



ABOUT US

WHAT WE OFFER

Studio Lavalette offers a fun but serious photo learning environment. Whilst you take a well-earned holiday, we help you to get the most from both your digital camera and your image editing software. We call it a "**holiday + focus**".

Studio Lavalette is based in the wonderful, Michelin starred picturesque and historic town of Villebois-Lavalette, in South West France and throughout the year we deliver a variety of photography holiday courses and workshops that are both highly enjoyable and very focused. Our primary objective is to ensure that you leave here inspired and motivated by what you can do with your camera and software, whilst being uplifted by the experience.

Studio Lavalette's photography courses and workshops are run by, me, Don McCrae ARPS (so...no more of that silly third-person stuff...!). I am an award winning*, published, professional photographer**, with over 14 years' experience and qualifications with a deep understanding of digital photography and training in its related software.

* Six awards in 2014...and counting!

WHO WE ARE

Don McCrae ARPS

I have been a, (film and digital), photographer for over 14 years and hold both the Associateship and Licentiate Distinctions awarded by the UK's Royal Photographic Society. I was a co-founder of, and ran Fo2PiX Ltd., a UK business that developed and sold a variety of Photoshop plug-ins, (under the name *buZZ.Pro*), as well as standalone image editing applications, such as the *PhotoArtMaster* series and *ArtMasterPro*.

Whilst at Fo2PiX, I wrote the 53,000-word *ArtMasterPro* User Guide and worked with Kodak, Microsoft, Epson, Wacom, HP, FujiHunt, Blue Pixel, ACD Systems and Toshiba. I also presented or lectured at: Focus-on-Imaging (Birmingham, UK); the Master Photography Association Roadshow (all over the UK); photokina (Germany); Epson Europe (Paris and Amsterdam); PhotoExpo (New York, USA); QVC, (a live UK TV shopping channel); RPS Digital Imaging Meetings (UK); JVH's Digital Festival (Seattle, USA); WEX Photographic (UK); as well as numerous other events across the UK.

In 2010 I co-founded the fast growing and successful office art supply business, [Works in Print Ltd.](#), **which sells hundreds of my photographic prints and digital

artwork each year.

Trisha McCrae BA(Hons)

My love for French food started when Don and I stumbled upon a café in Charras near **Studio Lavalette**, several years ago. We couldn't believe our luck. The place was full of families enjoying the *bonne table* - the atmosphere was electric. And the food was delicious top quality regional fare served with the utmost respect and love. The final dish was a performance in the dark by the waitresses who paraded the flaming meringue pie to all our tables.

This experience at Charras told to me that the French adore not only food, but they also respect their wonderful food traditions - and every region has its own traditions. Near **Studio Lavalette** you can see men with their dogs hunting for truffles; women gathering walnuts to pickle; a farmer and his wife gathering-in the ducks to make confit. You see a mother with her child at the market as they both scrutinise the tomatoes; and you hear of families renowned for how they cook their beans or preserve their jams. Like me, they all have a love for food and the highest regard for the quality of the ingredients they use.

Many people have influenced me and contributed to my culinary knowledge. I've read, (and cooked from), wonderful books by Elizabeth David and Darina Allen to the delicious vegetarian dishes of Yotam Ottolenghi and Rachel Khoo. All these chefs have a respect for keeping their food close to its source.

I have a passion for French cuisine, especially the heavenly provincial dishes. Believe me, you're in for treat when you come on one of our photo holiday courses!

Away from the creativity of French cooking, I have exhibited as a painter and sculptor, and screened as an artist-filmmaker. I've curated, taught art, led numerous workshops and hold a BA(Hons) in Art and Art History.

WHAT'S WHAT AT STUDIO LAVALETTE

Studio Lavalette is set in the grounds of the Maison du Couvent, probably the oldest house in Villebois-Lavalette. The **Studio** itself, which was previously an old house, has been completely renovated and re-engineered to suit the needs of 21st century image takers and makers....err that's you!

The **Studio** on the ground floor comprises:

- a portrait studio, complete with 3 Bowens lights; diffusers, beauty dishes and reflectors; an infinity curve; a selection of backdrops; and a variety of props;
- 4 state-of-the-art iMac computers, (with buckets of RAM), each one running Photoshop CC 2014, Photoshop Elements 11.0, Lightroom 5.0 and other imaging-related software and plug-ins, such as the Nik Collection;
- each workstation is equipped with an A4 Wacom Intuos tablet and pen;

- a wide-format Epson 4000 printer with a selection of fine art inkjet papers;
- a growing collection of books and magazines about photography and photographers; and
- a selection of digital and film cameras - yes we do have film: 35mm, 120mm and even cut-sheet film.

Elsewhere **Studio Lavalette** offers:

- dining and lounge area;
- large, covered, south-facing veranda;
- first-floor views of the Villebois valley;
- 2 twin-bedded rooms and 1 double-bedded room, all en-suite;
- free Wi-fi throughout;
- a 5m x 11m swimming pool; and
- parking for 3-4 cars.

Note:

- All our photo holiday courses and workshops are given in English.
- Sorry no pets on site, but there is a pet minding service nearby.
- There are stairs to the bedrooms on the first floor of the **Studio**, so regrettably we're not very wheelchair-friendly.