

## Hands On Newsletter

February 2008

[www.prairiefireproductions.com](http://www.prairiefireproductions.com)

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### Profoto AcuteB 600R

**The Mobile Photographer's New Best Friend:**  
Studio Lights When You Can't Bring the Studio

When I was young, I never had a special thing like a "blanky" or toy to take with me when I left the security of my home to venture into the outside world.

And, until recently, I never had a special thing to take with me when I left the security of my studio to shoot in the outside world. Yes, I have 4 Nikon SB800's that I use frequently; if I had my druthers, I'd have 4 more. However, as I've written, they aren't intended to replace studio lights, and they don't.

But, now I've found the [Profoto AcuteB 600R](#) – a battery powered, portable, studio type lighting system. It has become my new security blanket and accompanies me whenever I leave the studio for a location shoot. It is the mobile photographer's new best friend.



The system is so versatile that I'm going to review it in two parts. Part I, this article, will focus on using it indoors. Part II, which will probably be in the March newsletter, will focus on using the AcuteB outdoors.

#### What it is:



Essentially, the AcuteB 600Ws generator is kin to the Acute2 series of Profoto power packs. It powers one head, either a standard Acute2 head, or a light weight, portable head tailored for

mobile use. To conserve battery power, the mobile head does not contain an internal fan or constant modeling light. If you want a modeling light, there is an adaptor that enables one.

So, we have 600Ws going into one head – more than enough power to replicate studio lighting.

But, what's more important, in my eyes, is the fact that the generator gives a range of 7 f/ stops. Said another way you can dial down to 9Ws – a critical feature in any lighting system. (In my previous article *Friends in Small Places* I wrote that it is often more difficult to get less light than more. Said another way, many people buy too much power and can't turn down their lights enough to shoot at lower apertures or in small spaces.)

Being able to dial down is even more critical when one uses the AcuteB system to supplement light rather than as a primary light source.

Like other studio lights, the AcuteB recycles very quickly; depending on the state of the battery, the interval is .09-2.6 seconds.

And, the battery stays strong – for a long time. Profoto says that you get 160 full power flashes per charge. My good friend, Jim DiVitale, who has two of these units – and inspired me to get mine – reports that on a job on which he shot at half power, he went all day without wearing down a battery.

So, more power and power more quickly – that's what distinguishes the AcuteB from my SB800's or other "off camera" flash units.<sup>1</sup>

One thing I like about my AcuteB is that it takes ALL of my Profoto light

shapers and is compatible with my Sekonic meters<sup>2</sup>. So, I need not buy new softboxes or paraphernalia to take into the field. And, with the simple and easy Profoto ring system, changing light shapers is fast and easy. For those who want ultra-portability, the head has a hole that will take and grip an umbrella.

All in all, it's like having a studio lighting system outside the studio.

How portable is it? Actually, much more portable than I had expected. It packs up into a small soft-sided case with a shoulder strap. The total weight of the package is around 13 lbs. It seems lighter to me and carries easily.

We've been teaching "off camera" flash in a lot of our seminars. Many of the instructors use supplemental batteries with their flash units. And, many of them "hang" or attach them to the light stands. I actually find the Profoto system to be less clumsy. And, as I'll demonstrate next month, with the outdoor report, I use the battery, with a bungee cord, as ballast to hold down the light stand.

To put the system to work for this review, I went next door to my good friends at [MDI Resources](#), a showroom containing outstanding office furniture, and took a picture of one of my favorite models, their employee Jessica Flores<sup>3</sup>.

#### Set Up<sup>4</sup>:

Because the light in the showroom was tungsten, I used a Rosco #3407 gel to change the AcuteB color temperature (white balance) from "Daylight" to "Tungsten". You can see the gel taped across the reflector.

And, because I wanted you to be able to see the gel, I did not use a



<sup>1</sup> Again, I want to make clear that I love my SB800's and Nikon's CLS system. The AcuteB does not compete with or replace them. It is a different tool – one to use when one wants mobile "studio" lighting.

<sup>2</sup> I got the "R" version which is compatible with the transmitter in both my L358 and L758 meters.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 21 for a better look at Jessica.

<sup>4</sup> Thanks to Ed Bensen for the set up image.

light shaper – as most of us would in this situation. Knowing I would not have “soft light”, I made some creative decisions.

First, I decided to go for a hard, more direct and dramatic lighting pattern. I wanted a harder shadow line between the lit and unlit sides of Jessica’s face. To enhance that look, I chose not to use a reflector on the unlit side of Jessica’s face; I figured I would get a small bit of reflection from the off white wall to that side. The result is a hard and stark shadow line – a look I really like, but one that would not be appropriate for a business brochure.

Were this a business shot, I’d have set up and used the light differently.

First, as to the “quality” of the light, I’d have softened the light with a small softbox. And, I would have used a reflector to put some of the Acute’s light on the shade side of Jessica’s face.

As to the “quantity of light”, I would have gone for a much more balanced approach – setting the AcuteB so that it provided slightly more power than the ambient light. In that sense, the Acute would have given the light “direction” and would have put consistent light on Jessica’s face, both things the lighting in the showroom was not doing.

Had I done that, we would have had a very different image. Not better. Now worse. Just different.

#### Deciding on how much light I wanted from the AcuteB:

Because I knew that without the softbox or reflector I was going to get a more dramatic image, I decided to shoot with a 2 stop difference between the ambient light in the room and the light that the AcuteB would put on Jessica’s face. This is the same way I would approach a “dramatic” shot in my studio.

If I had chosen to go the “soft, supplemental light” way, I would have chosen a much smaller gap between the ambient light and the output of the AcuteB.

How much should the “less striking” differential be? Surprisingly, this is the subject of great debate. Some say, adamantly, 1 stop,

others less; I trust Doug Box who says that  $\frac{2}{3}$  stop works best for him. As with most things, we each have to find our own way. I’d start with Doug’s settings and adjust for individual taste.

#### Metering:

First, I measured the ambient light in the room. I chose to use my L758 because it has a “spot meter feature”. I set my ISO to 200 and my shutter speed to 200 (I was hand holding and because the abundant, ambient light would have an impact on the image, I wanted to shoot a bit faster than my normal studio speed of 1/60 second.). I put the meter in ambient measurement mode and took a series of readings on the room around Jessica and on both sides of her face. Because the showroom was lit with little spotlights, pointing every which way, the readings varied quite a bit. I

used the spot meter to get some readings on what would be the dark side of Jessica’s face and settled on f/5.6. In this situation, the spot metering function of the L758 was very useful.



Since I wanted to light Jessica so that the “lit side” had 2 stops more light than the ambient side, I had to adjust the AcuteB so that it put out enough light to shoot at f/11. I put the L758 into flash/trigger mode, and took a reading on the left side (camera right) of her face. It came in at about f/7.1. I dialed the AcuteB up about 1 stop and metered again. One more tweak, and I was at f/11 which is how the image was shot.

#### Summary of the process:

1. Using the ambient light setting on the meter, measure the ambient light.
2. Using the flash/triggering setting on the meter, set off and measure the AcuteB.
3. Adjust the AcuteB output to ensure the f/stop I wanted.

The result presents a rather moody Jessica. I know it’s hard to see in this small image, but, we’ve got “loop lighting” and there is good definition in her blouse. Again, this is not a “showroom shot” it comes from my dark side

and was necessitated by the set up (no light softeners).

Simple, powerful, effective, the AcuteB is the mobile shooter's new best friend.

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE: This system is not just a "road trip buddy". It is much more versatile than that.

#### The AcuteB in the Studio:

The AcuteB can use it in a studio in exactly the same way one uses his or her other studio lights. It can be plugged in; in that mode, using the modeling light adaptor will allow you to get traditional studio light functionality without fear of depleting the battery.

#### And, Now for Something Different:

So much for tradition – I've got a wild idea that I think will help all my wedding and event photographer friends who are often frustrated by their inability to control the placement of their subjects. Many have to shoot people up against walls. Using traditional on camera or off camera flash often results in a harsh, distracting shadow behind the subject.

So, I think it's time for another wedding – it's time to marry the AcuteB with the Ringflash that I reviewed in my [December Newsletter](#).

The charm of the Ringflash is the funky, even, comic-book-like shadow it throws. Rather than compete with a subject, the gentle shadow compliments it.

If I had to cover a wedding or event, I'd throw the AcuteB over my shoulder or put it in a fanny or back pack. I'd mount the Ringflash on my camera and lens, and off I'd go. (Mark Rezzonico, of Profoto tells me that they can shorten the cable on the Ringflash for this application.)

What about having to re-meter and re-set on the move? Actually, if you can approximate distances and understand the "law of light reciprocity" I think you won't have to touch the light – you'll simply have to adjust the aperture.

[I had written a complete explanation of this into this column but took it out. It was so

geeky, it even bored me. If you want it, [email me](#) and I'll send it along. Just trust me, once you get the hang of it, you'll be able to roam around with your Ringflash and never touch the AcuteB – all of your adjustments will be made on your camera.]

I think you can all tell that I think this set up is cool.

But to know how really cool I think it is, you have to know that I've created a new seminar based upon its use. It's called the *Street Shoot Safari Seminar*. Here's the plan:

A small group of students, 2 beautiful models – with full releases. Limited equipment – the AcuteB 600R, some [Photoflex](#) reflectors and LitePanels for reflection and diffusion.

Before we roll, we scout and plan a series of location shoots – everything from abandoned buildings to funky settings.

We spend a day in pre-production, creating a shoot plan, discussing the "themes" with the models, getting story boards of the images, planning lighting set ups, and creating a wardrobe and prop list. Each student will be responsible for producing one location.

On the day of the shoot, we cover all the locations, using only the available light, the AcuteB, the reflectors, and the LitePanels. You shoot your hearts out. On the final day, we see what we've accomplished in post production. My goal? To teach planning and "guerilla lighting". Your goals? Get shots for your portfolios and web sites, learn something and have fun. To make things better, Profoto has told me that I can submit the best images from the shoot for possible use on their websites and in their ad's. I haven't formally posted this seminar yet. If you're interested, [email me](#).

## Portraiture to the Rescue, Again

A beautiful model, one of the world's best cameras, in the hands of one of the world's best photographers (John

What happened here is not fully unexpected. Normal make up, as applied by the model, does not account for some of the things we deal with in the studio. In essence, the make up



Woodward) – what could possibly be wrong with this scenario?

Bad makeup meet too much resolution and sharpness. Result? An image in which the slightest cracking of the make-up and the lightest of facial hair (the kind all people have) catch light and show in the image.

Trust me, as bad as the image on the right might look in this newsletter, it looks much worse at full resolution and full size.

dried up and cracked. It looked like a river bed after the water evaporates. (Jen, the sharp 16 year old, explained that this happens when moisturizer is not put on underneath the make up. The skin sucks the moisture from the makeup causing it to crack. From a distance, no one would notice. But, this camera, this lens – big issue.)

Soon, I will do a feature story on working with MUA's (Make Up Artists). They really bring a lot to the table.

What about the camera? Is this an argument against sharp, high



resolution images? No, not at all. And, most cameras with extreme resolution have modes that cut back “sharpness” – often called “portrait” modes.

Yes, getting it right in the camera is nice – and actually, this image was “right” in the camera. The camera didn’t apply the make up.

I would always prefer a sharp, precise image. Always. Because, I have tools that can bail me out when something like this happens.

So, into *Photoshop* the image went.

If this story sounds familiar to some of you – it is. It is almost identical to the story I wrote “The Adventures of Wrinkle Woman”<sup>5</sup> about a year ago.

Like I did with Wrinkle Woman’s wrinkles, I tried every way I knew to remove the “skin problems” in this image.

I used two “blur techniques” – surface and smart. Both worked well but required some masking so that I could paint back in some important detail the blurs had taken out. I got good results with both, but they took some time and, as with all blurs, there’s the risk of creating plastic, Barbie skin.

And, then I tried *Portraiture*. (I usually do all of this work in *Portraiture* – but, knowing that this had become an “academic” exercise, I started by doing it the hard way, with

blurs, before turning to my tried and true remedy.)

Usually, in *Portraiture*, you can use the “push one button” method; it’s that good.

But, this image was a real challenge because it had some pretty severe problems – all in different color areas. The areas under the eyes, on the chin and on the left cheek presented very different problems. In essence, we had problems in the “highlight” areas (under the eyes) the “mid-tone” areas (the chin and cheek) and, to a much lesser extent, in the shadow areas (in the tiny cracks in the make-up; the cracks create tiny shadows – like wrinkles do on a much larger scale.)

The “one button push” gave me an acceptable result, but I wanted more.

So, I took control of the program, easy to do, and followed this protocol:

First, I made sure to set *Portraiture* to reflect the output size of the final image I was going to deliver. Not all programs allow us to do that. But, it makes sense. Higher settings on a smaller image may turn it to mush.

Following a tip I learned from a *Vincent Versace* DVD, I made a re-touching map. This one was mental. It didn’t take much to see that I had three distinct problem areas.

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<sup>5</sup> I plan to have an archive of all of my old newsletters on the website, soon.

Blowing up the image, a lot, I could actually see the wide range of color differences with which the program would have to work.

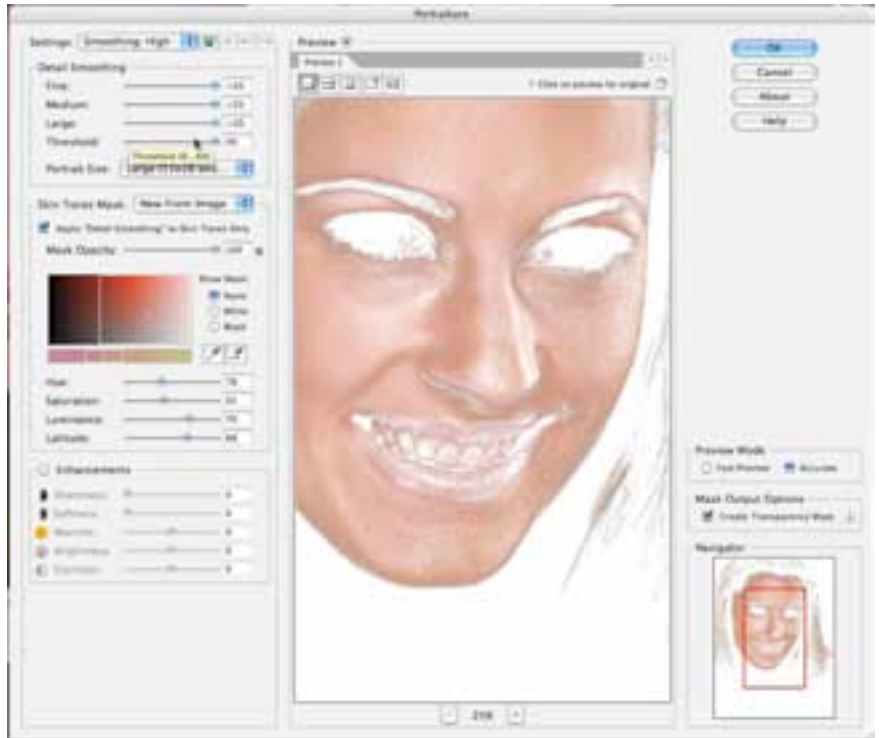
As I wrote in the *Wrinkle Woman* piece, a simple way of looking at skin retouching is to treat the face as a neighborhood with strict deed restrictions; all of the houses need be painted in a small color range. When *Portraiture* finds a house that is too bright, or too dark, it makes it blend in with the colors surrounding it. That's the simple theory. There's a lot more to it, but we need not go there.

I decided that instead of trying to get all three areas fixed in one pass, I'd do it in three.

So, I made a new layer from the background layer and ran *Portraiture*. [Filter>Imagenomic>Portraiture].

I decided to attack the biggest problem first, the mid-tones.

Working in a preview window with an image blown up enough to isolate the cracks and flats in the make-up, I used the first eye dropper/color selector tool to pick the color of the make up I wanted to start to smooth out. The first eye dropper makes a "global" decision. The second eyedropper samples more colors to allow us to refine our selections. I



didn't use the second eyedropper because I knew I was going to use 3 passes.

Because I thought the problem was severe, I used the "Smoothing High" pre-set and then "maxed out the settings" in the "Detail Smoothing" panel. (Note the mask to show you what is and what isn't being affected.)

I pushed "OK" and I had my first corrective layer.



I did the same thing, two more times, to get the highlights and shadows. Notice the picture of my Layers Palette after I had run the process three times.

Voila! Victory.

I fiddled a bit with the opacity settings, and then followed a tip *Jim DiVitale* often teaches, I did a quick tour through the blending modes just to see if there was something very cool I could do with my work.

In the end, I left it the way it was. To finish off the image, I did some minor retouching – whitened the eyes and gave them some bounce.

Imagenomic has some actions that make the process go faster. When they are available, I'll post a URL where you can go to download them.

As you can tell, I really love Imagenomic's three products: *Noiseware*, *Portraiture*, and *Real Grain*.

And, I love the company. They are small, responsive and knowledgeable. Call and you'r w likely to get the President, the Chief Engineer, or the Evangelist/Guru George Bowen, who attended Jim DiVitale's first *Photoshop* seminar and gave an Imagenomic lesson.

Best of all, they are generous supporters of our seminars.

If you don't own these products, you might want to go online to download free trial versions. When you fall in love with them, you can purchase them at a great discount by using our seminar/newsletter code: PFP2007.

To try them or buy them go to the [Imagenomic Web Site](#).

## Welcome Aboard Hoodman

The [Hoodman Corporation](#) has joined our team of seminar and newsletter



sponsors. All of our sponsors share critical criteria: All make superb, innovative products. All give exceptional consumer support. And, all are great people –

accessible, concerned and fun.

I've always been intrigued by Hoodman – I knew of their products when I was in the film industry and I love their logo.

But, I didn't think of them as a sponsor until I took my new D3 out for a test drive.

What's the link between my D3 and the Hoodman Corporation?

Simple, Hoodman makes the fastest, greatest capacity, and most reliable UDMA compact flash cards available. They also make FireWire 800 card readers – the fastest technology on the market. This is the stuff I need to take full advantage of my D3's ability to shoot ultra high speed bursts.

Back to the D3 test drive. My daughter Jenny is on the Memorial High School



Winter-Guard. They had a competition in a gym the weekend I got the camera. I thought it would be a great opportunity to test both the High Speed ISO and burst rate of the camera. Both performed very well.

But, my name brand, late model compact flash card didn't. It balked and occasionally could not handle the high speed through put.

So I set out to find a new card manufacturer, one that made high speed cards and high speed readers – and that's how I found Hoodman.

(For the non-geeks in the crowd, here's a simple explanation of digital capture, and why this speed is important. When we push the shutter button, the shutter opens and closes and data is recorded on the sensor; the data from the sensor goes into a camera buffer where it is held until the camera "writes" the information to the compact flash card. If the data is coming in at a rate faster than it is being written to the card, the camera's buffer fills – and when it is full, it cannot accept any more data. The shutter will not activate until there is room on the buffer for more data. The result – you may lose the "money" shot because the camera buffer is full.

Similar problems occur when we try to transfer the data from our cards to a computer. If the card or card reader is slow, it will take a long time to make the transfer.)

The solution to the problem is two fold – larger, faster buffers, faster cards, and faster card readers.

To solve the problem, the industry has created a UDMA protocol. To learn more about it, [click here](#).

Hoodman's [16GB, UDMA compact flash](#) cards are both the fastest, and largest in the industry. And, they have NEVER had one fail in the field. NEVER.

Unlike many people I know, I prefer large cards over a pocketful of small ones. I get the largest, fastest cards available, so now I have two Hoodman 16GB's to replace the name brand 12GB's I'd been using. Some people think I am crazy. Those who fear, worry about card failures. I just buy reliable cards.

That said, I'm not sure how I'm going to take advantage of the very cool dual card slots in my D3. I can put one 16GB card in each slot – the question is how to set them. I can have them fill consecutively – giving me 32GB in the camera RAW image storage – that's incredible. (My bad math tells me that's 800 images per card, or 1600 in the camera – and these are full, uncompressed .nef images).

The worriers will say that is taking too big a risk.

Or, I can be cautious, and have the cards mirror each other – when I make a capture, the same image is written to both cards thereby giving me an instant back up.

Finally, I can use the 16GB's to capture my RAW files and use smaller, older cards, in the second slot to capture .jpegs. (But, I don't know why I'd do that, I don't think I'd ever use the .jpeg.)

In the next several newsletters, I'm going to review some Hoodman products. I'll start with a speed test of the UDMA cards.

Once more, I'd like to welcome this family run business aboard. They are good people and we are pleased to have them on our team.

#### BUT WAIT: THERE'S MORE

The good folks at Hoodman have authorized me to make a premature new product announcement. Soon, Hoodman will be coming out with an LCD cover for the screen on the D3. This is the cover that many of us think Nikon forgot to send. Nikon may be right, the LCD screen is "hardened glass", but many of us still want protection. We practice safe LCD. I've been using a screen protector from a Treo. Others have been equally inventive. I, for one, can't wait 'til Hoodman ships their D3 protector. And, when they do, remember that you heard it first, here.

### **Tips from the Pro's** **#1: Snakes Batteries On Planes**

Enhanced airport security has changed the way we travel with our camera equipment. And, the "changes" are constantly changing.

[Frank McDaniel](#), a good friend and rep for a lot of photo equipment companies, including our sponsor the MAC Group, recently sent an email notifying his friends that we can no longer pack our extra batteries in our stowed luggage. They have to be packed in our carry on suitcases and run through security. For more on this here's the [link](#) Frank sent.

To make specific decisions more difficult, the standards vary by country and sometimes, by airline. The only way to be certain is to do some checking – at the time of your trip. I'd start with the [TSA](#), check with my airline, and with international travel do some Internet research on the requirements of your destination country.

The regulation on batteries is counter-intuitive. Most of us have believed that the easiest way through any security issue is to just put the stuff in a checked bag. That's no longer true.

Photographers face the more generic issue: What is the best and most secure way to carry extensive, expensive equipment on a trip? And, what will the airlines allow?

Many of us travel with too much equipment to carry on. And, now that we cannot securely lock our cases, we hesitate to check it in. (Yes, we can use TSA locks, but I've heard too many complaints of things that have

“disappeared” from checked luggage to feel comfortable with that alternative.)

Many years ago, I worked with a great videographer, Mark Benjamin. Whenever he flew, Mark bought an extra seat for his camera equipment. An extreme solution, but it worked.

Today, there are many carry on alternatives – rolling back pack, hard cases, etc. Our sponsor, [Tenba](#), provides many of them.

And, of course there are the “check in” hard cases that photographers have used for ages. However, now that they cannot be “locked”, they stand out like a “lost” \$20 bill on the sidewalk” – easy pickings.

Doug Box gets around this by putting his equipment in a non-descript, large, blue plastic suitcase. His thought – it’s less likely to be opened.

Other pro’s I know use a shipping firm to send the equipment ahead to their final destinations. They pack it well and cross their fingers.

The Bottom Line: An “equipment travel” strategy is now an important part of every trip – something to be thought about and implemented before heading for the airport.

“By failing to prepare you are preparing to fail” – Benjamin Franklin

## #2: Protecting My Copyright

### A Fool for a Client? Not Me!

There is an old saying that a lawyer who represents himself has a “fool for a client”.

I think that’s true and, although I’ve been a lawyer since the days of flower children and the Jefferson Airplane, when it comes to my own problems, I use outside counsel.

In last month’s newsletter, I made a resolution to enforce and protect copyrights, and to share the journey with you, through this newsletter.

My first step was to choose a lawyer to represent me. I chose Pam Rea, a lawyer I’ve known for more than 10 years. Pam is special in many ways. But, what makes her the perfect choice for my case is the fact that she’s been in and around the photography business for more than 20 years. She gets it.

Not content to have her “simply” represent me (I say “simply” with a bit of sarcasm, there is nothing more difficult than representing a lawyer – I’ve been there, often), I’ve asked her to do something special for the photography community. I’ve asked Pam to write a *Law for Photographers* column for this newsletter – a column that will run every so often and a column that will try to answer some of your generic questions. She’s already

gathering topics. If you have suggestions, [email them to me](#), and I'll pass them on.

One caveat (that's "warning" in legalese – I can still talk like a lawyer when I need to). The column is intended to discuss general legal topics of importance to photographers – not to give specific legal advice. Specific advice is always best given in the context of a one-on-one, attorney:client relationship.

Thanks, Pam, for the kind offer to serve this newsletter community.

Since I last wrote, we filed and served my lawsuit for "copyright violation". I've asked Pam to post the public documents on her website so that you can follow the process as it unfolds.

You can find that information, [here](#).

As we take new steps, we will post them.

As I said before, I think it important that we respect the creative rights of others and protect our own.

Fortunately, I am in a place where I can set an example by enforcing my own. Maybe, if enough people get the message, we won't have to do this, again.

### **#3: From Tony Corbell Check Out Viveza**

I've been trying to contact Tony Corbell for a couple of weeks, off and on, to discuss his upcoming seminar. I just got ahold of him. Seems he's been busy rolling out a new Nik product – *Viveza* – he told me it sounds like *Cerveza*. That's all he said and he had to run.

So, I went to the Nik site to check it out. I think you should, too. *Viveza* is another Nik tool using their impressive U-point technology. This one is used to adjust light and color without making difficult selections or using layers and masks. The tutorial went on the web site an hour ago.

Since I'm a software junkie, I'll probably get a copy, try it out, and review it.

Nik has posted a short video about this product. You may want to take a look [here](#).

Thanks, Tony, for the "heads up".

## Seminar News and Notes

### There Are 4 Seats Left In Jim DiVitale's March Class

You Wanted More of Jim DiVitale – Here He Is!



2 Full Days – March 29 and 30, 2008

\$350 for 2 Days

Bring Your Camera – Bring Your Computer

# The Whole Banana Seminar

Light It – Shoot It – Process It

*Studio Lighting – Lightroom – Photoshop*



Last year, we brought in Jim DiVitale to teach our first, 2 day, “bring your computer” *Photoshop* seminar. It was so successful, we’ve decided to create a series of “bring your camera – bring your computer” seminars and, naturally, we’ve asked Jim to teach the first one.

In many ways, this will be a unique seminar, unique because it will take us through the entire creative process – from set up to delivery. And, unique because it will show us how to create a workflow using two, important tools, Adobe’s *Lightroom* and *Photoshop*.

I’ve asked Jim to structure a 2 day course that will meet the needs of all photographers, whatever they shoot – be it portraits, products, weddings sports, or architecture. Here’s what he plans to do; I say “plans” because our small class format gives us the flexibility to change direction if the class wants to move to another topic or spend more time on a technique. His “all new” content will include:

### **Day 1**

We will start with an introduction to the basic processes in *Lightroom* – working in the 5 modules – Library, Develop, Slideshow, Print and Web.

We will learn how to import, export, attach metadata and key words. We will learn how and when to use presets and how to create our own.

We will take a RAW image and “develop” or optimize it; for many of our images, that’s all that need be done. No reason to go to *Photoshop*.

But, there’s more. Without changing programs, we can do some pretty great B&W conversions and/or tonal adjustments.

Once we understand the fundamentals, we’ll go into the studio for a product shoot. Jim will explain the process from conception, set up, lighting and shooting. We will learn how to shoot tethered, directly into *Lightroom*.

OK, now we will know how the program’s basics work – and how to use *Lightroom* in the camera room.

Now, it will be time to go to work. Back into the classroom, we'll start up our computers, and working with Jim, on images he gives us, work step-by-step through the entire process.

We'll import the images, name them, add metadata and key words. Then we will process them using the following tools: White Balance, Exposure, Recovery, Fill Light, Brightness, Contrast, and "Presence".

Once we have the images we want, we will create proof sheets, slideshows, web pages, and prints. And, we'll learn how to add personal touches to our images, and an identity plate in *Lightroom*.

Whew! What a day!

## **Day 2**

First, we'll finish off *Lightroom* by working through some advanced techniques – rating, cropping, file comparisons, and using virtual copies. By the time we are done, we should all be quite proficient with this great tool.

And, then, we will make the transition to *Photoshop* – the mother-ship of creative expression. Jim will bring a whole new set of lessons to teach us more of the "advanced" techniques he uses to make his images sing.

We'll start off with some remedial work. Yes, we all try to "get it right" in the camera – but sometimes, we don't. So, Jim will show us how to "fix" our mistakes, repair damaged files and correct lighting mistakes.

It's been said that there is no digital capture that does not need "sharpening". That's especially true for those of us who turn off all of the in camera adjustments and choose to make the adjustments post-capture. Jim will work through the different options, explaining each as we work along.

Then, we'll get creative. We will do as many of the following as time allows: We will learn to use light painting and selective focus creatively. We will go from color to BW images using techniques that give exceptional depth and control. And, we will learn how to make something that will make us money – we'll learn how to create "greeting cards" to sell to stores and galleries.

That's it – two days of Hands On, Work Along with Jim.

At the end of the seminar, from 4-5PM we will hold a question and answer session on the material covered on both days of the seminar, and, from 5-6PM, on topics not discussed in class.

We are putting the question and answer sessions at the end of the day to ensure that we stay on topic. If you have a question about a specific step, you can ask it during the class. However, more general questions will be reserved for the end of the day.

### Is This the Class For You?

Although there has been a lot of demand for “work along with the teacher courses,” and although I understand that we learn a lot more from doing than seeing, I’ve been hesitant to offer this type of course before because it is difficult to make sure that all of the students get a quality experience.

Simply stated, it’s hard to balance the class in a way that the topics covered are within the reach and understanding of all who attend. For example, I don’t consider myself an “advanced” *Photoshop* user. I figure I’m closer to being a beginner. However, in reality, I’m probably on the line between “intermediate” and “advanced.” Some of my friends who took “work along *Photoshop*” classes at Texas School grumbled that their classes were held back by people who had never studied *Photoshop* or had no idea how to run their computers. I’m sure that those people, who initially signed up for these “intermediate” classes did so in good faith; I can only imagine how frustrated they must have been when they could not keep up.

So, how do you decide if this class is for you? Here are a couple of questions you might want to ask yourselves:

Are you proficient on your computer? Do you know how to turn it on, download files, open, close and save files? Is your computer “stable”? Has it been trouble free for a while? Can you deal with crashes and freezes? Unfortunately, we won’t have IT support on site.

Are you proficient in *Photoshop*? Do you know the basic tool set? How to open new documents? What layers are and how to create them? Do you have a basic understanding of masks? Have you ever processed a RAW image?

As to the *Photoshop* questions, if you want to take the seminar, you can build some proficiency in these areas by reading and working with books, online training, and DVD’s – before you come to class. We don’t expect anyone to be experts in these

areas. We do think you will need to know how to open the gate to the arena we are entering.

Are you too advanced for the seminar? That's hard to tell. I really don't know anyone, including our instructors Dave Cross and Jim DiVitale, who are too advanced to learn new *Photoshop* techniques. As many of you know, *Photoshop* is a "black hole"; it's easy to be captivated, fall in and never come back. There's always something new, a bit more down the hole.

We are posting this seminar almost 2 months before it will be held to give as many people as possible a chance to bring their skills up to the level which we think will ensure a positive experience in the class.

### What Am I Supposed to Bring to Class?

Please bring a laptop computer, an extension cord, and a power strip; if you have a tablet, you may want to bring it. I'm sorry, but we cannot support desktop computers or large external monitors; there's just not enough room in the classroom.

### To Get Ready for Class We Recommend:

1. That you download the trial versions of the software we will be using in class and familiarize yourself with what they do and how they do it. Proficiency is not necessary. Familiarity will be helpful:

We will touch on aspects of:

a. onOne Software – just click the link to download MaskPro 4.1, PhotoFrame Pro 3.1, and Genuine Fractals 5. This site has great video tutorials on each product. These are fully functional versions that expire after the trial period. (If clicking on the underlined text does not work put the following url in your browser: <http://www.ononesoftware.com/>)

b. Imagenomic – download and try Noiseware , Portraiture and Real Grain. These are fully functional trial versions – except they leave a watermark on your prints. You'll get to learn how to use them and see whether you like them, but you won't want to print the images. There are some excellent training materials on this site. (If clicking on the underlined text does not work put the following url in your browser: <http://www.ononesoftware.com/>)

2. We will teach this course using *Photoshop* CS3 and *Lightroom* 1.1. Most of what we do can also be done in CS and CS2, but we strongly recommend that you upgrade to CS3 if you can.

If you do not own *Lightroom*, you can download a free, 30 day, trial version from [Adobe](#).

3. When you come to class, we will give you a CD with the files we will be using in the exercises. So, you'll need a computer with a functioning CD drive and the ability to load the files.

This is a long description because we think we are offering a lot of class. We want to be very careful to let you know what we are going to be doing and give you a way to figure out whether or not you should take the class. We really don't want to discourage anyone. This class will work for people with basic computer and *Photoshop* skills.

Enrollment in this seminar will be capped at 15 students for the entire weekend. We expect this class to fill quickly.

#### But Wait, There's More

This seminar is being brought to you with the help of our sponsors – Houston Camera Exchange, the MAC Group, onOne Software, Lensbaby and Imagenomic. Upon completion of the class you will be given certificates that allow you to purchase their products at discounted prices.

This seminar will be taught in the classroom and studio of:

PrairieFire Productions, Inc.  
7026 Old Katy Road  
Studio 162  
Houston, Texas 77024

To Register For This Seminar:

**Go Here:** [Registration Web Page](#)

If you have questions, send me an email [by clicking HERE](#).  
Or, Call me at 713.213.1133.



Thanks,

Steve Herzberg

PS. If you register and do not hear back from me within 48 hours, please email me. This is a new system and, although we have tested it over and over, I'll need to know if it does not work.

### **Seminars for the Rest of the Year**


We are constantly making adjustments. Here's the current master schedule:

<b>Dates:</b>	<b>Teacher:</b>	<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Jan 12 OR 13</b>	<i>Hanson Fong</i>	<b>Lighting and Posing</b>	By popular demand, we are bringing Hanson back to teach his basic course. this course sold out both times we taught it – once within the first 8 hours it was posted, and the other time within a couple of days. If you want in, it's a good idea to enroll early.
<b>Feb 2 AND 3</b>	<i>Doug Box</i>	<b>Advanced Portraits &amp; Making Money with Your Photography</b>	After teaching several basic classes – we are offering a first from Doug: An advanced course that focuses on both the art and business of photography. Perfect for those who want to start making money with their photography.
<b>Mar 1 AND 2</b>	<i>John Woodward</i>	<b>Creating Images that Demand Attention</b>	By popular demand, this is a repeat of a seminar that left everyone stuffed with knowledge.
<b>Mar 29 AND 30</b>	<i>Jim DiVitale</i>	<b>The Whole Banana: Light It, Shoot It, and Process It In Lightroom and Photoshop</b>	The complete course you've asked for. We will start in the studio and then work in the classroom. Bring your computers and work along with Jim as we create a workflow in Lightroom and Photoshop.
<b>April</b>	<i>TBA</i>		
<b>May 10 AND 11</b>	<i>Hanson Fong</i>	<b>Advanced Lighting and Posing</b>	An advanced course for anyone shooting events such as weddings. Lighting and posing techniques for those who must work quickly and on location.

<b>Dates:</b>	<b>Teacher:</b>	<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Comments:</b>
<b>June 21 AND 22</b>	<i>Janice Wendt</i>	<b>Portrait and Fashion Photography: Capture and Retouching</b>	We've all seen her at trade shows and know her as the Nik Diva. Janice Wendt is actually one of the nation's best photographers and foremost image retouchers. We will start with capturing images and then, in the classroom, work along with her to make those images great. Bring your computers – this is hands on.
<b>July</b>			
<b>Aug 30 OR 31</b>	<i>Steve Herzberg</i>	<b>A Little Less Talk -- And, A Lot More Action</b>	The seminar that pulls it all together – pure hands on. Small groups, you design the shoot, you work with the model, you light, you shoot, and you do the post production. All, with the close supervision and support of the creator and co-instructor of the Hands On Seminar series.
<b>Sept 20 AND 21</b>	<i>Jim DiVitale</i>	<b>Advanced Photoshop</b>	Bring your computer and work along with the master. All new lessons – tips and techniques.
<b>Oct 25 OR 26</b>	<i>Steve Herzberg</i>	<b>A Little Less Talk -- And, A Lot More Action</b>	The seminar that pulls it all together – pure hands on. Small groups, you design the shoot, you work with the model, you light, you shoot, and you do the post production. All, with the close supervision and support of the creator and co-instructor of the Hands On Seminar series.
<b>Nov 15 AND 16</b>	<i>John Woodward</i>	<b>TBA</b>	
<b>Dec 13 AND 14</b>	<i>Tony Corbell</i>	<b>The Power of Light: 2008</b>	One of the nation's most honored and respected photographers teaches his first <i>Hands On Seminar</i> .

**BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE:** Many of you have asked me to teach a series of small *“Pictures for Your Portfolio: Images for the Internet”* shooting seminars. I'm about to do so. The common denominator will be a very hands on class in which you plan and execute shoots with top notch models. You will have careful supervision. And, the models will give you full releases. These classes will be built on the successful formula we used in last years *Fashion/Glamour* shoots. And, don't forget the *Street Shooter Safari*. Again, if you are interested or have suggestions, please, [email me](#).

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To contact Steve, by email, [CLICK HERE](#).