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**Mauricio Donelli: No Limits** by Harvey Goldstein



When I asked Mauricio Donelli the source of his inspiration, his answer was unique. It was more than just having a camera at a young age; he has two uncles who were great photographers in Italy and who immigrated to Coro, a small town in northeast Venezuela, where they continue to work as photographers. He says photography is in his DNA, in his blood. Born in Venezuela 41 years ago, his environment was defined by the constant presence of images of people and nature. Images were his family's language and their way of living. He was born into a creative family and the camera became his way to continue the tradition.

Mauricio photographs with an open mind. He believes that everything one sees must be photographed. There is no right or wrong, just what is good or not good for him. He is one who "loves to take pictures and be a witness to different scenes." For Mauricio, there is no better way to see. He believes it is important for a new photographer to understand that the imagination has no limits and that images are infinite. There is only one way to find these images, learn about them and see them, and that is by making photographs. By constantly creating images, the probing, aspiring photographer will see many new things as he explores the environment, while the more tentative photographer will have a more limited view of the world. Mauricio's work ranges from weddings and portraits to commercial photography and fine art nudes, as well as animals, nature, architecture, travel, adventure and photojournalism. There is nothing that is not in his realm of interest.

"Sometimes a photographer will think that all of the great pictures have been taken, but there is always a new image tucked away in the back of your mind," he says.



Mauricio has made his mark as a destination wedding photographer. He is never worried about where the wedding will take place because he “sees” the wedding site differently than the bride and even other photographers. To Mauricio, to create is to see; he observes the elements that surround him at the moment and how they will work together, applying the right formula for the right image.

While the bride will prepare the house, hotel or outdoor areas for traditional photographs, Mauricio will find interesting places to photograph the bride, such as in the kitchen, bathroom, in a corner or on a roof. Anywhere and everywhere is within his world of fine places to photograph and it is his intention to have the final image be as unique as possible for each bride or family. It is his signature to be different from the rest, which is why he is always changing his style and looking for new and innovative ways to create photographs. Mauricio’s work has taken him to Aruba, Barbados, Bonaire, Colombia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, France, Guatemala, Italy, Mexico, Nicaragua, Salzburg, the U.S. and Venezuela.

Visiting each country gives him the opportunity to see and learn more. Mauricio is presently involved in two life projects; one is a book about his 25 years as a wedding photographer, and the second is a book of the nudes that he has photographed.

To Mauricio, photographing the human shape is a story. It is like every day appearing as usual, but with enough nuances to make each one different.

He has also had the opportunity to photograph some of the great celebrities of our time, such as Arnold Newman, astronaut Charles Conrad and the Dalai Lama. It is not unusual to have only 10 minutes to prepare for such sessions. Such was the case when he photographed the Dalai Lama. When Mauricio told the Dalai Lama it would only take 10 minutes, he laughed, saying that all photographers say the same thing. Mauricio completed the session in the allotted time because the Dalai Lama was easy to work with. Mauricio asked him what he could possibly know about having a balance between the religious and material life, since he looks so religious with nothing material. The Dalai Lama’s response was to laugh, raise his wrist, and show Mauricio his vintage Rolex.





Mauricio's cameras of choice for weddings are the Mamiya 645 Pro TL and AF Digital and the Nikon F5. He prefers Kodak Portra NC 160 and for his blackand- white wedding work, he uses Kodak CN 400. For portraits, he works with a 4x5 Sinar P2 with Polaroid film 55 (positive/ negative). He will also use his digital camera for portraits because he feels that some of his work fits with the digital technology.

He also likes to compare what he has accomplished with his large-format film versus what he has captured with his digital camera. Even if he photographs the same subject in both mediums, the image may be the same, but the feeling is different because the technique is different.

Mauricio is constantly experimenting to find a new niche—not necessarily the correct one, because there is no correct way, only different ways to capture an image. He continues to strive for the unique.



Mauricio's philosophy on life is that each day must be different and that one must do things differently each day—that is the key to his success. By constantly changing, one will always have something new to see and photograph. Each new photograph that one takes is part of that individual's creation. It is important to continue to take more photographs, create more, see more and enjoy more. After 25 years of photography, Mauricio Donelli believes this is the only way for him to live his life.

It is his way of telling his stories; it is how he wants to live until the end. Visit [www.mauriciodonelli.com](http://www.mauriciodonelli.com).

***Harvey Goldstein from Branford, Connecticut, has been in the photographic industry for more than 30 years. He is a former studio owner and presently edits numerous association newsletters and magazines, as well as being a freelance writer.***