contributors

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CS3

Tips and Tricks

CS3 is jam-packed with a wide variety of new features, and with the Extended version of the software, there's even more power under the hood than ever before. Here are just a few of my favorites.

New Docking palettes

The new palette docking system in CS3 may take some getting used to, but after a while I think you'll find it much easier to work with. The single column toolbar is great if you have a large monitor. If you find there's not enough space to show all the tools, click the double-arrow at the top to bring back the double-column toolbar. Expand/contract palettes with this new double-arrow feature. Open/Close palettes individually by clicking on their name. Roll palettes up/down with the common minimize/maximize icon. All of this was done to provide you with more screen real estate to view your photos. And it works very well.

Auto-Align & Auto-Blend Layers to gain the perfect shot

This one feature is worth the price of CS3 admission. You can now take a series of images of the same source and combine those images together to gain the perfect shot. Think of this as bracketing your photography, while at the same time eliminating elements that are not shared within the photos. For example, if you take a series of images of a storefront, while some people walk by. The end result when combining

these layers is an image of the store without the people. It's truly an amazing feature. But better than that, you can also auto-blend to get the best exposure. In this image, 3 exposures were taken of the boat. All three images were placed in a single document on different layers (note that you'll have to unlock the background layer). All three layers were selected and Auto-Aligned *Edit>Auto-Align Layers*. This lines all three layers up. Lastly, they were Auto-Blended *Edit>Auto-Blend Layers*. Blending automatically retrieves the best exposure areas for all three shots using layer masks Figure 1.

Adjustment Layers for Shadow/Highlights and Variations

This one is awesome. Now you can create an adjustable layer for both of these features, even though they are not listed as adjustment layers. Here's how: Open your image. Right-click on the image thumbnail in the layers palette and select Convert to Smart Object. Now, go to Image>Adjustments>Shadow/Highlights or Variations. The adjustments are added to the bottom of the layer stack as a Smart Filter. You can hide, paint on the mask, edit and delete these smart filters as needed. Awesome!

Figure 1. *Auto-Align & Auto-Blend Layers*

Figure 2. *Hue/Saturation and BW Conversion*

Figure 3. *Camera RAW*

Figure 4. *Cloning/Healing enhancements*

Hue/Saturation and BW Conversion all in one adjustment layer

CS3 now supports a new method to convert your Black & White photos that is more intuitive than ever before using the Black & white dialog *Image>Adjustments>Black & White*. Fine tune the tonal black & white range from −200 to +300 for each color found within the image. The lower the number, the darker the image becomes, the higher the number, the lighter. Not only that, but once you've made your adjustment, you can now Tint your image using a hue and saturation slider at the bottom of the dialog. Best of all, you can apply the *Black & White* conversion as an adjustment layer Figure 2.

Smart Filters

Speaking of Smart Filters, once the layer is converted to a Smart Object, you can apply most of Photoshop's filters in an adjustable and dynamic way (notable exceptions are Lens Blur, Wind, and Liquify). One of the nicest features of these Smart Filters is the ability not only to go back into the filter and readjust your settings (double-click the name of the filter in the Layers Palette to do so), but you can also adjust the blend mode and opacity by double-clicking the icon to the right of the Filter's name. Now that's a wonderful feature! Stack a few filters one on top of the other, and move them back and forth between each other. Just be prepared if you don't have a zippy lightning speed processor, as the benefits of all this new adjustment power means Photoshop has to work a little harder to display your results.
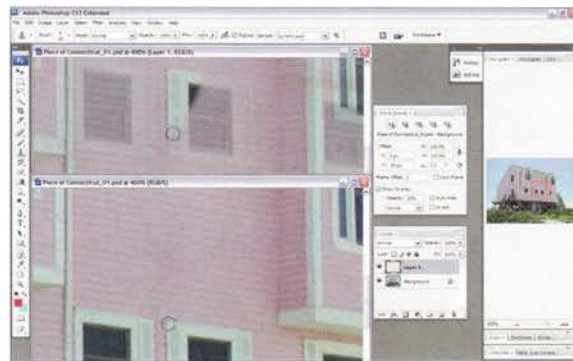
Camera RAW for JPEGs and TIFFs

One of the best new features of CS3 is the fact that you don't have to shoot in RAW anymore to gain the benefit of using the Camera RAW plugin. Now, TIFFs and JPEGs are supported. Coupled with that comes the new sliders: Fill Light to bringhten shadow areas, Recovery to bring back highlights without clipping, and Vibrance to punch up your colours. To open your images via Camera RAW, you must first open Adobe Bridge, select your image and go to *File>Open* in Camera RAW or click [*Ctrl/Cmd*]+R. This is going to revolutionize the way photographers work with their images Figure 3.

Cloning/Healing enhancements

Save up to 5 cloning sources, and see a ghost overlay of the image when you go to paint your clone source. These improvements to the Cloning tool are brilliant for Retouchers. To use these features select the Clone tool and go to *Window>Clone Source*. In this palette, check *Show Overlay*. Select a source to clone [Alt]+[Click]. Now when you move your mouse, an overlay displays the source moving alongside your cursor. As soon as you start to clone into a target, the overlay becomes static and does not move. This helps you to align the source to the target image. Here a new window is being cloned above an existing window on the side of the house. These are just some of the many features that are available, and this doesn't even begin to scratch the surface. There's an enhanced Print dialog, more options in the PDF Presentation option under the *File>Automate* menu, and web features which were rolled into Photoshop from the now deceased Image Ready. So dive in and let your creativity run wild Figure 4. «

by Robert Anselmi