



LEARN
FROM THE
EXPERTS

Classic Jersey

The Amateur Photographer Masterclass with **Tom Mackie**

A beguiling mixture of British and Continental influences, Jersey is in a league of its own when it comes to landscapes.

Tom Mackie shows five AP readers how to make the most of its classic landmarks. **Gill Mullins** reports

SOME 100 miles south of the mainland lie the Channel Islands, with roots in both England and France but with a flavour all of their own. Jersey is the largest and most southerly, just 14 miles off the Normandy coast. Its 45 square miles pack in an extraordinary range of landscapes, from rugged coves to golden sands, green lanes to enticing footpaths, historic castles and towers to the Second World War fortifications built by the Germans – the Channel Islands being the only British territory to be occupied during the war.

Jersey's happier claim to fame is that it is the sunniest place in the British Isles, and it certainly lives up to its reputation for our *Masterclass*, shooting classic Jersey landmarks. We meet the readers, all from Jersey Photographic Society, in the warmth

of a bright evening for a briefing at the car park closest to our first quintessential Jersey shoot – sunset over Corbière Lighthouse. While most people don't venture much further to capture the lighthouse, our expert Tom Mackie suggests an alternative viewpoint from a rocky outcrop a few hundred yards south, by the famous MP2, or 'Radio', Tower. 'It's always a good idea to vary your viewpoint and be prepared to try something different if you want great results that stand out from the crowd,' he explains.

SHOOTING THE MOON

As luck would have it, a crescent moon is due to set over the lighthouse half an hour or so after the sun has gone down. Tom suggests that, from our viewpoint, looking out over the sea toward Corbière, f/8 is

probably the optimum aperture as there's not much detail to capture in the watery foreground. Then, after the sun has set, it's all about shutter speed. Tom recommends no slower than 1/15sec, with an ISO of around 1250 to make this possible.

Another approach is to shoot the moon separately with a fairly fast exposure to avoid blur (it sinks surprisingly quickly), then use a longer exposure for the lighthouse to smooth out the water, and finally to blend the images on your computer (see Tom's shot, page 23). 'This way you get the optimum exposure for both subjects, and you can position the moon exactly where you want it, too,' says Tom.

FOCUS-STACKING

The second day's itinerary is to shoot the classic scenes of Mont Orgueil Castle overlooking Gorey, and the Archirondel Tower in St Catherine's Bay. However, with the morning sky's solid-grey cloud threatening a dull backdrop for two views where the sky will play a big role, we call in first on one of Jersey's most celebrated gardens at Samarès Manor, as overcast conditions are



About the readers

Sue Baudains



'I started about 10 years ago, shooting landscapes and surfing. Today has inspired me to pay more attention to the technical aspects of photography.' Canon EOS 5D Mark II with 24-105mm and 100-400mm zooms

Claire Jehan



'I've always taken family photos and branched out from compacts to a DSLR 3 1/2 years ago. Today I've practised using equipment that, up till now, had been little used.' Canon EOS 5D Mark II with 24-105mm zoom

Bob Newton



'I'm mostly interested in wildlife and close-ups. The thing I've really learned today is to take more time to think about the technical aspects of a shot, and to choose the best lens for the composition.' Nikon D300 with 10-20mm, 80-200mm and 80-400mm zooms, and a 105mm prime

Alan Pryor



'I've only been doing this since October, so today's shoot has opened up a whole new world of photography for me.' Nikon D5100 with 18-55mm, 18-105mm, 70-300mm and 100-300mm zooms

Gary Stringfellow



'I've been taking pictures since January and I'll shoot anything that catches my eye, from landscapes and wildlife to macro. I really enjoyed Tom's easy way of teaching.' Nikon D3S with 17-35mm, 24-70mm and 70-200mm zooms, and 105mm and 300mm primes

Your AP expert... Tom Mackie



A former contributor to AP's *Photo Insight* series, Tom Mackie is one of the world's leading photographers. He has spent many years as an architectural, industrial and landscape photographer, and has a penchant for panoramic photography. Tom has published several books and written numerous articles for photography magazines. He also lectures on photography and regularly holds workshops in the UK and abroad. www.tommackie.com



perfect for floral shoots. Inevitably, as soon as we arrive the clouds disperse and the sun blazes down, but we still find a perfect spot in the Japanese Garden to try some focus-stacking. This technique combines different shots in post-production to create the effect of a really large depth of field, and it's a classic for garden photography. We could use a small aperture such as f/22 to increase the depth of field, but this will introduce a lot of diffraction and result in an image that isn't as sharp as it could be. Instead, it's better to go for an optimal aperture of f/8 for crucial image sharpness and focus-stack instead.

'It's actually quite straightforward,' says

'As luck would have it, a crescent moon is due to set over the lighthouse half an hour or so after the sun has gone down'

Tom. 'Shoot several different frames with different focus distances, so that different areas of each shot are sharp, then use Photomerge in Photoshop to blend the sharp sections into one shot.' Next, select all the layers using the Layers palette, and choose Edit>Auto Blend Layers>Stack Images. 'This gives you a final picture with multiple sharp points of focus – more like how our eyes see a scene. A tilt-and-shift lens will help create the same result in-camera, but focus stacking is far cheaper.'

After lunch by the spectacular herb garden – complete with viewing platform for interesting architectural angles and a 12th-century thatched dovecote as background interest – we head east to tackle sweeping landscapes at Gorey and St Catherine's Bay. With a blue sky all afternoon, this was a *Masterclass* where, for once, an umbrella would be required only for shade!

A big thank you to **Jersey Tourism** (jersey.com) for kindly supplying our Jersey flights and car hire, and to **Samares Manor** (samaresmanor.com) for free entry to shoot its glorious gardens.



Experiment

◆ While this is underexposed, the flare of the light from the lighthouse and its reflection create lots of atmosphere, showing what you can achieve through experimentation. For an even stronger composition, Alan could've included more of the rocks to the right. Nikon D5100, 135mm focal length, 8secs at f/8, ISO 640

Leading lines

◆ The dark shadows on the harbour wall and Mont Orgueil Castle, and the footpath heading towards the quayside buildings, all act as leading lines in Claire's striking Gorey image, which is perfectly framed by the palm tree fronds and the colourful foreground pelargoniums. Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 24-105mm, 1/250 at f/8, ISO 100

TOM MACKIE



CLAIRE JEHAN





To comp or not to comp?

◆ Here Bob has used a longish 1/3sec exposure to cope with the low light and capture the warm post-sunset colours, but with this approach there's always a risk of capturing movement in the moon. Tom's option was to expose purely for the lighthouse, then comp the moon in from a separate, faster shot to keep it sharp and capture the crater details – and this also gives the option of enlarging and repositioning the moon for more impact.

Bob: Nikon D300, 18–200mm, 1/3sec at f/8, ISO 500

Tom: Nikon D800, 70–200mm, 82secs at f/8, ISO 1250



GARY STRINGFELLOW



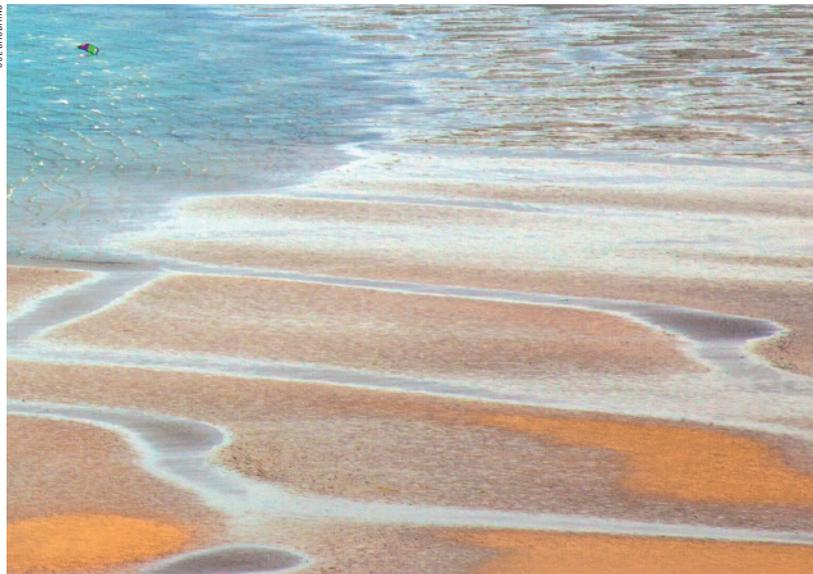
Create a sense of place

◆ Including the headland complete with house on the right-hand side of the frame adds a sense of place and perspective to this wideangle sunset, and Gary has carefully exposed to make the most of the last of the light. Nikon D3S, 17-35mm, 1/400sec at f/7.1, ISO 400

Patterns

◆ Look for patterns to create an eye-catching take on a familiar theme, as Sue has done with her unusual and effective beach shot at Gorey, cropping in close to maximise the effect of the watery trails in the sand, and including the colourful kite-surf sail to pique the viewer's curiosity. Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 24-105mm, 1/20sec at f/14, ISO 100

SUE BAUDAINS



Top tip

With panoramic stitches, a 1/3 overlap provides enough data to create a seamless image. Mount your camera on tripod and turn off any image stabilisation, then set up everything manually to avoid the camera settings altering automatically between frames, which can adversely affect the final result



SUE BAUDAINS



Taking part?

EVERY month we invite three to five AP readers to join one of our experts on a free day's assignment. The experts are **Tom Mackie** (landscapes), **Cathal McNaughton** (documentary and photo essays), **Annabel Williams** (location portraiture) and **Luke Massey** (wildlife). Our next confirmed *Masterclass* will be with Andrew Sydenham in London. To take part, visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/masterclass. Please state which *Masterclass* you would like to attend and include your name, address, email address, daytime telephone number, some words about your work and three or four images.

GARY STRINGFELLOW



Change your perspective

◆ Moving to a different viewpoint can create dramatically different results with the same subject. Sue's cropped in tightly on Archirondel Tower to create a panoramic look that focuses attention on the beach and the tower, while Gary has shot from further up the road using tree branches to naturally frame the scene.

Sue: Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 24-105mm, 1/125sec at f/10, ISO 100

Gary: Nikon D3S, 17-35mm, 1/80sec at f/8, ISO 160

BOB NEWTON



Focus-stacking

◆ Bob's shot of the Japanese Garden at Samarès Manor beautifully illustrates the focus-stacking technique (above), capturing the flora in all its glory. Nikon D300, 10–20mm, 1/180sec at f/8, ISO 200

Straight horizons

◆ Alan's got some punchy colour in his panoramic stitch of Mont Orgueil and Gorey harbour. The skewed horizon is easy to fix. After Photomerging and flattening the layers, choose Select All>Edit>Transform>Distort, then with the grid on for reference pull the anchor points up on both sides of the image until is straight. Nikon D5100, 18–105mm, 1/320sec at f/8, ISO 200

ALAN PRIOR



Jersey, Channel Islands

Location One hundred miles south of mainland Britain, with high-speed ferries from Poole and Weymouth, and regular flights from 27 UK airports.

Corbière lighthouse Situated just off the Rue de la Corbière, this is Jersey's most south-westerly point. It's accessible by causeway at low tide.

Samarès Manor On the Grand Route de Saint-Clément, south-east of St Helier, Samarès is noted for its spectacular Japanese, herb and water gardens. Open daily from 30 March–12 October, 9.30am–5pm. Tel: 01534 870 551. Website: samaresmanor.com. Admission: adults £7.50, seniors £7.15, accompanied children free

Mont Orgueil Castle Standing guard over Gorey on the east coast, the castle is an ideal focal point for panoramas from the top of the hill overlooking the village. Open daily 10am–6pm (until 3 November), and 10am–4pm (from 4 November). Tel: 01534 853 292. Website: jerseyheritage.org. Admission adults £11.30, seniors £10.20, children and students £6.90

Archirondel In St Catherine's Bay, just north of Gorey, this striking structure is often called a Martello tower, but it's actually a Conway, after the former Governor of Jersey, Sir Henry Conway, who ordered its construction as part of a fortifications programme to repel the French in the 18th century.

MORE TO EXPLORE

JERSEY is bursting with photo opportunities. For architecture, focus on the towers dotted round the coast – many from the Napoleonic Wars – or the equally ubiquitous Second World War fortifications, including the MP2 'Radio' Tower at Corbière.

If it's sweeping sands you're after, head west to surfers' favourite St Ouen's Bay,

north for cosier spots like Grève de Lecq, Plémont and Rozel or St Brelade, Ouaisne and Portelet in the south.

Floral destinations include Jersey Lavender Farm, Reg's Garden and Judith Quéree's Garden, while in summer there's an Open Gardens scheme.

For more information, visit jersey.com

Top tip

If you don't have a cable release for a long exposure, use your DSLR's built-in self-timer