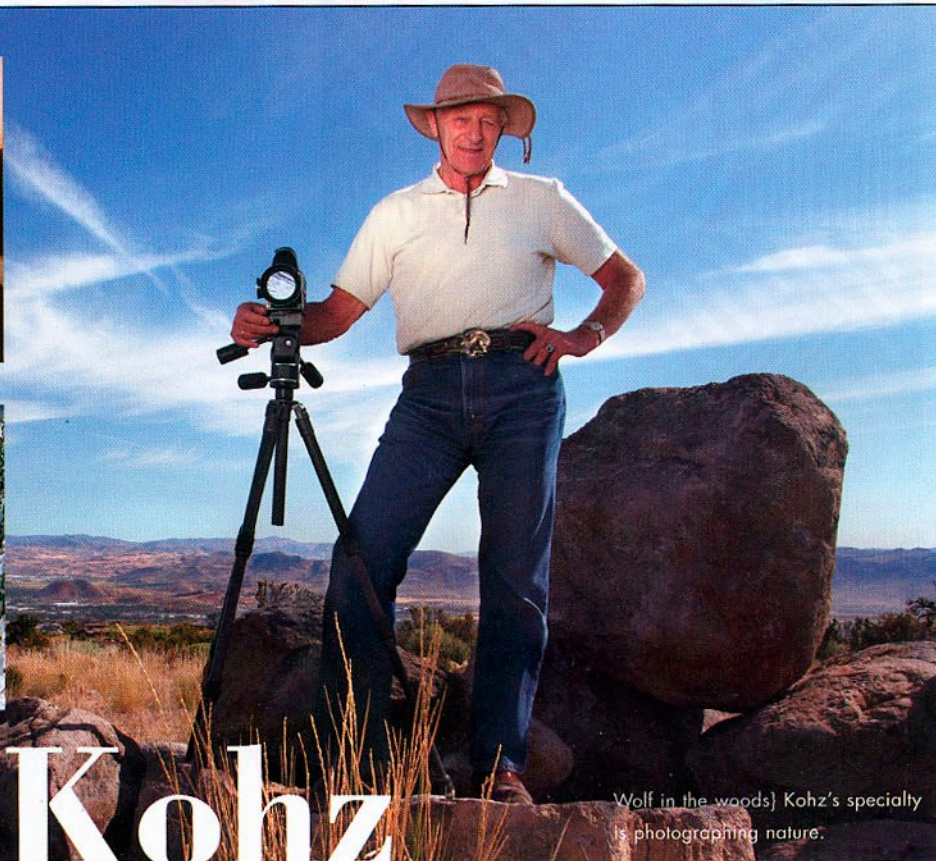


MEET THE
artist

Photo by Wolf Kohz



Photo by Wolf Kohz



Wolf in the woods) Kohz's specialty is photographing nature.

Wolf Kohz

WOLFGANG KOHZ REALLY WANTED TO TAKE THE ECHO LAKE WATER TAXI.

The 77-year-old had just hiked about 20 miles in the Desolation Wilderness, at one point jumping from boulder to boulder to reach Pyramid Peak, all to photograph the Sierra Nevada in its early morning splendor. He was tired.

But then, discipline — that same force that drives his 40-year-old photography business, Tahoe Foto — kicked in.

"I said, no, I'm out here to hike," he recalls.

That determination, coupled with a love of nature, has led him into the Sierra backcountry as well as some of the West's most scenic areas — Yosemite National Park, the Big Sur region along the California coast, Bryce Canyon National Park in Utah — to photograph landscapes with his trusty Hasselblad, which he describes as "the best camera there is." Two of his photos — serene images of Lake Tahoe in the summer and winter — hang in the B concourse of the Reno-Tahoe International Airport, blown up to mural size.

"When he's out with the camera," says his wife, Judy, "he would like people — as much as possible — to get the feeling he got when he was there. That's kind of a mission."

The first inklings of this mission date back to post-World War II Europe, when the German-born Kohz got interested in photography.

"After the war, I was able to purchase a camera in a U.S. Army surplus store," he says.

He came to the United States in the early 1960s, married the American-born Judy, and together they traveled to Lake Tahoe from the East Coast, opening Tahoe Foto in Round Hill, Nevada in 1966.

"I photographed babies, and dogs and cats, and whatever came across," Kohz says. "But I always, when I had the chance, hiked in the mountains."

In 1971, he established Wolf Products Inc. to showcase his fine art photography. In 1986, he moved to Carson City — "I got too lazy to do the shoveling of the snow," he says — and expanded his repertoire to include close-up photos of flowers, stones, and other natural items against black backdrops, as well as some wildlife photography. Last year,

he began putting his pictures into 8-by-8-inch framed tiles, and then into larger tiles that are incorporated into coffee tables and other furniture. His latest endeavor is to put an enlarged photo of a lake or meadow into a tempered-glass floor.

"You always have to think of things," Kohz says.

And you have to change with the times. During his tenure in the business, Kohz says he has seen cameras go from, "basically, a box with a hole with an emulsion on a piece of glass," to sophisticated computerized equipment. His Hasselblad camera now has a digital backing, and one of his favorite photos, Majestic Yosemite Falls, is one that he digitally altered so that a stone walkway is removed to show the area in its more natural state.

Technology changed photography, and Kohz changed with the times, but one thing remains constant: His love of the outdoors.

"I'm a nature guy," he says. "It's my church."

RESOURCES

See Kohz's work at Art Source gallery, or visit Wolf-products.com. ■