All images ©Katrin Rismann

You don't have to have a still subject, a tripod and multiple exposures to mimic the look of a high dynamic range. A few big slider boosts in Adobe Camera Raw or Lightroom 2 can get you there.

BY KATRIN EISMANN

Faux HDR

ADOBE CAMERA RAW

Figure 1

High dynamic ranges (HDR) allow you to capture and render extreme highlight and shadow detail, which can be useful for architectural and landscape photographers. The drawback is that true 32-bit HDR capture requires photographing a scene with a multi-stop over- and underexposure bracket that's in perfect registration. That requires a tripod and, for best results, a still subject.

Well, life doesn't always hold still, and I have to admit, sometimes my tripod is back in the car. I'll show you how to push Adobe Camera Raw and take advantage of the new Gradient tool to create HDR-like effects without using additional plug-ins or taking multiple shots. You can create the contemporary look of the images in **Figure 1**. To create this effect, it's best to work with highly graphical images with little fine detail.

1. Start by increasing the recovery, fill Light, and blacks sliders more than you feel comfortable with. Coincidently, in this example I set all three sliders to 85 (**Figure 2**). You may need to reduce the exposure slider to maintain richness.

2. Increase the clarity and vibrance sliders (**Figure 3**). In most cases, I prefer

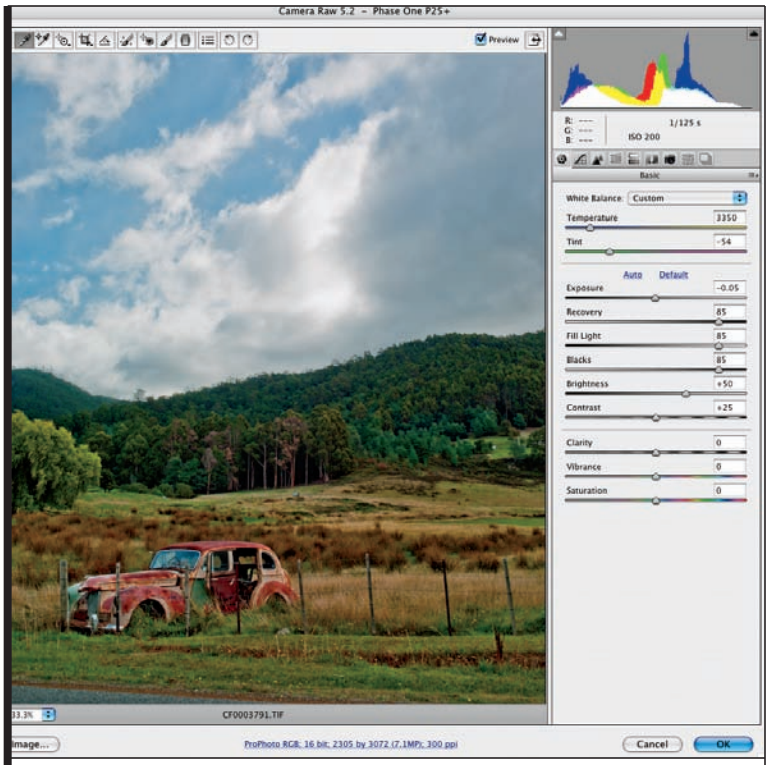

Figure 2

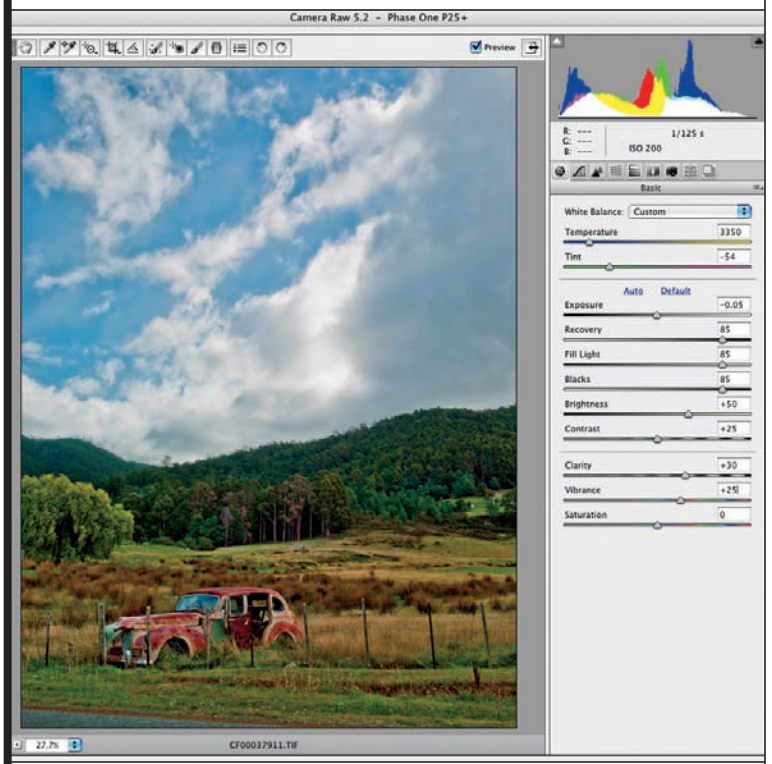

Figure 3

higher clarity than vibrance, but as with most things creative, it's a matter of personal preference.

Often, adjusting the develop sliders in the Basic panel is all that's needed, but for a more creative twist, investigate the new Graduated Filter in Adobe Camera Raw.

1. Clicking on the Graduated Filter tool on the upper left toolbar panel reveals the controls on the right.

2. Take a moment to visualize a combination of controls that could enhance the image. In this example (**Figure 4**), I imagined that making the sky darker, more contrasty and saturated with a hint of blue would make the sky more dramatic.

3. The beauty of the Gradated Filter is that after applying the initial gradient, you can adjust each parameter to refine the image (**Figure 5**).

4. To add an additional gradient, make sure to click the *New* radio button. In this example (**Figure 6**), I opted to lighten the lower part of the image to draw attention to the landscape. To hide the gradients pins, tap the H key.

In most cases, exaggerating the ACR sliders and adding a boost with the Gradient tool is all that's needed to create this popular highly saturated look. CUT THE LINE HERE.

SPLIT-TONING HDR IMAGES

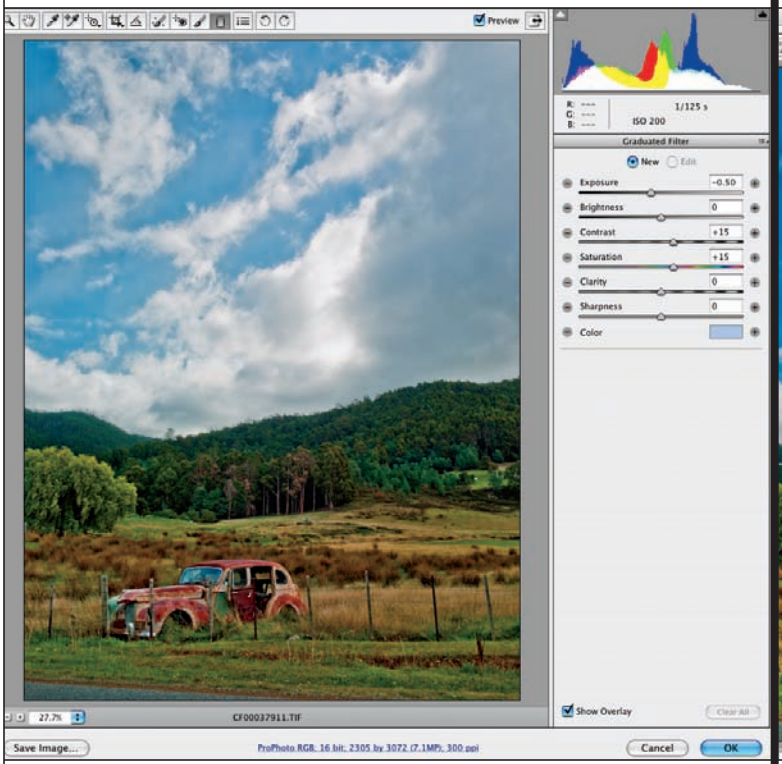

Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

Figure 7: Image before

Figure 7: Image after

Split-toning is commonly used to add a hint of color to the shadows and highlights of black-and-white images, and usually meant to mimic traditional darkroom paper, such as the old *Afga Brovira* warm-tone fiber-based paper. When experimenting with faux HDR, try adding a split-tone effect to color images as shown in the before and after comparison in **Figure 7**.

To add split-toning to an image;

1. Start by increasing the recovery, fill light, and blacks sliders and decreasing the exposure as described above.

2. Click on the Split-Tone panel and start with the highlight slider. To see the color you're applying, press option/alt while moving the color slider (**Figure 8**). Release the option/alt key and increase the saturation slider to apply the color to the image highlights.

3. Repeat the option/alt on the hue slider of the shadows and adjust saturation. I usually prefer to warm the highlights and cool the shadows.

4. Finally, adjust the balance slider to determine which areas of the image will receive more color. Since I needed to accentuate the early morning feel of the scene, I skewed the color toward the highlights (**Figure 9**).

Experimenting with faux HDR is a quick way to create a contemporary look without photographing multiple exposures or using third-party plug-ins. Of course, the faux HDR image won't actually have an increased dynamic range. Go ahead—break the rules—move those sliders more than you ever did before! ■

Katrin Eismann is the author of "Photoshop Restoration & Retouching" and "Photoshop Masking & Compositing," and co-author of "Real World Digital Photography" and "Creative Digital Darkroom." In 2005, she was inducted into the Photoshop Hall of Fame, and in 2006 was named Chair of the MPS in Digital Photography department at the School of Visual Arts in NYC www.sva.edu/digitalphoto.

Figure 8

Figure 9

IMAGINGUSA®
Katrin Eismann speaks on Lightroom Development Modules and other editing techniques at Imaging USA in Phoenix, Jan. 11-13. www.imagingusa.org