Dec 2025 PS, PS Beta & LRC Updates

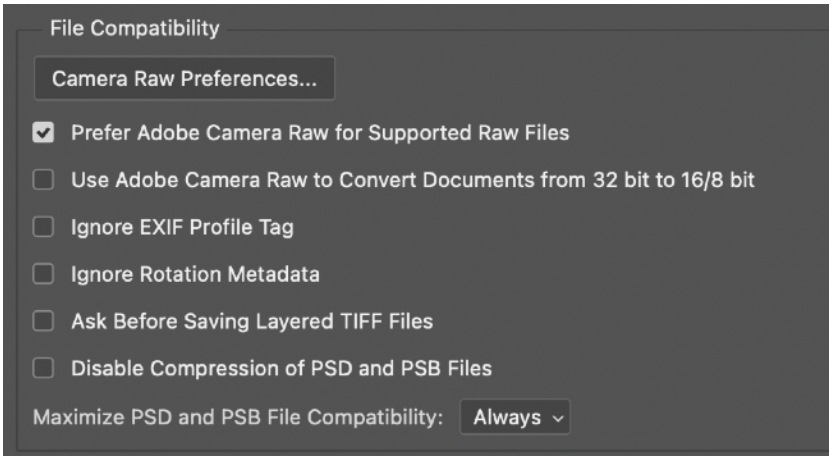
In this lesson, I explore the updates made by Adobe to Lightroom Classic, Photoshop, and Photoshop Beta in December 2025. While the changes aren't drastic, they offer insights into future developments, particularly regarding adjustment layers in Photoshop.

Lightroom Classic Update: PSB File Format

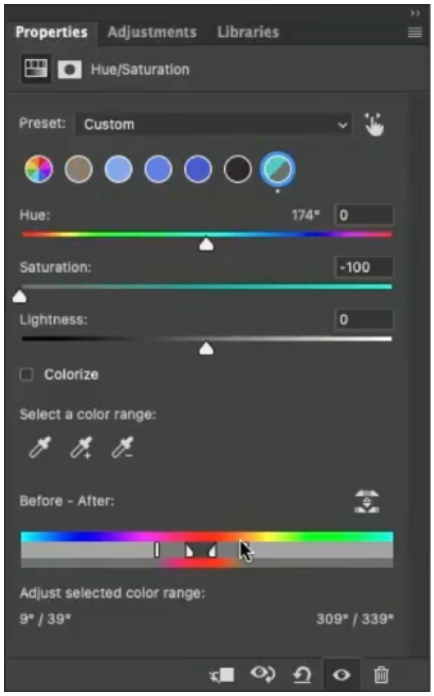
The primary update to Lightroom Classic involves the addition of the PSB (Photoshop Big) file format as an option when sending files to Photoshop for external editing. Previously, users could only choose between TIFF and standard Photoshop (.PSD) formats. The choice of format depends on file size: Photoshop files are limited to 2GB, TIFF files to 4GB, while PSB files can handle significantly larger files, practically eliminating size limitations. I note that while PSB is useful for very large, layered files, it cannot be selected as a default format within Lightroom Classic's preset settings. As an alternative, I suggest using TIFF as the default and then using "Save As" in Photoshop to save as PSB when needed.

Photoshop File Handling Preferences

Within Photoshop's preferences (under "Settings" in the Photoshop menu or "Edit" in Windows), I highlight the importance of the "Maximize PSD and PSB File Compatibility" setting. This should be set to "Always" to ensure that Lightroom can display saved files. I also discuss the "Disable Compression for PSD and PSB Files" option. Enabling this option significantly speeds up saving times but results in much larger file sizes. I recommend leaving it disabled unless saving time is paramount. Finally, I recommend leaving the option to "Save layers in a TIFF" enabled.



Photoshop Update: Hue and Saturation Adjustment



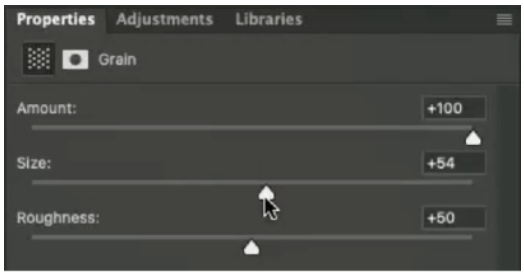
A minor but welcome change in Photoshop is an addition to the Hue and Saturation adjustment layer. A new icon has been added that inverts the color selection. This allows users to easily target everything *except* the selected color range for adjustments. I demonstrate how this works by isolating reds and then inverting the selection to affect all other colors.

Photoshop Beta:

New Adjustment Layers (Clarity and Dehaze)

Photoshop Beta introduces two new adjustment layers: Clarity and Dehaze. This is significant because, traditionally, adjustment layers have been limited in the types of adjustments they could perform. Features like Shadow/Highlight, Clarity, and Dehaze were previously unavailable as adjustment layers due to technical limitations. I explain that adjustment layers could only affect individual pixels, not considering their relationship to surrounding pixels. This limitation stemmed from the need for real-time updates for video layers, which relied on Color Lookup Tables (LUTs). Adobe has seemingly overcome this limitation, potentially at the cost of instantaneous updates when moving layers rapidly. I express excitement about the potential for future adjustment layers, such as sharpening and shadow/highlight.

Grain Adjustment Layer and Oddities



The second new adjustment layer in Photoshop Beta is Grain. I demonstrate this layer and compare it to the Grain effect available within the Camera Raw filter. I apply the Grain adjustment layer to one side of a face and the Camera Raw filter (with the same settings) to the other side. Upon closer inspection (at 100% zoom), I observe that the results are not identical. The transition between the two sides is discernible, with the Grain adjustment layer creating a harsher, less natural transition, almost like a black line drawn around the edge. This suggests that the implementation of Grain differs between the adjustment layer and the Camera Raw filter, even with identical settings.

Inconsistencies in Edge Sharpness

I begin by pointing out a noticeable difference in edge sharpness when the Camera Raw filter is applied as an adjustment layer versus its standard application. I demonstrate this by applying the filter to half of an image using both methods. I observe that the adjustment layer version appears softer and more natural, while the Camera Raw filter applied directly creates a harsher, more defined edge. As I note, "when I get to right here, I can suddenly see

what looks almost like I grabbed a pen and drew a black line around the edge that is here. It doesn't have the same softness." This is further illustrated by examining a window in the image, where the crack appears softer and more natural on the side processed with the adjustment layer.

Smart Filter vs. Rasterized Layer Behavior

I then explore how the Camera Raw filter behaves differently depending on whether it's applied as a smart filter or to a rasterized layer. I undo the previous steps to remove the smart filter and then rasterize the layer, effectively turning it into a standard image layer. Applying the Camera Raw filter with identical settings (50, 50, and 50) to the rasterized layer results in a drastically different outcome. I describe the rasterized side as "very pixelated as if every single pixel is perfectly sharp," lacking the softness observed in the adjustment layer version. This discrepancy is considered odd because the smart filter version and the adjustment layer version should produce similar results.

Conclusion

In summary, the December 2025 Adobe updates include the addition of PSB file format support in Lightroom Classic, a minor but useful inversion feature in Photoshop's Hue and Saturation adjustment, and the introduction of Clarity, Dehaze, and Grain adjustment layers in Photoshop Beta. The new adjustment layers in Photoshop Beta are particularly noteworthy, as they signify a fundamental change in how adjustment layers function, potentially paving the way for more advanced and versatile adjustment options in the future. However, I also note some inconsistencies between the new Grain adjustment layer and the existing Grain effect in Camera Raw, as well as unexpected behavior with the Camera Raw filter adjustment layer when applied to rasterized layers, suggesting that further refinement may be needed.