inspired by golden street light reflecting from the carpet of autumn leaves. We also tried light trails and the creative Halloween themed shop window displays caught our attention.

A visit to Cosford Air Museum is planned too, to capture the architecture of the building housing the Cold War Exhibition.

Do you have any funny stories about the club?
One of our members, Roy Jevrons, had run out of time to prepare his prints for a club competition and so mounted a piece of white paper and titled it 'One side of a white cube'. The judge saw the funny side of this and offered a humorous critique suggesting perhaps it was a little over-exposed, a different crop might have been beneficial and perhaps it would be better if turned 90 degrees!

What are the club's goals for the future?
The club seeks to provide a range of activities that will interest and engage our members, and provide friendship through shared interests. We are working to raise the profile of the club in our local area and to increase the club membership numbers. AP

Club essentials

Tettenhall Wood Photographic Club

The Institute, Wood Rd, Tettenhall Wood, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV6 8NF

Meets: Tuesday evenings from September to early June. Meetings start at 7:30pm prompt in room 4.

Membership: TWPC Membership is £30 per year, plus £3 per meeting.

Contact: Info@twpc.org.uk , or membership@twpc.org.uk

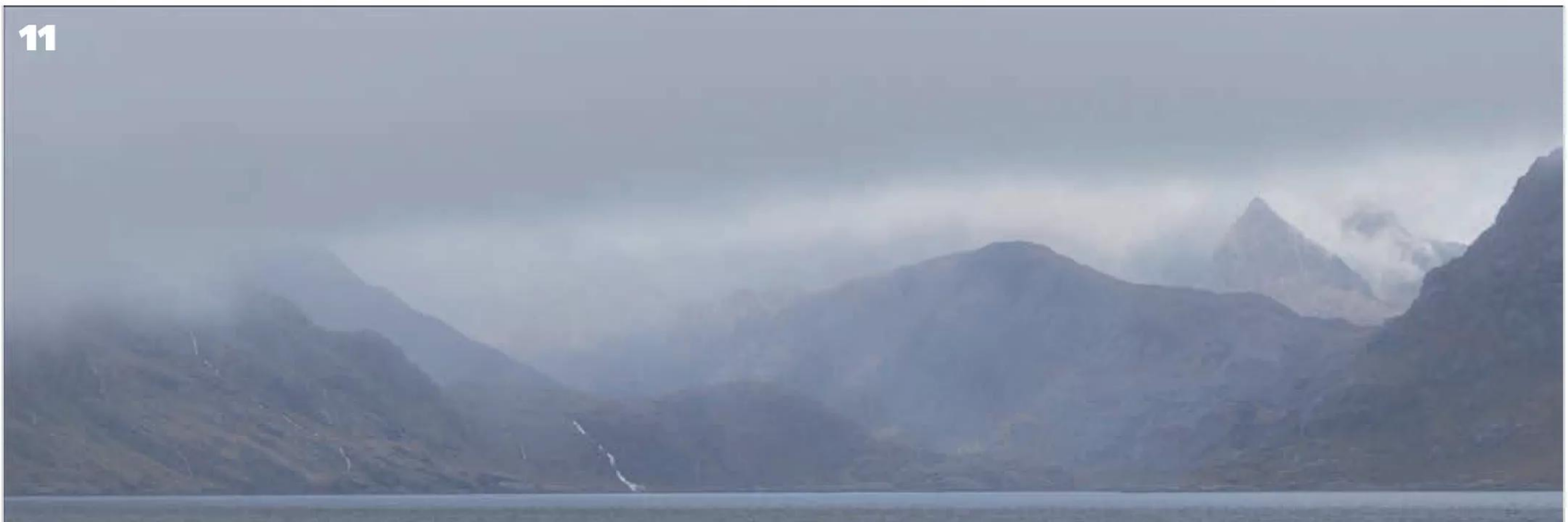
Website: www.twpc.org.uk

5 Elan Valley Dark Skies by Bill Roberts

6 Salford Quays by Dave Ormerod

7 No Breaks No Fear by Mark Rock

8 Close Shave by Franco Colabella



9 Neita Leads Off The Bend by Delia Kingsbury

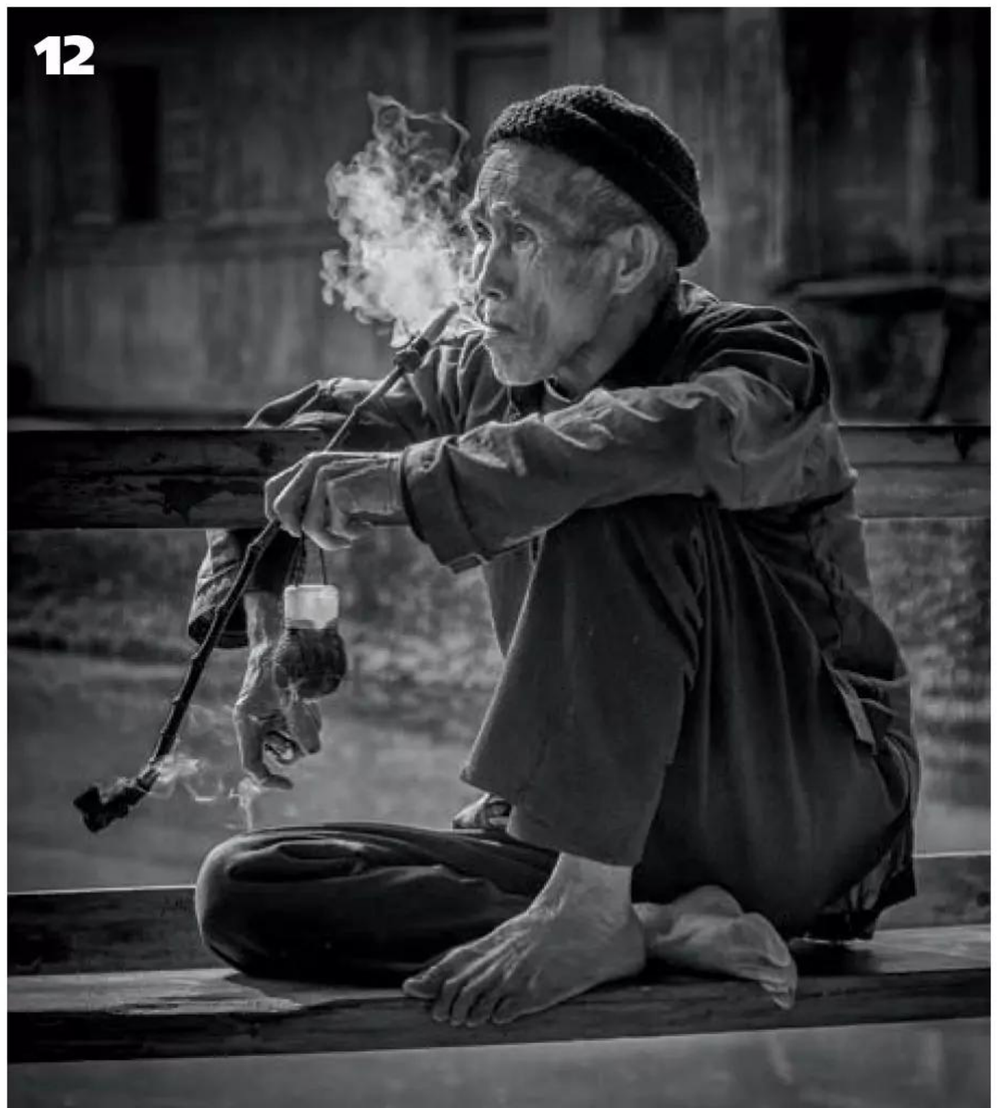
10 Carlinuellus Flocculosus by Michael Bull

11 Low Cloud Over The Cullins by Janet Griffiths

12 At Peace With My Pipe by Paul Reynolds

13 Cockney Sparra by Malcolm Harris

14 Lilies by Sue Tucker



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FACT FILE

New Order's *Power, Corruption & Lies*

Musicians: Peter Hook, Bernard Sumner, Gillian Gilbert, Stephen Morris

Released: 2 May 1983 (Factory)

Best chart performance: No. 1 in the UK Independent Albums charts

Sales: 60,000 certified UK sales

Fascinating fact: In 2010 the cover was one of ten classic album covers from British artists commemorated on a set of GB stamps issued by the Royal Mail. The fashion designer Raf Simons used the cover art on one of his most coveted pieces from the Autumn/Winter 2003 'Closer' collection. He produced four fishtail parkas in different colours with New Order and Joy Division artwork spread around the back of the pieces. Street-fashion label Supreme also included the LP's floral motif in its Spring/Summer 2013 collection.

Power, Corruption & Lies

By Trevor Key

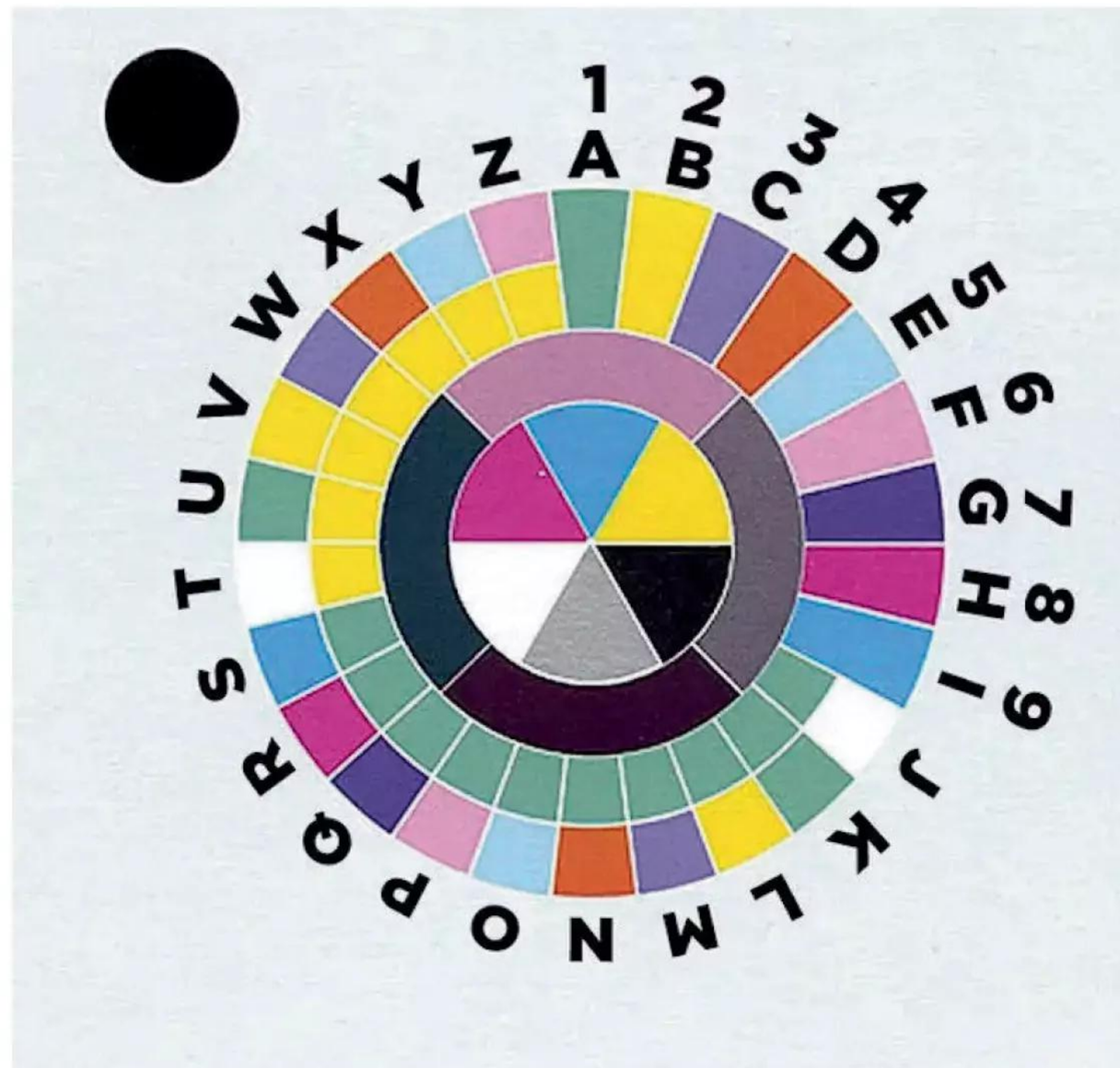
Gallery red tape, a painting behind glass and the need to hide the album title meant a rocky road for creating this New Order LP cover, writes Steve Fairclough

The front cover of *Power, Corruption & Lies* shows the photograph of 'Basket of Roses', plus the album's coded catalogue number FACT 75

Out of the ashes of Joy Division, following the suicide of lead singer Ian Curtis in May 1980, rose the band New Order. The three remaining members – bassist Peter Hook, drummer Stephen Morris and guitarist Bernard Sumner – decided to continue. They are said to have taken their name from a *Guardian* newspaper article titled 'The People's New Order of Kampuchea'. The band name was suggested to them by their manager, Rob Gretton, and they became a four-piece again when Gretton also suggested adding Gillian Gilbert, Stephen Morris's then girlfriend, as a keyboardist and guitarist in early October 1980.

Power, Corruption & Lies was New Order's second studio album – it was released by Factory Records on 2 May 1983. The album featured more electronic tracks than the band's 1981 debut album, *Movement*, with

The rear cover of *Power, Corruption & Lies* was meant to resemble a floppy disk and included Peter Saville's famous colour-coded alphabet wheel in the centre



An explanation of how Peter Saville's colour-coded alphabet wheel works. For example, K is the 11th letter, which means 1 and 1 (green) are used

more use of synthesisers. The monster hit single *Blue Monday* wasn't included on the vinyl album, but was released separately on a 12-inch single. It would later appear on cassette and CD versions of the *Power, Corruption & Lies* album.

No agenda

The album cover was designed by the art director and graphic designer Peter Saville, who co-founded Factory Records in 1978 with the late Tony Wilson (1950-2007) and Alan Erasmus. During a 2003 interview with Lee Gale for *JACK* magazine, Peter Saville explained, 'Of all the people I worked with, the body of work which ended up representing what I was interested in is the work for New Order. They had no personal agenda. They didn't really want to talk about the covers and they didn't have any ideas about the covers. [For album titles] Stephen [Morris] would jot things down from whatever book he was reading, and then they would do a vote on it. I just did, pretty much, what I cared about; what I was interested in at that point. So, the New Order covers from '81 until '93 were pretty much my annual expression of intent.'

The album's front cover was a photograph of an 1885 oil-on-canvas painting – 'Basket of Roses' by the French artist Henri Fantin-Latour – with a colour code on it spelling 'FACT 75', the album's catalogue number. The back of the album was a die-cut piece of artwork, designed to look like a floppy disc, with a colour wheel in the centre that had a hidden secret…

Trevor Key (1947-1995) was an English photographer who began his career as a Butlins photographer. After moving to London, he assisted on the shoot for the Rolling Stones' *Let It Bleed* album cover. In the 1970s he founded Cooke Key Associates with Brian Cooke and became the de facto designers for Virgin Records artists. He created the cover for Mike Oldfield's *Tubular Bells* and worked on album covers for the Sex Pistols, Ultravox, Phil Collins, Peter Gabriel, Roxy Music, Wham!, OMD, Joy Division and New Order. He died of a brain tumour, aged just 48.

Clear influences

In the early 1980s Saville was influenced by the Dutch designer Gert Dunbar, who set Saville thinking about historical culture and the modern world. Saville was also influenced by a TV drama about the renaissance dynasty the Borgias, 'It caught my imagination and fascinated me with renaissance Italy… and it's the era of Machiavelli.'

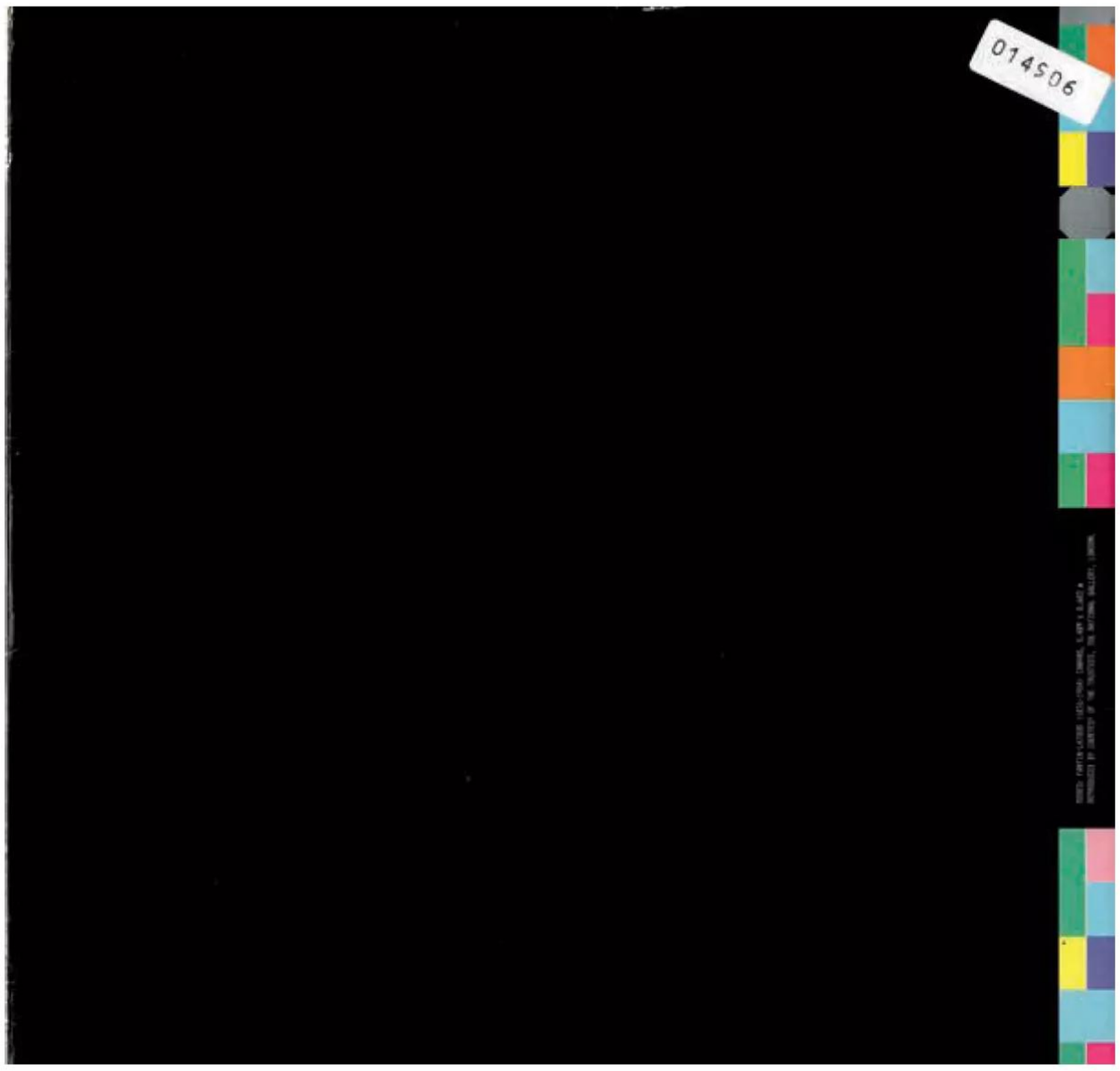
Saville added, 'When I heard New Order's album was called *Power, Corruption & Lies*, programming took me straight to Machiavelli. I thought "that fits because I've got this thing about history and technology… yes, a Machiavelli portrait! And I'll put it together with something technological." I went around various museums and galleries in London to look for a Machiavellian portrait. I ended up in the National Gallery looking for 14th and 15th century portraits of dangerous chaps. I found a few, but it was just obvious, too graphic and too literal… just route one.'

Saville had given up and was exiting the gallery, but decided to check out the gallery's shop 'in case I missed something that was in one of the rooms. I resorted to just buying some postcards. I gave up on Machiavelli. I was disappointed because I thought, "Shit, what am I going to do?", so I bought a few things. I'm holding this postcard [of the "Basket of Flowers" painting] and my then girlfriend Martha said, "You're not thinking of that, are you?" and I said, "No, don't be silly, it looks like a box of chocolates. I couldn't use that for *Power, Corruption & Lies*… I could, couldn't I?" It's so not *Power, Corruption & Lies*.'

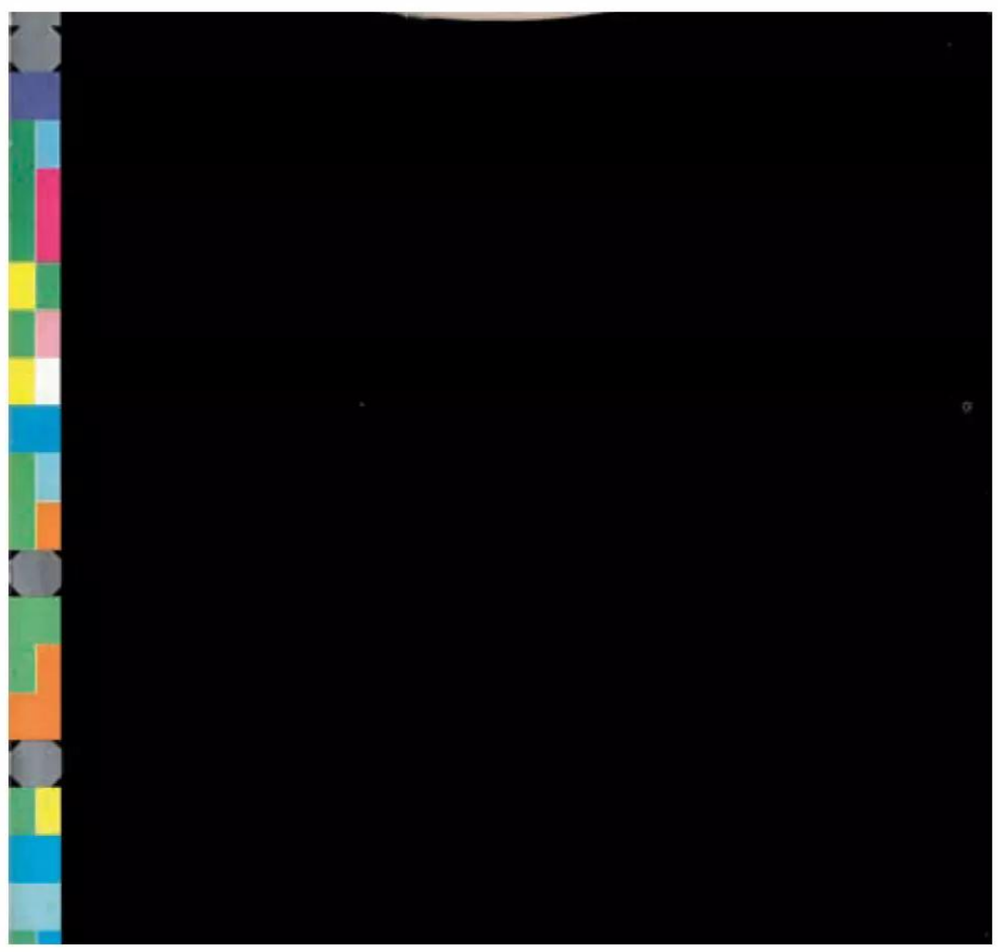
Saville added, '[But] it's a lie, isn't it? I thought, "Fucking hell, that's wonderful." I subsequently had a trip to Manchester when I heard *Blue Monday*, found a floppy disk for the first time, and showed the band this postcard. Bernard [Sumner] said, "Oh yeah, we mention flowers in one of the songs." Jolly good. So, this [painting] became the image.'

National Gallery impasse

A major headache emerged as the National Gallery painting wasn't in the gallery's



Above: The inner sleeve shown here spelling out 'NEW ORDER POWER' with the colour code – Peter Saville used a hexagon and a credit to break up the words



Right: The inner sleeve shown spelling out 'CORRUPTION AND LIES' with the colour code – Peter Saville used hexagons to break up the words

possession at that time – it was on a five-year loan to Norwich Castle Museum. The National Gallery had lost any suitable reproduction transparency of the painting and wouldn't allow Saville to reproduce the postcard.

Peter Saville revealed, 'Tony [Wilson] was used to me being late, but not five years late. There was real impasse, but I'd decided I loved it and it was perfect. For a few weeks nothing happened. In the end, Tony said, "What the fuck's happening with this cover?" and I said, "I can't get the picture. Long loan, Norwich Castle from the National Gallery and I can't get it." Tony said, "Leave it to me," and went into *World in Action* mode.'

Tony Wilson got through to the then director of the National Gallery, Sir Michael Levey, who explained that photography of the gallery's works was expressly forbidden. But Wilson found a way around the problem by asking who owned the painting. The answer was, 'Strictly speaking, Mr Wilson, the people of Great Britain own it.' Wilson allegedly replied, 'Well, the people want it.' The director replied, 'Well, if you put it like that Mr Wilson, I suppose we could make an exception in this case.'

Special concession

A special concession was made to allow Peter Saville and photographer Trevor Key to go to Norwich Castle to photograph Henri Fantin-Latour's 'Basket of Roses' painting, which measures just 59x73.8cm. Saville recalled, 'We went one evening at five o'clock and the security people showed us in. We weren't allowed to touch the picture. It was hanging, and we had to photograph it in situ.'

The design of the label in the centre of the vinyl version of the *Power, Corruption & Lies* LP is 'based on a Diatronic typesetting disc'

THE EXPERT PANEL ON *P, C & L*

Lee Gale

Factory Records designer Peter Saville was at his most creative here. It's a photo of 1885 painting 'Basket of Roses'. It merely plays a role in his concept. Plus, there's the anecdote of getting access to the artwork, even before the tricky task of photography had begun at Norwich Castle.

Howard Wakefield

A damaged transparency led to this Trevor Key commission. His photo captured the painting with a depth and naturalism that surpassed the gallery's version. Paired with the seminal use of fine art in popular culture, the colour code amplified the cover's impact. It influenced many designers.

Andy Cowles

This sleeve is all about the tension between a romantic oil painting and the computer-generated colours in the corner. The chromatic range is vast, likewise the texture and tone. At a stroke, designer Peter Saville presents New Order as both the past and future – moody Northern poets and new synth Gods. Genius.

The 2020 'Definitive Edition' boxset release of *Power, Corruption & Lies* came in a pink box with the original album in CD and vinyl formats, two DVDs, a CD of previously unreleased sessions and recordings and a 48-page book

Saville was thrown by this and the fact that the background in the actual painting was brown, whilst the postcard he liked reproduced it with a grey-looking background.

He revealed, 'This guard took us down a narrow corridor and pointed to this picture. It wasn't very easy to see because it had glass over it, so you couldn't even see the picture for the reflection. It had taken us three hours to get to bloody Norwich; months [waiting] and special concessions. I said to Trevor, "Fuck, how are we going to shoot it?"'

Saville explained, 'I was pissed off because I'd had to carry so many cases for him [Key]. I opened a case and he took out some stands. He pointed to 20 feet of black velvet, rolled, a good metre or so deep. He put up these light stands down the corridor, put the velvet down the corridor, leaving enough room for the 5x4 camera.'

Saville added, 'Trevor Key was a very professional still-life photographer and wasn't going to be caught out by this. He cut a hole in the velvet, the lens went through the hole, and he said, "Oh, it looks really nice." And I said, "Trevor, how did you know?" And he said, "Be prepared." And he shot it.' With the photograph in the bag, the background colour had to be changed at the repro stage from the brown more towards the grey.

A hidden code

Saville revealed, 'We didn't want to write *Power, Corruption & Lies* on the cover. I thought, "I need a code. I don't have any information to communicate with the code, except the title, the catalogue number, New Order or something. How can I code the information?" The type was all I had to work with. I thought if I made the alphabet a code, then I could spell out words in the code. I thought the easiest way to do a code is with colours… 26 colours, [but that's] tricky. I wasn't going to get 26 easily distinguishable colours out of a four-colour process.'

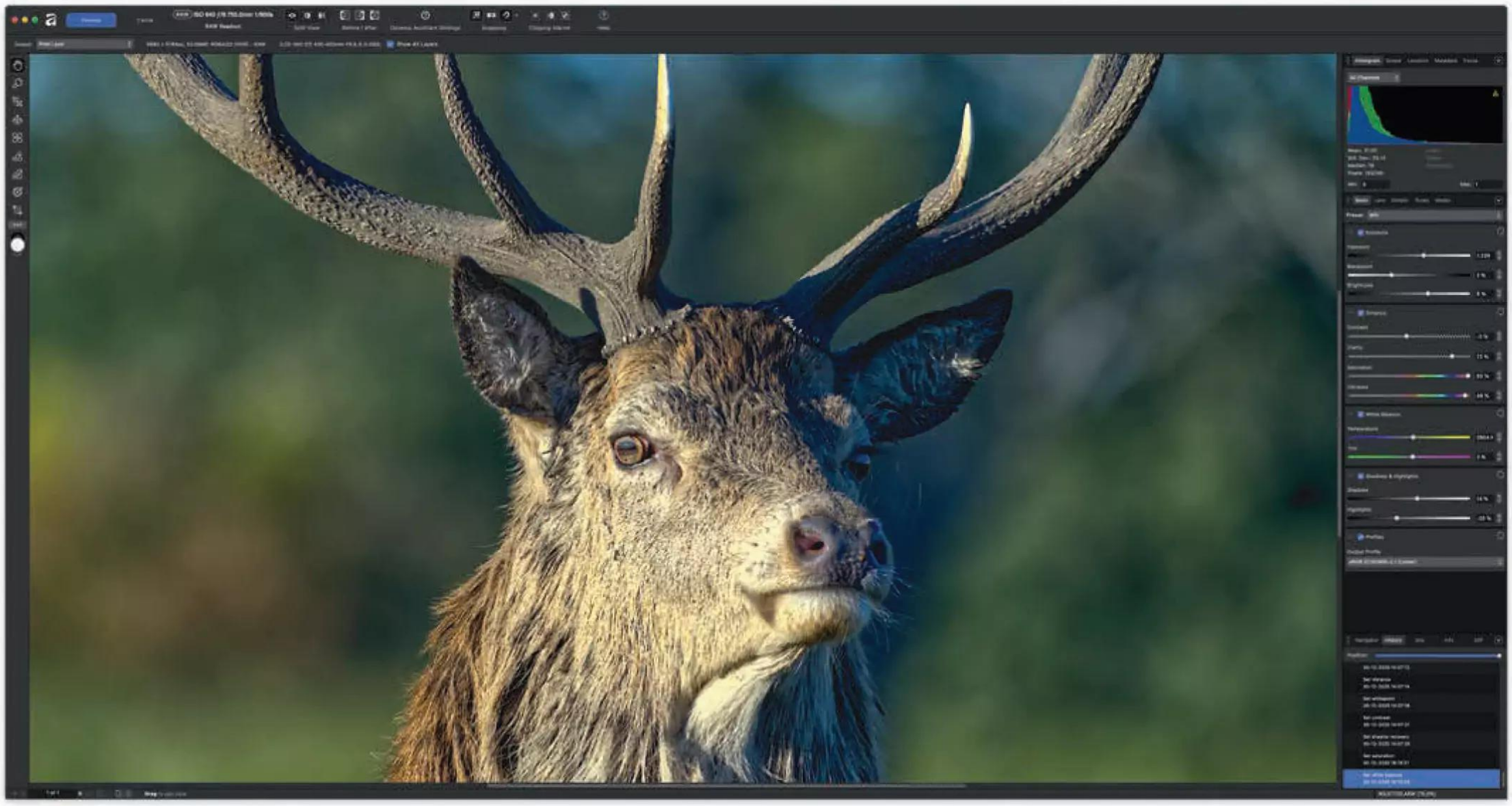
Saville continued, 'So, I thought "letters, numbers… A is number one, Z is 26… mmm, I can get nine colours? So, I'll call A one, and I'll call Z 26, so I'll have colours one to nine, zero will be white." I sat down with some coloured pencils and worked this out. The colours are the predominant colours in the painting. These are the processed colours, plus silver, which I used. I gave no information… that's how it came out.'

Saville's alphabet colour wheel appeared on the back cover of the *Power, Corruption & Lies* album with no explanation. A week after the album was released there were two letters in the music paper *NME* pointing out a spelling mistake in the letter colour coding. Saville recalled, 'I didn't think anybody would ever work it out. There's one give-away… there are 26 segments. They worked it out and were right. Of all the words, "Corruption" was spelt wrong (it was spelt as CORRUPTIRN). I didn't check the proofs for spelling. It just looked nice, so I said it was fine. I didn't actually check it. And corruption is a funny word. We fixed it.'

Despite the mistake on some of the early copies of *Power, Corruption & Lies*, out of all of the album artworks Saville created this cover is his favourite. Saville stated, 'It's the whole thing together. I like the nostalgic romanticism of it. I like the colours of it, the déjà vu of my mother's living room, this is like Arcadia, this is our dream of landscape and a park and country life. It's very *Country Life*. It's the front and the back I like because it's got both extremes [fine art and technical]. It doesn't attempt to strike a balance between the two. This is just A and Z and, strangely, they go together really well. This is why it's my favourite [album cover]. It covers all the ground that I like.' AP

Below: The New Order bassist Peter Hook's band Peter Hook & The Light paid homage to the *Power, Corruption & Lies* album cover on their 2013 live album

© LET THEM EAT VINYL RECORDS



Affinity by Canva

It sounds too good to be true. Affinity is a powerful, immensely capable software for design, graphics and photography and it's absolutely free. Will Cheung takes a close look at this potentially game-changing editor

At a glance

Free

- £13 per month, or £100 per year, for Premium Canva AI
- Three-in-one software
- Full photo-editing studio
- Mac & Windows
- affinity.studio

Nothing stays still in imaging for long, with a never-ending conveyor belt of new kit and firmware updates part and parcel of a photographer's life. It's no different in software where we see new features and improvements every few months.

A huge shake-up in the world of software saw Serif acquired in 2024 by Canva, an Australian software company known for its online design platform, for a reported US $380million. Serif was a British company that published Affinity Photo, Designer and Publisher, three packages that rivalled Adobe's Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign respectively, and very capable they were too. Being available for outright purchase rather than on subscription gave Affinity's trio an extra appeal.

Things moved quickly after the acquisition. Sales of the Affinity apps stopped in early October 2025 and at the end of that month Affinity by Canva was revealed. Also known as Affinity Studio, the former Designer, Photo and Publisher have been rolled into one software package and it's available for the all-in price of nothing. That's right, Affinity Studio for Mac and Windows is free to everyone, with an iPad version on the way.

It's worth saying that Affinity V2 app owners are not left out in the cold and can carry on as normal. The software remains available for download if required, but it won't be updated, so new raw formats won't be supported.

To get started, simply go to affinity.studio, sign up and download the software. It is as simple as that. No credit card, no subscription, no strings attached. In truth, however, Affinity Studio is based on the freemium strategy so while the basic package is free with 5GB of cloud storage, the premium AI-driven features come at a cost. Our focus in this review is on the free software.

Studio selection

Open the software and in the default Context Toolbar, you'll see the three 'studios', Vector, Layout and Pixel, which represent the three previous apps, Designer, Publisher and Photo respectively. Navigating from one studio to the other is no more difficult than clicking on the appropriate icon, which changes the toolbars and palettes to suit. It's a neat and efficient way of working.

You might have noticed there hasn't been any mention of Affinity's cataloguing and keywording functions but that's because they don't exist. So, if you were hoping that Affinity would be a free Lightroom alternative, think again.

Those functions excepted, Affinity is a fully featured image editing software, from raw development to retouching, unlimited layer functionality with compatibility with Photoshop PSD files, and skills such as HDR and focus merging.

Existing Affinity Photo 2 users will feel immediately at home with the interface layout, but one difference is that tool icons are all monochrome rather than colour. This seems a retrograde step as colour icons are nicer to work with, so perhaps that might change in time.

Those new to Affinity might find it daunting initially, especially as it's so richly featured. Getting familiar with it needs practice, practice and yet more practice. Naturally, there's plenty of customisation potential to help, including the ability to create your own studios, and that was my first job.

Apart from three app options the studio drop-down includes Slice, Canva AI, Retouching, Colour Grading, Typography and Compositing. What tasks you want to perform and how you like to work will govern which items feature in your personal studio, and there's nothing to stop you having dedicated studios for different subjects and techniques.

With our focus on Affinity's photo editing skills, I created my studio without Vector and Layout because they weren't needed, and another option I left out was Canva AI. The extra tools in this studio are only active by paying a subscription. For information, the Canva premium service is currently £13 a month (50% off for the first three months) or £100 yearly, which works out at £8.33 a month, with a 30-day trial. Among the additional skills are AI-powered tools that include remove background, subject select, portrait lighting and several generative features.

© WILL CHEUNG

After processing in the Develop studio, the rest of the editing was done with masks in the Pixel Studio

I worked through the toolbars and the right panel palettes, and only selected stuff I was likely to use. Just like working through a camera menu, don't stress about getting it perfect because you can update or delete studios as you learn the software and get to know its potential. For the newcomer, the benefit of organising your workspace is that each time you open the software you're greeted by a familiar face with everything arranged to suit.

Raw ingredients

Let's start working with Affinity by exploring raw processing. For reference, this test was done using Affinity by Canva v3.0.2 on an Apple Mac Studio, with M2 Max processor and 32GB RAM.

Raw files are opened by either dragging and dropping them onto the interface or icon, using File>Open, or accessing files via the Welcome splash page. The software automatically changes the Pixel icon to Develop. Fujifilm shooters will be delighted to hear that Affinity is fully compatible with X-Trans CMOS sensor raws.

Being very familiar with Adobe Camera Raw, particularly in Lightroom, I did notice some differences in Affinity and it started with the imported images. In my test, the same raw image in Affinity looked darker and much lower in contrast and saturation compared with Adobe (with the same colour space) which showed a much brighter, altogether snappier image.

This meant that Affinity's controls needed more aggressive adjusting to get a comparable result. Of course, you'll end up with broadly similar images, but those familiar with Adobe's processing should be aware of this and it's a matter of getting used to Affinity's characteristics.

Moving to the right panel, Affinity has a full array of tools with the Basic, Lens and Details palettes the ones holding the most used tools. So, in the Basic palette there's Exposure, Blackpoint, White Balance and Shadows & Highlights and on the Lens Palette there are lens aberration correction tools. By default, many of the controls in each palette are only active if the tick box is checked. You can speed up the process by making presets of your favoured tools in each palette.

AI noise reduction is a popular and important feature with Adobe, DxO and Topaz

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The original raw taken in challenging conditions was very flat. A few minutes editing in Affinity made a huge improvement

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Layer masks, the Adjustment Brush and Filter Brush tools were used to edit this image

leading the way. Affinity has noise reduction with five sliders to fine-tune luminance and colour and it performs reasonably well, but there's no single-click option and it's not AI-powered. Putting the same high ISO raws through Affinity and denoising in Adobe Camera Raw showed that both did well, but the latter's NR skills were significantly superior. If you frequently shoot at high ISOs and want top results, a denoising app such as DxO PureRaw is worth considering.

I use masks in raw processing a great deal, especially as AI does the heavy lifting which speeds up workflow enormously. Masks are important tools and there are options in Affinity's Raw Develop studio and in the Pixel Studio, too. But there are no single-click subject-focused masks in this free software.

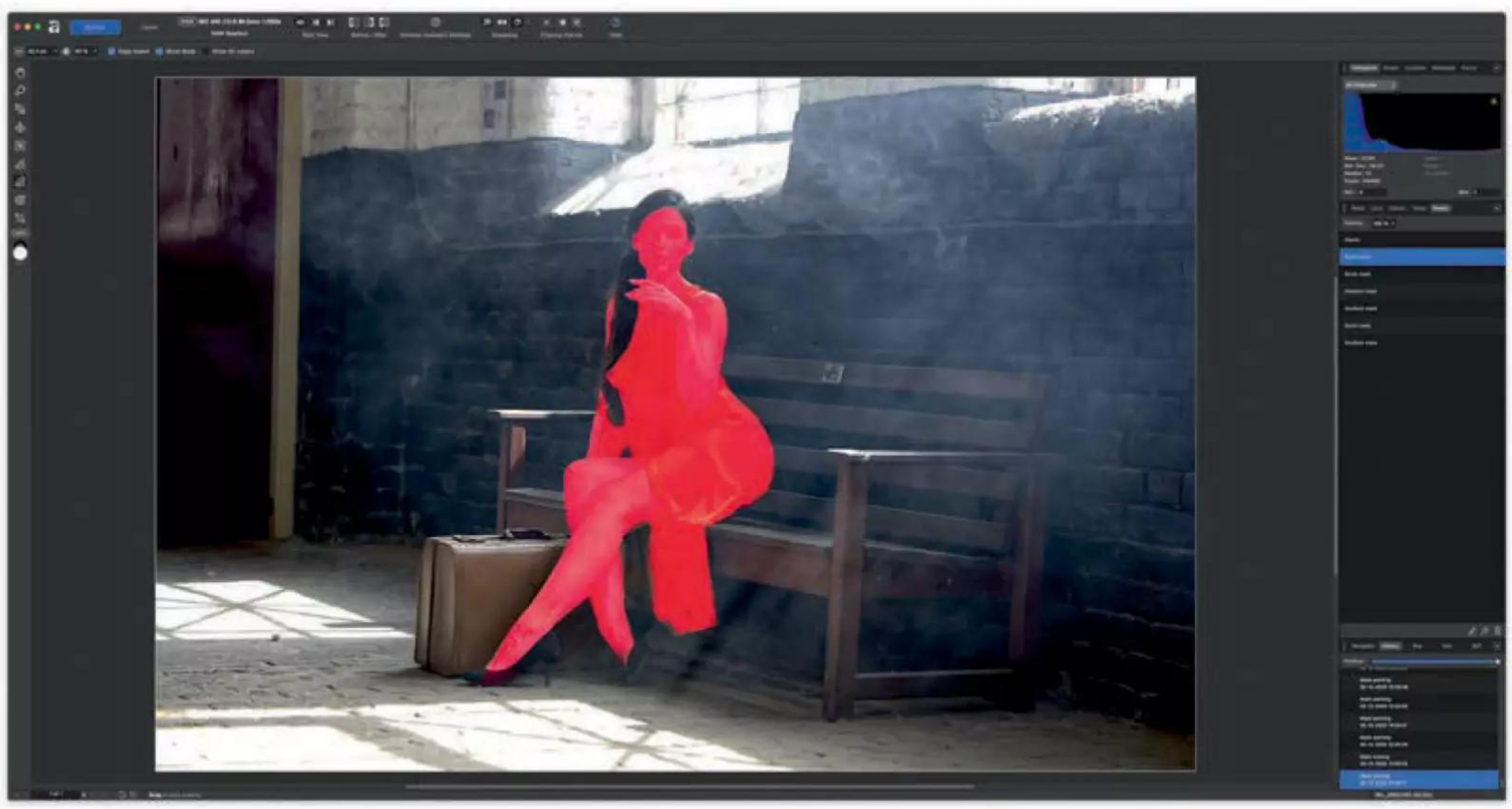
In the Develop studio, there are two ways of accessing masks, either via the left tool bar or with the Masks palette. Here there are two options, Brush and Gradient, with opacity available to control mask density. It's in this palette that created masks are shown and each mask as well as the master image is made active by clicking on it.

In the left toolbar there's the Mask Paint, Mask Erase and Mask Gradient tools, and these are supported in the top toolbar with Edge Aware and Show Mask tick boxes. Ticking the Edge Aware box is worthwhile, and it produced decently accurate masks, even with less strongly defined subjects including birds. The Show Mask option is worth using too, so you can see the mask itself. But oddly, the box must be unticked to allow any editing changes to be made. Auto switchover would make the process more streamlined.

Once a mask is created, click on the appropriate palette to make adjustments. Adjust a slider and its impact on the preview is shown in real time, provided that the Show Mask box is unticked. Masks in this studio can't be renamed and all you see in the Mask palette is the type of mask applied, Brush or Gradient; clicking on each shows the masked area. This slows down workflow slightly if your preferred way of working is multiple masks.

However, a handy feature is the ability to compare 'before' and 'after' previews, either mirrored side-by-side at the same magnification, or in split view.

Affinity's raw editing masks work well, but need slightly more user input compared with AI generated masks which are available with the premium subscription. As it is, the interface seems disjointed, and having all the masking tools and options in one palette would give a more streamlined experience.



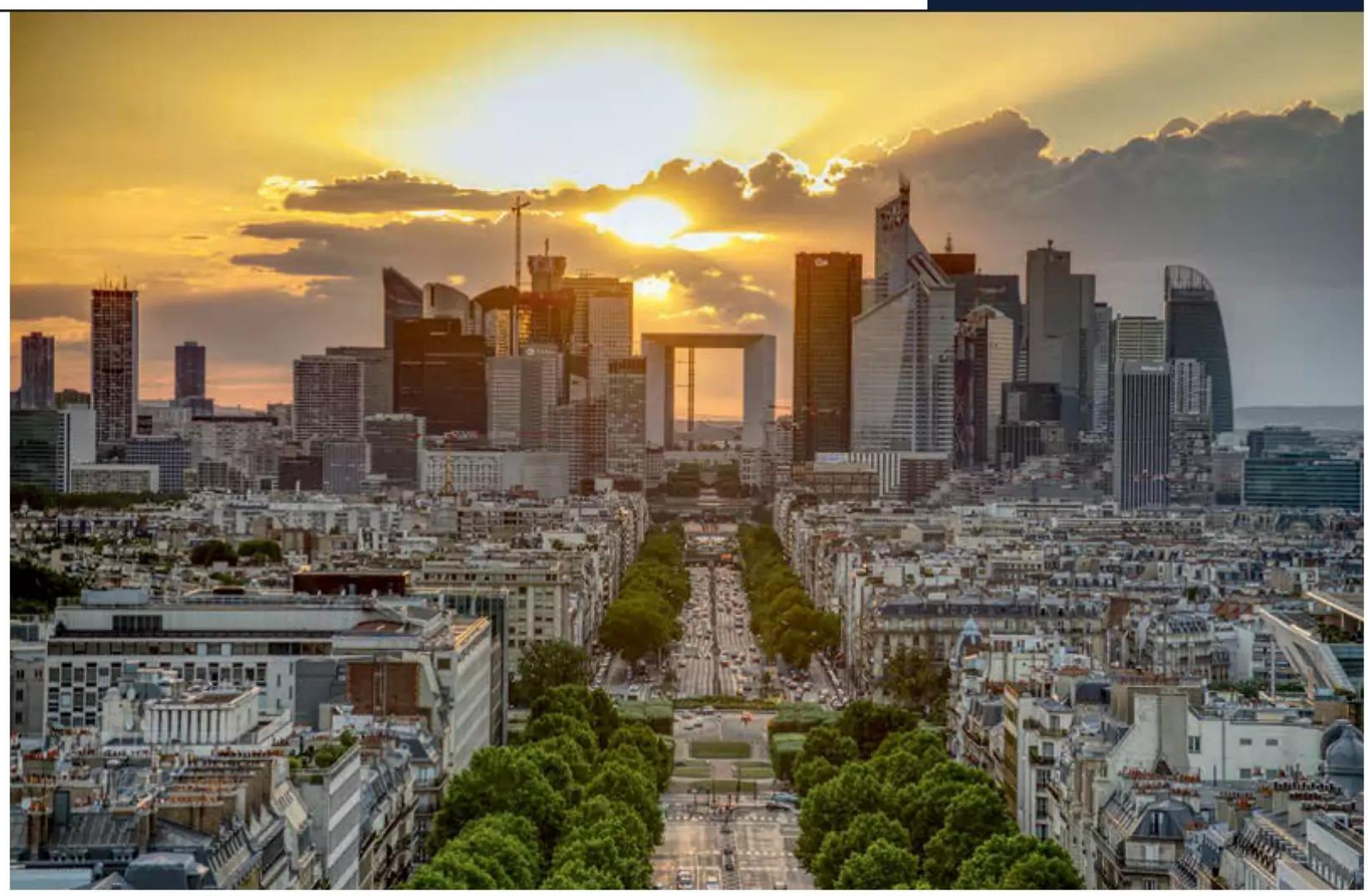
Affinity has masking tools that can salvage demanding images, but making masks needs care

Post-raw editing

Once you have edited the raw file to your satisfaction, click on the Develop. A second or two later you're in the Pixel Studio, and the toolbars and palettes change. Affinity is blessed with an extensive collection of editing tools from basic cloning and healing to layers, layer masks and selection tools.

Affinity's Studio toolbar comes into its own in editing, and the way relevant tools are grouped together in the Retouching and Colour Grading studios is really cool. Click on either and a long list of editing functions appear in a drop-down menu. In Retouching, for example, among the 24 options on show are Black & white, HSL and Exposure. Click on the tool's heading and you see a range of preview thumbnails showing the effect of the various settings. If you then click on a thumbnail, the preview image updates to show the effect, and a palette appears to allow you to tweak the preview.

To take a practical example, if you click on HSL (hue, saturation, luminance) and then on one of the presets, the preview updates and the HSL palette appears so you can fine-tune the image to taste. I thought this a neat way to make image edits quickly, with the thumbnails giving an accurate guide to the effect. There's still the ability to fine-tune the result.



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A five-frame exposure bracket merged in Affinity's HDR Merge with the Dynamic option selected

The left toolbar has, among many others, healing, cloning and selection tools and if the default arrangement doesn't suit, it can be customised. Left click on the three dots at the base of the bar and the Customise Tools dialogue box appears. The greyed-out tools are those already in the toolbar and highlighted ones are those available to add. All you do is click and drag to add or remove items and to change their order.

Right-clicking on the tool bar also brings up the option of opening the Customise Tools dialogue box. In addition, there are Sub Tools menu items and Rich Tooltips. For inexperienced Affinity users, Rich Tooltips is especially useful. By hovering over each tool there's a brief explanation of what it does, plus a tip or two. This tool bar can also be undocked and placed anywhere on the interface.

© WILL CHEUNG

Affinity's Focus Merge did a great job with this 8-shot focus bracket. The Clone Brush and Healing Brush tools were used to tidy up foliage

A deeper dive

One tool I found myself calling on regularly was the Adjustment Brush. Select this and click on the image, and a new layer mask is automatically created, that you can go back to later if you need to revisit the effect. The Adjustment Brush is set to Exposure as default, but in the Context Toolbar drop-down menu, there are no fewer than 17 other options including Curves, HSL and Vibrance. Opacity, flow, size and hardness are available to adjust the way the brush works and clicking on the More menu for the Brush – Selection dialogue box gives even greater control. Finally, there's also a blend mode drop-down menu, so the layer is created in the preferred mode with Normal being the default.

In the Layers menu, masks can be edited by clicking on the mask icon together with the Option key (Mac) or Alt (Windows). You can refine the layer mask with the brush tool. Layer visibility and opacity can be fine-tuned too, so you have total control of the effect. Of course if you don't like your efforts, the History palette means you can take a step or two backwards, or the layer can be deleted, so you can start again.

Creating masks with the Adjustment Brush is fast but for intricate work,

An ISO 51,200 original raw. Left: With Affinity noise reduction. Right: With Denoising in Adobe Camera Raw, shown at about 200%

such as masking a sky against a detailed horizon, you need to take your time, zoom into the image, and work carefully with small brushes. If you're used to working with AI generated masks which can be very good in such scenarios and need little manual input, masking in Affinity demands more work and patience but it's not arduous. The option of Edge Aware that is available in the Develop Studio would have been handy here too, but this is a free software so you can't have everything.

Equally useful, and working in a similar way, is the Filter Brush. Here you can selectively add blur with options that include Diffuse Glow, Gaussian Blur and Motion Blur. Noise, Clarity and High Pass are other options available.

Another tool to highlight is the Inpainting Brush. The Clone Brush can be used to tidy up small areas, but if you're looking to remove larger parts of the image, the Inpainting Brush can do the job very well with a single click. Just brush over the area you want to edit and a few seconds later it's gone. I thought this tool worked impressively on the images I tried and the edit was seamless. Only on the odd occasion did I have to undo the result and try again.

The Adjustment Brush and Filter Brush tools are quick and convenient but if you prefer, using selection tools and layers can be more precise.

Layers are essential for more involved image editing and Affinity is well blessed in this respect. For working non-destructively, there's Mask Layer, 24 types of adjustment layer, and even more filter layers. There's also the choice of Pixel Layer.

There's more, too

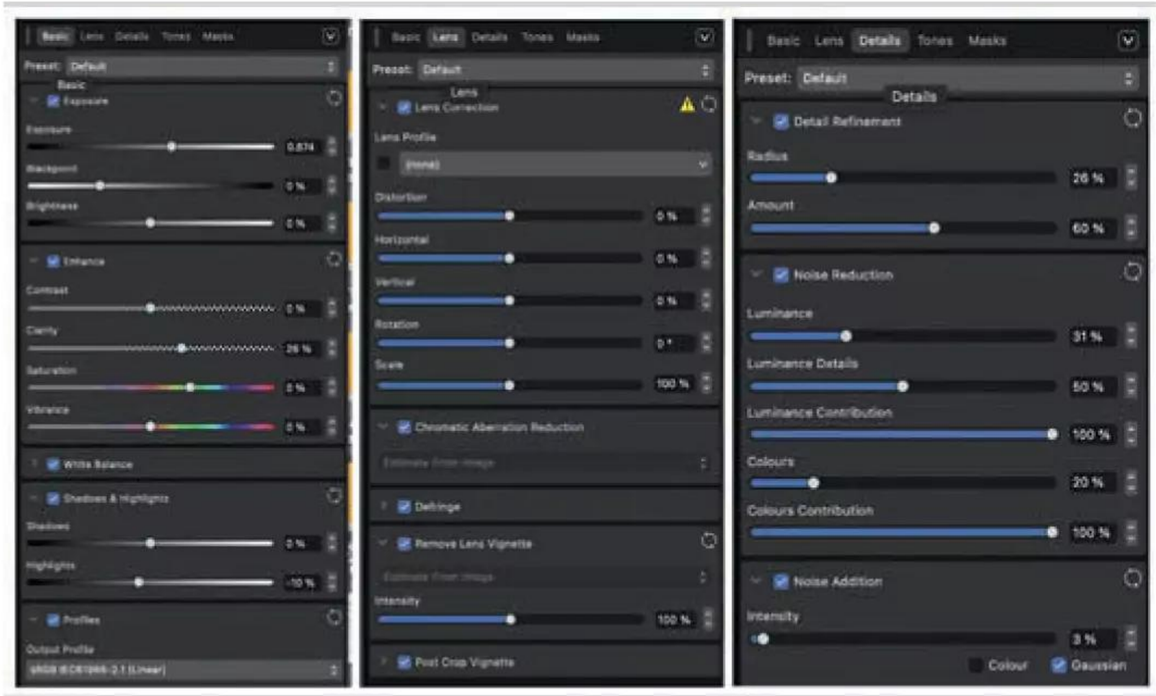
So far we've concentrated on Affinity's photo editing skills and taken a brief look at what's available. But this is extensive software with massive potential, and it'll probably satisfy the needs of most photographers, designers and illustrators.

Affinity Studio has retained from Affinity Photo V2 a selection of image processes that include panorama stitching, focus stack merging, HDR merge and astrophotography stacking. Using them is straightforward, and an Affinity .af format file is produced at the end.

For panoramas, I tried five- and eight-shot raw sequences shot hand-held. Affinity stitched them accurately without any obvious join lines or tonal changes. There are no projection options on offer, but you do get a preview of the finished stitch before you click ok.

Focus bracketing is a common camera feature, but of course software with merging skills is needed to finish the job. Photoshop is capable and specialist focus stacking software is also available, but most cost money. Having that merging ability for free is very much a good thing and Affinity delivered fine results with my focus brackets, made on Canon EOS R and OM System cameras.

After you've finished editing your images they can be saved as an Affinity file with file extension .af. When it comes to exporting there are the usual JPEG (best, high, medium and low) and TIFF (8-bit, 16-bit, RGB, Greyscale, CMYK and LAB) options, as well as PSD (Photoshop), HDR and plenty more to cover design, web and graphic options.



There's a wide choice of tools for Raw editing

Affinity studio makes a good job of monochrome conversions

© WILL CHEUNG

Layer location

The layers panel by default lives on the right side of the interface and just like the toolbars, it can be moved to sit wherever required. Clicking on the downward arrow at the top of the layer panel brings up working options and access to what panels you want to have on show. With Affinity's multiple skills, it's no surprise that there are over 60 to choose from.

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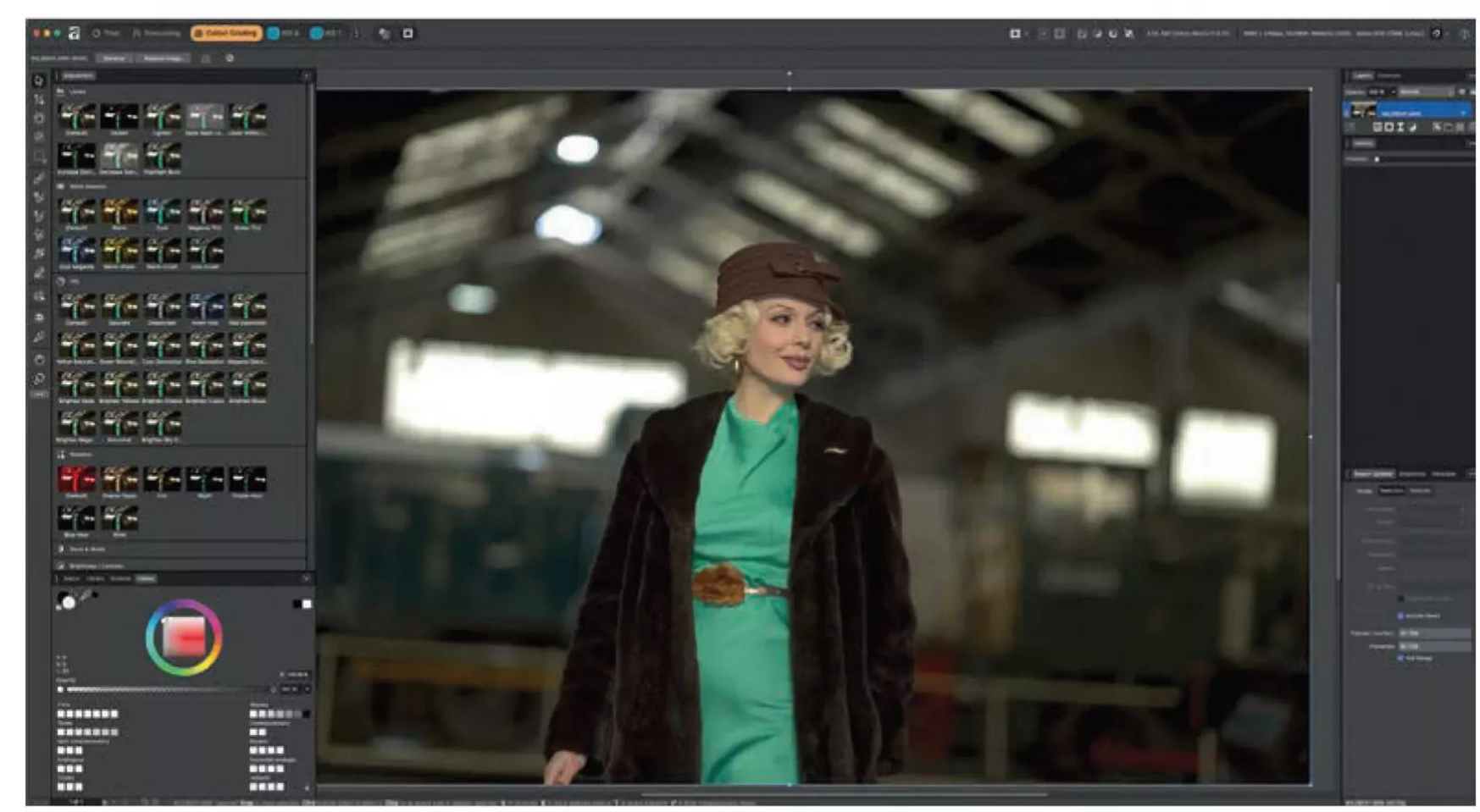
A tricky twilight moon scene came through Affinity very nicely

© WILL CHEUNG

Affinity stitched seven upright frames for this panorama, which was shot handheld



The Colour Grading Studio gives fast access to the main tools for image fine-tuning

Verdict

NOT much in the world of imaging comes free, so Affinity by Canva should be lauded from the rooftops for that simple fact alone.

However, there are two 'inevitables' to be discussed. The first is AI and do you need it? On the one hand, AI-edited images are not universally welcome in competitions and photo distinctions, depending on what's been done. On the other, AI can save hours of painstaking graft, plus it can rescue or create images that would be difficult or even impossible without its help. The beauty of Affinity Studio is that there's the choice, and while the free version is impressive, if AI appeals the premium subscription is £13 per month.

The second inevitable is the comparison with Adobe. You'll need Adobe's Creative Cloud Pro subscription, which is a hefty £66.49 per month, to match Affinity's functionality. For those using their work for brochures, flyers, or posters, Affinity Studio is a compelling solution.

Sticking with just photo editing, Adobe's Photography package comes with both Photoshop and Lightroom for £19.97 per month. Affinity can't match Lightroom's cataloguing and keywording skills.

With or without the AI option, Affinity Studio has an obvious appeal that will attract Adobe haters, the budget-conscious and anyone looking for a hugely capable editing software.

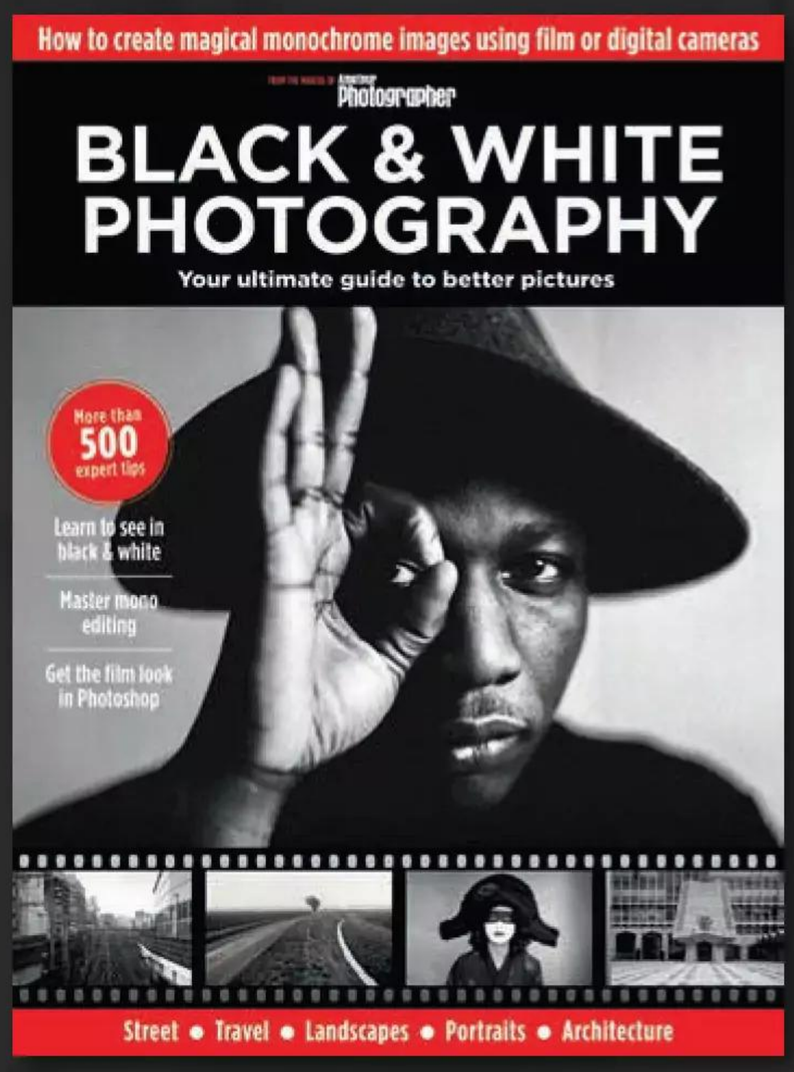
Ultimately, you have simply got to try Affinity by Canva. There's no commitment, it's free so there's nothing to lose apart from time trying it.

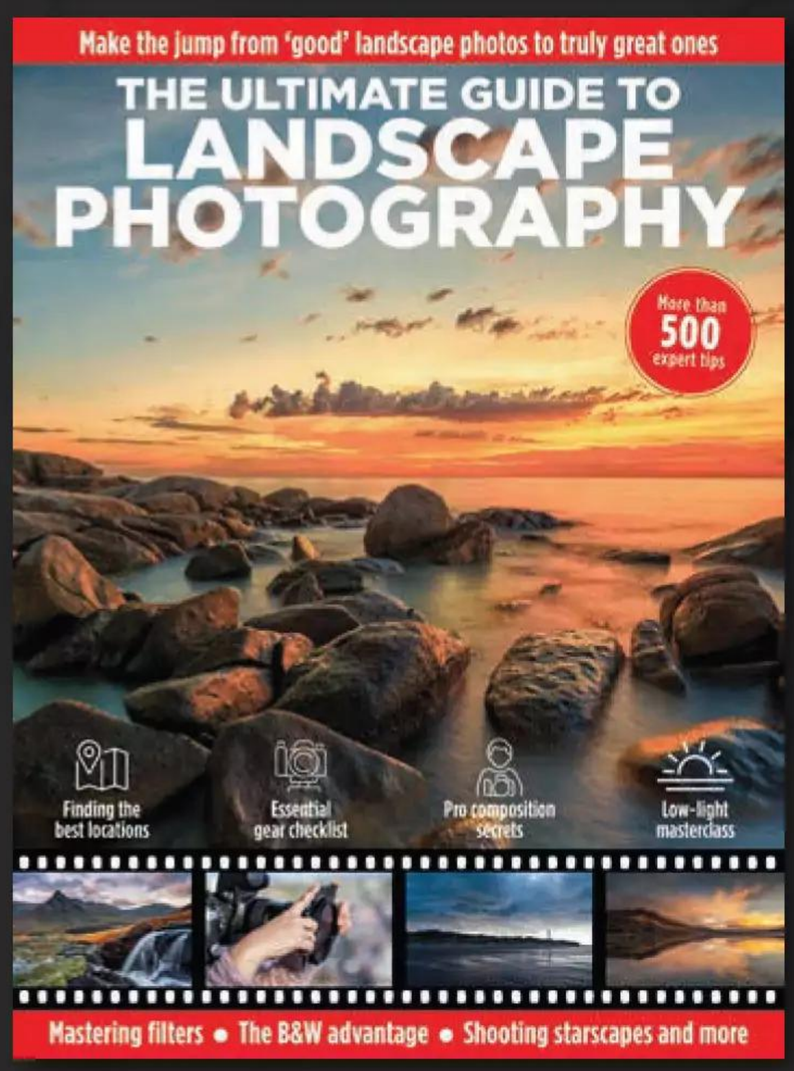
For and against

- ✚ Truly remarkable product – it's free!
- ✚ Three in one software
- ✚ Huge range of editing tools
- ✚ Plenty of customisation potential
- ➖ Subscription needed for AI tools
- ➖ Masking fiddly
- ➖ Average noise reduction

From the makers of Amateur Photographer magazine

Your definitive guides to assist you in all aspects of photography





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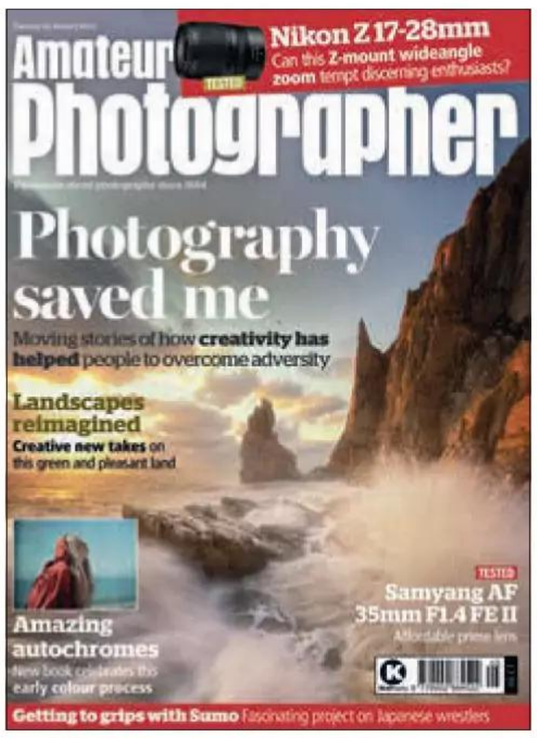

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DxO PhotoLab 9 isn't simply about lens corrections and denoising. It has extensive and powerful adjustments for image tonality, colour, microcontrast and more

DxO PhotoLab 9.3

DxO's flagship photo editor is now up to version 9. **Rod Lawton** explains what's new and how it all fits in

DxO PhotoLab 9 is the flagship program in DxO's photo editing software line-up. It's renowned for the quality of its raw image processing, its lab-developed camera/lens correction profiles and its DeepPRIME AI-driven noise reduction technology. It combines powerful photo enhancements with sophisticated local adjustment tools which now include AI subject and object selection. It does all this in a non-destructive workflow which allows for multiple versions of the same image and supports a wide range of preset effects. It also has basic but effective image browsing and searching tools.

There is a PhotoLab Essential version which is cheaper, but it lacks many of the Elite version's key features, such as the DeepPRIME processing and its ClearView contrast adjustment and haze reduction.

So how does PhotoLab fit in with the rest of DxO's software line-up? Perhaps its closest relative is DxO PureRAW, which takes the same lens corrections, raw processing and DeepPRIME processing and incorporates them into a simpler raw batch processing tool which can output enhanced and optimised JPEG images or, more usefully, part-processed raw DNG files for other software to use. With this, you get all the advantages and flexibility of raw files but with DxO's raw processing and corrections pre-applied.

DxO also publishes ViewPoint, a tool for more advanced lens and perspective corrections which is especially useful for architecture and wideangle photography. This works as a standalone program or as a plug-in for Lightroom/Photoshop. If it's installed alongside PhotoLab, it's integrated into the PhotoLab interface and offers specialised tools like tilt-shift miniature effects and volumetric distortion correction within PhotoLab.

And then there's DxO FilmPack, a program specifically designed to authentically replicate the appearance of classic analogue films and processing styles. Like ViewPoint, FilmPack works as a standalone application and as a plug-in, and also integrates with the PhotoLab interface.

Finally, there's the DxO Nik Collection. It's an outstanding collection of creative plug-ins for use with other photo editing programs or even as standalone applications. If it's installed alongside PhotoLab, the Nik Collection plug-ins can be accessed directly from a button within the application, though they don't integrate in the same way as ViewPoint or FilmPack.

That's an introduction to DxO PhotoLab and the DxO software family, so let's take a look at exactly what PhotoLab can do and the kind of photographers it's aimed at.

At a glance

£219.99

- High-end raw processing
- DeepPRIME noise reduction
- Automatic lens corrections
- AI masking
- Mac and Windows
- 30-day trial version available
- dxo.com

DxO Lens corrections

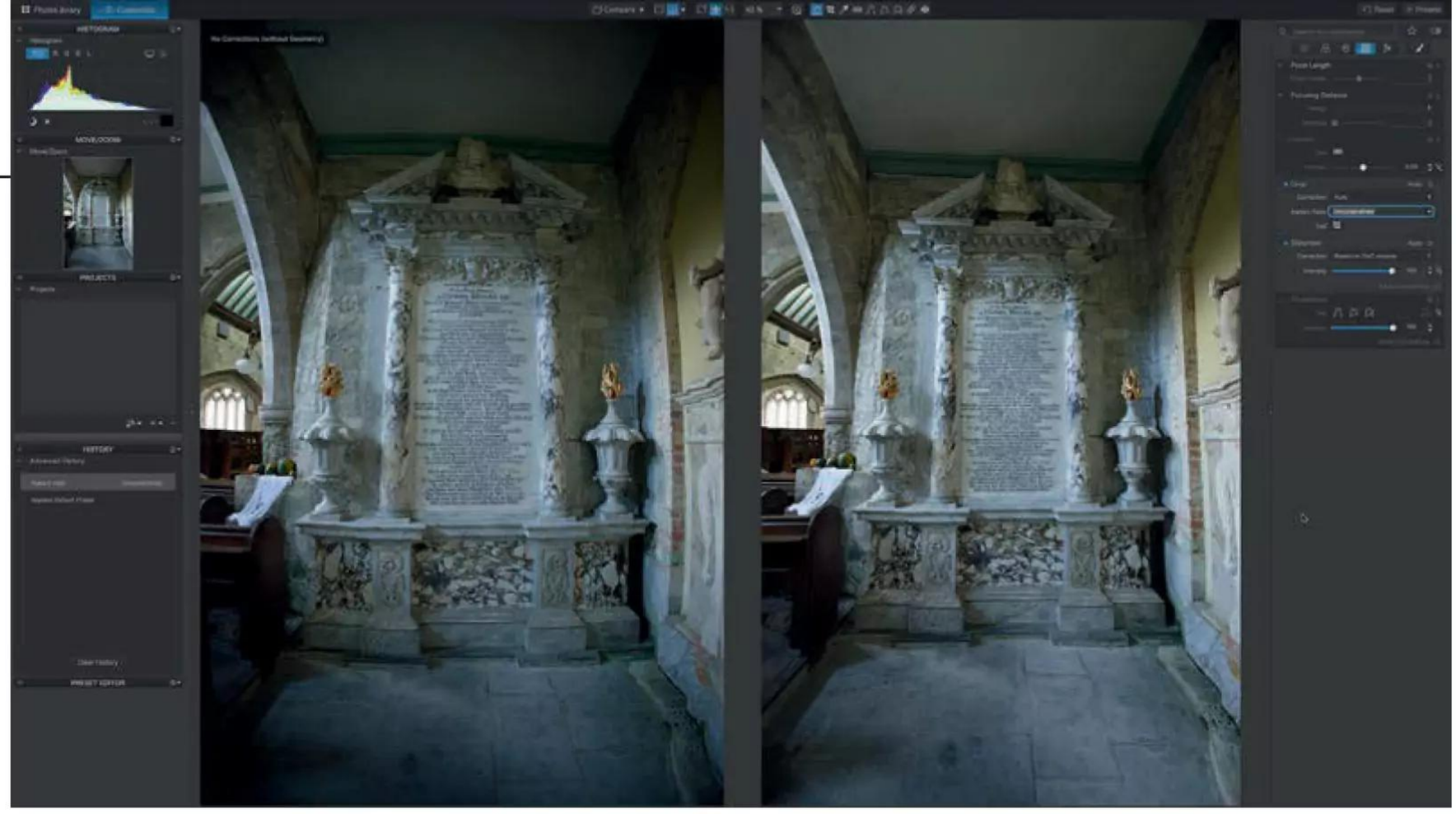
All lenses exhibit some degree of distortion, chromatic aberration, colour fringing or corner shading (vignetting). Sometimes it's not too bad and can be ignored or accepted, but usually it benefits from being corrected.

Lens corrections have become especially important as lens makers have been moving towards a kind of hybrid optical/digital correction approach. This allows for more advanced, better or cheaper lens designs, but it does depend on the right kind of camera/software support. Mirrorless cameras typically apply lens corrections to JPEGs in-camera. If you shoot raw files, some brands will embed correction profiles in the files for the software to use, but some won't. Even if the maker includes a correction profile, it might be basic and easily improved on.

If you use Adobe Lightroom, Capture One, Affinity or other photo editors that can process raw files, these will typically match your photos up with correction profiles automatically, or use the maker's own embedded profile where available. But DxO goes further.

First, DxO takes the approach that cameras and lenses need to be corrected as pairs, so there are lots of permutations. In fact, DxO has now developed more than 100,000 correction profiles and actively adds new cameras and lenses as they appear.

These correction profiles are developed in DxO's own testing labs, and they don't just correct distortion, chromatic aberration and vignetting – they also correct global lens softness and also edge softness, lens by lens. Lots of lenses grow visibly softer towards the edges, and while this is an optical effect you can't reverse, DxO's lens profiles apply a progressive sharpening effect that disguises it very effectively.



Many modern mirrorless lenses now depend on digital as well as optical corrections, and DxO's correction modules are one of PhotoLab's strengths

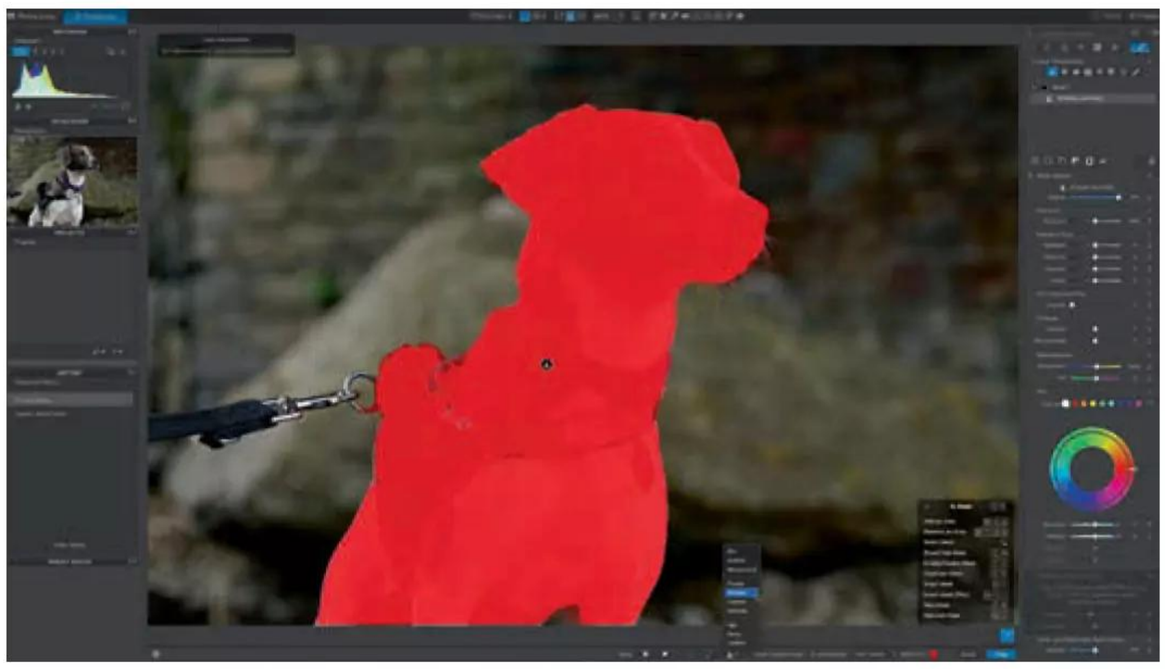
All this sounds very complicated, but these lens corrections are applied automatically. PhotoLab can identify the camera and lens used from the image file's EXIF (shooting) information and then apply a matching correction profile automatically in an instant without you having to do a thing. If it doesn't have the required profile straight away, it will prompt you to download it. These are small files and it only takes a few moments. It's rare to find a camera and lens combination that DxO doesn't support.

There's one more feature of DxO's lens corrections worth highlighting. When software profiles are used to correct barrel distortion in wideangle lenses, they do this by 'pushing' the edges and corners of the image outwards. Normally this extra image area is lost, but DxO's crop tool can be set to expand to retain this extra image area – it's like having your wideangle lenses made even wider! That's not really the case, of course, it's just that you're keeping the outer edges of the corrected image that other programs would crop off.

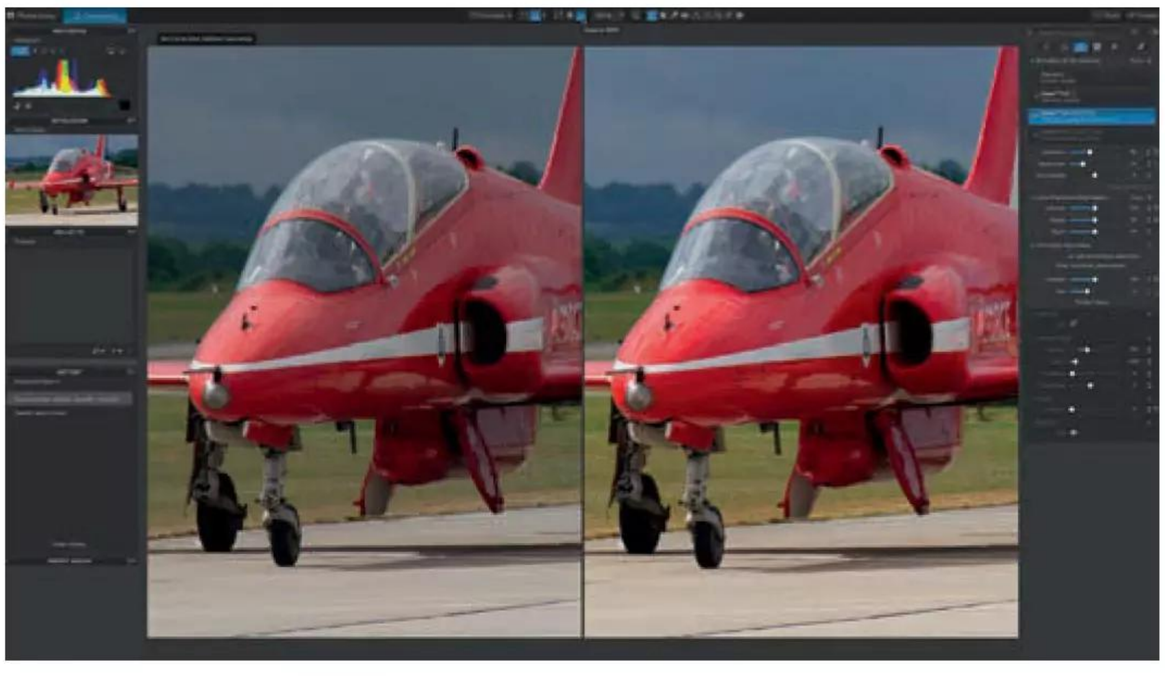
Noise reduction

DxO's DeepPRIME AI noise reduction for raw files was revolutionary when it was first introduced, eliminating noise yet preserving or even enhancing high-ISO detail in a way that was positively uncanny. Other programs have caught up, though, and AI noise reduction is now common. Adobe Lightroom now incorporates this option seamlessly into its workflow, where previously it needed to create a new, 'Enhanced' file.

DxO hasn't stood still, though. It's been continually developing its DeepPRIME processing generation by generation, and the options now include DeepPRIME XD2s

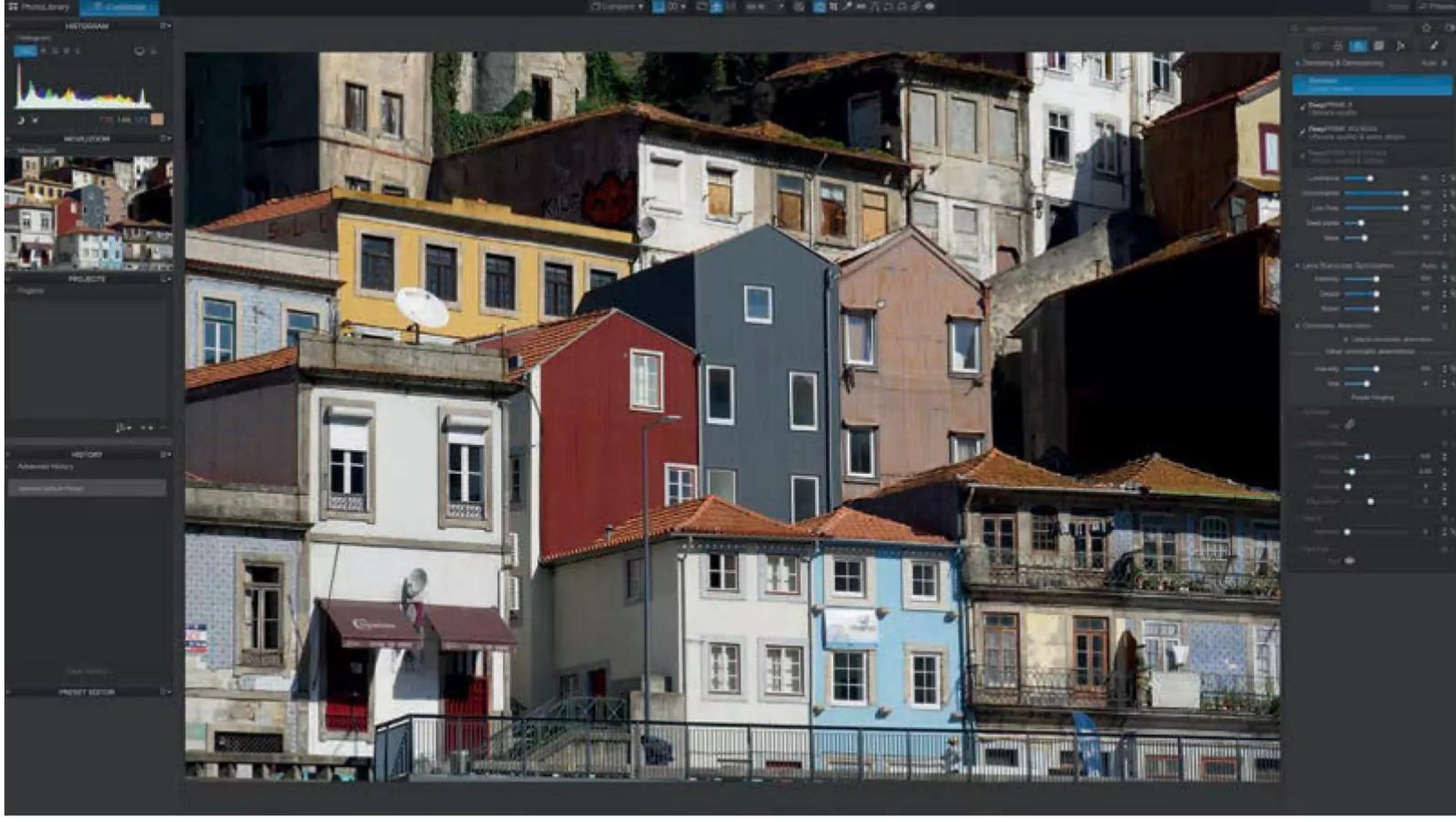


PhotoLab 9 introduces AI masking, which offers automatic selections, area selections and object recognition, including animals



Your worst gear benefits the most!

If you have one of the latest camera models and invest in the best lenses, you might not see a whole lot of improvement from processing your raw files in DxO PhotoLab. However, if you have older or cheaper gear it's a different story, because this is where PhotoLab and DxO's DeepPRIME processing can make the most difference. Here's a picture taken with an old Canon EOS 400D being used with a Tamron 28-300mm superzoom – both distinctly average performers. But with PhotoLab's correction modules and DeepPRIME processing, its raw files are transformed. PhotoLab can make your old images look better than they ever did at the time.



Many consumer-level lenses lose sharpness at the edges of the frame but DxO's correction modules are developed to counteract this on a specific lens-by-lens basis

(XD – eXtra Detail) for the 'most challenging' raw files and DeepPRIME XD3 X-Trans for the unique colour filter layout in Fujifilm X-Trans cameras.

PhotoLab also has DeepPRIME 3 for 'ultimate quality' with regular Bayer sensors, and this is where it gets a little confusing – which is better, XD2s or XD3? DxO doesn't make this very clear and, to be honest, it's hard to see much difference in the results.

On top of this, DeepPRIME processing is not instantaneous. It can now use dedicated GPU processing on computers where this is available, but it still takes a few seconds. If your computer is fast enough you can see a whole-screen preview, but otherwise you need to use a smaller floating preview window. Every generation is faster, though (including computers), so hopefully we'll get to a point where the processing is instantaneous and seamless.

It's worth it, though. DxO's DeepPRIME processing still produces the best combination of noise reduction and detail enhancement of any AI noise reduction processs I've tried yet. What it can do with noisy high-ISO images is just astonishing.

Local adjustments

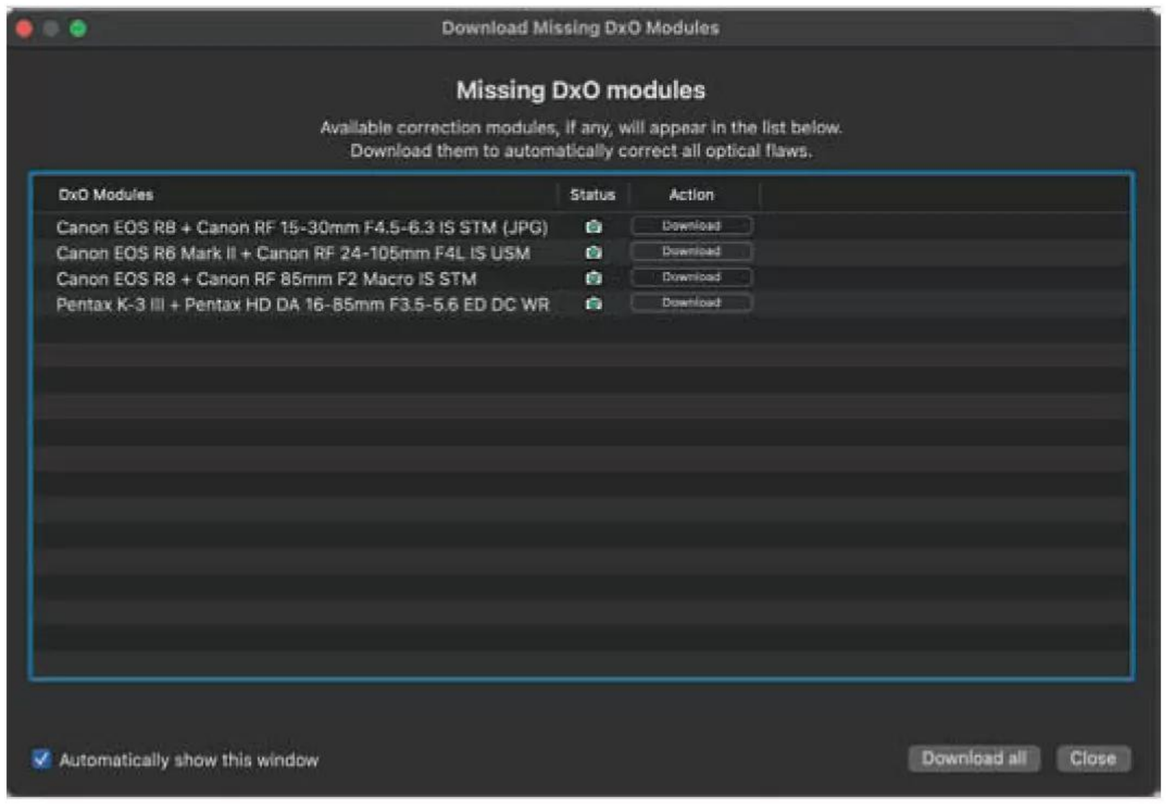
PhotoLab isn't just a tool for lens corrections and noise reduction. It's also a fully fledged photo editor complete with a powerful set of local adjustment tools. It doesn't offer the layers of Photoshop or Canva Affinity, but for anyone working on single photographs rather than elaborate composites, it has everything you need.

The local adjustment tools include some DxO specialities. Using Control Points, for example, you can click on a spot in a photo to create a circular adjustment mask that targets just those specific tones. It's an unusual way to select areas of a photo but once you're used to it, it's very fast, very selective and very effective.

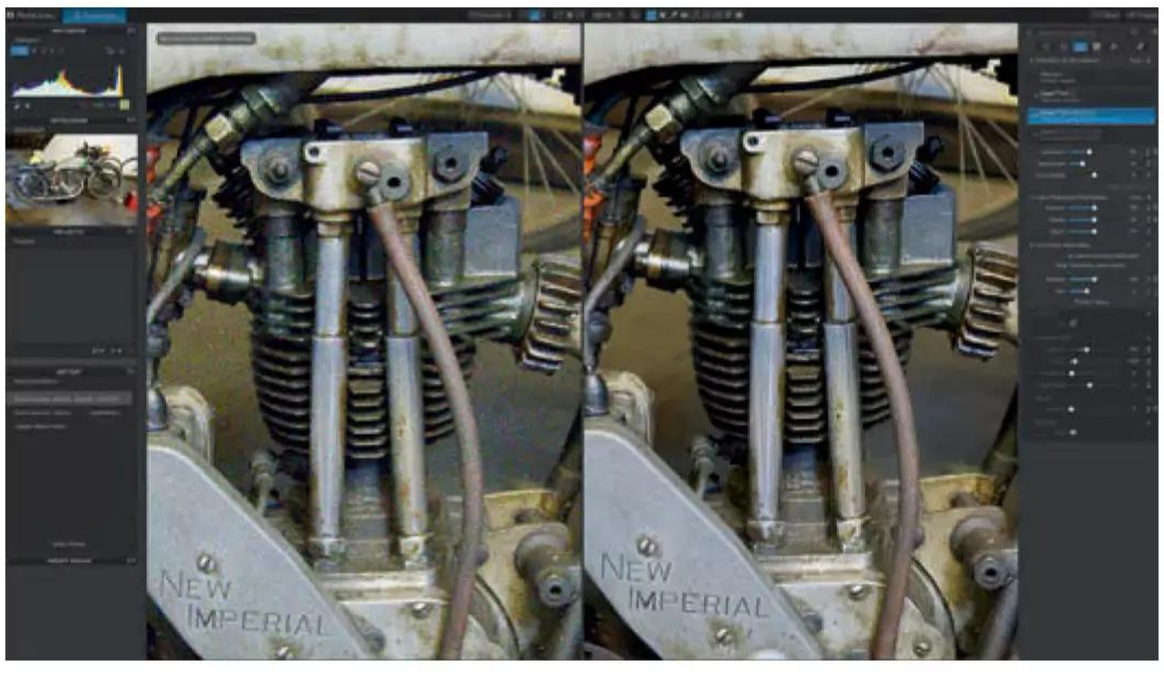
PhotoLab also has regular gradient and brush masking tools. These are useful for broad, subtle adjustments – the Brush tools can be used with or without auto-masking – and the gradient mask tool is very effective for controlling bright skies in outdoor shots. If you're working with raw files, it can recover a lot of highlight detail in bright skies, for example.

PhotoLab has a further, unique adjustment called a Control Line. The name is not that helpful, to be honest, as it doesn't have anything to do with lines. Instead, you can think of this as a linear gradient tool with an eyedropper. The eyedropper is used to select the range of tones for masking, so you could use this in a landscape shot, for example, where the sky is bright but there are trees and buildings against the sky that you want to protect from adjustment.

On top of that, PhotoLab offers Luminosity Mask and Hue Mask options too, but the main news with PhotoLab 9 is the inclusion of new AI masking tools. We've seen these before in programs like Lightroom or ON1 Photo RAW, so their inclusion in PhotoLab 9 feels like it's brought DxO's



DxO is constantly developing new correction modules as new cameras and lenses are released, and will automatically prompt you to download any you don't yet have



Just how good is DxO DeepPRIME?

This is a raw image taken at ISO 12,800 on a Sony A7R II. That's a big ask of a camera of that age and resolution at such a high setting, and the uncorrected image on the left displays a lot of noise and lacks detail. In fairness, PhotoLab shows a totally uncorrected 'before' image, so it's a slightly exaggerated comparison. Neverthless, the corrected image on the right shows no noise at all and remarkable fine detail that's just not apparent in the original. DxO's DeepPRIME result shows no horrible smoothing effects, no obvious AI artefacts and even restores colour and contrast. It has its limits, as here it doesn't quite know what to do with the defocused bicycle spokes in the background, but it's pretty exceptional nonetheless (and this is at 200% magnification).

software right up to date.

The AI masks come in three main modes – a selection mode, an area mode and a named object type mode. With the selection mode you simply move the mouse cursor over the photo and it will highlight recognised objects as the pointer passes over them. You just click on an object to create a mask. The area mode works a little differently. Here, you drag a rectangular marquee around the object you want to select and the AI will identify and mask the object within that marquee. Sometimes selection mode works best, sometimes the area mode will give a better result.

With the predefined mask option, you use a pop-up menu to choose an object type to look for, such as skies, main subjects, backgrounds, vehicles, people, hair or clothes, and the software will then use AI to look for corresponding objects and create a mask.

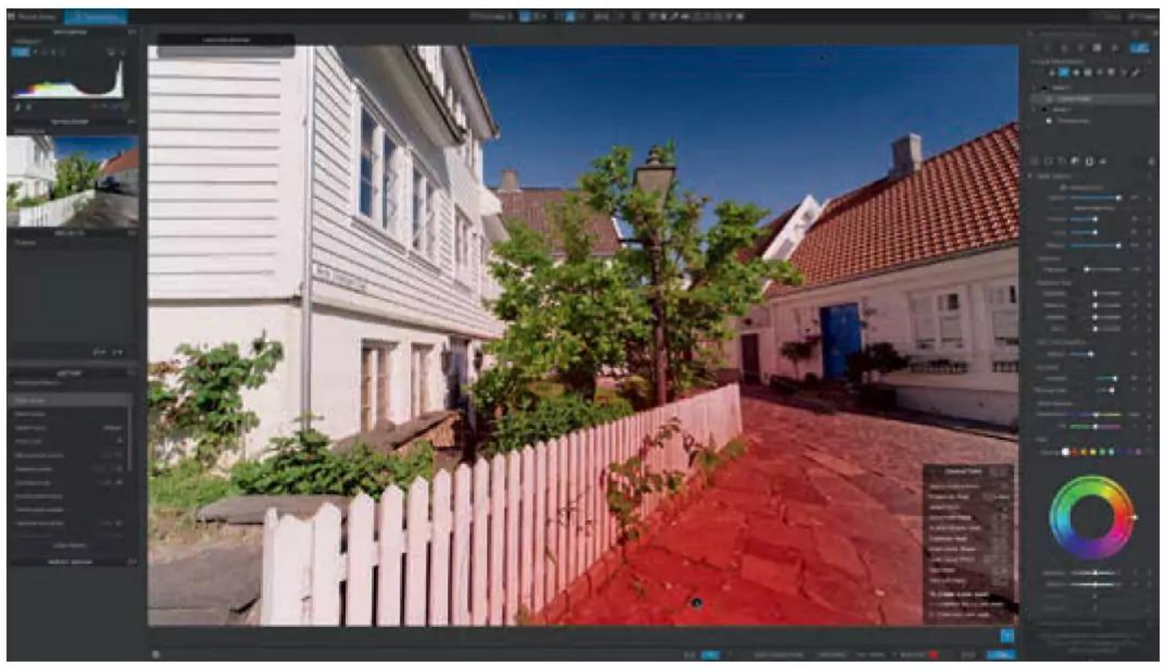
It all works really well. It's the first time AI masking has appeared in PhotoLab, but DxO has really hit the ground running. The selection and area modes have '+' and '-' options for adding to or removing areas from the mask, and PhotoLab's masking tools now support 'submasks' so that you can combine different masks for even more precise adjustments. This does start to get a little complicated, but it's not essential to getting great results – it's just another level of refinement, in case you need it.

Non-destructive editing

All of this happens within PhotoLab's non-destructive editing workflow, and it's important to understand how this works. PhotoLab does not create new versions of your photos. These remain unaltered on your computer. When you make your adjustments it simply changes the appearance of your photos within PhotoLab to reflect these changes.

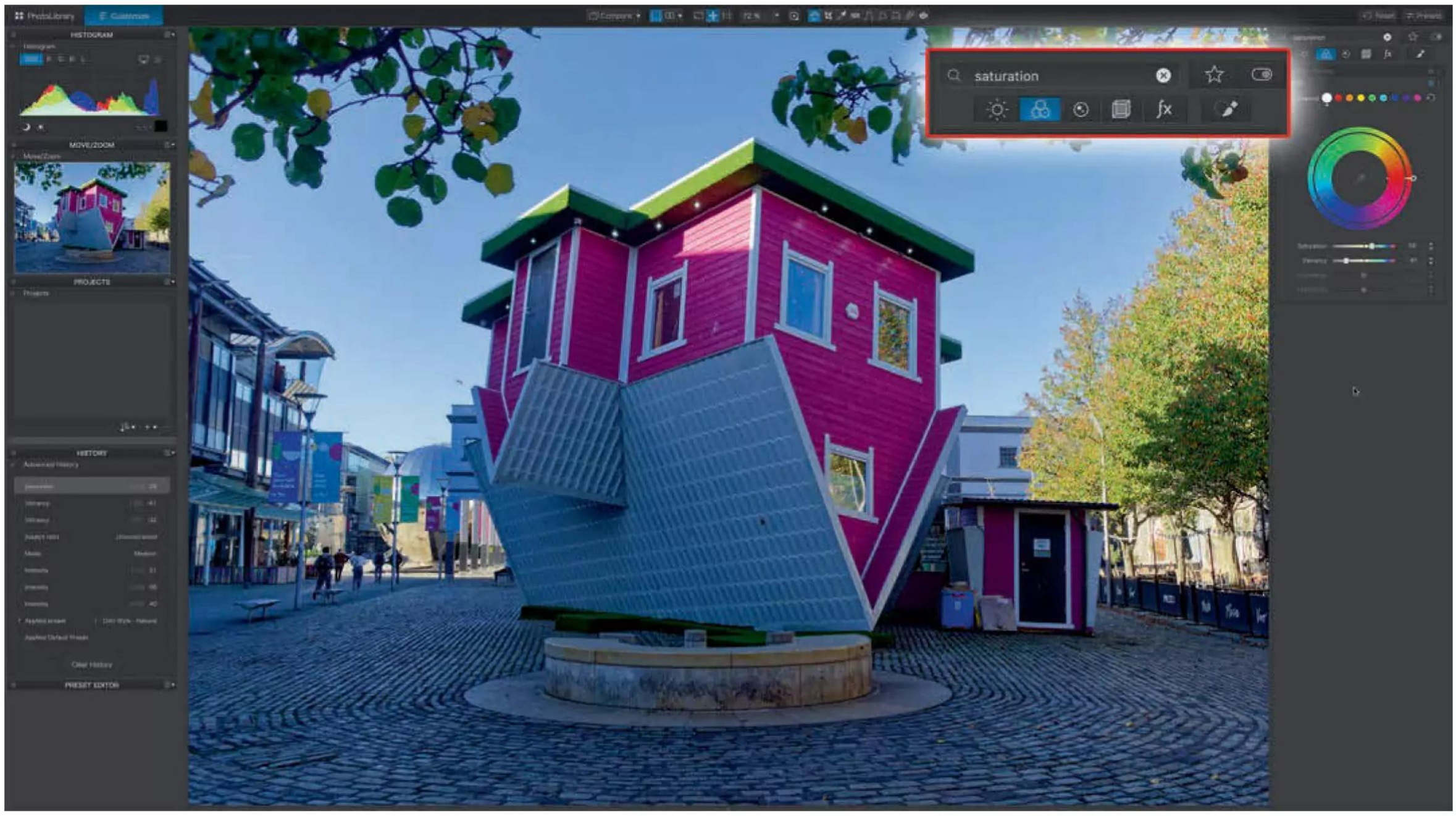
These changes are not permanent. In fact, they are stored as processing metadata (instructions) within files stored alongside your images, with the same filename but a .dop extension. If you're ever browsing your images in Windows Explorer or the macOS Finder and see these .dop files, don't delete them or move them. If you do, your original image will still be safe, but any adjustments you've made in PhotoLab will be lost.

In fact, if you want to make permanent, edited versions of your photos you must use PhotoLab's Export option to save them as new JPEG or

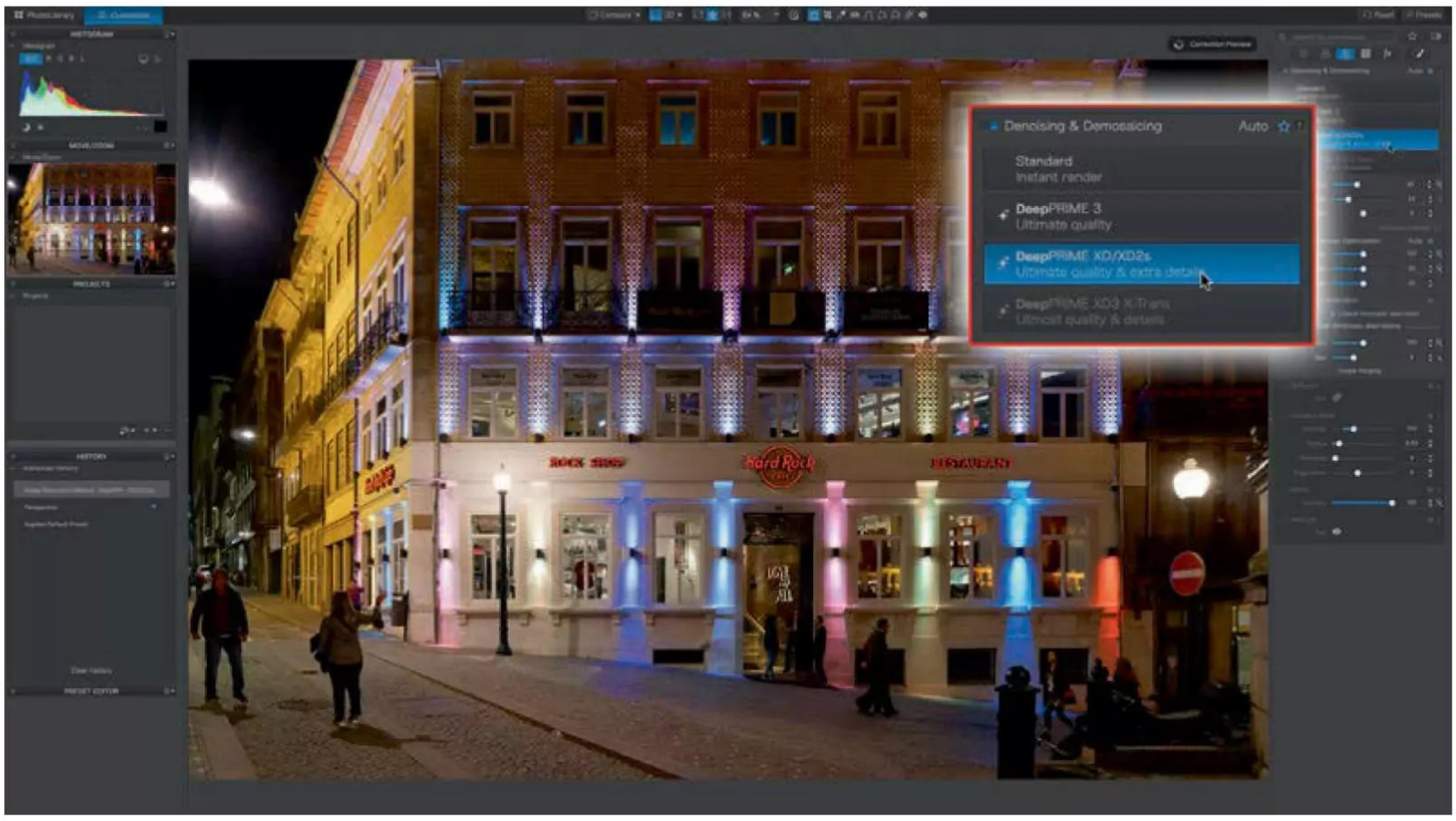


Control Lines and Control Points

AI masking is one of the latest features in DxO PhotoLab 9, but it's not the only way to apply local adjustments. AI masks can be fast and effective, but they can also leave gaps and edge artefacts, and sometimes regular, non-AI masking works better. Here, I've used a Control Line to darken the blue sky without affecting the wooden buildings, and I'm setting up a Control Point adjustment to emphasise the texture of the flagstone pavement in the foreground. Control Points have been around for a long time in DxO software, and you'll also find them throughout the DxO Nik Collection too.



PhotoLab offers easy corrections but the tools quickly get technical when you dive deeper. However, there is a neat tool search box to help you find the one you want!



DxO's DeepPRIME processing technology will make you rethink your camera's low-light capabilities, but it can only be used on raw files

TIFF files. It's the same with any non-destructive photo editor, including Lightroom.

This non-destructive workflow does bring major advantages. It means you can revisit and re-do any adjustments you've made to photos, at any time in the future. It also means you can create 'virtual copies' to try out different processing or editing styles. These virtual copies use the same original image file, so you can create as many as you like without duplicating actual photos.

PhotoLibrary window

PhotoLab doesn't stop at photo editing. It also has its own integral PhotoLibrary view for browsing and searching your photos. Be aware, though, that it's not exactly a Lightroom alternative. DxO takes a more basic approach to organisation that may nevertheless suit the way you work. There's no 'import' process and images are shown 'live' in folders, but there are some quirks and limitations too.

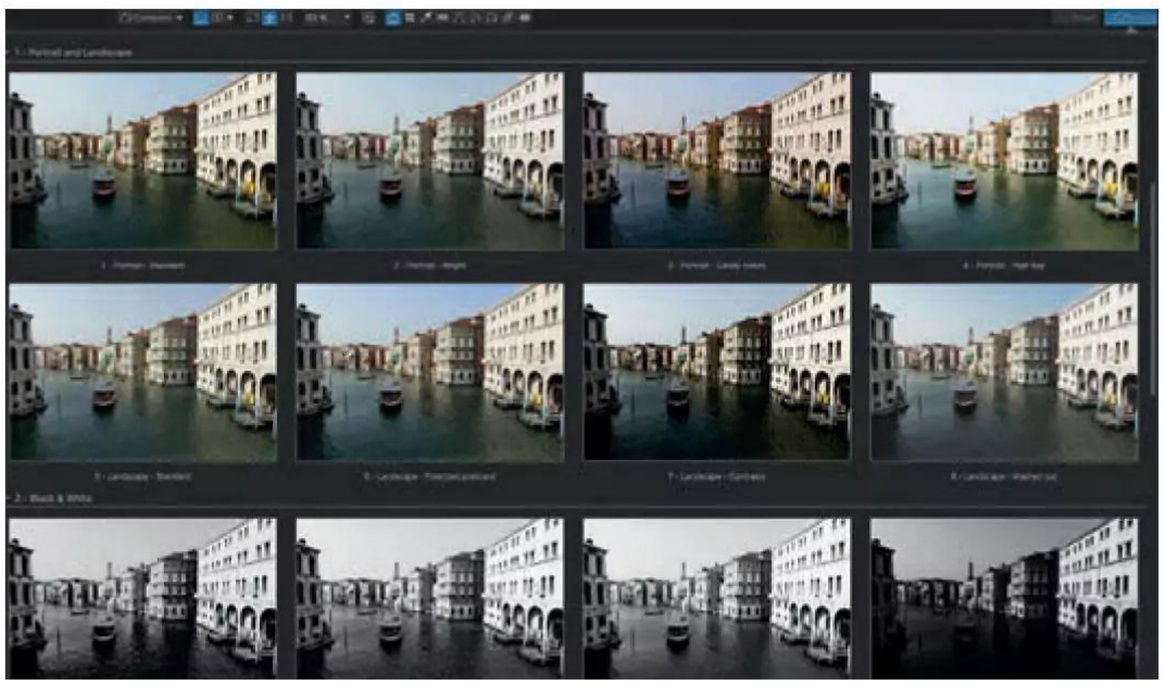
The PhotoLibrary view is very effective for anyone who uses a folder system for their organisational structure. Folders have limitations for organisation, though, because images can of course only be in one folder at a time. If you want to organise images by theme, you'll often be in a situation where photos match more than one theme. For example, if you come back with a set of images from a ski holiday, you might want them to be in a 'travel' album, a 'winter' album, a 'sports' album and more.

This is why many photo organisers offer 'albums', or 'Collections' as they are called in Lightroom. A photo can only be in one folder at a time, but it can be in as many different albums as you like.

PhotoLab's PhotoLibrary window can do this too – it calls these 'projects' but the principle is the same. You can even nest projects in a hierarchy within 'project groups'. The only thing is, PhotoLab's projects are hidden away in a cramped little panel at the bottom of the left sidebar. They're not very prominent and not very accessible.

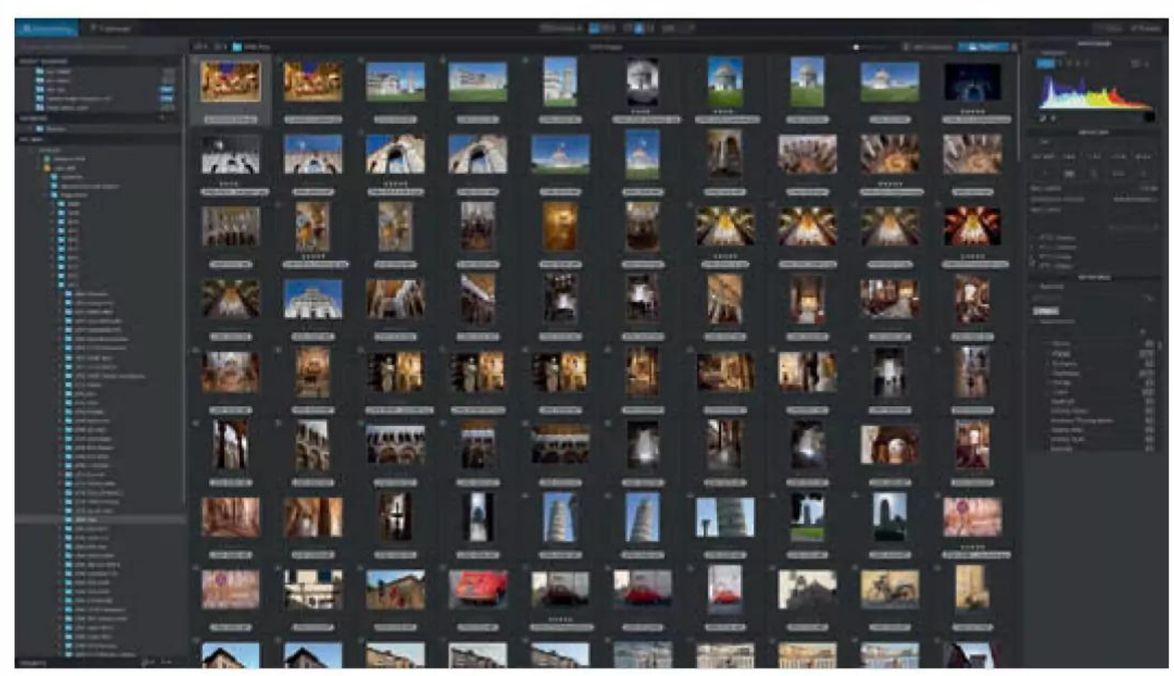
PhotoLab has a search feature which is very clever but has quirks of its own. It searches as you type, offering suggestions from your photos' filenames, keywords and EXIF (shooting) data. It's fast and really rather innovative, but you don't have any control over where it searches. Basically, any folder you've browsed becomes part of the PhotoLibrary index, even those you might prefer to exclude. On top of that, if you search for a particularly common item, such as a specific ISO setting, PhotoLab will display some of them but then a message saying 'Too many images to be displayed. Please add some more search criteria!', which isn't especially helpful.

PhotoLab's PhotoLibrary feature is definitely worth having, but its design and behaviour feel somewhat unfinished. It's useful on a basic level, but it's no Lightroom beater. AP



PhotoLab presets

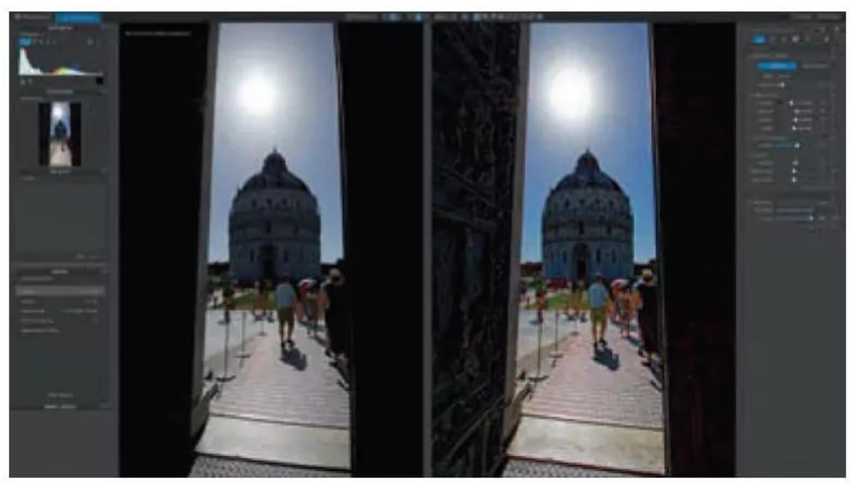
You don't necessarily need to dive deep into PhotoLab's manual adjustments to get instant image 'looks', because it comes with a range of presets accessed by a button in the top right corner. This displays a pop-up panel of presets, all previewed using the image you're working on and arranged in categories. There aren't a huge number, but it's enough to get you started – especially since you can create and save your own based on your own edits and adjustments. If you have DxO FilmPack installed too, this panel will display some of its 'designer' presets too. If it's preset image effects you're after, though, you're really better off with the DxO Nik Collection.



The PhotoLibrary window is useful but perhaps not PhotoLab's best feature. It offers 'projects' but they are squashed into a tiny panel, and its search tool has some weird quirks

PhotoLab is an excellent tool for black & white as well as colour. You can use virtual copies to try out different variations and each image preserves its editing history

ClearView Plus is one of DxO's secret weapons for outdoor photography. It adds contrast while levelling up bright skies and darker foregrounds



PhotoLab 9's Smart Lighting and Selective Tone tools make it easy to extract every ounce of shadow and highlight detail from your raw files

How does DxO FilmPack fit in?

DxO FilmPack is a separate product and you don't need it to use DxO PhotoLab. However, if you do install FilmPack, it becomes integrated with the PhotoLab interface in a way that gives you all the retro analogue effects of FilmPack but in PhotoLab's non-destructive workflow. For this shot of a Bristol 4-ton truck from the 1920s I've used the FilmPack Time machine feature to select an appropriate image style from the period and added a vignette blur to subdue the background – these options are not available in PhotoLab without FilmPack. It's a purely optional add-on and adds to the expense, but it does take PhotoLab in a whole new direction for those who are interested in old-school photography.

Verdict

Amateur Photographer Testbench Recommended ★★★★½

PHOTOLAB 9 is an excellent tool for anyone who wants to get the very best image quality from their raw files. Many programs offer automatic lens corrections, but DxO's go further with tailored global and edge softness corrections as well as the usual distortion, chromatic aberration and vignetting correction. The basic raw processing is already among the best, but DxO's DeepPRIME processing works a special kind of magic on high-ISO shots which I think has yet to be surpassed.

It's also a very accomplished photo editor, with powerful and precise image enhancement tools and a range of masking tools which now includes very effective AI masking options. PhotoLab can't do Photoshop-style layered montages, but it can do everthing else, and to a very high standard.

But while it carries out lens corrections and basic image optimisation automatically, it's not exactly a program for beginners. There are a lot of quite technical adjustments that need some experience to use properly. This is a program that's best suited to more experienced photo editors, who are willing to put some time into their work.

And while the PhotoLibrary window is effective enough at helping you browse your photos, its quirky approach to searches and lacklustre implementation of projects is disappointing. PhotoLab is a great program as long as you're not expecting it to organise your images like Lightroom.

For and against

- ✚ Excellent lens corrections
- ✚ Superb DeepPRIME processing
- ✚ Powerful local adjustment tools
- ✚ Perpetual one-off licence
- ➖ Quite expensive
- ➖ Technical in places
- ➖ PhotoLibrary quirks

Valdis Kundzinš, Latvia

Meet our GuruShots winners

AP showcases the very best images sent in by GuruShots users on the theme of Your Magazine Shot

GuruShots, the organisers of the world's greatest photography games and communities, recently challenged its users to send in their best images on the theme of Your Magazine Shot. *Amateur Photographer* is partnering with GuruShots and we are now pleased to publish the 18 highest ranked photographs by those who entered. Also, remember that you can view every single image that made it into the Top 500 at amateurphotographer.com

For more inspiring challenges to improve your photo skills and stay motivated, see **gurushots.com**

Cristian Ferro, Italy

Grzegorz Truchanowicz, Poland

Sayo Nara, Japan

Emi Manolova, Bulgaria

Unnamed, Belgium

Will, United States

Ivan Miksik, Czech Republic

Bryony Herrod-Taylor, United Kingdom

Jamil Badalov, Azerbaijan

Kai T Støyva, Norway

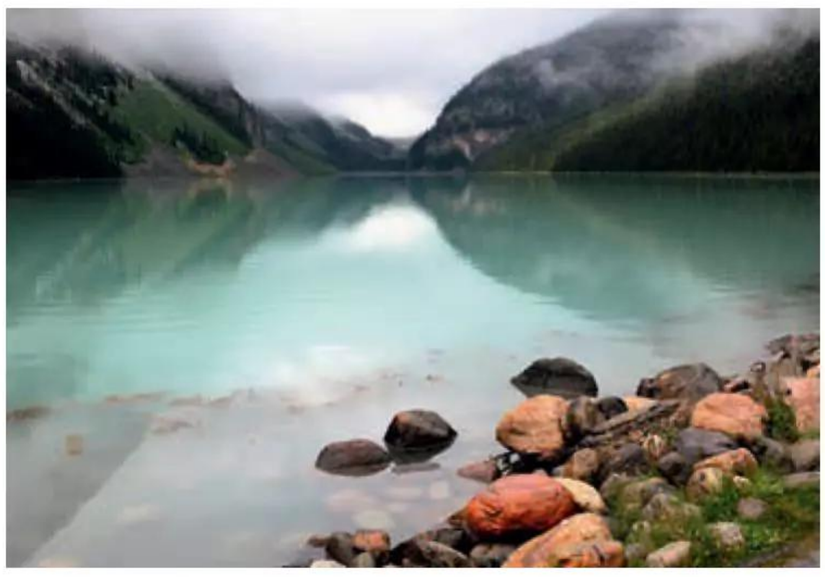
Tony HH, Great Britain (UK)

Sladek, Austria

James Farley, United States

Radek Matouš, Czechia

Walt M, United States


Bill Chilcott, Australia

Jimmy Bailey, United States

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Buying Guide

452 lenses listed & rated

Our comprehensive listing of key specifications for mirrorless lenses

Lenses

Interchangeable lenses come in a huge array of types for shooting different kinds of subjects

IN GENERAL, the easiest way to expand the kinds of pictures you can take is by buying different types of lenses. For example, telephoto lenses let you zoom in on distant subjects, while macro lenses enable close-ups of small objects. Large-aperture lenses allow you to isolate subjects against blurred backgrounds, or shoot in low light without having to raise the ISO too high. Meanwhile, all-in-one superzooms cover a wide range of subjects, but usually with rather lower optical quality.

Lens mounts

On the whole, each manufacturer uses its own proprietary lens mount. Notable exceptions are Micro Four Thirds, shared by Olympus and Panasonic, and the full-frame L-mount that's used by Leica, Panasonic and Sigma.

Built-in focus motor

Lenses for mirrorless cameras invariably use built-in motors for autofocus, which are also used for electronic manual focusing. Silent, video-friendly stepper motors are most commonly employed. Manual-focus optics with traditional aperture rings are also widely available.

Filter thread

A thread at the front of the camera will have a diameter, in mm, which will allow you to attach a variety of filters or adapters to the lens.

Maximum aperture

Wider apertures mean you can use faster, motion-stopping shutter speeds.

OUR GUIDE TO THE SUFFIXES USED BY LENS MANUFACTURERS

AF	Nikon AF lenses driven from camera
AF-S	Nikon lenses with Silent Wave Motor
AF-P	Nikon lenses with stepper motors
AL	Pentax lenses with aspheric elements
APD	Fujifilm lenses with apodisation elements
APO	Sigma Apochromatic lenses
ASPH	Aspherical elements
AW	Pentax all-weather lenses
CS	Samyang lenses for APS-C cropped sensors
D	Nikon lenses that communicate distance info
DA	Pentax lenses optimised for APS-C-sized sensors
DC	Nikon defocus-control portrait lenses
DC	Sigma's lenses for APS-C digital
DG	Sigma's designation for full-frame lenses
Di	Tamron lenses for full-frame sensors
Di-II	Tamron lenses designed for APS-C DSLRs
Di-III	Tamron lenses for mirrorless cameras
DN	Sigma's lenses for mirrorless cameras
DO	Canon diffractive optical element lenses
DT	Sony lenses for APS-C-sized sensors
DX	Nikon's lenses for DX-format digital
DS	Canon's Defocus Smoothing technology
E	Nikon lenses with electronic apertures
E	Sony lenses for APS-C mirrorless
ED	Extra-low Dispersion elements
EF	Canon's lenses for full-frame DSLRs
EF-S	Canon's lenses for APS-C DSLRs
EF-M	Canon's lenses for APS-C mirrorless
EX	Sigma's 'Excellent' range
FA	Pentax full-frame lenses
FE	Sony lenses for full-frame mirrorless
G	Nikon lenses without an aperture ring
HSM	Sigma's Hypersonic Motor
IS	Canon's Image-Stabilised lenses
L	Canon's 'Luxury' range of high-end lenses
LD	Low-Dispersion glass
LM	Fujifilm Linear Motor
MP-E	Canon's high-magnification macro lens
OIS	Optical Image Stabilisation
OS	Sigma's Optically Stabilised lenses
PC-E	Nikon tilt-and-shift lenses
PF	Nikon Phase Fresnel optics
PZD	Tamron Piezo Drive focus motor
RF	Canon full-frame mirrorless lenses
S	Nikon's premium lenses for mirrorless
SAM	Sony Smooth Autofocus Motor
SDM	Pentax's Sonic Direct Drive Motor
SMC	Pentax Super Multi Coating
SP	Tamron's Super Performance range
SSM	Sony Supersonic Motor lenses
STF	Sony and Laowa Smooth Trans Focus
STM	Canon lenses with stepper motor
TS-E	Canon Tilt-and-Shift lens
UMC	Ultra Multi Coated
USM	Canon lenses with an Ultrasonic Motor
USD	Tamron Ultrasonic Drive motor
VC	Tamron's Vibration Compensation
VR	Nikon's Vibration Reduction feature
WR	Weather Resistant
Z	Nikon's lenses for mirrorless cameras

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Mirrorless Lenses

LENS	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY	IMAGE STABILISATION	MOUNT: CANON M	CANON RF	MICRO 4 THIRDS	SONY E	NIKON Z	FUJIFILM X	LEICA L	FULL FRAME	MIN FOCUS (CM)	FILTER THREAD (MM)	DIMENSIONS: DIAMETER (MM)	LENGTH (MM)	WEIGHT (G)
CANON MIRRORLESS																	
RF-S 10-18mm f/4.5-6.3 IS STM	£379		Extremely small and lightweight ultra-wide zoom for Canon's APS-C format EOS R mirrorless models	·		·							14	49	69	44.9	150
RF-S 14-30mm f/4-6.3 IS STM PZ	£379		Small and lightweight video-optimised lens with internal powerzoom mechanism	·		·							15	58	69.6	62	181
RF-S 18-45mm f/4.5-6.3 IS STM	£319		Retracting kit zoom designed for the EOS R10; small and lightweight, but offers an uninspiring range	·		·							20	49	69	44.3	130
RF-S 18-150mm f/3.5-6.3 IS STM	£519		General-purpose travel zoom lens for APS-C format RF-mount cameras such as the EOS R7, R10 and R50	·		·							17	55	69	84.5	310
RF-S 55-210mm f/5-7.1 IS STM	£429		Lightweight telephoto zoom for APS-C RF-mount cameras, with decidedly slow maximum aperture	·		·							73	55	69	135	270
RF 10-20mm f/4 L IS STM	£2580		World's widest-angle full-frame rectilinear zoom includes optical stabilisation and weather-sealing	·		·						·	25	n/a	83.7	112	570
RF 14-35mm f/4L IS USM	£1750		High-spec, relatively lightweight ultra-wide zoom that offers 5.5 stops of stabilisation and takes 77mm filters	·		·						·	20	77	84.1	99.8	540
RF 15-30mm f/4.5-6.3 IS STM	£669	4★	Relatively affordable, compact, and lightweight image-stabilised ultra-wideangle zoom	·		·						·	28	67	76.6	88.4	390
RF 15-35mm f/2.8L IS USM	£2330		Premium f/2.8 optic with unusually wide maximum angle of view and optical image stabilisation	·		·						·	28	82	88.5	126.8	840
RF 16mm f/2.8 STM	£320	3★	Small, lightweight ultra-wideangle prime is affordable but has seriously compromised optics			·						·	13	43	69.2	40.1	165
RF 16-28mm f/2.8 IS STM	£1249		Ultra-wideangle zoom with bright aperture and relatively compact, moisture- and dust-resistant design	·		·						·	20	67	76.5	91	445
RF 20mm f/1.4 LVCM	£1919		Premium wideangle hybrid prime with aperture ring, weathersealing, and large maximum aperture			·						·	20	67	76.5	99.3	519
RF 24mm f/1.4 LVCM	£1680		Large aperture wideangle prime in Canon's hybrid range, with aperture ring and weathersealing			·						·	24	67	76.5	99.3	515
RF 24mm f/1.8 IS STM Macro	£719	4.5★	Bright wideangle prime with optical stabilisation and close focusing that gives half life-size magnification	·		·						·	14	52	74.4	63.1	270
RF 24-50mm f/4.5-6.3 IS STM	£379	4★	Compact, retractable full-frame kit zoom designed for the EOS R8	·		·						·	30	58	69.6	58	210
RF 24-70mm f/2.8L IS USM	£2330		Image-stabilised, large-aperture, standard zoom for Canon's full-frame mirrorless EOS R system	·		·						·	38	82	88.5	127.7	900
RF 24-105mm f/4L IS STM	£1120		General-purpose standard zoom with useful range and image stabilisation	·		·						·	45	77	83.5	107.3	700
RF 24-105mm f/4-7.1 IS STM	£460	4.5★	Designed to be an ultra-compact and lightweight kit zoom, with an unusual 'Centre Focus Macro' option	·		·						·	34	67	76.6	88.8	395
RF 24-240mm f/4-6.3 IS USM	£800	4★	Very respectable all-in-one travel zoom with fast AF and effective IS that's well-matched to the EOS RP	·		·						·	50	72	80.4	122.5	750
RF 28mm f/2.8 STM	£345		Slimline, lightweight 'pancake' prime that's equally well suited to APS-C and full-frame cameras			·						·	23	55	69.2	24.7	120
RF 28-70mm f/2L USM	£3050		Groundbreaking, but huge, full-frame zoom with constant f/2 maximum aperture			·						·	39	95	103.8	139.8	1430
RF 28-70mm f/2.8 IS STM	£1250		Smaller, more affordable alternative to RF 24-70mm f/2.8L is designed to be an upgrade over kit zooms	·		·						·	28	67	76.5	92.2	490
RF 35mm f/1.4 LVCM	£1819		Premium 'hybrid' lens with built-in aperture ring and Canon's first Voice Coil Motor for autofocus			·						·	28	67	76.5	99.3	555
RF 35mm f/1.8 IS STM Macro	£520		Multi-purpose fast prime that includes image stabilisation and 0.5x macro reproduction	·		·						·	17	52	74.4	62.8	305
RF 45mm f/1.2 STM	£479		Ultra-large aperture standard prime that's surprisingly small and light, and comes at a remarkably low price			·						·	45	67	78	75	346
RF 50mm f/1.2L USM	£2350		Heavyweight ultra-fast standard prime that promises exceptional low-light performance			·						·	80	77	89.8	108	950
RF 50mm f/1.4 LVCM	£1540		Classic professional-spec large aperture standard prime, with hybrid design including an aperture ring			·						·	40	67	76.5	99.3	580
RF 50mm f/1.8 STM	£220	4.5★	Compact, lightweight standard prime uses new mirrorless-optimised optics, including an aspherical element			·						·	30	43	69.2	40.5	160
RF 70-200mm f/2.8L IS USM	£2700	5★	High-end constant maximum aperture telephoto zoom with unconventional extending barrel design	·		·						·	70	77	89.9	146	1070
RF 70-200mm f/4L IS USM	£1700		Small and light weather-sealed telephoto zoom promises premium optics	·		·						·	60	77	83.5	119	695
RF 75-300mm F4-5.6	£289	3★	Extremely affordable telephoto zoom, but uses an outdated optical design and has no stabilisation			·						·	150	58	71.2	146.1	507
RF 85mm f/1.2L USM	£2800		Top-of-the-line, ultra-large aperture, short telephoto portrait prime for full-frame mirrorless			·						·	85	82	103.2	117.3	1195
RF 85mm f/1.4L VCM	£1680	4.5★	Pro-spec short-telephoto portrait lens designed for both stills and video use, with an aperture ring			·						·	75	67	76.5	99.3	636
RF 85mm f/2 Macro IS STM	£650		Relatively compact, lightweight image-stabilised short-telephoto that offers half life-size magnification	·		·						·	35	67	78	91	500
RF 100mm f/2.8 L Macro IS USM	£1480	5★	Superb macro lens with 1.4x magnification and spherical aberration control dial for smoothing blur	·		·						·	26	67	81.5	148	730
RF 100-400mm f/5.6-8 IS USM	£700	4★	Long telephoto zoom that's surprisingly compact, lightweight and affordable due to its small aperture	·		·						·	88	67	79.5	164.7	635
RF 100-500mm f/4.5-7.1L IS USM	£2900	4.5★	Premium ultra-telephoto zoom that's barely any larger than its 100-400mm DSLR counterpart	·		·						·	90	77	94	208	1530
RF 135mm f/1.8 L IS USM	£2560		High-end large-aperture portrait prime boasting optical stabilisation and weather-sealed construction	·		·						·	70	82	89.2	130.3	935
RF 200-800mm f/6.3-9 IS STM	£2300	4★	Ultra-telephoto zoom for full-frame cameras with weather-sealing and relatively manageable size	·		·						·	80	95	102.3	314.1	2050
RF 600mm f/11 IS STM	£700		Remarkable lightweight ultra-telephoto that employs diffractive optics and a collapsible barrel	·		·						·	450	82	93	200	930
RF 800mm f/11 IS STM	£930		Similar design to its 600mm sibling makes it easily the smallest and most affordable 800mm prime	·		·						·	600	95	102	282	1260
FUJIFILM MIRRORLESS																	
XF 8mm F3.5 R WR	£799		Extremely compact, weather-resistant, ultra-wideangle prime, accepts 62mm filters							·			18	62	68	52.8	215
XF 8-16mm F2.8 R LM WR	£1799		Premium ultra-wideangle large-aperture zoom lens with weather-resistant construction							·			25	n/a	88	121.5	805
XF 10-24mm F4 R OIS WR	£899	4.5★	Updated wideangle zoom lens with weather resistance and improved stabilisation that gives fine results	·						·			24	72	77.6	87	385
XC 13-33mm F3.5-5.3 OIS	£329		Lightweight standard zoom lens, with unusually wideangle view and mechanical zoom operation	·						·			20	49	61.9	37.5	125
XF 14mm F2.8 R	£729	5★	Wideangle prime with high resolution into the corners, its performance justifies the price tag							·			18	58	65	58.4	235
XC 15-45mm F3.5-5.6 OIS PZ	£259		Lightweight retractable power zoom that's set to be the entry-level kit lens for X-system cameras	·						·			13	52	62.6	44.2	135
XF 16mm F1.4 R WR	£729	5★	Weather-sealed fast prime for X-system users							·			15	67	73.4	73	375
XF 16mm F2.8 R WR	£349	4.5★	Attractively priced, weather-sealed, compact and lightweight wideangle prime							·			17	49	60	45.4	155
XF 16-50mm F2.8-4.8 R LM WR	£699		Compact and lightweight standard zoom with premium optics and weathersealed construction							·			24	58	65	71.4	240
XF 16-55mm F2.8 R LM WR II	£1149		Updated premium standard zoom that's considerably smaller and lighter than its predecessor							·			30	72	78.3	95	410
XF 16-80mm F4 R WR OIS	£769	4.5★	Good-quality weather-sealed, constant maximum aperture zoom with a useful focal-length range	·						·			35	72	78.3	88.9	440
XF 18mm F1.4 R LM WR	£879	5★	Large-aperture wideangle prime with weather-resistant construction							·			20	62	68.8	75.6	370
XF 18mm F2 R	£430	4★	A compact wideangle lens with a quick aperture							·			18	52	64.5	40.6	116
XF 18-120mm F4 LM PZ WR	£899	3.5★	Optimised for both video and stills use, with a power zoom mechanism that operates internally							·			60	72	77.3	123.5	460
XF 18-135mm F3.5-5.6 R LM OIS WR	£699	4★	Weather-resistant zoom for Fujifilm X mount, designed to be the perfect partner for Fujifilm X-T series cameras	·						·			45	77	75.7	97.8	490
XF 23mm F1.4 R LM WR	£819	5★	Replaces the older XF 23mm f/1.4 with updated optics, faster autofocus and a weather-resistant design							·			19	58	67	77.8	375
XF 23mm F2 R WR	£419	5★	Compact weather-resistant wideangle prime lens							·			22	43	60	51.9	180
XF 23mm F2.8 R WR	£399	4.5★	Ultra-small, weather-resistant pancake prime with 35mm equivalent view							·			20	39	61.8	23	90
XF 27mm F2.8 R WR	£419	4.5★	Slimline, lightweight pancake prime with aperture ring and weather-resistant construction							·			34	39	62	23	84
XF 30mm F2.8 R LM WR Macro	£599	4.5★	Relatively compact and affordable macro lens offering internal focus and 1:1 magnification							·			10	43	60	69.5	195
XF 33mm F1.4 R LM WR	£619		Designed to complement the smaller, cheaper 35mm f/1.4, with quicker autofocus and weather-sealing							·			30	58	67	73.5	360
XF 35mm F1.4 R	£439	4★	Shallow depth of field and bokeh effects are simple to achieve with this lens							·			28	52	65	54.9	187
XF 35mm F2 R WR	£299	5★	A powerful and weather-resistant lens that feels great and has the performance to match							·			35	43	60	45.9	170
XC 35mm F2	£169	4.5★	Simplified version of the 35mm f/2, with plastic construction and no weather-sealing or aperture ring							·			35	43	58.4	46.5	130
XF 50mm F1 R WR	£1499		The world's fastest autofocus lens promises to be a very special optic for portrait photography							·			70	77	87	103.5	845
XF 50mm F2 R WR	£449	5★	Lightweight weather-resistant short telephoto prime lens that's ideal for shooting portraits							·			39	46	60	59.4	200
XF 50-140mm F2.8 R LM OIS WR	£1249		A telephoto zoom with a constant maximum aperture and weather-resistance	·						·			100	72	82.9	175.9	995
XC 50-230mm F4.5-6.7 OIS II	£315		Entry-level telephoto zoom with optical image stabilisation, but no aperture ring or weather resistance	·						·			110	58	69.5	111	375
XF 55-200mm F3.5-4.8 R LM OIS	£599	4★	Telephoto with built-in optical image stabilisation plus aperture control ring	·						·			110	62	75	118	580
XF 56mm F1.2 R WR	£999	4.5★	Large-aperture short-telephoto portrait prime with high quality optics and weather-sealing							·			50	67	79.4	76	454
XF 60mm F2.4 XF R Macro	£599		A short lens designed for macro work with half-life-size magnification							·			26.7	39	64.1	70.9	215
XF 70-300mm F4-5.6 R LM OIS WR	£729	5★	Lightweight weather-sealed telezoom that's compatible with 1.4x and 2x teleconverters for greater reach	·						·			83	67	75	132.5	580
XF 80mm F2.8 R LM OIS WR Macro	£1249	4★	Fujifilm's long-awaited 1:1 macro includes weather-resistance and optical image stabilisation	·						·			25	62	80	130	750
XF 90mm F2 R LM WR	£699	5★	A classic portrait lens that's sharp, with gorgeous bokeh							·			60	62	75	105	540
XF 100-400mm F4.5-5.6 R LM OIS WR	£1399	5★	This superb zoom is both water and dust resistant, and can operate in -10°C temperatures	·						·			175	77	94.8	210.5	1375
XF 150-600mm F5.6-8 R LM OIS WR	£1899	4.5★	Long telephoto zoom that employs a small maximum aperture to keep the size and weight low	·						·			240	82	99	314.5	1605
XF 500mm F5.6 R LM OIS WR	£2899		Pro-spec super-telephoto prime that gives 750mm equivalent view and is compatible with teleconverters	·						·			275	95	104.5	255.5	1335

ALL PRICES ARE RRPS, STREET PRICES MAY VARY

Mirrorless Lenses

LENS	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY	IMAGE STABILISATION	CANON M	CANON RF	MICRO 4 THIRDS	SONY E	NIKON Z	FUJIFILM X	LEICA L	FULL FRAME	MIN FOCUS (CM)	FILTER THREAD (MM)	DIAMETER (MM)	LENGTH (MM)	WEIGHT (G)
				MOUNT											DIMENSIONS		
LAOWA MIRRORLESS																	
6mm F2 Zero-D MFT	£519		Widest-angle rectilinear lens available for Micro Four Thirds cameras, yet still remarkably small				·						9	58	61	52	188
7.5mm f/2 MFT	£499	4.5★	Tiny but sharp wideangle prime for Micro Four Thirds featuring manual focus and aperture control				·						12	46	50	55	170
10mm f/2 Zero-D MFT	£399	4.5★	Tiny, sharp wide prime for Micro Four Thirds with manual focus and auto aperture control from the camera				·						12	46	54	41	125
17mm f/1.8 MFT	£189		Inexpensive compact prime for Micro Four Thirds cameras with manual focus and aperture operation				·						15	46	55	50	160
18mm f/0.95 APO MFT Argus	£519		Ultra-large aperture, manual focus prime, designed for Micro Four Thirds only				·						20	62	80	83	500
25mm f/0.95 APO MFT Argus	£399		Manual-focus standard prime for Micro Four Thirds with ultra-large aperture at an affordable price				·						25	62	71	86	570
50mm f/2.8 2x Ultra Macro APO MFT	£409		Macro lens for Micro Four Thirds with manual focus, electronic aperture setting and 2x magnification				·						13.6	49	53.5	79	240
4mm f/2.8 Fisheye	£249		Lightweight fisheye lens for APS-C and Micro Four Thirds offering a circular image with a 210° angle of view				·	·		·			8	n/a	45.2	25.5	135
8-16mm f/3.5-5 CF	£579		Ultra-wideangle zoom for APS-C cameras provides 12-24mm equivalent view at an affordable price		·			·	·	·			20	86	88.4	88.5	463
9mm f/2.8 Zero-D	£499		Compact manual-focus prime for APS-C mirrorless cameras promises very low distortion		·		·	·		·			12	49	60	53	215
10mm f/4 Cookie	£339	4★	Slim, lightweight and affordable ultra-wideangle prime for APS-C offers decent optics			·		·	·	·	·		10	37	59.8	25	130
25mm f/0.95 CF APO Argus	£649		Ultra-large aperture lens for APS-C cameras with manual focus and aperture control		·	·		·	·	·			34	62	71.5	81	575
33mm f/0.95 CF APO Argus	£499		Ultra-fast manual-focus standard prime for APS-C cameras that promises minimal colour fringing			·		·	·	·			35	62	71.5	83	590
65mm f/2.8 2x Ultra Macro	£409	4.5★	Superb manual-focus macro lens that provides unusually high 2x magnification		·			·		·	·		17	52	57	100	335
9mm f/5.6 FF RL	£869		The world's widest full-frame rectilinear lens is also available in Leica M mount					·	·		·	·	12	n/a	62.4	66	350
10mm f/2.8 Zero-D FF	£839		Ultra-wideangle prime for full-frame cameras; Laowa's first autofocus lens in its E and Z-mount versions			·		·	·		·	·	12	77	82	70.8	420
10-18mm f/4.5-5.6	£899		The world's widest zoom for full-frame mirrorless cameras, with manual focus and aperture control			·		·	·		·	·	15	37	70	90.9	496
11mm f/4.5 FF RL	£769		Compact, lightweight ultra-wideangle rectilinear prime for full-frame mirrorless accepts 62mm filters					·	·		·	·	19	62	63.5	58	254
12mm f/2.8 Lite Zero-D FF	£699		'Zero distortion' ultra-wide prime that comes in 5- or 14-blade aperture versions, with AF in E and Z mounts			·		·	·		·	·	14	72	77	76.5	377
12-24mm f/5.6 FF	£729		Remarkably small and light ultra-wideangle zoom with manual focus and aperture control			·		·	·			·	15	77	69.4	93.6	497
14mm f/4 FF RL	£599		Smallest of a trio of manual-focus ultra-wideangle rectilinear RL primes for full-frame mirrorless			·		·	·		·	·	27	52	58	59	228
15mm f/2 Zero D	£899	4.5★	Manual-focus fast ultra-wideangle prime for full-frame mirrorless cameras, with minimal distortion			·		·	·		·	·	15	72	66	82	500
15mm f/4.5 Zero-D Shift	£1249	4★	The world's widest-angle shift lens offers +/-11mm movement in any direction			·		·	·			·	20	n/a	79	103	597
20mm f/4 Zero-D Shift	£1139		Wideangle shift lens that offers +/-11mm movement and promises zero distortion			·		·	·		·	·	25	82	91	95	747
28mm f/1.2 FF Argus	£669		Manual-focus large-aperture wideangle prime for full-frame mirrorless cameras			·		·	·		·	·	50	62	68.5	106.3	562
35mm f/0.95 FF Argus	£899		Ultra-large aperture manual-focus lens for full-frame mirrorless cameras			·		·	·			·	50	72	76.8	103	755
35mm f/2.8 Zero-D Tilt-Shift 0.5x Macro	£1269	4.5★	Specialist perspective-control macro lens designed for architecture, landscape and product photography			·		·	·		·	·	22.8	77	104.9	148.9	1350
45mm f/0.95 FF Argus	£869		Manual-focus prime lens with an ultra-large maximum aperture, that promises a natural-looking perspective			·		·	·			·	50	72	76.8	110	835
58mm f/2.8 2x Ultra Macro APO	£539		Specially designed for full-frame mirrorless, this manual focus lens provides 2x magnification			·		·	·		·	·	18.5	67	74	117	595
85mm f/5.6 2x Ultra Macro APO	£449	4.5★	Remarkably small and lightweight full-frame macro lens that delivers twice life-size magnification			·		·	·			·	16.3	46	53	81	291
90mm f/2.8 2x Ultra Macro APO	£539		Fully manual macro lens offering twice life-size magnification, designed for full-frame mirrorless			·	·	·	·		·	·	20.5	67	74	120	619
180mm f/4.5 1.5x Ultra Macro APO	£499	4.5★	Unique long telephoto macro includes autofocus to 1.5m and electronic aperture setting in E and Z mounts			·		·	·		·	·	30	62	67.6	134.4	522
200mm f/2 AF FF	£1999		Remarkably affordable large-aperture telephoto lens, also available in Canon EF mount for adapting to RF					·	·			·	150	105	118	174.8	1588
LEICA MIRRORLESS																	
14-24mm f/2.8 Vario-Elmarit-SL Asph	£2220		Ultra-wideangle zoom for Leica's SL full-frame cameras with a large maximum aperture								·	·	28	n/a	85	131	855
24-70mm f/2.8 Vario-Elmarit-SL Asph	£2300		Large aperture standard zoom lens for Leica's full-frame mirrorless cameras								·	·	38	82	88	123	856
28-70mm f/2.8 Vario-Elmarit-SL Asph	£1650		Leica's smallest, lightest and most affordable zoom lens for its full-frame SL mirrorless system								·	·	19	67	73	102	572
35mm f/2 Summicron-SL Asph	£1950		Relatively small and affordable by Leica's standards. Not to be confused with much pricier 35mm f/2 APO								·	·	24	67	74.5	83	400
50mm f/2 Summicron-SL Asph	£1700		Leica's least expensive full-frame L-mount prime is half the weight of the premium APO alternative								·	·	45	67	74.5	83	402
70-200mm f/2.8 Vario-Elmarit-SL Asph	£2780		Optically stabilised and weather-sealed full-frame telephoto zoom, compatible with teleconverters	·							·	·	65	82	89	207	1540
100-400mm f/5-6.3 Vario-Elmar-SL	£1910		Weather-sealed and optically stabilised long telephoto zoom, compatible with 1.4x teleconverter	·							·	·	110	82	198	88	1530
NIKON MIRRORLESS																	
12-28mm f/3.5-5.6 PZ VR Nikkor Z DX	£379	4.5★	Ultra-wideangle lens for Nikon DX-format cameras with power zoom operation	·					·				19	67	72	63.5	205
16-50mm f/2.8 Nikkor DX VR	£778		Lightweight large-aperture standard zoom with optical image stabilisation for DX cameras	·					·				15	67	74.7	88	330
16-50mm f/3.5-6.3 VR Nikkor Z DX	£329		Extremely compact and lightweight retractable kit zoom for Nikon's DX-format mirrorless	·					·				30	46	70	32	135
18-140mm f/3.5-5.6 VR Nikkor Z DX	£599	4★	Small and light all-in-one travel zoom for DX mirrorless cameras, with impressive close-focus capability	·					·				20	62	73	90	315
24mm f/1.7 Nikkor Z DX	£289	4.5★	Compact, lightweight and affordable large-aperture prime for DX-format cameras						·				18	46	70	40	135
35mm f/1.7 Nikkor Z DX MC	£399		Versatile DX macro lens with large aperture, 0.67x magnification, and dust- and drip-resistant design						·				16	52	70	72	220
50-250mm f/4.5-6.3 VR Nikkor Z DX	£379	4.5★	Entry-level telephoto zoom for DX mirrorless featuring retractable barrel design	·					·				100	62	74	110	405
14-24mm f/2.8 S Nikkor Z	£2499	4.5★	Pro-spec weather-sealed wideangle zoom that can use 112mm filters via the included hood						·			·	28	112	88.5	124.5	650
14-30mm f/4 S Nikkor Z	£1349	4.5★	Remarkably compact ultra-wideangle zoom that accepts 82mm screw-in filters						·			·	28	82	89	85	485
17-28mm f/2.8 Nikkor Z	£1199	4.5★	Smaller and more affordable large-aperture ultra-wide alternative to the 14-24mm f/2.8						·			·	19	67	75	101	450
20mm f/1.8 S Nikkor Z	£1049		Weather-sealed large maximum-aperture prime promises ultra-sharp images						·			·	20	77	84.5	108.5	505
24mm f/1.8 S Nikkor Z	£1049	5★	Large-aperture wideangle prime that aims to combine edge-to-edge sharpness with attractive bokeh						·			·	25	72	78	96.5	450
24-50mm f/4-6.3 Nikkor Z	£439		Ultra-compact and lightweight zoom designed to be sold with the entry-level Nikon Z 5						·			·	35	52	73.5	51	195
24-70mm f/2.8 S Nikkor Z	£2199	5★	Superb fast standard zoom includes OLED display and customisable control dial						·			·	38	82	89	126	805
24-70mm f/2.8 S Nikkor Z II	£2599	5★	All-new pro-spec standard zoom with lightweight design, internal zoom, and declickable control dial						·			·	24	77	84	142	675
24-70mm f/4 S Nikkor Z	£999		General-purpose standard zoom for Nikon's full-frame mirrorless system						·			·	30	72	77.5	88.5	500
NEW 24-105mm f/4-7.1 Nikkor Z	£529		Relatively compact and lightweight weather-sealed standard zoom, gives 0.5x magnification for close-ups						·			·	20	67	73.5	106.5	350
24-120mm f/4 S Nikkor Z	£1099	4.5★	Standard zoom for Z-system cameras with extremely useful focal-length range						·			·	35	77	84	118	630
24-200mm f/4-6.3 VR Nikkor Z	£849	4.5★	Billed as the perfect ultra-compact travel zoom lens, with dust- and drip-resistant construction	·					·			·	70	67	76.5	114	570
26mm f/2.8 Nikkor Z	£529	3.5★	Ultra-compact 'pancake' lens, designed for full-frame but also a good fit to DX-format cameras						·			·	20	52	70	23.5	125
28mm f/2.8 Nikkor Z	£249		Inexpensive, compact full-frame prime, also available as an SE version in a kit with the Z fc						·			·	19	52	70	43	155
28-75mm f/2.8 Nikkor Z	£949	4★	Large-aperture standard zoom that's much more compact and affordable than its 24-70mm f/2.8 sibling						·			·	19	67	75	120.5	565
28-400mm f/4-8 VR Nikkor Z	£1400	4★	Longest-range superzoom lens for full-frame cameras, includes weather sealing and optical stabilisation	·					·			·	20	77	84.5	141.5	725
35mm f/1.2 S Nikkor Z	£2899	5★	Pro-spec ultra-large aperture prime with premium optics and weather-sealed construction						·			·	30	82	90	150	1060
35mm f/1.4 Nikkor Z	£649	4★	Relatively affordable and lightweight large-aperture prime lens for full-frame cameras						·			·	27	62	74.5	86.5	415
35mm f/1.8 S Nikkor Z	£849		Fast, moderate-wideangle prime designed for optimum optical performance						·			·	25	62	73	86	370
40mm f/2 Nikkor Z	£249	4.5★	Small, lightweight and affordable standard prime that focuses fast and gives decent image quality						·			·	29	52	70	45.5	170
50mm f/1.2 S Nikkor Z	£2299		Ultra-large aperture weather-sealed standard prime that promises 'elaborate bokeh'						·			·	45	82	89.5	150	1090
50mm f/1.4 Nikkor Z	£499	4★	Relatively affordable and lightweight large-aperture prime lens for full-frame cameras	·					·			·	37	62	74.5	86.5	420
50mm f/1.8 S Nikkor Z	£599		Large-aperture prime that promises exceptional edge-to-edge sharpness						·			·	40	62	76	86.5	415
50mm f/2.8 MC Nikkor Z	£649		Compact, lightweight and relatively affordable macro lens that offers 1:1 magnification						·			·	16	46	74.5	66	260
70-180mm f/2.8 Nikkor Z	£1299	4.5★	Relatively small and lightweight alternative to the Z 70-200mm f/2.8 that's also much more affordable						·			·	27	67	83.5	151	795
70-200mm f/2.8 VR S Nikkor Z	£2399	5★	Pro-spec large-aperture telezoom with optical image stabilisation and built-in OLED display	·					·			·	100	77	89	220	1360
85mm f/1.2 S Nikkor Z	£2999	5★	Pro-spec ultra-large-aperture short telephoto prime designed for portrait photography						·			·	85	82	102.5	141.5	1160
85mm f/1.8 S Nikkor Z	£799	4.5★	Portrait prime for Nikon's full-frame mirrorless system that promises beautiful bokeh						·			·	80	67	75	99	470
100-400mm f/4.5-5.6 VR S Nikkor Z	£2699	5★	Optically-stabilised pro-level telephoto zoom includes top-plate status panel and weather-sealed build	·					·			·	75	77	98	222	1355
105mm f/2.8 VR S MC Nikkor Z	£999	5★	Professional-spec macro lens that boasts optical stabilisation and offers life-size magnification	·					·			·	29	62	85	140	630
135mm f/1.8 S Plena Nikkor Z	£2699	5★	Superb portrait lens that gives pin-sharp images with gorgeous bokeh, but is large and heavy in return						·			·	82	82	98	139.5	995
180-600mm f/5.6-6.3 VR Nikkor Z	£1799		Reasonably compact and affordable super-telephoto zoom, compatible with 1.4x and 2.0x teleconverters	·					·			·	130	95	110	315.5	1955

Mirrorless Lenses

LENS	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY	IMAGE STABILISATION	MOUNT: CANON M	CANON RF	MICRO 4 THIRDS	SONY E	NIKON Z	FUJIFILM X	LEICA L	FULL FRAME	MIN FOCUS (CM)	FILTER THREAD (MM)	DIMENSIONS: DIAMETER (MM)	LENGTH (MM)	WEIGHT (G)
NISI MIRRORLESS																	
9mm f/2.8 ASPH	£398		Weather-sealed ultra-wide manual-focus prime for APS-C and Micro Four Thirds mirrorless cameras			·		·	·	·			20	67	74	78	364
15mm f/4 ASPH	£429		Ultra-wide manual focus prime for full-frame mirrorless promises minimal distortion and 10-ray sunstars			·		·	·	·		·	13	72	75.6	80.5	470
OLYMPUS / OM SYSTEM MIRRORLESS																	
7-14mm f/2.8 ED Pro	£999	4.5★	Super-wideangle zoom lens that's dustproof, splashproof and freeze-proof				·						20	n/a	78.9	105.8	534
8mm f/1.8 Pro Fisheye	£799		Fisheye lens with impressive image quality that's dustproof, splashproof and freeze-proof				·						12	n/a	62	80	315
8-25mm f/4 ED Pro	£899	5★	Weather-sealed wideangle zoom with premium optics and extended tele range that accepts 72mm filters				·						23	72	77	88.5	411
9mm f/8 Fish-eye Body Cap Lens	£89		Slimline lens in a body cap with 140° angle of view				·						20	n/a	56	12.8	30
9-18mm f/4-5.6 ED II	£600		Updated ultra-wideangle zoom gains water-repellant fluorine coating and OM System branding				·						25	52	56.2	49.3	154
12mm f/2.0 ED	£739	5★	A wideangle fixed lens for the Micro Four Thirds system				·						20	46	56	43	130
12-40mm f/2.8 ED Pro II	£899		Gains uprated IP53 weather-resistance, improved optical coatings, and the 'OM System' badge				·						20	62	69.9	84	382
12-45mm f/4 Pro	£599	5★	Excellent compact, lightweight weather-sealed zoom that offers 0.5x magnification at all focal lengths				·						23	58	63.4	70	254
12-100mm f/4 IS ED Pro	£1099	5★	Superb high-end weather-sealed superzoom lens featuring powerful in-lens IS with Sync IS	·			·						15	72	77.5	116.5	561
12-200mm f/3.5-6.3 ED	£800	4★	24-400mm equivalent superzoom includes weather-sealed construction and decent optics				·						22	72	77.5	99.7	455
14-42mm f/3.5-5.6 II R	£269		A redesigned variation of the standard kit lens				·						25	37	56.5	50	112
14-42mm f/3.5-5.6 EZ	£329		Compact kit lens for Olympus PEN and OM-D models with powerzoom control				·						20	37	60.6	22.5	93
14-150mm f/4-5.6 II	£550		High-powered zoom for all your needs – from wideangle to telephoto – plus weather-resistance				·						50	58	63.5	83	285
17mm f/1.2 ED Pro	£1300		High-end, large-aperture weather-sealed prime designed for documentary or landscape work				·						20	62	68.2	87	390
17mm f/1.8 II	£479		Updated version of this classic small prime lens, now with weather-sealed construction				·						25	46	57.6	37.6	112
20mm f/1.4 ED Pro	£649	4.5★	Compact, large-aperture standard prime that's the first lens to wear the 'OM System' label				·						25	58	63.4	61.7	247
25mm f/1.2 ED Pro	£1099	5★	Large maximum-aperture prime combines impressive sharpness with lovely bokeh and fast, reliable AF				·						30	62	70	87	410
25mm f/1.8 II	£399		Updated bright-aperture ultra-compact prime gains weather-resistant construction				·						25	46	59.4	42	156
30mm f/3.5 ED Macro	£249		New in the M.Zuiko Premium range, this macro lens features super-fast AF and weighs only 128g				·						9.5	46	57	60	128
40-150mm f/2.8 ED Pro	£1299	4★	This high-quality 80-300mm equivalent lens offers amazing portability for this pro class				·						70	72	79.4	160	760
40-150mm f/4 ED Pro	£799	4.5★	Remarkably compact telephoto zoom provides high-quality optics and weather-sealed construction				·						70	62	68.9	99.4	382
40-150mm f/4-5.6 R	£309		This middle-distance zoom lens has an 80-300mm 35mm-equivalent focal length				·						90	58	63.5	83	190
45mm f/1.2 ED Pro	£1200		Large-aperture lens designed for portrait photography with premium optics				·						50	62	70	84.9	410
45mm f/1.8	£279	5★	Fast-aperture lens for taking portrait shots is sharp, quiet and has no colour fringing				·						50	37	56	46	116
50-200mm f/2.8 ED IS Pro	£2999	5★	Superbly sharp pro-spec optically-stabilised telephoto zoom that's compatible with teleconverters	·			·						78	77	91.4	225.8	1075
60mm f/2.8 Macro	£450		High-precision macro lens that's dustproof and splashproof				·						19	46	56	82	185
75-300mm f/4.8-6.7 ED II	£499		Update featuring Zuiko Extra-low Reflection Optical coating said to reduce ghosting				·						90	58	69	117	423
75mm f/1.8 ED	£799	5★	Ultra-fast prime lens ideal for portraits and action shots				·						84	58	64	69	305
90mm f/3.5 Macro ED IS Pro	£1299	5★	Pro-spec macro lens with twice life-size magnification, weather-sealing, and optical stabilisation	·			·						22	62	69.8	136	453
100-400mm f/5-6.3 ED IS II	£1299		Updated ultra-telephoto zoom, now with more easily-removable tripod mount ring and full Sync IS support	·			·						130	72	86.4	205.6	1125
150-600mm f/5-6.3 ED IS	£2499	4.5★	Optically stabilised ultra-telephoto zoom that offers a massive 300-1200mm equivalent range	·			·						280	95	109.4	264.4	2065
300mm f/4 IS Pro	£2200		Compact ultra-telephoto prime with optical image stabilisation, compatible with Sync IS	·			·						140	77	92.5	227	1270
PANASONIC MIRRORLESS																	
G 7-14mm f/4	£740	5★	For a wideangle zoom, the overall level of resolution is very impressive				·						25	n/a	70	83.1	300
G 8mm Fisheye f/3.5	£730		The world's lightest and smallest fisheye lens for an interchangeable-lens camera				·						10	22	60.7	51.7	165
DG 8-18mm f/2.8-4 Leica ASPH	£1049		Splashproof, dustproof and freeze-proof ultra-wideangle zoom with premium optics				·						23	67	73.4	88	315
DG 9mm f/1.7 Leica Summilux ASPH	£449	4.5★	Compact large-aperture wideangle prime with an 18mm equivalent angle of view				·						9.5	55	60.8	52	130
DG 10-25mm f/1.7 Leica ASPH	£1800		The world's fastest standard zoom lens, with an unusual 20-50mm equivalent range				·						28	77	87.6	128	690
DG 12mm f/1.4 Leica Summilux ASPH	£1199	4.5★	Compact fast wideangle quality with excellent optics and built-in aperture ring				·						20	62	70	70	335
DG 12-35mm f/2.8 ASPH OIS Leica	£880		Fast standard zoom with reduced focus breathing and smooth aperture operation for video	·			·						15	58	67.6	73.8	306
DG 12-60mm f/2.8-4 OIS Leica	£880		Premium standard zoom with useful focal-length range and weather-resistant construction	·			·						20	62	68	86	320
G 12-60mm f/3.5-5.6 OIS ASPH	£439	4★	Incorporates a stepping motor for a smooth, silent operation and features a dust and splashproof design	·			·						20	58	66	71	210
G X 14-42mm f/3.45-5.6 X PZ POWER OIS	£369	4★	Powered zoom; impressive results in terms of both sharpness and chromatic aberration	·			·						20	37	61	26.8	95
G 14-140mm f/3.5-5.6 ASPH POWER OIS II	£619		Weather-resistant update to Panasonic's optically stabilised superzoom lens	·			·						30	58	67	75	265
DG 15mm f/1.7 Leica Summilux	£549	4★	High-speed prime with a compact metal body, includes three aspherical lenses to cut down distortion				·						20	46	57.5	36	115
G 20mm f/1.7 ASPH II	£249	4.5★	Ultra-compact fast prime with excellent optics but slower autofocus than more modern options				·						20	46	25.5	63	87
DG 25mm f/1.4 Leica Summilux II Asph	£580	5★	Lovely fast standard prime with dust- and splash-resistant construction				·						30	46	63	54.5	205
G 25mm f/1.7 ASPH	£159	4.5★	Inexpensive fast normal prime for Micro Four Thirds that offers very respectable optical quality				·						25	46	60.8	52	125
DG 25-50mm f/1.7 Leica ASPH	£1800		High-end ultra-large-aperture short telephoto zoom that's designed to complement the 10-25mm f/1.7				·						28	77	87.6	127.6	654
G 30mm f/2.8 Macro MEGA OIS	£300	3★	Compact lens offering true-to-life magnification capability for better macro images	·			·						10	46	58.8	63.5	180
DG 35-100mm f/2.8 Power OIS Leica Vario-Elmarit	£1099		Updated fast telephoto zoom promises improved flare resistance thanks to Nano Surface Coatings	·			·						85	58	67.4	99.9	360
G 35-100mm f/4-5.6 ASPH MEGA OIS	£300		Telephoto zoom equivalent to 70-200mm on a 35mm camera	·			·						90	46	55.5	50	135
DG 42.5mm f/1.2 Leica DG OIS	£1399	5★	Mid-telephoto high-speed Leica DG Nocticron lens with 2 aspherical lenses and ultra-wide aperture	·			·						50	67	74	76.8	425
G 42.5mm f/1.7 Power OIS	£349		Mid-telephoto lens with a 35mm equivalent of 85mm, its f/1.7 aperture promises a beautiful bokeh effect	·			·						37	31	55	50	130
DG 45mm f/2.8 OIS Macro Leica	£539		Tiny macro lens with 1:1 magnification and optical image stabilisation	·			·						15	46	63	62.5	225
G 45-150mm f/4-5.6 MEGA OIS	£280	4★	Compact, lightweight telephoto zoom comprising 12 elements in nine groups	·			·						90	52	62	73	200
G X 45-175mm f/4-5.6 X PZ POWER OIS	£400	4★	A powered long-focal-length zoom lens	·			·						90	46	61.6	90	210
G 45-200mm f/4-5.6 MEGA OIS II	£380		Telephoto zoom lens with dust and splashproof construction, supports Panasonic's Dual IS	·			·						100	52	70	100	380
DG 50-200mm f/2.8-4 OIS Leica	£1600		Premium telephoto zoom that completes Panasonic's Leica f/2.8-4 series	·			·						75	67	76	132	655
G 100-300mm f/4-5.6 MEGA OIS II	£570	4★	Long zoom lens with dustproof and splashproof construction, supports Panasonic's Dual IS	·			·						150	67	73.6	126	520
DG 100-400mm f/4-6.3 OIS II Leica	£1499		Updated super-telephoto zoom promises improved zoom mechanism and adds teleconverter compatibility	·			·						130	72	83	171.5	985
DG 200mm f/2.8 OIS Leica	£2699	5★	Stunning 400mm-equivalent fast telephoto prime, comes with 1.4x teleconverter in the box	·			·						115	77	87.5	174	1245
S 14-28mm f/4-5.6 Macro	£880	4.5★	Lightweight and affordable ultra-wideangle zoom that offers unusually close focusing								·	·	15	77	84	89.8	345
S Pro 16-35mm f/4	£1499		Relatively compact and lightweight premium wideangle zoom with weather-sealed construction								·	·	25	77	85	99.6	500
S 18mm f/1.8	£800	4.5★	Large-aperture ultra-wideangle prime that's relatively compact, lightweight and affordable								·	·	18	67	73.6	82	340
S 18-40mm f/4.5-6.3	£519		World's smallest and lightest full-frame zoom lens, designed to match the Lumix S9 camera								·	·	15	62	67.9	40.9	155
S 20-60mm f/3.5-5.6	£619		Compact, lightweight and relatively inexpensive standard zoom with a wider than usual view								·	·	15	67	77.4	87.2	350
S 24mm f/1.8	£799	4.5★	Wideangle prime that's relatively lightweight and compact								·	·	24	67	73.6	82	310
S 26mm f/8	£219		Slim and ultra-lightweight 'pancake' prime, but manual-focus only and with a fixed f/8 aperture								·	·	25	n/a	67.1	18.1	58
S 24-60mm f/2.8	£899	4.5★	Relatively small, lightweight and affordable large-aperture zoom that gives consistently fine images								·	·	19	77	84.0	99.9	544
S Pro 24-70mm f/2.8	£2250		Pro-range fast standard zoom includes dust- and splash-resistance, along with a focus-clutch mechanism								·	·	37	82	90.9	140	935

ALL PRICES ARE RRPS, STREET PRICES MAY VARY

We've tried our hardest to ensure that the information in this guide is as complete and accurate as possible. However, some errors will inevitably have crept in along the way: if you spot one, please let us know by emailing ap.ed@kelsey.co.uk. Unfortunately we don't have space to list every single product on the market, so we don't include the most expensive speciality items. **Before making a purchase we advise you to check prices, along with any crucial specifications or requirements, with either a reputable retailer or the manufacturer's website.**

Mirrorless Lenses

LENS	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY	IMAGE STABILISATION	MOUNT: CANON M	CANON RF	MICRO 4 THIRDS	SONY E	NIKON Z	FUJIFILM X	LEICA L	FULL FRAME	MIN FOCUS (CM)	FILTER THREAD (MM)	DIMENSIONS: DIAMETER (MM)	LENGTH (MM)	WEIGHT (G)
S 24-105mm f/4 Macro OIS	£1750		L-mount full-frame standard zoom which offers half-life-size magnification	·							·	·	30	77	84.0	118	680
S 28-200mm f/4-7.1 Macro OIS	£899	4.5★	Unusually small and lightweight full-frame superzoom lens, but with slow maximum aperture in return	·							·	·	14	67	77.3	93.4	413
S 35mm f/1.8	£580	4.5★	Relatively compact and lightweight full-frame prime designed for both stills and video shooting								·	·	24	67	73.6	82	295
S Pro 50mm f/1.4	£2300		Premium, fast standard prime for full-frame mirrorless with built-in aperture ring								·	·	44	77	90	130	955
S 50mm f/1.8	£429	4★	Relatively lightweight and affordable standard prime that gives fine images but can struggle with close focus								·	·	45	67	73.6	82	300
S 85mm f/1.8	£600		This short telephoto portrait lens is the first in a new line of practical, affordable f/1.8 primes								·	·	80	67	73.6	82	355
S Pro 70-200mm f/2.8 OIS	£2599		Pro-spec fast telephoto zoom incorporating optical image stabilisation and weather-sealing	·							·	·	95	82	94.4	208.6	1570
S Pro 70-200mm f/4 OIS	£1300		Image-stabilised, weather-sealed telephoto zoom for L-mount full-frame mirrorless	·							·	·	92	77	84.4	179	985
S 70-300mm f/4.5-5.6 Macro OIS	£1260		Relatively lightweight optically-stabilised telephoto zoom featuring dust- and splash-proof construction	·							·	·	54	77	84.0	148	790
S 100mm f/2.8 Macro	£999	5★	Unusually small and lightweight short-telephoto macro that offers life-size magnification								·	·	20	67	73.6	82	298
S 100-500mm f/5-7.1 OIS	£1799	4.5★	Impressively compact ultra-telephoto zoom, with excellent optics and superb stabilisation	·							·	·	80	82	92	196.1	1285
SAMYANG MIRRORLESS																	
7.5mm f/3.5 UMC fisheye MFT	£253		Fisheye manual-focus lens with Ultra Multi Coated lens elements to reduce flare and ghosting				·						9	n/a	48.3	60	197
8mm f/2.8 UMC fisheye II	£249		Updated version of the Samyang 8mm f/2.8 UMC Fisheye lens, with improved optical construction		·			·		·			30	n/a	60	64.4	290
12mm f/2 NCS CS	£330		Fast wideangle prime for APS-C and Micro Four Thirds mirrorless cameras		·		·	·		·			20	67	72.5	59	245
35mm f/1.2 ED AS UMC CS	£359		Standard-angle manual-focus lens for mirrorless cameras with APS-C sensor size		·		·	·		·			38	62	67.5	74.2	420
50mm f/1.2 AS UMC CS	£299	5★	Fast telephoto prime that can produce stunning results with a super-shallow depth of field		·		·	·		·			50	62	67.5	74.5	380
85mm f/1.8 ED UMC CS	£319		Manual-focus medium-telephoto portrait prime for APS-C mirrorless cameras		·		·	·		·			65	62	67.5	81	423
300mm f/6.3 ED UMC CS Reflex	£249		A compact reflex mirror lens dedicated for mirrorless compact system cameras		·		·	·		·			90	58	73.7	64.5	320
12mm f/2 AF	£402	4★	Affordable large-aperture ultra-wide prime for APS-C cameras, available in E, X, and Canon RF mounts			·		·		·			19	62	70	59.2	213
14mm f/2.8 AF	£629		Autofocus wideangle prime for Sony full-frame mirrorless FE mount cameras					·				·	20	n/a	85.5	97.5	505
14-24mm f/2.8 FE AF	£1050		Remarkably small and lightweight weather-sealed ultra-wideangle zoom that accepts 77mm filters					·				·	18	77	88.8	98.6	445
16mm f/2.8 P FE AF	£348		Extremely affordable and lightweight weather-sealed ultra-wideangle prime for Sony full-frame cameras					·				·	12	62	69.8	70.5	207
18mm f/2.8 FE AF	£350		Compact, lightweight autofocus wideangle prime for Sony full-frame mirrorless cameras					·				·	25	58	63.5	60.5	145
24mm f/1.8 FE AF	£460		Boasts Custom Mode function that sets the lens to infinity focus for astrophotography					·				·	19	58	65	71.5	230
24mm f/2.8 FE AF	£280	4.5★	Small, lightweight autofocus wideangle prime for full-frame mirrorless cameras					·				·	24	49	61.8	37	93
24-60mm f/2.8 FE AF	£636		Large-aperture standard zoom that's dramatically lighter than the firm's previous 24-70mm f/2.8					·				·	18	72	78	126	494
24-70mm f/2.8 FE AF	£828		Samyang's first-ever zoom lens includes a manual focus ring that can be switched to controlling aperture					·				·	35	82	88	128.5	1027
35-150mm f/2-2.8 FE AF	£1319		Ultra-large-aperture zoom with weather-sealed construction and video-friendly features					·				·	33	82	92.8	157.4	1231
35mm f/1.4 FE AF II	£635	4.5★	Large-aperture prime with AF-stop button and custom mode switch for manual focus ring					·				·	29	67	75	115	659
35mm f/1.4 P FE AF	£528		Third-generation 'Prima' lens includes weathersealing and a USB-C port for firmware updates					·				·	30	67	75	99.2	470
35mm f/1.8 FE AF	£360		Smaller, lighter and more affordable than its Sony equivalent, with a dual-mode manual focus / control ring					·				·	29	58	65	63.5	210
35mm f/2.8 FE AF	£279	4.5★	Compact, lightweight, inexpensive autofocus prime lens for full-frame mirrorless cameras					·				·	35	49	61.8	33	86
45mm f/1.8 FE AF	£350	4.5★	Small standard prime for Sony full-frame mirrorless					·				·	45	49	61.8	56.1	162
50mm f/1.4 FE AF II	£599	4.5★	Billed as the smallest and lightest large-aperture 50mm prime for Sony FE, with completely new optical design					·				·	40	72	80.1	88.9	420
75mm f/1.8 AF	£380	4.5★	Small, lightweight short telephoto for full-frame Sony, also available in Fujifilm X mount					·		·		·	69	58	65	69	230
85mm f/1.4 FE AF II	£639		Relatively lightweight portrait prime with a focus hold button and custom mode switch					·				·	85	72	83.4	99.5	507
85mm f/1.8 P FE AF	£348		Small, lightweight and affordable short telephoto prime that doesn't skimp on features					·				·	80	62	69.8	71.5	272
135mm f/1.8 FE AF	£799		Fast-aperture mid-telephoto lens designed for subjects such as portraiture and astrophotography					·				·	69	82	93.4	129.6	772
SIGMA MIRRORLESS																	
10-18mm f/2.8 DC DN | C	£600	4.5★	Strikingly compact and lightweight large-aperture ultra-wideangle zoom for APS-C cameras					·		·	·		11.6	67	72.2	64	255
12mm f/1.4 DC | C	£519		Ultra-wideangle large-aperture prime for APS-C cameras, with aperture ring (control dial on RF)			·		·		·			17.2	62	68	69.4	225
16mm f/1.4 DC DN | C	£450	4.5★	Large-aperture wideangle lens with dustproof and splashproof design		·		·	·		·	·		25	67	72.2	92.3	405
16-300mm f/3.5-6.7 DC OS | C	£599	4★	All-in-one superzoom lens for APS-C cameras with an enormous 24-450mm equivalent range	·		·		·		·	·		17	67	73.8	121.4	615
17-40mm f/1.8 DC | A	£779	4★	Ultra-large-aperture 25.5-60mm equivalent zoom for APS-C cameras, with aperture ring/control dial			·		·		·	·		28	67	72.9	117.9	525
18-50mm f/2.8 DC DN | C	£430	4.5★	Fast standard zoom for APS-C mirrorless, that's relatively inexpensive but lacks optical stabilisation			·		·		·	·		12.1	55	61.6	76.5	290
23mm f/1.4 DC DN | C	£450		Large-aperture prime for APS-C cameras with 35mm equivalent angle of view					·		·	·		25	52	65.8	76.9	340
30mm f/1.4 DC DN | C	£300	4★	A prime for Micro Four Thirds and Sony E-mount users, it's impressively sharp even at f/1.4		·		·	·		·	·		30	52	64.8	73	140
56mm f/1.4 DC DN | C	£400	4.5★	Small, lightweight large-aperture portrait prime for APS-C Sony and Micro Four Thirds		·		·	·		·	·		50	55	66.5	59.5	280
14mm f/1.4 DG DN | A	£1399	5★	World's first 14mm lens with a bright f/1.4 aperture, designed with astrophotography in mind					·			·	·	30	n/a	101.4	149.9	1170
14-24mm f/2.8 DG DN | A	£1459	5★	Superb ultra-wide zoom for full-frame mirrorless that's two-thirds of the weight of its DSLR equivalent					·			·	·	28	n/a	85	131	795
15mm f/1.4 DG DN Fisheye | A	£1859		Full-frame f/1.4 fisheye lens, which covers the entirety of full-frame and provides a 180° angle of view					·			·	·	38.5	n/a	104	157.9	1360
16-28mm f/2.8 DG DN | C	£750	4.5★	Relatively compact and affordable ultra-wideangle zoom designed to complement the 28-70mm f/2.8					·			·	·	25	72	77.2	100.6	450
17mm f/4 DG DN | C I-series	£550	4★	Small and lightweight ultra-wideangle prime that boasts all-metal barrel construction					·			·	·	12	55	64	48.8	225
20mm f/1.4 DG DN | A	£859		Bright wideangle prime that includes an array of features designed for astrophotography					·			·	·	23	82	87.8	111.2	635
20mm f/2 DG DN | C I-series	£650	5★	Small wideangle autofocus prime with a large maximum aperture and premium metal construction					·			·	·	22	62	70	74.4	370
20-200mm f/3.5-6.3 DG | C	£799	4.5★	World's first full-frame all-in-one superzoom lens with a 20mm ultra-wideangle setting					·			·	·	16.5	72	77.2	115.5	550
24mm f/1.4 DG DN | A	£779		Large-aperture wideangle prime boasts aperture ring, focus lock switch, and rear filter holder					·			·	·	25	72	75.7	95.5	520
24mm f/2 DG DN | C I-series	£550	5★	Moderately fast premium wideangle prime with metal construction, aperture ring, and great optics					·			·	·	24.5	62	70	74	360
24mm f/3.5 DG DN | C I-series	£480		Compact metal-barrelled wideangle prime that offers half life-size magnification					·			·	·	10.8	55	64	48.8	225
24-70mm f/2.8 DG DN II | A	£1179	5★	Second-generation standard zoom gains updated optics, faster autofocus, and aperture ring					·			·	·	17	82	87.8	120.2	745
28-45mm f/1.8 DG DN | A	£1299	4★	World's largest-aperture full-frame zoom, but at the expense of bulk and limited focal-length range					·			·	·	30	82	87.8	151.4	960
28-70mm f/2.8 DG DN | C	£760	4.5★	Small, lightweight and relatively affordable large-aperture full-frame standard zoom					·			·	·	19	67	72.2	101.5	470
28-105mm f/2.8 DG DN | A	£1399	4.5★	Versatile large-aperture standard zoom, with fine optics and longer than usual telephoto end					·			·	·	40	82	87.8	157.9	995
35mm f/1.2 DG DN | A	£1459		Ultra-large aperture autofocus lens for either Sony E or Leica L mount promises top-notch optics					·			·	·	30	82	87.8	136.2	1090
35mm f/1.2 DG II | A	£1299	5★	Second-generation f/1.2 lens promises improved image quality in a significantly smaller size					·			·	·	28	72	77.2	115.5	550
35mm f/1.4 DG DN | A	£750	5★	General-purpose fast prime promises top-notch optics, fast quiet AF, and a comprehensive set of controls					·			·	·	30	67	75.7	109.5	645
35mm f/2 DG DN | C I-series	£550		Everyday walkaround prime that promises premium optical performance					·			·	·	27	58	70	65	325
45mm f/2.8 DG DN | C	£549		Ultra-compact full-frame standard prime for everyday shooting, with all-metal barrel construction					·			·	·	24	55	64	46.2	215
50mm f/1.2 DG DN | A	£1399	5★	Fully featured ultra large-aperture standard prime that's surprisingly compact and affordable					·			·	·	40	72	81	108.8	745
50mm f/1.4 DG DN | A	£849	5★	All-new, designed for mirrorless version of Sigma's legendary 50mm f/1.4 'Art' lens					·			·	·	45	72	78.2	109.5	670
50mm f/2 DG DN | C I-series	£620	4.5★	Relatively compact everyday standard prime, with metal barrel construction and aperture ring					·			·	·	45	58	70	68	350
65mm f/2 DG DN | C I-series	£650		Compact short-telephoto portrait prime designed to deliver sharp images with attractive background blur					·			·	·	55	62	72	74.7	405
70-200mm f/2.8 DG DN OS | S	£1499	5★	Designed-for-mirrorless fast telezoom includes weather-sealed construction and declickable aperture ring	·				·			·	·	65	77	90.6	205	1345
85mm f/1.4 DG DN | A	£999	5★	Superb large-aperture portrait prime for full-frame cameras that's a fraction of the size of its SLR equivalent					·			·	·	85	77	82.4	94.1	630
90mm f/2.8 DG DN | C I-series	£550	4.5★	Small short-telephoto prime with all-metal construction and aperture ring that's ideal for portraits					·			·	·	50	55	64	61.7	295
100-400mm f/5-6.3 DG DN OS | C	£899	5★	Relatively compact, lightweight and affordable long telephoto zoom with optical stabilisation	·				·		·	·	·	112	67	86	199.2	1140
105mm f/2.8 DG DN Macro | A	£700	5★	Weather-sealed 1:1 macro lens that delivers superlative image quality					·			·	·	29.5	62	74	133.6	715
60-600mm f/4.5-6.3 DG DN OS | S	£2000		Unique 10x ultra-telephoto zoom for E and L mounts with a shortest focal length of 60mm	·				·			·	·	45	105	119.4	281.2	2485
135mm f/1.4 DG | A	£1649	5★	Unique portrait lens that's the world's longest focal-length f/1.4 autofocus optic					·			·	·	110	105	111.7	135.5	1430
150-600mm f/5-6.3 DG DN OS | S	£1200		Ultra-telephoto zoom that aims to provide pro-spec optics and build quality in a relatively light package	·				·			·	·	58	95	109.4	263.6	2100
200mm f/2 DG OS |S	£2999	5★	Large-aperture telephoto prime with optical stabilisation and dust/splash-resistant design	·				·			·	·	170	105	118.9	201	1820
500mm f/5.6 DG DN OS | S	£2779		Impressively portable long telephoto prime, with optical stabilisation plus dust- and splashproof build	·				·			·	·	320	95	107.6	234.7	1370

Mirrorless Lenses

LENS	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY	IMAGE STABILISATION	MOUNT: CANON M	CANON RF	MICRO 4 THIRDS	SONY E	NIKON Z	FUJIFILM X	LEICA L	FULL FRAME	MIN FOCUS (CM)	FILTER THREAD (MM)	DIMENSIONS: DIAMETER (MM)	LENGTH (MM)	WEIGHT (G)
SONY MIRRORLESS																	
E 10-18mm f/4 OSS	£750	4★	Super-wideangle zoom with Super ED glass and Optical SteadyShot image stabilisation	·				·					25	62	70	63.5	225
E 10-20mm f/4 G PZ	£750	4.5★	Ultra-wideangle powerzoom lens for APS-C mirrorless with dust- and moisture-resistant construction					·					13	62	69.8	55	178
E 11mm f/1.8	£500	4.5★	Lightweight large-aperture ultra-wideangle prime for APS-C cameras, aimed primarily at vloggers					·					15	55	66	57.5	181
E 15mm f/1.4 G	£750		Large-aperture APS-C wideangle prime with premium optics, weather-sealing and an aperture ring					·					17	55	66.6	69.5	219
E 16mm f/2.8	£220	4★	Pancake lens for APS-C mirrorless, with a circular aperture and Direct Manual Focus					·					24	49	62	22.5	67
E 16-50mm f/3.5-5.6 PZ OSS II	£289		Updated compact powerzoom kit lens gains support for video and stills shooting at 120 frames per second	·				·					25	40.5	66	31.2	107
E 16-55mm f/2.8 G	£1200		Premium, high-resolution, weather-resistant standard zoom for APS-C mirrorless cameras					·					33	67	73	100	494
E 16-70mm f/4 ZA OSS Vario-Tessar T*	£839		A lightweight, versatile mid-range zoom with a constant f/4 aperture	·				·					35	55	66.6	75	308
E 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 OSS	£270		Optical SteadyShot, said to be silent during movie capture, and a circular aperture	·				·					25	49	62	60	194
E 18-105mm f/4 G PZ OSS	£499		Sony G lens for E-mount cameras with a constant f/4 aperture	·				·					45	72	78	110	427
E 18-110mm f/4 G PZ OSS	£3300		Constant f/4 maximum aperture powerzoom for video production, for Super 35mm / APS-C cameras	·				·					40	95	110	167.5	1105
E 18-135mm f/3.5-5.6 OSS	£570		Lightweight, compact standard zoom designed to match Alpha 6000-series cameras	·				·					45	55	67.2	88	325
E 18-200mm f/3.5-6.3 OSS LE	£489		Smaller and lighter than comparable lenses, this is an ideal high-magnification travel lens	·				·					50	62	68	98	460
E 18-200mm f/3.5-6.3 PZ OSS	£999		Boasts powered zoom and image stabilisation with Active Mode, making it ideal for movies	·				·					30	67	93.2	99	649
E 20mm f/2.8	£309		Pancake wideangle lens promises to be the perfect walkaround partner for E-mount cameras					·					20	49	62.6	20.4	69
E 24mm f/1.8 ZA Sonnar T*	£839		Top-quality Carl Zeiss optic ideally suited to Alpha 6000-series bodies					·					16	49	63	65.6	225
E 30mm f/3.5 Macro	£219		A macro lens for Sony's APS-C compact system cameras					·					9	49	62	55.5	138
E 35mm f/1.8 OSS	£399		Lightweight, versatile prime with Optical SteadyShot image stabilisation	·				·					30	49	62.2	45	155
E 50mm f/1.8 OSS	£219		A handy, low-price image-stabilised portrait lens for the APS-C Alpha mirrorless range	·				·					39	49	62	62	202
E 55-210mm f/4.5-6.3 OSS	£289		Lightweight optically stabilised telephoto zoom lens for APS-C mirrorless	·				·					100	49	63.8	108	345
E 70-350mm f/4.5-6.3 G OSS	£830		High-end long telephoto zoom for APS-C E-mount cameras includes optical stabilisation	·				·					110	67	77	142	625
FE 12-24mm f/2.8 GM	£2900		The world's widest-angle zoom with a constant f/2.8 maximum aperture promises pro-level quality					·				·	28	n/a	97.6	137	847
FE 12-24mm f/4 G	£1700	4.5★	Compact, weather-resistant super-wideangle zoom with high-quality optics					·				·	28	n/a	87	117.4	565
FE 14mm f/1.4 GM	£1400		Remarkably small and lightweight large-aperture ultra-wideangle prime that accepts rear gel filters					·				·	25	n/a	83	99.8	460
FE 16-25mm F2.8 G	£1249	4.5★	Compact, affordable and well-featured f/2.8 wideangle zoom, but with somewhat restrictive range					·				·	18	67	78.4	91.4	409
FE 16-35mm f/2.8 GM	£2300		Premium G Master-series fast wideangle zoom with weather-resistant construction					·				·	28	82	88.5	121.6	680
FE 16-35mm f/2.8 GM II	£2400	5★	All-new wideangle zoom that combines premium optics, relatively compact size, and weather-sealing					·				·	22	82	87.8	111.5	547
FE 16-35mm f/4 ZA OSS Vario-Tessar T*	£1289	5★	Zeiss full-frame wideangle zoom lens that provides consistently good image quality	·				·				·	28	72	78	98.5	518
FE 16-35mm f/4 G PZ	£1300	4.5★	Small and lightweight ultra-wideangle zoom with superbly implemented power zoom operation					·				·	23	72	80.5	88.1	353
FE 16mm f/1.8 G	£849	4★	Remarkably small large aperture ultra-wideangle prime, includes weather sealing and aperture ring					·				·	15	67	73.8	75	304
FE 20mm f/1.8 G	£949	5★	Compact, super-sharp wideangle prime featuring aperture ring and weather-resistant construction					·				·	18	67	84.7	73.5	373
FE 20-70mm f/4 G	£1400	4.5★	Lightweight standard zoom with excellent optics and an unusually wide view, but a painful price					·				·	30	72	78.7	99	488
FE 24mm f/1.4 GM	£1450	5★	Compact, large-aperture wideangle prime includes aperture ring and weather-resistant construction					·				·	24	67	75.4	92.4	445
FE 24mm f/2.8 G	£630		Small, lightweight wideangle prime with premium aluminium construction					·				·	24	49	68	45	162
FE 24-50mm f/2.8 G	£1149	4★	Large-aperture standard zoom with relatively compact size but limited focal-length range					·				·	33	67	74.8	92.3	440
FE 24-70mm f/2.8 GM	£1799	5★	This pro-grade standard lens for the Sony full-frame FE mount gives exceptionally sharp results					·				·	38	82	87.6	136	886
FE 24-70mm f/2.8 GM II	£2100	5★	Superb second-generation pro standard zoom is smaller, lighter, sharper and more video-friendly					·				·	30	82	87.8	119.9	695
FE 24-70mm f/4 ZA OSS Vario-Tessar T*	£1049	5★	Compact lens with an f/4 maximum aperture across the zoom range and built-in image stabilisation	·				·				·	40	67	73	94.5	426
FE 24-105mm f/4 G OSS	£1199	5★	Excellent full-frame standard zoom with optical stabilisation and weather-resistant design	·				·				·	38	77	83.4	113.3	663
FE 24-240mm f/3.5-6.3 OSS	£929	3★	Ideal for travel, landscapes and more, with built-in stabilisation. Also dust- and moisture-resistant	·				·				·	50	72	80.5	118.5	780
FE 28mm f/2	£419	4★	This full-frame wideangle prime with a bright f/2 maximum aperture promises excellent sharpness					·				·	29	49	64	60	200
FE 28-60mm f/4-5.6	£450		Ultra-compact, retractable kit zoom designed for the rangefinder-style Alpha 7C					·				·	30	40.5	67	45	167
FE 28-70mm f/2 GM	£3049	5★	Remarkable ultra-large aperture standard zoom that boasts superb optics in a reasonable size					·				·	38	86	92.9	139.8	918
FE 28-70mm f/3.5-5.6 OSS II	£429		Lightweight optically stabilised entry-level standard zoom. Updated 'II' version supports 120fps shooting.	·				·				·	30	55	72.5	83	293
FE 28-135mm PZ f/4 G OSS	£2379		Constant f/4 maximum aperture powerzoom for video production, for full-frame cameras	·				·				·	95	95	162.5	105	1215
FE 35mm f/1.4 ZA Distagon T*	£1559	4★	Full-frame ZEISS Distagon lens with large, bright f/1.4 aperture					·				·	30	72	78.5	112	630
FE 35mm f/1.4 GM	£1499	5★	Stunning large-aperture prime that's smaller, lighter and focuses closer than its ZA predecessor					·				·	27	67	76	96	524
FE 35mm f/1.8	£630	4.5★	Lightweight fast prime with fine optics and quick autofocus that's well-matched to Alpha 7 series bodies					·				·	22	55	65.6	73	280
FE 35mm f/2.8 ZA Sonnar T*	£699		When coupled with a full-frame Sony E-mount camera, this prime lens promises to deliver					·				·	35	49	61.5	36.5	120
FE 40mm f/2.5 G	£630	5★	Sony's first 40mm prime is a compact, lightweight design with weather-sealed metal build					·				·	28	49	68	45	173
FE 50mm f/1.2 GM	£2100	5★	Remarkable ultra-fast prime offers stunning quality for the same size and weight as its f/1.4 ZA sibling					·				·	40	72	87	108	778
FE 50mm f/1.4 ZA Planar T*	£1500	5★	Optically excellent premium fast prime, but large and heavy for its class					·				·	45	72	83.5	108	778
FE 50mm f/1.4 GM	£1500	5★	Superb large-aperture standard prime with excellent optics and a pro-spec control setup					·				·	38	67	80.6	96	516
FE 50mm f/1.8	£240	4★	Features a new optical design with a single aspherical element, but slow autofocus					·				·	45	49	68.6	59.5	186
FE 50mm f/2.5 G	£630		Small prime boasts an aperture ring that can be switched between clicked and clickless operation					·				·	35	49	68	45	174
FE 50mm f/2.8 Macro	£500	4★	Sony's budget macro for full-frame CSCs offers decent optics but is slow at focusing					·				·	16	55	70.8	71	236
FE 50-150mm f/2 GM	£3799	5★	Premium ultra-large-aperture full-frame telephoto zoom that's ideal for portrait and event photography					·				·	40	95	102.8	200	1340
FE 55mm f/1.8 ZA Sonnar T*	£849		35mm full-frame prime lens with wide aperture allowing good images indoors or in low light					·				·	50	49	64.4	70.5	281
FE 70-200mm f/2.8 GM OSS	£2500	5★	Compact, lightweight telephoto zoom lens for full-frame E-mount bodies	·				·				·	96	77	88	200	1480
FE 70-200mm f/2.8 GM OSS II	£2600	5★	The world's lightest 70-200mm f/2.8 provides superb optical quality and extensive controls	·				·				·	40	77	88	200	1045
FE 70-200mm f/4 G OSS	£1359	4★	G-series telephoto zoom lens, dust- and water-resistant, with built-in image stabilisation	·				·				·	100	72	80	175	840
FE 70-200mm f/4 Macro G OSS II	£1749	5★	Updated telezoom boasts excellent optics and useful half life-size macro feature	·				·				·	26	72	82.2	149	794
FE 70-300mm f/4.5-5.6 G OSS	£1150		Sony's most compact image-stabilised telephoto zoom	·				·				·	90	72	84	143.5	854
FE 85mm f/1.8	£550	4★	Relatively inexpensive portrait lens includes dust and moisture-resistant construction					·				·	80	67	78	82	371
FE 85mm f/1.4 GM	£1889	5★	Stunning image quality from Sony's premium 'G Master' portrait lens					·				·	80	77	89.5	107.5	820
FE 85mm f/1.4 GM II	£1849	5★	Updated short-telephoto portrait lens provides even better image quality in a lighter design					·				·	85	77	84.7	107.3	642
FE 90mm f/2.8 Macro G OSS	£1049	5★	Optically excellent dedicated macro lens for Sony's full-frame E-mount cameras	·				·				·	28	62	79	130.5	602
FE 100mm f/2.8 STF GM OSS	£1700		Innovative portrait lens combines optical stabilisation and an apodisation filter for smooth bokeh	·				·				·	57	72	85.2	118.1	700
FE 100mm f/2.8 Macro GM OSS	£1400		High-end macro lens that provides 1.4x magnification, with an aperture ring and optical stabilisation	·				·				·	26	67	81.4	147.9	646
FE 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6 GM OSS	£2500	5★	Premium optically stabilised, weather-sealed telezoom designed to match the Alpha 9	·				·				·	98	77	93.9	205	1395
FE 135mm f/1.8 GM	£1750	5★	Large-aperture portrait prime for full-frame combines exceptional sharpness and attractive bokeh					·				·	70	82	89.5	127	950
FE 200-600mm f/5.6-6.3 G OSS	£1799		Weather-resistant super-telephoto, with easy-to-use internal zoom design	·				·				·	240	95	111.5	318	2115
FE 400-800mm f/6.3-8 G OSS	£2549	4.5★	Unique ultra-telephoto zoom, that uses an internal zoom mechanism and is compatible with teleconverters	·				·				·	170	105	119.8	346	2475

Mirrorless Lenses

LENS	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY	IMAGE STABILISATION	CANON M	CANON RF	MICRO 4 THIRDS	SONY E	NIKON Z	FUJIFILM X	LEICA L	FULL FRAME	MIN FOCUS (CM)	FILTER THREAD (MM)	DIAMETER (MM)	LENGTH (MM)	WEIGHT (G)
					MOUNT										DIMENSIONS		
TAMRON MIRRORLESS																	
11-20mm F/2.8 Di III-A RXD	£819		Large-aperture wideangle zoom for Sony APS-C mirrorless cameras with moisture-resistant construction			·		·					15	67	73	86.2	335
17-70mm F/2.8 Di III-A VC RXD	£780	4.5★	Provides a uniquely useful combination of 4.1x zoom range, f/2.8 maximum aperture and optical stabilisation	·				·		·			19	67	74.6	119.3	525
18-300mm F/3.5-6.3 Di III-A VC VXD	£679	3★	Superzoom lens for APS-C mirrorless cameras, available in Canon RF, Fujifilm X, Nikon Z and Sony E mounts	·		·		·	·	·			15	67	75.5	125.6	620
16-30mm F/2.8 Di III VXD G2	£849		Second-generation ultra-wideangle f/2.8 zoom with moisture-resistant construction, fits Nikon Z and Sony E					·	·			·	19	67	74.8	101.8	440
17-28mm F/2.8 Di III RXD	£899	5★	Small and lightweight fast wideangle zoom boasts excellent optics and fast autofocus					·				·	19	67	73	99	420
17-50mm F/4 Di III VXD	£749		Unique zoom for full-frame cameras that extends from the wideangle into the 'standard' range					·				·	30	67	74.8	114.4	460
20mm F/2.8 Di III OSD M1:2	£399		Widest of a trio of lightweight primes offering half life-size magnification and splash-proof build					·				·	11	67	73	64	220
20-40mm F/2.8 Di III VXD	£879	4.5★	Billed as the smallest and lightest ultra-wideangle f/2.8 zoom for full-frame E-mount cameras					·				·	17	67	74.4	86.5	365
24mm F/2.8 Di III OSD M1:2	£399		Compact wideangle prime designed for high-resolution full-frame mirrorless cameras					·				·	12	67	73	64	215
25-200mm F/2.8-5.6 Di III VXD G2	£729		Updated 'G2' superzoom lens with an unusually large aperture and close focusing capability					·				·	16	67	76.2	121.5	575
28-75mm F/2.8 Di III VXD G2	£849	4.5★	Second-generation fast standard zoom boasts new, faster AF motor and completely redesigned optics					·				·	18	67	76	118	540
28-200mm F/2.8-5.6 Di III RXD	£800	4★	All-in-one superzoom with impressive maximum aperture but limited wideangle and no stabilisation					·				·	19	67	74	117	575
28-300mm F/4-7.1 Di III VC VXD	£879		Full-frame superzoom with built-in optical stabilisation, but restricted wideangle and maximum aperture	·				·				·	19	67	77	126	610
35mm F/2.8 Di III OSD M1:2	£399		Optimized Silent Drive (OSD) motor promises full compatibility with advanced autofocus modes					·				·	15	67	73	64	210
35-150mm F/2.0-2.8 Di III VXD	£1599	4★	Super-fast standard zoom for Sony full-frame mirrorless with useful close-focus distance					·				·	33	82	89	158	1165
50-300mm F/4.5-6.3 Di III VC VXD	£819	5★	Impressively sharp yet compact telephoto zoom, with useful focal-length range and close-up capability	·				·				·	22	67	75	150	665
50-400mm F/4.5-6.3 Di III VC VXD	£1250	4.5★	Telephoto zoom that's similar in size to conventional 100-400mm designs, but starts at 50mm	·				·	·			·	25	67	88.5	183.4	1155
70-180mm F/2.8 Di III VC VXD G2	£1330	4.5★	Updated large-aperture telephoto zoom gains optical stabilisation while staying compact	·				·	·			·	85	67	83	156.5	855
70-300mm F/4.5-6.3 Di III RXD	£650	4★	Lightweight, affordable, weather-sealed telephoto zoom, available in Nikon Z and Sony E mounts					·	·			·	80	67	77	148	545
90mm F/2.8 Di III Macro VXD	£600		Attractively priced macro lens that gives life-size magnification and includes moisture-resistant construction					·	·			·	23	67	79.2	126.5	640
150-500mm F/5-6.7 Di III VC VXD	£1379		Long-range telephoto zoom that's similar in packed length to 100-400mm optics, comes in E and X mounts	·				·		·		·	60	82	93	209.6	1725
VOIGTLANDER MIRRORLESS																	
10.5mm f/0.95 Nokton	£999		Ultra-large aperture super-wide prime for Micro Four Thirds with manual focus and aperture setting				·						17	72	77	82.4	585
17.5mm f/0.95 Nokton	£799		35mm equivalent wideangle manual-focus prime with exceptionally large aperture				·						15	58	63.4	80	540
25mm f/0.95 Nokton II	£719		All-metal construction with traditional manual focus and aperture rings				·						17	52	60.6	70	435
29mm f/0.8 Super Nokton	£1599		Currently the world's fastest photographic lens in production				·						37	62	72.3	88.9	703
42.5mm f/0.95 Nokton	£749		Large aperture short-telephoto portrait lens for Micro Four Thirds cameras				·						23	58	64.3	74.6	571
60mm f/0.95 Nokton	£1049		Unique super-fast manual-focus medium telephoto for MFT offers a 120mm equivalent view				·						34	77	82.5	87.7	860
18mm f/2.8 Color-Skopar	£469		Slimline, moderately wideangle manual-focus lens for APS-C mirrorless cameras, available in silver or black							·			17	43	59.3	23.5	115
23mm f/1.2 Nokton Aspherical	£629		Lightweight manual-focus lens for APS-C cameras that's available in both Fujifilm X and Nikon Z mounts						·	·			18	46	59.3	43.8	214
27mm f/2 Ultron	£449		Small, lightweight prime lens for Fujifilm cameras with a 41mm equivalent angle of view							·			25	43	59.3	23.5	120
35mm f/0.9 Nokton Aspherical	£1200		Ultra-fast manual-focus standard prime for Fujifilm APS-C cameras							·			35	62	72.7	64.9	492
35mm f/1.2 Nokton	£599		Fast standard prime for Fujifilm X and Nikon Z mounts is specifically designed for the smaller APS-C sensor						·	·			30	46	59.6	39.8	195
35mm f/2 Macro Apo-Ultron	£649		Manual focus macro lens for APS-C mirrorless offering half life-size magnification						·	·			16	49	60.7	58.4	265
50mm f/1.2 Nokton	£599		Large-aperture short-telephoto prime for APS-C mirrorless cameras with manual focus and aperture ring							·			39	58	63.9	49	290
10mm f/5.6 Hyper Wide Heliar	£749		Covers a phenomenal 130° angle of view, with optics designed to minimise distortion					·				·	50	n/a	67.8	58.7	312
15mm f/4.5 Super Wide Heliar III	£649		Compact, lightweight ultra-wideangle manual-focus prime that still accepts 58mm filters					·	·			·	30	58	66.4	62.3	294
21mm f/1.4 Nokton Aspherical	£1149		Large-aperture wideangle prime specifically designed for Sony full-frame mirrorless cameras					·				·	25	62	70.5	79.5	560
21mm f/3.5 Color-Skopar Asph	£549		Compact wideangle prime with manual focus and aperture operation					·				·	20	52	62.8	39.9	230
28mm f/1.5 Nokton Aspherical	£799		Relatively small large-aperture wideangle prime, with manual focus and aperture control					·	·			·	28	49	62.6	55	320
35mm f/1.2 Nokton SE	£849		Super-fast yet relatively compact prime, with 'Still Edition' design optimised for photography not video					·				·	30	58	66.5	59.9	387
35mm f/1.4 Nokton Asph	£639		'Classic' lens based on symmetrical optical design that only uses spherical lens elements					·				·	30	58	67	39.6	262
35mm f/2 Apo-Lanthar	£899		Promises the highest resolution and colour correction of all of Voigtlander's E-mount lenses					·	·			·	35	49	62.5	67.3	352
40mm f/1.2 Nokton	£810		World's first full-frame lens with a super-fast f/1.2 aperture, promising pleasing bokeh			·		·	·			·	35	58	70.1	59.3	420
40mm f/1.2 Nokton SE	£749		'Stills Edition' version of this fast prime is smaller, lighter and more affordable					·				·	35	58	66.5	51.9	340
50mm f/1.0 Nokton Asph	£1699		Impressively compact ultra-large-aperture manual focus lens for Canon RF, Nikon Z, and Sony E mount			·		·	·			·	45	62	67.6	66.6	598
50mm f/1.2 Nokton	£899		Super-fast manual-focus prime boasts 12 aperture blades for attractive background blur					·				·	45	58	70.1	58.8	434
50mm f/1.2 Nokton SE	£849		SE version does without switchable clicked/clickless aperture mechanism					·				·	45	58	66.5	58.5	383
50mm f/2 Apo-Lanthar	£869		Fully manual lens with apochromatic optics designed to completely eliminate colour fringing					·	·			·	45	49	62.6	61.3	354
65mm f/2 Macro Apo-Lanthar	£749		High-quality apochromatic macro lens designed for Sony mirrorless offers half life-size reproduction					·	·			·	31	67	78	91.3	625
75mm f/1.5 Nokton Aspherical	£849		Short telephoto, manual-focus portrait lens for Canon RF-mount mirrorless cameras			·						·	50	62	71.9	74	525
75mm f/1.8 Portrait Heliar	£899		Unusual short-telephoto portrait lens with spherical aberration control to manipulate out-of-focus blur					·				·	70	62	70	88	515
110mm f/2.5 Macro Apo-Lanthar	£899		Manual-focus macro lens with 1:1 magnification and premium apochromatic optics					·				·	35	58	78.4	99.7	771
ZEISS MIRRORLESS																	
Touit 12mm f/2.8 Distagon T*	£959	5★	Designed specifically for Sony NEX and Fujifilm X-series CSC cameras. Very impressive performance					·		·			18	67	82	68	270
Touit 32mm f/1.8 Planar T*	£700	4.5★	Optimised for use with APS-C format sensors, a fast standard lens for Fujifilm X-series cameras					·		·			23	52	72	76	200
Touit 50mm f/2.8 Planar T*	£589		Macro 1:1 lens for extreme close-ups, as well as shooting portraits or panoramas as a light tele-lens					·		·			15	52	75	91	290
Batis 18mm f/2.8	£990		The Batis range is for mirrorless full-frame system cameras from Sony					·				·	25	77	78	95	330
Loxia 21mm f/2	£1230		Compact manual-focus wideangle prime purpose-designed for Sony Alpha 7-series cameras					·				·	25	52	62	72	394
Batis 25mm f/2	£980	5★	A wideangle lens for Sony full-frame users offering unrivalled quality					·				·	20	67	81	92	355
Loxia 25mm f/2.4	£1190	5★	Gorgeous but ever-so-pricey compact manual focus prime, with absolutely stunning optics					·				·	25	52	62	69.5	375
Loxia 35mm f/2	£1015		Small wideangle manual-focus prime intended for Sony Alpha 7 users					·				·	30	52	62	59	340
Batis 40mm f/2 CF	£1130	5★	Bridges the gap between Batis 25mm and 85mm lenses and features close-focusing ability					·				·	24	67	91	93	361
Loxia 50mm f/2	£740		Manual-focus standard prime with premium optics and E mount for Sony Alpha 7 users					·				·	45	52	62	59	320
Otus ML 50mm f/1.4	£2100		Premium manual-focus large aperture standard prime for Canon, Nikon and Sony users			·		·	·			·	50	67	77	100	677
Batis 85mm f/1.8	£909	5★	A high-quality medium prime for wedding and portrait shooters, developed for Sony's Alpha 7 series	·				·				·	80	67	78	105	475
Loxia 85mm f/2.4	£1199		A compact, manual-focus, short telephoto lens for the mirrorless Sony Alpha series					·				·	80	52	62.5	108	594
Otus ML 85mm f/1.4	£2350		Premium manual-focus large aperture short-telephoto portrait prime for Canon, Nikon and Sony users			·		·	·			·	80	77	88	113	1033
Batis 135mm f/2.8	£1749	5★	Absolutely stunning, super-sharp image-stabilised portrait lens for Sony full-frame mirrorless	·				·				·	87	67	84	120	614

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TAMRON 25-200MM

f/2.8-5.6 Di III VXD G2

This lens is the successor to the highly acclaimed 28-200mm F/2.8-5.6 Di III RXD, reborn as an advanced 2nd-generation "G2" model. It offers improved image quality and faster, more precise autofocus powered by TAMRON's VXD linear motor focus mechanism. Experience the full potential of an all-in-one zoom, reimagined.

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F/1.4 DG | ART

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F/2.8 DI III VC VXD G2

NIKON Z

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SAMYANG AF 24-60MM

f/2.8

This lens offers a full-frame focal range that covers wide to standard subjects, which is ideal for photographers and hybrid creators who want to shoot different genres with a single portable zoom. With a constant f/2.8 aperture it provides consistent exposure and control over depth of field, while maintaining excellent low-light capability.

DJI RS 5

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The new DJI RS 5 features touchscreen subject selection with the new tracking module, smooth balancing from fine-tuning knobs, and direct control via the new briefcase handle - all backed by faster charging and extended battery life.

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908509	Canon RF 15-30mm f4.5-6.3 IS STM	£431
909599	Canon RF 24-50mm f4.5-6.3 IS STM	£159
909491	Canon RF-S 18-150mm f3.5-6.3 IS STM	£329
908392	Canon RF-S 55-210mm f5-7.1 IS STM	£339

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909451	Fujifilm 50-140mm f2.8 R LM OIS WR XF	£749
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909126	Fujifilm 55-200mm f3.5-4.8 R LM OIS XF	£299
906944	Fujifilm X-E4 Mirrorless Body	£999
909633	Fujifilm X-T5 Mirrorless Body (2,000 Shutter Count)	£1199

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907809	Nikon 10.5mm f2.8G ED DX Fisheye	£249
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909649	Nikon 105mm f2.8G IF-ED AF-S VR Micro-Nikkor	£349
909583	Nikon 18-105mm f3.5-5.6G ED AF-S DX VR NIKKOR	£99
909636	Nikon 18-140mm f3.5-5.6G ED AF-S DX NIKKOR VR	£149
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909565	Sigma 24-70mm f2.8 DG DN ART (Sony FE)	£599
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909020	Sigma 30mm f1.4 DC DN Contemporary (Canon EF-M)	£229
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905699	Sony 50mm f2.5 G	£399
909605	Sony 55-210mm f4.5-5.6 E OSS	£159
909211	Sony 70-200mm f2.8 GM OSS FE	£1399
908474	Sony 70-200mm f4G OSS FE	£749
909527	Sony 70-200mm f4G OSS II FE	£1099
903432	Sony 85mm f1.4 GM FE	£899
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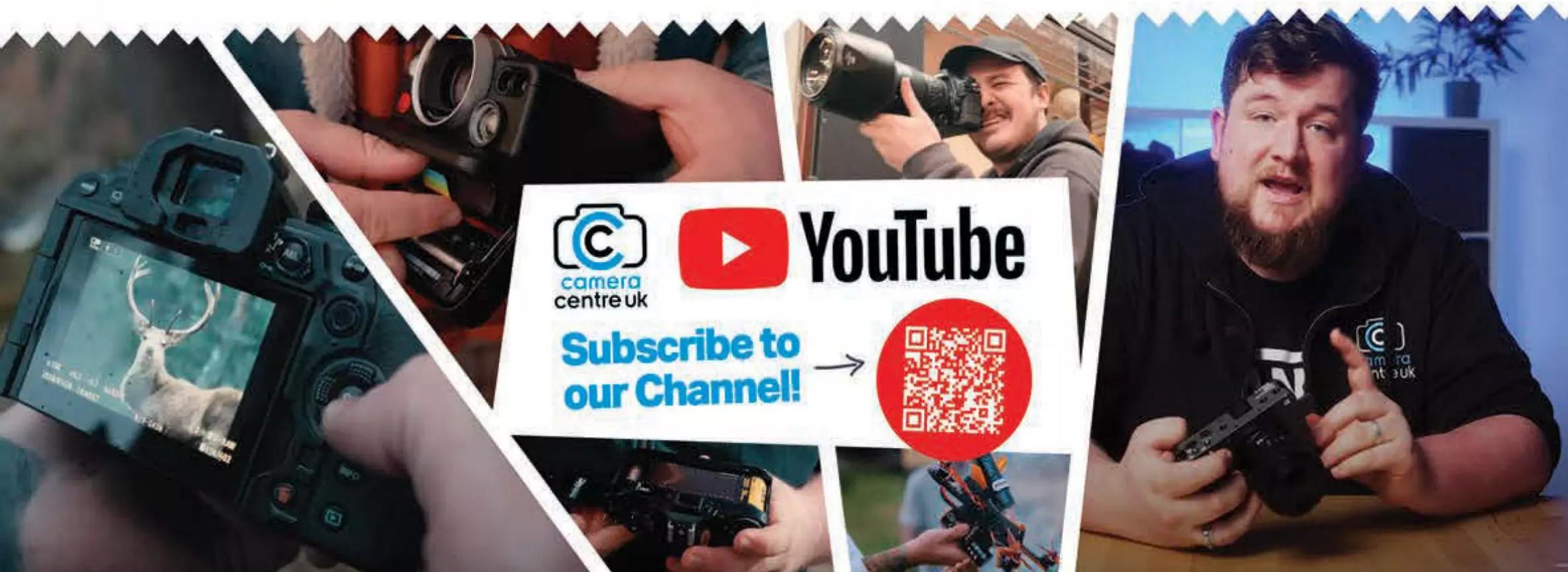

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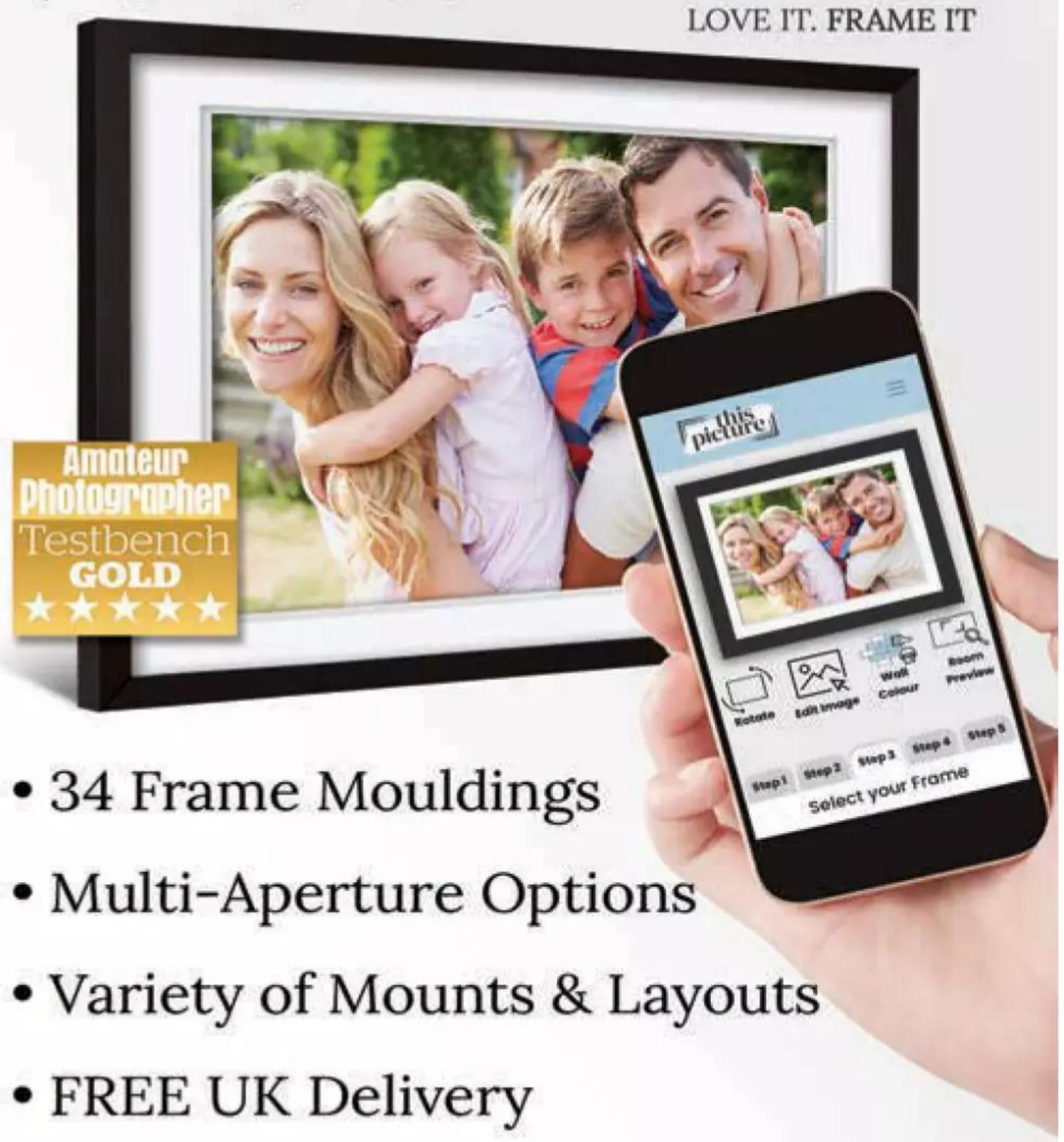

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Final Analysis

Peter Dench considers...

Cannes photographers, 1989 by Derek Ridgers

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I was once on assignment in Monaco for *The Sunday Times Magazine*. It was a blisteringly hot day so I chose to pull on a pair of too-short shorts for the day's photography. Walking around Port Hercule harbour I came across a party on a luxury yacht. I realised my error, returned to my hotel room, swapped my too-short shorts for a pair of smart light grey linen slacks and returned to the yacht party. After explaining to the PR about my assignment, they gave me the once over and nodded me on board.

I spent the afternoon swerving among trays of fizz, ducking between bikinis and even got to say Cheers! with actor Ted Danson. Later I was invited to an evening Gala that would provide the core images for my article. I never forgot the lesson. Always wear the right trousers.

I first saw this image reviewing Derek Ridgers book *Cannes* (IDEA 2025). It doesn't make me proud to be a photographer. Most of the snappers clearly didn't get the memo. The shorts are far too short. And the shirts – unbuttoned to the navel. Some have no shirts on at all. Collectively it's a sartorial disgrace.

Ridgers has poked the hornet's nest walking into their shot. The ultimate photo bomb. Ridgers admits to rarely talking to the other photographers but often being shouted at by them – preferring to keep his focus for fear of missing a good shot.

Who did he step in front of? There are about 50 photographers in this picture. All are men. I would bet my Ray Bans they are photographing a woman. Most of them have a look of frustration bordering on menace. Clearly triggered by Ridgers' few seconds of defiance. He has unsuccessfully tried to find a photo shot from the photographers' point of view.

The reaction from the Kevin Keegan-esque snapper bottom right wearing a 'ream' Lacoste tracksuit top is typical. His shorts are so short you can practically see… let's not go there. It's a photo camera brands must salivate over. No smartphones. Just one global brotherhood of Yashica, Praktica, JVC, Olympus and Canon cameras. I think 'Keegan' has a Kodak Instamatic 155X or 255X, he may not even be a pro-photographer, just out on the razzle.

It's a predatory image depicting the carnal appetite of the festival's paparazzi. But also a historic image. Because of the evolving French privacy law of droit à l'image (a right to one's image) it's harder to publish photos of people in public without their permission. The practice by photographers of Upskirting became illegal, 29 years after this image was shot.

I wonder how many of these photographers would consent to be in this photo today?

Peter Dench is a photographer, writer, curator and presenter based in London. He is one of the co-curators of Photo North and has been exhibited dozens of times. He has published a number of books including *The Dench Dozen: Great Britons of Photography Vol 1; Dench Does Dallas; The British Abroad; A&E: Alcohol & England* and *England Uncensored*. Visit **peterdench.com**

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