



# STEVE BERTONE PHOTOGRAPHY

**Success Magazine:** Steve, your interest in photography and animals first converged at age fourteen. How was this passion sparked?

Steve Bertone: After hearing about a lost dog through my church newspaper, I was alarmed. A few days later, I was the lucky one to bring the dog and its relieved owner back together. That day changed my life forever. While I was happy to have reunited the dog and his master, I was also curious when the owner, Ernest Loubell of NYU, showed me his extensive line of professional photo equipment. As a reward for finding his lost dog, he promised to teach me photography and give me his cache of old photo equipment. I was awestruck! I knew the equipment was a gift, but was yet to realize just how powerful that gift would become throughout my life.

**SM:** What is the most important thing you learned from Mr. Loubell that you have carried with you throughout your career?

SB: Mr. Loubell taught me how to select subjects, compose set-up shots, use lighting—all the fundamentals of photography. The most important thing I learned from Mr. Loubell, however, was to continue to shoot as many photographs as possible to learn from my mistakes. He told me the more pictures I took, the more experience I would get, and the better my photographs would be. I remain forever grateful to Mr. Loubell for his advice. Though Mr.

Loubell has passed, the time he spent with me will forever be with me each time I am behind the camera.

**SM:** Where did you begin to hone your photographic skills?



SB: Growing up minutes from the ocean in Queens, New York, in a mosaic of ethnic neighborhoods, I had endless experiences and opportunities to photograph the New York City skyline, landscapes, cultural events, and school events. I carried my camera everywhere I went and took pictures of everything. In my junior high school yearbook, I made a special dedication, which published numerous photos of mine. Not only was that a privilege, but it really was the beginning of my photography career.

**SM:** How did you end up in the Capital Region?

SB: I lived in the Queens area until my mid 30s. In 1989, I followed my parents—who had moved to upstate New York in the early 70s—to the Capital Region. I had a strong bond with my parents and missed spending time with them, so the move was partly to be closer to them. I was also ready to escape the hustle of city life and enjoy the peacefulness of the rural environment of upstate New York.

**SM:** When did you make the decision to use animals as your chosen subject matter... and make it your career?

SB: I believe it is my calling to work with animals, as I feel I have an innate attunement with nature. I also believe I have a natural rapport and understanding of animals and they know this. This understanding makes the animal I am photographing feel comfortable around me, and to pose for me naturally.

**SM:** Why horses in particular?

SB: I have loved horses all my life. I have found them to be highly intelligent animals and I believe they are absolutely beautiful to photograph. Their bodies have a natural grace and fluidity, and their personality can be easily seen in their actions and movements.

**SM:** What type of equine photography do you specialize in?

SB: I specialize in portrait and action photography.

**SM:** What is the most challenging aspect of animal photography?

SB: For me, the most challenging aspect of animal photography is being there at the right time to capture the perfect moment. Unlike humans, animals will not recreate a specific action or movement to ensure the photographer gets the shot. This is the importance of taking numerous photos when working closely with animals.

**SM:** What other types of photography do you do?

SB: I also enjoy photographing landscapes, children, and adults. I have photographed weddings as well as public and private events.

**SM:** What technical aspects of photography do you excel in?

SB: I believe I have mastered composition and light exposure, which are vital to the technical elements of good photography.

**SM:** Aside from skill, what personal characteristic has enabled you to succeed in this field?

SB: My ability to really listen to a client and understand what they want in a photograph. I am attentive to detail and conscientious about meeting the client's specific needs. I am very passionate about my photography and I believe my passion shows in my prints. I am also extremely demanding of myself, setting high goals to attain the perfect shot.

**SM:** What is the most rewarding aspect of your work?

SB: Exceeding my clients' expectations. I also find it very rewarding to work with animal owners who truly love their animal and consider them a part of their family.

**SM:** How would you describe your photographic style?

SB: I strive to capture the personality of each subject I am photographing. I take great care to shoot the most artistic and real photos showing the subject's emotion and personality. I am also comfortable suggesting poses that highlight the subject I am photographing to attain the best possible photograph.

**SM:** Why should a prospective client choose you to capture their images?

SB: Throughout my photography, I attend to every minute detail to maintain technical quality while capturing the personality and the emotion of the subject.

**SM:** As someone who has followed their passion in life, what advice would you give to others?

SB: I would give the same advice that was given to me. No matter what you choose to do with your life, always be the best at what you choose. Make it your passion. No one can ever take that passion away from you.

**SM:** What one word describes you best?

SB: Perfectionist.



## STEVE BERTONE PHOTOGRAPHY *Photography with a heart*



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