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# JEFFREY JACOBS MAKES HIS EXTERIORS GLOW

Shooting spacious interiors takes about 100 lights. *As told to Jack Neubart*

THIS WISCONSIN CABIN WAS THE DREAM CHILD OF DESIGNER THOMAS JONES, owner of Thomas R. Jones Design in Orange County, California. He built it as a summer retreat for his family. In contrast to the cabin that once stood there, this one is spacious and modern. It was also a huge project to photograph. I had three assistants led by Trice Patterson, my son Josh among them.

Now that I'm shooting digital, I've changed my approach. In the past, I would have had to do twilight exposures such as this all on one piece of film. Today, I shoot the dusky sky separately and my digital artist, Jeremy Paine, seamlessly blends the images (here and in the next shot).

The glass façade meant you could see practically every detail in the house, and that meant putting lights almost everywhere. Aside from the sleeping quarters that you don't see, there's a loft upstairs, and downstairs is the family room and kitchen. There were over 100

**More than 100 lights were required to highlight the inviting design of this modern cabin.**

lights at work here, exclusive of the existing down lights on the property. So I may have to gloss over some of them and focus on the main areas.

I use my bulbs like paintbrushes. Each light, whether it's a Lowel, Arri or ETC Source Four, serves a specific purpose. They're not really interchangeable. However, the Lowels do give me a bit more leeway, since they'll accept a variety of bulbs. Also, practically every light has blackwrap, which I use in place of barndoors.

We arrived on site in my extended Ford Club Wagon, which I packed to the gills. We were there for three days in June, producing 12 shots, both exteriors and interiors. Since I have the option to shoot the sky separately, I light at night, which lets me better visualize the lighting. Our exposure for the house was 8 seconds at f/12.5 on a Cambo Wide DS with 35mm Schneider lens and P 45



Phase One back. One more thing: to achieve the necessary depth of field, I set focusing at the hyperfocal distance.

Let's start outside the cabin. The surrounding property lends depth and texture to the place, so if there's a tree, I'll light it. There are 575W Source Fours outside illuminating the trees near left and far right. Other lights outside served to fill in the black holes among the trees. I hate black holes in a shot. More lights brought out the grass and steps in the foreground. And I used spots to bring out the texture in the brick on the right and highlight the adjoining wall of the cabin. All the lights inside and out were hidden by camera angle or pieces of furniture, for the most part.

As we step into the house, we move all the way to the loft in the rear. We positioned several lights here and aimed them at the ceiling. There were additional lights spread around the kitchen and living room floor also directed at the ceiling, but these were stronger bulbs to attain the needed reach. The broad ceiling lights were 75W Par 30 floods. The highlights along the ceiling came from 100W Par 38 spots. All the down lights are existing lights, except one. To highlight that lighthouse sculpture above the fireplace, I switched out one of the bulbs with a Par 30.

Just inside the house, far left, are black chairs that needed to be lit. We highlighted those with a flood positioned on the floor, while another flood, also at ground level, was aimed at the back of the dining room set to the right. We also had several spots and floods raking across the stonework inside the house, also from the floor. There were also several spots aimed upward toward the loft, to give us those highlights along the front edge, and another spotlight (suspended from a grip arm attached to a stand) sweeping across the railing. Other lights targeted areas that may be somewhat obscure when viewed here.

Now we move back outside and come to a 75W Par 16 flood which was aimed upward so that it's raking across the stonework to the left of the lounge chairs. We also had a Par 30 flood at the back of the porch, almost in the corner, hitting the stonework all the way back and filling in the wood canopy. In that area, we also had Par 30 spots hidden by the columns and aimed across the chaises. And the principal lights for the canopy and black mullions came from Par 38 spots and floods running across the porch.

With this second photography, we move down south to a commercial facility, Park It Here, a multifaceted parking garage near Memphis International Airport, on assignment for architect Todd Walker (Archimania). The site is massive, so big, in fact, that we included people in the shot to show scale, and the vehicles add to the sense of a busy facility, reinforced by the car zipping past the camera as a red streak (a 3-second exposure). As before, I shot the dusky sky separately, but the covered parking (populated by metal halides) mandated another exposure (4 seconds), with yet one more for all the fluorescents (8 seconds). I used the same camera, lens and back here as before. As you often see in car shots, we wet down the whole parking lot for dramatic effect.

The key to lighting sites such as this is taking control of the environment—not only what's in the frame, but also what surrounds the frame. So we began by turning off all the open and covered parking lights, along with all the fluorescents, although the sign remained lit. We bagged some street lights that were affecting the scene with duvateen. And to deal with those lights that have sensors, we simply popped the sensor off, and replaced it when done, uncovering the other lights as well—all with the aid of a lift.



Here, 93 lights went into overdrive in this parking facility, replacing the existing lighting.

We again waited until nightfall. My lighting helps to tell the story about the place, to reveal the texture and materials used. Here that meant using a mere 93 lights (all switched on for the base exposure), with more than one-quarter of them (22 of the 250W floods) pressed up almost against that wall of glass on the right. My feeling is, if the designer or architect took the time to make that an integral component, then it's my job to show it and light it. Wherever similar glass structures were concerned, I wanted the viewer to get a sense of the metal support system, not simply the glass itself—and would position lights as just indicated. Moreover, there was one more consideration: The existing lights exhibited a color shift from panel to panel, and replacing them gave us a uniform color balance.

There were also lights aimed at the grass and sweeping across the face of the covered parking facility. Additional lights were aimed upward onto the face of the buildings to the left to accentuate the ribbed metal in the overhangs and more lights still to bring out each facade. Aside from that, there are lights suspended behind the overhang where the people are standing: We had a flood aimed at the top of each column, and a spot pointed at the bottom. In addition, I had two rimlights on the people, and, coming from the parking lot, there was some frontal lighting on them for fill. We also had lights aimed upward into the corrugated metal on the wall (facing camera) of the far building, for separation.

We needed to light inside the conference room (the space behind the sign). While it may be difficult to see here, the lighting did two things: It brought out the desk and chairs (with lights pointed in their direction from below), but even more importantly, it highlighted the translucent nature of the glass (with lights aimed outward). There were also lights hitting the ceiling. We also added some lights to the adjoining room so that would not be a featureless void.

We still had the parked car far left to deal with. I rigged two Source Fours off the edge of the building, using a lift so we could get them way up high. We used a flood to light the back part of the parked car and a spot for the front. And then I brought in a small flood to light the foreground person, and added a spot to edgelight the guy at the back of the vehicle.

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