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INTERMEDIATE

# Tool Talk

Featuring **MIKE CORRADO**



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For Carey, her guitar and the bar background I wanted soft, flattering light. I fired an SB-900 into a 36-inch umbrella as the key light on Carey, a second SB-900 with a Honl Speed Snoot to light the cherry red guitar and a third, on a stool in the back, to add a bit of fill to the bar. I added a 1/4-inch Honl Speed Grid with a red gel to the third Speedlight to send a nice stream of complementary red light to the front of the bar and the floor. D3S, AF-S NIKKOR 24mm f/1.4G ED.

## The Building Blocks of Light

I can get the light there, no problem. I can bring in the Speedlights, the stands and all the accessories I'll need to take the pictures I need to take. I know the Speedlights will be versatile and powerful enough to handle the job. And then comes the more interesting and creative part: I build the idea of the image, and then I shape, control, direct and finetune the light to express that idea.

No matter how much I know ahead of time about the setting and the subject, I know I'm likely to run into the unexpected. Will I be lighting to match the mood of

the room, or will I be creating a mood to overcome the limitations of the room? Because I don't know that beforehand, I come prepared with all the right tools.

The basic ones are my Nikon Speedlights—my SB-900s, SB-600s and SB-R200s and the color gels that come with them and the stands that'll hold them right where I want them. And the SU-800 Wireless Speedlight Commander that allows me to use any or all of the Speedlights off the camera.

Then comes an army of light modifiers: diffusers, snoots, grids, umbrellas and more. How big an army depends on what I think I'll be facing, but at the very least there's always a snoot and a grid. The purpose of these invaluable accessories is to give me the greatest possible control over the light—control of where it goes and what it looks like when it gets there; control of how it makes my subject look. With these tools, I can choose the degree of dispersion and diffusion. I can make the light go wide or tight, get softer or harder.

The right tools for the job are vital, but what I've learned along the way is that the photos you take aren't the result of having the right tools; they're the result of knowing how to use them.



*Featuring*

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Mike Corrado's title at Nikon is senior manager, NPS & pro relations. Check out Mike's work on [Instagram](#).

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