

RON SMID - Connecting with

by Dorothy Jeanne Engst

Sitting across from me at the coffee shop, Ron Smid had plenty to say about the photographs he takes. I could tell immediately where his passion lay. As he talked he became so energized it was as if he were the exact opposite to the serenity his photos portray. It is only when he explains the process and how it can take him up to five days to capture the perfect shot that you realize he is as still and connected to nature as anyone could hope to be.

When I contacted Ron it was not only due to my fascination with his photography; his lifestyle was key as well. When he's not living in a remote cabin in the woods, he travels Canada in his Mitsubishi Delica with his dog Natasha in the passenger seat.

Natasha arrived in Ron's life in 2005 when he was on one of his five day shoots. She had been shot in the eye and her condition led Ron to believe she had endured years of struggles. Ron was surprised when the vet said she was just

six months old. That was six years ago, and Ron titled the photo he took at that time 'New Beginning'. It was a new beginning for Natasha and the first use of a new camera for Ron and the photo itself captured the essence of a new beginning.

His appreciation for Canada and his connections with nature started at an early age, when Ron was 19 years old he left home for the first time and headed west with a camera in hand. A profound experience with spirit that took place while ascending Della Falls in Strathcona Provincial Park only helped to strengthen Ron's realization of who he was and confirm his journey with photography was taking him in the right direction. He is self taught through study, calling landscape photographers worldwide and asking questions; and most importantly, making the connection with nature.

Ron takes his connection with his photography to a special level. No digital imagery here. Working with a 1950's mahogany Deardorff camera complete with leather bellows, this is the

same type of camera used by photographer Ansel Adams at the turn of the last century. With this camera he catches nature on large 8 x 10 negatives that provide proofs which are clearer than digital cameras can manage today. He finds that film has an organic property to it; it's finite, no taking an endless ream of shots. Every sheet of film is a labour of love producing that one single image of connection to nature.



*Photo at left -
Canoe Cove, P.E.I.*

n Nature

Ron is a wanderer; he uses his intuition, looks at a map and then wanders the country for months at a time allowing the photographs to find him.

“If you look deep enough, they are looking for you too and the alignment comes into place. You are with that image and you know you’ve met each other before,” he says.

Throughout our meeting Ron couldn’t emphasize enough the importance of making that connection first; this happens when he gets off the beaten track.

“I have to release myself to the process, with patience and intuition,” he explains.

This could involve heading off across a lake by canoe, climbing mountains or slogging through the woods. All these he loves to do because he is passionate about Canada.


“Canada has everything we need to survive,” he says. “We don’t often realize how rich we are.” 



Photo above - Cathedral Grove on Vancouver Island, B.C.

Photo below - Ron with camera and Natasha



Join Ron in making his connection with nature. For this and several future issues we will be featuring photographs taken by Ron Smid. There are two ways you can participate.

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