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April/May 2026



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\*As of August 22, 2025, among 24–70mm f/2.8 interchangeable lenses for full-frame/FX-format mirrorless cameras. Based on Nikon research.





# Australian Photography

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IMAGE: GETTY

## MIKE O'CONNOR, EDITOR

As parts of our tourist infrastructure begin to show the strain of years of underinvestment, the caretakers of some of Australia's most iconic natural sites are beginning to confront an uncomfortable reality: popularity comes with a price.

Recently, you may have heard that Lincoln's Rock was forced to close to visitors after a massive influx put pressure on local parking and raised safety concerns. The Blue Mountains aren't alone. It has now been announced that visitors to the Twelve Apostles along the Great Ocean Road will soon be charged an entry fee to help offset the cost of a new \$126 million visitor centre.

Globally, the relative calm of the pandemic years seems to have been replaced by a new kind of tourism frenzy. Many destinations have gone from empty to overwhelmed in a matter of months, while attracting a different kind of traveller: one who arrives to capture the photo, then quickly moves on to the next trending location. Tourism trends come and go, but it is difficult to see this cycle changing any time soon.

The problem is social media continues to concentrate demand on a relatively small number of photogenic places, often ones that were never designed to handle large volumes of visitors in the first place. And the solution increasingly being adopted around the world is simple: user pays.

In New Zealand, the international visitor levy has already been increased, while more controversial measures are appearing on the ground. At sites such as Aoraki / Mount Cook, metered parking has been introduced

at some visitor car parks to help manage both demand and maintenance costs. It's likely that Lincoln's Rock will establish something similar down the track.

There is a case for this. Charging a fee forces visitors to decide whether opening their wallet justifies the experience, while also creating a funding stream for infrastructure and conservation that governments have often struggled to prioritise. But you could argue that these changes are less about managing tourism than they are about responding to decades of declining investment in the places that tourism depends on. The result is that regions already facing rising costs for local ratepayers are increasingly asking visitors to contribute directly to the upkeep of the landscapes they have come to see.

The shift toward entry fees, levies and managed access is coming, whether we like it or not. As social media continues to amplify photogenic locations, the challenge will be finding a balance between sharing these places and protecting them. Photographers like you and I, whose images often spark that interest in the first place, may increasingly find ourselves caught between two competing priorities: showing the world these locations and helping ensure they are not loved to death. ☘



APRIL - MAY 2026

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Photography

AUSTRALIANPHOTOGRAPHY.COM



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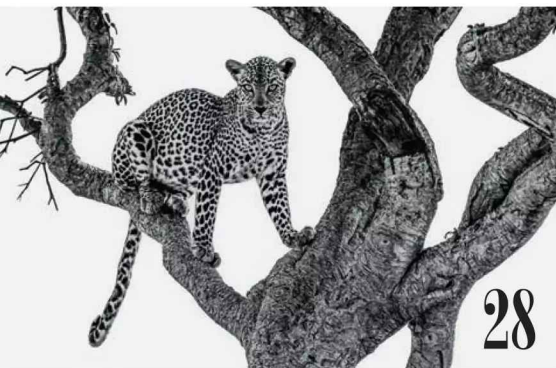
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### THIS ISSUE'S COVER

Captured by WA-based photographer Harman Singh Heer in Lake Nakuru National Park, Kenya, this lioness is beautifully framed in the first light of the day. Canon R5, EF100-400mm f/4.5-5.6L IS II USM lens @ 400mm. 1/200s @ f5.6, ISO 320.



**NEW**

# Canon

## EOS R6 MARK III

### UNLEASH YOUR PASSION

The new Canon EOS R6 Mark III is shaping up to be the ultimate hybrid tool for the versatile travel photographer. Built with a durable yet travel-friendly chassis, it delivers significant upgrades, starting with a new 35.2MP full-frame sensor for high-resolution stills that allow for creative cropping. Its speed is game-changing, offering up to an incredible 40FPS continuous shooting with an advanced Pre-Continuous Shooting mode to perfectly capture fleeting moments. For videographers, the 7K Open Gate recording uses the entire 3:2 sensor area, providing unmatched flexibility in post-production.



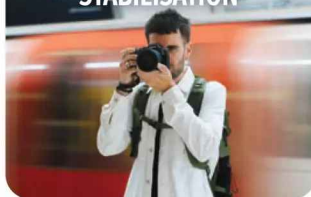
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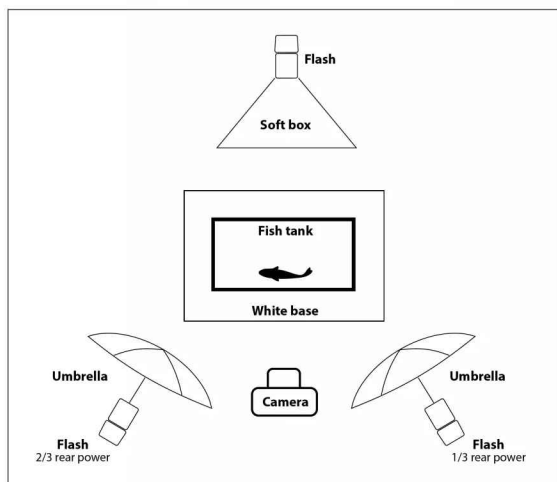




BEHIND THE LENS

# THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

PHOTOGRAPHER: DOUG GIMESY



LEFT: For the cleanest results, a few key setup details matter: use very clean water; place the tank on a white base so it acts as a reflector and creates a gentle light gradient; position the camera directly front-on and mount it on a tripod; and manually set focus just inside the front glass to keep the subject sharp. Lock exposure and lighting settings in manual beforehand, have someone ready to wipe away splashes, and slightly overexpose the background (around one stop) so it blows out to white and hides minor floating debris.





## BEHIND THE LENS

Thought extinct in Victoria until recently, when I got the call to drive 300kms to Kerang on a 43°C day to hopefully photograph the Southern purple-spotted gudgeon (*Mogurnda adspersa*), I jumped at the chance. For those who don't know anything about this fish, and I'm sure you're not alone, it's a slow-moving freshwater fish native to Australia, that's about 6–12 cm in length.

Now I'm not an underwater photographer, but given they live in murky water with a visibility range of about 5cm, and being super rare, I knew finding one and taking an image in situ would never really be an option. So, we decided the best strategy would be to photograph one that the ecologists had already collected as part of their catch-and-release research, by briefly placing it in a portable fish tank and taking some shots before it was released back into the wild.

Being such a rare and unknown animal, I really wanted the viewer to focus primarily on the fish. However, I also wanted to give the fish some sense of

place, a sense of being in water. So, to do this I decided to apply a technique that was inspired by my friend Alex Wiles' magnificent Floodplain series, where the result is that the fish is not only seen on a white background, but the viewer also sneaks a side glimpse of the water/air interface in which the fish is swimming.

While the final shot was a little rushed, I'm happy with the results. If I was doing it again though, I think I'd consider trying it on a black background, using a touch of dramatic side lighting, just to potentially add mood as well as a more dynamic feel of depth – no aquatic pun intended!

**NIKON D750, NIKON 105 F/2.8 MACRO LENS. 1/250S @ F/13, ISO 400.  
OFF CAMERA FLASHES: TWO THROUGH UMBRELLAS PLUS ONE AT THE REAR  
THROUGH TRANSLUCENT PERSPEX.**



# QUICK SNAPS



## NIKON'S NEW Z 70–200MM F/2.8 S II ARRIVES

**N**IKON has announced the local release of the new NIKKOR Z 70–200mm f/2.8 VR S II, a fast telephoto zoom lens designed for the company's full-frame Z-mount mirrorless cameras, promising major gains in portability, autofocus speed and optical performance.

Positioned within Nikon's premium S-Line, the new lens officially becomes the lightest 70–200mm f/2.8 zoom in its class, weighing just 998 grams.

That represents a significant reduction of around 26 per cent compared with the original Z 70–200mm f/2.8 VR S launched in 2020, achieved through a complete redesign of the optical layout and internal mechanisms.

Nikon says the weight savings will be particularly noticeable for photographers working long days in the field, as well as for videographers using gimbals or shooting handheld.

And of course, despite the lighter build, the lens maintains a constant f/2.8 aperture throughout the zoom range, covering focal lengths commonly used for sport, wildlife, portraiture and events.

Autofocus performance has also seen a substantial upgrade. The adoption of Nikon's new Silky Swift VCM (SSVCM) motor delivers faster, quieter and more precise focusing, with autofocus

speeds claimed to be approximately 3.5 times quicker than the previous model.

AF tracking while zooming has also been improved by around 40 per cent, according to Nikon.

Optically, Nikon has also reduced the total number of elements by strategically incorporating Super ED, aspherical ED and aspherical elements to better control chromatic aberration. At the same time, 'advanced' coatings, including Nikon's Meso Amorphous Coat and ARNEO Coat, are designed to further suppress flare and ghosting in challenging light.

The lens also introduces several practical refinements, including direct compatibility with Arca-Swiss tripod heads along with an internal zoom mechanism. Additionally, an adjustment window allows filters to be rotated without removing the hood, while vibration reduction of up to 6.0 stops is available when paired with compatible cameras.

The lens has a minimum focus distance of just 0.38 metres at the wide end and support for Nikon's Z teleconverters.

And the price? Yours for \$5,399, and available for pre-order now.

*Check it out on [Nikon.com.au](https://www.nikon.com.au).*



© Jono Allen, *Māhina*. First Place, Underwater, and Grand Prize winner of World Nature Photographer of the Year.

## QUEENSLAND PHOTOGRAPHER TAKES TOP HONOURS AT WORLD NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD

**A**N Australian photographer has taken out the top prize at the World Nature Photography Awards, with Queensland-based photographer Jono Allen named World Nature Photographer of the Year for 2026.

Allen's winning image captures a rare white humpback whale swimming closely with her mother, highlighting a quiet and intimate moment in the ocean.

Captured at Vava'u, Tonga, this rare white humpback calf – named *Māhina*, meaning "moon" in Tongan – "glowed like a beam of light through the deep blue," he said.

Only 1 in 40,000 humpbacks are born with this lack of pigmentation.

"Sharing this moment with *Māhina* and her protective mother is a memory that will live with me forever. It was undoubtedly one of the most extraordinary days I have ever experienced in the ocean – and perhaps ever will," he said.

The 2026 edition of the awards attracted entries from photographers in 51 countries across six continents.

*You can see more finalists at [australianphotography.com](https://australianphotography.com)*



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## CREATIVE ARTS ENROLMENTS CRATER AS POLICIES BEGIN TO BITE

**NEW** research has highlighted a shrinking future for Australia's creative industries, with more than 40 courses and degrees cut in less than a decade as students increasingly turn to STEM subjects.

Published in the *Australian Journal of Education*, the study, *The Polycrisis for Arts and Creative Education in Australia*, shows that enrolments in schools, TAFEs, and universities have steadily declined since 2018, with pathways into creative arts, including photography, being particularly affected.

The decline accelerated after the introduction of the federal Job-Ready Graduates policy in 2021, which increased fees for arts and creative degrees while lowering costs for many STEM programs.

Higher costs have coincided with course closures and some programs being placed under review, raising concerns that opportunities for creatives across the breadth of the industry are narrowing ever further.

National data from the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority show that Year 12 arts enrolments fell sharply between 2012 and 2022. Male participation dropped from 22.2 per cent to 15.8 per cent, while female enrolments fell from 37.6 per cent to 26.9 per cent. Across states and territories, all except ACT saw declines in ATAR arts enrolments.

Drama and Dance saw the largest declines nationally, followed by Media, Music, and Visual Arts, with photography courses among those impacted.

Interestingly, the trend runs counter to the government's National Cultural Policy, *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place*, which aims to support creative career pathways for Australia's 3.2 million young people aged 15–24.

At the same time, it is thought creative industries in Australia continue to employ more people than mining and contribute \$67.4 billion to the economy, some 2.5 per cent of GDP.

The most recent national arts participation report commissioned by Creative Australia (2023) indicates that 97 per cent of Australians engage with the arts, and that 74 per cent of Australians surveyed agreed that the arts should be an important part of education, underlining the sector's ongoing importance.



## AI IS MAKING DIGITAL STORAGE HUGE EXPENSIVE

**AI** is drastically changing the creative industries and work in 2026, but a lesser realised effect is how it is also reshaping storage markets, with direct consequences for photographers.

Two of the world's largest hard drive manufacturers, Western Digital and Seagate Technology, recently announced during their Q2 earnings calls that they are fully sold out for 2026.

Western Digital CEO Tiang Yew Tan said, "We're pretty much sold out for calendar year 2026," while Seagate CEO William Mosley added, "Our nearline capacity is fully allocated through calendar year 2026."

And although retail shelves remain stocked for SSDs and other forms of storage for now, the trend is clear – manufacturers are increasingly prioritising high-volume, long-term contracts with enterprise and AI clients over consumer retail demand, which is starting to inflate prices for consumers.

It's likely this won't change anytime soon either – Tan explained that Western Digital has contracts with three of its top five clients extending as far as 2028, and Mosley said Seagate's demand visibility is strong through 2027.

The effects of this shift are already apparent in Australia, with storage and memory prices climbing sharply over the past year.

Jason Puschmann, founder and managing director at reseller Computer Alliance, told CRN Australia this week that "a 4 TB Samsung SSD used to cost close to \$500 and now it retails for \$1,149. If you need to purchase RAM, a 16 GB component was priced at \$60, now they're selling for \$200 to \$300."

These increases also affect the cost of high-capacity drives and memory, as well as SD cards essential for photographers handling large RAW files and 4K or 8K video.

Rising prices are not the only challenge. AI infrastructure is consuming increasing amounts of RAM and NAND flash memory, components critical to both enterprise computing and high-speed storage. In turn, this makes SSDs and hard drives more expensive and potentially harder to source.

It's worth noting that the challenges aren't across the board, at least for now. Major hard drive manufacturer Toshiba has remained largely silent on its capacity, and SanDisk, which split from Western Digital in 2025, has not reported capacity limitations for its consumer SSDs.

For photographers, backing up large photo libraries or shooting high-resolution video now carries a higher cost, and the market shifts don't appear to be changing anytime soon. If you've been holding off getting that new SSD, now might be the time to buy. ☁



# INSPIRING PHOTOGRAPHY

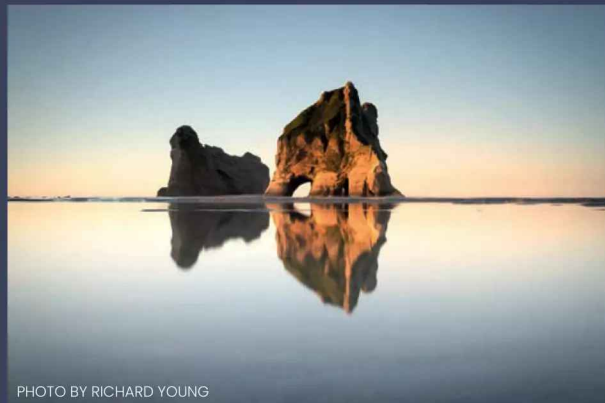


PHOTO BY RICHARD YOUNG

## COURSES, WORKSHOPS AND TOURS IN NZ



PHOTO BY GLEN HOWEY



PHOTO BY KEN WRIGHT

### **New Zealand Winter Photography Tour**

7 Days

25th – 31st July 2026

Mackenzie Country – Mt Cook –  
Ashburton Lakes

### **New Zealand Winter Photography Tour**

7 Days

3rd – 9th August 2026

Ashburton Lakes – Mackenzie Country –  
Mt Cook

### **NZ South Island Highlights Photo Tour**

19 Days

17th September – 5th October 2026

Milford – Catlins – Wanaka – Mt Cook –  
Kaikoura – Marlborough – Golden Bay

### **NZ Southern Explorer Photo Tour**

11 Days

17th – 27th September 2026

Milford – Catlins – Wanaka – Mt Cook

### **NZ Southern Coastal Photography Tour**

7 Days

29th September – 5th October 2026

Kaikoura – Marlborough – Golden Bay



PHOTO BY GLEN HOWEY



PHOTO BY GLEN HOWEY

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YOUR BEST SHOT

# YOUR BEST SHOT

## ABSTRACT

One thing we love about Abstract photography is how it allows photographers to use shape, colour, texture, light and form to create images that are open to interpretation. This issue, we were wowed by your truly creative shots that left so many questions unanswered, and had us wondering “how did they do that!?”

THIS  
MONTH'S  
WINNER





HIGHLY  
COMMEDED

## LYNTON STACEY

*A swirl of trees and snow*

## EDITOR'S COMMENT

Captured after a good snowfall overnight in Cranbrook, which blanketed the trees and ground, Lynton Stacey tells us he converted this image to black and white before taking it into Adobe Photoshop and applying the Twirl filter. The result is an abstract that suggests swirling snow among the trees, with just a hint of branches lingering at the edges of the frame.

This is one of the more effective uses of a Photoshop filter we've seen in some time, producing a dynamic,

flowing effect that's immediately arresting—particularly with the restrained black-and-white palette. The subtle inclusion of the trees, even if only in the corners, helps anchor the image with a touch of reality, adding balance and intent to an otherwise fluid abstraction.

## TECHNICAL DETAILS

Sony A6600, 16-55mm f/2.8 lens @ 17mm. 1/250s @ f2.8, ISO 400.

## GREG JOHANNES

*Alien Planet*

## EDITOR'S COMMENT

Greg Johannes captured this remarkable image on a dive in West Papua.

"I'd intended to shoot wide that day but the visibility was quite low when I spotted this amazing bubble-tip anemone," he says. "I cruised in extra close and fired up the camera's macro settings and came away with this look into another world."

It's that otherworldly feeling that makes this image so effective and our pick as the winner this month. There's a wonderfully mysterious feeling about the shot as the viewer is left wondering what it is they're looking at, made all the more effective by the lovely colours and unique shapes and textures. Well done.

## TECHNICAL DETAILS

Olympus TG-6, 1/50s @ f2, ISO 200.

Thanks to the team at Blonde Robot, Greg Johannes has won a Think Tank DarkLight Backpack in 20L size. Also available in 14L, the DarkLight is the ideal blend of tactical style and everyday functionality. Whether you're an enthusiast capturing cityscapes or an advanced amateur exploring the great outdoors, it offers a durable and comfortable solution to carry your gear. Built with a laser-cut MOLLE panel and tactical webbing rails, this rucksack allows you to precisely configure your loadout.



SEE MORE AT [THINKTANKPHOTO.COM](http://THINKTANKPHOTO.COM)





## DEBBIE HARTLEY

*Shattered Liberty*

### HOW I DID IT

This image was taken during our cold winter last year when the temperatures were at around minus 3, and ice had formed in our bird bath. I love taking photos of the ice, as you never know what ice forms you are going to get.

### TECHNICAL DETAILS

Canon R5, Canon 100mm macro lens. 1/160s @ f5.6, ISO 400.



## BILL ROBERTS

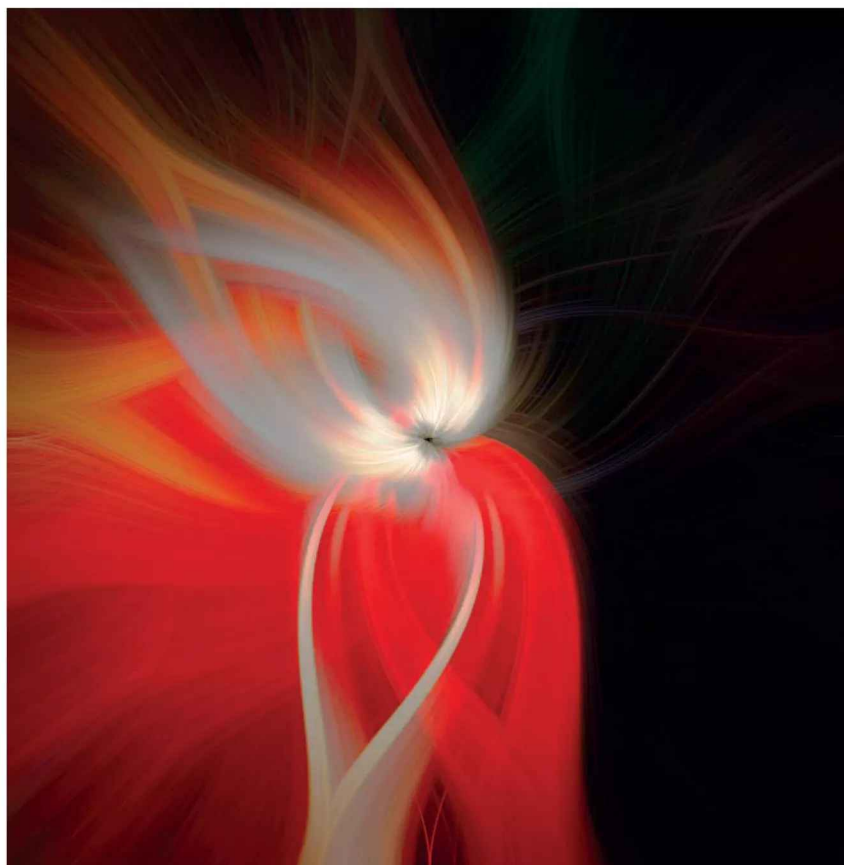
*The Lancer*

### HOW I DID IT

I used a spiral filter in Photoshop combined with a photo taken at a Medieval Faire of a Lancer to create this image. Several brightness and hue/saturation layers were used to increase intensity and contrast.

### TECHNICAL DETAILS

Canon 5D mark III, EF 100-400 mm lens @ 400mm. 1/640s @ f5.6, ISO 400.







## JOHN LAFFAN

*Not what it seems*

### HOW I DID IT

The Opera House is always a challenge for me to photograph, as unfortunately a lot of areas are blocked from the public. This was the place for me.

### TECHNICAL DETAILS

Canon R8, RF 24-105mm f4 lens  
@ 24mm. 1/50s @ f4, ISO 125.

## HOWARD MOUTRIE

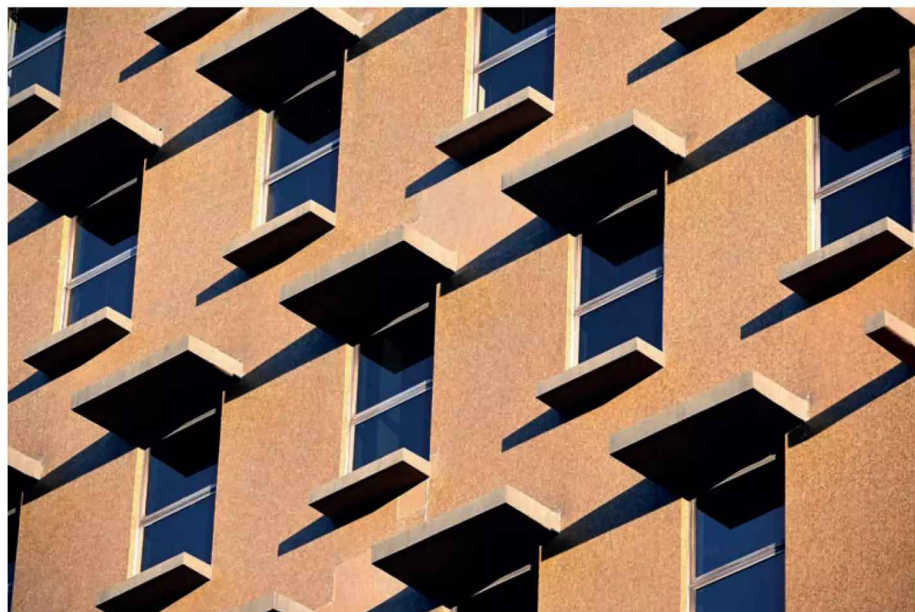
*Untitled*

### HOW I DID IT

Along the old Route 66 in USA there are many old vehicles which provide abundant opportunities for abstract images. In this instance, I was drawn to the cracked paint because of the way the cracks were graded in size in much the same way as tree branches reduce in size. At the same time, I liked how the large cracks evoked an image of dancing figures.

### TECHNICAL DETAILS

Nikon D7200, 18-140mm lens @ 70mm. 1/50s @ f10, ISO 200.



## ETIENNE VAN ROOYEN

*Windows*

### HOW I DID IT

While wandering Melbourne's CBD with my brother, I was drawn to a rhythm formed by light and shadow across this row of windows. What caught my eye was how the repetition erased individuality, creating a sense of infinite continuation. Stark angles and strong contrast flatten the architecture into pattern, echoing the surrealism of a René Magritte painting.

### TECHNICAL DETAILS

Nikon Z 50, Nikkor Z DX 50-250mm f/4.5-6.3 @ 130mm. 1/125s @ f 7.1, ISO 400.







## KATIE TURNBULL

*Untitled*

### HOW I DID IT

On my morning walks I collect items from around our farm. Lately I have been collecting bones, as the intricacies of them fascinate me. This is a kangaroo skull that the wedge-tail eagles had picked clean and then it has been exposed to the elements for a few months. The detail in the fontanelles is amazing, along with the grooves where the veins sat. An abstract picture of an object crafted by nature.

### TECHNICAL DETAILS

Canon R5, Canon 100mm Macro lens. 1/100s @ f13, ISO 1250.

## HOW TO ENTER

**YOUR BEST SHOT IS OPEN TO ANYONE IN AUSTRALIA. TO ENTER AN IMAGE IN THE COMP, CHECK THE COMPETITION THEMES AND ENTER AT [AUSTRALIANPHOTOGRAPHY.COM/YAFPHOTOCOMPETITION/YOUR-BEST-SHOT](https://australianphotography.com/yafphotocompetition/your-best-shot)**

### UPCOMING COMPETITION THEMES



**JUNE 2026**  
BIG AND SMALL  
31 March 2026



**AUGUST 2026**  
SOFT LIGHT  
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Photographed in Casablanca, Morocco, this photo uses the silhouette of a man standing beneath the arches of the grand Hassan II Mosque to give the image a sense of scale. Sony A7C II, Sony 40mm f/2.5 G lens. 1/1000s @ f/4, ISO 100.







PHOTO TIPS: CAPTURING PEOPLE

# THE HUMAN TOUCH

BY LODI PERTOVT

Great gear can capture perfect images—but only people can give them heart. In this feature, our 2025 Photographer of the Year People category winner lifts the lid on how he captures his powerful portraits.



## PHOTO TIPS: CAPTURING PEOPLE



As digital camera gear and post-processing software continue to improve, with AI chips dedicated to nailing focus with clinical precision and tools like Topaz AI designed to correct mistakes and recover images, it has never been easier to produce photographs that are technically competent and visually pleasing.

But there's one thing even the best gear can't do for us: tell a story. And one of the most powerful ways to do that is by adding a touch of humanity. A landscape can be beautiful, and a building can hold historic or architectural value, but it's through people that we can understand emotion, values, culture, juxtapositions, history, and lived experiences. Adding people to your photography can elevate something aesthetically pleasing into something memorable.

But navigating the delicate tightrope of including people into your photography can be daunting. With some deliberate decision making and thought ahead of time, it doesn't have to be.

### UNDERSTAND THE CULTURE

When visiting somewhere new, especially if you're there to take photos, one of the first settings I adjust is not on my camera, but rather in how I present myself and interact with others. And these settings are not dependent on the available light or the speed of the action, but on understanding the local culture.

Many places have cultural sensitivities or aversions that can get a reckless or unthinking photographer into trouble.

I lived in Morocco for two years and spent much of my time navigating the labyrinthine medinas in search of interesting compositions and compelling stories. But often what I found were cultural sensitivities that were just as difficult to navigate as the medinas themselves. Don't take photos of men if they're praying. Don't take photos of women whether they are praying or not.

In one instance, while fancying myself somewhat like some invisible street photographer or a Bruce Gilden type, I was caught taking a man's photo without his knowing in the middle of Ramadan. In response, the man chased me down the narrow market and rightly confronted me. It was a harsh lesson in respecting the local culture that completely shifted how I approached my photography.

Once I became aware of these sensitivities, I began to approach situations differently. I chose tighter focal lengths to create greater separation between myself and my subjects, and I started shooting with smaller, more compact cameras and lenses.

I have grown to love the Sony A7C II paired with the Sony 35mm f/1.8 prime as an excellent combination for most of my travel work, as the smaller body and prime lens appear less intimidating.

But, for places like Morocco, which can be highly photo-sensitive, a setup built around a smaller APS-C body, such as Fujifilm's X-M5 or X-E series, paired with a tighter 50mm-equivalent lens like their relatively compact 35mm f/2 works particularly well. Combined with a wider, compact prime such as the 18mm f/2, which offers a 28mm full-frame-equivalent field of view, this setup provides a strong balance between intimate detail shots and more contextual images within the narrow corridors of the medina, while keeping the kit as compact as possible.

And, while it might seem counterintuitive for photographers hoping to blend in and feel invisible, I found that always carrying my camera, either with a strap around my neck or simply in my hand, meant I needed fewer obvious movements to bring the camera up and take the shot. It also meant I was no longer hiding my intentions. My camera was there, front and centre. I was not showing it off and I was not interrupting the scene, but I was also not hiding it.





ABOVE: Shot during one of Guadalajara's Day of the Dead parades, this image frames a horseback Catrina between two luchadores. To take this image, I hailed down a bus of luchadores and politely requested to photograph them. I was initially denied but, endeared by my earnest request in Spanish, two of the Mexican wrestlers stopped the bus and decided to strike some fantastic poses. At that point, the Catrinas, whom I had previously photographed, approached and joined the composition in the background. Sony A7C II, Sigma 24-70 f/2.8 G2 lens @ 24mm. 1/100s @ f/8, ISO 100.

RIGHT: Shot during one of the Day of the Dead parades in Guadalajara, Mexico, this image captures the sort of intimacy only possible with my subject's awareness. Sony A7C II, Sigma 24-70mm f/2.8 G2 lens @ 70mm. 1/160s @ f/2.8, ISO 100.





## THE ART OF LANGUAGE

In addition to using a smaller setup, I also found myself smiling more and opening each interaction with the little Darija, the local dialect of Arabic, that I had learned. “Salaam, le bes? Alhamdulillah!” (Hello, how are you? Praise be to God!). What I discovered was that doors that once felt closed began to open on their own. While in Morocco I had the luxury of time, I have found that even in places I am only visiting for a few days, learning simple phrases like “hello” and “how are you” can be enough to make someone smile.

This was especially the case when photographing women. Whilst I was still turned away more often than not, approaching my photography with the cultural awareness that photographing women was sensitive meant that my rejections were typically less confrontational than they had been prior.

And it's this exact awareness that led me to take the photograph I am most proud of (You can see it to the right). Whilst visiting local markets in the south of Iraq, another Arabic Muslim culture, I noticed some of the female vendors, clad in conservative black chadors, were marked with faded tattoos of intricate details.

Traditional face and hand tattoos, known locally as daq or washm, have roots that date back thousands of years to ancient Mesopotamia. But, much like the hands and face tattoos of the Amazigh in Morocco, these markings are a fading practice, considered sinful, or haram, in modern Islam for needlessly hurting one of Allah's creatures. As such, the woman before me may be one of the last generations to bear these markings. My awareness of this delicate situation not only informed me of the significance of these markings, but also of how to approach the situation with finesse.

Knowing that an unmarried man striking up an unprovoked conversation with this woman could be considered improper, I instead chose to buy a handful of potatoes to throw in my backpack. After the ice was broken, mostly through pointing and a polite bow, I gently raised my camera and pointed at it for permission. She thought for a moment, then nodded.

I could have taken that photo with a longer lens or slammed my camera in her face without asking and dealt with the consequences later. But in approaching our interaction with respect and awareness, I was able to capture something I am proud of.

Much of this information can be learned ahead of time through Google searches and by reading blog posts or articles written by other photographers. However, it can also be learned on the ground by observing people's body language as you walk the streets with your camera.

One way I like to begin every visit to a new city or place is by joining a free local walking tour. I've found that guides will often explain how people are likely to react to a camera and can also offer useful advice on interesting places to visit during your stay.



## MAKE A CONNECTION

Not every culture is as photo sensitive as Morocco or Iraq, and how you approach developing relationships and showing respect can differ based on where you are in the globe. In rural Romania, it could look like sharing a drink of palinca with the locals. In Japan it can look like giving people space and silence. And in Mexico it can be as simple as having a laugh or treating people without judgement. But one thing that has been universal is the power of a warm smile.

It can seem somewhat counterintuitive, as a person smiling in travel photography can sometimes look like your subject has “broken character” or is simply posing for the photo. And yet, it's maybe the most useful piece of gear I have in my camera bag.







## PHOTO TIPS: CAPTURING PEOPLE



LEFT: Shot in Nasiriyah, Iraq, this image is the photograph I am most proud of. Her tattoos are the marks of a fading tradition that she may be one of the last to bear. Even her cigarette, which she lit whilst I was buying some potatoes, is a small mark of defiance, adding further texture to her story. It was an enormous honour and privilege to take this photograph. Sony A7C II, Sony 35mm f/1.8 lens. 1/125s @ f11, ISO 200.

BELOW, LEFT: My favourite part of Romania is the region of Maramureş, because of photos like this. Through the simple act of walking through various villages with a smile, a polite wave, some broken Romanian and a camera, I was invited to take some truly wholesome photographs. After visiting the village three days in a row and striking up small talk with this particular woman, I was invited to see her chickens and drink some coffee. Through Google Translate and charades, we were able to sustain entire conversations that, judging by this photo, brought both of us a great deal of joy. Sony A7C II, Sony 35mm f/1.8 Lens. 1/50s @ f1.8, ISO 320.

BELOW, RIGHT: Boys in a remote village in Northern Laos. Their laughter and unbridled joy was infectious and, in joining in with their mischief, I was able to build trust in the local community. From there, I was granted permission to photograph much of the village. Sony A7C II, Sigma 24-70mm f/2.8 G2 lens @ 44mm. 1/500s at f4, ISO 100.

### A SIDE NOTE ON RESPECT

Showing respect and consideration for your subject extends beyond how you interact with them and can include the choices you make in camera and how you frame your images. Consider how your composition positions your subject. Shooting someone at eye level invites the viewer to see them as an equal, while positioning the camera below the subject encourages admiration, asking the viewer to quite literally look up to them. By contrast, placing the camera above the subject and angling it downward can imply inferiority.

While there are always exceptions to these conventions, I want you to consider my photograph of the tattooed woman in the chador. Would the image tell the same story if the viewer were looking down on her? What story would be told if, while clad in her dark robes, she had to look up at me from below the camera?





## PHOTO TIPS: CAPTURING PEOPLE



This photograph was taken in the small villages of Maramureș, Romania, after an invitation to try some homemade palincă turned into an afternoon of laughter, culminating in a taste of fresh zacuscă made from roasted capsicum, eggplant, and tomatoes. Sony A7C II, Sony Zeiss 55mm f/1.8. 1/320s @ f/2.8, ISO 100.

Even when taking street photography or capturing images of religious ceremonies, I seldom try to hide the camera and instead try to put forward an authentic and friendly version of myself. In my experience, in being transparent and clear with my intention, people are less intimidated when I take their photo and, ironically, when discretion is desired, they pay less attention to me when I don't present myself as though I have something to hide.

### QUICK TIPS FOR BUILDING RAPPORT

**Show them the photo:** Turning the LCD screen and showing people the photos you have just taken can be a quick and effective way to build trust and make the interaction feel less transactional. It can also open new opportunities, as others may then ask to have their photo taken.

**Smile:** Never underestimate the power of a friendly smile. It signals that you are approachable, welcoming, and non-judgemental. A smile can also disarm someone who may have been caught off guard by your camera and help ease any tension if they were not ready to be photographed just yet. This is probably the most important tip and, fortunately, also the easiest to put into practice.

**Be yourself:** This advice applies to both photography and dating(!). Few people want their photo taken by someone lurking in an alley, trying to hide behind discretion. That kind of behaviour can make your presence feel uncomfortable and your intentions unclear. Instead, be yourself, enter the scene with confidence, and take your photos as if you have nothing to hide. This approach also gives you the freedom to be more deliberate in how you compose your images, rather than being limited by what you think you can get away with.

And when I am seen taking a photo of someone unawares, diffusing the situation is often as easy as a gentle smile, a wave, and turning the screen to face them so they can have a look. In the very rare instances where someone is displeased, or asks me to delete an image, whilst technically I know that in most countries I don't legally "have to", I believe no one photo is worth more than someone's comfort or dignity.

I once met a photographer in India whose approach to photographing people was very different from my own. He told me my images felt manufactured, which is probably a fair criticism of some of my work, and went on to argue that "real" photography only happens when a subject doesn't know they're being photographed. When I looked through his images, many of them were exceptional, and I couldn't deny the strength of his eye. Still, something about the conversation unsettled me. I found myself thinking about the distance between photographer and subject, and what it means to make an image without ever acknowledging the person within it.

Ultimately, there's no single right or wrong way to photograph people. Different approaches carry different intentions, risks, and rewards. But for me, photographing people has only ever made sense when the person comes before the photo. That perspective has shaped not just the images I've made, but the experiences that surround them. It has led to moments where a camera becomes an icebreaker, an invitation to share palincă or tacos, or a way of being welcomed, however briefly, into someone else's world. I'm not sure I could say the same if I felt my camera mattered more than the people framed within its viewfinder. 🌟



# CAPTURE THE MURRAY AT ITS UNTOUCHED BEST



IMAGE: SANDY GODDARD

For photographers seeking rare access, quiet horizons and remarkable light, the Murray River Safari offers something few experiences can.

**O**perated by Murray River Trails, this four-day small-group journey explores remote reaches of the Murray River within the internationally significant Riverland Ramsar Wetlands.

This is no crowded river cruise, but an immersive eco-tourism experience designed for travellers who value nature, knowledge, and comfort.

Guests encounter vast shimmering outback lakes, ancient river red gum forests and towering red and orange cliffs that glow at sunrise and sunset. Reflections on still water create striking compositions in the calm of early morning, while clear, dry outback air provides exceptional conditions for night and astrophotography.

Wildlife opportunities are abundant. Each tour typically records 50 to 100 bird species including the vulnerable Regent Parrot, along with sightings of Red Kangaroos, Emus, Koalas and Lace Monitors in natural, undisturbed settings.

With a maximum of just 10 guests, photographers have space and time to compose thoughtfully. Aside from exploring beyond the banks each day, your purpose-built eco-houseboat is moored in a different stretch each night allowing uninterrupted access to stunning locations for golden hour and blue hour.

Days combine relaxed river cruising, short guided walks, vehicle access to remote wetlands and optional kayaking, making it easy to travel with camera equip-

ment while reaching otherwise inaccessible locations.

Evenings offer time to review images and enjoy a chef-designed menu showcasing local produce and regional wines.

For photographers seeking wilderness, wildlife and exceptional light - without sacrificing comfort - the Murray River Safari offers an inspiring new perspective on the Murray. 🌿

Find out more: [murrayrivertrails.com.au](http://murrayrivertrails.com.au)



IMAGE: LUKETSCHARVE



After being submerged in a pond, a hippo comes up for air. It looked quite comical, with watercress on its head forming a headpiece. I always try to look for more interesting elements to 'add' to the final shot. Nikon D850, 500mm f/4 lens. 1/1600s @ f4.5, ISO 200.





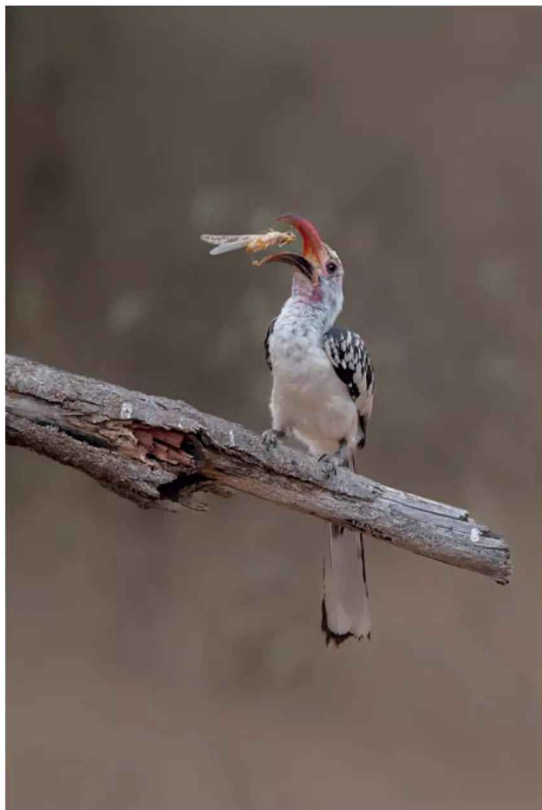


PHOTO TIPS: AFRICAN WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY

# MAKING THE MOST OF AFRICA

BY MICHAEL SNEDIC

Africa is a true wildlife photographer's paradise, and for many photographers, a visit to the continent will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Here's a few tips for making the most of a trip to this most magical of places.



Until you've experienced it for yourself, it's hard to fully describe how remarkable Africa is for wildlife photography. The sheer range of opportunities, from wildlife encounters to landscape scenes, is unlike anywhere else. Add to that the warmth and generosity of the people, and the experience of visiting the mother continent becomes about far more than photography alone. It's also a place everyone should experience at least once, if they can.

Made up of dozens of countries, Africa offers an extraordinary variety of environments, each with its own unique wildlife and photographic possibilities. But at the same time, making the most of a trip requires careful research and planning.

In this guide I can't even begin to delve into all the countries in Africa that you should visit in any great detail, but I can share some of my own experiences of photographing throughout the continent over the past 12 years that may help you plan your own trip. So, let's dive in.

### PUTTING PHOTOGRAPHY FIRST

To put it simply, the best way to visit Africa with the aim of photographing wildlife is to seek out experienced operators and guides first. You can use specialised safari companies, but if you are specifically after getting the best images out of your bucket-list trip, then a photography business that takes photo safaris is, in my opinion, the way to go. Always look for operators who partner with local companies too – you simply can't beat local expertise when it comes to Africa.

I really encourage you to consider what you want out of your trip before you go. For example, you'll want to consider whether you should stay in one location for a longer period or visit various locations in different countries for variety. You may want to choose to visit National Parks, or private conservancies, or a mix of both. And you may also want to photograph certain species. Many companies specialise in the 'Big Five' (African elephant, Cape buffalo, African lion, leopard and rhinoceros), but the thrill of photographing the less common species, including the vast array of birds found throughout Africa, can be just as exciting.

And of course, the time of year you wish to travel can make a huge difference to your overall experience, as well as the photos you capture.

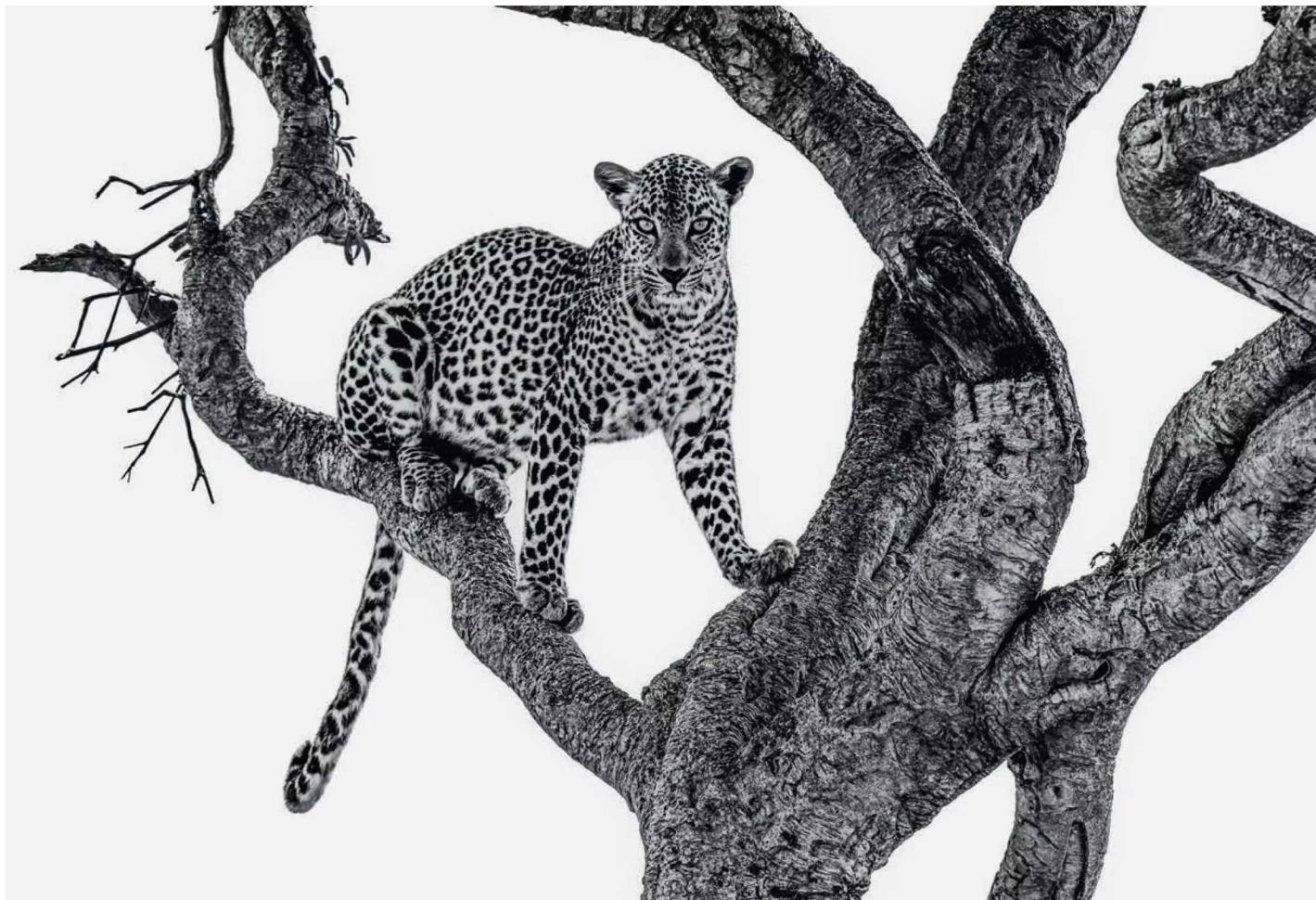
### WHAT GEAR SHOULD I TAKE?

This is always a tricky one, and a question that's been debated for decades. I'll start with camera gear. When traveling for photography, I always take two camera bodies – one as my primary camera and one as a backup. While it's easy to get gear serviced and repaired in major centres, much of your photography in Africa is likely to be in the backcountry. The often dusty and hot environment is hard on gear and having a backup gives you options if something does go wrong.





## PHOTO TIPS: AFRICAN WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY



### GREAT AFRICAN WILDLIFE SPOTS TO VISIT

#### KENYA

**Why you should go:** Kenya is a premier travel and wildlife destination. It is known for its incredible array of wildlife, both in numbers and species. It is also the 'hotspot' for seeing and photographing the Great Wildebeest Migration in the Maasai Mara. If I had to sum up which location and country in Africa has given me the most amazing wildlife experiences, I can't go past the Maasai Mara.

**When to visit:** The best time to visit Kenya for a photo safari is during the dry season from June to October, offering fantastic wildlife viewing as animals congregate around waterholes.

#### BOTSWANA

**Why you should go:** Botswana is a premier safari destination due to huge wildlife populations, especially in the Okavango Delta and Chobe National Park. It offers high end luxury adventures, including the famous mokoro canoe trips.

**When to visit:** The best time to visit Botswana is during the dry winter months from May to October. The Okavango Delta also floods during June to August, which is a great time to do any water-based safaris.

#### TANZANIA

**Why you should go:** Tanzania offers top-class wildlife safaris, including the Serengeti's Great Migration, the famous Ngorongoro Crater, as well as landmarks like Mount Kilimanjaro.

**When to visit:** The best time to visit Tanzania is during the dry season from late June to October, especially if your goal is to photograph wildlife. To experience the wildebeest calving in the southern Serengeti, January to February are recommended.

#### UGANDA

**Why you should go:** Incredibly, Uganda is home to half of the world's Mountain Gorilla populations. Gorilla treks are also more affordable than Rwanda. It is a great place to see and photograph chimpanzees, with Kibale National Park being a particular 'hot spot'.

**When to visit:** The best time to visit Uganda to experience the Mountain Gorillas and Chimpanzees are during the two dry seasons – June to September and December to February.

ABOVE: After quite a number of mornings patiently waiting, I was rewarded by this leopard climbing a tree, turning around and looking directly at my camera. I chose to create a high key image and create a black and white image in post-processing for a more striking effect. Nikon Z9, 180-600mm f/5.6-6.3 lens @ 600mm. 1/800s @ f8, ISO 100.

OPPOSITE, TOP: Having just caught a locust, a Red-billed Hornbill tosses it in the air before swallowing it. These are the sort of moments that can elevate your images from just another bird-on-a-branch shot. Nikon D850, 500mm f/4 lens. 1/800s @ f5.6, ISO 800.

OPPOSITE, BELOW: On safari in the Maasai Mara in Kenya, our guide heard on his radio that a giraffe was walking across the plains just as the sun was rising. We headed there just in time to compose this image of the giraffe walking past the half-risen sun. Nikon Z9, 180-600mm f/5.6-6.3 lens @ 570mm. 1/1000s @ f6.3, ISO 400.



LEFT TO RIGHT: On safari in the Maasai Mara, we came upon a beautiful Crowned Crane in perfect plumage. It was casually feeding near a lagoon and when it looked up, I was able to take this portrait shot. I aimed to leave space around the subject for the image to breathe. Nikon D850, 500mm f4 lens. 1/1600s @ f5, ISO 200.

A baby Mountain Gorilla sleeps peacefully next to its mum. Overcast conditions really helped here as when shooting dark subjects like gorillas metering can be an issue. Nikon D850, 70-200mm f/2.8 lens @ 110mm. 1/500s @ f5, ISO 400. -1 EV.

One of the world's most famous 'tuskers', Craig, gently approaches our safari vehicle. Here, it was simply a matter of letting this incredible subject fill the frame without cutting any of him out. Sadly, Craig passed away recently. Nikon Z9, 70-200mm f/2.8 lens @ 70mm. 1/1600s @ f6.3, ISO 800.





**“THE LANDSCAPES ARE MAJESTIC, AND THE PEOPLE AND CULTURAL EXPERIENCES INCREDIBLE. TRY TO MAKE AS MUCH OF ANY OPPORTUNITIES TO PHOTOGRAPH THESE AS YOU CAN...”**

I use a double-sided camera harness, with a long focal length zoom on one body and a wide-angle lens on the other. My main body is a Nikon Z9, paired with the longer lens for wildlife, while the second body, a Nikon Z6 III, is set up with a wide-angle for animals in their environment, as well as landscapes, sunrises and sunsets. The other advantage of this is it means less lens changes in the field – something that can create all sorts of problems with dust.

To touch on it briefly, many photographers gravitate towards long prime lenses for Africa. And while 500mm, 600mm and longer primes certainly have their place, I generally find zoom lenses to be the more practical choice. They're lighter, often more affordable, and offer far greater versatility in the field.

Both of my lenses are covered with camouflaged coverings (Lenscoat being one example) and I always use lens hoods on each lens to minimise glare and flare. I also bring with me a couple of rain covers for each camera and lens combination, just in case I'm caught out in the elements.

One of the many advantages of travelling with a dedicated photography company is the access you get to the little things that improve your photographic experience. For example, many safari vehicles are fit-

ted out with photographers in mind. They may have permanently affixed gimbals which you can attach a heavy lens and camera to, or access to beanbags which you can use to stabilise your gear while shooting. That said, I do find a monopod is also a useful accessory, especially in low light. I wouldn't travel to Africa without one.

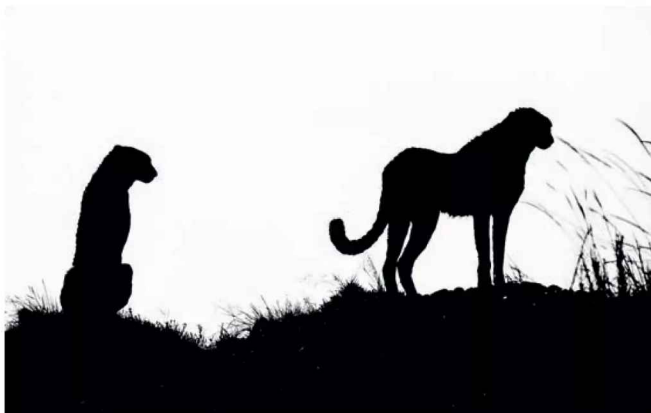
Finally, as far as clothing is concerned, I suggest breathable layers using earthy colours such as brown, green or khaki. These colours blend into the environment and there is less chance of you attracting insects. Long-sleeved shirts and trousers are also good for sun and insect protection. As the mornings can get quite cold, a jacket of some sort is always a necessity. I also use a wide-brimmed material hat, and sunglasses for those glarey days.

### **ON PHOTOGRAPHY**

I encourage anyone photographing in Africa to do their best to capture a diverse range of imagery. It can be overwhelming at first, but there's so much more to see and photograph than just tight close-up shots of animals. The landscapes are majestic, and the people and cultural experiences incredible. Try to make as much of any opportunities to photograph these as you can.

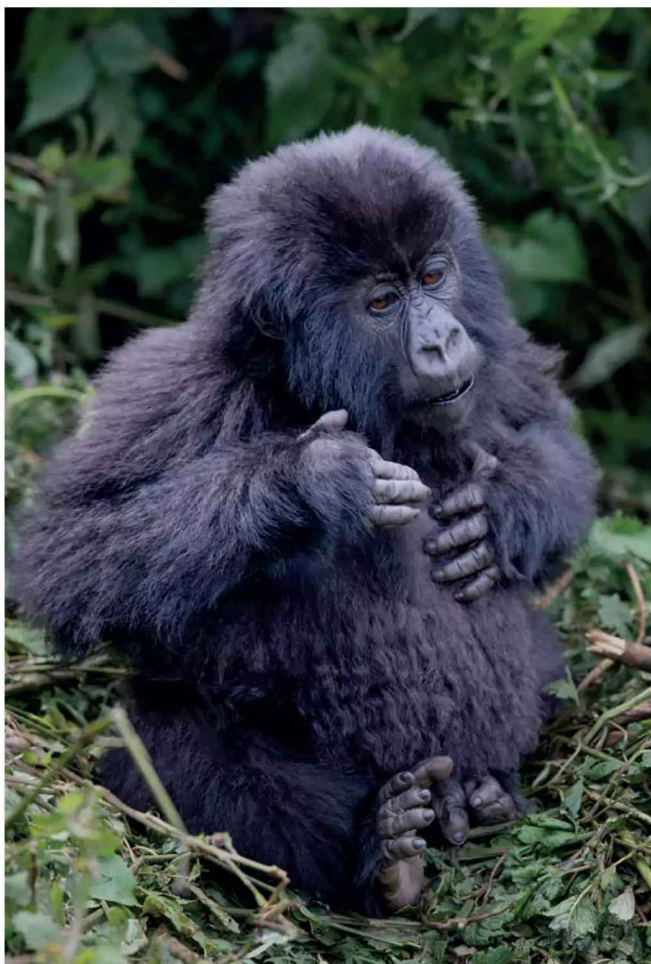


## PHOTO TIPS: AFRICAN WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY



LEFT: These two cheetah siblings were relaxing on an earth mound. As the sun was behind them and the background quite bright, I could visualise that a silhouetted image would be quite effective, especially as the subjects were defined against the clear sky. By over-exposing 2.3 stops, I was able to 'whiten' the background (a high key effect). Nikon Z9, 180-600mm f/5.6-6.3 lens @ 540mm. 1/6400s @ f7.1, ISO 160.

BELOW: It's always a treat to see and photograph wildlife behaviour, and in many ways capturing these traits are what helps elevate your photography beyond mere captures. Here, I was able to capture an image of this cute youngster 'practicing' beating his chest, just like his dad. Nikon D850, 70-200mm f/2.8 lens @ 175mm. 1/800s @ f4.5, ISO 400.



In many ways, it's the things you can't control that make being on safari so exciting for photography. Chance animal encounters, unexpected weather, and the time of day can all have a big impact on your imagery. While much of the best photography happens at the peak times of early morning and early evening, there's no reason why you can't capture great images at any time of day. For example, in the middle of the day is when I try and capture high key images in the harsh light. You can see an example of this style of photography on page 34.

When bad weather or moody skies roll in, this is when I love to look a bit wider to introduce these elements into my frame. Elephants on the plains or walking along the horizon while storm clouds are forming is one of the iconic African images, or pre-sunset, with a beautiful glow in the sky.

Personally, I've always loved focusing on getting sharp shots first and then thinking about different ways to creatively capture my subjects. Using Intentional Camera Movement (ICM) is a classic technique. With longer exposures of around 1/30s or slower, panning alongside a moving mammal or a flying bird can create a sense of motion and give your images a distinctive, dynamic feel. Or, focus on an animal for half a second, then use the remaining exposure time to move your camera left and right, or up and down, to create stunning, pastel-like images. Depending on the light, you may need a Neutral Density (ND) filter to help.

Finally, your greatest chance of coming away from a trip to any country in Africa with photos you can be proud of is down to one simple thing – patience. Often, I have sat in one spot, waiting for a particular animal behaviour or for the light to change.

At the same time, remember to drink it all in. Just being out on safari, surrounded by a wonderful array of wildlife set against beautiful landscapes with your camera on your lap, can be just as enjoyable as taking photos. And when it all comes together, it feels all the more special. 🌟

### THE GREAT MIGRATION

If you visit during the Great Migration, you'll have plenty of opportunities to photograph one of nature's great spectacles: vast herds of wildlife, dramatic river crossings, and multiple hunts by the big cats, where wildebeest can become 'easy pickings'.

If you are more into individual animals or smaller groups, then outside the migration period is best as crowd sizes are much smaller.



# TASMANIA

THROUGH  
THE  
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## AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP *2026*



IMAGES: MIKE O'CONNOR



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# WHY LESS IS MORE (AND MORE IS LESS)

BY GREG CROMIE

Packing your camera bag, and you can't decide what to include? Or perhaps you're sick of the weight of your kit. Here's how packing a minimal kit is a gateway to better photography outcomes, experiences, and a greater joy in photography.

**A**re you spending too much time hunting around inside your camera bag for the best lens for the shot? Are you packing EVERYTHING in your camera bag just in case you need it? Is gear-choice-paralysis hindering your artistic freedom and ability to focus on getting the best shot? And most importantly, is your joy of photography suffering from carrying so much weight? If this sounds like you, there's a good chance you're stuck in what I like to call a More Is Less mindset.

## WE ALL MAKE THIS MISTAKE AT FIRST

Most of us initially believe we need the right lens for every occasion. And the reality is that it happens most when we first start out as photographers. Be-

ing new to any hobby that requires specialised gear can be intimidating. You want to make the most of your creativity and don't want to be caught out without the right lens for the job. As a result, you invest in a lens kit that covers all the bases. Then, when heading out the door with your camera bag, you tend to pack all that new glass to be ready for anything. I mean, you spent all that money, of course you should pack it...right?

With all that gear on board, there's a real risk you'll be sore and fatigued before you even arrive at your destination. Once you arrive, you need to unsling your camera bag and select the best camera and lens combo for the lighting, composition, and moment. And if those key elements of lighting and composition change





## GEAR TIPS: WHY YOU SHOULD PACK LESS



significantly, you'll need to unsling that bag again and find the best lens for that new moment. Juggling lenses in the field is also a surefire way to expose your sensor to dust or drop a lens.

Plus, you're likely missing something even more valuable – the shot!

### **MORE GEAR WILL JUST SLOW YOU DOWN**

If you pack your camera bag with everything, there's a good chance you're hindering your photography. Yes, you have options for capturing the scene, but you could also be struck by Gear Choice Paralysis (GCP). GCP is a little like a deer in the headlights! You stare down at all those bright, beautiful lenses and can't seem to make a choice or reach instinctively for the best lens for

the job. Meanwhile, your light, composition and even your subjects are changing. But more importantly you may be missing the best shots of the day.

Photography is all about being present and documenting fleeting moments in time and space that will never repeat in the same way again. I often say photography is the art of documenting what is, before it becomes what was.

While you hesitated to select the best lens, the light, the scene, and the subjects changed. I've seen countless photographers miss shots while hunting for the right gear. And, I've seen countless more complain about the weight and impact of their bulging camera bag. In essence, more gear equals less outcomes.





## MORE IS LESS

In 2015, I travelled to Tokyo, Japan, for the first time – it was a dream come true. I journeyed for a one-week solo photography experience. Of course, I packed and carried every lens I owned just in case I needed them. By the end of my first day, I was miserable. I had lugged all my camera gear around Tokyo, and my back, feet, and neck were aching. I initially attributed the discomfort to my new camera backpack. But really, the bag had nothing to do with it. I was carrying too much and spending far too much time unslinging my backpack, opening it, changing lenses, closing it, and putting it back on.

## LESS IS MORE – LESS GEAR MEANS BETTER SHOTS

Fear not, dear reader, for there is a cure to Gear Choice Paralysis – although some of you aren't going to like it (at first). If we flip the narrative on More Is Less, we end up with Less Is More. But how does that relate to your ongoing development, creative output, and gear choices?

While having every possible lens for a shoot is com-

forting and confidence-building, I argue you'll achieve far better results with fewer options.

Rather than packing all your lenses, limit yourself to one or two at most. Instead of walking out the door with a bag of primes, try using a single zoom that covers the same range. Of course, it's genre-specific and working photographers may not have this level of luxury, but the math still applies.

The point is that less gear – especially lenses – significantly reduces Gear Choice Paralysis. You have fewer lenses to choose from and must make the lenses you have work for the light, composition, and moment. You're carrying less gear, but you'll be more mindful and ready to capture magical moments.

At the same time, carrying a smaller, simpler kit lets you use a smaller camera bag, reducing strain on your body. While your overloaded camera bag may feel light enough when you test-fit it at home, it will quickly change the longer you carry it. Being able to comfortably carry a light kit all day – without strain or ache – is a real blessing.





## GEAR TIPS: WHY YOU SHOULD PACK LESS



LEFT: I'm a Chapel Street local and have lived and raised my family in the area for the past 30 years. While a familiar view, I love walking this street with my camera in hand, a spare battery in my pocket, and nothing to distract me from capturing compelling frames. Fujifilm X-E5, Fujinon XF 23mm F2 R WR lens. 1/250s @ f8, ISO 160.

BELOW: Does this remind you of something? If you're packing this much gear into your camera bag, it will eventually slow you down, distract you, and erode your joy of photography.



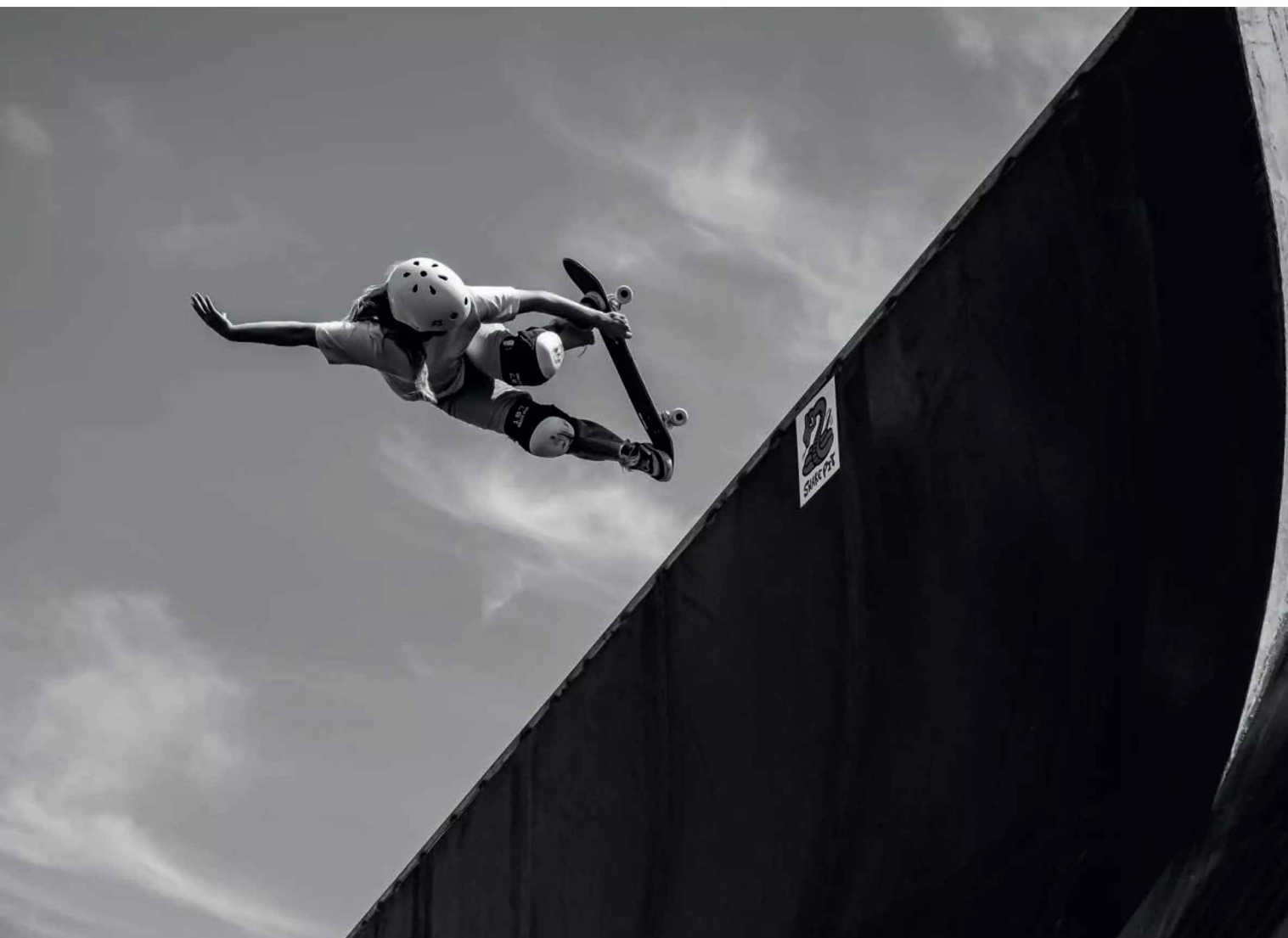
### WHERE TO START

I recommend that anyone building a lens kit avoid filling their bag with every focal length. Start with just the kit lens (24-70mm-ish) and use it until you have mastered it. Then review your images and determine the focal range and aperture at which most of your shots were taken. Perhaps you mostly shoot at 50mm with the widest aperture the lens will allow. In this example, let's say F4. As a result, you should consider getting a 50mm with a faster aperture, such as F1.4 or F1.2. Then learn to master that lens and create even more beautiful images.





## GEAR TIPS: WHY YOU SHOULD PACK LESS



**ABOVE:** I came across this skate event while walking past the local skate park. At the time, I was carrying the Fujifilm X-M5 with my beloved Fujinon XF 27mm F2.8 R WR pancake prime. The action was there, and I had no time to return home for another lens. I made the shot work for me! Fujifilm X-M5, Fujinon XF 27mm F2.8 R WR lens. 1/1250s @ f6, ISO 400.

**RIGHT:** If in doubt about the best lens to pack, review your images from past shoots to determine your preferred focal range and aperture. Now all that's left is to pack the lens that fits those outcomes.

**FAR RIGHT:** Gear Choice Paralysis is a well-documented phenomenon that causes even the most confident photographer to freeze, fumble their gear, and miss the magic shot of the day. Don't be like this guy and think you need to bring it all!

Having fewer lens options in your bag allows you to be more observant of light, composition, subjects, and changing scenery. The more observant you are, the more likely you'll be ready for that shot of the day. You can't be truly observant when you are digging through the depths of your camera bag. Nor can you be truly present when your back and neck are aching, and you're thinking about calling it quits.

### TOKYO AGAIN

I returned to Japan a few times, and on my last trip in 2019, I spent a glorious week in Tokyo shooting street photography day and night. This time, having learned from past mistakes, I packed a single Fujifilm X Series camera and the Fujinon XF 23mmF2 (35mm full-frame equivalent).





**“I OFTEN HEAD OUT THE DOOR WITH ONLY THAT SAME LIGHTWEIGHT 23MM PRIME LENS AND CAN BLINDLY SHOOT FROM THE HIP, CONFIDENT I’VE CAPTURED EVERYTHING I WANT IN FRAME.”**

As a backup, I also packed the Fujifilm X70 – a small and lightweight fixed lens compact camera. My kit weighed next to nothing: 885g excluding spare batteries, SD cards, and a banana. I also switched to a lightweight sling instead of my usual camera bag. Even then, I packed only one camera for my daily outings and left the other in my hotel room, and I mostly carried that camera on a wrist strap.

I was light on my feet, always ready to take a shot, and my eyes were free to anticipate the next one. There was no gear paralysis, no aches or pains, and I had to make the lens work for me and the shot. Even with the limitation of that 23mm (35mm) lens, I was far more creative and daring in my image capture too.

### **LESS IS MORE EDUCATIONAL**

While carrying far less than you feel comfortable with can be a little intimidating at first, stepping out the door with a single lens on your camera can be liberating and educational. Working with the one lens – a prime or zoom – creates obvious limitations to how you approach any shot.

I argue that with no other choice, you must make the available glass work for you and the shot. What is the

alternative? Not take the shot? Bah! Zoom with your feet, play with depth of field, and look for creative ways to capture a moment in time.

Another great benefit of the Less Is More approach and working with a single lens is that, over time, you master that lens. You learn its range, focus performance, low-light capabilities, and how its aperture affects depth of field, mood, and image quality. I often head out the door with only that same lightweight 23mm (35mm) prime lens and can blindly shoot from the hip, confident I’ve captured everything I want in frame. With Less Is More, you will also reach a point where you are so familiar with the focal range that your speed-to-composition will increase. In that respect, a single lens can make you even more confident than having a bag full of lenses.

The best way to get started with a Less Is More mindset is to choose your favourite lens, mount it to your camera, and commit to keeping it there for an extended period – weeks or months. Don’t even pack a camera bag! Drop a spare battery in your pocket, attach a comfortable shoulder or wrist strap, and keep your camera in your hand and ready to go at a moment’s notice. Sometimes a moment is all you have! ☼



## REVIEW: SONY A7 V



# SONY A7 V

Sony's fifth-generation A7 is here, and it looks like the wait has been worth it. Doug Gimesy takes it for a spin.

Over the last few years, I have generally been using two different Sony bodies. The A1 for its fast focus, high shutter speed, and high-resolution capabilities, and the A7 IV as both a street and a back-up camera that also has the benefit of being about half the price of the A1.

When I heard the A7 V was launching, I was curious to see how it had evolved from the A7 IV, and whether I thought it was worth the upgrade. Now if you don't want to read any further, spoiler alert, the answer is yes. But, why?

Well to put it simply, by sacrificing a few megapixels, you're getting many of the great features you'd find in an A1, but at a significantly reduced cost.

### THE BUILD

At first glance, the layout and body of the V look very similar to its predecessor. Still dust and moisture resistant, compared to the A7 IV the body is nearly identical in size (130 x 96 x 82 mm vs 131 x 96 x 80 mm) and only comes in slightly heavier at 695g (vs 659g).

But upon a closer look, there have been some significant changes. The A7 V has an improved grip and now has a four axis multi-angle (i.e. flip and tilt) screen, and this has double the resolu-

tion (2,095,104 dots up from 1,036,800 dots) of the A7 IV.

Additionally, the viewfinder now doesn't black out in between shots during high-speed bursts, but to be candid, I never thought that type of thing was an issue anyway.

If there's one upgrade I had hoped for but didn't see, it's an improvement to the viewfinder resolution. Unfortunately, it remains the same as the A7 IV.

Most wildlife, sports, and action photographers I know prefer reviewing images in the viewfinder while in the field. In low ambient light, it's much easier to zoom in and "pixel peep" without glare, and you're always ready to capture the next moment as it happens.

Given this, I'm not sure why Sony chose to increase the flip screen resolution before upgrading the viewfinder—it's a disappointing omission.

### THE SENSOR

The full-frame sensor remains at 33MP, but several changes have been made to its design and processing. It is now a partially stacked Exmor RS CMOS sensor, paired with the BionZ XR2 processor (up from the previous BionZ XR). Combined with updated algorithms, these changes result in noticeable improvements in performance across a range of areas.

### AUTOFOCUS

Subject recognition range has been increased along with autofocus accuracy and speed (even though the number of autofocus points remain at 759).

Sony claims the A7 V offers about 30% improved animal recognition and about 50% improved bird recognition and it also has an auto mode now to decide for you, or if you are not quick at changing things.

However, its EV sensitivity (the camera's ability to focus in low light) remains unchanged at a respectable, if unremarkable, -4 EV.

It is also worth noting that faster sensor readout reduces the likelihood of rolling shutter distortion with fast-moving subjects, as well as banding under artificial lighting when using the electronic shutter. These issues are improved, but not eliminated entirely, and can still occur in certain situations.

Using the electronic shutter, burst speeds increase to an impressive 30 fps in RAW (up from 10 fps on the A7 IV), for up to 10 seconds when using a fixed shutter speed. One of the standout improvements for me—particularly for action shooters such as sports and wildlife photogra-



phers—is the addition of up to one second of pre-capture.

If you have not used pre-capture before, it can be genuinely valuable. When the shutter button is half-pressed, images are continuously recorded to a temporary buffer and only written to the memory card once the shutter is fully pressed.

This effectively allows you to capture moments from up to one second before the decisive press, which can make the difference when timing is critical.

Speaking of buffer, it is relatively shallow, and you probably get around 30–40 shots shooting in Lossless Compressed mode before it starts to fill. That's not an issue if you are shooting in short bursts or using, for example, a fast CF Express Type A card to write to, or if you're shooting compressed RA.

But if you have an SD card and are continuously filling the buffer with pre-capture, or shooting 30fps lossless for more than a second, it's something to be aware of.

## IMAGE QUALITY

Another major upgrade is dynamic range, which increases from 14.7 stops on the A7 IV to a claimed 16 stops on the A7 V. This translates to improved flexibility when recovering both highlights and shadows. On paper, this also places it ahead of Sony's flagship A1, which is rated at 15 stops.

The 5-axis body image stabilisation on the A7 V is also improved to an impressive 7.5 stops in the centre, 6.5 stops at the periphery (vs 5.5). This basically means, all else being equal, you can hand hold at a lower shutter speed without getting operator movement blur. Does it work well? You bet. I took a handheld image at 24mm using a 1/5th second exposure with no noticeable movement blur—impressive.

## OTHER NEW FEATURES

Internally, there's other benefits to the newer model that you may not be aware of. If wireless workflows are your thing the A7 V now also supports 6GHz Wifi (in addition to 2.4 and 5GHz), meaning faster transfer rates, and Sony claims the battery life is also notably improved.

You'll get approximately 630 shots (viewfinder) and 750 shots (LCD monitor). This is up nearly 20% (The A7 IV maxed out at around 580 shots with its LCD monitor).

## VIDEO

I only occasionally shoot short 4K wildlife clips for stock, so I am far from a video expert, but a few specification changes stand out. 4K can now be recorded at

up to 120 fps when shooting NTSC (up from 60 fps), or 100 fps when shooting PAL (up from 50 fps).

The higher of the dual base ISOs has also increased from 3200 to 8000, which should result in cleaner footage at ISO 8000 than was previously possible at ISO 3200.

To be candid, I do not fully understand the technical details of how dual base ISO works for video, but it is an impressive improvement and one I would love to see extended to stills photography in the future.

Image stabilisation has also been improved, resulting in smoother handheld footage, and a new auto-reframing feature can help keep moving subjects centred in the frame, albeit with a reduction in resolution.

## THE WRAP-UP

The A7 V is an excellent all-rounder: a strong choice for sports and wildlife, a capable landscape camera, and a reliable companion for street photography. In short, it handles a wide range of shooting scenarios with ease. It also makes a perfect second or spare body for photographers who primarily work with an A1 II.

So, ultimately this is a great camera for many styles of photography, and I don't think you'll be disappointed, given what you get for the price. And if you already own the A7 IV, should you go out and upgrade? Well, I did! 🐾



ABOVE: Sony A7 V, FE 24-70mm F2.8 GM II lens @ 70mm. 1/800s @ f2.8, ISO 3200.

SCORE  
8.8

## RESULTS

### HANDLING ★ ★ ★ ★

It's solid and the layout felt very familiar to the A7 IV, although I'd love to have seen a drive/focus mode dial on the top.

### FEATURES ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Given the price, the multi-angle flip screen, ability to shoot 30fps RAW and having up to one second RAW pre-capture, I'm really not sure it would be reasonable to ask for much more!

### AUTOFOCUS ★ ★ ★ ★

Generally good to grab focus most of the time, and it is sticky at holding it once it has.

### IMAGE QUALITY ★ ★ ★ ★

Excellent even at higher ISOs, with an impressive 16 stop dynamic range on mechanical shutter.

### VALUE FOR MONEY ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

With an RRP of \$4,699, there really is no other Sony camera that I can compare it to and not give it full marks.

### FINAL WORD

The A7 V is the more affordable, lower-megapixel—but higher dynamic range—little sibling of the A1.

### SPECS

|                   |                                                                                    |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Sensor</b>     | 33 MP full-frame partially stacked Exmor RS CMOS                                   |
| <b>Format</b>     | full frame                                                                         |
| <b>Resolution</b> | 7008 × 4672 pixels                                                                 |
| <b>Lens mount</b> | Sony E                                                                             |
| <b>Autofocus</b>  | 759 phase-detect points, advanced AI subject recognition                           |
| <b>LCD</b>        | 3.2" 4-axis tilting touchscreen                                                    |
| <b>Viewfinder</b> | 3.68 M-dot OLED EVF                                                                |
| <b>Video</b>      | 4K up to 60 p (full-frame, 7K oversampled), 4K up to 120 p (Super35), 10-bit 4:2:2 |
| <b>Weight</b>     | 658 g (with battery & card)                                                        |
| <b>Storage</b>    | CFexpress Type A + SDXC (UHS-II)                                                   |
| <b>Price</b>      | \$4,699 RRP                                                                        |
| <b>More info</b>  | sony.com.au                                                                        |

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# THE BOXER

Portraying a no-nonsense, no-holds-barred boxer was the aim of this portrait.



WITH KEITH O'BRIEN

I have been practicing photography since 1969, when I received my first camera. Over the years I have explored many genres, including landscape, still life and abstract work. I have shot with Canon,

Olympus and Sony cameras, and still use bodies from each system depending on what I want to achieve. My current focus is people and travel photography. I particularly enjoy street photography while travelling, using an Olympus OM-D E-M1 Mark III, as well as planned portrait shoots with Sony. My Canon 7D remains a reliable choice for sports photography.

This image comes from a planned portrait shoot where I met Michael for the first time. Michael is a model, actor and artist based in the Canberra region. The theme of the shoot was boxing, and for this image I chose to work close, focusing on Michael sparring directly into the camera. Lighting was provided by a single softbox to emphasise his face. All images were upper body, featuring either boxing gloves or the wraps seen here.

I explored different focal lengths before settling on a 50mm view, which gave me the look I was after. The aim was to convey a tough, no-holds-barred boxer, suggested by the pose but driven primarily by the intensity in the eyes. The lens was set to f/4.5 to maintain portrait quality with minimal distortion and controlled depth of field.

Post-processing was kept deliberately minimal. I aim to achieve correct lighting and focus in-camera, something that is more controllable in the studio than on the street. I carried out basic adjustments to exposure, cropping and any obvious blemishes in Lightroom. The file was then exported to Photoshop for light sharpening and minor contrast and tonal adjustments.

**SONY A7 III, SONY FE 24-70MM F/2.8 GM II LENS @ 50MM.  
1/125S @ F4.5, ISO 100. GODOX FLASH WITH SOFTBOX.**

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APS ONE FRAME





Smart use of aspect ratios can help you overcome the limitations of your gear, and open up new creative possibilities. Here's how.

WITH ROZ ZITO



**H**ave you ever heard that expression that probably annoys more photographers than any other? You know the one –

“Oh, your camera takes great photos!”?

It can be like a red rag to a bull – probably cos it's like saying you are an excellent cook simply because you own a Magimix.

Having a good camera certainly helps if you know how to use it, but a good eye for composition is worth far more than a camera costing thousands.

When I first started in photography, I struggled to master the technical side. Even so, I believe I had an instinct for good images before I really understood what I was doing.

Over the years, I have taken photographs I am proud of with a Canon 1DX Mark II, the top-of-the-range Canon of its day, and with an ageing Canon 7D. One of my recent favourites, a leopard

with her eye perfectly framed by her tail and published in this magazine a few months ago, was taken with a Canon R5.

Sometimes, though, you may find yourself throwing everything out the window and reaching for your phone, as I did when I spotted this perfect rainbow in Tuscany's Val d'Orcia, a World Heritage area of Italy. It was the first time I had ever seen this phenomenon in all its glory, and possibly the last, but I simply could not capture it all.

I was leaning out of a window, wrestling with my expensive camera. The lens was a travel compromise, a 24–70mm, not quite wide enough to take in the full arc of the rainbow while keeping both feet on the ground. Time was slipping away.

I could have taken a panorama, but instead I grabbed my phone and changed the aspect ratio to 4:3. That gave me both width and height, exactly what I needed to capture the majestic sweep. The result was more successful than anything I managed with the camera and lens I had on me at the time.

Making more deliberate use of aspect

ratios on my iPhone has made a huge difference to how I use it for photography, as each aspect ratio offers different compositional possibilities.

The 4:3 ratio typically optimises your camera's sensor, maximising light capture, and is generally considered optimal for mobile photography. 16:9 format is wider, with a cinematic feel and is about 78 percent wider than it is tall. The 3:2 ratio is standard for most DSLRs, and works particularly well for print. And finally the square 1:1 format is often used for Instagram, fitting neatly within a phone screen.

By visualising your final image in different formats, over time you begin to understand which best serves the outcome you are trying to achieve. In the case of the Tuscan rainbow, being able to capture the entire arc without changing lenses or position made all the difference.

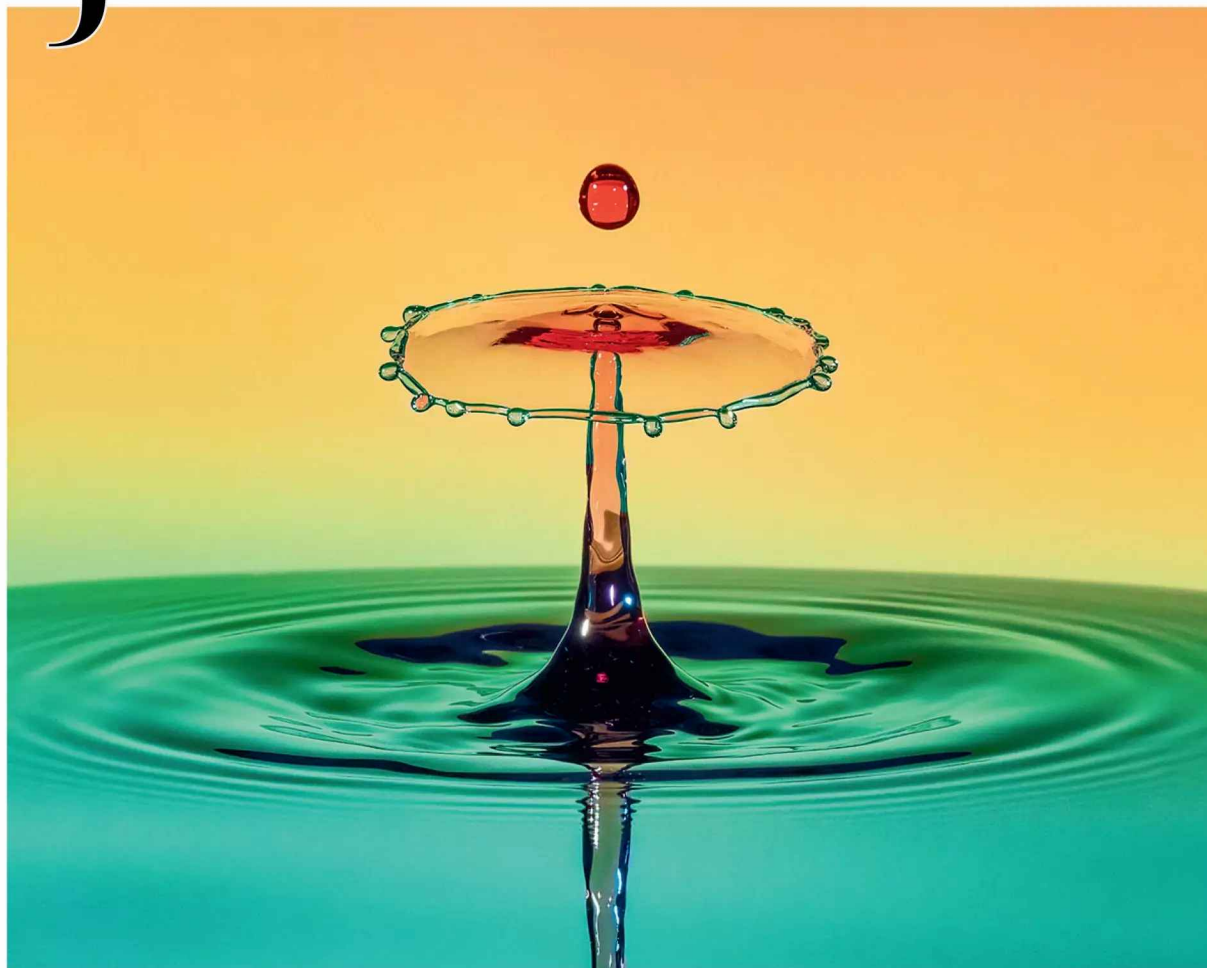
Ultimately, photography is not about having the perfect piece of equipment in your hands. That is simply not possible all the time. I think what really matters is understanding the tools you already have and how you can use them creatively to capture better images. 🌀



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"Splash" by Ted Dimitropoulos  
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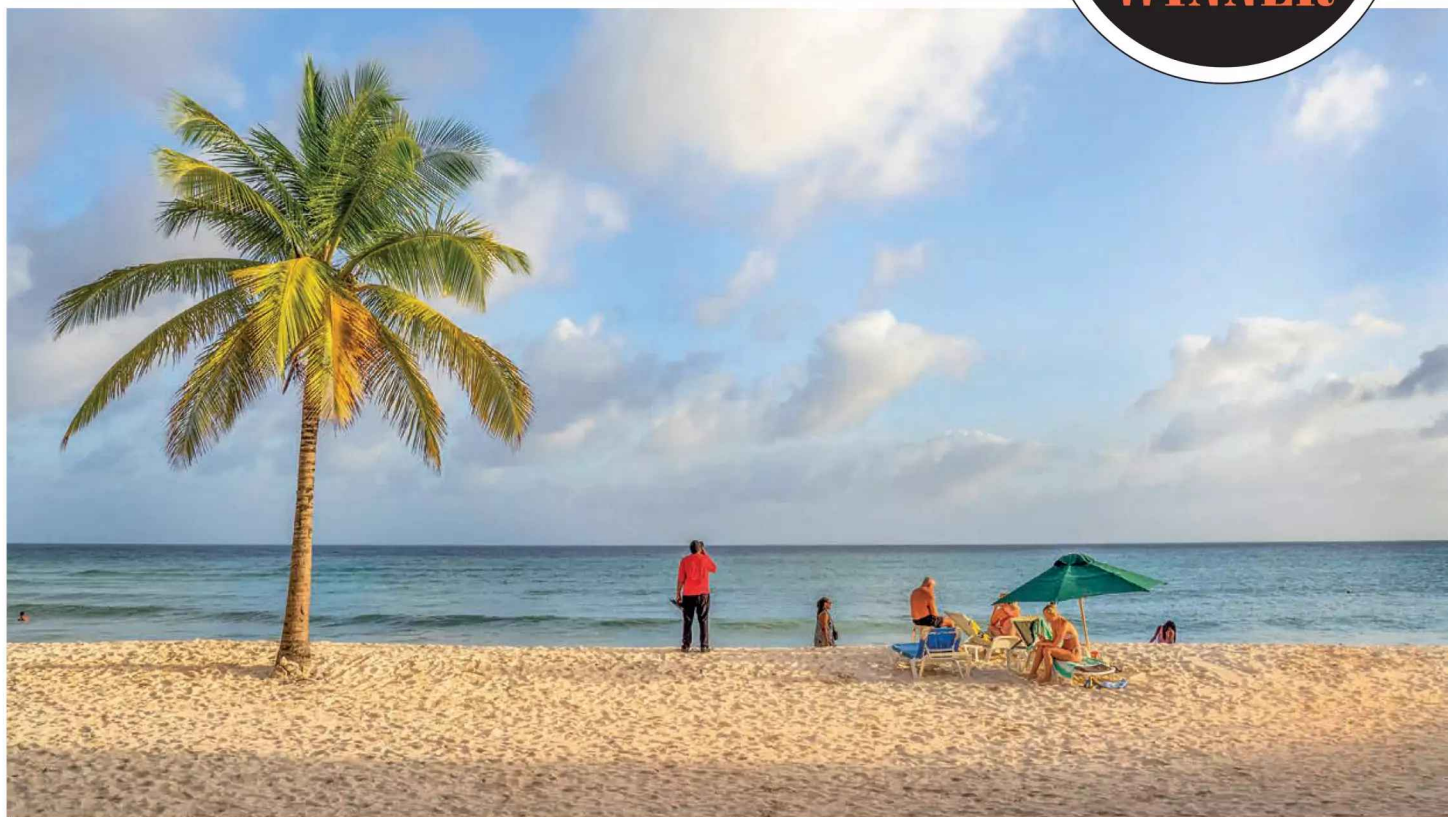
A-P-S.ORG.AU

# IMAGE DOCTOR

Images need a pick-me-up?  
The doctor will see you now.

BY ANTHONY MCKEE

THIS  
MONTH'S  
WINNER



## PICTURE PERFECT

"Hello Anthony. It was late afternoon and the light was just right. The separate but connected elements – a palm tree, a man gazing out to sea, a woman walking along the beach, a group of three bathers and a woman sitting on the sand – are set against the horizontal bands of sky, sea and sand."

**ANTHONY'S TIP:** Hi Daren, I love this image. I'm not sure if you were just lucky with the light or you applied some extra processing to the image to open up the shadows but the result is stunning. As someone who often judges competitions at the professional level, I would be awarding this image a mid-silver (an 84), and the one thing stopping me from taking it to a gold (a 90+) would be position of that umbrella – see how it's cutting off the head of that woman!

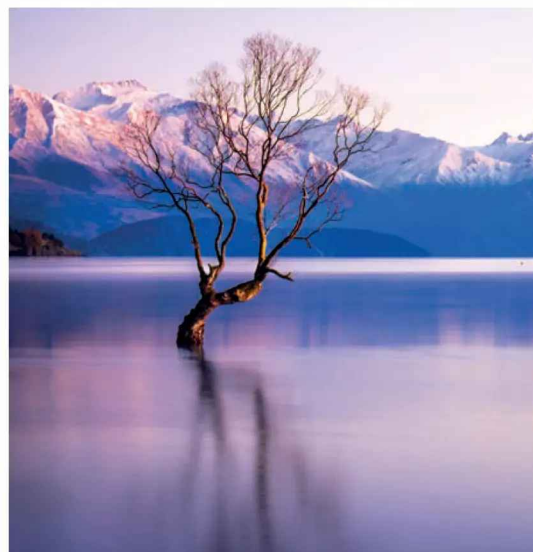
Ideally I would have moved a metre to the left to avoid this, or if the crowd was friendly I would have gone over and pushed the umbrella slightly over to the right. As always though, there's no guarantee the scene will be the same when you get back to this position.

If there was one thing that I was going to do to improve this image it would be to tighten the crop about 10 per cent, losing the person in the water on the left of the frame while you were at it. Otherwise, great effort.

TITLE: Beach

PHOTOGRAPHER: Daren Fawkes

DETAILS: Olympus O-M1, Olympus 12-100mm lens @ 12mm. 1/1000s @ f5.6, ISO 320.





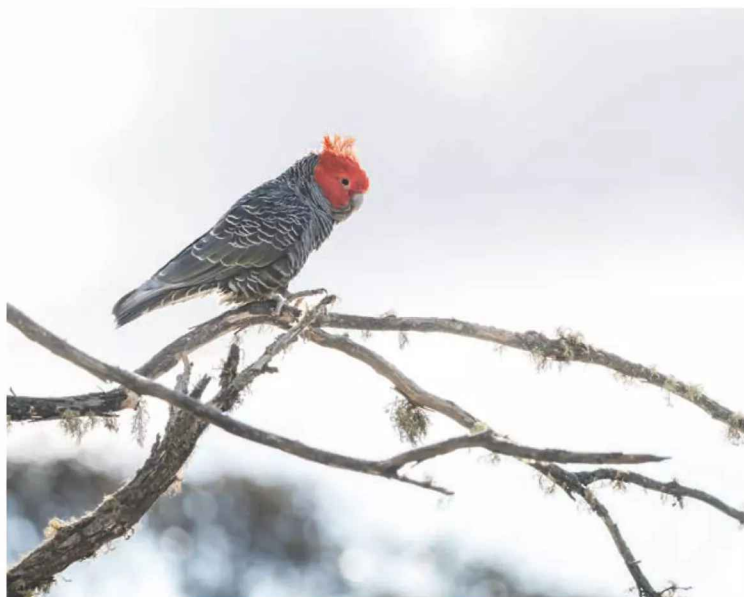


## DJI DELIVERS THE GOODS

"*Salt Divide* was built as a top-down aerial abstraction at Lake Tyrrell, using the DJI Air 2S to simplify the scene into two core value blocks – blush brine and chalk salt – then letting the shoreline do the storytelling. I flew to a height that kept the 'island' of scrub as the anchor on the right, and waited for clean light and minimal glare. In Adobe Camera Raw I set the baseline: nudged white balance toward warm pinks, shaped contrast with a gentle S-curve, and pulled highlights to keep the salt texture intact."

**ANTHONY'S TIP:** Hi Richard, this is a great image, and it reveals just how capable the DJI Air 2S drone really is. I do have a couple of problems with this image though. To start with, there is a dark shadow (probably cloud cover) over the top third of the picture. I would open up your original RAW file in Lightroom or ACR and I would use an adjustment brush to lighten up the shadow area to the same brightness as the lower half of the frame. Now for a radical suggestion – rotate the image 180 degrees and then crop off the right hand 10 per cent of the frame so that you don't see the end of the salt bar. About now we'll be looking at a totally different image, and I think it will be a little bit stronger. Cheers!

TITLE: Salt Divide  
PHOTOGRAPHER: Richard Hristovski  
DETAILS: DJI Air 2S. 1/1000s @ f2.8, ISO 100.



## HIGHLIGHTING YOUR SUBJECT

"Hi Anthony, I was on a walk with my camera at Dinner Plain when this handsome Gang Gang landed in front of me and posed for ages. The day was overcast and I struggled with the HDR, eventually opting for a blown-out background, which gave me some chromatic aberration that I hope I've eradicated. I'd really like to know how to get a better result."

**ANTHONY'S TIP:** Hey Dani, you might have a few concerns about this image, but I think you have done well. The exposure is almost perfect and despite your concerns, there is a subtle amount of tone in sky,

which is all that you need. Typically when I am shooting images against a sky I have the habit of shooting in RAW mode, and then underexposing just enough to ensure I capture any highlights. You can then use masks in Adobe Camera RAW to selectively brighten the areas of the image that are important to you. The one thing that I would do to improve this image is to crop it down to the 3:2 ratio, otherwise, good effort.

TITLE: Gang Gang  
PHOTOGRAPHER: Dani Maver  
DETAILS: Sony A7 III, FE 200-600mm f5.6-6.3 lens @ 300mm. 1/250s @ f6.7, ISO 100.



## WONDERFUL WANAKA

"I was so excited to take this photo on our visit to New Zealand this year. Everybody wants a 'Wanaka tree' image. I woke up early and was hoping for snow on the mountains, which we got. It was taken with my Canon 90D on a tripod in the 'blue hour'. I needed a 13-second exposure to get enough light, and I love the effect it has had on the water. I am also just getting the touch of golden light as it was rising."

**ANTHONY'S TIP:** Hi Jane, and yes, it is breathtaking the number of photographers who literally queue up every day to get this photo! That being said, I am pleased you made the effort to get up early to get the good light. One mistake a lot of photographers frequently

make is try and include too much into the frame, but this can often take our eyes away from the key element within the photo. As we look at this image our eyes are inclined to drift to the bright water and sky on the right, and they stay there. I would be inclined to crop this image to square, putting the tree on the left-hand third of the frame. Then I would just clone out that distant buoy and your Wanaka Tree will be ready to frame and mount!

TITLE: Wanaka Tree  
PHOTOGRAPHER: Jane Willis  
DETAILS: Canon 90D, 55mm lens. 13s @ f5.6, ISO 100.



## IMAGE DOCTOR



### A TOUCH LESS TILT

"I visited Adelaide after a long absence and took a stroll around the river. I looked up and was surprised by what I saw so I had to photograph it. Never seen a mirror that size before!"

**ANTHONY'S TIP:** Hi Rob, I frequently shoot architecture for commercial clients, and I love any opportunity I can get to include old architecture with the new. A frequent challenge within architecture photography though, is getting the geometry of an image accurate; most of my clients don't want to see their building tilting backwards. The easiest way to correct the geometry of any image is to open the file in Lightroom or Adobe Camera RAW and then go to the Crop tool. In the Geometry dialogue box adjust the Vertical to -29 and immediately you should notice the verticals of your image looking vertical. Crop to suit. The new step that you want to make is to go to Masking and then use a brush to select the entire building on the left; now apply +20 of Dehaze to that mask, and about +0.65 to the Exposure. You have just added a little more life to the new building. Now, use another mask to slightly darken the building on the right and Bob's your uncle. I hope this is a help!

TITLE: Big Mirror

PHOTOGRAPHER: Rob Taylor

DETAILS: Canon 6D Mark II, Canon EF 24-105mm lens @ 29mm. No exposure info.

### AFTER THE RAINS

"This was a bit of a fluke shot that I took on the outskirts of Bundaberg back in 2013, as I was driving into Bundaberg. Taken with a Canon EOS 450D with a 18-55 kit lens. I don't have a title for it but if I had to give it one, it would be something like *After the Rains*."

**ANTHONY'S TIP:** Hi Keiron, I love seeing a decent rainbow, and looking at your photo I can almost smell the rains too. There are four details that capture my eye looking at this image. The first is those dark brown stalks on the base of the cane; I would crop the bottom of the image to remove these stalks and in the process I would level the horizon. This will immediately improve this photo. Next, I would use the Spot Healing tool in Photoshop to remove the power pole and any hint of the power lines. And finally, I would use a noise reduction tool like Topaz DeNoise to smooth out the image. And voila, job done!

TITLE: After the Rains

PHOTOGRAPHER: Keiron Hubbard

DETAILS: Canon EOS 450D, 18-55mm lens @ 55mm. 1/800s @ f5.6, ISO 100.

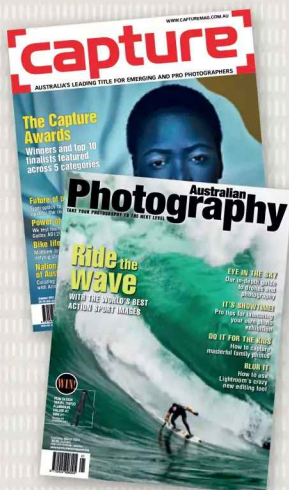


**WIN!**

### 12 MONTH SUBSCRIPTION TO AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY OR CAPTURE MAGAZINE

Congratulations to Daren Fawkes who has won a 12-month subscription to either *Australian Photography* or *Capture* magazine for taking out Image Doctor this month! AP has been celebrating the work of Australian photographers for more than 70 years. Published quarterly, *Capture* is Australia's leading journal for emerging and professional photographers.

Find out more about AP at [australianphotography.com](http://australianphotography.com), and *Capture* at [capturemag.com.au](http://capturemag.com.au)



### HOW TO SUBMIT AN IMAGE

- Email entries to: [imagedoctor@australianphotography.com](mailto:imagedoctor@australianphotography.com) with "Image Doctor" in the subject line.
- Include your name, image title and up to 150 words about how you created it.
- Only one image per person per month.
- Images must be saved in JPEG format. Maximum file size is 5MB. Include your name in the filename of the image.
- An Australian address is required in order to receive the prize.
- Employees of Yaffa Publishing or the sponsor are not eligible to win the prize.
- The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.



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# MCPP 2026

MULLINS CONCEPTUAL PHOTOGRAPHIC PRIZE



Photo credit | **Travel / Street Photography by Jason Buck** | Jason works at Loganholme Camera House and he shot this inspiring photo with the Sony Alpha A7R V camera plus Sony FE 55mm f/1.8 ZA Carl Zeiss Sonnar T lens | **Image details:** Shutter 1/60 | Aperture f/1.8 | ISO 500.



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