Greetings from Far Away to Those Near and Dear:

What a fascinating Theme we have this month. Thanks again to all who spent the time going through the list of potential themes and voting so strongly for this one. Here is some information that I have gleaned and WoW! Have I learned a lot in the gleaning process.

It will be very interesting to judge and Bill will have to be sure that our guest judge, and our in-house judges are well aware of what is being looked for. First thing that came to my mind when going through this information was THROW OUT THE WINDOW ALL your Preconceived ideas of what so many judges go on and on about. Sharpness throughout, Sharp focus. Rule of Thirds etc. You cannot use these prerequisites on these images. The soft focus, the blur, the lack of detail, that is what makes these images work. So again dear members, start thinking outside the box, read what makes a Bokeh image, and most of all go out there and have fun. And Colin!!!!!!! not gonna work with your supper dooper close up macro images that are perfectly sharp and in focus. Take a good look at the BUTTERFLY!!! Personally I've tried so hard to get where Colin Scotter is with his Macro images and I've never got there yet!!! Hey! It really made me think of images that I had taken in lifetimes past that I figured were NO GOOD ---- BECAUSE ---- they were not in focus or the depth of field wasn't great, or too much and I discarded them. I'll just bet you guys have some like that as well. This is truly an exercise for EVERYONE, so let us see some new images from some different members.

PLUUEEASSEE!! And again HAVE A BLAST!

BOKEH

The term comes from the Japanese word boke (暈け or ボケ), which means "blur" or "haze", or boke-aji (ボケ味), the "blur quality". The Japanese term boke is also used in the sense of a mental haze or senility. The term bokeh has appeared in photography books at least since 1998.

It is sometimes pronounced /ˈboʊkə/ (bokeh-uh. and in photography describes the effect found in out-of-focus regions of images. Different lens designs, aperture shapes and sizes, and various depths of field have profound effects on the type and extent of bokeh produced in a photograph. Bokeh happens in the areas of an image beyond the depth of focus; by playing with focus and lens, photographers can create some stunning images.

The English spelling bokeh was popularized in 1997 in Photo Techniques magazine.

How to use the Bokeh photography technique
• Bokeh usually works best when taking an up close picture of your subject, try finding a subject with nice clear lighting that you are able to get a good close up of.

• 2

Slightly unfocus your lens so that the image is now softly blurred. The image background will be significantly blurred, but try keeping the foreground image, your subject, recognizable.

• 3

Set your exposure time according to the amount of light present.

• 4

Now set your aperture to a lower f-stop number so that the aperture is opened wider. Having the aperture on a wide setting will help keep the picture in soft focus.

• 5
Look into your viewfinder and inspect the frame for any sharp lines or clear details in the background, this is not wanted in a Bokeh picture.

- 6

Now take your pictures.

In photography, **bokeh**[^1] is the blur, or the aesthetic quality of the blur, in out-of-focus areas of an image, or "the way the lens renders out-of-focus points of light." Differences in lens aberrations and aperture shape cause some lens designs to blur the image in a way that is pleasing to the eye, while others produce blurring that is unpleasant or distracting— "good" or "bad" bokeh, respectively. Bokeh occurs for parts of the scene that lie outside the depth of field. Photographers sometimes deliberately use a shallow focus technique to create images with prominent out-of-focus regions.

Bokeh is often most visible around small background highlights, such as specular reflections and light sources, which is why it is often associated with such areas. However, bokeh is not limited to highlights, as blur occurs in all out-of-focus regions of the image.

[^1]: An example of the bokeh effect produced by a Canon 85mm prime f/1.8 lens.
An extremely shallow depth of field, a common effect of macro lenses, emphasizes bokeh.

The depth of field is the region where the size of the circle of confusion is less than the resolution of the human eye.

Although difficult to quantify, some lenses enhance overall image quality by producing more subjectively pleasing out-of-focus areas. Good bokeh is especially important for large-aperture lenses, macro lenses, and long telephoto lenses because they are typically used with a shallow depth of field. Bokeh is also important for medium telephoto "portrait lenses" (typically 85–150 mm on 35 mm format) because in portraiture photography, the photographer typically seeks to obtain a shallow depth of field to achieve an out-of-focus background and make the subject stand out.

The bokeh produced by a catadioptric lens (also called a mirror lens).

Bokeh characteristics may be quantified by examining the image's circle of confusion. In out-of-focus areas, each point of light becomes an image of the aperture, generally a more or less round disc. Depending how a lens is corrected for spherical aberration, the disc may be uniformly illuminated, brighter near the edge, or brighter near the center. Lenses that are poorly corrected for spherical aberration will show one kind of disc for out-of-focus points in front of the plane of...
focus, and a different kind for points behind. This may actually be desirable, as blur circles that are dimmer near the edges produce less-defined shapes which blend smoothly with the surrounding image. Lens manufacturers including Nikon and Canon make lenses designed with specific controls to change the rendering of the out-of-focus areas.

The shape of the aperture has a great influence on the subjective quality of bokeh. For conventional lens designs (with bladed apertures), when a lens is stopped down smaller than its maximum aperture size (minimum f-number), out-of-focus points are blurred into the polygonal shape formed by the aperture blades. This is most apparent when a lens produces hard-edged bokeh. For this reason, some lenses have many aperture blades and/or blades with curved edges to make the aperture more closely approximate a circle rather than polygonal. Traditional "Portrait" lenses, such as the "fast" 85mm focal length models for 35mm cameras often feature almost circular aperture diaphragms, as is the case with Canon's EF 85mm f/1.2L II lens and Nikon's 85mm f/1.4D, and are generally considered exceptional performers. In contrast, a catadioptric telephoto lens displays bokehs resembling doughnuts, because its secondary mirror blocks the central part of the aperture opening. Recently, photographers have exploited the shape of the bokeh by creating a simple mask out of card with shapes such as hearts or stars, that the photographer wishes the bokeh to be, and placing it over the lens.\textsuperscript{[11]}

Leica lenses, especially vintage ones, are often claimed to excel in bokeh quality, although Leica photographers have tended to make more use of maximum aperture due to the lenses' ability to maintain good sharpness at wide openings and the suitability of the Leica camera system for available-light theatre work and reportage. Consequently, more evidence is needed to determine whether Leica's lens designers deliberately set out to produce pleasing bokeh.

Minolta/Sony STF 135mm f/2.8 [T4.5]* (STF standing for Smooth Transition Focus) is a lens which is specifically designed to produce pleasing bokeh. An apodization filter is used to soften the aperture edges which results in a smooth defocused area with gradually fading circles. Those qualities make it the only lens of this kind currently on the market.
2. In the middle of the filter the wanted bokeh shape is cut out - in out example a heart is used. I’m not sure how big a hole the shape can be. But you can check it right away by just looking through the viewfinder. On the 50mm lens @ F1.8 a 15mm heart gives a metering value equal to F3.2, so it can probably be a little bigger (you can use a puncher or cut it by hand).

3. Set your camera to its **lowest aperture value** (completely open).

Here are two shots to demonstrate this technique - one with a bare lens and the other with the hearted hood. see more shots here and here (I leave it as an exercise to tell which is which :)

You will need:

- One large aperture lens (a Canon 50mm F1.8 is used here, but Nikon 50mm 1.8 will also do, and the superb Nikon 50mm 1.4 will work even better)
- One sheet of black paperboard
- Cut and shape the sheet to make a fake lens hood. The Diameter is made so that it snugly fits on the lens.
Beautiful Examples of Bokeh Photography

The word ‘bokeh’ derives from the Japanese for ‘blur’ or ‘haze’, and in photography describes the effect found in out-of-focus regions of images. Different lens designs, aperture shapes and sizes, and various depths of field have profound effects on the type and extent of bokeh produced in a photograph. Bokeh happens in the areas of an image beyond the depth of focus; by playing with focus and lens, photographers can create some stunning images.

**Bokeh Day.** This image is an excellent example of bokeh, with the metallic effect on the bubbles and receding blur of lights offering a sense of depth and dimension. (via DW212)

![Bokeh Day](image1.png)

**Bokeh Butterfly.** Bokeh photography can transport the viewer to an almost alien world of scale and color, such as this beautifully composed image of a butterfly. (via Aussiegall)

![Bokeh Butterfly](image2.png)
**Cactus Needle Bokeh.** This macro image of the miniscule hairs on a cactus uses an extremely narrow field of focus to achieve the sensual bokeh effect. (via Kevin Dooley)

![Cactus Needle Bokeh](image1)

**Forget-me-not’s.** Kevin Law’s bokeh image is another to take nature as its subject matter, with the pretty forget-me-nots’ summer blossoms set against the blurred greens of an English meadow. (via Kevin Law)

![Forget-me-not's](image2)

**A Cup of Bokeh, Please.** This superb shot juxtaposes a sharp focused mug against blurred lights for a touch of bubbling bokeh. (via Shermee)

![A Cup of Bokeh, Please](image3)
**When Bokeh and Alcohol Mix.** A close-up shot of Christmas tree lights, using a quarter-second exposure, resulted in this colorful spiral.

**Sweet Disposition.** Photographer Josh Liba likes to take portraits of this character called Yushi in various settings. In this case, she finds herself in a field of corn stubble at sunset, with a delightful combination of color and soft

**The Smell of Bokeh.** Nifty’s beautifully rendered photo captures the play of golden light on plants, cobwebs and sparkling dewdrops. Another Christmas-themed bokeh shot that verges into the realms of abstraction, with lights reduced to discs of sublime color.
**Bokeh Spiral.** Many of the spirals found in nature are based on the logarithmic principles of the Golden Section, such as the receding body of a plant as seen in this bokeh image.

**Bokeh Snow Tree.** This atmospheric shot captures a blizzard blowing through the branches of a tree in Massachusetts, with the blurred snowflakes offering a sense of depth and movement.

**Happy Bokeh Wednesday!** It took a lot of patience to achieve this image, but finally the photographer managed to capture the fine detail of a falling leaf’s desiccated flesh against the blurred autumnal colours of the background.

**Typical Elbe Bokeh?** This maritime image uses bokeh effects to create a sense of scale and distance with the form of a freight-laden ship pleasingly blurring into the background.
Bokeh Mu’a. The feathered light in DucDigital’s bokeh photo has an ethereal, dream-like quality. (via DucDigital)

2009 Illuminate Yaletown. Bokeh photographs often feature greater blurring on lights that are further from the camera, sometimes producing startling geometric effects.

Lonely Night of Bokeh. The combination of blur, water, tonality and colouration in this image creates a melancholy yet alluring atmosphere.

Bokeh!. This image was captured when the photographer visited Shivamogga, in the Indian state of Karnataka. The corrugated iron roof, rivulets of water and glistening, blurred vegetation are characteristic of the subcontinent’s monsoon season.

This portrait captures children under sprinkler showers in the summer sun, with a pleasing bokeh effect on the joyful face in the background.
**Bokeh Burger.** Tasty bokeh shot has a sizzling burger set against a barbecue’s blurry burning embers.

**Sheltering Angel.** A hermit crab shelters inside its shell, with the masterfully handled bokeh effect on glistening pebbles creating a sense of sunlit depth. (via Lel4nd)

**Bokehlicious NY Streets.** Expertly handles the balance between the tree in the foreground with the lights of New York behind, achieving just the right level of focus and blur.

**Sunset Bokeh.** Light on water has long been a favorite subject matter for photographers, and a touch of bokeh produces a particularly sedate aesthetic.
Double Sweet Bokeh. This fresh photo has a bokeh blur on the polka dot background and a strawberry in the foreground, with the central fruit’s flesh picked out in stunning detail.

Bokeh Billiard. bokeh shot makes great use of depth, colour and light to capture a cool pool hall aesthetic.