

Forest and loch, mountain and glen.

A WILDLIFE AND LANDSCAPE CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY RETREAT.

THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK, SCOTLAND,

18 - 25TH APRIL 2020

WILLI ROLFES • NIAL BENVIE • CHARLOTTE BENVIE

FOOD AND
PHOTOGRAPHY
RETREATS™

with the Benvies

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The Retreat

Food and Photography Retreats are for people who enjoy a house-party style holiday in a lovely setting where they can immerse themselves totally in photography - and eat very well too.

The concept of a Photo Retreat is a little different from a tour or workshop. The Retreat has elements of both but the tuition is more structured, the outcomes are more focused and a lot of emphasis is put on creating a relaxing atmosphere in which conversation can flow and ideas emerge.

Are our Retreats for beginners or more advanced photographers? Well, we pull off the unusual feat of making them suitable for both by adopting a two-tier teaching approach. While advanced photographers don't always welcome a tutor breaking their concentration in the field

by offering advice on basic technicalities, they often want artistic or practical guidance at the production stage in the studio. Less experienced photographers, however, tend to need more help in the field with essential techniques to get the photos they want and might not yet be ready for complex production processes. If they want to try it, however, we have a range of Photoshop templates they can use without needing an in-depth knowledge. More advanced photographers can use these templates to fast-track their own creativity.

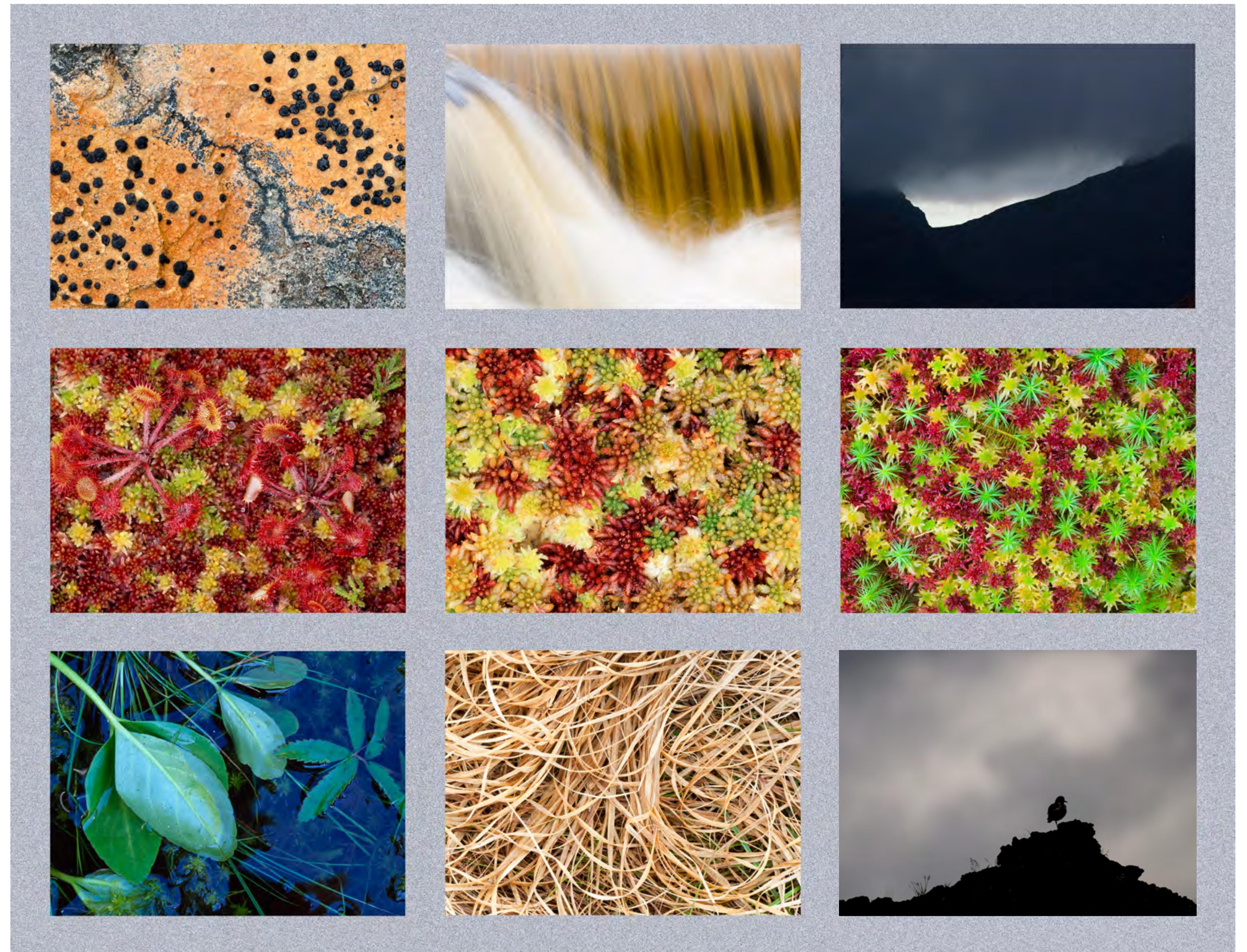


What's on offer

The mountains and forests of the Cairngorms, Speyside and Glen Affric provide photographers with the raw material for their creative work during the Retreat. Your time is divided between the field and studio, to take advantage of the best light but also to allow time to practice new-found production skills as well as receive feedback on your work and take part in discussions about what we're doing. We will use a feeding station to photograph red squirrels, so the opportunities to secure wildlife photos are assured.

During the Retreat, photographers will learn about contemporary approaches to wildlife and landscape photography:

- *Re-imagining landscape photography through the creation of "Colour Transects"*
- *Re-imagining animal and detail photography through the creation of "Chocolate Bar" collages*
- *Re-imagining plant photography with the "Field studio".*



Skills: Colour Transects

Niall started to create this style of image in 2017 and they have been widely published since. A "Colour Transect" consists of a photograph and colour swatches presented as a single piece of work. The 27 swatches are sampled from the photograph, sometimes highlighting the diversity of colours in the image, sometimes the variety of different hues of the one colour. The object is to simplify and clarify the image's colour content for the viewer.

The concept of the transect is borrowed from ecological sampling. A line is defined through a habitat and samples taken or records made at regular intervals along that line. The exercise can be repeated at different times on the same transect to introduce consistency to the sampling process. In a Colour Transect, lines are drawn across the image at the post production stage and colours sampled to create the swatches

We provide Photoshop templates to speed the creative work of more experienced PS users and to allow novices to make these striking images with minimal trouble.

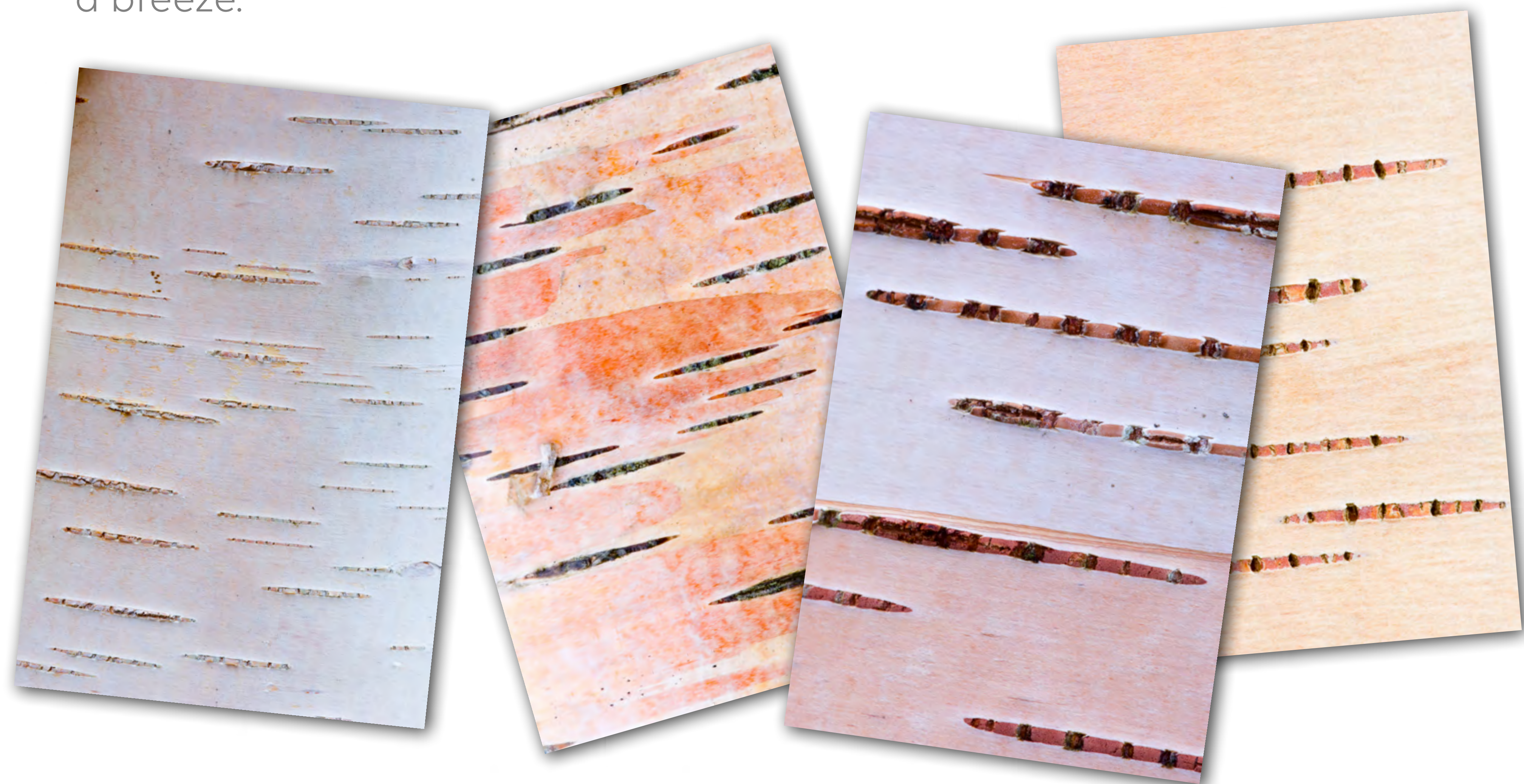


Skills: Chocolate bar collages

These images are all about diversity where people expect there to be uniformity. It's a highly versatile technique that is effective in holding the viewer's attention and encouraging closer examination of the subject.

You can learn and practise this technique with a wide variety of subjects, from decaying buildings, mosses and lichens to bark, stones, pebbles and water reflections. We have no shortage of subjects close to our base.

We provide Photoshop templates to make construction of these collages a breeze.



Skills: field studio photography

Niall and Willi are well-known exponents of the field studio, where subjects are photographed in the wild against pure white, backlight backgrounds front lit with a second, diffused flash. The result is an incredibly detailed rendering of the subject, describing in the process its translucent qualities. These images provide the starting point for the creation of more elaborate composites and different renderings - such as the buttery-coloured retro.-look shown here. If you don't have your own, we provide flash gear.



CAIRNGORMS

AND OUR VENUE



Cairngorms National Park and Speyside

Scotland's second National Park, the [Cairngorms](#), is the UK's most extensive mountain environment. The Spey valley retains some of the largest tracts of the pine forest that covered large parts of the Highlands after the last Ice Age. Its distance from the sea means that the area's numerous lochs and marshes are often wreathed in early morning mist. Snow is less predictable than in the past but if there is going to be any in Scotland, it will fall here last.





Our venue

We are based at the Ballintean Mountain Lodge in Glenfeshie for this Retreat, about 17 miles south of Aviemore. Surrounded by pine woods that are home to crested tits, red squirrels and pine martens, the spacious Lodge is an ideal place for learning and relaxing in. We have sole occupancy of it during our stay and make it our own. All the bedrooms are en-suite and there are lovely public areas for holding demonstrations and discussions. In this setting, we enjoy the sort of freedom to set our own timetable that is impossible in hotels.



Meals

Good food is at the heart of our Retreats, from breakfast through to after-dinner chocolates, all made by Charlotte. You can see some sample menus at the end of this document. She uses local ingredients, when they are available, in meals that are delicious and imaginative without being fussy. And that goes for her vegetarian dishes too. Food allergies and intolerances are catered for sensitively when notified in advance on the booking form. Expect to eat well, for breakfast, lunch and dinner. And in between times too.





General information

Retreat Price: £2150

What is included in the price of the Retreat?

Transfers to and from Aviemore railway station or Inverness (airport and railway station); accommodation during the Retreat at the Ballintean Mountain Lodge; all meals during the Retreat from dinner on Saturday 18th April until breakfast on Saturday 25th April 2020; tuition from Willi and Niall; a print of your favourite photo of the week; transport during the Retreat.

What is not included in the price of the Retreat?

Travel between your home and Inverness / Aviemore; alcoholic drinks; insurance for you and your possessions during the Retreat; additional entrance fees we may incur. You should bring your own toiletries, but towels are provided.

Travelling to and from the Retreat

You can drive directly to Ballintean Mountain Lodge (the address is Ballintean, Glenfeshie, Kingussie, PH21 1NX) or you can arrange in advance with us to be collected (by early afternoon on Saturday 18th April, 2020) from Aviemore railway station, Inverness airport or Inverness railway station. The Retreat starts with lunch at 1330 hrs on Saturday 18th and finishes after breakfast on Saturday 25th at which point we

return you to your railway station or airport. Drivers are free to leave later if they wish but rooms need to be vacated by 1000.

Daily routine

We publish the following day's schedule at dinner each night. The aim is to teach you a variety of skills in the field and in the studio afterwards. We will make sure we are outside in the best light but also give you enough time indoors to work with your pictures. We will visit a variety of mountain, loch and forest locations in Strathspey and the Cairngorms as well as making a day trip to arguably Scotland's most picturesque glen, Affric. The prevailing weather conditions will play a large role in Niall and Willi's decisions about where to take the photographers with regards to photographic opportunities and safety.

Your safety during the Retreat

We take your safety seriously and make it our priority when planning the daily routine, especially if making sorties into the mountains. We ask that you respect our judgement in respect of managing risk. We issue guests with hi-vis vests to tie to their bags and two-way radios to make visibility and contact when we are scattered in the field, easier.

General information

Insurance

It is a requirement of booking that guests provide evidence of personal travel insurance to cover cancellation and curtailment, medical and emergency expenses (including repatriation), personal accident, injury and death in addition to loss of/damage to luggage and possessions, personal possessions and flight cancellations/delays.

Weather and clothing

Prepare for cool weather, with the possibility of late snow in the mountains. You should have: proper walking boots; waterproof trousers; a waterproof shell; a down jacket or fleeces; and thermals. A windproof hat and fold-down mitt/ liners combination will keep head and hands warm. We'd also advise that you pack micro spikes (we like [Grivel](#) ones) or [Yaktrax](#) if we go into the mountains. Equally, it *could* be 18 ° C...

The longest walk we anticipate would be about 5 km, although many of our forays will be much shorter. If you're travelling by car, pack rubber boots. You might not need them but they could be useful. You may want something smarter for the evenings. Since there are a lot of wooden floors in the Lodge we ask that guests wear slippers or indoor shoes when inside.

Equipment

If you are travelling by air, you may be concerned about carry-on luggage restrictions. The way round this Niall has used for many years is to pack as much gear as you reasonably can into a photographer's waistcoat. This counts as a garment, not hand luggage and you can still take your carry-on allowance in to the cabin. Equipment you'll need during the Retreat:

- If possible, please bring a laptop loaded with Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop/Elements or similar RAW processor. A flash drive is useful for getting the documents we'll give you onto your computer.
- You could use any lens between 16 mm and 500 mm (and something in excess of 300 mm for the squirrels) but a macro lens, a mid-range zoom and a moderate wide-angle will get most use.
- We have a spare tripod but would urge you to bring your own.
- Please pack a head torch or hand-held one, for safety and navigation.
- A walking pole or staff is useful in the mountains.
- Bring all the chargers, cards, batteries and backup media you need, plus UK power adaptor if you're travelling from abroad.
- A polarizing filter and graduated ND's, only if you have them.
- Hand warmers - which help to prolong your battery's life.

General information

About us

After many years leading tours and workshops for other companies at home and abroad Niall and Charlotte Benvie established Food and Photography Retreats in 2018. Our offer combines the teaching of particular skills in attractive locations with great hospitality, conversation and food.

Willi Rolfes is a leading German natural history photographer, tutor and author with a meticulous approach to his work and a talent for communicating his skills. He is also Director of the Katholische Akademie Stapelfeld in Cloppenburg.

Niall has been a professional photographer, writer designer and guide for over 26 years with a massive publication record including six books and hundreds of articles. He has been involved in founding and running several of the biggest outdoor photographic initiatives of the last decade, including Meet Your Neighbours, Wild Wonders of Europe and 2020VISION.

For 28 years, Charlotte combined a career in the Civil Service with freelance catering and hosting roles before coming to

work with husband, Niall. Guests value not only her expertise in the kitchen and dining room but her attention to detail and warmth. She has a keen eye for a picture too and can also assist with Lightroom processing. She is a trained chocolatiere.

Contact Food and Photography Retreats Ltd.

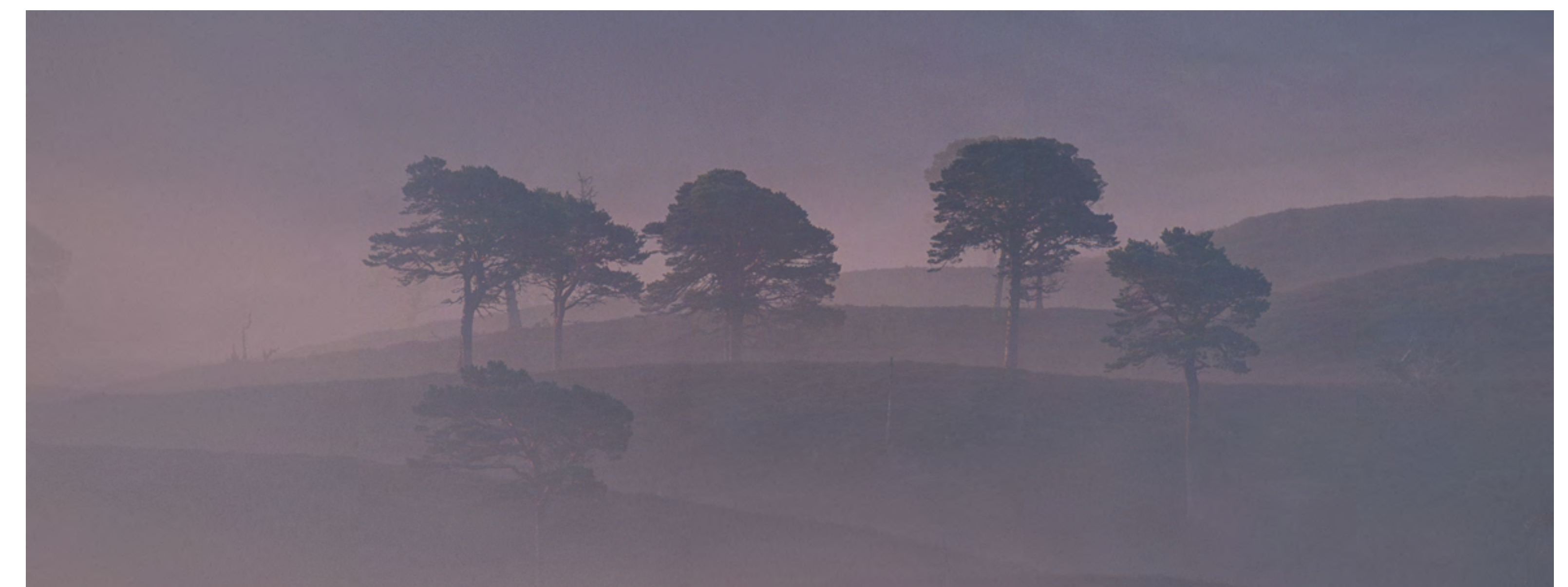
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Food and Photography Retreats Ltd is a Scottish private company, limited by guarantee, number SC596219. Its registered office is: 10 Murray Lane, Montrose Angus DD10 8LF, SCOTLAND.



Sample menus

from the kitchen of
Charlotte

Welcome dinner

Thursday 20th June, 2019

☞
Welcome bubbles

☞
Fresh trout with creamy horseradish
lentils, served with asparagus and
roasted tomatoes

☞
Chocolate mousse with
orange polenta biscuit

from the kitchen of
Charlotte

Dinner

Saturday 14th February, 2015

☞
Roasted figs with goat's cheese
and Parma ham
served on a bed of leaf salad

☞
Salmon salsa verde en croûte
served with baby potatoes and green bean

☞
Carlotta's Chocolate pots
served with fresh berries

from the kitchen of
Charlotte

Dinner

Sunday 17th May, 2017

☞
Venison pie with sweet chestnuts
and banana shallots
served with clapshot, braised cavolo nero
and oven roasted potatoes

☞
Apricot brioche pudding
with crème fraîche

☞
Coffee and Carlotta's Chocolates
dark chocolate bonbon

from the kitchen of
Charlotte

Dinner

Wednesday 27th January, 2018

☞
Chicken and chorizo casserole
served with oven roasted potatoes
and green vegetables

☞
Assiette of miniature desserts
with a lemon theme

☞
Coffee and Carlotta's Chocolates
truffles