

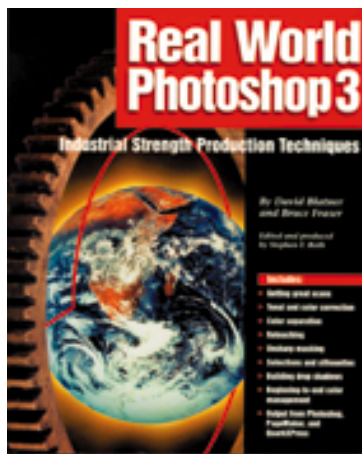
## The standout among Photoshop books

By David Herman

**Real World Photoshop 3: Industrial Strength Production Techniques**, by David Blatner and Bruce Fraser. Berkeley, Calif.: Peachpit Press, 1996. \$39.95 (\$55.00 in Canada). ISBN 1-56609-169-1. (510) 548-4393; [www.peachpit.com](http://www.peachpit.com).

WALK INTO ANY DECENT BOOKSTORE these days and you'll find dozens of Photoshop titles—sometimes even an entire Photoshop section. Some books specialize in a particular facet of Photoshop (cool special effects, beginners' tips, filters, etc.), but most are "survey" books explaining the basic concepts and helping users navigate the deeper, murkier waters of Photoshop's more complex subjects.

I have most of them, and although there are a lot of good ones, there's one that stands out from the crowd: David Blatner and Bruce Fraser's *Real World Photoshop 3: Industrial Strength Production Techniques*.



The authors have been around the block a few times—some of Blatner's other books include *Real World Scanning and Half-tones*, *The Desktop Publisher's Survival Kit*, and *The QuarkXPress Book*; Fraser is a contributing editor to *MacWEEK* and *MacUser* and is a recognized expert on Photoshop. They write with authority and panache, in a style that's accessible, entertaining, and easy to understand.

*Real World Photoshop 3* succeeds for the same reasons that the other books in

Peachpit Press's popular *Real World* series succeed: it's chock-full of solid advice, savvy tricks, and clear explanations of everything from basic concepts to the most thorny issues.

Blatner and Fraser gleefully advertise on the back cover of *Real World Photoshop 3*, "No gratuitous special effects included!" and "Pinch, Ripple and Spherize filters not covered!" Rather, as the book's preface promises, they focus on "mov[ing] images through Photoshop—getting good scans in, working your will on them, and putting out world-class, camera-ready film." This is a book that will help you get your work done.

The authors don't hesitate to wade right into the swamps of Photoshop's most intimidating subjects, where others sometimes fear to tread. For example, for many users the single biggest struggle in Photoshop is choosing the right settings to get predictable, quality color, from input to the final printed piece. While some Photoshop books briefly touch on this incredibly complex subject in a few paragraphs or maybe (if you're lucky) a handful of pages, *Real World Photoshop 3* devotes an entire chapter (almost 40 pages) to Photoshop's critical color preferences alone. There's also a great chapter on understanding color issues, 50 pages each on tonal and color correction, very helpful information on sharpening images and on working with duotones, and even a great section on the often-overlooked topic of selections (my own view is that getting the right selection in Photoshop is often half the battle—otherwise you'll end up fighting with your file and having to do much more work than necessary).

*Real World Photoshop 3* is written from a Mac-centric viewpoint, but that shouldn't scare away any Windows users, since once you're inside Photoshop, things function nearly identically whether you're running it on a Mac or a PC. If you are a PC user, all you'll need to do is remember the simple keystroke equivalents and get over the fact that you're looking at illustrations of Mac dialog boxes (which, although they have minor stylistic differences, generally function identically to Windows dialogs).

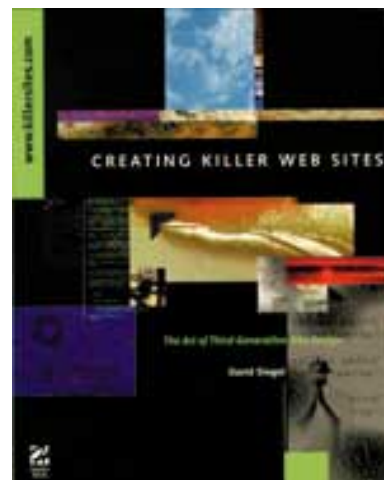
With so many people using Photoshop for so many different things, it's usually dangerous to generalize about what's best for all of them. In this case, though, it's a pretty safe bet that if you're looking for the

best Photoshop book out there, look no further: get a copy of Blatner and Fraser's *Real World Photoshop 3*. It's worth its weight in RAM.

## Luring, seducing, and coaxing on the Web

By Hatsy Thompson

**Creating Killer Web Sites: The Art of Third-Generation Site Design**, by David Siegel. Indianapolis: Hayden Books, 1996. \$45.00 (U.S.). ISBN 1-56830-289-4. (800) 428-5331; [www.mcp.com/hayden](http://www.mcp.com/hayden).



DESIGNING A WEB PAGE USING HTML (HyperText Markup Language) is like writing *Romeo and Juliet* in a language with no words for love: it can be done, but only crudely and with great effort. Web designers, accustomed to print's rich vocabulary for relationship, typographic style, and color, find themselves struggling with a language that knows only the rudiments of proportion and emphasis. The brainchild of scientists eager to share dry text and simple graphics, HTML was not conceived for sophisticated layout. But inasmuch as it's become the lingua franca of the Web, designers are stuck with it, at least for the time being. So, how to make a silk purse out of this sow's ear?

David Siegel, Web designer, typographer, philosopher, vegan, diarist, and cyber-narcissist, has published a guide to doing just that. *Creating Killer Web Sites: The Art of Third-Generation Site Design* is part panegyric on good design, part nuts-and-bolts production handbook. With an

## the Well-Equipped Desktop

undergraduate degree in mathematics, professional training in digital type design (Tekton, the architectural font, is one of his creations), service on various W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) HTML committees, and a spirited, opinionated style, Siegel knows his subjects well.

Says Siegel, third-generation Web sites demand their designers combine the visual

morticed images and nesting tables; a mom-and-pop storefront demonstrates the use of client-side image maps and template design; a hot-list page incorporates drop shadows and advanced table tricks; and a photographic gallery uses animated GIFs and simulated randomness.

The book's last section presents roughly a dozen model Web sites, a guide to designing with PDF, predictions on the future of HTML (really a wish list for Web design tool developers), and tips for smoother surfing (change your browser's unvisited link color from blue to red because red stands out more—"Have you ever seen a blue speedometer dial?"). All these goodies are amply illustrated and presented with verve.

*Killer Sites* is not just a book.

With its companion Web site (whose URL, [www.killersites.com](http://www.killersites.com), appears prominently on the book's cover), it's a prototype of the very latest in publishing packaging—the "book/site." The *Killer Sites* Web site fits tongue and groove with the *Killer Sites* book, featuring (in mid-September) recent PDF developments, a downloadable Netscape browser color palette, and links to all the book's case study sites. One of

them—Siegel's own personal site ([www.dsiegel.com](http://www.dsiegel.com))—bears exploring both for form and for content. An essay entitled "The Balkanization of the Web" is at once philosophical treatise and demonstration of color as navigational tool. "Dine With Dave" charts Siegel's lunch dates—where, with whom, what was eaten, and what was said (over pasta and salad at the Farfalle in Hollywood, Harry Marks of the American Film Institute reportedly remarked, "Having a heart attack really changes your outlook on computer graphics."); the page is both an exercise in whimsical self-promotion and a fine implementation of HTML table tags. (Interestingly, Siegel violates his own counsel about timeliness: his lunches seem to have stopped inexplicably on June 11. Has Siegel really had no Web-worthy meals since that artichoke/roasted red pepper sandwich at Caffe Centro?)

*Killer Sites* is one of the most useful, readable, and imaginative guides to Web design and production so far. If you're a member of the third generation, or would like to be, read/visit this book/site. ■



palette of print design (using hierarchy and metaphor), the guile of consumer marketing ("lure, seduce, coax," for which Siegel's own site presses Marilyn Monroe into service), and the spatial sensibilities of architecture, to create sites that entice, delight, inform, and build "net equity" (audience mindshare). Ample illustrations support Siegel's argument that first- and second-generation sites (respectively, "slide presentations shown on a cement wall" and those that are "technology-driven, with noisy backgrounds and interminable waits") are doomed to cyberdust.

Siegel then offers up a treasure trove of ingenious, well-documented workarounds: the "single-pixel GIF trick" for controlling white space and typographic leading, the "invisible table trick" for managing spatial relationships, and a host of others for laying out pages, rendering type, and preparing images. A half-dozen case studies show these tips and more in action: an astronomy enthusiast's home page illustrates the use of browser offsets, anti-aliasing, and tiling; Siegel's own home page features