From the Editor

Hi Everyone,
Hope you enjoy this wonderful issue. Larry Becker shows you how to make your own business cards. Simon Skellon has a great article on correcting common photo issues. And Lesa Snider has a fun tutorial on creating a composite image.

Till next time,
Diana Kloskowski
Editor-in-Chief

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BUSINESS CARD CREATION

In our digital world it's still important to have an actual business card and cards are incredibly affordable and easy to have made. Recently I attended a social media summit all about live streaming media, with a primary focus on Periscope. As a regular Periscope broadcaster I thought it would be worthwhile to come up with a card dedicated to that trade show.

Unfortunately, lots of people over-design their business cards. They try to pack way too much information on them and they use fonts that are too large. But if you look at business cards from major corporations, you'll find them to be simple and even a bit understated. So, it was a little bit of a challenge to incorporate both simple elegance and my Periscope information. Here's what I did (and what you can do too).

1 Start by gathering all the necessary media. I took a screenshot of my Periscope user profile on my iPhone and emailed it to myself so I could use it on my computer. Later, we can use the profile as is or make adjustments. For example, if I want to make the portrait bigger, I can paste a bigger copy of my portrait over the properly sized one that comes with the screenshot. I reached out to my friend whose company was doing the printing for my cards and he told me that the bleed area was 1/8" bigger than my actual card and the safe area was 1/8" inside the card area. Business cards are normally 3.5x2" and the front of this card will be horizontal, so your document needs to be 3.625x2.125". Also, I recommend working at 300dpi for a quality print project.

2 At this point it will be helpful to add guides. Remember the document is 1/8" bigger than the finished card all the way around, so you'll want guides so you can see your actual card's finished size. And you'll also want to add those inner guides that tell you what the 'safe' area is on your card. That keeps important info away from the edge where it might get accidentally trimmed. First, turn on rulers by pressing Ctrl-Shift-R (Mac: Command-Shift-R. Now, to add guides to your document, click-and-hold on the vertical ruler and then drag into your document area to make a guideline appear.

Periscope is a social media app where people stream live video. On the Periscope website it is described as "Explore the world in real time through someone else's eyes."
You’ll want one 1/8” and 1/4” inside each of the four sides of your document. In order to be precise when dragging guides into position, you can press Z to switch the Zoom tool and zoom in to around 400% or 500%. Just remember to return to the Move tool (V) so you can move the guides around once you’ve zoomed in. Once your guides are all in place, press Control-0 (Command-0 on Mac) to fit your document back into your visible area.

3 Many of the simple, high-end business cards I’ve seen have small, lightweight text on the right third of the card and just the name and title, larger and to the left two thirds. Press T to get the Text tool, then click-hold, and drag a text box on the right side of the card where you guesstimate your address and contact info will fit.

Now, type in your contact info. If your text is too big (like mine), just press Ctrl-A (Mac: Command-A) to select all the text.

Then in the Tool Options bar, select a better font and scale it smaller. I chose Myriad Pro Light at 7 points.

Finally, enter all your contact info and click the green check mark to commit the typing. By clicking the check mark, you’ll automatically leave the Text tool and be using the Move tool. If you need, hover the Move tool arrow over some of the text you typed and center your the block of text you typed vertically.

4 To add your name and title on the left side of the card, press T to get the Text tool and click about where you think your name should start. Type in your name (I like all caps for the name), hit return, and then type in your title. For a classy design, I scaled up the font size of my name; bolded my first name and gave it a smoky blue color; chose a deep red for my title; and right-justified all the text. Just highlight the text you want to adjust and use the tool controls below like you did before.
Looking at the card, the black text seems a bit harsh so I made it all gray instead. As an aside here, I noticed that my fonts seemed a little jagged, but I know that’s because the working window zoom amount was set to 105.8% from when we pressed Control-0 (Mac: Command-0) earlier to fit the card into the working window. You can grab the Zoom tool (Z) and zoom out to 100% and all the text will display correctly.

It’s one thing to have a stark, simple business card, but it needs a few design elements to keep it from being boring. I grabbed the logos for Twitter and Periscope from the web. Again, I don’t advocate taking image art without proper attribution, but these companies encourage people to use their logos to promote their social media presence.

Let’s add a vertical line to divide the name and address areas. Press N to get the Pencil tool and, in the Tool Options bar at the bottom, make the size 5 pixels. Next, at the top of the Layers panel, click the Create A New Layer icon so you can draw the line on its own layer and move it around later. As you click-and-drag to draw your vertical line, be sure to hold the Shift key and keep it vertical. Create another new layer and press M to get the Rectangular Marquee tool.

Start outside the document bounds, then drag out a selection box that’s a little taller than your name and that goes across the entire card from edge to edge.

Click on the foreground color box and pick a color for your graphic accents. I chose a smoky blue.

Press Alt-Backspace (Mac: Option-Delete) to fill the selection with the accent color. Using the Marquee tool again, select a rectangle inside your “safe area” guides that’s taller than the graphic bar you just created, and hit Backspace (Mac: Delete).
6 It's time to do the other side of the card and it's vertical, so create a new Photoshop Elements document that's 2.125" wide, 3.625" tall, and 300dpi, and add the guides 1/8" and 1/4" inside all of the edges like you did with the other side of the card.

In Step 1, I mentioned that I captured a screenshot of my Periscope profile from my phone, so open that in Photoshop Elements and press Ctrl-A then Ctrl-C (Mac: Command-A then Command-C) to select all and copy it. Then close it to return to your blank vertical business card with guidelines. Press Ctrl-V (Mac: Command-V) to paste the image into its own layer.

Press Ctrl-T (Mac: Command-T) and use the corner handles of the Free Transform tool to resize the image so it's within the bounds of the outer guidelines.

7 We need the panels of color to go all the way to the edges of our document so there's enough bleed that the print shop can trim the cards and have the color go all the way to the edge. In the Layers panel click on the Background layer, and then click the Create a new layer icon to create a new blank layer above the Background layer and below our pasted image.
Press Ctrl-T (Mac: Command-T) and use the corner handles of the Free Transform tool to resize the image so it's within the bounds of the outer guidelines. Press Z to get the Zoom tool and then zoom in to the top of the image to make the blue rectangle as large as possible without going out of the frame.

Press I to get the Color Picker tool (aka Eyedropper tool) and select the blue color, then press M to get the Rectangular Marquee tool and, starting outside the document bounds, drag a rectangle selection edge to edge from left to right, and from the very top down to the bottom edge of the blue box. And press Alt-Delete (Mac: Option-Backspace) to fill with the blue color.

Do the same process again for the light gray panel by selecting that color gray with the Color Picker tool (eyedropper) and then draw a rectangle with the Rectangular Marquee tool and fill it with gray so it goes completely from edge to edge.

The only remaining part is the light blue shape to the left of the portrait. It should go all the way to the edge so when the card is trimmed to the right size, it will appear to go to the edge. Use the Color Picker tool and the Rectangular Marquee tool and you're good to go. I zoomed in so I could be precise.

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The only thing left to do with these two Photoshop Elements layered files is to save them as a TIFF file with the specifications that my print shop required. (Stay away from JPEG because of loss of image quality, especially with fonts.) As a side note, I chose rounded-corner business cards because they’re easier for people to put in their wallets, and I chose matte rather than glossy card stock so that later on I could write on the cards with a pen if I need to.
Elements has three overall ‘modes’: Quick, Guided and Expert. The first two of these present us with quick and easy fixes for sprucing up images, instead of having to tackle the Expert mode. Saying this, being able to work your way around Expert mode will open up far more options for editing photos, and will inevitably help you improve your skills. In this tutorial, I’ve outlined four hot topics when we talk about fixing photos: color correction, crop and straighten, exposure control, and lastly cloning out distracting objects. There are lots of other image problems that you might encounter, but learning these four will hopefully set you off on the right foot.

Color Correction in Portraits

1 Capturing portraits presents a number of challenging issues. Color temperature, or white balance, is usually taken care of by the camera, but even that can produce inaccurate results. Load up your image into Elements and head to the Expert mode. To correct color, be sure to duplicate the Background layer by pressing Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J). Then go to the Enhance menu along the top and down to Adjust Color>Adjust Color for Skin Tones.
To get things started, click on any part of the person's skin. Elements will automatically adjust the color balance to what it thinks is correct. Sometimes this isn't always perfect, so it might take a few clicks on different parts of the person's skin to adjust the color so it looks more natural. You can gauge how it's progressing by clicking on the Preview box in the adjustment to view the image before any adjustments are made.

The best reason to use this adjustment is that if the image still doesn't look quite right, you can quickly warm it up or cool it down by adjusting the Ambient Light Temperature slider, which will affect the whole image. Going to the left will increase the amount of blue there is, which is helpful for correcting orange casts, and going to the right will increase red, ideal if your image is too cold. Sometimes effects with this slider are very subtle.

The Tan slider also performs a similar task. Sliding this to the right, along with the Blush slider underneath, will actually make the skin tones appear warmer. The final look of the image will depend heavily on how you want that person's skin tone to appear in relation to everything else in the image. Hit OK when you're done and save the image as a PSD file to preserve the layers.

TIP: Another way to correct color balance, is by using the Photo Filter adjustment, set to Blue or Orange.
**Crop and Straighten**

1 **The Straighten tool (P)** is quite simple to use, however there are a few options to consider (we’ve listed them below). To use the tool, click-and-drag across an object that you know should be level. Elements will then tweak the angle of your entire canvas so that it is level. You can also use the tool make true verticals on objects that should be upright, like these towers.

**Grow or Shrink**

When using the Straighten tool set to Grow or Shrink, the image’s canvas (edge) will adjust so that all of the image is included, no matter how much is being rotated.

**Remove Background**

When straightening an image with this option, Elements will chop off any transparent pixels that are left behind. The risk is that you could lose some of the important details in your image, such as the tops of these towers.

**Original Size**

When you straighten an image with this option, the canvas size doesn’t change, keeping the document’s original dimensions. Any gaps created by the rotation will automatically be filled with the color from your background color swatch.

2 **Cropping images is one** of the most important parts of image editing—it can emphasize an object, create a different mood, or even hide details that shouldn’t be there. Fortunately for us, Elements makes cropping our images a very easy process.

   Select the Crop tool (C) and in the Tool Options set it to No Restrictions to have complete control over its area. There are a number of Crop Suggestions that you can roll your mouse over to preview. I would only recommend using these if you know the exact size of the paper you intend to print the image.

3 **Choose one of the three** Grid Overlays from the Tool Options bar. These will help you achieve a better overall composition. We’ve given a brief explanation of each one below:

**None**

The None option is clear of any grid overlays, which helps you to see all the image details and gain a better feel for the composition. The edges of the crop can be tweaked by dragging the corner boxes.
**Rule of Thirds**

This has four intersecting points on a large grid. By positioning important subjects, for example a person’s face, over one of these points, or as close as you can, a strong composition can be created. The horizontal and vertical lines are ideal for positioning either the horizon or a tall building along.

**Grid**

The third overlay option is handy for gauging right angles, horizontal lines and verticals as well. It’s more accurate but harder to see image details. You may want to try the first two before using this one.

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4 If you plan on using the image for printing, for example, you can enter 250 into the Resolution box and make sure it is showing Pixel/Inch. This will make sure your image is printed at a size that will produce the best quality. If you don’t plan on printing the image, leave this blank. Position the cropping boundary so that you have a strong composition, perhaps cropping out distracting objects around the edges. Press Enter, or click on the green tick to confirm the new crop.

Tip: To see what your image looked like before, go to the Window menu and down to History, then click on the previous history state.
Exposure and Contrast

1. Whether you have an image that suffers from over-exposure (bright highlights and dark shadows), or under-exposure (lacking in contrast and general brightness), these steps should help to fix this. In Expert mode, go to the Layer menu and down to New Adjustment Layer>Levels (press OK in the pop-up box). Holding the Alt key (Mac: Option), slide in the far right of the three pointers. Your image will turn black and any pure white areas will show up as white, which we want to avoid making in this process. This will brighten your image, and if you avoid creating white patches, you’ll avoid over-exposure. If your image is already over-exposed, you probably won’t need to adjust this.

2. The middle of the three pointers in the Levels adjustment will likely make the most difference. Slide it to the left to lighten the exposure of your image. Depending on how dark your image is, you may need to go quite far to the left. Sliding this pointer to the right will do the opposite and will darken the overall image if it’s suffering from over-exposure.

3. The far left pointer inside Levels decides how dark the shadows will look. As with the highlights, hold down the Alt key (Mac: Option) and drag it inwards. If you see any parts of your image turn black, then all detail will be lost in that area. If there are already strong shadows in your image, you won’t need to adjust this one. It’s acceptable to have some completely black areas in the image, if it was taken on a sunny day.

Tip: The Auto button in the Levels adjustment will do the hard work for you, but it’s not always perfect.
A common scenario is having an image that has dark shadows and bright highlights at the same time. Using just one Levels adjustment makes it difficult to brighten the shadows and darken the bright highlights. If this is the case, then duplicate the Background layer by selecting it in the Layers panel and pressing Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J). Then, go to Enhance>Adjust Lighting and across to Shadows/Highlights. By keeping the Lighten Shadows slider to around 10%, and moving the Darken Highlights slider upwards, you can balance out the exposure. The Midtone Contrast slider may not be needed, but can produce some interesting effects if moved to the right.

**Remove Distracting Objects**

1. Let’s begin with the easiest retouching tool of the lot, the Spot Healing Brush tool (J). This one is ideal for cleaning up small specks or removing small objects that don’t need to be there. It’s worth learning when to switch between the Proximity Match and Content Aware options that go with this tool, as this will make all the difference. Here’s a look at the differences:

**Proximity Match**

Set the Spot Healing Brush to Proximity Match when the surrounding area around the object is a solid color or a pattern-less area. Elements will look at neighboring pixels and take an average reading to use as the object’s replacing pixels.

**Content-Aware**

With Content-Aware selected, objects can be removed from areas with pattern or texture, helping to reduce signs of cloning. Texture is imitated more accurately than with the Proximity Match option.
We can put the Spot Healing Brush (set to Proximity Match) to good use on images such as this one, where there are lots of small objects on the water. Duplicate the Background layer so that we’re not destroying the original one, and use the Spot Healing Brush to paint an area just large enough to cover the object being removed. When you release the mouse button, Elements will replace the object with the surrounding pixels, making for a pretty good cover up job!

For removing larger objects that are a distraction, grab the Clone Stamp tool and set it to Aligned in the Tool Options bar. This means that Elements will remember where you last sampled after each click of the mouse. Hold down the Alt key (Mac: Option) and click on pixels surrounding the object to sample them. Before applying the sampled area over the object, add a new blank layer and tick the Sample All Layers option in the Tool Options bar.

When using the Clone Stamp tool to replace the object with sampled pixels, move the brush in a direction that will always be sampling away from the object. For example, if you sample from the left side of an object, brush from right to left over the object. This will create a very clean cloning pattern that will flow with the rest of the image. Once the object has been completely removed, to better blend the areas together, lower the Opacity of the Clone Stamp tool to 40% to create gradually fading.
One of the most rewarding projects you can tackle in Photoshop Elements is combining images in interesting ways. Whether you’re crafting a surreal piece of art or merely swapping heads, the process is similar—combine two or more images into the same document, select the image area you want to remain visible, add a layer mask to hide the rest of the image, and then experiment with layer blend modes and color adjustments until your artistic vision is achieved. Even if you’re not feeling inspired to do this kind of thing right now, learning how to select, mask, blend, and change colors in Elements are core skills worth mastering. Plus, giving yourself permission to play with a technique like this may ignite your inner artist. In this column, you’ll learn how to combine a photo of an Italian villa and a photo a glass of red wine in order to create a version of Italy you can drink!
1 **Fire up the Elements Editor** and click the Expert button at the top of the workspace (it’s called Full Edit in older versions of the program). Choose File > Open and locate the image you want to base the composite on, such as the wine glass shown here. Summon the Layers panel by clicking the Layers button at the bottom of the workspace.

2 **Rotate the wine glass by** choosing Image > Transform > Free Transform. Elements surrounds the image with a box and draggable handles. Point your cursor near one of the corner handles and when it turns into a curved double-sided arrow (circled), drag to rotate the image so the wine level is fairly horizontal. To reposition the glass, click-and-drag inside the box—the goal is to hang the reflection of the glass stem off the document edge (you can also drag a corner handle outward to enlarge the glass slightly in order to hide the reflection). When you’re finished, click the green checkmark beneath the image to accept the transformation (or press the Return key on your keyboard).

3 **Add another image** to the document by choosing File > Place. Navigate to where the Italian villa image lives on your hard drive and then click Place. When the image opens, Elements surrounds it with resizing handles. Take a peek in the Tool Options bar and make sure Constrain Proportions is turned on, and then drag any corner handle inward to resize the image so all the trees fit within the glass. Drag within the box to reposition the image atop the glass. Click the green checkmark beneath the image when you’re done.

4 **Now let’s hide the sky** in the villa image by selecting the villa, trees, and foreground and then adding a layer mask. Sometimes it’s easier to select what you don’t want (the sky) and then invert the selection in order to select what you do want (everything else). So with the villa layer active, grab the Quick Selection tool (A) from the Select section of the Toolbox, and then in the Tool Options bar, set the brush size to around 100 pixels and turn on Auto-Enhance. Mouse over to the image and click, or click-and-drag, across the sky. If you select too much, Alt-drag (Mac: Option-drag) across the unwanted area to subtract it from the selection.
5 **Flip-flop the selection** by choosing Select > Inverse, and then add a layer mask by clicking the circle-within-a-square icon at the top of your Layers panel. When you do, Elements hides the sky in the villa layer.

6 **Adjust the color** of the villa layer so it looks more like the wine. Click the half-black/half-white icon at the top of your Layers panel (circled) and choose Hue/Saturation. In the panel that opens, turn on Colorize (also circled) and then drag the Hue slider all the way left to the red section of the rainbow-colored bar. Next, drag the Saturation slider rightward until the red matches the wine (+58 was used here). To restrict the color change to the villa layer and not the wine glass, click the icon at the bottom left of the panel (also circled).

7 **Now let’s use layer blend modes** to control how colors on each layer blend or cancel each other out—our goal here is to make as much of the grassy foreground disappear as possible. Click the villa layer to activate it and then from the Blend Mode menu at the top of the Layers panel, choose Darker Color. This blend mode looks at the colors on all layers and keeps only the darkest ones; it doesn’t blend any colors together. Since the wine is darker than most of the foreground, a chunk of it disappears (we’ll hide the rest of it in the next step). When using your own imagery, be sure to experiment with other blend modes to achieve the result you want. An easy way to do that is to cycle through all the blend modes using keyboard shortcuts: activate the Move tool (V) and then press-and-hold the Shift key on your keyboard while tapping the + key to go forward through the menu. (You can use the – key to go backward.) If you don’t activate the Move tool, you run the risk of changing a tool’s blend mode instead of the layer blend mode (tools such as the Clone Stamp and Brush tool can use blend modes, too).

8 **Click the mask you created** in step 5 (circled) and activate the Brush tool (B) in the Draw section of the Toolbox. Press D to reset the color chips at the bottom of the Toolbox to their default values of black and white, and then press the X key to flip-flop them so that black is on top. In the Tool Options bar, pick a soft-edge brush from the Brush menu, set the brush Size to about 400 pixels, and then set Opacity to 100%.
Mouse over to the image and brush across the areas of the villa image that you want to hide (the foreground and the vertical strip on the right). Reduce brush size to about 70 pixels and hide any areas of sky that may still be visible between the trees. If you mess up and hide too much, press the X key to flip-flop your color chips so that white is on top and then brush back across that area. Remember, in the realm of the layer masks, painting with black conceals and white reveals.

Now let’s add some texture to the piece. Click the Graphics button at the bottom of the workspace (circled) and scroll down until you find one you like (“Oh So Dusty” was used here—it’s also circled). Single-click a thumbnail to download and add it to your document.

10 Click the Layers button at the bottom of the workspace to reopen your Layers panel. Locate the texture you added and drag it to the top of your layer stack. Use the menu at the top of the Layers panel to change the texture layer’s blend mode to Multiply. TIP: To use the blend mode keyboard shortcuts mentioned earlier, activate the Move tool (V) in the Select section of the Toolbox first or you’ll change the blend mode of the Brush tool (that is, if it’s still active).

11 If the texture seems too dark, ensure that layer is active and then adjust the Opacity setting at the top of the Layer panel (70% was used here). Since doing so reveals a couple of empty corners in the document—created by rotating the image earlier—add a solid white layer to the bottom of your layer stack. To do that, click the half-black/half-white circle at the top of the Layers panel and choose Solid Color. In the Color Picker that opens, pick white and then click OK. Drag the fill layer to the very bottom of your layer stack.
As you can see, compositing is well within your reach. When you're using your own imagery, it may take some experimentation to find the right images but rest assured the effort is worth it. Until next time, may the creative force be with you all!

Are you happy with the composition? If not, try adjusting the villa’s color by double-clicking the Hue/Saturation adjustment layer’s thumbnail to reopen the Hue/Saturation panel and/or experimenting with different blend modes for the villa and texture layers. Here’s my final Layers panel.

And here’s a similar homage to Scotland (Darker Color was used for the castle layer blend mode and the texture is “Ivory Sweet”):

As you can see, compositing is well within your reach. When you’re using your own imagery, it may take some experimentation to find the right images but rest assured the effort is worth it. Until next time, may the creative force be with you all!

Each issue we give you a new photo assignment. Winners are announced online. Our Upcoming Challenge Theme is Green. All entries for the Green Photo Challenge must be submitted by May 31st. To enter the Photo Challenge, go to this link and follow the instructions: [www.PhotoshopElementsUser.com/contests](http://www.PhotoshopElementsUser.com/contests).

**FIRST SNOW [ PHOTO CHALLENGE 1ST PLACE WINNER ]**

Jim Steinmiller

The photograph was taken in Bristol, Indiana last winter with my Nikon D7100. It is a shot of Bonneville Mill. It was the morning after a very heavy first snow. I did very little post processing as nature did a pretty good job on its own. I did use Elements to remove a distracting blue refuse container that was just inside the shelter.

**DALI’S DOOR [ PHOTO CHALLENGE WINNER ]**

Sue Balk
Pinckney, MI

Taken in Spain, this is a doorway to a building on Salvador Dalí’s property (no melting clocks...).

**MAJESTY IN BLUE [ PHOTO CHALLENGE WINNER ]**

Paulette Geiger
Milan, Ohio

This image was taken while on a photography outing at Magee Marsh in Port Clinton, Ohio. Shot in RAW, I adjusted the saturation and focal point in elements 14.