



Newsletter

Issue 06 - January/February 2012

This Month's Contents

	Page		Page
Out and About with Michael	1	One-on-One Tuition	4
Lowepro Ambassador	2	Photography Tip Of The Month	5
Product Review - Lowepro	2	Photo Of The Month	6
Trekabout Photography Workshops	3	Inspirational Photographers	7

Out and About with Michael

Welcome to my latest photography newsletter. I hope you all had a great Christmas break and wish you all the very best for 2012. For me, the last couple of months have been quite hectic and productive photographic-wise, and it doesn't seem to be slowing down!

In December 2011, *Australian Photography* magazine published my five page article on photo trekking, using the eight day trek I did on the Overland Track in Tasmania last year as an example. It explains how to best prepare and undertake a multi-day photo trek, and you can view the full article [here](#).

In early December, I returned to Tasmania for another photographic trip, this time working my way along the east coast using a campervan to get around. I flew into Hobart and headed straight to the south-east coast, towards Tasman National Park. Over an 11 day period, I slowly worked my way up the coast to destinations including the Tessellated Pavement, Freycinet,

inland to the rainforests of Blue Tier and then up to the north-east coast to Eddystone Point and Bay of Fires. It was an absolutely magnificent trip and completely different to the photo trek I did on the Overland Track. I had never travelled and photographed in this way before and found the sense of freedom quite liberating. I was able to go and photograph anywhere I wanted, stay as long as I liked and if conditions weren't favourable for photography, I simply hopped into the van and drove to my next location. The freedom afforded by using a campervan opened up a whole new way of reaching new photographic destinations and it will certainly not be the last time I travel and photograph in this manner.



I have started a new Facebook page dedicated one hundred percent to photography, called "Michael Snedic Photography". To 'like' my new page and become a part of my photographic community on Facebook, click [here](#). In addition, my website has had a complete makeover. To see the new layout and design, click [here](#)

I have also added a series of photos from my trip to Lord Howe Island to the new photos gallery on my website. You can view them [here](#).

In the meantime, I hope you all continue to enjoy your photography!

Cheers

Michael

Lowepro Ambassador



Lowepro, the world's leading camera and video protective gear company, have recently appointed me as one of their Australian Ambassadors.

I have been an exclusive user of Lowepro bags since starting my photography career in 1996, due to their innovative design features, quality, durability out in the field and great aesthetics. It is for this reason that I am proud to support, and be an Ambassador for, a company in whose products I have one hundred percent faith.

This privileged position will entail me promote Lowepro's camera bags across Australia, through magazines, websites, online marketing, conventions and more.

For more information, click [here](#).

Product Review - Lowepro

Pro Trekker 300AW

The Lowepro bag that is now my main 'workhorse' is the Pro Trekker 300 AW. This brilliant photography backpack has been designed for the serious enthusiast or professional outdoor photographer who wants a bag that will travel well. It is extremely rugged, lightweight, has room enough to fit quite a bit of kit and is extremely comfortable once fitted correctly. It is also hydration-ready and has a series of integrated tripod sleeves, suitable for carrying a tripod, monopod and trekking poles, if required.

As a full-time, professional wildlife and nature photographer, I often take most of my photography gear with me, as I don't always know what photographic opportunities will come my way. It could be wildlife, macro or a stunning landscape, so this means taking two camera bodies, a series of lenses, a tripod, a flash unit, as well as the usual photographic accessories. The Lowepro Pro Trekker 300 AW easily fits all of the above, including a 300mm f2.8 lens attached to a camera body. There is also room for a laptop or iPad, so this bag covers all of my requirements.



The adjustable backpack harness also means that once fitted, it will feel so much more comfortable when carrying a backpack full of gear. The hydration system allows for a Camelbak or similar to be fitted, which saves you having to unload your backpack and reach for a water bottle every time you need a drink.

Apart from the above-mentioned features, the Pro Trekker is extremely durable, with a ballistic nylon polyurethane exterior. As with many other Lowepro backpacks, it comes with an AW (All Weather) cover, that protects the bag completely from the rain.

I can't rate the Pro Trekker 300 AW highly enough and can easily recommend it to anyone who is looking for a photographer's backpack that 'ticks all the boxes'.

For more information on this backpack, click [here](#).

Trekabout Photography Workshops

A lot has been happening in the world of Trekabout Photography Workshops lately. Apart from continuing to present our popular workshops, Mark and I have created a number of new ones to add to the ever-increasing range that we offer to participants. These include a full day 'Australia Zoo Experience' and a three day 'Fraser Island Experience' (full details very soon), with more new workshops currently being planned.



Full Day 'Australia Zoo Experience' - Saturday 17th March 2012



Trekabout Photography Workshops have announced our new, full day 'Australia Zoo Experience' photography workshop. We have designed this workshop so that our participants receive the most varied wildlife photography opportunities at Australia Zoo, while at the same time offering comprehensive photography tuition from both Mark and I.

Our first workshop sold out within 48 hours and we now have a new date available on Saturday the 17th of March 2012. Bookings for this new date are also filling up, so you will need to book soon to secure a place.

For more details on the full day 'Australia Zoo Experience', click [here](#).

Three Day 'Fraser Island Experience' – Friday 18th May to Sunday 20th May 2012

After numerous requests from our workshop participants, we will soon be presenting a three day 'Fraser Island Experience' photography workshop. Areas that we will visit and photograph will include the rainforests of Central Station, Lake McKenzie, the Maheno wreck, the Pinnacles, the Cathedrals, the Coloured Sands, various Sandblows, views to Lake Wabby, Indian Head, Champagne Pools, Cooloolo National Park, Rainbow Beach, as well as lot's of birdlife, macro and more.

We will be limiting participant numbers to eight participants per workshop, for a maximum tutor/student ratio. With both Mark and I presenting this workshop, you will receive plenty of group tuition as well as ample one-on-one time with us both.

Details regarding our new, three day 'Fraser Island Experience' will be announced soon (please keep an eye on our website www.trekaboutphotography.com)



Six Day 'Red Centre Experience' – Monday 25th June to Saturday 30th June 2012



After the great success of our previous three 'Red Centre Experience' photography workshops, we have added a 2012 date for this popular workshop to our Trekabout calendar.

If you have never been to the Red Centre, especially with your camera, this is one workshop I can highly recommend. There is so much to photograph there and our photographic destinations will include sunset at Uluru, Kata Tjuta, Kings Canyon, Trepkina Gorge, Emily Gap, Jessie Gap, the Alice Springs Desert Park (lots of wildlife, including free-flight bird shows), the Alice Springs Reptile Centre and much more.

For more information on our six day 'Red Centre Experience' for 2012, click [here](#)

Seven Day 'Lord Howe Island Experience' – Sunday 7th October to Saturday 13th October 2012

Last October, I took a group of participants to beautiful Lord Howe Island for a week of photography. The workshop was a resounding success, so I'm again presenting the seven day 'Lord Howe Island Experience' this coming October. I have designed the itinerary so that we visit the most photogenic parts of the island, while also allowing some free time to allow you to relax and unwind (itinerary includes beach barbeques, fully-cooked breakfasts each morning, snorkelling trips and lots of photography). I am capping this workshop at nine participants, allowing plenty of one-on-one tuition time with each attendee.



Lord Howe Island is truly a piece of paradise and a photographer's dream and one of my favourite photographic destinations. I can't wait to take participants back there in October.

To find out more about the seven day 'Lord Howe Island Experience', click [here](#)

Exciting New Photography Competition – Grand Prize valued at \$999!! (plus three other prizes)

Trekabout Photography Workshops have announced their inaugural photography competition. With sponsors onboard, we are offering 5 different prizes, the grand prize being a weekend Trekabout workshop at O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat, as well as accommodation for the weekend at O'Reilly's. The total for this grand prize alone is worth \$999, so why not enter now?

The theme for the competition is 'Primary Colours' and you can enter by clicking [here](#)

One-on-One Tuition



I have presented a number of one-on-one photography tuition sessions this year already and have dates available for half day and full day tuition over the coming months. If you would like me to spend time with you, working on any areas of photography you may be struggling with, or simply need a refresher on how to use your digital camera to take better photos, I can help.

Why not bring along a friend, relative or camera club member and reduce the price per person (maximum two people per session). For more information, click [here](#)

Eight Day 'Bowra Birding and Bird Photography Experience' – July 26th to August 2nd 2012

I am once again presenting an eight day bird photography workshop to Bowra, with professional birder, Barry Davies. This workshop is based around one of Australia's best-known birding spots, 'Bowra Sanctuary', near Cunnamulla, in western Queensland. Barry will present sessions on how to find and identify the different birds and I will be presenting sessions on how to best photograph them.



If you would like to spend eight days 'out-west', looking for and photographing a myriad of bird species and do so with other keen bird photographers, then this workshop is for you! To find out more about the eight day 'Bowra Birding and Bird Photography Experience' click [here](#)

Photography Tip of the Month

Keeping Your Photography Equipment Clean

It is very important that you keep your cameras, lenses, tripods and other photographic accessories thoroughly clean. If you have been in a dry/dusty environment with your camera, I suggest you use a soft brush to clean off any outside dust and use a large blower (like a Giotto 'Rocket') to blow any sand away, especially in the 'hard to get to' areas. Once this is done, use a dry cotton cloth to give the camera body a final wipe-down or a damp cloth if you need to get rid of mud or similar.

Lens exteriors should be cleaned in a similar way, except for the front glass element. Care must be taken to remove any dirt/sand particles using a blower, before the actual lens can be cleaned, otherwise you could end up scratching the glass. If the glass element is in need of cleaning, you can use a lens-cleaning fluid. Care needs to be taken to not spray the fluid directly onto the lens, but rather on the cloth and then wipe the lens with it. If the lens isn't too dirty, you can use the old-fashioned 'breaths' directly onto the lens and then use a dedicated lens cloth to wipe any marks away (never use facial tissues, as they act like sandpaper). Lens Pen Cleaning Brushes are also recommended and can be bought from various camera stores.



Cameras, lenses and tripods all need cleaning after visits to the beach (landscape and seascape photographers, please note!), especially if you are photographing right by the ocean's edge and there is a strong breeze blowing. Salt spray definitely needs to be cleaned off with a damp cloth for camera bodies and lenses, whereas a good hosing-down is the best method for cleaning tripod legs, especially if it has been in the water and sand. If your tripod has been in the sand, never close the bottom legs completely but leave them ajar until you get home. You can then use a hose or tap to wash any sand and salt away. Once this is done, dry the tripod legs with a cloth and leave the tripod outside to completely dry.

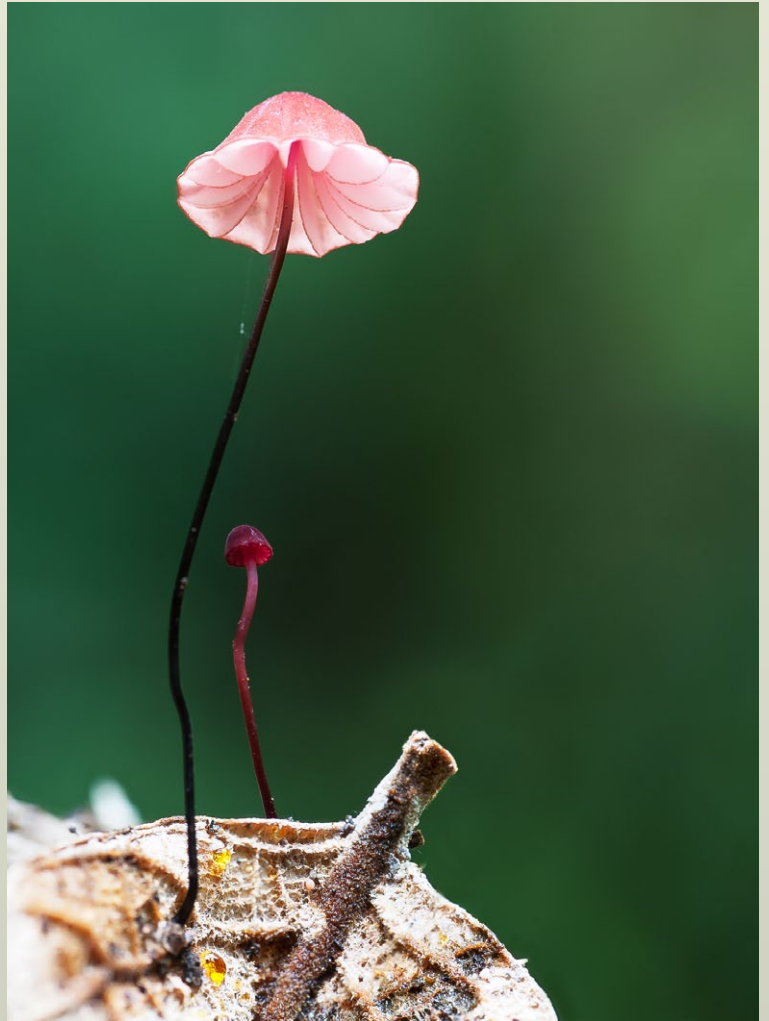
If you spend a few minutes after each shoot cleaning your camera gear, it will go a long way towards ensuring your gear lasts longer and keeps its resale value, so it's well worth the effort.

Gilled Fungi. Photo: Adam Hauldren

This month's photograph is a macro shot of Gilled Fungi. Adam has explained some of the technical challenges and solutions he found to capturing this shot:

My thanks to Michael for asking me to provide photo of the month for this issue of the newsletter. The photograph was taken while on a hike up at Maiala National Park on Mount Glorious. The weather was perfect for macro photography, being overcast but bright, so I hoped for some good results, especially since the weather in the preceding days had been damp, so I hoped some fungi would be about.

I was very disappointed therefore when, after hiking for a while on the tracks through the forest, I had failed to find evidence of any fungi to photograph. This disappointment was short-lived when I came across this tiny pink mushroom growing from a rotting leaf. Its size (around 25mm high) and position (under a log to the side of the track) made it impossible to photograph in situ, so I very gently moved the whole leaf and attached fungi on top of the trunk of a nearby fallen tree where I could more easily set up my tripod and camera equipment. Once I'd taken the photographs, I was careful to replace the leaf in its original location.



My initial tests showed that in order to get both fungi in focus, I needed to use a very narrow aperture – even f32 did not give me the depth of field I needed to get both fungi in focus. I knew that apertures smaller than that would be prone to a degree of softness due to diffraction, and in addition, the background was becoming distractingly “busy” at narrower apertures. I loved the soft background gained by shooting at apertures between f8 and f16, so decided to experiment with focus stacking.

Having determined a suitable exposure/aperture combination through test shots, I took multiple photographs with the camera in Manual Mode, re-focussing by hand between each shot so as to capture a different part of the scene in sharp focus. Camera was securely mounted on a tripod and triggered using a wireless remote, using mirror lockup to reduce camera shake.

Once back at home, I loaded the images into Adobe Lightroom to perform basic White Balance and other minor image corrections, before exporting all the images into Helicon Focus to perform the image stacking itself.

*The result can be seen here and is the product of 5 stacked shots taken with the following settings: **Nikon D700 Camera body, Tamron 90mm f2.8 Macro Lens, 1 second exposure at f16, ISO 100 (Nikon's Lo1 setting)**. In hindsight, I wish I had taken a few extra shots to get the extreme foreground in focus also, but overall I am generally happy with the result.*

If you don't have dedicated commercial focus stacking software, you can get the free CombineZP software from [here](#). Alternatively, if you already own Photoshop, similar results can also be obtained by using the “Merge Layers” command.

My recommendation would be to experiment, and don't be afraid of using multiple shots to gain the required depth of field, along with the benefits of wide aperture (soft backgrounds and faster shutter speeds).

Frans Lanting

FRANS LANTING STUDIO

I have been a fan of Frans Lanting's wonderful nature

photography since I started out in photography 16 years ago. He has been photographing for three decades and in that time has travelled around the globe many times, capturing amazing images of wildlife, landscapes and people, as well as macro shots. He has never rested on his laurels and continues to create truly wonderful images which I, and many others around the world, are privileged to be able to see through his website, books, magazines and other publications.

Here's a quote from Frans Lanting's website:

FRANS LANTING has been hailed as one of the great photographers of our time. His influential work appears in books, magazines, and exhibitions around the world. Born in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, he earned a master's degree in economics then moved to the United States to study environmental planning. Soon after, he began photographing the natural world--and never turned back. For three decades he has documented wildlife from the Amazon to Antarctica to promote understanding about the Earth and its natural history through images that convey a passion for nature and a sense of wonder about our living planet.

To view inspirational photos by Frans Lanting, visit his website [here](#)