



Photoshop Mastery

Taking Photoshop to the next level

■ BY BEN WILLMORE

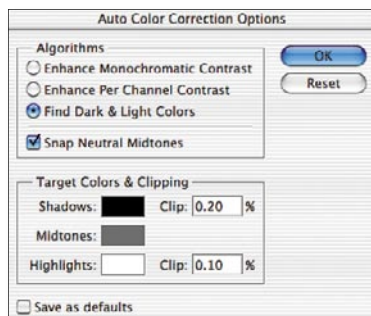
Faded Fixes

Conner Huff was in a pickle. His parents' wedding photo was badly faded. Hoping to return the image to its former glory, he sent it to the Photoshop Image Ambulance at www.digitalmastery.com/problems. A combination of adjustment layers and blend modes provided for a 5-minute solution.

First, open an image that could use some reviving or just download the image we're using here. We'll start by fixing the faded area in the center of this image. [NAPP members may download the image used in this tutorial from www.photoshopuser.com/napmem/departments/photoshopuser.html.] To isolate that area, choose the Elliptical Marquee tool and click-and-drag across the center area. To reposition the selection before releasing the mouse button, press-and-hold the Spacebar and drag around the faded area. To continue changing the size of the selection, release the Spacebar but keep the mouse button pressed. The mouse button should only be released when the selection closely matches the boundary of the faded area.

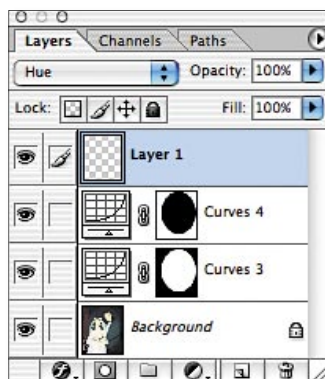
Create adjustment layers

With that area isolated, choose Curves from the Create New Adjustment Layer pop-up menu at the bottom of the Layers palette. Next, click the Options button in the Curves dialog to access the Auto Color dialog, use the settings shown below, and then click OK in both dialogs. That improves the faded center of the image, but the adjustment doesn't blend into the surrounding areas. With the adjustment layer active, choose Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur and experiment with the Amount



setting until the adjustment blends with the surrounding areas (we used 4).

Now the outer area looks a little faded in comparison. To target that area, hold the Command key (PC: Control key) and click on the layer mask thumbnail attached to the adjustment layer in the Layers palette, and then choose Select>Inverse. Now create another Curves adjustment layer, click the Auto button in the Curves dialog to apply the same Auto Color settings, and click OK. This adds a bit of contrast to the outer area of the image.



Correcting color

The color in the wood wall behind the newlyweds doesn't quite match the surrounding image. To remedy the situation, click the Create a New Layer icon and place the layer at the top of the layers stack (as shown above). Then change the layer blend mode at the top of the Layers palette to Hue so that any paint applied to the layer will change the basic color of what's underneath without changing its brightness. Next, choose the Brush tool (B), Option-click (PC: Alt-click) on the wood area where the color looks appropriate, and paint over the areas with discolored wood. Then sample a color from his suit and paint across the lower-right corner to get consistent color in the suit.



Original (top) and restored (bottom)

Heal away the frame

Now the lower-right part of the suit needs to be fixed so that the shape of the oval frame is no longer visible. Create a new layer at the top of the layers stack, choose the Healing Brush (J), and turn on the Use All Layers checkbox in the Options Bar. Then, choose a brush wide enough to cover the transition you're attempting to fix and Option-click (PC: Alt-click) in the dark area just below the transition. Center your cursor on the transition just above the area you clicked on and drag across a small area. When you release the mouse button, Photoshop blends that transition into the image. Make sure to work on very small areas so you don't hit too much of the pocket or fabric edges; otherwise, they'll end up blended into their surroundings. □

Ben Willmore is author of the best-selling book Photoshop CS Studio Techniques, co-author of How to Wow: Photoshop for Photography, and creator of the hit seminar "Photoshop for Photographers." Get free tips and tutorials at Ben's website, www.digitalmastery.com.