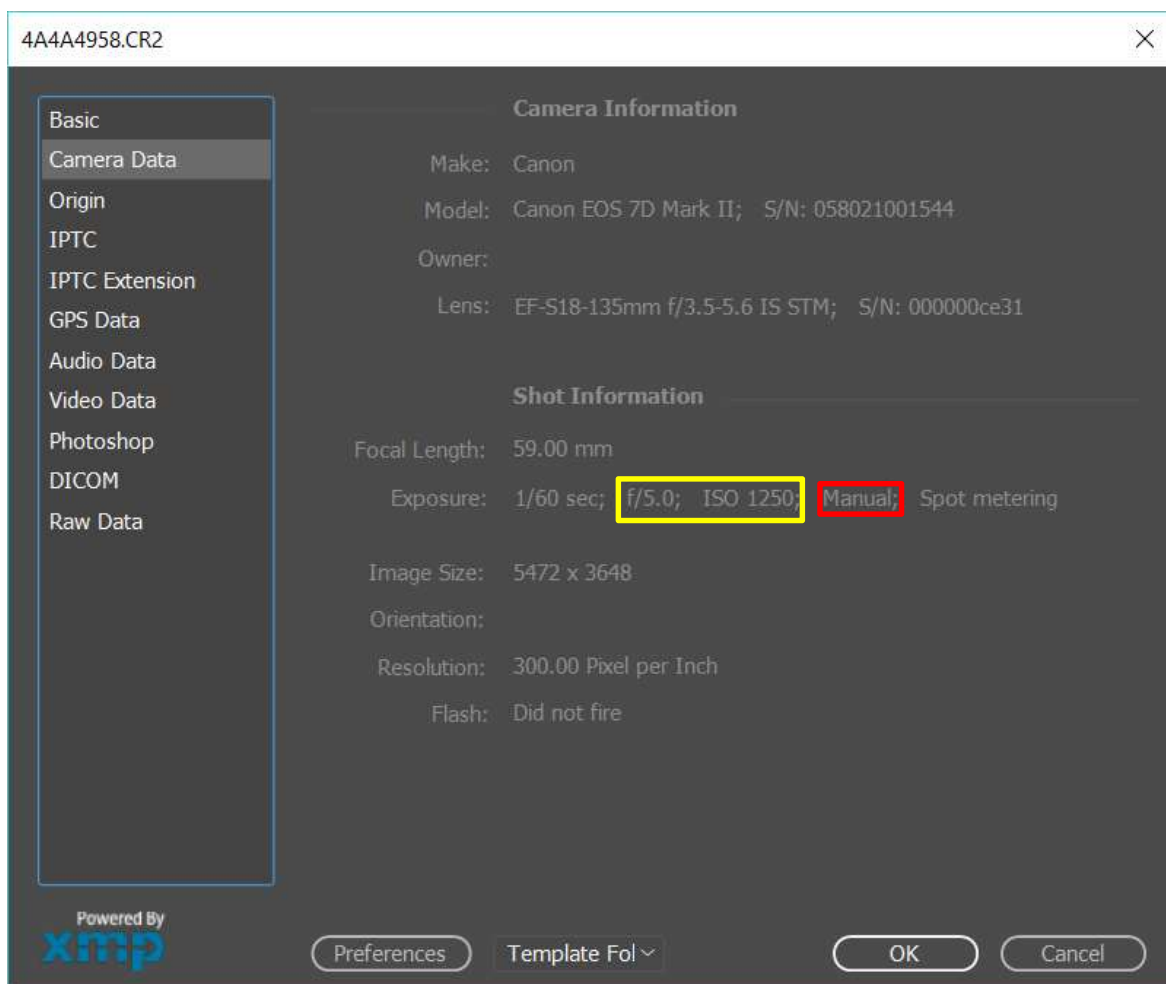


The Difference Between Manual and Aperture Priority Used in Night Photography Without a Tripod

We love to do night photography, especially around holidays where many colorful lights are displayed. However, it is often not feasible to use a tripod to capture our desired nighttime images. What do we do?

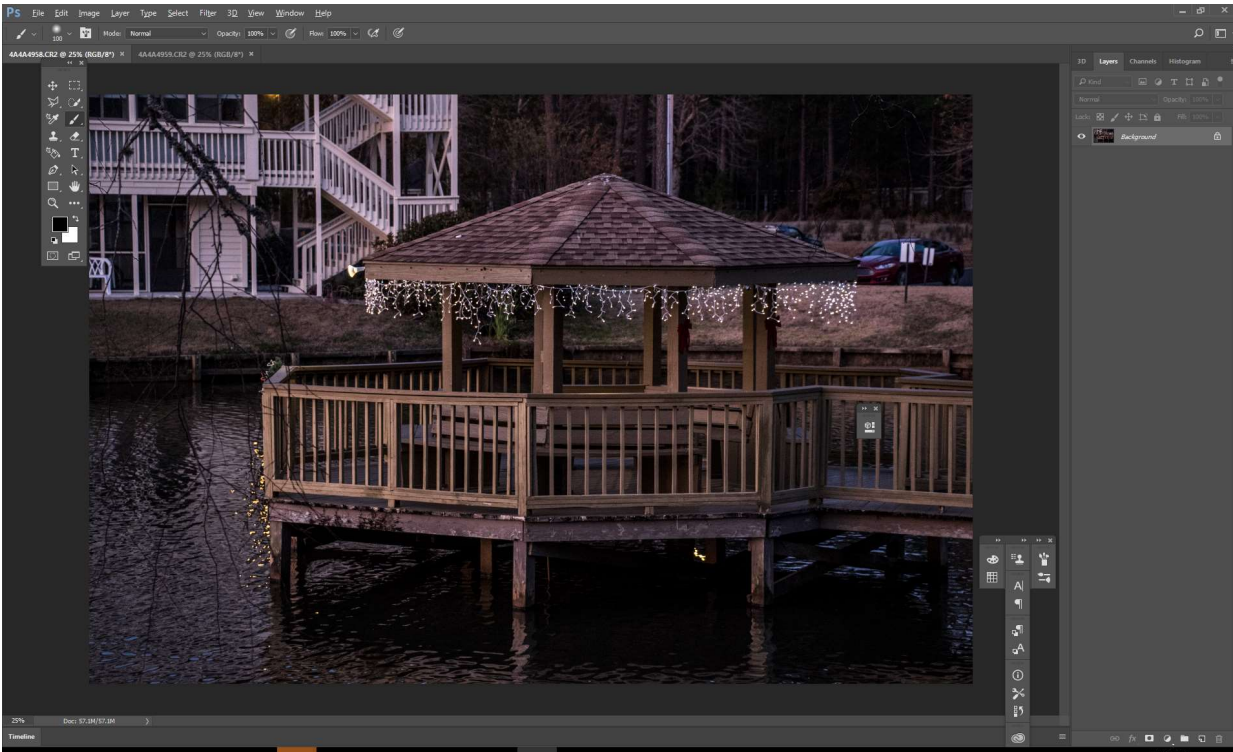
Many photographers are in the habit of relying upon Aperture priority to photograph. It serves us well most of the time, under decent lighting conditions. But when we want to capture a mood, we need to stretch our willingness to work at a deeper level, and dive into Manual photography, especially if we are unable to take long exposures using a tripod. Manual settings work well within a range of light after sunset and before the two hour span expires that surrounds sunset. It is possible to hand hold a camera, using Manual settings and stability settings, and still capture a good image, one that incorporates the mood and lighting of the time. Manual settings allow us to control all three critical elements simultaneously: Shutter speed, Aperture f/stop, and ISO.

Here are two images, taken at the same time of day, after sunset, with the same ISO and the same f/stop setting. Both are hand held. See if you can determine why the one on Aperture setting loses the night time look. It has the same ISO and Aperture f/stop as the Manual settings image, taken immediately after the latter was shot.



Settings when in manual mode

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Manual Mode Image

4A4A4959.CR2

| Camera Information | |
|--------------------|--|
| Make: | Canon |
| Model: | Canon EOS 7D Mark II; S/N: 058021001544 |
| Owner: | |
| Lens: | EF-S18-135mm f/3.5-5.6 IS STM; S/N: 000000ce31 |

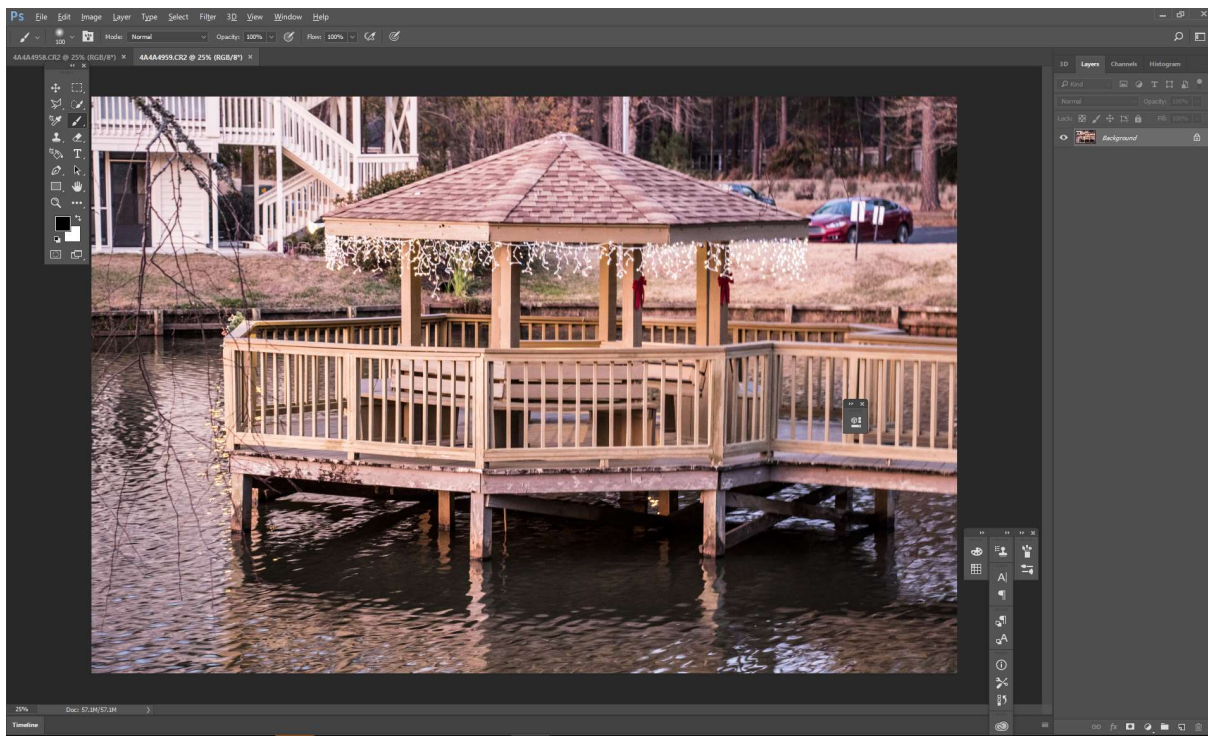
| Shot Information | |
|------------------|--|
| Focal Length: | 59.00 mm |
| Exposure: | 1/13 sec; metering |
| | f/5.0; ISO 1250; Aperture priority; Spot |
| Image Size: | 5472 x 3648 |
| Orientation: | |
| Resolution: | 300.00 Pixel per Inch |
| Flash: | Did not fire |

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Settings when in Aperture Priority Mode



Aperture Priority Mode Image

You might have noticed that the Aperture Priority Mode image is a bit more blurred in spots. It is not as sharp because the software in the camera automatically changes the shutter speed while keeping the requested aperture f/stop, and maintaining the preset ISO. If the ISO had been automatically bumped up, while the 1/60th of a second Shutter Speed was maintained, the image would be less blurry, because hand holding requires at least 1/30th of a second (for a steady hand) shutter speed. However, the scene would still be lit as if it were daytime. Thus, it loses its late evening mood, captured only when we manually set all three points of the exposure triangle: Shutter speed, Aperture Priority, and ISO.

To control the exposure in your camera, when in manual mode, set all three points. Then point the camera at your subject. Depress the shutter button half way down (do not take the picture yet). On the back screen, you should see a horizontal ruler with a tiny movable pointer. Move the pointer right or left until the image has the correct exposure. When you want normal light, that would be somewhere around the middle of the ruler. To capture the experience of darkness, move the pointer to the left of center.

How do you move the pointer? There is normally a wheel on your camera that controls this (Quick Control Dial—see your manual). To move the pointer to the left (darker exposure), turn the wheel to the right. To move the pointer to the right (lighter exposure), turn the wheel to the left.

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