



ADVANCED
USER REPORT
PHOTOGRAPHIC

Konica Color JX200

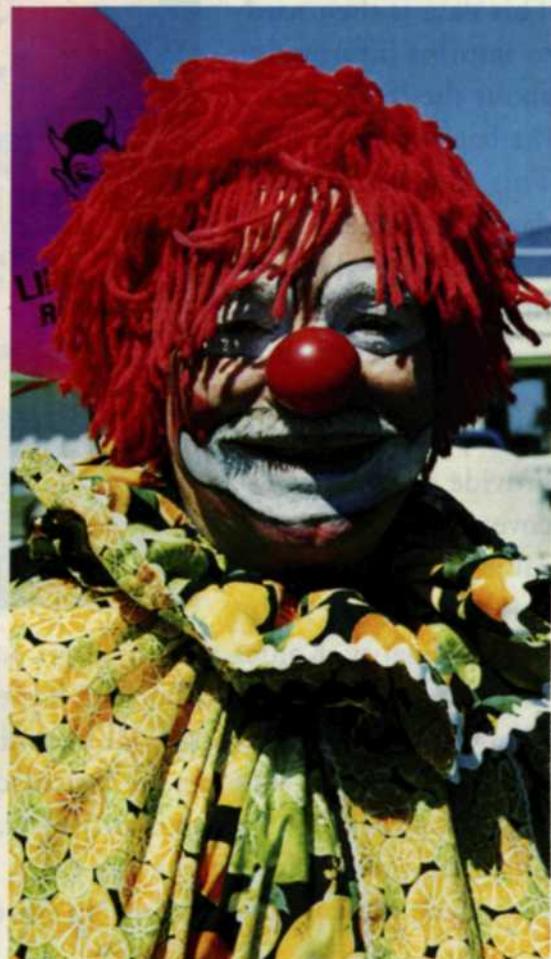


New ISO 200 Advanced Photo System film produces excellent image quality

by Jack and Sue DrafaHL

The words "Advanced Photo System" (APS) are somewhat misleading. For someone new to the APS format, it sounds like it is designed for photographers with plenty of "advanced" photo experience. The truth is, the film and system are really designed and targeted with the amateur market in mind. APS film is advanced in technology, but simple in its use. The APS concept was jointly designed by the film and camera manufacturers with the common goal of simplifying film usage yet maintaining image quality. APS offers the convenience of one-step film-cartridge loading, mid-roll film changing, and the choice of three print formats. A special magnetic layer on the film records picture-taking information that can be printed on the back of each print. The developed film is returned safely ensconced in the original cassette for easy storage, and a convenient index print is returned with each roll to make filing virtually effortless.

Konica's introduction to the APS format started in 1996 with JX400 color-print film. They now follow up with a new JX200 color-print film. Konica has incorporated four new advanced film technologies to insure that the quality of a 40% smaller negative is equal to or better than previous



PHOTOS BY JACK & SUE DRAFAHL

35mm color-negative films. Konica's JX-Crystal technology is used to control the size of the silver-halide crystal in order to reduce grain size. This is critical because of the three APS format sizes. When the panorama size is selected, a print twice as long as a 4x6 print is created. Minimizing film grain is important any time an enlargement is made.

The JX-Couplers keep colors from drifting from one layer to the next, thus maintaining accurate colors. The film itself includes two blue-, three green-, and three red-sensitive layers, with interlayers or filters in-between. Red and green colors next to each other are usually a problem with color films, but with the aid of these couplers, the definition between these two is very clear. The JX-DIR Couplers work on the color edges to keep the images sharp. These couplers also sharpen the edges of subjects against the blue sky backgrounds.

The JX-IX layers optimize the functions of the magnetic recording of data on the base of the film. This data is then used to imprint information about the image on the back of the print. This data can include data, time, and a brief message about the image.

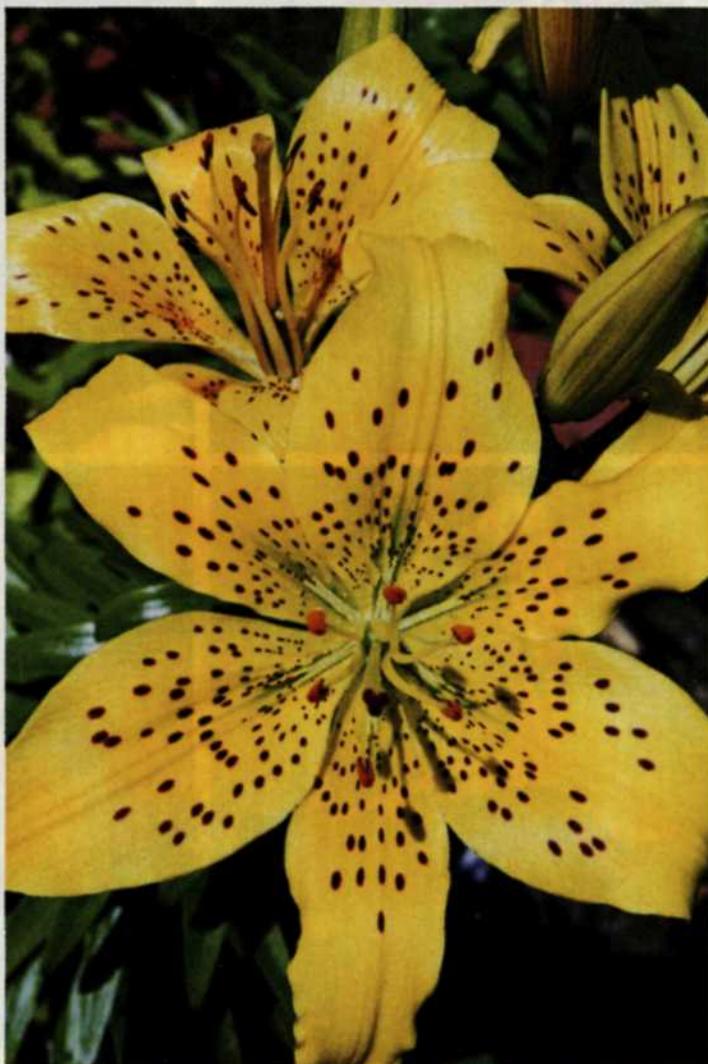
The concept behind Konica's APS JX200 color-print film is to provide a film that covers just about any subject, and still maintains a very high level of quality. Konica already offers an ISO 400 film, so the JX200 provides versatility and has the advantage of smaller grain. JX200 works well in sunlight and when using an electronic flash without the assistance of any filter, and under tungsten light with an 80A filter. You can take photos under tungsten light without the filter, but the quality is best using the correction filter. No filtration for reciprocity

is necessary with exposure times from $\frac{1}{10,000}$ second to 10 seconds, but you should add one stop of extra exposure when exposure times reach 10 seconds.

When you get your JX200 film processed, you will receive a small index print sheet along with your print order, and the film cassette with the negatives stored inside. On the index print sheet you will find crop marks for those images that used the "C" (Classic) and "P" (Panorama) formats. The "H"

(Hi-Vision) is printed from a full negative. If you change your mind about the cropped formats, you can pick a different crop or full image when you re-order your prints. If for any reason you lose your contact sheet, you can always get a new one printed. To make organization easy, the images on the index sheet are printed and numbered in the order that you shot them.

In an endeavor to make an easy transition to APS film, Konica has introduced two new photographic devices to assist in the use of the JX200 color-negative film. The first is the Konica IX viewer which allows photographers to view their negatives at an enlarged size before



Previous page: JX200 produces saturated colors and neutral whites.

This page, top: Reds are rich and natural. Far left: Yellows reproduce accurately. Near left: The warm hues of early morning and late afternoon are beautiful on JX200.

printing. The processed film cassette is inserted into the viewer and it advances to the first frame. A motor drive then moves you through the frames, and rewinds the film back in the cassette when you are done. The viewer will be available for use at selected photo finishers.

The second device is for the photographers interested in digitizing their images. The Konica Q Scan recognizes either

standard 35mm or APS in both negative and slide form. The images can be scanned up to 1200 dpi at 17 million colors. An index preview allows you to pick through the JX200 negatives at a glance and scan only the ones you want. The Q Scan automatically corrects images that are adversely affected by different types of lighting. These images can then be saved to hard disk, used on the Internet, or printed on electronic printing material.

For our tests with JX200, we enjoyed the color and excitement of a local beach community parade that had a clown troupe as part of the festivities. There were more than a dozen clowns with all types of ridiculous colors that closely resembled film test color charts. Later, we added a close-up lens and made a photographic tour of our flower gardens. We added in a couple of photos with more subdued colors and sent half the film to a Konica APS processing lab. When the prints were returned, we pulled out the index card and looked over the images.

We found the exposure latitude was at least two stops under and three stops over for good prints. The sharpness was excellent and those areas where reds and greens met were separated and sharp. Subjects against the sky had good edge separation which indicated that the JX-Couplers were really doing their job.

We also scanned a few images to see how they converted to digital. At the time of the test, we did not have access to the Konica Q Scan, so we used our standard 35mm scanner. The scanned images indicated that the effective ISO of the film was actually higher than ISO 200, so you could set the ISO a little higher if necessary. The colors were saturated and the grain pattern was similar to 35mm images we had scanned using the same scanner.

The second group of film was processed in our C-41 processor as our control. We don't have an APS processor, so it took some time to find an APS film reel. After some research, we found just "one." The second batch of film was processed in C-41 chemistry, and it too confirmed that the film ISO was a little higher than 200. This slight increase of film ISO is not bad, in fact, it adds a little insurance to getting a good exposure. A common aspect of both processed groups of film was the consistency of exposure. Throughout the wide range of lighting and exposure situations, the negatives remained the same overall density.

APS is not just for advanced photographers, just ones who enjoy technological advancements. Konica now offers APS photographers a choice of ISO ratings in their JX films. Grab some JX200, drop it in your APS camera, and see what advances. For more information, contact Konica U.S.A., Inc., 440 Sylvan Ave., Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632; 201/568-3100; on the Internet, <http://www.Konica.com>. ■

JX200 has good latitude—contrasty scenes reproduce with lots of detail, and negatives overexposed up to three stops or underexposed up to two stops yield good prints. JX200 is a fine general-purpose film, handling lots of subjects well.

