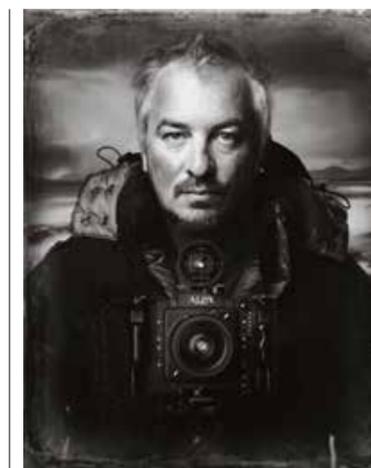


Allt Coir' a'
Mhadaidh,
Glen-Brittle, Isle
of Skye, shot
on an Alpa STC



iShoot landscapes



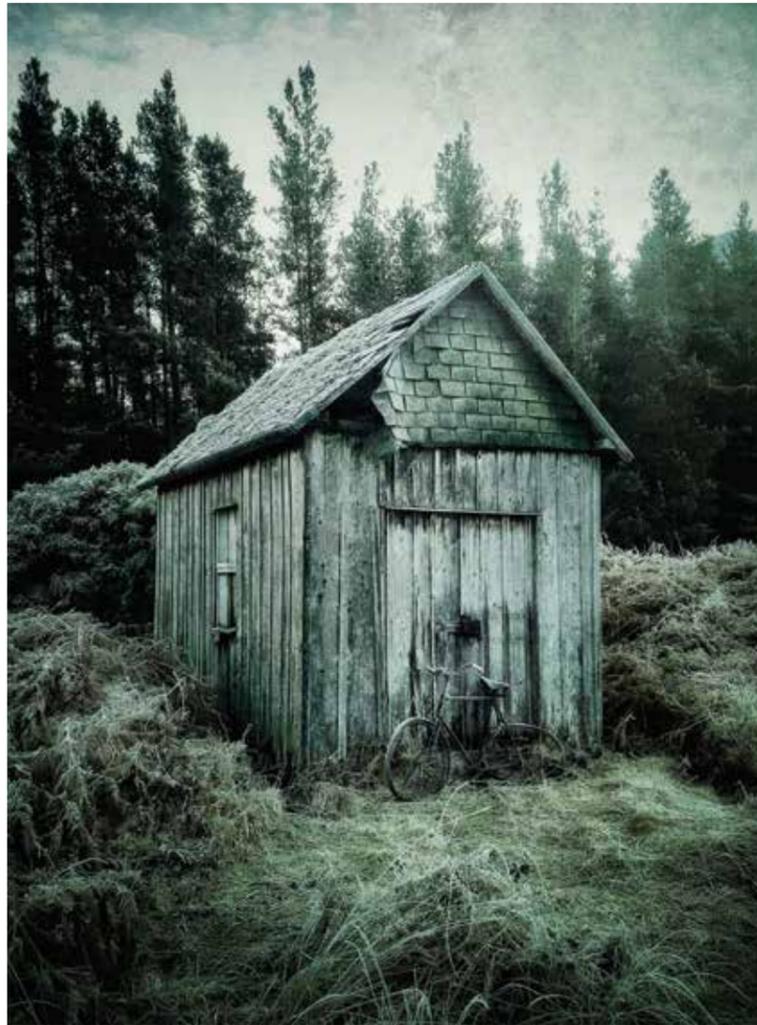
Julian Calverley may have built a career around using large-format cameras in the studio, but he is just as content outdoors, capturing scenes with his iPhone. He talks to **Andrew James**

While it is easy to dismiss the photographic capabilities of a mobile phone, British photographer Julian Calverley is doing his best to change this opinion. He is one of a growing breed of image-makers who see the camera phone as much more than just a 'snap anything' tool, and he's recently published a book of iPhone images to prove that the device carries serious creative weight.

Had you suggested to Julian as recently as a couple of years ago that his first photographic book would be one based on images taken on a camera phone, he admits he would have been the first to reject the idea as ridiculous.

'I'd have been horrified, irritated and taken it as an insult,' he says, as we look through the images contained within the pages of his A5 book *#IPHONEONLY*. 'It does feel quite strange,' he continues. 'I never expected my first book to be like this, as I come from a very traditional background.'

The more you talk to Julian, the more he comes across as the last person you would expect to find embracing the fun of 'iPhonography'. However, he



Frozen bike shed, Glen Etive, north-west Scotland

Below: Heavy rain in Glen Etive, north-west Scotland

'The iPhone's ability to provide a quick and simple burst of creativity releases him from the slower and more precise process of using his Alpa camera'

It is keen to point out that the iPhone work is a side project rather than a substitute for his large-format work, the body of images that he identifies as his main passion.

Learning and landscapes

Julian learned his trade mainly on the job after a brief and ultimately dissatisfying dalliance with art school. Initially working in an E6 processing lab when he was 17 years old, he moved on to become an assistant in a studio at just 18. Since then (he is now 50), he has forged a highly successful career as a commercial photographer.

'When you get a good commercial job, the money is still quite reasonable,' says Julian. 'This means I don't have to work quite as much and there are gaps between the bigger jobs.' It is these gaps that were the key to his introduction to iPhone

photography, because while the world of commercial photography pays the bills, Julian's real passion is for landscapes.

Julian loves landscapes and also admits to being attracted to darker, moodier imagery. This should be quite clear when looking at his very classic landscape style, as well as the images he shoots with his iPhone.

His eye for dark and dramatic imagery is something that dates back to his early days, when he was influenced by photographers such as Bob Carlos Clarke and John Claridge.

While these two photographers had very different styles, they shared a sense of mood and possessed an ability to push the limits of their profession. The painter JMW Turner is also a massive influence for Julian. 'I went to see an exhibition of his work recently and it was the ultimate inspiration for me. His work is so

dramatic and powerful,' he says.

With Julian's background in studio photography, he is usually more at home with bigger cameras. These days he mainly uses an Alpa 12 STC (shift travel compact) with a Phase One IQ180 digital back for his landscape work.

He can see the irony in his love for larger and more precise cameras that are, in all respects, the antithesis of the iPhone – which is small, light and offers almost no manual control over the actual process of taking a photo.

But this is exactly why he has fallen in love with it. The iPhone's ability to provide a quick and simple burst of creativity releases him from the slower and more exacting process of using his Alpa camera. It follows the same principle as his love of the more solitary pursuit of landscape photography, which provides an antidote to the controlled teamwork that goes into many of his commercial assignments.

Just like his photographic idols, Julian wants to break away from the conventions and explore his creativity – whether that's using a tripod-mounted Alpa or on a lighter and infinitely simpler device that can be carried in his jacket pocket.

Although Julian has only relatively recently tapped into the creative potential of his iPhone's camera, he confesses to being something of an Apple fanboy. 'I've owned an iPhone since they first came out, but it was a friend of mine, Jack Lowe,



Above: Public bridleway under autumn fog, near Sandon, Hertfordshire

Moss-covered tree, Glen Orchy, north-west Scotland

emulated what he was doing with the bigger cameras. If you compare both his classic landscapes to his camera-phone images, it's easy to see they are imbued with the same love of drama and darker leanings.

Once he had a good number of 'lonely selfies' and iPhone landscapes in the can, Julian showed the collection to his London agent, who suggested putting together a small portfolio of the photos. 'When showing my images, I started getting a great reaction to them. Towards the end of a presentation, I'd throw in the fact they were shot on a phone and most people wouldn't believe it. Almost without exception, the art director would ask at the end, "What's that app again?" It was clearly lodging in their minds.'

Battery booster

Julian uses his iPhone with a Mophie Juice pack to give him an extra eight hours of power – something that's important when he is shooting miles from the nearest plug socket. 'If I am out and about playing around with Snapseed while waiting for the weather to change, it's easy to use up all the power on the phone,' he says. 'I also use other apps, such as maps or tide times, and this all drains power. I probably use it as a phone least of all.'

When taking an image with the iPhone, the process is as simple as the controls themselves. 'There is no secret and it's very simple, very liberating,' explains Julian. 'The phone is small and very easy to use. For me that's half the attraction. It's down to being in a great place with the right light and honing your compositional skills.'

Julian believes that composition is very much a gut feeling. He simply plays with his viewpoint and framing until what he sees on

who advised me to join Instagram, thinking I'd enjoy the community aspect of it,' says Julian.

Taking Jack's prompt, Julian signed up to the online photo community and began to shoot more and more with his iPhone. 'I started photographing everything from drain covers to my breakfast,' adds Julian. 'You name it and I probably shot it. Then I started playing with various apps so I could improve my images. That's when I discovered Snapseed for processing the images.'

Lonely selfies

Julian's use of the iPhone as a creative tool really began as a way of recording where he was when

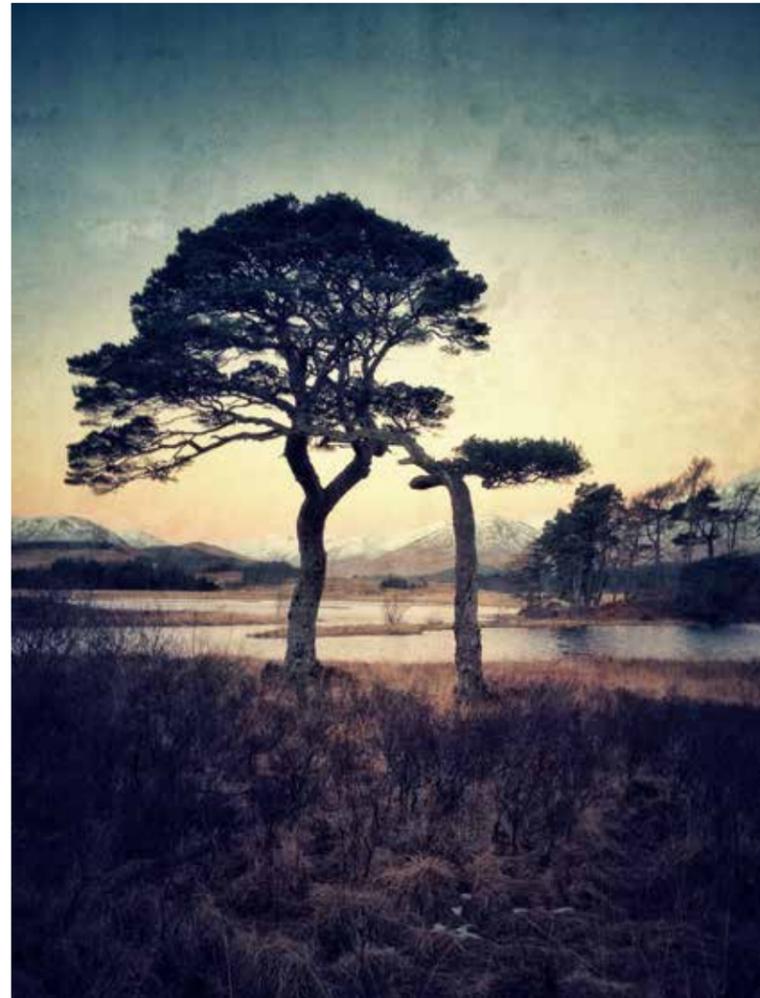
shooting his landscapes with his Alpa. Not wanting to actually appear in the shot in the true definition of the world 'selfie', he began taking photos of his camera on a tripod in front of whatever stunning scenery he was visiting at the time.

'It was all a bit of fun,' he says. 'I'd shoot these lonely selfies and then sometimes send the image to Alpa, or usually just upload them to Instagram. I wasn't taking them to blow my own trumpet or say, "Look at me, I have an Alpa" – it was just something to do. But very quickly, I started getting people liking them and it all grew from there.'

Julian quickly found a style for his iPhone imagery that naturally



An example of a 'lonely selfie' – an Alpa STC against the backdrop of Buachaille Etive Mòr, Glen Coe, The Highlands



Caledonian pine trees at dawn, by Loch Tulla, north-west Scotland

For the love of Alpa



WITH Julian's background in studio photography, he is usually much more at home with larger cameras. In 2006, he visited photokina, the European photography show in Germany, discovered Alpa, the Swiss manufacturer, and fell in love with its precision-made cameras.

'It felt like a real camera and I have to feel really comfortable with the model I am using,' explains Julian. 'It gave me an

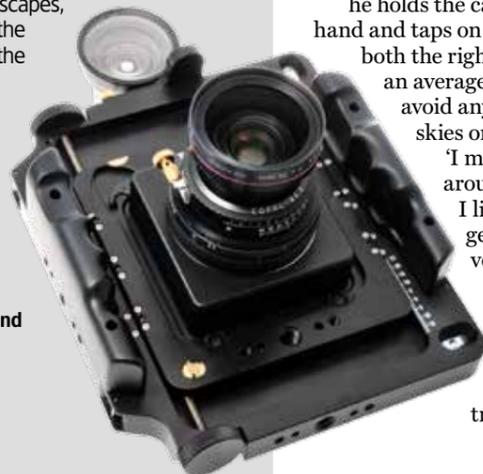
experience a bit like using a plate camera – a little bit slow and awkward, but it was beautifully precise.'

He saved up for two years and bought himself the Alpa SWA (shift wide angle), later adding the Alpa 12 Max to his collection. When Alpa introduced the STC (shift travel compact) to its line-up, he finally settled on what he believes to be the ultimate landscape camera.

'I use the Alpa 12 STC for landscapes, while for commercial work I use the Alpa 12 Max. However, I do use the STC for certain commercial jobs where a smaller camera is required, such as stitched car interiors.' Both cameras are combined with IQ180 or P45+ digital backs, 40mm and 70mm lenses and a tilt adapter.

Above: The Alpa 12 STC is small, precise and perfect for location work. It's also pricey, costing around £2,500 new

Right: The Alpa 12 Max is a more portable camera that can be used handheld as well as on a tripod



'I think getting your work in front of an audience is a good thing. I am a fan of Twitter, I do a couple of regular blogs and I have a Facebook account'

▶ the screen feels right. He is, however, always surprised by the number of times the image he shoots seems to fit the age-old rule of thirds law when he sees it sitting within the Instagram grid.

When shooting with the iPhone, he holds the camera with one hand and taps on the screen to get both the right focus point and an average meter reading to avoid any overexposure of skies or highlight areas.

'I move the phone around and see what I like,' he says. 'I get obsessed with verticals and horizontals, so making sure the horizon is level, and that a building or tree is straight,

takes time. I'm a bit OCD about these aspects.'

Processing

Part of the picture-making process involves playing with the image and making sure it has exactly the look that Julian wants to achieve. He finds Snapseed quick to use and very effective. He processes images while waiting for conditions to be right at the scene or, more frequently, when he's back at the hotel after a day out shooting. His workflow is relatively simple and, rather like his composition, very much based on gut feeling with each image. However, a basic workflow for processing his iPhone images does exist.

He takes the picture with the iPhone camera and tweaks the original using Snapseed. First, he goes into Details and selects the Sharpen filter, using the Magnify

tool to check he isn't overdoing it. After sharpening, he opens the Vintage filter and has a play with the controls. Generally, he only uses the texture and brightness sliders, reducing the default amounts that are applied by Snapseed. Finally, he goes into the Tune Image filter and takes the ambience slider back to the left slightly to give the image a little more contrast.

This is all done in a matter of minutes. At most, he will spend five minutes processing an image before leaving it and going on to something else. Later, he will return to the picture, decide whether he is still happy with the processing work and, if so, save it back to the iPhone's photo library before finally posting it to Instagram or his Twitter account.

'I think getting your work in front of an audience is a good thing. I am a fan of Twitter, I do a couple of regular blogs and I have a Facebook



account. When I'm really busy my posting slows down a bit, but generally I just fit it in around whatever I am doing,' he says.

Left: The road to Sandon, Hertfordshire

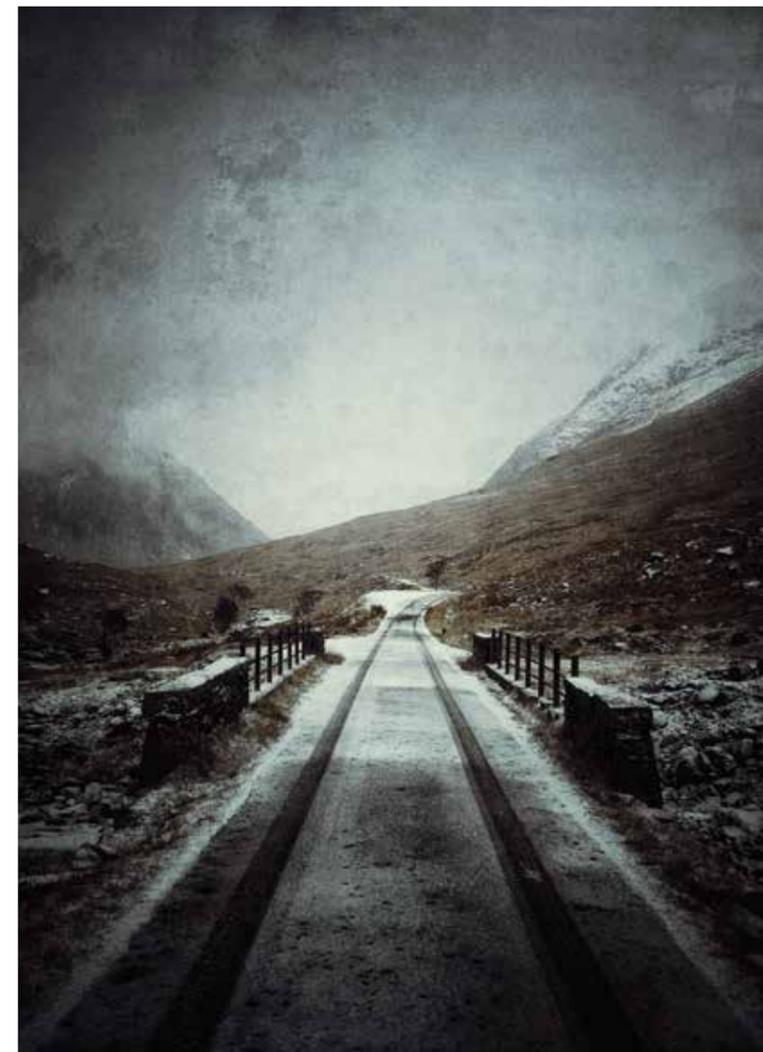
Julian's book, #IPHONEONLY, is available from www.lionhousebindery.com, price £15 (ISBN 978-0-99291-110-2)



MY FAVOURITE SHOT: GLEN ETIVE, NORTH-WEST SCOTLAND

JULIAN'S favourite image was taken in one of his favourite and most productive locations, Glen Etive in Scotland, and despite being an iPhone image, it made it into the Lürzer's Archive Top 200 Ad Photographers Worldwide annual. It is typical of his style – dark, very moody but ultimately incredibly beautiful.

'It was shot early one morning while driving the single-track road through Glen Etive,' he says. 'It's a place I enjoy spending time at and I love the solitary single set of tyre marks left by my Land Rover in the snow that's starting to settle on the ground.'



TOP TIPS



Clean your lens

Always keep your iPhone lens clean. It only takes a small smudge of dirt or a droplet of rain on it to spoil the quality of the final image – especially if you are shooting into the light.

Be patient

Patience is the key to all photography, but especially landscapes. It's important to get yourself into a good position, and then wait and watch the light. With a sudden burst of great light, you might only take one frame, but that moment will have been worth waiting for.

Bad weather

Learn to love bad weather. This is when the most dramatic images can be shot. For me, there's nothing worse than clear-blue skies with sun on my face. With bad weather, you often get the soft light that looks so great in an image.

Squint

If you squint at the image on the back of the phone to break down the complexity of the scene, and it still looks good in its basic form, you know you are on to a good thing.