



AORAKI MOUNT COOK

# MOUNTAIN PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

24-28 March 2016



NEW ZEALAND  
ALPINE CLUB





AORAKI MOUNT COOK  
**MOUNTAIN PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP**  
24–28 March 2016

**Where** Based out of NZAC Unwin Lodge and Plateau hut, Aoraki Mount Cook.

**When** 5pm, Thursday 24 March– 5pm Monday 28 March.

**Who is this course for?**

The NZAC Mountain Photography Workshop is aimed at already competent (beginner–intermediate level) DSLR/ Mirrorless photographers who want to further their skills in landscape photography – particularly in an alpine environment.

You'll learn about equipment and gear selection for mountain photography; photography in mountain locations – including planning/composition; best times to shoot and specific landscape techniques to get the very best detail from your shots. Twice a day we'll head out to spectacular locations, then follow up our shoots with post-processing time back at the lodge, where you'll learn how develop an image from the RAW file using Adobe Lightroom.



**Plateau Hut will make a spectacular location, with views of Aoraki Mount Cook, Hochstetter Icefall and the Tasman Glacier.** ALL IMAGES: MARK WATSON

**CLICK TO REGISTER FOR THIS WORKSHOP**

**MOUNTAIN PHOTOGRAPHY**

differs from a climb or a tramp where you journey as a team from A to B with a reasonably set objective: it's about planning a location, scoping and spending time on the shoot. Photography is a highly

individualistic creative art form that is dependent on serendipity, a fair degree of patience and, importantly, the 'quality' of light. As each person is at a different stage with their photography and what they want from a course like

this we will have a flexible plan and cater to everyone. With a small group we hope to operate as a unit yet still allow freedom to 'do your own thing'. I will do my very best to give each of you personal attention in the field and in the classroom.

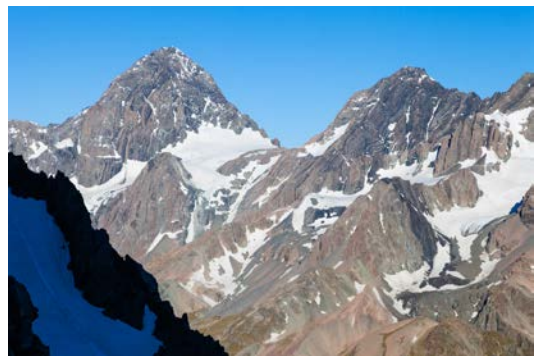
## Prerequisites

At a minimum all people wishing to register for this workshop should:

- Own a DSLR or Mirrorless **manual-capable** camera + lens
- Own or be able to borrow a tripod
- Have a working knowledge of aperture, shutter speed and ISO and how the three work together (if you are rusty on this let us know and we can do a quick refresher)
- Have basic skills with ice axe and crampons. (*Trampers without ice axe and crampon experience can join, but will be limited to taking photos from the immediate vicinity of Plateau Hut during the trip up to Grand Plateau*).

## What we will cover during this workshop

1. Taking pictures while tramping & climbing and dedicated private trips to take specific mountain landscapes/natural history.
2. Discussion on types of cameras: DSLRs versus Mirrorless; Compact cameras.
3. Discussion on carrying your equipment: bum bags, backpacks, lens cases and what to use when.
4. Selection of lenses for the mountains.
5. Technical aspects:
  - Use of aperture priority, shutter priority, manual control etc
  - Aperture selection (Depth of Field & Sharpness)
  - Exposure and understanding histograms
  - Filters - polarizer, split neutral density etc
6. Tripods: type, how to use, stability in wind
7. Composition: highly personal, of course, but there will be some field discussion, examples shown and assistance in the field.
8. Reconnaissance and shot planning: 'location and light.'
9. Mountain landscape: balancing exposure, blurring motion, correct exposure, choosing subjects and working with the light; photographing people and action.
10. Digital technology:
  - Raw vs Jpeg
  - Memory cards
  - Battery power
  - Dust/moisture – keeping camera clean
11. Storage and post production: hard drives, 'Lightroom'



FROM TOP:

1. South Faces of Aoraki Mount Cook and Nazomi from Hooker Valley.
2. Hooker River.
3. Malte Brun and Aiguilles Rouges from Plateau Hut.
4. First light on the summit ridge of Aoraki Mount Cook.



programme for storage, cataloguing, post-processing.

## 12. Post Processing:

- Processing RAW files to get the very best for your finished image. Contrast, curves, saturation, cropping/straightening horizon, dust removal, sharpening etc.
- Discussion/demonstration of Photoshop blending techniques and HDR.
- Stitching multiple images together to create a panorama landscape. Use of pano head plate to eliminate parallax error.
- Black & White conversions.

13. Group discussion & critique of images each day after we take and process images.

## Technical gear required

- Please bring your portable computer and card reader i.e. have the ability to download your own images.
- Please download to your computer the 'month free trial' of Lightroom 6/CC as I will be demonstrating this programme's benefits for image library organisation and processing.

[Adobe Lightroom 6/Creative Cloud Trial Version: to download click here.](#)

- Please read as much as you can about Lightroom in advance. There are a number of YouTube videos and plenty of learning resources on line.
- You don't need Photoshop. All the basic processing techniques we will use are in Lightroom, but I will demonstrate some Photoshop techniques that you might like to follow along with if you do have Photoshop.
- You will need a good sturdy tripod. If you don't own one already then don't go out and buy an expensive one in advance... perhaps borrow from friend ( I do have one spare tripod that can be used... ask me by email).
- Don't go out and buy an expensive camera bag. I'll show you various bags during the course to give some idea of variety to suit your needs.
- Read about the benefits of using split neutral density filters. I will be demonstrating their use during the course.
- If you have recently bought a new camera please read the manual in advance and be familiar/comfortable with changing the settings.
- If you can borrow or buy a set (2 or 3 different grades - 2, 3, 4 f-stops) of Neutral Density Gradient filters then please do so as we'll be demonstrating their use a lot during the course. Singh Ray and Lee make the best, though expensive, versions. There are cheaper alternatives, such as Cokin. If you are only buying



FROM TOP:

1. Tasman Lake and Aoraki Mount Cook, Tasman Valley.
2. Hooker Lake and Aoraki Mount Cook.
3. East Face of Aoraki Mount Cook from Plateau Hut.

one set, Soft are more versatile than Hard.

- Also useful is a cable release or electronic shutter trigger.

## Essential clothing and equipment

- Usual mountaineering clothing + wet weather/wind proofs.
- Lots of spare socks in case of wet feet in streams.
- Gum boots can be useful as well as mountain boots.
- Ice axe and Crampons.

(Note: While it is possible to photograph at Plateau Hut without these, those with experience in ice axe and crampon use will have more flexibility with shoot locations).

- Gaiters.
- Walking pole(s).
- Good hat and gloves.
- Headlamp.
- Day pack + pack big enough for overnight @ Plateau Hut.
- Sleeping bag.
- Bowl or plate, cup and spoon.
- Drink bottle.
- Toiletries.
- Because of late sunset and early sunrise this time of year we might try to catch a nap during the day - bring an eye mask if you need one.

## Course fees

The course cost is **\$1190**. NZAC membership is required.

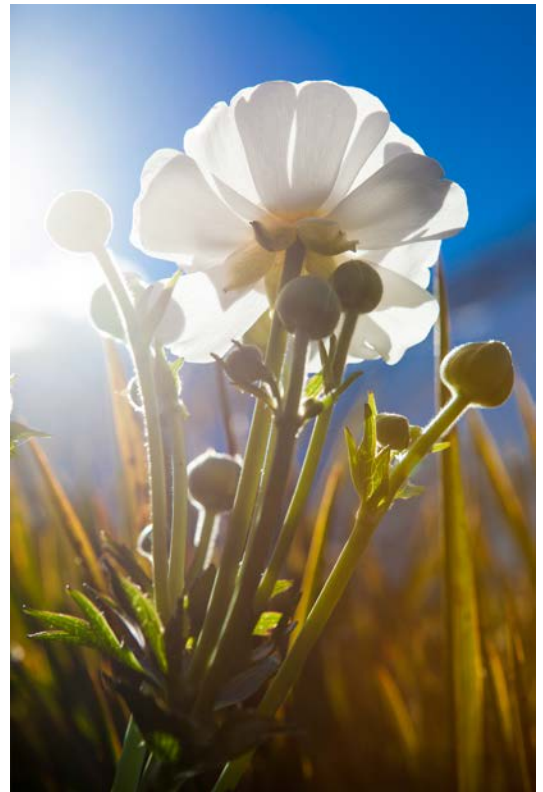
- This includes all instruction, accommodation, four evening meals and flights to Plateau Hut.
- To join NZAC go to:  
<https://alpineclub.org.nz/apply-for-membership/>
- If you are accepted onto the course you will need to pay a non-refundable \$300 deposit immediately to secure your position. The remainder of the fee is due by Friday 4th March

## Safety

*The location of Grand Plateau has a number of significant hazards and shooting from locations beyond the hut is only suitable for those with mountaineering experience. You must take responsibility for your own safety in any location you choose to go to. Your tutor is not a climbing guide or instructor and is not there to ensure your wellbeing.*

**CLICK TO REGISTER FOR THIS WORKSHOP**

More about [Mark Watson](#), course tutor.



FROM TOP:

1. Mount Cook Lily, Hooker Valley.
2. Mount Cook Village & Mount Sefton.

## Details

- You will need to arrive at Unwin Lodge by 5pm on the evening of March 24th for a 'welcome' evening meal, introductions and outline of the workshop.
- We will be pooling transport from Christchurch to Aoraki Mount Cook, so please let us know if you'd like to combine.
- Evening meals will be supplied but you will be required to bring your own breakfast, lunch and snacks.



Pre-dawn over Tasman Glacier terminal lake.

## Outline of Programme

### • THURSDAY 24th March

5pm: Meet at NZAC's Unwin Lodge, Aoraki Mount Cook.

6pm: Group dinner at the lodge.

7pm: Introduction by Mark Watson: aims and objects of the course/outline of the days ahead. Each course member to introduce themselves. Background and brief description of what they want to get from course.

- Short slideshow.

- Landscape shooting basics.

### • FRIDAY 25th

Early breakfast, drive to Glentanner and Tasman Valley for sunrise shoot.

Return to Unwin for 2nd breakfast.

Tuition session (Lightroom overview)

Download images and processing in Lightroom: critique of first morning's images.

Early dinner.

Sunset photo excursion in Hooker Valley or Hooker Lake.

### • SATURDAY 26th

Early breakfast then Tasman Lake sunrise shoot.

Return to Unwin and download images.

Processing + workshop session.

Noon: Pack food, clothing, camera gear etc for night at

Plateau Hut. Drive to Mount Cook Airport.

Flight to Plateau Hut.

Dinner.

Evening shoot: Malte Brun Range, Tasman Glacier, Plateau Hut, Astrophotography.

### • SUNDAY 27th

Early breakfast. Shoot pre-dawn/dawn on Aoraki Mount Cook and Grand Plateau.

Fly back to Mount Cook Airport

Return to Unwin download/process pictures

Workshop session + slideshow.

Evening shoot: Tasman Valley Overlook.

### • MONDAY 28th

Early breakfast - drive to White Horse Hill car park and walk to Mueller Lake near first swingbridge in time for dawn on Mount Sefton.

Workshop session & lunch.

Post-processing time and image discussion.

5pm: Depart for Christchurch.

### NOTE

If weather does not allow us to fly to Plateau Hut, Mueller Hut will be our backup destination. (4 hour walk).