



Alaska Airlines

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ALASKA  
FOR ALL  
SEASONS

Adventures in the  
Great Land



# ALASKA ABSTRACT

An aerial overview of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

Photos by Frank Lanting

**R**ivers of ice. Trilobes of icy melt-water. Sheer granite faces plunging thousands of feet to meet the deep blue, mirrorlike surface of an Alaska salt-water fjord. Alaska is a land of contrasts, a study in abstractions. Subtle shapes locked in the variable textures of ancient stone and ice, formed where solid meets liquid, where the



Left: Five courses spiral the cranks of a canyon. Above: Glacier branches illuminate a stream bed.

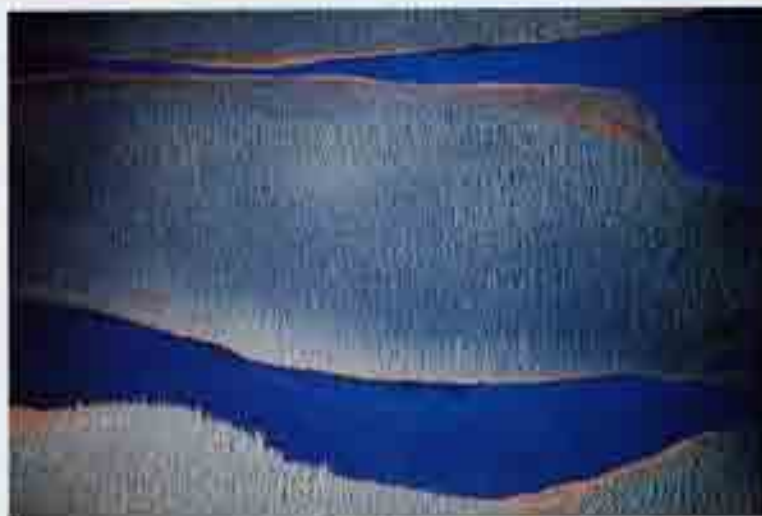




relative softness of forest meets the slowly changing hardscape of volcanic geology.

And it seems it can all change from moment to moment as the most variable of elements, light, plays off the landscape and the atmosphere, the weather and the seasons, producing unexpected and fleeting combinations of color and texture.

Photographer Frans Lanting recently turned his focus on the landscape of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve in south-central Alaska, the largest national park in the United States. A noted wildlife photographer who has traveled the world on assignment for such major publications as *National Geographic*, Lanting spent hours taking photos out the open window of a small Super Cub bush plane—at 100 feet, 1,000 feet, 10,000 feet—awestruck by the



LEFT: MELTWATER CARVES A WINDING PATH ALONG THE SURFACE OF A GLACIER IN THE WRANGELL-ST. ELIAS NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE. TOP: A BUSH PLANE FLIES THROUGH THE PARK'S UNIVERSITY RANGE. BOTTOM: EVENING LIGHT ADDS A SURREAL CAST TO THE BOREAL FOREST OF THE CHITINA RIVER VALLEY.



wilderness that surrounded him. He noted that amid the park's giants of stone and ice, the plane seemed to be thoroughly encompassed by the terrain.

Lanting was born in Rotterdam, Netherlands, and came to the United States to study environmental planning. He left his graduate studies in 1980 to devote himself fulltime to photography, being especially captivated by wildlife and changing environments. In the last two decades he has photographed some of the wildest and most remote places on the planet, from the Amazon to the Arctic, "portraying wild creatures as ambassadors for the preservation of complete ecosystems." Settings closer to his home in Santa Cruz, California, still intrigue him as well: Lanting views Monterey Bay as one of his seven wonders of the world. His work in the Wrangell-St. Elias, some of which is included in these pages, is part of a series he's doing on American landscapes. —P.F.



TOP: MASSIVE CREVASSES MARK THE SURFACE OF THE MOUNT ST. ELIAS ICE PACK. BOTTOM: RIVULETS RUN PARALLEL PATHS ON NABESNA GLACIER.