CREATIVE BRIEF - SPRING 2015

- **Spaces Creative Brief Spring 2015 -**

Hi everyone and welcome back to springtime. Finally the weather is starting to clear and the time is perfect for shooting! The winter is always a tough time to be producing content, the weather is bad the locations are hard to come by and everyone stays hidden waiting for the sun. Now with spring upon us we are starting to really see submissions pick up here at Spaces. This past quarter we received our largest collection of submissions from Spaces contributors in our 5 years of business. This is an excellent indication that sales are up and our contributors are motivated.

This quarter we are going to keep it clean and simple and focus on just the creative needs of Spaces Images. We will discuss several categories that fit into this upcoming spring & summer seasons and a little advice as to why we feel these images capture what buyers need and are having a tough time finding.

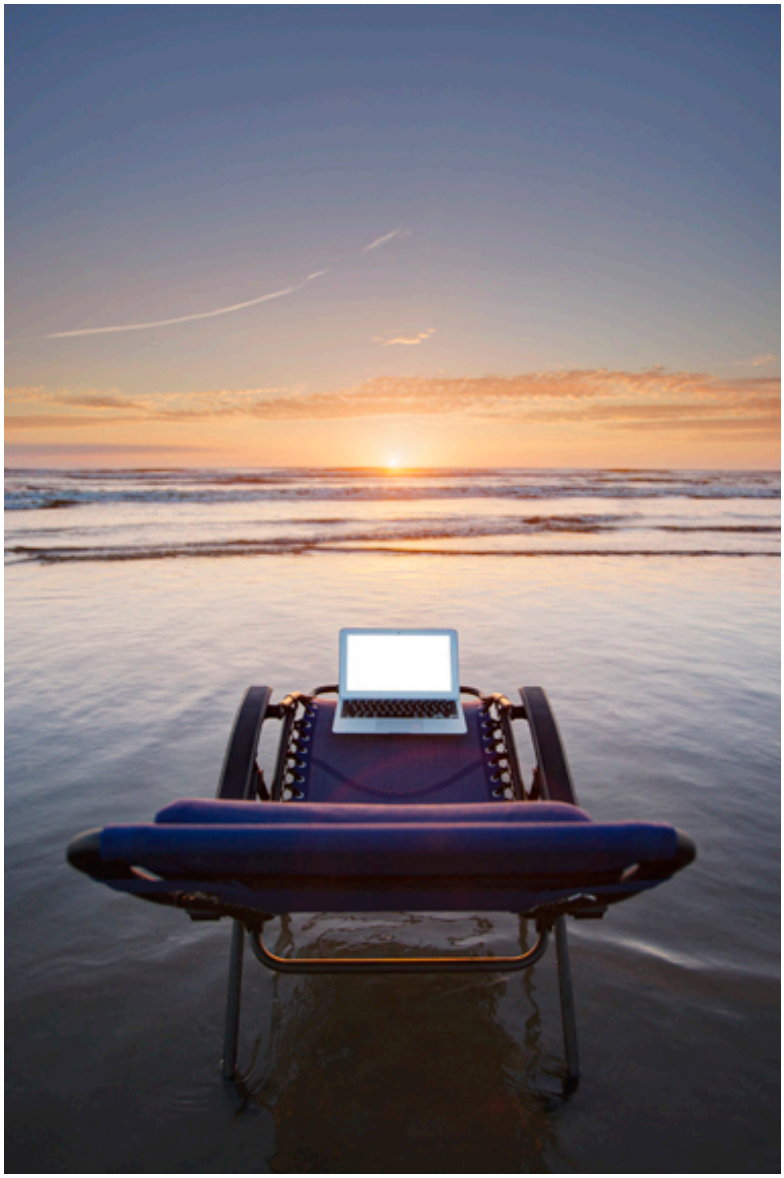
So without wasting too much time with an intro, let's get right to work looking at imagery that captures the eye. We have a total of nine categories for this brief that cover everything from business to leisure and all relating to this season of sun. This should be a fun motivator and hopefully will get you outside thinking about your own personal creative spin on how to turn that sunshine into revenue.

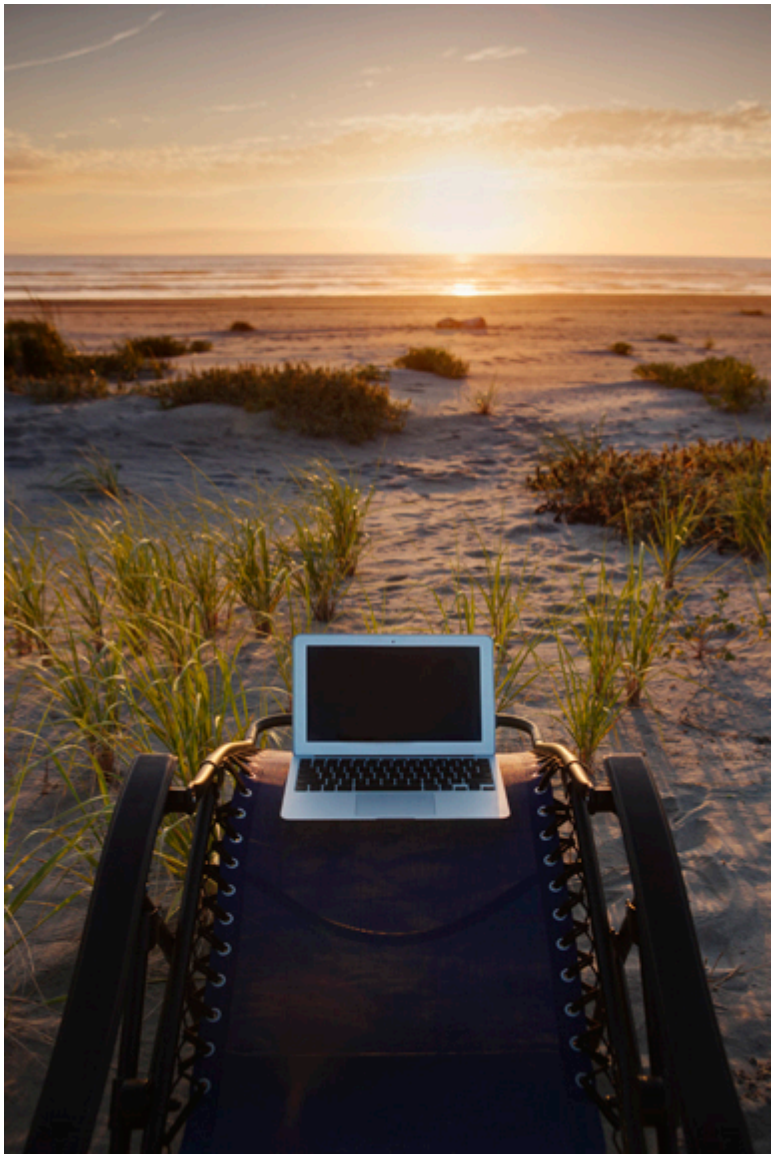
- Laptop Holiday -

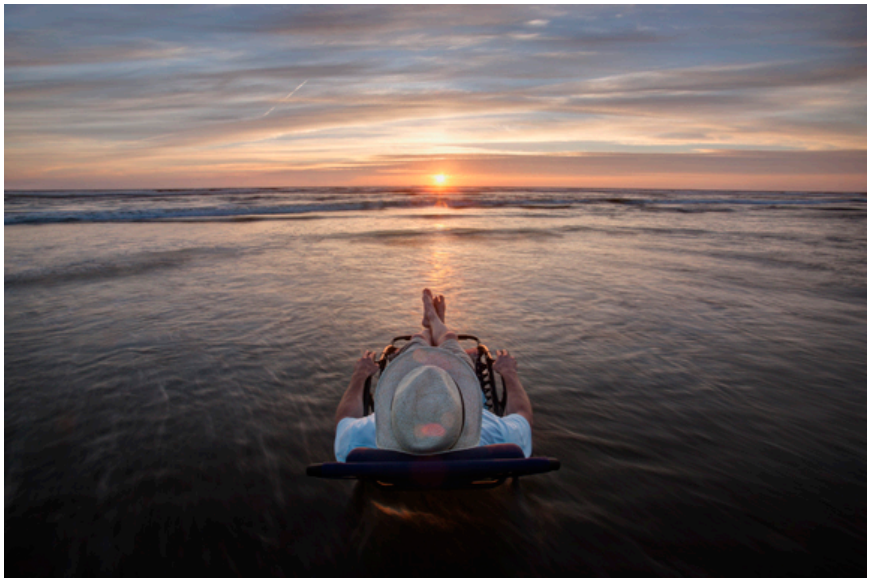
I discussed this with everyone a few briefs ago but to this date we have not seen one image come across our desk that has taken advantage of this easy to create concept. I myself went on a holiday and created a small set of "laptop on vacation“ images that have already started to sell.

This is not a tough shoot it is just you a good location and your laptop. No cost, just time to create images that say holiday and work at the same time. Keep notes on your location options as you go about life, once you have 10 or 12 great locations chosen, spend a day with your laptop making a series of strong images at each of these spots. By the end of your day you could easily have 10-20 great shots that are in demand but are just not available in the market. If you want to make sure just do a search under “laptop, location, no people“ and see just how slim and poorly covered this subject truly is.

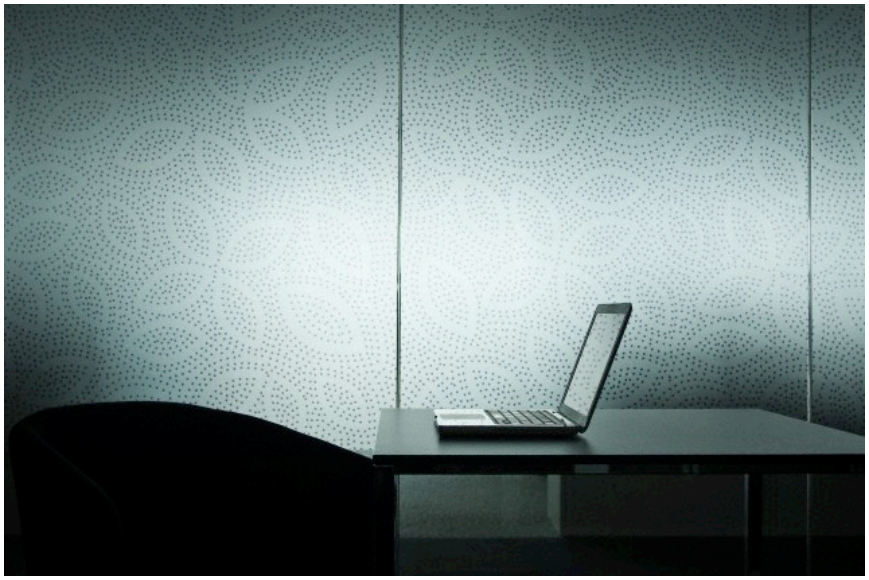
Here is an example of what I shot with my laptop over a couple of hours on holiday with my family at the beach. I even added a few with myself as the model allowing my son to take the shot. These kind of images are all about location and light. These images can be in your own backyard, if you nail the lighting and the composition the environment could be just about anywhere that looks inviting.

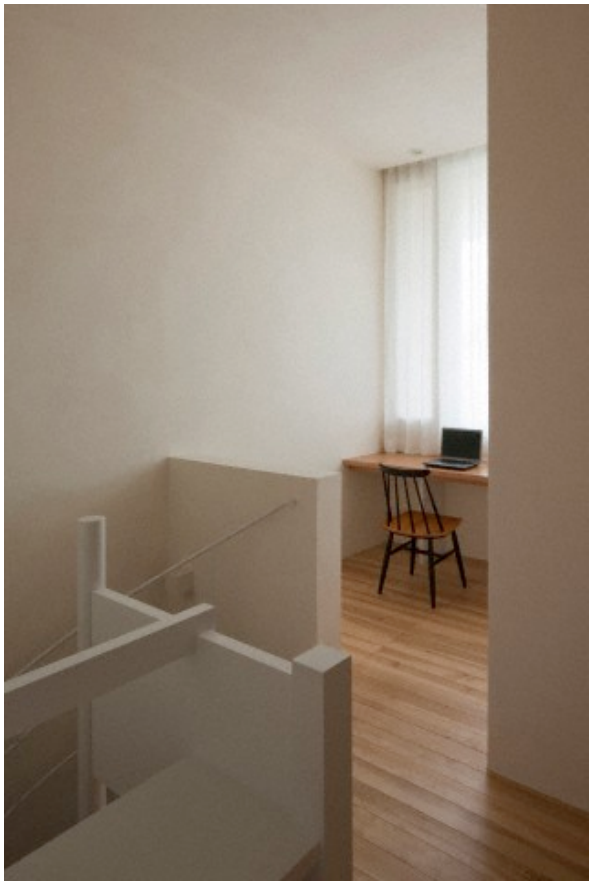


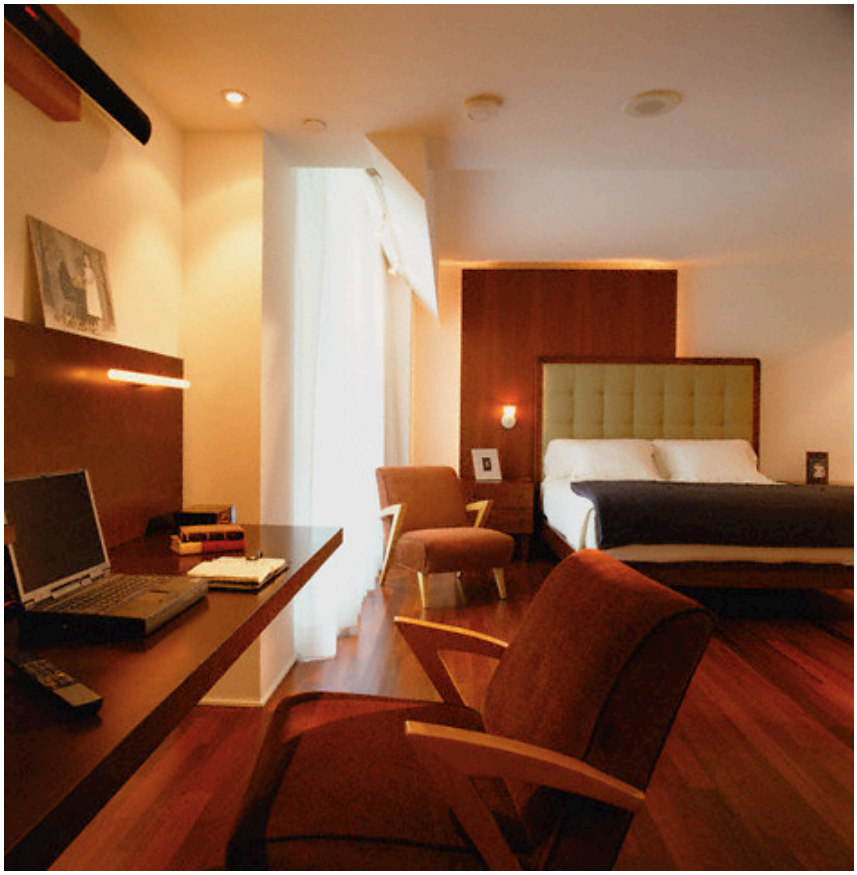




This shot is about as easy as it gets, alone at night in your hotel. Want to help pay for that hotel? Shoot some of these images of "laptops on holiday" next time you are on the road. We all have the appropriate prop needed for this shot, a little time is all it takes. You don't even have to leave your own home, what are you doing this weekend? Why not take an hour out of your day and create a story with your laptop as the star. This concept will cost only your time, the challenge is set, so let's see who reads this far into the brief and actually takes the time to craft a "laptop on holiday" or "laptop at work" the trick is all in telling the story.







- Camping -

Do you spend your free time out enjoying the great outdoors and your natural surroundings? Not everyone is cut out for camping but if camping is something you enjoy then it's time to start adding content about a subject that is near to your heart. Camping is a big industry and images that reflect the time spent in the wilderness are always in demand. If you are a camper then you should have some great ideas for sharing your favorite hideaway with all of our audience. Here are a few images that embrace the beauty that is camping.

You will see over and over in this creative brief that a good image starts with light. If you are going to create images for the stock industry taking the time to capture that image in beautiful light will send your returns and edits soaring. Each of these images not only encompass camping but they all have one factor that can not be overlooked in our industry, they all have beautiful light.

That is what we do, we capture light, remember that. If you have a great location and shot idea, don't waste it on a grey day embrace the shot and wait until the light is stellar. If you spend as much time focused on the light as you do your subject I guarantee you will see a big surge in your future sales.

This is the season that the campers start to air out their sleeping bags and prepare for the upcoming months of camping and hiking. Today more people are focused on healthy living and one example that is used over and over in advertising is camping and hiking. The industry itself is massive, here are some statistics of just the U.S. camping industry annually.

- 6.1 million american jobs

- $646 billion in outdoor recreation spending each year

- $39.9 billion in federal tax revenue

- $39.7 billion in state/local tax revenue

There is big money in this industry and with that is a great demand for images that embrace the outdoor lifestyle. You don't have to be a camper to shoot camping. Once again this, as with all our images, will not sell if not accompanied by excellent light. I have offered examples here that don't even require model or property releases, just taking the time to make an early stop at your local camp grounds before anyone is awake. If you need any help with concepts please drop us a line

and we will create a shot list just for your location.

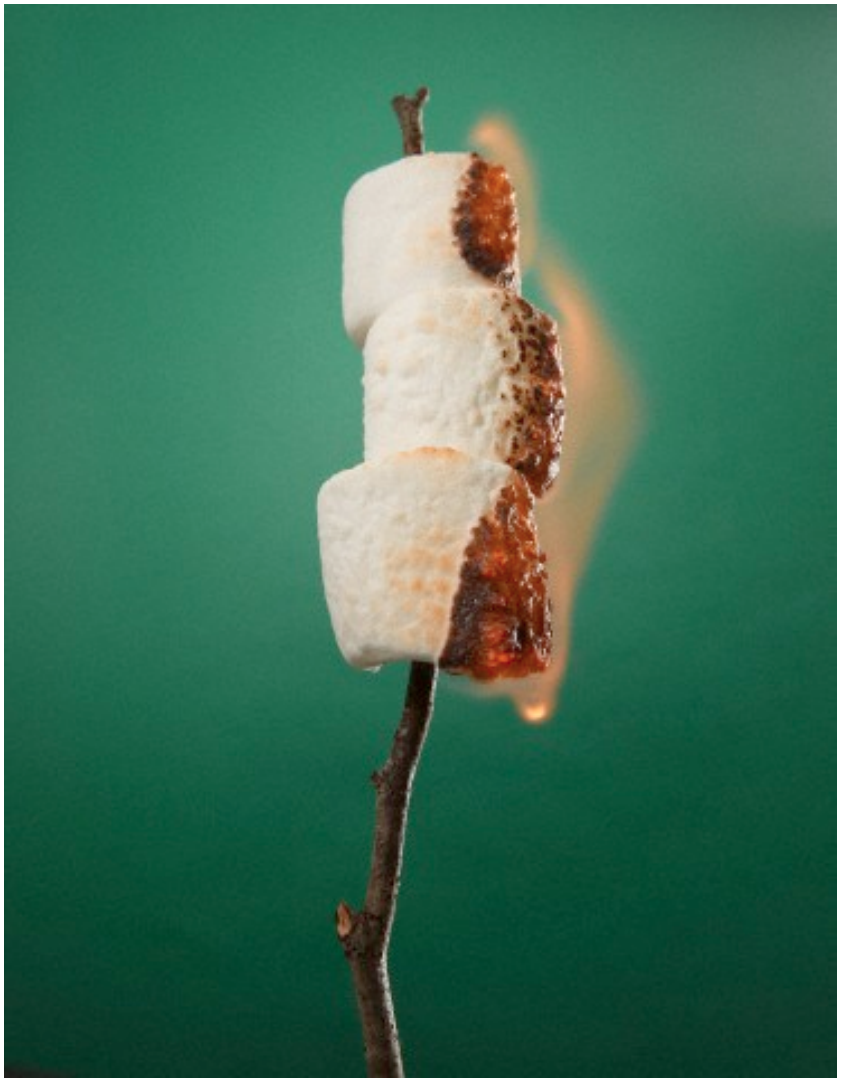
- Spring And Summer Fun -

Holiday travel and summer fun always are in big demand from the buyers of stock content. It might sound like an easy concept “summertime without people“. But when you start to do a search you will see that strong imagery telling this much needed story is in short supply. Part of the reason is trying to come up with an interesting shot without people involved that still reads summertime fun.

We all have very different lives and it is within them that our own life stories offer unique visions of what summer fun is to you. To help get you started we have added some images that embrace concepts that Spaces would love to add to our collection. Even more, we want the real hidden treasure, the images that have not been created that are clear in only your mind, that is the gold that we want to motivate you to create.

Summer fun is the broadest subject that we will cover. Because it is so broad we want to leave it up to you to come up with what says "summer fun" to you personally. If you can spend a bit of time reminiscing about summer days that have passed and what is or was special about them to you the more unique tour images will be. Here are a few images that say summer fun. The more generic you can be when applying this concept to your summer images, the broader your final buyers use will be. Have fun with this, summer is all about having fun so remember to keep these images focused on the joy of summer.

OPEN



- Spring and Summer Sports -

Some activities lend themselves only to the fair weather months of the year. Now is the time to be thinking about outdoor spring and summer sports and activities. A few we came up with are golf, swimming, baseball, tennis, and volleyball. The idea here is to not only capture the location where these sports take place but also the pieces that make up the sport and help tell the human story behind summer sports.

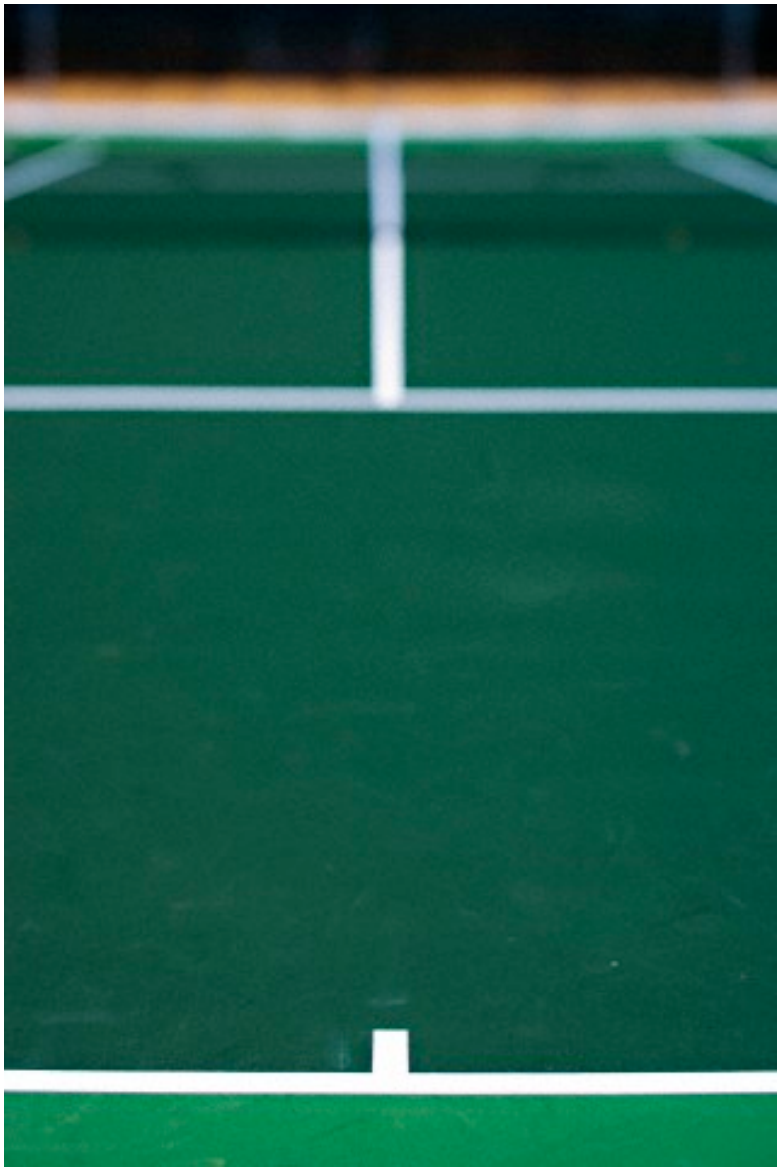
Remember the beautiful light that makes you go OOH and AHH when it’s captured? That is the light that will lead you to the pot of gold, or at least help make the house payment this month. The light in every image I share is what makes the shot stand out above all it’s competiton. The combination of light and strong composition are what make a potential buyer click through on your image.

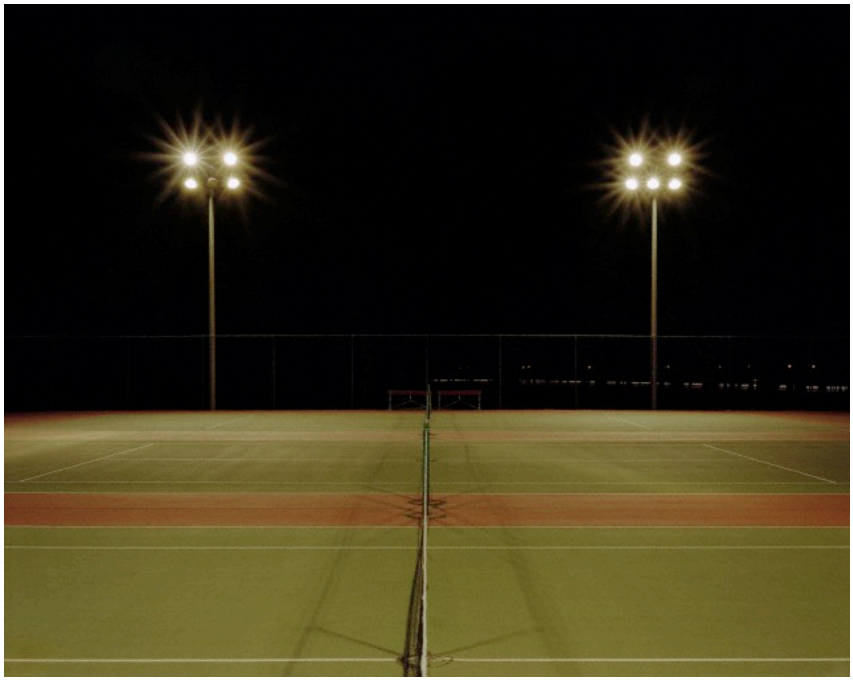
Do a little test, go to a search engine, type in a set of words that are specific to a shot you want to create and see which image grabs your attention first. You will find over and over again there are

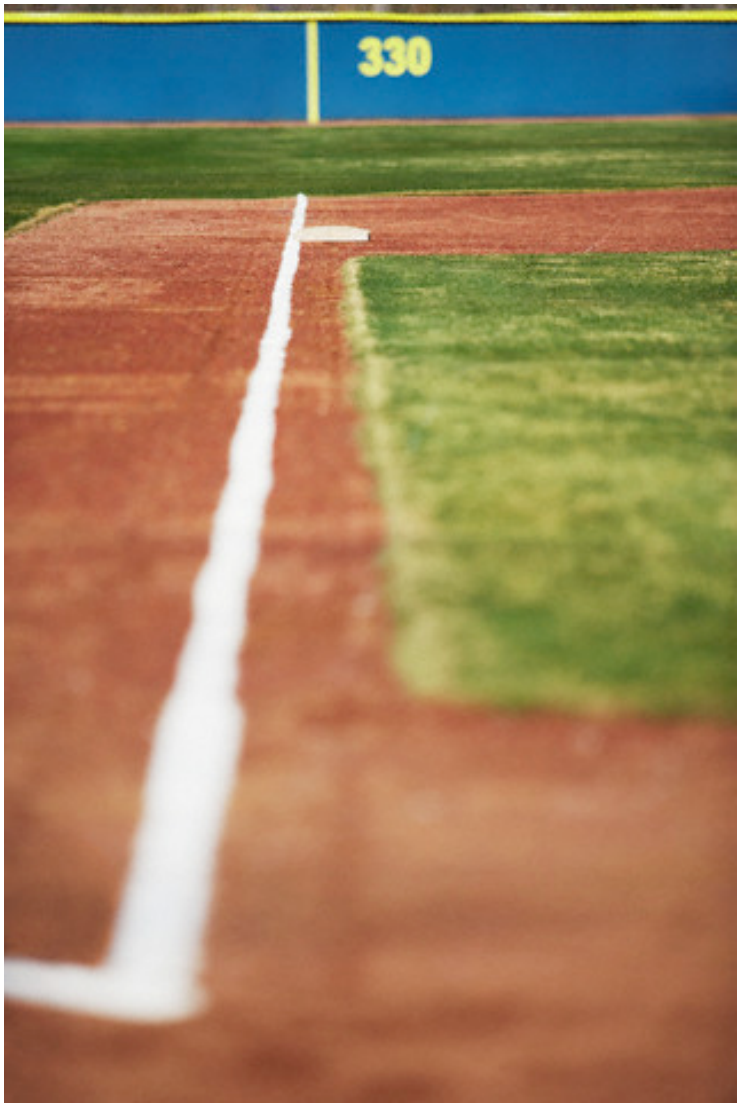
two deciding factors on making a buyer click through on a thumbnail. I know I have mentioned these two factors over and over but as photographers we are really light gatherers and we need to emphasize this with every image we create. What light best suits your subject, it's not always sunshine, rainbows and lollipops. A bit later we will discuss some weather options that always lead to strong sales and it isn't the perfect sunrise or sunset.

The warm weather leads to summer sports and one thing Spaces collection could use more of are well produced sports activities. We suggest reaching out to your local golf courses, sports training facility or school that has facilities that they need shot in trade for a property release. There are so many options, all you have to find is one and you will have a day of solid shooting ahead.

Although we didn't share any lifestyle images for this subjet it is indeed a subject that lends itself to both stills and lifestyle. If you want to start your lifestyle shooting with a sports based subject there is nothing that I know personally better than sports. If you need any help with creating ideas or writing a shot list for a location you have acquired please drop us a line and together we will produce a shot list that will make your day fun and profitable.



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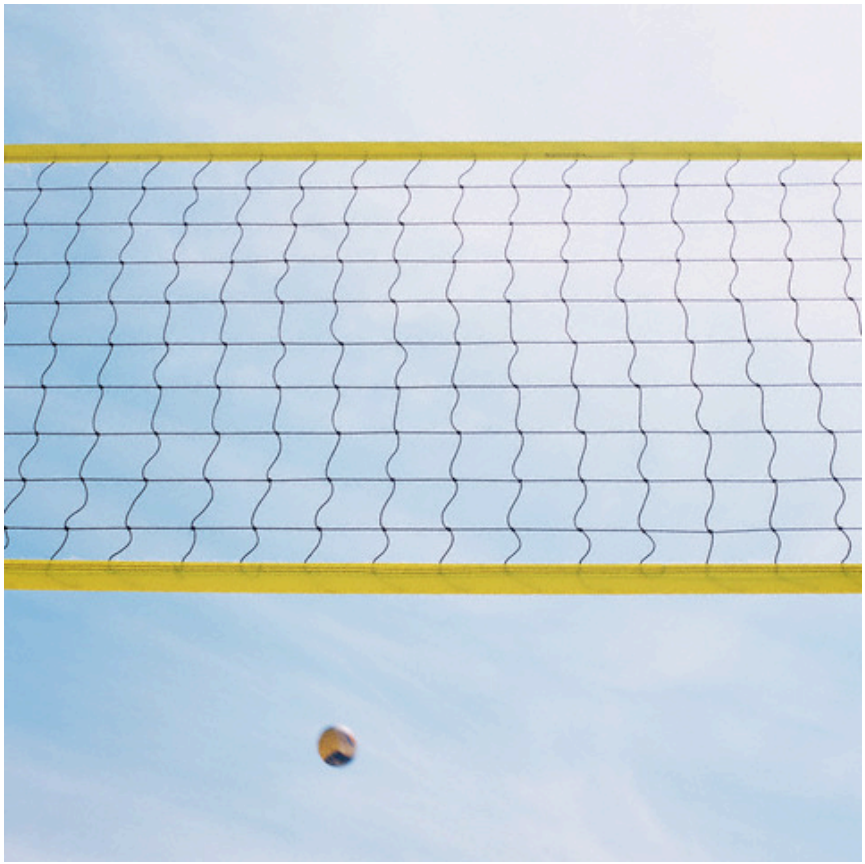
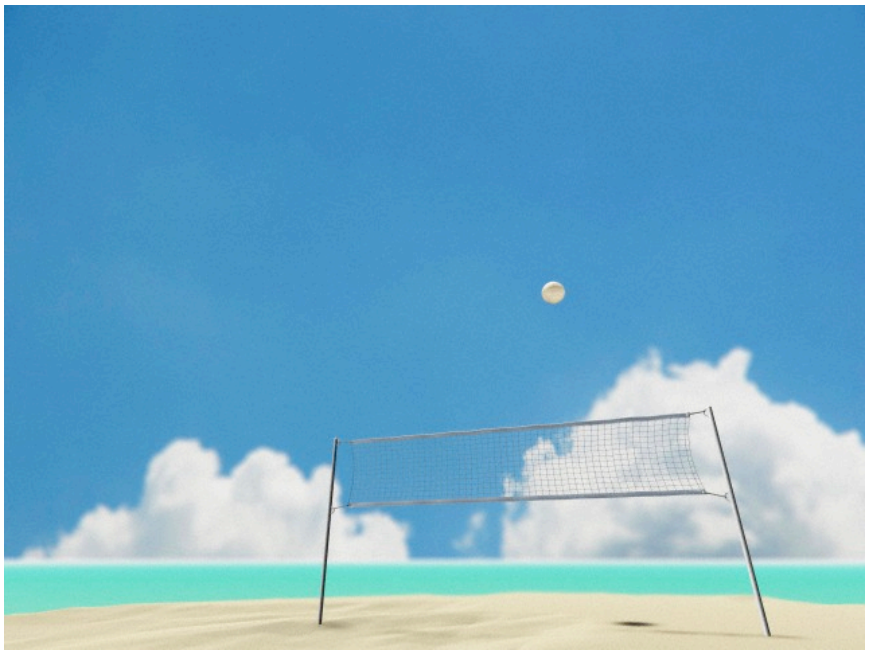
HOME
T.O.L.
TIME TO PLAY
GUESTS
T.O.L.
PERIOD
BALL ON
DOWN
YDS TO GO

HOME
VISITORS





- Small Business -

Some of these creative briefs start to sound like a broken record but it is only because there are a few major factors to stay focused on when creating content for your stock agencies. I keep mentioning the light and the composition as they are two factors that always need close attention

when composing your shot.

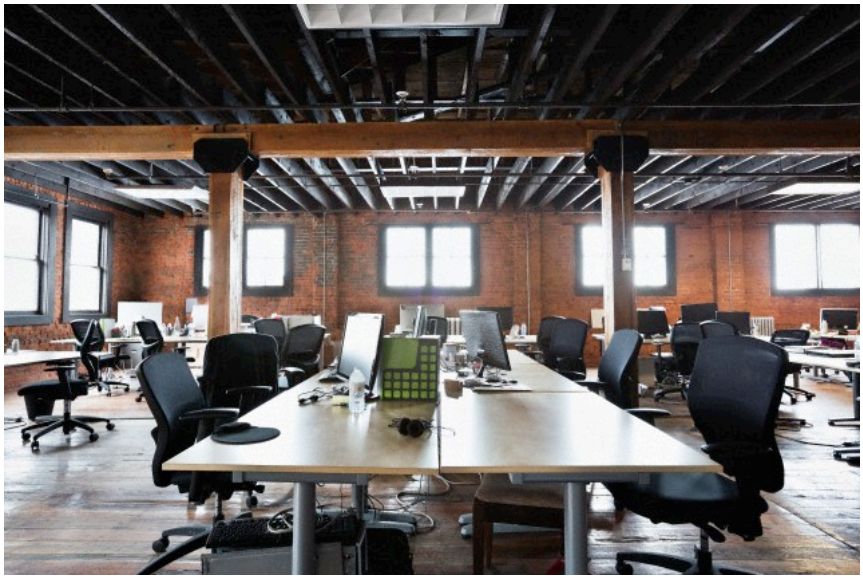
Now, let's focus just on location for this one. Of coarse the more applicable the light is to your environment the better, please don't loose sight of these two important building blocks for better stock imagery.

The small business location is probably the easiest to locate and to do a trade out with the owner for your content. The list is endless but the more personality we see the better it tells the humanity of the work itself. The people behind who fix your shoes, who sell you bread, the people that work at every corner in your town. These people have a great need for images to help solicit new and existing customers in their own advertising. This is the perfect setting for a trade of goods for a signature to the location.

The owners themselves can often be the stand in models so you can expand your portfolio with not only the location but also some lifestyle shots of the owners or their employee's working in the place of business.

Here is just a small collection of motivators to get you reaching out to your neighborhood and local businesses for some trade out that benefits both you and the business owner.

Small business of all shapes and sizes are available everywhere folks. I would like to suggest you start with friends and acquaintances that have their own business and present the opportunity of a trade out to get this always needed subject matter added to your portfolio. The more the location shares the individuals personality the better. Eclectic collections that make it clear to the viewer that this is a personal small business and not another member of the 1% will generate strong sales when executed properly. Even though the environment might look cluttered it is a calculated clutter, the need to focus on what is working on the set and what isn't will be your call. Remember to remove anything that doesn't add to the concept or doesn't read clearly and quickly to the buyer, that is what we mean when using the term "calculated clutter".



- Fog: The Perfect Weather -

I mentioned a bit earlier in this brief about the weather and it being nice, we can all get out and shoot more. One type of weather that is as big a seller in the stock industry as a sunny day is a day filled with fog and haze. The light that is refracted through these tiny droplets of water allow us to capture light like nothing else.

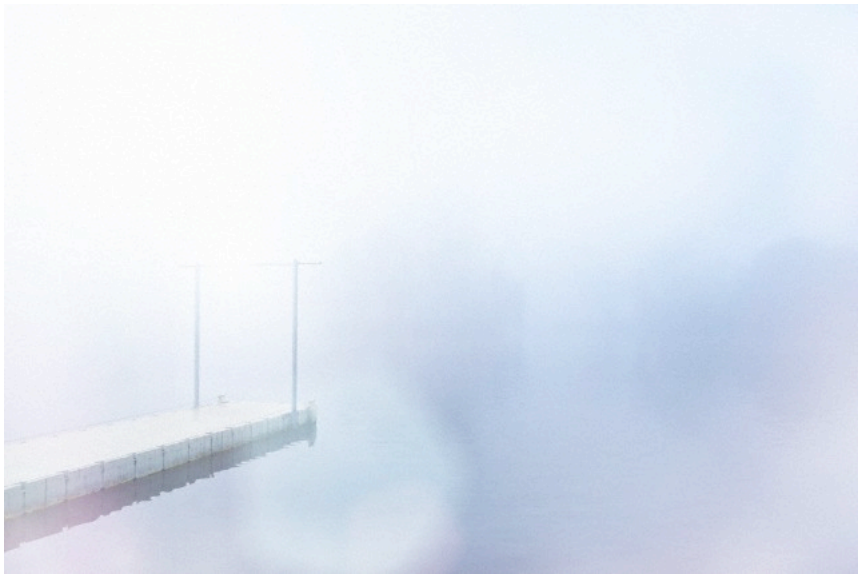
We have seen the few images we have available at Spaces that were captured in this beauty called fog sell very well. There is something about the addition of fog and haze that can really add drama to an image.

The spring and fall are the times we see fog the most, so now is the time to get up early, grab a

thermos of coffee and head out into the grey morning. Waiting for the right moment is what shooting fog is all about, it can't be too thick or it overpowers the shot, too thin and it just doesn't show in camera as well as what we see with our eye. Taking the time to find a few locations that would be accentuated by early morning fog is the trick, having this list handy and ready to go when the next bank rolls into your town is what preproduction is all about.

The fog moves very quickly when it is magic time, you might get an hour you might only get 15 minutes. One trick that will help you to capture that fog and haze clearly for the viewer is to backlight it with the sun. As the fog gets to the point where it becomes magical you need to transmit light through the fog to create the moments that buyers are looking for.

Make sure when choosing your location that you factor in the sun's position and the angle you want to shoot when that foggy days rolls your way. Here are a few excellent examples of the dimension and drama that capturing the fog can do to your next shoot. We have only a few shots in our collection that embrace this wet weather situation we would love to add more and more for our buyers to feast upon.



- Here Comes The Bride -

Many of our contributing photographers supplement their annual income shooting the occasional wedding. This is the beginning of the wedding season and if you ever find yourself out shooting a wedding for either a friend or client please consider grabbing extra shots to compliment your efforts. The wedding business is HUGE and it is not going anywhere soon.

Weddings offer a great way to capture beautiful settings that would normally be far too expensive to ever try to recreate for stock. This being said, most all of the content for stock related to weddings were all shot at an actual wedding.

From the table settings to the brides dress there are so many ways to tell the story of the joining of two in love. You would think the selection would be excellent as there are so many opportunities for images. However, this is not the case, this is an industry that is in great need for creative uplifting content and in a bad way. Check out the selection of imagery at Corbis or Getty that says “marriage“ that do not include people. Almost non existent and from the little wedding based content we have at Spaces we can say IT SELLS!

When you are shooting your next wedding why not let us know beforehand and we will personally write you a shot list to keep by your side for all your upcoming weddings. If we team up on this we can get the job done easier while also keeping the shots fresh. Drop us a line, we would love to walk down the aisle with you or at least point you in the right direction. For now here are some images that will help to get your creative juices flowing.

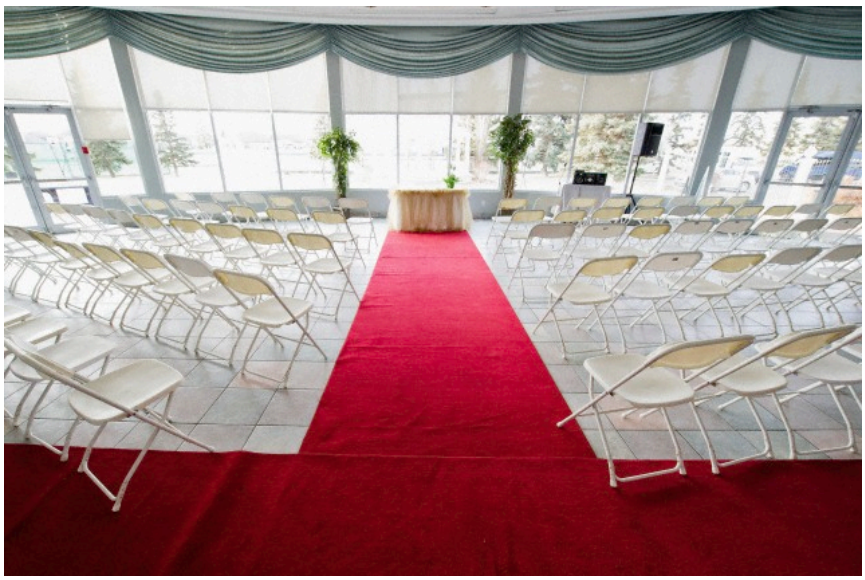
Wedding content when shot well has a very long shelf life. Try to consider bright breezy imagery that is clean and pure in it's design. This market is not about moody images filled with contrast, at least not for our buyers. When creating this content attention to detail is everything. There is a line we use on set everyday " When in doubt, take it out" meaning that when you see something in your image that catches your attention, if that article does not help tell the story or support the emotion of the shot then it is probably better off not in the shot. This is never more apparent then when shooting wedding content.

Over the past 8 years of recession we saw the wedding business take a hard hit. Now all the people that have put off their wedding nuptuials due to the poor economy are starting to spend again in this massive industry. We saw only 1.9% of growth over the past 8 years and in the last year we have seen 2.3% growth alone. Now is the time to consider shooting some of your scheduled weddings with stock in the back of your mind. Here are just a couple of numbers sharing just how massive this industry is annually in just the U.S. alone.

Annual Revenue $55bn

Annual Growth 09-14 1.9%

Annual Growth 2014-2015 2.3%



- Grocery Shopping -

We all have one, your local grocery store where you have been buying your fresh goodies for years. If you can make a relationship with just one local grocer you will come away with a shoot that will continue to produce revenue for a very long time.

The reason being is grocery stores have not changed a great deal over the past 20 years. With the exception of new scanners and cash registers everything else about grocery stores is still true as it was decades ago. With that said you would think that there is plenty of strong content of grocers, once again a very basic need is not being filled for our image buyers.

This is actually a location that needs just basic recording as much as telling a story. I have an image at Spaces of a grocery store that sold for $2,000 two moths ago. It was just an outtake of the fruits and veggies section I took when getting my lighting dialed in for a lifestyle shoot. Had I

known then that my empty grocery store shots would sell so well I wouldn't have hired any talent that day.

Of course telling stories are also a great addition to this kind of shoot. Add a few models to your day and you could be looking at a production that nets a strong 40 images if choreographed well.

The store themselves need promotional material so this is another great place to apply the trade of images for trade of property release. Once this relationship is established you should be able to return to that store and continue to add to your portfolio over time. One grocer can easily net you three or four shoots and when you add lifestyle the options just continue to grow.

Here is a small sample of imagery to get you thinking like a shopper for your buyers. This is not an easy subject to create a new spin on but if successful you will see sales that will make your head spin. I am including one image that I shot myself. It was a lifestyle shot of family shopping. We tried the shot a few different ways but it was when we added the feeling of motion that the concept leapt off the page for the buyer to appreciate. This motion helped to sell the concept of busy lifestyle to the viewer but if I break it down even more it was when we had the little girl hold onto the front of the cart that the feeling of being rushed really came off the page.

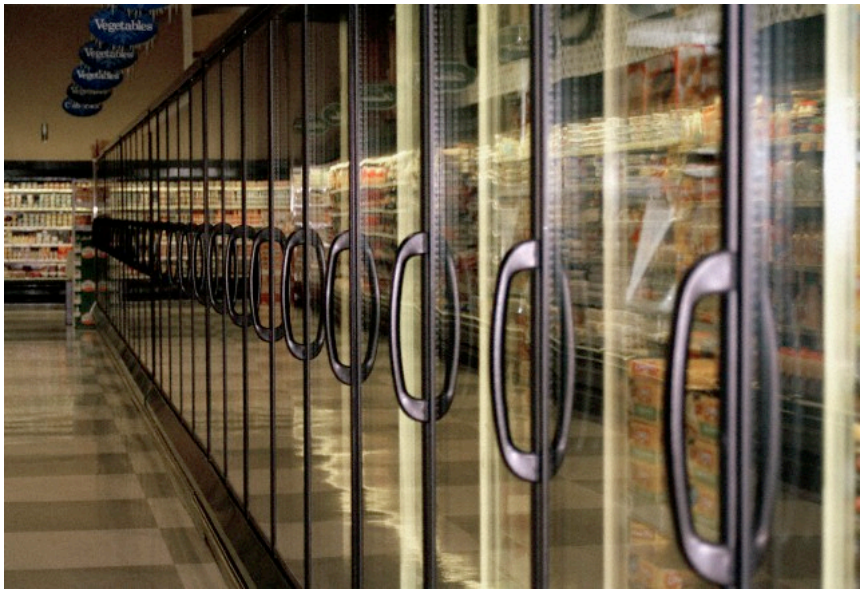
This is an easy location, the hardest part is gaining access. Once you have it is all about using

available light and working your images in post to give them a bit of added dimension. The light is even, you can shoot there in the middle of the night if need be and there are so many to choose from you just have to find one independent grocer that wants and needs what you have to offer.

We have shot in grocery stores many times and every time we have it made very strong returns. If you do find your way into a grocer's I would suggest that you try to add some lifestyle. The models can be everyday people they don't have to be off the cover of GQ, on the contrary real life is what will sell so when casting please keep it real. As far as scripting your shoot we are here to help anytime you want to draft a shot list of lifestyle. This is what we are here for so please, if you have any interest drop us a line and let's tackle this together.

Freezer Orders
Burgers
Mineral Waters

Delicatessen
Boar's Head


Vegetables

- Agriculture: Crops and Gardens -

The agriculture industry is in the middle of a massive transformation from a social perspective. On one end we are seeing a growing industrial machine continuing on the same path it has for the past century. Mechanizing anything from machinery to the seeds themselves to increase greater returns for less investment. This portion of the industry is under a great deal of criticism, are we making the right choices for our health and if so what is the right choice?

For stock photographers these kind of social transitions allow us to create new content for a hot topic. When there is a subject that is in the midst of social change the need for imagery to support both sides of the story are vitally important to buyers. If you take a few minutes to do searches on "agriculture, no people" you will see that the options are few with most of the images being large processing machines in fields with the sun setting in the background. Don’t get me wrong these images still need to be improved on and when executed well they still produce long term revenue.

However, with the change to a healthier lifestyle, what we eat has become a major topic for all forms of media. These changes are what offer us the chance as professionals to fill the shelves with fresh imagery of what is considered healthy to todays standards.

Because of this shift we see a huge empty slot of imagery that has yet to catch up to new direction our buyers are heading. Home gardens and commercial green house growing are just two areas that we believe will continue to see strong growth for new well produced content. Well produced is the real trick, I can search pages of poorly shot veggies in someones garden but the availability of shots that are finished and well thought out are not as abundant.

We have broke this section up into three parts. Commercial processing, home gardens, and greenhouse gardens. Each section will share a few images we feel are strong in Location, lighting and composition. Once again the key is excellence, two excellent shots of gardening or any subject will net you far greater rewards than ten mediocre images.

Gaining access to a comercial farm would make any strong photographer a very good return from their days efforts. We have several images of harvest but what we would love to have and what is missing from this subject is the processing of the harvest itself. If any of you have access to local commercial farms I would love to see someone go out and get some strong content of agricultural processing. It is all over the media and now is the time to capitalize on this hot topic.

There aren't many still images that are as popular right now as greenhouse gardening. From home

greenhouses to commercial sites this subject needs fresh content. With the addition of so many new commercial greenhouses available in everyone's hometown we are sure there are many that are in need of a trade out with a professional photographer. Get on the phone and start making calls.

One other beautiful thing about greenhouses, they have beautiful light. Smooth and even due to the light being transmitted through softened panes. Access and attention to detail are the key factors to strong sales. Once you have gained access to a location please take the time to pick the perfect string of tomaotoes or berries. Once again layering these images so they offer a sense of dimension will always help to grab viewers attention.

Both interior shots as well as exterior are in demand. If you time your exterior shots for the magic hour the balance that can be achieved is remarkable. Please take this small sample of examples to help see just what I am explaining. On every one of these shots the attention to detail has been beautifully executed and the use of light only supports that result.

Home gardens are never hard to find but the attention to detail is what makes a potential buyer click through on your thumbnail. Take the time to prop out your shot, it helps to add dimension as well as tell the story for the buyer. Here are a few excellent examples of gardening that tell more of the story than just a row of greens in the dirt.

Thank you to everyone for all the new content that is coming through the doors, the quality is amazing. We can't say enough good things, you are all excellent photographers and we are very fortunate to have each and every one of you as contributors.

As I look through all the images I have chosen to share there is one thing I see in each and every image… Excellent light! That little bit of glimmer that is kicking off the leaves on a tree. The time spent to clean a beach in post till it is absolutely pristine. The framing of your subject that never allows the viewers eye a chance to escape all of these points are what makes you a professional.

The more we can embrace the passion that made us pick up a camera for the first time every time, I guarantee that your work will not grow stale and your life will always be filled with what you love to do. Remember, with all the proficiency we have achieved on a technical level it is still the heart that draws our attention as well as the attention of our buyers.

I try to keep that thought true as much as I can, some days better then others. If you can achieve this you have won the race my friends. Until next quarter please take good care of yourself and those near and dear to you and…get out and SHOOT!