

June 2008

# Cacao Ethnobotany Field Trip, Guatemala. Photo Essay.



ASOCIACION  
**FLAAR**  
MESOAMERICA



Nicholas Hellmut





It is very dark under the canopy, since cacao prefers shade, so lighting is a challenge. We use Westcott reflectors to provide light. The light from a reflector looks more natural than trying to use an on-camera flash. For carrying lenses and other accessories, a camera backpack is essential: the brand we use is Tenba



These particular trees had more pods than trees in other places in Guatemala that we photographed. Plus they were disease free. Just a few kilometers away a tree had lost every pod due to rot.





A gray card is essential, especially a large one; large enough to fill the entire frame at medium format size. Unfortunately the crew forgot to pack the MacBeth ColorChecker.





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We are currently using an ancient Hasselblad ELX body to hold the Phase One P25+ digital back, since their Zeiss lenses are excellent. The tripod is a Gitzo G1548GT with Manfrotto Deluxe HD Geared tripod head. But this tripod is only when we have a car and assistants; when traveling by plane we use a mid-size Gitzo tripod with an Arca-Swiss tripod head (the really old ones, 20 years old, which are better than the new ones that lock by mistake on their own and are impossible to unstick without tech support.





Samples of cacao photography with Phase One P25+.



FLAAR is a research institute dedicated to assisting scholars and students of anthropology and archaeology learn about how advances in digital imaging can improve their recording of cultural, ethno-botanical, and ethno-zoological heritage of Latin America.





Samples of cacao photography with Phase One P25+ before HDR process.



HDR result by Luis Sacayon, staff of FLAAR Mesoamerica, based on the photographs by Nicholas Hellmuth taken especially to formulate in this HDR process.





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HDR result by Luis Sacayon, staff of FLAAR Mesoamerica, based on  
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in this HDR process.





We would like to thank Cooperativa Asociativa Chocóla, Fidel Velazques and Daniel Ochoa for their help in our ethnobotany field trip.

For memory in the 22-megapixel digital camera we use a 16 GB card from Hoodman. In our Canon EOS 5D we use an 8 GB memory card from Hoodman; in the Nikon D300 a 4 GB card from Hoodman, and in the Nikon D100 a 2GB card from Hoodman.



The Phase One P25+ digital camera back is provided by Global Imaging Inc, courtesy of Greg Lamb, CEO. Global Imaging is one of the few places in the US where you can look at all major brands of medium format digital cameras: Sinar/Jenoptik, Hasselblad/Imacon, Phase One, and Leaf. If a camera store sells only one brand, they will push that brand and usually denigrate other brands. But if the camera store offers all brands it is easier for them to discuss the pros and cons of each brand in a fair manner.



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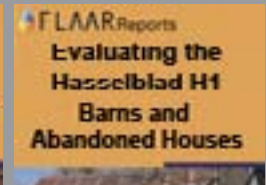
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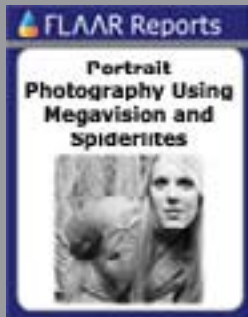
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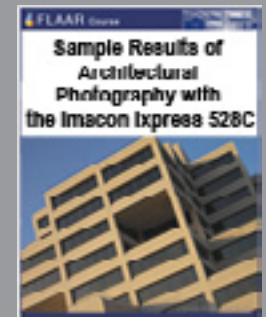
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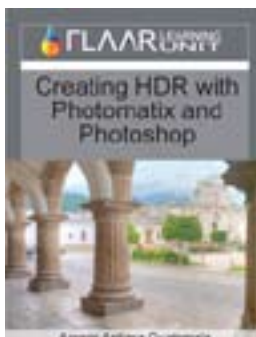
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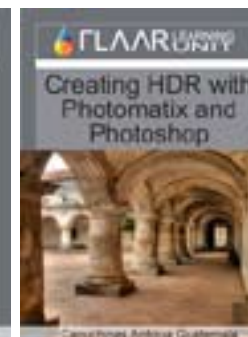
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