



The Backgrounder

A publication of Virtual Backgrounds - ©2005

Spring Issue 2005

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Free Simone DVD

For a limited time only, with each *Background Power!* book sold, a free Simone DVD will be included at no additional charge. The DVD shows Joseph and Louise Simone at work in their Montreal Canada studio creating some of the images that now appear in their new book, *The Portrait ...Mirror of the Soul*.

WebPhotoSupply.com

For all of your portrait and commercial photography needs visit Web Photo Supply at www.webphotosupply.com.

Quality lighting at discount prices!



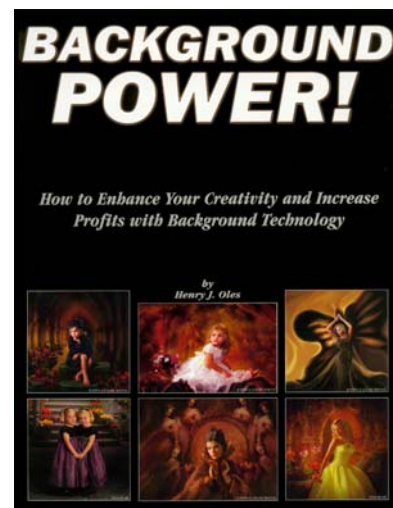
Background Power! is Now Available

The long anticipated new book devoted 100% to backgrounds in general and Virtual Backgrounds in particular has been published and is now ready for shipping. Several years in the making, *Background Power!* is the most comprehensive book ever written on backgrounds and probably also the only one. Until now, there simply hasn't been much attention given to backgrounds.

"When a photographer goes on location to photograph a client, he usually goes there because of a particular background, but when that same photographer shoots in the studio, he typically forgets all about

the background and, therefore, keeps the background super simple and traditional. Today's technology makes it possible for the photographer to have total control over the background without leaving the studio, often resulting in products that are better than what could be generated on location," says Dr. Henry Oles, author of *Background Power!*

Background Power! is a 220 page full color, hard bound book. It is available for only \$39.95 plus \$5.00 shipping and handling (within the US). [Contact](#) Virtual Backgrounds today for your copy.



".....Good reading !..... , written from the uncontested Guru of background savvy. Here's a man who knows his stuff!"

-Dave Newman
Salt Lake City, Utah

No-Nonsense Guarantee!

In the interest of getting *Background Power!* into the hands of photographers everywhere, including those photographers who are highly skeptical, Virtual Backgrounds has come up with a special offer for a limited time only.

Order your copy of *Background Power!* and pay \$39.95 plus \$5.00 shipping and handling (within the US) and examine it for 30 days. If you should feel that it isn't one of the

best books you have ever read for helping you build your business through backgrounds, just say so and Virtual Backgrounds will give you a full refund.

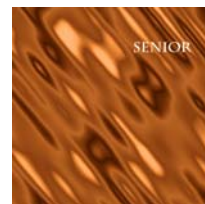
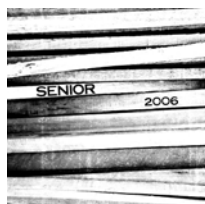
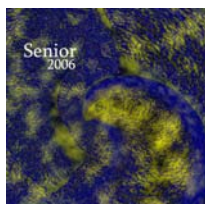
The book is filled with powerful marketing ideas along with technical information and many sample images that will help you to grow your business!

Senior 2006 Slides Available Now!

Each and every year Virtual Backgrounds releases a set of slides specific to the following year's graduating class. This year's Senior 2006 slide set is completely new and different! It gives the photographer infinite options from blending in the

colors that the subject is wearing to using completely black and white backgrounds. In addition, you can combine color gels with the black and white backgrounds to match the background with the color that the subject is wearing.

The entire set contains 20 slides and has unlimited applications. [Click here](#) to view the entire Senior 2006 slide set.



Even Minimal Background Variety Helps Sales!

Do something...anything...just do something! While so many photographers use only one or two backgrounds, research clearly demonstrates that even the most simple variation in backgrounds, such as offering a choice of colors, significantly increases sales.

Chris Wunder, Director of Marketing for Marathon Press, was the marketing director for Interstate Studios, a school picture company. According to Wunder, the data was clear. Background color choice makes a big difference, and using Virtual Backgrounds made an even bigger difference.

Rick Harding of San Antonio states it very simply. "If you use one background, they buy the best pose. If you use multiple backgrounds, the customer buys more images because they like the different backgrounds...I make more money when I use background variety."

Advanced Workshop Dates

Back by popular demand is our 2-day **Advanced Workshop** for current owners and users of Virtual Backgrounds projection systems.

Throughout the workshop, you will see how a variety of speakers, each having their own unique ways of using Virtual Backgrounds, use their systems to enhance their creativity, aid in marketing and increase their overall sales.

The Advanced Workshop will be held on August 15-16, 2005. The cost is \$450 which includes two lunches and a dinner.

Contact a friendly consultant for further information and to reserve your space in the class!

Green Screen vs. Optically Projected Virtual Backgrounds!

What do you think is better...green screen or projected Virtual Backgrounds? This is one of the more common questions we get asked at trade shows. The most truthful answer is, it all depends. Just like there is no one lens that is the best for a camera, there is no single best background method. It all depends on what one is trying to accomplish.

Generally speaking, green screen is more ideally suited for exotic event or fun type photography. For example, if you are photographing a golf tournament and you want to make a photograph of golfers in a golf cart plunging into a 20 foot deep sand trap, then this is an ideal job for green screen. On the other hand, if one is doing quality portraiture, pro-

jected Virtual Backgrounds are far better both in terms of quality and practicality. Green screen tends to give a severe "cut out" look, especially around the hair. Also, when using green screen, the photographer does not see the total image in the viewfinder. Therefore, the photographer has to be very generic in posing and try to paste in an appropriate background later.

The real problem with green screen is having to paste in the backgrounds for every proof after the photographic session and before the proofs are viewed by the customer. With many photographers taking 20, 30 and more exposures, this can be exceedingly time consuming. You would never want the subject to see

proofs for selection with a green background and tell them that you will give them a good background later. Another question often asked is what about just using PhotoShop to cut out the subject and add the background. While spectacular work can be done with PhotoShop, it is exceedingly time consuming to create a single image. PhotoShop is a better technique for commercial work where extensive time consuming work can be done on a single image.

So, the method that is best depends upon what is to be done. Ideally, a professional photographer should have available multiple methods for creating backgrounds that are just right for the situation.

WOW! Total Background-Making Control!

We are excited about our new film recorders at Virtual Backgrounds which give us far more control over our background slides than ever before. Until now, all of our slides that we sold were duplicates. Now, each slide is an "original master" because each slide is individually made from a digital original. This in itself improves the quality. But, it gets better than that. We can now make all kinds of improvements to each background slide we offer. We

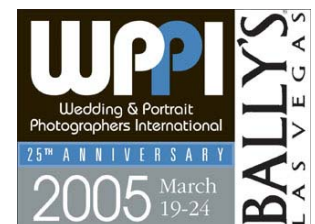
can digitally add perfect fires in fire-place backgrounds where no fire was burning. We can darken hot spots. We can make backgrounds that are far better than what they were originally in real life. In fact, we can take backgrounds that would have been unusable if used on location and make them far better than the real thing. We can do just about anything with our backgrounds, even improving our original sets that were created some years ago.

We are really excited about being able to make these improvements in our backgrounds. In the near future we hope to be able to make our film recorder services available to our customers so that if you have a special background that you want converted to a slide, we'll be able to do it for you. Watch for an announcement of the availability of this service in the near future.

Upcoming Shows and Presentations

So far in 2005, Virtual Backgrounds has been on the road quite a bit promoting our products and educating professional photographers such as yourself about the many benefits of having Virtual Backgrounds as part of your suite of tools used to promote your business, make your life a little bit easier and help you to make more money.

Our travels in the upcoming weeks will take us to many different places and hopefully to a city near you. Click on each of the links to the right to get more information about the upcoming trade shows and conventions where Virtual Backgrounds plans to attend. We hope to see you there!



Trevon Baker and the Simones take on Australia & New Zealand

Virtual Backgrounds and Nulab of Melbourne Australia organized a series of 2-day workshops throughout the month of February.

The tour consisted of travel to six cities in Australia and New Zealand, including Melbourne, Sydney, Perth, Brisbane, Christ Church and Auckland. On the first day, Joseph and Louise Simone held a workshop demonstrating the artistic side of Virtual Backgrounds.

The second day was presented by Trevon Baker. It emphasized the marketing advantages as well as the



technical side of Virtual Backgrounds.

The tour was a huge success for both Nulab and Virtual Backgrounds.



Images by Trevon Baker taken in Australia in February 2005

VB People Spotlight: Trevon Baker

At Virtual Backgrounds we don't just talk about all the great things that can be done with our products...we do it. When Trevon Baker first heard of the concept of Virtual Backgrounds, he was compelled to learn as much as he could about it. He persuaded the owners of the one hour lab/portrait studio that he worked for in Montana to let him travel to the Winona School in Chicago to take a week long course. A year later, Trevon moved from Montana to Texas to work for EPS Photographic (now Virtual Backgrounds).

After 4 years, he returned to Montana to open his own portrait studio, which quickly became a highly successful business. Trevon was one of the first photographers in the country to use video

proofing. He also was one of the first to convert his entire studio operation to digital.

After 10 years of operating the studio, Trevon sold the business to become a full time industry consultant and educator which brought him back together again with Virtual Backgrounds. For the past two years, he has been the primary assistant to Louise and Joseph Simone and Don Blair during their seminars and workshops.

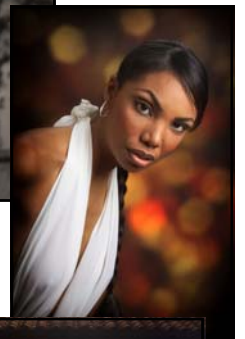
Unable to leave the role of actively being a photographer, Trevon continues working as a portrait and scenic photographer and has opened a new studio in Kalispell, Montana.

Trevon's primary interest for the future, besides continuing with his photography,

is in teaching and speaking.

He has a unique ability to make the complex easy to understand. He has given state association programs and participated in our recent six city tour of Australia and New Zealand. He has published several articles, including one on Virtual Backgrounds, for *Professional Photographer* magazine.

Trevon will be a speaker at PPA of Canada's National Convention and the Photo Imaging and Design Expo in San Diego. He can be reached through his websites, www.trevonbaker.com or www.todayinmontana.com.



We're Here to Help!

Remember, that as a continuing service to our system owners, Virtual Backgrounds offers free consultation. Jim Wilson, Cr. Photographer and VP for Education and Customer Service, has more than 20 years of experience with the Virtual Backgrounds process.

If you have a question about Virtual Backgrounds, just ask. If you'd like to have a review of your captured images simply send them to Jim by mail or by email at jim@virtualbackgrounds.net.

New Slide Set Introduced!

Virtual Backgrounds would like to announce the release of our newest slide set. The Trevon Baker Collection I is made up of 15 slides and sells for \$139.

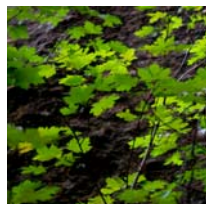
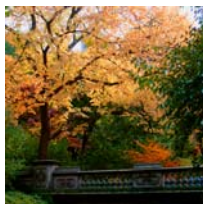
Trevon has spent years working with Virtual Backgrounds and making his own slides for use in his portrait studio in Kalispell, Mon-

tana.

You can catch Trevon in action at the upcoming WPPI Trade Show in the Virtual Backgrounds booth (#1011). He will also be speaking at the PPA of Canada Convention, the Montana PPA Convention and the Photo Imaging and Design Expo.

At each of these events, Trevon will be conducting live shoots using his own background collection as well as other great backgrounds created by Virtual Backgrounds.

Click [here](#) to view the entire Trevon Baker Collection I. And be sure to keep an eye out for other new slide sets being introduced by Virtual Backgrounds.



FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHERS

April & Larry Helsel—Keepsakes Studio

April and Larry Helsel are relatively new to the portrait business. They opened Keepsakes Studio in 1998 in the small Pennsylvania town of Duncansville. Looking for the latest technology, the Helsels found the Scene Machine Virtual Background system at the 2001 Photo Expo in New York City. Larry liked the concept, but April, the actual photographer, saw it as a potential headache.

Nevertheless, Larry won the debate and a few weeks later they had their Virtual Background system. At first, it just sat in the corner collecting dust. April made a few test exposures, but nothing of interest. Several months later, Jim Wilson, Director of Education at Virtual Backgrounds called to find out why no one had attended the Virtual Backgrounds workshop in Texas. April decided to attend the workshop, but had very few sample prints made with the system to bring along. April found the

workshop very helpful, but she still took another few weeks to start actually using the system. Quoting April, "My oldest daughter, Ciera, served as my first serious subject, but I didn't want to do just a plain portrait of her with a Virtual Background. I decided that I wanted to try to create a 'story book' type of image. I used a Denny rock and placed some ferns and other plants in front of and behind her to create depth. Olen Seidler, a long time user of the Scene Machine, suggested using a 4 x 8 sheet of Plexiglas to create reflections such as water. The Plexiglas became her 'pond.' I really got excited when I saw the results. I knew that my portraiture had just entered a whole new dimension."

"I've now used Virtual Backgrounds for two years and I still have a lot more to learn. It is such a versatile tool. I love experimenting with new ideas. The ease of operation saves time and money without needing to

use the 20+ muslins I already had. Children open up so many doors to creativity. Repeat clients love the variety I can give them without leaving the studio. With all the variety I now have at my fingertips, there is no way I'll get in a rut again. I keep trying new set ups. My competition never knows what I am going to do next. I use my Virtual Background system for 90% of my indoor work."

April's husband, Larry, also comes up with some of the ideas and is actively involved in creating new props, such as the boat dock. Props they build on their own are very inexpensive and can be changed frequently so nothing ever gets old. April is also very active with Adobe Photoshop, which she uses to enhance some of her images.

April is always eager to share her experiences with Virtual Backgrounds by doing programs and workshops. Her website address is www.keepsakesstudio.net.



Tech Tips

by Henry J. Oles

Do Creative Things With Retro-Reflective Material

Here's a hot new idea! Now you can buy pieces of the same retro-reflective material that is used to make your projection screen and stick it on various props.

When you project something on it, like a color, the prop "lights up." Essentially it "glows" as seen here in these two samples from Background Power!

Normally retro-reflective material is quite expensive, but we can sell you remnant pieces in various sizes for only \$10.00 per square foot.

Contact Virtual Backgrounds for further information.



Simone Background Collections

Earlier this year, Virtual Backgrounds introduced 3 sets of 10 backgrounds created by Joseph & Louise Simone of Montreal Canada.

Unlike most of our other slides, the Simone Collections are highly abstract. The Simones spent weeks at the computer working on these special images. Their use of these same backgrounds can be seen throughout the Simone's new book, *The Portrait...Mirror of the Soul*.

Each Simone set of backgrounds sells for only \$199. All three complete sets can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

