

john tunney  
BREWSTER

## The limitless scope of sea and sky



Sit for awhile with a John Tunney photo, and simple shapes turn complex, almost mystical. Everyday objects—a pear speckled with water drops, a horizon on the beach at dusk, a white rose just beyond its prime—become beautifully laden with meaning.

Experimenting with shutter speed, depth of field, and digital effects, as well as printing with archival art papers and pigment inks, give Tunney's images the feel of a monotype print or a painting. "They're very simple compositions," Tunney says. "People say there's a calmness to the photographs, a stillness."

Photography has been a passion for five years, but in more concrete terms it has allowed Tunney to embrace a new career. Ten years ago, he was an executive at a public relations firm in New York, and his wife was the editor of a travel magazine. More and more, Tunney's interests shifted and he left the public relations firm and developed an online yoga web site. He sensed the exhilarating potential for a fresh start and a new home.

by mary grauerholz



Wood End Twilight



"We decided to pack it in and come to Cape Cod," Tunney says. They settled in Brewster and a few years later, Tunney renewed his interest in photography. "It was something that had to be done," he says simply. Today he shows his photographs and teaches classes and workshops in photography and Photoshop at Barnstable's Cape Cod Art Association.

Much of Tunney's work is steeped in Cape Cod imagery. Seascapes, marshes, boats, and lighthouses become impressionistic subjects. There is a touch of whimsy here and there, as well, in photos of lobsters and plovers. And although many artists cite the Cape's light, Tunney is more drawn to the region's other natural aspects. "There's something about the way the water and sky work together," he says. "People have been coming here more than a hundred years for this. There's something about it that makes you want to communicate the essence of it."

*Sunset Sail*, which Tunney shot four years ago, is a favorite of his. "It was one of the first ones I did when I got serious about photography," he says. For *Chatham South Beach*, Tunney positioned himself at the Coast Guard Lighthouse, the site of the ocean break. The use of a panning technique and computer editing produce a blurred effect that takes the piece beyond photography. "I approach it like a painter," he says. "Sometimes a

picture says all it needs to say right out of the camera. Other times it's just the beginning, like a rough sketch."

The beginning of a photograph can come in quirky fashion. Tunney was at his brother's house when he saw clothespins on a line. "I was doing some pictures of some flowers, and I saw these colorful clothespins. I started playing with them." His shot became *Clothes Pins Spin*, a whimsical piece that is frenetic with color and shape. As the photographer says, "it's very energetic." He produced the effect by playing with depth of field.

Even with such simple objects as subject matter, Tunney's photographs have a powerful draw, much of it in his unique mix of the abstract and representational. As he says, "I'm trying to create an image that creates an experience."

**John Tunney's photographs may be seen at the Collections Gallery, 23a Jarves Street, Sandwich and at the Harvest Gallery & Wine Bar, 776 Main Street, Dennis, The Cape Cod Art Association, 3480 Main Street, Barnstable, and Oceana in Orleans, or by visiting [www.jtunney.com](http://www.jtunney.com).**

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