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NHS-56

NIKON ニコン JOURNAL



THIS ISSUE

PG.1--THE "HERMES" LENS!

PG.6--ZUNOW OR NIKKOR?

PG.10-A UNIQUE UNDERWATER HOUSING

PG.12-THE F-SPOT...QUESTAR "F" FINALLY!

ROBERT ROTOLONI
EDITOR/PUBLISHER



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NEXT ISSUE

The deadline for the next issue of our NIKON
JOURNAL, #57, is September 1, 1997. Please get all
articles, photos, ads & letters to me by that date so I
can get #57 out on schedule. THANKS!!

EDITORIAL

It wasn't easy getting this issue of the Journal out on time. After putting it off as long as possible, I finally had to give in to the reality of current technology and invest in a new up to date computer system. I had known for quite some time that I was falling further and further behind as I stood by my trusty 386DX that a friend and I had built using some parts from my even older PC-XT system. But it did work, and still does (my Nikon serial number database, now numbering over 13,000 entries, still resides in my 386 as I now have both systems running side by side), but putting the Journal together using my aging method was just taking too long. Now I have an IBM Aptiva with a Pentium chip running Windows 95, which is where all the software is and will be! As time passes I hope to learn how to use it with a little more imagination so our Journal will look more modern. But I had to learn enough to get this issue out and I had to do it NOW! I am sure the results are not perfect, but I hope to get better, so please bare with me. Also I will have an e-mail address shortly (as soon as I get it working right!) and you will be able to get to me even faster!

First off is a fully illustrated article by Peter Lownds on one of the rarest Nikon lenses there is: the Hermes enlarging lens. I've only seen two and one was behind glass! Now you will know as much as anyone else does about this item. We have an interesting look at the Zunow f1.1 lens from a pros' point of view. These lenses are as sought after as the Nikkor f1.1 and rightly so. The late Bill Fraker was an enthusiastic member full of ideas but whose life was cut short by disease. If he had lived he would have been a regular contributor I am sure. From his files given to me by his widow I've put together an article I am sure he would have done himself, if only he could. Finally we have positive evidence of the "Questar Nikon F" thanks to feedback from member Karl Eichhorn. See page 12! We also have Alan Morris' Part 3 on fitting out your Nikon F/F2 for available light work. On page 17 you can read about the latest happenings in the auction world and also about a new Nikon book!

Finally, I have still not received information about NHS-Con6 but I should have it in time for NHS-57, due out in early October. This should still give us time to plan for a great time in New York.



ROBERT ROTOLONI
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

PRE-WAR ENLARGING LENS!!!

THE HERMES LENS!!

by Peter Lownds

I heard the letter box opening, bills, bills and more bills. But I knew the Journal should be out soon, and I always look forward to the N.H.S. parish magazine arriving, a quick flip through the hallowed pages and there, right before my eyes the missing link. About two and a half years ago I had tried, in my humble way, to shed some light on the Nikon EL-Nikkor lenses, and I knew that this lens was out there somewhere. Now here it was in the pages of our Nikon Journal (NHS-55, pg. 1). Here was the very lens I had first learned of less than two years before. There is a nice little story about this lens which is worth telling.

About 18 months ago an NHS member was at a camera show in the U.S.. He was watching the table of a dealer friend while he took a walk around the room. At about 2 o'clock the dealer returned to his table, "NHS member 1, come quickly and take a look at a funny Nikon lens on another table, but a second NHS member had already found the little jewel and silver had crossed palms.

NHS member 1, trying not to look interested, asked "how much for that bit of glass?" NHS member 2, "well I'm going to take it home and play with it for awhile, and try to find out what it is and how much it's worth." NHS member 1, "well if you do sell it, please let me know."

I had heard on the Nikon grape vine that this lens had turned up, and had made a few telephone calls, found out a name and made a more generous offer (well, I thought it was more than generous), NHS member 2, "well let me think about it!"

Both members attended NHS-Con5 in Tokyo a few months later, as well as the present owner (have a look at the group photo in the convention issue and see if you can work out who is who).

More money changed hands than I had offered, a lot more money, and the lens found a new home down in sunny Miami, which proves that with the really rare items, step up and pay the man the extra dollars for you'll never get a second chance!

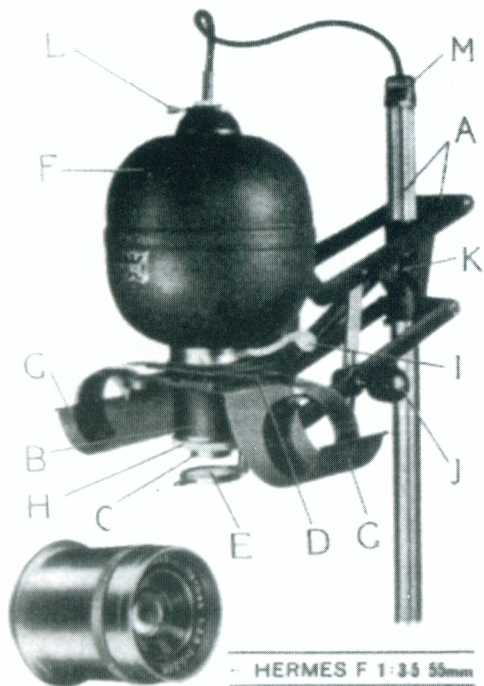
About a month ago a very reputable London dealer phoned me at work asking to pick my brains. "Peter what do you know about a Nikkor "Hermes" enlarging lens?" I gave him the benefit of all my knowledge on Nikkor enlarging lenses, which would fit on the back of a postage stamp. He had just re-

ceived a fax offering one for sale, what's something like this worth?" Long pause on the phone..worth maybe a right arm and a few fingers from the left hand! I dreamed the whole day of adding this to my collection. The gods had just been good to me with a Stereo-Nikkor. Twice in a few months, this would be too much for one person, but live right an help little old ladies across the road in the rain, eat all your vegetables, and don't take candy from a stranger! Who would have known it does work!

About ten days later I went to a camera fair in Belgium. A collector who shall remain nameless came to my table and asked, "are you interested in a Hermes lens"? What? You mean a Nikkor Hermes EL lens? Well, yes! That's the second time in 10 days that I've been offered a Hermes lens. Are these things being made in Poland, or grown on trees? Of course, I would be interested! Within seconds I was holding a Hermes lens! He said he had offered it to a London dealer that week just to find out a price, but I was going to sell it to you because of your writing in NHS-46. I paid his price and both parties were happy. The main thing was I had it!

That day there must have been six NHS members present, a mini-convention. I was showing off my jewel, me the proud owner of a Nikon Hermes lens. This is a really very rare Nikon item. Not just a rare lens, but a lens of historical importance. This is one of the first items made by Nippon Kogaku for sale to the general public. Interest amongst the six NHS members ran from total indifference to "that's nice". I had put my lens behind my glass display case and gone off for a walk. I returned with a new victim, another chance to show off my lens. I reached into my display case only to find it gone! My Hermes lens was gone! I froze! I looked around only to see my brother-in-law Jaap Kortten laughing with a few others at my expense! I'll get him back for that! Never mind, he has his cross to bear for he collects Olympus!

The first time I remember hearing about the Hermes enlarging lens was from one of the original "gang of four" Nikon collectors, Burt Rubin. Burt had been involved in helping sell the famous Canon collection of Peter Dechert. Burt tells the story of a group of Japanese at Dechert's house, a deal being struck and closed with a handshake. The bulk of the

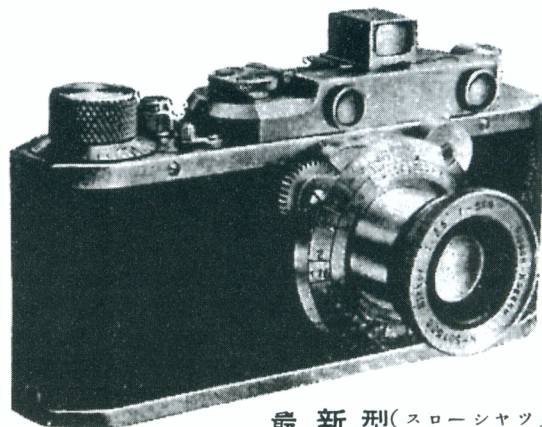


HERMES F 1:3.5 55mm

Some "vintage" Japanese ads for the Canon camera, the Seiki enlarger and its "HERMESLENS". Note that the Canons can only be had with various Nikkor normals! The missing click-stop bracket mentioned in the text can be seen here.



新標準型 Canon



最新型(スローシャッター付)

Nikkor	1:2.....	¥ 550
"	1:2.8.....	¥ 480
"	1:3.5.....	¥ 395

新標準型

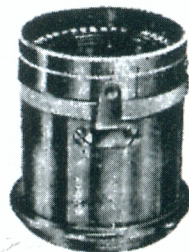
Nikkor	1:3.5.....	¥ 380
"	1:4.5.....	¥ 330

セイキ高級引伸機用

HERMESLENS

レンズ HERMES F=5.5cm 1:3.5

日本光学工業株式會社に於て 35mm 判引伸専用設計製作された四枚組合セツサー型の最高性能を有する最高級優秀レンズにして絞りは暗中使用の便に改良してあります。



HERMES LENS F=5.5cm
1:3.5

ヘルメス鏡玉はそのまゝライカ引伸機にも使用出来ます。

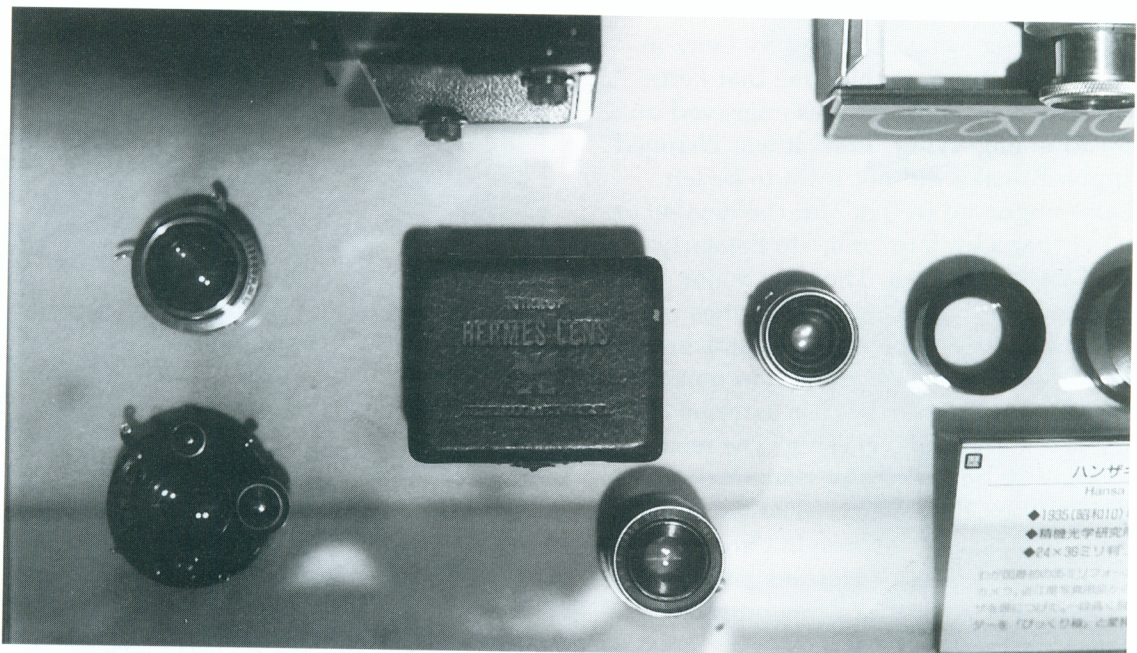
——カタログ御請求下さい——

東京・目黒 精機光学工業株式會社 中根 昭三





The two upper photos and the two bottom shots on page 2 are of Peter's Hermes lens #597. I doubt that I would have had the courage to disassemble this lens if it had been mine, but fearless Lownds has done just that! Actually, looking at these photos one gets the feeling that this is not a complicated piece, but a very straight forward design with not much in the way of fancy frills. Just your good work horse enlarging lens. Below is a grab-shot of the Hermes lens that is on display at the JCII Museum in Tokyo. We were given a private showing on Sunday during NHS-Con5 and were allowed to browse through the Museum at our leisure.



collection would be shipped to Tokyo via UPS, but he would hand carry the very rare items. Among them was the only known Hermes enlarging lens in its case. The journey to Tokyo started on a four seater plane. The pilot would not allow Burt to hold onto his carry on bag. Sir, your bag's in the back of the plane, it can't go anywhere. It's six feet behind you, but no loose bags in the plane! Burt reluctantly gave his bag to the pilot. After a 30 minute flight the plane was back on the ground. Burt got out of the plane and asked the pilot "can I have my bag back please"? It will be brought into the terminal building for you sir! Burt walks the 50 meters to the terminal, but no bag! It took two hours to find his carry on bag! Two hours sweating and a few choice words were heard. His bag was finally found! Those two hours took two years off his life!

The name Hermes comes from Greek mythology. Hermes was the son of Zeus and Maria. He was a messenger of the gods, and a god in his own right. His was defender of the roads and paths, and the protector of travelers.

I had seen pictures of the Hermes lens in a paper given by that great historian, John Baird, at the first Nikon Historical Society Convention in Chicago in 1988. A photo of the same lens had been used in guide a few historical publications about the Canon story. The Hermes enlarging lens was made for the Canon/Hansa sales organization to be sold in combination with the Canon Hansa enlarger. Both the enlarger and the lens were copies of contemporary Leitz items of the day. The lens is a copy of a Leitz Varob 5cm.

The Leitz Varob was a first attempt by Leitz in enlarger lens design. It was at this time that Leitz changed the way the focal length was engraved on the lens. Instead of engraving "mm" it was changed to "cm". Nippon Kogaku did not want to be left behind and also engraved in "cm" for the next 40 or so years. Leitz canged back to "mm" in the early sixties, as did Nippon Kogaku. The only major difference between the Varob and the Hermes is that the Leitz lens was calibrated in relative exposure values, while the Hermes was engraved in normal F stops. We can see that the Hermes has external click stops. My click stop bracket is missing. The next Varob I locate will be butchered for that small, but most important, little F stop clicker. The Varob finish is nickel while the Hermes has a bright chrome finish. The reward for finding a Hermes must be worth unscrewing and removing a few hundred enlarging lenses at camera shows.

The serial number on my lens is only 3 digits. This throws a wrench into the works with regards to the Nikon numbering system. The Dechert Hermes lens is #55498, which, if we use a little bit of Nikon logic, the "55" is the 5.5cm and the next two digits are the aperture 3.5. So the first lens would have been #5535, which would make the Dechert lens the 465th made. But my lens has a three digit number? So now we have to go back to the start and rethink the numbering system. Was this the first type, or was it a question of forgetting to engrave the first two digits so my lens could be #55594?

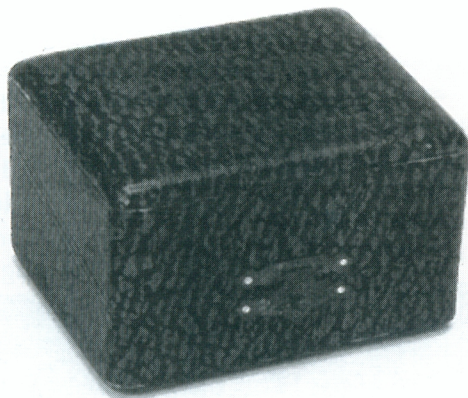
On one of the better days in my life, a wet Sunday in Tokyo, we travelled by metro to the JCII Museum. I can still remember drooling in front of all those glass display cases at cutaway after cutaway, and in the bottom of a large case a huge 120cm f/7 Nikkor made for a 4x5 plate camera (they must have needed six Japanese just to lift it onto the tripod. This lens is "seriously big"! In one display case were three of the lenses Rubin had hand carried on that small 4 seater plane. The story had come full circle. I remember that showcase well, the Mona Lisa has the same effect on art lovers!

I have looked through the "75 Years of Nikon" book, very little mention of the Hermes enlarging lens, only that it was made in 1936 at the same as the lenses for the very early Hansa Canons. Very little is mentioned in other books. Robert Rotoloni tells me that he has three Hermes lenses recorded to date besides mine. They are lenses #5555, 55447 & 55498. Does anyone out there know of any others? Bob looks forward to receiving a few Hermes lens numbers for his database.





Along with Peter's lens we have a page from Hayato Ueyama's famous Canon book. Ueyama-san is the premier Canon collector in Japan and his collection is awesome. I can attest to this because in 1989 I spent a delightful afternoon at his home near Osaka where he showed us everything, including this very lens. I can still remember opening that case. This was the very first Hermes I had ever seen!



エルメスレンズ元箱



6 ZUNOW OR NIKKOR?

by Roger Swan

It is with feelings of great sympathy for Tony Hurst and Peter Lownds for the storage problems that they must experience with all their enormous f1.1 Nikkors, that I am prompted to write this. I am in the fortunate position of not having to have risked damage to the mount of a rangefinder Nikon by being tempted to use such a cumbersome piece of glass on my cameras. Being stuck in a comparative backwater, I have never owned, or in fact, even seen one so far.

However, I was fortunate enough to acquire a Zunow 5cm/f1.1 a short time ago which would seem, in light of what Peter wrote in NHS-40, to be a rather more user friendly optic than the internal mount Nikkor. It is considerably smaller and balances nicely on the SP. Additionally, it fits the internal mount very snugly with no play at all. The filter size appears to be 54mm or possibly 55mm, with a non-standard pitch. I have not got around to measuring this yet. I have not tested it as yet, but the two films which I have put through it indicate that it is better than my Canon 50mm/f0.95 but not as good as the F1.0 Leitz Noctilux, which is not surprising, as the Leica lens is pretty well current state of the art.

I am enclosing a couple of shots of the lens together with some pictures taken with it. I hope this does not brand me a traitor to the cause! Until I am lucky enough to find a Nikkor f1.1, I shall have to make do with what I have!

From the comparison shot with a Nikkor 5cm/f1.4, it can be seen that the Zunow has a "C" engraved on the mount which indicates that it was intended to be used on a Contax. With the internal mount lenses this makes no difference, as the photos taken in the local bistro with an SP show quite well.

The photo of the Zunow with three other high speed "normal" lenses which I have show that it compares very favorably with them as regards size, though for Nikon to have managed a 52mm filter size on the Nock-Nikkor must rate as a remarkable achievement.

My 5cm/f1.4 Nikkors range in weight from 206 grams for a chrome version (#321745) to 142 grams for a black one (#409569). The Zunow weighs in at 335 grams, which would seem to be considerably lighter than the Nikkor f1.1 lens.

I am afraid I can provide no information as to history of either the Nikkor or the Zunow so I am looking forward to reading future Journals.





Some comparison views of the F1.1 Zunow. Above photo vividly illustrates the Zunow's size next to the familiar F1.4 Nikkor. Note the very similar layout and design of these two lenses. Do you think that Zunow was trying to win over some Nikon users? Below we have the Zunow grouped with some other super fast lenses. Clockwise from the upper left: Canon 0.95, Noct-Nikkor 1.2, Leitz Noctilux 1.0, Zunow 1.1. As you can see, the Zunow is the "runt" of the litter.





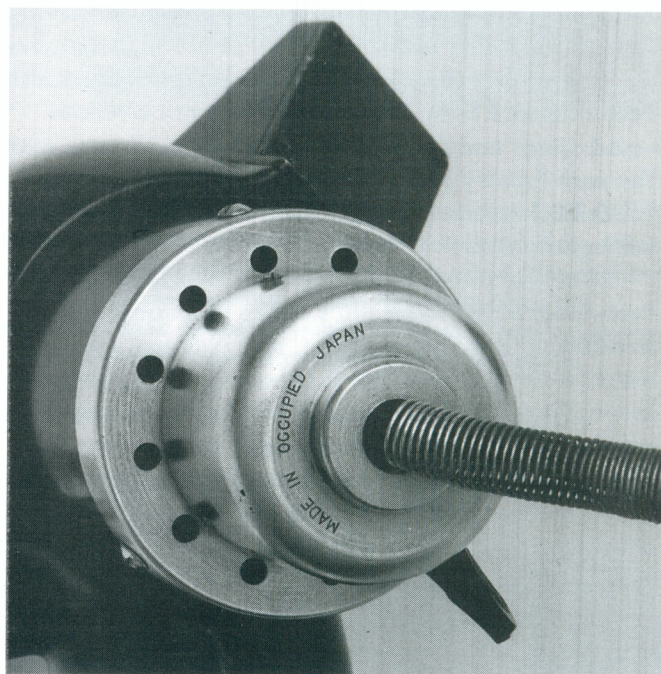
Roger Swan used his Zunow to take some available light shots at his local bistro. Not bad for a lens designed in the early fifties without the aid of computers or modern ED type glass. Actually, if handled correctly, a very usable lens. Later lenses were made with a black barrel. (Photos Roger Swan)



MORE MIOJ 50 YEARS LATER



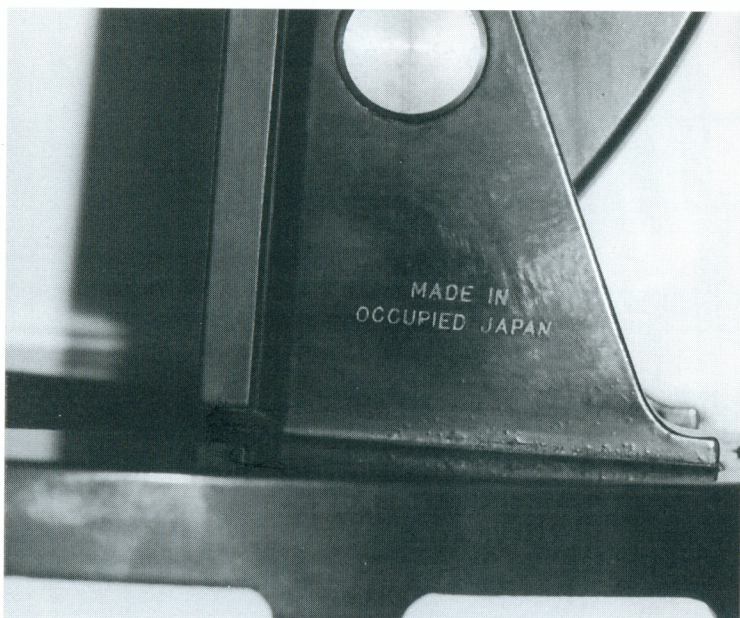
Above..Now would be a good time to look away if you are a little faint at heart. I had to take the focus mount to bits to be able to show you the "MIOJ" engraving on this quite rare 135/f4.0 Nikkor. This engraving is very difficult to see under normal circumstances but it's there.



Above two photos..Here we have a Vertexometer brought in by the very first U.S. Nikon Importer, the Overseas Finance & Trading Co. (O.F.I.T.R.A.) of San Francisco. The "MIOJ" is engraved in large letters around the lamphouse. This Vertexometer came my way because an NHS member had read about it in the Journal.

Left..On what other instrument has "Made In Occupied Japan" been engraved? Don't know? Well, you will have to wait for the next Nikon Historical Society Journal. Watch these pages.

(All photos..Peter Lownds)



A UNIQUE

by William Fraker

UNDERWATER
HOUSING!!

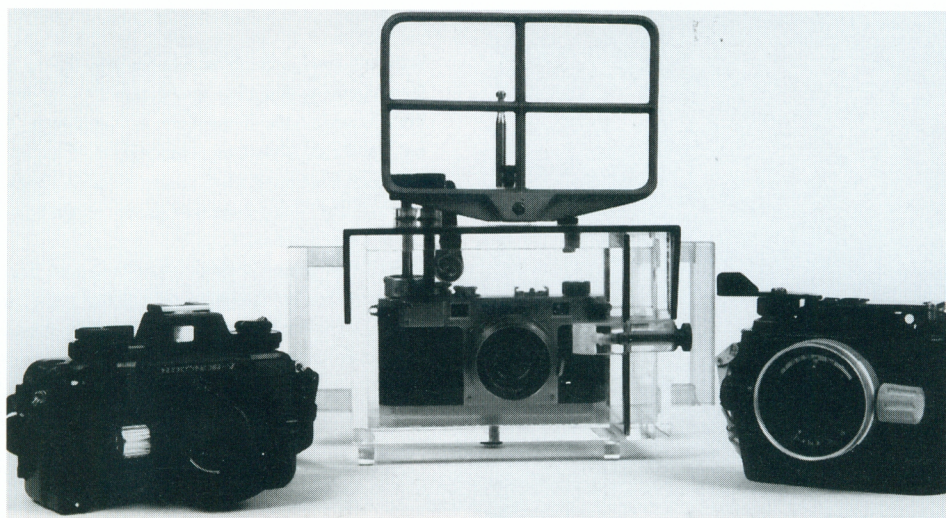
In the early years of the NHS, one of our more active members was Bill Fraker. Sadly, Bill was afflicted with Lou Gerig's disease which caused his untimely death in his thirties. Up until he could no longer talk on the phone, Bill and I kept in touch on a regular basis, exchanging information and ideas about Nikons. After his death his wife informed me that Bill wanted the NHS to receive his photo inventory so that some of the interesting items he had come across would not be lost to the society. One of the items included in his photo archives was an underwater housing designed to be used with the Nikon M and S models. Now this is not a Nikon-made item nor does it even remotely compare with the rare factory model we so exhaustively covered in NHS-52, but it is an interesting piece and well worth taking a look at.

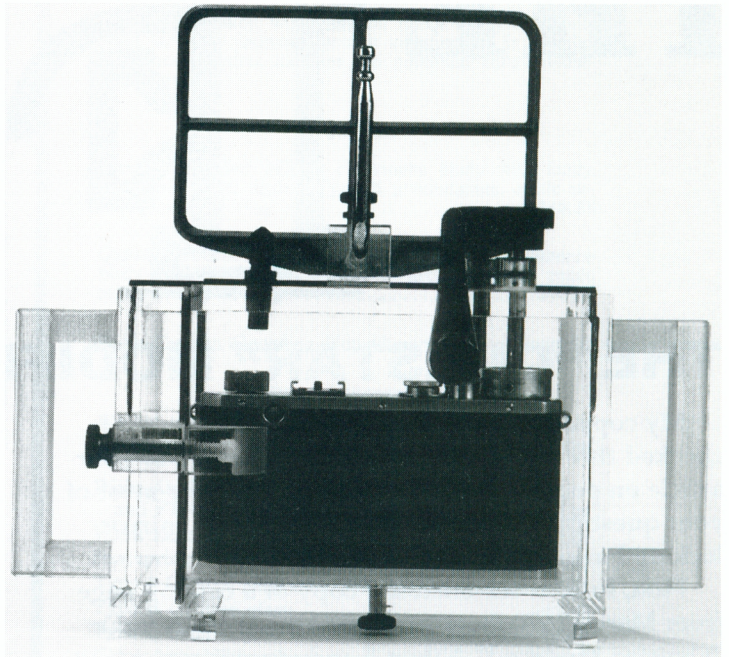
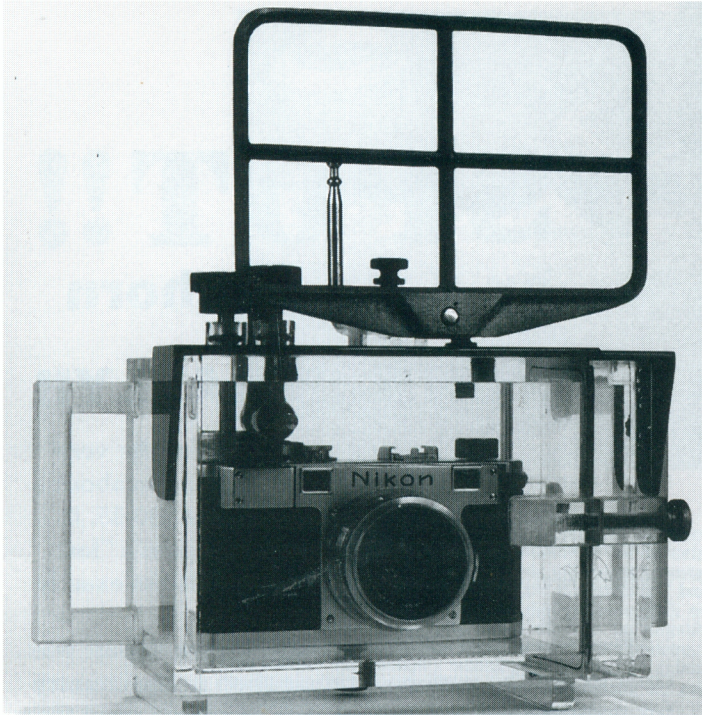
From the photos it can be seen that it is basically a box constructed from thick lucite with protruding handles, a large framefinder, and external knobs used to control winding & focusing, plus a release lever. There does not appear to be any controls present that would allow the user to change either the shutter speeds, or the lens aperture. They must be set before submersion. My guess would be that most lenses would be used wide open to gather sufficient light, and a set shutter speed of maybe 1/60sec, was adequate for most shooting.

Obviously this is a rather crude item compared to the Nikon-made housing. However, for casual underwater photography it is quite usable. We do not know to what depth it could be used nor do I see any way of attaching a flash unit. But whoever made this piece probably only needed the features that are present.

This unit is unique to the Nikon M/S models and would not work on later lever wind Nikons, nor would it work on a Contax, as the shutter release position is different than that of the Nikon. So it appears that whoever made this underwater housing made it only for use with the early knob wind Nikons!

I am sure that if Bill had lived he would have been a consistent contributor to the Journal. He had many ideas for articles, some of which we discussed when he was still capable. However, the last time I spoke to him on his speaker-phone, he informed me that he no longer had the strength to depress the shutter release on his Nikons! I guess we all should count our blessings.

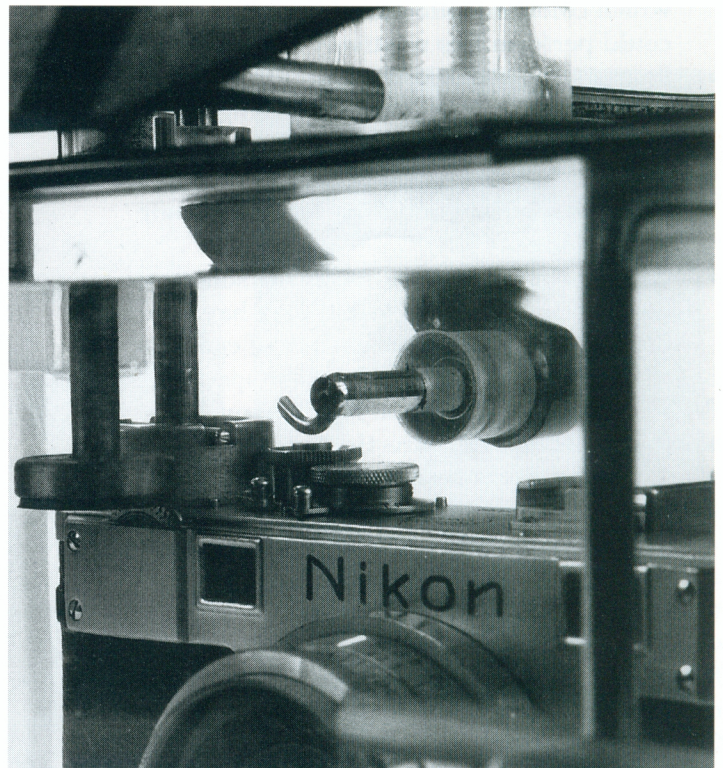
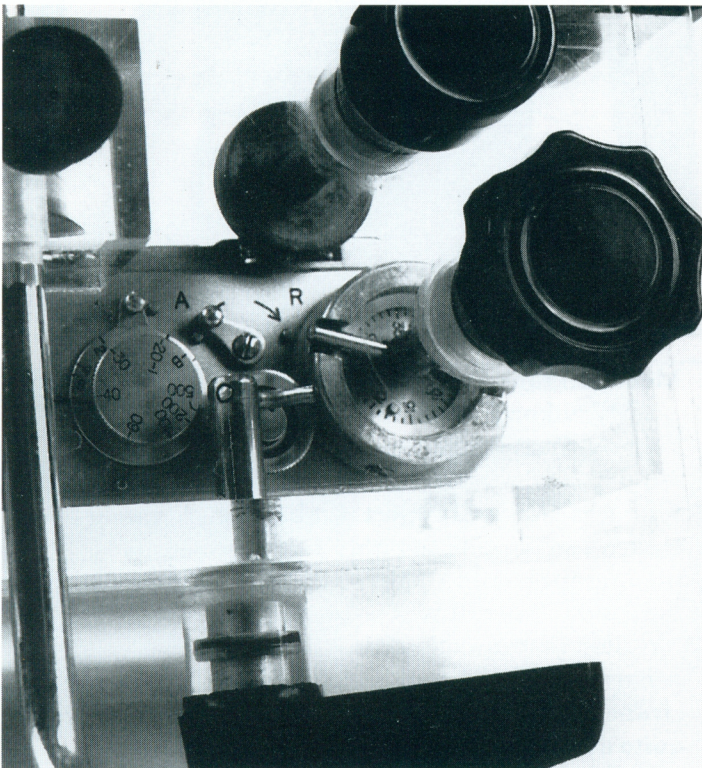




As you can see this underwater housing lacks any name or model. It appears to be homemade but it is obvious that not only did the maker know what he was doing, he also built it for a specific model, in this case the Nikon I/M/S series. The top two photos illustrate that this housing is comprised of a main body box, hand holds on either side and a large frame finder on top. A straight forward logical arrangement. It is the control layout that is interesting. Below can be seen the controls for

the focusing wheel, shutter wind and shutter release. All three controls are large and easy to grip. Note that the wind control will only fit the knob wind Nikons but the focusing ring control would fit all models. The shutter release probably would as well. There is no way to adjust shutter speed or lens aperture. This is probably a one of a kind item.

(All photos Bill Fraker)



THE "QUESTAR" MODIFIED NIKON F..FINALLY!!

My copy of NHS-55 arrived yesterday and as I checked through it my attention was drawn to your article on pages 4 & 5. I believe I can answer most of your questions regarding Nikon F's with a mirror lock up button.

First, look at the enclosed copy of a catalog page from March 1970 Questar literature. There is your "Questar-Modified" Nikon F and, as you can see, it is exactly the same as the camera shown in your photos at the top of page 5! During the late 60's and early 70's, Questar recommended and sold Nikon F cameras for use with their telescopes. Beginning in the late 70's and most of the 80's they abandoned Nikon and went to the Olympus OM series of cameras. I'm not sure what they are "pushing" these days. I cannot say who actually made this particular modification, but I can suggest 3 possibilities.

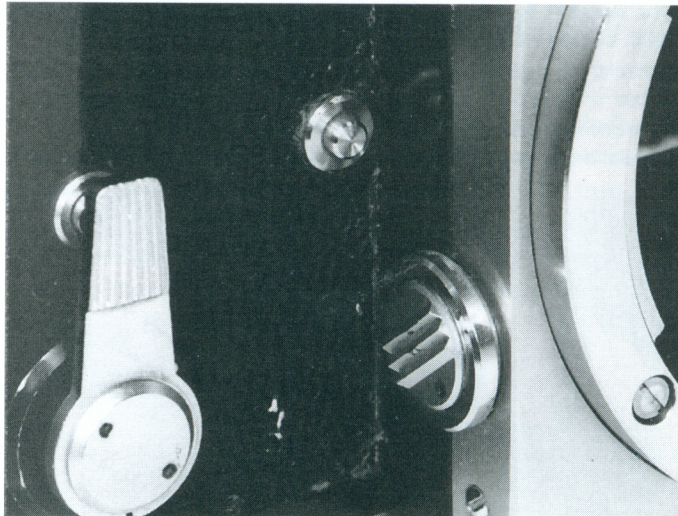
- Perhaps they did it in-house. Certainly a firm which could manufacture a complex telescope could perform this relatively simple mod.
- Since Questar was actually selling Nikon F's at the time, they were certainly buying them through the sole importer-EPOI-in New York. Perhaps they made arrangements with EPOI to have the modification done by their repair technicians in New York.
- Or, finally, in return for ordering some specific number of cameras, Questar may have, through EPOI, arranged to have a batch of cameras modified by the factory for their specific use.

Perhaps, as President of the N.H.S., you might be able to get the answer directly from Questar. After all, this is a matter of history, not a proprietary matter at this time. (Karl, I shall try. RJR)

Now, as to the other type of modification shown in your article (the little plunger installed in the lens mount frame), I have the answer to that. Without any doubt this particular modification was done by Marty Forscher, who for many years owned and operated Professional Camera Repair in New York City. How do I know? In the late 60's I sent my own

black Nikon F (SN 6434829) to Marty for the very same modification! He had it back to me in about a week and as I recall the cost was about \$30-35. It works beautifully-much better than Nikon's "lost frame" method. My modified camera looks exactly like your photos.

For many years Professional Camera Repair was considered the very best repair shop in the country for professional equipment. For 20 years I used them exclusively for Nikon CLA and other repair work. I assume they are still in business. The last address I had was: 37 West 47th St., NY, NY 10036.



Member Frank Wikle sent this letter....

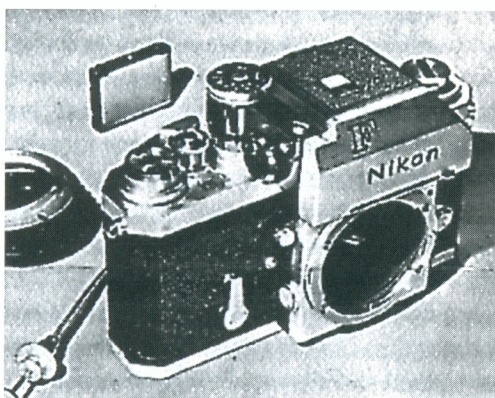
My Nikon F #6487739 has the neatly installed "auto-up" mirror button as mentioned and illustrated in your article. It is also surprisingly easy to hit when you least expect it. I bought the camera from a teacher whose father was a professional photographer and I didn't know about the button until a day later. It was so neatly and professionally installed that it really didn't bother me and resale wasn't the object of my purchasing it. Pete Smith cleaned the camera 3 years ago and I shoot with it quite a bit.

THE QUESTAR-MODIFIED NIKON



The Nikon F and Accessories

The Questar-modified Nikon F is one of the most satisfactory cameras we have discovered for securing sharp negatives at *all* shutter speeds with your Questar. The secret is in its wonderfully light titanium foil ball-bearing shutter, which opens so smoothly it does not move the sharply focused cones of rays on negative during exposure, and in the Questar modification, a tiny button (see arrow) which permits you to release the mirror before exposure, thus eliminating all mirror-slap vibration.



The Nikon F with FTN Meter

This is the Nikon with the new metering system built right into the interchangeable viewfinder. It enables the photographer to have an accurate through-the-lens reading.

Price List

Questar-modified Nikon F camera body with body cap, waist level finder, Type B groundglass, cable release, adapter ring\$248.55

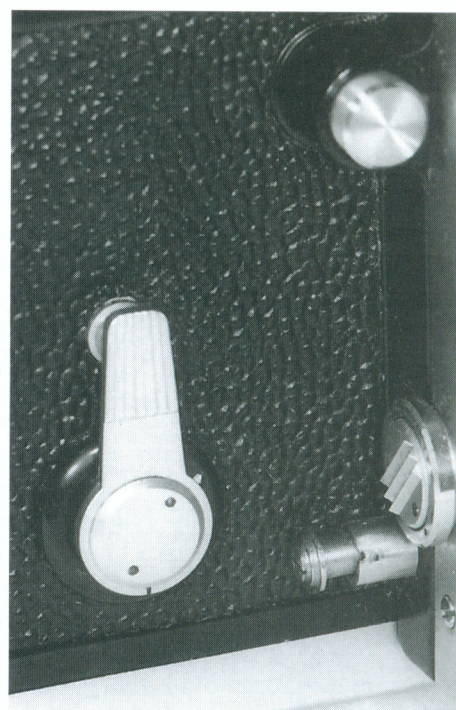
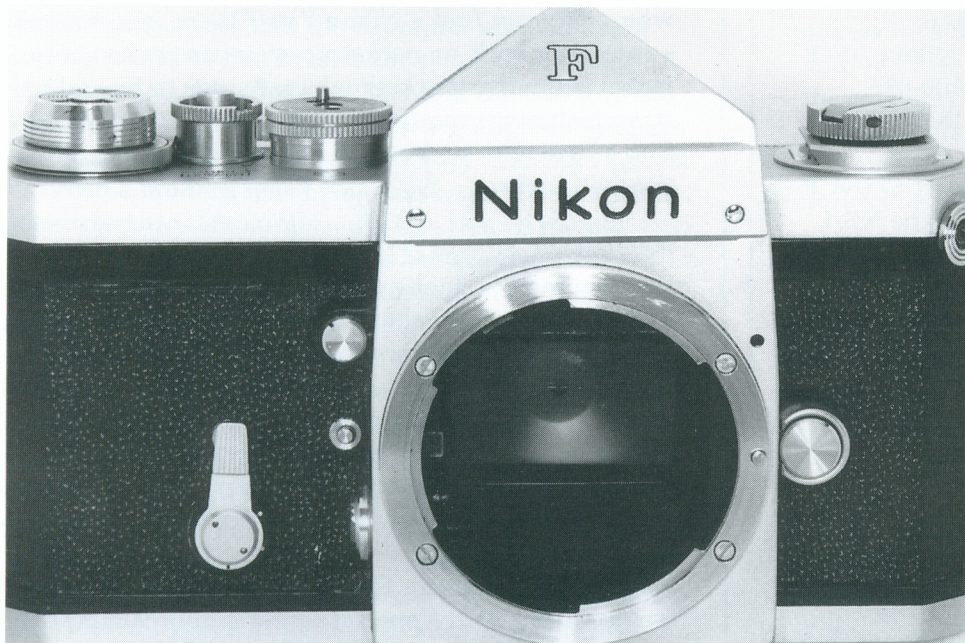
Questar-modified Nikon F with FTN Meter, camera body with body cap, Type B ground glass, cable release, adapter ring 345.55

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TAKING AVAILABLE LIGHT PHOTOS WITH YOUR NIKON

PART III..FITTING OUT A NIKON F/F2 & AN INTRODUCTION TO LENS CHOICES

by Alan Morris

FITTING OUT A NIKON F OR F2.....

A long established rule of hand-held photography with 35mm cameras is that the minimum shutter speed is equal to the reciprocal of the focal length of the lens being used. For cameras smaller than 35mm, faster shutter speeds would be required than those stated by the 35mm rule and, conversely, for larger format cameras slower shutter speeds would be allowable. What is the approximate weight of a Nikon F2 when ideally configured for available light photography?

- F2 with DE-1 finder, type "A" focusing screen, AR-1 soft push, neck-strap rings & ring protectors, and roll of film (no batteries): 29 ounces
- Bottom half of hard leather case: 5 ounces
- 105mm Nikkor, UVa filter & hood: 17.5 ounces
- Total weight (see footnote 1): 51.5 ounces

This total weight of 51.5 ounces=4 pounds, 4.5 ounces makes for a very hefty 35mm camera indeed, closer in weight, in fact, to that of a larger format camera with lens. The bottom half of the hard leather case not only adds weight but also affords better camera gripping and protection. Thus while the hand-held rule would say that the minimum shutter speed would be, for this combination, 1/105, or closely 1/125th second, the user with steady hands should be able to successfully hand hold and shoot at the F2 synch speed (1/90th) or even more slowly at 1/60th second.

In the accompanying photograph of an F2 with the DE-1 finder, the following items are shown:

- a) Soft Push for shutter release button, Nikon AR-1
- b) Neckstrap rings (2), Nikon Part #1K100-035
- c) Neckstrap ring covers, Nikon Part #1K080-005
- d) Bottom half of hard leather case
- e) Wide fabric neckstrap, Nikon NS-1, part 673NCP

While the neckstrap rings and covers, and the NS-1 neckstrap are all items currently available, the AR-1 soft push and the bottom of the hard case must be found on the used market. I have seen at used camera shows boxes of cheap imitation-looking soft pushes, while real Nikon AR-1's are as hard to find as hens' teeth. The soft push screwed down around the F/F2's shutter release makes the Nikon's release action nearly akin to the smoothness of a Leica screw mount or M camera. The soft push fulfills its intermediary role between the surface of the actual shutter release and the first finger of the right hand by spreading the shutter release force over a larger area, thus lowering the actual pressure needed to release the shutter.

Having had 45 years' experience with both screw mount and M Leicas, I can state that the mechanical shutter release of these cameras is without parallel. Not only does the soft push bring the release action of the Nikon F or F2 into near coincidence with that of the Leicas, but by raising the height of the Nikons' shutter release the soft push corrects what I consider to be the ergonomically incorrect location of the F's shutter release. Smooth shutter release is a key desideratum for successful available light photography.

F2 hard cases marked CH-1, Ch-4 and Ch-5 are separable into a bottom and a top half. But the bottom half of the CH-1, unlike the CH-4 & 5, is furnished with a built-on narrow leather neckstrap, fastened through hinged rings on each end. While this built-on neckstrap can be used for camera support for available light photography, I prefer the fit and feel of the camera in a case bottom with no built-on strap but where the wide fabric strap is fastened with proper rings to the camera's strap lugs. In available light photography, you often may want to cinch up the neckstrap to tighten your grasp of the camera to your body, your face and arms in a steadying action; the wide fabric strap works well in such an effort, but the slick, narrow leather built-on strap does not work as well. These comments about built-on neckstraps apply also to Nikon F hard cases. F and F2 cases are not interchangeable. If, on the used market, the only place where you can find a Nikon F or F2 case, you find only a case with built-on neckstrap, you can try a shoemaker or leather pocketbook craftsman to have the strap fastenings removed. If on the other hand, you find a case with no built-on neckstrap, consider yourself lucky.

INTRODUCTION TO LENS CHOICES....

Graininess of high speed black and white film, camera shake, slow shutter speed, subject motion and inexact focus are factors that act to soften available light images. While these softening or blurring effects might work to the detriment of photographs of babies or young children, the vast majority of adults will truly welcome less-than-acute sharp photos of themselves. One does not have to be a Ph.D in the Obvious to realize the truth of this postulate. Then, there are lenses and accessories that purposefully act to soften images. Leica sold a special screw-mount 90mm/f2.2 modest telephoto called the "Thambar", from 1935 to

1949. The Thambar was designed for soft focus portraiture using a special filter with silvered center spot; this filter blocked out the more crucial-focus axial rays and allowed through the outer marginal rays. A scan through the sales ads of any edition of "Shutterbug" will show that Thambars WITH their special filters sell in the thousands of dollars. A recent ad of Spiratone featured a 100mm/f4.0 lens of fixed aperture designed for soft focus portraiture that can be purchased at a low cost to fit most popular SLRs'. So, soft focus portraiture is still "in". If, for example, a tripod and fine grain film are used in conjunction with an otherwise sharp lens, soft focus effects can still be achieved with filters made by Zeiss called "Softars"; increasing softening effects are obtained with Softar I, II and III, and combinations of Softar I+II, I+III and II+III. Nikon also makes soft focus filters: No.1 and No. 2 (in 52mm, Product #s 2407 and 2408).

There is a new aspect issue on lens sharpness or, rather, lack of sharpness called, "Bokeh", a Japanese term where the characters "bo" and "ke" mean "out-of-focus blur". The May/June 1997 issue of the professional photographic journal "PHOTO TECHNIQUES" (see Footnote 2) presents a unique Primer Series on Japanese Bokeh. This is a current concern of Japanese photographers in dealing with the issue of image sharpness. Some lenses demonstrate Bokeh qualities while others do not. Bokeh relates to the qualities a particular lens gives to objects in front of and in back of the plane of focus. The Bokeh question is: To what degree are these out-of-focus-plane objects still recognizable for what they are in the final print? As an example of Bokeh, study the photograph in my Part II in NHS-55 on page 11. The 35mm focal length lens, opened to f2.8, was focused at the picture plane of the seven women standing in a line perpendicular to the lens axis. Note that the drummer and his drum located about 10 feet behind the plane of focus are both recognizable. But note also that the hair and hat of the roast honoree in the lower right foreground are recognizable though he's seated very near my camera.

With a modern lens being marketed whose optical characteristics are supposedly like that of the old soft-focus Thambar, with Zeiss Softars available to create soft-focus effects when mounted on renowned ultra-sharp Zeiss Contax lenses, with Nikon selling soft-focus filters for portraiture, and, with Japanese photographers, living in the very land famous for computer-designed lenses of ultimate sharpness, concerning themselves with Bokeh unsharpness qualities and appreciations, then why do all the camera makers' ads hawk the qualities of their lenses as being so extraordinary in sharpness and contrast?

Obviously, a portion of the camera advertising is overblown hype, stating one make is sharper, or contrastier, than other makes. This advertising is akin

to claims for the superiority of one make of automobile over another, for factors such as cornering ability and time for zero to 60mph.

In years gone by, lens resolution testing was accomplished with a test setup using resolution bar charts supplied by the National Bureau of Standards (NBS). The sets of test charts, which were precision printed both in high and low contrast versions, were set up on a wall in a plane perpendicular to the axis of the test lens at a distance equal to a fixed multiple of the lens' focal length. The charts would be arranged across the field of view of the test lens in horizontal, vertical and diagonal rows. The camera would be mounted on a heavy duty tripod and loaded with fine grain black and white film. Photographs of the wall array of NBS charts were taken at all f-stops. The film was developed and then studied under a low power microscope. The results of each exposure at a given f-stop were read out as the finest set of bars that could be cleanly noted on each NBS chart imaged in the exposure. For example, the test record might show: f/2, 50 lines/mm on axis; 25 lines/mm at the edge. As the sensing medium for the test was photographic film, variables in the lens test results could arise due to factors such as film storage & development, and these variables could effect the results from test to test at the same facility or from one facility to another.

Today, lens optical performance is evaluated with electronic sensing in the focal plane of the test lens. The results for resolving power and object-to-image contrast ratios are presented as graphs of Modulation Transfer Function ("MTF"). Zeiss lenses for Contax are individually tested on the Zeiss MTF machines and the MTF graphs are packaged with each lens. Thus technology abounds for precise testing of the lens resolving power and contrast; "sharpness" is an imprecise subjective term promoted by advertisers and by those who are unaware of or choose to ignore the existence of methods for precision testing of photographic lenses.

Taking under consideration these multiple factors of soft focus, Bokeh, resolving power and contrast, we can see that for purposes of portraiture by available light, we can be happy indeed with our old, all-mechanical, but functional Nikon F and F2 cameras and with Nikkor lenses that are of the same era.

In addition to the inverse-of-focal-length hand-hold time rule for 35mm cameras presented at the beginning of this Part III, there is another rule of great importance to available light photography, and this second rule is one of optics for lenses. It is....

- Independent of the focal length of the lens, as long as the scale of the object is maintained constant, at a given f-stop, the depth-of-field will be the same. Understanding of the rule will provide you assistance in deciding what focal length lens to use for what

application. For example, let us suppose that we use every lens at $f/2.8$ for taking available light photographs, adjusting only the shutter speed to control exposure. Then take as an approximation to the height of a human head a length of a 12" ruler and imagine that we will take a series of photos of a 12" ruler held perpendicular to the lens axis, using a series of lenses: 35/50/85/105 and 135mm. If, with each lens, we arrange the setup so that the 12" ruler extends completely across the focusing screen, then the depth of field will be the same for all of these lenses under these circumstances.

In Part IV I will further discuss the choice of lenses to be used in available light photography, by making applications of the rules discussed in this article.

Footnote 1: In calculating the total weight of the F2, the weight of the wide fabric strap has been neglected. This is because some of its weight is borne by the photographer and by the camera's neckstrap lugs.

Footnote 2: PHOTO TECHNIQUES, published every other month by Preston Pubs., Div. of Preston Industries, Inc., 6600 West Touhy, Niles, IL 60714-4588.

Footnote 3: This rule of optics strictly holds true only for near objects, the distances we are interested in in available light photography. At these shorter distances the depth of field depends only on the scale of reproduction and the f-stop number. You can study the actual depth of field tables for each lens, and make comparisons between several lenses at the same f-stop and at the same size fields of coverage.



Nikon F2 configured as described in the text.

My grandson at age 6 trying his very best to hit 1000 strokes in 20 minutes on a Health Rider exercise machine. His determination is reflected in the set of his jaw! This photo was taken with an F2 with 85/1.8 Nikkor and Tri-X film rated at EI800, with window light into the room, metered at EV5, for an exposure of $f/1.8$ at $1/60$ th second. The $1/60$ th shutter speed was not brief enough to stop his arm motion. This was an available light test photo taken before I moved to Kodak TMZ film using EI ratings of 1,600 and higher. (Photos Alan Morris)



THE LATEST AUCTION NEWS!!

There is currently quite a bit of activity on the photographic auction scene, with Nikon playing an ever increasingly prominent role alongside that perennial "king of the auction", Leica. Two recent events illustrate the continued increase in both the volume and quality of Nikon equipment (both RF and reflex) that is appearing on the international auction blocks.

First up is the recent Tamarkin Photographica sale held in New York City May 24th. This was Stan Tamarkin's second installment of what is currently the major, if not only, photographic auction being held on a regular basis here in the United States. You will remember the insert sheet in NHS-55 from Stan offering our members a free catalog for the May auction. I hope many of you took advantage of his offer, if for no other reason than to keep in touch with what is being offered and at what prices. He sent me a report on this latest effort:

- Tamarkin Photographica's second rare camera auction, held in New York on May 24th was a huge success. Collectors and dealers from all over the world gathered to purchase for a total of \$350,000 a mix of camera rarities including Leica, Nikon RF, Alpa, Rolleiflex, Zeiss Contarex and Contax. The auction attracted international collectors and dealers from Germany, Japan, China, Korea, Hong Kong, Switzerland and Austria, and, of course, America.
- Highlights of the auction were a chrome Leica MP (\$23,000); black Leica M3 (\$9400); Leica M4 MOT with motor (8550). Among the Nikon RF gear there was a near mint SP in its original box (\$4200); S36 motor drive (\$3000); reflex housing type one (\$3500); Model S Repro kit (\$2000); 50mm/f1.1 Nikkor (\$2500); and a 35mm Mini Finder (\$900).
- Tamarkin Photographica's second auction, following the success last October of the Tucson sale, clearly demonstrates the demand in the USA market for an auction house specializing in photographic rarities.
- Tamarkin's next auction will again be held in New York City on October 31, 1997.

Stan has written me to announce to the members of the NHS that his offer of a free catalog for the October sale is still in effect! Write to the following address: Tamarkin Photographica, Dept. K,

198 Amity Rd, Woodbridge, CT 06525. He also said that part of the success of this sale was the interest in Nikon RF equipment! He asked that I encourage my members to give up some of their excess pieces for the October auction so that he can continue to have a good showing of Nikon!

By the time you read this the June 12th Christie's auction will be history. Nikon has been well represented at these London sales the last few years and this time is no exception. Included in the sale are: Nikon I 609242; Nikon M #6093236; and black S2 #6157569 w/f1.1 Nikkor! In addition are other RF items as well as reflex. Nikons are now present in nearly every Christie's auction and interest in them is very high.

I've said it before in these pages, and I'll say it again. Subscribe to these auction catalogs if for no other reason than to keep in touch with things! Besides Tamarkin & Christie's, I've also told you about Auction Team Koln in Germany. All three produce finely illustrated catalogs that are great reference sources. Check it out!!!!

A NEW NIKON BOOK (LEICA TOO!)

Member Patrice-Herve Pont has released three new titles in his ever growing list of publications! Two of them are of interest to the NHS. First is a small pamphlet (he calls it a "Fotofiche") on the 50mm normals made for the reflex Nikons. And I mean all of them! With photos, formulas, dates, and serial numbers, he lists every f2, f1.8, f1.4 and f1.2 Nikkor made, as well as the Micros, GN, and Noct-Nikkors. His Fotofiches sell for 25 French Francs.

The big news is "Nikon Saga", a neat little 80 page reference book that lists all Nikon cameras from the Model I to the F5. Each is illustrated with a small photo, dates of production, serial numbers, points of identification, and variations. "Nikon Saga" serves as a convenient reference that does not try to cover everything, but works as a short, to the point, guide to the camera models. It could come in very handy while browsing camera stores and flea markets.

The third item is called "Leica Saga" and, as the name implies, does for the Leica what the above volume does for the Nikon. Even though I am not a Leica "collector", I am, like so many others, always a Leica "looker". All three items are available direct at: Fotosaga, Flassy, F-58420 Neuilly, France for 90 French Francs. Fax..03-86-29-05-07.

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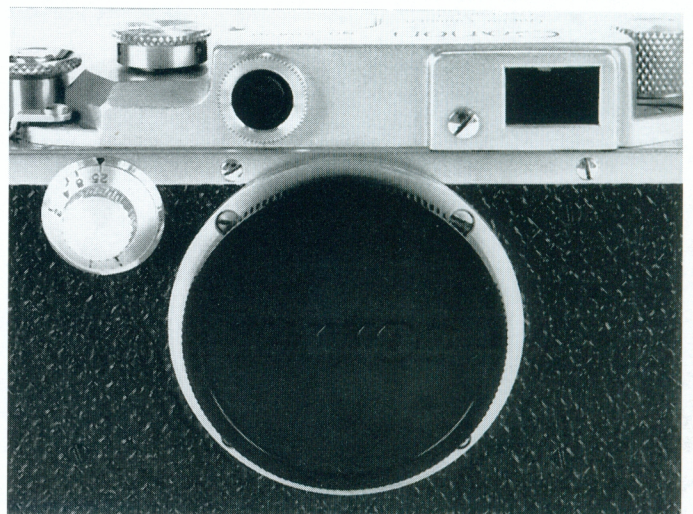
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odds 'n ends

SOME "WEIRD" CAPS!!!

Two rather wierd little items were also amongst the Fraker photos. One made by Nikon, the other not. But I have never seen any others besides these. First is an item that must have been made by Nikon but really obscure. Made of black plastic, it is embossed with the word "NIKKOR" and on the rear surface only "JAPAN". And what is it you may ask? Well, it's a screw-mount body cap! And here you thought finding the body cap for an SP was hard, try to find this baby! I've never seen one in person!

Next is a homemade rear lens cap for the Micro Nikkor. Now why anyone would go through the trouble to make this thing when the real item was available for a few dollars, I'll never know! It is an elaborate friction-fit metal cap with even a cutout for the locking tab. It's also much deeper than it needs to be. Deep enough to fit an internal mount f1.1.... I wonder if that's what it was made for? (RJR)





Created For The 'NHS' by TONY HURST

NIKON JOURNAL #56-JUNE 30, 1997