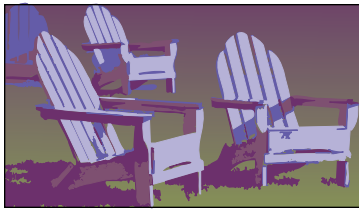# Luanne's

Posterized

Luanne Seymour Cohen, Creative Director at Adobe Systems, shares a technique on how to create cool posterized images with Streamline, Adobe Photoshop® and Adobe Illustrator®.

Images with Adobe Streamline®

Adobe

Sometimes you want to make a photographic image look very graphic with crisp, sharp edges and high contrast colors. You can do this by first posterizing it in Photoshop, tracing it in Streamline and then editing and finessing the colors and shapes in Illustrator. This technique shows you how.

POSTERIZING IMAGES WITH STREAMLINE

1. Open the original image in Photoshop. For best results, use a higher resolution image. 300 pixels per inch will usually give good results in Streamline.


2. Streamline will give you better results if you simplify the shapes in the image first. Choose Image>Map> Posterize. Play around with the number of levels and turn on the Preview button to see the results. Don't worry about the number you end up with, just pick whichever gives you the nicest shapes while still maintaining detail.

Posterizing in Photoshop
6 levels of posterization means that Photoshop will use 4 tonal values in *each channel*. This means that for a 3-channel RGB image, you'll end up with 4 x 4 x 4 colors or 64 colors.

3. Save the file. You can save the file in TIFF, TIFF compressed, PICT, MacPaint, or Adobe Photoshop 2.0 or 2.5 format.


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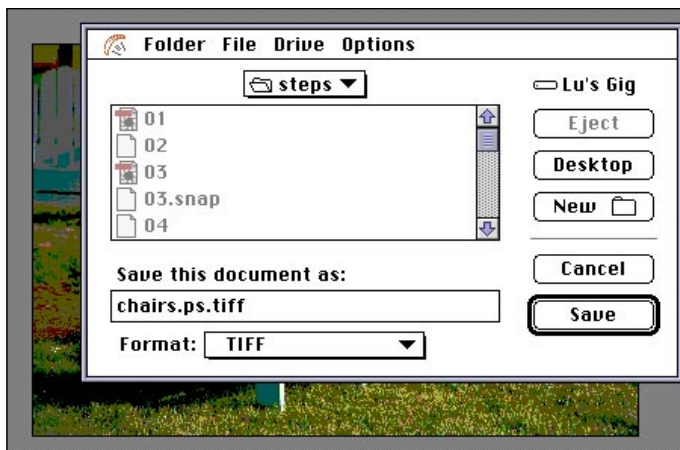
POSTERIZING IMAGES WITH STREAMLINE

4. Switch to Streamline and open the Photoshop file you just saved. Choose Options> Settings. Select one of the preset posterization settings. Don't worry if the number of colors is different from what you want because we will adjust that later.

5. Choose Options>Color/ Grayscale Setup. This is where you will experiment with the number of colors for your posterization. Click the Preview button to see how the image's color shapes will be divided up. Be sure that the Generate custom color list is turned on.
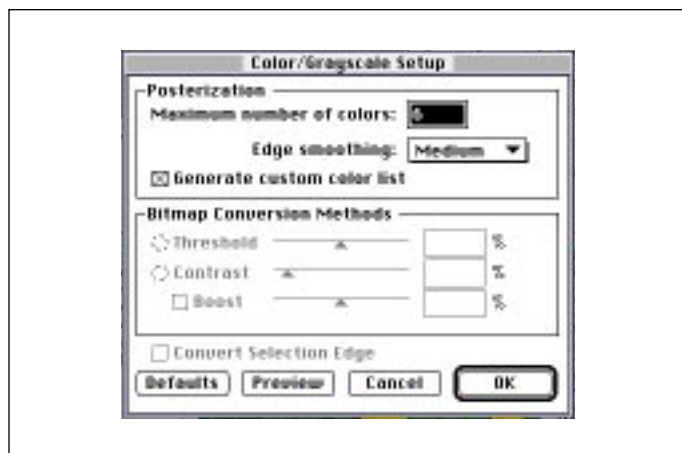
Streamline's posterization
Streamline creates a graph of the image color values (histogram). Then it divides the colors evenly into a color palette that contains the number of colors selected in the Color/Grayscale Setup dialog.

6. Keep trying different numbers of colors and clicking the Preview button until you are satisfied with the shapes and detail level in the preview. Don't worry about the actual colors created because we will change those later.


Experimentation pays off
In the image at left, I tried several different posterization numbers and found that 6 was the minimum number I needed to retain some of the shadow detail. Anything less and the shadows blended into the chairs to create strange shapes.

7. If your image has straight lines in it and you don't want them to be converted to curved lines, you can change that beforehand. Choose Options>Conversion Setup. Select Curved & straight lines in the Path Options area. If the image is noisy and you want to correct for that, increase the Noise Suppression amount.
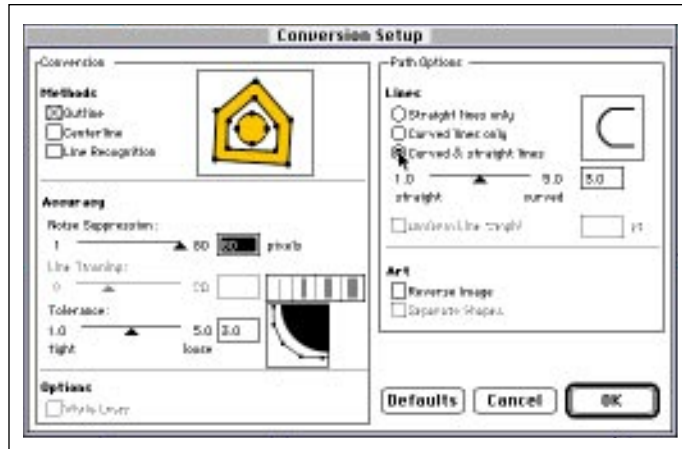
8. Because you've changed some of the specifications, Streamline has given your settings a new name. You can change it in the Settings dialog if you want.

9. Now that you have your settings adjusted, you can go ahead and autotrace the image. Choose File>Convert and Streamline will begin the autotrace process. When the tracing is complete, choose File>Save Art As and save the file. Streamline will save the file in Illustrator format and name it after the image file with a suffix of *.art*.
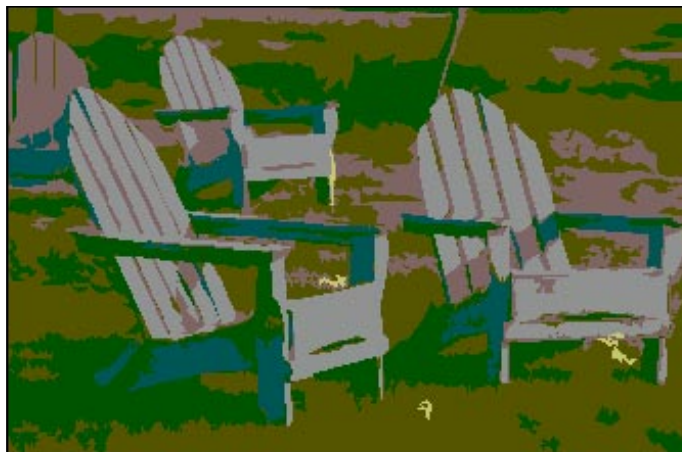

Smoothing paths
If the shapes that Streamline created are too complex or have too many anchor points, use the Smooth Path feature. Select the path or paths that need simplifying. Choose Edit>Smooth Path. Choose Minimum, Normal or Maximum.

10. Open the file in Illustrator. Choose Object>Custom Color. Notice that there are now several new custom colors. They will be named Auto Color followed by a number.
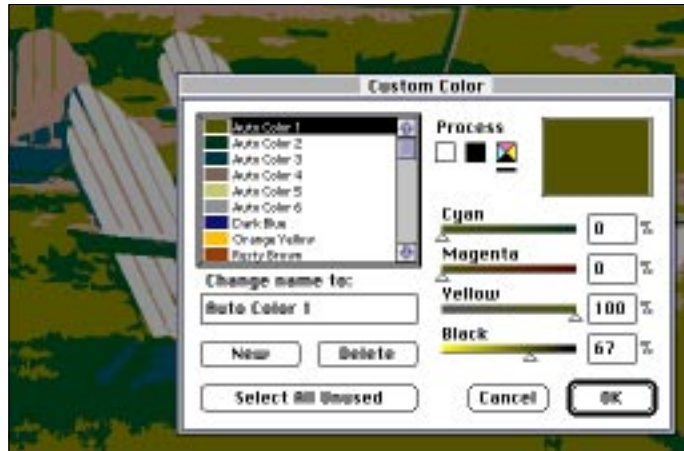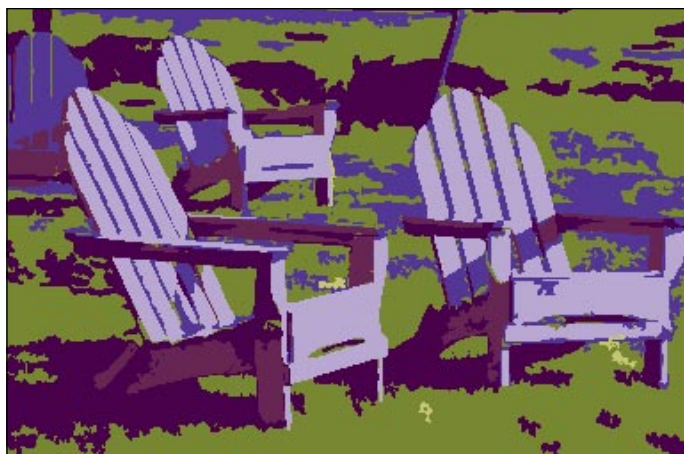

11. If you want to adjust a color, select its name and begin moving the CMYK sliders. When you release the mouse, the artwork will update in the window so you can preview the change. When you are finished changing colors, click OK.
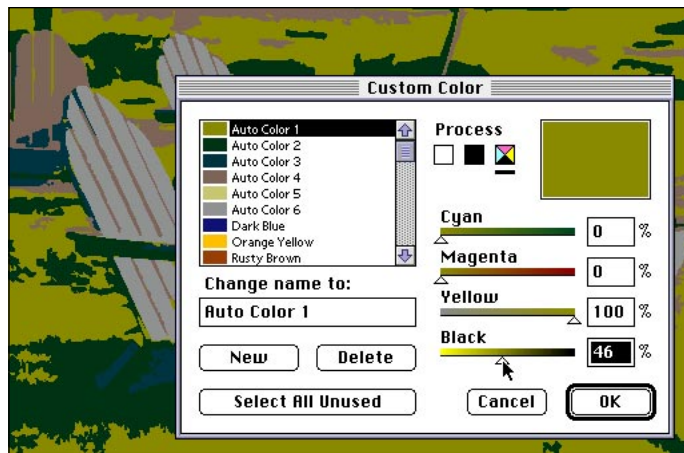
Changing custom colors

Be sure you have no other files open when you change the custom color definitions. Changing the definition of a custom color will affect all files that are currently open.

12. Once you have adjusted all the custom colors and are happy with the preview, click OK. If your file needs cleaning up, continue to step 13. If you are happy with the effect, save the file.
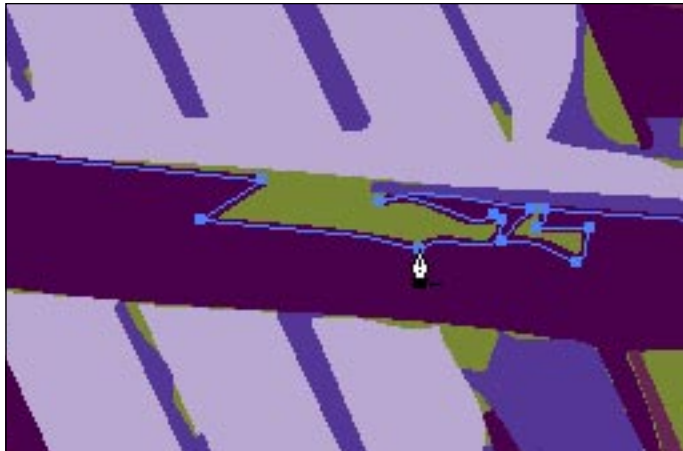
13. Remove any unwanted shapes by selecting and deleting. To break up complex shapes , zoom in on that area.

14. Depending on the complexity of the image you traced, you might have some unwanted lumps and bumps in some of the paths. Use the Remove Points tool, the scissors tool and the knife tool to simplify and split up paths.

15. Once you've removed or simplified the really complex paths, you're done. In the example at right I added a gradient to the background shape to add visual depth.