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# New Pentax Soft-Focus Lens

With the 85mm f/2.2, soft-not sharp-is beautiful!



ALL PHOTOS BY AUTHORS

## SPECIFICATIONS

**FOCAL LENGTH:** 85mm  
**CONSTRUCTION:** 2 elements in 1 group  
**ANGLE OF VIEW:** 28.5° (diagonal)  
**APERTURE RANGE:** f/2.2. to f/5.6  
**METERING:** Stop-down metering  
**FOCUS RANGE:** 1.9 ft. (0.57m) to infinity  
**MAXIMUM BARREL DIAMETER:** 72mm  
**BARREL LENGTH:** 51.5mm  
**FILTER SIZE:** 49mm  
**WEIGHT:** 8.1 oz. (230g)  
**LIST PRICE:** \$252  
**COMPATIBLE CAMERAS:** Pentax K-mount  
**DISTRIBUTOR:** Pentax Corp., 35 Inverness Drive East, Englewood, CO 80112; telephone (303) 799-8000

ers, we found that distracting backgrounds diffused into a soft, colorful blur. Other flowers seemed to radiate a glow around the edges, enhancing the photos even more.

When photographing people, the flesh tones remained neutral while the soft-focus flare created a dreamlike appearance. When photographing in the studio, we found some difficulty in cutting the flash power down to match the f/2.2 aperture necessary for maximum soft focus. We did find, however, that the modeling lights in many studio strobe units provided more than adequate output for usable shutter speeds. A single TTL flash bounced off the ceiling seemed to work the best.

The lens has brilliant color reproduction. Keep in mind that using a slow ISO film is necessary to be able to use the lens properly in full sunlight, due to the wide aperture of the lens.

Another advantage we discovered with Pentax's soft-focus lens is its ability to focus down to two feet, which makes it ideal for macrophotography and special application copy work. The closer you focus with the lens, the greater the soft-focus effect. So if you have an old portrait or wedding photo and want to give it that soft-focus effect, just put it on a copy stand and photograph it with the Pentax lens at its widest aperture. It also does a great job of covering up the scratches and marks left on photographs by years of handling.

By combining the new soft-focus lens with Pentax's optional extension tubes, you can take soft-focus close-ups or you can use any of Pentax's four accessory rear converters to change the focal length to 120mm and 170mm, as well as varying the speed of the lens. ■

**W**hen a manufacturer introduces a new lens, they will usually brag about its sharpness. Not Pentax, with their SMC soft-focus 85mm f/2.2 lens. They boast that this unusual lens, specifically designed for soft-focus close-ups, landscapes and portraits, is not just not sharp—it's also beautiful!

### FEATURES & DESIGN

When you examine this lens, you will notice there are no rear elements and no aperture linkage, and the extremely large aperture blades are exposed to open air. The front of the lens has only two elements in one group, making it one of the simplest lenses you will ever encounter. These two elements have been positioned to give controlled spherical aberration which, in turn, causes beautiful soft-focus photographs. With lenses of this type, each image point is surrounded by a diffuse halo, giving a simultaneously sharp and soft image.

1. At the maximum setting of f/2.2, the Pentax soft-focus lens produces wide halos around solid-colored objects.

2. At the minimum setting of f/5.6, the lens produces moderate soft-focus but the halo patterns are still evident, especially near strong highlight areas.

3. Wedge-shaped pictogram on aperture ring shows the degree of soft focus attainable at each aperture setting.

The front aperture ring has been designed much larger than the focusing ring, allowing the user to find each control with little difficulty. The top of the aperture ring has an inscribed wedge that indicates the various degrees of the soft-focus image. On the bottom of the lens are the standard f-stop markings. The maximum soft-focus effect is achieved at f/2.2 and the minimum at f/5.6. Even though the f-stop does control depth of field, it is mainly used to control the degree of soft-focus effect.

When stopping the lens down to achieve the desired soft-focus effect, you'll find that there is quite a bit of focus shift. To avoid this, the lens aperture must be stopped down *before* focusing.

### FIELD TEST

Testing this lens in the field was a real dream. We found that the soft-focus flare highlighted the central image and then decreased and merged into the background. When photographing flow-

By Jack & Sue Drafahl