

Welcome to Season 2 of the HPIC Landscape SIG Group! I can't believe its been a full year since we started the SIG Groups and I believe these have become quite successful and useful to those members who have come along on the journey.

As we start our new year it's good to reflect on what we have covered over the past year with the talks and the various Assignments that have all been for a purpose. You have completed 10 Assignments of varying complexities culminating a live photo-shoot to maybe pull it all together. For those who haven't yet completed all the assignments don't worry there's still time to do them along the way.

I think that many have come a long way in understanding the basic concepts involved in the composition of a great landscape and now know how to read and what to look for in Landscape images.

And as you have found, good Landscape photography is one of the hardest disciplines to master since you are not in control of any of the external elements presented to you, but it is up to you to interpret and make the most of what you see and to apply all the tools in your toolbox. Remember the same scene will never present itself to you in the same way hour by hour, 365 days a year, every year; so its up to you to wait for and capture the moment.

To recap, we now understand and look for:

1. A **Vista** with a **point of interest**. (Not human or animal as a subject, but these can be in the distance for scale or movement purposes). We've confined this to Vistas and scenic views for now since that's what the YPU use in its definition of 'a Landscape'. BUT crucially a subject or point of interest within the scene to draw the eye to, within the context of the composition, so that we can clearly articulate "**what is it of!**"
2. **Correctly exposed and well lit for the conditions**. We hopefully have learned to not over-blow highlights so as to lose details in the sky and not underexpose shadows, so that you can't see into them. We have learned about the use of various Filters to help with this and when to and not to use them. We have learned about the uses of polarising filters and we have learned how to take multiple Bracketed images to manage difficult High Dynamic Ranges of light e.g Contra Jour, and how to Blend images to bring out the best light.
3. Sharp **Foreground interest**, that is **not** the subject. We have learned to choose our foreground interest carefully as a lead into the image and to place a 'front marker' to the image which allows for better spatial separation front to back.
4. **Leading lines** into and through the image; to and beyond the point of interest. We have found that diagonal or S shaped leading lines take the eye through an image towards and beyond key subject matter, and that horizontal lines flat to the scene make the image static and lacking in movement and can block the eye e.g walls, closed gates and fences.
5. **Sharp front to back**, preferably from your feet to infinity depending on conditions and mood. We have learned what f stops to use when it is appropriate for front to back sharpness and we have looked at various tools

to be able to sharpen selected areas appropriately e.g., Hi-Pass filters in Ps or equiv.

6. At least **3 layers of separation** from foreground, middle distance and far distance. (Or more if you can achieve it). We have learned to SEE an image as we take it and understand that foreground layers are often darker and contrastier and sharper, which brings them forward in an image and far distant hills are less contrasty, less sharp and often hazy and this pushes them away to the distance, thus creating a wide depth of separation
7. We have learned a few hints and tips like ensuring verticals are always vertical, and horizons are not always so unless an actual horizon, (and even that may look a little curved if wide enough!), Get low down to water, reduce the amount of water to avoid it occupying half the frame. Crucially we have **learned how to crop** and how cropping can alter the relationship of the subject to the scene and what it is off, which all affects what YOU the photographer want to convey to the VIEWER and we have looked at traditional cropping sizes and the use of the vertical crop.

Season 2

You will note that I left (8) **Mood or Wow** or gives an emotion or tells a story, off the above list!

Because now we have learned those basic techniques we can build on them to deliver the Story, Mood and Wow. Partly 'the Story' is part of the subject matter and the mood and the Wow is delivered by the light in which it is taken and the post processing techniques used.

E.g A rusty Old tractor photographed in the corner of a derelict farmyard, with a deep golden sunset under a glowering black cloud sky, will evoke the emotions and story of days gone by, finality, end of days and foreboding future.

Whilst I just conjured up this image in my head now, we need to be preconceiving ideas of what we are looking for and how we would shoot it and where. Landscape photographers do this all the time, so that it's not just a matter of pot luck with good fortuitous light on the day we turn up! We look for those conditions arriving and plan to go there to certain locations when the light is right. Some will argue that this takes the spontaneity out of photography, maybe, a little but there is time and place for both.

So this year we will be looking at what OTHER AWARD WINNING PHOTOGRAPHERS DO to create Mood, Wow and Story. How light is used and tonality of an image to create mood.

SIG Format Season 2

We will use the first half of the SIG Session will be as before, a look at 1 or 2 images taken by ourselves and analysed as before.

In the second half we will look at images from other acclaimed and award winning photographers and spend time analysing what they did from the points above and how they delivered to Mood Wow and Story where applicable.

We will throw in the Odd technique as appropriate and make time for a How to? Forum if we feel the need.

I hope this meets with your approval and fulfils your need and direction. Please don't hesitate to say if you want to include other.

ChrisR