CAMERA NOT INCLUDED

The Photography Zine by Ewen Bell



Edition #8
July 2026

You are encouraged to print a personal copy of this zine for your own enjoyment. Or send a copy to a friend. Sharing is caring.

© 2026 Ewen Bell
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be used, copied or transmitted for commercial purposes without prior written permission of the copyright owner.

NONE of the images or text are permitted for AI training.
#DoNotTrain #NotForAI

First published in Australia in 2026 by Twocats



EWEN BELL

CAMERA NOT INCLUDED

Edition #8
July 2026


MELBOURNE
Victoria / Australia



THE COVER

Melbourne CBD on Foot

The streets of Melbourne have rarely been a photographic subject for me. My professional work takes me to the regional parts of Victoria, or into the Outback of Australia, or further afield to the majestic Himalayas. And every so often, far beyond to the polar nights of the Arctic.

Melbourne is my home, not my job.

I feel shy on these streets. I like to disappear, to immerse myself in anonymity. I feel distant from the people who share these streets. Humans are to be avoided. They are obstacles to the necessities of life... coffee and banh mi.


QUEEN VICTORIA MARKET

THIS EDITION

Grey Ghosts

July 2026

We think of winter as a time of withdrawal, and yet in Melbourne it feels like the exact opposite. It's a time of calmness, coolness and cameras. The cafes are full of customers and there are fewer tourists to clog up the footpath. It's a great time to be living in the city.

This collection is a celebration of winter light as much as a celebration of Melbourne.

I started this journey for the simple purpose of reviewing a few lenses. Every day I would hit the streets for a few hours to stretch my legs, and take the cameras for a walk. Anything that gets me away from the computer is good for me. We don't get winter sun coming into our apartment, so it's a double win to spend time on the streets.

Predicting where the sun might be is a challenge. And a joy. I never know which building will hide the sun, and which will reflect it. Chasing the ever changing shadows around town is a pleasure all it's own. I love the serendipity of shooting in this city.

A quick word of thanks to the sponsors who make this publication possible.

I need to say thankyou for ongoing support from my sponsors. They help to make my life on the road a little easier, and help to keep my photography viable.

I don't want to fill the pages with too many adverts, so please allow me this little reminder that the folks at Peak Design, Tamron and Angelbird have been generous in their support for my work.

A special thank you to all my YouTube subscribers as well. It's great to have you here :)

TAMRON







THE YARRA

Melbourne / Australia

HOW TO SEE MY CITY

Wandering but never lost.

This month I've spent a lot of time on the streets of Melbourne, my home town. There are worse places in the world to have been born. Melbourne is surrounded by fertile farming regions that produce great produce, lots of national parks where I can touch nature and trees, and the city itself is very multi-cultural with great markets and cheap eats.

It's also a great place to photograph.

Most of my career I have avoided making Melbourne a subject of my work. I shoot for regional tourist boards, hotels and wineries. I love an excuse to get out of town. I once did a magazine shoot on the top restaurants around Melbourne, and had to spend a little time on the streets gathering scenes to compliment the food photography. But that's not the same as really making a study of Melbourne.


CITY
HATS OF Quality

My formula for photography in Melbourne is simple. Start with good light and then see what turns up.

Sometimes I wake up too early and can't get back to sleep, so I check to see if there are clear skies and then contemplate walking down to the river for sunrise. We live a few hundred metres from the banks of The Yarra, near Flinders St Station.

Sometimes I like a little cloud at dawn, just above the horizon, to catch some colour and texture. But sometimes I focus on the light glowing off the water itself. This scene was taken with a bargain priced 50mm lens by TT Artisan, and the 50mm perspective gave me some tight framing for the river, but perfect for the rowers.

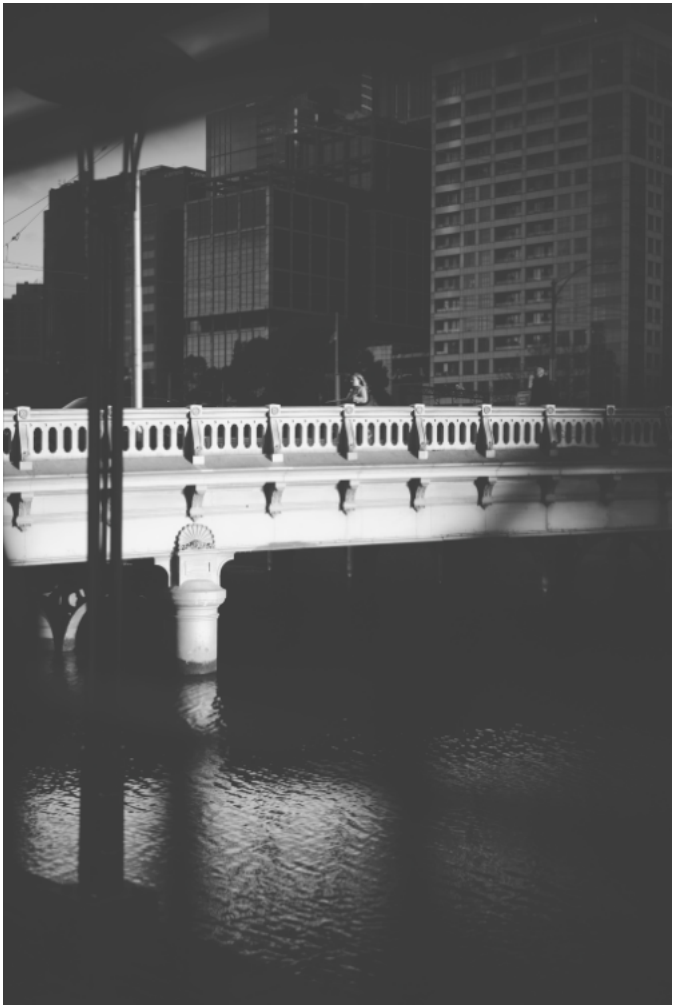
Shooting at F2 does the rest.







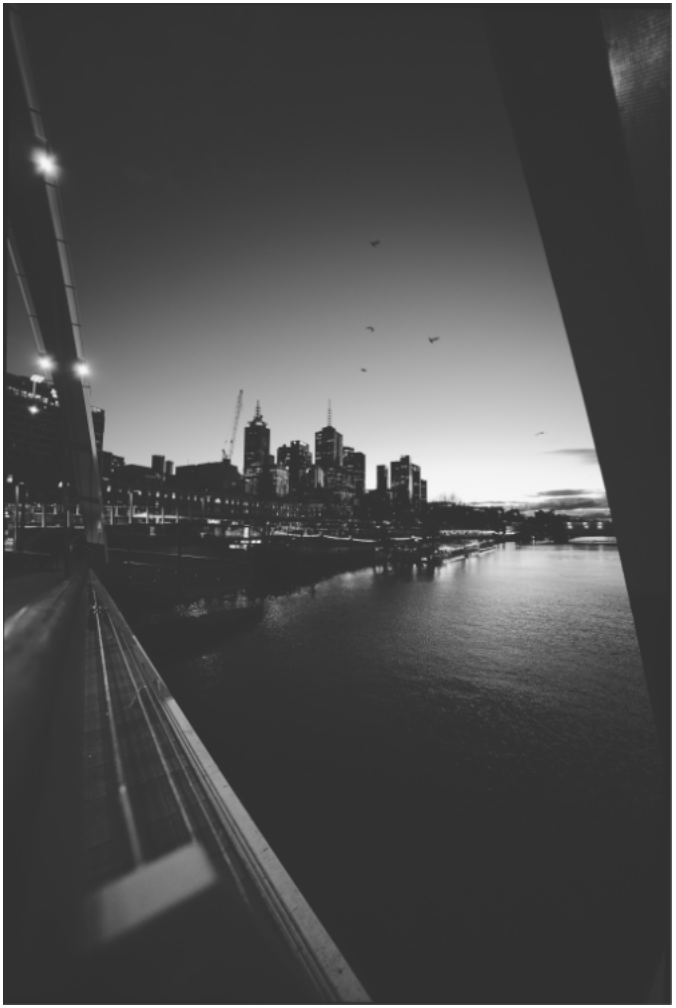

2014
2014

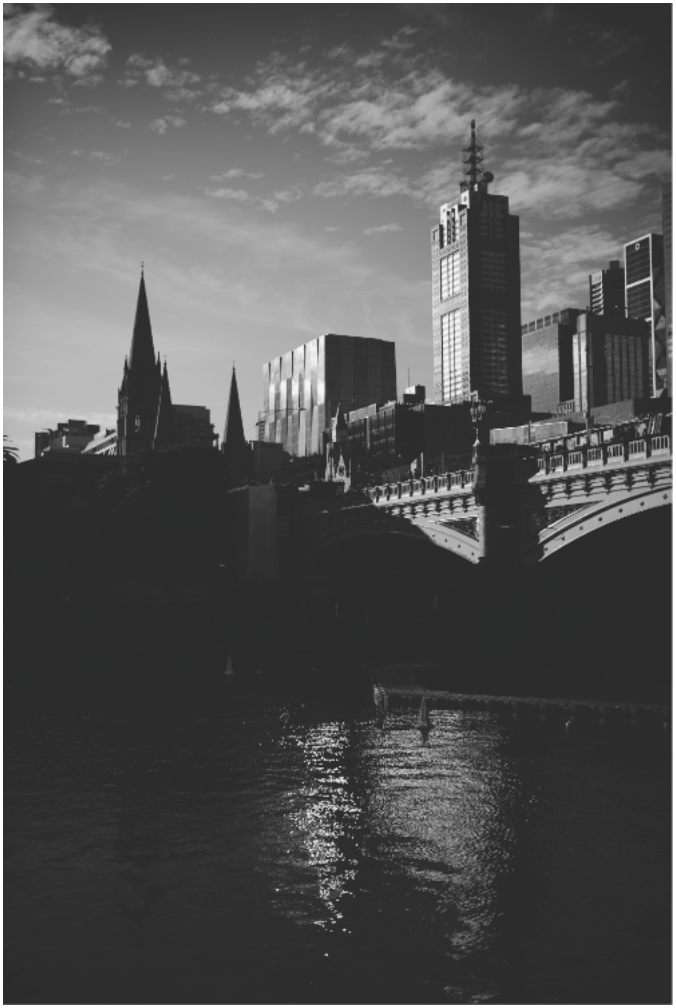




I can feel my brain slipping into a mode when the compositions start to click. It's almost as if my conscious brain shuts off for a while, and just gets out of the way. The compositions after this point are often pleasing and surprising. As in, I am surprised myself. I didn't know such a composition existed, and yet there it is on my screen.

So much of being creative is a matter of removing the constraints we learn as adults. We stifle our creative mind with layers of rules and expectations. I like to think of the process of removing constraints as "de-influencing". We're stepping back to a more genuine form of ourselves, with less baggage to get in the way.





One of these shots is taken at 12mm, the other at 50mm.

We change how we see the world when we change lenses. This is what I enjoy most about reviewing camera gear. Just having a reason to flip around my brain and look at my home town from a totally new perspective.

I walk this bridge a dozen times a week, on my way to a client or to coffee. But this week I get to stop and explore the scene, and make some photos. And try to make each shoot different to the last time I stopped and took photos on this bridge.



THIS PAGE IS SPONSORED

Thankyou Angelbird

Angelbird make a bunch of high performance memory cards, and some excellent tether cables. My journey with this brand began in 2020 when we started making recipe videos at home. Shellie did the recipe development and styling, and I did the video and editing. We quickly realised that “sustained data rate” was way more important than any maximum speed a card might claim to offer.

Those max speeds you see on the labels tend to drop off after a minute of shunting data onto the laptop.

Back then I scored a killer deal on some 256gb Micro-SD cards by Angelbird, and I've been buying their stuff ever since. My minimum spec for SD cards now is V60, which means 60MBytes/sec (480mbps). This gives me enough grunt for shooting 6K 10bit video, or for high speed continuous burst when shooting birds or festivals.

The best part is they are super fast to download at the end of the day. I can clear my cards and start a backup of the day, and be ready for dinner ten minutes later. I'm super happy to have them as a sponsor of this publication, and for their support in sponsoring my documentary project in Nepal.


AV PRO SE
CFexpress B
512GB
3700MB/s
INPUT 1
INPUT 2

DAYLESFORD WORKSHOP

Shellie and Ewen sharing 4 days of delicious photography.

It would be silly of me not to include a mention for our annual food photography workshop. We usually hold this in early May each year, when the air is getting cool and the leaves are changing colours. We rent a farmhouse about 90mins out of Melbourne, and Shellie prepares days and days worth of yummy things to eat and shoot.

This workshop is open to professionals who want to advance their skills, to cafe owners who want to shoot in-house, bloggers and influencers who want to level-up, or amateurs who just want to enjoy learning about light in an especially delicious setting.

Ewen does most of the teaching and talking, and we fill the days with learning and hands-on practice. In the evenings we gear down to share dinner at the farmhouse, and reflect on what we've achieved. It's a lovely experience, and we have room for a maximum of 6 participants each year. Book early!

ewenbell.com/food



daylesford love 2026

recipe collection

EWEN'S WORKSHOPS

Intimate photographic experiences with Ewen Bell

Every year I run a handful of workshops and photo tours in various parts of the world. I have been doing this for twenty years now, and every year I try to find ways to make each experience more rewarding. It's never the same workshop twice.

I run my tours in places I know very very well. I don't outsource my expertise. I care about these places and believe they offer something special to my companions. We learn about the cultures and landscapes, as much as we do photography.

Visit the website for more details.

ewenbell.com/tours

ANCIENT ANNAPURNAS

PHOTOGRAPHY TOUR
EWEN BELL

One of the most adventurous photography tours we've ever planned in the Himalayas. Follow the jeep trail deep into the Annapurnas to the ancient village of Manang, photograph some of the highest peaks in the world, and finish with a helicopter landing at Lake Tilicho.

Highlights include stunning waterfalls, glacial rivers plus herds of goats and yaks.

November 2024
13 days from US$11,880



BHUTAN

PHOTOGRAPHY TOUR
EWEN BELL

Dancing Monks and winter light in the kingdom where happiness meets wisdom.

Softly softly in the land of the Thunder Dragon. A journey from festivals to farmers with intimate moments and fabulous photography. Come and find out why we regard Bhutan as such a treasured experience, and why the people of Bhutan are the happiest on earth.

2025 November 13 - 27
15 days from US$10,888





COMPLEXITY

Wide is Work

I often hear about people who bought a wide lens, but then never use it because they didn't like the photos. They say things like "subjects are too small when I shoot with this lens."

I get what they mean. The problem isn't the lens though, you just need a different approach to composition when you have a wide lens. You need to think about the complexity these lenses offer. The wider they are, the more context they are bringing in... and it's your job to be on top of that.

As the photographer, you have to juggle the additional context, the extra layers and the increase in information.


MARVEL STADIUM

That extra complexity of shooting very very wide is both a curse and a blessing. Once you start seeing these extra elements as opportunity instead of hurdles, the compositions start to makes sense.

And for me, the idea of my subjects being very very small in a big scene is an extra bonus. I love the play on scale. I like to step into that world of tiny humans, and explore their world as they are confronted by the scale of our cities and buildings.

Are we building cities for people, or for profits?



We are making cities so very impersonal.

There is a huge difference between a 5 story tenement, and a 50 story skyscraper. And Melbourne is full of glass and steel towers now. It's not just that they are everywhere in the CBD, but they're often jammed in against each other.

Seems a shame to create the luxury of living and working so high in the sky, only to block the view with another building. These towers are seemingly designed for shareholders, not for the humans who work there.



There was a time when buildings in Melbourne were designed not only to impress with their scale, but also to impress with their service to humans.

This is the Redmond Barry Reading Room at the State Library. It's a beautiful space that offers a tranquil respite for people to study and learn. It was built before "air conditioning" was a thing, and designed to cope with the heat of Melbourne summers.

Everything about the State Library is a monument to architecture that responds to humans. A series of spaces that not only keep books safe, but provides a harmonious and calm environment to the people who wish to enjoy them.



My favourite spaces in Melbourne are the less obvious ones.

This cafe is located upstairs, above the street level. But you have to enter from the rear laneway, by going up some old timber stairs and pushing past the tattoo parlour and leather workshop.

You have to work a little to find it. Which is how I want to think about photography as well. I don't want my photos to always be too obvious. I want to make the audience work a little to discover things they might be missing. Or maybe even leave a few things to their imagination entirely.

Let the viewer full in some gaps, and then they become participants in the photos instead of being mere observers.


CAPTAINS OF INDUSTRY



SUPER WIDE

Tamron 12-20mm F2.8 for Sony + Nikon

I have a new favie ultra-wide lens, but this time I've been shooting on the streets of Melbourne instead of the Arctic Auroras.

There are times when 14mm isn't quite wide enough. It's debatable whether I needed anything THIS wide on the streets of Melbourne, but I was never going to get a chance to chase auroras or waterfalls in time for the launch of the product. This pushed me in a new direction, to turn my 12mm perspective onto the city I live in.

This is not a small lens, but it's far lighter than I was expecting and much sharper too. Tamron are doing really good things with fast zooms these days. I loved their 20-40mm F2.8 lens, which I used in the Himalayas on a recent journey. This new model is a far more challenging bit of technology, and for me far more impressive.

Now I have to wait 6 months until I get back to the Arctic and can chase auroras and publish a new review without trams and skyscrapers.


Nikon
TAMRON
12-20mm F2.8


TAMRON
12
14
16
CUSTOM/1


F2.8
TAMRON

SUPER CHEAP

AF 50mm F1.8 Neo by TT Artisan for E /Z / L

TT Artisan have made an amazingly affordable lens for mirrorless full frame cameras that opens the door to experimenting with fast primes on a budget.

It costs just US$89. The 50mm F1.8 Neo delivers amazingly sharp and punchy images for everything short of up-close food photography. It has no external moving parts, no aperture ring or other controls. Not even a manual focus ring. But it does deliver great autofocus and is available for Sony, Nikon and Leica mounts.

I love that this lens exists, especially for beginners. It's always a struggle when starting out in photography to experiment with fast primes. The cost is prohibitive for many people, if they are not sure of the benefits. At this price point, a lot more people can contemplate trying out the joy of a fast 50mm lens.

See my website or YouTube channel to learn more about it.


Nikon
AF-S 50/1.8


SIGMA
Nikon
AF 50/1.8


AF 50/1.8 Neo
TTARTISAN


VICTORIA UNIVERSITY

MARKET MUSIC

Sunday afternoon at the Queen Victoria Market

I got up pretty late on a Sunday and saw the sunshine was with us again. Another day to head out and capture a few shots and complete my lens reviews. I headed to Queen Vic Market, where I knew there'd be crowds and light. I had no idea what I would shoot when I got there.

In truth I didn't really make it into the market itself. On the edge of the deli hall was a lovely guitarist, playing a great selection of songs. Great vocals, great intonation with the songs he chose, and great light to cap it all off.

You can find him on IG with @dale_valentine_music.




5
SHARED
ZONE

I took a LOT of photos of this guy.

Mostly with the 50mm. I asked him first, but he probably didn't expect I would hang around for an entire hour just taking photos. The light was just hanging in there, sitting on the edge of neighbouring tin roofs, and bursting into my shots.

I love shooting back into the light. And I love taking my time. I didn't rush this scene, and I wanted maximum variety as possible. I wanted lots of angles. I kept shooting until I felt I had ALL of the story, and not just pieces of it.




5
SHARED ZONE
COMMERCIAL VEHICLES ONLY
PENALTIES APPLY
LANE


STOP

50mm is a pretty flexible perspective to shoot with. These days I prefer 35mm, but the 50mm was under review so I had to make the most of it.

I get some shots close and tight, and then try to step back and get a bigger scene if possible. I like diversity when it comes to telling a story. I like to see the big picture, and the little picture.



No surprises here. I'm shooting back into the light.

I love a little contrast in the light, and with modern cameras these days the ability to pull images out of harsh conditions is amazing. There's so much dynamic range in the sensors now.

This series was captured on the Nikon ZR. It's a camera released for cinema mainly, but also happens to have a great stills camera hidden inside.

I have a review of this camera body on my YouTube channel now, along with the 50mm F1.8 Neo by TT Artisan used to capture these photos.





#EWENTUBE

I share a bunch of photos and ideas on my YouTube channel. You can also watch them on the Fediverse via PeerTube for those who prefer ad-free viewing

ewenbell.com/ewentube


12-20mm F2.8 Full Frame from Tamron - Field
Photography with Ewen Bell
12-20
mm
Watch on YouTube


What makes the Nikon ZR such a great camera
Photography with Ewen Bell
IT EVEN
TAKES
PHOTOS
Nikon
40/2
Watch on YouTube

WHO MADE THIS?

Meet The Author

My name is Ewen Bell and I'm a photographer based in Melbourne, Australia. I've been very lucky in life to had the opportunity to make a career from photography.

For over two decades I've been travelling and shooting, which is why I have this photo of me in Bhutan when I was MUCH younger and better looking than I am now :) You can tell it's an old photo because I'm holding a DSLR camera.

Photography has changed my world, so I want to help others find their voice with the camera as well. I love sharing my photos, but also love sharing my knowledge about taking photos. That's why I'm making a zine, in addition to my blog and my YouTube channel.

ewenbell.com

