PETER LIK - THESIS

American Society of Professional Photographers 2015 Fellowship Application

PETER LIK AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHERS FELLOWSHIP THESIS

My life and career as a landscape photographer would be nothing without the strong determination of my parents, who barely escaped the harsh realities of communism in their homeland of the Czech Republic after WWII. These two incredible people – honest, hardworking citizens yearned greatly for a free life in a far off land. They would find a way out and set sail on a massive ship of immigrants on their way to Australia. They never looked back. I hadn't even been born yet, but – although my parents didn't know it at the time – the foundation for my career as a landscape photographer was already being set in stone.

Growing up in one of the most beautiful continents on the planet completely set the stage for my powerful connection to the natural world. Australia is practically a landscape photographer's dream – with rivers, forests, deserts, beaches, mountains, and of course the Great Barrier Reef. People always ask me about other artists I admire, but there has really only been one true influence on my career: Mother Nature. She is the great artist in my life. I discovered her as a child in Australia and it is my connection to her spirit that has kept me going all these years.

My fondest memories of being a kid always involve some type of outdoor activity – hiking, camping, exploring – at first with my family and then later with my friends as a teenager. There was almost no way to not feel that bond with the great outdoors. I know now, even more than I did then, that I could not have been in a better place for inspiration.

The important moment that really set me on a course to become a photographer was when I was eight-years-old and my parents bought me the eye-widening birthday gift of a Kodak Brownie camera. I remember holding it in my hands, staring at it – totally entranced. My family led a humble existence, never spending too much on anything other than the necessities, yet, here in my hands was something magical! A real treasure! This was more than just a gift, it was a way to assert my creativity and be different, unique. It gave me a purpose. Even at such a young age, I could somehow appreciate the potential. It felt right. My first snapshot ever was of a spider web, glistening with morning dew in the family garden. I had no technical understanding of light, foreground, or shadows, it just captivated me, this beautiful creation from Mother Nature. I clicked the shutter and in an instant my future flashed before my eyes. At the time, I didn't grasp exactly how important that moment was. But to this day, it is a moment that is burned into my brain, my heart, and my soul. As a kid, I think we see life's little details that may become less apparent as we get older. Somehow, I've managed to continue to see those details, and that's perhaps the best ingredient for a career in this industry.

It wasn't until over a decade later that I was able to really pursue photography as something more than a dream or hobby. Money for camera equipment or film had been almost out of the question. Once I really began to stretch into adulthood, I doubled up on jobs – working anywhere I could for any pay, just so I could snap off a few shots in my spare time. At this point I was already very hooked and knew I needed to do whatever I could to make my passion and my career one and the same. It became my lifelong mantra to always capture and share the most beautiful places on earth. Nothing would ever bring me more joy.

So I shot and I shot and I shot, and when I was tired, I shot some more. Finally, in my late twenties – after so many years of saving up – I made my first trip to the States. It was 1984 - the year that everything would change for me. America is just so huge and filled with the most diverse landscape imaginable. Something that you don't get in Australia is the clear change of seasons – it makes for an ever changing palette and so many incredible visions from one month to the next. My first experiences in this country were marked by the moment when, as a photographer, my whole universe would turn on its side. I was in Alaska and had met a great American photographer – who I consider a good mate to this day. I can remember being blown away by his panoramic format camera. When I saw his gear and the images they produced I thought: "What the hell have I been doing?!" I had been missing out on something that would ultimately become my calling card. The panoramic camera format has such a wide field of view and is really the only way for me to capture landscapes in their entirety. I was completely inspired. I knew in an instant what I had to do. He dared me "to go big or go home," and that is exactly what I did. I went big. From then on it was panoramic all the way and I never looked back.

I returned to Australia with the spirit of an entrepreneur and artist – ready to take on the fine art photography industry with great confidence. Because of that experience in The States, I was getting shots like never before – and the sales of my work was improving to the point that I could open my own exclusive gallery in 1999. This was a milestone for me, and the real seed for a career that would be more adventurous than I could possibly imagine.

For over a decade I traveled back and forth between the U.S. and Australia –always facing an intense shooting schedule. It was during these years that I took on the biggest challenge of my life. It would become known as Spirit of America – a fine art photography book that followed my journey through all 50 states. This was one of the most important learning experiences for me. I was a true landscape photographer on my own, following my heart and my passion – without the help of modern technology. In those days it was just me, a clapped out van, a paper map and my intuition. No digital technology either – or a lot of money for film, so I had to make each shot count.

I fell in love with this country more and more with every shot I took. I was beginning to truly master the panoramic format and really come into my own. Blazing deserts, intense raging rivers, majestic mountains and Pacific shorelines. Such a raw, diverse landscape – that only makes my 2013 U.S. citizenship an even bigger thing to be proud of. I am so proud to be an American. However, I am just as proud of my own heritage and during these times, it was my fan base and galleries back home in Australia that really gave me a support system.

When I finally discovered the American Southwest I was blown away. There is almost no way to truly describe the awe-inspiring scenes out there unless you experience it for yourself. Just looking over that Grand Canyon or stepping onto White Sands National Monument in New Mexico are moments that come once in a lifetime if you are lucky. There's Death Valley in California, and Horseshoe Bend in Arizona – so many locations that seem to change looks a million times a day and with every movement of the sun and change in weather. Despite the dry, hot climate, there are many rivers lakes and forests – some that even see snow in the winter. It is a landscape photographer's paradise and I can't imagine a better place to shoot.

From 1994 until 2003 I did whatever I could to push my work in The States and Australia, slowly building a name for myself that would ultimately lead to opening 14 exclusive galleries of my own across America. When I began this venture, many thought I was crazy. They didn't think I was going to make it by going outside the traditional model of selling in galleries owned by third parties or selling at auctions. I just had to do things my way. That is the beauty of this life – you only get one go around but if you work hard and believe in yourself, you can achieve your dreams.

My longest running gallery in the U.S. is located in Hawaii – a personal paradise for me that I shoot almost every year. As a kid in Australia, I was always watching so many American surf films that featured palm trees and the clear blue water of the South Pacific. Experiencing the archipelago first hand was a dream come true. It would become a landscape I would constantly visit. In 2003, I opened LIK LAHAINA on the island of Maui and it is still going strong after 12 years. The success of that gallery led to influencing Caesars Palace, who gave me a shot on my future stomping grounds of "Sin City" in 2005. I had finally made it onto The Strip – another dream come true. Four Vegas galleries later, I can't believe how far I have come.

This incredible success was the sign I needed to open my LIK USA corporate offices in Las Vegas around 2007. Here, you will find my creative studio set amidst state-ofthe-art printing and production facilities. Having my own eyes on every detail is so important to me and to my collectors. The operation took me so long to put together, but I believe anything worth doing is worth doing right. This was the time in my career when things were really taking off for me and I could now spread my wings. Over the years, I have enjoyed opening galleries one by one in some of the biggest hotspots around the country – designing them myself – another passion of mine that has led me to design my own homes as well. I love my life – and I love to constantly create.

As a result of my passions and lifelong dedication to Mother Nature, a lot of tremendously humbling moments have occurred. I been genuinely overwhelmed by the many awards and titles I have received over the years – a sentiment that only takes a backseat to the pride I feel over the shots that led to such honors. To be accepted by prestigious institutions in the industry – my photography peers – just feels amazing. AIPP, BIPP, PPA, ASP and RPS have all been so generous to me and have undoubtedly helped my career with their stamps of approval. In particular, PPA has really blown me away with a recent Lifetime Achievement Award. The truth is, I can't even believe I have been doing this that long! All the same, being only the 13th photographer in history to receive this distinction was a mind blower, capping off an already incredible time in my career.

As I reflect back on all the beautiful landscape scenes I have encountered and captured, so many images and visions come to mind. To highlight a few special moments from literally millions of frames in my collection is almost an impossible task – one of the reasons I love putting out 200-plus page books that share so much of my work. But, there are a few images that have really helped to put me on the map:

One

One was literally a true, once-in-a-lifetime shot I captured on the banks of the Androscoggin River in New Hampshire. In a fleeting, abstract moment, the water's surface reflected the fall forestry in a way that is almost indescribable – providing me an image that would rival even the world's greatest painters. It was truly Mother Nature at work. *One* is credited as the first photograph I sold for \$1 million and is responsible for a myriad of distinctions.

Pele's Whisper

Pele's Whisper, named after the Hawaiian goddess of fire, is another image that I was fortunate to capture. It is responsible for over 23 award wins. As I stood on dangerous, volcanic ground in Hawaii, the bursting structure gave off such intense heat and created a vast, billowing plume of smoke. It has been said to resemble a female profile, blowing into the ocean – causing the steam to part on the surface of the water below. After I shot the image, I later found out the hot terra I was standing on had completely crumbled into the sea.

Inner Peace

Inner Peace is an image that remains part of the Smithsonian's permanent collection. It depicts one of my favorite subject matters, the Japanese maple tree, found in the Pacific Northwest of the U.S. This stunning vision gave off such an amazing energy – showcasing a total rainbow of colors more vibrant I could have ever imagined. Inner Piece is one of many shots found in my Japanese Maple series and is also responsible for garnering me a coveted Windland Smith Rice International Award win.

Ghost and Phantom

One of my most prominent works to date, *Ghost*, was taken at Antelope Canyon in Arizona. What an awesome place. It is like Mother Nature carved out a rocky maze full of wonder and mystery. It was in a subterranean cavern where I waited patiently for the sun to pass overhead. As soon as the perfect beam of light came through the overhead shaft, my Navajo guide threw a handful of dust into it, creating this intense ghostlike figure. When I snapped the shutter, I had no idea what I was getting. Weeks later I was blown away by what I saw. I don't think that image could ever be replicated. It still gives me chills when I think about it. Along with *Inner Peace, Ghost* is responsible for a Windland Smith Rice International Award win, and is included in the Smithsonian's permanent collection. It is the color version of and precursor to my recent black and white adaptation, *Phantom*, an Elite One of One Print, which sold for a world record in 2014.

I love all of my images. To me, they are priceless. These works are just a tiny fraction of an endless collection that continues to grow every single day of my life. I am often asked if I have a favorite photograph, and as far as I'm concerned, I haven't taken it yet. I have to keep pushing myself to go after that almost unattainable "perfect shot." It is a challenge that keeps me going – it wakes me up at dawn and guides me beyond the sunset. It is a challenge that has truly given me a genuine purpose in this life.

Being a landscape photographer and sustaining this incredible career has always been about staying connected to my favorite artist, Mother Nature. That's it – my secret revealed. I will always admire her and feel grateful for her gifts of incomparable beauty. If I never take her for granted, I will always capture landscape photographs with passion and appreciation. I will never forget my humble beginnings – learning the value of hard work and how to dream the impossible, thanks to my amazing parents who started this adventure. I am truly grateful.

PETER LIK - biography

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- 1959 Born in Melbourne, Australia to hardworking Czech immigrants.
- 1967 Got my first camera, a Kodak Brownie. Took my first snapshot of a spider web in the garden.
- 1984 Visited the U.S. for the first time, discovered the panoramic camera format, truly a defining moment in my career.
- 1990 Took on a massive project, now known as *Spirit of America*. After fifty thousand miles and 1,000 rolls of film, I had revealed landscapes from all 50 United States, this was one of my biggest challenges of my career and life.

- 1997 Opened my first gallery in Cairns, Australia.
- 2002 Received Master Photography degree from the Australian Institute of Professional Photography.
- 2003 Opened my first U.S. gallery in Lahaina, Hawaii.
- 2010 Received Master Photographer degree from Professional Photographers of America.

Awarded Fellowship degree from the British Institute of Professional Photographers.

Awarded Fellowship from The Royal Photographic Society.

2011 Starred in the NBC-produced TV series, *From the Edge with Peter Lik.*

After a Windland Smith Rice International Award win, *Ghost* goes on display at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington D.C.

Ghost was featured in an exhibition at the Capitol Rotunda in Washington, D.C.

- 2012 *Inner Peace* is displayed at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History after a second Windland Smith Rice International Award.
- 2014 *Phantom* sells for a record \$6.5 million, making it the most expensive recorded sale of a photograph.
- 2015 Honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award by Professional Photographers of America.

PETER LIK - AWARDS and Honors

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Master Photographer

PPA – Professional Photographers of America

AIPP - Australian Institute of Professional Photography

Fellowship **RPS – Royal Photographic Society BIPP – British Institute of Professional Photography**

Accredited PPOC – Professional Photographers of Canada

2015

AIPP QUEENSLAND Infinity Tree - Silver Scarlet Moods - Silver Painted Shores - Silver Celestial Dreams – Silver

F2 SOCIEDAD FOTOGRAFICA Heart of New York - Acceptance Pele's Whisper – Acceptance

FEP International Photographer of the Year - Bronze Allure - Distinction Pele's Whisper – Merit

ONE EYELAND Scarlet Moods – Bronze

PPA Lifetime Achievement Award

PPA - WESTERN DISTRICT Scarlet Moods - Sealed Image Painted Shores - Sealed Image Eternal Guardian - Sealed Image Midsummer Dreams - Sealed Image

PPOC Allure - Acceptance Endless Summer - Merit Inner Peace - Merit Endless Flow – Merit

PSNZ - NATEX Eric Young Memorial Trophy Best Landscape Projected Celestial Dreams - Gold Painted Shores - Acceptance Crimson Tides - Acceptance Scarlet Moods - Acceptance

AIPP Autumn Mist – Silver

AIPP QUEENSLAND Autumn Mist – Silver

BELGRADE INTERNATIONAL SALON Gotham - Acceptance River Titan - Acceptance Allure - Acceptance Pele's Whisper – Acceptance

EPSON INTERNATIONAL PANO AWARDS Autumn Mist - Bronze Coastal Dreams – Bronze

FINLAND INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL CIRCUIT Inner Peace - Acceptance Pele's Whisper - Acceptance Seventh Wonder – Acceptance

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF ART PHOTOGRAPHY Eternal Beauty - PSA Ribbon Ghost - Acceptance Coastal Dreams - Acceptance Sacred Sunrise - Acceptance Inner Peace - Acceptance Ocean Dance - Acceptance Pele's Whisper - Acceptance Forbidden Ember – Acceptance

INTERNATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR Secret Morning - Silver In Search of the Sun - Bronze Temple of the Sun - Bronze

MIDLAND SALON INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION Pele's Whisper - FIAP Silver Medal Pele's Whisper - Acceptance Forbidden Ember - Acceptance Coastal Dreams - Acceptance

2013

PCA ADRIATIC EXHIBITION Ocean Dance - Acceptance Allure - Acceptance Endless Summer - Acceptance Seventh Wonder – Acceptance

PPA Celestial Dreams - Merit Coastal Dreams - Merit Crimson Tides – Merit

PRILEP SALON INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION Autumn Mist - Acceptance Coastal Dreams - Acceptance Tree of Serenity – Acceptance

PSA CALIFORNIA PACIFIC Allure - Acceptance Celestial Dreams - Acceptance Secret Morning - Acceptance Ocean Dance – Acceptance

ONE EYELAND Allure - Finalist Endless Summer – Finalist

PHOTOGRAPHER'S FORUM BEST OF PHOTOGRAPHY Tranquil Blue – Finalist

RPS INTERNATIONAL IMAGES FOR SCREEN Coastal Dreams - Acceptance Crimson Tides – Acceptance

PSNZ - NATEX Eric Young Memorial Trophy Best Landscape Projected Allure - Gold Medal Autumn Mist - Honor Ribbon Tranquil Blue - Honor Ribbon

THE INTERNATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHIC ART EXHIBITION - LINES Sacred Sunrise – Acceptance

WPGA - SUMMER AWARD Best of Show - WPGA Summer Award Best of Category - Landscape Allure - Winner Pele's Whisper – Winner

AIPP Allure – Silver

AMERICAN APERTURE AWARDS Inner Peace - Winner Landscape/ Seascape/Nature

INTERNATIONAL LOUPE AWARDS Autumn Mist - Bronze Secret Morning – Silver

NANPA Endless Forest – Distinction

ONE EYELAND Photographer of the Year - Nature Inner Peace - Gold Eternal Beauty - Silver Sacred Sunrise – Silver

PPA

Autumn mist - Silver Medal Autumn Mist - 2 Merits Allure - Merit Enchantment - Merit Summer Dreams – Merit

RPS MEMBERS BIENNIAL COMPETITION Autumn Mist - Finalist Pele's Whisper - Finalist

AIPP Eternal Beauty - Silver with Distinction Endless Summer – Silver

AIPP QUEENSLAND Eternal Beauty - Silver with Distinction Inner Peace – Silver

BIPP Inner Peace - Gold Blaze of Beauty - Merit Endless Summer - Merit Eternal Beauty - Merit Tree of the Universe – Merit

EPSON INTERNATIONAL PANO AWARDS Harmony - Bronze Shadows of Gold - Bronze Peaceful Morning - Bronze Antelope Cathedral – Bronze

INTERNATIONAL COLOR AWARDS Bella Luna - Second Place – Nature

INTERNATIONAL LOUPE AWARDS Inner Peace - Silver Ghost - Silver Endless Summer - Silver Pele's Whisper – Silver

NANPA Eternal Beauty – Distinction

PPA Endless Forest - Merit Empire - Merit Last Surf – Merit PPA - Western District Last Surf – Merit

PSA INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION Endless Forest - Acceptance Gotham – Acceptance PSNZ Endless Summer – Acceptance

WORLD OPEN OF PHOTOGRAPHY Inner Peace - 3rd Place Nature

2011

AIPP Mystic Valley - Silver Tree of the Universe – Silver

BLACK AND WHITE SPIDER AWARDS Epic - Nominee Morning Calm – Nominee

EPSON INTERNATIONAL PANO AWARDS Beyond Paradise - Silver Angel's Heart - Silver Ancient Spirit - Silver Sacred Sunrise - Silver Genesis – Bronze

FOTOWEEK DC INTERNATIONAL AWARDS Inner Peace - 1st Place: The Natural World Eternal Beauty - 3rd Place: The Natural World

INTERNATIONAL COLOR AWARDS Lilies of the Pond - Nominee in Nature Pele's Whisper - Nominee in Nature Blaze of Beauty - Nominee in Nature

IPA

Inner Peace - 2nd Place: Landscapes Tempest - Honorable Mention Timeless Land - Honorable Mention Tree of the Universe - Honorable Mention

NANPA Pristine - Top 10

NATURE'S BEST PHOTOGRAPHY WINDLAND SMITH RICE INTERNATIONAL Inner Peace - Winner: Plant Life OUTDOOR PHOTOGRAPHER GREAT OUTDOORS Inner Peace - Honorable Mention

PHOTOGRAPHER'S FORUM Pele's Whisper - Honorable Mention

PPA

Lunarscape - 2 Merits Tempest - Merit Tree of the Universe – Merit

PPA SUMMER SHOOTOUT Inner Peace - Grand Prize Winner Summer Days - 3rd Place: Open Category

PPOC

Accreditation - Marine Accreditation - Nature Accreditation - Night Accreditation - Pictorial / Scenic Atlantic Reflections - Merit Pele's Whisper - Acceptance Sacred Sunrise – Excellence

PSA CALIFORNIA PACIFIC Pele's Whisper - California Pacific Medal Blaze of Beauty – Acceptance

PSA INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION Blaze of Beauty - Honorable Mention Medal Pele's Whisper – Acceptance

INTERNATIONAL LOUPE AWARDS Beginnings - Silver Impending Storm – Silver

RANGEFINDER - TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT Eternal Beauty - First Place Pele's Whisper - Second Place

2010

AIPP Tree of Life - Silver with Distinction Pele's Whisper - Silver 25 Year Anniversary Book -Gold & Book of the Year

AIPP QUEENSLAND Tree of Life - Silver Sacred Sunrise - Silver 25 Year Anniversary Book – Silver

APA Tree of Life – Merit

BIPP Fellowship Sacred Sunrise - Silver Deep Forest - Merit Pele's Whisper - Merit Tree of Life – Merit

COLOR PORTFOLIO CONTEST Angel's Heart – Merit

INTERNATIONAL APERTURE AWARDS Blue Pier - Bronze Field of Dreams - Silver Glass Mountain - Silver Whispering Sands – Silver

INTERNATIONAL COLOR AWARDS Dunescape - Nominee in Nature

IPA Pristine - Honorable Mention Tree of Life - Honorable Mention Turning Time - Honorable Mention

NANPA Pele's Whisper - Top 10 Cover of Expression 2010

NATURE'S BEST PHOTOGRAPHY Pele's Whisper - Sixth Place

NATURE'S BEST PHOTOGRAPHY WINDLAND SMITH RICE INTERNATIONAL Ghost - Winner: Art in Nature PPA Master of Photography

RPS Fellowship

2009

AIPP Misty Harbour – Silver

AIPP QUEENSLAND Pele's Whisper - Silver with Distinction Dark Side of the Moon - Silver Mystic Valley - Silver with Distinction

BLACK & WHITE SINGLE IMAGE Winter Shadows – Merit

BLACK AND WHITE SPIDER AWARDS Dark Side of the Moon - Nominee Evolution - Nominee Harmony - Nominee Sunlit Birches - Nominee Winter Shadows – Nominee

IAPP

Misty Harbour - 2nd Place: Landscapes Beginnings - Acceptance Impending Storm – Acceptance

INTERNATIONAL COLOR AWARDS Ice Princess - Nominee in Nature Winter Shadows - Nominee in Nature

IPA

Pele's Whisper - 2nd Place: Landscapes Desert Glow - Honorable Mention Escape to Paradise - Honorable Mention Mystic Valley - Honorable Mention

PDN THE GREAT OUTDOORS Pele's Whisper - 1st Place: Nature

POP PHOTO Pele's Whisper - Winner: Nature PPA Dreamland - 2 Merits Mystic Valley - 2 Merits Pele's Whisper - 2 Merits

PSA Atlantic Reflections - Acceptance Harmony – Acceptance

PSNZ Beyond Paradise – Acceptance

RPS Pele's Whisper - Acceptance Candy Bark – Acceptance

2008

AIPP Impression - Silver Misty Blue – Silver

AIPP QUEENSLAND Secret Veil - Silver Hidden Temple - Silver Turn Scarlet - Silver Guardian Angel - Silver

BLACK & WHITE SINGLE IMAGE Into the Mist – Merit

IPA Ice Princess - Honorable Mention Winter Shadows - Honorable Mention

NANPA The Jetty - Acceptance Tranquility – Acceptance

PPA Impression - 2 Merits Misty Blue - 2 Merits Beyond Paradise – Merit

RPS Atlantic Reflections – Bronze

AIPP Ghost - Silver with Distinction Angel's Heart - Silver with Distinction Heaven on Earth - Silver Icy Waters – Silver

PPA Blush - 2 Merits Heaven on Earth - 2 Merits Turn Scarlet - Merit

2006

PPA Angel's Heart - 2 Merits Ghost - Merit The Opera - Merit

2005

PPA Ancient Spirit - 2 Merits Bamboo - Merit

2004

AIPP The Opera - Silver with Distinction Valley of the Shadows - Silver Spirits of Stone – Silver

AIPP QUEENSLAND Bamboo - Silver The Opera - Silver

2003

AIPP Atlantic Reflections - Silver with Distinction Paria Canyon - Silver with Distinction Shadowland - Silver Out There – Silver AIPP QUEENSLAND Atlantic Reflections - Gold Shadowland - Silver with Distinction Stoneage - Silver Paria Canyon – Silver

PICA

Limited Edition Prints - Gold Echoes of Silence – Silver

2002

AIPP Master of Photography Ancient Spirit - Silver with Distinction Bodie Ghost Town - Silver with Distinction Tranquility - Silver Fire Rock - Silver

AIPP QUEENSLAND Ancient Spirit - Highest Scoring Landscape Ancient Spirit – Silver

SAUSALITO ART FESTIVAL Photography - 1st Place

2001

AIPP Antelope Canyon - Gold Prince of Tides - Silver with Distinction The Woolshed - Silver

2000

AIPP The Jetty - Silver Moonlight Head – Silver

AIPP QUEENSLAND The Jetty - Highest Scoring Color Print The Jetty - Gold Moonlight Head - Silver The Tanks - Silver The Station - Silver

AIPP Hopetoun Falls - Silver with Distinction Lone Shack – Silver

AIPP QUEENSLAND Lone Shack - Silver