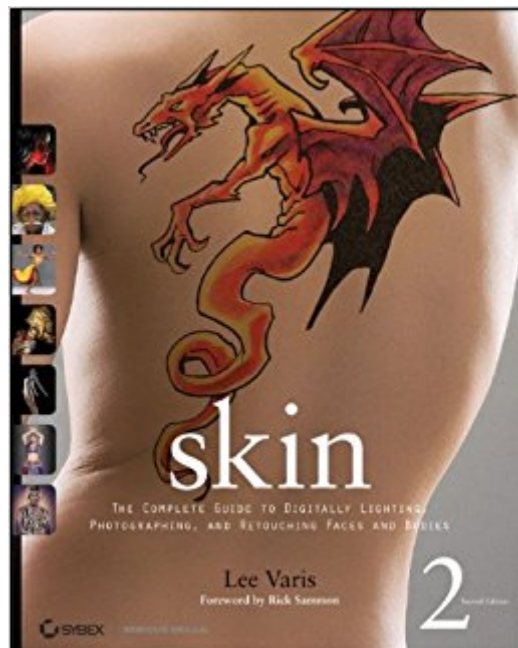




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# **Skin: The Complete Guide To Digitally Lighting, Photographing, And Retouching Faces And Bodies**



## Synopsis

Revised and thoroughly updated, this practical guide to photographing people is better than ever! What is the color of skin? You may think you know, until you enter the world of digital photography and try to reproduce what you see. Differences in software, lighting, computer calibration—everything has an impact on color. And that's all before you get into differences between people in terms of skin types, ethnicities, age, gender, and more!

Hollywood-based photo-illustrator Lee Varis guides you step-by-step through the maze. This new edition covers the very newest trends and techniques in photographing, lighting, and editing skin—and offers plenty of tips, examples, and valuable advice from the author's own professional experience in the field. Shows you how to digitally capture all skin types: male, female, young, old, different skin tones and ethnicities, with makeup or without, wrinkled, tattooed, and more. Covers a wealth of topics in addition to photo editing, such as how to obtain model releases and compose shots, how to shoot groups, and how to create promotional headshots. Incorporates the latest on working with Photoshop and Lightroom. Showcases exceptional work from a variety of photographers and artists. If you're photographing people, you'll want this valuable and unique guide on your shelf.

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## Customer Reviews

What is the color of skin? You may think you know, until you try to reproduce what you see.

Differences in software, hardware, lighting, calibration – everything has an impact on color. And that's all before you confront the differences between people: young, old, male, female, different ethnicities, wearing makeup or not, wrinkled or tattooed – even their notions about what looks good! In this new edition of his hot-selling guide, top Hollywood photo-illustrator Lee Varis guides you step by step through the maze. Find out how he lights, captures, color-corrects, and retouches images of people in all their variety – using the very latest Photoshop and Lightroom tools – and discover his secrets to making people look compelling in their own skin. topics include: Understanding the basics of digital capture and workflow Starting with the right hardware and software settings Developing your digital color "chops" Mastering Rembrandt lighting, natural lighting, and other lighting techniques Overcoming common digital skin problems, such as too much red Composing shots, posing models, and taking formal portraits or candid shots Trimming the fat, lighting up the eyes, and filling in wrinkles Using new blur filters, creating a grunge look, and adding dazzling effects Sharpening, soft proofing, and simulating, so you can print with success Discovering what can and what can't be done in post-process Learn new camera calibration techniques Understand lighting for many different effects Discover color-correction techniques for every type of skin Learn new special effects like HDR Toning in Photoshop CS5

Lee Varis is a photo-illustrator working in Hollywood. He has been involved in commercial photography for three decades. His images have been featured in National Geographic, Newsweek, and Fortune magazines, and both his writing and photography have been featured in trade journals such as PDN, PEI, Design Graphics, and others. His work has appeared on movie posters, video box and CD covers, and in numerous brochures and catalogs. Varis conducts seminars and workshops for APA, PPA, ASMP Maine Media Workshops, Santa Fe Photographic Workshops, and LIGHT Photographic Workshops. He is the president of LADIG (Los Angeles Digital Imaging Group).

I find the instructions in this book confounding. The steps are so terse that they're impossible to follow. There are frustrating errors such as the one that says to look in chapter 4 for skin color ranges, which are in chapter 3. He uses one sentence to communicate a step that requires a lot more information. I know that this is considered one of the best books on the subject, and the information is all there, but I had to go elsewhere and find other tutorials that are based on these techniques to get proper instruction. Really frustrating!

I first checked this book out at the local library thinking it was more of a Photoshop book and was completely surprised by the amount of information. I had to have my own copy. Yes it was full of Photoshop techniques but most importantly for me also was a very good book for understanding the basics of good photography. Nice to have a thorough and unexpected refresher. Clearly written for the beginner to advanced photographer

Not as advanced as I had hoped but still an enjoyable read. There's quite a bit of step-by-step Photoshop instruction, so it should be very useful for those progressing from 'beginner' to 'intermediate'. Everyone should read what Lee Varis has to say about CMYK skin color; the Internet would be a better place without so many unintentionally blue people.

Soft. Smooth. Silky. Creamy. Alabaster. Ebony. Glowing. Leathery. Weathered. Skin. In the world of photograph retouching the color and texture of skin is one very important aspect of preparing an image. The color and shade of skin can make a person glow, or look like a corpse, or look, um, artificially tanned. One of the problems is skin is never the same from person to person and reacts to different lighting conditions quite radically. The goal, whether doing a complete retouch or just a few minor corrections, is to make sure the subject's skin color is spot-on. Lee Varis is a prominent photographer and illustrator who has been featured in Newsweek, National Geographic, and more, with over 30 years experience. I really became interested in him when reading some reviews of the first edition of "Skin". I never got around to buying that book, though. Then, late in 2010, Varis published the second edition of this book, which similar to the first received outstanding reviews. I hemmed and hawed, though. I invested in some of Scott Kelby's books, a Bambi Cantrell book, some lighting equipment and gear, and got most of my Photoshop knowledge through the Internet and trial and error. Recently I had opportunity to purchase a stack of books from , and this was on my list of potentials. What really sealed it for me, though, was the man is endorsed by Rick Sammon. Who can resist a Rick Sammon recommendation? :) You can go read the table of contents for yourself, since you're most likely reading this blog in a Web browser. I'll stick to a higher level description and let you fill in the details. In my opinion, this book is so completely worth the cost and then some. After you read my review, I encourage you to visit [and](#) do the "Look Inside" thing to get a sample of what you'll get with this book. The color of skin in an image is impacted by many things. Ambient light color, strobes being used, the walls, the ceiling, the white balance, the color space in your editing software. A treatise on skin that just explored Photoshop or Lightroom

would be a huge disservice to the readers. When I read this book, I was pleasantly surprised to find the book covered almost the entire work flow, from lighting to printing. Another thing I really appreciated about this book is that it's not one of those excruciating step-by-step manuals. "Skin" is not intended for beginners; I would say journeyman level would be about right. Lee covers color management and calibration, including how to build camera profiles in a couple of different ways. The section on lighting is very nice, and more advanced than basics. Lee covers a variety of lighting situations and sources, and speaks to the rules of lighting, both in observing and breaking said rule. In the processing sessions, there are a few steps here and there, but Lee does assume the reader knows what s/he is doing in Photoshop, Lighroom, etc. I found the Photoshop sections invaluable and have already recorded some of the steps as Photoshop Actions. Skin retouching, skin replacement, now to keep the skin looking real, some tips on how to quickly achieve the correct skin tone and then how to tweak the skin tone for effect. Truly good stuff!! I really enjoyed Lee's writing style. The writing is straightforward and clear. I felt that Lee assumes his readers would be intelligent and have a good grasp of the basics of image capture and processing. The book was written in a more conversational style as opposed to how most books touching Photoshop are written. Consider yourself warned: occasionally Lee throws a couple of numbered steps in the text, but for the most part he assumes you know how to create and manipulate layers and mask. One thing I found truly useful that I did not already know, though, was the use of Advanced Blending Options. That was like a revelation for me. I highly recommend this book, for whatever that's worth. I thoroughly enjoyed it, and even more so because I did not need to be sitting in front of a computer to follow along. I will go back and read it again, and probably again and again. I will most definitely pull out many more of the Photoshop activities and record them as Actions, applying my own tweaks in the process. I can't stress enough how much I enjoyed the writing style. It's so hard to find more advanced books, as most people seem to write for beginners. After a while, all those beginner books seem to be one big duplicated mass. "Skin" stands out and on top of all the rest, in my opinion. Truly a valuable purchase. Go get this book, and make some wonderful images!

Skin: The Complete Guide to Digitally Lighting, Photographing, and Retouching Faces and Bodies! just finished reading Skin: The Complete Guide to Digitally Lighting, Photographing, and Retouching Faces and Bodies, a wonderful book for Adobe® Photoshop® enthusiasts. Although I would only consider myself an intermediate user of Photoshop, I found Lee Varis' book immensely helpful, and I highly recommend it to all those who photograph people. Chapter 1: Digital Imaging Basics is a brief introduction to digital imaging basics. It quickly covers chips and pixels as

well as dynamic ranges. Furthermore, Varis covers JPEG artifacts, cameras, memory cards, computers and monitor calibration. He finishes the chapter with a discussion on Photoshop preferences.

**Chapter 2: Color Management Workflow, and Calibration** is as the title suggests. The first few pages provide a high level overview of workflow management. Then Varis discusses color and light calibration. I must admit, he does have a rather funky looking set up of test targets that include the GretagMacBeth 24 patch plus Styrofoam cutouts and black traps. Varis provides a lengthy and detailed discussion on his calibration method. He also mentions that he prefers 8 bit processing as opposed to 16 bit. Moreover, he comments on the popular expose to the right practice.::::The idea is good theory but bad practice because the histogram cannot tell you where you are placing your tones with any precision, and it can't tell you whether the histogram is appropriate for the subject. (What picture goes with this histogram?) The camera's histogram is only a general indication of the distribution of values in the camera-generated JPEG. It is usually a composite of all three channels. The RAW data has a much wider distribution of tones that will vary in each channel, so you may not know if you are clipping important data in the Red Channel simply by looking at the histogram display on the camera.::::

**Chapter 3: Lighting and Photographing People** is an overview of lighting. Varis uses different configurations of lights and reflectors to demonstrate various effects. The photographs contained in the book are helpful to understanding the concepts discussed.

**Chapter 4: The Color of Skin** teaches the reader about proper skin tones. Varis introduces how to use curves effectively as well as how to adjust skin tones by using the CMYK values. He then finishes the chapter with a discussion on cultural and personal preferences. What one group of people might desire, others might oppose. So it is important to understand your audience.

**Chapter 5: Tone and Contrast: Color and B+W** is an extremely interesting chapter because it discusses how to create B+W conversions and how B+W conversions can create better color photos. The first few pages discuss the channel mixer and split channels to obtain stunning B+W conversions. Next, Varis teaches the reader how B+W image can be used in luminosity blending to darken, lighten, and recover detail. I enjoyed part of the chapter because it opened up new avenues for processing my photos. Last, he discusses hue, saturation and toning effects.

**Chapter 6: Retouching** is a thoroughly enjoyable chapter. Varis begins with a basic retouching where he uses the healing brushes to smooth away wrinkles. But then he kicks it up a notch by subtly using the dodge and burn tools to make the image just that much better. He then goes on to show how to use Hue/Saturation Repair to address red blotchy skin. I found the before and after pictures were amazing. Varis then walks his readers through an example of an attractive woman in her fifties. The before and after pictures are remarkable. He then shows a similar set of

before and after pictures for a beautiful young model likely in her twenties. He wraps the chapter up by discussing some thinning techniques as well as some further skin processing. Chapter 7: Special Effects provides some useful tricks to generate interesting images. The four main themes of this chapter are soft focus, film grain and mezzotint, cross-processing, and tattoos. A substantial portion of the chapter is devoted to soft focus, which includes depth of field effects. Because photographers often want to create a softer, less harsh image or part of an image, I found this discussion helpful. I am not one for film grain and mezzotint. Similarly, I am not wild about cross-processing where you get unexpected colors in unexpected places. The last section on tattoos was interesting, even though I am not a tattoo fan. I liked the last part of the tattoo section where he described how to use Photoshop to create a fake tattoo. Chapter 8: Preparing for Print focuses the following key themes: sharpening, color management for print, soft proofing, desktop printing, and creative print finishing. I am going to comment on the first and last items. Varis' sharpening discussion is very helpful. Prior to reading this book, I simply used unsharp mask and was done. Now, when I want to get a sharper picture, I use multiple sharpening layers in luminosity blending modes as well as darkening and lighting blending modes. This technique has the advantage of offering better control of the halos. Creative print finishing provides some options for designing captivating borders or edges to the photographs. In his examples, Varis shows how the edges provide added pizzazz to the already great photo. Chapter 9: Parting Shots is a short chapter that provides some further high level commentary on workflow. Varis then walks the reader through the companion CD. I suspect most readers have already opened the CD and have been using the files all along, so this information is superfluous at this point. And last, he reminds readers that digital photography is still in its infancy. Much of what we have just learned is likely to become outdated soon. I believe, however, that if we understand and have developed a sense of adventure to experiment, our newly gained knowledge will help us as newer technologies and techniques emerge. Being an intermediate, at best, Photoshop user, I found Skin to be a valuable resource. I enjoyed learning by working through the examples. I also enjoyed seeing how just some subtle steps make a significant difference. I highly recommend this book.

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