



Beth Harris

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Raphael.

A few Septembers ago, I was in Crested Butte for [Vinotok](#). One evening before the festivities really entered into full swing, I stopped in to the Eldo. I sidled up to the bar, picked a stool, and ordered a beer. To my left, there was a man sitting on his own and we ended up chatting. He was touring the area by motorcycle, was soft spoken, seemed to be a sensitive kind of man, intelligent, and, I would find out later, terribly humble about his artistic talents.

It is a rare instance when, after making an acquaintance at a bar, I immediately exchange contact information. He was obviously a different sort of person -- the kind of person who enriched the world rather than detracted from it. Seeing that in him right away, I knew I would like to remain in touch with him.

That man was Raphael Sassi, an artist of world class talent. Over the years I knew him, Raphael always stayed utterly true to the art he wished to create. He was an inspiration to me and astonished me with his self-sacrificing commitment to his artistic purpose. He was kind to me and offered me an opportunity to give photographic workshops on a piece of land he owned. While I wasn't ready to give workshops last year, I deeply appreciated that he held my talent in high enough esteem to make such an offer and have never forgotten his quiet confidence in my photographic abilities.

The world is certainly dimmer for having lost Raphael, not only because he was a superior artist, but even more so because he was a person of character who quietly and persistently encouraged the best kind of growth in others.

Rest in peace, friend. See you on the other side



Sebastian Sassi