



Chapter 1

**PHOTOSHOP CS2 AND
THE DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHER**

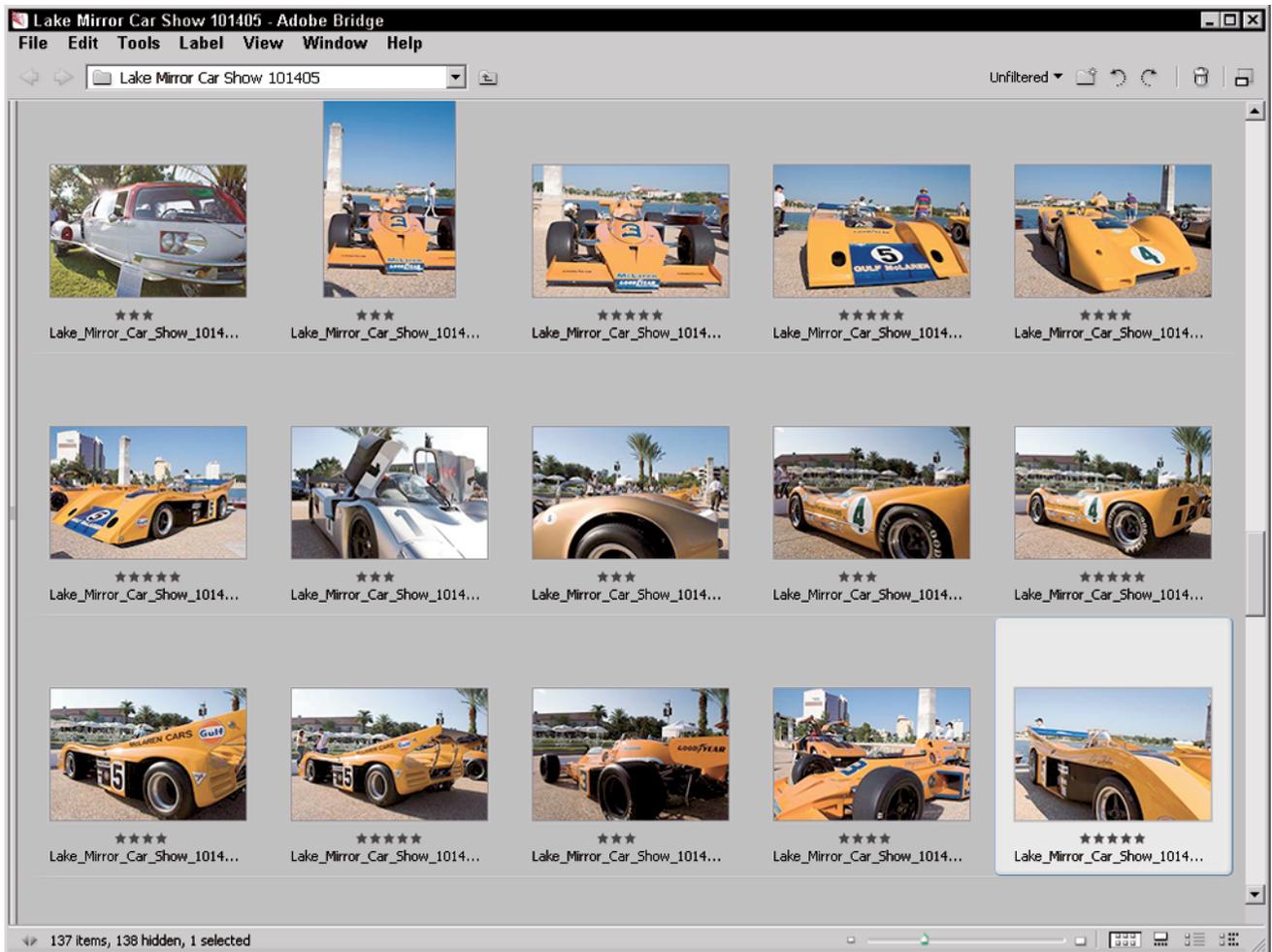


For the professional shooter, using a digital camera is a blessing as well as a curse. On one hand, you have instant gratification — you can view an image on the camera's LCD monitor immediately after you shoot it. On the other hand, after you finish the shoot, you have to process the images. For the professional, this means processing hundreds of photos from a shoot — a daunting task, unless you adopt a workflow like the one presented through the course of this book. After all, if you photograph people, places, or things for a living, the more time you spend behind the lens of a camera, the more profitable you become. Workflow is all about increasing your time behind the lens, and decreasing the time you spend

performing repetitive tasks in Photoshop. In this chapter, I show you how to configure the Adobe Bridge, Camera Raw, and Photoshop for a digital photography workflow. I also introduce you to automating your work with Actions, and nondestructive editing.

WORKFLOW FOR THE DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHER

A digital photographer's workflow need not be difficult, but you need to carefully plan it. Workflow is all about repetition. You often need to perform the same tasks on whole groups of your images like in Figure 1-1. But the



trick is to perform as many tasks as possible on as many images as you can in one fell swoop. Your workflow begins with sorting and categorizing images from your shoot. You sort your images into folders and then rename them. The tool you use for this task is Photoshop CS2's Adobe Bridge, a robust replacement for the Photoshop CS File Browser. Figure 1-1 shows a folder full of images that have been ranked and renamed.

If you've used your camera's RAW format to capture your images, you apply initial edits in Camera Raw. If you did not shoot in the RAW format, you open your images in Photoshop and begin your work there.

After sorting the images, you present them to the client for review. When the client decides which images are "keepers," your workflow continues as you fine-tune the images for the desired destination. The end result of your workflow is an image edited to pixel perfection.

SETTING UP A DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY WORKFLOW

The release of Photoshop CS2 adds some wonderful tools for the digital photographer. Where the digital photographer is concerned, Photoshop CS2 is really three applications: Adobe Bridge, Camera Raw, and Photoshop. If you shoot using the RAW format, your workflow includes each application. If your camera processes images, or if you set your camera to process images as JPEG or TIFF images, you can skip over the Camera Raw workflow. I tweak the preferences of each application to suit a digital photographer's workflow as outlined in the upcoming sections.

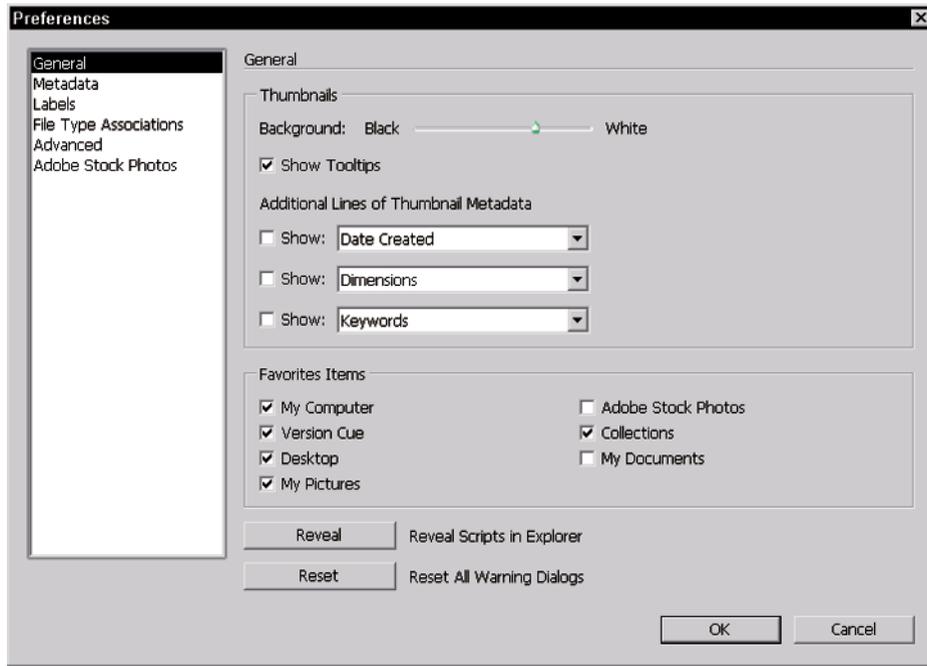
CONFIGURING ADOBE BRIDGE

The Adobe Bridge is where your workflow begins. From within this multifaceted workhorse, you sort and rename images, as well as add personal metadata and keywords to your images. The default settings for the Adobe Bridge suit many digital photographers. However, I change a couple of settings to suit a digital photography workflow as follows:

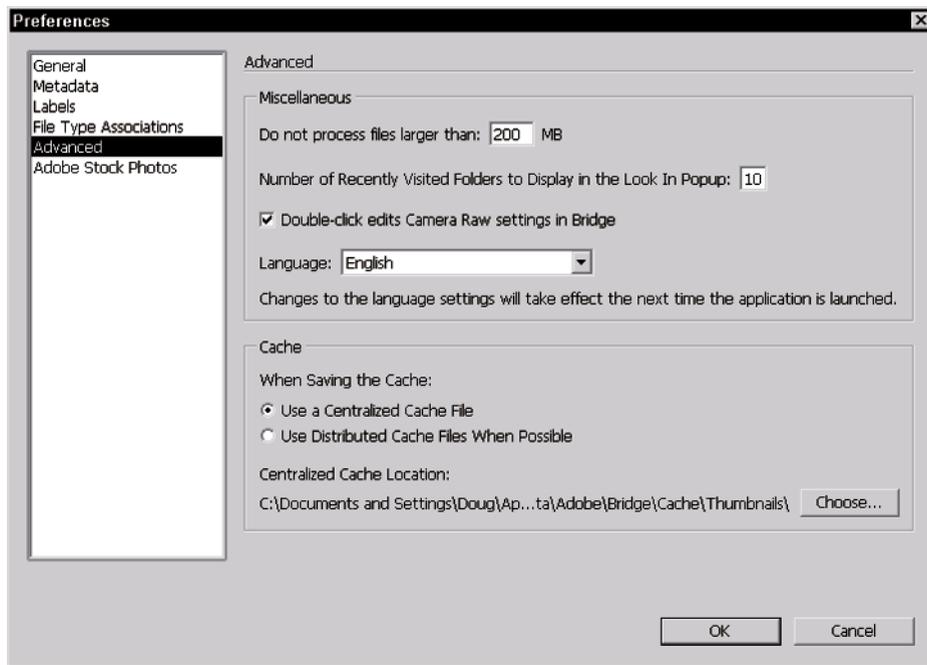
1. Open the Bridge Preferences dialog box to the General section as shown in Figure 1-2.
2. Deselect the Show Date Created check box to alleviate clutter when you view thumbnails. By default, you can always hover the cursor over a thumbnail and view a tooltip that shows the date created as well as other information.
3. In the Advanced category of the Bridge Preferences dialog box, shown in Figure 1-3, select the "Double-click edits Camera Raw settings in Bridge" check box. By default, a double-click opens the Camera Raw dialog box within Photoshop. I prefer to do all my Camera Raw edits within the Bridge, thus alleviating the extra processor overhead of Photoshop. If I find the need to do further tweaking in Photoshop, I click the Open button in the Camera Raw dialog box to open the image in Photoshop.

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You can also customize the layout of the Adobe Bridge to suit your working preferences. I make some recommendations on customizing the Adobe Bridge workspace in Chapter 2.



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1-3

CONFIGURING CAMERA RAW

If your camera has the ability to capture images using the RAW format, and you follow my sage advice and use this format for all of your work, you'll get to know the Camera Raw dialog box on a first-name basis. I recommend changing Camera Raw preferences as follows:

1. Open the Camera Raw Preferences dialog box shown in Figure 1-4.
2. Choose Sidecar “*.xmp” files from the Save Image Settings In drop-down list. This option stores changes in image settings, such as exposure and brightness, in an XMP file, which is Adobe's version of the XML language. The beauty of this option is that as long as you use the Adobe Bridge to move images to new folders, applicable XMP side car files automatically follow. Note that if you use your computer operating system to move images to different folders, the XMP file is not copied unless you manually do so.
3. Choose Preview images only from the Apply Sharpening To drop-down menu. This option sharpens previews in the Adobe Bridge, but does not apply the sharpening to the image when processed into Photoshop. The reason I recommend this setting is that the Photoshop dynamic sharpening duo, Unsharp Mask and Smart Sharpen filters, give you better sharpening options. The only time I deselect this option and let Camera Raw take care of sharpening is when I need to quickly process several images as JPEG files for initial client review.

CONFIGURING PHOTOSHOP

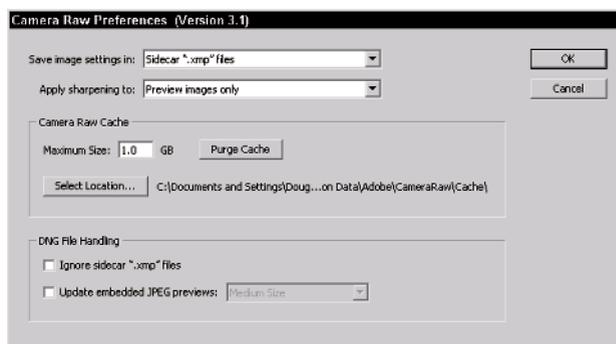
A good deal of your workflow takes place in Photoshop. I recommend the following preferences for a photographer's Photoshop workflow:

1. In the Photoshop Preferences dialog box General section, enable the Zoom with Scroll Wheel option if you use a scroll wheel mouse. This option enables you to quickly zoom in or out on an image using the scroll wheel on your mouse.

2. In the File Handling section, choose Never from the Maximize PSD and PSB File Compatibility. This option reduces the file size of the saved document, because Photoshop does not save a flattened version of the image along with the regular file, which is saved with layers intact. The only time you would accept the default Ask option is if you use PSD files in other applications that do not recognize Photoshop layers, in which case you should choose the Maximize PSD and PSB File Compatibility option.
3. In the Display and Cursors section, choose Normal Brush Tip and select the Show Crosshair in Brush Tip option. This setting enables you to see the size of the brush and identify the center of the brush as you work.
4. If you use third-party filters, then in the Plug-ins & Scratch Disk Preferences section, enable the Additional Plug-ins folder option, click the Choose button, and specify the folder in which you store your third-party plug-ins. I've named this folder “Plug-ins” so I can easily find it when I add additional plug-ins to my arsenal.

PRO TIP

If your third-party filters are stored in various locations on your computer, create a new folder named Plug-ins, and then create shortcuts from each plug-in to the Plug-ins folder. Specify this folder as your additional plug-ins folder — you'll have access to all of your filters, no matter where they are installed on your computer.



5. If you have multiple hard drives, then in the Plug-ins & Scratch Disk Preferences section, choose a hard drive other than your startup hard drive (the Photoshop default) from the First drop-down list. If you have more than one additional hard drive, choose an additional scratch disk hard drive from the Second drop-down list. The reason for this is that your startup hard drive becomes fragmented due to all the activity from your operating system. Specifying a different hard drive improves Photoshop's performance. If you have additional drives that you can use for scratch disks, choose them from the Third and Fourth drop down lists.

PRO TIP

If you can justify the cost, use a dedicated hard drive for Photoshop's scratch disk. Doing so improves Photoshop's performance. Defragment your scratch disk drives on a regular basis so that Photoshop can access them quickly. Make sure your machine has at least 1GB of RAM. The ideal solution is 2GB of RAM. Memory is cheap, and (hopefully) your time isn't.

6. In the Memory & Image Cache Preferences section, enter a value of **75** in the Maximum Used by Photoshop text field. Increasing the percentage of memory decreases usage of the scratch disk and improves Photoshop's performance.

EXPLORING THE ADOBE BRIDGE

Professional photographers take hundreds of photos in an individual shoot, which means the busy photographer ends up with thousands of image files on a computer. If you do not adhere to a proper workflow, you, the photographer will have a logistical nightmare on your hands when you try to find individual photos from a shoot. Fortunately, the Photoshop designers decided to

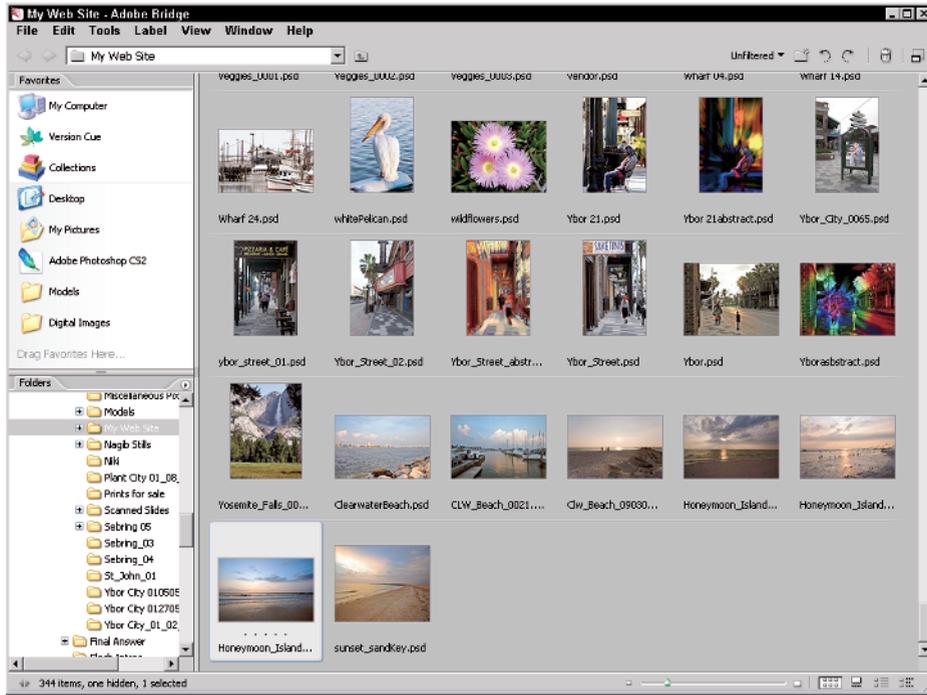
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In Chapter 2, I show you the professional photographer's workflow for saving time and maximizing efficiency with the Adobe Bridge.

give digital photographers a powerful tool with which we could organize our image collections. Enter the Adobe Bridge. In addition to organizing your image collection, the Adobe Bridge also functions as a digital light box, enabling you to quickly sort through hundreds of images from a shoot. Figure 1-5 shows a folder of images in the Adobe Bridge as configured in the File Navigator workspace.

USING THE CAMERA RAW PLUG-IN

All professional digital cameras offer the option of capturing images using the camera manufacturer's native RAW format. As mentioned previously, the RAW format captures everything recorded by the camera's sensor. Each camera manufacturer has a proprietary application to process the RAW file into a format that you can edit in Photoshop. However, none of these applications holds a candle to Photoshop's Camera Raw application, which launches whenever you double-click a RAW file in the Adobe Bridge. In the Camera Raw dialog box, you tweak the RAW file settings recorded by your camera to deliver the optimal image. In addition, you can correct for camera anomalies, such as vignetting, noise, and chromatic aberration, and have the option of opening multiple images to apply the same settings to all of them. Figure 1-6 shows the Camera Raw dialog box being used to process an image. You use the Camera Raw dialog box at two points in your workflow — when processing images for initial client review, and when fine-tuning images the client has accepted.



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1-6



RAW: The Professional's Choice

Digital cameras are marvels of technology because in addition to capturing razor-sharp images, they can process images. Although this feature is great for amateurs and casual camera users, professional photographers need precise control over every characteristic of their images, which is why serious professionals shoot their subjects using their camera's RAW format. With the RAW format, you have all the data on your camera's sensor chip at your disposal. This data is recorded using a write-only format, so you cannot destroy it. However, when you modify the original camera settings in the Camera Raw dialog box, the changes are appended to the original file. The revised information tells

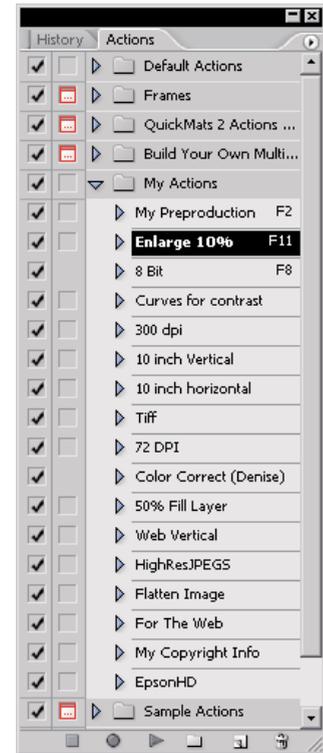
Camera Raw how to process the image. In the Camera Raw dialog box, you can revert to the "as-shot" camera settings at any time.

Shooting an image using your camera's JPEG or TIF setting means the camera's computer does all the processing — the equivalent of taking your film to the camera store and leaving with the prints and not the negatives. The first figure below shows an image shot and processed in-camera as a JPEG file, whereas the second figure below shows an image captured in the RAW format and processed by the photographer in Photoshop's Camera Raw dialog box using the default camera settings.



INTRODUCING PHOTOSHOP ACTIONS

Workflow for a digital photographer need not be time intensive. When you perform many of the same commands and actions on your images, you can use Photoshop's powerful Actions feature to record a set of commands that you commonly perform. For example, if you create images for delivery to a Web site, you typically change the color profile, resize the image, change the image resolution, and then optimize the image using the Save for Web command. Instead of applying each task in turn to each image, you open one image and record the desired commands as an Action. Then you can batch process to apply the Action to multiple images from within Photoshop or the Adobe Bridge while you do something more important — like line up a client shoot. Figure 1-7 shows the author's Actions palette. Notice that the Actions are segregated into a set.



1-7

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I cover creating and using Actions in detail in Chapter 14.

Choosing When to Shoot RAW versus JPEG

If you have the luxury of time, you get the best results shooting with your camera's RAW format. RAW is the format of choice for photographing landscapes, portraits of people, or products and subjects that don't require a lot of sequence shooting. The flexibility you have while processing the RAW image in Photoshop Camera Raw is worth the initial investment of time. However, if you often shoot under severe time constraints, such as creating photographs of a sporting event for publication in a daily or weekly publication, you should use your camera's JPEG option. You

forfeit your option to tweak the initial exposure, but cut down on the amount of time you spend getting the images ready for publication.

If you must shoot with the JPEG format, make sure you use your camera menu options to bracket your exposures and flash settings. Depending on your camera manufacturer, you can also enable and fine-tune different parameters using the camera menu, such as the contrast and saturation, to suit the type of event you're photographing.

UNDERSTANDING NONDESTRUCTIVE EDITING

▶ **W**hen you perform a menu command on a digital image, you change the pixels that make up the image. Granted, if you're not happy with the command's end result, you can undo the command to return an image to its previous state, or use the History palette to undo several commands in one fell swoop, but this is not efficient workflow — when you save and close the image, the steps recorded in the History palette disappear. However, if you apply all of your edits to copies of the

background layer, or layers created from selections, you do not destroy pixels on the background layer. If for any reason your edits do not turn out as desired, you can delete the layer to which you've applied the edits, and you still have your unaltered image on the background layer. You can also modify the opacity of a layer, and change the blend mode to get the desired result. You save the edited image in the desired format for client use, and then save your “working” PSD file complete with layers for future use. Figure 1-8 shows several named layers in a portrait that has been edited nondestructively.



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I have an assignment that the client wants me to turn around quickly. However, I anticipate getting a release from the client to use the images in the future. What format should I use?

Most professional digital cameras will let you capture images simultaneously in RAW and JPEG formats. You can choose this option from your camera menu. Use the JPEG images for the quick client turnaround, and use the RAW images for your future use. Be sure to bracket your exposures to compensate for the inability to adjust exposure on the JPEG images.

I am thinking of upgrading my computer. What are your recommendations for a good system for a digital photographer using a PC?

I personally use a Pentium 4, 3.0 GHz processor with 2GB of PC 3200 RAM. AMD 64 processors are also a good option because they quickly handle Photoshop processing and take full advantage of the new 64-bit version of Windows XP. My motherboard supports USB 2.0, and I have a USB 2.0 card reader attached to a USB 2.0 hub. I have two 7200-RPM hard drives with a total capacity of 460GB. My auxiliary hard drive has a 100GB sector that I use as a Photoshop scratch disk. I use a Wacom Intuous III tablet, which is essential for creating precise selections as well as photo touchup and restoration. Dual monitors are another option that I plan on adding in the near future. In addition, I have a DVD R/W drive, which I use to archive image files. I also have several USB 2.0 hard drives, which I use for additional archiving. DVD disks and hard drives are cheap. If you lose images due to an equipment failure, they're gone forever. You can never be too careful.

I am thinking of upgrading my computer. What are your recommendations for a good system for a digital photographer using a Mac?

I don't personally use a Macintosh, but a fellow photographer who uses Photoshop on the Macintosh platform has these recommendations: A Macintosh G5 2.0 GHz processor with 2GB or DDR RAM. Use a motherboard that supports USB 2.0, FireWire 400 and 800. Dual monitors are a plus if you can afford them. Another added plus is a DVD-R/W drive to archive images from a shoot. External hard drives are another useful option for backing up multiple shoots. A Wacom tablet is essential for creating selections and doing detailed touchup work.



