

HORIZON NEWS #19

NEWS, THOUGHTS AND IMAGES FROM HORIZON PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

At many a wedding [starting in the 1920s and 30s], the hired photographer replaced the minister as the central officiator.

John Updike

STUDENT PHOTOS: CLOSE-UP



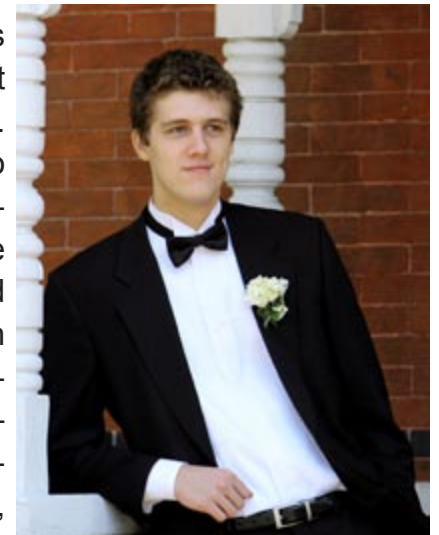
Radhey Shyam (2)



Scott Baker

We heard an unusual personal story from a student (name withheld) in our wedding workshop. Twenty-three years after his last contact with his ex-wife she “reappeared,” apparently searching for some rather belated relationship closure. Following a lengthy conversation of relationship “whys and wherefores,” she had a surprising request: “You’ve had custody of the wedding album for the past 23 years (yes, he had saved it). I would like it for the next 23.” We tell this tale because it is an example, admittedly a bit unusual, maybe even extreme, of the emotional power of the wedding album. The album freeze-frames a pivotal moment of life, and a couple’s wedding memories are as likely to be shaped by the photos as by the actual memories themselves. It’s no wonder that couples generally take great care in choosing their photographer.

These days, couples want their photos to have a spontaneous feel, despite the fact that weddings are unspontaneous events. One of the photographer’s challenges is to create pictures that look unposed and unself-conscious, while the circumstances are anything but. If this were a real couple and not models, we think they’d be pleased with these three photos by our students. The expressions, the interaction and the body language are deliberate, yet look totally comfortable, and there are feelings of warmth, energy, and intimacy.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

>>Horizon’s 2008 Course Schedule is completed and posted on our site. You can print out a pdf calendar of the entire year. Check out our many new offerings and locations! www.horizonworkshops.com

>>Our expansion throughout the northeast continues with the addition of David Wells, who will teach a Rhode Island workshop, encompassing Providence (the state’s historic capital city) and Newport (the most opulent resort town in America a century ago). David, who is a nationally prominent name among workshop instructors, has traveled the world capturing an intimate sense of place with his camera.

>>Our 3rd annual **Summit** on May 2,3 & 4 boasts sixteen instructors, classes on over twenty different subjects, portfolio reviews, and much more. Advance registration is just \$225.

QUICK TIP: THE HAIRLIGHT

Watch any movie from the 1930s and 40s and study the closeups of the leading lady, and often the leading man, too. Invariably, you will observe a prominent highlight—sometimes two—in the hair. This “hairlight” adds a glamorous glow, almost an angelic quality. It also helps separate the head (and often the shoulders) from the background. How do you create a hairlight? It’s a cinch...if you have a studio. You need a light stand with a boom to hold the light well above and behind the head so the light is (a) out of the picture; and (b) pointing down enough that the light isn’t spilling directly into the camera. Why is a boom needed? It enables you to put the light stand off to the side; otherwise, to place the light behind the subjects head would place the light stand in the picture.

Once you determine your f stop for the main exposure on the face (and body), adjust your hairlight’s output so it is brighter than that f stop indicates, so you get a highlight. (Example: your camera is at f.8 for the main light; set the hairlight light to produce enough light for f.11 or f.16) Check your LCD, then adjust the hairlight power up or down as needed to get the light as bright as you like.

Below left is a shot from **Rich Russo’s** studio. You can see the hairlight in a rectangular “softbox” above and behind the model, but you don’t need a softbox to get the effect. In the shot on the right, you can see two hairlights at work...both are visible on the guy’s head, while only the right hairlight is hitting the woman’s hair. If you think this hairlight is too prominent, you would simply lower the light output a stop or two.

What if you don’t have a studio, just a normal room? Normal ceilings are relatively low, so it’s difficult to get the hairlight high enough so the light doesn’t flare into the lens. What about creating a hairlight outside? It’s a little tricky with flash, but you can use the sun to create a hairlight...a subject for another day.



Holly Deason



END FRAME



Radhey Shyam

Once upon a time, it was an all black & white world. Hard to believe, but many felt B & W was “real” photography while color was “unnatural” and “unartistic.” Over time, color completely won the day, and now the world is not only all-color, but most people like their colors unnaturally supersaturated. Well, digital makes it easy to have it both ways. You can program your camera to shoot either, or you can shoot in color and transpose to B & W in your digital darkroom. Why not try mixing things up a bit in your albums... throw in some B & W amidst the color. And while you’re at it, try adding different tones to your B & W. This used to be a difficult, time consuming and sometimes odorous (we don’t mean onerous, we mean smell) back in the days of the darkroom. Now it’s just the touch of a button.