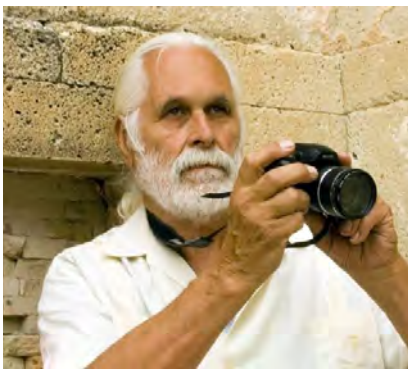


# John Lamkin Award-winning Journalist and Photographer

By Maralyn D. Hill



A little over ten years ago, I was fortunate to meet award-winning journalist and photographer John Lamkin. I clearly remember how happy I was when he agreed to serve on the board of the International Food Wine & Travel Writers Association, when I was president.

If you ask John how he started travel writing, he will be the first to reply, "It was an escape from the drudgery of being an aerospace engineer—dropped the engineering, kept the writing."

John went on to study at the San Francisco Art Institute and then discovered the now famous San Francisco Camerawork. John is quick to say you might find him horseback riding through the jungle to explore an ancient Maya ruin, or sitting on the balcony of a five-star plus resort, sipping an exotic drink, or interviewing a fashion celebrity, or somewhere in between.

John is the Executive Editor of FWT Magazine: food wine travel. He belongs to several professional organizations including the International Food Wine and Travel Writers Association where he serves as a Board Member and as Publications Chair.

His recent book (co-authored with Susanna Starr—text: Susanna, photographs: John) about the Zapotec weavers of Mexico's Oaxaca Valley is reaping critical acclaim. Susanna's words and John's photos capture the sense of life of the people. I asked John to share how *Our Interwoven Lives with the Zapotec Weavers: An Odyssey of the Heart* evolved. Here it is:

"We both lived in the same small town, Taos, but didn't know each other. We met at Susanna's small eco-resort, Rancho Encantado, in the southern Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico and this year we celebrate our 18th anniversary. I had started a small publishing company, mostly to serve as a consultant for people interested in self-publishing. When we met, Susanna was working on her first book, *Fifty and Beyond: New Beginnings in Health and Well-Being*, which we published together. We traveled together extensively and ended up co-authoring the latest book, *Our Interwoven Lives with the Zapotec Weavers: An Odyssey of the Heart*, Susanna did the writing and I the photography. I published the book through my company, Paloma Blanca Press. We have very the same likes in travel and other things which makes us an ideal traveling/writing team."

John will go anywhere for a story and believes as Isabelle Eberhardt once said, "A nomad I will remain for life, in love with distant and uncharted places."

**Maralyn D. Hill:** John, how did you

**discover your love for travel?**

**John Lamkin:** My love for traveling came early on, vacationing with my grandparents and with my parents. The writing came later.

**MDH:** Which are you more passionate about, writing or photography?

**JL:** I'm equally passionate about my writing and my photography. I use them to supplement each other. As far as enjoying the process, the photography comes first.

**MDH:** What is your writing process?

**JL:** I don't have a set process. Unfortunately, like many other writers, I wait until close to deadlines to dive in.

**MDH:** When you have the opportunity to pick your travel destination, where do you go?

**JL:** Preferably, where I haven't been before and where there is a new culture to explore.

**MDH:** What motivates you to be a luxury journalist?

**JL:** The lifestyle. Becoming a luxury



writer was synchronicity. I had been writing a lot about Mexico and when the editor of a luxury magazine in London needed someone to do a luxury piece in Cancun, she picked me. It just took off from there.

**MDH: What is it about the experience of travel that you find so inviting?**

**JL:** My favorite experience in traveling has always been finding something new—a new culture, language, cuisine, and so on.

**MDH: Do you have any hobbies?**

**JL:** My work is so satisfying that I don't need hobbies.

**MDH: Where do you see the luxury market trending?**

**JL:** I see the trend going toward more experiential, especially in travel—luxury safaris, treks, adventure, and the like. To me, this is a very agreeable trend.

**MDH: If you were stranded on an island, name one person and three items you would bring?**

**JL:** My partner, pen and notebook, and Swiss army knife.

**MDH: What are three necessities you won't travel without?**

**JL:** Nexus 7 tablet, camera and good walking shoes.

**MDH: What does Luxe Beat Magazine mean to you?**

**JL:** Luxe Beat Magazine is the perfect venue for my luxury writing and that of many others. The magazine has a very dynamic publisher and editorial staff which brings it along very rapidly towards being one of the top magazines for discerning luxury buffs.

It was a pleasure to interview John and learn more about him. I've read many of his stories and his latest book and attest to his talent. You can check out his website at

**TravelWritingAndPhotography.com** and contact him at **john@TravelWritingAndPhotography.com**.

Thank you John for more insight into your stories and you.

