



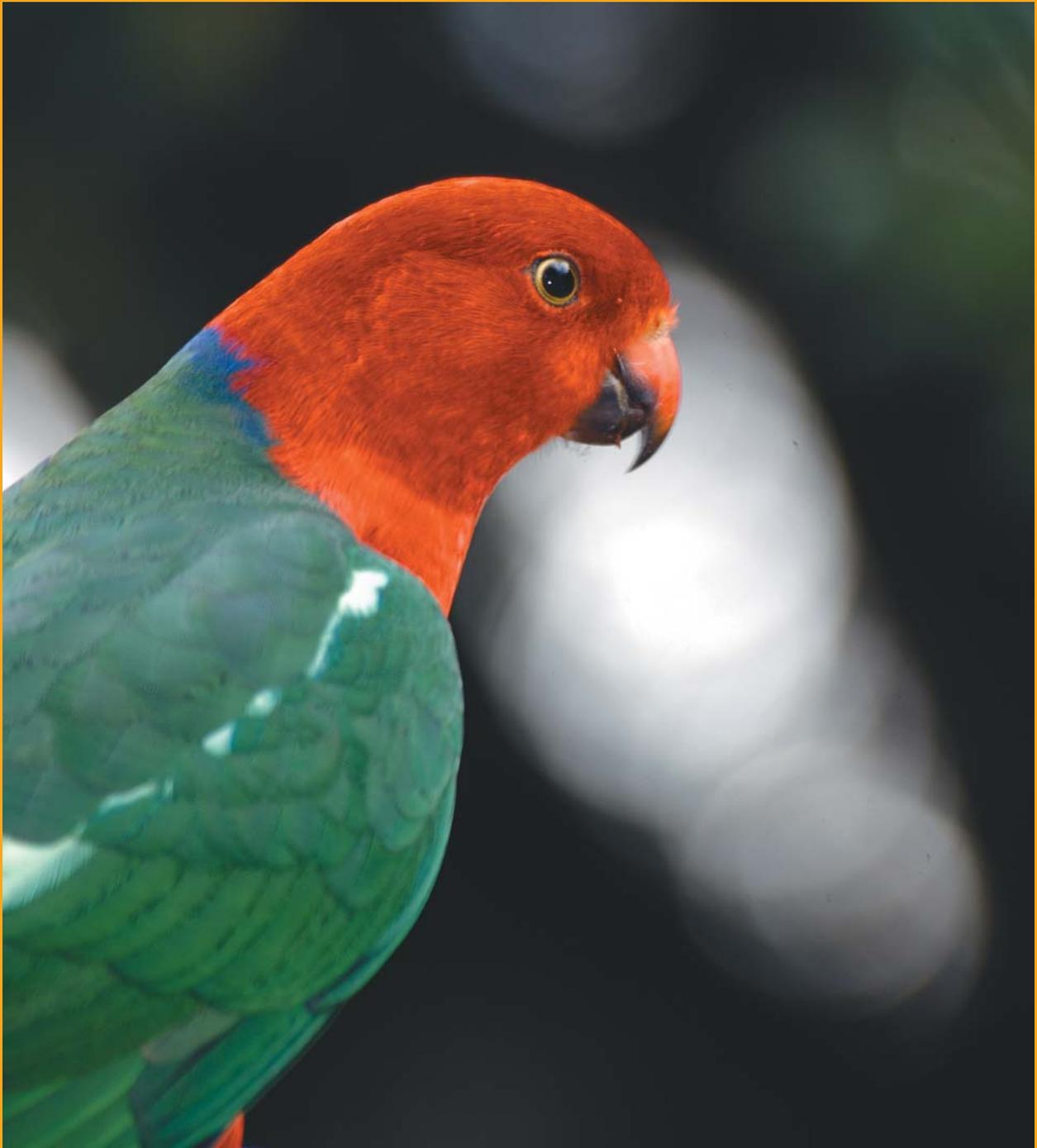
PART ONE

What a Little Layer Can Do

Ready to get started? In the first section of the show, I'll show you nifty techniques that you can use in countless ways. You'll soon see, though, that a theme runs through the projects: use layers.

Whether you're bringing out the detail in a photograph or creating motion, layers give you flexibility, so that you can feel free to let your creativity run wild without permanently changing your image. We'll use other features, too, and give you some super-user tricks to go along with it all.

If you stick with me, you'll learn how to find the detail that's hiding in channels, convert a color image to a striking black-and-white version, merge two photos seamlessly, shave the stubble off your subject's face, create the illusion of motion, customize stock photography, and give a surfer his appropriate background. Now, doesn't that all sound like fun?



CHAPTER 1

Pinfeathers

TRY IT AT HOME: Pinfeathers.psd

SIT BACK AND WATCH: PinFeathers.mov

Welcome, my fine-feathered friends. I'm going to show you how to reveal more detail in an oversaturated photo than you even knew you had. Yes, that's right. With some photos, you can capture detail that is hidden in the depths of your image. The trick is in working with the channels.



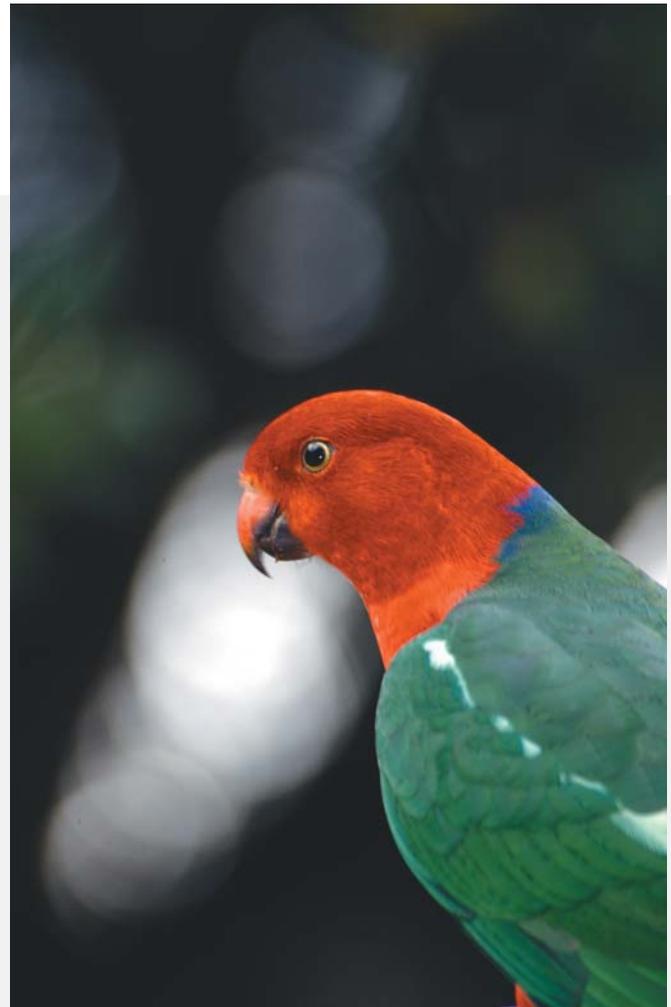
Take a look at this image, which I photographed with a digital camera. It's not a bad photo, but the red is oversaturated, so I'm not getting quite the look I want ❶.

Using the technique I'm about to show you, I can increase the detail in the red feathers, so that the parrot looks like this ❷.

Amazing, isn't it? Let's get started. You can work along with me, using the Pinfeathers.psd file on the CD included with this book, or if you'd rather watch me do it, open the movie file PinFeathers.mov.



❶



❷

Evaluate Your Channels

Let's zoom in so we can focus on the bird's head. This photograph is an RGB image, so it contains a red channel, a green channel, and a blue channel. You can see each of these channels using the Channels palette.

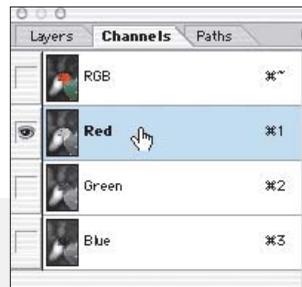
Select the Channels tab to open the Channels palette ❶.



❶ Use the Channels palette to view only the red, green, or blue channel in an image.

Select the red channel. Each channel appears in grayscale. Do you see any additional information in the red channel that might bring out more detail in the red feathers? No, this channel isn't going to help us ❷.

Select the blue channel ❸. Can anything here help us? No, it's too dark. Let's move on.



❷ The red channel appears in grayscale, but it doesn't contain any additional detail.



❸ The blue channel is too dark to give us the detail we're looking for.



❹ Aha! There is detail lurking in the green channel.

Finally, let's select the green channel ❹. There's the information we are looking for!

We want to apply the detail we've found in the green channel to the red channel so that we can add more detail to this image overall.

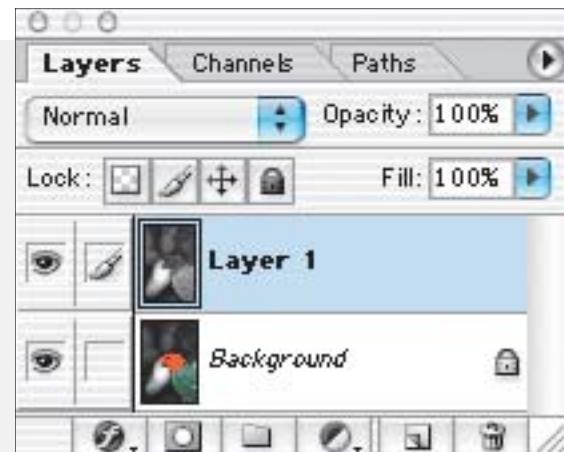
Copy the Channel to a New Layer

First, we'll copy all the content in the green channel. With the green channel targeted, choose **Select > All**. Then, choose **Edit > Copy**.

Now, we want to paste that information into a new layer. Select the **Layers** tab to return to the **Layers** palette. Target the image by selecting the **Background** layer. We see all three channels again—the full RGB image. With the **Background** layer still selected, choose **Edit > Paste**.

Notice that a new layer, named **Layer 1**, appears in the **Layers** palette **1**. What have we done? We've pasted a grayscale copy of the green channel (**Layer 1**) on top of our background image, which was full color. The grayscale image is obscuring the color image.

WHOA! Make sure that your original image is targeted in the **Layers** palette before you copy the channel. If the original image isn't targeted, you won't copy anything into the clipboard!



1 Photoshop creates a new layer to contain the information you copied from the channel.

Apply a Blending Mode

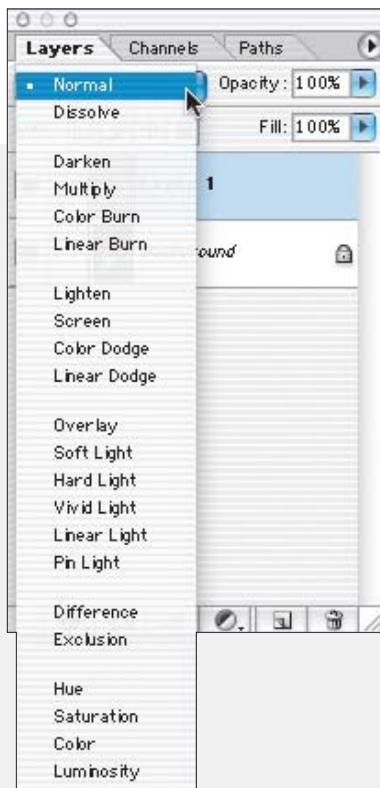
Now, obviously, if we've gone to all this trouble, we want to be able to see the detail in this image—and we'd like the image to be in color. Somehow, we have to blend the images together.

Here's the trick. We are going to apply a blending mode to Layer 1 **1**. A layer's blending mode determines how its pixels blend with the pixels beneath it in the image. Right now, the blending

mode is Normal, so we're not seeing the background image at all. We want to find the blending mode that combines the layers in a way we like.

Make sure Layer 1 is targeted in the Layers palette. Then let's start by choosing a different blending mode. I'm going to start at the bottom of the list, with Luminosity **2**.

That's interesting. We've got our color back, and a fair amount of detail. We could stop here. But instead, let's see what our other options are.



1



2

If we use the minus sign key, we see Luminosity again. And then Saturation, Hue, Exclusion, Difference, and so on. Some of these are fairly odd. Take a look at Pin Light. Look at the detail coming back into that region. I think Pin Light is our best bet. It seems to be a little strong, but we can tone it down a little bit in a moment. The Pin Light blending mode is blending the grayscale values with the RGB image.

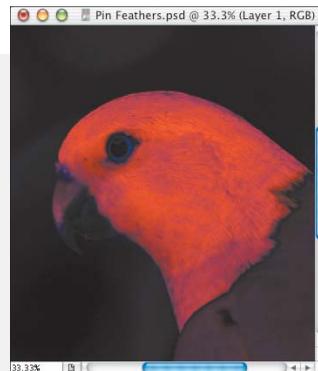
SUPER USER TIP Here's a super-user tip for you. To run through the blending modes quickly, use this keyboard shortcut: Select the Move tool in the Toolbox. Then, hold down the Shift key while you press the plus sign (+) or minus sign (-) key on your keyboard. The plus sign key moves through the list from top to bottom. The minus sign key moves through the list from the bottom up.



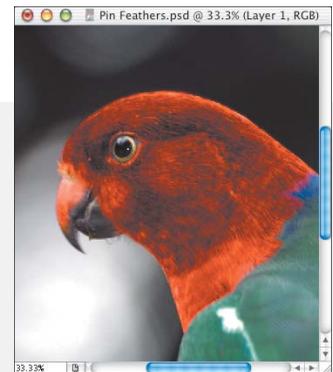
SATURATION



EXCLUSION



DIFFERENCE



PIN LIGHT

The image changes as you apply different blending modes. Try each one to see which one gives you the effect you want.

Blending for Effect

When you use more than one layer in Photoshop, the pixels in the top layer either override or interact with the pixels in the layers beneath it. The Normal blending mode, which is the default, hides the pixels beneath the top layer unless the layer is partially or fully transparent. Each of the other blending modes let you control the way pixels in the layers interact with each other.

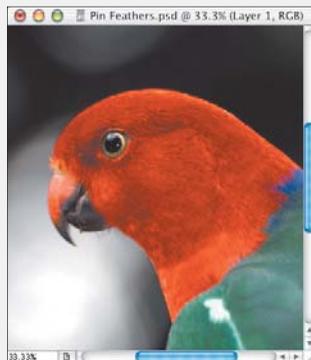
It's often a good idea to apply each blending mode to see which gives you the effect you're looking for. But your search will go more quickly if you understand a little about what each mode does. Use these descriptions as a starting point, but experiment on your own images to get a feel for the effect of each mode. (In the following, the underlying colors are the *base color*, and the color in the top layer is the *blend color*.)

- ▶ **DISSOLVE:** Randomly replaces pixels with either the blend color or the base color, depending on the opacity of each pixel. The top layer appears to dissolve into the underlying layers.
- ▼ **DARKEN:** Replaces pixels in the base color with those in the blend color wherever the pixels in the blend color are darker. The resulting color is always darker than the original.
- ▶ **LIGHTEN:** Replaces pixels in the base color with those in the blend color wherever the pixels in the blend color are lighter. The resulting color is always lighter than the original.
- ▶ **MULTIPLY:** Multiplies the base color by the blend color. The resulting color is always darker than the original.
- ▶ **SCREEN:** Multiplies the inverse of the base and blend colors. The resulting color is always lighter than the original.
- ▼ **COLOR BURN:** Darkens the base color to reflect the blend color by increasing the contrast.
- ▶ **COLOR DODGE:** Brightens the base color to reflect the blend color by decreasing the contrast.
- ▶ **SOFT LIGHT:** Darkens or lightens the colors, using the blend color as if it were a diffused spotlight shining on the image.
- ▶ **HARD LIGHT:** Multiplies or screens the colors, using the blend color as if it were a harsh spotlight shining on the image.
- ▼ **PIN LIGHT:** If the blend color is lighter than 50 percent gray, pixels darker than the blend color are replaced. If the blend color is darker than 50 percent gray, pixels lighter than the blend color are replaced.
- ▶ **DIFFERENCE:** Subtracts the blend or base color from the other, depending on which one is brighter.
- ▶ **HUE:** Replaces only the hue with that of the blend color, but retains the luminance and saturation values of the base color.
- ▶ **SATURATION:** Replaces only the saturation of the base color with that of the blend color.
- ▼ **COLOR:** Replaces both the hue and saturation of the base color with those of the blend color.
- ▶ **LUMINOSITY:** Replaces only the luminance of the base color with that of the blend color.



Adjust the Opacity

Okay, we said we wanted to tone this down just a bit, because the Pin Light blending mode has made the red feathers a little too dark. We'll take care of that by adjusting the opacity of this top layer. Next to the blending mode pop-up menu in the Layers palette is the Opacity pop-up menu. When you click the arrow next to the opacity percentage, a slider appears. Drag that slider down until you get the image you want. I think it looks right at just about 62% ❶. The red is vibrant, and the detail gives the image depth and texture.



❶

The combination of the Pin Light blending mode and an opacity adjustment gives us the perfect blend.

Let's zoom back out so we can see the whole image ❷.

WHOA! If the effect is too extreme in some areas of your image, use a layer mask to hide the unwanted changes in isolated areas.



❷

All the changes we made are applied to a layer, so the original image is unharmed. If we hide Layer 1, the image looks just like it did when we started ❸.

CLICK THE EYE TO HIDE THE LAYER



❸ *We made changes to a layer, not to the original image. To return to the original image, just hide the new layer.*



Remember to check the channels if you ever need to add more detail to a particular area in a photograph—especially if the colors are oversaturated.

We should have guessed from the beginning that we'd use the Pin Light blending mode. Why? Because these are pinfeathers, of course!

OR TRY THIS: You could use the same technique to enhance overexposed or blown-out images. Duplicate the channels the same way we did here, but try using the Multiply blending mode to increase the density of the layer.

