



CENTRAL COAST
LIVING

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SUNDAY, JUNE 8, 2008 | THE TRIBUNE | SANLUISOBISPO.COM

LIGHT ON THE LANDSCAPE

PHOTOGRAPHER TONY HERTZ'S WORK
CAPTURES THE MAGIC HOUR WHEN ORDINARY
SCENES IN NATURE BECOME EXTRAORDINARY

ALSO INSIDE TODAY

OWN A PIECE OF SLO COUNTY'S
HISTORY AND HELP PROTECT A
CULTURAL ICON OF THE AREA, F6

IN TRAVEL, F10: QUÉBEC TURNS 400 IN FROMMER, F13: VISITING NICARAGUA IN READER PHOTOS, F16: COUNTRY LIVIN'

HOW TO REACH US

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IN THIS SECTION

Arts events F9
Travel F10
Arthur Frommer F13
Books F14
Reader photos F16

ON THE COVER

'Autumn on the Merced'
Fall foliage in Yosemite National Park.

Photo: Tony Hertz

Design: Beth Anderson



PHOTOS BY TONY HERTZ

'WAVEDRAW' Birds watch the strong surf while a wave pulls back and small surface rocks are dragged back to sea in Pismo Beach.

Keeping his work in focus

Shell Beach lensman Tony Hertz has displayed a passion for photography in a career as a photojournalist, freelancer and teacher. See a display of some of his best work at SLO Art Center

By JOSH KRANE
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When searching for a beautiful scene in nature, landscape photographer Tony Hertz takes on the mindset of a hunter.

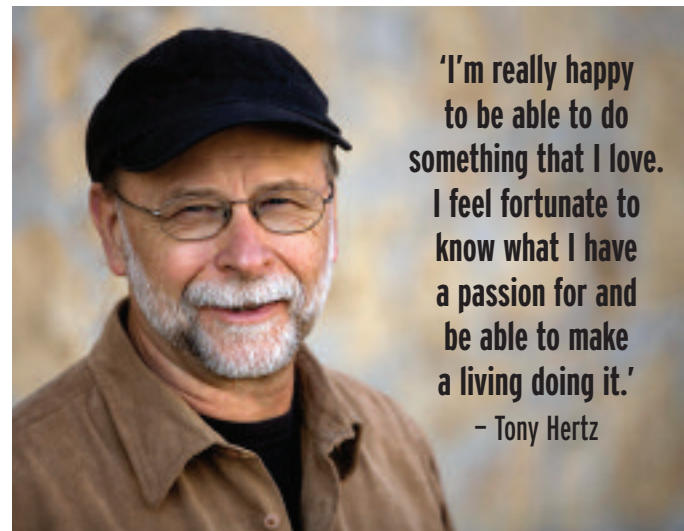
Primarily shooting wild spots around San Luis Obispo County, the Shell Beach resident pursues his quarry by quietly studying the environment around him. His Nikon D200 camera and tripod in hand, Hertz walks around the places he photographs, noting everything from the time of year to the angle of the

sun to which way the wind is blowing.

This process — Hertz refers to it as “working it” — helps the photographer pinpoint the scene he wants to frame. When he finds it, he acts quickly, sometimes taking hundreds of shots from several different angles and distances as well as adjusting his camera’s aperture and shutter speed to bring out the optimum depth of focus in the photograph.

Most importantly, though, Hertz said he relies on his intuition, or abili-

Please see HERTZ, Next Page



'I'm really happy to be able to do something that I love. I feel fortunate to know what I have a passion for and be able to make a living doing it.'

— Tony Hertz

PHOTO BY CRIS MITCHELL



'BIG SUR HIGHWAY' Twilight presents warm soft light along the ragged cliffs of the Big Sur Highway.



'EDNA VINEYARDS' While a storm clears, vineyard rows are aligned with nearby hills and billowing clouds south of San Luis Obispo.

Hertz

From Previous Page

ty to shoot from the gut, to reach his simple, yet understated goal: "to make good pictures."

"When you do get a good shot, it is sort of like your trophy in a sense because you've captured the essence of a scene," said Hertz, a part-time photography instructor at Cuesta College and former staff photographer for the then-Telegram-Tribune. "It's like capturing the fleeing cougar when it's leaping and being the hunter who actually shoots it."

Exhibit at SLO Art Center

Hertz is currently showing some of his best work in his first professional

exhibit, "Centered," at the San Luis Obispo Art Center through July 6. The fine art landscape photographs span the Central Coast, capturing scenes from Montaña de Oro State Park to Big Sur. The exhibit also includes photographs of Yosemite and Redwood national parks.

"I'm delighted to have my first showing," said Hertz, who has a white beard and speaks in a soft, friendly tone. "I think the exhibit does a really good job of capturing a continuity of my photos."

Despite the hours Hertz takes to get to know the places he shoots, he sometimes has only minutes to capture a great photograph. He often works during the "magic hour," the fleeting time of day right before and after sunset that produces warm col-

ors on the land. He also has learned to adapt to his changing environment, sometimes waiting for clouds to form in just the right pattern over the horizon or, when photographing the ocean, keeping an eye out for rogue waves.

"It's just getting the timing right," Hertz said. "It's kind of like a pressure, but it's something that I particularly enjoy when I'm actually out there shooting because I'm trying to capture nature when it's working."

Dramatic minutes

Hertz only had about 15 minutes to make his photograph "Wavedraw," a beach scene taken at Dinosaur Caves in 2004. Standing on a nearby knoll and shooting about a foot off the ground, the photographer intentional-

ly waited to shoot until just after sunset in order to reduce the contrast between the sky in the background and the ocean and surrounding rocks in the foreground. He also shot the water as it receded into the sea at a slower shutter speed in order to produce a blurred effect.

In the end, Hertz ended up making the scene into a montage, combining separate images digitally: one of the beach's foreground and the other of the background sky.

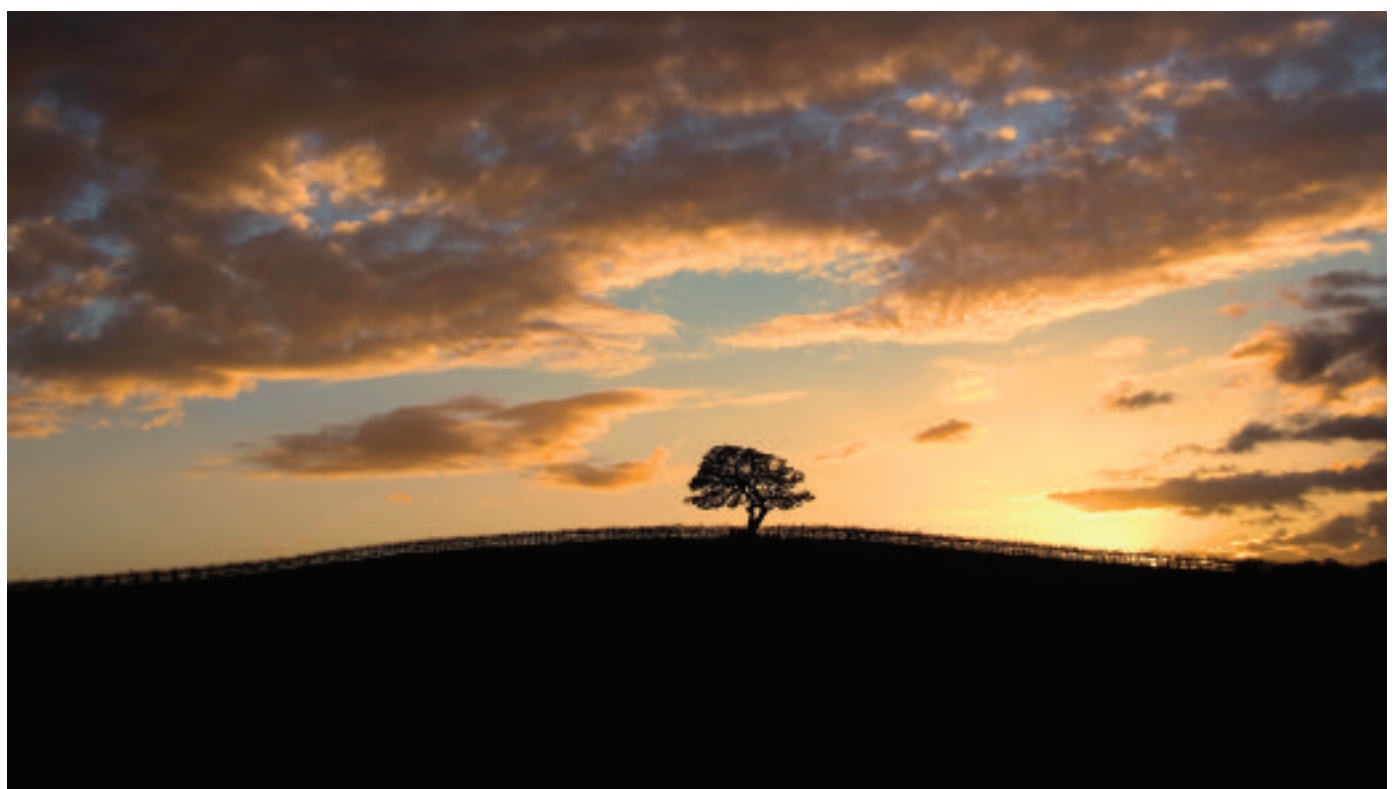
"I rarely ever do that," said Hertz, who says that about 98 percent of his work is from single digital images. "When I saw all the photos together, it just seemed like those two photos captured what was really going on there

See HERTZ, Page F5



'ROAD TO ARVIN'
A highway carves into the rolling hills east of Arvin while the landscape is bathed in warm late-afternoon light.

'LONE OAK AT SUNSET'
A majestic glowing sky frames a lone oak tree while vineyards are silhouetted on the horizon east of Paso Robles.





'BRIDGE TO SOMEWHERE' A walkway overpass in the Lady Bird Johnson Grove, Redwood National Park is enhanced by bright-diffused light during a wet winter day.

Hertz

From Page F3

and seemed to have a better cohesion.”

Always on the hunt

When without a camera or if outside conditions aren't right, Hertz is still scouting out future scenes, he said, taking mental pictures that he often refers back to when he returns to a location.

It's the technique he used in "Lone Oak at Sunset," a photo that captures the silhouette of an oak tree standing over a vineyard east of Paso Robles. Unhappy with the results the first time he photographed the area, he was pleasantly surprised when he returned a week later and found a more compelling sunset and clouds filling the horizon.

"The same scene can look totally different during a different time of day or year," Hertz said. "There are a lot

IF YOU GO...

"Centered," photographs of the Central Coast by Shell Beach resident Tony Hertz, former Telegram-Tribune photographer, will be on display through July 6 at the San Luis Obispo Art Center, 1010 Broad St. Daily gallery hours are 11 a. m. to 5 p. m.; the gallery is closed Tuesdays.

of dry runs. It's a matter of stowing away scenes that might work for a later time."

Hooked by great photos

Hertz's interest in photography started when he was 10 years old, when he remembers being entranced by the photographs inside publications such as Life and National Geographic magazines. The Redlands native got his first camera 10 years later and attended college at Cal Poly, where he majored in journalism, concentrating in photojournalism. After graduation, he landed a job as a staff photographer at the Telegram-Tribune.

"I did yield a lot of great experience working at the newspaper," said Hertz, who spent 10 years at the then six-day-a-week paper in the 1980s. "It really taught me to shoot and evaluate and go on and shoot the next assignment."

Since leaving the newspaper, Hertz has become a successful freelance corporate and editorial photographer. His images have appeared in USA Today, the New York Times and National Geographic World Magazine, among other publications. Hertz also worked as an instructor at the Lepp Institute of Digital Imaging in Los Osos in 2004 and 2005.

Passion through the lens

The photographer is out shooting anywhere from once to several times a week, depending on the weather. He lives with his longtime companion, Janice Richards, who sometimes accompanies him on his photo shoots and helped prepare the photographs in "Centered."

For the future, Hertz said he would like to continue showing his work in galleries. In the meantime, he's going to keep on making good pictures.

"I'm really happy to be able to do something that I love," Hertz said. "I feel fortunate to know what I have a passion for and be able to make a living doing it."

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MOREONLINE

Tony Hertz's Web site: www.tonyhertz.com