

How to replace sky

Graham Jones, March 2019

The process described here is very similar across most post processing software (PS, LR, OnOneRAW, Capture 1, etc.). In this description Affinity is used.

The Affinity work space:



- *Identify the photos that are to be combined and their location on your computer or storage media*
- *Choose a photo with 'bland' overcast/grey sky with almost no definition. This will be the 'background' photo:*



- *Choose a photo with the sky you want*



- Load both photos into the Affinity workspace
 - Apply 'basic' adjustments to background photo (exposure, contrast, clarity, WB, etc)
 - Choose 'selection brush tool' and enlarge brush to about 400pix
 - Open 'background photo'. Make selection of sky across entire photo
 - Click on 'Refine', set brush to about 300pix. Brush entire horizon. fine details like plants going above horizon may need one or two extra refine brush passes
 - In the Refine toolbox click on 'output', choose mask and click apply
 - Make sure the new mask layer is above the background layer
 - Uncheck the mask layer
 - Go to sky image, choose Select All, then edit 'Copy'
 - Go back to background layer, then edit 'Paste' (make sure the sky layer is above the background layer in the layers stack)
 - Click on move tool and with this position the sky over the background layer
 - Click on mask layer and move it into the sky layer to become a 'child layer'
 - Composite image (with sky replaced should appear)
 - Now it is necessary to match sky and ground tonally to create realistic effect. There are three main options using layer stack tools:
 1. Blend mode try all different options (with this photo 'multiply was best)
 2. Adjust opacity (layer stack)
 3. Try adjustments (layer, new adjustment layer).
- Slide new adjustment layer into sky layer (i.e. child layer).

Before and after (sky replacement):

'Background photo'



'Sky photo'



Sky replaced



Another example of sky replacement:



