

Hands On Newsletter

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colormunki

Pt. 1: Color Calibration for the Rest of Us



Color Calibration has been the seminar “flavor-of-the-day” for the past couple of years. It just won’t go away. And, for good reason.

Nothing is more disappointing than taking great care to get a proper exposure and processing it carefully, only to have the final colors in the print look like nothing you’ve ever seen

before.

With the switch to digital, perhaps the most frequent lament is “That’s not what it looked like when I took it” or “That’s not what it looked like on my monitor”.

Why is this the mantra from the “age of digital”? Because, in the days of film, there were fewer steps in the work flow AND the labs, without our knowledge, fixed our mistakes. Said another way, they were doing our color correction for us – and they were darn good at it.

The workflow was simple. We put film in our cameras. We made exposures. We took the film out of our cameras. We sent it to the lab – for both processing and printing. And we admired “our work”. I say “our” in quotation marks because, in reality, very often the labs did significant work to cover our mistakes. And, like good retouchers, they didn’t boast about what they’d done.¹

The basic problem starts with the fact that the human eye and brain are the ultimate calibration system. When we look at things, the brain is doing its best to “correct” colors to meet our expectations. And, the eye sees a wider variety of colors than can now be perceived by the best camera sensors or computer chips or can be displayed on the best monitors or produced on the best printers. Said another way, we see colors subjectively. The camera, computer and printer see it objectively.

And, that is why we often hear, “That’s not the way it looked when I took the picture”. It never will look like what we saw.

But, we can make it come close – and that’s what color calibration is all about.

Until recently, calibration was best left to “geeks”. It required some knowledge of color theory, computer expertise, the ability to read and understand

technical manuals, and patience. And, it required tools that were often priced out of our reach.

Today, getting consistent colors is something for the rest of us – something all of us can do.

And, thanks to the good people at the MAC Group and X-Rite’s **colormunki**, we now have one affordable tool that will calibrate our monitors, create printer profiles (match our monitors to our printers), and calibrate our projectors.



In Part 1, we will discuss the first two steps in the following process (1) getting a good image; and, (2) calibrating our monitors. In Part 2, we will talk about calibrating our printers and some of the other special things the **colormunki** will do.

Getting it Right in the Camera

Consistent color starts in the camera. No amount of color correction will make a poorly exposed image look like what we saw with our eyes.

Without regard to how well our monitors and printers are calibrated, if we put garbage into our work flow we will get garbage out.

¹ One of the most important lessons I’ve learned from the great Photoshop teachers we’ve had in the seminars is to NEVER tell a client that the images that they love and think look just like them have been “retouched”. Why ruin the illusion?

Books have been written about getting it right in the camera. No need to go into depth here – a superficial analysis will do.

For our purposes, three things stand out.

First, we need use the proper exposure settings; a severely and uncorrectable under or over-exposure is difficult to correct.

Second, we need to make sure we use a proper white balance setting; an image with an uncorrectable color cast is also difficult to correct.

Third, we need to shoot RAW which will give us the power to adjust our exposures and white balance either to correct mistakes or adjust for personal taste.

The easiest way to do all this? I think that the use of a simple 18% Gray target can help us in all three areas.

1. Proper exposure: Meter. Set the camera. And, then take a picture of the gray target. Look at the histogram. It will tell whether the image is under or over exposed.
2. White Balance: Some do a custom white balance by taking an image of the card and using it to set the camera. I stopped doing custom white balancing, long ago. Instead, I

use one of the pre-sets (never Auto White Balance²) and use the gray card to take a “reference shot” as described below.

3. The Gray Card Reference Shot: I put a gray target in one of my shots. When I go to process the images in my RAW processor, I click balance on that gray card. After making whatever fine adjustments the reference image needed, I batch process all of the images shot under the same lighting set up.

Voila! Solid exposures and proper color temperatures.

A few tips about this simple work flow:

First, one needs a good target – one that has consistent gray throughout. Worn or dirty targets don’t work.

Second, the target MUST be lit correctly and consistently. In the studio, make sure it is evenly illuminated by the light on the subject. Holding a target in a way that creates either glare or shadows will make that target ineffective and the process flawed.

Third, take a new histogram reading and do a new reference shot EVERY time the lighting changes. Both indoors and outdoors.

² Jim DiVitalte teaches us never to use “Auto White Balance” because it makes “batch processing” in our RAW processor more difficult. The theory is that Auto gives the processor a moving target. A fixed preset, no matter how wrong, will be the same across the range of images – making batch processing more effective and efficient.

Yes, using this system, especially outdoors, adds a bit of time to a shoot, but it is the fastest way I know to ensure a proper exposure and correct White Balance.

My target of choice is the [Lastolite Ezybalance](#). Why? It has a couple of features I really like. First, it's foldable/portable. I carry the 12", which folds to about 4" in my travel bag. I use the 20" and 30" in the studio.



What makes it really special is that it has thin white lines, in the shape of a target, on the front. These lines make it possible to stay in "autofocus" mode while taking our test/histogram shot. As we know, to autofocus a camera needs "contrast". On a pure gray target, there is no contrast, so the camera hunts and searches and never pulls focus. To be able to take a full gray frame on a pure gray target, most of us go into manual focus. And, then, we forget to go back into autofocus, thereby running the risk of shooting an entire session out of focus. Those little white lines are session savers.

OK – Good exposure, good White Balance, and a reference shot – the camera has done its job. Now it's time for the computer.

And, for the computer to do its job, the monitor must be properly calibrated.

Monitor Calibration the Easy Way

Now we are ready to use the colormunki – first step load the software.

Editorial:

The Blame Game

Recently, Nikon has been taking some heat on the "professional photographer" forums.

The heart of the complaints? Nikon's touting of its new breed of DSLR's, particularly the D60 and D40 lines, is being seen as a threat to those who make a living with their cameras.

In essence, it's being said that Nikon is leading people to believe that they can take pro level pictures with either of those cameras.

One [commercial](#) features Ashton Kutcher at a wedding.



Here's some of the backlash against that ad.

Nikon TV commercial with Ashton Kutcher...bother you at all?

 , Jun 12, 2008;
12:47 a.m.

Are any of the pros here are cringing like me at the thought of an "Uncle Ashton" running around with a new kit Nikon "impressing" everyone with his "boo-yah" shots? Every time I see that commercial, I cringe because I think it sends the wrong message to anyone who attends weddings, leading people to think that this new gee-whiz camera will make a wedding shooter out of them.

There are enough Uncle Bobs out there, and now we'll have Uncle Ashton to deal with.

I know, Nikon wants to sell and it's a cute commercial. I just don't see it boding well for us

who invest many thousands of dollars in equipment and many hard hours at weddings practicing our craft.

I'm not saying anything should be done about it, heck, it's just a commercial. I was just wondering your idle thoughts.

Were I to be upset by a commercial, I'd feel more threatened by the very creative concept and execution of Nikon's [Picturetown](#) campaign. I think it is absolutely brilliant and compelling.

Nikon gave 200 Nikon D40's to the people in Georgetown, South Carolina.

The theme:



"Anyone can take compelling pictures with the D40.

Anyone can capture a moment. There's really nothing to it. All it takes is the right camera. Nikon D40, the camera that changed Georgetown to Picturetown. A place where ordinary people take extraordinary pictures."

And, they did. Just visit [Picturetown](#) to see for yourselves.

Was Nikon blowing smoke? Overstating the capabilities of the cameras?

Leading people to wrongfully believe that they can take pro level images with those cameras?

Not at all. The claims are true. Those cameras will take “pro level images” **if used in a professional way.**

How do I know? I just bought my 16 year old daughter, Jenny, a D60 with 2 lenses (18-55 VR and 55-200 VR). It is really a great camera capable of professional quality images. It is twice the camera my D70 was, and for a time, that was the “professional” digital camera to many of us Nikon shooters.

In Jen’s capable hands, that camera sings.

Is the anger fair?

Not in my eyes.

We can’t be angry with Nikon because they make great cameras.

I’m a Nikon shooter³ and I want Nikon to make great cameras, lenses and software. And, I want them to sell them at affordable prices.

So, what’s going on?

I think this is a case of misplaced anger. This hostility has nothing to do with Nikon’s products or its advertising campaigns.

It is a manifestation of the frustration many professional photographers are feeling in a photography marketplace where they are finding it more and more difficult to make a living.

Said another way, the fear is that if we make the tools of the trade less expensive and easier to use, we create a new world – one in which people choose to do their own photography instead of hiring us.

Actually, we’ve seen this frustration bubble out in a different manner. Remember the derogatory “moms with cameras” tirades we’d here at professional schools and conventions? The anger was focused on many talented, entry level, female photographers who, because people liked their work and were willing to pay for it, were taking business away from the more established photographers in town. The complaints about Nikon’s commercials are the same sauce in a different jar.

Did the entry level female photographers take a part of the business? I’m sure they did.

Are people going to buy these new Nikon cameras and do their own work instead of hiring a “professional”? I’m sure they will.

³ I shoot the incredible D3. My back up, a D2x. My glass – all Nikon. Like the guy complaining, I’ve got many thousands of dollars invested in Nikon equipment. Yet, I’m not threatened by Nikon’s activity in the lower end markets. In fact, as I’ll explain later, I benefit from it.

But blaming Nikon is like blaming Columbus for discovering the New World. The problem is not with the new world; it's with what we decide to do with it.

The failure to adapt and prosper is on us, not Nikon or any other camera manufacturer.

If someone can pick up a D40 and D60 and get the same result we would give them, why should they pay us?

And, therein lies the challenge.

In my eyes, this new world demands that we differentiate our work, that we do things that amateurs, even with the same equipment, cannot do. And, that we do them better.

I've been writing about "differentiation" since my early newsletters, years ago. It's really a simple concept. People will pay us to do things that they either cannot do at all or cannot do as well as we can.

I'll not go back through all of those old articles – but here's a summary:

1. To get the most out of our cameras we must understand our cameras. These DSLR's are computers with more power than the first desktops I owned. They give us the ability to customize settings to maximize the capture. We have to know how to take advantage of this power. Most of the "non-professionals" who buy them will shoot in "P" or "Auto" modes. If we do the same, our images

will not look much better than theirs. And, if that's the case, why should they hire us?

2. We need to understand light. Really understand it. The ability to control light, in any and all circumstances, differentiates the work of the professional photographer. From indoors to out, in the golden hours and in the glare, we have to be able to control the light. Backlighting, additive flash, subtractive lighting, painting with light, off camera flash – mastering these are but a few of the things that make us better. Understanding and using meters is a critical skill that only the serious master. If all we do is use on camera flash, and TTL metering, what differentiates us from the people we want to choose us rather than their own cameras?
3. Posing. Posing. Posing. Nothing is more difficult than getting people in the right poses so they look good. The problems are magnified with groups. Look at amateur photo's and then look at those of photographers who've studied with Hanson Fong. Look at the hands in a Don Blair image and look at those in an amateur photo. The difference is in the details and it's a big difference.
4. Post Production: I have deep respect for my brothers and sisters who preach that we are supposed to be photographers and not computer jockeys – but in my mind, the easiest path to differentiation runs through Photoshop or the other post-production tools.

I've yet to see the "camera perfect" image, one that can't be made better, more creative, more compelling in post-production.

I don't mean just tweaking the settings, which in itself, makes a difference.

I mean using the creative power of Photoshop and the plug-in suites from people like [*onOne*](#) and [*Imagenomic*](#) to really make standout images.

For example, there's a difference between an image with a frame and without one. I don't see creative frames as a the icing on the cake, I see it as a part of the cake. One can make the frame, from scratch, in Photoshop – or one can use [*PhotoFrames Pro*](#) to make an image that most of our competitors cannot.

I've written a lot about the [*Lensbaby*](#), before. I think it is a great differentiation tool. Selective focus allows us to call attention to parts of an image or to create an ethereal look. Recently, [*onOne*](#) has introduced [*Focal Point*](#), a software tool to create the same look. Once more, selective focus is not a part of the average photographer's bag of tricks.

No matter how good the image in the camera, most of us face the challenge of retouching skin. This can be done one of several ways in Photoshop, or it can be done, with ease, in [*Portraiture*](#). The ability to correct skin flaws, without making Barbie Skin, is a talent not universally

shared by all with cameras. Again, differentiation.

It takes time and effort to learn to master these programs – and that's what makes us professionals. We are willing to take the time and and give the effort to learn things others will not.

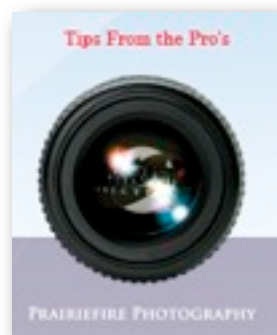
Why is their so much resistance to post-production manipulation? I think much of it comes from people who ported over to digital from the film world – people whose labs did the corrections for them. They either don't feel comfortable with computers or don't want to learn the programs.

That's fine. Their focus is to create better images than their neighbors can. And, most of them can. But, the second ground of differentiation is to be able to do things that their neighbors cannot do – and post-production is the place where much of that very cool stuff, the things that knock socks off, is done.

One final thought: I doubt there would be a D3 were it not for Nikon's ability to sell the lower end DSLR's and Coolpix cameras. There just can't be enough high end cameras sold to justify the research, development and production costs. So, when I see

someone shooting a D40 or D60 or a Coolpix, I understand that without those sales, I'd probably have to shoot Canon⁴. And, I don't want to shoot Canon.

I think it's easy to be frustrated in this marketplace and easy to cast blame. But, it's not productive. Negative energy sends us backwards. It's time to move forward with skills and business models that make us different from and better than the competition.



Hoodman Loupe The Chimps Best Friend

Perhaps it's because I'm not the brightest bulb on the tree, but it took me a while to figure out why we call looking at the screen on the back of our cameras "chimping".

It was not until I listened to people in class going "Ooh! Eii! Ahh!" over and over again that I realized that the activity was called "chimping" because of the sounds we were making.

I've worked to wean myself from the practice. I don't find a lot of value in looking at each image and I find it both slows down and destroys the rhythm of a shoot.

But, there are times when it is important to take a look. If I want to be sure I have pulled proper focus, if I want to make sure my subject didn't blink, if I don't want to move on to the next shot until I'm sure I have this one, I chimp.

And, when I do, I use the *Hoodman Loupe* – especially if I'm outdoors.

This is an alarmingly simple solution to the problem of screen glare and isolation. Simply place the loupe over



the screen and look. No buttons to push, nothing to flip open or closed, just put the loupe over the screen and look.

To fight glare on my D2x, I had one of those flip up screen shades. More than once I forgot to close it between shots and poked myself in face. I carry the loupe in my pocket. It can be worn around the neck. It's there when you need it and gone when you don't. Simple as can be.

Well made with an adjustable eyepiece, it's tough and easy – just right for a chimp.

For more info, you can go to the [Hoodman](http://www.hoodman.com) website.

⁴ Canon has a deep and diverse product line; although I'm sure the camera line is profitable, Canon can support research with money it makes from things like printers and copiers.

The Trampoline Transformation

A Tip From
Hanson Fong's May Seminar

During Hanson's May seminar, my 16 year old daughter Jenny, and some of her friends, modeled for Hanson and the class. I know these girls. They are really great kids and we were all thrilled with what they brought to the session.

When each took a turn with the camera, the "diva" took over. They were "professional" in all ways. They hit poses, had attitude, they were great.

After he had gotten the images he wanted, Hanson decided a "change in mood" was necessary. He wanted to put away the "serious and professional" and interject a bit of fun and goofiness.

So, he turned to me and asked for a trampoline. A trampoline? Not the kind of thing I keep in my "prop room".

Fortunately, one of the students had one sitting in a garage not far from the studio. While we were at lunch, her husband very kindly brought it over.

What we're talking about here is one of those bouncer things that we see at garage sales – exercise equipment that is often shelved after a while. They are usually 40 or so inches wide. Built for one person, they have removable legs and can be stored quite easily.

We set it up and saw a magic transformation. Gone were the divas. In their place, little kids.

Hanson had promised a transformation in expression, and we got it.



Here's an example of Jenny in the air. From Daddy's Little Diva back to Daddy's Little Girl. I love it.

A couple of thoughts on using a trampoline as a prop:

1. Safety, Safety, Safety. It's pretty easy to jump too high or to go too far. These things were made for a more gentle style of "exercise" bouncing. You have to keep your subjects under control. And, I think a spotter is essential.
2. This is stop action photography. With strobes, the lights stop the action.

- With hot lights, they won't so you'll have to shoot higher shutter speeds.
3. I have 16 foot ceilings in the studio. Even with that advantage, camera angles became critical. As much as you want to shoot "up" on the subject, when you do, you'll find yourself showing the top of the backdrop holder or part of the lights or ceiling. Although that can be fixed in post production, you'll probably find you want to shoot straight on, from a step stool or ladder to make things easier, later.
 4. Remember as you set your lights that the subject will be up in the air a couple of feet; re-set your lights and meter accordingly.

I like this trampoline stuff so much that I made the student an offer she couldn't refuse. The trampoline is a permanent fixture in my studio. I plan to use it to bring back the kid in all of my clients.

Focal Point

Time for a Little Differentiation

[onOne Software's Focal Point](#) is a great new tool – one that gives us the ability to replicate the look of a selective focus lens in post-production. It also allows us to alter the image's depth of field and add vignettes.

Why do these things?

In a recent New Yorker article, author Laruen Collins quotes the man many believe to be the best fashion retoucher in the world, Pascal Dangin: "A good photograph directs the viewer in how to look at it. So there's scanning patterns – whether it's three, four or five points, there's a hierarchy. You say 'O.K., I want the person to look face, back, legs, floor and then maybe he background', or whatever it is. You guide the viewer through the visit of an image."⁵

In the classroom, we've seen [John Woodward](#) say the same things as he teaches us how to make images that "demand attention." John stresses the compositional elements, the rule of thirds, curves, and the relationship between foreground, middle and background.

We also know that the eye often looks first at the brightest area of an image – that's how dark vignettes guide us to the place the artist wants to be the focal point.

The same can be said about the eye's tendency to look first at the thing most in focus; in this sense, "blur" moves us to the focal point.

And finally, the eye looks for anomalies – things that don't belong. That's why [Photoshop Diva Katrin Eisman](#) teaches us to start our post-production work by getting rid of the distractions.

⁵ The article, Pixel Perfect, in the May 12, 2008, edition gives great insight into artistic approach used by Dangin and its philosophical underpinnings.

Until recently, we had to get these things “in the camera”. I learned to create vignettes using a lens hood or by putting a paper mask around the edges of my lens. In the darkroom, there were “frames” and “masks” that helped create the effect. We can still buy selective focus/tilt shift lenses. (As I mentioned before, I love the Lensbaby.)

As for depth of field, if we have fast lenses – 1.4, 1.8, 2.0 or 2.8 – and we are conscious of the impact of the settings we are using, we can create some of the direction toward the focal point we are seeking. However, when using variable f/stop lenses, we often forget that when we zoom we are changing the f/stop. (In my old film days, I constantly used the “stop down” ring on my lenses to check my depth of field. As I write, I realize that I have not pushed that button on my Nikons more than a dozen times in the last several years. Hmm.)

Focal Point is not a substitute for good camera work, it is a supplement to it.

How does it work? Like everything from *onOne*, it’s relatively simple.

For this review, I’m using a [Hanson Fong](#) portrait of Jody Goldstein⁶ taken during his last *Hands On Seminar*.

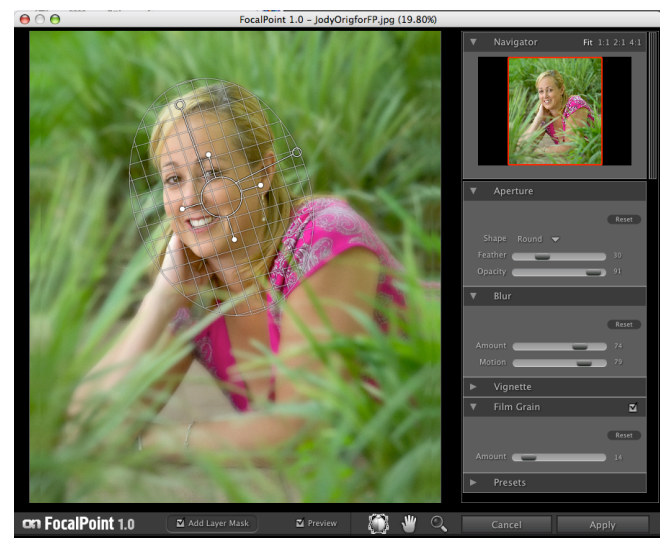
This is a very good image and probably does not need any post production work. But, I thought I’d use it so see whether we can make Jody jump out a bit by setting her off against the

background a bit more.



Into Focal Point we go. Here’s the opening screen:

Note: For a larger view of screen



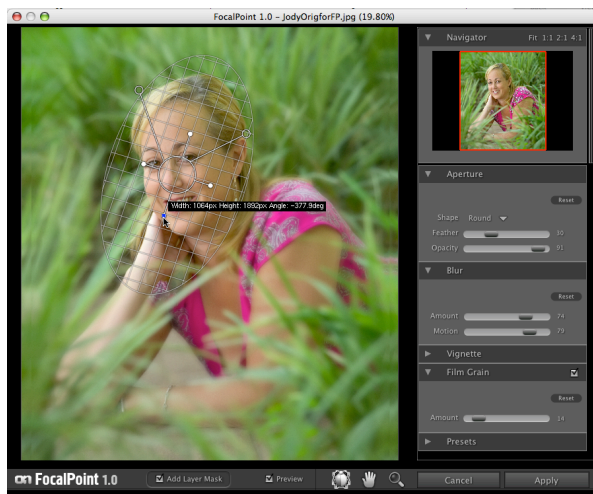
shots, Zoom In.

When opening, Focal Point creates a “blur” layer. It opens with the “bug” on

⁶ You’ll be seeing more of Jody. In addition to being an accomplished photographer, Jody is an “intellectual property” lawyer; she’ll be contributing columns on IP law to this newsletter, soon.

screen. You can see the grid, the “legs” which are the 4 handles with solid endings, and the antenna, which are the two handles with hollow endings.

The first task is to define or shape the area that onOne calls the “sweet spot” or what I would call the “center of attention”. This is the area that will retain sharp focus. First, we drag and drop the bug to get it’s initial placement. Then, we use the legs to adjust the shape of the spot. By pushing and pulling them, we adjust



the width and length. I’ve started here with a round bug. (You can also start with a rectangle.)

In this image, I’ve gone to an oblong sweet spot. I want to make Jody’s face pops off the screen. I also want to give it some “lead in” from the right arm that is a “diagonal” in John Woodward terms.

No, we can’t create the perfect shape with the length and width handles. That’s why, when we get back to Photoshop, we’ll find a mask that will

allow us to make tweaks in the selection.

Actually, one of the things I like best about this program is that one need not make a selection. The bug and mask take care of that task. I’ve found that making accurate selections in Photoshop is a critical skill that few of us have honed. That’s probably why software developers are doing all they can to help us out. This “bug” technology makes using *Focal Point* easy.

In the next step, we use the 2 antennas. One will allow us to control the amount of the blur and then allow us to feather it. And, the second will allow us to control the type of blur we will get; it also gives us the ability to allow the blur to encroach a bit into the sweet spot.

The antennas move on two planes. They pull in and out and move, at an angle, up and down. Each direction controls a separate function. Once you understand what they do, and the range of movement, they are really easy to use.

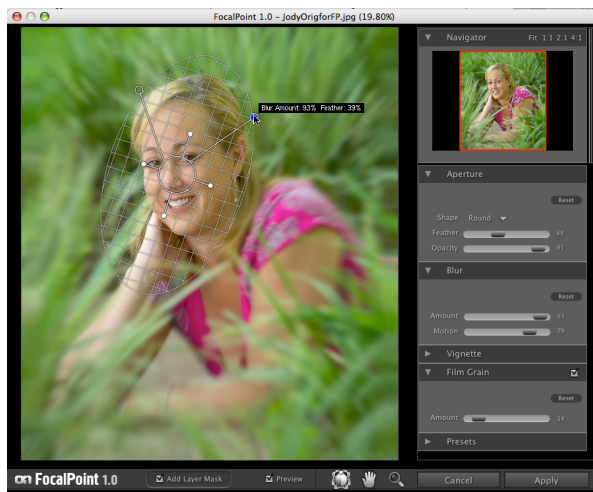
I start with the right hand antenna. Moving it in and out controls the amount of blur; making it longer gives more blur. Pushing it in, less. At all times, the antennas give us the opportunity to see an instant quantitative read out.

As to the amount of blur, that’s a matter of taste. You get an instant preview as you pull the antenna.

Feathering the blur, the second right antenna function, is a very important part of the process. It controls the width of the transition between the part of the image that will be in focus and that which will be out of focus. Use too little feather and you will have a very noticeable, un-natural line (a very short transition). *onOne* recommends a feather of at least 25.

One of the things I like most about this program is that it gives instant feedback and the ability to preview the effect at all times. Just drag the cursor off the screen and you can see what you've done.

Here's the window after I used the Blur and Feather antennas:



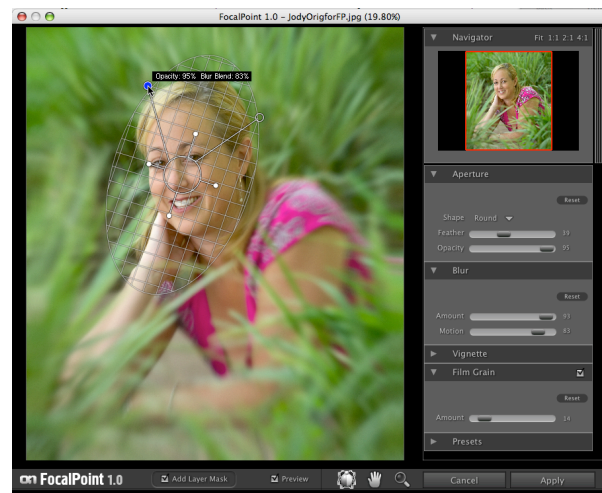
The left hand antenna allows us to set the type of blur we want. Pull down and you get a very soft Gaussian blur; angle up and you get a more extreme blur, with more distortion.

Push in and out on the left hand antenna and you can control the

“opacity” of the blur. Actually, what this does is let the blur creep a bit into the center of focus; it's a nice effect.

To make a point in this review, I used some extreme settings.

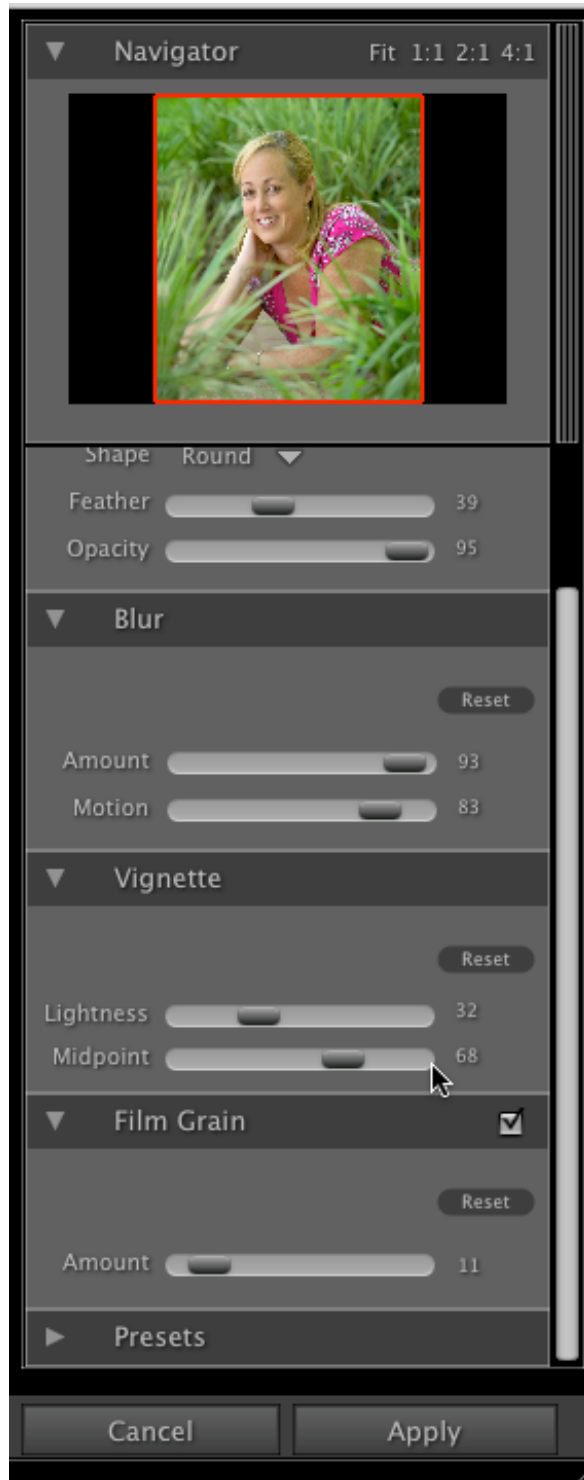
Here's the screen after using the left antenna:



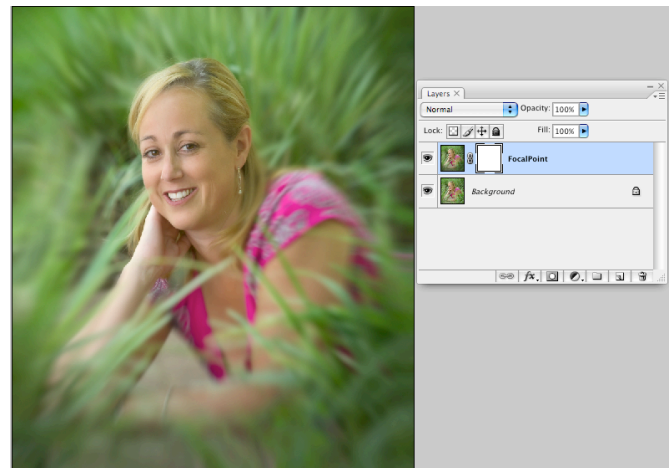
One thing I did not do in this image was use the “shift/tilt” function on the bug. That, too, is an easy function. You simply hold down the option/alt key while clicking and dragging in the center of the bug.

For many images, we'd be done. But, I wanted to do some fine tune “tweaking” with the control panel. All of the functions set by the bug can be modified in the panel. I used it to add the vignette and some film grain. Jim DiVitale teaches us that every time we blur, we have to add grain. The failure to do so shows.

Here's the control panel for this image:



Hit apply, and your back in Photoshop with a Focal Point layer and a mask.



I did a little more fine tuning with the mask. With a 50% gray brush, I toned down the vignette; I was a little heavy handed because I wanted the effect to show in these screen shots.

It turned out that I liked my other settings. I did a little work on the diagonal arm, again with a 50% brush, to give it a stronger lead in to Jody's



face. Here's the final image.

The Bottom Line: Focal Point is a great tool, simple, straightforward, and easy to use.

onOne consistently makes a strong effort to ensure that those of us who buy their products use them with ease. Like all of their products, Focal Point comes with built in tutorials. In addition, there are great tutorials on their website.

To make things even better for our readers and students, *onOne* is offering a free Webinar. All you need to know, including how to sign up, is in this newsletter in a page or so. We've not set the date, yet; so, sign up, and I'll email you and let you know when it's going to happen.

Finally, *onOne* is making it easy for us to own ***Focal Point*** and all of its other software.

First, it gives us a free, 30 day trial run.

And, then, it offers a generous discount to our students and readers. Simply

www.ononesoftware.com

Discount: 20% and Free Upgrade to New Version

Code: PRFRE08

orderorder, from their website, using the code above.

Hands On Seminars & the onOne Webinar

I've had to make some changes in the seminar schedule. Because of a death in the family, I'm in California.

With the very kind support of Janice Wendt, and the understanding of the students who had enrolled, I postponed the seminar she was to teach on June 28 and 29.

Janice will now teach that seminar on **October 11 and 12**, replacing a seminar I was going to teach on those dates. I've attached the class description with the corrected dates. You can register as you did before. Do not be thrown off if the PayPal link has the old dates. It may not have been changed yet.

Until I know when I'll return to Houston, I'll not be able to set the date for the July seminar Mike Peyton and I are going to teach: ***Pin Ups – The Entire Process***. My sense is that it will be taught in the last week of July. I'll send out an announcement as soon as the date is set. It will be a one day seminar, limited to 8 students; it will be taught twice, once on a Saturday and again on Sunday.

We've had more than 50 people sign up for the **free onOne Webinar**. The attached description includes the sign up information.

Revised Seminar Schedule for the Remainder of the Year

Dates:	Teacher:	Subject:	Comments:
July	<i>Steve Herzberg and Mike Peyton</i>	Pin Ups : The Entire Process	In this seminar, we will create the art of the 30's through 50's, the stylized, romantic vision of the "perfect" woman. Blending the arts of photography and painting, we will run through the entire process. First we will conceive the shot, light it for green screen, pose and shoot it. Then, together, we will work on our computers creating the masterpiece. This will be a very low enrollment Hands On Seminar.
Aug 30 OR 31	<i>Steve Herzberg</i>	A Little Less Talk — And, A Lot More Action	The seminar that pulls it all together – pure hands on. Small groups, you design the shoot, you work with the model, you light, you shoot, and you do the post production. All, with the close supervision and support of the creator and co-instructor of the Hands On Seminar series.
Sept 20 AND 21	<i>Jim DiVitali</i>	Advanced Photoshop	Bring your computer and work along with the master. All new lessons – tips and techniques.
Oct 11 AND 12	<i>Janice Wendt</i>	Portrait and Fashion Photography: Capture and Retouching	We've all seen her at trade shows and know her as the <i>Nik</i> Diva. Janice Wendt is actually one of the nation's best photographers and foremost image retouchers. We will start with capturing images and then, in the classroom, work along with her to make those images great. Bring your computers – this is hands on.
Nov 15 AND 16	<i>John Woodward</i>	TBA	
Dec 13 AND 14	<i>Tony Corbell</i>	The Power of Light: 2008	One of the nation's most honored and respected photographers teaches his first <i>Hands On Seminar</i> .

Stay Tuned – We've got a couple more cards up our sleeves.



**You've Been Asking for a "Retouching" Seminar
Here it is!**

**For the First Time
in a Limited Enrollment Hands On Seminar
One of the Industry's Most Respected Image Doctors**

Janice Wendt



2 Full Days – October 11 AND 12, 2008

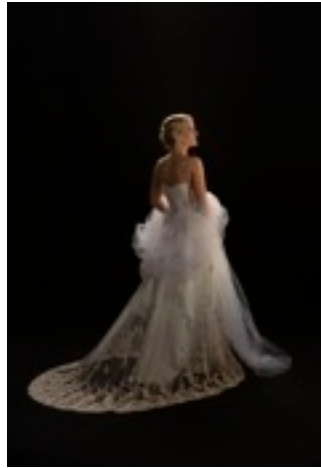
\$350 for 2 Days

Bring Your Camera – Bring Your Computer For:

Retouching with the Master

We all know we are supposed to “get it right” in the camera. But, when we shoot real people we face real problems – problems that we can fix if we know the tricks of the “image doctors”. And, no-one knows those tricks better than the Image Doctor to the Stars, Janice Wendt.

Why do I call her the Image Doctor to the Stars? Because, Janice has done the post production work for some of America’s best photographers on some of their best known images. People like her good friend Hanson Fong turn to her in their moments of need.



Here are two images that Hanson Shot in his last Hands on Seminar. Check out Dr. Janice’s special touches.

And, now, we have her in a small format, work-along-with-the-teacher seminar.

Why bring the camera? Because all good images start with a good exposure. We will spend some time in the studio discussing lighting and posing and the other things we have to do to get it “right” in the camera. It’s not known to many people that in addition to being a world renowned touch up artist, Janice is an accomplished portrait photographer. The studio session will allow her to share those skills with you.

After an introductory lesson, you’ll shoot some images to work on during the remainder of the class. We will also give you some images that present special challenges and we’ll work, together, to solve them. Finally, if time permits, we’ll give you a chance to work on some of your own “problem images” with Janice’s help.

No one can get good results without careful color management. It starts in the studio and ends with the print. Although this will not be a course in color management, we will spend a little time on the concept so that you can use what Janice teaches you to your full benefit.

Some times we really screw up and our images need a “total rescue” – like what to do when something goes wrong in the camera – like when we use the settings for an outdoor shoot under tungsten light, or when we underexpose, or you get the idea, when we have gray moments.

But, the bulk of our time will be spent on two tasks: (1) solving the kinds of problems we can’t completely cure in the studio – things like bad skin,

wrinkles and asymmetrical features or making people thinner, taller, or filling in a partial smile; and (2) making good things better, like making eyes “pop” and teeth glisten – some of the tricks of the fashion/glamour trade.

At a time in this industry when it is critical to be both “better” and “different”, we’ll learn how to give our images an “**edge**” or “**style**” that not all photographers can achieve.

As we all know, there are a myriad of ways to do the same thing in post-production. There are a ton of tools from which we can choose. In class, we will discuss the alternative ways of doing things complete with the “pros” and “cons” of each approach.

Because of the generous support of our sponsors you will have the use of trial versions of the software from *onOne*, *Imagenomic*, and *Nik*.

The Bottom Line: Even the best photographers have to retouch their images. In two days, Janice will teach us an approach to image doctoring that will improve the quality of our work and the ease with which we do it.

More on **Janice Wendt**:

I call Janice the Nik Diva – she’s the woman at the trade shows doing those amazing things with Nik products. When she taught a session in one of my Texas School classes, I decided I’d make every effort to bring her to Houston. With Hanson Fong’s help, I finally convinced her to come.

Janice, who is from San Diego, California, is one of the industry’s most respected retouch and image enhancement artists. She is often called upon to “train the trainers” on numerous techniques related to digital imaging. She spends much of her time working on educational projects for Nik Software and educates hundreds of professional photographers each year nationally in subjects related to the digital capture process, digital workflow and offers a practical view of the film to digital transition or conversion process for professionals.

Janice has fine-tuned her craft over the years and has a foolproof way of getting the most quality out of every image. She possesses a full understanding of the photographic process and has positioned herself as one of the true leaders on the topic of digital image enhancement.

Janice is an experienced commercial and portrait photographer with over 20 years of working in film and digital photography.

Is This the Class For You?

Although there has been a lot of demand for “work along with the teacher courses”, and although I understand that we learn a lot more from doing than seeing, I’ve been hesitant to offer this type of course before because it is difficult to make sure that all of the students get a quality experience.

Simply stated, it’s hard to balance the class in a way that the topics covered are within the reach and understanding of all who attend. For example, I don’t consider myself an “advanced” *Photoshop* user. I figure I’m closer to being a beginner. However, in reality, I’m probably on the line between “intermediate” and “advanced”. Some of my friends who took “work along *Photoshop*” classes at Texas School grumbled that their classes were held back by people who had never studied *Photoshop* or had no idea how to run their computers. I’m sure that those people, who initially signed up for these “intermediate” classes did so in good faith; I can only imagine how frustrated they must have been when they could not keep up.

So, how do you decide if this class is for you? Here are a couple of questions you might want to ask yourselves:

Are you proficient on your computer? Do you know how to turn it on, download files, open, close and save files? Is your computer “stable”? Has it been trouble free for a while? Can you deal with crashes and freezes? Unfortunately, we won’t have IT support on site.

Are you proficient in *Photoshop*? Do you know the basic tool set? How to open new documents? What layers are and how to create them? Do you have a basic understanding of masks? Have you ever processed a RAW image?

As to the *Photoshop* questions, if you want to take the seminar, you can build some proficiency in these areas by reading and working with books, online training, and DVD’s – before you come to class. We don’t expect anyone to be experts in these areas. We do think you will need to know how to open the gate to the arena we are entering.

Are you too advanced for the seminar? That’s hard to tell. I really don’t know anyone, including our instructors Dave Cross and Jim DiVitale, who are too advanced to learn new *Photoshop* techniques. As many of you know, *Photoshop* is a “black hole”; it’s easy to be captivated, fall in and never come back. There’s always something new, a bit more down the hole.

We are posting this seminar a month before it will be held to give as many people as possible a chance to bring their skills up to the level which we think will ensure a positive experience in the class.

What Am I Supposed to Bring to Class?

Please bring a laptop computer, an extension cord, and a power strip and a card reader; if you have a tablet, you may want to bring it. I'm sorry, but we cannot support desktop computers or large external monitors; there's just not enough room in the classroom. You will want to bring your cameras, meters and Pocket Wizards (if you don't have a meter or a Wizard, you can use one of mine.)

To Get Ready for Class We Recommend:

1. That you download the trial versions of the software we will be using in class and familiarize yourself with what they do and how they do it. Proficiency is not necessary. Familiarity will be helpful:

We will touch on aspects of:

a. onOne Software – just click the link to download MaskPro 4.1, PhotoFrame Pro 3.1, Focal Point 1.0 and Genuine Fractals 5. This site has great video tutorials on each product. These are fully functional versions that expire after the trial period. (If clicking on the underlined text does not work put the following url in your browser: <http://www.ononesoftware.com/>)

b. Imagenomic – download and try Noiseware , Portraiture and Real Grain. These are fully functional trial versions – except they leave a watermark on your prints. You'll get to learn how to use them and see whether you like them, but you won't want to print the images. There are some excellent training materials on this site. (If clicking on the underlined text does not work put the following url in your browser: <http://www.imagenomic.com/>)

ALL TRIAL VERSIONS OF THE SOFTWARE HAVE A LIMITED "LIFE". **onOne** and **Imagenomic's** software expires in 30 days. **Nik's** expires in 15. PLEASE, BE SURE NOT TO START PLAYING WITH THIS SOFTWARE SO EARLY THAT IT EXPIRES BEFORE THE CLASS.

2. We will teach this course using *Photoshop* CS3. Most of what we do can also be done in CS and CS2, but we strongly recommend that you upgrade to CS3 if you can.

If you do not own *Lightroom*, you can download a free, 30 day, trial version from [Adobe](#).

3. When you come to class, we will give you a CD with the files we will be using in the exercises. So, you'll need a computer with a functioning CD drive and the ability to load the files.

4. We will also pass out trial versions of NIK software products.

This is a long description because we think we are offering a lot of class. We want to be very careful to let you know what we are going to be doing and give you a way to figure out whether or not you should take the class. We really don't want to discourage anyone. This class will work for people with basic computer and *Photoshop* skills.

Enrollment in this seminar will be capped at 15 students for the entire weekend. We expect this class to fill quickly.

But Wait, There's More

This seminar is being brought to you with the help of our sponsors – Houston Camera Exchange, the MAC Group, onOne Software, Photoflex and Imagenomic. Upon completion of the class you will be given certificates that allow you to purchase their products at discounted prices.

This seminar will be taught in the classroom and studio of:

PrairieFire Productions, Inc.
7026 Old Katy Road
Studio 162
Houston, Texas 77024

To Register For This Seminar:

[To Register, Click Here.](#)

The Dates on the Website and on PayPal may not be correct. That's OK. The seminar will be on October 11 and 12, 2008. Your receipt will have the correct dates on it.

Hands on Seminar News

Free onOne Software e-seminar/Webinar



Our good friends at *onOne Software* are offering to do a private, free training seminar for our readers and students that will teach us the ins and outs of their entire product line. The seminar will be taught by Brian Kraft, *onOne's* VP of Sales. Brian is one of the guys you see at the trade shows demonstrating and teaching their products. The seminar will teach us how to use the products easily and effectively. For those who own *onOne* products, this is a great way to hone our skills. For those who don't, by using the free downloads, it's a way to learn before buying.

There is no better way to learn than to work along with an expert. And, Brian is that expert. How do I know? On my recent stay in Oregon, I visited *onOne*. Brian gave me a quick tutorial on a technique I needed to master; he made it simple. I'll share it with you in the next newsletter.

What's a "webinar"? It's a virtual classroom – a place we all meet while staying home or at work. All we have to do is pick a day and time. *onOne* does the rest. They send us an *Adobe Connect* URL and a phone number. All we have to do is connect and join in.

The seminar will last about an hour and participants will receive generous discount coupons for use when purchasing *onOne* products.

Bottom Line: This is a free seminar taught by a nationally recognized expert. We don't have to go anywhere or do anything more than dial in. Who says there's no such thing as a "free lunch"?

If you are interested in having us set up this Webinar, please send me an email by [clicking here](#).

I will create an enrollment sheet and ask those enrolled to help pick a date and time. Enrollment will be limited to 100 participants.

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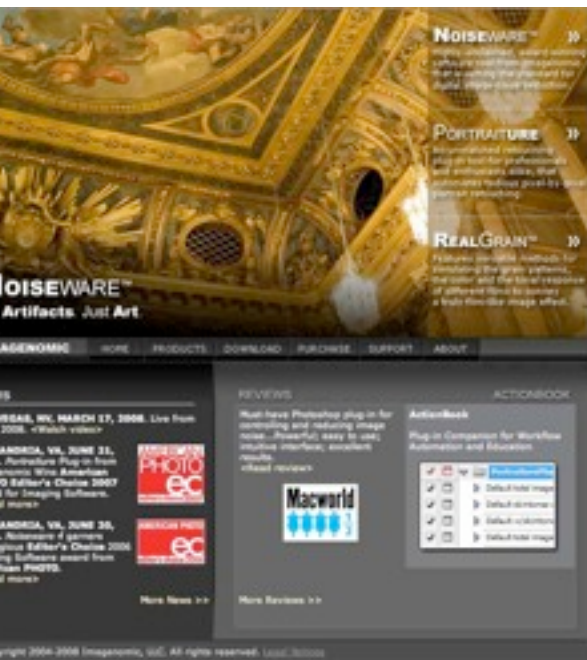
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The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the author and not those of the sponsors.

To contact Steve, by email, [CLICK HERE](#).