

that will show speed and give the illusion of motion. Long lenses will compress the action, giving the photo a vitality, but when panning, stick with wide-angle lenses.

Following a skier down the mountain is one effective method Ryan uses to capture the feel of skiing. Here a wide-angle lens should be used, preferably a 24 mm or 28 mm, which is prefocused to its hyper focal distance, the place where far-away objects as well as close objects will remain their sharpest. Hold the camera low, at about knee height, and fire away. It helps to have a motordrive — and plenty of film. Says Ryan, "You may waste a lot of film; but then, again, you may get that one great photo, too."

TIME. The time of day you choose to shoot can make or break your shot. Early mornings and late afternoons are best. The reason is simple; colors are richer and deeper, plus the long shadows that are cast will give the snow more texture and help delineate distance. Try to frame your subject with the sunlight behind. Rim light always makes a subject look good, and with the light coming from the rear, the snow will sparkle if it's flying.

Other good times to shoot are on foggy days, when the colors will be muted and subtle. Ryan himself prefers early morning when mist or ice crystals hang in the air and steam is rising off creek beds. The most important thing, says Ryan, is to stay alert. "A shot from one place on a hill can be boring," he says, "but five hours later, when the light strikes it just so, it can be extraordinary."

PLACES. The trick to good ski photography, as in any kind of photography, is anticipation, knowing or sensing when something interesting is about to happen. Ski the course once and find that ideal spot, then plant yourself there and wait. Things to look for include knolls, or a rolling terrain, where a skier might become airborne for a split second. Also, look for fresh powder, which will spray gracefully as a skier goes by, or any area where a skier will be making fresh tracks. These can produce powerful images.

Don't overlook the unusual vantage point, such as a counter hill, or even a ski lift. Keep your eyes open for things such as saturation of color, pieces of machinery, clothes, etc.

In conclusion, Ryan advises to keep shooting, learn the rules, then break them. "Photography is nothing but calculated luck," he says, "over a long period of time, the chance of your snapping a great photo steadily improves."

"That final 500th of a second where you actually snap the photo may be luck, but the fact that you have put yourself in the position to snap it is where the real skill comes in."



Not the Alien — just a documentary filmmaker caught in action by artist/photographer David Peters.

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