



Several years ago, just using the words art and digital in the same sentence created disinterest among photographers. No one was even slightly interested, simply because the cost of digital was too high and, with few excep-

with a Foveon 12-megapixel prism camera, next to the same size optical print from medium format film served as proof of the superiority of digital. That usually settled any issues that the engineer types/grooms might have had with the notion of filmless capture and quality of output. For me, the "digital vs. film" debate was over in 1999. I said goodbye to dust and grain forever.

accepted the fact that I don't belong to an exclusive club anymore and have tried to help others who have recently joined the digital ranks and are stuck with the problems.

These days, all digital 6-megapixel cameras on the market can create some amazing images in the hands of people who can see and think clearly when using their tools. We have the ability to create images of

The Art of the Digital Wedding

BY CLAUDE J. JODOIN, CPP, CR. PHOTOG.

tions, the nation's portrait labs had not yet begun to "print pixels." To top it all off, the emotional fear factor on the part of photographers kept them from embracing digital. I had been working digitally since 1986 as an industrial photographer, so the concept was not new to me.

Rather than wait for labs to "get digital," my studio quit using film completely in 1999 and became its own lab, using Kodak dye-sublimation printers and Fuji Pictography 3000, and we began evolving toward large format Epson inkjet in 2000.

In a blind test, my clients always picked the digitally captured and printed (Fuji Pictro) 8x10s as superior to the film images printed optically. Yet, I did not use the word digital, preferring "filmless" or "electronic," because of the negative perception based on low-resolution point-and-shoot results of the past. "Real" pros still used film. It was a tough battle, but time has proven me correct. An easel displaying a 30x40 of a bride and groom captured

The rapid advances in digital capture and output technology in the last five years have been phenomenal. It's as if the turn of the new millennium ignited the imaging companies to accelerate quality and lower costs. They put this technology into the hands of more artists, labs and amateur shooters than ever before. I have

greater range, quality, and versatility than with film with much lower cost and higher efficiency.

In 2003, even the most stubborn film holdouts have now purchased digital SLRs to add to their wedding camera arsenal. They're available now for between \$1-\$2000 with no compromise in quality making fine images





up to 11x14 and beyond. This makes competition among wedding photographers greater than ever, since it is possible to gear up with twin bodies, flashes, cards, zoom lenses etc. for less than \$5000.

Film cameras are being retired from active duty and no longer differentiate the “pro” from the amateur. So, tell us, Claude, what does?

The following words come to mind: anticipation, composition, confidence, craft, experience, timing, tenacity, focus, work speed, sales, reaction, psychology, efficiency, making people at ease, presentation, posing, lighting, “mind’s-eye,” exposure/color control, contrast control, good hygiene, bladder control, appropriate dress code, stamina, perspective, dedication, courtesy, timeliness, organization, backup gear, design, deductive reasoning, vendor relationships, continuing education, commitment to excellence, artistic vision, Photoshop, and one of the most important: *re-*

sponsibility.

All cameras are nothing more than recording devices. Digital cameras are just tools, so leave all the “romantic notions” of digital in the last millennium. There’s too much work to be done.

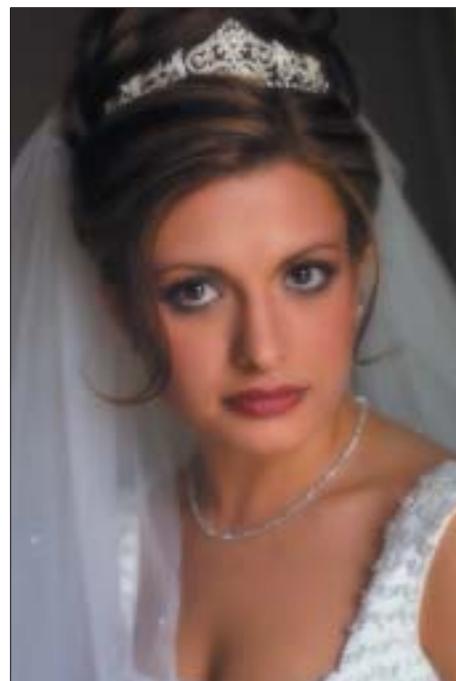
Different Work Habits

Digital weddings require greater discipline to establish a different set of work habits. Many rewards stem from creating a larger number of images without regard to the same “per-frame cost” as film.

By way of their smaller sized imaging chips, digital cameras like the Fuji S2, Sigma SD-10, Canon 10D, and Nikon D1H, give us 2–3 stops greater depth of field and more ambient light sensitivity with less noise than their medium format film counterparts. Because focal lengths are different on a digital camera (because of their smaller imaging chips) a 28mm lens is now considered a “normal” lens for 6-

megapixel SLRs. This is opposed to the traditional 75–90mm normal lens for medium format. The greater depth of field of the shorter normal lens of digital cameras allows us to use larger apertures and maintain depth of field, thereby increasing working illuminant sensitivity for any given scene.

I recently showed a friend how to bounce his Nikon SB-26 Speedlight on his new Fuji FinePix S2 Pro at ISO 1600 off of a 30-foot church ceiling. He was astounded to see that an on-camera TTL flash with four AA-size batteries could illuminate the entire church. With ISO 400 film at f/8, this feat would require roughly 1600 watt-seconds of flash power to achieve similar results, which would increase the ratio of flash-to-ambient illumination by five stops, effectively removing the effect of ambient illumination from the image. The flash intensity is closer to the ambient light level than it ever was with film. This difference allows us to create a greater variety of images



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For more information, circle 220

without the traditional “black background” from flash falloff, caused by the greater differential between ambient and flash illumination levels. Even with larger apertures, there is adequate depth of field (with smaller digital imaging chips, think $f/4$, not $f/8$).

With prime lenses (50mm and 85mm) in the $f/1.2$ – $f/1.8$ range, we can capture handheld images at a reception illuminated by a single candle in the middle of a table. The results are simply amazing. To achieve similar results with medium format, we

would need 150 or 250mm lenses at $f/4$, using grainy high-speed film and a tripod to accommodate the resultant $1/4$ second shutter speed, increasing the incidence of blurred subjects.

In normal lighting, it’s also fun to work with lenses from 8mm to 300mm and still fit them in one bag. The digital artist has more fun than the film artist and can be more creative without counting frames.

Wedding coverage demands that the photographer “chase the light” all day. The art of digital weddings demands that photographers muster all the lighting and exposure skills they own to combat the great variance of lighting intensity, quality, and color throughout the day. To adapt and control light, a photographer must use of all tools and techniques necessary. Once mastered, we are free to create.

When labs used to control color and density from our negatives, we needed to create and record printable lighting ratios on the negative and let the lab

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Photographer ALERT! NEW Monthly SPECIAL REPORT Reveals Secrets All Photographers MUST Know in 2004

BY DANNY KEFFER

Times are changing, and photographers are being left in the dust. We can't ignore it anymore. Digital is here to stay. The old ways of marketing for photographers just won't work anymore. Competition is fierce, and customers want everything on their terms.

It's Time For Photographers To Stand Up And Say "I'm Not Going To Take This Anymore! I Know There Must Be A Better Way!"

You're not alone out there. Have you found yourself frustrated lately, wondering why you seem to be working hard and long hours, but your profits seem to stay the same, or worse - SHRINK? Thousands of photographers everywhere are feeling this pinch.

However, all over the country, there are photographers who, despite these changing times, are making a great living (\$150,000 PROFIT or more per year) all from their photography businesses.

What's their secret?

They Know Things You Don't Know - Secrets That Have Been Kept From You. Secrets Most Of These Photographers Don't Want You To Discover!

No disrespect to any photographer making good money. They're not being greedy. However, if YOU knew the secrets to making great money in 2004, would you want your competition to discover them? No way. You want that

"edge." You want to be THE photographer in your area. You want to KNOW without any concern or fear that every day you'll have a steady stream of great customers practically begging you to be their photographer.

For RANGEFINDER READERS ONLY: A Photographer In Grand Rapids Michigan - One Of The Highest-Paid And Most Respected In The Industry - Is GIVING These Secrets Away, FREE, To 49 Rangefinder Readers - Will YOU Be One Of Them?

Have you wondered what MARKETING you MUST be doing in 2004 - the marketing that really WORKS? Have you wished there was a magic way to turn almost every sale into a 24x30 or better? Have you dreamed of owning a photography business that you LOVE, and that makes you great money, without you having to work more than 35 hours a week? Have you had any sleepless nights lately where you were worried and frustrated about how you're working hard, and not getting paid what you wish you could?

If You Answered YES To Any Of The Above Questions, You NEED To Be One Of The First 49 Photographers To Call This Toll-Free Recorded Hotline, OR Visit This Website!

You've probably heard of a photographer by the name of Charles Lewis. If you haven't, it's time you're introduced. Charles owns and runs one of the most successful photography businesses in the history of the pro-

fession - and more importantly, he's become known as the LEADER IN REVEALING HUGE PROFIT-GENERATING SECRETS to photographers over the last 25 years. Well, Charles has graciously put together a TOLL FREE RECORDED HOTLINE you can call, and a special FREE website you can visit right now. Both will reveal some of the secrets that are revolutionizing the photographic industry as we speak. Check either one out right now - both FREE-I can't recommend them enough.

Also, Charles has agreed to let you (if you're one of the first 49 photographers who call or log on) to get a FREE 6-MONTH, NO OBLIGATION SUBSCRIPTION to his "Photographer's Money-Making Secrets Revealed 2004" reports - delivered right to your door each month! This subscription is worth \$175, but 49 photographers who act fast will get it for free. Also, you'll never be billed anything or be obligated to pay anything else ever. This is Charles' way of helping photographers deal with the changes happening in the industry in 2004.

Don't Wait - Call or Log On Now.

It won't cost you anything, and if you log on or call right away, you'll get 6 months of secrets -FREE, with NO OBLIGATION or cost whatsoever. Don't trust you'll remember later - your life is busy - do it now before you forget. **Recorded "PHOTO SECRETS" HOTLINE: 1-800-570-9289 - 24 hrs. (recording)** **"PHOTO SECRETS" Website: www.photographyprofits.com**

worry about the rest. We never saw "color" until we got proofs back. Effectively, whether we print our own work or not, we are now "the lab," since we get to see color immediately on our LCD displays during capture. Later on, our computer monitors and Photoshop act just like the lab's video analyzers of the past. Digital capture requires acute awareness of lighting ratios, much tighter exposure controls and new camera habits that compensate for color shifts present in all recorded scenes.

As a perfectionist, I always carry a Minolta V Flashmeter and a Wallace Expo-Disc around my neck. These are the basic tools required to maintain control at all times. Since I started using the Expo-Disc, I don't have to carry a gray card or a color meter to custom gray-balance a scene. I try to stay in charge of my color and exposure at all times throughout the day by using these tools and my camera's manual exposure controls

and custom white balance features. This allows for the total control of ambient light indoors and out in combination with on- and off-camera flash.

Here's my top 11 guidelines (OK, rules) for digital wedding photography—since 10 wasn't enough:

1. Never overexpose—overexposure is death for digital files. Always use the highlight alarm on your camera and keep the white values from blowing out.
2. Calibrate an incident meter to your camera and use it.
3. Respect the meaning of 0.1 stops on your meter—it really counts.
4. Do not increase contrast or saturation in your camera settings, use normal or less.
5. Do not go beyond standard sharpening settings in your camera, especially at high ISOs. It will increase noise levels.
6. Discipline yourself to process all images in-camera using high quality

JPEG files to ease the workflow later.

7. Do not rely on a histogram for judging exposure, it's too interpretive.

8. Instead, use your calibrated incident digital flash/ambient meter ahead of time for each scene.

9. Use the camera's custom gray/white balance for each scene.

10. Use the camera's auto white (gray) balance only as a secondary choice when you can't do No. 8.

11. Never over-sharpen an image file.

Claude Jodoin has been involved in digital imaging since 1986 and has not used film since 1999. email: claudej1@aol.com.

Claude Jodoin will be presenting a program at WPPI 2004 on Tuesday, Feb. 24, entitled "The Art of the Digital Wedding."

WPPI SNEAK PREVIEWS

There are a total of 93 speakers involved in platform programs and Masterclasses and WPPI PLUS.