

Adobe Encore™ 1.5

By Jack and Sue Drafahl

images and effects into a video production, and finally the DVD authoring software. It's not surprising that Adobe makes all three types of programs, and they directly interface with one another. Adobe Photoshop is the universal image-editing program. Adobe Premiere enables you to take the edited images and drop them on a timeline where they are converted into a video presentation.

The final piece of the digital puzzle is Adobe's DVD authoring program called Encore 1.5. Encore takes those final edited video files and presents them in a professional-looking DVD, just like a Hollywood movie.

Encore is much more than just the end of the presentation process. It actually goes full circle as it comes back to Adobe Photoshop for additional help for special menu creation. Providing a list of all Encore's features isn't going to give you a good idea what the program is really about, so instead we'll take you through a couple of sample DVD projects.

To keep the whole process organized, all the tools, menus, and assets used for a project are located under four distinct folders in Encore. The project folder holds your video assets, menus and timelines. Clicking on any item in this folder will open the appropriate menu associated with that file. The menus folder lists all the menus used throughout the project. When a menu is selected from this fold-

NOW THAT THE slide projector has become a part of photographic history, technology has provided us with new ways to present our moments in time. Video projectors, DVD players, and computer-driven slide presentations are now becoming the norm.

The software needed to create these shows falls into three basic groups: programs to edit the raw images, software to group these



Encore editing screen. Project window in upper left, library/layer/character/style menu in lower left, properties menu upper right, and menu screen lower right.



Encore toolbox. Most of the tools are self-explanatory. The direct select tool can select parts of buttons, symbols, etc.



This is a selection of menus from the menu library that is installed with Adobe Encore. The library includes menus for corporate, education, general, government, sports and weddings.



When you register your copy of Encore with Adobe, you can download six free menu sets that include corporate, film clip, outdoor retail, tech, vacation, and wedding.

er, the folder expands showing all the linked buttons in that menu. The timeline folder shows all the video files linked to a timeline. When a specific timeline is selected, the list again expands and shows all the marked chapters. Finally, the disc folder indicates the type of media you have selected and just how much space has been allotted for your project. Now let's move on to our first project.

The images are exposed, scanned if necessary, and then edited in Adobe Photoshop. Then groups of photos, music, and recorded sounds are used to create several video clips in Adobe Premiere. Finally, Encore is opened and the video clips are imported as assets into the project folder.

The complexity of the final DVD will determine how you assemble the menu system with Encore. One of the fastest methods is to open a blank menu screen from the menus library, and drag the video segments onto the blank screen. Encore will make all necessary DVD menu links required to make the DVD functional. At this point you can size and arrange the video file buttons. You can then edit the text under each button using a versatile text menu that allows you to do just about anything. Once you burn the DVD, you are done. That was quick and easy, huh?

If you want to add some pizzazz to the menu, you can right-click (option-click) on the menu or use the edit tool in the floating toolbox to open Photoshop. When the menu comes into Photoshop, it will have the menu buttons broken down into layers. You can adjust the different parts of each button, or add a colorful background. When you are satisfied with your efforts, save the file and return to Encore to see your updated menu.

If you don't want to create your own menu, you can load one of the presets from the Encore library. Drag your video files into the pre-made buttons on the menu screen and then you can size, move, add text, or edit the pre-made menu in Photoshop. At any time during this process, you can preview the final DVD by right-clicking on the menu screen or by selecting the preview button at the bottom of the toolbox.

This program even allows you to add chapters to each video so the viewer can jump from one point to the next. Simply click on a video file in the projects folder to open a video timeline. You can then use

the chapter button located at the top left of the timeline, or in the monitor window. You can even create a chapter submenu that will link each chapter to buttons in the chapter menu. By dragging the chapter marker in the timeline menu to the button in the chapter menu, all links are made automatically.

The chapter submenus can then be linked to the main menu using a special properties menu. You can do this by entering the name of the target menu, or by dragging a pickwhip button from the link line in the properties menu and indicating the destination menu. You can also use this same pickwhip button to indicate which return menu is activated when the user presses this button.

If you want a really impressive DVD menu, you can use a video background for the main menu, and animate the buttons. Each video button can be set so that short video clips are activated when the button is selected. You can even create several submenus that can point to any video clip or chapter you have created. At any time during the



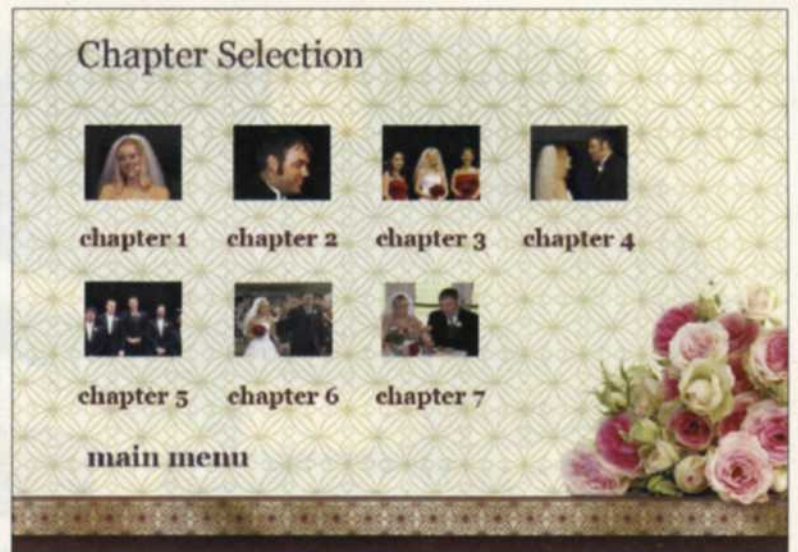
When you go to the library and select the menus tab, you will find menu sets that include variations of both menus and sub-menus.



The text options are much like those you find in Adobe Photoshop.



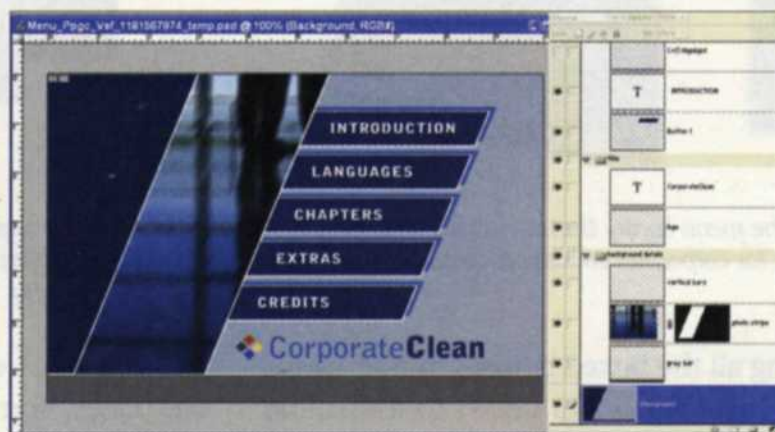
Each menu system in the library contains a wide variety of buttons and symbols that can be added to your DVD menu.



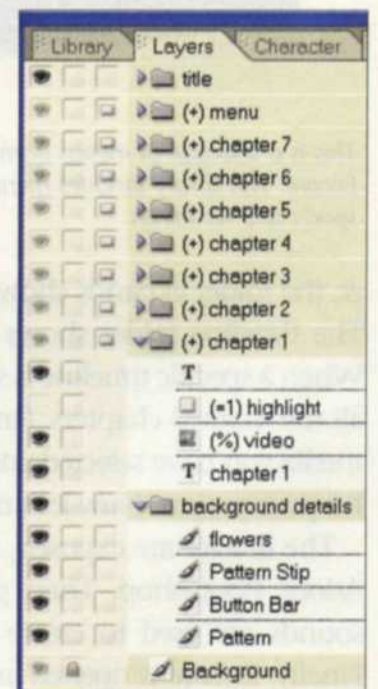
Chapter menus can be created by selecting the chapter markers and dragging them into the preset opening in the menu.



Above and right: Menus can be easily linked using the small button to the left of menu and video files in the properties panel and dragging it to the menu panel.



Photoshop PSD files with layers can be used to create or edit menus used in Adobe Encore DVD 1.5.



When an Adobe PSD file with layers is brought into Encore, it can be manipulated much like the layers palette in Photoshop.



You can work with individual layers in Encore by using the direct select tool. When the layer menu is open, you can see all the menu parts.

process, you can jump to Photoshop and use its arsenal of creative tools to further refine and enhance your menus.

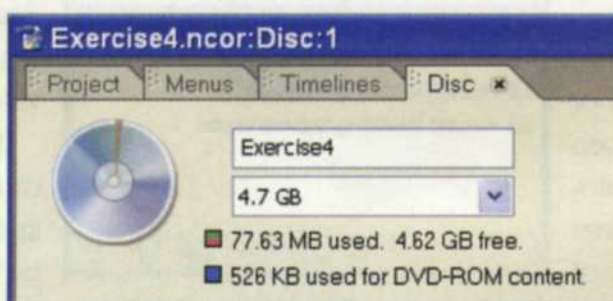
To insure that your project is going to write to the DVD correctly, Encore has a Check Project command under the file menu. It checks every aspect of your project and lists all the errors in menus and links that need to be corrected before burning your project to CD or DVD.

Adobe even makes it easy to learn how to use Encore. They feature several practice exercises in the book's help section, or you can watch the demo CD that comes included with your Encore purchase. Adobe Encore 1.5 is designed to work on Windows XP and

is available from the Adobe store for \$549 (or \$99 for the upgrade).

If you want to get the best possible DVD video production with Encore, you might also consider two other Adobe products—Adobe After Effects 6.5 for creating some advanced video effects, and Adobe

Audition for advanced audio editing of your soundtrack. For more on Encore 1.5 or these other fine Adobe products, log onto the web site at www.adobe.com. **FOI**



The DVD burner menu shows you how much space will be used on the DVD, and gives you a visual representation on the disk shown in the upper left.

Jack and Sue Drafafl are freelance journalists/photographers living in the Pacific Northwest. They have owned and operated a custom lab and service bureau, Image Concepts, for many years. They can be reached at: digitalduo@jackandsuedrafafl.com. The Drafafls new web site is: www.jackandsuedrafafl.com/.