I've always aimed for overall sharpness in my close-up and macro photography. so I'd shoot at small apertures, say f/22 or f/32, with my Micro-NIKKORS. Then I saw images from a photographer who limited sharp focus to elements of flowers. I liked the detail and sense of softness he achieved, so I explored shooting macro at fairly wide apertures. I'd get a single point of sharp focus—to bring the viewer's eye where I wanted it to be—while the rest of the image showed a dream-like softness. The technique works incredibly well with the D750, thanks to the camera's large sensor and wide dynamic range. D750, AF-S Micro NIKKOR 60mm f/2.8G ED, 1/800 second, f/4.2, ISO 100, aperture priority, Matrix metering.
work with our cameras as they progress from prototypes to production to availability. Along the way I learn their features and capabilities, compare and contrast them to previous models in our line-up and shoot end-result images that showcase what they can do. Naturally, I come away from all these steps and stages with pretty complete knowledge of the new models.

Recently, though, a photographer friend threw me a curve. As I was just about to show him the D750 DSLR, he asked, "Was there anything about the camera that surprised you when you got to shoot with it?"

His question made me realize that often in these days of digital miracle and wonder, a new Nikon camera actually does take my photography in surprising directions.

The first thing I think when I get my hands on a new addition to the Nikon camera line is, How is this camera going to fit in with the way I like to shoot? After all these years, can a new camera make me a better photographer? Yes, sometimes it can. Can it make me a more enthusiastic one? Frequently.

What often happens is that the new camera will prompt me to modify some of my methods and preferences or to try something new. For me, one of the goals of photography is exploration. I want to see how the world reveals itself in ideas and images when I look through the viewfinder.

Changing Views with a Vari-angle LCD

I was having lunch in a pool hall (doesn't everyone?), when I thought, I've got a camera with a tilting LCD; let me find a way to use it. As I was leaving I found the image I wanted. I quickly pulled the LCD out, lifted the camera, tilted, framed and shot. I even had time to turn on the virtual horizon indicator to keep the setup on the level. D750, AF-S NIKKOR 20mm f/1.8G ED, 1/40 second, f/8, ISO 2800,
The D750 took me in that direction right away because of its chief physical feature: a tilting Vari-angle LCD, which is a first for a full-frame, FX Nikon. The tilt angle LCD is one of those things that gets a "Oh, that's nice" or "Oh, okay," reaction when you first hear about it—but that response quickly turns into "Oh, way cool!" when you start using it.

I've always liked shooting high- and low-angle photos—and when I shoot video, I tend to like it a lot—but being able to make those types of images with a full-frame Nikon and some of my favorite AF-S NIKKOR lenses, was...well, way cool. And way creative when having that capability suggested pictures I might not have thought of making otherwise. Plus, the Vari-angle LCD proved problem-solving when it was the only way I could get low-angle or high-angle shots short of lying on the ground or standing on a ladder. It was nice to be able to see from a comfortable position what the lens was seeing. So that was a surprising turn for my shooting, right off the bat.

HDR

© Lindsay Silverman
Red Rocks Park in Colorado. The D750 offers four settings for its in-camera HDR images: high, low, medium and auto. Choose auto and the camera analyzes the light, the contrast and, to a degree, the subject, to make its choice. Above, the result of setting auto. I used a tripod. D750, AF-S NIKKOR 20mm f/1.8G ED, 1/40 second, f/16, ISO 100, aperture priority, Matrix metering.

Another feature that proved exciting was the D750's capability to produce an automatic HDR (High Dynamic Range) photograph. Set the camera for that result and it'll take two rapid-fire images, one under the meter reading, one over, and then layer them to create an image of wider dynamic range than a single shot can
offer. I'm a big HDR fan, and I routinely produce HDR images by setting my camera on a tripod and choosing auto bracket mode to shoot a series of photos that I later process in third-party software on my computer. With the D750 I can take three-, five-, seven- or nine-image brackets—one exposure at the meter reading (or at my manual choice of shutter speed and f/stop), then a series above and below that reading. (The D750, by the way, is the first Nikon enthusiast-level camera to offer nine-frame bracketing.) Typically I'm a three- or five-frame guy, but I've been experimenting with seven and nine and getting incredible HDR results, though I have to tell you, at nine frames the processing software tends to slow down. The auto two-frame HDR feature has affected my shooting simply because there are times when I don't have a tripod and just want to get a quick, hand-held HDR image.

I'd gone to Central Park in New York City to shoot fall foliage, only it wasn't there yet. So I used the opportunity to take some HDR images that would add some interest to the muted colors of an overcast day. This one, at the Bethesda Fountain, is a five-stop bracket, hand-held with the zoom's VR activated. At home I used Photomatix Pro software to merge the images, then took the photo into Capture NX 2 and used U-points and local control to sharpen some areas and add saturation and contrast to others. D750, AF-S NIKKOR 28-300mm f/3.5-5.6G ED VR, 1/500 second, f/8, ISO 400, manual exposure, Matrix metering.

Sharing Easily with Built-in Wi-Fi®

The D750 has also influenced what comes after I shoot a photo; namely, sharing it. Photography has always been about sharing what we see, what we care about, what we celebrate and want to remember; and what we want others to remember. I've shared in the past by making prints, by creating photo albums, by giving slide presentations and, with digital, by sending photos nearly instantly to others using e-mail or a secure FTP site. With the D750's built-in Wi-Fi capability, I can take a picture and send it to my compatible smartphone or tablet and then on its way to
any number of social media sites, or individuals via e-mail or text message. What's really cool is when the responses and comments come back almost as quickly. Because of this quick communication capability, sharing has now become part of my imaging process.

D750 Video Features

Another effect on my shooting concerns the moving image. For years I concentrated on still photography before discovering that video is its own creative, expressive fun. But to really get into it I first had to change my thought process. When I take still photos I deal with fractions of a second to capture what I want. In video, it's the flow of events, the continuity of what's taking place in front of me that I'm out to record.

The D750's made a difference in my video shooting by giving me the ability to adjust the aperture steplessly, and quietly, while the camera is in record mode with its Power Aperture feature. When recording video, it's typical to leave the camera in its record mode to capture all the action within the scene, which resulted in shooting a few seconds of video at f/4, then, realizing the need for f/8 or f/16 for the next shot, turning off the camera, resetting the aperture and starting up again. With the D750, I make the change as I'm shooting and make the edit later, at the computer. The scene's light changes, people walk around, water flows, clouds move—and I can adjust the aperture as it all happens to increase or decrease the zone of focus, create a mood or direct viewers' attention to an element in the scene.

Another favorite feature for setting exposure while recording is the highlight display that activates zebra stripes that show up on the LCD on areas that are very likely overexposed. If I see them, I know I need to reduce the amount of light by choosing a smaller aperture or changing the ISO.

For me, the surprising thing about a new Nikon camera is how it encourages and inspires me to explore new territory and return with brand new evidence of the adventure.
Featuring

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Early in his Nikon career Lindsay served as general manager of Nikon House in New York City's Rockefeller Center, where he hosted some of the world's finest photographers as well as photo enthusiasts and photo writers, editors and educators from around the world. He has held technical, marketing and product management positions for the company, and for 19 years was a contributing writer, photographer and editor of Nikon World magazine.

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