

# Catching waves

**Chris Simmons** reveals some of the techniques he uses for capturing dramatic seascapes



**Gull Rock Winter Storm**

In 80mph winds, flying spray added to the emotion in this tempestuous scene.

**T**he sea conjures an elemental dynamic that, in my view, sets seascapes apart from the generalised category of landscape photography. For from tempestuous lashings to lapping caresses, the sea's expressive fluidity is uniquely demanding when successfully interpreting its ever-changing moods. In the viewfinder its textures and reflections constantly evolve. Yet show patience; study and respect

the sea's predictable unpredictability. Get your approach, settings and timing right and you can reflect the scene's emotion and start 'catching waves'.

Seascapes are governed by two fundamental truths. The first; compared to land mass, a large reflective body of water will see scudding clouds mopping-up more light, while dawn and dusk levels will rise and fall exponentially. In time, an inner sense tells you when

the light is just right, to freeze a wave, catch swirling motion or add ethereal ghosting. The second; accept that the tides will constantly move the goalposts and seascapes become an exciting photographic adventure.

A rolling breaker can add a cornerstone to your composition, yet its foaming wake will send your metering see-sawing. You must watch closely and balance the action. Consider ND filters to gain a

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### Kelp, Rocks, Dawning

A long exposure balanced by a ND06 grad and a burst of second-curtain sync'd flash.

slightly longer exposure and instil foreground motion. Mid-ground focusing and a tighter f-stop will retain detail in the following wave ranks. Maybe even punctuate with bounced second-curtain flash to bring the crest to a sparkling full stop. These are just a few options from a whole range of techniques.

For me, the sea engenders a tremendous spirit of freedom that inspires me to constantly evolve my award-winning photographic approach. That's why I moved to Crantock on Cornwall's magnificent

Atlantic coast. From here I offer one-to-one, B&B workshops to DSLR photographers of all levels who want to hone their seascape skills on some of the UK's finest

coastline. You will learn to use and rely on manual settings and capture images 'in camera' with refinement of RAW files through considered use of Photoshop post-production.



### PROFILE

Chris Simmons has been fascinated by photography since childhood. After developing his camera and darkroom skills in college, he moved to London and a career in advertising as an art director. He also travelled widely around the UK and abroad, building a body of 'vista' seascape work in remote coastal locations. In 2011, Chris won the 'Cornish Point of View' award, then held his first exhibition and launched a dedicated website in 2012. In 2013, he moved to Cornwall to live the dream and extend his photographic work.

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