

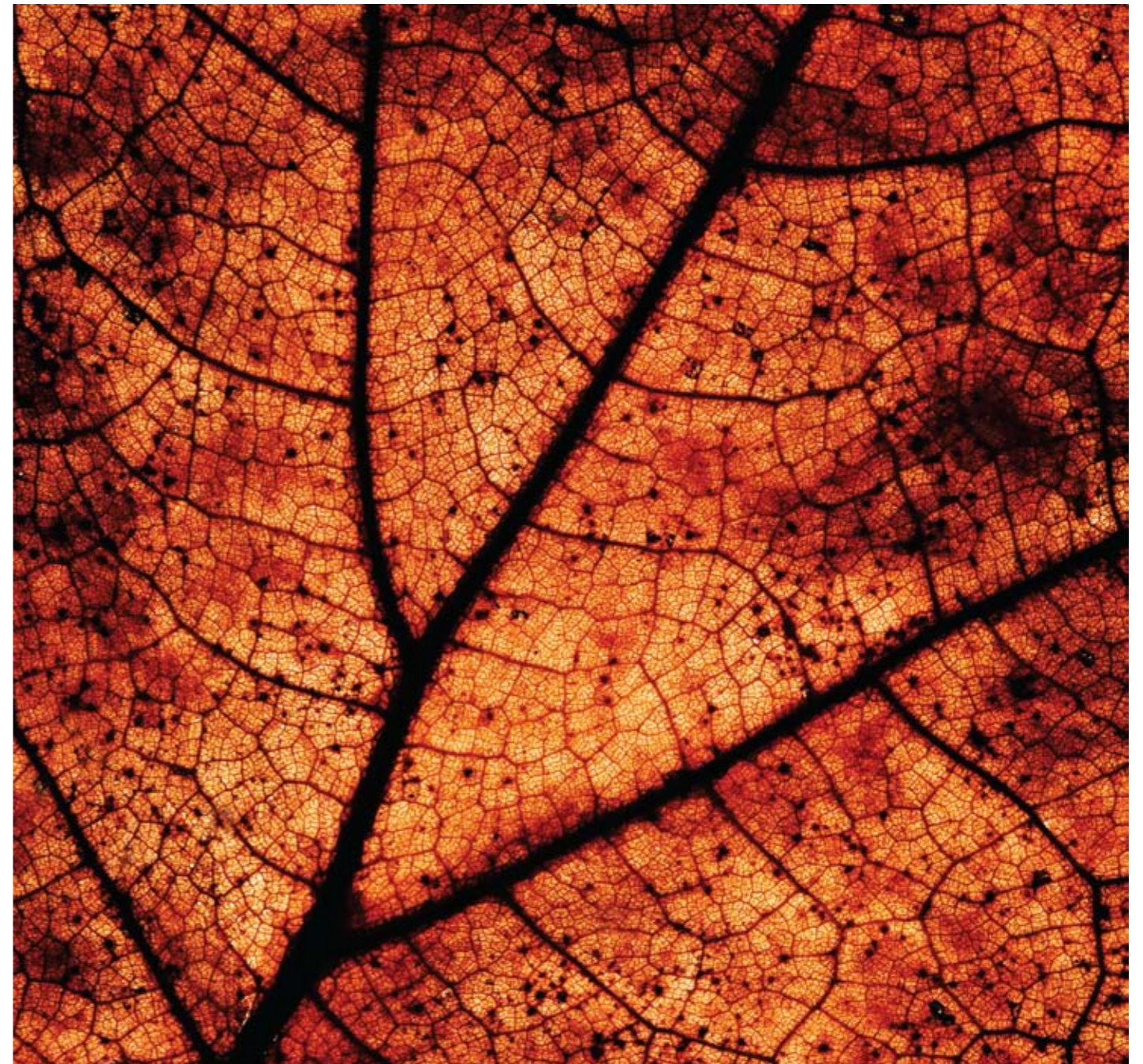
IN-DEPTH GUIDE TO...

AUTUMN COLOUR

It's often said that autumn presents the British landscape at its best, with hillsides erupting into fire-hued glory, golden light illuminating woodland and mist photogenically lingering in valleys. As a result, the season could be accused of being over-photographed – but that doesn't mean it's not a worthy subject for your pictures, especially if you take a new approach...

.....
TURN OVER A NEW LEAF AND GET
INSPIRED WITH DOUG CHINNERY
.....







DOUG CHINNERY

An artistic approach to capturing autumn colour sets Doug apart from the pack as a landscape photographer to watch all year round

WORDS CHARLOTTE GRIFFITHS PICTURES DOUG CHINNERY

Location: North Nottinghamshire Shooting on: Canon EOS 5D MkII, EOS 1Ds MkII, Holga, Hasselblad

Though Doug Chinnery is a successful fine art landscape photographer and works all the year round running photographic courses, writing articles and capturing his environment in ever more creative ways, it's the autumn season that sees his own images start to glow with a new intensity. Deft use of polarisers, clever composition, year-round mental 'logging' of locations that'll look good when the leaves turn – whatever it is that Doug is doing in order to capture these stunning pictures, it's clearly worth learning about.

Starting out with the 'ubiquitous Kodak Brownie' at age eight, Doug progressed to medium-format photography with a Soviet Lubitel twin-lens reflex camera at 11 and followed up with an Olympus OM10. "As a child I just enjoyed the fun of making pictures and it was the process rather than the results which hooked me," he said. Throughout his twenties and thirties Doug found less time for photography, jokingly pointing the finger squarely at "a wife and her insistence on various DIY projects that took up my spare time". Later, Doug's wife redeemed herself by buying a Canon EOS 350D as an anniversary present which "really re-fired my enthusiasm and passion for image-making" and got the photographer firmly back on track.

Autumn daze

The onset of autumn sees the fine art landscaper approach his chosen photographic genre with renewed vigour. It's not just the colours of the environment that Doug loves: the cooler weather brings misty mornings and a more manageable hour for sunrise and sunset. "The colour of the light in autumn, especially in the early morning and late afternoon, is just perfect for image-making," he said. "I am always looking to capture the colours and textures of autumn. I am looking for scenes which are quintessentially autumnal – swathes of colour, reflections in water, mist, receding layers – all of these make great images."

For a fantastic autumnal sunrise shot, Doug has some words of advice: but it's not

“The colour of the light in autumn, especially early morning and late afternoon, is just perfect for image making... I am looking for swathes of colour, reflections in water, mist – all of these make for great images”

for the faint-hearted. "Get into position an hour before sunrise, find the perfect composition and stay there. Now just wait for the light," he said. "If it is misty, enhance the effect by using a longer lens than normal – wide lenses make mist appear less dense while longer lenses enhance it."

"I would also use a polariser and look for compositions that put the lens at 90 degrees to the sun for the maximum effect. It enhances the contrast in the image, makes blue skies bluer and it makes the autumn colours really pop."

Doug has a mental catalogue of locations and builds on them throughout the year, memorising spots that'll quite literally be golden in the right light. "I look for either copses of trees of all the same variety so the colour is uniform, or for a really eye-catching look it'll be trees of different varieties growing together – this gives a wider range of shades and colours. In every woodland I visit throughout the year I am on the lookout for areas where the woodland floor is tidy. Every now and then you will find a woodland where the floor is distraction free – these are gold dust."

"I also look for lone trees in good locations so you can compose to make the most of both the colour and the position – like a tree on a horizon line or a lone tree beside a pond for example. Trees growing near water will often be shrouded in mist at

dawn when the weather is right in autumn. I make a point of knowing all of those locations in my area."

For autumnal macro shots, Doug prefers to collect fallen leaves and pieces of bark together before taking them home. "Then I set up a studio in my dining room using natural light and shoot them there without the complications of working in the field. I can't abide flash or studio lighting. Natural light in all its forms does everything I need."

The tools of the trade

To capture such creative images, Doug chooses a suitably creative piece of glass as his optic of choice. "A couple of years ago I would have picked my Canon 70-200mm f/2.8 IS L zoom, as it's such a versatile lens – but for the last year I have been very fortunate to own a Canon 45mm TSE tilt and shift lens," he explains. "It is so sharp, the focal length is ideal and it has the advantage of the tilt and shift movements which I can use creatively to introduce blur effects into my images." This blur effect, otherwise known as Intentional Camera Movement (ICM) is a technique employed by photographers to create abstract, impressionistic views of the world. ICM-photographer Chris Friel (interviewed in *Advanced Photographer*, issue 7) is one of Doug's major inspirations, who he describes as the "most startlingly innovative, exciting and creative photographer in the UK".

"The key [to ICM] is to use ND filters, low ISOs and narrow apertures to force the shutter speed down to between one and five seconds," Doug explains. "Then experiment with moving the camera in different directions at different speeds and at different points in the exposure. Be prepared to make 1000 images a day and have just four or five good ones. I love ICM!"

Like most keen landscapers, Doug is a user of filters: he is kitted out with the Lee system and has a set of soft and hard neutral density grads and its polariser, which he describes as 'superb'. "I also use the pro-glass neutral density filters – I have the two and three stop versions as well as the Big Stopper, although I have so far broken three of those. They are in very

short supply so I also carry a B+W 10-stop extreme ND filter."

Non-photographic essentials include a short bungee strap for hanging Doug's camera rucksack under his tripod to help stabilise it in high winds, and shower caps from hotels. "They make great disposable waterproof covers for the camera," he says.

Despite his enjoyment of ICM, Doug is keen not to limit himself to one particular style. "I would say that you'll see symmetry used a lot in my images and many are cropped square. I love minimalism and am always striving to eliminate anything from the frame that is not absolutely necessary to the image."

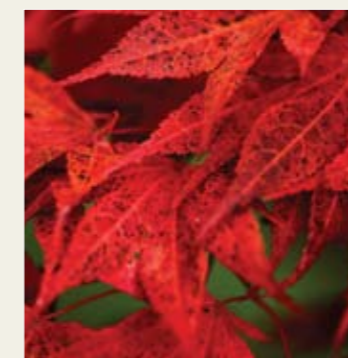
Doug's commitment to minimalism extends to his use of post-production software, with the photographer firmly placed in the 'get as much right in-camera' camp. His images are manipulated in Adobe Lightroom then final tweaks are applied in Photoshop. "I always experiment with white-balance, and I like the clarity and fill light sliders in Lightroom. In Photoshop my first job is dust spotting, followed by tweaking levels and curves. I rarely saturate the colours as I find adjusting the curve brings up the colours enough for me. For my mono conversions, I use Nik Software's Silver Efex Pro 2, it gives superb control." Most of Doug's images can be processed in three or four minutes. "If I work longer than that it is because the image is an artistic or creative shot," he explains. "On these I often spend an hour or more, often applying textures."

As this issue of *Advanced Photographer* went to press, Doug was still waiting to hear back on the success of his images in this year's Landscape Photographer of the Year competition: last year he landed a Judges' Choice award and has two pictures in the current shortlist. Regardless of the final results, success is already well on its way to this hard-working, experimental and very humble photographer – keep a look out for his name up in lights. O



SEE MORE:
www.dougchinnery.com

THE STORIES BEHIND THE PICTURES



FINGERS OF FIRE

Autumn leaves on an acer tree taken at a Scottish country house. I raised the ISO as I was working hand-held and filled the frame.

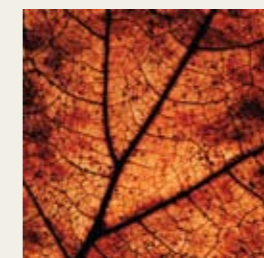
Canon EOS 5D MkII, Sigma 105mm f/2.8, 1/320sec at f/2.8, ISO 250



EVENING DELIGHT

I had noticed this beech copse while out walking with my dog Stan, and knew it would make a glorious autumn photograph – so I returned on one of those wonderful evenings when the light was liquid gold.

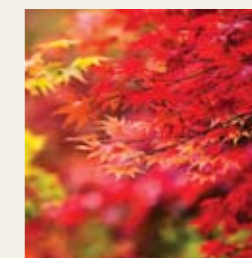
Canon EOS 1Ds MkII, 50mm f/1.8, 1/20sec at f/16, ISO 50



SCORCHED EARTH

I used my dining room window as a lightbox, taping the leaf to the glass and making sure my macro lens was parallel to the leaf. This required a long exposure but I loved the detail.

Canon EOS 5D MkII, Sigma 105mm f/2.8 macro, 30secs at f/26, ISO 50



FOREST FIRE

Acers at Westonbirt Arboretum. Using a long lens compressed perspective, blurred the background and gave me a fast shutter speed.

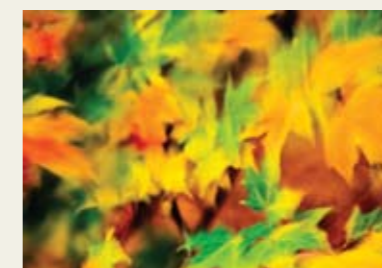
Canon EOS 1Ds MkII, 70-200mm f/2.8, 1/1250sec, f/2.8, ISO 100



WAFI AND WEAVE

I am a big believer in exploring the countryside on foot. The inside of this pine forest in Scotland was very dark but we came across this amazing grass – it needed a very long exposure but I loved the final result.

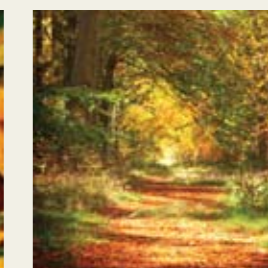
Canon EOS 1Ds MkII, 24-70mm f/2.8, 15secs at f/22, ISO 50



TUTTI FRUTTI

I made this image in a local park. It was a windy day so sharp shots of the autumn foliage were out of the question – so I slowed the shutter speed to blur the leaves.

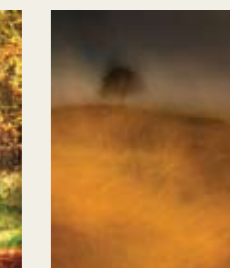
Canon EOS 1Ds MkII, 70-200mm f/2.8, 1/20sec at f/4, ISO 50



THE WAY HOME

This was in a local woodland. Although the day was bright I still needed a tripod as I was using a long lens to compress the perspective of the scene.

Canon EOS 1Ds MkII, 70-200mm f/2.8, 1sec at f/22, ISO 50



AUTUMN RAIN

This image uses a technique known as ICM. Working hand-held I used a narrow aperture to give a slow shutter speed.

Canon EOS 5D MkII, 45mm TSE f/2.8, 0.4sec at f/22, ISO 100

GOLDEN SPREAD

Westonbirt Arboretum has one of the finest collections of acers in the country. Working hand-held I opened the aperture wide for a fast shutter speed and shallow depth-of-field

Canon EOS 1Ds MkII, 70-200mm f/2.8, 1/400sec at f/2.8, ISO 100

