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Power Retouche Pro Review

Review Date: September 2nd 2008
Author: Jon Canfield

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Introduction

Photoshop

Få et forspring i Photoshop med Børsen e-Learning. Gratis demo!
www.laerselv.dk/Photoshop

Flaming Pear Software

Creative plugins for Photoshop and PSP
www.FlamingPear.com

Power Retouche

When I was asked to look at Power Retouche Pro, I was expecting another [Photoshop](#) plug-in similar to hundreds of others out there, all promising to make my life easier by improving the retouching process. So, I was very pleasantly surprised when I installed the package to find there were a number of unique and useful tools now available to me.

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Power Retouche Pro (www.powerretouche.com) is actually a collection of 25 plug-ins for Photoshop (all versions), and programs compatible with the Photoshop plug-in architecture, like Paint Shop Pro and Corel Draw. You can also purchase the plug-ins individually, but the variety of tools makes the whole package a worthwhile investment. All plug-ins work in both 8 bit and 16 bit modes, and many can also work in alternate color spaces like LAB and CMYK.

Ease of Use

- PR Anti-Aliasing...
- PR Black Definition...
- PR Black/White Studio...
- PR Brightness...
- PR Color Corrector...
- PR Color Fringe Remover...
- PR Contrast...
- PR Dynamic Range Compressor...
- PR Edgeline...
- PR Equalizer...
- PR Exposure...
- PR Film Grain...
- PR Golden Section...
- PR Graduated Color...
- PR Histogram Repair...
- PR Illumination Editor...
- PR Lens Corrector...
- PR Noise Corrector...
- PR Posterizer...
- PR Radial Density Corrector...
- PR Saturation...
- PR Sharpness...
- PR Soft-filter...
- PR Toned Photos...
- PR Transparency...
- PR White Balance...

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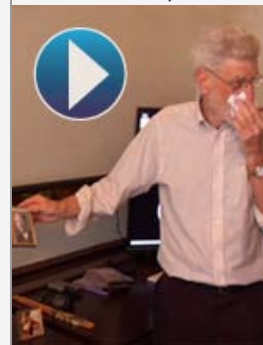
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Figure 1

The full package includes the following plug-ins:

Black & White Studio for conversion to black and white images with emulation of different film types, color correction filters, and more. The presets included for a number of popular film types including [Kodak](#) and Ilford do a very good job of conversion, and you can fine tune the effect from there if you wish. You can also confine your adjustments to specific zones to pull more detail from your images.

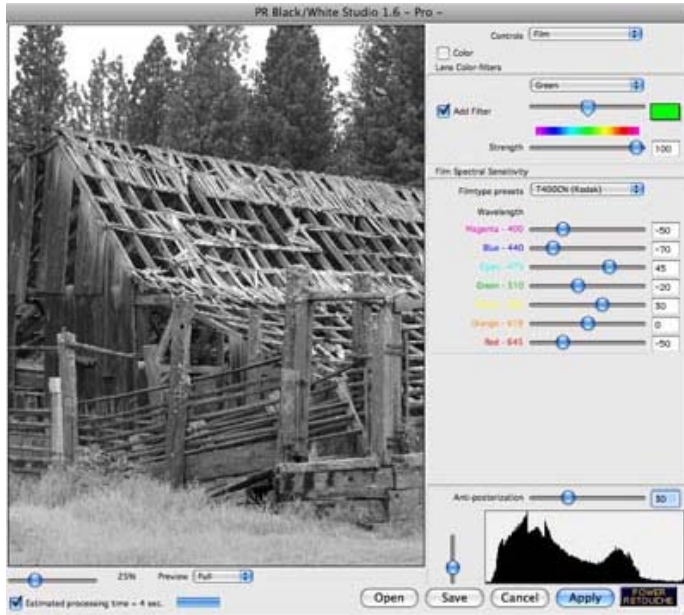


Figure 2

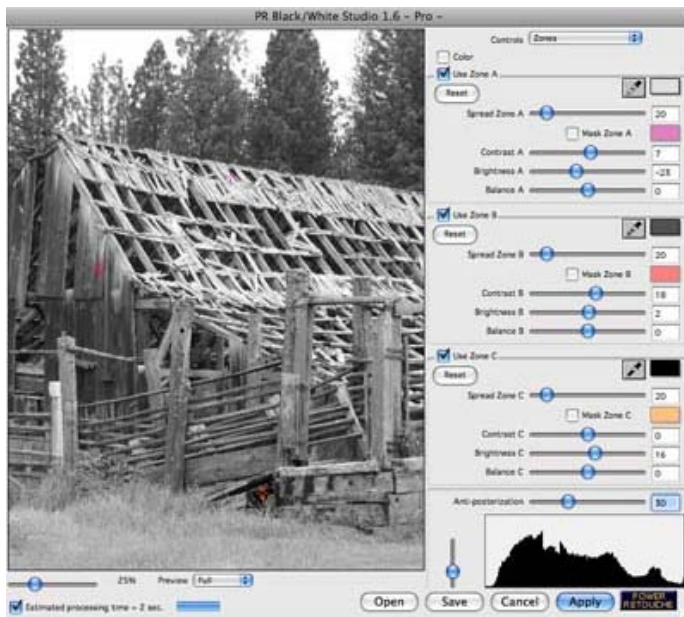


Figure 3

Color Fringe Remover to eliminate color fringing common in digital imaging when going from bright highlights to darker colors. Color Fringe Remover also has the ability to reconstruct the underlying color information.

Equalizer allows you to adjust the equalization in lights, midtones, and darks as well as applying the correction in specific color ranges and as a graduated effect.

Toned Photos has presets for sepia, Van Dyck, Kallitype, Silver Gelatin, Palladium, Platinum, Cyanotype, and Silver. You can also create your own presets.



Figure 4

Dynamic Range Compressor gives you full control over the dynamic range correction of your image, including black point, shadow depth, saturation, and contrast.

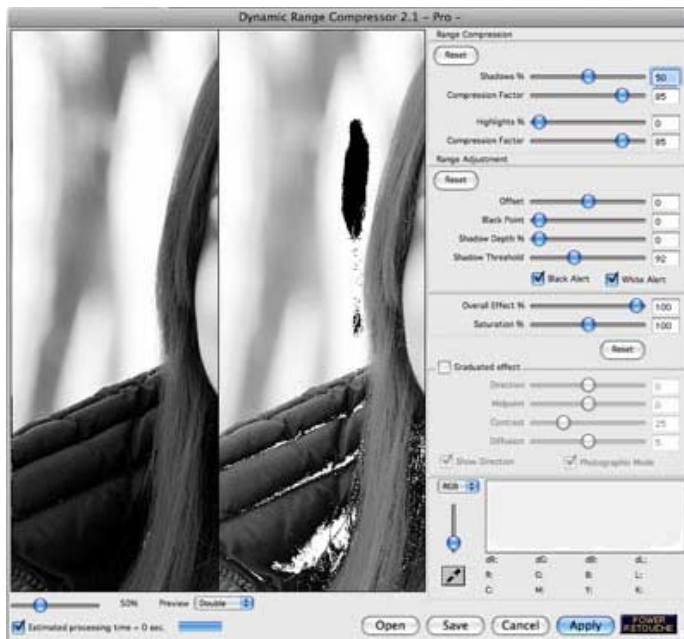


Figure 5

Film Grain does a very nice job of emulating traditional grain in both color and black & white images with control over intensity, size, and hardness of the grain.

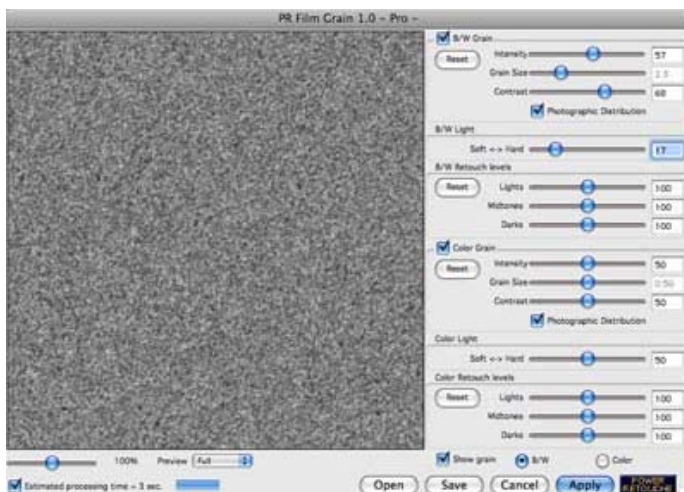


Figure 6

Graduated Color provides two methods of applying a grad color effect to your

images. The traditional mode, as well as a photographic mode that automatically sets the effect for complimentary colors and more natural results.

Lens Corrector can do amazing things to distorted photos, whether ultra wide angle or panoramic shots. Both pincushioning and barrel distortion correction are available.

Soft Filter works much like a traditional soft filter (think Softar), with control over the strength and spread of the effect. It also does double duty as a noise filter.

Sharpness Editor is unique among any of the tools I've tried for sharpening images. Unlike the typical Unsharp Mask, this plug-in does not create the strong edge contrast that leads to halos and artifacting. While you can restrict sharpening to edges only, when it's combined with the anti-aliasing feature it gives a very natural look. One feature I find very useful is the blur adjustment which can be restricted to color ranges, keeping portions of your image from being sharpened at all.



Figure 7

Black Definition uses black as a color channel. By reducing the black definition, you can increase the apparent saturation of an image with out actually changing the color values and impacting the luminance.

Golden Section is a nice tool for aiding in the composition of a photo, especially for cropping purposes. You have the option to use rule of thirds, golden sections, golden spiral, and other classic composition aids.

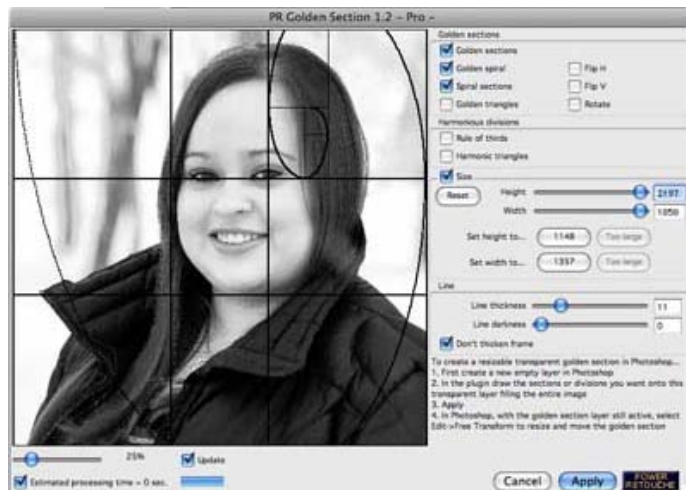


Figure 8

Illumination Editor gives you control over the lighting direction in your images. You can set the light source to any direction, and change both the exposure and brightness to give a more natural appearance and open shadows.



Figure 9



Figure 10

Radial Density Corrector gives you control over the brightness and exposure correction. You can control the radius and fade of the correction with control over the diffusion of the adjustment to keep a natural look.

Contrast Editor controls the black and white contrast in a photo without affecting the color contrast or saturation. You can adjust the midtones only, or use the general contrast control to adjust contrast and saturation in one adjustment.

Exposure Corrector is a full featured plug-in giving you more control than any other exposure adjustment tool I've seen. You can correct overall exposure like most tools provide, as well as a specific range of color or light values. Being able to adjust only the deep shadows as an example, lets you retain more detail in the highlights and prevents light shifting in the midtones.

Color Corrector gives you control over each of the primary color channels to correct hue, as well as adjusting a specific range of hues and the brightness and saturation of these values.

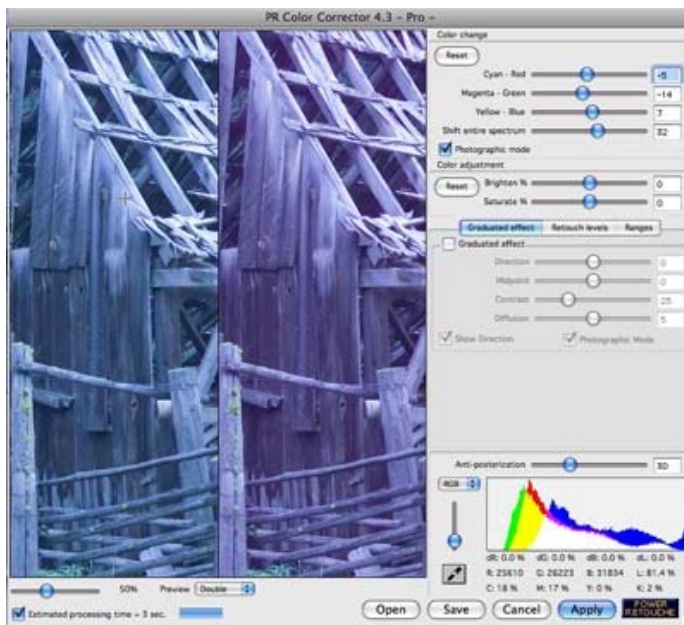


Figure 11

White-balance Corrector has both a manual mode with presets for different lighting conditions as well as color correction filters (Wratten type), and an Auto mode that does an amazingly good job of finding the correct color balance. One nice feature of this plug-in is the ability to target the correction to a specific range of values.

Saturation Editor works on all color values rather than primaries or modified primary palettes. With a photographic mode and regular mode, you can adjust how saturation changes are applied to the image without impacting brightness.

Noise Corrector is one of the most intuitive plug-ins for noise control that I've ever worked with. It gives you five different ways to correct noise problems – Soft Focus, which works well for portraits, Film Grain Leveling, Median, Despeckle, and Smoothing. You can control the method of correction, how areas are masked to preserve details, the brightness range to be modified, and how stray pixels are handled.

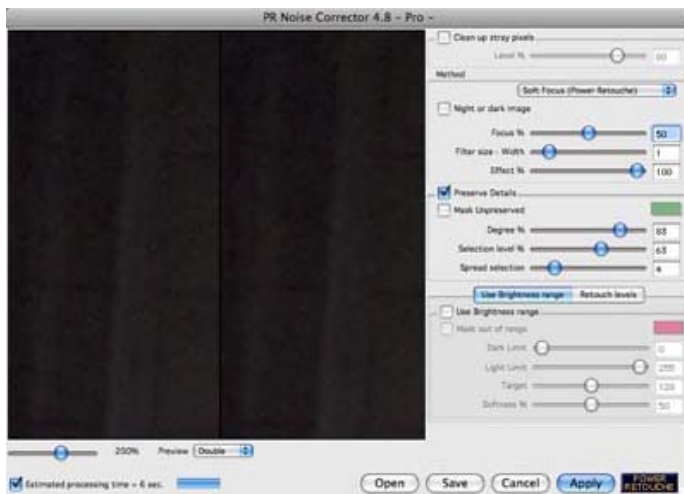


Figure 12

Anti-aliasing gives a smoother appearance to edges, and is especially useful with images that have been resized, and works well when combined with the Sharpness Editor plug-in.

Histogram Repair is unlike the other plug-ins in that it has no user interface. Selecting this plug-in will automatically repair a histogram that shows posterization due to adjustments made in the editing process. Histogram Repair interpolates the missing data to smooth out the histogram.

Edgeline Drawing is like Photoshop's Find Edges on steroids. You can control the direction, weight, and color of lines.

Posterizer works on specific color values and allows you to select how many color levels will be used. When working with a layered image, you can use blending modes to create some unique effects.

Transparency Editor lets you create masks and transparent backgrounds on layered images. Another use for this plug-in is to create blended compositions with multiple

images using different exposure values.

Brightness Editor offers brightness adjustment with color preservation, and works well when paired with the Exposure Corrector plug-in for finer adjustments than either can provide on their own.

Conclusion



Ratings (out of 5)	
Features	4
Ease-of-Use	3
Value for Money	4.5

Individually, the various Power Retouche Pro filters sell for \$32 to \$43 each, with the Black & White Studio plug-in selling for \$63. As a whole set, the package sells for \$175, which is a bargain for all of the tools being provided (and a substantial savings over the \$951 price if purchased individually). I found some filters more useful than others, in particular the Illumination Editor, Sharpness Editor, Noise Filter, and Toned Photos. The Golden Section plug-in was helpful when making cropping decisions, and if you're looking for a powerful black and white conversion tool, Black and White Studio should be high on your list of choices. Not all of the Power Retouche Pro plug-ins are intuitive in use, and many offer a number of controls that might seem overwhelming at first. There are good tutorials online for each plug-in, although a single cohesive user manual would be a welcome addition for the pro package in particular.

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