# *Lasso Tool Techniques*

One of the best tools for touching up photos is the *Lasso Tool*. We will learn a few techniques in this lesson that can be applied to any photograph of any kind. I chose to use a model's face because the subtle tones of the human skin are the most difficult to adjust. Once you get the hang of these, you will be able to use the very same techniques on other subjects. We will be using some strong feathering in this lesson because of the soft tones. If you were to apply this technique to other subjects you will probably want to use less feathering on the lasso tool.

Okay, to begin with, open both files *lima1.jpg* and *lima2.jpg*. Right away you will notice that there is quite a substantial difference in the overall color of these photos. So, we will first *"color correct"* them to make the overall color similar to each other. With the *lima1.jpg* file selected go to the *adjust* portion of the *image* pull down menu and select *Color Balance (screen 42)*. Use your sliders to adjust the color to your liking. I have added some red, a little magenta and a bit more yellow *(screen 43)*. Notice that the photo overall is a bit dark and flat. You will soon realize this is true with almost all raw photos. We will need to adjust the brightness and contrast. Go to the *adjust* section of the *image* pull down menu and select *Brightness/Contrast (screen 44)*. Again, use the sliders to make the adjustments. Get the brightness *and* contrast to where you like it and then click OK *(screen 45)*. This picture has a very soft focus to it, so we will want to keep that in mind when we are applying the contrast. If you add too much contrast it will tend to conflict with this soft focus and make the image look wrong. The light has been filtered or softened to give a warm gentle cast to the model. We want to keep that feel in the final image as well. Experiment with the initial steps to get the image to look its best.
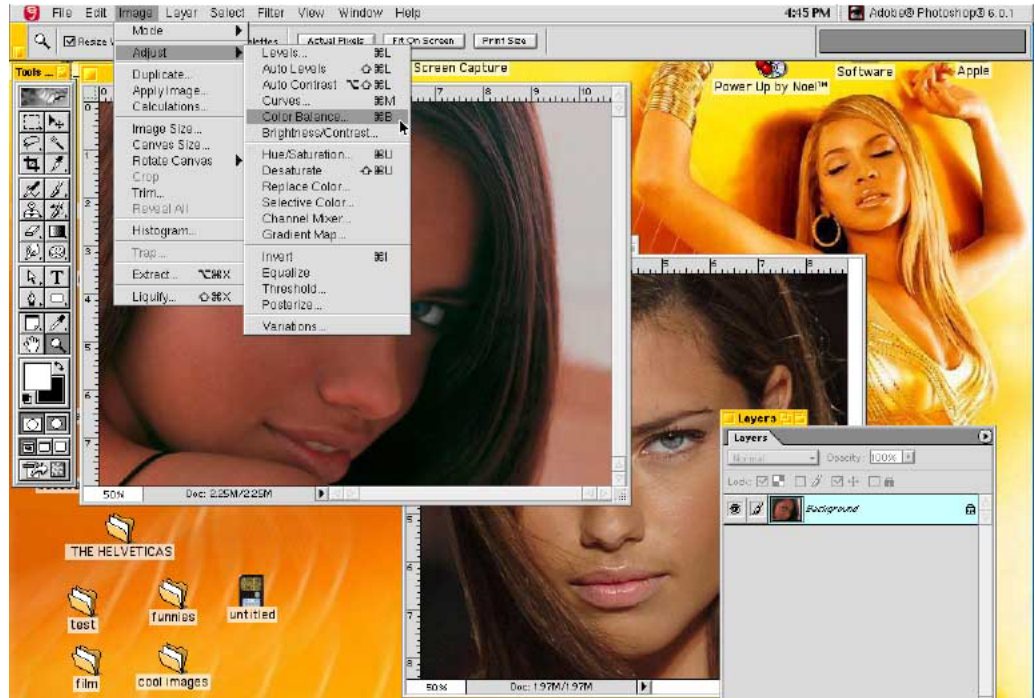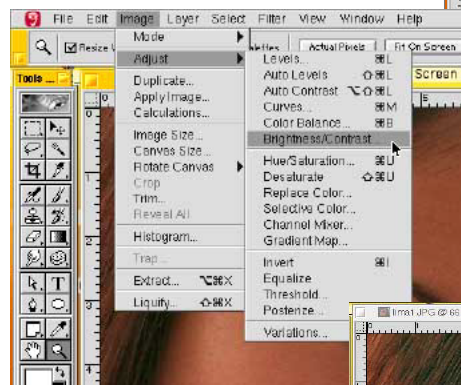

▲ *Screen 42*

◄ *Screen 43*

▼ *Screen 44*

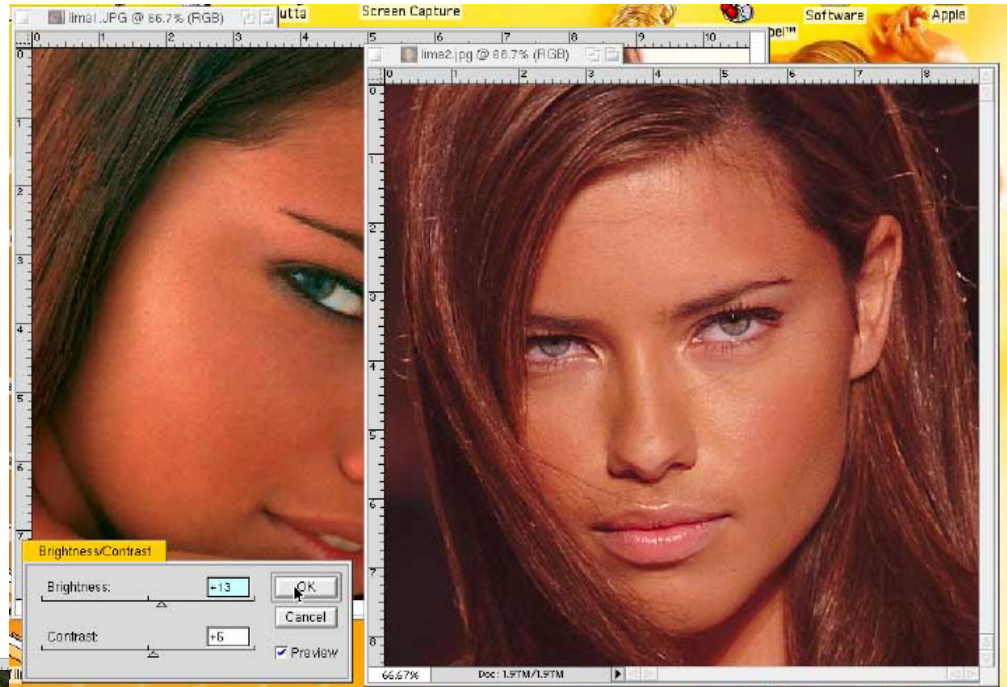*Screen 45* ►

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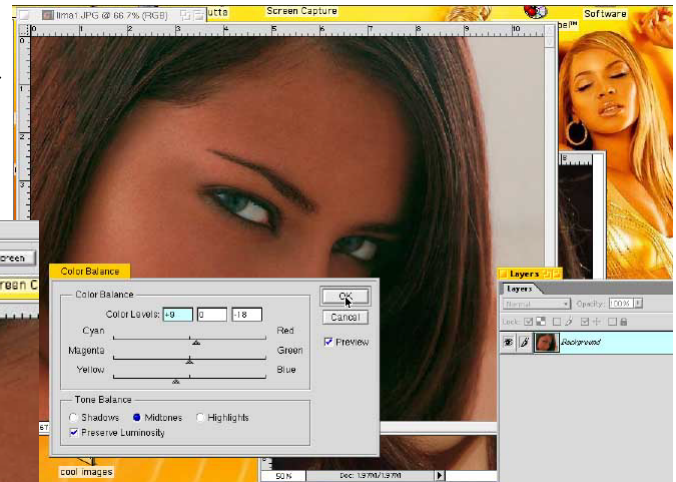
We now want to adjust the *lima2.jpg* file the same way. Adjust your overall *Color Balance* the same as you did with the previous photo. Now adjust the *Brightness/Contrast (screen 46)*. Because this is a crisper focus and the lighting is much stronger we can adjust the brightness and contrast differently. Make the adjustments to where you like them, using your previous shot as a reference for overall color. Once you get it to where you like it select the *eyedropper tool* and click on her cheek bone in either photo. Now click on her cheek bone in the other photo. Notice when you click the eyedropper, the foreground color changes. The hues should be similar, if one cheek is more red or more green, then you will need to continue your color correction. If one cheek is darker than the other that is OK, as long as the hues are the same.

   Are the colors corrected? Perfect, now we need to save our work. Do a *Save As (screen 47)*, and save *each* as a photoshop file, this will allow you to have layers within the files. You should now have *lima1.psd* open.

   We want to fix her blemishes, although she does not have many. A small one on her forehead above her eye. Select the lasso tool with the feather set for 3 pixels and draw a circle to the left of the blemish *(screen 48)*. Now *copy* and then *paste*. Press the *command* key and slide the pasted portion over the blemish. Poof! it's gone, perfect. Now do this to any others you may find. Remember to go back to the *background* layer each time you want to select something new to copy.
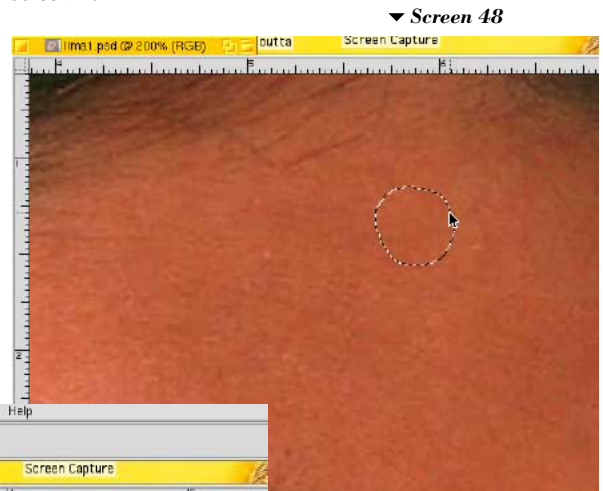
   Let's add some eyelashes. Simply select the first two with the lasso and copy and paste them, then slide into place *(screen 49)*. To *rotate* them, go to the *transform* portion of the *edit* pull down menu and select *rotate (screen50)*. Rotate the corners and press enter, now slide in position.
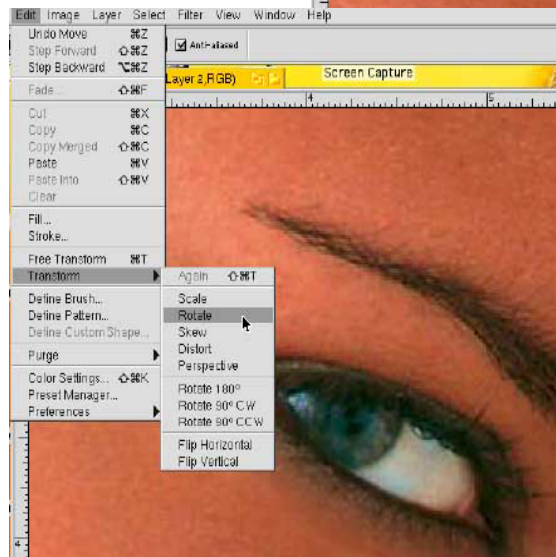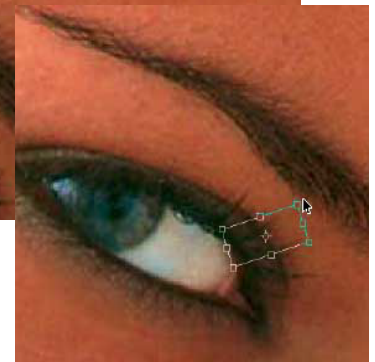

▲ *Screen 46*
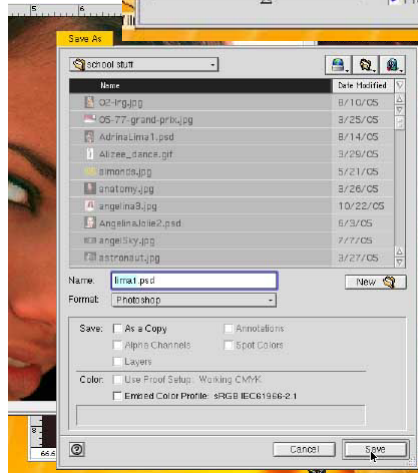
◄ *Screen 47*

▼ *Screen 48*

▲ *Screen 50*

▲ *Screen 49*

Lasso Tool Techniques continued

Once you have completed all of your copy and paste work you will want to *flatten* the layers *(screen 51)*. This action compresses all of the layers into the *background.* How does your model look? Can you tell where made alterations? If you can, press *command z*, and now go to the layer or layers that did not look good and fix them. You want your touch up work to be *completely* undetectable.

Our next step in her touch up is to smooth her skin. This is my favorite part and truly makes a dramatic difference. Select the lasso tool and put the feather at 4 pixels. Draw around the entire profile of her face, you can do this in sections, just hold down the *shift* key as you select more areas. Stay inside of the hard lines, such as the bridge of her nose, the nice shadow around her nostril and crease of her lip. Now, hold down the *option* key and use the lasso to subtract the eye area. Hold the *shift* key again, and add her shoulder, neck and back, as well as under *her* left eye. Your selected area should look like *screen 52*. Remember, you do *not* have to be precise in your selection, just close.

Once you have everything selected, *copy* and *paste* to a new layer. This layer we will keep, so we want to name it *skin (screen 53)*. To name a layer *double* click on it with the *option* key held down. Now with the *skin layer* selected we want to blur this layer. Choose *Gaussian Blur* under the *blur* section of the *filter* pull down menu *(screen 54)*. You will get a new window. Set your blur to where you like it, I chose 8 pixels. Be certain the *preview* box is checked off *(screen 55)*, and you will see the effect of the filter on your photo. When you have it where you like it, click OK and the filter will be applied. What do you think? A little too smooth? Yup, we will take of that next.

◀ *Screen 51*

▼ *Screen 52*

Screen 53 ▶

▼ *Screen 54*

▲ *Screen 55*

Lasso Tool Techniques continued
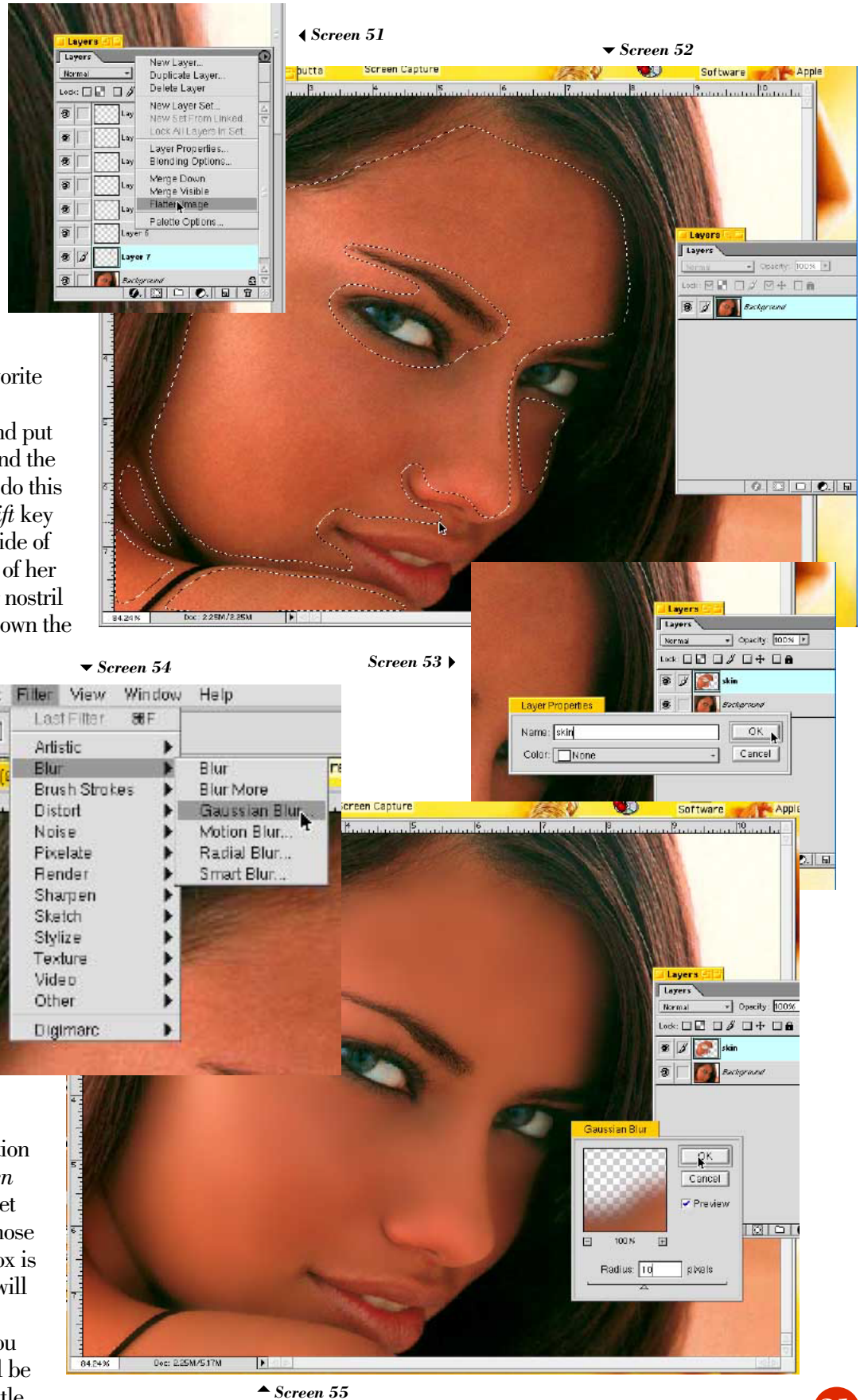
Okay, with the *skin* layer selected let's adjust the *opacity,* Slide it to where you like it, the key is to make her skin look very smooth, but we also need to keep it looking natural. By having all of the blurring on a separate layer we can always go back and change it if someone does not like it. Notice as you have less opacity that you see more texture of the skin below, and also notice that the nice hard edges like the bridge of her nose and the good shadows stayed sharp, very nice!

Now that we have the opacity where we like it, we need to add some more brightness and contrast to the *skin* layer. Always remember, when you blur something you also darken it and loose some of the contrast, so we will need top adjust this. Use your sliders *(screen 56)* to get the skin to where you like it and press OK.

We will next adjust the iris color of her eye. Select the lasso tool and set the feather to 1 pixel, now draw the iris of one eye, hold the *shift* key down and draw the iris of the second eye. Make sure you have the *background* layer selected, and go to *variations (screen 57).* Make your adjustments to get the eyes to the color you like. Also, while the iris is still selected you might want to adjust brightness and contrast too. Try it out, see what you like. Now select the white of her eyes and brighten them some too.
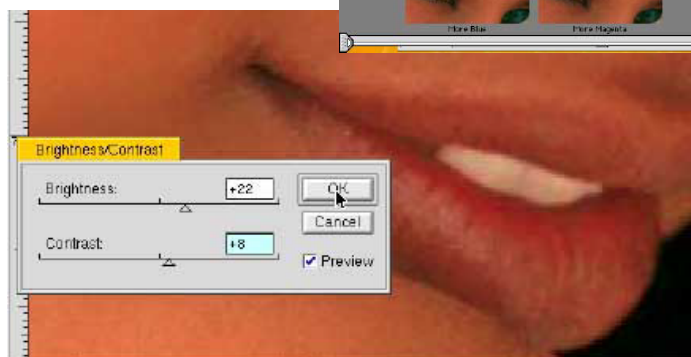
Select her teeth and brighten them a bit *(screen 58),* don't forget to use the *command h* short cut to hide the selection. This lets you see the result much better. Also, try adding a 10% fill of white, under the *edit* pull down menu. Get the teeth so they are nice and bright, but still natural looking too.

▲ *Screen 56*
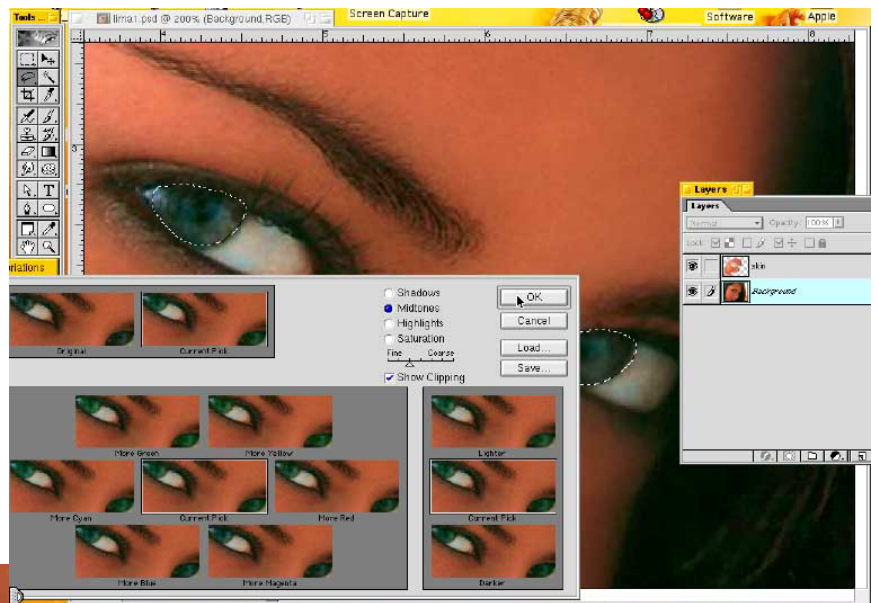
▲ *Screen 57*

◀ *Screen 58*

How about those lips? Not bad, huh? But let's add a little bit of color to them. Select your *lasso tool* with a feather of 1 pixel. Draw around the entire outside of her lips. Try and do this at one time without adding to your selection, you will get a better edge. You can exaggerate the dip at the center of her lips a bit like I did. Now press the *option* key and subtract her teeth *(screen 59)*. Again, try and do this with one pass, you will get a better result. Now go to *variations,* in the *adjust* section of the *image* pull down menu, and manipulate the color. Remember it stores your last adjustments that you made, so just hit the original photo and start from there.

Let's add some blush to her cheek. Select the *lasso tool* and set your feather to 33, this will give you a *very* soft edge, which is exactly what we want. Follow a rough contour of her cheek bone and bring it toward a point to the left of her eye *(screen 60)*. You can make this color adjustment from either the *skin* layer or the *background* layer, your choice. Go to the *Color Balance* section under the *adjust* portion of the *image* pull down menu, and manipulate the sliders. Some red and magenta should do it.

You will begin to notice that sometimes we use the variations and other times the color balance. One thing I like with the color balance is that it previews the change right on the photo, and what I like about the variations is that you have lighter and darker options. You will find what works best for you and what is easiest. These are your tools, use them any way you want.

Well, look at our before and after pictures to the right. Pretty dramatic change and we were able to get the skin tones much closer to each other than the original photos. You will want to make the same changes to the *lima2.jpg* photo that you did with the first. Also, look closely at mine, I got rid of the stray hair that ran across her cheek and forehead. Do this the same way as you did with the blemishes, just a larger area. Try selecting a portion above, copy then paste. Now scale the pasted portion and make it a little larger. Nice job!!

Screen 59

Screen 60