

HORIZON NEWS #47

IMAGES, THOUGHTS AND NEWS FROM HORIZON PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

"Why do two colors, put one next to the other, sing? Can one really explain this? No."

Pablo Picasso

Student Photos Up Close

With foliage season around the corner, we got to thinking about photographs in which color is a dominant feature of the image. How can photographers make color "sing," as Picasso might say? Here are a few thoughts, illustrated by four outstanding (non-foliage) student photos.

Ron Rivers' photo of a roadside watermelon display table features strong primary colors — greens and reds — that vibrate well together. As to why this "works," Picasso might be right: you can't really explain it, it just does. For those in search of explanations, color theory says greens and reds are a strong combination because they are on *opposite ends* of the color spectrum. That maximizes visual contrast. Which is why juxtaposing red and orange, which are *adjacent* on the color spectrum, is usually less appealing to most eyes.

Another way to enhance color vibrance is to include black, white, and/or grey elements in the picture because these "non-colors" serve as contrasting elements to any color. In Ron's photo, the paper plate serves that purpose. (Imagine the picture without the plate...less color pop, yes?)

Capturing one single color set against a black, white or grey background is another effective way to call attention to color; the eye steers away from "neutrals" and toward colors. It's hard to take your eyes off the Crayola crayon in **Morgan Foery's** elegant-yet-simple shot. Ditto the yellow line in **Brenda Kolb's** dynamic road detail. (It's hard to detect the crayon in Brenda's shot, but that's the idea behind this visual joke.)

Bright colors make for high impact. Subdued colors, though they have less punch, can be every bit as pleasing. The pastel hues in **Alan Wiener's** shot of an old Chevy truck interact beautifully together...and the soft palette is perfectly suited to the decomposing subject matter.

As you seek out foliage images — and other pictures in which color is critical — be conscious of color juxtapositions to create stronger and more varied images. (More on color >> next page.)



Oversaturated with Oversaturation

by Steve Gottlieb

When I judge camera club competitions, I explain at the outset that, like every human being, I have my prejudices, both pro and con. I identify some of them. One of my strongest prejudices is against images that, to my eye, are *oversaturated*. I'm particularly put off by nature photographs that don't look natural.

It seems like more and more photographers these days are cranking up the saturation. Intense colors certainly catch the eye — no doubt that's why most *Outdoor Photographer* covers are heavily saturated— but this is like getting attention by playing music too loud or over-seasoning food. Catching my attention is not the same thing as pleasing me.

To enhance color *without* saturation overkill you might try minimizing those elements in a picture that distract from the colors. Here's an example, using a fine photo by **Alan Wiener** (who produced the Chevy Truck detail on the prior page.)

The top picture is Alan's unretouched image. The middle version is heavily saturated. The bottom is unsaturated, with distracting elements — sky, signage and such — either removed or toned down. Result: colors stand out more without looking fake.



Asbury Park's Pavilion: Then & Now

In producing the pictures for my 2002 book, *Abandoned America*, I traveled to forty states in search of subjects. Over the years, I've returned to a number of my picture locations. A few subjects still survive, burdened by additional years of deterioration. But most have vanished with time, either decomposed or hauled away for burial or scrap.

One notable exception.

Last month, I drove through Asbury Park, NJ, a town I photographed 14 years ago. Back then, the town's large "Pavilion" seemed ripe for the wrecking ball. Indeed, the whole town felt that way. But in the intervening years, the town has sprung back to life. The Pavilion has received a magnificent renovation; the day I was there it was buzzing with shoppers, diners and beachcombers.



Upcoming Workshops

Oct 12: Camera Basics

Oct. 13-14: Creative Vision

Oct. 20-21: Canon Experience

Oct 26-28: Chesapeake City thru Nat'l Geographic Eyes

Dec. 8: The Creative "i": Shooting with the iPhone

Jan. 19: From Click to Print

Jan. 20: Photoshop Elements

Jan. 26: Lightroom

Feb. 23-24: Horizon Summit (Multiple Instructors; site: Wilmington, DE)

Apr. 29 - May 5: 2013 Western Adventure (So. California & Las Vegas)