

Kodak Pro 100 Film



Just when you thought it couldn't get any better, Kodak again improves its medium-speed color print film. You don't have to be a professional to appreciate the superb quality this film delivers in a variety of uses.



by Jack and Sue Drafahl

The best part of working on a film test is that we have an excuse to go on a photo expedition and shoot whatever strikes our fancy. Unfortunately, most film tests have to be accomplished in a short period of time due to tight magazine schedules. When the Kodak Pro 100 film test came along, we assumed the same would be true. However, due to a scheduling break, we had twice the time to test this color-negative (print) film. This new emulsion had already been released in the large and medium formats and was already being used by many professional photographers. Because of its success, Kodak was now ready to release its 35mm version. And besides having extra review time, Kodak also sent us a double batch for the test. What more could we ask for?

The word "Pro" in the film name tells us right away that this emulsion was designed for professional applications such as fashion, architectural, studio, portrait, and fine art/landscape photography. This emulsion replaces Kodak Vericolor HC color-negative film, and it boasts excellent sharpness and extremely fine grain. Pro 100 uses Kodak's popular T-grain technology and incorporates several new emulsion enhancements that rival Kodak's Ektar color-negative film.

Left: This parade float in Tillamook County was made primarily of yellow flowers. Believe it or not, this float was over eight feet tall! A Nikon 8008 camera and 180mm f/2.8 lens were used to put Kodak's Pro 100 film to the test.

Improvements to the cyan and magenta layers include a triple coating that controls the grain in the fast layers, color quality in the mid-speed layers, and maintains stable processing characteristics in the slower layers. The DIAR coupler improvements increase the quality of fine detail and enhance edge effects in all the color records. The ISO of Pro 100 is

an obvious 100 and it is balanced to daylight exposure, flash, and tungsten/fluorescent light with proper filtration. Besides this new 35mm version, Pro 100 is available in 120, 220 and 70mm rolls, 4x5- and 8x10-inch sheets and 5- and 9.5-inch rolls

Although Pro 100 is designated as a professional film, we feel that many of the professional 35mm films also lend themselves to amateur and advanced-amateur applications. We decided to test the film in both amateur and professional applications. Our test sites ranged from the shores of Pacific Ocean to San Salvador Island in the Bahamas, spanning a distance of over 5000 miles.

Our first test was the local Dairy Parade in the city of Tillamook, Oregon. Once a year, the residents celebrate the main industry for the county, dairy farming. We noticed hundreds of amateur photographers lined up and down the streets waiting to capture those special moments on film. This was great because we could blend in and nobody would even notice us, except that maybe our lenses were bigger. As the parade progressed we switched from short to long lenses and back again. An unusual assortment of clowns, old cars, potatoes, horse-drawn wagons and milk trucks paraded by. We saw only one dairy cow, and

Right: The famous US Navy's Blue Angels perform at the Portland Rose Festival air show. This shot was made with a Nikon 8008 body and 75-300mm Nikkor lens, wide open at f/4.

Below: This Queen Angel fish was photographed off San Salvador Island in the Bahamas with an 8008 in an underwater housing using a 105mm macro lens.

Bottom Right: This clown was caught at the Tillamook Dairy Festival.



guessed the rest were busy making milk for that great Tillamook Cheese.

We still had at least 25 more rolls to shoot, so we planned a more complex professional application for the second test. We looked through our inventory of 35mm cameras, and decided to test our next 5 rolls with a special camera called a Natcam. This unique camera, originally made for the military, shoots 350° panoramic pictures on a 100-foot roll of 35mm film. (10° is lost to the shutter's action from a complete 360° panorama.) We modified the drive mechanism to take standard 36-exposure rolls, and we were off with our Pro 100 film.

We selected a nearby lake and waited until the sun was directly overhead. In order to capture 350° panoramas, you must hold this camera above your head to photograph a scene. We quickly captured three frames on each roll of film and retreated to the car, sensing that we looked somewhat ridiculous holding the camera overhead. We returned to the lab with our 11 rolls of film and processed them in standard C-41 chemistry.

Once we laid the parade images on the light box, we determined that 100 was indeed the film's true ISO. The latitude of the Pro 100 seemed to fall somewhere in between two stops under and

three stops over, and the orange mask seemed to be slightly heavier than the Ektar emulsions we had previously tested. This would mean slightly longer printing times, but professional labs have bright enlargers, so the density was not a problem. The contrast was lower than Ektar and most of the amateur Gold films, allowing a greater tonal range in harsh sunlight without flash. The grain was very fine and separation between bright colors was excellent.

When we looked at the 15 negatives shot on the Navcam, we were impressed with the fact that the entire scene was printable. These negatives covered everything from the bright sun to deep shade, all in one neg-





negative is not difficult. But additional problems occur with underwater photography. Light falloff, color loss, and water density all add difficulty to taking pictures underwater. Jack used a Nikonos V for close-up pictures of the critters on the reef and for wide angle pictures of our daughter on her first dives. Sue used a Nikon N8008 with a 105mm macro in a special watertight housing allowing her to capture fish on film using nearly all the camera functions. We assumed the ISO would be the same as on land so we spent the first two days putting the Pro 100 to the test. Then hurricane Erin passed 20 miles from our location. For the next couple of days all tests were restricted to the safest location on the island—the bar. Once the storm passed, we shot the remaining film underwater on as many subjects as possible.

A few days later, we returned to the lab to see our results. The island had no C-41 processing so we crossed our fingers as the processor told us they were done. We were immediately impressed. We were looking at better than 95% good shots! Some of this was due to the sophisticated cameras, but the Pro 100's latitude and lower contrast added to the high percentage of great images. The overall quality of the images was excellent, exhibiting fine grain and superb sharpness. Eliminating the common blue cast found with underwater photos was easy with a slight color correction when printing. We survived a hurricane of a vacation and Kristy had some great pictures to show her friends.

Left: A local car club's display at the Tillamook festival had this car on display. Pro 100 captured the colors and tones with exceptional accuracy and resolution. Below Left: A Nikonos V, twin flashes and 15mm lens caught this turtle in underwater flight. Below: The rolling wheel on a clown-filled cart at the fair was stopped in motion by a Nikon 8008 with a 180mm Nikkor lens at f/2.8 and 1/4000-second exposure.

In the final analysis, we have to say that even though Pro 100 is designated a professional film, we found it to be an excellent choice for most all advanced-amateur and professional applications. If you are an advanced amateur and want the advantages of a pro, then Kodak's Pro 100 will give you a head start toward taking really professional pictures.



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ative. The lower contrast and 6-stop exposure range allowed for perfect 14-inch long negatives. (Yes, the Navcam produces 14-inch long 35mm negatives. We told you it was a strange camera!)

We were extremely satisfied with the performance of the film and assumed our testing was over. Then we realized that our summer vacation fit into the testing time period. Our 15-year-old daughter Kristy was being certified as a scuba diver in San Salvador, Bahamas, so we decided to add some very special tests for the Pro 100.

With today's cameras and lenses, getting a good



For more information, contact your Kodak Professional dealer or Eastman Kodak Co. at 343 State St., Rochester, NY 14650; (800) 242-2424. ■