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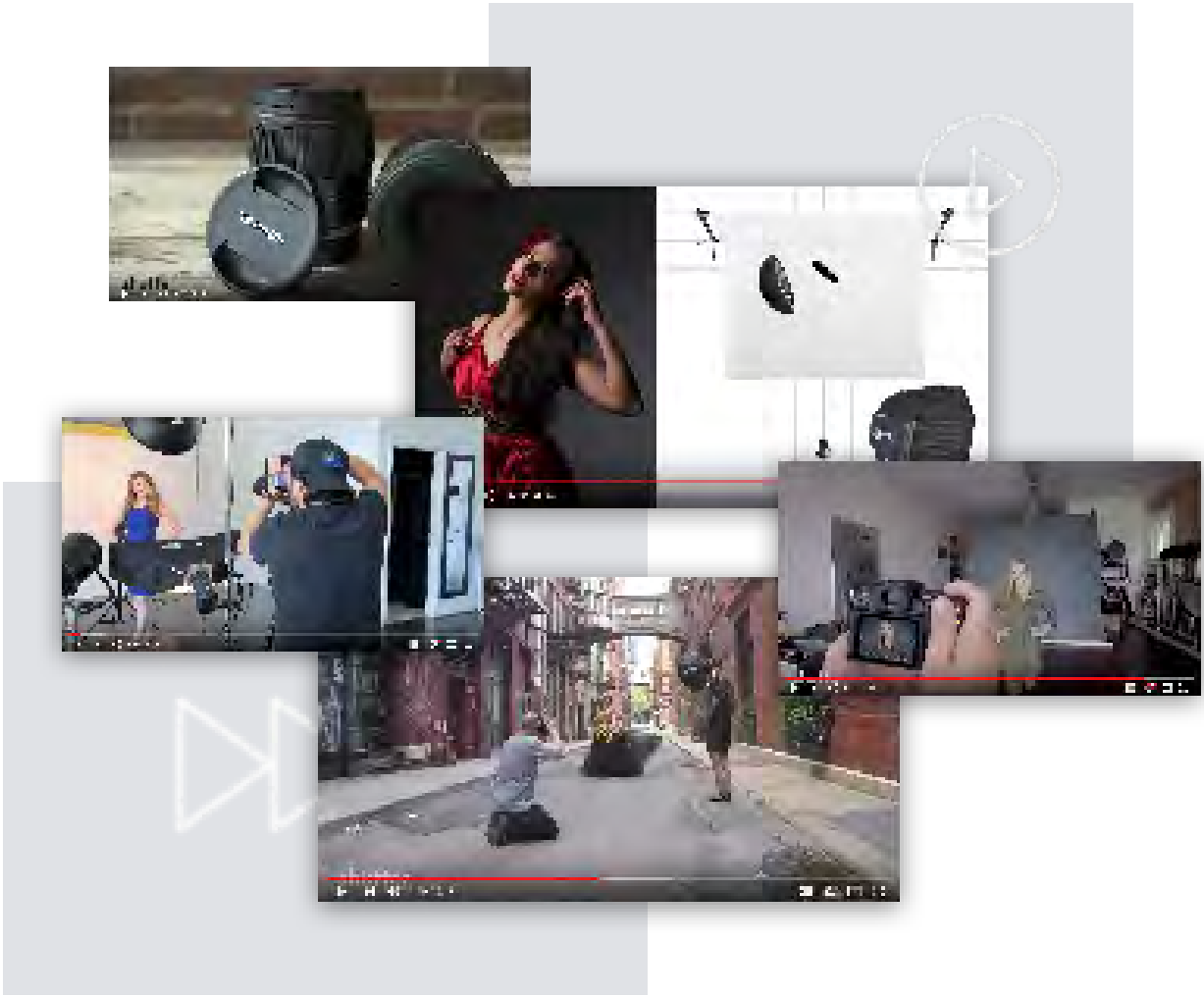
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MISSION **STATEMENT**

Shutter Magazine's focus is on photography education. Our goal is to provide current, insightful and in-depth educational content for today's professional wedding and portrait photographer. *Shutter* uses the latest technologies to deliver information in a way that is relevant to our audience. Our experienced contributors help us create a sense of community, and have established the magazine as one of the leading photography publications in the world.

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THE **COVER**

PHOTOGRAPHER: Anatoly Karpov | karpov-art.com
CAMERA: Canon EOS 5D Mark IV
LENS: Canon EF 85 mm f1.2L II USM
EXPOSURE: f11, 1/160s, ISO 100
LIGHTING: Profoto D2 500 AirTTL, Profoto Softbox RFi 150 CM/5' octa, white reflectors x2
ABOUT THE IMAGE: This photo is one from my Redhead Dolls Project. I am fascinated with the color combinations, volume opportunities and lighting challenges provided by the redhead models. It is like an ongoing celebration of joy, emotions and passion. Starting with this series I tried my new approach of editing, which is still very painterly but also has some fairy tale fragrance. The world of Magicians, Alice in Wonderland, or perhaps just dreams — there is a bit of all this mixture in this work.
MODEL: Valeria Smirnova

Curious how Sal got this shot? Click to here to watch the BTS video.

It's Vegas Baby!

Glitz and glamour is everywhere you look. As creatives, our job is to capture the beauty around us.

Check out this Vegas shoot and how we got the shot.



message from **sal cincotta**

publisher



TIPS & TRICKS TO SHOOTING EDITORIAL COMMERCIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

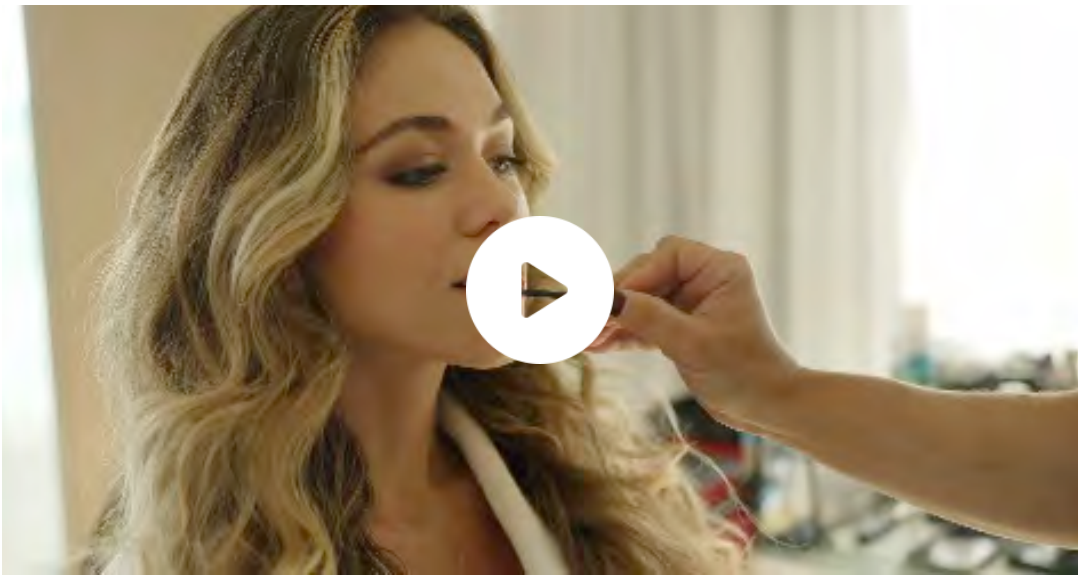
with **Adam Freedman**



Image © Adam Freedman

Shooting commercial advertising fashion and lifestyle is exciting. I'm a high-energy and creative person, so it enables me to express what I see in each image and create something unique for each client. Even when I'm shooting something less interesting, I try to put something unique in the images and present everything in its most positive light. I tend to cross over in a lot of my work. We use terms like editorial, lifestyle, fashion and commercial as different, and they are, but you can have some of the elements of each in a photo. Shoot to the look the client needs, even if you are your own client. I like emotion in photos and it's probably why I shoot a lot of lifestyle.

For this article, I was able to work with a couple of my favorite companies, Bikini Crush Swimwear and the Grand Beach Hotel Surfside. The photos are a mix of what I shoot for a swimwear client and images for the hotel, and just for my portfolio or the model's portfolio. For the last year or so I have been shooting a lot of swim content. Understanding the client is critical. Bikini Crush is a luxury brand. Instead of a day at the beach look, I needed a more upscale location.



The model for this shoot is Devon Christenson from Elite Modeling Agency Miami. I chose Devon because her look fit the vision for the shoot. Looking at her portfolio she has amazing expressions needed for this. I usually work with agency models. Many of my clients require that the models come through agencies. This simplifies the billing and usage. It's all resolved well before the day of the shoot. Working with experienced models in the long run saves the client time and money. The initial cost can be higher, but the productions move quickly, and we can get a lot more done.

I usually shoot tethered to my iPad. I can show an experienced model the general idea of what we are looking for using the iPad and they take it from there. Models with less experience require you to spend more time getting the looks you need and again the iPad is a huge help. It also lets me review the images as we shoot, moving the production along much faster. I prepare a board of sample images and I use it on every shoot as an inspiration board along with a posing guide. This will help you a lot with communicating with your model. I am high energy and talk a lot and do not have any trouble communicating. I have coached several photographers who are more reserved. A sample posing guide on set will make your life much easier. I use Pinterest for this.

The Grand Beach Hotel Surfside is amazing. It is one of the most stunning properties in South Florida along with the other properties they own. They photograph so well. There is so much available light, which makes it easier to plan shots and reduces the need for gear. Familiarize yourself with your location before the shoot day if possible. If you cannot go there, look up images online and hire a scout on large productions. I use an app called Sun Seeker that tells me where the sun will be. It's a great tool to use to plan your locations around a property all day. Always try to match the location for a set to the light. If you cannot, then you need to have a plan of what you need to create the lighting environment. Not everything goes as planned on a production. Be always positive, be a leader. If a situation arises, resolve it. Do not panic.

I wanted to use different lighting situations in these images so you can see what the difference is. Some of the images are available light, some the available light was mixed with artificial light. Usually on shoots like this I am using scrims and reflectors. I have sizes of each from 4x6' to 10x10' and sizes in between. Most are the Manfrotto Pro Scrims. I love these, they assemble in seconds and pack up for easy transport. My lighting gear is mostly Elinchrom ELB 1200 packs and heads. These are game changers. I can overpower the sun and they can sync at up to 1/8000 of a second. I use a mix of Elinchrom, Westcott and Chimera light modifiers. For this shoot I used a 24" Chimera collapsible beauty dish when I did use flash. Easy to pack up and comes with a grid and diffuser. There are so many brands and all of them are good. The 24" beauty dish is a must for my kit.

Before I get into my camera gear, let's talk about practice. Yes, practice. Musicians run scales regularly and they practice regularly. Photographers do not and they need to. The way I learned what looks I can get from each modifier is to test them all. I use a mannequin and I spent and continue to spend hours working out what I can do with my gear. This allows me to be able to come up with a plan for each production and when a situation occurs on shoot day, I have the knowledge of how to overcome it. If you don't know what your gear does, how can you expect to get the look you want?

I like gear and I am a bit of a geek when it comes to new gear. I shoot with Sony for the most part and my go-to cameras for stills are the A1 and A7RIVA. For video I use the A7SIII and the A1. My lenses are a mix of Sony FE lenses and Sigma FE mount lenses. For this shoot I went with zooms. I have a great set of primes and love them, but I am in Florida and with the humidity I don't like changing lenses when I am going to be outside. Zooms have come a long way and with the new offerings from most manufacturers I do not think you lose anything noticeable as far as image quality when compared to primes. Most of my images are viewed as they are meant to be in print or online as the entire image and not as part of an image. Don't pixel peep, you will make yourself crazy. I do not believe you need this kind of equipment to take great photos. I use what I use because I want to. There are no bad cameras or lenses. Today's offerings from all companies are great.

SETUP 1

The first set of images were shot in the hotel room and balcony. Devon's expressions are what make these images. They were all shot using a 24-70 to make you feel more involved as the viewer. The wider-angle lens gives the viewer a feeling of being there. I often use a 24-70 and even a 16-35 when shooting lifestyle. These are all shot available light. We had a cloudy day, no scrims needed. For the most part these were shot at ISO 800-1000, 1/125 shutter and f3.5. Yes, you read that correctly, ISO 800-1000. New cameras can shoot at higher ISO without a problem. If there is noise, it's fine noise, and if you really want to take the noise out, Photoshop can do it easily now. The noise makes skin look better. I add noise back into photos in post. Using the tools of today has made my kit so much smaller and I use far less lighting gear than I used to. With older cameras I would have bounced light to create this same look to stay at ISO 100. It would have taken much longer and a lot more gear. I love technology and use it to my advantage. You should too.



Image © Adam Freedman





Images © Adam Freedman

SETUP 2

The second set of images I shot two ways to show what looks can be done with and without artificial light. The ones with only available light have a more lifestyle or natural feel and the ones with strobe added have a sexier glamour and editorial feel. One is not better than the other, just different. Some of my clients like one look and some like the other. These were first shot with only available light. Settings for most are ISO 1250. F-stop was between 2.8 and 3.5 for most and shutter speed 1/125-1/160. I used the Sony 70-200 FE 2.8 GM for most of these images. I had more working room and wanted the compression of the longer lens. Work with your model to hold poses when you slow your shutter speed. Even at 1/125 you can get motion blur if the model is moving too fast. Some blur is OK if you want to show movement. The second part was shot adding in the Elinchrom ELB 1200 and a 24" collapsible beauty dish by Chimera with the diffuser. I dropped the ISO to 200 and the aperture and shutter speed range stayed the same initially. I played with the shutter speed to let in more ambient light.





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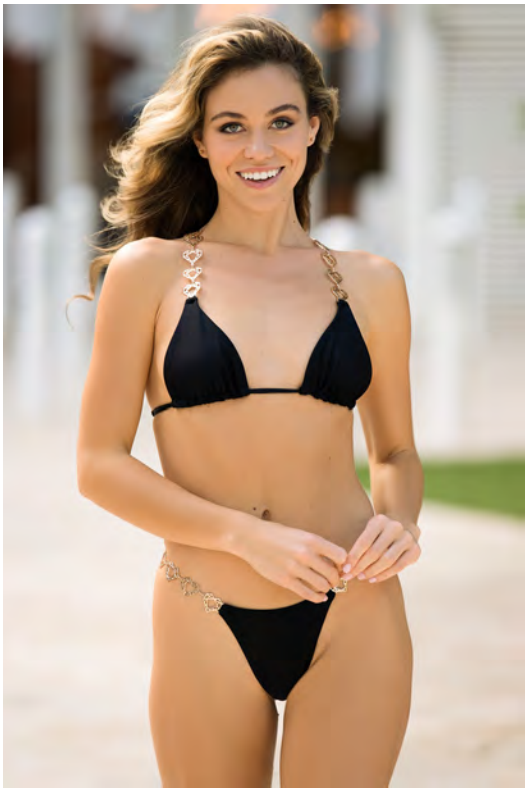
In all these images, I made the poses a little sexier. The outfit is sexy and I wanted the posing to match the outfit and location. I always shoot with both the model looking into the camera and looking off. I also shoot in thirds. I do not mean the rule of thirds, but the same photo with the camera at three different heights. Your camera height can really affect the look and feel of an image. I never want to get done and wish I had shot from a different height or angle. I always say, "See 360, shoot 360." What I mean is be aware of your surroundings. Sometimes the hero shot is behind you. Memory cards are the cheapest piece of kit we have, so taking extra shots only helps. I do not worry about shot count. I never say I shot too much. This is a topic that seems to create a lot of debate. Don't spray and pray. Shoot with purpose. But don't limit yourself. Shoot from varying angles and camera heights. Another reason I shoot a lot of images is to understand what clients need today. We are not shooting just an 8-page ad or a look book. Clients need features and fillers—features or hero shots and fillers to feed the social media beast. I did a shoot for Mela Swimwear over the summer and we had 35 feature photos and 1,500 fillers. Those fillers have been posted regularly on social media. I see them daily. The client pays for those. Always look for ways to add value to what you offer. There is value in every image you shoot.

SETUP 3

The third set are outdoor photos. We had a cloudy day for the most part with the sun peeking out on occasion. Usually I am using scrims and reflectors, but they were not needed this day. These images are more for the swimwear company. These were shot with both the 24-70 and the 70-200. ISO was between 160-800 with most being 800. These were later in the day, and we were running out of light. Understanding posing and angles is critical. You need to show off the swimwear and still deliver a great photo of the subject and environment. When you have a beautiful model in a bikini and the photos are sexy, you need to make sure they fit the client's look and add the appropriate amount of sizzle. I have some clients who want a more sexy or provocative look in images and some who want a more conservative look. Spend time getting to know what your client wants. Remember it is their shoot.







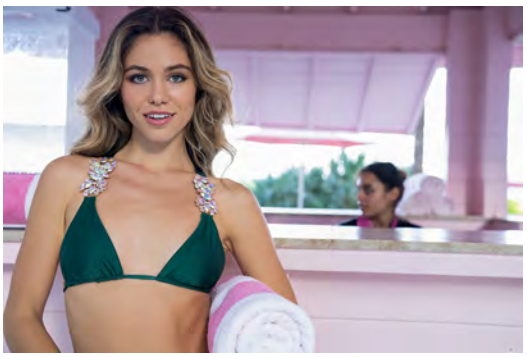
Images © Adam Freedman

Image © Adam Freedman

These are more typical swimwear photos for clients that were shot with the 70-200. These have life because of the models' expressions and mixing in a lifestyle feel on an otherwise basic lookbook photo. Devon's expressions set the images apart.







Images © Adam Freedman

My advice is to push yourself creatively. Stay calm and never panic. Practice and always be learning. ■



Adam Freedman is an award-winning commercial fashion and lifestyle photographer. He was rated #1 in 2019 One Eyeland Awards Best of the Best Photographers. He has always been a little rebellious when it comes to rules. Adam uses his imaginative outside-the-box thinking to create iconic imagery for his clients. Along with his talent he has assembled a team that consists of industry leading individuals, all of which contribute highly refined skills to full production from concept to project completion. His work has been featured by numerous brands, fashion designers, resorts, major corporations and magazines.

website: aefreedman.com **instagram: instagram.com/adamfreedmanphotos/**

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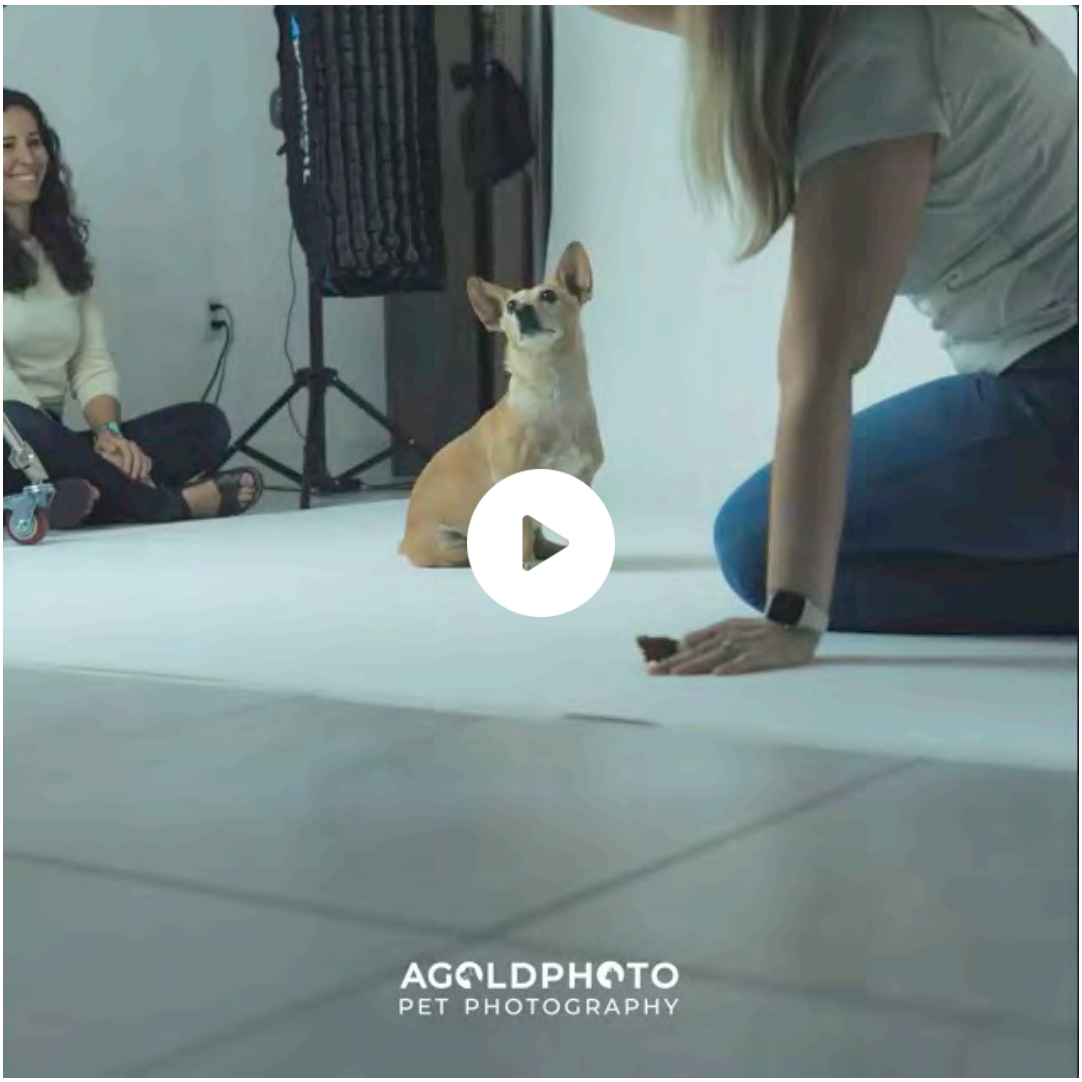


HOW TO GET STARTED WITH PET PHOTOGRAPHY

with **Adam Goldberg**



Image © AGoldPhoto Pet Photography



People LOVE their pets! I have been photographing pets since 2013 when it was just a hobby, and it became my full-time job in 2017.

I own and run AGoldPhoto Pet Photography Studio in Tampa, Florida with my wife, Mary.

Pet portraits are popular with pet owners because pets don't live as long as we want them to and pet parents want a way to remember their pets, even after they're gone.

Pets are often challenging to photograph for their owners because they won't sit still or "they always look away" when their owner pulls out their phone.



Image © AGoldPhoto Pet Photography



Image © AGoldPhoto Pet Photography

I started my pet photography career by working at an animal shelter. My background is in marketing and I was originally hired to manage the website and social media. Once the website redesign was finished, my supervisor asked me to take over the photography program too. At that time, I knew nothing about photography or how to work with animals.

It was a struggle at first, but after watching countless videos online and practicing on the shelter animals, I got really good at it. Most weeks, I spent 4-5 hours a day taking photos of scared and nervous shelter animals. After so many hours of practice, I learned what worked and what didn't.

The animal shelter was in South Florida and taking adoption photos outside was challenging. The lighting was never consistent and it was VERY hot out, especially in the middle of the day. Midday is an awful time of day to take photos outdoors without any lighting equipment. The pets were also distracted by the other smells, which made it harder outside too.

After lots of trial and error outside, I decided to use a small room with a window inside the shelter to take the adoption photos, but eventually switched to a basic lighting kit.

I was at an animal shelter conference where I met someone from a large pet food brand that partnered with Westcott to give shelters a free lighting kit. I continue to use Westcott lighting to this day and I am proud to be a Westcott Top Pro.

Once it was time to leave my job at the animal shelter, I took a corporate marketing job at a software company in Tampa and realized quickly that it wasn't for me. I missed working with animals, so I went to the local animal shelter in Tampa to start volunteering and taking photos of pets again.

It has been quite the journey with lots of trial and error to get where I am today, so if you're looking to add pet portraits to your offering, here are a few tips to help you get started.

GO TO A DOG PARK AND ASK PEOPLE IF YOU CAN PHOTOGRAPH THEIR DOGS

If you're looking to sharpen your pet photography skills, head to your local dog park to take photos of the dogs romping around. I would bring my dog with me and start by taking photos of him, but would also focus on the other dogs. I would show the owners the back of my camera and tell them that I would post them on my Instagram (@agoldphoto) and it was a great way to build my audience, but also to get practice with various camera settings like the auto-focus modes and shutter speed to get a sharp photo.

TAKE PHOTOS OF FRIENDS' PETS FOR PRACTICE

Almost everyone I know has a dog and friends with dogs were a low barrier to entry to practice on. It's important to practice on all kinds of dogs, in addition to your own, because each one has a different behavior, level of training and even fur color. Practice on as many dogs as you can.

POST IN NEIGHBORHOOD FACEBOOK GROUPS OR NEXTDOOR.COM

Once you run out of friends with pets, you can join neighborhood Facebook groups and offer free photos for pet owners if they let you practice on their pets. As you take more photos, you will start to build your portfolio and you will get better and better.





Images © AGoldPhoto Pet Photography



Image © AGoldPhoto Pet Photography

POST CONSTANTLY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

As your portfolio grows, post your photos as much as you can on your personal social media and create business social media pages for your pet photography. On your personal page, you want as many friends as possible to know that you offer pet photography. Your friends will start to reach out to you for your services and will tell more friends, and that's how it snowballs into more pet photo shoots for you.

CREATE BLOG POSTS ON YOUR WEBSITE

After each photo shoot, create a blog post on your website with photos from the photo shoot and some information about the pets you are photographing. Make sure to include a link or two to the services page on your website. The links to your services will help others find you, especially if the pet owner shares the blog post on their social media.

Blog posts also serve as content for local search. Whatever city you are in, include that in the blog post so that you show up in local searches. For example, "Pet Photography in Tampa."

CONSIDER MAKING PET PORTRAITS YOUR NICHE

When starting my photography business, my plan was to offer as many services as possible to diversify my offering. As time went on, I learned that having one specific focus worked better for me because I became the go-to person for pet portraits. Having pets be my focus allowed me to perfect my style and hone in on that, which set me apart from other photographers who were offering pets, but only on the side.



Image © AGoldPhoto Pet Photography





Images © AGoldPhoto Pet Photography

CREATE A REASON AND URGENCY TO BOOK A PET PHOTO SHOOT

Photography services in general are not a necessity, so you have to create a reason for a pet owner to book with you. Oftentimes, a reason is that their pet is sick and nearing the end of their life. End of life is not the reason I want someone to book with us. These shoots are often depressing, the pet is no longer acting and looking like themselves and their owner may have large medical bills to pay for.

Instead of relying on the pet owner to come up with a reason to use your services, create your own. An example of this is to create a mini session event where there are limited spots and a portion of sales are donated to an animal charity.

These events are how we used to run our business prior to the pandemic and we traveled all over the country. We were in each city for a limited number of days, so pet owners had to schedule their session while we were there. There was a sense of urgency for our photo shoots and events always sold out months in advance. The pandemic ruined that for us, but it led us to opening our own photo studio in Tampa instead.

We opened our studio in August 2020 and we wanted to get away from offering mini sessions, but the sense of urgency went away with that, so we had to come up with something else.

Now, our focus is our “Tails of Gratitude” fundraising book. We set out to create a fundraising coffee table book that benefits the Humane Society of Tampa Bay. The first volume of the book raised $8,850 for the shelter and we’re taking applicants for our second volume now.

The book created a reason to book other than the mini session and the end of life session.





CREATE AN EXPERIENCE

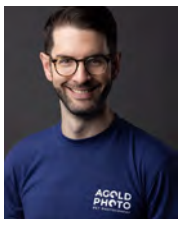
Any photographer can offer a 15-minute mini session and a digital gallery of photos, but what type of experience is that really, especially if working with animals?

Now that we have our own studio, we don't limit the amount of time a session can last. We want to make sure the pets are comfortable as well as the owners. Give your clients something to talk about other than the quality of the photos.

As a luxury photography business, we're not selling photos at all, we're creating a unique experience for pet owners to celebrate the love they have for their pets.

We're not selling our pet photography skills or pieces of photo paper or canvas, we're selling love.

If you want to see more of our pet photography work, you can follow us on Instagram and Facebook, and check out this ultimate guide to shelter pet photography we made with Westcott. ■



Adam Goldberg is a pet photographer based in Tampa, Florida. He owns and manages AGoldPhoto Pet Photography with his wife, Mary. Adam's passion lies with taking photos of shelter animals in hopes of getting them adopted.

website: agoldphoto.com **instagram: @instagram.com/agoldphoto/**

ADDING HEADSHOTS TO YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY BUSINESS

with **Barbara MacFerrin**

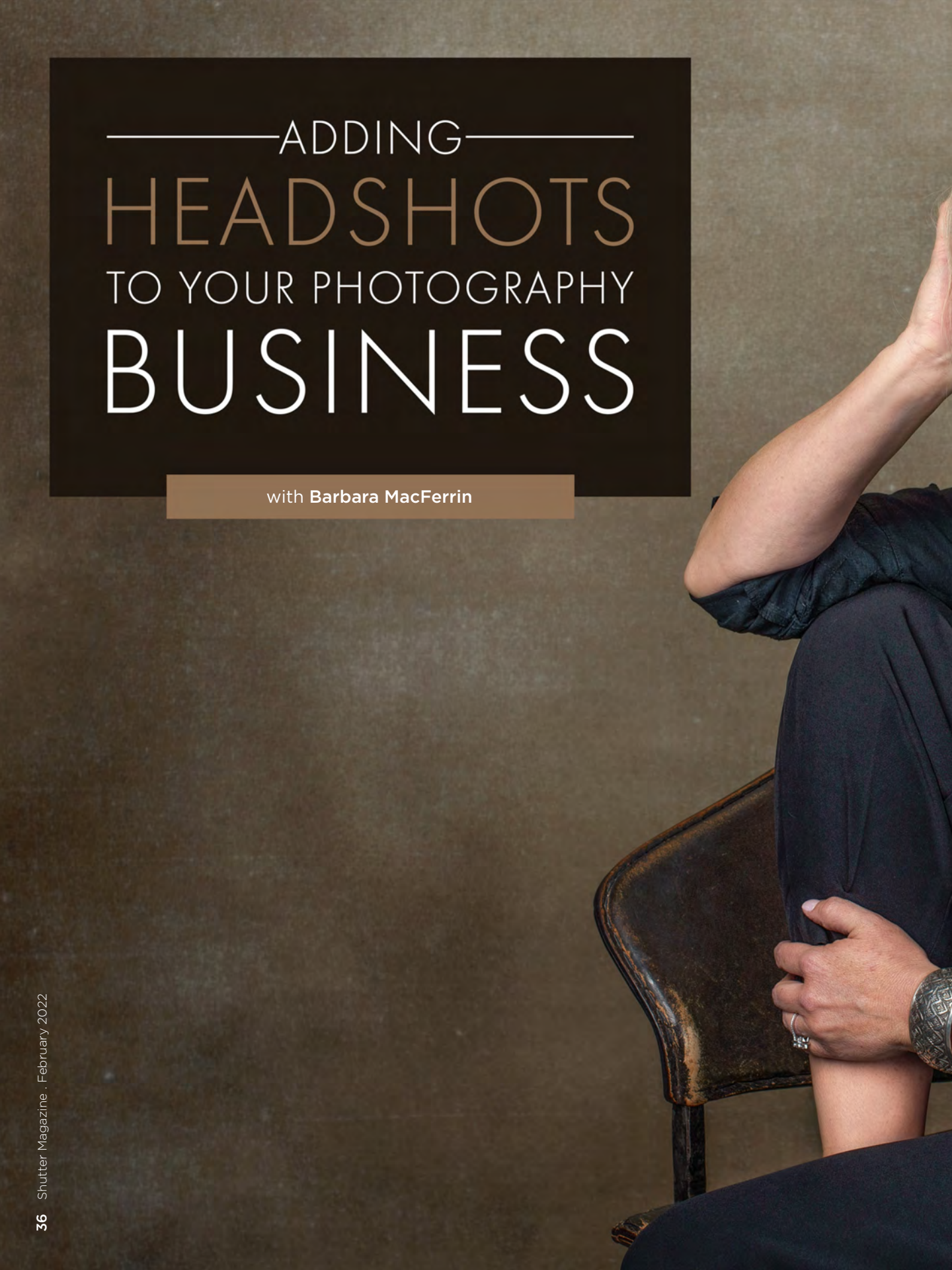




Image © Barbara MacFerrin Photography

Today's marketing and social media has made it nearly impossible to have an online presence without a professional headshot. Your clients (and even YOU) need a headshot that will stand out. Here are some scenarios for headshot needs:

- Corporate headshots
- Business branding
- Dating
- Social Media
- Author portrait
- Modeling/actor portfolio headshot
- Musicians/album releases

If you're not offering headshots in your business, you are leaving money on the table. Headshots are a nice addition to your portfolio and often are much easier than other types of sessions. Headshots are always in season and they're a great way to build a relationship with those clients for other types of sessions. If they're happy with their headshots, they will likely remember you when they're ready for family photos and will likely return when they need to update their headshots later on. Here are some tips for taking great headshots:



Image © Barbara MacFerrin Photography

1. KNOW YOUR CLIENT'S NEEDS

Make sure you have a pre-consultation with your client, whether it's on the phone or in person. Ask them what they're looking for and if they have any requirements such as background color, wardrobe colors, etc. Do they want the session taken outdoors, on location or in your studio? Do they want a typical, corporate-style headshot or something more creative or more casual? The more information you have up front, the easier it will be to plan the session and to satisfy your client's expectations. Ask them for inspiration photos if applicable. The example left is of a recent university graduate who wanted a more casual headshot that he could use for social media.

Image © Barbara MacFerrin Photography



Image © Barbara MacFerrin Photography

2. MAKE SURE THEY KNOW WHAT TO WEAR

Most clients are not particularly comfortable in front of the camera, so there's nothing more frustrating for them than when they have no idea what to wear for their session. During the phone or in-person consultation, make sure you discuss wardrobe ideas. Try to get them to bring a few options so that they will have a variety of shots to choose from. The more variety they have, the more likely they will purchase more images. I typically recommend solid colors and advise them to avoid busy patterns so to not distract from their face. Most people (especially women) do not like how their bare arms look in photos. To avoid this, suggest they wear long or 3/4 sleeves for their session (unless they have specific requirements not to, depending on their needs). Also let them know to press their clothes beforehand and make sure they're free of pet hair. This will save you retouching time in Photoshop!



3. SUGGEST PROFESSIONAL HAIR AND MAKEUP

Some clients opt out of professional hair and makeup services to save money, however, you should emphasize to them how important it is to have professional hair and makeup. Not only will they look their best, but it will save you editing time retouching blemishes or hair. An added benefit of having hair and makeup done will allow your client some down time and they'll feel more relaxed before having their photos taken. A relaxed client will lead to better images. I always give them the option though and more often than not, the ladies will choose to have this service.

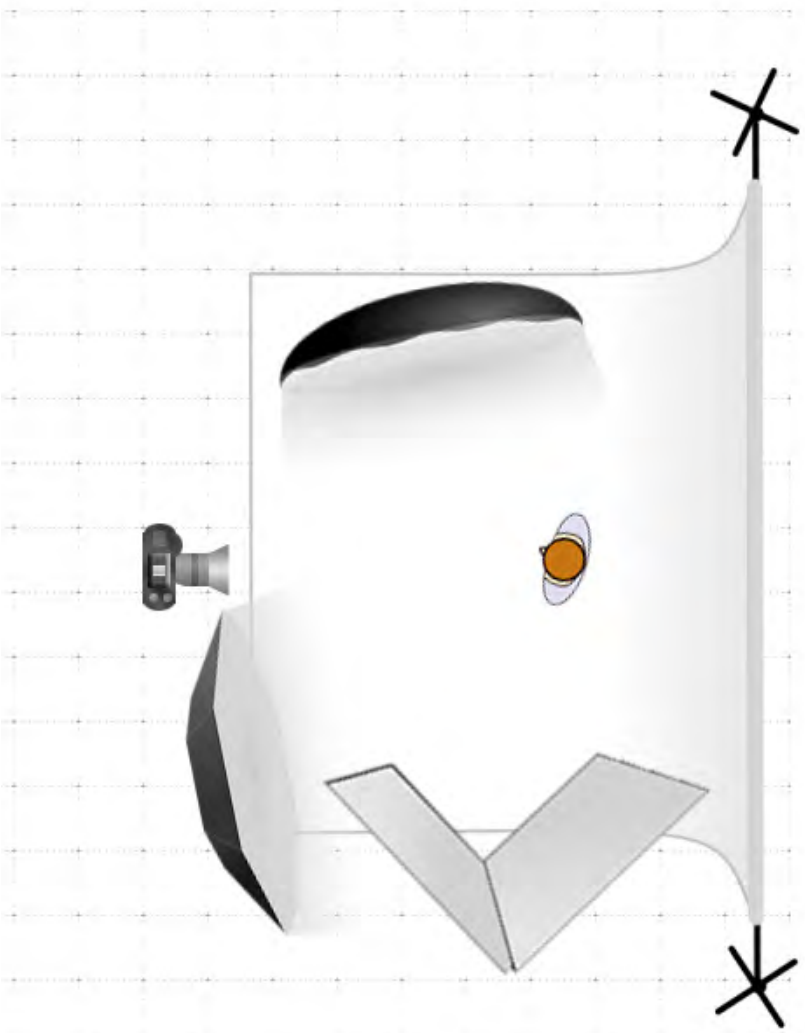
4. HELP YOUR CLIENTS FEEL COMFORTABLE

One of the comments I get most often from my clients is that I helped them feel comfortable during their session. Most people are nervous to get their photos taken, so it's up to us to help them relax and feel at ease. Engage in conversation when they arrive. Ask them general questions that are in their comfort zone ("How long have you lived in the area?", "Do you have any pets?", etc.). Make silly jokes and keep it light and positive. Guide them through the session and talk to them throughout. Tell them where to put their hands, where to look, etc. Don't just let them try to figure out what they're supposed to do. Give them positive feedback while you're taking the photos ("You're doing great!"). This will keep them comfortable and help reassure them that they're doing it right. Even if the shots aren't your favorite, or if the light doesn't look right, never tell them that it doesn't look good. That would kill their confidence. Stay positive and keep chatting!



5. KNOW HOW TO LIGHT YOUR SUBJECT

There are different ways to light your subject, but it's good to establish a consistent look so your clients will know what to expect from their headshots. One of the best compliments a photographer will get is when people recognize your photography. Your clients are coming to you because they trust that you will help them look their best and lighting is an essential part of that equation! I usually have a go-to setup for my client headshots, but depending on the client or the situation, I may switch that up from time to time. I like to use a diffused umbrella for my key light, positioned in front of the client to camera left, and a larger umbrella as a fill light at a lower power than the main light on the opposite side of the key light. For women, I tend to light a bit more evenly to soften their features, so I will either add a white V-flat on the opposite side of the key light, or will add more power to the fill light. For men, sometimes I keep a bit more shadows on one side of the face, so I will omit the V-flat and/or lower the power of the fill light. Some photographers like to add a kicker light to have more separation from the background. Here you can see a BTS and a diagram of one of my headshot lighting setups:







6. POSING

Technically, a headshot is from the shoulders up. However, I like to capture a variety of poses such as standing, sitting, leaning, or 3/4 body shot. Remember, the more variety of shots you show your client, the higher your chances are of making a bigger sale. Sometimes one of the hardest things about photography is posing.



Images © Barbara MacFerrin Photography

The poses are those that feel comfortable and natural to your client. This way, they can focus on being relaxed and having a natural expression. Not every pose will feel comfortable or "right" for your client. Experiment with different ones and make adjustments as you go. Just remember to keep praising your client even if the pose doesn't look right.

7. PAY ATTENTION TO DETAILS

What makes a great headshot stand out is the attention to details. Try not to rush through the session. Make sure your client's clothes aren't overly wrinkled. Always keep a steamer and lint roller handy in case your client didn't have time to press their wardrobe or if you're noticing a lot of pet hair on the clothing. Ask them to make small changes to their expression: a slight head tilt, pull the chin forward, etc. These small details will make all the difference. Here are a couple of unedited images that show how a simple head tilt made this client's eyes open up. She also looks more relaxed and more approachable in the second image:





Images © Barbara MacFerrin Photography



Image © Barbara MacFerrin Photography



Image © Barbara MacFerrin Photography





Images © Barbara MacFerrin Photography

8. RETOUCHING

Subtlety is key when it comes to retouching. You want your client to look polished and at their best, but you don't want to go overboard. Every photographer has their own unique style; some apply minimum retouching and others take it a bit further. There's no right or wrong, but your retouching goal should be believable and realistic. I do my own retouching in my "signature style" so that I can maintain that unique quality about my work. Above is an example of an image before and after my signature style retouch.



Image © Barbara MacFerrin Photography



Image © Barbara MacFerrin Photography

CONCLUSION

What I've talked about here works well for my headshot photography business. Some photographers offer quick headshot sessions that only provide head and shoulders shots. Others take a more comprehensive approach in offering hair and makeup services and a full branding package with a variety of outfits and poses. Depending on your business model, you can offer different packages and products to fit your clients' needs. Ultimately, it is your decision on what will work best for you and your business. I hope you have found this article useful in helping you make the leap into adding headshots and/or branding photography to your portfolio if you haven't already! ■



Barbara MacFerrin is an award-winning fine art portrait photographer based in Boulder, Colorado whose creative work is inspired by old master paintings of the Baroque period. Barbara is a PPA Master of Photography, 2020 & 2021 PPA Diamond Photographer and an Accredited Master Photographer of the Portrait Masters. Her work has been internationally published and she teaches online and in-person fine art photography workshops to photographers around the world.

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Images © Ian Spanier Photography

LIGHTING ON LOCATION: AN AFTERNOON WITH A TERMINATOR

with **Ian Spanier**

It's all about who you know… at least that's how the saying goes out here in Hollywood. A few months back, I decided to take full advantage of one connection. It began with an Instagram post by Sandra Jersby (@swedefit), a fitness professional I have worked with many times for various publications since moving to Los Angeles. Sandra is also a trainer for a number of celebrities and professional athletes, and on that day she posted one of her clients' progress videos, and the face was quite familiar. Any fan of *The Terminator* movies, like myself, would instantly recognize the Liquid Terminator, Robert Patrick.

Robert has also starred in various roles since then, in everything from *Sons of Anarchy* to *Goliath, The Expanse, The Walking Dead,* and other movies like *Safe House, The Protégé,* and even cameos in *Wayne's World 2*. Sandra's post was about Robert's diligent work on his latest fitness prep for his role in the John Cena/DC Comics series, *Peacemaker.*

Not one to usually ask, I took a step outside my comfort zone and asked if she wouldn't mind asking him if I could make a portrait. A day later, he and I were direct messaging much to my surprise! We worked out a date and I began my prep.

Upon arrival, Robert was AMAZING. Super friendly, and was game for some creative fun. I had planned five setups, ambitiously—I explained that I shoot fast, but I'll take whatever time he will give me. Something I will say about all celebrity shoots: no matter what, I plan for two minutes. If that's all I get, I need to nail the first shot. In the ideal scenarios, nailing the first shot leads to more than two minutes. I should mention, I also trained myself to shoot fast, with good reason.

I knew Robert was a motorcycle guy and owner of a Harley dealership. It just so happened that I had been working on a personal project all about motorcycle riders and I shared a sample of that with him. He liked it and we started there, just as I planned.

Ninety percent of the time, I plan my shoots out in great detail in my notebook. This is something I have been doing since the beginning of my career. I draw a birdseye view of the sets with details about what lights, modifiers and backgrounds I will use, as well as the settings and sample images of the day once complete. This has been an incredibly useful tool for my whole career, not only to be able to reference old shoots, but also to hand over the day's plan to assistants when I need to deal with talent, my clients or even a computer glich.

Images © Ian Spanier Photography



Images © Ian Spanier Photography



Image © Bree Andrews

I began with the same set I'd been using for MoTo, my Motorcycle Rider project. This was an unusual setup for me. I use these personal shoots to really push myself out of my comfort zone and try new things. Usually, I shoot with a depth of field around f7.1, as it just fits my way of seeing. I also usually work minimally, often with just one or two lights. This set, however, was on white seamless paper with two 43" deep silver umbrellas on the paper, a Westcott Rapid Box 24" beauty dish, and finally, a Westcott 7' shoot-through umbrella tucked all the way back against my front door. I use Westcott FJ400 strobes along with the FJ-X2m transmitter. All this light means more power, more power for a deeper depth of field, with me shooting at ISO 800 at f20. I am a big believer in light meters, and I chastise any photographer who doesn't rely on one, particularly for strobe photography. I always read my lights from the back forward, same as I always create my set from the back forward. The background lights are at f16, mostly because in my smaller space I am limited with how kickback will affect my subject, so I deal with making the set pure white in post—not ideal, but it gets the job done. I use a pair of V-Flat World flats to block these back lights, and also use the black side as a negative fill, which helps separate my subject for better post work. The Rapid Box is my key, posed high and down at my subject, set to f18 and the 7' shoot through is two stops (f11) under, acting as a fill.

After I read each light individually, I then read with all lights firing. I do this because often the exposure with both front lights will increase when combined, but also because I want each light to act independently. The key being two stops brighter will mean that is the main source, and as you can see in the final, I increase this feel. I believe these settings are very important, but it's all about the right feel of the light. I will let feel trump settings, even though I am such a believer in light metering as an integral aspect of the understanding of light, so it's the combination in my opinion.

One other note: I always meter for my ideal, then open the camera up. When I am metering for f8, I shoot f7.1 This is so my camera's histogram is juxtaposed to the right, something that leads to better detail in the shadows, and that is very important for post work.

Robert liked the first image that popped up on my iPad (that I shoot JPGs) to thanks to my CamRanger 2 wireless image transmitter. From there, it was on.

That little piece I mentioned about planning? Well, this is where it comes in handy. Shot two was planned with Robert beforehand, as I asked him to bring a trench or pea coat. While he went to get it, I quickly put a piece of 8x10 black velvet over the white seamless, turned off all the strobes and switched to my Westcott Solix 2 LED. Set to 3700k for a nice warm light, I changed gears. This continuous light source is a throwback for me. It forces me to work a bit slower, more like the days I used 4x5 film cameras, and this is with intention. The results have yet to let me down. This has become one of my favorite setups. WYSIWYG with continuous light sources, and that's a fun change from strobe.

A refresh on Robert's coffee and we jumped to set three. Again, I use the outfit change to make my change. Using the same 43' deep silver umbrella from the MoTo setup, I added a diffusion sleeve and two Westcott X-Drop background kits. These are great portable backgrounds that I use to make my Irving Penn-inspired "corner" portraits. Penn has always been a huge influence on my work, and my little modern homage to him is a staple in my mix.

I found a fake floor background from Backdrop Outlet, which completes the look. In real life, it looks odd, but in the finals, it works great. For this set, I go to my usual settings, ISO 200 at f7.1. Personally, I like to make these finals less contrasty and a bit desaturated or B&W. The nice soft light from the diffused umbrella makes for a perfect feel. I either use the 43" deep silver or my 7' silver with diffusion for this setup, always depending on space available… that 7' is BIG!



Image © Bree Andrews





Images © Ian Spanier Photography



Image © Bree Andrews



Images © Ian Spanier Photography

To be honest, we really could have stopped at set two. I knew I had the image I wanted of Robert for myself, and he was super happy with the first shot! Nonetheless, I asked if he would mind one more. He had brought a great hat, so I didn't want to leave anything behind.

My final setup is an idea I had developed when I first got my hands on Westcott's umbrellas and realized how great these low-priced and easy to pack in and out modifiers are. Originally, I had taken the 7' silver with diffusion and stacked it with a 43" deep silver umbrella with diffusion onto one stand, using a Mafer (aka superclamp) with a 3" pin to put two lights onto one stand. Soon after, I had a shoot with limited ceiling height, so I did the same with two 43" Deep Silver umbrellas. Both work great and create a beautiful window-like quality of light. Again, this is all about metering. I make my key (the light on top) two stops brighter than the lower light on the stack, or as my photographer friend Andrew French calls it, "The Spanier Stack," combining for f7.1. For today, 7' and 43" it would be, and again, turning to my influence from Penn, I directed Robert to sit with his hands on my table, and from there—well, just be Robert. ■



Ian Spanier began taking photographs at six years old when his parents gave him his first point and shoot camera. After majoring in photography in college, Spanier worked in publishing as an editor, but making pictures never left him. Having only known 35mm, he taught himself medium and large format as well as lighting. The original "Masters of Photography" have always inspired Spanier as they shot what they saw. For him, there is no "one" subject that he photographs; he also chooses to shoot what he sees.

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CHOOSING A LENS THAT FITS YOU

with **Joel Grimes**



Image © Joel Grimes





Image © Joel Grimes

Settings: f/7.1 1/200 ISO 320

Lens: TS-E90mm f2.8 Macro

I hate to admit this, but I have this love affair with lenses. When it comes to the creative process, what lens I choose is a key ingredient to the final outcome of my images. As an artist/photographer, understanding the basic fundamental laws of optics is well served in getting to my end result. There is this saying among seasoned photographers: "Camera bodies will come and go, so build your system around the lenses that best suit you."

If we look at the history of lenses, we are living in a time where the quality of optics has never been better. Part of that is a result of computer design, advancements in new types of glass, and precision quality control during manufacturing.

Another factor is the introduction of digital mirrorless cameras. In speaking directly to the Canon Optical Engineers, they have stated they are elated over the opportunity to develop new RF lenses for the EOS R mirrorless camera system. The main reason is now they don't have to account for the mirror in the SLR cameras, and the size of the lens mount in conjunction with the flange distance to the sensor has opened the door to new design possibilities. We can already see this in some of the latest lenses being introduced into the market.



Settings: f/8.0 1/125 ISO 100

Lens: EF 70-200mm F/2.8L USM

Image © Joel Grimes

The new modern lenses have made advancements in three primary areas. First and most importantly is the correction and minimization of aberration. Aberration is most noticeable when you set your lens aperture at its widest setting, resulting in loss of sharpness primarily in the corners of your frame. Stopping down two to three stops from wide open, to what we call the "sweet spot of the lens," will minimize aberration.

However, shooting wide open can also give you an amazing shallow depth of field look, resulting in that sought-after crushed bokeh. Today with the current modern designed lenses, shooting wide open is a dream come true, and something that I am personally experimenting with more and more each day.

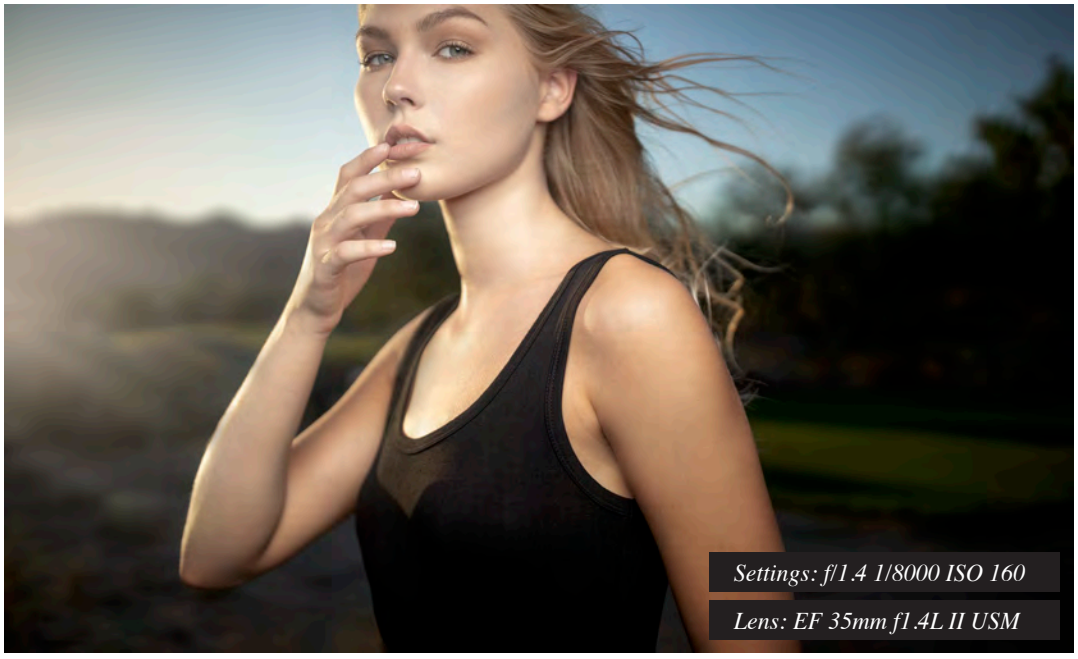


Image © Joel Grimes

Second, overall sharpness has increased to the point that the resolution of modern designed lenses is astonishing and seems to be keeping up with the increase of ultra-megapixel sensors. As someone who started out shooting in the late '70s, it has been a long haul to get to where we are today. It wasn't that long ago where zoom lenses noticeably underperformed prime or fixed lenses. But today, many premium zoom lenses perform as good or very close to prime lenses.



Settings: f/8.0 1/8 ISO 100

Lens: TS-E17mm f/4L

Image © Joel Grimes

Third is the advancement in lens coating that helps minimize lens flare and optimal color rendition. Most of us don't think much about this, but with older lenses, if you were to shoot into the sun or a small bright source of light, the amount of overall image degradation was disconcerting. As a commercial advertising photographer, I would go to great lengths to flag off the sun or my lights to minimize flare into my camera. But today, with these new lenses, that is not as much of a concern.



Settings: f/7.1 1/160 ISO 200

Lens: RF 24-70 F2.8 L IS USM

Image © Joel Grimes



Settings: f/8.0 1/200 ISO 200

Lens: RF 24-70 F2.8 L IS USM

Image © Joel Grimes



Settings: f/8.0 1/200 ISO 400

Lens: RF 24-70 F2.8 L IS USM

Image © Joel Grimes

So where does this leave us? Well, personally, as stated before, I feel like we are in good times and couldn't be happier. But with all these advancements in technology, how does this affect the overall outcome as applied to the creative process? We have to agree that there is more to the photographic process than ultra-sharp images.
Since I started photography, there has been this ongoing balancing act between two worlds, the technical and the artistic or creative side of things. In the early days, I defiantly gravitated towards the technical side of the pendulum and have spent a lifetime pushing myself towards the creative side of things. It seems that many of us tend to fall into that category.

Whenever I am setting up to create an image, I always have to ask myself, "What is the end result I am trying to achieve?" Am I doing something that forces me down a path that represents my uniqueness as an artist? Jokingly, I often say, "Who sets out to create an average or boring image?" I want something more, something that I can hang on my wall and will last the test of time.

If you are a student of history, as I hope you are, you will notice that with every step forward in the advancement of progress there is always a group that takes a step backward in time, countering that advancement. Music is a great arena to use as an analogy to observe this trend or phenomenon.

Back in the '80s and into the '90s there was this huge advancement with electronic musical instruments such as synthesizers, drum machines, guitar sound effects, etc. All good, except there came a point when it was overused and started to overpower the music. I was in a rock band in the '80s, back when I had plenty of hair, and know that sound very well.

Eventually, listeners longed for the simplicity of clean, raw music. Thus came the unplugged era and a counter to the overproduced techno era. In 1992, Eric Clapton's "Unplugged" album was a live-recorded stripped-down approach and became a phenomenal success, eventually winning three Grammys. That counter to technology created all sorts of new bands that wanted a more raw back-to-basics sound. I think we see this today happening again with the overproduced auto-tune vocals. There is now a push for a step backward.



Image © Joel Grimes

Art or photography is no different. My boys grew up with the digital revolution but now are also into shooting the old film cameras. You see this whole group of photographers that are mounting 100-plus-year-old barrel lenses onto their digital cameras. They are welcoming all the things like image softness, aberration and flare that modern lens technology has corrected. It is a push to counter the current modern state of perfection.

There is something refreshing and honest about revealing life with all its flaws. They have done studies in advertising photography and especially in shooting food. If you introduce a flaw of say, a french fry out of place or a drip of ketchup onto the plate, it is much more believable and appetizing. When I started creating my early composting images, I kept this concept in mind as I looked to sell the fake of combining multiple images into one. I purposely found ways to add a flaw into my work to help the illusion of winning over my viewers.



Settings: f/10 1/125 ISO 200

Lens: Pentax-D FA645 55mm F2

Image © Joel Grimes



Settings: f/7.1 1/160 ISO 200

Lens: EF 85mm f1.4L IS USM

Image © Joel Grimes



Image © Joel Grimes

What lens is right for you is a personal choice and should reflect your creative vision as an artist. I happen to love shooting portraits using a 24mm lens on a full-frame camera. It has been somewhat of a signature in my work. For reasons that I find hard to explain, I am drawn to that close-up wide-angle environmental portrait. There is a risk of lens distortion on my subject, which I wholeheartedly welcome. For me it gives the viewer a glimpse into a world they don't see every day. A photograph is not reality and never will be, so I use that to my advantage.

I also use tilt-shift lenses and the use of panorama rigs to shoot multiple images and stitch them together to create an angle-of-view and perspective that cannot be done using a one-lens capture. I often get asked why I would go to all that trouble to use such a technique. I like the idea of doing something that adds more work to the process because few are willing to go to that much trouble and it tends to separate me from the masses.

So, follow your vision and uniqueness as an artist. Find the right lens or system that gives you the look you love. If it is a 100-year-old lens with all sorts of flaws, or an ultra-sharp modern lens, then so be it. Don't be swayed by the critiques or the naysayers. Do your own thing, but beat it into the ground until you have produced more images on that look than any other photographer on the planet. Every photographer or artist you admire has gone through that same process and paid their dues in building a body of work. The bottom line is don't sit around waiting for something to fall into your lap. Get out and explore the unknown and the world will take notice. ■



Joel graduated from the University of Arizona in 1984 with a BFA in Photography and soon established a commercial studio in Denver, Colorado. He has been selected as one of Canon's exclusive Explorer of Light photographers and a Westcott Top Pro Elite photographer. He has also been selected by Adobe as one of their Photoshop Feature Artists. For over 35 years, Joel has worked for many of the top advertising agencies and corporations across the globe and his assignments have taken him to every state across the U.S. and to over 50 countries. In 1990, Joel produced his first coffee table book, "Navajo, Portrait of a Nation," which received a number of photographic and design awards and produced an 18-month solo exhibit at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. Joel is also an ambassador for the creative process by teaching workshops and lectures across the country. "I feel that by being an open book with my process I have an opportunity to inspire others to follow their dreams and passions to create."

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EXPANDING YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY BUSINESS

with **Jermaine Horton**



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You don't have to only shoot weddings! The one thing I was told when I first started in photography was to stay with one genre and do not do multiple. Worst advice I ever got LOL.

Now I'm not saying don't master your craft and genre, but what I'm saying is that you don't have to be STUCK in just one. Because I decided to open the doors of photography, I'm a published wedding, sports, wildlife, portrait, etc. photographer. There are no limits except the ones I place on myself.

Lighting isn't always focused on strobes or speed lights. It can even be natural light. When shooting sports or even wildlife, for real-time action you don't get to choose where the sun is or will be. For wildlife like in Alaska, it's preferred to be overcast with the sun still facing the direction you are shooting. Sometimes the sun can cause reflections that are not good for the subject that has harsh light bouncing back into the subject. So understanding ALL light is the start, from natural to artificial.

When I'm shooting sports, I'm always wanting the best light. That's not always the case, but I like to have my subjects with the light facing them. With sports, you don't always have that choice, but usually in football they flip sides of the field so you will end up with the light you want. Even with still subjects such as my wedding and portrait clients, people always ask, "What's your favorite light?" The simple answer is… the best available.

Weddings are so fast-paced so I don't always have time to set up soft boxes or umbrellas, however, sometimes the best available light turns out to be the most flattering. There are wedding days where my couples are like, "Oh man, it's so overcast" when I'm like, "YES!" That means that the sun is my light source and the clouds are my soft box. Now don't get me wrong, if I have time to be creative I can get my soft box and expose for the sky and get some dreamy buttery shots. But it's not always required. The wedding day is so hectic that sometimes you only have a few minutes to get a series of shots. So choosing the BEST light is paramount.



Image © Jermaine Horton Photography

I truly feel that once you understand lighting, you can practically shoot just about anything. This is no knock to anyone in their respective genre to say a newborn photographer can come in beauty and fashion and do the same as them, but if you understand the fundamentals, you can learn to be just as good to shoot ANY genre with the best of them.

I used to be TERRIFIED of flash! I was a natural light photographer and wouldn't touch anything but a speed light. Now, I forget how to shoot in natural light sometimes because I would always shoot flash. Now I've learned the healthy balance of both! You don't have to be limited with just shooting weddings or a certain genre.

The amazing thing about my wedding clients is that they become my "lifetime" clients. What does that mean? That means that after the wedding they come to me for maternity when they get pregnant, headshots for their businesses, family photos for the holidays, etc.

Sometimes when you keep all your eggs in one basket or genre it can be a hindrance. When the pandemic started, weddings were on hold, but because I was well versed in other genres I was able to still make a living with family photos, some commercial work and more. Sometimes people discover by shooting other genres that weddings aren't their passion and they love something else. This also means you aren't locked into doing something because you feel you have to because you are completely vested in it. It's how many photographers get burnt out and quit. So go out there and shoot shoot shoot. Try all the genres. Try it all and then you will find what you truly want to be capturing and what you love doing vs. what you feel you have to do.



Image © Jermaine Horton Photography

Image © Jermaine Horton Photography



Image © Jermaine Horton Photography

My nonprofit organization is truly where my heart is. The Art of Confidence Project is my personal project where I help children of color restore their confidence and empower them through artistry. Why is this important? Because sometimes in photography you need to have purpose far beyond your genre or specialty. Being able to give back is so huge to me. I've been blessed to have a successful wedding photography business, but my nonprofit of giving back fulfills me. To see the children's faces after they see themselves in a greater light fills my heart and theirs. But it still comes down to creating impactful images and they are conveyed by not just knowing lighting but knowing your subjects. In weddings, I know how to pull emotions from clients by saying certain things to get reactions, and at what point to snap the photo when they are laughing or crying. It's the same for my nonprofit capturing children, knowing when to expect reactions and emotions, as at times our projects are extremely emotional but also fun as well. Because I opened up my mind to shooting other genres it was easy to transition into doing this along with what I already do. Being able to start this I created projects that went viral that got me national and international attention. From being on Fox News, CBS, Good Morning America and more, this project did that for me. It got the most amazing companies to know me, donate, add me as an ambassador and so much more.

We sometimes feel nervous about doing more or stepping outside of our comfort zones. However, sometimes you have to get UNCOMFORTABLE to get comfortable. I was completely comfortable being a natural light shooter but got uncomfortable with off-camera flash, and now I'm extremely comfortable with it. Because of that comfort I'm secure and knowledgeable about anything I want to shoot, from projects of my own to those asked for by clients and brands.



Image © Jermaine Horton Photography



Image © Jermaine Horton Photography

The one thing I was always told was, "Sometimes you just have to jump off the cliff and build your wings on the way down." In photography, you are going to make mistakes, you are going to have not so great moments, but keep going. The best advice I took was the advice I ignored of staying with one genre. I've had the pleasure of learning from the best: Jerry Ghionis, Joshua Dwain, and so many others. If you feel you are afraid to try new genres because your skills are not where you want them, find you a mentor. Go to workshops, conferences and events that will help you advance your skills in lighting, composition, and your general understanding of certain techniques. My success has come from my investing in education and hands-on learning from people I admire and want to learn from. I felt if I wanted to be the best, I'd learn from the best. So I followed people like Jerry and Josh, invested in their workshops, education, classes and conferences they taught at. Because of all of these things, I'm a Sony Artisan, Westcott Top Pro, Stella Pro, Spider Holster, Fundy Design and NPhoto ambassador. ■



Jermaine Horton is an Internationally Published Naperville (Chicago) area wedding and portrait photographer. His passion for telling his clients stories has garnered him clients throughout the US, feeding his love of travel and his drive to create. We can't forget his unique relationship with his clients , selfies and dance moves that has him a hit at every wedding. Along with being a wedding photographer he is also the President and Founder of The Art Of Confidence Project that's internationally recognized which empowers and restores the confidence of our youth. He's a Sony Artisan Of Imagery, Westcott Top Pro, Stella Pro Lighting, Spider Holster, Fundy Design ambassador.

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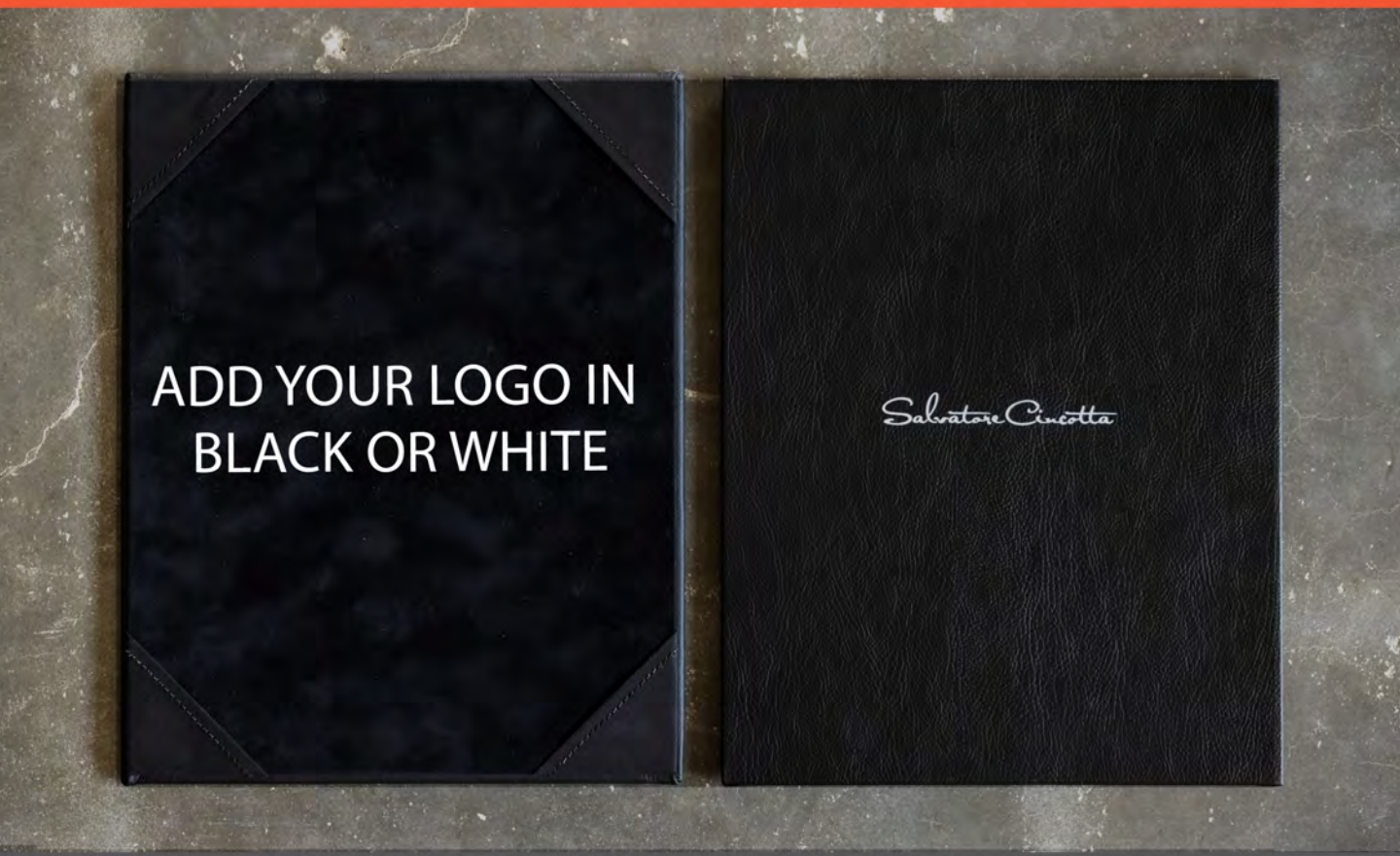
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HOW TO GET STARTED IN —BOUDOIR— PHOTOGRAPHY

with **Jasmin Jade**

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As a new boudoir photographer, one of the most difficult things for me to understand was pricing. Even though I had been in business as a family photographer for a couple of years, I wanted to change my pricing structure to make profit and steer away from "shoot and burn."

Not only was pricing very hard to understand, but I did not know what to sell, how to sell it or where to find the products.

Pricing yourself is not easy. Pricing yourself for profit is a difficult task, especially for a beginner photographer. Finding the pricing range for you and what products to sell starts with finding your ideal client first. Who do you want your ideal client to be? Who do you want to bring into your studio? Who do you want to attract? You need to start from there.





Images © Jasmin Jade Photography

I wanted to make profit, so I needed to set my prices for that and furthermore attract the kind of client who would pay my worth and who loves photography as much as I do.

The number one rule with selling products is to keep it simple. You can very easily get overwhelmed with all the different companies that offer canvases, albums, prints, embossed boxes, USBs, and the list can go on! There are so many amazing products to sell to your clients that are fabulous, but when starting out with products, it's best to pick only a couple of companies.

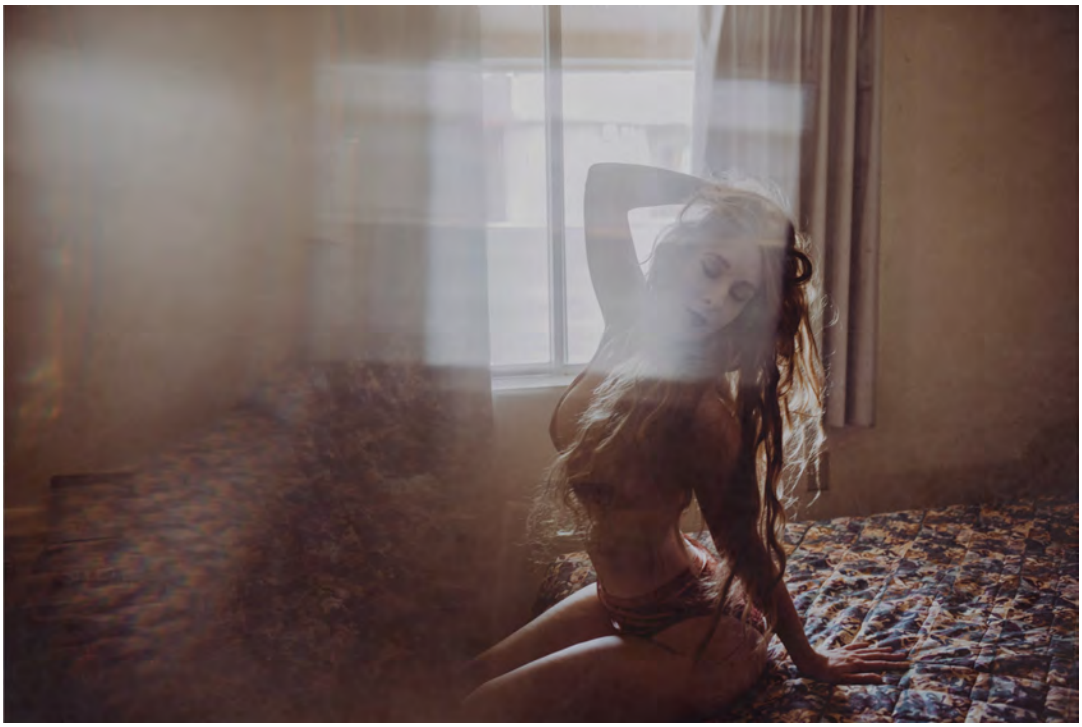
Choose products that reflect your style as a boudoir studio and brand but also some that you think will be perfect for your ideal clients. These are the products that you personally would want to display in your home and ones that you genuinely will get excited about showing off.

In my experience, almost every client will purchase products from their boudoir session. Boudoir sessions are different than family sessions because this isn't exactly the type of session that they are going to take somewhere to print themselves. Most of my clients in the past have always invested in an album either for themselves, the enjoyment of their significant other or as a groom's gift.



Image © Jasmin Jade Photography





Images © Jasmin Jade Photography

First, you need to decide what type of product you want to offer to your clients. I always suggest offering albums. They have been my top selling product of all time.

The top seller for me as a new boudoir photographer was always the little black book that I offered with my middle package. Nowadays I sell my little black book together with a big album.



Image © Jasmin Jade Photography



Image © Jasmin Jade Photography

Once you decide on what type of products to offer, start to research the companies that offer these products and pick one or two that you think align with your style as a brand, what your ideal clients will love, and that have the quality that you expect.

The best way to sell the products is to have full products in the studio that are ready for your clients to look at. I always print my favorite sessions and use the images to showcase all the products that I offer.

Have these sample albums, canvases and prints somewhere in your studio where all your clients can see them and fall in love with them.

Pricing yourself has everything to do with how much money you want to make and nothing to do with the market you are in. When I started my boudoir business, it took a while to learn my worth and not to give in to price shoppers. I eventually made the leap to IPS and being comfortable with being a high-end boudoir studio.

I learned that with pricing yourself right, the magic truly happens. Your clients book more effortlessly, selling your products comes easier and the experience that you can provide for your clients is priceless.

A few things I learned during this shift were

A few things I learned during this shift were:

Have clients book you that will spend the money and value your work.
The higher your entry price point, the better clients you will attract.
There are clients who would never book a cheap photographer.
There are clients looking for high-end photographers.
There were more than enough people who could and wanted to afford me.

Pricing yourself can be challenging and frustrating because there are so many things to consider when pricing your sessions and finding your products.





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Image © Jasmin Jade Photography







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During the photo session I make sure to take a lot of different photos of my client. I make sure I get every pose from different camera angles and frames so I have more choices to present my clients with. I do have a list of poses I go through in my head with each client, but I also improvise a lot depending on my client. That means that I do lots of flow posing and try out new things with each session. This keeps me on my toes and makes the session more fun. It's challenging and it prevents boredom. It has not always been like this; as a beginner boudoir photographer I struggled a lot with posing. My mind went blank often and I struggled with imposter syndrome. It was only with a lot of practice over years that brought me to mastering my posing in a way that I don't need to think about it.

I like poses that don't look posed. I also make sure I am taking a beautiful portrait of my client's photo session for social media at the end. ■



Jasmin Jade is a boudoir, portrait photographer and educator from Germany, based out of Washington, DC. .When Jasmin isn't behind her lens, she is inspiring photographers globally to take control of their editing workflow through her preset company, Embrace Presets. She has a strong desire to help other women find the same freedom in their business that she has achieved. Jasmin is passionate about creating a community of dreamers and doers and believes in community over competition and knows that running any photography business cannot be done alone.

website: jasminjade.com **instagram: @www.instagram.com/thejasminjade/**

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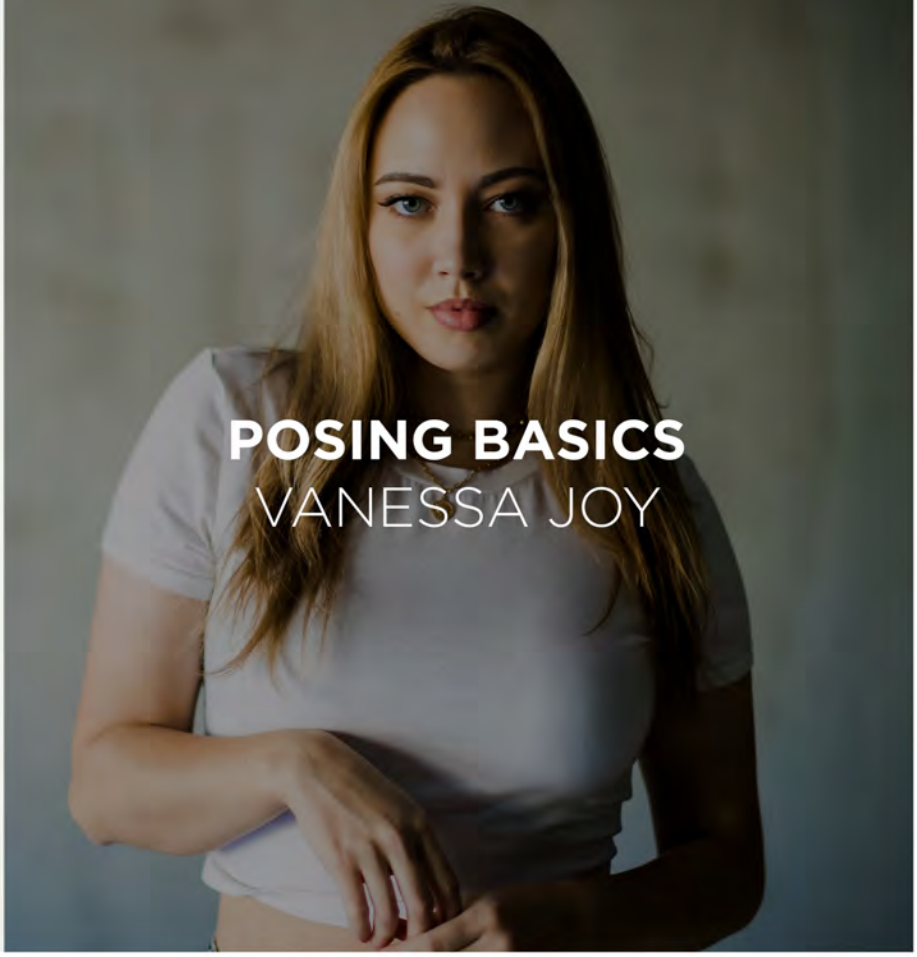
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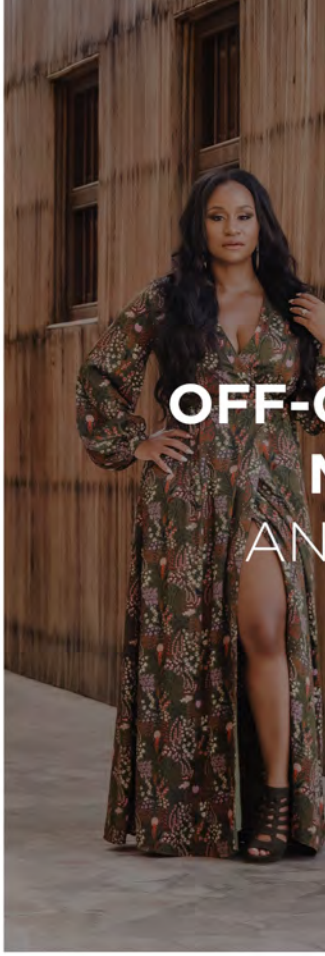



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hands-on courses

These are shooting courses. You will be shooting and working. Bring your camera, gear, or whatever you need for the course and to create create images. Expect to have some level of shooting.

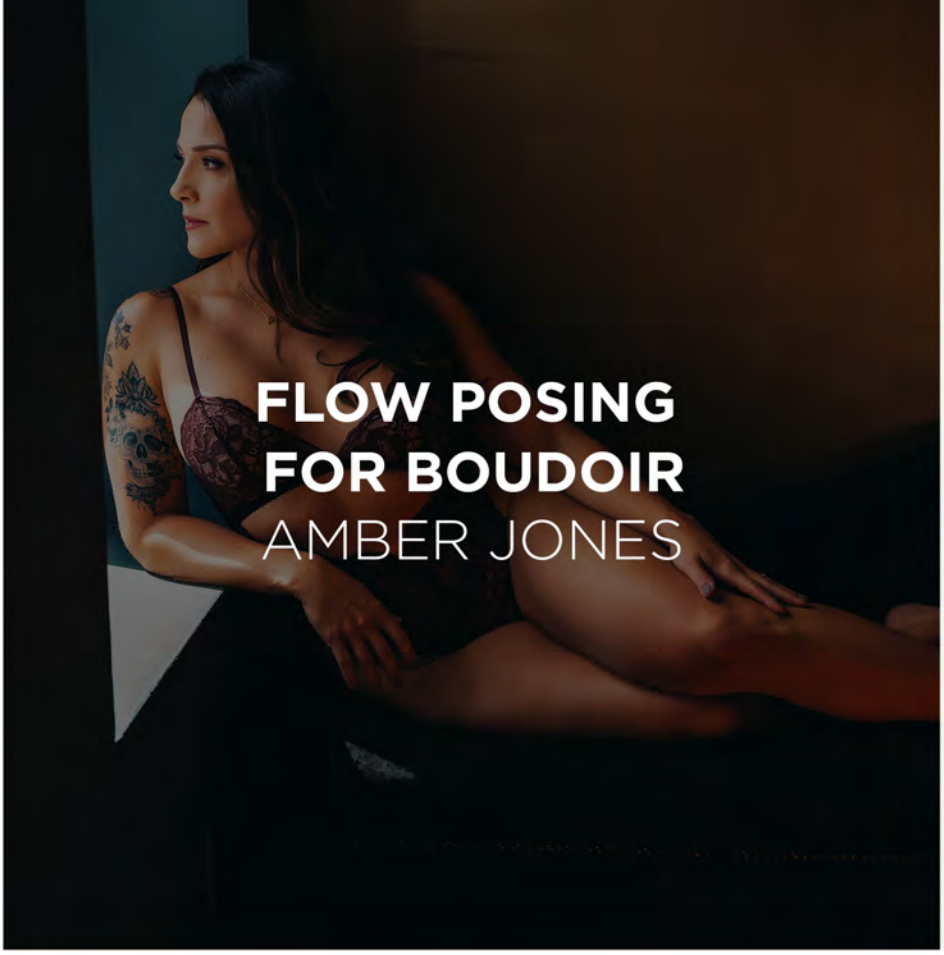
live demo courses

These are instructor-led courses where you will see a live demonstration of what the instructor is teaching. The goal is for you to see how and why the instructor does what he/she does in order to get the final result.

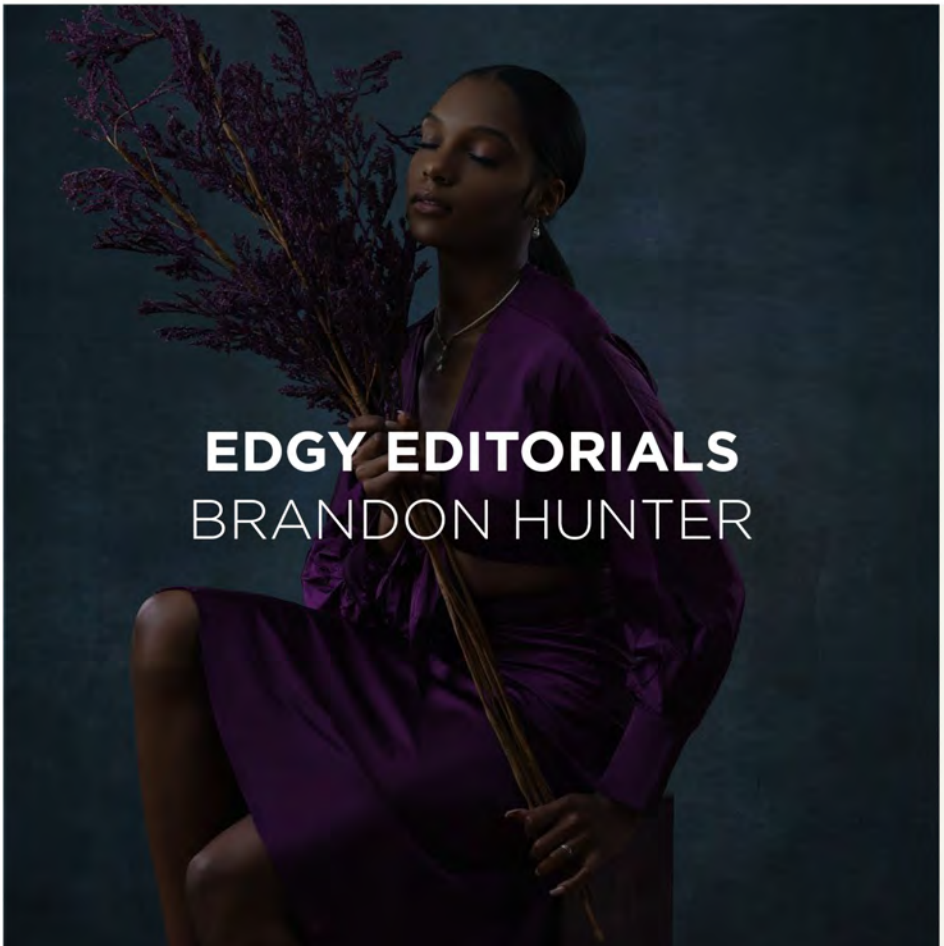












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4 EASY SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS TO HELP YOU GROW YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY BUSINESS

with **Vanessa Joy**

If you want to grow your wedding photography business, it's important that you take advantage of social media platforms to promote yourself and engage with potential clients. Of course, using social media the right way is easier said than done. That's why I'm going to share with you some easy social media marketing tips that you can start implementing today. (Trust me, you'll love these!)

WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS SHOULD YOU USE?

First off, let's talk about which platforms you should focus on. In my opinion, the three biggest ones for your photography business should be Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. It's important to understand that each platform will have a different audience. For example:

- If you want to market to a couple's parents, go to Facebook.
- If you want to market to the couple directly, go to Instagram and TikTok.
- If you want to market to a younger demographic (maybe the couple before they get engaged), go to TikTok in particular.

Now, let's talk about some tips that will help you take your social media marketing to the next level.



Image © Vanessa Joy



Image © Vanessa Joy



Image © Vanessa Joy

1. FIGURE OUT YOUR POSTING SCHEDULE

It's important that you post to your preferred social media platform(s) on a regular basis. That doesn't mean you have to spend all your time uploading photos and posts to social media—after all, you're a wedding photographer, not a marketing whiz! However, you need to invest in some kind of "infrastructure" or strategy that will put your business out there without taking up all of your time.

More specifically, there are a ton of software options out there that will actually schedule your social media posts for you (for example, Later, Hootsuite, MeetEdgar and Buffer). For instance, Later allows me to schedule all of my social media content in advance and helps me to keep updated on all the latest trends in the social media world. The great thing about using one of these tools is that you'll only have to spend one day every week or two to schedule out your posts for the next month.





Images © Vanessa Joy

2. UNDERSTAND THE TYPE OF CONTENT YOU SHOULD CREATE

As a wedding photographer, you have an advantage over other professionals in that you're already creating "content" for marketing purposes, i.e., the pictures you're taking and getting paid for. Still, it's not enough to just post photos to your social media accounts every few days—you may need to post other content as well.

Here are two types of content you should keep in mind when thinking about what to post:

1. Popular content. This doesn't necessarily include your own photos. Popular content could be articles or photos from other people that have a wedding-related theme (like posts about the royal wedding). Facebook is a great place to share popular content, which will get your business clicks and views and help expose your brand to a larger group of prospective clients.

2. Behind-the-scenes (BTS) content. This is another great type of content for building your photography business. It can be in article, picture or video format (video in particular performs great on social media). Here's one way to use BTS content: on Instagram, you can post the final photo of a session as the opening picture of your image carousel and then fill out the rest of the gallery with BTS pictures that demonstrate how you got there.

3. Expert posts. You're an expert in the field of photography, so share your knowledge! Sharing a few "trade secrets" won't hurt your business, but it will get people thinking, "Oh wow, this person really knows what they're talking about! I want to learn more." When people trust your expertise, they'll be much more likely to do business with you.

4. Content marketing. Okay, so technically all of the above points fall under the umbrella of "content marketing"—but what I'm talking about now is content specifically designed to attract couples who are planning to get married, or the parents of those couples. For example, you could post an article about the "Top Things You Absolutely Need on Your Wedding Registry List." This type of content is a great way to provide helpful information to prospective clients... and sneak in some of your photography as well!

Keep in mind that social media platforms love it when people post videos and photo slideshows to their account, since those types of content tend to keep other users on the platform longer. Even if you're not a videographer,

Image © Vanessa Joy

3. REPURPOSE YOUR CONTENT

For the most part, there aren't a lot of "repeat customers" in the wedding photography business. What that means for your social media marketing is this: you can use, reuse, and keep reusing content you've already posted to your account! For instance, maybe a blog post from a couple of years ago only needs a few quick edits and it's good to go for your Facebook page. Or if one of your blog posts or videos is completely "evergreen" (that is, it doesn't need any updates), you can set up your scheduling platform to repost it once a year.

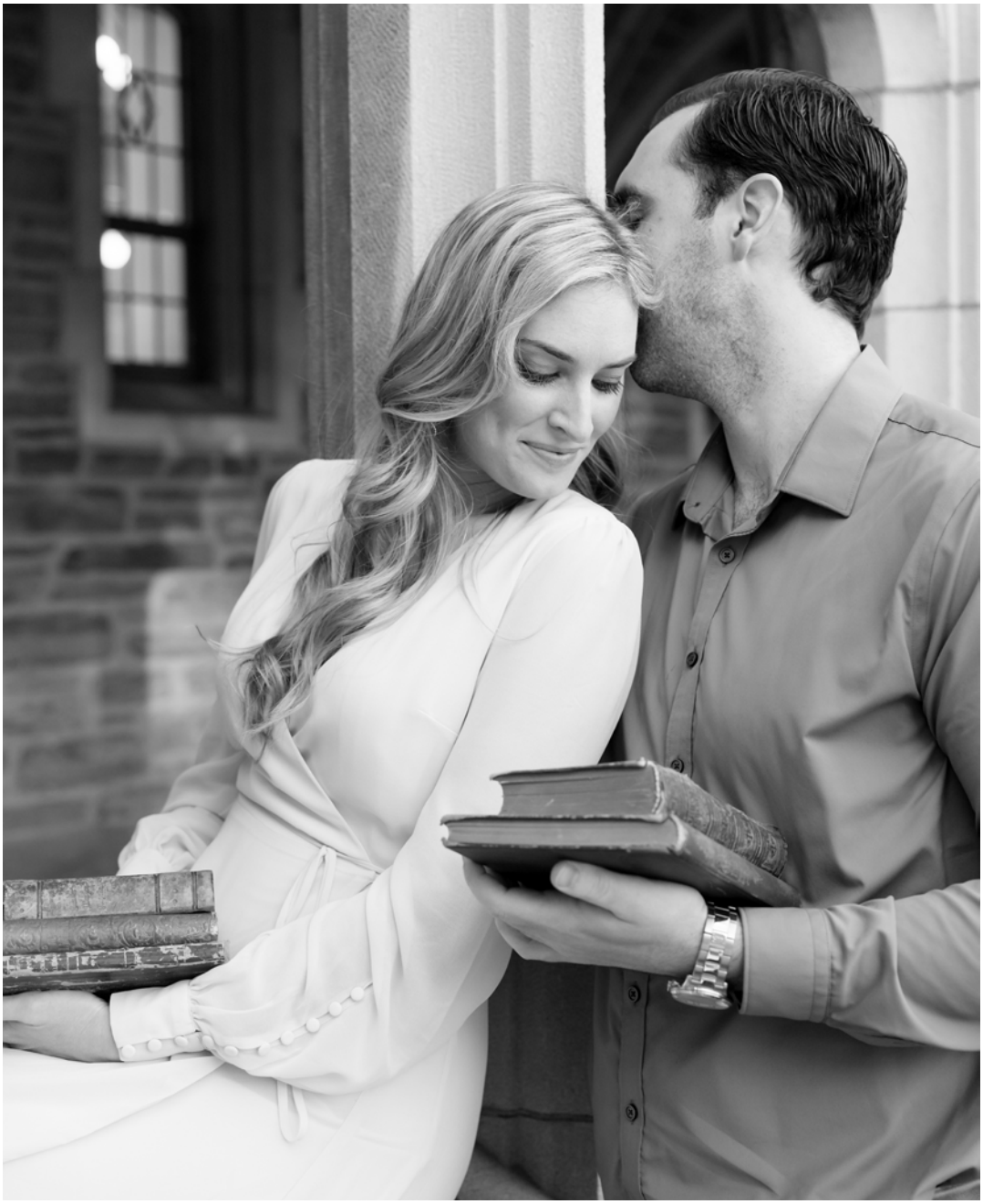


Image © Vanessa Joy



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4. ENGAGE WITH YOUR PROSPECTS

Just because you're posting content to social media doesn't mean you can sit back and wait for clients to come to you. It's important to actively seek out prospective clients and do your part to engage with them.

For example, you can follow hashtags on Instagram that newly engaged people often use (#justsaidyes, #hefinallyasked, #justgotengaged, etc.) and then follow that prospect. Like their posts and comment on one or two of them. (Of course, don't be creepy about it!) This will accomplish two things for you:

1. It lets Instagram (or TikTok) know that you're interested in that type of content and want to see more.
2. There's always a chance that the couple likes your pictures and shares your content with their personal network.

You also want to engage with local wedding vendors in your area. Social media can be a direct line to the people in the best position to recommend your business to prospective clients. It's not about spamming them with annoying requests to "recommend me, recommend me!" It's about building authentic relationships that will bear fruit over time.

In addition, engage with your followers on social media. That's a big one! Reply to comments and messages, and see if you can draw prospects out by asking questions. Respond to your prospects on the same platform where they reached out to you (it shows you respect their comfort zone).

Finally, give your prospects somewhere else to go. In other words, if someone engages with you on Facebook, share a link to your website (or better yet, a landing page with a special offer or a free promotion). This is a great way to bring prospects into your "drip campaign" (a series of emails scheduled to be sent out on a regular basis).



Image © Vanessa Joy

WRAPPING UP

In conclusion, I know this may be a lot to wrap your head around (and this article is just scratching the surface)! But hopefully I've given you an overview of what it really takes to grow your photography business on social media. If you'd like to learn more, sign up for one of my free guides. You can imitate what I do if you want!

The bottom line is that you should pay attention to your social media presence and put in the work. If you do, then trust me on this: your business will grow by leaps and bounds.

Check out Behind the Shutter's YouTube page for a full video going through all of this social media fun! ■





Vanessa Joy has been a professional wedding photographer in New Jersey since 2002, and an influencer in the photographic community for years. Since starting VanessaJoy.com in 2008, she has taught photographers around the globe at almost every major platform in the industry (LearnPhotoVideo.com). Vanessa has been recognized for her talent and business sense at the renowned industry events CreativeLIVE, Clickin' Moms, WPPI and ShutterFest. Her peers love her informative, open-book style of teaching.

website: vanessajoy.com **instagram: @vanessajoy**


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Congratulations to all our featured artists. Be inspired and create something that is you.

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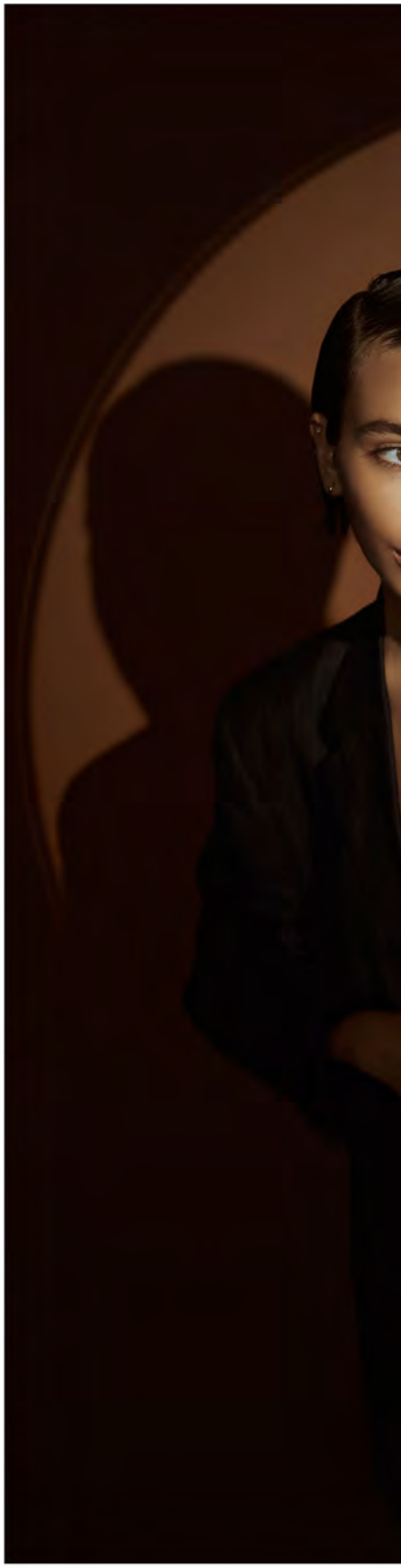


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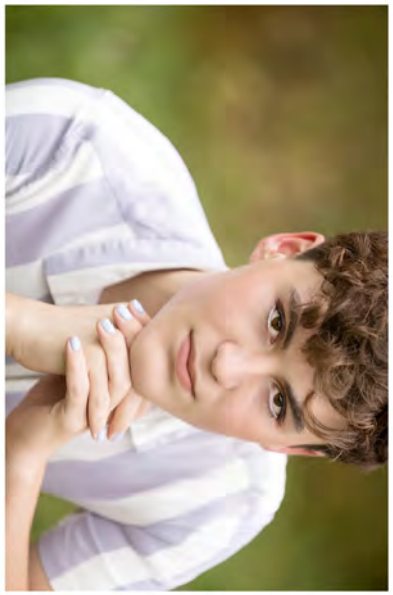




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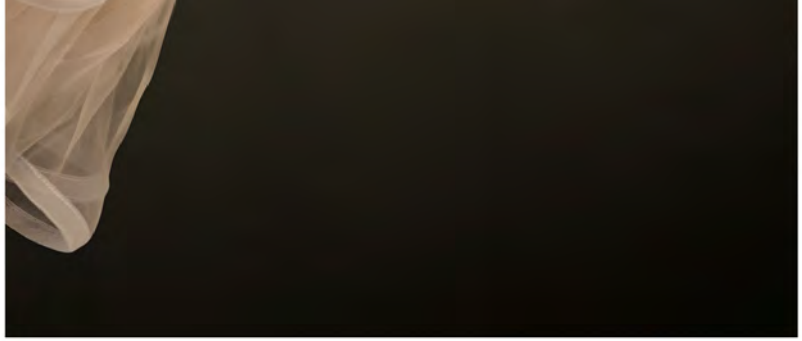




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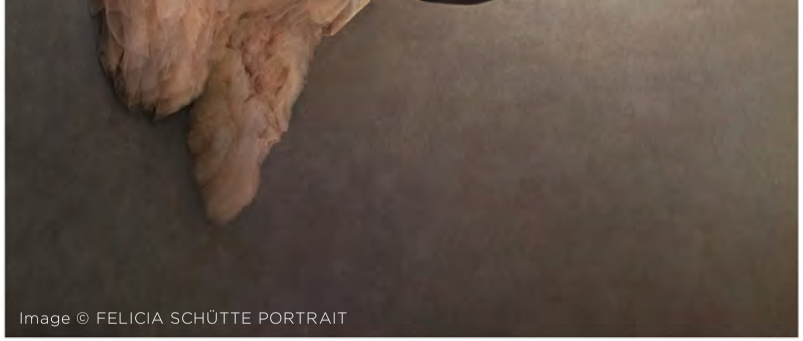


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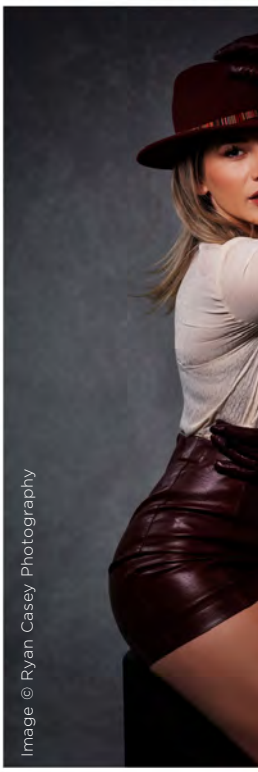


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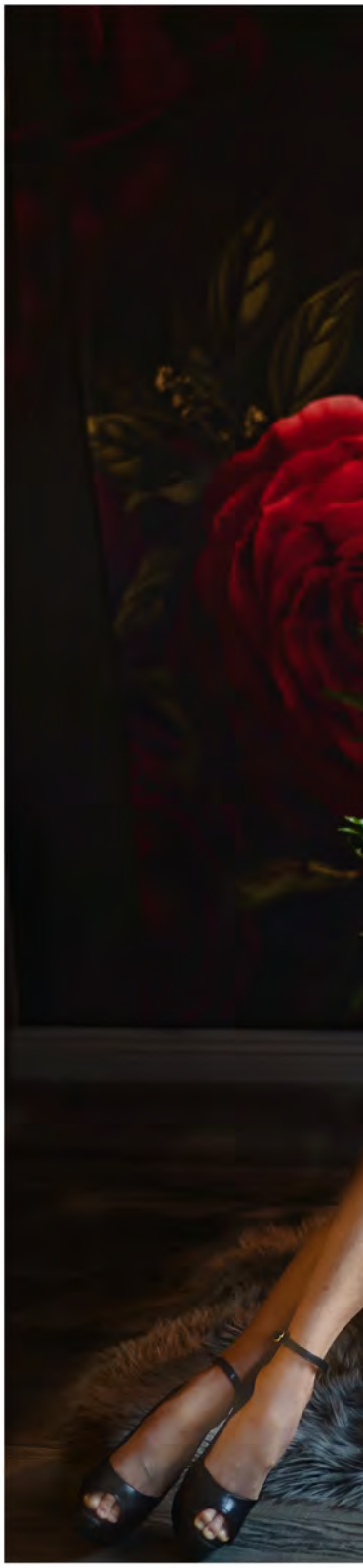


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LIGHTROOM TIPS AND TRICKS

3 WAYS TO GET BETTER COLOR IN LIGHTROOM CLASSIC

with **Dustin Lucas**



Image © Jessica Lucas


Before
After
Histogram
ISO 500
55 mm
ƒ / 4.0
Original + Smart Preview
Basic
Tone Curve
HSL / Color
Color Grading
Adjust :
Midtones
Shadows
Highlights
Blending
50
Balance
0
Detail
Lens Corrections
Transform
Effects
Calibration

There are so many avenues for editing color when it comes to Lightroom Classic and it's easy to get sucked into the minutia of buying presets and profiles. As photographers, we're always on the hunt for better color and to make our images look the best they can. So how do you get to that place where you are confident with your own editing? You have to start somewhere and develop a system or workflow. Once you have an editing workflow you will start to better manage quality while editing efficiently. That's where these three tips and tricks to getting better color in Lightroom can help!

Tip 1 is to calibrate your tools from camera to your computer monitor. Tip 2 is to apply the right camera profile to your images to align color in camera with what we see on the screen. Along with applying starting point settings from a preset, we can hit the consistency we need right out the gate. Tip 3 is using the target adjustment tool to dial in hue, saturation and luminance or HSL color by color. These three tips will get you a good base to then white balance your images as you see fit.

TIP 1: CALIBRATE YOUR TOOL

It goes without saying that as creatives we want total control, and you should calibrate tools like your computer monitor, camera, lens, printer, etc. to achieve this. Brands like DataColor and X-Rite provide the necessary tools to do this and, of course, always check your computer's spec on the best option. I have an Apple XDR screen so I can't use these tools on my MacBook Pro, so I have an external monitor I plug into to manage my calibration. I will dive into monitor calibration later this year, but for now I want to focus on the Camera Calibration software from DataColor called SpyderCheckr to dial in colors. It's simple to set up and massively helpful to get you to a standard base for color.

You will first need to purchase a color grid and photograph it in even lighting with daylight as the only source of light. (Fig. 1) With your purchased color grid you will have software to download and install. Then import the Raw file into Lightroom Classic and make adjustments to ensure white balance and exposure/density are set to the directions of the grid software. (Fig. 2) Once you create the preset you'll need to relaunch Lightroom Classic. (Fig. 3) Now we can apply the new preset created to apply our custom-built HSL settings to get a more consistent result. (Fig. 4ab) Now before we move onto Tip 2, it's important to understand the limitations of using this custom preset. It's not a one size fits all adjustment for color, and be sure to read the best practices from the company you purchase them from.



fig 1



fig 2

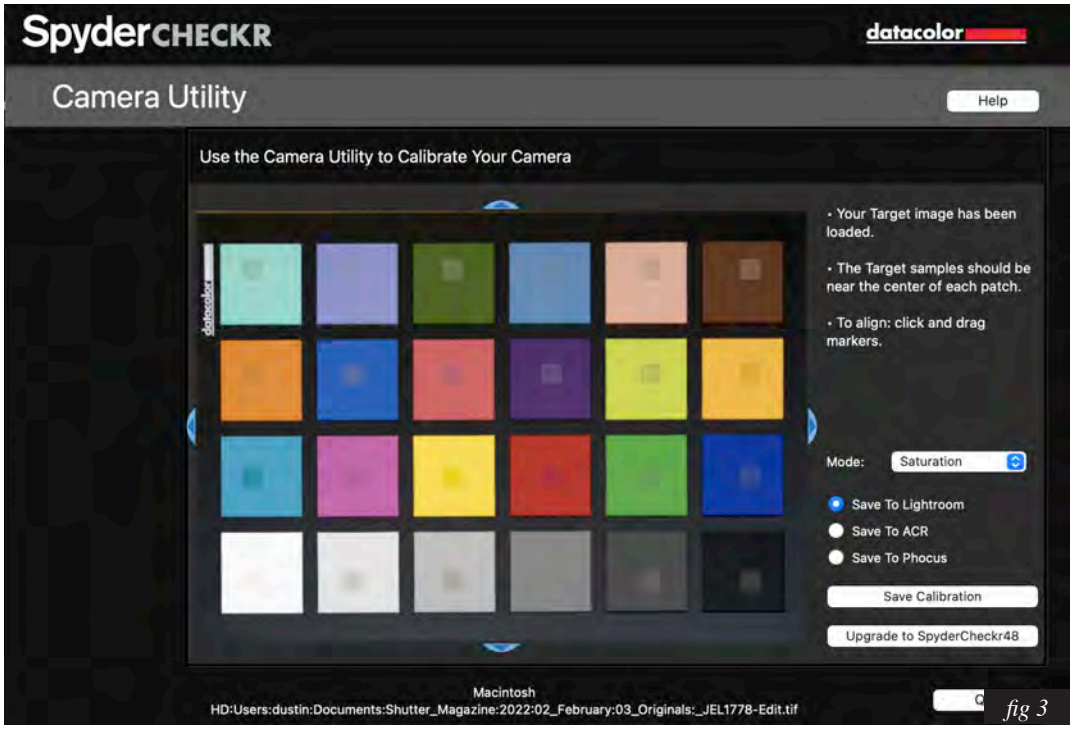


fig 3

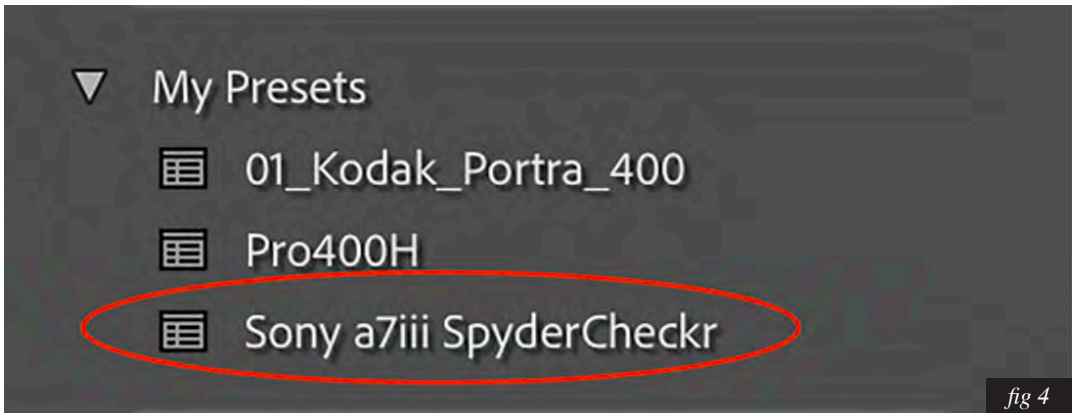


fig 4

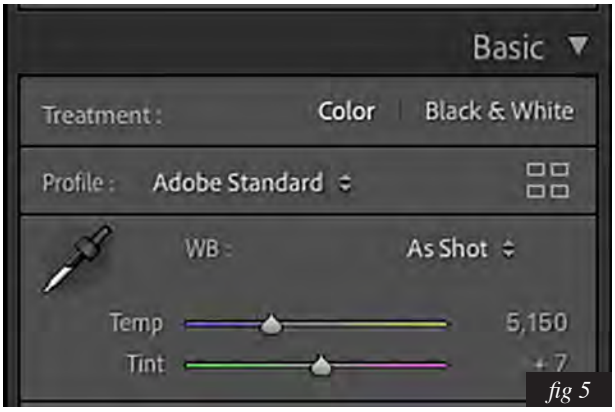


fig 5

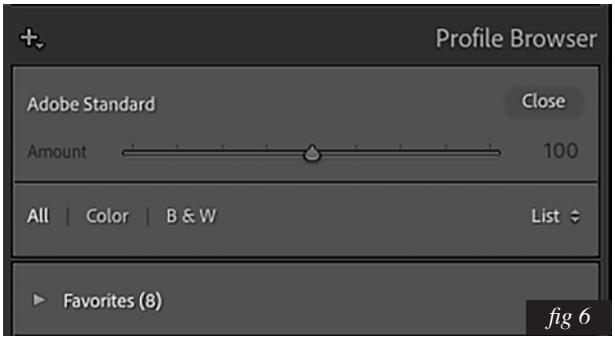


fig 6



fig 7

TIP 2. APPLY THE RIGHT CAMERA PROFILE & SETTINGS

Now we need to decide on the profile to use on our image, and before we do it's best to vet this on an image that's properly exposed. You'll notice with the preset build from the SpyderCheckr the profile is set to Adobe Standard. (Fig. 5) After making a few quick density changes, we can see the image clearly and begin to test some profiles. Going into the Profile Browser is the best way to quickly hover over options to preview different profiles. (Fig. 6) You'll notice as well we can star profiles to add to our favorites list. The favorites list is the default list when you list the drop-down in the Basic panel. (Fig. 7) I decided to add a few Adobe Raw, Camera Matching and third-party profiles to my favorites to preview quickly. (Fig. 8)

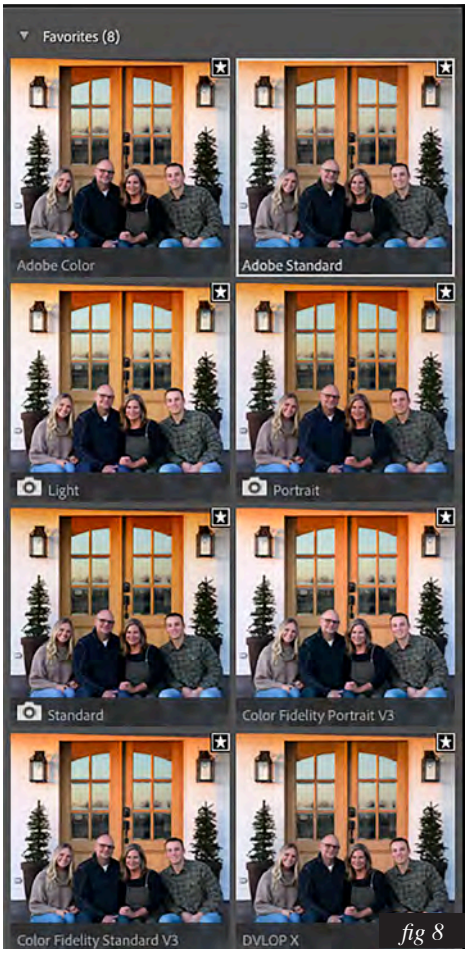


fig 8

Adobe Color is the newest default for Lightroom Classic and it basically added contrast and saturation to the older Adobe Standard profile. (Fig. 9) The Adobe Standard has a flat Raw appearance giving you more flexibility to adjust. You might wonder why the back of your camera preview looks different than the image imported in Lightroom. There are multiple factors like what in-camera settings are applied. For example, my Sony camera has picture styles baked on the JPG preview. I try to remove all effects but it still seems to look different. This is where Adobe tries to emulate with the Camera Matching set. Keep in mind these options vary per camera manufacturer and even camera model. Looking at the Sony a7iii options: Light, Portrait and Standard profiles, we can see quite an increase in color appearances from the Adobe profiles. (Fig. 10)



fig 9



fig 10

Image © Jessica Lucas

The Light profile looks like exposure was increased in the Adobe Color Profile. (Fig. 11) The Portrait profile seems to recover highlights and adds a red hue. (Fig. 12) The Standard profile appears to add punch or more contrast without shifting the hue. (Fig. 13) All of the Camera Matching profiles seem to really push saturation when compared to the Adobe Profiles. This is where I prefer to let the third-party profile enter into my workflow. Adobe just isn't always the best for color management.

Looking into the Google abyss of searching Lightroom Classic profiles, it can be difficult to find the right fit. Unfortunately, your options for using Google to shop profiles are limited. A few companies I've had experience with are Color Fidelity, DVLOP, Noble, VSCO and Mastin. If you are looking for film emulation, that's a whole other department and I'm not getting into that. This is more for getting true to life color with your images.

Starting with the DVLOP X profile pack, I was quite happy with the subtlety to it. Unlike the Adobe Color profile, it's less punchy with contrast and saturation. (Fig. 14)



Image © Jessica Lucas

fig 11



fig 12



fig 13

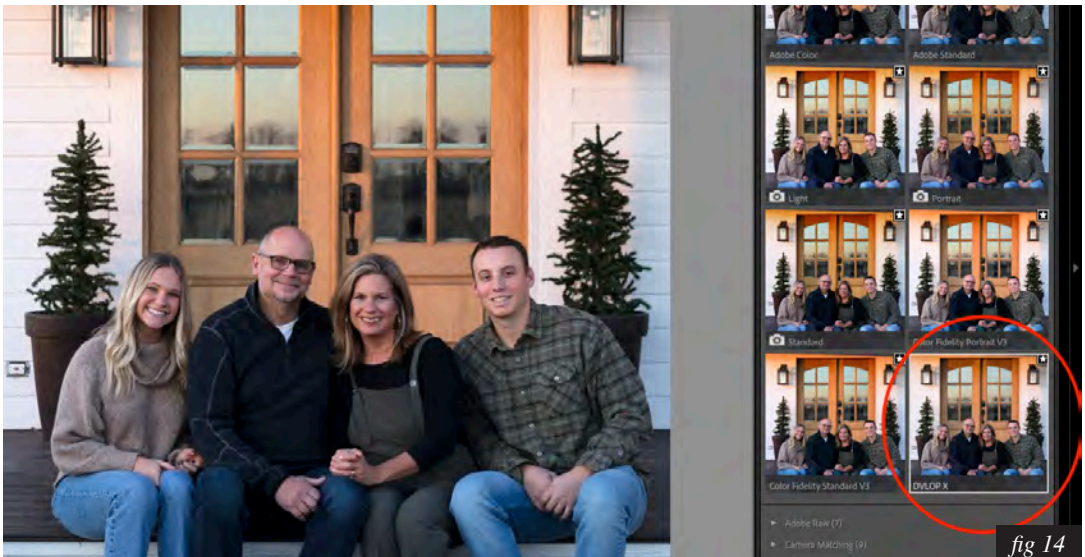


fig 14

Honestly, the Adobe Standard looks quite similar side by side. (Fig. 15) My final pick was the Color Fidelity pack as they have done an excellent job getting my image back to how I shot it. (Fig. 16) The colors are just right and the dynamic range is right where I want it. The Color Fidelity Standard V3 is my go-to choice for third-party profiles. (Fig. 17) Overall, you need to find a profile and stick with it to maintain a consistent color workflow. Let's move on to the next tip!

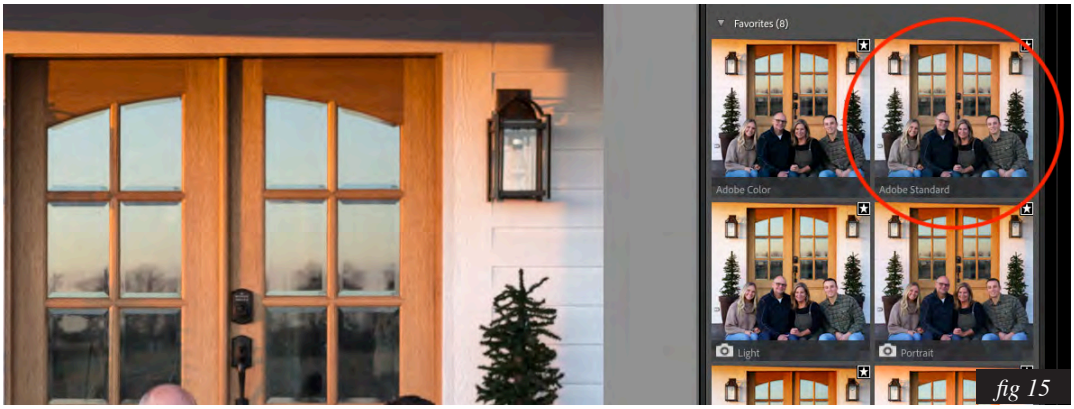


fig 15


fig 16


fig 17

TIP 3. TARGET SPECIFIC COLORS

I see many presets and editing techniques where photographers drop the saturation and lift vibrance. This drops the overly saturated color overall and increases the vibrance without affecting the skin. Well, this doesn't work as simply as you expect it to and you need a more selective option to edit color in the image. The most difficult thing to do is balance HSL adjustments made to the skin tones to the other areas of the image. (Fig. 18) Keep in mind as well, if you are working from the custom built HSL preset, you may want to toggle this panel or reset it if it's creating more color issues than correcting to neutral. (Fig. 19)



fig 18



fig 19

Image © Jessica Lucas

The Target Adjustment tool is by far one of the most useful and likely underutilized tools in Lightroom. (Fig. 20) This allows you to click and drag anywhere in the image to sample either by color(s) or tone depending on the tool. (Fig. 21) The HSL panel, which can seem quite daunting at first, has this feature and the user experience is simple. Select the target adjustment tool for the Hue, Saturation or Luminance, click in your image and drag up to push the sliders to the right or drag down to push the sliders left. You'll see immediately that the target adjustment tool samples exactly what range of colors you selected and adjusts based on which direction you drag. (Fig. 22) If you want to reset a panel, hold Option and click just above the slider per panel.

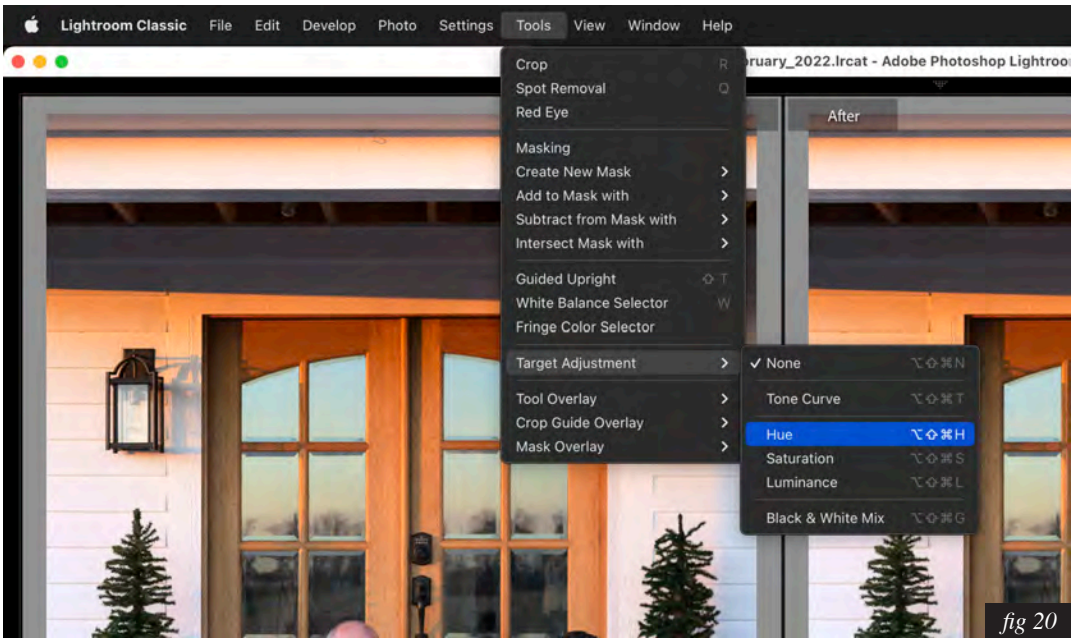


fig 20

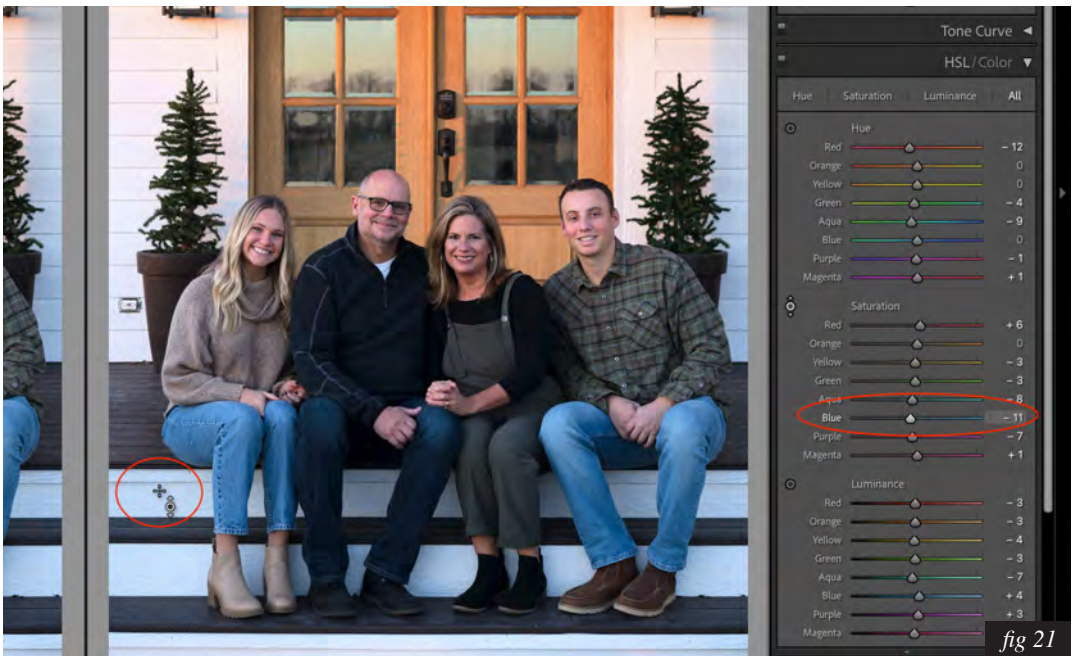


fig 21

Image © Jessica Lucas



fig 22

Keep in mind this tool affects color in the entire image, it isn't masking in any way. For example, if I want to remove the blue cast by lowering saturation in the white porch panels, it will also change their jeans. (Fig. 23)



fig 23

Same goes for reducing the orange tones on the door as it will affect their faces. (Fig. 24) With that in mind, you have to be creative with how you want to use this tool. To reduce desaturating the jeans we could lift the luminance to hide the blue cast in the shadows of neutral-toned objects. (Fig. 25) As a last step, you may want to expose the Color Grading panel to shift specific regions warmer to reduce that cool cast in the shadows, midtones or highlights. (Fig. 26) You can lift luminance in the midtones as well as another way to recover tones as an additional tip! (Fig. 27 before/after)



fig 24



fig 25

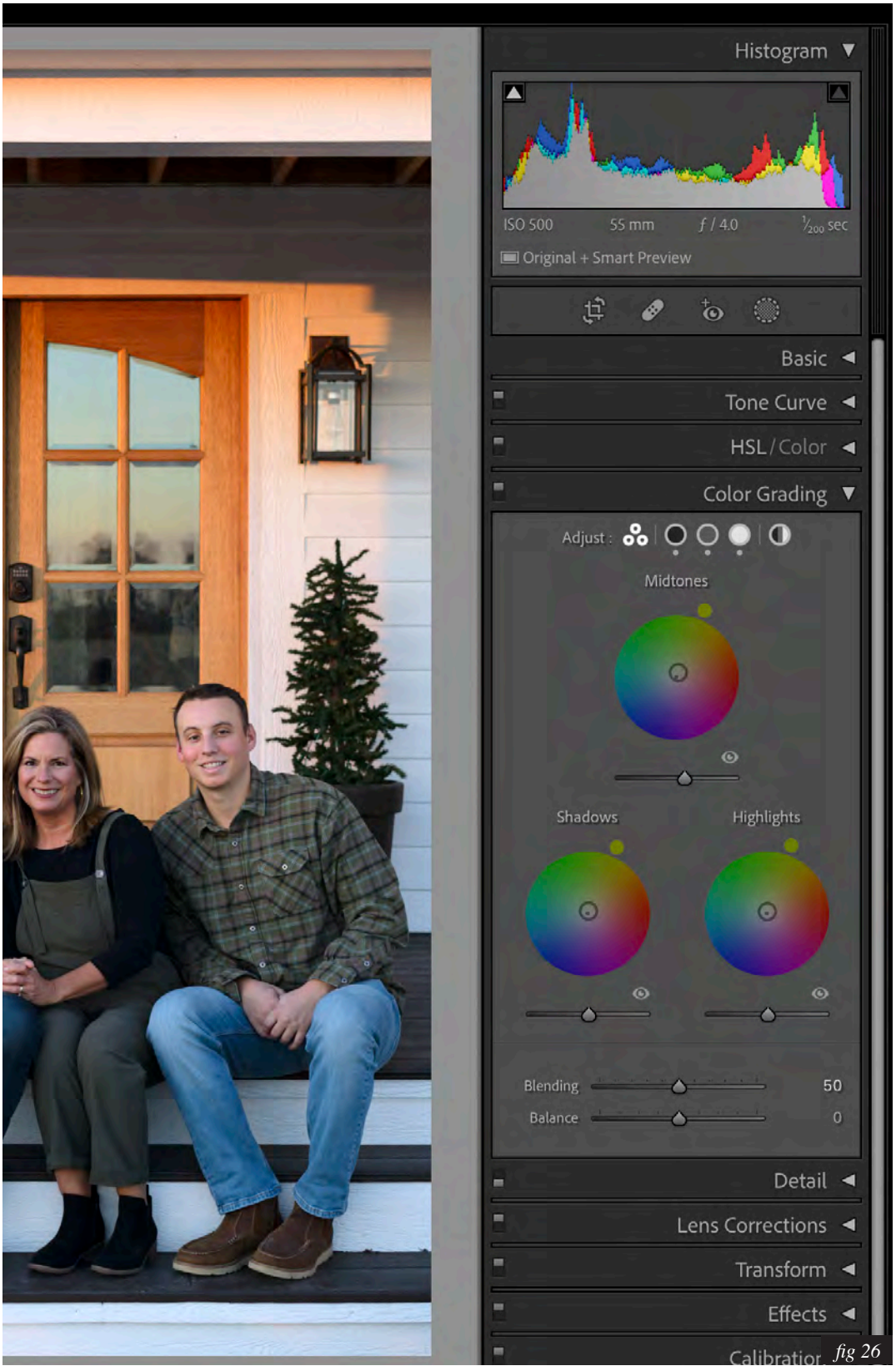

Histogram
ISO 500
55 mm
f / 4.0
1/200 sec
Original + Smart Preview
Basic
Tone Curve
HSL / Color
Color Grading
Adjust :
Midtones
Shadows
Highlights
Blending
50
Balance
0
Detail
Lens Corrections
Transform
Effects
Calibration

fig 26





Images © Jessica Lucas

THE RESULTS

Now that you have additional tools to get better color in Lightroom Classic, continue to experiment utilizing all three of these tips to find the best fit for you. For me, it's helpful to start with camera calibration to get an objective standard for color and then apply my preference on top for profiles and target adjustments in HSL. Of course, if you are looking to not spend money on tools or profiles, I get it. In that case, keep it simple and use Adobe Standard and tweak the HSL sliders as you see fit. Build a workflow for color and stick to it! ■

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Dustin Lucas is a full-time photographer and educator focused on the wedding industry and the academic world. After achieving his Master of Fine Arts degree, a career opportunity opened once he began working with Evolve Edits. Through teaching photography classes and writing about photography, Dustin continues to expand his influence on art and business throughout the industry.

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website	salcincotta.com



model	violet deardorff
exposure	f/2.5 @ 1/200 iso 50
lighting	westcott fj400 + rapid box switch octa-m, westcott fj200 (edge light), westcott fj80 (background light)
gear	canon eos r5 canon rf f1.2 l usm lens



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