



First Light on Godafoss – by Vivian Chen (story on page 10)

Landscape Competition in August

We will hold a landscape competition on August 9. Please upload your submissions no later than August 7.

Submission opens: now

Submission deadline: midnight of August 7, 2016

Competition date: August 9, 2016

Competition tip: See "12 Elements of Success in Image Competition" website sub menu from Competitions

Juror is the award winning photographer, Paul Tsang.
(<http://www.aboutmasterpiece.com/about.html>)

You may submit up to 2 images for this competition.

How to submit:

1. login to <http://101photoclub.com> with your member ID and password.
2. How to submit, please see the file below. You always can download the file from website:

"Organization -> Documentations and Files to Download"



Editors

Ken Fong
Wen-Wen Li
news@101photoclub.com

Planning Committee

President: Serena Hartoog
Vice President: Tatung Chow
Membership: Vivian Yeh
Competition: Dennis Lo
Web Master: Roscoe Shih

101 Photo Club

101 Photo Club is sponsored by River of Life Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

Regular Meeting : 1st Tuesday of each month 7:00-9:30pm at River of Life Christian Church, 1177 Laurelwood Road, Santa Clara, CA 95054

For details, please visit:
101photoclub.com

Events

Aug 9 Landscape Competition (p. 1)

Resource

Recap June 7 Dynamic Landscape (p 3)

Article Iceland Scouting Report
By Ken Fong
(pp 6-9)

President's message

We are going to hold our 2nd competition, this time for the landscape category at our August event. I encourage everyone to participate in the competition. We have invited world famous master photographer Paul Tsang as the competition judge (see <http://www.aboutmasterpiece.com/about.html>).

We will have gifts for the first 3 winners and some honorable mentions. All winners need to be present at the event in order to receive the prizes.

For those interested in portrait photography, we have 2-Day Workshop by Scott Robert Lim for our October program. Scott Robert Lim is an international award-winning, master photographer, Sony Artisan and certified educator with over 70 international major awards to his name including; 2009 Kodak Award, Top 10 Most Influential Photographers, and Top 10 World's Best Wedding Photographers. His highly popular Creative Live workshops have been viewed by hundreds of thousands and have contributed to his worldwide popularity. He is an author, inventor, mentor and life coach to hundreds of photographers worldwide. Scott's images have been published in international books and magazines viewed by millions. He is a popular international speaker with an upbeat, charismatic and inspirational style. Scott resides in Los Angeles, CA with his wife of 27 years and two children. For details see our website to register. The member discount deadline is 8/30/2016. Don't miss it. He will teach you how to use inexpensive, lightweight and portable gear to take amazing portraits.



Catch the star that holds your destiny
– Shannon M. Dickinson

The Dynamic Landscape Recap, June 7, 7pm.

On June 7, the Club was treated to “The Dynamic Landscape” lecture with Steve Kurtz from Bay Photo Lab. Steve shared about the types of light that are used in landscape photography (hard, soft, directional, etc.), his favorite focal length (Steve favors longer focal lengths for his compositions), why good support gear is critical (the best camera can produce images ruined by cheap tripods), ideal apertures (tiny apertures like f18-22 may yield more depth of field, but the diffraction at those settings is almost like having an unfocused image), and why we need to shoot in RAW. Steve gave some demos on basic post-processing in Lightroom and introduced some additional software to help with B&W imaging.

Steve also gave a helpful demo on the Bay Photo “Bay ROES” apps to help photographers make their own prints. The red version is the pro version and comes with full color correction. The blue version is the economy version that is meant for the power user that does their own monitor calibrations and color profiling. Steve also clarified that the “competition prints” are deep density prints...prints that are meant to be scrutinized under very bright lights. These prints are not appropriate for placement



in the home unless you have such bright lights.

Finally, Steve gave an overview of all of Bay Photos print products, from traditional media, to metal prints, to flexible material for ultimate portability (trade shows, etc.)



Scouting Report: Iceland's Midnight Sun (Summer) – by Ken Fong

When folks look at my photography from Iceland, they often comment on how colorful and nicely exposed the landscapes turned out, usually followed by another question “What is this place where I can experience such nice photography?” After responding that it is Iceland in the summer, their following comment is usually “...then I must go there with my family on my next vacation.” That is usually where I stop them.

If you are to take away only one point from this scouting report, let it be this one: to experience wonderful photography in Iceland, **DO NOT** go as a tourist or as part of a family vacation.

Iceland is a wonderful place to visit with your family or in a tour group; however, if your expectation is for amazing photography, you have to take a much different approach...most Iceland tour books will never mention this because it does not serve the business interest of many shops and restaurants that will be closed when you are doing serious photography.



Godafoss: Waterfall of the gods

KENFONGPHOTOJOURNEYS.COM



Prepare for any type of weather in Iceland

Serious photographers from all over the world travel to Iceland to experience what is called “Midnight Sun”, which is wonderfully diffused light with a sky that can potentially resemble a never-ending sunset for about 5-6 hours. Here's the catch, this wonderful light starts at around 10pm at night and wraps up at 4am...the best photographic light is occurring when all of the tourists are sleeping! The tourists are experiencing long days to take hundreds of snapshots; however, the light during the day is often flat and colorless when cloudy, or too much contrast if the sun is out. Bright sun will often ruin what could be a great composition, even with tools like HDR.

During “midnight sun”, the sun sets and travels just under the horizon for the next 5-6 hours. We get this same type of “magic light” here in California, but only 90 minutes worth (45 minutes before sunrise and 45 minutes after sunset). Individuals will often scoff at the cost of photographing in Iceland, but if you consider the amount of wonderful light that is available, you are getting 4 times more per day versus here in California, and you do not need to rush between multiple targets...you can also spend more time at fewer targets to get stronger compositions. So from the perspective of the amount of good photography one will go home with, Iceland is actually a very good value.

This scouting report is about photographing Iceland in the Summer only, but I will make references to the winter season. Iceland has a short summer season window, starting from mid-June and lasting through August.

GETTING THERE

Iceland is actually one of the closest European countries to the West Coast. A flight from Seattle to Reykjavik is about 7 hours because the flight path flies north near (but not over) the pole...cutting through Canada and Greenland. Iceland is often described as an ideal “stopover” location if travelling on to Northern Europe.

I usually take Iceland Air starting with a flight from San Jose to Seattle via Alaska Airlines. Delta also offers flights from

(continued)

SFO if you don't mind stopping in Minneapolis. WOW is now offering direct flights from San Jose at supposedly lower prices...sort of like a Southwest Airlines style.

Normally, booking your tickets 2-3 months in advance is okay, but if you are planning to visit Iceland in the summer (mid-June through August), you should consider booking your tickets as early as January to prevent a price hike that goes on in the spring.

GETTING AROUND

A standard rental car is adequate for getting to most of Iceland's major sites; however, consider renting a 4WD if you plan to do additional scouting or wish to cut down on some hiking time for certain targets. I will usually rent a 4WD picked up at the airport (Keflavik), then return the vehicle in Reykjavik the day before I return. There are plenty of \$20 shuttles operated by two large companies that can take you between Keflavik and Reykjavik (Grayline Airport Express and the Flybus by Reykjavik Excursions.)

Both Reykjavik Excursions and Gray Line offer day-tours based in Reykjavik that will drive you to most of the island; however, keep in mind that if you sign up for a day tour to a place as far as Hofn, you are spending a lot of time on the road and will get relatively less time to sight see because you need to return to Reykjavik on the same day. For serious photographers, the day-tours are not recommended.



THE APPROACH FOR SERIOUS PHOTOGRAPHY

When you photograph under Iceland's Midnight Sun, you have the potential to return with a ton of great photography versus the ton of (flat lighting) postcard shots that the tourists take during the bright day. But as mentioned earlier, you cannot achieve great photography with a tourist's schedule. In the workshops that I lead, I will typically start a photo session at 10pm and hit several locations until wrapping up at 4am. We then return to the hotel to sleep for 3 hours, wake up at 9am to have breakfast, check out of the hotel around 10am, drive to the next location, check in to the next hotel, sleep for 4 hours, have dinner, scout for compositions, then start the next day's photo session. On days where we are not driving, we either catch up on more sleep or hold post-processing sessions. So as you can see, this is far from a relaxing or even luxurious "vacation", but the reward is the photography.

WHAT IS MIDNIGHT SUN?

As mentioned earlier, midnight sun occurs when the sun sets but doesn't quite leave. We know this as "magic light" on the West Coast, but the unique aspect of "Midnight Sun" is that it provides the same type of sky as just after a sunset for SEVERAL HOURS. Midnight Sun is NOT night photography, as it never gets dark in the summer months; however, your exposures will still be long and you will definitely need your tripod. Midnight Sun is ideal for photographing Iceland's many dramatic landscapes because the actual sun is never out to produce hard shadows, so you can make compelling compositions without a compromised histogram. During Midnight Sun, you can supposedly shoot without graduated neutral density filters; however, I have found that bringing a 2-stop soft GND or a 2-stop reverse GND have helped to create more robust



One of many abandoned fishing boats

histograms. You will still need a 5-6 stop solid ND to slow down water if that is your style. A 10-stop solid ND is mostly useful for blurring slow clouds, but I have not found a lot of opportunities to use the 10-stop on my recent trips.

Similar to the magic light we experience in most of the U.S., Midnight Sun lighting may often seem dull and flat at times, with very subtle colors, if at all. For this reason, many tourists will ignore this type of light and choose to go to sleep. But as photographers, we know that our sensor is picking up much more than our eyes are seeing. And because Midnight Sun produces histograms that have not been compromised by a bright sun, what comes out in post-processing is usually amazing.

June 21 is the summer solstice, where the sun sets at midnight and rises just three hours later...this may sound like a shorter photo session because the sun doesn't seem to stay down very long; however, keep in mind that as the sun sets and rises at Iceland's latitude, it is doing so at a very low angle, creating a very slow sunset or sunrise. You won't get as much "midnight

sun", but you do get low-angle and directional light, which can be rewarding in a different way. The main point is to avoid using the light that the tourists are using, when the sun is high in the sky. I personally prefer to time my workshops to begin in mid-May in the Northern part of the island to maximize the amount of Midnight Sun, yet still enjoy the possibility of slow sunsets and sunrises.



are out all year long; however, you cannot see them during the summer because it never gets dark enough. It is rare to even see stars in the summer, so don't plan on any astrophotography. Aurora lights can be seen in the late Fall thru early Spring starting around midnight if the weather conditions are right.

THE LOCATIONS/POSSIBLE ROUTES

Southern Iceland. Southern Iceland covers 2 of Iceland's iconic areas situated near the towns of Vik and Hofn. Vik is the destination for photographers who want to photograph popular waterfalls such as Seljalandsfoss (the waterfall you can see from behind) and Skogafoss (the wide waterfall), among many other waterfalls. Most waterfalls are easily accessible from the main road and involve a short walk from the parking lot. Vik is also the location for the famous DC3 wreckage on a black sand beach, dramatic coastal seastacks such as Reynisdrangar and Dyrhólaey, and a church on a hill with lupines in the foreground.

Hofn is one of the main locations to stay if photographing the famous Jokulsarlon Ice Lagoon and nearby Iceberg Beach. There are actually places to stay that are closer to the lagoon, but I have found Hofn to be strategically located because the town is between Jokulsarlon and the other popular photographic target Vesturhorn. Vesturhorn is a beautifully isolated mountain with unique grassy lava dunes as the foreground. The photographer also has the option of using a black sand beach or a mirrored pond as the foreground for this location. Further down the road, is the less popular, but just as majestic Eystrahorn, which is a great alternative to Vesturhorn if weather conditions are not favorable.

Southern Iceland is probably the "must see" section of Iceland if you are a first-time visitor, and I will often devote at

least 2 (4-5 hour) photographic sessions to photographing the Ice Beach alone because the compositional possibilities can seem endless.

Northern Iceland. The main photographic targets of Northern Iceland seem to be concentrated near Lake Myvatn. These targets include Godafoss (a wide waterfall that is like a shorter version of Niagara falls, but



Hverarönd Geothermal Area

with easy access to photograph the falls from the ground level). Another popular target is Hverarönd and Krafla

geothermal

areas, which is another place of seemingly endless compositions if your interest is in unique foreground textures and shapes, and sulfuric color. Lake Myvatn is also located close to Dettifoss, which is one of Europe's most powerful waterfalls. Dettifoss has two views: one from the east and one from the west. The east side is closed until mid-June, so please check ahead if you plan to use that side. I would visit Northern Iceland only if it is part of a larger route since I think there are not enough compelling targets to justify a trip here by itself.



KENFONGPHOTOJOURNEYS.COM

Icelandic Troll

West Iceland/Reykjavik. Similar to Northern Iceland, a visit to West Iceland just by itself does not seem justified because of so few photographic targets. But the few photographic targets in West Iceland are very rich including Iceland's iconic Kirkjufell (a symmetrical mountain dome with a waterfall as the foreground...how often do you use a waterfall as your *foreground*?) I personally consider Kirkjufell as one of the real jewel compositions of the entire island. Other great coastal targets include Londrangar and Arnarstapi on the western peninsula, and the large Hvíserkur troll

east of the peninsula. To "economize" a visit to West Iceland, I recommend combining it with a route to Northern Iceland.



Reykjavik Concert Hall

Reykjavik: You might hear a reference to Iceland's "Golden Circle" tour or route. Not to be confused with the "Ring Road" route, which encircles the entire island. The Golden Circle tour covers a route that starts in Reykjavik, stops by Thingvellir National Park (a fault and fissure zone), Kerid Crater, Geysir, and Gullfoss. The Golden Circle tour is usually recommended for folks who stop by Iceland for a day. The city of Reykjavik features many unique photographic

opportunities as well, especially the HARPA opera house at night, and the Viking statue (Solfar Sun Voyager) nearby.

Westfjords, East Island, and Interior. These areas are less popular with the tourists but very rewarding for photographic scouts and workshops. The downside is that these areas are the most remote, so it may not be for the first-time visitor. The Westfjords are only visited by 3% of the tourists but can also be a photographer's paradise if remote and unique compositions are the goal. The Westfjords feature countless table mountains, some waterfalls, and abandoned fisheries and ships. The East Island features fjords with quaint little fishing towns and opportunities for many first-light compositions since you can actually see the sun rise over the water in this area. The largest town on the East Island is Egilsstaðir, which features several waterfalls and a deep geothermal lake featuring a mythical worm called the Lagafliot (their version of the Loch Ness Monster.) The Interior offers opportunities for unique landscape (mountain) colors and textures as well as large milky geothermal lakes...but keep in mind that the Interior does not have open road access until late June.

The Ring Road Tour refers to a route that encircles the entire island without covering the interior or the Westfjords. For photographers on a workshop schedule, this route usually takes about 2 weeks.

NEXT STEPS

Planning a photographic journey to Iceland requires some good lead-time. If you are planning for a winter shoot, you can probably reserve your airfare 2 months in advance since winter is not popular with general tourists; however, if you plan to photograph in the summer (mid June to early August), you should book your airfare 5-6 months in advance to get a good selection since you will be competing with a ton of tourists and photography enthusiasts. "Shoulder Season" is the period (mid May to early June) just before the start of the peak, and is a good option if you are looking for more availability in both airfare and lodging...you will get about 1 hour less of magic light, but you will still get plenty of good light if you stick to the midnight sun light schedule.

Apart from timing, the next decision you'll need to tackle is which group to use to get good photography. I have composed a table below to help you with your decision depending on your needs and based on my experience.

Option	Summary	Recommended for	Examples & Recommendations
Day Tour (lowest cost)	This is a sightseeing option and is NOT recommended if you want good photography. You are travelling with tourists during the middle of the day (light will likely be unfavorably high contrast) and you will have minimal time to make serious compositions. This option is recommended for photographic <i>scouting</i> purposes only.	Beginners. Those looking to survey for potential photographic targets. Those wanting to supplement their existing visit for scouting purposes. Those not comfortable traveling alone.	Gray-line and Reykjavik Excursions are the two largest tour operators on the island and offer many day-tours that leave from Reykjavik. The "Golden Circle" is very popular, and the farthest these day-tours can reach are Jokulsarlon in Southern Iceland.
Individual (low cost)	This is travelling with fellow photographers who appreciate the importance of the light schedule. This option is NOT recommended as part of a family vacation as mentioned at the start of this article because you will risk upsetting other members of the family who are not photography enthusiasts.	Photo Enthusiasts with photographic experience in planning, scouting, and composition, as well having a familiarity of the island's targets. Those comfortable travelling alone or in small groups.	Try to find a <i>photographic</i> guidebook to help plan your trip. Use tools like The Photographer's Ephemeris (TPE) and Google Earth to scout your targets in advance.
Photo Tour (low cost)	Photo tours load many people onto a bus and get driven to many locations. Most photo tours concentrate on the amount of photography but not the quality. Tours are good for capturing iconic or postcard images, but do not necessarily follow a schedule centered on good photographic light...most of the photography is done during the day, which can be unfavorably bright and high contrast. Because there are a lot of people in a tour group, one cannot expect any significant personal coaching.	Photo Enthusiasts with minimal experience. Those not comfortable traveling alone. Those who don't need individual coaching and do not expect ideal light.	(The main thing that distinguishes a photo tour from a workshop is the <u>coaching ratio</u> . Photo tours usually use a large tour bus.)

Workshops (moderate cost)	Workshops are designed to help individuals improve their technical and compositional abilities and will almost always be planned around good photographic light. Good workshops typically have a coaching ratio no larger than 6:1, 6 students to 1 instructor. A workshop will typically cover fewer targets than a photo tour, with relatively more time spent at a given site to allow for stronger compositions and better photographic light. Because workshop groups typically travel in smaller 4WD vehicles, they can go to unique locations that larger tour buses cannot reach. Workshops cost more because you are paying the instructors to fly and stay in Iceland to guide and teach you.	Photo Enthusiasts and professionals that seek to improve their craft. Those not comfortable traveling alone. Those who want individual and/or customized coaching and expect good photographic light.	Aperture Academy apertureacademy.com Lurie Belegurschi iceland-photo-tours.com Ken Fong (yours truly) kenfongphotojourneys.com
Individual Guide (high cost)	This service is completely customized to your skill level and interests. A (typically renown) guide will either take you to locations based on their expertise, or you can tell them which specific location you are interested in photographing where they will then pre-scout the site in advance. Coaching ratio is generally 1:1 but can typically include a spouse or friend on your trip. Because guides typically travel in smaller 4WD vehicles, they can go to unique locations that larger tour buses cannot reach.	Photo Enthusiasts and professionals that seek to improve their craft. Those seeking a specific target that may be difficult to get to due to weather or environmental reasons.	Schermeisterphotography.com



Bruarfoss

KENFONGPHOTOJOURNEYS.COM

On the Cover: First Light on Godafoss

This is one of the photos I took when I attended the Iceland workshop in May. Several month prior to the trip, I was really excited in anticipation while preparing all the necessary equipment needed for this trip, including thermal clothing, wool socks, filters and overshoes etc.

On May 21st, we went to Godafoss. My coach Ken Fong brought us down to the bottom of the fall, where we used a wide angle lens to make our compositions. Ken also taught us how to use a nodal bar to take seamless panoramic compositions. He then recommended that we should go up to the top of the falls to take a different composition before the sun came out and becomes too bright. However, I was so concentrated in taking my panoramic pictures before realizing that everybody had left. I immediately packed my bag and rushed to the top of the falls.

I thought my timing was just right. Ken was discussing with other classmates what type of filter we should use. He also reminded us again that there wasn't much time left before the sun would be too bright. I was busy composing, setting up my tripod, attaching filters, and adjusting my settings. Finally, I was ready to take the exposure. At that very moment, the sun came out. I felt so bad, but told myself that I should keep doing it since I was there already. Click! Click! Click! Click! I took four images with different shutter speeds. Then, I saw the sun shined brightly on the fall. Ok, I tried my best.

During my post processing, I merged all four shots and formed one image. Settings are: 24mm, ISO 100, F16, shutter speed from 5 to 15 seconds.

It turned out that quite a few people liked this image even though the photo was taken moments after missing the ideal (diffused) magic light. My lessons from this are: always be ready to catch the right moment when you need to, don't delay or be distracted by other attractions, and if you miss it, just catch up and keep shooting. You never know what your result will be!