

Now that you are comfortable drawing with the mouse, let's try the *Magnetic Lasso Tool*. You will click and then release the mouse button, dragging the mouse close to the edge that you want selected. The tool will follow this edge like a magnet, but it will miss in places. This is normal and we will go back and touch up those areas.

Open the *mustang65Orig.jpg* file and select the magnetic lasso tool (see below).



Set your *feather* to 0 pixels, the *width* to 10 pixels, the *edge contrast* to 10%, and a *frequency* setting of 50. The feather you are already familiar with, the width determines the distance that the tool will work within. Since we have set it for 10 pixels you will want to stay fairly close to the edge of the car. The edge contrast is set for 10%, meaning the tool will have a contrast tolerance of 10% to determine where to put the selection. The frequency is set for 50. The tool will place points along this selection at this space, once a point is placed you can not adjust the selection. However, we will be going back and touching up once the selection is complete.

Let's begin by selecting the *magnetic lasso* tool, then press the *tab* key to eliminate all the extra pallet windows. Now click and release the mouse button where the passenger tire meets the floor. Drag the mouse (without the button down) around the edge of the car (screen 21). Follow the entire contour of the Mustang, you will need to use the space bar to move within the image. Once you get all the way around and back to your starting point, just click the mouse

and the entire car will be selected (screen 22). You will notice the computer had some difficulties following the edge perfectly. This is usually because there is not quite enough contrast or difference in color for the tool to recognize. This will not be a problem because we will go in and make adjustments to the selected area.

The tool did do a *better* job than we could have done using the freehand lasso, so for that it was much more helpful. Now zoom in on the image to 200% to allow

yourself a better view for the fine adjustments that we will need to make. This edge should be as perfect as possible.



▲ Screen 21

HINT:

Remember to use the *tab* key to close your pallets. With this tool you will not be able to use the *tab* key once you start drawing (It is a bug in the program).

If your drawing starts to go bad and you cannot control it, simply double click the mouse and begin again.



▲ Screen 22

So now, that you have zoomed in on your picture, it will be easier for you to adjust the selection to make it as perfect as possible. First make sure your pallets are visible, press the *tab* key to make them appear. We want to select the *regular lasso* tool and have the feather set at 0 pixels.

To start with, we will be working on all of the areas that fell short of the car. These we will need to *add* to the selection. With the *lasso* selected, hold down the *shift* key and click and drag precisely around the portion that needs to be added (*screen 23*). When you release the mouse button, you will see that this has now been added to your selection, perfect! Again, the key here is precision, we want this edge perfect. When you are adding portions, do a small bit at a time. Kind of tease it along. If the new portion is not exactly what you wanted, simply press *command z*. This is the *undo* command. Now, just go back and draw your new addition to the selection.

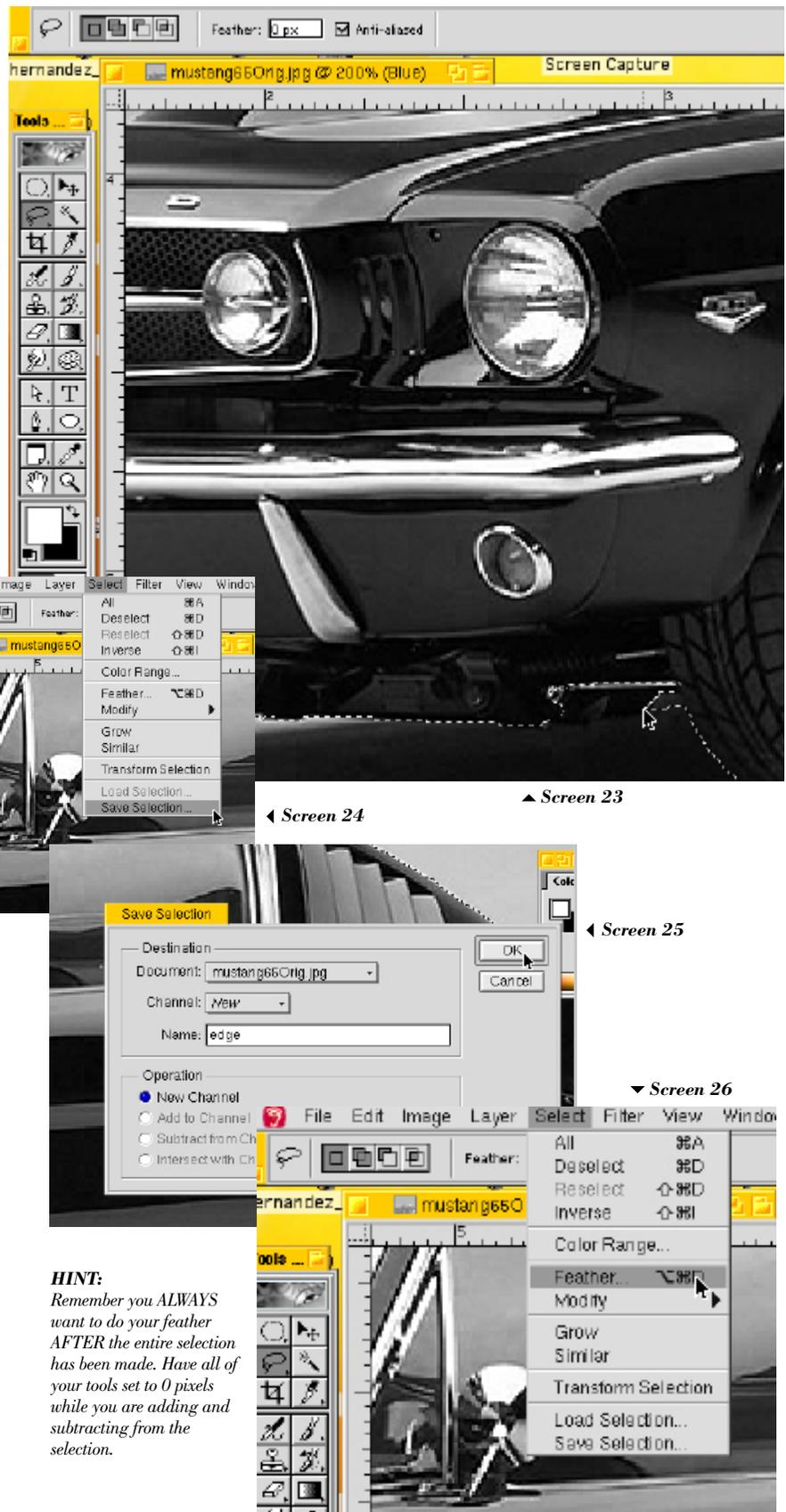
The *undo* command is designed to be quick and simple. When you are creating an image, you are constantly using trial and error. Simply by repeating this command again, and again, you will see a before and after comparison. Always remember *command z* for *undo*. Repeat the command and the change comes back. Build speed as you go, you can always undo the change. A good designer always has a full wastebasket. If you are not making mistakes, you are not trying hard enough.

Once you have made all of the “*additions*” to your selection, you then need to make the “*subtractions*”. To do this, keep the *lasso* selected and press the *option* key. Now, go around and *subtract* all of these areas of the selection. Your selection is complete, let’s save it.

To do this, go under the *Select* pull down menu and choose “*save selection*” (*screen 24*). A new window will pop up, name the selection “*edge*”. Make sure the new channel button is chosen, and press *OK* (*screen 25*). Now, let’s load this selection. Go to the *Select* menu and choose “*load selection*,” and select the *edge*.

You can have as many selections saved as you want, and load them whenever you need that selection. Name them something that you know exactly what they select, like *edge* or *window*, etc.

Now we want to feather the entire selection. Choose *feather* from the *Select* menu (*screen 26*).

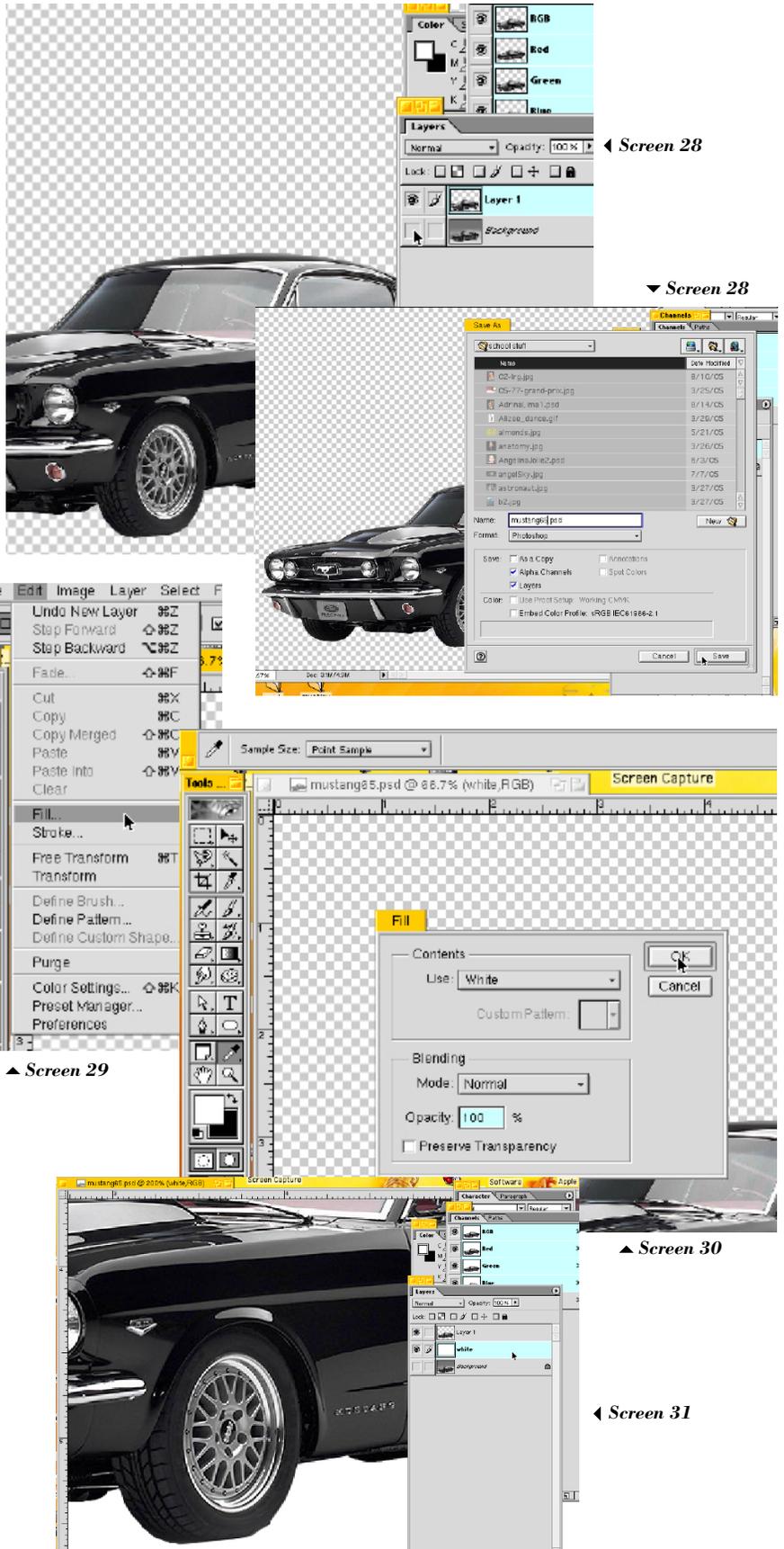


Do you know why we did our feather at the end? If we had the tools set for a feather of 1 pixel, we would have been feathering each time we used the tool. This would have deteriorated the nice precise edge that we needed. So, *whenever* you are adding to selections, have your tool feather at 0 pixels. And apply any feathering after the selection is completed.

Let's feather the edge of the mustang selection 1 pixel. Then, copy this portion, *command c*. Now paste, *command v*. Your selected area is pasted on a new layer exactly over the one below (*screen 28*). Click the eyeball to shut off the background layer. Notice the checkered board pattern, this indicates transparency. Save your file. Name it *mustang65.psd* (*screen 29*). Remember, by saving it as a photoshop file, you will allow the layers to stay intact.

We want to check closely on our edge, so let's make a new layer. Click on the small arrow in the top right portion of the layer pallet, just like you did in the previous lesson. Name this layer *white*. Go to the *Edit* pull down menu and select *Fill* (*screen 29*). A new window will pop up (*screen 30*), notice you have many options here. We will explore these options in more detail a little later on. Have white selected under the *contents* section. Under the *Blending* section, have the *mode* set for normal and the *opacity* at 100%. Click *OK*.

OMG a whiteout!!...lol. Just as you commanded it, the computer filled the entire layer with white. This is a separate layer, so we can put this layer between the background and and your car layer. Now you have a solid color to check your edge against. Inspect it closely. Mine was good, but a little rough around the tires (*screen 31*). This will be okay, how did your's come out. If you are not happy with it, simply reload the *edge* selection to the background layer. Throw out your old car layer and shut off the white layer. Make what ever adjustments are needed to your *edge* selection and save the new selection. Copy and paste it to a new layer, Do this until you are very happy with it. The tires will be difficult to get perfect, you can leave them a little rough like mine. You may save and close this window. We will be using this image latter on as artwork for a billboard and several advertisements.



◀ Screen 28

▼ Screen 28

▲ Screen 29

▲ Screen 30

◀ Screen 31

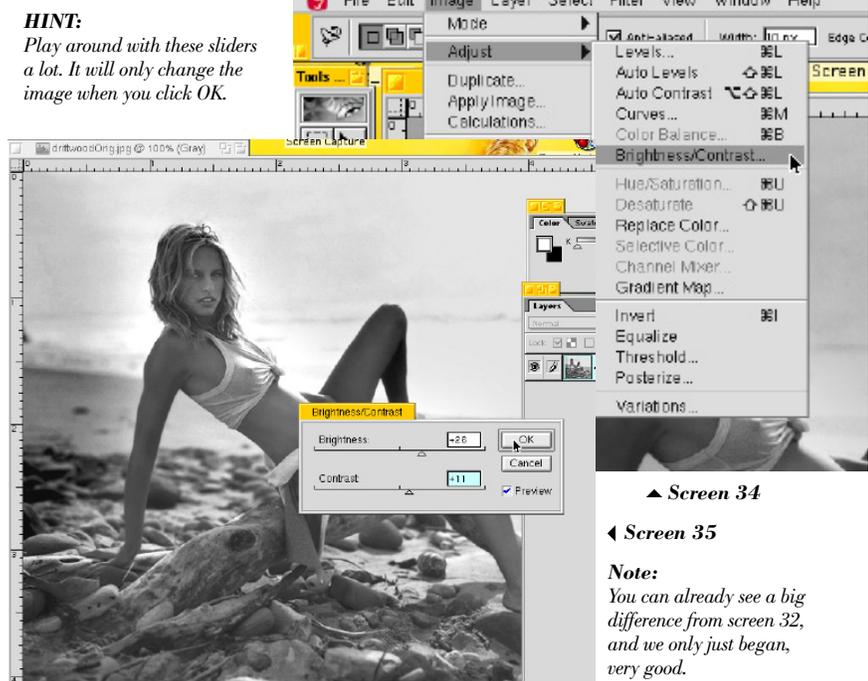
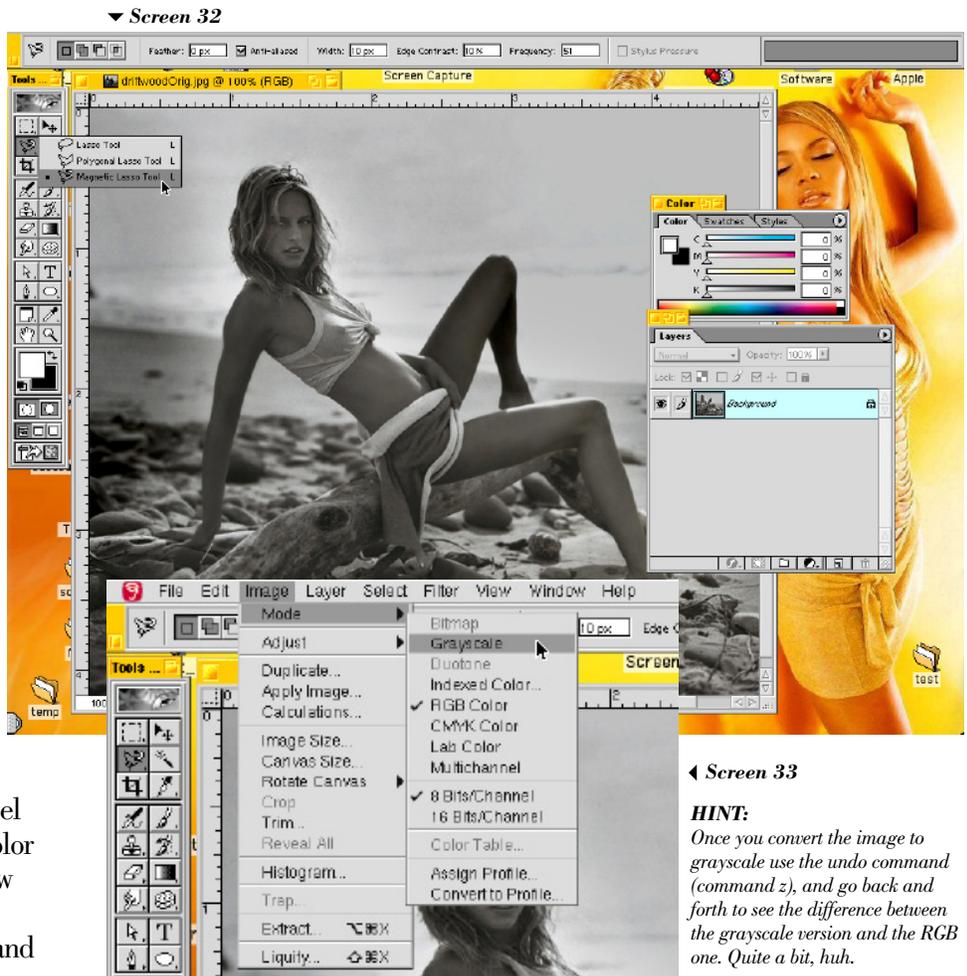
Let's try something that is a little more difficult. Open the *driftwoodOrig.jpg* file (screen 32). Not a bad photo, composition is very interesting and it has a very nice form. However, the image seems quite dark and lacking a bit in contrast. Would you agree? Also, this seems to be a black and white photo, right?

This file is actually in color, note that it is an RGB file. Most likely this was scanned in and saved as a color file. This could give it a blue or red cast over the entire image depending on the room lighting where it was scanned. We will convert it to black and white to eliminate any ambient color that might have been cast onto it. Under the *Image* pull down menu select *Grayscale* from the *Mode* section (screen 33). A new window will pop up asking if you wish to discard color info. Click *OK*. Now the image is a true black and white (grayscale). Also notice this is now a much smaller file for the memory, because it only has one channel (color). We will spend a lot more time on color and channels later on, but it is good to know why this became a smaller file.

Okay, let's start adjusting the brightness and contrast to give the image more punch. Choose *Brightness/Contrast* under the *Image* pull down menu in the *adjust* section (screen 34). A new window will pop up with sliders. Use these sliders to add more brightness and contrast to the image (screen 35). Make it what you like, but do some experimenting to see what some different combinations will do.

The brightness slider adjusts the overall tone of the photograph, while the contrast adjusts the crispness of the shading. Something to keep in mind is that a digital photograph captures *all* of the minute tones that are in an actual image. Whereas a scanned image can only be as good as the original photo. If there are no details in the dark areas of the photo, there will be no way to enhance them on the computer.

I have found that when you shoot a digital photo and have some dark areas, you can actually brighten these portions and all of the fine details are there. This is a huge plus, and a very good reason to shoot pictures with digital cameras. Okay, have you got your image to where you really like it?... Perfect!



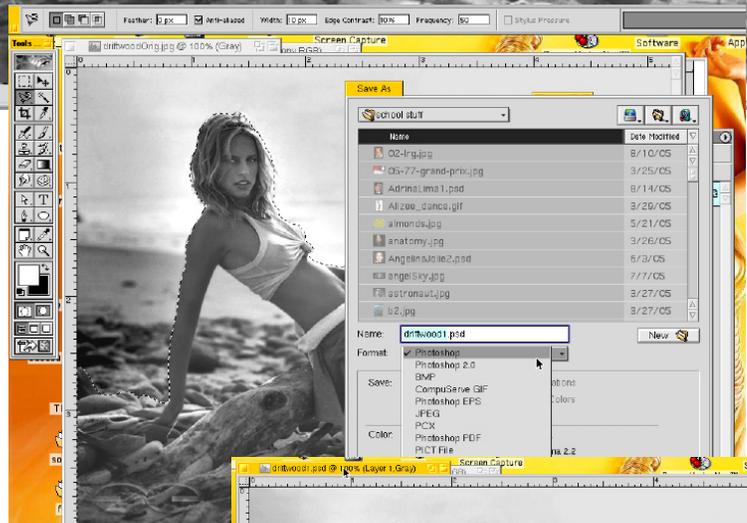
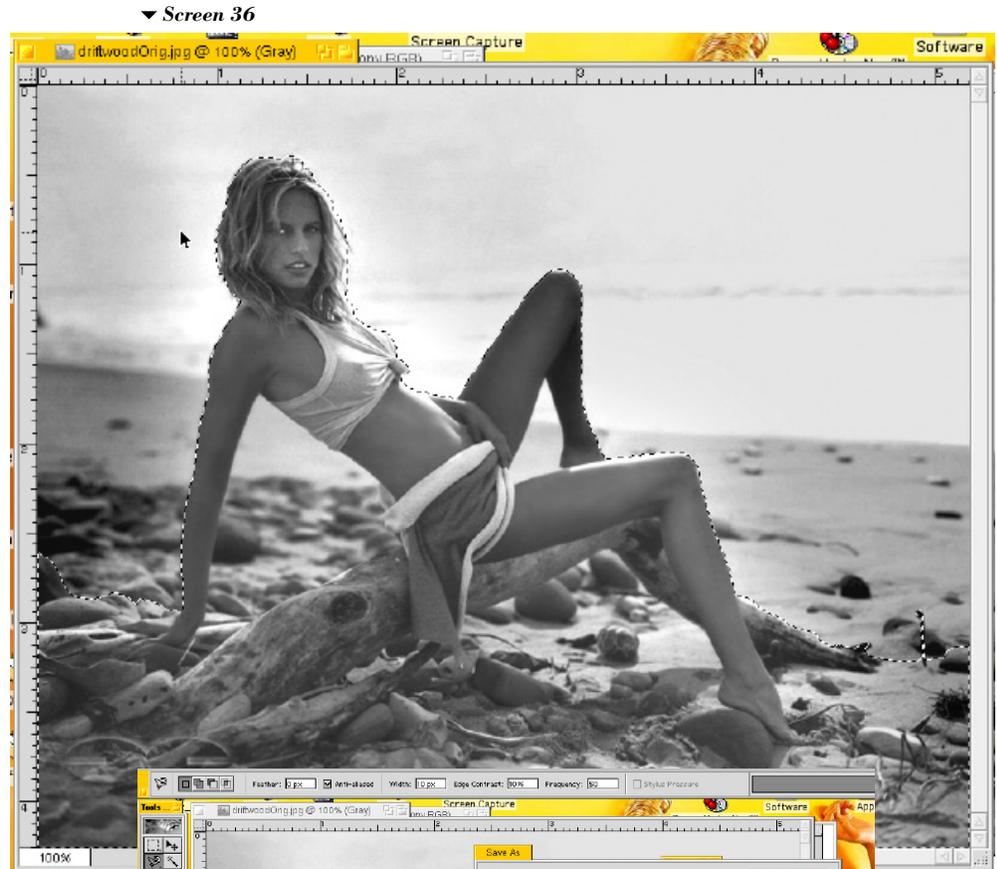
Now that you have your image adjusted to where you love it, let's make it more interesting. Got any ideas?.....How about adding some depth to it. Do you remember we had talked about using depth to add attention to our focal point? Well, this a perfect opportunity to do that effect.

What we need to do first is determine a natural edge across the rocks that we can use as our foreground, and everything behind that will be in the background. We will eventually blur this background portion, and it will give the image greater depth. The focal point will jump off the screen. Nice. Just what we wanted.

So to begin with, select the *magnetic lasso* and hit the *tab* key to close pallets, click a point and then drag out a selection for the edge of the foreground. Include all of the model, begin at the top left portion of the rock and work clockwise around the image. Go all the way down on the right and across the bottom. When you return to the starting point, click on it to close and complete your selection (*screen 36*). Perfect this selection by adding and subtracting to it, just like you did with the Mustang. Let's save this file, call it *driftwood1.psd* (*screen 37*).

We now need to subtract some areas of the foreground. Under her arm and body, in the joint of her knee, under the piece of driftwood and around her foot. With the *magnetic lasso* tool selected, hold down the *option* key. You will notice a small - sign next to the tool. Click a point and drag out the selection that will be subtracted. Do this same procedure for each of the areas that need to be subtracted (*screen 38*). Fine tune the selections using the *regular lasso*, like you did before. Save the selection, like with the Mustang, and also call it *edge*. We now have a perfect selection for the model and foreground. This is exactly what we were working for, again nice job. This is going very good.

Feather the *edge* selection 1 pixel. *Copy* and then *paste* the image. Notice it will be pasted to a new layer and put precisely in it's original spot. Save your work, *always* remember to do this as your go. Just press *command s*, and the file will save and over write the previous saved version.



Screen 38 ▶

HINT:

Make your edges very precise, just like you did with the Mustang. Keep the ripples on the edge of her shirt, like I did. If you were to make this a smooth edge, it would look fake. Also, give your self some extra space around her soft hair that is highlighted, like I did.



After pasting the image to a new layer we want to select the background layer and duplicate it. Click the arrow in the top right corner of the layers pallet, and choose *Duplicate Layer*. Name this layer *Background blur* (screen 39), and click *OK*.

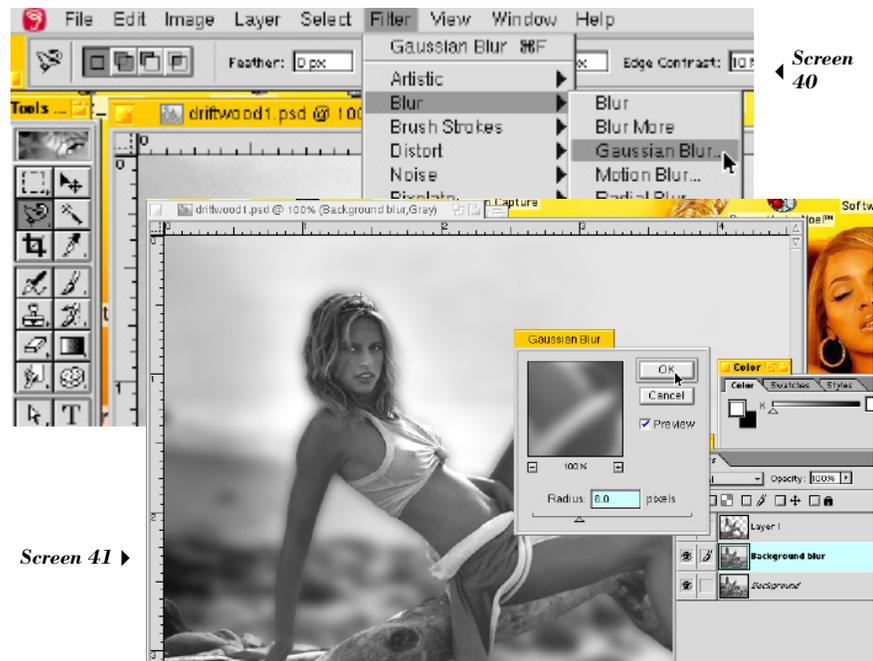
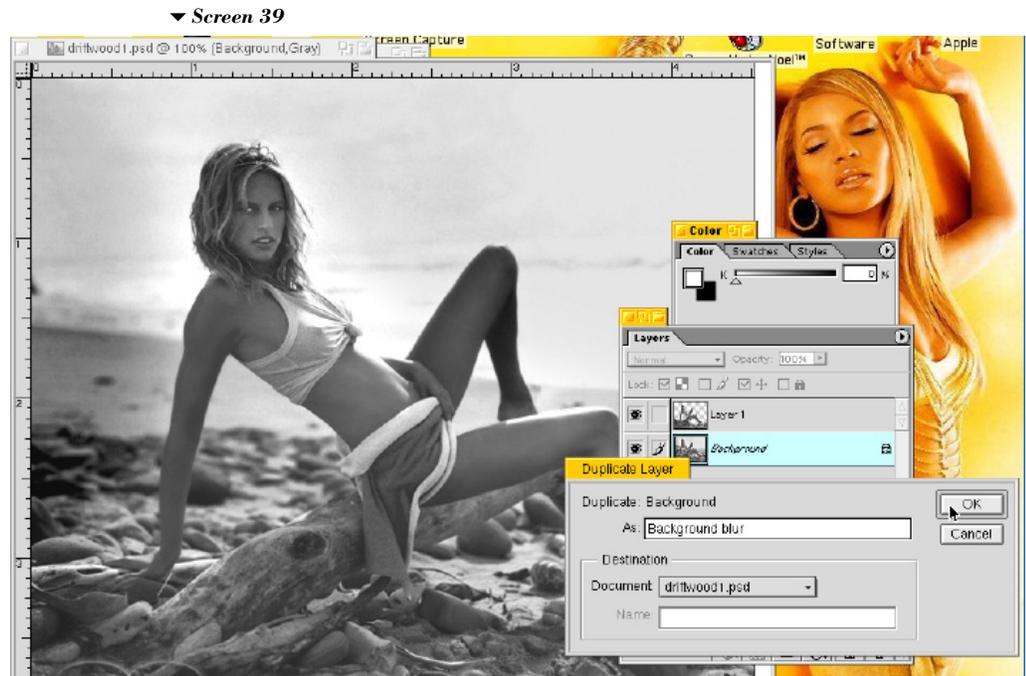
Now you need to blur this layer, we want a significant amount of blurring. The best way to achieve this is with the *Gaussian Blur* filter. You will find tons of different applications for this filter as you do more work on other images.

So, go to the *Filter* pull down menu and choose *Gaussian Blur* from the *blur* section (screen 40). A new window will pop up. It has a slider and a box where you can type in a number. Notice as you move the slider to the right, the background portion gets blurred more. Slide it to a position you like, I chose 6.0, and then click *OK* (screen 41). Looks pretty cool, huh? It definitely gives it more depth, however, the edges have a strong halo around them.

Click the eyeball on the layer with the model and notice that the entire *Background blur* layer received the gaussian blur effect. This actually is the best way to blur the background, we just need to clean up the halo edge. There is a very simple technique to do this, using the blur and smudge tools, combined with the eraser tool. This image will be perfect to demonstrate the best advantages of those tools. That discussion will be a few lessons away, so we have taken this image as far as we can for now. Press *command s*, to save the image, and then close the window.

Very often when you are working long on a project or image, it is nice to take a break for awhile. Usually, when you return you have better ideas and more enthusiasm. Did you know it took Leonardo DaVinci ten years to paint the Mona Lisa's lips? It's true! Although, he did put it down a lot in between. It just took ten years to get it to a point where he liked it, or maybe he was never going to be happy with it. He painted right over the image several times, I wonder who he was trying to create?

Notice the before and after shots. Your edges will clean up just like these did. Great Job!!



driftwoodOrig.jpg



driftwoodTest.jpg