Picture Package and Custom Package

How to create custom layouts in the Print module

By Martin Evening

Picture Package and Custom Package

In addition to the Single Image/Contact Sheet options, there is also a Picture Package engine mode that has its own set of configuration panels (**Figure 1**), including a few custom templates that can be accessed from the Template Browser panel (**Figure 2**). These can be readily identified by the bracketed numbers such as the *(3) 2x2.5, (2) 3x7, (2) 2.5x3.5* template that is shown selected in Figure 2. The purpose of the Picture Package templates is to enable you to produce multiple-sized photographs on a single-page layout. For example, commercial portrait photographers may use this feature to produce multiple print variations on a single sheet of paper. Rather than be forced to print out two or more different print sheets that use different print sizes, you can produce all the different size prints you need on a single sheet of paper.

Image Settings panel

Here, you have the same Zoom to Fill and Rotate to Fit options as you have in the Single Image/Contact Sheet layout style mode. There is also a Photo Border slider for setting the border width inside each cell and an Inner Stroke slider that can be used to set the stroke border width.

Rulers, Grid & Guides panel

The Ruler Units options are identical to those discussed earlier. Below this are the Grid Snap options. Here, you can customize the Picture Package layouts by dragging and dropping individual cells. The Snap options mean you can choose to snap to the grid lines or other cells when adjusting the placement of the cells (or turn off this option). The Show Guides options allow you to switch on or off various items, such as Rulers, Page Bleed, Page Grid, Image Cells, and Dimensions.

Cells panel

To create a new Picture Package layout setting, you need to select Picture Package in the Layout Style panel and click the Clear Layout button in the Cells panel. You can then add new cells to the blank Picture Package layout by clicking the Cell size buttons. These range in size from 2 x 2.5 inches to 8 x 10 inches (or 5x7.5 cm to 13x18 cm, if using centimeter units).

You can stick with these default size recommendations or click the button options arrow and select Edit to create and add a new custom cell size (see **Figure 3**). As you click the cell buttons, new cells are added to the layout and they are auto-matically placed to best fit the current Page Setup layout (**Figure 4**). To arrange the cells better, you can also try clicking the Auto Layout button. This rearranges the cells to find what would be the best fit for the page layout. Lightroom does so with a view to what would be the most efficient use of space yet still allow you to trim your photos easily with a paper cutter. As you try to squeeze in more cells, at
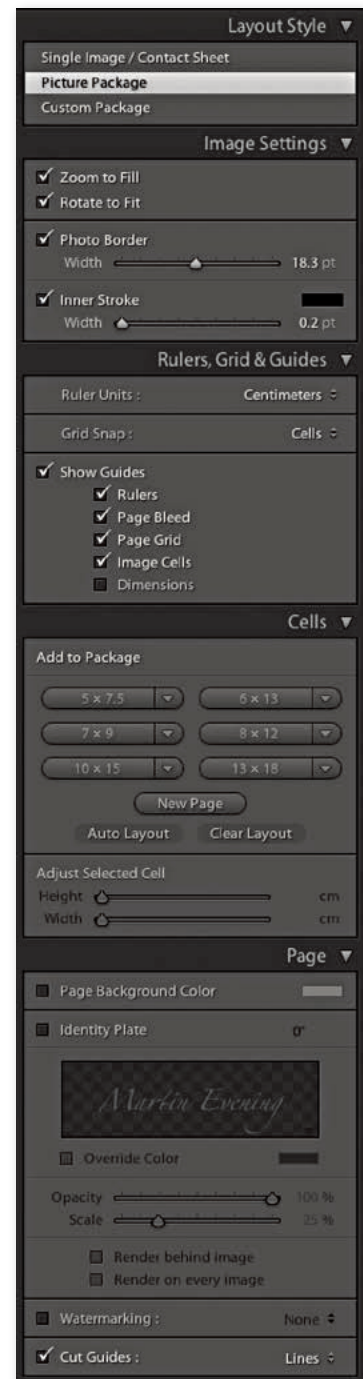

Figure 1 *This shows the panel options for the Picture Package layout.*

Figure 2 *This shows an example of a Picture Package layout using a custom (3) 2x2.5, (2) 3x7, (2) 2.5x3.5 template.*

some point, Lightroom may allow you to place one more cell, but this will not necessarily allow you to trim the pictures that easily. Even so, the Auto Layout option can otherwise be a useful paper-saving option. The other option is to click a cell and drag it manually to a desired location on the page; this is where the Snap options can come in handy, as they can help you align the cell images (**Figure 5**). If any of the cells end up overlapping, you will see a yellow exclamation point icon. You can then use the Zoom to Fill, Rotate to Fit, and Photo Border options in the Image Settings panel to refine the layout and determine how the photos will fill the cell frames.

If you add more cells and there is not enough room on the page, new pages are added automatically (as shown in **Figures 6** and **7**). Alternatively, you can click the New Page button to manually add a new page and adjust the arrangement of the cells' layout across two or more pages. If you want to delete a page, click the red cross in the top-left corner.
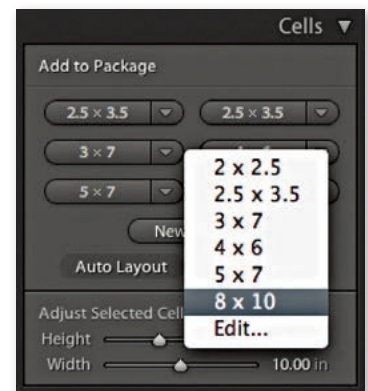

Figure 3 *You can create new cell size settings by clicking a cell-size arrow and selecting Edit (the cell sizes shown here are using inches units).*

Figure 4 *This shows a new Picture Package layout being created, where a new cell had been added to the current layout. You can click and drag to reposition a cell anywhere on the page layout.*
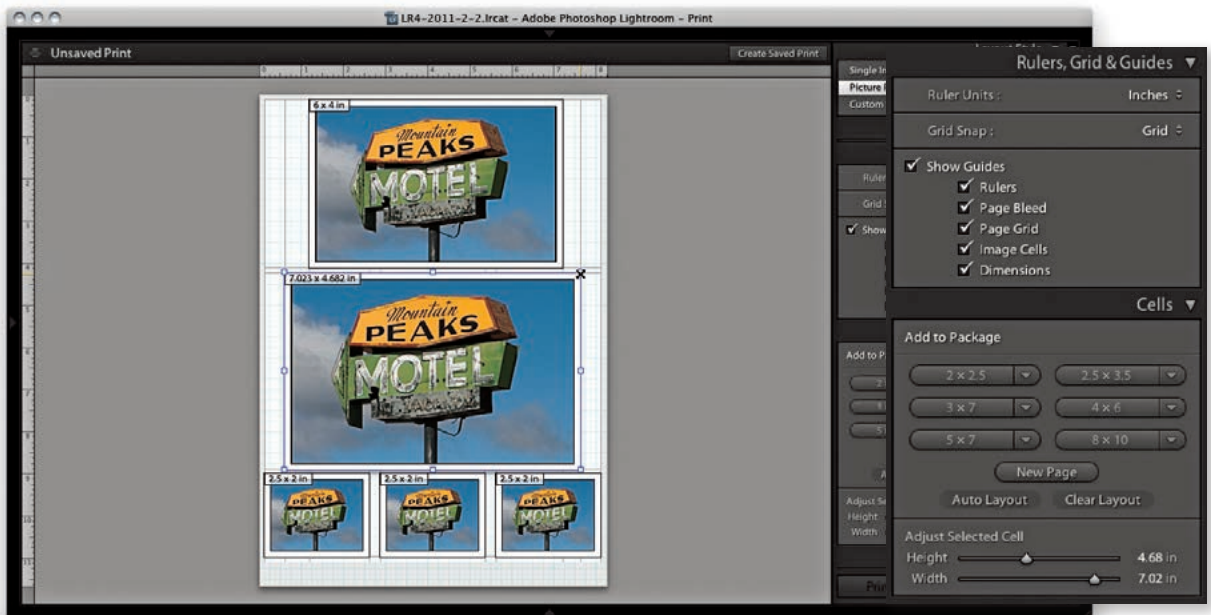

Figure 5 *You can manually edit the cells by dragging the cell handles (hold down the ⇧ Shift key to preserve the same aspect ratio). Or, you can drag the sliders in the Cells panel.*
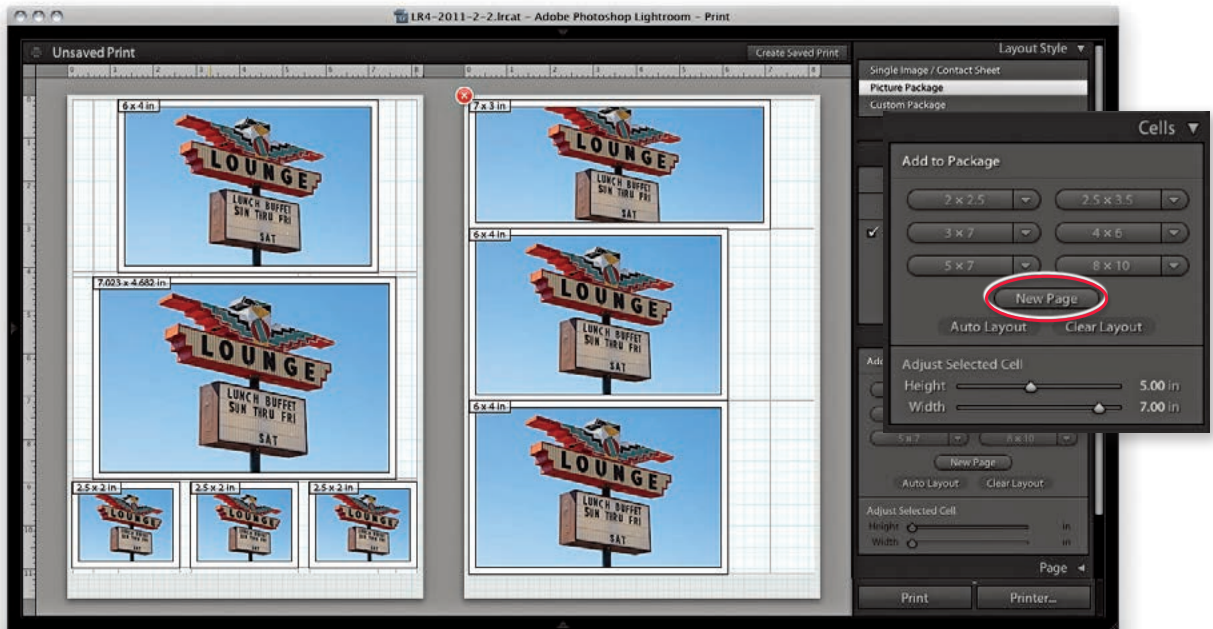
Figure 6 *As more cells are added, they may overflow onto new pages. Or, you can click the New Page button (circled) to add new pages to a Picture Package layout.*
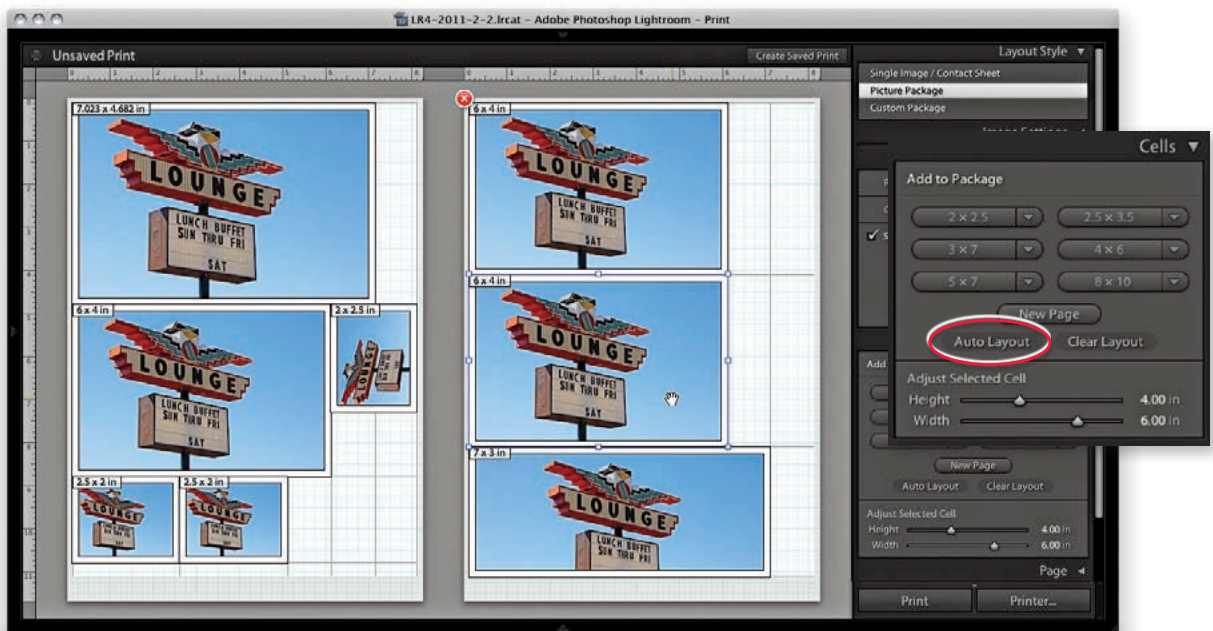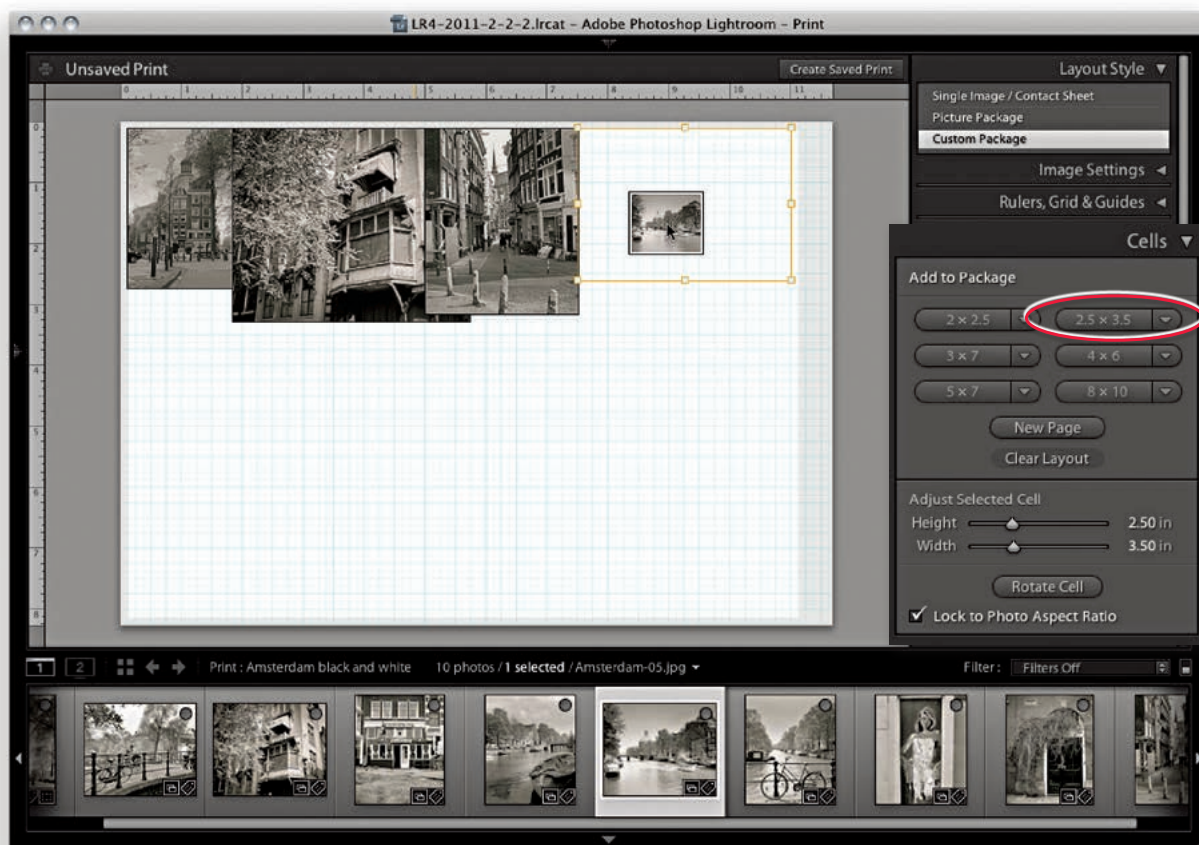

Figure 7 *Here, I clicked the Auto Layout button (circled) to optimize the layout arrangement. You can also edit the position of the photos within the frames by holding down the ⌘ key (Mac) or* Ctrl *key (PC) and dragging within the frames.*
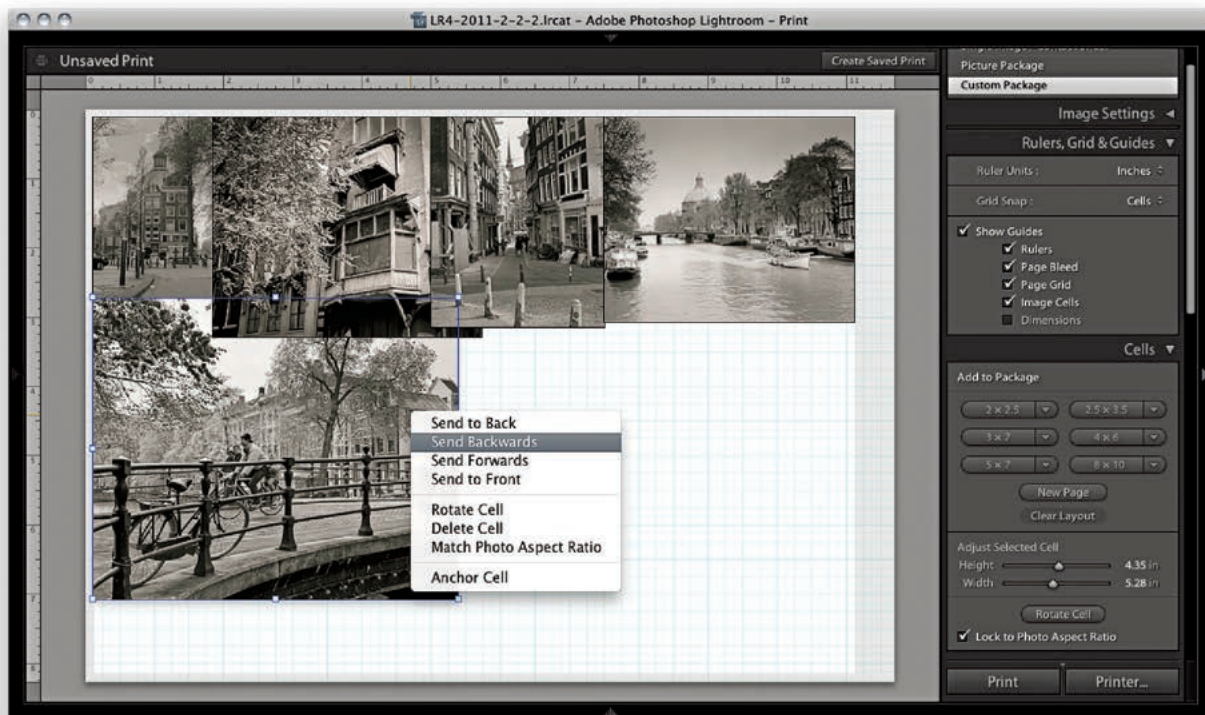
Custom Package layout style

Custom Package can be regarded as an extension of the Picture Package layout style. The main difference here is that, with Custom Package, you can create and save free-form layouts for placing selected, individual photographs on a page. In the following example, I have shown how you could use this layout engine to produce a scrapbook-style page that is ready to print. This is also an example of a print job where it would be a good idea to save the combination of the layout setting and picture selection as a custom print collection.

1. When the Custom Package option is selected, you can add frames to the layout in two ways. You can click the buttons in the Cells panel, such as the 2.5 x 3.5 cell circled here. Once you have done this, you can resize the cells as desired and drag photos from the Filmstrip into the layout cells. This provides you with a better indication of how the final custom package might look. Alternatively, you can simply drag any photo from the Filmstrip into the Custom Package layout to place it anywhere on the page.

2. Once placed, you can edit the size and proportions of each cell by clicking to select it and dragging one of the handles to achieve the desired size and shape. You can also right-click a cell to access the options shown here. These options allow you to adjust the relative position of a cell, moving it either to the front or to the back of the Custom Package page layout. You can also select the Match Photo Aspect Ratio option to make the cell shape match the proportions of the placed photo. Or, you can use this menu to rotate, delete, or "anchor" a cell. If you click the New Page button in the Cells panel (circled), you can add extra pages to a Custom Package layout. Where an image is anchored, this allows you to keep an image locked to the layout design so that as new pages are added to a layout the anchored images appear automatically on each page in the same location. For example, this could be useful if you were designing a layout in which you needed certain images or logos to appear in the exact same place on each page. But bear in mind that the Custom Package layouts are limited to six pages at a time. Having said that, it is possible to exceed the six-page limit to create batches of Custom Package layouts and use the arrow keys in the Toolbar (see **Figure 8**) to navigate between them.
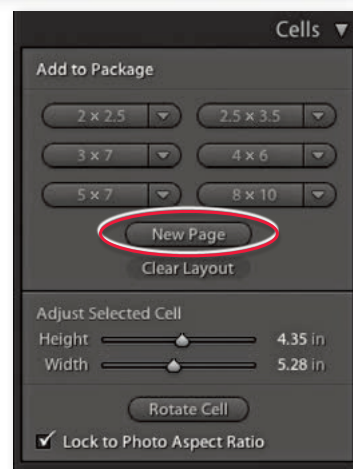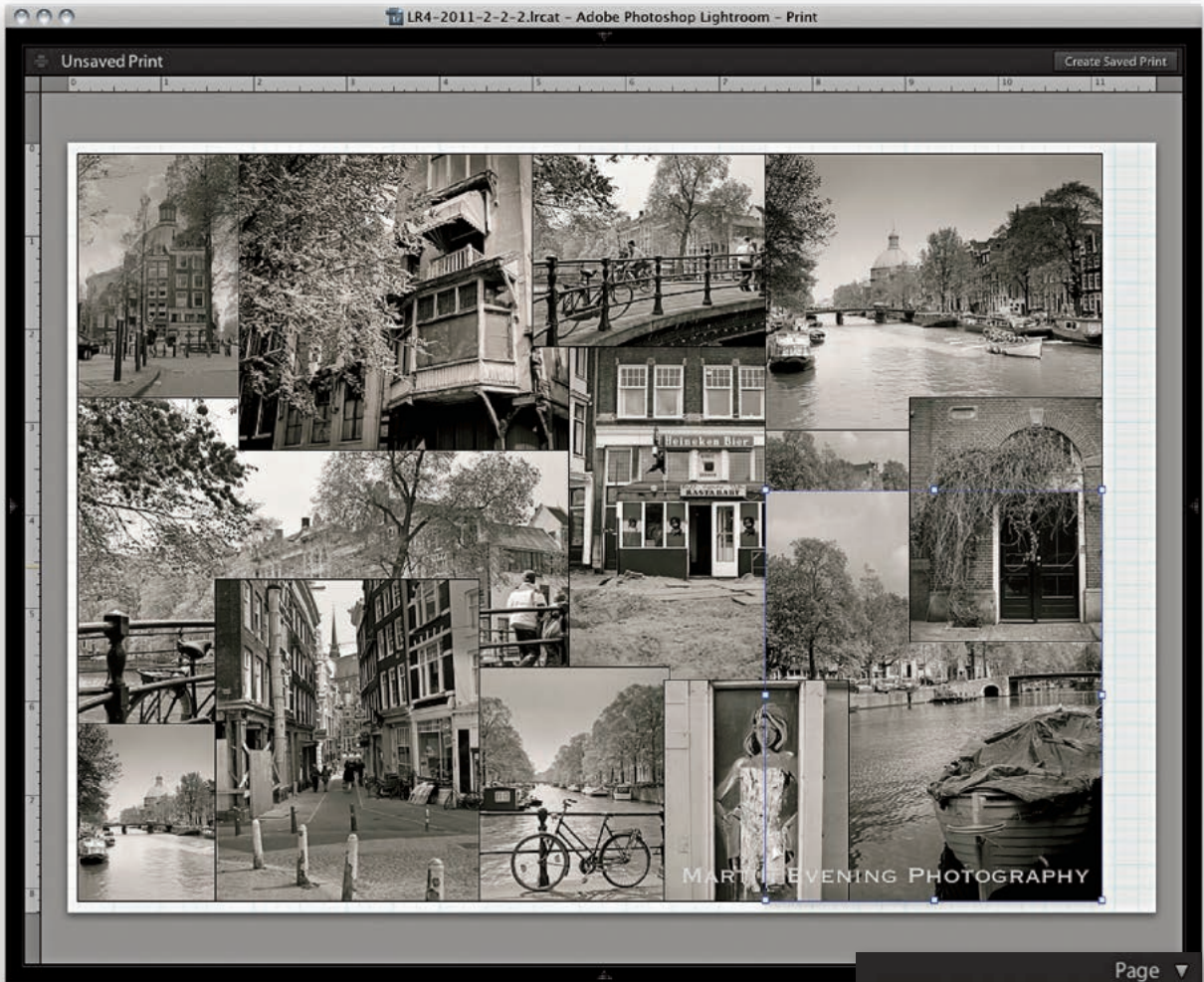

Figure 8   *The Toolbar shows how Custom Package layouts are limited to six pages at a time and that you can use the arrows to move between sets of layout pages.*

3. Here, you can see an example of a completed layout in which I added enough cells to fill the whole of the printable area of the page. The black lines you see here are only guides, and these will not show when the final print is made. You can also add an Identity Plate logo to the layout. Here, I checked the Identity Plate option in the Overlays panel and adjusted the settings as shown on the left to add an identity plate in the bottom-right corner. If you check the "Render on every image" option, this will add the identity plate to each and every image in the layout. Once I was happy with the Custom Package layout, I saved it as a custom user layout. I clicked the "Add new preset" button and named the preset as a new print template. This would allow me to access the template again in the future and use it with different collections of images, or edit as desired. I could also save the custom layout as a new print collection to the Collections panel. This would allow me to save the layout design (including the photos) as a print collection.

Picture Package/Custom Package Page panel

The Picture Package and Custom Package Page panel is slightly different from that available when using the Single Page/Contact Sheet layout style. You do have the Page Background Color and Identity Plate options, where you can add a custom identity plate to a Picture Package/Custom Package layout (as shown in Step 3), but there are no Page Options or Photo Info options. One unique thing that is featured in the Picture Package and Custom Package layout modes is a Cut Guides option. When this is checked, it adds cut guides to the print that can be in the form of crop marks at the edges or crop lines that intersect on the page. Now, although this is a specific package layout feature, it also happens to be useful for single-image print layouts such as in the **Figure 9** example. This can make it easier to trim prints to an exact size in cases where it is not easy to see where the print edge should be, such as a photograph where you have a white background.
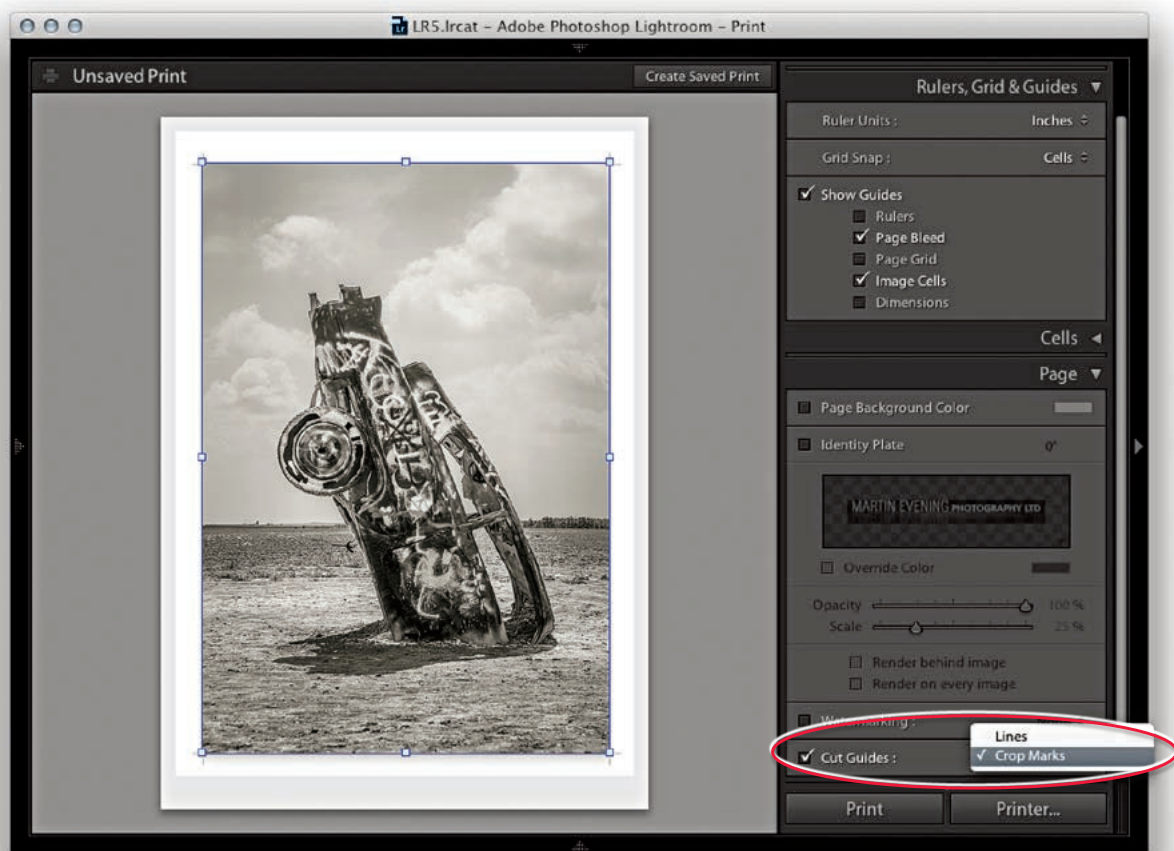

Figure 9   *The Cut Guides option can be used to add crop trim guides to photos.*

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