

AfterShot Pro 2

A new update turns terrible photographer **Graham Morrison** into a passable one. Almost.

DATA

Web
www.aftershotpro.com
Developer
Corel
Price
£57.99

For those into digital photography, there's been a revolution in post-processing software over the last decade. No longer does the photographer need to worry about exposure or white balance, or framing. As long as your DSLR shoots RAW, there's a good chance software can take your bleached and badly composed snapshot and turn it into a candidate for Photo of the Year. And for once, Linux hasn't been left out in the cold. There are several excellent post-processing tools, and one of the best was Bibble, which was subsequently snapped up by Corel at the end of 2011.

Bibble became AfterShot under Corel's auspices, and version 1.0 was released in early 2012. There were a few updates, but for a long time all was quiet, so we're happy to see that the project is continuing with the release of AfterShot 2. We installed it in Arch through its user repository as the only official

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packages are RPM and Deb. It would be nice to see a pure binary download, as there are very few external dependencies. There's a trial you can unlock

with a licence, but before you do, make sure your camera image format is supported - RAW formats are specific to a camera's make and model.

Go faster

The big update for this release is speed, and while we didn't do any side-by-side comparisons, image loading and processing was considerably faster. Importing a batch of images, for example, was quicker than both the old version and Adobe's Lightroom running on the same hardware. This makes a big difference when

The image management views and the amount of control you have over your collection is excellent.

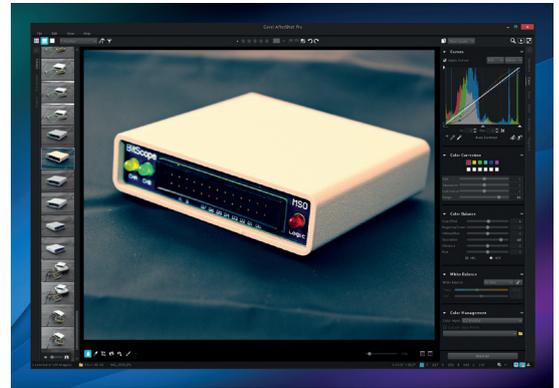


Image processing is much faster, but we miss a faster feedback mechanism when adjusting values.

you're importing and managing your collection through your own series of folders, tags and rankings, which is the other main reason for an application like this. Image processing has been upgraded too, and AfterShot Pro is the best Linux tool we've found for lightening dark areas of a shot, increasing exposure and noise reduction. All of these processes are absolutely essential when putting together this magazine, for example. Noise reduction in particular has been much improved and is considerably more powerful than the equivalent feature in Lightroom. But all these effects suffer from the lack of decent, quick feedback in the main image view, even if the final render is quicker overall. We also miss the ability to view the pre and post filtered image side by side, as we quickly become desensitised to the changes we're making.

The GUI in general could do with a bit of a makeover. We miss small things like a localised thumbnail view for noise reduction (to avoid the cost of processing the whole image), and the rotation tool is unintuitive. Most of all, the GUI is tiny on anything approaching a high-DPI screen and can't be changed. This is going to be a problem for photographers, as high-resolutions screens are becoming increasingly common and useful for proofing.

When there are few professional alternatives, this update is a welcome release, and with the promise of an HDR compositor in late summer, it's still a near essential tool for any wayward photographer. **L**



LINUX VOICE VERDICT

Excellent processing tools and a reasonable price held back mostly by a tight and inflexible GUI

