Nik Sharpener Pro

Version 1.04
Reviewed May 24th 2004 by Marianne Wilkins

Image Test:
I had a close up digital photo of a gold and burgundy Iris flower. When I took the photo, I would have preferred a sharper center to the flower. The manual was starting to annoy me so I thought I had just better try the product.

Bring the photo up in Adobe. Click on filter. The Nik Sharpener Pro appears as one of the filters if it installed correctly. Click on that option and select one of the sub menus. Inkjet Autoscan sounded good.

One screen appears with image width, height, printer, printer quality, eye distance and personal profile. Three lines of notation at the bottom of the screen indicate if you have sufficient detail among other things. Move the slider for image width or height to change the size of the image and allow for greater detail.

Click Okay and instantly your picture is transformed. Wow – amazing were my first thoughts. What a great tool. The enhancement was wonderful. I was very impressed with the results. Very easy to use.

I went on to try other photos.
I had a very soft focus of some friends on a hike. The tool did little to enhance the focus on that picture. I have a white Persian cat – the sharpening brought out many of her individual hairs and made her look old and gray! Other photos were

excellent including a waterfall fountain, kids pics and the florals. They all showed a significant improvement.

Installation in Adobe Photo Elements 2:

Let's see, I read the directions but I'm uncertain if it should go into the Plug in folder or the filter folder. The program defaults to C:\Program Files. I guessed right, (plugin folder) but I felt this could have been clearer. The help file for installation does not show up until after you install. The manual also references a folder illustration to the "right" when it is actually above the text.

Manual:

It gives a good overview of the product. The print is small. The pictures are okay. Once I tried the product, the manual did answer my questions regarding how to use each of the options. The picture on the manual looks over sharpened.

Suggestions:

Sample pictures on the CD would have been nice. It would have been great to have a slide show of before and after pictures.

The installation process should have been clearer. Screen access to the read me file should have been available as an option up front rather than forcing one to guess where to put the install programs.

Marketing of this product has been poor. Cost of this product is not in line with other imaging products. I would suggest that the home and inkjet version of the product be combined as one. The cost should be well under $100.00. Probably $50.00 for a download.

The picture on the manual is poor.

Other Products:
One could use the unsharp mask filter in Photoshop Elements to gain similar results. The unsharp mask requires the adjustment of several parameters for optimal results. The Unsharp Mask does not provide added detail nor color protection. See some of the web sites below that compare and contrast Nik Sharpener Pro to the Unsharp Mask. (Nik wins out!)

Cost:
1. Nik Multimedia Sharpener Pro Complete
$279.95 at BH PHOTO Video

2. NIK Multimedia NIK Sharpener Pro Inkjet Edition
$149.95 Andorama
Limits outputs to inkjet printers and the web.

3. Nik Sharpener Pro! Home Edition Mac/Win (1115)
It is intended for the home user. It limits photos to 8.5 X 11 and smaller. Optimizes for on line photo services too but not the web.
$69.95 at BH PHOTO Video

Summary:
A real WOW product. Once installed, the product is very easy to use and has an excellent interface. If one is doing a lot of close up work, then this software would be a real asset. Other photos are also enhanced easily.

Other Resources:

http://www.nikmultimedia.com/sharpenerpro/usa/entry.php
Nik Multimedia site. Details what is included in each version.

http://www.outbackphoto.com/reviews/tools/20001116NikSharpenerPro.html Very good review of the product with lots of pictures.

http://www.unleash.com/kurt/niksharpenerpro/index.asp
Another review recommending Nik Sharpener Pro.

http://www.luminous-landscape.com/reviews/software/nic_sharpner.shtml
Good comparison with the Unsharp Mask filter.

http://www.a-digital-eye.com/niksharpen1.html
Very detailed review with comparisons to the Unsharp Filter Mask. A good gallery that shows: no sharpening, unsharp filter and Nik Sharpener Pro comparisons.