



Lightroom Bitesize: Reducing Noise

When shooting on low light, or with high ISO settings, images can easily become inflicted with noise.

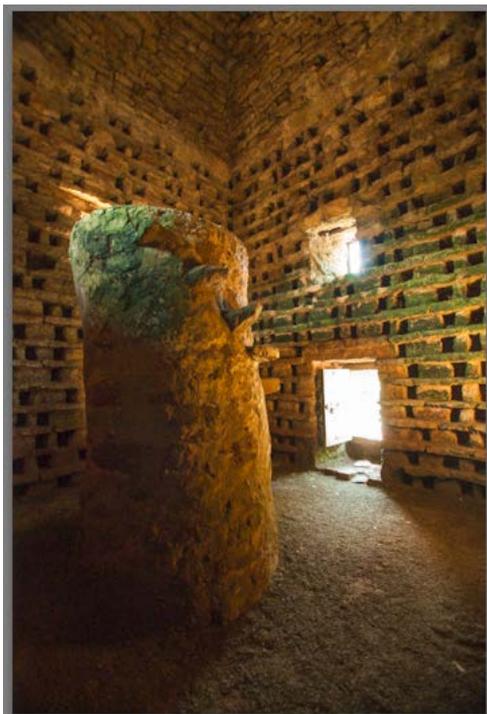
Noise can be one, or both, of the following:

Luminance noise: A visible graininess, usually in shadow areas.

Colour noise: Speckles of red, green and blue spots.

Let us take a look at this image that I took inside the dovecote at Penmon, Anglesey.

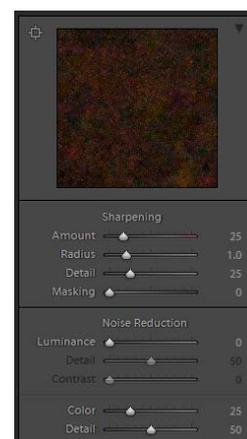
At this small size it looks OK but a closer look in the shadow areas show both Luminance and Colour noise.



Open up the **Detail** panel in the Develop module.

In order to be in control of noise reduction you really need to be looking at 1:1 magnification - but the trouble is that if you are only concentrating on one small part of the image then you cannot see what is happening in other parts of the image. Fortunately this has been taken care of by virtue of a preview panel.

Note: If you cannot see it just click on the little black triangle in the top-right of the Detail panel.





To set the area showing in the preview panel just click on this little button at the top-left of the panel and then move your cursor over the main image. Click when you have found the correct position.



We'll deal with the colour noise first by moving the **Colour** slider to the right.



By the time the slider has reached 65 all of the green and red blotches seen before have gone. There is no point in setting the slider any further.

At this point you can also adjust the Detail slider beneath - but personally I never find that it makes much difference.



Now we'll repeat the exercise - but this time with the **Luminance** slider. You can easily take this too far and make the whole image appear slightly blurred so be careful and watch the effect on the main full-sized image as you work. Here I have taken the slider to 50 - which I think is a good compromise between noise levels and sharpness.

Again you can tweak the Detail and Contrast sliders if you want - although I just leave them at their default settings.



Again, a simple task using just two sliders - which has made a considerable improvement to the shadow areas when viewed at full size.

However, you may now want to look at sharpening the image - because noise reduction and sharpening go hand-in-hand due to their opposing effects. It's not by chance that they live together in the Detail panel.

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by
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