

IMAGE CONSULTANT

Face-Lift

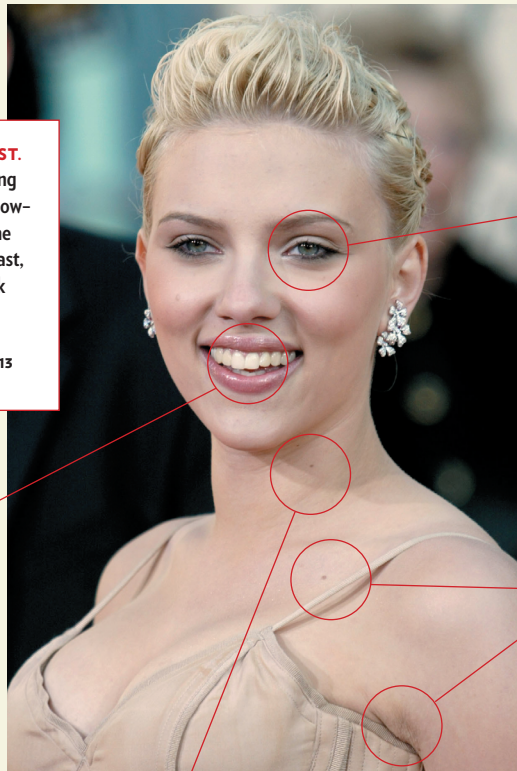
Making people look good without looking fake

1) OVERALL COLOR CAST AND CONTRAST. Getting the skin right usually means removing a color cast. Scarlett finds herself overly yellow-cyan with flattened contrast as a result of the classic paparazzi red carpet photo-op. Contrast, saturation and a red shift make the skin look natural and vibrant.

LEVELS: 37 SHADOW, 1.10 MIDTONE, 241 HIGHLIGHT
COLOR BALANCE: CYAN/RED=16, MAGENTA/GREEN=-13
SATURATION: OVERALL=12, REDS=-5

2) WHITER THAN WHITE. Color casts and flash can make teeth unnaturally yellow. Using the dodge tool within the color channels whitens teeth, and a final touch-up with the burn tool restores the proper contrast and brightness. Highlights are exaggerated in the eyes and on her jewelry with the dodge tool set for highlights.

DODGE TOOL ON BLUE CHANNEL, 8% 20 PIXELS FOR TEETH;
BURN TOOL SET TO 5% MIDTONES;



5) THE EYES HAVE TO HAVE IT. When you look at a portrait, the eyes are the most compelling part of the face. They aren't called the gateway to the soul for nothing. Here, the bags under the eyes have been lightened, the shadows in the eyes have been eliminated, the whites have been brought out and the irises have had saturation added to bring out their color and the specular highlights that give eyes life.

DODGE TOOL SET TO 8%, COMBINATION OF MIDTONES AND HIGHLIGHT SETTINGS; SPONGE TOOL SET TO SATURATION, 20%

4) BLEMISHES ARE DIMINISHED. Although she is already wearing a lot of makeup on her face, Scarlett needs some help improving the rest of her body. On-camera flashes with their harsh front light bring out the worst in skin defects. Underarm rash, moles and shadows are minimized, although not eliminated completely. There is such a thing as too much perfection. The small mole on her cheek is so well known that it would be wrong to remove it.

CLONE TOOL AT 15% OPACITY, 40 PIXELS 0% HARDNESS

PORTRAITS ARE ALWAYS A PROBLEM because of the inconsistent quality of originals—anything from a studio-lit portrait to a grab shot taken with a cheap digital camera. The desire is to make every subject look their best without over-manipulating the image. Here is a standard suite of corrections that can improve any portrait, plus a few extra manipulations that can correct some of the worst damage done by the point-and-shooters.

Two other corrections should be made to flash shots. Pictures taken with the subject near a wall often create a harsh shadow around the subject. It is usually easy to clone out the shadow, since the contrast level is so high it is easy to separate the shadow from the background and the subject.

Those same images usually have harsh highlights on cheeks, chins and the tip of the nose that are blown out and look artificial when a color fill is applied. In these instances, careful

3) HARSHNESS TAKES A POWDER. Just as real foundation covers shiny faces, brushing on a judicious amount of cover-up with the paintbrush can moderate harsh highlights—and shadows, too. The trick here is to choose a close skin tone, and apply as a series of quick clicks with a smallish soft brush—not a steady application of the tool. That makes it easy to use the history palette to back off if things go too far.

COLOR PICKED UP FROM HER RIGHT CHEEK, APPLIED AS NORMAL, 7% OPACITY, VARIOUS BRUSH SIZES BUT ALL WITH 0% HARDNESS.

cloning from other areas of the face at low opacities and multiple applications can not only fill the harsh highlights but improve the overall appearance of the skin as well.

Correcting portraits isn't about digital face-lifts or making people look perfect. The goal is to create a natural-looking improvement in the original photograph and minimize structural flaws that are exaggerated by the composition and lighting in the original. If, along the way, subtle retouching creates a kinder, gentler version of someone, well, no one has ever complained. **[FPO]**

