

AURORA RESIDENCY

BESPOKE PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

EWEN BELL
SHELLIE FROIDEVAUX

Immerse yourself into Arctic Norway to capture intimate moments with the Northern Lights. This is a unique workshop that makes the most of local knowledge on auroras and fjords. Two weeks in a quiet pocket of Norway with superb photographic locations, day and night.

2027 January 17-31
14 days @ AUD\$18,888



AURORA RESIDENCY

14 Day Residency

- Private Cabins and a maximum group size of just 4 people
- All accommodation, meals and ground transport included
- Pre-tour advice for your cameras and clothing
- Pickup and Drop-off at Harstad-Evnes Airport (Narvik)

A Quiet Piece of Norway

This workshop is unusual in almost every possible way. It's focused on shooting the night sky in the middle of the Polar Winter, and instead of moving from one location to another we stay put and explore a small region beneath the Aurora Oval. You get your own cabin for the duration of the workshop, plus a little pampering up at the main house when Shellie prepares lunch and dinner.

We plan the schedule on the assumption that you might be up late shooting. You'll have basic breakfast supplies in your cabin for when you wake up, but for lunch and dinner a hot meal awaits you along with time to review photos and discuss editing techniques. Anytime there's good weather during the middle of the day, we have some nice places to go shooting in the local area too. Even on cloudy days we might schedule a trip to nearby

towns to get a taste of local cafes, just to break things up a little. Keep in mind the day length is very short, and night arrives early. That's good, because we want the maximum opportunity to capture auroras in the dark.

Sometimes they kick off at 4pm. Sometimes 1am. Sometimes they just don't kick off at all. Clouds are the true enemy of Aurora photographers, so we run the workshop for two weeks and get rest when the weather is against us.

We'll gather together for dinner every night, watch the satellite data coming through, and be ready to move when there are signs of inbound activity. Most locations for our photography will be very very short drives. Some options are relatively close but might require a little more adventure to kick a path through the snow. We adjust the schedule according to the fitness of the group, and the conditions on the night.

For many folks the cabins themselves offer sufficient inspiration. You can shoot auroras right off the deck, with views across the fjord. There are town lights and fishing fleets in the area too, but that doesn't mean you can't shoot auroras. Most importantly, you won't be crowded by bus loads of other photographers. And if you get bored of the scenery near our cabins, no problem. We'll go a little further down the road and try a new section of fjord or forest.



EMBRACE NOT CHASE

The residency workshop is a very different concept to our regular photo tours.

We don't drive all over Norway in search of light, and we don't "chase" auroras by driving for hours and hours across borders. We've done a lot of those kinds of tours in the past, and we think there is a better way. A much less exhausting way that gives our companions a chance to better enjoy their experience in The Arctic.

And the residency is what we came up with.

We reduce our time spent of the road massively. We don't have to pack and repack to move from one location to another. We get to really know a small but beautiful part of Norway, one that is blessed with lots of great inspiration for auroras and landscapes.



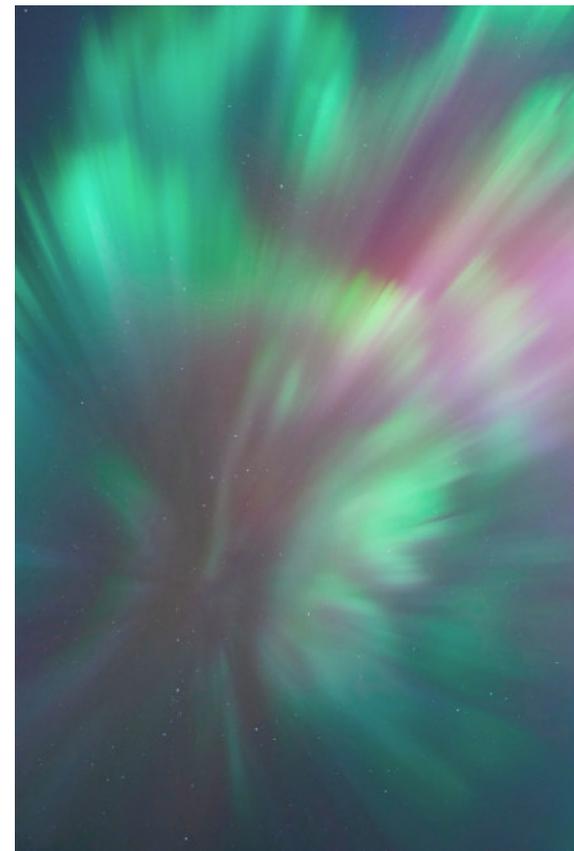
CALM AND CLEAR

What I love about Arctic winters is the extreme nature. I love when a fresh dump of snow coats the landscape. I love the transition between clouds and light. I love the reindeer hiding amongst the birch. I love the fir trees coated with snow. I love the fjords rising out of the ocean. I love the mountain lakes capped with solid ice.

And I love spending time with nature, with a minimum number of other people.

The problem with auroras in The Arctic is that everyone knows about it now. Two decades ago there was not much tourism up here in the winter, but today there are literally hundreds of vans and coaches heading out from Tromsø each night in search of "an experience". And it's just as bad in Lofoten, and the word is out on Senja too.

It's hard enough to escape the crowds as a regular traveller, but as photographers we seek even more solice and isolation to shoot. And that's why we picked our little corner of Norway for these Aurora Workshops, just a short drive from Narvik. We can't escape other people entirely, but we can avoid the vast majority of them when shooting auroras!









MEET EWEN BELL

Photography Mentor
and Guide

My name is Ewen Bell and I'm the guy who designs these tours so you can get great photos and experience a marvellous adventure.

My work is published all over the world in travel brochures, the travel media and photography magazines including National Geographic in the USA and Food & Travel in the UK. My depth of experience with leading tours is impressive, with over 50 tours and workshops completed in recent decades across Asia, The Himalayas, Australia, Antarctica and Scandinavia.

“A hidden gem in the world of photography, Arctic Norway is beautiful in all kinds of light. Bright sunshine in winter makes it bright with colours, heavy overcast skies make it moody and powerful. Northern lights above at night make the skies dance with electric hues.”

It's kind of weird talking about myself and “selling” myself to you here! But really, I do know a thing or two about photography and how to teach photography. Perhaps most importantly, I care about making sure YOU go home with great photos.

ewenbell.com



PRIVATE CHEF SHELLIE

All meals are included in this trip and they're fabulous! Meet Shellie Froidevaux.

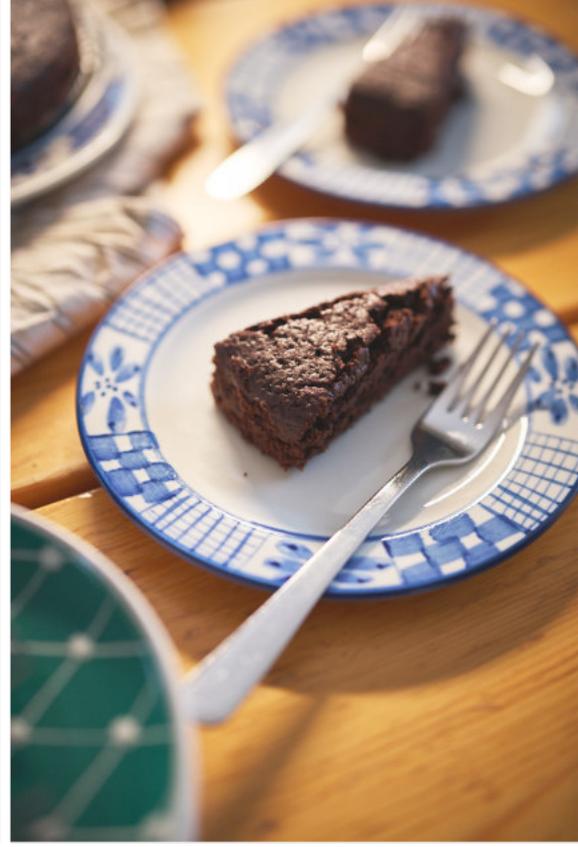
The most valued member of the leadership team for this tour is Shellie Froidevaux, a wonderful photographer and recipe developer, who will be our private chef for the residency. No other tour can match our ability to stay in remote locations, because no other tour has Shellie. She's friends with a few local cafes too, so we also get to enjoy some strategic stops for freshly made cinnamon buns with the locals.

We've heard horror stories from our travellers about other Arctic workshops that do not include any meals, and leave you to either self cater from a local supermarket or pay extra for meals at a very expensive restaurant. If you're spending time sorting basic meals it means you're not spending time enjoying your photography.

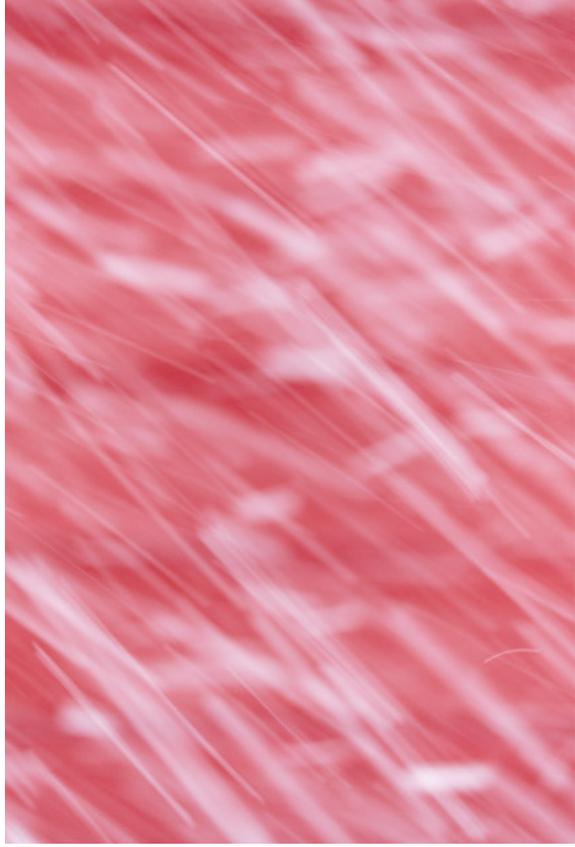
With the help of Shellie Froidevaux we not only make sure you get great meals along the way, but expect a few special treats for those cold nights standing out in the cold waiting for an aurora. Shellie loves to go the extra mile.

ironchefshellie.com









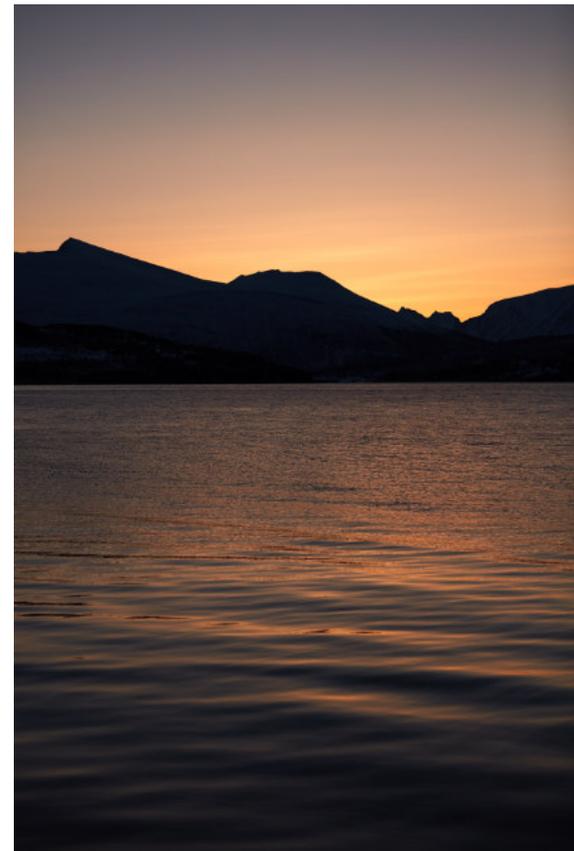
LONG TWILIGHTS

The first question I get asked for this itinerary is whether we'll have any daylight to work with at all?

There will be some daylight in the Arctic Winter, but mostly it's like a very long twilight. The sun officially returns to Tromsø on January 21 each year, so it's often just out of sight in early January. That means some lovely gentle light for slow shutter photography.

We will definitely have a chance to explore our local areas during the daytime, plus time to process our photos and review images from previous nights.

This tour design runs in January so we get maximum aurora opportunities. We are planning for late nights and a chance to sleep-in if the auroras keep us awake late.









WHAT LENS TO PACK

You don't need a full-frame mirrorless or DSLR to enjoy this journey, but you do need a good lens. We've run dozens of trips like this one before and have a good understanding of which lens will give your camera the best results.

The most important lens for this trip will be an **ultra-wide angle** that is suitable for night photography. We need a seriously wide angle to capture the Northern Lights because the biggest and best events take up all of the night sky. The same ultra-wide perspective is also ideal for capturing the majestic nature of the landscape.

In full-frame terms, an 18mm lens is good, but 14mm is way better. We'll be happy to chat with you in advance of the tour about which lens is right for your camera and this adventure.



POST CAPTURE

Even like to emphasize the creative side of photography that takes place in the digital darkroom.

Every day of this adventure will allow for opportunities to discuss, refine and learn about post-processing techniques.

Please bring your laptop and your preferred processing software. A photo is never finished at the moment of the shutter, and as you learn different ways to process your images you can also adjust your technical approach to the camera accordingly.









AURORA OVAL

Tromsø to Narvik is the sweet
spot for Aurora Chasing

The Aurora Oval goes right over the top of Tromsø and Narvik, which is why even a modest aurora event looks spectacular from this part of the Arctic.

Lots of other places to the south and east will tell you that auroras are seen through the winter, which is often true, but what they don't tell you is they also see a decent show when a large aurora storm hits.

Here in Narvik, even on a modest KP1 evening we can see auroras above our head or stretching from one horizon to the other. It's an ideal location for auroa photography.



FIFTEEN YEARS

Ewen Bell has been capturing the Arctic since 2010. Norway is his second home, literally.

Ewen and Shellie have a small house half-way between Tromsø and Lofoten where they escape the Australian summer and enjoy the drama of Arctic winters.

This is a part of the world Ewen and Shellie really really love, and really understand. They also love joining the locals for waffles at the local community centre every Wednesday!

When you arrive in Tromsø for the start of this workshop, Ewen and Shellie will already have been preparing for your arrival. Shellie designs a menu to explore local ingredients and Arctic flavours, while Ewen will have run through the weather forecast and current conditions with Gunnar and planned out how best to fine tune the itinerary.











MOODY WEATHER

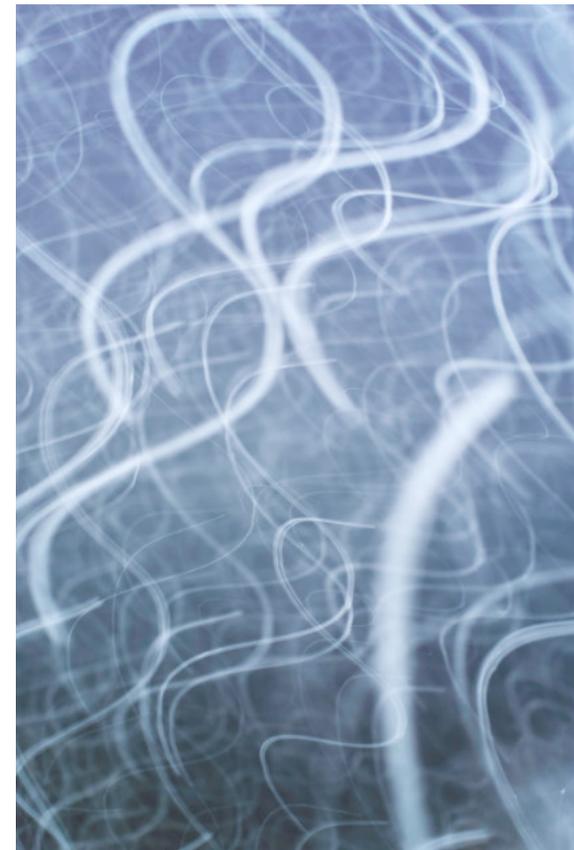
The Arctic winter can be blizzard all morning, then stunning clear skies all night. Some days are snow days and we stay inside to edit photos, and some days are crystal clear and we go for a long drive in search of sunlight.

When we do get a snow storm coming through it just makes for even prettier landscapes as a backdrop to our aurora photography. There will be patches of really bad weather during January or February, but also patches of perfection. Across a two week period we can expect a little of the best, and a little of the worst.

Some days may offer both.

The worst weather is warm and wet. Weather systems from the south can last for several days at a time. This is why we don't design 5-day workshops, so instead we stay for two weeks to improve our chances of clear skies during the workshop duration.

And yes, there are indeed fun things we can do with cameras and snowfall!



MOONLIT NIGHTS

We schedule our tours so that we enjoy a variety of night time conditions, from pure darkness to full moonlight. Each has its own benefits, but if the objective is to capture beautiful compositions then a moonlit night allows for both aurora activity as well as the amazing Norwegian fjords.

The key to moonlit auroras are to pick the right locations, close to the Aurora Oval. Destinations too far away from the aurora oval get less of the action, but close to Tromsø and Narvik is the perfect combination of longitude and latitude to give you brilliant events high in the sky even when the solar activity is otherwise modest.

The colours of a moonlit aurora are different also. The blue sky makes the green of auroras really shine, without the need of massive manipulation in Photoshop that leads to a very fake looking scene. With the moonlight on your side, you get the real colours, better tonal range and more creative options.









CAMERAS ARE COOL

We hear a lot of fuss about taking cameras into the Arctic conditions and how to prepare for the freezing temperatures. If you're shooting with a modern DSLR or mirrorless camera then you need no special equipment, modifications or protection. Snow brushes off when everything is cold, but take care to avoid it melting on a warm camera body.

On a recent journey in a colder region of the Arctic we spent hours with our gear shooting the Northern Lights in -32 temperatures. No problems. Your camera will go colder than that and still keep shooting. Your batteries won't last quite as long as when warm, but it's no drama. Really.

Heading outside at night to shoot the aurora does require that you take care of yourself, and ensure you keep your feet and fingers warm. We will provide a very detailed packing list to help you prepare for Arctic conditions, including advice on where to shop in Oslo for the best winter gear.



DRESS FOR THE COLD

“There is no bad weather, only bad clothing.”

A full guide of warm gear to pack is supplied before the tour, but here's a sneak peak of what will get you through the journey.

Down Jacket

A big puffy jacket makes life easier, so you can quickly go from toasty temperatures inside the cottage to mega-minus degrees outside. The hood is great in windy conditions, and fluffy edges help keep your face warmer too.

Windstopper Gloves

Essential for operating your camera on sub-zero days.

Snow Boots

Leave room in the boots for extra air and you'll always have warm feet. Buy a bigger size and then stomp through knee deep snow without a worry.

Snow Pants

We often romp through fresh snow to reach a shot, so a layer of dry padded pants really keeps the snow and cold off your legs.

Thermals

A layer of thermals will keep a warm core close to your skin on the coldest of night shoots.

This is not an expedition to the North Pole – you will not freeze to death when visiting Arctic Norway. There's always a warm cabin and a hot cup of chocolate just around the corner... we make sure of it!









THE FINE PRINT

Dates

2027 January 17-31

Price

AUD\$18,888

Group Size

Maximum of 4 people

Accommodation

The price is based on accommodation in classic red cabins. They are comfortable and practical with direct access to the shore and a deck for night photography.

Single Room Included

The default rooming for this tour will be single rooms instead of twin share. A discount is offered to couples sharing a cabin too.

Inclusions

- All meals are included and will be delicious
- All transportation on arrival
- Airport transfers when travelling with the group
- Expert tuition from Ewen
- Endless inspiration from the scenery of Norway

Exclusions

- Your camera gear
- Flights into and out of Narvik/Harstad

The itinerary information may vary slightly for your specific departure, as we continuously research and develop each trip. Inclement weather or other factors outside our control may also necessitate alterations.

HOW TO BOOK

Hit the website to book online. Deposits are required to confirm your place and can be paid via credit card or bank deposit.

ewenbell.com/aurora

