

creating HDR compositions. I took several images at different settings in Manual exposure mode to use as the basis for this composite. In my opinion, the P510's in-camera processing does a good job of reducing the contrast between the light and dark areas, but it cannot match the performance of specialized HDR software like Photomatix Pro, especially when, as here, you take several shots in Manual exposure mode, giving the software a wide variety of exposure values to work with.



Figure 3-34: HDR composite done in Photomatix Pro software



Figure 3-35: Scene mode

## The SCENE Setting on the Mode Dial

Next, I'll discuss the settings that are available with the mode dial at its SCENE position. To review, this option brings up a menu with a list of 17 choices, including Scene Auto Selector and 16 specific scene types. When the mode dial is set to SCENE, you can select any one of these choices by pressing the Menu button and selecting a scene setting from the menu list, shown in Figure 3-36.

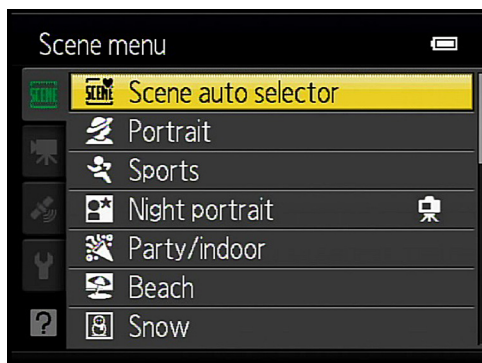


Figure 3-36: Scene menu

While that list is displayed, you can press the zoom lever on top of the camera towards the T position, where there also is a question mark on the camera's top. In this situation, as shown here, the zoom lever activates an information screen, like the one shown in Figure 3-37, that gives you a brief description of how this particular Scene setting can be used.

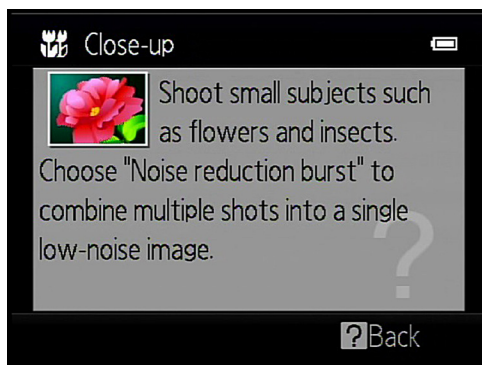


Figure 3-37: Scene mode help screen

Note, though, that when you select any of these settings, the Menu system offers few other choices; that is, when you have made a selection such as Portrait or Sunset from the SCENE setting menu, you cannot make any more choices using the menu system other than Image Size and Image Quality. The camera will make all other settings as it deems appropriate for the given selection. So, these Scene settings are convenient if

you are faced with a certain type of photographic situation and you want the camera to make reasonable choices for that situation, but you have very little control over the camera's settings. Following are details about each of those types, including what sorts of settings the camera chooses for each.

## Portrait



Figure 3-38: Scene mode - Portrait setting

With the Portrait setting, the camera automatically sets itself for face detection, which means it looks for human faces and focuses on the one closest to the camera. It also automatically applies skin softening, which smooths wrinkles and other harsh features on the skin. However, you cannot control the amount of skin softening or turn it off. There are no Shooting menu options with this Scene setting. However, you can pop up the flash and select a flash mode if you want. You cannot make any changes to the focus mode, but you can use the self-timer and exposure compensation.

## Sports

The Sports setting is intended for subjects that move around unpredictably. The camera sets itself for continuous shooting and takes a rapid series of as many as five images at a rate of up to seven frames per second when you hold down the shutter button, depending on conditions. The flash is forced off, and focus and exposure are locked when the first image is taken, to

increase the speed of the sequence of shots. You can use manual focus and exposure compensation if you wish, but you cannot use the self-timer, and the Shooting menu is not available. This mode is useful when you need to stop action in relatively bright lighting conditions.

### **Night Portrait**

This mode is similar to Night Landscape, but, because your subject will be a person in a dark outdoor setting, the camera will use the built-in flash. The subject presumably will be close to the camera and, unlike a landscape scene, can be illuminated by the flash. The camera will select Slow Sync for the flash mode, and will not let you change it. (If you don't pop up the flash unit, the camera will display an error message until you do.) Apart from the use of flash, this mode operates in a similar way to Night Landscape. The menu lets you select either Hand-held or Tripod. If you select Hand-held, the camera may take multiple shots and combine them into a single final image. However, if you zoom the lens in to a telephoto setting, the camera may take just a single shot. You can use the self-timer (including the Smile Timer) or exposure compensation, but you cannot change the focus method. The camera uses its face detection circuitry, and attempts to find a face to focus on.

If you choose Tripod from the menu, the camera will take a single shot at a slower shutter speed. It still will use the flash.

### **Party/Indoor**

This setting is meant for indoor photos of people and rooms. In most cases, you should pop up the flash; the flash mode is initially set to Auto with Red-eye Reduction, but you can change to another flash mode if you want to. If you don't want to use flash, you can leave the flash unit retracted, in which case the P510 will try to use a relatively slow shutter speed. In that case, you should hold the camera very steady or place it on a tripod. (Realistically, though, you probably are not going

to be setting up a tripod for candid or impromptu pictures at a party.) The camera will focus on the subject at the center of the frame. In the example shown in Figure 3-39, the camera did fire the flash.



Figure 3-39: Scene mode - Party/Indoor setting

With the Party/Indoor setting, there are no Shooting menu options available. You can use exposure compensation or the self-timer, but you cannot change the focus method.

## Beach

With this selection, the camera optimizes its settings for the beach, where there is likely to be bright sunlight reflected from the ground. In this environment, the camera will have a tendency to underexpose the subject because the exposure meter will be measuring the brightness of the beach. If you pop up the flash, the camera will set the flash mode to Auto in order to light the subject sufficiently, and it is quite likely that the flash will fire in order to enhance the brightness of the subject so it will be clearly visible against the glare of the background. However, you do not have to pop up the flash when using the Beach setting. You can use either macro focus or normal autofocus, but you cannot select manual focus or use Infinity autofocus. You can use the self-timer or exposure compensation.

The image shown in Figure 3-40 obviously was not taken at the beach; I took it to illustrate how the camera processes shots in this mode, in comparison to the Snow setting, discussed next.



Figure 3-40: Scene mode - Beach setting

### **Snow**

The Snow setting is similar to Beach, in that the camera may use the flash to compensate for the brightness of the snowy background, if you have chosen to pop up the flash unit. The camera appears to use a greater amount of reddish hue than the beach setting, as a balance against the bluish color temperature of a snowy scene. Other settings are similar to those for the Beach setting. As you can see from Figure 3-41, which was taken at the same place and time as Figure 3-40, there is not a great deal of difference in the processing of photos taken with the Snow and Beach settings.



Figure 3-41: Scene mode - Snow setting



## Sunset

Choose this setting to capture the rich hues of the setting (or rising) sun. The camera disables the flash, but you can use the self-timer and exposure compensation. You cannot change the focus mode from normal autofocus. The camera processes the shot to emphasize red-orange tones in the heavily slanted rays of the late afternoon or early morning sun. Of course, you don't have to limit the use of this (or any other) Scene setting according to its label; if you are photographing autumn leaves with reddish hues, red-brick buildings, or other subjects with reds you want to emphasize, consider this setting as one tool that may be of use. For example, Figure 3-42, taken with this setting, does not show a sunset, but I felt that the emphasis on reddish light was appropriate for this scene that was lit by the sun's long rays in the early morning, not long after sunrise.



Figure 3-42: Scene mode - Sunset

## Dusk/Dawn

If you are taking pictures before sunrise or after sunset, this is a setting to be aware of. With the Dusk/Dawn setting activated, the camera forces the flash off and intensifies the colors in order to add interest to images that otherwise might seem flat or washed out because of the low intensity of the available light. This Scene setting imposes the same restrictions as the Sunset