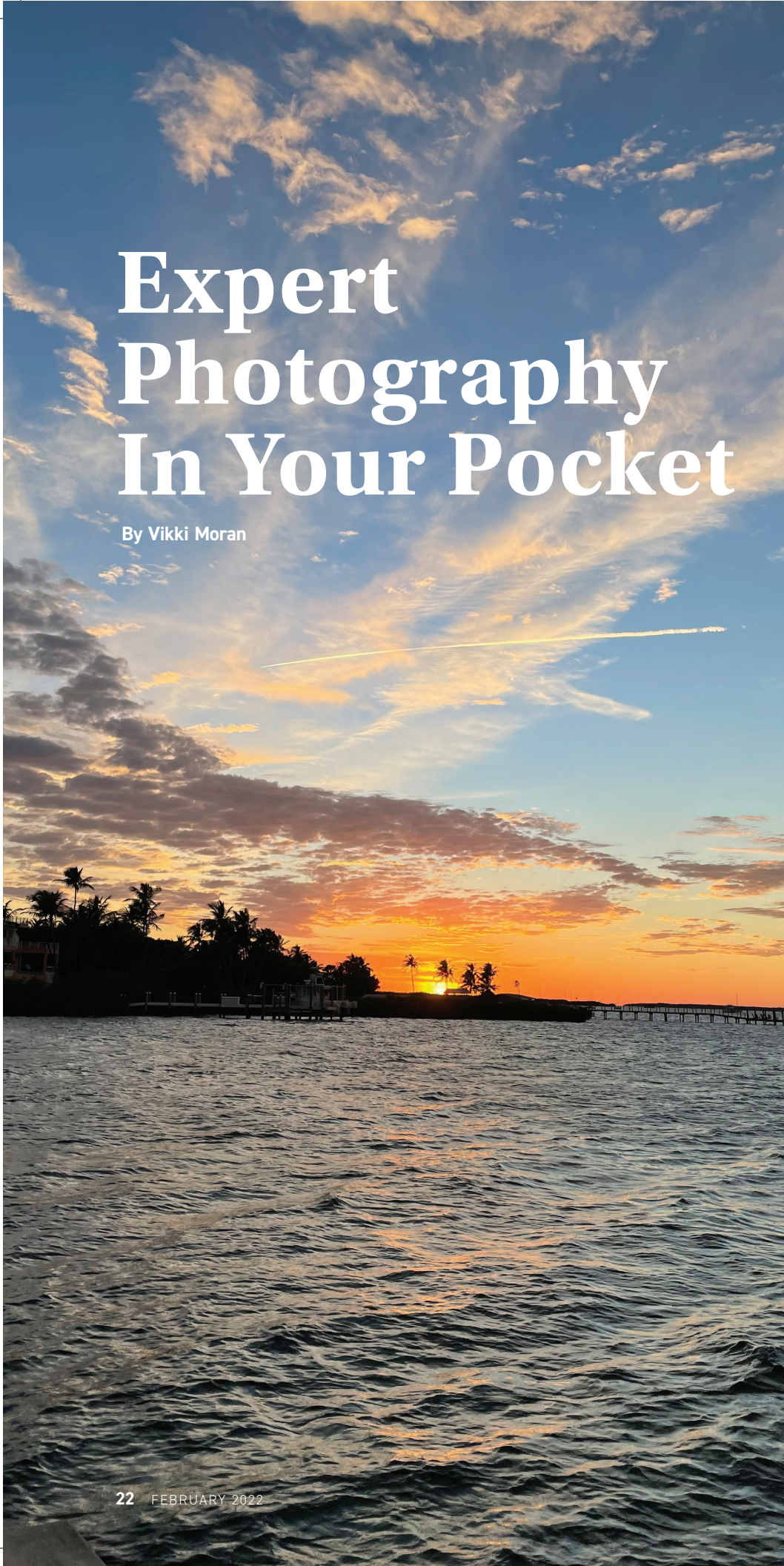




Expert Photography In Your Pocket

By Vikki Moran

Several years ago—before the pandemic was even a thought any of us could entertain—I took a river voyage in Germany. In addition to the luxury that comes with river cruising in Europe, I enjoyed learning about and taking classes on smartphone photography from renowned photographer Jack Hollingsworth.

Jack is an award-winning, 30-year veteran in commercial photography who has fallen in love with his iPhone camera as his primary capture tool. His work and wisdom in smartphone photography, shared with us on our adventures through Germany, are priceless.

In an effort to pay it forward, this column shares the knowledge gleaned from Jack, plus a few of my own tips on vacation photography. I am also sharing photos taken exclusively with my iPhone, although any smartphone with a camera will work on your next journey.

This is the year we expect to be back to traveling in large numbers, and this information could help you throw off the big camera bag from your shoulder. Yes, attachment to our trusty camera is a strong one. I struggled mightily as a travel journalist to switch from my tried-and-true. However, because I can board a plane with fewer bags, am free from the constant anxiety of leaving my camera somewhere—I once left an expensive camera in a café in Pompeii—and can move quickly without a sore shoulder, my attachment dissipated rather swiftly.

As you travel and explore, or just take a trip down the road to visit friends and family, keep the following tips in mind:

Never ignore the smartphone pop-up window that says, “Storage Almost Full.” It’s a fatal error. Even veteran photographers make this mistake—exactly once. Within an hour, your phone could crash and permanently lose valuable information. That could be a nightmare. Heed the warnings that pop up about storage.

Know the difference between the terms megapixels and megabytes. Megapixels have to do with pixel resolution. Megabytes have to do with data storage. Depending on the smartphone you are shooting with, images will range from about 2MB to 4MB. Darker images contain more image data and, consequently, take up more storage space.

Rely less on apps and accessories and more on attitude and aptitude. With intent

and a clear focus on the fundamentals of traditional photography, your images won't disappoint. A well-balanced shot with great color and light is the same winning combination when using a traditional camera or smartphone camera.

When taking a selfie, look directly into the lens (the front-facing one). Resist the urge to look at yourself on the screen below the lens. Hold your phone with both hands to stabilize your shot. It may be lightweight, but you want to take a great photo without the shake of your one-handed movement.

The grid lines (turned on in your settings) create photo shots and keep the horizon straight. Turn the flash off most of the time. Use as a fill flash for outside shots or in the evenings when there is little to no natural light available.

Keep HDR on "auto" all the time. When shooting photos and video, you have two image-format options that can free up storage space, but as smartphone professionals, we like the option of seeing both versions (activate in settings).

Your smartphone camera provides options for time lapse, slow motion, video, square and panoramas. Try them all. You will love the variety.

Activate your location services, which uses GPS, crowdsourced Wi-Fi, cell towers and Bluetooth to determine your location. For privacy reasons, you may not want to share your location when you share your photos with others. If this is the case, turn off this feature.

Turn off auto brightness. Adjust brightness manually when you are editing your image. This will save battery life.

Never blow up the screen to bring subjects beyond 3x. It will greatly distort the image. Simply get closer to the subject you are shooting. Shooting higher than 3x is not going to get the picture you want. You can always edit the image with cropping and zooming after, if needed.

Carry your smartphone, which from now on you will consider a camera first and foremost, in a discreet place. Having your phone sticking out of the back pocket of your jeans is an invitation for theft. Small crossbody bags are perfect. Men and women carry them, and they are blessedly light weight.

Take more pictures than you will ever need or use. Part of the joy of digital photography is reviewing a day's shots and



Modern photo technology in smartphones gives users a way to capture memories in a high-quality, easy-to-use way.

culling after the day is over. There might be a gem that has to be captured a certain way to be majestic. Taking several shots of the same subject or sight will get you there.

Think like an artist when shooting. A sunset or sunrise taken through the leaves of a tree is more interesting than the standard sunset picture. When you see your subject, look around to see if there is an interesting way to take the photo.

Be on the lookout for the unusual. Some unique pictures may be hiding above or below you. Experiment with the unique and delete the bizarre. There is a thin line between the two.

Capture your mojo. You may learn about yourself when you find your favorite subject to photograph on a trip. I switched from taking pictures of prepared food to shooting ingredients and menu boards across Europe. I also love taking pictures of older generations in daily life. Their faces speak to me now and stay in my soul.

Good luck in your 2022 travels. I hope to cross paths with each of you. You will know me easily. I am the one with an old-fashioned notebook but not a big camera. ■

