

## BOOK REVIEW

Title: "Photoshop Elements 8 for Mac: The Missing Manual"

Publisher: O'Reilly

Review by: Fred Offenbach

As a user of Version 3, then 6, and now 8, I perhaps have tunnel vision of this manual, and I went immediately to the "What's New In Version 8?" section. That seems reasonable enough with any program, but with the changes that were made by Adobe when they went to Version 8 it really is necessary to have a reference book, and this is without a doubt one of the best references on the market.

### *What's New?*

There are a lot of changes that have been made to the work space and the way it functions, and the author does an excellent job of explaining the details of the changes -- even pointing out the problems that still are present in the program and ways of working around them. As you know (or should know) there are many nooks and crannies in the program and most of them are not obvious unless they are pointed out to you; then you must remember how to do it -- perhaps months later.

### *Working With This Book*

This book does a great job of delving into the details of the nooks, and provides a reasonably good index for finding text. In searching a subject such as 'Brush' I found 20 entries indexed, which is very generous. However, another quest for 'Extracting' came up with a blank, and this is a common term that is being used by Adobe, such as the Magic Extractor Tool. Redirecting the search to 'Selecting' did find more than 25 references, but Magic Extractor Tool is still not mentioned. Only when I searched for Magic Extractor Tool as the primary search did I find the entry. This is a problem with all indexing -- you must learn the vocabulary of the program. This index deserves a B+ grade in my opinion and is one of the major strengths.

The book is 567 pages long, and all photos are in full color. I did have trouble in detecting some of the differences in photos when two photos illustrated before-and-after changes.

There isn't a CD that comes with the book, but there is a web site that holds some of the photos that are worked on, but the number of them is relatively few.

I think that the author does a good job of explaining the reason for using certain tools rather than others, since there are so many ways to do things, and often finishes the discussion with a recommendation. Keyboard commands are often included in the text; you can take them or leave them, but she mentions them as you go along, probably hoping that you will remember a few of them.

One of the very good features of the illustrations is the generous use of screen shots with labels for each of the significant buttons. I find that it helps a lot in understanding the panels.

Another nice feature is Appendix C, which explains each command on the menu bar; reviewing it line-by-line can be a good place to start with the program since there are a number of new commands.

There is a section that explains how to find some of the great add-ons such as free layer styles available from the web, and she lists many of the sites; then it tells you how to install them, and where to find them in the program. This kind of detail is not easy to find!

### *Bottom Line*

I strongly recommend this book, even if you are just upgrading from Version 6 to Version 8.