

“Spring Blossoms” by Terry Tasche

The image this month is “Spring Blossoms” taken in the spring in Chicago’s Lincoln Park. The instructions explain how the soft effect was done in Adobe PhotoShop.



- 1) Here’s the original image. Notice how the background can be as important as the subject. Here I had used the sun-spotted grass to provide a colorful contrast to the pink blossoms. The aperture is wide open to provide an out-of-focus background.



2) Make a duplicate layer of the original background layer (select the background layer and hold the Command button while hitting J key (Command on the Mac, and Control on the PC). Then go to Filter in the top menu and apply the Gaussian Blur filter to the duplicate layer by going to Filter--Blur—Gaussian Blur, using a value of 90. The image brightens and softens when the Overlay Mode is chosen on the Gaussian Blur layer in the Layer Palette's Blending Mode drop-down section at the top of the Layers Palette



3) After retouching some of the hot spots on the leaves on a separate new layer using the clone tool, we'll next crop the image to a square format and add a white border using the

Image—Canvas Size to increase the size by .5 inch all around, and choosing white as the Canvas Extension Color at the bottom of the Canvas Size dialog box.



4) It is almost finished. Select the marquee tool and go to the options bar at the top and change the Feather amount to 50. Make the marquee selection of “marching ants” around the image in order to create a soft edge. Go to Select—Inverse to select the outer edge. Then go to Filter—Gaussian Blur. Then hit Delete (pc-Backspace).

Incidentally, PhotoShop CS3 has a neat feature at the top in the options bar called Refine Edge. After making a marquee selection and the Refine Edge box is checked, a dialog box appears where more edge refinement is possible. A preview checkbox is also available.

Also, the saturation can be enhanced, if desired, by going to the adjustment layers at the bottom of the Layers Palette and clicking on the black-and-white circle and choosing Hue/Saturation and moving the Saturation arrow to the right “to taste.”



5) The last thing to do is to add a pink stroke. Make a selection where you’d like a stroke, or line, to appear around the border. Double click the foreground color chip, move the cursor onto the image and choose a color from the image for the stroke. Go to Edit—Stroke and put in the number of pixels for the width of the stroke/line and hit OK. Voila, we’re done!



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