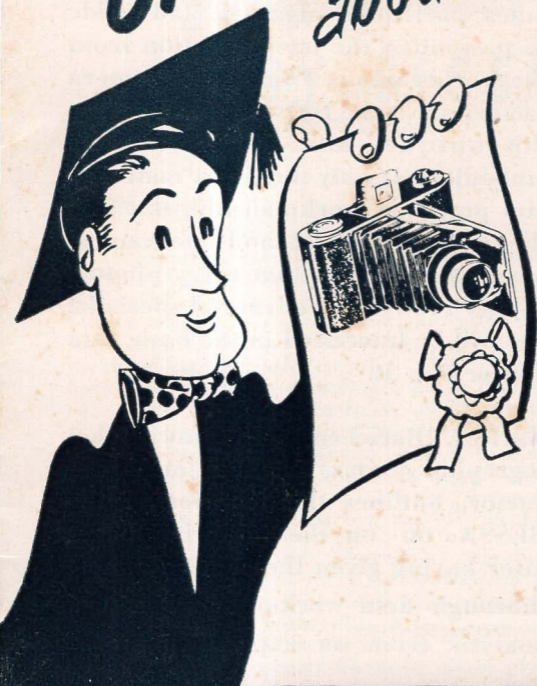


# ONE MAN'S OPINION about



THE  
**BABY BESSA**

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# Willoughbys

takes particular pleasure and pride in presenting the latest creation from the world-famous Voigtlander camera factories . . . the BESSA 66. Because this unique, ultra-modern camera embodies not only the finest materials and precision workmanship, but also the newest optical and mechanical advances, it is felt that every photographer . . . tyro or advanced specialist . . . will be interested in the basic data concerning it.

Karl A. Barleben, well-known photographic writer, lecturer and instructor, outlines the features of the BESSA 66 on the following pages after having given the camera a most thorough field work-out and critical analysis from an expert's point of view.

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# **One** MAN'S OPINION

ABOUT THE **New**  $2\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$

**Voigtlander**

**BABY BESSA**

*General...*

Recognizing the tremendous popularity of the  $2\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$ -inch negative, Voigtlander engineers set to work designing and building a folding camera . . . but without the customary size and bulk that generally accompanies cameras handling this size negative. Their efforts have been splendidly consummated in the BESSA 66 . . . truly a camera masterpiece of diminutive size. In truth, it is one of the *smallest* and *most compact* cameras on the market making  $2\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$ -inch negatives. This is the feature that appeals on first glance . . . I know that was my reaction when I first saw the BESSA 66.

The square negative deserves its universal popularity, for it has much to recommend it from both a practical as well as economical point of view. To begin with, it is sufficiently small to be regarded as "miniature," yet large enough to make special fine-grain developing and extreme care during processing unnecessary. Second, a full dozen negatives can be had

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on a standard roll which ordinarily yields eight  $2\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$ -inch negatives, thus a bonus of four extra shots is made possible. Third, as the negative is a perfect square, the camera is held and operated at the same position . . . trimming and cropping for any pictorial results, as desired, being attended to when making the enlargements.

The BESSA 66 provides these advantages within the confines of a really small camera . . . a camera that easily fits into the pocket without undue bulging or unnecessary weight.

## *Construction . . .*

Made of steel, leather-covered and satin-chrome trimmed, the BESSA 66 measures a mere  $1\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2} \times 5$  inches overall. Not only does it offer an extremely smart, sleek and up-to-date appearance, but under that surface of beauty lies a genuine ruggedness . . . which I quickly discovered by deliberately trying to work the camera to death. Of significant value, too, is the fact that all external surfaces actually *defy wear and scratch marks*.

To my delight, I found that the little BESSA 66 will perform consistently and positively even under the hardest use . . . yet it remains bright and new externally.

The drop-bed swings open . . . bringing the lens into position . . . at the press of a button. FIG. 1 (a). The entire back opens fully for easy loading and cleaning. A special arm FIG. 1 (d) lays flat against the camera-side which, when swung out, serves as a support when the camera is used on a table or other flat surface for time-exposures. A small but valuable feature is the manner in which the arm, when not in use, serves as a positive lock

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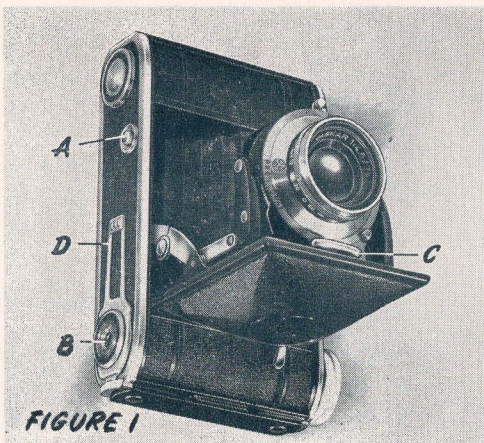


FIGURE 1

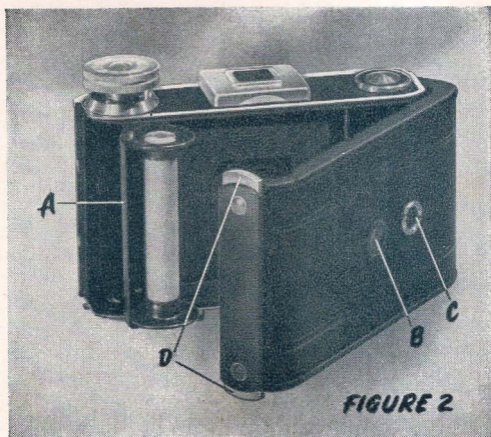
for the press spring-latch FIG. 2 (d) by means of which the back is opened . . . thus accidental opening of the back is completely avoided. A standard, American-thread tripod bushing is built in for tripod use. FIG. 1 (b).

The ruby observation window FIG. 2 (b) in the back of the BESSA 66 is effectively capped by a metal blind which is opened by the flip of a finger FIG. 2 (c). The most sensitive film is thus protected, yet viewing the exposure numbers is extremely easy.

## Film Loading...

Another feature of the BESSA 66 which made a decided hit with me is its ability to accomodate *both* No. 620 and No. 120 roll film interchangeably without fuss or bother. In my travels I have frequently experienced difficulty in obtaining No. 120 film . . . or No. 620 film, as the case may have been. The

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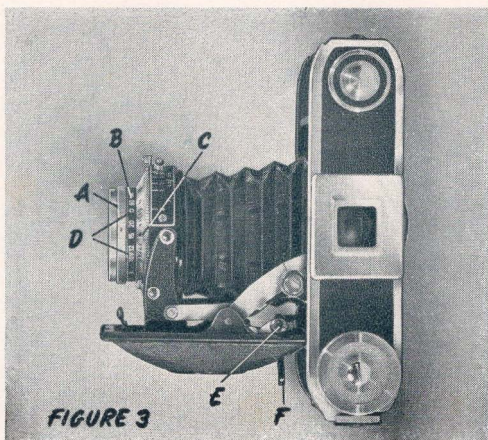
**FIGURE 2**

BESSA 66 enables me to take *either* size. The gimmick here is a novel double winding key on which are mounted both key-sizes, spring-loaded. I have had my share of headaches with cameras using only a single size roll, so you can realize my appreciation of this feature . . . and I am confident you, too, will quickly come to value it in your own work with the BESSA 66.

Naturally the BESSA 66 will handle color films . . . Ansco color, Ektachrome, Kodacolor as well as black-and-white and infra-red films.

Excellent, easy-to-use roll holders are used which swing out completely from their normal position in the camera. FIG. 2 (a). Just pull them out, drop the feed and take-up spools in them, slide back, and you're ready to wind the film to "1." Smooth, simple, easy and positive.

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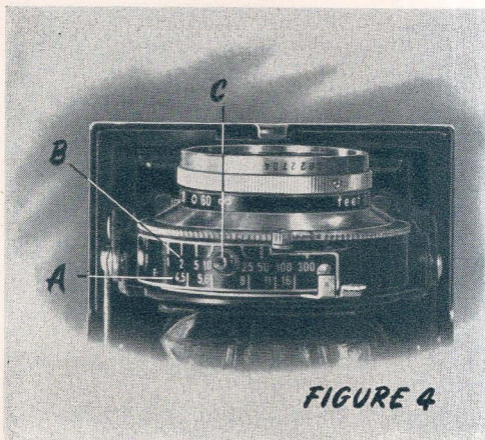


## The Lens...

I have always enjoyed the crispness of Voigtlander lenses, and was delighted to discover that the new Vaskar f4.5 lens of 75mm (3-inch) focus with which the BESSA 66 is fitted not only lives up to, but exceeds the characteristics of the pre-war lenses. Perhaps the special coated Vaskars are designed from radically new formulas, or it may be only the coating . . . in any case, this f4.5 lens performs admirably.

Focusing is accomplished quickly and easily by turning the front collar of the lens FIG.3 (a). Distances are clearly etched on the scale FIG. 3 (b), and are surprisingly easy to read. An accurate *depth-of-focus* scale FIG. 3(c) is incorporated which is helpful rather than a nuisance.

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**FIGURE 4**

A novel "zone" focusing idea is bound to be of tremendous help to beginners. Two symbols . . . a circle and an inverted triangle are included on the distance scale FIG. 3 (d). The idea is simplicity itself . . . set the diaphragm at f8. Set the focus index opposite the circle and the depth ranges from 16 feet to infinity. Set the focus index opposite the inverted triangle and the depth is from 8 to 16 feet. I find this useful when shooting fast-action and sports subjects, where critical focusing would take too much time.

The lens diaphragm scale is located atop the shutter casing where it is easily adjusted and read FIG. 4 (a). All lens markings are so positioned that they can be read from shooting positions . . . no need to twist or turn the camera to adjust or read focus, depth or stop.

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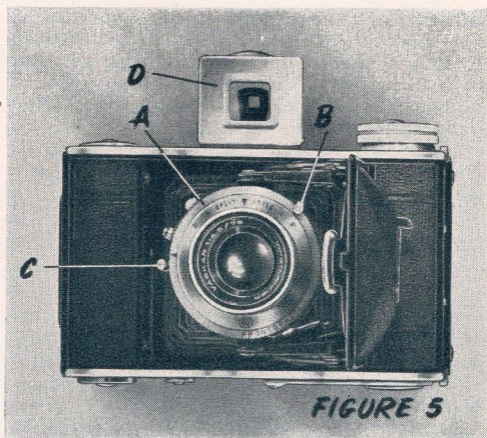


FIGURE 5

## *The Shutter...*

You are sure to become attached to the new Prontor-S shutter with which the BESSA 66, in combination with the Vaskar lens, is fitted. FIG. 5 (a).

Speeds of 1 to 1/300th second are provided, in addition to Bulb. FIG. 4 (b). That 1/300th second speed has brought home the bacon for me on several occasions in sports shots.

A built-in flash synchronization contact FIG. 4 (c) makes the use of a complete synchronizer unnecessary with the BESSA 66. Merely attach any standard flashing unit to the camera and plug it into the bayonet coupling on the shutter . . . and you're ready for perfectly-timed flash shots. Each time the shutter is released, the contacts close, firing the bulb.

As though that weren't enough, there is also a built-in delayed action device which

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enables you to be in the picture yourself if you wish FIG. 5 (b). Approximately ten seconds are thus available, during which time you can get into the scene before the shutter releases automatically. Just cock the shutter FIG. 5 (c) in the usual manner, push the red lever over as far as it will go . . . and you have plenty of time after releasing the shutter before it actually opens.

All in all, I doubt if you can find a more practical and useful shutter anywhere at the price.

The lens and shutter assembly is securely mounted on struts which, although collapsible for closing purposes, provide an unusual degree of *rigidity*. There is no wobble or shake. Leather bellows of the finest quality couple this assembly with the camera body.

## *Shutter Release . . .*

Don't you hate shutters that you have to jerk and tug at? Well the Prontor-S shutter releases *smoothly* . . . and at a *slight* pressure. Not only that, but the practical *trigger release* FIG. 3 (f) which projects through the drop-bed when the camera is open enables the shutter to be released without force or jerk. You won't get blurred pictures because of camera shake with the BESSA 66.

The trigger release collapses into the drop-bed when the camera is closed by pressing the push catch FIG. 1 (c) but automatically projects itself into position when the drop-bed is opened. In the normal shooting position at eye-level, it falls naturally, directly under the left forefinger. Making an exposure is similar to firing a rifle . . . just as easy and smooth with the usual "trigger squeeze" technique.

A threaded *cable-release socket* is also provided, but not on the shutter proper. It is located at the base of the drop-bed FIG. 3 (e), where the cable release nipple engages the

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linkage which connects the trigger and shutter. At this point the action is smooth, positive and convenient.

## *The View-finder...*

A double optical, eye-level view-finder is mounted on the camera for fast, simple sighting. When not in use, it folds against the camera body where it is out of the way. A flip of the top unit, and the two sections spring up into upright position, ready for use FIG.5(d).

What I particularly like about this view-finder is that the front unit is housed in a rather wide, metal frame. At first you might think this a mere affectation . . . but it was not long before I discovered that this frame serves a definite service, as does every part of the BESSA 66. The frame is actually a light-shield which gives a more brilliant image by excluding the light around the edges of the front optical unit. Thus, you can aim the camera in all directions, almost, irrespective of the light direction, and still see clearly what is going on in front of the camera.

Obviously the view-finder is accurate. It shows the precise field of view as it will be recorded on the film. Keep this little gadget clean and finger mark free and it will serve you well.

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I have owned and used practically every make and type of camera during the past twenty-five years. I am hardly a beginner. Yet I have not actually found so many distinctive features and practical applications in a single camera as are yours in the little BESSA 66 . . . and at only \$49.50. What makes this camera so wonderful, in my opinion, is the fact that it is as easy to use and practical for the beginner as it is useful over a wide range of serious and professional applications for the serious, advanced amateur and professional.

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It is true that there is no such thing as a truly "universal" camera. But the BESSA 66 comes awfully close to fulfilling that term. If you want a small, compact camera for pocket use, the BESSA 66 fills the bill. The carefully made and coated Vaskar f4.5 lens has ample speed for all ordinary work; the versatile Prontor-S shutter with its speeds to 1/300th second, built-in flash synchronization and built-in delayed action device . . . not to mention its smooth, jerk-free release and action . . . the BESSA 66 has it. The ability to handle both No. 620 and No. 120 roll film is of great value to the traveler. By defying wear and scratches, the sturdy little BESSA 66 not only takes hard punishment but retains its fresh, new appearance indefinitely.

The amateur, newsman, sportsman, traveler, pictorialist and professional will find in the BESSA 66 a camera of sterling quality and accomplishment . . . at a surprisingly low price. Of all the different types of cameras I regularly use, I can honestly say that the BESSA 66 sees more use than any . . . even as a "second" camera for "protective" shots on assignments, projects and jobs. Now that I have discovered its multi-purpose features, I can't imagine going out camera-ing without it . . . and I know you, too, will arrive at this same opinion once you use it.

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The BABY BESSA is also available with Color-Skopar f3.5 lens in Compur Rapid Shutter at \$64.50. The Carrying Case is priced at \$7.50.

# SOMMERS CAMERA EXCHANGE

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