

HVC Color Composer Pro

Review by
Steve Baczewski

Digital color Photoshop plug-in



PRICE:	\$129.95
FOR:	Mac and Windows
FROM:	Master Colors, LLC
PHONE:	310-663-2870
WEB:	www.master-colors.com
RATING:	◆◆◆◆◆

Master Colors' HVC Color Composer is a designer's dream tool—a Photoshop plug-in that adds a fifth, more instinctive color space to Adobe's existing Color Picker, based on Hue, Value, and Chroma. This simple addition is broad in scope and develops confidence in understanding, controlling, and generating palettes with harmonious color combinations. As Ansel Adams acknowledged that the Zone System was derived from a harmonic progression found in music, HVC Composer creates a mathematical progression of colors based on contrast. The amount of contrast distance between neighboring color swatches is controlled by

three algorithms that let you create and save color palettes for use within Photoshop's swatches window.

After installation, select HVC as your picker from Photoshop's General Preferences. The HVC interface has the same layout as the Adobe picker with the standard color spaces—HSB, RGB, Lab, CMYK—plus it adds three buttons for Hue, Value, and Chroma. Clicking on these buttons generates a specific corresponding color preview window. Hue displays the basic colors, Value displays all colors in the same lightness, and Chroma displays all colors in the same intensity. It's a very natural process based on how

we perceive color. You then specify the contrast parameters using your target color(s) as a reference point. There are three algorithms: Auto-range defaults to generating a color palette with four levels of contrast; Range lets you produce a palette of colors with just one contrast value between colors; and Proportion is based on two target colors, where you select a ratio to create a palette of colors with the same contrast ratio from the target colors. HVC shines at quickly generating combinations of colors that work well together that would otherwise be very difficult to create. ■