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THE GLAMOUR EDITION

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Shutter Magazine is about photography education. Our goal is to provide current, insightful, and in-depth educational content for today's professional wedding and portrait photographer. *Shutter Magazine* 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 establish the magazine as one of the leading photography publications in the world.

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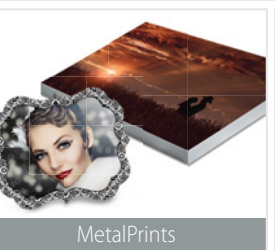
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HOW TO NOT
SCREW UP A

DESTINATION

WEDDING

WITH LAURIN THIENES





[by Laurin Thienes]

I can't count the number of photographers whose websites advertise them as a "destination wedding photographer." It always makes me laugh. The reality is, the majority of photographers who claim this do not specialize in destination weddings, and usually feel qualified after having photographed a friend's wedding in an exotic location.

There's nothing wrong with wanting to leverage the images you have from the location to help drive traffic to your website and blog. But what happens when those calls for destination weddings do come in? Are you prepared to actually take that call? I'd be willing to wager that many of you are not. I sure thought I could in the beginning. My first thought was, "Yay, vacation!"

Well, time to wake up—this is your business! Now, before I am crucified for turning my back on opportunities to spend a few days in a top vacation area, you have to keep in mind there is a time and a place to tack on those extra days. That needs to be the second thought—not the first. Having shot multiple weddings in Hawaii, Puerto Vallarta, Puerto Peñasco and other exotic locales over the years, I've come up with a few tips that can help you capitalize on the amazing opportunity.

[RUN A BUSINESS]

As I touched on already, this is your business. My last few destination weddings went like this:

Day 1: Fly to location.

Day 2: Photograph rehearsal dinner (or whatever preparty celebration is going on—more on this later).

Day 3: Photograph wedding.

Day 4 Morning: Photograph day-after portrait session/trash the dress/insert-adjective-here portrait session.

Day 4 Afternoon: Fly home.





© Holland Studios

This schedule puts me out of pocket three to four days, and then I'm back ready to take other work. As much as I wanted to spend that extra time enjoying the warm rays and sandy beach, I was hired to do a job, not vacation. Spending those extra days is not just about the extra money out of your pocket eating whatever profit you made on the wedding—you also risk losing other business opportunities. I failed miserably at this on my first destination jobs. I watched every penny of profit disappear after spending extra time in Maui after a wedding at the Ritz-Carlton Kapalua. Sure, I enjoyed myself, but this is no way to run a business.

[HANDLE YOUR OWN TRAVEL]

I learned early, no exception, to always book my own trip. Booking your travel affords you the ability to set the travel days that you want—be it to explore and enjoy, or perhaps because you have another job that you've landed in the same location. Regardless of when you are traveling, only you know how much your time is worth, if the \$40 you save on a ticket is worth the seven-hour layover. Murphy's law says that the penny-pinching groom will have you on the worst flight possible, and you will spend more time than it's worth cursing the bad decision of letting someone else plan your flights. You don't need to be staying at the Ritz, but you do need to be in a safe, clean hotel room, with no fear of your gear being ripped off. We create a breakdown of the approximate cost of airfare and lodging in different areas.

For example, I knew that I could get myself and my second photographer to Puerto Vallarta, and stay there for around \$1,500, over the course of a wedding. This fee was above and beyond the package price the couple was paying, but it allowed me to control my own movements.

[SEEK ADVICE]

So now what? You've booked the job, secured airfare and lodging, gotten excited about where you are headed. But when you get there, you have to have your ducks in a row. One aspect of foreign travel is that sometimes the laws are drastically different than those in the States. Before you set foot anywhere, get a grip on where you will be. Reach out to friends or other photographers who have worked in the location for advice on what you might run into.

This advance knowledge can be invaluable. Since Puerto Vallarta was a quick flight and a relatively safe location for us to work in Mexico, we became quite familiar with navigating the local airport and the throng of individuals trying to hustle you for anything from a brand-new condo property to a taxi ride to a strip club. We were told to ignore every single person who talked to us until we got outside to the airport-sanctioned taxi stand. Everything else, we had been told, was a scam. I was told to put my cell phone to my ear and have a conversation with myself. Worked like a charm.

Without this up-front advice, who knows what timeshare presentation we would have found ourselves in, or worse. There will always be advice that you have to take with a grain of salt, as well. One person told me that, when driving over the border from Phoenix to Puerto Peñasco, I was to offer \$100 when the Mexican border patrol wanted to search our car. Mind you, I was with someone who spoke fluent Spanish. I also knew that if they did search our caravan, we would be clear—but to be prepared to be taken aback by certain actions and rules. Use common sense and stay safe.

MAKE THE MOST OF IT

If I'm going to be in a place where I normally don't shoot, I'm going to maximize my time covering the wedding. This usually entails photographing whatever pre-wedding day celebration is going on, obviously photographing the wedding, and then doing a portrait session with the couple the day after.

I despise shooting rehearsal dinners because nothing is ever bought from them. Ultimately, you stand around photographing the same 10 people eating dinner. On a destination wedding, where things are more casual, this is actually your time to get to know the people who are going to be on the other end of your lens the next day. It's also a perfect opportunity to get a few casual, nonwedding images of the couple together. You might just find your next display image for your studio. This additional coverage is not normally included for local weddings, but for a wedding I was traveling for, I always included it at no cost. If I'm going to be somewhere anyway, it's an easy up-front pull-through to help with booking.

The same goes for the day-after shoot. As long as you aren't catching a flight immediately the next morning after the wedding, you can utilize this shoot to really push the limits and create amazing imagery. Use your creativity, spend some time researching amazing locations, and go out and make images you normally would not be able to make on a wedding day. This shoot can be a goldmine for many reasons, be it for your portfolio or for the money-making images that can be sold as large wall portraits to your couple.





© Laurin Thiemes

Destination weddings can be great for your business and portfolio, but they're simply fun times to shoot, too. Being prepared for what you are getting yourself into when you put "destination wedding photographer" as a heading on your website is important to the continued success of your business as a whole.

So when your phone rings, and that bride wants to book you for that wedding, and you immediately have the urge to put the phone down and scream in excitement, just remember to take a deep breath and remember that this is your job—albeit an awesome one. ■

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**TOP 5 WAYS TO
GENERATE REVENUE
IN THE WORLD OF VIDEO**
— WITH JOE SWITZER —



by **Joe Switzer**

How is your business doing? It's the holiday season, and many of you are going to hear this question a lot. Hopefully, you feel your business is successful and are optimistic about future financial opportunities. Maybe some of you can't say that you are 100 percent content and happy with your company's financial statement and outlook. When I was in NYC teaching a workshop and platform class last month, as always, the majority of the questions from all filmmakers or photographers wanting to become filmmakers were about lenses, cameras and editing. Nobody ever asked about business and making more money. Is this why so many talented creatives fail as professional filmmakers and photographers?

Maybe the first question on everyone's mind should be related to increasing your company income.

Originally I was going to interview the top three financially performing video companies that I know of, and show you the commonalities between them. This got difficult, as many of them don't want to release financial information, and the article would have grown way too big. Instead, I'm going to simplify the moneymaking process and show you the revenue-generating concepts that have worked for Switzerfilm. The goal is to help you get your financial house in order. Your mission should be to implement three or four of these revenue-generating ideas into your business next year.

1 - REVENUE STREAMS

Let's start with revenue streams. Apple, the world's biggest company, has the Mac, iPhone, iPad, iPod, iTunes and, soon, a smartwatch. Apple is approaching a \$700 billion market cap, which means Apple is bigger than Nike, Disney, Starbucks, Canon, Sony and Google combined. So how do you become more like Apple? Revenue streams.

Switzerfilm started as a one-revenue-stream wedding-video company. Today we have expanded to five revenue streams: wedding photo, wedding cinema, corporate video, corporate photography and our newest division, web and mobile development. We turn down other revenue streams like family and senior photography so we can focus on the big five.

We have chosen these specific services because our team is passionate about them, and our clients get a better overall experience. A bride and groom don't want to hire and deal with separate wedding vendors. They would rather have a unified team that knows how to maximize time and work in harmony. This is why 90 percent of our clients hire us for both photo and video for weddings. This allows us to average over \$14k for each wedding, and that number continues to climb.





© Joe Switzer



© Joe Switzer

Here in the Midwest, most of clients have tight budgets. These are not celebrity weddings. Couples in our area spend about 30 percent of their wedding budget on Switzerfilm. We treat them as if it's the only wedding we will ever shoot. Corporate clients behave the same when they hire us for a video shoot. It's a rare corporate client that won't add on photography when we're going to be traveling and shooting all sorts of amazing scenes and content. Photo and video overlap in so many ways. About a year ago, we got so frustrated with getting our videos and photos displayed on our clients' websites. After we'd worked so hard to put together a video for a company, and it took the company up to a year to post it on its website, we knew there might be a new opportunity for us to expand. It's then that we decided to add web and mobile development to Switzerfilm.

Over the years, we have found companies we work with had trouble keeping their website up to date and relevant. We also found that it was a convoluted process, with software programmers writing code, photographers shooting the photos,

and the video not matching the photos or website. Companies need to have a current website that represents what the marketing and management team wants. With so many companies involved in maintaining or building a website, it gets hard to communicate between all the different parties.

We started our website and mobile business at the beginning of 2014. We are astonished by the synergies of all the revenue streams at Switzerfilm. When your revenue streams connect well, they start to depend on each other—and, before you know it, each division is bringing up the other divisions. The start of a new year is the best time to take a look inside your business to decide what you and your team are passionate about, and to focus on offering services that can rely on each other. Don't ever forget that even for a \$700 billion dollar company like Apple, it still has only a handful of revenue streams. When you've decided on revenue streams, remember to keep it simple and stay focused on your passions while solving the big problems for your clients.



2 - BUILD A TEAM FOCUS

Let's move on to the second way we're able to generate revenue. People. Focusing on the people you work with will increase productivity and eventually revenue for your brand. Your team should work diligently to directly affect the success of the company. Everyone at Switzerfilm knows that they are the company. What I mean by this is that everyone knows Katie Long as our head photographer. The look of our photography is in the hands of Katie. She is inspired to create, but what completes her as an artist is working with the team. That includes Ashley, who handles the second shooting, and Kristin and I, who shoot video. We all work side by side, posing and setting up the scenes.

3 - BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

The individual people make up this company, and it doesn't stop there. Many other people who work for other video

companies feel like they are a part of our team because they've helped build Switzerfilm. Many dear friends of ours have worked with us over the past 10 years. Because of that collaboration, Switzerfilm has the capacity to take on more and bigger projects. If you think you can grow revenue alone, you are mistaken. It's the people who rally behind, support and believe in your company. I've always looked to hire people I feel are more talented than I am. Do that, and all the revenue streams at your company will start moving higher.

4 - LONG-TERM GROWTH

What does long-term growth mean to you? The *Wall Street Journal* and investment pros talk about this all the time. Many of you have some sort of a retirement plan. The same thought process you use to buy stocks is what you want to have when it comes to investing in and growing your company revenue. If your company were a stock, would you buy it? Long-term growth is our biggest concern. The team understands that if paychecks are cut in half like they were in

2014, it's for a long-term approach. If you're going to be adding photography, cinema or a marketing division, it won't be instant gratification. It can take years for new divisions to just break even. Switzerfilm wants long-term double-digit topline growth, and we have planned for that.

Some of you who are just starting out might be growing at 100 percent or more year over year. Talented creatives would probably prefer to join a team that has long-term growth in mind instead of a company that remains idle with no change. So ask yourself this question. If your company were a stock, would you buy a few shares? You'd better be able to say yes. When I was in college, the buyer from Wal-Mart's headquarters was speaking to our class. When it was time for questions, I asked him how Wal-Mart was able to grow and grow while almost all other retailers went out of business or ceased becoming competitors. He went to the drawing board and wrote two words: *the customer*. Do you focus on your customers? Do you wow them by instantly replying to emails? Do your clients receive their photos and video two weeks early? Does the final product you deliver exceed all expectations? Your revenue will surge higher when you and your team totally understand that your company's

financial success is in the hands of the customer. All revenue streams move higher when your team is motivated to continuously impress the customer. Everyone on the Switzer team is actively involved with clients. Our customers like and trust us, and that impacts revenue arguably more than anything else we could possibly do.

5 - CONTINUING YOUR EDUCATION

Lastly, if you are reading articles like this, attending conferences and watching educational videos online, then you are obviously working on yourself and continuing your education. Teaching others can be a revenue stream in itself. Talented filmmakers like Ray Roman and Kevin Shahinian will likely continue to do workshops and help students while making money living their dream. How amazing is it that you can offer workshops in your area as the expert, and pass on what you have learned and earn additional income along the way? Everyone wins. Switzerfilm has been teaching others for years, and will continue to do so.



We're always learning from anyone in the cinema or photography business. When Ray Roman's workshop (rayromanfilms.com/education/) is in my hometown of St. Louis, you can be sure I'll be there. For most of you, the real revenue stream from education happens when you personally grow with new knowledge and apply it to your everyday workflow.

2015 is here, and it's the perfect time to write out what revenue streams you will be focusing on for your business this year. Support and grow your different divisions with the concept of long-term growth, the people you work with, continuing your education and never losing the focus that your company growth is only as good as your relationship with your customers. Plan and expect to grow your business in 2015. Happy filmmaking. 🎬

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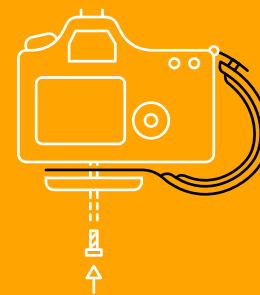


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by **Justen Hong**

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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If you plan on doing this yourself, I recommend searching for your company name, domain name, or old addresses and phone numbers, etc. Find the outdated listings and fix them. You may need to create an account with the directory, verify you are the owner or request an update to the website via email.

An issue I see with a number of photography websites is the lack of complete contact information. I see contact pages with only a contact form and no mailing address, phone number, email, etc. Google may see this as suspect. What kind of legitimate company doesn't have an address, email or phone number?



INBOUND LINKS

Embed followable nonreciprocal inbound links from reliable, topic-related websites. These are links from other sites to yours (that you do not link back to in return) with followable links (most paid directories provide no-follow links, meaning they tell search engines to ignore the link, so they are not considered inbound links). Don't completely ignore no-follow links, since they can positively but indirectly affect your website ranking.



OUTBOUND LINKS

Embed outbound links to high-quality authoritative websites. You now know the importance of quality inbound links, but what is often overlooked is the importance of having good outbound links. Linking to other topic-related authoritative websites is also important for a solid SEO strategy. Make sure you are linking your site to other great resources that your customers would enjoy or find useful. For instance, if you are a wedding photographer, you would want to link your website to top wedding blogs and other local wedding vendors (just make sure they have good websites along with positive reviews). You don't want to link to low-quality sites or vendors with bad customer service and tons of complaints.



ASSOCIATED KEYWORDS

Google's algorithms are consistently getting more intelligent. They are no longer strictly looking for just your targeted keywords. I believe they are also looking for words and phrases that are associated with them. For instance, if you are a wedding photography studio, I would expect to find words like engagement, bride, groom, reception, church, ceremony, etc.

The most important advice I can give concerning your content (text/copy) is not to write it for search engines but for your target market. Yes, you still need to use your keywords, but sparingly, and in the right places. More importantly, make sure it is well written and to the point. Bad grammar, typos and poor writing can negatively affect your ranking.

You also need to find your voice, both as a brand and photographer. With all the websites I build for photographers, one of the major issues I see is that many have a hard time creating copy for their site, specifically their blog post. So many photographers have just one sentence of copy for each of their posts. You need more than that, and it needs to be substantive. Write a funny story about something that happened during the shoot, about the couple or the location and why you chose to shoot there, why you selected those particular images for the post, which image is your favorite and why. It's OK if you're not Ernest Hemingway—find someone who can rewrite or proof your words. If you have someone else write your post, just make sure they are staying true to your brand, vision and message.



ABOUT US SECTION

You need a thorough About Us section. So many photographers have only one page, even one short paragraph, dedicated to this section. You definitely need more. Take some time to write about you and your company. Include things like a mission statement, personal bios of all the staff, customer service information, FAQs and testimonials. (Don't forget about things like a privacy policy, which probably should not go in the About Us area.) These are all things that legitimate companies have on their websites.



SOCIAL SHARES & MENTIONS

Social shares and mentions are an important signal to Google that you are a legitimate entity and that you are creating great content. Future algorithm updates will likely place more importance on this.

It is also critical that you use all the major social platforms. In a recent discussion about social media on a photography site I belong to, a member wrote that he uses only one site and hates all the others. Personally, I am not a fan of many social media platforms, but in order to have a solid, long-term SEO strategy, you have to use them all. If you are a professional photographer and you don't have business pages on Google+, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Pinterest, get busy. These are all great resources to amplify your brand and share what you are doing. You never know where your next customer will find you, but the more places your brand reaches, the better chance they will.

Of all the social medias, I find that Google+ can affect search engine rankings the most. It is the quickest way to get your content indexed; and, since it is part of Google, I believe it holds more clout. The only thing is, you have to use it to see the benefits. You need to share other users' content, "+1" other users' posts and make posts of your own. When posting content, don't forget to use helpful hashtags. Don't go overboard with them, and make sure they are on topic. For instance, if you are sharing a blog post about a wedding you recently photographed in St. Louis at the Ritz Carlton for Joe and Jane Doe, I would use hashtags like #StLouis, #WeddingPhotography, #RitzCarlton, #DoeWedding. There are also communities for every profession and hobby. Join some and interact with them.



SATISFIED VISITORS

Are users satisfied with your website? Do they find it useful, or do they only glance at it and then leave right away? You can sort of figure this out by using Google Analytics or Google's Webmaster Tools. With these tools installed on your website, you can log in and view your bounce rate. The bounce rate shows when a user visits your website and leaves after viewing one page without interacting with it. The reason why I say "sort of figure this out" is because users could be visiting your site and finding exactly what they need on that one page and leave a happy visitor. A typical bounce rate is 50 to 60 percent. Anything above that, and there may be issues. Major red flags if it is over 70 percent. On the flip side, if it is in single digits or extremely low, there may be an error in how Analytics was set up or how it is reading your site.

For a good intro-level Google Analytics tutorial, visit <http://www.visuallure.com/ga.html> or just do a search for "google analytics tutorial."

The most common reasons people leave websites right away are slow load times, broken links (404 errors), poor navigation, bad mobile experience and poor design.

Another major reason, specifically with photography websites, is that the user didn't connect with your photography. This just shows the importance of selecting the right images to showcase on your site. ■



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THE GLAMOUR EDITION

46 - HOW I GOT THE SHOT
SAL CINCOTTA

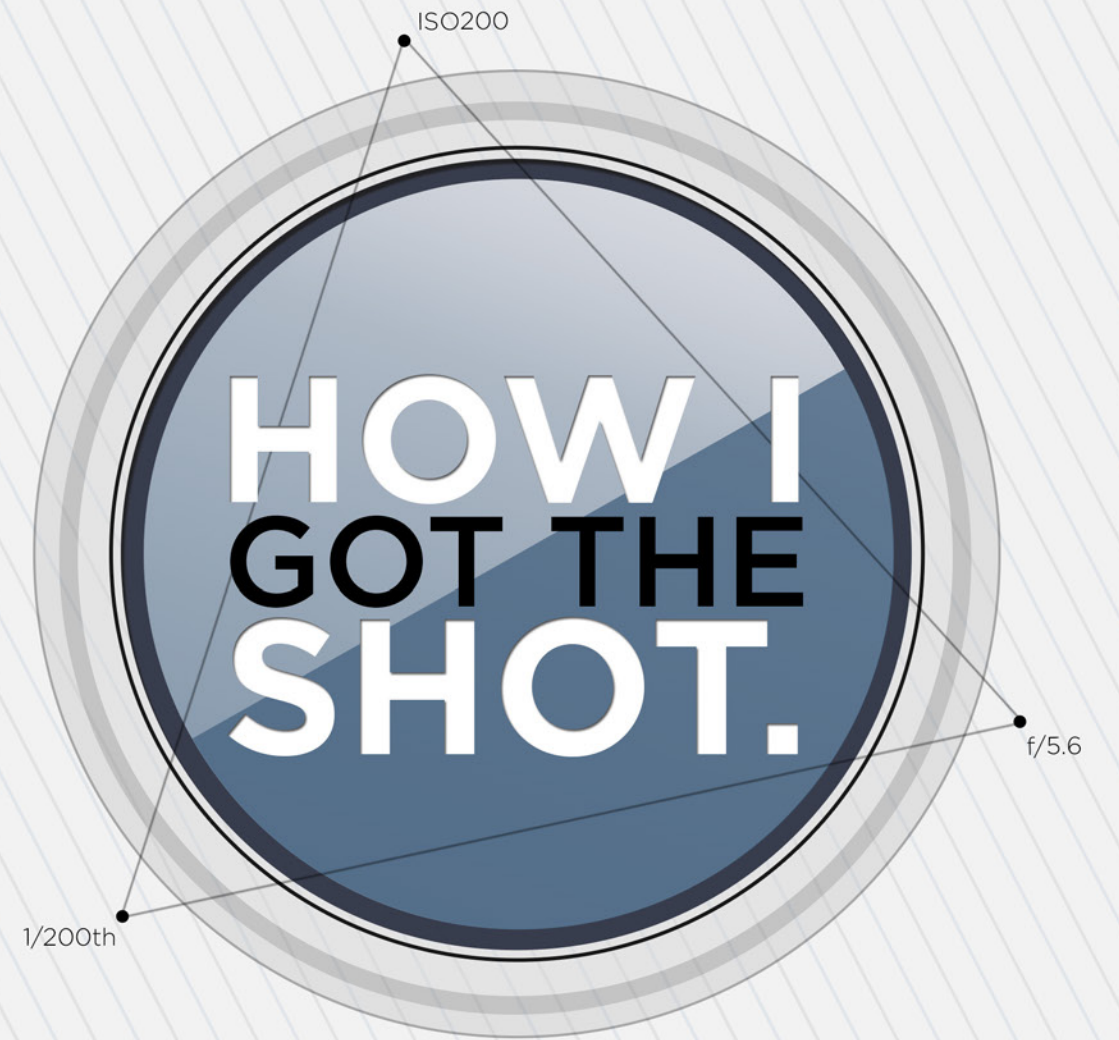
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BY SAL CINCOTTA

With the launch of our new print magazine, I am excited to announce a new series called “How I Got the Shot.”

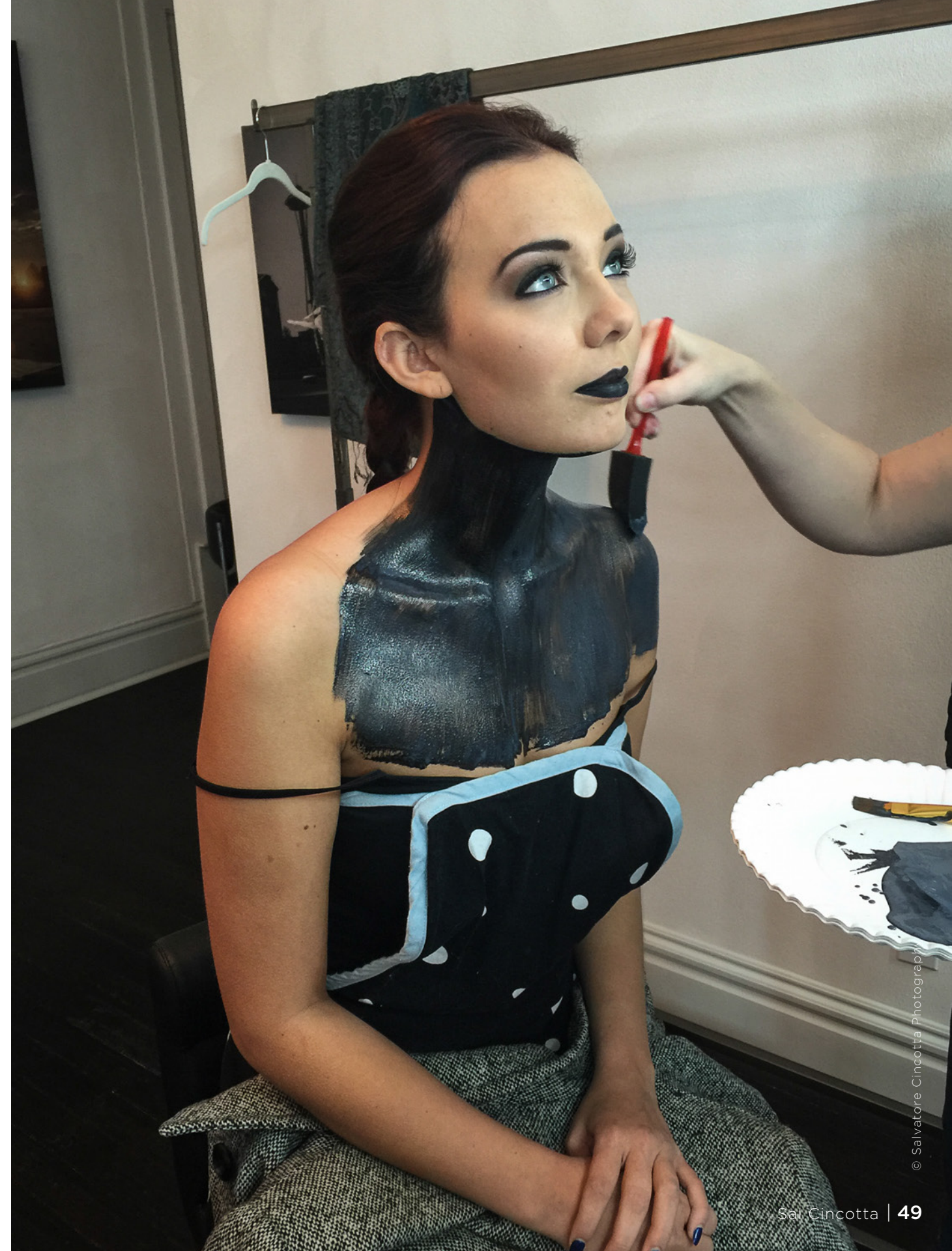
It gives me an opportunity to showcase the behind-the-scenes like never before. There are so many images we look at that make us wonder about the “how.” How did they make that shot? Sometimes it’s the smallest of details that can spark our imagination. I hope that by sharing the details of the shoot, we can spark some new ideas and creativity for you as an artist.

No matter what, enjoy the process. Enjoy creating. And most of all, enjoy failing. It’s how we all learn to be better photographers.

CONCEPT

For the cover this month, we wanted something dark and dramatic. Something a little different. Normally, we go for the big bridal portrait or the typical glamour portrait—pretty girls always sell, right? For this one, we wanted to get out of our normal routine and do something fun.

Flipping through a commercial magazine, we had seen an image of a girl covered in latex paint. That was the inspiration for the shoot. Speaking of which, where do you find your inspiration? We are always looking to Hollywood, magazines, Pinterest, commercial ads, etc. for inspiration. Rarely do I look to photographers in my field for inspiration. Don’t get me wrong, there’s a ton of great photographers out there—I just don’t want to use that as my inspiration. I want to look somewhere outside the normal circle to be inspired. That allows me some level of creative interpretation to incorporate back into my work.



© Salvatore Cincotta Photography

MAKEUP

Makeup was the trickiest, mostly because I don't know how to do it. You should hire a professional. We knew what we wanted, but had no clue how to execute our vision. I called my go-to makeup pro, Aurora Lord of Make-Up Artistry by A&C. She had no experience with latex paint, so this was fun and exciting for her too. She had to figure out where to get the makeup and how to apply it. Like any good makeup artist, she tested it on herself.

We wanted a dark, futuristic look. We wanted black latex all around her shoulders and up part of her neck. Then we wanted her hair pulled back to bring the focus to her face and upper body. In order to work with latex, it has to be painted on—not a simple process. It dries quickly and leaves stroke marks, and it takes more than one coat to really look right. This shoot's lighting setup required almost five coats to cover the skin.

LIGHTING AND GEAR

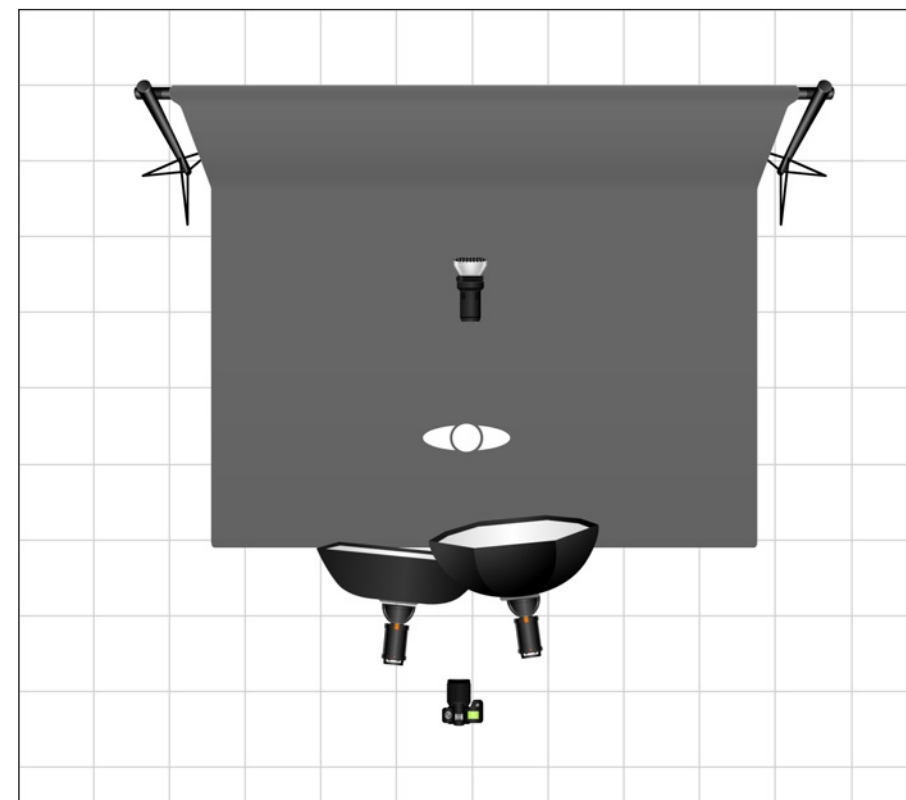
We shot this at our home studio in O'Fallon, Illinois, tethered and on a gray backdrop. I went with my Phase One IQ250 150mm lens. The settings were ISO 200, 1/200 sec, f/5.6. I don't usually shoot tethered, but I thought it was really important that the entire team was looking at my monitor to see what it was looking like. It's really tough to see details on a small screen on the back of a camera. This proved extremely beneficial. We took several test shots, showed the makeup artist and made real-time adjustments. Had we not done this, the results would not have been as solid as they were.

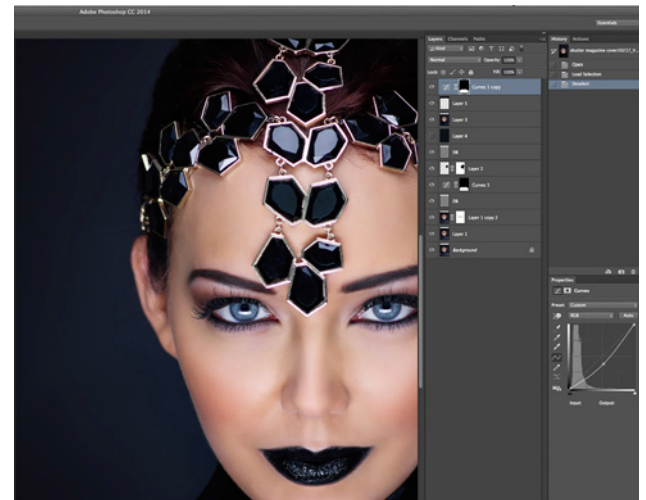
The lighting involved a bit of trial-and-error. I knew the look I wanted, but seeing it on the screen with the test shots was huge. The first few shots I took had no backlight. I originally thought this was the look I wanted. Checking it on the screen allowed me to quickly see this was the wrong look. Then I tried firing the backlight on the model to create a rim light. After a test shot, I realized that wasn't the look I wanted either. Then I fired it into the backdrop to create a natural vignette and some separation—and bingo, that was the look I wanted.

I wanted a clean beauty light with limited shadows. I needed the model to pop off the backdrop rather than blend in. We needed a backlight to create that separation.

We lit the scene with Profoto D1s and a Profoto B1. On the front side, we had the Profoto 5" Octobox connected to a D1. Underneath, we had a Profoto 1"x4" strip box connected to a D1. To create some separation from the background, we used a Profoto B1 connected to a 20-degree grid, and fired it right into the background.

(See the lighting diagram.)





POST-PRODUCTION

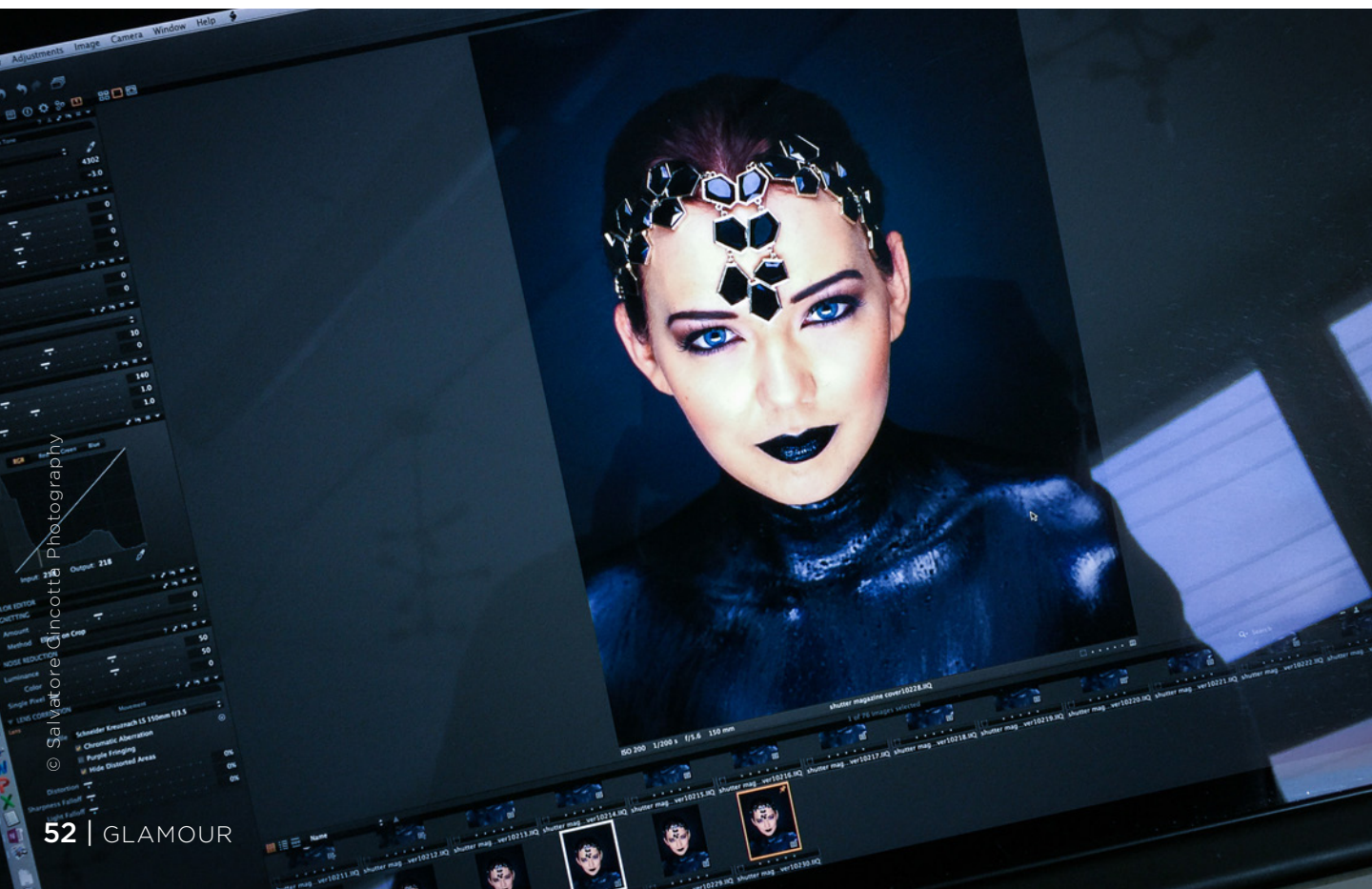
Post-production for this image was going to be different than most of the images I work on. Since this was for the cover, I knew I had to perfect the image in every way I could. I spent hours researching techniques online trying to figure out how to execute the changes and adjustments I wanted. That, coupled with my existing skill set, allowed me to get the image where I wanted it.

The first step was to bring the image into Lightroom for basic color correction. Then, I exported the image as a 16-bit TIF file to work on in Photoshop. That's where all the heavy lifting was done. On an image like this, I want as much detail as possible.

My workflow is very methodical. I fixed exposure and color issues in Lightroom. Then I worked in Photoshop for all corrective edits. The corrective edits here were to fix her nose, make her eyes and lips bigger, stretch her neck, adjust her shoulders and remove blemishes.

When working in Photoshop, I am a huge believer in layers. I use layers as a safety net of sorts. With an image with so many adjustments, it's important to use one layer per item. This allows you to keep building the image even if you screw something up; you are only one layer away from the last item you were working on.

(Elite+ members, log in to your account to see how I made some of these adjustments in Photoshop.)





LESSONS LEARNED

This was a great exercise in teamwork. Although I could not have done this alone, collaboration is not always easy. Before you start shooting, make sure your team is in complete sync with your vision. And make sure you understand your own vision before you pick up your camera. All too often, I see photographers grab their cameras and just start shooting. The problem with that is, you don't really know what you are trying to accomplish. It's like walking into a dark room and just walking around hoping to run into a light switch. You must have focus and purpose. Shoots like this are a perfect opportunity to hone that skill.

Get out there, put a concept together and shoot, shoot, shoot. ■

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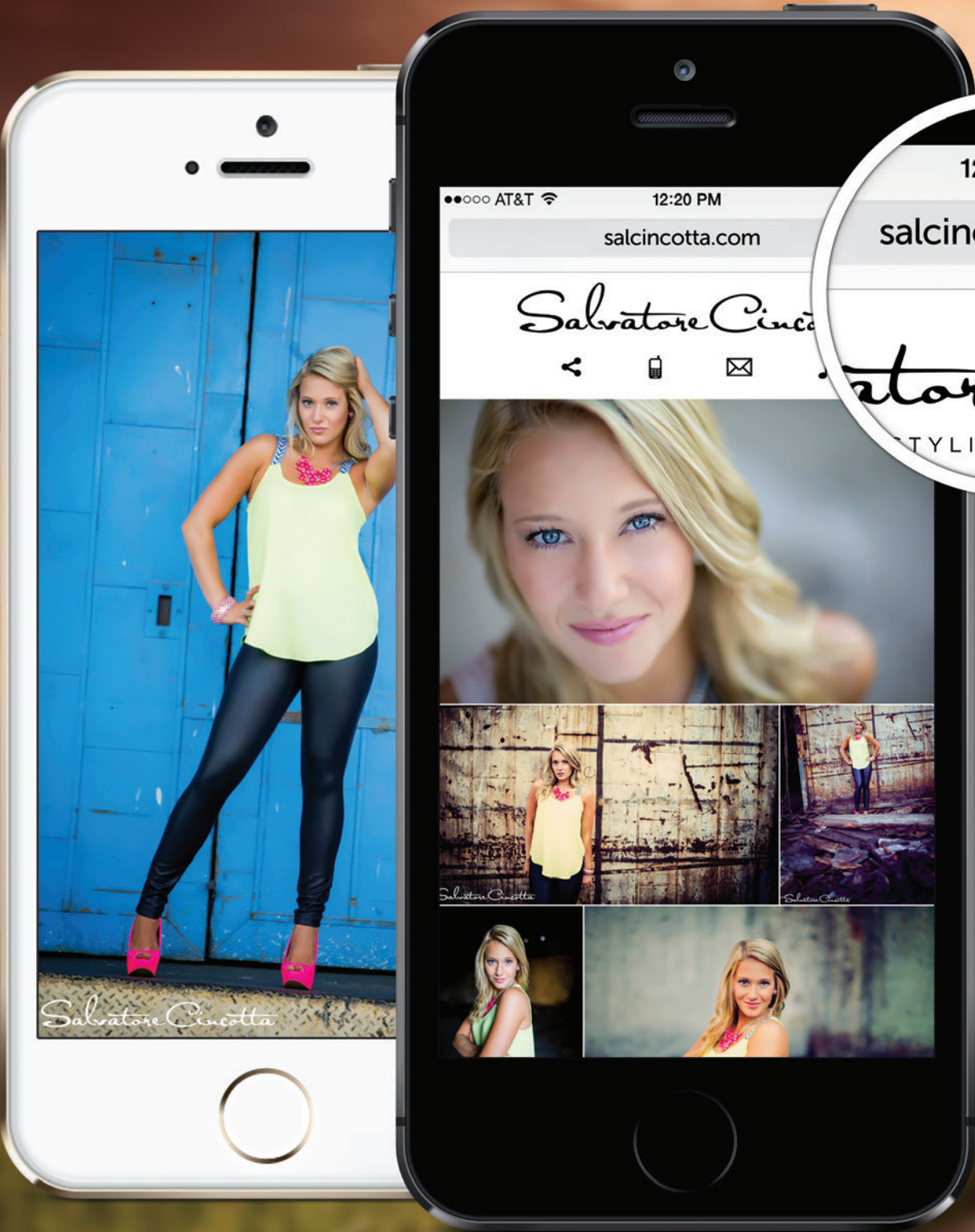
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MAKING CLIENTS

FEEL BEAUTIFUL

WITH
PHOTOGRAPHY



by **Lori Nordstrom**

Most of the time when we think about “glamour”—making women feel beautiful with our photography—boudoir, fashion or glamour photography comes to mind. I think it’s our job to make sure every person in front of our camera feels special, beautiful and unique. There are so many feelings tied to images, and the more feeling and emotion we can involve, the more valuable the images become.

Getting to know your subject is key. The relationship that you have starts on the very first phone call. Sometimes it may even start before, with the person referring you. This gives you instant credibility as well as common ground as you get to know each other.

The relationship-building process happens throughout the client experience: the first phone call, discussing how they heard about you, the consultation call, the actual session, and the sales and order appointment. Throughout this process, we are gathering tools that will make that client’s experience (as well as your images) even more powerful and unique. The first phone call is a very important time for you. As you ask questions of your client and get to know her, be sure to write things down and go back to those things that are important to her. There are things that make each woman feel beautiful and every man feel valued.

FAMILY PORTRAIT SESSION

.....

If I am doing a family portrait session, I ask the mom about her family. I ask about each of her kids, what’s important to them and how they spend time together. I ask what her husband does for a living, and about her home-decor colors and style. I use everything I’ve learned to make her experience special by incorporating the things she most values.

A CONVERSATION MIGHT GO LIKE THIS

Me: Tell me about your kids. I'd love to hear more about them! How old are they?

Client: My oldest, Michael, is seven. My middle is Addy, and she is five, and then our little guy is Jonathan. He's three, and is a handful!

Me: Wow! Sounds like you are super busy! I'm sure they are all really different, too.

Client: Definitely! As I said, Jonathan is the wild one. Addy is super sweet and very into all of the princesses right now, and Michael just loves sports! He will play with anyone who has a ball in their hands.

Me: That sounds like my youngest. In fact, his first word was ball! What would you say Michael's favorite sport is?

I'll go on to ask about Addy's favorite princesses and what games or songs Jonathan likes to play. I want to get to know the kids by getting her to tell me as much as possible about their personalities.

Me: You definitely sound busy! Do you work outside of the home as well?

Client: No, I don't. We made the decision that I'd stay at home once I started having kids, so I quit my nursing career. Maybe I'll go back to it once Jonathan is in school.

Me: That's a big sacrifice! I'm sure that there are days you miss it. What does your husband do?

Client: He is in sales for XYZ and on the road a ton. It will be a challenge to find an appointment time that will work for everyone!

Me: You definitely have a lot on your hands, especially with your husband being on the road. I'm sure he knows how important it is that he's doing this with his family—we'll find a time that will include him. I know the kids will really love seeing your family portraits in your home, especially when he is away for work.

The conversation will continue, but already I have so many tools to use. I know that this client has put her family first. She's at home with her kids as her No. 1 priority. I use that information to build up her role as a mom and as the primary caretaker in the home. I also know that Dad has a demanding job that takes him away from the family. I make a point of thanking him for taking the time to be there for his family when he comes in to be photographed.

I've already told Mom, "Your kids are going to love seeing those portraits on the wall—especially when Dad is off to work," thus beginning the selling process.





© Lori Nordstrom



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MAKE EACH PERSON FEEL SPECIAL

.....

I'll use this information again during our consultation call as we're talking about where her portraits will be hanging in her home. I'll help her choose an area of the home where her kids spend a lot of time, and remind her how she and the kids will feel when they see the portraits there. During the session, I'll talk about the family bond, how the kids respond to Mom and are so attached to Dad. There are always things to recognize in the personalities and relationships you see in front of you, and these are the things that make each person feel special and unique.

Some things I might say during this family portrait session:

- • • "I love how Michael is still so sweet and cuddly. Cherish those moments—they will definitely not last forever!"
- • • "These three are so funny together! I love the way they laugh and tease each other!"
- • • To Dad: "I love the way Addy looks at you! She's probably one of those little girls who thinks she'll marry her daddy one day!"
- • • "It's so cute that Jonathan mimics everything you do! I love how you cross your arms, and he crosses his. You hug Mom, and he hugs Mom!"



© Lori Nordstrom

MAKE ALL PORTRAITS PRICELESS

Anytime we talk about relationships, we are building up the value of our portraits, because those relationships and personalities that we talk about, and get them talking about, will make those portraits priceless. I want to recognize Mom's role in the family by saying something like, "I know you are so busy with the kids—thank you so much for bringing everyone together and working with me to organize your session. You are going to really love seeing these portraits every day to remind you of this time in your lives." I'll build up Dad by thanking him for coming and doing this for his family. I remind them all how important this time is.

When photographing a high school senior session, one of the things I'll ask my seniors is, "Is there anything that makes you nervous about being photographed?" I hear all kinds of things, from, "I've gained weight this year" to "My skin is bad right now" to "People say my smile is fake in photos" or "I have a really crooked smile." The list goes on. The great part is that, by asking beforehand, not only can I look for those things and be aware of the issue, but I can comment on them. I'll use certain poses to thin out the body, and reassure her that I'll be able to make her skin look clear and beautiful (their skin usually isn't as bad as they think it is). To the girl who says her smile looks fake, I'll say, "Your smile looks amazing! I love when you laugh a little before I take the shot—you look so natural!"

Use what you learn before the session as you work with your clients to create an amazing experience and make them feel special, unique and beautiful. ■

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HOW TO PLAN THE
PERFECT
WARDROBE

WITH CRAIG LAMERE





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[by **Craig Lamere**]

I was so excited when I found out the theme of this month's issue of *Shutter* was going to be glamour. Glamour is the most freeing and fun shooting I do because I'm not restrained by as many rules as those of other genres I shoot.

In glamour, you have the freedom to create anything you can visualize, while incorporating all the principles of traditional shooting. I love all the stylizing that goes into glamour shoots, from finding the wardrobe to working out the hair and makeup to organizing the location and settings. I get asked all the time where I get the wardrobe for my shoots.

When I wanted to start shooting fashion/glamour, I looked at fashion magazines and websites for ideas and inspiration. What I found out really quickly was that I had no way of getting my hands on the clothes I wanted here in Idaho. That's when I decided I had to get a little creative and just find and make the wardrobe I was going to shoot. The two places I found to be the most fruitful were thrift stores and vintage shops.

“ **THRIFT STORES**
ARE GREAT FOR
FINDING PARTS
TO PUT AN **ENTIRE**
LOOK TOGETHER... ”



[GO THRIFTING]

Thrift stores are basically department stores that don't follow any trends, and the items never go out of style. Ninety-five percent of the time, I never reuse clothes unless I completely repurpose them. So I really don't want to buy retail because it is a waste of money, and I can find gems at thrift stores for \$10 or less. Thrift stores are really great for finding parts to put an entire look together, rather than a single piece. Sometimes I luck out and find a killer dress, but most of the time I find a bottom for \$3 and a top for \$5, and have my whole wardrobe for eight bucks.

Thrifting is like going on a treasure hunt. I often find a piece of an outfit I like, buy the garment, and then cut off the part I want and add it to something else to create an all-new garment. Even though the clothes are at a low price already, I ask the manager for a discount. Salvation Army and other thrift stores often give me a break, but Goodwill never does. Local thrift stores have the best selection and are the easiest to work with for that extra discount.



© Craig Lamere



© Craig Lamere

[GET VINTAGE]

I love vintage clothes and vintage dresses from the 1930s through the 1950s. The way a great vintage dress is built, with the crazy attention to detail in the stitching, the intricate fabrics and the tulle—what’s not to love? Vintage treasures are hard to find in thrift stores. People just don’t donate those types of clothes very often, and when they do, they don’t stick around long. I knew if I wanted to shoot those types of dresses, I would have to go to the vintage shops.

I approached the vintage shops a little differently than I did the thrift stores. Vintage shops sometimes offered the option of renting or borrowing the items I wanted to use for my shoots. I didn’t want to have to buy anything, because I would never use the clothes again, so I had a plan to get what I wanted. I introduced myself to the owner and told her I was a photographer who was looking for wardrobe for stylized shoots. Before she could say anything, I would pull out my tablet and show her my work. A picture really is worth a thousand words. I showed only vintage images so she could see what I could do with her clothes. Once I showed the owner my portfolio, I asked her if I could rent some of her clothes for my shoots. I told her I really didn’t want to purchase the clothes because I would not use them again once I shot them. The owner, being super cool and liking what she saw, agreed to the rental. We set a price, and I now had vintage clothes for my shoot.



[MAKE CONNECTIONS]

On the day I returned the clothes to the shop, once again knowing a picture is worth a thousand words, I showed the owner what I had done with them. She loved the images. I had done my research, and knew she had a website where she promoted her clothes and sold them online, so I offered to give her low-res copies of the images to put on her site. She was ecstatic about getting to use the images, and made me a better offer on my rental agreement than our original offer.

As time went on, my relationship with the shop owner got better and better. I even ended up shooting a session for her boyfriend. As new clothes came into the shop, she would call me to see if I wanted to come look at them before she put them out for sale.

These are just two examples of resources you can use to create the images you want. In the end, it does not matter if you come from a huge city where you have lots of options or if you come from a place known mainly for its potatoes. All that matters is that you have the drive and imagination to make your images come to life. ■

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SENIOR
GLAM
SESSIONS

WITH BLAIR PHILLIPS



by Blair Phillips

Everyone has at least a bit of glamour deep down inside. But not everyone has their hair and makeup done and their clothing picked out by a professional stylist, like our counterparts on television. Wouldn't it be nice to have someone give us that type of attention for at least a day?

THE GLAM SESSION

Two years ago, I found myself really wanting to shake up my portfolio. The way to get someone's attention is to do something dramatic. I wanted some new marketing images that included some wild and glamorous hair and makeup. I needed to devise a plan to shoot all these images, but still get paid to do so. I came up with the idea of bringing in local seniors for wild, glamorous hair and makeup. We wanted to create a look that they would normally never know to ask for. This is a way to turn an average person into someone completely different.

HAIR AND MAKEUP

Your hair and makeup person needs to have a similar brand as you. I find it to be more cost effective to select a professional

who does both hair and makeup. This way I do not have to work with two separate people. With a hair and makeup professional, it is important to work with only licensed professionals. In most cities, it is unlawful to charge for those services without being licensed.

GLAM TEAM

Now that I had my Glam Team in place, a senior Glam Session was born. This session was designed to take place at the end of a senior's normal session. This session would generally last around 30 minutes, with a minimum order requirement to ensure the makeup and hair was paid for. The Glam Session was designed to give an ordinary, everyday girl the opportunity to have an out-of-body experience. It's a senior-session add-on because I did not want the whole session to be with wild and crazy makeup. They are more likely to buy large wall portraits from her everyday look. The Glam Session images are what they will share with all their friends on social media. I use these images for marketing through my own social media as well. These images let potential clients know that there is a whole other side that we are capable of producing. They love being able to live in a fantasy world while being photographed.



© Blair Phillips

MONEY

Let's talk about the financial end of glamour. These sessions are extremely fun, but I don't want to shoot for free. We require a \$250 minimum for these add-ons, which covers my time, plus hair and makeup. Most clients spend a hefty amount on images from these sessions after they prequalify themselves by paying the minimum.

Do not be afraid to ask for your money up front. Money spent is money forgotten. Always pay the vendors directly so you reap the tax benefits. Glam Sessions create the most perfect shooting situation for a photographer. Having an amazing and inspiring subject can bring out a whole new animal inside you.

WHAT ABOUT MOM?

Parents always put their children's wants and needs before their own. While this is a great thing, moms need some attention sometimes too. They need to be reminded just how beautiful they are. Mom is generally the last person to do much of anything nice for herself. Senior Glam Sessions became so successful that we put a twist on them and made them available for grown women. The minimum order requirement is much more for one of these sessions, which run an hour and a half to two hours of shooting time. First

order of business is to make a plan to take your session from a vision to a final product. You must have before and after images that show a rather drastic change in your subject. The first one is going to be free. We already have a hair and makeup artist with whom we've built an awesome working relationship. We sat down with our artist and told her that we wanted these ladies to feel absolutely glamorous. We did not want them to have a look that was so drastic that you would not recognize them. Then we put the test images on social media, and the phone began to ring. We also marketed this to men. We provide men with an easy way to do something really thoughtful for their wives.

PLANNING THE SESSION

For these Glamour Sessions, we ask clients to send us some images they find online of hair and makeup styles they like. We forward these to our hair and makeup artist well before the session. The worst scenario is when all the hair and makeup is done and the client hates it. If this happens, she will most likely not tell you until the session is over, making all the images you took practically worthless. Before I started doing this legwork, I had a client who was brought to tears after the artist left. I had to take her to a department store and buy a flat iron, makeup remover and some more makeup. We went back to the studio and did her hair and makeup again. We turned a terrible situation into something positive. It's imperative that there be some communication before the session.



© Blair Phillips

KIDS' GLAMOUR

We even introduced glamour to some of our children's sessions. Styling and making up a three-year-old girl can make an image really exciting. I'm not talking about going overboard and giving her a pageant look. We had a limited-edition session where we added just a hint of makeup and hair fix. The images brought the parents to tears. Sometimes a subtle change can add such value to an image. We have also found that adding lipstick to a little

girl in the correct setting can make an image so much more appealing.

Pop culture continues to set the beauty standard pretty high. It takes a little more time, but adding glamour is key to adding confidence. Think of how you feel when you have a fresh hairdo and you are wearing your favorite outfit. You feel so confident and comfortable. Why not do all you can to create an environment that leaves your clients feeling the same way? Give them the gift of glamour. ■

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BRINGING YOUR
INSPIRATIONS
— **TO LIFE** —
with Alissa Zimmerman



by **Alissa Zimmerman**

We at Team Cincotta work like maniacs practically all day, every day. Sometimes I wonder how we all stay sane. Having a creative outlet and being able to work on inspiration-driven projects is what fuels me and keeps my passion alive.

We try to do at least one creative photo shoot per month—whether it be in a different location or in our studio in Illinois. It's so important to push yourself to try something new and innovate—especially if you're a creative running a full-time business. It's easy to get bogged down with the minutia of your daily to-do lists. Making the time to organize and execute your vision from beginning (inspiration) to end (the final product) is crucial to staying energized about doing what you love and keeping your work fresh.

A few months ago, Sal and I came up with a formula to keep our planning process more efficient and productive. Before we had this formula, we kept running into the same issue: Details and ideas were all over the place, and everything would fall apart at the last minute. This caused massive chaos for us internally, and completely killed morale. We needed some kind of formula to keep us focused—with no potential for failure.

Here's how we do it.

STEP 1 - PREPRODUCTION

We normally plan these creative shoots around our travel schedule. So when we know we're going to be in a unique location, we schedule a meeting to discuss ideas for the shoot. Having this initial meeting is key to ensuring success. Sal will tell me what he's looking for—a beauty shot, a bride and groom, a dramatic landscape or architecture shot, etc. This is where I determine what I need to research for our location.



“WHAT STORY DO YOU WANT TO TELL WITH YOUR IMAGES?”



© Salvatore Cincotta Photography

STEP 2 - USE THE FORMULA TO ORGANIZE YOUR DETAILS AND BEGIN YOUR RESEARCH

The formula is simple. It's a who-what-where-when-why format. I'll use our creative shoot from Brazil a few months ago to illustrate how we used this formula.

WHO?

How many models will you need? Male and/or female? What kind of look do you want? Will you need a hair and makeup artist? For this shoot, we wanted a beauty shot, a bride and groom on the beach, and a bridal shot with a different spin on what we normally do. I knew I had to book a male and a female model (Sal wanted models who looked like Brazilian natives), as well as a hair and makeup artist who could travel with us for on-site touch-ups.

WHAT?

This is your “thing.” What do you want to showcase in these images? Is it a wedding dress? Is it a dramatic custom-made red gown with a 12-foot train? This is where your inspiration comes into play. For our shoot, we needed a wedding gown with a dramatic veil for the beach shot and a unique headpiece for the bridal shot. I found an image on Pinterest by photographer Caleb & Gladys (check them out on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/calebgladys>) that really inspired us; the key is to take an inspirational image and tweak it to make it your own. We decided to re-create this concept, but turn it into a bridal portrait.



© Salvatore Cincotta Photography

WHERE?

Locations will make or break the shoot. What kind of location will complement your details? Unique locations can also inspire you to come up with new concepts. Brazil is obviously known for its beautiful beaches, so we decided to capitalize on a private beach we had access to. Normally, I would do research on Google and use sites like Panoramio.com or Google Maps to find specific locations we don't have time or access to scout out in person.

WHEN?

Timing is everything. Making sure you're scheduling the shoot for the shots you want is crucial. In Brazil, we were looking for shots on the beach during the golden hour and into sunset. There's no reason for me to schedule a model to start hair and makeup at 10 a.m. if we aren't going to be shooting until 4 p.m.

WHY?

This is your concept—where you'll take all the abovementioned details and turn them into a story. What story do you want to tell with your images? We had the bridal portrait with the headpiece nailed down, but had to come up with a story to tell for the beach shot. With the giant rocks on the beach as leading lines, we knew we needed a shot with the bride at the edge and a huge veil blowing in the wind.

STEP 3 - EXECUTE AND ADAPT

Once you have the formula planned out, the other details seem to just fall into place. This is the time to book your models and makeup artists, arrange transportation, find wardrobe, make or buy your accessories/props, and map out your day.

Something that the team has come to accept is that no matter how much we plan, there will always be parts of the shoot that don't pan out. As long as we have a foundation of what we want to accomplish, though, we are able to go into a shoot with a vision, and adapt to anything that doesn't work out according to our plan.

In Brazil, a massive storm rolled in while the model was wrapping up her makeup. Instead of panicking, we decided to get a handful of beauty portraits inside the ugly hotel room while we waited for the rain to die down (which turned out to be some of my favorite images from Sal to date). This delay caused massive issues for us since we had planned sunset beach shots. We headed to the beach anyway to make something out of nothing. On the drive out there, the sun finally came out, but we were two hours behind in our original timeline, so we had to get both of the shots we wanted in about a two-hour window before the sun was gone.



© Salvatore Cinquotta Photography

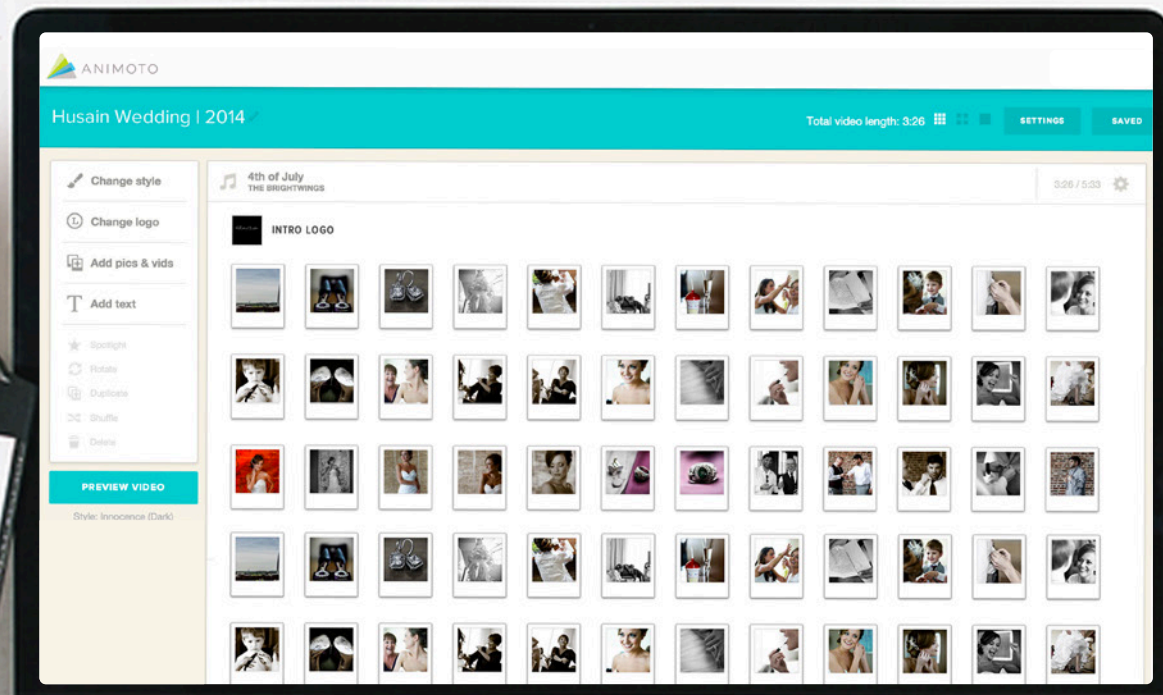


For us, these shoots are all about working as a team, staying focused on the shots we need to get, and, most importantly, remembering to enjoy ourselves while we're creating beautiful images. ■

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PRODUCT REVIEW


WITH
Salvatore Cincotta

“ A SLIDESHOW
IS A SLIDESHOW IS A SLIDESHOW.
NOT TRUE.
NOT EVEN CLOSE. ”

Animoto is not a new company, but they are a dominant force when it comes to producing an amazing multi-media experience for our clients.

Over the years, there have been many contenders, but the reality is, when it comes to ease of use, power, and speed, I have found that no other tool has been able to achieve what Animoto Pro has.

While slideshows might seem like a novelty item, the reality is, with Animoto, they are so much more than a slideshow. This is a tool that will allow you to take parts of a day and build something more powerful than any single image. By using motion, video, and music, Animoto Pro allows the photographer to offer that killer add-on to their sale.

Don't believe me? Watch the video to see how easy it is to create your first slideshow. Even better, try it for yourself. Head over to Animoto.com/photography where you can learn more and sign up for your free 14 day trial. Create your own multi-media experience and see the results for yourself. 

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GLAMOUR

FOR THE WEDDING
PHOTOGRAPHER

WITH VANESSA JOY





BY VANESSA JOY

I love glamour photography. As a wedding photographer, however, I don't have the time to open up my studio to that genre. Many wedding photographers do both, but it's just not in the cards for me at the moment.

If you're in the same boat as me, or perhaps would like to bring the glamour feel into your wedding work, not to fear. There are plenty of ways that wedding photographers can add a bit of glam to their wedding portfolios. After all, who doesn't want to have some glamour fun with their brides?

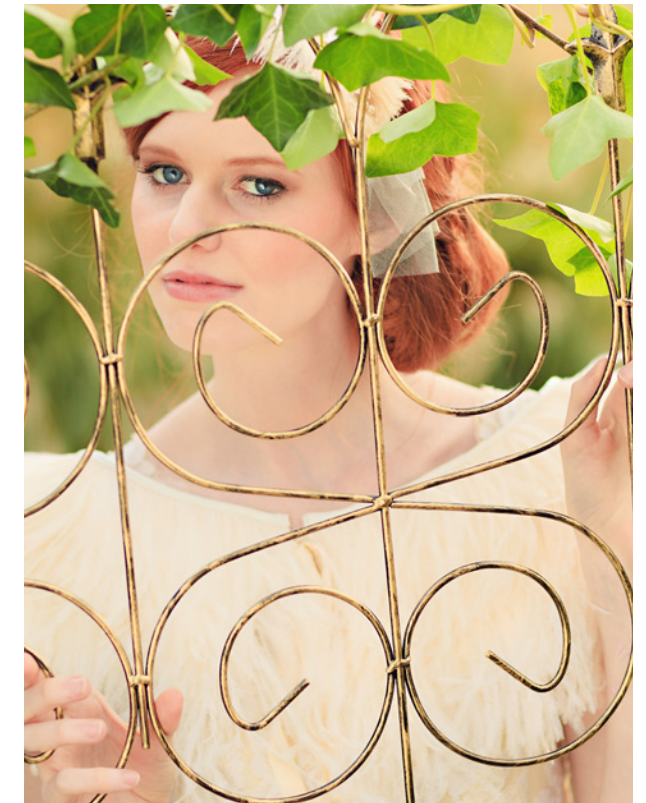
CHANNEL YOUR INNER FASHIONISTA

Where to start? It's time to move from finding photographic inspiration via wedding images to looking for a new muse or two in the fashion world. Glamour photography has a high-fashion element that's typical of wedding photography. So instead of perusing Pinterest, pull up websites like those of *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair* and *Grace Ormonde Wedding Style* (a very

chic wedding magazine). If you're seeking glamour photography with more of an earthy feel, check out clothing websites and catalogs from retailers like Free People and Anthropologie. Finding inspirational posing and expressions from fashion magazines and sites will help you put together an inspiration board to study and draw ideas from. Pay attention not only to the model, but also to the decisions the photographer made, like lens choices, cropping, angles and lighting. Lots of factors come together to give an image that glamour feel, so spend time dissecting and reengineering imagery that you love to ingrain the concepts into your mind. Now you're ready to start shooting.

LOSE THE SMILE

Weddings are meant for smiles and laughter, rainbows and butterflies (OK, maybe not rainbows and butterflies). If you want to incorporate a bit of glamour into your weddings, sometimes it's as easy as ditching the giddy grin and finding a frown.



© Vanessa Joy



I'm not saying to be a party pooper. Take a look at your existing repertoire of poses that you typically capture on a wedding day. Are there some whose mood would change entirely if just the subject's expression changed? Note those, and next time you pose your subjects like that, have them give you both a smile and serious expression in the same pose.

If your clients aren't good at pulling off a serious expression, try this trick. Have them smile for you in that pose first, then tell them to close their eyes and relax their face and mouth. When they open their eyes to look at your lens, ask them to take a deep breath in and out through their nose. Voilà! Instant sexy face.

— | SCHEDULE A STYLED SHOOT

Styled shoots are essentially mock wedding setups where you get to coordinate all the details, from the bride's dress to the reception tablescape. You, and preferably a group of other vendors like florists, makeup and hair artists, wedding planners and venues, collaborate to create a themed shoot, donating your time and money to make it happen. These shoots are great for marketing in a multitude of ways, but it is also the perfect opportunity to introduce glamour into your wedding portfolio.

Typically on a styled shoot, you'll have free reign as the photographer to pose and light however you'd like. Ideally, you'll have as much time as you'd like to photograph the bride. Use this time to experiment with different posing and lighting that represent a more glamour and fashion approach. You'll be able to try out these new techniques without worrying about a paying gig being at stake. This is a great way to introduce a new technique or style of shooting to your portfolio.



— START DOING BRIDAL SESSIONS

Bridal sessions aren't popular here in the Northeast, but definitely are in other areas. A session like this is just between you and the bride. You get to photograph her in her full bridal glory ahead of the wedding. She's going to get her hair and makeup trial before the wedding anyway—why not put the dress on too?

This also allows you to trial-run some new glamour posing and lighting concepts. You get more one-on-one time with the bride, and no one else is vying for her attention. If you're not giving this session away for free, then you do have to be careful to also give the client the style of photography she's paying for.

Arranging a bridal session with your client comes with the added bonus of another sales opportunity. Not only could you end up achieving your goal of adding some glamour photography to your body of work, but you could add a few bucks to the bank too.

ALLOCATE MORE TIME FOR BRIDAL PORTRAITS ON THE WEDDING DAY

Maybe you don't have time to schedule even more photography shoots, paid or not, into your calendar. I get it—we're all busy, and there are only so many days in the week. That doesn't mean that all is lost on adding a touch of glam to your wedding work.

At every wedding you photograph, you (hopefully) have the opportunity to take a few shots of the bride alone. That's your time to shine, but all too often we end up not having the time we'd like. Contacting your bride six months before the wedding, before she's scheduled hair and makeup, will allow you more time to work with her individually.

Hopefully, you're already doing some sort of scheduling with your clients. Now, just arrange it so that you have an extra five to 10 minutes with the bride than you normally would. That's all you'll need to try a couple of your new glamour-based ideas that you've been collecting in your mind. Do this on just a few weddings throughout the year, and you'll beef up your portfolio and confidence in shooting glamour-style in no time at all.

Take a look at the video, in which I give you my top tips for pulling together a styled shoot. Arranging all those vendors, props and models is not an easy task, but it's worth every second if you do it right. ■

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BY Salvatore Cincotta

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INSPIRATIONS



INSPIRATION comes to us in many shapes & sizes

Put 10 photographers in a room and ask them to shoot a paperclip, and there's no telling what will happen. And that, ladies and gentlemen, is why I love being a photographer. We all see the world in our own special way. Ultimately, though, nothing is truly new or unique. Everything is inspired by something that came before. In that spirit, this month we asked you, our readers, to submit some work you thought would inspire your peers. What you gave us was inspiring for sure. Enjoy.



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SHUTTER
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PRESENTS

MOSHE ZUSMAN

SHUTTERFEST EDUCATOR





with **Moshe Zusman**

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR STUDIO.

I have been a photographer for over 10 years, and am self-taught. I am continually inspired by my peers in the industry. They push me to be more creative and think outside the box. I consider myself so lucky because I get to do what I love as a job.

HOW DID YOU GET INTO DESIGN?

Before photography, I was working in marketing and tech support. I didn't know it then, but those experiences were a great foundation for starting a photography business. Eventually, I picked up a camera for fun, and fell in love. I started second- and third-shooting weddings, and had about 150 under my belt before going into business for myself.

IF NOT PHOTOGRAPHY, WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING?

I'd be a bad comedian! Seriously, though...it's hard to tell since I can't imagine doing anything else.

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR WORK AND STYLE.

My images are vibrant. I like strong contrast and edgy lighting. When I shoot weddings, I like to combine high fashion with portraits. What bride doesn't want to look like a supermodel on her wedding day? I also work with a team for most weddings, so while I am capturing portraits, they are working to capture the candid moments.

WHAT ADVICE CAN YOU OFFER PHOTOGRAPHERS?

Look at what you did today, and do it better tomorrow.



© Moshe Zusman



“ LOOK AT WHAT
YOU DID **TODAY**,
AND DO IT
BETTER TOMORROW. ”

© Moshe Zusman



TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR COURSES AT SHUTTERFEST.

I have three classes at ShutterFest, and am so excited to be part of such a great forum for photographers. There will be a lot of practical information in each class that has helped me build everything from my business to portfolio, and be able to continually take it all to the next level. We'll have demonstrations, hands-on time and tips...and some bad jokes sprinkled throughout. 🍷

TO SEE MORE OF MOSHE'S WORK, VISIT MOSHEZUSMAN.COM.

DON'T MISS MOSHE AT SHUTTERFEST 2015!



WHAT'S IN YOUR BAG?

WITH MOSHE ZUSMAN

- 1 | Profoto B1
- 2 | TTL remote for Profoto B1
- 3 | Benro tripod
- 4 | Profoto reflector
- 5 | Canon Speedlite 600EX-RT
- 6 | Kupo Speedlite Clamp
- 7 | Fujifilm XF 35mm f1.4
- 8 | Canon EF 70-200mm f/2.8I IS II USM
- 9 | Fujifilm XF 23mm f/1.4 R
- 10 | X Rite Colorchecker Passport
- 11 | Kupo Speedlite Clamp
- 12 | Fuji X-T1
- 13 | Sandisk Extreme Pro CF Cards
- 14 | Canon 24-70 f/2.8 ii
- 15 | Canon EF 85mm f/1.2II USM
- 16 | Canon EF 100mm f/2.8L Macro
- 17 | Canon Speedlite 600EX-RT
- 18 | Canon EOS 1Dx
- 19 | Canon EF 14mm f/2.8L II USM
- 20 | Nexto
- AA Rechargeable Batteries



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ARE YOU **GELLIN'?**

WITH MICHAEL CORSENTINO



by **Michael Corsentino**

Welcome to the wide world of gels! First, some background and definitions.

>> GELS

Gels are thin plastic sheets available in a variety of cut sizes and rolls, and a huge array of specially formulated colors that yield unique and repeatable results. They can be used for both creative and corrective effects, and they work with strobes, speedlights, constant lights or a combination of sources. The variety of gels and their uses is huge, with anything from simple to the wildly fun and experimental, and everything in between.

>> IT AIN'T ALL COLORED PLASTIC

Cut sheets and rolls of light-modifying materials don't stop at colored gels. There's an entire range of diffusion fabrics available as well. These help soften light to give it any of a number of different characteristics. Products include fabrics like Tough Spun.

>> MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL

Leading gel and diffusion fabric manufacturer Rosco has over 1,200 colored gels and fabrics across its five diffuser lines. This is a dizzying number to think about, and begs the question, where do I even begin? Rosco realized this, and recently released eight 12x12 gel and diffusion packs organized by intended use. I used gels from these packs to produce the images featured in this month's article. Speedlight users are also in luck with Rosco's six speedlight packs to choose from. These packs provide much-needed direction and clarity in what would otherwise be an uncharted sea of gels.

It's worth noting that as much as I love Rosco and these new, reasonably priced gel kits, there are cheaper alternatives available in a pinch. In the past, I've occasionally used the colored wrapping foils available in most craft stores, which yielded some pretty cool results. The thing you sacrifice by not using gels manufactured specifically for the photographic, film and theatrical markets is the accurate colors keyed to the Kelvin color temperature scale.



© Michael Corsentino

>> COMMON USES

Let's look at some typical applications. First and foremost, gels introduce color, and color adds mood and drama. You can easily add warmth to an image using a warming gel such as Color Temperature Orange (CTO). If you have only one gel in your arsenal, make it CTO. I use CTO all the time to add a warm highlight that looks just like sunlight to my subject's hair. CTO is also great on overcast days to help simulate the warm light of the sun.

Gels are available in varying densities—.25, .5 and 1, which are referred to as "cuts," meaning quarter cut of CTO, half cut, etc. Conversely, CTB (Color Temperature Blue) can be used to add an overall cool tone. Pink Minusgreen and Green Plusgreen gels are often used to balance nasty colorcasts found in fluorescent lighting conditions. Neutral-density gels, available in a variety of densities, can be used to subtract just the right amount of light from an exposure. Warm-toned gels in hues of pink, red and peach are often used in beauty photography in conjunction with diffusion materials to enhance and soften the skin. Gels can be used to accentuate existing colors in a scene or introduce completely new ones—primary, secondary and otherwise.

If you're limited in the background department, the quickest way to change your background color inexpensively is with gels. This works particularly well with light gray (and white backgrounds to a lesser extent). Just grab a gel that has the color you want for your background, attach it to your strobe or speedlight, and point it at the background. You now have a new background color. It's that easy.

Gelled lights can also be fired through irregularly patterned boards called "cookies," which are stacks of water glasses and other objects that create interesting and more natural-looking colored background patterns. As you can see, gels have a ton of uses on location as well as in the studio.

“ IT’S ALL **UP TO YOU,**
AND IT’S ALL
SUBJECTIVE. THERE ARE
NO RULES... ”

>> CREATIVE USES

The creative use of gels is where things really start to get interesting and exciting. That’s what I decided to focus on for the images in this month’s feature. It’s all up to you, and it’s all subjective. There are no rules, only guidelines relating to color theory. The look and effect you create is purely up to your creative vision and concept.

For these studio images, I wanted something edgy and different, something with a less digital feel and an ethereal quality. With all the crisp, hard-edged digital images dominating the photographic landscape, I wanted to take a departure using motion, color and softness. The technique is straightforward enough. It’s achieved using strobes and constant lights with gels in a studio with no other light. To create maximum drama and an otherworldly 3D feeling, I used red and blue gels. To heighten the effect—and because I knew red and blue would stand out well on black—I chose black for my background color. For lights, I used strobes to freeze action, and constant lights to create motion. Two Profoto 7A 2,400-watt second packs with two Profoto ProHeads served as my key light and accent light. I introduced motion and created the soft painterly feeling with two LupoLux Daylight LED Fresnels, each matching the position of my key and accent lights. Mounting the camera on a tripod and using a long shutter speed are also key techniques for achieving this effect. My shutter speeds were between 1.6 and 3 seconds.



© Michael Corsentino



© Michael Corsentino

>> GET YOUR GELS ON

Techniques like this are all about experimentation and finding your sweet spot. You'll need to season to taste with your shutter speed and mixture of gels. Be patient and have fun. Check out my video for more info.

Now go get your gels on and head outside or into the studio. I'll be looking for your images online. ■

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- David Benoliel

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QUESTIONS

- + Why you shouldn't automatically give your clients digital negatives.
- + How to find the right people to help you build your portfolio.
- + What are Sal's favorite Canon lenses?
- + Advice on how to pay yourself as a first-year business owner.
- + Tips on creating an impactful sales presentation without a studio.
- + How to kickstart your business after relocating.
- + Tips on budgeting for professional development.
- + How to shoot for a Signature Edit.
- + Pricing head shots and properly educating your clients.

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Q&A

WITH
Salvatore Cincotta

YOU'VE GOT
QUESTIONS?
WE'VE GOT
ANSWERS

GOT MORE QUESTIONS?

Every month we will have a call for questions on our Facebook page and Sal will answer them with real-world advice



— CREATING A —
**PROFESSIONAL
WORKFLOW**

WITH DUSTIN LUCAS

ACTIONS AND DROPLETS



by **Dustin Lucas**

We all know that an efficient digital workflow can be the greatest thing for your business. It alleviates the painstaking hours spent in front of the computer screen, and streamlines your images from capture to delivery. Quicker delivery time and less work in post-production is your end goal. So how do you get there? You need to be using actions and droplets in Adobe Photoshop. If you are already using presets in Lightroom or Capture One, this is a great tool to start with. But you can't do everything in Lightroom. This is where actions and droplets provide an efficient process to get images in Photoshop and apply advanced adjustments.

Let's start by learning what these processes can do.

ACTIONS

In the simplest of terms, an "action" in Photoshop means an automated process. This means that you can apply a multitude of adjustments to an image with one click. The beauty of creating an action is that once you record one, it's reusable as many times as you want. Of course, you must save them separately from Photoshop in the event you upgrade the software or your computer crashes.

Recording an action is as simple as editing an image in Photoshop—which is to say, not all that simple. First, open an image in Photoshop. Access the Actions panel via Menu Bar < Window < Actions. In the panel you need, click the folder icon at the bottom. (FIG. 1) This is for naming a group to keep all your actions organized. Then, with the group selected, click the icon that looks like a piece of paper with a folded corner. (FIG. 2)

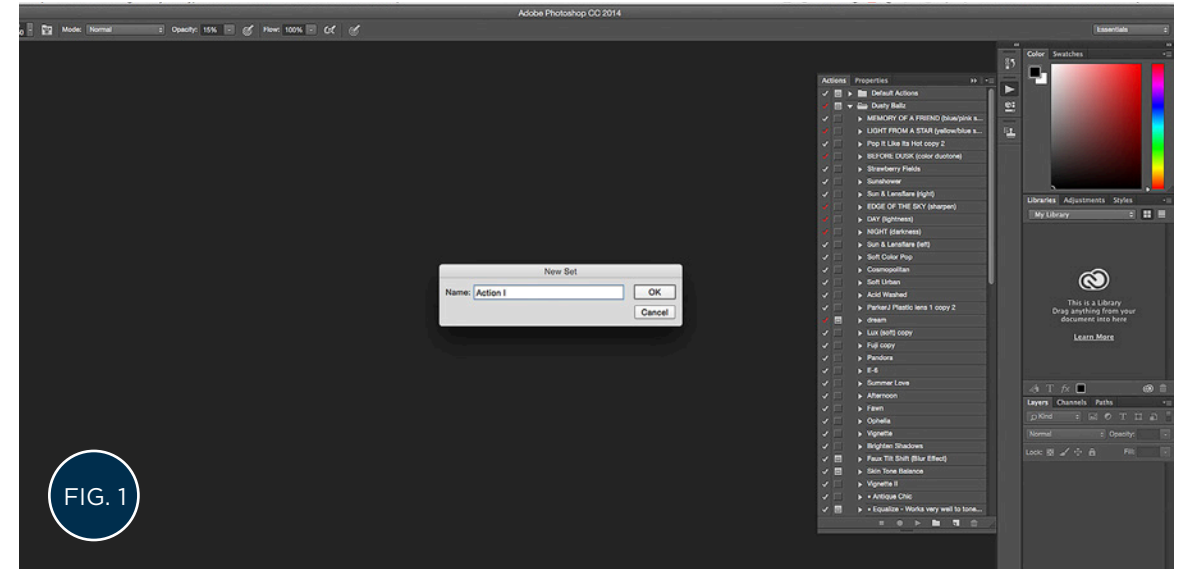


FIG. 1

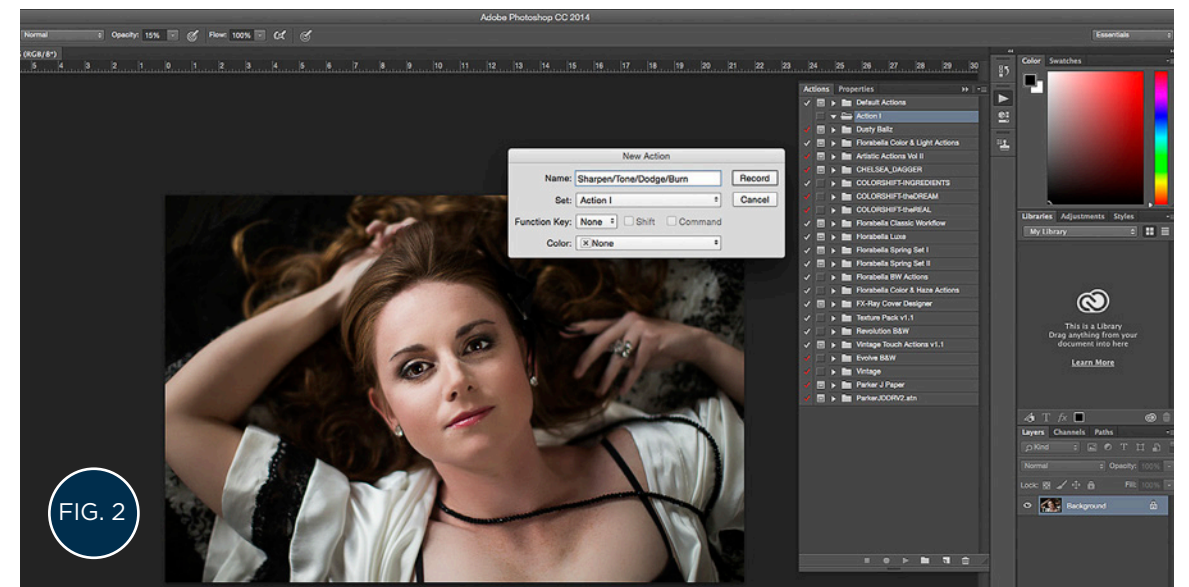


FIG. 2

This begins the recording of an action. You are now ready to begin making adjustment layers and adding filters. The advantage to making multiple layers is that you can paint in the effects with layer masks as needed. I tend to streamline my sharpening, toning, dodging and burning into one action that I use to generally edit. Any pixel manipulation—i.e., cloning and spot removal—needs to be done prior to sharpening.

BATCHING IMAGES

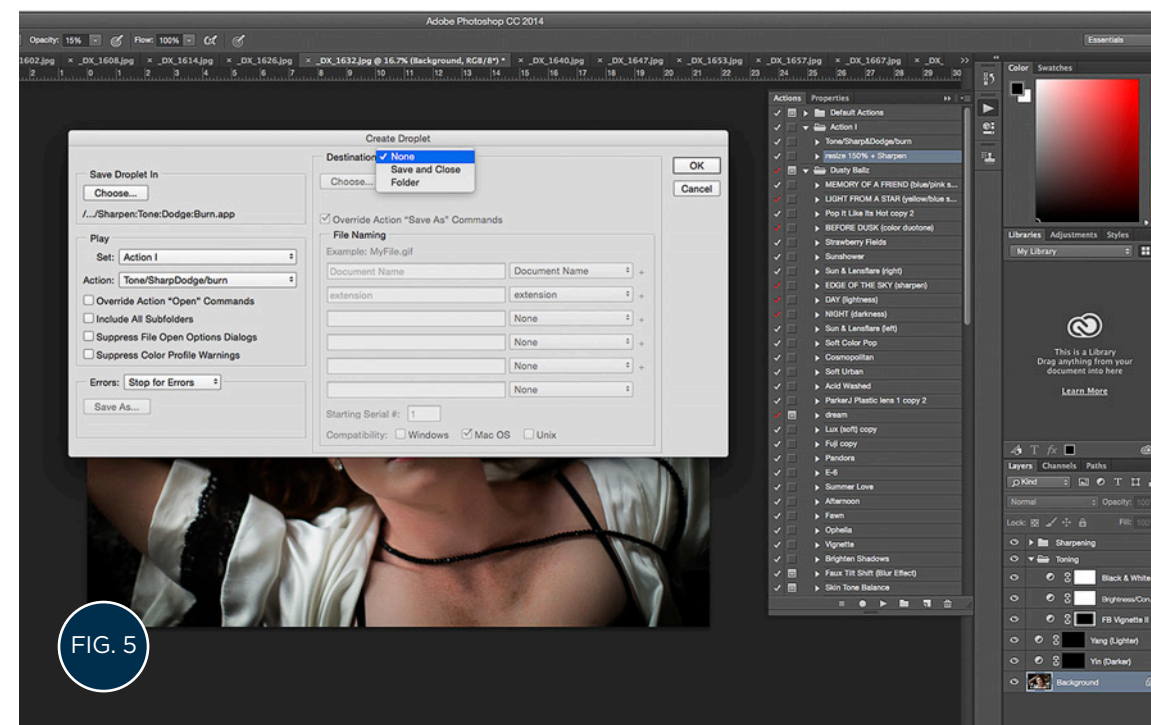
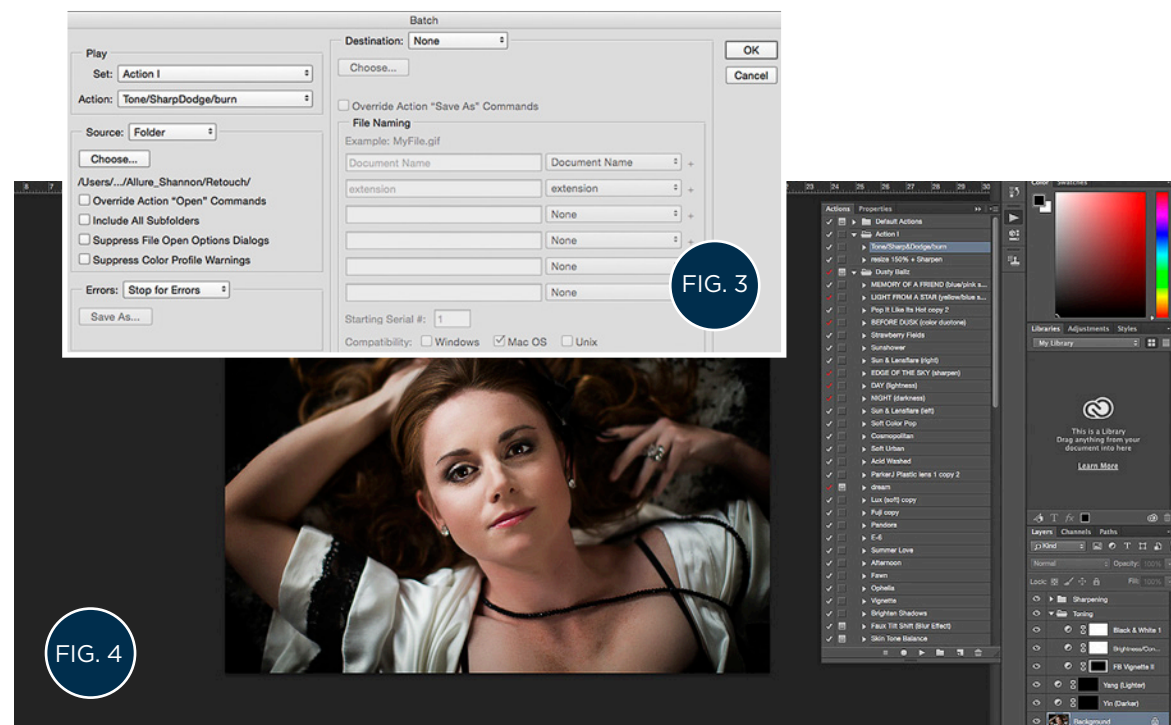
These actions can be run singularly on an entire series of images by going to the menu bar and clicking File < Automate < Batch (FIG 3). This brings up a dialog box with four categories: Play, Source, Destination and Errors. Under the Play settings, choose the Set or Group where your actions are stored, and then choose the specific action. You will notice you can only run a single action at a time. If you want multiple actions to play, you can create what I call a batch action. Batch actions are very simple to make. Create a new action, play all of the actions you want within it, reorder your newly applied layers and stop the recording.

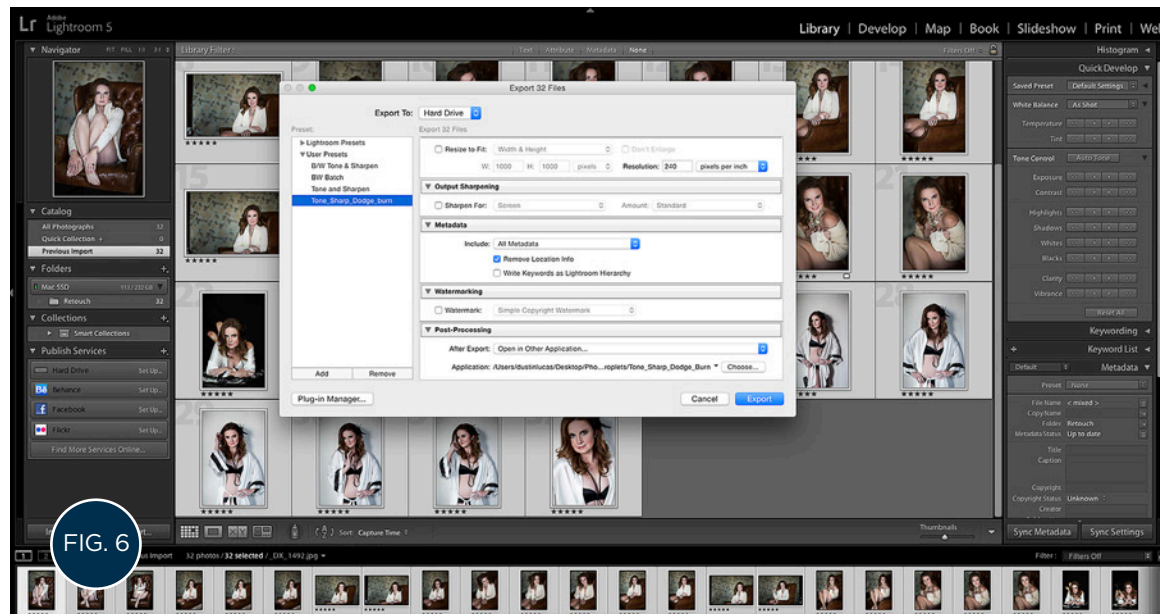
“Source setting” refers to where the images you want to batch edit are saved. Destination is where you have to decide whether or not you want to edit the images independently in Photoshop. The None option opens them up one by one. Save and Close is a great option if you have PSD files being saved. More times than not, you will be exporting your raw images as JPEGs, which stops the automated process by asking if you would like to Save As. The “Override Action ‘Save as’ Commands” is your solution to this, except it will not allow the actions to affect your JPEGs. A common practice of mine is to make an action that applies all the appropriate adjustments, flattens and then saves when I am using JPEGs. This has been a very successful process in batching JPEGs. This may all be familiar territory for you when using Photoshop or Bridge to batch edit. I want to show you how to make droplets and bring Lightroom back into the equation. (FIG. 4)

DROPLETS

Actions can streamline your post-production, but droplets are key to saving you the most time when exporting your images from Lightroom, opening them in Photoshop and applying actions. Droplets are an automated script that can be run from programs separate of Photoshop. Let’s start by making a droplet. The same location to start a batch process is where the option to make a droplet is stored. Simply go to the menu bar and click File < Automate < Create Droplet. (FIG. 5)

From this dialog box, there are four categories: Save Location, Play, Errors and Destination. The Save option allows you to choose the location where this droplet will be saved. Next, choose which set and specific action you want to take effect in the images. I keep the Stop for Errors option on default. Destination refers to the batch. If you want the images to open one by one, choose None. When exporting from Lightroom, you will choose a location for the images to save into. The Save and Close option for your droplet is handy if you want to simply override the exported file with the action applied. Folder is an option if you want to save a separate file from the exported one.





ALL WORKING IMAGES © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

FROM LIGHTROOM TO PHOTOSHOP

Now you are ready for your actions and droplets to run directly from Lightroom. As all Lightroom users know, exporting can take a lot of time. I have a great workflow for you to streamline all of your images to open in Photoshop with layer adjustments and be ready for you to edit. When I learned this process, it saved me so much frustration from waiting for the export to finish and manually begin a batch process from Bridge.

Start by opening Lightroom. Find the catalog of images you want to export. Go to the Library module and select all the images. Next, choose the export option. There are many categories in this dialogue box. For the purpose of droplets, I am going to focus on post-processing. The default option is set to do nothing. If you click it, a drop-down option will appear. Open in another application is the option you are looking for. You have the ability to choose what application; this is where you find your saved droplet. Select it. That is it! (FIG. 6) For smooth exporting and batch processing, choose file types like PSD instead of JPEG or TIFF. For JPEGs and TIFFs, the action you record must include saving and closing the file. Without doing so, the process will stop and prompt you to save each image. This defeats the purpose of not having to watch the process run. Also, if you are planning on running hundreds of images, you might want to break up the batching into smaller groups. This alleviates the possibility of your computer freezing.

Keep in mind that this is a basic run-through of actions and droplets. I have created droplets for weddings, seniors, family, etc. that are most effective within my workflow. I suggest experimenting with different adjustment layers, actions and droplets to find what works best for you.

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BUILDING BLOCKS

WITH SKIP COHEN

A NEW SERIES DEDICATED TO HELPING YOU
BECOME MORE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT
WITH YOUR MARKETING INITIATIVES.

YOUR WEBSITE



BY SKIP COHEN

Welcome to “Building Blocks.” Over the next year, in every issue, we’re going to take you through some of the most fundamental components of your business. The very first ingredient should be your skill set.

Your skill set needs to be outstanding, especially now, when consumers have so many choices. You’ve got one chance to impress website visitors, to hook them with your work. Your goal is to make your work habit-forming and so strong that they can’t walk away from just one image, but want to see more and even share your images with their friends.

We’re going to start in this first issue talking about your website. Just remember: No amount of marketing can get you past a weak skill set. Photography is not a “fake it till you make it” business. Anybody can get their first customer. The key is to get the second, third and fourth—and to get them all to send their friends your way.

Let’s get started on your website!

If you were building the studio of your dreams, you’d be on top of every single detail. You’d start with window and skylight exposure so you had great natural light whenever you wanted it. You’d decide on the layout, how big a main shooting room you wanted, whether or not to have a changing room, even a kitchen and equipment room. You’d decide on every single detail, right down to where light switches and electrical sockets were going to be.

For many of you, a website is the equivalent of that dream studio. It’s the equivalent of a bricks-and-mortar location. But most of you have a website simply because you know you need one, and it’s just an address. You’ve put no effort into planning the “building.” You got a site and then filled it up with, let’s be frank, a lot of garbage. But it’s never too late to make a few changes and turn your website into an experience for every visitor.

There’s a great line I picked up years ago from a terrific marketing/motivational speaker by the name of Ed Foreman:

“If I can see the world through my client’s eyes, then I can sell my client what my client buys.”

There’s a lot more to marketing than just putting yourself in their shoes. You’ve got to literally see things through their eyes and work to understand what’s important to them. You need to understand the trends in your community, how people are able to find out more about you, what your client really wants to see.

Let’s start with some good solid basics, the things you should be looking at immediately. Some are easy to fix, others might take a little longer, but in the end, the plan is to help you create a website that screams, “I’m a great photographer!”

DEMOGRAPHICS AND DESIGN

For those techies out there who love a strong, high-tech-looking website, remember who your target audience is. That design look might be OK for a commercial or architectural photographer, but in the portrait/wedding/event categories, women make 98 percent of the purchase decisions. Here’s the first point about seeing things through your client’s eyes.

Your site, if you’re in the portrait/social specialties, needs to have feminine appeal. It needs softer colors and a design that’s not overly masculine. I’m not just talking to you males out there, because I’ve seen a number of sites by female photographers who forgot about their target audience.

Create continuity in the design between each tab/section of your site, and between your site and your blog. This is important in building brand identity. You can easily recognize any McDonald’s on the planet; you want to do the same with your properties.

YOUR GALLERIES

- In the infrastructure itself, give people a sheet of thumbnails to click on, rather than having your galleries come up one image at a time. This gives them a chance to see more of your work and select what they're most interested in first.
- You don't need to show every image you've ever captured. Under any one category, you don't need more than six to 12 images.
- Never post an image that's not your best work! With every image, ask yourself, "If this were the only image I could show, would I get hired?" If "yes," then it's a keeper.
- Stop setting up multiple categories for your wedding work. Break the images out into two categories: engagement and weddings. We all know how a wedding plays out. I've seen artists break a wedding into as many as 10 categories: "Getting Ready," "First Look," "The Procession," "The Ceremony," "First Kiss," "Details," etc.
- Stop the madness! Don't make visitors to your site mine for the images they'd most like to see. You might need to go higher than six to 12 images in some cases. My favorite for wedding photographers is when an actual album is shown. This gives you a chance to supplement your gallery images and actually show your ability as a storyteller and album creator.
- Let your images demonstrate a little of your skill set. Show a few different techniques, and don't forget to include a black-and-white image or two.
- Don't show old images. You can only rest on your laurels so long before people notice how the styles have changed. Don't share images that are more than two years old. Keep your galleries fresh—unless the image was so amazing it got you the Pulitzer.

- Keep your galleries relevant with logical connections. Photographers often have several specialties that don't belong on the same site. If you're a wedding photographer but you also want to build a little commercial business, I suggest having a separate website. At the very least, give people a split landing page and a choice of where they want to go.

Here's why. Your target is completely different for each subject. A wedding is about the bride, her mother and maybe the groom. Commercial photography is going to be searched by an account exec at an ad agency or a corporate product manager. An account exec looking for somebody to hire for a car shoot is going to walk away from wedding images. At the same time, Mom, when searching for a wedding photographer, is going to be put off by product shots, car shots, etc. Logical connections for a wedding photographer would consist of galleries of babies, children and families. The same applies to a portrait photographer whose secondary focus is weddings.

- Make sure your images load fast. Check your site every morning and check it on different browsers. Right now, the pecking order has Chrome at the top, followed by Firefox, Explorer and Safari. Check your site every day on at least the top two, which right now represent more than 80 percent of what people are using.
- Stop oversizing your images. I wrote this in a blog post once: Your site isn't Burger King, and you don't need to biggy-size anything. I've seen children's faces that photographers have blown up to full screen—and, instead of showing off a skill set, it just freaked people out.
- Don't repeat too many images of the same subject. This happens most often when a photographer wants to show a black-and-white image and just takes the lazy way out after showing the same color shot. It also happens with photographers who are just starting out and show only images with the same model. You've got to show variety. Hold off on that particular gallery if you don't have enough of that type of image. This is definitely about quality and not quantity.

Here's one more example. If you want to photograph high school seniors, you need more than just a number of images of the same model over and over again. Also on the subject of seniors, remember that there are guys in the class as well. Galleries are usually loaded with images of girls, but the guys are just as important.

- Always make sure you have the rights to share each image on your site. That means including a clause in your contract that allows you to use images for promotional purposes. Always have a few model releases in your camera bag to use at events not by a contract.
- Don't show a lot of images from shoots at workshops you attended, especially if you got the shot while standing just behind the instructor. First, you'll be in trouble if you can't duplicate his/her shot. Second, you weren't the only one in the class, and all the attendees have the same images. You're going to kill your credibility with the same images on your site as shown on a competitor's.

While there might be a few isolated cases, for 99 percent of the artists out there, you can't be in business without a website. It's the foundation of everything you stand for and are trying to build.

January is the official launch of the slow season, the perfect time for you to be working on creating a site that reflects the pride and passion you have in your work. Next month, we'll jump into the rest of the building blocks for an effective site. ■

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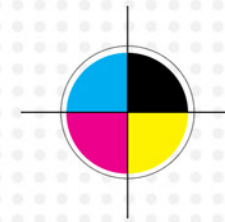
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