The Hot One Awards are back and hotter than ever. For more than a decade, the Hot One Awards have been one of the photographic industry’s biggest, most comprehensive product contests. With new products and new companies entering every year, the level of competition continues to escalate. For this year’s contest, we dramatically expanded our panel of judges, giving new depth to the judging process.

*Professional Photographer* is a resource for the working pro, so the Hot One judging is based on the experience and opinions of professional photographers who use these products and services every day. This isn’t some scientific analysis conducted by a bunch of clinicians in lab coats, but a poll of real pros working in the real world. None of our panel of 52 judges is employed by *Professional Photographer*. They all reviewed the products in each category and voted on their favorites. The main criterium was how effectively they thought these items would help their art, their workflow and their business.

A reminder here, that the Hot Ones are somewhat retrospective awards. Like the Oscars and Grammys, they honor the top releases from the previous year, even though some are updates of the strongest performers on the market, and some are brand new in the industry.

Take a look to see if your professional opinion matches that of our esteemed panel of judges. These are the tools of your trade, but not every tool works for every photographer. Like we always say: *It’s not the tool, but the way you use it that makes all the difference.*

*Jeff Kent*
*Hot One Editor*
*jkent@ppa.com*
CAMERAS

DIGITAL SLR

LESS THAN $1,000

Olympus E-P1
The world’s smallest 12.3-megapixel interchangeable lens camera system is more than just a camera, it’s an ultra-portable multimedia capture device. The Olympus E-P1 combines the still image capture capabilities of a DSLR with high-definition video capture, a stereo Linear PCM audio recorder and Olympus’ In-Camera Creativity application, offering art filters for both still photography and video. The E-P1 works well as a pro pocket camera, great for those impromptu captures that help inspire your work. Price: $799.99 (includes 14-42mm lens). olympusamerica.com.

DIGITAL SLR

$1,000 TO $3,000

Canon EOS 7D
The Canon EOS 7D furthers the trend in multi-feature DSLRs. With an 18-megapixel APS-C-size CMOS sensor and dual DIGIC 4 Image Processors, the EOS 7D captures still images at ISO up to 12800, speed up to 8 fps, and high-def video as well. The EOS 7D has a new 19-point autofocus system with improved subject tracking. Its Intelligent Viewfinder provides 100 percent coverage, and displays autofocus mode, a spot metering circle and on-demand grid lines. The camera has new 63-zone, dual-layer iFCL metering that factors in both focus and color information to provide accurate exposure, even in difficult lighting. Price: $1,699. usa.canon.com

DIGITAL SLR

OVER $7,000

Nikon D3X
Announced at the tail end of 2008 but unavailable for our 2009 Hot One deadline, the Nikon D3X took the industry by storm in ’09. The D3X advances the speedy D3 with a full-frame FX-format CMOS sensor and significantly higher resolution (24.5 megapixels vs. the D3’s 12.1 megapixels), and a lower native ISO range (ISO 100-1600 vs. the D3’s 200-6400). The D3X uses Nikon Expeed image processing technology to increase image fidelity and reduce noise, even at high ISO. It can shoot at up to 5 fps at full resolution. Compatible with Type G or D AF Nikkor lenses and the full line of DX lenses (FX format not supported), the D3X has a state-of-the-art autofocus system with 3D focus tracking, as well as 3D Color Matrix Metering II. Price: $7,999.95. nikonusa.com

MEDIUM-FORMAT

DIGITAL CAMERA SYSTEM

Phase One P40+
The P40+ fought a strong challenge from another Phase One product, the 645DF. The P40+ impressed the judges with its 1.8 fps capture rate and 50-3200 ISO range. Judges also liked the camera’s Sensor+ technology, which allows photographers to change the capture resolution from 40 to 10 megapixels for higher sensitivity and faster speed. The camera tops off these impressive credentials with a 12.5-stop dynamic range. Price: $19,990. phaseone.com

Editor’s note: Two new, potentially game-changing cameras came out just after this year’s judging wrapped up. The Canon EOS-1D Mark IV ($4,999) and the Nikon D3S ($5,199.95) are speed-optimized DSLRs designed for fast-moving applications like sports, photojournalism, even weddings. The Canon model has an APS-H-size 16.1-megapixel CMOS Sensor, ISO range of 100-12800, and continuous shooting up to 10 fps. The Nikon has a 12.1-megapixel FX-format CMOS sensor, ISO range of 200-12800, and continuous shooting up to 9 fps. Both cameras support high-definition video capture. Professional Photographer will publish full reviews in upcoming issues. Stay tuned!
LENSES

STANDARD ZOOM

Tamron SP AF17-50mm f/2.8 XR Di II VC LD Aspherical [IF]

Tamron captured this category for the second consecutive year with the SP AF17-50mm f/2.8 XR Di II VC LD Aspherical [IF] lens. Tamron designed this high-speed, f/2.8, wide-to-moderate-telephoto zoom exclusively for Canon- and Nikon-mount DSLRs with APS-C sensors (the focal length is equivalent to 26-78mm in full-frame 35mm format). The lens features Tamron’s proprietary tri-axial vibration compensation (VC) mechanism to minimize the effect of camera shake, and allows photographers to shoot at slower shutter speeds while handholding the camera. With a maximum aperture of f/2.8, the lens produce appealing shallow depth of field and smooth focus transitions.

Price: $649.

tamron.com

WIDE ZOOM

Sigma 10-20mm f/3.5 EX DC HSM

This is the widest zoom lens with incorporated Sigma Hyper Sonic Motor (HSM) technology for quick, quiet autofocus. It’s the only ultra-wide zoom with fixed aperture; f/3.5 maximum aperture throughout the entire zoom range helps it perform well in low-light situations. By incorporating two Extraordinary Low Dispersion (ELD) glass elements with a Special Low Dispersion (SLD) glass element, the 10-20mm F3.5 EX DC HSM provides excellent correction of color aberration. It has a minimum focusing distance of 9.4 inches throughout the entire zoom range, and maximum magnification of 1:6.6.

Price: $950.

sigmaphoto.com

MACRO

Tamron SP AF60mm f/2 Di II LD IF 1:1 Macro

This is the first medium-telephoto macro lens designed for APS-C size DSLR cameras with maximum aperture of f/2. The SP AF60mm f/2 covers the equivalent angle of view of 93mm when converted to the 35mm format. With its fast maximum aperture, this new Tamron 1:1 macro lens delivers smoothly blurred backgrounds. The lens features internal focusing and Tamron Full Time Manual Focus Control.

Price: $569.

tamron.com

TELEPHOTO

Phase One Schneider Kreuznach LS 110mm f/2.8

The collaboratively built LS 110mm f/2.8 digital telephoto leaf shutter lens is designed for medium-format camera systems. The lens features shallow depth of field and flash sync up to 1/1,600 second. The telephoto provides longer focal length with just enough optical compression for full-length portrait photography. Designed for location fashion photographers using fill flash, the lens is versatile enough to apply to numerous situations, including commercial photography and even weddings.

Price: $3,990.

phaseone.com
**MEDIUM-FORMAT**

*Phase One Schneider Kreuznach LS 80mm f/2.8*

The Phase One–Schneider Kreuznach collaboration proved to be a winning combo this year. The LS 80mm f/2.8 is the standard-length lens in the digital leaf shutter collection of medium-format camera systems. Like its telephoto sibling, the LS 80mm f/2.8 has a shallow depth of field and can sync with flash up to 1/1,600 second. *Price: $2,490.*

**WIDE-ANGLE**

*Carl Zeiss Distagon T* 2,8/21 ZE

Designed to work with all Canon EOS cameras, the Distagon T* 2,8/21 ZE is an ultra-wide-angle lens with a 90-degree field of view. In keeping with recent trends in digital cameras, the Distagon T* 2,8/21 ZE is ideally suited for high-def video, due to its wide focus rotation, image quality and minimal breathing characteristics (when optics appear to change focal length). What really impressed our judges was the way the Distagon T* 2,8/21 ZE virtually eliminates image errors in transitions between bright and dark light by preventing color fringing and chromatic aberrations. The Carl Zeiss T* anti-reflex coating helps prevent unwanted reflections and stray light. *Price: $1,540.*

**LENS ACCESSORY**

*Lensbaby Fisheye Optic*

Lensbaby continues its award-winning innovation with the Lensbaby Fisheye Optic, which allows photographers to turn a Lensbaby Composer into a fisheye lens. The optic’s six-element, multi-coated design features an ultra-wide 12mm focal length capable of capturing a fisheye view from infinity to 1 inch. The Fisheye Optic features a system of interchangeable aperture disks in settings from f/4 to f/22. A lens flare feature creates glowing, colorful areas around the edges of the frame, which would be black with normal fisheye lenses. Unlike most Lensbaby Optics with their focal “sweet spot,” the Fisheye Optic produces images that are sharp throughout the frame. *Price: $149.95.*

**DIGITAL STORAGE MEDIA**

**MEDIA CARD**

*SanDisk Extreme Pro CompactFlash*

Available in capacities of 16GB, 32GB and 64GB, SanDisk Extreme Pro CompactFlash memory cards feature read/write speeds up to 90MB per second (600X). The dual-lane architecture of the new SanDisk Power Core Controller directs digital traffic into separate memory lanes to process more images simultaneously. The controller also features an Error Correction Code hardware engine and a simplified design to help maintain data integrity. The durable Extreme Pro cards perform at temperatures of -13°F to 185°F, and have an interior RTV silicone coating for moisture protection. *Price: $335.99 for 16GB, $559.99 for 32GB, $895.99 for 64MB.*

**MEDIA CARD READER**

*Lexar Professional ExpressCard CompactFlash Reader*

The Lexar Professional ExpressCard CompactFlash Reader leverages UDMA 6 technology for high-speed file transfer up to 133MB (886X) per second with the Lexar Professional 600x CF card. Plug in the reader to the ExpressCard slot of a laptop, and it connects directly to the PCIe bus interface for enhanced performance. The reader’s deep slot protects card and reader from accidental bumps. The read/write LED indicator lets you know when file transfer is complete. *Price: $44.99.*

**PORTABLE HARD DRIVE AND DISPLAY**

*Epson P-7000*

The Epson P-7000 impressed our judges with its new tethering functionality to allow photographers to view and save images as they’re captured, and to control basic camera functions remotely. The P-7000 employs Epson Photo Fine Premia technology, which encompasses 94 percent of the Adobe RGB color space to display more than 16.7 million colors on a 4-inch LCD. With hard drive capacity of 160GB, the unit can hold thousands of images. Compatible with UDMA CompactFlash cards, and its lithium-ion battery lasts up to three hours. *Price: $799.*
LIGHTING EQUIPMENT

CAMERA FLASH

Quantum Trio QF8

The QFlash Trio QF8 won over judges with its versatile combination of a QFlash head with a built-in FreeXwire TTL radio and QTTL adapter for DSLRs. The unit’s radio wireless TTL commands other remote QFlash Trios, as well as older QFlash models mated with FreeXwire receivers. The Trios radio QTTL signals do not require line-of-sight to function. The rapid-firing QFlash comes with a parabolic reflector that can be removed and exchanged for bare bulb, wide-angle lights, diffused lights and telephoto reflectors. Powered by Quantum Turbo battery packs, the Trio includes a USB port for downloading firmware updates. **Price: $875.**

qtm.com

PORTABLE FLASH SYSTEM

Bowens Travelpak

A previous Hot One winner, Bowens recaptures the crown with its latest Travelpak. The system can power a Bowens Gemini or Calumet Travelite monolight with 200- to 3,000WS of portable power. The new Travelpak has improved durability and light connectors. It comes with a detachable battery section for quick change outs on the fly or to switch between small and large batteries. **Price: $579.95.**

bowensusa.com

STUDIO FLASH SYSTEM

Bowens Gemini 500R

Teaming up with the Travelpak is the Gemini 500R, a radio-enabled, 500WS compact mono-light with six f/stops of power. The light can be synced via slave or the plug-in radio trigger module for compatibility with Pulsar, PocketWizard or Litelink trigger systems. Features include red-eye reduction, power saving and inverted display. The Gemini 500R monolights are available as individual heads or in kit sets with umbrellas, reflectors, stands and trolley case. **Price: $589.95.**

bowensusa.com

LIGHT MODIFIER

Paul C. Buff PLM System

AlienBees takes the umbrella modifier to a new high with its parabolic light modification system, the PLM System. The PLM provides a high-output, nearly round light that can be acutely focused. PLM light creates soft shadows but the system can generate impressive power. For example, the system produces f/32 at 10 feet from a 300WS strobe at ISO 200. The 16-rib umbrella-like design mounts to a standard studio flash to provide a range of light modification, more so when combined with the optional accessories. Available in three sizes (42-, 64- and 86-inches) and two colors (silver and white). **Price: $12.95 to $74.95.**

alienbees.com

CONTINUOUS LIGHT SYSTEM

Westcott uLite

Continuous light is gaining ground in our industry, and the Westcott uLite comes in several kit configurations. The three-light kit is a complete studio portrait lighting system that comes with two 500-watt lamps and one 100-watt background light with a 6-inch reflector and a 3-foot stand, two collapsible 20x20-inch soft boxes, and two 7-foot light stands. The uLite provides constant light so photographers can see the lighting patterns the same way their camera will record them. **Price: $295.**

fjwestcott.com
**PRINTERs**

**INKJET PRINTER**

LESS THAN $500

Epson Artisan 810

Epson scored a victory with the Artisan 810. This all-in-one printing solution has a 7.8-inch smart touch panel and a 3.5-inch color LCD that displays only the buttons needed, making it easy to select, copy, enlarge, rotate, crop, restore, and print photos without a computer. Epson six-color, Ultra Hi Definition Claria inks combined with Epson MicroPiezo print heads and DX5 technology create archival prints with estimated longevity up to 200 years in an album, 98 years under glass. The unit also affords 4,800-ppi scanning, both color and black-and-white copying, and built-in Wi-Fi and Ethernet networking.

*Price: $299.99.*

epson.com

INKJET PRINTER

$500 TO $1,000

Canon Pixma Pro9500 Mark II

For a mid-priced inkjet device, the new Canon Pixma Pro9500 Mark II Photo Printer packs a punch with 10 pigment-based ink colors, including gray, and photo and matte blacks. The Pixma Pro9500 produces pro-quality prints with Canon’s double-encoder system. Full-photolithography Inkjet Nozzle Engineering (FINE) technology and the 7,680-nozzle print-head significantly boost print speed. The matte black, photo black and gray inks reduce metamerism, and provide high-density blacks and neutral monochrome.

*Price: $849.99.*

usa.canon.com

INKJET PRINTER

$1,000 TO $5,000

Epson Stylus Pro 3880

Epson calls the Stylus Pro 3880 its most sophisticated 17-inch printer to date, and our judges give it kudos. Featuring the Epson UltraChrome K3 with Vivid Magenta ink set and a MicroPiezo AMC print head, the Stylus Pro 3880 yields gallery-quality prints up to 17x22 inches. The ink set’s advanced magenta pigments yield deeper blues and violets, and the three-level black ink technology yields a better tonal range and gray balance. The MicroPiezo AMC print head produces maximum resolution of 2,880x1,440 dpi with variable-sized droplets as small as 3.5 picoliters. Epson’s new AccuPhoto HD2 image technology amplifies the printer’s

FILM

COLOR NEGATIVE

Kodak Professional Ektar 100

Last year, Kodak won the Hot One Award for the 35mm version of this film. A few months later, Kodak released the 120-format version to great acclaim. Featuring highly saturated, vivid color, Kodak Professional Ektar 100 has the finest grain of any color negative film available. Kodak specs say it’s best for nature, travel, outdoor, fashion and product photography, but it’s versatile enough to handle a variety of applications. *Price: Varies by retailer (about $4).*

kodak.com
credentials with smooth color transitions and excellent highlight and shadow detail. **Price:** $1,295 for Standard Edition. epson.com

**DYE-SUB PHOTO PRINTER**

**Canon Selphy CP790**

Canon landed a Hot One Award last year with the Selphy CP770, so it’s no surprise that the next-generation Selphy scored the award this year. The CP790 is upgraded with enhancements to the Portrait Image Optimize feature. The system’s brightness and color cast corrections have been improved so that skin tones reproduce with an even more natural appearance. The new Creative Options feature allows users to tweak photos before cropping them on the 3-inch LCD screen. The highly portable CP790 has optional battery and memory card slots for printing on-the-go sans computer. **Price:** $179.99. usa.canon.com

---

**INKJET MEDIA**

**MATTE PAPER**

**Hahnemuehle Photo Rag 500gsm**

Our pros selected Hahnemuehle Photo Rag 500gsm, a 100-percent-cotton white paper with a smooth surface. Judges appreciated its guaranteed archival standards and premium matte inkjet coating. Photo Rag meets the highest standards for density, color gamut, color graduation and image sharpness, while having the feel of fine-art rag paper. Photo Rag 500gsm is compatible with pigment and dye-based ink sets. **Price:** $33 to $285 depending on size and format. hahnemuehle.com

**GLOSSY PAPER**

**Hahnemuehle Baryta FB 350gsm**

Judges handed a second award to Hahnemuehle for Baryta FB as the pro’s pick in glossy paper. Baryta FB is a fiber-based, 100-percent alpha-cellulose paper with a smooth, glossy surface. This archival photo paper was specially developed with a bright white, ultra-smooth surface texture that corresponds to classic baryta media in structure and feel. Free ICC profiles are available on the Hahnemuehle website. **Price:** $27 to $305, depending on size and format. hahnemuehle.com

**FINE ART PAPER**

**LexJet Sunset Velvet Rag 315g**

This year our judges applauded the 100-percent-cotton LexJet Sunset Velvet Rag 315g, an OBA-free, neutral-white paper with a slightly textured matte surface that resembles the art papers of traditional etchings. Sunset Velvet Rag 315g works particularly well with the wide-gamut ink sets of professional printers from Epson, Canon and HP. **Price:** $127 for a 24-inch x 50-foot roll. lexjet.com

**CANVAS**

**LexJet Sunset Select Matte Canvas**

The next-generation LexJet Sunset Select Matte Canvas improves on its popular predecessor with this water-resistant poly-cotton blend canvas. A new bright white, acid-free inkjet coating supports greater consistency from print to print, while delivering an increased color gamut and improved D-max. This new canvas also works well with wide-gamut ink sets. **Price:** $72 for a 24-inch x 40-foot roll. lexjet.com
STUDIO & LOCATION EQUIPMENT

TRIPOD OR CAMERA STAND

Manfrotto M-Y 732CY Carbon Fiber Tripod
Our pros selected the Manfrotto M-Y 732CY Carbon Fiber tripod, the newest member of the Manfrotto M-Y family of compact tripods. Designed for lightweight DSLRs, the M-Y 732CY is a light yet durable product that can hold up to 7.7 pounds. When folded, the M-Y 732CY is only 16.7 inches long.
Price: $200.
bogenimaging.us

BACKGROUND

Backdrop Outlet Mod Cloth
Backdrop outlet faced stiff competition in this category—from itself. The Mod Cloth edged out a couple of other Backdrop Outlet products in its price range. The Mod Cloth line features textured damask and a range of contrasts to make subjects stand out. Available in 5x6- or 5x9-foot formats, Mod Cloths are woven and double sided (metallic look on one side). Price: $99.
backdropoutlet.com

CAMERA BAG

IT'S A TIE!

In by far the most competitive category this year, two worthy contenders rose to the top: The Lowepro Classified Sling AW and the Think Tank Airport TakeOff.

Lowepro Classified Sling AW
The Lowepro Classified Sling AW has a slim profile to keep DSLRs and other essential gear close yet conveniently accessible. The Classified Sling 220 AW can accommodate a 15.4-inch laptop in a zippered, padded outside pocket; the 180 pocket holds a netbook. Inside, the adjustable padded dividers, pull tabs and hook/loop lining allow full customization. A zippered top pocket affords fast access to small items. Airline-reg compatible and free of dangling parts, the Classified Sling AW features an all-weather cover, Hideaway Tripod Mount, memory card pockets on the inside lid, a SlipLock attachment loop on the shoulder strap, and a tuck-away waist belt.
lowepro.com

Think Tank Photo Airport TakeOff
Sharing the spotlight in this category, the Think Tank Airport TakeOff is a rolling camera backpack with a shoulder strap storage system for easy conversion. The Airport TakeOff complies with airline carry-on requirements. It accommodates standard DSLRs across the top and/or pro-size DSLRs along the sides. Other features include lockable zipper sliders, adjustable sternum straps, a protective laptop case and room for both a 300mm lens and tripod. The bag weighs 8.5 to 10 pounds, depending on accessories. Price: $299.
thinktankphoto.com

COLOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

X-Rite ColorMunki Photo
X-Rite flexes its muscles once again, this time with the ColorMunki Photo. Our pros gave the nod to this integrated color control solution for its high-tech yet easy-to-use monitor, projector and printer calibration and profiling system. It also syncs with your image enhancement programs for seamless integration with your workflow. ColorMunki will even optimize your printer profiles for specific colors and black-and-white features. The system includes an all-in-one spectrophotometer. Price: $499.
xritephoto.com
SOFTWARE
CAPTURE / PROCESSING
Camera Bits Photo Mechanic 4.6.2
Workflow accelerator Photo Mechanic speeds import, captioning and editing through a set of customizable tools. Among other capabilities, the software allows photographers to create Web galleries and slideshows, print contact sheets, transfer photos to an FTP server, and upload images to an online archive. Our judges particularly liked the Ingest command, which reads images from memory cards, flattens directory structures, applies IPTC metadata, creates backups on separate disks, and renames files, all in a single step. Price: $150. camerabits.com

PLUG-INS / ACTIONS
Imagenomic Portraiture 2 for Lightroom
In another hotly contested category, Imagenomic scored a narrow victory over several worthy competitors. Our pros selected Portraiture 2 for Lightroom because of its fast and accurate skin retouching features. Portraiture 2 builds on earlier versions for Adobe Photoshop and Apple Aperture. Our judges were impressed by the two workflow modes—Edit In and Export—for individual and batch image editing and processing. This is the first time a software developer has been able to accomplish this feat, and Imagenomic has received accolades from Adobe Systems for the successful development. Price: $199.95. imagenomic.com

IMAGE EDITING
Nik Software Viveza 2
Nik Software Viveza 2 is technically a plug-in, but its selective color and light control features are so impressive that it easily outpaced all competitors in this category. Viveza 2 offers global adjustments and controls through Nik’s U Point technology. The software is designed to save photographers time in editing images by eliminating the need for complicated selections and layer masks. U Point technology allows users to make selective edits to hue, saturation, contrast and more with just a click and a quick slider adjustment. Price: $199.95. niksoftware.com

PAINTING
Corel Painter 11
Painter 11 improved texture and precision in its pressure-sensitive brushes. New RealBristle Dry Media tools enhanced drawing capabilities with new marker, pen, chalk and pencil tools. Painter 11’s Hard Media Controls include customizable profiles, dab sizes, transitions and stroke width previews for a custom-tailored look. Price: $429. corel.com

ALBUM DESIGN / LAYOUT
Album DS 6.1.1
In version 6.1.1, Album DS helps photographers quickly and easily design albums, cards, posters, collages and a variety of other contemporary image products. Our judges gave Album DS high marks for its...
versatility—it works with any album maker. Album DS can auto-populate entire albums, produce picture packages and proofs, split design spreads into left and right halves, automatically renaming the image files as left and right, and can also split spreads with an overlap in the center gutter to keep the entire image visible after binding. Price: $349. albumds.com/site_us

PRESENTATION / SLIDESHOW

Animoto Pro
As pros look for ways to use moving images, Animoto is fast becoming the application of choice for slideshows and video presentations. Created by TV and film producers, Animoto Pro makes professional-grade videos from images and sets them to music with more than 500 free, commercially licensed songs. With the release of Animoto + Video, users can incorporate video clips alongside their photos to give customers a more dynamic multimedia experience. The application features patent-pending Cinematic Artificial Intelligence technology that thinks like an editor/director. Price: $99 for three months; $249 for one year. animoto.com/photography

DIGITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT

ACDSee Pro 3
ACDSee continues its award-winning innovation with Version 3 of its professional image organization, viewing and editing application. The Pro 3 software optimizes workflow through four areas of activity: manage, view, process and online. Manage arranges digital assets into user-created specifications with both folders and metadata. View allows photographers to preview images at full size and apply a range of advanced features. Process integrates nondestructive image editing and pixel-level editing into one seamless application. Online facilitates simple image storage and sharing online without exiting the application. Price: $169.99. acdseepro.com

STUDIO MANAGEMENT

SuccessWare
Available for Windows and Mac OS, SuccessWare’s update landed it another win in this category. Adding to the software’s studio tracking, product pricing and business planning features, the latest version boasts a new scheduling feature with month and list views; quick appointment scheduling via drag-and-drop of saved appointments; staff reminders using multimedia messaging; automatic e-mails sent to clients and prospects; and more. Price: Ranges from $49 per month for a single-user lease to $3,595 for an 11-user purchase. successware.net

PRESENTATION

TRADITIONAL PHOTO ALBUM

TAP DPS Matted Folio
New from TAP, the DPS (Digital Proofing System) Matted Folio weds a modern feature with a traditional presentation, allowing photographers to display images and deliver a CD/DVD all in one package. The folio has a patent-pending, retractable CD/DVD storage sleeve hidden in the back panel, and works great as an add-on display piece or proof book. Price: $14.50 for folio. Mats sold separately at $13.85 per six pack. tap-usa.com

CONTEMPORARY PHOTO ALBUM

AsukaBook Book Bound EXD
AsukaBook’s new Book Bound EXD line impressed our judges with its customizable format and its high-quality construction. The Book Bound EXD line includes an AsukaBook EX book with a printed hard cover and a matching book jacket. Customizable inside flaps give the album the look of a real coffee table book, and it comes in a custom-designed book case. Includes protective varnish or laminate coating in a matte or glossy finish. Price: Varies according to size. asukabook.com
ONLINE PRINT ORDER FULFILLMENT SERVICE

WHCC PickPic
PickPic captured this category with the August 2009 release, offering a new level of speed and security, personalized domain name and SSL certificate for secure payment transactions. The system features slick image galleries designed to match the photographer’s branding, with support for custom crops, tones, borders, pricing and discounts. Just after our judging concluded, PickPic came out with the next generation of its online service, PickPic ProofPro. Price: $99 per month. pickpic.com

ONLINE ALBUM DESIGN AND HOSTING

Viewbook PRO Website Account
Viewbook PRO is more of a virtual display system than an online tool for building tangible photo albums. If you’re looking for the latter, try close runners-up Collages.net Hybrid Album Design or Forbeyon Virtual Album Builder.

Viewbook PRO provides a robust yet simple platform for building online galleries, sophisticated portfolio websites and virtual albums. The fully customized sites can include branding elements, scalable slideshows, full-screen views and video. There’s even technology for embedding portfolios and projects into blogs and social networks. Price: $19 per month. viewbook.com

FRAME

Midwest Photographic Contemporary Acrylic Frames
With Midwest Photographic’s acrylic frames, your prints are protected behind the acrylic face, and magnets keep them in place. The effect is a contemporary look in an easily modified setup. It’s a great display option for studios that want to swap out photos seasonally, or for different promotions. Photos go between the two 5x5-inch pieces of acrylic, which are held together by small magnets. Price: $119–$187. midwestphotographic.com

DISPLAY

IT’S A TIE!

WHCC Float Wraps
WHCC Float Wraps add dimension to a room. The wraps are created by stretching a photographic print or canvas around masonite. A laminate protects the image, while padding between the print and the masonite gives the front of the Float Wrap a raised look. Available in sizes from 8x10 to 20x30 inches. Price: $26–$128. whcc.com

NOVELTY OR ADD-ON SALES ITEM

Simply Canvas Clusters
With four or more individual canvases in each cluster, Simply Canvas Clusters combine to create multi-faceted wall art. Simply Canvas provides 10 ready-made, custom-designed patterns. Each cluster comes with a Zip file of sizing templates. With almost no canvas design skill, photographers can drag and drop elements to make clusters and then place a production order. Custom borders are included in the price. Price: $213–$380. simplycanvas.com

Simply Canvas Photo Banner Stands
Simply Canvas Photo Banner Stands won over our judges with their simplicity and high-quality printing on durable fabric. Ideal for studio and tradeshow displays, Photo Banners also make great add-on items and premium gifts for portrait and wedding clients. The stands are lightweight and easy to transport. Price: $99–$249. simplycanvas.com
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

BOOK

“Power Marketing, Selling, and Pricing”

WEBSITE

Nik Software Webinars
From mid-October through mid-December Nik hosted a series of eight hour-long webinars on a range of photography topics. Classes covered close-up and scenic photography, portraits, sports and action, wildlife, landscapes, weddings, commercial image creation and Capture NX2. The webinars included basic tips as well as product-specific lessons related to Nik’s applications. Look for Nik’s next set of webinars on the company’s website. Price: Free. niksoftware.com

WORKSHOP/SEMINAR

Kubota Digital Photography Bootcamp
Kubota is back on the podium. Kevin Kubota’s 18th Digital Photography Bootcamp took place over five days in November and covered all of the specifics for running a successful digital portrait and wedding studio. Topics included style, creativity, and inspiration; digital capture techniques with live models; workflow with cutting-edge software tools; Photoshop essentials and fine art techniques; presentation and sales techniques; and marketing and business. Check the Kubota website for future Bootcamp details. Price: $2,895. kubotaimagetools.com

DVD

Kubota RAW Workflow for Lightroom V2
The interactive DVD outlines a step-by-step process for working with RAW files in Lightroom, including tips for organization, editing and enhancing, and final presentation. As a bonus, the DVD comes with more than 50 Lightroom presets created by Kubota to speed up a digital workflow. Price: $99. kubotaimagetools.com

BEST OF THE REST

Every year we give a shout out to some worthy competitors that didn’t quite fit into an established category. This year, the judges’ kudos went to the RS DR-1 Double Strap by Black Rapid and the Kubota RPG SpeedKeys 2.0.

Black Rapid RS DR-1 Double Strap
Black Rapid designed the RS DR-1 Double Strap for photographers working long days on location with two cameras. Ergonomically optimized, the RS DR-1 comes with all the hardware needed to attach two cameras, including the new FastenR-2 and ConnectR-2 fasteners. Price: $56. blackrapid.com

Kubota RPG SpeedKeys 2.0
The new Kubota RPG SpeedKeys 2.0 for Lightroom 2 is a customizable wireless USB keypad with one-button access to a variety of adjustments, Kubota Lightroom presets and advanced image enhancement tools. This version offers 48 new key options for the complete customization of hundreds of settings. The SpeedKeys software allows photographers to use pre-programmed workflow key combinations or their own presets. It comes loaded with 29 Kubota Lightroom presets. Price: $349. kubotaimagetools.com