

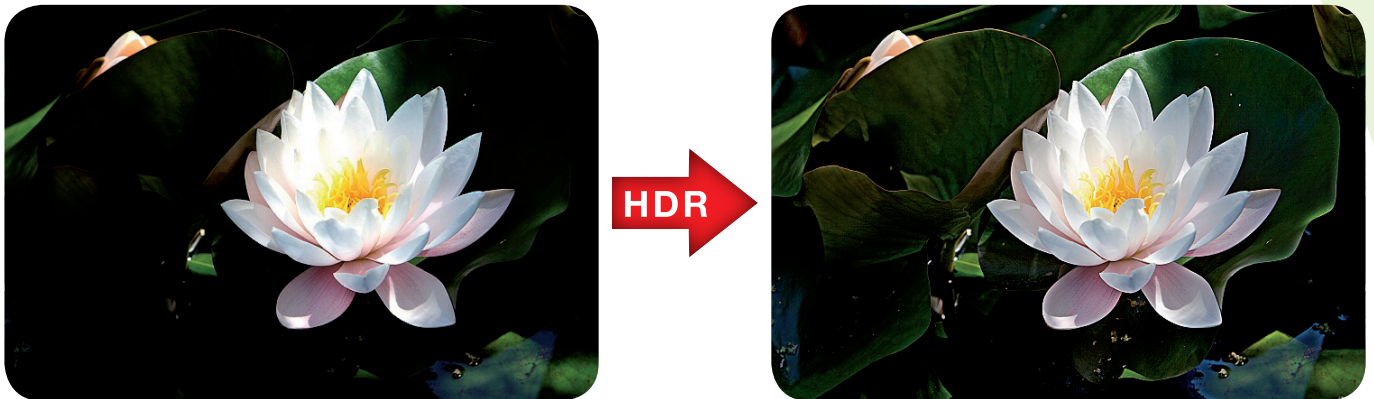
## Using HDR to Get More Detail in Your Pictures

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**This tutorial is fully applicable for Zoner Photo Studio 12 Professional only.**

If you are a Zoner Photo Studio 12 Home user, you can still test out HDR by temporarily switching to a trial of the Professional version. To do so, use the **License...** item in the **Help** menu. If you use an earlier version and have not yet used the version 12 trial, you can download and install the [trial version](#), and use it 30 days for free.

We'd like to show you one of the ways that you can easily create perfect photos using the **HDR function in Zoner Photo Studio 12.**



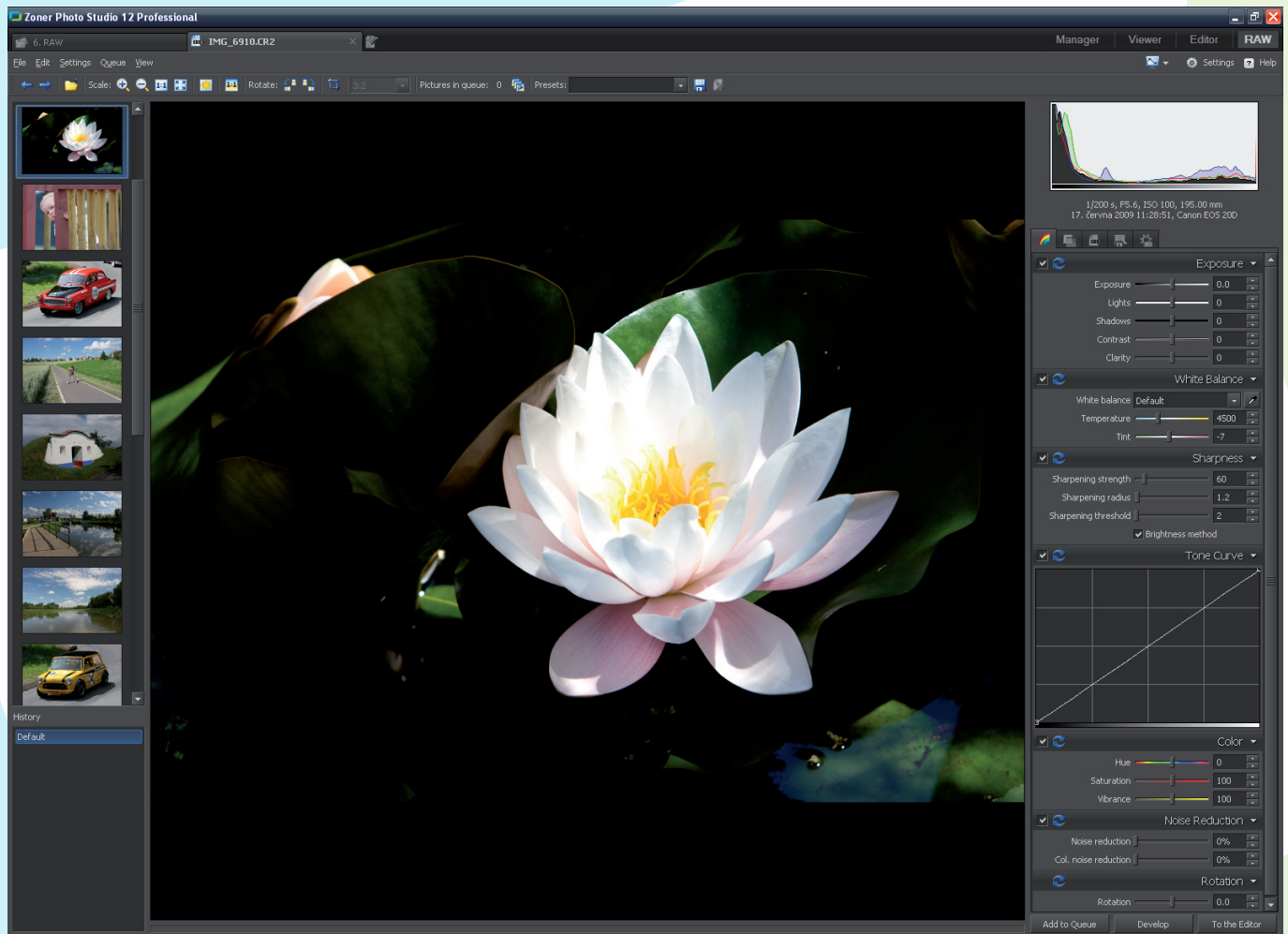
You can download originals of these photos before and after HDR edits here:

- the original RAW file—Zoner Photo Studio—[HDR demo.CR2](#)
- the final HDR image—Zoner Photo Studio—[HDR demo\\_hdr.jpg](#)

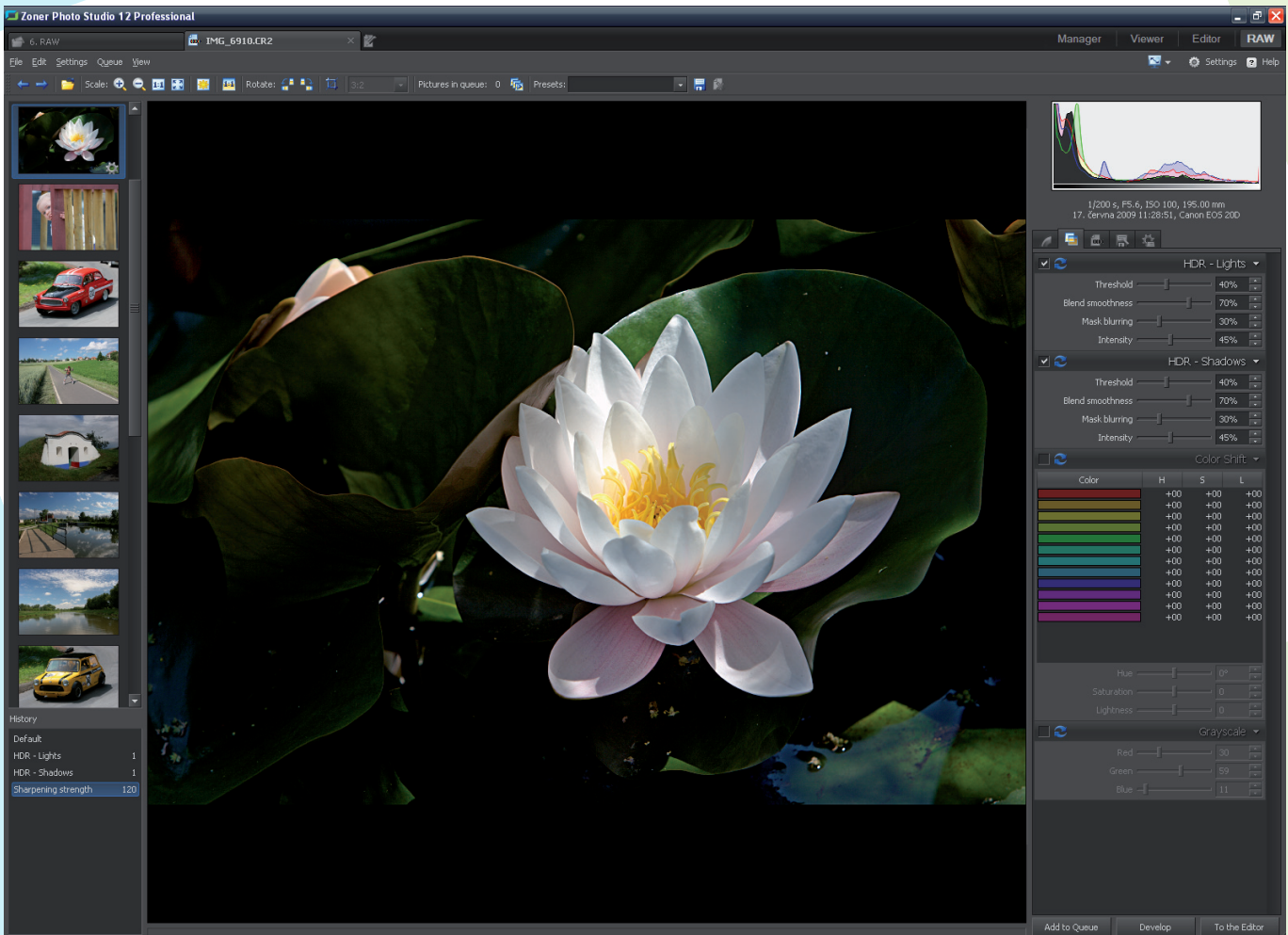
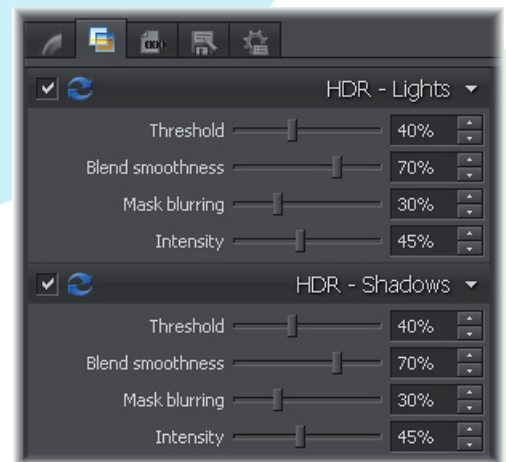
A HDR (High Dynamic Range) function helps meld two or three shots of exactly the same scene with differing exposure levels into a single picture with enhanced light/shadow detail. HDR work is sometimes nicknamed “sandwiching.” This function is useful when photographing scenes containing a wide range of lighting levels, such as a dark forest beneath a bright sky. A scene with such a wide exposure range cannot be photographed in any way that will capture the details in all parts of the picture, so the photographer is forced to sacrifice detail in either the light areas or the dark ones. However, if the photographer takes three pictures with differing exposure levels—underexposed, overexposed, and “inbetween,” they can solve this problem using HDR. Remember, in order to use HDR, all shots need to be taken from the same spot. Thus you essentially need to use a tripod when taking source pictures for HDR! If only there were a way to turn one photograph into the full set of three HDR source photographs...

## HDR From a Single Photograph

If your camera enables it, you really can create turn a single photograph into an HDR image. You can do this when you start from the RAW-format photograph, as these contain an unusually large exposure range. To do so, select the RAW-format photo in question and switch into the **RAW module**. The button for this is at the top right of the program window.



The main purpose of the RAW Module is to convert RAW-format pictures into pictures in ordinary formats. Before actually performing the conversion—“developing” the picture—you can adjust the conversion parameters, including those for HDR. In the right side of the window, switch to the Effects tab. The first two sections of this tab serve for work with HDR. Although you can do HDR with just “middle plus lights” or “middle plus shadows,” the most typical is to use both lights and shadows. The settings groups for each are activated separately, using the checkbox atop each group. The preview in the preview window updates while you work to show the effects of your latest changes to HDR settings.



### The HDR Settings in Detail:

Although the settings for lights and shadows are separate, they work the same way. The **Threshold** setting defines the brightness level beyond which material from the over/underexposed picture starts being copied into the “middle” picture. It is best if this transition is not completely sharp—if material starts copied in gradually instead as the distance from the Threshold increases. To define how smooth this blending process is, use **Blend smoothness**. Not even this kind of blending is enough to hide the transition on its own, however. Thus an “unsharp mask” is also used to help bleed the changes out into pixels surrounding the changed areas. The unsharpness of the unsharp mask is controlled by the **Mask blurring** setting. The last setting is **Intensity**, which sets the ratio of visibility between the original picture and the one being copied in.

In this example, the dark areas are sorely lacking in detail. Set the **Intensity** in the **HDR – Shadows** group to the full 100 percent. The bright parts of this flower, on the other hand, do not need their details enhanced very much, so set the **Intensity** under **HDR – Lights** to just 20 percent. You can now safely go on and adjust other RAW conversion settings and develop the photograph into a file or into the Editor for further editing

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For more photo editing tutorials, see [Tutorials](#).