

Landscape Photography

Lessons Learned
by
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This presentation is mainly about an organised landscape photography holiday in Tuscany that my wife and I went on In Oct 2018.

It was run by HF Holidays and led by a professional photographer, Graham Light of Abbey Studios, Cricklade, Wilts.

There are a few pictures taken on other holidays that also help to illustrate the subject

Equipment To Take With You

- Camera
- Lenses
- Filters
- Spare charged batteries
- Tripod

Camera: I use an Olympus E600 12.3 Megapixel 4/3 DSLR
As a backup I had a Panasonic compact TZ-70 with 30x zoom

Lenses: My main lens was a F2.8, 12-60mm tele lens (35mm equivalent of 24-120mm). I also took a 40-150mm (80-300mm equivalent) tele lens for that extra bit of zoom.

Filters: I took a circular polariser and a set of Cokin graduated neutral density filters.

Batteries: 2 spares plus the one in the camera, the priority each evening was to ensure all 3 were fully charged for the next day. I recall a railway meet where a lady's new DSLR's battery ran out after a few shots. She had no spares – result, day spoiled.

Tripod: I use a Koolehaoda travel tripod, weight 1.3kg. Folded it's 36cms, extended 142cms. A bonus, one leg can be detached to use as a monopod.

Composition

- Have a clear idea of the scene you want to capture.
- Is everything in the scene relevant or a distraction.
- Front, middle and distant
- Frame your subject.
- Little is better.

Have a clear idea of the scene you want to capture. Be it landscape or urban, have a good look around and decide on your subject, the best angle, composition of the image, the use of light etc. **Is everything in the scene relevant** or a distraction: If not, leave it in. If it is, consider repositioning yourself, or zooming in, or if not possible take the picture anyway then use post processing to adjust the picture to your liking..

Front, middle and distance: Construct your image if possible with foreground detail, middle distance subjects and background elements and use all to create interest to the final image and tell a story.

Frame you subject use trees, plants, street furniture etc. to enhance the image.

Little is better: Enhance the subject by positioning it against a plain background e.g. a tree on a hill against the sky. This is also called negative space and is the area between and around objects in a photo. Use it to see shapes and sizes more effectively, and produce better composed images.

Tuscan Landscapes



Initial image on the outskirts of San Quirico our base for the holiday. Now what to choose as the subject, the farmhouse on the hill perhaps.

This was at midday and a bit hazy.



Walking a bit further I chose this view giving bushes in the foreground, farmhouse in middle distance and in the far background the town of Pienza and mountains. Perhaps the bushes in the foreground are a distraction, or do they add depth to the scene? You decide.



Moving a bit further along and slight pan around and zooming in a bit to lose the bushes has emphasised the, subject, the farmhouse while still retaining the scale of distance with the foreground trees and the hills and village in the background.



It's also about what else you find in the area you're in.

Scanning a bit further around this view I caught sight of this section of the panorama and swapped to a 80-300mm lens. At 168mm zoom 1/640s F8 ISO200

There is a graininess due to the haze but it gives the image a bit of moodiness. You also have a number of areas you capture interest, from the rolling ploughed furrows in the foreground, the road leading the to lone barn. The green fields giving way to the woods and then finally the “teeth” of the trees on the horizon

Framing the subject



Walking along a footpath around the hill town of Monticchiello in the distance was the town Pienza. Lots of stuff going on in this picture with leading lines, contrasting colours (50 shades of brown) but how about framing it with a bit of greenery?



A bit further along the path were some bushes that provided a frame. The only blemish being the dangly branch on the right which probably could be cloned out.



Another framed view of Pienza later in the day, this time from the opposite direction. A low level shot using some shrubs in the foreground for framing

Little is Better



Sometimes little is better.

You don't have to fill the frame with too much detail.

Unfortunately I never got that iconic shot of the lone tree on the hilltop / horizon but this gives an idea.



On a HF holiday in Yorkshire, this was a lone tree on a crag above Malham Cove. A bit different in that lots of texture in the cracked limestone and views of the distant hills

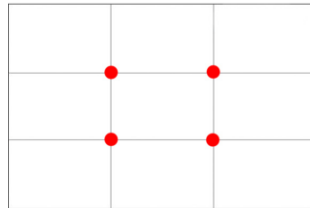


Another little is best, although from a composition perspective the subject tree could have been positioned off centre – rule of thirds.

Two things to remember with Landscape Photography

Use the rules:

- Leading Lines
- Rule of Thirds



Leading Lines: can you use some element in the image to draw the viewer into the frame and towards the main subject, fences, paths, roadways etc. all can help with this. It makes you feel as if you're standing in the frame, and looking at the path you have to follow to get to your destination.

Rule of Thirds: use this to help in composition but the rule can be broken if it allows you to create an interesting picture. Placing the subject off centre will often help. Try to avoid having the natural horizon dividing the picture in half, either place it in the lower or upper third of the frame.

A lot of cameras have the facility to overlay a thirds grid on the display of your camera to help with composition.



Leading lines in this image of the famous winding road with cypresses in Val d'Orcia near Siena in Tuscany. Rule of thirds with the leading lines of the road towards the house and the horizon in the upper third of the image



Footpath leading up the west side of Langdale in the Lake District.

The path leading from the lower left third diagonally across and receding figures giving scale and tells the story of a walk to the head of Langdale.



Paths and rows of vines leading down to a village near Niedermorschwir in the Alsace
The horizon is nicely in the upper third and the village in the right hand third.

This was taken on a Ramblers walking holiday in the Autumn a few years ago



Another soggy Lakeland day. The leading lines being the track bounded by drystone walls heading to the distant crags.

Does this break the rule of thirds by going straight up the middle of the frame?

This was shot “on the fly” whilst hurrying to get to the Mortal Man pub in nearby Troutbeck before closing time

Getting the Lighting right

As the camera took it



With +ve Exposure Factor



When taking pictures in snow scenes remember that 15% at least of the light is reflected back off the snow causing the camera to underexpose by at least 1 sometimes 2 stops so use the exposure factor to compensate for this.



A recent snowshoeing holiday in Austria, 6500 feet up heading towards a peak called Mutter in the Lechtal Alps. The camera on Auto because of difficulty using the viewfinder in the bright light. A case of point, press the shutter release and hope for the best!

The camera settings on Auto were 1/1600s, F5 at ISO80

Evan after adjusting the image by +20% brightness and -20% contrast, the image is still underexposed.

The End

Well, not really, I've only touched a bit on the subject of Landscape Photography.

There are many websites on the internet that you can look at and which provide lots of advice on the subject.

Or go on a Landscape Photography holiday led by a professional.