

Lesceave Rocks, Cornwall

Lesceave Rocks is a rocky shore at the south eastern end of Praa Sands. While the latter is very well known for its outspread golden beach line, the former is especially characterized by its enclosed characters and its huge boulders. The place is also known to have incredible geological value as it entails several remnants of the workings of different sea levels.

I took this shot in the beginning of my trip to Cornwall in late November 2008. I always do some location finding before the actual shooting to get to know the place and try out different compositions. I decided to check out Praa Sands, but yet another parking fee made me decide to try to access the beach from elsewhere. That is when I discovered a small parking lot with a path leading to Lesceave Rocks, which is actually a narrow end of the popular Praa Sands but remarkably different in structure. I instantly detected the numerous photographic possibilities the area offered, but as it was clouded and rainy, I chose to simply explore the area first and to come back when the light and weather would be better.

When I returned in the evening, everything just came together: the sky had cleared, the light was perfect and I literally saw photographs all around me. In the words of David Noton: "the game was on". But time was of the essence and I chose to focus on this seascape within the short period of perfect light and weather conditions. To stress the dynamic character of the scene I opted for this composition and stopped down the camera to F22 and lowered the ISO to obtain a shutter speed of about 1 second, which gave the waves a lively touch and added some tension to the shot. I also wanted to capture the amazing colours that tinted the sky that evening and used a 0.6 and 0.9 ND grad filter to balance the exposure.

Even though at that evening all elements seemed to favour me, all was not rosy at Lesceave Rocks. After standing in the water for over an hour to shoot these seascapes –all caught up in the moment – I suddenly noticed that my boots were drenched. Fortunately I had been able to protect all my equipment and got away with a pair of soaked socks this time. But I would definitely advise everyone planning on shooting seascapes here, to adjust their garment and bring the necessary equipment protection as the tide can be very unpredictable.

But I must confess that that was about the only setback of the evening. As a landscape photographer you're always dependent on the light and weather conditions to take a good shot, and it gladdened me intensely that everything seemed to be just right that evening. The region's endless possibilities became even clearer to me when I returned at several other moments during my stay in Cornwall and was able to take some great close up shots under dull weather conditions. So, while it started out as a coincidental excursion, I must confess that this was the night that made the whole trip more than worthwhile.

Did you know:

The geological value of the area is brought home by the remarkable presence of a bunker on the beach, dating from World War II. As the cliffs are constantly subject to movement, the bunker was relocated from the top of the cliffs to the ground below.

Geologists will be glad to know that the area also abounds with granite rocks, displaying large feldspar crystals.

Within 30 miles

- (7 miles north west) The tidal island and Castle of St-Michaels mount.
- (13 miles south) Sandy beaches, tidal pools and rocks at Mullion Cove.
- (17 miles south) The dramatic coastline and lighthouse of Lizard point at the tip of the Lizard Peninsula, the southernmost point of the UK mainland.

Planning

Location: Lesceave Rocks is situated at the most southern point of Praa Sands, near Rinsey on the south coast of Cornwall.

How to get there: From Penzance drive east and take the A394 to Helston. When you have passed the village of Germoe take the second on your right (Hendra Lane), just before the village of Ashton. You will find a very small parking lot at the dead end of the street: here you will see the path that leads to the beach.

What to shoot: Coastline, rock formations, sand patterns and tidal pools. If the weather allows it, you can get some magnificent sunsets. On dull days you can concentrate on intimate landscapes. Best time of day Late afternoon and evening as the coast is westerly orientated. Any time of the day for close-ups.

What to take: A selection of lenses, tripod, polarisation and ND grad filters. Plastic boots and protection to keep your equipment dry.

Nearest pub: The Lion and lamb, Fore Street, Ashton (08721 077 077)

Nearest accommodation: Dingley Dell, Pengersick Lane, Praa Sands (01736 763 527)

Other times of year: Landscape photography throughout the year. Mind you, in the summer period the beach may be a bit more crowded.

Ordnance Survey map: Landranger 203

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