

The Nikonian

40

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ON OUR COVER:

Nikonian Tom Trujillo (tjtrujillo) provides our cover shot, showing the massive dust cloud descending on Curry Village at Yosemite National Park in early October. The rockslide disrupted the 8th Annual Photo Adventure Trip (ANPAT) and thankfully nobody was seriously injured. Tom's account of the events of the day are on pages 10 to 16. This image was taken with his brand new Nikon D700, and an AF Zoom-Nikkor 35-70mm f/2.8D lens. He was shooting at ISO 3200, and this image was captured at 1/60 second with an f/4 aperture.

This Page: Nikonians co-founder J. Ramón Palacios (jrp) shot this image of a fallen tree during the 8th ANPAT at Yosemite National Park. He tells us "I was taking images of the lake with some rock in the foreground when a beautiful tourist came by and asked why I was kneeling down ---while she held her point and shoot at arm's length, standing up straight. So thanks to her question as I was explaining, and tried to show her the technique I found this gorgeous fallen tree which made for a much better composition. I said thank you." He used his Nikon D2X with a Nikkor 12-24mm f/4G AF-S DX lens set to an aperture of f/22. His shutter speed was 1/200 sec at ISO 200.

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Greetings fellow Nikonians!

In the space of less than two weeks Nikonians were involved in a triumphant week-long exhibition in Cologne, Germany, followed by a near tragic incident in Yosemite Valley, USA.



jrp
Administrator
Charter Member
Co-Founder
25475 posts

The high point was our participation in the 2008 Photokina; the second time we have made our presence known on an International level.

Just like at 2006 Photokina, we were the only photo community present at the show with a booth and a full slate of daily activities.

This year we were pleased to receive many visits from leaders in

the photo imaging industry including Nikon representatives, and unlike our 2006 presence, we found very quickly that among these leaders, in just two short years since the last Photokina, we had already become a household name.



This was a monumental leap from the earlier years when my dear friend and co-founder Bo Stahlbrandt would make the trip to Cologne by himself, passing out flyers and talking to anyone who would listen about this community of ours.

Figure 1 - Mr. Byung-Ik Mah with the MAGICA camera support system. Photo by J. Ramón Palacios (jrp)

Our 2008 participation at Photokina was enhanced by the presence of Markins President Byung-Ik Mah, who joined us in the unveiling of our new MAGICA camera support system.

Mr. Mah joined our list of VIP's at the booth, which included Gary Fong (demonstrating his line of photo flash diffusers) and Pascal Baetens, who demonstrated fine-art nude photography techniques.

Bo and I want to make special note of the long hours and dedicated behind the scenes work performed by our Nikonians office representatives, Hendric Schneider and Jürgen Plessing. Hendric is our Mass Media and Communications Director and Jürgen is in charge of our eCommerce operations. They were joined by our Community Support Director Gerold Brinkema (Asgard) and Corporate Sponsors and Advertisers Relations representative Katarina Mintalova in forming the backbone of our booth staff.

Their efforts would have been much harder had it not been for the assistance of Martin Joergensen (On Location podcaster), Albert Esschendal (alberte) and Simon Leech (DigitalHeMan), who helped run the booth as well as demonstrate photo techniques and Gary Fong products.

Last, but certainly not least, we are grateful to the many Nikonians volunteers who came to help pass out flyers and draw visitors to our booth. Special acknowledgement must go to Thomas Berg (twberg), who devoted full days throughout the Photokina,



Figure 2 - Jürgen Plessing, on left, discusses fine art nude photography shooting plans with Pascal Baetens. Photo by J. Ramón Palacios (jrp)

sacrificing the opportunity to visit the many exhibitors on hand.

This collection of Nikonians from all walks of life formed a cohesive and aggressive force of friendly and knowledgeable representatives of our community, and they were instrumental in promoting our reputation as the largest Nikon users community in the world.

Of course, even though we treasure our Nikon gear, we must acknowledge that as photographers we also rely heavily on all the other equipment and accessories that make our lives so much easier.



Figure 3 - Nikon Nordic AB Key Account Manager Tobias Lehtinen (center) dropped in to say hello, carrying a brand new Nikon D90 to discuss with Nikonians co-founders Bo Stahlbrandt (bgs) and J. Ramón Palacios (jrp). Photo by Tom Boné (flashdeadline)

We would particularly like to single out HP and Apple Corporation for their assistance. HP provided free large prints produced by an HP Designjet Z3200 printer, and our visual presentations were made with four Apple Mac Pro 8-core, Two 2.8GHz computers, feeding four 23" Apple Cinema Displays.

Daily operations with these units was assisted by Apple computer consultant Mitch Enzmann.

The Photokina activities kept Bo and I busy for long hours, but we both took comfort in the fact that we would soon meet again in Yosemite Valley, USA for what should be a relaxing week of friendship and great outdoor shooting at the Annual Nikonians Photo Adventure Trip (ANPAT).

Little did I know as I gave Bo a farewell hug at the train station in Cologne that our plans would be interrupted by the force of Nature.

I should have had a premonition that something would be unusual during this time, when just before I packed up for the ANPAT I heard from Bo that he would not be able to attend, due to an emergency on the home front. This would be the first time I attended an ANPAT without my partner.

Our 8th Annual Nikonians Photo Adventure Trip (ANPAT) will most likely be the most often discussed ANPAT in Nikonians history. The early October week-long outing had all the elements of another successful ANPAT, especially after we were fortunate to engage the services of Michael A. Mariant as our trip coordinator.

Michael's reputation as a noted authority on photography in the Yosemite Valley was already well-established and earlier this year we were fortunate in enlisting him to join the Nikonians Academy faculty as instructor on the Master your Vision series of workshops.

Upon arrival at our cabins in Curry Village we busied ourselves with preparations for a rigorous daily schedule of shooting. Michael's advance work had already equipped us with five vans.

The shooting program was extremely well detailed. Each van received a guide with maps and annotations. We would get up very early every morning to catch the sunrise. On our second day, Tuesday, a large boulder-- or slab of granite came down the mountain next to Curry Village. Fortunately, nobody was in their cabins or in the tents. Nobody was hurt; just a bit scared.

Following an assessment by geologists later in the day, we were assured the area was safe. Our band of some 30 Nikonians was just a small portion of many other visitors booked in cabins and tents throughout Curry Village.



Figure 4 - David Mathre (david_mathre) got this close-up of the geologist team in a helicopter assessing the damage after the first rockslide.

The place was packed with small children from a primary public school. It

was the following morning, Wednesday, when our ANPAT activities were once again rudely interrupted. This time it was much worse. All of our vans except one were already on the road, but the last van was still at the Village. Suddenly, a much greater rockslide than the previous one shattered the morning calm.

Nikonian Tom Trujillo (tjtrujillo) and Michael Mariant helped rescue children who were cut by flying debris (Tom's eyewitness account and photos from the scene are in this issue on page 11). I have seen all of Tom's photos, including some that are not published here.



Figure 5 - James Knighten (emi_fiend) took this shot of Tom Trujillo (tjtrujillo) at Glacier Point before the second rock slide.

It is obvious from a few of the images showing men and women half naked running out from the shower-houses in panic that this 70,000 ton rockslide quickly had everyone's attention.

Tom, a former search and rescue trained veteran of the U.S. Navy, was the one who first came to the children-- took them out-- and delivered them into the safe hands of the troop leaders-- or their mothers. Many of us already on the road heard the commotion from miles away, and although immediately informed it took time before we could gather everyone up to assess the damages and figure out what we would be doing for the next few days.

It was then, after we had counted all heads and started making decisions that the true meaning of being a Nikonian came to me. It was a sobering thought to know that when the rockslide created a mad dash from Curry Village, it was a group of Nikonians led by Tom and Mike who were running in the opposite direction, looking to help those scared and injured children instead of running away.

Michael Mariant's connections as a photographer for the Associated Press, combined with images taken by our Nikonians on the scene and atop Glacier Point immediately led to photos taken by our members being distributed worldwide. Obviously decisions had to be made to abandon that site --even if without luggage-- and get our group relocated to disrupt the ANPAT the least possible. That's when Michael Mariant's experience and contacts in the area where he has held numerous workshops became invaluable.

We had to be making decisions minute by minute as far as accommodations and places to eat. All of these inconveniences would have soured the mood of any photographer who had just spent a considerable sum of money to enjoy a week of shooting and camaraderie. I am most humbled by the fact that exactly the opposite reaction set in with our ANPAT 8 group.

We were mostly grateful that we were there and alive, that none of us was injured, that miraculously there were no fatalities and that we all doubled our efforts to make sure we still had a great time to enjoy and capture images in Ansel Adam's world of wonder.



Figure 6 - The ANPAT 8 participants pose for a group photo in Curry Village.
Photo by Nikonians Image Doctor Rick Walker.

So, in the end, extraordinary photos were made, and on departing we all gave each other a much firmer and appreciative handshake than I recall from previous ANPATS. Everyone said, "Sign me in for ANPAT 9" And, after all were gone and I once again boarded a plane to head from home after a week of being in the company of fellow Nikonians, I kept thinking of the one comment made as we were saying our goodbyes:

"Last year when we were running out from Yellowstone with a snowstorm on our heels-- we understood why you named these ANPATS- where the A means adventure-- but this year you topped it and from now on "ADVENTURE" will have to be in bold letters.

Amen to that my friend. :-)

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Nikonians offers several levels of membership. Of course there is a free, basic membership, but we invite you to enjoy the fun and benefits of Silver, Gold and Platinum membership levels providing you with sell & buy opportunities, image upload, free shipping and more. Nikonians is a not-for-profit community. All capital generated through our operations (The Nikonians Community, The PhotoProShop and The Nikonians Academy) are reinvested to sustain our growth. Each membership counts and we take this opportunity to thank you for your support!

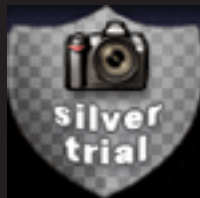
Bo Stahlbrandt and J. Ramón Palacios, Founders of Nikonians



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Contests Update

Thomas Spain (Countryboy)

of USA, is the September segment winner with his image entitled "Praying Mantis." His image will go on to the finals for [The Best of Nikonians – 2008 Images.](#)

Hewlett Packard one of the contests sponsors will be providing Thomas with an A610 Printer. Comments from the Judges include: "Unique combination and well composed" "Everything is right with this image. Technically perfect. Great sharpness, color, composition. He captured the mantis at just the right moment." "Lots of attitude, "You looking at me?". Beautiful, simple colours combined with a pin sharp image."

Thomas describes himself as an avid nature photographer who enjoys shooting wildlife in their natural habitat. The praying mantis image was taken in his backyard. He prints his own images using an HP Pro B9180 printer also will matte and frame his favorites. He jokingly likes to call it "Wild to Wall Photography."

His image was taken with a Nikon D2X. with a 1/13 sec exposure at f/18, using ISO 100. He also used natural light, a cable release, mirror locked up, Markins M10 on a Gitzo CF tripod, reflector (white matte board) and a sun shade.



Contests Update

Our October Winner is **Daryl Godkin (dgwpg)** from Canada, with his image entitled "The Blue Room." Daryl's image will also go on to the finals for The Best of Nikonians – 2008 Images.

PhaseOne one of the contests sponsors will be providing Daryl with a PhaseOne 4 software package.

Daryl's photo was taken in Kolmannskuppe ghost town near Lüderitz, Namibia. He's a familiar Nikonian, having taken 2nd Place, Landscape Category, in the Nikonians Photographer of the Year 2006 Contest.

We asked Daryl to give us his thoughts on the image:

"Upon entering this room, I was immediately drawn to the uniformity of the doorways and the natural vanishing lines they create. The soft morning sun illuminated the colorful rooms with varying light, while the peeling paint and other textures completed the scene. After a few different exposures I was able to realize my vision. Location, light and subject – that's all that is required. The technical details are as follows: Nikkor 12-24mm on a D200, 0.5s at f/11, 200 ISO, supported by a Markins ball head on a Gitzo tripod."



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Yosemite Rockslide adds challenges for ANPAT 8 Nikonians

About the authors:

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25475 posts

Tom Trujillo (tjtrujillo)

Gold Member
Nikonian since March 23, 2002
945 posts

Jim Nichols (JungleJim)

Platinum Member
Nikonian since Aug 2, 2004
50 posts

A year of planning and extensive logistics was interrupted by 40 seconds of Mother Nature's fury. For the thirty Nikonians gathered to capture the Yosemite National Park's offerings of spectacular photo opportunities, a subtle warning had already been provided in the advance publicity for the 8th Annual Photo Adventure Trip (ANPAT):

"Very few things can improve your photography more than an ANPAT, shooting in the company of fellow Nikonians, sharing tips and tricks, laughter and friendship; even moans and groans at this photo boot camp."

The "boot camp" reference was to early morning starts in order to capture sunrises at the most scenic locations, traveling in six van-loads for the better part of the day. The Nikonians campsite, Curry Village was a Spartan camp, with very few amenities in the cabins.

Nikonians co-founder J. Ramón Palacios describes the start of the adventure:

After trying for three years to go to Yosemite for an ANPAT we were lucky to be able to hire Michael Mariant as a faculty member of the Nikonians Academy and that connection allowed us to get accommodations at the Yosemite Valley. This ANPAT was important for me because my partner Bo had to cancel at the least minute. Nevertheless we made it to the Fresno Airport in California where we gathered five seven-passenger vans that would be utilized by six Nikonians to be a bit more comfortable. We received all our members flying in at the airport, and at the very end Steve Johnson (reuben) and I merrily drove in to the Curry Village resort where we had made reservations for all of us to stay from October 4 to the morning of October 11.

The program was extremely well detailed. Each van received a guide with maps and annotations and we had a schedule that included all of us in our van groups departing all sunrise to make the best of the light.

Our first clue that something was not going to be going good for us was on Tuesday morning, October 7. A large boulder, or slab of granite, came down the mountain under which Curry Village is located.

Fortunately nobody was in their cabins or in the tents-- nobody was hurt-- simply scared. There was no damage to the Nikonians cabins. The place was crowded with children from a primary school which was having a visit to the park. All was joy and laughter for the kids and the guardians and parents.



Figure 1 - David Mathre shot this photo of geologists checking the rock face after the Tuesday slide.

ANPAT Adventure

We made a decision to wait until the professional geologists came to fly in to the mountains in helicopters. The geologists said it was safe and we returned. Then, on Wednesday morning, with all vans out and only one remaining (waiting for their breakfast bags) just before 7 a.m. local time, a much larger boulder came crashing down. It created a tremendous noise which many of our members could hear from a distance. I was far enough away that I vaguely heard it, and my first thought was of our Nikonians.

Tom Trujillo (tjtrujillo) picks up the story:

At 7 a.m. our van mates (van 2) were to muster at the amphitheater located for the most part at the center of Curry Village. We were slowly making our way to the van and I happened to look back and see a section of the granite wall come loose followed almost immediately by a thundering boom.

It's interesting that many folks told me, and I have since read, that the earth shook. I can't say that it did. What caught my eye and made me bring my camera up was the dust cloud that formed immediately in front of the wall at the same elevation as the break.

I was taking pictures in between fumbling with the camera which had an older AF 35-70mm f/2.8D Nikkor lens with a polarizer still on from it from the previous sunset session. Fumbling to take the polarizer off, fumbling to figure out how to quick change ISO speed etc (I had only had the D700 about a week before ANPAT started). Everything happened within a few seconds. As I was taking pictures, I heard the screams -- oh my god's, etc -- that you would hear in such an event. During this process, the dust cloud reached ground level and was coming towards our group very much like the 9/11 videos we see on TV.



Figure 2 - Tom Trujillo's sequence shows the EXIF time recorded by the camera. By his timing, his first photo begins at 6:57:21 a.m.



Figure 3 - 16 seconds later, panicked tourists run for safety, some still trying to get dressed.

ANPAT Adventure

No kidding; that's what I was thinking. What really woke me up was seeing a man and a woman with some kids running, tripping and falling while trying to carry their kids. When I saw her fall through the D700 viewfinder, that's when I slung the camera to my back and ran towards them as they were just about to be engulfed by the dust cloud. Probably 30-40 yards or so, but by the time I got to them they had picked each other up and the kids and ran past me. I have the pics of them tripping.

As they ran past me, I heard screaming coming from behind the first row of cabins and knowing that there were several more rows followed by an unknown number of tents behind those, I kept going past the cabins. I got behind the cabins but in front of the tent area and saw and heard a kid at the same moment slowly walking toward me. It was hard to tell his age because it was

very cloudy from the dust kicked up. He had a blood on his forehead and as I picked him up to move him out of the slide area the arm that I had on his back was completely bloody. I handed him off to a woman that may have been his mother as she was addressing him about his forehead and picked up another kid that seemed to be a little stunned and handed him off as well. Again, this is all in seconds.

After I handed off the second kid, I noticed that a couple men had run past me, over the tree, into the tent area. I didn't see anyone left in the area so I took a few pictures and about that time Mike Mariant and some of the park rangers showed up and shooed me away from the site. I left, with a quick stop by a restroom to clean up my very wet arm from the bleeding kid and the little that got on the D700. **Interviewed two weeks later, Tom admitted that he still**



Figure 4 - Tom raises the camera to catch the dust cloud descending on Curry Village. This is the same image we feature on our front cover.



Figure 5 - The dust cloud hits Curry Village roughly 30 seconds after Tom first hears the commotion.

ANPAT Adventure

hadn't gotten around to cleaning all the dust off his brand new D700. While Tom, Mike Mariant and Tom's van-team were on the scene at Curry Village for the action, Jim Nichols (JungleJim) had an eagle's eye view from above:

At the outset of my third ANPAT with Nikonians' I thought I knew what I was in store for. Early 4 a.m. awakenings for sunrise alpine glow, lots of great times with my van mates, sunset setups, walking, wading, climbing for that oh-so-special shot, meeting new and returning fellow Nikonians ANPAT members, and lots of finger pushing on that shutter button in hopes of a few memorable shots. But nowhere on the itinerary did it or anyone, including JRP, mention taking part in a natural disaster and getting a picture published. By Wednesday morning of the weeklong trip, I had my routine down.

However, I was still anxious to get up that Wednesday morning to ride up to



Figure 6 - This photo of the men running into the tree area by Tom Trujillo was one of the ones picked up by the Associated Press.

Glacier Point overlook. The prior day there had been a late afternoon rockslide from the very point where our Van 5 was headed to shoot the Half Dome morning alpine glow. A great chance to peer over the edge and see where all the rock had come from. We arrived in plenty of time to get all setup. A line of tripods and cameras all pointed to that famous mountain cliff view. As usual, it was hurry up and wait for it to happen. Look at the watch.

Close to 7am. I was imagining the other vans off on their trips and everyone needing some morning coffee. Then we all heard it. Around 6:55 a.m. A very loud booming sound similar to a jet engine or a sonic boom. But the noise continued and we were compelled to lean over the railing to witness a cloud of rock dust descend down the cliff to the very place we had just been sleeping in Curry Village. OMG! (We all said this a lot).



Figure 7 - Jim Nichols catches the rockslide at the very beginning. His EXIF time shows nearly two minutes before Tom Trujillo started shooting, but don't forget, they did not have their camera times synchronized.

ANPAT Adventure

Time slowed as the realization sunk in and a déjà-vu feeling transfixed us. My D300 was all set up with filters and locked into the tripod waiting for the sunrise glow across the valley (it never did happen). I quickly grabbed my backup D200 w/ 18-200 already set to Program mode as I leave it to be ready to point and shoot. That's pretty much just what I did. Also hanging over the cliff with me was Phil Boggs with his camera and Rick Walker (who was empty handed). Other van members were above us watching in silence. I took pictures for 25 minutes, but the event happened in those first few minutes. It was very hard to look away as the dust rolled into the valley looking more like a covering of morning dew.

Time enough to get out my small binoculars and scan below. We were able to see the path the rock slide took on its terrifying journey into the village trees. As we passed those around, we chimped all the photos to see what had been captured. Rick called Michael Mariant to check in and tell him we had a few pics if they could be used by his connections with the Associated Press. Rick relayed Michael's story about Tom Trujillo, that all ANPATers were safe and to return to base camp. We were all just in a state of disbelief. What are the odds of two avalanches in 18 hours and we were lucky enough to witness and record this morning's event from our vantage point. Packing our gear up for the return was done, post haste and the van was in a very somber mood as we returned to Curry Village.

The next few hours were passed sharing the trauma of bearing witness, processing photos, finding a laptop, contacting the AP, transmitting files and many group meetings to recover the day and the rest of the trip. Several wrenches were tossed at us by the event, namely no access to the Village and our cabins. It was frustrating to see my cabin and not be able to run through the restricted area for a few moments and grab my suitcase. Oh well, what you have is what you got until the area was cleared. I took that opportunity to buy some more Smartwool socks, and a couple of souvenir tee shirts. Michael did a yeoman's job to work with the Yosemite relations folks to rearrange our lodging and meals over the next several days. When we were at last able to return to the village, another Nikonian, Christopher Kuvlesky (RngrCSK) was on the scene in his official Ranger uniform working with his team to get our gear out of the restricted village cabins. One brother Nikonian helping another, a fitting end to the event.

The big finale dinner on Friday still came too soon for everyone. Many had missed some part of the original schedule due to rearrangement of locations, but that meant just a great excuse to return to Yosemite perhaps in a different season. What an incredible experience this ANPAT was (and my other two) and I plan to do it again. Maybe Nikonians will have to have several levels of trips: Laidback ANPAT with only a few early morning rises, a Traditional ANPAT with the tight exhausting schedule and the newest: Extreme Adventure ANPAT-our 8th ANPAT members have definitely "Been There and Done That" one. I would not have missed it for anything. Great memories of the pictures and fellow ANPAT members. That's what Nikonians is all about.



Figure 8 - Jim Nichols photo of Park Rangers helping Nikonians collect their gear. The ANPAT participants were grateful to all, including one who turned out to be a fellow Nikonian: Christopher Kuvlesky (RngrCSK)

ANPAT Adventure

Once the excitement of the rockslide and the aftermath was over, it was up to ANPAT coordinator Michael Mariant and co-founder J. Ramon Palacios to salvage the rest of the adventure. Now they were virtually stranded, with nothing but the clothes on their backs and their camera gear in their vans. JRP concludes:

When we heard about Tom and Mike and his van group's close call, it was then that we came to realize the true meaning of being a Nikonian. They made themselves busy caring first for others. It's a bad time for a joke, but it was interesting that they first took some pictures. Thanks to the fact that Michael Mariant-- besides being a faculty member of the Nikonians Academy is also an Associated Press photographer, some of our Nikonians photos made the front pages of many newspapers. He contacted AP, told them about the event, and let them know we had images. We all had gathered as soon as possible at the Yosemite Village Center. We spread the news among the members. I noticed that for some time we all remained in silence while images were prepared to be sent to the AP news desk.

Obviously decisions had to be made to abandon that site. We needed to be relocated to disrupt the ANPAT the least possible, and that's when Michael Mariant's experience and contacts in the area became invaluable. He has held numerous workshops in the area and knew exactly what to do. We were not able to collect our things from the cabins for safety and security reasons, so we dispersed to do a little shopping. We found no outlet that could sell us underwear. Only t-shirts and coffee mugs and refrigerator magnets (which of course we bought, along with toothpaste and shavers). We re-programmed the ANPAT schedule on the spot, and Michal Mariant saw the need for an uplifting experience, so he was very generous, and took two of the vans to a special place-- which was one of the favorites of Ansel Adams and inspired the book "The Quiet Light."

The site was absolutely magnificent. You could not hear even a whisper in there. Everyone was immersed in their own thoughts-- but also because they were overwhelmed by the beauty of the surroundings-- and thinking that they could be standing where Ansel Adams made some of the best of his photographs. We spent the remaining nights in different hotels. Rooms were scarce so we all had to double up, even if we had made reservations for single rooms.

-- And this is where the understanding of everyone was very valuable. Those of us who had routine medicines we take daily had to wait a day before we could collect our things from the cabins. The park rangers helped us by giving us forms to fill out, then going to the cabins and collecting everything we had itemized.

They recovered 100 percent of everything that was listed by us-- we spent the most of the next afternoon picking up our luggage and then being scattered to new hotels. It wasn't too long before everybody was in better spirits. We had to be making decisions minute by minute as far as accommodations and places to eat and all of this was directly negotiated by Michael Mariant. As the ANPAT came to a close we celebrated the fact that we were alive, we made good pictures, and our friendships strengthened in the face of adversity.

Editor's Note:

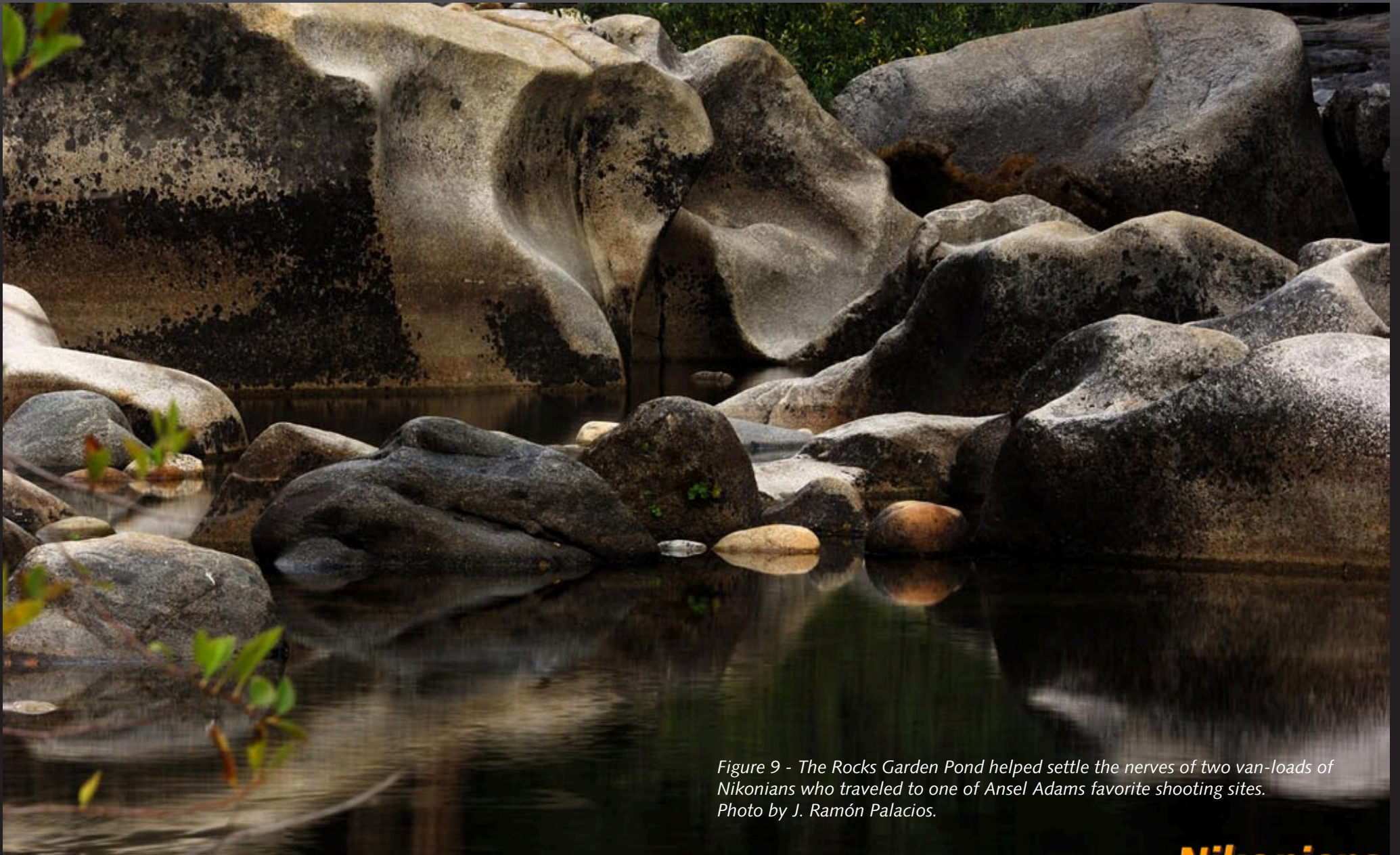
Even though they were severely disrupted, the 8th ANPAT Nikonians came away with a large selection of outstanding images. Check out the [8th ANPAT Gallery](#) pages to see their results.

Also, for a first-hand podcast account from ANPAT coordinator Michael Mariant, download [The Image Doctors show #77.](#)

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ANPAT Adventure



*Figure 9 - The Rocks Garden Pond helped settle the nerves of two van-loads of Nikonians who traveled to one of Ansel Adams favorite shooting sites.
Photo by J. Ramón Palacios.*

Nikonians presence strongly felt at "the Big Show"

Non-stop action from start to finish, Photokina 2008 drew the largest Nikonians presence from Day One.



flashdeadline
Tom Boné
Chief Editor
Member since
7-Apr-2002
3580 posts

Nikonians [co-founders](#) J. Ramón Palacios (jrp) and Bo Stahlbrandt (bgs) had a busy schedule ready for fellow Nikonians at the 30th edition of [Photokina](#), in Cologne, Germany.

The Nikonians booth in Hall 2.1 was within a short walk and an escalator ride from the Nikon booth, and thousands of visitors

made sure they dropped in on both. A highlight for the Team at the Nikonians booth was the steady appearance of worldwide Nikon representatives. They came from as far away as South Africa and Australia, and as nearby as Sweden and Germany.

Many took the time to let Bo and Ramón know they had been following the Nikonians community activities, and they made sure to thank them for our support of the Nikon brand. The major focus for the Team was to



Figure 1 - J. Ramón Palacios (jrp) is shown discussing Nikon gear with (from left) Romi Jacobs, Marketing and Brand Manager and Stefan van der Walt, Managing Director, of Nikon South Africa.

keep up with a hectic schedule of daily activities, which included a daily drawing to award a Markins Q3 Emille Ball Head; two live model shooting sessions a day hosted by fine art nude shooting expert Nikonian Pascal Baetens and hosting appearances by Gary Fong (founder of Gary Fong Inc.) and Mr. Byung-Ik Mah (founder of Markins Professional Photographic Products).

Following the same pattern as the 2006 Photokina, a major crowd attraction was turned in by Pascal Baetens, Nikonians Fine Art Gallery Curator, who showed visitors his proven methods for producing fine-art nude photography.

Pascal's demonstrations were followed live, and on screen thanks to computers provided by Apple. The Apple presence was obvious throughout the booth, as they helped provide visual presentations with four [Apple Mac Pro 8-core computers](#), feeding four 23" Apple Cinema Displays. They were also hooked



Figure 2 - Pascal Baetens talks with his model while presenting one of his twice a day fine-art nude photo sessions. Photo by On Location podcaster Martin Joergensen.

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in to an [HP Designjet Z3200 printer](#), which was busy churning out free enlargements for Nikonians members visiting the booth between shows and demonstrations.

Also drawing crowds was Gary Fong, who described his connection with the Nikonians community, saying he not only enjoys selling to Nikonians, but also appreciates the feedback in our forums.

"In many cases if something is not working right I can see it being discussed," he said. "It rarely comes down to a need to change the product itself. In most cases I just need to improve, or clarify the directions."

He took delight in assisting the Nikonians Team who were armed with an assortment of his diffusers, giving them tips on how to speed up their demonstrations, and how to handle the gear.

During his demonstration he gave credit to his following of the Nikonians forums for learning of a "bonus" Lightsphere feature he had not intentionally included. "It turns out that the white dome on the Lightsphere is being used as a very handy tool to adjust white balance." Gary Fong's line of innovative flash accessories is available at the Nikonians [Photo Pro Shop](#).

Facing the Nikonians booth, visitor's eyes were instantly drawn to the right side, where a massive photomural wall displayed the new Nikonians MAGICA camera support system. In front of the mural wall was the system itself, with Nikonian Tom Berg (twberg) ready and willing to describe its design characteristics.



Figure 3 - Gary Fong, designer of the Fong Lightsphere series and other electronic flash accessories explains the best methods for using his flash attachments to control lighting indoors and outdoors. In this photo he's explaining how to mount the Universal Lightsphere.



Figure 4 - Thomas Berg (twberg) explains the MAGICA camera support system.

The [MAGICA](#) combines a Gitzo Carbon Fiber Mountaineer tripod with a Markins anti-vibration plate for further vibration dampening and a Markins ball head. It has Markins Titanium spikes and is topped off with Nikonians leg wraps, for comfortable carrying in the field.

Thomas worked the entire show as a volunteer, and rarely had time to visit the many other exhibitors at Photokina. He was one of many volunteers who helped the Team by donating their time passing out flyers and directing Nikon users to our booth. We even had a husband and wife pair on hand.

All the volunteers had plenty of walking to do, as the exhibit halls were packed to capacity. More than 1,500 exhibiting companies from 49 countries came to show their complete range of imaging products and services. Photokina press representatives estimate more than 169,000 visitors from 161 nations attended the six day event in late September. The exhibitor figures are broken down as follows: a total of 336 exhibitors and 183 additionally represented companies attended from Germany; 652 exhibitors and 352 additionally represented companies came from other countries.

One distinguished guest at the Nikonians booth takes honors for traveling the furthest. Markins President Byung-Ik Mah arrived from his company headquarters in South Korea to meet and greet visitors. Mr. Mah, founder of the Markins Company whose products are solely distributed through Nikonians.org, was appreciative of the MAGICA system which bears two of his products, and mentioned that the Markins Company has been working on a line of tripods for the past two years.

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Figure 5 - Mrs. Hirs Mueller (buzzel08) accepts her free Markins Q3 Emille ballhead after registering at our booth. The Nikonians prize award team is: Katarina Mintalova, left, and Jürgen Plessing, right. Presenting the ballhead is Markins President Byung-Ik Mah.

with his now famous Markins ballheads, Mr. Mah intends to have the lightest weight yet sturdiest product on the market. It took more than five years for his ballhead designs to go from design to production, so don't start placing any orders for a Markins tripod yet. While attending the Photokina, he took time to personally present one of his Markins Q3 Emille ballheads to a lucky daily raffle winner. The ballheads were presented to members daily, along with Nikonians hats, t-shirts and camera straps, courtesy of the Nikonians [Photo Pro Shop](#).

Of course, everyone from the Nikonians sooner or later found quality time to visit the Nikon booth upstairs.

The majority of visitors were most enthusiastic about the new Nikon D90, which sports a 12.3-megapixel sensor and high resolution 3-inch LCD screen. But the "buzz" on this camera is that it also provides Nikon's first DSLR that can shoot videos.

He emphasized that this was not an official product announcement, adding that when he feels he has perfected his prototypes he will unveil them publicly.

The prototypes have been available only to a select few close business contacts, while he continues testing to meet his design goal. Just as

Nikon calls it D-Movie mode "allowing consumers to create their own HD movie clips (1280 x 720) with sound from their D-SLR camera. Photographers will appreciate the cinematic qualities that come from the 24fps frame rate, which matches theatrical film, whether producing vacation clips or creatively melding stills with video."

Samples of the movie mode are available through Nikon's website, and you'll want to take a minute and [check the videos](#) produced by Swiss Nikon.



Figure 6 - The Nikon booth was packed daily with visitors eager to get a look at Nikon's newest offerings. Photo by On Location podcaster Martin Joergensen.

Also on the "must see" list for Nikonians at the Nikon booth was the new AF-S NIKKOR 50mm f/1.4G lens recently introduced in time for the show.

The lens is scheduled to be available in December 2008.

Nikon's Dirk Jasper said the small

lens is designed for full-frame use, but can quickly become a DX-shooter's favorite medium telephoto (at an effective 75mm range). It's also been a much discussed topic among Nikonians, with some questioning the lack of Nikon's exclusive Nano Crystal Coat.

Jasper, a team leader in Nikon GMBH's Consumer Products Division, told us the Super Integrated Coatings (SIC) coating on this lens, which serves to cut down on lens flare and chromatic aberrations, was the right choice for this type of lens. "The Nano Coat is perfect for lenses that have large glass at the front or many elements -- like the wide angles, zooms and telephotos," he said.

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Figure 7 - Nikon's Dirk Jasper shows Hendric Schneider, our Mass Media and Communications Director, one of only two new AF-S NIKKOR 50mm f/1.4G lenses at the Photokina. The lens, scheduled to be available next month, will retail at \$440 USD.



"But in this case you're talking about a fairly small prime lens with front and rear elements that are symmetrical to each other, and that's just a few of the technical factors in this design." "The SIC is the right match for this lens." he said "Anything more would be like using a cannon to shoot a small bird."

Jasper added the Nano Coat technology is an expensive process that in this case was not required, with a net result of less costs in production as well as in selling prices. We also took time to visit our Nikonians corporate sponsor booths and found them more than cordial and ready to show us their goodies.

Among the highlights:

The folks at [Datacolor](#), home of the display calibration industry leading Spyder 3 products, had Doc Baumann showing his famous pixel manipulation skills, Apple demonstrating their Aperture Workflow and a series of workshops helping photographers understand color and colorspaces in digital photography.

They also provided shooting opportunities in their "La Dolce Vita" themed location and hosted a "Trade In" campaign live on stage. Add the prize drawings and one of the most popular exhibitors' parties at the Photokina, and Datacolor pronounced it a successful event.



Figure 8 - Visitors follow a demonstration at the Datacolor booth. Photo provided by Datacolor.

Meanwhile, over at the Bogen Imaging booth, Product Manager Guido

Segers arranged for a meeting with Gitzo Imaging Supports Brand Manager Luca Alessandrini. He's a passionate spokesman for the Gitzo brand, and within seconds you have no doubts about his experience as a former race-car driver. He talks fast and with passion as he describes the essence of his Gitzo brand. Surrounded by the newest of Gitzo products in the Bogen Imaging booth his eyes gravitate with pride to a somewhat old-looking tripod in a display case. The tripod is brand new version of a classic dating back to the 1970's. In celebrating Gitzo's 90th Anniversary, the company went back to their roots and did a ton of research to find old specs and tools to re-create a Vintage line, which looks just like the original, with a few modern enhancements.

"This is what we do best," said Alessandrini. "We've been doing it for 90 years. It all comes from a lot of research and development. We look to the photographers – we call them our local heroes – and we send designers and engineers to watch them at work. We ask a lot of questions, and we watch how they handle their equipment.

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When we see the need for a specific product or a specific need, we build it." The Vintage tripod was designed in much the same way he said. "And that is why it has stood the test of time and why we can bring it back to the market."

The Vintage tripod will be a functional addition for photographers with an eye towards photographic heritage, but Alessandrini is quick to point out the Gitzo engineers, and their local heroes have been very busy lately, and he's got plenty of the latest cutting edge technology products ready to stock Bogen Imaging's warehouses.

We also had the chance to drop by the Think Tank Photo booth (conveniently on the same floor as our booth) and thank their President and Designer Doug Murdoch for the use of an Airport AirStream for the Photokina trip. (Our review is in this edition of The Nikonian).

Six days went by very quickly for those members of the Team and volunteers who handled countless questions from Nikon enthusiasts. It was not until a farewell dinner at the end that we had a chance to get to know each other better, before packing our bags, and heading back to our own little parts of the Nikonians world.



<<<

Gitzo Imaging Supports Brand Manager Luca Alessandrini, right, and Bogen Imaging Product Manager Guido Segers inspect the Gitzo Vintage Line display in the Bogen Imaging booth.



above

Nikonians co-founder Bo Stahlbrandt (bgs) and Apple computer consultant Mitch Enzmann, on the right, prepare for a photo demonstration in the back-room of the booth. Photo by On Location podcaster Martin Joergensen.

<<<

Albert Esschendal (alberte), holds his Gary Fong Whale Tail while describing its uses to a visitor.

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<<<

Dennis Hissink, at left, editor of LetsGoDigital.org traveled from the Netherlands to the Photokina, where he touched base with Nikonians Co-founder Bo Stalhbrandt (bgs).



>>>

Lars Peter (EpsilonZero) receives his free HP Design-jet Z3200 printer enlargement from Apple computer consultant Mitch Enzmann. His favorite photo (and the story behind it) is featured on our back cover.

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SilverFast has won the EDP AWARD for Best Color Management Software of the year 2008

Black and White done right



rickpaul
Rick Paul
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There are many methods of producing outstanding black and white images from digital and scanned images. From the in-camera settings and conversion capabilities, to the more advanced tools available in Capture NX and Photoshop.

[Nik Software](#), the creators of Capture NX for Nikon, and the Viveza plug-in for Photoshop and Apple's Aperture, have released a new plug-in to help with the process of converting color images into outstanding black and white images: Silver Efex Pro. Silver Efex is intended to provide all the tools required to produce outstanding Black and White images.

The Silver Efex Workflow

Silver Efex is implemented in Adobe Photoshop as a plug-in, invoked through the Filter menu. Opening your file as a Smart Object out of Lightroom or Adobe Camera Raw allows you to use Silver Efex as a Smart Filter. This is the best way to work with a filter like Silver Efex, as it enables you to go back and re-tweak your edits at a later time. Silver Efex works well by starting out with a relatively flat (low contrast) image, and then start making your changes in Silver Efex.

The Silver Efex filter presents the image surrounded by a complete B&W workflow application window.

It does not take much time with Silver Efex to understand the workflow pattern of the application. The left side panel of the application provides built-in settings templates for overall effect such as Underexpose EV -1, Soft Sepia, and Antique Plate. You can also save your own settings preferences and add them to this menu.



Figure 1 - Workflow window

The right side of the application provides the primary editing tools. At the top are the standard controls of Brightness and Contrast, plus a third adjust of "Structure" The Structure slider adjusts the mid range contrast in your image to bring our more detail. It can have a very subtle effect on the image, but is a powerful feature of Silver Efex that can have a pronounced effect on the final image.

Moving down the right hand pane, we come to a feature that users of Capture NX and Viveza are already familiar with: The Control Point. Clicking the "Add Control Point" button will allow to place a control point anywhere on the

Silver Efex Pro Review

image. Control Points allow you to modify specific sections of an image. The Control point determines the boundaries of the control point effect based on the position, color, tone, and texture of the object the Control Point is placed on. The user can modify the effect and size of the Control Point. Additional Control Points can be placed on the image to provide greater control over the appearance of an object, and the placement of a Control Point with default settings prevents that object from being affected by other Control Points. For more information on Control Points, visit www.upoint.com.

Each Control Point in Silver Efex provides local adjustment for Brightness, Contrast, and Structure to any region of the image. For example, you might adjust the overall image for high structure, but use a control point to lower the structure on the portrait of your main subject.

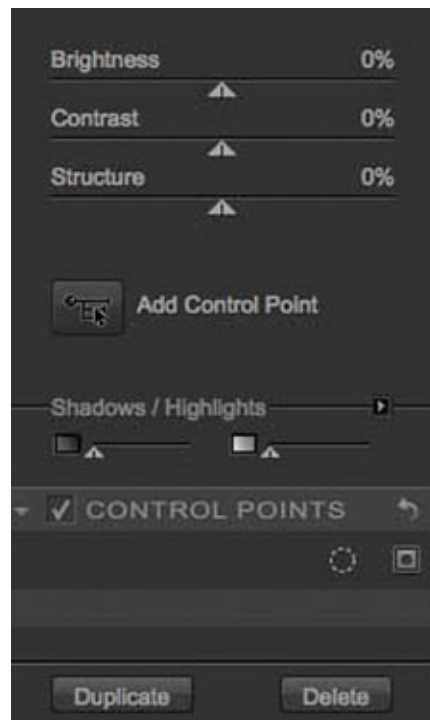


Figure 2 - BCS Panel

One of the primary advantages of Silver Efex is that the tool retains the knowledge of the color and tones, even though the image on the screen appears black and white. Thus a Control Point positioned on the sky will only affect the blue color of the sky, not just the gray tonal value it represents. This is important, as it allows you finer control over specific colors and areas of your image, not just specific tonal values.

The next control helps your protect shadows and highlights. When expanded, this tool also displays a histogram representing the tonal range of the image. The shadow and highlight sliders can be used in conjunction with the zone selection at the bottom of the panel. By selecting Zone 0 (Black) and Zone 10 (White), you can monitor the changes highlighted changes in your image as you adjust the shadows and highlight sliders.

The push pin tool in the loupe panel allows you to “pin” an area of interest in your image to see a 100% display in the loupe window. The loupe tool helps with zone visualization and allows you to more easily see the effects of the structure slider adjustment. Silver Efex provides a standard set of color filter controls. The basic tool provides red, orange, yellow, green and blue filters. The expanded tool allows to finely control the Hue and Strength of the filter. A good way to use the filters is to pick a color to set your basic range, then use the sliding scales to move the strength all the way up, and then back it down until you achieve the look you want.

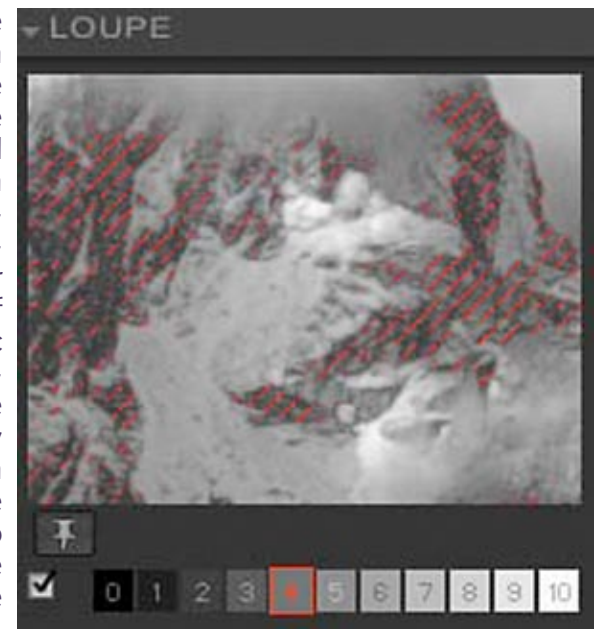


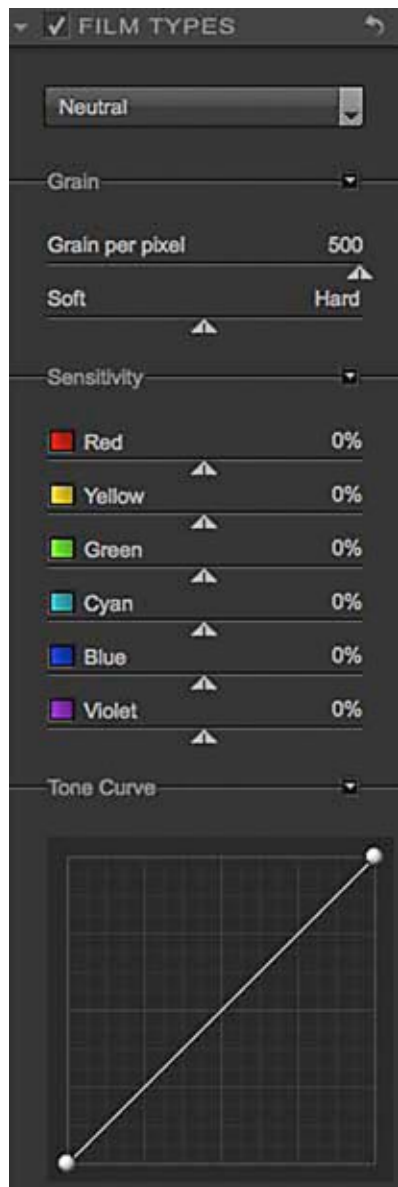
Figure 3 - Loupe Panel



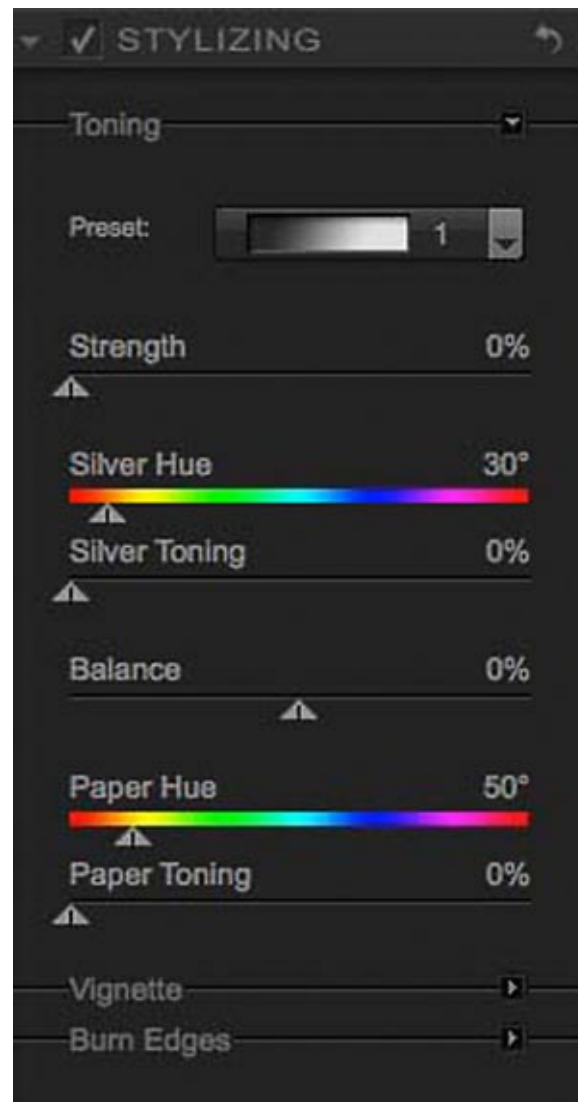
The remaining tools in Silver Efex provided very specialized effects to the image. The first is Film Type, which emulates most of the more popular B&W films types, from ISO 32 Kodak Panatomic-X to ISO 3200 Ilford Delta 3200 Pro. Beyond the standard preset film types, controls are also provided to finely adjust the grain, color sensitivity, and tone curve of the film emulation. These emulations can provide some interesting effects, depending on your application.

Figure 4- Color Panel

Silver Efex Pro Review



<<< Figure 5 - Film Panel



<<< Figure 6 - Style Panel



Figure 8 (above) Another effect sample

The last tool in the menu provides adjustments for toning, vignette, and burn edges.

The toning adjustment provides 18 presets, including splits, blue, coffee, copper, selenium, and sepia. The tool also provides fine controls for the tone by adjusting Silver Hue/Toning, Balance, Paper Hue/Toning.

All three of these tools can be used to provide some very stylistic effects.

Silver Efex Pro Review



Figure 7 - Sample effects

Other Features

Silver Efex provides controls to the view, such as hiding the style browser and providing a split image between the original color image and B&W conversion.

When you're finished with your adjustments in Silver Efex, you have the choice of accepting the changes, which will appear as a new layer in Photoshop. Or you can select Brush mode, which will exit to Photoshop, and allow you to apply the effects with a brush to selected portions of the image. The Brush mode only works if you're not using Silver Efex in the Smart Filter mode.

Conclusions

After working with Silver Efex Pro for just a few minutes, I was able to produce black and white images I was very pleased with. Silver Efex Pro's combination of features provides a tool for Black and White conversion that few other tools can match. It provides a very rich "digital darkroom" experience. You can quickly experiment with different effects and filter combinations to produce outstanding images.

For more information on Black and White photography, be sure and listen to the [Image Doctors Podcast Episode #75](#).

Silver Efex Pro sells for \$199 US. It is available directly from Nik Software, either as a digital download or a boxed product for both Macintosh and Windows. The software key enables both the Photoshop and the Aperture versions. A 15 day fully functional trial is available.

Your Nikonians Links:

<http://www.nikonians.org/nikon>

All of the Nikonians Nikon reviews

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Complete listing of all resources at Nikonians: Articles, FAQ's, Guides, eBooks ...

<http://www.nikonians.org/forums>

Our 70 very active discussion forums

<http://podcasts.nikonians.org>

Nikonians Podcast – MP3 radio

<http://blog.nikonians.org>

Our blog with current photography news and more

<http://orange.nikonians.org>

The Nikonians Business Directory, our Orange Pages

<http://images.nikonians.org>

Our member and contest galleries

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Advertise your products and services with Nikonians. Reach out to 58,000 photographers daily

<https://www.photoproshop.com>

The Nikonians Pro gear online shop

<http://www.nikoniansacademy.com>

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<http://www.nikonians.org/about>

<http://www.nikonians.org/team>

More about Nikonians and the team behind it

Slow and steady approach delivers winning images

Steven Shepard is a Gold Member from Vermont, USA. He's an accomplished author with 39 published books and hundreds of articles to his credit. His Web site is www.ShepardCom.com. In this article Steven describes his technique for macro nature photography.

Fall and early Winter is the perfect time of the year to photograph nature's jewelry. The days are still warm, the humidity is still high, but in the evenings the temperatures drop, precipitating moisture from the air and coating everything in a fine lace of dew-drops, converting even the most mundane subject into a work of wonder that will take your breath away.

Insects, spider webs, grass blades, flowers – all glisten like delicate crystalline sculptures. They're easy to photograph, but a few suggestions will make your shooting that much more pleasurable.

Morning is Best

Early mornings are the best time to shoot dewy subjects. Insects, often elusive and wary during the day, are slow and lethargic early in the morning, especially when they are coated with dewdrops. Try to catch them with the sun reflecting off the surface of the water droplets; a bit of fill flash, (-) 1-2/3 stop, will add just enough catch light to warm the subject in the dim light of early morning.

The other nice thing about morning, of course, is



Figure 1 – Grasshopper – Nikon D2X - ExposureTime: 1/250" - Aperture: f/8.0 - ISO: 100 – Fill flash used

Photographing Nature's Jewelry

the warm golden light that follows sunrise. Don't wait too long: the morning glow is elusive and is rapidly replaced by the harsh light of later morning. Furthermore, as the sun rises, and the day warms, the dew drops evaporate and the magic disappears for another day.

Perspective

It took me some time to learn how to photograph the kinds of subjects that you see in this article, not because they required a special photographic talent that I lacked, but because I wasn't seeing them. It was rather funny, actually: I operated as if my subjects were as tall as I am and occupied the same space that I did – clearly a mistake! Some of the best photographs I have ever taken of natural subjects were made after crawling on my hands and knees, entering the world of my subjects so that I could actually see them.

All of the images in this article were taken less than a foot off the ground. If you want to photograph this kind of subject, you have to approach the subject on its terms – which means getting into its world and seeing what it sees. Incidentally, because you will probably be shooting close to the ground, add a short center post for your tripod to your holiday gift list. There's nothing more frustrating than trying to shoot close the ground with a long center post getting in the way of progress.

Slow and Steady

Because you will be photographing small subjects under conditions in which the depth-of-field may be extremely shallow, take great care to ensure that the focal plane of the camera and the "focal plane" of the subject are as parallel as they can



Figure 2 - Yellow Trumpet Flower - Nikon D2X - ExposureTime: 1/250" - Aperture: f/16 - ISO: 400 – Fill Flash used

Photographing Nature's Jewelry

possibly be. This is not a time to hurry: These kinds of images take time. Shoot on a tripod and take your time aligning things. Even a slightly off-kilter camera will result in a partially focused image.

It's also helpful to shoot at a very small aperture to maximize depth-of-field, in which case you will undoubtedly be using a long shutter speed. You can also add fill flash; the good news is that you can experiment to your heart's content – this is digital, after all! Also, don't forget that if you shoot an insect or other small animal, if the creature's eyes aren't focused, the entire image will look blurry. Make sure the eyes are razor sharp. I often find that I have to switch over to manual focus when shooting these subjects, so be prepared to do that to ensure a good focus across the entire image.

Stealth is Everything

One final set of recommendations before I wrap this up so that you can go outside and shoot. We're talking about photographing the world of very small subjects in this article, which means that special rules apply. You, as an immense (to your subjects, anyway) human being, can have an overwhelming impact on the photographic environment without realizing it. Spider webs are often attached to the filmiest of grass stems, stems which an errant tripod leg can rip asunder in a heartbeat, ruining the shot – and the spider's sole means of feeding itself. The tiniest breath can set a stem moving. Your shadow can dramatically reduce the light on the subject. So here's my final bit of advice. Take your time. Tread lightly. Move in painfully, exaggerated slow motion. Look before you sit, kneel, or lie down. Take your time setting up the shot. Hold your breath. Enjoy!



Figure 3 - Dew on Spider Web - Nikon D2X - ExposureTime: 1/25" - Aperture: f/16 - ISO: 100 No Flash

Hot new items at the Nikonians Photo Pro Shop

Get ready for the Holidays with these great gift solutions for your favorite Nikon photographer (or yourself).

First on the list is our **Last Call for the Thanksgiving Special**



Thanksgiving Special

Show your pride...

This year we've created a Nikonians™ Special Bundle for Thanksgiving. Show that you are Nikonian and wear our brand new fleece jacket and get a Nikonians T-Shirt for free! This Special is valid until the end of Thanksgiving weekend (30th of November).

Please note: We have a short supply of individual sizes, don't miss it on this occasion.

More Information:

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Nikonians Rain-Jacket Hooded Pack-Away

Forget what "wind and rain" means and take your best images out in the field. Never be caught by surprise in the rain again...be prepared with the Nikonians water-proof pack-away jacket. On the front you will find the embroidered Nikonians logo. Simple and professional. The jacket is made of 100% nylon, and weighs only 200 grams (7 ounces). It has elasticized cuffs, front zipper and a drawstring hood and bottom with barrel stoppers. When not in use it conveniently packs into the front pouch pocket.

USA ordering information [here](#).

International ordering information [here](#).



NEW! Nikonians Outdoor Full-Zip Jacket

This 100% polyester micro fleece jacket is extremely comfortable and provides superb breathability. On the front you'll find the embroidered Nikonians logo. The jacket features: DWR water-resistant finish, tumbled face and shearling back, double wind-resistance, cover-stitching and a tapered neck.

More information:

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Our New T-Shirts are now available:

These T-Shirts are made of high quality 100% black cotton, with only the Nikonians logo (3.94inch) in front. They are available in sizes: S/M/L/XL/XXL/3XL

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Markins Ball heads



Markins Q3 Emille available in Red and Blue. These high performance professional ball heads come with the Markins tradition of superior craftsmanship. The ball head features: a captive knob, integrated bubble level, all corners and edges rounded to a super-finish by a barreling method, and a patented spring loaded stop pin to prevent plates from accidentally sliding out with your gear.



USA ordering [here](#). International ordering [here](#).



Front View / Logo:

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www.nikonians.org

The **MAGICA** concept consists of:

- Gitzo Carbon Fiber Mountaineer - best tripod in the market
- Markins anti-vibration plate for further vibration dampening
- Markins Titanium spikes the most resistant and effective and
- Nikonians leg wraps, for comfortable carry in the field
- Markins ball head.

The result is the sturdiest and most efficient complete integrated camera support system on the market.

Visit the [MAGICA Web Site](#) for more information and technical specifications.



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FREE BUSINESS CARDS FOR GOLD AND PLATINUM MEMBERS



Rugged carry-on provides camera safety and security



flashdeadline

Tom Boné
Chief Editor
Member since
7-Apr-2002
3580 posts

Your passport is up to date, the airline reservations are made, and it's time to pack your Nikon gear for the coming assignment.

Will you be able to pack it all in a convenient small carry-on with rollers? Will that carry-on provide safe transport for your gear and your laptop? And, most important, will it meet current interna-

tional air travel weight, size and security restrictions?

If that carry-on is the Think Tank Photo [Airport Airstream](#), the answer to your questions is a resounding yes.

Photographers planning on international air travel have plenty of logistics to consider in terms of equipment safety and security. The Airport Airstream is just one of many Think Tank Photo solutions as you plan ahead. You have your choice of an assortment of luggage that will accommodate your personal shooting needs along with your destination, shooting and living conditions on-scene and known routes of travel. Think Tank's broad assortment of products and accessories will undoubtedly provide just the right combination once you have your goals in mind.



With the help of Think Tank Photo's founder and lead designer Doug Murdoch and marketing director Brian Erwin, we had the chance to put the Airport Airstream to the test during the recent Photokina in Cologne, Germany. It took Brian barely 15 seconds to determine which carry-on would best serve the purpose. Within a week after discussing the trip, the big brown truck arrived with a brand new Airport Airstream plus the optional Low Divider set. Brian's instructions were similar to those he gave when we tested their Rotation 360 backpack: "Go ahead and treat it rough."

With all the dividers, plus the gear I wanted to carry and accessories I needed to carry, arranged on a large table I had hundreds of packing options and it took at least two hours to come to a final loading plan. If you check the Think Tank Photo website you will see a number of packing options based on the shape and size of your gear, and of course you have your own creativity to rely on. One thing for sure. If you get the Low Divider accessory, which brings the dividers down far enough in depth to allow for fitting a 15" laptop, you will be leaving a pile of dividers at home.

Packing was fun, but I was certainly aware of those size and weight restrictions for International carry-on luggage, so I added a simple \$6.00 fishing scale from the local Wal-Mart to the mix.

That's when I saw why Think Tank describes this bag as "The perfect small roller for traveling with a selected amount of gear."

The weight of the bag alone (it has rollers and a telescoping luggage handle not to mention the necessary padding and reinforcement) was just over nine pounds.

Figure 1 - Scale used at airport showed me at 20 pounds. Stuffed a few more items in my camera vest and proceeded.



Think Tank Airport Airstream Review

After my first packing attempt, with everything but the kitchen sink stuffed inside, my smile of satisfaction disappeared as soon as I weighed the bag. It topped 30 pounds. My airline for the roundtrip (Lufthansa) requires carry-ons to be 18 pounds or less. Hmmmmm. Let's do this again.

It took a while, and eventually I had the weight down to 25 pounds. Still over weight, but no excess bulging and I knew that just before check-in, all I had to do was remove the laptop AC-brick, strap the SB-800 on my belt and stuff a few other items in my camera vest to pass.

Once past the check-in and security inspection, it was a simple matter to re-arrange everything before it was time to board.

My domestic puddle jumper didn't have enough room for a salami sandwich in the overhead compartment (much less a real bag) so I had to stuff the bag under the seat in front of me. It fit, and made a handy foot stool.

At the International Airport in Philadelphia I found an Air France baggage restriction rack and stuffed the Airstream inside with fractions of an inch to spare in depth (this with the 15-inch laptop resting on the Low Dividers inside.)



Figure 2 - Smooth fit in the Air France luggage gauge. It was a bit tight in the Lufthansa gauge by a fraction.

Airports are loaded with the mortal enemy of all roller luggage – escalators. Philadelphia International and Frankfurt's airport had plenty, then the train platforms on the way to Cologne. Once we arrived at the Photokina in Cologne, we found escalators of all sizes conveniently located between the dozen buildings in use by the exhibition.

At the first escalator on day one I was careful to pick up the bag by a handle and carry it, but by the time I hit my hundredth escalator in the massive Photokina complex I was barreling the bag in front of me, or dragging it behind me, stepping on and off escalators with ease. The rollers made it across the gaping teeth of the escalators with no problems, and the telescoping handle held up to the constant upwards yanking and pulling. The telescoping handle held the weight of the bag and contents, and on one day, when I was helping to carry a case of bottled water to our booth, I had that carton perched on top of the bag, with no damage to the handle or wheels.

Mind you, that with all those escalators at the Photokina, this means I was pushing, pulling and picking up by the telescoping handle the equivalent of at least two airport trips per day for six days. Nothing ever broke, but the case now has some interesting (and at times artistic) scratches along the well positioned plastic scuff guards.

Security at the world's largest photo convention is an interesting concern. You know that practically every other person you pass carrying any bag at all is probably packing plenty of expensive gear. The photo packs are a dead giveaway.



Figure 3 - The dreaded roller wheel killing escalators had no impact on the durable Airstream wheels.

Think Tank Airport Airstream Review

But, the Airstream is a very unassuming piece of common roller luggage from the exterior. In fact, it's so common-looking that one day at our hotel, I was at the front desk for barely a minute, turned to go to my room and rolled away another guest's luggage.

It was at least a half hour later that I realized my mistake, and fortunately the person who's luggage I stole had mine, and the convenient business card holder had my Nikonians card in it. My theft victim turned out to be a fellow Nikonian Team member. If for any reason I had totally lost the bag, another advantage of the Airstream is the metal tag, complete with a Think Tank phone number and email address for their lost and found department. The bag has a serial number on the plate, to help identify the rightful owner. Near that plate is the internal pouch that carries a security cable.



Figure 4 - Security cable and TSA lock held in a convenient pouch just below the lost and found tag with unit serial number.

Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would need that cable, given my destination, but during my long layovers at the airports

when I found myself drifting off to sleep at the uncomfortable boarding gate benches, I got into the habit of pulling it out and running it across my chair before I sat down. I didn't need to lock it to my butt – I just wanted the security of mind, knowing that if anyone decided to walk away with my bag I'd be rudely woken up.

The bag packed well, handled the constant strain of daily use for a week with no problems, and most importantly protected my gear under a few trying circumstances. On one occasion I was rolling it across a parking lot waiting for a Photokina shuttle bus and one of the busses came too close to me and

smacked the bag on the side. No damage. A few more interesting dings. In another scary scene at a Cologne train station, Nikonians co-founder J. Ramón Palacios and I had all our baggage perched on a large shopping cart size luggage carrier and we made a snap decision to use an escalator (next to a sign in German that said don't put these carts on escalators). The cart shifted weight and everything started coming down and to the right of the escalator. The Airport Airstream was wedged upside down between the cart and the escalator side walls. The full weight of our combined luggage was now being held up by a single Airstream roller wheel screeching along the metal wall. I was sure I'd be minus that wheel once we got off the escalator, but it suffered absolutely no damage. That's impressive.

Conclusion:

If you plan on traveling light on international carriers and want peace of mind about the safety and security of your gear, the Airport Airstream is a solid choice. It packs well and presents a common luggage exterior that helps defray possible theft temptations.

It will handle most 15 inch laptops with the optional Low Divider accessory, which I highly recommend.

Another accessory to consider is the Think Tank Airport Check-In briefcase. The Airstream (as well as most of the others in the Airport line) is compatible with the briefcase. There are plenty of spare pockets and sleeves all over this bag for easy compartmentalization and the only risk is forgetting where you stuffed a few things. Fortunately the inside main lid compartments are covered in see-through plastic for easy spotting of some of your items.



Figure 5 - Inside includes room for D80, SB-800, 18-200 VR lens, and plenty of spare batteries, cables and accessories.

Think Tank Airport Airstream Review

The quality of construction aspect is top-rate. All plastic, fabric and hardware (like the wheels and telescoping handle) are top of the line, ensuring a long life under rigorous treatment. This same construction is universal for the entire Think Tank Airport line. I had a close look at them during the Photokina.



Figure 6 - 15 inch laptop perches smoothly, sideways on top of the Low Dividers.

The bag sells for \$290 USD and for an extra \$40 the Low Divider accessory is a wise addition if you plan on carrying a small laptop. The price may seem a bit steep compared to other alternatives, but the bag will pay for itself by assuring that your gear makes it to and from your destination in one piece. Don't forget, Nikonians member have a special free gift available by ordering through this special link: <http://thinktankphoto.com/nikonians/>.

The negatives: Only one. You must remember that this is designed for a fairly light load. Don't plan on stuffing two Nikon DSLR's and a handful of lenses plus the laptop into the carry-on and expect to meet the weight restrictions for most international travel.

Editor's Note:

We will soon publish a review of the new Tenba Roadie Rolling Photo Case.

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New from Nikon - The Nikon D90

Leading the list for “buzz” excitement and speculation in the Nikonians Community is the new Nikon D90, which adds video capabilities to a Nikon Digital Single Lens Reflex (DSLR) for the first time. It was first announced in late August. Our members are already discussing their new D90's in the [D70/D80/D90 Users Group](#).

The highlights for this new camera, released just before Photokina 2008 include:

- 12.3 effective megapixels, Nikon's DX-format CMOS image sensor and exclusive EXPEED image processing
- Low-noise performance from ISO 200 to 3200
- D-Movie, an innovative movie shooting feature for digital SLR cameras
- Scene Recognition System integrated with Face Detection System
- Live View capability with 3-in., approx. 920k-dot high-resolution LCD and dedicated Live View button
- Compatible with the Picture Control System and offering new Portrait and Landscape modes
- Bright pentaprism viewfinder featuring frame coverage of approx. 96%
- Active D-Lighting for high-contrast lighting situations
- In-camera retouch, including newly added features: Fisheye, Distortion Control and Straighten

The D90 is the Nikon's first digital SLR camera with a movie shooting function.

Nikon's features listing includes:

Newly designed Nikon DX-format CMOS image sensor with wide ISO sensitivity range with low noise

D90's 12.3 effective megapixels provides outstanding resolution, delivering im-



ages with extraordinarily defined detail and expanded enlargement capacity. The extremely wide sensitivity range of ISO 200 to 3200 delivers incredibly low-noise characteristics throughout. Furthermore, sensitivity can be increased to Hi 1 (ISO 6400 equivalent) and decreased to Lo 1 (ISO 100 equivalent) to expand shooting versatility. The camera also employs the Image Sensor Cleaning function that works to free image-degrading dust particles from the sensor's optical low-pass filter.

EXPEED for smooth tones, rich colors and fine details

Nikon's comprehensive digital image-processing EXPEED technology is optimized for the D90 to realize the high-quality, high-speed image processing capability. EXPEED also contributes to the outstanding performance of other powerful features such as Live View and the new Face Detection System.

D-Movie: the world's first* D-SLR movie mode

In a world first* for D-SLRs, the D90 offers a movie function, allowing you to shoot 320 x 216 pixels, 640 x 424 pixels or HD720p (1,280 x 720 pixels) movies at the professional smoothness of 24 frames per second in motion JPEG format. The D90's sensor, which is much larger than the sensor of a typical camcorder, ensures higher image quality and exceptional low-noise, high ISO



New from Nikon - The Nikon D90

sensitivity performance, even during movie shooting.

Capturing creative movie clips or the drama of life's moving moments is further enhanced by the wide selection of incredibly sharp NIKKOR interchangeable lenses that are available, from fisheye to wide-angle to super-telephoto. And Micro NIKKOR lenses bring the magic of extreme close-up imagery to movie making.

*As of August 27, 2008, according to research conducted by Nikon Corporation

Note: Autofocus and some other functions are not available when recording movies.

Scene Recognition System integrated with Face Detection System

The D90 precisely reads the color and brightness information of each scene from the 420-pixel RGB sensor, and applies this to auto focus, auto exposure and auto white balance. The D90 also recognizes human faces using the new Face Detection System, data which is incorporated during calculation, resulting in faces with newfound definition and accuracy as well as enabling face priority AF in Live View mode and immediate zoom into people's faces in playback zoom.

Easy-to-use Live View mode

One press of the Live View button activates the D90's Live View mode, delivering a bright, crisp image to the 3-in., approx. 920k-dot color LCD and allowing comfortable shooting without looking through the viewfinder. There are three contrast-detect AF modes that let you focus on any point in the frame: Face priority AF automatically detects up to five faces and focuses on that calculated to be the closest. Wide area AF offers a large AF area suitable for handheld shooting, and normal area AF provides focus with pinpoint accuracy when using a tripod. And when Nikon VR (Vibration Reduction) lenses are in use, photographers will enjoy the benefit of a VR-smoothed image, even in Live View mode.

Picture Control System: Customize the visual style of your images

Nikon's Picture Control System enables users to customize the look and mood of images. Six original setting options are available — Standard, Neutral, Vivid, Monochrome, Portrait and Landscape — for easy customization of image preferences.

Active D-Lighting for smooth tone reproduction in high-contrast lighting

The D90's Active D-Lighting accurately restores details in the shadows and highlighted areas, which are often lost in high-contrast lighting situations, by localizing tone control while shooting. There are four levels, including the new "Extra High." Active D-Lighting can be used manually or set to Auto mode. It is also possible to bracket your pictures, allowing the capture of one image with Active D-Lighting and one without.

Versatile, practical 11-point AF system

Thanks to the Multi-CAM 1000 autofocus module, the D90's 11-point AF system offers fast and precise autofocus coverage across the frame with the most sensitive AF sensor operating from the center. In addition, the D90 features versatile AF-area modes to handle most shooting situations: Single-point AF is recommended for stationary subjects, dynamic-area AF for moving subjects, auto-area AF for spontaneous shooting and 3D-tracking (11 points) AF for when you want to change the composition after focusing on your subject.

Bright pentaprism viewfinder featuring frame coverage of approx. 96%

The D90 has a precise eye-level pentaprism viewfinder with approx. 96% (centered) frame coverage and an easy-to-view 19.5 mm eyepoint (at -1.0 m-1). The built-in 16-frame superimposed grid display can be activated to assist in the creation of better-balanced compositions.

Advanced Scene Modes for superior image quality

The D90 features Advanced Scene Modes: Portrait, Landscape, Close-up, Sports and Night Portrait. These modes not only adjust exposure and image processing, but also judge the optimum Active D-Lighting and Picture Control settings to obtain the best results. The D90 also recognizes if VR (Vibration Reduction) is on or off and minimizes noise even in dimly lit scenes.

Extensive palette of in-camera Retouch Menus

The D90's designers incorporated a wide variety of image editing functions, making it easy for users to enhance images within the camera. The D90 introduces several new retouch options: Distortion Control adjusts lens aberration, Straighten corrects inclination of the image, while Fisheye produces optical effects similar to a fisheye lens.

New from Nikon - The Nikon D90

Engineered for precision and durability

Accurate exposures rely on precise shutters and the D90's electronically timed shutter mechanism was specifically engineered for long, accurate service. To ensure this, D90 shutters, assembled in D90 bodies, underwent exhaustive 100,000 shutter-release cycle testing.



Nikon D90 Other Features

- Gives you quick response, with 0.15-second start-up, 65 ms shutter release time lag (CIPA standard) and 4.5 fps continuous shooting.
- 3-in., approx. 920-k dot high-resolution LCD monitor with wide viewing angle that lets you change composition of the frame during shooting from various angles and easily confirm your image during playback.
- Built-in flash with 18mm lens coverage, guide number of approx. 17/56 (ISO 200, m/ft., 20°C/68°F) and Nikon's original i-TTL flash control; works

as a commander; controlling up to two groups of remote Speedlights.

- Highly efficient energy-saving design allows approx. 850 images on a single charge of the Rechargeable Li-ion Battery EN-EL3e. (CIPA standard, with AF-S DX NIKKOR 18-105mm f/3.5-5.6G ED VR, with 50% of pictures taken with flash)

- Extensive playback functions offer ample options for viewing and selecting the right shot, including 72-frame playback, calendar playback and histogram display for magnified portion of the image.

- Versatile Pictmotion menu creates slideshows combining five choices of both background music and image effects.

- Compatible with HDMI (High-Definition Multimedia Interface) output.

- Supports the Nikon Creative Lighting System when using the SB-900, SB-800, SB-600 Speedlight, or Wireless Close-up Speedlight System R1C1; ensures accurate exposures via i-TTL flash control.

- Multi-Power Battery Pack MB-D80 (Optional, in common with the D80) gives you the choice of using one or two Rechargeable Li-ion Batteries EN-EL3e or six R6/AA-size batteries to extend battery life.

- New optional Remote Cord MC-DC2 enables shutter release and long time exposures (bulb) remotely.

- With the new optional GPS Unit GP-1, location information such as latitude, longitude, altitude and time is automatically recorded to each image's EXIF data.

- Included Nikon ViewNX image browsing and editing software lets you organize, label and select images as well as perform RAW (NEF) image editing adjustments and conversions.



New from Nikon - The AF-S Nikkor 50mm 1.4

- Optional Capture NX 2 photo-editing software features patented U Point™ technology and powerful tools for quick and easy photo editing including enhanced RAW (NEF) Editing.

AF-S NIKKOR 50mm f/1.4G

Nikon's newest lens harkens back to the good old days of fast prime lenses. The AF-S NIKKOR 50mm f/1.4 prime lens that is considered by many photographers to be an essential tool with a focal length that closely replicates the visual perspective of the human eye when used with an FX-format D-SLR. It has the Silent Wave Motor technology and the ultra-fast f/1.4 maximum aperture and focus as close as 1.5 feet.



When used on a Nikon DX-format digital SLR camera, the new AF-S NIKKOR 50mm f/1.4G provides an ideal portrait picture angle, approximating that of a 75mm lens in use on a FX-format D-SLR or 35mm SLR camera.

A newly developed optical formula effectively corrects sagittal coma flare and coma aberration, delivering astonishing image quality and allowing more users to realize their creative vision with vivid clarity. Instances of lens flare and chromatic aberration are further suppressed through the use of Nikon's exclusive Super Integrated Coatings, which also help ensure vividly accurate color balance. The rounded diaphragm opening combined with the nine-blade aperture contributes to a substantially more natural appearance of out-of-focus background elements.

The AF-S NIKKOR 50mm f/1.4G lens is scheduled to be available at Nikon authorized dealers beginning December 2008 at an estimated selling price of \$439.95. For more information, please visit www.nikonusa.com.

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Calendar

Nikonians Academy North America workshops

We start the year with workshops in San Francisco, Los Angeles and Seattle.

Our January 2009 Schedule takes us to:

San Francisco	Master your Nikon D300 - In Depth	08-JAN-2009
San Francisco	Master your Nikon D300 - Advanced	09-JAN-2009
San Francisco	Master Nikon i-TTL Flash, CLS	10-JAN-2009
San Francisco	Master Nikon Capture NX2	11-JAN-2009
Los Angeles	Master your Nikon D300 - In Depth	15-JAN-2009
Los Angeles	Master your Nikon D300 - Advanced	16-JAN-2009
Los Angeles	Master Nikon i-TTL Flash, CLS	17-JAN-2009
Los Angeles	Master Nikon Capture NX2	18-JAN-2009
Seattle	Master your Nikon D300 - In Depth	22-JAN-2009
Seattle	Master your Nikon D300 - Advanced	23-JAN-2009
Seattle	Master Nikon i-TTL Flash, CLS	24-JAN-2009
Seattle	Master Nikon Capture NX2	25-JAN-2009

Complete listings by city, date and topics can be found at the [Nikonians Academy](#).

The 2009 SWPP and BPPA Convention in London

Photographic Trade show - January 16-18, 2009

Venue **Novotel London West**

Society of Wedding and Portrait Photographers and the British Professional Photographers Associates 2009 Convention is being held in London and is the ideal opportunity for you to learn from the experts. The event is by far the largest gathering of like-minded professional photographers eager to share their knowledge and friendship. Attendees have the opportunity to meet representatives from all of the major manufacturers from all over the world.

Based upon the success and popularity of the 2008 Convention organizers have kept to the same formula with just a few tweaks and additions to make your visit a worthwhile and memorable experience. You will get the chance to meet other photographers from all corners of the globe, make friends and acquaintances who will give you help and advice when you most need it.

More info: <http://www.swpp.co.uk/about.htm>

PMA 2009

March 3-5, 2009

Las Vegas Convention Center - **Las Vegas, Nevada**

The 2009 theme is "Picture More Reasons to Be at PMA 09." There will be more than 600 exhibitors featuring the newest technologies; and there will be five full days of top-level education. PMA 09 is the place to meet industry leaders to exchange ideas. The centerpiece is the high-caliber PMA education with approximately 150 sessions featuring more than 350 speakers/chairpersons.

More info: <http://www.pmai.org/pma09home.aspx?id=11224>

The Ninth International Exhibition of Consumer and Professional Imaging

April 09-12, 2009 - The International Exhibition Centre "Crocus Expo" Pavilion 2, Halls 7 and 8 - **Moscow, Russia**

PHOTOFORUM-2009 is the largest imaging trade fair and the most important event in photo industry of Russia and the CIS. The main themes will be: Consumer photo and video; Professional photo; Digital image processing; Printing; Framing. Over 350 companies will exhibit at PHOTOFORUM-2009 including all leading manufacturers of the photographic industry such as Canon, Sony, Kodak, Panasonic, Nikon, Fujifilm, Olympus, Pentax, Noritsu, Epson, Casio, Hewlett-Packard, Rekam, Mitsubishi Electric, BenQ, GE. Organizers expect over 90 000 visitors to attend the show.

More info: <http://www.photoforum-expo.ru/en/photoforum-expo/>

The Nikonian



Nikonian Lars Peter (EpsilonZero), of Munich, Germany, brought this image to the Nikonians booth to get a free large print produced by an HP Designjet Z3200 printer. He took this picture of his brother Arne coming dangerously close while kite surfing. Lars was standing in knee-high water, shooting his Nikon D200 with his Tamron SP AF 17-50mm f/2.8 XR Di II LD lens at f/8. His exposure time was 1/640 sec under sunny skies at ISO 200.