

Lightzone Software

By Peter Rowlands

To my mind good software should be intuitive and logical so that it can be opened and used without the need to refer to meaty instruction books. As a result the first 30 minutes for me are crucial and Lightzone had me hooked from the start.

Lightzone is a standalone image manipulation programme rather than a Photoshop plug in and versions are available for both Mac and PC (Windows XP or Vista). It has a look like Apple's Aperture which strangely I've not got on with but Lightzone is somehow more obvious.

Open up the software and by default there is a list of your files on the left. Select the folder with the images you want to view and thumbnails then appear at the bottom of the page with the first image selected and shown in the large centre frame. The metadata is shown top right which is very useful when you need to check camera settings.

Click the "Edit" icon in the bottom right of the main image (or simply double click the thumbnail image) and you are taken to the next layout which is where the fun begins. The selected image is centre screen and on the left of your screen are a wide variety of "Styles". Run your cursor over each style name and the modified image is shown top left and if you then click again, the main image will be converted. It is a very fast and effective way of seeing what the results will be.

On the right hand side are the icons for



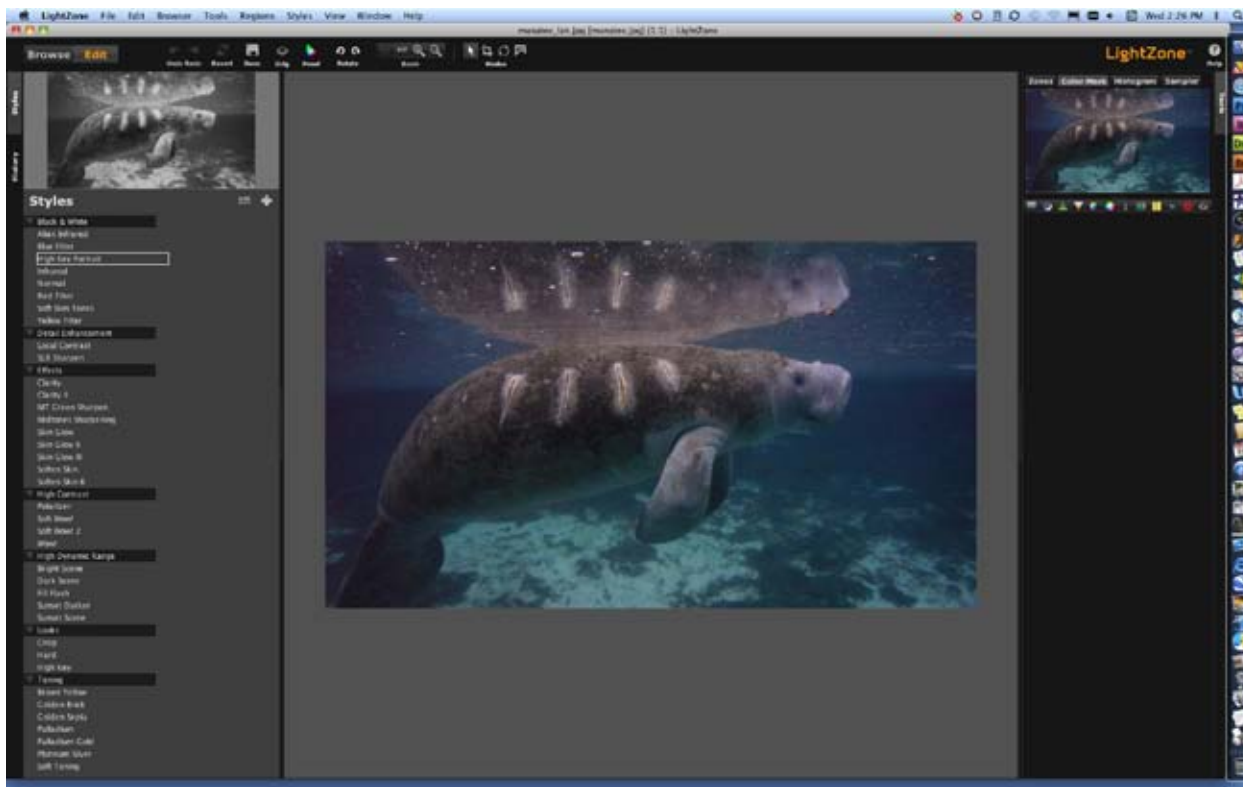
Open up the software and by default there is a list of your files on the left. Select the folder with the images you want to view and thumbnails then appear at the bottom of the page with the first image selected and shown in the large centre frame. The metadata is shown top right which is very useful when you need to check what camera settings were used.

Relight, Gaussian Blur, Hue/Saturation, Colour balance, White balance, Black & White, Noise reduction, Clone, Spot and Red Eye all of which are self explanatory.

The most useful for me was 'Relight' which brightened up the image (I tend to shoot slightly underexposed) and gave it more sparkle. Now I know that this can also be done fiddling about

with brightness and contrast but having the ability to have it done at the click of a button really suits me. If, however, you are not happy with the result, the popup window gives you many more manual controls than just brightness and contrast so you can quickly achieve the image/effect you want.

If you then return to the 'Browse' mode you will see that another image has appeared next to

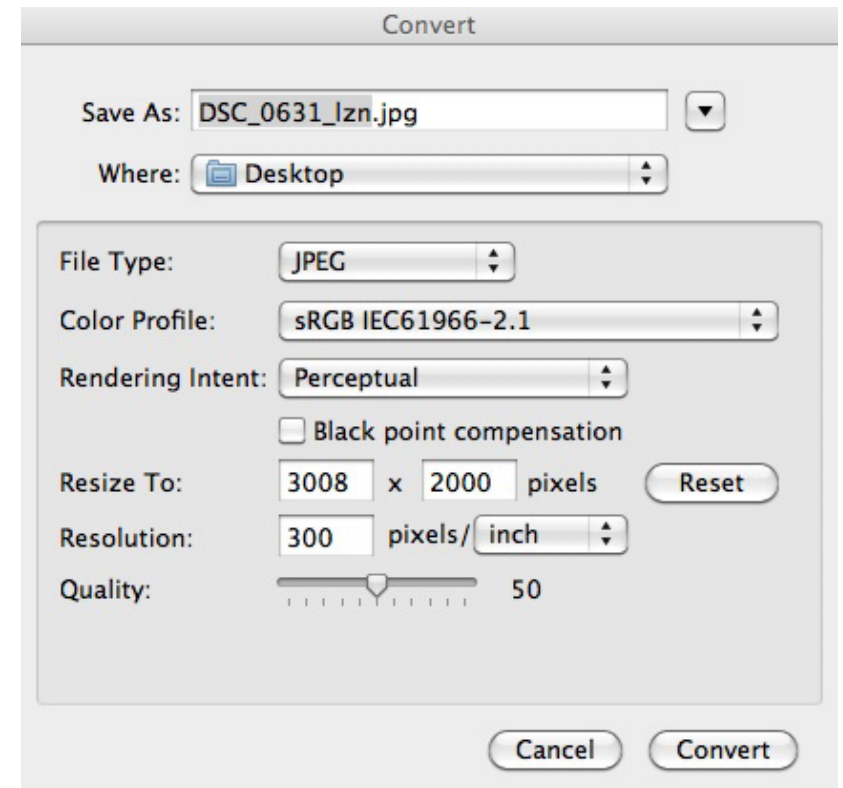


Click the “Edit” icon in the bottom right of the main image (or simply double click the thumbnail image) and you are taken to the next layout which is where the fun begins. The selected image is centre screen and on the left of your screen are a wide variety of “Styles”. Run your cursor over each style name and the modified image is shown top left and if you then click again, the main image will be converted. It is a very fast and effective way of seeing what the results will be. On the right hand side are the icons for Relight, Gaussian Blur, Hue/Saturation, Colour balance, White balance, Black & White, Noise reduction, Clone, Spot and Red Eye.

the thumbnail you selected. This has the suffix _LZN after the filename to indicate that it has been edited. In the meantime your original image has not been altered.

Another nice feature for me was the ‘Convert’ facility (top right). Judging by the variety of sizes and

resolutions of images which are sent to me I would hazard a guess that a large number of people are not fully conversant with the relationship between image size and resolution. I blame Photoshop for this as I find the ‘Image size’ function to complicated and I much prefer the Lightzone



Another nice feature for me was the ‘Convert’ facility

method.

I am still very much a novice with a new toy but for the capabilities I have found so far (and I am sure there will be many more pleasant surprises along the way) I think the \$99.95 (approx £65) is extremely good value.

www.lightcrafts.com

Peter Rowlands
peter@uwpmag.com