

Camera Club of Boca Raton

Evaluator's Information Sheet

First, we would like to thank you for accepting our invitation to critique entries during our monthly Evaluation Night. We look forward to your comments. For those who have evaluated our work before, this is a reminder as well as an update on some changes we have made. For new evaluators, this aims to inform you of the various aspects of our Evaluation meetings.

Member Groups

Participants are divided among three groups based on their levels of experience, both in camera club membership as well as photographic know-how:

- **Level 1**, the least experienced in terms of camera club membership and/or photographic skills.
- **Level 2**, intermediate, more advanced photographers who have belonged to this or other camera clubs previously and/or have a fair amount of familiarity photographing.
- **Level 3**, advanced, the most experienced group, having been camera club members for a while and having demonstrated a certain amount of know-how in the photographic arena.

We would like to see our guest evaluators score easiest on Level 1 entries, knowing these were taken by photographers with less experience. Scoring can be tougher on Level 3 entries, because these members have the most experience and, to put it bluntly, "should know better."

Subject Categories

Members may enter three photos in any combination of our two categories

- **1 Assigned Subject:** As with most clubs offering this category, photos entered here must comply with the subject assigned for that month, constituting the major portion of the image or be the primary theme. While clearly fitting the category, these entries must also comply with considerations that constitute strong images; it is not enough that they simply fit this month's subject. These are evaluated separately within each experience level.
- **2. General/Open:** Any subject other than that assigned (including altered reality or obviously manipulated work). These are evaluated separately within each experience level.

These are shown within each experience level starting with the least experienced (Level 1), first the Assigned then the General. You will be told the level and category when each new grouping is presented.

About Altered Reality/Creative Edit: Submitting altered reality photographs is encouraged. Entries may deviate from reality in any way, clearly manipulated in the camera (zooming the lens or shaking the camera) **or** in the computer (using filters, colors, added objects in the frame, and similar departure from reality). These creative images can be entered in either category: If dealing with the Assigned Subject, they should go into that category. Otherwise, the altered images should go into the Open/General Category.

A.I Created Photos

In the last year or so, software has become available that will create a photo just by writing a suggestion. For example, giving the suggestion “show the New York skyline at sunset,” produced a photo that was recognizable but the quality was poor. It would not be a competition photo but in the next year or two (perhaps soon) it could be.

The Camera Club guidelines allow for and encourage the use of the “digital darkroom” which is the software such as Photoshop, Lightroom, etc. used for editing. The software today allows us to replace the sky, change the background and make many other changes to enhance the original RAW or JPG that came out of the camera.

Accordingly, the following Rule goes into effect immediately:

1. All submission must start with a photograph you took with a camera or a cellphone camera
2. Any sky or background replacements must be from photos you took NOT supplied by the software company or purchased.
3. The same applies to Altered Reality, “Creative”, it must start with an original photo. Since it is Altered Reality, you can add items that were not original to you.
4. No A.I. created images will be accepted.

We rely on an honor system and expect that our club members will follow the above rules.

Critiquing Versus Scoring

While scores are meaningful, we view the evaluations as a learning experience: What you say in your review is most important. We wish to remind the evaluator that people are entering images they consider their best work at the moment appropriate for the category. Being a somewhat sensitive area, it is always best to find positives about the image before voicing problems. While true for everyone, this would probably be most evident among the less experienced photographers/club members in Level 1. Please be as specific as you can, avoiding generalities such as “I like it” or “This is nice,” considering all the aspects of the photograph: subject, composition, and technical characteristics such as exposure, sharpness, clarity of colors, range of whites and blacks, etc. Because guests and relative newcomers to the world of clubs may not be so familiar with terminology, it will be an added bonus if you briefly explain such terms or processes (examples include burn and dodge; negative space; and rule of thirds). Thank you for these considerations.

It is also important for you to know that, while most clubs prohibit conversation during the process, we encourage our members to ask questions if there is something they do not understand. Because we consider these evaluations a learning process, we are hoping you are willing to answer possible member questions regarding your comments on the pictures immediately after

you score them. This is not intended to challenge your critique, but rather to enlighten members, especially those less experienced in clubs, when they do not understand something. Feel free to decline if you are not comfortable with this aspect of our evaluation process.

Our Scoring Guide

We use a four-point scoring system, spanning from a high of 9 to a low of 6. Please try to use the full scale, especially because the range is so limited:

Please consider and where appropriate comment on the composition, the technical aspect of the image and the overall WOW factor.

- **A “9”** constitutes an excellent picture having impact and needing very little, if any, improvement.
- **An “8”** represents a strong picture in terms of subject, composition, exposure, etc. but needs minor corrections.
- **A “7”** is an average or OK picture, which needs corrections and/or lacks impact.
- **A “6”** is reserved for seriously flawed images.

For teaching purposes, we ask the evaluator to comment on aspects that make the 9 images especially strong. For the 6, 7, and 8 photos we hope the evaluator will comment on how to improve these pictures. Your comments and suggestions are the most helpful component of the learning experience. Each submission should be rated on its own merits—we do not do run throughs! Please also try to assign scores consistent with the critiquing. Assigning a score that truly represents the quality of the photo is in itself a learning tool. Being an easy grader does not help the photographer learn and improve his/her skills. On the other hand, it is confusing if an evaluation is strongly favorable but the score is low.

Again, many thanks for helping us all improve our photographic skills!

Please note our website link: www.bocaratoncameraclub.org