



## Hands On Newsletter

November & December 2008

[www.prairiefireproductions.com](http://www.prairiefireproductions.com)

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### Seeing The Big Picture Commentary from Photoshop World

As they say, "It was deja vu all over again."

This year, while attending *Photoshop World*, I had an experience identical to one I had about the same time last year.

It was early, I was on my way to the first class of the conference, and I was standing in line waiting to buy a de-caf and fat free muffin (yes, I know that fat free muffins are not calorie free –but I feel less guilty when I get to say "fat

free" when ordering a muffin.)

The people in front of me were talking about their work – both were graphic artists, and both made a point of saying what poor photographers they were. Then, they pulled out some of their stuff.

It was incredible. I looked at their images in wonder. It did not matter to me whether they had been perfectly composed in the camera and/or created in Photoshop. All I cared about was that I could not take my eyes off them. I was seeing the big picture.

That moment helped crystalize a theme that has been running through these newsletters since I started writing them:

As photographers, we need to see **the big picture** – the end result – and understand that getting to it is a journey on a path that calls for “conceptual”, “camera” and “computer” skills.

What do I mean by “the big picture?” I mean images, like this one from an amazing body of work by August Bradley that – in John Woodward’s words – “Demand Attention”.



Image by August Bradley – Copyright August Bradley  
Used With Express Permission of the Artist

You’ll learn more about August in the Postscript to this article.

When I first came back to photography, when I bought my first digital camera, I took a bunch of classes. In a couple I was told that one had to “get it right in the camera” and made to feel that it was somehow impure to touch a computer or use a processing program like Photoshop.

I remember one instructor – known for his dark room work and retouching railing against Photoshop. A neophyte in digital production – I grew up with a darkroom in my home – I asked him “What is the difference between the brushes and dyes we used to enhance prints and the brushes in Photoshop.” I didn’t get an answer.

Some remnants of that “it’s all about the camera” philosophy remain.

That makes no sense to me.

And, each year, *Photoshop World* drives the point home. *PSW* offers a series of “tracks” that provide classes that cover every step of the creative path – from capture to output – in an integrated way that teaches us to keep our eyes on the prize – the big picture.

It makes no sense to talk about “getting it right” in the camera, as though there is something impure about using

Photoshop and its brothers and sisters. All images are the product of some manipulation – be it done in the camera or afterwards on a computer<sup>1</sup>. The key is to get it right, period.

Creating an image is a process.

The road to the perfect image follows intertwined paths. The camera is on but one of those paths.

The path I follow starts with a “conceptual” phase where I think about the story I want the image to tell and what I will need to do to get there. For me, this is essential for every image I create – whether it be a headshot, product shot, or an experimental shot – something to use to test a product or learn a technique. I need to know the “story” because I need to know what equipment to use, how to light, how to pose or display AND what I will have to do in post production to execute the vision.

The importance of this path became clear in my early days as a film maker. I used story boards and shoot plans for every scene. Planning was even more important in my documentary work – because I had one chance, and only one chance, to get what I needed. There

were no re-shoots. (When I do event photography or photojournalism I think “story” first. It keeps me from coming back with just a bunch of shots. And, I almost always use story boards in my studio shoots.)

Production is the next step on the path. It encompasses all the work done to get the image into the camera<sup>2</sup>.

Post-production is the work done on the computer to create the final image.

“Production” and “post-production” are parts of the same path. They are complimentary, not contradictory.

The “get it right in camera” advocates have created a false dichotomy – setting the latter two phases in opposition to each other. The phrase is often used to denigrate the photographers who do some of their work at the computer. The phrase is often used in a tone that makes it seem that they had to turn to their computers because they could not master the capture in their cameras. Seen in that false light, post-production is a “corrective” rather than “creative” measure.

Seeing the world that way makes life more difficult.

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<sup>1</sup> Was film “pure”? No way. Those of us who grew up in darkrooms know the powerful manipulations that could be done with chemical processes, things like burning and dodging tools, vignette frames and, later, paint brushes. Terms sound familiar? In many ways, the darkroom is the base metaphor for Photoshop and its brother and sister programs.

<sup>2</sup> Of course, the camera is not “pure” either. Modern digital cameras are, themselves, computers that include tools and settings that manipulate the image as it is taken. Color management, sharpening, enhancement – all are possible in the camera. I usually shoot a “neutral camera”; I turn all that stuff off. I’d rather make the adjustments in post-production. But, the fact is that the modern camera blurs the lines. The camera is a computer and some of what we’d do in post can be done at the time of capture.

Of course, we all want to get it right in the camera. Why wouldn't we? But, the real question is what is the "it" that we need to get right in the camera.

The "it" is defined by the conceptual stage in which one integrates the complete vision and makes a plan that ensures that the the production and post-production phases are on the same path.

The plan has to recognize that: there are things one cannot do in the camera; and, there are things one cannot do in Photoshop.

And, perhaps most importantly – there are things that one can do in the camera that make post-production easier and better.

Once you understand that, you are on the path of a more fulfilling journey.

In this time of a troubled economy and a struggling photography industry, this message takes on even more importance.

To survive, photographers are going to have to differentiate their work from that of their competitors – be those competitors other studios, mall stores, *or* neighbors with good cameras.

And, it is in post-production<sup>3</sup> that we can really differentiate our work.

I've written before that if a neighbor can do the same thing with a camera that we do, there is no reason to pay us.

What most of our neighbors cannot do is master and use the brilliant creative tools that *Adobe*, *Bibble*, *Apple*, *onOne*, *Imagenomic*, *Photomatrix*, *Image Trends*, and *Nik* – for starters – give us. These tools not only make our images better, they make them different. And, difference sells.

Some say that instead of sitting at a computer we should be selling. That creates another false dichotomy: post-production and selling are not inconsistent activities.

Post-production gives us something to sell. Something better than our competitors images and better than those taken by our neighbors.

To borrow from Seinfeld, success demands that we be the "masters of our own domains" – which, in turn, requires that we master each step on the creative path.

Like me, most of the people I know walk the production path more easily than they walk the way of post-production. Most of the people I know are "photographers" trained on the camera and lights, not on the computer and software. And, that's why *Photoshop World*<sup>4</sup> is so important to

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<sup>3</sup> One of my very favorite differentiation tools is the *Lensbaby* – which one uses on the production path.

<sup>4</sup> Although *PSW* deals primarily with post-production, NAPP recognizes the need to teach the "production process" and offers a very strong photography track taught by some of the world's best photographers.



me. It's teaching me to walk the entire path – a path I know is the road to success as an artist.

The biggest lesson I learned at *PSW*, this year? It's not about "getting it right in the camera." It's all about "getting it right, period."

**Postscript:  
August Bradely --  
Master Of  
The Big Picture**



Image by August Bradley – Copyright August Bradley  
Used With Express Permission of the Artist

With the writing of the *PSW* edition of this newsletter delayed by the events of September, this commentary has been sitting on my computer for a couple of months.

Fortuitously, I had not published it before boarding a flight to California in October.

I use airplane travel as a time to read my magazines. Lucky me – I found the perfect postscript for this commentary in the September/October 2008 issue of one of my favorite magazines, [\*Digital PhotoPro\*](#). On Page 82, is an great article by William Sawalich called "*The Stylish Storyteller*"; it is a feature on [August Bradley](#) and essential reading for those who want

their work to make strong, creative yet commercial statements.

Bradley is one of the hottest photographers around. I was so impressed by his work that I called to both ask permission to use some of his images in this

newsletter and to try to persuade him to teach a Hands On Seminar.

Unfortunately, he's so busy shooting, he can't take the time off to teach.

That makes a major statement in today's commercial world. Not many photographers are so solidly booked.

Why is he so busy? Not everyone with a camera can compete with what he

delivers. His work is so different, and so well done, that he is in great demand. Differentiation and excellence. He's carved out a place for himself, built on a strong conceptual vision, strong capture and strong post-production.

These are images that cannot be done in the camera, alone.

Sawalich's perceptive interview with Bradley goes to the heart of this commentary. You really have to read it in its entirety; I read it several times just to let it sink in.

August sees the entire path.

Obviously, he is a conceptual planner; all storytellers are. How else would he know what props to rent and how to direct the makeup and wardrobe artists?

And, because he is a post-production master and does his own work, he knows exactly what he needs, in the camera, to achieve his vision.

The relationship between production and post-production? You might be surprised by his answer:

"All things equal, I prefer to capture as much as possible in-camera because it's more efficient and avoids a lot of complications. My hair and makeup

team knows to make things as finished as possible in-camera; ***we never rely on a fix-it-in post mentality. Post is for taking something to new heights in ways the camera cannot, not for correcting photographic mistakes.***"<sup>5</sup>(Emphasis Added)

In one quote, Bradley says what I've been trying to say for years, in these newsletters. When reminded that he might be what some call a "photographer first", he responded:

"I care entirely about connecting the original vision in my head to the final image. I'm not sentimental about process. I'll go from the idea in my head to the final image in whatever way will most effectively deliver the best result. For so many years, the greatest drawback of photography has been that work created with the camera was limited by the constraints of the tool. Now, for the first time in photography's history, there are no constraints of the tool. The imagination of the artist is now free to explore endlessly. More than ever, it's now about the artist and the imagination rather than about the peculiarities of the tool. This freedom has been achieved by combining the camera with a second tool, the computer."<sup>6</sup>

August Bradley gets it. Enough said.<sup>7</sup>

### **But Wait! There's More**

August is using twitter as a form of a mini-blog; to learn more, [click here](#). His

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<sup>5</sup> Digital Photo Pro, Volume 6 Number 5 Page 85

<sup>6</sup> <sup>6</sup> Digital Photo Pro, Volume 6 Number 5 Page 87

<sup>7</sup> Although Digital Photo Pro consistently presents material that educates, stimulates and challenges the serious photographer, William Sawalich's article on Bradley has raised the bar. I can't wait to see what's in the latest edition. I'll be flying this weekend and will pick up a copy to read on the plane.



body of work is incredible; to see more, go to his website, [here](#). For his agent, click [here](#).

I'd heard a lot about HDR (High Dynamic Range) photography, but it really didn't grab me – until I saw some



## **More From Photoshop World**

How A Great Class and Some Great Teachers Got Me to Try Something New

### **The Story Behind My Very First HDR Image: My Living Room**

#### **I. The Inspiration and Backstory**

As I wrote in last month's newsletter, my goal, this year at *PSW*, was to get as far out of my comfort zone as possible – to take classes in subjects I did not know much about and from people I did not know, at all.

of Ben Willmore's images and took his *PSW* Class: *High Dynamic Range Imagery*. Both pushed me over the edge. I had to master the technique.

What is HDR? Perhaps, the simplest explanation is that it is an attempt to capture the entire dynamic range of the subject which is often greater than the dynamic ranges of the capture device/camera or the output device/printer.

Said another way, the range of contrast presented by the subject is often greater than the contrast that can be captured by a camera.

Seen at the ends of our familiar spectrum, if we want to expose an image long enough to get the detail in the shadows, we run the risk of overexposing or “blowing out” the highlights. Conversely, if we want details in our highlights, we run the risk of underexposing our shadows and losing our detail at that end of the spectrum.

(For a much better explanation of HDR, see the brilliant series of articles by one of my favorite, concept driven photographers – [John Paul Caponigro](#) – in *Digital PhotoPro* magazine. Yes, that magazine again. It really is good.)

With most of our images, we avoid those pitfalls with careful lighting and metering.

The forgiving nature of RAW capture, helps too; one can “expose to the right”, meaning to “overexpose” a bit to capture the details in the dark end, because RAW often captures enough of the highlight detail to allow us to “recapture” it in post-production.

Actually, often that detail is not really “lost” – it is there and need not be “recaptured”. It just appears to be “lost” on the camera, either in the “blinking highlights” or on the histogram. However, that histogram does not represent the actual data captured in a RAW image. but rather is a .jpeg image – which is not a true representation of the greater amount of data actually captured in the RAW image, itself. Why

don’t they just give us a RAW histogram? Because RAW data can’t be displayed that way. To learn more, read the late Bruce Fraser’s *Real World Camera RAW* which is the book that finally got me to understand RAW capture and processing.

### Meet the 3 Bears

Let’s assume, that we have a “good capture” but have lost some detail in both our highlights and shadows.

[John Woodward](#) has been teaching a form of HDR photography for years – he calls it the “**3 Bears Technique**”<sup>8</sup>. John takes the same image and processes it three times: first, to get the best “average” exposure, that’s Bear #1. Then he processes it, again, to favor the detail in the highlights; in this, Bear #2, the detail in the shadows will be lost. Finally, he processes it a third time, to create Bear #3, which captures the detail in the shadows at the expense of blowing out the highlights.

John then opens all three up as layers in the same image in Photoshop and blends them together. The final image has the mid-range from Bear #1, the shadow detail from Bear #2, and the highlight detail from Bear #3.

For this article, I processed the Packard image below using the 3 Bears technique; once I had an acceptable image with both highlight and shadow details, I put a more stylized look on it

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<sup>8</sup> The technique is fully explained in John’s excellent reference work [All I know 08](#).



using **Viveza** and **Nik Color Efex Pro**.

decreased the exposure, I could bring back the highlights that were missing.



(I shot this image a couple of years ago, thought it was junk, stuck it in a folder and did nothing with it. As I will explain, later, for this newsletter, and for product tests, I've been looking for random images in my junk folders for use in testing products and ideas.)

The Packard was perfect for the 3 Bears technique. It was a very ordinary, "flat image". Although it was shot in bright light in a high contrast context, the image that came out of the camera didn't have much highlight or shadow detail. The sky had no character, the chrome was a bit blown out, and the dark areas had no detail.

But, I could see in the RAW processor that I had the data I needed to get more from the image. How did I know? I used the "Exposure slider. When I increased the exposure, I could bring back the blacks that were not showing. When I

So, it was time for 3 Bears.

Before going further, I should say that **Lightroom 2.2** has made the 3 Bear process a lot easier.

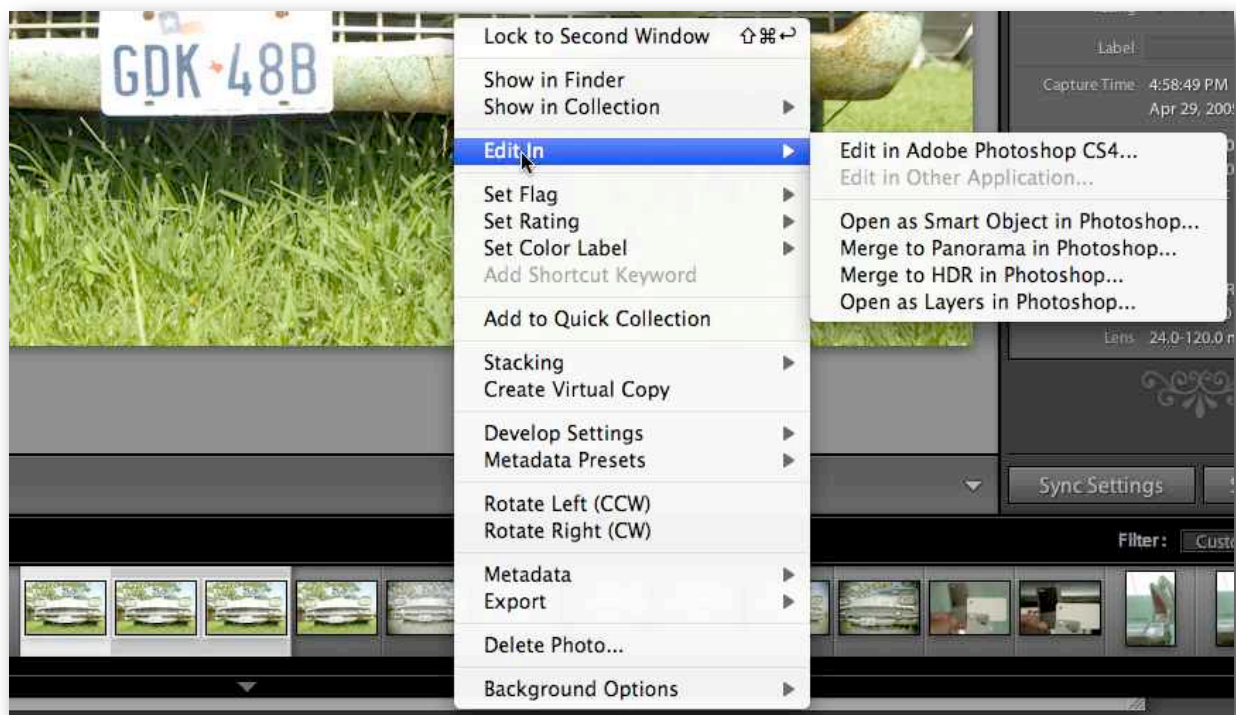
Before using Lightroom, I'd make 3 different versions of the image in Adobe Camera Raw and open each in Photoshop. Then I'd combine the three in one file for processing. What that meant was that I actually had 3 separate files, all of which were fairly large and all of which took up disk space. That may not be a big deal in these days of cheap storage, but still, less is more.

Here's how I did it in Lightroom.

I developed my 3 versions of the same image and saved them. Simple enough. I just used the sliders to get one base image, one with shadow detail and another with highlight detail.

There are two major benefits that flow from using Lightroom to start the 3 Bear technique.

First, instead of creating 3 images, Lightroom simply creates 3 different instruction sets; you get three looks, but have but one image to store. And, you can go back and change those looks any time you want by simply re-adjusting them which, in turn, simply writes new instructions.



OK, so now we have our 3 Bears. Here's the next cool thing about Lightroom 2.2, it allows you to open all 3 images, at once, into the same document – that's very cool, saves time and confusion.

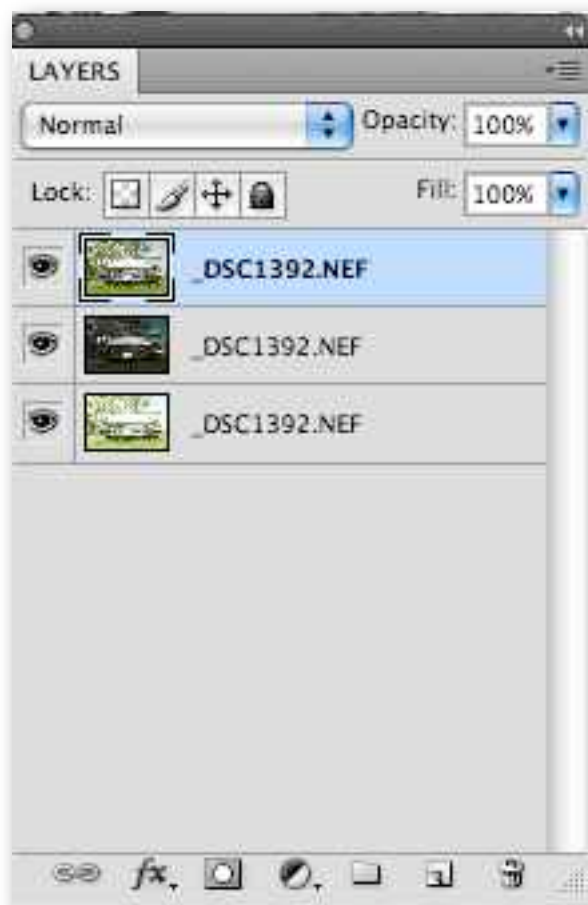
Once you have our three Bears, highlight them and go to the “**Edit In**” menu. Here's what you'll see:

In the lower left hand corner, you can see that I selected the 3 versions or Bears.

When you go to the **Edit In** menu, you get several choices – 2 of which would have worked for me:

I did not choose “Merge to HDR in Photoshop” because, as I will discuss when I talk about HDR, I use [Photomatix Pro](#), not Photoshop to do my difficult HDR work.

Instead, I used “Open as Layers in Photoshop” – and here's what I got. In



this CS4 Layers panel, you can see the three different versions of this image. Note, they are all the same image, from Lightroom, with the same number.

From here, I simply used masks to brush in the highlights and shadow details that had been missing in the original capture.

It took more time to write about it than it did to actually do it.

**The 3 Bears works when, in one frame, you have captured all the data you need to present detail in both the highlights and shadows.**

The Packard was within one stop of showing detail in the shadows and 1 stop of showing details in the highlights. This was well within the capture ability of the original RAW data; what I needed was there; I just had to bring it out.

### Going Beyond the 3 Bears

**However, there are times when to capture detail in both the shadows and the highlights we have a far greater stop difference – a difference that is beyond the dynamic range that the camera can capture in one shot. It is in those situations that we can use multiple exposures and HDR software to create the dynamic range needed to properly present the image.**

And for that reason, I decided to learn HDR

I set out to find find a situation where there was so much difference in the dynamic range of the image that I could not do it with one exposure. I started looking for something that would have at least a 5 stops difference between the highlights and shadows with detail.

For my very first HDR, I knew exactly what I wanted to shoot – an old John Deere “Poppin John” – a 2 cylinder farm tractor that got its name from the “pop, pop, pop” sound it made as its cylinders fired. Why? First, I’m partial to the Green and Yellow. In the farm country in Wisconsin, where I lived, you were true to the colors of the implement line you used. My first tractor was a Poppin John – and I thought it would be cool to find one and do a good HDR image of it.

Were I still in Wisconsin, I would have found one in minutes. Since the John Deere dealer was in Mt. Horeb, my home town, the hills were alive with the sound of poppin’. However, after a couple of hours on the phone I learned that Houston, not exactly a farm center, was not alive with the sound of John Deeres.

So, I had to think of something else to shoot.

### Inspiration

In deciding where to look next for a proper, high contrast subject, I turned to something that had inspired me at *PSW – The Art of Digital Photography* presentation, hosted by [Jim DiVitale](#). It was a lecture/art show of the work of seven incredible photographers, all very

different, but all masters of the “big picture”.

The most enduring memory of the show? The look on Photoshop Diva [Julieanne Kost's](#) face as John Paul Caponigro explained the philosophical underpinnings of his recent work. Julieanne, considered by many to be one of the best composite artists in the world, listened and looked at the screen with a look of rapt wonder.

The most inspiring moments? When Jim DiVitale, Joe Glyda and [Jay Maisel](#), showed work that was the product of “self assignments”.

What was inspirational was that these extremely accomplished and busy photographers took the time to shoot – off the clock – to better themselves by doing new and different things.

So, after falling flat on my face trying to find a John Deere, I remembered an assignment I had given myself, after *PSW*: **I was going to stop searching for the easy, beautiful things to shoot – I was going to find the beauty in the things I had already shot or in things that were close to me.**<sup>9</sup>

That's why I looked to the Packard to illustrate the result of the 3 Bears

technique.

Now on “self-assignment”, I decided to look for something close to shoot and process as my HDR example.

I walked 23 steps to my living room – that's about as close as it could get – and decided I'd do my shooting there.

### **The Wisdom of Willmore**

All I know about HDR I learned from Ben Willmore – both from his class at *PSW* and from his DVD, *High Dynamic Range (HDR) Mastery*.

The thing I like most about Ben's teaching, both in the classroom and on the DVD, is that he works hard to make things simple, easy and understandable. He takes small steps. Nothing is left out.



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<sup>9</sup> The assignment also reflects the deep respect I have for [Hanson Fong](#) – who, in classes, teaches us to work with “ordinary people” – not just thin beautiful models. I love the fact that in classes and presentations Hanson challenges the audience to put together difficult couples or groups – people that we all perceive as tough to pose, individually or together. In moments, Hanson has them posed in ways that bring out the best in all. Not many teachers will accept that real world challenge. Think about how many classes and demonstrations use beautiful, thin models. Hanson finds the beauty in everyone. One of my self-assignments is to be more like Hanson.



The DVD is organized like a good lecture series. There are 4 “classes”

- Shooting for HDR
- Merging Exposures
- Processing HDR Files, and
- Enhancements.

Each class has several chapters.

This is a “tell all” DVD. Ben doesn’t hold back or keep secrets. You have a feeling that he’d be pleased if you could turn out work that would rival his.<sup>10</sup>

The DVD, a bargain at \$69.95, can be purchased on his [website](#).

By the time I had worked through the DVD, I felt prepared to tackle the HDR genre.

I’ll not try to give a step-by-step explanation of how I shot and processed the living room. If you want to learn HDR, it’s really best to learn it from Ben. I’m not close to being qualified to lead anyone down that path. I just found it and still find rocks and pitfalls along the way.

Instead, I’ll write a bit about my very first HDR capture and process – my living room.

This may not be the best image in the world, but there are some things about it that I think make clear the value of HDR photography. Unfortunately, not all are clearly apparent in the low resolution .jpeg I’ve included in the

newsletter. But, if you pull it out and enlarge it you’ll see some things that make clear why HDR has me so excited.

There are things in the picture that one does not see when walking into the actual room. The louvers are throwing really cool shadows on the window seat. There are great highlights in the brass around the fireplace. The glass covering the fireplace contains a very cool reflection of the hassock and couch that are in front of it. And, finally, I like the light beams that are coming the hallway behind the couch; those beams have a tangible presence – they are a character in the scene, one that might be unrecognized but for HDR. The naked eye captures far more detail than the camera. There is no way to light the room so that my naked eyes can capture all of the things I can see in the image.

### Setting Up

**Lighting:** My living room is usually very dark. I walked over and opened the louvered windows; they would be my main light source.

The only other light coming into the room was sunlight coming down a hallway and entering the living room from behind the camera position. That natural light was all that I’d use.

With the lights on, I looked at the room and decided that I’d like the purple blanket to be on the intersection of the lower third’s line. I also angled the

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<sup>10</sup> To me, that’s the mark of a true teacher. Those who find their joy in teaching find much of that joy in watching their students grow.

camera bit to give the room a more funky look.

That decided. It was time to go to work – to capture the image.

**Setting Up the Camera:** I chose a camera position, set up my tripod, and put on a Nikon 14-24 lens that I had borrowed from [Nikon Professional Services](#).<sup>11</sup>

There are a couple of critical components to getting a good image for an HDR conversion.

The goal in image capture is to have a series of images that are absolutely identical but for the exposure differences.

There are several things we can do, when shooting, to make this goal possible.

First, one has to try to **avoid camera movement**. Yes, Photoshop will do a pretty good job of aligning the images, but that's a "fix". If one can, it's better to get it right in the camera.

So, step one is to use a tripod. I've tried alternatives, outside, such as shooting on a monopod or hand-holding and shooting my exposure brackets in very fast bursts – but none give the rock solid, identical image that one gets with

a tripod.

One reason to start the process in Photoshop is that the program is pretty good at aligning images that are off because of slight camera movement. (As will be discussed later, but for this movement, I'll almost always start in Photomatix and run the entire process there.)

Some times the subject is moving, like branches on a tree or running water. Photomatix Pro will try to eliminate this "ghosting".

Lest I inadvertently move the camera while pushing the shutter, I used a remote wireless trigger release I picked up at PSW from [Booth Photographic Limited](#). This is a very well made, cool trigger system; it has consistently performed flawlessly for me. And, it is priced reasonably.



There are a couple of concepts that once they were locked into my consciousness were easy to implement.

Knowing that I had to get identical images – with the only difference being that of exposure, here's how I set the camera:

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<sup>11</sup> If you are a Nikon shooter, and are eligible to join NPS, you should. Need a repair, they expedite it. Need to borrow a lens – either to try it out or because you'll only need it for one shoot? They will loan it to you. I called and told them I wanted to try out the 14-24, gave them my FedEx account number, and it was here in two days. I used it for a week and sent it back. The NPS people represent Nikon well. They are quick and responsive, friendly and businesslike all at the same time. I cannot say enough good things about them – or that lens. I really want one. Please!

I put the camera in manual mode and shot RAW. That's normal for me, anyway, but it seemed the right thing to do, anyway. I see no reason why one could not use aperture priority mode, instead. The key is to use **one constant aperture setting for use in all of the exposures**. The failure to do so would mean that the depth of field would change with each successive image. And, therefore the images would not be identical. Simple and straightforward, that makes sense, but it still had to get locked in. What that meant is that I would have to **achieve my differences (bracketing) by manipulating shutter speed** and/or ISO;

Variant: **HDR with Strobes**: So far, we've been discussing shooting with ambient light which can be any constant light source. (Even a hot light in a studio.) In that situation, we can keep the aperture constant and use the shutter speed to control the amount of light to get to the sensor.

Things are different using strobes. In a studio, on normal exposures, the shutter speed is irrelevant. There is usually little or no ambient light and the strobes fire so fast that all the light going to the sensor is controlled by the size of the aperture. Even with a slow shutter speed, the light of the strobe controls the exposure; and, slow with strobes is usually not as slow as we need to go with HDR. So, with strobes, if you want to change

the lighting, you change the aperture, change the ISO or move the light – with most people choosing to change the aperture because moving the lights changes the quality of the light as well as the quantity.

But, we've already said that we need to keep the aperture constant because we don't want to change the depth of field or focus in any way.

So, here's the solution: We change the power of the lights, **without changing the aperture** to match them. So, if we want to shoot at F8 – if that will be our normal or proper exposure – we leave the aperture at F8 and change the lights to say F16 and F4 to get 2 stop over and under exposures.

Now, back to the living room.

**I turned off the autofocus and focused manually.** I'm not sure that this was essential – but I'm anal. I didn't want the focus point shifting in any way. So, I used manual focus (which, because my room was so dark, and because there was very little contrast on the point I chose for focus, I was forced to turn on the lights just to pull focus.)

Once I had the camera in focus, I **closed "curtain" that blocks the window in the viewfinder**. I knew I was going to make some very long exposures and didn't want any light sneaking in through the viewfinder.

### **Figuring Out the Exposures:**

Ben tells us that the goal is to have three images to take into the HDR process. One normal, one overexposed, and one underexposed.

On the DVD, Ben shows a very simple way to get the right exposures. He meters for the neutral shot (apparently using the camera's meter) and then uses a bracket 2 stops above and 2 stops below the normal. The key to Ben is to make sure that the overexposed image is really overexposed. To verify that it is, Ben looks at the "highlight blinkers" on the LCD; if it looks like all the highlights are blown out and blinking, you've got a properly overexposed image.

One of the things I like about the DVD is that Ben shows us how to set the brackets on both the Nikon and Canon system. If you use auto bracketing, once you've got it set up, you press the shutter and the camera shoots the 3 frames. It's really that simple.

But, I rarely do things the easy way. And, I didn't think I'd capture what I needed in the living room with a bracket that covered 5 stops (2 over, 1 neutral, and 2 under). So, I took a different tack.

Because the room was so dark, I decided to meter the highlights and shadows to get some idea of how far apart they were.

To do this, I took out my Sekonic 758 and used the spot meter function to take a reading of the trees that were visible through the 2" openings in the

louvered windows. Those would be the highlights I wanted to capture. I then took a reading on what I figured would be the darkest part of the image, a part of the couch that was not getting any direct light; that would be the detail in the shadows I wanted to get.

Lo and behold, I had found the perfect subject for the HDR shot – there was an 8.5 stop difference between the highlight and shadow readings. That's a lot of difference and clearly beyond the reach of my D3.

### **Capture:**

With the camera in manual mode, the f-stop at 8, I shot my normal shot which was 1 second at f8.

From that point forward, I simply turned the shutter speed dial, 1 stop at a time down to 1/15 second which would get my underexposure and up to 25 seconds which would get my overexposure.

I didn't use the auto bracket feature because it simply would not allow that wide a bracket.

Understanding the limitations of the LCD screen, I used it to make sure I had gone far enough on both ends.

Other than the fact that the "overexposure" shots took so long, this was really a simple and quick process.



## Choosing the Images to Use.

Ok, I now had 9 images. It was time to choose the ones that best covered the dynamic range I was seeking.

Since I knew I was not going to “adjust them” in any way, I bypassed Lightroom and opened them up in Bridge.

Whatever software one uses, it’s very important to make sure that the images are imported, as shot, and that no “auto processing” takes place. There are software packages that, by default, try to correct the “defects” in the image before previewing them. We don’t want that. We want to see exactly what we have because we are looking for the extremes at both ends of the dynamic range.

Here are my 9 shots in Bridge. I selected 5 of them, 2 in the middle and

each of the extremes. Critical to me was that the darkest image captured the highlights without blowing them out and that the brightest showed detail in the couch. Looking at the brightest it was hard to imagine that they had been shot in a dark room.

Not one of these 9 exposures was useable on its own – even with major adjustments. The best was probably the top row, right hand image and, in it, there are blown highlights and blacked out shadows. This may have been an extreme case but it makes clear why HDR is necessary and has become the solution of choice for a lot of architectural and interior shooters.

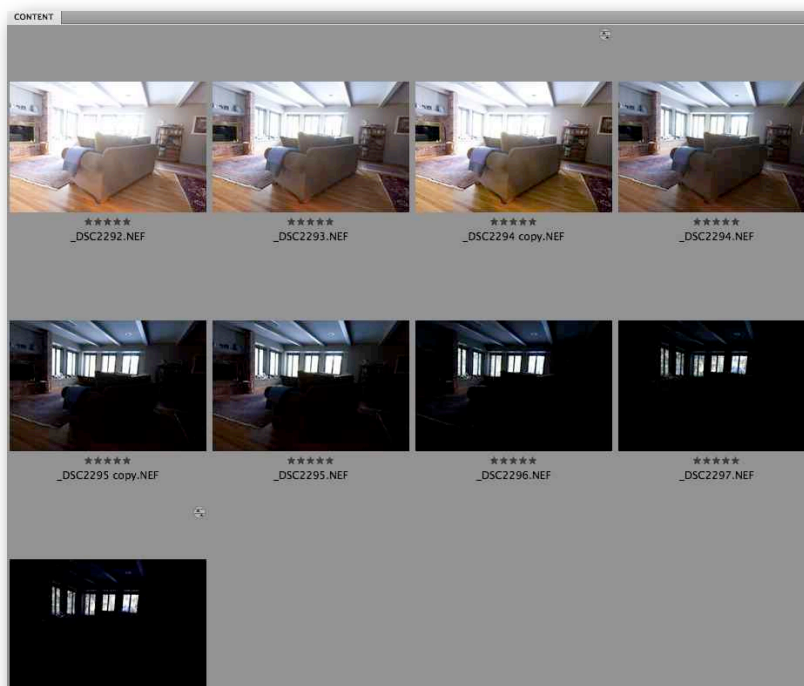
## Merging and Processing the Images

At this point, it’s really time to defer to Ben’s DVD. I’m not qualified to discuss, in depth the remainder of the process.

There are a few things I can discuss. At this point, one has a creative decision to make. I had to decide whether I wanted a “realistic” image – one that looked like my living room or whether I wanted an “illustrative” or exaggerated image.

For practice, I did both. For this newsletter, I chose the exaggerated image because I like the funky look.

Each style has its place. Jim DiVitale is shooting a series of interior shots in Atlanta. He’s trying to get the rooms to look as



real as possible.

The choice you make will dictate what you do from this point on, and the software you will use to get there.

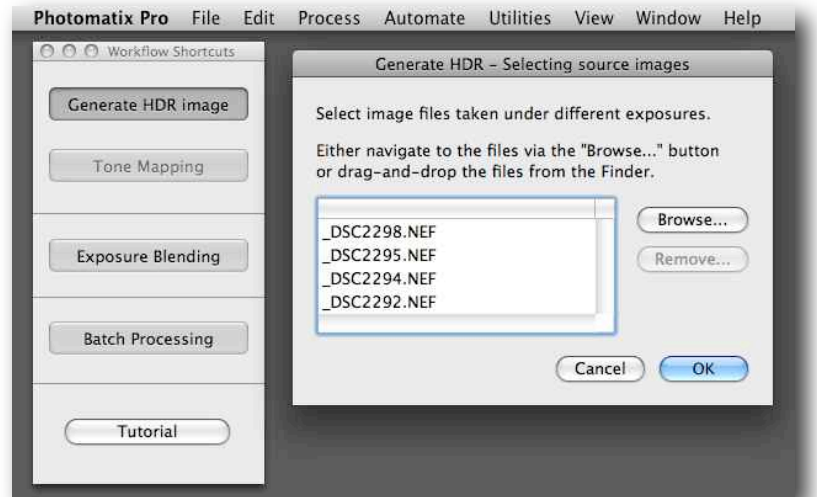
## ***Photomatix Pro* – The HDR Software of Choice**

Although one can do HDR processing in Photoshop, Ben, and the other serious devotees of HDR photography all seem to use Photomatix Pro – and I can see why. It is a straightforward, powerful, yet simple program that gets the job done. Once one masters the interface and understands all of the controls, one simply diddles until the image looks just right.

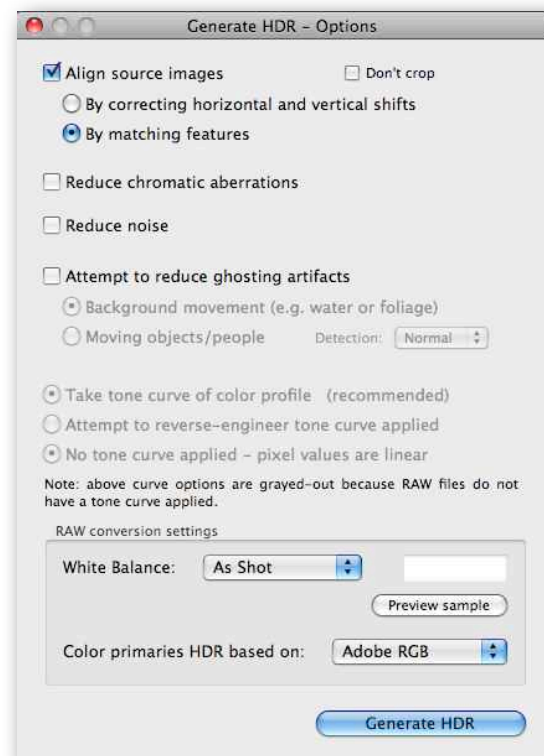


There are times when one will start in Photoshop – like when there are serious alignment issues, but since I didn't face that challenge, I dropped my images into the stand alone version of Photomatix and went to work.

When I open Photomatix, I get the “Workflow Shortcuts” window and push “Generate an HDR Image” In the window to the right, you place the images that represent the dynamic range you are trying to capture. I used 5 images from my array. Three would have been faster, initially, but I chose two mid range images because I didn't think one would do the trick.



Pushing “OK” brings up an “options” window. Nothing had to be changed here. If I had a “movement” situation, like limbs of trees moving in the wind, I'd have used “Attempt to reduce ghosting artifacts”; with serious



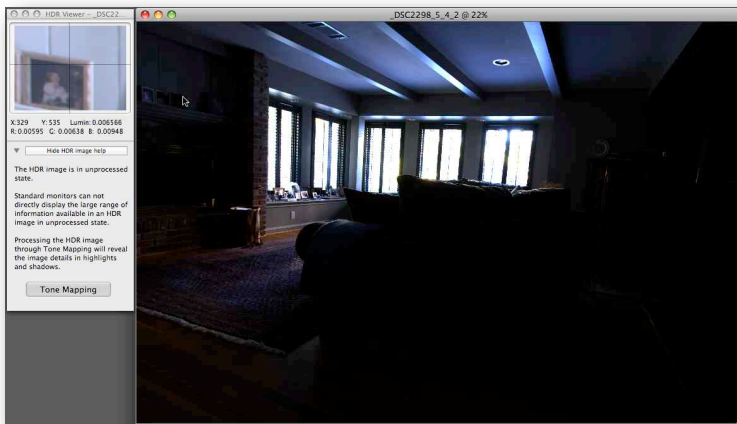
movement or alignment problems

caused by an unsteady hand, not subject, I'd have started in Photoshop.

When one pushes “Generate HDR” the program goes to work. This is a computer intensive process made more difficult by the fact I used more than three images.

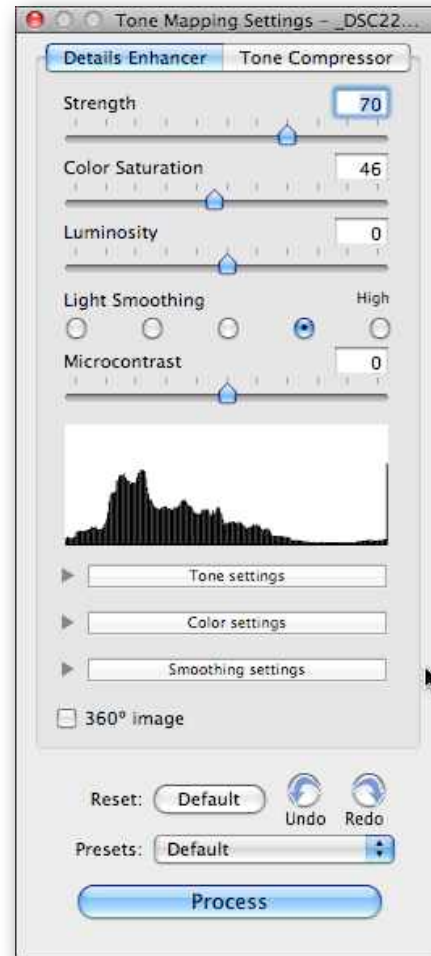
When the generator is done, you get a PERFECTLY UGLY IMAGE. Don't despair, this is the starting point, not the ending point.

On the right is some kind of composite. What's significant is that when you move the cursor within the ugly image, it shows you the range of what the composite has captured. Here I put the cursor in the black area of the fireplace

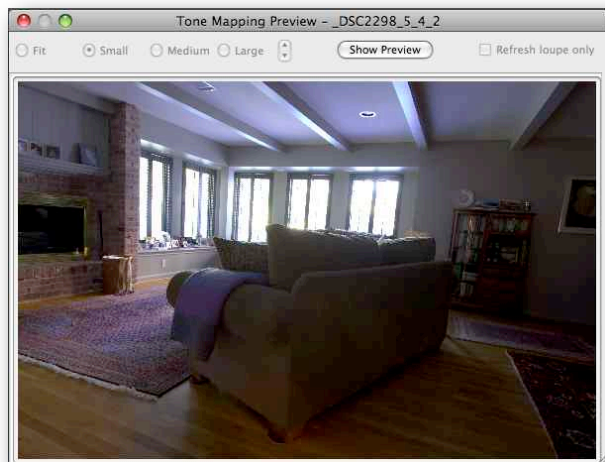


mantel and VOILA! there's a baby portrait of Jenny. I cruised around the image to make sure there was detail in both the highlights and shadows. There was.

So, I hit the “Tone Mapping” button and now I got the windows that would let me create the image. I got a control panel



and I got a “starter image” – not perfect but with every thing I would need to make



a perfect image. (I knew that because in the previous version of the image I cursoried around. So even though the windows were not showing much detail, I knew that it was there.)

It's at this point, one makes the creative choice of whether to go for the realistic look (by going into the "Tone Compressor" mode) or an illustrative look (by using the "Detail Enhancer" mode.) I chose the Detail Enhancer mode to make the grungy looking image I wanted.

From this point on, it's all a matter of using all of the controls the program offers to get the look you want.

How do you know how to use them? I think there are three ways to learn Photomatix.

1. There Ben's excellent DVD;
2. There's the Photomatix manual and a tutorial in the program; and,
3. You can do what Jenny does, forgoe all formal learning and "fiddle".

I used #1 and #3. Guided by Ben's outstanding lessons, and having a rudimentary knowledge of what each of the controls did, I just moved through them.

A couple more things:

One can run the image through the process, twice, and I did; it accentuated the illustrative look.

The image is not "finished" when it leaves Photomatix. Ben does intricate

enhancements, back in Photoshop – both in ACR and in the program proper.

The DVD takes us through some of those enhancements. Ben's images are not great works of art by happenstance – they are great works of art because he pays attention to the smallest details and he is a great post-production artist.

Ben has created some post-production actions that he gives away with the DVD. I ran one of them on my image.

So, that's the story about what I learned at ~~school~~ PSW. A great teacher led me to try something in which I had little interest and a great software program made my maiden voyage productive. HDR is now a part of my repertoire and I am constantly looking for ways to use it in my work and play.

## **Tenba Makes Tough Bags**

Camera bags are to some people what shoes are to Imelda Marcos – they just can't get enough of them.

I know people who have more than a dozen camera bags – and are always on the lookout for more.

I'm not one of them.

I've always loved great tools, be they my Nikon cameras or my Snap-on wrenches. Over the years, both as a mechanic and as a photographer, I've learned that there are special tools for



special tasks – and I’ve got a lot of them. Because I love them, I take care of them.

And, that’s why I care about camera and computer bags.

To me, they are a type of portable tool box – the function is to keep my stuff safe.

I’ve own several bags, each with a different application and all made by different manufacturers.

I first looked carefully at Tenba bags when I ran into a friend at their booth at *PSW*.

Immediately, I saw that they were different – for lack of a better way of saying it, Tenba bags are tough.

It’s really hard to write a lot about a bag. Not being a connoisseur, to me a bag is a bag. They all have wheels and pockets and dividers.

What impressed me most about the Tenba line was that component to component, the Tenba stuff felt tougher. I own both Tamrac and LowePro bags, and my unscientific impression is that the Tenbas are stronger.

The first thing I noticed was that the frame is more rigid – it doesn’t “torque” or twist; that’s a sign of strong construction. It just feels more solid.

The second thing I noticed was that the dividers – those things that you attach,

with velcro to create compartments are thicker – much thicker. And, thicker means more protection.

The zippers, handles, outside cloth, inside plastic, wheels – all are heavy duty.

My first Tenba bag was the **Roadie Rolling Photo Case**, shown below:

It’s strong. It’s tough. I trust it to protect my stuff.



(No, all that Canon stuff is not my stuff – I used a picture I took off the Tenba web site.)

There’s not much more I can write about a bag. I like it.

Fortunately, Tenba can tell you more about it. Click on the image below and you will go to a Tenba video on YouTube that sings the bag's praises:



There's another Tenba bag that fits my "specialty tool" approach to this stuff, the **Skooba Checkthrough**.



It's sort of a Clark Kent bag. It looks mild mannered and ordinary. But, it possesses super powers.

My need for this bag can be summed up in

one word, "**SMASH**". That's the sound my MacBook Pro made when it was dropped while being checked by airport security. You don't want to know the sound that I made.

What's special about the Checkthrough? You can take your computer through airport security without removing it from the bag. It's TSA approved so that, when used

properly, you simply put the bag, with the computer in it, on the conveyor belt and let it go through the scanner.

Fast and safe.

No more fumbling to bring it out, put it in its own separate tray, put your shoes in another tray, go to the other end, put it back in the bag and put on your shoes. And, your computer is never at risk.

If that's all there was to the bag, that would be a lot. But, there's more. Like all Tenba products, this bag is solid and well built. The computer compartment is strong and well padded. I've never felt a more comfortable handle on a carry through bag. And, the shoulder strap is well padded and "over engineered". It's big enough that I now carry all the stuff I carried in a separate briefcase and computer bag in one Checkthrough.

Once more, a movie is worth a thousand words, so here's Tenba's description of this bag; click on the picture to see the YouTube video.

Tenba: Skooba Checkthrough - TSA-friendly laptop bag



## Tips from the Pro's

### **#1. Peter's Protocol for Upgrading to CS4**

Until I met Peter Bauer at Photoshop World a couple of years ago, I didn't think he was a real person, I thought he was a computer. Peter is NAPP's "answer man" – the guy who answers all the tough support questions. The fact that he answered them so completely and quickly led me to believe he was a "virtual person", not a human being.

CS4 has been out a few months. I love it as do all of the people I know who are running it. It has great new features, and improved interface and is faster.

I'm sure I'll spend a lot of space in upcoming newsletters writing about those new features.

But, I thought a better place to start would be to talk about the upgrading process – how one best goes from a previous version of Photoshop to the current one. (In my case, I went from CS3 to CS4).

Upgrading improperly is laying a foundation for failure. So, in this edition, we start at Step 1, getting CS4 on to our computers.

Before upgrading, I wrote Peter Bauer, the guy who knows the best way to do everything Photoshop, to get his preferred protocol.

I followed it and everything worked perfectly from Day 1. In fact, it worked so well that, within a week, I deactivated<sup>12</sup> and uninstalled CS3 which I had left on my computers as a safety net.

The upgrade process is easy. However, there are a couple of steps one must take to reinstall 3<sup>rd</sup> party plug-ins, actions, special things like custom brushes and textures.

Some people will choose to re-install, from the disk or online, all of the 3<sup>rd</sup> party stuff. As anal as I am, that's a process I try to avoid.

Before installing CS4, I made sure that I had the most current versions of all of the non-Adobe stuff – the stuff that would not be installed by CS4. In my case, all of those "current versions" were CS4 compliant.

Knowing that, I followed Peter's protocol as set forth below:

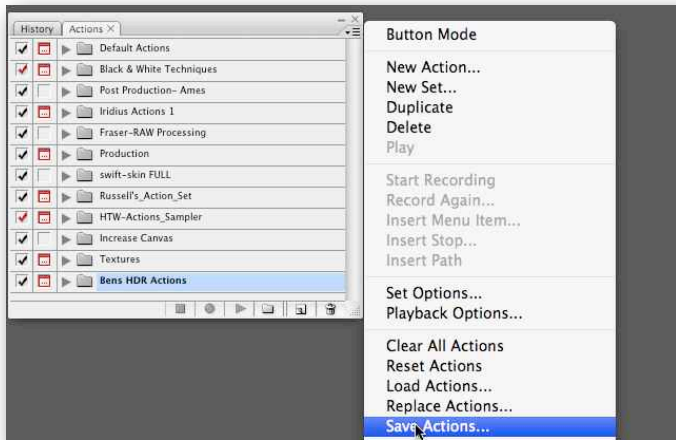
1. To Preserve Non-Adobe Actions: I opened CS3 and selected a set of custom actions. (Note, this process works on sets, not individual actions.

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<sup>12</sup> If you want to give your previous version away, or sell it, you have to "deactivate it" before uninstalling it. Adobe keeps track of the number of computers running a product on one serial number. Without a special license, I'm pretty sure the limit is 2 computers. If all one does is "uninstall" Adobe does not know that you aren't using it. Only "Deactivation" sends the message that the license is not being used. On a Mac, the path to deactivation from within CS3 is: Menus>Help>Deactivate.

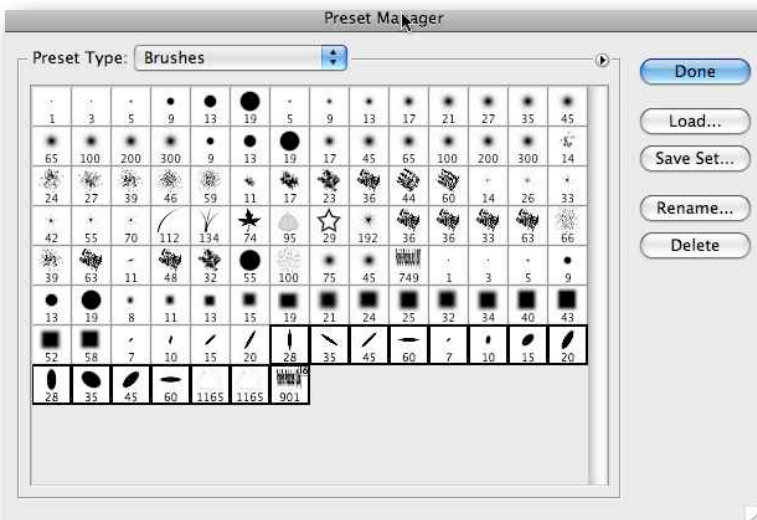
So, it's wise to put loose actions in a set.)

- a. From the Actions Palette drop down menu, select "Save Actions"



I chose a location, my desktop, on which they would be saved. The action sets are saved with an .atn file extension.

2. To preserve custom brushes, styles and things like that, one uses Edit>Preset Manager to create sets and save them in a similar manner.



Here's a picture of the Preset Manager. A couple of things to note: It, too, saves "sets". When you first open it, the "Save

Set button is likely to be grayed out. By selecting my custom brushes (more than one brush) I got the option to save them as a set. From that point on, the process is similar to the one that saved the actions. Just save them to a clearly labeled file on your desktop. The "Preset Type" drop down menu let's you save other custom things. Here are your choices:



Just to be clear, by going through this process, we are trying to save all of the 3<sup>rd</sup> party or custom things that are not a part of CS4 and will not show up in CS4 unless we save them from CS3 and load them on our own.

We can Quit CS3. We're done there.

Now, it's time to install CS4 from the original DVD.

Peter reminds us to disable any anti-virus software (I'm a Mac, what is that?) and/or automated programs we might have. When I'm doing an upgrade like this, I turn every other program on my computer off.

OK, now we have CS4 loaded, it's time to upgrade it to make sure it has all of the current components. I use the Adobe Updater which, on the Mac, is under the help menu.

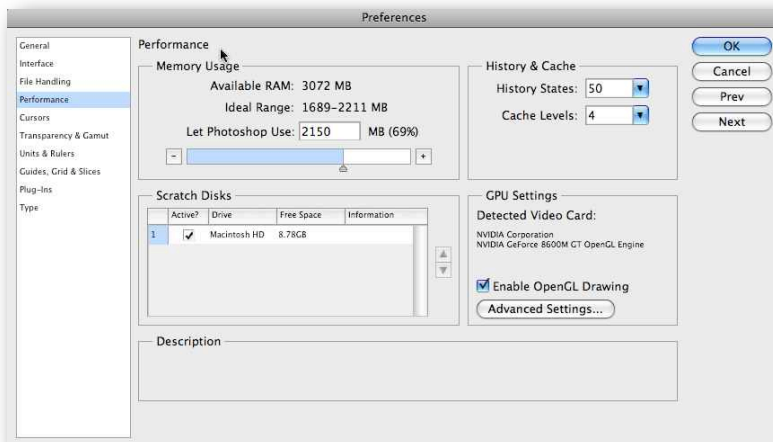


Peter also reminds us to get the latest Camera Raw plug-ins, by clicking [here](#).

It's now time to re-load your custom actions, using the LOAD ACTIONS button in the actions menu. And, in a like manner, it's time to load the custom things you saved with the Preset Manager using the LOAD function there.

Finally, while still in CS4, Peter suggests that we go to the Preferences and make sure that the memory is set to no more than 70% and that only internal hard drives are used for “scratch disks”.

Here's a Mac Preferences window; the settings are in the “Performance” Menu:



On an Intel Mac, one can “EnableOpenGL Drawing” which implements some new features like “flipping” and “rotating” the image so that one can move around in it more quickly and work on it at better angles.

There may be other preferences you want to customize, but for us it's time

to shut down CS4.

We are not done, yet. We still have one task left, we've got to install all of the 3<sup>rd</sup> party plug-ins, things like our onOne, Imagenomic, and Nik software.

For this task, Peter recommends something I've been doing since CS2 – something that has made my upgrades to CS3 and CS4 a lot easier.

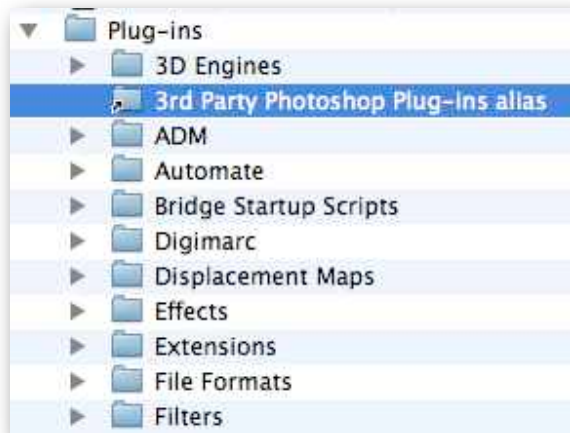
Peter tells us to install those plug-ins to a new folder on our desktops. I've been calling mine “3<sup>rd</sup> Party Photoshop Plugins”. (I've also made similar folders for my 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Actions and Presets.)

Once the plug-ins are loaded, we put them in the Photoshop CS4 folder. We then create and alias of those new folders and place the alias in the official CS4 plug-ins folder. The alias tells Photoshop that there are more plug-ins available and sends the program to the actual 3<sup>rd</sup> party folders, where it finds and loads them. Here's my folder set up:



Notice the “3<sup>rd</sup> Party” folders. I’ve made an alias for each and put it in the appropriate “stock” Photoshop folders.

Here’s what the Plug-ins alias looks like in the Plug-ins folder:



For the move from CS3 to CS4 all I had to do was move that folder from the CS3 file to the CS4 file and make and place a new alias.<sup>13</sup>

I restarted Photoshop and ran through all the plug-ins to make sure they all worked. They did. Had they not worked, I would have re-installed them from disk.

Once more, I want to thank Peter Bauer of [NAPP](#) for generously allowing me to share this protocol with you. As I’ve said before, my NAPP dues are probably the best investment I’ve made in my photography. I get the fabulous Photoshop User Magazine, a web site filled with tips, tutorials and forums, product discounts AND Peter Bauer.

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<sup>13</sup> Actually, I duplicated the folders in CS3 and put the copies and new aliases in CS4. I wanted to leave a fully operative version of CS3 on my drive as a safety net. Luckily, CS4 has been so stable that I did not need it.

Can’t beat that for \$99.

## **2. Viveza to the Rescue: Saving A Hi-Key Image**

Last month, I got a call from a good friend and good photographer who was having a “gray moment”. No, not the kind of gray moments I have – moments brought on by advancing age and retreating memory. She was having a problem getting rid of



the gray after effects of too little light on a Hi-Key white background.

How they got there is a long story – best summarized as follows: If you have been shooting Hi-Key successfully for many years, don't let anyone tempt you to change your lighting to the way he does it.

Anyway, that's not why she called. She wanted to get rid of the gray. First, she paid her lab a hefty "art" fee to get rid of it; the lab returned the images with a gray background.

So, she called me to ask about using one of my favorite programs, MaskPro to extract the image from the background so as to place it on a new white background. I love MaskPro. But, it was too much tool for the job. There was a much easier and faster way.

I asked her to send me a .jpeg by email so that I could fix it in Viveza. She wouldn't do it – being the good person that she is, she didn't want to waste my time.

I made her a deal. If I could not fix it in one minute, I'd send it back.

With Viveza, I fixed it in less than a minute. Here's what I did:

Sooner or later, I'll do a complete article on Nik's U-point technology and explain exactly how it works. But, for now, let's just solve the problem in front of us.

I opened it up on Photoshop and started Viveza. My goal was to change the gray to white WITHOUT affecting the white sweater or the little girls hair.

And, I wanted to keep some gray shadows.

To preserve the colors I did not want to change, I placed a series of control points on areas I wanted to keep the way they were.

I call the "stock" or "neutral" control points "status quo" points. Areas on which they are anchored will not change. I put points on the white sweater, the little girl, and in some of the shadow areas where I wanted to retain some gray.

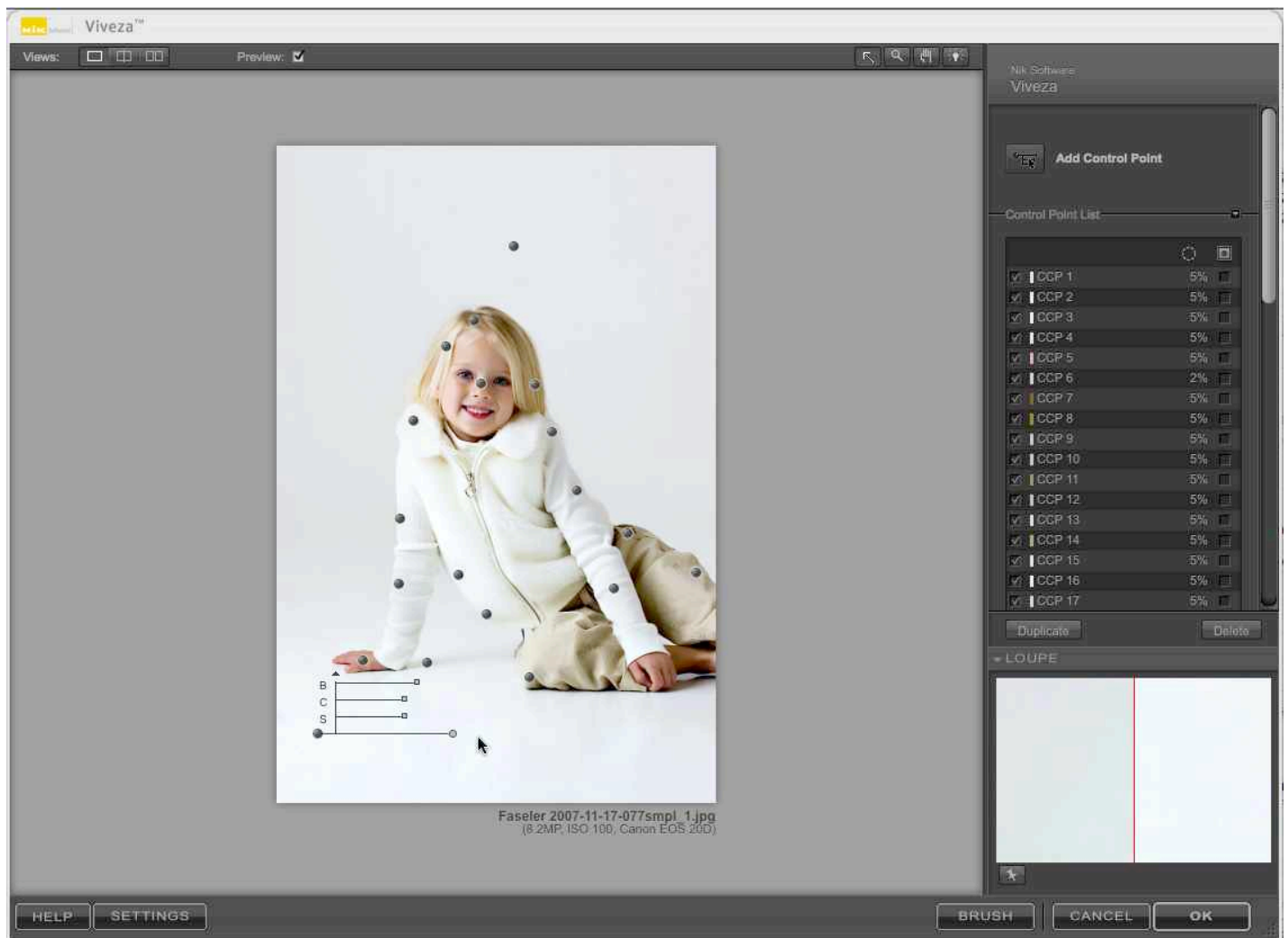
I then placed two points on the areas in which I wanted to change the gray to white.

I increased the "Brightness" of the area I wanted white by pulling out the slider; it was that simple.

My original change point was almost big enough to cover the area that was unintentionally gray. However, to cover the last little bit of gray, I pulled a duplicate point down to the bottom of the image.

On the next page, you will see the set up, in Viveza, and the instant feedback that let me know I had it right. I particularly like how I held the edges of the white sweater and the detail in it, and the natural shadows under the arm and legs.

Once more, the lo-res images in the newsletter don't do the final product justice. In the lower right hand corner, you can see a before and after view of



the gray areas – the before on the left and the after on the right.

All I had to do was hit “OK” and Viveza applied the changes to a new layer in the image.

(Those lines across the image are my “rule of thirds” grids. They are not a part of Viveza.)

All done in less than a minute. No difficult selections, no masks, no sweat. Viveza, with its U-point technology, is one of the easiest programs I’ve ever used. It rocks!





### 3. My Dean Collins “Ground-Pod”



Dean Collins made things simple. Known primarily as the man who both created the “language of lighting” and taught us how to use it, he also left a body of work teaching us how to make simple equipment to meet the challenges of the day.

I dedicated an [entire newsletter to Dean](#) and will continue to write about his contributions to photography. He is the man I wish I would have met. I’m “getting to know” Dean through his very close friends – Jim DiVitale and Tony Corbell – and through the DVD lessons he’s left behind.

Dean was practical. In one of his video’s he introduced us to the “ground pod” – a camera support system for low shots. Here’s my version – with what I think is a slight “upgrade”.

Basically, it’s a 2x2 sheet of ½” plywood. I spray painted it mat black

just to make sure it didn’t reflect any light.

The camera mounts on a ball head I had sitting in my closet. To mount the ball head to the board, I drilled some holes and used a ¼”/20 thread bolt coming up from the bottom. (Actually, I got rid of the bolt in favor of a countersunk screw. I wanted to be able to slide it along the floor without having the bolt scratch anything.

I’ve drilled 3 different holes. The camera is mounted on the center hole – but there are 2 more along the edges. I’ve got one on the edge of a corner; I had to do this because my Nikkor 16mm Fish Eye lens picks up a 180 field and I didn’t want the ground pod in the picture. (I’ve got a client with some incredible restored cars and hot rods and I’m going to shoot some of them with the fish-eye, from the ground, for HDR. That’s why I needed the ground pod – so that I could get identical, steady shots.

The “upgrade”? The [Hoodman Right Angle Viewer](#).

It makes low shots simple, especially when the lens is tilted up and the viewfinder window is pointing toward the ground. Some people prefer to shoot from their knees rather than lying flat on the ground.

Like all things from Hoodman, the RAV is very well made and comes in a protective case.

#### 4. Jenny Herzberg's Ghost Effect



Proud Papa or not, I think this is a very cool effect – one that has me thinking about doing some similar things.

One of the things I love about Jen, who is 16, is that she is totally unafraid of creative “failure”; she tries things and if they don’t turn out – she moves on. I want to be more like her.

Here’s how she got the ghost effect.

Jen turned off all of the lights in her room, and for a light source used her MacBook computer screen. Duh! Why didn’t I think of that – the ultimate portable “hot light”.

She set her Nikon D60 for a 30 second exposure and focused on the chair.

Jen exposed the chair for around 15 seconds. Then she moved into the frame, sat in the chair for 7 or so seconds and then on the floor for the remaining time. Because the chair was exposed for more than 20 of the 30 seconds, it is the darker than Jen’s body – thereby, turning her into a ghost.

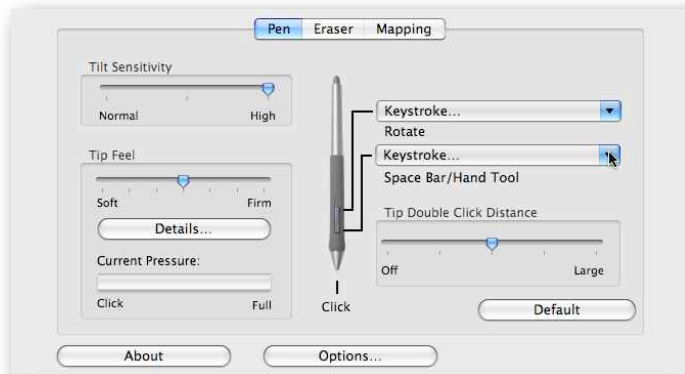
Jen always shoots RAW and almost always shoots in the manual mode. Once she conceptually mastered the “sunny 16” rule she was able to do stuff like this using a “trial and error” methodology.

Jen does some very cool things and I’m sure you’ll be seeing more of them in future newsletters.

#### 5. Quick Tips

One very quick **Wacom** tip: As I mentioned before, CS4 has a couple of very cool features, the ability to use our pen tool to both pan and rotate an image so as to allow us to work more efficiently. I’ve programmed the buttons on my pen so that hitting the lower button is the same as holding the space bar (which allows me to pan through the document – in the new CS4 terminology, some call this “flipping”) and holding the upper button allows me to rotate the image. Last month’s newsletter contained a long explanation of how to program your Wacom. Follow those instructions to set the “Keystrokes”; hitting the space bar gives you the pan and the letter “r” gives you the rotate.

Here's a picture of the settings window for my pen.



Every so often I list some of the **web sites I visit** – the ones with interesting content or lessons. Here are a few more:

1. **Jim DiVitale** has taken a good blog and made it great. Now included are tutorials. Take a look [here](#).
2. A couple of times when **David Ziser** was teaching workshops at conferences I attended, I lurked in the background – listening carefully and absorbing as much as I could. David has a great [blogspot](#) with a diverse array of tutorials.
3. **Lightroom 2.2** is an incredible program – one that will fulfill the normal needs of many photographers. There are several websites that I look to for tutorials and cool tips. Among my favorites is **Matt Kloskowski's, Adobe Photoshop Lightroom Killer Tips**. Check out his free "Presets" section. It's got some cool stuff. You can get there by going [here](#).

**colorMunki** has come out with some new training materials. Already the easiest calibrator I've ever used, they've taken steps to making the learning curve flat. To learn more, go [here](#).

## Coming Attractions

### Things You'll See In Upcoming Newsletters

Here are some of the new and exciting things I couldn't get to in this newsletter:

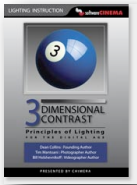
1. **The New [Lensbaby Composer](#)**: As most people know, I am a big Lensbaby fan; I love the blur/focus lines one can draw with this shift or tilt focus lens. In my mind, it is one of the ultimate "differentiation tools" – the tools that separate us from those who want to compete with us. And, if you're not in the business of photography, it is a great tool for making "creative statements". For the holidays, I gave Jenny a complete Lensbaby set up, lens, macro, tele-extendors and "creative disk" kit. I can't wait to see what she does with it. The Composer is probably a bit easier to master and with it, Lensbaby has introduced some very cool new accessories that apply across the product line. Soon, I'll do a review of the Composer and this new stuff, soon.



2. **Some DVD's Worth Watching**: I've been using my "treadmill time" in the

mornings to watch and learn from some really great DVD's. Here are some, from [Software Cinema](#), that I've found helpful:

- [\*\*\*Dimensional Contrast with Dean Collins\*\*\*](#) – I've already dedicated an entire newsletter to Dean Collins, the photographer/teacher who created the



language we speak and the concepts we use to discuss and control lighting. In Dean's world, there were three qualities of light, Diffused, Specular and Shadow. This DVD

systematically teaches us how to understand and control each. I'll write more about this, soon.

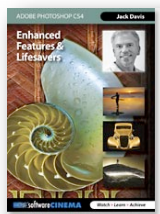
I've been using a lot of books, online tutorials and videos to help me make the transition from *CS3* to *CS4*, and from *Lightroom1* to *Lightroom2*.

Amongst the ones I like best are 3 videos from Jack Davis – one of my favorite teachers. They are:

[\*\*\*PS Lightroom 2 – Enhancing Indepth & Unleashed;\*\*\*](#)

[\*\*\*Photoshop CS4 – Enhanced Features & Lifesavers; and,\*\*\*](#)

[\*\*\*Adobe Camera Raw 5 – Indepth & Unleashed\*\*\*](#)



This is an exciting transition period. *Lightroom* has been beefed up and will do most of the things photographers need done. No longer is it limited to “global changes”. For many, this will be the only program needed to go from organizing ones files to delivery of the final product.

*ACR* has always been more than a simple RAW processor. It too, has become a creative force.

And, *CS4*'s not only become faster and more powerful, but also sports a simplified interface.

At first the change over seems challenging; but, I'm finding that there are a lot of great teaching materials out there, like these tapes, to simplify the task.

### 3. Major Updates from onOne

**Software:** As soon as I get my hands on the latest versions of the individual programs in [\*\*\*onOne's Plug-in Suite 4.5\*\*\*](#), I'll review them. I've already been using the newest edition of *PhotoFrames* and *Genuine Fractals*, which I'm about to review; I view both as essentials. I'm very interested to see what they've done in *PhotoTools 2* (*PhotoTools 1* is one of my favorite plug-ins and I gave it an in depth review last year.) Finally, I'm trying to get onOne to give us a couple of webinars on the new products just like he did on *MaskPro* a couple of months ago.





**4. Major Update: Portraiture from Imagenomic:** *Portraiture* is an essential plug-in for those who shoot skin; be it young or old, acne or wrinkles, dealing with skin problems is often both time consuming and challenging. *Portraiture* is the easiest



way to make people feel good about themselves without giving them artificial, plastic “Barbie” skin. I’ve reviewed *Portraiture* twice, including a couple of tutorials, in past newsletters (go [here](#) to see them.)

I’m going to download this new version and write about it, soon. In the mean time, for those of you who own *Portraiture 1*, the new version is a free upgrade. For those of you who don’t, you can download a free trial from the Imagenomic website.

#### **5. Giving Back to the Community: Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep**

A couple of years ago, I watched Sandy Puc’ give a presentation, at Texas School, in which she explained a program that offered all of us an opportunity to give something back to our communities.

Sandy told us about a program called “*Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep*” – a program in which photographers create and give portraits to those who are about to lose a baby or loved one, something to memorialize their too short lives.

The best way to truly understand this program is to go to the [website](#) and to watch this video. (Click in the black.)

Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep (NILMDTS) Imagine - For Photographers



For very personal reasons, I could not step up and participate at that time. My time has come and I hope some of you will join me.

Here’s what I’m thinking. Many of you who have taken our seminars have volunteered to help on my shoots. I’m thinking we form teams and do these shoots together. I can’t think of a better way to use what we’ve been learning.

I’m going to contact the people in the Houston area to volunteer my services. If you’d like to join me, drop me an [email](#). Or, if you prefer to do it on your own, check in on the website. What a great way to start the new year.

## Seminars

We are finalizing the 2009 Seminar Schedule. On it, you'll find courses taught by some of our familiar faces and a couple of new ones.

In January, we have the [Jim DiVitale Photoshop KISS \(Keep It Simple Stupid\) Seminar](#). It's been sold out for months, but if you'd like to get on the waiting list, [contact me](#).

What's after that? Hanson Fong. Here's the full description.



### You Asked For It – You've Got It

## Shooting With the Master

### Hanson Fong -- 2 Day Hands On Seminar



**February 21 and 22, 2009 — 9AM to 5PM Each Day**

Tuition: \$350.00 for Both Days

Enrollment Limited to 15 Students

Posing, Lighting, Shooting. Posing, Lighting, Shooting. And, more Posing, Lighting and Shooting. That's what this class is about. And, no one is more qualified to teach it than Hanson Fong.

This is the class you, Hanson's students, designed. Last year, I sent an email to all of you who have taken Hanson's one day course asking what you'd like in a 2 day course.

Here's what you asked for, and here's what we'll do:

Since Hanson is famous for both his posing and lighting, we will do both. But, this time, instead of spending most of our time in the classroom, we will spend most of our time lighting, posing and shooting. You asked for a chance to "do it yourself", under close supervision, and that's what we will do.

Hanson will start with a classroom course, an overview – to give us the foundation for the techniques we will be using. Then, we will put those techniques to work. Then, we will start to pose, light and shoot. Pose, light and shoot some more. And, more and more. You get the idea. This will be a VERY hands on workshop.

Hanson is the master of shooting large groups. Remember, he claims that he's never met a group he can't pose. To practice posing groups, we will work with each other. We are usually so diverse that we present big challenges.

The last time we taught this class we brought in a model and a bunch of my daughter's friends. Treat them right and you will probably get a release to allow you to use some of your images on your websites.

How much do you have to know to take this course? We expect you to be familiar with your camera and meter, able to take readings and make settings. You need not know much more than that. That's why we have classes. (And, truth be told, we can teach you to the very basics of using a meter, if need be.)

In case you don't know Hanson, no one knows posing like he does. His work has won awards and praise throughout the world. With over 30 years in the Art of Photography, Hanson will teach his techniques that apply to both fine art and photojournalistic photography. To learn more about him, you can go to his [website](#).

Hanson's classes have always filled within a few days of posting. To ensure you get in, enroll soon.

**To enroll, [click here](#).**

You will be taken to my website where you will fill out an enrollment form. After doing that, hit “submit”, and you will see a “Pay Now” button from PayPal. When I receive your payment, I will send you a receipt and confirmation.

This seminar will be taught at my Studio. Here’s a [MAP](#).

If you have any questions, you can contact me by [email](#).

Thanks.  
Steve Herzberg.

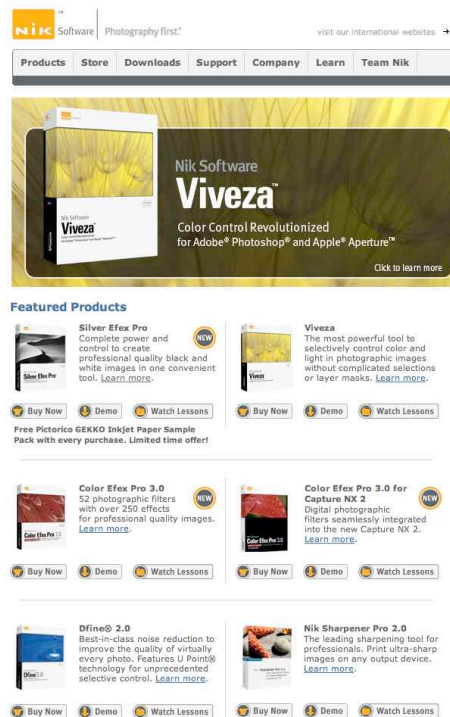
Refund Policy: In these small classes, we do not offer refunds UNLESS we can fill the seat with another student. This often happens in classes like Hanson’s because we usually have a waiting list. But, there are no guarantees.

**But Wait  
There’s More  
For Discount Coupons  
Go To The Next Page**



## Discounts from Our Friends and Sponsors

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### [Nik Software](#)

15% off on all products other than bundles or Nikon software.

**Discount Code: [PrairieFire08](#).**

onOne Software website screenshot. The main banner features the text "Maximize the power of Photoshop with Plug-Ins..." and "Plug-In Suite 4" with a "Save \$800!" badge. Below the banner, there are four product boxes: "GenuineFractals 5", "LiquidResize Preview", "PhotoTools", and "FocalPoint 1". Each box includes a "Buy Now" button. At the bottom, there are links for "Sign up for onOne news" and "Attend a free online webinar".

[www.ononesoftware.com](http://www.ononesoftware.com)

**Discount: 20% and Free Upgrade to New Version**

**Code: PRFRE08**

Imagenomic website screenshot. The main banner features the text "NoiseWARE™ No Artifacts. Just Art." and "Portraiture™ An unmatched retouching plug-in tool for professionals and enthusiasts alike." Below the banner, there are three product boxes: "NoiseWARE™", "Portraiture™", and "RealGrain™". Each box includes a "Buy Now" button. At the bottom, there are links for "More News" and "More Reviews".

[www.imagenomic.com](http://www.imagenomic.com)

**Discount: 10%**

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SoftwareCinema website screenshot. The main banner features the text "Products-On-Disc" and "Become a Member". Below the banner, there are two rows of product boxes: "The Best of Photoshop CS2" and "Lighting Essentials". Each box includes a "Buy Now" button. At the bottom, there are links for "More News" and "More Reviews".

[www.software-cinema.com](http://www.software-cinema.com)

**Discount: 15%**

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