



Great white shark, Guadalupe Island, Mexico. Gear: Nikon D500 camera, Tokina 10-17mm lens, Nauticam housing, Inon Z-330 strobe. Exposure: ISO 320, f/11, 1/125s, FL 17.

Photo 1. (top left) The original photo is a little hazy and flat prior to post-production processing.

Photo 2. (left) Decreased exposure, increased clarity, increased vibrance. Enhances cathedral lighting and drama.

Photo 3. (center) Adjusted tint to green to look more like a bad viz day. Maintained dramatic lighting.

Photo 4. (below) Converted to black and white to enhance cathedral lighting, reflection of light off skin, and drama.

Changing Tones

Text and photos by Gary Rose, MD

Much of the fun of underwater photography is in the post-processing. Just like with any form of art, the touch-ups, additions, deletions, and tonal changes can alter the entire photographic expression. A mood can be set, ambience softened, light hardened. The choices are infinite. With the use of a single photo, I will demonstrate.

Photo 1 is an average photo of a great white shark taken at Guadalupe Island, Mexico. The photo is hazy and has a somewhat flat quality. The viewer can easily see a potential to sharpen this up and highlight the background cathedral lighting, as well as spotlight the fabulous glow of the midday light reflecting off the dorsal skin of the great white.

In Photo 2, I first decreased the exposure, which immediately focused and emphasized the background cathedral lighting. Tweaking a little more, I increased the clarity and vibrance, and added a touch of blue tint, which enhanced the rich blue



tones of the negative space of the surrounding tropical Pacific Ocean.

In Photo 3, I shifted the tint from blue to green to recreate the effects of a low-visibility dive, just to see how it would turn out. Notice that the cathedral lighting and reflection of light on

the great white shark is maintained. This small change in color tone created an entirely different and natural feel.

I always love converting my images to black and white, especially those with dramatic lighting. To do this, I just completely desaturate the photo. In



Photo 4, I also boosted up the texture, clarity, and vibrance to add additional drama to this photo. The cathedral lighting pops. The reflective light bathes the great white and forms a magnificent corona, which creates a spiritual emotion.

While playing with tonal qualities, the underwater photographer can create an extraordinary number of visual, emotional, and spiritual results. Color, or lack thereof, and tone provide an extensive palette to create, and then recreate. Visit: garyrosephotos.com

