

Got a burning question for me about my career or working as a photographer? Chances are I've already answered it. Take a look here!

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Previous Interviews

<https://www.joshuacripps.com/contact-joshua-cripps-photography/#tab-id-4>

Personal and History Questions

When and where were you born?

I was born in 1981 in a city in California called Los Gatos. I spent the next two years in nearby San Jose, and then my family moved to a small town in the Sierra Nevada foothills called Sonora. And that is where I consider myself to be from.

Was/are any of your family photographers?

Not that I'm aware of, though I think Ansel Adams was once my uncle's friend's wife's brother's roommate.

Has photography always interested you?

Nope! I know photographers are supposed to say they've been fascinated by photography ever since their grandpa gave them a Brownie when they were three years old, but that just isn't the case for me. Even though I was always an artistic kid, I never thought too much about photography, choosing instead to draw and play music. In fact, I'd never even heard of the Rule of Thirds until I was almost 23 years old. And it wasn't until I was 25-going-on-26 that I began to look at photography in a more serious light (pun intended).

You simply describe your youth as growing up on granite and the smell of pine trees? Can you elaborate on that a little! In particular do you think your upbringing influenced your photographic style?

Sure thing! I grew up in a small town in the Sierra Nevada foothills called Sonora. For most of my childhood we lived within spitting distance of the Stanislaus National Forest and my parents were really good about encouraging us to spend time outdoors. As a family we were consistently camping and hiking, and every summer we spent time up in the higher elevation landscapes along Sonora Pass. That's where my first moments clambering around on granite were and where I started to build an appreciation for nature.

But it wasn't until I went away to college at USC in LA that I got a great perspective check. Growing up in the woods feels completely and utterly normal and banal....until you're not in the woods any more.

Living in LA, surrounded by concrete and cars and freeways, I realized just how much I needed to be in the mountains. That's what helped drive my interest in hiking and backpacking, especially in the High Sierra.

Just as they tell writers to write what they know, I tell photographers to shoot what they love. When I finally got into photography in my mid-20's I had already built this deep, beautiful connection with the Sierra Nevada, so it was only natural that my photography would become an extension of that.

You spend a lot of time in the California's Sierra Nevada. How did you end up making Mammoth Lakes your home? Was it driven by photography or other life goals?

As I mentioned, I have a particular affinity for the High Sierra. For years all of my backpacking trips centered around trails off of Highway 395 and out of Tuolumne Meadows in Yosemite. And for many of these trips, Mammoth Lakes Ranger Station was where I needed to pick up my wilderness permits. So I developed this very positive feeling toward Mammoth; Mammoth was the cool little mountain town where you picked up permits for awesome backpacking trips. How could you not love it?

And as time went on and my interests shifted from merely backpacking, to backpacking and photography, to teaching photography, I came to realize that Mammoth is not only in an incredible location, but it's also a great little town with a good local community that's full of passionate, outdoorsy people.

So in 2015 when I was feeling a little itchy toward making a location change (I was back living in my home town at the time), I thought: "why not move to this cool town, in an amazing place for photography, full of young, active people who want to live an outdoorsy lifestyle?" And this place is paradise: it's exceeded my expectations in every way.

Can you talk to us about the transition you personally had from a passionate enthusiast to becoming a pro photographer?

You bet! Ever since I was a little bambino I dreamed of being a photographer. My grandpa gave me my first camera at the age of 2 and it changed the course of my life. Uhhhh, not! But that's what you're supposed to say, right? Too bad it's a total lie in my case. When I was a kid I wanted to be an astronaut. Heck, I didn't even know I liked photography until years after I had collected my bachelor's degree in, of all things, aerospace engineering (I mean, I really wanted to be an astronaut). I even worked as a satellite designer for Boeing for awhile, thinking that's where my future lay.

It was during my tenure at Boeing that I got my first DSLR almost as an afterthought just before a month-long vacation to Alaska. Before and during the trip I made the classic beginner's assumption that since I had an amazing camera (a Nikon D50, watch out!) and was going to an amazing place, I would automatically take amazing photos. Nat Geo was going to be interested in these shots, fo' sho. And during

the trip things went well, though I had no idea what I was doing. Twiddling aperture and shutter speed this way and that, shooting from the hip, almost never using a tripod (gasp!). And I have to say, those photos looked flippin' baller. Or, at least they did on the tiny little screen of my camera.

Once I got home though the truth of the matter came to light. I looked at the photos on my computer monitor and discovered with a sick, sinking feeling that they all SUCKED, with a capital UCKED. But this was an important moment, because it signified a shift in my thinking when photography transitioned from simply something fun to do while traveling, to a Problem To Be Solved. This is what engineers are trained to do: solve problems. And my photos not living up to my expectations? Well, now that was a big problem.

So I dove into the world of nature photography with both feet (is it still a dive if you go in feet first?). I devoured articles on not only what aperture is but why you would bother to choose one f-stop over another. I read about the emotional as well as technical implications of different shutter speeds. I learned how to spot meter, shoot in raw, and even the most important thing of all: how to remove the lens cap. I also found photographers I admired and studied their works, analyzing composition and lighting. How they placed the elements of their photos, what times of day and in what conditions were they shooting, what worked about their photos, and what didn't.

And you know what happened? My photos started getting better, a lot better. Which made seeking out and taking pictures a heckuva lot more fun and satisfying. It soon became my all-encompassing hobby. And many many days after work (and weekends) were spent out crashing around Southern California looking for the best spots to take the best photos I could.

After about two years of this a few chance encounters led to me earning my first few dollars as a photographer. This was early 2008. First, I made some prints of my best shots to date and took them down to a local painter whose work I admired. I simply wanted some feedback from a professional visual artist, to see if he could offer advice about composition or treatment. To my surprise he thought the shots were good enough that he suggested I enter the Hermosa Beach Art Walk (or maybe as chair of the Art Walk he just wanted my \$75 entry fee, hmmm....). He even gave me suggestions of how to create a booth and framed pieces for the fair. So I entered and sold about \$700 worth of prints in that one day show. I was absolutely floored!

Around the same time I had entered a photo competition in my home town and after the judging was complete I received two phone calls from the jurors. First they told me to come pick up two of the four pieces I entered which weren't accepted. Then they hung up. Oh. The next day the jury called back and let me know I'd won first place in the contest. Ha! Fast forward a couple of months and during the awards ceremony I made a connection that led to me assisting on my very first photo workshop. Of course, by "assist" all I really did was make sure no one wandered off and got lost, but hey, I was still earning money (a tiny amount) by leading (shepherding) photographers on a photo workshop. This was the big leagues, man!

Meanwhile I continued to while away the days as an engineer. That is until the housing crisis struck the US economy and Boeing went about laying off thousands of workers. So with visions of all this new photography coin rattling around in my brain I started deliberately writing bad code into our software. And when satellites began blowing up left and right the company traced it back to me and laid me off.....Kidding! In reality I simply went to my bosses, told them I wanted a chance to try making it as a full time photographer, and off I went.

That was the second fateful -yet totally naive- decision of my photo career. I had no idea what it took to run a business (arguably I still don't), how to attract clients, create and maintain income streams, and constantly fight off the surges of self doubt and utter bewilderment that made me want to scurry back to the safe confines of my Boeing cubicle. And yet, running headlong into building a photo business gave me a crash course in Eking Out a Living 101. At the same time it was another Problem To Be Solved, though orders of magnitude bigger, tougher, and more complicated than simply learning how to use my camera.

I spent the next four years attending art festivals, assisting on workshops, working side jobs (even went back to engineering as a consultant for about half a year), racking up tons of credit card debt, collecting unemployment (thanks, Obama), and even co-founding a workshop company with Jim Patterson, a friend and fellow landscape photographer. And all the while I continued to build diverse income streams from teaching to print sales to licensing to photo contests to recording and selling video tutorials. And eventually, in 2012, I was able to earn 100% of my income from photo-related activities. Damn, did that feel good!

So you can see that it was not like flipping a switch from enthusiast to pro. It was a long, hard, gradual slog that eventually started paying off. And I have to say, the process continues, and it's not like I can simply stop and say "pew, now I've made it and I'm done!" Every day is about continuing to shoot and share the best photos I can, to seek out new business ideas, opportunities, and partnerships, and to trust that even though nothing about this business is consistent, there's always another opportunity on the horizon.

Where did you study photography?

At the highly-acclaimed academy of the Internet. I started reading everything I could find online about landscape photography. I found a whole mess of photographers whose work inspired me and I tried to break their photos down into basic pieces to figure out why I liked them. I joined photo sharing sites and looked at dozens of images every day. Every photo I looked at critically: why does it work, or why doesn't it work? What is the photographer doing with composition, technique, and lighting? I joined online critique forums expecting to receive pats on the back for my "awesome" work, but instead got complete tear downs of what I could do better. That was a fantastic learning experience, and good for my humility as well!

The other place I learned about photography was out in the woods. There's no better way to improve a skill than to practice it. So from the moment I picked up my first DSLR to now I've been running around shooting as much as possible, always thinking about what I can do to improve my images.

Why do you prefer nature photography rather than other types?

Probably because I don't like people. :) No, I'm kidding. I love people but I'm a classic introvert and I need to be away from people in order to recharge my psyche. So in order to get true fulfillment from my art I have to do it in nature, away from the hustle and bustle of society.

I've always loved to hike, camp, backpack, travel, and be outside. That's the natural extension of who I am so it makes sense that I do landscape photography. Plus I love that it's just me with my camera. As soon as you start to bring other people into your photography it becomes less about a personal experience and more about the interaction between you and them. I do photography to enhance my personal experience with nature.

How long have you been in the field of nature photography? Do you enjoy it?

Started shooting seriously in 2006, nature photography from day 1. And I absolutely love it! More every day in fact. It's the lens through which I experience the beautiful parts of our planet.

What was appealing to you about photography, compared to engineering?

I love the freedom of the lifestyle and that fact that I get to choose exactly how I spend my time. Of course, being able to spend so much time creating and visiting beautiful places is incredibly rewarding as well. However, there are things that are difficult about being a full time photographer that I don't enjoy such as the lack of financial stability, the constant need to market and self promote, and most of the running the business side of photography like answering dozens of emails a day, doing bookkeeping, website maintenance and upgrades, filing permit applications at national parks, etc.

Will photography always be your profession?

Now that is an impossible question to answer! I have such a wide range of interests that I could easily see myself transitioning to another line of work in the future. I'd love to get back into music, which I was passionate about for many years. I'd also like to try my hand at becoming a better writer and maybe earning some money there. So there are some other possibilities I see for myself down the road. However, for the time being, nothing has captured my attention quite like photography has and I've got no plans to do anything else.

Where do you see yourself in 5/10 years?

To be totally honest with you, as I've gotten further from engineering I find myself less goal oriented. Now I think more about the journey and how I can make it as rich and enjoyable as possible. So I don't have an answer for you like "I want to be on the cover of National Geographic within 3 years." I just don't operate that way any more.

But I can tell you that I envision still being passionate about nature photography in the next decade, and I plan to continue teaching workshops and growing that business. Hopefully within 10 years we will have a number of international destinations on offer.

I also have a few projects in the works that could be career-altering, but that's still a secret for the time being. Sorry!

Where would you like to be in 5/10 years?

I think it's entirely possible that I will be living on the South Island of New Zealand within 10 years. But if that doesn't come to pass then I'll most likely still be tramping around the Sierra Nevada.

What locations are on your wish list for an extended photographic adventure?

Oh man, how much time do you have?? The thing with traveling is you are always discovering more places to travel, so the list is truly endless. But at the moment my current wishlist looks something like this (in no particular order): Wyoming's Wind River Range, The Cirque of the Unclimables in Canada, Tatsenshini-Elsek Provincial Park in BC, Madagascar, New Zealand (again and again and again), more places in the Andes, South Georgia Island, China, and and and.....

Which photo of yours means the most to you personally?

There are four photos that jump out instantly at me. The first is a shot of Cathedral Peak in Yosemite. For me that photo represents the turning point in my career when I went from somewhat haphazardly shooting, to actually consciously creating the shots I wanted to see.

The second photo is from Lake Tahoe and is probably my personal favorite shot. It's the result of an evening when all my planning and pre-scouting got tossed right out the window and I was forced to spontaneously adapt to changing conditions. And I ended up with an image far better than I could've pre-envisioned.

My third meaningful image is this shot of the now famous Wanaka Willow. It was the first (and only) time in my photographic career that the vision of a shot I had in my head was actually realized in a photo.

Usually the photos you picture in your mind's eye come out completely different in real life thanks to the vagaries of Mother Nature. But on this singular occasion everything clicked into place as perfectly as I had imagined.

Finally, another photo from the Sierra Nevada called The Reason. This shot simply captures everything I love about photographing in the Range of Light: soaring mountains, innumerable beautiful lakes, and ponderously swirling clouds.

What would you like your viewers to take away from your work?

I want people to realize that each of my photos is a representation of a real moment that I experienced. Yes, the mountains really looked like that, the sunset really was that color, and that shaft of light actually did fall on just that one spot. There are magical places and experiences all around us if you just begin to look for them. I also hope that people will in some way realize the beauty of our planet and the fragility of its resources.

Working as a Photographer

What was your first job in photography?

I never had any internships or assistance-ships or part-time gigs, so I've never worked for anyone else as a photographer, other than assisting on a workshop or two in the very beginning. Basically I just jumped right into running my own business. The first thing I ever did that made money was launch my website (on May 1st, 2008), and spam my friends about it. Two of my good friends from college each bought a print that night, and voila, my photographer career began with a few hundred dollars in sales.

What is your job title now?

Head Monkey Poop Scooper, Janitor-in-Chief, CEO, CFO, C3PO, Pixel Mixer, Shutter Snapper, Aperture Twiddler, Voice-Activated Tripod Mover, Pizza-Powered Photograph Grabber, etc. I work for myself so I really don't have a title. Probably the most accurate one would be Guy Who Loves Photography.

What difficulties have you had during your photographic career?

I think a better question might be: when is a photography career never NOT difficult? In all honesty, my career has been a long string of failures. But because I'm either too stupid or too stubborn to give up, I just keep plodding along. And because I have a problem-solving nature I always try to figure out what went wrong with my failures so that I can turn them into successes the next time around. I think the hardest thing for me is going through failure after failure, trying to understand what went wrong, thinking you get it, trying your solution, and then having that fail as well. And you just have to keep on going. That is exhausting. Sometimes I just want to throw my hands up and say "enough is enough!" But when you

work for yourself you can't really take time to do nothing; you have to constantly keep pushing yourself, your photography, and your business to improve.

What are the highlights from your career so far?

There are a number of things that stand out very clearly in my mind as career highlights. The first is that 2013 was the first year of my career that I earned every single penny of my income from photography. From 2008 through 2012, even though I was earning income as a photographer, I had other side jobs, random contracts, and even some government assistance. But from 2013 onward I was 100% on my own and while that was pretty scary in the beginning it also lit a fire under my butt and I've cranking hard ever since.

The second thing that I consider an amazing part of my life as a photographer is teaching workshops. This is something I sorta fell into by accident when I started getting lots of good feedback on my seascape images in 2009 and 2010. People wanted to know how I created the images I did, and I had a thought: maybe they would pay me to teach them??? That's how it started, but it's turned into something really amazing. Now I have a small business which I run with another photographer, Jim Patterson, where we teach small group workshops all over the place.

That might sound like a small thing but when you actually stop to reflect on what it means it's pretty incredible: I get paid to travel to beautiful locations and spend time with other people who are passionate about the same thing I'm passionate about. And since I always take time for my own photography before and after these workshops, it means I get to travel to some of the most beautiful spots in the US and abroad, do photography, and get paid to be there. Believe me, I have no small amount of gratitude for how fortunate I am to be able to do this.

Another big point in my career was when I decided to start a YouTube channel devoted to teaching landscape photography. It started out as a small project but has grown over the years into a channel with 250,000+ subscribers and over 10 million views. It's also led to invitations and projects that have helped my career continue to grow.

But probably the biggest highlight in my career so far was in 2014 when I was hired by Nikon to shoot sample photos for the launch of the D750. This was a global ad campaign and my introduction to shooting commercially. It opened the door to some incredible business and personal relationships and I consider it a turning point of my career. Since then I've shot a few more campaigns for Nikon and been invited to speak on their stage at tradeshow around the US.

How did you first start getting your name out?

In the very beginning it was just word of mouth: I told my friends and family. But it wasn't until I got more into social media, flickr specifically, that my photos started reaching a wider audience. In 2009 I moved to Santa Cruz and began shooting tons of seascapes. Around the same time my dabblings on flickr taught me to be a brutal self-editor and to only post my absolute best work. As I put that into practice I

started to gain a reputation as a solid seascape photographer. That was the beginning and I've been building on it from there by continuing to post only my best work online, and also by teaching. Doing that has helped me move into a position where people regard me as an expert, which helps me reach a much broader audience of photographers trying to improve their skills, as well as non-photographers who just like good landscape photos.

How and where do you sell your work and why there?

In the beginning 95% of all my print sales were made at art and wine festivals, which we have no shortage of here in California. I got started doing that because it was an obvious venue: you pay a promoter for a space, the promoter hopefully brings in thousands of people to the festival, and it's a win-win. Unfortunately it turned out that doing art festivals was extremely hard work and not all that lucrative (at least for me they weren't). So I quit doing them around 2013.

Since then sales of my own work have been through my website, or to art consultants working for hospitals and hotels. This is why having a good website, keeping it updated, and practicing good SEO is super handy!

Which photo is your most popular photo and why do you think people like it?

There are a lot of ways to interpret "most popular" so I'm going to talk about my best-selling photo, which is a photo of Cathedral Peak in Yosemite. In order for a photo to do well it has to resonate with people. And that resonance usually happens because people have been to the spot in the photo. I can't tell you how many times people have told me Cathedral Peak is the place where they first learned to backpack, or it's where their family hiked to every summer, or it simply embodies the beauty of Yosemite National Park. It's a place that holds a special significance for a lot of people, and for that reason I think it's done well as a print.

You have been featured in major publications such as Outdoor Photographer and Popular Photography. Is publication something that you have actively pursued or has it developed as a natural consequence of your work?

My efforts at publication have followed somewhat of a bell curve. In the very beginning I dreamed of publication, but of course my images were crap and I knew it. But as I started to improve I saw publication as a way of validating what I was doing with a camera. It seemed to me to be the way to show I could hack it. So I began to actively pursue publication by submitting to contests. I was fortunate enough to win a few magazine contests, and that led being published here and there.

And as good as publication feels (it is really cool to see your name and photos in print!), as I came into my own as a photographer my need for that validation waned. I began to shoot more and more for myself, to fulfill my creative vision, and as a consequence I stopped aiming for those publications.

Do you employ others to assist with the photographs and workflow process? Are there any people you find valuable to the success of your business?

I do all the photography and editing myself, but I have learned over the years to hire experts to help me with the tasks I'm not good at or don't have time for. For example, I am currently working with a virtual assistant to help with administrative and research tasks, a video editor to create my YouTube videos, a marketing guy to help me streamline my business practices, and a graphic designer to help me create eBooks. It's hard to get past the initial hesitation of hiring someone to do work for you but it not only frees up your time, but you end up with a better product than you could produce alone.

What is the most stressful part of being a nature photographer?

For me, it's never being off the clock. When I was an engineer I'd leave work at 6:00 pm and not think about it until the next morning at 9:00. Now there's no safety net below me; I sink or swim based on how hard I work. Which means I'm working hard every day, morning till night, and I rarely take time off. Mostly this stress is self-imposed and when I start to feel overwhelmed I remind myself that all the things I want to do are fun, cool projects, and all of the people I'm corresponding with are current or future clients (meaning they're giving me money), they're people who want to have me on a podcast (or interview), or companies who want me to do projects with them. So I take a deep breath and focus on being grateful for being in a position where my stress comes from too many good things happening at once.

Do you have an internship or mentoring program?

I have been playing with the idea of an internship/mentorship program for young photographers, but I need to take some time to develop the concept so there's nothing ready yet.

How much time do you spend scouting for new photographic opportunities, and what comes first for you, the chicken or the egg (in this case the location itself or an image concept)?

Oh, I am totally an egg shooter! I think. Maybe a chicken? Uh, actually, I'm not sure which is which is your metaphor. For me the image making process is about discovery. I don't like forcing my vision into a pre-existing concept because I find that destroys my creativity in the moment. If I show up to Milford Sound for example with visions of some epic wide-angle landscape dancing in my head then I might not pay attention to the smaller, different scenes that are speaking to me in the actual moment. Because I hate

to tell you, but Mother Nature has different plans for your vision. She might serve you up a plate of steak and mashed potatoes, but more likely she'll bring you a sack of moldy boot leather. And if you're dead-set on the vision in your head then you are gonna be sorely disappointed when the conditions you're pre-visualized fail to materialize.

Not that I'm saying people shouldn't try to achieve the vision of a photo they have, just don't pursue that at the sake of spontaneous creativity in the moment.

So to rewind to your other question, I spend a ton of time scouting, though I don't really think of it specifically as scouting. For me it's just exploring, hiking, climbing, canyoning, and backpacking. And when an opportunity appears for a photo, then I'll grab it and shake it by the ears.

When photography becomes your full time gig, what is it that keeps you motivated?

The process of exploring and shooting keeps me motivated and inspired to a high degree. But that's only on the artistic side. Shooting is easy. When it comes to running a sustainable photography business a whole new set of skills and challenges come into play. And where with photography as an art form I'm motivated by the process of shooting, with photography as a full time gig, a lot of inspiration comes from the end results.

What I mean is, I like taking pictures. The actual activity itself brings me joy. But once you turn that into a gig you force yourself to take on a bunch of tasks which are not exactly enjoyable by themselves. Case in point, I HATE emails. Writing them, sending them, seeing new ones pop up in the inbox...shudder. Every email I receive I view as a little gremlin biting at my feet annoying and harassing me until I can kick its ass back into mogwai form. If all of the internet collapsed and took email with it I wouldn't complain (of course ignoring for the moment that my business simply couldn't exist without the internet or email). Of course I'm exaggerating but basically I'm trying to make the point that I find email to be a drag.

BUT! There's a part of me that actually loves answering emails. And that's because I know the end result is worth it. Whether it's booking a new client, helping another photographer with some feedback, or connecting with business opportunities, I know that almost every email I receive or send has a net positive value for me, my business, and hopefully for the person on the other end as well. And knowing those end results are out there really does keep me inspired to continue working hard and chugging away at tasks which in and of themselves are not super fun.

In other words, I love the idea of achievement, of building a business. And the desire to look back and say, "yup, I did that" helps me stay motivated with photography as my full time gig.

What does a typical photo expedition involve and how many expeditions would you go on a year?

Man, I hate to sound so cliché, but there's really no such thing as typical. Every year is different, and so is every trip. For example, 2016 was heavy on the international travel. I spent three weeks in Chile, six weeks in New Zealand, and in July I was in the Dolomites in Italy for a couple of weeks. And even though those were all international trips, each one was totally different in character.

It was my first time in Chile, for example, and my goal was simply to lay the groundwork for future photography trips. Unless you are extremely lucky or follow a well-trodden path it's hard to scout a new place and come home with killer photos, because inevitably you're in the wrong spot when the nice light hits, or you find an amazing location when conditions aren't great. I prefer to explore areas that aren't iconic, which means a lot more scrambling and bewilderment, and so my goals for Chile were simply to poke around some lesser-known spots and find places to come back to shoot. In three weeks of traveling (entirely by bus or ferry) I had four total days of good photography and maybe have 4 or 5 shots I'm happy with.

New Zealand, by contrast, was a chance for me to return to a place I know very well, and get a bit deeper beneath the surface. I spent as much time as possible in the backcountry, exploring areas I'd previously marked on my mental map. Since I knew I'd be trekking a bunch, I brought everything I needed to be happy in the wilderness for a couple of days at a time. Which meant my pack was heavy on camping and camera gear, and light on just about everything else. And because New Zealand was a very photo-centric trip for me I tried to give myself every opportunity to shoot: renting a car so I could travel independently, paying for guides and excursions to get to unusual places, taking bigger risks with the weather, etc.

My trip to the Dolomites was an entirely different beast altogether because I joined a workshop there led by my friend Erin Babnik. Even though I know first hand that by spending a little time and doing a little research I could have easily set up a great trip on my own, sometimes it's nice to let someone else do all the heavy lifting, especially when that person is already a Dolomites expert like Erin is. So for that excursion, I really enjoyed turning off my brain, letting Erin handle all the details, and I had a ton of fun shooting a place I'd always wanted to visit. Then after the workshop I spent another week or so exploring on my own.

How much roughly could it cost you to go on a shoot?

Now this is a really interesting question! In 2012 I went to New Zealand for a month. My goal for that trip was to come home with three good images. Considering I strive for 10 good images in a year, getting three in a month was an ambitious goal! The trip ended up costing me around \$4000, including flights, a rental car, lodging, food, and production costs like scenic helicopter flights and special equipment purchases.

That means I was willing to spend \$1333 to create each of those three images. Sounds like quite a risk, eh? Because there was no guarantee I would come home with those images. What if I only came home with two good images, or one, or none? That would mean that a single shot from New Zealand could've cost me as much as four grand! Or imagine if I came home with bupkis? \$4000 spent, without a single image to show for it. Ouch. Now that would be hard to justify from a financial point of view (but not from a personal one, as I love New Zealand and cherish any time I get to be there, photography or no).

But as it turns out, I came home with about 15 decent images, and 7 images I was absolutely stoked on. Meaning that the trip ended up costing me about \$200 per photo. Not too bad, especially when you look at the number of print sales those images have generated; it's more than paid for the trip. And now that I am leading photo tours in New Zealand the initial investment has come back to me more than 10-fold.

The truth is it's always a gamble when you go out to shoot. Are you going to come back with keeper images or not? Sometimes the expense is completely justifiable; other times not so much. But at the end of the day I think that's irrelevant. Because if you're going out to shoot only with the goal of making money from the images you capture, then you're missing the point of nature photography in the first place.

Do you put on exhibitions for your work and why/why not?

Me personally? No. But I have been involved in a few exhibitions put on by various galleries, organizations, and museums. I haven't spent much time pursuing the exhibition path because my experience so far is that art rarely sells itself. A piece sitting on the wall in a gallery is far less likely to sell than a piece in my booth at an art festival that I can talk about directly to the customer.

Basically I only like doing exhibitions when they make it as easy as possible for me to participate. For example, I once had an exhibition at the Museum at San Francisco International Airport. All they needed from me were 12 loose prints, which they then matted, framed, and hung. Ahhh, easy.

What do you think of competitions?

I have very mixed feelings about competitions. You never really know what the judges are looking for and often it seems like they pick totally crap images as winners. So I enter competitions in a very scattershot way and don't sweat the results too much.

The other thing you have to be really careful about these days is that many contests are put on by companies as a thinly-veiled way to get free access to images to be used in advertising. Always read the fine print of any contest you enter because it's far too easy to have some company grab the rights to your image with the fine print in their contest rules then use that photo in some huge ad campaign without paying you a dime for it.

How important is social media in your strategy of deriving an income from photography related activities?

I have a true love/hate relationship with social media. Part of me loathes it because I find that social media tends to create conformity in art, rather than celebrating diversity and individual artistic vision. I also don't like the idea that if I'm not constantly online consuming content I'm missing out on something. But on the other hand I find social media incredibly valuable for making all kinds of connections, whether they're personal or business. In fact, a lot of my income stems from social media, either directly or indirectly. For example, fans of my Facebook page will sign up for workshops or purchase prints. And increasingly I'm using YouTube to generate passive income in the form of ad revenue and tutorial sales from my website, as well as create a rich photography community.

You are the co-founder of Sea to Summit Photography Workshops, can you explain what takes place in one of the workshops?

When Jim Patterson and I founded the company in 2010 we both agreed that we wanted to teach the fundamentals of good photography and finding your own vision. We both felt that this was far more important than simply hand-holding students into creating a good image. As a consequence we developed a three-pronged approach to teaching where we discuss: 1) The philosophy of art, photography, and vision; 2) Theoretical knowledge the participants can take with them to create their own beautiful photos down the road; and 3) Specific and practical tips, tricks, and approaches to photographing the present scene. And I'm happy to say we've seen many past students really come into their own as photographers using this approach.

Our workshops are all location-based, and they're set in amazing landscapes that we know intimately. We could teach this stuff in a classroom, but it's 100 times more fun to be out actually shooting in some incredible places. We currently run workshops in Death Valley, the Eastern Sierra, Yosemite National Park, the Palouse, New Zealand, Olympic National Park, and have a few other locations in the works.

Finally, I want to mention that on our workshops emphasize fieldcraft and the process of capturing great photos while out shooting, thus giving you the best possible platform to start from for post processing. We keep our groups small, 8 participants maximum, so that everyone gets plenty of attention. And all the instruction is done on a 1-on-1 basis, which means photographers of all experience levels are welcome to join us.

Industry and Social Media

In your personal opinion and while looking at the competitive industry nature photography has become, what is a trademark difference between the good and the great?

Vision, pure and simple. Good gear and technical excellence are no longer enough to separate the wheat from the chaff. Digital has given us the tools to create technically perfect, beautiful photos with almost inane ease. And yet, what do we see online and in galleries? The same locations photographed beautifully a million times over. How many more shots of Mesa Arch does the world need?

For me art is about showing the world in a new way, and I want to see photos that reflect that. New locations, new approaches to photography, different ways of seeing the world outside of the classic compositional approaches. That for me is what separates great photographers from the merely good.

The photographic industry as a whole has changed a tremendous amount in the last decade. What is the best and worst part of where we are today?

The best part hands down is how good the software has become. Now I don't even have to go out and shoot. I can download a mountain, river, and flowers from a stock photo site, composite them together, toss an epic sky over the top and have a killer image, ready for 99.9 on 500px. I don't even have to leave my house or change out of my sweatpants; it's awesome!! Now I can be the lazy photographer I've always wanted to be.

But for broader changes what I've seen is both the democratization of photography as more and more people get cameras, as well as the crumbling of the technical barriers involved with taking good photos. And what this has led to is an incredible swell in the artistic potential of photography. On the technical side we've essentially reached the point where you don't have to know anything about camera settings in order to get a technically excellent photo. With focus peaking you no longer need to understand focus, hyperfocal distance, or depth of field. With live preview histograms you no longer need an understanding of stops, metering, or exposure. All you need now is to simply line up your composition, then use these empirical tools to get a technically perfect shot. And removing those kinds of barriers allows the artistic aspects of photography to be more accessible.

And when you take that artistic ease and combine it with the fact that everyone has a camera now, the end result is that more and more breathtaking photos are being created than ever before. We, as a whole society, are discovering more incredible places and virtually exploring our insanely beautiful planet in more depth and detail than has ever been possible.

But of course all of that comes at a price, and personally I see two major downsides to this massive explosion of photography. The first is for us as photographers and the industry in general. With photography becoming an extremely popular, mainstream, social, and interconnected hobby it's only natural that we've begun to see the rise of a celebrity culture within photography. And this is both troubling and ironic because art is supposed to be about individual expression and interpretation. And yet, with a celebrity culture what we are seeing is that more and more photographers are creating images not for personal expression but rather to achieve popularity.

And with popularity comes influence. Once the brands figured this out and money started flowing into the industry it led to a stampede to homogenization. Photographers who wanted brand partnerships, ambassadorships, and paid travel all began producing the exact same kinds of images and before you knew it the goddamn feet-out-the-tent selfie was born. And although that's a very specific example the same ideas hold true across many outlets for photography. All the popular images on sites like 500px and Instagram began to look so similar you couldn't tell which photographer they belonged to. This whole process also created the very damaging perception that in order to be commercially successful a photographer has to photograph in a certain way in order to fit the expectations of what's "good."

The second downside I see to this photo explosion is for the planet. Although more photographers absolutely means that more people are photographing social, economic, and environmental issues, for every one of those photographers there are nine who enjoy photography simply as a hobby. And while I'm incredibly happy that more people are using photography as a means to get out and explore nature there seems to be a major component missing from the equation, which is our necessary and vital stewardship of the beautiful places we're all photographing.

As I mentioned earlier, I think photography should arise as an extension of our connection with nature, but with the changes in the industry the emphasis seems to be ever more on the image itself and less on that connection with nature. And as soon as we value the image over the place, that's when we start to see more and more terrible behavior, like people taking selfies with bison, or walking off the boardwalks at Grand Prismatic Spring just to "get the shot." So this may be an exaggeration of the truth but I feel like many of the current generation of photographers are rampaging through nature, taking what they need for an epic photo, and not thinking about the legacy they leave behind or what it means to be a good steward of the planet so that the people who come after us can enjoy the same beauty we do.

But thankfully, and to end on a positive note, I am seeing more and more photographers step up to the plate to be good role models towards environmental stewardship, and I'm hoping the tide will continue to turn.

What recommendations would you have for someone starting out in the industry?

For a photographer just starting out in the industry my advice is simple: shoot what you love. As my friend John Barclay would say: shoot what makes your heart sing. When you find that niche that you are passionate and excited about, that passion shows through in your photos, which makes people excited about your photography. And when other people get excited about your photography, that's when amazing things start to happen. That's exactly what happened for me in the past and what I'm sure will continue to happen in the future. Spread your love and it will come back to you in wonderful ways!

You also need to realize that running a successful photography business, or even building following on social media, is not as binary as flipping a light switch. Success can be simple but it certainly isn't easy: it takes persistence and consistency, and being just too dang stubborn to quit. And rarely does it happen overnight, so stick with it and have faith.

Do you think adventure photography has a conservation role in an increasingly electronic world?

I think adventure and landscape photography has a vital role in conservation as more and more people embrace imagery, exploration, and showcasing the beauty of our planet. Unfortunately, I think the wrong message is currently being broadcast. Many of the leading photographers on social media seem to focus on portraying their lives in as cool a way as possible, and I believe this focus on appearance over all else leads to terrible behavior. One only has to look at the recent spate of head-shaking incidents in Yellowstone to see that people aren't thinking about the consequences of their actions, but only the images they're trying to capture.

Business and Marketing

How do you turn your photography into a business?

If you want to turn photography into a business you need to study business more than you need to study photography. Most photographers don't know shit about a business plan and couldn't market their way out of a paper bag. In fact, almost all the working photographers I know (myself included) got lucky and were able to first build devoted audiences for their work before going into business. Such that even our crude attempts at marketing have been at least moderately successful. And the most successful photos I know are the ones that have that business background. So if you want to turn your photography into a business, I say go for it! It's a challenging but incredibly rewarding way to spend your days. But just FYI you will probably find that you end up working a lot harder and for longer days than you would at a 9-5.

As for what to shoot, all I can advise is to shoot your passion. As my friend John would say: shoot what makes your heart sing. When you find that niche that you are passionate and excited about, that passion shows through in your photos, and that's what makes people excited about your photography. And when other people get excited about your photography, that's when amazing things start to happen. That's exactly what happened for me in the past and what I'm sure will continue to happen in the future. Spread your love and it will come back to you in wonderful ways. And in the meantime I can guarantee that will also help you get the practice you want, and it will help develop your skills and style.

I'd also advise that even though you may be incredibly excited to dive in to making your photography a business, and are pumped to start earning money, and motivated by a sense of urgency, don't be afraid to give it the time it needs to develop. Even though we are in the era of Instagram and "overnight" celebrities, it takes time, dedication, and commitment to build a career. So keep your head down and march along.

It's also totally normal to feel overwhelmed and paralyzed. I often spend so long trying to figure out the perfect course of action that I forget to move at all. What I've learned is that you can never make a perfect decision, simply because you never have complete information. Instead the best course is to take the info you have and just start moving. Try something, try anything. Stick to it and iterate: Figure out what you're doing well and how you can do it better. Figure out what's not working and get rid of it. It's a work in progress. The most important thing is to start moving.

In the meantime, think of the worst case scenario. This is something that helped me when I was making the transition from corporate life to freelance. I thought: well, really what's the worst that could happen? I completely lose all the money I've saved from my corporate job and have to go live with my mom again? Or I have to swallow my pride and ask my company for my old job back? Maybe so, but at least I will know that I tried. Knowing those kinds of worst case scenarios made it easier to accept the risk and take the plunge. Granted, I realized our situations might be totally different. But I bet if you think through the worst case situation you'll see that it's not really that bad, and hopefully that will help you step forward.

I'd recommend taking as many business and marketing classes as possible, as that will give you a huge advantage over other photographers when starting your business. Get a book called "Best Business Practices for Photographers."

For starting a photography business the best advice I can give you is to work hard every day and expect things to take longer than you want. Define your goals and create a concrete plan to get there. From when I left my engineering job until I was supporting myself 100% with photography took about 4 years. I was earning money right away doing art festivals but it wasn't enough to live on and so I had to get part-time jobs, unemployment from the government, and I just about maxed-out my credit cards. But then, landscape and nature are a very different and difficult type of photo business to start because you don't have clients contracting you to take pictures like you would with weddings or portraits. With landscapes you have to take the pictures and then try to find someone to buy them. What kind of business do you want to start? If it's landscapes and nature then I'd recommend creating a diversity of options: try selling prints to local people (farmer's markets or art festivals), local businesses, local hospitals. Try selling

calendars, greeting cards, posters, anything you can think of. Try assisting other local photographers with their workshops or classes. Start a YouTube channel and make a vlog about your adventures. Try making a podcast about what it's like to be a photographer. For this kind of business you need diversity, because it's likely that you will only earn a little money from each revenue stream, but together it's enough.

If you're planning to start a portrait or wedding biz it's a different story altogether. You need a solid portfolio, a great website, a good business plan, know how to price, shoot, edit, package, and sell products. It's a lot but in some ways it's easier because once you find clients then you will be earning money. Again, I would recommend assisting an established pro, as they can give you incredible insights into how they make their business work.

As far as marketing to companies, I really haven't done very much of that at all. I've only worked with one company to create photos for them. But if you want to go that route I would recommend getting signed on to an agency (if you Google something like Instagram influencer agency you can find a lot). They will help connect the clients to you to get the right gigs. In terms of general marketing to build an audience it takes a loooooong time. You have to be consistent, patient, and only show your best work to the world. I started sharing my photos online in 2007 and it took about 2-3 years of sharing my best stuff consistently to build any kind of an audience.

I'm not trying to be discouraging, because if you can build a career as a photographer it's extraordinarily rewarding and fun. But in my experience there's no such thing as overnight success, and no such thing as a magic bullet. Instead, you are putting the pieces together every day, one small part at a time.

Would you recommend others get internships / assistantships before pursuing their career independently?

I did assist on a few workshops before starting my own. However, I didn't really get a glimpse into the business side of things. And having a good understanding of that is far more critical to success than being a good photographer or teacher. I would wholeheartedly recommend aspiring photographers to seek out internships or assistantships before starting a business. Also, take classes on business, marketing, and entrepreneurship. Doing the photography is easy....getting people to give you money for it is hard, and the more insight you have into the business of photography before you begin the better equipped you'll be to create a successful career.

Do you have any tips for marketing?

Ok, now that's a huge question! The key to marketing is first understanding what your goals are. Are you trying to sell prints, are you trying to book workshops, land commercial gigs? Each of those is totally different and requires a different approach. So you have to identify your goal first then figure out who your audience is and how to reach them. In more concrete terms, the email newsletter is the #1 way to market yourself to a captive audience. If you can build a strong email list (by giving away awesome content typically) then you have a huge leg up when it comes to marketing yourself or your products.

Technical Photography Questions

If you could pass on one critical tip or technique to someone, what would it be?

Use a tripod! Sure, a tripod is a clunky pain in the ass, but if you are striving to nail your composition or achieve technical perfection in your images a tripod is a life saver.

Are your compositions pre-meditated or developed on the fly?

Yes. Generally speaking I always compose on the fly. I try to let a scene speak to me and tell me what there is to shoot, rather than imposing my preconceived expectations and compositions onto the scene. But if I find an amazing composition when the light isn't quite right for that shot it goes into my quiver of useful ideas. Then when conditions are better I'll go back and shoot it.

What clichés in photography do you try and avoid?

This will make me sound like a total snob, but I actively avoid iconic locations. It has nothing to do with their beauty; after all, the places are iconic for a reason. But I personally don't find much artistic satisfaction in photographing a spot that has been shot a million times. At that point photography becomes less about personal expression and more about who happened to be there with the best weather. I think about it a little bit like cover songs: If I cover a Beatles song I know I will have a great time singing it and I will produce a song that everyone already knows and already likes. But whose artistry am I expressing in that situation? Ultimately I'd rather record my own music; even if it doesn't turn out as good as my Beatles cover, I can take pride in my own creation.

Can you elaborate on your post production workflow?

For me, post production is an extension of the image-making process. I am actively trying to showcase certain features of a landscape that I find striking. My philosophy mimics caricature: simplify and exaggerate. Meaning that when I compose in a certain way to highlight part of the landscape, I will then attempt to further highlight that element in post. For example, if I love the contrast a shaft of light is making on a mountainside, I will enhance that contrast further in post. If I love the purple color of a flower, I will make it more purple in post.

But in more specific terms, my post workflow involves importing raw files into Lightroom, and doing as much development of the images as possible there. In fact, the only reason I bring an image into Photoshop these days is if I need to blend exposures, or do highly-tuned local adjustments.

Gear Questions

What was your first camera and why did you choose it?

I didn't choose it, it chose me. One night I fell into a troubled sleep. When I woke up I was in a forest clearing, surrounded by cameras half set into rocky outcrops. I went around and pulled on each camera in turn but the only one that came free was my fabled and trusty Nikon D50.

The true story is much more bland and goes like this...

Me: What kind of camera should I buy as a beginner?

Guy at the Camera Store: Well the Nikon D50 and the Canon Rebel are about the same in terms of performance and quality, but the Nikon is \$100 cheaper.

Me: Sold.

Is there any equipment you would recommend to other nature photographers?

You don't need much aside from a camera, some lenses, and a good tripod. Maybe think about getting a pair of waders. :)

Do you use filters in your field work?

Sure do! I stack at least 3 UV filters on every single one of my lenses for maximum protection. Nothing is going to damage those babies! In truth, for many years my go-to setup comprised a 3-stop and a 2-stop soft, drop-in GND filter. But nowadays I'm shooting with a Nikon D850 and the dynamic range is so excellent I often find that GND filters aren't needed. These days when I slip on a filter it's very likely a 10-stop or 6-stop solid ND so that I can introduce some long exposure effects to my photos. After all, if a short exposure is good, then surely a long exposure is better, right?

I also keep a polarizer in my bag but I very rarely use it for landscape work. And that's simply because I don't want to suffer the slings and arrows of uneven polarization across my frame if I'm using a wide angle lens. Not to mention I frequently shoot right at the sun (take that, sensor!) and so the polarizer wouldn't have an effect anyway. But for waterfall work, or rivers, streams, forests, and some telephoto shots I'll definitely slap the polarizer on there.

What camera do you use and why?

At the moment I shoot with a Nikon D850. I like it because it brings together everything I look for in a camera: incredible detail and image quality, good ISO performance and color accuracy. I do wish it was a little lighter though!

For the non-pro photographer I would avoid getting caught up in the endless cycle of newer and better gear because I think that misses the fundamental point of nature photography, which is just to get out and experience the beauty and wonder of our planet, and to share that beauty with other people. Sure there might be cameras out there with better dynamic range than your current camera, or more detail, and better high-ISO performance, but for 99% of what the average person shoots almost any camera is sufficient. Plus ask yourself if you'd rather spend \$3000 on an international photography excursion or on a new piece of gear.

What lenses do you use? Which is most useful?

I love wide angle photography both for its dramatic perspectives and for its ability to draw the viewer into the scene. So I frequently shoot with my Nikkor 14-24mm and 18-35mm lenses. However my current favorite lens is my Nikkor 70-200mm f/4 lens. Shooting landscapes with a telephoto is incredibly rewarding because you pick out small vignettes from the overall scene and come away with much more unique and personal imagery.

Do you shoot film at all?

Flim? Fiml? Limf? What's that?

What other equipment do you use and why?

There are two other bits of kit that are absolutely indispensable for the kind of photography I do. The first is a good tripod. This is critical for getting sharp shots, blurring water motion, doing long exposures, and for consistency. The tripod is an amazing, but often overlooked tool.

The second item is a set of good filters: a CPL, a 10- and 6-stop ND, and sometimes a 3-stop soft grad.

How often do you change your equipment?

Less often than I change my underwear, I'll tell you that. I prefer to spend my money on travel and experiences rather than new gear, so I really only buy new equipment when the old stuff breaks or doesn't live up to my needs anymore.

What equipment do you take on a shoot?

Whatever it takes to get the job done! If I'm in the front country I bring my whole kit, including multiple bodies, all my filters, and every single friggin' lens I own. When I hit the trail I do pare things down a bit, but exactly how much depends on how far I'm hiking and how much other gear I have to carry (once you add crampons, an ice axe, a shovel, rope, and extra clothing to your backpack you start to wonder just how good that iPhone camera is after all). But I'd hate to miss a photo just because I decided to shave half a pound off my kit, so when I go trekking I still bring one camera body, a carbon fiber tripod, my 14-24mm ultra-wide zoom, a 18-35mm wide zoom, (usually) a 50mm prime, a 70-200mm f/4, extra batteries, and a handful of filters. It's not toooo heavy, and honestly, if you eat enough chocolate you don't even notice the weight.

Inspiration

What inspires you?

Photography is my third biggest passion in life, after watching funny cat videos on the internet and collecting interesting grains of rice. To answer your question, I'm inspired by the smile of every child and the wag of every puppy's tail. By the glint of mischief in a sea otter's eye, and the majestic sound of a herd of elephant seals.

Naw, but for realz tho.... the number one thing that keeps me excited about photography and constantly out shooting is, well, constantly being out shooting. For me (as it is for most nature photographers), photography is an extension of the experiences I have in life. It's my way of trying to capture and explain the moments, places, and feelings that are most important to me.

And within that sentiment I find there are two separate, but related, paths that are rewarding. The first is gaining a deeper, more intimate knowledge of an area I already know well. Take Yosemite Valley for example. It's a place I've visited and shot over a hundred times. And yet each time I visit I find hidden little nooks and crannies that give me a different glimpse of the Valley, and show me new sides to all the icons I know so well. It's like peeling back the onion skin of your significant other, getting to know them more intimately, and building a deeper and more satisfying relationship.

The second path is really an extension of the first: it's still driven by the search for novelty, but rather than seeking novelty in a place I already know, it's discovering completely new places (to me). There is really a profound joy to be had by seeking out new places, having new experiences, and photographing scenes I didn't know existed the day before. I think that the best photos are emotionally driven and that delight that comes from the process of exploration does seep into one's photos. When I'm happy, excited, and smiling in some new beautiful place, there's nothing that makes me want to bust out the camera and start shooting more.

Who are your 3 all-time top photographers?

Number one, without even thinking about it, is the late Galen Rowell. He was in so many ways what I aspire to be: not only a pioneering landscape photographer, but also an incredible outdoorsman and athlete. A true adventurous spirit. Pretty much my whole style of composition, lighting, and aesthetic sensibilities came from looking at Galen's work.

My second pick is a contemporary nature photographer named Marsel Van Oosten. Marsel is probably my favorite working photographer today. As digital techniques become more advanced and more widespread it seems to me that many photographers are becoming reliant on them to produce striking images. Instead of focusing on the craft of photography they're focusing on the technique and the technical. I'm talking about things like 12-image blends involving seven different focus points for extreme DOF, five different exposures for dynamic range, and heavy cloning to "fix" whatever aesthetic problems were present in the scene. But while these techniques are producing unquestionably beautiful images, I feel like they miss out on some deeper part of photography, which is why I love Marsel's work.

He doesn't spend 10 hours per image combining and merging shots in Photoshop in order to create a masterpiece. No, he simply goes out and explores the world, finding and photographing some incredible stuff in the process. And that's more of the type of photographer I try to be.

My third pick is a tough one because there are so many talented photographers out there today. But the name my mind keeps coming back to is Michael Anderson, a photographer out of Colorado. I love Mike's work because it's adventurous, pure and simple. He travels all over the world, shooting incredible places that are far off the traditional photographer's path. And he has a style of photographing and processing that lends a distinctive air of fantasy to his images. Whenever I look at his galleries it makes me want to travel. And that's part of the power of good photography: it connects you to a place you've never been before.

Where or do you get your photographic inspiration from and do you follow any other photographers that you particularly admire?

I draw most of my inspiration from the landscape itself. One of the beautiful things about traveling and exploring is the exponential cascading effect it has on being inspired to continue traveling and exploring. When I am photographing a place, I always see new angles, new locations, new mountains, new lakes, and new rivers. And this is what keeps me brimming over with ideas for places to go and things to shoot.

In terms of people there are so many outstanding landscape photographers these days that I couldn't possibly list them all, but there are a few standouts that spring to mind. In general I am drawn to adventurous photographers who are pushing themselves to explore and find new locations. Guys like Paul Nicklen, Jimmy Chin, Paul Zizka, and Cory Richards are endlessly inspiring.

If you could step back in time capture a sunset and sit around a campfire with one person who might that be and what might you ask him/her?

If I could go back in time I'd find some historic babes and ask them to go to the prom with me in San Dimas.

You know, of all the questions you asked me, this one has me the most stumped. One person from all of history? Dang. I supposed the most photographically-oriented answer would be Galen Rowell. That guy influenced my life in so many ways, from the way I compose my images to the time of day I like to shoot to my desire to hoof it into the wilderness to to photograph. Changed my photography in profound ways, and yet he died before I ever even picked up a camera. Would love to spend an evening romping around the Sierra with him (not that I could keep up), and if I wasn't huffing and puffing too hard I might ask him if he would please please please not get on that small plane on August 11, 2002.

Other Advice

Do you have any recommendations for starting photographers?

Shoot what you're passionate about and always make the photography first. Focus on creating your art and don't try to jump into creating a business first thing. In fact, for many people trying to go into photography full time is not a good idea. You get to do the thing you love less because you're so focused on building the business. And you take this thing you love and turn it into something that stresses you out. Depending on your personality it can be worth it, and for me I don't regret making the decision. But there are definitely days when I think about how much simpler and less stressful my life would be had I stayed in engineering.

If you could give one piece of advice to photographers what would that be?

If there's one thing that will make your photography a success, it's simply to photograph what you love. It will make you happier and more passionate, it will attract people who love the same things you do, and it help you build stronger relationships with the places, things, and people you care about. And at the end of the day, what could make for a richer life than that?