

**Product:** Nik Color Efex Pro by Nik Multimedia  
**MSRP:** 299.00 **Street price:** 249.00  
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**Description** (what's it do?): Nik MM offers this suite of digital photo filtering tools for most major photo manipulation applications. Adjust tone, sky effects and, my favorite, a polarizing effect are among the filters offered in this complete package.

**Minimum requirements:** Photoshop 4x or later, or Photoshop LE, Photo Deluxe or other Adobe PS plug-in standard application. Runs on OS 9x, or OSX and Win95/98/NT/2000/ME/XP. (No processor or RAM minimums listed on product packaging nor on the NMM web site)

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS:** Are really fine quality output product that provides clean, natural looking results when you want them and funky, even outrageous ones on demand. Although the sliders could be larger and more "aqua" in appearance, they are easy to read and use with previewing on the fly - even on my ol' 500 Mhz G4. I like the GUI content.  
4 out of 5

**WHAT I FOUND:** Like any plug-in suite, there are some I really love and others I'll never use. The quality is there in this product. The interface is easy to read, although (as above), a little more "Mac-liness" would be nice. Excellent output for both web and print. For this test, I used both indoor and outdoor family photos from two different lower resolution digital cameras (both under 3MP). I am happy to say that the results were very good and, again, very fast to set up and render. Unlike some other brands, Nik MM does an excellent job of creating effective filters. Contrast where appropriate and soft where you want it.

**LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY?:** Given that this is clearly a pro product that can really be used by anyone with a "good eye," I'd say that anyone proficient in Photoshop will have fun with these filters.  
LEVEL: Pro-Sumer

**LIKES? :** I LOVE the polarization and sunshine effects. Great to "help out" an otherwise UV affected image or to create a little edgier tone. The night and sky effects are natural when not over-applied and my suggestion is to apply the effect until you can really see it and then back off a bit. Especially if you use Image-ready to put your output on the web. Applying these effects in layers can really give you great results. Especially if you are trying to come up with something really clever for presentation folders, products and/or artistic effect. The black/white conversion creates the most effective and dramatic results I've seen to date with an excellent "spectrum" control slider that really produces excellent results from a variety of lighting conditions. The pop-art effect is incredible and vivid; it just makes you want to play with images to see the results. The effect makes family photos silly and interesting but can also produce stunning backgrounds, art and other bold images.

**DISLIKES? :** Although the sepia filters are very effective, I found the sepia to be a little on the cool side compared to traditional sepia. Still far better than the filters that come with PS but I'd like to see a little more temperature adjustment by the end user. The pastel effect was a little too contrasty for my taste, however, on more balanced tone originals, the results were acceptable.

**HOW DOES IT COMPARE? :** I believe, like with many filters, that it is important to choose your tools wisely. The right combination of filters that do what you want them to do is always best, but this requires a little foresight. As a suite of filters, Nik MM has produced an excellent product that incorporates some "real-life" and usable filters that produce excellent results.

**RECOMMEND TO A FRIEND?:** For the creative pro, advanced consumer and pro-sumers, this is one you want to have in your library.

**REVIEW HARDWARE:** Apple Titanium PowerBook G4 500 - 1Gb RAM - 10.3.1

**FINAL THOUGHTS:** I would love to have the really key filters (polarize, sunshine, pop, b/w, sky effect) bundled with Nik's Sharpener. Again, you get a lot with this package, and all of the Nik products, that are really worth the pricing. If you are frustrated by Adobe's stock filters and really want your output to stand out, Nik Multimedia Color Efex Pro fills that need very well.

**Overall rating:** 4 out of 5 : Excellent

For more information, visit: <<http://www.nikmultimedia.com/>>

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