



Hot Spots for Great Shots

by Darwin Wiggett and Samantha Chrysanthou

Photography as a hobby is more popular than ever! Thanks to today's user-friendly, high-quality digital cameras, you don't have to be a master of photography to expose sharp images properly.

But you can only rely on your camera so far; in the end, great shots happen for those who know how to be in the right place at the right time. In this

article we'll introduce you to six of our favorite spots in the Bragg Creek and Kananaskis region where the subject matter is stunning, and wonderful photographic opportunities are literally at your fingertips.

We'll also share a few pointers on the best times for taking photos, as well as give you a few tips on making better images when you get there.

Sun-kissed Mount Lorette is beautifully reflected in one of the three Lorette Ponds.



A look upstream from Elbow Falls.

Mt. Lorette Ponds, HWY 40 - previous page.

The Lorette Ponds are dotted with paved pathways, a railed fence, picnic tables, docks and bridges. While the groomed park-like nature of the ponds is highly appealing for picnickers, serious nature photographers often try to eliminate any hint of human presence in their photos.

You can make the images of Mount Lorette reflect off one of the three ponds, but rather than fight man-made structures, use them strategically to add an interesting perspective and scale to your photos.

As with most landscape photography, the best times to visit Lorette Ponds are sunrise to mid-morning and from late afternoon to sunset. Even during winter, you can often find a few small windows of open water for capturing intimate, ice-framed reflections of the peaks.

Elbow Falls, HWY 66 - at left.

This well-known waterfall attraction, located just 20 minutes west of Bragg Creek, is a favourite location for many photographers, but few people visit this classic scene in winter months. We love making photographs of Elbow Falls right after a fresh snowfall for that Winter Wonderland look. Head out early in the morning – before the virgin snow gets trampled by winter boots.

Although the Falls are the main attraction, this location has so much more to offer! Take a walk through the picnic area and capture the living energy of the Elbow River as it flows through snow-topped boulders. The stairs to the Falls lookout can often be slippery, so put on some ice grippers when making your way to the top, where looking down the river provides for spectacular aerial views. ▶▶






ELKANA
WOODWORKING
& DESIGN

“With over 20 years specializing in detailed inlay designs with exotic woods, we’ll change your home or business environment into something extraordinary.”

Grant Pescod
Owner- Cabinetmaker

403-830-3044 | grant@elkanawoodwork.com

High-end furniture and custom built-in cabinetry:

- TV entertainment units
- Bookcases
- Library units
- Kitchens
- Bathrooms
- Dining rooms
- Home theatres



Beaver Flat Trail, HWY 66 - at left.

Just west of Elbow Falls lies a fantastic 1.3-kilometer Interpretive Trail running through a marshy beaver dam area. This location is a hidden gem for nature photographers.

Here you can make a classic shot of sun-kissed peaks reflected in the calm waters of the pond. Explore further and you'll find bleached skeletal tree trunks standing stark naked along the banks of the beaver pond, offering great subject matter for those looking for more abstract imagery.

During the winter, look for the contrast between tangled roots and wind-blown snow. In springtime, when the pond truly comes alive with invigorating sights, smells and sounds, a walk through the woods is always a rejuvenating experience.

While making your way through, remember to look for birds nesting in the birdhouse! Mount a telephoto lens onto your camera when strolling around in case you come across wildlife, but also to extract line, shape and form from the landscape. The Beaver Flat Interpretive Trail is a wonderful place to stretch your photography skills to see beyond the obvious.

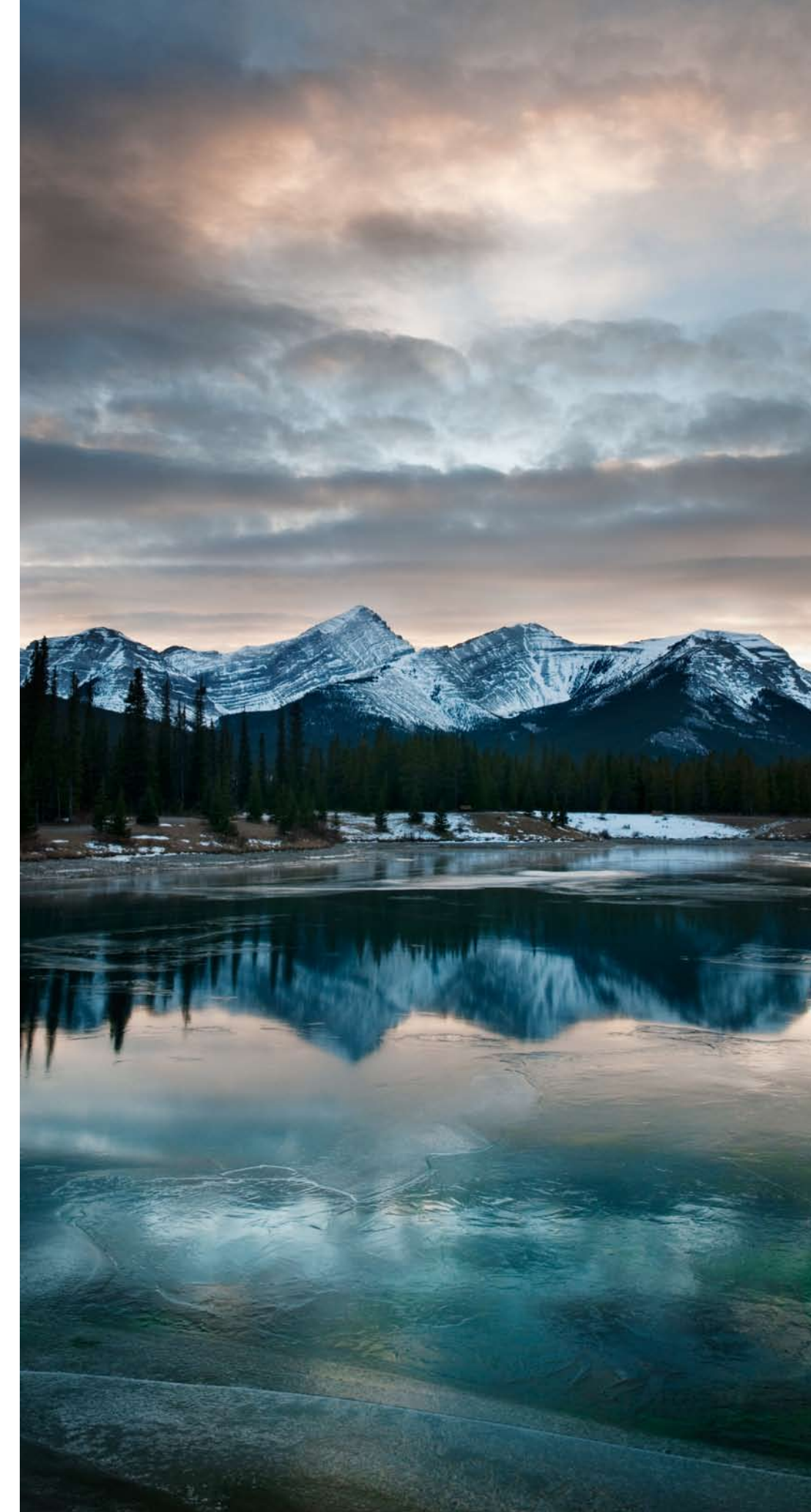
Forgetmenot Pond, HWY 66 - at right.

This picturesque pond is a popular picnic and family outing area, as well as a stunning photography location.

We prefer coming here in the morning, when the water is calm. There are few people around and the mist often rises from the water to create an ethereal mood. On sunny mornings, the background mountains are spectacularly side-lit, allowing you to use side-lighting to bring out the texture in the peaks and to add depth to your photos. ▶▶

Opposite page: bleached skeletal tree trunks intertwine at Beaver Trail.

This page: Forgetmenot Pond is a truly unforgettable sight.





We recommend using a polarizing filter for side-lit scenes to help saturate the colours and to remove reflective glare.

Just like at Elbow Falls, make sure you explore a little bit beyond the Pond. The Little Elbow joins up with the Elbow River in this area, providing many opportunities to photograph the gurgling waters in their rocky river bed.

Mount Kidd Reflecting Pools, HWY 40 - at left.

About one kilometer south of the signed Galatea Lakes trail-head turnoff lies a series of small reflecting pools on the right side of Highway 40. This spot is not signed and has no pull-offs, so you'll need to park on the shoulder of the highway.

This classic mountain scene is dominated by Mount Kidd looming ruggedly large over small reflecting pools that remain majestically tranquil and verdant in the spring, although this location is wonderful to photograph in any season. During the winter and late fall, the pools form patches of open water with lacy, fringed edges of ice. It's hard to imagine designing a more perfect scene, but take note, Highway 40 runs so close to the ponds that it has a habit of snaking into the right side of your photographs. This scene is best photographed in the spring at sunrise, whereas sunset provides the most flattering view of the mountain during winter months.

Wedge Pond, HWY 40 - on the front cover.

Also located off Highway 40, Wedge Pond is a perennial favourite among Calgary-area nature photographers. The pond is relatively small, easy to walk around, and is surrounded by some truly spectacular looming mountain peaks.

From sunrise to mid-morning, the stunning view springs to life with light dancing across Mount Kidd and the Wedge. Throw in the odd moose grazing on submerged vegetation, and you have all the elements for classic mountain photography. During winter, Wedge Pond is not a natural 'go to' destination for photography because there is rarely open water, but once the ice melts in the spring, the pond's siren call to photographers begins to work its magic. We like to photograph Wedge Pond in the fall, when the brilliant golds of the aspen groves really stand out against the darkly treed mountains. The best times to photograph here are from dawn to mid-morning, but evenings can also reward you with some very interesting light effects.

The classic mountain scene of Mount Kidd reflecting in the pools is wonderful to photograph in any season.



Darwin Wiggett is a well-known Canadian outdoors photographer, with numerous calendars, books and magazines published worldwide.

His 11 published pictorial books include the acclaimed *Darwin Wiggett Photographs Canada*, *How to Photograph the Canadian Rockies* and *Dances with Light*. He is a columnist for the *Outdoor Photography Canada* magazine, and also writes regularly for *Popular Photography* in the U.S. In 2008, Darwin was awarded Travel Photographer of the Year honours.



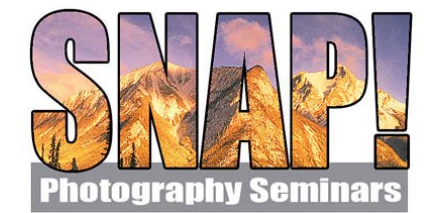
For workshops, seminars, photo tours and inspirational imagery see: www.darwinwiggett.com and www.snapphotoseminars.com

Samantha Chrysanthou is an Alberta native who changed careers from law to photography after realizing that she was more intrigued by capturing the natural beauty of landscapes than by the nuances of courtroom debates.



She now writes and photographs full-time, with particular fondness for the prairies, foothills and the Rocky Mountains. Samantha's work has been published in *Outdoor Photography Canada*, *Popular Photography*, *Photoshop Magazine* and *Nature Photographers Online*.

Samantha is represented by the AllCanada Photos stock agency. You can see more of her work at: www.chrysalizz.smugmug.com



Mastering Digital Nature Photography from Capture to Commerce
April 24 & 25, 2010 in Canmore, AB

Join Darwin and Samantha, with John E. Marriott and special guest, Roy Ramsay, Editor of *Outdoor Photography Canada* magazine, for a comprehensive and engaging nature photography seminar. Learn how real pros master the intricate art of digital nature photography.

The first 75 registrants will "Meet the Pros" at an exclusive social event and be entered to win a free portfolio review! Full details at: www.snapphotoseminars.com

Give your feet a reason to get naked!



Timeless Slate & Limestone Craftsmanship

Contact us to find out why more homeowners trust our customized stonework to transform their homes into timeless works of art.

403 478-7343
info@barefoottile.ca
www.barefoottile.ca

Bathrooms • Floors • Fireplaces • Kitchens • Patios • Infloor Heating

