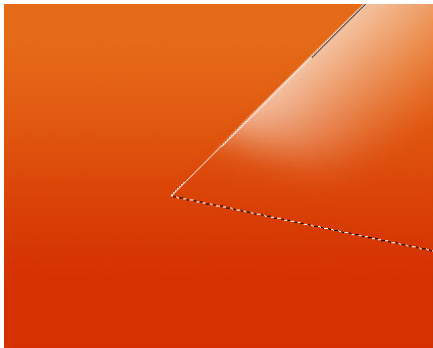


This tutorial is about making a “mac” style background. You can use these in all sorts of situations, including the obvious –your desktop– as well as part of your designs for your website, Powerpoint presentations, Flash work, etc.

1. We begin with a blank canvas and then draw a subtle gradient across it. (Start with a canvas that is 1280×1024. Choose two colors that are similar to each other to make a very subtle gradient change.



2. Add a NEW LAYER. Now take your Polygonal Lasso Tool (L) and draw in a rough triangular selection as shown. Then take a really fat soft brush (size 300 or so) and draw some faded-in white with the edge of it. Be careful not to make it too strong. Set your white from step 2 to Overlay.



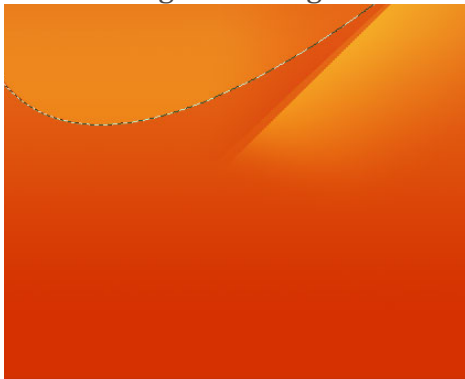
3. NEW LAYER. Take the Polygonal Lasso Tool and do a similar triangle but on the other side. This time add some black. I a used a gradient fill here using black and nothing. You can get this type of gradient by selecting your gradient tool then dropping down and choosing the second one. Set your black layer to Overlay at 34%.



4. **NEW LAYER.** Now use the Pen Tool and draw a nice-looking curve. The secret to nice curves with the Pen Tool is dragging the handle out a long way. Join the path back up so it is one continuous blob, then right click and select **MAKE SELECTION**.



5. You should now have a selection of a nice curve. Once again use the Gradient Tool, this time with white fading to nothing and add some white. Set this layer to **Overlay**.



6. **NEW LAYER.** And again grab the Pen Tool and this time make a new even more interesting shape. Close the shape back in on itself so it is one continuous path and again right click and choose **MAKE SELECTION**.



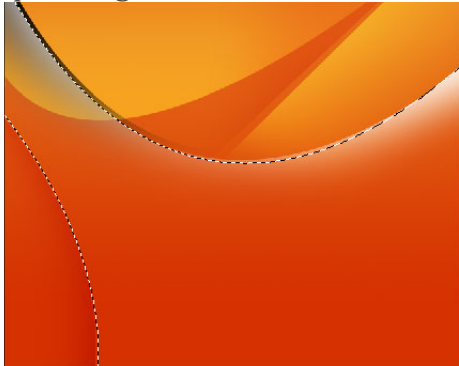
7. Now with your selection, grab that fat soft brush size 300 and add some black just at the top on one side. DON'T LET GO OF YOUR SELECTION!! YOU WILL NEED IT FOR THE NEXT FEW STEPS.



8. NEW LAYER. Now choose a selection tool (L) and hit the Down arrow key 10 times. You need to have a selection tool on to move your selection around or Photoshop will try to move some of your artwork (since you are on a new layer, it will give you an error). So make sure you've chosen a Polygonal Lasso Tool. Now press Ctrl+Shift+I to inverse your selection. Then with your soft brush, size 300 paint some black down the bottom as shown. When you're done set the layer to Overlay and fade it back to 60%.



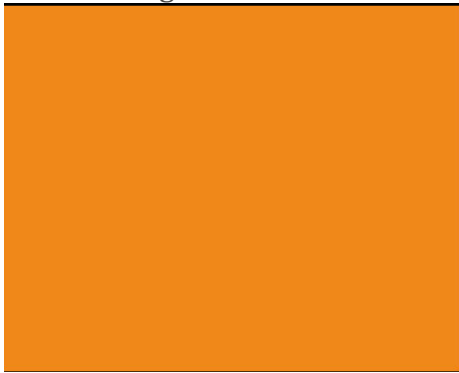
9. NEW LAYER. Now press Ctrl+Shift+I to inverse your selection again (back to the original) and this time paint some nice white as shown. Note that because you moved our selection down it won't quite align with the black.



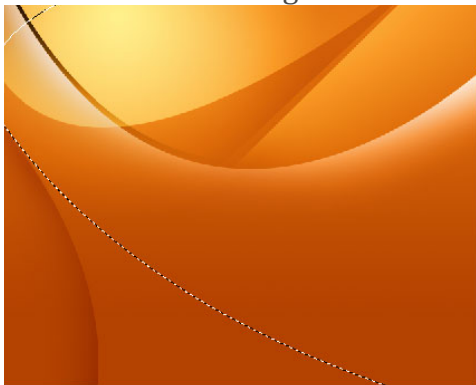
10. NEW LAYER. Now grab your Gradient Tool, choose white to nothing and set it to Radial Gradient. Then add a white light at the top left as shown. Set this layer to Overlay.



11. If the colors are not looking right you should fix that. If you are a crazy perfectionist go back to the beginning and start again with a different set of colors. But instead you can make an adjustment, so... NEW LAYER. On the new layer, add a fill of a good color similar to the ones you've used. Set the blending mode to Color and set the Opacity to 55%. Play with the opacity until it looks good.



12. NEW LAYER. Now once again, use the usual method of using the pen tool to draw a nice curved selection and then right click and choose Make Selection.



13. Use the White to Nothing gradient and add a smooth white transition from left to right. And set the layer to Overlay.



14. NEW LAYER. ALMOST DONE!!! Create one final curved selection down in the bottom left add a white gradient fading to nothing and switch to Overlay.



15. For the final touches, I added a tinge of black overlaid bottom right and a bit more white overlaid on the top left. But these are inconsequential changes. You should polish yours up a little bit as well.



BE PROUD. YOU'RE DONE!