



In her portfolio, Gina Diaz has photos that capture intimate moments and scenes of Redlands, including, at right, an image she took at El Carmelo Retreat House that highlights the city's citrus heritage.

Capturing Redlands



Gina Diaz

A high school gift and digital technology help turn passion into business

By LUANNE J. HUNT
Photos by GINA DIAZ



IT WAS LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT for Redlands photographer Gina Diaz when her boyfriend Steve (who's now her husband) presented her with a Pentax camera during high school. Diaz immediately began taking pictures of everything. She continued to hone her skills and now runs her own successful business, Gina Diaz Photography.

In September, the Redlands High School graduate won first prize in the annual Redlands

Photo Contest with an image taken at El Carmelo Retreat House.

"I've taken pictures of pretty much everything in Redlands, so I was looking for something unique," said Diaz. "I wound up going to El Carmelo Retreat and when I got there, there was a smudge pot and vintage orange crates sitting there on the lawn. It was like boom, that's it."

Diaz says she is amazed that what started out as a hobby has now turned into her life's passion.

"Back in high school when I started taking pictures, I was mainly focused on learning how to use my camera," said Diaz, 45, who shoots portraits, weddings and images for local businesses. "Before I knew it, I had accumulated boxes full of film, negatives and photos. My life has been all about photography ever since."

Diaz says digital technology for cameras, as well as the Internet, has helped her take her business to a new level. For instance, her Facebook page provided her with the opportunity to instantly share her work with friends and fans.

"One day I was looking at the photos I posted on my Facebook page and realized that I now had an online portfolio," said Diaz. "It's been a tremendous tool for advertising and also for getting feedback."

Although Nikon and Canon seem to be the preferred camera brands for photographers, Diaz has stuck with Pentax. When she upgraded to a digital model, it allowed her to use her old lenses, which made the transition seamless.

In order to get the best photo possible, Diaz recommends having a relaxed approach, getting to know your subject and not being afraid to use your imagination. And she says to not take yourself too seriously, which seems to be her key to success.

"I'm a simple girl who loves to take pictures," said Diaz. "I believe I will do this forever and I can't imagine myself without my camera."

Besides her Facebook page, Diaz has a website, <http://ginadiazphotography.com>, and can be reached by phone at 909-225-7648.

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