

Tony Roberts Photography Newsletter, May 31, 2017

In this week's newsletter, you get to learn all about **memory cards**. And we visit one of my students who loves making **books** with his thousands of travel photos. I'm starting a **photo-of-the-week feature** for any of you readers and we'll wrap things up with a tip of the hat to Roger Cicala and his amazing company, **Lens Rentals**.

Book Report:

The digital era has changed the landscape about how we preserve our photographs. These days our images are stored on computer hard drives and we rely on software to view, edit and output them for use.

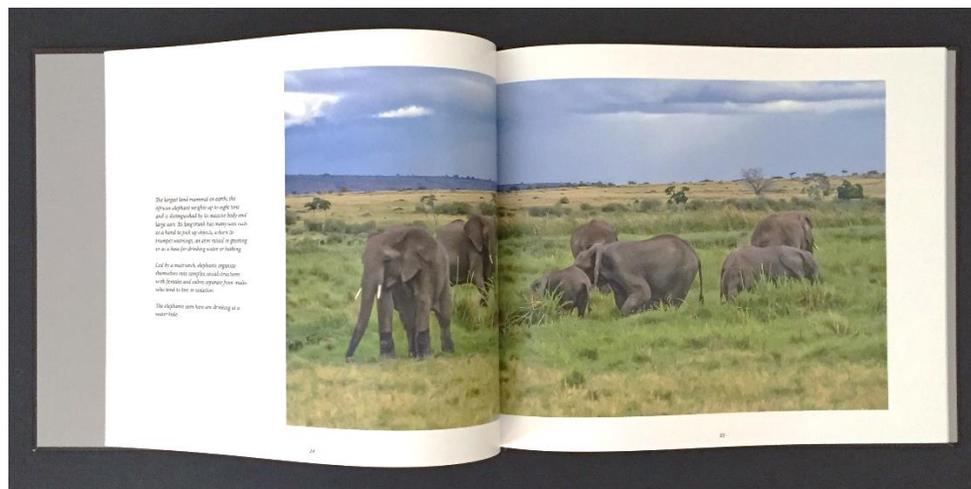
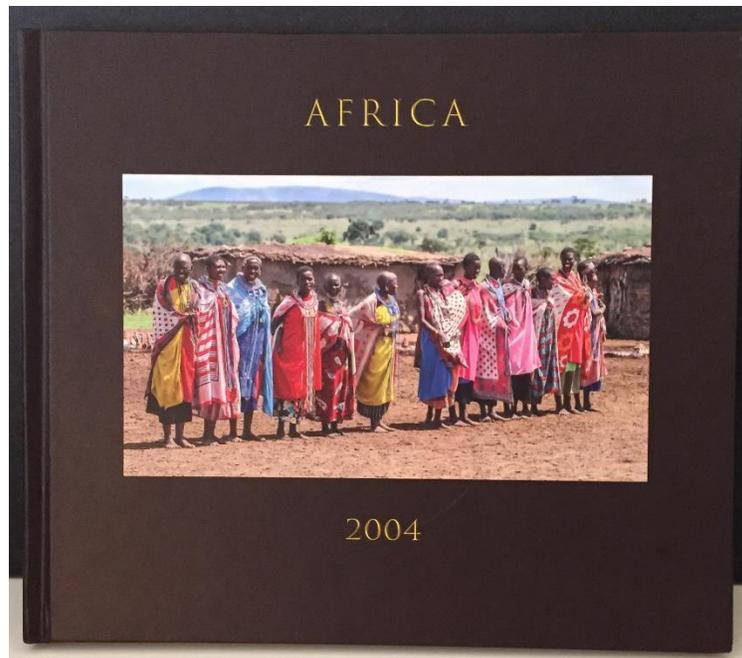
While there are many fine software packages, I prefer Adobe's Lightroom because it helps me organize my photo library (120,000 images and counting) and has state-of-the-art editing. It also has creative modules to **Map** the location for each image, a terrific **Slideshow** module as well as **Print** and **Web** modules that simplify output.

Since it was introduced in version 4 (2013), Lightroom's **Book** module helps create the modern equivalent of the old-style photo album. By creating custom layouts or choosing several very nice templates, Book puts it all together and prepares it for publishing.

Pictured below is a recent book on which I collaborated with one of my students, Donn Roberts (no relation). Donn and his family spent two weeks in Kenya and Botswana in 2004 and returned with well over a thousand images.

Donn uses Lightroom to organize all his different trips into collections and for the past few years we've been busy creating books of all his travels. In addition to Africa, Donn and his wife have been to Asia, South America and Europe.

Africa is the twelfth travel book we've produced and we're currently at work building layouts for a book on Vietnam.



Here's a brief look at the way we use the **Book** module:

In Lightroom's Library module, we create a collection of images. The collection is arranged in a sequence that generally follows how Donn wants them to appear in the book.

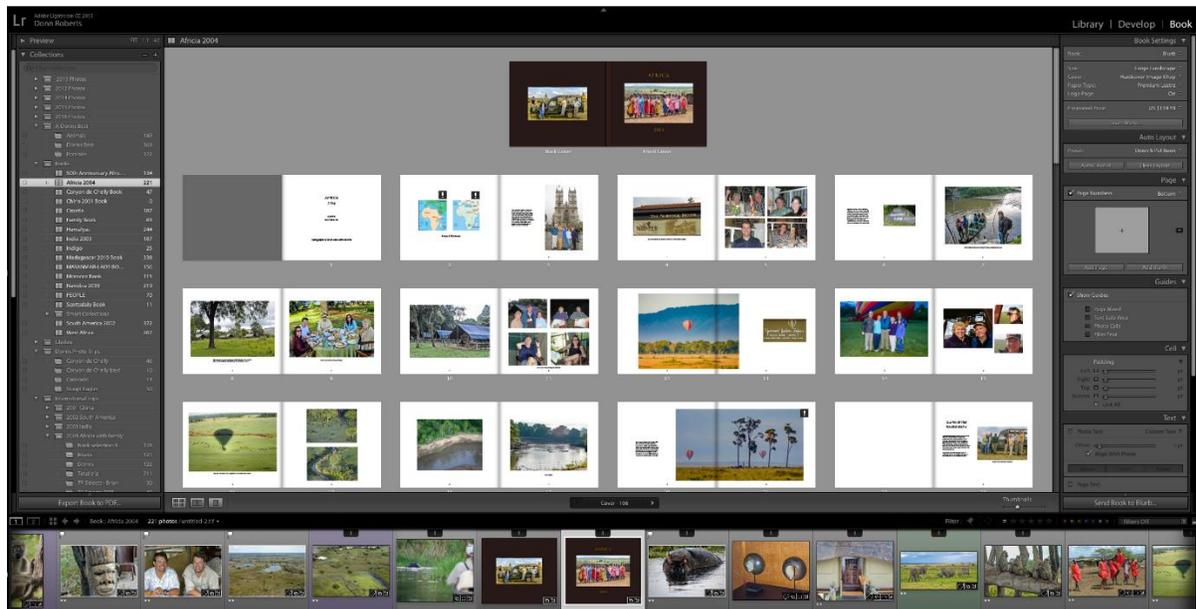
We then click on the Book module tab and choose **auto-layout** just to get started with a basic layout. Nothing done at this or any stage is permanent until it is sent to Blurb for publishing. We do save the initial layout and give the book a title. Any changes made thereafter are automatically saved.

The bottom filmstrip contains the collected photos while the center section shows a layout of the book's pages. You'll notice in the photo below that the cover pages at the top show the front and rear images. Any photo can be resized and text can both overlay or adjoin photos.

Next, we start fine tuning the layouts and Donn starts writing text for the introduction, chapter headings and the afterword. We do a **lot** of fine tuning and Book easily permits rearranging just by dragging and dropping.

We insert text and start balancing the pages, making sure that the image, text and captions are correctly placed. After a lot of back and forth, we reach a point where we send the book to Blurb as a beta copy. We scrutinize the beta copy for typos and text sizing. When we're happy with the beta version, Donn then places an order for multiple copies that he'll share with family, friends and acquaintances from the trips.

Here's a screenshot of the completed Africa book layout in Book showing photos and text:



This is an all-too-brief-look at the Book module. There's a lot more that goes into it but I wanted you to see that creating a book is a great way to share your images and to create a lasting memento.

Memory Cards:

For most of us, the memory cards we're currently using are just fine. No need to rush out and buy new cards UNLESS you've found that you're consistently filling up your card(s) or that you find the buffer signaling (red blinking light) a slowdown. Moreover, the advent of video recording on cameras presents new challenges. Video recording requires more speed and more capacity.

Card speeds are rated both for write and for read at megabytes per second (MB/s). It's a good idea at this point to take the card out of your camera and have a look at all the techie lingo printed on it. Your card's lingo may be slightly different but essentially, here's what it all means:



300MB/s = the read/write speed. This is a speed demon capable of write speeds up to 260MB/s. Your card is likely about 40MB/s.

XC II = Same as UHS II, a faster standard for data transfer.

That padlock means you can lock the card from read/write. See the slider?

U3 = Supports 4K video recording at 30MB/s as opposed to U1 @10MB/s

C10 = A video recording rate of 1080 pixels at a minimum of 10MB/s

64 GB = There are a lot of variables that determines how many photos you can store on the card. Here's a link to a [site](#) that will calculate the quantity of photos based on format (jpeg vs. raw), capacity of the card, and number of megapixels of your camera. Very handy!

Here's a plain vanilla card from a few years ago:



60MB/s = A moderate speed, good enough for most of us.

HC I = Slower speed standard, caps at 88MB/s.

U3 + C10 = all good for good video capture.

16 GB = You'll fill these cards up quickly unless your camera megapixel count isn't very high, e.g. 8-12 MB. Again, use the [calculator](#) to gauge the number of photos your card will handle.

And here's the current champion speed demon:



The main difference between this card and the Sandisk above is the write speed of 299MB/s vs. 260MB/s. It may seem a bit of a quibble but when your brand new Sony A9 is spewing out 20fps at 45MB each image, you're going to be very happy about the transfer rate.

If your camera isn't capable but you intend to upgrade in the near future, the good news is that all these cards are backward compatible. In other words, they'll work just fine with your current gear.

SD has become the standard card size for most digital cameras. With the coming of video capture, many of the newer cameras have two memory card slots. This means you have the option of designating one card for video and the other for stills. I can foresee putting a speedy card in slot A for video and a medium speed (and less expensive) card in slot B.

The world of memory cards is confusing, so don't hesitate to depend on camera store professional to help you. I like B&H Photo in New York and find their staff consistently helpful. Here's a [link](#) to their website.

Photo of the Week Showcase

Your images are important to me and I'd like to start showcasing them in the newsletter. Please feel free to submit any images for consideration via email. Preferred format is jpeg, 1080px for size and use 8-10 for quality. If possible, please include your metadata so I'll know who you are and the camera details. If you don't know how to do this, just include some pertinent info in your email along with the image(s). I will consider any image taken with any camera including smartphones. And please keep in mind that the subject should be something a total stranger will relate to.

Lens Rentals:

Founded in 2006 by Roger Cicala as a way to expand his own gear collection and share his photographic knowledge, Lens Rentals has grown from a one-man operation in a spare bedroom to a company with nearly 100 employees. It is the premier rental house in the USA and Roger's critiques of gear are widely respected. I've been using Lens Rentals for several years to try out new cameras and lenses before purchasing. It's smart way to find out if a certain camera lives up to its hype. Moreover, Lens Rentals offers the benefit of purchasing a camera or lens if it passes your testing. For more about Roger, visit his website at www.lensrentals.com. Here's one of Roger's insightful critiques of a Canon lens, the Canon 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6L IS.

"This is a compromise lens. It's not quite as sharp as the 300 and 400mm primes and has a telescoping zoom which some people don't like. Personally, I appreciate this feature since it's faster to zoom. The Canon 70-200 f/2.8L IS II is sharper than this lens from 100-200mm. Trip after trip, however, I pack up 2 or 3 "best possible" lenses only to unpack them and put a 100-400mm in my bag. This is because, although it's a compromise, it's a very good compromise. It's nearly as sharp as the primes and far sharper than a consumer lens. The huge range means getting the shot framed just right and not having to change lenses, and it's relatively small and easy to shoot hand-held."

Critiques like this are bread and butter to the professional photographer. We don't always have time to assess every camera and lens that comes on the market. Kudos to Roger for having such a fine organization.

That's it for this week. Get out there and take some new photos and enter the Photo of the Week. All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tony". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'T' and a long, sweeping tail.