

USER REPORT  
PHOTOGRAPHIC

# Fuji Sensia

# 200 & 400

Fast color-slide films make the grade

by Jack and Sue Drafahl

It used to be that when you found yourself in photo situations requiring higher-speed 35mm slide film, panic quickly set in. You had the feeling of compromise...accept more grain in order to gain depth of field or faster shutter speeds. Thanks to technological advances in film manufacturing, you no longer have to hesitate when you reach for a higher-speed film. Fuji offers some of the finest higher-speed 35mm color slide-film choices with its Fujichrome Sensia II 200 and 400. We decided to put these films through the paces and see just how they perform under pressure. (There's also a new Sensia II 100, but it was not yet available for testing.)

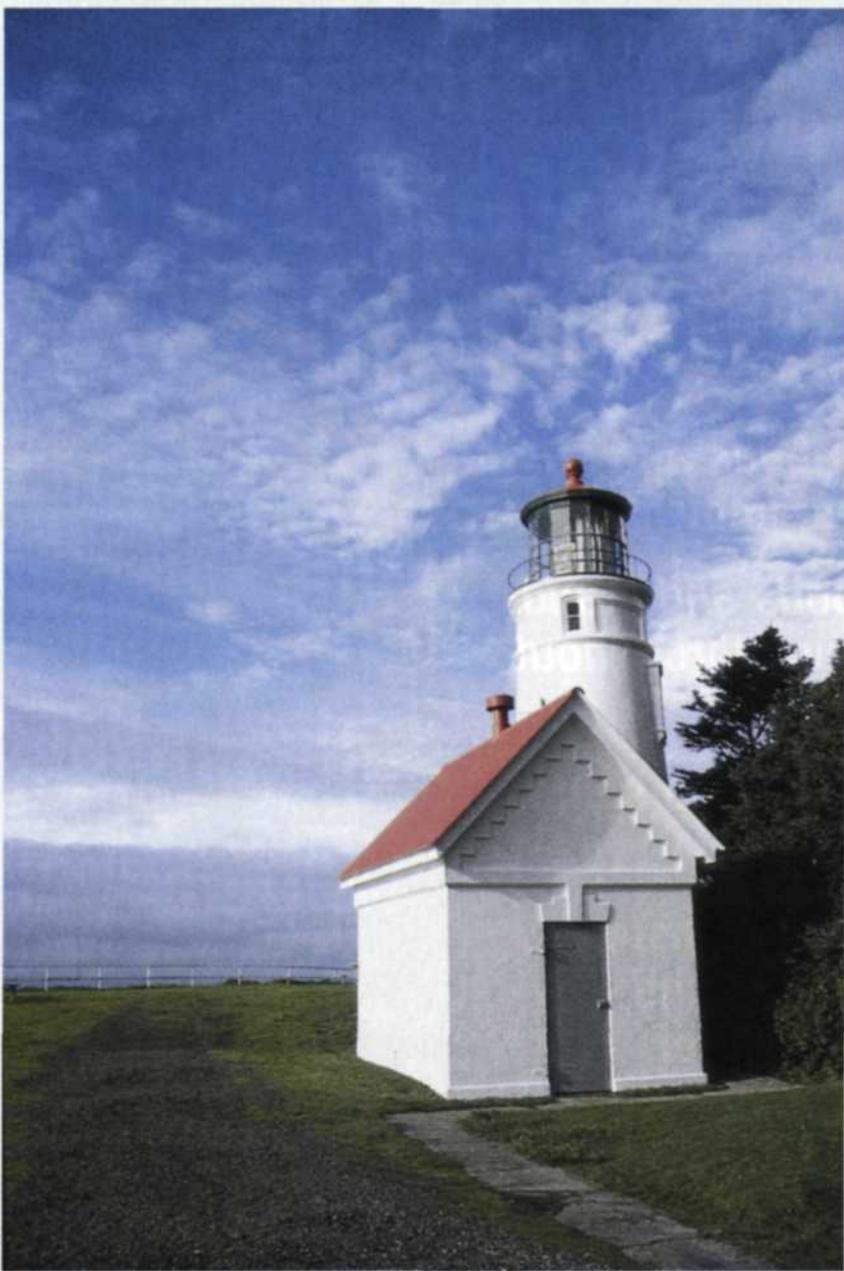
One of the problems we run into conducting film tests is finding new shooting locations. Those of you who have

followed our articles over the years should have a pretty good idea of what Oregon looks like by now. What you don't know is how we pick the locations. We have this dart board with a map pasted to it...well, you get the idea. As it turned out, this test ended up as a two-day trip down the southern coast. Knowing exactly where we will end up really doesn't really matter to us, just as long as we can get out of the office.

We headed out looking for lighthouses, covered bridges, fishing boats, color and design, and whatever Mother Nature could throw in. Well, we found most everything on our shopping list, but Mother Nature tossed us slivers of sunshine surrounded by buckets of rain. That was all right, because it gave us a chance to shoot with sunlight at the start and make a soggy finish. What good would a film test be if the lighting was perfect?

Fuji's Sensia II 200 (top) and 400 (bottom) are a great pair of fast slide films. Both produce excellent image quality, rich colors, clean whites and a full range of tones. They share a very similar palette, so you can shoot with Sensia II 200 and switch to Sensia II 400 when you need more speed (even pushing it to EI 800) while maintaining a consistent "look" in your images. Sensia II 200 is a bit sharper, but otherwise these two fine films are quite similar.

ALL PHOTOS BY JACK AND SUE DRAFAHL



We have to tell you up front that we are not big fans of ISO 200 and 400 slide films. We are very picky about film resolution and grain, and prefer the lower ISO films whenever we can use them. But we were pleasantly surprised with the results with both Sensia II films. Both had an excellent grain pattern and handled color saturation much better than expected. Our biggest complaint with high ISO slide films in the past has been exposure latitude. More times than not, we have lost images even when using the bracket mode. We tried to shoot the same subjects with both cameras so that we could see which film worked the best in each situation. We took a chance with this film test when we only did a three-frame  $\pm 0.7$  bracket. The only times we missed a shot were when a camera battery died and once when we misused a spot meter. What more could we ask of our films?

Before we head out on any film-test adventure, we expose a roll of each emulsion and process it to determine the accuracy of the ISO rating with our equipment. In our previous testing of Fuji products we've had to rate them  $\frac{1}{2}$  stop lower than their ISO speeds. Not so with these Sensia II emulsions. The ISO ratings

of 200 and 400 were right on the money.

As we looked at these first rolls with a loupe, we noticed that the grain structure seemed to be the same with both films. Going back to the film data sheets we discovered that both the 200 and 400 films have a diffuse RMS granularity value of 15. We then checked the numbers on the resolving power, and found that the 200 resolved 50 lines and the 400 resolved 45 lines (with low-contrast 1.6:1-ratio test subjects). The spectral curves of both emulsions were



**Sensia II 200 handles difficult subject matter very well, including white tones in bright sunlight and the subtle hues of a misty morning. Color saturation is excellent. This is a fine all-around film for general shooting when you need an extra stop of film speed.**





**Sensia II 400 shares with its pro-oriented “brother, Provia 400, the finest grain among the ISO 400 slide films. It also provides excellent color saturation, clean whites and the ability to handle high-contrast subject matter. It also pushes to EI 800 very well.**



almost identical. This indicated that we could switch emulsions when photographing the same subject and maintain a good match from one image to the next. That makes Sensia II 200 and 400 a great film team.

We ran a quick push test on the 400 and found that a one-stop push does increase grain and contrast slightly, but it still maintains excellent quality. The 200 emulsion can be pushed, but the 400-speed film produces better image quality at rated speed than the 200-speed film pushed to EI 400.

Some of our best results from each emulsion came as the rains began to fall. The color saturation was excellent. We

were most impressed with the images of a rain-soaked red picnic table we found at a rest stop. The color saturation was unbelievably rich with all three exposures on both the 200 and 400 emulsions.

On the morning of the second day, the sun opened up for 30 minutes, so we could test both emulsions under more contrasty lighting. Sounds great, huh? What we had not expected was that the sun would open up while we were photographing a very white lighthouse. The extreme range of white and dark is very challenging for high-speed films. Most can't handle pure white in sunlight,

and if they can, they rarely can carry the range in the shadows. When we looked at our processed results, both films passed with flying colors. Either emulsion could be used in a variety of lighting situations and maintain consistent quality. We were sold on the Sensia II 200 and 400 team.

For further information regarding the Sensia II films contact Fuji at 800/800-FUJI or check out their website at [www.fujifilm.com](http://www.fujifilm.com). ■