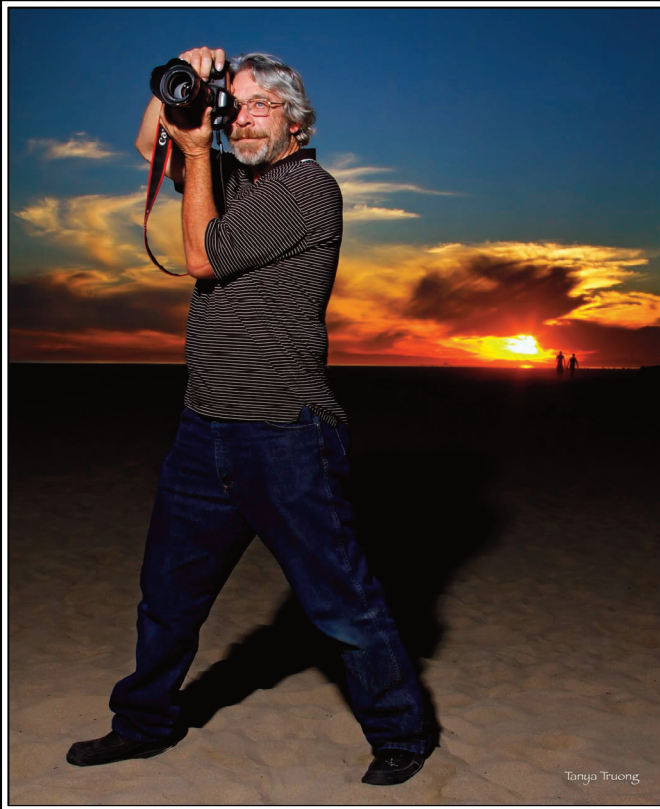




Neil Peters - by Tanya Truong



Mai Luc - by Neil Peters

A Fountain of Light: Honoring Neil Peters Through the Lens of Friendship and Art — MAILUC

It was a radiant September day in Arizona, 2009—one of those rare moments when the sun, the setting, and the spirit of creativity align perfectly. At the Montelucia Resort, nestled at the base of Camelback Mountain and inspired by the villages of southern Spain, I found myself envisioning a photo shoot unlike any other. The resort's architecture whispered stories of elegance and escape, and I knew instantly it was the canvas I needed.

I reached out to my dear friend and renowned local photographer, Neil Peters, whose eye for beauty and passion for storytelling made him the ideal collaborator. Neil was thrilled! After all, the Montelucia had hosted icons like President Obama and Beyoncé. With the resort manager's blessing, we mapped

out discreet yet stunning locations: the spa's spiral staircase, the grand lobby, the resort's front steps, and even the hallway leading to the meeting rooms. Each space offered a new mood, a new challenge, and a new opportunity to stretch our creative boundaries.

The photo that graces this cover carries a story as whimsical as it is meaningful. Neil and I first met at Mt. Lemmon, where he was scouting models for his Ao Dai photo series. My friends and I met him at a hotel lobby at the mountain's base, and before we even reached the shoot location, we were already experimenting with shots. One spontaneous moment had me standing in the pool steps, letting the tails of my Ao Dai float across the water. Neil loved the idea, and from

that moment on, he knew I was fearless in pursuit of the perfect shot.

Whether it was climbing cliffs, wading into fountains, or hanging upside-down from jungle gyms, I was always game for the unexpected. So, when we spotted a fountain in the meeting room hallway at the Montelucia, Neil looked at me and smiled knowingly. Without hesitation, I stepped into the water, layers of tulle swirling around me. The resulting image was pure magic; it was mystical, mischievous, elegant, and glamorous all at once.

Neil was a cornerstone of the photography and fashion communities in both Tucson and Phoenix. His influence extended far beyond the lens; he helped launch the careers of countless aspiring models, fashion designers,

and makeup artists. Whether at local celebrations, beauty pageants, fashion shows, or photo shoots, Neil was always present, generously volunteering his time and talent. He became a beloved fixture in the community, known not only for his artistry but also for his kind soul, love of great food, and deep appreciation for cultural traditions.

His iconic Ao Dai series gained widespread attention on social media, showcasing his eye for beauty and his ability to elevate the classic Ao Dai. Neil never charged for the work he loved; he believed that accepting payment would diminish his passion. For contracted projects, he edited efficiently, but for the work he chose to do from the heart, he would spend countless hours perfecting the images. His dedication was evident in every masterpiece he created—each one a reflection of his love for the craft and

the people he cared for.

Last November, we lost Neil after his courageous battle with cancer. My last conversations with him were filled with laughter, memories, and gratitude. We reminisced about our 15 years of friendship and the countless adventures we shared in pursuit of beauty and meaning. Neil wasn't just a friend—he was part of my family. He celebrated with us at crawfish boils, birthdays, weddings, and mourned with us at funerals. His presence was woven into the fabric of our lives.

I'm deeply honored that But Tre chose this photo to celebrate Neil's legacy. His covers didn't just showcase photography; they told stories that stirred curiosity and wonder. Through his lens, Neil gave us glimpses into worlds both familiar and fantastical. His work lives on, and so does the love and joy he brought to every shoot.

This cover is more than an image—it's a tribute to a man whose artistry and heart touched so many. Thank you, Neil, for the light you shared. We miss you dearly.

MỘT DÒNG SUỐI ÁNH SÁNG: VINH DANH NEIL PETERS QUA LĂNG KÍNH TÌNH BẠN VÀ NGHỆ THUẬT

Đó là một ngày tháng Chín rực rỡ ở Arizona vào năm 2009 - một trong những khoảnh khắc hiếm hoi khi ánh nắng, bối cảnh và không gian sáng tạo hòa quyện hoàn hảo. Tại Khu nghỉ dưỡng Montelucia, nép mình dưới chân núi Camelback và lấy cảm hứng từ những ngôi làng phía nam Tây Ban Nha, tôi hình dung ra một buổi chụp ảnh khác biệt so với bất kỳ lần nào khác. Kiến trúc của khu

[XEM TIẾP Ở TRANG 38]



Neil Peters' artistic contributions to the Bút Tre cover pages