

## FEATURE

# Selling directly

ALL PICTURES BY DAN SANTILLO

Got some good shots of your local area that have saleable potential? Dan Santillo did, here's what he did with them.



**A**FTER NINE months of living in Swansea and building up a selection of photos from the local area, I decided to approach shops to see if they were interested in selling my work. One photographer had pretty much saturated the market with photos for sale in many shops. But despite this I thought it was worth trying; at worst I'd be told 'no' and at least I would get some feedback on my photos.

One particular shop had images by other photographers, so I approached this one first. I went in person and spoke to the owner, asking if she took on other photographers' work to sell. She agreed to look at my portfolio and we arranged a mutually convenient time. I chose 24 photos that I felt people would like to see hanging on their walls, mounted them on card and put them in a Kenro leather portfolio case. Only

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# to shops

**Blaen y Glyn, Brecon Beacons National Park, Powys, Wales**

Canon EOS 10D, Canon 28-135mm, 15secs at f/19, ISO 100, polariser, tripod.

'This is a favourite haunt of mine. I didn't realise there was a whirlpool until I'd taken this long exposure shot.'



photos of the local area were on sale in the shop, so I concentrated on them, but also added a few from further afield in Wales to show I covered a wider area, if required.

It took me about a day and a half to print and mount the photos. Five days later, the shop owner was looking through my portfolio and complimenting me, saying it was good to see saleable photos. We discussed the price and she

agreed to pay me the same rate as she paid other photographers. I had admitted, perhaps foolishly, that I didn't have much of a clue about selling to shops, but she was very helpful and explained about her business and what sort of profit she wanted to make.

Whilst discussing how she wanted the final images, I showed her a separate signed and mounted photo I had bought along, to show the ↗

**Blaen y Glyn, Brecon Beacons National Park, Powys, Wales**

'This is the same shot cropped. When I was asked for this as a panorama I was dubious whether it would work, but when printed and mounted I was pleasantly surprised at how good it looked.'



## Selling directly to shops

finished product. It happened to be a panorama and on the basis of that one print, she decided to take some of those too. There weren't any panoramic photos on sale yet, so we agreed on a size and price for them.

I was amazed when she told me she wanted seventeen prints – seven 23x50cm panoramas and ten 24x30cm. It had proven a far better visit than I could possibly have hoped for. I was also hopeful that the novelty and size of the panoramic prints would help my work stand out from the rest of the shots on sale in the shop.

The following week I took the prints to the shop, along with an invoice for £128. She was very pleased with the prints and when I dropped in later to see how things were going, I was happy to see them for sale in the window and on the wall inside. Once enough have been sold, she will be placing a repeat order. She also gave me a heads-up on other locations that sell well.

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### Whiteford Lighthouse

Tripod-mounted Canon EOS 20D, Canon 75-300mm, 1/25sec at f/16, ISO 100.

*‘This lighthouse takes a two mile walk along Whiteford Sands to get to. The sky was a lovely colour and the cormorants flying around it certainly add to the shot.’*

### Dan's tips for selling to shops

#### Do

- Decide on a price beforehand.
- Research what photos they currently sell and design your portfolio around that.
- Show a handful of images that might be further afield but still relevant to the area.

#### Don't

- Be afraid to approach the shop even if they appear to have lots of images on sale.
- Be pushy if the shop says no – accept their answer and ask if you can leave a business card if they do find themselves looking for images in the future.
- Be afraid to invest money in a decent portfolio case as first impressions last.

### About Dan

29-year-old Dan Santillo made a bold move in April last year, quitting his office job and moving to Swansea to try and establish himself as a freelance photographer and writer. He's been into photography ever since he was a kid, but got serious in 2002 when he bought his first digital SLR.

Current gear: Canon EOS 5D, Canon EOS 20D, Canon EF 17-40mm, 24-105mm and 75-300mm, Sigma 105mm macro, Lee filter system



I later approached a local National Trust shop, who were also very interested but were changing their shop manager, so I was asked to go back in a couple of months.

With my confidence boosted by this initial success, I shall be seeking out more local shops in both Wales and Cornwall/Devon in the very near future. I shall be sticking to the same format of approaching them in person with my portfolio tailored to the area I'm in, but shall decide a price I want before I go! 📷