

# Book Review: Photoshop 7 Wow! Book

by Matt LaRusso



Photoshop is an application that when used proficiently, can leave little evidence of having touched an image. It also has a tremendous amount of *wow* potential. The “Photoshop 7 Wow! Book” (soft cover, 471 pages plus CD, Peachpit Press.) by Photoshop-guru Jack Davis is a guide to the less-subtle things you can do with this powerful image editor.

The Wow! series of books is known for its colorful visuals and detailed instructions, and this version is no exception. The book is printed in color throughout, a must for any image-editing manual.

Among the most helpful images in the book are examples of the effects and filters as applied to images. This gallery of effects, before and after, is an excellent at-a-glance look when one is stymied by the endless possibilities of styles and filter effects.

While on some levels this book is much more engaging and useful than Photoshop’s own user manual, the biggest bonus is the inclusion of a CD packed with sample files used in the book as well as hundreds of actions effects, and filters. The CD, like the book, is compatible with both Macintosh and Windows versions of Photoshop, and installation of the add-ons is as simple as putting it in the proper location in the Photoshop application file. Some of the files on the CD are required to get the effects shown in the book, others are just great time-savers. The most difficult thing about them is finding the time to try them all!

There are techniques introduced in the book such as the Layer Style techniques and the Wow! Media Painting that are sure to make any Photoshop user rethink the possibilities of what they can do and how they can do it.

Previous versions of this book have sold quite well and won awards, and the series is familiar to many designers and photo retouchers. Personally, I had last purchased this book when Photoshop was at version 4, and had been consulting it quite frequently, even after Photoshop 4 was nothing more than a snapshot of a memory, faded from time (and with a heavy Gaussian Blur filter applied.)

Although many of the old trusted-and-true effects remain in each new version of the book, the latest version is completely updated to take advantages of the time-saving techniques and advanced way of working in Adobe Photoshop 7. There is a some redundancy with techniques shown in the “Photoshop 6 Wow! Book,” but for anyone serious about pushing pixels with Photoshop 7, it is worth picking up.

There are other manuals available for specific areas such as color correction, digital camera techniques, or portrait retouching, but for pure wow visual effects, this book is the champion. This book is great for the novice to advanced user, but may be a little overwhelming for the absolute beginner. However, there are plenty of easy-to-follow examples which allow anyone to create the “wow” effects through the book.

MACNJ members, remember; user group members get an additional 20% off already discounted Peachpit Press titles when shopping online at their website. See the “Member Benefits” section on *page 7* for full details.

## Photoshop SIG Ready for Return

The Photoshop Special Interest Group is ready to resume meetings as the summer draws to a close. The new season of SIG meetings will be held on Thursday nights from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM at Voorhees High School in room 245.

The tentative meeting dates for the remainder of 2003 are as follows:

**September 18<sup>th</sup>**  
**October 16<sup>th</sup>**  
**November 13<sup>th</sup>**  
**December 18<sup>th</sup>**

Please note that these dates are the Thursday *after* the monthly MACNJ meetings, but they are not necessarily the second Thursday of each month (which jumped before and after the Saturday meetings) as they were over the last year of meetings.

PSIG members should look for an e-mail with updated meeting information as September approaches. Additionally, meeting information will be posted on the Photoshop SIG section of the MACNJ website.