

CCCC Fourth Tuesday Digital for July 22, 2008

RAW Conversion

OK, first, Tim Grey wrote almost 30 pages (small type, lots of pictures) and I am NOT going to type/put all that stuff in here! I'm lazy and Tim can use the \$, so check out his book "Photoshop CS3 Workflow".

Open your image from File > Open or double click on a RAW image while in Bridge. (you can also open jpeg and TIFF files in RAW if you'd like)

Once in Camera Raw...

The top bar has 11 buttons. The first two are useful, the **Zoom** tool for zooming in and out and the **Hand** tool for moving the image around while magnified. Actually, using the space bar, alt/option and command/ctrl keys you can do the same thing without switching back and forth on these two buttons... push them and watch the cursor... magic!

The only other button of use is the one just to the left of the rotate CW and CCW buttons. This is the **"Open Preferences Dialog"** button and for me (and Tim) the only thing to set/use are the first, set **Save Image Settings to Sidecar .xmp file** (which saves your RAW changes to a separate file with the same name BUT the .xmp ending. JUST MAKE SURE that when you copy/move your RAW files that you get the sidecar files as well or you LOOSE your RAW adjustments) and **Apply Sharpen to: Preview ONLY** (you want to wait until the image is finished and set to final size before sharpening the actual image in Photoshop, which handles sharpening much better and with more control.

Workflow Options a line of text at bottom center. This is where you set your **Color Space, Bit Depth, Size and Resolution**, and whether to open the image as a **Smart Object**.

Most folks will want **Adobe RGB as their Color Space** (if they eventually want to make 8 bit Jpegs) and **16 as their Bit Depth** and for **Size, use the selection that is native to your input** (don't go + or - from your camera's output image size unless you plan to make BIG files. If you do, this is the place to do it!) You can set your image as a **Smart Object here or wait** until you get to Photoshop. I'd wait. **Resolution is only a 'number'** at this point and is usually set to whatever resolution you will print at, be it 240, 300 or 360 depending on your favorite theory of Printing Wizardry.

Histogram and the Clipping Triangles that are in the upper left (shadows) and upper right (highlights) show where you've gone to black and white respectively.

RGB (at the cursor) and Image Exposure Info Just that. If you use the 'Color Sampler Tool' in the Top Bar, the Sample's RGB setting will appear here also.

White Balance, Temperature and Tint White Balance is a BIG reason why you use RAW conversion in the first place. You can rescue or readjust the image to get the results that you want rather than what was set in the camera. Push the slider around, see what looks good.

Under White Balance is

A row of eight Buttons.

Basic is the first button, it allows for the main tonal adjustments and here is where you can rescue that over/under 'woopsed' exposure. The main sliders here are **Exposure, Recovery, Fill Light and Blacks.**

Exposure Slider. Use it to advance or reduce the highlights to just before Clipping. You can hold the alt/option key just like in Levels to see Clipped pixels.

Recovery Slider. Used to recover highlights that were lost by the Exposure Slider or in the basic exposure. It can also be used to tone down over bright areas.

Fill Light Slider. Used to lighten up the shadows. Tim likes to brighten them up to see detail and if too bright, tone them down in Photoshop.

Blacks Slider. Used to reduce/remove clipping in the blacks. Save what you can, you can always make it black again in Photoshop.

Vibrance Slider. Used to bring up the saturation of the more subtle colors, not the garish/bright ones. Great to get a bit of under done color going. BUT, Save the main Saturation adjustments for Photoshop.

Leave Brightness, Contrast, Clarity and Saturation alone. They can best be adjusted in Photoshop.

Of the Eight Buttons, Basic does most of what you need done. There are others like **Curves, Detail, HSL/Grayscale and Split Toning** that you can play with BUT, these things are best done in Photoshop where you can do/undo them in layers where you can change your mind, reduce them, delete them and/or mask them.

That's about all you want/need to do in Camera RAW. You "might" look into **Noise Reduction** if your image is noisy and the **Lens Corrections** tab if your lens has added aberrations.

When you are done adjusting in Camera Raw, if you want to Open the image in Photoshop, click the **Open Image** button. If you want to close the image, saving the settings, click **Done**. If you want to bail out, hit **Cancel**. If you want to start over, hold the alt/option key down, the Cancel button turns into a **Reset** button and you can reset all of your adjustments and start over.

Most of the buttons we haven't used are, like the programs Lightroom and Aperture, provided for Commercial Photographers who have hundreds or even thousands of

images to process at one time and NEED a simple way to make basic corrections to ALL of the images in as few steps as possible.