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Amateur captures atmosphere of autumn after dark

By John Lawrence

Now November is here, the days are shorter and the nights longer. Some of us draw our curtains until spring returns but for photographer Matt Pielas this time of year offers the perfect chance to capture the atmosphere of East Finchley after dark.

Matt regularly walks out with his Lumix LX15 and his Samsung Galaxy S9+ mobile phone to photograph the local paths, roads and parks that can look so different after daylight has disappeared.

“Taking good photos at night is about two things: stabilisation and aperture,” says Matt. “My camera gives me a good choice of aperture but the stabilisation is better on my mobile phone so I mix the two devices. But really the best camera is always the one you have with you. Moments don’t last forever and you have to catch them however you can.”

Matt was living in a bright and hot Chicago when he first visited London 20 years ago. He knew nothing about the city except what he’d seen on television, and people warned him: “Don’t go there, it’s cloudy, rainy and dirty!” But he says the atmosphere of London charmed

him immediately and he spent hours taking photos.

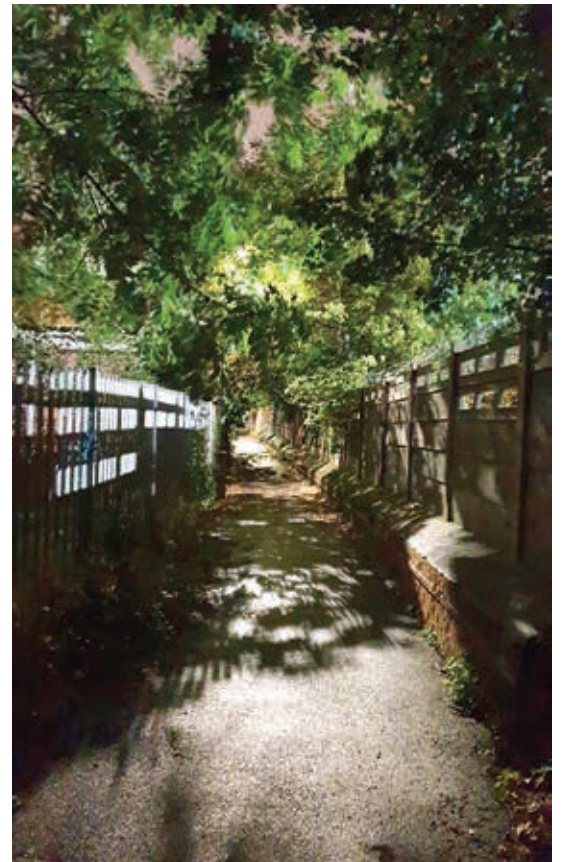
Five years ago, he decided to come back for good and has lived in East Finchley for the last four years. He still roams the capital from Stanmore to Croydon taking thousands of photos but describes N2 as the “last and best place where he wants to live”.

“Living here means taking a part in this community and continuing my photo hobby,” he says. “Probably I have a different point of view than people who were born here, but maybe that’s why I’ve got something to show them, to let them realise that they live in very nice place, which can be easy to forget if you’ve always lived here.”

“Anyone can be an amateur photographer like me. Just watch from your window and learn to see your neighbourhood in a different way. There’s so much out there.”



Shots in the dark: These images taken by photography enthusiast Matt Pielas show, from top to bottom, the community green space and the homes of Strawberry Vale behind, the churchyard of Holy Trinity in Church Lane, a foggy East End Road and the Pumphandle Path, off Tarring Road



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