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keeping it real

GLEN JOHNSON'S GENUINE FANTASY WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY

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He arrives at a wedding with no specific direction and no particular agenda. He's Glen Johnson, of Eugene, Oregon-based Aperture Photographics, and he's going to capture the authentic moments of that special day unencumbered by plans, ready for whatever strikes him.

"Each wedding is a new day and anything could happen. I'm open and aware, but I don't force it—I just let it flow," he says.

Johnson focuses on creating a realistic feel with the couple and the setting, which is his biggest challenge. "Creating a playful, romantic mood is very delicate because the couple has to feel it. They aren't



experienced at modeling to fake it. If you give too many instructions, the magic disappears."

When Johnson does have a specific photo idea, he explains it to the couple then gets out of the way to let them act naturally. Open to their interpretation of his ideas, he feels there really aren't any rules for creating a good wedding image.

"When something looks good, I might ask them to do it again, perhaps turning a little more toward the sun this time or something. But, I shoot when something feels right. At times, I stand there thinking, 'Wow, that was so incredibly beautiful.' Those moments make it all worthwhile."



A DREAM COME TRUE

Johnson carefully selects the equipment he needs to create his photos. A fan of Photoshop, Pictage, FlipAlbum, Zookbinders, Capri Album, Nikon, and Marathon Press, Johnson nonetheless feels tools are irrelevant. "The photographer makes the pictures, and once you get past a certain level of quality, it doesn't matter what tools you use," he says. "Does anyone ever look at a

Picasso and wonder what brand of brush he was using? No. The results are all that matter."

With that said, he glorifies his Nikon D1x, which he wouldn't trade for anything on the market today. "It has a fast write speed, so fast I can honestly say that I've never pushed the button and had the camera not fire because it was still writing to the disk. The autofocus is very quick, even in complete darkness, if I have the SB-80 flash on. I've shot things that were happening so fast, I didn't think there was the slightest chance of them turning out, but there they were . . . perfectly in focus."

"I work with other photographers who have a full range of cameras, but I always like what I

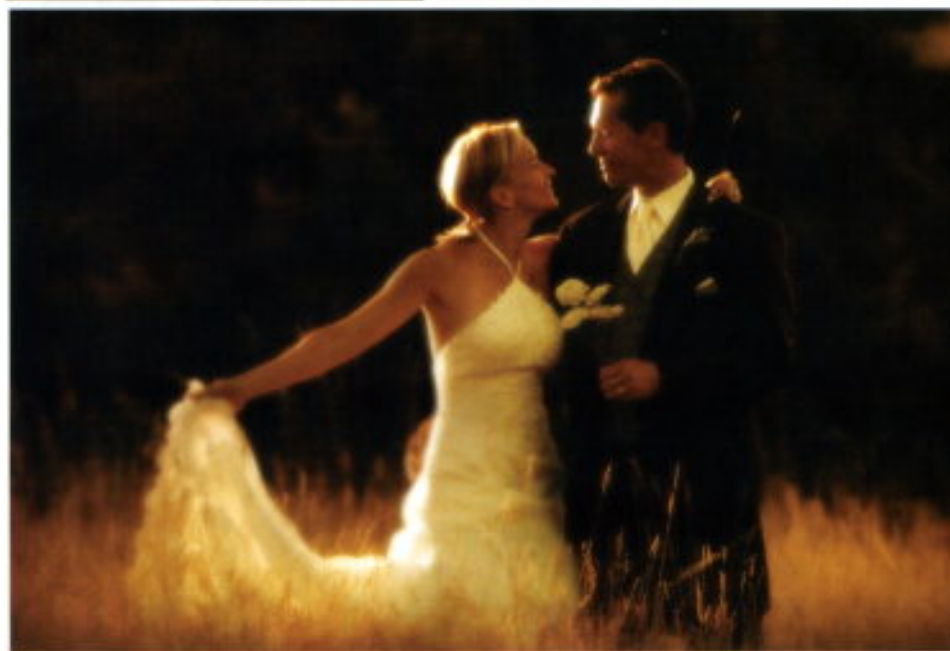
REALITY IS FANTASY

Johnson provides brides with two types of fine art wedding images: those that are realistic and honest in the way they tell the story of the wedding; and environmental portraits, which are realistic because they make use of the location, but have been transformed into something dreamy, a fantasy, through Photoshop.

"I'm the first to admit that I do cater heavily to the fantasy aspect of weddings," he says. "My style is very warm tones, with selective blurring, and a little added grain. I try to keep it looking wholesome and natural with a warm, fuzzy feeling thrown in there."

While the storybook romance-type imagery can be created for effect afterward, the actual day is spent keeping it real.

"In physics, there's a Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, which says that to measure the temperature of a glass of water, don't stick a thermometer in because the thermometer's temperature changes the temperature of the water. Photography is the same way. If you stick a photographer in there, it changes the moment and it is no longer real. So my goal is to affect the event as little as possible during the day."





see from the D1x best," Johnson explains. "The color rendition, the sharpness, the dynamic range, the smooth shadows—it beats them all in real-world work situations."

LET IT FLOW

Johnson's style of photography probably came to life when he was a rafting guide. He learned the importance of flowing with powerful things instead of against them, trying to fight them. He translates this into weddings by always looking for ways to give his clients what they want, even if it doesn't



atives, but they still have to purchase prints from me. I don't think anybody would wait three years just to get free prints. By then, they'll be calling for baby portraits."

The father of three-year-old Jade, Johnson lives for these family moments. He loves that feeling of standing with the bride, right after she's hugged her mother and seconds before she heads down the aisle on her father's arm, the excitement of photographing her with that big puddle of a tear in the bottom of her eyelids.

"There's so much emotion, family love, and tradition in that room that you can almost feel it flowing around like waves. It really is like standing at the edge of an ocean. I know I'm just the photographer so I'm not *really* part of the ocean. But still, all those waves crashing around feels pretty incredible and I truly enjoy being a part of it all." ♦

For more of Johnson's images, visit www.aperturephotographics.com



seem to be in his best interest. For example, he lets guests shoot pictures he has set up, and even occasionally floors them by offering to shoot their camera so they can get in the photo. "I believe, first of all, my pictures will turn out way better than theirs, and second, a grumpy photographer who offends his guests and bridal couple costs a lot more in ill feelings than what an 8x10 is worth."

He also found a way to include the negatives in all his packages without losing money. "I now say, 'Negatives are included in all my packages free—after three years.' So the couple gets to keep the neg-

GLEN JOHNSON'S GEAR BOX

DIGITAL CAMERA
Nikon D1x with 18-35, 28-105, 135, and 300mm Nikkor lenses

35MM CAMERAS
Nikon N80 and FE2
(for backup)

DIGITAL DARKROOM
Homemade PC
Western Digital JB edition hard drive
Sony CD and DVD burners
Wacom Tablet
Lexar Media card reader
Photoshop 7.0
FlipAlbum
ACDsee

LIGHTING
Nikon SB-28 and SB-80 DX Speedlights
Lumedyne Portable Flash system

LABS
Pictage
K&K in Portland, Oregon

ALBUMS
Capri Album, Zookbinders, ArtZ