PHOTOSHOP TUTORIAL 2 BACK-LIGHT

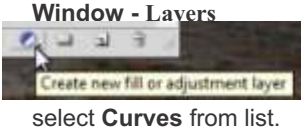
The reference photo I took early in November of baobab against sun at Kubu Island, Botswana. Nikon D300S - 10-24mm Nikon lens at 14 mm - 1/125 sec - f8 - ISO 200

2 BACK-LIGHT CONTROL

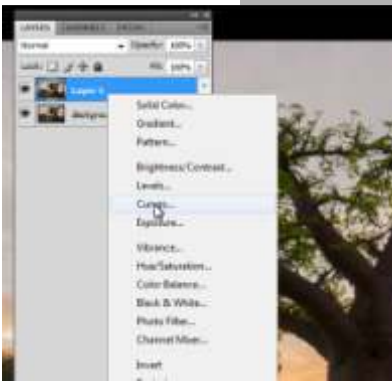
An under-exposed subject is normally the result of the camera's built-in reflective metering system p.13-18 being 'fooled' by an overly-bright background.
To fix this in Photoshop, we are going to use the Curves Adjustment Layer.

step ①

Open file hit **ctrl - J** to create new layer (this is a good practice to always have original image to go back to when doing complex manipulations). With layer active click on the **Fill or Adjustment Layer** icon at the bottom of the Layers palette **Window - Layers**

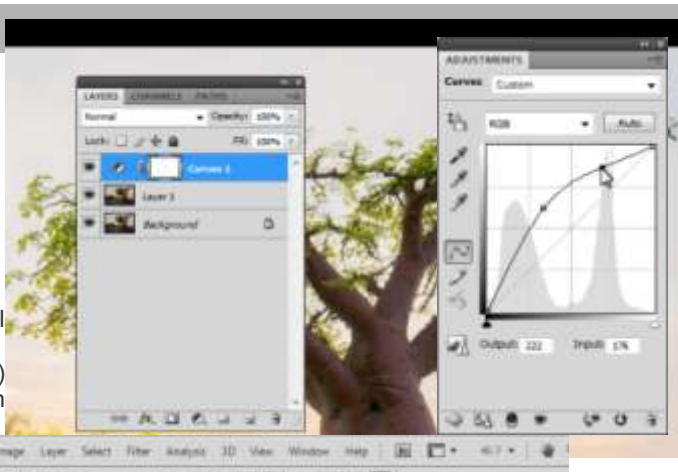


select **Curves** from list.



step ②

a) Now only concentrate on the subject (tree) and push the Curve upwards. The Curve should not touch the top edge of the box, you can click on the Curve to create a new point to move it away from touching the top.
b) Once the Curve is set click on mask in **Curves 1** (indicated in red below) and start painting the background black using the **Brush Tool** in normal mode. Start with a 50% opacity and small brush size next to subject (tree) and increase as you move away from subject. Ignore dark spots you accidently re-created on subject.
c) Fix accidental dark spots by changing to white and then paint over these dark spots.



step ③

Click Laer 1 and Curves 1 (holding shift) right click and choose Merge layers.
Go to **Image - Adjustment - Levels** and move sliders for better tonal range.
Burn and dodge for more dramatic lighting. Do not take exposure above 20%.

PHOTOSHOP TUTORIAL 3 SATURATION

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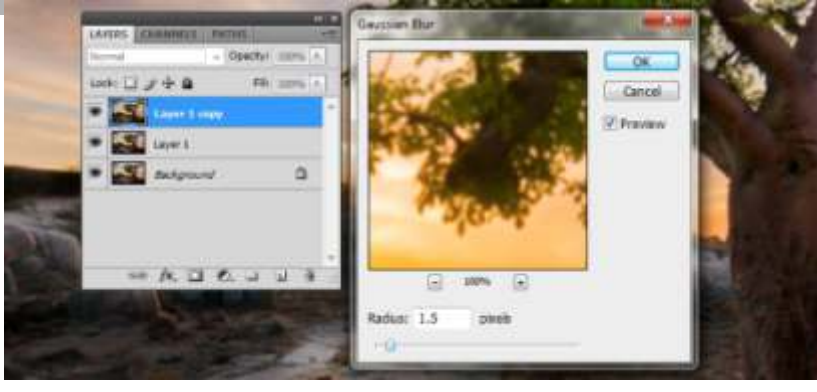
3 PUSHING SATURATION

When Saturation is increased some colours block out (posturise, banding) to a pure red/pure blue, etc. (picture on right pushed to +31 from picture on top) This would happen when Saturation is boosted beyond a certain point. This is called 'clipping' the same happens when Levels are pushed too much when attempting to boost contrast.

Here is a good trick to solve this problem...

step ①

Make 2 copy Layers (click on background in LAYER pallet then click **Ctrl+J** x 2).
With copy Layer highlighted at top of the Layers stack, go to **Filter - Blur - Gaussian Blur**. Move the Radius slider to blur the detail effectively without changing the shape or form of the image too much.



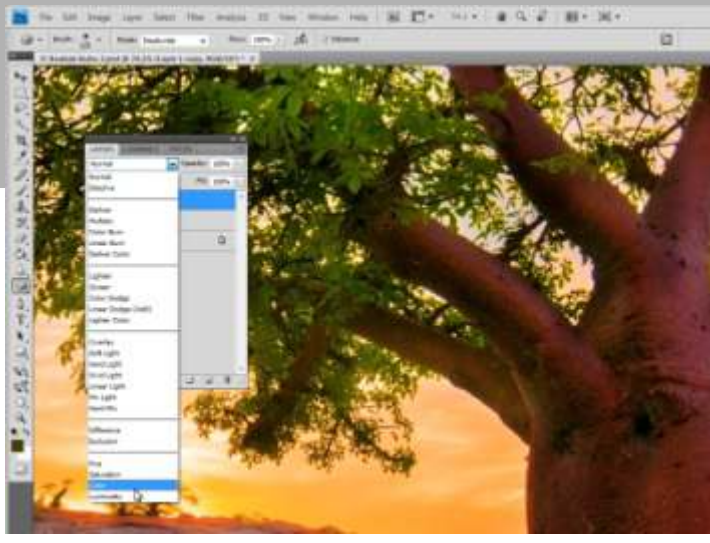
PHOTOSHOP TUTORIAL 3

step ②

Go to **Image - Adjustments - Hue/Saturation** (**Ctrl+U**) and push it higher up than you normally would, to prove a point (I have pushed it all the way up to 41 which is in the zone where 'clipping' really becomes evident).

step ③

Click on drop-down arrow next to **Normal** at the top in the Layers palette, and choose the Blending Mode to **Color** from the list. The blurring will disappear and allow the detail from the original to show through. With the blurred Layer highlighted, you can still change the saturation, click **Ctrl+U** and re-adjust saturation to your liking. You can push colours much more on the blurred image, there's no fine detail present to get 'clipped'.
You can des-aturate areas with excessive colour casts using the sponge tool, in this case the rocks got a bluish tint which needed to be de-saturated.



4 SHARPEN IMAGE

Sharpening cannot fix

- **poor technique**
- **blur caused by camera shake**
- **out-of-focus subjects**
- **subject movement**
- **image softening caused by dirty lenses**
- **lens flare**
- **atmospheric haze**

Sharpening is the last effect that should be done to an image.

A camera sensor sees the world in a mosaic of small squares, unnatural jagged edges (sawtooth) are created on diagonals

To compensate for this a filter is used to soften the edges for a more natural effect. This creats slightly softer images which needs some sharpening.

Although sharpening techniques can be used to improve 'slightly soft' photos, a photo cannot effectively be refocused.
Sharpening is meant to provide a solution to an abberation created by the nature of digital capturing.
A digital sensor converts an image into a magnitude of coloured squares 'Picture Elements' (or pixels).
Camera manufacturers use a filter over the sensor to blur the image slightly. This blurring - known as 'anti-aliasing' - lets the sharp edge of each 'step' bleed over into surrounding pixels and allows the jagged squeres to appear more natural (more akin to the way our eyes see). In doing so there is a slight softening of the entire image. The anti-aliasing filter adds a degree of fuzziness to the total image resulting in a 'softer but more realistic' photo/image, forcing the use of a sharpening 'software device on almost all digitally recorded images.
As with all things in Photoshop, there are lots of different ways of adding sharpness.

HOW SHARPENING WORKS

None of the sharpening methods truly sharpen the actual image - they all increasing the contrast on edges within the picture.
Sharpening process creates an apparant sharpness.

4a UNSHARP MASK FILTER

The name 'Unsharp Mask' is derrived from a film process in which a blurred (unsharp) low density positive copy of the photo is placed together (sandwiched) with the original negative.
This cancels out the blurring and the edges in the resulting print is given extra definition.

step 1

Sharpening is the last process used on an image.
Before sharpening always save a copy (some stock agencies like Alomy insist on images which has not been sharpened).
I always make a duplicate before starting any manipulation. Click on the **Background** in the **Layers** pallet to highlight the **Background** and click (**Ctrl+J**) to make a copy.

PHOTOSHOP TUTORIAL 4a

step ②

Go to Filter - Sharpen - Unsharp Mask, and click on the part that you want to sharpen, and it'll appear in the Preview, magnified to 100% (to change preview size you can toggle **+** and **-** underneath preview). The **Amount** slider controls contrast on the edges, I start with **150%** on bigger files (when halos appear go lower). To keep fine detail sharp I normally stay below a **Radius** of **0.5** for fine detail to be sharpened.Click and hold on the **Preview** pane, to see the

original shot. Click **OK** to sharpen whole image.

step ③

The horizon appears to sharp and unnatural. The whole image was sharpened indiscriminately, areas such as the horison did not need any sharpening.

The way to fix this is to use a **Adjustment Layer**. Click the **Create new Fill or Adjusment Layer** icon at the bottom of the Layers palette, fill with white and paint areas to view bottom layer with black when there are not much of the unsharpened view to allow throug. Fill whole area with black and paint with white brush (for sharpened areas) it there is less areas (regions) you wish to have sharper.

The trees on horizon created an unnatural posturised halo around them after sharpening (above), wheras the image before sharpening rendered these trees in a soft natural manner (below).

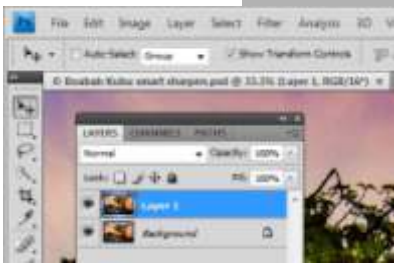
In example I only wanted to have the horizon less sharpened and used a white mask to paint with black.

4b LOW PASS SHARPENING

When more than the Unsharp Mask start to break the image with haloes and bad contrast without giving enough sharpening the 'High Pass filter' is the next option. This option is great for nature and wildlife.

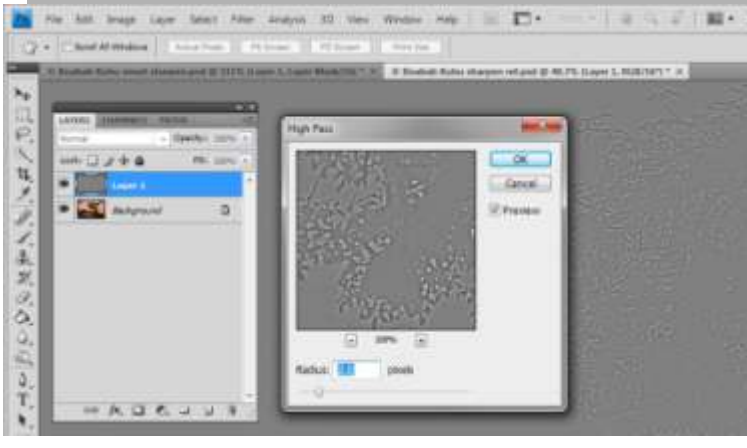
step ①

Make sure that this process is the last one to do. Click on the **Background** in the **Layers** pallet to highlight the **Background** and click (**Ctrl+J**) to make a copy.



step ②

With this copy **Layer** highlighted go to **Filter - Other - High Pass**. and the dialog box will appear. Move the **Radius** slider to 0, for a neutral grey screen. Nudge the slider bit by bit, until some good detail can be seen, it will start to look like an embossed etching as you increase the **Radius**. Avoid blurred haloes around the edge, move the slider until halos appear and then move back until the haloes are minimised but the detail is still present.



step ③

Click **OK** to activate the filter. Click on drop down arrow next to where it says **Normal** in the Layers palette, pick the **Overlay** Blending Mode from the drop-down list. The High Pass etched blends into the original colour picture, and delivers good sharpening of the detail and texture of photo.

If the effect is too strong, change the Blending Mode to **Soft Light.** For slightly higher-contrast use **Hard Light** instead (I went with hard light for the Kubu baobab). You can adjust the blend between the sharpening and the original picture, click on the **Opacity** slider and reduce it to pull back the intensity (i used 80% for a slightly more natural effect).

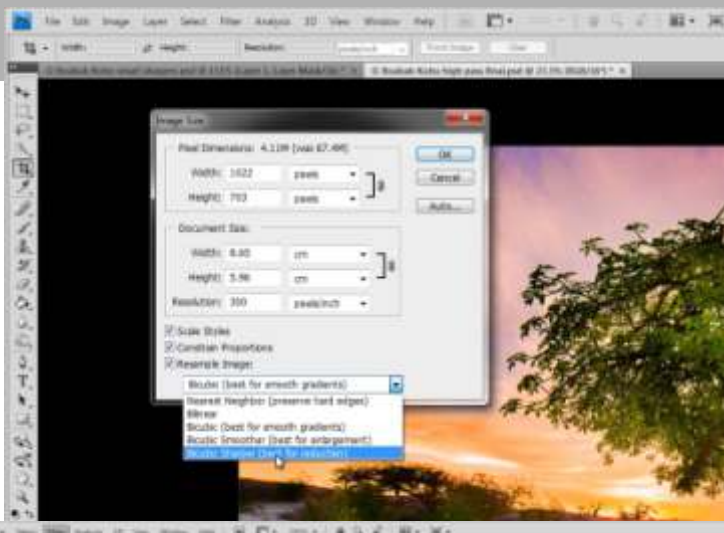
TUTORIAL 4c SHARPENING

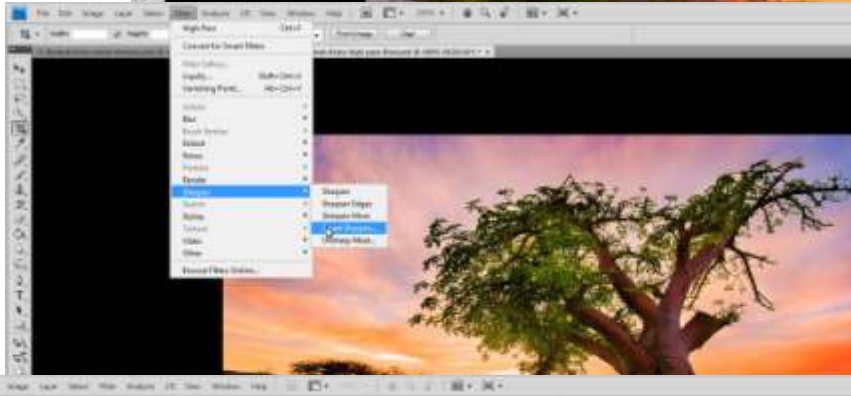
REDUCING AND SHARPENING FOR DIGITAL SALONS

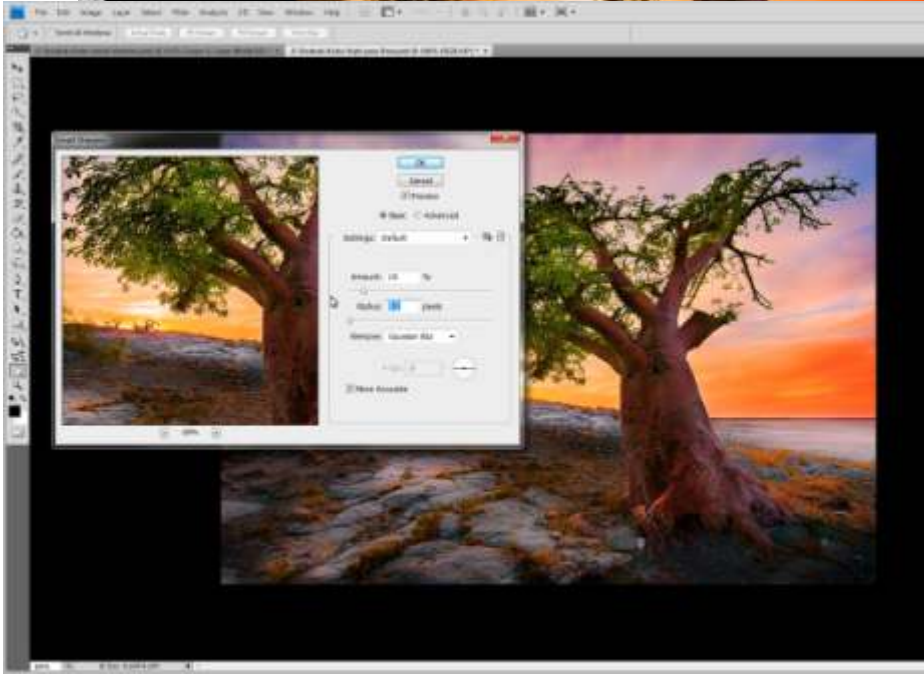
4c

When reducing pixels considerably the image will loose definition and (apparent) sharpness. The default reduction mode in Photoshop is '**Bicubic (best for smooth gradients)**' which is not the recomended reduction setting.
To reduce for sharp image from big files click Image - Image Size click on arrow at bottom drop down menu and choose **Bicubic sharper (best for reduction)**. Choose the pixel size for image to be reduced to (I chose 1022 pixels on width to ad a 1 pixel border all round later which will take image to 1024pixels wide).Make sure your pixel size does fall within the required salon specifications. Click **OK**.
Resize image to 100% and press '**F**' twice and evaluate image, press '**F**' again to return to Photoshop platform.
Should image still need slight sharpening go to Filter - Sharpen - Smart Sharpen.
Choose % amount, never go higher than 30% at this size.
Radius always at0.1 for this size, tick More Accurate and OK. Re-evaluate, sharpness my now be to much.

Make decision and enter at club, salon or for honours. Do realise that judging dynamics for these three groups differ considerably.







PHOTOSHOP TUTORIAL 2-4
BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Original photo RAW converted to TIFF

Curves for fill-in light p.22

Pushing saturation p.23

Unsharp mask p.25

Low pass sharpening (Overlay) p.27

Low pass sharpening (Soft Light) p.27

Low pass sharpening (Hard Light) p.27

My final photo using Low Pass sharpening with ‘Hard Light” and blend to back with 80% opacity. Pushing saturation brought out the red bark of the Kubu baobabs and gave the mauve tinge to a before surise sky