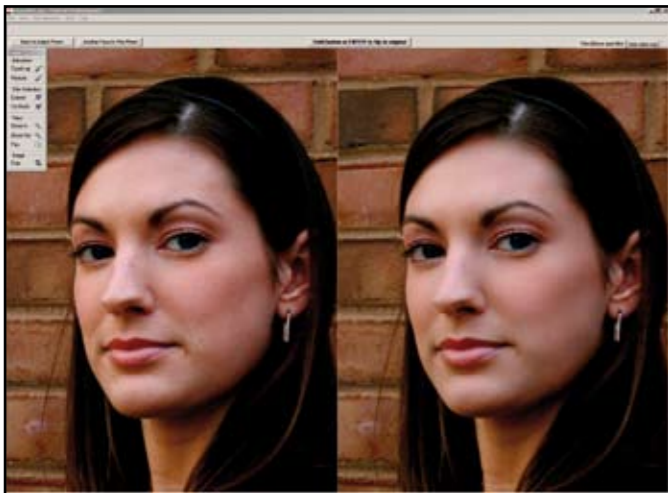
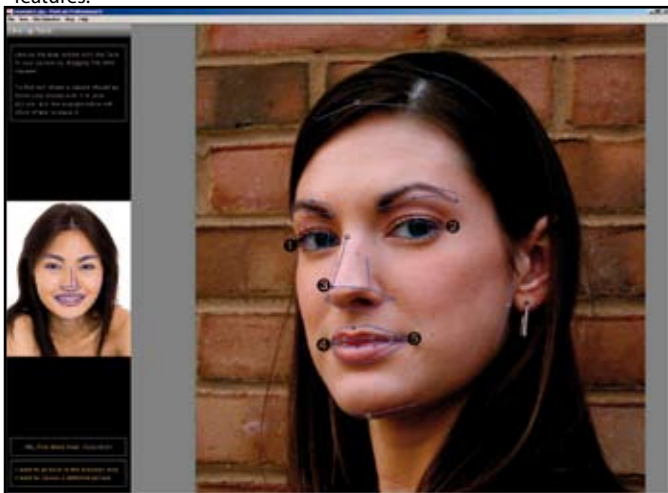


Portrait Professional Max

Version 6

We are indebted to member, Martin Sellars, for bringing this software to our attention. A Google search for the name revealed a substantial backing by all those who have reviewed the product, so we obtained a review copy and here is what we have found. The software was developed by a London-based company called 'anthropics' who also specialise in animation.

All of the other reviewers comment on the simplicity of the program in use, and this indeed was our own finding. The workflow is followed by stepping through a wizard and clicking the space bar to say, 'OK I've done that'. If you are unsure quite where to click your mouse the animated image at the sidebar expands as you navigate over the control points, to show just where they should be placed. After the placing of five control points a set of bezier-like curves appear, outlining the main features of the face and these may be adjusted for a more exact match to the model's features.



The speed at which we progressed was interesting. The first attempt to place the control points took 24 seconds, the second 18 seconds, and the third 11 seconds. Adjusting them dropped from 2 minutes to 40 seconds by the third attempt. If you accept the (very satisfactory) default settings for a female beauty enhancement, you may therefore be underway in about 50 seconds. Allowing for 5 seconds to process the file and another 5 seconds to save it, you are all done in about a minute.

ABOVE TOP: The top image shows the positions of the five control points, set by the user. The image to the left zooms automatically to show you just where the wizard expects you to place the control point.

ABOVE: A before and after preview is available as you manoeuvre the sliders so that you may judge your retouches. You may go back to the control points and adjust them further should you need to.

Moving On

There is more to Portrait Professional than simple skin softening and blemish removal. You may, for example, retouch one face in an image and then go back and complete the process on other faces in the image simply by clicking on the 'retouch another face in this picture' button. At every starting stage you will be asked the gender of the subject – the program is trained to retouch differently for males and females.



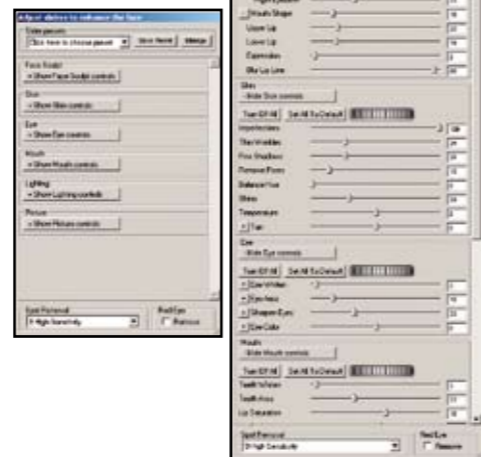
More Advanced Yet

If the retouch defaults are not quite to your liking, there are six drop down menus, each with a sub-set of sliders as follows:

- Face Sculpt – 14 sliders
- Skin – 8 sliders
- Eyes – 4 sliders
- Mouth – 6 sliders
- Lighting – 4 sliders
- Picture – 5 sliders

ABOVE: The two sets of control points have been superimposed in Photoshop for illustration. In practice you complete the first face then ask to retouch another face in the same image.

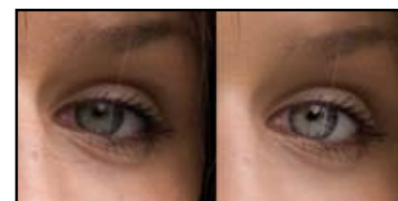
By the time you get this far, Portrait Professional has expanded into a massively powerful retouching suite, with complete control over the colour and shape of every portion of the face, from eye, nose and jaw shape, to teeth colour, lighting and exposure control. The amazing skill of the software design is that it remains trivially simple to use throughout! The changes that may be made are controlled and quite subtle, even a very clumsy operator would be hard-pressed to create a freak in the way that the Photoshop Liquify Tool can! This is of considerable importance in a busy studio – a relatively junior staff member could pick up the required skills in a couple of hours and be operating at a level that would take a Photoshop operator years to achieve.



CAPTION: We had the advantage of being able to flick between Photoshop layers to compare the 'before' and 'after' images, using just the default settings of Portrait Professional.

Here is what has actually been modified

1. The right eye has been lifted
 2. The left eye has been lowered
 3. The eyebrows have followed both movements
 4. The right cheek has been brought inwards to narrow the face
 5. The jaw has been moved back slightly
 6. The forehead has been moved slightly higher
 7. The eyes have been whitened
 8. The pupils have been lightened and made a more intense blue
 9. The skin texture has been softened
 10. The shadows have been filled to improve the modelling
- All this was accomplished in 60 seconds!



ABOVE: The model's face has been very slightly thinned. The eye enhancements have been individually adjusted for a near maximum effect, which remains quite realistic.

"It comes with a cast iron recommendation"

www.portraitprofessional.com

FINAL THOUGHTS

If you think we are over-egging the pudding, go and download a trial version of the software from www.portraitprofessional.com. At £39.99, this is a piece of software you can hardly be without, it is a remarkable bit of coding at an even more remarkable price, nothing we can write will top what you will find after your first couple of attempts! It comes with a cast iron recommendation. We understand that a Mac version is in the final stages of preparation. As footnote, we casually mentioned Portrait Professional to Gary Galt when discussing his review of The Photographic Organiser for this issue. He downloaded the software overnight and the following morning he showed it to a client who had come for a passport photograph, she went out with a large print as well as her passport picture – job done!