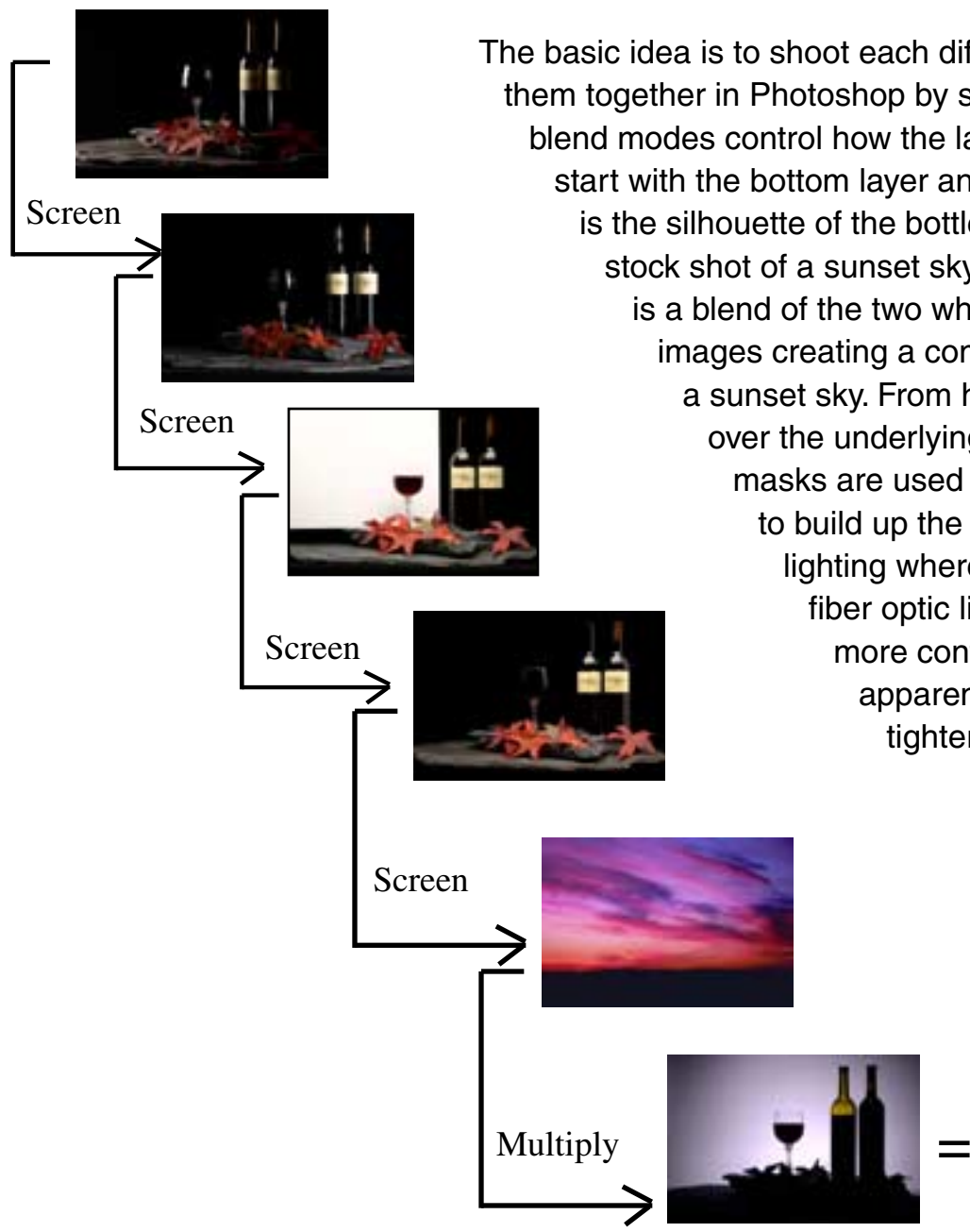




Bonterra Wine

This image was created using digital capture and a special layered lighting technique utilizing Photoshop layer blend modes. We will explore the whole process, from start to finish, in the following pages. Digital capture opens up a whole new way of photography in the studio and complex lighting like this becomes easy to achieve. The key to this procedure is to lock the camera down on a tripod — then each image captured is in perfect registration with the previous image. The photo-digital process becomes more dynamic when images can be manipulated in the computer while you are capturing them, providing creative feedback for photographic decisions.



The basic idea is to shoot each different lighting direction separately. Then blend them together in Photoshop by stacking the layers one on top of the other. Different blend modes control how the layers interact with one another. The strategy is to start with the bottom layer and work your way up. In this case the bottom image is the silhouette of the bottles against a white background. The next image is a stock shot of a sunset sky which is multiplied over the first image. The result is a blend of the two where the dark parts darken the light parts of both images creating a composite image with dark silhouetted bottles against a sunset sky. From here on additional image layers will be screened over the underlying layers, gradually building up the lighting. Layer masks are used to control which parts of each layer are used to build up the lighting. The result is similar to “Hosemaster” lighting where light is painted over the subject with a special fiber optic light source. This Photoshop light painting is much more controllable and because the results are immediately apparent, it allows for more experimentation and a much tighter polished look.

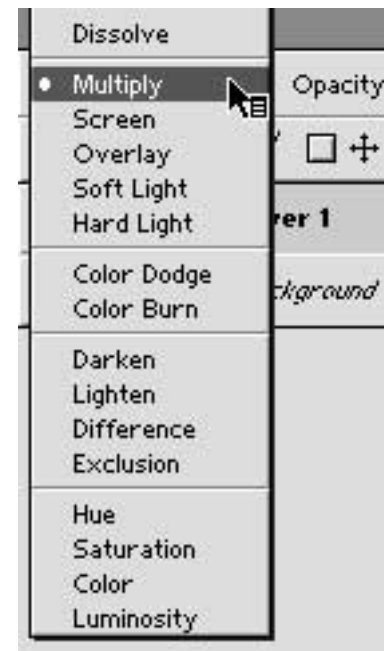




Shift drag



The first step is to light the background only creating a silhouette for the foreground. Place a large white card (foam core) behind the subject with a fair amount of space separating it from the foreground set - that way it is easier to keep unwanted light from spilling onto the foreground. After you have this shot go into Photoshop and drag the sunset sky file onto the wine silhouette image file. The sky should be pre-scaled to match the size of the wine file. Then the images can automatically lined up by holding down the shift key while you drag. At this point you will not see the wine bottles because the sky is on top. Changing the layer apply mode (the drop down menu directly under the layer tab) to multiply will blend the two images by darkening the white card background with the image of the sky.



Multiply layers to add image detail to clear white areas of background





Shift drag



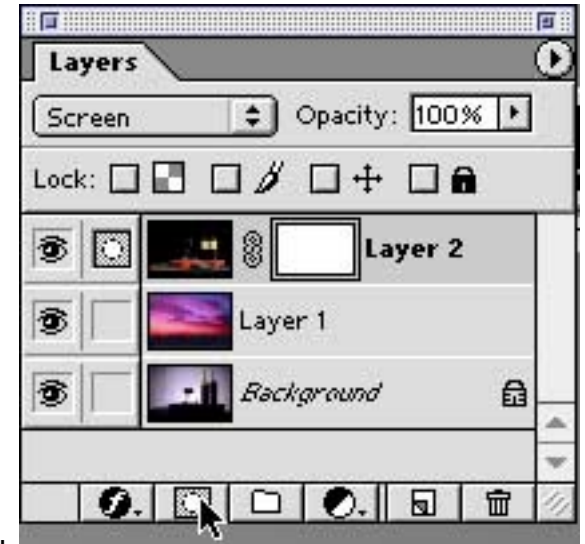
Shoot a new lighting set-up and screen the layer in Photoshop to add light.



Next add overall foreground lighting — in this case supplied by a medium softbox. Change out the white background for a black one (**black Tuflock**) before you shoot. Assuming that the camera is locked down on a tripod, all the subsequent shots will be registered; shift drag the file on top of the silhouette sky combo to add this foreground light to the background. This time change the apply mode to screen. The foreground light will be added into the silhouetted wine set.



To control where the light is applied add a layer mask to this top layer by clicking on the mask icon at the bottom of the layer pallet (see screenshot at right ---->) - then invert the mask to black: (press command-i) Add in the light slightly by bringing up the levels dialog - (command-L) and slide the black triangle at the bottom of the dialog (<---- see left) to the right just a bit. This will



gray up the mask revealing a little bit of the overall light. Now choose a soft airbrush and paint into the mask with white to “paint in” the light where you want it — in this case lightening the labels and the right side of the wine bottles.

Use layer masks to control light: paint with white in the mask to add light from the layer, paint with black to hide it.

Use a lower opacity setting (10-30%) with the airbrush to gradually build up light. Mistakes can be corrected by painting with black into the mask. Very subtle lighting effects can be achieved this way, blending different light sources and building up the light one layer at a time.





The next layer is a shot with a white card placed right behind the wine glass. Shift drag this file over the composite, change apply mode to screen and create a layer mask to hide the layer. Now use the airbrush and paint into the mask with white to put a soft glow behind the glass. Next, add the highlights from the left bottle.

Continue adding new lighting directions, reflections, ect.. by screening on top of the composite-in-progress. Hide reflector cards with layer masks.



This layer mask technique allows a much freer placement of white cards and other light controllers because now you don't have to be concerned with these things showing up in the shot. Reflections and shadows can be created in the ideal position and simply painted in to avoid showing the source





The next lighting set up is used only for the leaves. Shift drag this shot onto the composite, create layer mask and paint in the mask to create the dappled lighting effect. Sometimes where we *don't* see light is more important than where we do see it — less is more! Keep examining the light and add only those areas that have really good light quality, like the highlights on the stem of the wine glass in this shot.

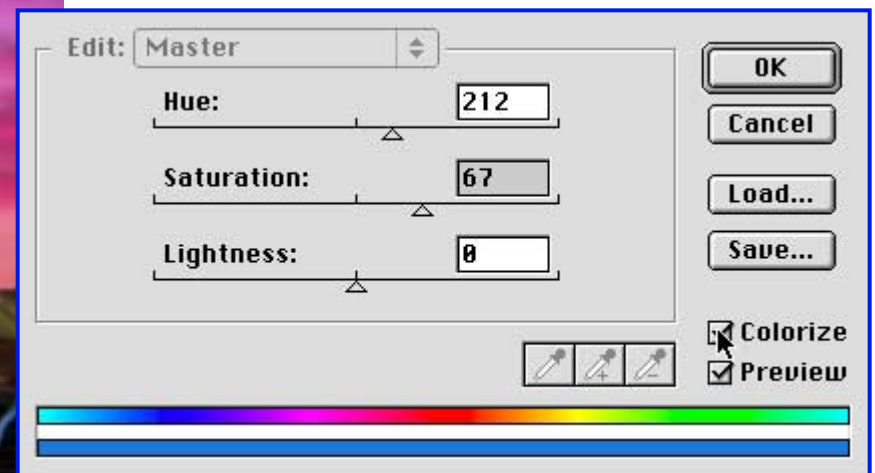
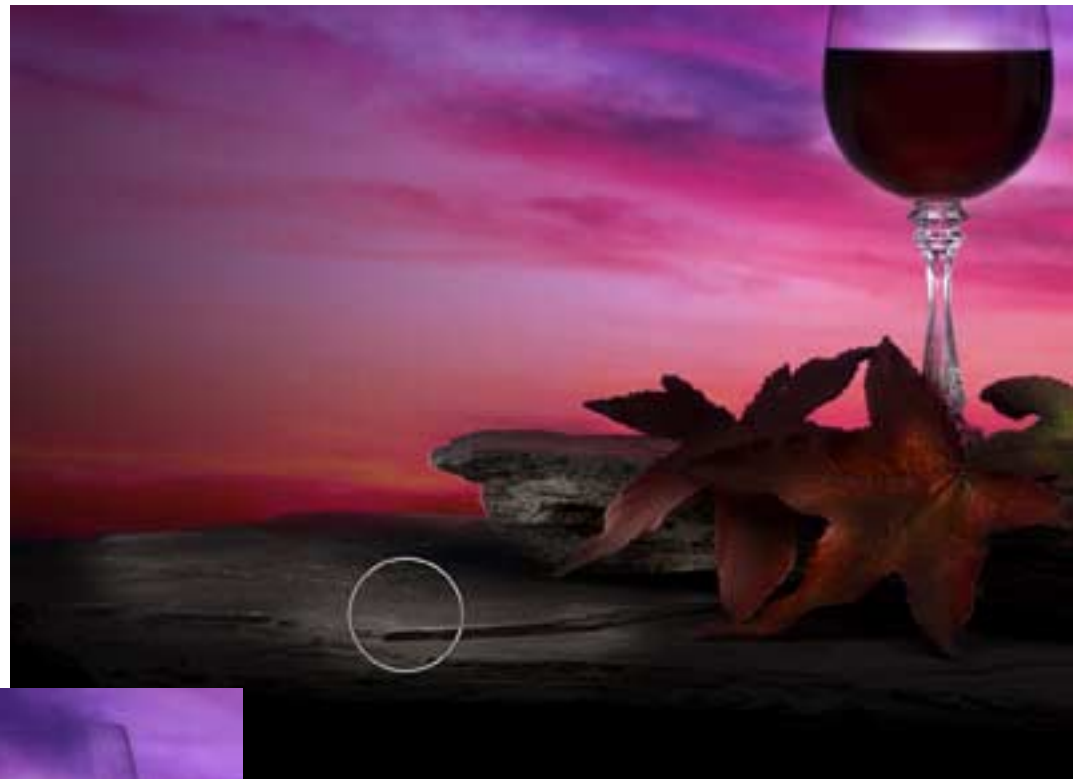
Use only the best parts of the individual images for the composite

Don't be afraid to change the intensity of the layer or even do a curve or levels adjustment in the new layer once you have the lighting in place. It is easy see how the newly added light interacts with the rest of the image — make adjustments as needed.





The final lighting layer brings in light from the left to add texture to the stones and leaves. Proceed as before by shift dragging, screen, layer mask and paint into the mask with white. Because this light is in a separate layer it is easy to change not only the intensity but the color of the light as well. Make sure you have the image layer selected and call up the Hue/Saturation dialog (command - u). Check the Colorize radio button and slide the Hue triangle to the desired color. This kind of control is much better than using gels over the lights.



Create color effects by using Hue/Saturation to colorize individual lighting layers.



The final image can be further refined with adjustment layers and a blur layer. These additional layers are treated the same way — create a layer mask and paint in where you want the effect. Here the color of the wine was enhanced with a levels adjustment layer that brightens up the red channel in the image, painting it into the wine glass and the bottles with a soft airbrush. The subtle diffusion effect is created by duplicating the merged layers, running a Gaussian blur and bringing this image over the rest of the composite at a reduced opacity. A layer mask can be used to further control the effect.