

A U S T R A L I A N

AVIATION

BEHIND THE LENS

CREATED BY

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Photography by:

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AA Behind the Lens:

ROB

FINLAYSON

1) How did you get into aviation photography?

I always enjoyed photography, and then after several visits to the observation area at my local airport, developed an interest in aircraft.

Combining the two, and I have been shooting aircraft for nearly 40 years.

2) Why aviation photography?

It never ceases to amaze me that these machines get off the ground, and day in/day out they keep on doing it! It is a privilege to be able to watch and photograph them.

I have also been fortunate to build up a network of fellow photographers, who have become lifetime mates, and who share my love of aviation photography, travel and red wine!

3) Is this something you do as a hobby or is it a commercial operation for you?

Primarily a hobby/passion.

4) Tell us about your best ever day shooting

Any sunny day at Hong Kong Kai Tak!

5) You've got to choose your best shot ever. What is it and why?

Photo number 2, Kai Tak was an amazing airport to photograph at, and it was always enjoyable to get a good shot of my country's airline on short finals at Kai Tak!

6) What's your best tip for anyone starting out in aviation photography?

Buy the best quality lens you can afford!
Get up early for the best light!

7) Tell us about your gear

CANON EOS 5DMK4 Body

CANON EOS 5DMK3 Body

CANON 100-400L Lens

CANON 70-300L Lens

CANON 24-105L Lens

CANON 17-40L Lens

Quite happy with my current set up.

8) We've all got our own style; tell us about yours

Style wise, I always like to shoot artistic images, $\frac{3}{4}$ rear, nose on, tails etc.

I also like to shoot just parts of an aircraft e.g. shot 10 of the Lufthansa MD-11F.

9) Any quirks to how or what you shoot?

I have always enjoyed shooting tri-engine aircraft, 727/DC-10/MD-11/Tristar.

10) We've all done it – missed the perfect shot. Tell us about the time you missed what could have been the best shot ever. What happened?

Prior to FR24, it was not uncommon to leave a photo spot after a long session, only to hear a noise, look back and see that an unexpected rare aircraft had just landed!

11) What's a day at an air show look like for you?

I rarely go to air shows.

12) Photo editing – love it or loathe it?

I use Photoshop, and minimal editing. I sort my aircraft images by airline, and then by aircraft type.

All my edited images are backed up on a separate external hard drive, stored at another house. [A](#)



1) Late afternoon LAX, China Southern
A380 flies right overhead and
silhouetted in the glorious sunset.
This shot was taken just over the road
from the famous In-N-Out Burger.



2) KAI TAK, my all-time favourite airport! The afternoon Qantas arrival from Sydney. A lot of searching went into finding buildings that would allow public access to get these sorts of viewpoints of the famous approach.



3) LAX is a very exciting airport, even more so when viewed out of the side of a chopper over the field. As many photographers know, Star Helicopters run photo tours over LAX with amazing views!



4) This is a rare shot of a Qantas A380 departing LAX in daylight. The previous night's flight to Sydney had been delayed, and took off mid-morning.



5) A late afternoon shot at Kansai Airport of a 747 landing on runway 14L.



6) The view from the balcony of the Dubai air traffic control tower with the Emirates A380 terminal in the background.
I was fortunate to spend many afternoons up there. (Thanks Andrew!)



7) After a heavy, but brief rain shower, the sun came out and lit up this Jetstar 717 on the ramp at Hobart.



8) During the apartheid years, Qantas used to fly into Harare from Perth. The night I arrived, as we walked across the ramp to the terminal, this classic Russian airliner from Estonia was preparing for departure.



9) This Azul Embraer 190 is pictured taking off at Viracopos Airport. It was taken alongside my mate Gianfranco Beting. Gianfranco is a fellow photographer. He worked for Azul, and designed all of their special liveries, including this one, dedicated to the late Ayrton Senna.



10) A Lufthansa cargo MD-11F, lining up on New York JFK's runway 4L. The Empire State Building is visible in the background. (Thanks Fred!)



11) A very nice view from the control tower at Santos Dumont Airport in Rio De Janeiro. (Thanks again to Gianfranco Beting)



12) Early days at Tokyo Narita, a colourful JALways 747 about to land.



13) A Singapore A380 on take-off early morning from the Sydney ATC tower. Some nice condensation over the wings. Crisp autumn mornings are my favourite time to shoot. (Thanks Paul)



14) I have always enjoyed taking photos of aircraft tails. This is one of my favourites, taken at Kuala Lumpur Airport, with Malaysian and Air Asia aircraft in the frame.



15) Final approach of an Emirates A380 at Mauritius.
Large numbers of locals gather around the northern side of the
airfield, to watch the 380 arrive and depart.



16) I was invited to shoot airside at Budapest Airport and took this nice angle of a Lufthansa Airbus landing. (Thanks to Mihaly!)



17) An Etihad Cargo Airbus freighter lifts off from Abu Dhabi Airport. In the background is what must be one of the most spectacular ATC towers in the world!



18) A Transaero 747-400 taxiing at Antalya Airport. This aircraft featured a Siberian tiger on the nose. The livery was to advertise and support the work of Amur Tiger Centre in Russia.





19) My South African mate Bobby's partner is from Kazakhstan. They invited us to visit and explore the country, and of course Bobby and I had a day at Almaty Airport. Not a lot of traffic but very interesting, and in the afternoon it's a great backdrop! We were taken around courtesy of a few local Kazakh photographers.

20) A slightly different view of a Qantas 747-400,
taken at Sydney Airport from a cherry picker.
(With thanks to the guys that got me up there!)



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