Into the Wild

From the Top End to Tasmania’s Tarkine, Australia is blessed with an abundance of stunningly photogenic vistas. In this special feature, Brent McKeen asks 11 pro photographers to name their favourite locations along with their best tips for outdoor photography.
ABOVE
The Kimberley offers unique landscape photo opportunities, with Purnululu National Park one of the best in the world. Manual Mode, 16-35mm lens @ 38mm, 1/350s @ f/11, ISO 400, hand held, processed in Lightroom. Photo by Darran Leaf.

RIGHT
Whiskey Bay, Wilsons Prom NP. Canon 5D Mk II, Voigtlander 20mm lens, 20s @ f/16, ISO 100. Photo by Dean Cooper.

OPPOSITE
Lord Howe Island. Canon EOS 6D, 24-70mm f/2.8 lens @ 24mm, 1/400s @ f/9, ISO 100. Photo by Luke Hanson.

“There are three main small bays which are perfect to photograph. Each has its own set of very photogenic rocks. There are also a couple of islands just offshore and these make a great addition to any composition. Place them in the frame for the viewer’s eye to be led there and you’ll have a winning image. Cooper is a fan of “The Prom’s” ever-changing weather.

“A front will whip up from the Southern Ocean and then it’s all on. It is a wild piece of coastline to say the least. If you want to go there, try the cooler months of the year. The Prom to me is all about capturing seascapes with mood and you might not get that in summer with a blue sky day.”

Dean Cooper’s Top Tips
1. Try using prime lenses. If you don’t have one then shoot at specific focal lengths. I use three lenses - 20mm, 25mm and 40mm – and I use the 25mm 90 per cent of the time.
2. Don’t try and get everything in. Put the blinkers on and hone into some strong elements which will create a strong composition.
3. Keep it simple! This will force you to look harder and make something out of what’s in front of you. Look for shapes or things that stand out and make that your feature.
4. Allow some time for your skills to develop. We are all at different levels so be aware of your level, when you have reached it, and then push on to the next level.
5. Be organised and prepared. If you head out for a morning shoot and it’s 3°C and you left your beanie and jacket at home you will hate every minute of it! And that organisation goes for your gear too!

– deancooper.com.au

Luke Hanson
Luke Hanson, owner of Pinetrees Lodge (pinetrees.com.au) on Lord Howe Island, runs wilderness photography courses. You don’t need to look too far to find natural beauty when you live on a tropical island in the Pacific, one described by
naturalist Richard Attenborough as “so extraordinary it is almost unbelievable...” Hanson says he loves the island's variety of colours, textures, structures and life forms.

“There were no indigenous people on Lord Howe, so without 40,000 years of burning and landscape change, the place feels raw and rich,” says Hanson.

He continues, “You can walk off-track in the remote parts of the park and know that you’re probably the first person to go there, and the feeling of discovery makes photography exciting. Probably the best weeks of the year are the photography weeks we run at Pinetrees.”

Luke Hanson's Top Tips
1. Combine strong compositional lines, tonal contrast and saturation with scale and drama. You need to find a landscape that deserves a photo, and then find a subject or focal point.
2. Play around with some compositions and see what works, and then you have to hurry up and wait — sometimes for hours!
3. Be patient. Light changes slowly and clouds (think tonal contrast) are continually evolving. But just imagine how your photo will look when you have a beam of light on your subject, surrounded by darker tones.
4. Look to include movement to create drama. Capturing action is a great way to get that ‘wow’ factor in your shots.