

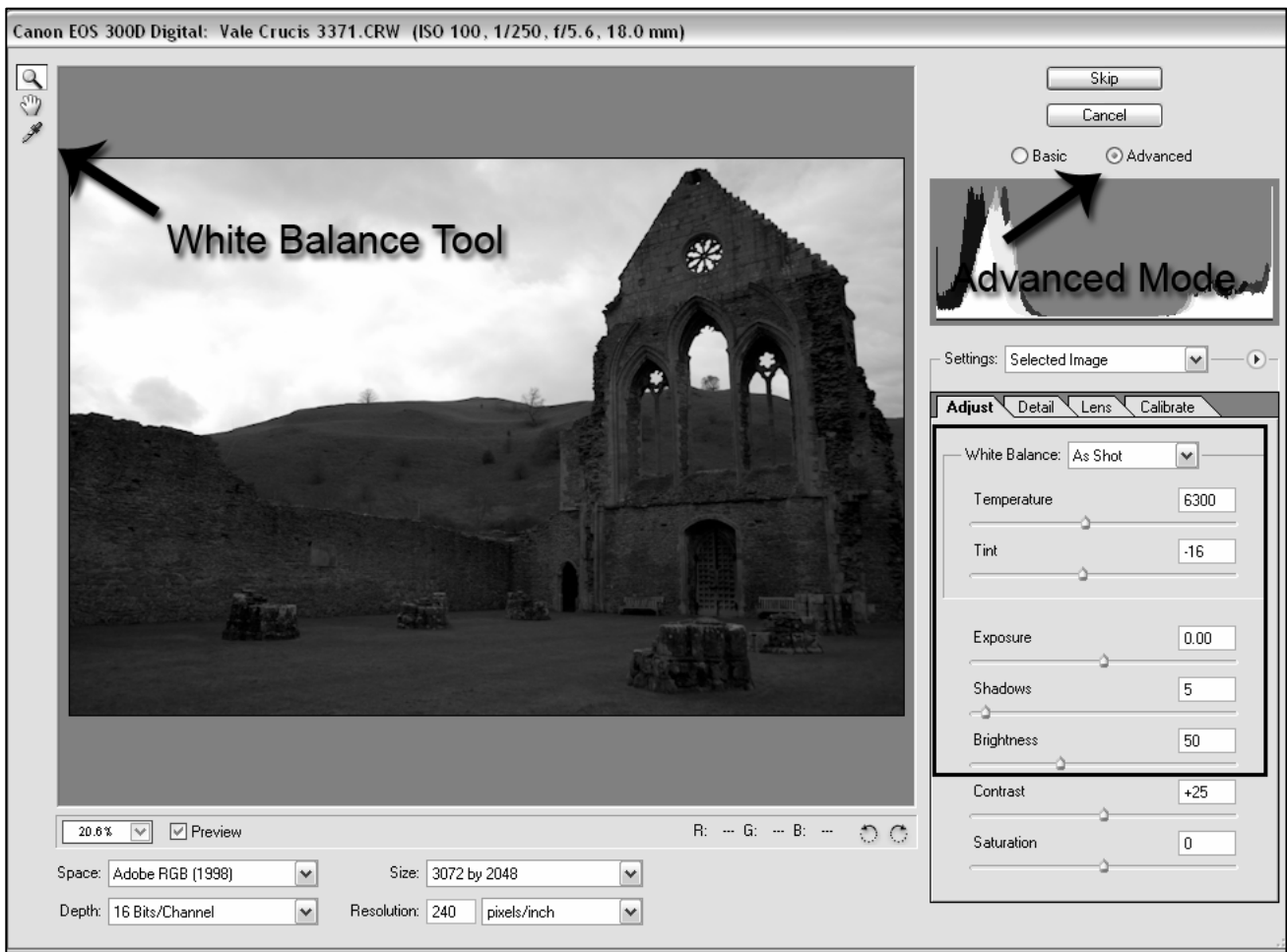
Correcting a RAW Image With a Light Sky & Dark Foreground

Simon Cotter, March 2005

NB this workflow requires either Photoshop CS or Photoshop Elements 3

Shooting RAW files provides additional exposure latitude and allows correction for both sky and foreground from a single file although Ian Lyons states that you can't really recover more than +/- 1 stop.

Its best to get the image correctly exposed in the first place. e.g. by using a ND Grad filter. Using a digital camera the advice is to "**Expose to the right**" to avoid blowing highlights, i.e. adjust your exposure so that histogram just touches the right hand edge.



Highlight Recovery

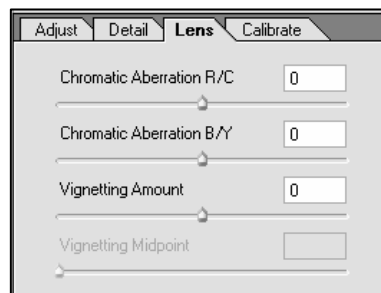
Double-click on the RAW image in Photoshop's browser to open the image in the Camera RAW Plug-in.

1. Adjust White Balance

- Use **White Balance Dropper tool** on a mid-range tone (RGB values between 150 to 220), for an accurate White Balance adjustment use at 100% Zoom
or select from preset **White Balance** settings on drop down menu.

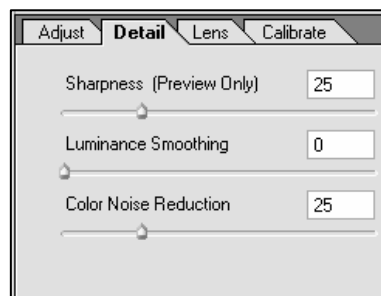
2. Use **Exposure** slider to get the best detail in the sky (NB holding ALT key to observe blown highlights) within +/- 1 stop.

3. Use the **Chromatic Aberration R/C** slider in the Lens tab to remove any Red/Cyan colour fringing. You need to be in **Advanced** mode (not available in PSE 3) and use 100% Zoom (Holding down the ALT key whilst adjusting the slider will isolate just the Red/Cyan channel). *Chromatic Aberration is more likely to occur with Wide Angle lenses.*



4. Similarly use the **Chromatic Aberration B/Y** in the Lens tab to remove any Blue/Yellow colour fringing.

(At this stage you might also want to use **Vignetting Amount** slider in the Lens tab to correct any vignetting which can occur with Wide Angle lenses and also use the **Luminance Smoothing** and **Colour Noise Reduction** sliders in the Detail tab to remove any noise from high ISO shots)



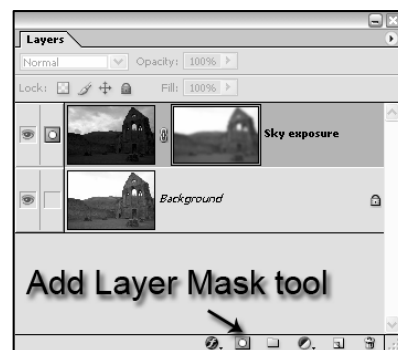
5. Press **OK** to process the image with these settings with the correct exposure for the sky into Photoshop then use **Image/Duplicate** to produce a copy and close the original image.

6. Open File Browser and double click on the same image to open Camera RAW then use **Exposure**, **Shadows** and **Brightness** sliders to bring out the detail in the shadows and mid-tones and click **OK** to convert this into the image with the correctly exposed foreground into Photoshop.

7. Select **Window/Arrange/Tile** to show both the converted images on screen at once. Use the **Move** tool to drag the sky corrected image into the foreground corrected image as a layer, holding down the Shift key to centre the pasted layer.

8. Making sure the sky corrected image is the top layer, select it then click on the **Add Layer Mask** icon in the layers palette.

9. Click on the Background layer and press CTRL+A to select the whole image, then press CTRL+C to copy it to the clipboard. Hold down the ALT key and click on the layer mask in the top layer and press CTRL+V to copy the clipboard onto the white mask.



10. Finally use **Filter / Blur/ Gaussian Blur** with a setting of about 40 and click on the Background layer - **Job Done!**