

## New Product Showcase

Compiled by Tere Hendricks and Jim Erhardt  
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### Adobe Elements 2.0

Adobe recently announced the upcoming release of [Photoshop Elements 2.0](#). It should be available soon with an estimated street price of \$99 (USD) or \$69 for upgrades.

Elements 2.0 features new color correction tools, a Selection Brush for masking, and an upgraded paint engine with new paintbrush options. Adobe has also added a Quick Fix dialog box that provides access to several correction and enhancement tools in one place.

Elements Help system has undergone a major overhaul. It has a new glossary, dialog tips, smart messages, and a help search field in the shortcut toolbar all to go along with its "inspirational recipes" and hints palette.

The File Browser in Elements has been enhanced so it now displays EXIF information recorded by digital cameras (exposure settings, date and time, etc.). Digital camera users will also benefit from improved batch processing features like the ability to convert an entire directory of cryptic file names into meaningful ones.

Standard Photoshop Elements features include the palette well for docking palettes, 1,000 levels of undo and redo, layers, drawing tools, and support for plug-ins designed to work on RGB images. These and other features shouldn't come as a surprise--after all, Elements is based on the Photoshop engine.

Elements 2.0 is optimized for Mac OS X and Windows XP. But don't worry, Elements also runs on Windows 98, 98SE, ME, and 2000 and on Mac OS 9.1 and 9.2 and you only need 128 MB of RAM.

Should "real" photographers consider Photoshop Elements 2.0? The answer is yes if you have Elements 1.0, Photoshop LE, Microsoft Picture It, or any other lower end image editing program. The answer is also yes if you want a program with a full set of image editing tools that has a much shorter learning curve and is a whole lot cheaper than Photoshop 7.0.

Tere - NPN 096

### Modified Tripod Bracket for the 80-200mm f2.8 AFS Lens

When new camera equipment becomes available to the public there is usually a lot of hype that goes along with it. Often the reality is that, although improvements have been made, there are still imperfections with the equipment. When working in the field with that new camera or lens, these imperfections become obvious, usually at the worst possible time. One such scenario is with the removable tripod bracket that comes with the Nikkor 80-200mm f2.8 AF Silent Motor lens.

There are several major flaws with the removable tripod bracket that comes with the Nikkor 80-200mm f2.8 AF Silent Motor lens. 1) The release knob is small, not easily accessible, and can be difficult to turn depending on the outside temperature and the size of the photographers fingers. 2) In order to loosen the lens enough to switch it from a horizontal to vertical camera position, the knob must be unscrewed approximately 4 complete rotations, which is cumbersome and time consuming. The same is true when locking the lens into position. 3) Once the bracket is loosened, the lens does not glide smoothly in the bracket. What this means is that the Arctic tern you were photographing will have migrated half way to the Arctic circle by the time you are able to switch the camera from a horizontal to vertical position.



These problems have been apparent to the majority of people I have talked to that own the lens. Several of my friends, including a professional nature photographer, have returned the lens soon after purchasing it because of this faulty bracket. After upgrading to this lens and using the bracket myself, I found it to be as cumbersome as people have said.

This is when I started thinking of a way to fix the problem. Working together with a friend who is an expert carpenter, we have designed a simple and effective modification to the bracket. Over the past year, I have tested several variations of this modification and ending up with one that is reliable and easy to use.

We have modified the bracket by positioning a large, easy to grip, release knob on the top (10 O'clock) of the bracket. This knob is somewhat similar to the "easy to use" release knobs on the Nikkor 300mm f2.8, 400mm f2.8, 500mm f4, and 600mm f4 lenses. With this modification, the lens can be released or locked into place with a simple 1/3 rotation of the knob. This allows for a quicker and smoother rotation of the lens to either the vertical or horizontal position or anywhere in between.

To date the several photographers that have had their bracket modified have been pleased with the results. Even though the bracket may not be "perfect" to everyone who uses it, there has been a very positive response to the change, and I could not imagine going back to the old bracket.

Ordering info...

To have your bracket modified, send your name, return address, and telephone number along with a check or money order for \$75 plus \$5.00 for shipping and handling (\$80.00 per bracket) payable to: "James Stachecki / Natural World Photography". Send your order to:

James Stachecki / Jack Van Ysseldyk  
301 E. Mt. Pleasant Ave.  
Livingston, NJ 07039

For more information, call James at (973) 334-8409. Orders will be filled in the order that they are received. Brackets will be modified and mailed back within one week of receipt. Please allow 7-10 working days for return of the bracket. Include an extra \$5.00 for 1-2 day return delivery.

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