



Adobe Photoshop CC 2015: June update

Welcome to the latest Adobe Photoshop CC bulletin update. This is provided free to ensure everyone can be kept up-to-date with the latest changes that have taken place in Photoshop.

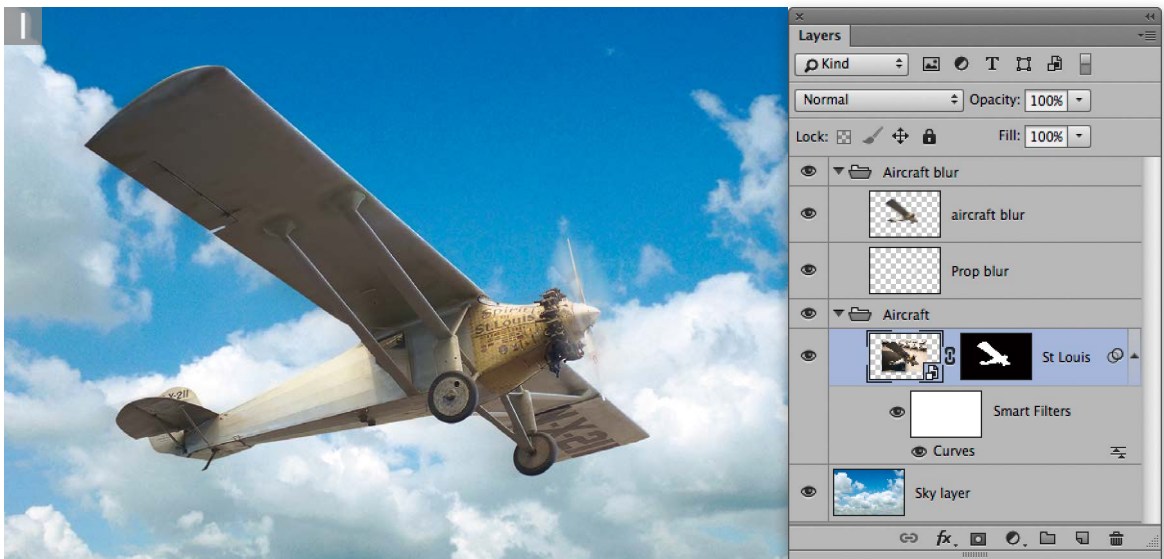
This bulletin coincides with the announcement of Photoshop CC 2015 and content includes basic information about some of the latest features that are new to Photoshop in Photoshop CC 2015. The features described here will be accessible to all Creative Cloud subscribers and those who have purchased the current version of Photoshop CC. For a complete description of how to use these new Photoshop tools, with diagrams and step-by-step tools, I recommend you buy the *Adobe Photoshop CC 2015 for Photographers* book, which will be on sale later this summer.

Image Adjustments as Smart Filters

This latest version of Photoshop CC allows you to apply most of the regular image adjustments from the Image ⇨ Adjustments menu to smart object layers. Up until now it has only been possible to apply the Shadows/Highlights or HDR Toning adjustments to smart objects. Now, you can apply any of the adjustments in the Adjustments menu except for the Desaturate, Match Color, Replace Color or Equalize adjustments.

To create a smart object you can either go to the Filter menu and choose Convert for Smart Filters, or go the Layer menu and select Smart Object ⇨ Convert to Smart Object.

The ability to apply a wide range of image adjustments to smart object layers is the same as when you apply an adjustment layer, but is like adding an adjustment layer in a clipping group with an associated layer mask. One advantage of this approach is that when you apply an image adjustment to a smart object layer and move that layer the image adjustment (or series of adjustments) are automatically moved with the layer. When working with adjustment layers you have to remember to select and move the adjustment layers at the same time as you do so. Overall, this means you now have the option to create smart objects and combine adding filters and image adjustments, which in turn can share the same filter mask. Of course, if you wanted to maintain separate masking control of the image adjustments then it may in these circumstances be better to stick to using adjustment layers. However, there is of course a workaround that was suggested by Julieanne Kost as a means to apply independent layer masking to nested Smart Objects. For example, if you convert a layer to a Smart Object and apply a filter or adjustment you can mask it, as shown in the example opposite. If you then select the Smart Object layer and choose Layer ⇨ Smart Object ⇨ Convert to Smart Object again, you can nest this Smart Object in another Smart Object. This effectively allows you to mask Smart Object adjustments independently.



1 In this first step I opened a layered image in which the layer that contained the Spirit of St Louis airplane was a smart object layer. This meant that when this layer was selected I could go to the Image ⇒ Adjustments menu and apply any of the main image adjustments from this menu. Here, I selected Curves.



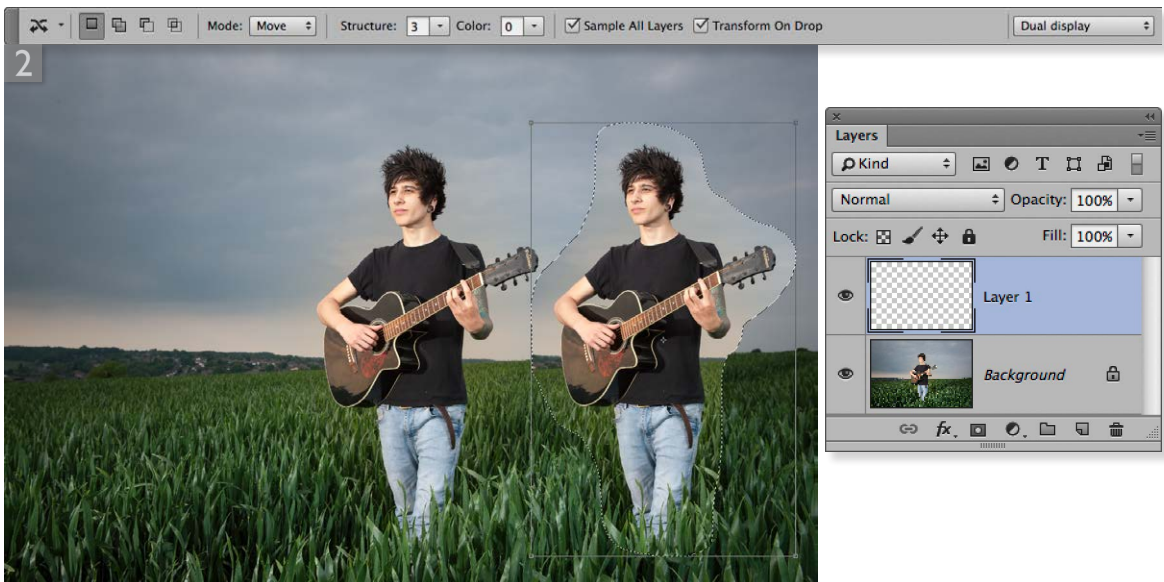
2 This opened the Curves dialog, where I applied the adjustment shown here. This adjustment targeted the smart object layer contents only, which was effectively the same as applying an adjustment layer in a clipping group. This particular smart object layer was also masked by a layer mask. You will notice in the Properties panel that there are controls for fine-tuning the Filter mask as well as the layer mask (or vector mask if one was applied).

Content-aware move with transformations

The following steps show how you can now apply transform adjustments as you carry out a content-aware move tool adjustment, whether you are using the Extend or Move mode.



1 To begin with I selected the content-aware move tool and clicked and dragged to define a rough outline of the guitar player.



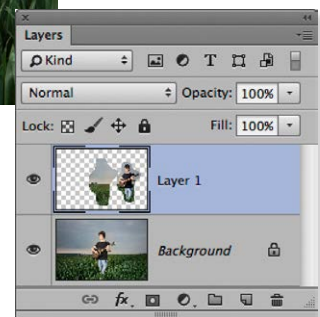
2 I added a new layer and checked 'Sample All Layers' and 'Transform On Drop' in the Options bar. I then clicked inside the selection with the content-aware move tool and dragged to the right. This created a temporary duplicate of the original selection.



3 Because 'Transform On Drop' was checked I was able to scale the copied pixels and in this instance rotate slightly as well, making sure I matched the horizon line.



4 All I had to do next was to hit the **Enter** key to apply the transformation and instruct Photoshop to blend the transformed pixels with the underlying image and, at the same time, delete and fill the original pixel selection area. These edits were added to the new layer and I was also able to fine-tune the Structure and Color sliders to obtain the optimum blend. However, I did also need to carry out a little extra retouching to perfect the blending.



Export options

Photoshop CC has new export options for RGB mode images. These are available via the File ⇒ Export menu and also via the Layers panel. This feature allows you to export your documents, layers, or layer groups faster and with fewer steps.

First, I suggest you go to the Export preferences (Figure 1), where you can configure what happens when you choose an export option. The Quick Export Default section allows you to choose which format the files can be saved in when applying a quick export and whether transparent pixels are to be preserved or not. In the Export Location section you can either have the option to be asked where to save asset files each time, or to always export to an assets folder next to the current document.

When you choose File ⇒ Export ⇒ Quick Export as..., or go to the Layers panel menu and choose Quick Export as..., the assets saved will depend on what is selected in the document and whether Generator extended tagging has been utilized. In general, when you choose Quick Export, this exports a full resolution version of the image saved to the specified format. If a layer or layer group is targeted and extended tagging has been used in the naming, a full resolution version will get exported as well as one with the attributes specified using the Generator syntax.

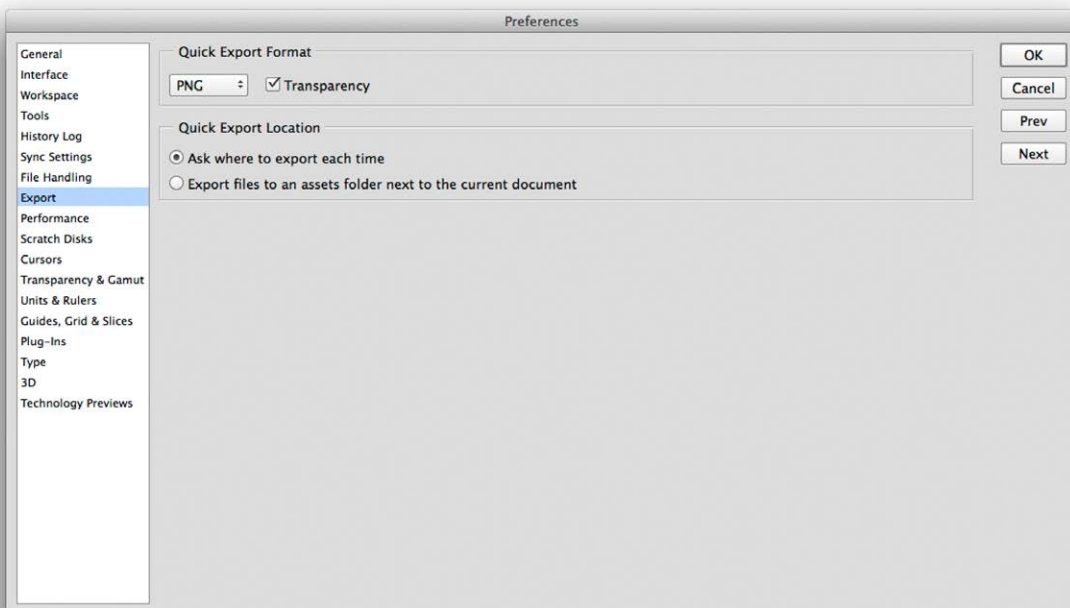


Figure 1 The Export preferences.

If you want more control over the export process, choose File ⇒ Save for Web ⇒ Export as... This opens the Export Preview dialog shown in Figure 2, where you have complete control over the file format selection, the file format settings, the image size you wish to scale the export to as well as the canvas size. As with Quick Export, the export location depends on the settings configured in the Export preferences.

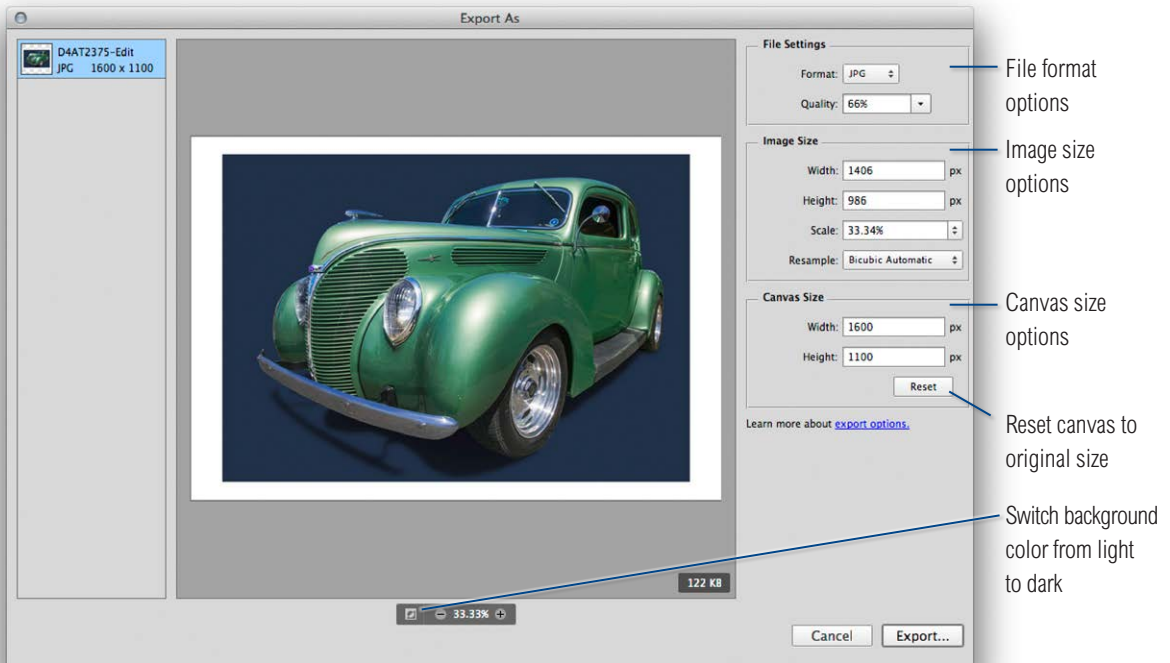


Figure 2 The Export Preview dialog.

Noise panel for Blur Gallery filters

One of the problems you get when adding Blur Gallery effects to create the impression of shallow focus is that the blur effect will also blur the underlying noise structure of the image. Now, this is not such a problem if the image you are working on has no visible noise. But if you are editing a high ISO capture (like the example shown here), this is where the Noise panel can come in handy, because it allows you to generate noise that can be added just to the blurred areas.

When working with any of the Blur Gallery filters you simply go to the Noise panel. If the noise panel is not visible, choose Reset Blur Gallery from the workspace menu in the Options bar. You can then check to add noise, select a noise method from the top menu (Gaussian, Uniform or Grain) and adjust the Amount slider to determine how much noise is added. In Grain mode, the controls are the same as those found in the Camera Raw Effects panel and you can adjust the Size and Randomness sliders. The Color slider controls the monochrome to color ratio (this can help you match the appearance of color noise present in the underlying image). Lastly, there is the Highlights slider. This can be used to reduce the noise in the highlight areas to achieve better highlight/shadow matching.



1 This photograph was shot using the Canon EOS 550D at 6400 ISO. As one might expect, there is a fair amount of luminance and color noise visible in this image. It can be treated to some extent using the Detail panel, but not completely.

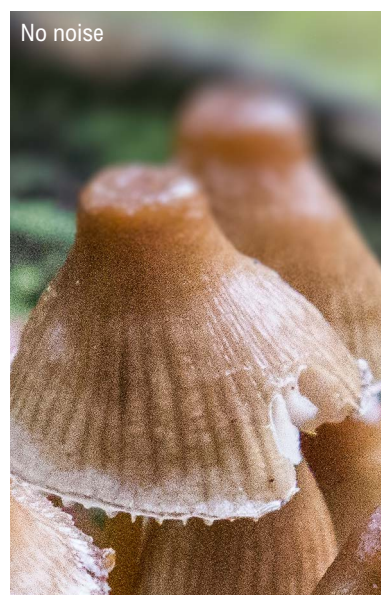
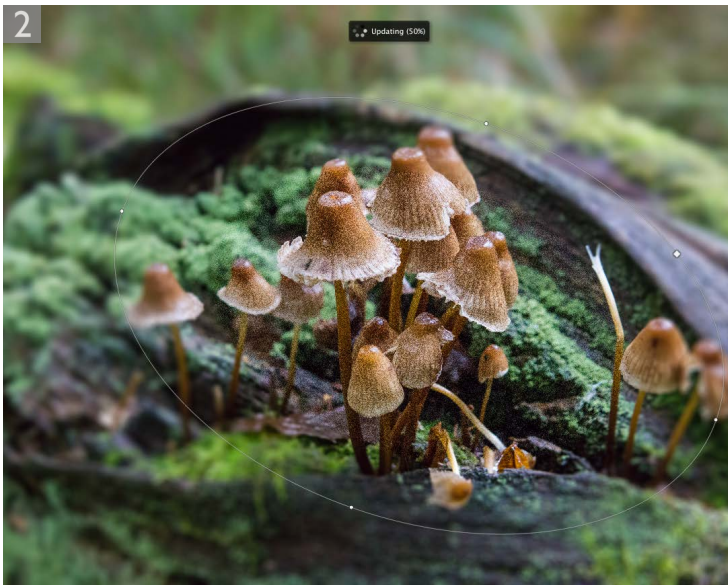


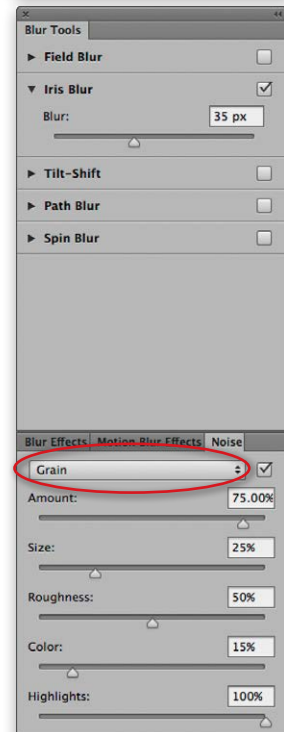
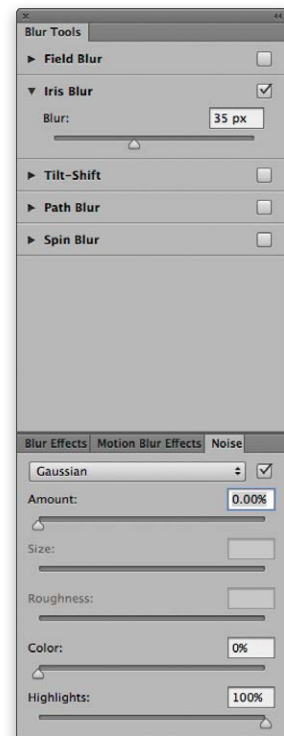
Figure 3 This shows a close-up view of the image shown here where the top view shows the outcome with no noise added and below where grain noise was added to the Blur Gallery effect.



2 I went to the Filter menu and chose Blur Gallery ⇒ Iris Blur. I manipulated the iris shape to achieve the desired shape and applied a 35 pixel blur. However, the blur effect also blurred the underlying grain in the image.

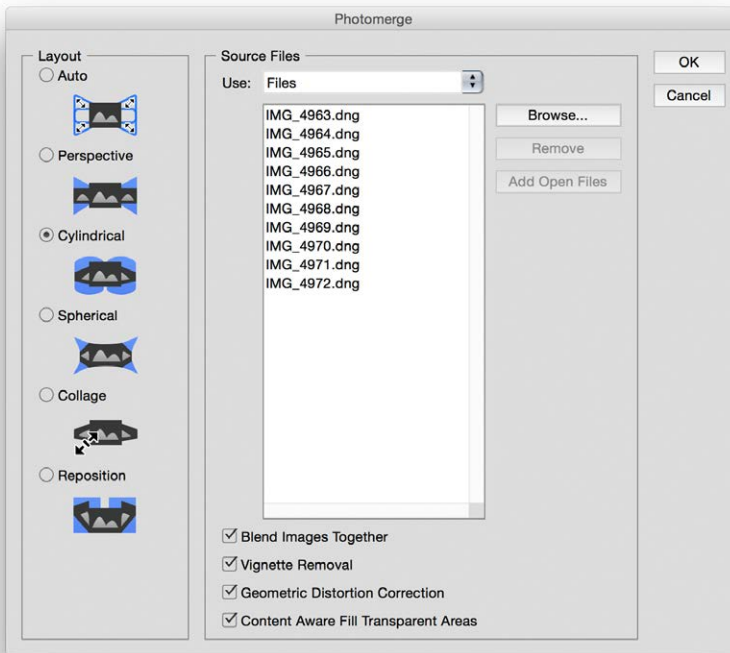


3 To correct this, I enabled noise in the Noise panel, set the mode to 'Grain' (circled) and adjusted the Amount slider to add more noise, adjusting the Size and Roughness. I then went to the Color slider and set this to 15% to make the added noise less monochrome. With the Highlights slider I left this set to 100%. Basically, these controls allow you to kind of mimic the appearance of the underlying grain in the photograph.



Photomerge refinements

While Camera Raw now now incorporates a panorama DNG creation function, the Photomerge dialog in Photoshop has been updated to allow you to include a content-aware fill step to fill the transparent areas.



1 Here, I chose File ⇒ Automate ⇒ Photomerge, selected the photos shown here, set the Layout mode to Cylindrical and checked all the boxes at the bottom, including 'Content Aware Fill Transparent Areas'.



2 This generated the panorama stitch image shown here, where you will notice because I checked the new option this added a merged layer with a content-aware fill applied to the outer transparent pixels.



Image Processor Pro

The Image Processor Pro (Figure 4) is now made available as a separate downloadable script, which can be downloaded via the Adobe website. Once downloaded and installed, you will then need to go to the File ⇒ Scripts menu and select Browse... to launch Image Processor Pro. Meanwhile, the original Image Processor can also be accessed via the File ⇒ Scripts menu in Photoshop, or via the Tools ⇒ Photoshop menu in Bridge. Image Processor Pro though allows you to select a folder of images (or select all open images) to process, and select a location to save the processed files to. Image Processor Pro can then be configured to run a Photoshop action (if required) and save the processed files using a wide variety of file formats and simultaneously process to save the files in multiple file formats to separate folders. This can be very handy if you wish to produce, say, both a TIFF version at high resolution and a JPEG version ready to place in a web page layout.

With the standard Image Processor, you had the option to simultaneously save a JPEG, PSD and TIFF version and determine the output dimensions for each, but that was all. The more advanced controls in Image Processor Pro now allow you to configure sets of file outputs and apply individual processing instructions to each set. For instance, in Figure 4 you can see that Set 1 is configured to save a JPEG version, and there are options to determine the pixel dimensions, resolution and image quality. Furthermore, you can choose the output profile and select Photoshop actions to run either before or after image resizing. Meanwhile, Set 2 is configured for saving TIFF file versions. Here, you can also choose different file format options, resize the image and select the desired bit depth. With the PSD set there are options to include alpha channels, layers and whether you want to maximize file compatibility. Below the file format options is the File Naming section, where you can determine how the files are renamed for each individual set. The options here are similar to those found in the Batch processing and Create Droplet dialogs.

Lastly, there are plus and minus buttons you can use to add or remove sets. For example, you could configure Image Processor Pro to output three different types of JPEG output. Maybe, one set of JPEGs resized for sending as email attachments, others saved ready for placement in a website and others as full-size images for placement in a layout. Once

Preparing JPEGs for the Web

When you are preparing images that are destined to be shared by email or published via the Web, the Image Processor is a handy tool to use because you can not only resize the images as part of the image processing, but you can instruct the Image Processor to convert the image from its current profile space to sRGB, which is the ideal RGB space for general purpose Web viewing.

the settings have been configured you can click on the Save... button at the top to save as a configuration setting that can be opened via the Load... button.

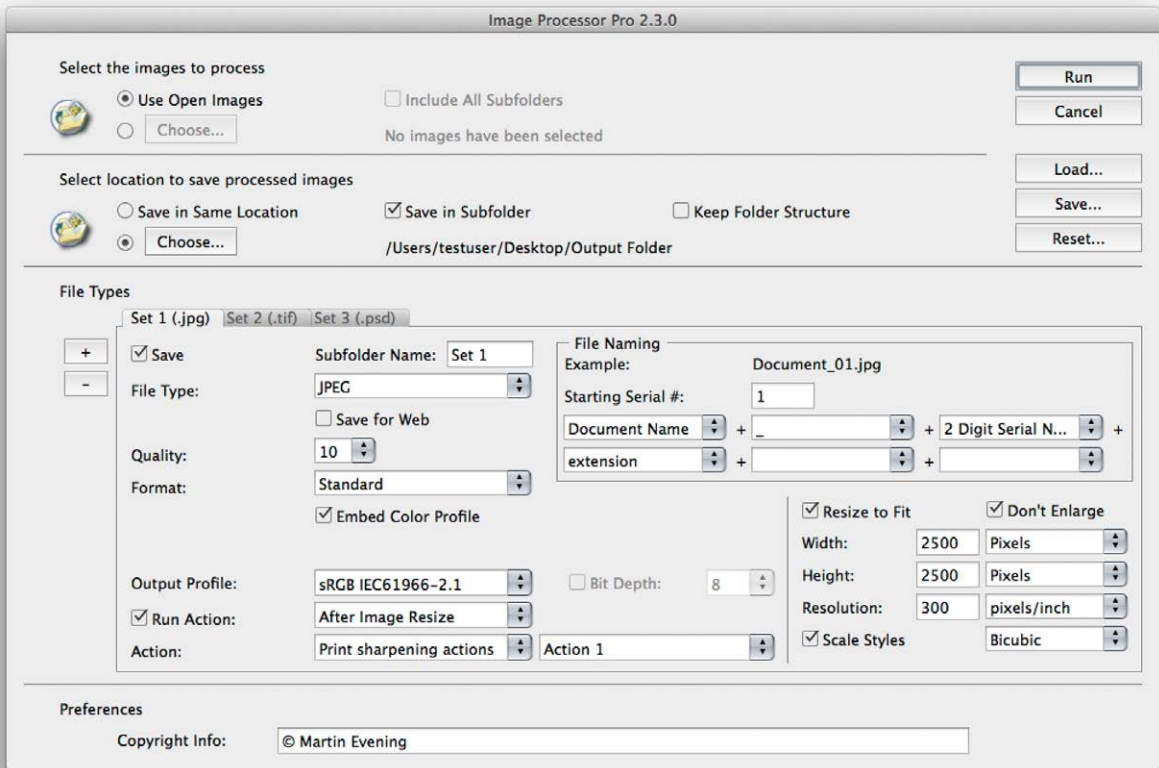


Figure 4 This shows Image Processor Pro, which can be configured to process single or multiple images, apply Photoshop actions, add copyright info and save the files to a designated folder location in one or more of the following file formats: JPEG, PSD or TIFF. The destination folder will contain the processed images and these will be separated into folders named according to the file formats selected.

Adobe Color Themes panel

The Adobe Color Themes panel (Figure 5) restores Kuler functionality to Photoshop. Kuler was removed when Photoshop CC was first released due to the removal of Flash support from Photoshop. This panel provides the same level of functionality allowing users to explore lots of different color combination themes as well as create their own custom themes.

Setting a custom background color

In the New Document dialog the Background Content menu now features an Other... option. When this is selected it opens the Color picker, which allows you to select a custom color as the background color (see Figure 6).

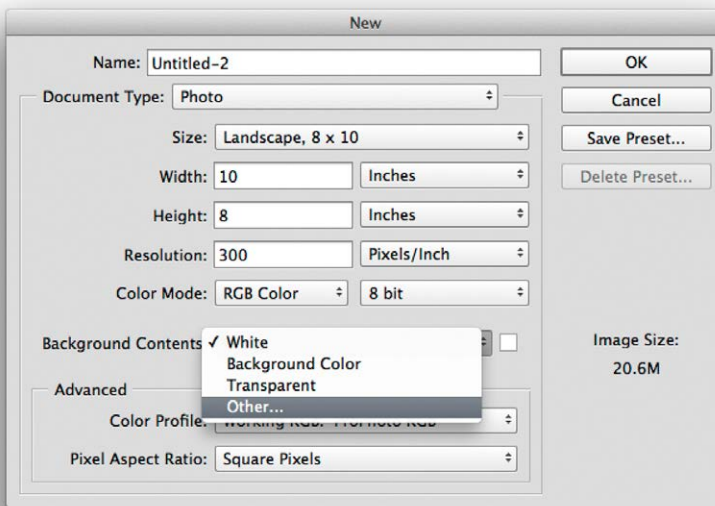


Figure 6 The New Document dialog, showing the Other... background color option.

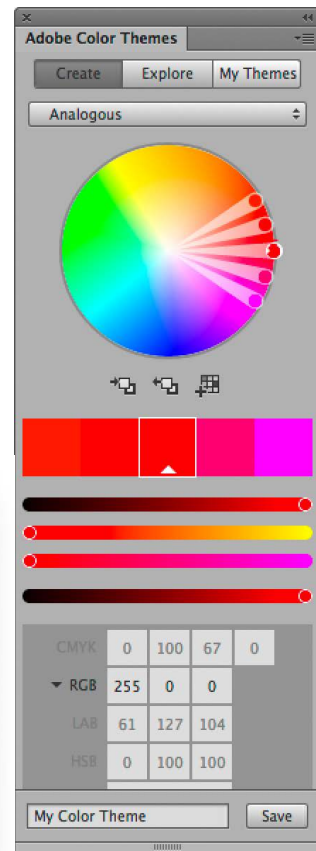


Figure 5 The Adobe Color Themes panel.