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THE SUBMINIATURE TIMES

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Supporting 110, 17.5mm, 16mm, 9.5mm, 8mm, 4mm, 1mm, Microdot, and Electronic Still Photography.



Update

Several letters came in regarding the 16mm Petie camera shown at left, and above center, currently on sale at Adorama.*

The lens is a 25mm f/9 Roschlein Kreuznach achromat. Collectors report the cameras are still useable.

* (212) 741-0052

PRESS RELEASE

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Functionality and ergonomics guided the construction of the Minox. The small, elegant stainless steel apparatus so markedly deviated from the technology of the period that one of the most important tasks in marketing the product was to make it recognizable as a camera.

In August 1935 the production drawings for the mechanics were completed and the optics calculated by Professor Schulz of Vienna. The precision mechanic Hans Eppner hand-crafted the components of the silver-plated prototype. Snapshots taken with the original Minox received enthusiastic responses. Zapp's Minox was registered for a patent world-wide - including Estonia, where his original idea had been conceived. He was honored, somewhat belatedly, in 1994 when the newly constituted Estonian Republic issued a commemorative stamp featuring his Minox construction draught.

The VEF-Minox Riga

In the fall of 1936 Walter Zapp entered a production contract with VEF (Valst Elektrotehniska Fabrika), a large electrotechnical manufacturer in Riga. Production commenced in 1938 - exactly one hundred years after photography had been invented. The first camera was sold to a diplomat, who probably used it for spying - an application Zapp had never considered, but which was pivotal in establishing the Minox' reputation as a precision camera for document photography and secret snapshots. A total of about 17,000 subminiature cameras of the 'VEF-Minox brand' were sold until the outbreak of World War II. With the occupation of the Baltic by Russian forces, production continued under Soviet management in 1940/41. Thus slightly less than 2,000 cameras came to be 'Made in USSR'. Today, the legendary Minox Riga is in high demand as a rare collector's item. In March 1941, Zapp headed west with his wooden model, the prototype built by Hans Eppner, and the first production-line camera. He took up work at the AEG research institute in Berlin, contributing his knowledge and experience to the development of the electron microscope.

A New Beginning in Hesse

With the end of the war, this task also came to its end. One of the first actions taken by the American military in their occupation zone was passing an ordinance ordering Germans to turn in any items of worth, including cameras, under the threat of the death penalty. Luckily, a compassionate officer permitted Zapp to legally retain the proof of his inventorship, the original prototype camera and the first 'Minox Riga'.

Richard Jürgens had started working with Leitz in Wetzlar and brought Zapp there in September 1945. That month they founded the *Minox GmbH Wetzlar* and started working on improving their camera. The famous 'Complan'-lens, a new shutter and two light-filters were created during this period; also the famous measuring chain, whose distance beads made possible a quick and exact distance setting when shooting close-ups. Heavy exterior parts were replaced by anodized light metal and the brass body gave way to one made by aluminum pressure casting. The bright-

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frame finder conceived by Zapp soon became a standard feature in view-finder cameras world over.

A year of independently conducted preparatory work was followed by the search for a business associate who would finance production and marketing. Ideally, this should have been a partner well established in photo-technology, but companies at the time were too preoccupied with rebuilding their own operations. This was when the cigar manufacturer Rinn & Cloos (R&C) entered the scene. The company was seeking to diversify, as tobacco was scarce and could only be obtained with foreign currency. Thus Minox cameras, already established as an export success, were bartered for tobacco and became somewhat of an informal currency in the trade of the post-war years. In 1948 Minox moved to the R&C premises in Heuchelheim near Giessen.

Dissonances evolved in the odd*partnership that finally led Walter Zapp to break with the company in 1950; he would later remove to the solitude of the Swiss Alps to pursue his calculations and construction work in subminiature photography unbridled by business squabbles. Forty years would pass before the Minox inventor and his production firm reestablished contact.

Minox A - Symbol of the 'Economic Miracle'

Meanwhile 'the Minox' was turning into a major commercial success reflecting the economic upswing of the German 'Wirtschaftswunder' ('Economic Miracle'), and was soon recognized as a symbol of the quality 'Made in Germany' stood for, similar to the Mercedes star, the VW Beetle or the Montblanc fountain pen. The production process was further rationalized and new accessories created which widened the camera's range of applications. Simultaneously the sales and client-service network grew denser and denser. Scores of camera dealers had their employees trained in the Minox system at company seminars. Minox was one of the few camera manufacturers to produce each and every component of its cameras, from shutter to lens, itself. More than one-thousand production steps are involved in assembling the multitude of individual components of a subminiature camera to form a product measuring up to the highest standards of optical and mechanical precision.

Milestones: Microfilm and Minox B

For a time in the 1950s' delivery times for Minox cameras likened those of Mercedes automobiles, such was the popularity of the minuscule apparatus among professionals and amateurs. Milestones in this period were the entry into the microfilm business in cooperation with the federal railway and the postal service in 1956, as well as the introduction of the Minox B in 1958. Although it featured an integrated selenium-based exposure meter this new subminiature camera was only negligibly longer than its predecessor. During its 14-year production span the Minox B advanced to become an unmatched best-seller.

LETTERS

Dear Al,

Ever since ST #78 I am very curious about Minox sleight of hand stuff. Do you hear from John and Hurley? Keep up the good work.

LUV MAGIC, Detroit.

Dear LM,

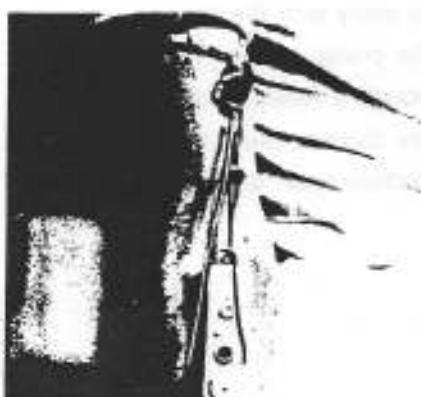
Re: J&H. If you process color film at home using a spoon instead of scale measurements you're probably using Hurley's calculations (via the old Formulary newsletter.)

Unfortunately I didn't pay close attention to 9.5mm in the '60s. It was full time work trying to learn 16mm.

Here's a gem from "Minox Memo" '63.
Have fun! Al D.



Mr. Robert E. McCaleb, Puyallup, Washington, a commercial diver now serving in the U.S. Navy, is also an avid photographer who always has something up his sleeve — his Minox camera. To keep his camera concealed yet handy at all times, this sly sailor devised a simple rig consisting of a piece of braid to fit around the upper arm and a strong rubber band attaching the Minox to the braid. After a picture is taken, he merely "lets go" and the Minox disappears from sight. Though we have our doubts as to whether the Minox can be included as part of a regulation Navy uniform — we must admit that sailor McCaleb may well have started a new fad for long-sleeved civilian Minoxers.



UPDATES

BOB PINS IN NORWOOD, NJ whose monthly camera listing is now 24 pages long, has retained the services of a full time repairman, formerly of Franke and Heideke. Call Bob re: Rollei-16 service and repair. (201) 784-1444.

SELENIUM (NOT SILICON) light meter cells are still being built for the Minolta-16 cameras by Quality Light Meter Co., 6922 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, CA 90028 (213) 467-2265.

BUMMER OF THE MONTH The Eastman Kodak Frequent Film Buyer Awards Program enables you to earn points toward a wide range of valuable gifts from computers and VCRs, radar detectors to African safari vacations, by purchasing Vericolor III which comes in all sizes except 16mm.

TALK ABOUT TIMING. December 12th we received Brooklyn Camera's Holiday '95 list of photographic equipment. It included this gem:

For Sale: Federal Copy Device, copies from 16mm movie film to 127 film, \$59. December 12th was one day after Kodak announced they've stopped producing 127 film!

THE GREAT SPY MOVIE FAN CLUB

Dear Al,

Concerning "Falcon & the Snowman" measuring chain on Minox B. Took mine off long time ago. They get in the way. Just measure the chain alongside your arm, finger-tip to elbow, remember it, got it made.

Tom Mahon,
Brooklyn, NY

FREE CLASSIFIED

WANTED Riga Minox, and lens for Minox enlarger.
Leonard Hart, Houston, TX (713) 868-9606.

WANTED Plastic Rt Angle Viewer for Minox, or Rt Angle #97308. Irvin Brewer (310) 271-6691 FAX (310) 859-9961.

THERE'LL BE A QUIZ

It's no small wonder that we don't see too many pix from the P-3 1020 watch/camera fans. The instructions make your eyes glaze.



WRIST WATCH CAMERA

WATCH SETTING INSTRUCTIONS

1. PRESSING "LIGHT" BUTTON ILLUMINATES THE DISPLAY FROM THE RIGHT.

2. CHRONOGRAPH

PRESSING "MODE" BUTTON ONCE SELECTS THE CHRONOGRAPH (LEFT MOST AND RIGHT MOST DASHES BLINK).

TO ACTIVATE CHRONOGRAPH:

- A) TO START, PRESS "START/STOP" BUTTON (TIME BEGINS TO INCREASE).
- B) TO STOP, PRESS "START/STOP" BUTTON AGAIN (STOP DASH BLINKS).
- C) TO RESET DISPLAY TO ZERO, PRESS "RESET" BUTTON.
- D) FOR LAPSE TIME: PRESS "START/STOP" BUTTON, MEASURE THE DESIRED TIME THEN PRESS "LAP" BUTTON, (LAP DASH BLINKS). IN A TWO HORSE RACE THIS IS THE TIME TAKEN BY THE WINNING HORSE.
- E) TO SEE THE TIME TAKEN BY THE LOSING HORSE, PRESS "START/STOP" BUTTON (STOP DASH BLINKS) THEN PRESS "LAP/RESET" BUTTON (LAP DASH STOPS BLINKING).
- F) TO RESET CHRONOGRAPH, PRESS "RESET" BUTTON.
- G) TO GO BACK TO TIME MODE, PRESS "MODE" BUTTON AGAIN.

3. ALARM

PRESSING "MODE" SWITCH AND HOLDING IT FOR 3 SECONDS WILL SELECT THE ALARM SETTING MODE (ALARM SET DASH BLINKS) WITH A BLINKING HOUR DIGIT.

- A) PRESS "SET/READ" BUTTON TO SELECT ALARM HOUR (AM/PM).
- B) PRESS "SELECT" BUTTON TO CHANGE TO MINUTES (MINUTES DIGITS BLINK).
- C) PRESS "SET/READ" BUTTON TO SELECT ALARM MINUTES.
- D) PRESS "MODE" SWITCH TWICE TO RETURN TO TIME MODE.

4. TIME/DATE

PRESS "MODE" SWITCH AND HOLD FOR 3 SECONDS (ALARM SET DASH BLINKS). PRESS AGAIN AND TIME SET DASH BLINKS TOGETHER WITH SECONDS DIGITS.

- A) PRESSING "STOP/RESET" BUTTON WITH SECONDS UP TO 29, WILL RESET SECONDS TO ZERO.
 - B) PRESSING "STOP/RESET" BUTTONS WITH SECONDS ABOVE 30, WILL ADVANCE TO THE NEXT MINUTE.
 - C) PRESSING "START/STOP" BUTTON AGAIN WILL SELECT THE MINUTES, AGAIN THE HOURS, AGAIN THE DATE, AGAIN THE MONTH, AGAIN THE DAY AND AGAIN BACK TO SECONDS.
 - D) WHEN TIME AND DATE HAVE BEEN SET, PRESS "MODE" SWITCH TO PERMANENTLY SHOW TIME.
5. PRESSING AND HOLDING "SELECT START/STOP" BUTTON WILL SHOW THE MONTH AND DATE.
6. PRESSING AND HOLDING "SET/READ" BUTTON WILL SHOW THE ALARM TIME.
7. TO TURN ALARM ON AND OFF, PRESS AND HOLD "SET/READ" BUTTON THEN PRESS "SELECT START/STOP" BUTTON. SYMBOL ON DISPLAY INDICATES ALARM IS ON.

HELPLINE

TO LANDSCAPE FAN, Dover, De: Focalware 1200 is a Sharp pocket computer that incorporates 12 different photographic applications. With a few keystrokes, you can compute the depth of field for any lens on any camera, and determine sunrise and sunset times anywhere in the world at any time of year.

Focalware 1200 will even tell you the sun's position in the sky at any given time of day - a great help in planning location shoots. List price \$295. Visual Departures 1 (800) 628-2003.

JEFFERY IN DETROIT was seeking fastest possible way to produce Minox color prints at home. We recommended the Pragmatic Processor. Does anyone have a faster process for Jef?



Pragmatic Products 58 sec. processor is the fastest in the world. The speed allows you to make the finest prints. Model 11-\$199. Model 20-\$299.95. C/N 1-800-567-7724. We teach you more about color printing than anyone else in the world. Free informative video to view—2983 Cherry Hill Dr., Port Huron, MI 48060. Nikon 500F4 Lens—\$2900.00. OBD. Above. NORTH AMERICA 1-800-567-7724.

INTERNATIONAL

DO YOU HAVE PROBLEM FILMS? C-22, CN5, E4 Foreign manufacturers, Eastern countries, unknown brands. Let specialists process for you. Please contact Mehri, P.O. Box 95, D-8422 Riedenburg, West Germany.



WEAR YOUR COMPUTER

COMPUTERS ARE NOW SMALL enough to wear, a helpful attribute if you need both hands free. The Mobile Assistant weighs just 2.75 lbs., and comes with a small display screen in a headset with audio input/output. The 486-based PC comes with a 250 Mbyte hard disk; the computer can run up to 4 hrs. on batteries. Options let you expand the hard drive to 540 Mbytes. Computer Products & Services, Fairfax, VA. (703) 631-6925.

QUICKFINDER 2 / 96

Minolta-16 MG-s	\$75	L
Minox LX Black	775	A
" B w/case, chain	\$159	M
" Enlarger w/cover	269	M
Steky III w/case & 40mm, box	195	B
Tessina gold	1795	B
Yashica Atoron	99	L

A Alkit	(212) 674-1515
B Brooklyn Camera	(516) 678-5333
L Le Camera	(609) 588-4843
M Midwest	(614) 261-1264

EDITOR'S JOURNAL

Learning candids on the run

When my mom couldn't make breakfast for some reason, I'd eat at a place I'll call the Batouttahell Diner. It catered to a largely blue collar crowd. The service was fast!

You were expected to pay when you ordered. The next time you saw your waitress she'd have a bacon and egg platter in one hand, your change in the other. Reading material was forbidden at the counter. This was the original take-out place except that they let you borrow a stool for a few minutes.

Many of the employees from a nearby bakery had breakfast at the diner. It was the time of the sweater girl. In the summer I'd sit at a back table so that I could look around, filling my young eyes with wonder before facing the long hours of schoolwork ahead. I was determined to catch one particularly breathtaking young lady on microfilm.

I alerted a friend who acted as my 'blind'. Sitting with his back to the door, I thought I could just raise my camera and fire over his shoulder. When the moment of truth came, I got 'creative' and slapped my Mamiya-16 between two pieces of toast.

The waitress never missed a beat. She stepped between me and my intended target and asked in a loud voice "Say kid, do you want mayo on that camera sandwich?" I never went back.

Subminiature lives!

