



Image: Fire Fall -- Yosemite Horsetail Falls (Yosemite NP)  
Photographer: Howard Hou  
Detailed info on page 11



## Editors

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## Planning Committee

**President:** Serena Hartoog  
**Vice President:** Tatung Chow  
**Membership:** Vivian Yeh  
**Competition:** Irene Wu

## 101 Photo Club

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

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

For details, please visit:  
[101photoclub.com](http://101photoclub.com)

## Events

Glamour portrait shooting, 4/2/16,  
Sat (p 3-4)

## Resource

Scouting Report: Death Valley  
by Ken Fong (p 5-10)

## President's message

The club has members with different interests. We try to meet everybody's needs by bringing speakers on a wide variety of topics. I encourage everyone to send suggestions on how to improve the programs by emailing me or [news@101PhotoClub.com](mailto:news@101PhotoClub.com).

This coming month, we changed the regular meeting from Tuesday night to Saturday's glamor shoot. There will be 10 professional models with makeup by 9 makeup artists. We also have 3 clothing designers for the models. This exciting event will be held at our club VP Tatung's private home. So please sign up and don't miss this opportunity to photograph professional models.

Following the model shoot, at the May 3rd meeting we will host a portrait competition. This is an opportunity for you to upload the images you took from the April 2nd event and display to all the members for group critiques. The photos will also be sent to our models for their portfolio. Submit your favorite shots for the models, designers and makeup artists. They need your support. We will be honored to have Hanson Fong back to critique and comment on the images. This also is a good chance for you to improve your photography skills by the critique. All the images you submit for competition/critique will display anonymously, so don't worry if your images are good enough. No one will know.

To participate, you must login to your account at [101PhotoClub.com](http://101PhotoClub.com) and access the "Competition" pull down menu - "Submit images to a competition ", you should be able to upload images to your account. Everyone can upload as many images as the website indicates for the May competition. More details will be sent out later. We will have some gifts to give away for the top images.

Make photography a part of your life and artistic vision. Let's make it fun and enjoyable.

There are even more exciting events planned for the summer and fall. Stay tuned.



*Do Things with Passion ...  
or not at all*

## April Glamour Portrait Shoot Event for 101 Photo Club members.

Want to practice everything you have learned from our recent portrait workshop from Hanson Fong? Please join us in April for an opportunity to take photos of up to 10 models who will have make-ups done by professional makeup artists and be dressed up by wardrobe designers. The models will be photographed with 2-3 indoor studio setups and several outdoor and environmental backgrounds. The backgrounds will include valley views, sunset (weather permitting), and surrounding grass. Even if there is fog, the valley can create some amazing moods.

**Where:** Tatung's private house at Three Springs Ranch San Jose (Mt Hamilton area). The exact location will be provided later.

**When:** Saturday, April 2, from 4:30pm to sunset (around 7:30pm).

**Who can attend:** This workshop is free for members, but you must sign up to reserve a spot. We will not accept non-members for this workshop due to limited space.

**What to bring:** Camera and lens for portrait and landscape. The club will provide the rest.

**Car Pool:** We encourage carpool from the ROLCC parking lot. The signup is already closed and we are in the process of arranging carpool. The details will follow.

(Please see the flyer on next page)



# GLAMOR PORTRAITS SHOOT



COME JOIN US

## FOR A GLAMOUR SHOOT FEATURING:

- 10 MODELS MADE UP BY PROFESSIONAL MAKEUP ARTISTS
- BOTH INDOOR AND OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTS,
- SEVERAL DIFFERENT STUDIO LIGHT SETUPS INDOORS.
- OUTDOOR SHOTS WILL INCLUDE BACKGROUNDS SUCH AS:
  - A VALLEY FROM THE TOP OF A HILL
  - SEVERAL ACRES OF GRASS
  - AROUND THE HOUSE.
- PHOTOGRAPHERS WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHOOT DURING THE SUNSET, AND WHATEVER THE WEATHER PROVIDES.

## WHAT TO SHOOT:

BEAUTIFUL MODELS AND TOP HILL SUNSET VIEW.

## WHERE:

TATUNG'S PRIVATE HOME AT THREE SPRINGS RANCH SAN JOSE (MT HAMILTON AREA), EXACT ADDRESS WILL BE PROVIDED WHEN YOU SIGN UP TO ATTEND.

## WHEN:

SATURDAY, APRIL 2ND  
4:30PM TO SUNSET (7:30PM).

## WHO CAN ATTEND:

THIS WORKSHOP IS FREE FOR MEMBERS, BUT YOU MUST SIGN UP TO RESERVE A SPOT, IN ORDER TO COME. WE WILL NOT ACCEPT NON-MEMBERS FOR THIS WORKSHOP DUE TO SPACE LIMITATIONS.

## WHAT TO BRING:

CAMERA, LENS FOR PORTRAITS AND LANDSCAPE BOTH, CLUB WILL PROVIDE THE REST.

 RIVER OF LIFE FOUNDATION  
生命河基金會  
Brought to you by:  
101 PHOTO CLUB  
101 Photo Club & The River of Life Foundation



## Scouting Report: Death Valley – by Ken Fong

### INTRO:

Death Valley National Park was the location for the first multi-day photography workshop that I attended as a new landscape photographer. Even with an experienced guide, my first experience there was very tough, but I learned a lot about where I needed to be in terms of my compositional skills. Today, I actually discourage individuals who are starting out in landscape photography to visit Death Valley because it is not the best place to start with basic composition; however, for those who are further along in their experience, it is one of the best places to test your compositional ability. Whereas most photographic locations have subject material that presents itself to you almost as soon as you show up, Death Valley requires that you WORK to find your compositional material. This scouting report is intended to serve as a general guide to help you plan your photoshoot in Death Valley...it is biased towards

compositions that I enjoy, but I will also try to include some of the aspects that have more general appeal.



### 2016 SUPERBLOOM

There has been much hype in the media about the 2016 Superbloom. A superbloom is rare and occurs usually during an El Nino year, where seeds that have been sitting around for years finally get a chance to germinate after getting their outer layers washed away. The resulting effect is a field of color that appears to “float” above the desolate landscape Death Valley is known for. The last Superbloom was in 2005. The bloom starts in the lower elevations of the valley and work their way higher until early June. Each elevation features a different dominant wildflower, so the colors will vary as the season moves on. The typical shutterbug will make a trip to or through Death Valley, expecting to take a

photograph from the road to capture this amazing sight. However, be warned that photography may or may not be rewarding depending on several factors:

- 1) Color boldness: A wildflower's color is most bold after a rain...not only is the dust rinsed away, the moisture saturates the flower petals, making the colors more intense.
- 2) Wind: For macro photographers, wind plays a factor into whether you can shoot close to your base ISO or not. Ideally, you want little or no wind.
- 3) Clouds: If the wildflowers detect clouds (they can!), there is a good chance they will go into “protective” mode, where they close up their petals in anticipation of rain. Colors are less intense when this happens.
- 4) Bright Sun versus Overcast: Bright sun may bring out bolder colors, but may also make your composition too contrasty. Overcast may resolve the contrast, but may make the colors less bold. I would tend to prefer the latter and rely on post-processing to bring out the colors; however, you may want to try both situations and judge for yourself.
- 5) Location: the bulk of the shutterbugs park off the main road and start shooting, but it helps to plan your shot a little more. See if there are any iconic Death Valley background subjects that you can use to provide both context and color contrast, otherwise, your viewers will just think you are shooting wildflowers at any random location. A good example of an iconic background is Badwater, which provides a nice white contrast and is also recognizable. Other examples include the Panamint range, Mesquite Dunes, or Zabriskie Point.) Also, consider playing with the elevation when photographing a field of flowers...if you can get onto a hill, you can

adjust with the height and see if it changes the boldness or compression of the flower field. Adding height also increases your chances of converting a field of flowers into a leading line in your composition.

The above are just some of the factors that can lead to a rewarding photo...and I'm not even a wildflower expert. If you talk to photographers that are wildflower experts, you will probably learn about many other factors. But the point I want to make now is not to go to the Superbloom as a "day trip"...not only will a daytrip wear out your driver, you might only walk away with a photo that is no different than the thousands taken by other tourists. Plan at least 2 full days of shooting the Superbloom to get some variance on the weather conditions. You do not need to shoot the Superbloom for the full day (you probably shouldn't as there are many other wonders to see and scout.) Driving to and from Death Valley will require another 2 days. So we are talking about 3 nights minimum to increase your chances for rewarding photography.

### WHEN TO VISIT

Although the Superbloom will continue into early June, the ideal time to visit Death Valley is October through April. May through September is very hot. You may have heard that the park shuts down during it's hottest months, but their official website says the park is open all year round (but I am guessing you will not see a lot of people in the summer months.)

### HOW TO GET THERE

Driving from the San Francisco Bay Area, there are two possible routes: the most "direct" is to take Hwy 5 to Bakersfield and curl back North to Hwy 190. This is about a 7.5-hour journey without stopping.

Another possible route is to head directly east over the Sierras to Hwy 395 and come down via Owen's Valley. This will ADD about 2 hours to your trip but will allow you to add other sites like Mono Lake, Eastern Sierras, and Mammoth Lakes to your itinerary. If using this route in the winter, be sure you are using a Sierra pass that is OPEN.

The route I usually take is by flying to McCarran Airport in Las Vegas, rent a car, then drive 2 hours to the east park entrance via Hwy 160.

### WHERE TO STAY

Normally, you can book an inexpensive room at Stovepipe Wells Village, or a more expensive room at Furnace Creek. Due to the Superbloom, hotel capacity within the park is very sparse, even on the weekdays. If you cannot find a place at Stovepipe Wells or Furnace Creek, my recommendation is to stay outside the park in Pahrump (Holiday Inn Express), which is about an hour's drive to the park entrance if coming from Las Vegas. There are also camper options inside the park. There are more dining options at Furnace Creek.

### HOW LONG TO STAY

As mentioned earlier, you need to devote 2 days for travelling in and out. I would set a minimum stay of 3 nights to allow 2 full days of photography. An optimal 4-5 nights would give you enough time to scout and allow for more variations in weather.





**WHAT TO SHOOT (BESIDES THE SUPERBLOOM)**

For myself, Death Valley is all about ground texture: mud cracks, salt pan craters and tiles, polygon shapes, and sand dune patterns. But during the middle of the day, most of these textures are either unremarkable or look horrible. The magic happens at the fringes of the day,

from an hour before the sun rises, and the hour past sunset. When these ground textures are married to something interesting in the sky, you have yourself an unforgettable photographic experience. Most of the main valley (from Cottonball Basin in the north to Badwater in the south) are populated with salt pans created by a massive drainage system where the salt has no where to go. During the day, salt reflects the brightness of the sky and produces an unfavorable contrasty image; however, before sunrise or after sundown, the salt reflects COLOR, which offers a creative alternative to water when making a mirrored composition. But before listing the sites with reflective salt (Badwater/Cottonball Basin), here are some locations that are fine for shooting during the day:



Use ziplock containers to prevent that sinking feeling.



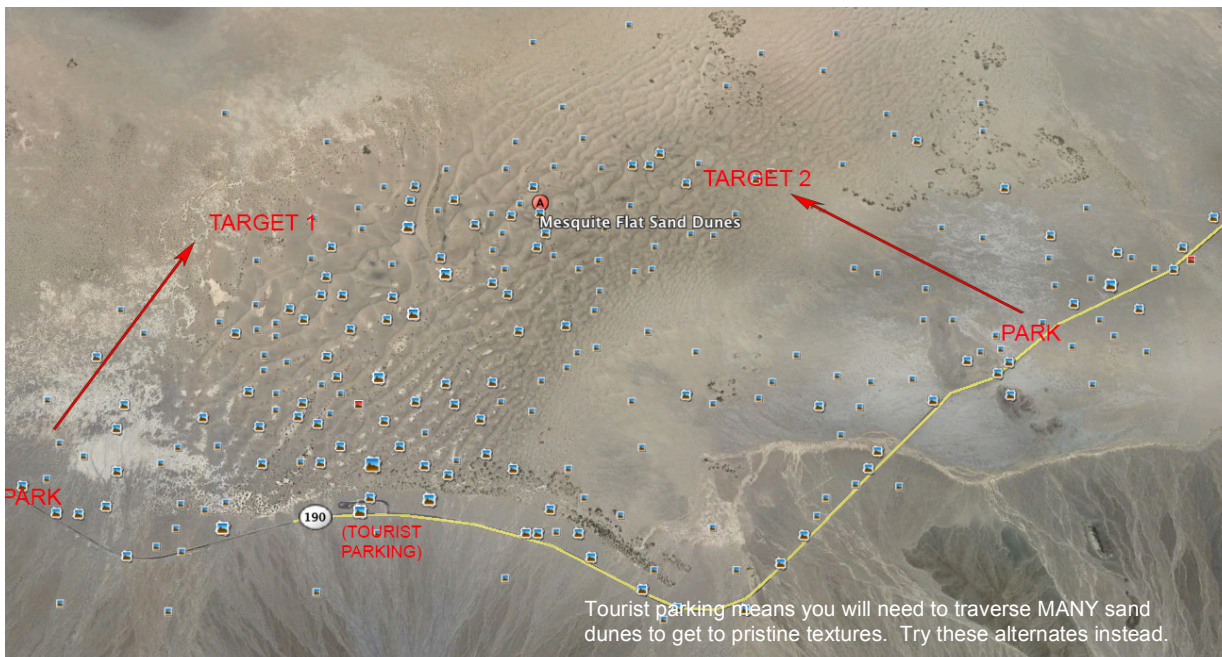
Point your compositions down when the sky is not interesting.

KEN FONG  
FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHY

**Mesquite Sand Dunes (Star Wars filming location)**

Located close to Stovepipe Wells, these dunes are easy to access for tourists, with a parking lot that is just a few feet from where the dunes begin. However, if you are looking for pristine dunes (not trampled by the masses of tourists), you may want to explore the edges. Trying to find pristine dunes from the tourist parking lot will require you to traverse many dunes, which is a lot of work.

To get to the pristine area, please consult the image below. Both targets are accessed by parking to the side of the road. Be sure to record the location of your car with a GPS device if you plan to return when dark. "Target 1" is how to get to the larger dunes by walking along the west side of the dune area...allow about 25 minutes to make it out there. Larger dunes do not necessarily make for better compositions but can give you some height options. To get to even more pristine dunes, "Target 2" is a nice alternative...allow about 30-40 minutes to make this walk. Once you arrive to either of these sites, you will want



Tourist parking means you will need to traverse MANY sand dunes to get to pristine textures. Try these alternates instead.

to be careful about where you walk on the dunes, because you could be messing up your own composition. I usually try to use existing footprints as a path, or walk along a ridge that I don't plan to use. I personally find the light just after sunrise or just before sundown best for capturing textures. Pre-sunrise or post-sunset light tends to look a bit flat, but can offer some nice magic light options. As the sun goes higher, you can move to more



contour compositions, one of the few exceptions where we can embrace hard shadows. Use ziplock “to go” containers with X slits on top to prevent your tripod from sinking into the sand (see photo).

**A cautionary note on sandstorms:** As with other dunes, Mesquite Dunes “resets” after a sandstorm, where footprints are erased. Sand dunes form when wind picks up material from the nearby alluvial fans and deposit them onto the dune area. You DO NOT want to be caught in a sandstorm. Not only will it exfoliate your skin, the fine sand will etch the glass on your lenses and virtually ruin your photographic equipment and your sunglasses or eyeglasses.

#### Devil’s Golfcourse

Devil’s golfcourse is an interesting place to photograph. I personally don’t like the unique texture it presents, but it is still fun to photograph. At this site, photographers are actually encouraged to capture it in harsh, mid-day light because it helps to bring out the “despair” in the composition. My advice is to try to find a red rock to use in your foreground to provide contrast and depth...there are a few red rocks near the parking area.

**Mosaic Canyon/Golden Canyon** – both canyons are fine for shooting during the middle of the day because direct light overhead can help light up the slots (but may be still contrasty). Mosaic Canyon is a shorter walk. My recommendation is to bring some water to pour on the rock aggregates to help the colors come out. Golden Canyon offers a behind-view of the Manly Beacon (seen at Zabriskie Point), as well as a good view of Red Cathedral, which is best photographed by not getting too close to it.

**Vistas: Dante’s View, Aguerberry Point, Zabriskie Point.** All three of these vista points are Death Valley’s most popular, with Zabriskie being the easiest to access since it is right near the east entrance. Dante’s View requires the most driving. All vista point compositions benefit when there are interesting clouds. Zabriskie is popular for its first light compositions and has many other interesting attractions to shoot beside the Manly Beacon. Aguerberry is good for sunrises and sunsets.

#### Badwater/Cottonball Basin

Both locations can yield remarkable compositions if you can find some interesting foreground patterns, textures, or shapes married to an interesting sunrise or sunset.





Remember, salt reflects light, so your foreground may be almost as bright as your sky. From my experience, your best chances of finding interesting patterns, craters, and shapes will be near water or salt creeks. Cottonball Basin is famous for such creeks and you will find them almost everywhere within that basin. Badwater is more famous for larger crater shapes but does not have as much water. I have found that if you scout closer to the road at Badwater, you will find more moisture (but not necessarily a creek). After a rainstorm is probably an excellent time to visit Badwater because you have the opportunity for water-filled craters, which makes for an amazing mirrored shot at sunrise/sunset. Also, don't forget to check out the "West Road" of Badwater just south of Furnace Creek...there is a portion of the West Road that crosses a dry white salt creek that has some very interesting salt craters (about 10 minutes from the main road turnoff.) Again, these sites are unremarkable during the day, but can be magical with very low angle light at the fringes of the day.



The ridges of salt craters at Badwater will glow during magic light. It is bonus if you can find a crater filled with water for a reflection composition.



There are plenty of streams to create leading lines at Cottonball Basin. Don't feel that you have to use reflections to mirror the background subjects or mountains...you are mainly using reflections to mirror a colorful sky.

#### Cottonball Basin/Badwater Scouting Tips:

- During the day, SCOUT for your foreground material. Don't waste too much time photographing because the subjects will likely not look impressive and will be too contrasty...even with overcast light. Return during magic light.
- Look for interesting shapes and patterns, and places where mirrored compositions can benefit. Binoculars might help you to spot large salt pan areas; however, you may not see the specific shapes until you are very close and right over them.
- Use a GPS device where you can record waypoints of your scouted foregrounds, and use an App like The Photographer's Ephemeris to help you visualize what the sunrise or sunset will look like. Record how much time it took to get to the location, then plan on returning later, especially if something interesting is happening in the sky during sunset or sunrise. Don't forget to record the coordinates for your parked car or you will have a true "Death Valley Experience". A dedicated GPS device like a Garmin is supposedly more accurate than a smartphone and can work without data coverage. If you are planning to use your GPS device or smartphone, please practice using the waypoint recording function (and without data coverage) BEFORE your trip to Death Valley.
- Dress appropriately and choose old hiking shoes that you don't mind messing up due to all that salt. For Badwater and Cottonball Basin, I recommend



bringing a garbage bag so that you can lay your camera backpack down while you photograph...the salt is very corrosive and you will want to protect anything that you are laying down.

- Rinse out your gear (tripods mainly) in the shower immediately after the shoot. Do a deeper clean when you get home.

When I first visited Death Valley, I could not understand why photographers could spend a ton of time here. With what I know now, I can see that the composition possibilities are virtually endless in just Cottonball Basin and Badwater alone. If I had more time, I would love to rent a Jeep at Furnace Creek and explore the larger Eureka Dunes, and the famous Racetrack.

If you make it out to Death Valley, we'd love to hear about your experience and see your work. Please travel and photograph safely. Plan responsibly...this is not a simple daytrip!

For more photos, please visit:  
<https://500px.com/kenfong/galleries/death-valley>

That's me on the left alongside fellow photo scout Tom at Cottonball Basin. We were bundled up because of a strong wind that was blowing salt around. If this were a sandstorm at Mesquite Dunes, we would head for shelter.





## About the Cover “Fire Fall -- Yosemite Horsetail Falls”, Yosemite NP Photographer: Howard Hou

"In 1973, photographer Galen Rowell took the first-known photograph of the natural Yosemite Firefall, which greatly increased its fame among landscape photographers and Yosemite aficionados." - quoted from internet.

Since then, with the digital camera and popularity of long range lenses, Horsetail Falls has attracted world-wide photographers to join the great natural event. Particularly, this year with enough rain and snow, the falls are on the radar by the whole world. The national news will often broadcast this well-known Yosemite event. Normally, there are two lanes of one-way drive on both the north and south drive; however, during this event, orange traffic cones are arranged so that one lane is solely dedicated to photography parking. Amazing, isn't it?

I packed up with my gear and drove up to Yosemite at 5:30am with friends on 02/20/2016, Saturday. We made a day trip and returned around midnight. The shooting location was from information given by Aaron Meyers (see reference below). We decide to photography from the Southside Drive, East:

GPS Coordinates: 37° 43' 39.84", -119° 36' 33.06"

Upon our arrival at 3pm, the area was already full of photographers with lenses aimed at the same target: Horsetail Falls. We did not reach to the exact location but were only off about a half mile west of the GPS spot mentioned above. This location almost faced the exact front view of the fall. During sunset, the light was not narrow enough to light only the falls. Instead, the wider sunset light covered the fall and its surrounding face. Nevertheless, I am pleased with what I got as a first-time visitor for this event. Compared with people who were at the same spot since 7am. I am happy with what I have.

In short, it was a fun event to see the magnificence of Yosemite National Park and take photos alongside photographers from all over the world. More information can be found from Google searches, but I am including Aaron Meyers's website address below as a great reference.

Camera and Lens: Canon 5D Mark III, 70-200mm II IS Lens with Canon Extender EF 1.4X II.  
Settings: 1/80s, f/4, ISO200, Focal Length 185mm.

Reference website:

[Horsetail Falls 2016 \(Yosemite National Park\) – Aaron M Photography Blog](#)

