

## HDR – Good or Bad?

Everyone has their own opinion on the worth of High Dynamic Range Photography, but is it a good thing or a bad thing?

Surely a process that enables you to extract as much detail from a picture is a good thing? We spend hard earned cash and time to improve our equipment and technique to gain this advantage, surely it must be all good?

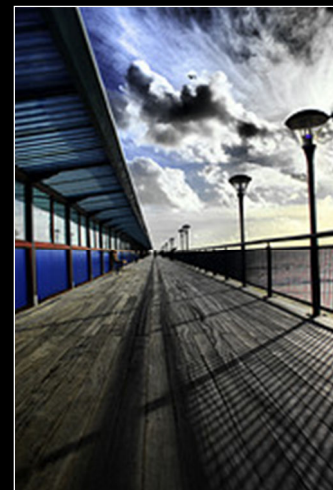
There are normally two elements to HDR processing. The first simply combines different exposures of the same or similar images to create a single image with more detail available across the full range of exposure.

The problems often occur at the second stage, or “Tone Mapping”. This element enables the user to control how much and where detail is recovered and how colours are balanced.

It became a “fashion” to overdo the effect at the Tone Mapping stage and create pictures with lurid colours and dramatic contrast. This, I believe, has given HDR a bad reputation that it doesn’t necessarily deserve. It’s all a matter of taste; HDR is an inherently useful tool, but allowing people into the equation will always produce unpredictable results!



Too much? – what was the photographer thinking?



Artistic – Style over substance?



Subtle – Improved detail in shadows



Clean – Flatter image for simpler image?