

BetterPhoto For Better Photos

With top-level instructors and a variety of classes, **BetterPhoto's** online learning environment is hitting the mark for many nature photographers



The Internet has made it easier than ever to find information on almost any subject, and photography is no exception. While reading up on how to use your camera or the basics of exposure, many people learn faster and better with feedback. But workshops can be expensive and difficult to work into many schedules. This is where BetterPhoto.com fills a void by giving students feedback and flexibility in how they learn.

BetterPhoto.com was started by Jim Miotke 12 years ago as a site dedicated to sharing information on photography. It grew into an online community of enthusiasts sharing information and images. Seven years ago, that mission expanded to start offering online classes on a variety of photography subjects, from basic camera use to advanced Photoshop features. BetterPhoto now offers more than 80 classes taught by some of the best photographers in the world, including classes on specific camera models, nature photography, portrait, composition and many other subjects. Most of the instructors are

published authors, workshop leaders and respected photographers like Lewis Kemper, Jim Zuckerman, Brenda Tharp, Bruce Smith, Tony Sweet and William Neill.

Along with instruction, BetterPhoto has an active forum community, a monthly photo contest and web-hosting options to get your photos online with a minimum amount of work on your part. The web hosting is available in several different levels, from a basic website to a Pro BetterPholio that gives you storage space for an unlimited number of images, e-commerce, mailing lists and password-protected galleries.

Classes run either four or eight weeks. Each week a new lesson is e-mailed to students covering a specific aspect of that course. As an example, Rob Shepard has an eight-week class, "Impact in Your Photographs: The Wow Factor." Lesson one covers interesting light and how to recognize and use it in dramatic ways. A new lesson is e-mailed every Wednesday morning. At the end of each lesson is an assignment for the student

to put the information into practical use. The student then uploads images for critique, typically by Sunday or Monday of that week. The instructor reviews submissions and gives feedback on the image and how it applies to the lesson. One of the main advantages of the BetterPhoto approach is that rather than just having one-on-one feedback, every student in the class is able to see the images uploaded by the other students and the feedback given by the instructor. So you get the individual attention that applies to you and also learn from others.

Each class also has a Q&A forum. Students can ask questions and receive answers from both the instructor and other students. To keep classes manageable and ensure that students get the attention they deserve, class sizes are small. And because everyone has different schedules, students can ask questions and submit images at any time of the day.

All class lessons and images, as well as the Q&A board, are active for one year from the start of class, so it's possible to go back review other students work and questions at your leisure.

Most students feel that the level of instruction and learning exceeds that of a conventional workshop and that they receive more one-on-one attention from the instructor. BetterPhoto has had thousands of students take courses and many students are repeat customers, taking a variety of courses.

A free course preview is available, "Digital SLR Photography," which offers a good idea of how the system works

and whether it's the type of environment from which you'll benefit. Although not interactive, this free preview is a archived course that gives you access to the lessons, Q&A and instructor feedback on previously uploaded images. **OP**

For more information, contact: BetterPhoto, (888) 927-9992, www.betterphoto.com.