Creative Brief - Winter 2015

Welcome to 2015

We hope your holidays were filled with family and fun and the weather is treating you with a bit of kindness. It has been a very exciting year for us at Spaces. We started our new relationship with Blend Images last year and we can say without a doubt it was the best move Spaces has made since its inception. We saw 500% growth in revenue in just the last year. With only 3,000 new images added we can say with certainty that this relationship is a perfect match. Our content is going up on many agencies as fast as we can add it to our own site.

Getty Images is a leader in getting our content to market and are also a big part of what has grown the collection's sales over the past year. We are aware that some photographers have not been excited to work with Getty Images recently, but you must remember that a large part of our growth this past year was due directly to our working relationship with Getty. As they continue to be a integral part of the stock industry it makes good business sense to work closely with them to generate the greatest revenue stream possible for our contributors.

With the relationships we have forged during 2014 becoming even stronger, we expect to see another huge spike in sales over 2015. Couple these new relationships with a boon in the economy and we are very excited to greet the new year with open arms.

Enough with all the chit chat, let’s get this year started. We are going to begin the year with a short revue of Spaces with Faces and then it’s onto a special feature covering in detail the newest angle in photography in quite some time, the world of UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle). To wrap it all up we will revisit some basic tricks to help your images have more impact and stand out as the best in their field.

- Spaces With Faces -

We want to do a short follow up on adding your “Spaces with Faces” to our collection. As you all know by now Spaces has begun taking lifestyle imagery into our growing collection of stock content. Lifestyle stock photography is by far the broadest selling category in the stock industry. Getting your locations can be the toughest part of the job, when you get that next amazing location to work from maybe we can help you with cutting your lifestyle teeth here at Spaces. Is it time to step out of your comfort zone and try your hand at shooting some lifestyle on location or have you been producing lifestyle content for years? Either way Spaces has the distribution to make you the strongest sales in this always needed field of content.

Just one rule... they have to be shot on location not in studio. That’s it folks, no other limitations for Spaces Images content. If it was shot on location we want it. If it was shot with people, we want it, without people we want it, if it was shot with your neighbors dog we want it! We have an amazing channel of distribution in place that's running smoother than ever. If you have continued to add content to Spaces over the past year you have seen your sales increase a great deal. If you haven’t sent us a submission in a while maybe it’s time to send us some new strong material. We are very confident that our sales will reflect all of your efforts and get you back to shooting again.

Below are a few samples of what our contributing photographers have added over the past couple of months to our Spaces with Faces collection. We are so pleased to see the level of quality coming into our newest collection. Every edit is better than the last. We know this work sells really well. We have the distribution in place to produce the highest returns in the industry for your lifestyle imagery, now we just need you to start adding lifestyle to your portfolio with Spaces. We are very confident that we can produce a strong revenue stream for your lifestyle content through our multi level distribution platform. Maybe lifestyle isn’t for you, no worries, we want you to do what makes you the happiest and at the same time we would love to help grow your returns.

If you are interested in learning more or having one of us lend a hand writing a shot list or discussing talent please reach out we are here and we love to help our contributors on every level, especially on the creative side. Anything we can offer, we are here to help make shooting lifestyle as easy and as profitable as possible. With 20 years producing lifestyle stock under our belts we are confident that we can help you increase your revenue for 2015. Drop us a line, lets talk stock.

The colors and effort to get this shop in tip top shape will push this image ahead of other industrial photos covering the same subject matter. Then add the unique POV, the movement of an employee placed ever so perfectly to support and you can tell right away that this was produced by a serious professional. Every right angle true, this image was well thought out and beautifully executed.

The placement of the model is everything in this shot. Her placement leads you through the room and places you in the location. As the viewer you can sense yourself inside this hotel room. Add to that the excellent use of placement and balance and this image will sell. Even though the model is small in the shot you can still read this image clearly as a thumb nail due to it's clean lines and excellent use of negative space.

There is so much about this image that makes it a compelling photo, I think it speaks for itself. The location and the color along with the pose and subject matter of the young monk make a perfect marriage. These are the kind of shots that will not only make good returns but will also leave you as a photographer feeling very satisfied. Just a spectacular image and a model release to accompany as well. This is an image that will truly stand the test of time when referring to lifestyle stock.

Once again the color and light used when capturing this image stops the viewer. Add just the right amount of drag to the shutter, clever camera angle and this story reads quickly while still offering something very different for the end buyer. When used well a drag shutter can add so much life to your photos, without ever the need for a model release.

Escaping to a secret hide out should always be accompanied by a camera. Beautiful framing of these folks out on a fun summer day keeps the eye always returning to center. This is not an easy shoot to go out and produce so grabbing shots like this and taking the time to get them right while

on holiday can end up paying for that next escape. Whenever I take a break I spend the first half enjoying my stay and making notes of things I see and experiences that occur around me that I think have photographic potential. Then when I am nearing the end of my stay I take time out on a couple of days to go out on my own and get the shots I saw when the light is be the best. By doing this on all of our holidays I have payed for many of our holidays with just the content I have shot while vacationing. Building a road map of the locations by lighting and timing can make for a fun day and a very productive one at that. Word to the wise, don't bring the family you'll only bore them to death.

Street life is always great to capture but it is tougher than it looks. The mixture of lighting temperatures, people, and action brings this image up off of the page. Controlled chaos takes patience, a good vantage point, and sometimes a lot of frames. Today if no one person can be pulled and reused from an image and be recognized then the image can be represented in commercial sales as apposed to the much lower returning editorial model. A little creative cropping along with the clone and blur tools and we can usually hide the obvious.

Great use of Silhouettes in these next two images. This first one of a man relaxing and fishing tells a story of a guy who doesn't care if he catches a fish or not, his goal is just to enjoy himself. All of that information is offered through the models body language, relaxed and at ease this model doesn't have a care in the world and the final buyer will be able to see that at a quick glance. Excellent storytelling taking place here.

As with the last Silhouette it is important that the models body language supports the goal you are trying to achieve. As with the last shot the model posture tells the viewer a great deal. Here the women with her two walking sticks has a clear feeling of reflection. This location could also offer several options besides this one. You could take other clothing and props and create very different images from the same location. Put her in running gear, hand on hip and water bottle in other hand and you have a completely different result. When you head off to your next shoot make the most out of it and add some extra props to your goodie bag. Think about silhouettes and what props read clearly, add a surf board and you have still another.

Classic image concepts are classic for a reason, they continue to sell. This is the best of the best when it comes to a pristine image of a young girl looking out over the horizon. Because the photographer chose to use very iconic props for this shot, this image will have very long legs that will carry it's sales for years and years to come. The light is majestic supporting the concept of the image, everything fits here and by choosing the props that were used the model has a very worldly look, she could be European or she could be American. The broader your brush you apply the more buyers you will attract with your work.

A great use of a low angle across the water combined with the soft tones and the subject matter make this image as beautiful as it is practical. The hues of this image will have as much to do with the sales history as the subject matter. Often images that fit the bill for the subject at hand will then be narrowed down for the color palette they offer as the buyer's project may also require matching of specific colors or tones.

This shot offers up a faceless vacationer, it could be anyone but most of all they are alone and relaxing. The use of a drag shutter to keep motion in the water offers extra dimension to this image. Add a great sunset, HDR to handle the wide exposure latitude along with one of my favorite photo tricks, Stanley Kubrick's "One Point Perspective" and I expect this image to sell quite well over time. To add, it was my brilliant son Parson that came up with the idea to cover my balding head with a hat, bravo' Parson. To learn a bit more on the classic Kubrick trick click HERE.

I added this shot to share how to star in your own shots. Actually it was Parson who took this image and expects to be compensated 10% of ALL future sales. If you don't have an extra kid hanging around or don't want to split your money, might I suggest you purchase one of these wireless remotes for your camera.

Canon: Click HERE

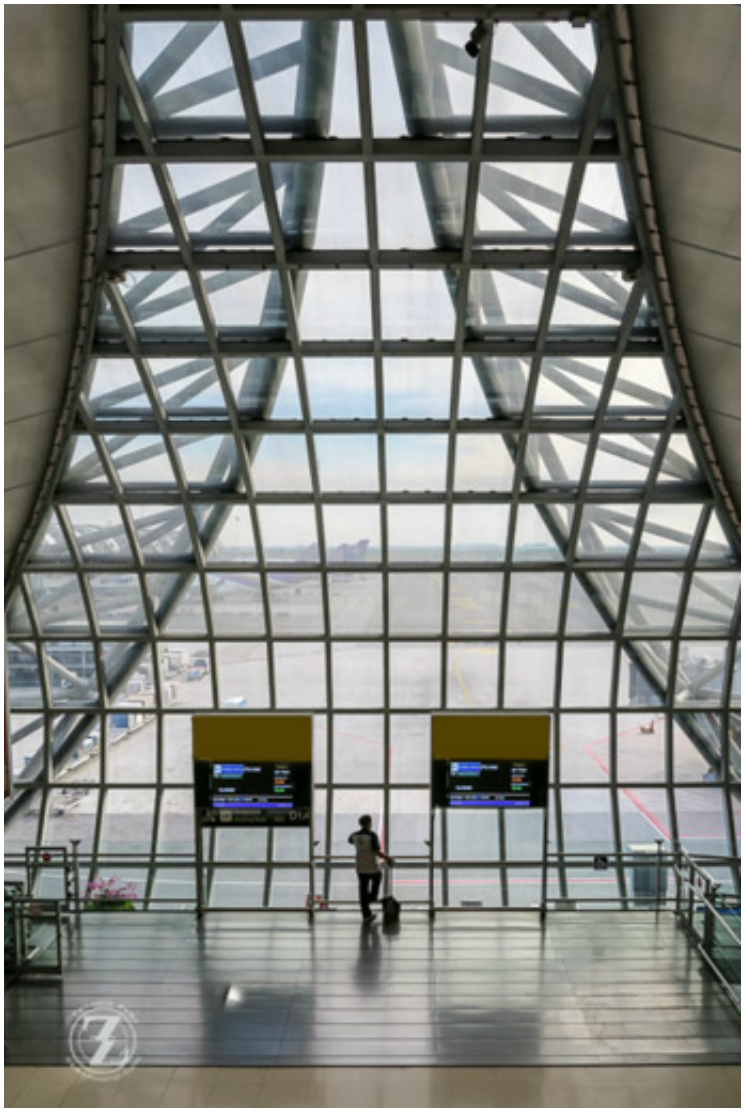
Nikon: Click HERE

They are super cheap and as long as you hide one of your hands in your poses you can fire away

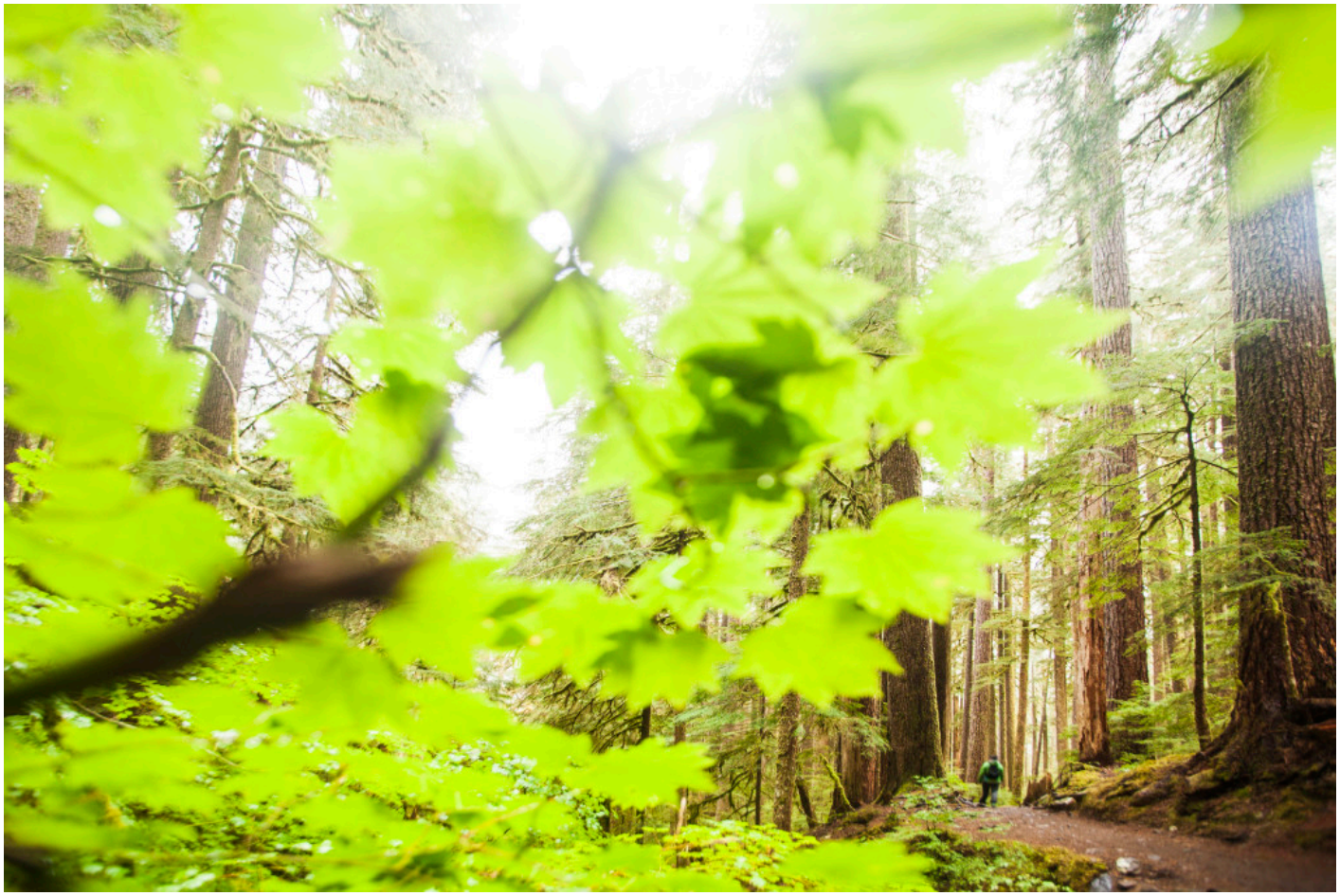
all day keeping modeling costs to a minimum while adding some new selfies to your Facebook page at the same time :)

Here is an example of me shooting me at 6:00 a.m. all alone. My son doesn't get up at 6:00 for anything on holiday so this was a great chance to test out my wireless shutter release. This image was shot with a 9 stop neutral density filter on the front of the lens. This is what allowed for long enough exposures to turn the waves to a milky haze. Not only are these exposures long (longest 40 seconds) it was a five bracket HDR. You have to get a model that can focus and stay incredibly still but it is possible to shoot HDR's of people with very long exposures. I hope this shot sells but it was more about having fun than producing with a buyer in mind. Don't forget to have fun while you are working it can't always be fun, but I believe it should be the driving force whenever possible.

Shooting over someone's shoulder takes the right image and the right model, adding the person to this shot takes the viewer along for the ride. There are two options when shooting over someone's shoulder. First this option is a great tool to get the viewer to focus on the amazing surroundings and view while still offering the human element to the shot. The second option being to center the person directly in the image. This is tough but sometimes it’s your only angle. One way to make the most of this situation would be to hold the camera up as high as possible still including the person in front but allowing the viewer to be involved with the view as well. The need for the right props and costume is an absolute if you are going to consider adding your model to the center of such an image. Also you need to carry focus on your model, if the view or horizon goes soft you will be fine but if the person in the middle of the image isn't sharp the image may be a tough sell.



The addition of the people or even just a person can add a great sense of scale to your grand locations. By adding the nondescript person to this image the photographer not only offers a clear sense of scale to the viewer, but what was once an interesting architectural shot becomes a broader applied story of today's traveller. You would think this was a highly executed and stylized production piece but it's not. It doesn't matter how you get it, what it takes is an eye that can create or capture an image that clearly reads to it's viewers. This image reads clearly at any size and pulls the viewer straight in.



Adding a person doesn't have to be all about the person. Our customers at Spaces have become accustomed to our great locations. If you can add the human element while still keeping the feel of your location being the primary focus you can make more than one customer happy. Take your shot using the environment as the main focus and the person supporting then flip that idea and make the person the cameras focus. You get two shots out of one location and you doubled your effort in a few short minutes. It doesn’t always work, but it’s a good trick to keep up your sleeve. This is a great use of space that shows the photographers strong understanding for their subject matter. Knowing your subject always helps especially in creating unique imagery like this photo. You might try making a list of subjects you know really well. Have you shot any of them recently?

Here again we have such a strong color palette, the eye is forced to take notice when these complimentary colors are combined. The story offers up words like, peaceful, serene, relaxed, and escape, all because of the addition of the person in the canoe. Take out the canoe and we still have a beautiful setting but by adding this one subject to the photo the sales potential becomes massive in comparison.

These next two images share what can only be truly captured by someone that lives and breaths the lifestyle. The message in this first one offers a lot to potential buyers. The feeling of freedom coupled with the exhilaration of healthy living, add competition to the mix and this image should see multiple applications over its life. The placement could not be more perfect, another example of an image that would be impossible to create as a producer. If you have hobbies or passions in your life please take the time to record them you have the knowledge to create images that others could never begin to understand or have access to.

Another beautiful example of living and breathing your subject. This again is not a shot you can just set out to get on a sunny day. The understanding of light and it's application in this image guarantee’s it's sale over time. Here is a another great example of an image that offers it's buyers a base hue or color tone that some buyers will be looking for to enhance their spread. The rule of thirds is perfectly applied offering the addition of clear open space if the buyer needs room for copy.

Attention to detail and great casting will keep this image above it's competition for years to come. The time the photographer took to obtain the location, cast the talent, prop the set, focus on wardrobe and produce consistent results frame after frame shows an excellent result of a day in the life. Here is an example of what can be obtained when you take the time to craft a shoot. This shoot produced over 30 selects from the photographers efforts. I am certain the returns on this production will hold up for years to come. I will share three image from this shoot, all of them offer very real moments into the lives of this pretend family.

Sometimes an image can go from very good to EXCELLENT! This image is a great example. I wish I could give you all a recipe to make this happen every time you push the button, but alas this is what we hunt for and only on occasion we nail it like the photographer has here. The serene look this woman has is an absolute moment in time caught forever. These little nuances are what will make some of your work soar over the rest. Consider this, it is what makes all of us go out and shoot again and again. The chance to grab a moment in time that you made happen is a very rewarding feeling both personally and monetarily.

Capturing mood and emotion is a very important factor for becoming successful at shooting lifestyle stock. One place that will save you so much work is to spend the money on great talent. This woman delivered time and time again for this photographer when it came to sharing her emotions with the camera. Her pose here is natural and not forced, you might think it easy, but it takes great talent and a great photographer to create these private moments and make them appear real to the viewer. Great talent is hard to find, but when you do find them hang onto them and treat them right. You do not need a stable of 50 excellent models to shoot lifestyle. If you can find 5 great models that can deliver time and time again you are much better off sticking to the talent that makes you money. One of our contributing photographers took two models and headed off across the globe. They shot only these two models for every location they visited, but the talent they chose was simply the best. Hundreds of photos were created over a few weeks and the images shined because the talent was so strong. Don't make your life to difficult when you find good talent, use them, a lot. Over time you will become a team that understands what each other needs to achieve perfection. The time you save and the results will pay for themselves every time.

I keep bringing this topic up, but I believe it is what stands behind a truly great stock photo. This image brings the viewer into the shot and makes them actually feel something. I can feel the snow hit me in the face, and the poses and information in the background tells me we're all having fun. Great use of spontaneity and interaction with the models. If there is one way to keep things loose and keep production moving it is to have fun on a set. Easily said, but often much harder to pull off. I believe if you worry too much about failing you will stifle your creative mind. Might I suggest going into your shoots with the attitude that you are a BILLIONAIRE. I have been using this technique for years and it can help a great deal in chasing away fears and anxiety that will stifle your creativity. This image either takes one of those lucky stumbled on moments that happen every now and then, or this can be a clearly written out shot before you even leave your warm office. Next time you are going to shoot something you have personal experience with in your past, might I suggest you take some on a mental field trip to find the gold that is waiting in your memory's hard drive. We are photographers and what separates us from everyone else is we are observers of all that is around us. If you don’t already, when you start to write your next shot list, close your eyes and take yourself back there. Who hasn't had snow ball fights with either kids or friends. But would you have thought to take this shot if you were on this location? This is very cleaver photography and with time and discipline you can start to see these moments all around you. There are oodles

of them stored in that big brain of yours. Just for practice choose a subject, now close your eyes and look back through your happy memory bank. If this is something you already do, you know what I speak of. If you haven't, please take some time to try it. As with anything it takes practice and the right state of mind to get good. In the end you might find it the most relaxing part of your work schedule, it definitely is mine.

- Up Up And Away: The World Of UAV's -

This past year we have seen a huge growth in the sale and use of cameras attached to flying objects. The world of UAV photography is getting a lot of attention. Of coarse this new technology

is going to grab everyone's attention. Just the mention of a hovering one eyed bird in the sky and visions of Jules Verne come racing to mind.

This new market has caught the eye of the consumer looking for a new way to take photos or video and at the same time have fun playing with a great toy. The recreational side of these new vehicles should not be overlooked as they can offer hours of fun for everyone as well as a great way to get some new perspective on your images.

Now, for those of you that want to make revenue from a birds eye view we have a lot to share with you. This is an advanced coarse in UAV's, so please put your seat in the upright position and prepare for take off.

- Laws And Legal -

Although outside the United States, everyone is having a great time flying UAV's, the FAA in the U.S. is still trying to figure out what to do. Surprising huh? Right now they are saying that you can fly, but you cannot charge for your efforts. So we are in a clearly grey area by producing stock photography from the sky as we are not being paid directly for our services by a paying client. If you want to shoot a business here in the U.S. and charge them for it, your accountant is going to have his hands full. Not saying it can't be done, but it is pushing the grey area at this time.

Here in the U.S. thanks to the rest of the world not having an issue, it looks like the FAA is going to be forced to make this a viable business model but until then we are dancing with the devil if we try to charge for our services. Below are a few recent links on the subject. The newest report is saying two years before they will be able to make a decision. During this two year period we are going to see some very strong business models developing from this new POV. Andersen Ross may not be the biggest player but getting on the cutting edge of new technology could lead to future opportunities and will keep us diversified in the image making business. Rolling the dice maybe, but if and when the ruling goes through it will be the ones that took the risk that will be leading the way in this emerging photographic industry. Here are some links to the ever changing legal side surrounding UAV's.

FAA.gov click HERE

Drone Law click HERE

FAA Approves click HERE

So lets all imagine that the FAA are super chill and they follow reasonable precautions to keep everyone safe on airliners and clearly define a working license for UAV's, what's next? This is where it might get a bit technical, but with this new technology we have found that finding the right

information is about as hard as it gets right now. So skim through, it may not be for you, but if you have even an inkling of what tomorrow may bring, we have a ton of data to share.

- Where Do We Begin? -

To even make this move feasible for us, we needed to have the support of a pilot of UAV's. Flying one of these expensive toys is not a game, it takes great skill and a lot of practice. We are very fortunate to be supported by our friend and Spaces contributor Ned Frisk. Ned has spent many hours practicing and getting his skill set dialed in. This takes a strong technical mind as there are really no books or video's to help get you started. From building out the copter (every little wire and every connector soldered) to understanding how to operate the vehicle, Ned is a perfect fit for our team and it takes a team if you want to do this right.

Ned does have one trick to offer for any of you that are interested in becoming a pilot. Here is a link to one of the smallest drones you can buy. They are around $60, once you are able to make this little guy go wherever you want and land it on a dime then moving up to a larger UAV is that much easier.

Ned makes it look easy. I tried flying that little ladybird UAV and crashed it time and time again. Ned flies it around the house without even thinking and can land the little guy on a platform that is exactly the size of the Ladybird, until you try, trust me it is a very steep learning curve. To be a good pilot I truly believe you have to be passionate about flying UAV's, without that enthusiasm the task can become very daunting.

We have not had a serious crash since we started and this is directly related to the time that Ned took learning on a tiny version and his passion for technical challenges. Fingers crossed, no matter what you do there is always going to be the chance of a crash so before you grab the joy stick make sure everything is properly insured.

HERE is the link to the Ladybird.

- What You Will Need To Have True Control -

There are many ways to achieve the result of getting a camera into the air using a UAV. We have spent 5 months of trial and ERROR just to get to where we feel comfortable to start shooting stock footage and stills. We will only share what we have learned. At no time is this the only way to get footage from the air, but our goal is to share what it takes to offer stock footage and stills from this amazing POV with professional results.

We are about to share data that cannot be accessed anywhere at this time. The knowledge and information for commercial UAV's is very limited we hope we can help you in deciding if this is something your business might be interested in exploring. With that said please keep this creative brief close to your heart. We love to share information about this ever changing industry but at the same time we have put a great deal of time and expense into the learning curve and until the rest of the world catches up we would love it if you kept this to just Spaces contributors.

The price is high right now to enter this game as a professional, but we believe it will not be long before the price begins to drop and the technology gets easier and safer to use. If we all get a head start on this technology it won't seem quite so daunting if and when it becomes a regular tool for us image makers.

- The UAV -

There are so many options to choose from when it comes to the UAV itself. The market is flooded with UAV's that have on board cameras with high definition video all ready to go for about $500 up to $2900. That is all well and good for family fun and weekend outings but when it comes to creating commercial grade video or stills the game starts to change in a very big way.

The one area that is going to keep most players out right now is the need to be able to understand, build, and maintain this new technology. There are several companies out there that offer build outs on UAV's but to have someone else build out your rig really leaves you with little understanding of your system if something should go wrong. Trust me things will go wrong at first, a lot. Our advice is if you want to get into this industry you need to know it from the ground up. Ned is our IT everything guy. We could not have accomplished this learning curve without his huge brain as part of the team.

We like the folks at www.quadrocopter.com They are a very skilled group of people that understand UAV's from the ground up. With that said when it came time to build out our second UAV we ended up using components from three different UAV companies to make the most robust machine we could. As with many companies each does one or two things really well leaving us having to use components from three different manufacturers to produce a bird we felt could handle the job the best. We are never trying to cut prices as the results could come crashing down on us. It has been important for us to use the best gear in the industry so it's done right the first time, or second or third, depending :).

- Payload -

First thing you need to know is what is your payload going to be? How much weight do you need

your UAV to lift? I share this as a starting point, as we did not, and it cost us big time. Once we had added everything we needed to make things work (focus control, wireless signal transfer, start/stop function) we were over on our payload and had to go back shopping for a new UAV. That was an expensive mistake and if we can offer you one thing from this brief, it will be how to avoid our costly mistakes.

There are several elements that come into factor when assessing the weight you will be carrying. Every UAV has a maximum payload it can carry based on the distribution boards power, the motors power, and the size of your propellers. This is not the actual weight of the UAV but it's payload we are discussing.

There are many components needed to get your images from the air to you safely and the camera itself is just a small part of the actual payload. Let's discuss equipment needed and what the payload of these items will total. This will help us to not only establish what UAV we are going to need but also what gimbal you will need to control your camera once it is airborne.

As we have discussed, our payload weight is what we need to establish so we can be sure that the UAV we decide to build or purchase is significant enough for our payload. Here is a list of all the components that make up our UAV's payload. We have added a list of the items and their weight. There are alternative brands that you can purchase to achieve the same results. We spent a great deal of time researching and we think we can save you a lot of stress and at the same time keep you from over spending. These are not the cheapest options but from our research the difference in cost for a lesser brand is only gong to cost you time and more money in the long run.

Gimbal: Movi M5 - 4.75 lb.

Camera: Canon 5D mark 3 - 1.89 lb.

Canon 5D battery: 2.7 oz.

Zeiss Distagon Lenses: 1.7 lb - 2.1 lb.

You can save a great deal of weight by using Canon or Nikon lenses, but we prefer the glass of the Zeiss and believe the results warrant the extra weight.

Redrock Microremote wireless focus: - 1.2 lb.

Teredek Bolt 300 1080p wireless video downlink transmitter: 10 oz.

2 Lipo batteries for power: 3.5 oz. each

Add on some extra zips to tie down cables, clamps to hold everything in place and an articulating

arm to hold the base station for the Follow Focus and we now know just how much our payload is for our UAV. Now we can move forward and make a strong educated decision on what we will need in our UAV to get our gear off the ground.

Our total payload for take off (minus the memory card) is a whopping: 10 lb.

We want our UAV to be able to lift this weight without any stress so we purchased a heavy lift kit that can carry 12 lbs. easily. By keeping our base weight well bellow our UAV's capacity we can fly easier (better response). The battery life is longer, and the chance of a crash is greatly diminished. We can have 2 of our 8 motors go out at the same time and still bring our gear back safely to the ground. Redundancy is very important when you are flying this much money around.

- The Components -

Here is a brief explanation of what each separate component does to help get your images and video back down to earth and saved to a drive.

Teredek Bolt 300 :

The Teredek Bolt 300 sends a 1080p signal up to 300’ with zero latency (responds in real time). The distance can be extended with relays set every 300’. The Bolt 300 sends our 1080p signal

back to us wirelessly. Without this device we would be guessing at what we were shooting and when. The need for almost zero latency in your signal means the difference between nailing the focus or being a second behind what you are actually recording.

Redrock Microremote Follow Focus:

The Redrock Microremote Follow Focus consists of a base station for power, a motor and wheel to control your focus, and a finger wheel to control the focus using just your thumb (used for one man

set up with Movi). There are a couple of other options on the market, all of them seem to test well so this is the one palace we went with a slightly less expensive manufacturer. The biggest concern is there is zero latency in your movements. You need that motor to react within milliseconds, or you are going to be just behind on all your focus. It is a must to have a system that is supported in real time. The thumb focus is great if you are a single user as it can be attached to the handle bars of the Movi. Since we are operating in two person mode we have never used the finger wheel but it is handy to have just in case.

Atmos Ninja 5” monitor/recorder:

To be able to record our video and stills directly to a source rather than just the card in the camera we think this tool is incredible. The Atmos Ninja 5” recorder/monitor with the addition of the

Teredek Bolt 300 allows us to record our content wirelessly to another source besides just our cameras card. This allows you the ability to start, stop, replay and save your data to a separate drive and review on the 5” screen, or plug directly into our laptop to record, replay, and review on the fly.

Without this tool we would be having to pull the card every time we want to check and review what we just shot. With the Atmos this now can be done while we are recording and also offers redundancy in backup by saving our data not only to the card on the camera but to our drive in the Ninja as well. Control over record stop/start and replay are a vital part of keeping the work flow moving as quickly as possible.

Movi Controller:

The Movi controller is a very powerful tool. We can control all of our cameras movements, focus, zoom, and iris, with the remote wirelessly. Dampening can be set to adjust how quickly your

movements are in relation to the joystick. The two dials on the left side control, zoom and focus and there is one more dial on the far left side (not visible in photo) that can control your iris as well. The monitor mounts to the top and to make it easy to handle we mount the entire control to a tripod and then sit in a chair to operate.

- The Gimbal -

The most impressive part of the system and also a tool that can be used with or without the UAV is the gimbal. There are many gimbals available on the market today but we are once again going to focus on the very best the market has to offer. We chose the Movi M5 as our gimbal for many reasons. They are the leaders in the business. They make their own motors and their reviews stand for themselves. Strong builds, reliability, and great support, has made them the #1 gimbal in the industry.

- So What Is A Gimbal? -

The gimbal is a device that controls the swings, tilt, and pan of your camera from a wireless remote control. Each pivot point is controlled by a small motor, these motors are all tied together with a CPU that works very much in the same way as the Segway. Instead of the motors working to keep your Segway upright the motors in the Movi are working to keep the camera steady and remove any bounce or jar an operator might give a camera while operating thus keeping the footage smooth as silk.

The Movi can easily be attached or removed from the UAV with the flip of a switch and the press of a button. We can move our Movi from UAV to hand held in about a minute.

We are very excited about our UAV work, but to be straight it is the Movi that is the game changer for us. The Movi makes producing smooth video that we could not create in the past without dollies and a great deal of time, skill and money (especially time). The platform creates results similar to a steadi-cam but instead of taking months or years to become skilled you can have it up and running with great results the day the package arrives at your door.

Don’t let the weight fool you though, try holding a 10 lb. weight out in front of you for 10 minutes you are going to feel it, I assure you. If you are out of shape you are going to feel it, and fast. Time will help develop the muscles needed, but if you are serious about stepping into the Movi ring please contact us and we will be happy to share a work out routine that will help develop the muscles needed to stay strong throughout the day. However, when your work starts making you go to the gym you might want to consider another profession :)

We had established our payload earlier for our UAV, but there is one other payload to pay close

attention to. Your gimbal is also made to carry only a certain amount of weight as well. If you overload your gimbal you are going to run into trouble burning out the CPU in your gimbal as well as the motors. Our gimbal can handle a 5 lb. payload and we have her maxed out. In hindsight it would have been better to get the Movi M15 but at the time it was not yet available. The Movi M5 handles the job great but we are so close to max payload and always trying to reduce the weight, even a few ounces here or there can make all the difference. The M5 has been a great choice to get us started but the M15 is looking pretty sweet after our initial investment.

We can set the Movi to single operator mode, allowing the movements of the camera to be controlled by the operator and how fast the operators moves their arms. From a soft setting that allows more freedom of movement to a much stiffer setting that takes away all the bumps and jars even at a full running pace, it is the settings that control the amount of resistance needed for each movement. These settings can be very exact and to make life easy as they are all fully savable to the Movi's menu for future applications. As you build your settings eventually you have a collection that can be applied to just about anything you encounter.

You can also operate the Movi with a two or three person team. One holding the Movi and the other operating the remote control, and still another just racking focus. When you add a team of two or three to the work flow with each operating in tandem the Movi becomes a tool that stands alone.

We could talk all day about the Movi but instead of boring you with text please click through on the links offered to see some of what the Movi can do. Start off with the NAB show and the Freefly presentation to get acquainted with the equipment and work your way through the links to see what some folks are already achieving with these new tools.

My favorite is the Ajax soccer match. One take from start to finish, it makes my back hurt just watching it (look closely at the very end when the Movi goes behind the goal, you will see one mistake where they got the Movi handle bars in the frame other than that it is perfect!). Click through on all the links bellow to learn more about the Movi and if it is right for your business model. The last two are our first attempts at using the Movi in the coming months we will be sharing our results on a regular basis. We hope this saves you a great deal of time and energy. I would have killed for this information 6 months ago but it was no where to be found.

Movi links:

Vincent Laforet at NAB click HERE

1st short with Movi click HERE

Getting Started click HERE

Our first tests with our UAV click HERE

Our First test with Movi M5 click HERE

More video links on the Movi:

This is a great example of using the Movi first time with a single operator click HERE

Soccer click HERE

The Pros click HERE

Wedding photographers single user click HERE

- Second Operator Remote Control -

Okay lets ratchet this up a bit more. You want to take your production to the next level? The addition of a second operator running the swings, tilts and pan of the camera completely changes the tool's applications. By adding a second operator you can have the Movi in the hands of one person while another person controls the swings, tilts, focus, and zoom of the camera from a remote wireless controller. In a perfect world you would have three people, with one person dedicated to focus only. The controller is a bit intimidating at first glance and the first time you get your hands on it with a second operator it’s a bit like an episode of The Three Stooges.

With just a little time and practice, the two operators start to work as one. Add the use of a headset for the two operators to communicate directly and the entire picture starts to become crystal clear.

With Ned handling the Movi and me on the remote for the swings and tilts this machine really starts to show off it’s capabilities. Camera movements that would take all day, some even not achievable without the Movi, start to become as easy as you can imagine them to be. If you watch our first clip of the girl dancing, trying to get this revolving view and constant change of angles and focus would be almost impossible. Keeping focus, changing camera angle, keeping it smooth while revolving in a tight space, becomes almost simple. With the Movi, and talent that had never worked professionally, we had it in three takes and we were on to the next shot.

Just so we are clear, in first operator mode the Movi can be controlled by one operator steering the Movi by turning their hands in the direction they want it to pan or tilt while watching on a small monitor attached to the handle bars. In second operator mode the Movi is held by one operator

with a small monitor on the handle bars to keep themselves aware of their position while the second operator controls a joystick for the camera movements and a dial for adjusting the focus or zoom from a separate controller. If you like video games this is just the ticket for you. My video game skills were on hold for the past 25 years but with a little practice it all starts to become very intuitive.

Here are some images showing off the final build out of the Movi M5 with all it’s goodies. We have shared some information on what we have added but we still have to share what everything does.

Canon
EOS 5D
Mark II
Torque

The Movi M5 complete with:

Canon 5D Mark 3

Zeiss Distagon 35 mm lens

Teredek Bolt 300

Redrock Microremote

Upgraded Flex Cables for Redrock Microremote w/ voltage regulator

Quadracopters Stop/Start for Canon 5D

Rail clamps

Articulating Arm

2 Lipo Batteries

Low Battery Voltage Beepers

One more thing to remember when operating a Movi, you can’t set it down without the proper device to hold it. We have a Movi C-stand mount manufactured by Cinema Oxide, it allows the Movi to be held by a c-stand or tripod when not in use by the operator. This is super nice to have on set, the Movi came with a simple plastic stand for operating but the addition of the C-stand holder by Cinema Oxide makes the day just that much easier.

There are so many different models on the market, we thought it might be of interest to see some of the leaders in the industry. Let’s take a quick look at some of the UAV’s available, from the basic fun for dad model, to the most sophisticated versions used in the commercial industry.

WL Toys V959 Quadcopter

Inspire 1

Spread Wing S9000

Gryhphon Dynamics GD-X8 800 Folding Frame

Cinestar 8

- Pilot Ready For Takeoff -

WOAH! Okay the pilot is ready but there is so much to do to get this right, and before you lift 30K into the air you want to make absolutely sure that you are ready. Remember driving a car for the first time? Even though you had watched your parents drive for years and took classes and passed tests it still took time to get comfortable behind the wheel. Let me assure you that even though we were completely prepared and had done everything we needed to assure ourselves that our system was ready it still took a lot of guts to lift that baby off the ground the first time, edit that… the first 20 times :)

- First Test Flights -

On our first flights we did not want to trust our skill set with all the goodies attached, so for the first few weeks the flights consisted of a ten pound weight strapped to the bottom. This was the next step in getting familiar with a big rig after flying the toys around.

Once Ned had put in the time and effort to get comfortable with this bird, the camera and all the accessories for capturing in flight were ready to be added, it was time for our first flight. Since Ned and I had been working with the Movi on set and not attached to the UAV our skills were already seeing improvement long before we even turned the UAV on. In no time we saw dramatic results, a big part of that was getting to a comfort level that could handle our anxiety and still think straight with that much money floating around in the sky. It truly is a situation that if you had money to burn learning would be so much easier as you would trust yourself more. It takes time to trust your own intuition and until you get the practice in you are going to stay nervous. A true “catch 22“ if ever there was one (too nervous to fly but you have to fly not to be nervous).

I like to share the mistakes almost more than anything, I feel it is our mistakes that can save all of you the headache we had to deal with first time out. So here is the first big mistake, and we kept doing it over and over again. You have to start your camera before you take off as there was no way to start/stop with our remote.

Thank goodness that before we could train ourselves correctly there was a new piece of gear that allows us to start/stop from our remote, phew! This is the crazy part of working in an industry that is so new, there is little information on how to get started. By the time we run into a problem there quite often has been something new designed and put on the market to solve the problem. Many issues are yet to be seen so it first takes users to understand where the shortcomings are before action can be made to correct them. Funny to see testing on a device that may always be in beta development. The Movi and all the newest gear is going to get easier and easier for consumers to master as time goes on and more people put it through every possible scenario.

We have helped by fixing a couple of things ourselves and shared it with the guys over at Freefly, the makers of the Movi. Even though there is a community of users on forums not many have the inclination to share what they have worked hard to figure out. Until this market has been truly developed there are going to be secrets that no one wants to share.

Testing is done and we are ready for first flight with camera. The weather was perfect, we took our first unit up to the baseball field near my home (off season so we had it all to ourselves). More anxiety than anything else and the first flight went off without any issues. Our palms were covered in sweat and we were both breathing rather hard after only a ten minute flight. It was such a rush of adrenaline to be flying a camera for the first time. The idea of being able to take our camera over the 100’ evergreens to see the ocean was anything short of magic. It was a much more relaxed experience for me as I was not piloting, always bating Ned to take the UAV higher and higher, we looked like a couple of kids with a very expensive toy.

Now the interesting part of the puzzle, how do we make money? As I stated earlier, at this moment it is a law in the U.S. that we cannot charge for our services at this time. Clients are not an option without some rather creative accounting, but we are good with that, we will make our money shooting stock footage and stills as this does not fall under the category established by the FAA.

The other side of the coin is we can do trades with this new tool. We can gain access for our stock needs at locations that need the service of our UAV. We get access to their location with a signed property release and in trade they get all our footage. This is not new for our business plan, we have never paid for a location in all our years of shooting stock. Trade outs with businesses that need your service is a win/win for everyone.

I am not going to give away our entire game but I will say we would never venture into any research and development without having a pretty good idea of what and where we feel this new technology can produce revenue. Once we get our ideas from the drawing board to the camera we will start to share with you some of our concepts that have come to fruition.

This industry is going to be much broader than just commercial photography, if you have a kid at home trying to decide what to do with their life you might have them look into UAV's. We feel certain that in a very short time there will be a great demand for photographers that either specialize in this field or offer it as part of their ever expanding business model.

One last little thing to consider. When speaking of UAV's we would love it if everyone let go of the word "DRONE". The term itself is very intimidating and if not corrected will become the permanent handle for this emerging new market. The less daunting we make this new industry the more open the public and the state will be when reviewing and making decisions about the future of UAV's.

We hope even if you aren't interested, that you are at now more aware of this new industry and what it takes to add UAV photography and video to your business model. If we can be of any help in answering anything to do with UAV's please contact us, we promise to share all our secrets.

- Picture Perfect -

I always love it when I can point my camera at something and just record it perfectly without any lighting or effort. Those magic moments when everything comes together and you just say WOW! Unfortunately you can't make a living waiting around for the perfect moment before you push the button. We as creative professionals need to achieve results every time we take the time to create an image.

To wrap up this quarter's creative brief I want to revisit the need to make your content shine every time you send a file off to market. If we want potential buyers to take notice of our work we have to take the extra time and effort to truly make our images stand out.

We can all improve our skills every day without having to ever leave our desk, as today's online support for photoshop is incredible. The information that is free, used to be heavily guarded secrets and those secrets of today can be obtained for a small price from one of the better online centers.

I want to share with you a couple of the better online Photoshop classes so you can start to make your already beautiful pictures that much more spectacular. I won't spend a great deal of time reviewing them as they are both very good and can really improve your skills.

Linda for Photoshop click HERE

Russell Browns for Photoshop click HERE

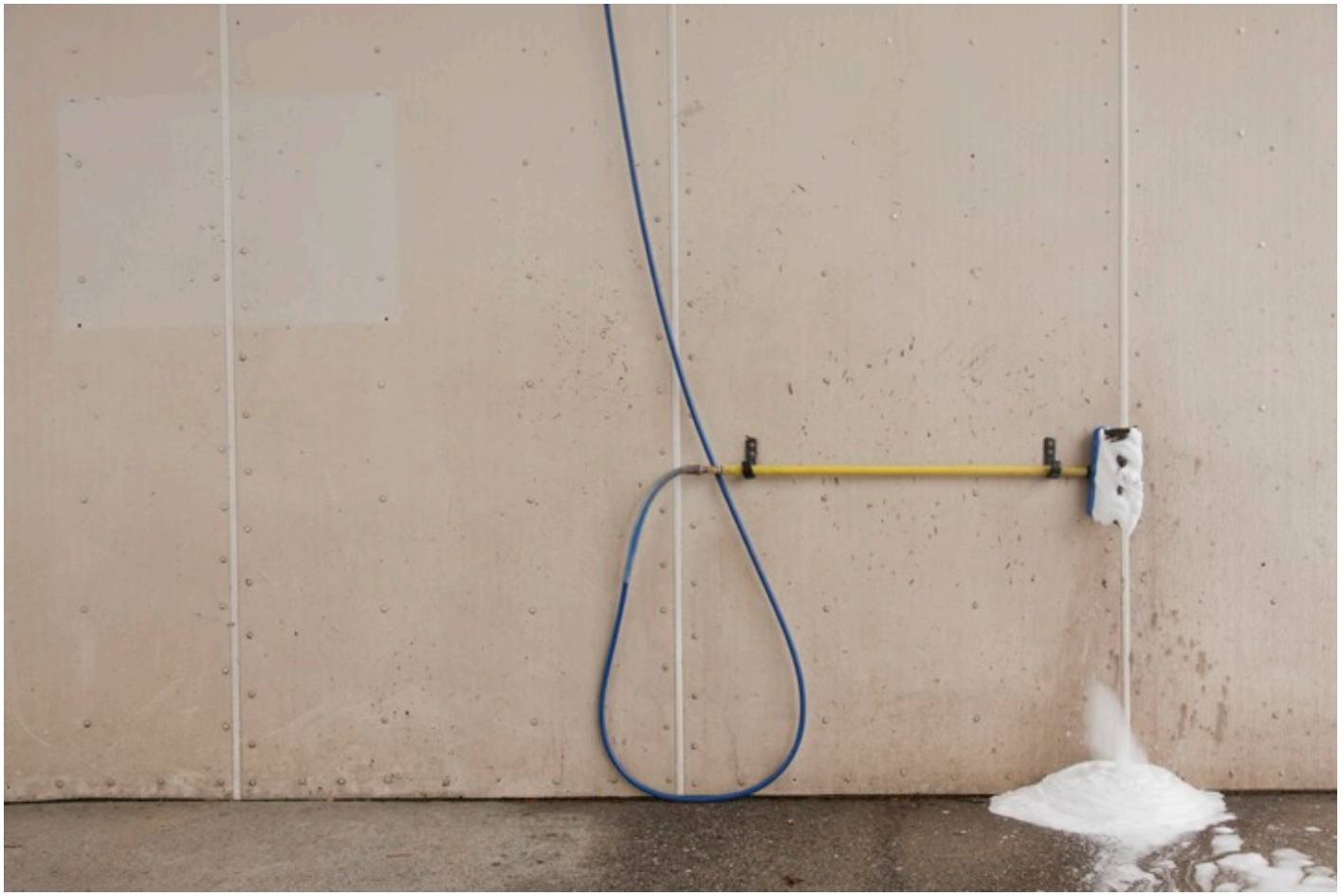
Photoshop Learn click HERE

I thought it might be of interest and help to offer up some of my own work from start to finish. First the way it was shot was a straight Raw or HDR version of the image with no retouching. Then I want to share the final version of each image as well. You will see quite a difference from the beginning to the finished image on each of these examples. I would like to also note that you don't need to take Photoshop to the next dimension. I am not making people float around the living room or adding wings to my dog this is a practice in image retouching that enhances your images and makes them that much more desirable for the buyer. If you know where you are going before you start on an image journey the easier that journey will be and the end results are always a big improvement.

If you find yourself wanting to grow your skills might I suggest baby steps. Add some density to a skyline or maybe just enhance the color palette a bit. I feel it is very important that when venturing into something new you must be greeted with some sense of success if you want to stay motivated. So be kind to yourself when it comes to self education, your attitude makes all the difference. Here are a few images I have produced for Spaces, from the original file to where they eventually ended up after my retouching. I think you will agree the effort taken on these images made the difference between mediocre sales and returns that keep returning.

On this image the biggest challenge was bringing down the the exposure on the top section above the door. I had to isolate the area that was too bright above the door with pen paths and then adjusted the exposure of that section until it started to match the rest of the barn's interior. Also at the top of the image were a group of electrical cords I removed by darkening the area that they ran along. Then it was time to do some barn cleaning, the green hoses were removed, the floor was cleaned just enough, and the exposure was set to add some depth and texture to what was a rather flat image. Taking the time in the first place to coil the cords running off the walls adds to the finished look of this barn image.

First thing was to make the truck unidentifiable for legal reasons. I removed the white top and rack, removed the spare tire off the back, boxed out the top of the truck to give it a more square look. Then closed the door, removed the man and dog and started cleaning the beach. It might not be something you would consider but cleaning the beach is the attention to detail that will make the difference between reasonable sales and an image that will return again and again. Add a little color to the sky and some neutral density to the foreground and this rather boring image offers a great story that can be used for many applications.



Having to rely on available light made this image very flat and uninteresting to the eye. Add some gradation to the background to create some directional light and this image starts to jump off the page. Density added to the foam, the back wall had a huge square stain removed (the hardest part of fixing this image) then some additional foam was added to the brush to complete this image.

The most obvious fix on this image is the replacement of outside. The grounds outside were so distracting but because it had snowed that morning and there was snow on the porch. A quick outline with the pen paths tool and the addition of a snowy scene I had in storage and this image starts to offer a unique look and feel for the end buyers needs. The correct crop and removal of any distractions in this image, marks on the floor, scratches on the door, anything and everything that

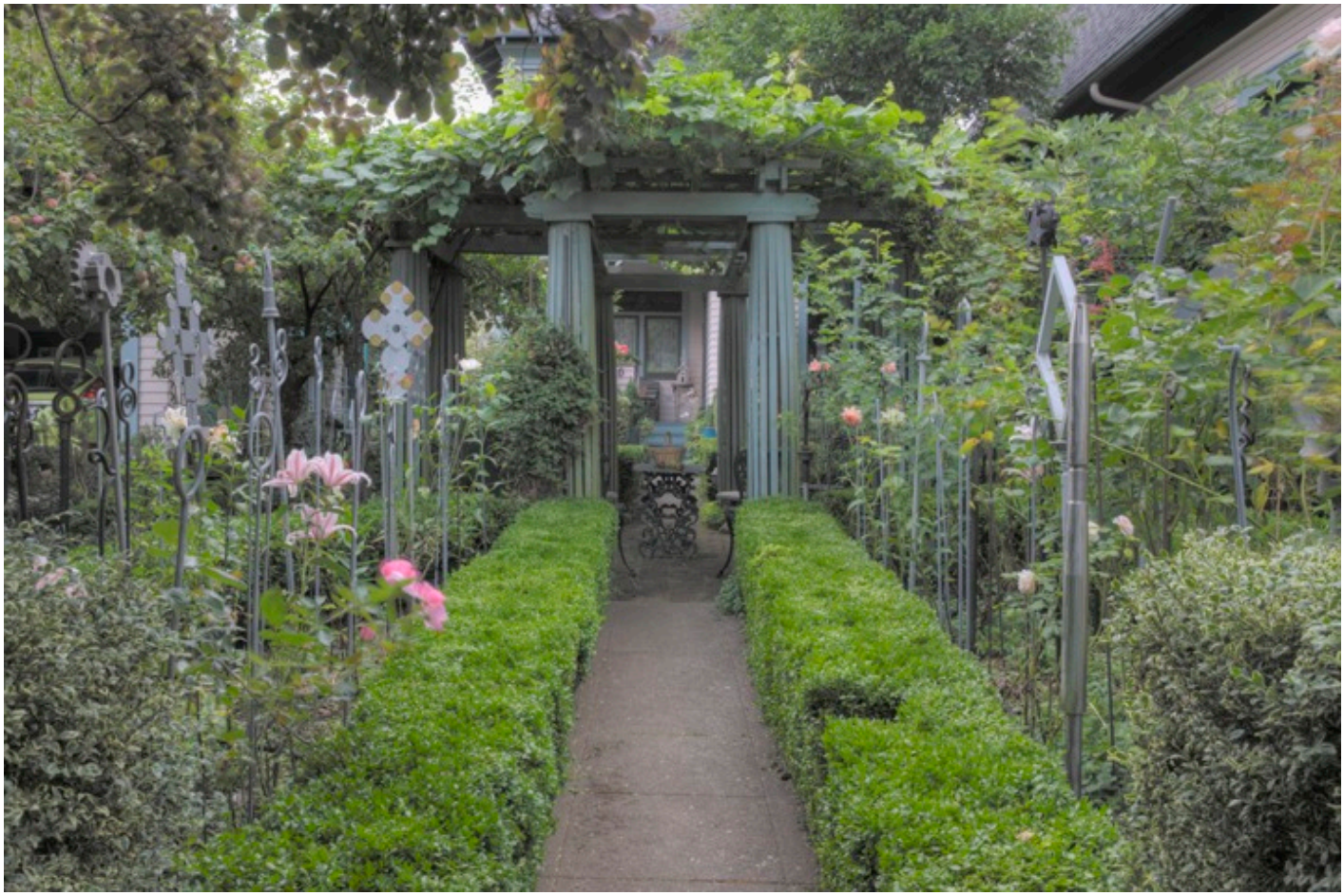
needs to make this image pristine has been accounted for. They might seem like little issues but when a buyer gets your image and finds things they have to clean or fixed the chance of them coming back is severely diminished.

As with almost every image I have shared, this is all about cloning and pen paths. Here I needed to do a selection of the sky, so I pulled out the pen paths tool and made my selection. I cannot repeat this enough, when making selections there is truly only one way to get a clean selection in a reasonable amount of time and that is the pen paths tool. If you don't know how to use the pen paths tool, no worries I am adding a link to a great pen paths tutorial, HERE.

Take some time over the next week to try out the pen paths tool, if you noticed, I was even able to make a perfect selection around the antenna of the RV on the left side of the image. You need to be at 200% or higher to make a clean outline but when it is done there are no loose pixels, missed or rough edges you have to clean due to poor sampling that other selection tools might create, you have a precise selection every time. Once the sky was selected I applied a gradation mask to the sky to give that sense of early morning light. The clone tool was used to remove stuffed animals from RV windows, logos from RV's, hoses, and even a bit of cleaning to the front gravel.

This Gas Station is now just a memory. I passed it about two moths ago and it is long gone. This was a happy accident that I feel helped tell the story much better than I had originally planned. The middle pump's nozzle was twisted around and it looked awkward on the pump, so I tried to fix it. The fix was made and I was ready to shoot when all of a sudden the pump nozzle fell off of the pump and landed out in front of me. That was the ah-ha moment that I realized the story was much better with the pump out on the ground. I placed the pump handle in what I felt was the best spot esthetically and took the photo. I feel the nozzle on the ground pulls you in as a viewer and helps to connect you to the photo.

This had a lot of cleaning to make the final stand out clearly and support a strong graphic feel to the image. Cloning out the back walls wasn’t easy, since I did not have enough wall to clone everywhere it was time to build walls that matched. I do this by making a separate layer and painting the color of the back wall into the areas I want changed. Add some noise, add some gradation and blend until every part of that back wall can be looked at 200% and you cannot tell it was cloned. It takes a little practice, if you ever want a quick crash coarse please drop us a line and we will pass on our tricks.



This was one of those cleanings that was tough to decide when to let it go. At 200% there was always a leaf or two that could be enhanced our removed but there has to be a time when you say, enough is enough. Here the biggest fixes were replacing the areas of the hedge that were thin, cleaning lots of stuff off of the walkway and cropping into the image to force you to look up the path as much as possible. You might think you nailed your position perfectly when you composed your image, sometimes a second look can make the framing that much better. Keep an open mind when looking at your files. Most of the cameras we are working with today allow for cropping and still meet the 50 mb. file requirement. The Birdhouse was placed in the background on the porch replacing a chair that was too loud for the shot. A basket of apples was added to the table to offer the addition of the human element and to add to the story.

Lindstrom & Son Construction

This is an easy fix, remove the logo and this one is ready. I have to say that everyone’s cloning is getting better and better some of you are true masters at the art of retouching. Remember to always check your final’s at 100% or even 200%, look for ghosts or clones that leak into areas that show your retouching. I retouched this image only to have it kicked back to me due to some ghosting along the side of the dump truck where I had used too soft of a brush.

Here was a quick and dirty shot added to the end of a shoot. This was my assistant that donned a cowboy hat and took position to help tell the story. I didn't have releases for the people only the horses so first thing was to remove the people on the left side by the horses. I didn't feel the chair added to the image so it was next to go. I wanted the horse on the right to be placed in a more balanced location in the image so I moved the little guy more into the image frame. Take the color and warm it, use some neutral density to add detail to the hat and this image is ready for market. If I had planned on having this as one of my shots on my shot list before doing the shoot I would have chosen a more appropriate coat for the environment. Every part of your image needs to be thought through in detail to help tell your story to the buyers. The addition of a leather coat or riding jacket would have added even more value to this final image.

When I clone, it is very important to use a sharp brush, if you use a feathered brush you are going to have soft areas in your image when viewed at 100% Soft brushes are easier to apply but they will bite you in the end. You will find that if you can get good with pen paths and cloning you can do anything... well almost anything. All of these fixes I am sharing are all done with cloning and pen paths, with the exception of the gas pump where new walls had to be created.

Time and practice will be the deciding factors on how proficient you become at retouching. Before you send an image off for QC or edit, ask yourself, is my image absolutely pristine and would I be happy as a buyer receiving this file for the money I spent? If you can answer YES to this question, then your image is ready to produce the most revenue it possibly can. If you have any questions about retouching of any kind, please drop us a line. If we don't have the answer we will contact some of our super smart friends to help us all out.

- That's a Wrap -

We are so excited to be entering into a year that shows so much hope and promise. It has been a tough recession, but if you are still here you managed to survive and stay a professional stock photographer. That was no small accomplishment. You should take the time to pat yourself on the back, raise a toast and say I AM AWESOME! So many people fell by the way side during these very tough, past 7 years. Starting a stock agency at the dawn of this financial setback was not the easiest time to decide to enter into the market. Fortunately, Spaces was supported by some of the best in the business. If not for your efforts and refusal to quit, Spaces may not have made it out of those dark days.

Now, with those skinny years finally behind us we are seeing unrivaled growth at Spaces. As we said at the beginning of this brief, we have seen 500% growth over the past year making the upcoming year more exciting and fruitful than ever before.

If there is a subject or topic you feel would be useful to our contributors we would love to hear from you. We do our best to offer up information that is hard to find elsewhere and keeps us all on top of the changes in our industry. Got a cool idea or need a question answered? Please send it along and we will add it to the next creative brief.

Until then, keep shooting and have some serious fun at the same time. When we have fun our brains work overtime and our family, our banker and our buyers all benefit. Stay warm and we'll see you all back in the spring.