

CREATIVE LIVING

Sharpen skills by knowing hyperfocal distance

FOCUS ON PHOTOGRAPHY



MONTE NAGLER

ture the photographer wants to

Of all the technical qualities of a photograph, one of the most prized is sharpness. In a good photograph, the parts of the picture the photographer wants to

be in focus are perfectly sharp; the rest are blurred. For example, you will most often want everything sharp in a landscape. But in an outdoor portrait, you will likely want to blur the background.

Yet there is only one means of controlling what will be or won't be sharp, and this is by understanding and using the camera's depth of field. Depth of field calculations have a very important part to play in photography.

When focusing on your subject, you normally focus on one point, yet because the lens has depth of field, points both closer and far-

ther away from where you are focused will be sharp.

When photographing a scenic or other distant subject, photographers often focus on infinity, believing this will ensure everything will be in focus. Yet, by focusing on infinity, a good deal of potential depth of field is wasted.

Maximum sharpness is achieved by focusing on what is called the "hyperfocal distance"—a point nearer to the camera than infinity—so that the depth of field extends just to infinity but now includes subjects much closer to the camera.

The hyperfocal distance is at the nearest point that is in focus when the camera is focused at infinity.

For instance, focus your 50mm lens on infinity and you'll see the 15-foot mark aligned with F/16 on your lens' depth of field scale. This means that 15 feet is the hyperfocal distance for a 50mm lens at an aperture of F/16.

But if you rotate the focusing ring so that the 15-foot hyperfocal distance is set right on the focusing index mark, your depth of field will now be at its maximum of 7 1/2 feet to infinity. This means more of the fore-

ground will be sharp in the finished print.

You can even leave your camera set this way and by continuing to use F/16, you can photograph all day without refocusing. All of your pictures will be sharp from front to back by just keeping at least 7 1/2 feet from the closest subject in the viewfinder.

Remember, there is a different hyperfocal distance for each aperture on your lens. The bigger the aperture, the greater is the hyperfocal distance and the less depth of field you'll have available.

For those who have more auto-

matic cameras without depth of field scales on the lens barrel, just knowing a few hyperfocal distances will help a lot.

For a 50mm lens, the distance is 30 feet at F/8, 22 feet at F/11 and 15 feet at F/16. So if you just place these distances on the focusing index mark, you know you're maximizing depth of field for each F-stop.

Monte Nagler is a fine art photographer based in Farmington Hills. You can leave him a message by dialing (734) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone. His fax number is (248) 644-1314.

DESIGN CALENDAR

■ Haberman Fabrics, 117 W. Fourth in Royal Oak, presents a variety of home decorating classes. The six-session *Traditional Slipcovers*, beginning Tuesday, Aug. 7 (\$90). Pre-registration is required. Call (248) 541-0010 or visit www.habermanfabrics.com

■ Join decorating consultant Jeanine Matile for the six-session *The Merchant of Vino*, 27640 Middlebelt at 12 Mile in Farmington Hills, Saturday, Aug. 11, and shows you creative ways to decorate your home for entertaining. Matile will give great decorating ideas using products from the store. There will be two sessions, 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. Space is limited. Call (248) 473-7600 and ask for Susan Hernandez or Jimmy Johnson.

■ Public tours at Meadow Brook Hall in Rochester are given year-round. During the summer (to Aug. 31), the first hourly tour begins 10:30 a.m. and the last 3:30 p.m. Monday-Saturday; Sunday tours are 1:30, 2:30 and 3:30 p.m. The hall is closed most holidays, and tour hours may change during special events. Public tours won't be offered Friday-Tuesday, Aug. 3-7, because of Concours d'Elegance activities.

The Dodge Brothers Motor Car Exhibition is open during regular touring hours now

through Sept. 30. This special exhibit focuses on John Dodge and the history of the Dodge Brothers Motor Car Company, with archival material from the collection of Meadow Brook Hall never before on view to the public.

Admission is \$8 for adults, \$6 for seniors, \$4 for ages 6-12, free for ages 4 and under. Tours for groups of 20 or more may be scheduled for other times. Advance reservations are required for group tours. Group rates are available.

Tea on Tuesdays is offered 3-4:30 p.m. the third Tuesday of each month in the Christopher Wren Dining Room or on the Loggia Terrace, now to November. Price is \$30 per person and prepaid reservations are required.

Summer luncheons are open to the public now through Aug. 31 (closed for lunch Aug. 2, 3, 6 and 7 because of Concours d'Elegance activities). Seatings are 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. Monday-Friday. The price of \$15 includes salad, rolls, entrée, beverage, dessert, tax and gratuity. Reservations are required.

Call (248) 370-3140 for reservations and more information. Visit www.meadowbrookhall.org

Meadow Brook Hall, on the Oakland University campus off Adams, is a 110-room, Tudor-

revival style mansion that was the residence of OU founders Matilda Dodge Wilson (the widow of auto pioneer John Dodge) and her second husband, lumber broker Alfred Wilson.

■ Cranbrook House, 380 Lone Pine in Bloomfield Hills, is open for walk-in tours 3 p.m. Sundays, now through Oct. 28, for \$10. Walk-in tours are scheduled 11 a.m. and 1:15 p.m. Thursdays, now through Oct. 25. Visitors may include lunch at noon Thursdays for an additional \$15 by making a reservation. Lunch is available only with a \$10 tour.

For private or group Thursday lunch and tour reservations, call (248) 645-3147.

After touring the house, visitors may stroll through 40 acres of the surrounding gardens at no additional charge. Tours of the gardens only are \$5 any time 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays-Saturdays, open 11 a.m. Sundays.

For guided private and group garden tour rates and reservations, and senior and student discount information, call (248) 645-3147. Free parking is available at Christ Church Cranbrook directly across Lone Pine.

Saarienen House, home of Cranbrook architect Eliel Saari-

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