

the Driftwood



Official newsletter of the Beachcombers Photography Club

January 2012



KiteSurfing6 by Des Millin
Received a COM at the recent Bloemfontein Salon

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*The Beachcombers Photography Club
is affiliated with the PSSA
(Photographic Society of South Africa)*

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THEMES for 2012

MONTH	THEME	VENUE	DATE
January	Wildlife	Mondi Sports Grounds Conference Room (Woodpeckers)	10 January 2012
February	Monochrome	Mondi Sports Grounds Conference Room (Woodpeckers)	7 February 2012
March	Zululand Landscapes	Mondi Sports Grounds Conference Room (Woodpeckers)	6 March 2012
April	Practical	Mondi Sports Grounds Conference Room (Woodpeckers)	3 April 2012
May	People	Mondi Sports Grounds Conference Room (Woodpeckers)	1 May 2012
June	Architecture	Mondi Sports Grounds Conference Room (Woodpeckers)	5 June 2012
July	Motion	Mondi Sports Grounds Conference Room (Woodpeckers)	3 July 2012
August	Sport	Mondi Sports Grounds Conference Room (Woodpeckers)	7 August 2012
September	Man at Work	Mondi Sports Grounds Conference Room (Woodpeckers)	4 September 2012
October	Art	Mondi Sports Grounds Conference Room (Woodpeckers)	2 October 2012
November	Practical	Mondi Sports Grounds Conference Room (Woodpeckers)	6 November 2012
December	Year End Function	To be confirmed	4 December 2012

For details and maps of our venue, please visit: www.beachcombers.co.za/events2010.html

WORKSHOPS

Keep an eye on this space for news of forthcoming workshops to be held throughout 2012.

Photography Course By Manie Combrinck

*Starts on 29 February 2011, every Wednesday at 18:30
at Grantham Park Primary School, Empangeni.*

Phone 082 490 5075

E mail manie.c@mweb.co.za

or drop in on my Facebook page

for more information.

Cost: R 1 500



BLACK AND WHITE, THE DIGITAL WAY

This article is an extended version of one Keith Cooper wrote for Canon Europe (issue 11).

HIGH QUALITY BLACK AND WHITE

Black and white goes back to the very origins of photography.

Early plates and films had limited sensitivity to longer (red) wavelengths of light and produce a certain interpretation of the subject.

Later films had a much more even response to colours (panchromatic) that led to a different 'look'.

The differing chemistry and manufacturing processes adopted by various manufacturers resulted in different films producing subtly different renditions of the same scene. It was soon discovered that using coloured filters in front of the lens also altered the image.

For example, a red filter cuts out some of the blue light from the sky while still letting through the red component of the white light reflected from clouds. This results in darker skies, which emphasise the clouds. More complex mixtures of colours, such as flowering plants and skin tones, would all look slightly different on different films and with different filters.

GOING DIGITAL

OK, so I have my digital camera and want a black and white picture of a landscape, with dark skies and fluffy white clouds, what do I need to do?

Some cameras do indeed have a black and white setting that might be worth a try, but I'm looking at getting the very best out of my camera and want to use 'raw' images, just the same as I would with colour. The black and white setting gives you 8 bit black and white JPEG images. If you shoot raw and JPEG at the same time you'll find that the raw files are still in colour.

I'm going to be looking at converting the raw files to colour and then to black and white. The examples all used Photoshop CS for raw conversion and subsequent image processing. You could use other raw converters and photo editors just as well.

In my own work I often apply some fairly hefty curves and adjustments to my black and white images. Posterisation can be a real problem if you are working with 8-bit images (such as from JPEGs). One way to reduce the risk is to work in 16-bit where you have more data to play with.

SKY AND CLOUDS -- FILTERS

Back to the sky and clouds... I compose and take the picture just as if I had black and white film in my camera. Well not quite, with film I might select a filter, maybe a light orange filter - red often looks too much like moonlight.

With digital I can still apply the equivalent of a coloured filter for black and white, but I'm going to do it later with Photoshop. I also have the advantage of changing my mind if I decide, for example, that a yellow filter would have been better. It is true that the process is not quite equivalent, but certainly very similar.

The two black and white images of Tower Bridge below show some of the subtle changes that you get with different processing:



The RGB colour original



Simple conversion RGB to grayscale



Layer based technique. (See later for layer settings)

BASIC CONVERSION TECHNIQUES

For all of the conversion techniques I'm going to describe, I'll assume that you have a well-exposed raw file with very little clipping of highlights.

By all means experiment with any pictures you want, but starting with good colour originals allows you to see the effects of different conversion processes more easily.

Digital cameras are thought of as recording scenes in pixels of red, green, and blue. Actually each pixel is sensitive to a range of colours and has a little coloured filter in front, so it is more accurate to think of each one contributing to a grayscale image (channel) representing values of mostly red, mostly green and mostly blue.

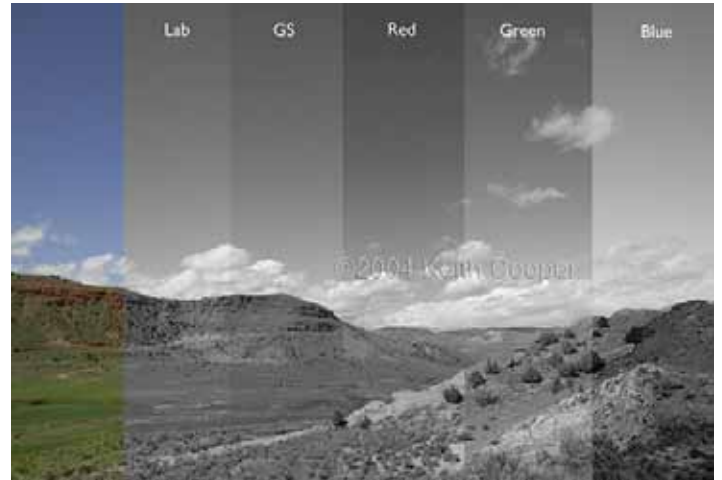
This gives one of the simplest conversion techniques, just pick one of the channels – it's already in black and white. If you want to use the red channel, delete the green and blue channels and change the image mode to 'Grayscale'

Very simple, but you are throwing away a lot of your picture information, and for the best quality, that's not really what we want.

There are several other simple techniques available in Photoshop:

- Change the mode to grayscale:
Image > Mode > Grayscale
- Desaturate the image:
Image > Adjustments > Desaturate
- Change the mode to Lab:
Image > Mode > Lab Color --then delete the 'a' and 'b' channels, and change the resulting Alpha channel to Grayscale.

Update: Photoshop now includes a more complex B/W conversion option, which is like a more complex version of the Channel Mixer approach described later - very easy to use, but still following the basic principles outlined in this 2004 article.



The Lab, Grayscale, Red channel, Green channel and Blue channel processes are compared in this Wyoming landscape.

Update: If you would prefer a slightly more automated (but still very flexible) method of converting to black and white, do have a look at the lengthy review of Nik SilverEfex Pro. It includes examples based on the Wyoming image above. I actually use it quite often for my own large B/W prints.

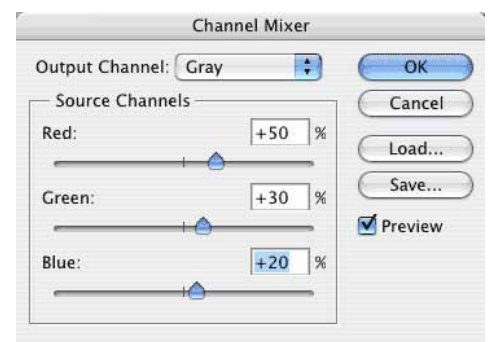
LAYER BASED EFFECTS

Channel mixer settings for basic black and white. What if you mix the 3 different colour channels as grayscale images?

Easy to do, with a 'Channel Mixer' adjustment layer.

Note the ticked monochrome box.

The percentages are the proportions of the different channels that are being mixed. They do not have to add up to 100% but it is a useful starting point.



This method allows you to fine tune the conversion to emphasise different aspects of the coloured original.

Remember that something like 'blue' does not really

equate with any particular shade of gray, it is how the tone relates to others that gives the effect.

Although very powerful, you are mixing just three channels and there are times you may want finer control.

A very simple technique (used in the second Tower Bridge picture) involves just two Hue and Saturation (H/S) adjustment layers.

- Create a H/S Adjustment layer with no adjustment. Change the layer blend mode to Color
- Create another H/S Adjustment layer with Saturation at minus 100.
- Return to first H/S layer and tune the black and white effect using the Saturation and Hue sliders

The Tower Bridge picture had Hue -36 and Saturation +42.

Even more detailed control is possible by using different edit selections in the adjustment dialogue. This allows you to select which colours are altered by differing amounts.



This picture of a cottonwood tree was taken in Wyoming.

Notice the results with 2 H/S layers with settings of Hue -43 and Saturation +25

The 'Infra-red film look' uses settings of Hue +19 and Sat +75 but has the blending modes reversed (first layer 'normal', second 'color')

I found the second 'Infra Red' technique accidentally, when experimenting with blending modes.

Remember that there are no 'right'

ways of getting your black and white image and it is well worth trying different options.

You could for example try a H/S layer with a channel mixer layer (monochrome) above it.

I've only listed some of the simplest methods here.

You can combine them, mask them and generally spend a lot of time 'getting it right' if you want.

There are a number of third party plugins available for Photoshop, some of which even aim to mimic the responses of particular film stock.

I've got a collection of most of the methods I've found on the B/W conversion page.

You can also try conversions directly in Adobe Camera Raw, by setting the saturation to -100 and altering the other settings under the 'adjust' tab.

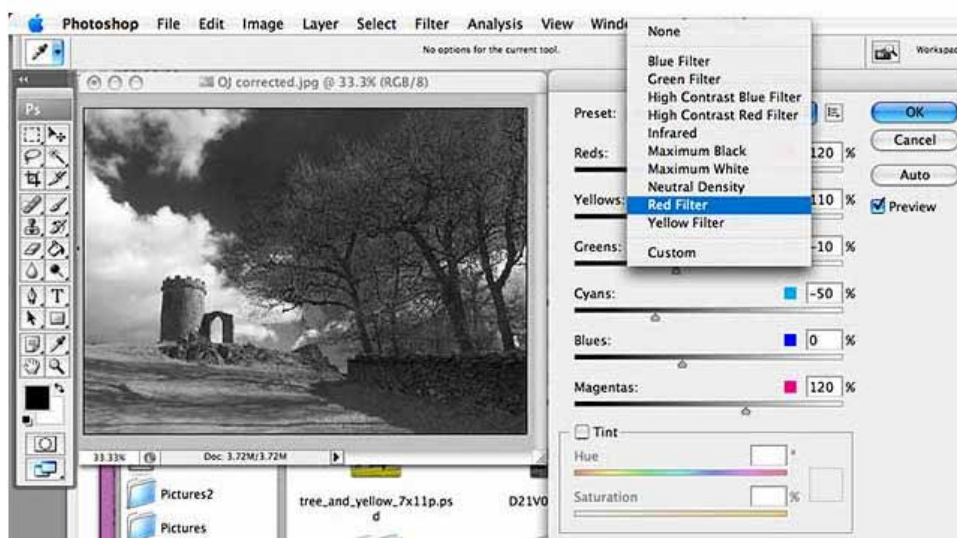
Update: Photoshop has greatly improved its B/W conversion options with a specific adjustment that allows fine channel adjustments to be produced. This is also available in Camera RAW, however I usually prefer to do the conversion from a colour image I've opened in Photoshop.

CONVERSIONS AND QUALITY

Seeing results on the web, there may not look too much difference between the techniques, but when you are looking to make high quality prints, there are some other considerations in deciding which to try.

Work in 16-bit mode if possible. The image of Hood Canal at the start of this article would have been seriously posterised if I'd worked in 8-bit.

Any method that pushes saturation of an image too far



is likely to show artefacts. This is particularly true at high ISO speeds or with compressed (JPEG) original images.

The Tower Bridge layers example and first cottonwood conversion, both use more saturation than I would normally use for prints. This was mainly so as to show the effects more clearly in this web article.

One area that is often neglected is the colour image that is converted. There is nothing to say the colours have to be right before you convert. I sometimes use DxO optics Pro to process my raw files, but turn up some of its adjustments and controls beyond what I'd want for a good colour image. When converted to B/W I can sometimes get a better B/W image.

Image noise may be more noticeable in some channels. The red channel often shows this up, particularly

in deep blue skies.

With my landscape prints I sometimes use the Lab method since it seems to give files that are easy to work with and take large adjustments well.

As with most of these things you should experiment and see what works best for your images.

Welcome to digital black and white!

There is more info in the Digital Black and White section of the website

There is an article on the website about digital black and white based on an interview Keith gave to a digital photography magazine for a Black and White special issue.

COMPETITIONS

CAPTURE THE SPIRIT OF AFRICA AND WIN BIG PRIZES WITH AMARULA!

Once Africa is in your blood, it never leaves you. The Spirit of Africa is the spirit of adventure, the drive to see what lies over the next dune. It's the lure of wild places, where the king of the jungle still rules and humans are dwarfed by the power of Nature. It's a sense of timelessness, of age-old baobab forests and mountains shaped by millennia.

Amarula invites you to take pictures that capture the wild heart of Africa. Show us what makes our continent such a special place to live and stand the chance to win great prizes!

This year's competition is titled "Capture the Spirit of Africa". With our sponsor Amarula, we invite you to send in your best wildlife images (pictures of mammals, birds, reptiles, insects, etc). We'll select ten finalists who will each win a R1 000 Cape Union Mart voucher. The grand prize is R15 000 photographic equipment plus another R10 000 voucher from Cape Union Mart – just what you need for your own photo safari!

Go to <http://www.wildcard.co.za/competitions.htm> for full rules and to upload your photograph. Entries close on 8 February 2012.

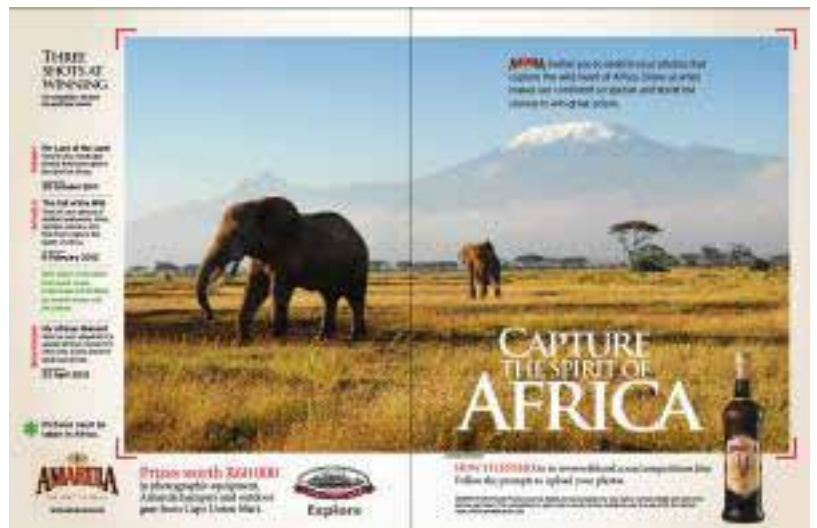


FOTO FIRST HOLIDAY PHOTO COMPETITION

Foto First is proud to announce their Foto First Holiday photo competition... If you think that you have snapped something awesome this holiday season, you need to submit your impressive photo!

We are looking for photos that best show good old December holidays in South Africa; for example, kids on the beach, hiking in the mountains or your dog pulling the Christmas tree apart.

Stand a chance to Win one of ten Fujifilm 3D cameras worth R 3 999 each and loads of print vouchers. Terms and conditions apply!

One 6x8 print of your photo must be paid for in full and second will be printed at no charge for the competition entry. Acceptance of entries closes on 28 February 2012 and winners will be announced on Friday 16 March.

Please print the entry form e-mailed previously out on your colour or B&W copier and cut in half (if you did not receive the entry form, please drop me an e-mail on chantelle@cre8designandprint.co.za and I will forward to you)

Please note that it is a requirement of the competition that the entrant becomes a VIP member if they are not already (internal stores).



UPCOMING EVENTS

Our Next Meeting

Our next club meeting will be held on Tuesday, 7 February 2012 at the Mondi Sports Grounds conference room (Woodpeckers) in Richards Bay at 19h00. The theme is Monochrome, defined as a photograph or picture developed or executed in black and white or in varying tones of only one color.

The Next Special Interest Group Meeting

The Committee has decided to implement Special Interest Groups (SIG) that will meet once a month in addition to our normal Club meetings for those who want to learn more about specific areas of photography. This will give members the chance to learn from each other, go to different places to take photographs and get to use equipment that they may not usually have access to. There will be a coordinator for each group who will arrange the meetings/ outings.


The SIG's will be as follows:


- Macro Photography with coordinator Hendrik Louw
- Studio Photography with coordinator Manie Combrinck
- Wildlife Photography with coordinator Sias van Schalkwyk
- Photoshop with coordinator Peter Martin

SALONS 2012

Get all the information on the upcoming salons from the PSSA website at www.pssa.co.za. We also wish to remind you that a trophy is awarded to the Club member who receives the most number of Salon acceptances during the year. You must therefore ensure that you enter as many salons as possible. You also need salon ac-

ceptances to be promoted from three to four star and four to five star.

FEBRUARY 2012	SALON	Second Clarens Salon of Monochrome Photography
	COUNTRY	Clarens, South Africa
	CLOSING DATE	4 February 2012
	JUDGING DATE	
	INFO	<p>Salon Director: Hans Slaghuis FPSSA, APSSA (Vers) Email: hansslaghuis@mweb.co.za</p> <p>CATEGORIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People (excluding children) • People (young children) • Land-, city- and seascapes • Open <p>Additional information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Clarens Photographers • Salon <p> Download</p>

FEBRUARY 2012	SALON	First Pretoria Super Circuit
	COUNTRY	Pretoria
	TYPE	3-in-1 Digital, Print and AV Salon
	CLOSING DATE	18 February 2012
	JUDGING DATE	Digital: 25-26 February 2012 Prints: 3-4 March 2012
	INFO	<p>Salon Director: Sarel Naude Email: sarelnaude@gmail.com</p> <p>DIGITAL CATEGORIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Red • Nature General • Avant Garde • Birds • Street Photography • Sport and Aerial <p>PRINT CATEGORIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal Portraits • Mono Human Portrait • Open Blue • Avant Garde • Photo Journalism • Nature General <p>AUDIO VISUAL CATEGORIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Story • A Comic <p>Additional information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salon <p> Download</p>

JANUARY CLUB COMPETITION

Unfortunately the COM images for January were not available in time for this issue of the Driftwood, please look out for them in the next issue.

MEMBER NEWS

The Beachcombers Photography Club finished 20th out of 39 club in the PSSA 2011 interclub competition. Well done to all those who submitted images!

Congratulations to Des Millin on earning a Certificate of Merit for his entry "KiteSurfing6" (see cover page) in the recent Bloemfontein Salon. Congratulations to the following members who had acceptances at the same Salon:

PETER MARTIN



Altered Reality: Moonlight



Altered Reality: Death by Coffee

SIAS VAN SCHALKWYK



Pictorial (Sport): Thirsty Runner

DESMOND MILLIN



Pictorial (No Sport): Fire

REG SCULLY

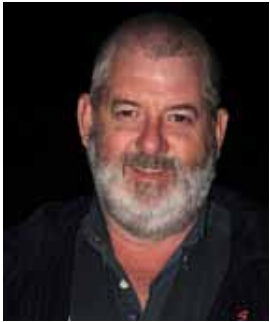
Nature Zoology (No Landscapes and Botanical): Blue Banded Snapper 2

ACHIEVEMENTS BY BEACHCOMBERS CLUB MEMBERS

We look forward to showcasing our Member's achievements for the year! Please send us any news of your achievements outside the club for inclusion in the Driftwood.

BEACHCOMBERS CLUB MEMBERS

We would like our members to get to know their fellow members and will try to get photos of all of you so that we can start by learning each other's names! Thank you Jane, for taking these photos of our members for us.



Nobby Clarke



Manie Combrinck



Chrissy Crichton



Arista Daley



Gavin Fordham



Hennie Homann



Farouk Khan



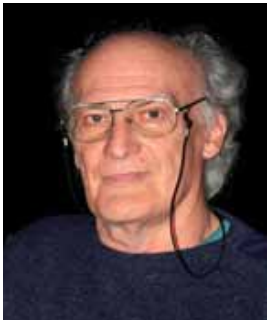
Mrs Khan



Chantelle King



Sean King



Peter Lickfold



Yvonne Louw



Peter Martin



Connie McCarthy



Hendrik McCarthy



Annett Nell



Danie Nell



Mark Sanders



Reginald Scully



Debbie Smith



Jeremy Smith



Lara Staal



Cornelius van der Merwe



Werner-Hein Zeelie



Sias van Schalkwyk



Patricia

We still need photos of these members:

- Marnus Combrinck
- Marthie Combrinck
- Evert Crafford
- Nada Crafford
- Mr Crichton
- Jane Douglass
- Tony Douglass
- Judy Dearing
- Jan Erasmus
- Allan Ferraris
- Jane Ferraris
- Johann Hamman
- Norman Hibbert
- Pauline Hibbert
- Hendrik Louw
- Elize Kemp
- Bronwyn Macdonald
- Steve Macdonald
- Pat Maritz
- Natascha Meunier
- Celeste Morkel
- Gerda Pistorius
- Beverley Ramsay
- Peter Ramsay
- Andrea Sneddon
- Mike Sneddon
- Graeme Swarts
- Tristan Swarts
- Willem van d Walt
- Barbara van Rooyen
- Gerhard van Rooyen
- Gerrit van Huyssteen
- Eleanor van Schalkwyk
- Collette van Staden
- Anthony Woodhouse
- Sanet Woodhouse
- Richman Zondi

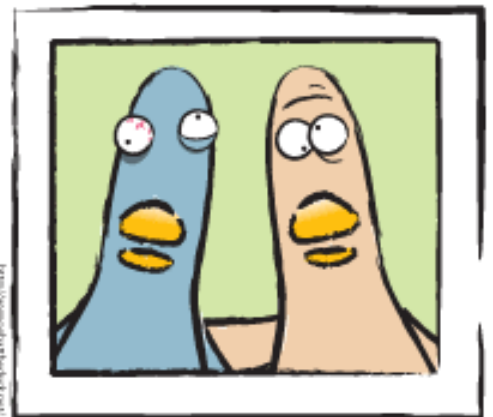
BUYING OR SELLING?

Looking for used equipment in top condition? Have something you would like to sell? Advertise your photography requirements in this space! Email the details to: chantelle@cre8designandprint.co.za

LAST LAUGH

www.whattheduck.net

What The Duck



THE COMMITTEE

President:
Manie Combrinck
Cell: 082 490 5075

Secretary:
Marthie Combrinck
Cell: 082 879 9249

Web Master:
Sias van Schalkwyk
Cell: 083 229 9258

Additional Member:
Hennie Homann
Cell: 082 898 1204



Additional member:
Chantelle King
Cell: 082 771 6646

Additional member:
Alton Daley
Cell:

Additional member:
Jeremy Smith
Cell:

THE LAST WORD

Want to see something added to the Driftwood? Any changes you would like to see? Please email any comments or suggestions to chantelle@cre8designandprint.co.za

If your photo does not appear on our Members Page, please email a recent photo of yourself for inclusion.