

Shooting Beaufort (and beyond)

Written by Mark Shaffer

Wednesday, 11 April 2012 07:27 - Last Updated Wednesday, 11 April 2012 07:56

The Backyard Tourist offers up some practical and professional advice on how to make every picture count.



As soon as the sun comes out for good each spring in the



Lowcountry, the azaleas explode, ornamental fruit trees pop, and all manner of wildlife joins the chorus. Meanwhile a ubiquitous clicking signals one of two things: the marsh at low tide crawling with fiddler crabs or the annual return of The Non-Indigenous Shutterbug, (known in scientific circles as *Photographicas Ohio*). One day the streets of Beaufort are simply crawling with people snapping away at everything in sight, stumbling around in complete target lock, squinting through viewfinders and peering dumbly into sun-splashed view screens. To be sure, we still sight the occasional photo-hound stalking the perfect shot with camera gear worth more than Governor Haley's annual travel budget.

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But for the most part the average individual takes pictures with something that does most – if not all – of the thinking.

Most camera manufacturers upgrade their Point & Shoots every year. Each year the technical



sophistication increases while the cameras become sleeker, smaller and – in most cases – simpler to use. There's a major contributing factor to this trend: that smart phone you can't seem to put down. Both the latest generations of Android and iPhone come equipped with damn good cameras – not quite the quality of the current crop of pocket cameras, but closer and closer with each new generation. And they come with an advantage not available on your average P&S (at least, not yet) – apps. My iPhone 4S shoots at 8 megapixels (8x10 print quality) with some pretty advanced optics, including a filter to cut out harmful infrared light. In short, the thing beats the pants off of some pocket cameras I've owned and as long as the operator's up to it, turns out stunning photos in all sorts of light. And I can accessorize the iPhone (and the iPad, for that matter) with some pretty cool lenses and other gear for next to nothing. How about a fisheye lens for \$20? (Check out "Resources" below for more details.)



The combination of phone, camera and apps set these devices apart for a lot of casual photographers and an increasing number of enthusiasts and pros, as well. There are hundreds of photo processing apps and most are junk. But I can download a basic version of Photoshop –

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the premier photo processing platform – for free and buy capabilities incrementally as I need or want them. This means I can snap a photo, edit it on Photoshop and post it on my blog, website, Facebook and Flickr account in less time than it takes most people to pour a cup of coffee. As Patrick O'Brien's Capt. Jack Aubrey would say, "What a fascinating modern age in which we live." Indeed.

No doubt a good portion of our readers will document this visit to Beaufort and the Lowcountry via their smart and perhaps their not-so-smart phone. But our focus (no pun intended) is to help out with bits of advice on a point & shoot pocket camera safari around our photogenic old town. In keeping with that theme all of the accompanying photos were shot with a Canon S90, purchased new a couple of years ago and considered by many to be among the best of its kind at that time. It's since been replaced with the S95 and the current reigning champ, the S100. The newest model is lighter, thinner, packed with more technology than the average enthusiast will ever use or understand, shoots in multiple formats including RAW and full HD video and comes with its own GPS for under \$400. Keep in mind that because of rapidly changing technology and consumer demands, buying a device like this is not an investment in anything other than the photos and memories captured and preserved with it. Much like the aforementioned smart phone, this is disposable technology. Phrases like "Mirrorless" and "Micro 4/3" are quickly becoming part of the industry vernacular. The revolution is coming, but until it gets here let's "pocket" some pixels.

THE PROFESSIONALS

We asked some professional photographer friends to weigh in with a little point & shoot advice. Their

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