These instructions were written for Photoshop CC 2015 but should work the same or similarly in recent versions of Photoshop.

1. To download the files you’ll use in this exercise, go to: nobledesktop.com/goodies

2. Under Photoshop Digital Darkroom Techniques, click the Class Files button to download the compressed files.

3. Once the file is downloaded and uncompressed you should have a folder named DigitalDarkroomFiles containing two images: bbq.psd and bbq-finished.jpg.

4. In Photoshop, go to File > Open.

5. Navigate to the DigitalDarkroomFiles folder and open bbq-finished.jpg. This is a flattened version of how the finished image will look.

   The goal is to transform an ordinary still life into something more memorable with a sense of magical light, subtle organic/painterly textures, and three-dimensionality through tonal and color changes, as well as selective focus.

6. Close it once you’ve had a good look.

7. Go to File > Open and from the DigitalDarkroomFiles folder, open bbq.psd.

   **ADDING A HALO EFFECT AROUND THE EDGES OF SHADOW AREAS**

1. To select the top half of the image's histogram, press Cmd–Option–2 or Ctrl–Alt–2.

2. Invert the selection to select only tones below 50% on the grayscale (Cmd–Shift–I or Ctrl–Shift–I). That's the letter i, not a 1.

3. Duplicate only the selected pixels to a new image layer by pressing Cmd–J or Ctrl–J (or choosing Layer > New > Layer Via Copy).

4. Name the new layer blurred shadows.

5. With the new layer selected, go to Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur.

6. Set the Radius to 2 (or use your own taste) to make a soft halo around the shadows and click OK.

7. To intensify the effect, change the blending mode of the layer to Overlay (at the top left of the Layers panel).

8. Some of the shadows have become too dark. Choose Layer > Layer Mask > Reveal All to add a layer mask to the blurred shadows layer.
9. To bring back some of the lost shadow details, use the Brush tool ( ) (press B to select the tool). Paint black to hide the blurred shadow areas where you want to preserve sharpness (e.g., around the “WEBER” letters on the foreground wheel and other areas of fine detail). Use the example to the right as a guideline.

10. Now you’ll do almost the same thing for the highlights. Hide the blurred shadows layer.

11. Press Cmd–Option–2 or Ctrl–Alt–2 to select the top half of the image’s histogram.

12. Select the Background layer.

13. Duplicate the selected pixels to a new image layer by pressing Cmd–J or Ctrl–J.

14. Name the new layer blurred highlights.

15. Move the blurred highlights layer so it’s the top layer.

16. With the new layer selected, choose Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur.

17. Set the Radius to 2 (or use your own taste) to make a soft halo around the highlights and click OK.

18. To slightly lessen the overall effect, reduce the Opacity of the layer to 80%.

19. Choose Layer > Layer Mask > Reveal All to add a layer mask to the blurred highlights layer.

20. Show the blurred shadows layer.

21. Select the blurred highlights layer mask.

22. Use the Brush tool ( ) with black paint to hide the blurring in areas where you want to preserve sharpness. Using the example to the right as a guideline, we suggest keeping the background elements blurred (wooden deck, wall, door) to effectively make the sharp foreground elements stand out.

**Re-Interpreting the Overall Colors in the Image**

1. Select the topmost layer.


3. Name it overall color and click OK.
4. In the Properties panel, set the following:
   – Shadows to +4, 0, +22
   – Midtones to +29, -4, -11
   – Highlights to +13, 0, -41
   – Make sure Preserve Luminosity is checked.

5. The layer mask thumbnail of the color balance layer you just added should currently be selected. To add some texture to this adjustment layer’s mask, choose Filter > Noise > Add Noise and set the following:
   - Amount: 50%
   - Distribution: Gaussian

6. Click OK.

7. Now let's make the texture more subtle and organic either by painting on the layer mask with various organically shaped brushes, varying the opacity of your brush, or applying a painterly filter to the mask for an easier (but less interesting) look. Go to Filter > Filter Gallery and choose Brush Strokes > Angled Strokes and set:
   - Direction Balance: 75
   - Stroke Length: 33
   - Sharpness: 1

8. Click OK.

GIVING THE GREENISH WALL & SLATE A MORE INTERESTING COLOR

1. Select the Background layer (otherwise the selection we are about to make could accidently alter the mask of another layer).

2. Go to Select > Color Range and:
   – Click the eyedropper on the green door in the upper left corner.
   – Set Fuzziness to 48.
   – Also do a Shift–click with the eyedropper to add the slate floor and the wall slats to the right of the grill.

3. Click OK.

4. Double–click the Quick Mask Mode button ( ) at the bottom of the Toolbar to bring up the Quick Mask Options.

5. Set Color Indicates to Selected Areas and click OK.

6. You should now be in Quick Mask Mode. If not, click the button to switch into Quick Mask Mode.
7. Use the Brush tool ( ) to paint white over any shadow areas of the grill (to remove it from the selection). Paint black over any wall or slate areas (to add it to the selection). Paint 50% gray on the wood flooring so it will be partially selected. Use the example to the right as a guideline for the selection. In the example, the black indicates selected areas, the white indicates deselected areas, gray is partially selected. 

NOTE: As you paint you won't see white and black, you’ll see the original image (not selected) or a color overlay (will be selected).

8. Press Q to exit Quick Mask Mode.

9. Select the topmost layer.


11. Name the adjustment green slate, door, wall and click OK.

12. In the Properties panel, set the following:
- Shadows to +5, +3, 0
- Midtones to +2, +23, 0
- Highlights to -4, +23, 0
- Make sure Preserve Luminosity is checked.

13. To slightly lessen the overall effect, reduce the Opacity of the layer to 70%.

**PUNCHING UP THE REDS LATENT IN BOWL, TOOLS, & RUST ON LOWER GRILL BARS**

1. Press P to select the Pen tool ( ).

2. In the Options bar at the top, choose the Path option as shown below. Instead of making a Shape Layer, this will create a path that we’ll later turn into a selection.

3. Draw a path to encompass the bowl.

4. In the Paths panel, double-click the Work Path and rename it red bowl for later use.

5. With the red bowl path highlighted, at the top right of the Paths panel go into the panel menu ( ) and choose Make Selection.

6. Set the following:
- Feather Radius: 2 pixels
- Check on Anti-aliased (to soften the edge of the selection slightly).

7. Click OK.

8. Press Q to enter Quick Mask Mode.
9. With a medium-size brush set at low opacity, paint black (gray) over rusty parts of the tools. Refer to the example on the right as a guideline.

10. With a small brush set at 50% opacity, click and then Shift-click on the struts to add them to the selection. Refer to the example on the right as a guideline of what we want in the final selection.

11. Press Q to leave Quick Mask Mode.


13. Name the adjustment reddish bowl, tools, & struts and click OK.

14. In the Properties panel, set the following:
   - Shadows to +21, -3, -7
   - Midtones to +35, -10, -17
   - Highlights to +10, -13, -20.
   - Make sure Preserve Luminosity is checked.

**BRIGHTENING SOME ELEMENTS**

We want to add more emphasis to parts of the grill by brightening the red bowl, struts, foreground wheel’s whitewall, and shadow sides of the hanging tools.

1. Press Q to enter Quick Mask Mode.

2. Using the example on the right as a guideline, paint black (to select) over the bowl, tools, and wheels.

3. Press Q to leave Quick Mask Mode.


5. Name the adjustment brighten bowl, etc. and click OK.

6. In the Properties panel, brighten the highlights with a curve as shown below.
BALANCING THE COLOR SATURATION

1. Some colors have become over saturated. To adjust them, choose Layer > New Adjustment Layer > Hue/Saturation.

2. Name the layer balance color saturation and click OK.

3. In the Properties panel, make sure Colorize is not checked and:
   - Set Saturation to -40.
   - From the menu that says Master, choose Reds.
   - Make Saturation -5 and Lightness +3.
   - Change the menu to Yellows and make Saturation +23 and Lightness -15.
   - Change the menu to Blues and make Saturation +20.

4. Too much of the tools’ color saturation was lost. Paint black on the layer mask to give them back a more vibrant color. Refer to the example on the right as a guideline.

ADDING VIGNETTING TO FOCUS ON THE SUBJECT

1. Choose the Elliptical Marquee tool ( ).

2. Drag from the upper left to the lower right corner of the image.

3. Choose Select > Refine Edge.

4. Click on the View menu and double-click On Black so we get a better preview of how the effect will look.

5. Set the Feather to 70.

6. Click OK.

7. Invert the selection (Cmd–Shift–I or Ctrl–Shift–I).

8. Cmd–Option–click (Mac) or Ctrl–Alt–click (Windows) on the layer mask on the reddish bowl, tools, & struts layer to subtract those areas from the selection.


10. Name it vignette and click OK.

11. In the Properties panel, drag the White Point straight down to Input 255/Output 138. If you don’t see the Input and Output values, you may have to resize the Properties panel, making it taller.

12. With the layer mask still selected, use the Brush tool ( ) to mask out the vignetting on other foreground elements whose tones you want to preserve, like the hanging tools and wheels.

13. Your image should be looking good! Save and close the file.
MASKING TIPS

- When creating a mask select the parts of a layer you want to see. Then, when you click the *Add layer mask* button in the *Layers* panel, you’ll see what was selected and everything will be masked out (or hidden).

- **Shift-click** a mask thumbnail to disable it without throwing it away.

- **Option-click** (Mac) or **Alt-click** (Windows) a mask thumbnail to view only the mask, not the image.

- **Option-Shift-click** (Mac) or **Alt-Shift-click** (Windows) a mask thumbnail to view it as a shaded color overlay, much like a Quick Mask.

- Remove a mask by dragging the mask thumbnail to the trash. Photoshop will ask if you want to *Apply mask to layer before removing*. If you click **Apply**, Photoshop will delete the areas of the layer that had been hidden by the mask. In most cases, you’ll simply want to choose **Discard**, to throw away the mask without affecting the image layer.