

Photographer Reveals Beauties of Underexposed Settings



Every time photographer Alan Blaustein snaps a picture, he challenges himself to capture the feeling of his surroundings.

Many of his images are of less-touristy parts of Europe, where assignments and his own personal curiosity often lead him. He selects tucked-away locations, such as private gardens or public areas with well-sculpted architecture. The beauties he captures with his camera are ones viewers of his images might not have been exposed to before.

"I feel like an explorer," he says.

Compared to the average American, he is. In the nearly two decades that Blaustein has been a professional photographer, he can count at least 20 times that he's traveled overseas. In a day's time, he has been known to drop everything he's doing in his hometown of Mill Valley, Calif., a dozen or so miles north of San Francisco, purchase an airplane ticket and fly to Europe.

When he lands in his destination country, the quickness of the trip continues, as he rushes to the scene he plans to photograph, not wanting to waste any time during his typical two-to-three-week stays. During his shoots, he usually follows a similar routine. First, he stakes out his setting. Then, he retreats to his hotel, goes to bed, wakes up around 5 a.m. and heads back to the location. Once there, he slows his pace significantly. If he's in a private garden that has given permission to shoot, he

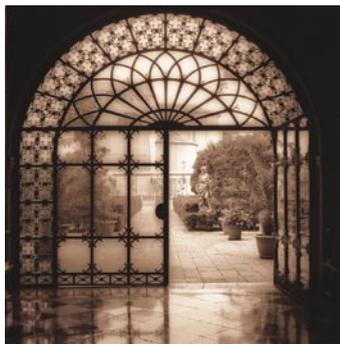
might spend hours soaking in the serenity of the setting with his lens.

Blaustein prefers to shoot on cloudy days and during the early morning and late afternoon hours. These conditions, he believes, provide the best lighting for the mood he's trying to create

in his signature black-and-white and sepia-toned photographs: ethereal, timeless, nostalgic and tranquil.

"A hundred years ago, people weren't in so much of a hurry," he says. "They paid attention to detail. That's what intrigues me. Whether it's the beam on the side of an old building or an archway that's been around for a long time, I walk around and think, 'Wow, look what survived a couple wars and the invasion of technology and time.'"

The historical landscape of Europe strongly appeals to



"Courtyard in Venezia," paper 24" x 24", image 24" x 24"



"Villa Monastero, Lago di Como," paper 24" x 24", image 24" x 24"



"Sentinel Oak Tree," paper 9" x 24", image 6.5" x 20"

All images by Alan Blaustein (Image Conscious)

Blaustein, but he's also drawn to outdoor regions of the United States. He's photographed national parks on the East and West coasts, and some of his popular images today come from local parks and beaches near his California home. With his camera, he's gotten up close and personal with trees, shells and leaves, all images of which are available through Image Conscious, a San Francisco-based art publisher.

Blaustein also does commercial and editorial work. His images have been featured in numerous galleries and appeared in calendars, books, greeting cards, posters and original prints.

Blaustein's career as a photographer started after he received a bachelor's degree in photography from the Rochester Institute of Technology in New York. After graduation, he landed a job as an art director in the advertising department of Bloomingdale's department store. A year

or so later, Blaustein went back to school, this time at the Academy of Art College in San Francisco. He received a master's degree in fine arts and ended up teaching photography at the academy for 17 years. Seven years ago, he decided it was time to leave the classroom and branch out on his own full time.

In all of his travels, he's developed a personal connection to Europe, and the feeling he gets when he's in certain areas is one he can't help but share with others. "I love capturing a moment on a piece of film," he says. □

For more information, contact Image Conscious at 800-532-2333 or 415-626-1555, or visit www.imageconscious.com.

