



### Lightroom Bitesize: Subtle HDR effect

Just like Marmite, you either love it or loath it. What am I talking about? - High Dynamic Range, or HDR, photography.

I've tried it myself with a trial version of the 'professionals choice' Photomatrix and I also bought a program called Dynamic-HDR - but try as I might I just didn't like the results. However, I clearly don't have the last word on the matter as many, many photographer routinely take three or more images at different exposures and then blend them together to produce images with high contrast and saturation which are claimed to mimic the view from our own eyes - and they are very popular, as any HDR group or forum will attest.

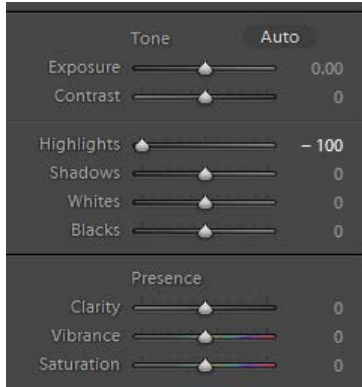
So where am I going with this? Well I decided to see if I can create a subtle HDR look by just using the Develop sliders in Lightroom. A quick trawl on the Internet showed that this isn't something new - but it's my take on it.....

We are going to use this image taken at the Black Country Living Museum in Dudley, West Midlands. I had deliberately under-exposed the foreground to try and claw back some detail in the sky during post processing. Let's see how we get on.

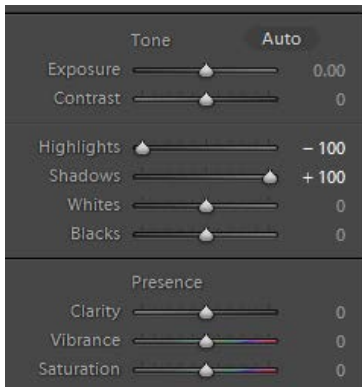




First we are going to move the Highlights slider completely to the left.

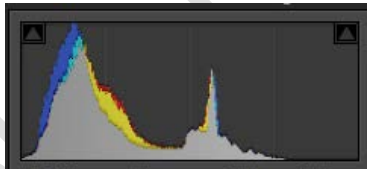


Now we are going to move the Shadows slider completely to the right.

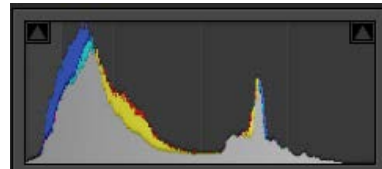


Looking at the histogram it is bunched over to the left so we can 'stretch' it by adjusting the Whites slider to the right.

Before:

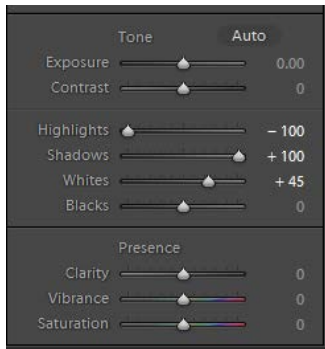


After:

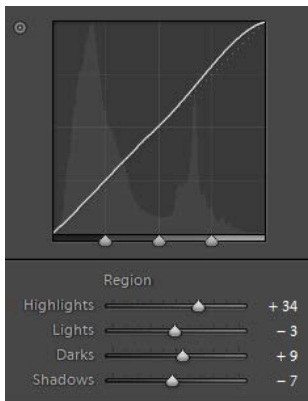




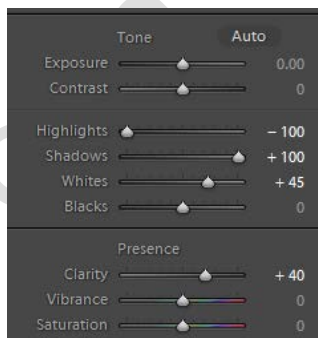
We can leave the Blacks slider where it is because the left hand side of the histogram is nicely tucked into the corner with no clipped shadows.



Now we can fine-tune the contrast. You can use the Contrast slider if you want but I prefer the added control of the Tone Curve.

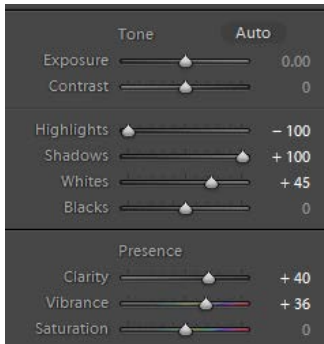


Back to the Basic panel now and we can add a bit of Clarity.



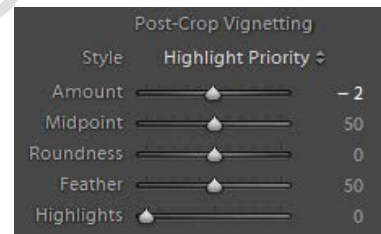
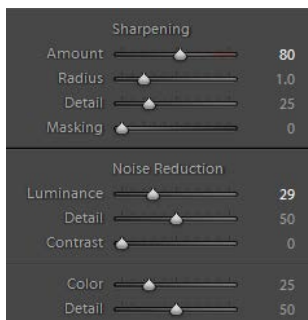


Now we can add a bit of Vibrance to boost the colours a bit.



With every digital file we need to do a bit of sharpening and associated noise reduction.....

.....and maybe add a very subtle vignette.



And that's it.

With a few tweaks we have gone from this:





To this:



Now this isn't what is now recognised as an HDR image but, to me, it is true high dynamic range because it has opened up all of the tones that were previously lost without turning it into a comic-book scene.

If you found this tutorial useful please let me know by leaving a comment on my Facebook page (or just 'Like' it) at <https://www.facebook.com/johnhallettphotographs/>. Thanks