

The Photographer's Guide to Silver Efex Pro 2

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Preface

About this Book

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Companion Videos

I'm pleased to offer a set of companion videos, *Mastering Silver Efex Pro 2.0*, that show you the techniques described in this book. To learn more, visit http://www.luminescentphoto.com/silver_efex/silver_efex_guide.html

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If you are having problems with installing or operating the Silver Efex Pro 2 application, please contact **Nik Software technical support**.

1 Introduction

My first real experience with photography involved tagging along to my mother's camera club, where I was introduced to the magic of the wet darkroom. For myself and many others, working with black and white was our port of entry into serious photography. While color film was sent off to the lab, black and white could be processed entirely at home. In a home darkroom, you had complete creative control over the entire photographic process, from developing the film to the final print. In today's digital "darkroom" Unfortunately, in today's era of digital cameras, all images begin life in color, meaning that you'll need to apply some digital magic to get quality monochrome images.

Because digital cameras capture images in color, producing a quality black and white image can be challenging. Early versions of image editing applications produced flat, uninspiring results when converting color to black and white. Moreover, many inkjet printers were incapable of producing neutral gray tones. When you combine these two factors, it is understandable why many professionals still preferred using traditional black and white film over digital. Sadly, many film processing labs won't even handle black and white film anymore, and it's becoming less common to find a local camera shop that stocks the necessary chemicals for a home darkroom. Fortunately, modern software makes creating quality black and white images far easier, as software developers have recognized the need to deliver the tools necessary for photographers to create dynamic monochrome images. What's more, some current inkjet printers include multiple black and gray inks, allowing us to print excellent black and white images at home. With the right tools, you can use the RGB color data in your images to your advantage to process black and white images better than you ever could in a traditional darkroom.

Working with monochrome images gives you more than just a powerful creative tool. By shooting in black and white, you'll open up photographic opportunities where you might otherwise leave your camera in the bag. Black and white images make shooting in mid-day light or in overcast conditions a viable option. Converting your images to monochrome also solves the problems with shooting in mixed light or at very high ISO's. Color casts are eliminated and "noise" can take on the appearance of film grain-- a look that works well in black and white.