

SCENIC WILD PHOTOGRAPHY

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These words come to you from a lofty campsite in Wyoming's Bridger-Teton National Forest. It's late in the evening; the scenic Hoback River is fast flowing far below, and ominous thunderstorm clouds are gathering overhead. Every few seconds a bolt of lightning is visible in the distance, somewhere in the direction of Grand Teton National Park, but here all is quiet with anticipation. It's July 3rd. In but a few hours this great nation will celebrate its 228th anniversary, and here I am, a patriot of an uncommon kind, alone, away from the crowds, watching as the majestic scenery slowly fades into the mystery of night. While most



other Americans are celebrating in feast and music and fireworks, I listen to the silence of the mountains, the wind in the thick conifer forest, the howls of distant coyotes, and the constant whisper of the river making its way through pebbles and brush and fallen logs in the canyon below. I am indeed a patriot of the simplest form – one who loves the land. Perhaps this country, land and all will fare better if more of us turned to such simplicity. Forget politics and wars, forget corrupt CEOs and the stock market and everything else man-made, and just celebrate the beauty and grandeur of the place we are fortunate enough to occupy for the insignificant instance that is our lifetime in the vastness of eternity. If I may be as bold as to suggest a different kind of July 4th celebration to those of you who have not yet tried it – you will never feel more patriotic than sitting on a lofty perch in wilderness, watching as the sun rises and sets and the ancient silence permeates a vast and beautiful land. If patriotism is love of the land, then be prepared to experience love in its purest and most powerful form – one inspired by beauty. Like all love affairs, after a while we need a reminder of that spark that ignited our hearts and fused our souls, that inspired in us the most primal of emotions. Leave the noise and worries behind, watch the light, listen to the wind, open your heart and be prepared to fall in love again.

Guy

Important News about Our Prints

Over the last few weeks, we have made some important changes which are now available on our web site (<http://www.scenicwild.com>). It is our hope that these changes will make our prints more available to anyone who wishes to own one. Please read on to find out what we've done and why:

- We decided to add 11x14 prints at an affordable price as a permanent offering. **You may now order any of our 11x14 prints directly off the web site for the low price of \$50.**



- All prints are now sold as **open edition**. After much thought we decided that the practice of limited editions is not conducive to our goals. Limited editions serve one purpose – to arbitrarily increase the monetary value of a print. While this is important to those who sell or purchase prints as an investment, it is not what we had in mind for our images. We produce images to promote awareness and foster a love for the natural world and the beauty of the American West. We'd like these prints to be available and affordable to anyone without compromising on quality or setting arbitrary limitations on circulation or price. Your signed print is guaranteed to be of the highest quality and its true value is in the beauty it portrays, not in its price tag.
- We now accept online credit card payments so you may select, customize, and pay for your order right from your web browser.
- **Free shipping** in the continental US!
- All prints now shipped flat. No more cardboard tubes.

Need your 4x5 Film Scanned?



Getting a good scan of Large Format film has always been a source of frustration for me. While excellent and affordable desktop scanners are widely available for 35mm film, there does not seem to be enough demand to justify manufacturing such scanners for larger formats. With some exceptions, new flatbed scanners do a very good job, but are still limited by consumer-grade sensors, and other issues.

Some years ago, Polaroid offered dedicated 4x5 film scanners. These were dubbed "SprintScan 45i" and "SprintScan 45 Ultra". The latter model sold for close to \$8,000 in its day and was favorably compared with a drum scanner in a View Camera Magazine review. Polaroid had unfortunately since dropped the scanner due to low demand and the remaining stock was quickly bought up by labs and individuals who needed quality scanning without the expense and hassle of a drum scanner. After much searching, at long last we were able to locate and purchase one of these units for our use. Having worked with scans from various sources for some years, we were very pleased to verify the fantastic quality this scanner produces.

Having outsourced our large scans at premium prices for a number of years, we are now able to produce 300MB scans that meet our stringent quality requirements in-house. Further, we can now offer these scans to fellow 4x5 photographers struggling with the costs of professional drum scans. As an initial experiment, we would like to offer the following service to subscribers of this newsletter and their friends (feel free to forward it to anyone you think may be interested):

\$25.00 per scan (plus shipping)

Service to include:

- Film prep (dusting and PEC-12 cleaning, if needed)
- ~300MB scan from our Polaroid SprintScan 45 Ultra scanner
- Scan burned to CD-R

At this point we require a minimum of 2 scans per order.

The goal is to offer a great deal on a great scan. These scans should work well for almost any use, from fine-art printing to online display. Be aware that in some cases you may still want to have your film drum-scanned. These cases include severely under-exposed images, and sheets that need to be scanned all the way to the very edge of the exposed area (the Polaroid holder will reach a little into the frame on all sides to hold the film flat).

If you require more information, please don't hesitate to contact us at talphoto@hotmail.com. If this proves to be a useful service, it will be added to our web site in the next revision, along with an order form and online payments.

What's Wrong with Beautiful?



An article in the recent edition of LensWork Magazine sets out to defend so-called "pictorial" landscape photography.

Ensuing discussion on a number of forums drew some strong words from both sides. I found myself flustered by the very concept that beauty and visual appeal needed defending in the first place. The author did an admirable job of researching the topic, as well as maintaining a professional perspective laden with academic terminology. To me, however, a work of art draws its value from the emotions it evokes.

Describing art in terms of "genre" or "school" or any other systematic categorization or breakdown is not only useless, but also serves to rob the work of its true value. Rather than having a *meaning*, it now has a "bucket" to be lumped into along with other pieces with which it may have some things in common.

An interesting exercise in observation, no doubt, but what purpose does it serve?

It would seem the so-called "art elite", or those pulling their strings, can no longer appreciate simple beauty and raw emotion and is obsessively seeking new kinds of stimuli - something, anything new, regardless of visual or emotional appeal, irrespective of skill, inspiration, devotion, and yes - meaning. The modern artist is no longer the inspired, creative craftsman of old. Rather, he or she is now someone capable of dreaming up something more abstract, grotesque, or inexplicable than seen before; something of undetermined origin and ambiguous interpretation. The more stumped the critics are for obvious meaning, the more superlatives they will endow upon the work. Well, forgive me for saying this or for exposing my ignorance, but... umm... from where I'm standing - the king has no clothes.

In what had to have been a particularly bad day, Ansel Adams once wrote:

"The dismal half-baked images of the average "reportage" and "documentary" photography are self damning... the slick manner, the slightly obscure significance, the esoteric fear of simple beauty for its own sake - I am deeply concerned with these manifestations of decay."

Who are these people who fear beauty for its own sake? What manner of emotional disorder are they afflicted with, and what can the rest of us do to contain and cure it? I, too, am deeply concerned.