

QUACK

Newsletter of E.J. Peiker, Nature Photographer and www.EJPhoto.com
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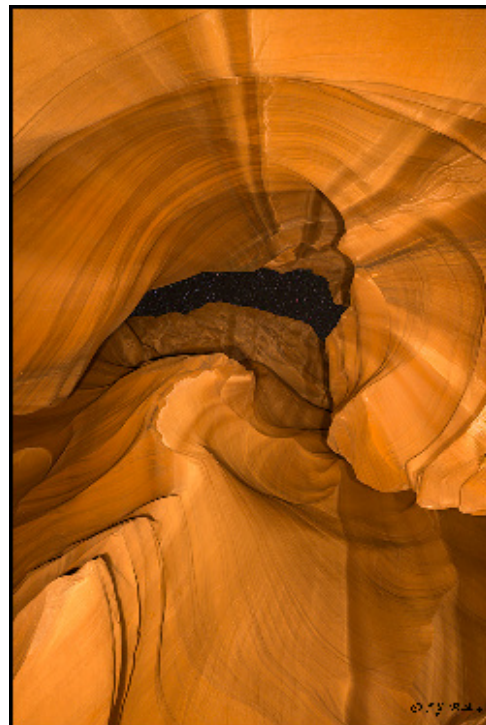
Welcome to the quarterly newsletter from E.J. Peiker, Nature Photographer and www.EJPhoto.com. In this publication, I keep subscribers posted on upcoming workshops as well as sharing photos and experiences with you. I will also give you impressions on any new equipment that I get the opportunity to use and any other general information in the world of digital Nature Photography. Finally, I strive to bring Photoshop processing techniques to you that you may not have thought of. Please feel free to forward this to other photographers and interested parties but please do so only by forwarding this newsletter in its entirety. All content is copyrighted by E.J. Peiker and may not be reproduced. If you would like to be added to the mailing list, unsubscribe, or access back issues, please visit: www.ejphoto.com/newsletter.htm



Summer Travels

It has been a busy summer between leading workshops and personal photo travel. Here's a summary...

Antelope Canyon at Night: In late spring, which is very much summer-like here in my home state of Arizona, I paid a return visit to the Antelope Canyon area near Page where I commissioned a private shoot of Upper Antelope Canyon at night. This is an amazing experience! First, instead of hundreds of people in the canyon that you find during the day, it was just me and my Navajo Guide for a couple of hours. Second, it is absolutely pitch black and dead silent inside - 100% sensory deprivation. Photography is accomplished by shining a light on a feature of the canyon walls, focusing on it and then starting the exposure in pitch black. The guide, who is very experienced at doing this and is dressed in black then light paints the canyon with an amber gel light panel. The results are amazing and you actually get stars through openings in the canyon. It was an amazing experience. See my entire Antelope Canyon gallery including the night shots here: http://www.ejphoto.com/antelope_canyon_page.htm



Oahu North Shore: Over the years I have extensively photographed all the islands of Hawaii that can be visited (http://www.ejphoto.com/hawaii_page.htm). I had generally used Oahu and Honolulu International Airport only as an intermediate point to getting to the other islands, and then only when a direct flight to the other islands wasn't possible since large number of people do not mesh with my photographic style. Living in Phoenix we are fortunate to have direct flights to the 4 major islands that most people go to. This summer I decided on a mini vacation on the north shore of Oahu away from the hustle and bustle and crowds of Honolulu. The trip wasn't a photo specific trip but plenty of photography was done anyway! The North Shore is still crowded by the standards of the other islands (except the Kaanapali area of Maui which is also overcrowded) but during the morning golden hours there were very few people in desirable photo spots. We visited just about every photogenic spot between the western tip and eastern tip of the northern part of Hawaii's most populous island. I was even able to photograph a few birds on the grounds of our hotel at the Turtle Bay Resort and some sea turtles along the beaches of the North Shore. Photos can be found here: http://www.ejphoto.com/oahu_page.htm. An update of my article Photographing The Islands Of Hawaii can be found here: <http://www.ejphoto.com/Quack%20PDF/Photographing%20the%20Islands%20of%20Hawaii.pdf>

Iceland: In July, I co-led the NatureScapes Iceland workshop with NatureScapes co-founder and owner Greg Downing, and acclaimed Icelandic bird photographer and author Johann Oli Hilmarsson. While the



weather was a constant challenge during southern Iceland's wettest summer ever, we still had plenty of opportunity to create both great landscape and bird photos. Our group went all the way to the far northwest where we visited a fantastic waterfall complex called Dymandi and the Latrabjarg Puffin cliffs. We also went as far east as the Jokulsarlon glacial lagoon and many points in between. We visited all of the famous waterfalls of the south and even spent the night on the tiny island of Flatey which most participants felt was a major highlight of the trip. Red-throated Loons with chicks were photographed in the south and we also photographed coastal areas and geothermal areas. Of course we stopped several times for Icelandic horses; always a crowd favorite. At the conclusion of the trip, three of us went on an exploratory trip of Iceland's far north in preparation for a possible northern Iceland workshop offering in 2015. The weather was much better near the Arctic circle and we were able to photograph many of the major waterfalls of the northern region as well as numerous landscapes and awesome geothermal features around Myvatn. As always, Iceland was a fantastic trip and one I highly recommend to bird and landscape photographers alike. NatureScapes is offering this workshop again in 2014 (see below). My Iceland Landscapes photography can be seen here:

http://www.ejphoto.com/iceland_page.htm. Atlantic Puffins, Red-throated Loons, Razorbills, Arctic Terns, Black-legged Kittiwakes, Black Guillemots and more are easily navigated to from my Birds Index: <http://www.ejphoto.com/Birds.htm>

Arizona's Navajo Country and North Rim of The Grand

Canyon: The annual trek for my workshop participants into this area of Northern Arizona was not without its challenges. We braved record rains, flash floods, intense thunderstorms, highway closures and more to come away with many great shots. As always, our Monument Valley Navajo Guide, Fred Cly, did his very best to give us a great experience even with these challenges. While our Totem Pole visit did not provide the morning skies we had hoped for, we still got some interesting alternate shots. The morning shoot of The Mittens provided some amazing light and clouds. The two afternoon shoots got us into some better weather and even some new spots that I had not photographed before. Our Antelope Canyon visit got washed out but we alternately took a boat into the Lake Powell side of Antelope Canyon which was a unique view of this landmark. We had some wonderful light for the evening shoot at Horseshoe Bend. The workshop concluded with the better part of three days at the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. We had some great light, lightning and wildflowers at both Point Imperial and Cape Royal. On my way home I stopped by Sunset Crater north of Flagstaff which was experiencing a fantastic wildflower bloom. Please see my Monument Valley Page:

http://www.ejphoto.com/monument_valley_page.htm, my Antelope Canyon Page: http://www.ejphoto.com/antelope_canyon_page.htm, my Glen Canyon Page: http://www.ejphoto.com/glen_canyon_page.htm, my Grand Canyon Page:



http://www.ejphoto.com/grand_canyon_page.htm, and my Sunset Crater page:
http://www.ejphoto.com/sunset_crater_page.htm



points. The many villages with quaint churches make for good foregrounds when all man-made signs can't be removed.

The Dolomites: To cap off a very busy summer, I traveled with Phase One to Italy's spectacular Dolomites in September. I got to use a Phase One 645DF+ camera with 60 megapixel IQ160 digital back and Schneider-Kreuznach Leaf Shutter lenses. The landscape and detail recording capability of the Schneider lenses with the 645 back is simply amazing - like nothing possible with any 35mm camera and lens. I will have a complete article on the pros and cons of medium format vs. 35mm in the next issue of Quack. The Dolomites are among the most beautiful mountains on Earth. If there is a downside it is that they have been so massively developed by the ski industry that it's difficult to eliminate chair lifts, gondolas and other skiing related structures from the landscape. But with perseverance, I was able to find some good vantage

Mirrorless Cameras - The Search For The Right Lightweight System

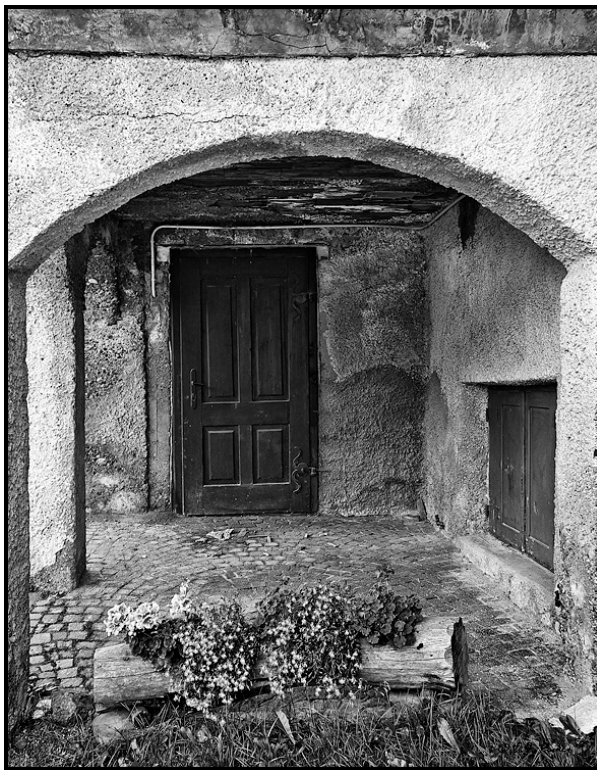
It has been nearly two years since we last looked at the mirrorless segment of the camera market in this newsletter - much has changed. As long time followers of Quack will note, I was one of the first in the USA, to purchase a mirrorless interchangeable lens camera. I kept the Panasonic GF1 for about 18 months before selling it and liked it. At the time, DSLRs were making huge strides and it rarely made sense to take the GF1 instead of my new D3X. Since then, we have entered a whole new world of mirrorless cameras and some rival or equal the image quality possible from a DSLR. In fact some share the identical sensors as their big DSLR siblings but with less weight and bulk.

Let's take a look at some of the major players...

Panasonic: Panasonic along with Olympus were the original players in this market with the introduction of the micro four-thirds (m43) system. Panasonic has the most complete line of mirrorless cameras and lenses of any manufacturer. There are four primary camera lines, the GF for users transitioning from point and shoot cameras, the GX for advanced users wanting a small footprint camera, the G for those wanting a higher feature camera with DSLR look, and the much larger and pro-grade GH line. Lenses cover the entire spectrum from an ultra wide 14mm (in 35mm equivalents) to 300mm. The most recent introductions include the GH3, GX7 and G6 - all super capable cameras with a phenomenal feature set - especially the GH3 and GX7. The GH3, for the money, may be the best video camera value on the planet. The fundamental issue with m43 is that the sensor technology has not kept up with the 35mm full frame technology. The system is still at 16 megapixels with just small incremental gains being made in dynamic range and noise which each subsequent generation. Sony is able to get nearly equivalent performance out of a smaller sensor with more pixels in the high end RX100 II point and shoot so why Panasonic (and Olympus) is stuck in the sensor arena is unclear. The m43 sensor size is definitely the system's Achilles Heel. An additional issue with Panasonic m43 cameras is that they have not yet developed a world class continuous autofocus system so it is still not a good choice for fast action. Finally, you can't talk about Panasonic without mentioning the extremely poor customer service that this company gives its USA customers. Do you want

to wait 6 months for a repair, likely have it repaired wrong, and possibly not actually get back what you sent them, and then not have anybody that you contact to rectify the situation? Do you want to not have critical accessories available until the camera is about ready to be phased out? Then, in the USA, Panasonic is your company.

Olympus: Olympus recently introduced what is undoubtedly the best m43 camera to date for still imaging in the OM-D EM-1. It is a pro-featured camera with a much more responsive autofocus system, much more manual control and much improved button layout. The smaller and very popular OM-D E-M5 is still in the lineup too as is a rangefinder style PEN E-P5 with similar capability and a number of lower specification models. Like the Panasonic m43 options, the lens array is vast and all m43 lenses from Olympus, Panasonic, or third party manufacturers can be used. Olympus continues to claim that these cameras have "the world's fastest auto-focus". Of course this claim is completely absurd and not substantiated by unbiased independent testing. Certainly the AF in what truly is the world's fastest AF camera, the Canon EOS 1Dx, runs circles around. What they should claim is that these cameras have the world's fastest contrast detect autofocus system. But these cameras do have an excellent AF system for still subjects and have decent AF systems for moving subjects given the limitations of contrast detect. The E-M1 adds on sensor phase detect AF which further improves the performance but you aren't going to shoot birds in flight with the same success as you would with an EOS 1Dx or a D4 regardless of what Olympus marketing claims are. The problem again is the sensor. The m43 sensor is 1/4 the area of a full frame 35mm sensor making it uncompetitive in image quality with large sensor cameras. The newer cameras like the E-M1 and the Panasonic GX-7 are quite good but they are not anything like a D800 or even a D600. Don't get me wrong, the image quality can be excellent but you will not get the color depth, dynamic range, or noise performance of larger sensors. Olympus service is considered among the slowest in the industry in the US. While they are generally more competent than Panasonic in this regard, expect to be without your gear for a timeframe often measuring in weeks to months for seemingly minor repairs.



Sony: This company has come the farthest in the shortest amount of time. Currently, Sony's primary entry into the mirrorless interchangeable lens category is the NEX system. This is a full line of cameras from entry level NEX3 to near pro features in the NEX7. The system uses an APS-C sized sensor which is about half the area of a full frame sensor but about double the area of an m43 sensor making this an excellent compromise between extreme image quality and compactness of the system. Until recently the knock on the NEX system has been the lack of high quality lenses but recent introduction of several Zeiss lenses for this system has rendered that point moot. Couple these new lenses with the legendary Sony photo sensors and you have a very capable camera system. In addition to the NEX system, Sony has fixed lens mirrorless cameras that are absolutely world class in image quality - the RX1 and RX1R - the later eliminates the low pass anti-aliasing filter for slightly higher resolution. These are full frame sensor cameras that have a fixed 35mm Leica lens. Unfortunately they are severely overpriced at \$2800 and then you have just one focal length and you don't even have a viewfinder; that costs an additional \$500. There are fairly high confidence rumors that Sony will announce a full frame NEX camera and/or

and interchangeable lens RX1 camera. Of course the downside of full frame cameras is the size and

weight of the lenses. The lenses can be a bit smaller with mirrorless cameras than they can with traditional mirror style DSLRs but not dramatically smaller. This again plays into APS-C being an optimal sensor size for a high image quality but compact mirrorless camera system.

Fujifilm: Fuji has come from nothing to a very formidable lineup since the last time I talked about mirrorless cameras. Fuji's X-Pro 1 and XE-1 are similar cameras with the major exception that the X-Pro 1 offers a clever hybrid optical and electronic viewfinder while the XE-1 only offers an EVF. Both of these cameras feature Fuji's exclusive X-Trans sensor which, for the same megapixel count offers a slightly higher resolution and lower noise than a traditional Bayer sensor. Both cameras are getting close to a replacement cycle and it will be interesting to see if Fuji can up the X-Trans technology from a 16 megapixel APS-C size to a 20 megapixel + APS-C sensor without sacrificing noise or image quality. Or will Fuji get stuck in the same 16 megapixel rut that m43 is stuck in. There is also the much smaller entry level X-M1 which accepts the same high quality line of Fusion X lenses and a couple of Zeiss lenses are available for this system. In addition to the interchangeable lens cameras, Fuji also offers the updated X100s which is an excellent 35mm equivalent focal length fixed lens mirrorless camera. The Fuji cameras are excellent and have received tons of critical acclaim. In the US, the problem a pro has is support of Fujifilm USA, as I write this, full 7 months after the introduction of the X100s, the camera is still not available unless you want to wait for 4-16 weeks. Fuji's customer orientation in the US isn't as bad as Panasonic's but it is not where it needs to be to gain a large following.



Nikon: I should place Nikon in a category called "The Rest" as they are simply a bit player (as is Canon) in this market. They have an incoherent strategy with the Nikon 1 system which suffers from too small of a sensor (Half again the area of an m43 sensor or 1/8 the area of a full frame sensor), too low of a pixel count, and a lack of advanced features. What it does have is the best autofocus system of any mirrorless camera. If your emphasis is on good continuous AF with maximum reach, coupling something like a Nikon V2 with a Nikon super tele then this is your choice. As I go to press with this issue, Nikon has just announced an underwater Nikon 1 based on the J3.

Canon: Even more so than Nikon, Canon is a bit player in this segment. Actually in the US it is essentially a non-player. The EOS-M, Canon's entry into this field is a deeply flawed product with a completely inadequate lens lineup. The APS-C sensor is more than adequate but what kills this system is an autofocus system that is less capable than some \$200 point and shoot cameras despite it having on sensor phase

detection. Sales have been so poor in the US, that Canon has decided to not even sell all of the lenses for this system here. Canon has the technology to turn this into a real winner if they were to use the D70 sensor with it's fantastic hybrid AF system and if they were to introduce a solid lens system but as it stands now, Canon is a non-starter in this area. An EOS M2 is heavily rumored to address these issues.

Everybody Else: Other players include Samsung, Ricoh, and Pentax but they are just non-players in the US market so I'm going to save space for other things. The Samsung system is a pretty decent system though, just nobody knows about it.



Oh, then there's Leica: The Leica M is a great camera but costs WAY too much money and that's before you even buy lenses.

Where does this leave us? Or more specifically, what am I going to do with respect to a mirror-less system? I clearly see the value in these camera systems, now more so than ever. Some of the cameras and lenses are now capable of true pro level image quality in a much smaller package. I do plan on purchasing one of these cameras and a couple of lenses for those times when I want to travel much lighter or require a strenuous hike to get to the shooting destination but not give up the capabilities that I desire. If I could live with just a 35mm lens I would seriously consider the Sony RX-1R or for less money and slightly reduced, but still excellent image quality, the Fuji X100s. I want more flexibility than what a single focal length non-interchangeable lens camera can provide. The new Zeiss 16-70mm f/4 lens for the Sony NEX system has elevated the NEX cameras significantly in my quest. Of the NEX bodies, the only one that gives me fingertip manual control at the level I want is the NEX7 but this is a two year old camera and sensor noise data shows that it is not up to today's standards. Fuji's X-system is another consideration. Their lenses are excellent but both the XE-1 and X-Pro1 are due for replacement. I briefly considered the Panasonic GX-7 but the small m43 sensor and Panasonic's exceedingly poor customer support has eliminated it from contention even though it has the largest and best lens selection. The GX7 does have the perfect feature set though from a manual control standpoint; but that darn small m43 sensor... Similar things can be said for Olympus even though it now has the best m43 camera ever made in the OM-D EM-1.

At this point I am leaning towards Sony and hoping for an NEX7 successor coupled with the new Zeiss 16-70mm lens or possibly a Fuji X series successor. I'll keep you posted in future newsletters on my final decision and how it's working out.

Values Based Camera Buying Decisions

In writing the above article on mirrorless system cameras I realized that my analysis is very much a values based analysis - in other words, what do I value most in a camera system. After spending a bit of time thinking about this I have come up the following ranking:

1. Availability of lenses - the system must allow me to shoot the types of things I photograph
2. Dynamic range - My photographic style is one that requires a large amount of dynamic range. Whether it be birds which often have both black and white on the same bird, or landscapes where I like to shoot just before sunrise or just after sunset
3. Resolution - the system must have enough resolution to be able to print exhibition quality 16x24 or larger prints
4. Autofocus performance - this is very important in any action shooting
5. Weight - the system must be light enough to be able to carry for long days, day after day. This is the unfortunate downfall of medium format in my opinion.
6. Noise - in many ways this is linked to dynamic range. But while dynamic range is a concern for almost all of the shooting I do, noise is a primary consideration only for wildlife shooting where I tend to use higher ISO values.
7. Cost - of course cost is always a consideration but it falls behind having the right tool for the job

I haven't mentioned a number of other considerations like Ergonomics and controls. I believe that you can get used to just about anything so that isn't a huge consideration and I shoot 100% of my images in manual mode and all cameras that I would ever buy have full manual as an option



Camera Platform Stability In The Age Of High Megapixel Sensors

It is quite often that I hear complaints from people that have upgraded to a D800 that their pictures aren't as sharp with a D800 as they were with (insert old camera here). They are sure there is something wrong with the camera. When I ask them how they are determining this they say that when viewed at 100%, the old camera's pictures are sharper and often they are getting ready to return the camera. Almost always there is nothing wrong with the camera but it is either the photographer's technique, the lens, or their support system (tripod and head) is not up to the task.

Let's take a look at this with an example. Suppose you are taking a picture of a single point of light. Let's also suppose that point of light is 8 microns in diameter when the image is projected onto the sensor. If I have a pixel size that is 9 microns in width like some of the early full frame cameras, that entire point of light can be contained in a single pixel. When viewing this at 100%, there is just a single illuminated pixel (ignoring any spill over). Now let's take that same projected 8 micron point and record it with a camera with just 4.5 micron pixels like some of the highest pixel count DSLRs on the market, it now requires up to 4 pixels to record that same point of light. When you then look at that image at 100% you see 4 pixels illuminated for a single point of light and we perceive that as being less sharp. What is really happening in this theoretical exercise is that each of the 4 illuminated pixels is just recording one quarter of the point of light.

Let's now assume that within that same 8 micron by 8 micron area we have 4 individual points of light, one at each corner of the pixel. The old camera will record a single dot since all four points of light are fully contained within that single pixel. The new high megapixel camera can record each point individually thereby recording a finer level of detail than the older camera can. But for an identical subject, when viewed at the pixel level, small details may be recorded over several pixels while they are recorded in fewer pixels with the old camera and when viewed pixel for pixel may be perceived as being less detailed due to this.

In a similar vein we can look at lenses. First, your lenses must be precisely focus adjusted to your camera. If you haven't done this, you simply will not get the results you expect. Now, let's say your old camera can resolve 3000 lines per frame and your lens can resolve 3200 lines per frame. This is a case where the resolution is sensor limited. In other words, assuming perfect technique, you are recording the maximum detail the camera is capable of but the lens could resolve a bit more detail. Now let's put that same lens on a camera able to record 5000 lines per frame like a D800E, now you are lens limited and not getting everything out of the sensor that you could if you used a higher resolution lens. Again, when you look at these two images at 100% on a pixel level, the old camera may look sharper because no pixels were blurred due to the lens. The new camera may have pixels that are blurred to adjacent pixels because the lens limited what the sensor can record. When normalizing to the same output size, the higher megapixel camera will allow you to create output that resolves everything the lens is capable of where the older one will not.



Diffraction also plays a role. Since smaller pixels are more able to record any diffraction from the lens' aperture diaphragm if you compare a lower megapixel (larger pixel size) camera with a higher megapixel (smaller pixel size) you will see more degradation on the newer camera - basically this is the concept as discussed above where the same light spread across more pixels due to the smaller pixel size.

Lastly let's look at technique. Let's say we have a 4 micron projected dot that we are photographing with a camera with a 9 micron pixel size. Lets also assume that this point is perfectly centered within a pixel. You now have leeway of an additional 5 microns of motion (2.5 microns in each direction) before an adjacent pixel will start to record the point of light. But on the high megapixel camera with 4.5 micron pixel sizes, you only have 0.5 micron of movements (0.25 microns in each direction) before an adjacent pixel will pick up motion and thereby giving you the perception of a less sharp photo when viewed at 100%. It is therefore imperative that the camera be properly supported and totally steady. When hand holding we used to say that 1 divided by the focal length is the slowest hand-holdable shutter speed. That may have been true in the film days or in the days of low megapixel counts. On a camera like the D800, you should use something more like 1 divided by three times the focal length. So if you are using a 50mm lens you need a shutter speed of at least 1/150 to even have a chance at a sharp shot. For most people it's even faster than that. Stabilized lenses or bodies certainly help in this regard but they are not a fix-all. When on a tripod and exact shutter timing is not necessary, always use mirror lock-up coupled with shutter delay or mirror lock-up with a cable release. make sure the camera is mounted steady on a stable tripod with a solid and rigid tripod head. Do not skimp on camera support or you are wasting the money you spent for all of those pixels. Use the very best lenses you can afford.

Unfortunately many photographers have spent a lot of money on extreme resolution cameras like the D800 without upgrading their technique, lenses, and support and are getting sub-optimal results. I am not the first to write that the D800 may be too much camera for the skill set or support equipment of the vast majority of photographers that have purchased it. I believe that unless you have the best lenses made, a fantastic tripod and head, and superb technique, you may be much better off with a camera like the D600.



The Best Lenses For Your Nikon and Canon Cameras (Updated) - The Canon 200-400mm f/4L Extender

Last quarter I shared with you the very best lenses money can buy for your Nikon and Canon DSLR. At the time I had not yet tested the just released Canon 200-400 f/4L Extender lens. I have since had the opportunity to use one and shoot some resolution tests and I can say without hesitation that it is the best super-tele zoom ever made, bar none, rivaling the f/2.8 prime lenses in the 200 to 400mm range when you stop down one stop to f/5.6. At f/4 the primes still hold an advantage and of course the primes in the range can go to f/2.8 when you need to really collect light or require a very shallow depth of field. The statements above apply with the built-in tele-extender retracted. With it in place, it is a good performer and performs more like traditional super tele zoom lenses. I would not recommend using the drop in extender if you are shooting at the shorter focal lengths - only use it when you truly need a focal length that is longer than 400mm; there is just no reason to give up image quality when you don't need the longer focal lengths that this lens is capable of. In other words, for maximum image quality, don't just zoom back to the 280mm setting with the 1.4x extender in place to get approximately 400mm of focal length. Finally, there are a number of reports of using the lens with the extender dropped into place and then adding another tele-extender like the Canon 1.4x III or even the Canon 2x III. Results from these combos are not very good and should only be used if you have no other options. In fact, in most situations you will get a sharper shot if you take the shot without an additional tele-extender and just uprez the image. Overall and especially with the extender retracted, this lens is by far the best of breed. The Nikon 200-400 or Sigma zooms in the range can't touch it.

The Best lens table has been updated with this change. The next change I anticipate comes with the entry of the new and very exotic Zeiss 55mm f/1.4 when released in the upcoming months. Preliminary data on this lens is nothing short of mind boggling.

| Lens Category | Canon EF Mount | Nikon F Mount |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Ultra Wide Prime | Zeiss 15mm f/2.8 ZE | Zeiss 15mm f/2.8 ZF.2 |
| Extra Wide Prime | Zeiss 21mm f/2.8 ZE | Zeiss 21mm f/2.8 ZF.2 |
| Wide Prime | Zeiss 25mm f/2 ZE | Zeiss 25mm f/2 ZF.2 |
| Moderate Wide Prime | Sigma 35mm f/1.4 | Sigma 35mm f/1.4 |
| Standard Prime | Zeiss 50mm f/2 Makro Planar | Nikon 50mm f/1.4G |
| Portrait Prime (short telephoto) | Canon 85mm f/1.2L II | Nikon 85mm f/1.8G |
| Medium Telephoto | Zeiss 135mm f/2 Apo Sonnar ZE | Zeiss 135mm f/2 Apo Sonnar ZF.2 |
| 200mm Prime | Canon 200mm f/2L | Nikon 200mm f/2G |
| 300mm Prime | Canon 300mm f/2.8L IS II | Nikon 300mm f/2.8G VR |
| 400mm Prime | Canon 400mm f/2.8L IS II | Nikon 400mm f/2.8G VR |
| 500mm Prime | Canon 500mm f/4L IS II | Nikon 500mm f/4G VR |
| 600mm Prime | Canon 600mm f/4L IS II | Nikon 600mm f/4G VR |
| 800mm Prime | Canon 800mm f/5.6L IS | Nikon 800mm f/5.6E VR |
| Wide Angle Zoom | Tokina 16-28mm f/2.8 ATX Pro FX | Nikon 14-24mm f/2.8G |
| Standard Zoom | Canon 24-70mm f/2.8L II | Tamron 24-70mm f/2.8 Di VC |
| Telephoto Zoom | Canon 70-200mm f/2.8L IS II | Nikon 70-200mm f/4G VR |
| Super Telephoto Zoom | Canon 200-400mm f/4L Extender | Nikon 200-400mm f/4G VR II |

Adobe Creative Cloud

Much has been written in the last couple of months about Adobe's change from a perpetual license model to a subscription model. I'm not going to rehash the whole argument for or against this. I stand firmly on the

side of preferring a perpetual license over a monthly bill for the remainder of my photographic life. Here are just a few other thoughts:

- Creative Cloud is a terrible name as it is very misleading. You do not have to work in the cloud, you simply download Adobe applications like Photoshop, Premiere, In-Design, etc and install them on your computer and run as you always did - boxed versions are no longer available. The software does need to check-in with Adobe's server every now and then to authenticate your license. The time period is currently set to about three months so as long as you force a check-in before any trip, you shouldn't run afoul of this.
- If your license expires you do not lose access to your photos. Any application that can open the file type you are using can still open those files. The rub is if you are saving layered images that utilize Photoshop specific commands, you may lose the capability of seeing or editing those. Flattened images will still be viewable or workable in other programs including your older versions of Photoshop. I do recommend using TIF not PSD as your file type. Not only is it more universally accepted it isn't quite as proprietary to Adobe.
- Adobe has just released new pricing for a Photoshop CC and Lightroom bundle. The cost is now \$9.99 per month for the foreseeable future. If you upgraded Lightroom and Photoshop every two years, which cost you \$280, this model saves you about \$40 every two years and is therefore a reasonable deal. The downside is that you don't have the option to skip versions, which many did. If you skipped versions, The \$240 per two years cost is still more than you would have paid. If you do not use Lightroom, like me, it now costs about \$40 more every two years than it used to, and, as above, you are locked in and can't skip versions to save money. If you use more than three Adobe applications, the price is \$30 per month for all Adobe programs and that becomes a very good deal if you are used to upgrading them regularly.



Overall I am disappointed in this strategy change as I hate monthly bills that I can't do anything about without losing the investment that I made all along - this isn't cable TV. In my case, I only use Photoshop out of the entire Adobe Creative Suite, so adopting the CC model would cost me more and give me no flexibility in how or when I spend my money. What happens if I have a life event that prevents me from paying \$10 a month. I would now lose the ability to edit my new files in Photoshop even though I have been paying, perhaps for years. For this reason I have, for now decided to remain on Photoshop CS6. All of my equipment is supported and Adobe has stated that at least for some period of time they would continue to update ACR 8, the RAW converter within Photoshop CS6 to incorporate new cameras. I may switch at some point in time but for now, that time is not right for me.

In the meantime, Phase One has given me a license for Capture One Pro. As I get time, I may explore it as an alternative RAW workflow which would then allow me to continue to use Photoshop CS6 until such time that whatever operating system I am using doesn't support it.

Upcoming Workshops

I continue to offer workshops in some fantastic destinations through NatureScapes Certified Workshops. Click on the Workshops below for all of the info. For the complete schedule of Workshops offered by NatureScapes, please click [HERE](#):

[Banff and Jasper National Parks: \(Oct 19-26, 2013\)](#)

[Ultimate Iceland Adventure: \(July 7-19, 2014\)](#)

Stay tuned on the [NatureScapes Workshops Page](#) for more amazing workshop announcements in 2014!!!

Private Photography Instruction and Consulting Services

In addition to the photo workshops that I launched over 10 years, I also offer private instruction in Wildlife and Landscape photography at the place of your choosing within the USA and Canada. These private workshops are of the one on one variety (or two on one). Clients may schedule time in 4-hour time blocks for either classroom or field sessions. With just two people, a number of shooting locations become possible that aren't possible for larger groups and thereby making it possible to photograph some species or locations that are not attainable with larger groups. More specific instruction, based on the client's specific needs, can be given using this delivery method in either the classroom or in the field. For more information please see the following link: www.ejphoto.com/duckshop_private.htm

I also offer both photo equipment and computer workstation/digital darkroom consulting services. This allows me to combine my 27 years of work in the computer industry with my lifetime of photographic experience and provide services at a technical level that are hard to find elsewhere. Contact me for rates and specifics or visit my rate sheet: www.ejphoto.com/Quack%20PDF/Rate%20Schedule.pdf

Two eBooks Now Available

Be ready for Duck Photography with my eBook "**Ducks of North America – The Photographer's Guide.**" It is an essential text that covers all of the techniques needed to get the best shots of waterfowl and birds in general. It covers every species in the wild and in captivity in North America and gives species specific tips on how best to capture them and where to find them. Eleven years in the making, this book is a great tool for the beginning, intermediate or advanced waterfowl photographer. The tips in it are easily applied to all birds and most other subjects too. It sells for \$30. While this is expensive for an eBook due to the incredible amount of time and money it took to create it, it will easily save you 10 times that in aggravation, time, and failed attempts.

I have also released my previously privately published paper book "**West – A Collection of Photographs From The Western United States**" in a fully updated and revised eBook version. It is available for \$10.

Both books can be ordered from the fine outlets you will find at this link:

http://www.ejphoto.com/ebook_page.htm

Facebook Page

On my Facebook Fan Page, I am keeping those interested up to date on what photo excursions I go on as well as short commentaries on a variety of photo related subjects and tools. I also have nearly 100 galleries accessible through there. Please visit:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/EJ-Peiker-Nature-Photographer/150804446733>

and if you like what you see, please click the "Like" button.

Image Recovery from CF and CD Cards

Let someone that worked as a professional in the computer industry for more than a quarter century and has a multitude of tools available attempt to recover images from your damaged, formatted, or corrupted media cards. There is a basic \$25 charge for the analysis. If I determine that I can recover images, I will recover them, with the card holder's approval, for an additional \$75.

Disclaimers:

E.J. Peiker conducts consulting services and product design services for a number of photographic product companies. The companies change from time to time:

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E.J. Peiker is sponsored by Hunt's Photo and Video - New England's largest photography retailer. Visit them at www.huntsphotoandvideo.com/

E.J. Peiker is a founding partner in www.Naturescapes.net

Those that know me know I would not endorse a product even for compensation if I did not feel it were a superior product.

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