

THE AUVILLAR PHOTOGRAPHIC WORKSHOP • SEPTEMBER 2007

FIRSTLIGHT



FIRSTLIGHT AUVILLAR

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHIC WORKSHOP

COVER: At first, students at the Auvillar school were very aware of Art Stevens and his camera. So he backed up against a wall and let them get used to him being there. "Jeane was the field commander at recess, leading the soccer games and organizing the boys and girls, a tomboy and really good athlete," he says. "Then she came into class, let her hair down and became this angelic, beautiful little girl. It was quite a transformation. The great morning light and her own natural light were irresistible, even from across the room.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ART STEVENS

The pre-dawn hours drew a gaggle of workshop participants to a street above Auvillar, each trying to capture the perfect early-morning shot of L'Horloge. Ray Johnson seized this special moment.

PHOTOGRAPH BY RAY JOHNSON



France was hosting the opening round of the world Rugby Championships in Toulouse, and the mood in Auvillar was festive. A local amateur band entertained at an outside lounge as locals cheered the television (off-camera at right) and danced.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ART STEVENS



Ray Johnson found this tree farm, across the bridge north of Auvillar, fascinating. After shooting the sunlight streaming in, softened by the fog, from a number of perspectives, this image automatically framed itself. "I guess it was the mood that struck me," he says. "Misty, mysterious. I half expected a unicorn to come charging out."

PHOTOGRAPH BY RAY JOHNSON



As Park Terrell was leaving the crowded Gimont weekly open market, he spotted this man looking for a parking spot, and through hand gestures offered him his spot. "While I was putting my camera gear away, I turned to look at him and thought, what a picture," Terrell says. "I motioned to him with the camera, and he nodded yes. How I wish that we could have talked a bit." • PHOTOGRAPH BY PARK TERRELL

The light that paints this southwestern France hilltop village illuminates more than the beauty of the landscape and its people. For fifteen aspiring photographers, that light helps kick over a bushel obscuring a passionate talent.

In days spent on area farms or in vineyards, with glass blowers or knife makers, in a world-class organ restorer's warehouse, a local classroom or a gourmet chef's kitchen, where they generally are welcomed warmly and provided excellent access, each participant captures images all his or her own.

"This joy of taking photos is rejuvenating," says participant Kim Hoskinson, "I think the coolest thing about this experience is that when you come back with your images, everyone else in the room is almost as excited as you are to see them."

A promenade off the town square, on the site of the former viscount's castle, provides a sweeping view of the Garonne Valley. Each twilight, workshop founder Jay Dickman gathers the participants here to photograph locals and follow the fading magical light through the village streets — the people are accepting and engaging; the students eager and entranced.



ABOVE: Kim Hoskinson was returning to her room after a long day of shooting when she spied this warm light casting a glow upon Auvillar's clock tower.

PHOTOGRAPH BY KIM HOSKINSON

RIGHT: As Reinhard Ziegler roamed the cemetery that envelops this church on three sides, he took note of the large rose window over the entrance. "It floated in the midst of the stone facade like an invitation," Ziegler says. "Once inside, the cool damp air stood in stark contrast to the brilliant, warm light streaming in. The colors bathed the walls in a beauty that was as much musical as visual."

PHOTOGRAPH BY REINHARD ZIEGLER





ABOVE: While walking up a winding cobblestone road and admiring Auvillar's rustic architecture, Kim Hoskinson watched a young boy ride his scooter out of his family's gate. "I watched the boy scoot himself up the hill, turn around at the top, and then coast back down, repeating the cycle over and over again," Hoskinson says. "I found peace in the thought that some things, like a boy playing on a warm summer night, never change."

PHOTOGRAPH BY KIM HOSKINSON

LEFT: As Art Stevens moved through the Auvillar classroom, he noticed that reflected sunlight from this young girl's desk would make her glow when she got close. "When the class was asked to write an answer I got my shot," Stevens says. When Stevens showed the image to the teacher the next day, she smiled, said, "Oh, Pauline again," and pulled from her desk the magazine produced at the original Auvillar workshop. Inside, there was a younger Pauline, in a totally different shot.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ART STEVENS



For part-time photographer Art Stevens, FirstLight instructors helped him find a special place.

“This workshop has freed me to feel like a photographer, for the first time, really,” Stevens says.

Such a revelation heartens FirstLight founder Jay Dickman, who merges a fascinating location, groundbreaking Olympus equipment, lessons from a storied career, and an accomplished staff to provide a unique experience. Adobe expert Jay Kinghorn, who co-authored *Perfect Digital Photography* with Dickman, is the perfect complement to the FirstLight founder. “I’m high energy, always moving,” Dickman says. “He’s quiet, thoughtful, and extremely intelligent. He knows his craft so well.” Guest instructors, such as renowned photographer Peter Turnley and *Traveler Overseas* publisher and editor Steve Connatser, add to the workshop’s rich patina.

“This addresses my heart and soul,” Dickman explains. “If you don’t have a soul, you can’t do it. All we are doing is cracking people open to what is inside of them.”

ABOVE: Serge François, owner and executive chef at the Hôtel L'Horloge in Auvillar, is not as fierce as he looks in this image (the rabbit did not make it into his kitchen). After a few hours of being trailed through village markets, François relaxed and started showing a sense of humor. **PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN BAILEY DEV**

LEFT: While walking through the weekly Gimont market, these purple onions captured Park Terrell’s eye. “The deep purple and dark green accentuated each other,” he says “Not having a macro lens with me, I exposed on the greens of the onion and held the camera level over the box. You can almost smell the onions.” **PHOTOGRAPH BY PARK TERRELL**



ABOVE: Honey collected from hives near the village of St. Paul-d'Espis is poured into 55-gallon collection barrels, where it is strained of bits of flowers, insects, sticks and the like.

RIGHT: Beekeeper Malika Kemouche and her partner took photographers John Robinson and Connie Dines to hives nestled on a hillside near some fields of then-blackened sunflowers. Each photographer received multiple stings. "I was fascinated by the patterns of the comb on the frames," Dines says.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CONNIE DINES





ABOVE: In the village of Moissac, about 25 kilometers from Auvillar, Monsieur Larant works almost daily in the cramped quarters of his glass blowing shop, fashioning colorful bowls, ornaments and unique lamp shades.
PHOTOGRAPH BY PARK TERRELL

RIGHT: A beekeeper moves a smoker fueled by little bundles of burning straw over stacks of hives near the village of St. Paul-d'Espis.
PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN ROBINSON





The destination provides a visual feast for FirstLight participants but state-of-the-art photographic and printing equipment and software set the table.

FirstLight founder Jay Dickman, an Olympus Visionary, relies on his Olympus Systems and collaborates with John Knaur, Senior Marketing Manager for Olympus Imaging America, to support visual creativity.

The workshop affords participants to use Olympus equipment and provide direct feedback on how it responds to a variety of situations. “We encourage up and coming photographers,” Knaur says. “We expect some of them will be much better known in the future.”

Adobe Photoshop Certified Expert Jay Kinghorn uses Photoshop and Lightroom software to help participants become more proficient in improving, cataloging, and storing their images.

Lightware, Lexar Media, Singh-Ray Filters, and WiebeTech provide innovative product support. Hewlett-Packard state-of-the-art printers provide the gallery-quality large prints used in the last-night show for the community.

“As we work on our newest generation of products we focus on ease of use and excellent print quality,” an HP spokesman says. “Artists have favorite tools, and as a manufacturer HP wants to support these artists by making the best products that we can. It becomes a synergistic relationship.”



ABOVE: Gimont, an ancient bastide town an hour from Auch, hosts two weekly markets, a produce, bread and simple crafts one held on Thursdays, and its famous Sunday Foie Gras market. This French gentleman retreats with his Thursday purchases.

PHOTOGRAPH BY KATE MANN

LEFT: Madame Ricaut, a foie gras and garlic farmer near Mauroux, competes in the artistic design category of the annual Saint Clar garlic competition. This “flower” is a tiny detail on a stunning, life-sized, parasol made entirely of garlic husks, bulbs, flowers, and stems.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN BAILEY DEV

RIGHT: Jean Daldosso, world-renowned organ maker and restorer, plays the organ at his church in Gimont.
PHOTOGRAPH BY POLLY CRONGEYER



RIGHT: Each organ takes three to five years to restore. Every part — every cable, stop, pipe, pedal, key, pin, bellows, valve and bolt is removed, catalogued, carefully cleaned, repaired, rebuilt or replaced.
PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN H. OSTDICK

BELOW: Daldosso and his craftsmen were in the middle of a three-year project to restore a 19th-century organ from the Spanish cathedral in Murcia.
PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN H. OSTDICK



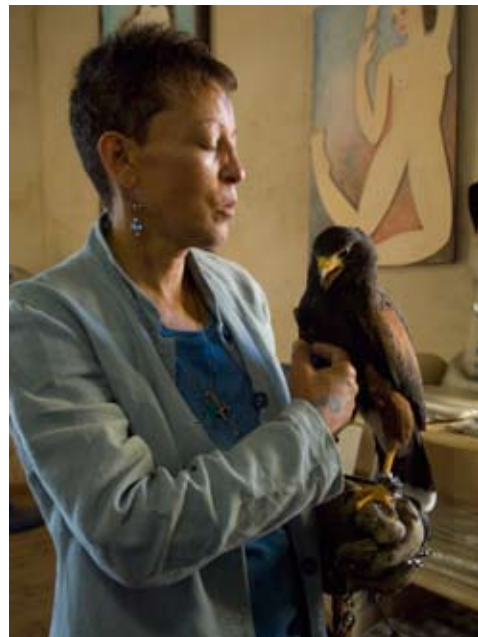
LEFT: Catalogued and stacked organ stops create beautiful still life patterns as they wait to re-enter the great organ puzzle.
PHOTOGRAPH BY POLLY CRONGEYER





Reinhard Ziegler captured this unfiltered golden image at about 7 a.m. from a high bluff over the Garonne River. "The very long lens flattens the perspective and brings everything forward; nuances and textures take on importance equal to that of larger elements, so the image feels rich in detail and proximity," he says. "I think it captures the romance and atmosphere of this part of France."

PHOTOGRAPH BY REINHARD ZIEGLER



TOP: While shooting the balconies and old windows in Lauzerte, John Robinson spied this serene cat in a window.
PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN ROBINSON

ABOVE: Denise Lambert, co-owner of Bleu de Lectoure, returns from a late-afternoon walk with a spectacular hunting falcon perched upon her arm. "I was immediately drawn to the energy between this elegant woman and her bird," Suzanne Chandler says.
PHOTOGRAPH BY SUZANNE CHANDLER

RIGHT: Local volunteers participating in the vendange (grape harvest) ride a picking cart at Domaine des Thermes, a vineyard owned by Dominique Jollet et Thierry Combarel. After a hard day's work, the vintners treat their volunteers to a wine-tasting dinner.
PHOTOGRAPH BY POLLY CRONGEYER



TOP: Frustrated by some difficult lighting inside, Raj Dev stepped outside Jean-Luc Clamens' truffle processing site in Caussade for inspiration. "I noticed the opposite side of the town square reflected in Jean-Luc's sign (J. Gaillard)," he says. "I used it to capture a sense of place." PHOTOGRAPH BY RAJ DEV

ABOVE: An expressive Andre Allibert talks about his farm, La Sarcelle, located near Auvillar. "The picture captures his joy for life, the expressiveness of his hand gestures, and says to me: quintessential Frenchman," Kate Mann says. PHOTOGRAPH BY KATE MANN

RIGHT: These foie gras destined geese at the Ricaut family farm near Mauroux proved pretty skittish at first. "I noticed that the longer I stood near them, the closer the flock would let me approach," Raj Dev says. "After communing with the flock for some time, the geese let me get close enough to take this picture." PHOTOGRAPH BY RAJ DEV





ABOVE & LEFT: Eighty-year-old Gerard Bouchet was 12 when he received his first gun, which he disassembled to learn how it worked. The self-taught gunsmith begins each project with a solid piece of steel, hand carving the wood and steel using a multitude of power and hand tools. He has completed seven guns in his lifetime. • PHOTOGRAPHS BY PARK TERRELL



BELOW & RIGHT: Marc Tussac, a local scientist, examines a specimen in his lab, a collection site for local insects in the agricultural region. • PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT LOSSON





Walking along the northeastern side of Auvillar's unusual circular town square, Greg Hartwell was struck by the contrast the light was creating. "The partial arch and the far wall were a sufficient distance from the tourist bureau to allow me to shallow out the depth of field by opening up the lens," Hartwell says. "The challenge was to keep the planter, the rose (actually some distance outside the arch) and the tourist bureau in focus while fuzzing the arch and the far wall."

PHOTOGRAPH BY GREG HARTWELL



Pictured, left to right, in the Auvillar square are (kneeling) Yannick Michaud, Suzanne Chandler, Erin Bailey Dev, Polly Crongeyer, Jay Dickman, (second row) Art Stevens, Kate Mann, Jacqueline Scherer, Valerie Hartig, Connie Dines, Robert Losson, Ray Johnson, Alissa Everett, Pam Terrell, Park Terrell, (back row) John H. Ostdick, Steve Connatser, Reinhard Ziegler, Jay Kinghorn, Greg Hartwell, John Robinson, and Raj Dev.

TEXT BY JOHN H. OSTDICK

2007 Auvillar FirstLight Workshop Faculty



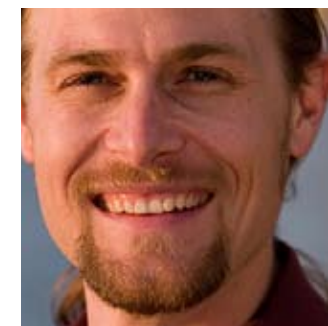
Jay Dickman - Olympus Visionary

Jay Dickman, Olympus Visionary and Lexar Elite Photographer, is founder of Firstlight Workshops. A Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer and regular contributor to National Geographic, Jay's work has won numerous awards in the World Press International Competition. Jay recently co-authored Perfect Digital Photography with Jay Kinghorn, published by McGraw Hill.



Steve Connatser - Founder of Traveler Overseas Magazine

Steve Connatser served as design director for several magazines, including American Way Magazine, D Magazine, and Private Clubs Magazine, before becoming editor, publisher, and design director for Polo Magazine, then founding Traveler Overseas Magazine, where he now fills those same roles. Connatser has won over 400 awards for art direction and writing, receiving letters of commendation from H.R.H. Prince Charles ("...a job well done") and William F. Buckley ("...the best designer in the world"). John Wayne also once told him "great job," but then that is a different story.



Jay Kinghorn - RGB Imaging

An Adobe Photoshop Certified Expert, Jay Kinghorn draws upon his background as an assignment and fine-art photographer to develop training programs that fulfill the essential needs of photographers. His approachable, comfortable and efficient training style makes Jay one of the most sought-after digital imaging specialists. In 2003, Jay created a landmark digital imaging survey with ASMP Colorado to assess the adoption of digital photography.



Robert Losson



Valerie Hartig

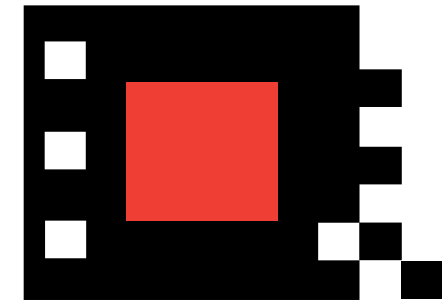


Yannick Michaud

A Special Thanks to **Robert Losson, Valerie Hartig** and **Francis Sohler** (not pictured), all three Auvillar residents who provided invaluable assistance in making this workshop occur. Also, thanks to Olympus' **Yannick Michaud**



i n v e n t



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BACK COVER: While wandering Auvillar after sharing a coffee with a colleague in the square, Suzanne Chandler strolled down a winding, tiny street, where she was drawn to this woman with a twinkle in her eye. "She waved for me to come in, and although we didn't speak the same language she captured me — a stranger — with her open heart and bright spirit," Chandler says. "I love the contrast between light and dark, the texture of the window and frame against the deep dark smoothness of her room." • PHOTOGRAPH BY SUZANNE CHANDLER

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DETAILS FOR GRANTED.
NEITHER DID MY CAMERA."

— JEFFREY AARONSON
OLYMPUS VISIONARY

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