



# SWISS WATCH

REMO NEUHAUS KINGSLEY SINGLETON

*We catch up with Remo Neuhaus after his latest shoot in Gran Canaria, and find out about his photographic exploits from Altruism and Ambassadorial roles, to Zinedine Zidane and Zurich...*

**I**t's a little past 7pm on a February evening, and on the Canary Islands the warmth of the day is fading into a cool twilight. It's here, on Gran Canaria's mountain roads, that Remo Neuhaus has just finished shooting his latest campaign, for the sports brand Bauerfeind featuring Olympic triathlon gold medal winner, Nicola Spirig. The sun is still weak, and the breeze at this altitude has kept the day fresh, but the North African dust and heat is still a far cry from his lake-strewn and snow-streaked native Switzerland. Remo is used to feeling the heat though. Having built a highly respected portfolio shooting for blue-chip clients like FIFA, Caterpillar, Lacoste and New Balance, alongside celebrities and sporting stars such as Zinedine Zidane and Amy MacDonald, his life has not been without pressure. And he spent his formative years in the high temperatures of the commercial kitchen, managing successful restaurants in the Swiss capital, Bern. So, there's little heat, metaphorical or literal, that he can't take. But restaurateur becomes globetrotting professional photographer? Run that past us again?

"Yeah," he agrees, "it's not the most obvious transition, is it? But I think, because I've had so many experiences, so many stressful situations with guests

and clients over 20 years, it's all led to a certain calm now."

This pacific attitude he now applies to whatever, or whoever, he's shooting, and it's something that's marked him out as one of Switzerland's go-to photographers. "Many working photographers," he explains, "can be a little conceited and they take themselves too seriously. For me, all people are the same, and I give them all the same respect. So you see it's identical whether I'm shooting a star or a street worker – I treat them with the same respect. I think people can feel this energy and it relaxes them; it brings out their best, as well as my own."

Based on that approach, what would he say to prospective professional portrait photographers then? Obviously it's proof that building a career like his takes more than just technical proficiency? "Oh yes, so something else I do is always read about the people that I shoot. I want to know who this is; how he or she thinks; their history... it's only then that I have the target to make the portrait and it can become how I see this person. You have to immerse yourself in them to produce your best work."

Of course Remo's path took in traditional photographic study, too – he attended the CAP Photo School in Zurich – but more importantly his story seems to be about practice, persistence and ▶

**PREVIOUS SPREAD:**  
Verena Kosheen from the 2016 Olmo fashion calendar

**BELOW LEFT:**  
Model Ronja Furrer for Stromer

**BELOW RIGHT:**  
Model Sabrina Colombi

**RIGHT:**  
Actor Anatole Taubman





**“I CAN BE REALLY OBSTINATE... IF IT DOESN'T WORK TODAY, I WILL TRY AGAIN AND AGAIN”**

on-the-job experience. Book learning, after all can only take you so far. He took several assistant jobs to learn from those plying their trade and says, “it was so important to see how photographers behaved with clients, definitely, but there was another lesson; I saw how they worked. In doing so, I also realised the importance of my own style; that I had to make pictures myself because only I can see what I really want in an image.”

That's not to say that things always went smoothly, and he emphasises that his growth as a pro, made possible by practical experience, was underpinned by trial and error. “That's key for me. I always push myself to try new shots and

adopt new techniques; the challenge is so important that even now I set up and I practise before the final job, just to make sure that everything will go smoothly. I can be really obstinate with my ambitions. If it doesn't work today, I will try again and again and that way, it will usually work tomorrow.”

This rehearsed, systemic approach has paid off: “In the last three years I've made some great leaps in terms of the number and size of clients I'm dealing with, and it's all built on the foundation of those experiences. It's like the shoot today,” he continues, “the target up here was to get a series of three pics with Nicola running, stretching and cycling.



We had a great brief, a superb subject, a really good team – which is always the basis for a good result – and in the end, the client was very happy.”

Delving deeper, you can see how Remo's fastidious approach meant that his prior experiences contributed to its success. After steering the agency away from a more sterile studio and composite route, he suggested shooting in the same location that Nicola Spirig uses for her training, making for a more natural and relaxed subject. Prior to this, he had been shooting with another athlete, Judith Wyder, a three-time European and world champion in orienteering. Accompanying her in training in a time-for-images arrangement, he got to perfect his approach to shooting a moving athlete using high-speed flash. “Shooting with Judith Wyder before naturally helped me prepare for this shoot and it was highly successful. Knowing that the technique was perfected and 95% of the images I'd

take would be sharp despite her speed, we could focus more on the fine details of Nicola's movement and her facial expressions.”

Of course creative enthusiasm has to be tempered with the responsibilities of growing his business, and there Remo displays similarly energies which have put him in the enviable position of a packed diary and several excellent ambassador relationships with leading companies. “I'm really a lucky guy as I'm fully booked. That hasn't come about through what you might call a classic advertising approach, but I do put a lot of effort into my presence on social media. As well as the usual Facebook and Instagram pages, I have a blog and I make sure to keep the flow of updates going.”

And it's not just an online presence Remo maintains; he also regularly exhibits work in Zurich and Bern, so what does he see as the importance of this, both creatively and from a

**THIS SPREAD:** Olympic gold medallist Nicola Spirig in Gran Canaria

business perspective? “Well, I love to have the printed products in my hands – to feel the paper – and I love to see big images! I think that's the same for a lot of people and when you're looking to impress and to stay in potential clients' minds, it can help. When I exhibit, it's always in large sizes, because the quality and my style with the medium-format Pentax 645z really comes out in enlargements.” In September he is exhibiting at Bern's prestigious Werkschau exhibition for the first time.

Remo's Facebook and Instagram pages and the blog on his site showcase the need for a constant flow of information in the digital age. Sometimes it might seem like you're hurling your thoughts and images into the void with no return on your energies, but if your shots are good





**PREVIOUS SPREAD**  
**LEFT:** Andjela Milanovic from the 2016 Olmo fashion calendar

**RIGHT:** From a personal project with model Bianca Bauer

**FAR LEFT CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT:** From the Soccer Stars series – Zinedine Zidane, Paolo Maldini, Ronaldo and Luis Figo

**LEFT:** Dario Tozzi and Isabel Mueller for Enrico Bizzarro & Prive Academy

**“PERSONAL PROJECTS CAN ALWAYS FIND THEIR WAY INTO THE BUSINESS SIDE”**

enough, it’s only a matter of time before someone comes calling. Remo’s blog includes everything from behind-the-scenes information on his commercial shoots to personal projects.

In his case, this visibility led to relationships with Pentax, Elinchrom, BMW, Breitling and Profot AG (a photography store in Switzerland), for whom he also writes a blog. “With Pentax, I just sent them my pictures and videos, because at that moment I was making portraits of world-famous footballers including Zidane, Ronaldo, Figo, Maldini and others. They liked the pics so much that I became an ambassador for the 645z.”

Remo’s Soccer Stars series began as a free project; he was shooting the players in a charity match for UNICEF in Bern. “I asked the organisers if I could make a portrait series and sell every picture for UNICEF; we raised more than CHF5000 (£3500) for a good cause.” This altruism also led to work with a FIFA magazine, and on these pages, you’ll also find shots from his collaboration with the Olmo fashion store; another good example of how a little networking raised his profile. “That’s a project between the owner of the store, Luc Pauchard, and me. We were both at an event, and we hatched the idea of the Olmo calendar. It’s very limited – only 333 every year – but it’s lots of fun. And it all helps open even more doors down the line.”

Asking Remo how he balances these personal projects with the paying business, it’s clear that the line is blurred by his appreciation of the life he’s leading. It must help when the two naturally inform one another, though?

“Yes, that’s the cool part; personal projects that I try out and techniques that I learn can always find their way into the business side. For instance, in the beginning, I worked mainly on portraits and sports as well as the commercial jobs, but at the moment I’m getting really interested in fashion and models. It’s a great experience, working with beautiful models not just in the studio, but on location. I’ve learnt that, for me, it’s so important that, when I work with women, the shots have style.”

And looking forward? “It’s a challenge, but always a good one; I have so many ideas and so many different inspirations. There is so little time that my task is always to manage my energy, because I’m always enthralled by the world; in that way, I’m like a child and my eyes are always open.”

remoneuhaus.com  
 @remoneuhaus  
 remo.neuhaus.photography