

FINE ART • MUSIC • THEATER • PHOTOGRAPHY • POETRY • SCULPTURE

# CAPE COD ART

MARTHA'S VINEYARD & NANTUCKET

A guide to  
art & culture  
on Cape Cod  
and the Islands



BOBBY BAKER  
PHOTOGRAPHY

CAPE COD LIFE  
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*Since 1979*

35<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY



ARTS FOUNDATION  
OF CAPE COD

# Bobby Baker

## PROFILES IN ART

Bobby Baker was born and raised in a musical home in western Pennsylvania. His father played the trombone, which Baker studied along with piano. He was an active musician for several years before concentrating on photography. “I had point and shoot cameras and always seemed to take photographs that others found interesting,” Baker says. “But it was once I was living around the ocean and all its special treats that everything ‘clicked.’ I was hooked on shooting seascapes and other images of seaside life.”

Last year, Baker’s lifelong love of music intersected with his photography in Austin, Texas. He attended “South by Southwest”—an annual music, film, and art festival—and documented the experience on his Nikon D800 camera. The end result, a gripping black and white portfolio, conveys the magnetic energy that draws people from all walks of life to the festival. “You could see the hope and excitement in their eyes,” he says. The experience also rekindled nostalgic memories from Baker’s days as a musician. “You could relive the days when you would travel across the country just eating potato chips and saving money for gas to get places,” he says.

“South by Southwest” was atypical for Baker, however, because the vast majority of his photography involves the sea. “The ocean is exciting—it’s captivating, it’s soothing,” he says. “When I’m away from the ocean, the inspiration seems to go away.” While Baker has shot seascapes across North America, Cape Cod has become his muse. He first visited 25 years ago when his wife took him to Chatham. “It was love at first sight,” says Baker, “with my wife—and with Chatham.”

When he’s shooting on the Cape, Baker rarely has an agenda. “I just walk around with my camera,” he says.

“Inevitably, I’ll come upon something that just blows me away.” He counters this spontaneous search process with a calculated decision about shooting in black and white, or color. “It’s all about the light,” the photographer says. “I have not found light anywhere like the light I find on the Cape. There are times when it feels like I can reach out and touch it. When you have something that beautiful, you have to shoot it in color.”

Alternatively, Baker notes some scenes demand monochrome. “There are times when the contrast is so vivid and descriptive that you feel it,” he says, “and it has to be black and white.” His portfolio contains timeless and contemplative images, such as footprints winding through Cape Cod dunes, encouraging the viewer to reflect on the relationship between nature and humanity.

After a day of shooting, Baker returns to his studio and processes the images on his computer. He is wary of letting editing technology dominate his craft. Although he might tweak an image to improve the exposure or contrast, Baker operates within the scope of photography’s history. “When you go back in time, Ansel Adams was a master of manipulation in the dark room,” he says. “What we’re working in now is a digital dark room.”

A striking element to Baker’s work is the way in which his photographs evoke emotion. One of his sunsets over Chatham, for example, captures the energy of the day’s last light through a kinetic palette of colors streaking the sky and sparkling off glassy water. “The cool thing about art is being able to capture the feelings of something you’re going through and actually experiencing,” Baker says. “Hopefully you are doing it well enough to be able to pass that on for someone else to enjoy or experience.”



*Race Point* | black and white photography | 21.75" x 13.75"

*“I have not found light anywhere like the light I find on the Cape. There are times when it feels like I can reach out and touch it.”*



*Sailing to Stage Harbor* | color photography | 14.5" x 21.75"



*On Oyster Pond* | color photography | 21.75" x 8"

Bobby Baker’s work may be seen at the Cape Cod Art Association, 3480 Main Street, Barnstable, where he is a master artist. His work may also be seen at [bobbybaker.com](http://bobbybaker.com)