

Photoshop Tips and Tricks

That Velvia Feeling

By Rick Cloran

If you were a film shooter at one point you probably remember how much pop the colors on Fuji's Velvia film had. If you would like to have that type of pop back, try this.

Add a Channel Mixer Adjustment layer. Use the drop down menu at the top of the dialog to work on each channel separately. In the Red channel change the values to Red 106%, Green -3%, Blue -3%. Next in the Green channel change the values to Red -3%, Green 106%, Blue -3%. Lastly in the Blue channel change the values to Red -3%, Green -3%, Blue 106%. Now click OK to accept the changes.

Next add a new Curves adjustment layer. This time we will use the RGB master channel. If you have CS3 or earlier you will see the input and output boxes. If you have CS4 click anywhere on the curve to activate the input and output boxes. Now click in the input box and set input 0, click in the output box and set output 0. This preserves basic black. Next click back in the input box (In CS4 you will have to click on the curve again to establish a new point.) Set the input value to 65, click in the output box and set the value to 60. Next set a third new point with input 190 and output at 195. Finally reconfirm whites with a fourth point with input 255 and output 255. What you will have done is to make a very subtle bend to the curve that has the effect of boosting the contrast in the image very slightly. Click OK to accept the changes.

What you should see if you turn these two layers on and off is a boost in color and a slight boost in contrast that provides a nice added pop to the image. Not enough of an effect? Change the Channel mixer to 110% with offsets of -5% for the other colors on each channel. That increases the effective added saturation.

You will note that on the Channel Mixer adjustment layer, the changes that we made in each channel netted to zero (e.g., we added 4% to one color and took away 2% in each of the other two colors. The changes we made across all channels also netted to zero for any color. (e.g., in Red we added 4%, but then took away 2% of red in both the Green and Blue channels.

I generally find that one of these two sets of changes makes a very nice difference in my images while not making them look over saturated. If you want to kick it up even more try 116%, with -8% and -8% in the off colors. Feel free to experiment with the amount of change in the Channel Mixer adjustment layer or the Curves adjustment layer. When you find a set of numbers that do what you like, be sure to record them into an action so you can add that pop with a single click.