AFFINITY PHOTO
EDITING GUIDE

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO GET STARTED RIGHT NOW!

SIX COMPLETE GUIDES TO ALL THE AFFINITY CORE SKILLS

PART 1
GET TO GRIPS WITH AFFINITY'S PERSONAS

PART 2
ENHANCE LANDSCAPES WITH TONE MAPPING

PART 3
DISCOVER THE POWER OF BLACK & WHITE

PART 4
USE BLENDING MODES FOR AMAZING ASTRO

PART 5
GET FLAWLESS SKIN WITH AFFINITY'S TOOLS

PART 6
CREATING STUNNING IMAGE COMPOSITES

PART 1
GETTING STARTED WITH AFFINITY PHOTO

Affinity Photo
The new king of editing

ONE-TIME PAYMENT
■ Affinity Photo is yours for the one-off cost of £48.99, or only £19.99 for the iPad app
■ Visit affinity.serif.com/photo

Kirk Schwarz takes an in-depth look at Affinity Photo, an award-winning photo editing suite that offers powerful features at an unbeatable price.

I N THE WORLD OF image editing, plenty of software packages claim to offer the ultimate experience. But none of these have excited us as much as Serif's Affinity Photo editing suite.

This fully-featured editing software manages to create a perfect balance between familiarity and innovation thanks to its use of industry standard tools, as well as an ethos of creative freedom. Few packages share such an incredible feature list as

Affinity, truly meaning the only limit to your creativity is your imagination.

As well as allowing you access to such essentials as Layers and Masks, you also have excellent Live Filters, which allow you to see the effects as you apply them – a must for the perfectionist in us all. It also offers a huge degree of customisation, non-destructive adjustments and the amazing ability to work with PSD files, meaning you won't lose your back

catalogue of Adobe work when you switch over.

With such impressive specs, it's little wonder that Affinity has claimed both our own five-star Highly Rated and Best in Test awards on every appearance, as well as an Apple award for App of the Year 2017.

Therefore, throughout this special supplement, we're going to explore the key aspects of this amazing software, taking an in-depth look at exactly what Affinity Photo can really do, including a peek at the amazing iPad version, which is hands down the best fully featured mobile image editing software available, offering a near-

identical experience to the desktop version.

What you can expect
We'll be running through all aspects of photo editing, starting out in this issue with a look at the Develop Persona, where we'll show you how to get the best out of your RAW files.

We'll also be looking at Affinity's ability to create stunning landscapes, thanks to the Tone Mapping Persona, as well as how to make the most of the brilliant portrait features, which includes one-click frequency separation, taking all of the hard work and effort out of this advanced technique.

> " AFFINITY HAS CLAIMED OUR VERY OWN COVETED FIVE-STAR BEST IN TEST AWARD "

AFTER

LANDSCAPES MAKE YOUR WORK SHINE IN ONE CLICK
Affinity has a number of powerful tools for landscape photographers, including a dedicated Tone Map Persona. Opening your images in this Persona allows you to merge a series of photos together to create an HDR image, which you can fine-tune with a series of dedicated sliders.

BEFORE

AFTER

BEFORE

PORTRAITS EASILY CREATE HIGH-END RESULTS
When it comes to editing portraits, the more advanced skin retouching techniques used to be a difficult trick to master. Luckily, Affinity makes everything so simple, even including a one-click Frequency Separation mode.

// KNOWHOW
FOUR THINGS THAT WE LOVE ABOUT AFFINITY

Here are the features which we think make Affinity the best new editing software on the market.

LIVE FILTERS
If you're the creative type who always adds Radial Blurs or likes to Liquify, you'll love the ability to see your effects in real-time. This aspect really takes the guesswork out of complicated edits, meaning everybody has the power to create stunning results.

TONE MAPPING
HDR is an area which many still consider a complicated process. However, thanks to the dedicated Persona, merging multiple shots couldn't be more simple. It offers a series of one-click presets, as well as sliders to create the perfect shot.

FULL CUSTOMISATION
Affinity is set up in such a way that nearly all aspects can be customised to your liking. Through a simple process, you can add tools and tabs, ensuring that your favourites are always close to hand, and best suited to your needs.

AFFINITY FOR IPAD
Not content with creating an amazing desktop experience, Affinity is also responsible for the best image editing app on any mobile device. It's so good, you can follow along with these tutorials without leaving the sofa.
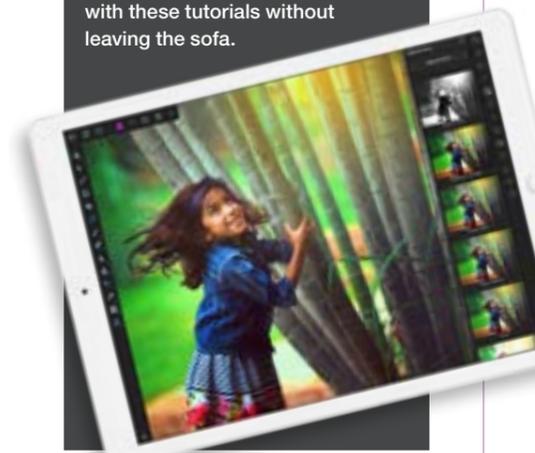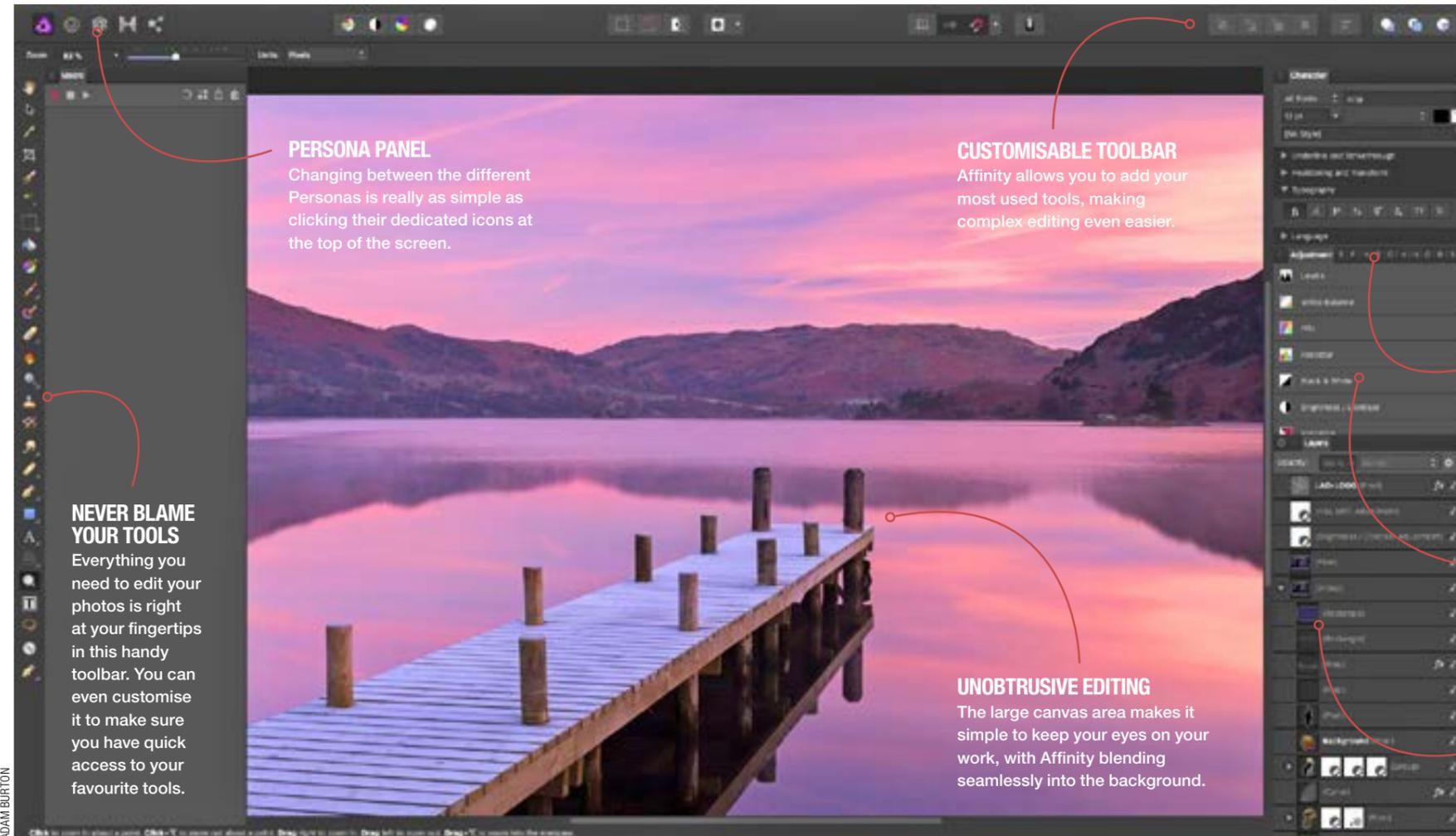
A quick look into the power of Personas

A FFINITY PHOTO has been designed from the ground up to offer an unbeatably smooth and intuitive experience. It's powerful enough to impress any professional looking for a fully-functioning editing suite, while also allowing first-time users to create fantastic results. It achieves this by dividing tasks into Personas. These tabs house various editing setups, and do an excellent job of keeping your workflow intuitive.

With just a single click, you have access to a wealth of abilities, including powerful Tone Mapping to create HDR images, the most intuitive Liquify tool available and an excellent RAW conversion experience. When you start using these alongside the raft of industry standard tools and adjustments on offer, you'll see why Affinity Photo has been winning awards and earning widespread acclaim since its initial release.

Personas explained

Here, we'll be taking a quick look at what each Persona is capable of, offering you a brief overview and pointing out some of our favourite key features, many of which may be surprisingly familiar to you. Over the course of this complete guide, we'll also be going in-depth to show you some simple ways to achieve excellent results, covering genres from landscapes to portraits, and everything in-between.

PERSONA PANEL
Changing between the different Personas is really as simple as clicking their dedicated icons at the top of the screen.

CUSTOMISABLE TOOLBAR
Affinity allows you to add your most used tools, making complex editing even easier.

NEVER BLAME YOUR TOOLS
Everything you need to edit your photos is right at your fingertips in this handy toolbar. You can even customise it to make sure you have quick access to your favourite tools.

UNOBTRUSIVE EDITING
The large canvas area makes it simple to keep your eyes on your work, with Affinity blending seamlessly into the background.

ADAM BURTON

PHOTO PERSONA
HOME TO TOOLS, LAYERS AND ADJUSTMENTS
Packed with industry standard tools, adjustments and creative filters, the Photo Persona is where the majority of your editing will take place. Whether it's working on your colours, adding selective Dodging and Burning or even creating sprawling complex photo composites, this is where the magic happens.

SO MANY OPTIONS
Affinity houses a wide range of features to aid in your editing. Everything from an infinite History slider to a powerful integrated stock photography panel is waiting for you to take full advantage of.

ADJUSTMENTS GALORE
With so many Adjustment Layers available, non-destructive editing gives you the freedom to edit without fear of ruining your shots.

MULTIPLE LAYERS
Affinity supports Layers, which means you can create complex composite images, really letting your imagination run wild.

LIQUIFY PERSONA
RESHAPE YOUR SHOTS WITH THIS AMAZING TOOL
Liquify is an impressive image reshaping feature, including tools such as Push Forward, Pinch and Punch. However, Affinity takes it one step further by showing the effects in real-time, including any underlying Layers, as well as adding a customisable grid, allowing for precise control, and a Reconstruct Mesh, which can automatically lessen the effect by any degree – amazing.

DEVELOP PERSONA
A POWERFUL RAW CONVERSION MODULE
RAW conversion is an essential, and Affinity's Develop Persona is outstanding, allowing you full control over fundamentals such as Exposure, Contrast and White Balance. You also have an advanced lens distortion correction tab, as well as the excellent Before and After tools, which allow you to make sure you're happy with changes before you jump to the other Personas to finish the job.

TONE MAPPING PERSONA
CREATE BREATH-TAKING HDRS IN MERE SECONDS
Tone Mapping maximises a shot's dynamic range, which it achieves by merging data from multiple bracketed images. However, Affinity's Tone Mapping Persona works just as well with a single image, giving you instant results. You have access to a large library of one-click effects, including the excellent James Ritson custom creations, and a wide array of sliders allow you to craft the effect that best suits your vision.

EXPORT PERSONA
HAVE PRECISE CONTROL WHEN SAVING YOUR WORK
While you can easily save your work without utilising the might of the Export Persona, those who have the same exacting standards as us will be delighted at the power this module offers. Allowing full control over saving your images makes sure the world sees them as you intended. Affinity Photo even lets you save as PSD files, meaning working with cross-platform clients becomes incredibly simple.

PART 2
ENHANCING AMAZING LANDSCAPES

Affinity Photo
Landscape masterclass

BEFORE

AFTER

LANDSCAPES REVEAL THE HIDDEN DETAIL IN YOUR SHOTS
Affinity Photo has a tool or adjustment for every occasion. These include Dodge, Burn and Curves – ideal to add the perfect contrast.

Kirk Schwarz walks you through getting the most out of your landscape photos using Affinity's RAW editor and the powerful Tone Mapping Persona.

WITH SO MANY stunning landscapes around us, ripe for capture, they're a staple of our photography portfolios. Whether it's sunrise, sunset or just an interesting location we've stumbled across, we're never without our cameras.

Of course, even the best shot in the world can benefit from a touch of editing, and that's where the excellent Affinity Photo comes into play. On the previous pages, we journeyed through the five different Personas, taking a brief look at what this very powerful photo editing software could offer. Now we're going much more in-depth with a longer look at the Tone Mapping Persona.

Using a RAW landscape image, which we'll show you how to convert in the Develop Persona first, we're going to choose a custom Tone Mapping preset from the many on offer and walk you through the huge range of customisation options.

The joy of having so much control is that it really allows you to make each shot your own and actually gives you the level of freedom to be as subtle or as crazy as you want in your final edit.

When you've finished in the Tone Mapping Persona and applied an HDR look to your image, you'll then be placed back into the Photo Persona, which means you can carry on editing, using tools such as the Clone Stamp Tool to tidy up any little imperfections, or even throw in a couple of Adjustments, meaning you can change the Colour Balance, add some Split Toning or even convert your shot to black & white if that's the look you're after. The choice is entirely yours.

Which photo?
We're using a shot from Blyde Canyon in South Africa, but you are free to use any photo you'd like, though the technique will work best if you make sure you have a shot with plenty of contrast, and with details captured in both the shadows and the highlights. This will ensure the Tone Mapping has enough data to work with as it processes the initial image. Of course, even though this is a landscape masterclass, you're free to try it with any of your shots, even wildlife or portraits.

> **"THE JOY OF HAVING SO MUCH CONTROL IS THAT IT MAKES A SHOT YOUR OWN"**

EDIT YOUR SHOTS ON THE MOVE THE AMAZING AFFINITY IPAD APP
When you're out shooting landscapes and you want to get started with the editing process straight away, the Affinity Photo app is a boon. It offers an identical level of functionality as the desktop app, so you can even follow along with this tutorial on the go.

// KNOWHOW
WHY AFFINITY IS PERFECT FOR LANDSCAPES

Affinity is a fully-featured editing package, which offers you all the top-end professional tools, allowing you to create truly stunning results.

DEVELOP PERSONA
No landscape editing would be complete without the ability to tweak your RAW files. The Develop Persona gives you the flexibility to recover highlights, create selective edits and perfect your colours.

ALL THE TOOLS
Affinity's strength comes in its variety. Instead of hand-holding, it allows you true creative freedom, meaning you can create the edit you have in your mind, without having to worry about constraints.
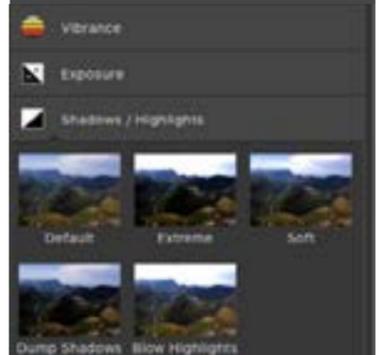
EDIT AS YOU SHOOT
The brilliant iPad app offers everything the desktop version does, including RAW editing. This means you can transfer your shots to your iPad as you shoot, and have them edited before you even get in the car.

Vibrance

Exposure

Shadows / Highlights

Default   Extreme   Soft

Dump Shadows   Blow Highlights

TONE MAPPING PERSONA
Giving you the ability to create instantaneous HDR results from multiple or single images, the Tone Mapping Persona is as simple as it is powerful. You even have access to the brilliant James Ritson custom profiles.

AFTER
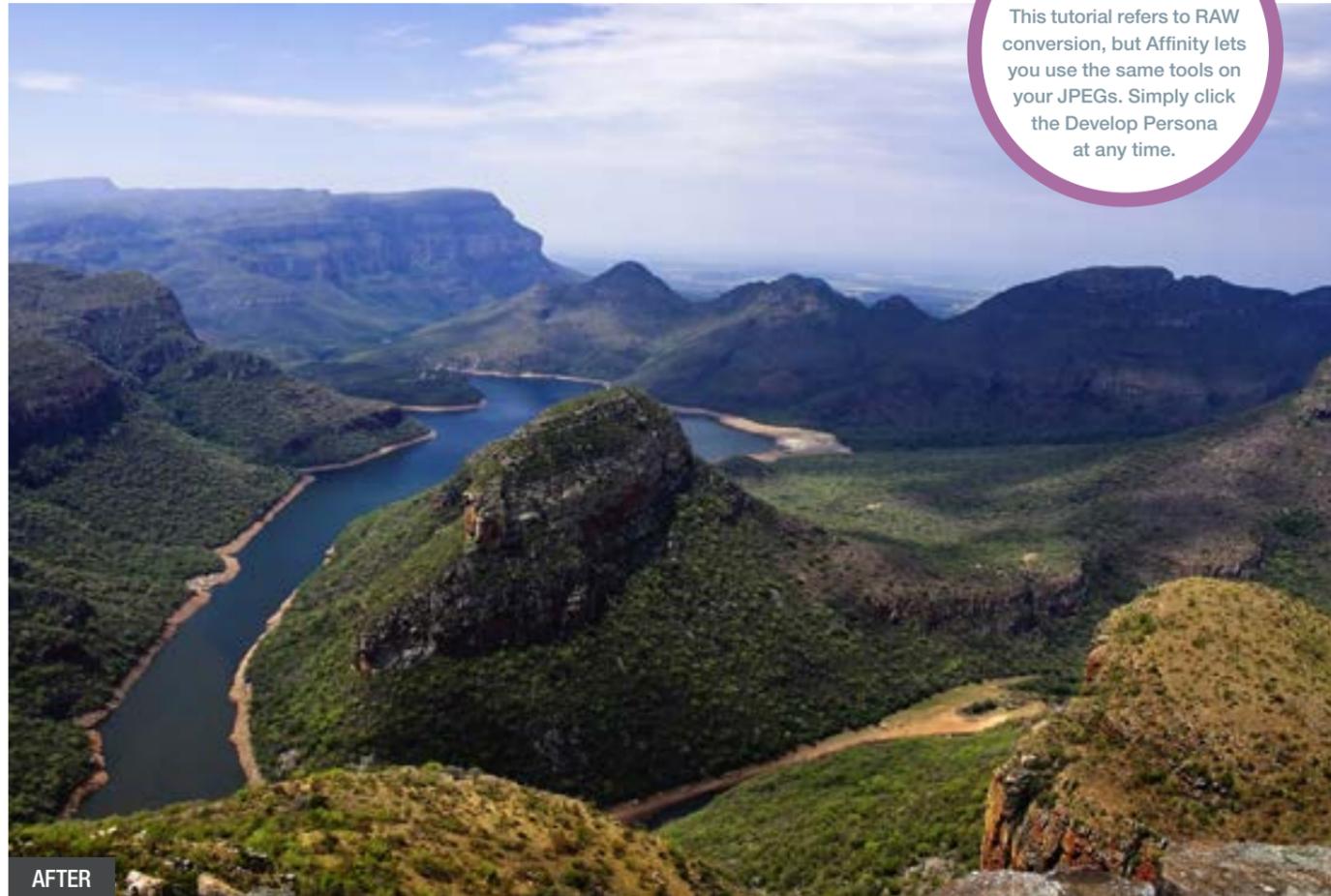
Give yourself a head-start with Affinity's Develop Persona

WE ALL KNOW that RAW files capture a phenomenal amount of data in comparison to JPEGs. However, to make the most of this data, you need the software to read it – which is where the Develop Persona really shines.

In this first step you'll see how to make the most out of your RAW landscape image, recovering highlights and shadows, as well as adding some vibrancy, perfecting the colours and using gradient tools to add selective edits. This will allow you to make skies look moody without affecting your perfectly-exposed foregrounds.

Once you've explored the tools on offer and created your very own magnum opus, you'll be taking it into the Tone Mapping Persona to add the final touches and bring out all the hidden details.

With Affinity Photo's ethos of creative freedom, you are always able to jump back into the Develop Persona to touch up your work if you've missed something in the edit, as well as moving seamlessly between the Develop and Photo Persona, which gives you access to tools such as the Clone Stamp Tool, Colour Balance or the powerful Dodge and Burn.

BEFORE
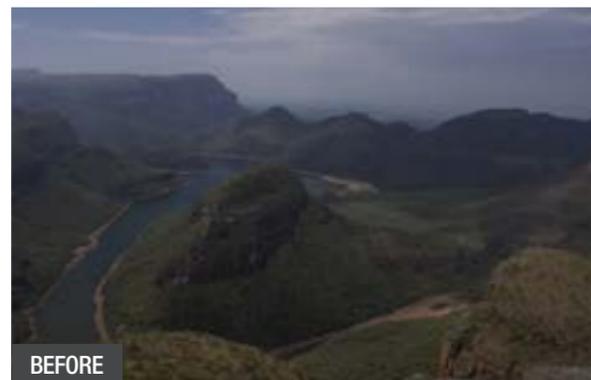
Above & top This RAW image doesn't do the scene any justice. With just a few tweaks, you can completely change your shot.

❝ AFFINITY PHOTO ALLOWS YOU TO MOVE SEAMLESSLY BETWEEN THE PERSONAS ❞
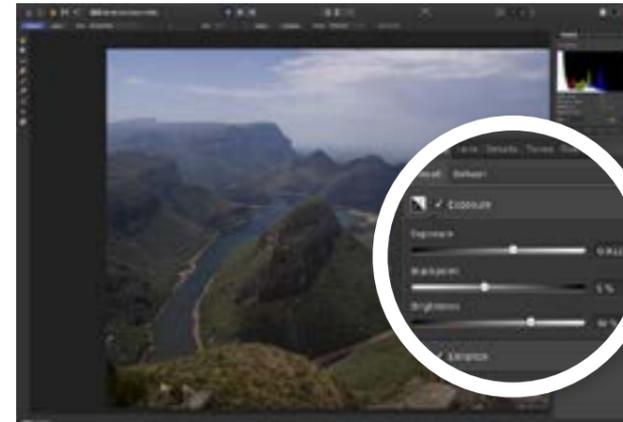
1 **Get your exposure spot on**
Open your Basic Tab and increase the Exposure and Brightness sliders to lighten or darken the image, but don't blow your highlights. You can also increase your Blackpoint to 5% to deepen the blacks, which really makes the shot pop.

2 **Add some contrast to make it pop**
Set the Contrast and Clarity sliders to bring out the details – to 12% and 10% respectively in our shot. If your colour isn't jumping out, you can increase Vibrance to bring out rich tones – we've gone to 50% and the result is subtle.
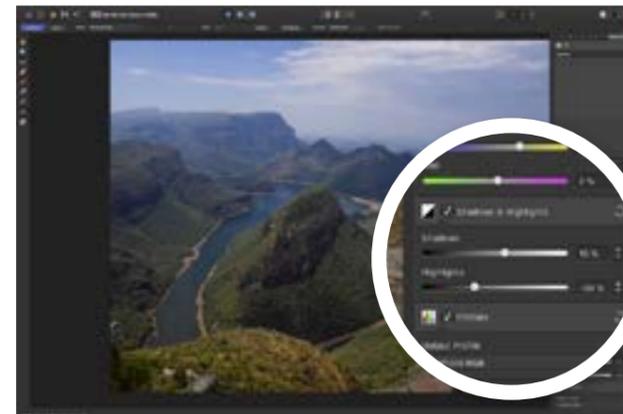
3 **Recover your shadows and highlights**
Click on Shadows & Highlights and slide Shadows right to increase the brightness in the darker areas – we've gone to 15%. Slide the Highlights slider left to recover details in the brighter parts, preventing the sky from being too bright.

4 **Use a gradient to edit your sky**
Click the Overlay Gradient Tool and select Linear. Now drag from mid-sky to your horizon. The red mask is the only area that editing will affect, so use the previous three steps to perfect your sky. Click Develop when you're finished.

// KNOWHOW THREE TOOLS FOR PRECISION EDITING

OVERLAY GRADIENT TOOL
This allows you to mask off an area, meaning only your chosen area will be affected by any editing, perfect for bright skies.

OVERLAY PAINT TOOL
Similar to the Gradient Tool, but this actually allows you to create your mask with a brush tool for pin-point precision.

OVERLAY ERASE TOOL
This handy erase tool allows you to remove any area of your mask by simply brushing, which is great for detailed fine-tuning.

AFTER

BEFORE

Above & left We've turned our RAW image into a great starting point, making sure we have plenty of tones. In just five steps, you can really ramp up the visual impact of your shot.

Use Tone Mapping to create instant impact

TIP
EXPERIMENT
With such a wide range of presets available, don't be afraid to experiment. The menu even offers Crazy and Extreme options.

C REATING HDR photos can be an in-depth and advanced technique, often requiring you to shoot a series of exposure bracketed images (meaning they're shot at different exposures). Affinity Photo includes a dedicated Tone Mapping Persona to take on some of this work. While this Persona does allow you to import multiple images and create your final shot, it can also create the effect using a single exposure, which it will automatically turn into a stunning HDR image at the click of a button. The best thing about this technique is that you have a wide range of one-click presets designed to cover nearly every type of shot you can envisage. You can even see the results in real-time. You also have the usual exposure, contrast and colour tools, as well as Tonal Compression, Local Contrast and even an excellent Overlay Paint Tool to create a custom mask, allowing for a truly mind-blowing level of selective editing possibilities for your landscape images.
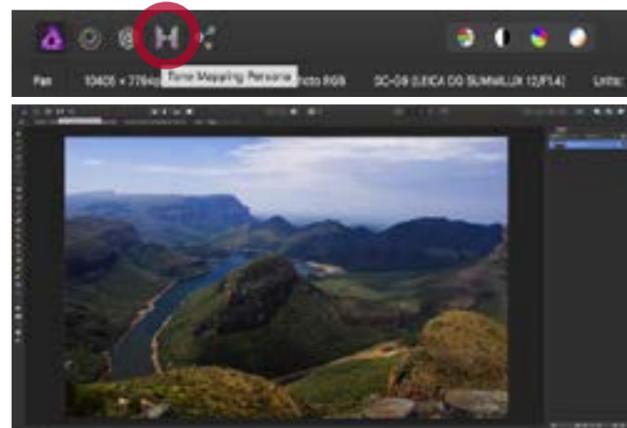
1 **Open the Tone Mapping Persona**
Once you've finished the Develop process, you'll be sent to the Photo Persona. This is great for getting in-depth, but Affinity has an easier path to amazing results – simply click the Tone Mapping Persona to carry on.

2 **Select your Preset**
In the Tone Mapping Persona, on the left you'll see the presets. Open the drop-down menu and click James Ritson Customs. For this tutorial, we've used the 'Lift Shadows, Max Punch' preset, though feel free to experiment.
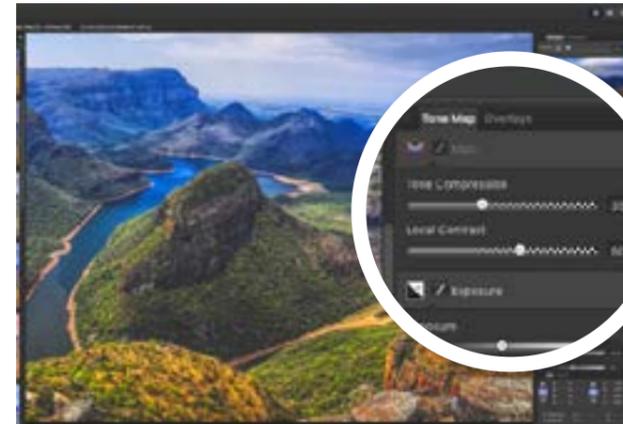
3 **Adjust your tonal compression**
For this scene, the instant effect is a little too powerful. Sliding the Tonal Compression slider left will reduce the overall effect, while dragging the Local Contrast slider left will decrease the clarity in the image, making it a touch more natural.
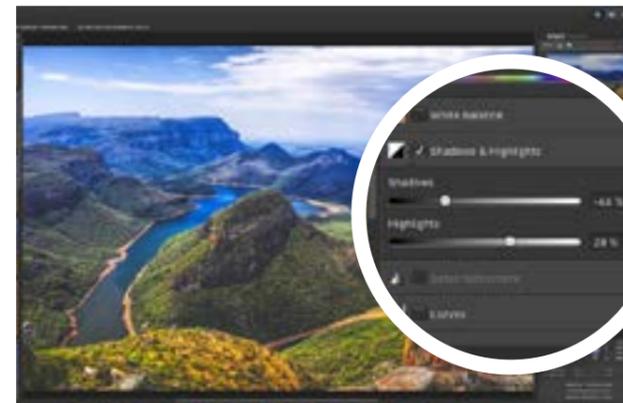
4 **Edit the exposure to suit your scene**
You'll recognise the same tool layout as the Develop Persona, which keeps this step simple. Drag the Exposure, Blackpoint and Brightness sliders to fix your Exposure, and use the Shadows & Highlights to bring back any lost details.

5 **Fix the colours with a mask**
Click the Overlay Paint Tool, and simply brush over the saturated areas to create a mask. Now reduce the Saturation and Vibrance sliders. If you've made a mistake, click the Overlay Erase Tool to erase the mask. Now click Apply.

// KNOWHOW THREE OF THE BEST ONE-CLICK EFFECTS

With so many on offer, we thought we'd give you a helping hand by showing you our three favourite presets, ranging from a calm and natural look, to something more extreme.

DRAMATIC
Found under the Default tab, this punchy preset gives you an instant colour boost without giving you too much clarity. It's ideal for bright images with a wide range of colours, and is perfectly suited to bring out the best details in your favourite summery blue-sky shots.

MAXIMUM GRIT
Found under the Extreme tab, this preset is unashamedly HDR. Packing in a huge amount of Local Compression and an increase in sharpening, it is perfect for gritty black & white portraits, especially on those subjects who have one or two wrinkles or furrowed brows.

ARCTIC CHAMBER
This James Ritson Custom is ideal for enhancing those tones. Bringing the colour temperature down and increasing the Local Contrast, it's perfectly suited for bringing the most out of your foreground, making it ideal for long-exposure winter waterfalls.

PART 3
EXPLORING
MONO URBAN
ENVIRONMENTS

Affinity Photo
Creative city scenes

ORIGIN00 IMAGE TECHNOLOGIES

STANDARD CONTRAST

ENHANCED CONTRAST

USING LEVELS INSTANT BLACK & WHITE EXCELLENCE
Simply add a Levels Adjustment and increase the Black Level to 10%
and decrease the White Level to 90% for an instant contrast pop.

WHY AFFINITY IS
PERFECT FOR
B&W EDITING
Affinity's brilliant non-destructive
adjustments allow a huge range of
creative freedom. These come into
their own when converting colour
to stunning black & white.

BLACK & WHITE
Starting with an obvious
one, the powerful Black
& White Adjustment allows you to
fine-tune each individual colour
with simple sliders. This lets you
make micro changes that are
otherwise near-impossible.

LEVELS AND CURVES
Affinity offers both,
allowing you to fine-tune
shadows and highlights to the nth
degree, which is perfect for those
eye-catching black & white
conversions with ultra-bright
whites and smooth blacks.

GRADIENT MAP
Our personal favourite,
adding a Black & White
Gradient Mask allows you to
place your tones exactly. This
is perfect for taking control over
the all-important transitions in
your monochromatic images.

SOFT PROOFING
Designed to represent
different print spaces,
Soft Proof can also be used to
add an artistic effect. Cycling
between options can give you a
subtle washed-out look, which is
ideal for adding a sense of filmic
depth to your black & whites.

Kirk Schwarz shows you how to get the most from
your abstract architecture and gritty black & white
street photos in this easy to follow tutorial.

CITIES ARE GREAT
for so many reasons.
Not only do they often have
the best shops and a vibrant
night-life, but they also offer
incredible architecture and
loads of creative potential.

Exploring busy shopping
precincts and more secluded
back alleys will reveal a whole
host of intriguing characters,
just begging to be framed up
by your camera.

If you prefer your subjects
to be silent and static, the
often eclectic mix of old stone
buildings and purpose-built
steel monoliths provide the
perfect playground for
adventurous architectural
photography enthusiasts.

Of course, taking the shot
is only the first step on the
way to greatness. A small
amount of natural editing
can help to really uncover the
hidden potential in even your
best work. Adding simple
edits, such as contrast and
clarity, will give your shots
a gritty look, while managing
to emphasise every little
detail for your viewers to
marvel at. Taking it one step
further, adding a Soft Proof
Adjustment will allow you to
instantly create a beautiful
washed-out look, adding an
extra depth to your tones
with a traditional film
appearance. You can also
explore the Tone Mapping
Persona, using HDR to ramp
up your street portraits.

Keep ultimate control
All of these techniques are
non-destructive, so you can
go back and fine-tune your
individual Layers to ensure
you have the perfect results.
And don't forget that Affinity
will save these Layers, as well
as your full History, meaning
you can re-jig your edit as
much and as often as you
like. To really harness the
power of black & white, it's
important that you have a
shot that translates well.
The best mono photographs
are often those which have
plenty of contrast, and a
strong amount of dominant
shadows and highlights. You
can often find the right mix
in shots taken in directional
light, early morning or late
afternoon, when the sun is
at its lowest point.

Finding this perfect mix
increases the depth, so try
and make this work to your
advantage by having one side
in constant light, and the
other bathed in deep shadows.

> "NATURAL EDITING CAN
> UNCOVER HIDDEN POTENTIAL
> IN EVEN YOUR BEST WORK"

EDIT IN YOUR LUNCH BREAK WITH THE AMAZING AFFINITY IPAD APP
We've previously explored the massive power of Affinity's iPad app, and once again you
can use it to follow along with this entire tutorial. The best part is that you can take it
anywhere, so grab a sandwich and sit down to create your mono masterpieces.

AFTER

BEFORE

Above & left Adding a black & white conversion, as well as increasing noise and clarity, has given us a completely different feel to our starting image, really helping to bring this character to life.

Learn how to add a gritty feel to your street photos

A S FAR AS GENRES go, there are few as classic and inspirational as street photography, harking back to the days of pioneers such as legendary Magnum co-founder Henri Cartier-Bresson and Vivian Maier, who tragically only achieved recognition posthumously.

Whatever your inspiration, the subtle art of capturing candid moments has moved on relatively little since the days of film, and nowhere is this more obvious than the wide-spread use of black & white in modern street shots.

Of course, packing in a massive amount of flexibility, Affinity gives you more than one way to create stunning black & whites, and the powerful Filters, such as Noise, will allow you to add a hint of vintage grain to your work, really adding to that gritty look. The great thing about Affinity is that we can do this entire process non-destructively. Simply put, this means your original image remains 100% intact, allowing you to alter any of your changes at any point throughout your edit.
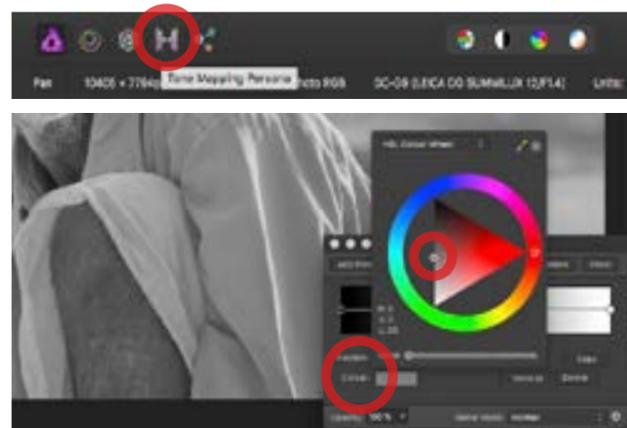
1 **Create a black & white Gradient Map**
Open the Adjustment Panel and choose Gradient Map. Click the left-hand circle, which will be red, click colour and select black. Do the same for the right circle, changing blue to white, and then the middle circle, choosing a mid-grey tone.

2 **Adjust contrast**
Double-click halfway between the left and middle circles to add a new point and choose a very dark grey. You can slide this to change your shadow strength. Repeat on the right-hand side, choosing a very light grey.
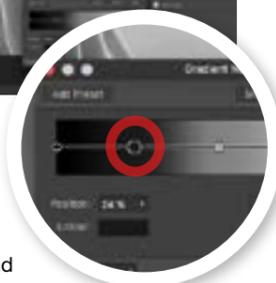
3 **Increase your global Clarity**
Click your Background Layer and Duplicate it with Ctrl+J. Open the Live Filters menu – the hourglass icon below your Layers Panel – and select Clarity Filter. Add a radius of 5-10px for local contrast to bring out your subject's character.

4 **Add a touch of noise for that film look**
Again in the Live Filters menu, click Add Noise Filter. Make sure you're set to Gaussian and not Uniform, and also have Monochromatic ticked. Set intensity to 15% to add grain. Right click and select Merge Visible to create a Pixel Layer.
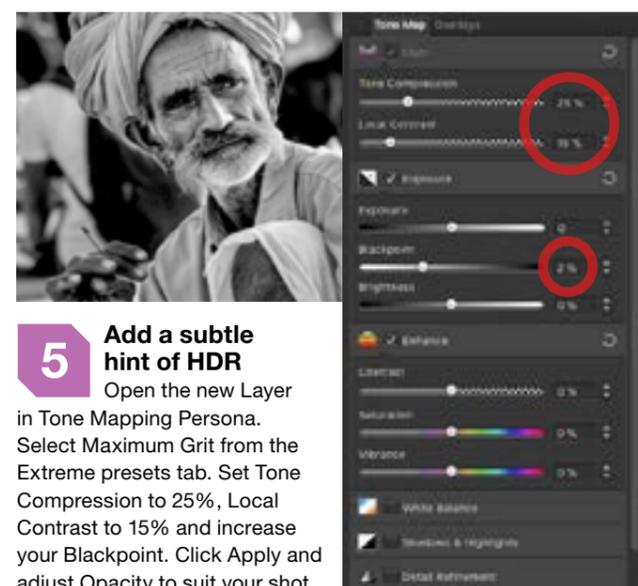
5 **Add a subtle hint of HDR**
Open the new Layer in Tone Mapping Persona. Select Maximum Grit from the Extreme presets tab. Set Tone Compression to 25%, Local Contrast to 15% and increase your Blackpoint. Click Apply and adjust Opacity to suit your shot.

Affinity Photo
Explore the night sky

ZDENEK BARDON

BEFORE

AFTER

BLENDING MODES SCREEN VS SOFT LIGHT
Screen hides the darkness in the Layer, where as Soft Light lightens anything over 50% grey, and darkens anything that's darker.

Offering the ultimate freedom allows you to craft your star shots from the ground up, perfect for revealing hidden details.

CLARITY
This handy filter increases the local contrast, which can often be incredibly overpowering. However, in small doses, you'll find your stars really pop against the blackness of the sky.

BLENDING MODES
One of the most underutilised features of image editing, Blending Modes allow you to alter the behaviour of a Layer in relation to the Layers below, which makes adding colour pops amazingly simple.

DEVELOP PERSONA
With so much of the information hiding in plain sight, the ability to convert a RAW file is essential. The Develop Persona's powerful tools will allow you to increase the brightness of the stars, while retaining the darkness of your sky.

Kirk Schwarz delves into the vast mystery of space with these two techniques to help you get the most out of your amazing astro and star trail shots.

STARS – POSSIBLY the greatest inspiration the human race has ever known. Whether you gaze up in amazement on a dark, clear night, or you purposely study the outer reaches of our galaxy with a powerful telescope, chances are you're blown away by what you see. Of course, the beauty of astrophotography is that what you see is only an infinitely small portion of what's to be found, and your camera can help to uncover these mysteries. Shooting long exposures allows far more light to hit the sensor than the human eye can perceive, revealing a myriad of amazing details.

With a little bit of luck, a tripod and some jiggery pokery with your settings, you can easily wind up with a stunning dark sky-scape. However, taking the photo is only the first step in the process, and the real magic happens in post-processing, where you can bring out all of the unseen information, as well as correcting the colour and adding those finishing touches.

What the pros use
The image above was shot and edited by leading astrophotographer – and keen Affinity user – Zdenek Bardon. The talented Czech photographer has edited countless shots in Affinity, and has even had some of the resulting shots published by NASA, which must surely count as one of the highest commendations either Affinity or Zdenek could receive.

With such a wide range of industry-leading tools, as well as a can-do attitude and creative freedom, Affinity revels in creating the impossible. It even features an amazing Exposure Merging function, which, as you'll see, allows you to create star trails, such as Zdenek's, in a single click. This is something that was previously a laborious task, having to change Blending Modes on multiple Layers one at a time.

Don't just take our word for it – get out there and shoot your own astro images, and once you've captured a RAW masterpiece, come back and follow our step-by-step tutorial to really make them shine.

> "THE REAL MAGIC HAPPENS IN POST-PROCESSING, WHERE YOU ADD FINISHING TOUCHES"

BOBAK BOHDAN

CREATE YOUR OWN EPIC ASTRO SHOTS WITH THE AMAZING AFFINITY IPAD APP
Affinity Photo's award-winning software is also available as an iPad app, and is perfect for editing on the move. If you want to work on your astro images while still under the night sky, the app is a perfect companion to check you've nailed the shot.

Exposure Merging
Exposure Merging can be used on Image Stacks to take an average metering of the individual Layers and create the perfect exposure. This is ideal for star trails, but also very handy for anyone shooting bracketed landscape shots.

BEFORE

AFTER
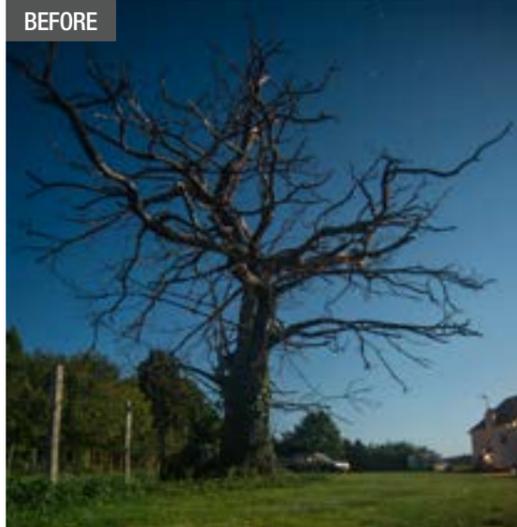
DAN MOLD

Above & left In just two steps, you can import all of your individual shots and merge them together to create the final star trail image.

Use Blending Modes to create amazing star trails

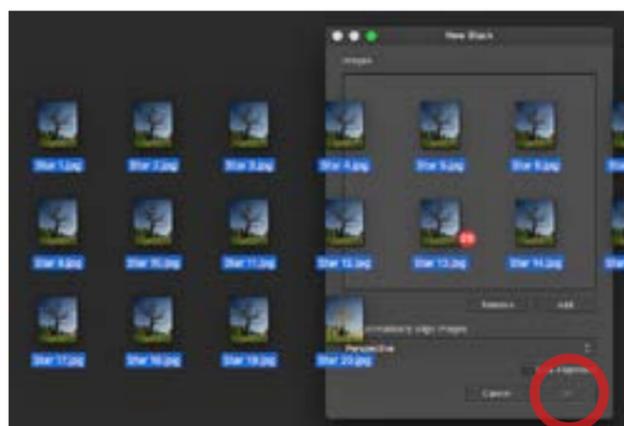**S** TAR TRAILS ARE one of the most creative avenues of astrophotography, blurring the lines between fact and fiction to create a shot with a massive amount of visual impact. The great news is that they are actually

incredibly simple to shoot, and even easier to create in Affinity Photo.

To craft your shots, you'll need to set your shutter speed to at least 30 seconds, and take a series of continuous shots over the course of 20 to 30 minutes.

The individual shots will have a slight trail to them, but with a little Affinity magic, you can blend them all together seamlessly to create one mega star trail.

You'll learn how to use Layer Stacks, bringing multiple photos into a single

document as a series of Layers. You'll also be exploring the Exposure Merging function, which allows you to get the best exposure from multiple shots with a single click. It's so simple, you'll have a masterpiece in minutes.

TIP
EXPOSURE MERGING

While Maximum works well for us, you can also try Range or Mid Range, which may work better.

1 **Import as a New Stack**
To open all of your star shots as a single multi-Layered document, go to *File>New Stack*. Click Add on the dialogue box and select your shots. Click Open, then Click OK to add them to your Layers panel – this will take a minute.

2 **Use Exposure Merge**
Now you'll have a Group called Live Stack. To merge your star trails, simply click the Exposure Merge icon to the right of the stack Layer and change to Maximum. This will instantly create epic star trails.

3 **Merge your Layers to add finishing touches**
Once you've created your amazing star trails, click on the Live Stack Group, the top Layer, and make sure it's active. Right click and select Merge Visible. This will create a new Pixel Layer above the group, which you can edit further.


4 **Perfect your contrast with Curves**
Create a Curves Adjustment Layer. Now lower the left side of the Tone Curve to darken the shadows, and raise the right side to boost the highlights. Don't worry if details get blown out, we will fix that in the next step.
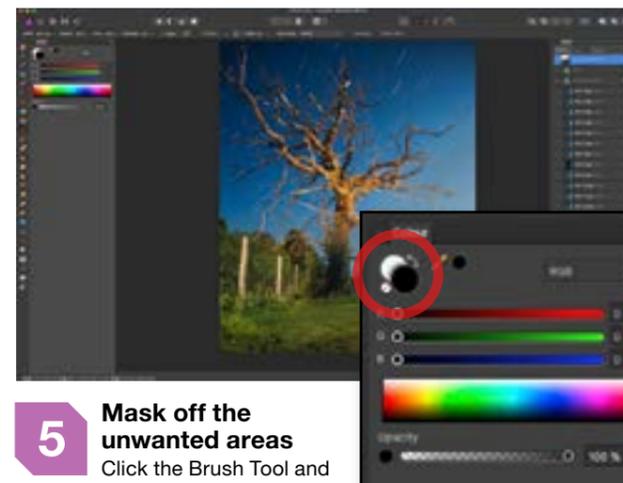
5 **Mask off the unwanted areas**
Click the Brush Tool and set the colour to black. Now brush any area where you don't want the curves to be visible, and the Layer Mask will hide them. To bring any area back, simply repeat, but change your foreground colour to white.

// KNOWHOW THREE WAYS TO USE BLENDING MODES

Blending modes change the way individual Layers interact with each other. This can create some unique results, and these three are must-haves in your editing arsenal.
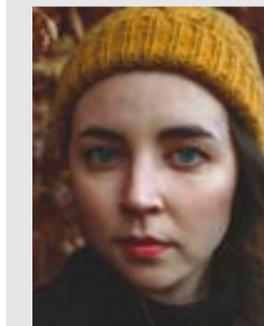
SOFT LIGHT
The Soft Light Blending Mode changes the values of the current Layer based on its relation to 50% grey. Anything which is lighter becomes brighter, and anything which is less bright becomes darker. It's great for adding subtle contrast to your image.

SCREEN
Screen is an essential Blending Mode, and one you simply must know for creating composites. It makes blacks turn invisible, which is incredibly useful if you have an image with a subject you want to use, and a black background, such as fireworks or stars.

EXCLUSION
Add a new Layer and use the Paint Bucket tool to fill the Layer with a navy blue. Now set the Blending Mode to Exclusion and you'll notice the shadows are blue, and the highlights are yellow. Reduce the Opacity to 5% for a quick and easy cross-processing effect.

BEFORE

AFTER

PORTRAITS NOT SURE? ASK AFFINITY TO HAVE A GO
Go to *Filter>Colours>Auto Levels* and watch in amazement as Affinity decides what level of contrast and toning best suits your image.

Above Colour Balance allows you to create dramatic colour grading.

PART 5
MASTERING PERFECT PORTRAITS

Affinity Photo

Create powerful portraits

Kirk Schwarz shows you how to use Affinity Photo to get professional looking skin, as well as adding an autumnal twist with a very simple colour edit.

THE CONSTANT throughout all the seasons is stunning light, and we can take full advantage of this when shooting portraits whatever the time of year. We've themed our shoot with autumn in mind, but there's inspiration to be found in every season.

While the later autumn months may be dominated by a magical show of changing colours and falling foliage, the earlier months change very little. We'll show you how to use this to your full advantage by shooting in that fragile in-between time, when the leaves are firmly attached and the rich hues haven't quite started to make their appearance yet.

To achieve this warm and welcoming look, we're going to use some of Affinity Photo's powerful colour tools. This will allow us to subtly change the colour palette to suit our scene. We'll also show you how to use the brilliant one-click frequency separation filter. This makes professional skin retouching an absolute doddle, allowing you to create outstanding results, which would be a lot more difficult to achieve in many other editing packages.

What will you need?
All you need to create your own autumnal wonderland is a nice portrait taken in an area with plenty of lush foliage. Don't delay, as the seasons tend to disappear before our very eyes. When composing, you'll want your subject to be perfectly in focus, as well as pretty large in the frame. This ensures the frequency separation will have the maximum impact when you're separating the texture from the colours, which gives it that polished look.

To get the most out of this effect, you'll want to use a shot with plenty of clean and contrasting colours, since you'll be targeting specific hues to create your own colour scheme. If you have a model in a forest, make sure their face isn't picking up the green hue which is often reflected from the trees or grass. Once you've selected your perfect shot, simply follow the next steps and you'll not only master the art of powerful and advanced skin retouching, but you'll also be an ace when it comes to colour grading.
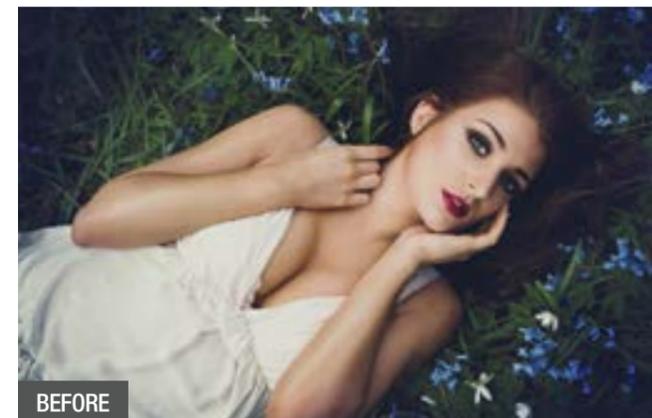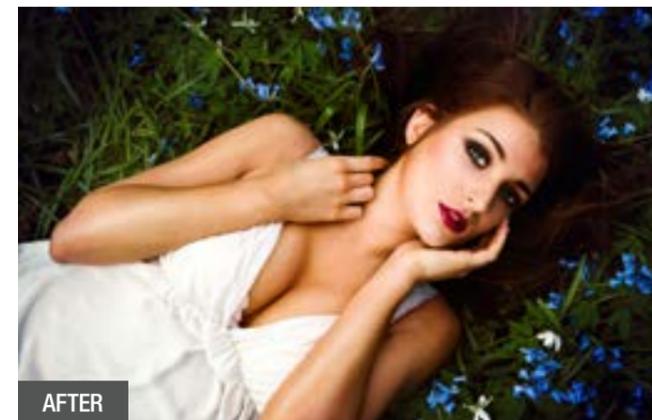
> " THIS MONTH WE'RE USING THE TONE MAPPING PERSONA FOR STUNNING RESULTS "
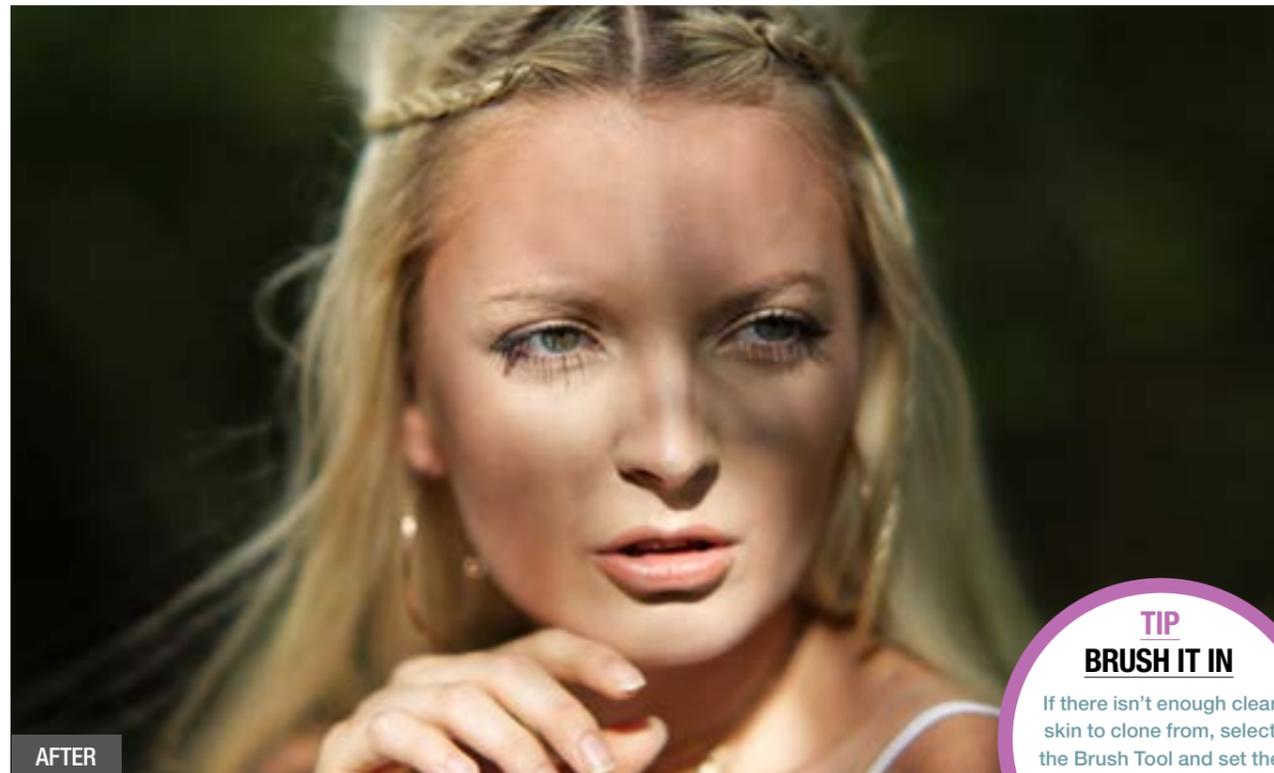
FOLLOW ALONG WHEREVER YOU ARE WITH THE POWERFUL AFFINITY IPAD APP
The Affinity Photo iPad app is great for the busy portrait photographer. Thanks to its fully-featured approach, offering an identical level of functionality as the desktop app, you can even follow along to this whole tutorial.
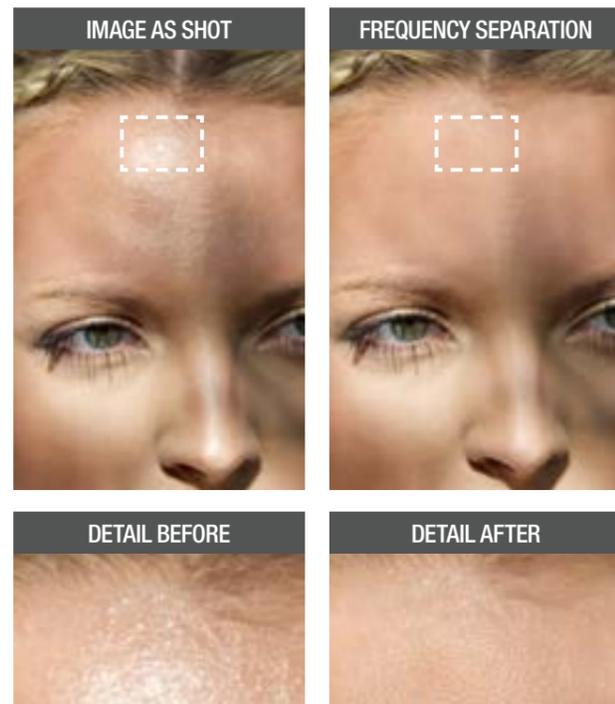
AFTER

Create easy frequency separation in just one click

HAVE YOU EVER picked up one of those ultra-glossy magazines and seen models whose perfectly flawless skin looks too good to be true? Then it probably is! Even top models don't turn up to the studio looking that great. It's a combination of make-up artistry and some savvy post-processing. While we can't recommend make-up artists enough, they're probably overkill if all you're doing is taking some nice shots of your friend. This just leaves the retouching option.

Frequency separation is one of the most popular, and successful techniques in any

pro photographer's editing arsenal. It splits your image into two entirely different Layers. The first is a blurred Layer, which controls your colour, and the second is a texture Layer, which is set to a Linear Light Blending Mode. This allows you to work on your skin tones and skin texture individually.

That may sound overly complicated, but Affinity Photo's Frequency Separation is automated. That's right, with a single click, Affinity creates your split Layers as required, while also allowing you to fine-tune each individual aspect for the best possible looking results.

> " AFFINITY PHOTO MAKES COMPLEX RETOUCHING INCREDIBLY SIMPLE "

IMAGE AS SHOT

FREQUENCY SEPARATION

DETAIL BEFORE

DETAIL AFTER

Above The heat and direct light makes the skin look a little blown out. In four steps, the skin looks smooth and natural.
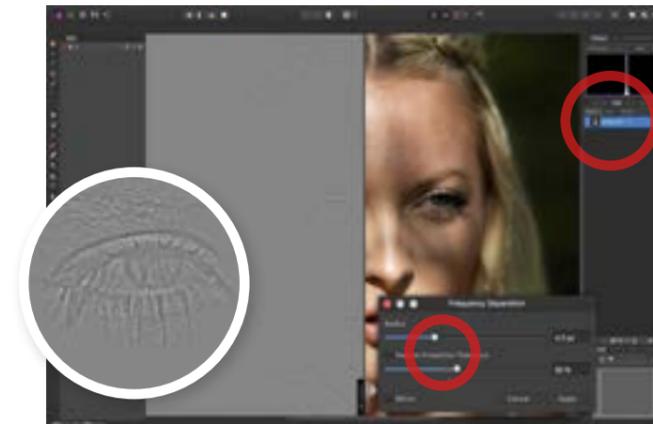

1 **Create a Frequency Separation**
Go to *Filters>Frequency Separation*. Slide the Radius until the texture on the colour half of the image has just become too blurred to make out. Click Apply and it will create two Layers. High Frequency is your texture, and Low is your colour.
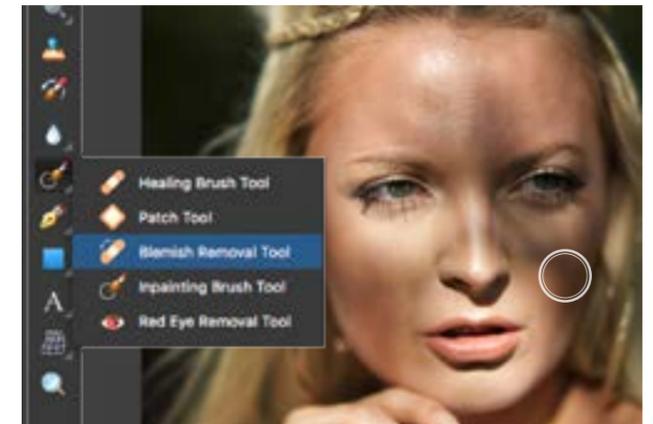
2 **Remove the blemishes and imperfections**
Click the High Frequency in the Layers Panel. Now choose the Blemish Removal Tool and click on a blemish. While holding down your mouse button, move the cursor to an area of clean skin and let go. Repeat until you're happy.
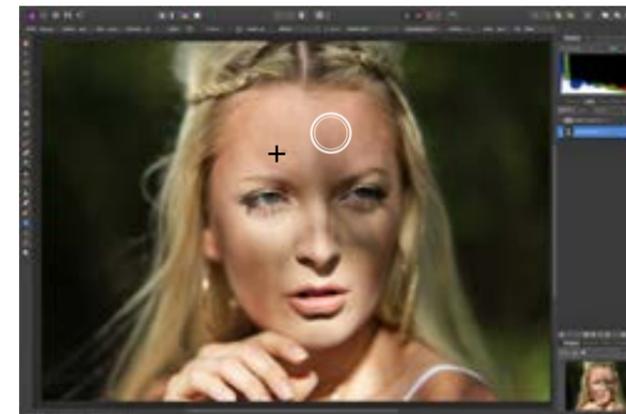

3 **Use the Clone Stamp Tool to even tones**
Click on the Low Frequency Layer and choose the Clone Stamp Tool. Set Opacity to 20% and while holding Alt, click a source point. Now brush in over any area where the skin tone looks unnatural. This is great for bringing back highlights.
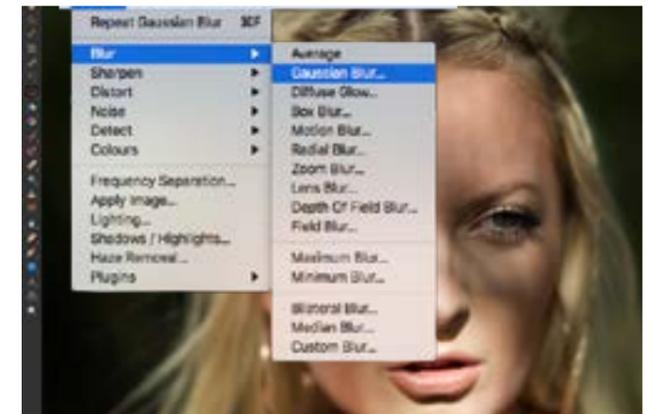

4 **Use Gaussian Blur to smooth the skin**
Choose the Free Hand Selection Tool and set Feather to 40px. Draw around any area where the texture needs smoothing. Go to *Filters>Blur>Gaussian Blur* and set a Radius that smooths the skin, but be subtle – 7.2px worked here.

// KNOWHOW THREE STEPS TO INNER HEALING
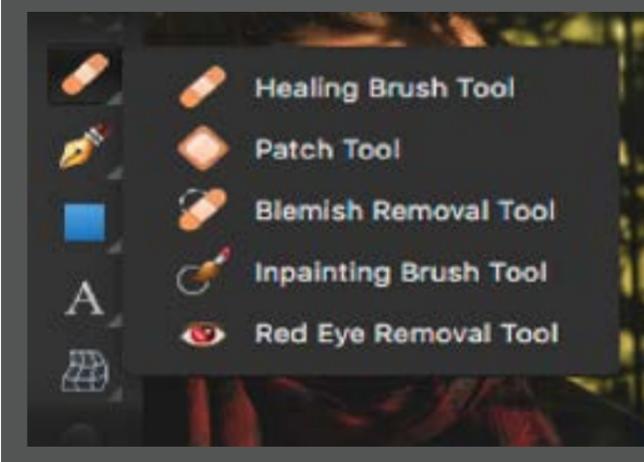
HEALING BRUSH TOOL
This allows you to set your own source point, like the Clone Stamp, but automatically blends in based on the surroundings – ideal for texture work.

BLEMISH BRUSH TOOL
This tool allows you to click on any area, and drag to a new area where you prefer the texture. It then blends it in seamlessly by calculating the texture and colour in the area around your selection.

INPAINTING TOOL
This brilliant tool lets you paint over an area, and Affinity will work out what to fill it with, based on the surrounding areas. This makes it ideal for removing unwanted distractions from your scenes.

BEFORE

AFTER
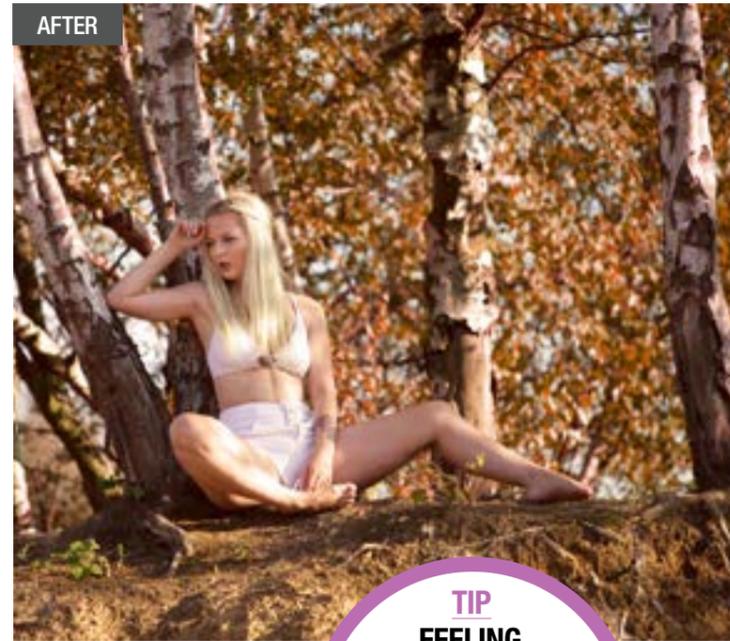
Use colour to change summer into autumn

C OLOURS ARE AN intrinsic part of our daily lives, and they dominate our world. In photography, they are one of the most important tools you have to connect with your viewers. However, cameras don't always capture the vista as we see it. RAW files retain basic data about the scene, but it's up to you to bring that information out as you want to show it. Similarly, JPEGS, which don't capture the same level of detail, look a lot more vibrant out of camera. However, a JPEG is an image file which has been edited by your camera, so it's still not guaranteed to show the viewer that epic scene you want to convey.

Take control of colour
We've already learned how powerful Affinity can be, but it's the small things that can make the biggest difference. Everyday tools, such as Colour Balance and Selective Colour, can be used to make subtle tweaks, or even to completely change the look and mood of your scene, as we'll find out now.
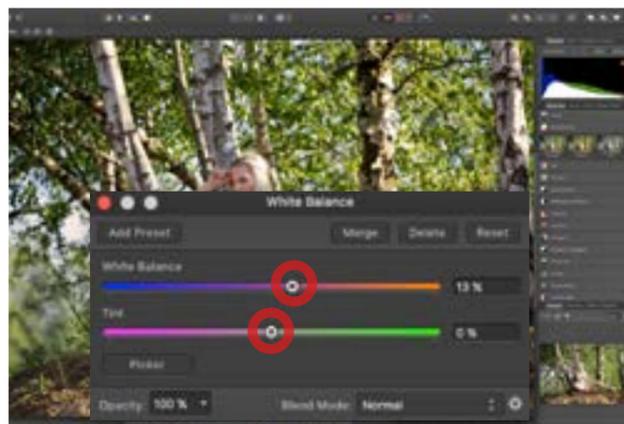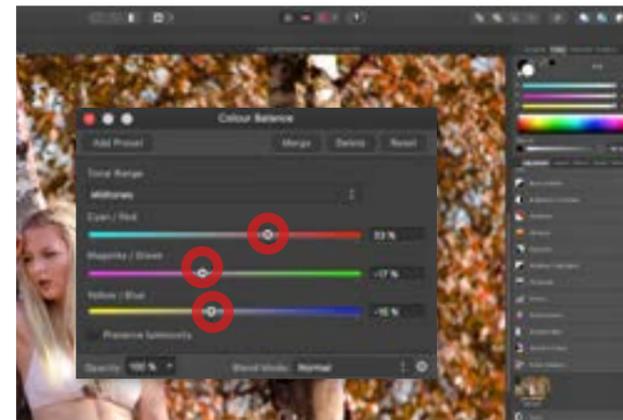
1 **Warm the colour balance**
Open the Adjustments tab and choose White Balance. Sliding right towards orange will warm your image, whereas sliding left will make it more blue, or cool. You want to slide right, until your shot looks as though it was taken at sunset.
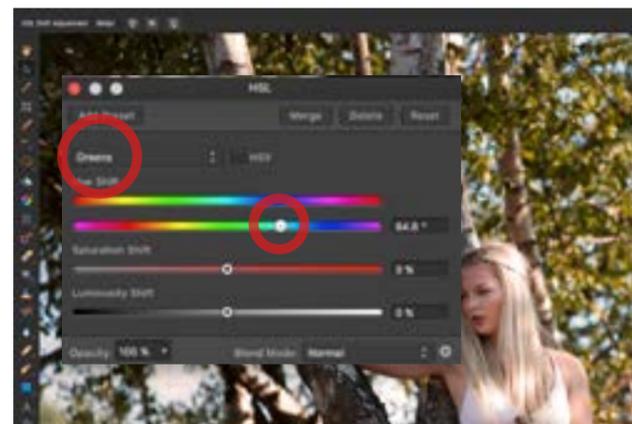
2 **Use HSL to alter the leaves**
Create an HSL Adjustment and change Master to Yellow. Drag the Hue slider right to 0.8, depending on your scene, to change the yellow to autumnal browns. Change Yellow to Green and repeat this to even out the tones.

3 **Use Layer Masks to erase the colours**
Altering the Hue may have changed other areas of your shot. To undo this, click on the HSL Layer and use a Soft Edged Paint Brush Tool to brush black over any areas you don't want this to be visible, such as the skin or grass.

4 **Add a global Colour Balance**
Create a Colour Balance Adjustment and drag the Cyan/Red slider right to introduce a warmer, more autumnal light. Now drag the Magenta/Green and the Yellow/Blue sliders left. You should have a warm tint but with natural skin tones.
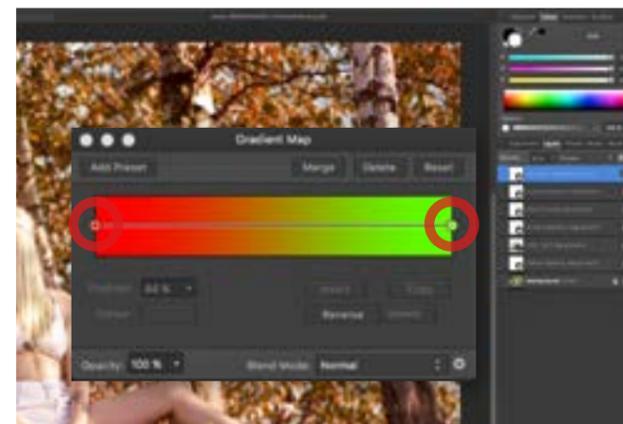
5 **Apply an autumnal Gradient Map**
Create a Gradient Map Adjustment and choose the green default. Click the middle circle and delete it. Now click the right most circle and change the colour to green. Set the Blending mode to Screen and Opacity to 10% and you're done.

// KNOWHOW THREE GREAT WAYS TO CREATE COLOUR

Adjustment Layers are the backbone of any good editing software, and Affinity Photo has them in spades. These are three amazing ways to alter your images' colour.
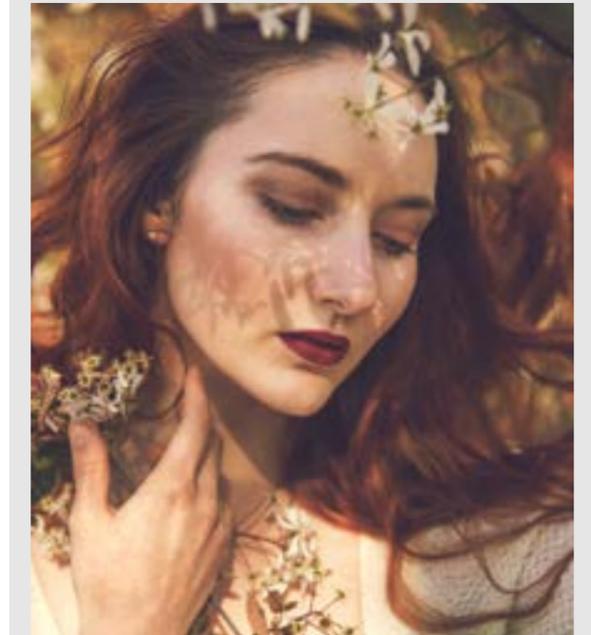
COLOUR BALANCE
Colour Balance is a much-used tool. It's responsible for values of colour in a particular image, and can be used to subtly grade you work, or even create a dramatic mood by cooling down the scene, or using it to mimic soft warm summer light.

HSL
HSL stands for Hue, Saturation and Luminance. It allows you to choose specific colour channels, and alter the value of each hue, meaning you can change all of your original colours. You can also control the saturation and brightness.

SPLIT TONING
Split Toning assigns different colour values to the highlights and shadows. You can then choose a bias to decide which colour dominates. This simple technique can create a wild effect, or just introduce complementary colours into your work, which really draws in the viewer's eye.

PART 6
SUPERHERO
SHOWDOWN

Affinity Photo
Composite creatively

AFTER

Kirk Schwarz takes you on a journey to create the next protector of the human species in this impressive superhero composite tutorial.

LOOK, IN THE SKY. Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's a billboard for the latest Hollywood superhero flick. Watching fully-grown men being flung through skyscrapers, or going toe-to-toe against gigantic aliens is just good fun, and the inspiration behind our final Affinity Photo instalment.

Throughout the guide so far, you've learned how to edit landscapes with the Develop and Tone Mapping Personas, you've gone through complex colour grading using some of the best tools on the market, and you've mastered the art of black & white conversions. One thing we've yet to cover, which Affinity Photo does incredibly well, is the art of creating selections. Powerful features such as the Pen, Selection Brush and Flood Select Tools are perfect for making complex cut-outs – essential for creating our composite superhero image.

Where do I start?
The most important shot you'll need is the hero, which in this case, is a hero. We've posed him in a dynamic way and we can still cut him out precisely. You'll also need a gritty background, such as this city shot we're using. Lastly, we've added some fiery wings for that extra final wow factor.

With all of your individual components shot or sourced, it's just a case of jumping into Affinity to cut them out and put them all together to create your epic cinematic masterpiece.

> " AFFINITY'S SET OF NIFTY SELECTION TOOLS IS IDEAL TO CREATE EPIC COMPOSITES "

BACKGROUND

MODEL

SELECTING IMAGES ALWAYS THINK OF THE BIGGER PICTURE
Find your background first, then create the scene around this. We had a gritty background, which would allow us to compose our flying effect. We shot the model in a dynamic hovering pose and thought the addition of flames as wings would help to sell the whole effect.

FLAMES

// KNOWHOW
WHY AFFINITY IS PERFECT FOR COMPOSITES

Affinity Photo boasts powerful features, such as selection tools, Layers and Masks, all of which are essential for digital mash-ups.

MAKE YOUR SELECTION
Affinity offers a handful of tools which allow you to create selections, ranging from quick and easy, to extremely precise and complex. This is a key area when it comes to creating intricate composites.

THE MIGHTY PEN
The Pen Tool allows for the most precise selections, letting you fine-tune the direction of travel, as well as create pixel-perfect curves and spot-on cut-outs.

LAYER MASKS
Layer Masks allow you to hide an individual Layer's effects from the rest of the image, while retaining the information should you change your mind at a later date – an essential for complex composites.

LEARN TO REFINE
Refine allows you to alter your selections after the fact, going as far as offering a Matte Brush, which makes Affinity do the hard work on tough selections, such as flyaway hair. This makes the whole selection process incredibly powerful and very professional.
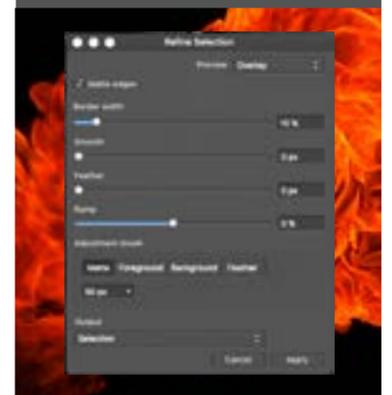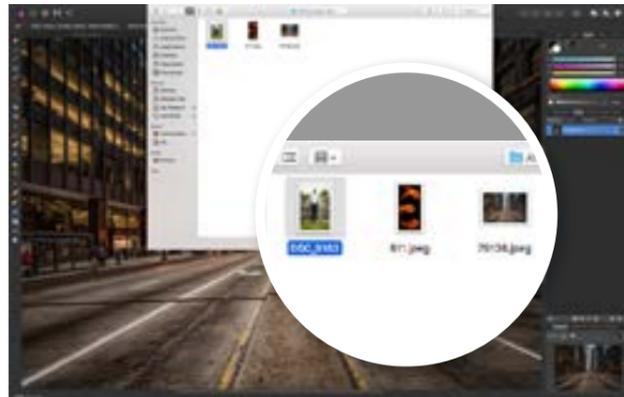
Make your selections wisely

THE KEY TO ANY photo composite is being able to have your individual elements interact seamlessly. This means being able to have hard edges, or even soft edges, appear as they should. It's also essential that you don't include the background when you're cutting out a model, or accidentally cut off parts of them. Thankfully, Affinity has three great tools for this.

You'll be able to take advantage of the Selection Brush or Flood Select Tools, both of which offer a simple one-click approach, and both of which do an excellent job. You also have the Pen Tool, which allows you the ultimate freedom and control. Simply clicking from one point to another will create a line. You can then add natural curves to these lines, as well as move them or change the effect at any point, all of which make those precise selections very easy to master – ideal for our superhero shot.
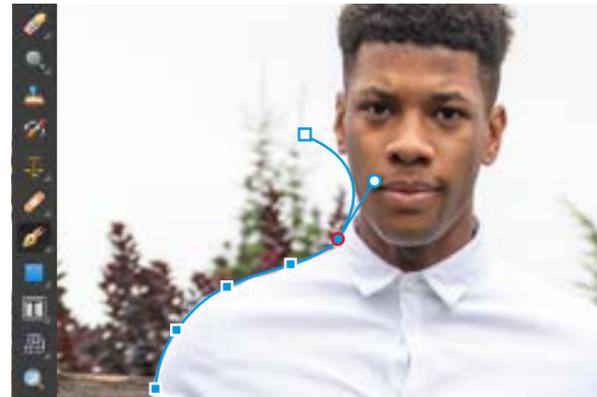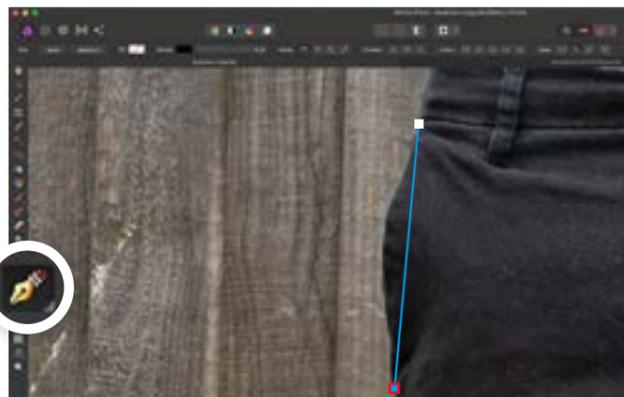
Above The powerful selection tools in Affinity make cutting out your characters simple, while also giving you ultimate control.

5 **Tell the Pen Tool where to go next**
Still holding down your mouse button, hold down the Alt key and drag the mouse to move the line that was responsible for the curve. Point it in the direction of your next point and the transition will be much more natural.

6 **Turn your outline into a selection**
Once finished, head to the toolbar at the top and press Selection to create a path of marching ants. Now hit Ctrl+J to duplicate this Layer and delete the original. Use the Move Tool to resize and place your model.
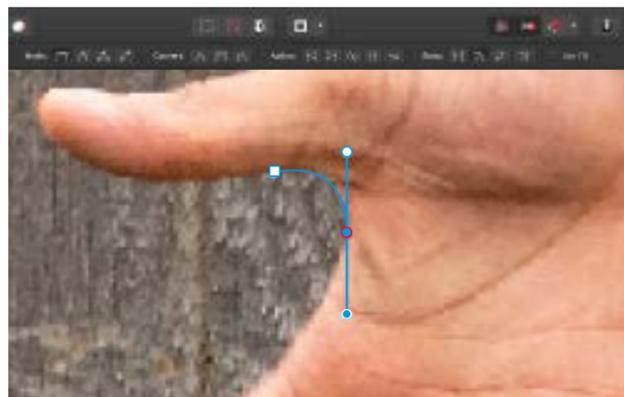
1 **Open your background shot**
To give yourself bearings, open the background shot first, by clicking *File>Open*. Once imported, you have a reference point to work with. Next, select your superhero model shot and import it by going to *File>Place*.

2 **Cut out your superhero**
You now need to remove your hero from the background. If the background is pure white, you can use the Flood Select or Selection Brush Tools. However, if you have a busy background like ours, select the Pen Tool for precision.

7 **Create a realistic shadow**
Duplicate your model Layer and open a Levels Adjustment. Set Black Level to 100%, right-click the Layer and select Mask to Below. Now right-click on the model and choose *Transform>Flip Vertical*.

8 **Place the shadow and add some blur**
Move the shadow to the street below and grab the top of the movement box. Drag this down to squash the shadow Layer. Click Live Filters and choose Gaussian Blur. Move the slider right until the shadow's edges are more natural.

3 **Trace the outline with the Pen Tool**
Zoom in and click on the edge of your model, where you intend to start the selection. Now click a little further up. You should see a straight line appear, which isn't good for cutting out rounded shapes, so we need to learn how to create a curve...
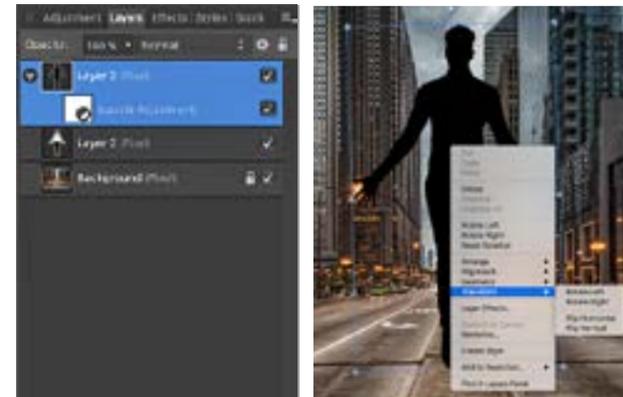
4 **Create natural curved selections**
Click once more but don't let go. Drag the mouse in any direction. You'll see a line come out of the central anchor point, which will create a curve in the Pen Tool's line. Drag until this fits the outline of your model but don't let go.

Blend images to create a story

A FLOATING MAN may be pretty impressive in real life, but it takes quite a bit more than basic levitation to pass for a superhero these days. With this in mind, we're going to add some fiery wings to make our model really look the part. Although it may sound extremely difficult to achieve, it's a very simple effect, and can be accomplished with a stock photo and the Screen Blending mode. While you may not have a lot of images of fireballs at your disposal, you can easily shoot fireworks or sparklers against a dark sky to get the same effect, then you can use this simple technique to give your hero some fiery abilities of their very own.
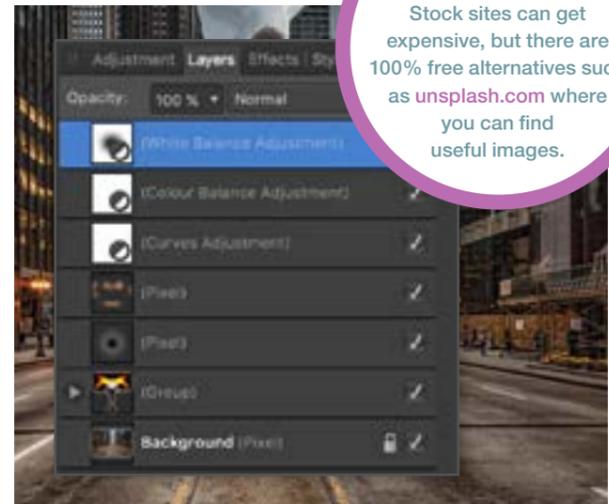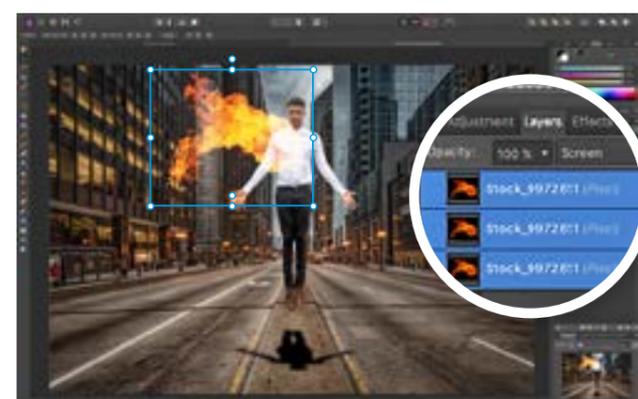
Above The ability to use multiple Layers and Masks is a must for anybody who is creating composite images.

5 Repeat for the other wing
Take the flame Layer we hid earlier and make it visible. Now repeat the process, but when you're using the Move Tool to place it, right-click and choose *Transform>Flip Horizontal*. Now put it in place and mask it out, as per the previous step.

6 Paint in the flames' reflection
Flames will create a colour cast, so we need to add that. Create a new Pixel Layer and use the Paint Brush Tool. Set Flow to 10% and the Foreground Colour to Orange. Paint where the light should fall and set the Blending Mode to Soft Light.
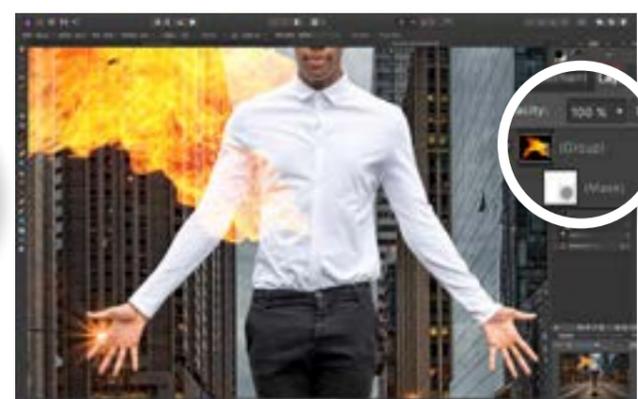
1 Import your 'special effects' shot
We have this shot of three fireballs, which we're bringing into the document by clicking *File>Place*. Once in, duplicate the Layer and hide the original by de-clicking the tick to the right of its Layer. We will need this Layer later on.

2 Add your fiery wings
Use the Eraser Tool 'E' to delete all but one fireball. Once you have your single flame, use the Move Tool to put it into place, and change the Blending Mode to Screen, which will hide any black in the image making it invisible.

7 Add some movement to your model
Click back to your model Layer and create a Live Filter Motion Blur. Set the rotation to 90% (or to suit your pose) and Radius to 30px, which should create a sense of motion. Unfortunately, it's blurred the whole model Layer...

8 Mask off the Motion Blur effect
Click on the Motion Blur Layer, which includes its own Layer Mask. Now use a black Paint Brush Tool to brush out the blur effect over the model's face and torso. You can always paint it back in by switching from black to white.

3 Make the effect even brighter
The Screen Blending Mode can cause transparency. To get around this, duplicate your Layer for a better effect. Once you're happy, hold Ctrl and click every fire Layer to select them. Press Ctrl+G to put them all into a single group.

4 Mask out the front of the flames
Create a Layer mask for the new Group. Choose the Paint Brush Tool 'B' and set hardness to 50%. Select black as the foreground colour and brush where you don't want the flames visible, which is the chest and arms.

9 Add your final adjustments
Click on your top Layer and create a Curves Adjustment. Add an 'S' curve, which looks like the example above, to add additional contrast. You can now also add any additional adjustments that you may have learned from previous tutorials.

// HOW TO GET AFFINITY PHOTO ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

Affinity Photo is yours for the one-off cost of £48.99, or only £19.99 for the iPad app. It's available on both Windows and Mac operating systems. To find out more about the desktop and iPad versions of Affinity Photo, visit affinity.serif.com/photo where you'll also find a selection of video tutorials helping you get the best out of the editing software to make the most of your images.