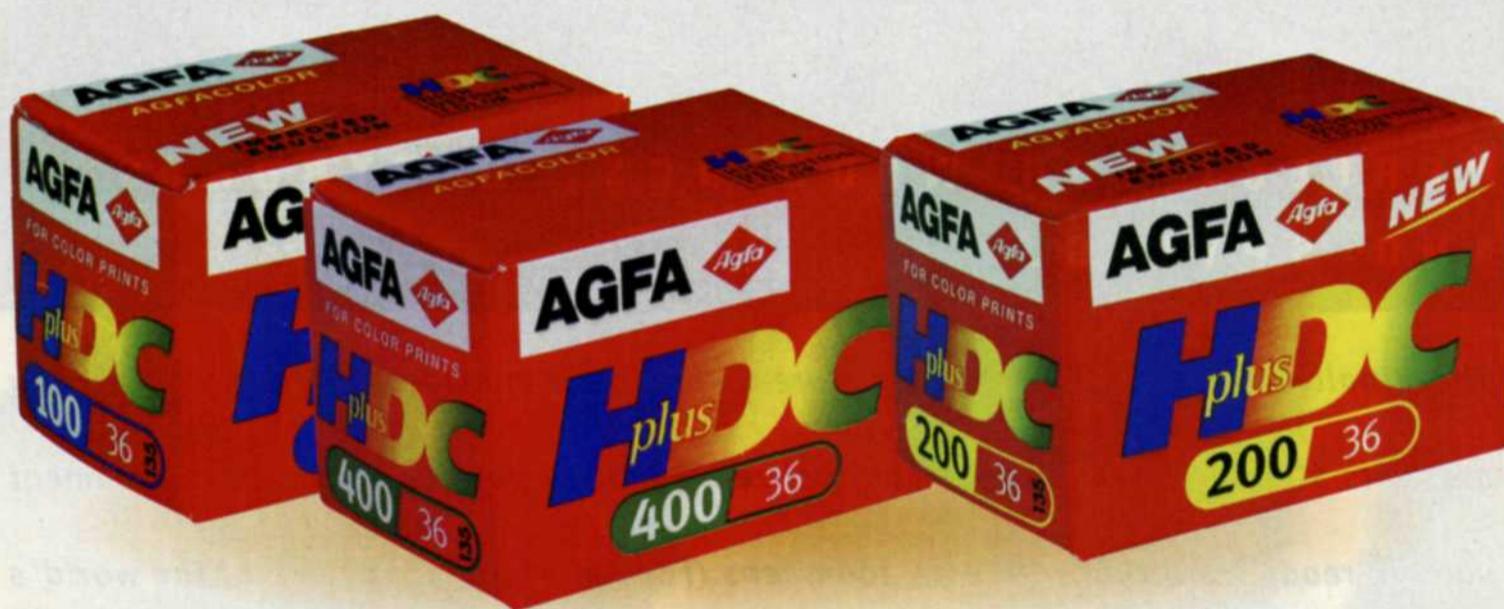


Agfacolor HDC *plus*—The New Generation

Three great new color-print films:
ISO 100, 200 & 400

by Jack and Sue Drafa



Do you think it is possible to have something that is negative and positive at the same time? Agfa must, because they recently introduced three excellent new Agfacolor HDC *plus* negative films, in ISO 100, 200 and 400.

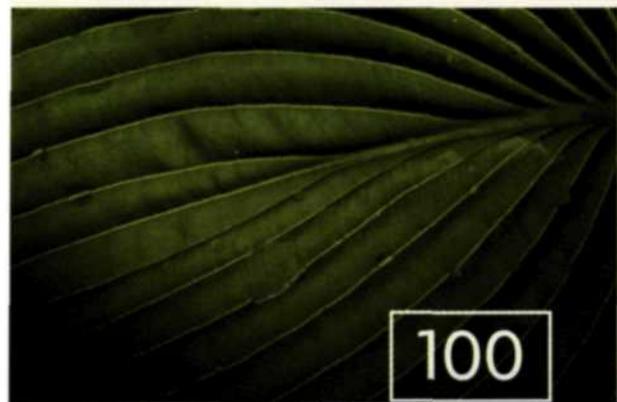
The *plus* actually represents two unique areas of improvement. New technological advances have allowed Agfa to incorporate a completely new color coupler system. This provides a greater color fidelity without any loss of color saturation. They also did some tweaking to the Super Inter-Image Effects (Super IIE) in Agfacolor HDC *plus* 100, which resulted in more saturated colors in the deeper shadows. Agfa felt this was a critical area in need of improvement, since a great many amateur pictures are

underexposed. This new coupler also helps make the film more tolerant to tropical environments or unfavorable conditions like hot sunlight in your car.

Do you think it is also possible to make something smaller and achieve larger results at the same time? Agfacolor HDC *plus* has a second change that affects the light-sensitive crystals. The SEM (Surface Enhanced Multistructured) crystals were initially developed for Agfa's APS films and eventually incorporated in the 35mm HDC 400 emulsion. These crystals are flat and thin and exhibit a much larger surface area which can collect up to 30% more photochemical energy than a standard crystal. This means thinner film with small, fine grain that allows you to produce much larger prints than ever before.

One of the first things we look at when reviewing films

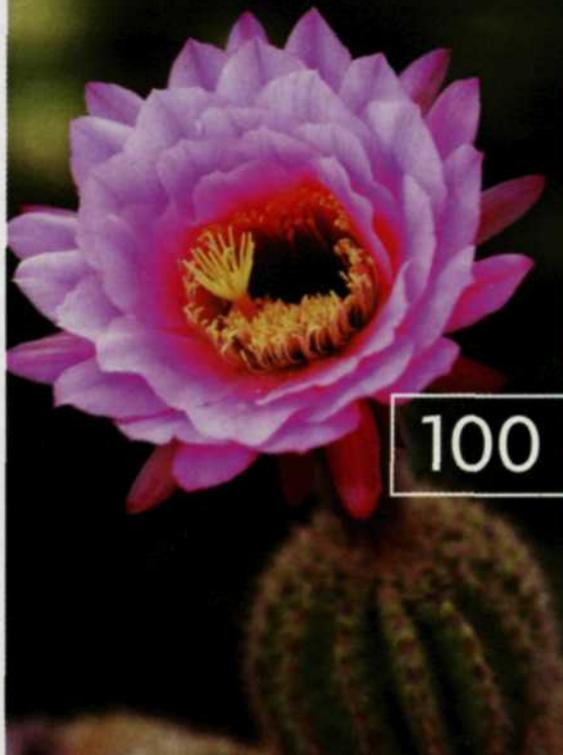
for *PHOTOGRAPHIC* is the film's tech sheets. With new-improved film versions we like to compare the sheets with those of their predecessors to see the areas on which we should concentrate our test efforts. Since HDC 400 was already improved to match the APS format, its numbers remained the same but its name changed to HDC *plus* 400. HDC *plus* 100 and 200 are where we saw changes to the RMS granularity numbers and the total layer thickness (HDC *plus* 100 drops the



100

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RMS granularity to 4.0 from 4.5 and the total emulsion thickness to 16µm from 23µm; HDC *plus* 200 drops the RMS to 4.5 from 5.0 and the thickness to 18 from 23). HDC *plus* 100 and 200 have exposure latitudes of -2 to +3 stops, while HDC *plus* 400 has a little less at -1½ to +3 stops.



100

This information told us that we should closely analyze the grain structure in areas with fine detail and those soft-focus areas in the background. The color saturation and accuracy would be checked in both sunlight and deep shade conditions.

Whenever we get new film to test, we also run a pre-flight to check ISO accuracy and to find any idiosyncrasies of the

All three HDC *plus* films have been improved with the latest technologies developed for Agfa's APS films, making them better films all around with finer grain, thinner emulsions, richer and truer colors, wide exposure latitude and more. In use, the films live up to their promise.

film before we head out for the actual testing. This has served to save us much grief over our years of film testing. We took one of the HDC *plus* 100 rolls and ran off some exposures on some very colorful cacti that had volunteered to model for our film test. One cactus really liked posing and produced a fluorescent pink flower over seven inches across. The processed results confirmed that ISO 100 was accurate and no exposure compensation was necessary. We also noted that the



100

color saturation was very good, and the negatives had an excellent tonal range from highlight to shadow. The grain structure was very fine in both the fine detail areas and in those areas that were completely out of focus. Everything was all set so we packed up the camera bags and hit the road.

The Saturday Market in downtown Portland offered an environment with a broad range of lighting



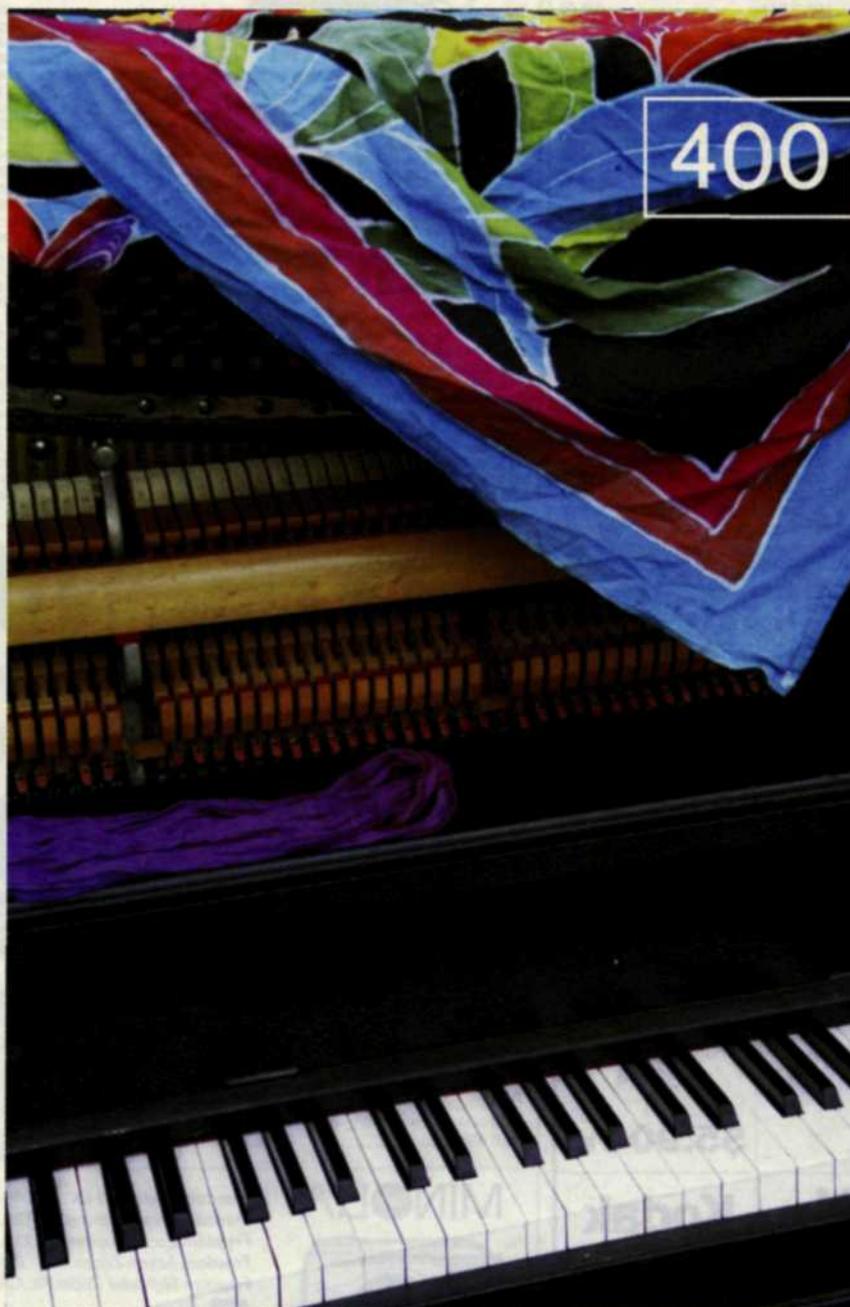
200



200

Agfacolor (Continued from page 26)

conditions and colorful subjects. If it did not rain, we would be all set. We decided to use HDC *plus* 100 for close-ups and macro subjects, while the 200 and 400 emulsions would be rotated through different types of lighting situations. Our first subjects were a couple of clowns—great subjects for a film test. One was a very happy clown, and the other seemed to be having a very bad day. We didn't know that clowns were allowed to have bad days. The light level was heavy overcast, so we started with the 400 emulsion, shot a few additional subjects, and then came back to re-shoot the clown and many of

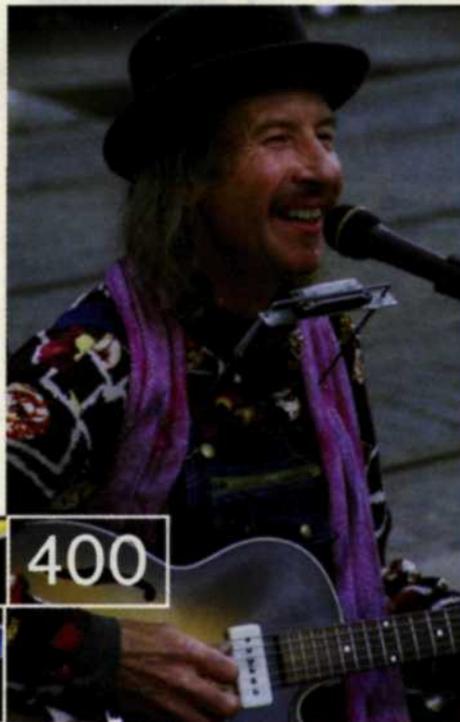


ALL PHOTOS BY JACK & SUE DRAFAHL

the same scenes with the 200 emulsion. We didn't use any exposure bracketing with any of the photographs. We would let the film's wide exposure latitude cover any deviation from the norm.

Back in the lab we quickly processed our film. For all of our *PHOTOgraphic* film tests, we use our Wing/Lynch film processor. It is computer-controlled to .1° and uses automated time and temperature curves to keep accuracy to the second. It uses one-shot chemistry, so each group of film we process has brand-new chemistry.

The best part of conducting film test is the excitement of looking over the results. We had already seen quite a few of the HDC *plus* 100 negatives, so we started our



evaluation with the 200 emulsion. The density from highlight to shadow was very complete, and it was evident that each negative would give a full-range color print. We also noted that the exposure throughout the roll was very even and printing would be a dream. The grain structure was very tight and the color saturation looked excellent.

We then moved to one of the HDC *plus* 400

rolls and loped our way down the roll. The negatives looked very much like the HDC *plus* 200 we had just reviewed. The grain was a little larger, but the color saturation and tonal range were almost identical for the two rolls. Finally, we looked at one of the HDC *plus* 100 rolls. The grain was definitely the best on this roll, but the color saturation and tonal range were similar to the 200 and 400 rolls.

So what determines your film choice in a specific situation? There are many factors affecting your choice, but subject movement and the amount of light available

HDC *plus* 400 was Agfa's first 35mm film to benefit from its APS technology advances. It's a great general-purpose color-print film, with the speed to handle a wide variety of shooting situations and the image quality to satisfy the most discerning tastes.

have the most influence on your choice. If you have lots of light and the subject moves very little, then grab some HDC *plus* 100. Typical subjects include scenics, macro with flash, or just about any subject in full sun. If the subject moves a little or the sun goes behind a cloud, you may want to switch to HDC *plus* 200. Group pictures with flash, kids at play on an overcast day, and hand-held long-lens shots may be best with this emulsion. When the light drops and the action increases, go for the HDC *plus* 400. Zoo pictures, pets, races,

people in deep shade, and distant pictures with flash are good candidates for this higher-speed film. If in doubt, the higher speed film will guarantee to stop the action.

Each time we get a new batch of film with a plus or improved status, we wonder if we will ever reach a point that we can't see any change. Well, Agfa's HDC *plus* films are noticeable improvements over their excellent predecessors. The thinner emulsion of HDC *plus* gives better image definition, the improved crystals produce more image brilliance, and the new couplers give a better tone differentiation. Keep up the good work, Agfa!

For more information, contact Agfa Division, Bayer Corp., 100 Challenger Rd., Ridgefield Park, NJ 07660; 201/440-2500; on the Internet www.agfahome.com. ■