

The Nikonian



eZine

52

www.nikonians.org

Contents

- 03 Editorial**
- 05 Membership**
- 06 Photokina Recap**
- 08 Get to Know your Gear - by Josh Larkin**
- 12 Nikon Autofocus for Action and Animals - by Mike Hagen**
- 15 Should you upgrade to the Nikon D600? - by Darrell Young**
- 18 Talking about Books - by J. Ramón Palacios**
- 19 Photographer's Eye - Turin - by Marco Baracco**
- 22 Understanding a Nikonian on his Big Day**
- 23 Cotton Carrier Review - by Rick Hulbert**
- 27 Meet the Nikonians Photo Professors**
- 28 New From Nikon**
- 31 Calendar**

ON OUR COVER:

Our cover shot was taken by Nikonians co-founder J. Ramón Palacios (jrp) in New Mexico, USA, during the 12th Annual Nikonians Photo Adventure Trip (ANPAT). Shown (left to right) at the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta are Larry Anderson (mnbuilder49), Jim Gould (jgould2), Jim Eaton (f11), Bo Stahlbrandt (bgs) and Fred Morton (Fred Morton). Shot with Nikon D700, AF-S NIKKOR 14-24mm f/2.8G ED lens at 24mm, f/7.1 aperture with a shutter speed of 1/100 sec and 6400 ISO. It was very dark, yet the 6400 ISO gave enough room for an available light exposure. More images from the ANPAT will be featured in an upcoming special edition of The Nikonian eZine.

This Page: Nikonian Portion of the Nikon booth at photokina 2012 in Germany. Photo courtesy of Koelnmesse GmbH; Thomas Klerx, shot with a Nikon D3 using Manual exposure mode. ISO speed 1600, shutter speed 1/80th sec, f/6.3 aperture on AF-S NIKKOR 24-70mm f/2.8G ED lens. More images and a recap of the exhibition start on page 6.

THE NIKONIAN™ is copyrighted © Nikonians EMEA Ltd 2012. All rights reserved. Nikonians® is a registered trademark. Our domains, products and services are not associated or affiliated with the Nikon Corporation. All images are copyright of the respective photographers. Chief Editor Tom Boné (flashdeadline@nikonians.org). Design and Production provided by Kristina Nessler, Executive Office Manager, enprovia® Software Engineering s.r.o. Our circulation: Over 150,000 copies of this publication are downloaded within the first three months of being issued.

Community growth includes new approaches to member recognition

Nikonians co-founders J. Ramón Palacios (jrp) and Bo Stahlbrandt are in New Mexico, USA for the 12 Annual Nikonians Photo Adventure Trip (ANPAT) as we prepare this edition of the eZine for publication.



Tom Boné
(flashdeadline)
Chief Editor
Member since
7-Apr-2002
3860 posts

Drawing close to the end of this year, we have new developments in promoting member recognition and a final resolution to a brief technical problem.

By now, you may have noticed the introduction of new features enabling users to rate topics as well as see who is recommended in the community and who has mastered the art and science of photography.

The features allow you to recommend a member and rate a topic. You can easily recommend a member in the Nikonians Community, simply by clicking on the link: "Recommend Member" in the forum and topic of your choice. For further details [check our FAQ's](#), for step-by-step information.

You will find our new topic rating function towards the right hand side of your screen as you scroll through discussions. A simple drop down menu labeled: "Rate this topic" allows you, the user, to express your thoughts about the topic in a numbered scale from 1-5, five being a Must Read. Through this, users are able to engage whether or not this topic was useful, inspiring and insightful. This new rating system is [also covered in our FAQ's](#).

Another new look has been appearing (and growing) as we scan our forums. You may have noticed ribbons next to some of our member's names. These ribbons are signs of recognition awarded to members in the Nikonians community for their high skill levels, expertise and on-going contributions of sharing, learning, and inspiring. These members have helped us make Nikonians what it is today. Hovering your mouse over a ribbon will provide more information. If you are wondering who determines eligibility and how these ribbons are awarded, our [FAQ's provide the answers](#).

Adding to our growing list of enhancements, we have included a new look on the front page of some of our discussion area, such as the Landscape Forum. The forum now has an images slide show at its top, showcasing the winners of the Monthly Landscape Contests for your enjoyment and inspiration.



You can move it back and forth with your mouse or using the arrows at the extremes. Clicking on an image will take you to the gallery version. The slider can be turned off (Hide).

At the end of this year, Nikonians will select the top three images among all Monthly Contests Winners from all forums where there is a monthly contest, including Online Assignments forum Contests for a 2012 Triple Crown Awards and prizes.

On a final note, our computer IT wizards are to be commended for their quick response to a technical glitch in early October. In short, most members found our Nikonians.org pages inaccessible on multiple platforms and many received warnings about computer safety. Our fearless leaders co-authored the official explanation on the matter once the dust has settled, and I'll conclude with a re-print of their message to all members:

Google site scanning found a piece of code on our site that could be interpreted as possible malware. We have made the appropriate substitutions and that has appropriately resulted in the warning status from Google being eliminated.

The site scanning technology was beneficial in alerting us of a possible problem; however, the automatic procedures, which necessarily followed, resulted in warning messages on numerous browser platforms. In addition, while we made our adjustments we had pages offline temporarily.

We are thankful for the opportunity to corroborate that we are clean and safe as we have been for over 12 years now. We are very sorry for the inconvenience and confusion that this may have caused.

As the technology that allows us the opportunity to share, learn and inspire each other with written text and images evolves, there will always be security risks involved and although the Google site scanning caused a temporary breakdown in the smooth flow of communications within the community, we are appreciative of their extra layer of security.

Bo Stahlbrandt (bgs) and J. Ramón Palacios (jrp)
Co-founders
Nikonians.org

MAGICA

More than just a tripod

**This is the Professional Camera Support System
designed by our members.**

Want to know More?
[check out our MAGICA System Overview](#)



Membership levels

Nikonians offers several levels of membership. Of course there is a free, basic membership good for a trial period, that you can now extend indefinitely depending on interactivity, 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



Access our free forum areas.
Learn, share and participate in lively discussions
Receive our newsletters, podcasts and RSS feeds
Receive our eZine THE NIKONIAN™ as PDF
Access our fast search portal NikoScope™



Everything in the Silver level plus
Your exclusive Nikonians personal Photographer's ID
Get your personal Nikonians Business Card
Write access to the Nikonians Wiki
Your own personal blog at Nikonians
Your own personal email address at Nikonians



Image gallery
Your personal image gallery with many features.
Participate in photo contests
Participate in the Annual Best of Nikonians Images Photo Contest. Prizes are awarded during the year as well as in the contest finals.
Access to classifieds section
Buy and sell your gear in our Buy and Sell Forums
Access to Nikonians workshops & tours
Access to Nikonians events
Upload and link to images in forums
Rebates and more!



Everything in the Silver and Gold level plus free shipping in the Photo Pro Shop, larger gallery, free access to events
Access to Platinum Lounge
Free access to the Nikonians Business Directory, the Orange Pages



A membership starts as low as \$25 USD per year or less than 7 cents a day. Join today at www.nikonians.org/membership

Photokina 2012 Recap

Michael Steiner, 2012 photokina Communications Manager provides substantial portions of this recap of the world's leading innovation and business platform for the photography and imaging sector. The event is held once every two years in Köln, Germany. Images by Nikonians eCommerce Director EMEA representative Lilija Gross (lilija).

The 32nd photokina, which ended on September 22, was a great success. Some 185,000 visitors from 166 countries attended, which marked an increase in visitors from the prior event in 2010 (181,464). The share of trade visitors was 48.8 per cent; 42.5 per cent of these visitors came from abroad, a significant increase (7.5 per cent) compared with the equivalent figure for the prior event.



In recognition of his service to photokina, Makoto Kimura, President and CEO of the Nikon Corporation was presented with the Golden photokina Needle by Jürgen Roters, the Mayor of Cologne and Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Koelnmesse, during photokina 2012.

This award has been presented since the beginning of the 1950s to individuals from the spheres of business, science and politics who have rendered extraordinary service to photokina.

Nikon's booth at the exhibition was well attended as presentations were made on stage and attendees were encouraged to handle popular cameras and lenses (including the newly announced Nikon D600).

Nikonians were in attendance although not manning a booth as in previous photokina events. Moderating Team member, Dennis Owens (DennisOwens) of Germany helped with the Virtual Backgrounds booth (where Lightsphere creator Gary Fong was a highlight attraction) and our Nikonians eCommerce Director EMEA representa-



tive, Lilija Gross made the rounds and captured some images while networking with industry representatives.

Tamron unveiled the new SP 70-200mm F/2.8 Di VC USD at their booth in Hall 4. The lens is a full-size, high-speed telephoto zoom lens equipped with VC (Vibration Compensation)2 image stabilization, and USD (Ultrasonic Silent Drive).

Tamron also displayed their updated legendary 90mm Macro lens. The new generation SP 90mm f/2.8 DI Macro 1:1 VC USD lens offers VC (Vibration Compensation) and USD (Ultrasonic Silent Drive).

A total of 87 percent of visitors said they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the range of products and services on display at photokina. Trade visitors were pleased with the opportunity photokina offered them to achieve their trade fair goals. Altogether, some 84 percent of trade visitors reported they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the results of their visit; 93 percent said they would recommend the event to close business acquaintances.

Photokina 2012 Recap



The wide-ranging program of events was a big hit again this year. Professionals at the fair focused on exchanging information on the latest sector trends, market developments, and business models. For private users it was all about touching, sampling, and experiencing the latest systems and technologies. In addition, photokina 2012 again featured many high-quality photography exhibitions that addressed topics ranging from photo documentation and photo design to photojournalism and photo art.

The next photokina Köln - World of Imaging - will take place from Tuesday, 16th September to Sunday, 21st September 2014.



Meet the fully-featured high-resolution lens you've been waiting for.

SP 24-70mm F/2.8
Di VC USD Model A007

The world's first F/2.8 full-frame standard zoom lens with image stabilization. Play with light as you explore the subtle aspects of beauty with Tamron's all new, high-speed standard zoom gives you top in class optical quality while featuring VC anti-shake mechanism, fast, accurate and quiet USD AF system with full-time manual focus, rounded 9-blade diaphragm for beautiful bokeh, moisture-resistant construction and Di design for use with full-frame DSLR cameras for excellent format



Drawing on the beauty of light.

www.tamron-usa.com

TAMRON
New eyes for industry

ADVERTISEMENT



Learning your equipment helps you perfect your craft

Josh Larkin (tonupbandit) is a Vermont-based photographer, web designer and writer. He's considered himself an artist all of his life, studying painting and fine art the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, MA in 1992. He later went on to study history and pursued a career in journalism in Vermont. He began making photographs with a point-and-shoot in 2005 and developed a passion for the medium in 2008 when he was given a Nikon D70s to play with. Since then, his work has been published by numerous Vermont news and media outlets. In 2012 he decided to focus on his photography business and has been working with clients and news outlets in the Northeastern United States on various photography and web projects. Josh's work can be seen at www.joshlarkinphotography.com.

A good friend of mine recently asked if I was getting a new camera anytime soon.

"Maybe next year, if I have the money, why?" I replied. (Yes, I'm typing with crossed fingers right now in hopes that I can add a D800 to my quiver).

Her response was the familiar refrain we see all over photography forums: "Well, my camera just doesn't take very good pictures, so I want to get a better camera and I thought if you were going to get a new one maybe you'd be willing to sell me one of yours."



Hardwick, Vermont. 1/100th, f/3.2, ISO 100, 50mm/1.8D AF Nikkor

Ummmm, okay. There's clearly a lot going on in that statement that we can pick apart. We all know that telling a photographer that their camera takes really good pictures is like telling a great baker that their oven makes amazing cakes. That's just silly, and doesn't even warrant more than a sentence here. But as I thought about this interaction more, I realized that there's something deeper going on in the mindset of new photographers and hobbyists alike.

Backtracking to my friend's question, and in her defense, I did allow her to use my D7000 for a couple of hours, and compared to her three-year-old Canon point-and-shoot, it does produce nicer photographs. Her point was that my camera was more responsive, it focused quicker, it was easier to hold, and when she pressed the shutter release, bam, the picture was taken. But the real problem I see is not that her camera is flawed, it's that she hasn't been willing to learn the equipment to find its strengths and weaknesses, and instead is buying into the belief that a new and better camera will make her a better photographer.

Certainly if given that same point-and-shoot, a competent photographer after having spent some time learning what it can and can't do would make good photographs with it. If they shot with only that camera for a week, and then a month, they would produce great photographs. Why? Because, a good eye and good camera are only parts of the full equation. Really knowing your equipment is also a part of the equation, and one that often gets overlooked when we get preoccupied with acquiring the next greatest camera body, or that other lens that we have to have, or that second flash.



Triplets in Randolph, Vermont. 1/100th, f/10, ISO 160, 50mm/1.8D AF Nikkor

Simply put: Want to be a better photographer? Learn to use your existing gear, regardless of whether it's a D3200 with a kit lens, a D4 with 50mm prime, or a Coolpix. Learn every setting, every menu, and every peculiarity of your gear and you'll make

Get to know your gear

better photographs than if you just purchase another item that purports to make your photographs better.

This is not a new concept, and it is one that many great photographers throughout history have followed and recommended. Take for example, this passage from ([Ansel Adams](#))' The Camera: "The camera imparts its own level of abstraction ("departure from reality" as we see it with our eyes) to the photograph, lending qualities of shape and scale, for example, that frequently differ from our visual perception. I use the term image management to refer to the considerations and controls that affect the optical image, as seen on the ground glass or viewfinder and projected on the film. By fully understanding the characteristics of the camera and lens, we can learn to visualize the optical image."

Or how about [Henri Cartier-Bresson](#), who reportedly only used a Leica rangefinder and a 50mm lens throughout his entire career.



Parts for sale. Stowe, Vermont. 1/100th, f/11, ISO 200, 50mm/1.8D AF Nikkor

Those are just two examples of masters who knew their equipment so well that the camera and lens became essentially extensions of their minds' eye, allowing them to capture images that to this day captivate us.

Practically speaking what does this mean to the modern day photographer who

wants to improve? To me it means practicing with one camera and one lens until I have a very complete understanding of how the equipment works, and under which circumstances it will perform its best.

Where to start

Given the range of camera makes and models out there, it would be impossible for me to state definitively where you should begin this process for yourself. That being said, I began learning about photography through trial-and-error at first, and then, as my desire to improve grew, I started seeking out advice on areas to focus in on. My first real experience with learning my equipment and technique came when a photographer I was speaking to told me to start shooting only in aperture priority mode, and do so until I had a solid understanding of depth of field. I shot that way for months. I'd shoot the same subject at f/3.5, then at f/11, then at f/22, go home, download and compare them. After a while I started to get a much better sense of what f-stop to shoot at to get good bokeh, or more depth of field, or where the acceptable limits were if I needed more or less light to achieve a specific goal.

I then moved on to shutter priority, learning what shutter speed to be at for motion blur, or to stop action, etc. After that, moving over to manual exposure was relatively painless, but it didn't mean my learning was over. Far from it. In fact, for a while I went along just being thrilled that I was shooting manual all the time and getting consistently good results. Then I started to slump. I wasn't growing as a photographer. Yes I could take a good photograph, but I wasn't making photographs that I looked at and got excited about consistently.

And that's when I decided that focal length would be a good place to settle for a while.



Portrait. 1/500th, f/3.5, ISO 100, 50mm/1.8D AF Nikkor

Get to know your gear

One Lens?

If you're at a point where you want to grow as a photographer and you haven't done the one lens exercises, then it's your time. The idea is simple, pick a lens, and shoot with it for an extended period of time. Now, you'll read a lot of recommendations to "shoot at one focal length for a day!" While that may be fun, it won't help that much. You're looking for more than fun. You're looking to grow, and the only way to do that is to practice something over and over and over again, like, for more than 12 hours.

If you're fortunate enough to own a prime lens or two, you're all set. Pick one, slap it on your camera, and spend the next month or two only shooting with that lens.

"But I only have my 18-105mm kit lens," you say. Well, go invest in some gaffer's tape, pick a focal length, and tape that zoom ring in place. Seriously. Gaffer's tape won't leave residue on the lens barrel when you take it off, btw.



Old wheels. 1/160th,
f/8, ISO 200,
50mm/1.8D AF Nikkor

I shoot DX bodies right now. I have three lenses that I carry, a Tamron 70-200mm f/2.8, a Sigma 17-55mm f/2.8, and a Nikkor 50mm f/1.8D. The prime is my favorite, and I'd say it's mounted on my D7000 about 75 percent of the time. That's where I started with this exercise, the 50mm prime lens.

A short diversion here.

A 50mm lens on a DX body gives you a field of view comparable to a 75mm lens on a 35mm film camera due to the [crop factor](#). Back in the film days, the "kit" lens offered with many 35mm cameras was the 50mm, because the photographs taken with that set up were fairly too close to nor-

mal human field of view. If you want to get that similar 35mm snapshot field of view on a DX body, you'll need a 35mm lens, which gives you the field of view of a 52mm lens on a 35mm film camera or FX body. If you're shooting with a zoom, just tape it at the 35mm point and you'll be good to go. I shoot the 50mm because it's what I have, and because I really like the field of view.

Only using a single focal length will help you grow as a photographer in a number of ways. First and foremost, you'll be forced to think more about your compositions. You'll either have to move your feet to get the shot you want, or, if you can't physically get to a place to do that, you'll have to decide on another way to get the shot. Maybe there's a wall in back of you, so you can't move back from your subject so it fits in the frame. Well, what if you lie on the ground and look up towards your subject? Or vice-versa. Can't get close enough to your subject? Maybe adding more of the environment into the frame will work, or, reframing by moving three or four feet to the left or right?

After a solid month of shooting this way, you'll start envisioning the field of view, and the resultant photograph, before you even bring the camera up to your eye. After another month, you'll be able switch your brain to 50mm mode, or 35mm, or whatever focal length you've been using and see the framing beforehand. Hey, that's what Ansel Adams was talking about a few paragraphs up above! Pre-visualizing your shot. I'm fairly good at this now with my 50mm. I can look at a scene and pretty quickly figure out how it will look through that lens, just like I'm fairly good at knowing how the image will look if I shoot at f/1.8 or at f/11. And just between you and me, it took more than shooting with this lens for a day to have it stick with me.

This will also help you understand the limitations of your lenses. As you work through the lenses you have -- if you only have a zoom, just change your focal length to the wide angle or the zoom position and spend time shooting like that as well -- you'll start to see where each lens excels and where it falls short. For example, when I got my Tamron 70-200mm f/2.8, I spent about a month with that lens on my camera almost exclusively. During that time I learned that it's too soft for my tastes wide open at f/2.8, but gets very sharp at f/4 and still has nice bokeh throughout its zoom range.

More than that, I learned that the auto to manual focus on this lens is changed by pulling back on the focus ring, which can easily happen accidentally while the camera hangs at my side. The first few times that auto focus wouldn't activate I was a little

Get to know your gear

confused, hunting around for what the problem was. Had I been shooting a wedding, or sports, I'd have been sunk. But after shooting consistently only with the lens for a prolonged period of time, when it's on my camera now and I'm about to take a shot and the autofocus doesn't kick in, it's instantaneous that I snap the focus ring forward. You don't miss a beat, because it becomes second nature. And it will only become second nature if you really know your equipment, which comes from prolonged use.

Not just lenses?

Nope. The same thing applies if you have more than one camera body. Commit to spending time shooting with just one body until you know where every setting is and can go through them without looking. I typically shoot with my D7000, but I also often carry my D2x with me. When I got that body, I spent a lot of time shooting with it. It's a very different camera from the D7000, technology-wise and in terms of its layout and menus. Had I walked into any serious assignment with that camera as my only camera I'd have been lost, and probably gotten lots of horrible shots. Instead, I took my time with it and learned what it can and can't do. For example, it's essentially worthless in low-light and if I know I'll need to go over ISO 400, I don't even take it out of my bag. However, if I'm shooting a portrait in good light, it produces wonderful skin tones,

even nicer than the D7000. Its autofocus is also ridiculously fast, so if I'm shooting sports outdoors, I'll often default to the D2x. Again, I only know these things because I made the commitment to know them.

And yes, I know full-well that the D2x is getting a bit long-in-the-tooth. It's an eight year old camera, which means it might as well have come out of the

Paleozoic era in today's world of photography equipment. But the thing is, I can still make beautiful photographs with it, because I know what it can and can't do. To be honest, my friend's point-and-shoot is probably beyond the D2x in many regards. But I can also look back at magazine covers from 2005 shot with a D2x and I know that the real reason those images still look great is because the photographer knew the equipment.

While researching this post, I came across an article on Essentials for Photographers that I found quite useful. Along with drawing a brilliant analogy between jazz musicians and their instruments and photographers and their equipment, the author offers a couple of great lists of things every photographer should be able to recall or do essentially without thinking. Can you change lenses without looking at your camera, or change up your white balance setting without taking the camera from your eye?

The final thing I want to mention here is that learning your gear doesn't just mean shooting with it consistently for a period of time. It also means learning the craft through reading, asking questions, joining photography groups, and practicing.

A quick example, let's say you're shooting only with a 200mm lens on your DX body. Well, if you don't know about crop factors, then you don't know that you're shooting with essentially a 300mm lens. And if you don't know the general rule of thumb to follow for minimizing camera shake for a given focal length - shutter speed should be the reciprocal of the focal length - then you're not aware that you should use 1/300th as your starting point. Sure, 1/250th of a second will likely get you a sharp image, but understanding the theory and reasoning behind that 1/300th recommendation will help you a lot.

And so I'll end this write up on this note, which is essentially what I told my friend. A better camera, a better lens, a better super-awesome-your-photos-will-blow-minds gizmo might help you get slightly better images, but if you want to make much better photographs on a consistent basis, learn your equipment and learn your craft.



Williamstown, Vermont. 1/100th, f/16, ISO 200, 50mm/1.8D AF Nikkor on a Nikon D2X



Nikonians African Safari shooting leaves animals unharmed

Professional photographer Mike Hagen is the Managing Director of the Nikonians Academy. Hagen has been the driving force behind the highly successful series of North America Nikonians Workshops in the United States and Canada since 2005. The Nikonians Academy workshops have earned praise as some of the best photographic training sources available. If you want to learn how to better use your autofocus system, sign up for one of our Master classes at the [Nikonians Academy](#) or join us on our photo adventures around the world.

Year in and year out, one of the most popular topics in our Nikonians Academy workshops is autofocus. The Nikon autofocus system is very advanced and works well as long as you understand its idiosyncrasies. If you don't understand the system, then it can be complicated and difficult to use in the real world. As with most things in life, the solution to mastering autofocus is to spend a little time studying and then lots of time practicing in the field.

Some of the more difficult subjects to pho-

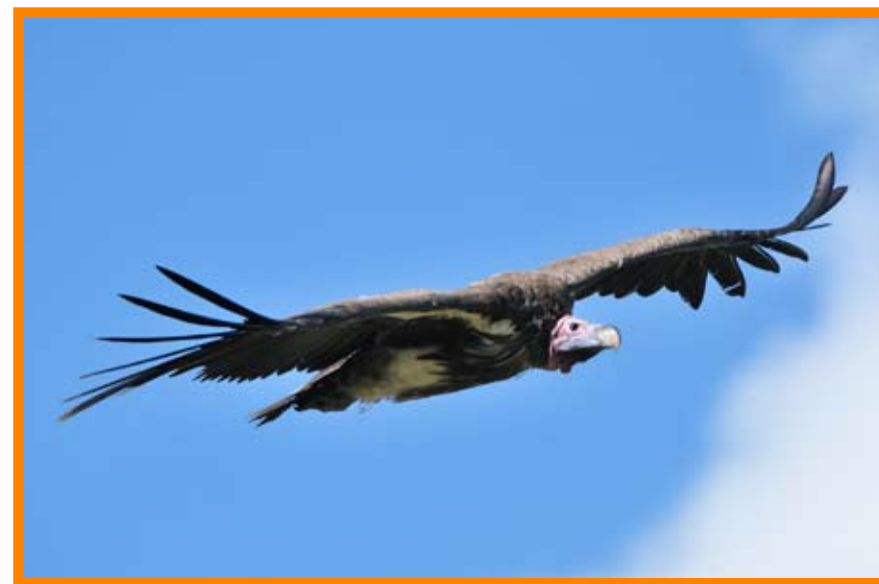
Fox in the snow.
Triple D Game Farm.
Nikon D300, Nikon
200-400mm f4, Gitzo
MAGICA with Markins
M20 ballhead.



tograph are action and wildlife. Capturing tack-sharp images of moving people or animals can cause grown men to weep in frustration. I've seen it myself and it isn't a pretty sight! The faster and more erratic the motion, the more difficult it is to come away with a sharp picture.

Here are some simple steps you can take to set yourself up for success with the Nikon Autofocus System.

Start focusing before you need to take the photo. The focus system requires at least one to two seconds to lock onto your subject. Therefore, I like to start focusing before the action really begins. If I'm photographing a bird, then I will start tracking the bird when it is a long ways off. I keep tracking it until it gets close enough to take the shot and then fire off a series of images. This approach results in a much better photo than waiting until the bird is close enough and then starting focus.



Vulture, Serengeti NP, Tanzania. Nikon D300s, 200-400mm f4, Nikon TC-14E II, Gitzo MAGICA with Markins M20 ballhead.

Nikon Autofocus for Action and Animals

For the photo of the vulture, I started focusing when it was just a dot on the horizon. Then, when it was close to filling the frame, I started taking photographs.



AF-C switch

Use AF-C for moving subjects. AF-C stands for Autofocus Continuous and means that as long as you hold down your shutter release button or AF-ON button, then the camera will continuously track the object. As soon as you let up on the button, then the system stops tracking.

Use Dynamic 21 point AF. Many Nikon cameras such as the D7000, D300s and D3s have the ability to choose how many focus sensors you use when focusing. You can pick from one point, nine points, 21 points or 51 points. Over the last four or five years, I've found that 21 points is the sweet spot for the autofocus system. This allows enough space for the subject to move within the group of 21 points while the camera tracks the subject. The 21 point "net" prevents the camera from losing focus if the subject leaves the priority sensor.



Dynamic AF switch (middle position).



Menu selection for 21-point

Some photographers are tempted to use 51 points. Those who do will often experience the autofocus jumping to different areas of the frame because the camera will pick up something else it thinks is the subject. Keep it to 21 points and you'll be happier.

Keep your priority sensor placed over the moving subject. When using dynamic 21-point autofocus, make sure that you position the priority sensor (the dark one in the middle) over the subject and keep it there as the subject moves forward and backwards, right and left. You'll need to pan your camera with the movement as the animal or subject moves around the environment.

A good example of this is the horse and rider photograph. As the cowgirl rode from right to left, I kept my priority sensor directly on the rider so she would be in focus.



Horse and rider at 7L Ranch, Mariposa, CA. Nikon D300s, 70-200mm f2.8, handheld.

Nikon Autofocus for Action and Animals



Cougar. Triple D Game Farm.
Nikon D300s, 200-400mm f4,
Gitzo MAGICA with Markins M20
ballhead.

Focus on the eyes. As you improve your autofocus skills, you'll also want to become more precise about what specifically you are focused on. Many people consider it a success if something on the subject is in focus (shoulder, leg, foot, etc.). However, the truth is that the very best photos are those where the subject's eyes are in focus. Therefore, make sure that your priority sensor is placed exactly over the eyes. If you want to be even more precise, then put the focus point on the closest eye to the camera.

You can see the impact of slightly out of focus eyes on the cougar photo. In this case, my focus point was centered on the chest of the running cougar. Since the eyes are closer to the camera than the chest, they are slightly out of focus, rendering this shot unusable for a large print.

Pan smoothly and follow through. Panning smoothly with the subject sounds obvious, but you'd be surprised at how few people do this well. You need to imagine that you are swinging a golf club or baseball bat. Follow through with the motion even after you are finished taking

the photos. This encourages smoothness and helps keep your camera aimed at the action.

For the silver fox image, I panned with the running canine and continued moving my camera long after I was finished taking the image.

Set your "delay" correctly for the each situation. Most higher-end Nikon cameras have a menu item called "Focus tracking with lock-on." There are a number of choices in



Silver fox, 7L Ranch,
Mariposa, CA. Nikon
D300s, 200-400mm
f4, Gitzo MAGICA
with Markins M20
ballhead.

this menu item that range from Off to Long. If the camera is set for Off, then the autofocus system will immediately jump focus to whatever passes in front of the camera. For example, let's say that a lion is walking through long grass on the Serengeti. If you are focused on the lion and it walks behind grass, then the camera will immediately focus on the closer grass.

The other settings in this menu range from Short to Medium to Long. If you choose Long, then the camera delays the focus system for approximately 1.5 seconds, allowing the grass to pass by and keeping the focus on the lion.

There are situations where it makes sense to keep the delay set for Off. An example is a sporting event where you want to capture whatever action is closest to the camera. In this case, the camera's focus system will jump to the closest subject very quickly.

Ok, so these are some good tips to get you started with your Nikon autofocus system. As I said in the beginning, the key to getting better is practice. I try to take photographs every single day and work hard at my technique, so that I'm ready to take great images when it really counts.

Nikon D600 – Should I Upgrade?

by Darrell Young (DigitalDarrell)



It's new, packed with features, and easier on the wallet – should you get it?

Darrell Young (DigitalDarrell) is author of the NikoniansPress/Rocky Nook [Mastering the Nikon DSLR](#) series of books. The series includes the new Mastering the Nikon D800, along with previous Mastering books on the D7000, D300/D300S, D700 (co-authored with James Johnson), D90, D5000, and D3000.

The eBooks are available as both print and ebooks (in multiple formats) from fine vendors

such as Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, O'Reilly Media, and other book retailers. He joined the community in the year 2000, and his literary contributions led to his invitation to become a Founding Member of the Nikonians Writers Guild.

This is a question on the minds of many Nikonians today. A large number of Nikonians use excellent DX cameras, such as the Nikon D300/D300S, D7000, and D90. Many have a desire to enter the FX (full-frame) world, yet wonder how they would benefit and if they would lose anything. Current FX users often wonder if the D600 would be a fitting backup or carry camera.

As an owner and user of a Nikon D300S, D7000, D600, and D800, I have tested the cameras for usability and can make some recommendations, based on my own opinion and experience.



Nikon D7000 User's Perspective

The Nikon D600 is almost a direct upgrade from the Nikon D7000 for the simple reason that the D600 is a D7000 on steroids. I say almost because of two caveats, lenses and cost. The bodies of the D7000 and D600 are very similar in build and control layout, therefore, a D7000 user will enjoy immediate familiarity along with several improvements, such as a better grip and bigger viewfinder. If you are comfortable with a D7000, you will immediately feel at home with the D600.



The two caveats, lenses and costs, are your primary considerations. If you only have DX lenses, you can use them on the D600, but you will trade away resolution to do so. The DX mode on the D600 drops the resolution to only a little over 10 MP, so the D600 is a step backwards for those using DX lenses. However, if you have some older Nikkors from the film days, the D600 is perfectly comfortable with them. You can mount and use virtually any AF-D or AI/AI-S Nikkor made in the last 35-40 years. Only non-AI lenses should be avoided. If you have no FX lenses, you will have to spend considerable money to acquire them, such as the new, quite excellent AF-S Nikkor 24-85mm f/3.5-4.5G ED VR lens, which costs \$599 (USD).

Or, you could spring for the trinity of f/2.8 pro AF-S Nikkor lenses, the 14-24mm, 24-70mm, and 70-200mm, which will set you back over US\$6000 for the group. Plus the price of the D600 body is over twice the price of the D7000 body. Cost is your most onerous problem in entering the FX world!

Nikon D600 – Should I Upgrade?

If you are willing to bear the extra cost, the Nikon D600 is an excellent entry point into the FX world, with 24 MP of very high quality sensor goodness and a robust build that will allow the camera to last for many years. Over time, the satisfaction of shooting with a great FX camera will help alleviate the pain of spending lots of money.

Nikon D300/D300S User's Perspective

The semi-pro level Nikonian will have some immediate issues to deal with when purchasing a Nikon D600. Yes, you will get the powerful new 24 MP FX sensor with significantly higher dynamic range and image quality. However, if you have grown accustomed to the button arrangement on cameras like the Nikon D300/D300S, you will have to make an adjustment mentally to the control layout on the D600. There is



no AF-ON button or 10-pin accessory connector and the WB, QUAL, and ISO buttons are on the back instead of on the top of the camera. If you are shooting a wedding or event, you won't have time to look around for buttons, so if you do upgrade, make sure you've spent sufficient time familiarizing yourself with the different control layout.

The D300/S line is soundly in the semi-pro camp and is built accordingly, with a full magnesium-alloy body, where the D600 comes from the Advanced Enthusiasts camp, with a less robust build, having a partial magnesium-alloy body, which includes more plastic on the front

of the camera, behind the lens mount.

Additionally, you will have a similar problem with lenses when upgrading from the DX D300/S to the FX D600. If you have no FX lenses, you will have to bear the cost of new

lenses, which are significantly more expensive than DX lenses. Hopefully you have at least some prime Nikkors, such as the AF-S Nikkor 50mm f/1.4G lens. You can get by for quite a while with that, or a similar lens. Even your older AI/AI-S Nikkors will work fine. Otherwise, you will have to spend much more than the cost of the D600 body to buy one or more premium FX lenses. Or, you could use the AF-S Nikkor 24-85mm f/3.5-4.5G ED VR lens for a while, until you can afford higher-end lenses.

If you do upgrade to the D600, you will find the image quality is significantly better than the D300/D300S line, due to several advances in sensor quality since the D300 was released back in 2007. For instance, dynamic range on the D600 is quite amazing, at 14.2 EV. You will benefit from the upgrade in some ways and lose things in other ways. In my opinion, you may want to hold out for the amazing D800/E body because it is only about US\$1000–1300 higher in price. That way, you maintain your semi-pro level of camera build and size, along with your memorized control arrangement. The D800 is probably a better upgrade for D300/D300S users.

Current D800/E User's Perspective (Backup Camera)

If you are using the Nikon D800/E commercially and cannot afford another D800 body, you may want to consider the D600 as a backup camera. If you are shooting an unrepeatable event, such as a wedding, you definitely will have a backup camera on you at all times. The D600 is a good choice for a backup camera, with the one caveat of a dissimilar button arrangement. However,



Nikon D600 – Should I Upgrade?

you could preset the D600 to whichever settings you normally use and shoot without thinking. Or, you could even use the D600's AUTO mode, or AUTO ISO control and let the camera take care of the image.

The D600 has such wide dynamic range and high image quality that you could almost use it like a snapshot camera and still get excellent results. The fact that it has the same EXPEED 3 processor as the Nikon D800/E means it is quite fast at moving data. Other than the fact that the memory buffer will fill up faster in RAW burst shooting, the D600 is a great backup camera, at a reasonable cost.



With 5.5 frames per second, the D600 has a 1.5 FPS advantage over your D800/E, so it could be used to shoot events where more FPS speed is required. The Nikon D600 can easily provide the highest in commercial quality images for your clients. In fact, DxO Labs rates the Nikon D600 as the third best camera in the world for image quality, just behind the Nikon D800 and D800E cameras. If you would rather spend money on more FX lenses and less on a backup camera body, the D600 is a great choice for pros on a budget.

Author's Conclusions

Having used virtually all Nikon's DSLRs since 2002, I find the Nikon D600 to be a delightful camera, with sufficient body build to take daily use and image quality that even bests the US\$8000 Nikon D3X. It is a great camera for daily carry because it is slightly smaller than a D800 and not too heavy for things like hiking and climbing. When I shoot with the Nikon D600, I find that I am not having to use HDR as often. The wide dynamic range provides such deep shadow detail that I can shoot RAW files a little underexposed to protect the highlights and later bring out amazing detail with little noise.

My photo of the Golden Hour scenic shows some of that range. The foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains are the background (30 miles away). It was taken with the new Nikon D600, AF-S Nikkor 24-85mm f/3.5-4.5G ED VR lens at 50mm, 1/15 sec handheld with VR at f/8, 100 ISO, SD Picture Control, matrix meter, aperture priority mode.

The Nikon D600 is one of the new breed, including the D800/E and D4 cameras. I have a Nikon D800 but find myself carrying the slightly smaller and less costly Nikon D600 on a daily basis. The size, build, weather sealing, and image quality of the Nikon D600 makes it my camera of choice for daily use. Not all my images really need to be 36 MP in size. 24 MP is a great size, not too small and not too large.

The D600 camera is easy to use, fast, and has auto and scene modes for when you want a less knowledgeable photographer to use your camera, plus, it makes superb images and video. I find the camera highly usable and recommend it to those who are willing to bear the cost of FX lenses and the more expensive D600 camera body. It is a great entry point to the FX world for photographers on a budget or who need an affordable commercial backup camera.

Keep on capturing time...

Darrell Young (DigitalDarrell)

Talking about books

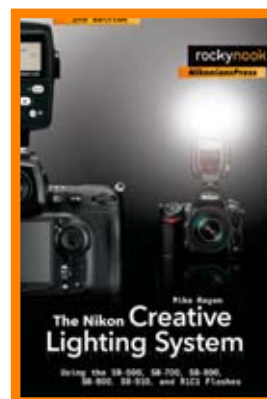
A quick look at some great reading by J. Ramón Palacios (jrp)



Mastering the Nikon D7000 is now in its third printing, sold out twice in just a few months since its publication. Three reasons for that. First, it is an affordable prosumer body with pro features --Nikon engineers love to do that! Secondly, the camera is a hit in the market and remains at the top of its class since its introduction. Thirdly, it was written by Nikonian Darrell Young (DigitalDarrell), who keeps on upping his thoroughness on detail and his easy to understand explanations of the how's and why's on these beautiful and remarkable machines of ours. This is his 7th book under the NikoniansPress label. If you own a D7000, get it. If you know someone you care for who has a D7000, get it. To celebrate this NikoniansPress/RockyNook edition, the book carries a voucher for a 50% discount on a Nikonians community Gold Membership.



Mastering the Nikon D800 has been an amazing success due to intense interest in the Nikon D800/E and complexity of the cameras. The D800/E not only gives you the resolution of larger and more expensive medium-format cameras, but the dynamic range has been rated as the highest on all available cameras of any brand. Low-noise performance at High ISO has been improved, Auto ISO takes into account focal length in use, the camera's deep resolution will take your breath away, and much more. Darrell Young (DigitalDarrell) clearly explains how to get the best out of your camera, producing his largest volume ever at nearly 600 pages. This NikoniansPress/RockyNook latest edition also carries a voucher for a 50% discount on a Nikonians community Gold Membership.

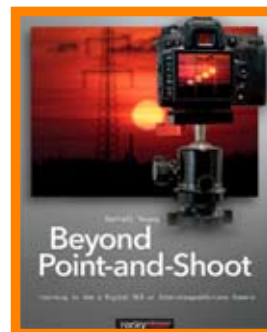


The Nikon Creative Lighting System: Using the SB-600, SB-700, SB-800, SB-900, SB-910, and R1C1 Flashes is the best of the books about the technical aspects of CLS. Written by Nikonians Academy Director Mike Hagen, not only deals in great detail with the functions of each and all of the speed-lights mentioned in the title, as well as ancillary equipment, it also shows examples of the equipment at work, both in automated and manual modes. As our toughest book reviewer wrote: *"Hagen's writing is quite clear, and leaves no unanswered questions about the operation of particular pieces of equipment"*

A must have book for both amateurs and professionals. This NikoniansPress/RockyNook edition has inside its pages a voucher for a 50% discount on a Gold Membership.



The Passionate Photographer: Ten Steps Toward Becoming Great (Voices That Matter) This is a book by Steve Simon, laureate photographer, writer and Nikonians Academy faculty member. One that can hardly be put down once started. Not a technical volume by any means, but an inspirational book for those who aspire to become a great photographer. Emphasizing passion as the secret ingredient to power your own efforts, he lists and explains ten solid steps towards that goal. One of the best photography books we have ever read. If in addition to be interested in becoming a great photographer you are interested in his field of documentary photography, this is a book not to miss.



Beyond Point-and-Shoot: Learning to Use a Digital SLR or Interchangeable-Lens Camera If you are just starting in the transition from a compact camera to a DSLR, this is a very well done book to guide you on the differences between ILC and DSLR cameras, how to choose a camera and lenses, and easy-to-understand instruction on the most important basics of digital photography. By Darrell Young.

The Photographer's Eye - Turin

by Marco Baracco (MarcoF80)



Your photography improves when you understand, even feel your subject

Marco Baracco (MarcoF80) is an Italian photographer with a heavy collection of Nikon gear and a passion for capturing images. He says that from early childhood he learned "that is possible to write by light, use it for work and communication, stopping moments and fixing it forever." A 1979 graduate of the

Photographic Institute of Torino, he says he has always had an authentic passion for cinema and photography. In a recent article for Nikon Italy, reprinted here with English translation, he focused on Turin, also known as the Capital of the Alps. Marco's style is to dig deep into his feelings or background information on a subject and use that influence to guide his photographer's eye. As you read his article, you will see the pattern emerge in his selected images.

Turin is a peculiar city where the tones are moderate. Citizens are not exactly prone to make noise showing off their own things. As my grandmother said – in Piedmontese dialect - "tente bottonà." It's like "hold your buttons" or in practical terms "be modest, be quiet, don't make too much noise."



We Turinese, as natives, have a certain ingrained jealousy for our own things and as consequence are very reserved; we have many things worthy of note but we don't want to create too much publicity of them.

It is a sort of a contradiction, because Turinese are generous and we have much to share. This city has authentic wonders, mysterious shortcuts that are rarely mentioned in books or in tourist guides. We have far places that need an appointment to be found, however a patient search is rewarded by finding real treasures, many yet to be discovered by non locals.

The beauty of Turin is contained especially in courtyards. Turinese seem to almost want to jealously guard their treasures inside a casket, to be shown only to trusted people. Today, the unknown foreigner is still seen with a certain mistrust, with doubt, fearing that seeing something beautiful can scatter the news all over and the questions will then

create embarrassment and bother, but mostly a fear that "they" can take away our treasures.

There are some courtyards that have boiling activity inside, working activity; laboratories, shops and stores; in many cases there are remnants of Roman and medieval walls. Some courtyards have been rebuilt, while others have remained as they were hundreds of years ago; stratifications of additions and architectural changes can also be found everywhere. In many cases recent jobs of face-lifting and restructuring have brought into the light real treats of Roman construction and of the immediately following periods.

I remember the Turin of the Sixties. The war had ended only fifteen years before and there were still bombed houses in sight. The view of the old houses in the center of

The Photographer's Eye - Turin

the city was not exactly clean. It was dirty and you saw rubble a lot, in many cases crumbling.



In the Seventies, the residents of the city began to speak of pollution and smog. Some streets were reconstructed as pedestrian walks and the cityscape found itself having a new setup of roads and squares almost overnight.

The 2006 Winter Olympic represented a moment of dramatic change. It was a rebirth for the city. It can be considered as a new power charge; now a cleaner and livable city can be admired. Some zones that once were demolished and abandoned have now been revalued and have acquired a new vigorous life. Finally, it is also possible to see many new beings in the cityscape, alien beings unknown to the locals until recently: tourists! Who may not want to take a walk in the historical center of Turin that today breathes still an eighteenth-century air, in a large number of courtyards there are ancient trees, flowers, old fountains, clattered floors, vine-trellises, roofing and galleries? Walking in the alleys and in the ancient sections of town is a continuous adventure

through the rediscovery of the city. Perspectives of yesterday that some years ago seemed to me meaningless return today with a renewed life. These once forgotten places now show an improved and polished aspect, reborn from wartimes, carelessness and neglect.

It could also be that (finally for my age) I have now matured a bit and that infuses me with a new taste that was not in me when I was young. It could also be that the photographer's eye now searches for details that not so long ago passed unnoticed!

For example, there was a place where I went with my family as a child, sometimes to eat pizza. Where today there is a typical restaurant,

many years ago (I don't remember how many, but they are quite a lot) there was Baldacci's Piz-za. Two Tuscan brothers, transplanted to Turin in 1950, had their firewood in a narrow alley where they cooked an unbeatable pizza.

The essential basic ingredients were genuine flour, Italian tomato and mozzarella, with the good olive oil from our Tuscan hills. Quite a delightful memory!



I also remember in the years '60-'70 going downtown into the old zone. The images were of despair. Some buildings that were bombed remained collapsed and many courtyards still carried the signs of the war. The poorest people lived there and the houses were ugly, dark and damp. Today the restructure projects have given back prestige to a zone that we held disreputable and frequently avoided. Now, everything is blooming with shops, bistros, typical and a variety of restaurants. The sidewalks are

The Photographer's Eye - Turin

filled with a swarm of working people at lunch time and in the evening the ancient sections of the city, especially the so-called "Roman Quadrilateral" become animated as you would not have thought possible about ten or fifteen years ago.

Another key point in time for the city, a time of renewal with new vital energy, is the current period of celebration for the 150th anniversary of the Unity of Italy. We had never seen so many tricolor flags on the balconies and windows, in the roads, in the shops and along the streets. The shops showcase studied compositions and objects that continually recall the Unity of Italy 150th experience.

When the National Soccer Team wins an important game (like the Soccer World Championship) for example, there is an explosion of flags and symbols. Unfortunately they last but a few days; then the enthusiasm lingers to extinction and everything returns as before, even with the same grey daily uniforms. Now instead, the whole city landscape is in green-white-red and so it will be until the end of the year.



My memories take me back almost fifty years, to when my parents brought me to see the monorail and to the Italy '61 Park wonders. It is a short flashback, but it is very clear; a shout emerges from the deep confines of my mind with the thought: I was there! To feel again my own city, to find again something that seemed lost: this is the feeling of this period, where I am to explore, see again and examine under a new light the places of the historical center of Turin, The Heart of my City.

Returning to cross the downtown alleys and the ancient sections, makes deep memories resurface, bringing



back all the places, the visions of when I was a child and the slow gradual process of moving from having been there to the immense pleasure of the rediscovery now. Today, the amazement is great and the photographer's curiosity lives long; those roads, where in the Sixties the bombed houses could still be seen, today now wear a new dress and new lights.

The recent restructure works, spread all over by now from twenty years of renovations and stimulated by the latest important events of which Turin has been the capital, have changed the sad perspectives of yesterday into a pleasant and noticeable new, renovated cityscape with new perspectives, new colors and new tones. Wise recoveries of daily art and clippings from the past have given back life to places that were degraded and dirt, talking of poverty through badly patched walls, eternal collage of summary charges, false adjustments, carelessness.

Let's taste a brief tour to the discovery of these perspectives of yesterday: our Secret Turin!

Does it take a Nikonian to understand a Nikonian?

by J. Ramón Palacios (jrp)

A short picture story about a "sweet" camera

Fellow Nikonian Donald E. Patterson (stentdoc) of Indianapolis, Indiana USA got married recently.

That's enough to make us all happy, but then, there is more to this piece of good news. He got a brand new D3 as a wedding present.



There are confusing versions to the side note, about whether the bride gave him a D3 or she just let him buy it. However, it is significant that instead of the classic wedding cake with a sugar candy couple on top, she ordered a custom-made cake simulating a D3 on top of it. The beautiful and delicious cake ornament was so realistic that Donald's brother had to be promptly slapped in the hand to prevent him from picking it up to make some shots of the happy occasion.



Donald wanted to eat it right there and then ("My precious").

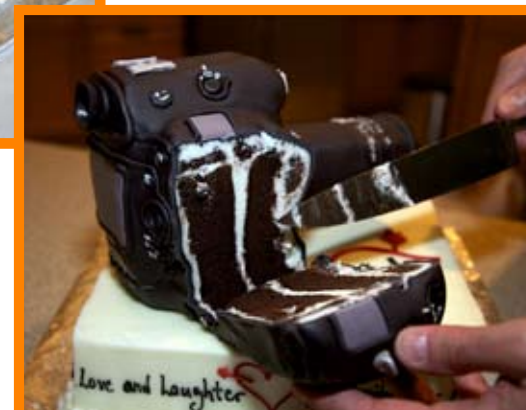


But guess what! Our undercover investigative reporter soon found out -after only two glasses of champagne- that the gorgeous bride, Jean Patterson, is also a Nikonian!

So, does it take a Nikonian to understand a Nikonian? Well, maybe not, but it sure helps. For those who have wanted to see a

cutout of the D3, here is a snap shot of that:

Our very best wishes to Donald and Jean for Love and Laughter, Happily Ever After.



Cotton Carrier review

by Rick Hulbert (rhulbert)

Rick Hulbert is both an architect and teacher of photography living in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Rick is an instructor with the Nikonians Academy and leads inspirational workshops on "Urban Photography." Rick Hulbert is one of the Nikonians Photo Professors and you can link to his Monthly Podcast directly from the Nikonians Website.



Wouldn't it be nice to have a Photo "Caddie" or "Sherpa" or a real, live "assistant" to carry and hand you the right gear when you need it?

The first professional photographer I met when I was a young architect was Julius Shulman, who was photographing one of my recently

completed buildings. He had a "photo-assistant" that accompanied him everywhere, and I have been looking for such a person for the last 42 years.

I love everything about photography... especially having the right camera and lens available when the "decisive moment" presents itself. Given the fact no one camera and lens is right for every situation, I have, over time, acquired more gear than I would care to admit. This includes the never-ending quest for the perfect camera solution for carrying my gear when on an outdoor assignment that may require self-sufficiency for between 4-16 hours at a time of sheer "shooting enjoyment." During the last 42 years since I first encountered the phenomenon of the "photographic assistant," I have researched and tested numerous camera carrying straps, bags, backpacks, waist packs, harnesses, roller bags, and even baby strollers.

Convenience vs. Comfort

One problem of carrying more than one camera at a time is having easy access to the right gear at the right time.

A second problem of carrying more than one camera with multiple lenses is comfortably surviving under the weight of all the metal and glass.

I have been a fan of the [Cotton Carrier Camera Vest System](#) for a few years now. As one of the early adopters, I have been completely satisfied with both the product and the customer service.



Recently, I had a chance to try their updated Vest Systems Bundle as well as their relatively new Carry-Lite Camera Holster Bundle.

Both packages now come with all the necessary parts and pieces bundled together... including the bonus of a hand strap and tripod adapter plate.

I appreciate that there is no camera carrying system or device ideal for every photographic situation. But, if you want the ability to carry a medium or heavy camera and lens for long periods of time, while keeping your hands, waist, shoulders and neck free of strain, or free to carry other gear, the Cotton Carrier Camera Vest and/or Holster is the ticket!

I have worn the vest system for 12 -16 hours straight without fatigue ... and I am not a "strong young man."

I have endured cameras around my neck for years and I simply find it very uncomfortable. I even tried experimenting with exotic straps that "spread the load," but the

Cotton Carrier review

Cotton Carrier Vest beats that by a long shot. If I am carrying lots of gear on a shoot, I will have both a backpack and a waist pack. But even with those two methods of transport, I find the Cotton Carrier Vest to be "heaven sent." It allows me to use my upper torso to support my main camera and a heavy lens. For me, that is a Nikon D3 body with either a 200 f/2 lens or longer. The result, for me, is that I experience less strain and fatigue from my biggest camera and lens than from the rest of my gear that is supported by the waist pack and backpack.

The key is to strap the vest on, in a fairly snug fashion, to your upper chest and torso. One "easy to access" clip locks the vest in place. The vest becomes one with your body. In fact, even when I take a break during a full shooting day to have a meal or take a rest, I leave the vest on as part of my clothing. I actually forget about it (well almost) until someone, who hasn't seen it before will look at me and ask..."what's that?" The Cotton Carrier Vest is a great conversation starter. After I go through my story of how I am a bionic man, I explain that the small vest plate is designed to hold

a camera safely in place while allowing complete freedom of body movement whether you are hiking or walking or carrying other items. If you do have a bigger lens, like a medium or larger zoom lens, an integrated Lens Stabilization Strap holds the lens close to your body so that it doesn't bounce around.

Where to put the "second" camera?

The Cotton Carrier Vest System even includes two security Camera Tethers as a fail safe back up support system for piece of mind. The reason for the second tether is because that bundle also includes a side holster in addition to the vest, which allows the photographer to carry an easily accessible second body and lens.

If you are an event photographer, you

will appreciate that having a second camera with a second lens attached and "ready to go" is a very convenient advantage.

In my case, I have fallen in love with photographing invisible light, specifically in the infrared spectrum. This is a great solution for those of us that have become so spoiled by early morning and late afternoon light that we no longer enjoy mid-day landscape photography. Since I had one of my cameras converted to be able to isolate the capture of infrared light, I always want it with me.

This is where the side holster is a really nice feature to have. The main camera can be quickly and securely attached to the vest plate and then the second camera and lens can be immediately removed from the side holster, ready to fire.

While I know there are other methods of hanging two cameras around your neck and shoulders, I really like the fact that the Cotton Carrier System prevents the cameras from swinging to and fro as you walk or move around.

One of the most innovative features of the vest and holster is also its smallest component ... the innovative Camera Hub. These hubs allow you to easily and securely link the camera body (or lens foot) to either the vest or the side holster ... or both. In fact four hubs are provided to allow for differing camera sizes.

Whether you are a landscape photographer, a wedding photographer, a sports photographer, or a commercial photographer, the Cotton Carrier Vest System will afford you easy access to your ready to shoot cameras with lenses attached.



Cotton Carrier review

The vest actually lets you hold more gear while having the effect of perceived less overall weight!

One of the newest “bundles” that is currently offered by Cotton Carrier is called the Carry-Lite Camera Holster. I have been using this product now for a short while, but I am very pleased with it. It combines a comfortably padded waist belt with an over the shoulder harness for added support. Just like in the Cotton Carrier Vest Bundle, a camera tether and a couple of hubs are included for the option of using a regular body or a “pro” series large body or battery pack. As well, a hand strap and tripod adapter plate is included. I have been working with the one camera bundle, but they also have a bundle for people who use two cameras.

Testing the latest version of the Cotton Carrier Vest Bundle ...

Well, folks, this was a tough assignment, but somebody had to do it. I tested the latest bundled offerings from the folks at Cotton Carrier, and the following is a summary of my hands-on experiences. I live in Vancouver, Canada, so I have easy access to what is referred to as “Super Natural British Columbia.” I also live and work in one of the most livable cities in the world, so I have no shortage of photographic situations and opportunities to enjoy. Having said that, I am not a rock climber or mountain biker or extreme skier. For me, walking uphill and downhill on trails as well as on the “ground floor” of the city is where I spend most of my time photographing everything from man made structures and environments to the natural landscape and wildlife.

One of my favorite camera lenses is the Nikon 200mm f/2 offering. It is a very “guy” lens, being super heavy with a wide girth. It's a bulky lens that can torque and distort the body it is attached to, if it is not handled and stored properly. (I know this from a very sad, first hand, experience.) Did I say it was heavy? I love it for portraits, and anytime you want to isolate a subject with a creamy bokeh or out of focus area. It is a sweet lens... sorry, I digress. That lens on a large “professional” camera body is my “Arnold Schwarzenegger” point and shoot solution.

This kind of requirement, for me is where the Cotton Carrier Vest is the best solution I have found (other than having a personal assistant). Actually, while I have a relatively extreme weight requirement for gear, the vest works great for most SLRs with any lens. However, I think it comes into its own with the 70-200 or thereabouts lens and camera combination.

The Holster solution that is part of the Bundled Vest Package works best for “normal” SLR solutions with wide angle through normal and modest telephoto lenses attached. It can also work well for the newer, smaller, “mirrorless” cameras that are all the rage. I tried it with my little V1 camera and my favorite 30-110mm zoom lens. I also experimented using it with the FT1 lens adapter that allows the ability to attach most FX and DX lenses to the camera. The FT1 adapter is also ideal as the strong metal foot offers an ideal place to attach the “hub” which connects the camera to the holster.



For tripod users like me, the camera adapter plate that is included allows you to instantly take your camera from the Cotton Carrier and mount it on an Arca-Swiss style tripod head simply and securely. There is even a great solution for those of you that might have Manfrotto style quick release plates. It's all on their website.

Testing the new Cotton Carrier Carry-Lite Bundle ...

While I was familiar with the Vest solution from Cotton Carrier, I wanted to also test out one of the more recent products offered, which is a waist belt mounted solution for carrying a more regular sized camera and lenses from wide to normal to modest telephoto lengths. The belt is a well-padded solution that is very comfortable. As I mentioned earlier, the integrated shoulder strap makes it that much more pleasant to wear overall. The key component to the Carry-Lite belt is the same holster that is part of the Vest Bundle solution, so the same comments apply. In short, it is a great solution for a standard body and wide to mid-range telephoto lenses.

Cotton Carrier review

Is there anything wrong with this picture? ...

... or to put it another way, is there anything that can be improved upon with these products?

While my review is very positive, I set out to purposely see if I could find some flaws or negative aspects so that my review would be "balanced."

Well, no product is perfect. I guess if you want a camera carrying solution that is more "protective" of your gear, especially from inclement weather, there is something to be said for the more typical bags available. However, if you are worried about theft, what better solution is there than to have the cameras and lenses effectively bolted to your body?

If you want to be more stealth with your equipment, the Vest and Holster solution I have been discussing is naked and exposed for all to see. It is guaranteed to invite envious glances so if you don't want your gear to be seen by others, this is not the best solution. However, if you want almost instant access to one or two cameras with lenses attached and ready to fire, you should check out these products.

Picture this!

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then the attached images will add to my thoughts. All in all, I am very impressed with the Cotton Carrier Products. I have had a chance to meet personally with the inventor, Andy Cotton, and have learned about how painstakingly and thoroughly he and his staff have been working on and refining these products over the past 2 and a half years. As an Architect and Designer, I am appreciative of new, innovative products that really work.

Until recently, the Cotton Carrier products have only been available on line, directly from the manufacturer. Recently, more and more camera stores and other retail outlets have been stocking the products. If you can find one in your local store or have a friend that has one, I urge you to give it a test run...or walk, or hike, or bike ride, or "wiggle."

By the way, the folks at Cotton Carrier also carry other great accessories including that very simple and adjustable camera hand strap mentioned earlier. Warning: If you try it, you won't want to be without one.



Meet the fully-featured high-resolution lens you've been waiting for.

SP 24-70mm F/2.8
Di VC USD Model A007

The world's first F/2.8 full-frame standard zoom lens with image stabilization. Play with light as you explore the subtle aspects of beauty with Tamron's all new, high-speed standard zoom gives you top in class optical quality while featuring VC anti-shake mechanism, fast, accurate and quiet USD AF system with full-time manual focus, rounded 9-blade diaphragm for beautiful bokeh, moisture-resistant construction and Di design for use with full-frame DSLR cameras for excellent format

EISA AWARD Best Product 2012-2013 LENS

Drawing on the beauty of light.

TAMRON
New eyes for industry

www.tamron-usa.com

ADVERTISEMENT

Meet the Nikonians Photo Professors



Nikon photo enthusiasts looking for a series of free podcasts designed to enhance their image making skills have a new “must listen” resource.

[Nikonians Photo Professors](#) Rick Paul and Rick Hulbert combine 60 years of professional and successful photography experience in the newest podcast series available through [nikonians.org](#) starting January 23.

Rick Paul has supplemented his 25-year career as an Aerospace Engineer by creating and developing a successful wedding photography and portrait photography business in addition to his success as a stock photographer. Rick has honed his instructional skills teaching photography skills to company factory workers.

Rich Hulbert has leveraged his 35-year background in architecture and urban design as a springboard for his current activities as an instructor and lecturer and workshop leader in the areas of architectural, travel, street and urban photography.

The Nikonians Photo Professors credit Jason Odell and Rick Walker, longtime podcast veterans of more than 150 Nikonians Image Doctors episodes for their inaugural work in generating interest in the field of photography-oriented podcasts. While preparing for the debut episode they consulted with Jason Odell and arranged to book him as their first guest.

The professors also pay homage to the Nikonians motto — Share, Learn, Inspire — by structuring the podcast format to those three elements. Each monthly episode will share information on new gear, assist in learning with the help of special guests and inspire creative techniques with an emphasis on basics (meaning no need for purchasing new equipment).

New From Nikon

Nikon's smallest, lightest and more affordable Full-Frame HD-SLR

On September 13, 2012 Nikon Inc. announced the 24.3-megapixel (MP) D600, a camera that is designed to deliver the image quality and performance benefits of a full frame FX-format sensor to the enthusiast looking to take their dedication to the next level. Our members in the [Nikonians D600 Forum](#) are already sharing images taken with the new camera.

Whether shooting stills or Full HD video, advanced features and Nikon technologies like the newly developed high resolution CMOS sensor and EXPEED 3 image processing engine are designed to meet the needs of the most demanding creative vision. Additionally, Nikon's new optional WU-1b wireless adapter allows users to shoot high quality HD-SLR images and transfer them to their mobile device, making it easier to stay connected, without the need for wires.



The D600 employs Nikon's newly developed, large 24.3 MP FX-format CMOS Sensor (35.9 x 24mm) to offer photographers a versatile camera that provides amazing image quality and sharpness, with ample resolution to tackle almost any project. Because the needs of the advanced amateur varies widely, the new CMOS sensor provides a wide ISO

range from 100-6400 (expandable from 50-25,600) to give photographers maximum low-light flexibility yielding clean images with minimal noise and accurate color. The full ISO range can also be used while capturing HD video in challenging light. Nikon's

exclusive EXPEED 3 image processing engine interprets the massive amount of image data flowing from the sensor to quickly process images and HD video. The result is striking images and impressive HD video that exhibits faithful color reproduction and tonal range throughout the frame.

Whether shooting lush landscapes, action sports or the elusive animals of the Serengeti, Nikon's Scene Recognition System and 2,016 pixel RGB sensor excels in any situation. By recognizing the scene prior to capture, the system meticulously analyzes factors such as color and brightness with extraordinary precision and compares all the data using Nikon's exclusive 30,000 image database. The result is enhanced AF performance and flattering exposures.

For precise AF performance in a wide variety of shooting conditions, the D600 features a 39 point AF system with the new Multi-CAM 4800FX AF module. This AF array is well suited to a wide variety of shooting styles and disciplines, offering AF modes to let users select a single point, continuous AF, Dynamic AF or use 3D tracking to keep pace with a moving subject throughout the frame. Additionally, the system features nine cross type sensors for maximum accuracy, while seven AF points are fully functional when using compatible NIKKOR lenses and teleconverters with an aperture value up to f/8 for extreme telephoto applications.



New From Nikon

To keep up with action sports, active wildlife or the photo opportunity that unexpectedly arises, the D600 is ready to shoot in 0.13 seconds, with a 0.052 second shutter release. The camera emphasizes speed and performance, from overall operation and image processing, helped in part by the exceptional EXPEED 3 processing engine. The camera is also capable of bursts of images at 5.5 frames per second (fps) at full resolution with full AF, to capture decisive moments. To further enhance speed and workflow, images and video can also be rapidly transferred to dual SD card slots that are compatible with the latest SDXC and UHS-1 high-speed standards.

Enthusiasts will also appreciate other thoughtful features made to appeal to more advanced photographers, such as the 100% frame coverage seen through optical viewfinder. The wide and bright view makes it easy to compose in a variety of conditions, and affords the ability to enjoy shooting for hours on end with minimal eye fatigue. Additionally, the D600 features several scene modes and features to enhance creativity, including one-touch access to Picture Control functions through a new dedicated button. Photographers can also shoot images in High Dynamic (HDR) mode for amazing highlights, and create awe-inspiring time lapses with ease.



This camera gives users the ability to record Full HD at varying frame rates and resolutions including 1080p video at 30, 25 or 24p, and 720p video at 60, 50 and 30p. When shooting HD video at the highest quality setting, up to 20 minutes can be recorded, or up to 29 minutes and 59 seconds in normal quality for added convenience when

shooting static shots such as interviews and events. The large 3.2-inch (8 Centimeters) 921K dot LCD screen makes it easy to preview images or video captured, navigate the menu system or confirm critical HD focus, while automatic brightness control adapts seamlessly to changing lighting conditions.

Sophisticated video features help to increase the production value on any project, including full manual control of exposure, and the ability to switch between FX and DX-format (1.5X) at Full HD for a telephoto boost and alter depth of field. Users can opt to focus manually or can take advantage of the full-time AF while recording to help ensure faces are in focus or track a moving subject. Additionally, videographers have the ability to capture audio with the onboard microphone or record stereo audio externally using the mic input. Audio can be monitored through the headphone jack and levels can be displayed on the LCD with peaking.

In addition to the ability to play back HD video and images through the HDMI terminal, users are also able to experience pro-grade video features in the Nikon D600. For monitoring and streaming applications, the image can be displayed on the LCD screen while simultaneously shown on another monitor through the HDMI, with or without shooting data. What's more, the D600 adds the ability to transfer uncompressed video via the HDMI connection, which can then be routed to a digital recorder or similar device.



Remote Sharing and Capture

Nikon has also announced the optional WU-1b Wireless Adapter that allows users to connect wirelessly to the camera. A companion Wireless Mobile Adapter Utility application for Android™ based mobile devices is also available at no additional cost. The Applications for the iPhone® and iPad® mobile digital devices should also be available soon.

New From Nikon

When connected, users are able to share their images taken with the D600 through their mobile device to their social circles, as well as send and download images from their camera to a compatible device. The adapter also allows users to remotely fire the D600's shutter from up to 50 feet from the camera, which is ideal for capturing photos from unique vantage points.

Built to withstand the wide variety of shooting conditions enthusiasts face, the body of the D600 is sealed and gasketed against dirt and moisture. The camera uses magnesium alloy top and rear construction to provide a lightweight camera with maximum durability. The shutter has been tested for 150,000 cycles, and sensor cleaning is also employed. The battery is rated for approximately 900 shots, affording photographers the ability to shoot all day. Additionally, the optional MB-D14 Multi Power Battery Pack extends the grip for comfort and can effectively double the battery capacity when using two batteries.

The D600 is also built with an emphasis on handling with thoughtful ergonomics and button placement, in a body that is compact enough to carry comfortably on any excursion. The handgrip has been improved for comfort, while the overall impression from using the camera is reassuringly solid. To avoid accidental engagement, the shutter button has been recessed, while the Mode Dial can be locked.

Price and Availability

The Nikon D600 is available at the suggested retail price of USD for body only, or with the AF-S NIKKOR 24-85mm f/3.5-4.5G ED VR for the SRP of \$2,699.95. The WU-1b for at an SRP of \$59.95. The MB-D14 Multi Power Battery Pack is available at an SRP of \$322.00

Editor's Note:

Our thanks to the NikonUSA Press room for providing press releases and images on these new products.

On the same day in September Nikon 1 system owners got a look at the new compact and lightweight 1 NIKKOR 18.5mm f/1.8, a fixed focal length lens.



The 18.5mm f/1.8 prime lens features the popular yet versatile focal length of approximately 50mm (35mm equivalent) and a large f/1.8 aperture, making it ideal for portraiture and everyday shooting. With the large aperture, consumers can create a dramatic depth of field with beautiful image blur, or shoot with confidence in challenging lighting conditions.

Conveniently compact and crafted with eight optical elements in six groups, the 18.5mm fulfills the promise of NIKKOR quality with solid handling and optical excellence. The lens is lightweight, weighing in at a mere 2.5 ounces (71 Grams) to further complement the portability of the Nikon 1 System. Seven aperture blades help to create a pleasing circular bokeh for a natural separation between subject and background.

Price and Availability

Compatible with the Nikon 1 J1, J2 and V1, the 1 NIKKOR 18.5mm f/1.8 will be available in early November 2012 in Black, White and Silver and will have a suggested retail price (SRP) of \$189.95.

Update: On October 24th Nikon unveiled their Nikon 1 V2, a new generation 70-200mm VR lens and new Speedlight. Details in our [News Blog](#).

Coming Soon from the Nikonians Academy Staff

Efrain Padro leads our [Puerto Rico Photography Adventure](#) - February 16-23, 2013

Michael A. Mariant leads our [Yosemite in Winter: A Season of Contrast](#) workshop in February 2013, [Big Sur: From the Coast to the Canyonstrip](#) in April, 2013 and [Giant Redwoods of Northern California](#) workshop in June 2013.

Mike Hagen leads the - [Iceland Photo and Bird Adventure - Summer 2013](#) and the [African Photo Safari, Tanzania - November 2013](#)

FotoWeekDC - 2012 FESTIVAL November 9 - 18, 2012 Washington, DC

Expect to see the very best in art, photography, photojournalism and all new programming at this year's [FotoWeekDC](#). In addition to a selection of outstanding exhibitions, FotoWeekDC is comprised of a variety of seminars, lectures, workshops, portfolio reviews, photo book displays, special events, and receptions, including more than 100 partner events throughout the region.

Now Showing Faking It - Manipulated Photography Before Photoshop October 11, 2012–January 27, 2013

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City
The urge to modify camera images is as old as photography itself—only the methods have changed. Nearly every type of manipulation we now associate with digital photography was also part of the medium's pre-digital repertoire: smoothing away wrinkles, slimming waistlines, adding people to a scene (or removing them)—even fabricating events that never took place.

This international loan exhibition traces the history of manipulated photography from the 1840s through the early 1990s, when the computer replaced manual techniques as the dominant means of doctoring photographs. Most of the [two hundred pictures on view](#) were altered after the negative was exposed—through photomontage, combination printing, over painting, retouching, or, as is often the case, a blend of several processes. In every instance, the final image differs significantly from what stood before the camera at any given moment.

Wedding Photographers International gather in March 2013 March 7-14, 2013

[WPPI Conference+Expo](#) is the premiere industry event for photographers and image-makers specializing in the creative and business aspects of wedding and portrait photography. Each year, nearly 16,000 professional and aspiring photographers attend WPPI to learn new techniques from industry leaders, build new relationships to grow their business, experience new products and solutions from major manufacturers to improve their productivity, and enjoy the many attractions in Las Vegas.

WPPI is a week-long event combining educational seminars with a major industry trade show and networking events, all designed around learning the latest techniques, building new relationships and growing a businesses in a friendly, fun environment – all at one time, in one place.

The WPPI 2013 Conference + Expo, will take place at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. Registration opens soon.





Jim Davie (jay dee) at the Very Large Array (of Deep Space Radio Telescopes), chasing a pronghorn with his long gun on a monopod. This image by J. Ramón Palacios (jrp) is one of many gathered by members attending the 12th Annual Nikonians Photo Adventure Trip (ANPAT) in New Mexico. We'll have more in our ANPAT special eZine coming soon. Shot with Nikon D700, AF VR 80-400mm f/4.5-5.6D ED lens @ 400mm, handheld; f/8, 1/1000s, ISO 800.