

PhotographyBB

YOUR GUIDE TO THE WORLD OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY **online**

Photographic Journey:

Street Walking in Moscow with JON AYRES

Photography Tips & Techniques:

Kenneth Fagan examines the secrets to understanding and mastering f-stops

Understanding Curves:

Dave Seeram begins a series on the applications and advantages of curves

Tutorials and More





From The Editor's Desk

It gives me great pleasure to announce and welcome you all to the first edition of the PhotographyBB Online E-Magazine. As the editor on-board, I'd like to take a moment to introduce myself: My name is Dave Seeram, I am a 32 year old Digital Photographer and Photoshop® enthusiast, and I am the humble editor of PhotographyBB Online. Some of you may know me through the PhotographyBB.

Welcome to the first edition of the PhotographyBB Online Magazine

I would like to kick things off by dedicating this first issue to some very special people in my life. To my beautiful wife Priscilla: Thank you for your encouragement, love, and for always being there to offer your sound advice every time I said, "Honey, come take a look at this!" To my parents: Thank you for your eternal support, and for raising me to be the person I am today... I think I turned out OK! There are many other folks who deserve a dedication, but I'll save those for future issues (trust me, you'll feel more special that way).

Since the launch of the PhotographyBB Forums in 2006, the site has grown and evolved in several ways. The forums are still THE place to be for photographers and photoshoppers alike; mainly at the beginner and intermediate levels of experience. There is a blog style main page, and a few other tidbits worth checking out too. During 2007, there was also the major addition of the Actions Downloads Page, where visitors can download both free and premium actions for use with Adobe Photoshop. Since the inception of this page, the feedback and response has been both huge and positive. I would like to thank everyone who has made a purchase through the site, and invite the rest of you to try out the free actions that are available there. Check back with the page often, as new actions are being added more frequently.

You can visit the Actions Page here: <http://www.photographybb.com/actions>

I would also like to take some time to recognize the contributing authors to this first edition of PhotographyBB Online. A special thanks to Kenneth Fagan for his contributions to the photography "how-to" and the "Photography Then and Now" sections, to Victoria Sargysan for her tireless support and contributions in magazine format and content suggestion, and to Jon Ayres (aka Bossman) for his fabulous street walking photo tour of Moscow. The magazine wouldn't be possible without all of your help, and I thank you for your support. On the same note, if anybody is interested in contributing articles, please email me your ideas. For the time being, PhotographyBB Online is compiled strictly on a volunteer basis. However, any contribution would be of positive value in adding to your own portfolio, experience, and not to mention - it's a cool publication to show off to your family and friends!

The year 2008 is going to be a busy year for us here, and Photography Online is the first step. This magazine is shaping up to be a fun and informative addition to our site, and will be available for free download on a monthly basis. I look forward to your feedback on the magazine and content. We'll continue to expand the scope of the magazine, providing valuable info on photography tips and techniques, Photoshop tools and tutorials, photo explorations, and a member spotlight feature. I always welcome new suggestions and recommendations to both the forums and the new e-magazine, so feel free to send your feedback and suggestions to: magazine@photographybb.com

Without further delay, welcome to the first edition of PhotographyBB Online, and enjoy!

Dave Seeram
Editor and Publisher

PhotographyBB

YOUR GUIDE TO THE WORLD OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY **online**

Contributing Authors

DAVE SEERAM is the creator of the PhotographyBB Online Website, and the Administrator of the PhotographyBB Forums. Dave is a 32-year old digital photography enthusiast, and loves shooting landscapes and architecture in his spare time. Additionally, he has several years of formal training in both Adobe Photoshop® and Quark Xpress®.

KENNETH FAGAN is a 24 year old photographer extraordinaire based in Meath, in the Republic of Ireland. Ken has traveled through Australia, Europe and lastly Canada where he graduated with a professional Diploma in Photography from the Focal Point School for Visual Arts in Vancouver, British Columbia. His specialties are product and food photography, but he is also skilled in fashion, sports and landscapes. Ken works with many camera formats including, 35mm pro digital and film SLRS, Medium format and 4x5 large format. Outside of photography, he enjoys cycling, fishing & hiking and never goes without his camera.

JON AYRES is a digital photographer from the United States, now living in Moscow since August 2003. He enjoys photography, writing, history, and taking beautiful scenes of Moscow on his walking photo-tours. His informative posts and photo-tours on the forums are always a treat. Jon has been involved in writing, digital art and photography for over thirty years and is a published author having several articles and photos published.

VICTORIA SARGSYAN is a professional graphic designer from Armenia, now living in the United States. She brings over 15 years of professional experience in graphic design, and her favorite software tool is Adobe Photoshop. Additionally, she is experienced in Illustrator, CorelDraw, Freehand, Lightroom, Adobe ImageReady, Flash, HTML, Dreamweaver, Motion Artist, Anime Studio, Poser. Victoria enjoys authoring tutorials and is a wizard at creating Photoshop brushes.

CREDITS

EDITORIAL:

Dave Seeram, Editor in Chief
Kenneth Fagan, Creative Concepts & Content
Victoria Sargsyan, Creative Concepts and Design

WEB TEAM:

Dave Seeram, Web Design & Publishing, Admin
Victoria Sargsyan, Site Moderator
Kenneth Fagan, Site Moderator
Mike (aka "Venom"), Site Moderator

PUBLISHING:

Dave Seeram, Publisher & Author
Jon Ayres, Contributing Writer
Kenneth Fagan, Contributing Writer

ON THE COVER:

Dave Seeram, Cover Layout and Design
Priscilla Ko, Cover Design & Consultation
Jon Ayres, Cover Photography

HOW TO CONTACT PHOTOGRAPHYBB ONLINE:

If you would like to contact PhotographyBB Online, please email: magazine@photographybb.com or write:

PhotographyBB
#331 - 6540 Hastings St.
Burnaby, B.C. V5B 4Z5
CANADA

ARTICLE SUBMISSION:

To submit an article, or to request an article submission, please email magazine@photographybb.com with your name, email address, and a brief description of your article and ideas. We look forward to hearing from you.



Photography: Then and Now

Have you ever wondered how photography got to where it is today? Where and when did it all begin? I can tell you that it hasn't always been about high precision glass and complicated mechanics. Here is your chance to go back in time and have a look at what it was before a half a second was considered a long exposure.

CHANGING TIMES IN PHOTOGRAPHY - BY KENNETH FAGAN

Camera Obscura (Latin meaning dark chamber) was the beginning of the birth of photography. The Camera Obscura started out as being a fully enclosed darkened room with a hole in one wall, and on the opposite wall, the image would be reflected (upside-down and backwards). This image would be created from the light shining through from the outside of the Camera Obscura, in through the hole, and onto the surface of the opposing wall. Camera Obscura can be dated back as far as the 3rd or 4th century BC in the days of Aristotle.

It wasn't until the late 1500's that a man by the name of Daniello Barbaro placed a lens in the hole of the Camera Obscura to create a sharper image. The Camera Obscura didn't become portable until around the middle of the 17th century, when it was transformed from being a large room down to just a simple box. It had all the same principals as the original camera Obscura; dark, fully enclosed with a small hole at one end, and of course, with the addition of the lens. This was still the very early stages of photography. There was no way of recording the images permanently, the reason being the chemicals just weren't discovered at the time to make light sensitive paper and to make the image on the paper permanent.



Kodak Hawkeye Camera



In the 18th century a discovery was made that an image was possible to be made on material which was first soaked in silver nitrate. This was a great leap in the advance of photography, but unfortunately the images were only very temporary, and so didn't last very long.

The first permanent images to be created can be credited to Nicephore Niepce, a French inventor of the early to mid 1800's. He made a plate covered with a bitumen chemical compound, placed the plate inside the camera, and exposed it to the light for about an eight hour exposure. The bitumen chemical compound he used hardened when exposed to light, and the remaining chemicals could then be washed away after the exposure was completed. The result of this was a negative image (upside down and backwards). He then coated the plate with ink and pressed it onto paper, creating a print of a positive image.

The discovery of the benefits of silver nitrate by Johann Heinrich Schultz in the 1720's sparked new interest in Niepce's work. Schultz started experimenting with the help of a man by the name of Louis Daguerre, who had a similar interest in photography, where they worked on developing the silver compounds processes. When Niepce died, it was then up to Daguerre to continue with the experiments. In the following years he discovered that when the silver



A Compact Agfa Ambi Silette

(on a copper plate) was exposed to an iodine vapour before it was exposed to light, and once the exposure was complete, exposing the silver to mercury fumes, would then form an image that was still light sensitive. To solve this he discovered that placing the material in a salt bath, 'fixed' the image ("fixed" meaning it was no longer sensitive to light). The copper plate with the image was then patented as the Daguerreotype.

This was the beginning of permanent photographic images. Many years passed, and the photographic process kept on developing. In the 1880's, George Eastmann of New York, developed a dry gel on film. This inevitably replaced the plates of the earlier years, and had many benefits especially when it came to photographers no longer having to move around with hazardous chemicals.

Eastmann's Kodak camera went on the market in 1888. By the beginning of the 1900's, it was possible that everyone could have a camera, the first one being a Kodak Brownie.

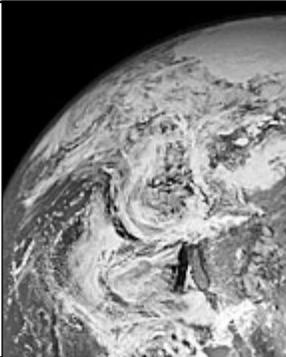


A Pentax MF 645 Medium Format Camera

From then on, cameras began to come in all shapes and sizes, and film types increased as time went on; roll film, sheet film, 35mm, etc... Lenses became more mechanical, allowing for various different exposures on the more advanced models in or around the mid 1900's. People could now take their cameras to the beach, or anywhere they wished, and send off the film to be processed. Film cameras began to be built with digitally controlled mechanics, and as technology became more advanced with the invention of the CCD Chip in the early 1970s, Kodak built the first Mega Pixel sensor in the mid 1980's. These developments in digital technology were the beginning of a new era in photography. Today, the digital photography market has outrun its film predecessor; Film is no longer in the demand which it used to be in the 1990's and before. Twenty years (or how about another 500 years) down the road, just imagine where photography will be!



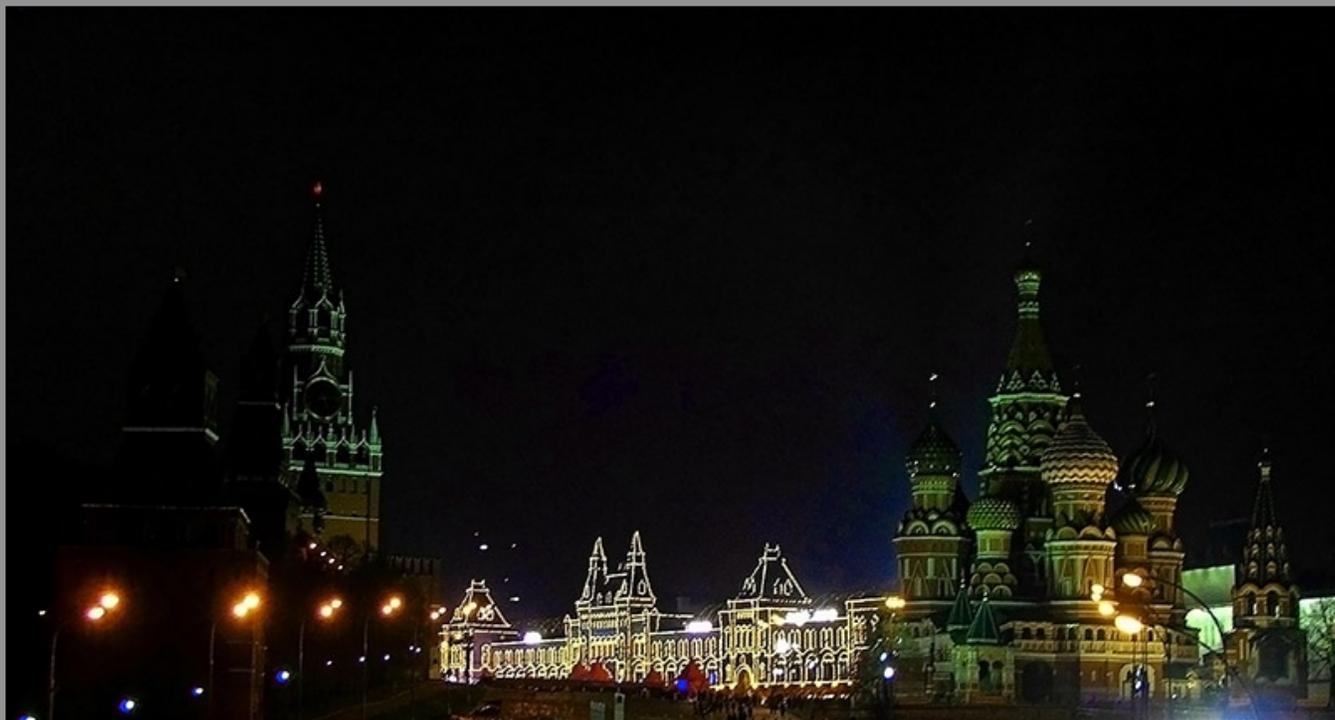
The Meopta Flexaret TLR made in Czechoslovakia



Photography Around the World

PhotographyBB Online Magazine is pleased to launch our first issue with a fabulous and stunning photo-tour of one of the most fascinating cities in the world - Moscow. Jon Ayres takes us on a streetwalking tour of the city, with some interesting historical facts and of course, amazing photos!

STREET WALKING IN MOSCOW - BY JON AYRES



No, no, I know what you're thinking and that's not what I mean. I'm not talking "those" streetwalkers. I'm talking about one of my favorite types of tours you can take in Moscow: The capital of the Russian Federation and one of the finest tours for the photographer. Not only is it the finest types of tours for a photographer, but for anybody else for that matter to take. It is one of the least expensive tours, completely free unless you choose to go inside a museum or two. Sure, I know it's only natural to want to see the major tourist's sites when you decide hit the road and come to Moscow. Famous places like the Kremlin, Red Square, St. Basil's Cathedral or the Pushkin Museum of Fine Art, but there is so much more to see than just the major tourist sites which tend to have something of a tourist trap flavor to them now, with so many people trying to sell things at tourist prices which we all know that means selling things at least 100 times more that they are really worth.

Moscow is a lovely and historic city, and it's a city that is easy to get out on your own and safely explore the many old historic streets, lovely parks and squares, the many old churches, palaces and mansions. There's no better way to see the real Russia than to get out on your own and do a little streetwalking, especially if you're a photographer who wants to take some special one of a kind type photos. I'm talking about the types of photos that give off feelings and full of emotions, not the tourist type of stuff that you can only take on tours; you can only take excellent photos by getting out on your own. None of the "pants on fire" jet tours allow for you to take the time needed to take good quality photos; you can only do this by getting out on your own without some pesky tour guide always harping about get on the bus, we have to go to another place blab-bla-bla during the whole tour. On a tour I took in St. Petersburg, I thought I would have a heart attack, that tour guide was moving so fast. I have even

seen tour buses take off and leave tourists on some of the Golden Ring city tours I have been on. What many people do not know was that the city of Moscow has decided to make tourism a major source of income for the city, from 5% at present to 20% of the city's revenue and compete with Paris and other European cities, which Moscow can do very well. Moscow has



Walking down the Mokhovaya St. one can see a splendid palace in back of the Kremlin and it is one of my favorite mansions in Moscow, The Pashkov Manor. The complex consists of the mansion, stables, manege, servant's quarters and church. Legend says that Pashkov who was in the military got upset about a demotion he received from the Tsar, so he decided to build his mansion across from the Kremlin and to add insult, the back of his mansion faced the Kremlin. Today the mansion houses the RGB which is the largest library in Europe (the second in the world after the US Library of Congress).

rebuilt the Tsaritsyno palace ruins of Catherine the Great and there is talk that Moscow will rebuild the wooden palace of Kolomenskoye in order to compete with St. Petersburg for tourists.

Since the end of communist rule in the early 1990's, tourism has become one of the major money making industries in Russia. The cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg are now considered to be two of the top tourist destinations among Asian and European tourists and the competition is heating up between the two cities. Only in the last couple of years have Americans and Canadians starting to come here to see a fascinating part of the world that was closed off to foreigners for so many years. I personally prefer Moscow to St. Petersburg, but it really depends on what your interests, likes, and dislikes are as to which city is

better. Both cities are very nice, but I like Moscow better because it is a lot older and I love history. In a number of Moscow's historic areas, you will find pedestrian only streets like Old Arbat. Old Arbat is a pleasure to walk down and see the interesting sites and shop in some of the real stores and Lavrushinsky pereulok, a lane which makes streetwalking photography a true pleasure.

When you walk down one of Moscow's historic streets such as one of my favorite streets, Bolshaya Ordynka, you can not help but feel as if you have stepped back into a bygone era. For example, here on Bolshaya Ordynka (street) you can find many historic buildings that are overlooked by most tourists such as the Marfo-Mariinsky Convent, founded by Grand Duchess Elizabeth Feodorovna who was both aunt and sister in-law of Tsar Nichols II, the last Russian tsar. This convent is only one of the many sites found on Bolshaya Ordynka, and Bolshaya Ordynka is only one of the many historical streets to be found in Moscow with interesting mansions, palaces and churches built in the 1500's, 1600's, 1700's and 1800's that many tourists never get to see, let alone even know about.

The history of Moscow officially dates from 1147



Old Arbat Street is a picturesque pedestrian street.

when Prince Yuri Dolgoruki founded a settlement here named after a river. Recent archeology discoveries now push the date of inhabitation back to the year 850. One of the reasons tourists travel to Russia is that Russia stands out from the rest of Europe and as a matter of fact, the rest of the world, because during the rule of the communists, Russia was a country closed to outsiders (people outside the Iron Curtin). Now that communist rule has ended, tourists from all over the world flock to Russia each year to see a lovely part of the world that was closed to them for so long. However, few of these tourists bother to get out on their own by themselves and see the real Moscow - instead choosing to take pre-booked tours and that really is no way for the photographer to get good photos that express feelings

on these rush rocket job tours. Most tourists choose to rely on organized pre-booked tours that rush from major site to major site for many reasons. Some want to see as many of the major important sites as they can on the limited time they have here, others are afraid that because they can not speak Russian that they

and bus/trolley map. Now on each map, mark where you will be staying, the hotel, hostel, where ever you will be staying, mark it on each map with a red circle. On the street map/metro map, mark the nearest metro station and bus stop closest to your hotel or wherever you're staying, and the bus, tram and trolley numbers.



This ancient little street has an atmosphere of the middle-ages - it sparkles with the golden domes of churches of which there are more than on any other Moscow street. Its name comes from one of these churches - the church to St.Varvara. In this photo, you can see the Old English Court at No. 4, which is one of the oldest stone buildings in Moscow. Next are the remaining structures of Znamensky monastery and then Church of St. Gorge in the distance.

can not get out on their own which is not necessarily true; they can get out on their own very easily if they want to. I see it each spring and summer, bus loads of tourists rushing from site to site as if they were in a rocket! Taking pre-booked tours are fine, you can easily see all the major sites very quickly, but there is so much more to see than just the major sites. What I call the real Russia, the real people, real culture and real history and it's very easy to see if you are willing to get out on your own and do some streetwalking. How do I street-walk you may ask as if you do not really already know?

First thing, if you're considering coming to Moscow, take time and research the city beforehand instead of just popping into your local tour agency and saying I want to go to Moscow, then settling on one of the rush job tours that most travel agents try and push. Plan out what you want to do and see and where you want to go. This is important for several reasons, especially if you're a photographer. Moscow is a big city and I do mean BIG - the largest city in Europe. I've been living here for 5 years now and I'm still making new discoveries and finding new things that I never knew existed here. You should download a street map, metro (subway) map

That way you will always be able to find your way back to where you're staying with no trouble at all. Its easy to get lost if your careless, I do it all the time myself. I fall asleep on the subway and miss getting off where I should; the bus maybe crowded and in winter the widows fog up and I'll miss my bus stop. So download and print out a few maps of Moscow, mark on them where you will be staying, then use a highlight marker and highlight the route you will be taking and you have just developed your own street walking tour. Easy wasn't it? Have I ever gotten lost? Well, lets just say I've gotten turned around a few times until I found a subway or metro station. Always look for the nearest metro station if you get lost.

Moscow has a great public transport system, it's not perfect, some bus drivers are not always

nice, but that can be expected in any city after having to deal with a few thousand fools every day. When you check into your hotel, ask and see if they have a free copy of the city of Moscow's tour guide, The Official Tourist Guide, absolutely one of the best tour guides of Moscow, some great maps in it and I would download a copy of it from the city of Moscow's web page (I have a link to it at the end of this article). Each metro station and subway car has a metro map. The stations and metro cars are all well marked with signs telling you which train to take or the route of the metro you are on, in order to reach a certain station or line and signs telling you what buses run at each metro platform entrance/exit. Each line has its own color; if you have downloaded a metro map then you can easily see how to get to where you want to go. You can also pickup a free metro map at most hotels and they are often given out to passersby's at various metro stations, keep one with you along with your other maps. If you want to take your own walking tours, the wise plan their routes out first, because in this concrete jungle, you can get lost very easily if you get careless. So plan out what you want to see and the routes you want to take and you'll have a great tour that very few other tourists get to have or see of this fantastic city.



Just me riding on a tram, one of the good ways to get around Moscow. Public transport in Moscow is good, but try to use it outside of the rush hours when people are going to work, lunch and returning home. Other times are not so bad as you can see in my photo.

What time of year is the best time to come to Moscow? That really depends on your preferences. In spring and summer the weather is nice, but a little on the warm and rainy side, this time of year is considered the tourist season, so prices will tend to be higher. Fall and winter can be nice and lovely, but Russian's winters can also be brutal, so make sure you have good warm clothing and good warm boots that will not slip on ice. If you come from a part of the world where it only snows heavily once in a lifetime and are not used to walking on ice without busting your you-know-what, then winter may not be the best time to come here. I know because I come from southwest Georgia and foolish me, I bust my butt on ice here every winter. I even broke my arm last winter when I slipped on ice because I did not watch where I was stepping. Thank goodness I know how to pick out a good camera that does not break when I slip on ice. My arm may break, but not my camera! That being said, winter time is a lovely time of year. The old churches covered in snow are beautiful and to watch the pretty Russian girls ice skating is a pleasure. Also, since fall and winter are the off tourist seasons, prices will be lower than they are in spring and summer. If you're looking to save money, then early spring and mid fall is the best time to come - the weather is not too bad and prices are very reasonable before they get higher for the tourist rush. One thing you should take into consideration is your age. If you're a part of the older generation, not as strong as you used to be, tire out easily or if broken

bones from slipping on ice can be risky, then you might want to only consider coming here in the spring, summer or early fall. Early fall is a good time to come, the maple leaves are changing and prices have begun to fall due to the off season. Moscow is a lovely city that has a lot to offer year round, but you should think about what time of year is best for you.

Can you get out and do some streetwalking and be safe? Sure you can if you are careful; Moscow is one of the safest cities in Europe, but it is not crime free. Be careful if your out late and not many people are around. The secret to taking safe streetwalking tours is always being aware of what is going on around you and making yourself a tough target. Do not take risks, put your camera in your camera case while shopping with it, and if you're out late and not many people are around, do not walk around with your camera hanging around your neck (sure sign that you're a tourist) and a target. Do not get me wrong, I walk around Moscow all the time with a camera around my neck, but there is a time and place to do this and likewise a time and places not to do this. Just use your common sense!



Kazan Cathedral located in Kolomenskoye Park, built by Tsar Alexei in 1649-1653 to commemorate the centenary of the capture of Kazan by Ivan the Terrible, is of typical 17th century style. Atop the arched first story sits a solid four-walled structure, crowned by five cupola-topped cylinders. Kolomenskoye Park has many old and historical buildings, not to mention a lovely overlook view of the Moscow River and nice river walk trail. Depending on the time of year, you may be able to pick a few fresh apples in an apple orchard next to the park as you walk through the orchard, very tasty.

Rules about photography in Russia: Rules about photography are generally the same in every country, in that if it's on a street and in public view, it can be photographed. But be forewarned, it is illegal to photograph inside subway stations. In St. Petersburg, this law is strictly enforced, but in Moscow it is often overlooked as long as you're not blocking traffic or causing and obstructions, especially in the subway stations of the circle ring which are like miniature art museums in themselves. Photographing embassies are not well thought of by the security staff, but if the embassy is located in an old mansion, you generally can photograph it from a distance with no trouble. Russia, like most other countries, charges for photography permits. Museums all like to charge for the right to take photos and some museums like the Diamond Fund where Russia's Crown Jewels are kept will not even allow cameras inside. Do not try and even use a tripod at Red Square, Alexander's Garden or Tsaritsyno, or police may ask to see your professional photographer's permit (a couple of hundred dollars permit). Also, try not to be obvious with your photography when you're the only one taking photos. By this I mean if you're in a park taking photos and you're the only photographer, and a policeman walks by, he will not notice you or bother you. But start trying to take his photo and you can pretty well believe he's going to stop and ask you some questions. Use your common sense; know when

you should take out your camera and when you should leave it in its case.

There are two types of churches in Russia: Churches that are still official churches of the Russian Orthodox Church (All Russian Orthodox Churches are official churches to the Russian Orthodox Church, but some are inactive and considered museums). For the churches which are still active and hold religious services, taking photos inside these churches are not always allowed, nor inside certain convents or of the female nuns. Taking photos in these cases are not permitted. For example, at the Danilov Monastery where the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church lives, taking photos inside the monastery is not allowed and the Cossack guards will stop you from taking photographs. Outside is fine, and you can take all the photos you want to take, but inside is not allowed.

In churches, monasteries and convents which are considered museums or no longer active officially, you can take photos inside. Sometimes a church or monastery will allow photos if you buy a permit which costs maybe \$1.00 or \$1.50, for example the Novodevichy Convent which is now part of State Historical Museum and founded in 1524 is a good example. Buy a photography permit for \$1.50 and take all the photos you want inside the convent. Remember, you are guest in another country, always respect the beliefs and customs of your guests.

Just what can you see by street walking? A little of everything and a lot of one of a kind things you will find nowhere else in the world. Moscow is a city where it really does not matter where you go, you can always find something interesting and something going on. The historic district of Moscow is generally centered around the Kremlin, the Kremlin being in the center of it all. Not everything historic is located around the Kremlin, but a lot of it is and this helps to make many streetwalking tours very easy. Streets such as Nikolskaya with its Royal Print Yard where the first Russian book was printed in 1564 all end around the Kremlin. Most of Moscow's historic streets are within walking distance from the Kremlin and Red Square. I have provided links (at the conclusion of this article), which show Moscow's famous and historic streets in detail so you can plan out where you want to go and how to get there.

The best streets in Moscow to explore (to me) are, Tverskaya Street (sometimes referred to as Paris in Moscow because of all the cafes, restaurants, hotels and sites located on this street). This is the main street of Moscow and it has existed since the 1100's. My favorite walk is from Pushkin Square to the Kremlin. What I find so interesting about Tverskaya Street are its side streets. Just glance down them when you come

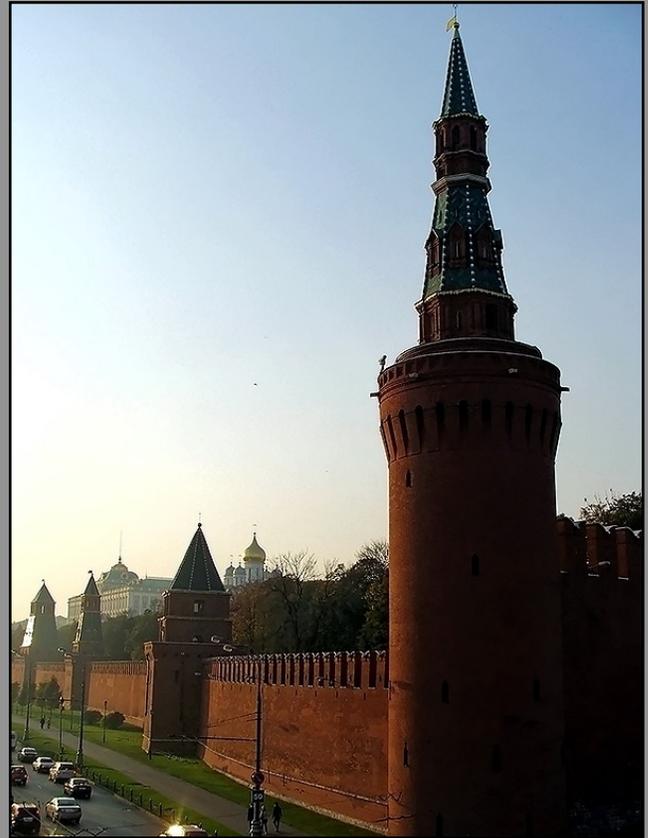


Entrance to the Danilov Monastery, which is now the residence of the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Patriarch Alexei II. No photos allowed inside the monastery.

Brief Historic Fact:



Church of Christ the Savior as seen from the entrance of Alexander's Garden Square which is located at the bottom of the church. The Cathedral of Christ the Saviour is the largest Eastern Orthodox Church in the world. It is located in Moscow, on the bank of the Moskva River, a few blocks west of the Kremlin. Construction started in 1839 and was consecrated on the very day Alexander III was crowned, on May 26, 1883. After the 1917 Revolution and, more specifically, the death of Lenin, the prominent site of the cathedral was chosen by Stalin as the site for a monument to socialism known as the Palace of the Soviets. Stalin ordered the Cathedral of Christ the Savior to be dynamited and reduced to rubble. It took more than one blast to destroy the church and more than a year to clear the debris from the site. The original marble carvings were preserved and are now on display at the Donskoy Monastery. The palace of the Soviets kept sliding off into the Moscow River and this frightened many people who thought God had cursed this site because his temple was destroyed. Finally Khrushchev ordered work stopped and a swimming pool to be built instead after Stalin's death. With the end of the Soviet rule, the Russian Orthodox Church received permission to rebuild the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in 1990. A building fund was started in 1992 and donations began to pour in from ordinary citizens in the autumn of 1994. The church was completed in 2000. A pedestrian bridge across the river, leading to the church was built and is a nice location to



A view of the Kremlin from Bolshoy Muskveretsky most.

to them and you will notice old churches, old boyar mansions, small city squares, this is the real Moscow, the main street of Moscow.

Another of my favorite streets is Lavrushinsky pereulok where the famous Tretyakov Gallery is located. This area is in walking distance from Red Square, just walk across the Bolshoy Muskveretsky most (bridge) in back of St. Basil's Cathedral, go down Bolshoy Ordynka which is another fantastic street and another of my favorites, turn right when you reach Bol Tolmachyovsky pereulok and you can not miss the gallery, Lavrushinsky pereulok is a great photographing area.



Bolshaya Dmitrovka runs parallel to Tverskaya Street from Okhotny Ryad to Strastnoi Boulevard. Members of Moscow's high society used to settle here, and at one time the street was known as Dvoryanskaya Street (Nobility). Since this street runs parallel to Tverskaya, you can walk down Tverskaya and return on Dmitrovka.

Bolshaya Nikitskaya Street, is another of Moscow's interesting streets with many sites to see including the Church of the Great Ascension, which was the site of Pushkin's marriage to the beautiful Natalia Gonchareva on February 18, 1831. A stone church was first built on this site in the 1600's at the request of Peter the Great's mother, Tsarina Natalia.

Varvarka (St. Barbara) Street is one of the oldest streets in Moscow, dating back to the 1300's, and this street is perfect to visit while your visiting Red Square. The street runs right to St. Basil's Cathedral, and you can walk down Varvarka and see some of the oldest buildings in Moscow, then swing over and walk down next to the old Kitay-Gorod walls or as it is sometimes called the China Town Walls. These walls surrounded the merchants village next to the Kremlin, then turn right and you'll be walking back toward Red Square.

I also love Moscow's parks and squares. Moscow was a city of parks, but sadly real estate prices have risen so high that many of Moscow's parks are slowly being destroyed. Moscow still has many parks at present and I always love to stop in one during spring and summer and rest awhile, have a cool Russian beer, maybe a hotdog or stuffed baked potato, watch the



Pushkin Square on Tverskaya Street is the famous meeting place.

world go by, and of course take a few photos. The most famous square in Moscow is Pushkin Square, where if you're going to meet somebody, you can arrange to meet them in front of the statue of Alexander Pushkin, the famous Russian poet. I have met a few fellow Americans here myself, who had read my articles and emailed me. I would meet them there and show them around a little.

Two of the largest parks in Moscow are Tsaritsyno and Kolomenskoye. In the southern part of Moscow, you will find the State Museum-Reserve Tsaritsyno. Tsaritsyno is the largest museum-reserve and historical and cultural monument of the federal level in Moscow, occupying over 700 hectares.

Kolomenskoye Park is another of my favorite parks to walk around in, many old and historic buildings from all over Russia are either located originally here or were moved here and rebuilt in order to preserve them. Located on a high bluff overlooking the Moscow River, many historic sites can be found here including Stone Age stone carving on the river bank. Dating from the 14th century, Kolomenskoye was the family estate of the Grand Dukes of Muscovy and later the Tsars of Russia. The luxurious chambers of Vasily III 1479-1533, the Grand Duke of Moscow was burned down during a raid by Khan Mukhammed Girei I of Crimea. In 1532, Vasily III built the church of the Ascension in the village of Kolomenskoye, to commemorate the birth of his son Ivan IV. It was the first known stone church built in the Russian kokoshnik, or tent style. Ivan IV the Terrible 1530-1584 lived here as a child, and later with his first wife Anastasia. Unfortunately, the wooden palace



of Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich, a unique masterpiece of Russian architecture built in 1667-1668 by Semen Petrov and the serf carpenter Ivan Mikhailov, did not survive. This beautiful palace, considered by its Russian contemporaries to be the "Eight wonder of the world", consisted of a large number of buildings interconnected by passageways. The original palace ensemble must have been very impressive with all its towers, cupolas, Kokoshniks, ogee-shaped roofs, spires, globes, gilded double headed eagles. The young Peter I the Great was taken to Kolomenskoye during the Streltsy riot of 1682. Later, as tsar, he returned several times. Partly because of changes in taste, and because the capital had been moved from Moscow to Saint Petersburg, the palace was neglected and the old wooden structure became unsafe for living. In 1769 Catherine II ordered it to be taken down. There is talk now in Moscow that the city of Moscow will be rebuilding this palace as they have rebuilt the palace of Tsaritsyno.

I have mentioned only a few of the many fascinating streets to explore in Moscow; it would take writing a book to name them all! So why not break out your hiking shoes when you visit Moscow and spend a couple of days seeing the real Moscow, the real Russia and her people that most tourists miss out on seeing. The key to making and taking a safe and productive street walking photography tour, is planning.

Hopefully I have shown you enough examples to wet your appetite a little. Moscow and Russia will remain a mysterious place to most of us Westerners as it was closed off to most of us for so many years. It really makes no difference what time of year you choose to come to Moscow, each season has its own unique qualities. Moscow is a city unlike any other city and is truly a photographer's dream city. So come here and find out for yourself just what you have been missing out on - Taking your own Moscow streetwalking tour will be a decision you'll never regret making.

Helpful Links for Planning Your Own Moscow "Streetwalking Tour"

Moscow Times Guide to Moscow and St. Petersburg

<http://guides.moscowtimes.ru/travel/index.php?r1=tr&r2=tmt&r3=menu>

You're Private Guide in Moscow, Famous Moscow Streets:

<http://www.guideinmoscow.com/site.xp/050055056.html>

<http://www.guideinmoscow.com/site.xp/057054.html>

Wikipedia: Streets in Moscow:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Streets_in_Moscow

Moscow Traveler's English version of the YellowPages:

This is one of the best sites for information on finding where places are, their addresses, phone numbers, web and email addresses.

<http://www.infoservices.com/moscow/2527.htm>

The City of Moscow's Website:

If it is not in English, you can choose English on the left of the web page. This web page has one of the best Moscow travel guides there is that you can download and print out the maps and plan your walking tours.

http://www.moscow-city.ru/?lang_char_id=en

This is a link to the guides you can download, though dated, they are still wonderful for the do it yourself explorer, especially The Official Moscow Tourist Guide.

<http://www.moscow-city.ru/download.phtml>

A Word From the Author:

My name is Jon D. Ayres and I'm originally from Albany, GA in the US. I first came to Moscow, Russia in August 2003 and fell in love with the city and I have been here ever since. I consider Moscow as much my hometown as I do Albany. Photography, writing and history are my hobbies along with shooting, hiking, camping, fishing, hunting and walking. I enjoy taking walks around Moscow and live next to a nature preserve in the southern part of Moscow where I enjoy taking walks and photos. In Moscow, I have taught English, business, history, literature among other things.

I have been involved in writing, digital art and photography for over thirty years and I am a published author having several articles and photos published. I have owned and used many cameras, including a Canon SLR, Polaroid and more digital cameras than I can remember. I'm a firm believer in post processing and have been using Photoshop since the first version came out. You can find examples of my digital art and photography at the following sites:

- <http://www.redbubble.com/people/bossman>
- <http://www.featurepics.com/Authors/Images6269.aspx>
- <http://www.eyeoftheheart.com/JonAyres>
- <http://s28.photobucket.com/albums/c226/wummis/>
- <http://www.fotothing.com/JohnnyReb/>



Photography 101

Each issue of PhotographyBB Online Magazine is going to bring you helpful tips and tutorials on how to get the most of your digital cameras and equipment. We'll cover camera techniques, principals of photography, digital photography issues, and how to get the most from the dreaded manual-mode!

UNDERSTANDING F-STOPS - BY KENNETH FAGAN

Are you having trouble understanding the whole concept of f-stops? If you are, then you are not alone. When you buy a shiny new SLR for the first time, there is a bombardment of technical information for you to get your head around. In this article I will explain what you need to know in order to get an understanding of f-stops. It takes time and practice to get to grips with which f-stop to use for the type of image you want to create.



First of all, before I begin, I will define some terms which I will be using in this article, to give you a better understanding of their meaning:

Diaphragm: The device in the lens which controls the amount of light entering the lens.

F-stop: The size of the opening in the diaphragm of the lens, each different f-stop allows a certain amount of light to enter the lens.

Depth of Field (DOF): The amount of area in or out of focus in an image.

Aperture: The opening in the diaphragm which allows the light to enter.

Shutter Speed: The length of time the shutter remains open in your camera.

Exposure: The aperture and shutter speed combined.

So now, once you understand the different terms, on your camera each f-stop will be represented as a number, depending on your lens, and they can vary greatly.

The smaller the number the larger the aperture, or opening. Each f-stop increases or decreases the amount of light entering the lens by a magnitude two times. These f numbers increase by the following increments:

f1.0, f1.4, f2.0, f2.8, f4.0, f5.6, f8, f11, f16, f22, f32, f45, f64, f90

For this tutorial, let's begin at f5.6 and go up as far as f45. Remember that as the size of the number increases the smaller the aperture in the diaphragm is, and therefore, the less light is being let into the camera. So, f5.6 allows x2 as much light enter the lens as f8, this means that f8 allows x2 as much light in as f11, and so on.

Each f-stop (if your camera/lens allows) can be divided into 1/3 or 1/2 stop increments, which are as follows:

(1/3 stops): f5.6, f6.3, f7.1, f8, f9, f10, f11, f13, f14, f16, f18, f19, f22

(1/2 stops) f5.6, f6.7, f8.0, f9.5, f11, f13, f16, f19, f22

The largest f-stop on your lens (in this example) f5.6, will be allowing the most light into the camera (since the aperture opening will be larger), and you will also have the shallowest *depth of field*. This means that when you are focused on the main subject you want to photograph, the objects on front or behind it will

remain out of focus, depending on how far they are from the main subject. As the f-stops decrease (remember, the f numbers get bigger but the aperture size decreases), the surrounding objects become sharper.

Let's have a look at a real-world practical example to get a better understanding of this. Take two similar objects place them on a table, one being about 12" on front of the other, making sure that they are both visible in your viewfinder. Mounting your camera on a tripod would be of great benefit to keep the camera still and in the same position throughout. Once you have all the preparations complete, focus on the front subject for each shot. Set your camera to an aperture of f5.6 and do a light reading to determine the shutter speed (the built in light meter in the camera will be able to do this for you). If there is not enough light at this point, you can increase the shutter speed time; conversely if there is too much light, you can decrease the shutter speed time.

To demonstrate the effect of f-stops affecting the depth of field (DOF) you will need to take about 5 photographs of the subjects. The first image should be taken at f5.6, the second at f8.0, the third at f11, fourth at f16, and fifth photo at f22.

You will notice that as you decrease the f-stops the shutter speed will double, for instance if you photographed the first image at 1/500th/sec. f5.6, for your second image (f8.0) the shutter speed will have doubled to 1/250th/sec, this is because the size of the aperture has decreased by half, f11 would end up 1/125th/sec, f8 1/60th/sec.

A camera (held by hand) at 1/60th will be shaky, unless you have a steady hand, so if you can avail of a tripod I would recommend you use it for more clear and sharp images. For each of the photographs, note the

A Real World Example:



Photo taken at an f-stop of f5.6

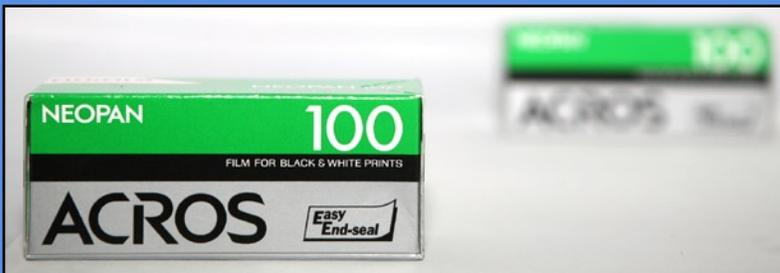


Photo taken at an f-stop of f8



Photo taken at an f-stop of f11



Photo taken at an f-stop of f16

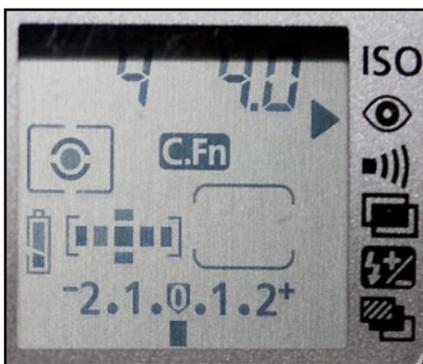


Photo taken at an f-stop of f22

f-stop used and the shutter speed. Once you have photographed the subjects at the 5 different exposures, load the images up onto your PC or Mac, or if you used film, use up the roll before you get them printed.

Once you are able to view the images and identify which image goes with which exposure (which you noted earlier in the project!), you will notice a slight difference between the first image (f5.6) and the second image (f8) having the background subject more sharp than that in the first image. Then compare image #1 to image #5 (f22), where both the subject in the foreground and the background are sharp.

To get the full benefit of f-stops and DOF (Depth of Field) you will need to understand the basics of the built in light meter in your camera:



In most digital and film SLR's, the light meter is represented as the following on both the LCD screen and when you look into the viewfinder:

-2..-1..{ }..+1..+2
•

The ‘{’ represents the current light reading. If it is positioned in the centre ‘{’ it means that the camera is set to the correct exposure for the given amount of light. Should the ‘{’ be positioned under the -2, -1, +1, +2 this means that the camera is set one or two f-stops under or over, for the ideal exposure. So when you are out photographing, for instance if you have your camera set to f11

and the light meter marker is at -1, change the f-stop to f8 to open up the aperture, likewise if the marker is at +1, change the f-stop to f16.

Additionally, it is also good practice to take photographs one stop under, one stop over, and one at the correct exposure. This way, you can view the results and see which image has the best exposure on screen or when printed; this is called bracketing. Bracketing gives you some lee-way if the lighting conditions are tricky or you are using the flash. Some camera models have an “auto-bracketing” mode, which automatically takes 3 (or sometimes even 5) photos at various f-stop intervals, so that you can later choose the photo with the most pleasing exposure.

It should also be noted that the built in light meter in your SLR is not accurate 100% of the time, as it generally just takes an average light reading. Hand held light meters are much more accurate as you can do readings on various areas on your subject.

To get more in depth on the subject of light readings, the two small dots between each number (-2..-1..{ }..+1..+2) represent 1/3 stops. If there was only one dot between each number, this would mean that they were representing 1/2 stops.

I hope that this article has shed some light (no pun intended!) on the subject of f-stops and exposures. It takes time and practice to fully come to grips with lighting, shutter speeds, depth of field etc... Many people might think that it is not very important to know these things (since your camera may have a full-auto setting). However, in the long run, as you get more and more accustomed to using the manual settings in your camera, the more you will enjoy the wonderful art of photography. The results won't come immediately, but keep your mind on the task at hand and you might just be impressed with what you come up with!

“...it is also good practice to take photographs one stop under, one stop over, and one at the correct exposure. This way, you can view the results and see which image has the best exposure on screen or when printed...”



Unleashing The Power of Curves

In each issue of PhotographyBB Online Magazine, we'll take an in depth look at a specific function which can be accomplished with curves. We'll go through real-world examples and applications that will add to your knowledge and show all that can be accomplished with this "perfect" tool!

CONTROLLING CONTRAST WITH CURVES - BY DAVE SEERAM

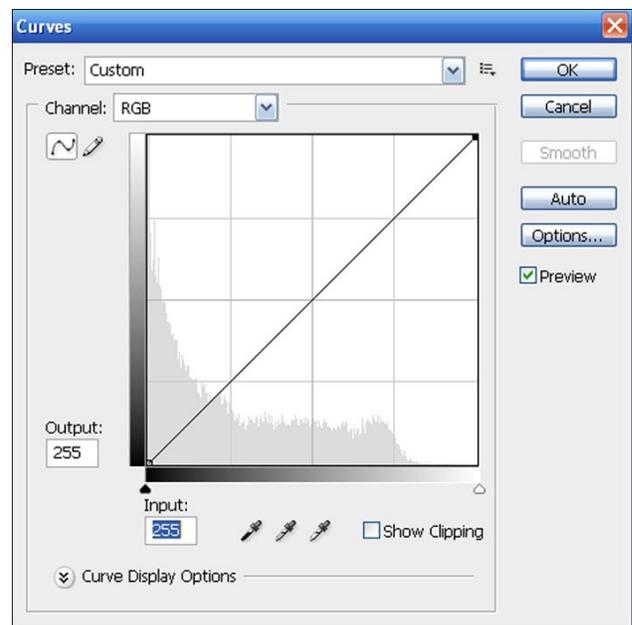
Curves have long remained a mystery for many photoshoppers, as they can be a bit intimidating and often don't produce desirable results when you just experiment with them. It's not like a linear slider you can move back and forth as you watch the changes. Curves are a vastly more complicated tool, but quite arguably the most effective tool in Photoshop. What many Photoshop users may not realize, is that the majority of standard image enhancing from brightness, contrast, saturation, color correction, and even sharpening can all be accomplished with the curves option. In this first issue, we'll take a look at the most common application of curves, which is contrast adjustment.

Often our images look more flat on a computer screen, than how we remembered them to be in real life. A lot of this is due to the limitations of digital photography when it comes to camera sensors, exposure settings, and in-camera image processing. Once we finally get the photo onto our computer, the results are sometimes left looking "flat." Often, a quick adjustment to the contrast in your photo can bring back the "vividness" of the photo, and really add some punch back into it.

But First, Some Theory:

Contrast is basically the relative difference between light and dark (highlight and shadow) areas of an image. So what does this mean, and how can I achieve better contrast using curves? Let's begin with a basic understanding of curves and contrast. If you glance at the image of the curves dialog box off to the right, we can have take a closer look at some of our options.

Curves gives us control over many things in our image, which is why we can accomplish so much with just this one tool. However, with regards to affecting image contrast, we'll just examine the necessary options for the time being (we will look at all of the curves options throughout our series on curves in each issue). The first thing you'll see is the main graph representation of the curves distribution (that diagonal line running through the graph), and the histogram of your image greyed out underneath. I'll get into histograms shortly, but I'd like to first focus on what the actual graph represents. If you notice along

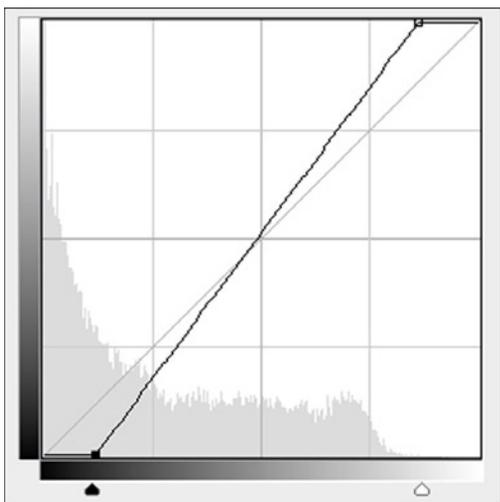


the horizontal axis of the graph, you'll see the word "Input," and along the vertical axis you'll see the word "Output." In RGB image mode, these two axis' represent the value of light, ranging from a minimum of zero, to a maximum of 255. You can also change these scales to represent ink values (which would range from 0% being white, to 100% being black) if you are primarily working with images for print. For this series, we'll be working with the light values in RGB mode, rather than ink values in CMYK mode (which you can change back and forth between, using the Curve Display Options tab a the bottom of the Curves Dialog box). Each shade of every color in your image is made up of 255 brightness

values or “intensities” of light. So any color in your image has it’s own light intensity somewhere between 0 and 255, and curves give us control to change that brightness, for any color in our image. When we work with curves to adjust contrast, we are only going to be concerned with your image’s lightness or luminance values, rather than individual colors.

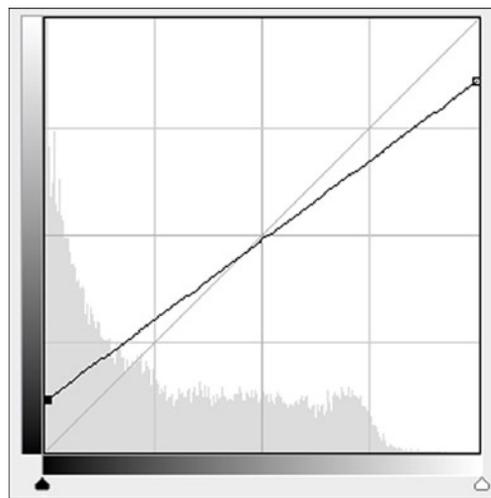
That being said, the line down the diagonal of the graph is showing us the input value of light, versus the output value. Along the horizontal axis we can see the lightness values ranging from pure black on the left (0 value of light) all the way over to pure white on the right (255 value of light). This represents the shadows (or darks) in your image, all the way through to the midtones (the middle area of the graph), to the highlights (lights) in your image. Basically, the bottom graph represents what the lightness values in your image *are*, and the vertical graph represents what they *will be* when changes are made to the curve. Now that I’ve said all of that, I’ve probably just confused everyone more than helped them! It’s all going to become very clear in a moment, I promise!

Let’s have a look at an example:



By clicking on the white and black tabs on the bottom of the graph, you can drag them across the graph to change their values. What we’ve done in the above example is increased the contrast in our image. Recall that contrast is the difference between dark and light, and higher contrast would be a greater difference between dark and light. So looking along the bottom of the graph, by dragging those black and white sliders inwards, we are darkening the shadow ranges, and brightening the highlights (albeit, in a curve like this, you will lose detail in your shadows and highlights; this example is just to illustrate how a steeper curve increases contrast).

Conversely, we can also reduce contrast in our image, by flattening the curve like this:



Here we’ve taken the pure blacks (along the horizontal input axis) and changed them to a lighter value (along the vertical output axis), and done the same by lowering the output of the highlight areas in the image. To adjust the curve in this way, you can simply click on the little black endpoints (called “anchor points”) on the curve line, and move them to where you would like them to be. So by flattening a curve, we are reducing contrast. Give it a try on a photo and see the results. Try pushing it further, and making a completely flat horizontal line for your curve; notice what happens?

The important thing to remember is that increasing the steepness of the curve will increase the contrast of your image, and flattening the curve will decrease the contrast in your image. There’s one last bit of theory to look at, then we’ll jump into some real world examples and applications for adjusting contrast with curves.

Meet Your New Friend... The Histogram!

The easiest way to tell if your image is lacking contrast, is simply by looking at it! If you feel that it looks a little flat, you probably need to adjust the contrast in your image. However, another way of telling if your image is lacking proper contrast, is by looking at the image histogram. The histogram will become one of your best friends as we go through each tutorial, to the point where you may start looking at a real-life scene and imagine the histogram in your mind!

So what is a histogram? An image histogram is a graphical representation of the distribution of tone frequencies in your image, ranging from the darks to the lights. Let’s have a look at an actual histogram to

see what that really means (in English!):

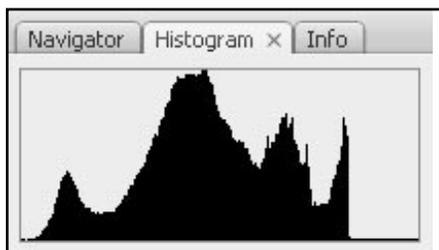
Knowing the histogram is a valuable tool in the Photoshop arsenal. A quick glance at the histogram can immediately tell us if there are certain areas of our image that require some processing. Thankfully, Adobe has given us a Histogram Palette which you can view by going to the menu: Window>Histogram

I will cover other uses of the histogram throughout our series on curves, but for the time being I'll discuss the histogram with regards to image contrast.

Let's have a look at an example:

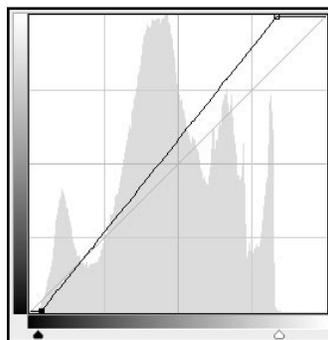


Here is our image, and the image histogram, as shown in the histogram palette:



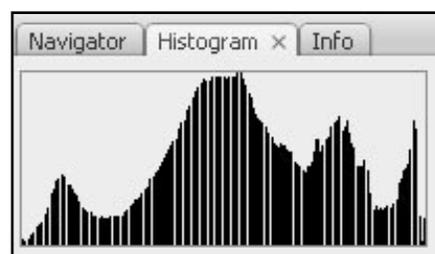
Immediately we can see that this particular histogram doesn't stretch across the entire frame horizontally. There is a "gap" of empty data on the histogram at either end (more so towards the highlights). This indicates that the range of tones in this image is not stretching across the available brightness values from 0 - 255. We can adjust the curve so that the values DO stretch more across the brightness values from 0 - 255, giving us brighter highlights, and darker shadows. That will mean there will be a greater difference between the light and dark values, resulting in what...? That's right! More contrast! Let's use the curve to bring those highlight values in the histogram, more towards 255, and the shadow values more towards 0, thereby brightening the highlights, and deepening the shadows.

Looking at the curve we can see the histogram in light grey, in the background.



By sliding the white tab in towards the brightness values that our histogram is showing, makes the resulting output values brighter. Doing the same for the shadow values makes them darker, and this results in the histogram being re-drawn to cover the

whole range of values between 0 - 255. Look at the histogram palette now:



The white vertical lines represent areas in the histogram that was "stretched" to cover the range of light values. Small thin lines like this will be acceptable and will not affect image quality when viewing on a screen or in print, however, if your resulting histogram has wide thick lines, this may indicate some posterization in your image. So now, with this steeper curve, we can look at our image and see that contrast is greatly improved:



This is a simple way of adjusting contrast based on the histogram data of your image. In many cases, stretching the light and dark values so that they cover the entire range of brightness will be enough to give your image perfect contrast. Now we'll look at some practical applications of contrast with curves.

When Enhancing Contrast, Always Change the Blend Mode!

Recall that when we are using curves to affect contrast, we are only concerned with lights and darks in the image. In order to make sure that we only affect the light and dark values (luminance), you will want to change the blend mode of your curve to "Luminosity." The best way that I recommend for doing this, is by making a *curves adjustment layer*, rather than going to the menu: Image>Adjustments>Curves... By making your curve on an adjustment layer, you are not altering the data on your original image layer, and you can also double click on the curves adjustment layer anytime to make additional changes or refinements to your curve. This is called "Non-Destructive Editing," and it is good practice to always work in this manner.

You can create a curves adjustment layer by clicking on the "Create new fill or adjustment layer" icon at the bottom of the layers palette (it looks like a circle, half black - half white). Since your curve is on a separate layer, you can easily change the blend mode of that layer in the layers palette from normal to "Luminosity." You'll notice that after you do this, your image colors revert to looking more natural. There are times that we will use curves to change color values, but not in the case of increasing contrast.



Original Image



Curves Adjustment, Blend Mode - Normal



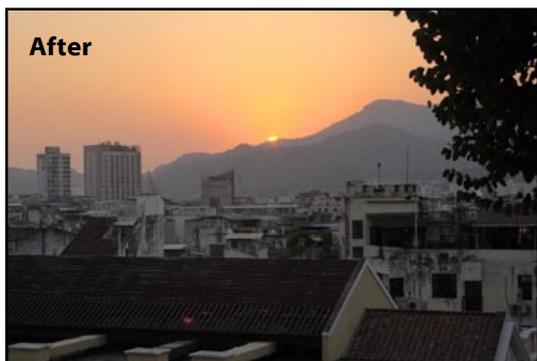
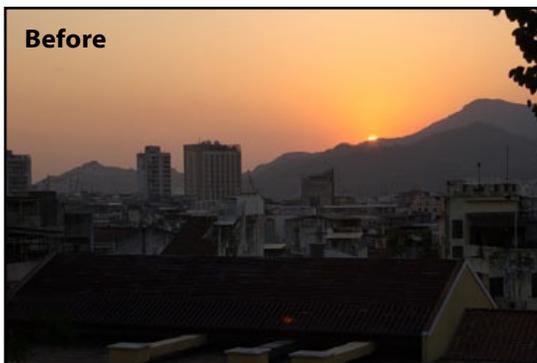
Curves Adjusted, Blend Mode - Luminosity

The above example illustrates the importance of changing the blend mode of the curve to Luminosity. The original image was flat, and could use some contrast enhancement. The middle image shows what happened when I made the appropriate adjustments with curves; However, leaving the curves adjustment layer in "Normal" blend mode boosted the blues in this image to the point where it appears to have a blue color cast throughout. By changing the blend mode to Luminosity as seen in the third image, we are able to see the contrast adjustment on just the luminance data of the image. Contrast is improved, and the image detail looks better overall.

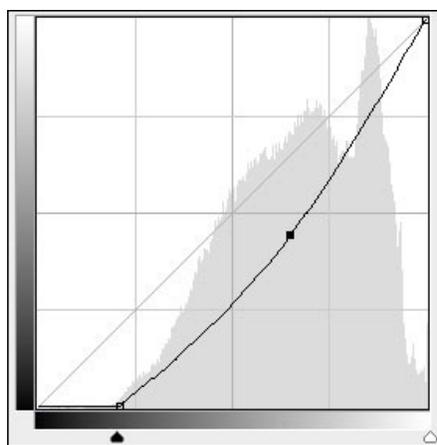
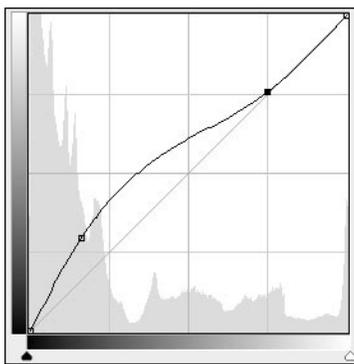
On the next page, I'll take you through some examples of contrast enhancement with curves for not only enhancing contrast, but for brightening or darkening images that require either, or how you can use a curve to increase contrast in just a particular area of your image. I'll also show you the curve that was used so you can see where and how the changes were made.

Turn the page for a closer look...

Some Examples of Contrast With Curves:



Brightening An Image: We've managed to capture a beautiful sunset in this image, however, in order to have properly exposed the sunset, we've sacrificed the exposure on the setting of the buildings below. As a result, they are a bit dark in the scene. With curves, this is a quick and easy fix! Create a curves adjustment layer and change the blend mode to Luminosity. Next, double click the layer to bring up the curve. The underlying histogram shows that the bulk of this image's tones are in the shadow ranges, hence we might want to increase the brightness in these areas. Instead of dragging the black slider inwards, what I've done is left it alone (since the histogram reaches all the way over to the blacks with no gap). Instead, you can click on the curve and add an anchor point anywhere. In this case, I've added one in the shadow areas, and pulled it upwards to lighten those areas. I also added another anchor point higher up, to "fix" my highlight areas so they will not be affected by the curve. Doing this has increased the brightness of the shadows and midtones, thereby brightening up the buildings in the scene.



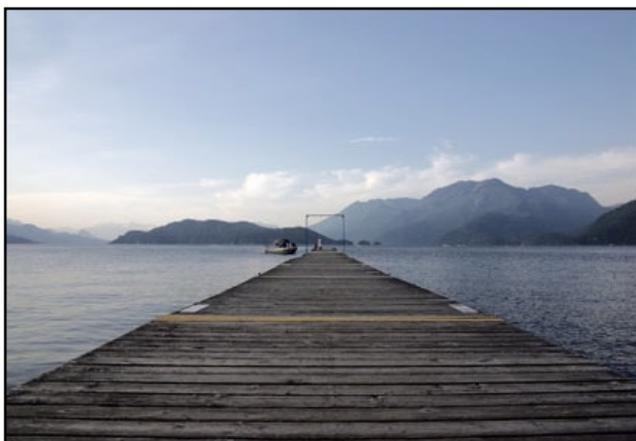
The result of adding an anchor point in the midtones region, and pulling it downwards effectively darkens the tones of the image. Notice the steeper curve equals more contrast.



Darkening An Image: You can see in the above image, that the photograph is slightly overexposed, and is lacking contrast. By now, you should be thinking that this needs a steeper curve! After adding the curves adjustment layer and changing the blend mode to Luminosity, the histogram showed me a couple things. First, the shadow range of the histogram was not stretching all the way over to the black side (0 value of light). Also, the histogram shows the bulk of the tonal data is in the midtone levels of this image, and those levels were quite high (hence a bright image). Knowing this, I moved the black slider inwards until it met with the histogram data, effectively darkening my shadows making them more rich. Also, I added an anchor point in the midtone area of the curve, and pulled it down slightly. This darkened the tones in those regions, and brought down some of the brightness in the image. Having a look at the final result on the right, we can see that there is an improvement in the overall contrast, and the image has been suitably darkened. Good job curves!

Let's have a look at a more complex example of what you can accomplish with curves. Let's say you have an image, and you want to boost the contrast in a particular section of that image. Taking a look at the example to the left (Fig 1.1), we can see that the image doesn't initially appear to have horrible contrast, although a slight boost would help. But let's say that I want to really boost the contrast in the wooden planks, and make them really "pop" out of the scene. You can change the brightness levels of just certain areas of your image within the curves dialog box.

With the curves dialog box open, you'll notice that if you hover the mouse over your image, you'll see the familiar eyedropper tool. If you hover over a certain area, you can click and hold the mouse button down, and as you continue to move the mouse around, you'll notice a circle shape moving about along your curve line. This indicates the region of the curve that would affect the area you are click-dragging in. When I click-dragged the mouse over the wooden planks in this image, this is where the circle showed up on my curve, indicating which area of the curve would affect this brightness region of my image (Fig 1.2). I have illustrated the range of where the little circle was showing up as I dragged around the wooden planks, as shown by the red elliptical area here on the curve. I can now add anchor points on either side of this area of the curve (as shown in Fig 1.3 - anchor points # 1 and 2), and by dragging the lower one down (1), and the upper one up (2), I can increase the steepness of the curve in this area alone. However, I'll also want to add another anchor point somewhere around the highlights region (3), so I don't affect those areas. Lastly, in looking at the histogram, I can see that it doesn't stretch all the way over to the right, so I can pull the highlights area of the curve inwards (4) to fix that. Here's a look at the final curve I made, and the resulting image. The wooden planks really pop now!



Final Image, Contrast Adjusted.

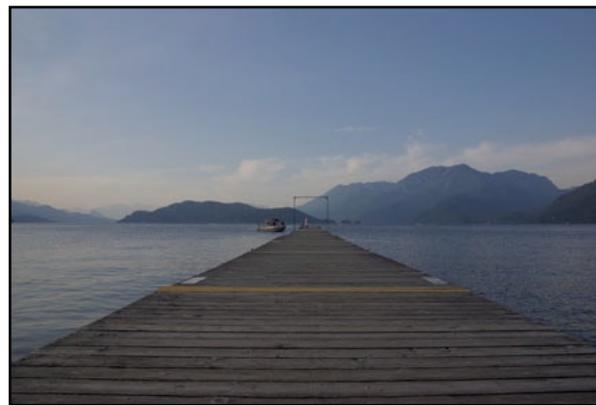


Fig 1.1 Original Image

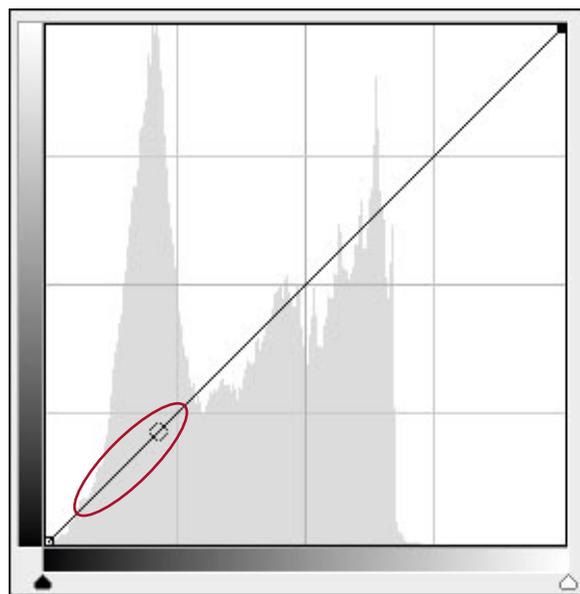


Fig 1.2 Range of data shown by click-dragging in photo.

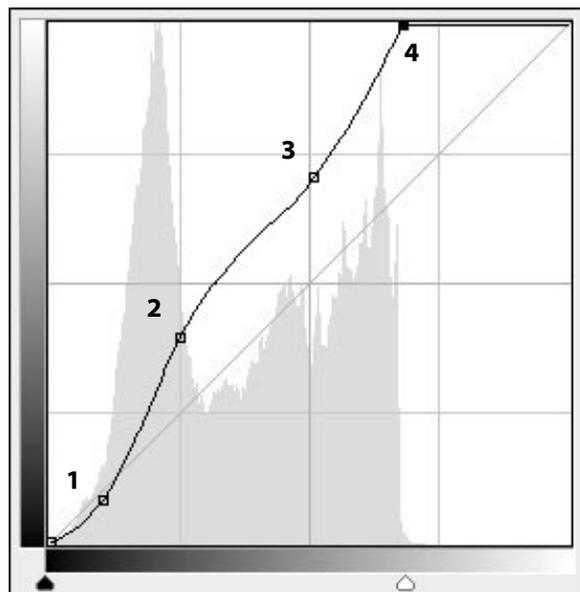


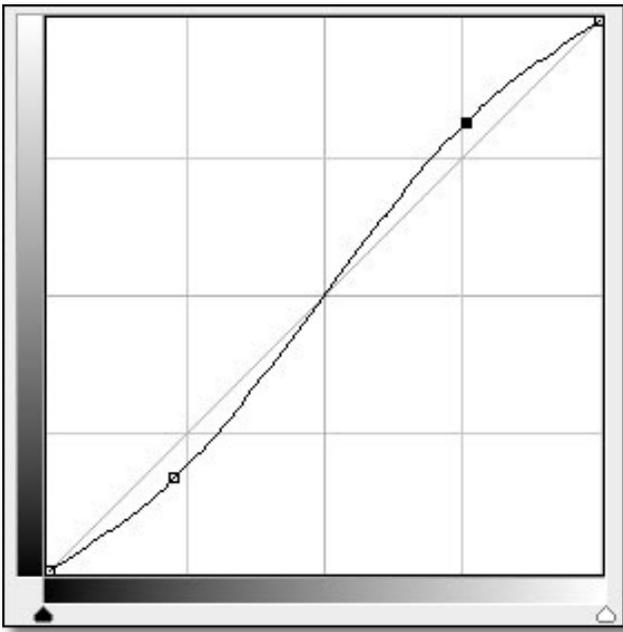
Fig 1.3 Curve shows selective saturation boost in particular areas.

The S-Curve:

You've probably heard the term at one point or another, "draw an s-curve." We'll finish up this section on curves and contrast by taking a brief look at the s-curve and its function.

An s-curve is a quick and easy way to increase contrast (in most cases, quite nicely) in your image in a matter of seconds. You basically leave the highlight and shadow endpoint values where they are (unless your histogram "suggests" you should pull them in a little, and you add anchor points in the general areas of shadows and highlights. Then, simply pull the shadows anchor point downwards, and pull the highlights one upwards. This will keep the midtone levels of your image relatively unchanged, but overall contrast will be an improvement (in most cases).

Here's an example of a typical s-curve:



You can see the shape of it resembles the letter "S" hence the name! The amount of which you increase or decrease the steepness of the curve will determine how much or how little contrast you are adding to your image.

I'd like to thank all of you (who made it through this!) for joining me on this in depth look at curves and contrast. I hope you have found some of the theory and tips to be useful in your work. I also hope this lesson has given you a greater understanding of curves and their usefulness. So be afraid no more, and open the curves dialog box, shake hands with your histogram, and have fun with the editing!

Next Issue...

We'll examine:
**Color Correction and
Color Cast Removal
with Curves!**

How to go from this:



to this:



**In our continuing series on
curves, you'll learn how to
control color in addition to
contrast control!**

Actions in Action!



You've probably heard all about Photoshop® Actions by now, and maybe even downloaded a few. In this series, I'll show you how you can create your own useful actions to automate those repetitive tasks. In this issue, we'll go through the process of creating an adjustable "blurred" image frame.

BLURRED FRAME ACTION - BY DAVE SEERAM

Here's a quick and easy method with which you can spruce up your images and display them nicely. We're going to create a cool frame for an image, using a blurred version of the same image as the background and frame. Let's go!

Step 1:

Open an Image to work with!



Step 2:

Open your Actions Palette (Window>Actions...). You may want to create a new folder to store your actions in. In this case, create a new Actions Set by clicking on the little folder icon at the bottom of the Actions palette (Create New Set), and name this set "Frames." Next, click on the "Create new Action" icon just to the right of that folder icon, and name this Action "Blur Frame."

Step 3:

Begin the Action recording process by clicking on the little "record" button at the bottom of the Actions

palette, as shown here:



Step 4:

The very first thing I do when creating Actions, is to automatically create a duplicate image to work on. That way, if I make any mistakes or accidentally save the file, I won't be saving over the original image. Do this by going to the menu: Image>Duplicate...

You can name the image anything you would like, or leave it as the default name that appears. You should immediately notice the step you just did has now been recorded in the actions palette! There's still a few more steps to go, but we're on the way!

Step 5:

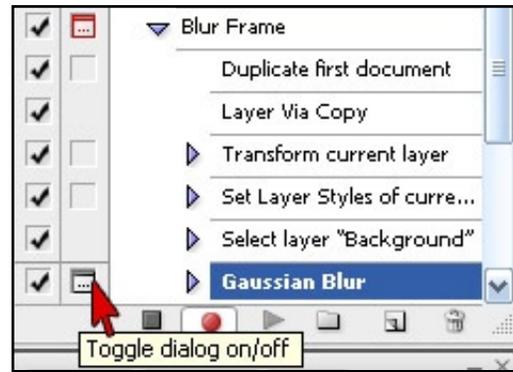
Duplicate the background layer by clicking the shortcut "Control-J." (Command-J on Mac) On this new duplicated layer, click "Control-T" (Command-T on Mac) to bring up the Transform Tool. At the top of your screen, you'll see some options, one of which is the Width and Height percentages with a little chain icon in between them. Click on the chain icon to "link" the width and height ratios together, then change one of them (either one) to 75%. If the "link" icon is clicked, both the width and height of the image should have been resized to 75% or its original size. Next, go to the layer styles menu (Layer>Layer Styles...) and choose Drop Shadow, changing only the values of: Angle: 135, Distance: 10, Spread: 0, Size: 50

With the layer styles still open, click on the layer style called "Stroke" at the bottom of the layer styles dialog box. Change the stroke size to 3 pixels, and click on the color box to change the color to black.

Step 6:

You're almost there! Click on the background layer to make it the active layer in your layers palette. Next, go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur... and choose a radius of 25 (or smaller for low res images). You'll want to be able to adjust this value at a later time, so click on the "Toggle Dialog On/Off" icon for that step in the recording in the Actions palette as shown to the right here:

That's it! Stop the Action recording by clicking on the stop icon at the bottom of the Actions palette.



You now have an Action that you can use over and over again! You'll notice when you run the Action on a new image, the Action will stop and pop up the Gaussian Blur dialog box when it reaches that step. This is why we turned the dialog option "on" in the Action. This way, you can adjust the amount of blur to suit your individual images as you see fit! Additionally, you still have control over the stroke and drop shadow of the upper layer too. You can easily adjust those by double clicking on the layer styles inside the layer palette. Now you have a reusable frame Action with the ultimate control! Try adding additional elements to the action such as an artistic filter (instead of the Gaussian Blur), or maybe even darkening the background using Curves!



This article and all images contained are Copyright© and property of Dave Seeram. Any questions should be directed to the author. Dave Seeram is also the author of several free and premium Photoshop® Actions which can be found at:

<http://www.photographybb.com/actions>



Member in the Spotlight

Each month, we'll feature a "Spotlight" on one of our site's forum members and tell you a little bit about who they are, what their photographic interests are, and display some of their work. This month, we'll start by featuring the PhotographyBB Website's creator and owner: Dave Seeram.

FEATURE ON MEMBER: DAVE SEERAM



The funny thing is, I usually have a lot to say when it comes to photography and digital image editing, but when it came to writing this "spotlight" on myself, I was at a loss for words. For those of you who are interested in reading about me, I'll give it a shot!

Tell us about yourself:

I'm just your average 32-year old run of the mill guy, from Vancouver, Canada. I've been into digital photography for some time now, since I got my first digital camera (the Nikon Coolpix 880). Since that time I've owned several small point and shoot digital cameras, and I am currently the proud owner of a Pentax K10D DSLR camera for over a year now. Getting to know this camera and really play with its features has been a great experience, and has really helped to take my work to the next level.

I would say that I'm more of a

Photoshop guy than anything else though. I've had more experience in image editing than with photography, and I've had formal Photoshop schooling as well as many years of experience with the software. That being said, I am always learning new techniques from some of the very talented people I come across online. I love teaching folks all about image editing and how to get the most out of the software. I too was a beginner once, and I understand how overwhelming it can all be at first; hopefully I can help!

Photography-wise, I am really into landscape and architecture shots. I love urban landscapes, and I am starting to form a liking for candid people photos also. My passion lies in image processing, so

most of my photography is geared towards the end result being either an artistic conversion, or an HDR (High Dynamic Range) conversion. I also love black and white, but that's a skill I have yet to master! I recently went to Hong Kong, which was the first time I've ever been to a place so different from Canada, while having my camera with me. It was quite an experience, and I was able to capture some great shots while I was there. It gave me a lot of chances to experiment with shooting in RAW, which was still new to me at the time. Now, more than anything else, I prefer to shoot my photos in RAW format.

Lastly, as most of you already know, I am also the creator and designer of the PhotographyBB Website and Forums, along with the





A beautiful view of the city of Hong Kong from "The Peak" This photo was a combination of 3 images processed with Photomatix.

PhotographyBB Actions. It's been a great journey creating the site, and I've met so many great people along the way. I started out with a limited knowledge of web programming, however, through the creation and evolution of the site I can say that I've learned quite a bit about web coding, and what it takes to be an administrator of such a site. I really geared the site towards beginners and intermediate users, but of

course everyone is welcome there. There are some great people at all levels of photography and image editing experience, and everyone's been very courteous and helpful.

What equipment do you use?

Camera wise, I have the Pentax K10D with 2 great lenses; the 16-45mm, and the 50-200mm lenses both from Pentax. Because of my

style of shooting, I tend to favor the 16-45mm heavily. I hope to get their ultra-wide angle 12-24mm lens someday (that's a hint to any folks feeling ultra-generous!). I also have a small Canon PowerShot SD630 which has been a great point and shoot camera that can literally go anywhere with me. On the software side, like I said, I am a Photoshop guy all the way. I have CS3, along with the original Adobe Creative



These are some images I shot while in Hong Kong. On the left: A street scene in Mongkok, and on the right: A large incense pot at a temple in Lantau



Suite CS, Indesign CS3, Lightroom for processing RAW images (which I am still experimenting with), and a great piece of HDR software called Photomatix.

What got you interested in photography?

That's actually a very tough question to answer. I can't pinpoint any particular event that sparked my interest in photography. I've always loved looking at photos and art, so perhaps that had something to do with it? My Dad and most of my uncles are really into photography, and I have a feeling some of that rubbed off on me; it's just in my genes! I can say that as long as I can remember I've always admired graphic design and layouts of things like magazines, movie posters, and admiring different font styles. Wherever the interest came from, it's a hobby that I love and will continue to pursue as long as I am able to work a camera, computer, and mouse!

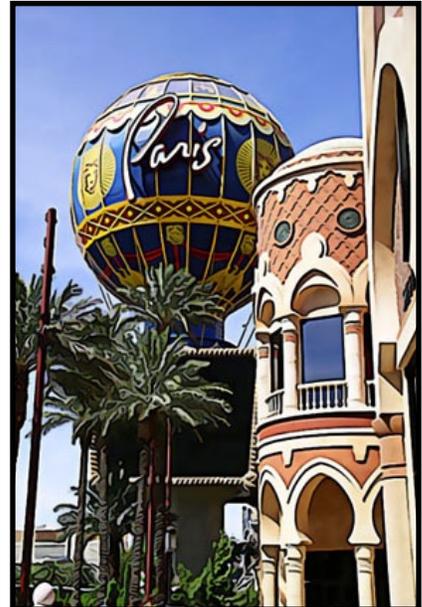
Where do you see your work going from here?

I still consider myself a hobbyist, however, the site has grown and evolved into my business. Along with the creation of this magazine, I hope to continue expanding the website, adding to the growth of this magazine, and continuing in the pursuit of teaching and training others how to get more from the digital photography world. Last year, I had the honour of being asked to write for PBase Magazine, which has been one of the best experiences for me. Although they are on a short break at the moment, I am very eager to resume writing for them when the next issue comes back!

I will also be releasing more [Photoshop® tutorials](#), along with some new tutorials for Elements® users starting next month. Some of you may have seen the new

[Photoshop® Actions Downloads](#) page over at PhotographyBB, where there are several free actions, as well as some more complicated premium artistic effect actions too.

I'd like to thank everyone for their support and assistance with the site and in the forums, and I welcome any new members to the site who would like to get to know us. Everyone at all levels is welcome to join, from beginners who can learn and grow, to the experts who love to share their knowledge. If you have any comments or questions, feel free to email me at: dave@photographybb.com

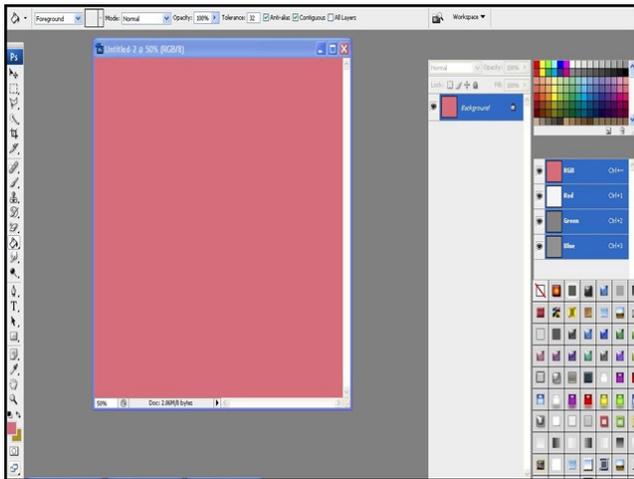




Scrapbooking Tutorial Series

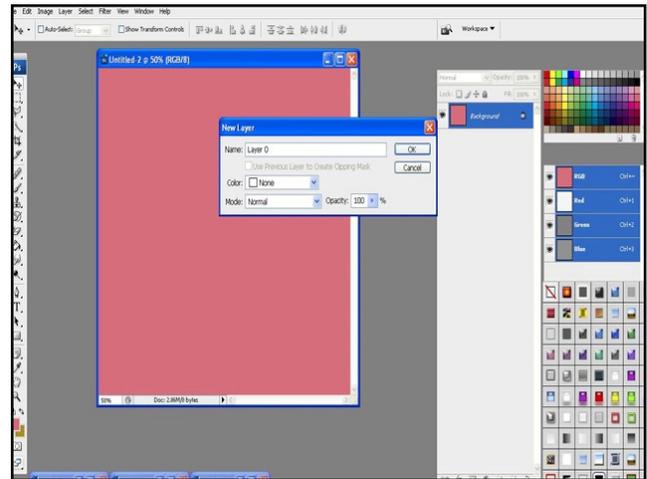
One of the best ways to showcase your digital photos or spruce up your web gallery is to build your own digital scrapbook. Our talented moderator, Victoria, begins this series by sharing some easy-to-use techniques in producing various effects and layouts for digital scrapbooking.

HAPPY VALENTINE'S SCRAPBOOKING - BY VICTORIA SARGSYAN



Step 1:

Begin by creating a new document of any dimensions that you would like (use 300dpi resolution for print, or 72dpi resolution for web use). Next, fill the background layer with any color of your choice. (In this case, pink or red would work well for Valentines!)

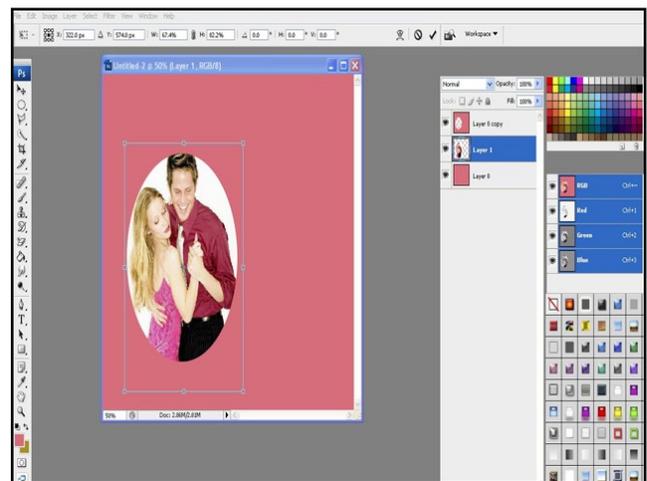


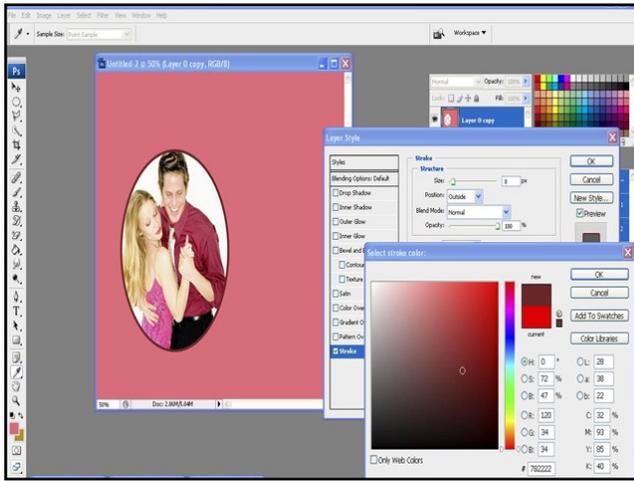
Step 2:

Double click the background layer in the layers palette and accept the name "Layer 0." Duplicate this layer (Control-J on PC, Command-J on Mac). On the "Layer 0 copy," use the elliptical selection tool (or any selection tool) to make a cutout shape, and press "delete." Next, press Control-D (PC) or Command-D (Mac) to deselect the area.

Step 3:

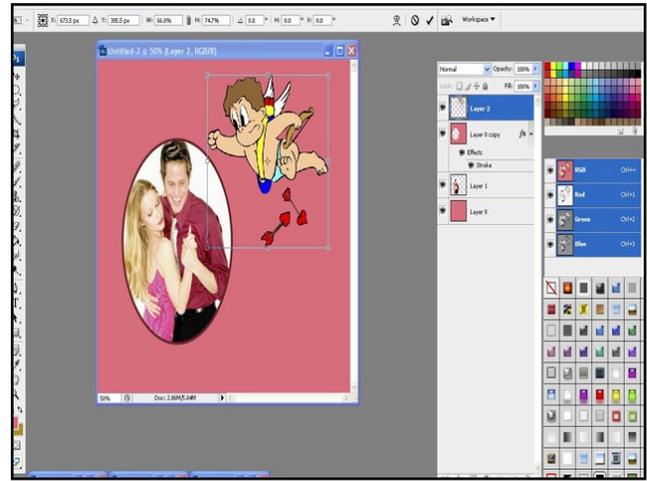
Open your "romantic photo," and go to the menu: Select>All, then menu: Edit>Copy. Go back to your original document, click on Layer 0 to make it active, and click Control-V (PC) or Command-V (Mac) to paste your photo in between your two layers. You should see your photo through the selection cutout you made earlier. Click Control-T (PC) or Command-T (Mac) to resize and reposition your photo in the cutout area. Hint: You can hold the shift key down while dragging the corner anchor points to resize the photo and keep the aspect ratio constant.





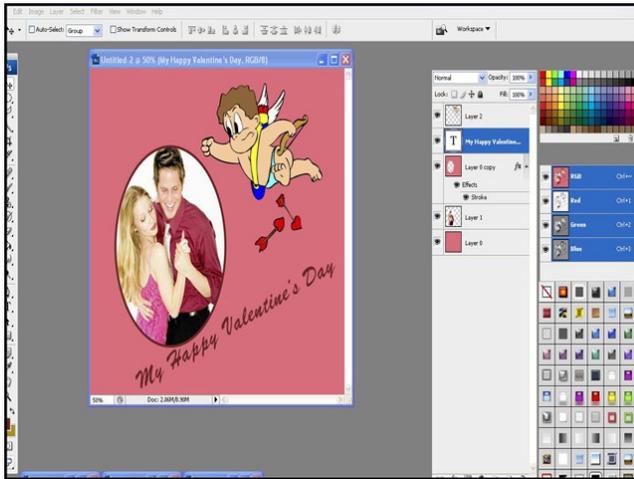
Step 4:

Click on the "Layer 0 copy" to make it active in your layers palette. Add a layer style by going to the menu: Layer>Layer Style... Try adding a stroke to the layer (you can change the stroke color and weight), or try other effects such as bevel/emboss, drop shadow, or outer glow. Experiment with multiple effects based on your preferences.



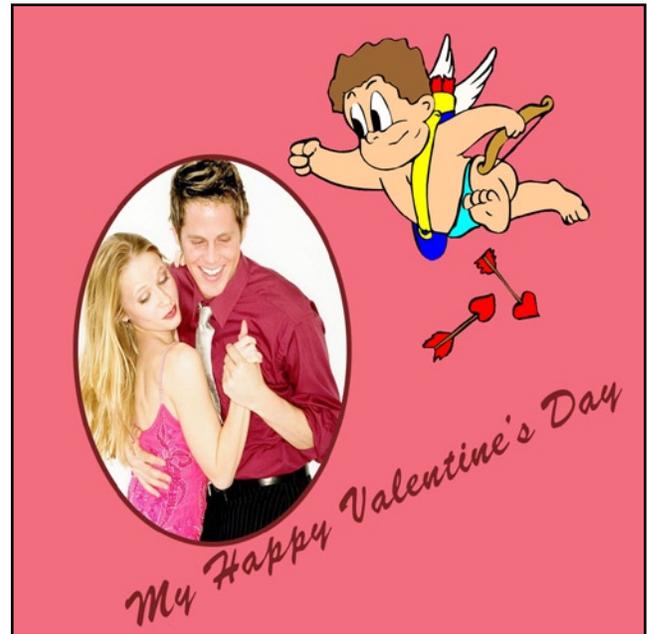
Step 5:

As in step 3, open a clip art illustration or graphic. Go to the menu: Select>All, then Edit>Copy. Go back to your image (Layer 0 copy should still be active), and paste the clip art onto your image as before. You can resize and reposition the clip art as described in step 3 also. If your clip art has a white background you can use the magic wand tool by clicking the white area, and then pressing delete to erase it easily.



Step 6:

Using the horizontal type tool, add some text to personalize your image. Click Control-T (PC) or Command-T (Mac) to rotate or resize your text to your liking. You can even add a layer style to your text as described in step 4. You're finished!



The final result! You can even experiment by using textured backgrounds, or even other images as backgrounds instead of solid colors. Have fun!

Victoria is a member of NAPP (National Association of Photoshop Professionals) and is a talented graphic artist and web designer with over 15 years professional experience. To see more from Victoria, visit her website where you can check out her galleries and additional tutorials at: <http://www.viktoryaimage.com>

Step into the Spotlight!

Would you like to be featured in the PhotographyBB Online Spotlight on Member section? If so, please let us know at: magazine@photographybb.com

We'll feature your photos, a small biography and write-up about you, as well as links to your web gallery or photography related business. We all love photography and image editing, so let's get to know each other!

Next Month's Issue:

We've got some great stuff in store for next month's issue of PhotographyBB Online Magazine. Next month we'll continue our series on curves with an article on color correction with curves. We'll also have some more Photoshop actions, tutorials, Scrapbooking tutorials, and another Member in the Spotlight.

We'll also continue our series of "Photography Around the World" as we take you on a photographer's view of far away and exotic places which just might make you feel like you are actually there!

Additionally, there will be some new editions to the magazine with articles on stock photography agencies, and a new series on Photoshop Elements tutorials. So with all this exciting stuff going on, stay tuned for next month's issue of the PhotographyBB Online Magazine!

Discounts for Readers:

Each month we will be featuring special discounts for various online offers, exclusively for readers of the PhotographyBB Online Magazine. This month, we'll feature a discount on our Photoshop Actions, with a whopping 30% discount on any PhotographyBB Action! (Discount Code: **PBBMAG30** - Valid until March 11th, 2008)

Thank you for reading the PhotographyBB Online Magazine. We hope you enjoyed it, and we'd love to see you again next month. If you have any questions or comments for us regarding this magazine, please feel free to email us at:

magazine@photographybb.com

We would love to hear from you!

Would You Like to Contribute?

We are looking for talented individuals who would like to expand their portfolios by volunteering to contribute articles to this e-magazine! If you are interested, we'd love to hear from you.

Topics of Interest are:

- Photography on Location
- Photoshop Tutorials
- Hardware / Software Reviews
- Camera Equipment
- Member Spotlight
- anything you'd like to share!

To become either a regular contributing author, or even just for a one-time article, please email us at: magazine@photographybb.com

Introduce yourself, share your idea, and maybe we'll see you in next month's issue!