



# Through My Eyes! New Zealand

Jerry Grasso



Welcome to my ***Through My Eyes!*** coverage of some amazing locations my wife Jayne and I have visited around the world. Some are iconic while the majority of the images presented here require a more intimate exploration of the location. This particular ebook is devoted to our travels through the North and South Islands of [New Zealand](#). My goal is not to present a definitive study of this location, but rather to provide hopefully a tantalizing glimpse to peak your interest! You will find that these images are not just your typical iconic scenes, but also contain some rather different ones as well.

How does one portray the emotional response to, and non-representational spirit of, a new and exotic travel location? During October, 2018, my wife, Jayne, and I [visited](#) New Zealand. I am a fan of “Lord Of The Rings” so I wanted to visit as many of the filming locations that I could.

This was our first bus tour. We usually drive when we travel. The reason is that I like to stop along the way when I see a picture opportunity. And I can stay till I get what I think I saw. So this was a stretch to be on a time table per stop. But it all worked out. I learned years ago that as a photographer one has to adapt to whatever may come your way!

I hope my pictures will reflect this sense of awe that we felt as we enjoyed our fairyland adventure!

For an interactive country map with the visited sites referenced within this ebook, please click [here](#). Feel free to do your own exploring!

Explore the many informational hyperlinks included within the ebook!

Any image found within this book or on my website is available as a print purchase. Just email me at [jerrygrasso96@yahoo.com](mailto:jerrygrasso96@yahoo.com), or visit my website at [jerrygrasso.com](http://jerrygrasso.com).

Enjoy life!





We literally traveled some 11,000 miles from the United States. We flew from Hartford, CT, to Houston, TX. We then flew non-stop 14 hours direct to Auckland. The largest city in North Island, New Zealand is [Auckland](#). The city's harbor features several large islands reachable only by ferry or other boats.





[Motuihe Island](#) is viewed during the ferry ride to any of the other islands.





This is the [Bean Rock Lighthouse](#).





The [Auckland Harbor Bridge](#) is very similar to the [famous bridge in Sidney](#), Australia.





What visit to the city would not be complete without a ride to the top of the [Sky Tower](#) for some amazing views of the city!









Welcome to Hobbiton and the Green Dragon and the [Shire](#)! The [Hobbiton Movie Set](#) was a significant location used for The Lord of the Rings film trilogy and The Hobbit film series. It is situated on a family run farm near [Matamata](#), in [Waikato](#), New Zealand. It is now a Tolkien tourism destination, offering a guided tour of the set.









I was blown away by the attention to detail throughout the set!





The [oak tree](#) on the hill above Bag End is fake!





Bilbo Baggins' home.













And of course, what visit would be complete without a visit to the [Green Dragon](#)!





















One of the entrances to [Tongariro National Park](#). It is the oldest national park in New Zealand, located in the central North Island. It has been acknowledged by [UNESCO as a World Heritage Site](#) of mixed cultural and natural values.

The park was [the fourth national park](#) established in the world. The [active volcanic](#) mountains Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe, and Tongariro are located in the center of this park.













Typical volcanic soil around  
the still active volcanoes.





The road to [Mt. Doom!](#) ( Mt. Ngauruhoe)





[Lake Taupo](#) in the distance.









[Mount. Ruapehu](#) erupted in 1995...



Part of the [ski fields](#) at [Mount Ruapehu](#) . Several scenes of the “[Lord Of The Rings](#)” were filmed here.





















Two of the many types of sheep on the islands. This was part of a visit to the [Agrodome](#) Sheep Show, the multiaward-winning stage show, to gain an insight into agriculture in New Zealand.





[Mori](#) are the indigenous people of New Zealand. This is part of the greeting ceremony at the [Tamaki Maori Village](#) we visited.













This is one of the many types of ducks found at the [Rainbow Springs Nature Park](#).



Also found in this park is a [rainbow trout hatchery](#). These big guys are eventually released into the many rivers and lakes around Rotorua and Taupo areas. If you are a fisherman, these areas are the places to fish for some [world-class fish](#)!



T

















These were taken from a river [cruise](#) near [Franz Josef](#). Boy, did we have fun on this cruise! You can view a [quick movie](#) sample from my website [here](#).





This is a view from the window of the [Kobe Cuisine Japanese restaurant](#) at the [Millbrook Hotel](#) outside of Queenstown. What a luxurious place to stay!





The following scenes were taken along the way to Milford Sound. The one above is part of the [Remarkables](#) mountain range outside of Queenstown.















## What's out there? in the beech forest community

Welcome to the Eglinton Valley's beech forest – home to some remarkable creatures.

Three of New Zealand's five evergreen beech trees grow in the Eglinton Valley.



Silver beech (Nothofagus menziesii)



Mountain beech (Nothofagus solandri)



Red beech (Nothofagus menziesii)

The light is fading and night is drawing in, as I wait, standing very still. I feel an air movement near my face, then another. I just can make out moving shadows passing close to me. They could be fantails, but I know they are not. The bats are out.

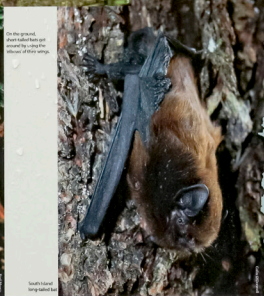
### An ancient family

The Eglinton Valley is one of very few places where both the southern lesser short-tailed bat and South Island long-tailed bat are still found together. These bats, known to Māori as pekapeka, are endemic to New Zealand and are its only land mammals.

The short-tailed bat belongs to a family that is more than 6 million years old and has some unique characteristics. Unlike other bats, they are able to forage on the forest floor and their diet includes nectar, fruit and pollen as well as insects.



Long-tailed bats feed solely on insects which they take on the wing, often around water and forest margins.



### Iconic forest birds

Like bats, many of the Eglinton's forest birds choose to roost and nest in holes and crevices, often preferring the biggest, oldest beech trees. And, like bats, some of these birds are not found anywhere else in the world; they evolved in isolation, without knowing mammalian predators. That means they have struggled to cope with competition and interference from introduced species, including humans.



### A deadly invasion

Introduced pests such as rats, stoats and possums have taken a dreadful toll of native wildlife. Tree-hole dwellers like bats and forest birds are especially vulnerable to stoats and ship rats which are agile climbers.

The threat increases dramatically every 3-5 years when beech trees produce abundant seed, called 'mast'. Mice are attracted by the feast and, in turn, provide food for increased numbers of rats and stoats. Once the mice die off, the hungry predators look to native species, especially birds, for their next meal.



### Uncertain future

Bats were once widespread but are now disappearing. The forest that once rang with bird song has become silent. The silence is an alarming indicator that bird numbers have declined, almost to the point of no return.

What can be done? Is it possible to stop – or reverse – the decline of this unique community? Can the dawn chorus be returned?

Check the Conservation action panel to discover some of the exciting initiatives in the Eglinton Valley – and how you can be part of the action!

Milford Heritage  
Highway App –  
coming soon





Forest birds, [KaKa](#).











# The Milford Road


## Welcome to Fiordland National Park


 Te Wāhipounamu – South West New Zealand  
World Heritage Area

OVERNIGHT CAMPING IN ALL CARPARKS,  
INCLUDING MILFORD SOUND IS NOT PERMITTED.

 Camping along the Milford Road is only permitted at designated DOC camping areas , or commercial accommodation providers .

 Please dispose of campervan toilet waste at waste stations sited at Te Anau, Knobs Flat and Milford Sound/Piopiota.

 Do not feed the kea.

 No dogs or other pets are allowed in Fiordland National Park.

### DISTANCE

Te Anau to Milford Sound/Piopiota is 119 kilometres (74 miles). Look out for the historic, white, mile-marker-pegs along the road.

### ROAD CONDITIONS

Between May and November the Milford Road can be affected by adverse weather and snow conditions particularly between the Lower Hollyford turn-off and Milford Sound. Roadside signs notify motorists of any chain restrictions or road closures.

No cycling/walking during the avalanche season and/or the No Stopping restriction zone from Falls Creek to the Chasm is allowed.

For current road conditions phone 0800 44 4449.

- FIVE MILE LOOKOUT**  
Views of Lake Te Anau and South Fiord.
- LAKE MISTLETOE**  
45min return. Forest walk.
- TE ANAU DOWNS**  
Departure wharf MILFORD TRACK.
- EGLINTON VALLEY VIEWPOINT**  
Views over the Eglington Valley.
- MIRROR LAKES VIEWPOINT**  
5min walk. Reflections and forest and wetland birds.
- KNOBS FLAT**  
Conservation displays.
- LAKE GUNN NATURE WALK**  
45min loop walk through beech forest.
- THE DIVIDE**  
Start of ROUTEBURN & GREENSTONE TRACKS.
- KEY SUMMIT**  
3h return track from Divide carpark.
- POP'S VIEW**  
Roadside viewpoint of the Hollyford Valley.

- LAKE MARIAN TRACKS**  
Waterfalls 20min return walk.  
Lake Marian 3h return.
- GUNN'S CAMP & MUSEUM**  
European history of the Hollyford Valley.
- HUMBOLDT FALLS**  
30min return walk to the waterfalls.
- Start of the HOLLYFORD TRACK.**
- MONKEY CREEK VIEWPOINT**
- GERTRUDE SADDLE TRACK**  
4h return for experienced walkers.
- HOMER TUNNEL VIEWPOINT & NATURE WALK**  
20min alpine walk.
- THE CHASM**  
20min return walk to a water-sculpted chasm.
- TŪTOKO HISTORIC 1936 SUSPENSION BRIDGE**  
Stop for mountain, river and forest views.
- MILFORD/PIOPIOTAHI WALKS**  
Various short walks.













The jewel location of our trip to New Zealand was a cruise tour of the [UNESCO World Heritage site](#) , [Milford Sound](#) . It is located on the southwest of South Island in [Fiordland National Park](#) . The 16 kilometer length from the head of the fiord to the open sea is lined with sheer rock faces that soar 1,200 meters high from the water. It is often called one of the most beautiful places on Earth! AND, there were several “Lord Of The Rings” [filming locations](#) in and near the park!









It has also been judged the world's top travel destination in an international survey (the 2008 Travelers' Choice Destinations Awards by TripAdvisor) and is acclaimed as New Zealand's most famous tourist destination. Rudyard Kipling had previously called it the eighth Wonder of the World!



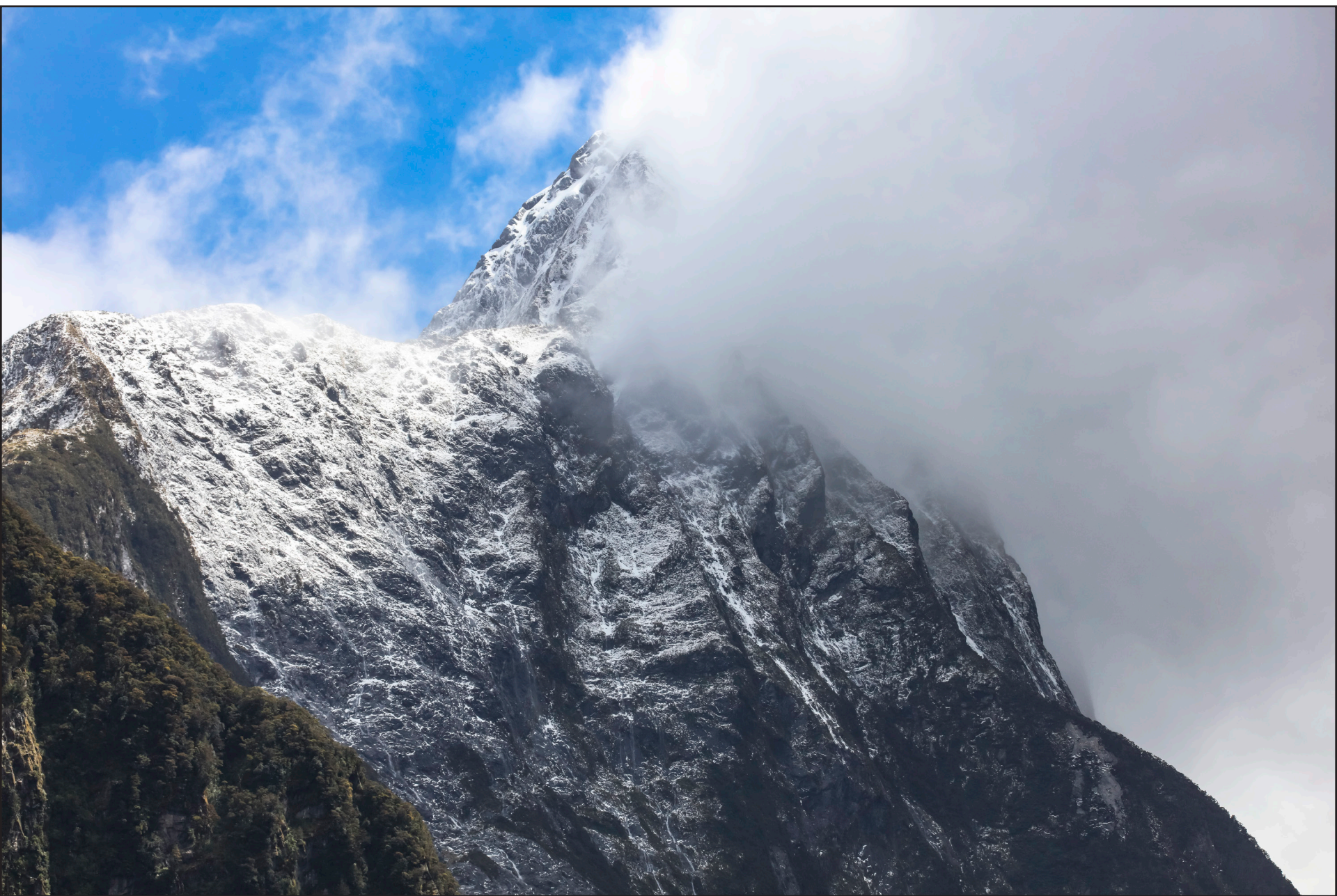






It is easy to see that waterfalls can be found throughout the park, especially on rainy days. It rains most of the time here and the park often will close as a result of treacherous weather. We were lucky the day we went. It poured on the way there, but the sun did break out a few times with patches of blue sky!













We were fortunate to see some seals resting on the rocks.





































The prettiest city we visited was [Queenstown](#) . The town is built around an inlet called Queenstown Bay on Lake Wakatipu, a long thin Z-shaped lake formed by glacial processes, and has views of nearby mountains such as The Remarkables, Cecil Peak, Walter Peak and just above the town, Ben Lomond and Queenstown Hill.

Water and mountains, what a combination! It is a great location to do "spokes of the wheel" touring to many scenic locations.

On the way to the city...





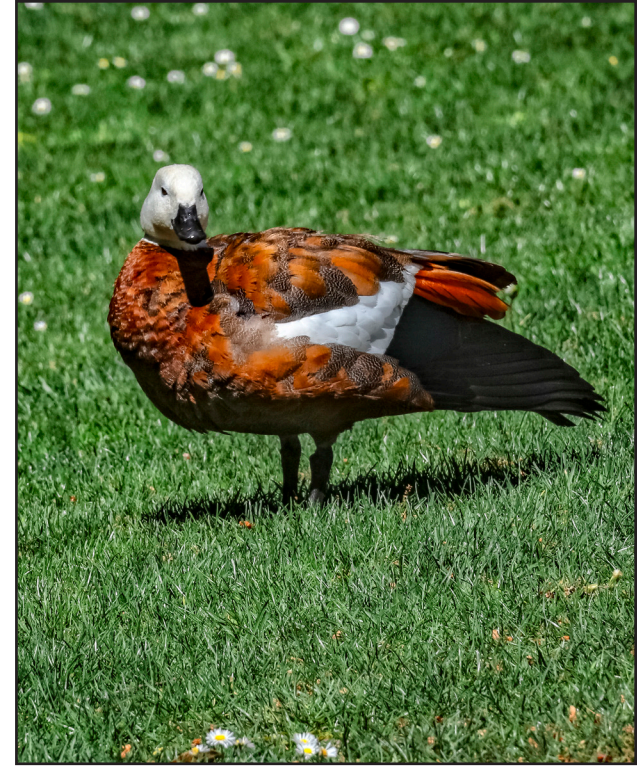
























[Glenorchy](#) is a small settlement at the northern end of [Lake Wakatipu](#). The local scenery was used as one of the settings in the first of Peter Jackson's "The Fellowship of the Ring" (2001), the first film in his Lord of the Rings series. Lothlórien, Orthanc, and the scene where Boromir was slain and leant near a tree were a few that were shot in nearby [Paradise](#). It was also used in "The Hobbit" trilogy, for scenes of the exterior of Beorn's house. I always knew I would one day make it to Paradise!













A partial glimpse on Hooker Lake of [Mount Cook](#). It is the largest peak (12,218 ft) in New Zealand!





The [Church of the Good Shepherd](#) is situated on the shores of Lake Tekapo.





Well, I hope you enjoyed this travel series to New Zealand. It seems like a dream already. But these memories will last a lifetime. Enjoy life!



# My Artistic Mission

## Child-like wonder and inquisitiveness

are qualities frequently put aside once we become adults. We tend to slowly become sterilized by our right-or-wrong kind of world which too often has too little time to explore the what-if's and the what-could-be's. I believe we all need to re-connect with these qualities to re-enrich our lives. A first glance at a photograph of an onion often reveals the fact that, indeed, it is an onion. But what also lies beneath its surface? We won't know until we peel back its layers.

Animation innovator, Walt Disney, recognized this and tried to bring back the power and importance of imagination. Inspired by his spirit, my mission therefore is to encourage the use of viewer imagination. My work attempts to explore and suggest what often lies hidden within the personalities and mysteries present in the world that was, and the world that is around us.

For me, my photography often is not so much about the decisive moment. Rather, it is about creating an awareness of place and a sense of history, with an aura of mystery. It is the starting point for my artistic journey, not the destination. I try to use what I produce

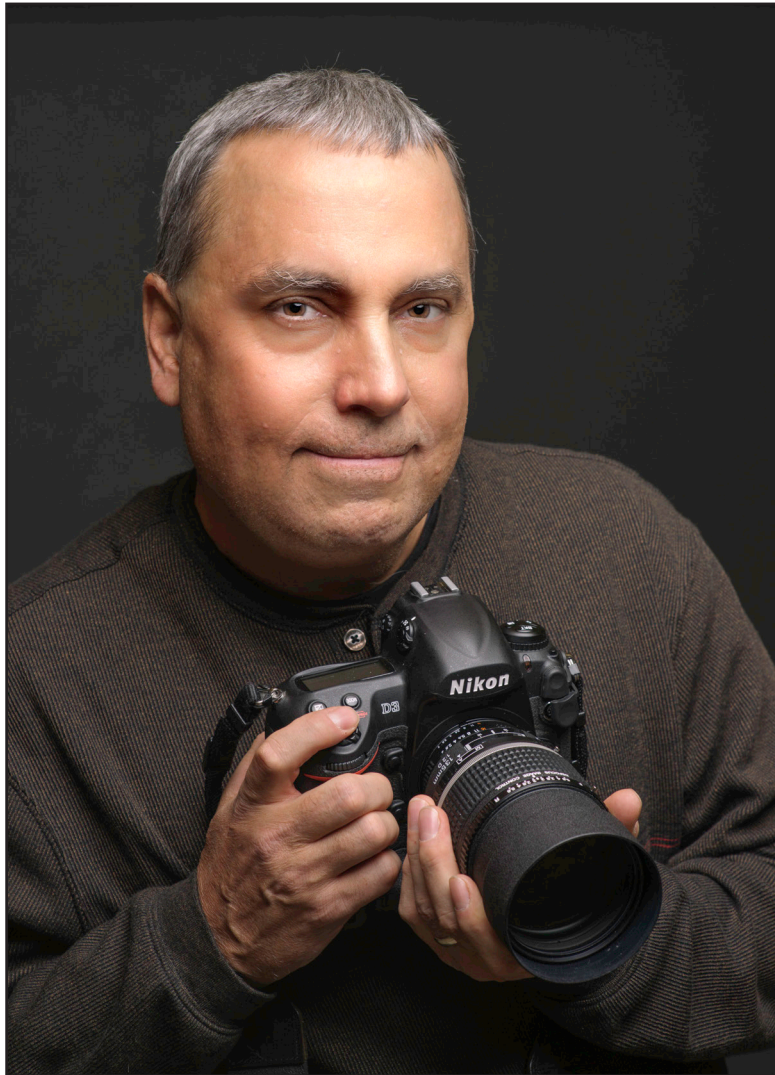
as personal metaphors for my reactions to what I saw and felt. My favorite motivational quote is that "Life begins at the edge of your comfort zone." My works attempt to reflect this as I probe the emotional, mind's eye after-image that was captured by both the eye and the heart, and which often defies logical explanation by the mind.

My goal is that my projects will serve as a springboard into inventiveness and exploration with the hopes of awakening my viewer's inner child. I try hard to show the connections and implications of things that others may not readily see. My hope is that my work may also help viewers discover the beginnings of their attempt to understand and perhaps even learn to tolerate and sympathize with the human condition and the world in which we live. I will try to do whatever I can to make viewers linger longer in front of my works so as to ignite their imaginative response through discovery and inquisitiveness.

Any image found within this book or on my website is available as a print purchase. Just email me at [jerrygrasso96@yahoo.com](mailto:jerrygrasso96@yahoo.com), or visit my website at [jerrygrasso.com](http://jerrygrasso.com).

Enjoy life!



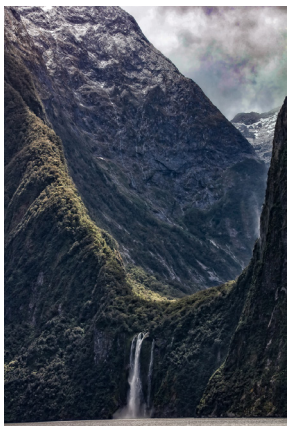


**JERRY GRASSO** has been an award-winning, international fine art photographer and visual artist since 2002. He has mentored locally with photographer, [Mallorie Ostrowitz](#), and then with internationally-renowned visual artist, [John Paul Caponigro](#). Photography is only the starting point for many of his projects. His favorite motivational quote is that “Life begins at the edge of your comfort zone.”

In addition to his travel photography, Jerry specializes in the intimately abstracted architectural photography, the photo essay, and the photo composite series.

Jerry’s mission is to awaken his viewer’s inquisitive inner child by creating an awareness of place and a sense of history, with an aura of mystery.





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