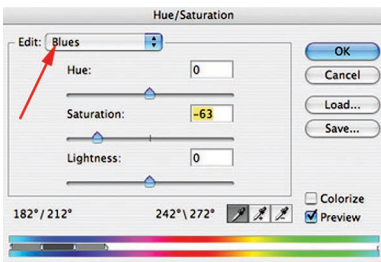


The Blue Dress



If you photograph brides and grooms outdoor in the shade, you will find that, even after you get the skin color you like, the whites are still contaminated with blue. This is especially evident in the bride's dress. Some people like it—I don't. The two most common ways I have seen people remove the blue cast is to 1) make a meticulous selection of just the dress and then change the color balance or the saturation; or 2) Use the magic wand to select the dress, holding the shift key and clicking to add to the selection, and then change the color balance or the saturation.

Instead, let's ask the question—what is different about the blue dress? Well—it's blue! Is there anything else in the image that is blue? Surprisingly, you will find that, unless there is sky in the image, there is usually nothing else in the image that is blue. Clothing and flowers are the only exceptions, and such things happen in only a small percentage of the images I deal with. So most of the time, we don't need to select the area we wish to change, we only need to limit what we do to the blue color.



The way I remove the blue is to choose Hue/Saturation, use the pull down menu to select Blues, and drop the saturation. I don't bring it all the way down to where it would be in a B&W image, as that doesn't look right. You can leave just a

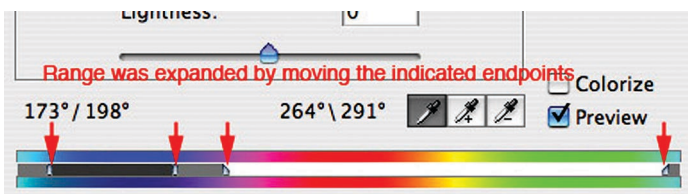
hint of blue. That's all I do for the majority of such images. But what if the blue isn't *quite* blue? Often there is a hint of cyan there. Occasionally, to get the skin tones where I want them, there is a hint of magenta. What then?

The answer is to actually sample the offending color. Here's how you do that. While in the Hue/Saturation dialogue box, choose the Blues as before, but if you move the cursor over the image, it



turns into an eyedropper—just click on the offending color and Photoshop will choose that exact shade to use. To see what’s happening, watch the colored bars at the bottom of the dialogue while you click on different colors. There is a little dark bar in between the two bands of color. The dark bar shows the range of colors that will be affected. The light grey bars on either side of the dark bar show the *transition* area, the colors that will be *partly* affected. You can click on any of the little

endpoints and drag them wherever you want, so you can expand the range of colors to whatever is necessary to remove the cast.



So what do you do if there **is** something else that is blue in the image that you want to keep that way? You could use one of three methods, depending on how big the area to retain is and how separated it is from the area to be changed (Choice #1 is what I use the most.):

- 1) Draw a quick lasso around the blue area to be retained. Press Command Shift I (Control Shift I) to invert the selection. Now the area you just selected will be excluded from the Hue/Saturation changes. Alternatively, you could just select the area to be changed. These are quick “swoops” with the lasso tool, not delicate and accurate selections—such are not needed because all you are trying to do is protect or select the blue areas—the other areas do not matter.
- 2) Do the Hue/Saturation change, then use the History Brush to revert to the original color in areas you didn’t want changed.
- 3) Use a Hue/Saturation Adjustment layer, make your change, then paint on the mask with black in the areas you didn’t want changed.