

If wedding photographers were able to draw up a purchasing prenup before making a permanent commitment to their equipment, this gear guarantee would likely include the following: digital cameras that ensure beautiful, creamy skin tones and fast focusing speeds; supersharp lenses that allow for a variety of perspectives on the Big Day; and a complete lighting system that lets the natural beauty of the day shine through. With the addition of the new Nikon D2xs digital camera to the Nikon Total Imaging System (which also includes the D200, SB-800 Speedlights, and complete lineup of Nikkor lenses), professional photographers never have to worry about irreconcilable differences with the tools of their trade.

EXCELLENCE

The D2xs walks down the aisle.

When Nikon introduced the D2X, the wedding photography world was taken by storm. This professional digital SLR featured superb image quality thanks to a 12.4-megapixel CMOS sensor, camera speed that belied its incredibly high resolution, and consistent ergonomics that continued the Nikon tradition of ease of use.

The D2xs promises to pick up where its digital predecessor left off. First, what hasn't changed: superior image quality that ensures you'll capture every detail in the wedding gown and every brilliant hue displayed in the table centerpieces, as well as the speed needed so you don't miss a single teary-eyed smile from the adoring parents of the bride and groom. What's new: enhanced features that make operation significantly more responsive, including refined viewfinder performance that makes for easier composition when shooting in Nikon's exclusive High-Speed Crop mode; a new 2.5-inch LCD with a 170-degree wide viewing angle calibrated at the factory to ensure consistent color fidelity; increased battery life; and a wide range of firmware enhancements.

SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW...

Speed remains a hallmark of the D2xs, with the ability to capture 12.4-megapixel JPEG or RAW images at a rate of up to five frames per second in continuous shooting mode. Continuous shooting at a rate of up to eight frames per second is made possible through use of the High-Speed Crop mode that captures a more specific, central area of the frame at 6.8-megapixel resolution. The D2xs has also been refined so photogra-



NIKON D2xs



NIKON D2xs AND THE NIKKOR LENS LINEUP

UNVEILED

phers can take advantage of 3D-Color Matrix Metering II even in this High-Speed Crop mode.

Refinement to the viewfinder includes an automatic viewfinder mask within the High-Speed Crop mode for faster, easier, and more confident composition. A new color scheme for menu displays makes for easier viewing, and new custom-settings options can assist busy photographers to program settings they like best.

The newly developed high-energy EN-EL4a rechargeable lithium-ion battery with increased capacity delivers enough power to support the shooting of up to 3,800 images (based on Nikon test conditions) on a single charge. The battery can be recharged at any time and also features a fuel gauge system display that shows the remaining charge by percentage, number of shots since the last charge, and overall battery status.

As part of the Nikon Total Imaging System, the D2xs is compatible with Nikon's full range of Nikkor lenses, and also maximizes the potential of Nikon's Creative Lighting System when used with the SB-800 Speedlight. The SB-800 features powerful i-TTL flash control for automatic balanced fill-flash and advanced wireless lighting capabilities that deliver outstanding results and creative new possibilities.

THE D200 AND THE NIKKOR LENS ARSENAL

The D200 remains a workhorse for many of today's top wedding photographers, and there are plenty of reasons why. The 10.2-megapixel camera can shoot continuously at up to five frames per second, capturing up to 37 JPEG images (when using select high-performance CompactFlash cards capable of and certified for this performance specification) or up to 22 NEF (RAW) images. The Nikon WT-3a Wireless Transmitter that attaches to the D200 enables cable-free image transfer to a compatible computer, with the safety of wide-ranging network and security protocols.



NIKON D200



NIKON SB-800

Photographers view each wedding with a different vision, and Nikon's full lineup of Nikkor lenses, including the exclusive VR (Vibration Reduction) and DX lenses, enables each photographer to put their own perspective on the amorous event. Recent additions include the 70-300mm VR Zoom-Nikkor, as well as the 18-135mm DX Zoom-Nikkor.

The D2xs is a natural fit into Nikon's family of professional imaging equipment, touting the ultimate in quality, technology, and the user-friendly ergonomics that Nikon is known for. Tap into any of the products in Nikon's Total Imaging System and your workflow will only benefit—and so will your bride's images.

NIKON WT-3a WIRELESS TRANSMITTER



Intuitive Imagery

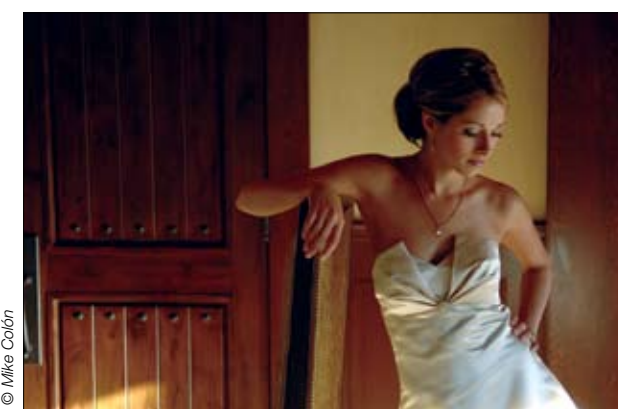
After the cake has been cut, Nikon's Capture NX Advanced software allows for simpler, easy-to-use full-scale digital image processing and editing. As part of the Nikon Total Imaging System, Capture NX features U Point technology that simplifies selection of the areas you want to enhance; a handy edit list that helps you track, cancel, or add new modifications to an image; an advanced image browser that lets you label, sort, and edit quickly and efficiently using thumbnails; distortion control; and improved noise reduction based on the latest, most advanced Nikon algorithms. You'll have almost as much fun in post-production as you did chasing the flower girl and ring bearer around the dance floor!



© Cherie Steinberg Cote



© Claudia Kronenberg



© Mike Colón



© John Solano



Naturally Nuanced

With his Nikon D2xs, SB-800 Speedlights, and VR lenses in hand, Mike Colón keeps his lighting subtle, and emotions at the forefront of his wedding images.

Don't ask Mike Colón what downtime is: In between the sleepless nights at home thanks to the recent arrival of his second son, Mike has managed to keep raising the bar on his wedding photography and grow his business significantly over the past year. Besides shooting more fashion and editorial for bridal magazines than he's ever done, Mike has also been shooting more celebrity weddings, traveling to distant locations for his destination weddings (last year he jet-setted to Monaco, Paris, Italy, Turks and Caicos, New York, Vegas, and Palm Beach, among other sites), and conducting workshops in Newport Beach and across the country training professional wedding photographers.

And yet in the midst of this hectic schedule, Mike's matrimonial M.O. has remained a constant. "I look for the in-between moments that reveal something real about my subjects," he reveals. "I focus on the nuances of facial expression and body language that make people unique and attractive. I connect with every client on a very personal level and make sure they feel comfortable in front of my lens, building up their confidence while I photograph them so they can be themselves without any inhibitions."

Because he believes, in his own words, that "your camera equipment should never hold you back," Mike relies on his Nikon D2xs, SB-800 Speedlights, and Nikkor lenses to bring out the feelings that permeate the day. "I often find myself



© Mike Colón

shooting in low-light situations, like dark churches and candlelit receptions," he says. "I want my images to look as true to the actual scene as possible to preserve the mood and emotion of the moment, so a lot of times I find myself using only the available light, even in the darkest of situations. The exceptionally accurate autofocus system on the D2xs, combined with Nikon's lineup of ultra-fast VR lenses, gives me exactly what I need to nail every image with confidence."

The D2xs's color accuracy has proven exceptional for Mike's images. "The color accuracy of the D2xs blows me away," he says. "I find myself shooting more and more in Auto White

"The exceptionally accurate autofocus system on the D2xs, combined with Nikon's lineup of ultra-fast VR lenses, gives me exactly what I need to nail every image with confidence."

—MIKE COLÓN



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Balance mode because it's so good. As a wedding photographer shooting primarily with available light [see below for more on Mike's lighting philosophy], I'm dealing with dozens of different temperatures of light throughout the course of the day. One of the hardest things for me has always been the task of relentlessly adjusting my white balance in order to achieve accurate color and skin tones in-camera. Nikon solved this issue by creating a camera that accurately and automatically assigns the proper white balance compensation for nearly every lighting situation I encounter."

The accuracy of the D2xs isn't just an aesthetic advantage. "Time is money, and this camera saves me tons of it!" he says. "The color is so accurate, I spend less time in post-production, which means I can spend more time out shooting!"

LET THERE BE LIGHT

Mike strives to keep his work natural-looking and organic, and the Nikon lighting system helps him light the way. "I like my work to look very true to what you would see with the naked eye, which is why I use primarily available light, positioning myself in relation to my subject so I achieve whatever look I am going for," he explains. "Whether it be flat, forgiving light, dramatic side lighting with dark shadows, or strong backlighting with lens flare, I can achieve nearly every look I want using the sun as my light source."

The Nikon SB-800 Speedlights allow Mike to enhance his shots without overdoing it. "When I'm indoors and need a sure shot of my subject, I'll mount my foolproof SB-800 and fire away," he says. "I usually point the flash head straight up toward the ceiling for a nice soft effect while raising the bounce card about half an inch to fill under the eyes. I've also been utilizing the i-TTL feature with multiple SB-800s positioned around the room as off-camera lights to simulate the look of ambient spotlights in the room. I avoid the look of on-camera flash whenever possible because I feel it draws attention to the presence of the photographer when viewing the image, which takes away from the natural feel I strive for in my work."

FOR THE LOVE OF LENSES

You're only as good as your glass, which means Mike's got his shots in the bag with a full lineup of Nikkor lenses. "My 50mm f/1.4 is what you'll see mounted to my camera for at least 75 percent of the getting-ready shots, including makeup application, detail shots of the shoes and dress, and candid portraits of the bride and groom before the ceremony," he says.



© Mike Colón

Mike also remains a big fan of his 70-200mm f/2.8G ED-IF AF-S VR Zoom-Nikkor. "It's an all-around great lens that's versatile enough to leave on my camera through the entire ceremony," he says. "It's great for portraits and candid shots of the cocktail reception as well."

His love of photographic extremes explains his affinity for the 10.5mm fisheye. "I mix this superwide and bendy look into many of my scenic location shots, my décor and room shots, and my fun reception dancing, group, cake-cutting, and garter-and-bouquet-toss images," he says.

His favorite lens, however, is the 200mm f/2G ED-IF AF-S VR Nikkor. "This is the lens that makes me look better than I am!" he laughs. "Everything that I shoot with this lens looks amazing. It's tack-sharp at f/2.0 and produces super creamy backgrounds. It's also perfect when you need to get up close during a dark ceremony: Just flip on the VR and shoot handheld down to 1/30th of a second for mind-blowing results. I use this lens on and off throughout the ceremony. I also use it for the bride and groom portraits when there's enough room to back up. It's my new favorite engagement session lens as well."

The most recent addition to his lens lineup is the new 105mm f/2.8G ED-IF AF-S VR Micro-Nikkor. "This is an amazing lens for super closeup details of the programs, table décor, seating cards, and the jewelry and rings," he asserts. "It also doubles as an exceptional portrait lens."

And how does he keep all these stunning images safe, especially with all the high-profile celebrity weddings he does? "I've been taking advantage of Lexar's LockTight CF cards (compatible with the D2xs) for added security," he says. "If a card gets stolen or there is any security breach, I can rest assured that nobody will be able to take my images and exploit them." §



Committed to Creativity

Cherie Steinberg Cote creates matrimonial masterpieces that are both artistic and technically perfect thanks to her Nikon D200 and D2X.

When Beverly Hills photographer Cherie Steinberg Cote was having lunch recently with a group of fellow photographers, she was surprised to hear as they discussed workflow that many of her colleagues had to color-correct all their images after each event. "I was amazed—I don't really have to do that," she says. "I attribute that to the whole Nikon system. The colors are always right on—and in wedding photography, the colors have to be right! So not only do I not have to color-correct, I'm not having to pay someone to do that for me, either."

Cherie taps into the Nikon D200 and the D2X to ensure her wedding images are always top-notch. When she decided to go digital, she started out with the Nikon D100, then moved onto the D70. It was her decision to purchase the D200 and D2X, however, that propelled her into the major leagues of matrimonial photography. "The D2X was the big one—I knew if I wanted to play with the big boys, I had to have the big camera, so I bit the bullet and bought it!"

During the big day, Cherie and her partner put all their cameras and lenses out on the table and switch back and forth. The D200 serves Cherie well during the long main event. "The quality of the D200's images is really thick and juicy," she asserts. "And the camera is so light—after seven hours carrying something in your hand, it can be too much if it's too heavy."

As for the D2X, Cherie describes this camera as "a really beautiful piece of machinery." "It's all about the file, it's all about the final product," she says. "I do my formals with the D2X, which are fun shots for me to do. I set everybody up and put them in their spaces and make them laugh (I'm really good at the formals!). So I'll use the D2X for the formals, and

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—CHERIE STEINBERG COTE



© Cherie Steinberg Cote



© Cherie Steinberg Cote

just play with the D200 for the rest of the day."

Cherie manages to work the SB-800 Speedlights into her workflow as well, using them on-camera for her signature look. "I've placed a couple of homemade items over the Speedlights to make them a little bit softer and more evenly lit," she explains. "Then I use them the way [photographer] Mike Corrado taught me—just put them on a stick and shoot them that way off of a PocketWizard."

Cherie's arsenal of Nikon lenses helps lend a different look that sets her work apart. "I love my 85mm f/1.4," she says. "That's a really fabulous lens for when I go in to shoot the girls getting ready for the wedding. You've got the shoes and the dress and all the details to shoot. And it's fun to shoot them in available light, because the available light on this lens is creamy, dreamy, and really cool. For the ceremony, I'll usually use the 18-70mm, as well as the 12-24mm and sometimes the 105mm. I pooh-poohed the 18-70mm at first—it came with one of my cameras and I didn't think much of it. But since I had it, I just started using it, and it was such an all-around, easy lens with such a great range that I started using it for ceremonies."

For receptions, Cherie plays around and has fun. "The perspective for this is different, so I pretty much switch the lenses out to shake things up," she says. "But I have to say, I really like the 28-105mm because it's got the macro on it. I didn't know how much fun I was going to have with that lens! Even though I'm technically savvy, I can't really explain the technology of the glass or anything, but there is something about the quality of that lens that is really very flattering."

When she does need to go into the files (she shoots both RAW and JPEG), Cherie uses the Capture NX software. "This program was really well-thought-out by Nikon," she says.

In the end, using her Nikon equipment is all about helping her bring out her own particular style and flavor. "I just do what I do—I don't have a name for it," she explains. "People love that my work is very artistic. They'll look at a picture and say, 'I can't believe you saw that picture or that you were at that angle.' I think that's my gift—I'll see the place I'm in, and I can imagine what to do with it. My Nikon gear just helps me get there." §

To see more of Cherie's work, go to www.cheriefoto.com



A Seamless Transition

John Solano's addition of Nikon's D2X and D2Xs to his film-camera workflow meets the demands of his high-end clientele.



© John Solano

Los Angeles photographer John Solano has long been a proponent of the Nikon family of film cameras, starting out with the F3 in the late 1980s and moving all the way up to the F6. But as his high-end clientele became more demanding over the years, John realized it was time to venture into Nikon's digital domain.

"I primarily switched to digital because as I was getting better clients, the jobs ended up becoming more heavy-duty," he explains. "Some of these clients were spending \$200,000 on the event, and I needed more coverage and more staff—I couldn't do it all by myself. As a businessperson, you have to hire people who are better than you and then delegate."

Today John owns two D2X models and one D2Xs—and the results have proven phenomenal for his business and his images. "I'm a firm believer that all my files should match, especially in the digital world," he explains. "This makes the workflow, and the end result, much smoother. If something optimizes and makes life easier for my business, I just buy it. In the long run it pays off, and it saves you money. You pay for it all at the front end, but you definitely save money on the back end."

John, an additional photographer, and an assistant use both Nikon digital cameras at every wedding. "I especially love the D2Xs," he says. "It's been enhanced with firmware updates, the focusing is great, and I like the flash exposure and larger screen. When I'm shooting a wedding, I'm on aperture priority 99 percent of the time, and the D2Xs does the math and the work for me. I'm so pleased with the results. I love the D2X as well, but when I needed another one, I just bought the newer model!"

Nikon's SB-800 Speedlights allow John to experiment with beautiful lighting. "I bounce lights—I tend not to use direct flash when I'm shooting," he says. "I always use an SB-800 with flash on the camera. And, when I'm shooting digital, depending on the event and the size of the ballroom, I've been lighting my ballrooms with three additional SB-800s. I also use the Nikon SC-29 TTL cord—this allows me to extend the flash off-camera. I've been putting it around a small little softbox that's made for these type of flashes—it's a little bracket that mounts around the SB-800,

but when you connect that to a TTL cord, you have a TTL softbox off-camera. The exposures are just dead-on, and that really enhances the light quality tenfold because it's a larger light source and softer. Working at high-speed levels, this is a godsend in terms of ease and simplicity."

Working primarily as an available-light shooter, John is a huge fan of Nikon's fast and prime lens lineup. "They make you think a little differently," he explains. "You have to work a little bit more for the shot, but the images are just sharper and better. My all-time favorite lens right now is the 28mm f/1.4. I primarily use it for my available-light shots during the ceremony when I'm up close, like in a Jewish ceremony when I'm underneath a chuppah. It gives me that wider coverage and span at 1.4, which is just lifesaving."

"When I'm shooting a wedding, I'm on aperture priority 99 percent of the time, and the D2Xs does all the math and the work for me—I'm so pleased with the results."

—JOHN SOLANO

John also loves the 50mm f/1.4, the 85mm f/1.4, and the 105mm Macro VR lenses. "The 105mm Macro VR is another all-time favorite of mine," he says. "I have four Nikon 105's. I've always trained myself to never shoot under 1/125th of a second, just for optimal sharpness. With the VR lens I'll take that risk, and I've been pleased each time—they must be doing something right!"

While going digital has certainly changed John's workflow, it has unquestionably cemented his dedication to the Nikon brand. "I've always been married to Nikon, because I have all the glass and the bodies, and it's the system I've been happy with," he says. "I think you pick your system and you stick with it because it does a great job for you." §



© John Solano

To see more of John's work, go to www.imagemakr.com



Nantucket Nuptials

Gray New England skies? No problem, says Claudia Kronenberg, who uses the Nikon D200, D2X, and D2Xs and her SB-800 Speedlights to light the way.

Not only is Nantucket, Massachusetts, a premier vacation destination—it's also the locale for some of the most high-end weddings in New England. And with the region's notoriously temperamental weather patterns and gray skies, photographer Claudia Kronenberg needs a complete photographic system that will handle Mother Nature with the same finesse used to handle the mother of the bride. In Claudia's case, the solution lies in the Nikon D200, D2X, D2Xs, a slew of Speedlights, and a full range of lenses (her favorites include the 70-200mm f/2.8 VR, the 17-55mm, and the 85mm f/1.4).

"The quality of these cameras is beautiful," says Claudia. "Weddings are all about skin tones, color, and detail, and these cameras give me the ability to work on those aspects in the RAW format. I've been doing bridal fashion shoots lately for some magazines, and I've blown up the images to 24x30—the skin tones are absolutely gorgeous."

The need for speed has also driven her devotion to Nikon's digital line. "When I'm shooting RAW, these cameras are superfast—there's no buffer time," she explains. "I've never had to wait for my cameras to catch up to me."

Claudia uses the wireless Creative Lighting System to illuminate her blushing brides and handsome grooms. "My favorite technique is to backlight the bride and groom with the sun, and then fill in with the SB-800 Speedlight," she explains. "I'll have somebody block the sun from my lens, and then I'll



© Claudia Kronenberg

shoot with the wireless system with the SB-800s on manual. I'll dial it way down to give me just enough fill light to make the subjects pop but still have this beautiful halo of sunlight behind them. Plus on Nantucket we have a lot of inclement weather, so on a dreary day I'll use the SB-800



© Claudia Kronenberg

wireless system to basically fill the subject so that they have this really natural-looking light that's not overly flashy and that fills those dreaded raccoon eyes."

Claudia also appreciates the lighting system's ease of use. "We either put the flash on a stand, or my assistant holds it where I want her to hold it," she says. "It gives me versatility

"From the D80 to the D2Xs, the ergonomics always feel like Nikon. No matter which camera you have in your hand, you automatically know where everything is."

—CLAUDIA KRONENBERG

because she can move around with it while I'm shooting. Also, the D200 can command this all right from the camera, while the D2Xs has the commander unit. I can tell each flash to do different things, and I can change the ratio of the flashes right from the camera."

Comfort and familiarity is important, too—especially for a photographer who has to think quickly on her feet as she dashes from the shoreline at a beachside wedding into the reception tent to make sure she gets all the right shots. "The one thing about Nikon that is so great, from the D80 on up to the D2Xs, is that the ergonomics always feel like Nikon," Claudia says. "No matter which camera you have in your hand, you automatically know where everything is, where to find things in the menus—it's very consistent and manageable across all the cameras. The intuitiveness and the way the cameras feel in my hand is what has always kept me with Nikon." §

To see more of Claudia's work, go to www.claudiak.com



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