

REMOVING HAZE FROM IMAGES IN ADOBE CAMERA RAW

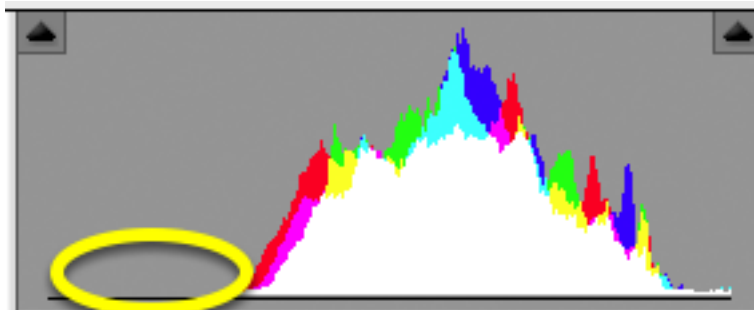
This brief lesson shows how to remove haze from an image in Adobe Camera Raw (ACR). The images and text are copyright and may not be reproduced without written permission of Roy Killen who may be contacted on roykillen@mac.com

Original "hazy" image



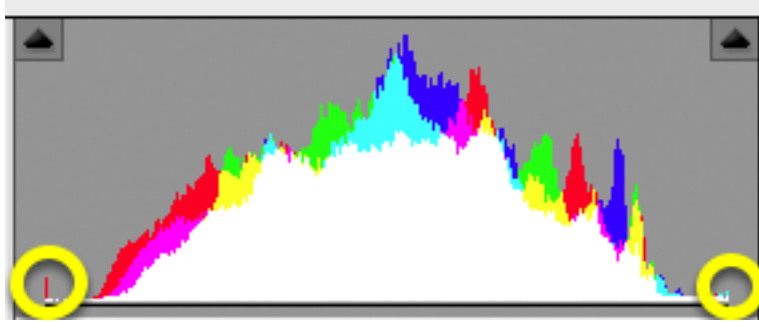
This image was taken through a plate glass window on an overcast day in Hanoi (so there was lots of smog). It is not very clear and there is a "haze" across it. If the image is opened in Adobe Camera Raw (ACR) it's histogram is as follows.

Original histogram



Note the obvious lack of tones at the dark end of the spectrum.

Histogram after adjustments



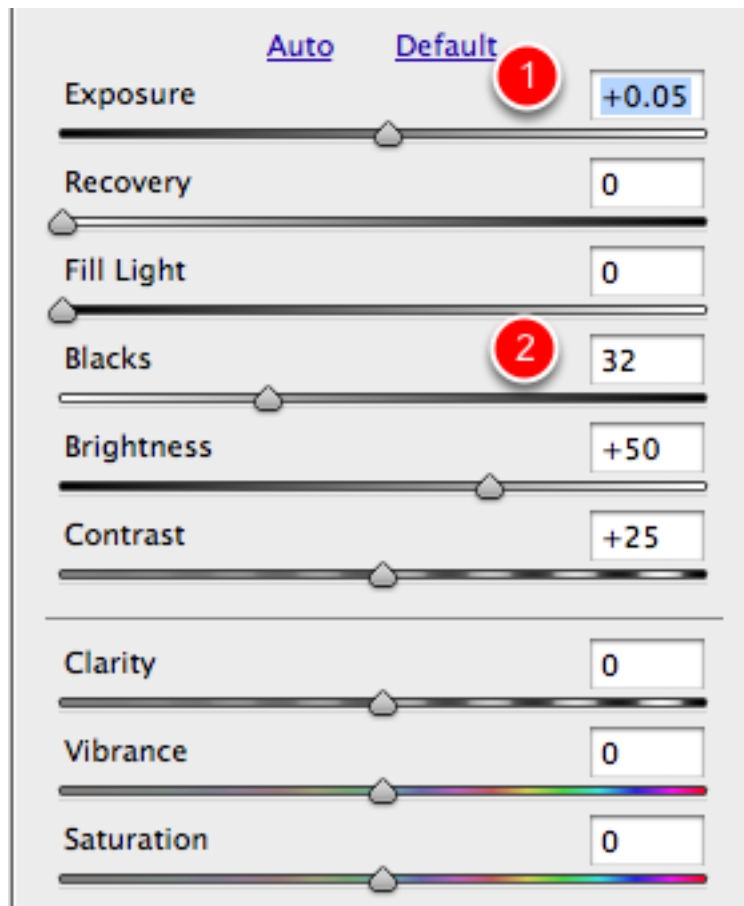
If adjustments are made to push the histogram out to the two ends, to the point just before clipping, the following image is obtained.

Adjusted image



Notice that the "haze" has been reduced considerably (particularly in the foreground); the colours become more saturated and the image looks sharper.

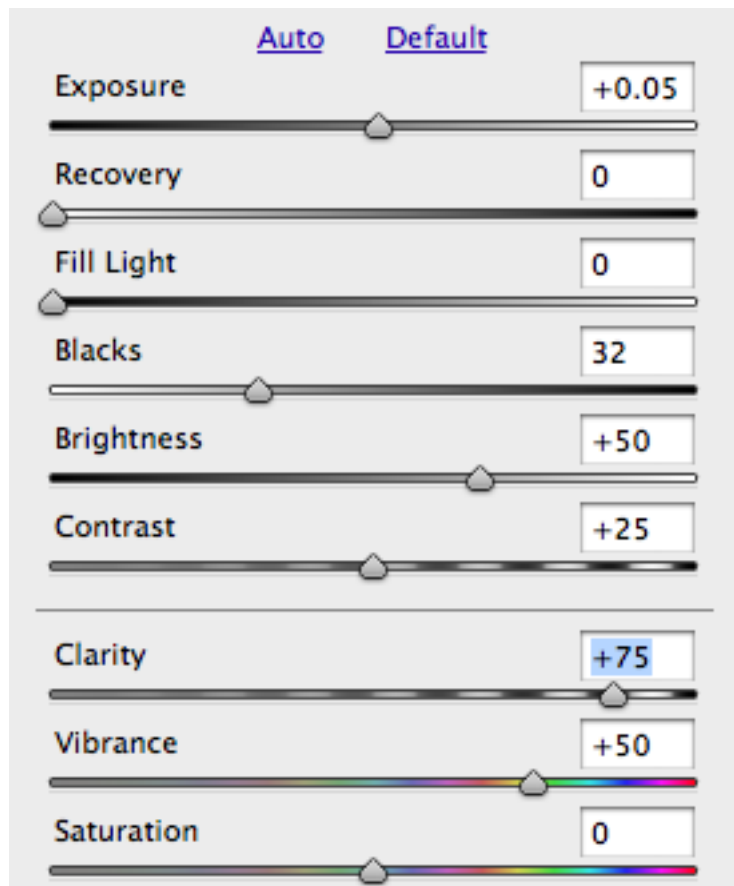
"Blacks" adjustment



The above improvement in the image was achieved with two simple adjustments: (1) A very slight increase in exposure to boost the highlights, and (2) Adjustment of the "blacks" which sets the tone that becomes absolute black.

The result was an image with tones across the full range.

Additional adjustments



The image can be given a little more "punch" by adjusting the "Clarity" (which alters localised contrast) and "Vibrance" (which increases the saturation of colours that are not already highly saturated).

The result is shown below.

Final image



Comparison - "before" and "after" adjustments



There are other ways of reducing haze. For example, you could use a Levels adjustment in Photoshop (or other image editor) to make the initial adjustments to the two ends of the histogram and then a curves adjustment to slightly boost the contrast. In later versions of Photoshop you can also add a Vibrance adjustment layer. The overall result will be similar to that achieved in ACR, but I think the ACR approach is quicker and easier if you have captured a RAW file.

For more tutorials by Roy Killen, visit the Belmont 16s Photography Club web site at www.belmont16footers-photoclub.com.au/