

Off camera flash

Lighting techniques on photography

Za vashe zdorovye!

I worked as a Photography Director for seven years at the publishing house Hymosa/Edipresse, that later merged together with [RBA](#) group. They published fifteen different magazines and therefore the assignments could cover a wide range of topics; fashion, still life or interior design. I will go through all of them to explain you how they were made.

Za vashe zdorovye! This how to drink a toast in Russia. Today I will talk about how I took this picture that had to illustrate an article on Vodka for the food magazine “[Comer y Beber](#)”.

Briefing

Despite the small size of the picture, it would occupy a prominent place in the article. Considering the target audience, the editorial staff of the magazine wanted a less descriptive picture and wanted a more abstract but suggestive one instead. The bottle and its brand had to be clearly seen, but there shouldn't be any association to any cocktail made with vodka. The image layout had to be vertical.



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Observations y conclusions

The verticality of the lines and shapes of the elements in the picture would help to accomplish the requested layout. First we placed transparent glasses but the attention easily shifted to the blurred bottles in the background and we did not want this to happen.

Both, the glasses and the bottles, were colorless and only their labels would stand out, specially the red one because of its size and color . We decided to put this bottle behind the one with the blue label so that it would be further away from the camera and look smaller. Finally we chose red glasses that would provide visual balance to the red label and detract from the cocktails importance by only revealing a couple of olives. We leaned the camera slightly to give the take a touch of dynamism and informality. Thanks to this idea the glass in the foreground would slightly overlap the bottles avoiding an explicit and direct identification of both vodka brands, but allowing to recognize them at the same time.

For the background and the base we used corrugated metallic plates to achieve a neutral look that wouldn't taint the liquid, but that would also bring out the transparent quality of the elements thanks to the reflections of their surface.

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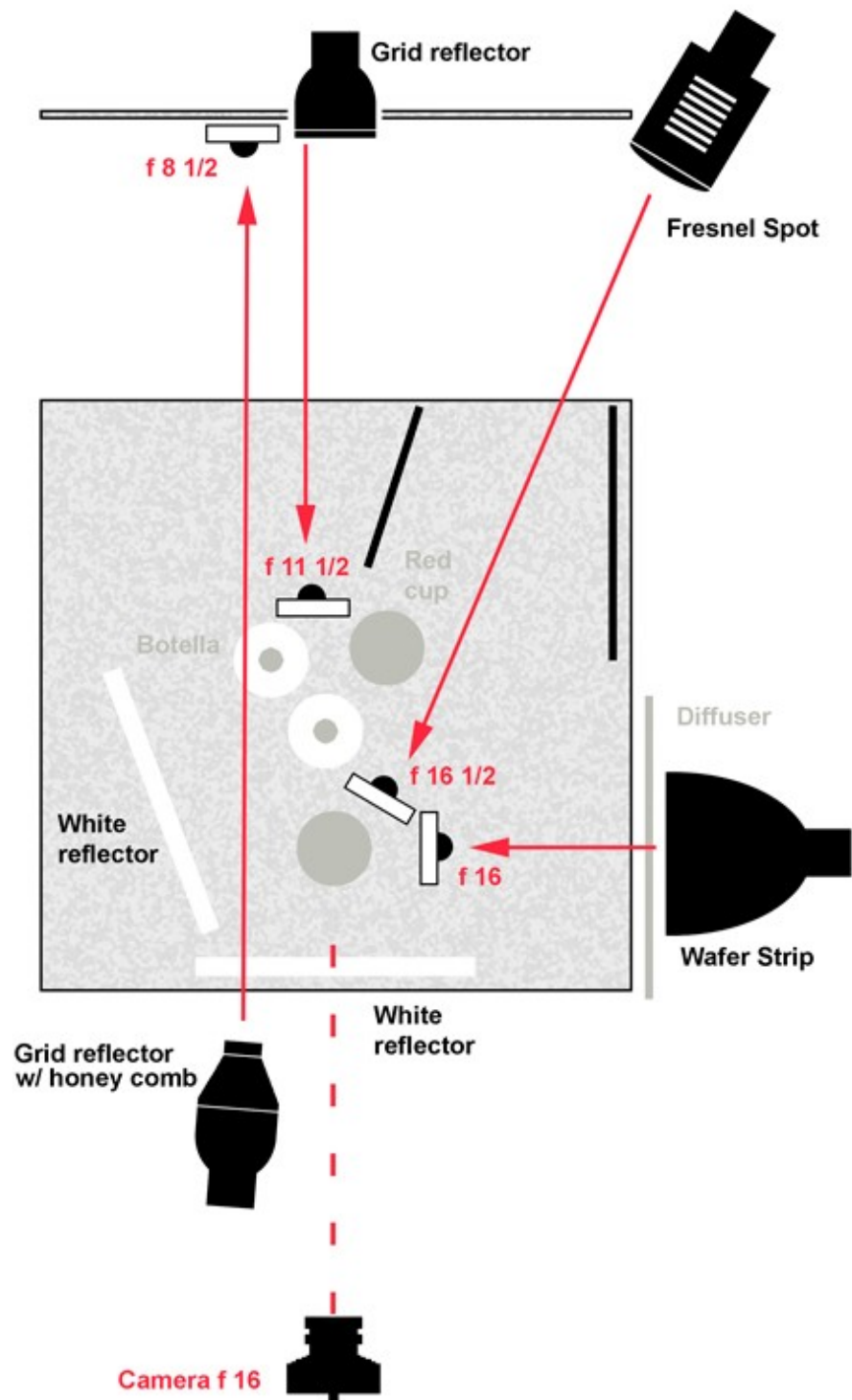
Technique

Basically we used three different light sources: a combination of backlights to enhance the transparency of all the elements, secondary lights to make the label stand out more and an effect light for the background.

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With a honeycomb grid reflector, we achieved a wide backlight that covered all the elements in the picture. In order to decrease the saturation of the color of the main glass, we projected on it a more intense backlight (+ 1 EV) from a [Fresnel](#) source. The [black flags](#) placed on the sides limited the amount of the said light to the glass, enhancing its outline . We reduced the contrast of the olives by putting a Wafer Strip on one side and by using a diffuser that diminished the reflection in the glass. With two foam core boards we reflected upon the bottles the light coming from the [Wafer Strip](#) and the backlight spots, to see the their labels better. Finally, with a cone shape reflector, we emitted a diffuse ring in the background metallic plate , (without overexposing), to make the glass stand out more.

The [Hasselblad](#) digital back allowed us to have an immediate preview of the take. To balance its color we used a [Gretag Macbeth](#) color chart.



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