

USING LUMINOSITY MASKS TO MODIFY PHOTOGRAPHS

For a photograph with extreme contrasts I will use another sunrise, shot from the mountain (actually a panorama of three photographs stitched together, scaled to a much smaller size).



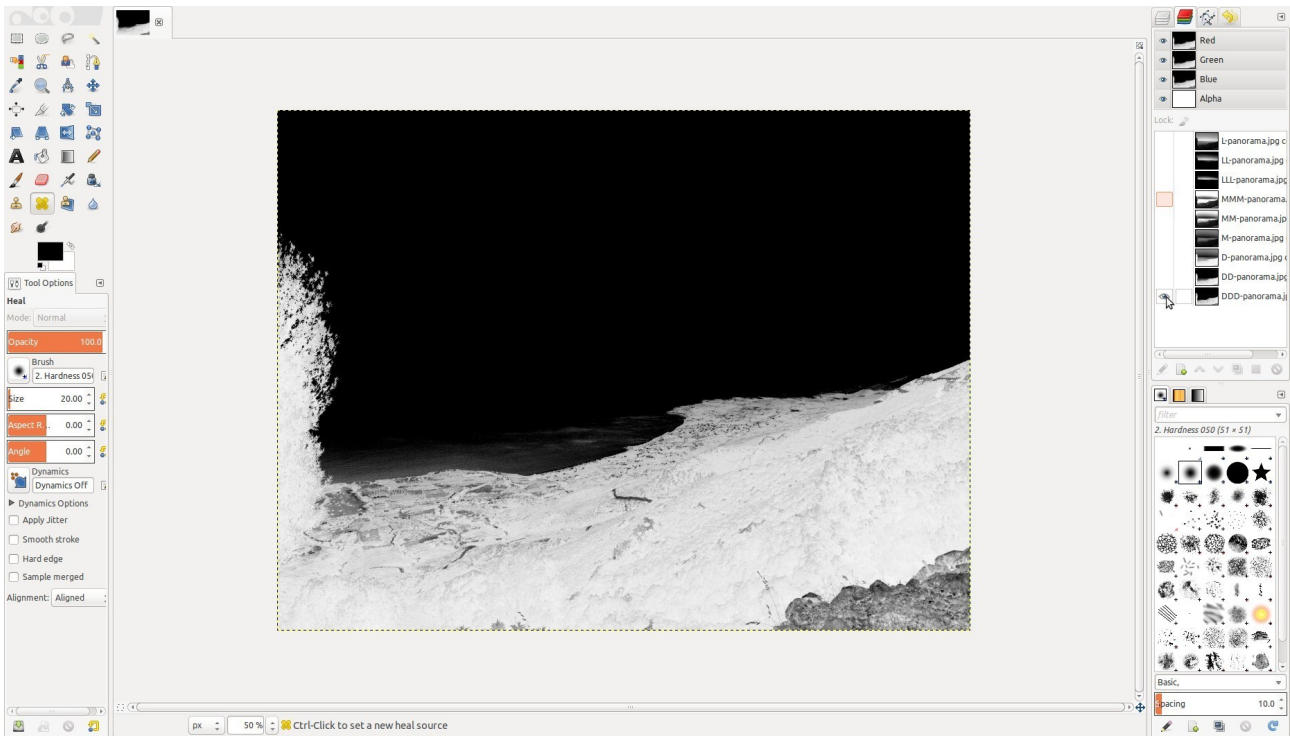
[panorama.jpg]

Load it into GIMP. Right-click in the layers menu and "Duplicate Layer".

In "Filters/Generic" click "Luminosity Masks (saulgoode)".

In the layers menu, click the "eyes" for both layers to make them invisible.

Select the channels menu and make each of the channels visible, one at once, to decide which is the most suitable as a mask.



[channel_masks.jpg]

We will add the mask to the top layer.

The white area of the mask we can adjust in the top layer. The black parts of the mask will show the bottom layer unaltered.

In this case I have chosen "DDD".

When you have made your choice, make sure none of the channels are visible and select the layers menu.

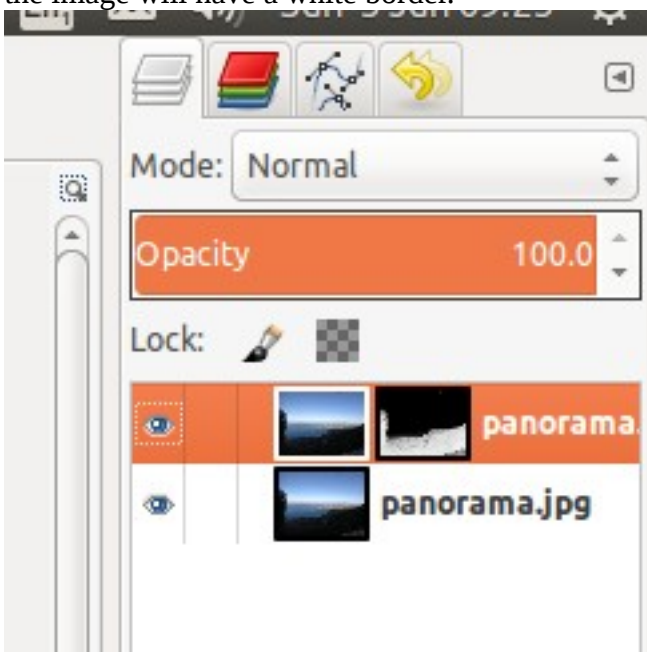
Make both layers visible and the top one active.

Right-click in the layers menu and select "Add Layer Mask..."

In the menu that appears select "Channel" and use the drop-down list to choose "DDD" then click add.

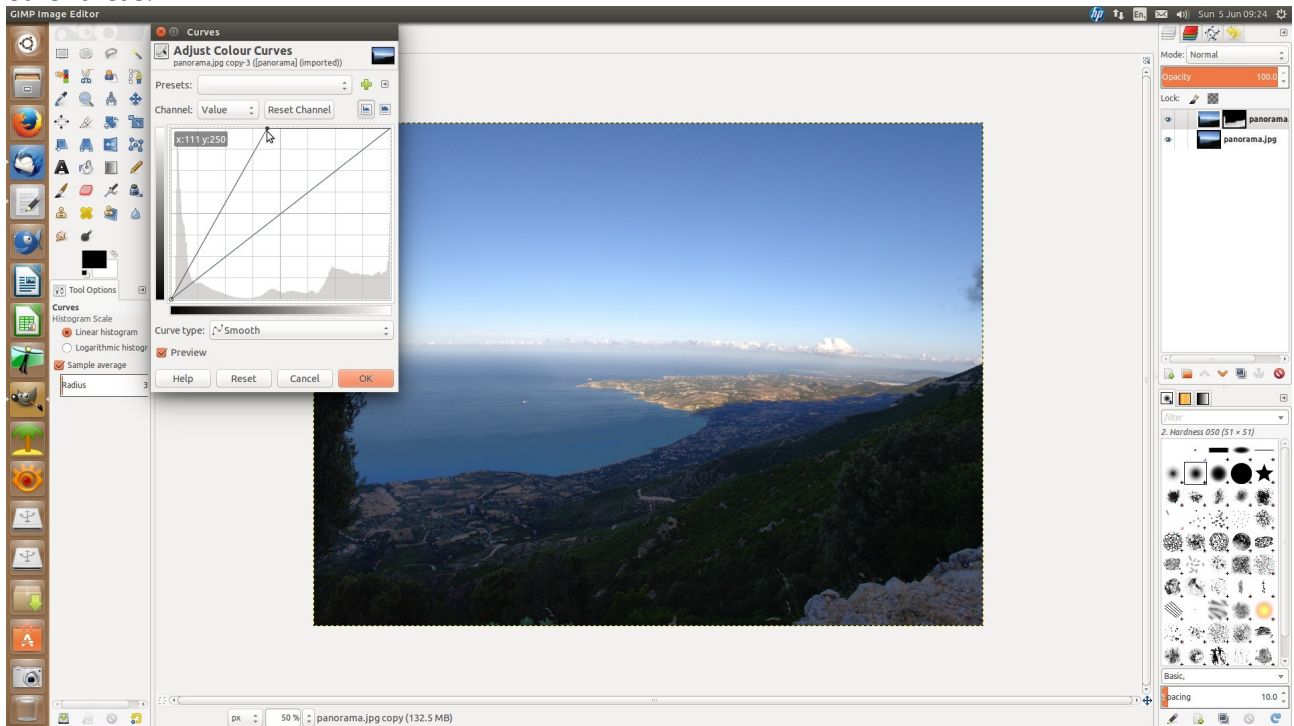
In the layers menu you will see that the mask has appeared next to your top-layer image.

Now you need to click the image to make it active. The white border of the mask will disappear and the image will have a white border.



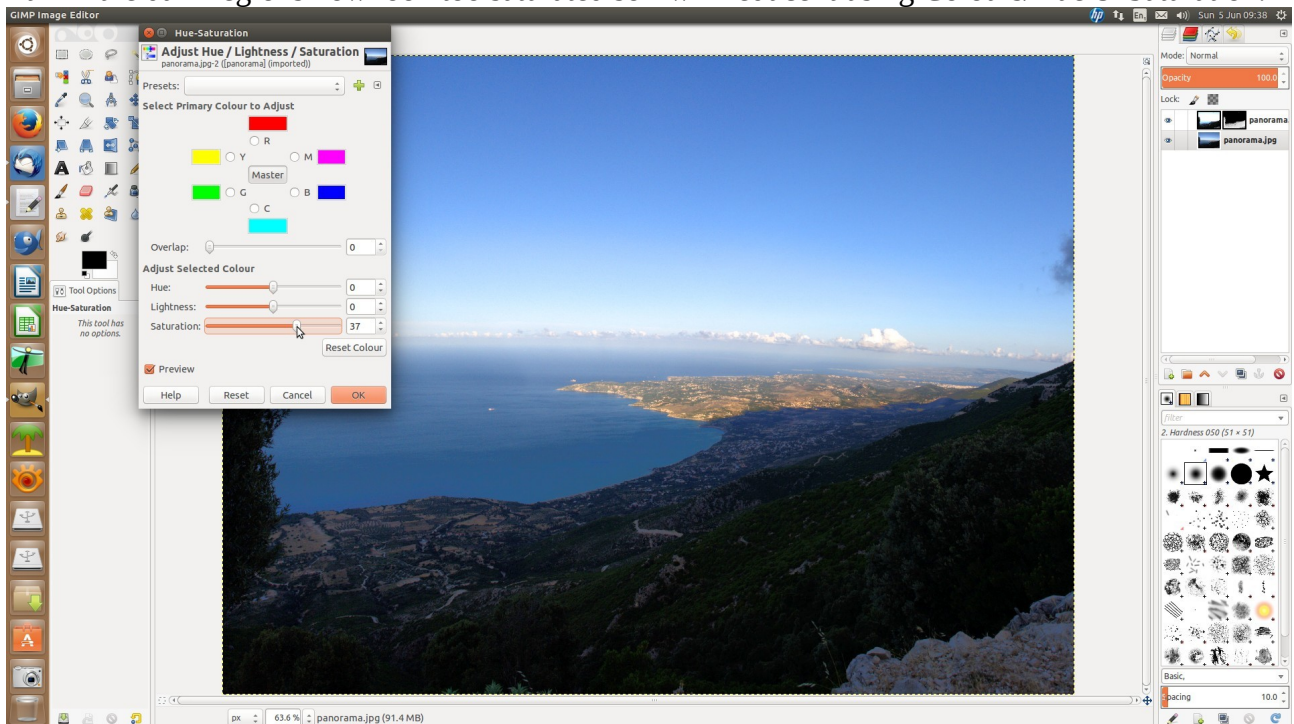
[image_select.png]

With Colours and Curves you can now alter the darkest parts of your picture without much effect in other areas.



[curves.jpg]

I think the dark regions now look too saturated so I will reduce it using Colours/Hue & Saturation.



[hue.jpg]

I decided that the bottom layer (the brighter parts) needed more saturation. I selected the bottom layer and used Hue & Saturation.



[pano_final.jpg]

When you are satisfied with the result you can save the picture or flatten it and export it.

You can, of course, use the curves menu with more subtlety to modify the result!

This is the most basic use of these masks.

If you find that the most suitable mask is not perfect for your needs, you can make it active and modify it with any of the controls – brightness & contrast, curves, and so on.

If there is something in the image you wish to protect from modification, you can paint that part of the mask with black.

Conversely, painting the mask with white will add areas to the top layer for adjustment.