The South Bay Mug

MACINT⌘SH

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A personal view from Bob

Adobe Photoshop Lightroom
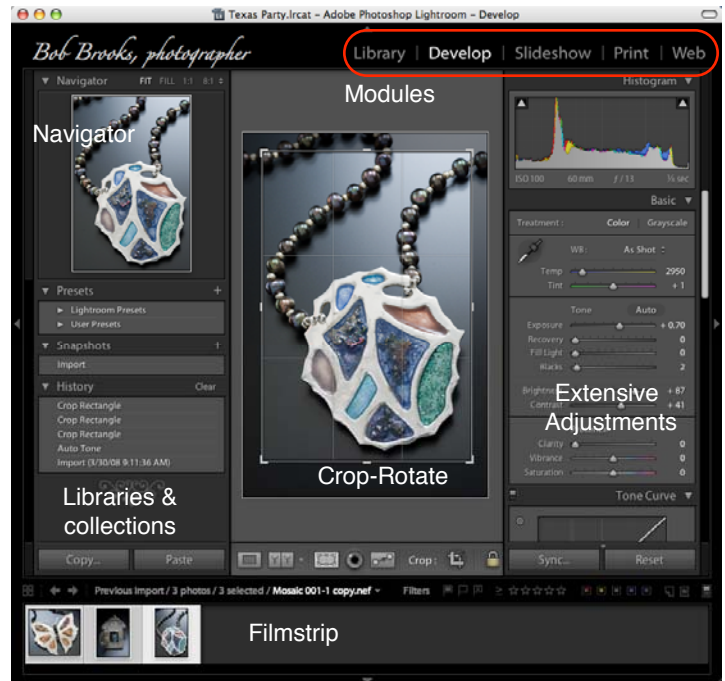#### when speed and workflow are important

Lightroom is a program designed by and for serious photographers and professionals who take hundreds or thousands of pictures and want an end-to-end solution to handling their photographic images. It streamlines the workflow process from importing, sorting, labeling and storing to editing and exporting. It's particularly useful when shooting in RAW format where images are not compromised by in-camera processing. Lightroom is an image database and processor that goes far beyond iPhoto to provide a workflow solution for managing, editing, and presenting your work. There's extensive support for viewing and editing metadata, hidden tags that describe how, when and who created an image. Images can be imported from a camera, memory card, CD or hard disk and stored anywhere on your computer or an external drive — even left on a CD or DVD.

Nondestructive editing: Lightroom does not duplicate or alter the original photo when it's edited. It simply creates a small file containing the editing steps to be applied when exporting the photo — printing, creating a slide show or posting to the web. You can create virtual copies of any photo and apply different edits. View multiple images side-by-side for critical comparison.

Lightroom is about speed. It supports cloning, healing and red-eye reduction but is not a pixel-level editor like Photoshop (reviewed Jan 08). Most photos require only a small part of Photoshop's extensive editing capabilities — cropping and straightening, adjusting hue, brightness and saturation and sharpening or noise reduction. The two programs complement one another. When pixel-level editing is needed, Lightroom can hand off images to Photoshop and return them to Lightroom.

Lightroom's five modules:

- Library: Import and catalog images. Add keywords, ratings and flags and add/modify metadata. The image database supports multiple libraries and collections (albums) and keeps track of everything.

- Develop: A very extensive collection of editing functions, only partially shown above. Notable is the Targeted Adjustment tool, that lets you click and drag within an image to adjust specific colors. Use it with the tone curve, hue, saturation, lightness, and gray scale.
- Slideshow: Includes many templates for presenting images as a slideshow.
- Printing: The only module I haven't used.
- Web: Export an image collection as a web page, either HTML or Flash. Upload to a web sever or to a drive.

Like most Adobe products, Lightroom has such extensive capabilities that you must invest time to learn it. Adobe makes great software but poor documentation, although Adobe and others have posted many excellent tutorial videos on the Internet. Still, the first thing I did was to buy Scott Kelby's "The Adobe Photoshop Lightroom Book".

In Summary: After a photo shoot I love using Lightroom to quickly view and process my photos.

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