

An Easy Way to Make Stereo View Cards

by David W. Kuntz

Stereo cards are a great way to share your digitally captured 3-D images with others, and, using StereoPhoto Maker, they're easy to produce. This column gives a brief introduction on how to accomplish this.

Most stereo card formats work best with images that are square, or very nearly square. However, most of us are shooting with digital cameras that capture rectangular shaped images. So, the first step in the process is usually to crop the image down.

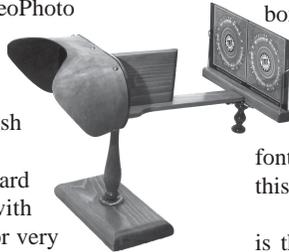
First, open your digital 3-D image in StereoPhoto Maker. To crop it, go to the "Edit" menu, position your mouse over the item "Crop," and then select "Free cropping option" from the flyout menu. This will bring up the dialog box shown at bottom left. This is where you tell the program the aspect ratio to which you want your crop to be constrained.

Before you put in any values, make sure that you check to "Keep aspect ratio" box, otherwise whatever you enter here won't be applied when you start cropping. Next, you can select one of the program's built in values, or provide your own numbers (X and Y). If you want an exactly square image crop, then enter 1 for both X and Y. It's probably simplest just to click on the built-in "Classic stereo card" choice. Once you hit "OK" you'll be returned to your image where you can perform your cropping.

To put your cropped image into stereo card format, go to the "File" menu, and then choose "Print stereo card." This will take you to the large dialog box at right. This dialog box contains all the options you'll need to format and finalize your card.

The first thing to do here is to select a size for your stereo card. Standard stereo card format is 7 inches wide by 3½ inches tall. This is specified in the drop down menu labeled "1" in the figure.

Unfortunately, no photo labs have a standard print of this size; however, they virtually all have a 5x7 inch standard print. The next step is therefore to change the "canvas size" of the image to this value. This is done by selecting the "canvas size" button (labeled "2") and then entering these values in the dialog box, which is shown at bottom right.



These few steps are actually all you need to do to produce a basic stereo card, but you'll probably want to do a few other things in order to finalize your card. One of these is to add text, such as a title and your name. This text can be simply typed into the three blank fields in the "Stereo card text" portion of the dialog box (middle right of the dialog box). Note that the "Title" and "Description" entries appear sideways on both sides of the card, whilst the "Author" text appears under the right image, smaller and right side up. You can also choose the font, the font size and the text color with the controls in this section of the dialog box.

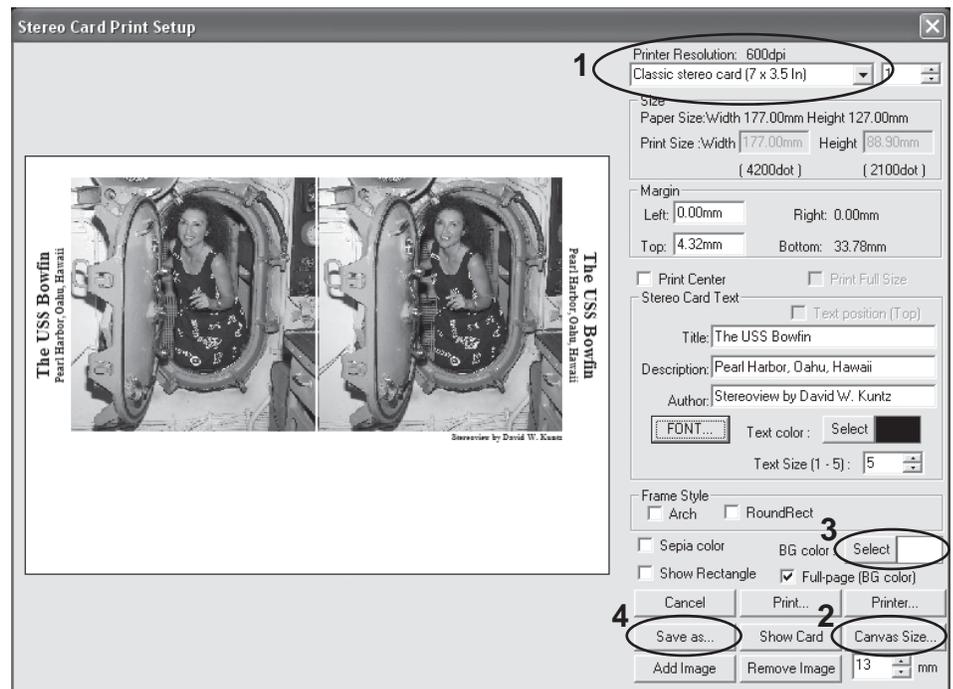
Another important selection to make is the background color for your card. This is set by clicking on the "BG color" button (labeled "3"), which brings up a standard Windows application color picking dialog box. Note that the results of all the selections

you make here are immediately displayed in the preview image on the left hand side of the dialog box.

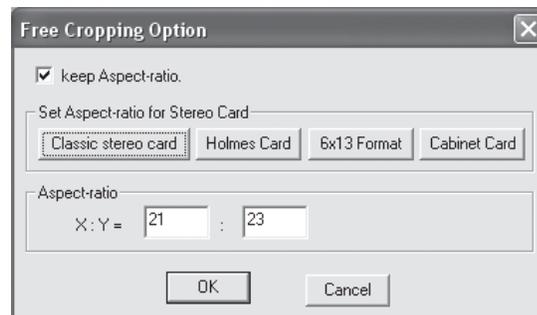
There are several other options to choose from in the program, such as applying the arched windows used in classic stereo cards, or even converting your photos to sepia toned. I encourage you to explore these.

When you're satisfied with your stereo card, then save it using the "Save as" button (labeled "4"). There are several options for file format, with JPEG being the most universally accepted.

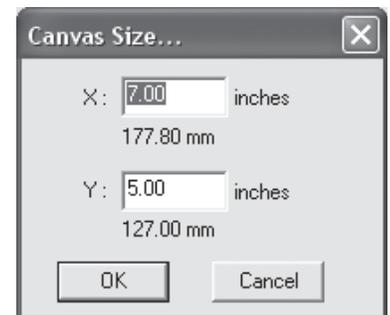
Now you have a 5x7 format JPEG image that can be printed by virtually any commercial photo lab. When you get your print back, all you have to do is cut it from 5 inches wide down to 3½ inches wide, and then glue it to a piece of card stock of the same dimensions. That's all there is to making stereo cards using StereoPhoto Maker.



The "Print stereo card" dialog box.



The "Free cropping option" dialog box.



The "Canvas size" dialog box.