

APP

Life's a batch

SilverFast Archive Suite 8

Mac THE LATEST ITERATION of this well-established professional scanning package combines two apps to cover scanning and image file processing. SilverFast Ai Studio is the main scanner control and image adjustment application, which offers a pre-scan image to which various controls and effects can be set up before applying them to a final scan.

SilverFast HDR Studio offers pretty much the same set of controls, but for images that are already on your Mac. It can also work on 48-bit and 64-bit raw images.

The new WorkFlow Pilot can help ease you into the sometimes complex sequence of settings needed to produce a good scan. It acts as a step-by-step wizard, offering the setup tools in sequence before starting final processing.



Scanning and archival software
LaserSoft Imaging

- ➕ Auto calibration
- Workflow Pilot
- AACO

- ➖ IT8 target for calibration not included
- Tied to specific scanners
- Pricey

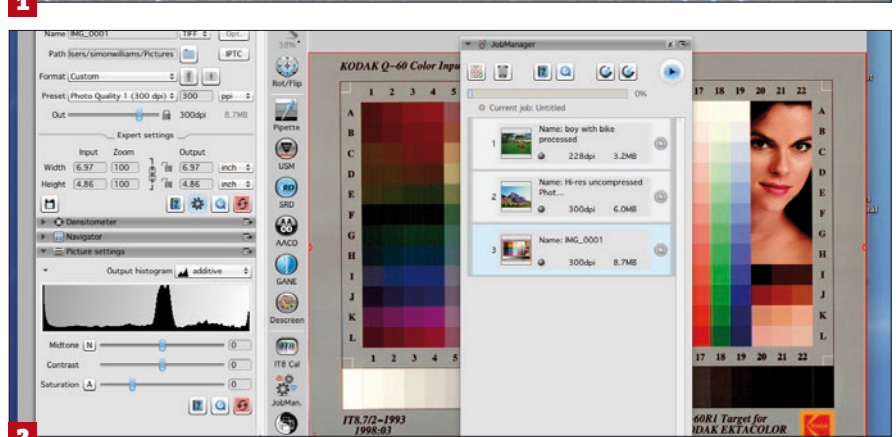
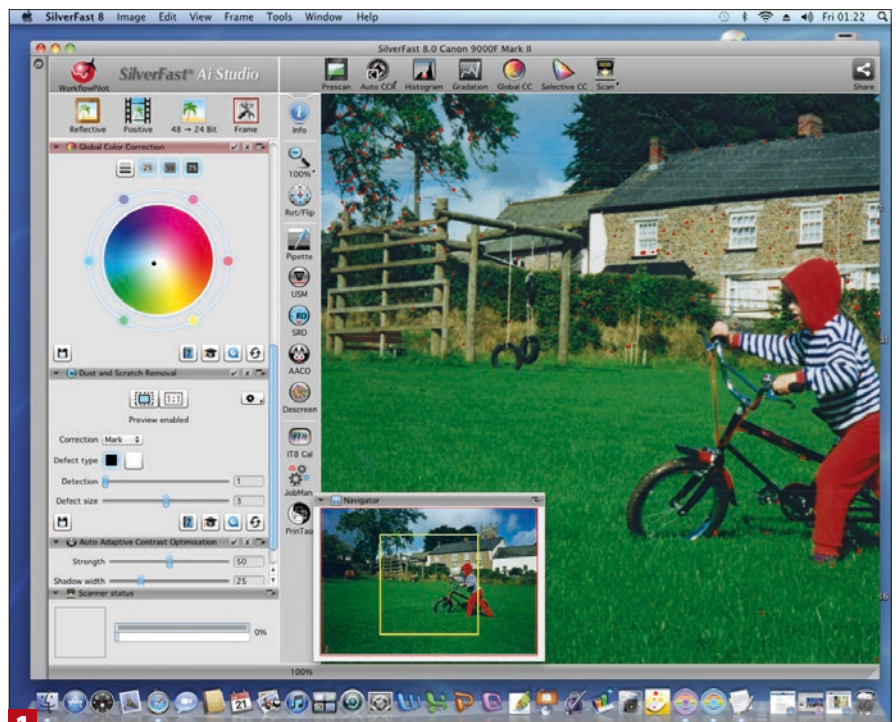
Initial setup of the scanner – we used a Canon CanoScan 9000F Mark II – involves calibration to an IT8 target, either reflective or transmissive, and this is handled semi-automatically. If you do want calibration,

you'll need to buy a target separately.

The interface is still populated by esoteric buttons, often bearing obscure acronyms rather than icons. These are divided into three banks: one topping the controls panel on the left-hand side, another vertically dividing this from the preview screen, with a third set above the preview.

Clicking on these buttons opens up panes in the controls panel for functions such as USM (unsharp masking), SRD (dust and scratch removal – why not DSR?), AACO (auto adaptive contrast optimisation) and GANE (grain and noise elimination).

AACO recovers detail from darker areas of high-contrast images, leaving the highlights untouched



SRD – and iSRD if your scanner supports infrared scanning – is designed to remove dust and scratches from scanned images, in much the same way Digital ICE does. It shows the blemishes it spots on the image preview and works in real time as you adjust sliders for detection level and defect size.

SRD's '1:1' view, which is actually about 300% zoom, showed a lot of red markers in our test print with a visible scratch, but we couldn't get it to completely identify the scratch. There doesn't appear to be any way of marking blemishes manually.

AACO recovers detail from the darker areas of high-contrast images while leaving the highlights untouched. This worked well on our test images, and noticeably improved the level of shadow detail. It cleverly uses multi-exposure scanning, taking two scans at different exposure settings to fill in detail.

1 Dazed and confused

The interface is more logically laid out, but there are still many strangely labelled buttons. AACO, anyone?

2 One fell swoop

The Job Manager, in SilverFast Ai Studio and SilverFast HDR Studio, makes it easier to set up and process batch scans

The Job Manager pops up whenever you have more than one image available at once – in the case of Ai Studio, that's when you've pre-scanned more than one print, transparency or negative in a pass. It lets you set up similar processing on several images and send them through as a batch.

SilverFast Archive Suite 8 is undeniably expensive, but it's an effective professional scanning app, with excellent colour and contrast correction tools. It could still be more intuitive to use, but the WorkFlow Pilot goes some way towards easing scan setups.

SIMON WILLIAMS

£416 inc VAT (sold in Euros at €499) © silverfast.com
 © OS X 10.8 or later • Supported scanner • IT8 scanner target for calibration

