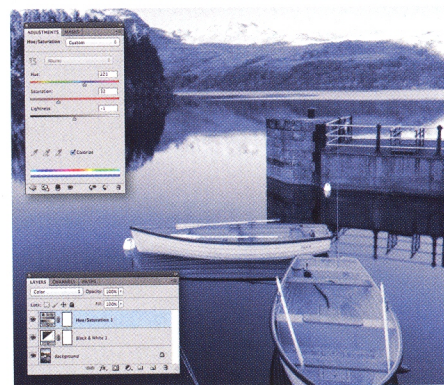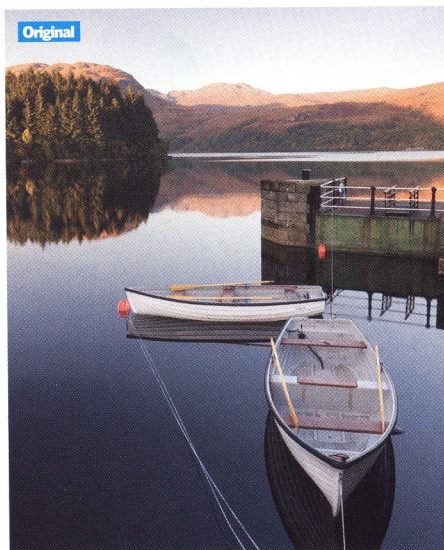# Duotone your black & white photograph

We reveal how to add color to your shadows and highlights

Caroline Wilkinson: There is so much you can do with a black & white photograph to alter its look, but one traditional technique that's still increasingly popular is color-toning. All too often it's a technique that's done horrendously badly: images look like they've been dipped in a purple or magenta wash, or like they've been taken using the wrong White Balance.

Subtly altering the temperature of the highlights or shadows with a yellow/orange hue or blue tint can add warmth or a contemporary coolness respectively. So, as a rule of thumb with this technique, err on the side of caution: you want the tint to work with the scene, not overpower it.

We're going to split-tone, otherwise known as duotone, a mono image here, which requires you to separately tone the shadows and highlights. The difficulty comes from finding colors that work well together: putting complementary colors in the mix is a good place to start and after that, experimentation.

Original

How not to do it

It can be tempting to take the easy route and colorwash your pictures using a Hue/ Saturation adjustment layer or to be too heavy-handed with applying color. You'll know you've gone too far as you'll start to lose details and will have very little graduation in tone. Often the best results come from picking a color that isn't so vibrant that it overpowers the scene. You want viewers to see the beautiful photograph first, and then the tint.

Color Balance adjustment layer

A quick but less effective way to split-tone is to use a Color Balance adjustment layer on a black & white image. You can control the tones using the Shadows, Midtone and Highlight settings all in one place.

1 Convert to monochrome Add a Black & White adjustment layer (*Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Black & White…*) and adjust the color sliders until you reach the level of contrast that best suits your image. You can also select one of the options under *Preset* for one-click effects. Here, I decide to opt for the High Contrast Red Filter.

2 Apply color Add a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer the alternative way by clicking on the *Add new fill or adjustment layer* icon at the bottom of the Layers palette. With the adjustment panel open, click on the *Colorize* box and drag the *Hue* slider to pick the tint for the shadows, ignoring the effect on the rest of the image for now.
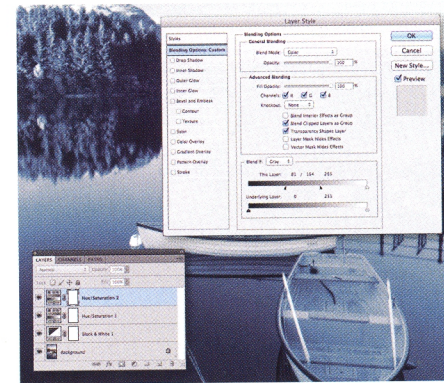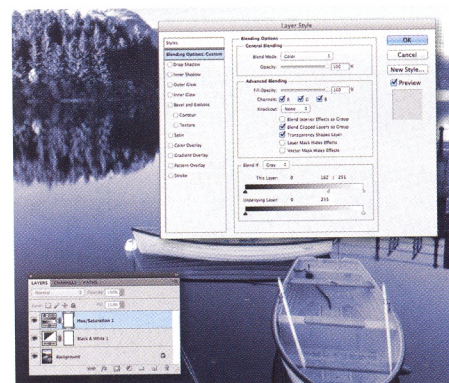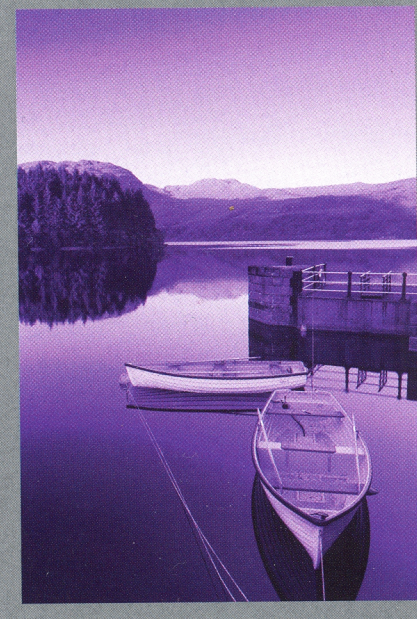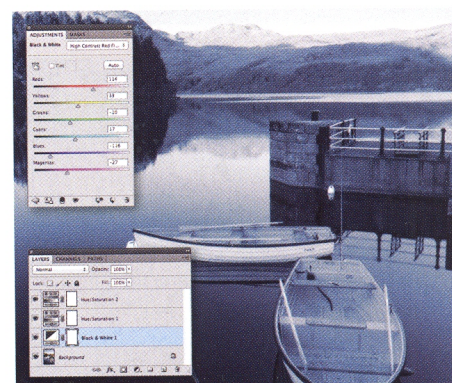

3 Tone the shadows In the Layers palette, change the Hue/Saturation layer's *Blend Mode* to *Color*. Now go to *Layer>Layer Style>Blending Options*. Hold *alt* and click the *white triangle* to split it in two and drag them until you find the balance between excluding highlights from the tint and a smooth graduation in tones. Best positions here are around 100 and 200.

4 Tone the highlight Repeat step three, but focus on the shadows. Add a *Hue/Saturation* adjustment layer, change its *Blend Mode* to *Color*, click *Colorize* and adjust the *Hue* slider to tone the highlights – ignoring the shadows. Access *Blending Options* and split the black sliders to remove the tint from the shadows. Good positions here are around 80 and 155.

5 Tweak your contrast One of the reasons for working with Adjustment Layers is so you can revert back to previous adjustments and tweak them once you've finished. The contrast in your black & white conversion greatly affects the duotone treatment, so double-click on the *Black & White* adjustment layer to re-edit the sliders and see if you can improve the results.

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