

Glossy/Liquid Chrome Tutorial by Matt M

Program: GIMP
Level: Intermediate

Before we begin, you'll need at least two additional features that may not come with the current GIMP by default.

The first feature is Tom Keil's "Metallic Look" which can be found in the G'MIC filter pack. The other is the "Chrome Image" which comes with the Script-Fu plugin.

Click the links and download for your appropriate or desired OS. Install into Gimp.

[G'MIC](#)

[Script-Fu](#)

Make sure to read the instructions on how to install. In most cases they go in the scripts and/or plugins folders.

Once these are placed in the correct folders, go ahead and open Gimp. Let's get started.

PART I

1. File —> New —> select your desired size. For this tutorial we will use a size of 512x512, with a Transparent Background.

You can also just load your image or logo or text into Gimp.

You should have only one layer - The layer with your logo on it. Name it "Main Color" or "MC"

2. (Optional) Once your image is loaded into gimp, we want to make sure the edges are as smooth as possible. While this effect won't give a true vector image, it's better than leaving the image alone. If you are happy with the smoothness of the edges, skip this step and move onto step 3.

Otherwise to make smooth edges:

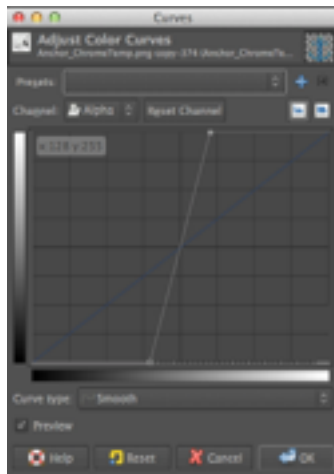
- A. Alpha to Selection (Layer —> Transparency —> Alpha to Selection)
- B. Shrink Selection by 2px (Select —> Shrink)
- C. Invert Selection (Select —> Invert)

Now, you should have a bit of a blur around the edges of the logo. We need to smooth them out.

To do that go to Colors —> Curves. Set the Channel Value to Alpha. Then drag the top left dot and the bottom right dot towards the center to form a pattern like the one in the image below.

The main thing to remember is both dots must be past the third line on their side of the the graph. You can move each dot more towards the center or back to it's respective third line to find the best for your image. Once you are happy with it Press OK.

NOTE: You can also click the little plus button next to presets and save this setting. I've named it "Smooth Edges".



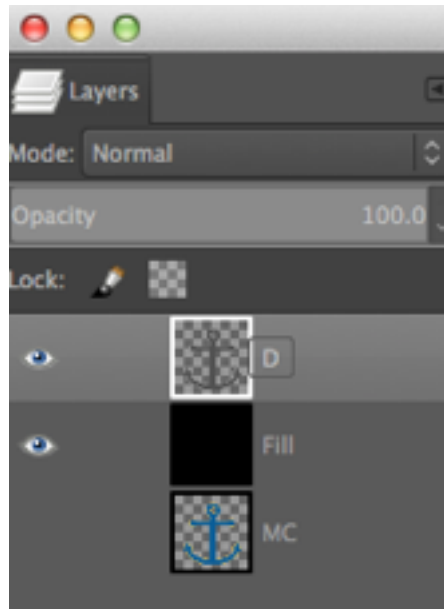
3. Next I recommend coloring any white in the logo to a light gray. To do this choose the "Select By Color" Tool. The too can be identified by the colors of Blue, Red and Green with a hand pointing at it. Once selected, hover it over the logo and click anywhere there is white. This will Select any and all white. Fill Selection with a light gray. I use (DEDEDE). This will give the final look a more silver chrome instead of a plain white. Once all white is filled with the gray, deselect selection (Select - None).

4. While changing any white is completely optional. Changing the black is not, due to the process we will be using coming up. So follow the steps in Step 3 to change any black to a dark gray. I use (242424).

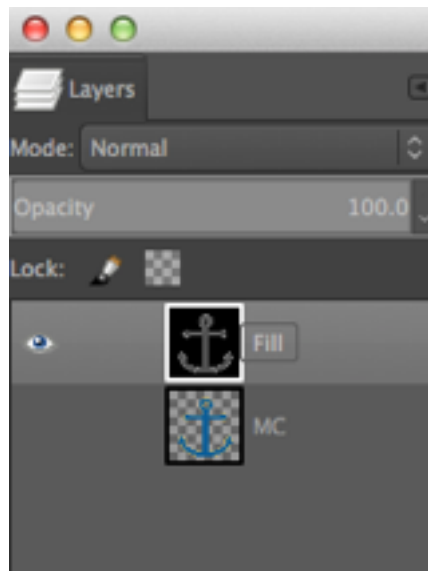
Now we can move onto the next portion.

PART II

1. Duplicate the MC Layer. Rename MC Copy to "D" for Desaturate. Hide MC layer.
2. Desaturate "D" layer. (Colors —> Desaturate —> Lightness).
3. Now we need to create a new transparent layer. A few ways. The easiest for me is to right click on any layer and choose "New Layer"



4. Rename the new layer “Fill” then move the Fill layer above the “MC” layer and below the D layer. Fill the Fill layer with a solid black (000000). Your layers should look like the image below.

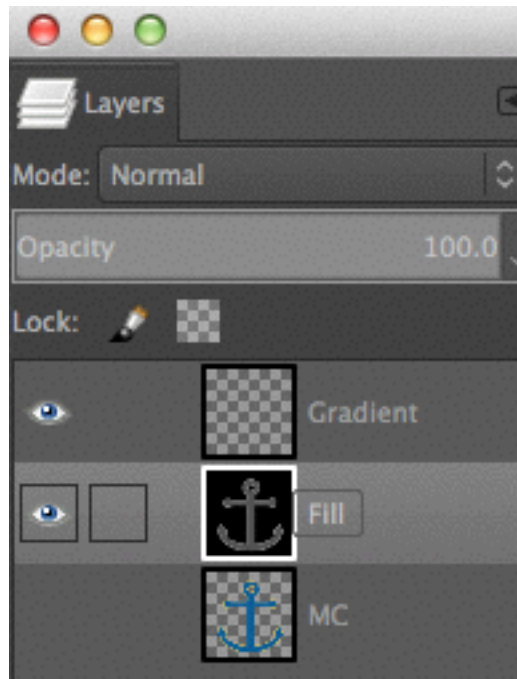


5. Merge the D layer down with the fill layer. Make sure the D layer is the active layer, right click and select “Merge Down” to mimic the image below.

6. Now we need to blur the Fill layer. Go to Filters → Blur → Gaussian Blur. Choose 7.0px for both Horizontal and Vertical. Press OK.

NOTE: If you've selected an image size larger than 1000x1000 you may need to up the Gaussian blur by a couple pixels.

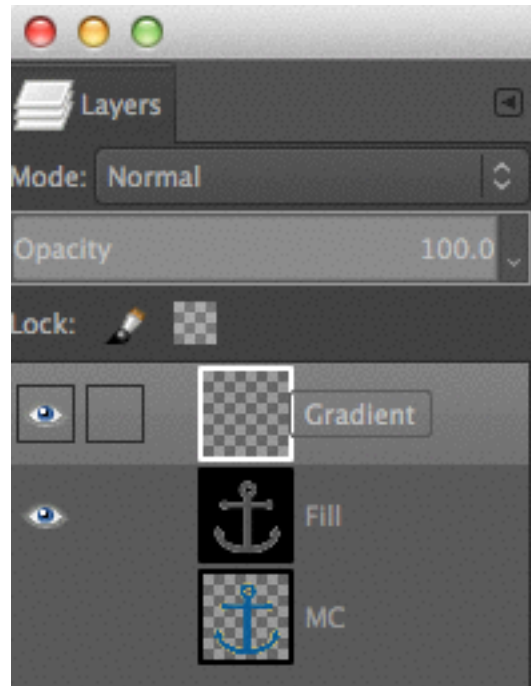
7. Next create a New transparent layer, name it "Gradient" - This layers should be the top most layer.



8. Make sure the active layer is the Fill layer. Also make sure your FG color is set to Black and BG Color to White.



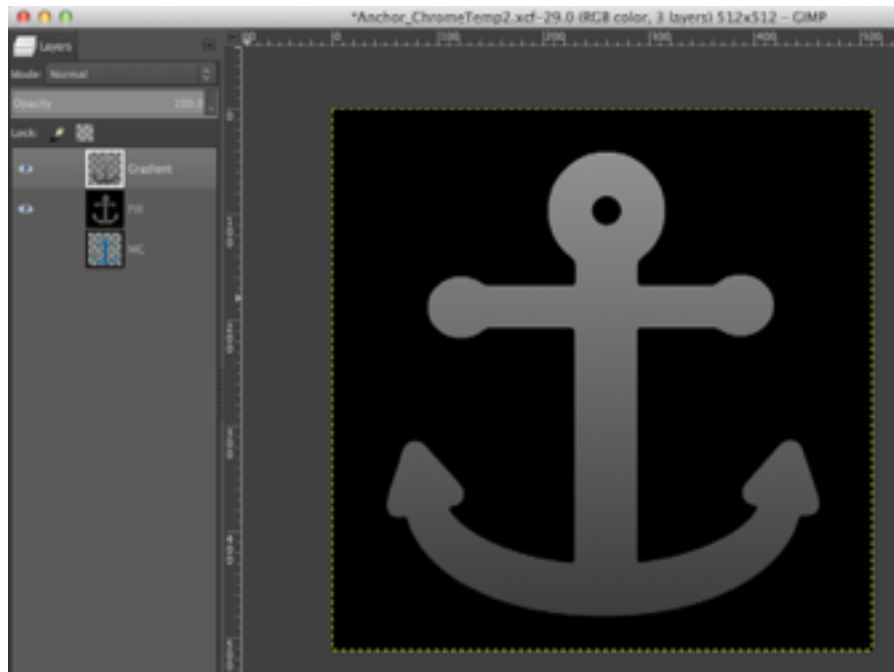
Choose the Select by Color Tool. Click anywhere within the black portion of the fill layer. This will create a selection. Invert the selection (Select —> Invert). This will outline the logo with a selection.



9. Now we need to  make the active layer the Gradient layer.

10. Select “Blend” Tool.
(aka Gradient Tool)

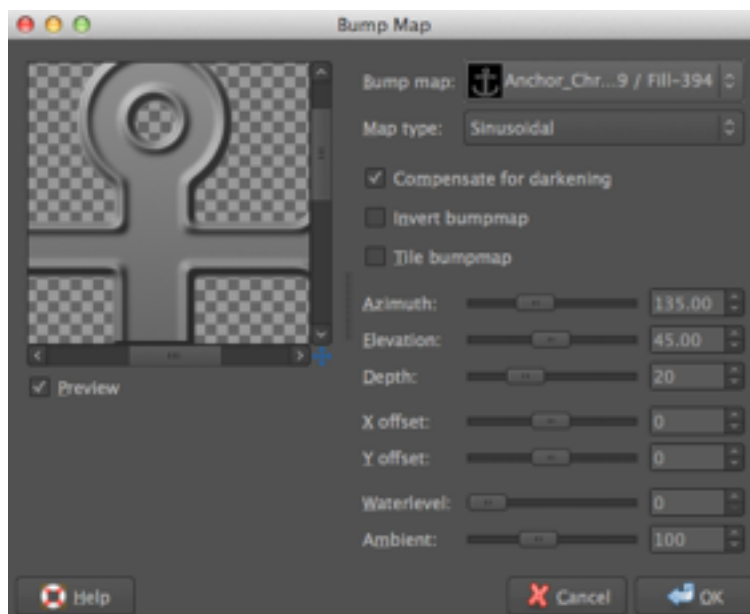
Make sure your FG color is set to a medium gray (929292) and BG to a darker gray (3d3d3d). Take the blend tool, and click at the top of the logo drag down to the bottom of the logo. While dragging hold down option or command keys to create a straight line. Once at the bottom of the logo release and deselect selection.



You should have the following on your gradient layer and logo should look like this:

Hide the Fill layer.

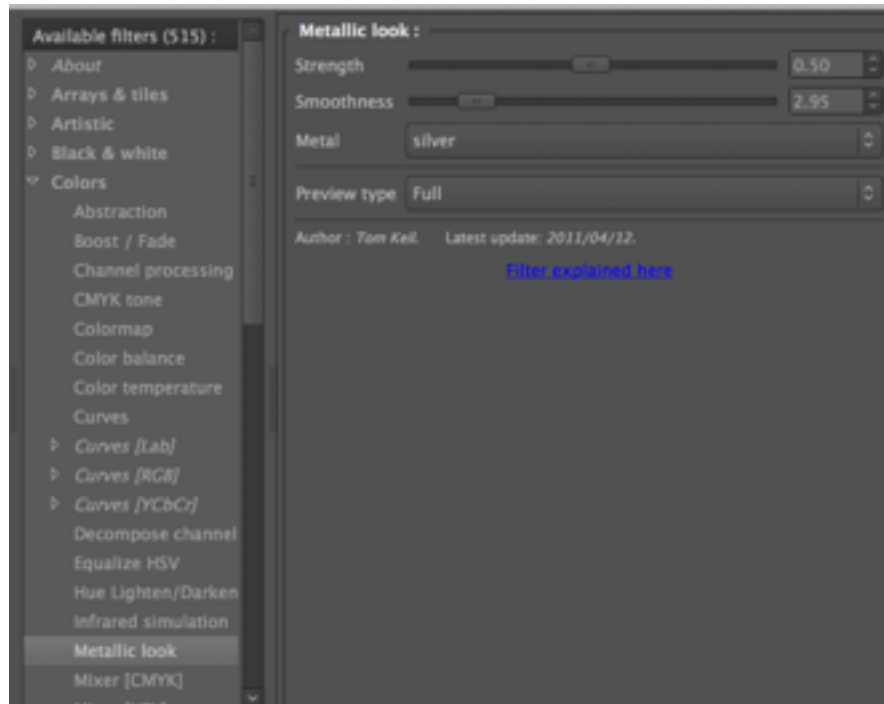
11. Duplicated Gradient Layer, rename Gradient Copy layer to “Bump Map” Hide Gradient Layer.



12. Go to Filters —> Map —> Bump Map. Use the Fill Layer as Bump Map, and type to Sinusoidal. Use the following settings and then Press OK.

13. (optional) If you feel it is necessary, you might want a little more bumping on the logo. The easiest way to do this is to go to Filters —> Repeat Bump Map.

14. Go to Filters —> G'MIC



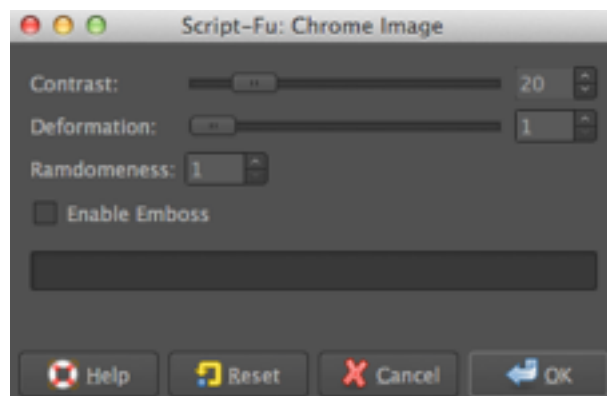
Once in G'MIC go to Colors —> Metallic Look. Set the Settings to the same as the image below. Press OK. If you want more gloss move the “Strength” setting up little by little.



Your image should look like the following.



15. Select the magic wand tool. Click in the black background so the selection shows. Go to Edit —> Clear. This removes the black background, except for a small outline.

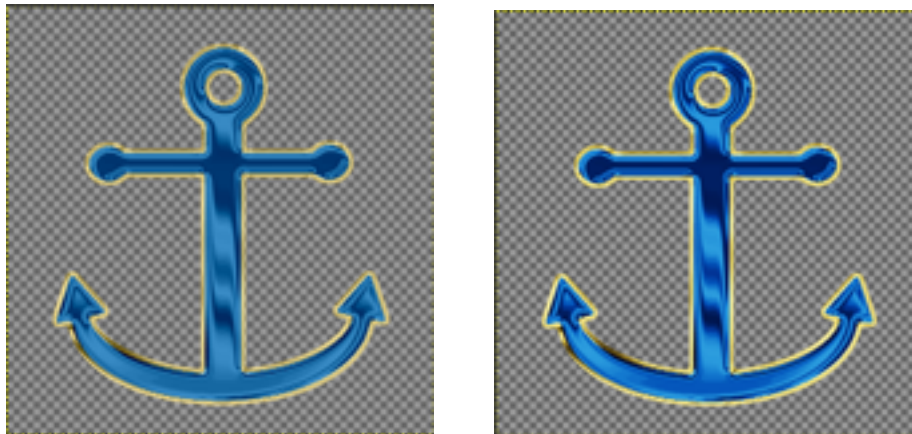


16. Duplicate Bump Map Layer. Go to Script-Fu —> Effects —> Chrome Image. Use the

following settings:

Press OK. Your image should look similar to this:





17. Change the Layer mode on Bump Map Copy to “Grain Merge” and make the “MC” layer visible. Duplicate the Bump Map Copy layer once, and your image should look like this: You can mess around with layer modes on the top two Bump Map layers for different effects. The other setting that works the best in my opinion is the “Hard Light” layer mode. Setting one or both of the Bump Map layers gives a little more shine.

18. Once happy with the result, save the file as an xcf file. Then with the top two Bump map layers and the MC layers visible, right click on any visible layer and select “Merge Visible Layers” (Clipped to image). Flattens the visible layers to the MC layer, but keeps the layer modes in tact.

Now we just need to clean up a little bit.

PART III

We want to smooth the edges again. Here’s a quick refresher:

1. on the MC layer, Layer—> Alpha to selection.
2. Shrink by 2px
3. Invert Selection
4. Gaussian Blur by 5.0px.
5. Colors —> Curves.
6. Presets —> Smooth Edges
7. Change the channel value to Alpha if it does do it for you.
8. Press OK.
9. Now all that is left is to feather selection. So keep selection active. Go to Select —> Feather. Feather by 5px (should be the default setting).

That should do it. For a little more gloss duplicate the flattened MC layer and change it’s layer mode to “Hard light” (Image Above to the Right).