Part 2 – Contrast Grading using Quick Mask & Adjustment Layers

1. In PS go to the left hand TOOL pallet and find the QUICK MASK icon (it looks like a camera) located at the bottom of the TOOLS.
2. Click the ICON and you will notice the BACKGROUND LAYER turns RED – this denoted that the QM is now active.
3. Please note: if you *double click* on the QM ICON a dia. box appears showing a colour palette – I use the default RED - I suggest keeping the OPACITY to 50% or less to allow you to see the selection you are about to adjust on the image - also make sure the SELECTED AREA bullet is selected.
4. Make sure the FOREGROUND is selected to BLACK (ICON above the QM

Tool) – use the “X” key to switch between BLACK & WHITE foreground & background and use the “D” key to Make the foreground and background colours Black & White

1. Choose the BRUSH tool and select a SOFT ROUND brush
2. Paint in the IMAGE where you want the adjustment – don’t worry about overlap, you can reverse and paint out if you overlap too much by reversing the FOREGROUND/BACKGROUND (“X”) key and paint back.
3. Now re-click the QM TOOL and your SELECTION will appear on the image – “MARCHING ANTS”
4. Go to the layers pallet and choose a NEW ADJUSTMENT LAYER – from the bottom here: 
5. Choose a CURVES ADJUSTMENT LAYER
6. You will now see an ADJ. LAYER alongside your LAYER with the selection you painted in – leave for the moment.
7. Click on the BACKGROUND LAYER AGAIN then click the QM tool again (note the colour of the BACKGOUND CHANGES TO RED)
8. Repeat this process and select as many areas as you would like to change on your image – it’s a good idea to get into the habit of *“naming”* each LAYER if you use multiple ADJ. LAYERS to keep track of your image adjustments.
9. When you have all the SELECTIONS you want, go to the LAYER PANEL double click here: to bring back the CURVES DIALOG BOX and use this to adjust that part of your image.
10. When doing this there are several other controls one can use to refine your adjustment: USE THE OPACITY SLIDER AT THE TOP TOOL BAR TO CONTROL HOW MUCH YOU PAINT IN/OUT.
11. EXPERIMENT WITH THE BRUSH TYPE ALSO. SWITCH FORGROUND/BACKGROUND TO RE-PAINT TO REFINE THE AREA/EDGES OF YOUR SELECTION.
12. Once you have all adjustments on each ADJ. LAYER (each part of the image) you can also use the GLOBAL OPACITY slider in each of the ADJ. LAYERS to refine further.

You may now wish to go back to lesson 1. And use this method on top of the above to further refine your image.

You can keep the layers or FLATTEN when you are finished, I usually keep a duplicate copy with the layers and a FLATTED copy for printing. Or you can use the “MERGE DOWN” feature – *PLEASE NOTE the latter can be quite confusing so I recommend reading up on this feature.*

I use NIK (by DxO) infrequently but sometimes do apply. If you do use it then use the BRUSH feature for EACH individual adjustment. When you return to PS NIK automatically creates a LAYER with MASK; you can now use the same features as described above to adjust and refine your image.

GOOD LUCK AND KEEP LAYERING & MASKING – if you have any questions please contact me on peter@petercorbett.com