

High Performance Cameras for Ordinary People Or I Just Paid \$ 1,000 for this Camera – Now What?

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So, you finally sprang for that expensive camera! Maybe you bought an extra lens, a nice case, and the salesman even convinced you that you needed a filter or two. Now what?

Your pictures don't look much different than the ones you were getting from the blue-light special camera; or even from your iPhone for that matter. Were you duped into thinking that an expensive camera would make you a world famous photographer instantly? Or at least you thought your friends and relatives would spend a little more time looking at your pictures, rather than just being polite and saying, "how nice."

It is very possible that you don't need that expensive camera at all. Depending upon what type of photographs you want to make, an inexpensive point and shoot camera, or even a camera phone, may be just fine. Most photographs, in fact, could have been made with any camera, film or digital. But a few pictures require a high performance camera.

Certain situations require a camera with greater capabilities.

A camera might be compared to a car. If your requirements are to get to your job which is five miles away, a 15 year old econo-box may be just fine. If you are pulling a horse trailer through the mountains, you will want something a little more robust. If you are driving the pace car in the Indy 500, your requirements will be different yet.

It is the same with cameras. If you are photographing friends at the beach on a sunny day, or your kid's birthday party, it is unlikely that you will need to spend \$2,000 on camera gear. If on the other hand, you find yourself in unusual light situations with the need to bring home great pictures no matter what, then it might be time to step up to a high performance camera and learn how to drive it.

As you have probably already figured out, there is more to making great pictures than having good equipment.

As a musician, only occasionally will somebody come up and ask what kind of guitar I play because they want the same sound. But as a photographer, I am often asked what kind of camera I have, implying that they want to make photographs just like mine.

I was at a gig one time when another musician came up to me and told me that my bass sounded great. It was all I could do to bite my tongue and not come back with a catty remark about how it didn't sound all that good when I wasn't playing it. But this is an everyday occurrence as a photographer. I often get photography jobs because the client thinks I have better equipment than he does, otherwise he would take the pictures himself.

I've never heard a concert promoter say they would play the gig themselves if they only had a better guitar.

The truth is, I don't own a lot of expensive gear. I buy what I need to do my job, know what its capabilities are, and if I need something else, I make a decision based upon solid financial concerns. After all, as a professional photographer, I need to take home money, not spend it all on expensive photo gear.