

# photoworld



2009/#2



**Cover: by Glenn Turner**  
*Five of the Red Arrows aerobatic display team stream red, white and blue smoke at Dunsfold. Sony Alpha 100, Minolta 100-300mm APO at 230mm, f10, 1/1000, ISO 200*  
 See story, page 4.

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Photoworld magazine is an independent quarterly from Icon Publications Ltd which provides free membership of the Photoworld Club UK/Photoclubalpha. The aim of the Club is to provide support services, information, inspiration and activities for owners of Minolta, Konica Minolta, Seagull, Sony Alpha and other equipment compatible with the Minolta SR, MC, MD, VS, AF, AF-xi and AF-D mounts. Membership of the Club is not dependent on subscription and you may also sign up, receiving emailed information only but no magazine, through [www.photostore-uk.com](http://www.photostore-uk.com), [www.minoltaclub.co.uk](http://www.minoltaclub.co.uk) or [www.photoclubalpha.com](http://www.photoclubalpha.com). Subscriptions cost £19.95 for four issues (UK/Europe), £23.95 (Rest of World), payable to Icon Publications Ltd, Maxwell Place, Maxwell Lane, Kelso, Scottish Borders TD5 7BB. This publication has no connection with Konica Minolta Holdings or Sony Corporation, or the brands mentioned. The logo typeface is 'Minolta Classic' designed by Justin Bailey.

## HELPLINES AND INFORMATION

Authorised & warranty repairs, assistance and enquiries

**OUR** website [www.photoclubalpha.com](http://www.photoclubalpha.com) is now packed with detailed features on the Minolta and Sony Alpha systems, has a busy discussion **Forum** and you can search the site for help on topics. It has a full directory of useful links for downloading software or obtaining help. For personal advice from the Club, use e-mail only please, to [david@photoclubalpha.com](mailto:david@photoclubalpha.com).

A **DEDICATED** helpline is available for Konica Minolta Dynax and Dimage digital system owners, and also for film camera owners. The helpline phone number is **0870 0104107**.

**ALL REPAIRS** for Konica, Minolta and Konica Minolta branded photographic products are handled by;

JP Service Solutions  
 Johnsons Photopia Ltd  
 Hempstalls Lane  
 Newcastle under Lyme  
 Staffordshire ST5 0SW  
 Tel: 01782 753366 – Fax: 01782 753340  
 Email: [kmsupport@jpss.co.uk](mailto:kmsupport@jpss.co.uk)

**SONY** may announce further firmware upgrades or indeed products. Your first step should be to check Sony's website regularly:

[www.sony.co.uk](http://www.sony.co.uk)

Their general helpline, which will have information on any other numbers, addresses, departments or offices which Konica Minolta owners may need to reach in future, is: **08705 111 999**

For downloadable printable manuals, legacy firmware and software updates, visit:

<http://ca.konicaminolta.com/support/americas/>

For the Sony European user service – there is still no UK user club:

<http://www.sony.co.uk/nextlevel>

To order KM/Sony parts, accessories, and new Sony flash components etc, visit the Photostore, where Bernard Petticrew also hosts an advice forum:

<http://www.photostore-uk.com/>

## MINOLTA REPAIRS

by specialist workshop in Milton Keynes

**FOR MANY** years **Camera Repair Workshop**, based in Milton Keynes close to the original Minolta UK service department, handled the repair of classic SRT, X, Vectis and later film cameras for Minolta UK.

They have obtained many of the spare parts and KM's stocks of older 'cannibalisation cameras' like 7000 and 8000i. Their proprietor is David Boyle, and his two technicians are Minolta trained. As an independent repairer they will specialise in film and digital, and hold parts going back to models like the XM. *The Dynax 9 is an exception, previously serviced by a special European centre, and must be sent to JP (see above).* No VAT is chargeable at present, and they offer Photoworld Club members a **10 per cent discount** on prices which they say are already better than former retail repair charges. This enables the Club to continue with its 10 per cent service and repair discount offer.

The **Photoworld Club Camera Check** scheme will be operated by Camera Repair Workshop, though in absence of Konica Minolta's former bulk shipping arrangements, the return carriage costs have increased and a charge of **£25 per camera/standard lens** combination is now required.

Your equipment is bench-tested for shutter speed, metering, focusing and aperture accuracy, externally cleaned and adjusted (this includes mirror box and film track, and all accessible parts or adjustments). If performance is below standard, a quotation will be issued for optional servicing. A certificate is completed showing the test results and functions checked, and returned with the camera. Camera Repair Workshop were actually responsible for most of the Club Camera Check work, and hold a stock of original 'Minolta Club' certificates along with all the necessary bench testing equipment.

They are based at:

**Unit 9, Wharfside, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK2 2AZ.**

**Telephone 01908 378088, fax 08712 427677.**

**Email: [cameraworkshop@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:cameraworkshop@tiscali.co.uk)**



# 70-400mm and Cyber-Shot DSC-HX1 win TIPA awards

Products launched only one or two months ago by Sony have already won two of Europe's top press-sponsored awards. The 70-400mm f4-5.6 G SSM zoom is so new it's unlikely to have had more than a couple of weeks' use before the Technical Image Press Association voted it the Best Expert Lens of 2009. The 1080p video-capable 20X zoom DSC-HX1 was only unveiled in February and wins the 'Best Superzoom D-camera' category.

Behind the scenes, there's been less unanimity about the DSC-HX1 because it lacks a raw file format. This makes it unusable for semi-professional or advanced amateur back up or everyday use.

But it has revolutionary new features, which in part depend on powerful raw file processing within the camera.

The editorial panel of Europe's most prestigious photo industry awards named the Sony Cyber-Shot DSC-HX1 'Best Superzoom D-Camera in 2009'. The judging citation states:

"The Sony Cyber-shot DSC-HX1 can take up to 224° panorama shots in one easy press and sweep motion. It is the company's first compact camera to use their 'Exmor' CMOS sensor technology, allowing the camera to achieve burst speeds of 10 frames per second at full 9.1 megapixel resolution and record movies in 1080p HD. The camera also has a fantastic 20x optical zoom 'G' lens technology which has previously only been available in their Alpha cameras."

Here is what Sony says about the camera:

"The feature-packed Cyber-shot HX1 blends lightning-fast shooting and powerful creative options in a beautifully stylish, easy to use camera.

"Inside, there's a super-sensitive 9.1 megapixel CMOS sensor that cuts image noise in low-light conditions like dusk or dimly-lit interiors. You'll see the difference with crisp, natural results when you're shooting handheld without flash. It is the world's first compact digital still camera with 10fps burst shooting at full image resolution\*: that's faster than many professional DSLR cameras. There are also two new low-light shooting modes which automatically superimpose a high-speed burst of six frames to produce one stunning shot. The HX1 is also the world's first digital



still camera with Sweep Panorama\*. This new shooting mode stitches together a high-speed burst of frames to produce an extra-wide, high resolution image. Just press the shutter button once then sweep the camera to create seamless panoramic shots."

The HX1 sells for nearly £500 – in some places, it is actually twice the price they have been selling Alpha 200 with 18-70mm kits. The price premium is no doubt partly due to the true 1080p HD video, placing the camera midway between still and video ranges.

Meanwhile, the Sony DSLR lens 70-400mm F4-5.6 G SSM was awarded 'Best Expert Lens in 2009'. The judging citation states:

"With 18 elements into 12 groups including 2 ED glasses, Super Sonic Motorisation (SSM) for a total weight of 1.5 kg, this Sony G zoom lens deserves the 'expert' definition. In a beautiful silver finish and in a solid construction, it features an excellent optical quality at f4. Circular aperture, low distortion, invisible vignetting and a negligible chromatic aberration completes the portrait of this high quality telephoto lens."

In Sony's words:

"The 70-400 mm F4-5.6 G SSM

DSLR lens is a very high quality G Series telephoto zoom lens with wide focal length range. It has smooth and silent AF operation using high-torque SSM (Super Sonic Wave Motor). The G Series optics with Extra-low Dispersion (ED) glass elements enables for clear, sharp edge-to-edge description and reduced chromatic aberration. Beautiful defocus effects are achieved thanks to the circular aperture. Other features include convenient operation with focus mode switch, focus range limiter and three focus hold buttons."

TIPA (Technical Image Press Association) was founded in 1991 as an independent, non-profit Association of European photo and imaging magazines. With 27 member magazines from 11 countries, TIPA is the largest and most influential photo and imaging press association in Europe. Each year, editors of member magazines vote for the "Best Photo and Imaging Products in Europe" considering innovation, use of leading-edge technology, design/ergonomics, ease of use and price/performance. For further information, visit [www.tipa.org](http://www.tipa.org) – David Kilpatrick



## Zeiss renews collaboration contract

OBERKOCHEN/Germany, 15.04.2009

Carl Zeiss today announced that its Camera Lens Division will extend their successful collaboration with Sony Corporation for a further 5 years. Taking full advantages of their competence both companies agreed to cooperate even closer in developing and commercializing new imaging devices in the future.

As early as 1996, the two global specialists in imaging technology discovered the high potential of a close collaboration. Now, this cooperation has been extended. "The excellent competence of Sony in electronics and sensor technology in combination with the best possible optics for film and video cameras – that is what this partnership stands for", states Dr. Winfried Scherle, General Manager and Vice President, Carl Zeiss AG, Camera Lens Division. "Numerous outstanding devices are the product of this cooperation and there are more to come."

In 1996 the first Sony camcorder with Carl Zeiss lens was launched onto the market. Since then the cooperation has been expanded to compact digital cameras or camcorders to high end bridge cameras and interchangeable lenses for the Sony Alpha digital SLR camera system. The goal of this partnership is to achieve high quality products that meet the demands of the customers. Due to this, both companies agreed on a partnership allowing Sony to apply ZEISS branded lenses on an exclusive basis on selected digital cameras and camcorders.

## Back issues of Photoworld on-line at YUDU.COM

We have started to put on-line readable editions of *Photoworld* on to the YUDU website.

Go to: <http://www.yudu.com/library/14917> and you will see covers for any editions which are now available to view. Our other magazines are also being converted the same way, so you'll have the option of reading these too. There are no charges, the digital editions and back issues are a free service.

# Aerial manoeuvres

I have always been interested in aviation and aircraft. I was taken to air shows every summer as a boy by my father, and a few decades later I am still visiting shows when I can. Unfortunately of course, the 2008 summer in the UK was rather a wash-out, and this had an impact on the air show calendar.

The biggest event of the year, the International Air Tattoo at Fairford in Gloucestershire had to be cancelled at short notice as the relentless heavy rain in the previous week turned the car park fields into quagmires. However, I did enjoy visits to the Farnborough Air show in Hampshire in July and to the 'Wings and Wheels' event at Dunsfold in Surrey in August. Needless to say, the weather was predictably unreliable with all sorts of conditions being experienced on both occasions.

This variable weather creates many challenges for the photographer (in addition to trying to keep camera, lenses and yourself dry!). The lighting conditions can change greatly throughout the day, or within a single pan across the sky when following an aircraft flypast, or between the horizon and directly overhead during aerobatic manoeuvres. One part of the sky can be completely cloudless and brilliant blue whilst in another direction it is a leaden dark grey. An aircraft can be in bright sunshine one second and then in deep shadow the next, which of course requires very different exposure values.

It is necessary to consider the effect of the lighting on colour and contrast, the need for exposure adjustment and the way the shutter speed may be changed by the camera depending on the exposure mode set, which potentially impacts the sharpness of the moving subjects.

For photographs of aircraft on display in the static park, where the lighting is more stable, the aperture may be the primary consideration to obtain a desired depth of field. The environment at air shows can be very busy, with aircraft parked close together, behind barriers and with large crowds milling around. Therefore, it is often necessary to crop a subject tightly to eliminate distracting elements, or preferable to zoom in for a close-up of specific details of the aircraft.

The photographic equipment I took to the air shows last year was my Sony Alpha 100 along with Sony

Glenn Turner outlines his approach to getting smoothly tracked ground to air shots at public displays



*Top: even from the ground you can give the impression of air-to-air. Close-up view of one of The Blades Extra 300LP aircraft at Farnborough – 100-300mm APO at 280mm, f14, 1/250, ISO 200.*

*Above: close-up of the nose of a Macchi MC202 Italian WWII fighter in the Farnborough static park – 16-105mm at 45mm, f9, 1/250, ISO 100.*

*Left: Royal Navy Sea King airborne early warning helicopter on static display at Farnborough – 16-105mm at 30mm, f13, 1/250, ISO 100.*





*Low speed flypast by a U.S. Navy McDonnell Douglas Super Hornet fighter-bomber at Farnborough. 100-300mm APO at 300mm, f8, 1/640, ISO 100.*



*Above: Reflections in the polished chrome propeller spinner of a Pilatus PC-12 turboprop aircraft at Farnborough – 16-105mm at 75mm, f9, 1/320, ISO 100.*

*Right: the mighty Vulcan bomber on approach to land at Dunsfold, 100-300 at 230mm, f8, 1/640, ISO 100.*



16-105mm and Minolta 100-300mm APO zoom lenses. This combination makes up a very versatile and compact kit which provides a range of coverage from wide angle ground shots through to a decent telephoto for airborne photographs. The outfit is easy to carry around for a day and also won't break the bank.

I take a Jessops monopod which I strap to the outside of my Lowepro 200AW bag. Generally I don't use the monopod on the ground, but find I get greater flexibility of movement for panning by supporting the foot of the collapsed pod in a monopod belt pouch (which is from Manfrotto, but could easily be home made as an alternative). This adds sufficient extra stability to save another couple of stops for hand-holding on top of the benefit already afforded by the SSS image stabilisation, and I find it invaluable in maintaining sharpness, especially for the longer zoom shots.

For photographing jet aircraft in flight, I usually plan to use a fast shutter speed. It may be necessary to increase the ISO to achieve this, depending on the lighting conditions, bearing in mind also that the 100-300 APO benefits from being stopped down a little. The secret of successful panning is to try to stay with the subject as smoothly as possible, and selecting the continu-





*Red Arrows (see story for lighting conditions on top photo). Above, 100-300mm APO at 300mm, f8, 1/640, ISO 100. The Red Arrows in the classic 'diamond nine' formation against a brooding sky at Farnborough. Below: four-ship formation (one inverted) at Dunsfold, 100-300mm at 300mm, f10, 1/1000. ISO 200. Opposite top: RAF Chinook banks steeply for a flypast at Dunsfold, 100-300mm at 250mm, f18, 1/125, ISO 100. Bottom: Full-size replica of a 1919-vintage Vickers Vimy bomber at Farnborough. Sepia tint/film grain texture added in Photoshop, 100-300mm at 230mm, f9, 1/320, ISO 200.*





ous autofocus and continuous drive options on the camera maximises the chance of getting a good shot. Holding your breath can also help.

It is more difficult to capture propeller-driven planes and helicopters perfectly, since the most natural appearance is obtained if the propellers and rotors are blurred rather than frozen completely. Stopping the blades can make the aircraft appear to be suspended in mid-air.

The problem in achieving this, is in making sure that the camera uses a slow enough shutter speed to get the right amount of blur in the propeller blades, whilst still being fast enough to keep the rest of the subject sharp! I find that the most pleasing shots are where the blades are blurred through arcs of maybe 20 or 30°, rather than being blurred into complete discs. There is no easy rule of thumb here, as the propellers on different types of aircraft rotate at different speeds, and the speed is also related, of course, to the power of the engine at any particular time. So, the best thing to do is to take a few test shots of the subject at different shutter speeds, view them in-camera, and then opt for shutter priority, choosing the speed required to achieve the desired effect.

Helicopters tend to be the most difficult subjects, as their rotors spin more slowly than propellers. The biggest challenge for me in 2008 was the massive Chinook helicopter, which has large contra-rotating rotors that turn so slowly that you can almost

see the individual blades with the naked eye. I had to slow the shutter speed down to as low as 1/125s to get some blur in those blades, and that really is on the limit of what can be effectively hand-held at 300mm!

For most airborne pictures, I try to pick angles where the subject is heading towards or away from me which reduces the relative movement, so helping with flexibility to select a slower shutter speed. I also find these views are usually more interesting than a standard side view anyway.

Sometimes changeable weather is not all bad, as it can create unusual and dramatic lighting effects. One such example is the view of the Red Arrows where a shaft of sunlight through a break in the clouds illuminated the smoke trails of the formation against the backdrop of a very forbidding dark grey sky.

Post-processing in *Photoshop* allows some opportunities to rescue certain images by bringing out shadow detail, for instance, if the subjects have turned out underexposed overall. I also transformed one rather dull image of the replica of the 1919 vintage Vickers Vimy into something more interesting by sepia toning and adding film grain texture. This treatment works, as it is in sympathy with the nature of this particular subject.

Given the choice though, I would always rather spend a day at an air show basking in nice warm sunshine!

— Glenn Turner





# gallery



To enter your own pictures for future *Gallery* pages, just send digital files. Images should be no larger than 2000 x 3000 pixels or the equivalent data size for panoramas (6 megapixels). They should be saved as AdobeRGB or sRGB JPEG files, with embedded ICC profile and intact EXIF data, to level 8 quality (High) or better. Your details, caption, copyright information, website URL, email address etc should be written into the file EXIF IPTC fields - use 'File Information' in Photoshop File Menu to view and edit these text fields.

You may also put caption, website, etc information in a separate text document attachment or in the body of your email.

The pictures must have been taken on Minolta, Konica Minolta, Sony or Sony Alpha equipment. Scans from slides, negatives or prints are accepted and full details must be provided of equipment used. EXIF data will be used to confirm the origin of digital entries.

Send by email to: [gallery@photoclubalpha.com](mailto:gallery@photoclubalpha.com)

You may also send by post on CD, CDs or DVDs must be universal (Mac or PC) and always 'finished' never left open for another writing session. Please do not send memory cards. TIFFs may be used on CDs only, not by email—no layers, no 16-bit please. Send to:

**Photoworld Gallery, Icon Publications Ltd,  
Maxwell Place, Maxwell Lane, Kelso, Scottish Borders TD5 7BB.**

You may enter as many images as you like at any time, including your name and address and all relevant caption details. *Gallery* entries will be considered for cover or portfolio use and web editions. Each contributor chosen receives a year's subscription/renewal, or a prize of similar value which may be a photographic book or other item.



Goran Stamenkovic from Basaid, Serbia, entered these three pictures for *Gallery* after reading our website invitation to enter. They are all taken with the Konica Minolta 5D using the 18-70mm f3.5-5.6 kit lens, and have an almost film-like journalistic quality to them. Top: 'Housewife from Topli Do'. Centre: 'Blacksmith from village, Basaid'. Bottom, 'Pantul'.

Website readers who have not yet subscribed to the magazine are only allowed to submit three pictures – Goran sent a very well edited submission and we welcome him as a new Photoworld magazine reader.







*Cute animals, especially mother and baby, always go down well! Top left, by Dewet Uys from South Africa, mare and foal near Queen's View in Scotland – “my Dynax 5D and I were ready when we drove past. I jumped out of the car and the horses gave me about five seconds to take the photo before they walked away... one of my many fond memories of Scotland”. Dewet used the kit lens at 70mm, ISO 400, wide open at f5.6 in Program mode, 1/100th. Top right, Eric Davies used his Dynax 7D with the Minolta 75-300mm f4.5-5.6 zoom, handheld at 300mm. Exposure was 1/80th at f7.1, ISO 200.*

*Below: a new resident at Edinburgh Zoo – European Ground Squirrel – captured eating the enclosure vegetation by Reinert Nijland of Newcastle-upon-Tyne ([www.reindert.eu](http://www.reindert.eu)). He used the Minolta 100-300mm f4.5-5.6 APO tele zoom at 250mm and f9, exposing on the Alpha 700 with added Minolta 3600HS(D) fill in flash at -0.6.*



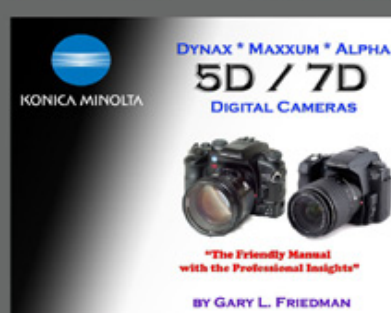
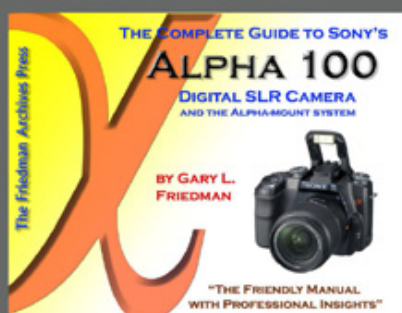
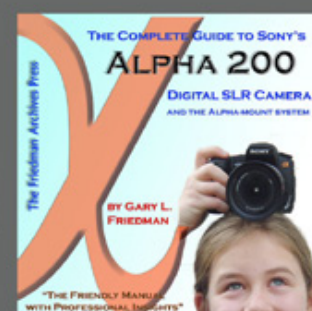
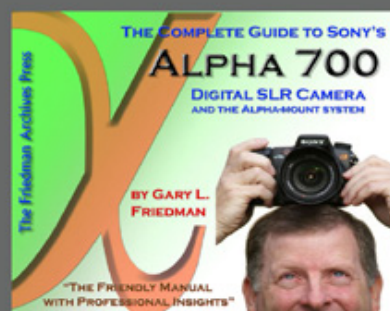
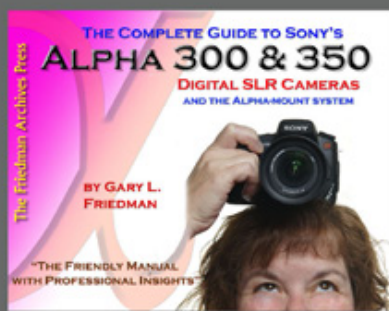
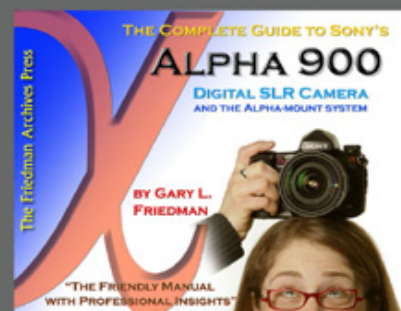




Two shots from the new 70-400mm f4-5.6 G SSM – above, by Philip Sharp of Liskeard, cannon at Porth Leven. A900 at 120mm and f9. Right, feather in reeds, by Peter Stusz of Arendonk, Belgium ([www.naturelight.be](http://www.naturelight.be)). A700, at 400mm and full f5.6 aperture.



# The Friedman Archives



Highly-acclaimed e-books on Sony and KM DSLRs  
(plus free articles) at  
[www.FriedmanArchives.com/ebooks](http://www.FriedmanArchives.com/ebooks)





*A bushel of birdlife – above, Red-Wing Blackbird by Glenn Dube of Ontario – A700, ISO 800, 70-300mm f4.5-5.6 SSM G at 300mm, f13. Below left: American Egret by Ed Dvorak – A700, ISO 200, 300mm f2.8 APO with 2X converter, 1/800th at f8. Top right: Blue Heron fishing on Siesta Key, Florida, in October, by Raymond Smith – A100, 75-300mm at 300mm, 1/400th at f6.3 ISO 100. Bottom right: Bluetit by Pat Morgan, Dynax 7D and 300mm f4 G lens.*





# Go East, young man...

Last April I made my first visit to Moscow. It is an amazing city, full of photographic opportunities as well as a rewarding cultural experience.

I was fortunate to be accompanied by a Russian-speaking Ukrainian friend who managed to keep me out of trouble, even as I was wandering around less salubrious areas clutching my tripod and looking very much the tourist.

Moscow, named after the Moskva river on which it resides, is the capital of the Russian Federation, and with a population of 10 million spread over 1000 square kilometres is also the largest city in Europe.

Its origins can be dated to 1147 and has had a turbulent history since, having been occupied by the armies of the Mongol-Tartars, Crimean Tartars, Sweden, and Poland-Lithuania, as well as resisting the armies of Napoleon and Hitler. It was superseded as the Russian capital in 1712 by St Petersburg and it was only after the Russian Revolution that it reclaimed its place as the capital of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1918.

It is against this backdrop that modern Moscow proudly shines as a modern metropolis. There are many sites of historical, cultural and artistic interest for the visitor, especially for those of a more photographic bent.

Aside from the usual touristic highlights such as the Kremlin, Red Square, and Novodevichy Convent, there is ample opportunity for street and social photography. A vibrant youth and alternative culture exists and makes for a colourful subject for documentation.

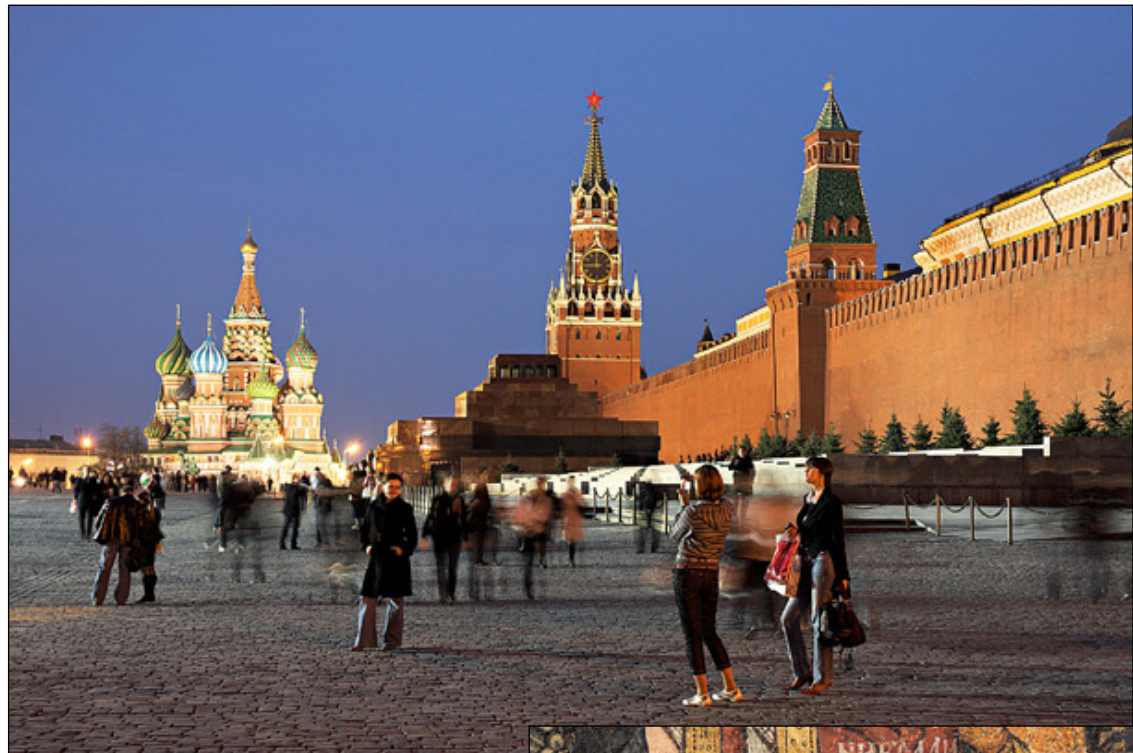
Ironically, photographic hysteria seems to be absent, I was not stopped once and questioned by police or other officials, something which is unfortunately becoming increasingly likely in the UK (a supposedly free and open society).

Russia faces as great a terrorist threat as the UK and has a totalitarian legacy, yet photography is tolerated to a much greater degree and photographers are not instantly branded as threats to be feared and hounded.

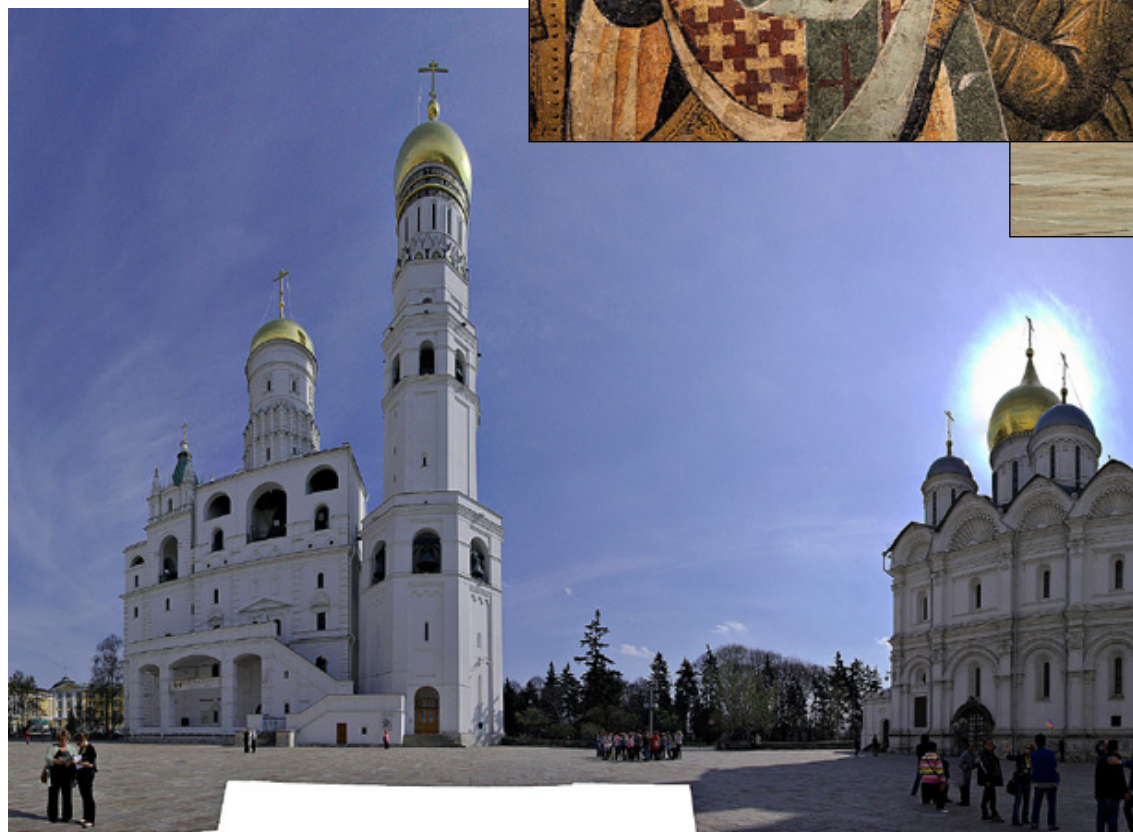
Moscow, and Russia in general, is not an easy place to visit compared to Western Europe but is well worth the effort.

It has a long and proud history and the place is full of an optimism for the future (despite their problems) balanced with their rich past.

Daniel Oi had the chance to visit Moscow and discovered a city street-friendly to photographers



*Moscow presented opportunities for photography throughout the day – dawn to dusk, and later. He used his tripod to capture scenes with and without people. Top right – Bubble Flash Mob along Old Arbat street. Every spring, a procession of soap bubble blowers parades along Old Arbat on the Day of Bubbles. Below: Cathedral (Sobornaya) Square, Kremlin. Three cathedrals share this square, along with another two churches. Handheld single row panorama.*







## Tips

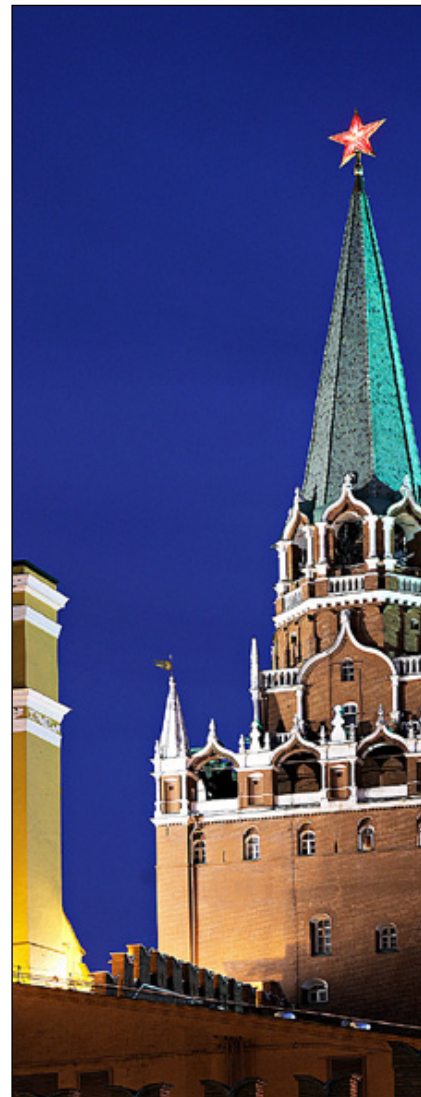
- Moscow is a dusty city. Bring a blower, lens cloth and brush to clean your equipment. Check your sensor for dust spots regularly.
- Go out in company. Like any city, Moscow has its fair share of petty crime to contend with. When photographing, it is advisable to have a spotter alert to other people in your immediate vicinity and to keep an eye on your equipment at all times.
- Tourist areas are generally safe, however on the underground (Metro) and less tourist friendly areas, it is best to be discreet and keep equipment out of sight. It is a legal requirement for visitors to carry their passports at all times, photocopies are not acceptable. Hence, you need to securely carry your valuables.
- Be aware of some photography restrictions. The Kremlin has strict security, no large bags are allowed within the walls (there is a bag check for you to deposit items). Lenses with a **diameter of more than 70mm** are not allowed, nor are tripods. In some churches, photography is prohibited. Otherwise, photography seems to be tolerated to a greater degree than in the UK. I was happily wandering all over Red Square with a tripod, A700 and panoramic head with not a glance from the numerous police patrolling the area.
- English is not commonly spoken. Having a Russian speaker is invaluable, though you may be able to get by with a phrase book and lots of hand gestures. Take the time to become familiar with the Cyrillic alphabet since most signs are written in the local script. An



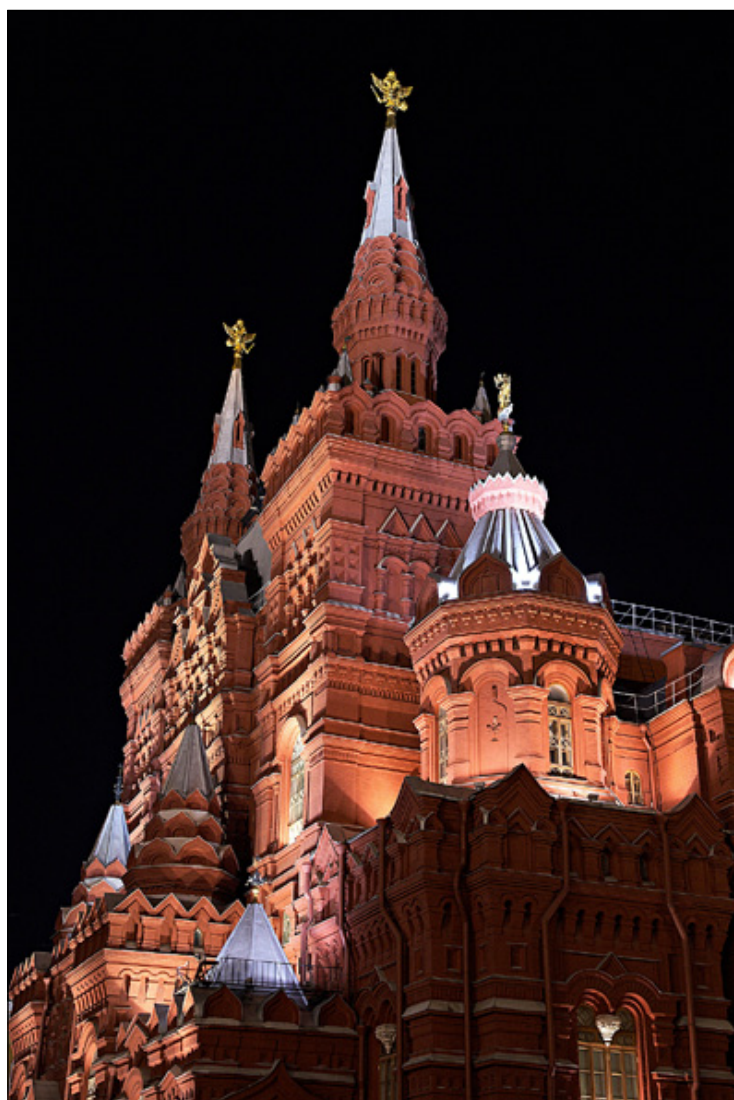




*Moscow in 2008 somehow looked more like London in 1968 – Daniel was able to catch many pictures of street performers during the Bubble festival. Below right: Moscow at dusk and at night. The floodlit churches and buildings make a great subject for photography.*







up-to-date guidebook is a must as Moscow is a rapidly changing city

- **Photo-backup:** Even on a comparatively short trip of one week, I kept over 1500 cRAW photos totalling nearly 20GB. Every night I would download photos to my laptop, and would burn a DVD every 4GB. I would not delete a memory card until I had a copy on the laptop and on DVD. I gave the DVDs to another person to carry them out of the country separately.

- **Photo Review:** Consider bringing along laptop to review your photos every day, as well as to check for dust spots and log into wireless internet to check email, news and tourist information. The smaller the laptop, the better. I use a **Fujitsu-Siemens P1510** tablet PC, which weighs 1.1kg with the extended battery lasting 5-6 hours, and which is slightly bigger than an A5 piece of paper. An external DVD burner can be left at your accommodation.

- **Bring along an electrical adapter** (Euro plug), multi-plug adapter, and a sufficient number of power cords. Have at least one spare battery which is recharged at every available opportunity. Bring along lots of spare memory cards, consider getting large capacity cards which will minimise card changing. I have an emergency 4GB MS Pro Duo in my A700, several 4GB Sandisk Extreme II/IV CF cards, and a few 1GB Lexar cards as backup.
- **Insurance:** Having peace of mind will allow you the freedom to take out your equipment and take photos. Make sure your policy covers your trip and read the fine print.

- **Travel light:** After a few hours, your shoulders and back will protest against any extraneous piece of equipment in your bag. Bring the minimum of lenses to cover the photography you want to do. I travel with three lenses, the Tamron 17-50mm f2.8 zoom as a general walk-about lens, the Minolta 100mm f2 for detail and portrait shots, and the Peleng 8mm fisheye lens for taking spherical panoramics.

- **A tripod is a must,** especially for night shots of landmarks, group shots and in low light. Be prepared to invest in a good tripod, the better ones are made of carbon fibre which is light and strong. Unless you are using long heavy lenses, a small 4 or 5-section leg tripod should be adequate, fit into your luggage more conveniently, but still provide reasonable height. Reverse the centre column for greater compactness. A Nodal Ninja 3 panoramic head completes my equipment list.

My greatest thanks go to my gracious guide, Natalia Biletska.





# Sony VPL-EW5 projector

Flat screen television technology is moving ahead so fast that today's supermarket deals at £500 will seem like crude compared to the 100 to 200 Hz, true 1080p, deep colour models arriving now at higher prices.

This makes any investment in larger – 40" or more – TV sets for photo display purposes seem that bit less attractive compared to the same outlay spent on a digital projector.

Until recently, any half-decent projector cost into four figures. You can now find SVGA models selling for under £200 plus VAT from business suppliers, though these are rarely ideal for showing digital camera files.

At the same price point as the large TVs there is a new generation of HDMI equipped three-LCD projectors (the best type for photographic colour and a key technology for Sony, Sanyo, and Epson). HDMI input tends to go with high resolution and widescreen – typically, WXGA.

## Resolution matters

The most affordable data projectors are SVGA, 800 x 600 pixels. If you are projecting to a small size for viewing in a study or small room, SVGA looks finely enough detailed to preview a 24 x 36 inch print.

The next step up, XGA, gives you a resolution of 1024 x 768 pixels – the old 19 inch screen size.

Beyond XGA there are many options which often match computer graphics card resolutions. The size called WUXGA is better known as the PC or Mac 24 inch screen, 1920 x 1200 pixels. Only think about a projector in this resolution if you have thousands to spend.

The size which is most affordable and useful is WXGA – 1280 x 800/720. This is also most likely to be combined with HDMI connection, now appearing in professional DSLRs. Typical costs are around £500-700.

There is of course a higher level, true 1080p HD projectors. These are generally well over £1,500.

## HDMI connection

I decided to buy a WXGA HDMI equipped Sony projector for reviewing and showing pictures. This 2009 model, the VPL-EW5, cost almost exactly £600. It was a considered decision to go for a projector rather than a 37 to 42 inch LCD TV.



The latest digital projectors from Sony are highly affordable, high resolution, and work directly from your Alpha 700 or 900 to show HD-format images



*The Alpha 900 is shown on top of the projector to make the connection (mini-HDMI to HDMI) cable and remote controller visible. Normally you sit the camera facing you, so the remote can control image changes and zooming in (above right).*



We had already purchased a cheap 22 inch TV (privately) when the full-digital changeover in the Scottish Borders put our older Sony WEGA digital TV temporarily in limbo. I could not resist connecting the Alpha 700 and 900 – as well as various other cameras being tested.

I had already seen Sony themselves using large screens along with image files loaded on to a Playstation 3 DVD. The hand-controller of the Playstation, combined with four times the dual core processing power of a typical home PC, allows absolutely smooth zooming and panning round a full 24 megapixel high quality JPEG. The effect can not be imitated using Photoshop zooming, nor can files be loaded and viewed as fast.

The Playstation is best connected using HDMI, but if you don't have one of these games consoles (actually a



very powerful DVD/Blu-Ray player, wireless internet terminal and media computer!) you can plug the A700 and A900 in directly.

The images can still be zoomed and scrolled, and the camera's remote control does this wirelessly. The experience is not as smooth as the Playstation playback method, which is why Sony use PS3+Bravia 100Hz TVs at exhibitions.

As and when HD video finally arrives in the Alpha system, video playback will also be possible direct from the DSLR. I have tested the Canon and Nikon models which shoot video clips, and they work well enough. Hopefully Sony will be able to solve some of the restrictions which make these early models a bit clunky to work with.

## Motion versus stills

For TV or DVD/Blu-Ray viewing, the now-arriving 100Hz and 200Hz (called 'Motionflow' by Sony) TVs give a vastly improved experience. One big problem with data projectors is that at the best they run at 50Hz, like most current low cost TVs. Fast movement will appear jerky or flickering.

However, for still projection – even with some of the zooming and panning possible with the Playstation – the projector technology is fine. What counts far more is the huge size of the image, about six feet wide at eight feet projection distance.

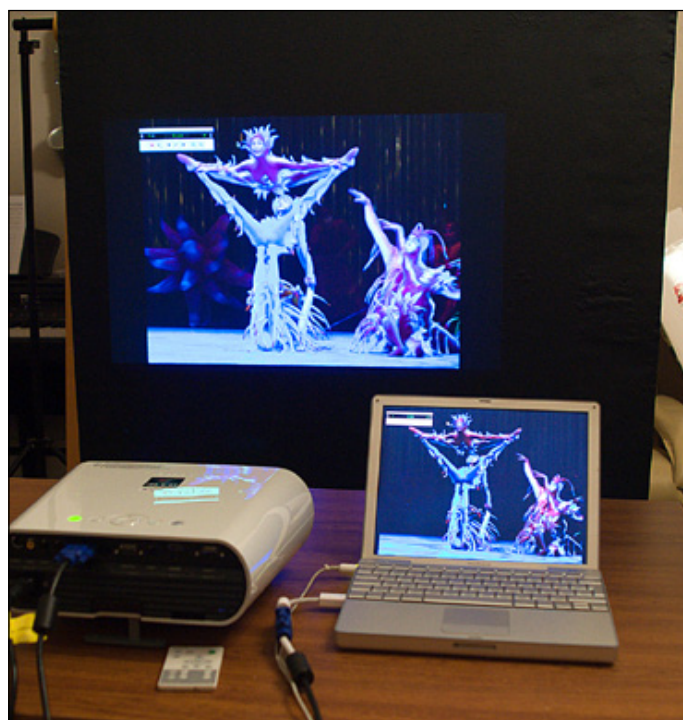
The sharpness of the projected images is exceptional. If you have good vision, you will see the 1200 x 800 pixels but no more obtrusively than the pixels on your computer screen or the printing dots on this page.

## The VPL-EW5 features

The EW5 is a 2000 lumens projector, which means very bright in practice. You can show images in room lighting though blackout helps. It normally operates at only 1600 lumens to extend lamp life and stay cool; I have found no reason ever to use full power.

The lens is only a 1.2X zoom. You can change image scale by 20%. The working distance will seem close to those used to slide projectors, giving a typical projector screen (48 to 60 inch) size at four or five feet. In a living room, you can probably project to wall size. My office is 10ft long, and I bought a 180cm wide IKEA Tupplur white blind now fitted over my window, and I can just manage to get the projected area into the width.

With slide projectors, a high stand was needed to keep the image



straight. Not so with this! The lens has a built-in 'rising front' anti keystone effect, so the bottom of the picture is almost level with the projector. Normal table height is fine even with the screen placed above obstacles.

If you need to throw the image higher up, the rear angle adjusting foot (single) is linked to an electronic keystone correction. The picture always remains looking square and straight. Two front feet have levelled screws.

The EW5 has a soft start-up, bringing the lamp up to brightness gradually. It auto-detects the input – which include regular S-Video and computer D-Sub 15-pin as well as HDMI. A credit card sized remote control, or large clear menu and navigation buttons on the projector top, allow settings to be adjusted. Most users will have it correctly set within five minutes.

Side controls are provided for zooming, and manual focus. There is considerable depth of field and it's much easier to get a perfect picture than with a slide projector. There is never any 'popping' or focus drift because there are no slide or mounts!

The built-in audio of the EW5 is a bit tinny and low in volume, and if you have a show which uses music, a separate sound system is essential. HDMI, unlike the D-Sub computer connection, includes audio.

If you want to run an additional monitor, or even daisy-chain projectors, there is a monitor (D-Sub) output.

Finally, the projector though fairly large in its well ventilated casing is lighter than a 35mm slide projector, and comes with a fabric gig bag (pocket for cables included). Thus

wrapped it drops nearly into my laptop-friendly shoulder bag, with the laptop almost identical in footprint.

All that is missing from the VPL-EW5 is direct memory card or USB operation. Some competing models include one or both, allowing JPEGs stored on a USB stick or (typically) SD card to be shown directly.

To do this, you must use your camera as an HDMI connected 'card reader'.

## File problems

This brings me to a conclusion, with a warning. While the EW5 is easy to use, and hooking up to your laptop may be the straightforward, getting the right structure and naming for files on a memory card is not!

You can project from a card still in your camera just as easily as reviewing on the camera itself, but



*Left: using a Mac Powerbook, and projecting on a matt black IKEA Tupplur blind in daylight. 1600 lumen economy output does this perfectly. Above: the focus and zoom controls.*

if you want to write a set of JPEGs on to a card you will need to adhere strictly to the folder and file structure.

It is also surprisingly difficult to persuade the Playstation 3 to see, and project, perfectly normal sets of JPEGs on USB memory sticks or memory cards (current PS3s do not have memory card slots). It's easier to get DVDs with JPEGs on recognised.

Many DVD players will also project JPEGs saved on CD but it is essential to get 'HD Ready' – and an HDMI connection – if you want high resolution.

The Sony VPL-EW5 is not the only choice in this group (HDMI equipped, 702p, WXGA data projectors) and I partly chose it to stay in the Sony family. If you have missed slide projection, these newly affordable HD-Ready projectors are waiting to bring it all back to you.

– David Kilpatrick



*Above: the rear interfaces include S-Video (out of shot, left) D-Sub 15 pin computer in and out, and HDMI (right) which carries audio as well as picture. Below: the top buttons are very easy to use. Projected menu instructions help too.*





# It's Autumn down under!

Our Spring is New Zealand's Autumn. Two of my last three Aprils have been spent in New Zealand, with the intention of photographing autumnal subjects as a small but attractive part of the trip, not because Autumn is any better than at home, but because it has differences. Being different can be refreshing and avoids any feeling of having done it all before.

The best area is undoubtedly Otago in South Island – it is to NZ what New England is to the USA as far as Autumn is concerned. The most spectacular trees are the poplars which were widely introduced and planted in straight lines as shelter belts or wind breaks along the edges of fields. The leaves assume a rich golden colour in much the same way as birches do in the UK. Although there are plenty of poplars in North Island, they do not appear to produce good colour, presumably due to the drier, warmer climate leading to early leaf fall.

Autumn in New Zealand can be as unpredictable and variable a season as it is in the UK – some



Duncan McEwan finds New Zealand has a few familiar names – but some different seasonal qualities to his familiar views of Scotland







*Top left: Mount Cook seen across Lake Pukaki. Bottom left: Arrowtown hillside. Above: morning mist at Queenstown. Below: Lake Wakatipu at Glenorchy.*





years being better than others and with the optimal timing not always the same, it can be a hit or a miss for those with limited time.

When travelling, one is usually limited in the amount of equipment that can be taken and this was compounded by my intention, on both occasions, to shoot both film and digital. For the most recent trip, the digital kit consisted of a Sony Alpha 100 body, Sony 11-18mm and 16-80mm CZ lenses and a Minolta 70-200mm SSM  $f2.8$  lens. The CZ lens was a recent acquisition and proved to be a quality short zoom with the focal range covering so much of what I ended up photographing. Its close focusing was an additional asset. The 70-200mm plus a Minolta 24-105mm lens on a Dynax 7 body adequately covered the film side of things. All the images shown were captured digitally.

In New Zealand, Autumn colours only develop in those trees and shrubs that have been imported into the country from Europe. Endemic species are non-deciduous and remain green throughout the seasons, so areas of native forest are not the places to go looking for seasonal change.

Arrowtown, near Queenstown, has some of the most colourful displays, with hillsides of mixed



*Above, an orchard at Alexandria. Below, duckweed on a lake near Dunedin. Top right: poplars at Bannockburn. Bottom right: poplars by Lake Wanaka.*

deciduous trees giving a spectacular palette of colour. The presence of the odd dark-leaved conifer adds contrast and helps to emphasise the saturated colours around them. Fruit growing areas and vineyards are worthy of attention, although for obvious reasons they are not readily accessible and shooting from the roadside can be rather restrictive. They do, however, provide a great show of colour particularly around Clyde, Alexandria and Cromwell.

Often when confronted with a mass of colour, it can be difficult to know where to start as good

compositions may not be immediately obvious. Shooting colour just for the sake of colour is fine up to a point, but it is worth trying to go that extra step. Using a long zoom lens can often allow more selective and stronger compositions to be achieved. While bright sunshine was needed to bring the poplars to life, other areas of mixed species photographed well in more subdued lighting. Indeed, damp foliage and an overcast day (as long as it is not too dull) will often produce better colour than strong direct sunshine.

A polariser is of immense value

in producing saturated colours by removing surface reflections from leaves. With digital, one has the benefit of being able to boost the colour in-camera or subsequently in a computer, but it is all too easy to produce results that are so vibrant that they look unnatural.

Autumn can manifest itself in other aspects apart from trees. Tussock grasses such as tussock grass can produce attractive brown colours and I was surprised to see that even duckweed turns a rich red. In woodland, fungi can be plentiful while in the valleys, early morning mists are not uncommon.

Exciting and productive as it was, there is of course no need to travel abroad to enjoy good Autumn colours as most parts of the country can, to a greater or lesser extent, provide excellent opportunities and you can more readily respond when conditions are reaching a peak.

If you happen to be in Scotland this Autumn, the hot spots are Glen Affric/Cannich, Glen Garry and Perthshire (around Dunkeld, Killiekrankie, Tummel and Rannoch) – that's where I'll be heading. Two Autumns in one year will be a real bonus!

*Ed: See Page 27, Workshops.*









# Sony World Photography Awards 2009

The second Sony World Photography Awards were held from 14-19th April in Cannes, France. After the first edition in 2008, Sony has implemented several changes concerning the public part of the event (I didn't visit the awards ceremony itself, so I cannot comment on that).

First of all, the exhibition covered the entire weekend, whereas in 2008 things started to be torn down Friday afternoon – a wise change, knowing that Cannes is humming with tourists on Saturdays and Sundays.

Like last year, there were two main venues. First, a Sony product exhibit was strategically placed in front of the famous red stairs. Second, Sony had rented La Rotonde Riviera, a round building of the Palais des Expositions, 100 metres off the main street. The exhibition of the pictures and portfolios of the winners was presented there.

Unlike last year, the pavilion where Sony presented their products was a cube, looking like some huge inflatable tent. This year's 'inflatable cube' definitely offered more space to present Sony products than last year's pyramid. Around it, Sony had placed a few items, including some table football games that were quickly put to use by the young people around.

A more striking change was the presence and attitude of the Sony sales people. Last year, I made several tours inside the pyramid, but nobody paid attention to me. This year, as soon as I stopped a while to marvel at the huge display of lenses (even a 300mm f2.8 was there), I was approached by a friendly young guy, asking how he could help me (in French, of course).

I asked if I could try one of the new zooms, the 70-300 or 70-400. Sure, he said, and took me to the central counter. As soon as another photographer had finished with it, the sales guy handed over an A900 with a 70-400. Wow! I asked carefully, if I could mount it on my A700, and he said go ahead. He patiently waited until I had finished my series of test shoots. On a side note, focusing was quick and silent, and the snapshots I took at 400mm f5.6 turned out great.

Another new element was the presence of a professional photographer inside the pavilion. He had his corner where he handed some soccer balls to his models. He takes a few shots, a few minutes later he hands over the prints. I heard him instructing

Thomas Goseberg visited the show in Cannes for the second year running to give his impressions



Photos by Thomas Goseberg: top, the Cannes show entrance, Sony table football. Above, in the exhibition. Below: souvenirs from Sony's event photographer.



a child how to pose and noticed he was English. After a while my wife and I asked him if he could take our picture? Sure, he said and pointed his A900 with CZ 24-70, vertical grip and some wireless transmitter on the hot-shoe at us! He noticed my A700 and started a quick chat. He let me try his A900 with the CZ – impressive. When the next person came along to get his pic taken, he told me to do it. He instructed me how to frame it, not too much space above the head, etc. I did like it.

A few minutes later we were handed over two free prints. They were 5.5 x 8" in a Sony envelope and the background was replaced by a football stadium. Now I understood why we were given Sony soccer balls while our picture was taken!

Off we went to the Rotonde, to visit the exhibition. Another change: while last year admission was free, this year we had to pay 5 Euro per person. We were given kind of a badge with a Sony neck strap to identify us as having paid (I will continue to use this neck strap/badge after this weekend when I want to appear more official...).

The badge granted us access not only today, but the entire weekend. On top of that, the exhibition included access to further parts of the exhibition hosted in the Cannes City Hall and some of Cannes famous hotels on La Croisette (Hotel Majestic, Hotel Carlton, Hotel Miramar and Hotel Martinez). That was also new, compared to last year, where the exhibition was only in La Rotonde.

The exhibition in La Rotonde was similar to last year. Large dividers separated the space into several smaller theme-orientated areas. The major difference was the size of the photos. One of the criticisms of last years exhibition was the small size of the exposed pictures. This year Sony has listened and the prints were much larger. Rather than showing 20-30 small prints of a portfolio, typically there were only 2-6 pictures. While sizes varied, a normal picture would be at least 30-40" wide. Some of them were even up to 3 x 2 metres!

All in all, it was worth a visit. I only expected a repeat of last year but found that Sony is evolving and becoming more serious at photographic art.



Thomas Goseberg is a regular contributor to the Photoclubalpha discussion forum.



# See the whole show on the website

David Zimmerman has been announced as the winner of the coveted L'Iris D'Or Award, the 2009 Sony World Photography Awards Photographer of the Year. Zimmerman received the award at this year's Sony World Photography Awards Gala ceremony in Cannes, France on Thursday 16 April.

The American photographer's entry in the Landscape category beat off stiff competition from some of the world's finest photographers to win the esteemed title, accompanied by a \$25,000 cash prize along with Sony camera equipment. His winning landscape series 'Desert' hauntingly depicts the American southwest desert environment as a fragile ecosystem.

Zimmerman said: "My documentation of these remarkable deserts throughout Arizona, New Mexico, California and Nevada continues in an effort to influence preservation through public awareness, opinion and action." On the announcement of his award, Zimmerman said: "I am thrilled beyond belief, and I want to thank you for this award. There was some wonderful work from some wonderful photographers... I hope this work continues, to make us feel, think and laugh, and I share this award with all the photographers doing terrific work out there."

The Honorary Judging Committee comprised 12 specially selected World Photography Awards Academy members. On behalf of the Honorary Judging Committee, Bruce Davidson said: "We live in an era of environmental awareness. It is also an era of the image. Both can coexist to give us a sharper picture of the use and abuse of our deep oceans and beloved terra firma, which is far more at risk than we admit or know. Both image and meaning coincide in the imagery of photographer David Zimmerman. In his sensuous sharp focus, we become more aware of where we are as humans in the drifting sands of time."

Fellow Judge, Zelda Cheatle, added: "I am very happy that these desert landscapes won overall as they represent skill in photography, an awareness of the environment and reach beyond mere pictures of land and sky." Zimmerman received his award from Fujio Nishida, President of Sony Europe at the glittering awards ceremony in Palais des Festivals in front of an audience of VIPs and industry leaders. The eleven other professional category 2009 winners also collected their awards

## Thousands of images are displayed on-line, replicating the exhibition



Sony World Photography Awards  
Cannes 2009

Above: by Iris d'Or winner David Zimmerman – from 'Desert' series



Sony World Photography Awards  
Cannes 2009

Above: by Prince's Rainforest Project Award winner, Daniel Beltrá



at the ceremony. Vincent Foong, from Singapore, was announced as the Sony World Photography Awards Amateur Photographer of the Year for his image in the Natural History category. Neal Kartik and Pranab Kumar Aich, from India, was awarded the 2009 Student Award.

## Rainforest award

Another major announcement on the night was the winner of the new Prince's Rainforest Project (PRP) Award. Spanish professional photographer Daniel Beltrá received the prize which includes a fully-funded project to document the rainforests of the world. In a video message at the awards night, HRH The Prince of Wales, said: "Photographic imagery can tell a compelling story about the truth of the situation and, the truth is, if we lose the fight against tropical deforestation, then we lose the fight against climate change."

The final presentation of the evening went to the acclaimed French photographer and former President of Magnum Photos, Marc Riboud, winner of the 2009 Lifetime Achievement Award. Riboud was presented his award by acclaimed photographer Elliott Erwitt and received a standing ovation from the audience of over 600 guests.

Astrid Merget, Event Director of Sony World Photography Awards, said: "We are exceptionally proud of the quality of this year's winners who all demonstrate photography's enduring power as a relevant and vital medium."

The Sony World Photography Awards continues to grow and has become much more than an awards programme. Schemes such as the Student Focus initiative, the Global Tour and our week-long festival in Cannes, offer a celebration of photography and give an important platform for the international photographic community to come together to share their experiences and skills."

"We are truly honoured to be part of this impressive showcase of photographic talent," commented Yoshiyuki Nogami, Vice President of Digital Imaging at Sony Europe. "We would like to congratulate all the deserved winners and look forward to offering our continued support to this inspiring event."



To view the awards, visit the website, [www.worldphotographyawards.org](http://www.worldphotographyawards.org). You will need an up-to-date system.



# Dare you do it yourself?

Two articles on the Photoclubalpha web site – [www.photoclubalpha.com](http://www.photoclubalpha.com) – dealt recently with small modifications that worry users. The first covered my experiences changing the Alpha 900 focusing screen for one with grid line, and the second involved ordering a Chinese-made replacement chip for a pre-Apo Sigma 400mm f5.6 tele, to make it work with current cameras.

The focusing screen article was not a step by step like the lens chipping one, since the instructions for this operation are very clear and the procedure is simple and nearly foolproof. It was simply a reassurance for those worried about changing their screen, with some tips.

## Changing screens

First of all, clear a suitable table - I used a table in my studio, and lit it with a flash unit, good light is essential. Next, I made sure I had an unused cleaning cloth and a blower bulb handy; then I blew all dust off the camera, noting that the rear screen (which has an adhesive plastic protector on my A900) tended to attract dust with static.

Then the package containing the screen and instructions was opened. It includes a pink warning slip advising you how to open the container, but this is badly designed. It is meant to ensure you don't open the clamshell holder upside down and spill the contents, but the diagram is not clear in any way (it should show the direction of the latch to indicate which side is up, and does not).

The latch is attached to the top half of the plastic case, which should be opened with the Alpha logo on top. Most people will do this anyway. The instructions are pictorial, with a written commentary in each language. There are some ambiguities and imprecise descriptions, but generally they are clear and easily understood.

One opened, the screen pack resembles vintage Minolta screen changing kits, with a spring loaded tweezer tool and the screen supported so as to be easily accessed. Only open the pack when you are ready, to avoid dust landing on the face of the screen. Work with the pack to the right hand side of the camera if you are right handed, and place the camera so that access to the right side of the screen is easy (don't rotate it the other way). This view shows about the angle

David Kilpatrick goes through two simple D-I-Y modification processes – changing an Alpha 900 focusing screen, and rechipped an old Sigma



you need to work at, if you are right handed. Left handed users may prefer to place the screen box to the left of the camera, but the angle of the camera still need to be as shown. The process is simple - you remove the white tweezers, and using the nib on the end, gently press into a slot clearly visible just below the electrical contact array in the lens throat. When you do so, the frame holding the screen will open with no help other than gravity, and will rest parallel to the reflex mirror with the screen itself apparently 1-2mm above it. *Note this, it is important.*

The tweezers are then used to grab the two lugs (visible in the opened box) at the right hand end inside the camera. This is surpris-



ingly easy and it is hard to mis-locate the tool. The screen can now be lifted out without any effect on the holding frame, it is 'free' at this stage. A slot is provided in the case for placing the removed screen, before lifting up the replacement.

As you can see, having let the screen go, I rested the tweezers on the case, ready to pick up the new screen.

When you do so, the replacement is already perfectly oriented relative to the camera (the correct side is up). You introduce the new screen into the camera remembering that the old screen was not pushed down into the frame, but rested freely on it. Just dropping the screen into the corner created by the frame and focus screen bezel it sufficient to locate it correctly. No pressure or adjustment should be needed. If necessary, lift the camera body and gently tap to make the screen seat itself, before using the nib of the tool to close the frame. Again, there is only a very slight controlled spring pressure. There should be no sense of resistance. The frame clicks home securely and positively with hardly any effort.

All you need to do now is lift the old screen from its holding slot, and place it where the new one was, replace the tool, and seal the box. But Sony made a minor error in specifying the shape and weight of the box. The instant I lifted the tweezers off the edge of the box, it tipped backwards and propelled the screen on to my (clean) table top! Place a coin or some other small weight on the front edge of the case to avoid this happening. Others promptly reported the same experience.

When I checked the viewfinder, the grid screen was installed straight, but two dust specks were present. I opened the frame with the tool, again, allowing the screen to fall away from the prism, and blasted a couple of quick jets from my blower bulb, then closed it. This removed the two specks. I then did a routine air-blast sensor clean before replacing the lens (I have never needed to clean my A900 by any other means).

Finally the tweezers were replaced in the case, and everything put back in the original packaging.

For the Type L grid screen I fitted (FDA-FLIAM) no exposure program adjustment appears to be needed compared to Type G, the standard screen, but the Alpha 900 still includes a *menu entry to program the camera* for this screen. This should be done, as the Type L may have slightly varying effects on exposure according to the aperture and focal length of the lens fitted. Just because L and G settings give exactly the same result with most lenses does not mean the L setting is redundant.

Result – one camera with the type of screen I like!





*Some reports on how to rechip the lens advise dismantling the entire rear mount. This is not needed, nor is any sanding or cutting with a backsaw.*

*A pair of miniature end cutters as used in the electronics industry for trimming wire exactly will do the job – so will luthier's fret end cutters, or good pliers with high precision wire cutters.*



The trimmed new board will fit easily and firmly into the space left by the old one.

There is no need to dismantle the mount of the original series **Sigma AF TELE 400mm f5.6** lens, to bring non-functional versions (old chip) up to speed with later film and current digital SLRs. The whole process takes under five minutes, and requires two tools – a small Philips screwdriver, and a precision end cutter. The same process works for the later APO version with incompatible chip as well, and any other similar old lenses.

The appeal of the original AF TELE and the later, identically sized, AF APO TELE should be obvious. They weigh in at less than 900g in the first non-apochromatic version, which like the later apo (1053g) will only focus to around 4 metres. The cost and weight penalty for the later, much larger, Apo Tele Macro focusing down to 1.5m is considerable.

This lens – an original version in gun metal finish – is impressively solid, a real metal barrel with a precision made extending hood, lined like the rear lens tube with flock anti-reflection black. The mount is well made, the tripod collar is ultra-neat though fitted with only a 1/4 inch thread:

The dilemma is that inside this lens is a chip which means it won't function at all on digital SLRs and many later film SLRs (almost anything which actually says Dynax or Maxxum on it won't work, this lens was made for the original 5000-9000 Minolta AF series). It will not even work in a manual focus mode, as the chip reports an error, not just 'no lens fitted'.

The answer is to rechip the lens using a new contact plate array fitted with a new chip, provided for around \$60 including post by James Lao in China:

<http://eadpt.cn.webz.datasir.com/eadpen.htm>

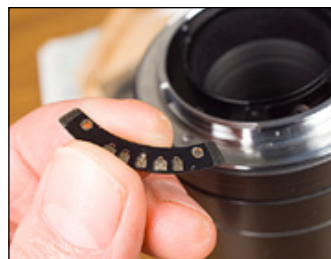
This service is absolutely reliable, I had my new chip in just four days to the UK.



The original contact array looks like this. Note that the board does allow the countersunk head screws to lie fairly flat. Removing the screws over a suitable tray, with the lens held sideways, requires a No 1 jeweller's screwdriver - 1mm or 1.5mm will do well. I used a screwdriver set with an illuminator in the handle.



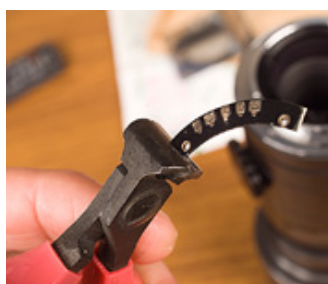
With the old board still attached to its ribbon cable, just ease it up, twist it and push it into the void the left as viewed here. If badly placed, it can interfere with the aperture mechanism, so after fitting your new chip and testing the lens, I suggest opening up again, pulling the old board out and cutting it off for good. It will never be needed again. Check the aperture lever operation anyway to make sure the board, when pushed into the lens, is not jamming the action.



The last shot is the contact side of the James Lao board. Note that it has excess substrate on the ends, which will need shaping down to fit, and that the screw holes are brass lined. This will result in the screws being very slightly raised when it is fitted, but this is not an issue, just a cosmetic difference.



On the back is the new chip, connected by small wires instead of a ribbon cable. It is not as fragile as this shot indicates, nor are you likely to damage it through static.



This is a pair of fine end cutters (so called because the clipping edge is right at the front, not set back by angled grinding/sharpening). It can be used to clip off the excess, then nibble the correct shape at each end, with minimal effort and no risk. No dust is created but little bits of board do fly off and land in watching eyes, so wear glasses or protective goggles if you do this. I wear off-the-shelf reading glasses, it makes this sort of small work much easier.



Here's how I replaced the screws. My screwdriver is a good enough fit to hold the screw and introduce it to the hole with the lens safely over the lid of the screwdriver kit. Do not stand the lens upright and do it from above, you risk losing a screw inside the lens. This way is safe.



Once fitted, it is perfectly functional though the trimmed ends and non-recessed screws make it look a touch agricultural. You could black-pen the ends I guess, but this is not going to affect flare or any other aspect of the final picture quality. Note the flock-lined rear lens tube - these optics were well made, 20 years ago.

Tested, I found that it absolutely must be stopped down to f8 to be useful.

The rechipping operation is so fast and hassle-free there is no great risk in buying one of these lenses at a bargain price, against the risk it will not work on your digital SLR. You can make it work. For 7D/5D owners where the resolution is less challenging, it would be a great buy. Do not expect fast focus – it is not – but the handling more than makes up for that. Balance and feel are just great, and the sliding collar which covers the moving focusing ring is a great design feature.





## EAST ANGLIA

### **New Quest Destination!**

9-12 June 2009 (Tuesday to Friday)

East Anglia is full of historical and picturesque villages and the landscape has a special character of its own, with 'big skies', tidal creeks, estuaries, and beaches. We will explore these at a leisurely pace over the four days, visiting such places as Dedham and Flatford ('Constable Country'), Southwold, Aldeburgh, Lavenham, and others. We will be based at West Mersea, with its fascinating frontage on the Blackwater estuary, where houseboats and occasional wrecks are subjects for the camera. A minibus will be used for travelling out each day.

Accommodation and meals are not included in the week, but Quest will be pleased to arrange B&B locally where this is required. There will be the option to take communal evening meals locally in the evenings. Seafood and oysters are specialities!

*Price £245 (deposit £75) 7 places.*

## FIGURE LIGHTING IN THE STUDIO

with Roy Taylor ARPS

(1 day, at The Camera Club,  
Kennington, London)

27 June 2009 (Saturday)

A repeat of last year's very successful workshop, where you will learn how to pose your model and use lighting to make artistic photographs of the female form. This is a challenging subject, requiring careful posing and lighting and where getting things wrong can easily lead to unsatisfactory and perhaps unfortunate results.

Roy Taylor is an expert in this field, and we are fortunate in having the use of the excellent studio at the Camera Club in London, one of the oldest and prestigious organisations in the country. Two models will be available and Roy will demonstrate various lighting methods to obtain different effects. Everyone will have the opportunity to take photographs throughout the day.

*Price £105 (deposit  
£30) 8 places only.*

## THAMES BARGE CRUISE

from Mistley, nr. Manningtree, Essex.  
15-16 July 2009 (Wednesday  
evening and all day Thursday)

Enjoy a relaxing day with this unique opportunity to sail in a genuine Thames barge! Seeing these beautiful vessels at close quarters, under full sail, is a never to be forgotten sight. Quest has chartered *Reminder*, a steel hulled barge, built in 1929. The barge offers a very special viewpoint with good opportunities for photography, including activities on deck, the barge

# Quest Workshops 2009

**Colin Westgate's QUEST workshops, sponsored by Photoworld, have moved to  
Coopers Cottage, 154 Coast Road, West Mersea, Mersea Island, Essex CO5 8NX.**

**Telephone 01206 384315. Mobile 07887 887101.**

**email [questphoto@btinternet.com](mailto:questphoto@btinternet.com). See the new website**

**[www.questphoto.co.uk](http://www.questphoto.co.uk) for details of photo trips and the full 2009 programme.**

skipper and crew, local boats at anchor and under sail, and there may even be other barges in the vicinity.

We will embark on Wednesday evening, sail with the tide early Thursday morning and return late afternoon. Arrival evening seafood platter, breakfast and lunch are catered on board. You are welcome to help the crewing if you so desire.

*Price £145 (deposit £40) Meals included. 10 places (strict limit) Price is based on double or sharing a twin or triple berth. Singles are not normally available due to the nature of the accommodation. Price includes B&B and midday meal. In the event of severe weather conditions it may be necessary to change or curtail the planned itinerary - this will be the decision of the skipper. In the extremely unlikely event that it is unsafe to sail, no refund can, regretfully, be given, but the barge, her crew and all food will remain at the disposal of the group.*

## TRADITIONAL OYSTER SMACKS AND WINKLE BRIGS

(1 day, at West Mersea, nr Colchester)  
13 September 2009 (Sunday)

Mersea native oysters are claimed to be amongst the finest in the world and this event marks the opening of the season when a multitude of traditional vessels dredge for them under sail. There is a contest for the biggest catches, and there is plenty of action! The traditional vessels, known as smacks, together with the smaller winkle brigs, are often well over 100 years old, and are truly picturesque subjects for the camera. Quest will be chartering a small motor vessel in which we will be able to move amongst the smacks for the best views of the action as well as longer distance shots with the boats under sail.

We will be on the water from about 9.30 a.m. until 1 p.m., when the contest ends. We will then be taken to a small island in the estuary for the weigh in and a delicious seafood lunch, including optional oysters if you like them. Here there will be further opportunities for photographs of the fishermen and onlookers. A fabulous and unusual day, with the feel of travelling back in time to a different way of life.

*Price £79, includes seafood  
lunch. (deposit £25) 10 places*

## CAIRNGORMS and the GLENS

### **New Quest Destination!**

12-18 October 2009

(Monday to Sunday) 6 nights

*Discount available if combined with  
the Skye/Applecross trip - see below.*

Our base will be at Beaulieu, which will be convenient for both locations. The photographic opportunities will include Loch Morlich and Glenmore Forest Park near Aviemore, and the wild Cairngorm mountains, plus the renowned north eastern Glens, including Affric and Cannich, where there should be a good display of autumn colour for us to enjoy. An additional optional feature of this trip will be a ride on the funicular railway, which travels to just below the summit of Cairngorm itself. Travel arrangements will be by air to Inverness and minibus thereafter.

*\*Turn this holiday into a  
fantastic 15-night trip and  
combine it with the Skye/  
Applecross trip and take a  
£110 discount - see below.*

*Price £745 (deposit £100) single  
supplement £90 (8 places). May be  
booked with the Skye/Applecross  
trip (see below), for a combined  
price of £1590, thereby saving over  
£100 (excluding supplements)  
Price includes dinner, B&B and  
minibus travel but not lunch  
and is based on a shared twin  
room. A supplement is payable  
for single occupation.*

## IMPROVING YOUR LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

with Colin Westgate  
and Hugh Milsom

(2 days, at Seaford, East Sussex).  
Wednesday 30 September - 1 October  
2009 (Wednesday & Thursday)

Landscape photography is often thought to be straightforward and indeed, it is not difficult to obtain reasonable pictures. Frequently, however, landscape photographs are disappointing, perhaps because of unfavourable light, poor composition or unsatisfactory printing. With the right approach, such problems can be overcome and this comprehensive workshop will cover ways and

means of improving your landscape pictures from the moment of taking to production of the final print.

The content will be a mixture of discussion, an appraisal of pictures from participants, and a field trip into the local area where there are interesting beaches and features such as the wonderful cliff scenery of the Seven Sisters. The in-depth discussion will cover the principles of landscape photography, use of colour or monochrome, digital or film. Topics such as the characteristics of different lenses, various filters, choice of subject matter, viewpoints, composition, principles of exposure, use of light and more will be included.

Vision and Interpretation are vital elements in the production of most successful landscape photographs. This includes 'pre visualisation' at the moment the picture is taken and post production prior to making the print. Both aspects will be covered, the latter using Photoshop procedures, which will be demonstrated using digital projection. A selection of images taken digitally on the workshop will be used, but if you are a film worker, you are invited to bring negatives or transparencies with you.

Both Colin Westgate and Hugh Milsom have many years of experience photographing in the landscape and both will demonstrate and discuss their individual approaches to the subject.

*Price £125 (deposit  
£40). 8 places.*

SEE WEBSITE FOR MORE  
AUTUMN SEASON COURSES

## ISLE OF SKYE AND THE APPLECROSS PENINSULA

18-27 October 2009

(Saturday to Tuesday week).

9 nights - 6 Skye and 3 Lochcarron.

Guest House and Hotel based

*Discount available if combined with  
Cairngorms & Glens trip - see below.*

Year after year, this is one of our most popular destinations and it is not difficult to understand why, as the "Misty Isle" is surely one of the most beautiful parts of the United Kingdom, full of mood and mountains, rivers, bays and lochs. There is all that the landscape photographer could want -



# Duncan McEwan

## photo activities

### 2009 programme

but Skye does not give it up that easily, as it is well known for the fickleness of its weather. But the weather makes the mood, and magic moments are never far away - if only the photographer is in the right place at the right time! Following the success of last year's extension to the dramatic Applecross peninsula, this has again been included in the schedule.

On Skye, we will, as usual, be based at The Skye Picture House, near Broadford, which is run by photographers Steve & Gill Terry. It is situated in a stunning location, at the edge of a loch, with superb views, especially for the morning sunrise. Otters and seals are often seen. A talk by photographer Ken Bryan, who lives on Skye, will be arranged if he is available. Our second location will be at Lochcarron, situated right by the Loch, with good access to Applecross.

*\*Turn this holiday into a fantastic 15-night trip and combine it with the Cairngorm and Glens trip above, and take a £110 discount - see below.*

*Price £955 (deposit £200). Single supplement £125. Cost includes full board accommodation, with packed lunch on Skye, and half board at Lochcarron. The price is based on a shared twin room and a supplement is payable for single occupation. It also includes minibus travel on Skye and Applecross but not the cost of flights. May be booked with the Skye/Applecross trip (see below), for a combined price of £1590, thereby saving over £100 (excluding supplements).*

#### **NORTH YORKSHIRE, with JOE CORNISH**

*1-6 November 2009*

*(Sunday to Friday) 5 nights.*

Joe Cornish is arguably Britain's finest contemporary landscape photographer and his use of light and composition, in conjunction with his total commitment, has resulted in a series of magnificent pictures of the landscape of the British Isles and elsewhere. His work is widely known and appears regularly in calendars and on cards and he is the author of several superb books on landscape photography.

The workshop will be based at the Lion Inn, Blakey Ridge, the highest inn on the North Yorkshire Moors. This remote and spectacular setting is an ideal location, and the open fires are something to enjoy in the evenings!

Daily field trips will be a feature of the workshop and thus some walking will be involved. You will need to be reasonably mobile for this. We will also be viewing and

discussing Joe's pictures and an essential part of the workshop will include a constructive appraisal of pictures from participants. This really is a workshop not to be missed, as it represents a very rare opportunity to work with this top professional landscape artist in his own area.

Joe regularly leads workshops in the UK and his enthusiasm and experience will guarantee an inspiring four days. Not to be missed, but book early, as places will be quickly filled.

*Price £775 (deposit £100).*

*Single supplement £75. 10 places. Price includes B&B accommodation on a shared room basis, plus minibus travel to Yorkshire if required. It does not include evening and midday meals. A supplement is payable for single occupation.*

#### **THE ARDECHE, FRANCE**

*New Quest destination!*

*in conjunction with Experience Ardeche*

*15-22 November 2009*

*(Sunday to Sunday) 7 nights.*

The Ardeche region is rich with photographic opportunities, with dramatic landscapes, large rivers, ancient forest and historical towns and villages. The variety of subject matter in the area will ensure a full and interesting week and of course we will enjoy the local ambience and French cuisine! We will be staying at the Belvedere Hotel, close by the famous Pont d'Arc, at the head of the Ardeche Gorge. Situated only 6km from the town of Vallon-Pont-d'Arc along the gorge road, Le Belvedere is a popular destination for the French tourists who prefer the tranquillity away from the hustle and bustle. A great opportunity to really enjoy this magical and welcoming part of France nestled right on the edge of the Réserve Naturelle. Quest has teamed up with Experience Ardeche for this event, a company specialising in activity holidays. Their knowledge of the area will guarantee us a full and interesting week.

The most convenient travel option is by Ryanair from Luton to Nîmes, where free transfer to the hotel will be provided. Other possibilities are by train (Eurostar and TGV). Please enquire if you would like more information.

*Price £825 (deposit £200).*

*Single supplement £100. Maximum 10 places. Price includes Dinner B&B, and travel in France during the week. It is based on a shared en suite room, and a supplement is payable for a single occupancy. Cost of flights or other transportation to France is not included.*

#### **HARRIS & LEWIS**

*6-13 June 2009*

Explore the beauty of Lewis (4 nights) and Harris (3 nights) - fantastic sandy beaches, dunes, machair, boulder shores, sea cliffs, sea stacks, as well as bleak peat moors.

Photograph iconic landmarks such as the Callanish Standing Stones at dawn and dusk. Marvel at the most stunning stretches of sand to be found anywhere. Evening light anywhere along the West coast can be absolutely stunning. On-site E6 film processing. Inversnaid: 01877-386254; info@inversnaidphoto.com; www.inversnaidphoto.com

#### **ISLE OF SKYE**

*10-17 September 2009*

Skye offers everything a landscape photographer could wish for - the Cuillin, Old Man of Storr, the Quiraing, Neist Point. Loch Slapin & Blaven, Elgol and many more. A trip to Loch Coruisk in the heart of the Black Cuillin may also be undertaken. Based in Portree (4 nights) and Kyle of Lochalsh (3 nights) with time in Kintail (Eilean Donan Castle etc). Co-led with Lee Frost. Photo Adventures: 01665-830523; info@leefrost.co.uk; www.photoadventures.co.uk

#### **ORKNEY**

*26 September - 3 October 2009*

Orkney is steeped in Norse and Viking history, as well as having some of the finest Neolithic sites in Europe - Skara Brae, Ring of Brodgar, Standing Stones of Stenness. The Atlantic coast offers wild, dramatic scenery - geos, caves, sea stacks, arches, the cliffs. A highlight will be the visit to the Island of Hoy where

Rackwick Bay is considered one of the most beautiful places in Orkney. Light and Land: 01432-839111; contactus@lightandland.co.uk; www.lightandland.co.uk

#### **TORRIDON**

*8-13 October 2009*

Torridon has become a firm favourite with landscape photographers due to wonderful mountains, glens, lochs and coast. There is no better time to see it than in late Autumn when, apart from the colours, wonderful atmospheric conditions can occur. Based in Gairloch. Co-led with Lee Frost. Photo Adventures: 01665-830523; info@leefrost.co.uk; www.photoadventures.co.uk

#### **ASSYNT AND N.W. HIGHLANDS**

*17-23 October 2009*

Based in Ullapool, this trip will explore the areas of Coigach and Assynt where there are many distinctively shaped mountains including Stac Polly and Suilven. Loch Assynt offers Ardvreck Castle and the tree-clad islands will prove irresistible. North of Lochinver is a wonderful coastline that includes fantastic sands and the rugged headland of Stoer Point. On-site E6 film processing. Inversnaid: 01877-386254; info@inversnaidphoto.com; www.inversnaidphoto.com

**Bookings should be made with the individual organisers.**

**Information can be had from them or from: Duncan McEwan: 01505-612673; mcewan@dunarden.fsnet.co.uk; www.dmcewanphotography.co.uk**



*Duncan McEwan thanks Alan R Thomson of Edinburgh Zoo after his talk at the Edinburgh meeting on March 22nd, which was very well attended.*





# SIGMA



## OUR WORLD

**Tom Servais:** Born in Miami in 1953, Servais moved to California at the age of 20 to 'find himself' and pursue surfing. After taking several photography classes, he began his career as a photographer with Surfer magazine. Fueled by the joy of turning his passion into a career, he travels the world in pursuit of an endless summer.

*Photo data: SIGMA 18-250mm F3.5-6.3 DC OS HSM, 1/1,000-second exposure at f/6.3.*

### TOM SERVAIS SHOOTS THE WORLD WITH A SIGMA LENS.

**A man hits the waves in the gentle rays of a setting California sun.**

This idyllic moment was captured by a high magnification, compact Sigma zoom lens. Designed for digital SLR cameras and equipped with Sigma's original Optical Stabiliser function, this hyper-zoom lens uses Special Low Dispersion (SLD) glass elements and aspherical lens elements to produce excellent image quality throughout the entire zoom range. The Super multi-layer coating helps reduce flare and ghosting and the Hyper Sonic Motor (HSM) ensures a quiet and high-speed AF.

\*Vignetting (a darkening of the corners of the image) will occur if the lens is used with digital SLR cameras with image sensors larger than APS-C size or 35mm SLRs, and APS SLRs

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