

## BELOW

Brent McKean's winning photo of the view over Lord Howe from Goat House Cave. Brent McKean. Canon EOS 400D, 1/320s @ f/11, ISO 400.

## RIGHT

The small group size on a Blue Dog Photography tour allows intimate time with villagers. Nikon D4, 70-200mm, 1/50s @ f/5.6, ISO 2000.

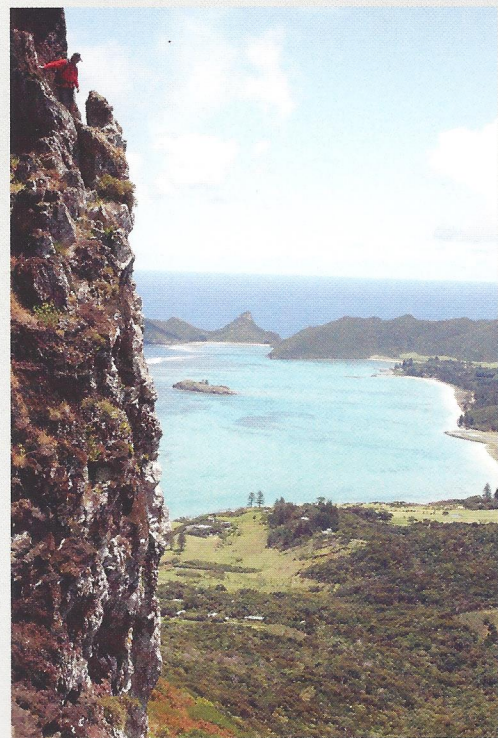
## Lord Howe Island: Pinetrees Lodge photography week

I love photography and travel. But so often my photography takes a back seat to other things, so the idea of going on a photography tour ticks all the boxes. One such tour is the walking and photography week on Lord Howe Island, off the coast of NSW, put on by Pinetrees Lodge. Lord Howe is a part of New South Wales and it's a two-hour flight from Sydney. It was made famous by Richard Attenborough in the seventies when he came to the island to shoot one of his iconic nature documentary series and declared it "so extraordinary it is almost unbelievable... Few islands, surely, can be so accessible, so remarkable, yet so unspoilt."

Recorded by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site of global natural significance, Lord Howe is teeming with unique bird and marine life, and offers pristine natural beauty. "Add to the landscape two daily sessions of soft morning light and saturated evening light, and you have the criteria for some exceptional photos," says Pinetrees owner and photography guide Luke Hanson.

In each group of 12 photographers, there are two professional photographers and a local guide. Each morning after breakfast, there's a 30-minute workshop on the technical theme of the day and then guests are given a brief for the daily photo competition, although Hanson says it's not really competitive. "It's just a way to get guests to concentrate on a technical theme, and have a bit of fun." The daily theme could be tonal contrasts, scale and perspective – or in the case of today's assignment, 'drama', which we're not short of as we climb along the basalt face of Mount Lidgbird, one of the island's two mountains. To get there we spend an hour hiking up a series of steps under the thick tree canopy so there's a certain physicality to the photography week!

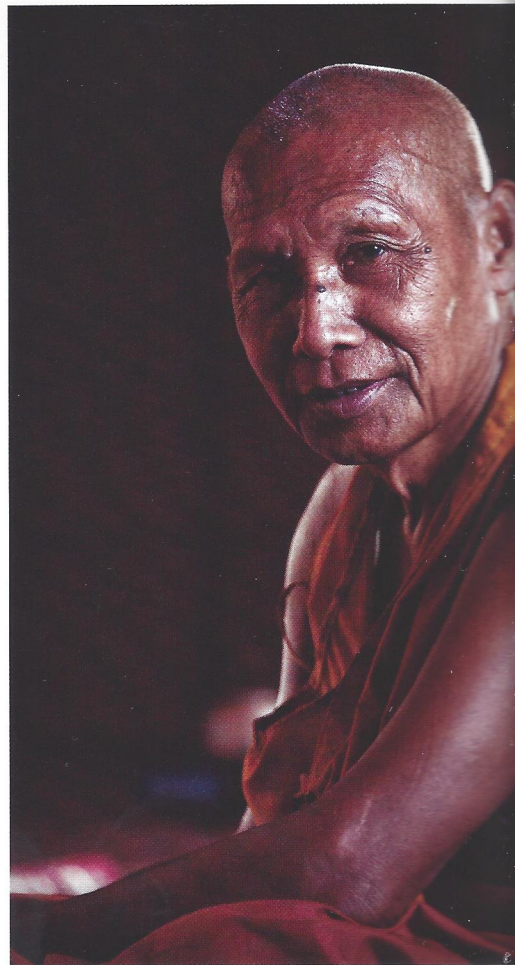
Climbing the basalt face has its challenges, but there are ropes in place for some of the steeper sections. All this provides plenty of photo opportunities to showcase today's 'drama' theme. Our destination is Goat House Cave, half way up the mountain, which offers magnificent views. From where we stand Lord Howe looks like some wild, exotic island straight out of an adventure novel.



Looking through my lens I shoot the vista under the watchful eye of my photography mentors Hanson, Kenny Lees and Alex De Kieffe. As taught on day one of the tour, I'm constantly checking my histogram to help me improve each shot.

Every night we have a debrief and everyone shows their top two shots of the day. "It's always a revelation for each guest to see how many different perspectives there are from the same location," says Hanson. There's a bottle of wine for the best photo of the day and guess who won the pinot for best dramatic photo? Thank you very much! – Brent McKean, Editor, Great Walks magazine.

More info [www.pinetrees.com.au](http://www.pinetrees.com.au)



## Siem Reap, Cambodia

Danielle Lancaster, Blue Dog Photography

### Where does the tour visit?

Danielle Lancaster says, "Our tour goes to Siem Reap, Cambodia. The tours take seven or eight days. You'll have a private shoot with traditional Buddhist monks and dancers. There's also the sunrise at Angkor Wat and you'll experience the culture at a grass-roots level."

### What draws photographers to the area?

"Cambodia is now safe to travel and it's enriched in (Khmer) and modern (Pol Pot's killing fields) history. It was listed by Lonely Planet last year as the number one destination. If there is something or somewhere special a client wants to photograph we will also work with them to achieve it."

### What support do clients receive?

"This specially designed tour consists of challenges and assignments following a topic designed to advance your photography. Critiques of work will be conducted in both private and public sessions, and there will be editing sessions, presenters and intensive tutorials on topics such as portraiture and camera techniques. Accommodation for participants is a recommended four-star hotel."