

The Playback

Ballad Pictures — Fall 2025

Reflection on Summer

This summer, we found ourselves in one of those Goldilocks sweet spots. Technically, we were “working,” but the truth is we were floating the Deschutes while Rufus Du Sol ran sound check a few hundred feet away at Hayden Homes Amphitheater on a glorious August evening in Bend.

That’s what production can be at its best: bluebird skies, a dynamite crew, laughter, and images riding the current along with a puff of wind in the pines.

There’s no guarantee, of course, of finding that center while nature slips and curves away from your path. But if you’ve put in enough time on the foundation, creative or otherwise, your chances improve of piloting into port with your story intact when she tires of your games.

Other Thoughts from the Long Daylight

- **Festival of the Summer:** Horseradish Fest in Collinsville, Illinois. We came for the condiment, stayed for the blindfolded root-peeling contest. Let’s just say clarity came around the third pint and a polka cover of “Jolene.”
- **Band on repeat:** Watchhouse. Hits that sweet spot between back-porch reflection and open-highway drive.
- **Apple of the month:** Hanners Jumbo (discovered in the orchards of Hood River). Crisp, sweet, and almost as big as your head.
- **Kitchen hack:** Adam’s popcorn game changer: never wash your pot.

What a Session Feels Like

Here’s the truth: before we talk shop, we want to hear your story. Where you grew up. That weird summer job. The song that still messes you up in the best way.

We’ll be in a couple of cracked leather chairs, Bowie spinning on vinyl, a pint in hand. That’s the start. Not the deck. Not the data. The story.

Because once we know what you care about, what keeps you curious, then the rest starts to make sense. The shape of the brand. The soul of the thing you're building. The product or the service becomes part of the plot.

And that's where it gets good.

Recent Reels

We've been busy behind the lens, the wheel, and the edit bay. Since spring, we wrapped a new commercial for Niima Brand Supplements, with a brand story video rolling out soon. We also just finished a fresh set of three end-of-summer spots for our longtime friends at Mountain View Heating and Cooling. HVAC has never been so cinematic.

Chef's Life national commercials have been airing on Food Network and beyond, and we added some giddyup to our step for an epic Wrangler clothing shoot in Texas.

We've also been crisscrossing the country with Bend partners, Mighty Creature Company, and Devise Agency out of Hood River, filming a new series on early childhood education for The Learning Care Group. Small towns, big backdrops, and a lot of hotel coffee. It should be a fun winter!

A Story from the Lake

Not long ago, we were filming wakesurfing scenes on Lake Billy Chinook when a family waved us down. Their very first time out in a new boat, and the ski rope was hopelessly tangled in the prop. Mortified, they asked for help.

Three people from our crew took turns diving under, sawing away at the mess. Forty-five minutes went by. Nobody checked their watch. Nobody calculated the cost. It was just the right thing to do.

Finally, the rope came free, and the boat sputtered back to life. The family offered cash. Our crew shrugged it off. The client mentioned their brand name, and the family lit up: "We're already customers. Now we're customers for life."

A Yelp review followed. Then it spread. Legend status achieved.

That's the guts of this whole thing: the moments you live when you're not worrying about perfection, when nobody's counting clicks or obsessing over the grid. Whether you're the client, the creative, or both, the real stuff rises to the top.

Until next season,
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