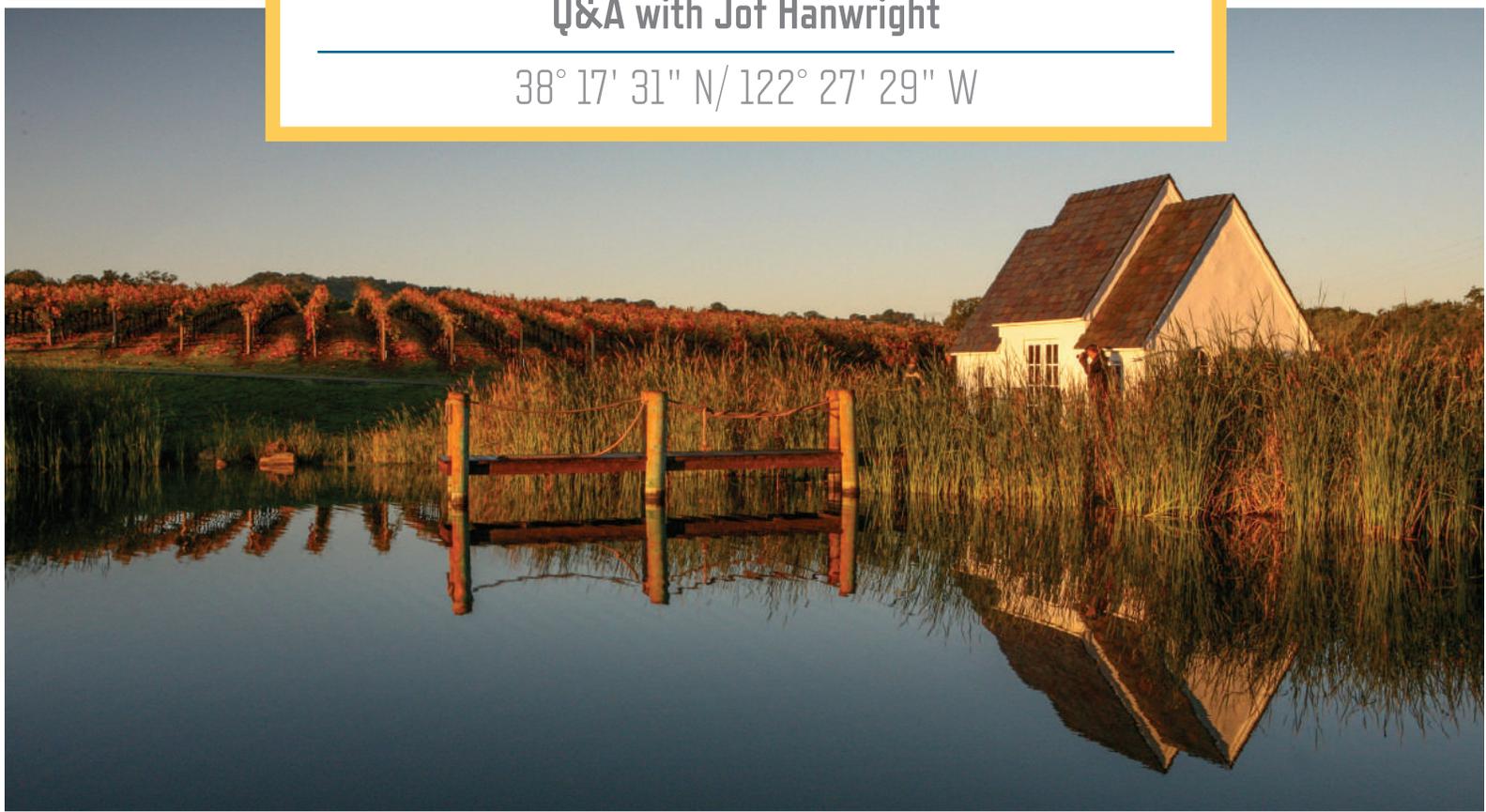




IN MY CITY: **NORTHERN CALIFORNIA**
Q&A with Jof Hanwright

38° 17' 31" N / 122° 27' 29" W



Co-editor **Stevie Nelson** gets a tour of Northern California—Sonoma, Mendocino and Marin Counties—from member **Jof Hanwright**

Stevie: HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING IN LOCATIONS? HOW DID YOU START & WHAT DO YOU PRIMARILY WORK ON?

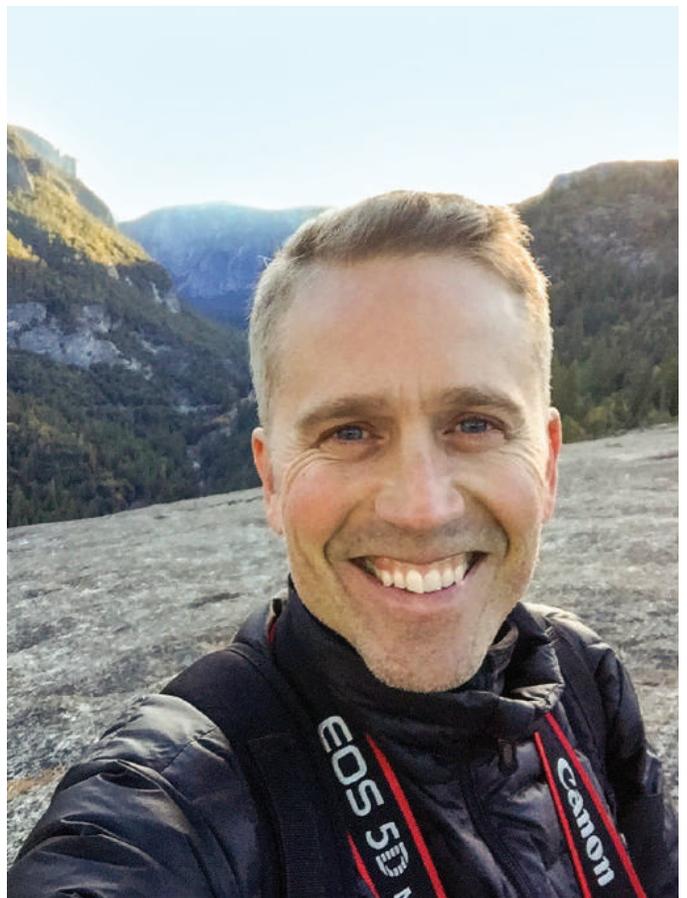
Jof Hanwright: I was born in Venice, CA, making me a rare California native. I had family in the business and started working on commercials when I was 15 years old. I did a couple jobs in the art department at first, and then became friends with a location scout working with Kira Films and Dektor Film. I wound up working as his assistant for several years. That was my entry into location scouting and management. I started full time in locations in 1993, after graduating from UC Santa Cruz. As a kid, there was a period when I wanted to be a photographer, and a period when I actually wanted to be a truck driver, so I suppose being a scout turned out to be a perfect combination of the two interests; you get to drive around and take photos!

I have always worked on advertising projects—primarily commercials, but still photography campaigns as well. I love the people part of the job, meeting and interacting with a huge cross section of humans, but my main passion has always been the photography. This year, I embarked on a new facet of the industry—aerial cinematography. It's been quite an experience so far. Having the ability to be able to place my camera anywhere I want it to be, to find angles and perspectives never before available to me, has lit a new fire for image creation.

For the past 17 years, I have lived in Sebastopol in Sonoma County. I moved to Northern California in 2000, but commuted back-and-forth to Los Angeles for several years. I left LA because I really needed a change of scene. I had developed a deep love of backpacking and mountain biking and I wanted to live somewhere that was more in line with my interest in outdoor recreation and I wanted to live in a less urban environment. I loved Venice (and still do), but the grind of driving back-and-forth to Hollywood and Pasadena in LA traffic was taking a toll.

While Sebastopol itself is not a prime filming destination, I've shot all around the area. My scouting territory is best described as Northern California—from Big Sur to Mendocino and Humboldt Counties, up to Lake Tahoe and the eastern Sierra. The “West County” of western Marin and western Sonoma (as well as Lake Tahoe and the Sierra) is what I think of as “my town.”

Stevie: WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE PRIMARY DRAW FOR FILMING IN & AROUND SONOMA, MENDOCINO AND MARIN COUNTIES IN GENERAL? WHAT KIND OF “LOOKS” ARE THERE?



JH: Filmmakers are drawn to Northern California for its natural beauty—from old-growth redwood forests, to breathtaking coastline and beaches, to bucolic farmland and quaint small towns. Combine those qualities with the close proximity to a classic American city like San Francisco, which offers architecture that can play as NY, Chicago or London, and you have a very compelling collection of visual options for many projects.

Stevie: WHAT TYPES OF PRODUCTIONS FILM IN SONOMA, MENDOCINO OR MARIN COUNTY?

JH: I work predominantly on commercials and automotive still shoots, but there are a few episodic shows now filming here and countless films like *American Graffiti*, *A Walk in the Clouds*, *Basic Instinct*, *The Candidate*, *Flatliners*, *Stephen King's Cujo*, *Die Hard 2*, *Explorers*, *The Goonies*, *Dirty Harry*, *Blue Jasmine*, *Inventing the Abbotts*, *Peggy Sue Got Married*, *John Carpenter's The Fog*, *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*, *Scream* and *Tucker: The Man and His Dream* have shot portions of the production in this part of the state.

Stevie: WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU FACE IN YOUR JOB?

JH: The wide breadth of locations available in this area also means managing travel time for the crew wisely—maximizing the number of looks you can achieve while minimizing drive time between locations. While it's possible to have Nor-Cal play for the Colorado Rockies, the Kansas prairielands and the rugged north coast, it does mean driving between geographic areas, and that always means being smart about how to build the shooting days. Being able to work with the

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producer and AD closely to make efficient schedules is both a challenge and something I really enjoy.

Stevie: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES TO FILMING SPECIFICALLY IN SONOMA, MENDOCINO OR MARIN COUNTY OR IN YOUR GENERAL NORTHERN CALIFORNIA TERRITORY?

JH: Northern California doesn't suffer from the same level of "filming fatigue" that LA and parts of NYC (and even London or Barcelona) suffer from. In general, property owners and the public still like seeing a film crew at work and get a kick out of seeing "Hollywood" in action. One thing that this region lacks are proper large-scale soundstages. There are a number of giant warehouses that we use, and a handful of great still photo stages that are big enough to accommodate even size-able commercial productions, but we lack the giant soundstages that some other regions have.

Stevie: WHAT ARE A LOCATION MANAGER'S FAVORITE "LOOKS" OR LOCATIONS IN & AROUND NORTHERN CALIFORNIA? WHAT ARE YOUR PERSONAL FAVORITES & WHY?

JH: The Sonoma Coast is a personal favorite. It offers rugged and pristine beaches, cliffside roads with sweeping ocean panoramas and amazing sunsets. I've shot countless spots in this area—from Audi, Porsche and Tesla, to Google, AT&T and Apple. There are also a number of private ranches that I have cultivated relationships with over the years that offer a film crew the ease of working on private land with redwood groves, rivers, rolling hills and extensive road networks. Some of these ranch properties are thousands of acres in size and offer more flexibility versus working on public lands where access can be much more restricted and limited.

Stevie: WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITES OR MOST MEMORABLE FILMING EXPERIENCES?

JH: Just last week, we were filming for Subaru on a street in a small residential neighborhood. We had a 100-person crew, a huge BB light, police closures—general filming mayhem. And the neighbors loved it! It became a block party with everyone out taking photos and chatting. Seeing a neighborhood embrace a film project like that and have fun with it is just the best. There was one particular home which was featured and I had gone to speak to the homeowner who had his two granddaughters over to watch the filming—they were about 3 and 5 years old. While we were speaking and I was saying thank you for having us out, one of the little girls came and gave me a hug and said thank you. So sweet. It was just a small moment but one that really struck me.



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Stevie: DOES SONOMA, MENDOCINO OR MARIN COUNTY OFFER ANY INCENTIVES TO HOLLYWOOD FILMMAKERS OTHER THAN THE CALIFORNIA STATE INCENTIVE?

JH: Not that I am aware of but San Francisco does have some specific incentive programs.

Stevie: WHAT ARE YOUR TOOLS OF THE TRADE?

JH: Cars (4x4 Jeep and an SUV), camera systems (Canon 5D), phone, Mac computer systems and website.

Stevie: WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT THE JOB?

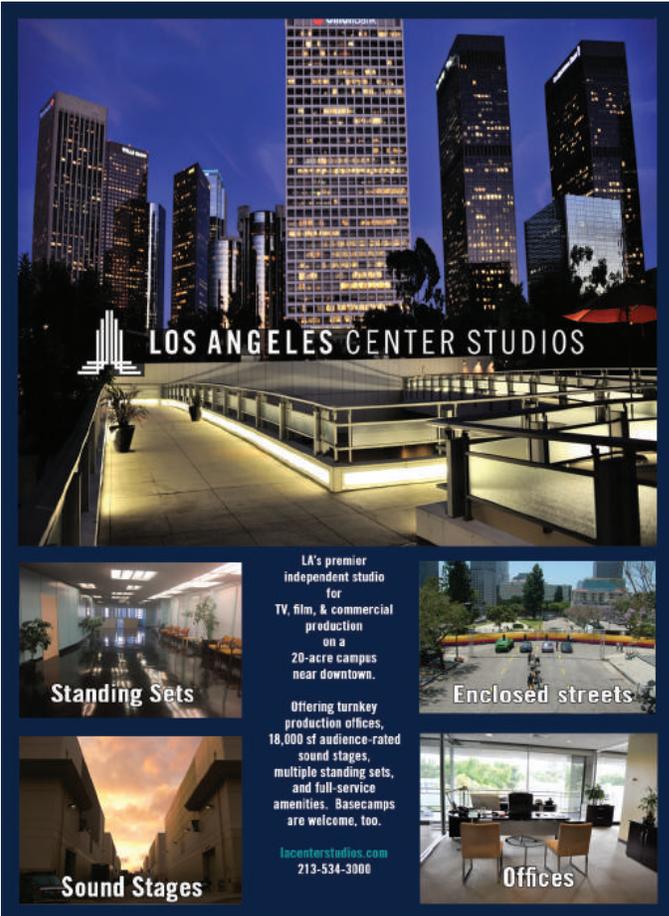
JH: I love being out in nature or in the heart of the city—out of an office! I love photography. I love the relationships I make with property owners and permit people. And I love the caliber of people I get to work with in production; they are some of the smartest and most creative people on the planet and I feel very lucky that they would call me and ask that I be part of their team.

Stevie: WHAT ONE PIECE OF ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOUR YOUNGER SELF OR SOMEONE JUST STARTING OUT IN THIS PROFESSION?

JH: I always want to be able to go back to a location again—I am always going to work to my utmost ability to make the experience a positive for everyone involved. I would hope that anyone working in locations holds to that as a primary goal. These locations are an asset, and the relationship we create with the property owner of the permit entity is invaluable. Northern California in particular is a close-knit region, and the choices we make and the impressions we leave have lasting consequences. I want to represent well for the film industry and work to ensure that we are always welcome.

Stevie: WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO JOIN THE LMGI & HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MEMBER?

JH: I joined the LMGI in 2013. I want to support our trade and the LMGI seems like the best way to do that—to show the world a well-defined and well-organized face of our craft.

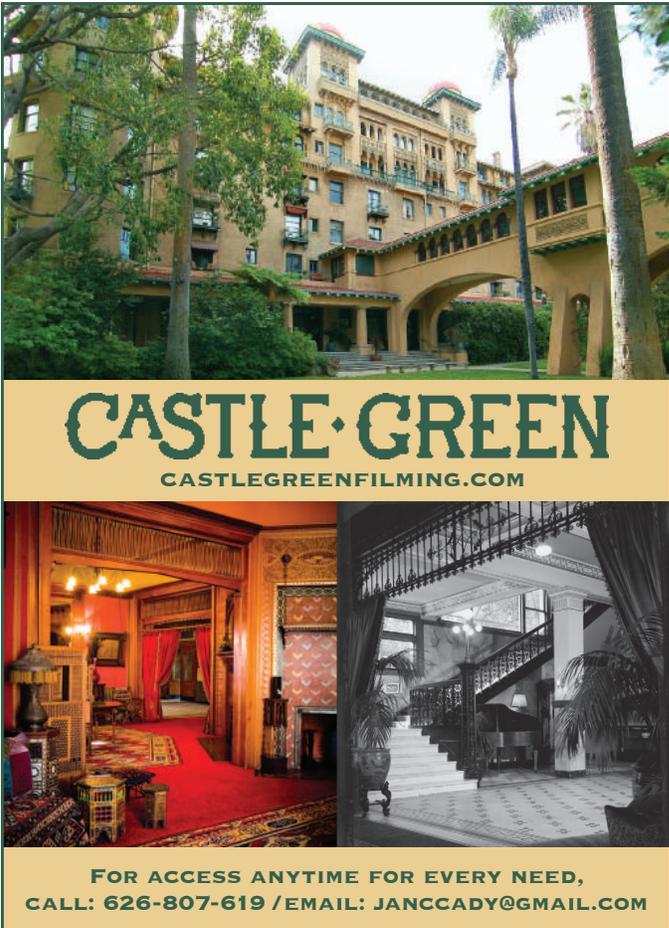


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Jof's Private Tour

MUST-SEE PLACE:

There are lots of things to see—hard to pick one—but I'd say the vineyards of the Alexander Valley are definitely worth a visit and also Bodega Bay (Hitchcock's *The Birds*) at the coast.

FAVORITE SHOP:

The Barlow marketplace in downtown Sebastopol is a great collection of small boutiques, local breweries and restaurants.

FAVORITE RESTAURANT:

The Underwood Bar and Bistro in Graton is definitely worth a visit. It's a hopping place serving cocktails & upscale cuisine like duck confit, salmon & oysters.

PLACE TO SEE BY NIGHT:

Nightlife is best found in the city. San Francisco is a quick trip away and there are tons of things to keep one occupied.

BEST DAY TRIP:

Start in Petaluma for breakfast, then a drive out through the farmland to Bodega Bay and a trip along the north coast is well worth the drive.

FAVORITE NEIGHBORHOOD:

Downtown Petaluma made famous by George Lucas's *American Graffiti* has great shops, beautiful Victorian architecture and some great restaurants. Sebastopol is much more eclectic and playful.

FAVORITE LOCAL ARTIST:

Patrick Amiot does wonderful "junk art"—sculptures made from found and repurposed objects.



BEST BAR/CLUB:

Hopmonk Tavern has locations in Sebastopol and Novato—great live music, drinks and food. They are serious about their craft beer and music!

BEST PLACE TO HEAR MUSIC:

Hopmonk Tavern!

BEST VANTAGE POINT/SCENIC VIEW:

Bodega Head in Bodega Bay.

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