

Soft water

Process: Tone Mapping Exposure Fusion

Method: Details Enhancer

Strength: 55

Color Saturation: 50

Tone Compression: 0.0

Detail Contrast: 0.0

Lighting Adjustments: Natural Medium Sunlit

Lighting Effects

Hide More Options

Smooth Highlights: 3

White Point: 0.132%

Black Point: 0.010%

Gamma: 1.00

Temperature: 0.0

Hide Advanced Options

Micro-smoothing: 0.0

Saturation Highlights: 2.0

Saturation Shadows: -1.0

Shadows Smoothness: 3

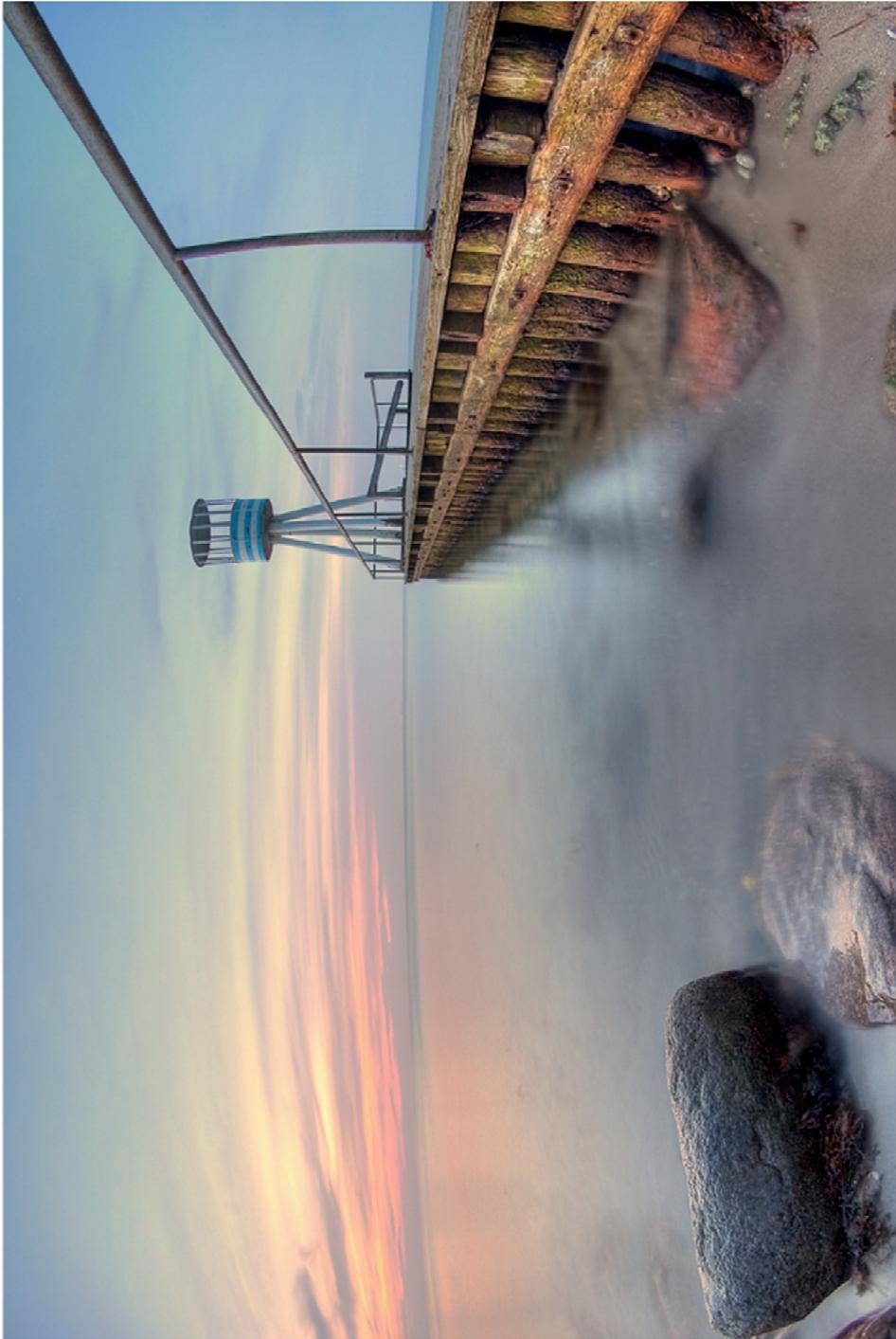
Shadows Clipping: 0

360° Image

Reset: Default

Presets: Custom

Process



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You are free to copy and share this brief guide; but you are not free to place it in your own website etc. and offer download from there. Link to my site instead. This brief guide will tell you something about my thoughts before taking the pictures that will be merged and tone mapped.

The guide will also give you all the setting in Photomatix and I will comment on the most significant ones.

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Soft water isn't about the amount of chalk in the water, it is about the appearance for the water. If the water have small waves and movements, you can produce images with the water looking like cotton wool. And it is very easy. It only requires long shutter time. Long shutter times will even movements out. HDR images are merged from several individual pictures and the combined shutter timer will help you here.

Long shutter times require dim lights. Either natural, as the image of the Life Guard Tower, or arranged using filters to block out light or using very small apertures like f/22.

The image is merged from five pictures spacing two EV-steps each. The light was dim and the combined shutter time is 46 seconds.

When you merge the series you do not want Photomatix to remove ghostlines in the water. If you need to remove ghostlines you have to mask the areas – and stay away from the water.

Here you need tone mapping to obtain the softness and that is why "strength" is set to "55". You might consider values below 50. "Lighting adjustments" is set to "nautal+" to avoid any enhancements of details. We are looking for that smooth look. And there is a high risc of getting halo around the tower.

Sometimes images like these carry a lot of noise in the sky. In that case I would have turned "smooth highlights" up. The price for doing that could be color details lost in the sky. I didn't have problems with noise in the sky.

"White point" is set to ensure that white exists in the image. White is important and this image would be all wrong if the tower didn't have a white look.

"Saturation highlights" is set to "2". We are dealing with a sunrise scene and I just have to preserve the wonderfull, pale red and yellow nuances. "Saturation highlights" does that.

TIP: You need waves to get the soft look. Movements makes the softness.

John Nyberg has written several books about photography and offer workshops and seminars about HDR and photography in general. His images are used all over the world.

Visit hdrfoto.dk for more information and to find reviews, guides and much more About photography in general and HDRphotography.

John Nyberg uses Photomatix to merge and to tone map his images.

