

POLAROID ONEFILM

Can One Film Do It All for the Point-and-Shoot Photographer?

by Jack and Sue Drafaahl

PHOTOGRAPHIC'S USER REPORT

When you hear the name Polaroid, you automatically assume that the conversation will be about one of the many instant films. For the first time in its 50-plus-year history, Polaroid has decided to enter the color negative film market, by introducing its new Polaroid OneFilm.

Polaroid's approach to the negative film market is definitely different than that of other large film manufacturers. Polaroid's research showed that one of the main problems with the film market today is the vast number of films for consumers to choose from. Kodak, for example, has over seven different types of color negative films for the amateur market alone. Many point-and-shoot photographers complained that there were so many choices, they became totally confused. So, Polaroid took a different direction by introducing OneFilm, an ISO 200 film that satisfies just about all shooting situations for the point-and-shoot photographer.

Polaroid had two goals in mind. First, they wanted to become a complete resource for all types of imaging: instant, electronic, and conventional photographic processes. Secondly, Polaroid saw a tremendous increase in point-and-shoot camera sales, and wanted a market share of the estimated 25 billion pictures taken per year projected for the 1990's.

Another new approach Polaroid took was to use a true ISO film speed. Most other manufacturers use higher rated films than actually marked on the box, in order to compensate for any errors in exposure caused by light meters, shutter speed, and apertures. For instance, a color negative film with a marked ISO of 100 is probably 160, and so on. The true ISO of the Polaroid OneFilm is just what is marked on the box: 200. The result is a film latitude of -1 to +3 stops, somewhat less forgiving than many other films on the market.

FIELD TESTS

Field tests showed that the OneFilm has a lower contrast range than many

of its competitors. This is especially useful when taking pictures in full sunlight, where the shadows normally become very dark and hard to see. Most of the point-and-shoot photographers are just concerned with the subject content of the photo and could care



ALL PHOTOS BY AUTHORS

less about contrast range. As commercial film processors, we see many summertime photos of picnics, barbecues, and beach parties go through our print processors. Many of these sentimental photos lose their impact because the high contrast range causes the images lurking in the shadows to be lost forever. Polaroid OneFilm keeps the contrast lower, and the color saturation down, so the picture content has a better chance of survival.

Many professional photographers may find the idea of one film for every shooting situation hard to swallow, but they must understand that this film is designed for point-and-shoot snapshots intent on capturing memories—they are not concerned with contrast curves, spectral sensitivity, or diffuse granularity charts.

Printing tests revealed that OneFilm has a moderate grain pattern, usually associated with the lower-contrast negative films. When we compared the color printing filter packs to other

brand-name films, we found that the OneFilm was about 7-9 points higher in the magenta-yellow. This just means that the one-hour processing labs will have to add another filter pack to their already expanded list of available films printed on their specific machines. Polaroid suggests that they try the pack for 3M film first before setting up a special channel.

Polaroid OneFilm has the standard DX coding on the side of each cassette and will default to ISO 100 when inserted into cameras that will not take DX 200 films. When OneFilm is used in daylight (5500° K) or with flash, the ISO remains at the 200 setting; but when used with tungsten light and an 80A filter, the ISO rating drops to 50. Polaroid recommends a 1.5-stop increase in exposure for exposure times longer than one second to account for reciprocity failure. For exposures over 10 seconds, an additional stop of exposure, 2.5 stops total, must be added to ensure correct image density.

Polaroid OneFilm is compatible with the standard C-41 chemistry and comes in a variety of formats: 135-12 (suggested list price \$3.69), 135-24 (\$4.98), 135-36 (\$6.32), 110-12 (\$3.18), 110-24 (\$4.36), 126-24 (\$4.77), and Disc-15 (\$3.84).

The one big question we had to ask ourselves during this film test was, "Can Polaroid OneFilm really cover all shooting situations for point-and-shoot photographers?" Considering the fact that most of them take pictures during daylight hours, and use flash when indoors, the answer should be "Yes." The only area in which the point-and-shooter might have trouble is in low-light situations without flash. Indoor sports arenas, art galleries, churches, and a variety of indoor situations encountered when traveling might be other weak links in the one-film theory. Only time and experience will tell whether Polaroid has indeed made the one film for decision-free point-and-shoot photography.

For further information, contact Polaroid Corp., 575 Technology Square, Cambridge, MA 02139; telephone (617) 577-2000. ■

