

AN EXPERT'S VIEW  
**NANCY  
LOVA**



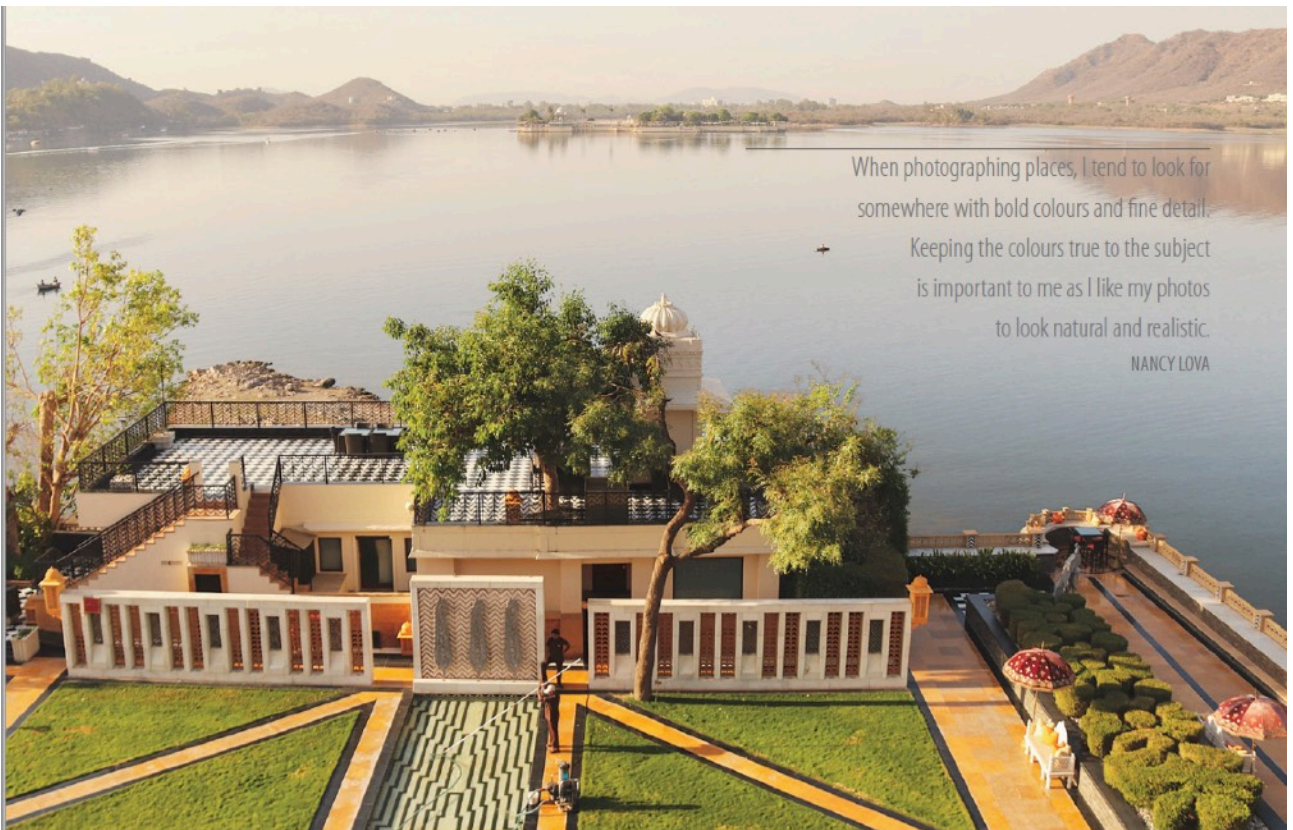
Moscow born Nancy Lova is a travel photographer currently residing in Kent, UK. Nancy gravitates to places that hold great meaning, often with a personal story or connection to herself. Much of her work is influenced by Indian and Arabic cultures with European twists. Prior to this, she worked in the property industry. Nancy's work can be found in print and online publications such as CNN Travel, *National Geographic India*, *Condé Nast Traveler* and *Travel + Leisure*. [nancylova.com](http://nancylova.com) @nancylova\_

**How did you get your quite recent break in travel photography?**

I firstly remained consistent with my posts on social media so that my name became more familiar. Secondly I ensured my website was strong but simple in order to let my photos do the talking. Lastly, when I became confident, I began pitching to the names I envisioned myself working with - there were a lot of rejections in the beginning though but that was understandable as I was just starting out. Again I remained consistent with my pitches and didn't let the rejections get to me. Eventually I managed to get my first online feature with *Condé Nast Traveler* and then a print feature with *Travel + Leisure*.



City Palace, Udaipur, India  
SMARTPHONE, 28MM, 1/2400 SEC, F1.8, ISO 20



When photographing places, I tend to look for somewhere with bold colours and fine detail. Keeping the colours true to the subject is important to me as I like my photos to look natural and realistic.

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Lake Pichola from Leela Palace, Udaipur, India  
DSLR, 18MM, 1/800 SEC, F4.5, ISO 200

**Is it fair to say that much of your work focuses on photographing cities and culture?**

I adore places that are rich in culture and tradition. Anything with too much glitz and glamour, I often try and stay away. Historical landmarks and houses of worship tend to be my go-to as they display the dominant religion of a place and have many stories to tell. They often provide captivating shots too. I love markets also in order to capture colour, culture and the lifestyle of locals.

**Do you ever use a smartphone for travel photography work?**

For my work, I mainly use my DSLR but at times, I still use my iPhone as it can be more comfortable for close ups and simple shots. Some images that I have used in articles just so happened to be taken on my iPhone and worked out really well but overall, my camera is my right hand. The shift was difficult at the start - DSLRs are heavier and need time to get used to, but once you get the hang of it, they're pretty easy to use.

**Do you think having a social-media presence is important to getting noticed, and is networking or collaboration to be encouraged?**

Definitely. Social media is free marketing and I've had opportunities come about simply from someone seeing my posts and stories on Instagram. I can't keep up with all the platforms: Instagram is all I use and is a great way to meet new like-minded people, and create new work and ideas. I've never collaborated with anyone although I'd love to for the right project.

416

**What's the best part about working in travel photography and travel writing, and do you think it helps to be able to do both?**

There are so many positives in travel photography. I'm constantly learning about new cultures and places, and each bit of work feels like escapism. I didn't intend on getting into travel writing; my initial intention was just photography but it kind of just happened. I was often asked to write about my experience of a place so then eventually I thought, why not do more of this and pitch my own ideas?

**What advice would you give to someone inexperienced who wants to break into the world of travel photography?**

Find what it is you love about travel photography and use that to influence your work. Don't look at others and their achievements or try to be like them: everyone's journey and style is different. Enjoy what you do and travel within your means - travel doesn't have to require lots of money being spent on trips. Lastly, be consistent with your pitches, social-media posts and let your camera be your best friend, because practice makes perfect.

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417

**NETWORK**

It's not so much *what* you know but *who* you know, so the saying goes. Put in the hours and mingle where you can at book signings, travel shows and photography talks. Attending events is another way of immersing yourself in the industry, and while you're being inspired, you just don't know who you might be rubbing shoulders with. When I speak at National Geographic's Masterclasses and similar events, the audiences are invariably peppered with serious photographers, there to sharpen their skills *and* make connections.

**FIND YOUR NICHE**

Many photographers have a style or subject matter they're associated with. While none of us wants to be pigeonholed, it does help if your Instagram has a consistent look or you have a specialism, for example wildlife, on which to focus. Most of us want to keep our options open and be able to work across all photographic genres, yet we'd be lying if we didn't say there were one or two areas that really get our juices flowing. And I think it shows when photographers have been following their bliss, be it food or astro. When I'm truly in the moment and every cell of my being is beautifully aligned with the job in hand, my work is so much the better for it.

**ENTER COMPETITIONS**

There are many people out there who describe themselves as award-winning and it may sound like too much trumpet-blowing. However, getting a stamp of approval can really help to propel our names into the world. Competitions are often beneficial when you first start - both to hone your skills and get your work into online galleries and exhibitions. They're not for everyone though, especially when entry fees



Wanderlust Icon Winner, Istanbul  
DSLR, 28MM, 1/125SEC, F10, ISO 400

Competitions and awards can hold many benefits,  
but I think it can also cause one to become  
distracted and competitive for the wrong reasons.

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394

395

