

PETER EASTWAY AND BETTER PHOTOGRAPHY MAGAZINE'S

CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY FOR PHOTO TOURS AND WORKSHOPS

CREATING A PORTFOLIO

Better
Photography

Leopard Seal, Paradise Bay, Antarctica. Whether for the trip of a lifetime or an annual holiday, travel is a great excuse to put together a portfolio of your work.



CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY FOR PHOTO TOURS AND WORKSHOPS

EXCERPT: CREATING A PORTFOLIO

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Tidal flats, Arnhemland. A lightly overlaid composite of rock art in the area is introduced to an aerial landscape to create an image with a difference.



Creating A Portfolio

The portfolio is a rite of passage for every serious photographer. And it is more complete and expressive than a single image, no matter how powerful that single image may be.!

Proper photographers have portfolios. What does this mean? Am I suggesting that if you don't have a portfolio, you're not a real photographer?

Far from it! I would never be so rude, but if you look at all the 'famous' photographers, however you define them, you know of them because of the portfolios of their work.

There are a few photographers who are famous for only one image. Most photographers produced bodies of work to establish their claim to fame.

In our society, a portfolio establishes you as a photographer, rather than as a casual snapshotter who uses a camera.

Some photographers only present their work on websites or social media platforms like Instagram – and this is perfectly valid. It is definitely a part of the portfolio process.

However, despite the importance of the internet and websites in our lives, photographers who produce a physical portfolio of their work – a book, an album, an exhibition – are seen to be making a statement with credibility, something that

posting on the internet does not achieve.

It's almost as though photographers are trying to distinguish themselves from the millions of snapshotters who post onto Facebook and Instagram in search of 'likes' and hearts.

What makes you a photographer if it isn't the equipment you use? I think it's what you do with your photographs that matters - and one way to establish yourself as a 'proper photographer' is to produce a portfolio.

Of course, there's no guarantee people will like your portfolio or even look at it. However, that's not the point.

The process of putting together a portfolio will force you to consider your work, both carefully and seriously, and this process will advance you in many ways as a photographer.

Don't take my word for it - try it!

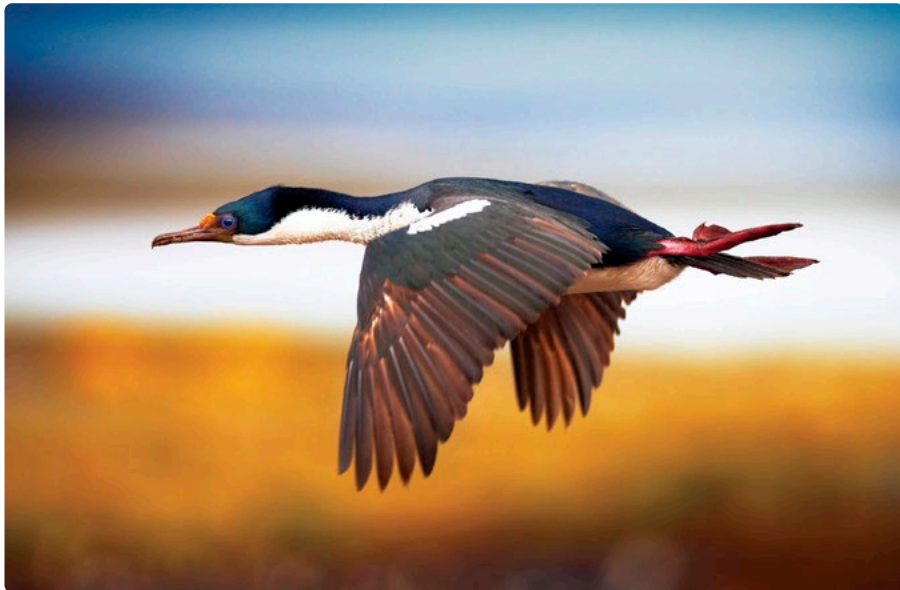
On the following pages, I've outlined many of the important steps and stages of a portfolio project.

It's easy, it's not overly time-consuming and importantly, it's a lot of fun!

A portfolio can be small. This is one of a series of four Spanish castles.



Create a theme that interests you. What will your portfolio present – photos of family, a holiday, a passion for wildlife or a special project?.



A Portfolio of... What?

A collection of photographs can be a record of a journey or a voyage, or something that's more abstract or fictional.

A portfolio is a collection of photographs designed for presentation to an audience, often one-on-one. Books can be read by millions, exhibitions seen by thousands, but a portfolio is usually produced as a personal statement and expected to be viewed by just one or two people at a time, often in the company of the photographer as well.

Of course, there are no hard and fast rules about portfolios. Advertising photographers used to drop off their portfolio to an advertising agency, hoping that some of the art directors would have time to view it and then hire them for a job. These days, most photographers rely on art directors finding them on their website, so the website becomes a defacto portfolio – or as is more often the case, a number of different portfolios.

For most readers, creating a portfolio is a personal exercise that will be viewed predominantly by family, friends and, possibly, other photographers. This takes a lot of the pressure off deciding what the portfolio should contain.

Finding A Theme

However, a portfolio needs a theme. The theme can be your best photographs taken

in 2019. You may then produce a series of annual portfolios.

The theme could be family photos – in which case maybe your portfolio is more of a family album? However, a family album would have photographs selected because they were important historically to the family. A portfolio of family photographs would be selected because of the art and craft in the photos themselves. Can you see the difference? Both are collections of photographs, but the underlying purpose is quite different.

A portfolio of photographs of family members would be designed to showcase your skills as a photographer first, and present the family second.

Portfolios can cover anything from a holiday to a sporting event, a series of abstracts to the use of a particular technique. However, part of a portfolio's success is found in the synergy produced by the photographs being presented together.

The photographs should work collectively to present an idea or a concept. It could even create a story, but then your portfolio is becoming more of a book than a portfolio.

But it doesn't matter!

Wedding Albums. This is a great example of a portfolio of work with a purpose.



Travel Photo Books. Probably the most common kind of portfolio these days.



How Will You Present Your Portfolio?

Should you choose the photographs for your portfolio first, or work out how you are going to present them?

Sometimes, having an idea of what you want the portfolio to look like will affect the choices you make for the individual photographs, but equally so, knowing what photographs you want in your portfolio can affect how you decide to present them. In practice, there's a bit of toing and froing.

So, what are your options?

Boxed Prints

One option is to produce a box containing individual prints. Each print can be individually matted and mounted, giving it substance when held in the hand. Or the prints can be unmounted, but if the paper or media is too thin or limp, it might not have the impact you hope for. While photography is a visual art, when you create a portfolio, the physical presentation is extremely important. It's like buying jewellery or chocolate – there's a reason the packaging is so good!

Don't forget to add in a pair of white gloves for your viewers to use while handling the prints.

Albums

A second option is an album. Unlike a photo book with thin pages, an album generally has

thicker pages and possibly real photographs printed and mounted in position – so it's produce the prints first and then mount them on pages to create an album.

This ensures you retain maximum photographic quality (you generate the prints), with the convenience of a book format that is easy to handle.

Photo Books

A photo book is also a great way to present your portfolio and some book printers (such as MomentoPro) will print your photographs using a high end photo printer on high quality rag paper, so the photos in the book are of maximum quality.

If a photo book only has 12 or 20 pages, it can seem a little thin – and unimpressive. You're better off with thicker pages to pad out your portfolio in an album or use boxed prints.

On the other hand, for larger portfolios a photo book is an excellent suggestion.

Online Options

Of course, you don't have to create a physical portfolio if you don't want to.

Creating an online portfolio can be as

easy as setting up an Instagram account (or equivalent platform) and posting your images online.

The problem with online platforms like this is that you don't always have control over how the images are presented or in what order.

A more secure option is your own website.

Fortunately, you don't have to be an internet guru to create a website because there are a lot of fully automated website providers – such as ZenFolio.

While you don't have absolutely full design control, you are given a wide selection of templates and themes which you can make suitably different to any other website created by the same system.

We realise some people will gravitate to the online options because they are easier and may provide a wider audience.

The good news is you don't have to limit yourself to one medium. Why not create a small series of matted prints, a more extensive photo album or photo book, and then you can replicate these images as a portfolio on your website.

Lots to do!

Printing Choices. There are lots of things to consider when producing a photo book or album. MomentoPro offers a great, high quality service.

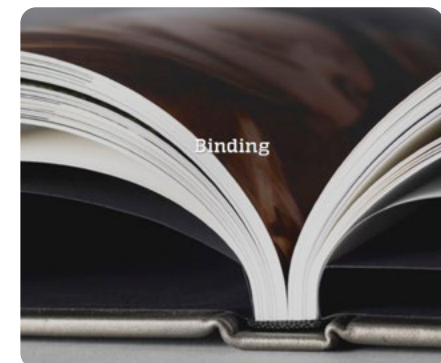
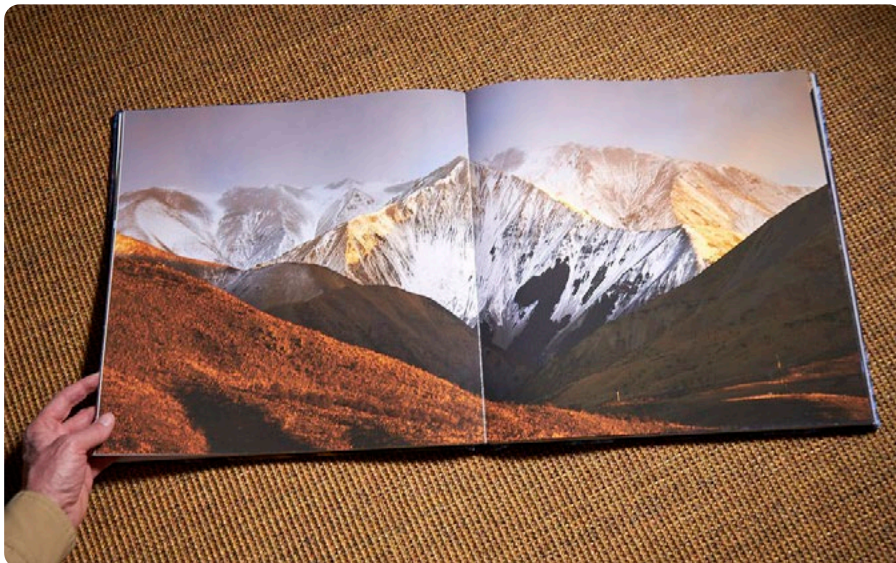


Photo books. Large or small, there's something special about a book of photos.



Prints in a box. The mattes around the prints and the box make a statement.



All Types. This cool photo album is called RAW by GraphiStudio.



6

Six Photographs. Six might be too few for a book or an album, but it's a great number for a set of matted prints, perhaps presented in a smart box.

12

Twelve Photographs. This is a serious number to consider. There's enough room to develop a theme or tell a story, without being too long-winded.

60

Sixty Photographs. Probably too many for a set of prints, but ideal for a substantial portfolio or a documentary approach.

96

Ninety Six Photographs. We're not saying don't do it, but you'll struggle to get viewers spending enough time to enjoy them all – we think!

PRODUCING A PORTFOLIO OF PHOTOGRAPHS

How Many Photographs Is Best?

Don't assume people want to see all of your photos – they can get bored quickly! Better to provide a smaller selection of higher quality.

We have all observed how busy people are these days. There's always time to grab a coffee on the run, but not necessarily to sit down in the cafe and enjoy it.

The same can be said about anything we see or view, whether it is a book, a web page or a television show. If what you are presenting is too long, your viewers won't get to the end of it.

So, what is too long? For an avid bird lover, a portfolio of 200 photographs might not be enough, while 10 bird portraits might be too many for an accountant more interested in superannuation. There isn't a

magic formula, but chances are the optimum number of prints for your portfolio is fewer than you'd like to include!

It's always tempting to add in a few extra prints because you never really know what people might like – and perhaps some people might like your extras. However, while the portfolio is being designed with a viewer in mind, the real person you have to impress is yourself.

Yes, But How Many?

The number of photographs in a perfect album is 12. Or sometimes 8. Or maybe 24.

The number of photographs in an album ranges from around six to 60 or even 100. However, the idea behind a portfolio is to present yourself within a theme. It's a bit like giving a speech. If you can do it in five minutes, you'll have more impact than boring people for an hour.

As a guide, I would aim for 10 or 12 photos in your first portfolio. To get to this 10 or 12, you may prepare a short list of 20 or 30 prints.

However, before a photograph makes it into your portfolio, it needs to be a photograph that you believe you will be

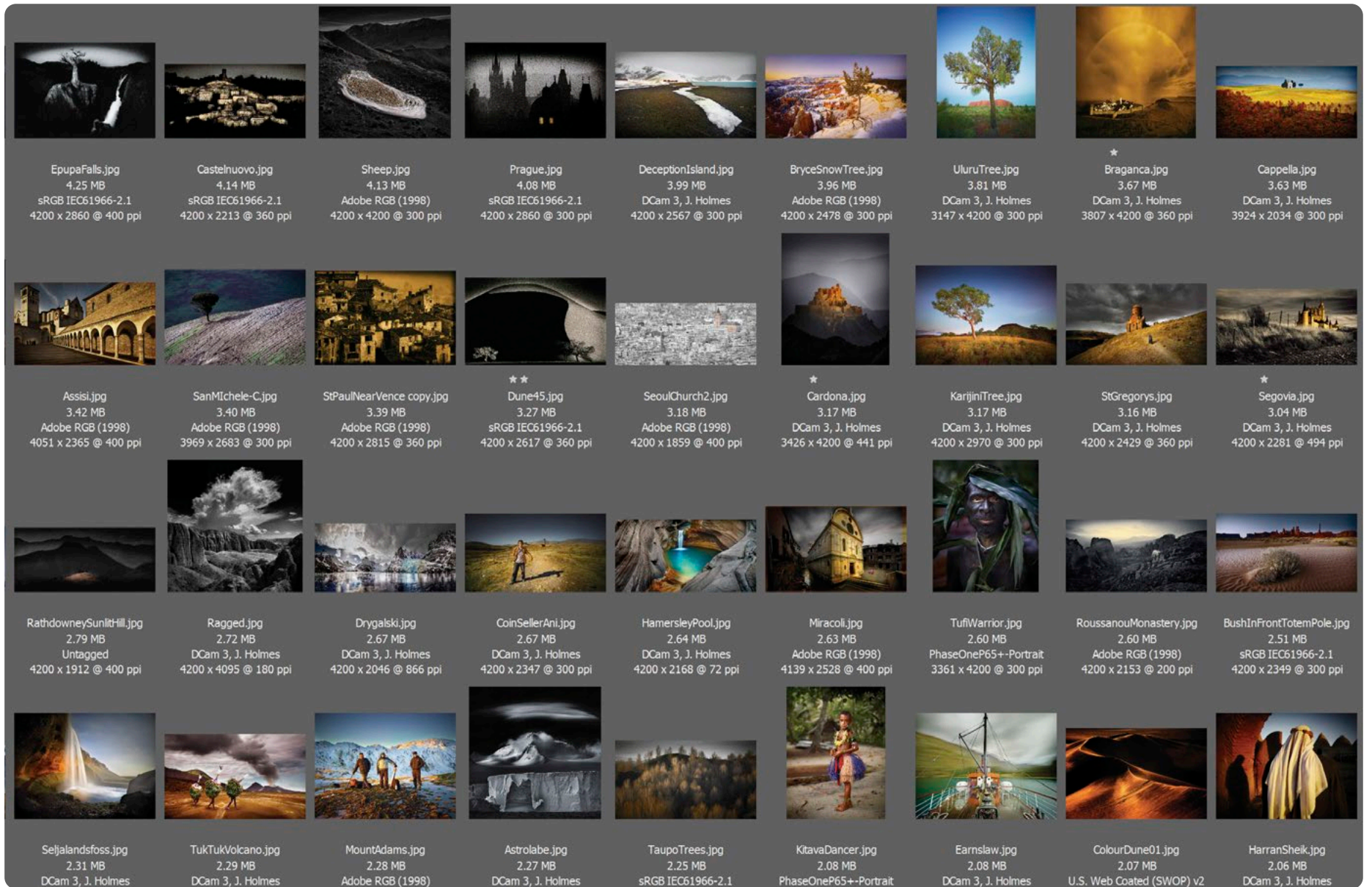
proud of in another 12 months' time. We all improve and progress as photographers, but I still have photographs taken many years ago that I am proud of.

These are the photographs that should make their way into your portfolio.

Remember, you can always make a second portfolio.

Sometimes this makes it easier to leave a few photos behind, but at the end of the day, the number of photographs in your portfolio is going to be the number that has the maximum impact on your viewers – and on you!

Only the Best. For *The New Tradition* book by Peter Eastway, 100 of his best images were selected, but this might be too many for a general portfolio. Less is often more.



Titles, Introductions and Credits

If you're going to make the effort to create a portfolio, it's worthwhile spending a little extra time and generating appropriate titles, credits and even an introduction.

Title

You don't have to be super creative with the title and, in fact, the word 'Portfolio' might be all you need. And rather than having a long descriptive title, perhaps a subtitle would be better e.g. 'Portfolio – Photographs from 2017'

Another option is to have your name as the title, e.g. 'Peter Eastway', or maybe your name and the date as a subtitle e.g. 'Peter Eastway – Photographs from 2017'.

Just as important as the title itself is the typeface and font you use.

Small titles can look very cool, but so can large type taking up the entire page. And we haven't even discussed if we should put a photograph on the front cover or leave it as a solid colour or pattern!

Credits

The main credit required is for you as the photographer. If your name is included in the title, mission accomplished.

Generally you'll want your name somewhere on the front cover or box lid so people immediately associate what's inside with you.

In addition to your name, who else would you like to acknowledge. You can do an Oscar acceptance speech and devote the portfolio to your family, but keep your end audience in mind.

There may be people who have helped you produce the portfolio, perhaps helped you with travel arrangements, post-production or the design. Perhaps you want

to include your equipment or the software used? Consider a page at the end of the portfolio acknowledging these people.

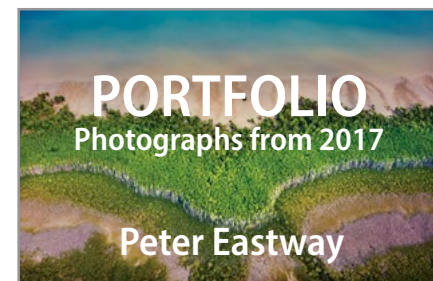
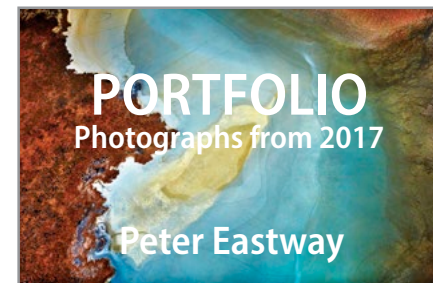
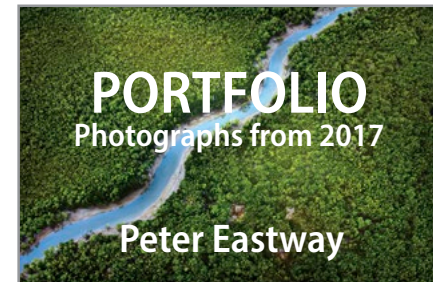
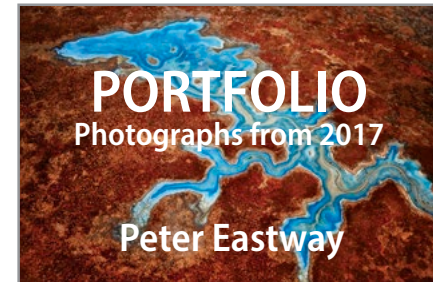
Introductions

Most portfolios don't have introductions *per se*, but to put your photographs in context, it may be appropriate to write a few words that explain the photographs.

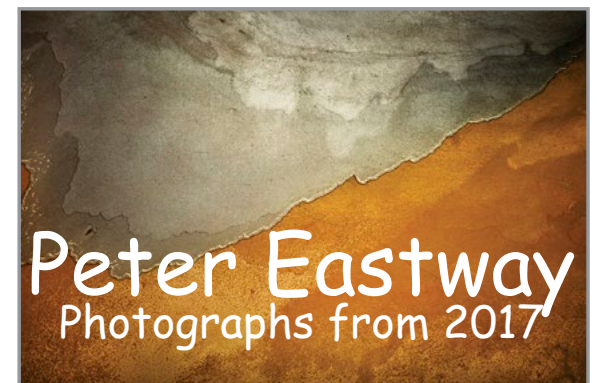
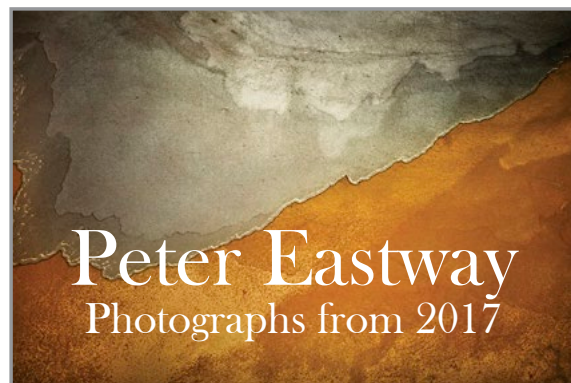
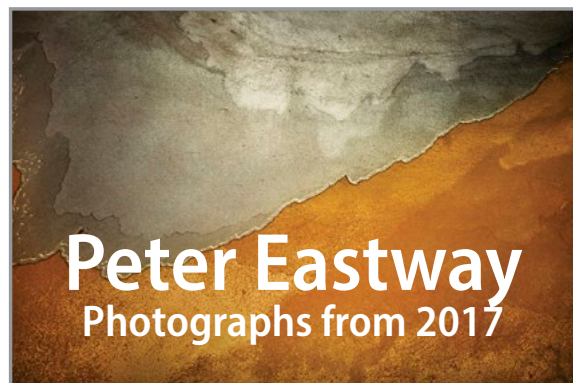
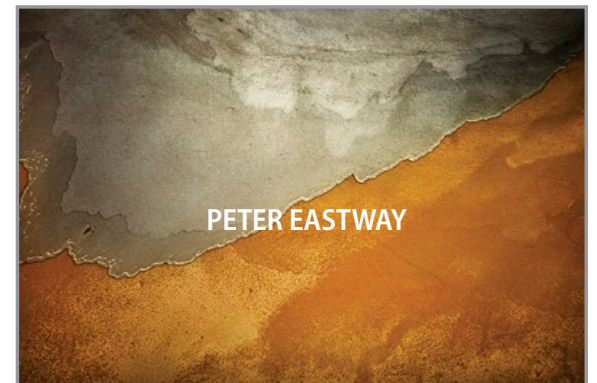
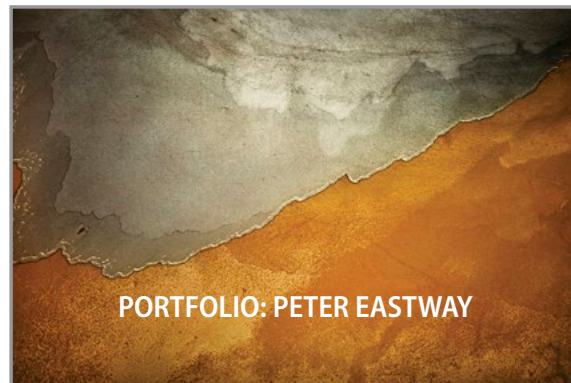
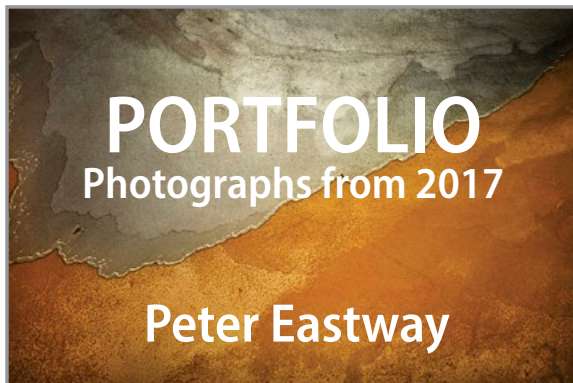
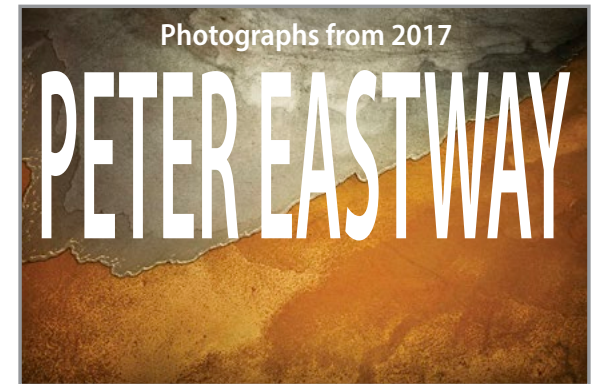
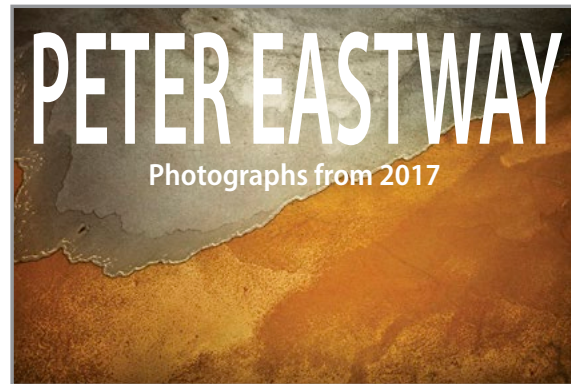
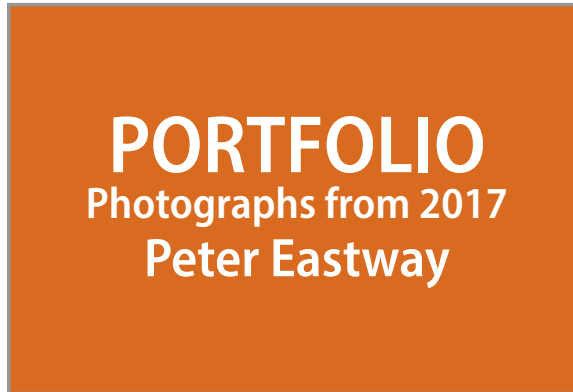
You're probably best off keeping the words factual and letting the photographs talk for themselves.

As you will see on the next few pages, the titles and credits will become a part of the design and as my patient wife correctly tells me, it's a good idea to work with a good designer.

Cover Pic? The hardest decision!



Cover Thoughts. The cover sets the tone for the rest of the presentation, so give it plenty of thought and ensure the titles and words are appropriate.



Captions, Headings & Folios

Imagine your viewer is looking at your photographs. Can the photographs speak for themselves, or should you provide some basic information to put them in context?

There are several schools of thought about captions and photography.

Some people believe that if a photograph is worth one thousand words, then surely there's no need for a caption.

On the other hand, a photograph of a frog might look quite benign to many viewers, but a caption describing the frog as a cane toad would probably change that.

Information and context are very powerful tools when used correctly. They can explain things about a photograph that can transform how it is viewed.

It might be quite appropriate to caption the people in your photographs, if only for historical purposes in the future. It might also be appropriate to provide the location of a landscape or a building.

On the other hand, descriptive captions like 'My Little Angel' or 'Sunrise's Golden Breath' are perhaps less helpful – but this is a personal choice. The only person you have to make happy with this portfolio is yourself.

So, photo headings or captions are optional and, rather than captioning each photograph, an introductory paragraph may

be all that's required to describe what the portfolio is about.

Headings

If a portfolio contains different sections or chapters, it may be appropriate to divide the portfolio using heading. For instance, a portfolio of flowers may be divided into red, yellows and purples, with a heading for each group of photographs.

Or the heading might appear on each page. However, headings are probably unnecessary for smaller portfolios.

Folios

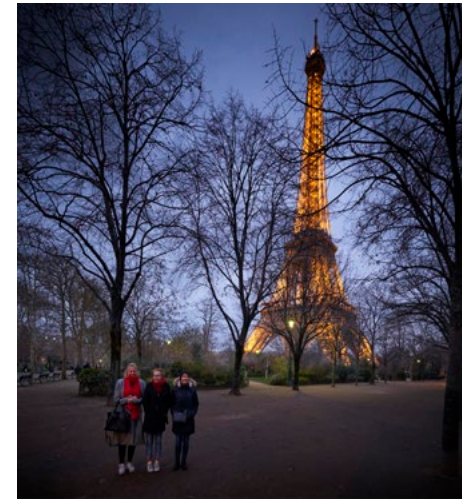
And what about numbers? If you only have a dozen or so images, page numbers are not essential, but they could be used as a design device.

Even your matted prints in a box could be numbered with a smart design.

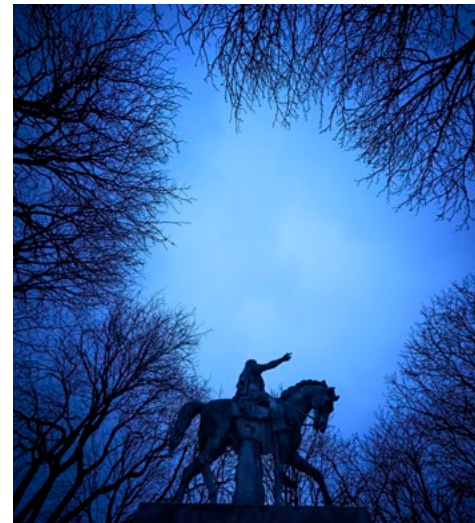
For larger portfolios, especially those in photo books, page numbers can be quite useful if your viewers wish to refer to a particular photograph.

But there are no rules!

Caption Not Needed? Sometimes the subject or location is pretty obvious!



Caption Needed? If your subject is not obvious, would the viewer like to know more?



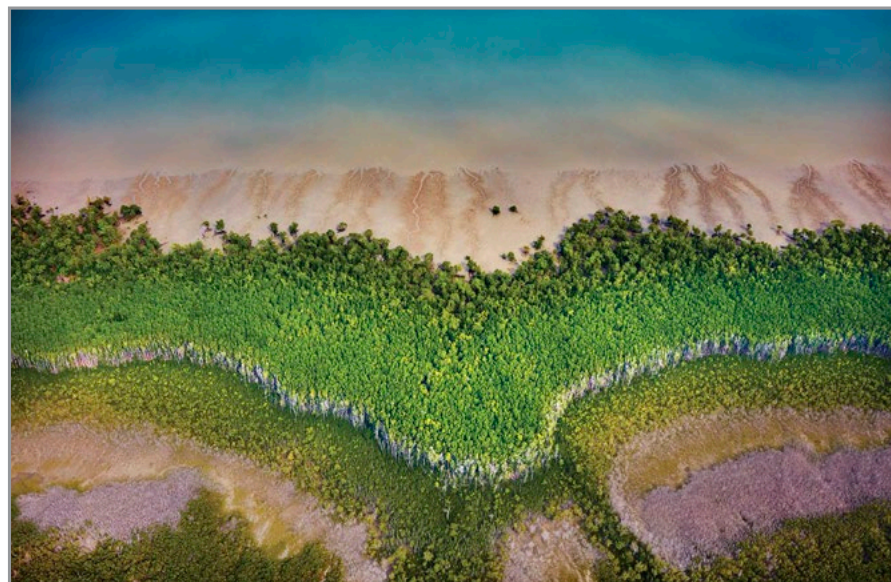
Page Designs. Do you keep your pages pure with no text, add a caption, and perhaps a page number as well? And if your photo fills the page - do you put text on top of the photo?



An example of a short caption for your photograph.



An example of a short caption for your photograph.



Processing The Portfolio

You don't have to go overboard when you edit your files, but you do need to ensure your photographs look their very best.

It goes without saying that this must be your best work. How do you ensure this?

Auto Adjustment

After you think you have an image file finished, and assuming you're using Photoshop, add a curves adjustment layer on top and press Alt/Option + Auto. (Optionally, if you don't want to use a layer, just open the curves tool and press Options.)

Photoshop will open up another panel with four options, or seven if you include Snap Neutral Midtones check box.

What Photoshop is doing is redistributing the tones and colours 'evenly' between black and white. There are a number of different formulas it can use to get an 'even' distribution, so Photoshop helpfully offers you four.

Assuming you have a good quality monitor and that it has been correctly calibrated and profiled (so what you are seeing on screen is a good representation of what your file actually looks like), click on each of the buttons in turn and see if the result is improved.

I often find this process at the end of my editing can 'clean up' my colours and tones, but of course if you don't like any of the

results, or it doesn't make much difference, you can just discard the change.

Spots and Dust

Perhaps the photographer's greatest fear is printing a portfolio and leaving dust spots in the image. It's amazing how easy it is to miss them – and how often your viewers will point them out!

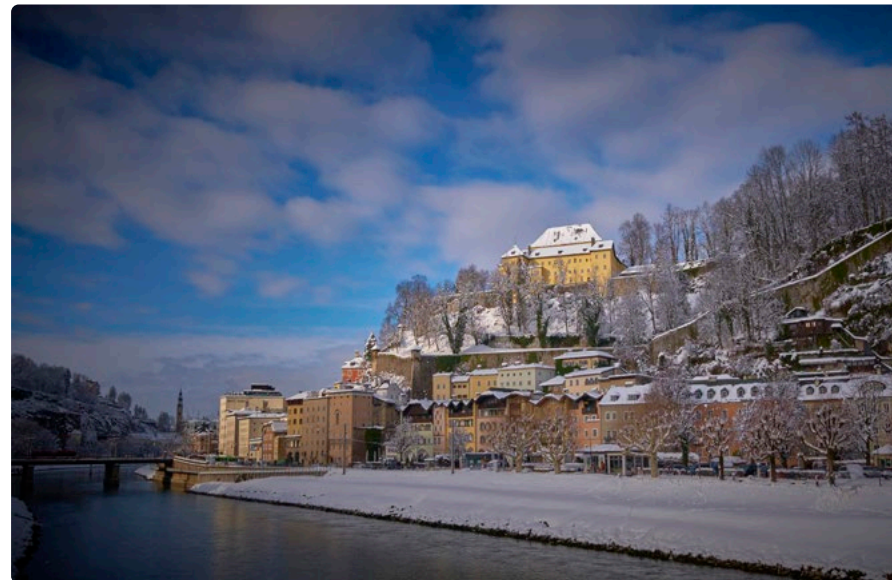
The only way to effectively spot your files is methodically.

Enlarge your image on screen to 100% (or 200% if you wish to be pedantic). Start in the top left corner and view the image. Remove any spots or dust marks with the healing tool, or sometimes the cloning tool. Don't have too much 'feather' on the tool, then again, don't have the edge too hard either. Somewhere around 50% is a good place to start.

When this section is clear of spots, move one screen width to the right and repeat. Continue until the far right of the screen, then drop down a screen height and go back the other way. Repeat until the entire image has been carefully spotted!

Sometimes there are small highlights or shadows that aren't spots, but look like them. Remove them as well, just in case!

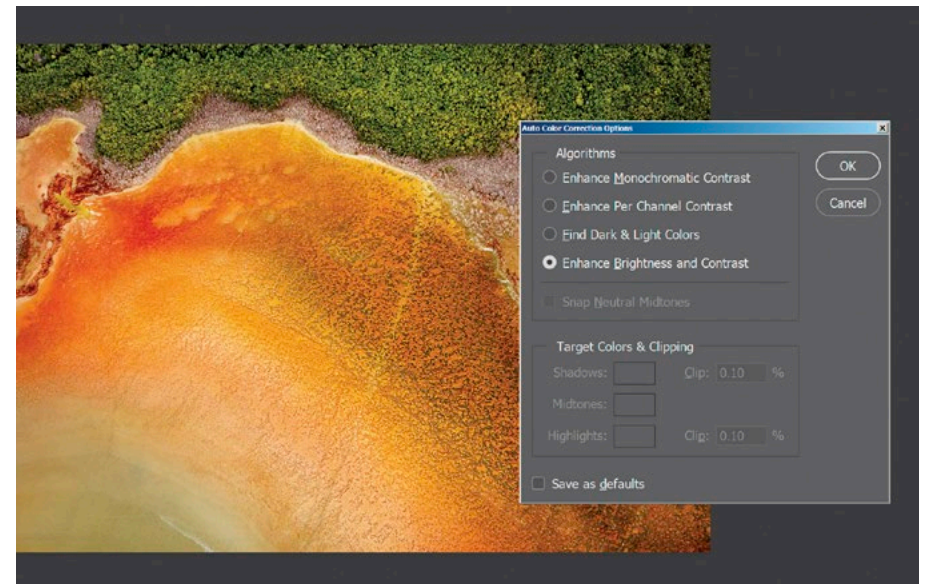
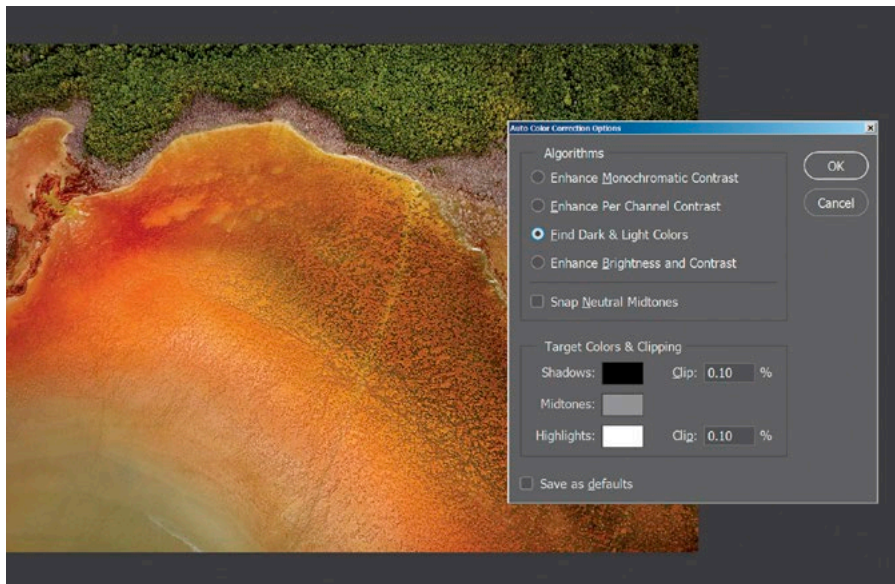
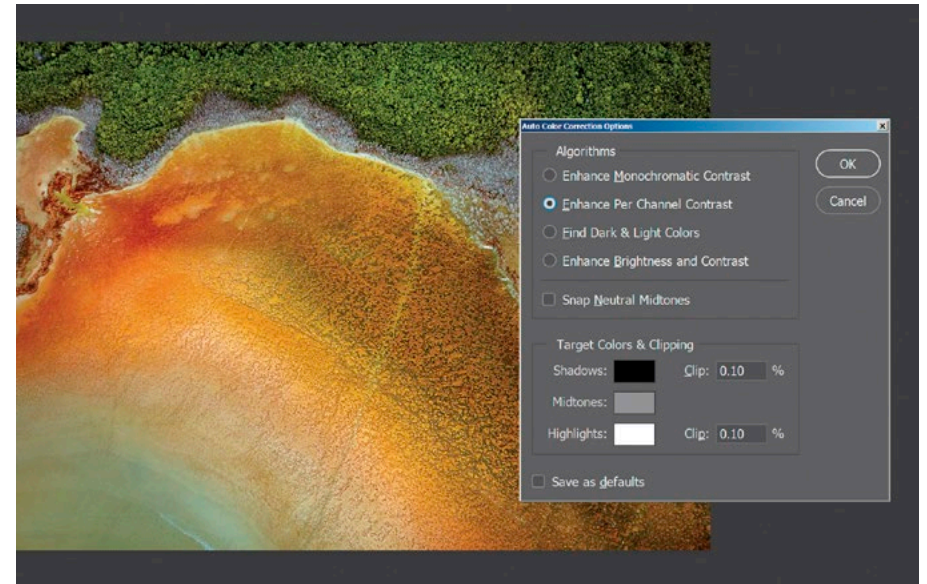
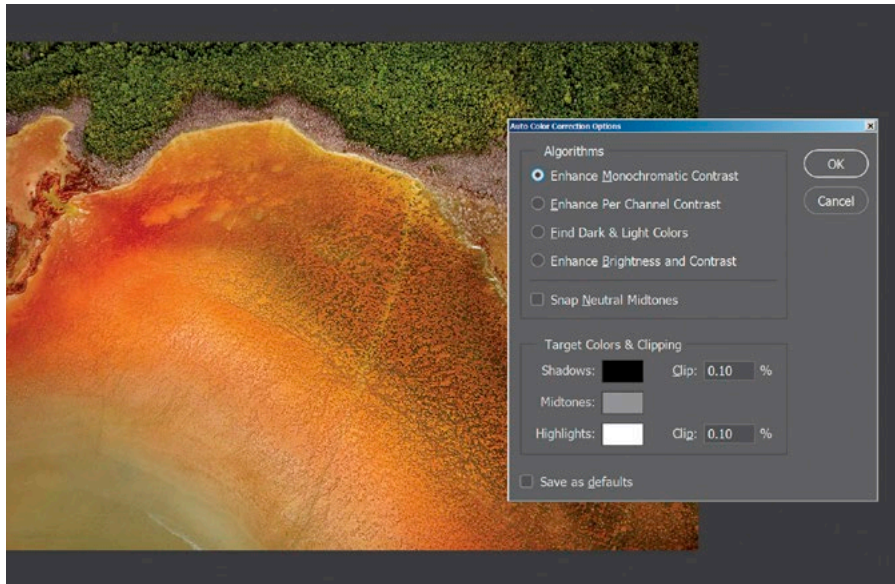
Lightroom & Capture One. Quick portfolios may not need much editing.



Photoshop. However, for your very best work, you may need to spend more time.



The 'Auto' function with a curves adjustment. Look closely at these four screen grabs and you can see subtle, but important differences in the colour, contrast and tonality. In each case a different 'auto' setting has been selected. Pick the one you like the best – assuming you have a good quality monitor which is correctly profiled and calibrated.



Sizing, Borders, Backgrounds

Simple is best, so while it can be tempting to add lots of design elements, it may be at the expense of your photos.

Few readers will have problems with sizing their photographs for their portfolio – meaning our cameras have more than sufficient pixels to produce a high quality reproduction.

Sizing

Make a set of files especially for printing the portfolio. Output them as JPEGs in Adobe RGB colour space at 360 dpi (if you have enough pixels), with the dimensions set roughly to the size of your portfolio page. In practice, I find that the dimensions don't need to be precise.

When you output your file, you can consider applying a little extra sharpening – Lightroom is pretty good for this. Try medium sharpening for glossy or matte paper, depending on what type of surface you are printing to.

A glossy paper can have a lot of impact and is great for subjects that are strong and dynamic – such as sport, nature and travel. On the other hand, a matte paper might be better suited to family photographs, portraits and fine art. But there are no rules!

Borders

Whether you're putting your photos in a

matte (window cut) for mounting, or on a page in an album, there are a range of border options: no border, generous white border, narrow black border, irregular borders and so on.

One suggestion is to keep the border design consistent throughout the portfolio as this tends to tie the photographs together. Another suggestion is to steer away from brightly coloured or overly ornate borders, the idea being we want viewers to look at the photos, not the frames. But there are no rules!

Backgrounds

So, when you place your photos in a mount or on a page, what colour should the mount or page be?

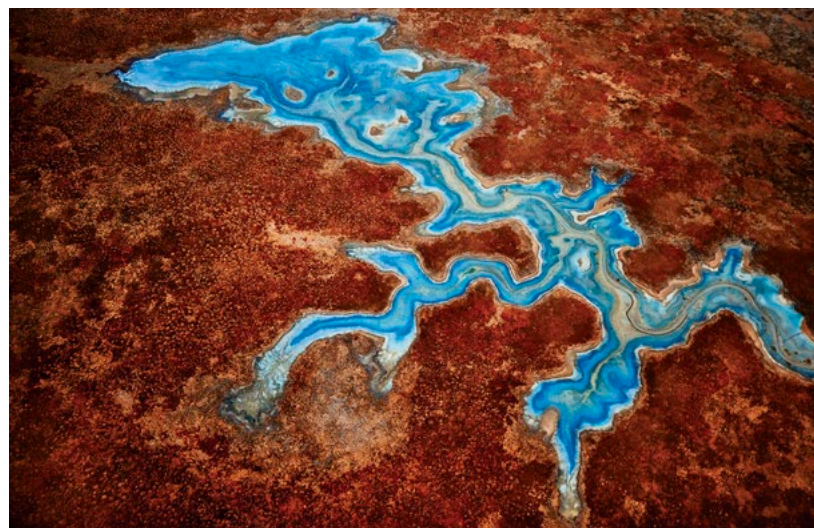
White is the standard and in 90% of cases, is probably your best choice.

Some photographers like black, but often black paper can appear dark grey, or if glossy can hold unsightly fingerprints.

On very rare occasions, a colour background, a ghosted image or pattern can work, but keep in mind that the heroes in your portfolio are the photographs, not the presentation.

But rules are meant to be broken!

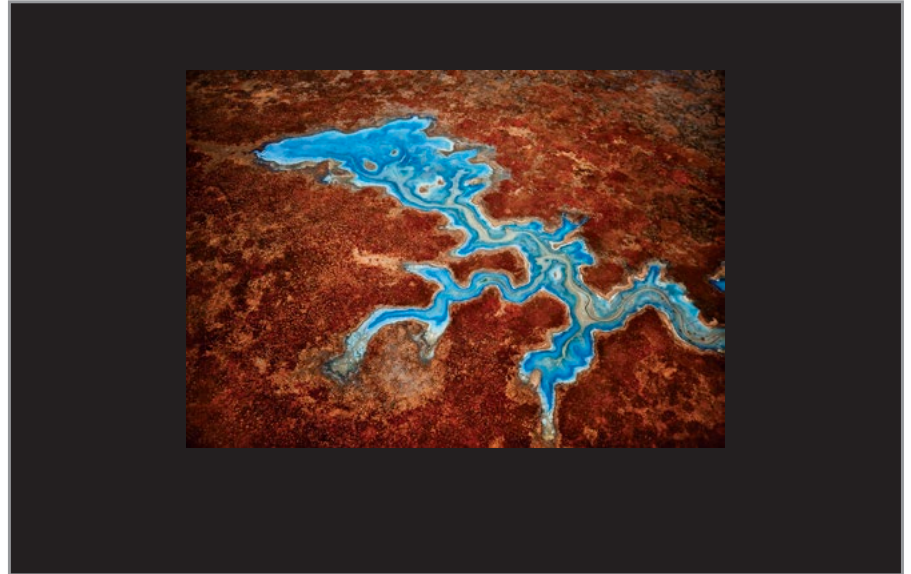
Narrow white borders? These can be quite popular in art books!



Black edge borders. These are popular with black and white photographs.



Page Designs. You might think you need a colour matte or background, but do you really? White is generally best, maybe black, rarely a colour. The same can be said for keylines.



Multi-Purposing Your Work

So, at this stage you have a collection of amazing photographs, ready for presentation in a portfolio of some description. Should this be all you do with your portfolio?

Different Designs

With your first portfolio designed as, say a box set, why not reuse the photographs in an album format as well?

You could design a box of large prints, say A3 or A2 in size, mounted and matted, and have a smaller A4 album accompany it. Then add in a photo book just in case you want to give away or sell copies of your work.

Website

These days, getting your work seen is important and although we've agreed that a physical portfolio is very important for a 'real photographer', this doesn't mean you shouldn't use the same images on your website.

If possible, consider presenting the photographs in the same order and with similar design attributes as your portfolio, so the two complement each other.

The same set of images could form part of a Facebook album or sit on your Instagram account, further extending the exposure for your work.

Audio Visual

Putting your photographs to music in an audio visual presentation is another great way to share your work. And if our viewers get bored, at least they can shut their eyes and enjoy the music (that is a joke because obviously they will be riveted by our visual literacy).

Audio visuals can also be presented on your website or posted to Youtube or Vimeo. Just make sure that you have permission to use the music that you choose.

Exhibition

One of the most challenging things a photographer can do is to have a public exhibition. Suddenly your work is up on the wall and real people are walking through the gallery, inspecting your work.

However, the good news is that much of the work required to produce a body of images for exhibition has already been done. Now it's just a matter of booking the venue and having the prints framed for fame and riches. Well, fame at least!

Exhibitions. Solo or with friends, putting on an exhibition is a lot of fun!



Audio Visuals. They have the advantage of allowing music to be added for impact.




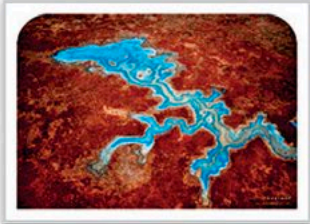

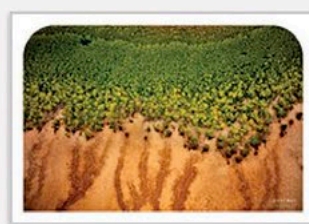




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Better
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Why I love magazines...

by Peter Eastway

When you get into photography, everyone says you need a good camera. And a good lens, a good monitor and good software. But how many people suggest that what you really need are good ideas?

Don't get me wrong! I love buying new equipment - it's part of the thrill of photography. However, I've never taken a great photograph without first having a great idea. It's ideas and inspiration that will set our photography apart, not equipment which everyone else can buy too!

My ideas have come from reading and writing articles. Sometimes I'm reading someone else's ideas, sometimes I'm writing down the ideas of an amazing photographer I interviewed. And these ideas are ones I would never have thought about on my own. I'd never type these ideas into Google because they're simply not on my radar - and that for me is the brilliance of magazines. It only takes one idea or one image on one page to give you a great idea - a new direction, a special technique, a different concept.

Years ago I wrote a book review on Creative Elements: Landscape Photography written by Eddie Ephraums. This book was

written very much like a magazine, showing Eddie's remarkable photography in a way I hadn't seen before. On the first page of each chapter, he showed the original photo and then opposite was his final interpretation. The differences were magical, inspirational - and achievable. On the following pages, he explained how he captured the photos and the steps he took in the darkroom to create the final result.

Yes, in the darkroom! I said this was quite a few years ago!

Around 12 months after reading Eddie's book, I was standing on a stage receiving the 1995 AIPP Australian Professional Landscape Photographer of the Year Award. I'd submitted four prints that were heavily inspired by Eddie's approach.

Interestingly, Tim Griffith who had won the overall 1995 AIPP Australian Professional Photographer of the Year had also read Eddie's book. It was just one idea that took us to places we'd never been before. And Tim had read about Eddie's book in a magazine as well.

I won the AIPP Professional Photographer of the Year another 12 months later and again in 1998, but I was feeling stuck. I felt I

had taken Eddie's initial inspiration as far as I could and I was looking for something new.

Around this time, I interviewed legendary advertising photographer Nadav Kander and afterwards we had an informal chat over a drink. I explained the creative block I was experiencing and asked him if he had any advice. He asked me how I had got to where I was. It was an interesting question and I answered that I was just living my life, but always on the look out for new ideas and opportunities. He replied, "So relax, sit back and wait for the next opportunity. It will arrive."

And so it did. A year or so later, I moved more seriously into digital (I think I bought a 3-megapixel DSLR from Canon) and suddenly the world of photography opened up yet again. I could now take Eddie's original inspiration in directions I'd never previously thought of.

As my photography developed, I found myself working with leading camera and software manufacturers from around the world - Canon, Adobe, Phase One, Capture One. They found the way I and a handful of other leading photographers approached our work new and inspiring.

And I put all this down to my involvement with magazines, not because I was writing them, but because of the ideas and inspiration I was exposed to. The same ideas and inspiration that every subscriber got to read as well.

And that's why I'm passionate about photography magazines. They are written by professional and enthusiast photographers who are willing to share their ideas and inspiration which in turn provide the catalyst for readers to transform their own photography.

Most of us love the idea of buying a new camera, but once purchased, what are we going to photograph with it? How are we going to use it? And how will it help us make better photographs without better ideas?

This is the concept behind every issue of Better Photography magazine. We've never had an equipment focus, rather we follow a strategy about sharing ideas and techniques.

What ideas and technique could you learn? Subscribe now and find out!



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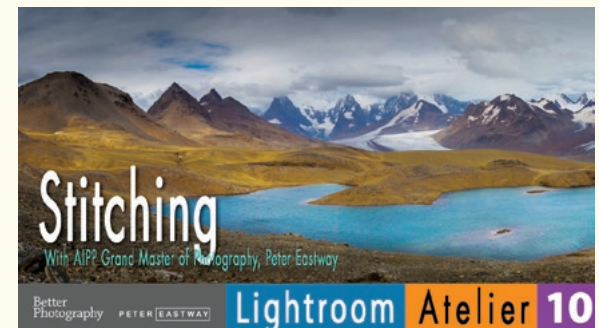
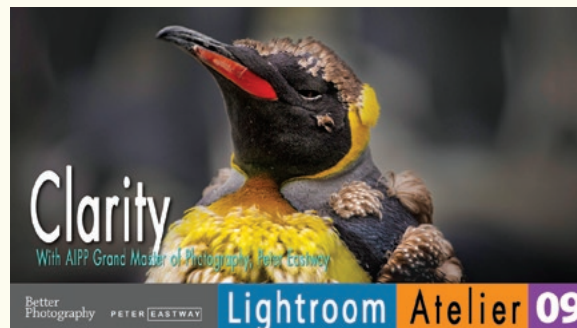
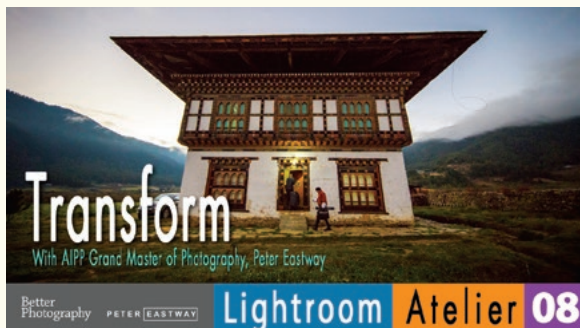
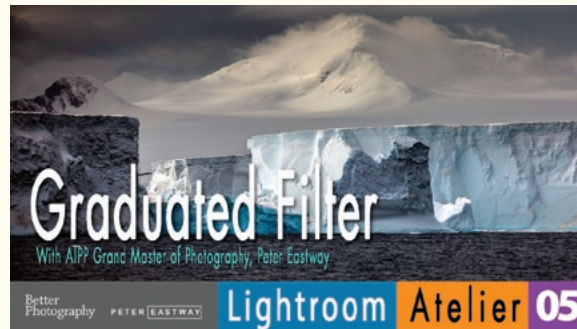
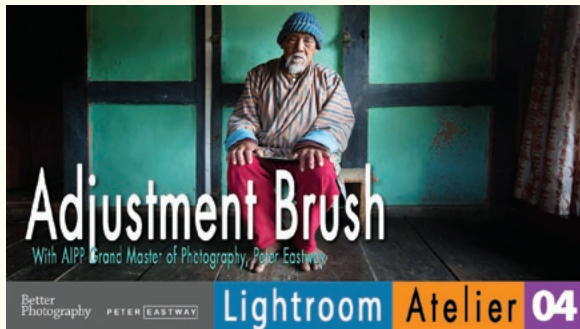
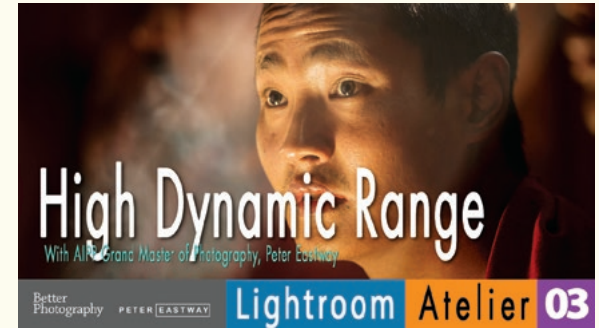
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need if you're happy with the average results that come out of your camera. However, as all creative photographers discover, using Lightroom isn't just a matter of sliding controls left or right, it's also an amazing tool with unlimited creativity – if you know how to use it properly. The reason you'll be interested in Peter Eastway's Lightroom Atelier is because you like what you see on the these pages and you'd like to achieve something similar with your own work. If that's you, check out the free lesson on our website and follow the links ...

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Landscape Photography MasterClass - Contents



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