

## Enhancing Images Using Vignettes

Creating a vignette to highlight the subject of your photograph is an excellent way to enhance your images and is extremely easy to do in Photoshop CS6. Here are Step by Step directions to make your images more powerful with vignettes. (While not exactly the same, these instructions will also help you create a vignette in Photoshop Elements as well.)

### Step One

Open your image in Photoshop like usual. Use your usual workflow to correct and adjust your image. Once you are satisfied with your final image, make sure the top layer is selected and press CTRL+SHIFT+ALT+E to merge all layers into a new layer.

### Step Two

Decide whether you want an elliptical or rectangular vignette and then choose the Marquee Tool by clicking on its icon or pressing "M" (or "SHIFT+M" depending on how you have your *Preferences* set up) to choose the Marquee Tool.

### Step Three

Set the *Feather* setting in the Toolbar to somewhere between 100 and 250 pixels depending of the resolution of your image and the smoothness of the transition you want between the vignette and your subject. Left click your mouse in the upper left hand area of your image, and while holding the mouse button down, drag down and to the right releasing your mouse to create your selection. (TIP: If you hold down the *Spacebar* while holding the left mouse button down you can re-position the selection anywhere in the frame.)

### Step Four

Now you have your subject selected but you want the vignette around your subject, not on it, so we need to reverse the selection. Do this by pressing CTRL+SHIFT+I (the letter I), or go to the *Select* menu and choose "Inverse."

### Step Five

Add an adjustment layer by choosing either a *Levels* or *Curves* adjustment. You can now choose to create either a light or dark vignette by dragging the appropriate slider or curve.

### Step Six

Once you have completed your vignette, save the image with a new name to avoid overwriting your original file.

There are several other ways to create a vignette for your photograph, but this method is the one I use most often for its simplicity and great results. I hope this helps you to create stronger, and more compelling images ... to better express your vision.

Don Barnes