

# album *moxie*



The Savvy Photographer's Guide to  
Album Design and More—with **InDesign**

**Khara Plicanic**

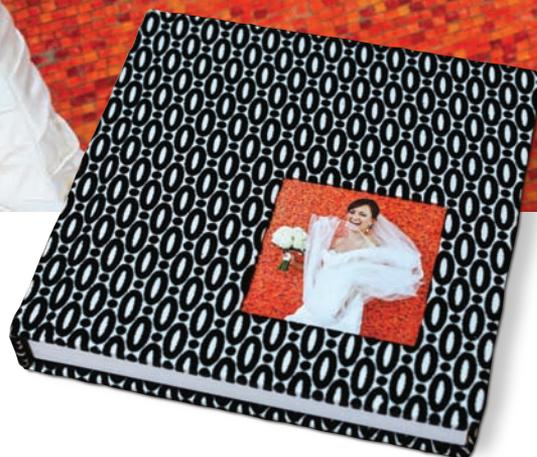
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Peachpit Press

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Peachpit Press  
www.peachpit.com

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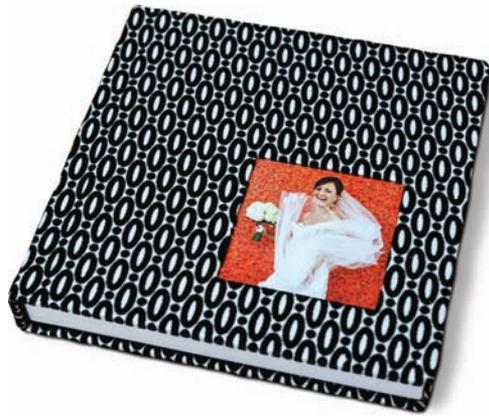
ISBN-13 978-0-321-92882-5

ISBN-10: 0-321-92882-2

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed and bound in the United States of America

*For photographers in search of a better way.*



# Acknowledgments

Getting a book put together is no small feat. From concept to distribution, it takes a team of incredibly dedicated (and endlessly patient) people to make it happen. Many thanks to everyone at Peachpit and beyond who touched this project—you continuously inspire and amaze!

And to my family who stood by my side while I pushed through yet another labor of love—you're the best. I love you.



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**Brownie**

SIX-20 CAMERA

Model D

*with flash contacts*

MADE IN ENGLAND BY KODAK LIMITED



# introduction

The word “*moxie*” is defined as: *force of character, determination, or nerve.*

And that’s exactly what it takes to create *truly significant* change of any kind, which includes launching a new business, developing a new product, or overhauling your album workflow.

Trying new things and making big, sweeping changes can feel overwhelming and risky at first, but sometimes, the bigger risk is sticking to the status quo.

Speaking of risk, at the risk of sounding overly dramatic, *Album Moxie* could actually *change your life.*

I say that with confidence because I’ve seen it happen time and time again. Comments like, “I can’t believe how much easier this is!” or “Why did I wait so long to give this a try?” routinely find their way to my inbox and always make me smile. My personal favorites, however, are the many along the lines of, “This has truly changed my life.”

As photographers, we often feel our businesses *are* our lives. When things aren't humming along smoothly, the stress can easily carry over into our personal lives as well. For a lot of photographers, album design is part of the problem. Even during the off-season, albums can pile up quickly, stressing us out, and feeling like they drag on *endlessly*.

Upon closer inspection, I've found that in general, we (as photographers and as members of the human species in general) tend to unnecessarily overcomplicate a *lot* of things, and album design is no exception. This book will help you *simplify*.

Drawing from a big ol' heap of moxie, we'll boldly simplify the tools, goals, and even the overall *process* of album design. By the end of the book, in addition to having two finished albums, you'll have an effective plan for strategically dealing with albums from start to finish, as well as a firm grasp of InDesign, which can dramatically simplify your life in and of itself (especially if you've only ever used Adobe Photoshop).

So muster up your inner moxie, and let's do this!

## The Plan

As you embark on becoming more savvy with Adobe InDesign and working through *Album Moxie*, keep the end in mind. In this case, the end is a happy you, with an album workflow that's not only under control, but *delightfully* so. In fact, you may find yourself actually *enjoying* albums again (and the profits that come with 'em!). Here's how we'll get from point A to B:

- **Chapter 1** examines the roadblocks and bottlenecks that exist in most album design workflows because a *defined* problem is already half solved! On the flip side, we'll also talk about what makes albums so darn awesome and the advantages that they can have for your workflow—and your bottom line.
- **Chapter 2** breaks down the overall process of album design, covering everything from what you choose to offer your clients to selecting a vendor to work with. Avoiding future headaches starts here!
- **Chapter 3** goes over the best tools for getting the job done, and some of the answers may surprise you. (Hint: Photoshop is an image-editing program and was never intended to design multipage documents!) InDesign is crucial to the process and you'll quickly see why!
- **Chapter 4** gives you a brief introduction to InDesign while sticking to familiar territory in Photoshop. Combining some InDesign basics with a Photoshop action, you'll learn how to make entire albums (featuring a single image per page) with one simple click—in *seconds*!

- **Chapter 5** helps you feel at home in InDesign by going over preferences and workspace setup. Learning your way around immediately ups your comfort level, making it easy to tackle new and exciting things.
- **Chapter 6** covers how to set up a new document. Though you can always make changes to your document setup later, you'll reap infinite benefits from understanding how to properly set it up from the beginning.
- **Chapter 7** walks you through an *entire* 20-page album design! You'll pick up new InDesign skills with each and every spread, learning all kinds of great tips and tricks along the way. This is a seriously hands-on chapter; you'll walk away with real skills and a real album!
- **Chapter 8** keeps the ball rolling with step-by-step instructions for troubleshooting, retouching, and exporting the album you designed in Chapter 7. When you're finished, you'll be ready to place your order!
- **Chapter 9** gives you tons of great resources to keep the party going. Learning how to use design software is great and all, but to maximize your potential, you'll want to learn more about *design* itself. That includes the basic principles and fun subtopics like typography and color theory.
- **Chapter 10** contains some bonus ideas about using InDesign for blogging and adding value to the client experience (and your marketing) with fun things like Facebook Timeline covers!

By the time you're finished, you'll not only have two finished designs that you can reuse and draw from over and over again (one, a simple album featuring a single image per page, and the other a full-scale custom design), but you'll also have a big-picture strategy in place, and a boatload of new skills to boot. (Pretty exciting, if I do say so myself!)

## Who Should Read This Book?

Whether you're a seasoned pro who has been designing albums for a zillion years and are just looking to tighten things up, or you're totally new to the game and have no clue where to start—this book is a game changer.

We'll tackle the what, why, and how of album design, redefining the traditional process from the ground up. Plus, you'll see why InDesign is crucial to the whole process and how it can save you from feeling like you're drowning.

What? You're totally new to InDesign? Never opened it before? Not to worry, I've been expecting you. Come on in, grab a seat, and make yourself comfortable! InDesign is the glue that holds this whole process together and I'll walk you through the basics from the very beginning. There's nothing to worry about, it's all simple stuff.

# How to Use This Book

I totally get it. Some people like to skip around, get what they're looking for, and get out. If that sounds like you, be my guest! Live and let live, right? I tried to make it easy for you to find what you're looking for quickly and easily so you can get back to action lickety-split.

If you're newer to albums, new to InDesign, or just want to be sure you don't miss any savory nuggets, I recommend working your way through the book in order. Although you can obviously devour it in whichever order you prefer, I wrote it with the intention of leading readers through a process that starts with Chapter 1 and carries on through to the end.

That said, I'm just thrilled you found it. So have at it in whichever way makes the most sense to you!

## *the lowdown on software versions*

For the most part, this book is software version independent, meaning that I created it to show you how to do amazing things regardless of which version of InDesign/Bridge/Photoshop you're using.

Some features (like InDesign's "gridify" in Chapter 7) weren't introduced until CS5, but you can still accomplish the same task with an earlier version; it just might take an extra 30 seconds. So most people using most versions should be able to get along fine.

I like to think of software versions like cars: Whether you're driving the latest model or an older one, the buttons (or old school hand crank) for rolling down the windows may work somewhat differently or be located in slightly different places, but you can still figure out how to use the car to get from point A to point B.

# Who Am I to Talk Anyway?

I'm a fellow wedding and portrait photographer who feels your pain.

The summer of 2008 found me hanging on by a thread while I singlehandedly booked, photographed, edited, proofed, and fulfilled orders for 150 senior portrait clients, 30-something weddings, and 50 miscellaneous sessions (kids and families). Honestly, I'm *still* not sure how I didn't collapse.

When clients started demanding albums, I was on the brink of panic. Selling, designing, and producing them after the fact was proving to be an immeasurable nightmare, so over the next few seasons I introduced (and continually fine-tuned) a strategy that has allowed me to produce album designs as quickly as I edit my sessions—within the *week*. (The design itself takes an hour or less—from *scratch*.)

Using my new strategy, I was able to show clients their album designs at the same time as they see their proofs and the results were—*pure magic*.

The amount of edits and requests for changes dropped dramatically (often to zero, with clients ordering the album exactly as I designed it), and my stress levels dropped proportionally.

My husband and I were able to travel more, sometimes taking off for months at a time. I took on other projects that have always interested me (like writing books), and I was able to develop new hobbies like running—and even had time to train for and complete a handful of half-marathons in several different states.

The best part? I did it all while adding value for my clients and simultaneously improving my bottom line.

I've been there, done that. And you can too.



# 4

## simply square

This chapter is all about making your first InDesign experience super-quick and easy. We'll be making a simple square book that features a single image per page (making it perfect for portrait sessions!). Because this isn't your traditional "designed" album, we'll use an unusual combination of InDesign and Photoshop to get the job done.

First, we'll jump into InDesign to create the photo border designs shown in **Figure 4.1**. Then, we'll kick the design over to Photoshop where we'll convert it to a pattern. Finally, we'll use the pattern in a Photoshop action to batch process images for a simple, square album—in *seconds!*

An easy warm-up project, it's the perfect introduction to InDesign. It's short, sweet, and you'll walk away with a finished product you can use time and time again.

Let's get started!

FIGURE 4.1 By the end of this chapter, you'll have the know-how to knock out a simple, square book with this classically simple DIY photo border—in minutes!



## Building the Border Design

Creating this border design with InDesign (instead of Photoshop) is awesome for a lot of reasons, including that it makes the designs *scalable*.

Because InDesign is a vector-based environment, when we create the image frame and border, they'll be built from *mathematically* defined shapes (vectors) as opposed to the more organic alternative of pixels like Photoshop uses. As such, we won't have to worry about issues with resolution and can easily edit or even resize the designs—without sacrificing quality or having to rebuild them for resolution purposes.

We'll be creating this design for images with a 2:3 aspect ratio as captured by a camera with a full-frame sensor. If your images were captured with a cropped sensor at a different aspect ratio, you'll need to make adjustments. I suggest working through this chapter as written first, however. Once you understand the process, you can tweak it to suit other aspect ratios as needed. Alternatively, you could crop your images to a 2:3 aspect ratio before continuing, though that is certainly a lot more work.

# Create a New Blank Document

If you haven't already done so, launch InDesign and before going any further, be sure that you have no open documents. Any open InDesign files should be closed before moving on or the preferences you're about to change will only apply to those documents.

1. **Set preferences to inches.** Choose InDesign > Preferences > Units and Increments (on a PC choose Edit > Preferences > Units and Increments) to open the Preferences dialog. By default, InDesign is set to units of measure called *points*. For the examples in this book, we'll be working in inches, so in the Ruler Units section, select Inches for both the Horizontal and Vertical (Figure 4.2), and click OK.

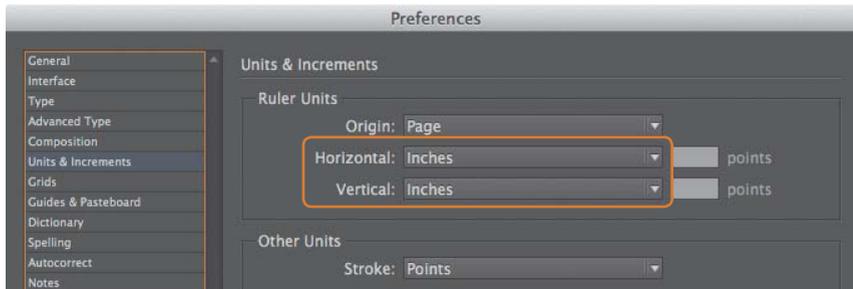


FIGURE 4.2 You can change your unit preference to millimeters, picas, pixels, and all kinds of other options, but for the purposes of this book, inches are best.

2. **Create a new document.** Choose File > New > Document. In the New Document dialog that follows, turn *off* the Facing Pages option (more on this option in Chapter 6), change both the Width and Height to 5 inches, and set the margins to 0 (Figure 4.3), then press OK.

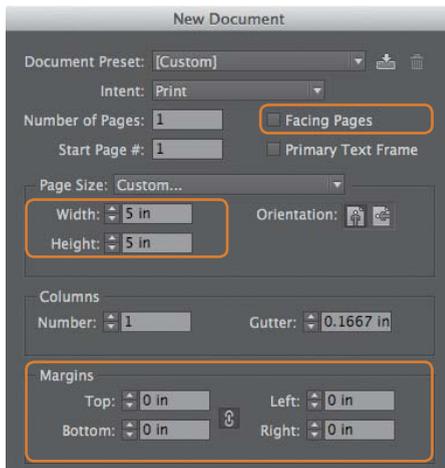


FIGURE 4.3 In Chapter 6, we'll cover Facing Pages, but turn it off for now.

3. **Save the file.** Choose File > Save As. Give the file a name like Simple\_Square\_Border, and navigate to your desired location before choosing OK.

First steps—done! Now that we’ve got the document built, we’re ready to create the image placeholder and the actual decorative border to surround it.

## Design the Image Placeholder and Border

Next, we’ll create a pair of rectangle frames: one (filled with black) to serve as a temporary placeholder for your photos, the other (with a black stroke) to be the decorative border.

1. **Create an image frame.** Select the Rectangle Frame tool by pressing the F key or by clicking the icon  in the InDesign toolbar. With the tool active, click anywhere within the document and enter 4 inches for the Width and 2.6667 inches for the Height (**Figure 4.4**). Click OK.

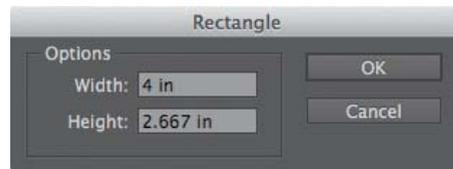


FIGURE 4.4 By clicking (instead of clicking and dragging) with the Rectangle Frame tool, you can choose specific dimensions for the frame you want to create.

2. **Reposition the frame.** Switch to the Selection tool (InDesign’s version of Photoshop’s Move tool) by pressing V or selecting it from the toolbar . Drag the frame to position it to the center of the document. You’ll know you’re in the right place when you see the magenta vertical and horizontal guides automatically appear, as in **Figure 4.5**. (You’ll learn more about working with guides in Chapter 6.)
3. **Apply a black fill.** With the large rectangle frame selected, click the Default Fill and Stroke icon below the Fill and Stroke swatches near the bottom of the toolbar—or press D. This gives the frame a black stroke with an empty fill, but we actually want the *reverse*. To change that, press Shift-X or click the Swap Fill and Stroke icon to end up with a frame that has a black fill and no stroke, as shown in **Figure 4.6**.

Why are we filling this frame with black? Ultimately, when we convert this design into a Photoshop pattern, we’ll need to knock out the area within this rectangle to create a transparent opening. Filling it with black makes it easy to remove in Photoshop, as you’ll soon see.

### tip

As in Photoshop, the shortcut for Undo in InDesign is Cmd-Z/Ctrl-Z. Unlike Photoshop, however, InDesign has no history palette. If you need to undo multiple steps, just keep pressing Cmd-Z/Ctrl-Z. If you run into overwhelming trouble, download the project’s finished pattern and corresponding actions from [www.albummoxie.com](http://www.albummoxie.com).

### note

Instead of Foreground and Background swatches like in Photoshop, InDesign has Fill and Stroke swatches (Figure 4.6). Fill refers to the color filling an object or frame, and stroke is the fancy design term for outline.

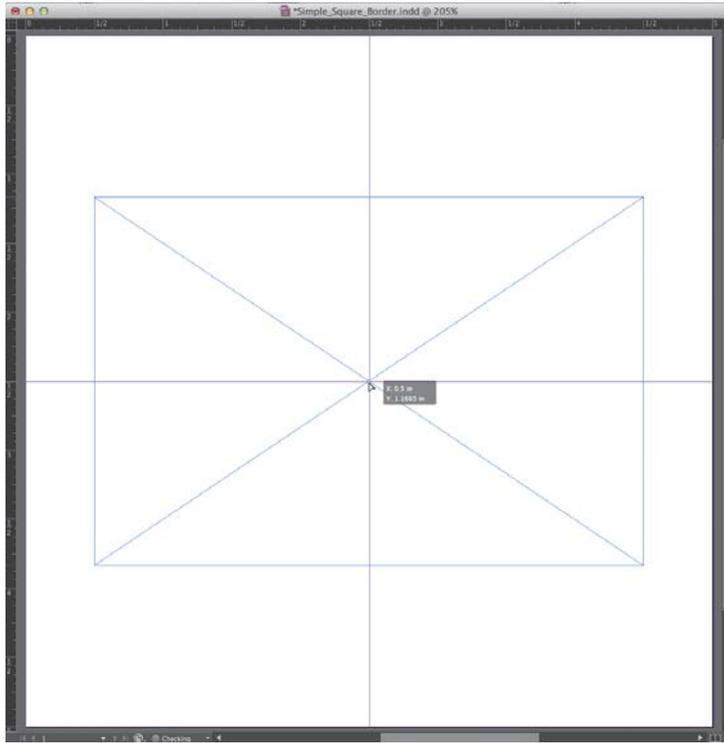
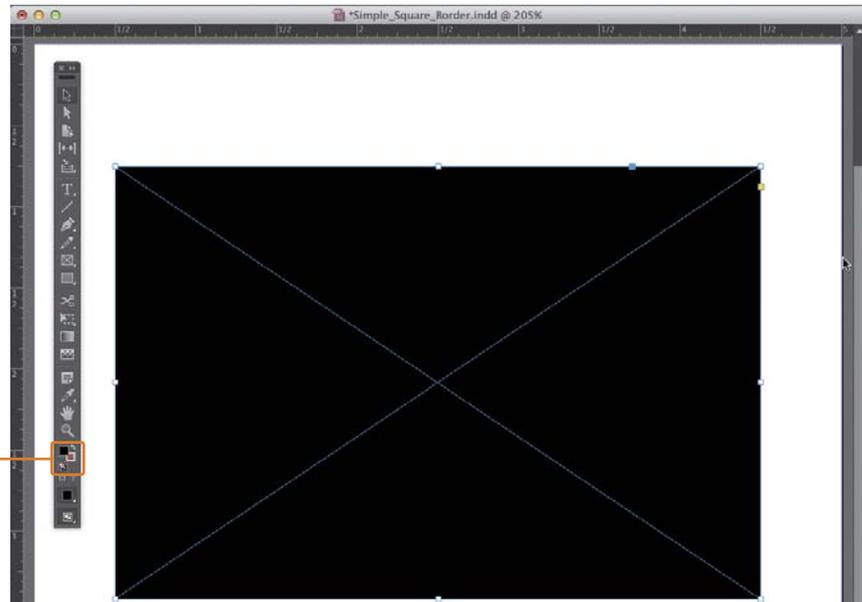
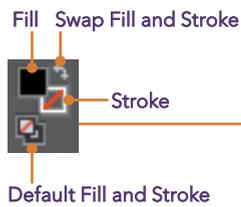


FIGURE 4.5 InDesign's guides appear automatically to help with object placement even while working on the fly.

FIGURE 4.6 Once applied, InDesign's default settings of an empty fill with a black stroke can easily be reversed by pressing Shift-X or clicking the Swap Fill and Stroke icon.



4. **Edit the Corner Options.** With the frame still selected, choose Object > Corner Options. In the resulting dialog, make sure Preview is turned on and select Inset from the Shape drop-down menu. Confirm a Corner Size of 0.125 inches for each corner (**Figure 4.7**), and click OK.

InDesign makes it easy to alter the corners of any frame you create, resulting in some pretty cool effects. Pretty sweet, eh?

Now that we're finished with the image placeholder, we'll create a second frame to be the decorative border.

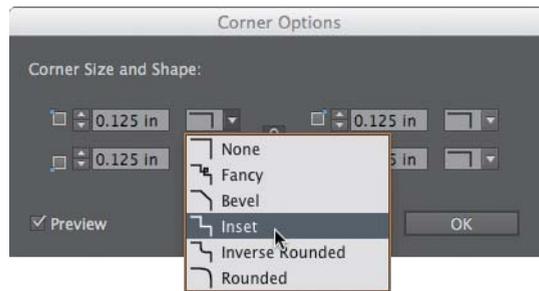


FIGURE 4.7 With Preview turned on you can see how each corner shape will look on your frame, rather than relying only on the menu's tiny icons.

5. **Make a second frame.** Press F to return to the Rectangle Frame tool, and click anywhere within the document to make a second frame. Make this frame 1/4-inch bigger than the previous one by entering 4.25 inches for Width and 2.9167 inches for Height. Click OK.
6. **Reposition the new frame.** Switch back to the Selection tool (V), and position this new frame on top of the other frame so that their center points are directly aligned in the center of the document, where you should see those magical magenta guides appear again (**Figure 4.8**).
7. **Apply a black stroke.** Press D to apply the default black stroke and empty fill settings to the frame.
8. **Edit the stroke.** Give the stroke a touch more style by choosing Window > Stroke to access the Stroke panel (**Figure 4.9**). With the border frame still selected, change the Weight to 2 pts and the Type to Thin – Thin.

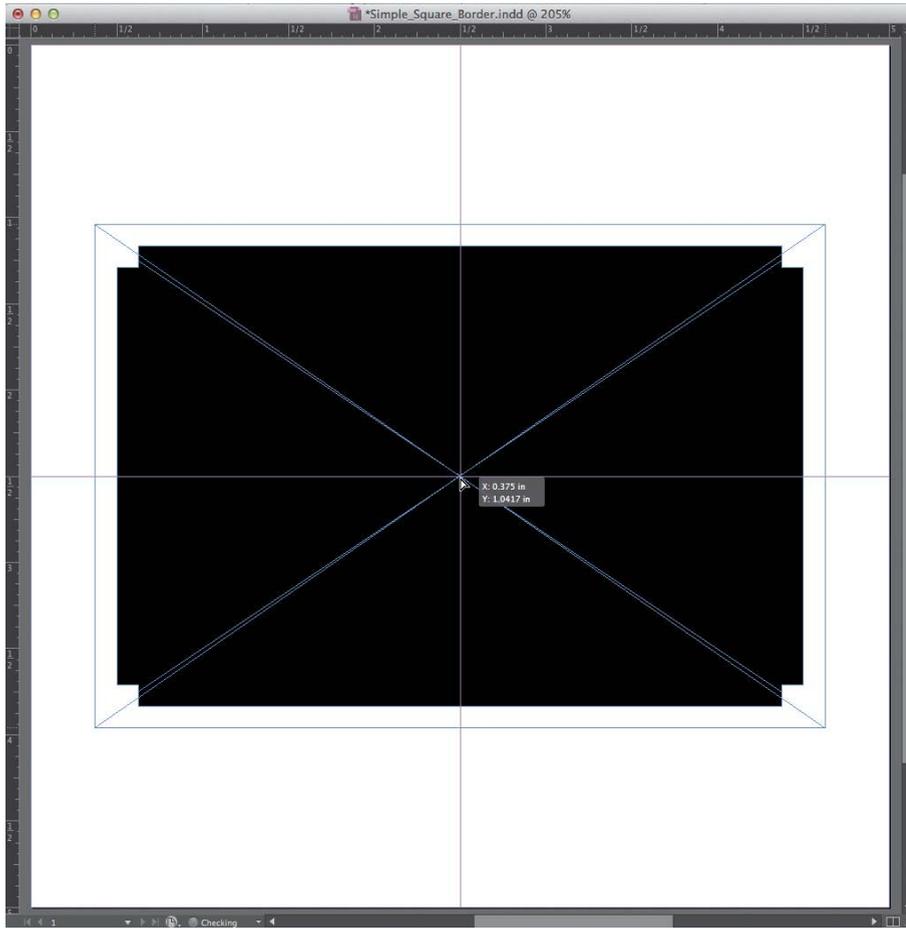


FIGURE 4.8 Use the auto-generated magenta guides to align the center points of the image placeholder and border frames.



FIGURE 4.9 The Stroke panel lets you customize strokes in a variety of ways.

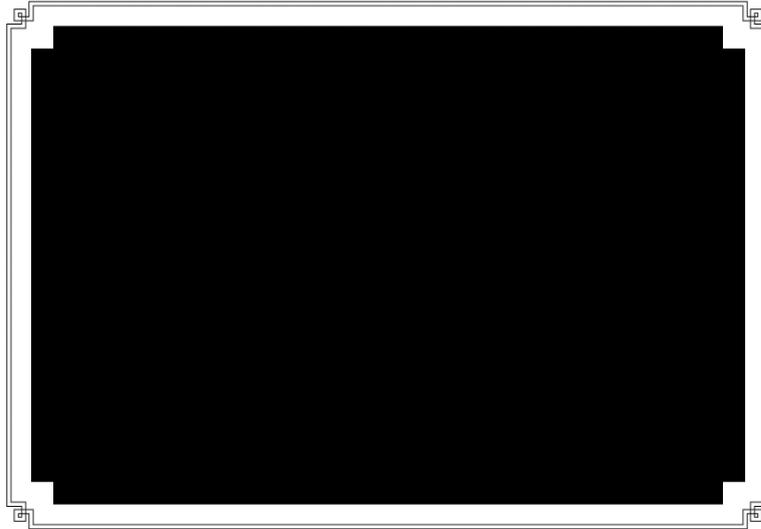
## stacking order

If you find yourself needing to select one frame that's stacked below the other, just Cmd-click/Ctrl-click on it with the Selection tool (V) and you should be good to go. Alternatively, you can adjust object stacking order by selecting any frame, then right-clicking and choosing Arrange to adjust the frame's front-to-back positioning.

Although InDesign *does* have a Layers panel, for a project as simple as this, it's not worth messing with layers.

9. **Fancify the Corner Options.** For a final bit of flair, choose Object > Corner Options and select Fancy from the Shape drop-down. Set the Corner Size to 0.125 inches for each corner, and click OK. When you're finished, your document should resemble **Figure 4.10**.

FIGURE 4.10 The finished design with a black image placeholder and a decorative border frame.



## *get a better look*

With everything that's happening on the screen, seeing your design can be tricky. You can, however, do a couple things to get a better glimpse:

**Clear the view.** Press W to toggle the visibility on and off for all the nonprinting elements like guides, margins, and frame boundaries. Notice the gray pasteboard area and absence of frame outlines. Wonderful, isn't it? Adobe refers to this cleaned-up view as Preview mode, but I like to think of it as "Wonderful" mode because it makes your document substantially more wonderful to look at and—it starts with "w," which makes remembering the keyboard shortcut easier. (Hey, whatever works!)

**Zoom in.** The same navigational keyboard shortcuts you know and love from Photoshop also work in InDesign.

To examine the document more closely, press Cmd-plus/Ctrl-plus. The more times you press this keyboard combo, the closer the image will appear. (Conveniently, as you might expect, Cmd-minus/Ctrl-minus will move the image farther away.)

**Scoot around with the Spacebar.** Once you're zoomed in, while holding down the Spacebar, drag within the document window to scroll around within the document. Alternatively, you can avoid scrolling entirely by holding down Cmd-Spacebar/Ctrl-Spacebar to temporarily access the Zoom tool. While simultaneously holding down the keyboard, use your mouse to draw a marquee around a point of interest and when you release, InDesign will zoom in on it directly.

## Create a Vertical Version

Great work so far! Now we're ready to create the vertical version of the design. Rather than starting over and making it from scratch, you can easily duplicate the page with the horizontal design and simply *rotate* it. No sweat.

1. **Open the Pages panel.** Choose Window > Pages. This is where InDesign keeps track of every page in your document.
2. **Duplicate Page 1.** Drag the Page 1 icon to the lower-right corner of the Pages panel and drop it on the New Page icon as shown in **Figure 4.11**.

This duplicates the page, giving us a grand total of two pages. InDesign automatically activates Page 2 in the Pages panel—as indicated by the blue overlay that surrounds it—and updates the view in the workspace accordingly.

3. **Select both frames.** Using the Selection tool (V), draw a marquee around both frames on Page 2. (You can confirm that you're working on Page 2 by glancing down in the bottom left of the document window where you should see a small number 2). As shown in **Figure 4.12**, you don't have to encompass the entire design with the marquee to select it; including only a portion of both frames is enough.
4. **Grab the Rotate tool.** Press R, or click the Rotate icon in the toolbar .
5. **Choose a reference point.** In the top-left corner of the options bar, find the Reference Point icon , and click the center point to tell the Rotate tool you want the design to rotate around the center point.
6. **Rotate the design.** Position your cursor anywhere within Page 2 and drag to rotate the design vertically (**Figure 4.13**). To ensure a perfect 90-degree rotation, hold Shift while dragging to restrict InDesign to angle increments of 45 degrees.

### note

Does the New Page icon look familiar? It should, it's identical to the New Layer icon in Photoshop.

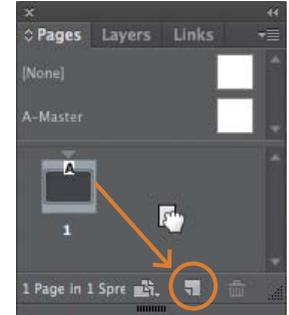


FIGURE 4.11 Duplicating a page is as easy as dragging it onto the New Page icon.

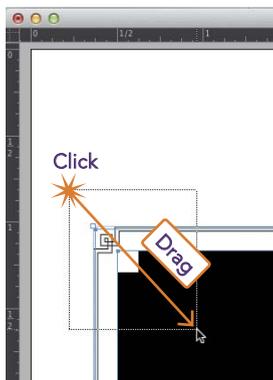


FIGURE 4.12 Click and drag over the corner of both frames with the Selection tool.

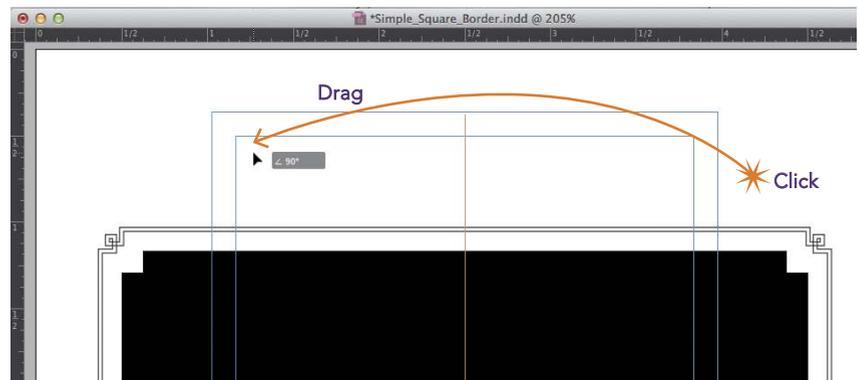
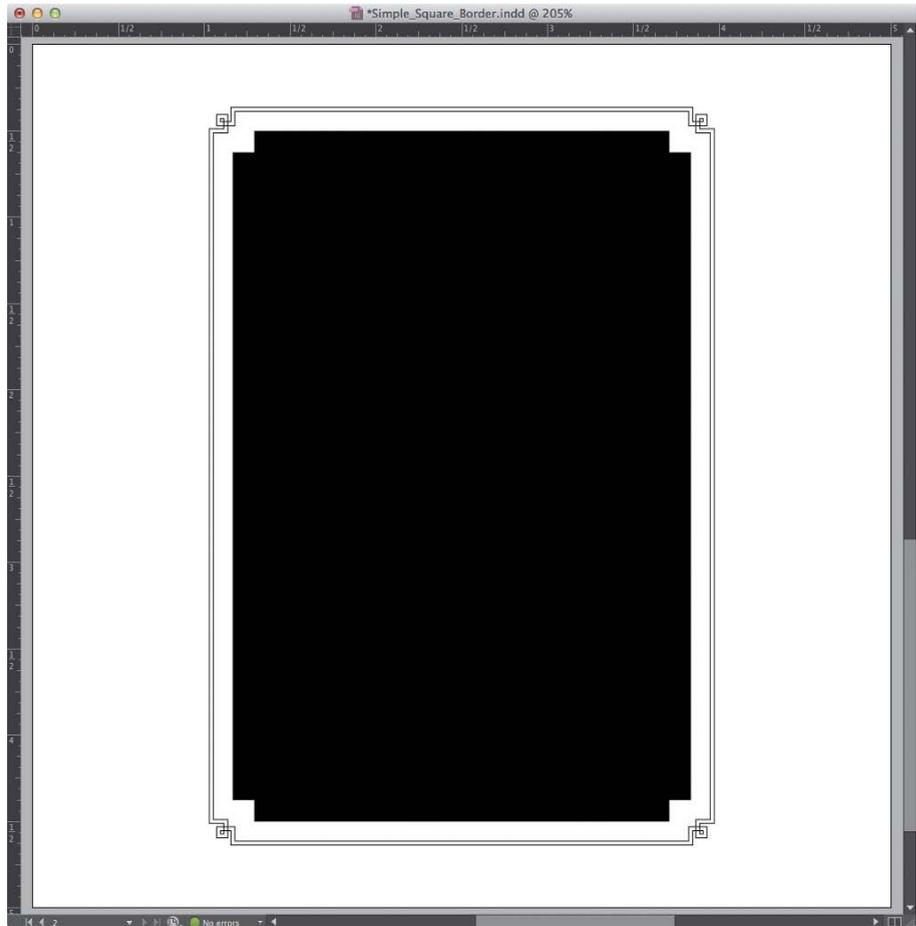


FIGURE 4.13 Using the Rotate tool in conjunction with the Shift key makes it easy to get a perfect 90-degree rotation.

7. **Save your work.** Press Cmd-S/Ctrl-S to update the saved file on your hard drive. You don't want to risk losing all this awesomeness!

You can see the final result (shown in the wonderful Preview mode) in **Figure 4.14**. High-five!

FIGURE 4.14 After rotating the design, the vertical version is ready to go!



## *resisting rotation*

Why not just make the horizontal version and rotate it vertically within Photoshop? You could, but in some cases, the vertical design is not merely a rotated version of the horizontal one. Depending on the kind of design elements you're using and whether or not they have directional importance, you may prefer to hand-place and invert them, rather than just rotate them.

## Export to JPEG

Now that the border design is finished, we're ready to export to JPG so we can kick this over to Photoshop to create a pattern.

1. **Export the design.** Choose File > Export (or press Cmd-E/Ctrl-E). In the dialog that follows, navigate to the location where you'd like to save the files, select JPEG for the Format menu, and click Save. A second window opens containing all the JPG options.
2. **Choose export options.** Under Export, be sure to select All. In the Image section, set Quality to Maximum, Resolution to 300, and Color Space to RGB. Be sure to put a check next to Embed Color Profile (Figure 4.15), and click Export.

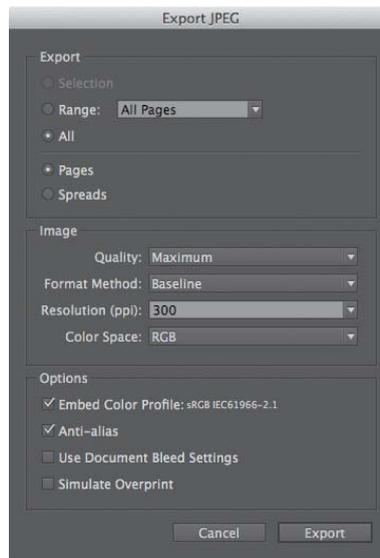


FIGURE 4.15 When exporting the design to JPEG, be sure to choose the appropriate settings.

That's it! Now that we've created horizontal and vertical versions of our design, we're ready to send the exported files to Photoshop to be converted into a pattern.

# Convert the Design into a Pattern

Time to set aside your newfound excitement for InDesign (temporarily, anyway) and head over to Photoshop to create the rest of the pieces that make this whole plan work like magic.

1. **Open the design in Photoshop.** Launch Photoshop, choose File > Open, navigate to Simple\_Square\_Border.jpg (we'll start with the horizontal version for now), and click Open. Alternatively, you could locate and open the file from within Adobe Bridge.
2. **Convert the Background layer.** In the Layers palette, double-click the lock icon to the right of the Background layer (**Figure 4.16**). In the pop-up window that follows, click OK to convert it to a working layer.

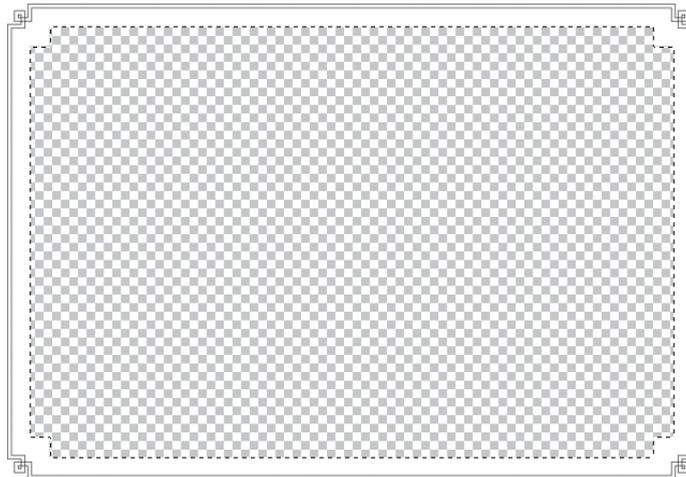
Because the design is ultimately going to be placed on top of your images, we need to knock out the black placeholder to be able to see the images below. This creates the need for transparency, which background layers can't support. Thus, we converted the background layer to a working layer.

3. **Delete the image placeholder.** Select the Magic Wand from the toolbar . (It may be buried with the Quick Selection tool. If you're having a hard time finding it, press W to find the appropriate tool family, then click and hold the Quick Selection tool to reveal the Magic Wand.) Click anywhere within the black placeholder to select it, then press Delete. The result is a transparent opening shown in **Figure 4.17**.



FIGURE 4.16 Because background layers can't support transparency, we'll convert it into a working layer.

FIGURE 4.17 After creating the fancy image placeholder in InDesign, now we'll delete it to create a hole within the border design.



4. **Define the pattern.** Press Cmd-A/Ctrl-A to load the entire document as a selection, then choose Edit > Define Pattern. In the window that appears, name the pattern 5 x 5 Horizontal (**Figure 4.18**), and click OK. Clear the active selection by pressing Cmd-D/Ctrl-D.

Phew! That wasn't too hard, was it? Congrats on having defined the horizontal border as a pattern. Next, we'll create the vertical version.



FIGURE 4.18 Defining the design as a pattern allows it to be used in a Photoshop action, turbocharging your workflow.

5. **Close the horizontal design.** Choose File > Close (no need to save it).
6. **Open the vertical design.** Locate and open the vertical version of the design we exported from InDesign earlier (Simple\_Square\_Border2.jpg). Repeat steps 2 through 4, this time naming the pattern 5 x 5 Vertical. When you're finished, close the file without saving changes.

We are *sooo* close! Now that both patterns have been defined, we need to save them as a set so they'll be available for future use.

7. **Save the patterns as a set.** Choose Edit > Presets > Preset Manager, and be sure to pick Patterns from the Preset Type drop-down menu. Select the pattern tiles we just created (the last two appearing in the series) by Cmd/Ctrl-clicking each of them (**Figure 4.19**). Click Save Set, enter the name My Border Designs, and click Save. Dismiss the Preset Manager by clicking Done.

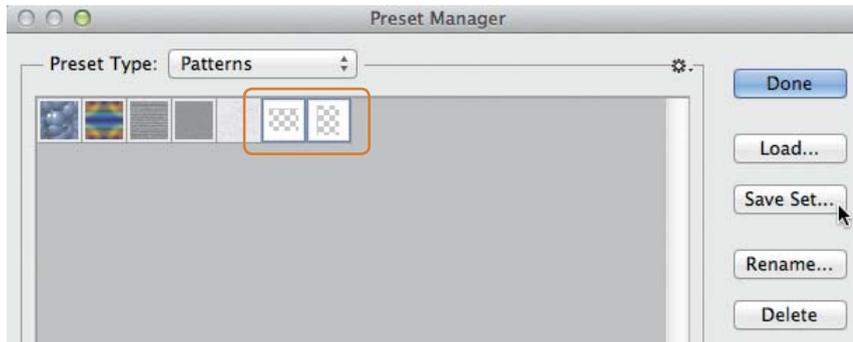


FIGURE 4.19 To make sure your patterns remain accessible for future use, save them as a preset.

# Record the Photoshop Actions

## tip

If you're not sure about the aspect ratio of a particular horizontal image, open it, choose Image > Image Size, and enter 3 inches for the width. If the height changes to anything other than 2, the image doesn't have an aspect ratio of 2:3.

You've made it to the home stretch! Now that you've created the design and converted it into a pattern, you're ready to record the Photoshop action that will enable you to automatically apply the border to a whole folder of images—*instantly*.

1. **Open a horizontal image.** In Photoshop, open any horizontal image that has a decent number of pixels (an image that was captured with at least 1 megapixel), is horizontal, and has an aspect ratio of 2:3 (from a camera with a full-frame image sensor).
2. **Open the Actions panel.** Choose Window > Actions. Make sure you're not in Button mode by clicking on the Actions Panel menu (**Figure 4.20**) and confirming that you do *not* see a check mark next to the Button Mode option. If you do, click to dismiss it.

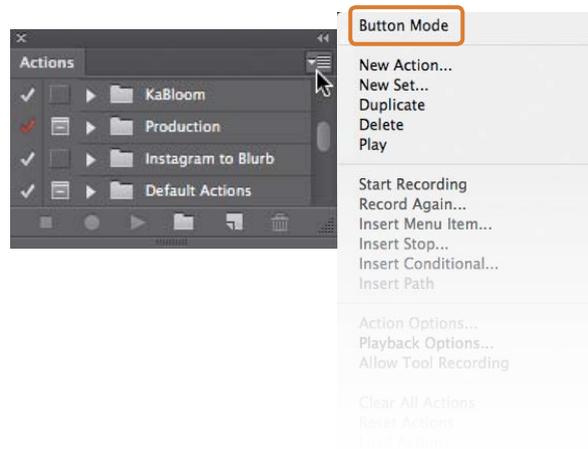


FIGURE 4.20 To record a new action, be sure Button mode is turned off.

We'll be recording a series of two actions and to keep things nice and orderly, we'll store them within a single action set.

3. **Create a new action set folder.** Click the folder icon  at the bottom of the Actions panel. Enter the name, My Border Designs, and click OK.
4. **Create a new action.** Click the New Action icon at the bottom of the Actions Panel  to create the first of the two actions we'll be recording. In the resulting New Action dialog, type 5 x 5 Horizontal in the Name field, and click **Record** (**Figure 4.21**).



FIGURE 4.21 Photoshop will create the new action and store it within the My Border Designs set, keeping your Actions panel organized.

This creates a new action, nests it within the action set we created in step 3, and simultaneously begins recording. From now on, Photoshop will record the actions you perform, so you can play them back later. (No need to rush; Photoshop doesn't record time, only actions. Take your time.) To begin, we'll resize the image so it appears properly within the pattern design.

5. **Resize the image.** Choose Image > Image Size to open the Image Size dialog, and make sure Resample Image is turned *off*. Change the Width to 4 inches. If you're using an image with the proper aspect ratio of 2:3, the Height should automatically change to 2.667. Next, turn Resample *on* and change the Resolution to 300. Finally, click OK.

Resizing the width and height *before* resampling and changing the resolution is crucial for keeping the image healthy. When we exported the original design from InDesign, we did so with a resolution of 300 ppi. As a result, our pattern was also created with 300 ppi. Thus, in order for our image to fit the pattern properly, it too needs to be 300 ppi.

The border design was made to fit a 5 x 5 album page, but the photo now measures only 4 x 2.667. To solve for this, we'll build out the image area to properly fit the 5 x 5 border design. Canvas size to the rescue!

## *how to determine width*

Where'd we get 4 for the width? When we created the 5 x 5 design in InDesign, we set the width of the placeholder frame to 4 inches. Here, we're creating an action to automatically resize images so they'll fit properly within that space. Because both the placeholder and our photos have a 2:3 aspect ratio, there's no cropping involved. All we need to do is a simple resize. (That's no coincidence—it's some very strategic planning!)

6. **Resize the canvas.** Choose Image > Canvas Size, change the Width and Height to 5 inches. Confirm that the anchor is set to the center position and the Canvas extension color is white (**Figure 4.22**) before clicking OK.

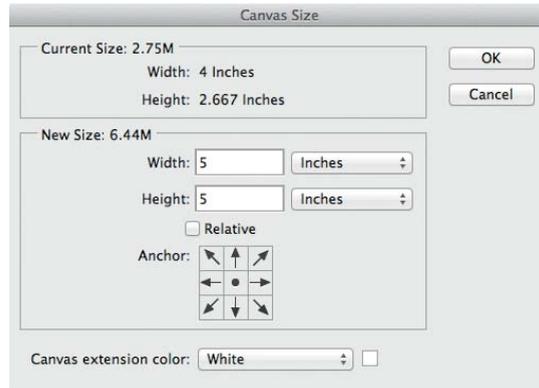
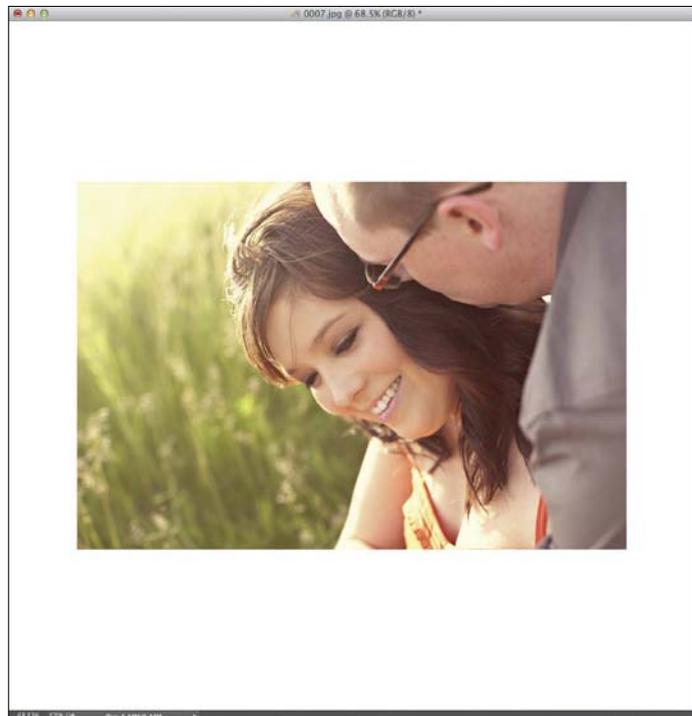


FIGURE 4.22 Adjusting the canvas size ensures that the image will properly fill out a 5 x 5 album page.

The result should be a white matte appearing around your image, similar to **Figure 4.23**. All that's missing now is the border design itself!

FIGURE 4.23 With the canvas now extended to 5 x 5, we're ready to add the border design.



7. **Apply the border design.** Choose Edit > Fill. In the Fill dialog, select Pattern from the Use menu and choose our 5 x 5 Horizontal pattern from the Custom Pattern menu (**Figure 4.24**). Confirm that Mode is set to Normal and Opacity is at 100%, then click OK.

Shazam! The finished product should look similar to **Figure 4.25**. Is that cool, or what? That's all we need as far as this action goes.

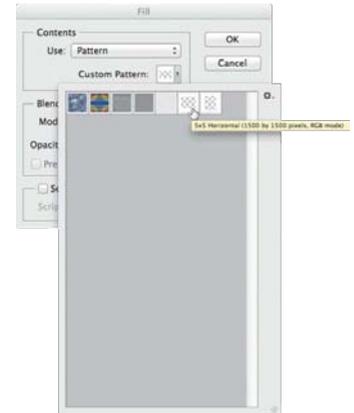


FIGURE 4.24 Applying the border is as easy as filling the image with our horizontal pattern.

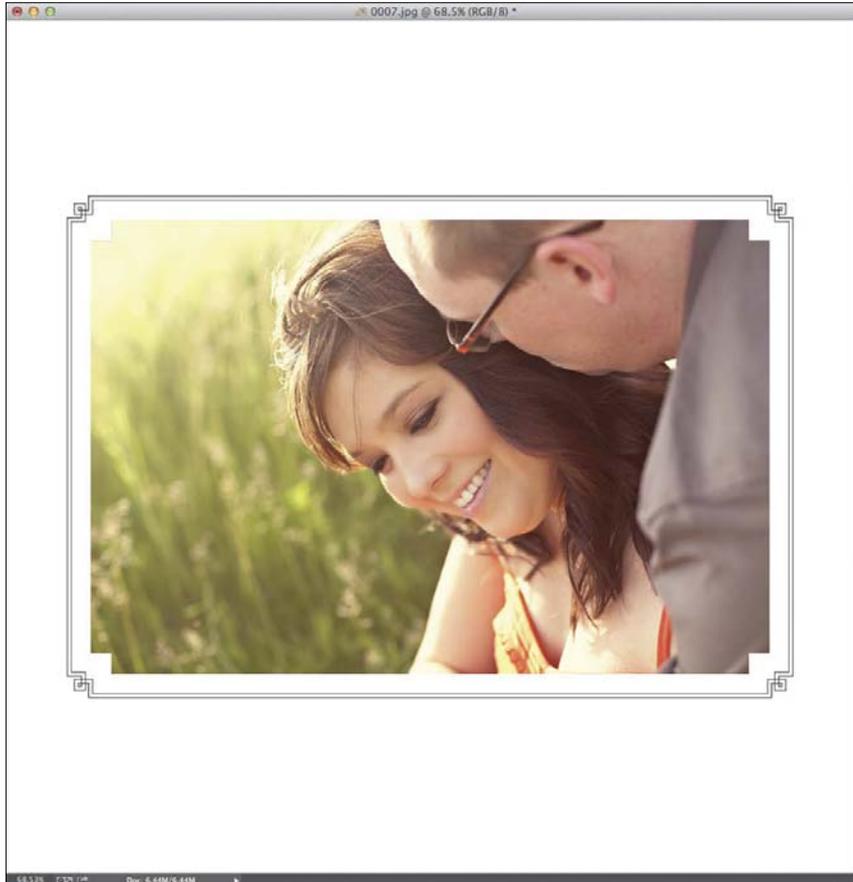
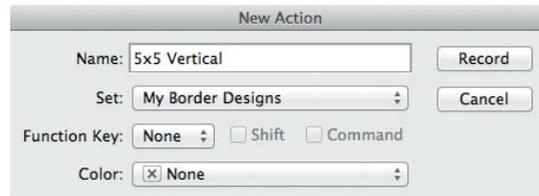


FIGURE 4.25 The finished border pattern applied to a horizontal image.

8. **Stop recording.** Click the Stop button at the bottom of the Actions panel . Because we used this image for the sole purpose of recording the action, choose File > Close and don't save any changes.

We're almost there! We just need to record a different action for the vertical version of the border design. The next steps will look familiar.

9. **Open a vertical image.** Locate and open any vertical image captured in a 2:3 aspect ratio with at least 1 megapixel.
10. **Create the vertical version of the action.** Create a new action, and this time, name it 5 x 5 Vertical, as shown in **Figure 4.26**.

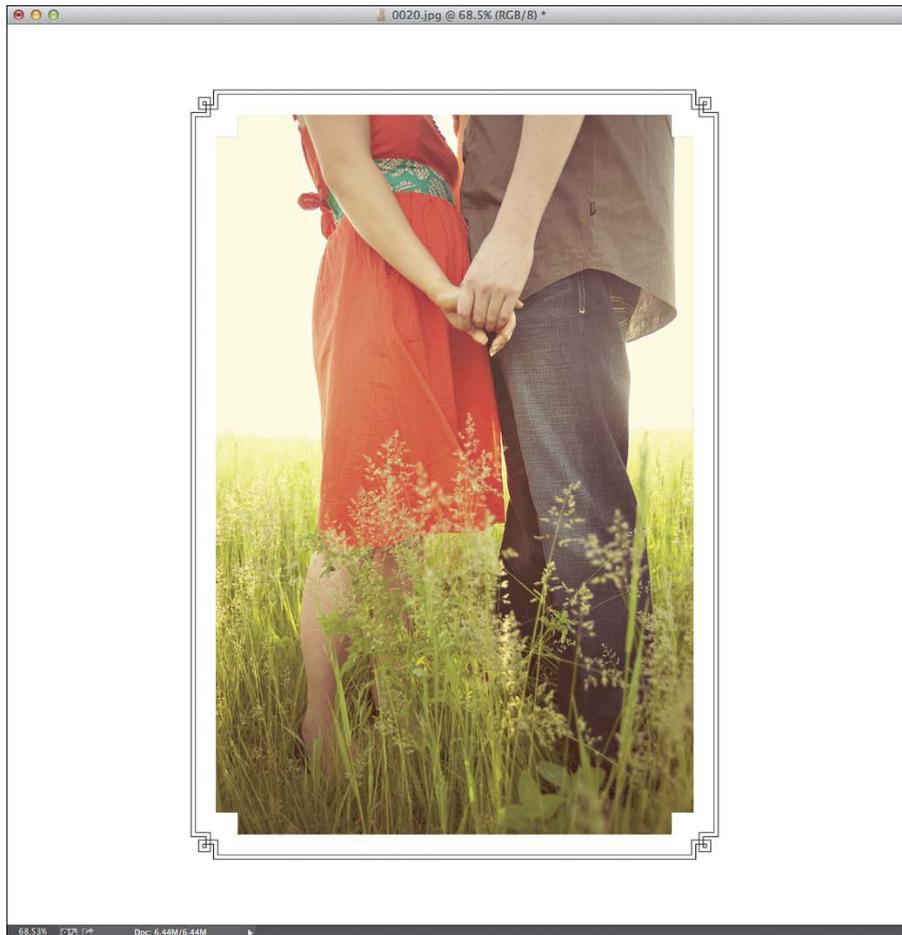


FILE 4.26 Record a separate action for the vertical border design.

Photoshop should automatically place the new action within the My Border Designs set. If you've gotten click happy and Photoshop put the new action elsewhere, just drag it into the My Border Designs set. (Refer to step 4, if necessary.)

11. **Resize the image.** Repeat step 5, but change the Height to 4, instead. The Width should automatically change to 2.667. After changing the Height, turn Resample Image *on* and change the Resolution to 300.
12. **Change the canvas size, and apply the pattern.** Repeat steps 6 and 7, but this time select the 5 x 5 Vertical pattern from the Custom Pattern drop-down menu. The final image should resemble **Figure 4.27**.
13. **Stop recording.** Click the stop button at the bottom of the Actions panel, and close the image file without saving.
14. **Save your new action set.** To keep these actions handy for the long haul, select the My Border Designs action set (not the individual actions, but the set as a whole) and choose Save Actions from the Action panel menu. Select a location, and click Save.

Way to go—you did it!



FILE 4.27 Here's the finished image after applying the vertical border design.

## Make Some Batch Magic!

This is the fun part where all the work we just did *totally* pays off. To take advantage of the recorded actions, we'll batch apply them to a folder of images. Get ready to be blown away!

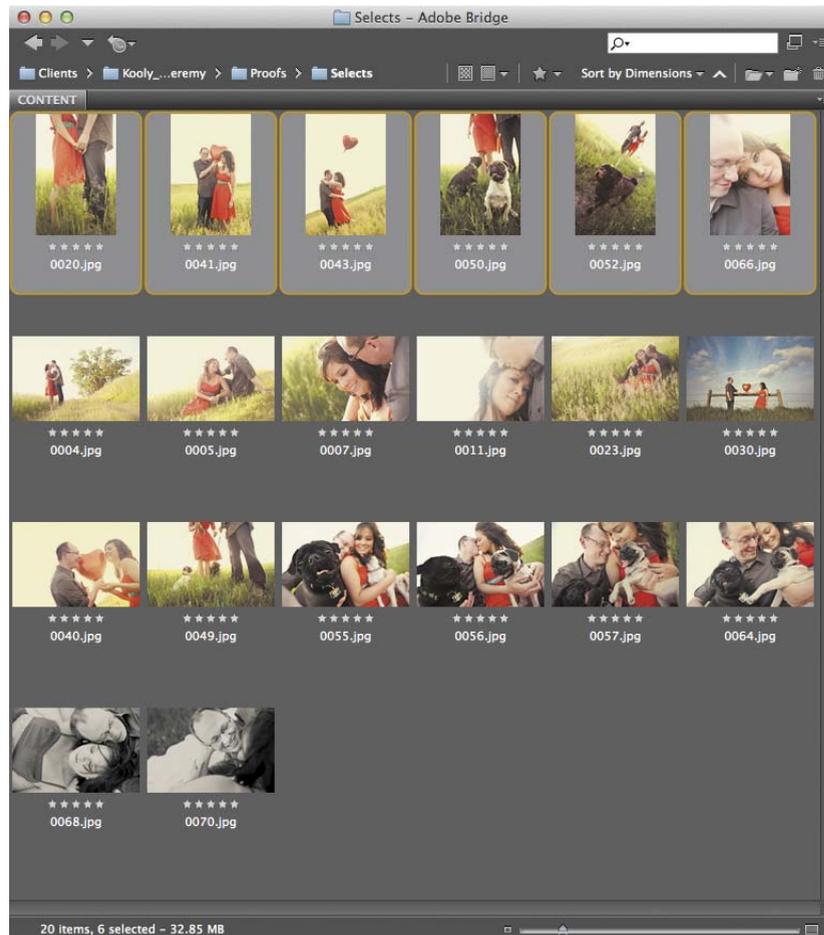
1. **Launch Bridge.** If you don't already have Adobe Bridge open, choose File > Browse In Bridge to launch it from within Photoshop. Navigate to a folder that contains multiple vertical and horizontal images, all with an aspect ratio of 2:3.

2. **Sort by dimensions.** Within Bridge, choose View > Sort > By Dimensions. As if by magic, all the vertical images now appear grouped together at the top of the window, followed by all the horizontal images below.

Because the action we run on each photo depends on whether it's horizontal or vertical, it helps to sort the entire folder of images according to their orientation. (If you have Photoshop CS6 or newer, the addition of conditional actions makes this step unnecessary. See the sidebar "Conditional Actions" for details. Pretty cool stuff.)

3. **Select and process the vertical images.** Now that the images are sorted by dimension, it's easy to select only the vertical images by clicking the first one and Shift-clicking the last one (**Figure 4.28**). Choose Tools > Photoshop > Image Processor.

FIGURE 4.28 Quickly sort the images by dimension in Bridge, then run the action in two batches, starting with the vertical images.



4. **Choose the Image Processor options.** Select the option to Save in Same Location (for maximum convenience) and under File Type, choose JPEG with a quality setting of 12. For Preferences, put a check next to Run Action and choose My Border Designs for the set and 5 x 5 Vertical for the action (Figure 4.29).

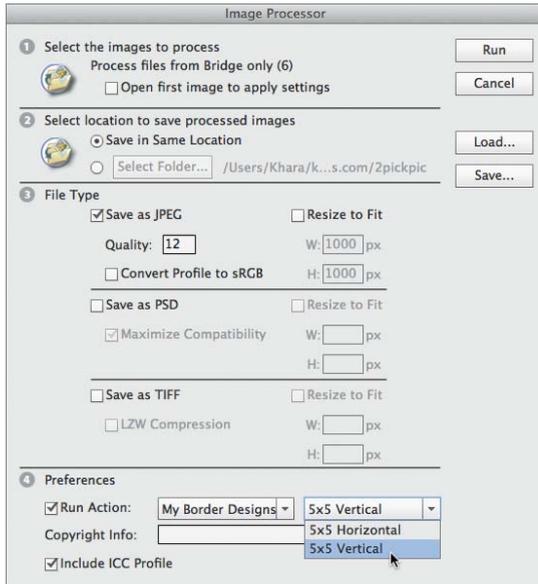


FIGURE 4.29 You can process multiple images at once with Image Processor. No need to duplicate files first or worry about accidental override.

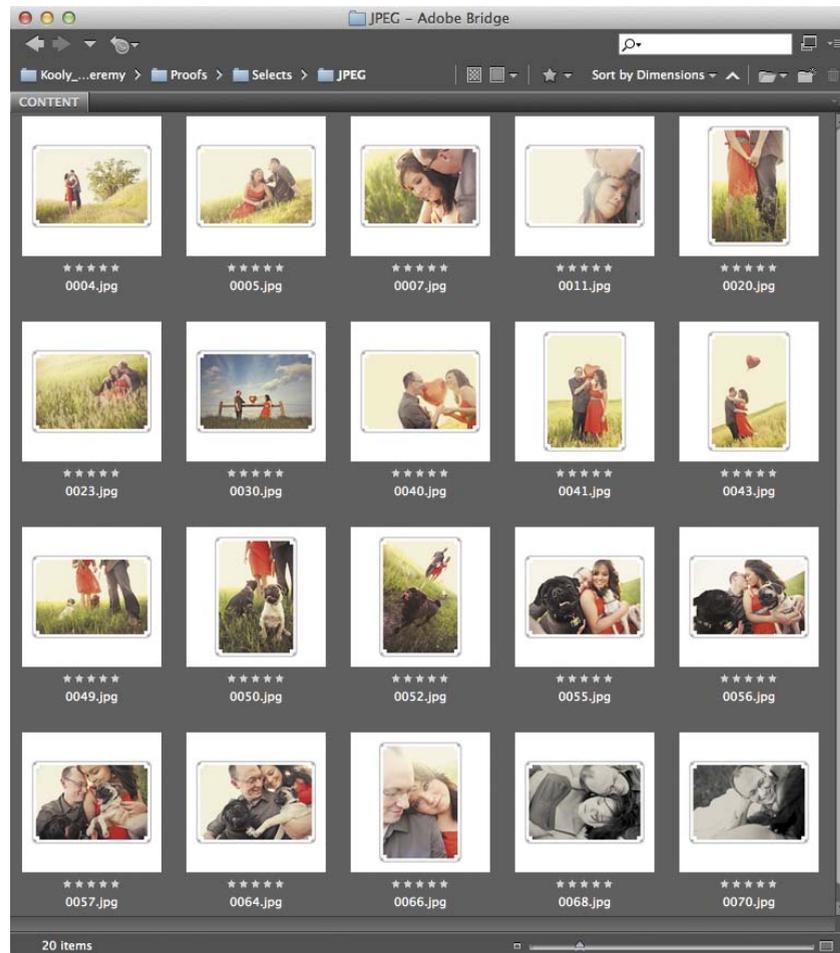
Bridge will process the files and save them in a new folder called JPEG, stored within the current image folder.

## *better than batching*

Why didn't we choose Tools > Photoshop > Batch? Because we didn't record a "Save" step in our actions, Photoshop wouldn't know how to handle our file-saving preferences. And if the images you batch haven't already been individually saved as a JPEG (while retouching, for example), Photoshop will interrupt the automation to ask you to choose a quality setting for saving *each* of the offending files, thereby undermining the whole point of batch processing. By using the Image Processor instead, we can specify the JPEG settings ahead of time so Photoshop doesn't have to interrupt us. Using the image processor also prevents the accidental overwriting of the original files and saves us the extra steps of having to create and specify a location for storing the finished images. In short, it's safer, easier, and faster. A true trifecta!

5. **Repeat with the horizontal images.** When Bridge finishes processing the vertical images, select all the horizontal ones, choose Tools > Photoshop > Image Processor, and change the selected action to 5 x 5 Horizontal. Click Run to process the horizontal images. Bridge adds the finished images to the previously generated JPEG folder located within the image folder (**Figure 4.30**). Pretty cool, huh?

FIGURE 4.30 You can process multiple images at once with Image Processor. No need to duplicate files first or worry about accidental override.



And that, ladies and gentlemen, is how you knock out a session album almost instantaneously. As mentioned in Chapter 2, these little books can be as wondrous for your marketing efforts as they are for your bottom line. Now that you've created a border design action set, you can whip these books out in seconds. Talk about cost effectiveness—wow!

## conditional actions

Adobe Photoshop CS6 introduced conditional actions making it possible for Photoshop to intelligently choose which action to run on which image, based on predetermined conditions (such as image orientation)—saving you *even more* time! If you have CS6 or newer, you can avoid having to sort images and run multiple batches. Instead, all you have to do is:

1. Create an additional action *within* the My Border Designs set, and name it Conditional.
2. From the Action panel's menu, choose Insert Conditional. In the dialog that follows, select Document Is Landscape from the If Current menu, and choose 5 x 5 Horizontal for Then Play Action.
3. From the Else Play menu, select 5 x 5 Vertical (Figure 4.31). These settings tell Photoshop that if the image is horizontal, it should run the horizontal action. For everything else, it should run the vertical one. Click OK. The finished action set should resemble Figure 4.32.

When you're ready to batch, instead of sorting images by dimensions and processing them in two separate batches (one for horizontal images and one for verticals), select *all* the images and run the Image Processor choosing Conditional as the Run Action. Photoshop will process all the images, intelligently choosing the right action based on the photo's orientation. Bam!



FIGURE 4.31 With the introduction of Conditional Actions in CS6, Photoshop can now make intelligent decisions about which action to run on a given photo.

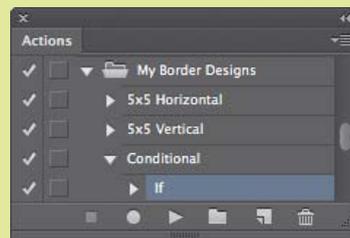


FIGURE 4.32 The conditional action completes the set.

## note

Although we built this border design to work on images with a 2:3 aspect ratio, you can tweak things as necessary if you regularly shoot with a camera that has a cropped sensor. The key is to avoid having to crop the images, which is discretionary and, as such, isn't subject to automation.

# Taking It a Step Further

Wasn't that fun? And it was just the beginning!

Now that you've at least gotten a feel for InDesign, there's nothing stopping you from building a vast personal library of all kinds of border dressings! The examples in **Figure 4.33** were all created with InDesign using the same foundation explained in this chapter. A few tweaks in the Strokes panel, combined with some color and a handful of fun dingbats, makes a world of things possible.

You don't have to be limited to only 5 x 5 borders, either! You can make them in a variety of sizes, the most common of which are 5 x 5, 8 x 8, and 10 x 10. Check out some additional examples and get inspired at [www.albummoxie.com](http://www.albummoxie.com).



FIGURE 4.33 With InDesign, creating a whole library of border designs to suit any purpose is a cinch! You can find these examples and more—in a variety of sizes—at [www.albummoxie.com](http://www.albummoxie.com).

# Chapter Recap

- Many of InDesign's keyboard shortcuts are similar to those in Photoshop—*including* navigational commands. Now that you've had the chance to poke around a bit, I hope it's starting to feel more like home!
- Although the default measurement unit for InDesign is points, we changed this preference to inches. We'll tweak more preferences in the next chapter. Stay tuned!
- When defining patterns and recording actions, keep in mind that a separate version is required for horizontal and vertical images. Be sure to always name the designs and actions accordingly so as not to get confused later.

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