

# Fujifilm Neopan

*Text and photos by Jack and Sue Drafa*

Photographers often think of black-and-white film as just an emulsion base covered with silver-halide crystals, but it's really so much more. It's a visual expression that looks at the world in shades of gray. It's a great learning tool for photographers of all skill levels. It's the force that makes photographers look at the quality of light. It's the basis of photography's history, yet continues on today. It's been the photojournalists' workhorse, the commercial photographers' mainstay and today's photographers' pure art form. So you see, it's so much more.

That's why Fujifilm had to work hard to design a film to expand the creative potential of the black-and-white photographer. Fujifilm's most recent addition to the professional line of black-and-white film is Neopan 100 Acros. A high-quality medium-speed film, Neopan Acros features extremely fine grain and superb image sharpness. When lighting conditions permit the use of slower films, ISO 100 allows photographers the benefit of a fine-grain emulsion with an excellent tonal curve. It is available in both 35mm and 120 formats.

The key to this new emulsion is the use of Fujifilm's Super Fine- $\Sigma$  (Sigma) Grain Technology, which maintains

small, evenly spaced and similar-sized grain. This results in a quality film that is the perfect choice for all types of picture taking, especially landscapes, portraits, photojournalism and fine-art photography.

The film boasts an RMS granularity of 7 when processed in Fujifilm chemicals, and for those who want to use other black-and-white film developers (Fujifilm B&W chemicals are not sold in the U.S.), Fuji has incorporated Precision Iodine Distribution Control (P.I.D.C.) Technology. This allows Neopan 100 Acros to be processed in a variety of black-and-white developers and fixers, and still maintain fine grain and rich tonal values. You can use either manual processing or high-speed automatic machine processors with this film. Processing temperatures can vary from 65° to 79° F at times ranging between 4.5 and 12.5 minutes.

For the nocturnal photographer, Neopan 100 Acros features minimal reduction in sensitivity for long exposures, so you can get excellent results with astronomical subjects, night scenes, and architectural interiors. Acros is designed for both traditional printing in black-and-white darkrooms, as well as the digital darkroom.



# 100 Acros

A terrific new B&W film



Each of our film tests has its own unique story, and this is the case of the missing roll of film. Our story begins several months before the actual Acros film test. We were off on a trip to Tonga, testing Fujicolor NPZ 800 color-negative film. Along with the test film, Fuji threw in a couple of rolls of a new black-and-white film called Neopan Acros. We decided to try one test roll of Neopan in a Tongan village, then put the exposed roll in the bottom of the camera bag.

A few months later it was time for the actual test, so we loaded up two Nikon F5s with a Sigma 14mm lens on one camera, and a 28–200mm Tamron zoom on the other. It was the perfect day for a photo excursion—the first dry, sunny day after 27 straight days of rain. What more could we ask for?

We decided that the local fishing harbor was a good place to start, with its water reflections, old rotten wooden posts, and an assortment of fish netting, rope and chains. Then we were off to an old train station with its old black locomotive

that never went anywhere except for a film test ride. The contrast between the deep black paint and pure white would really test the latitude of this film.

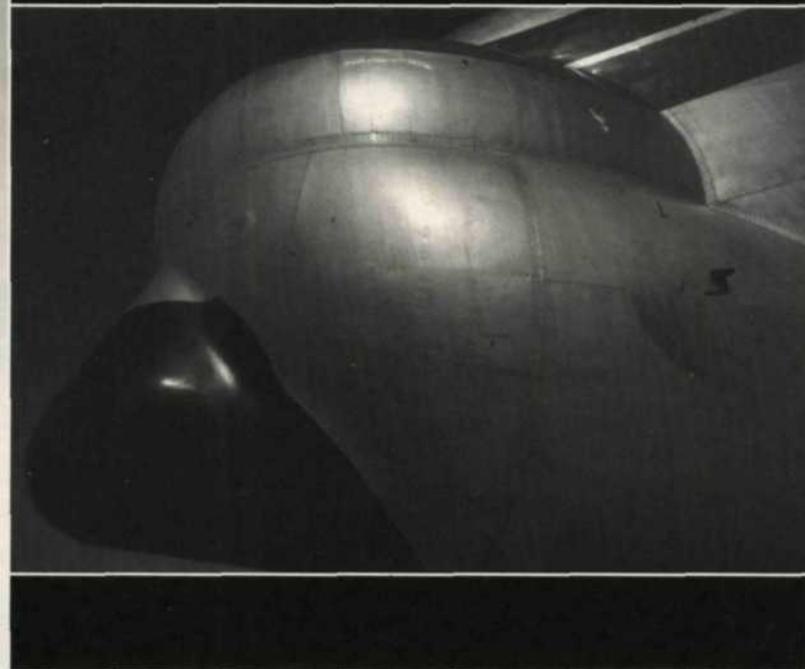
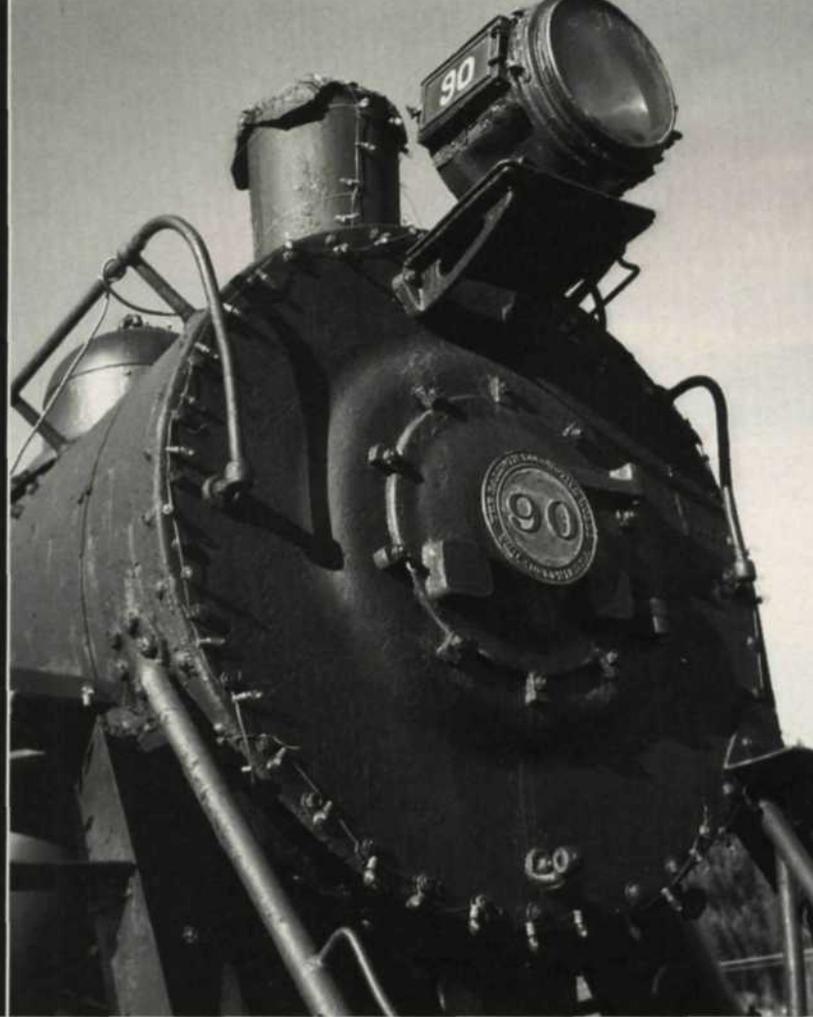
The wind had picked up a bit by now, which presented us with some incredible windswept waves at the beach, which were best documented with our zoom at 200mm. It was exhilarating, but we still needed more shots to really test this black-and-white film, so off we went again.

Wandering through the countryside we rounded the corner and saw something huge, sitting on top of a grassy knoll. It was a Pregnant Guppy, an oversized Air Force plane used to carry missiles and large vehicles during the Cold War. It was perfect for our film test as the entire plane was black and white, with gray tones in-between.

**Above:** Neopan 100 Acros fully captured the contrast of the white wave and beach in partial shade.

**Opposite page:** **Top left:** A small opening in the clouds provided natural sun "flash fill"; Acros recorded it with lots of detail.

**Bottom left:** Harsh afternoon sun provided a very-high-contrast image that showcases 100 Acros' abilities. **Right:** The new film also performs wonderfully well in flat lighting, with a contrast boost in the printing stage and lots of detail.



Back on the road again, we stumbled across our best find yet, a very old building that looked like it might have been a schoolhouse or town hall, but had to be military: Everything was painted gray including the window glass, doorknobs, gutters—absolutely everything. This made it perfect for our black-and-white film test. The sun was glancing off the chipped paint, and the eerie dark interior beyond the broken window gave us the full tonal range.

Still, there was still something missing. We knew we had taken some portraits, in Tonga we thought, but showed no evidence of people photos. Oh well, maybe we just imagined taking them. You know our memories aren't quite as sharp as they were in our younger days.

Back at the lab, we started moving things around on the darkroom shelf to find a spot for the exposed rolls of film. Hey, wait a minute. There's a roll of Acros film already on the shelf. How can that be? Instantly, there was a resounding cry of "Tonga" that reverberated throughout the darkroom. We guess we haven't totally lost it yet after all!

We ran a test roll in the processor to confirm the time, temperature and ISO rating were on the mark. After a couple more processing runs, all the film was hanging in the dryer.

When we laid the dried negatives on the light box, we were immediately impressed with the densities. Better yet, the loupe showed us there was virtually no grain. The exposure latitude had a wide enough spread to ensure no loss of images due to under or overexposure.

Now it was time to put the film to the printing test. Our first candidate was of the gray building with chipped paint. Wow! The detail was outstanding and the tonal range was rich, extending from dense blacks to delicate whites. What may have seemed ugly to passers- by was

---

**Top left:** This freshly painted historic locomotive is a perfect subject for testing black-and-white films. Neopan 100 Acros displayed fine detail in both shadows and highlights.

**Top right:** Acros also handles gray-tone variations very well, as demonstrated by this detail shot of the nose of a Guppy plane.

**Left:** The stark contrast from white to black in the late-afternoon sun was captured in lifelike detail by 100 Acros.

**Right:** The smooth texture of this chipped paint provides a wide range of gray tonal values that demonstrate 100 Acros' ability to record detail and tonality.

**Below left:** This backlit palm tree showcases the film's ability to handle extreme lighting and fine detail.

**Below right:** Neopan 100 Acros is a beautiful portrait film, too.

now a thing of beauty on Neopan 100 Acros film.

The silver-gray paint of the Guppy ranged from off-white to very dark gray as the sun's reflection painted the skin. The tonal range seemed even better than we remembered. Prints of the locomotive surely demonstrated the film's ability to capture detail in the deep shadows, without sacrificing the highlights. The range of this film was excellent.

So, what about that missing roll of Acros? It was a good thing we found it, as it had some of the portraits we took while in Tonga. One was of Rob Barrell, the co-owner of the boat *Nai'a*, and the other was of the Honorable Felikepa, minister of tourism for Tonga. His skin, warmed by the Tongan sun, glistened with fine detail that was easily captured by Neopan 100 Acros. As the sun sets behind the swaying palm trees, it seems a perfect ending to a great black-and-white film test.

If you want to find out more about Fujifilm Neopan 100 Acros black-and-white film, call 800/800-FUJI or log onto the Web at [www.fujifilm.com](http://www.fujifilm.com). ■

