

# Beauty Retouching & Skin Glow Technique

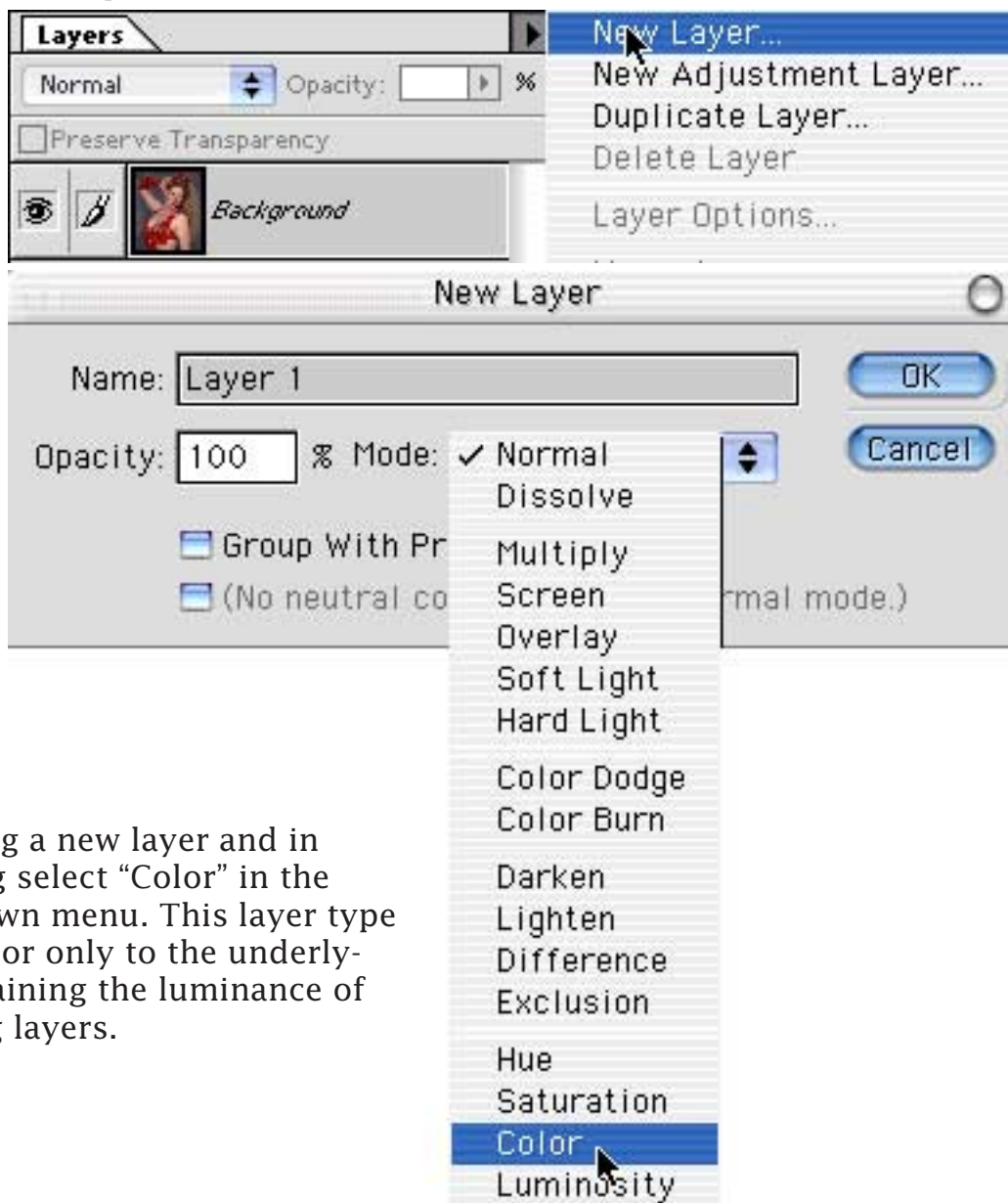
This project demonstrates some retouching & color correcting techniques that have many applications with portraiture. This is a shot of Laura Kali, a professional Middle Eastern dancer in Los Angeles. Aside from the discoloration under her arms (due to some reaction between the newly dyed costume and stick deoderant) this is a relatively good digital capture but as the old saying goes: "You can never be too rich or too thin" women can also never be too young and so we are obligated to shave off a few years here...



Toggle to  
retouched version

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version

We will start by getting rid of the underarm discoloration using a color layer to “paint out” the bad color.



Start by making a new layer and in the next dialog select “Color” in the mode drop-down menu. This layer type applies the color only to the underlying layers, retaining the luminance of the underlying layers.



Sample a color from  
a nearby area of good  
skin...

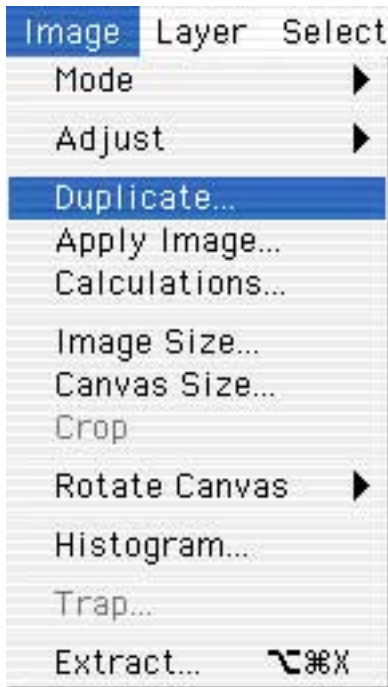
...and paint out the  
offending color.



Next we will cover up wrinkles and generally smooth out the skin.

Toggle to  
retouched  
version

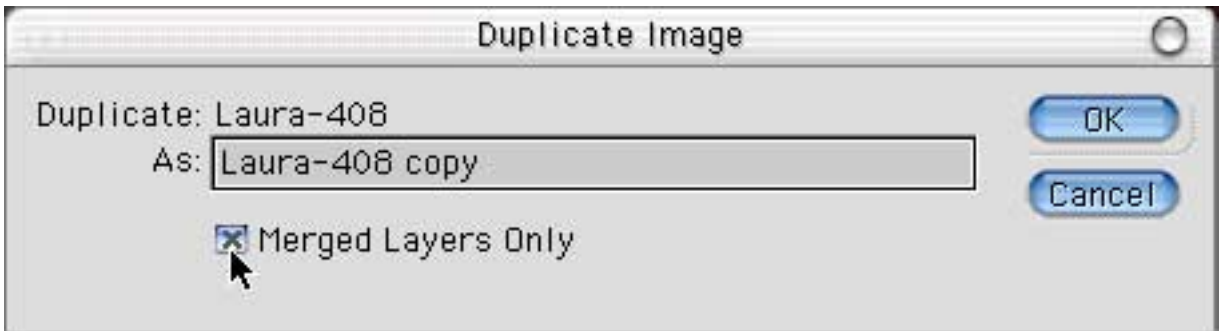




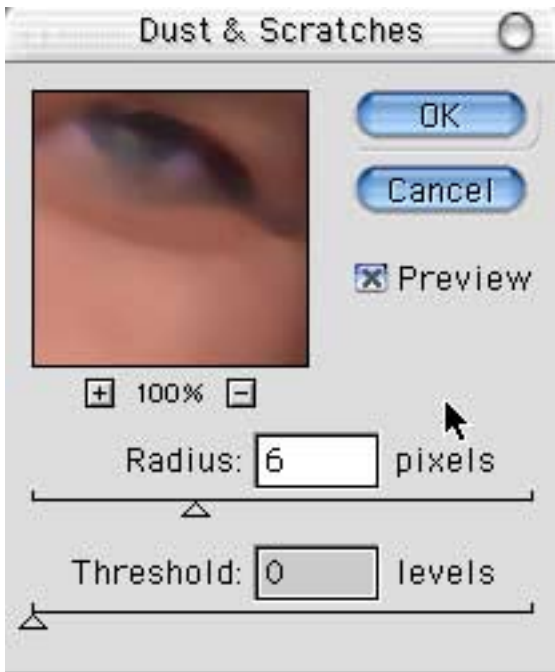
We will create a copy of the original image plus the retouching revisions without losing the color layer. This way, if any changes are necessary after you've seen a print ( ie... the underarm color is off a little bit ) you can re-edit the color layer easier.

First, select "Duplicate" under the image menu.

Then, make sure you check "Merged Layers Only" before clicking "OK"

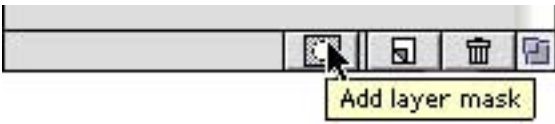


Next, select the Move tool, hold down the "shift" key and drag the newly created image over the original layered document.



Once we have this layer in place, select Filter menu →Noise→Dust & Scratches. Don't get excited, this is only the first step in our wrinkle smoothing procedure. Pick an appropriate radius to smooth out the skin without spreading the color too much. Next, use the Gaussian blur filter to just barely kill the edge bands in the result.

We are not going to use this image as is! Instead we will paint in smooth skin over the wrinkles in the original image...

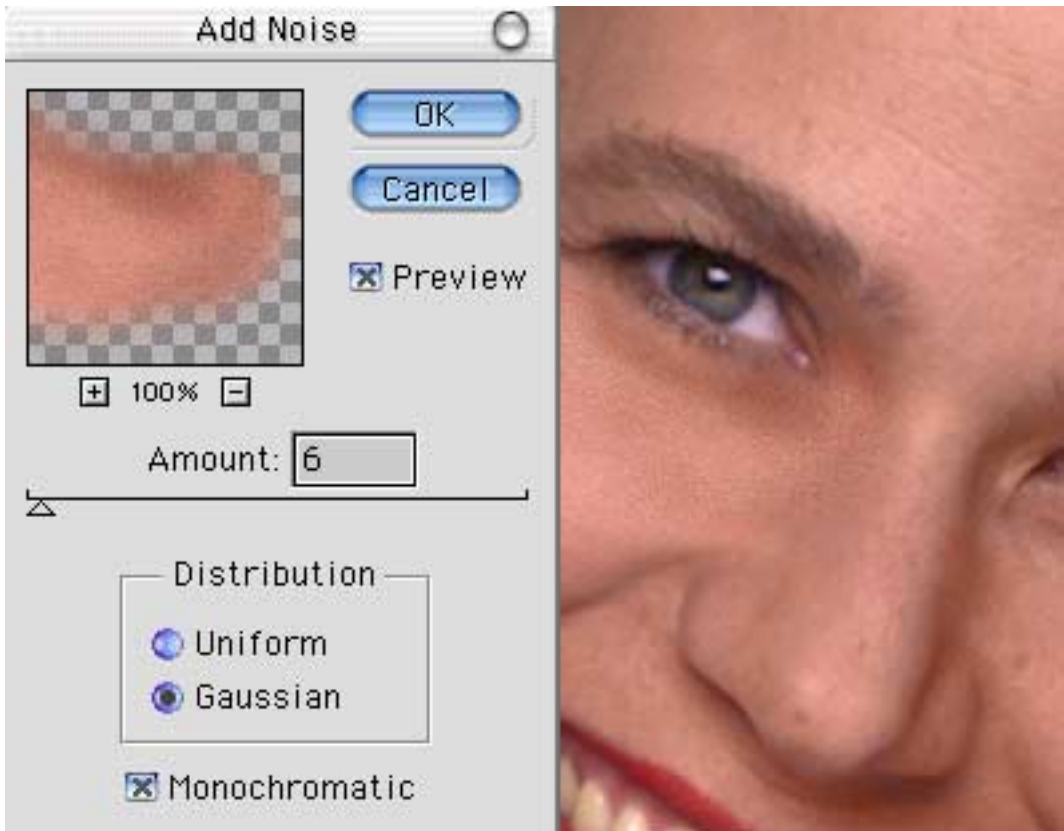


Make a layer mask by clicking on the layer mask icon at the bottom of the layer palette. Then hit “com-

mand-i” to invert the mask to black. This will completely hide the blurred image. Now, with the layer mask active, we can paint with white into the layer mask to reveal the smooth skin, covering the wrinkles in the process.



This method smooths out wrinkles without completely destroying the integrity of the underlying image. However, we can see that the new skin looks *too* smooth...

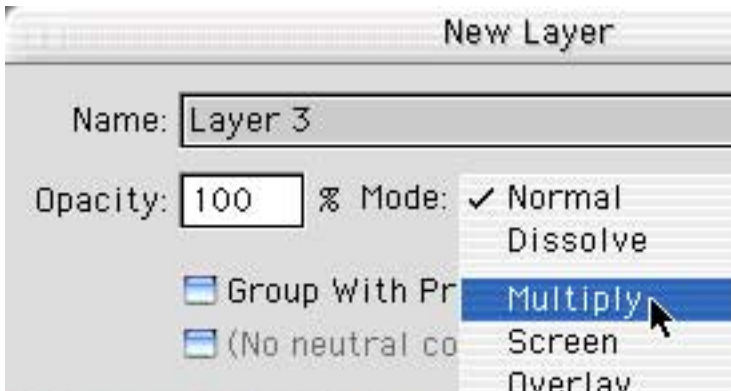


Before we finish covering up all the wrinkles, select the image in the layer ( click on the image thumbnail and make sure you see the paintbrush icon ) and then select the “Add Noise” filter. The amount you use here depends on how much grain is visible in the image. Usually the grain in the original is also slightly blurry so we will want to add just a bit more noise than looks right and blur it with the blur filter to make it match the image. Once you establish a match you can paint ( into the mask again ) over all the wrinkles and smooth out the complexion in the rest of the image

The  
retouched  
face

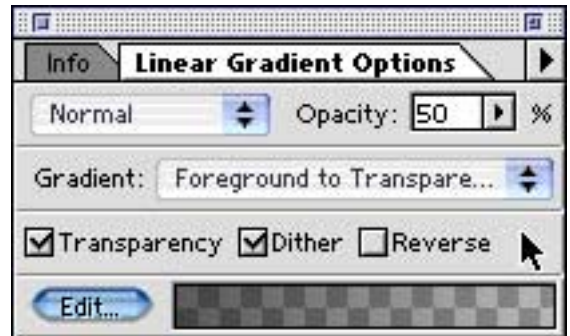
Toggle to  
original  
face





Next we will do some edge burning to give the image a little drama. Start by making a new multiply layer. We will

use the gradient tool to draw some black edge gradients into this empty layer. Set up a black gradient at 50% opacity with foreground to transparent.



Drag the gradient from the edges to darken and create a vignette effect. Don't worry if it looks too heavy you can always adjust the intensity with the layer opacity slider



The image with retouching and edge burn effect.

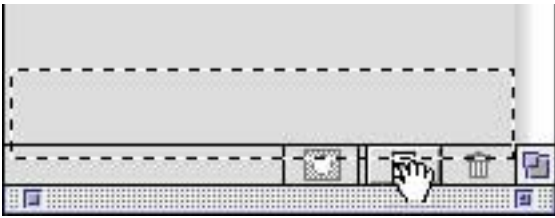
Toggle to first page

Toggle to final image

We are almost done. For the finishing touch we will apply a subtle diffusion effect to give the skin a beautiful glow...



Start by flattening the image, then copy into a new layer by dragging to the new layer icon at the bottom of the layer palette.



Change the apply mode to “Overlay”

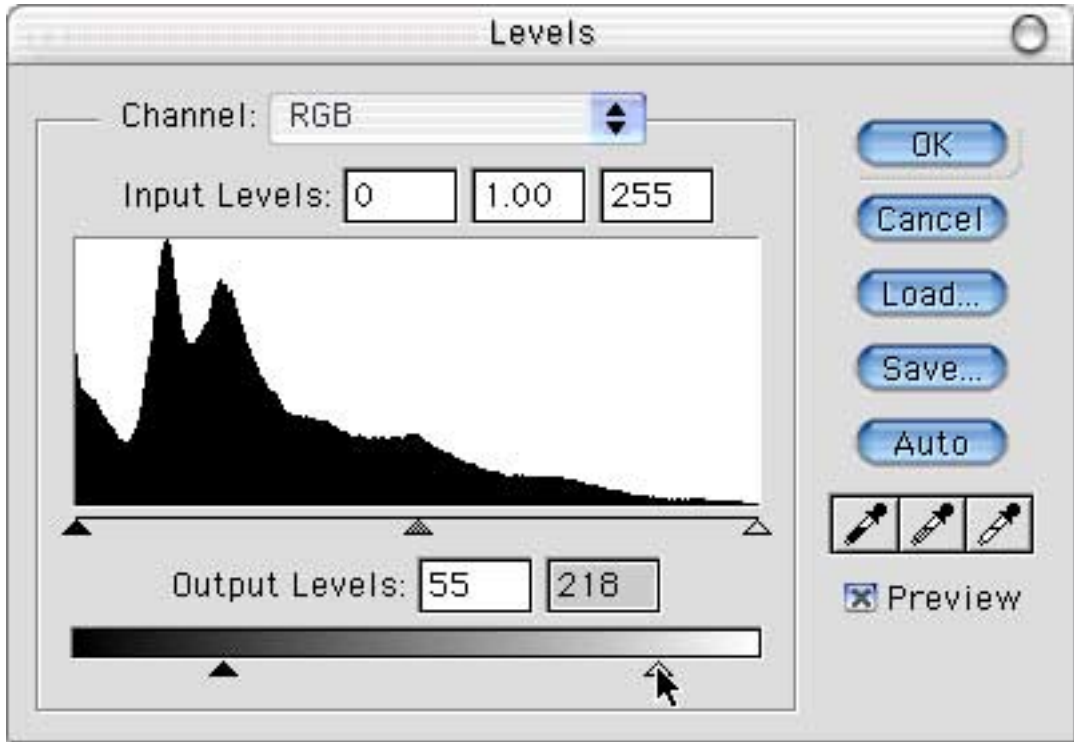


Then apply a fairly heavy Gaussian Blur to the layer...

You should end up with something that looks like this:



The “glow” effect is quite pronounced and because of the way overlay mode works there is an increase in contrast and a shift in the color towards red. We can now modify the intensity of the effect by changing the levels ( Image—>Adjust—>Levels ) in the two layers...



By playing with the output levels in one, the other or both layers we can create different diffusion effects. Basically we want to reduce the contrast in the layers by pushing the output sliders inward, darkening the white point and lightening the black point. Creep these in slowly and observe the effect on screen. You can go back and forth applying different amounts in each layer until you achieve the look you are after.



This effect was achieved by reducing the contrast in the lower, unblurred layer only, resulting in maximum diffusion.



This effect is the result of reducing the contrast of just the upper layer. Less pronounced, more subtle diffusion...

The final image here is somewhere between the previous two. In addition a hue adjustment layer was used to shift red out of the skintone and desaturate it a bit. You can experiment with different levels of blur and different opacities in the overlay layers to get a whole range of effects.

Toggle to retouched version

Toggle to first page original

