

PhotoFrame Pro 3

Review by Darrel Priebe

Summary *PhotoFrame Pro 3* is a fun and easy-to-use plug-in for Photoshop or Photoshop Elements to give your photographs exciting frame or edge effects. With over four thousand frames to choose from, you'll find it addicting to try and find an even better or more colorful alternative for framing you favorite pictures for printing, DVD shows or web display.

What Does *PhotoFrame Pro 3* Do? Here are two examples to give you the before and after view of an edge effect. I photographed the picture below, titled "*Girl in White*," at a wedding in Malibu. On the left is the original, and on the right the *PhotoFrame Pro 3* edge effect called Acid Burn #27.



Photograph © Darrel Priebe



Photograph © Darrel Priebe

Formal frames with mattes are also possible. Below is the *“Girl in White,”* in a Distressed Wood frame, with opacity set to 70% so the frame is slightly blended with the background image.



Photograph © Darrel Priebe

Formal frames can have a cut-matte look, too. Although it is somewhat hard to see in this low res photo, the white matte in the screen shot below actually looks like a bevel-cut matte recessed in the frame!



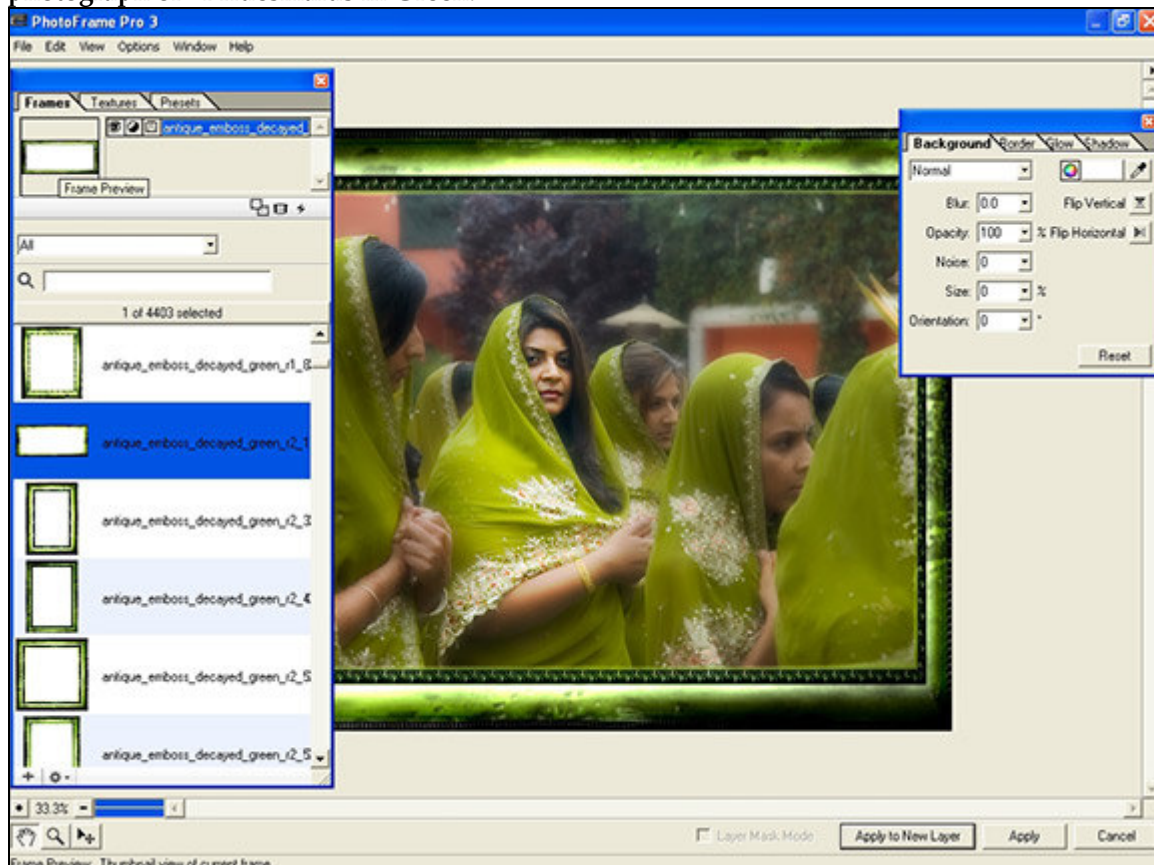
Photo from the *PhotoFrame Pro 3* web site tutorials

How Does it Work? After installation (which was trouble-free), you open your photograph in either Photoshop (version CS or CS2), or in Photoshop Elements (version 3 or 4). This program works on both PCs and Macs. In Photoshop, click on the Filter menu and select onOne, then PhotoFrame Pro 3. A new window opens up with new palettes. Next, you have 3 ways to find the frame you are looking for.

First, just select a frame from the Frames preview list on the left. There are 4,200 to choose from! Or, select a category from a pull down menu. Choose one of 5 volumes, plus 2 volumes of realistic frames and mattes, then select from a more limited list of frames. Or, if you're feeling lucky, you can click on a pair of dice (I'm not kidding) to get frames chosen at random. This Bad Idea is called the Randomizer! I guess it's for the kind of people who make random web searches to pass the time, or play the lottery. I've never been lucky. The frames that appeared at random were a poor fit to my pictures. But I've never won the lottery, either. Stick with the first two methods of picking a frame, they work.

To see any frame, just double click it, and it's there on your picture. To see your whole photo, minimize the palettes by pressing the Tab key, just like in Photoshop. To get rid of that frame, just click the trash icon at the top of the frames palette and your photo is restored and frame-free. You can pile up to 31 frames or edges on top of each other, to make a unique style. If you like your frame, right click and save it as a Favorite, so it's easy to retrieve in the future. When you're finished working, click the *Apply to New Layer* button at the bottom right corner of the window. The PhotoFrame window closes, as your framed picture appears back in the main Photoshop window, with the frame in its own layer. You are now free to adjust it further in Photoshop if desired, but the frame-job is really done at this point. You now have a masterpiece to print, enter in a contest, or share on the TOPCC Photo Group web site, <http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/TOPCCDPS/>.

The *PhotoFrame Pro 3* window within Photoshop. The Preview Frames list is on the left. Double click a frame to see it applied. Once you've found a frame you like, the Background palette on the right can adjust the frame's opacity, shadow, border, etc. The formal frame below looks like it was made for the photograph of "Bridesmaids in Green."



Photograph © Darrel Priebe

A great feature is the Frame Preview, which lets you select many frames or edge effects and view them on the same page. See picture below.



Frame Preview picture from PhotoFrame Pro 3 website tutorials

How Hard is it to Learn? Not hard at all. There are 6 five to seven minute video tutorials on the *PhotoFrame Pro 3* web site which show you most everything you need to know, including all the program features: http://www.ononesoftware.com/tutorials_pfp3.html I had planned an afternoon to work on my web site, but found this program so much fun I didn't get anything else done. It was addicting!

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

Before



After



Pictures from the *PhotoFrame Pro 3* web site tutorials

"Best Friends" photo with three different variations obtained by using the background color, border, glow & shadow controls in *PhotoFrame Pro 3*. Original photo is on the top left.



Photograph © Darrel Priebe



Photograph © Darrel Priebe



Photograph © Darrel Priebe



Photograph © Darrel Priebe

Special Features

- ✚ You can make the photo background color behind the frame either white or black, or any color you choose. See “Best Friends” above.
- ✚ The frames can be added as a separate layer so you can modify them with a Layers Mask
- ✚ A free Photoshop Action is available on the *PhotoFrame Pro 3* web site to increase the Canvas Size; use it before opening the *PhotoFrame Pro 3* filter if you wish to drag the frame outside of your picture and thereby reduce the frame’s intrusion into your picture.
- ✚ You can download program updates, and a free film-frame collection of additional frames and edge effects from the web site:
<http://www.ononesoftware.com/download.php#patches/updates>
- ✚ A 30 day free trial is available for on-line download. Give it a try, I bet you’ll like it:
<http://www.ononesoftware.com/download.php>

Room for Improvement

- ✚ I often found that I wanted to reduce the width of a particular frame, for example, to make a formal frame a little smaller in size. But the only adjustment I found for size made the overall frame dimensions smaller, but no smaller in thickness. Other graphic applications allow you to resize the frame, not just the overall frame size, so *PhotoFrame Pro 3* should do likewise.
- ✚ The program runs slowly on large sized photos, but I suppose a faster computer would fix that. (Maybe I should buy a lotto ticket!)
- ✚ Most importantly, a better search engine to help locate the style of frame or edge effect you want is needed. A better system of categorizing all the types of frames would go a long way to making it easier to search and find the frame you need.
- ✚ Lastly, the undo command (Control-Z on a PC; Command-Z on a Mac) didn’t work after rotating or resizing the frame. Instead, undo deleted the current frame and restored the prior frame. That came as an irritating surprise more than once.
- ✚ Overall, the faults of this program are minor in comparison to the strengths.

Conclusion *PhotoFrame Pro 3* is enjoyable and easy to use, and provides some great photo frames and edges to enhance your creative photographs. You need to have Photoshop Elements or Photoshop CS/CS2 to use this plug-in, but if you do, you will have a great time “framing” your web shots, DVD slide shows, or prints that don’t end up in a “real” frame on your living room wall. If you like the look of the frames you’ve seen in this article, you’ve got to try this program, it’s that much fun.

Details PC System Requirements: Pentium III or faster, Windows XP with SP 2, Photoshop CS or CS2, or Photoshop Elements 3 or 4, 2.4 GB of hard disk space, 512 MB of RAM, a DVD-R Drive. List Price: \$159.95; Upgrade from an earlier version price: \$70. On-line prices: Ads range from \$76 to 180, plus shipping. Publisher: onOneSoftware.com, 15350 SW Sequoia Pkwy, Suite 190, Portland, OR 97224, 1-888-968-1468.