

PROCESSING LANDSCAPES

“Mist in the Hope Valley”

Mam Tor, Peak District,
taken 23 January 2017

LANDSCAPE IMAGES - AIMS


- ▶ Good composition (Use the Rule of Thirds if possible). Consider a low viewpoint.
- ▶ A feeling of scale and depth, often achieved by using a wide angle lens. You will want to have foreground interest as well as an interesting background, and have both in sharp focus, and your eye should travel through the image into the distance.
- ▶ Capture unusual or interesting weather conditions if possible.
- ▶ Maximise depth of field by using a small aperture and focus at about one-third of the way into the view (hyperfocal distance).
- ▶ Balancing exposures of the sky and foreground.



BACKGROUND

- ▶ The image was one of several shot whilst on holiday in the Peak District in January 2017
- ▶ The weather that week was consistently foggy, every day, and very cold
- ▶ I had seen landscape shots of the Peak District before, and had a vision of a sunrise or sunset over a gritstone edge – the weather ruled that idea out!
- ▶ Planning a shot is always a good idea, but no pre-planning of this shot was involved – it was an opportunist shot taken on a walk along Mam Tor, looking back to the village of Hope (and its picturesque cement works...!)
- ▶ I had no idea when I shot this one that it might be any good...but it always pays to take your camera just in case.


LANDSCAPE IMAGE ISSUES

- ▶ The main issue when photographing landscapes is that the EV of the sky and the EV of the landscape are usually significantly different, resulting in skies that are blown out (overexposed) if the land is exposed correctly. This was an issue with this image.
 - ▶ There are numerous ways of dealing with this, but the methods I use most are:
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- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, set against the blue gradient background.

METHODS I USE FOR BALANCING EXPOSURES:

- ▶ Taking 3 images and blending them together as an HDR image, which I do frequently. A tripod is ideal, but you can get away with handholding for HDR.
- ▶ Use Photomatix Pro to create additional under and over exposed images and exposure fuse them, thus creating an HDR image from one single original image. This avoids any alignment issues.
- ▶ Use ACR, Lightroom or Photoshop gradients when processing the RAW image
- ▶ Use a digital filter such as Nik Colour Efex Pro's Graduated ND filter (very effective). I never use physical ND grad filters (awkward, especially when it is cold, and difficult to evaluate the final result).

CAMERA SETTINGS

- ▶ The image was shot handheld on my Canon EOS 80D crop-sensor 24MP camera, using my 15-85mm IS Canon zoom lens at 31mm
 - ▶ FF equivalent would be 50mm, which approximates to what is seen with the human eye.
 - ▶ F6.3, ISO100, 1/80th second. Lens has 4-stop image stabiliser.
 - ▶ I use Adobe colour space in camera and when processing, as it has a wider gamut of colours than sRGB.
 - ▶ I used to shoot Jpegs, then both, but now shoot exclusively in RAW format
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THE ORIGINAL IMAGE – AS SHOT ON
THE DAY...





PROCESSING “MIST IN THE HOPE VALLEY”

- ▶ The subject was fairly low contrast because of the fog, with a cloudy grey sky and slightly dark foreground
- ▶ I processed the image in Adobe Camera Raw within Photoshop CC, reducing the highlights and lightening the foreground.
- ▶ My main concern was to get some detail in the sky, retaining some of the dreamy fog in the distance while getting the foreground balanced correctly, and when I had got a reasonable result on the RAW image in Photoshop I then used Nik Efex Pro's Graduated ND filter. This filter is highly customisable – you can darken the sky, lighten the foreground, and adjust the hardness and position of the blend all in one go whilst previewing the result.
- ▶ I also used Topaz DeNoise to reduce noise in the final image, and selectively sharpened using the masking tool at about 80 – 85%
- ▶ The image was then cropped to EPC requirements, and did quite well in the March 2017 pdi competition, being held back by the Judge, and was subsequently also entered by the Club in an external competition

BEFORE.....AND AFTER



ANY QUESTIONS..?

