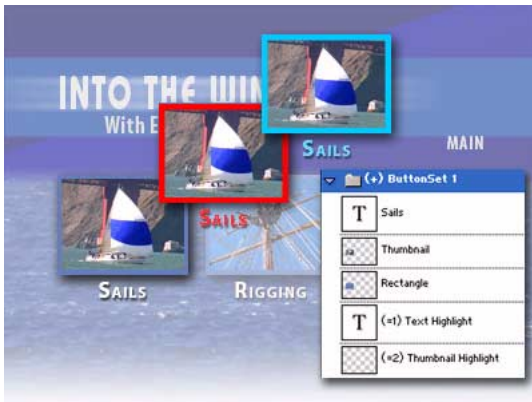Adobe Encore DVD
Create a menu in Adobe Photoshop

Adobe® Encore™ DVD works closely with Adobe Photoshop®. You can take advantage of the powerful design tools of Photoshop to create menus and buttons. If you add the proper layer-name prefixes to the layers in your menus, Adobe Encore DVD will automatically recognize button sets, highlighting, and video thumbnails. Once you import the menu into a project, you can modify it as you would any menu created in Adobe Encore DVD or you can jump back to Photoshop without closing the project.
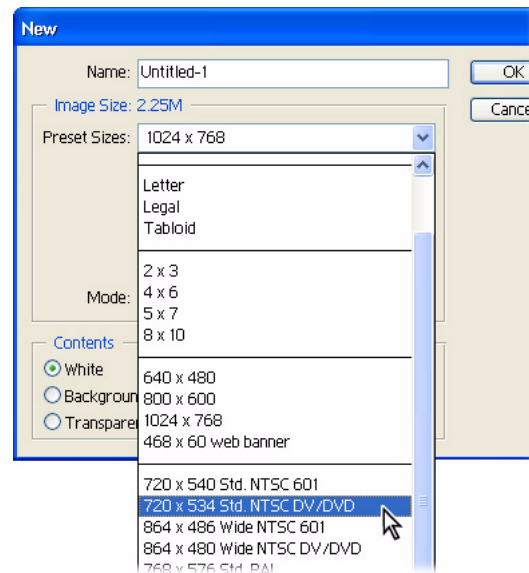
For this tutorial, you will need Photoshop and an idea for your menu.

1. Choose the right DV image size.

In Photoshop, create a new image using the preset image size that matches your television standard (NTSC DV or PAL) and screen width (standard or wide). For Mode, choose RGB.
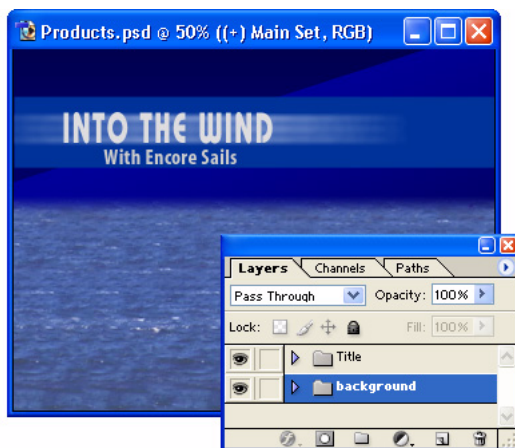
We've created a 720-by-534-pixel menu, the standard size for an NTSC DVD.

2. Create the background.

Add the images, text, lines, or shapes that make up the background. All elements that are not part of button layer sets (more about these in the next step) become the background of the menu. The background can be multilayered, with elements in layer sets or on individual layers. If you add lines, make them 3 pixels or greater to avoid flickering on a television screen. If you are creating an NTSC project, use only NTSC-safe colors. Colors that fall outside the NTSC color range can cause an unwanted halo effect when displayed on television monitors.

We've created a background using a still image, filled shapes, and a title.

3. Create buttons.

Create a layer set for the first button. Name the layer set using the prefix (+), including the parentheses, for example: (+) Main Menu. Adobe Encore DVD uses this prefix to identify button sets. Add all the elements that will make up the button into this layer set. You can include text and image layers. A button should be at least 70 by 60 pixels for proper visibility on a television. If you add text, make sure the font size is 20 points or greater to ensure that the viewer can read the text comfortably.

If your DVD is to be viewed on a computer, be aware that the footprint created by the content of this layer set determines the *hot zone*–the area that triggers highlighting when the mouse moves over it. Adobe Encore DVD creates the hot zone from the smallest rectangle that can encompass all the elements in the layer set. (Special layers within the button layer set define what the button highlight looks like. More about these in the next step.)

We've created the main menu button, a simple button that consists only of text.

4. Add button highlight layers.

To create highlighting for the button when the user selects and activates it, add up to three layers to the button set. A button highlight (also called a *subpicture*) may contain text and images, and may consist of up to three colors, but the colors must each be on separate layers. Each layer represents one color, and all three layers together serve as the highlight image. Objects on the layers must use a single, solid color and be on the same layer as other elements of the same color. Do not use gradients, feathering, or anti-aliasing. (Three colors are not required for button highlighting. You can use one or two layers, and therefore one or two colors, if you prefer.) Add one of the following prefixes to the name of each highlight layer: (=1), (=2), and (=3), for example (=1) Check Mark.

When you import the menu into your DVD project, Adobe Encore DVD automatically generates a color index or *color set* based on the colors in the highlight layers. The (=1), (=2), and (=3) prefixes map the layers to one of three color settings in the color set.

We've created a simple single-color text layer to highlight the main menu button.
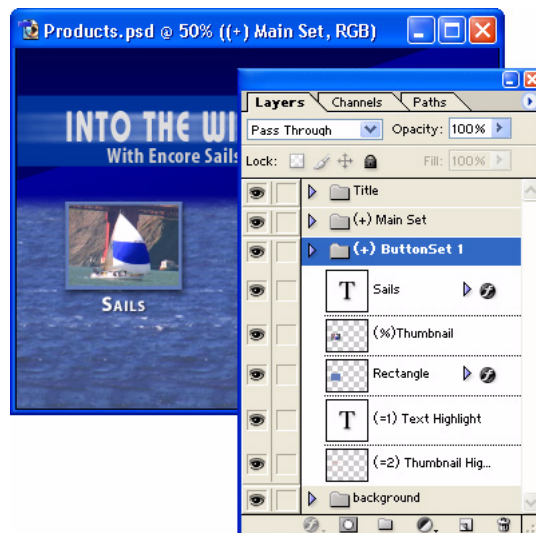

5. Create video thumbnail buttons.

If you want to create a button that will display a thumbnail image of a video, make a new button layer set. Remember to name it using the (+) prefix. Insert a layer into the new button layer set and add the prefix (%) to its name, for example, (%) Thumbnail. This prefix signals to Adobe Encore DVD that this layer will be used for a video thumbnail. On this layer, draw a rectangle that will serve as a placeholder for the video. The easiest way to maintain the correct proportions for the video is to draw a box the size of the menu (which matches the size of your video). Then, scale the box proportionally to the desired size. Rather than distort the video to fit the image, Adobe Encore DVD sizes the video to fit the smallest rectangle that will encompass the image. While the video remains rectangular, you can use masks to overlay the thumbnail if desired.

Add a text layer or other elements to the button layer set if desired. Follow step 4 to create the highlight layers for the button.
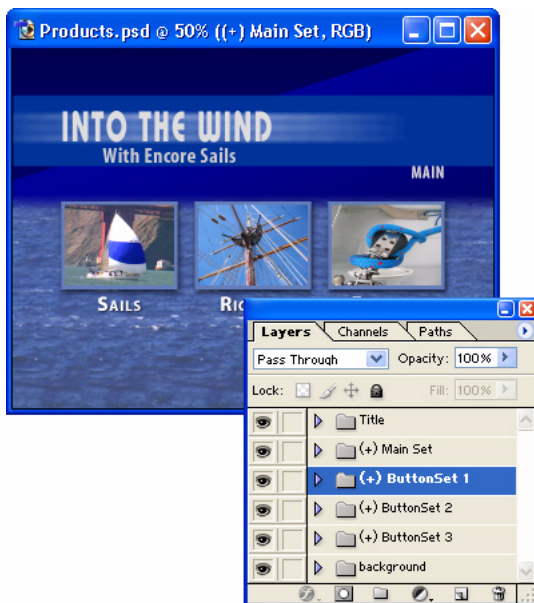
We've created a simple rectangular thumbnail with text below it. Instead of drawing a rectangle, we used a still image for our placeholder. The highlight forms an outline around the thumbnail.

6. Add the remaining buttons.

Add additional buttons as needed by either duplicating the ones you already made and placing them in new positions, or by creating new ones. Edit any text within the buttons as needed to complete your menu. Save the file. You are ready to import your menu into a DVD project.

We've added two more video thumbnail buttons and changed the button text on each.

7. Import the menu into Adobe Encore DVD.

Open Adobe Encore DVD. Create a new project (or open an existing one), and import the menu (use the File > Import as Menu command). Notice that Adobe Encore DVD has replaced any video thumbnail layers with gray and that the highlight layers are not visible. Until you link the video thumbnail button to the video, you see only a gray placeholder. To view the button highlights, click the Show Selected Subpicture Highlight button at the bottom of the Menu Editor window. This button displays the highlight images of all the buttons.

If you want to modify the menu, you can jump back to Photoshop by choosing Menu > Edit in Photoshop. When you save the changes in Photoshop, the menu reflects those changes in Adobe Encore DVD.