

# Year End Update + I'm Airborne Again!



Dec 29, 2023

Today I wanted to share a few individual updates as we near the end of 2023. Firstly, especially for those who have been asking about my second cataract surgery outcome, I had the surgery on December 4, and it went well. I didn't get a bloodshot eye this time, so I have no gory photos to share, but I'm not entirely satisfied with my eyesight. My left eye now has amazing vision, and I'm able to see everything from near to far with unbelievable sharpness and clarity. When I look with both eyes, I see well too, but when I close my left eye, the vision in my right eye is slightly soft from around 5 meters or 15 feet out. At this point, it looks like I am left with slight short-sightedness in my right eye, which is very disappointing, considering I've paid for trifocal lenses. The surgeon, who I revisited yesterday tells me there was never any guarantee of perfect vision, but they did a pretty damn good job on my left eye, so I'm not satisfied with their handling of my complaint either. I'm told that I could pay another \$4,500 and replace the lens, but there is a lot of risk and no guarantee that my eyesight will improve, and it may even get worse, so I won't be doing that.



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(Requires an Internet Connection)

Don't get me wrong, I'm incredibly grateful that I was even able to get these procedures done and get rid of my cataracts that developed very quickly over this year, but in addition to a strong feeling of being shortchanged, my dominant eye being slightly weaker than my non-dominant eye has played havoc with my archery. I know archery is just a hobby, but it's very important to me, and at the moment, I am not able to shoot like I was before the cataracts started to mess with my vision. In archery, you aim with both eyes, but my non-dominant left eye being sharper than the right eye makes it look like the target is in a place where it isn't, and I am missing the target completely sometimes, which makes it impossible for me to enter contests, etc. and it's

damned embarrassing to miss the target during practice too.

I'm told that over the coming weeks, my right eye vision may still kick in, but I'm opening my curtains each morning with one eye closed hoping to see distant objects with my right eye as clearly as I do with my left eye, but at this point, it's still a little soft. Fingers crossed that this kicks in soon. It's not the end of the world though. Daily life is fine, and I'm seeing great. If things don't calm down in another few weeks, I'll see about using contact lenses just in my right eye to bring the vision to the same level as my left, and I'll only need that adjustment for archery, so it's not too much of a problem, as disappointing as it is to still need this correction. I am grateful that I can see well again with both eyes.

## Amazon Glacier Backup

The second thing that I wanted to update you on is my Amazon Glacier backup directly from my Synology NAS unit, which has been running without issue since installing a Starlink satellite in September. Well, my backup jobs have kicked in as earlier jobs finished, and I now have all of my 2023 photos and videos uploaded to Glacier. Over the last month or so, all of my Finals have also been uploaded. This means that everything I give a hoot about from the last 25 years of shooting digital is now backed up to the cloud, and if you include the backup of my original photo shoot folders that are also backed up to iDrive, everything is backed up.

I also have my first five years of digital photography and some older scans backed up and have configured jobs for each year in between as well. At the moment, what I call my SyncBox is now uploading. This is my replacement for Dropbox, which I use to store all of the data that I like to synchronize between my two Macs and my iPhone and iPad devices. At 627GB

this will probably take about three weeks to upload, and then it will automatically start to upload my 2022 backlog.

Of course, I will come back from my three winter Hokkaido tours with more files to upload, so I'll stop the 2022 upload and let the new work backup before continuing with my older images, but my hope right now is that I can get the years between 2005 and 2023 all uploaded to Glacier during 2024, and then I will cancel my iDrive account, as I'll have all of my cloud backups in one place, on the Amazon Glacier servers.

## New Drone!

Finally, my last and exciting piece of news is that I've just taken delivery of a DJI Air 3 drone! I didn't talk about it much, but back in 2017 I bought a Mavic Pro drone and after getting relatively comfortable flying it, I sent it up in some extreme cold and the battery freaked

out, sending the drone plummeting to the ground. It landed in some soft snow so wasn't damaged by the fall, but I hadn't thought to turn the drone off as soon as it crashed, and the camera gimbal motors burnt out, leaving the drone essentially useless.

I thought about getting it repaired, but five years have elapsed since then, and it was still sitting in my store room. But, the times that I did fly my old Mavic Pro, I felt like it was an extension of my vision, almost as though I was flying up there, seeing the world from above and from angles that aren't physically possible. It was incredibly liberating, and I missed it. I got my Mavic back out, to find that all three of the batteries I'd bought were bloated, and no longer safe to use, so I won't get it repaired now. I started to look at what was available now and almost bought a Mavic Pro 3, which has three cameras now, including a wide, medium focal length, and a relatively long focal length that all look great.

Task	Backup contents	Region	Backup status
Finals Backup	Finals	US West (Northern Cal...	Success
Joplin Data	Joplin	US West (Northern Cal...	Please wait...
Photo Originals 2023	Photo Originals/2023	US West (Northern Cal...	Success
SyncBox	homes/Martin/SyncBox	US West (Northern Cal...	Backing up...(31.35 GB / 627.06 GB)
Podcasts Backup	Podcasts	US West (Northern Cal...	No backup yet
Photo Originals 2022	Photo Originals/2022	US West (Northern Cal...	Please wait...
Photo Originals 2021	Photo Originals/2021	US West (Northern Cal...	Please wait...
Photo Originals 2020	Photo Originals/2020	US West (Northern Cal...	Please wait...
Photo Originals 2019	Photo Originals/2019	US West (Northern Cal...	Please wait...
Photo Originals 2018	Photo Originals/2018	US West (Northern Cal...	Please wait...
Photo Originals 2017	Photo Originals/2017	US West (Northern Cal...	Please wait...
Photo Originals 2016	Photo Originals/2016	US West (Northern Cal...	Please wait...
Photo Originals 2015	Photo Originals/2015	US West (Northern Cal...	Please wait...
Photo Originals to 2005	Photo Originals/2000, Photo Original...	US West (Northern Cal...	Please wait...
Photo Originals 2006	Photo Originals/2006	US West (Northern Cal...	Please wait...
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Photo Originals 2011	Photo Originals/2011	US West (Northern Cal...	Please wait...
Photo Originals 2012	Photo Originals/2012	US West (Northern Cal...	Please wait...
Photo Originals 2013	Photo Originals/2013	US West (Northern Cal...	Please wait...
Photo Originals 2014	Photo Originals/2014	US West (Northern Cal...	Please wait...

Being the way I am though, I was looking at the Pro remote control, and also thinking that the CINE version would be nice to have, for the built-in memory and professional video formats, and it was going to cost a lot more than I was realistically able to warrant paying at this point, so I took a step back, and decided to go for the DJI Air 3. It doesn't have a telephoto lens, but it does have the ability to shoot 48-megapixel images with both cameras and a 46-minute flight time. It also uses the latest transfer protocol between the drone and the remote control, which has a built-in screen now.

I have to admit though, that a major part of my indecision came down to, perhaps somewhat uncharacteristically, a slight lack of confidence. I'd ultimately crashed my first drone, and figured if that happened again, I'd rather crash a \$2,000 drone than an almost \$6,000 drone. I did since find that you can now buy extended care packages with DJI drones that include a yearly replacement at a very low cost in case you crash your drone, which I added to my order. That relieves the pressure a little, although I don't know if I could mentally stand the pressure of crashing my drone again. Even the pros I see on YouTube do seem to crash from time to time though, so I guess it comes with the territory.

Things have also changed a lot in the last five years. I can no longer walk down to the side of my local river to fly, as most of Tokyo is now designated as a heavily populated area, including the fields at the side of my local river, which is strange, as I don't see many houses in the grass there. There are also now some licenses that have been put in place that once owned, allow you to fly in more places either without going through an application process, or having the application process made much simpler if you have a license.

My intention right now is to take the drone up to Hokkaido with me in January and February and get at least 8 hours of flight time to top up the two that I already have, and then I'll be eligible for a large discount on the courses required to get my license. To help build my confidence in flying, before I go to Hokkaido, I've booked a half-day training session with a local pro, and he helped me yesterday to get my drone licensed and the ID installed in the drone so that I can do that session with my drone.

It's all very exciting, and I'm looking forward to flying again. Hopefully, I'll have some amazing footage to share with you after my return, and not some embarrassing story of the demise of yet another drone while in Hokkaido.

## 2023 Top Ten

Before we finish I'd like to remind you that it's that time of year again, when we go through our year of photos and select our top ten images for 2023. This is an enjoyable and important exercise to do each year, honing our editing skills, and providing a yearly log of our progress as photographers. I'll share my top ten next week, and I hope to see yours too, so please stay tuned.



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