

# Lensbaby 101

**August 15, 2024**

**Dennis Freeman**

[dennisfreeman4510@msn.com](mailto:dennisfreeman4510@msn.com)



# Lensbaby is a brand of creative effects lenses

<https://lensbaby.com>



- Quality metal construction. Mount options support most cameras.
- Manual: Aperture settings and focus are controlled with lens rings. Lens data and aperture setting not recorded by camera.
- Each lens provides different creative effects, from soft focus and edge distortion to unique bokeh patterns.
- Lensbaby lenses are used in portrait, commercial, street, wedding, macro, and landscape photography, adding an aesthetic that standard lenses cannot achieve.

*Some popular options*

# The Lensbaby Effects / Lens Names

- **Sweet:** Sharp focus with gradual blurring to edges – tilt to steer sharp focus point.
- **Edge:** Sharp flat field of focus - “slice of focus” that can be tilted. Blur elsewhere. Can be used to create a “miniature” look.
- **Obscura:** Pinhole – everything at the same, but poor, level of focus.
- **Velvet:** Large sweet spot, blur to edge. As open up the aperture, get a “glow” over the whole image.
- **Twist:** Background gets swirled. Need subject to be close and background further away for best effect.
- **Sol:** Small, sharp area of focus, surrounded by blur, with adjustable blades to add bokeh texture.
- **Omni:** an attachment system that screws into the filter threads of your lens, and includes a number of magnetic wand attachments to bend light and create other artistic effects.

# The Lensbaby System

Lensbaby's product line can be broken down into three basic categories:

- 1) Standalone lenses,
- 2) the OMNI filter kit (not a lens), and
- 3) the Swappable Optic System that mounts specialized lenses on the tilting Composer Pro II, flexible Spark, or fixed mounts.

# Macro Mods to the Lenses

- Can use Extension Tubes, Macro Filters, or Lensbaby Macro Converter



Lensbaby 46mm Macro Filters\* screw onto the front of the optics: +1, +2, and +4 diopter. Can stack. (focusing can be a challenge with macro filters)



Lensbaby Macro Converters# are extension tubes that fit in between the Composer Pro II and optic of choice. Use the 8mm or 16mm converter, or stack them for 24mm.

\* The longer focal length lenses have the most magnification with the Macro Filters

# The shorter focal length lenses have the most magnification with the Macro Converter Kit (or extension tubes)

# Standalone: Velvet Lenses

- The Velvet effect is achieved using the Lensbaby Velvet 28, Velvet 56 and Velvet 85 lenses. (i.e. focal lengths)
- Soft and velvety image appearance, reminiscent of classic portrait lenses from the past.
- They combine a sharp central focus with a smooth, ethereal glow in the out-of-focus areas, resulting in images that have a romantic/timeless quality.



Velvet 28



Velvet 56



Velvet 85

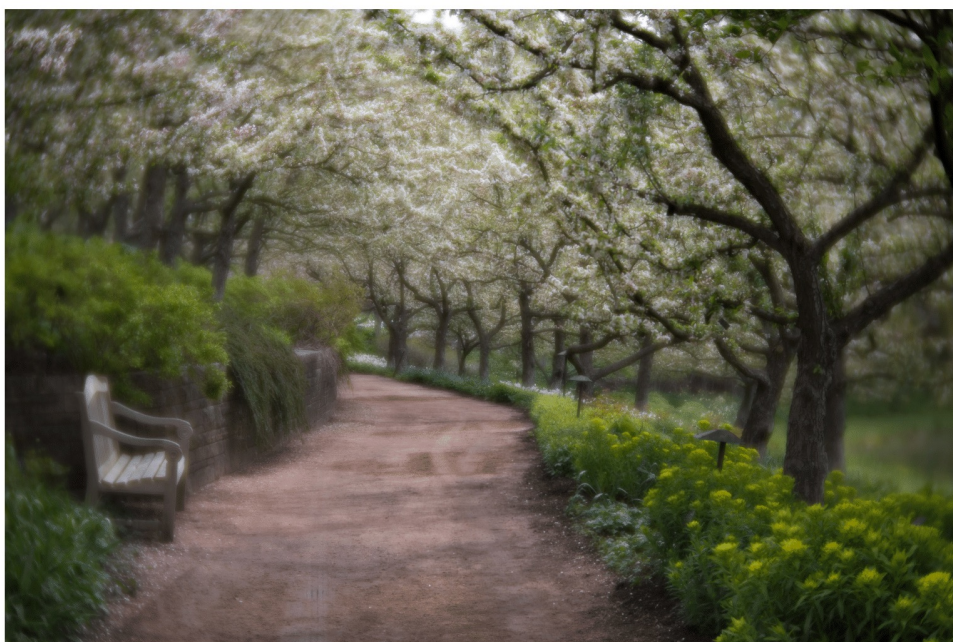
# Velvet 56 (or 85)



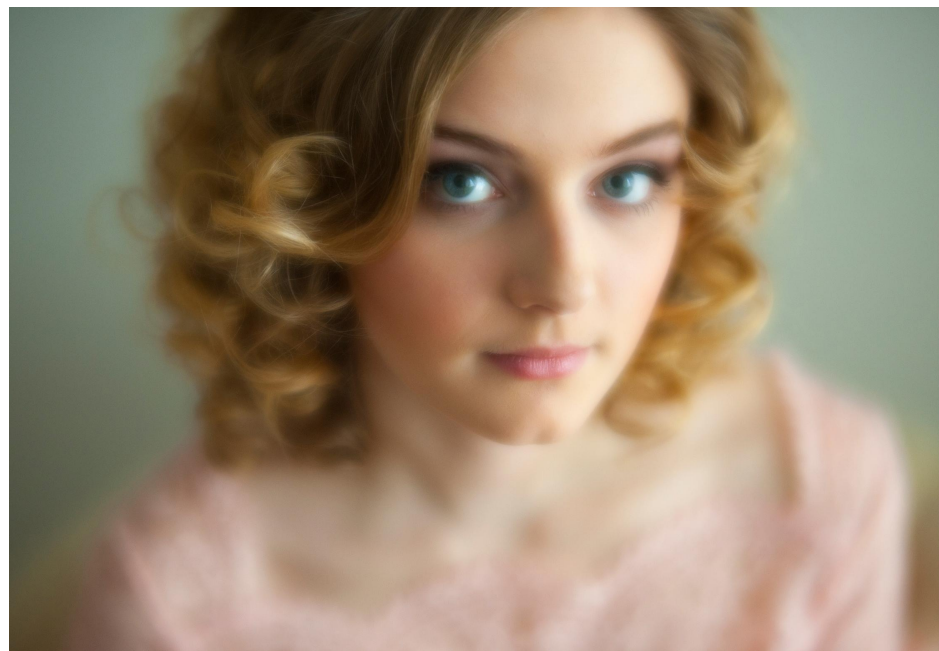
- **Aperture Range:** f/1.6 – 16
- **Focus Distance:** 5 in – Infinity: supports 1:2 macro

At its widest, f/1.6, you get very soft images, and the more you close it down the sharper it gets. The wider settings help you get that soft focus and bokeh look and images that look as though they were painted.

Great for portraits and macro. Impressionistic landscapes. You can add extension tubes or close-up filters (not from Lensbaby) to get even closer macros.



*Anne Belmont: Velvet 56*



*Rachel Shomsky: Velvet 56*



*Anita Kram: Macro with Velvet 56 & 68mm extension tubes*



*Dennis Freeman: Velvet 56 with Micro 4/3*



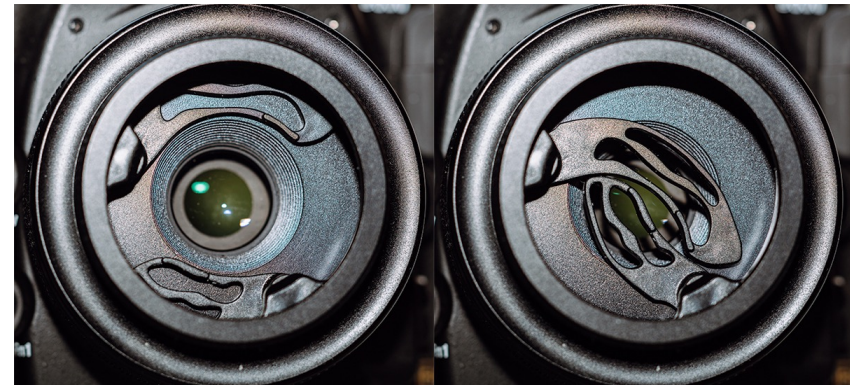
# Velvet Tips

- Camera in Manual Mode. Select shutter speed and use Auto ISO.
- Focus with aperture at f/4 or f/5.6. Then open the aperture up for the Velvet glow effects (e.g. f/1.6, f/2, f/2.8). The image on the Live View may look out of focus due to the “glow”, but the focus definition is sharp under the glow and you’ll see it in post-processing.
- If handheld, set camera in rapid burst mode. Gently rock back and forth to get a variety of focus points. On tripod do similar with focus ring adjustments and no burst. Pick best in post.
- At smaller apertures (f/4 and smaller) the focus is sharp and the glow is gone, but the edges are softened. This effect reduces with continued decreasing aperture.
- Take multiple shots at different apertures (tripod). You can combine for best total effect (sharp & soft parts) in Photoshop (layer masks)
- Velvets lose blacks near the frame edges. Add vignettes in post.

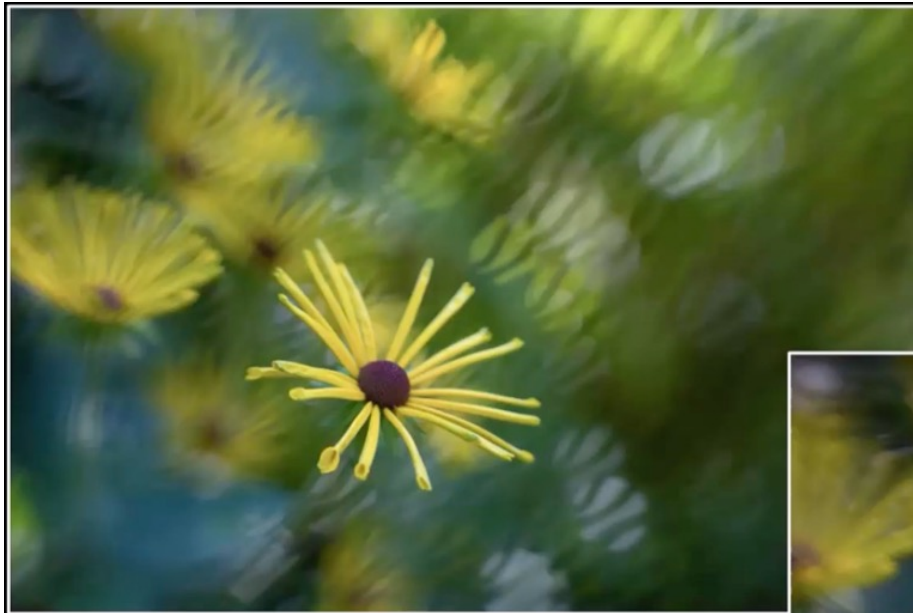
# Standalone: Sol 45 (or Sol 22 for m 4/3)

- Creates a spot of focus surrounded by smooth bokeh that allows you to separate your subject from the background.
- Similar to the Sweet 35, but has larger sweet spot and adjustable bokeh effects
- Can be tilted. Has a lock to point straight ahead
- Either of the bokeh effects blades can be moved in or out. Can be rotated for different orientation. Focus before using blades.
- **Aperture Range:** Fixed f/3.5
- **Focus Distance:** 14 in - Infinity

(More info on the Sol in Backup)



# Orient the bokeh blades to complement subject



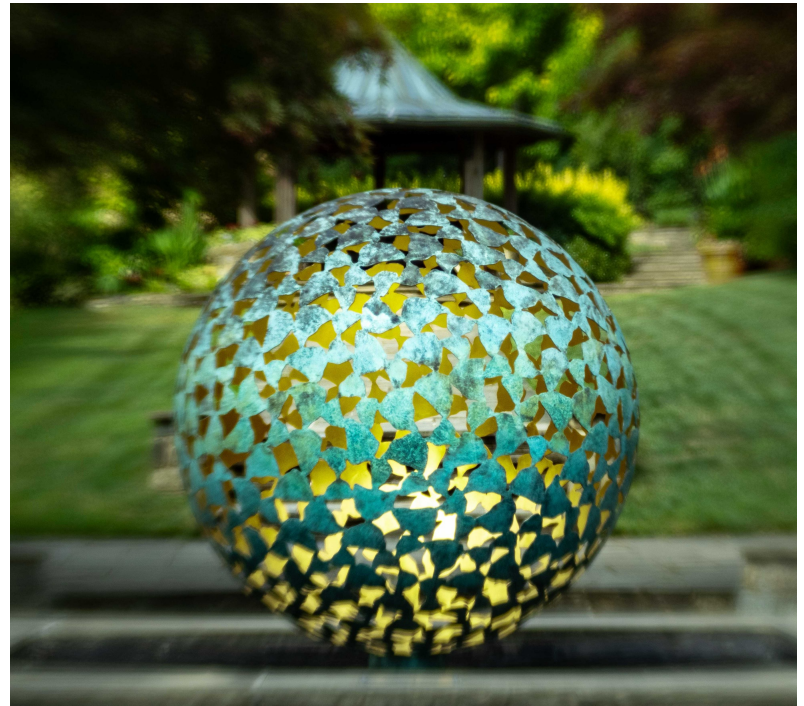
Lensbaby Sol 45 w/Bokeh Blades



Jackie



*Kathleen Clemons: Sol 45*



*Dennis Freeman: Sol 22 w/ Micro 4/3*



*Jim Fisher, PCMag: Sol 45*



*Dennis Freeman: Sol 22 w/ Micro 4/3*

# Swappable Optic System

10 different optics to pick from, e.g.



Double Glass II Optic



Edge 50 Optic



Sweet 35 Optic

With up to 15 degrees of tilt, users can selectively focus on a slice of their composition while creating extreme blur and distortion effects elsewhere.



Composer Pro II Body



Composer Pro II w/  
Sweet 35 Optic

# Other Swappable Mounts



Lensbaby Spark 2 Mount – flexible neck and interchangeable optics



Lensbaby Fixed Mount - interchangeable optics

# Soft Focus II Optic + Composer Pro II

Disk Case & Tool



Disks with the Soft Focus II Optic

*Can also use the Double Glass II disks*

Use straight-ahead,  
not tilted like this!



Magnetic Tool

The entire image is slightly blurred to give it a dreamy and ethereal quality. The Soft Focus II optic creates a deliberate reduction in sharpness, creating a gentle glow over the picture. Bokeh effects can be added with disks.

Curved field of focus. (Double Glass II has flatter field of focus)

Focal Length: 50mm

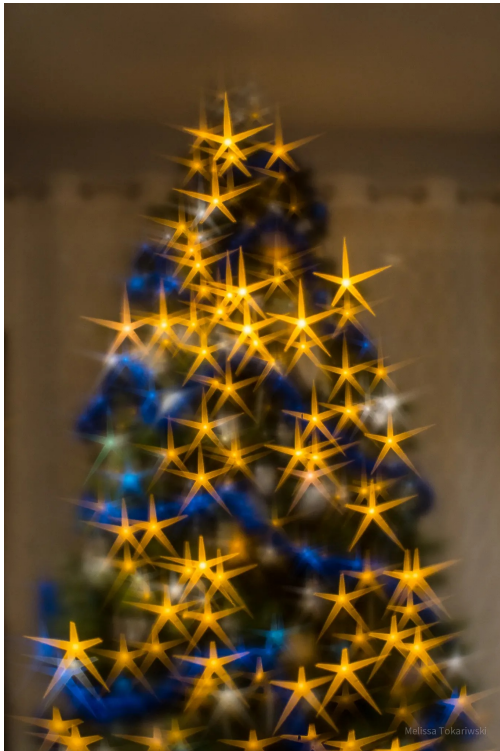
Aperture: f/2.5 - 22

Focus Distance: 15 in - Infinity

Use extension tubes between your camera and the lens to get in close for macro. 46 mm macro filters work too, but a pain if swapping disks.

# Note on Aperture (Bokeh) Disks

- For the disk pattern to really show up in the background bokeh, you need some specular highlights or small light sources in background, or strong contrasts.







*Jim Fisher, PCMag: SF II, no disks*



*Jan Heastont: SF II, no disks*



*Anne Belmont: SF II, no disks*



*Carol  
Vipperman: SF II,  
Star Disk*

# Double Glass II Optic + Composer Pro II



Disk Case & Tool



Magnetic Tool



*Can also use the Soft Focus II disks*

Captures a sweet spot of focus at the center of the frame which is surrounded by blur. Bokeh effects can be added with disks. Sweet 50 is similar except for no disks.

Note: Others have purchased a set of Soft Focus II disks by emailing Lensbaby.

**Aperture:**  $f/2.5$  to  $f/22$  - shoot at  $f/2.5$  for best effect

**Focusing distance:** 15.0 in - Infinity

Use extension tubes between your camera and the lens to get in close for macro. 46 mm macro filters work too, but a pain if swapping disks.



Erik Derycke: DG II at f/2.5, no disks



Dennis Freeman: DG II w/ Soft Focus II disk:



Cathy Kuhlman: DG II w/ star disk



Anne Belmont: DG II, no disks

# Sweet 50 (35, 80) Optic w/ Composer Pro II

**Aperture:** f/2.5 - f/22

**Focusing Distance:** 15" - Infinity

For macro, use extension tubes between your camera and the lens or 46 mm macro filters.



Highlights the subject in a sharp “sweet spot” of focus surrounded by blur. Good for portraits, landscapes, or everyday scenes.

With a 50mm focal length and broad aperture range, it provides sharp details in the focal plane while blurring the background for a unique effect.

Smallest aperture has largest sweet spot and vice versa.



*Sharon Garner: Sweet 50 w/ Composer Pro II*



*Khandie Khisses: Sweet 50*

*Jackie  
Kramer:  
Sweet 35*



*Lee Manston: Sweet 50 w/ Spark 2*

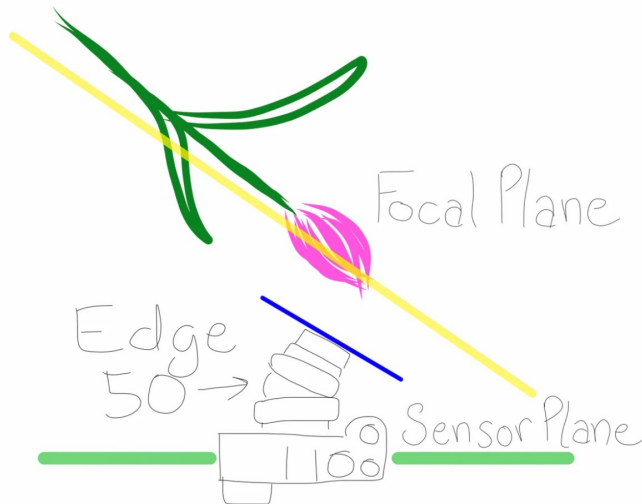
# Sweet Tips

- Sweet lenses with a +2 macro filter is excellent.
- Sweet focuses in a donut shape! The center can be out of focus, with focus around the center in a donut, then out of focus outside the donut. Open the aperture to shrink the donut hole and get a circle of focus.

# Edge 80 (35, 50)



Creates a flat field of focus - “slice of focus” that can be tilted. Straight ahead has no effect.



**Aperture Range:** f/2.8 - 22

**Focus Distance Edge 80:** 17 in – Infinity

**(Focus Distance Edge 50:** 9 in – Infinity)

Edge 50 & 80 have a built-in macro extension. When you move a lens farther from the camera sensor, the lens will focus closer to a subject. Need to pull it out to get bokeh with Edge 80.



*Nuno Caldiera, Edge 80*



*Nuno Caldiera, Edge 80*



*Laura Evans,  
Edge 35*



*Laura Evans, Edge 80*



# Twist 60 Optic

Creates a sharp central focus and a twisty, artistic blur around the edges. It's particularly effective for portraits, adding a dramatic and whimsical feel to the image.



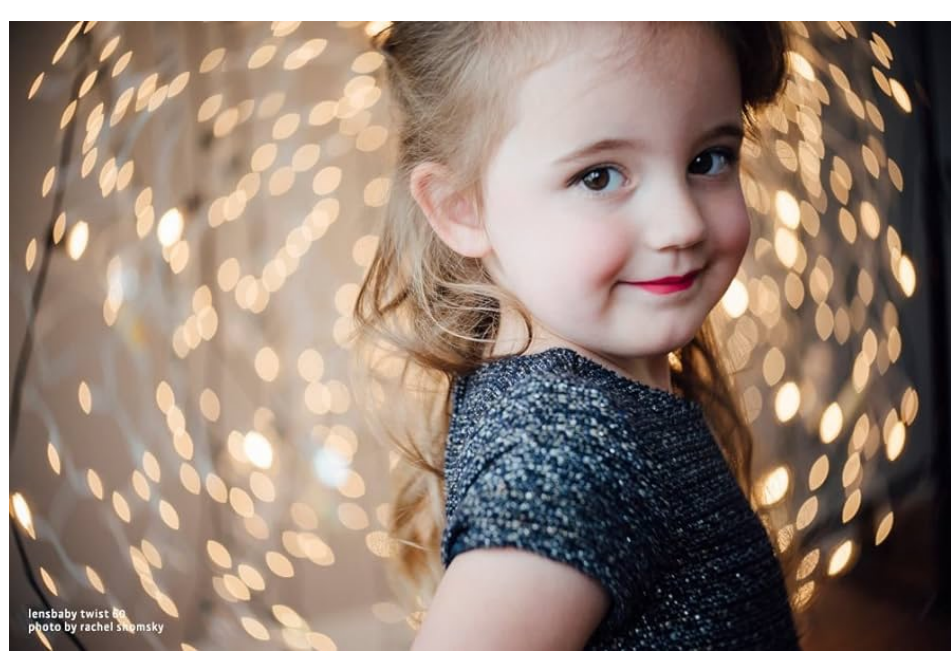
Use straight-ahead, not tilted (*what's with these product photographers?*)

Aperture: f/2.5 - 22

Focus Distance: 18 in - Infinity

Hint: want the twisted background to fill the frame

Use extension tubes between your camera and the lens for macro. Or 46 mm macro filters.



*Rachel Shomsky: Twist 60*



*Tracy Munson: Twist 60*



*Jackie Kramer: Twist 60*



*Jim Fisher, PCMag: Twist 60*

# Twist Tips

- Want background twisted effect to fill the frame.
- Smallish subject and busy backgrounds are good.
- Detail and contrast in the busy background shows effect best.
- Defocus until the twisted background looks good. Then approach or back up to your subject until it is in focus.

# OMNI Creative Filter System

- “Attach prisms, crystals, and other unique objects to the front of your lens, instantly adding depth, texture, and intrigue to your shots. The precision-engineered Effect Wands allow you to seamlessly integrate the perfect amount of blur, distortion, or dreamy bokeh into your photos, while the Crystal Seahorse attachments refract light in captivating ways, adding a touch of elegance to every frame.”



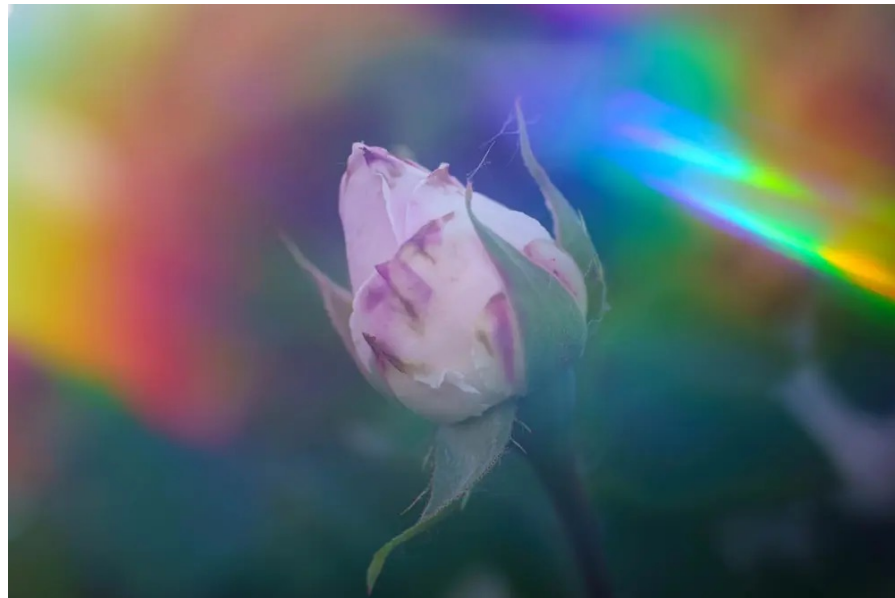
OMNI products can be used with any lens manufacture and is based around filter thread sizes. Please note that small rings are 49-58mm and large are 62-82mm.

Velvet lenses have 62mm & 67mm thread sizes.

The Optic Swap lenses are 46mm and would require a 46-49mm step-up ring.



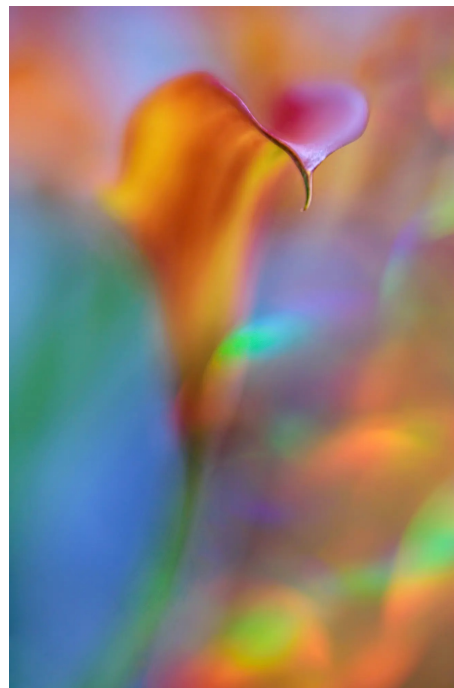
*Stephanie DeFranco: Omni*



*Carol Holt: Omni*



*Gerri Jones: Soft Focus II with the Omni Flexible Silver Reflector*



*Gerri Jones: Velvet 85 with a purchased Multi-Glitter Craft Sheet*

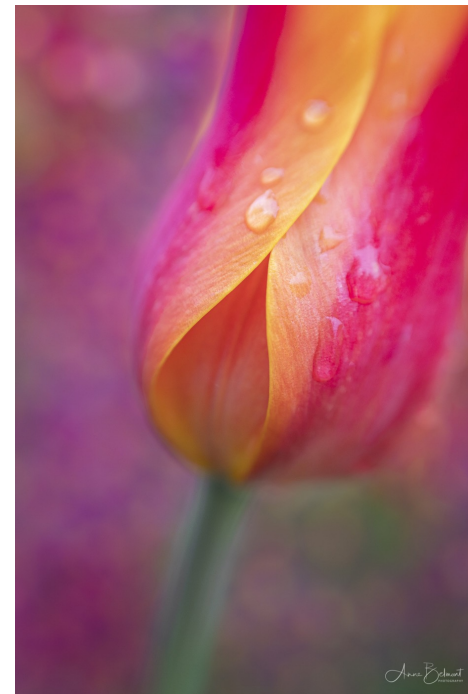
**BACKUP**

# General Tips

- Lensbabies act as regular lenses at smaller apertures.
- Bracket your focus to have a choice of images.
- If a single sweet spot isn't good, take two shots with different sweet spots (on a tripod). Align images in Photoshop. Brush the other sharp subject into the first image (Layer Masks).
- Can create abstracts with out of focus images and textured bokeh.
- Multiple exposures are great with Lensbaby. Either in-camera or in post-processing.
- Sharp focus is over-rated.

# A Few Tips for Using the Sol:

- A background with lots of lines will show more bokeh effect.
- Align bokeh effect lines to complement subject features.
- You can push the blades out of the way if you don't want the effect for a particular subject.
- Try tilting, don't put all of your subjects in the center.
- To shoot macro with the lens you can use extension tubes between your camera and the lens (or the Lensbaby Macro Converters) to get in closer. These are more convenient than macro filters when using bokeh blades since they don't cover the front of the lens. If not using blades 46mm macro filters are good – same as for Optic Swap lenses.





# Sol Aperture Blades Can Also be Used to Hold Creative Bokeh Disks\* in Place



These disks aren't sold on the Lensbaby site by themselves anymore. (some have gotten them from Lensbaby by emailing).

You can either look on eBay – or you can make your own.

With black construction paper or black cardstock you can make any shape you want. Just cut out a 26mm circular disk – then either use an Exacto knife to cut out shapes or use a decorative paper punch.

\* Creative Bokeh Disks Sets come with the Creative Bokeh Optic, the Double Glass II Optic, and the Soft Focus II Optic.



# Edge 35 Optic

- Does not have filter threads. Lensbaby sells an Edge 35 Filter Adapter that tightens on the front of the lens barrel. It is compatible with 62mm filters like ND or polarizer filters.
- Does not have a macro pop out lens adjustment like the Edge 50 and Edge 80. However, it focus to a minimum of 7”.

# Lensbaby Carries Refurbished Lenses

Save up to 50% on Like-New Refurb Products while supplies last!

LENSBABY

Shop ▾ Lens Effects Inspiration Center ▾ About Photowalks



Price ▾

Type ▾

Effect ▾

Save \$157.49



Refurbished Composer Pro II + Edge 80

\$292.46 ~~\$449.95~~

Save \$104.99



Refurbished Composer Pro II with Soft Focus II

\$244.96 ~~\$349.95~~

Save \$104.99



Refurbished Composer Pro II + Sweet 35

\$244.96 ~~\$349.95~~

Save \$89.99



Save \$132.99



Save \$58.49



# Lensbaby Has Sales – get on email list

**LENSBABY®**

**SUMMER SALE!**

© Laura Branson

**24% OFF STOREWIDE**

The advertisement features a vibrant yellow background with a pattern of white stars. The central image shows a Ferris wheel at night, illuminated with colorful lights in shades of purple, blue, and white. In the foreground, several camera lenses are displayed, including a Lensbaby Velvet 56mm f/1.6 lens, a Lensbaby Sol lens, and an Edge 80 lens. The text 'LENSBABY®' is prominently displayed in the top left, and 'SUMMER SALE!' is written in large, bold letters below it. The copyright notice '© Laura Branson' is visible on the right side of the Ferris wheel image. At the bottom left, the text '24% OFF STOREWIDE' is written in large, bold letters.

(Expired July 14)

# eBay has Lensbabies

## Focal Length

- Fixed/Prime (16)
- 16mm (2)
- 28mm (2)
- 35mm (38)
- 50mm (117)
- 55mm (1)
- 60mm (13)
- 80mm (27)

[see all](#)

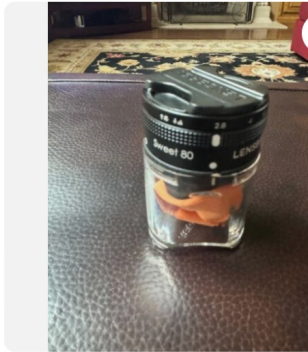
## Series

- Canon EF (21)
- Canon "L" (2)
- Sony FE (4)
- Canon RF (6)
- Nikon DX (1)
- Nikon NIKKOR (1)
- Sony Alpha (2)
- Pentax P (2)

[see all](#)

## Maximum Aperture

- f/1.6 (7)
- f/2 (14)
- f/2.0 (4)
- f/2.5 (85)
- f/2.8 (22)

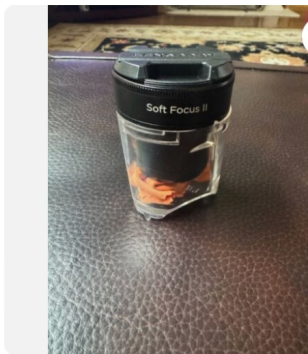


**Lensbaby Sweet 80 Optic**  
Pre-Owned · f/2.5 · 80mm · Special Effects

**\$99.00**

zuzzy123 (1,425) 100%

0 bids · 4d 20h left  
(Mon, 11:44 AM)  
+\$12.00 shipping



**Lensbaby Soft Focus II | f/2.5 (Optic Only)**  
Pre-Owned · f/2.5 · 50mm · Soft Focus

★★★★★ [1 product rating](#)

**\$75.00**

zuzzy123 (1,425) 100%

0 bids · 4d 20h left  
(Mon, 11:37 AM)  
+\$12.00 shipping



**Lensbaby Fisheye Optic Swap System Double Glass With Box FREE SHIPPING**

Pre-Owned · Micro Four Thirds · f/2.5 · 50mm

**\$59.80**

geraserra\_0 (1,828) 96.9%

Was: ~~\$65.00~~ 8% off  
or Best Offer  
Free shipping