PART I

How to Use the Nik Tools

The Lessons

Installing the Plug-ins 2
Using Dfine 2.0 4
Using Viveza 10
Using Color Efex Pro 3.0 14
Using Silver Efex Pro 18
Using Sharpener Pro 2.0 24
Getting the Hardware Needed. 30

Everyone reads the manuals that come with the software, right? Not always, of course. So, I'm going to give you a run down of the install process and the user interface of each of the Nik Software programs covered in this book's lessons. In most cases when you install a plug-in, such as the Nik plug-ins, they are embedded inside the application (in this case, Photoshop). But when you upgrade, re-install, or tweak Photoshop, you will need to re-install all your plug-ins as well.

So here's a simple solution. First, when you install the plug-in, don't blindly click OK and let the computer take over! You need to tell the computer where you want to save your plug-ins. Then, when you upgrade Photoshop, the plug-ins are in their own little folder sitting exactly where you put them on your hard drive. And the new Photoshop won't have removed them.

In the rest of this part, I describe the plug-ins in the order that I use them in my workflow. Because Color Efex Pro 3.0 and Silver Efex Pro are generally used separately, your workflow might be different.

LESSON 1:
INSTALLING THE PLUG-INS

First, go to your main hard drive and create a new folder named "Plug-ins" (or a name you'll remember) and you're ready to install your plug-ins.

Double-click the program icon and you're off and running. After you accept all the agreements, you will arrive at the Color Efex Pro 3.0 Complete Setup dialog box. Click the Browse button to open the Browse for Folder window, as shown in Figure 1-1. Select your plug-in folder, click OK, and you're taken back to the installation window where you click the Next button.

Open Photoshop and choose Photoshop ▸ Preferences ▸ Plug-ins (on the Mac) or Edit ▸ Preferences ▸ Plug-ins (in Windows) to open the Preferences dialog box (see Figure 1-2). Turn on Additional Plug-Ins Folder and locate your plug-in folder and click OK. Back in the Preferences dialog box, click OK. The final step is to close Photoshop and restart it. After restarting Photoshop, your plug-ins will be listed in the Filter menu.

When installing software, make sure you have all your product keys. Usually I store them in an obscure text file that is not easily recognized by prying eyes. I also keep a copy of the keys on a thumb drive, and I e-mail myself a copy of the keys so that no matter where I am I have the keys in case I need to re-install the plug-ins.

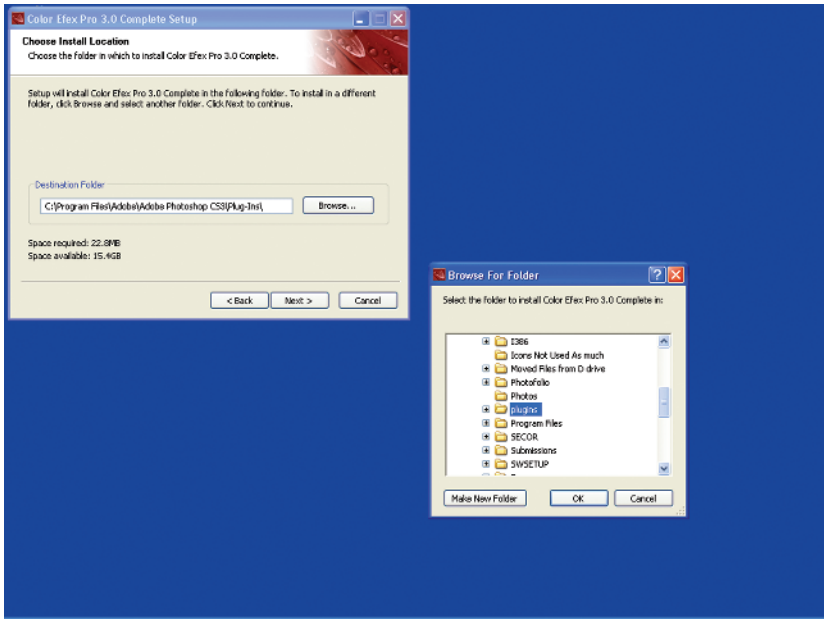

Figure 1-1
Selecting the new plug-ins folder.

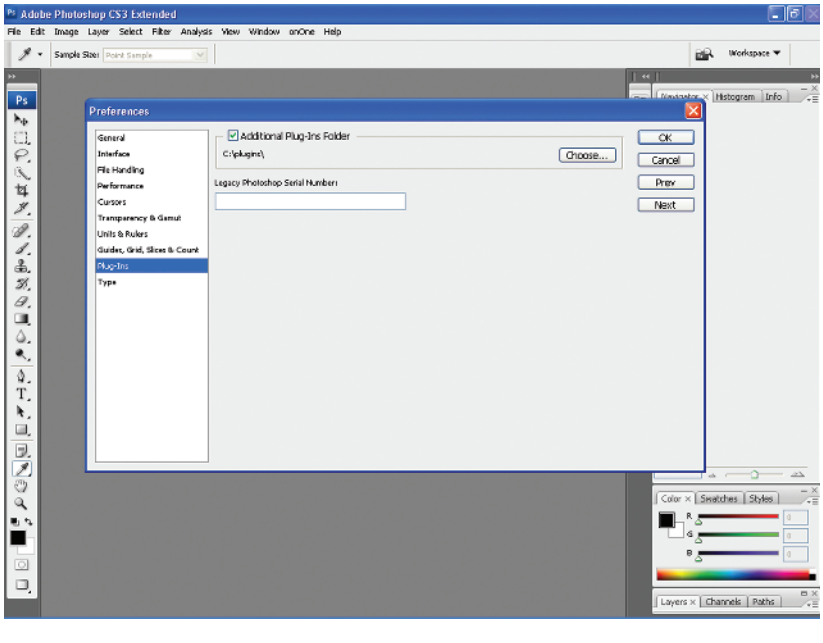

Figure 1-2
Locating the newly created plug-in folder.

LESSON 2: USING DFINE 2.0

Figure 1-3 shows the Dfine 2.0 window that you access by choosing Filter ➧ Dfine 2.0. Starting at the top left, the View tools provide a Single Image view, a Vertical Split view, and Horizontal Split view. The Horizontal Split and Vertical Split views let you see how noise reduction will affect the image. In most cases, I use the Single Image view and use the Loupe mode to see the effect on my image.

The middle option is Preview, which is active only in Single Image view. You can see the noise reduction results by toggling Preview on or off.

Next are the Preview modes, as shown in Figure 1-4. Preview modes let you see the effects of the noise reduction on individual elements of your image. You can examine each color channel (RGB) or look at the Luminance or Chrominance masks created during the noise-reduction process. However, you can preview Luminance and Chrominance only in Single Image view (more on that in a few paragraphs).

Using the Color Range Noise Reduction method or the Control Point method, you can view Contrast and Color Noise masks. When you view an image in either the Contrast Noise mask or the Color Noise mask modes, the white areas receive the most noise reduction, gray areas receive an intermediate amount of reduction, and the black areas do not receive any reduction in noise (see Figure 1-5).

Next are the Select, Zoom, Pan, and the Background Color Selector tools.

The Select tool lets you interact with the measurement rectangles (as well as control points, but more on that later) that appear, as Figure 1-6 shows. Press the A key to access the Select tool. To switch to it while using one of the other tools, just hold down ⌘ or Ctrl (when you release the key, you switch back).

The Zoom tool does exactly what it says: It zooms. You have three levels of zoom: Fit to Window, 100 percent, and 300 percent. The shortcut key is the Z key. Just as in Photoshop, press ⌘+= or Ctrl+= to zoom in, press ⌘+– or Ctrl+– to zoom out, and press ⌘+0 or Ctrl+0 to go back to Fit in Window.

The Pan tool (the shortcut key is H) lets you reposition the image when you are zoomed in at 100 percent or 300 percent. And just as in Photoshop, holding down the space bar automatically switches to the Pan tool.

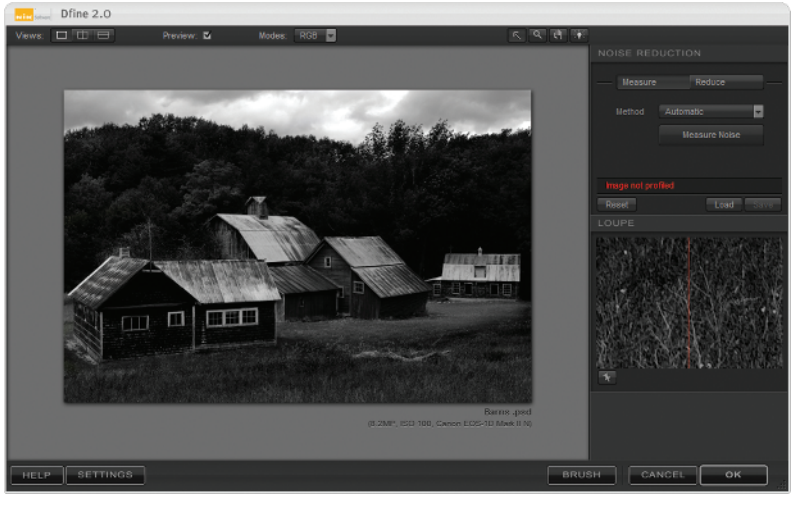

Figure 1-3
I generally use Dfine's Single Image view.

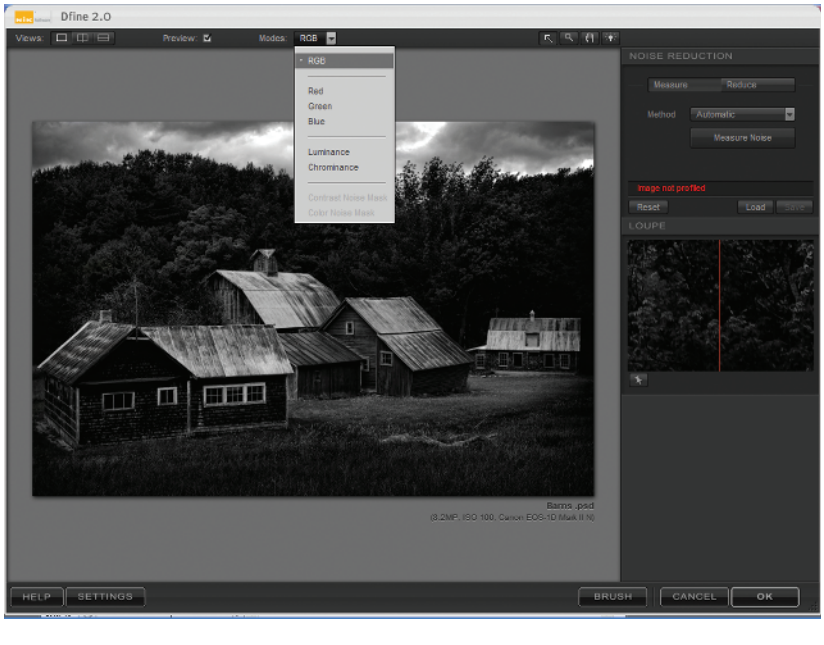

Figure 1-4
Use Preview modes to see how noise reduction will affect your image.

That little light bulb next to the Pan tool is the Background Color Selector. Trust me: Set it to Medium Gray and just leave it. I'll show you how to do that it in the settings section, or if you're dying to find out right now, jump ahead, but come back to this spot.

Next on the tour of the Dfine 2.0 window is the Noise Reduction Engine. The layout is simple. You can use a Measure button or a pop-up menu to select which measuring method you want to use. You can choose either Automatic or Manual mode (see Figure 1-7). I usually use Automatic. It saves time and does a great job finding the noise in an image.

The button below the Method pop-up menu is the Measure Noise button. Depending on which method you choose, you will see different options. Automatic gives you a Measure Noise button. In Manual mode, you will see the Measure Noise button, as well as a Add Measurement Rectangle button that lets you select the areas you want to measure — I find that the auto process usually does it better and faster (see Figure 1-8). Choose Manual mode ➧ Manual Reading if Automatic doesn't find an area to profile.

Note that Automatic won't find an area to profile when the image is comprised of high detail and there is no smooth, texture-less area to read. If this happens, use the Manual mode to draw a box that Manual Reading can use to read noise, and then hit Measure Noise; it will create a profile based on that information. You can also use the Manual mode to draw additional measurement boxes if you think that the Automatic mode missed a different type of noise.

After you've measured the noise, you have three options to reduce the noise detected. The Reduce button in the Noise Reduction Engine has another Method selection pop-up menu where you can choose Whole Image, Color Ranges, and Control Points (see Figure 1-9). Whole Image does just what it implies and will affect the entire image. So any adjustment you make to the Contrast and Color Noise will affect the whole image. In some case this is great, but it isn't the best tool if you want to reduce noise in only one section of the image. The Color Range and Control Point methods are much better, and I'll show you why in the "Fighting Noise" part of the book.

Up next is the Loupe. In the Fit to Window mode, it acts as, well, a loupe showing a close-up image of a selected area as well as a side-by-side comparison of the before and after noise reduction. Consequently, if you zoom in to 100 percent or 300 percent, the Loupe turns into the Navigator. You will see a thumbnail of your image and a red box showing where you are in your image (see Figure 1-10). To lock the Loupe in place, Control+click or right-click it.

Along the bottom of Dfine's window is the Brush button, which brings up the Selective tool in Photoshop, and the Settings button, which brings up the Settings dialog box (see Figure 1-11). As you can see from my configuration, I like things simple. I set my Default Zoom and Preview Mode to Use Last Setting, and I use Medium Gray for my Default Appear-

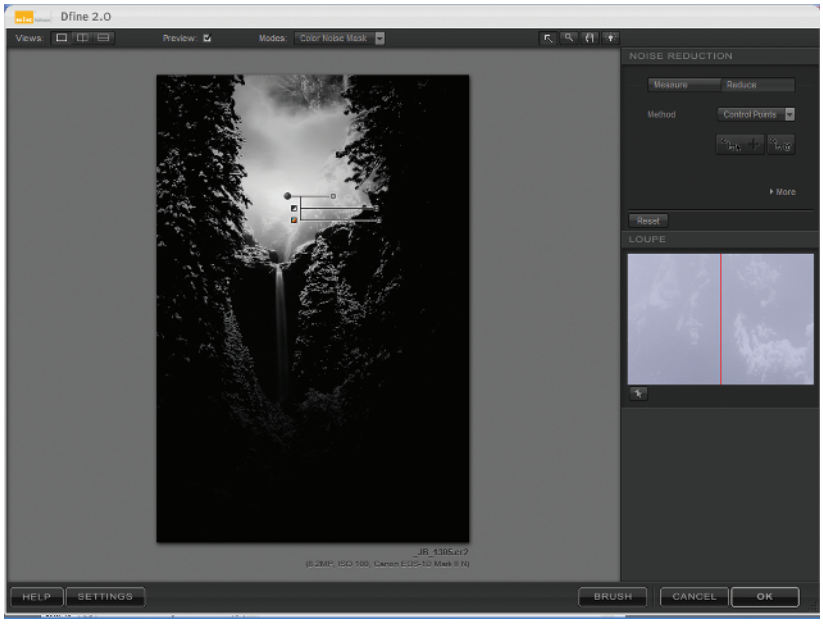

Figure 1-5
With Color Noise mask in Preview mode, you can see exactly what your control point is affecting.

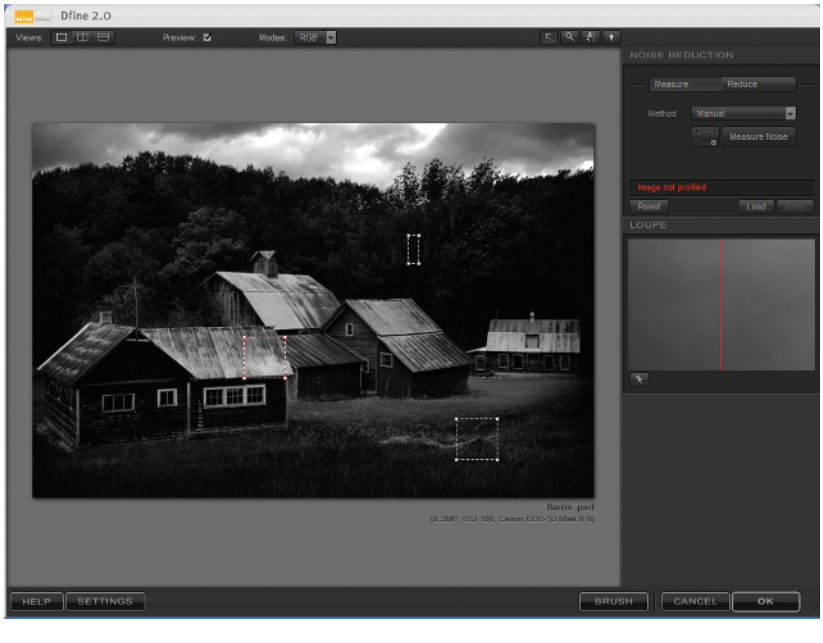

Figure 1-6
You can create measuring rectangles on your image to look for noise.

ance. I use medium gray because it is the best background view for my images. Because I don't use Auto Profile, I set it to Do Nothing and the final option, After clicking OK, I have set to Apply Filter to a Separate Layer. By creating the new layer with the effect, I can easily change it if I don't like how it looks.

You may think I skipped over some buttons in the Noise Reduction Engine — and you're right, I did. I skipped Reset (which clears the profiling done either by the computer or you), Load, and Save. Remember when I said this book was about speed? Well, it is, and I just don't use these buttons. Actually, these buttons are for you die-hard noise fighters who think the computer isn't that smart and you want to build your own Dfine profiles. I think the program does an amazing job auto-profiling the images. I'd rather be out shooting than creating profiles, wouldn't you?

There's a lot to absorb in such a simple window, but from here on the learning curve goes down, and for good reason: The folks at Nik made each program's window almost the same. And, now that I've described how most of the buttons function, I'll focus on the filters and settings for each program and fire through them.

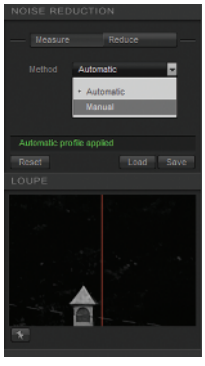

Figure 1-7

You can measure noise Automatically or Manually.

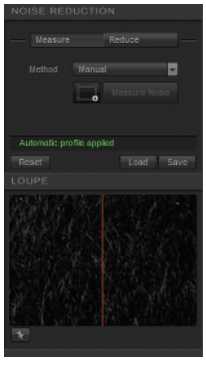

Figure 1-8

By clicking the Add Measurement Rectangle button, you can create areas you want Dfine to examine for noise.

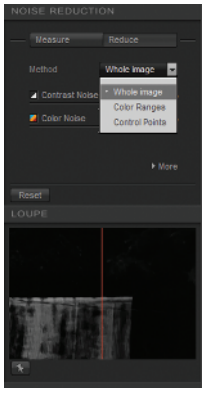

Figure 1-9

You have three options to reduce noise in your image: Whole Image, Color Ranges, or Control Points.

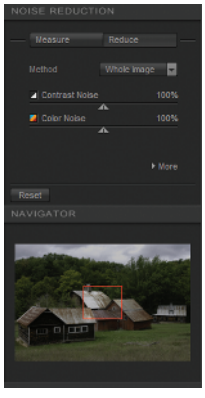

Figure 1-10

When you are zoomed in at 100 percent or 300 percent, use the Navigator window to show where you are on the main image.

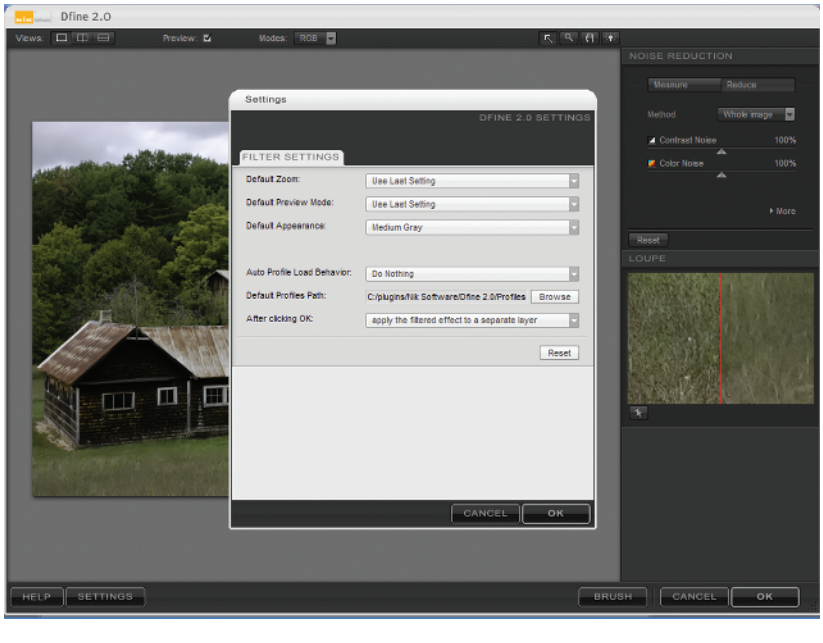

Figure 1-11

The Settings dialog box lets you select how you would like Dfine's filters to perform.

LESSON 3: USING VIVEZA

The next step in the workflow is Viveza. Without injecting too much of my opinion: This plug-in rocks! Until Viveza, Canon shooters (of whom I am one) had not been able to use control points on .cr2 (Canon Raw Format) images. Canon shooters who have seen a demonstration of Nikon's Capture NX 2 have asked how they too can use U Point technology? Here's your answer, folks: Viveza gives you the same U Point technology control as Capture NX 2, but you don't have to be a Nikon shooter to enjoy it.

Figure 1-12 shows the layout of the Viveza plug-in. Viveza's window is the same as Dfine's, with the exception of the display modes. Viveza, Color Efex Pro, and Silver Efex all offer Single Image, Split Image, and Side-by-Side preview modes.

Now we skip to the really cool part of this plug-in. Pick a point on your image and click the Add Control Point button on the spot you want to enhance (see Figure 1-13). The black dot is your control point with four sliders. The first is the Size slider, which lets you select the area you want to affect. Above the Brightness slider, the Contrast slider, and the Saturation slider is a small triangle. Clicking the triangle opens a host of other sliders: the Red, Blue, and Green color channel sliders, the Hue slider, and one of my favorite sliders, Warmth.

As you may notice in Figure 1-14, when I created my control point, a line appeared in the Control Point List. This list gives you a breakdown of the control points on the image. Each control point line has five basic parts. The check box at the far left of Control Point Details lets you turn the control point on or off. Next is a small color bar, which shows the color you sampled when you set the point. The Control Point Number helps you remember the points. The Size column works by showing you the Size slider value (25 percent in Figure 1-14). And finally, use the Show Selection column check box to show the area your slider is affecting. Figure 1-14 shows the image when the Show Selection column is checked. The white section is the affected area of the control point.

Below the Control Point List is the Details pane. The view you have selected, BCS or All, determines which sliders and values you'll see. At the bottom left of the Details pane are the Color Swatch and eyedropper tools. Selecting the Color Swatch tool opens the color picker, where you can determine the color created by the selected control point. Selecting the eyedropper tool lets you change to a color found inside the image.

The Rendering Method pop-up menu has three options: Basic, Normal, and Advanced. I explain Normal and Advanced later in the book. I don't actually have a need for Basic in my workflow, so I don't use it. However, you should try it out to see if it works with your workflow.

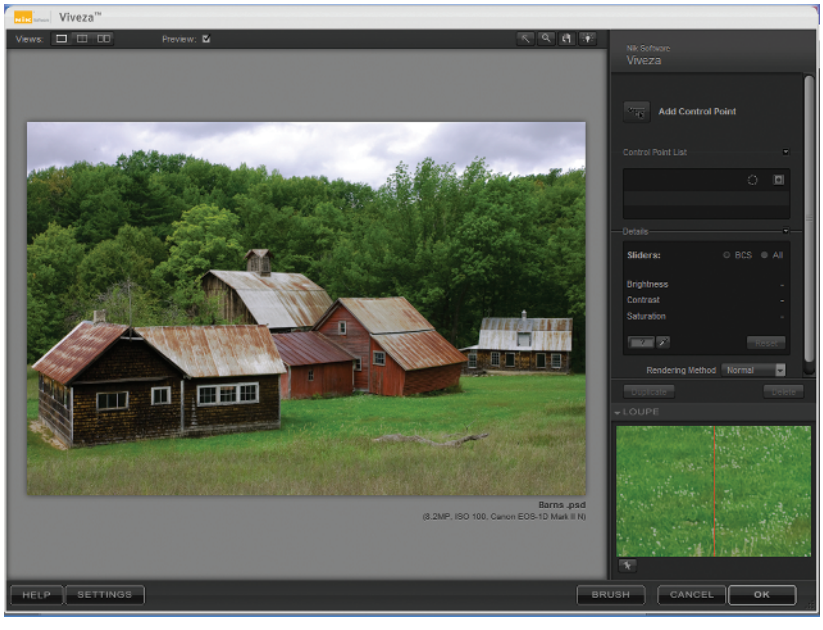

Figure 1-12
Viveza's Control Point List Detail pane.

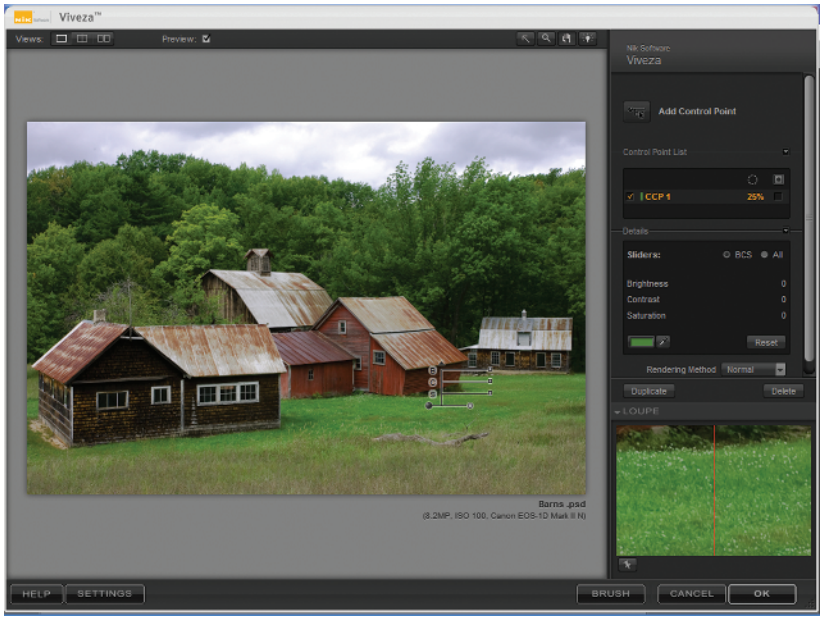

Figure 1-13
You can see your point in the Control Point List, and the details of your point in the Details pane.

Next are the Duplicate and Delete buttons. When you have a control point selected, clicking Duplicate creates a new control point with the exact same settings. Or, you can select the control point you want to duplicate and press ⌘+D or Ctrl+D. You can also duplicate a control point by pressing Opt or Alt and dragging the control point you want to duplicate. Pressing the Delete button says bye-bye to the selected control point.

The Loupe tool works just like it does in Dfine.

There are a couple of important buttons on the bottom of the window.

The Brush button, works in the same way as the Dfine's brush, except instead of brushing away noise you brush on an effect.

Selecting the Settings button displays the Settings dialog box as shown in Figure 1-15. I have Use Last Setting selected for Default Zoom and Preview Mode, and I have my Default Appearance set to Medium Gray. I have my Control Point Size set to 25 percent so that it doesn't automatically take over the whole image, and I have my Default Control Point sliders set to BCS. I use the BCS setting because it eliminates the clutter, and if I want to see the full list, all I have to do is click the little triangle.

Finally, I have After Click OK set to Apply the Filtered Effect to a Separate Layer. So once you click the OK button, the filter is applied to a new layer — and you're finished.

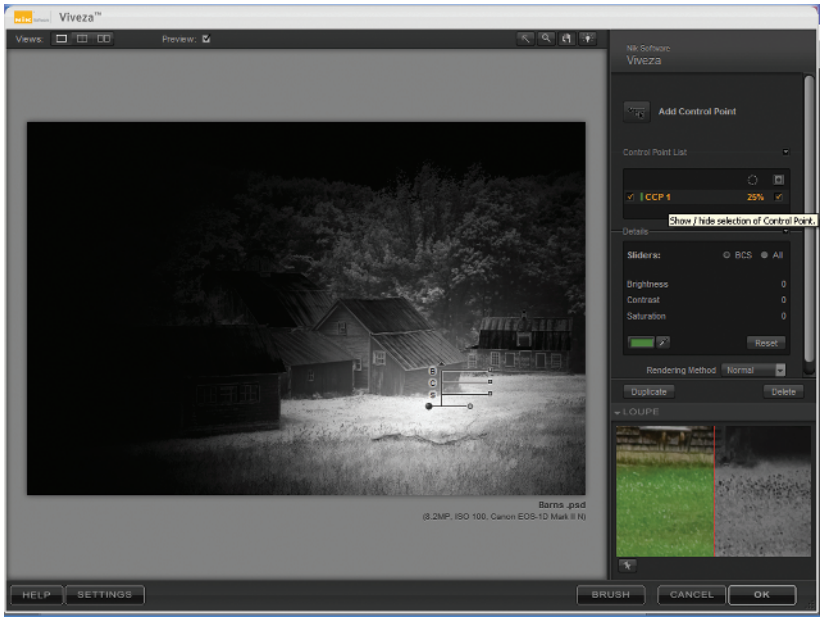

Figure 1-14
Checking the Show Selection box displays the area affected by the control point.

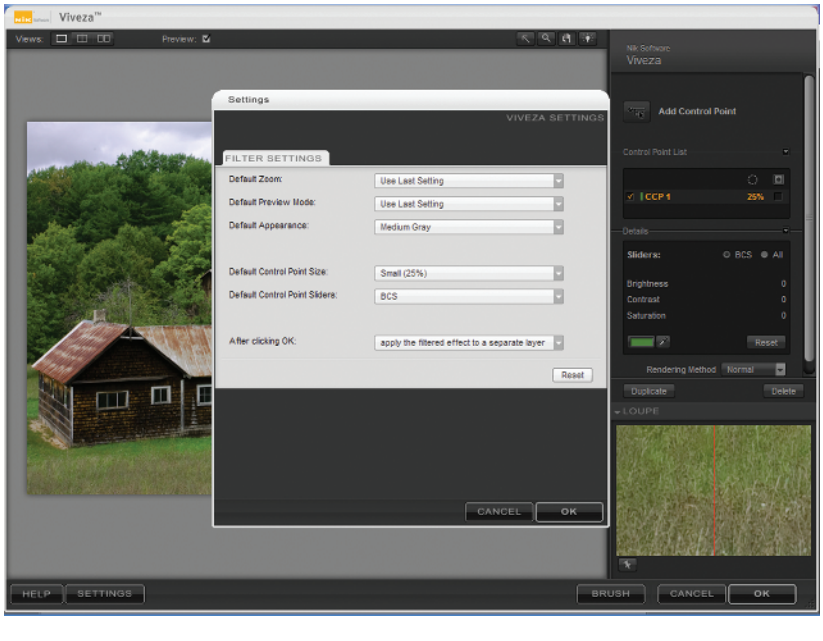

Figure 1-15
Use the Settings dialog box to set your preferences in Viveza.

LESSON 4:
USING COLOR EFEX PRO 3.0

In my opinion, this plug-in is a "wow!"

The Color Efex Pro 3.0 interface is straightforward (see Figure 1-16). The top of the window is the same as Viveza's with the exception of the Filter Display and Preview modes. From the Filter Display mode, you can toggle the Filter List on and off to give you more room for your image. I always leave the Preview mode set to Original Image.

Skipping over the Select, Zoom, and Pan tools, you come to the Filters Controls. Selecting a filter from the Filter List determines which controls are available in the Filter Controls. For instance, in Figure 1-16, I selected the Infrared Film filter, so I get those controls, and since this is one of my favorite filters I talk about it in a later chapter. Below the main controls for your selected filter are the Protect Shadows/Highlights sliders which allow you to prevent losing details in the brightest and darkest areas of your image. And, just below the Shadow/Highlights sliders are the control points.

The control points work differently in Color Efex Pro. Control points in Color Efex Pro 3.0 let you selectively apply the current filter without using a selection or mask. They use U Point technology to determine the object or area automatically, letting you either add or remove the filter's effect anywhere in the image. Depending on how you adjust its Opacity slider, the – control point takes away from the effect on the image. In Figure 1-17, using the Paper Toner filter, I dropped a – control point on the sky to take away the effect of the Paper Toner settings. The + control point has the opposite effect. I generally use the – control point more than the + control point.

Clicking the control point's title, you can expand your options to reveal a few more goodies such as the Apply to Entire Image slider where you can specify how much of the current effect you want to apply to the whole image.

Control Points Details gives information on each control point in you image. Below the Details area are the Reset and Delete buttons. You use the Reset button to return the image back to its original state. The Delete button removes specific control points (see Figure 1-18).

When you have filter settings you use frequently, you can save a lot of time by using the Quick Save slots. After saving your settings, you simply click the slot and your settings are applied automatically. Remember that speed I was talking about?

Next is the Navigator Loupe tool. I don't use the Loupe regularly, so in my workflow, I have it tucked away until I need it.

Figure 1-16
The overall layout of Color Efex Pro 3.0 and just some of the many filters you can choose.

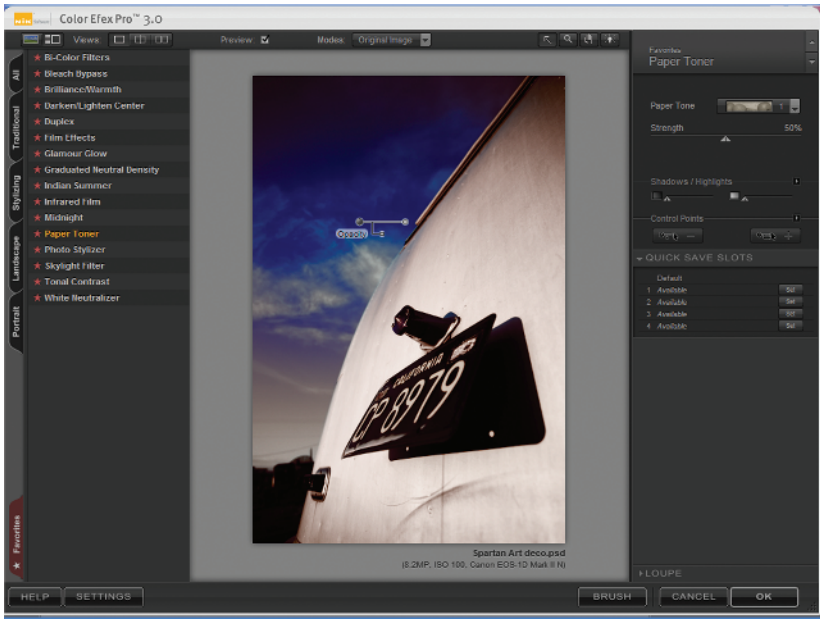

Figure 1-17
Dropping a negative control point takes away the filter's effect from the image.

Once again on the bottom right is the Brush button, which lets you bring up the Selective tool and paint on your effect. Use the Settings button to access the Settings dialog box (see Figure 1-19). This dialog box looks slightly different because it has two tabs. The Filter Settings tab has Default Zoom, Preview, Appearance, and After Clicking OK.

Using the Filter List pane, you can select which Filter Categories you want to appear in the Filter List (see Figure 1-19). Each Tab Category has different filters for different styles, and you can select which filters work best for your style of photography. I usually leave it on default settings. In most cases I use my Favorites and the All tabs. If you want to know how to set your Favorites, either click the star next to the filter name or Control+click or right-click the filter name. To remove a filter, just click the star next to the filter name.

Figure 1-18

The area in the upper-right corner is the Filter Control pane where you can adjust the effects of the filter.

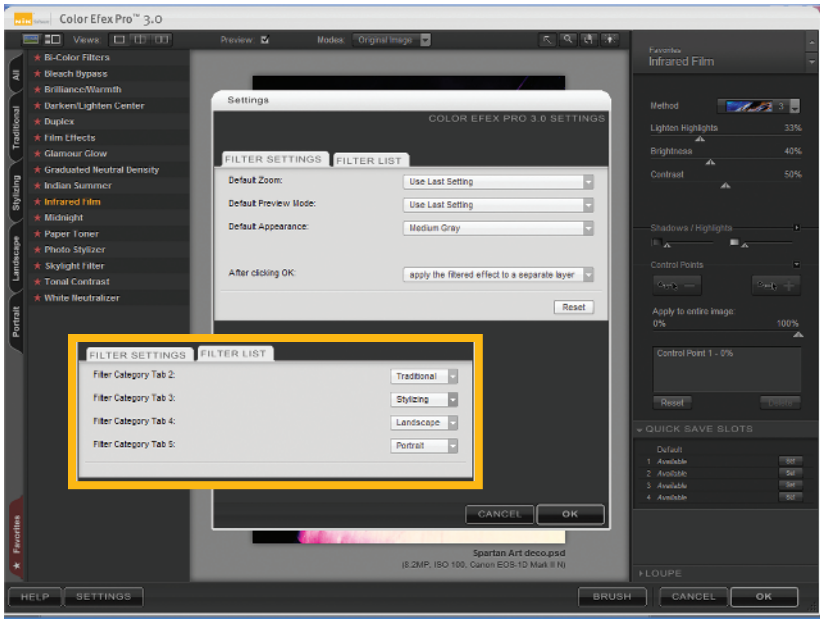

Figure 1-19

Use the Settings dialog box to set your preferences for Color Efex Pro 3.0. The inset shows the Filters List dialog box where you can choose which categories you want in your Favorites tab.

LESSON 5:
USING SILVER EFEX PRO

Silver Efex Pro is the newest member of the Nik product line. But in my opinion, Silver Efex Pro is already the end-all-be-all of black-and-white conversion plug-ins. The versatility built into this plug-in is outstanding.

Let's go through the window layout to get an idea of everything packed into this plug-in. The top of the window is fairly standard (see Figure 1-20). The Filter Display mode in Silver Efex Pro lets you toggle between displaying the Style Browser and the Image Preview or just the Image Preview.

Next are the Select, Zoom, and Pan tools, and on the right side are the Silver Efex Pro Filter Controls. At the top of the window are the main sliders: Brightness, Contrast, and Structure. Brightness and Contrast you know about, but the Structure slider is similar to the Midtone and Shadow sliders from the Tonal Contrast filter in Color Efex Pro — but on black-and-white steroids. The Structure slider lets you control the local contrast, so you can increase or decrease the visibility of fine details and structures. It is amazing what you can accomplish as you'll see in Part V.

Below those sliders is the Add Control Point button. In Silver Efex Pro, when you drop a control point on your image, you have three control sliders: Brightness, Contrast, and Structure. The Protect Shadows/Highlights sliders protect details in the brightest and darkest parts of the image.

The Control Points Details pane has an on/off toggle, the name of the control point, percent of area selected, and the Show Selection column (see Figure 1-21).

At the bottom of the Details pane are Duplicate and Delete buttons. You can duplicate a point by the same methods I talked about in the Viveza section of this part.

Next is the Color Filter set (see Figure 1-22). Remember when we had to use colored filters to achieve a particular look in our black-and-white photography? Well now there is a digital version, and what's even better is that you can simulate stacking of the same filter to make it look like you had two filters with you out in the field without the loss in stops of light. Pretty cool!! You can choose Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, or Blue filters.

Once you select the filter you want to add, click the Details bar below the filter to see the filter's Hue adjustment as well as a Strength slider (here's where you can make it appear as if you stacked two filters doubling the intensity of the effect).

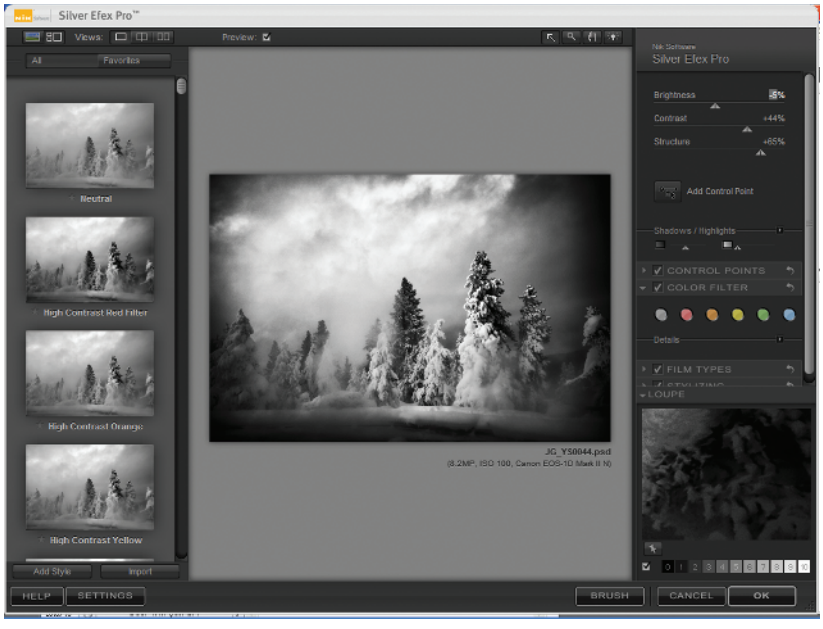

Figure 1-20
The Silver Efex Pro interface.

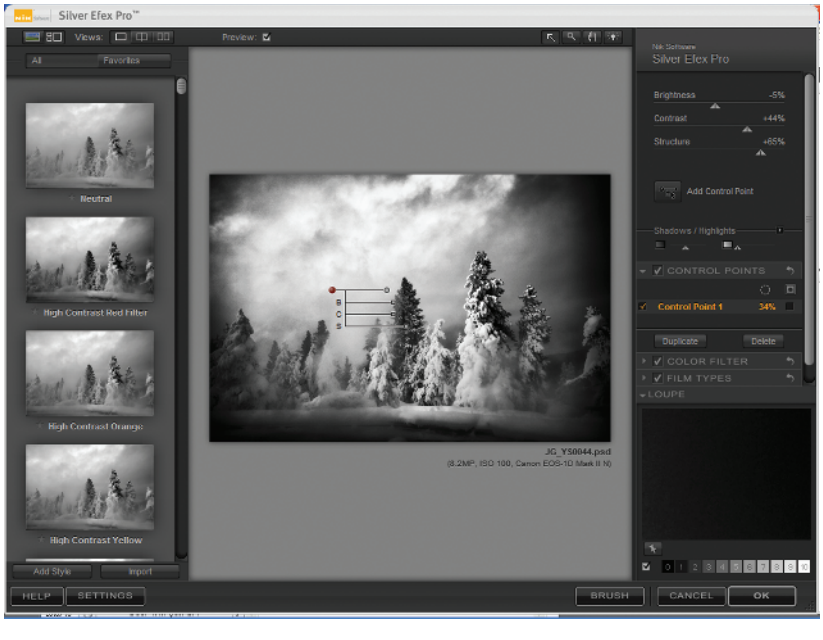

Figure 1-21
Each control point you add appears in the Control Point Details pane.

Now for probably every black-and-white shooter's dream: the Film Types pane (see Figure 1-23). You can choose from a list of presets for the film type you want, then choose the Grain amounts and the Sensitivity of the film to an array of colors. The Tone Curve pane in Film Types lets you fine-tune the tonal range of your image.

In the Stylizing Details pane, you have control over toning your image through Presets (see Figure 1-24). Vignette lets you re-create vignetting of your lens on to the image. Burning Edges obviously lets you burn the edges. You have full control of the intensity of the burn on each side, as well as its size and blending.

I told you this plug-in was packed, and we're not finished yet. Just below the Stylizing Details pane are the Import/Export buttons. If you have a style that you would like to share, you can export those settings into a .sep file and your friends can import it into Silver Efex Pro. I think sharing settings is a great way to learn. After all, that is how we grow as photographers.

Next is the Loupe. It works just as it always does but there's a little something extra called the Zone System Map (see Figure 1-25). The Zone Map lets you view the tonal relationships in your image, and affects those relationships using either the control points or other enhancement sliders.

Like the other plug-ins, the Brush button and the Settings button are located at the bottom on the window (see Figure 1-26). You click the Setting button to get the Settings menu where you can choose Default Zoom, Preview Mode, and Appearance. You also have the After Clicking OK option, that lets you decide if the effect you just created will be applied to a new layer or to your current layer.

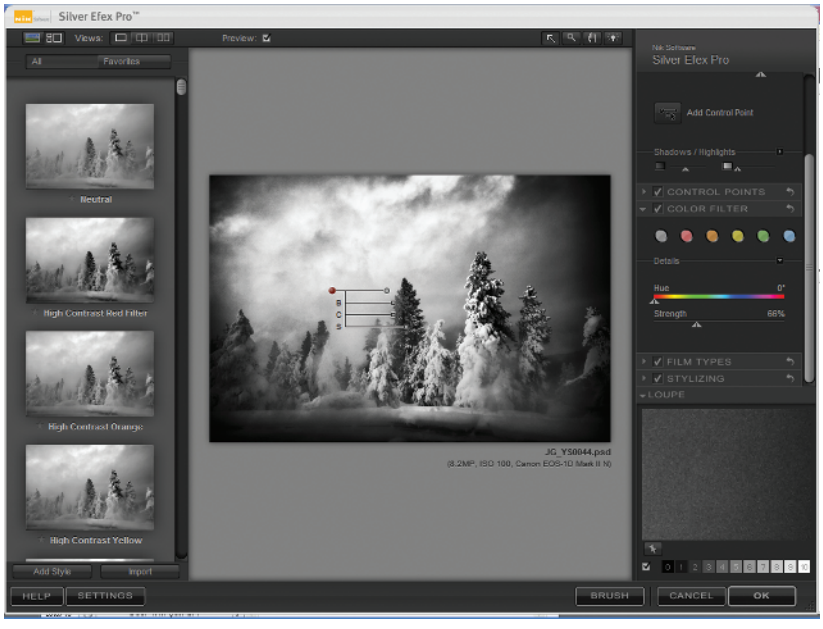

Figure 1-22
Using a digital version of the glass filters gives you even greater control over the final image.

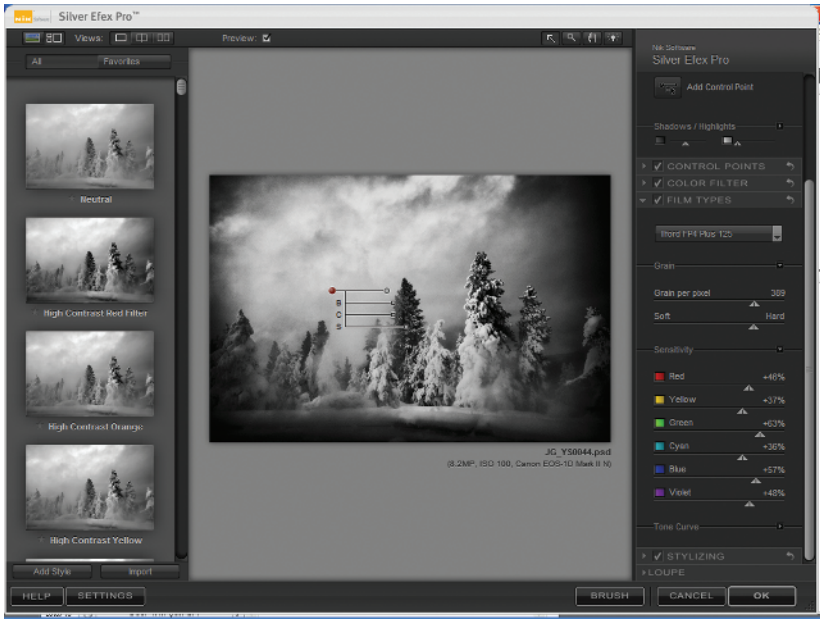

Figure 1-23
The Film Types pane lets you select from an array of types of film and customize the effect.

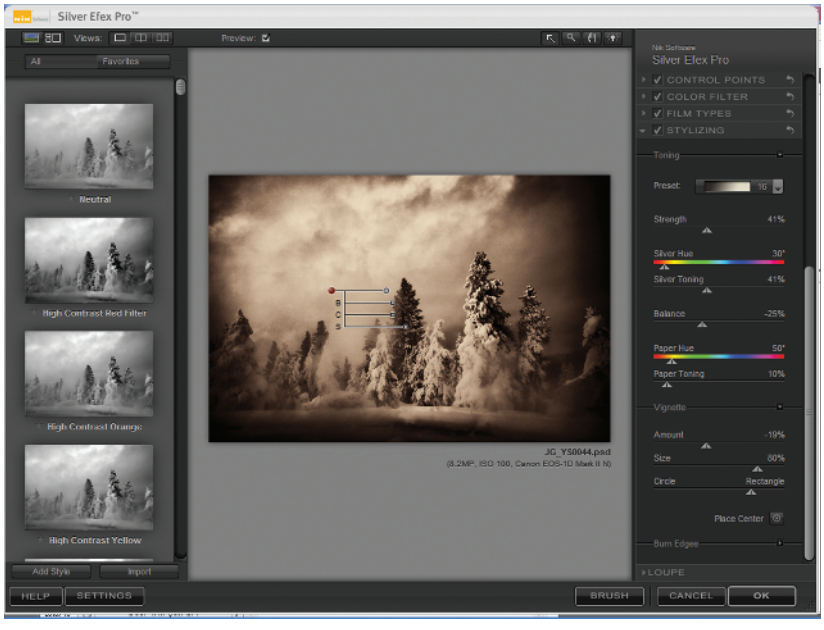

Figure 1-24
The Stylizing Details pane gives you creative control over Toning, Vignette, and Burn Edges.

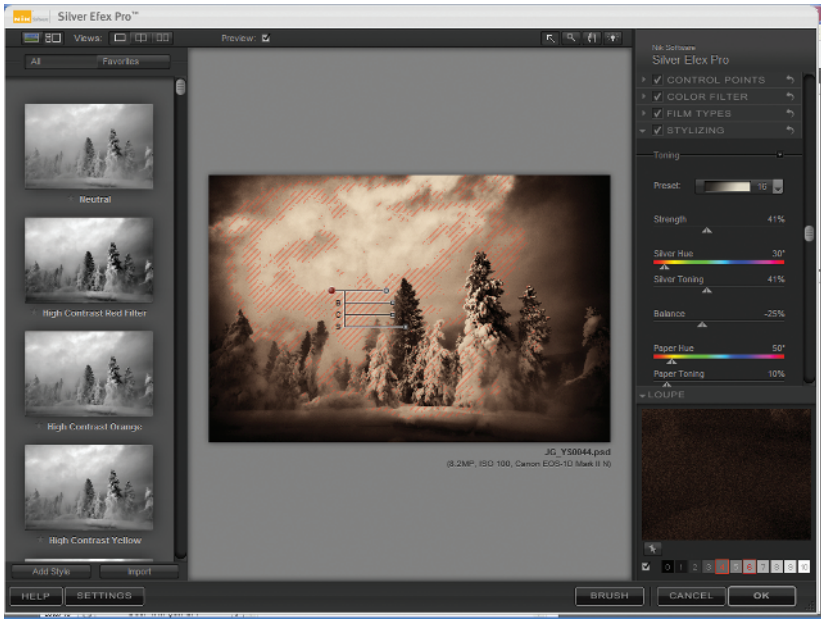

Figure 1-25
The Zone System Map shows you different ranges in the gray scale and where they reside in your image.

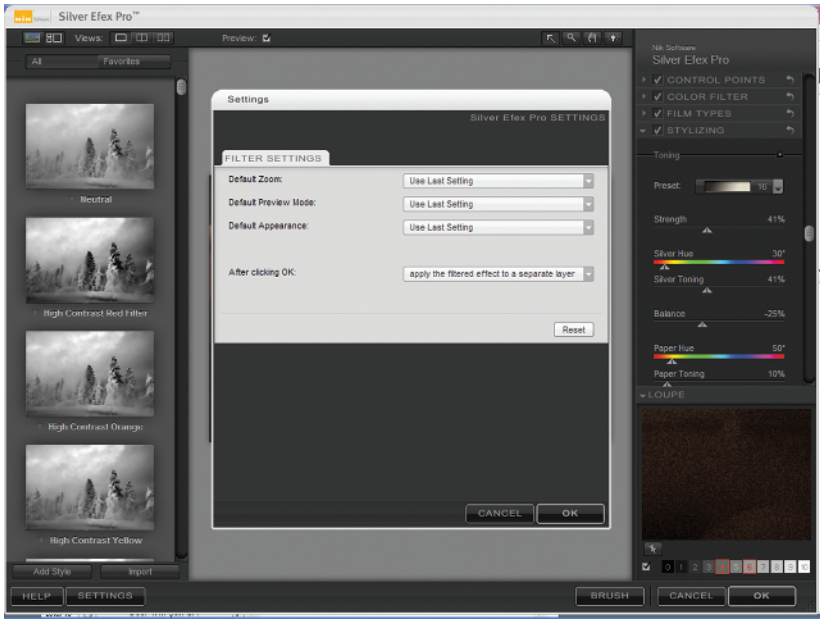

Figure 1-26

The Settings dialog box lets you dictate the look and actions of Silver Efex Pro.

LESSON 6:
USING SHARPENER PRO 2.0

Sharpening your image is the final stop in our workflow. Choosing Filter ➧ Nik Sharpener Pro from Photoshop's Filter menu gives you a list of preset filters ranging from Display to Raw Presharpening (see Figure 1-27). When you first dive into the sharpening process it can be a little daunting, but I'll go through the various layouts and controls so that when it is time to do that final touch on your image, you'll be ready and prepared.

Raw Presharpening

Sometimes even when your camera image is right, the low-pass filter will soften the image. Nik developed the Raw Pre-Sharpener to help get that sharpness back. The layout for the Presharpener is simple and straight forward (see Figure 1-28).

At the top of the window is the Multiple Preview button, which gives you the choice of viewing the whole image, a side-by-side view, or a over/under view. To its right is the Preview on/off toggle. Next is the Zoom Ratios tool. By clicking on the + or – button, you zoom in or out on your image. If you mouse over the image, a Move tool will appear so that you can move your image inside the preview window.

On the bottom of the window is the Strength slider, where you can input what percentage strength you want the filter to sharpen. The Save and Load options do exactly what they imply: You can save sets of sliders that you like to use, and load a preset to use on another image. The Cancel and OK buttons play or cancel the effect.

In the small window are the Single Click presets. These presets are used as a form of batch processing. Once you have determined a preset that you like, you can save it as a single-click preset. If you have complicated sharpening techniques that you like to use, setting it up once and saving it as a single-click preset will save you a ton of time.

That wraps up the Raw Pre-Sharpener window. Now let's see what else this program can do.

The Inkjets

The Inkjet presets are all I ever use — and even then it is just the Epson preset. But Nik has developed sharpening filters for all the big players — Canon, HP, Epson, and Lexar — plus a generic filter for the other inkjet printers. All the inkjet filters have the same layout, so I'll go through the layout and you'll be set for all things sharpened. Figure 1-29 shows the Epson preset. This layout is identical for the other inkjet preset.

Above the preview window is the Multiple Preview Mode button, which provides the same preview options as Presharpening. To the right is an eyeball button called Analysis Modes. The Analysis Modes button lets you choose between No Overlay mode (the default mode)

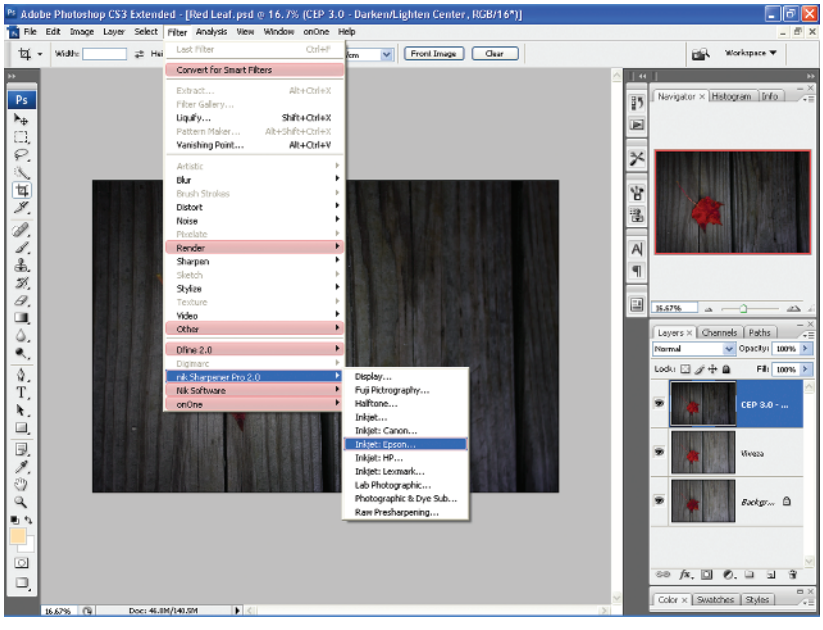

Figure 1-27

Choose Filter ⏵ Nik Sharpener Pro for a list of preset options for your sharpening needs.

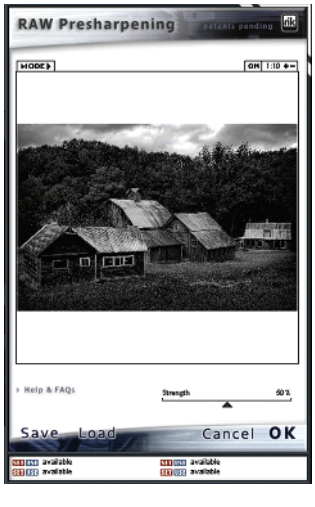

Figure 1-28

You effect the amount of sharpening to your image by adjusting the Strength slider.

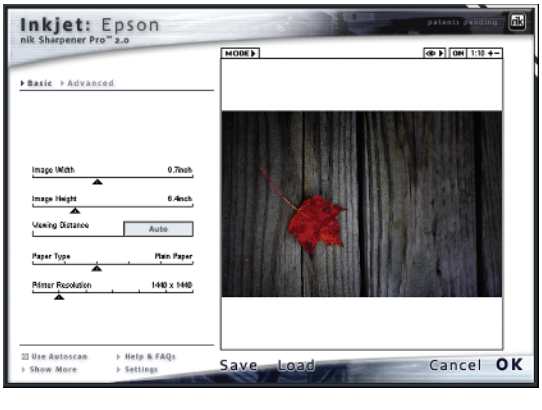

Figure 1-29

The interface for the various Inkjet presets is uniform, so using the filter for different printers is a cakewalk.

or one of two unique overlay modes. The two different overlay modes show a visual representation of the sharpening that will be applied to the image.

The first mode displays the interaction between the sharpening and the original image colors and detail. The sharpening effect is represented by red stripes showing the varying levels of opacity. Areas that have stronger red stripes will be sharpened more than areas with transparent red stripes (See Figure 1-30).

The second mode displays only what was sharpened. Sharpening is represented in a range of white to red. The darker the red, the more sharpening that will be applied to the image (see Figure 1-31). This mode works best when using the Advance tab, which I'll talk about in a minute.

Next to the Analysis mode are the Preview on/off toggle and the Zoom tool, which operate the same as I described for the Presharpener.

Now the backbone of this window, the tabs. The Inkjets presets has two tabs. Use the Basic tab to set the five filters for the sharpening effect you want (see Figure 1-32). Use the Width and Height sliders to set the size of the image when you open Sharpener Pro.

Next is the Viewing Distance slider. In my workflow I leave this set to Auto. There are all kinds of recommended distance for viewing photographic works, but the most agreed-upon is the square of the distance of the diagonal (the top left to the bottom right corner) of your print. However, if you like to take control of the distance you have five options: Up to 2', 2' to 5', 4' to 8', 6' to 10', and +10'.

Below the Viewing Distance slider is the Paper Type slider. You can fine-tune the sharpening even further by selecting the type of paper you are printing on. In many cases you will need to go to the paper manufacturer's Web site for this info. This is a vital step in getting a properly sharpened print, since this slider bases the amount of sharpening on the way the paper alters the amount of visible detail.

The Printer Resolution slider lets you sharpen based on the resolution your printer uses. Check your printer specifications to find its optimal printing resolution. If you can't find a setting on your printer, you can move the slider around to find what works best for your printer.

The Advanced tab provides additional controls to set the amount of sharpening to the entire image (see Figure 1-33). You have five sliders that can control the amount of sharpening across a different color range. You can select which color range you want to affect using the eyedropper and selecting the color you want to affect. You can further control the amount of sharpening by moving the slider between 0 percent and 125 percent. If you choose a color and move the slider to 0 percent, the color will not be sharpened.

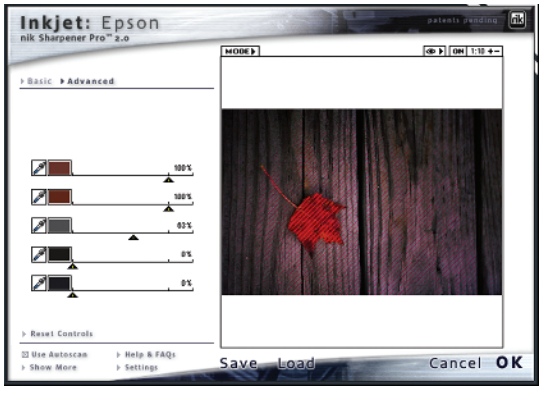

Figure 1-30
When in the first overlay mode of the Analysis mode, the areas that will be sharpened are represented by red lines of different opacities, each representing the sharpening strength.

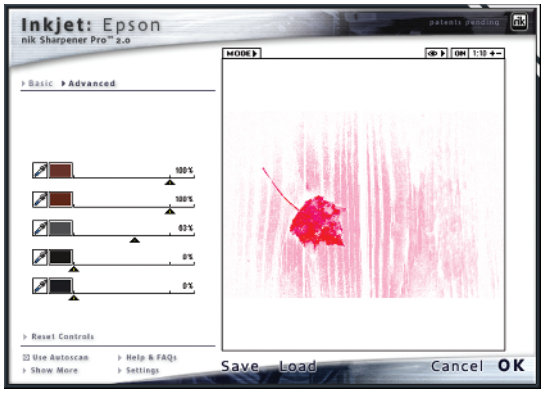

Figure 1-31
When in the second overlay mode of the Analysis mode, the red shaded areas represent the areas that will be sharpened; areas in white will not be sharpened.

Figure 1-32
The Basic tab sliders include Size, Viewing Distance, Paper Type, and Printer Resolution.

Conversely, if you pick a color and move the slider past 0 percent, you will sharpen your selected color range by that percentage. One thing to keep in mind, if you don't select a color and leave, the entire image will be affected.

Now let's move to the layouts for continuous-tone printing. The filter sets that share this type of layout are the Photographic & Dye Sub, Fuji Pictography, and the Lab Photographic filter presets. The presets are similar to the Inkjet presets: Image Height and Image Width, Viewing Distance, and Printer Resolution. Missing, however, is the paper type slider (see Figure 1-34).

The Halftone filter preset has an identical layout to the Inkjet preset except that its Printer Resolution slider is displayed in lpi (lines per inch) instead of dpi.

Finally, the Display preset is used for projectors or for posting to the Internet. It has a Strength slider just like Raw Pre-Sharpener, and that is it.

With the exception of Raw Pre-Sharpener, all the layouts for Sharpener Pro include Use Autoscan. This option ensures that the Autoscan process, which analyzes and adapts the sharpening process to achieve optimal image sharpness, is turned on. Clicking the Show More button brings up image details and the single-click user defined presets. Next to the Show More button is the Settings button, where you can set Sharpener to your liking (see Figure 1-35). Next are the Save and Load buttons and finally the Cancel and OK buttons for applying, or not, the sharpening effect.

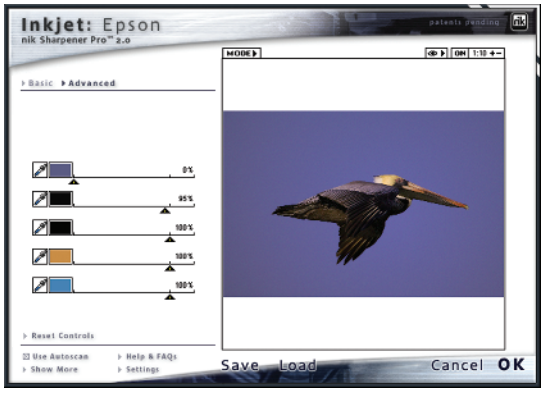

Figure 1-33
By selecting a color range and adjusting the slider, you can affect the amount of sharpness.

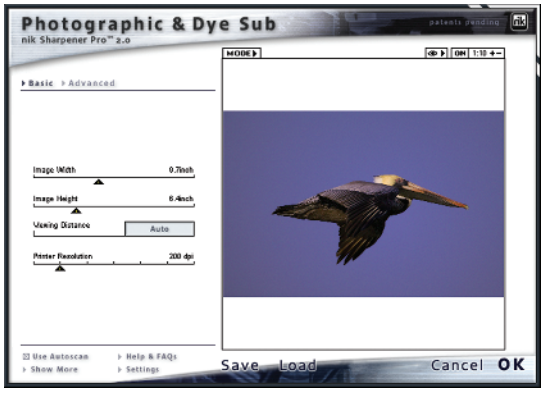

Figure 1-34
For continuous-tone printing, the layout of the presets is similar to the Inkjet presets.

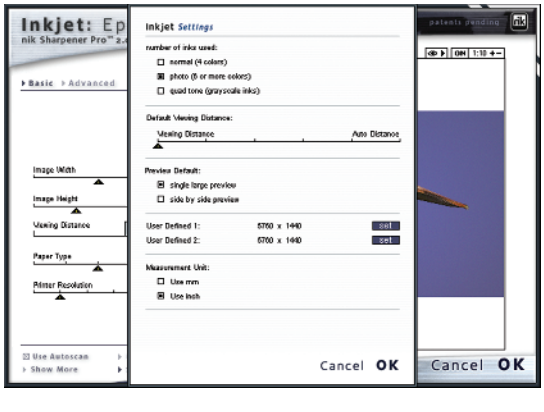

Figure 1-35
You can alter the settings for Sharpener Pro to suit your needs and style of printing.

LESSON 7:
GETTING THE HARDWARE NEEDED

I've talked about all the plug-ins, but not the hardware that you need to use them. Everyone has a preference; some are die-hard Mac users, while others prefer Windows. This fight will go one forever, and Nik's plug-ins work equally well on both platforms, so choose your favorite without worry.

I use a Wacom 12wx Cintiq tablet. It's fast, and all those shortcut keystrokes can be programmed into the tablet so instead of hitting two or three keys, I just click a button on my tablet. It is all about speed, and tablets make things go faster, in my opinion.

Another vital item is memory, both in the forms of RAM and hard drive space. When you open Photoshop, it will take about 1GB of RAM. If you have only 1GB in your computer, you're sunk. About 4GB should handle all your image-editing needs. You'll also need the fastest RAM you can get.

Because I travel so much, my laptop has dual 200GB hard drives. I also take a LaCie 120GB hard drive to back up all my images when I'm on location. There are many types of portable hard drives available, so you'll need to find the one that works for you. Because I travel so much, I wanted one that could take a beating.

At home I have about 6TB of storage on external hard drives. Three house all my images, and the other three are backups. Because memory is getting cheap these days, it's easy to find large-capacity hard drives for under $500.

I have a great filing system for all my images, but that is another book. Do what works best for you so you can find what you want quickly. If a client is on a tight deadline and you can't find an image because you forgot where you put it and you can't deliver, do you think that client will ever call back ? Just some stuff to think about.