

The Woman and the Horse

Photographs and Text by Steve Simmons



This is one of my favorite locations in New Mexico. It is an old, melting, Hispanic adobe village way out from any other civilization. No matter what time of year I go, the late afternoon light is wonderful on the old buildings.

These two shots were done on different days, one with late afternoon sunshine, and one with hazy sunlight. I added light to both of them as a supplement to the available light already there. On the left the flash actually serves as the main light, and below, it is intended to soften the shadows caused by the more direct sunlight.

The camera was a Nikon D200 with a 24-120 lens. The flash was a small battery powered unit made by Broncolor with one diffused flash head. The camera had one remote flash controller and the power pack had a second one so that I did not have to be tethered with a synch chord. These remote units are made by Pocket Wizard. I set the camera on Manual and worked out the exposure and flash power setting with the histogram on the camera's viewing screen.

The model is Tomiko Madoff who is one of my favorites and someone I have worked with several times. She is a competent rider, but I liked her on the ground for both of these shots. She poses easily and naturally, and needs very little direction. The other model is Cambridge Manzy Rose, an 8 year old Morgan mare that I have shown western pleasure and as a reiner. Rose is my prettiest horse model but can be a little difficult at times. She seems to know that she is supposed to point her ears forward, but may or not do so. The ears forward is a standard requirement for horse photography. They are simply much prettier when they pose in such a manner.

The key to making good photographs is to be able to respond to the light and the situation. I actually went to this location expecting to photograph Tomiko and Rose with some other buildings but the light here was so good I could not resist. I like to go and have some plans for what I intend to do, but I also like to be flexible and responsive to the situation of the moment.

By the way, this building is supposed to be an old brothel upstairs! and a store or bar downstairs!
This location will be one of the settings for an afternoon session in our May 2009 workshop.

