

Stockton Camera Club

The Shutter Tripper

September 2019

HAVE A

FUN & SAFE

Labor Day! ★



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President's Message

September 2019

By Heide Stover

We had a nice turnout for the potluck and I was happy to see new members there. Everyone brought great food so I'm sure we all had plenty. Trey and Becky were great about letting us use their home once again. It was really hot this year so for the first time since I have been going to potlucks, we all stayed indoors!

Wayne ran the projector and computer for us so we could watch the webinar. I like the Skylum products and it was fun to see how Levi used the Luminar flex program. I think he did a really nice job of showing us the program. I sent out an email with our code and also the link for the free trial download. Sounds like most of you are already using Luminar. Geez, where have I been?!

See you at the next meeting.

Happy Shooting

A Big Thank You to Our Sponsors!



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2019 Calendar of Events

Every 3rd Thursday (Except April, June & Aug) 6:30 PM	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	Membership Meeting Contact Heide Stover h1stover@aol.com
Thursday September 19	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	September General Meeting Special Subject - Photo Journalism
Thursday October 17	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	October General Meeting Special Subject - Monochromatic Color Scheme
Thursday November 21	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	November General Meeting Special Subject - Prints Only
Thursday December 19	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	December General Meeting Special Subject - Tools

2020 Calendar of Events

January 16	TBA	Annual Banquet
Thursday February 20	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	February General Meeting Special Subject - Motion/Movement
Thursday March 19	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	March General Meeting Special Subject - Sequence of 3
April	TBA	April Workshop/Photo Opportunity
Thursday May 21	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	May General Meeting Special Subject - Urban/Cityscapes
Thursday June 18	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	June General Meeting Special Subject - Prints Only
July 19	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	July General Meeting Special Subject - Reflections

Stockton Camera Club
July 2019 Competition Standings
Congratulations to all the winners!!!

PRINT OF THE MONTH WINNER - "Escaping Oz" by Darrell O'Sullivan
DIGITAL IMAGE OF THE MONTH WINNER - "Now That's A Gate" by Wayne Carlson

Please check out the website, <http://www.stockton-cameraclub.com/home.html>

Class A Standings	TOTAL	OPEN	SS	FEB	MAR	MAY	JUN	JULY	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
Ron Wetherell	74	66	8	20	10	0	27	17	0	0	0	0
Darrell OSullivan	65	65	0	0	0	0	37	28	0	0	0	0
Susanne Nichols	39	39	0	0	0	0	39	0	0	0	0	0
Charlene Martin	38	27	9	0	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brenda DeRoos	32	24	8	0	0	32	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lanny Brown	28	28	0	0	0	0	0	28	0	0	0	0
Joan Erreca	23	23	0	0	0	23	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adrian Ferreya	22	22	0	0	0	0	22	0	0	0	0	0
Ed Richter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Class AA Standing	TOTAL	OPEN	SS	FEB	MAR	MAY	JUN	JULY	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
Trey Steinhart	186	146	30	38	39	35	35	39	0	0	0	0
Christine Blue	173	117	38	0	38	37	62	36	0	0	0	0
Doug Ridgway	172	146	26	38	36	34	35	29	0	0	0	0
Sheldon McCormick	168	133	35	37	36	34	25	36	0	0	0	0
Elizabeth Parrish	130	103	27	38	30	27	0	35	0	0	0	0
Class AAA Standing	TOTAL	OPEN	SS	FEB	MAR	MAY	JUN	JULY	SEPT	OCT	Nov	DEC
Joanne Sogsti	189	151	38	40	34	38	40	37	0	0	0	0
Dean Taylor	188	148	40	36	40	38	36	38	0	0	0	0
Heide Stover	188	151	37	39	37	37	36	39	0	0	0	0
Wayne Carlson	180	142	38	39	35	36	33	37	0	0	0	0
Em McLaren	179	143	36	36	33	37	36	37	0	0	0	0
Sharon McLemore	174	145	29	38	37	39	23	37	0	0	0	0

2019 Competition Policy

A. GENERAL RULES

1. Only paid-up members may enter club competition.
2. Regular print and digital image competition period: Once each month except January. A competition year is February through December. Current regular meetings are February, March, May, July, September, October and December. The number of meetings may change from time to time at the discretion of the Board of Directors and approval of the general membership as facilities permit. The Annual Awards Dinner will be held in January.
3. A total of four (4) images (all prints, all digital or a combination of both) may be entered each competition month. A total of three (3) images may be entered in the Open Division and a total of one (1) in the Special Subject Division. The number of entries may change from time to time at the discretion of the Board of Directors and the approval of the general membership.
4. Each image will be scored from 6 to 10 points. All prints or digital images receiving 9 or 10 points will be classed as an honor image. The title of each print or digital image entered will be read before being evaluated. The name of the maker will be read for 9-point honor winners. Maker's names will be announced for the 10 point images after the Print & Digital Image-of-the-Month winners are chosen.
5. A print or digital image that does not receive an honor score, may be re-entered one more time in the same division.
6. A print or digital image may be entered in all divisions for which it qualifies; i.e., an honor image in Open may also be entered in the Special Subject Division at another competition. A print or digital image that receives an honor score may not be re-entered in the same division.
7. Any print or digital image that appears to be ineligible for competition or not qualified for a specific division could expect to be challenged. The Competition Vice-President shall decide whether or not the image is acceptable.
8. The exhibitor must have exposed each negative, slide or digital image entered. All images submitted for judging must be the work of the photographer/maker including the taking of the images and any digital enhancements and/or manipulation of the image. This does not apply to the processing of film or printing by a commercial processor.
9. The same image should not be entered both as a print and a projected digital image in the same competition.
10. In the event of absence or barring unforeseen circumstances, a member may submit make-up prints or digital images for one competition night per competition year; and whenever possible must submit all make-up prints or digital images at the meeting immediately following the month a member failed or was unable to submit the prints or digital images. Make-ups in the Special Subject Division must be the same subject as the month missed. Also, in case of absence a member may assign the responsibility of submitting his or her prints and/or digital images for competition to another member.
11. A club member who serves as judge cannot enter his or her own prints or digital images in the same competition. The judge's make-up prints or digital images can then be entered in another competition during that competition year. This is in addition to the once-a-year make-up provision already

allowed.

12. Prints or digital images may be projected/viewed briefly before the judging of each division if the judge indicates he/she would like a preview.

B. PRINT ENTRY RULES

1. Each print entered must have a completed label attached to the back of the print including; name of maker, title, date entered and Division (Open or Special Subject). The writing or printing on the form must be legible. Labels must be attached on the back of the print in the upper left-hand corner for correct viewing of the print.
2. All prints must be matted or mounted with a total size (including mat board) of no larger than 18" X 24" and no smaller than 8" X 10". Exception: One side of a Panorama Print may be no larger than 36". Prints that are smaller than 5" X 7" will not be accepted. The maker's name must not appear on the viewing surface of the image. Framed prints shall not be entered.
3. Prints accompanied by entry forms should be submitted no later than 15 minutes prior to the start of the regular monthly meeting.
4. Prints receiving a score of 10 points, in each class, will be regrouped and judged for selection for the Print-of-the-Month honors. Print-of-the-Month honors will be given in Class A, AA & AAA.

C. DIGITAL IMAGE ENTRY RULES

1. Digital images must be submitted in a format and by the deadline specified by the Competition Vice-President. Digital images may be submitted by email, mailed (CD) or delivered (CD) to the Competition Vice-President. Definition of Digital Image: An image taken with a digital camera, a negative, slide or print scanned into the computer and processed digitally.
2. Images must be in a format compatible with the projector. The key thing to keep in mind when formatting photos for submission is that the projector we use in the competition has a (maximum) resolution of 1400 x 1050 pixels. This means that any photo that exceeds this size in either dimension, could end-up being cropped by the projector. In other words: the image width cannot be more than 1400 pixels and the image height cannot be more than 1050 pixels. If your image is horizontal, only change the width to 1400, if your image is vertical, only change the height to 1050. Do not change both. Down-sizing the image from the "native" resolution coming out of your camera also significantly reduces the file size. This helps when emailing the files and takes-up less space on our hard-drives.
3. The maker's name, title of image, date entered and division (Open or Special Subject) must be included as the title of the image. When you have finished re-sizing your image save your image with a new title. For example do a Save as: Smith Sunrise Splendor 05-15 O.jpeg. (O-Open or SS-Special Subject). Specify whether you're Beginner, Advanced or Very Advanced.
4. Digital Images receiving a score of 10 points, in each class, will be regrouped and judged for selection for the Digital Image-of-the-Month honors. Digital Image-of-the-Month honors will be given in Class A, AA & AAA.

Are Smartphones Replacing Professional Cameras? Thoughts on the future of photography

By

[Christian Hoiberg](#)



Technology has changed a lot during the last decade or so and it's been fascinating to see how this has impacted the camera market. More and more people rely on mobile phones for their photography and these cameras are better than ever before.

But are smartphones going to replace professional cameras? Are we going to see more photographers leave their DSLR or mirrorless cameras behind and just rely on their mobile phones?

The megapixel war

While the megapixel is only a measurement of how big an image you can shoot, they've been an enormous focus amongst smartphone manufacturers. As of writing this, there are several smartphones that have an impressive 48MP camera.

To compare, the Nikon D850 and Nikon Z7 have 45.7MP and the Canon EOS 5DsR has 50.7MP, despite much larger image sensors.

Now it should be mentioned that squeezing as many megapixels as possible onto a tiny sensor doesn't necessarily mean a higher image quality. These smartphones have a Quad Bayer filter, which explained by [Smartprix](#) means, they have been designed to shoot 12MP images but do allow for 48MP bragging rights.

The high megapixel count on smartphones might not mean you can print large quality files as indicated amongst high megapixel DSLR cameras but they result in much better HDR capabilities. In other words, smartphone cameras are designed to focus on performing well in situations with a high dynamic range rather than providing the finest details.

Manual control over settings

Up until recently, the lack of possibilities to manually control the settings has been a big limitation for smartphone cameras. This isn't the case anymore; several phones allow full control over the camera settings. You can change the [shutter speed](#), [ISO](#), [aperture](#) and [White Balance](#). It's even possible to choose between shooting jpeg and RAW, giving you more flexibility for post-processing.

This is a game changer. Being able to manually control the settings is a requirement for anyone who's serious about their photography.

A wide range of accessories

Another factor that's part of the reason why many photographers are drawn towards mobile photography is the abundance of accessories available for most devices. Be it a neutral density filter, tripod or remote shutter, there are tons of options to choose between. All these possibilities can take your smartphone images to the next level.

I've seen incredible images taken with mobile devices by photographers who've used some of these accessories. It's almost unreal to think that you can capture a 30-second razor-sharp exposure with your phone.

All-in-one to the same price

While we often complain about the smartphones being too expensive, there's another way to look at it too: the top models cost roughly the same as a semi-professional DSLR camera. The main difference? You get a computer, telephone and camera all-in-one.

Reasons why mobile cameras are increasing in popularity

The big question is whether or not smartphone cameras are, or will be, good enough to replace DSLR and Mirrorless cameras. Let's first look at some of the factors why this could be a likely scenario:

Mobile phones are small. Size and weight is an important topic for photographers, especially if you tend to go on longer hikes and expeditions. There's a reason why many photographers switched to mirrorless cameras when they first arrived. Could it be that the same people move to mobile phones when the camera quality matches today's cameras?

Everyone has a smartphone. According to [BankMyCell](#), 66.5% of the world population owns a smartphone. More than 71.5% of the US population owns one. This percentage keeps growing. Smartphones are more accessible than ever and with the improving image quality, we've already seen it do a knockout on the point-and-shoot cameras.

Edit and share instantly. Being able to share the image instantly after capturing it has become an important factor for many. Apps such as Adobe Lightroom CC or Google's Snapseed make it possible to give a professional look to your photograph in next to no time, before uploading it to one or more platforms.

Image quality is quickly improving. The image quality has come a long way in a short time and it doesn't seem to be slowing down. Today's smartphone cameras are better than many 5-year-old professional DSLR cameras.

Why DSLR/Mirrorless cameras will still rule the professional market

While I think that smartphones are going to take over big parts of the amateur and hobbyist market, serious photographers are still going to trust professional cameras. Weight and size are going to be an important factor but the serious photographer will still value the extra flexibility a camera offers, the feeling of working with a professional tool and the extra image-quality.

This is why I believe that smartphones won't take over professional photography:

Image quality keeps improving. Yes. The quality of smartphone cameras are quickly improving but so is the quality of DSLR and mirrorless cameras. You might be satisfied with your camera today but in 5-10 years there's going to be something much better.

Manufacturers focus on professional markets. The smartphone industry might have killed compact cameras but this has created a shift amongst the camera manufacturers. It seems like the focus is now on the semi-professional and professional markets.

Most beginning photographers start with a semi-professional camera.

A camera remains one step up. I believe many photographers will start their journey with a mobile camera but once they get more into photography and want to get better, they invest in a DSLR or mirrorless camera. A camera remains a more professional tool than a smartphone.

There are many models to choose between. When buying a smartphone you're most likely going to buy the one that is the best all-rounder. You want one that is quick, easy to use, has all the apps you need, has a good camera and runs smoothly. The best camera phones aren't necessarily the best mobile phones. When choosing a DSLR or mirrorless you can choose between many models and find the one that best meets your requirements. A camera is a camera, nothing more.

High-quality lenses make a difference. Any professional photographer knows the importance of high-quality glass. You're much more flexible when using a camera and can use different lenses for different purposes.

The future of photography

Much comes down to your expectations as to image quality, flexibility with settings and lenses and, ultimately, your photographic needs and ambitions. Smartphone cameras are now more than good enough to produce beautiful images that can be shared online and perhaps even be printed in small sizes. If 10 years ago all you needed was a compact camera, then a smartphone will be all you need today.

However, DSLR and Mirrorless cameras aren't going anywhere. At least not anytime soon. There's still an enormous market amongst avid photographers that are looking for higher quality files and more flexibility. We can only expect the camera manufactures to keep trying to satisfy our ever-increasing demands and wishes to create even better cameras.

The '500 Rule' for Night Photography Explained

Avoid star trails in your night photography by following this rule

By
[Christian Hoiberg](#)

If you've played around with night photography before you're well aware of the many differences to standard landscape photography. Forget about the rules and guidelines you know about general settings for photography; most of these are likely to do more harm than good when the sun goes down and stars take over the sky.

Instead, you have to go against everything you know and increase the ISO, open the aperture and use a long exposure time.

Despite thoroughly covering the settings for night photography in our [Beginner's Guide to Night Photography](#), there's one setting that tends to often be

overlooked: the shutter speed. Yes, a slow shutter speed is needed but can't we just keep a low ISO, an aperture of f/11 and then extend the exposure time to several minutes?

Yes, we can do that but that also introduces an effect that you might not want in your images. The solution is the 500 Rule.

What happens when we extend the shutter speed too much

[Long exposure photography](#) is a topic we've covered extensively here on CaptureLandscapes but let's do a quick summary of what happens when using a slow shutter speed:

The camera picks up any motion that appears while the shutter is open. In other words, anything that moves within the frame while the shutter is open will be picked up by the camera; leaves blowing in the wind during a five-second exposure will appear blurry.

What does this mean for night photography? Due to earth's rotation, stars will appear blurry once the shutter speed exceeds a certain period of time. This is known as star trails.

In other words, if you decide to keep your ISO at 100 and aperture at f/11, you might need a shutter speed of over 20 minutes. These settings are going to result in a much cleaner image file (less noise and better front-to-back sharpness) but the long shutter speed will result in star trails.

Now, this can be a fun technique to explore but what do you do if you want razor-sharp stars? Which shutter speed is acceptable? Let me introduce you to the 500 rule:

The trick with night photography is that you've got to make some sacrifices with image quality. There's no getting around the fact that you need a high ISO and open aperture to get sharp stars.

While star trails can be an interesting technique from time to time, there's one thing you want to avoid at any cost: star blur. This is when the shutter speed is only slightly too slow and the stars are beginning to become blurry. At this point, it's obvious that the star trail is accidental instead of deliberate.

That's where the 500 Rule comes handy.

The 500 rule is a simple guideline you can use to calculate the maximum exposure time you can use before stars begin to blur. Is it perfect? No. But it gives a good indication of what shutter speed you can use with your current setup.



Nikon D810 + 14-24mm @16mm
| ISO1000 | f/2.8 | 285 sec



Razor-sharp stars with the
500 rule

How to calculate shutter speeds with the 500 rule

So what is this magic formula that calculates the maximum shutter speed? It's actually quite simple:

$500/\text{focal length} = \text{maximum shutter speed}$

Let's say that you're photographing with a 14mm, a common focal length for night photography. The slowest shutter speed you can use is then $500/14 = 35.7$; anything below 35 seconds should give sharp stars.

That's it? Finished? Not quite. The formula above isn't going to work for everyone reading this. If you use a crop sensor camera (APS-C or Micro Four Thirds) the calculated shutter speed above will result in blurry stars as it's intended for full-frame sensors.

You need to multiply the focal length with the crop factor to calculate the maximum shutter speed for an APS-C or Micro 4/3 sensor. Most APS-C sensors have a crop factor of 1.5 and Micro 4/3 have a crop factor of 2. Canon's APS-C sensors are slightly different and have a crop factor of 1.6.

APS-C: $500/\text{focal length} * 1.5 = \text{maximum shutter speed}$

APS-C (Canon): $500/\text{focal length} * 1.6 = \text{maximum shutter speed}$

Micro Four Thirds: $500/\text{focal length} * 2 = \text{maximum shutter speed}$

Calculate the maximum shutter speed for your equipment

Now that you know the formula for your camera it's quite straight forward to calculate the shutter speed you shouldn't exceed. However, to make it even easier for you, I've put together a list of maximum shutter speeds based on your crop factor and focal length:

Focal Length	Full-Frame Sensor	APS-C 1.5	APS-C 1.6 (Canon)	Micro 4/3
14mm	36 sec	24 sec	22 sec	18 sec
16mm	31 sec	21 sec	20 sec	16 sec
20mm	25 sec	17 sec	16 sec	13 sec
24mm	21 sec	14 sec	13 sec	10 sec
35mm	14 sec	10 sec	9 sec	7 sec
50mm	10 sec	7 sec	6 sec	5 sec

Not quite sure what crop factor your camera has? Do a quick Google search for "[your camera] crop factor" and you'll know in no time.

Be careful when using the 500 rule for night photography

While the 500 rule is a great guideline for night photography, it's important to take care. It's not a perfect guideline and by following the above recommendations you might still see slight blurs in your stars.

I strongly recommend that you take a test shot with the calculated shutter speed and zoom in on the preview to make sure that the stars are sharp. If they're not, reduce the exposure time slightly.

As a rule of thumb, I never go beyond 30 seconds when photographing the night sky. That's despite the fact that I've got a full-frame sensor and a 14mm focal length.

More about night photography

Make sure to read through the following articles if you want to learn more about how you can capture stunning images at night:

- [Beginners Guide to Night Photography](#)
- [7 Tips for Better Night Photography](#)
- [The Best Settings for Night Photography](#)
- [How to Plan and Photograph the Milky Way](#)

Want to skyrocket your night photography? Then combine the above articles with Mikko Lagerstedt's in-depth [Star Photography Masterclass](#); a detailed eBook that will help you take great images in the dark, starting today.

How to Focus in Night Photography

Learn these simple techniques to get sharp images during the night

By

By

[Christian Hoiberg](#)

Nail the focus in Night Photography

Night Photography is a genre that has become more and more popular the last years. Photographing at night can give stunning results but it also comes with a few more challenges than “regular” daytime photography. The most normal challenge with nighttime photography is getting everything sharp and in focus.

Let me tell you this: getting sharp photos during the night isn't as hard as you may fear. In this article, we will look at a few techniques and tricks on how to get the stars and landscape as sharp as possible in one single image. It's time to stop taking blurry images of stars!

Use Live View

When you're outside photographing the stars you're most likely in a dark area (unless you're photographing a

cityscape). Looking through the viewfinder will not give you much of an impression on how the image will be since you can't actually see anything.

In Live View, however, you're able to see more of the landscape when you increase the ISO and shutter speed plus open the aperture. No, the entire scenery won't be visible but you can see the outlines of the landscape and brightest stars. Recommended Reading: [The Best Settings for Night Photography](#)

If the surroundings are dark, you should take a couple of test shots to adjust and find the best perspective and composition. It's hard to get this correct in the first shot since you barely see any of the landscape. When you've found the composition you wish to use, it's time to nail the focus!

Where should I focus?

If you have Live View, activate it and try to find a place to focus on. This often depends on the photo you're capturing (bright cityscapes are different than dark landscapes) but you want to find bright places on your LCD.

When you have located such a spot (could be the brightest star, streetlight or another light source), use the +/- buttons on the back of your camera to zoom in on your screen. This is the spot that we are going to focus on.

If your camera doesn't have Live View, it's still possible to get sharp photos of the stars. It will be a little more challenging as you don't have the possibility to see the live focus but I'll show you a few techniques that will make sure you still get it correct.

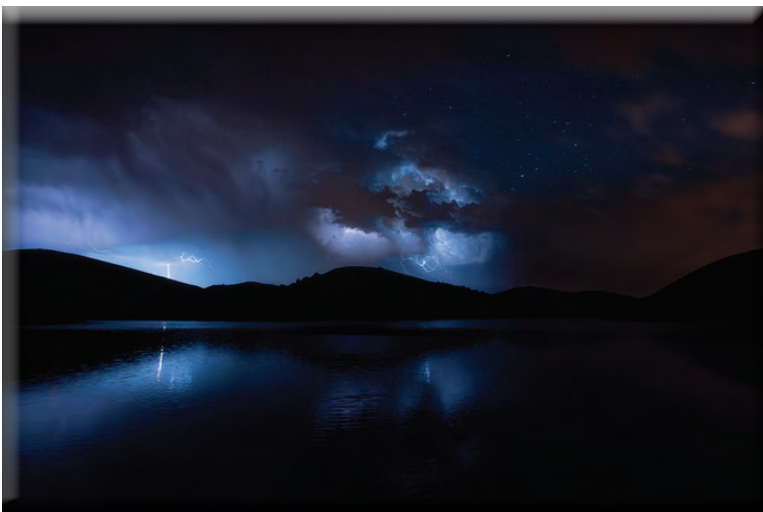
Use Manual Focus for best results

Even though autofocus has come a long way and many people never use anything else, manual focus is the way to go for Night Photography. Since the surroundings are dark your camera is simply not able to get a sharp focus as it struggles to find a reference point.

When you've found a bright spot and zoomed in using Live View, start adjusting the focus ring until the spot becomes sharp. You might need to twist back and forth a few times until you find the exact focus where the spot is sharpest.



For this image, I used the brightest star as my focal point



Note: Autofocus could work when photographing cityscapes but it's still better to focus manually.

The image is now in focus and you've found the sharpest point. It wasn't that hard, right?
But wait... I don't have Live View!

Fear not, my friend, not having Live View is no reason to give up! It might take you one or two extra test shots but the process isn't that much harder.

Since we don't have the LCD screen and Live View to refer to when adjusting the focus we need to know where our lens will give the sharpest result and get most of the image in focus. There are two techniques that makes this process very easy.

Prefocus on Infinity

The easiest way to get a good focus in night photography is to simply set your focus to Infinity. However, the sharpest point isn't always exactly at infinity, but nearby.

A good idea is to prefocus the camera before heading out and either mark the spot with a pen or simply tape the focus ring so it won't move.

Hyperfocal Distance

Hyperfocal Distance is a more advanced technique than using Infinity but the result is often a little sharper. It requires some more thinking and calculation before photographing. We will do an article on this subject in the future but here's a general idea of how you can benefit from using Hyperfocal Distance.

Note: If you want to focus on a foreground element you should consider focus stacking (capturing multiple images with different focus points) images in Photoshop or another software since the stars won't be as sharp as if they were focused upon.

Basically, Hyperfocal Distance is the focusing distance that gives you the best depth of field (meaning the distance where most of your image is in focus). You can use this [calculator](#) to find the Hyperfocal Distance you need.

As you can see, focusing in the dark isn't as hard as many think. The most important thing to remember is to use Manual Focus. Like anything else, focusing in night photography requires some practice before it works flawlessly. So, what are you waiting for? I would love to see your night images in the comments below. Maybe you also have some tips for focusing in the dark?



[Christian Hoiberg](#)

<http://www.choiberg.com>

Christian Hoiberg is a full-time landscape photographer who helps aspiring photographers develop the skills needed to capture beautiful and impactful images. Download his free guide [30 Tips to Improve Your Landscape Photography](#) and open the doors to your dream life. Visit his website or [Instagram](#) to view more of his photography.



Using Lightroom to Adjust the Night Sky and the Milky Way

Written by Holly Higbee - Jansen



Sony A7RIII, ISO 800, 20 seconds at F2.8

We recently returned from hosting a night photography workshop in the Eastern Sierra Nevada Mountains in California. There are many challenges to astrophotography, and not the least of it is the post processing.

Not only do you need to be aware of the correct settings in your camera, you need to be shooting in an area where the sky is not affected by a lot of city light pollution. Also, the moon needs to be a sliver of a crescent, or none at all. Then, if you have met all those conditions, you will need to have a good grasp on the post processing that will bring out the best in the stars.

Our cameras these days have a much better dynamic range than in the past. Dynamic range meaning the range of light the camera can read from the shadows to the highlights. In low light conditions, the dynamic range (that is the difference between the darkest and the lightest

part of the subject) is quite small. As a result with the newer digital SLRs, we are able to shoot in the most challenging situations. We are able to produce images which can be adjusted in Lightroom and Photoshop and bring out the beauty of the night sky.

Even with a camera with high dynamic range, it can be a challenge to deal with the noise and color of the sky when post processing.



Sony A7RIII, ISO 1000, 20 seconds at F2.8

Keep in mind when you are shooting in dark conditions, the image on the back of your camera may look great and the exposure may look perfect. Once you are out of the dark conditions, you will see that what looked like the perfect exposure, now appears to be extremely dark. So the lesson here is to watch the back of your camera and make sure that it looks brighter than expected. That way it should look good once you bring it in to Lightroom.

Another helpful note when shooting. Check your acceptable ISO setting on your individual camera before you set out on your night photography expedition.

What exactly does that mean? Each camera deals with digital noise and light differently and each photographer has an acceptable level of noise that they are willing to see in their images. Test your camera before you go out on your shoot. Take the same picture in natural day light with a variety of different ISOs from 100 – 10,000. Check

the noise level of each picture and see what you are willing to work with when you bring it back into Lightroom or Photoshop. This will be a good guide as to what ISO will work best with your particular camera in dark conditions.

Here is my basic Lightroom workflow which can be adjusted depending on the image. If you are happy with these general settings, you can create your own preset for it in Lightroom. Each camera will render these settings a little differently, so treat it as a preset, a starting point for your digital editing. The first thing you need to do is bring up the exposure and shadows. I generally increase the clarity to between +25-30 and increase the dehaze by +18



Sony A7RIII, ISO 1000, 20 seconds at F2.8

Set the color temperature to a color that is pleasing to you. I tend to like the tones in the dark blues the best. Be very careful when you are adjusting color temperature. I tend to set the color and then come back to it to be sure that my eyes haven't adjusted to a color that doesn't work with the image. You may also get some light from a city or the sunset on the horizon. This can add some interest to your picture if it is not too bright and adds just a subtle glow.

Be sure that all of the pictures from the same shoot have the same color temperature and similar noise adjustments if you plan on sharing or printing many different images from the same shoot. You can do this by syncing your settings in Lightroom after you have completed the adjustments to your liking.

After you have completed these adjustments, I would go to the curves module and create a gentle S curve that works with the image. That would generally include an increase in highlights and lights, a decrease in the darks, and a decrease in the shadows. It would look similar to this curve, but make sure it works with your particular image.

Then if you have a particular constellation you would like to highlight (like the Milky Way), use the adjustment brush to paint on a little exposure, clarity and saturation. If you would like to highlight the celestial core of the Milky Way, you can add a touch of peach or red to your brush to bring out the stars. These brush adjustments are very minor and will enhance your image with just a subtle touch.

The last thing you would do is add your noise reduction. This can be tricky, because noise reduction will add softness to your image. Keep your luminance and noise reduction to about 15. Again, this will depend on your camera and how sensitive your sensor is to noise.

Night photography can be fun and the results can be great after a few practice sessions. The Milky Way is still prominent in the summer sky in North America. Give it a try when there is little or no moon to light up the sky. You may get hooked on night photography and editing.

If you want to learn more about this amazing program for editing and organization, try my [Lightroom Quickstart class](#), please head on over to the class page here.

Hope to see you in the next class!

Holly

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Holly Higbee-Jansen is photographer, trainer, blogger, and workshop leader who enjoys teaching and the creative process. Her passions include teaching photography workshops in beautiful locations in California, Iceland, Costa Rica and the American West with her husband Mark. Holly also teaches online classes on Lightroom, Photoshop, and photographic technique. Get Holly's Free E-Book on "[Landscape Photography and the Light](#)" and find out about her newest workshops at [Jansen Photo Expeditions.com](#).

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