

Foreward

Nikonian Darrell Young, known to us for many years as Digital Darrell, has consistently been a source of instructional wisdom delivered with a touch of friendly humor.

His extensive collection of informative and valuable articles can be found on the “Resources” pages of the Nikonians website.

This work represents yet another progression in the rapid growth of our international community of photographers from all walks of life, recently exceeding 140,000 members from nearly 150 countries. It is a way to further confirm Nikonians’ vocation in education, introducing books as a new communication channel in addition to Nikonians eBooks, our more than 70 existing interactive forums, The Nikonian eZine, Nikonians Academy workshops, Nikonians newsblog, Nikonians podcasts, etc.

Nikonians has earned a reputation as a friendly, reliable, informative, and passionate Nikon users community thanks in great measure to members like our own Digital Darrell, who have taken the time to share the results of their experiences with Nikon imaging equipment, despite the pressures of their day jobs.

The Nikonians community has long been known as a worldwide home for welcoming Nikon users, and Darrell’s specialty is his ability to share his knowledge in the written word, always with the spirit of a friendly uncle talking with you in the comfort of your own living room.

Darrell’s easy and friendly approach is appreciated by the increasing number of our community members who have been fortunate enough to acquire the extraordinary Nikon D300 DSLR. The camera is a spectacular piece of highly technical photographic engineering, and Darrell cuts through the technical jargon to help his readers understand not only the camera, but also the wealth of photographic advantages it can deliver thanks to the ingenuity of Nikon Engineering.

We would like to congratulate Darrell for his work on this project. Special thanks goes to Tom Boné, Nikonians Chief Editor, who has streamlined the publication process in this first Nikonians Press book published in association with Rocky Nook.

Bo Stahlbrandt (bgs) and J. Ramón Palacios (jrp)

Nikonians Founders

www.nikonians.org



Preface

I grew up looking at pictures.

Ever since I was a baby my mother took hundreds of photographs of our family life, capturing small pieces of time frozen in little negative squares. Today, I can still look back at those images and they awaken memories that would otherwise be forgotten.

In 1968, my dear Mom gave me my first Brownie Hawkeye camera, and that little camera ignited a fire in me for taking pictures. I remember my mother's words of instruction, "Load the film in a dark place, never open the film door until after you rewind, and keep the sun behind you when you shoot".

From that day forward I often carried a camera with me. I took the fuzzy pictures of a 13-year-old as I hiked up the Roosevelt Mountain in Rockwood, Tennessee, USA, with my brother Steven and a friend named Scott. Every major event of my life has a few frames attached.

As an adult, I began photographing my own family, and to this day I've been documenting the growth of my five children. From my earliest memories, photography has been a part of my life, and I'll keep on shooting as long as I am able.

The year 1980 was a milestone for me; that's when I got my first Nikon camera. It was a nearly new Nikon FM, and I reveled in its incredible build, and the unbelievable images it produced. Before then, I had been shooting with Kodak 110 and 126 cameras, and although those images have priceless personal value, they would win no contests. I graduated from negatives to transparencies in 1981, as I realized that even sharper and less grainy images could be created in those delightful little two-inch squares. I loved film, and shot a lot of it. I wanted to shoot even more, but the cost of raising kids took precedence over the cost of film and processing.

The year 2002 changed everything for me photographically. I had been playing around with a Kodak P&S digital camera, and I finally got a Nikon Coolpix 990. While the pictures were fun and easy to make, they did not equal the quality of my 35mm images, so I viewed digital photography only as a toy. Then Nikon released the 6 MP D100, and Digital Darrell was born. Never before had I shot so many images. With the "free" use of the camera, I took thousands of photographs that I would never have considered taking with expensive film, and thus I moved to a new level of photography in the process. Digital cameras can offer an educational course in photography within themselves.

My love of digital photography grew, as did my relationship with the world's premier Nikon User Community, www.Nikonians.org. I came on board as a charter member in late 2000, and after my D100 arrived I really become involved as a member. I wrote a camera review that J. Ramón Palacios liked, (JRP is one of the co-owners of the Nikonians.org website, along with Bo Stahlbrandt) and he asked me if I'd like to write a few articles for Nikonians.org. At that time, I didn't even know I was a writer! Thank you, JRP!

I practically lived on Nikonians.org, spending hours there each day, first as a moderator, then as founding member of the Nikonian Writer's Guild. JRP asked me to write as often as I could, and he posted my articles for others to read. Wow, did my ego swell!

In 2005, I bought yet another of Nikon's excellent workhorse cameras—the D200. This camera seemed to reflect a direction toward a truly professional build in a smaller bodied camera. It has a high, 10 MP resolution, a weather-sealed frame, and a flexible feature set that includes the ability

to fully use Non-CPU lenses, such as Nikkor AI and AI-S primes. I used this camera on an almost daily basis, as a “carry” camera, since the size was reasonable and the image quality outstanding. Generation Two!

Then in 2007 my photographic world was tremendously enriched. Nikon released a camera that made my eyes pop, and my Nikon Acquisition Syndrome (NAS) become overwhelming. The Nikon D300! This is third-generation 12 MP digital photography! This is the affordable, yet professional-level tool for passionate creativity!

I opened that user’s manual of 421 pages and read some of it. “Wow, what a complex camera”, I thought. I struggled to understand how the autofocus and other systems worked. All these modes, and banks, and custom settings! Over the next few weeks, as I learned this new and extremely powerful camera inside and out, I began writing chapters of this book, partially to teach myself how to use the complex and very flexible features of the D300, and also to help you master your new D300.

Additional help is available to you at the world’s premier Nikon User’s Community, Nikonians.org. This truly is an International Community of over 140,000 Nikon users. Talk about a Nikon resource! As a Nikon user, you are probably already a member, but if you are not, please log on to www.Nikonians.org and become at least a Silver member. Nikonians.org is a goldmine of photographic knowledge for Nikon users and is unmatched by any other resource available.

This book is a joint effort to offer a resource to you that will help you understand the complexities of the important, most-used features of Nikon’s latest “wonder camera”. It’s also designed to help you have some fun with your D300.

I feel greatly privileged to be a Nikonian, to have such knowledgeable and friendly associates, and to help provide yet another, much requested resource in the form of a printed book. I hope you enjoy this book and that you greatly benefit from it, and most of all that you find joy in using your chosen photographic tool ... the Nikon D300.

Keep on capturing time ...

Digital Darrell
(Darrell Young)

