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Take Beautiful Landscape and Nature Photos

By Kelly Paal

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We've all been there. Spent a lot of money to go to someplace we've never been before. We've taken the photos and brought them home expecting family and friends to ooh and aah over the shots we've taken. You open the envelope and take out the prints and somehow the landscapes and nature shots that looked so beautiful there look flat, dull, and you don't remember seeing that couple in the corner of your shot when you snapped the shutter.

First thing that you must know is that to get really great landscape and nature shots you really need an SLR with appropriate film for the job, but these tips will help you even if you are using a point and shoot.

1. Appropriate film. I use 100, 200, and 400 speed maximum. Film brand is a matter of personal taste. I use the 100 and 200 when I know that it's going to be bright out and I use 400 if I think that I'm going to capture wildlife or if I'm deep in the forest.

2. Natural light. I try to avoid using flash. If I do use flash I only use my fill flash. Whenever you use flash you rob the scene of most of it's natural charm. Think of it how many times did you take a shot because the light was just to pretty.

3. The right lens. A slight wide angle lens is very valuable for landscapes and a slightly telephoto comes in handy for tight shots of beautiful flowers. I personally have a favorite lens 30mm-70mm that is a staple for me and I use it ninety percent of the time.

Now that the technical stuff is out of the way.

4. Decide what it is EXACTLY that you are trying to capture on film and crop accordingly. Not cropping enough is one of the biggest mistakes amateur photographers make. Great thing about landscapes is that they don't move. So to learn take a few shots cropping closer each time.

5. Occasionally turn the camera vertically. So many people don't seem to realize that they can turn their camera on to the vertical. Imagine that you trying to get this tall evergreen perched on a rock above a vista. If the camera is horizontal you'll crop out the tree, if you turn the camera vertical you'll get the tree and a lot of the vista too. Try this when you taking photos. Take one shot horizontal and then turn the camera vertical. You'll be surprised.

6. If you're taking a photo of a large horizon it will probably look flat on film. You need a sense of scale. So frame your image. Sometimes this can be a family member on one side of the shot, perhaps looking out into the beautiful horizon. A tree, rock, or plant can work in landscape shots just make sure

that the framing item is not the focus of your shot.

This will get you started. Nature and landscape photography is a specialized area of the art but with practice you can improve your snap shots to capture some of the great places you've seen.

If you have some specific questions please visit my Photography and Design Forum at:

<http://kellypaalphotography.com/v-web/bulletin/bb/index.php> and post your question there.

Copyright 2005 Kelly Paal Photography Kelly Paal is a Freelance Nature and Landscape Photographer, exhibiting nationally and internationally. She owns her own business Kelly Paal Photography (www.kellypaalphotography.com). She has an educational background in photography, business, and commercial art. She enjoys applying graphic design and photography principles to her

web design.

Brighten Your Path By Installing Decorative Landscape Lighting

By Mike Yeager

Landscape lighting can add a beautiful quality to any home. There are many choices available to someone who is considering it. Landscape lighting, and any outdoor lighting, can help protect a home as well as keep people from stumbling in the yard. Mainly, people purchase landscape lighting to enhance the appearance of their yard or landscaping.

There are many types of landscape lighting. You can purchase low voltage landscape lighting is recommended if you are interested in conserving energy. Another option to conserving energy is solar landscape lighting. Solar, or from the sun, is powered from the sun's rays. It stores energy during the day while the sun is out and then, at night, when it is dark, they are lit using this saved energy. They give off a faint glow that really can light up a little area or large area. These types of outdoor landscape lighting can be great ways to light your yard cost efficiently.

If you are considering doing work on your landscaping, consider landscape lighting design. Designing a beautifully light yard can be tough work, but there are professionals that can help you. For example, something that can be done is light a walkway to the front steps to your home or line the driveway with lights from the street to your garage. Maybe you would prefer to focus your lights on a single bush or tree that is special in some way or to shine on a flag.

When considering landscape lighting, ensure that you think of safety first. Consider speaking with a professional to help you design what you would like your yard to look like. Consider as well using energy efficient landscape lighting such as solar or low voltage. Landscape lighting can add beauty and charm to a home when it is done properly and safely.

Mike Yeager
Publisher

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