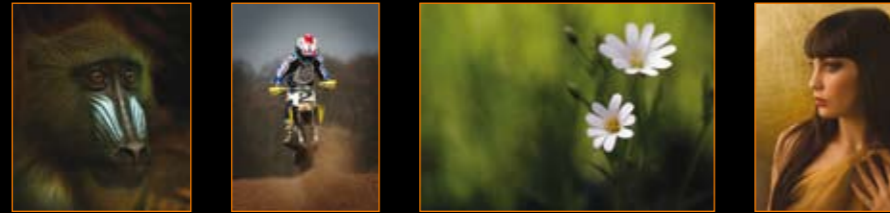


ePHOTOzine

GUIDE TO GREAT PHOTOGRAPHY

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE MANUAL FOR FILM AND DIGITAL CAMERA OWNERS



It's no surprise that ePHOTOzine, the UK's leading online photography magazine, has some of the world's best photographers amongst its members. In this book we share hundreds of truly amazing images, along with the secrets behind their creation. Prepare to be stunned, inspired and provoked.

This book is much more than just a showcase of great images. Inside you will find a wealth of useful tips to help you take better photographs, along with step-by-step guides to advanced photographic techniques. Whether you are still a film user, or have fully embraced the world of digital, this book has something to offer, regardless of your level of experience.

Split into easy-to-navigate subject-based chapters, you can dip in on your favourite subject or go more in-depth on those you know little about – an essential reference for anybody with an interest in photography.

- Wildlife & Nature ● Architecture ● Close-ups ● Flash & Studio Lighting
- Flora & Fauna ● Landscapes & Travel ● Portraiture & Glamour ●
- Sports & Action ● Darkroom & Digital Manipulation ● Black & White
- Transport ● Photo Journalism

"Peter Bargh is the most passionate photographer, writer and publisher I know. ePHOTOzine is easily the best photography resource on the web, and this book is every bit as good."

Steve Bavister, editor of the BIPP's *The Photographer* magazine.

"Pete's enthusiasm for imaging knows no bounds and this is reflected in this excellent guide that will help anyone keen to improve their camera skills."

Will Cheung, Editorial Director of *Photography Monthly*



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PETER BARGH

MAGEZINE PUBLISHING

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ESSENTIAL REFERENCE MANUAL FOR FILM AND DIGITAL CAMERA OWNERS



IMAGES ● TECHNIQUES ● TIPS ● ADVICE ● PORTFOLIOS...TO INSPIRE



About The Book

The Guide to Great Photography brings together some of the finest images uploaded to ePHOTOzine over the course of its five year history. The pictures were selected from over a quarter of a million that have been uploaded into one of the 13 gallery subsections. These, along with hundreds of facts, tips and techniques, bring together a superb resource for anyone interested in photography who wants to gain inspiration, learn new tricks or just enjoy great images.

When an ePHOTOzine member, Seb Wheeler, suggested in our forums two years ago that we create a book of images, I had no idea what a mammoth task I was about to embark on!

At that time we had a gallery of around 153,000 images, split into 13 categories. A book, full of the best images and accompanied by tips and techniques, seemed like a simple plan to pull together. After sounding it out with members to see whether it would be something they'd like, the answer was a resounding 'Yes'. The nightmare began!

What I hadn't envisaged, those many moons ago, was that the gathering of the images would be such an arduous task. For starters, I had to look through our gallery of 250,000 photos and choose ones to go in. After around four hours of looking through one of the smallest sections, Sports, I'd delved through just 70 pages. I was only a quarter of the way through one section which equated to just 3% of the gallery! A quick calculation made me realise that I had another 243 hours to go just to choose the photos. Time to ask for help. I soon had several volunteer picture editors, and two months later I had a set of pictures. Following a template format created by my designer friend, Steven Handley, I began to lay out the pages.

Challenge two: over 200 pages of photos, all of different shapes and sizes needed to be placed. This reminded me of a complex jigsaw. Fortunately, I enjoyed jigsaws as a kid – sadly, I couldn't start with the edges! This took ages to get right, but once completed gave me a great sense of satisfaction. This satisfaction was soon to be shattered.

Our policy on ePHOTOzine is that copyright of uploaded photographs remains with the photographer. If we want to use photos, we will contact each photographer. The email correspondence began. We sent out about 1,800 emails requesting the use of a photo. This generated many responses asking questions, many bounce backs and lots of clarification. Total estimate of email correspondence over the two years has been over 5,500! In one week last year we had four members of staff working almost full-time sending, receiving and administrating emails.

In the end, through reasons including lost photos, non-answered emails, members not wanting to be in the book, non-signed model releases, and size-too-small problems, we ended up with 70% of the photographs submitted, many incorrectly. This meant a total redesign of the pages and lots more organisational headaches. More jigsaw puzzles! If anyone ever says to me "It's just pictures and words – how come it's taken so long?" I'll scream!

The fruit of all this hard work is the kind of book that I believe you will have never seen before and will never see again. The Guide to Great Photography features outstanding photos, useful captions and panels of advice throughout to help you improve your photography. Flick through the pages for inspiration, pore over the techniques for advice and guides and dip into sections to improve your skills. There's something in this book for everyone, from beginner to professional. Enjoy the book, and, now the hard work's over, I'm off to relax until the next great idea! ■

Pete Bargh

Peter Bargh, May 2006



● This photograph of Max, by Martin Wait, is the most popular image on ePHOTOzine. I ran it through AndreaMosaic, using a folder full of photos selected for the book to create the mosaic. You may need to squint your eyes to see the original clearly. The tutorial showing how this fascinating effect is done can be viewed on ePHOTOzine, along with over 300 other film and digital techniques.

APERTURES EXPLAINED

What is it?

The aperture is an opening in the lens, made by a group of thin metal blades, which controls the amount of light that enters your camera to form an image. The aperture has two main effects on exposure – it alters the amount of your image that appears in focus, and it also affects how long you will need to open the shutter for the correct exposure.



What's an 'f' stop?

The word 'stop' comes from the very first cameras. Instead of a diaphragm of blades as used in modern lenses, early photographers had to insert a piece of metal into the lens with a hole drilled through it. This piece of metal was called a stop because it stopped some of the light getting through the lens.

Numbers marked on a lens are sometimes referred to as relative brightness and are expressed as a ratio to one. e.g. 1:2.8 would be f/2.8. The closer to zero the number is, the brighter the aperture.

Why have more blades?

The curvature of the aperture and the number of blades it's made of has a direct effect on how smooth out-of-focus backgrounds appear. The more blades used the rounder the aperture, leading to smoother background blur, known as bokeh.



Another phenomenon affected by the aperture are diffraction stars. These occur when a strong point source of light is partially obscured in the image. The result is a bright, multi-pointed star radiating from the light source. The number of points on the star is influenced directly by the number of aperture blades. Lenses with an even number of blades create stars with an equal number of points, so a lens with a six-blade diaphragm creates a six-pointed star. Apertures made from an odd number of blades create stars with double the number of points. A nine-bladed diaphragm creates a beautiful 18 point star.

What is depth-of-field

Simply put, depth-of-field, or front to back sharpness, is the amount of your image that is in focus. The brighter the aperture used, the less of your image will be in focus. This can be useful for isolating your subject by blurring the background. The focal length of the lens you use will also determine the depth-of-field. Longer focal length lenses reduce the amount of your image that is in focus, whereas shorter focal length lenses (wide-angles) increase the amount in focus.



Technique – Hyper-focal focusing

When you focus on your subject there is an area in front and behind the point of focus that is still sharp. Hyperfocal focusing allows you to maximise the area that appears in focus whilst keeping the horizon sharp. Older manual focus lenses have a depth-of-field scale marked on the barrel which allows you to use this technique quickly and precisely. To do this, simply align the infinity symbol with the mark that corresponds to the aperture you have selected. Newer autofocus lenses rarely display this scale. Instead, focus about a third of the way into your picture to maximise the area in focus.



EXPOSURE

What is it?

Exposure is basically the combination of shutter speed and aperture you use to take your picture. When both are correctly selected the photo will be accurately exposed. Getting this balance right is critical for producing stunning images. Get it wrong and you'll have a dark (under-exposed) or light (over-exposed) result.

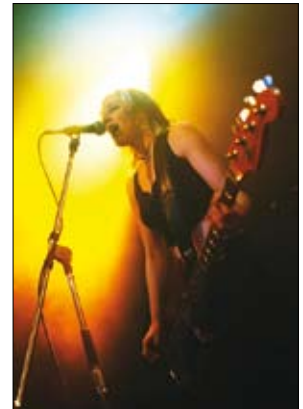
Which metering mode is most suitable?

Most modern cameras include two or three different metering options, such as matrix or evaluative, centre weighted and spot.

Matrix or Evaluative metering (green grid on photo) splits the image up into separate segments and uses a complex algorithm to calculate the correct exposure by taking readings from each segment. This mode is accurate under most conditions, and is great for general photography and snapshots.

Centre weighted metering (yellow oval on photo) takes the whole frame into consideration but with an emphasis on a defined area in the centre of the image. This mode is great for portraits or for scenes of low contrast. In backlit situations, centre weighted metering will under-expose your image.

Spot metering (blue circle on photo) uses a small point either located at the centre of the frame or selectable by the user for exposure calculation. Spot metering is great for shooting in high contrast situations, or when your subject is brightly backlit, as you can choose exactly where you obtain your meter reading from.



● GARY WOLSTENHOLME Spot metering was essential for this backlit stage shot.



SHUTTER SPEEDS EXPLAINED

What is it?

The shutter controls the duration that the light sensitive area inside your camera is exposed to light. The speed you choose will depend on the light available. Longer exposures are needed in dim light and shorter in bright conditions.

If you are hand-holding your camera there is a general rule of thumb that you should select a shutter speed that is at least equal to the focal length of your lens. This will reduce the chances of your image being ruined by camera-shake. For example, a shutter speed of at least 1/300th of a second should be selected when using a 300mm lens. For digital cameras with sensors smaller than 35mm film, the rule still stands, except it will apply to the equivalent angle-of-view rather than the actual focal length of the lens. For example, a digital compact camera may only have a 6mm lens, but because the 35mm angle-of-view is 28mm, then the longest shutter speed for hand-held sharp shots should be around 1/30th of a second.



How does it affect my images?

Different shutter speeds can also be used for creative effect. By choosing a slow shutter speed you can choose to blur moving objects, or, as in this example of the canoeist, you can freeze them by choosing a fast one.

Technique – Panning

Panning is a useful technique which helps produce an impression of speed when taking pictures of moving subjects. A correctly panned shot will keep your subject sharp while blurring the background. To create this effect you first need to select an appropriate shutter speed. Normally between 1/8th and 1/30th of a second is ideal, although this will vary depending on how quickly your subject moves. As your subject moves past, start to follow it in the viewfinder, keeping it in the same part of the frame. As you are moving, take your picture. If you have matched the speed of your subject it should be acceptably sharp, whilst the background is blurred.



Turn to the Sports section on page 66 for more details on panning and other shutter techniques.

Landscapes

Our world is full of natural beauty and to capture this well it's all about light and being in the right place at the right time. ePHOTOzine photographers will think nothing about arriving at a scene at the crack of dawn to photograph the sunrise and cut through the early morning mist, or trudge miles with a heavy rucksack to search out the unphotographed.



● **ANDREW ROBERTS** This haunting woodland scene was taken at Andrew's local forest in Tredegar on a foggy morning. He used a Canon EOS 300D digital SLR with a Sigma 18-55mm zoom and an exposure of 1/160sec at f/4. The result was then toned in Photoshop CS. There are many more like this in Andrew's ePHOTOzine portfolio.

Landscapes are, undoubtedly, the most photographed subjects around. You may be fortunate enough to step out of your door to a stunning vista, take a holiday in some beautiful location or spend time hiking around our more remote settings, but either way there's something for everyone in landscape photography.

Over the following 38 pages you will see some of the most impressive scenes, exposed in some of the most creative ways, from some of the most talented ePHOTOzine members.

We've split this section up into popular sub-sections and have included tips throughout to help you make the most of our countryside. You'll see that a landscape doesn't have to be just a pasture or woodland scene. You can move in close to crop out most of the surrounds or include buildings, objects or people as points of interest.

Hopefully, from the images that follow, you'll gain a huge amount of inspiration to shoot better landscapes. Each picture has a short caption that either explains how the photo was taken or where it is, so you can follow in the footsteps of previous photographers.

There are certain pieces of photographic equipment that will help you improve your photographs – you will see many of our photographers use filters, so we've included a guide

to the 10 essential landscape filters. Most serious landscape photographers use a tripod to prevent camera shake and a wide-angle lens is usually found in the outfit bag.

Whether you shoot film or digital you should be prepared for certain problems that might occur. Cold weather affects batteries so keep your camera in warmth when not in use. Also ensure you carry a spare battery – you won't find a friendly dealer at the top of a mountain!

When shooting digital avoid using the LCD too much as this drains batteries quickly. Make sure you have enough storage space (memory cards) to shoot the pictures you hope to take. Cards are no longer expensive, so it's worth having more than you need to ensure you don't miss a shot.

It's not just the equipment that makes a good landscape. The time of day is vital. It's widely believed that midday sun is a no go when shooting landscapes, but you can get some interesting graphical effects at this time, with deep shadows. However, early morning and late evening tend to be more suitable for most scenes.

Many ePHOTOzine photographers think nothing of setting their alarms for the early hours so they can arrive at a chosen scene at the crack of dawn. It's hit and miss whether they'll see a spectacular sunrise or ethereal blanket of mist,

but when the timing's right the results speak for themselves.

You'll see from the following photos that depth-of-field (front to back sharpness) is an important consideration when using film or digital cameras and this is explained on page 28

It's also important to consider the position of the horizon and how straight it is. There are several rules of composition that we cover on page 29 and these can, and often are, broken, but there's no excuse for a wonky horizon – apart from maybe one too many beers! Some tripods have a spirit level built in to give you the benefit of the doubt, or you can buy one to slip onto the hot-shoe of your camera.

So, without further ado, turn the page to begin your journey into the wonderful world of landscapes. ■

● **JOHN SIMMONS**
This photographer likes to get into the middle of the field for frame-filling poppy detail.





● ROBERT TAYLOR A selective view of falls near Ystradfellte.



● RAYMOND KING The blue sky and green foreground help the Whangarei Falls in New Zealand look like an image from a fairytale.



● DEREK CLEGG Glenariff Forest Park in Northern Ireland, taken using a Fujii S1 Pro on a slow shutter to introduce water blur.



● BERNARD CAULFIELD West Burton Falls are also known locally as Cauldron Falls and are easy to access from West Burton village.



● MARTIN WEST Early October sun illuminating the water at Padley Gorge, Derbyshire. Canon 20D, Canon 17-85 lens and warm-up filter.

SHOOTING TIPS – WATERFALLS

Waterfalls may look easy to photograph but there's a lot of skill involved in making them look as good as those on these pages. A good waterfall needs very careful control of exposure, lighting and camera position. The time of day the shot is taken is also crucial in obtaining a great photo.

1 Which shutter speed? If you want to show the power of a waterfall and catch the spray you need to use a fast shutter speed of around 1/250sec or faster, but most photographers prefer a slower approach. Choose a shutter speed slower than 1/15sec and the water will blur, creating really beautiful results. The speed you set depends on the power and fall of the water. If the exposure is too long you can sometimes lose some of the finer detail. If you use a film camera, bracket exposures and shoot at several speeds from 1/15sec to one second. Digital camera users can confirm the result on the LCD and re-shoot if necessary.

2 Expose correctly. The contrast between highlight water areas and dark surrounding stones can fool even the best camera exposure system. It's important to know how to compensate. The best way is to take a reading from your hand or grey card (see portrait section) and then it's not affected by the reflective nature of the subject. Or if your camera has a spot meter, switch over and take a reading off a nearby neutral toned rock, tree trunk or grass that's in the same light as the waterfall.

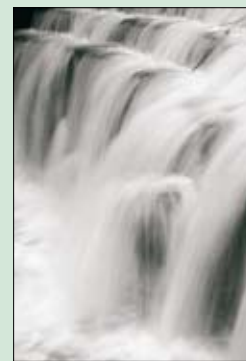
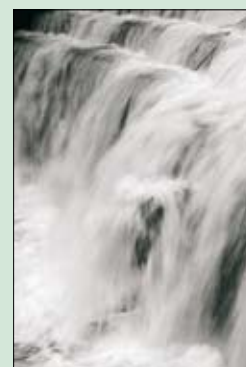
3 Have a shower! It's often necessary to get wet to shoot the best photos of waterfalls. If you can find suitable stepping stones use these to find a more direct angle to shoot from. Waterproof shoes/boots prove invaluable here! Also watch for splashes from the waterfall hitting the camera. If you're close to the action, a plastic bag over the camera with a hole for the lens will help shelter the camera and a UV or Skylight filter will protect the lens. Keep cleaning this to prevent blurred photos caused by raindrops on the surface of the lens or filter.

4 Use a tripod. With shutter speeds longer than 1/30sec it's safer to support the camera on a tripod or nearby rock/tree. A tripod gives you most scope to get the shot you want. Choose one with waterproof feet and preferably with legs that can splay individually so you can arrange the tripod over uneven rocky foreground.

5 Tidy up the scene. I often remove fallen leaves or distracting twigs from the water or surrounding rocks. While you can easily clone these out digitally, it makes sense to remove them before you take the shot. Take care if you have to balance on uneven or slippery rocks.

6 Sensitivity. Use a slow speed film with ISO25 to ISO100 setting or force the CCD of your digital camera to shoot at the slowest setting, which is usually ISO100. This ensures highest quality with least noise.

7 Use a filter. A neutral density filter will ensure you can shoot at lower shutter speeds in bright light. Better still, use a polarizing filter which also reduces the light but removes glare and reflections to make the water see-through and the colouring of surrounding foliage vibrant. Use an 81 series filter to warm up water, which can often look a touch blue.



● PETER BARGH The effect of changing shutter speed from 1/90sec (top), to 1/25sec (middle) and 1/6sec (bottom).



PORTFOLIO

SU & BRENDA

This husband and wife team are from Penang, Malaysia, and share a passion for digital photography.

The couple had been practising photography casually for two years, but they only got serious about it after joining ePHOTOzine in 2004.

"Our photography experiences have been a real rollercoaster ride so far and a steep learning curve. There's so much to learn, so much to do – but, unfortunately, so little time to do it in.

"We work solely in digital.

Our first camera was a Nikon Coolpix 5000. We have since both upgraded, now having a Nikon D70 each. We prefer to work in digital as using film is too costly and time consuming, taking the film to be processed and then having to wait for the pictures.

"To us, post-processing with an image editor on our home computer is half the fun of digital photography.

"Our main interest is nature photography, allowing us to spend time together away from the stresses of work and everyday life."

Although this portfolio features incredible photographs of fish, you will also find a huge variety of damselflies, dragonflies, exotic butterflies and colourful birds on their ePHOTOzine portfolio too.

Su will think nothing of getting down on all fours in a shallow pond to get at the right level for the shot of a resting insect. The results pay off; at the time of writing the pair have eight Editor's Choices and 43 Highly Commended awards.

Many of the outdoor shots are shot in bright sunlight with reflectors and a polarising filter to enhance colours and increase saturation. The detail brought out of the subject is phenomenal and backdrops are always subtly thrown out of focus with careful control of depth-of-field. ■

Contact Su and Brenda by email at: tradewin@streamyx.com



● Su particularly enjoys photographing his goldfish. To get the best results he photographs the fish in a small tank, which, unlike the main tank, is free of ornaments and other decorative features.

It's best to shoot the pictures in a dim or darkened room, as this helps to avoid any reflection on the glass of the tank.

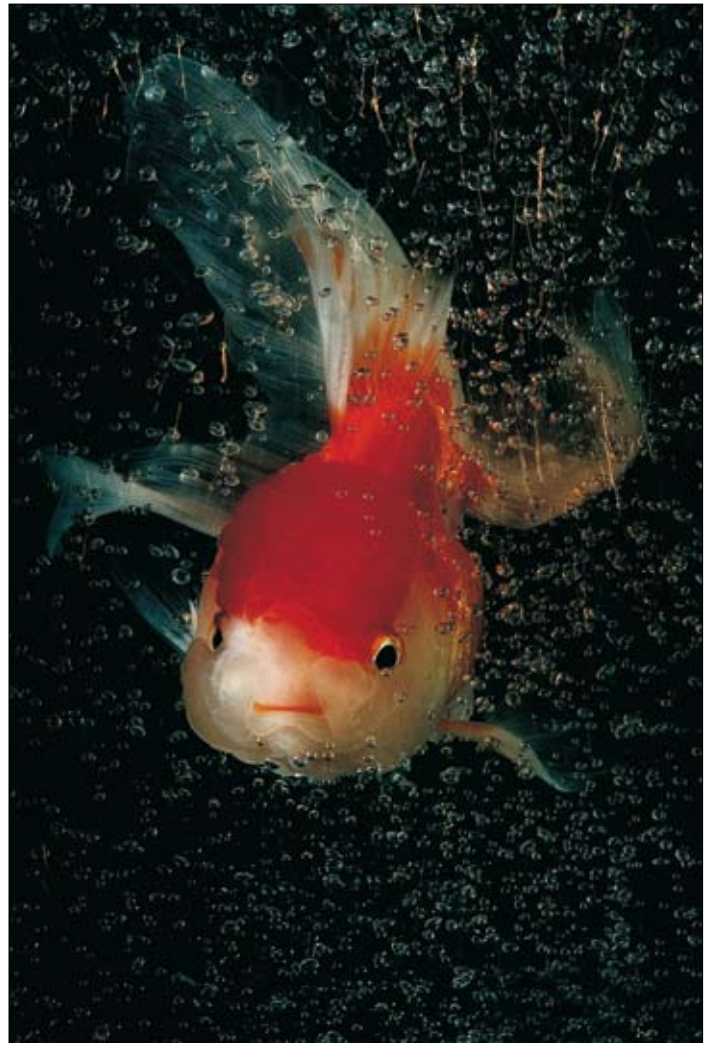
"I use a variety of equipment when shooting these photographs, some photographic kit and other useful bits just from everyday life.

I use a black t-shirt for the background, hot-shoe flash connected to the camera via a sync cable, slave flash and aluminum foil for reflective light.

"The lens I use varies from the 60mm Micro Nikkor, 18-70mm zoom and the 105mm Micro Nikkor – this depends on the size of the goldfish being photographed and how much of that fish is required in the frame.

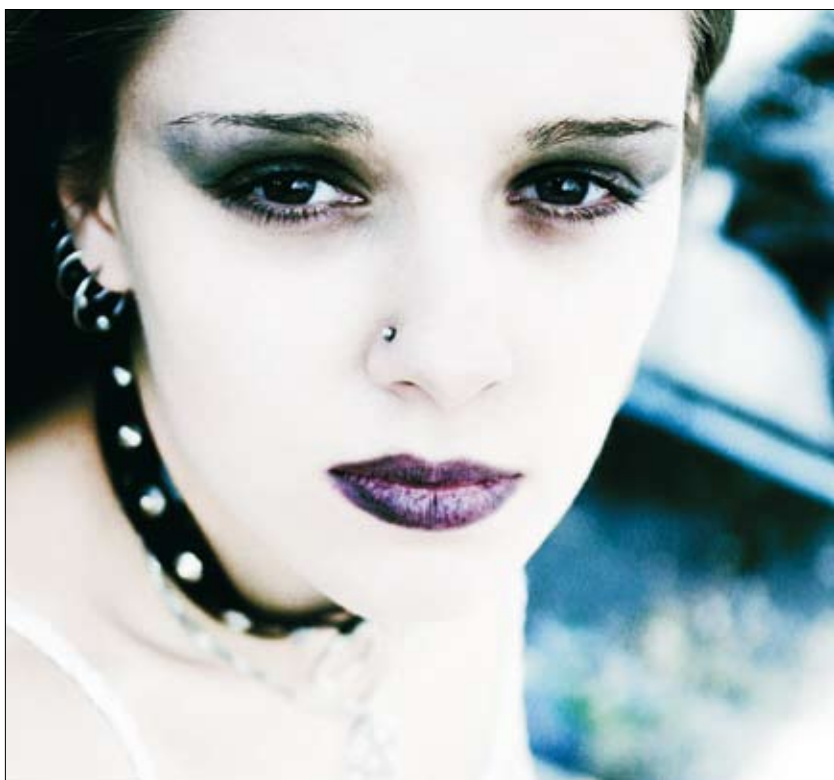
"I experiment with lighting quite a lot rather than using any specific method. I just like to try different things to find out what works."

For these three shots Su used rear curtain sync, with two low cost manual flash guns positioned left side & top side and a silver reflector on the right. The fish were in a studio 2x1x1ft glass tank. The wall of bubbles was created with an 8in flexible airstone.





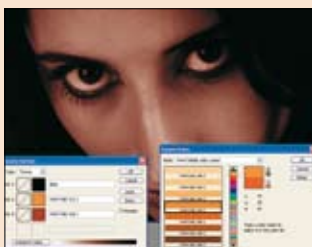
● RAB LETHAM "My lovely Mum Nancy, shot in the studio in colour and converted to black & white."



● ARNE HOFFMANN Arne titled this one White Goth. The tight crop and Photoshop editing have created a stark image with plenty of impact that suits the subject.

DIGITAL TIPS – DUOTONES

■ Photoshop has a very good, but underused colouring tool that's perfect for creating monocolour images. To get to this from a colour image you first go to Image⇒Mode⇒Greyscale to remove the colour. Then Image⇒Mode⇒Duotone which brings up a dialogue box where you pick colours for your Duotone, Tritone or Quadtone. Try experimenting with the various options using the Tritones mode. Click in the right-hand Ink 1 box to pick a colour instead of black and you will see that all the black areas of the photo become the colour you select. For this reason it makes sense to choose a dark colour. Clicking on the colour box of Ink 2 (currently set at white) adds an overall colour to mid-tones too and this can be blended with the colour in Ink 3 to produce an amazing variety of tones. The box on the left of each ink lets you adjust the curves for each colour so you can create split tone effects over the highlights and shadows.



● CHARLES SCHMIDT "My friend Ruth, taken at Highgate underground station, using a Nikon F80 and 50mm lens."

EQUIPMENT TIPS – USE A REFLECTOR

■ Many photographers making their first steps into studio work often believe that they need to invest in a complex multi studio light set up. The fact is you can take really good portrait photos with just one flash head, especially if you add a reflector.

■ A reflector is a flat-surfaced gadget that is positioned so it reflects light from a point source towards the subject. There are many kinds available, in all shapes and sizes. The surface will be either white, silver or gold. White produces a natural bounced light while silver increases contrast and gold introduces a warm tone.

■ Most are made of material with holes in each corner that are stretched and attached over a frame to make it into a large flat panel. The frame often has a tripod mount so a stand can be used to hold and position the flat surface in the right position near your subject.

■ Lastolite came up with a novel approach with a patented fold away method that has since been used on pop up tents, bird hides and projector screens. The idea is that the material is framed with a collapsing metal hoop that folds in on itself to reduce the overall size by around two thirds. When it springs open to full diameter it creates a taught reflective surface.

■ Another ingenious product from Lastolite is the Triflecta. This comprises three reflective panels on an adjustable frame.

This was made popular by fashion photographer Stu Williamson who used it in the '80s to produce fantastic portraits with great catchlights.



■ Do it yourself. There's nothing complex about a reflector. If you don't mind taking a Heath Robinson approach you can use a large sheet of white card to act as a simple reflector.

Take this concept a stage further and spray mount cooking foil onto the surface and you have a handy silver reflector. Some photographers crumch up the foil first so it creates a more diffused reflective surface.

For smaller subjects, even a sheet of glossy inkjet paper is fine to throw some light into the shadow areas.



● PAUL WARD This Alice in Wonderland shot was done in Photoshop using three images. Two of the girl in the two outfits in front of the mirror and one of a night club.



● MICHAEL WATKINS Smoking. 1/125 sec @ f/9, manual, softbox and reflector. Texture layers blended in Adobe Photoshop CS.



● ARIEL ALEXANDRE Tries to recreate the atmosphere of childhood and dreams in his photographs.



● STEVE SHARP Two semi fish-eye shots merged, then desaturated and the colour was painted back in via the History brush in Photoshop.



● ANNALIESA BENDING Wacky shot using layers, colour adjustments, zoom motion blur and liquified eyes.



● ANGIE BARNETT A self portrait with fishing rope done on a flatbed scanner as part of Angie's mermaid series.



● RAYMOND KING Street performers, captured using a Fuji 6900, were cut and pasted on a new background.



● ADRIAN LUNSONG Taken with a Sony Cybershot DSC-W1 at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2004. Used Photoshop CS2 for digital manipulation.

PHOTOSHOP FILTERS

■ While programs such as Photoshop and Paint Shop Pro have some amazing built-in effects there are many more made by third party companies to expand the software's versatility. What follows is a selection of these popular "plug-ins". Add them to your program's plug-ins folder and access them from the filter menu.

■ **www.neatimage.com** A filter designed to reduce visible noise and grain in photographic images produced by digital cameras and scanners.

■ **www.xaostools.com** Paint Alchemy transforms your images with paint effects like Coloured Pencil, Impressionist, or Pastel. Choose from 75 built-in brush stroke effects, 36 editable brush styles and complete versatile controls.

■ **www.autofx.com** Photo/Graphic Edges, Mystical Lighting and Dream Suite. Photo/Graphic Edges has thousands of ready made edges to enhance your photos, including all those specials you could originally create using Polaroid.

■ **www.alienskin.com** EyeCandy and Xenofex special effects plug ins are joined recently by Exposure, a great film characteristic emulator.

■ **www.ononesoftware.com** Genuine Fractals is an image scaling plug-in that helps you increase the image up to 800% without loss in quality.

■ **www.flamingpear.com** A range of filters including the Flood filter that creates realistic ripples.

■ **www.theimagingfactory.com** Convert to B&W Pro offers highly controllable colour to black & white conversion so you don't lose valuable tonal detail.

■ **www.extensis.com** Mask Pro 3 helps you make precise selections around difficult edges, such as hair.

■ **www.corel.com** KPT Collection – an amazing collection of plug-ins to be creative with. Highlights include the lightning filter and a good lens flare editor.

■ **powerretouche.com** Pro Pack of plug-ins includes various editors to provide advanced control of Noise, Tone, Softness, Sharpness, Brightness, Saturation, White balance and colour as well as an anti-aliasing mode, histogram repair and lens correction.

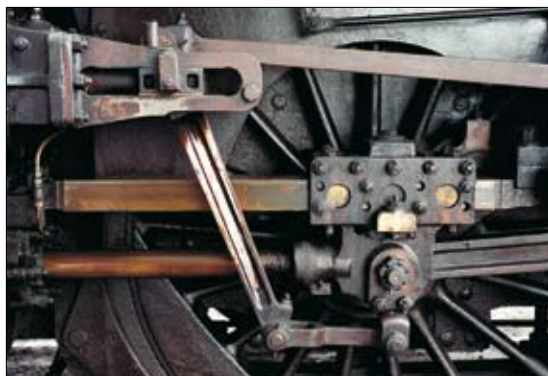
■ **www.andromeda.com** A collection of great tools that are geared more towards photographers than most, with filters, among many, to solve problems with red eye, depth-of-field and lens distortion.



● KEV BOOTH This man was fixing his steam engine with such loving care while Kev caught him on candid camera.



● MATT PAGE This train on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway is used in the TV programme Heartbeat. Dodged and burned.



● CHRIS WALKER Steam engines provide plenty of close-up details. Here the wheel and its mechanisms are the focal points.



● ALLEN COOK The 63601 locomotive taken as it pulls away at the Great Central Railway.



● PETE MURRELL A steam loco of the West Somerset Railway takes on water.

DIGITAL TECHNIQUE – ENHANCE A CLASSIC CAR SHOW SNAP

■ Vehicles are often cramped into tight spots at car shows and a touch of digital cloning is usually required so why not go a stage further and lift it into a new, more atmospheric setting?

1 Open the car photo and create a duplicate layer – Layer⇒ Duplicate Layer. Go back to the background layer and fill with white – Edit⇒Fill. I also added an ePHOTOzine number plate using the Type tool and Edit⇒Transform⇒Distort so it follows the plate's angle.

2 Add a layer mask to the duplicated layer – Layer⇒Add Layer Mask⇒Reveal All and click inside the white mask box that appears alongside the normal layer thumbnail.

3 Click on the Lasso tool and draw a rough selection around the car. Don't worry about being right up to the edge. We will erase any unwanted edge detail next.

4 Once you've gone all the way around the car go to Select⇒Inverse (Shift+Ctrl+I) to invert the selection.

5 Go to Edit⇒Fill and select black to add a mask on the top layer and allow the white from the layer before to show. You should now have your car surrounded by a rough white vignette.

6 Now, with the mask still selected, use the eraser and brush set to small size to paint or erase the mask around the car. On straight edges use the Polygonal lasso and fill with black (mask) or white (unmask) Once complete (don't forget the windows too) you should have a perfect cut-out.

7 Select the background, make it a transparent layer by double clicking on and then deleting the white. Select⇒All and hit the delete button.

8 Go to Layer⇒Merge Visible and Copy (Ctrl+C) and Paste (Ctrl+V) onto a suitable background. I chose a coastal scene that had already been enhanced by merging a sunset with a drab grey coast.

9 The colours may differ, making it look unnaturally placed, so go to Image⇒Adjustments⇒Match Color and select the original coastal shot as the match. This adds colours from the sunset onto the car. I then tweaked curves to make it more dramatic.





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