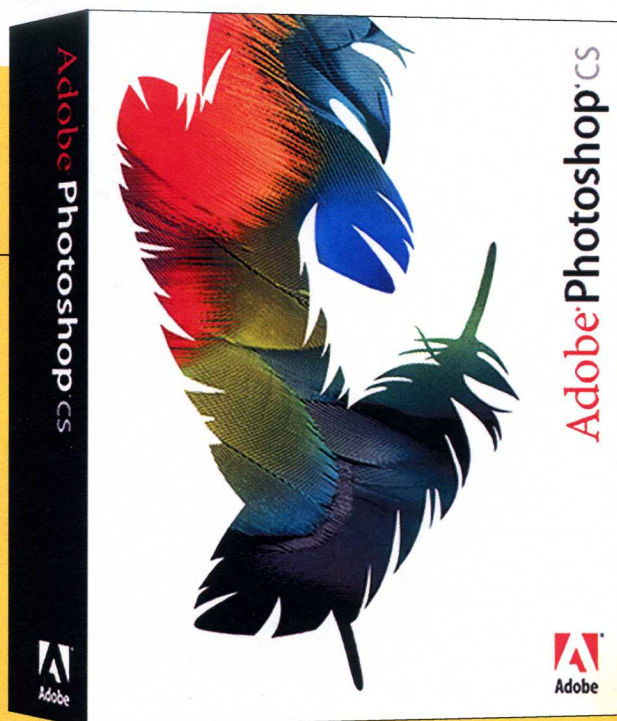




A Star Is (Re)Born

BY MELISSA BRANDZEL



Adobe's Photoshop CS Is Destined To Be A Hit With Photographers

Wouldn't it be great if the sequel was better than the original? And each new sequel got progressively better than the last one? Sadly, this fails to be so with Hollywood movies (*A Nightmare On Elm Street 6*, anyone?), but in the case of Adobe's® blockbuster design software, Photoshop®, each incarnation bests the previous version.

Coming soon to a retailer near you: Photoshop CS. CS stands for Creative Suite, which is how Adobe is now packaging its products—as a complete suite of software (Photoshop, Illustrator®, InDesign®, etc.) that are meant to work seamlessly with each other. Luckily for us, the Creative Suite was developed especially with photographers, videog-

raphers, graphic artists and Web designers in mind.

If you're already a Photoshop user, you're no doubt familiar with many of its features. The CS version, however, includes some new perks to facilitate a smoother, more efficient workflow. While there simply isn't the space to list all of them, here's a rundown of some of the more noteworthy functions. (Note: This report is based on a late-cycle beta version of the program.)

Enhanced File Browser. Essentially an on-screen lightbox, the File Browser is a real time-saver, with new, user-friendly ways to manage your files and track your work. Quickly search, sort, compare and even batch-process images without hav-

ing to open the desired files first. View large, high-quality previews that show great detail in a customizable preview window. Working with thumbnails has never been easier; size them to suit your personal preference and simply drag them around to arrange them quickly. For super-fast editing, try the Flag function—flag your desired images, then hide the unflagged ones so you can work with just your selected group. Identifying and searching for files is simple; you can assign keywords, create favorite folders and search through a directory tree of recently used folders, for instance. A new Metadata pane lets you create and edit metadata for one image or groups of images simultaneously. User-defined keyboard shortcuts also can help expedite your work.

Built-In Camera Raw. Adobe's RAW file conversion program, once a separate \$99 plug-in, is built into this version of Photoshop. Camera Raw 2.0 allows you to manipulate your RAW camera data with ease. With the color-calibration controls, you can make customized profiles for specific camera models and correct color shifts caused by unusual lighting situations. When you apply Camera Raw settings to multiple images, the settings will be applied automatically upon batch processing. A Lens tab section helps you fix chromatic aberration and vignetting. Future updates to Camera Raw will be free for registered users of Photoshop CS.

Comprehensive 16-Bit Editing. If you work with high-bit files, this is a major coup. The bulk of Photoshop CS's features—layers, text, shapes, painting—now support 16-bit images as well as 8-bit (if the file is bigger than 8 bits, the software will read it as a 16-bit file). Despite the large file sizes, which could be problematic if your computer isn't up to the task, editing in 16-bit has its advantages, especially during the color-correction process. You'll have more data to work with, as well as more control over that data and higher quality.

Match Color. This very cool new feature allows you to copy the color scheme of one photo and apply it to another photo. Use it to achieve a consistent look

across a group of images that were shot under different lighting conditions, for example, or simply get the tones of a single photo looking the way you intended. Match Color can be applied to the entire image or only parts of it—it's your call.

Photo Filters. Color correction and compensation can be easily achieved via Photo Filters, which can be customized and applied as adjustment layers. Simulating the effects of real filters, this function can be used to warm or cool your images to great effect, à la 80A and 81A filters. You can modify the amount of adjustment to be applied.

Other Great Photoshop CS Features. But wait, there's more! The **Histogram palette**, which can help you evaluate the tonal integrity of a photo, now can be viewed on-screen at any time, not just when you're in the Levels dialog. This means you can view the changes you make to your photo while you're making them, with separate histograms displayed for luminosity and individual color channels, if you choose. The **Highlight/Shadow feature** automatically balances the shadow and highlight areas of a photo. To replicate real-world blurring after the fact, try the **Lens Blur filter**. For you panoramaniacs out there, **Photomerge** will automatically stitch together multi-image panoramas. When you've hastily scanned your images, the **Crop and Straighten Photos command** will perform these two time-consuming tasks for you. The **Color Replacement tool** lets you change a green shirt to yellow without losing texture or shading, and makes correcting red-eye a breeze. Show off your photos on the Web and collect feedback on your work by creating an interactive **Web Photo Gallery**. And, if you order now, you'll get a free set of steak knives that can slice through a tin can!

Well, okay, no steak knives, but you get the picture. Any program that helps me spend less time processing my images and more time taking them is okay by me, and the newest version of Photoshop certainly has a lot to offer. It's a sequel that really packs a punch. (Eat your heart out, Rocky.) PC

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