

Capture One 5 rivals or exceeds Adobe Lightroom and Aperture as a raw processor, but impressive new tools aside, its IPTC functionality still needs improvement.

BY STAN SHOLIK

# Getting *there*

PHASE ONE CAPTURE ONE 5 PRO



When Phase One Capture One 1.0 made its first appearance in 2003, it was a raw file converter for a limited number of digital SLR cameras, and was positioned mainly for commercial photographers. In its upgrades since, the interface has been modernized, and it now supports TIFF and JPEG file formats, along with a growing number of DSLRs.

Capture One 5 (C1\_5) continues the progression, and now has valuable tools for

portrait and wedding photographers. With the release Version 5, the software becomes more than a raw converter. Now it's a formidable competitor of Adobe Lightroom and Aperture for handling all but the most complex pixel-level imaging tasks, and still delivers far better raw conversions.

Major software upgrades can be both welcome—to improve your workflow—and daunting when the user interface has been redesigned. But Phase One has incorporated

new features that photographers have been asking for, and kept the look and feel intact. The changes made in the interface to incorporate the new tools are cohesive; the new icons are in logical places, and there are new choices in the tool tab menus. Anyone familiar with previous versions of Capture One will feel right at home.

Like earlier releases, C1\_5 has three versions: the basic version, with its easy and intuitive workflow, delivers ready-to-use images with excellent color and detail; DB for Phase One, Mamiya and Leaf digital backs only; and the PRO version, which features a series of easy-to-use tools designed to match the professional photographer's workflow, whether it includes a digital SLR or a supported digital back. Each version includes upgrades, but the major changes for professional photographers are in the PRO and DB versions, which we'll discuss here.

One of the most valuable new features is



I captured this image of model Aubrey (left) with a Phase One back after I had created a neutral white balance for the session. Using the Skin Tone Color Editor in Capture One 5 PRO, I warmed the skin tone (right), increased the saturation slightly, and applied some uniformity to smooth out the model's skin. Since the background was a similar hue to the model, it warmed up also. With a contrasting background, only the skin color would have been effected.

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the Focus Mask (View > Focus Mask or click on the magnifying glass icon in the far-right tool group). This tool makes a color overlay on the areas in the image that it deems to be in focus. You can select the color of the overlay, its threshold value and its opacity in Preferences.

The Focus Mask operates on a selected raw image and also on raw thumbnails, so you can quickly see which images from a large shoot are precisely focused. This tool could be particularly valuable to portrait, wedding and fashion photographers who shoot in raw format. The initial Threshold value was too wide for my taste; it showed the focused subject and areas in the foreground of landscape images to be in focus, but no areas in between. I could largely eliminate the problem by tweaking the Threshold value. Focus Mask seemed to handle portraits much better than landscapes.

The new Focus Tool in the Details tab will be of value to portrait and commercial photographers, and works on any C1\_5-supported file format. The tool saves time by allowing you to check focus without zooming in or out of the main preview image. Clicking anywhere in the image with the Focus Tool allows you to zoom from 25 to 400 percent; you'll see the results in the Focus Tool window. In that window, the cursor turns into a hand tool so you can move around the image—a nice enhancement and a real timesaver.

Another new tool portrait photographers will love is the Skin Tone Color Editor in the Color Editor tool tab. After selecting a skin tone, you can adjust its hue, saturation and lightness, or make the skin more uniform. Only the skin tones in the range you select will be affected. It won't replace Portrait Professional, but it's an excellent tool for minor skin corrections and adjustments.



The new Focus Mask tool in Capture One 5 PRO shows a color overlay on areas of the raw image that it determines to be in focus. You can control the overlay color and the threshold of sharpness. I found it very useful with portraits.



The Focus Mask was less useful with landscapes. Somehow it often showed foreground and background areas to be in focus, but not the areas in between.

Among many other new tools are dust removal and vignette, which operate like the ones in Lightroom. There are also improvements in existing Capture One tools. The

one I'm happiest to see, though not entirely happy with, is the expansion of the IPTC metadata fields. C1\_5 includes nearly all IPTC categories (but not the "Category" that

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my press agency requires). Unlike most applications for pro photographers, the IPTC information doesn't show up immediately in C1\_5's Metadata tool tab. You have to select Load Metadata from the dropdown menu in the tab to see previously entered metadata, and you must do it every time you access the image folder if you want to see that information.

More disappointing, any changes you make to the IPTC data in C1\_5 are invisible to Photo Mechanic, Lightroom, Bridge, and Photoshop, even though the changes you make to the metadata in these programs are visible when you reload the metadata the next time you open the image in C1\_5. While C1\_5 has made a giant step in handling metadata, it still has a long way to go.

Capture One also needs to improve file visibility if it's going to rival Lightroom and Aperture. Capture One doesn't see PSD files, layered TIFFs or TIFFs with alpha channels, although it does see LZW compressed TIFFs and TIFFs with adjustment layers. And while it handled most JPEGs, it wouldn't show the JPEGs I made from TIFFs of Mac screen captures. Capture One needs to recognize all of the file formats that pros are likely to use.

Despite these areas, Capture One 5 PRO is a major step forward for the program, and it will increase its value to professional photographers, particularly portrait, wedding and fashion shooters. For Capture One 3 users who never upgraded to 4 PRO, Capture One 5 is a free upgrade. For 4 PRO users, Capture One 5 PRO is a \$99 upgrade. New users can purchase Capture One 5 PRO for \$399. Other upgrade pricing, a full overview of all C1\_5 features, raw file support, tutorials and a downloadable user guide are available on [phaseone.com](http://phaseone.com). ■



The Skin Tone Color Editor is a new tool in Capture One 5 PRO. It offers five sliders to give you control over the hue, saturation, uniformity and lightness of skin tones, as well as a slider to control how smoothly the changes are applied to the bordering skin tones.



The Focus tool in the Details tool tab saves you time by allowing you to zoom into and pan around areas of the image without zooming in and out of the large preview image.