

THE CAMERA CLUB OF CENTRAL MINNESOTA



The Newsletter of the Camera Club of Central Minnesota

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Club Meetings and Other Bits of Information

The Camera Club of Central Minnesota has decided to meet on different days in order to provide access to our meetings for more people. We will be alternating between a Thursday of one month and a Monday of the following month at the Public Library in St. Cloud from 6:45 to 8:45 pm.

The club has monthly photo topics, image sharing and critique, hands on demonstrations of photographic gear and software, member online gallery links, discussions about photography, and is open to all.

The monthly topics for the next few months are:

Monday, May 9, Bremer Community Room 104: Faces

Thursday, June 9, Bremer Community Room 104: Construction

Using Drones for Landscape Photography

The emergence of remotely controlled drones capable of carrying several pounds of photography gear, some with built-in full HD (or even 4K) video cameras have completely rewritten the rules of landscape photography (and videography). Landscape photography has always been a challenging pursuit within the world of photography. It was always a pursuit that demanded meticulous preparations, careful calculations of light value and correct setting of exposure values to get a near perfect exposure. Aerial photography was even more complicated. It required a huge budget that could cover helicopter, pilot and specialized gear on board. Therefore, this type of photography has always been reserved for top dollar productions.

Using drones however comes with a bunch of caveats. There are a series of rules and guidelines that you need to adhere to. Consumer drones are relatively new and most local law are only catching up with them but

as it stands right now, most countries have no fly zones (especially around airports and military installations) and even implement rules like speed limits and restrictions for flying over crowds. People with lack of common sense have forced the hands of authorities to implement tough anti-drone laws. There was a recent incident when firefighters from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection fighting a forest fire in San Bernardino had to stall their work because of interference by several drones. This was by no way an isolated incident. And don't forget that you might even get sued for "spying over personal property" if you fly over dwellings.

While these events are in no way related with landscape photography, what I am trying to refer to is that people do strange and stupid things when they get a chance to control a flying robot. It is always in your best interests to know the law of the land and never to put yourself in the path of the law.

Flying drones are a great idea. Lots of people are filming amazing footage with these devices. The latest generations of these drones are much smarter than five years ago. They now have sonic sensors that can detect objects and will force stop if they feel they have to. In fact they have so many smart sensors inside that they can easily fly indoors and hold a steady shot. If you have a clear need for additional angles, go for it, it's a lot of fun. But keep in mind that it can turn into a pile of junk in a moment. And also consider insurance since bodily harm and property damage is a real concern with these things. If you are considering getting one, as a tip, I would suggest buying one of the super cheap small drones to practice before flying the big boys. Personally, since I don't currently have a commercial need for such footage and it would only be a bonus item, I will wait until a few more iterations come along.



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Removing Blemishes with LR or Photoshop



GET A WACOM TABLET. IT TAKES SOME TIME TO GET USED TO BUT ONCE YOU DO, YOU CAN EDIT FASTER, IT'S MORE ACCURATE, AND IT'S MORE ENJOYABLE.



If I had a penny for all the blemishes I had removed over the years, I'd have a shed-load of pennies, and what an annoyance that would be! It's a sad fact of our lives that all the sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll has an impact on our visage (that's French for face). The impact for you and me as photographers is a significant time spent removing the pesky red marks. That, and the myriad of other things we find offensive to our eyes which blight our otherwise gorgeous images. But the big question is, which program is better suited to removing blemishes, Lightroom or Photoshop?

Lightroom vs Photoshop Blemish Removal Speed

This article will only be dealing with relatively simple blemish removal; spots, scratches and so on. I think we can all agree that for anything significant Photoshop is our one and only.

The first blow, and it's almost a knockout (one of many), goes to Photoshop. Speed is of the utmost importance to me. I do not want to waste my time waiting for a program when I have other, far more exciting, things to be doing. But surely speed is down to the user, not the program? You'd think so, but you'd be wrong. Lightroom is not able to utilize your computer's full power. Thus, no matter how much money you have thrown at your pride and joy, Adobe, in their infinite

wisdom, decided Lightroom didn't need the extra power. The result of this, at least when editing at my pace (fast), is that Lightroom cannot keep up.

Is Your Computer Up To Par?

I haven't tried Lightroom for this type of thing in a little while. So, in the interest of fairness, I thought I'd give it a quick go. As has always been the case, I found my editing speed throttled by performance; Either waiting for areas to render or having to backtrack when Lightroom did a poor job.

In all fairness, the "poor job" would somewhat be my error, but that error was only caused by the juddering one experiences in Lightroom when attempting to edit at speed. When Lightroom is 3-5 strokes behind me, errors are going to occur. That said, if one was editing at a more leisurely pace Lightroom does a fine job, though I have never felt throttled by Photoshop when it comes to speed.

Lightroom vs Photoshop Accuracy

This is a big one. There's no point doing a job like this if it's not done accurately. Both programs are accurate but one does outshine the other in a few respects. Can you guess which one that is? Yeah, it's Photoshop. Firstly, as I've mentioned, when the speed of the program is causing errors that must be taken into account, however, I can look past this considering, for many, it may not be an issue.

Secondly, I find the white areas while editing, created in Lightroom, to be quite distracting and can also potentially lead to errors.

Are You Doing It Wrong?

Thinking about it, this point also comes down to speed. Lightroom can do a good job, even with edges. The trouble is, especially with edges, that it takes far longer. You will often need to make your edges visible so you can move the sample points, adjusting the size and hardness of your brush can take ages depending on your tools, and the rendering time also leads to issues.

Life Changing Tip

It always amazes me how few people know this: Go to Photoshop hit B for the Brush tool and hold down cmd/ctrl + alt + right click, then drag your mouse around. You'll see that the brush size and hardness are changing as you move the mouse; up and down for hardness, and left and right for size. I also have this programmed to my Wacom tablet, push one button and drag to change size and hardness.

Second Life Changing Tip

Get a Wacom Tablet. It takes some time to get used to but once you do, you can edit faster, more accurately, and it's more enjoyable. It's also great for Lightroom.

Lightroom vs Photoshop Final Results

Speed and accuracy are what it comes down to when removing blemishes. Or are they? Clearly Photoshop is the outright winner in these categories; It's fast, accurate and has the power behind it to keep up with you but there is another element to this if you're a professional.

Depending on the job, I will not, and I also recommend you do not, fully edit images before showing them to a client. It's a massive waste of time. As such, if I'm working on portraits, I'll usually use the SLR Lounge Preset system to get me going, refine the images a little and then stop. The rest, blemish removal and other final touches, I do in

Photoshop IF, and only IF, the client buys the photos. Otherwise, it's a gigantic waste of my time. In fact, I only do that level of edit if the client is buying printed products, not digital files. There's not much point in editing blemishes away in a photo which will only be seen on social media.

However, if I feel there is a significant blemish, which will detract from the client's experience when viewing the images. I will, in that instance, use Lightroom to remove the offender. Therefore, there is most definitely reason to use the tools Lightroom provides.

Summary

Photoshop is the obvious winner, and that probably surprises very few of you. I do, however, hope that the pro's amongst you have picked up a little tip in terms of prepping images for clients and not wasting your time. I also hope that the Photoshop brush size tip changes some of your lives as it did mine!

Briefly returning to the SLR Lounge Preset system, I truly cannot recommend it enough. It has been an indispensable tool for me, and I can't see a time when I will not use it. Granted, there are occasions when I edit photos from scratch, but the Preset System is such a good time-saving tool when called upon. Perfect for a quick turnaround.



Wedding Photography

Wedding photography is a lucrative business, but one that is highly competitive as well. Landing clients takes a lot of time and effort, and once you get them, you certainly want to do everything in your power to please them. Their word of mouth will be among the best marketing you can hope for, and their repeat business for future anniversary parties, birthday parties, and kids' graduations will be more money in your pockets.

So how does one go about getting that kind of repeat business? We've created a list of three smart, business-savvy, and easy to implement ideas that are sure to get clients coming back for more.

Be Efficient

Everyone knows that weddings rank as one of the most stressful events in life. With so much going on, so much to plan, and so many people involved, the last thing your clients want to do is have to manage you too. You need to be autonomous so your clients have a worry-free experience!

Work with the clients to develop a shot list so you know well in advance the types of images they want. Offer them a pre-made, typed list of common wedding shots, and allow them to select the ones they want. This not only saves you time, it also gets your clients thinking about what they want instead of having to gener-

ate all the ideas from scratch. Provide space for them to add other shots to the list as well. This will allow you to plan accordingly and equip yourself with the gear you need to get the shots. The better you plan, the fewer lens changes that will be needed and the less time searching for the right accessory, meaning you have more time to dedicate to taking the photos your clients want.

Part of devising a shot list and a solid plan for the day includes knowing how to double up on your time. For example, while the bride and groom are getting ready for the day, take that opportunity to get photos of other members of the wedding party. Spend that time on the detail shots as well - the rings, the bouquet and boutonniere, and the decora-

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IF YOU WANT TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY BUSINESS, YOU'LL HAVE TO SPEND SOME TIME DEVISING METHODS

tions in the venue. Photograph children and elderly members of the wedding party as early as possible to capitalize on the energy they have at the beginning of the day. Maximizing your time means you will get more shots of more people, and no bride or groom will be disappointed with that!

Make It Personal

First and foremost, if you're to make it as a wedding photographer, you need to have the tools that will allow you to make working with clients a personal and meaningful experience. On the one hand, you need to learn names, become adept at effective and timely communication, be able to help couples make compromises, and be willing to adapt what you offer to better meet the needs of your clients.

On the other hand, you need to provide the small touches that your clients will appreciate and make them pause and think fondly of you as their photographer. In today's digital age, it makes an extra special impression upon clients when you send them something in the mail. Partnering with a company like Plymouth

Cards allows you to do just that and select from a wide variety of products that help you make a more personal connection with your clients. Maybe you offer them a small gift, like a 4x6 print, as a way to say congratulations. Perhaps you send a nice card as a thank you for allowing you to be a part of the big day.

The point is that not only does a printed card give you the opportunity to take a more personalized approach to business, but it also allows you to highlight the products you use and give your client something they can cherish for years to come. That's a winning combination!

Focus on Customer Service

While there is certainly a difference from one wedding photographer to the next in terms of the quality of the product they produce, what truly sets one photographer apart from another is their commitment to customer service. If you want to build a successful wedding photography business, you'll need to spend some time devising methods to make the customer experience one

that is unbeatable.

Part of this is certainly making the process personal, as discussed above. Additionally, the little things matter - returning phone calls and emails in a timely fashion, getting contracts and proofs to clients when you say you will, and checking in early and often to ensure you're in on the latest plans or changes to plans for the big day.

Throughout your relationship with your clients, from the first time you meet until they drive off as a married couple, cater to their needs. Ask lots of questions so you're sure to be locked in with their vision for the day. Be available to answer any questions they might have as well, whether that's via email on the weekend before the wedding or as the bride is making her way to the venue to walk down the aisle. In short, treat your clients like royalty; they did you the favor of selecting you to document one of the most important days of your life, so the least you can do is make everything you do for the betterment of the day. In the end, your clients will come back to you again and again because of this kind of top-notch service!

Picture Presentation

You've taken the time to create a gorgeous photo and process it in post. Now you need to decide how you will display your new masterpiece. Do you have it printed on a stretched canvas for a three-dimensional look, or would your image be better suited to being

printed on metal for a more industrial vibe? There's also acrylic mountings to consider, which give photos a distinctly modern, high-end look.

If you aren't sure which substrate is best for your photos, read on to find out what types of photos are best suited to acrylic, metal, and

canvas.

Acrylic

If you want a high-end, modern, professional look, acrylic might be the best product for you. Whether you go with a direct print or a photo print, acrylic will give your image greater depth and dimension



while providing viewers with a pure, clear, and sharp view of your photos. Glossy acrylic is a great application for any type of photograph, but especially color photos really pop - the brightness of the colors are enhanced, as is the saturation and vibrancy, giving you an elegant and breathtaking medium for showing off your best photos.

If you've got a portrait, a photo with muted tones, or if you want to hang your photo near a large window, but fear the reflections, try using an acrylic with a matte finish. Like glossy acrylic, a matte finish will give the image greater depth, but will also diminish the mirror effect - you'll be able to enjoy your prints even in bright, direct sunlight. Hang your photos in your entryway at home or in your office at work, and enjoy the view no matter how bright the room.

HD Metal Print glossy

With a variety of finishes, metal prints give you further options for displaying photos that have brilliant color. Whether you want to print an image of a Hawaiian sunset or your latest family portrait, a sublimation HD Metal Print will give you vibrancy of color that's hard to match. This type of metal print is UV resistant and can be displayed virtually anywhere - indoors, outdoors, or in dry or humid environments - without worry of fading or damage.

Another metal printing option is to have your images printed directly onto aluminum. Images that have been digitally enhanced really shine when printed on aluminum, as do photos of urban spaces and street scenes which both benefit from the metallic appearance of the print. With a matte finish that's highly minimalistic, aluminum printing won't take away from the impact of your image, but will serve to enhance it.

A direct print on brushed aluminum is a perfect idea for images that have lots of bright whites, because those areas aren't actually printed, but instead take on the look of the brushed aluminum. If you like a modern, graphic look, and want your prints to have added aesthetic appeal, direct prints on aluminum-dibond won't take away from the impact of your image, but will serve to enhance it.

Whichever type of metal product you choose, you can do so with the knowledge that your prints will be safe from fading, scratches, and moisture.

Canvas

Canvas prints give you yet another high-quality option for displaying your photos: They help create a subtle three-dimensional look that is particularly striking for landscapes and family por-

traits. The tactile nature of canvas prints give your images warmth and character, and the matte finish helps mask grain and noise that might appear in images taken at a higher ISO, without diminishing the vibrancy of colors. The look and feel of canvas is unmistakably classic, yet exudes the qualities of simple elegance. With printing that extends around the edges of the stretcher frame, canvas prints take on a seamless look that is striking from every angle.

Final Thoughts

As we've seen here, some photos are better suited to acrylic, while others look better on metal or canvas. But a large part of choosing a medium to show off your prints will also come down to your personal preference. Some people love the edgy industrial look of metal. Others want the traditional warmth of canvas. Regardless of which avenue you choose to pursue, it's essential to get your prints from a trusted lab with the experience and the quality of products that will make your images truly shine. MPix fits the bill on all fronts - it's a professional lab with years of experience and a host of innovative printing options. Made in Kansas, high-quality products ship worldwide within 10 working days. Check out MPix today!



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The Effect of the iPhone on the Cameras

What the iPhone has done to cameras is completely insane. There are many measures you can use to gauge the influ-

ence of the iPhone, a gadget that has changed human behavior in ways that few other things could. But a good place to start is by

looking at products that the do-it-all smartphone has elbowed aside en route to where it is now (which is everywhere).



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Membership is \$25 per year. Members should provide: Email Address, Mailing Address, and Phone Number.

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The Camera Club of Central Minnesota publishes a monthly newsletter which is distributed via e-mail. The newsletter will contain information about up-coming meetings, summaries of previous meeting, recommendations for photographers, announcements of photographic workshops, and other material that seems appropriate.

If you would like to send suggestions, comments, or other communications concerning the club or newsletter, please send your e-mail to rheath@tds.net.

The list of maligned objects is long. When was the last time you used an MP3 player or held a calculator? What about a physical map? Or a BlackBerry? Do BlackBerrys even exist anymore?

There might, however, be no better example than the camera, which has suffered mightily since the iPhone was introduced almost 10 years ago.

For a while, it was one big camera party. Sales grew modestly but steadily until the late 1990s. Then digital cameras were introduced, and demand soared. Thereafter, the industry grew quickly. That is, until 2007, when Apple launched the first-generation iPhone.

That, of course, coincided with the recession, which certainly didn't help. But the real impact began to take effect after the first dip, a few years later. What happened next is pretty self-explanatory.

The biggest hit has been to point-and-shoot cameras. Sales of the lower-quality, fixed-lens, hand-held devices way too many people used to tie to their wrists have fallen off a cliff since the iPhone's introduction. And few expects them to climb back up.

But the iPhone — or, really, smartphones in general — seems to be proving a bit of a thorn in the side of the higher-end camera market as well.

The number of fancier cameras (the sort that use interchangeable lenses, such as the clunkier digital SLRs you have probably seen around) being purchased each year rose through 2013. Some people, having left their point-and-shoots behind, were probably trading up for better cameras. And those better cameras weren't as expensive as they had been in the past — a slew of more reasonably priced digital SLRs have hit the mar-

ket over the past 15 years.

But the number of interchangeable lenses sold over the past couple of years hasn't been quite as impressive. It's possible that the dip isn't structural — that it's more of a momentary softening of the market than a sign of long-term replacement. Some, after all, argue vehemently that the two aren't actually all that interchangeable.

"Taking photos with smartphones and editing them with apps is like cooking with cheap ingredients and a lot of artificial flavoring," Takafumi Hongo, a Canon spokesman, told the Wall Street Journal in 2013. "Using interchangeable cameras is like slow food cooked with natural, genuine ingredients."

But the rapid adoption of the iPhone — along with the drastic improvement of the iPhone camera — makes it hard to believe that the line isn't beginning to blur, if not considerably, then at least a little bit.

