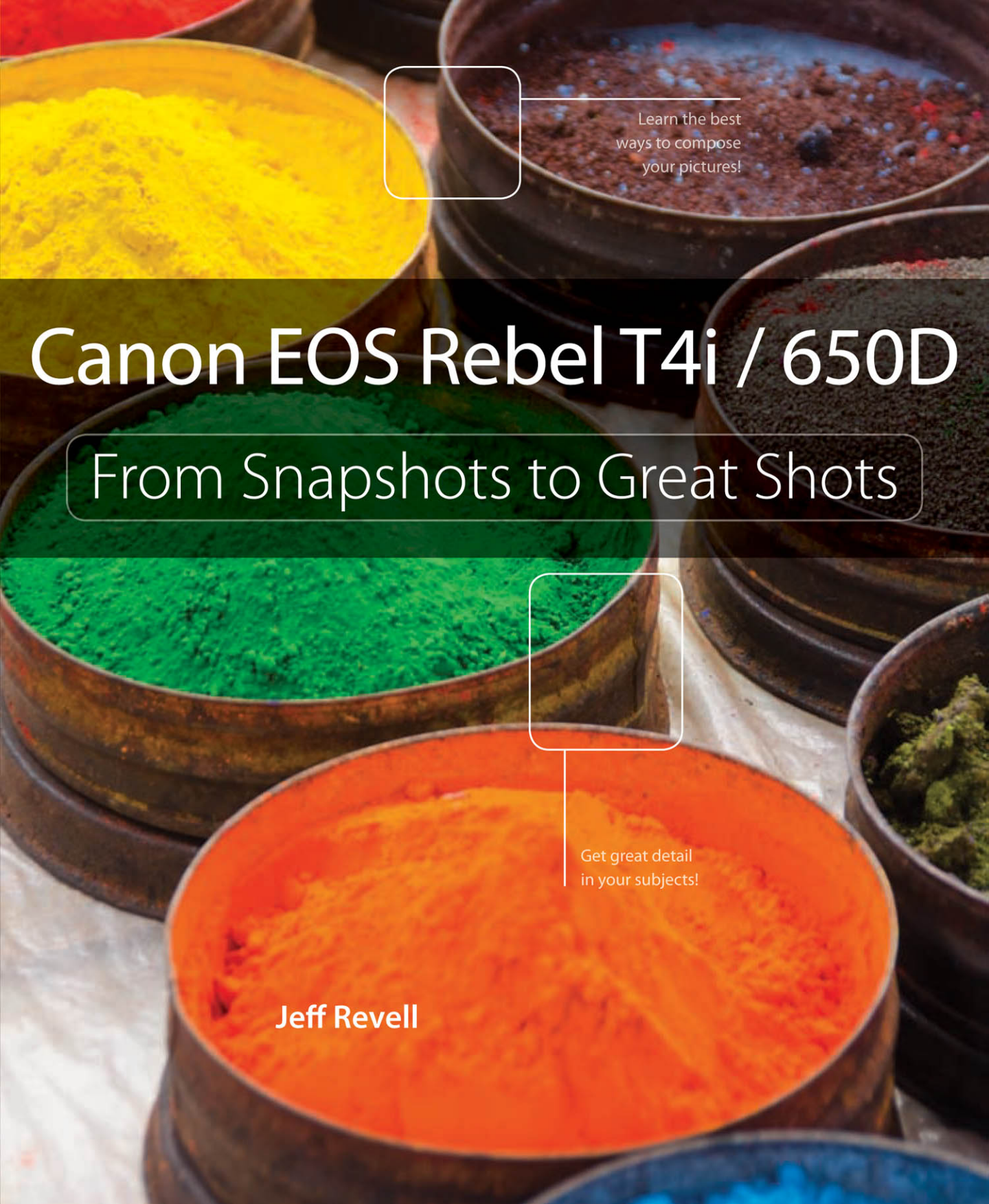
Learn the best ways to compose your pictures!
Canon EOS Rebel T4i / 650D
From Snapshots to Great Shots
Get great detail in your subjects!
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Canon EOS Rebel T4i/650D: From Snapshots to Great Shots

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DEDICATION

For all the great folks at Peachpit for putting up with my special brand of insanity—you guys are great!

B&H
PHOTO - VIDEO - PRO AUDIO

Contents

INTRODUCTION viii

CHAPTER 1: THE T4I TOP TEN LIST 1

Ten Tips to Make Your Shooting More Productive Right Out of the Box 1

Poring Over the Camera 2

Poring Over the Camera 4

1. Charge Your Battery 5

2. Turn Off the Release Shutter Without Card Setting 6

3. Set Your JPEG Image Quality 7

4. Turn Off the Auto ISO Setting 9

5. Set Your Focus Point and Mode 10

6. Set the Correct White Balance 12

7. Adjust the Viewfinder Diopter 15

8. Turn Off the Touchscreen 15

9. Review Your Shots 16

10. Hold Your Camera for Proper Shooting 22

Chapter 1 Assignments 23

CHAPTER 2: FIRST THINGS FIRST 25

A Few Things to Know and Do Before You Begin Taking Pictures 25

Poring Over the Picture 26

Poring Over the Picture 28

Choosing the Right Memory Card 30

Formatting Your Memory Card 31

Updating the T4i's Firmware 33

Cleaning the Sensor 36

Using the Right Format: RAW vs. JPEG 38

Lenses and Focal Lengths 40

What Is Exposure? 46

Motion and Depth of Field 49

Video and the T4i 52

Chapter 2 Assignments 59

CHAPTER 3: THE BASIC ZONE 61

Get Shooting with the Automatic Camera Modes 61

Poring Over the Picture 62

Poring Over the Picture 64

Scene Intelligent Auto Mode 66
Portrait Mode 67
Landscape Mode 69
Close-up Mode 70
Sports Mode 71
Night Portrait Mode 72
Flash Off Mode 73
Creative Auto Mode 75
Why You May Never Want to Use the Basic Zone Again 78
Chapter 3 Assignments 79

CHAPTER 4: THE CREATIVE ZONE 83
Taking Your Photography to the Next Level 83
Poring Over the Picture 84
Poring Over the Picture 86
P: Program Mode 88
Tv: Shutter Priority Mode 91
Av: Aperture Priority Mode 95
M: Manual Mode 99
How I Shoot: A Closer Look at the Camera Settings I Use 102
Chapter 4 Assignments 104

CHAPTER 5: MOVING TARGET 107
The Tricks to Shooting Sports and More 107
Poring Over the Picture 108
Poring Over the Picture 110
Stop Right There! 112
Using Shutter Priority (Tv) Mode to Stop Motion 117
Using Aperture Priority (Av) Mode to Isolate Your Subject 119
Keep Them in Focus with AI Servo and Auto AF Point Selection 120
Stop and Go with AI Focus 122
Manual Focus for Anticipated Action 123
Keeping Up with Continuous Shooting Mode 125
A Sense of Motion 126
Tips for Shooting Action 128
Chapter 5 Assignments 130

CHAPTER 6: SAY CHEESE! 133
Settings and Features to Make Great Portraits 133
Poring Over the Picture 134
Poring Over the Picture 136
Automatic Portrait Mode 138

Using Aperture Priority Mode 139
Metering Modes for Portraits 141
Using the AE Lock Feature 143
Focusing: The Eyes Have It 144
Classic Black and White Portraits 146
The Portrait Picture Style for Better Skin Tones 149
Detect Faces with Live View 149
Use Fill Flash for Reducing Shadows 152
People on the Move 154
Tips for Shooting Better Portraits 155
Chapter 6 Assignments 163

CHAPTER 7: LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY 165

Tips, Tools, and Techniques to Get the Most Out of Your Landscape Photography 165
Poring Over the Picture 166
Poring Over the Picture 168
Sharp and In Focus: Using Tripods 170
Selecting the Proper ISO 172
Using Noise Reduction 173
Selecting a White Balance 174
Using the Landscape Picture Style 176
Taming Bright Skies with Exposure Compensation 178
Shooting Beautiful Black and White Landscapes 180
The Golden Light 182
Where to Focus 183
Easier Focusing 185
Making Water Fluid 187
Directing the Viewer: A Word about Composition 188
Advanced Techniques to Explore 193
Chapter 7 Assignments 201

CHAPTER 8: MOOD LIGHTING 203

Shooting When the Lights Get Low 203
Poring Over the Picture 204
Poring Over the Picture 206
Raising the ISO: The Simple Solution 208
Using Very High ISOs 210
Stabilizing the Situation 211
Focusing in Low Light 215

Shooting Long Exposures 217
Using the Built-In Flash 218
Compensating for the Flash Exposure 222
Reducing Red-Eye 224
2nd Curtain Sync 226
Using an External Speedlite 229
Flash and Glass 233
Chapter 8 Assignments 234

CHAPTER 9: CREATIVE COMPOSITIONS 237
Improve Your Pictures with Sound Compositional Elements 237
Poring Over the Picture 238
Poring Over the Picture 240
Depth of Field 242
Angles 244
Point of View 244
Patterns 244
Color 246
Contrast 247
Leading Lines 248
Splitting the Frame 249
Chapter 9 Assignments 251

CHAPTER 10: ADVANCED TECHNIQUES 253
Impress Your Family and Friends 253
Poring Over the Picture 254
Spot Meter for More Exposure Control 256
Manual Mode 259
Avoiding Lens Flare 262
Using the Sun Creatively 263
Bracketing Exposures 264
HDR Backlight Control 266
Auto Lighting Optimizer 267
Handheld Night Scene 269
The My Menu setting 270
Customize Your White Balance 271
Conclusion 272
Chapter 10 Assignments 273

INDEX 274

Introduction

Walk into any bookseller and you will see countless books on the subject of photography. Look a little further and you will locate the camera-specific books. It is this divide between the camera-specific and instructional photography books that inspired me to write this book. I was seeing a lot of books that were just sort of missing the mark—especially when it came to combining actual photographic instruction with the use of a specific brand and model of camera. So with that, I set about to write this book on the Canon T4i, not as a rehash of the owner's manual but as a resource to teach photography with the wonderful technology present in the T4i. I have put together a short Q&A to help you get a better understanding of just what it is that you can expect from this book.

Q: IS EVERY CAMERA FEATURE GOING TO BE COVERED?

A: Nope, just the ones I felt you need to know about in order to start taking great photos. Believe it or not, you already own a great resource that covers every feature of your camera: the owner's manual. Writing a book that just repeats this information would have been a waste of my time and your money. What I did want to write about was how to harness certain camera features to the benefit of your photography. As you read through the book, you will also see callouts that point you to specific pages in your owner's manual that are related to the topic being discussed. For example, in Chapter 6 I discuss the use of the AE Lock feature, but there is more information available on this feature in the manual. I cover the function as it applies to our specific needs, but I also give you the page numbers in the manual so you can explore it even further.

Q: SO IF I ALREADY OWN THE MANUAL, WHY DO I NEED THIS BOOK?

A: The manual does a pretty good job of telling you how to use a feature or turn it on in the menus, but it doesn't necessarily tell you *why* and *when* you should use it. If you really want to improve your photography, you need to know the whys and whens to put all of those great camera features to use at the right time. To that extent, the manual just isn't going to cut it. It is, however, a great resource on the camera's features, and it is for that reason that I treat it like a companion to this book. You already own it, so why not get something of value from it?

Q: WHAT CAN I EXPECT TO LEARN FROM THIS BOOK?

A: Hopefully, you will learn how to take great photographs. My goal, and the reason the book is laid out the way it is, is to guide you through the basics of photography as they relate to different situations and scenarios. By using the features of your T4i and this book, you will learn about aperture, shutter speed, ISO, lens selection, depth of field, and many other photographic concepts. You will also find plenty of full-page photos that include captions, shooting data, and callouts so you can see how all of the photography fundamentals come together to make great images. All the while, you will be learning how your camera works and how to apply its functions and features to your photography.

Q: WHAT ARE THE ASSIGNMENTS ALL ABOUT?

A: At the end of most of the chapters, you will find shooting assignments, where I give you some suggestions as to how you can apply the lessons of the chapter to help reinforce everything you just learned. Let's face it—using the camera is much more fun than reading about it, so the assignments are a way of taking a little break after each chapter and having some fun.

Q: SHOULD I READ THE BOOK STRAIGHT THROUGH OR CAN I SKIP AROUND FROM CHAPTER TO CHAPTER?

A: Here's the easy answer: yes and no. No, because the first four chapters give you the basic information that you need to know about your camera. These are the building blocks for using the camera. After that, yes, you can move around the book as you see fit because the later chapters are written to stand on their own as guides to specific types of photography or shooting situations. You can bounce from portraits to shooting landscapes and then maybe to a little action photography. It's all about your needs and how you want to address them. Or, you can read it straight through. The choice is up to you.

Q: I DON'T SEE ANY CHAPTERS DEVOTED TO VIDEO.

A: I know that one of the reasons you bought the T4i was probably its ability to capture video. I have covered some basic video setup information in Chapter 2, but I really wanted the focus of this book to be the photographic capabilities and possibilities. Don't worry, though—read the next Q&A and I think you will be happy.

Q: IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I SHOULD KNOW BEFORE GETTING STARTED?

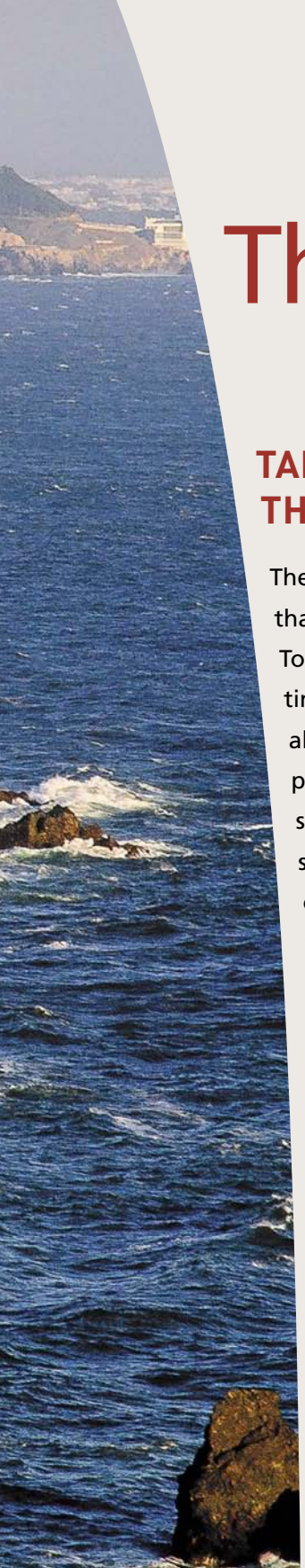
A: In order to keep the book short and focused, I had to be selective about what I included in each chapter. The problem is that there is a little more information that might come in handy after you've gone through all the chapters. So as an added value for you, I have written two bonus chapters: "Pimp My Ride" and "T4i Video: Beyond the Basics." The first chapter is full of information on photo accessories that will assist you in making better photographs. In it, you will find my recommendation for things like filters, tripods, and much more. The second chapter will lead you through some video tips and techniques to make your T4i movies even better. To access the bonus chapters, just log in to or join Peachpit.com (it's free), then enter the book's ISBN. After you register the book, a link to the bonus chapters will be listed on your Account page under Registered Products.

Q: IS THAT IT?

A: One last thought before you dive into the first chapter. My goal in writing this book has been to give you a resource that you can turn to for creating great photographs with your Canon T4i. Take some time to learn the basics and then put them to use. Photography, like most things, takes time to master and requires practice. I have been a photographer for 30 years and I'm still learning. Always remember that it's not the camera that makes beautiful photographs—it's the person using it. Have fun, make mistakes, and then learn from them. In no time, I'm sure you will transition from a person who takes snapshots to a photographer who makes great shots.

4

ISO 200
1/500 sec.
f/11
82mm lens

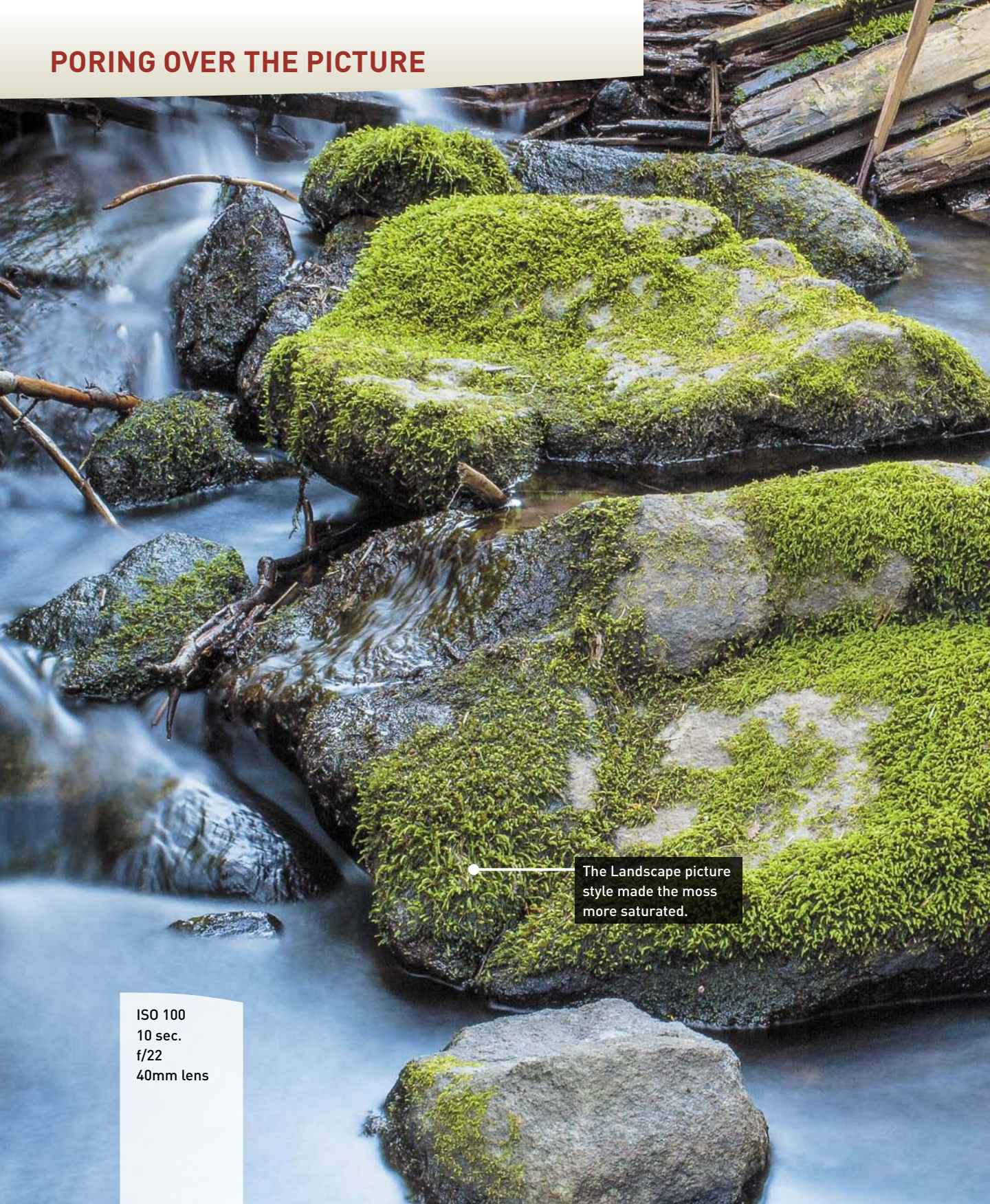


The Creative Zone

TAKING YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY TO THE NEXT LEVEL

The Creative zone is the name given by Canon to the shooting modes that offer you the greatest amount of control over your photography. To anyone who has been involved with photography for any period of time, these modes are known as the backbones of photography. They allow you to influence two of the most important factors for taking great photographs: *aperture* and *shutter speed*. To access these modes, you simply turn the Mode dial to the Creative mode of your choice and begin shooting. But wouldn't it be nice to know exactly what those modes control and how to make them do our bidding? Well, if you really want to take that next step in controlling your photography, it is essential that you understand not only how to control these modes, but why and when to adjust them so that you get the results you want. So let's move that Mode dial to the first of our Creative modes: Program mode.

PORING OVER THE PICTURE



ISO 100
10 sec.
f/22
40mm lens

Photographing moving water is not hard, which is probably why I enjoy doing it so much. The real key is finding a location that has good compositional elements. This particular stream had great elements like the small water cascades, the swirling pools, and the mossy rocks, which added great color contrast to the scene.
Using a low ISO setting also helped in getting a long exposure.
A very small aperture was used to get good sharpness.
I used a very long exposure to ensure that the flowing water looked silky smooth.

PORING OVER THE PICTURE

I know it's not very manly, but I have to tell you: I have a thing for flowers. I'm not much into growing them or having them around the house—I prefer to photograph them. With so many varieties and ways of lighting and photographing them, they are always presenting me with new challenges. I spotted this flower in a small garden outside my hotel room in Ollantaytambo, Peru. It had rained the night before, and I loved the small water droplets on the petals and the contrast of the flower against the darker green plant in the background.

I had to set the exposure compensation to –2/3 because of the darker background.

The ISO was raised to help get a small aperture with a shutter speed that was fast enough to handhold the camera.

ISO 400
1/125 sec.
f/9
200mm lens

P: PROGRAM MODE

There is a reason that Program mode is only one click away from the Basic modes: with respect to apertures and shutter speeds, the camera is doing most of the thinking for you. So, if that is the case, why even bother with Program mode? First, let me say that it is very rare that I will use Program mode, because it just doesn't give as much control over the image-making process as the other Creative modes. There are occasions, however, when it comes in handy, like when I am shooting in widely changing lighting conditions and don't have the time to think through all of my options, or when I'm not very concerned with having ultimate control of the scene. Think of a picnic outdoors in a partial shade/sun environment—I want great-looking pictures, but I'm not looking for anything to hang in a museum. If that's the scenario, why choose Program over one of the Basic modes? Because it gives me choices and control that none of the Basic modes, including Creative Auto, can deliver.

Manual Callout

To see a comparison of all of the different modes in the Basic and Creative zones, check out the tables on pages 310–311 of your owner's manual.

WHEN TO USE PROGRAM (P) MODE INSTEAD OF THE BASIC ZONE MODES

- When shooting in a casual environment where quick adjustments are needed
- When you want control over the ISO
- If you want or need to shoot in the Adobe RGB color space
- If you want to make corrections to the white balance

Let's go back to our picnic scenario. As I said, the light is moving from deep shadow to bright sunlight, which means that the camera is trying to balance our three photo factors (ISO, aperture, and shutter speed) to make a good exposure. From Chapter 1, we know that Auto ISO is just not a consideration, so we have already turned that feature off (you did change it, didn't you?). Well, in Program mode, you can choose which ISO you would like the camera to base its exposure on. The lower the ISO number, the better the quality of our photographs, but the less light sensitive the camera becomes. It's a balancing act, with the main goal always being to keep the ISO as low as possible—too low an ISO, and we will get camera shake in our images from a long

shutter speed; too high an ISO means we will have an unacceptable amount of digital noise. For our purposes, let's go ahead and select ISO 400 so that we provide enough sensitivity for those shadows while allowing the camera to use shutter speeds that are fast enough to stop motion.

STARTING POINTS FOR ISO SELECTION

There is a lot of discussion concerning ISO in this and other chapters, but it might be helpful if you know where your starting points should be for your ISO settings. The first thing you should always try to do is use the lowest possible ISO setting. That being said, here are some good starting points for your ISO settings:

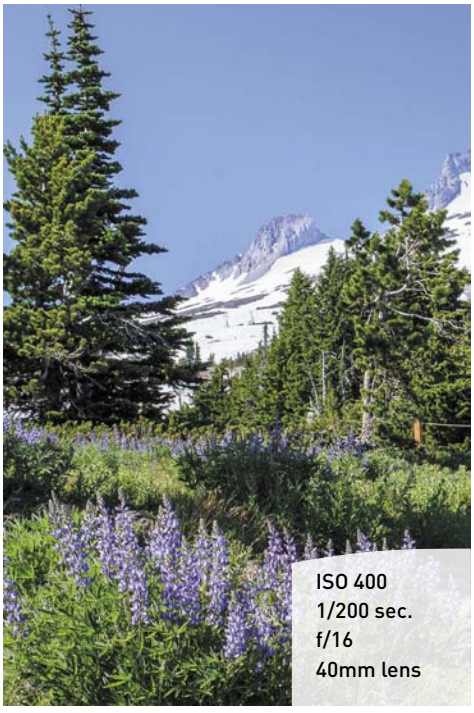
- 100: Bright, sunny day
- 200: Hazy, or outdoor shade on a sunny day
- 400: Indoor lighting at night or cloudy conditions outside
- 800: Late night, low-light conditions or sporting arenas at night

These are just suggestions, and your ISO selection will depend on a number of factors that will be discussed later in the book. You might have to push your ISO even higher as needed, but at least now you know where to start.

With the ISO selected, we can now make use of the other controls built into Program mode. By rotating the Main dial, we have the ability to shift the program settings. Remember, your camera is using the internal light meter to pick what it believes are suitable exposure values, but sometimes it doesn't know what it's looking at and how you want those values applied (**Figures 4.1** and **4.2**). With the program shift, you can influence what the shot will look like. Do you need faster shutter speeds in order to stop the action? Just turn the Main dial clockwise. Do you want a smaller aperture so that you get a narrow depth of field? Then turn the dial counterclockwise until you get the desired aperture. The camera shifts the shutter speed and aperture accordingly in order to get a proper exposure, and you will get the benefit of your choice as a result.

FIGURE 4.1
(left) This is my first shot using Program mode. Because I was pointing the camera more toward the ground, the exposure was longer.

FIGURE 4.2
(right) Because I zoomed out and included more of the bright sky in the photo, there was less of the ground to influence the light meter, resulting in a change of exposure.



Let's set up the camera for Program mode and see how we can make all of this come together.

SETTING UP AND SHOOTING IN PROGRAM MODE

1. Turn your camera on and then turn the Mode dial to align the P with the indicator line.
2. To select your ISO, press the ISO button on the top of the camera, turn the Main dial to the desired setting, and press the ISO button again (the ISO selection will appear in the rear LCD panel).
3. Point the camera at your subject and then activate the camera meter by depressing the shutter button halfway.
4. View the exposure information in the bottom of the viewfinder or in the display panel on the back of the camera.
5. While the meter is activated, use your index finger to roll the Main dial left and right to see the changed exposure values.
6. Select the exposure that is right for you and start shooting. (Don't worry if you aren't sure what the right exposure is. We will start working on making the right choices for those great shots beginning with the next chapter.)

TV: SHUTTER PRIORITY MODE

Tv mode is what we photographers commonly refer to as Shutter Priority mode. If you dig deep in your manual, you will see that Tv stands for Time Value. I'm not sure who came up with this term, but I can tell you that it wasn't a photographer. In all my years of shooting, I don't ever recall thinking, "Hey, this would be a great situation to use the Time Value mode." But you don't need to know why it is called Tv mode; the important thing is to know why and when to use it.

Like Program mode, Tv mode gives us more freedom to control certain aspects of our photography. In this case, we are talking about shutter speed. The selected shutter speed determines just how long you expose your camera's sensor to light. The longer it remains open, the more time your sensor has to gather light. The shutter speed also, to a large degree, determines how sharp your photographs are. This is different from the image being sharply in focus. Two of the major influences on the sharpness of an image are camera shake and the subject's movement. Because a slower shutter speed means that light from your subject is hitting the sensor for a longer period of time, any movement by you or your subject will show up in your photos as blur.

SHUTTER SPEEDS

A *slow* shutter speed refers to leaving the shutter open for a long period of time—like 1/30 of a second or longer. A *fast* shutter speed means that the shutter is open for a very short period of time—like 1/250 of a second or less.

WHEN TO USE SHUTTER PRIORITY (TV) MODE

- When working with fast-moving subjects where you want to freeze the action (**Figure 4.3**); much more on this in Chapter 5
- When you want to emphasize movement in your subject with motion blur (**Figure 4.4**)
- When you want to use a long exposure to gather light over a long period of time (**Figure 4.5**); more on this in Chapter 8
- When you want to create silky-looking water in a waterfall (**Figure 4.6**)

FIGURE 4.3
Even the fastest of subjects can be frozen with the right shutter speed.

FIGURE 4.4
Slowing down the shutter speed allows your photographs to convey a sense of movement.

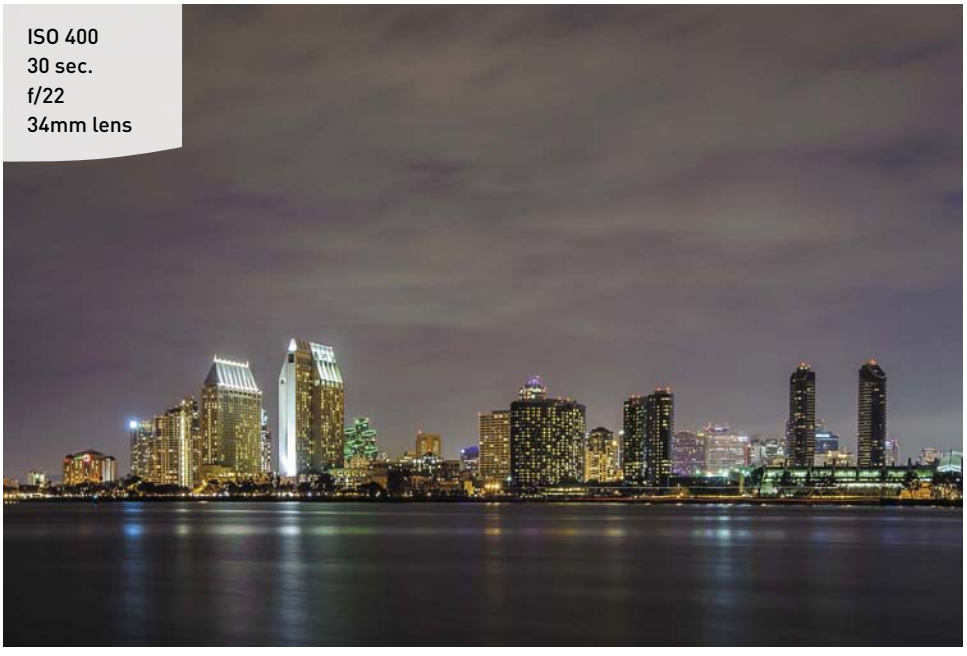


FIGURE 4.5
A long exposure combined with a small aperture and a steady tripod helped capture this cityscape of San Diego.

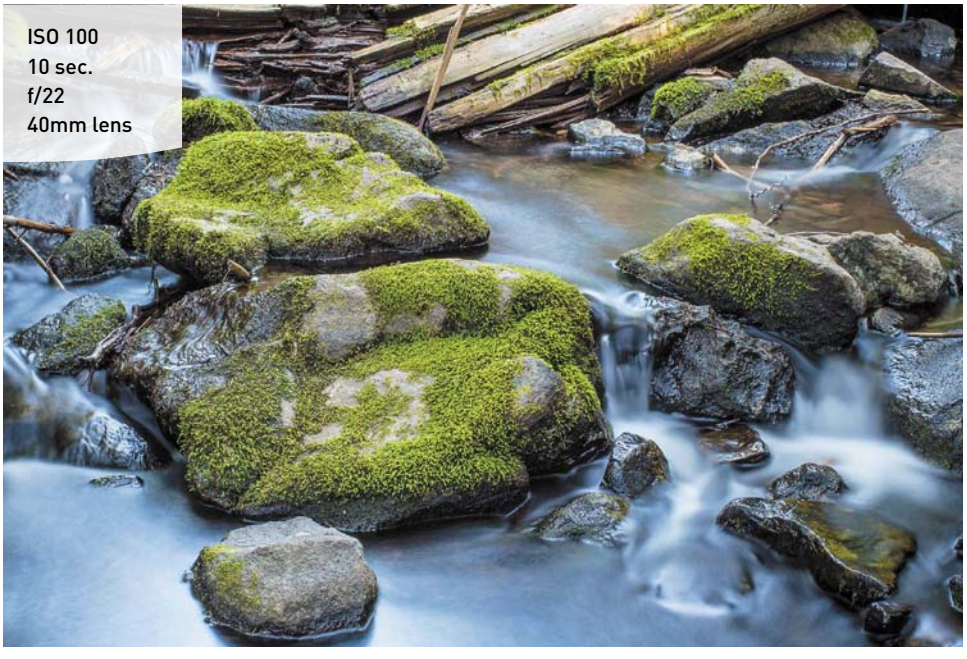


FIGURE 4.6
Increasing the length of the exposure gives flowing water a silky look.

As you can see, the subject of your photo usually determines whether or not you will use Tv mode. It is important that you be able to visualize the result of using a particular shutter speed. The great thing about shooting with digital cameras is that you get instant feedback by checking your shot on the LCD screen. But what if your subject won't give you a do-over? Such is often the case when shooting sporting events. It's not like you can ask the quarterback to throw that touchdown pass again because your last shot was blurry from a slow shutter speed. This is why it's important to know what those speeds represent in terms of their ability to stop the action and deliver a blur-free shot.

First, let's examine just how much control you have over the shutter speeds. The T4i has a shutter speed range from 1/4000 of a second all the way down to 30 seconds. With that much latitude, you should have enough control to capture almost any subject. The other thing to think about is that Tv mode is considered a "semiautomatic" mode. This means that you are taking control over one aspect of the total exposure while the camera handles the other. In this instance, you are controlling the shutter speed and the camera is controlling the aperture. This is important to know because there will be times that you want to use a particular shutter speed but your lens won't be able to accommodate your request.

For example, you might encounter this problem when shooting in low-light situations: if you are shooting a fast-moving subject that will blur at a shutter speed slower than 1/125 of a second but your lens's largest aperture is f/3.5, you might see your aperture display in the viewfinder and the rear LCD panel begin to blink. This is your warning that there won't be enough light available for the shot—due to the limitations of the lens—so your picture will be underexposed (too dark).

Another case where you might run into this situation is when you are shooting moving water. To get that look of silky, flowing water, it's usually necessary to use a shutter speed of at least 1/15 of a second, if not longer. If your waterfall is in full sunlight, you may get that blinking aperture display once again because the lens you are using only closes down to f/22 at its smallest opening. In this instance, your camera is warning you that you will be overexposing your image (too light). There are workarounds for these problems, which we will discuss later (see Chapter 7), but it is important to know that there can be limitations when using Tv mode.

SETTING UP AND SHOOTING IN TV MODE

1. Turn your camera on and then turn the Mode dial to align the Tv with the indicator line.
2. Select your ISO by pressing the ISO button on the top of the camera and then turning the Main dial (the ISO selection will appear in the rear LCD panel).

3. Point the camera at your subject and then activate the camera meter by depressing the shutter button halfway.
4. View the exposure information in the bottom area of the viewfinder or in the rear LCD panel.
5. While the meter is activated, use your index finger to roll the Main dial left and right to see the changed exposure values. Roll the dial to the right for faster shutter speeds and to the left for slower speeds.

AV: APERTURE PRIORITY MODE

You wouldn't know it from its name, but Av mode is one of the most useful and popular modes in the Creative zone. Av stands for Aperture Value, and like Time Value, it's another term that you'll seldom hear a photographer toss around. The mode, however, is one of my favorites, and I believe that it will quickly become one of yours as well. Av, more commonly referred to as Aperture Priority mode, is also deemed a semiautomatic mode because it allows you to once again control one factor of exposure while the camera adjusts for the other.

Why, you may ask, is this one of my favorite modes? It's because the aperture of your lens dictates depth of field. Depth of field, along with composition, is a major factor in how you direct attention to what is important in your image. It is the factor that controls how much of your image is in focus. If you want to isolate a subject from the background, such as when shooting a portrait, you can use a large aperture to keep the focus on your subject and make both the foreground and background blurry. If you want to keep the entire scene sharply focused, such as with a landscape, then using a small aperture will render the greatest possible depth of field.

WHEN TO USE APERTURE PRIORITY (AV) MODE

- When shooting portraits or wildlife (**Figure 4.7**)
- When shooting most landscape photography (**Figure 4.8**)
- When shooting macro, or close-up, photography (**Figure 4.9**)
- When shooting architectural photography, which often benefits from a large depth of field (**Figure 4.10**)

FIGURE 4.7
A fairly large aperture coupled with a long focal length created a very blurry background, so all the emphasis was left on the subject.

FIGURE 4.8
The smaller aperture setting brings sharpness to near and far objects.

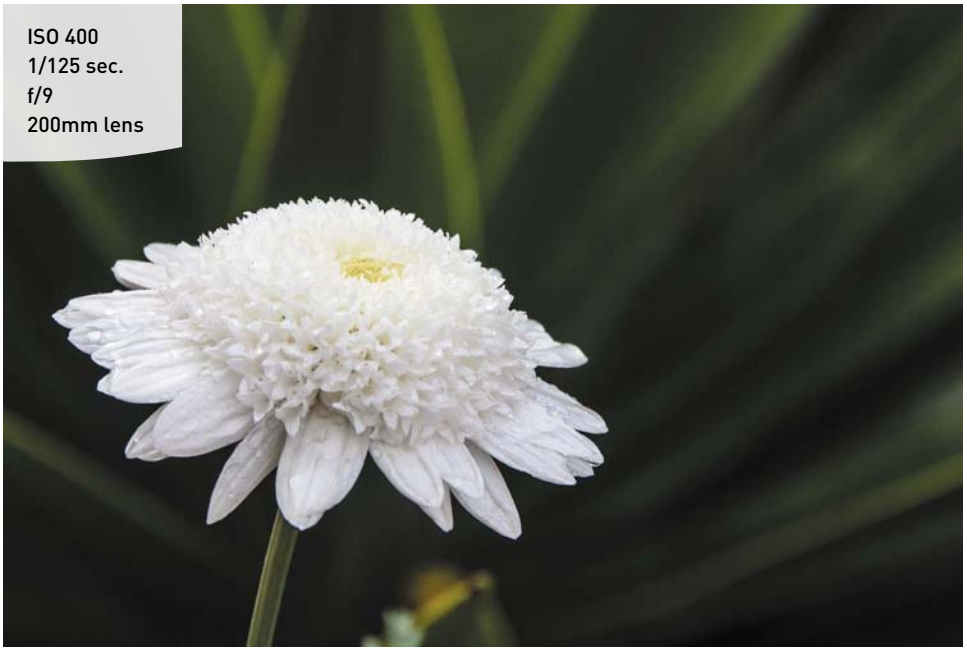


FIGURE 4.9
Small apertures give more sharpness in macro images.

FIGURE 4.10
A wide-angle lens combined with a small aperture makes for a large depth of field.

F-STOPS AND APERTURE

As discussed earlier, when referring to the numeric value of your lens aperture, you will find it described as an *f-stop*. The f-stop is one of those old photography terms that, technically, relates to the focal length of the lens (e.g., 200mm) divided by the effective aperture diameter. These measurements are defined as "stops" and work incrementally with your shutter speed to create proper exposure. Older camera lenses used one-stop increments to assist in exposure adjustments, such as 1.4, 2, 2.8, 4, 5.6, 8, 11, 16, and 22. Each stop represents about half the amount of light entering the lens iris as the larger stop before it. Today, most lenses don't have f-stop markings since all adjustments to this setting are performed via the camera's electronics. The stops are also now typically divided into 1/3-stop increments to allow much finer adjustments to exposures, as well as to match the incremental values of your camera's ISO settings, which are also adjusted in 1/3-stop increments.

We have established that Aperture Priority (Av) mode is highly useful in controlling the depth of field in your image. But it's also pivotal in determining the limits of available light that you can shoot in. Different lenses have different maximum apertures. The larger the maximum aperture, the less light you need in order to achieve a properly exposed image. You will recall that, when in Tv mode, there is a limit at which you can handhold your camera without introducing movement or hand shake, which causes blurriness in the final picture. If your lens has a larger aperture, you can let in more light all at once, which means that you can use faster shutter speeds. This is why lenses with large maximum apertures, such as f/1.4, are called "fast" lenses.

On the other hand, bright scenes require the use of a small aperture (such as f/16 or f/22), especially if you want to use a slower shutter speed. That small opening reduces the amount of incoming light, and this reduction of light requires that the shutter stay open longer.

SETTING UP AND SHOOTING IN AV MODE

1. Turn your camera on and then turn the Mode dial to align the Av with the indicator line.
2. Select your ISO by pressing the ISO button on the top of the camera and then turning the Main dial.
3. Point the camera at your subject and then activate the camera meter by depressing the shutter button halfway.
4. View the exposure information in the bottom area of the viewfinder or in the rear display panel.
5. While the meter is activated, use your index finger to roll the Main dial left and right to see the changed exposure values. Roll the dial to the right for a smaller aperture (higher f-stop number) and to the left for a larger aperture (smaller f-stop number).

ZOOM LENSES AND MAXIMUM APERTURES

Some zoom lenses (like the 18–55mm kit lens) have a variable maximum aperture. This means that the largest opening will change depending on the zoom setting. In the example of the 18–55mm zoom, the lens has a maximum aperture of f/3.5 at 18mm and only f/5.6 when the lens is zoomed out to 55mm. Fixed-aperture zoom lenses maintain the same maximum aperture throughout the zoom range. They are typically much more expensive than their variable maximum aperture counterparts.

M: MANUAL MODE

Once upon a time, long before digital cameras and program modes, there was manual mode. In those days it wasn't called "manual mode" because there were no other modes. It was just photography. In fact, many photographers, including me, cut their teeth on completely manual cameras. Let's face it—if you want to learn the effects of aperture and shutter speed on your photography, there is no better way to learn than by setting these adjustments yourself. But today, with the advancement of camera technology, many new photographers never give this mode a second thought. That's truly a shame, as not only is it an excellent way to learn your photography basics, it's also an essential tool to have in your photographic bag of tricks.

When you have your camera set to Manual (M) mode, the camera meter will give you a reading of the scene you are photographing. It's your job, though, to set both the f-stop (aperture) and the shutter speed to achieve a correct exposure. If you need a faster shutter speed, you will have to make the reciprocal change to your f-stop. Using any other mode, such as Tv or Av, would mean that you just have to worry about one of these changes, but Manual mode means you have to do it all yourself. This can be a little challenging at first, but after a while you will have a complete understanding of how each change affects your exposure, which will, in turn, improve the way that you use the other modes.

WHEN TO USE MANUAL (M) MODE

- When you need to maintain exposures between different frames for a panorama (**Figure 4.11**)
- When your environment is fooling your light meter and you need to maintain a certain exposure setting (**Figure 4.12**)
- When shooting silhouetted subjects, which requires overriding the camera's meter readings (**Figure 4.13**)

FIGURE 4.11
Setting the camera on Manual for panorama shots helps to keep the exposure consistent.

ISO 400
1/60 sec.
f/14
24mm lens

FIGURE 4.12
Bright scenes, such as this dry desert floor in Death Valley, can present a challenge to your light meter.

ISO 100
1/500 sec.
f/9
55mm lens

FIGURE 4.13
I really wanted a silhouette of the cactus needles, so I placed my camera in Manual mode and underexposed the shot.

SETTING UP AND SHOOTING IN MANUAL MODE

1. Turn the Mode dial to align the M with the indicator line.
2. Select your ISO by pressing the ISO button on the top of the camera and then turning the Main dial.
3. Point the camera at your subject and then activate the camera meter by depressing the shutter button halfway.
4. View the exposure information in the bottom area of the viewfinder or in the rear display panel.
5. While the meter is activated, use your index finger to roll the Main dial left and right to change your shutter speed value until the exposure mark is lined up with the zero mark. The exposure information is displayed by a scale with marks that run from –2 to +2 stops. A "proper" exposure will line up with the arrow mark in the middle. As the indicator moves to the left, it is a sign that you will be underexposing (there is not enough light hitting the sensor to provide adequate exposure). Move the indicator to the right and you will be providing more exposure than the camera meter calls for; this is overexposure.
6. To set your exposure using the aperture, depress the shutter release button until the meter is activated. Then, using your thumb, hold in the Av button on the back of the camera, and then use your index finger to turn the Main dial right for a smaller aperture (large f-stop number) or left for a larger aperture (small f-stop number).

HOW I SHOOT: A CLOSER LOOK AT THE CAMERA SETTINGS I USE

The great thing about working with a DSLR camera is that I can always feel confident that some things will remain unchanged from camera to camera. For me, these are the Aperture Priority (Av) and Shutter Priority (Tv) shooting modes. Although I like to think of myself as a generalist in terms of my photography, I do tend to lean heavily on the landscape and urban photography genres. Working in these areas means that I am almost always going to be concerned with my depth of field. Whether it's isolating my subject with a large aperture or trying to maximize the overall sharpness of a sweeping landscape, I always keep an eye on my aperture setting.

If I do have a need to control the action, I use Shutter Priority. If I am trying to create a silky waterfall effect, I can depend on Tv to deliver the long shutter speed that it requires. Maybe I am shooting a motocross jumper—I definitely need the fast shutter speeds that will freeze the fast-moving action. While the other camera modes have

their place, I think you will find that, like myself and most other working pros, you will use the Av and Tv modes for 90 percent of your shooting.

The other concern that I have when I am setting up my camera is just how low I can keep my ISO. I raise the ISO only as a last resort because each increase in sensitivity is an opportunity for more digital noise to enter my image. To that end, I always have the High ISO Speed Noise Reduction feature set to Standard (see Chapter 7).

To make quick changes while I shoot, I often use the Exposure Compensation feature (covered in Chapter 7) so that I can make small over- and underexposure changes. This is different than changing the aperture or shutter; it is more like fooling the camera meter into thinking the scene is brighter or darker than it actually is.

One of the reasons I change my exposure is to make corrections when I see the "blinkies" while looking at my images on the rear LCD. Blinkies are the warning signal that part of my image has been overexposed to the point that I no longer have any detail in the highlights. The highlight alert will flash wherever the potential exists for overexposure. The only unfortunate thing about this feature is that it doesn't work with the full-screen preview mode. You have to set your camera display to one of the Histogram modes and then you will see the highlight alert (**Figure 4.14**). If you see any area of the thumbnail blinking black, you are probably overexposing that part of the image.

As you work your way through the coming chapters, you will see other tips and tricks I use in my daily photography, but the most important tip I can give is that you take the time to understand the features of your camera so that you can leverage the technology in a knowledgeable way. This will result in better photographs.

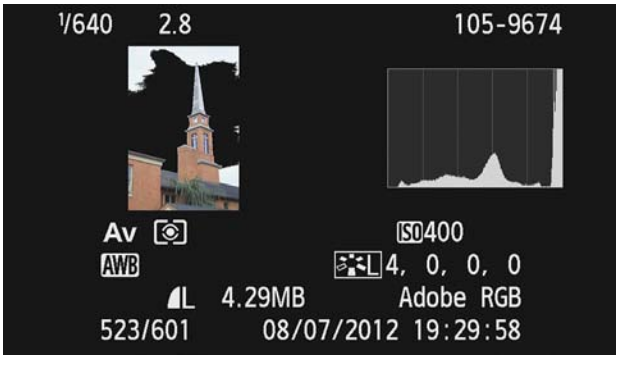


FIGURE 4.14
The T4i's highlight alert screen.

Chapter 4 Assignments

The information covered in this chapter will define how you work with your camera from this point on. Granted, there may be times that you just want to grab some quick pictures and will resort to the Basic zone, but to get serious with your photography, you should learn the modes in the Creative zone.

Starting off with Program mode

Set your camera on Program mode and start shooting. Become familiar with the adjustments you can make to your exposure by turning the Main dial. While shooting, make sure that you keep an eye on your ISO.

Learning to control time with Tv mode

Find some moving subjects and then set your camera to Tv mode. Have someone ride a bike back and forth, or even just photograph cars as they go by. Start with a slow shutter speed of around 1/30 of a second and then start shooting with faster and faster shutter speeds. Keep shooting until you can freeze the action. Now find something that isn't moving, like a flower. Start with your shutter speed at something fast like 1/500 of a second and then work your way down to about 1/4 of a second. The point is to see how well you can handhold your camera before you start introducing hand shake into the image.

Controlling depth of field with Av mode

The name of the game with Av mode is depth of field. Set up three items different distances from you. I would use chess pieces or something similar. Now focus on the middle item and set your camera to the largest aperture that your lens allows (remember that large aperture means a small number, like f/3.5). Now, while still focusing on the middle subject, start shooting with ever-smaller apertures until you are at the smallest f-stop for your lens. If you have a zoom lens, try doing this exercise with the lens at the widest and then the most telephoto settings. Now move up to subjects that are farther away, like telephone poles, and shoot them in the same way. The idea is to get a feel for how each aperture setting affects your depth of field.

Giving and taking with Manual mode

Go outside on a sunny day, and with the camera in Manual mode, set your ISO to 100, your shutter speed to 1/125 of a second, and your aperture to f/16. Now press your shutter release button to get a meter reading. You should be pretty close to that zero mark. If not, make small adjustments to one of your settings until it hits that mark. Now is where the fun begins. Start moving your shutter speed slower, to 1/60, and then set your aperture to f/22. Now go the other way. Set your aperture to f/8 and your shutter speed to 1/500. Now review your images. If all went well, all the exposures should look the same. This is because you balanced the light with reciprocal changes to the aperture and shutter speed. Now go back to our original setting of 1/125 at f/16 and try just moving the shutter speed without changing the aperture. Just make 1/3-stop changes (1/125 to 1/100 to 1/80 to 1/60), and then review your images to see what 1/3 stop of overexposure looks like. Then do the same thing going in the opposite way. It's hard to know if you want to over- or underexpose a scene until you have actually done it and seen the results.

Share your results with the book's Flickr group!

Join the group here: flickr.com/groups/t4i650dfromsnapshotstogreatshots

INDEX

1st Curtain sync, 228
2nd Curtain sync, 226–229
50mm focal length, 43
720P and 1080P resolution, 53

A

action, controlling, 102–103
action shots. *See also* motion; shots
  anticipating, 123–124
  Continuous drive mode, 125–126
  direction of travel, 112–113
  drive modes, 124
  focusing, 120–122
  frame rates, 125
  isolating subjects, 119–120
  shutter speed, 112
  stop and go with AI Focus, 122–123
  subject speed, 114
  subject-to-camera distance, 115
  tips, 128–130
  zooming in on images, 116
Adobe RGB color space, shooting in, 88–90
AE Lock feature, 143–144. *See also* exposures
AE/AF Lock/Focus/Reduce Image button, 3, 56
AEB (Auto Exposure Bracketing), 264–266
AI (Artificial Intelligence) focus modes, explained, 10
AI Focus mode, 79, 122–123
AI Servo focus mode, 79, 120–122
albums, creating for videos, 57
angles, considering in compositions, 244
aperture
  changes in, 49–51
  displaying, 18
  in exposure triangle, 46
  and f-stops, 47, 98
Aperture Priority (Av) mode
  isolating subjects, 119–120
  portraits, 139–140
  shooting in, 95–99
  vs. Shutter Priority (Tv) mode, 119
Aperture/Exposure Compensation, 3
architectural photography, shooting, 95–99
audio
  improving for movies, 55
  recording, 54
  turning off, 55
Auto AF Point Selection, 120–122
Auto Lighting Optimizer, 267–269
Autofocus Selection/Right Cross Key, 3
automatic camera modes
  Close-up mode, 70
  Creative Auto (CA) mode, 75–77
  Flash Off mode, 73–74
  Landscape mode, 69
  Night Portrait mode, 72–73
  Portrait mode, 67–68
  Scene Intelligent Auto mode, 66–67
  Sports mode, 71

B

Basic zone. *See also* Creative zone
  auto focus, 79
  color space, 78
  exposure compensation, 79
  ISO, 78
  limitations, 78
  picture style, 78
  specialty modes, 78
  white balance, 78
battery
  charging, 5
  keeping backup of, 5
black-and-white photography
  landscapes, 180–181
  portraits, 146–148
blinkies, correcting, 103, 178
bracketing exposures, 200, 264–266
buildings, shooting, 95–99
built-in flash. *See also* flash sync
  E-TTL (Evaluative Through The Lens) metering, 220
  FE Lock feature, 222
  flash range, 221
  identifying, 4
  metering modes, 220–222
  releasing, 218
  shutter speeds, 219–220
bulb photography, 259–261

C

camera back, 3
camera front, 2
camera settings, choosing, 102–103
camera top, 4
cameras
  holding, 22
  testing without memory cards, 6–7
Card Busy lamp, identifying, 3
catchlights, adding to eyes, 153
charging battery, 5
children, shooting portraits of, 154–155, 161
Close-up mode, 70
close-up photography, shooting, 95–99
color, considering in compositions, 246
color space, displaying, 18
color temperatures, warm and cool, 183
composition
  angles, 244
  color, 246
  contrast, 247–248
  creating depth, 191–192
  depth of field, 242–243
  leading lines, 248–249
  patterns, 244–245
  point of view, 244–245
  portraits, 155–156
  principles, 188
  rule of thirds, 190–191
  splitting frames, 249–251
Continuous drive mode, 125–126
contrast, considering in compositions, 247–248
cool color temperature, 183
Creative Auto (CA) mode, 75–77
Creative zone. *See also* Basic zone
  accessing modes in, 83
  Aperture Priority (Av) mode, 95–99
  Manual (M) mode, 99–102
  Program (P) mode, 88–90
  Shutter Priority (Tv) mode, 91–95
  shutter speeds, 219

D

date, displaying, 18
deleting images, 19
depth, creating, 191–192
depth of field
  changes in, 49–51
  considering, 242–243
  controlling with Aperture Priority (Av) mode, 95–98
  and motion, 49–51
  preview, 2

Depth of Field Preview button, 184–185
digital single lens reflex (DSLR) camera, 40
diopter, adjusting, 15
dioptric adjustment, identifying, 3
display options, seeing, 17–18
Drive Mode Selection/Left Cross Key, 3
drive modes, action shots, 124

E

ƐF Lens Align Mark, 2
ƐF-S Lens Align Mark, 2
ƐOS utility program, updating firmware with, 34–35
Ɛ-TTL (Ɛvaluative Through The Lens) metering, 220
ƐV (exposure value), 46
exposures. *See also* AƐ Lock feature
  bracketing, 200
  calculating, 47–49
  long, 217
  process of, 46
  reciprocal, 48
exposure compensation
  AƐB setting, 264–266
  displaying, 18
  landscape photography, 178–180
  using, 103
exposure control, spot meter for, 256–258
exposure triangle
  aperture, 46
  ISO, 46
  shutter speed, 46–47
external Speedlite, 230–232. *See also* Speedlite Hot Shoe
eyes
  adding catchlights to, 153
  focusing on, 144–146

F

faces
  detecting with Live View, 149–152
  focusing, 151
FƐ Lock feature, built-in flash, 222
file name, displaying, 18
Fill Flash, using with portraits, 152–154
filter colors, 180
Filter effect, changing for portraits, 146
fireworks, capturing, 260
firmware, updating, 33–35
flash. *See* external Speedlite
flash and glass, eliminating reflection, 233
flash exposure, compensating for, 222–224
Flash Off mode, 73–74
flash photography, wireless, 232
flash range, 221
flash sync. *See also* built-in flash
  explained, 218
  modes, 226–229
  speed, 219
Focus Assist mode, 215–216
focus modes
  AI Focus, 79, 122–123
  AI Servo, 79, 120–122
  Auto AF Point Selection, 120–122
  choosing, 123
  One Shot, 79, 144–146
focus point and mode, setting, 10–12
Focus Point Selection/Ɛnlarge Image, 3
focusing
  hyperfocal distance (HFD), 183, 186
  tack sharp, 183
  tripods, 185–186
frame, splitting, 249–251
frame rates, determining, 125
f-stops, 47, 98

G

glass, eliminating reflection on, 233
golden light, 182

H

Handheld Night Scene mode, 269
HDR (high dynamic range) images
  Backlight Control, 266–267
  bracketing, 200
  shooting, 198–200
high-key images, 180
Highlight Alert, flashing, 103, 178
highlights, regaining detail in, 180
histograms, 18–21
holding cameras, 22
horizon lines, 190–191
hyperfocal distance (HFD), 183, 186

I

image number, displaying, 18
Image Quality settings, checking, 8, 40
image resolution, considering, 39
Image Review, 3, 17
image size, displaying, 18
image thumbnails, displaying, 18
images
  deleting, 19
  high- vs. low-key, 180
INFO button, 3, 17–18
IS (image stabilization) feature
  turning off, 171, 212
  using, 212–213
ISO
  adjusting on fly, 118
  controlling with Program (P) mode, 88–90
  displaying, 18
  in exposure triangle, 46
  hazy days, 89
  identifying, 4
  indoor lighting, 89
  landscape photography, 172–173
  low-light conditions, 89
  manipulating, 103
  night, 89
  numbers, 47
  raising for mood lighting, 208–209
  saving space at high settings, 210
  setting, 9–10
  starting points, 89
  sunny days, 89
  turning off Auto setting, 9
ISO Ɛxpansion feature, setting up, 210–211

J

JPƐG image quality, setting, 7–8
JPƐG vs. RAW format, 39–40

K

Kelvin temperature properties, 14
kit lenses, 45

L

Landscape mode, 69
landscape photography
  aperture, 183
  black-and-white, 180–181
  color filter settings, 181
  composition, 188–192
  Depth of Field Preview button, 184–185
  exposure compensation, 178–180
  filter colors, 180–181
  focusing, 183–185
  golden light, 182
  hyperfocal distance (HFD), 183, 186
  ISO, 172–173
  noise reduction, 173–174
  panoramas, 193–198
  tripods, 170–171, 185–186
  white balance, 174–176
Landscape picture style, 176–178

LCD
rear, 3
reviewing shots on, 116
lens flare, avoiding, 262
lens release, 2
lenses
50mm focal length, 43
candid shots, 162
focal length, 41
glass used in, 41
IS (image stabilization), 171
kit, 45
normal, 43–44
for portraits, 68
portraits, 157
telephoto, 43–45
wide-angle, 41–42, 140
zoom, 45
light, color temperature of, 14. *See also* low-light conditions
light meter
metering modes, 141
using Manual (M) mode with, 100–102
lightning storm, photographing, 261
lines, considering in compositions, 248–249
Live View
autofocus modes, 149
detecting faces, 149–152
grid overlay, 151–152
white balance, 176
Live View/Record button, 3
long exposures, shooting, 217
low-key images, 180
low-light conditions. *See also* light; *See also* mood lighting
Focus Assist mode, 215–216
shooting in, 94

M

macro photography, shooting, 95–99
Main dial, 2, 4
Manual (M) mode
anticipating action, 123–124
bulb photography, 259–261
shooting in, 100–102
memory cards
checking presence of, 6
choosing, 30–31
formatting, 31–32
Low Level Format, 32
Release Shutter Without Card, 6
speed ratings, 31
Menu button, 3
Meter mode, displaying, 18
metering modes
built-in flash, 220–222
Center-weighted, 141
Evaluative, 141, 256
Partial, 141, 143
portraits, 141–143
Spot, 141
sunrise and sunset, 257–258
microphone, 4
Mode dial, 4
Monochrome picture style, 146–148
mood lighting. *See also* low-light conditions
built-in flash, 218–222
flash sync, 218
long exposures, 217
noise reduction, 209–210
raising ISO, 208–209
Stabilizer switch, 211–212
motion. *See also* action shots
controlling, 102–103
emphasizing in Shutter Priority (Tv) mode, 91–95
panning, 126–127
stopping with Shutter Priority (Tv) mode, 117–118
motion blur, 127–128
Movie mode, focusing in, 52
My Menu setting, 270

N

Night Portrait mode, 72–73
night scene, handheld, 269
night sky, focusing on, 214. *See also* skies
noise, explained, 10
noise reduction
landscape photography, 173–174
as space saver, 210
Strong setting, 209
normal lenses, 43–44

O

One Shot focus mode, 79, 144–146
On/Off/Movie Record, 4

P

panning, 126–127
panoramas
bracketing exposures, 200
"fake," 193–194
high dynamic range (HDR), 198–200
multiple-image, 195–198
shooting, 100–102, 193–198
tonemapping, 198
patterns, considering in compositions, 244–245
Picture Style/Down Cross Key, 3
picture styles
customizing settings, 148
displaying, 18
Filter effect, 146
Landscape, 176–178
Monochrome, 146–148
Portrait, 149
Standard vs. Landscape, 176–177
pixel resolution, considering, 39
point of view, considering in compositions, 244–245
pop-up flash. *See* built-in flash
Portrait mode, 67–68, 138
Portrait picture style, using with skin tones, 149
portraits
AE Lock feature, 143–144
Aperture Priority (Av) mode, 139–140
black-and-white, 146–148
candid shots, 162
capturing movement, 154–155
catchlights, 153
children, 154–155, 161
close-ups, 162
composition, 155–156
cropping, 158
detecting faces, 149–152
environmental, 140
Fill Flash, 152–154
Filter effect, 146
focusing on eyes, 144–146
framing, 160
lenses, 157, 162
metering modes, 141–143
Monochrome picture style, 146–148
reducing shadows, 152–154
shooting vertically, 157–158
skin tones, 149
sunblock for, 159
tips, 155–162
Program (P) mode, 88–90
progressive scan video, 53

Q

Quality Setting, displaying, 18
Quick Control, 3

R

RAW images
  advice, 39
  color information in, 38
  dynamic range, 38
  as negatives, 39
  sharpening, 39
RAW vs. JPEG format, 39–40
red-eye, reducing, 224–226
Red-Eye Reduction/Self-Timer Lamp, 2
reflections, photographing, 243
Release Shutter Without Card setting, turning off, 6–7
Remote Control Sensor, 2
resolution. *See* image resolution; pixel resolution
reviewing shots, 16–19
RGB color space, shooting in, 88–90
rule of thirds, 190–191

S

Scene Intelligent Auto mode, 66–67
SD cards, selecting, 30
SDHC cards, considering, 30
self-timer, using with tripods, 213
sensor, cleaning, 36–37
Set button, 3
shadows, reducing in portraits, 152–154
shooting modes
  displaying, 18
  zones of, 13
shots, reviewing, 16–19, 116. *See also* action shots
Shutter Priority (Tv) mode
  vs. Aperture Priority (Av) mode, 119
  shooting in, 91–95
  stopping motion, 117–118
  using, 102–103
shutter release, 4
Shutter Release button, 2
shutter speed
  action shots, 112
  Aperture Priority (Av) mode, 219–220
  Auto default value, 219
  controlling, 92
  Creative zone, 219
  displaying, 18
  in exposure triangle, 46–47
  low-light conditions, 94
  Program (P) mode, 219
  Shutter Priority (Tv) mode, 219
  slow vs. fast, 91
silhouetted subjects, shooting, 100–102
size of image, displaying, 18
skies, balancing with exposure compensation, 178–180. *See also* night sky
skin tones, improving, 149
sound
  improving for movies, 55
  recording, 54
  turning off, 54
speaker, 3
Speedlite Hot Shoe, 4. *See also* external Speedlite
Sports mode, 71
spot meter, using for exposure control, 256–258
Stabilizer switch, using for mood lighting, 211–212
stops, 47, 98
sun
  avoiding lens flare, 262
  using creatively, 263
sunrise and sunset, metering for, 257–258
sync speed. *See* flash sync

T

tack sharp focus, 183
telephoto lenses, 43–45
temperature of color, 14
thumbnails, displaying, 18
time, displaying, 18
tonemapping, 198
touchscreen, turning off, 15–16
Trash (Delete), 3
tripods
  aperture settings, 187
  IS lenses, 171
  landscape photography, 170–171, 185–186
  self-timer, 213
  stability, 171
Tv mode. *See* Shutter Priority (Tv) mode

V

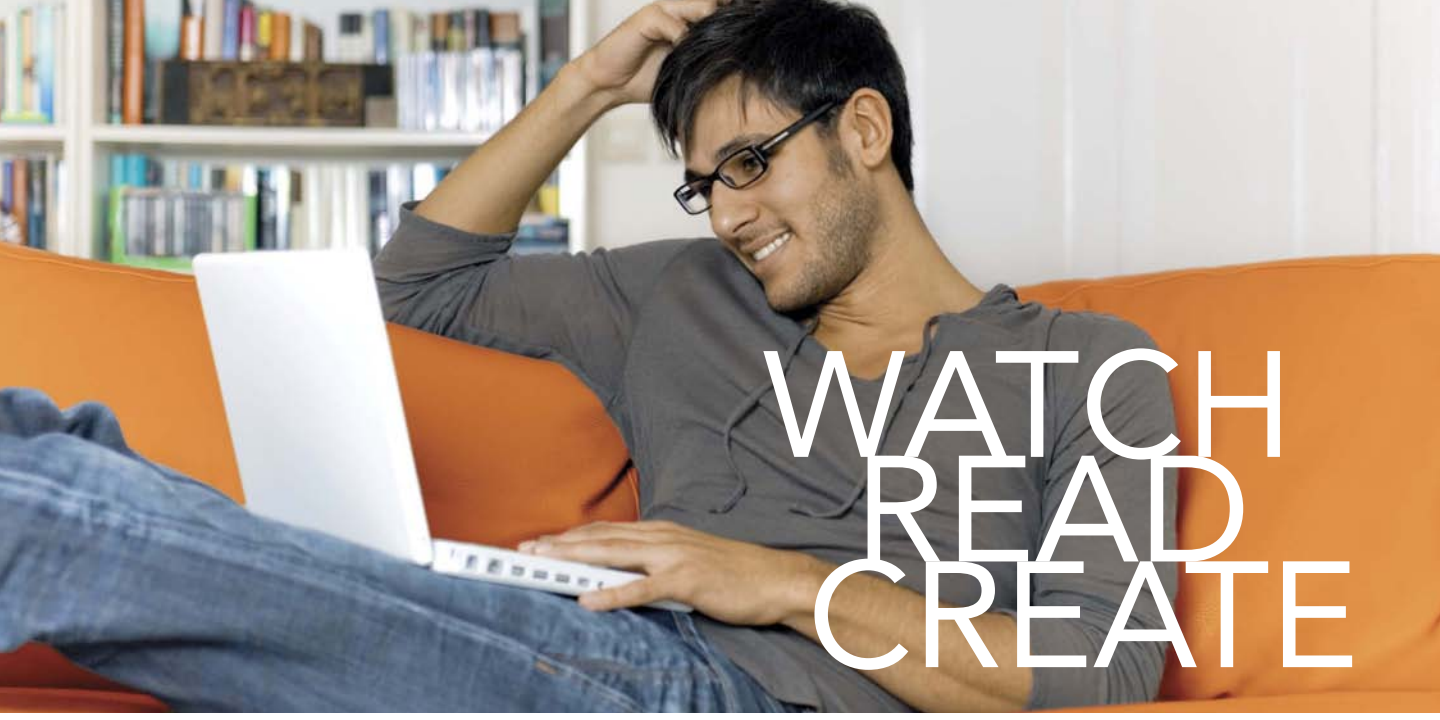
video
  AE/AF Lock/Focus/Reduce Image button, 56
  capture frame rate, 53
  creating albums for, 57
  focusing camera, 56
  focusing in Movie mode, 52
  ports, 58
  progressive scan, 53
  quality, 53–54
  recording high-def, 52–53
  watching, 58
video snapshots, activating, 57
viewfinder diopter, adjusting, 15

W

warm color temperature, 183
waterfalls
  setting up for, 187–188
  shooting in Shutter Priority (Tv) mode, 91–95
white balance
  correcting, 12, 88–90
  customizing, 271–272
  displaying setting for, 18
  Fluorescent, 174–175
  Kelvin temperature properties, 14
  landscape photography, 174–176
  previewing with Live View, 176
  setting, 12–14
  temperature of color, 14
White Balance/Up Cross Key, 3
wide-angle lenses, 41–42, 140
wildlife portraits, shooting, 95–99
wireless flash photography, 232

Z

zoom lenses, 45
zooming in on images, 116



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