

## Wow, What a Ride...

*Stardate, July 4, 20xx, Planet Earth, some distant ocean...*

The intrepid Captain of the Patricia J. grinned gleefully as he showed me their new boat and a lifestyle quote that struck his Admiral's particular fancy. Unfortunately, the black color of the quoted text disappeared when imposed on top of darker shadowed portions of the boat under the sun shade.

What to do, *what to do...?*

### Photoshop CS3 to the Rescue

In today's Bridge-ACR-CS3 digital imaging world, with due diligence, point-and-



shoot JPEG's can both be rescued and modified to aid in a succinct yet balanced lifestyle statement. Basically, some travel accouterments in the boat's center needed to be less dominant, so the text could appear as part of how the main theme strikes your fancy.

We're going to show you how to choose only the boat's dark portion, lighten shadows,

then spiffy up (Levels, Curves, sharpen) the ocean, before we present a lively lifestyle version. To perform this feat we need to do a Quick Selection, create an Alpha Channel, spiffy the image, turn the image into a Smart Object, move Alpha Channel as a Mask on the Smart Object, then use the adjustment for Shadow/Highlight as a Smart Filter before we superpose our fancy lifestyle quote.



### Quick Selecting for Alpha Channel Masks

We use the Quick Selection tool to selectively put marching ants around darker regions in the boats center. Our quick selection is shown at the right. We promptly go to the Channels Palette and save the selection as Alpha 1 before saving

the image as a PSD file. This lets us return and replace or modify this marching ants selection at any time.

Using Levels, we perform a JPEG color balance. To add contrast, a medium Curve slightly reduced highlights. The white foredeck was a bit strong.

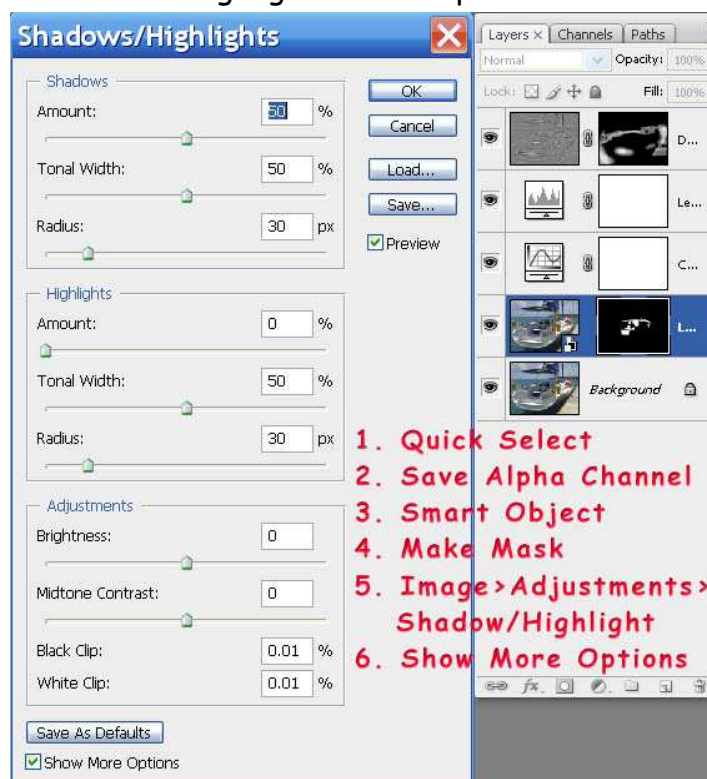
Using Pixel Genius' Photokit Sharpener, a white brush at opacity 33% Creatively sharpened dock, water, distant land, and flags. Creative sharpening is done with selective brush positions on individual layers using a pen tablet.

When the image really snapped, we took that image and created a Smart Object. Opening the Channels Palette, we did a Ctrl-click on Alpha 1 to the right of the icon, which placed the marching ants selection around the area where we wanted to gray the shadows on our main image. We then returned to the Layers Palette, chose Smart Object, and pasted that selection as a Mask onto the Smart Object layer.

Now, any modifications we made with the Shadow/Highlight tool would only apply to the region we had initially quick selected (white area in the mask; White reveals and black conceals).

## Shadow/Highlight

Shadow/Highlight is an adaptive command that evaluates and adjusts each pixel



differently depending on values of its neighboring pixels. It lets you recover detail from nearly blown out highlights and nearly plugged shadows in a way Curves or Levels just can't do. Where levels and curves shift all pixels at the same level by equal amounts, Shadow/Highlight evaluates local contrast and preserves it by making adaptive, context-sensitive adjustments.

Shadow/Highlight isn't available as an adjustment layer. It has to calculate the value for each pixel based on surrounding pixels on the same layer, while adjustment layers only compare a

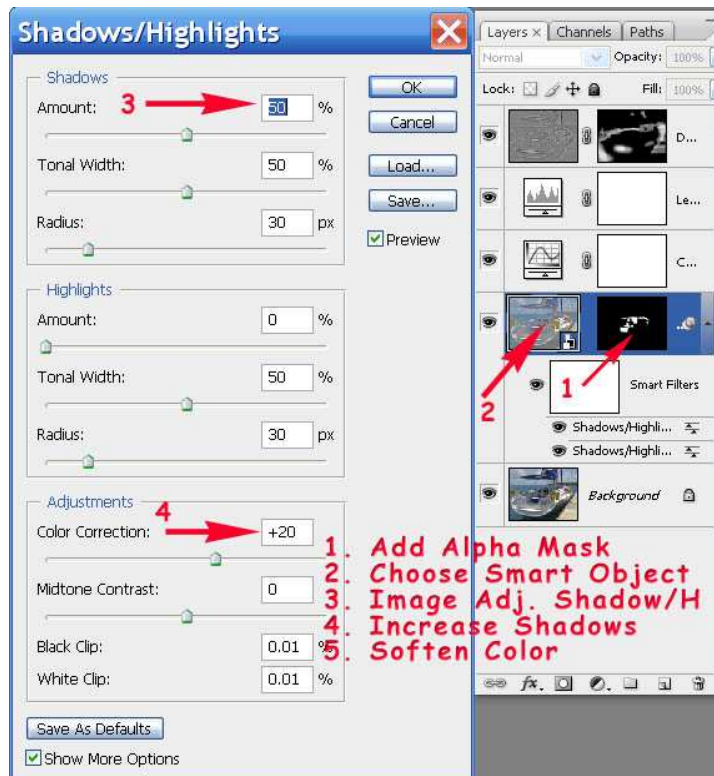
pixel with the same pixel on layers behind it (Real World Adobe Photoshop CS3, et

al. Fraser, 2008, page 424). The additional calculations required by Shadow/Highlight would make it agonizingly slower in any other adjustment layer.

In Photoshop CS3, you can use Shadow/Highlight as a Smart Filter, where you have more control over when the lengthy calculations take place.

In the figure above, we show the layers palette and default options for this workflow. We choose Image>Adjustments>Shadow/Highlight to activate this adjustment.

Here are Shadow/Highlight slider changes we made after choosing the Smart Object icon. Basically, we boosted Shadows (3) to make them lighter, then use some Color Correction (4) to add to that effect. We did not particularly tune these values.



### Before & After-Shadow/Highlight

The next two images show the effect; the heavily shadowed interior of Patricia J. is now muted.



BTW, in the quote which follows, we use Layer Styles and Bevel/Emboss option to put a Chisel Hard bevel on the red text to let it stand up and be counted.



Sunning herself on some distant, peaceful ocean, the Admiral of the Patricia J. contemplates *skidding in, broadside, used up, worn out*, then happily shouts "Wow, *What* a Ride...!!!" ~ while the Captain gleefully turns logs of such memories into gorgeously memorable print-on-demand books.

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