Photoshop Goodies
Phil Russell

There are three Screen Modes you can select from in Photoshop. They appear next to the bottom in Toolbar (Fig. 1.). Click the F key to move from Standard Screen Mode to Full Screen Mode with Menu Bar and to Full Screen Mode (without the menu bar showing. Try these the next time you open an image in Photoshop.
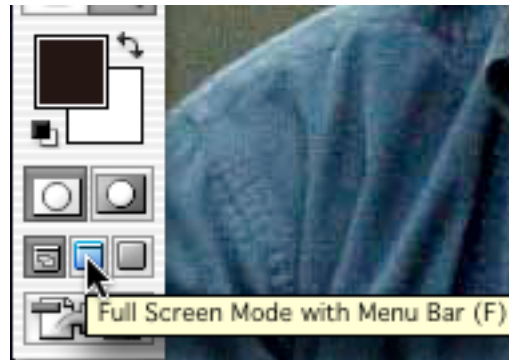
Fig. 1. Changing Screen Mode

Next, click the Tab key and watch the Palettes, Options Bar and Toolbar disappear. The Tab key is a toggle, so press it again to regain your palettes and bars. Press the Tab key again and your image dominates the screen. But how do you select tools now that the Toolbar is gone?

Remember the keyboard shortcuts! For example, B gets the Brush tool, M the Marquee, L the Lasso. Bet you can't tell me the key to press for Erase. Yes, it is the E key. Start memorizing the ones you use the most. You can always hit the Tab key and get them all back.

Still not satisfied? Need to scroll the image and the scroll bars are gone. Hit the Spacebar and you get the little hand. Now you can drag the image around.

Want to Zoom or unzoom? Command plus + or - zooms and unzooms.

To get back to the default Black and White as foreground and background colors, click D on the keyboard. The X key swaps the white up to foreground color and moves the Black to background. Clicking X again swaps the colors back to default (Fig. 2.).
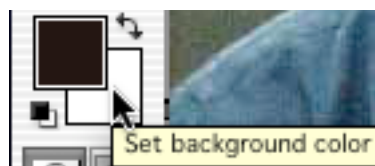
Fig. 2. Setting colors

Changing Brush sizes in Photoshop is done by using the right and left bracket keys ([ ]) Just to the right of the letter P on the keyboard.

Changing Brush opacity in Photoshop can be done from the slider which appears when you press B to get the Brush tool (Fig. 3).
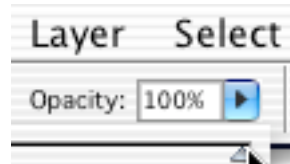

Fig. 3. Brush opacity slider

But a far easier way is to type the opacity. Click 5 and you get 50% opacity. Press 7 and you get 70%. If you use two figures, such as 25, type them quickly without a pause between and you get 25%. Press 0 to get 100% brush opacity (Fig. 4.).
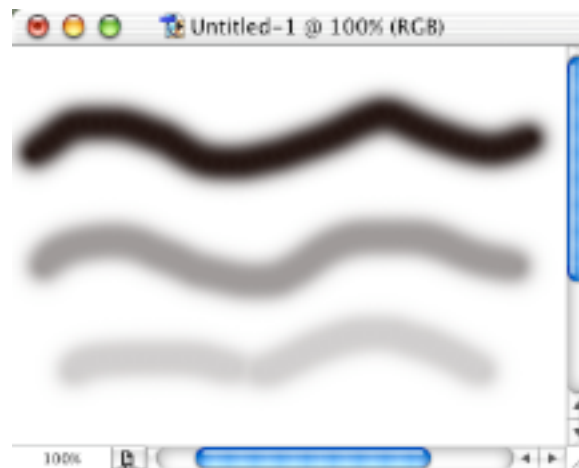

Fig. 4. 100, 50 and 25% opacities

Check out contextual menus in Photoshop. They often offer easy ways of doing things. Notice the several things you can do when you hold down the Control key over a selection in Fig. 5.
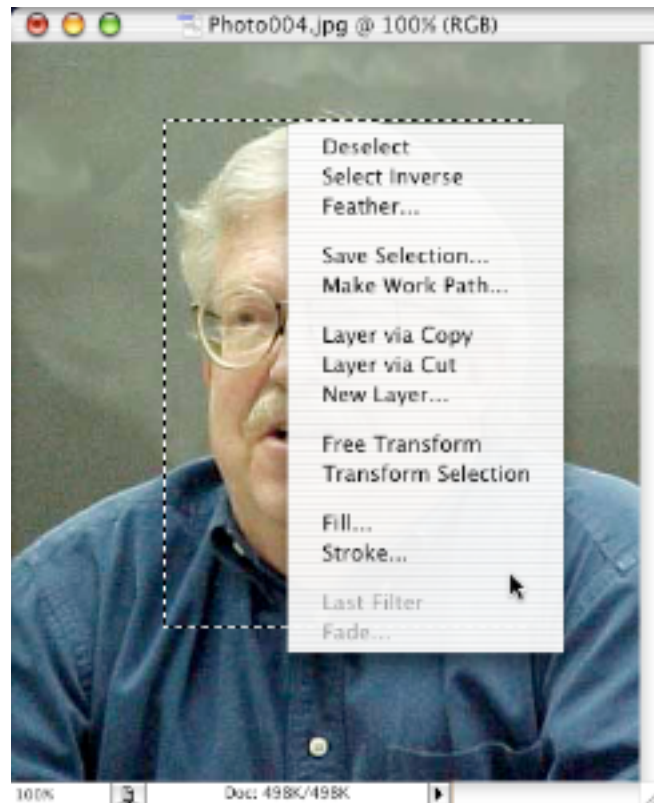
Fig. 5. Using Contextual menus

There are a lot of choices available to you in Photoshop when you select New... (Command + N) from the File menu (Fig. 6.). In addition to selecting the image size you want, you can make a Custom size which will be available the next time you click on the popdown Preset Sizes button.
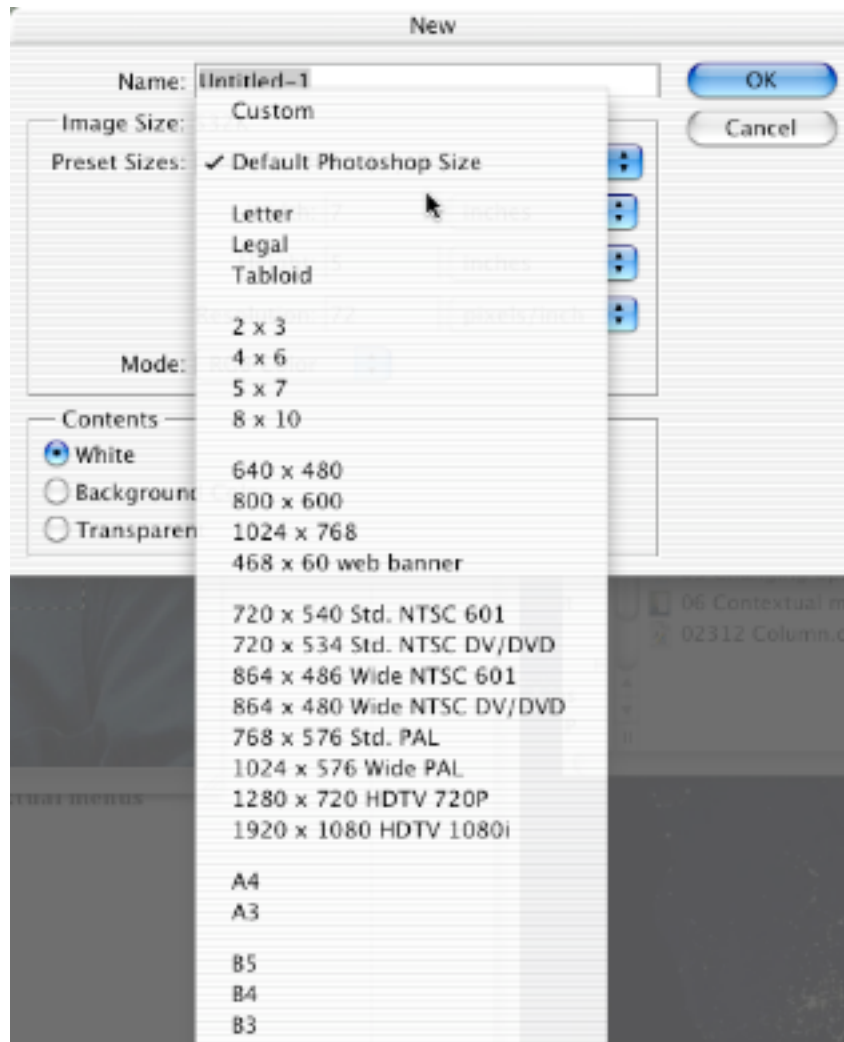
Fig. 6. New image size options

Picture package is a handy tool in Photoshop. Under the File menu, go to Automate and select Picture Package... (Fig. 7.).
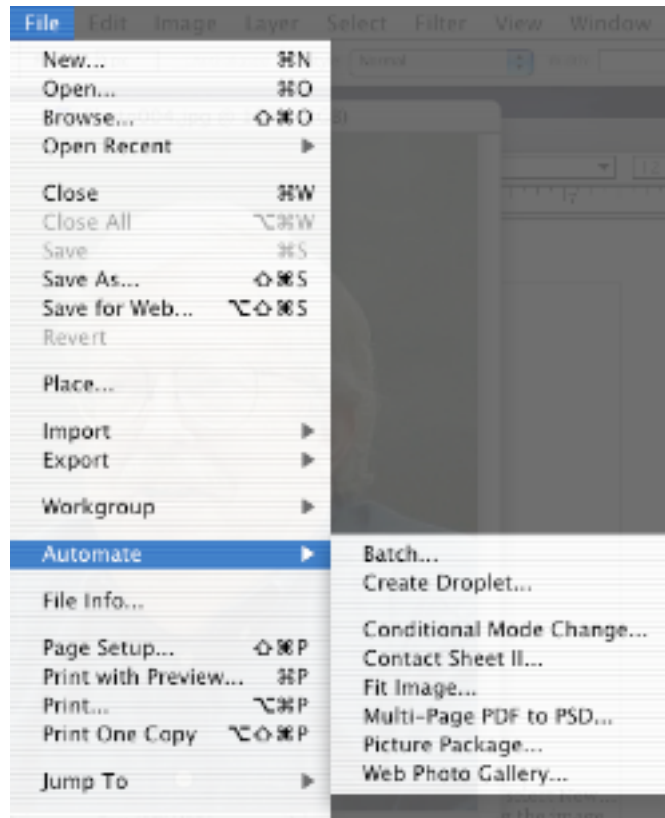
Fig. 7. Picture Package…

The first item of interest under Picture Package is Source. If you have images already open in Photoshop, the currently selected image is the Foremost Image, and will be used in Picture Package (Fig. 8.). But Source can use two other choices: File and Folder. File goes and gets whatever file you navigate to. Or if you have a folder of images, use Folder to navigate to it and select it. Using Folder means that Picture Package will make the same Picture Package of each file in the folder, using the same Layout for each one.
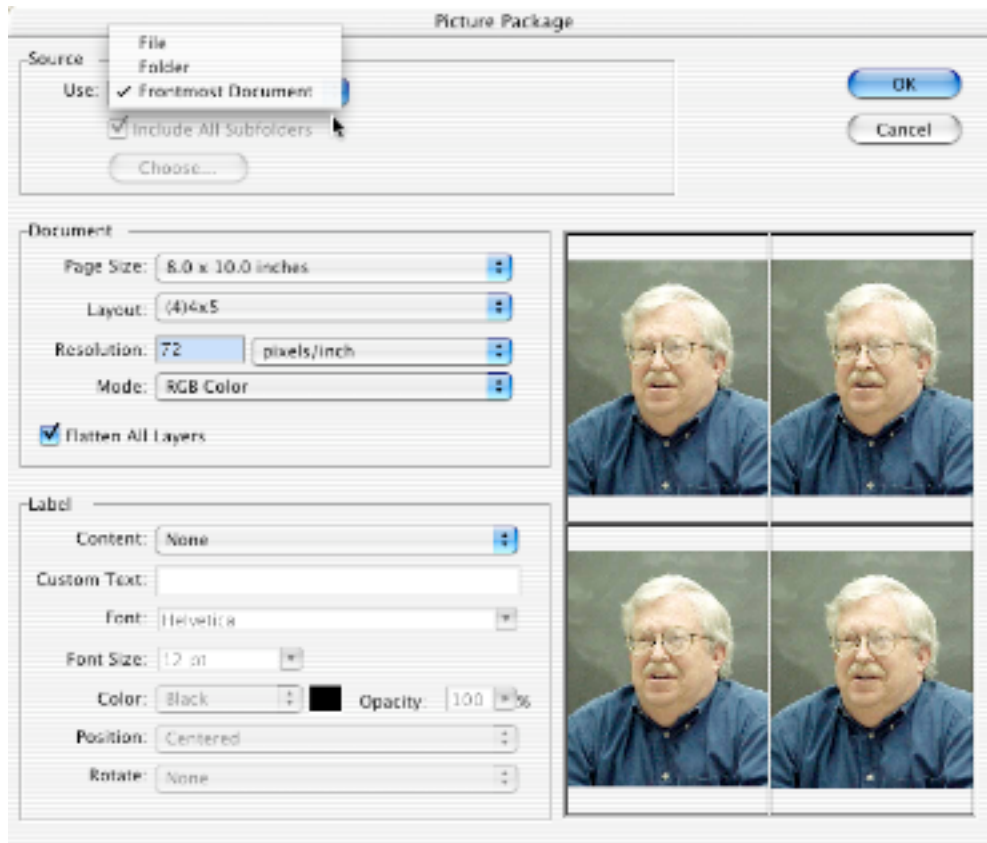
Fig. 8. Selecting a source

Use the Picture Package Layout popdown menu (Fig. 9.) to select a layout for your file, or folder full of files.
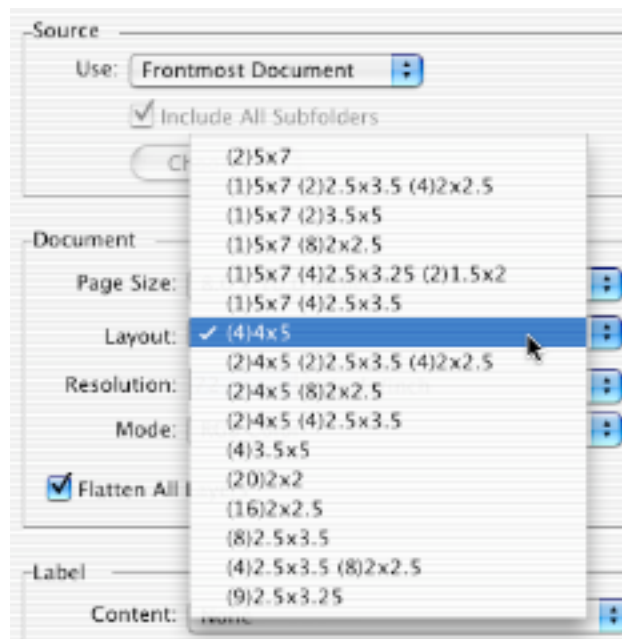

Fig. 9. Selecting a Layout

Look under the Label section in Fig. 8 and you see a Content popdown menu. Select Custom Text and you can have text appearing almost anywhere you like on the screen. I selected 18 point white Times and selected the Bottom Left corner, with 100% opacity and no rotation and got the result in Fig. 10.

Fig. 10. Custom Text

If you select Web Gallery in the File menu under Automate (Fig. 7.), Photoshop presents you with a variety of Template Styles which will create an index page of thumbnails with html code to take you to a full size image of each thumbnail (Fig. 11.).
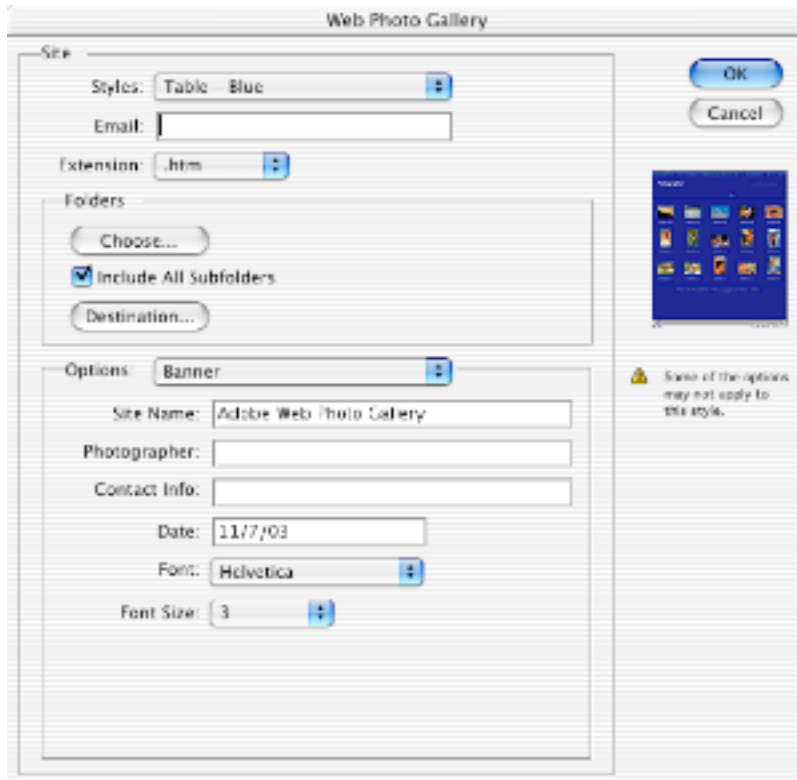
Fig. 11. Web Photo Gallery

After selecting a Style (I like plain old Simple for most galleries), you can select .html for Extension, choose a folder of images for the Gallery. Finally you can play with the various choices under Options. I often complete a Gallery using various changes in Resize Images, Border Size, Title Use and other variables to see which variables need to be changed.

Sometimes you get an image taken under really bad lighting conditions. The overall cast may be greenish or orange, for example. Here comes Photoshop to the rescue. If you do not want to go through Levels, Curves, and other Adjustments, instead go to Image menu, Adjustments and select Auto Color (Command + Shift + B) (Fig. 12.). You will be surprised at how well Auto Color fixes your image.
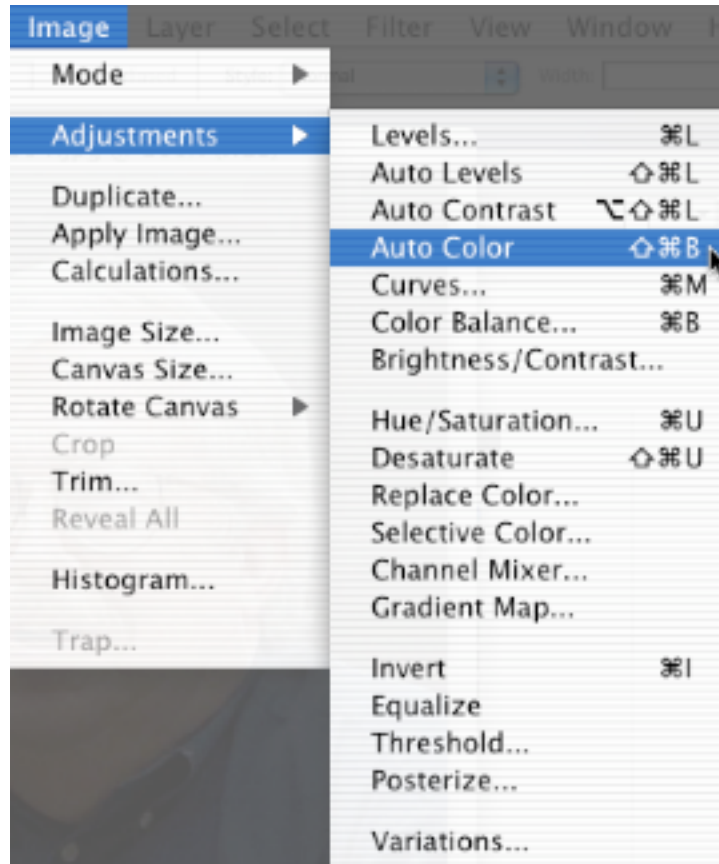
Fig. 12. Using Auto Color

What if you have too many open images? Go to Window menu, select Documents and you have a choice to Cascade or Tile the open images (Fig. 13.). Cascade lines the pictures up overlapped in the smallest space. Tile buts the pictures against each other forming a display of all your images at once. This is so handy when you want to look at a half dozen portraits and select the best one.
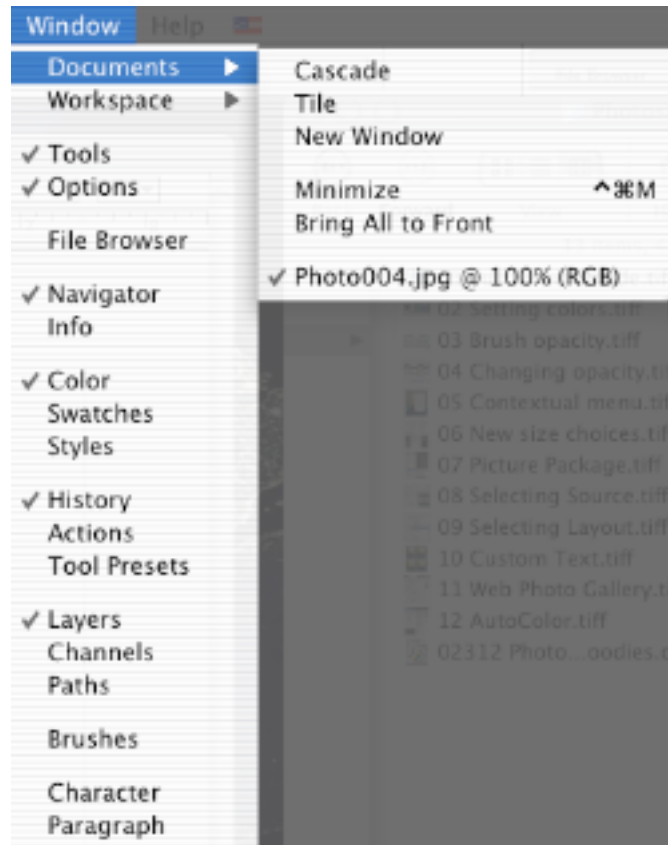
Fig. 13. Cascade or Tile

Too many (or too few) palettes showing can be a problem. But you can have sets of palette arrangements to choose from. Arrange the palettes you use in a certain situation. Go to Window menu, and under Workspace, select Save Workspace... Name it. Now that arrangements of palettes is available under the Workspace sub-menu. You can see a workspace I have saved as Phil's Workspace 1 (Fig. 14.).
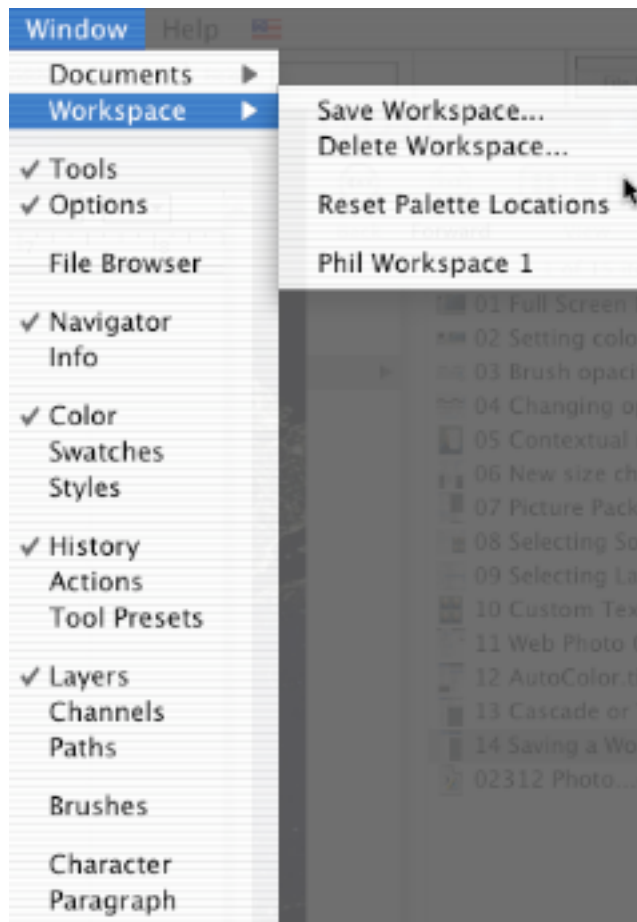
Fig. 14. Saving a Workspace