

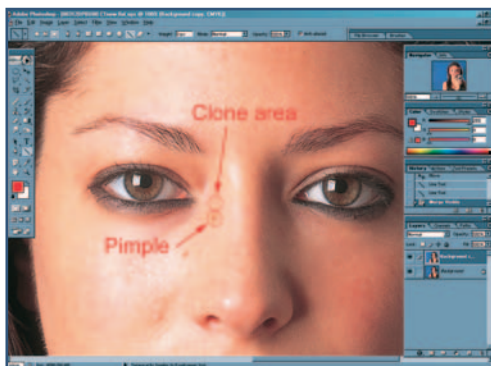
DARKROOM : PHOTO EDITING

TUTORIAL INFO

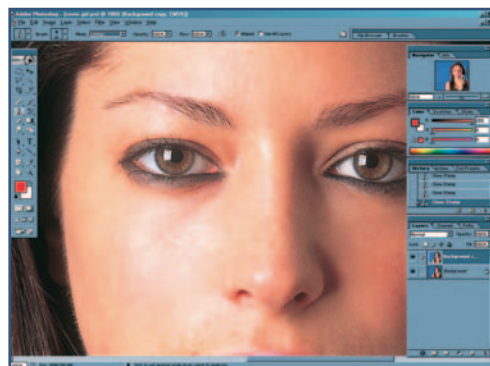
WRITER	SOFTWARE	ALTERNATIVES	TIME REQUIRED	DIFFICULTY
Duncan Evans	Adobe Photoshop 7	Jasc Paint Shop Pro 8, or Adobe Photoshop Elements 2	30 mins	Moderate

Cover Girl

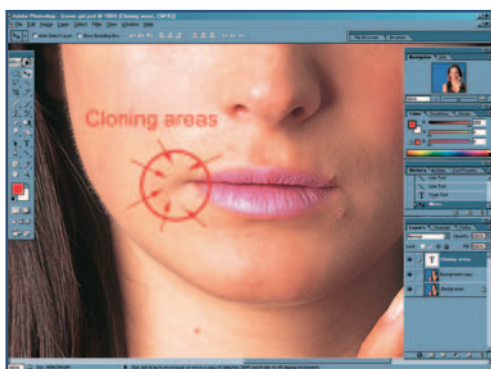
See how we improved the looks of this month's cover model and apply the techniques yourself



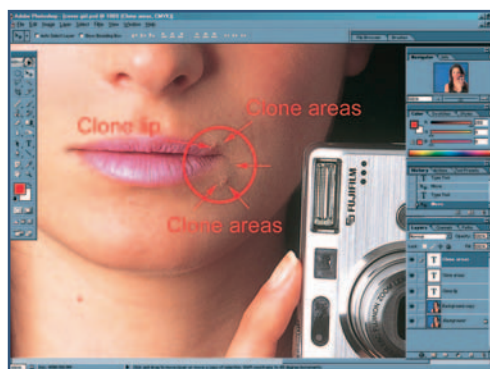
1 Firstly, make a duplicate of the Background Layer so that if it all goes wrong the original image can be easily retrieved (Ctrl-J). Next, examine the problem areas. The first is that the model has lots of pimples. The traditional way to tackle these is to use the Clone tool to sample from a similar shaded area (Alt-click) around the pimple and clone the clean skin over the top of the blemish. Leaving the Clone tool's brush at 100 per cent opacity will preserve the sharpness in the cloned area, but will cause repeating patterns. Using lower opacity settings avoids any patterns, but makes the cloned area soft. This technique can be used to soften and smooth the entire face area to give a flawless finish.



2 To keep the surface texture sharp use the Clone tool at 100 per cent opacity, but set the brush's blend mode to Lighten when cloning over areas that are darker than the brush's source area, and at Darken where the affected area is lighter than the surrounding skin. Using the Lighten mode means that only parts of the pimple that are darker than those in the cloned area will be replaced. As the brush used is circular and the pimple area is irregular, only clone over the places that need to be removed to avoid creating a large circular area of cloned material.

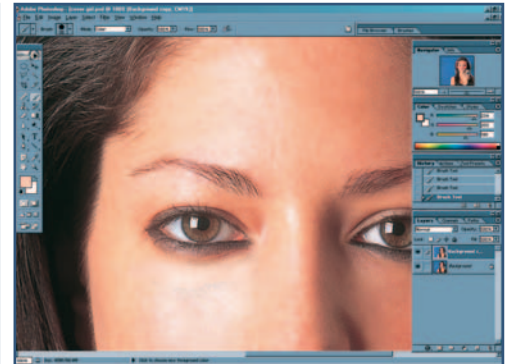


3 The next problem area is around the corner of the mouth where there is a combination of ropy make-up, pimples, hairs and discolouration. The trick here is to clone inwards, using a number of areas surrounding the affected zone as the source material. Cloning the clear surrounding areas inwards, so they meet in the middle of the pimple will make the fix look more natural. The area to be careful of is the top-right of the affected zone, as there is a reflection from the flash that cannot be extended downwards, as it would look out of place. The Clone brush was set to a combination of Lighten, Darken and Normal blend modes.

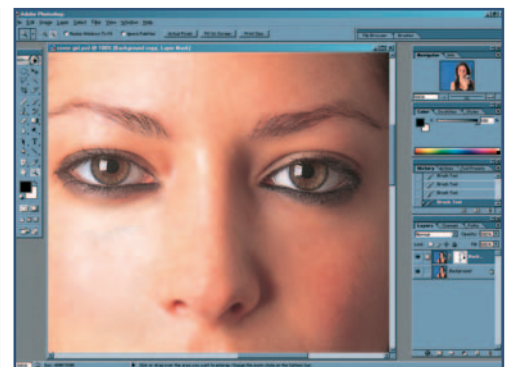


4 On the other side of the lips there is a similar problems, but to a lesser degree. Here the pimples are lighter thanks to the shadowing, so the Darken blend mode can be used to remove them. The other problem is that there is a pimple smack on the edge of the lip. This requires a small amount of the lip and the area just above it to be cloned along, using the Normal blend mode at 100 per cent to avoid losing sharpness.





5 Some extra work was done around the left eye, bleaching the colour out of the slight shadow underneath, then sampling the adjacent skin colour (Alt-click on a clear area to pick up the colour under the cursor) and painting it over the bleached area using the Colour blend mode for the brush. This lays down the foreground colour while preserving underlying tonality (brightness and contrast) which gives the image its texture and form. At this point make any corrections to colour that are needed (in this case, this was unnecessary).



6 Having been shot at f32 on medium format film, the image is razor sharp; but in this case it has exposed a lot of flaws with the skin. A final option is to duplicate the corrected layer, apply a two pixel Gaussian Blur to the copied layer and create a layer mask (click on the Create Layer Mask at the bottom of the Layers palette). The Brush tool, set at 30 per cent opacity, was used to paint on the mask to completely remove the blurred eyes and camera. The lips and hair were similarly treated, with the Brush's opacity set at 50 per cent. The mask covering the area surrounding key facial features was painted at 12 per cent to blend them into the blurred areas. Painting with black will hide whatever is in the masked layer, while painting with white over the same area will reveal what was hidden.