An Introduction to

SILKYPIX® *Developer Studio 3.0*

eBook

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Introduction

About the Author

I've been a passionate wildlife / landscape photographer for over 20 years. In 2000, I went digital and five years later I decided to start my own photography business. I have recently sold images to Canon-Europe and stock agencies, while also dabbling with ICC profiles for Canon EOS dSLRs. I actively promote digital photography at levels and have owned and developed two websites since 2004; EOSpix and EOS-Images. I also help moderate at OpenPhotographyForums.

Background

During February 2007, I was fortunate to grab a short fly-drive to California and Nevada with my family. I decided to photograph the excursion and returned with ~1500 raw images taken with my Canon EOS 1DmkIIN.

My wife wanted a "best of" set of 5x7" prints to show to friends and family, while I sought to ponder on my images and take more time squeezing every ounce of colour, tonality and quality out of them.

In the past, I would have used Pixmantec's Rawshooter, it was fast, it had an intuitive workflow and it was underwritten by some big names in industry, although some criticised it for its variable and sometimes "murky" output.

Since the demise of the RSP product I have felt reluctant to continue using it, for fear becoming too attached to a product that has no support or future. Anyhow I digress!

About 18 months ago a new Japanese product hit the market which went under the name of SilkyPix. Wow, what a strange product!

SilkyPix was met with mixed opinions; many advocates liked the way it rendered colour, but turned their noses up at the interface. While others picked up the product's poorly translated manual, only to put it down again, none the wiser.

SilkyPix has since gone through a few changes. The interface now looks and feels similar to the revolutionary Rawshooter, but its inherent quirks and weak documentation have still left it out in the cold.

Personally, I have persevered and consider it a superb tool for fast post processing and detailed editing of raw images. It has some superb functions (highlight controller, fine colour adjustment, noise reduction and

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lens correction) which other raw converters are only just starting to introduce. Furthermore its colour engine does indeed provide some of the nicest colour renderings I've seen to date.

Hence, I decided to write an introduction to SilkyPix that not only provides an overview and "hands on" approach, but also paths the way for some dynamic input and feedback through various web sites, to help finance and develop an advanced guide tackling more detailed and specific subjects.

The format for this tutorial will be a PDF document with embedded screenshots originally based on using SilkyPix Developer Studio version 3.0.11.3 for Windows XP, although updates to version 3.0.15 are now included.

I will also use my Californian trip shoot as the underlying image library, in order to develop and narrate the tutorial elements of this document.

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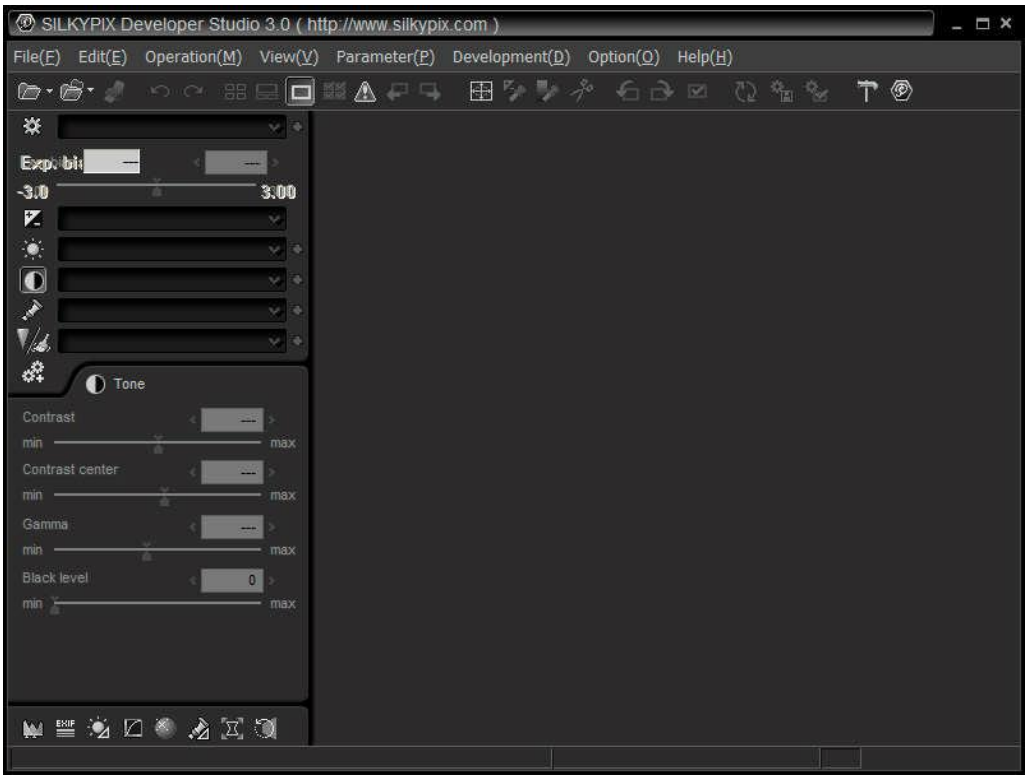
What is SilkyPix?

SilkyPix is a light-box stylised raw converter providing a wealthy mixture of unique and comparable processing functions akin to many other raw converters, yet the terminology used to describe some of these functions and their parameters, can be a little cryptic.

Once SilkyPix is executed, one is presented with the following screen:



Nothing really enlightening here, a menu bar, some sliders and lots of icons, all looking rather dull and grey!

Before I delve deeper, first and foremost, I must state that SilkyPix is **not** a Digital Asset Management application.

Ok, one can mark and sort images (later topic), but it should not be considered similar to Adobe's Lightroom and Bridge, or Iview's Mediapro. However given this limitation it does provide an almost "end to end" workflow for the digital photographer.

At the outset one needs to have an underlying strategy for image organisation and storage outside of SilkyPix. This is similar to how one may have approached and used Rawshooter.

I have always used the operating system's file management facilities for file organisation and storage. After all that's what it was designed for and it's much faster at moving files around than many 3rd party applications.

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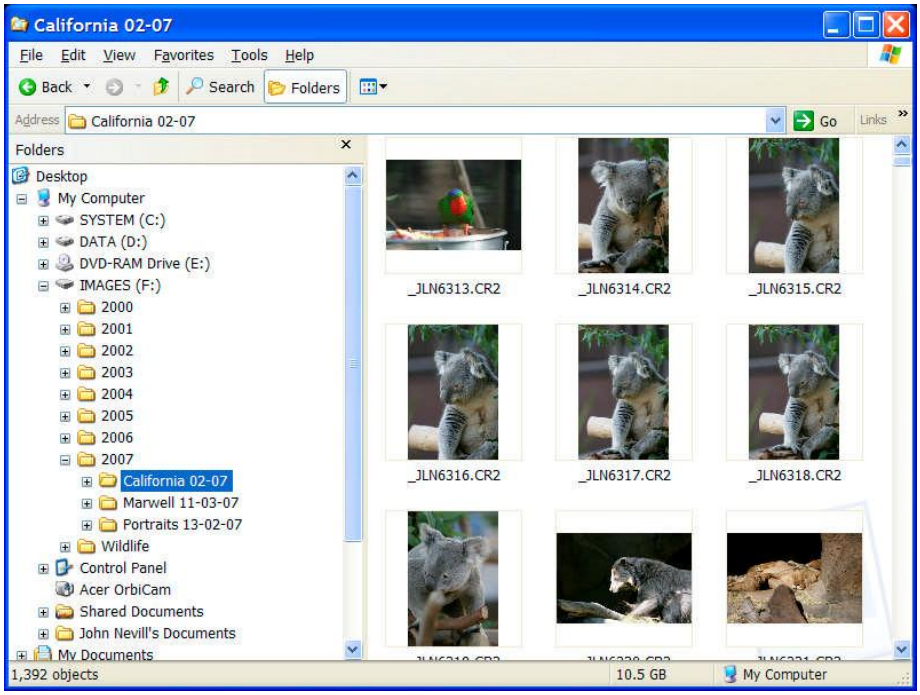
My immediate step in any image workflow process is to copy all the raw files off the media cards and into a new directory. In this instance, I would use a year, shoot name and date folder format. Conversely, I organise my wildlife images by species.

So before using SilkyPix, I get into this mode of operation and try and make it a habit.

Here's a screenshot of the Californian Trip shoot on my external hard drive. All images were copied directly into one folder.



Before I actually open up the folder in SilkyPix and start sorting and editing, I'll briefly review SilkyPix's main controls and menus.

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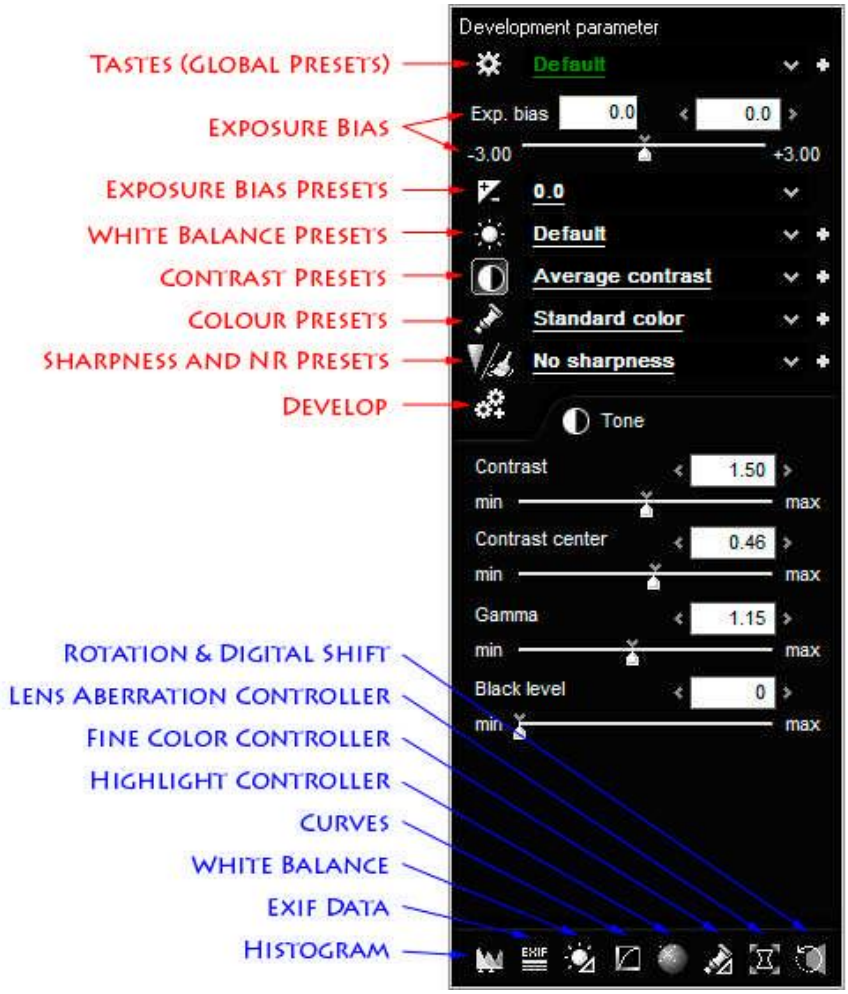
SilkyPix's Controls and Dialogues

SilkyPix's functions dialogues can be docked, tabbed or floated, which in essence is conceptually similar to many other RAW converters. In addition most dialogues can be moved to a second monitor to provide a larger viewing area for image previewing and editing.

The main controls and functions are housed in one dialogue box called **Development parameters** and comprise **Tastes**. These **Tastes** are in effect stored preset parameters (highlighted by the red arrows) and modules (highlighted by the blue arrows).

Any parameter change made to a **Taste** can be saved and named as a new **Taste** by clicking on the + sign next to the **Taste**. **Tastes** can be recalled by selecting them within the relevant drop down box.

The following diagram outlines the key functions available within the **Development parameter** dialogue box.



Clicking on any of the icons either pops up a further dialogue box (for functions) or changes the tab's contents.

For example, the screenshot shows the **Contrast** (tone) tab contents (note, the select outline around the icon).

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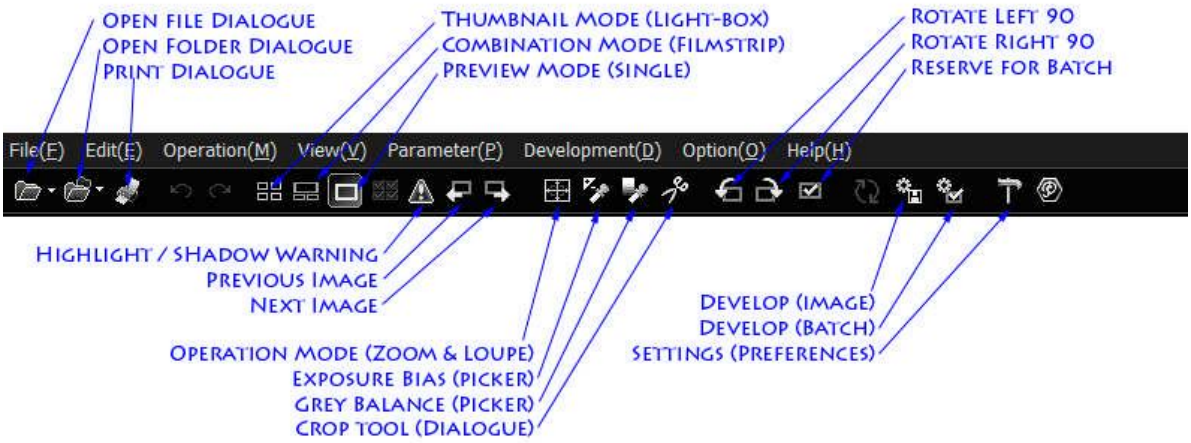
SilkyPix Menus

Across the top of the application's main display are even more icons plus the traditional "named" menu bar. The menu bar pretty much replicates all the icons, so emphasis will be given over to the icons.

Like most applications, only certain icons are accessible depending upon what development function or sub function is being used, so with a little license I will show all menu icons enabled for clarity.



The details and application of these development functions and sub functions will be considered and examined in later parts of the tutorial.

The next step is to load the image library. I selected the Open Folder icon and navigated to the "California 02-07" folder and hit **OK**.

SilkyPix opens the folder at quite a speed and begins the background processing of thumbnails.

Incidentally, thumbnails are generated on a "per view" basis, so one can easily scroll to images in the middle of the shoot, watch the previews build and start editing without too much hanging around.

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