

THE WORLD'S BEST-SELLING DIGITAL PHOTO MAGAZINE

4-10 FEBRUARY ISSUE 437

# Photography week



INSPIRATION | IDEAS | IN-DEPTH REVIEWS



**THE ALPHA A1 IS HERE**  
SONY UNVEILS THE MOST  
POWERFUL MIRRORLESS  
CAMERA EVER

## HOW TO SHOOT WINTER WILDLIFE

PRO TIPS FOR CAPTURING STUNNING IMAGES  
OF ANIMALS IN CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENTS

# W E L C O M E

# Photography Week



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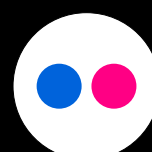
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## WHAT'S HOT

THE WEEK'S TOP HEADLINES IN PHOTOGRAPHY

THE NEW SONY ALPHA A1  
REDEFINES MIRRORLESS

Headline specs include a 50MP sensor, 8.6K video and 15-stop dynamic range



© Sony

**S**ony has shaken up the camera market with the announcement of the Alpha A1, a 50MP full-frame model that's quite simply the most powerful mirrorless camera we've ever seen.

Based on what looks to be a similar chassis to the Sony A9 II, the Alpha 1 combines its 50MP sensor with 30fps burst shooting for the first time, a trick that will have sports photographers salivating. The Canon EOS R5 rival also promises to be an extremely capable

camera for video, offering 8K video shooting, and employing similar heat dissipation to the Sony A7S III.

As you'd expect, the Alpha 1 has a price tag to match its specs: it'll cost £6,500/\$6,500 when it goes on sale in March. Realistically this is a professional camera for photojournalists and filmmakers, but that's still a fair bit more expensive than the Sony A9 II, which arrived for £4,800/\$4,500.

That said, the Sony A1 does bring to the table a combination of tech and

features that we haven't really seen on any hybrid mirrorless camera before.

**Specs and features**

Thanks to a pair of new Bionz XR processors, the Alpha 1 is an absolute brute for both sports shooting and high-resolution video. For example, the combination of those processors and the A1's stacked CMOS sensor means you can shoot JPEG images at 30fps when using the electronic shutter, which is impressive for a full-frame camera



# THE WEEK'S TOP HEADLINES IN PHOTOGRAPHY

with this kind of resolution.

By comparison, the Canon EOS R5 tops out at 20fps with its electronic shutter and has a slightly smaller buffer. Whereas the EOS R5 can shoot 350 JPEGs or 180 raw files in a single burst, the A1 can manage 400 JPEGs or 238 raw files in one sequence. Even with full AF tracking, the Sony A1 can apparently shoot up to 165 JPEGs or 155 raw images without pausing for a break.

That processing power is also very helpful when it comes to autofocus. The A1 has a slightly ridiculous 759 AF points covering 93% of its sensor, but more importantly it delivers Real-time Eye AF for birds, which is a first for a Sony Alpha camera. Sony's autofocus has been class-leading for a while now, and the addition of bird tracking will be especially popular. That said, the Canon EOS R5's Animal Eye AF blew us away, so it'll be interesting to see how the Alpha 1 compares to that camera in real-world shooting.

Naturally, you also get Real-time Eye AF for people and other animals (most notably dogs and cats). And Sony says the Alpha 1 can do 120 autofocus and auto-exposure calculations per second,



© Sony

which is apparently double the number possible on the Sony Ag II.

On top of the Sony Alpha 1 is a similar viewfinder to the Sony A7S III, which is very good news. This has a 9.44 million-dot resolution with a 0.90x magnification, while the refresh rate is now 240fps.

You also get what appears to be the same in-body image stabilisation (IBIS) system we've seen on previous Alpha cameras like the Sony Ag II, as it promises the usual 5.5 stops of compensation. Perhaps the only less-than-futuristic touch on the Sony A1 is

that it has a tilting touchscreen, rather than a fully articulating one. Still, you do get the lovely new menu system that we saw on the A7S III.

## Video specs

What's most impressive about the A1 is how it combines a pro stills skills with super-powerful video features. Along with its headline 8K resolution, the A1 brings a few video firsts for a Sony mirrorless camera. The camera can shoot 8K/30p video using the full width of its sensor (in other words, without digital tricks like pixel binning), and promises to manage that for an impressive 30 minutes, too.

While the Sony A1's 8K video is shot with 10-bit 4:2:0 bit depth and colour sampling, it can also shoot 4K in 10-bit 4:2:2 video internally – and that includes in slow-mo 120p. Professional videographers will be pleased to hear that it can output 16-bit raw video over its HDMI port, too.

Further underscoring the A1's pro credentials are its connectivity specs. You get two CFExpress Type A slots (which also accept UHS-II SD cards), along with a built-in Ethernet connection and dual-band Wi-Fi that apparently supports FTP transfers that are 3.5x faster than the Sony Ag II.



© Sony



THE WEEK'S TOP HEADLINES IN PHOTOGRAPHY

# THE NEW FUJIFILM GFX 100S IS A 102MP POWERHOUSE

Medium format model offers GFX 100 resolution in a GFX 50-style body



**F**ujifilm has announced the GFX 100s, taking the core of the landmark GFX 100 and shrinking both the body and the price to produce a 100MP medium format camera in the same ballpark price range as top-end full frame cameras.

Fujifilm's aim with the GFX 100s is to make a large-sensor camera both affordable and smaller than a DSLR. The company sees the GFX 100s as the natural successor to the GFX 50s, which will be discontinued.

Inevitably, there will be comparisons with the existing GFX 100, so how does the new GFX 100s stack up against its

bigger brother? First, it's a lot smaller and lighter – 30% smaller, in fact, and an amazing 500g lighter.

The 102MP sensor and X-Processor 4 are the same as those in the GFX 100, and the autofocus specifications are identical too. The IBIS and shutter mechanisms in the new camera are different, however.

Using lessons learned from the X-T4 and X-S10, Fujifilm has made the IBIS unit in the GFX 100s 20% smaller and 10% lighter than the one in the GFX 100, but at the same time it's upgraded the gyro sensor to increase the shake compensation to a maximum of 6 stops.

The GFX 100s also has a new, 22% smaller shutter unit. This downsizing has allowed Fujifilm to put the battery in the handgrip rather than having it underneath the body. The battery is the same NP-W235 2200mAh battery used in the X-T4, and in the GFX 100s it should be good for around 460 shots.

The GFX 100s has a magnesium alloy body and weather seals, but the downsizing does mean the viewfinder is fixed and non-interchangeable, with a slightly lower resolution of 3.69 million dots. There will be no battery grip option either – although there will be an optional MHG-GFX S Metal Handgrip, to



## THE WEEK'S TOP HEADLINES IN PHOTOGRAPHY

improve the handling with larger lenses.

It's also a surprise to see Fujifilm's usual shutter speed ring dropped in favour of a conventional mode dial, while there's a 1.8-inch 4:3 303 x 230 dot status screen on the top plate for exposure information and more. On the back of the GFX 100s is a 3.2-inch 3-way 2.6 million-dot tilting touchscreen, and a new AF joystick offering improved grip.

Interestingly, the GFX 100s has dual SD/SDXC UHS-II card slots – Fujifilm

has yet to take the plunge with the new CFexpress format being taken up by rival manufacturers.

The new camera also includes the ultra-high-res 400MP multi-shot mode recently introduced to the GFX 100, and Fujifilm says the GFX 100s has improved Far AF tracking and Face/Eye detection over the older model.

For video shooters, the GFX 100s offers DCI 4K/30p recording, with ProRes Raw output via HDMI. Fujifilm

F-Log and HLG are included, and there's a new Digital IS (digital stabilisation) mode which adds a modest 1.1x crop for all modes. The maximum recording time has been extended to 120 minutes, compared to 60 on the GFX 100.

The GFX 100s will be available from the end of February at a price of £5,499/\$5,999 body-only. That's barely more than half the price of the 'old' GFX 100, and close to the cost of the GFX 50s when it was first launched.

## FUJIFILM X-E4 IS A RETRO-STYLE COMPACT MIRRORLESS CAMERA

**F**ujifilm has also announced the X-E4, which replaces the X-E3. Where other X-mount cameras like the X-S10 and X-T4 are styled more like DSLRs, the X-E4 is styled like a compact rangefinder, with the viewfinder built into the camera body rather than mounted on the top.

The X-E series has been going as long as the Fujifilm X-T series, and has always had strong appeal as a more compact, traditionally styled alternative.

The X-E4 has several interesting new features, and the new kit lens is especially interesting. The camera will come with a pancake prime lens rather than a zoom – although it will of course take regular X-mount lenses too.

The Fujinon XF 27mm f/2.8 R WR pancake lens is a new version of a lens that's been in the X-mount range for a long time. It has the same optical configuration as the old model, but Fujifilm has improved the autofocus, and added an aperture ring and weather seals (hence the WR designation).

Otherwise, the X-E4 has a lot in common with the X-S10. The sensor is the same 26.2MP BSI X-Trans APS-C



unit found in Fujifilm's latest cameras.

The X-E4 has a 180-degree rear screen for vlogging and selfies, and while the shutter speed dial on the top plate echoes the external exposure controls of previous X-mount cameras, Fujifilm has added a 'P' setting for program auto exposure.

The X-E4 isn't designed to match the high-end video capabilities of the flagship X-T4, but it does offer uncropped DCI 4K/UHD video capture

at up to 30fps, and enhanced output via its Micro HDMI port. Internally it can record 4K 4:2:0 8-bit, while externally it can output 4:2:2 10-bit video.

Just in case you find the X-E4 just a little too compact there will be an optional clip-on TR-XE4 Thumb Rest or, for even more additional support, an optional MHG-XE4 Metal Hand Grip.

The X-E4 will be available from late February for £799/\$949 body-only, or £949/\$1,049 with the new kit lens.

ANDY PARKINSON

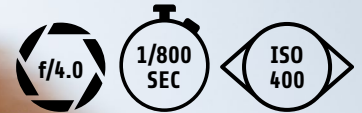


Andy Parkinson is an award-winning wildlife photographer, regular National Geographic contributor and a recent Nikon ambassador. Working with wild animals only, he often speaks about conservation issues, animal rights and photography ethics.

See more of Andy's work:  
[www.andrewparkinson.com](http://www.andrewparkinson.com)  
[@andyparkinsonphoto](https://twitter.com/andyparkinsonphoto)

RED SQUIRREL

A red squirrel comically appears from behind a snow-covered log



© Andy Parkinson

# HOW TO SHOOT WINTER WILDLIFE

Andy Parkinson details his top tips, techniques and practical advice from years of photographing nature in the great outdoors

Winter can be a simply sensational time for wildlife photography, wherever you happen to live. With both birds and mammals sporting their finest winter coats, it's at this time of year, in preparedness for the potential hardships that follow, that creatures look their pristine best. The landscape, meanwhile, is often transformed into a winter wonderland – a stunning white stage on which the staggering diversity of species that we share our countryside with parades.

In the pages that follow I'll look into the many benefits that the weather and light at this time of year can create,

and of course the few challenges that will inevitably ensue. I'll explore the extra dimensions that photographing in snow can add to your images, as well as the significant benefits of the reflected light that results. I'll also examine the importance of getting to know and enjoying your local species, however familiar they are, and the value of ensuring that you're always well prepared to work safely when the weather is less predictable.

Next, I'll explore the many different ways to capture seasonal images, from photographing animals as part of their landscape to extremely detailed

close-ups, and from explosive or touching animal behaviour to exploring the abstract beauty that a sea of white can create. I'll also detail exactly what it's like to seek out the most ferocious of conditions, in the most extreme places, and the award-winning images that can come from working in such marginal and extreme conditions.

So join me, and explore the magnificence that is the winter landscape, the magic of wildlife photography at this time of year, and all of the potential that lies with the species within, from garden birds to wild hares and other elusive subjects.





# FEATURE

## HOW TO GET STARTED

Dressing smart and preparing your kit is the first important step for capturing successful winter imagery

**W**orking in winter conditions presents all kinds of unique challenges, so preparation is key. Not only must you think about protecting yourself from the harsher conditions, but you must also think about protecting your often-expensive camera equipment. Remember that your camera's flash hotshoe is a weak point, and as such must be protected from the ingress of any moisture. A decent lens cover can also be a useful addition, but try to ensure that it isn't made out of noisy material, and that it

isn't loose-fitting – otherwise it could flap about in strong winds. Importantly, though, it must be thin enough to still enable you to operate the lens functions easily and intuitively.

As well as the best waterproof clothing that you can afford, my top tip is to wear glove liners and fingerless gloves. These are incredibly inexpensive, so multiple combinations can be bought for about £10/\$10. This way your hands will stay warm but can still operate your camera and lenses with the same speed and fluidity.

### WEARING THE RIGHT CLOTHING

I favour premium brands like Fjällräven ([www.fjallraven.com](http://www.fjallraven.com)) as they have Arctic pedigree and are one of the most sustainable and ethical outdoor clothing brands. I tend to opt for a layered approach, adding layers of clothing as the temperature drops. In the Scottish mountains in winter I'll often end up wearing two to four pairs of robust yet waterproof trousers, as well as multiple layers on my top half.



### ANDY'S ESSENTIALS FOR A COLD SHOOT

#### LENS COVER

A lens cover can protect equipment from snow and ice, while also providing a degree of camouflage.

#### HAND WARMERS

These can keep your hands functioning for longer in extremely cold temperatures.

#### WARM ACCESSORIES

You'll need a decent hat, gloves, and a neck warmer to cover all areas of skin that are exposed.

#### NOURISHING SNACKS

You'll need energy-rich foods to replenish lost energy due to the numbing cold – think nuts, cereal bars and the like.

#### FLASK FOR HOT DRINK

A flask of hot drink will help to protect your core temperature – and also keep up morale.

#### WATERPROOFS

If you think wildlife photography is going to become a regular hobby, get the best waterproof clothing



# F E A T U R E

## HOW TO GET STARTED CONTINUED



### BROWN HARE

A brown hare, encrusted in snow and ice, lies motionless in its form

© Andy Parkinson



### DRESSED FOR SUCCESS

Wearing solid waterproofs on top and bottom, Andy can shoot low to the ground without getting damp or cold

### WHAT'S IN ANDY'S KITBAG?

#### Cameras

1. Nikon D6
2. Nikon D4S

#### Lenses

3. AF-S NIKKOR 200-400mm F/4G ED VR II
4. AF-S NIKKOR 600mm F/4E FL ED VR
5. AF-S Teleconverter TC-14E III



© Claire Parkinson



# FEATURE

## SUBJECTS CLOSE TO HOME

Look for wildlife right on your doorstep, and remember that common species can make compelling subjects

When snow is forecast in my local area of Derbyshire, UK, I tend to prefer focusing on guaranteed, easily accessible subjects such as mute swans, grey squirrels or smaller garden/farmland birds, such as the yellowhammer below. The transient and ephemeral nature of recent winters means that this way I can maximise opportunities, however brief, rather

than speculatively hoping to capture images of more challenging subjects, such as foxes.

In recent years we've only had one or two days of decent snowfall each winter in some areas, so this strategy is what I'd recommend if where you live sees relatively mild winters.

Remember, it doesn't matter how familiar, or how overlooked, the subject

might be, be it a mallard, coot, swan, or grey squirrel. All species will still look fantastic in falling snow, and if you're not picky about your choice of subject you'll increase your chances of producing compelling images. The most important thing is that you familiarise yourself with your local subjects in advance, and then, when the forecast is right, make sure you arrive in plenty of time.



### PLAY WITH SUBJECT SIZE

Here, a little yellowhammer demonstrates just how small in the frame the subject can be, yet still remain the focal point

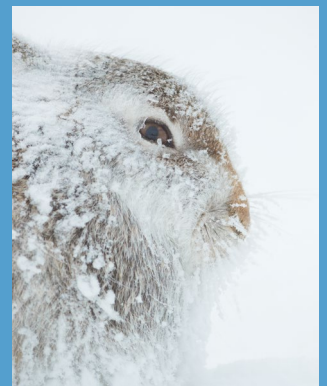


© x3 Andy Parkinson

### PRO ADVICE

#### Teleconverters explained

Teleconverters are an effective and fairly inexpensive way to increase the focal length of your lens. I use a 1.4x teleconverter, (turning my Nikon 200-400mm f/4 lens into a 280-560mm f/5.6 lens), but 2x teleconverters are also available. You will lose a stop of light on a 1.4x, and two stops on a 2x, and the AF speed of the lens will likely be reduced slightly.



# SUBJECTS CLOSE TO HOME CONTINUED

## HOW TO PHOTOGRAPH WINTER GARDEN BIRDS



### CHANGE YOUR PERCH

Always consider your perspective when preparing to photograph. Here I sat below some garden steps, which made capturing the robins at eye level more comfortable than simply trying to lie on the snow-covered ground.



### CONSIDER THE DAYLIGHT

Take time to notice the fall of light, and where in your garden, and at what time of day, it looks most attractive. Here I shot using backlight, with the predictable, fluttering flight of the wagtail making for some relatively easy in-flight images.



### INCLUDE FALLING SNOW

Whether it's falling or windblown, the presence of airborne snow will immediately add an extra element to your images. Try to shoot against a darker backdrop so that the snow is easily visible.



### CAPTURE THE ACTION

Competition over food resources can result in conflict. While never to be encouraged, if it does occur, notice when, where and why, and use this knowledge to increase the chance of capturing it.

## ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES **Don't start feeding birds if you can't sustain it through the whole season**

This really is the most important aspect of garden bird photography. Remember at all times how marginal the existence of small birds can be, and how difficult it is for them to find food in winter. As such, it's imperative that if you can't sustain feeding right through until spring then it's best not to start, as birds may

become dependent on you. If your circumstances change then try to phase out your feeding over days or weeks, thereby allowing the birds time to acclimatise to the diminishing food resources, and giving them adequate time to hopefully find replacements. You could also ask a willing neighbour to top up feeders.



# FEATURE

## INTIMATE PORTRAITS

Here's how you can use composition, aperture and knowledge of subject behaviour to capture compelling images

**A**nimal portraits offer us the opportunity to capture the character, personality, and perhaps even the soul of the animal whose life we've set out to document. They're an invaluable means of creating a connection between our species and theirs, and the more tools you can add to your arsenal, the more compelling your images will hopefully be.

The main image below is as much about the conditions on that day as it is about my relationship with this individual animal. I have known this particular hare for three years, so when the perfect conditions were forecast

– high winds, freezing temperatures and a big load of snow – it was the pleasure of her company that I sought out, high on her mountain plateau home. The ferocity of the conditions that day represent the very upper limit of what I'm physically able to endure, but by braving the elements I was able to produce one of my most intimately compelling images, rich in detail and character. The hare, apparently unbothered, groomed quietly, her ice-encrusted form huddled against nature's ferocity and the spindrift-filled air, while the ice that formed on her back cracked tectonically.

### PRO ADVICE

#### Choosing the right aperture

I often hear from other photographers that they will only use  $f/2.8$  or  $f/4$ , preferring to obsess over bokeh or diffuse backdrops rather than shooting for the conditions. I shoot at every aperture between  $f/2.8$  and  $f/22$ . Keep your mind open to creative possibilities, and decide in situ what part of the frame you'd like in or out of focus. There was no downside to increasing the depth of field for this image, so I shot at  $f/8$  – if I'd dropped focus from the eyes there would still be enough DoF for the eyes to remain critically sharp.



#### HARE SNOW BALL

A mountain hare, encrusted in ice, forms into a spherical shape as she begins to groom



# INTIMATE PORTRAITS CONTINUED

## ANDY'S TOP TIPS FOR BETTER PORTRAITS



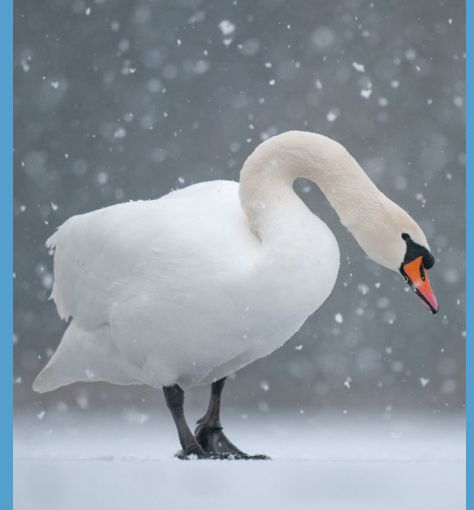
### SHOOT AT EYE LEVEL

This is the best way to create a feeling of intimacy with your subject. It will also likely push the backdrop further away, thereby focusing the viewer's attention on the only aspect of the image that's in sharp focus – the subject itself.



### USE YOUR APERTURE CREATIVELY

Don't assume that the only technique for portraits is to use your widest aperture, such as  $f/2.8$  or  $f/4$ . For this image I was shooting at  $f/10$  in order to bring as much of the hare's face and paws into sharp focus as I could.



### GIVE YOUR SUBJECT ROOM TO BREATHE

Portraits don't always have to fill the entire frame. Sometimes including some of the habitat, or the conditions, gives the portrait extra context and interest. Remember that it's the personality/character of the subject that's most important.

## USING A TELEPHOTO LENS IN THE FIELD

Telephoto lenses give us the opportunity to capture species that are difficult to get close to. They can be heavy and cumbersome, so you might want to use a tripod, but in snowy conditions I prefer to simply use the tripod mount for an eye-level perspective and to make it easier to move.



### KNOW YOUR SUBJECT

I had spent many weeks learning the movement patterns of some local hares, so rather than crawling towards this one I simply got into position and waited. I knew that sooner or later the hare would jog past.



### EXPOSE TO THE HISTOGRAM

When photographing in snow, you want those histogram pixels right up to, but not touching, the right-hand side. That way the snow will be correctly exposed and rendered as crisp white.



### SHOOT FLEXIBLY

Just because your subject is static doesn't mean that it will remain so. I often have a minimum shutter speed of  $1/500$  sec, even for a stationary subject, in anticipation that something like this might happen.



# F E A T U R E

## WILDLIFE IN A WINTER LANDSCAPE

Including the subject's environment can add interest and context. Go wider with your focal lengths to show the animal amid the elements

When it comes to winter photography, the images that best create a narrative, and tell the story of your subject, are those that show animals within the context of their winter environments. For me, these images are the Holy Grail, the ones that I most aspire to capturing, because they can be the hardest to get right.

The deer image below was the result of effectively perfect conditions. A ferocious squall blew through as I arrived in this forest setting, and within

a few minutes the whole scene had become transformed. Everything within it became carpeted in snow, the red deer stag included.

I was fortunate that I had my Nikon 200-400mm lens attached. Zooming right out to the 200mm end, I wanted to contrast the shape of the deer with the graphic, textural lines of the surrounding forest. Whatever lens you're using, don't be afraid to zoom out to include some of the surrounding environment: this can really help add context.

### PRO ADVICE

#### Use your histogram

For me, the histogram is the single most important asset when it comes to exposure. Unlike the LCD screen, which can be difficult to see on bright days, the histogram tells you everything that you need to know in an instant. I refer to it constantly to ensure that my exposures are accurate, and whenever there's any white in an image I will shoot to the right-hand side of the histogram.



#### RED DEER IN A SCOTTISH BLIZZARD

The subject almost disappears within its snowy surroundings



# F E A T U R E

## WILDLIFE IN A WINTER LANDSCAPE CONTINUED

### ANDY'S TOP TIPS FOR BETTER PORTRAITS

High-key images are somewhat in vogue at present, with many photographers sharing their various examples on social media. Often, however, it seems that high-key is just another way to describe overexposed images, and there's definitely an art to getting them right. When they're captured correctly, you'll end up with a shot with illustrative qualities, almost more reminiscent of an artist's drawing. Get it wrong, however, and it will simply look like you're trying to pass off a mistake as 'art'!



BLACK-HEADED GULL

### BACKGROUND

Either a milky-white, overcast sky or a snow-covered field are best for high-key images. Ideally, if you're shooting a subject in a field, as in this hare image, then the snow cover needs to be comprehensive, and also free from distractions such as exposed ground or vegetation.



BROWN HARE RUNNING



RED KITE FEEDING ON THE WING

### EXPOSURE

Exposure is critical, so always use your histogram to ensure that yours is accurate. Ideally, your highlights should be marginally touching the right-hand side of the graph, but push your exposure any more than that and the image will become uncomfortably hot to look at.

### EDITING TIPS

Images such as these look best when the snow is a crisp white, not a murky, underexposed grey. The same can be said for skies. Always try to get your exposures correct in the field, but if you need to adjust the exposure in post-processing then do so.





# FEATURE

## HOW TO BOOST YOUR CREATIVITY

Easy ideas for developing your style

**T**he only thought in my head when I'm shooting is "Does the image work?" I don't shoot for magazines, or for awards, or in anybody else's style. Instead I shoot only to please myself, and these images are my own creative interpretation of what I've experienced. As such I'm free to shoot

whatever I feel, whether it ends up working or not. Remember that with digital cameras there's no financial consequence for trying something, and if it doesn't work then that's what the delete button is for. What's most important is that you're willing to try new things, and to keep shooting when others might stop.

### HARE-D OF HEARING

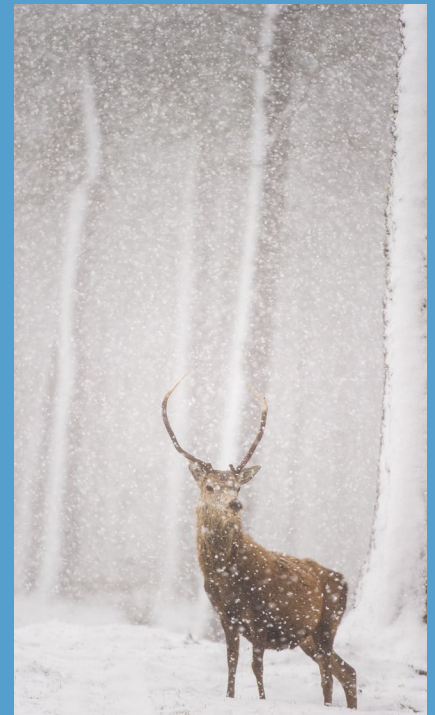
Liberate yourself from photographic norms. You just never know what you might be able to produce



### PRO ADVICE

#### What is crop factor?

Full-frame camera sensors are the closest to 35mm film, while APS-C chips are smaller in size and have a crop factor. This is 1.5x on Nikon and Sony APS-C cameras, and 1.6x on Canon cameras, turning a 200mm lens into a 300mm or 320mm lens respectively. I don't give credence to the minutiae of photography and whether you have a full-frame sensor, which is supposed to produce a higher-quality image, or a crop sensor, which magnifies the lens – you won't notice the difference unless you print images at the size of a double-decker bus, so buy what you can afford.



# FEATURE

## HOW TO BOOST YOUR CREATIVITY CONTINUED



### 1 FOCUS ON THE DETAILS

If the subject allows, work sensitively at close quarters. I love images with an abstract feel, where the viewer is not immediately sure what they're looking at, and that's what I've strived to do with this mountain hare. This was photographed at f/14, yet the depth of field appears very narrow.

### 2 VIEW FROM THE REAR

Don't stop shooting just because the animal or bird is facing away from you. No one looking at this image will struggle to imagine what creature this tail belongs to, because it's one of the most recognisable body parts of this iconic species. Does the image always need to include the whole subject?



### 3 NATURE'S ABSTRACT CANVAS

The white canvas of a snow-covered field is an ideal backdrop against which to produce uniquely creative and imaginative images. This brown hare looks suspended in mid-air, as if it's been Photoshopped into the image, but in fact all it's doing is bounding along past the near-frozen photographer.



### 4 LOOK FOR SYMMETRY

I often look for patterns or shapes in nature, and winter, with all of its graphic qualities, is the perfect time of year to indulge. Nature routinely throws up beautifully symmetrical moments, and as this swan glided away in threat posture I knew to wait until the head became framed between the tail feathers.



### 5 CONVEY THEIR CHARACTER

Mountain hares rely on their camouflage in winter in order to stay safe. Using snow holes or depressions in the ground, they lie motionless, trusting the ability of their white coat to blend in and keep them safe. These characteristics can be revealed with a considered, creative approach.



# FEATURE

## ULTIMATE UK WINTER WILDLIFE LOCATIONS

### RED SQUIRRELS

**Isle of Wight, Northumberland and Scotland**

These fantastically charismatic creatures are a perfect winter subject, and a number of paid-for sites have sprung up around the country. These locations offer guaranteed subjects, and the chance of capturing images that would take years to capture otherwise.

2

### MOUNTAIN HARES

**Cairngorms National Park, Scotland**

You must be extremely careful when venturing into Scotland's winter mountains, and it's a good idea at first to employ an experienced local guide – they'll be able to safely take you to some of the best locations, as well as imparting knowledge about these hardy mountain dwellers.

3

6

My list of global dream photographic locations starts with Canada's Wapusk National Park, where the goal would be to see polar bear mums emerging with their young cubs. Next for me is Japan in winter, and I've already been lucky enough to experience the ferocious winter chills of Yellowstone. Topping the list off would have to be Antarctica/South Georgia.

The UK is also blessed with a rich diversity of wildlife – here's a brief guide to some photogenic species, and the best places to find them.

### GREY SEALS

**Various rookeries in locations such as Lincolnshire and Norfolk**

It's again of paramount importance that you visit these places under the guidance of an expert. When grey seals come ashore in the winter months to give birth and then mate, they're especially sensitive to disturbance, so the utmost respect and care must be afforded to them at all times.

1

4

### RED DEER

**London's Royal Parks**

While this image of red deer stags was taken in Scotland, the deer parks of London, such as Richmond and Bushy, offer enormous scope to explore the creative possibilities of photographing red deer. These majestic animals make fantastic subjects, but again keep your distance and behave responsibly.

## TOP UK WILDLIFE DESTINATIONS

### 1. GIGRIN FARM

Gigrin Farm in mid-Wales offers unrivalled access to hundreds of red kites. It's a genuine conservation success story, and you'll likely see between 400-500 individual birds when food is put out at 2pm.

### 2. SHETLAND ISLANDS

Perhaps my favourite UK wildlife spot – I love the remote, isolated feeling in this spectacular archipelago. Ferocious Atlantic gales blow through in autumn/winter, and the islands are an unequalled location to experience extreme conditions.

### 3. CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK

In Scotland this is another must-see location for wildlife enthusiasts. Red squirrels, red and roe deer, ptarmigans, and mountain hares are just some of the possible photographic subjects.

### 4. NORFOLK AND LINCOLNSHIRE

The fenlands of these two coastal counties offer a great many photographic possibilities, from barn owls to brown hares, and from grey seals to all manner of coastal waders.

### 5. ISLE OF MULL

For many years now Mull has been known as the otter capital of the UK. It's also now one of the best places in the UK to see white-tailed sea eagles, and it's just a 35-minute ferry trip from Oban.

### 6. SCOTTISH BORDERS

In winter this part of the UK sees the arrival of huge numbers of whooper swans and various geese species. There's also a spectacular starling murmuration near Gretna Green services on the M6.

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GALLERY

# XPOSURE

THE WEEK'S MOST INSPIRING READER PHOTOS



## PORTSMOUTH GUILDHALL

**RAYMOND CLARKE**

"This is the Guildhall in the center of Portsmouth in southern England, framed by the city's Civic offices."

<https://bit.ly/3lutMuJ>

G A L L E R Y

THE WEEK'S MOST INSPIRING READER PHOTOS



**MARSDEN ROCK**

**MICHAEL ATKINSON**

"I captured this long-exposure seascape at Marsden Beach in South Tyneside, UK."

<https://bit.ly/3f52JYw>

# GALLERY

THE WEEK'S MOST INSPIRING READER PHOTOS



**GO VERTICAL**

**MARIO OTTAVIANI**

"I shot this image in Abruzzo in southern Italy, using my Sony Nex-5T and Sony 24-240mm f/3.5-6.3 lens."

<https://bit.ly/39wbG94>

# GALLERY

THE WEEK'S MOST INSPIRING READER PHOTOS



SARA

**JOAQUÍN ALONSO ARELLANO RAMÍREZ**

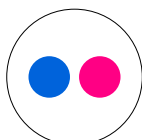
"For this portrait I used a single monolight, and I asked the model to tilt her head just a little to get the desired highlights and shadows on her face."

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INSPIRATION

# IT'S COOL, THAT

THE BEST THING WE'VE SEEN THIS WEEK



*Opponents* by Ksystof Mozyro – Overall winner, Professional



*Horse Man* by Rudy Oei – 1st place, Landscapes, Professional



*Yin and Yang* by Gheorghe Popa – 1st place, Abstract, Professional



*Portrait Woman Mursi* by Svetlin Yosifov, Overall winner, Amateur

Images © The photographer and courtesy Monochrome Photography Awards

## AMAZING IMAGES CAPTURE OUR WORLD IN BLACK AND WHITE

Monochrome Awards announces the winners of its 2020 contest

**T**he Monochrome Awards has announced the winners of its 2020 competition, featuring a remarkable variety of photos, and reminding us that you don't need colour in order to create powerful and arresting images.

First prize in the Professional section went to Ksystof Mozyro for his photo *Opponents*, taken at a protest rally in London. Prizes were awarded to both professional and amateur photographers in categories

including Landscapes, Nature, Portrait, Fine Art, Photojournalism, Architecture and Abstract. The Awards were established to "celebrate monochrome visions and discover the most amazing photographers from around the world".

Click the link to see all the winning and commended images at the competition website, where you can also purchase photography books, and find details of how to enter this year's contest.



S K I L L S

# CRASH COURSE

ESSENTIAL PHOTO SKILLS MADE EASY



## AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE

Mike Harris shows you how to capture multiple images of a cityscape and merge them together to create a panorama

1  
HOUR

When you witness a beautiful sprawling vista your first instinct might be to reach for a wide-angle lens – and while such focal lengths can produce stunning results, used in the wrong way they can also leave you feeling terribly underwhelmed.

Super-wide lenses suffer from barrel distortion, which makes objects appear further away. This isn't usually a problem when capturing immense objects, such

as mountains, but if your subject has less impact or fails to prominently protrude from the horizon line, a wide focal length can produce disappointing results.

Thankfully, by shooting a panorama you can have the best of both worlds: a sprawling composition that's free from barrel distortion. You start by panning the camera to shoot a sequence of images using a standard lens with a narrower field of view. Standard lenses work best because they suffer

from little to no barrel and pincushion distortion, and blending together multiple images in post creates super-high resolution shots, which affords you plenty of latitude to crop and refine your composition. Our image of the Bath skyline is a composite of three landscape-orientation images, but you can boost resolution even further by shooting panoramas in portrait orientation. Here's how to shoot, stitch and edit a panorama.



# S K I L L S

## STEP BY STEP HOW TO CREATE A PANORAMA



1

### FOCAL LENGTH

A major advantage of shooting a panorama is that you can produce sprawling images while avoiding the distortion of a wide-angle lens. We shot our sequence of three images at 85mm (35mm equivalent) to avoid both barrel and pincushion distortion.

2

### LEVEL HEADED

A stable tripod is crucial for capturing pin-sharp shots, so we hung our kitbag off the centre column as a counterweight. It also helps to have the legs perfectly aligned, so that your framing remains level. For perfect precision use a tripod with a bubble level on the centre column.



3

### SETTINGS

Whatever method of focusing you use, ensure your camera is set to manual focus when you begin shooting to prevent it refocusing. Use Manual mode to keep your exposure consistent, and select an aperture between f/8 and f/11 for a large depth of field with optimum sharpness.



### QUICK TIP

Your camera's Auto White Balance setting can change the colour temperature of your images between frames, which is difficult to rectify. We'd recommend setting the white balance manually, or choosing a preset to prevent it changing; you can then easily tweak the colour temperature in post-production if require.



# S K I L L S

## STEP BY STEP HOW TO CREATE A PANORAMA



4

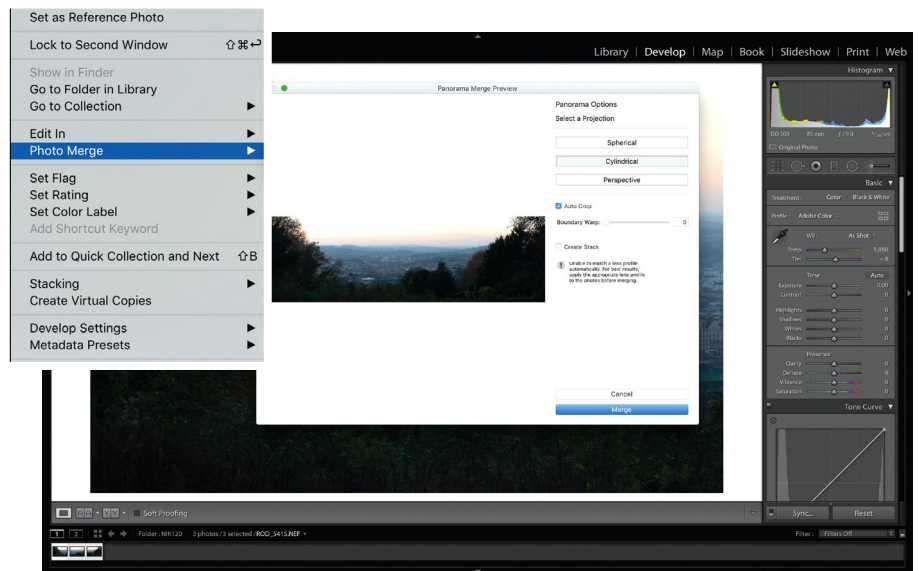
### PAN AND SHOOT

As you shoot your sequence, make sure each image overlaps the previous one by at least a quarter of the frame to prevent gaps. Don't worry about getting your composition spot-on, but err on the side of a wider framing: your panorama's large size means it can be comfortably cropped, but if your framing is too tight there's nothing you can do about it.

5

### MERGE YOUR SEQUENCE

Open your sequence of images in Adobe Lightroom's Develop Module. Hold down Shift and click the first and last images to select all the shots, and select Photo Merge > Panorama. Choose your preferred projection option – we recommend Cylindrical – then click Auto Crop (this can be refined later) and hit Merge.



6

### REFINE YOUR FRAMING

Once you've edited your image, use the Crop Overlay to refine the composition further. We used the rule of thirds grid to divide the foreground, city and sky equally in our frame. We also use the Radial Filter tool to selectively increase the exposure around the largest building in the scene to help draw attention to the focal point of our image.

E D I T I N G

# PHOTOSHOP

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HOW TO...

## ENHANCE LANDSCAPES WITH DEHAZE

James Paterson uses a powerful raw tool to add punch to low-contrast shots

**A**s the name suggests, the Dehaze command reduces atmospheric haze in landscape images. Found within Lightroom and Photoshop's Camera Raw workspace, the effect is applied via a slider that not only lets you reduce the haze, but also allows you to go the other way and make your photos look *more* hazy.

Of course, the effect isn't a magic trick that actually eradicates haziness. Instead, it works by applying a boost in

contrast and sharpness to a specific part of the tonal range – the part that usually correlates with hazy highlights in landscapes. As such, we can exploit the effect not just for hazy scenes, but also for other types of shots where we might want to use the boost in contrast and detail in other, equally effective ways.

Take the landscape here. As you'll see in this video tutorial, boosting Dehaze has a wonderful effect on the sky, resulting in a richness of colour

that's lacking in the straight-out-of-the-camera photograph. Dehaze can work exceptionally well on cloud details in skies, enabling you to tease out cloud shapes and intensifying colours.

It can help to boost faded tones in all kinds of photos, not just landscapes. However, using Dehaze can produce some unwanted side-effects, like deep shadows or colour casts, so it might be necessary to tweak settings afterwards to restore balance to the tones.



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G E A R

# SMARTPHONE TEST

EXPERT OPINION ON THE LATEST KIT



## APPLE IPHONE 12 PRO MAX

It's the most powerful iPhone yet – but does that extend to its camera?

[www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com) [£1,099/\\$1,099](#)

**A**pple launched its iPhone 12 range in October of last year, and not only are there four new iPhone models, there are also four different camera variations. In the past, Apple has used the same camera unit in both its standard-sized Pro model and the top of the range Pro Max. This year, however, there are some key differences between the two, and the iPhone 12 Pro Max is arguably the very best option for iPhone photographers, with a range of features designed to entice those who are willing to pay a premium for them.

### Key features

At first glance, the iPhone 12 Pro Max's camera setup doesn't seem too different from its predecessor's (the iPhone 11 Pro Max), or indeed its smaller sibling, the iPhone 12 Pro. Each has a triple-lens array, but there are some key differences.

While both the 12 Pro and the 12 Pro Max have 0.5x (13mm equivalent) and 1x (26mm equivalent) lenses, the sensor behind the 1x lens is larger in the Pro Max. It also features sensor-shift stabilisation, which should make the bigger model better equipped to

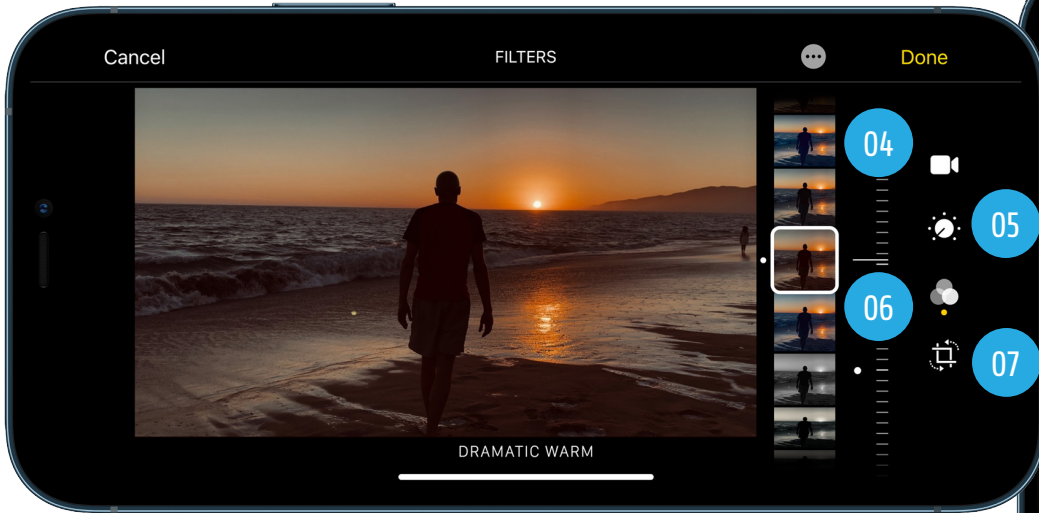
handle low-light shooting. Another difference is the telephoto lens, which is a 2.5x optic on the Pro Max, giving an equivalent of 65mm, compared with the 2x (56mm equivalent) lens of the standard Pro.

The iPhone 12 Pro Max shares some of its other improvements over its predecessor with the 12 Pro. These include the addition of a lidar scanner, used to measure distance and improve autofocusing speed in low light. There have also been some software upgrades, such as the addition of Night Mode for portraits and – probably





## SMARTPHONE TEST APPLE IPHONE 12 PRO MAX



1 Wide-angle lens: 26mm focal length, f/1.6 aperture, 7-element lens, Sensor-shift OIS, Night Mode

2 Ultra-wide-angle lens: 13mm focal length, f/2.4 aperture, 5-element lens, lens correction, Night Mode

3 Telephoto lens: 65mm focal length, f/2.2 aperture, 6-element lens, Dual OIS

4 Apple's A14 Bionic SoC has the grunt to enable 60fps 4K video, plus Dolby HDR for increased dynamic range.

5 Tap this icon to adjust the lighting and colour in your shot, and to reveal basic mono editing options.

6 The Camera app's selection of filters is limited compared with third-party apps, but all the basics are covered.

7 Cropping and rotating is easy in the Camera app, but more advanced edits require third-party software.

8 Stills dynamic range is excellent, yet the iPhone 12 Pro Max also captures accurate contrast for a realistic feel.

9 Switching between the three camera modules is easy with these instantly accessible shortcuts.



most exciting for photographers – the ability to capture images in Apple's high-quality ProRaw format, a new feature in iOS 14.3.

4K recording at 60p is not a new feature, but there's now the capacity to record in Dolby Vision HDR, as well as Night Mode time-lapse to give it an extra boost. Dolby Vision HDR requires a compatible device to view the footage in all its glory – such as an iPhone 12, or a Mac computer running macOS Catalina or Big Sur.

The iPhone 12 Pro Max's screen has increased in size slightly compared with the 11 Pro Max, being 6.7 inches on the diagonal. It's slightly taller than its predecessor, but it's a little narrower and slimmer, and weighs the same. There's also now a Ceramic Shield front, which should make the phone better able to withstand knocks and drops, while it's also a little better waterproofed than before.

In terms of non-camera features, probably the biggest news for the

iPhone 12 series is the addition of 5G connectivity. This means that, if you have a compatible data plan, you get access to super-fast download (and upload) speeds where they're available, and it could be a crucial deciding factor for many thinking about upgrading to the latest models – these are the first iPhones to offer 5G connectivity.

### Build and handling

There's no getting around the fact that the iPhone 12 Pro Max is a large phone, and this is either a good thing or a bad thing, depending on your personal preference, or perhaps your physical attributes. Those with larger hands will likely find the device very comfortable, while those with smaller digits may struggle to use the phone easily for some activities, such as texting. Then there's the fact that it's difficult to fit this phone into a small pocket, making it a little less easily portable than the iPhone 12 Pro. On



SMARTPHONE TEST [APPLE IPHONE 12 PRO MAX](#)

Faking a shallow depth-of-field effect is nothing new, but the 12 Pro Max does a great job of it



Although it lacks a macro camera, the wide lens can focus close enough for most situations

the plus side, the fact that while the 12 Pro Max has a larger screen than its predecessor it's managed to keep the same weight, and is actually slimmer than before, is an impressive achievement on Apple's part.

The design of the iPhone 12 draws inspiration from some of Apple's older models, going back to the squared-off edges we last saw on the iPhone 4. It's a striking look that won't appeal to everyone, but we think it works quite well.

Anyone who's used an iPhone before knows that Apple's native Camera app is pretty simple to use. However, iPhone users have in the past lamented that there aren't more advanced controls available to enthusiast photographers, and the addition of Apple ProRaw hints that Apple is looking to appeal to those wanting to take more than snaps.

As it is, you'll probably find yourself using the Camera app's standard





**Ultra-wide:** With a 35mm-equivalent focal length of 13mm, this lens gives a noticeably increased field of view over the wide lens



**Wide:** Equivalent to 26mm, the 'standard' wide lens gives a broad field of view, but it isn't so wide that objects appear lost in the frame



**Telephoto:** The 12 Pro Max's 65mm-equivalent telephoto camera gives you a little more reach than the 56mm-equivalent lens in the 12 Pro

Photo mode for most of your shots. Here, you can choose between any of the three lenses, tweak options such as flash, and turn Live Photos on or off. The more advanced controls include access to exposure compensation and the facility to choose a different aspect ratio. If you want more granular control, there are dozens of third-party apps that you can experiment with.

Some software features remain the same as on the iPhone 11 Pro Max.



Thanks to sensor-shift image stabilisation in the primary camera, capturing night shots is easy

## S P E C S

**PROCESSOR:** APPLE A14 BIONIC **SENSOR:** PRO 12MP **CAMERAS:** ULTRA WIDE (13MM): F/2.4 APERTURE, WIDE (26MM): F/1.6 APERTURE, TELEPHOTO (65MM): F/2.2 APERTURE **VIDEO:** 4K UP TO 60P; 1080P UP TO 60P **MEMORY:** INTEGRATED (128-512GB) **SCREEN:** 6.7-INCH OLED TOUCHSCREEN, 2,778 X 1,284 PIXELS **CONNECTIVITY:** WI-FI, BLUETOOTH 5, GPS, NFC, 5G **SIZE:** 161 X 7 X 78MM **WEIGHT:** 225G

One such useful feature is the ability to show you what's going on outside the frame, by using whichever lenses are not in use – this can be helpful for framing your shots, or avoiding taking a shot just as someone is about to wander into the frame. You can also have your phone record this extra data and use it (up to 30 days) later to fine-tune your compositions. Another returning software feature is Portrait mode, which can be used to create shallow-depth-of-field effects.

### Performance

Image quality in JPEGs from the iPhone 12 Pro Max is excellent. Colours are bright and punchy without being unrealistic, while the impression of detail is also very good.

Night Mode is an impressive performer, especially with the standard or the telephoto lens. Night Mode Portrait is useful for capturing artistic-looking shots in low light, so it's good to see the two modes mixed together. The ultra-wide-angle lens doesn't stand up so well in Night Mode – it's best avoided unless you're really desperate to shoot at that particular angle.

As mentioned, shooting in the new ProRaw format requires iOS 14.3 which has now been released but was still in beta when we tested the phone, although it gave us a good idea of how it's likely to perform. You'll need to enable ProRaw shooting in the Settings app, after which the option will then appear within the Camera app. You need to switch it on for each shooting session, which saves

you taking up lots of space on your phone with raw files of pictures of your shopping list and family pets, although you will need to remember to enable it when you want it.

The raw files withstand some fairly heavy editing in software such as Camera Raw – while you won't need to make such edits to all of your shots, it's great to have the option to do so.

Dolby HDR video shot with the 12 Pro Max really pops from the screen, especially in bright and high-contrast situations – when the light is flatter, it's less easy to see the difference that enabling Dolby HDR makes.

**Amy Davies**

## VERDICT

With the iPhone 12 Pro Max, Apple has delivered its best-performing smartphone yet, with its best-performing suite of cameras. There's a lot to like for both everyday snappers and more seasoned photographers, although we'd still like to see some more advanced controls in the default Camera app. The larger screen is great for viewing shots too, although if you want a more pocket-friendly phone you won't be missing out on much by going for the slightly smaller (and less expensive) iPhone 12 Pro.





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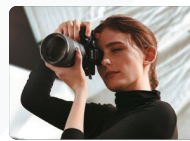
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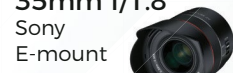
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# Photography Week

[photographyweek@futurenet.com](mailto:photographyweek@futurenet.com)



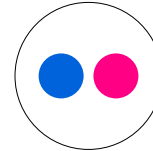
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[www.digitalcameraworld.com](http://www.digitalcameraworld.com)

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