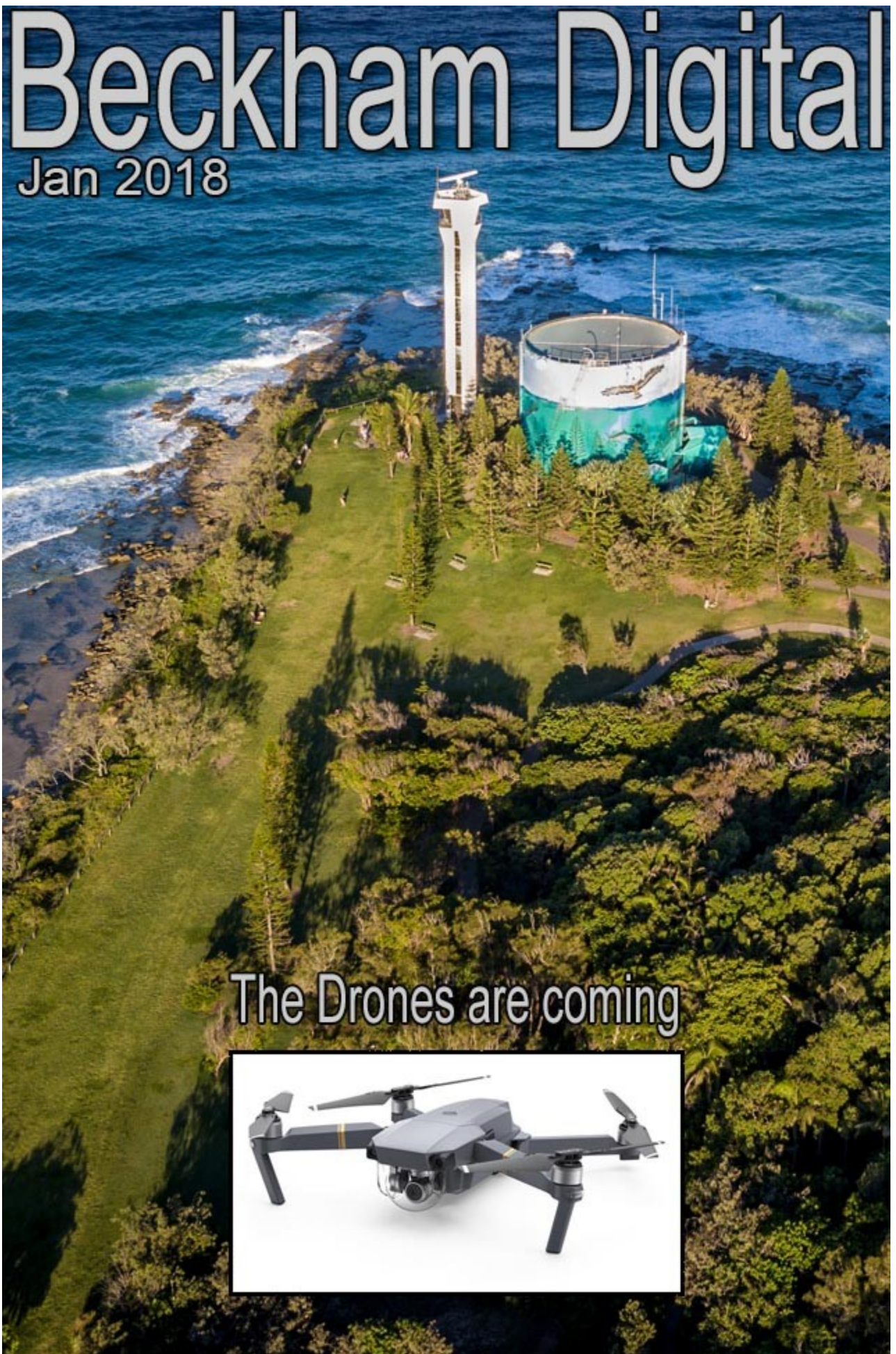# Beckham Digital

Jan 2018

The Drones are coming

Happy New Year to All - Well, here we are about to embark on another year of photography and I wonder what this year will bring. As I get older I find it more and more difficult to motivate myself to get out with the camera. An honest admission that I think many people share. It's that been there, done that, type of feeling.

So, I have been thinking of what to do next, something I guess we all do from time to time, looking for inspiration and a direction to follow. One thing I have been thinking of for over a year is running some free Photoshop Courses in the area I live.

I have the time, the expertise and the enthusiasm to do that, but.....Here comes that dreaded but.... I wonder how many modern photographers also have the same enthusiasm? With what I read, see and hear in my travels around amateur photographers. I am picking up a worrying attitude of *"that'll do"* or is this just me seeing evidence that is not there? I would quickly lose my enthusiasm for teaching if faced with that attitude. Learning isn't that hard when you have a little enthusiasm.

For example: Am I wrong when I think, most amateurs can't be bothered to take a tripod even when they have the experience to know it's required?   Are you are OK taking slightly unsharp, hand held images with a shallow depth of field? That's fine and it's your right to do so.

But, in Camera Club competitions, you shouldn't be too surprised when the judge points out the obvious weaknesses in your image that you yourself already know. How does this improve the standard of amateur photography or your photography? Come on people, make that effort and improve your results. The most successful photographer I know enjoys that success due to effort, far more than their technical or editing prowess

It's good to start off the year with with a bit of controversy and a rant, don't you think.

The Drones are Coming

I have often seen people out with Drones and on at least one occasion I have cursed them. Having said that, it wasn't really anything to do with the drone, but the ignorant nature of people using them. They turn up at a spot where a photographer is already at work (me) and then have their drone follow their girlfriend up and down a jetty, while being completely indifferent to others.

Having experienced this I assumed drones must be pretty stable because I wished very hard for that drone to drop into the sea, but sadly it didn't. I hoped it would crash into the jetty or just disappear over the horizon, but that didn't happen either. At one point I even imagined the girlfriend slipping off the jetty into the water.

Well, Drones are here to stay and recently I had the opportunity to experience one up close and personal. It's the Mavic Pro shown here, which appears to have a good reputation and voted top choice in at least one survey I saw.

There is a lot of information about the Mavic Pro drone HERE – However, in quick summary it has a 12MP camera 4000*3000 pixels and will record Raw, Jpeg or one of each and video up to 4K.

You can get a much better feel for the size of this drone from the picture below. They are very easy to fly and we could say they fly themselves. Take off and landing can be done automatically.

Automatic take off will raise the drone about 1.2 meters and if you don't touch the controls the drone will just hover, rock steady, in front of you at that height.

The main flight controls are two toggles you can see on the left. These control ascent and decent, forward and backwards flight and rotation of the drone. When you release the toggles, they self center and the drone immediately stops and hovers.

This gives you time to frame images and shoot video without worrying about flying the drone at the same time. It will do the flying for you.

Of course there are all sorts of rules and regulations regarding

Drones, but they are all mostly common sense that I don't feel I need to list here. There will be App's you can download that will show you restricted air space and in some situations, I understand the drone will not even lift off in restricted air space. Giving you a warning message that flight should not be attempted.

Above we are looking down from a height of almost 400 feet (max permitted height) and the tiny Mavic Pro can be hard to spot from the ground at that height. It's worth having a spotter with you, so they can keep the drone in sight while you're taking the pictures. We are looking south from Cartwright Point in Mooloolaba Australia. 1000Th @ F2.2 at 100 ISO

The drone does have an auto home button, so if you did lose track of it, you can tell it to come back to the lift off point. The metadata even records the Longitude and Latitude as well as the height the shot was taken. We had to do this once at Coochin Creek when the iPhone image suddenly disappeared while in flight and some way away. Probably due to a temporary loss of signal, but the Drone returned automatically with no drama.

The picture below is from a Raw image, Focal length at 35mm equivalent is 26mm. 1000^{Th} @ f2.2 with 100 iso. Of course not all images or video needs to be shot from a great height (400 ft) Sometimes just a slightly different viewpoint makes the world of difference to a photograph.

There are times when the drone needs to be hand launched and retrieved. Usually when the launch site is small, like from a boat.

A hand take off is easy and to get the drone back, you just bring it into range and it will hover rock steady, just above you. Reach up and grip the body and shut down the rotors. I managed to film a hand retrieve of the drone with my Canon G16 in somewhat gusty conditions on the beach.

This Youtube video demonstrates how easy it is.

If you're into selfies then a drone is one way to achieve something a little different.

The image below is Pt Glorious, an off road location west of Noosa. The image was shot in Raw mode as the drone was flown away from the lookout point.

230^{Th} @ F2.2 with 100 iso.

The image above is Lake Baroon in Queensland from the Maleny side. 125th of a second @ f2.2 with 100 iso. Like all photography, drone results tend to be better at dawn and dusk for all the reasons we are familiar with. Softer, less contrasty light

Lightroom Creative Cloud – Video Tutorials

We have had lots of satisfied customers for our video tutorials, be they Lightroom, Photoshop or PicturesToExe, but it's always nice to get some feedback.

Customer comment – Dec 2018 - I bought your Lightroom CC training disk some months ago. I decided in August not to renew CC but to go back to Lightroom 5.7. Anyway I have just started to utilise your disk and have had a look at the Graduated Filter video. I have only had a first run through and I know that I will have to run through it a couple of times more to really embrace the training.

However I have seen training videos on Lightroom on You Tube and where I believe your videos are the best is that you guide the viewer slowly through each part of the video, so as it were you are next to me doing the training. Many thanks for a great product. David.

David makes an interesting observation above when he says it's like me sitting beside him doing the training. If only you could see me when I am am recording a video. You would see that this is exactly what I do and my wife often laughs at me, because she says I use hand gestures even when I am sitting on my own recording a video.

My hand gestures hardly help you in a screen video, but it'ss something we all do automatically when talking to someone sitting alongside us.

Remember, the core part of image editing is like driving. We don't change our driving style when driving a different car and we don't change our editing style with different software.

However, we photographers have to inject our own creativity into our images, or they tend to look the same as millions of others.

Creative Wet Stainless – Photoshop and Camera Raw -Video

This month, due to a shortage of time to record a short video I enclose a full start to finish Master-Class manipulation using Camera Raw and Photoshop. Getting creative with a flat, dull and lifeless image.

Remember, Photoshop is the Rolls Royce of image editors and it underpins our creativity. It gives us the scope to develop a creative approach to our photography.

First through Camera Raw and then Photoshop.

Photoshop is not as hard to get into as many people think. It just takes a structured and methodical approach.
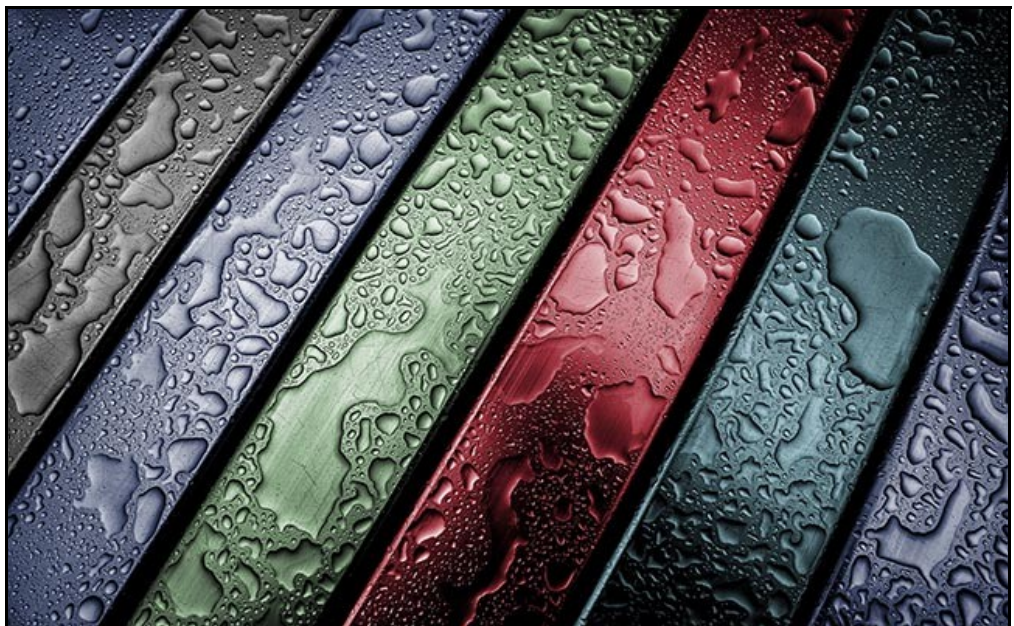
View on YouTube HERE

Download **Creative Stainless** for PC and Mac via an Mp4 video HERE

Download Part 1 of our **Photoshop for Photographers** training program here

Download Understanding **Photoshop's Bridge** here

YouTube video introductions to Tutorial Videos in our range
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Remember, we can be contacted via email with any queries you have, or you can phone us for a chat. We will guide you fairly and honestly and never sell you anything we do not think you need. Check out our number on our CONTACTS page.