

YARROW

Yellowstone National Park

22/1/21

DAVID ON LOCATION

Yellowstone, Wyoming, USA - 2021

David spent last week in Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming. Over the last few years, this has proved a happy hunting ground for him in January and this year, along with his usual guide, he had the park around the Madison Junction much to himself early in the morning. It was early starts (4 am) and extremely cold, but he would be out of the park when the tourists' buses and snowmobiles started to arrive at 10 am.

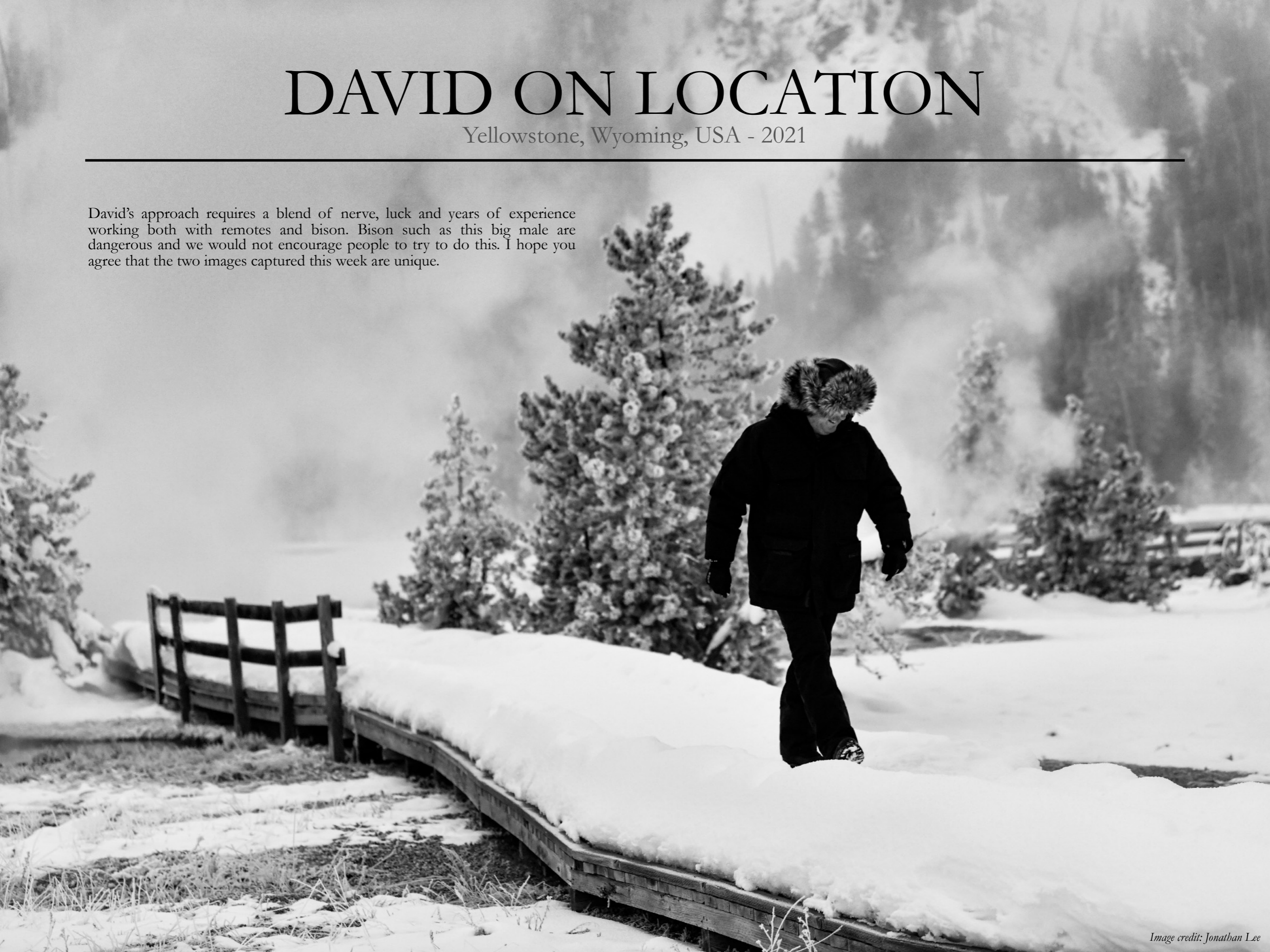
There were, however, two big changes this year in that David decided to work only with wide angle or standard lenses and to use remote control cameras to get as immersive and close as possible. He also focused on one huge bull bison living on his own on the banks of the Madison River. The river running through the park at an altitude of 6700 feet is frozen in parts during the winter and thermal in others, hence the bison come there to stay warm. Last Tuesday the temperature was -27 degrees at 7.30 am.



DAVID ON LOCATION

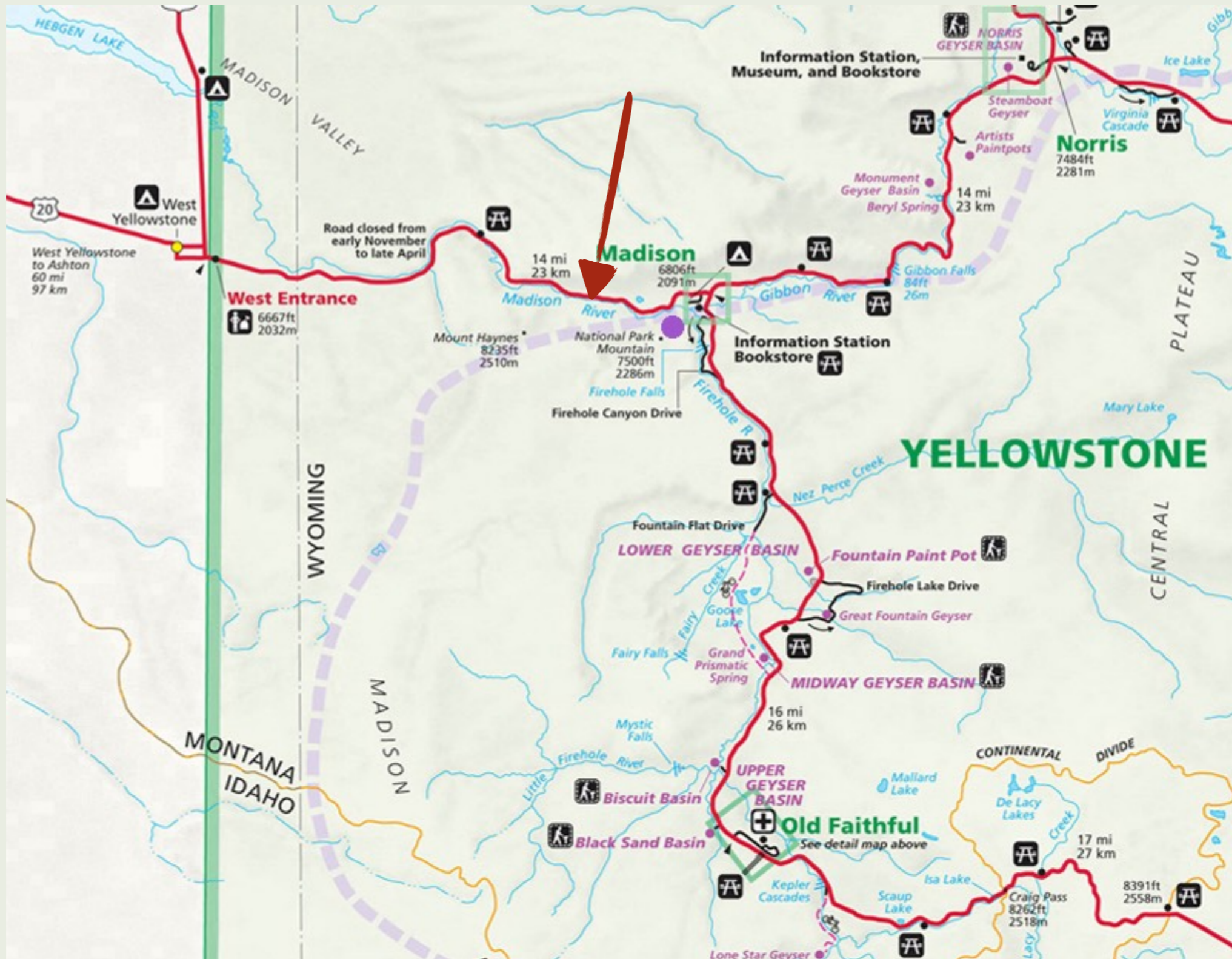
Yellowstone, Wyoming, USA - 2021

David's approach requires a blend of nerve, luck and years of experience working both with remotes and bison. Bison such as this big male are dangerous and we would not encourage people to try to do this. I hope you agree that the two images captured this week are unique.



LOCATION OF DAVID'S WORK

with the solitary bison





Buffalo Soldier

Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, USA - 2021

Sizes

Large – 56” x 77” Unframed, 71” x 92” Framed – Edition of 12

Standard - 37” x 51” Unframed, 52” x 66” Framed - Edition of 12

Prices available on request

Narrative

Three variables came together in this split second to allow this winter portrait to transcend most of my work with bison in Yellowstone.

The first is of course the proximity, which allowed for a standard lens and the contextual narrative that goes with it. The river detail behind lends to the power of the image as it gives an emphatic sense of place and season. This proximity came from a combination of my experience of bison movement and fluency in the use of remote control cameras. This is not something people should try in Yellowstone without a good guide and extreme caution.

The second bonus is simply the position of the bison’s head. The big males do resemble beasts from some sort of fantasy production and the lower the camera is relative to the head, the more the sense of an encounter with a creature from another world is amplified. This looks like an animal from a different planet - something “*Throners*” would expect to see “*North of the Wall*”. No other mammal on the planet looks more like a monster than a male bison in the winter.

The third helpful variable is his front left leg suggests movement towards me and that is fortunate as bison can often be stagnant when they are feeding. This picture has the dynamism we often seek.

We took this picture so early in the day that no one else was in Yellowstone National Park. We left the park when the tourists were arriving. That’s the way we roll.



The Beast of Yellowstone

Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, USA - 2021

Sizes

Large – 56” x 81” Unframed, 71” x 96” Framed – Edition of 12

Standard - 37” x 53” Unframed, 52” x 68” Framed - Edition of 12

Prices available on request

Narrative

This is a beast of a bison. I will leave others to decide if it is a monster of a photograph, but it is as good as I can possibly do. His size, the mountain on the left, the snow laden forest on the right and the virginal snow in the foreground all coalesce in the most fortuitous manner. Meanwhile, the early morning sunlight allows for every detail on the bison's face.

This portrait was taken with a 35mm lens, the best portrait lens I know and this image is proof as to why. Setting the remote up was not that challenging as the massive bull was some distance from me at the time, but we then had to hope that we'd got both the maths and the bison's direction of travel right. But this was down to luck more than judgement and this one image is perhaps the reward for the multiple of times we have failed. It is moments like these that offer the reason for using remotes, rather than just playing it simple and working with a telephoto.

To me this photograph just shouts “Yellowstone”, America's oldest National Park and one that in winter is an artist's dream. There is simply no place like it on earth. It's a very difficult image to replicate and I hope it will stand the test of time.