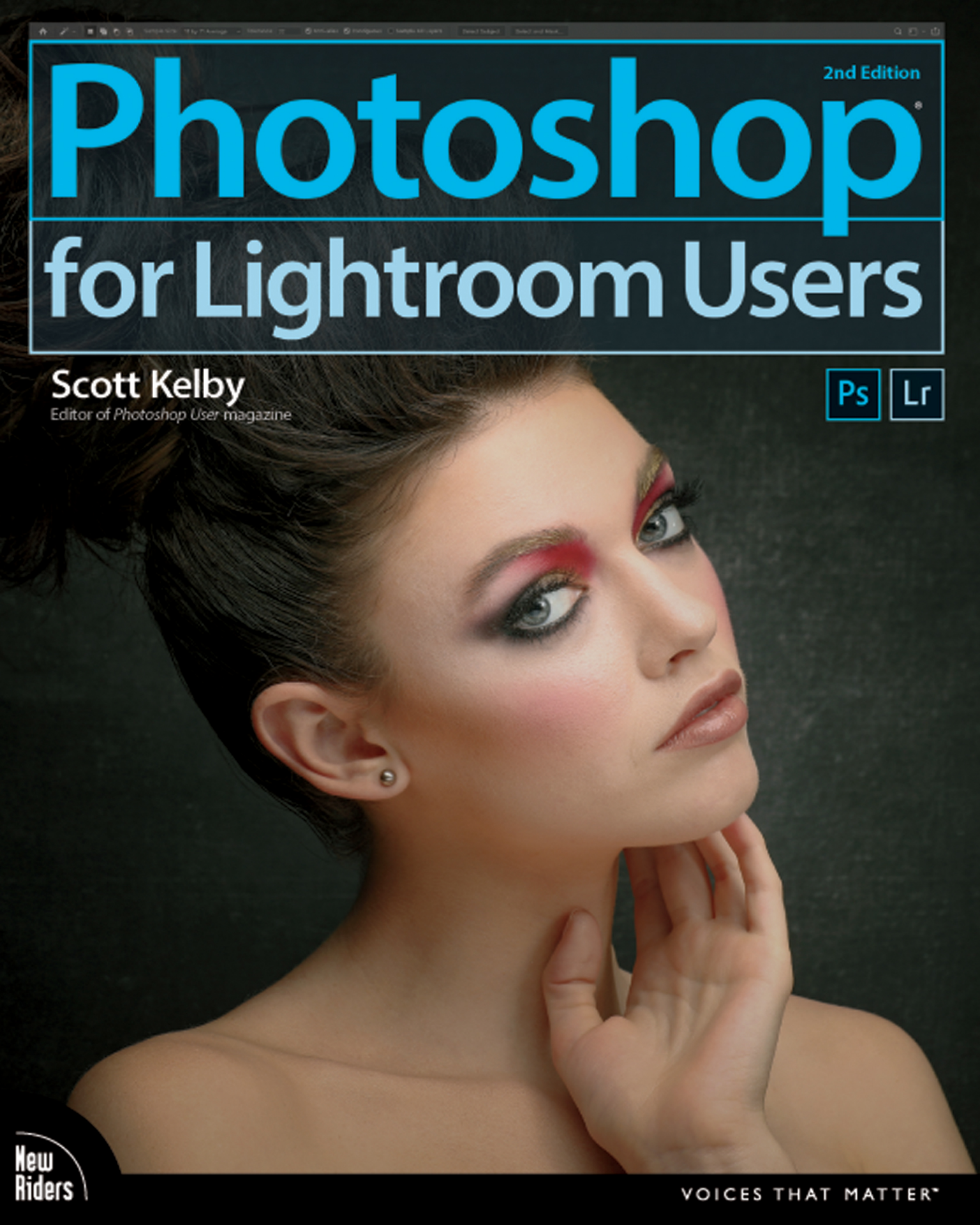
# Photoshop® for Lightroom Users

2nd Edition

Scott Kelby
Editor of *Photoshop User* magazine



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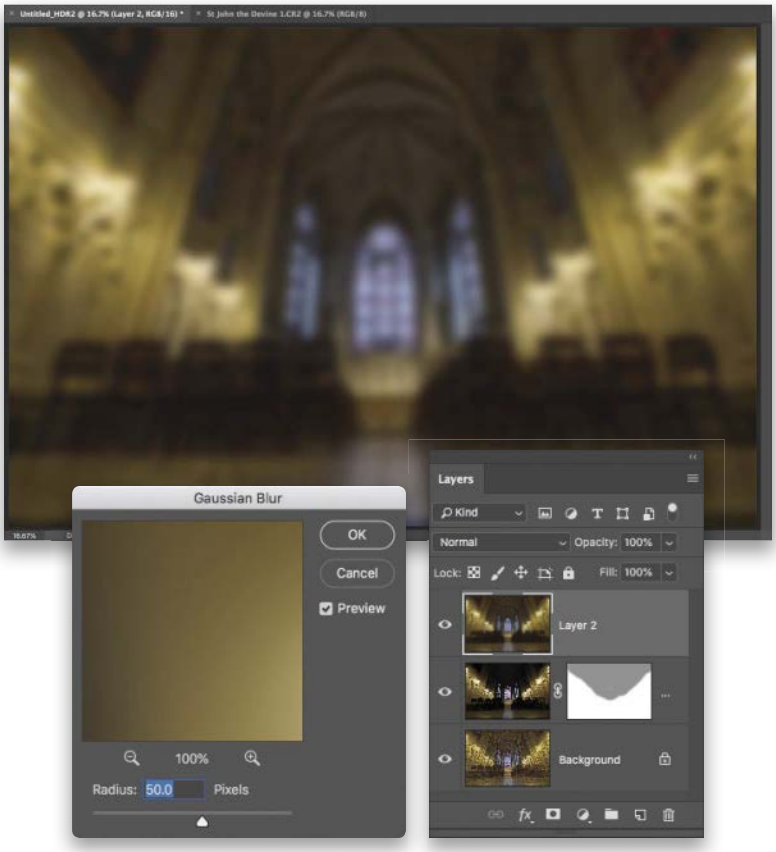
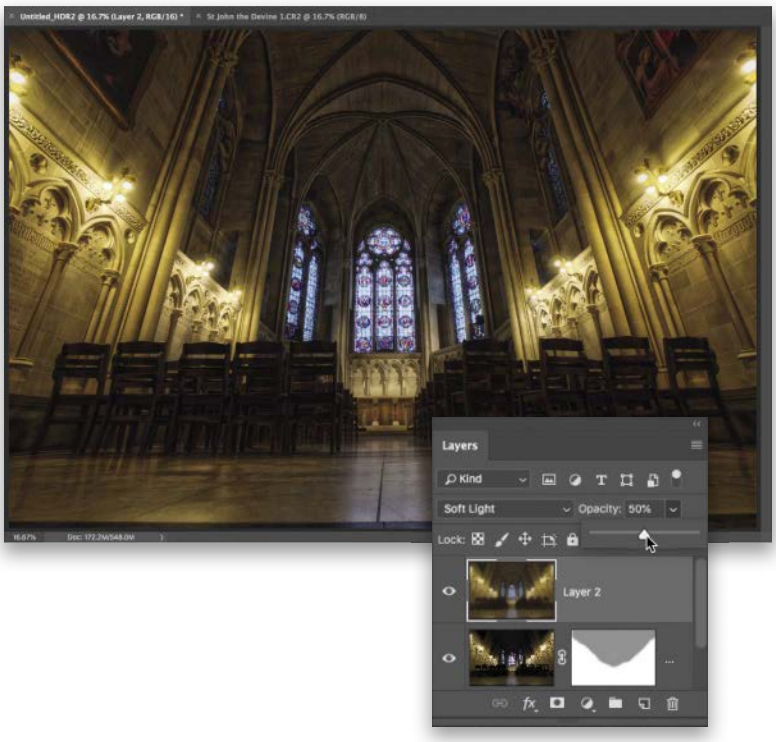
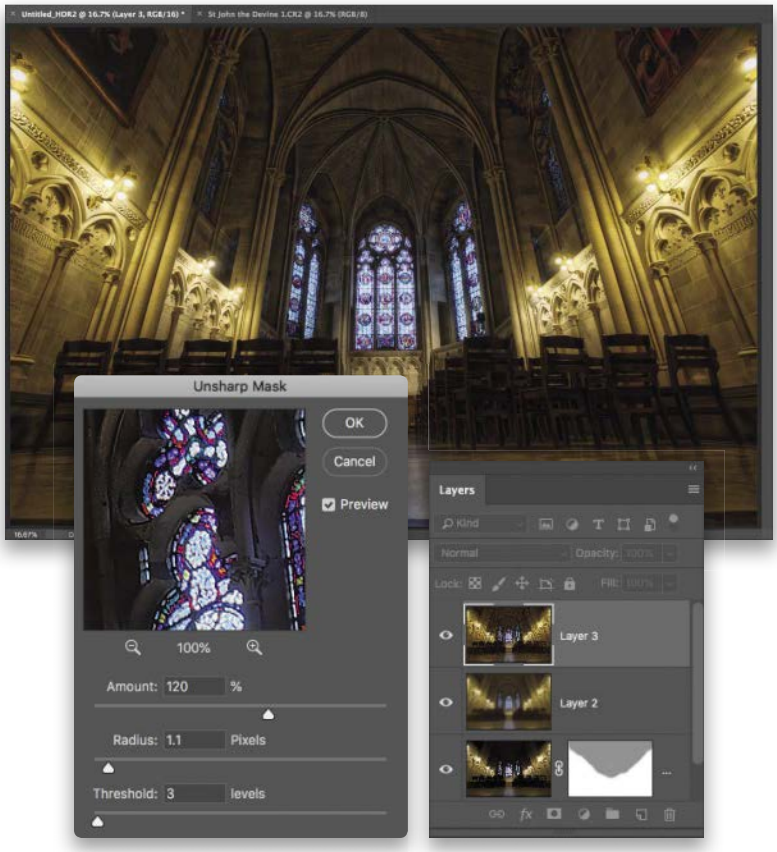



**STEP NINE:**
Now we're down to the finishing moves—some we'll do here, then we'll head back to Lightroom to finish it off. Start by creating what's called a "merged layer," which is a new layer on top of the layer stack that looks like you flattened the image, but you didn't (by the way, "flattening" means going to the Layers panel's flyout menu in the top right, by clicking on the little lines icon, and choosing **Flatten Image**, which flattens all the layers down so there are no more layers—just the Background layer). To create this merged layer, press **Command-Option-Shift-E (PC: Ctrl-Alt-Shift-E)**. Now, we're going to blur this layer to death (it's a figure of speech, and one we use for blurring or sharpening), and this will help us create a soft glow to our image, which takes off some of the edginess. To "blur this to death," go under the Filter menu, under Blur, and choose **Gaussian Blur**. When the Gaussian Blur dialog appears, enter 50 pixels (as seen here) and click OK.

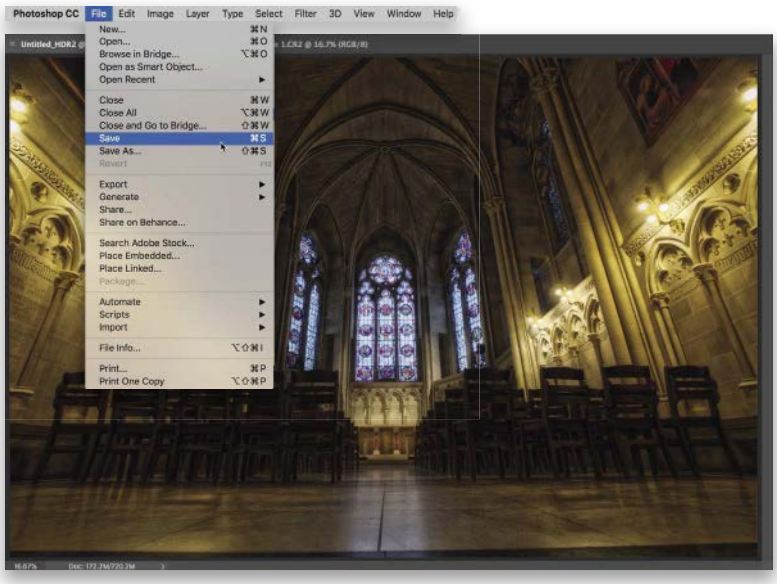



**STEP 10:**
To turn that massive blur into a glow, we do two things: (1) Near the top left of the Layers panel, click-and-hold where it says "Normal" and, from the pop-up menu that appears, change the layer blend mode to **Soft Light** (we looked at layer blend modes back in Chapter 1). This adds contrast and warmth to the image, but it also takes away a lot of the blur. Then, (2) near the top right of the Layers panel, lower the Opacity of this layer to around 50%, and now we have a nice, subtle, soft glow that helps keep the image from looking harsh.

**STEP 11:**
At this point, while I'm still in Photoshop, I apply some sharpening. You can either flatten the image now (again, getting rid of all the layers by going to the Layers panel's flyout menu at the top-right corner of the panel and choosing Flatten Image), or if you want to keep your layers intact (in case you change your mind later), then you can create another merged layer at the top of the layer stack (which is what I did here). Next, go under the Filter menu, under Sharpen, and choose **Unsharp Mask** (it sounds like it would make things blurry, but this filter is named after an old traditional darkroom technique they used to use to create sharpness). To add some nice, punchy sharpening, enter Amount: 120%, Radius: 1.1, Threshold: 3 (as seen here), and then click OK to sharpen the image.

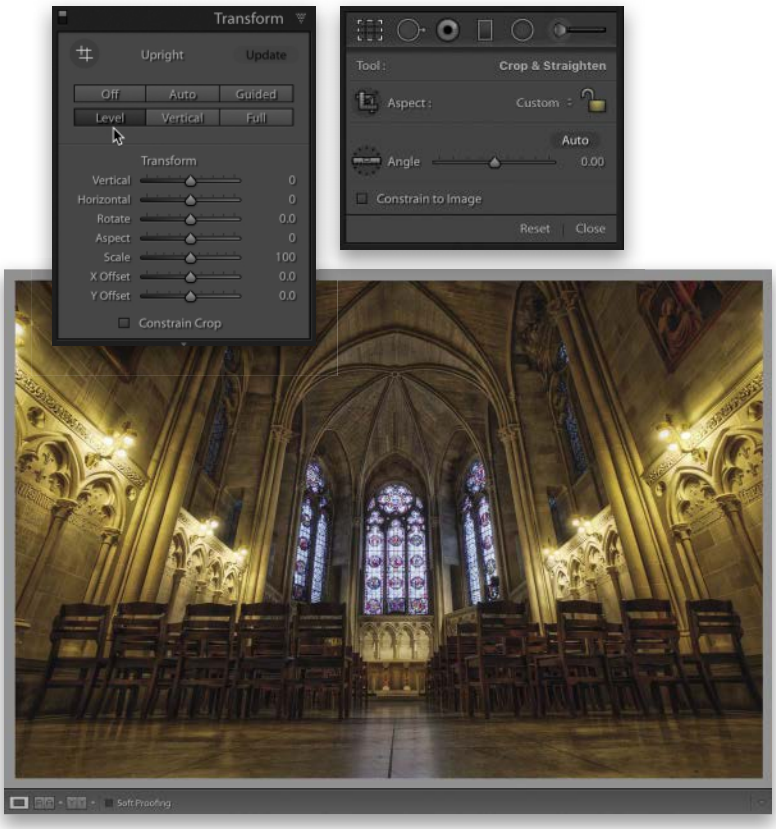



**STEP 12:**
We can do the rest of the finishing effects over in Lightroom, so let's save the document and close it to send it back to Lightroom (remember, that's all you have to do when you're done editing in Photoshop—and no, you do not have to flatten your image before sending it back to Lightroom. Just save and close. That's it).



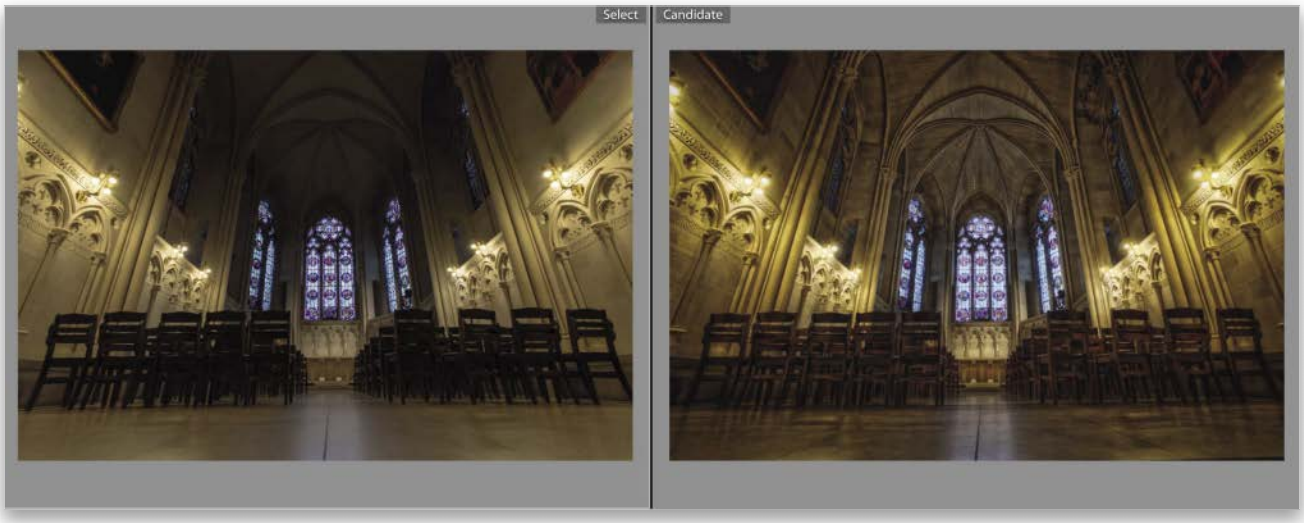

Continued


**STEP 13:**
With the image back in Lightroom, for this particular image, I think the ceiling could still be just a little bit brighter—maybe half a stop. To do that, in the Develop module, grab the Adjustment Brush **(K)** from the toolbox beneath the histogram, then double-click on the word Effect, near the top left of the panel, to zero out all the sliders. Next, drag the Exposure slider over to the right to around half a stop or so brighter (here, I dragged it over to 0.61, so just a little brighter than half a stop). Now, paint over some of the ceiling areas to bring them out a bit. I also ended up painting over the backs of the chairs—it seems like they could be a half stop brighter, too.




**STEP 14:**
You've probably noticed by now that our image was a little crooked, and at the bottom-right corner there was a line of tile out of place because of it. So, let's fix both of those. To straighten out the image, go to the Develop module's Transform panel and click the Level button to perform an auto-straighten. Then, grab the Crop Overlay tool **(R)**, from the toolbox beneath the histogram, and crop away anything left over that's showing in the bottom-right corner.

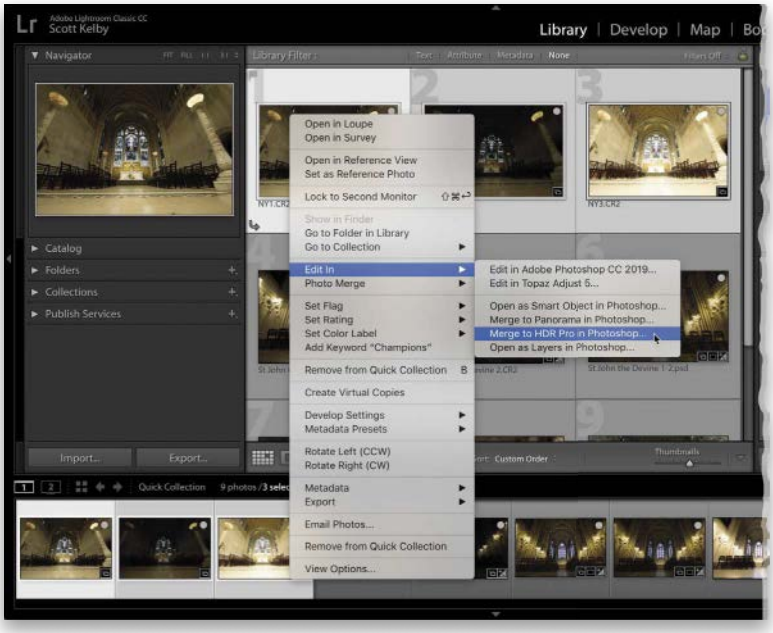
**STEP 15:**
Our final step is a finishing move I do to all HDR images, and that is to darken the outside edges all the way around—not just in the corners (like bad lens vignetting); I mean evenly around the outside edges. We do that by going to the Develop module's Effects panel and, under Post-Crop Vignetting, dragging the Amount slider to the left until the edges look darkened, but not making it look like an obvious vignette (here, I only dragged it to the left to –16. It's subtle, but it does make a difference—toggle the panel on/off, by clicking on the switch in the left side of the panel header, and you'll see what I mean).

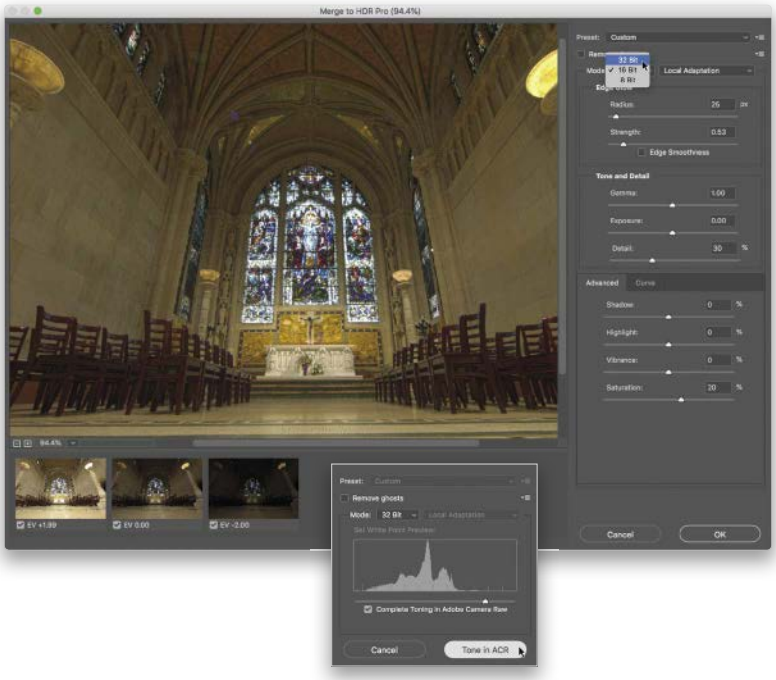

**STEP 16:**
This isn't really a step, but I wanted to show you a side-by-side comparison. That's Lightroom's built-in HDR feature on the left, with an Auto correction applied during the process. You can see that it looks pretty much like the original exposure. On the right is the same image processed with Photoshop's Merge to HDR Pro feature.

# TECHNIQUE FOR "SHARPER THAN LIGHTROOM" HDR IMAGES

There's kind of a hidden technique you can do in Photoshop (and it's incredibly easy) that creates a sharper and more color-accurate HDR image than Lightroom makes. You do this by creating a 32-bit super-high-quality HDR image, and the result is so sharp and crisp that you might not need to sharpen the image at all (and I sharpen every image, so for me to say that, the result must be really sharp).




**STEP ONE:**
In Lightroom, select your bracketed shots by Command-clicking (PC: Ctrl-clicking) on them (here, I've selected three bracketed shots). Once they're selected, go under the Photo menu, under Edit In, and choose **Merge to HDR Pro in Photoshop**, or Right-click on one of the selected images and choose it from the pop-up menu (as shown here), just like you would to create the tone-mapped HDR image you just learned in the previous project.




**STEP TWO:**
This launches Photoshop (if it's not already open), and brings up the Merge to HDR Pro dialog (shown here). At the top right, you'll see that the Mode pop-up menu is set to 16 Bit. Click-and-hold on that pop-up menu and choose **32 Bit** (as shown here). That will hide all the sliders and replace them with a histogram (seen in the inset below) and a slider (which we will ignore)—we don't want to make any changes here anyway because we're looking to make a realistic HDR image, not a tone-mapped effect look. When you choose 32 Bit, the OK button changes into Tone in ACR (and the ACR part is an acronym for Adobe Camera Raw). So, go ahead and click that button now.

**STEP THREE:**
This brings up Photoshop's Camera Raw window, so now you can edit the photo like you would in Lightroom's Develop module (it's the same sliders, in the same order, that do the same thing). Here, I fixed the white balance, increased the Exposure, added a little Contrast, pulled back the Highlights, adjusted the Shadows, Whites, and Blacks, added some Clarity to bring out the detail, and a little Vibrance to make it a little more colorful—pretty minor stuff. The major stuff I did with Camera Raw's Adjustment Brush **(K)**: I brightened the exposure on the ceiling by nearly a stop, I darkened the floor at the bottom of the frame by around a stop, I pulled back the highlights on the altar—generally, I just balanced out the light in the small cathedral so it looks more balanced overall. No sharpening at all, though. Now, click OK to open your image in Photoshop (it automatically down-samples it to 16 bit when it opens it in Photoshop).


*HDR processed in Lightroom*

*The sharper 32-bit HDR processed in Photoshop's Merge to HDR Pro*

**STEP FOUR:**
On the left is the same three bracketed frames merged together in Lightroom's built-in HDR feature, and I used the exact same toning as I did in the Photoshop image on the right. Look how much sharper and more detailed the image on the right is. It's like night and day, and I haven't even applied any sharpening. Look at the detail in the faces—on the left there is hardly any visible detail, and on the right there is. The color fidelity is better, as well. It's just a better-quality, more realistic HDR all the way around. So, when it really matters, jump over to Photoshop and compile that HDR image over there.