eter Gowland was taking bit parts in Hollywood movies when his mother gave him a Rolleiflex. "I started to sneak the camera into the studios in a paper bag, like my lunch," says the 85-year-old photographer, who went on to double for Ronald Reagan in the future president's first World War II movie. "Then I'd take these beautiful girls who were working as extras

or dancers around back of the set and shoot pictures of them." One thing led to another, and Gowland often talked his nubile subjects

into the nearby Pacific Ocean, where they splashed in the surf for his camera. "We had the beaches, we had the girls, and I'd learned a little bit about lighting on the movie sets," says Gowland. "That's how it all came together."

What came together was a 60year career photographing the female form (mainly its most wholesome incarnation, the California Girl, right) during which Gowland helped define glamour photography.

Gowland's work graced over 1,000 magazine covers, from *Popular Photography* to *Playboy*, which ran nine of

his nudes as centerfolds. He established himself as America's foremost authority on posing, reducing that task to an orderly numerical system in manuals co-authored with Alice Gowland, his wife of 60 years. For a taste of these out-of-print classics, get the Gowlands' recent Classic Nude Photography: Techniques and Images (Amherst Media, \$30).

As late as the 1950s, many publishers were still demanding large-format quality. So Gowland started looking for a way to combine the handholdability of his Rolleiflex with a bigger piece of film. In 1957 he built himself a 4x5 twin-lens-reflex from scratch. He called it the Gowlandflex and later manufactured hundreds for other photographers, including the great Philippe Halsman. Gowland's camera business became a major sideline to his glamour photography (see sidebar). How does Gowland view the

explicitness of modern glamour photography? "Nudes are more interesting when you don't show everything," he says. He thinks today's nudes are too heavily lit—a telling criticism from a man who learned his lighting in old Hollywood. "Most of my nudes are in shadow," says Gowland. "The sexiest picture I ever took was of a girl wearing one of my old shirts, open in the front."—RUSSELL HART

Right: Some of Gowland's two-dozen how-to books.

Peter Gowland's unique

rapher, who learned his

industry photographer. So it's not surprising that at

monorail model is just

and full movements.

Visit petergowland.com.

large-format camera line is

"All my cameras are built like airplanes," says the photog-

machining techniques during

a wartime stint as an aviation

41/2 pounds, Gowland's latest

what its name says it is—the

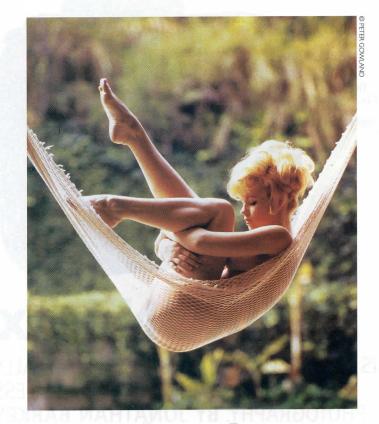
World's Lightest 8x10 View (\$1,550). "I built it for

a backpacker who wanted to

shoot 8x10 in the mountains,"

says Gowland. Yet the camera has a 24-inch bellows

predicated on light weight.



technology VISION

field test

82

on location

84

photofile

86

on set



