



### “From the Ordinary to the Extra Ordinary”

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In 2017 as a direct result of requests from camera clubs I developed the first of a series of talks, Smart Shooter Part 1 “Beyond Auto Mode - Taking creative control of your camera”. This rapidly became one of my most popular talks and as a result I had further requests from clubs and other organisations to take it further and have developed a series of talks entitled “From the Ordinary to the Extra Ordinary”

The notion is that as photographers we are always seeking to take our photography to the next level – from the ordinary to the extraordinary. Equally we are purchasing and using more and more sophisticated cameras and want to get the best from them but there is very little expert advice around. There are many YouTube and other channels where an individual photographer takes you through how they approach e.g. focusing on their model “X” camera but nothing that provides more detail of why and how. Following these requests I decided to first provide an

instructional talk exploring in much more depth the notion of “moving beyond auto” and develop further the more advanced aspects I touch on at the end of my first talk. This talk entitled Smart Shooting Part 2 – “From the ordinary to the extraordinary” - launched in 2019 and has rapidly become my most popular talk.

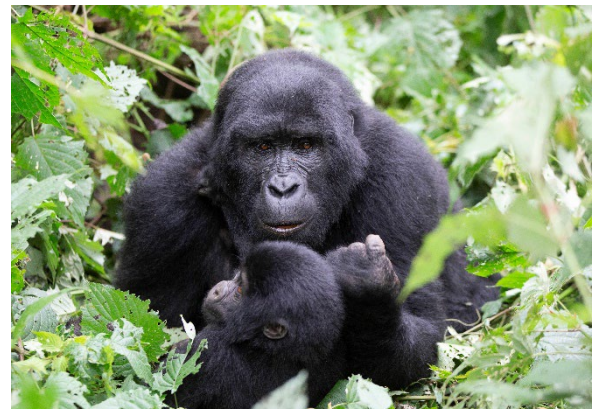
The principle is simple anyone can take absolutely superb photographs and the first step is definitely leaving the auto mode setting on your camera behind. The second, and often omitted step, however is to understand how the differences in digital v film shooting can make these photographs even better. We all struggle to produce sharper noise free images and use software tools such as the very popular Topaz™ suite but is there a different and supportive way? I firmly believe that there is a place for these software tools to further improve your photography but if you can shoot better to start with then Topaz™ and the like will improve your work even further. The often-quoted adage that you can't make a silk purse from a sow's ear is absolutely right. However, as a photographer with over 50 years of experience I firmly believe that if you seek to start with a silk purse and then apply these tools your work will be even better still. I have introduced countless photographers including many well known professionals to this approach over the last 10 or more years and all have reported major improvements in their work.

I shot film for 40 years before moving to digital in 2003 and was first introduced to these ideas in an interview with Thomas Knoll in 2006. You may recognize his name as he is the original author of Adobe Photoshop™, and the author of Camera RAW. Although I had shot digital for so many of years and was in touch with many of the developers of digital cameras through a lifelong friend, the then technical director of one of the leading camera manufacturers this was new thinking to me. Thomas expanding on something about digital shooting that had not occurred to me. Once I started to experiment it made perfect sense and has changed my shooting ever since. If you are prepared to examine and try this fundamental shift in thinking, then I can assure you that like so many others I have introduced to this to, your photographs will improve markedly. Ironically as we are buying more and more powerful digital cameras they these ideas more important than ever yet they are never discussed. As we strive to produce sharper, cleaner, clearer more noise free images they are the key tool in our digital shooting toolbox. You can perform miracles in PhotoShop™ and Topaz™ but you really can't make a silk purse out of a sows ear”. Getting things right in camera and understanding digital shooting is the very best place to start.

Digital cameras especially the more advanced ones we are buying now are not just film cameras with a digital sensor. We all the fantastic “bells and whistles” on these new cameras but if we continue to shoot believing that digital sensors are just more advanced alternatives to film we won't get the best from our significant investments even with miracle software. Whilst the basic controls are the same, if we are to get the best from them, we need to understand these fundamental differences more clearly.

Just as photographers like Ansel Adams encouraged us to expose film in particular ways to get the best from it we need to understand how digital cameras can help us to manage exposure to improve our image quality. These concepts may seem more complex but this talk and presentation is designed to take experienced shooters forward in their journey in photography as well challenge and stretch newer members who may have heard the first talk or had help through your club and be taking their first steps to take control of their cameras.

The talk lasts a full 2 hours including a 10 minute break in the middle. I bring prints along to illustrate the techniques I discuss and explore them using clear concise illustrated and animated explanations.



*Bob Brind-Surch*