

Text and photos
by Jack and Sue Drafa

Fujicolor NPH 400 Professional

Versatile pro color-print film

The Fujicolor Portrait Film family of four just made a recent change to its ever-popular mid-speed emulsion. The new NPH 400 now incorporates Fujifilm's proprietary 4th Color Layer Technology that was originally introduced in the Reala film emulsion.

This fourth, cyan-sensitive layer improves the overall color recording properties without affecting the balanced skin tones. The result is a finer-grain film with a smoother tonal gradation that can work extremely well under difficult lighting conditions.

NPH 400 is designed to be an all-purpose film when lighting conditions vary from full sunlight to indoor tungsten or fluorescent lighting, with and without the aid of flash. The wide exposure latitude of NPH 400 is perfect for wedding photography, as it enables you to maintain fine detail in both the whites of the wedding dress and the deep black tones of the tuxedo.

To refresh your memory, Fujicolor NPS 160 is a fine-grain daylight-balanced color-negative film, designed for situations where exposure times are shorter than $\frac{1}{8}$ second. This emulsion has a very wide exposure latitude and works well for portraits when you have adequate lighting. Fujicolor NPC 160 is similar, except the emulsion features higher contrast and yields more vivid colors. Fujicolor NPZ 800 is designed for situations where the light levels are low and electronic flash is not always an option. This emulsion has a very wide exposure latitude and can be rated from EI

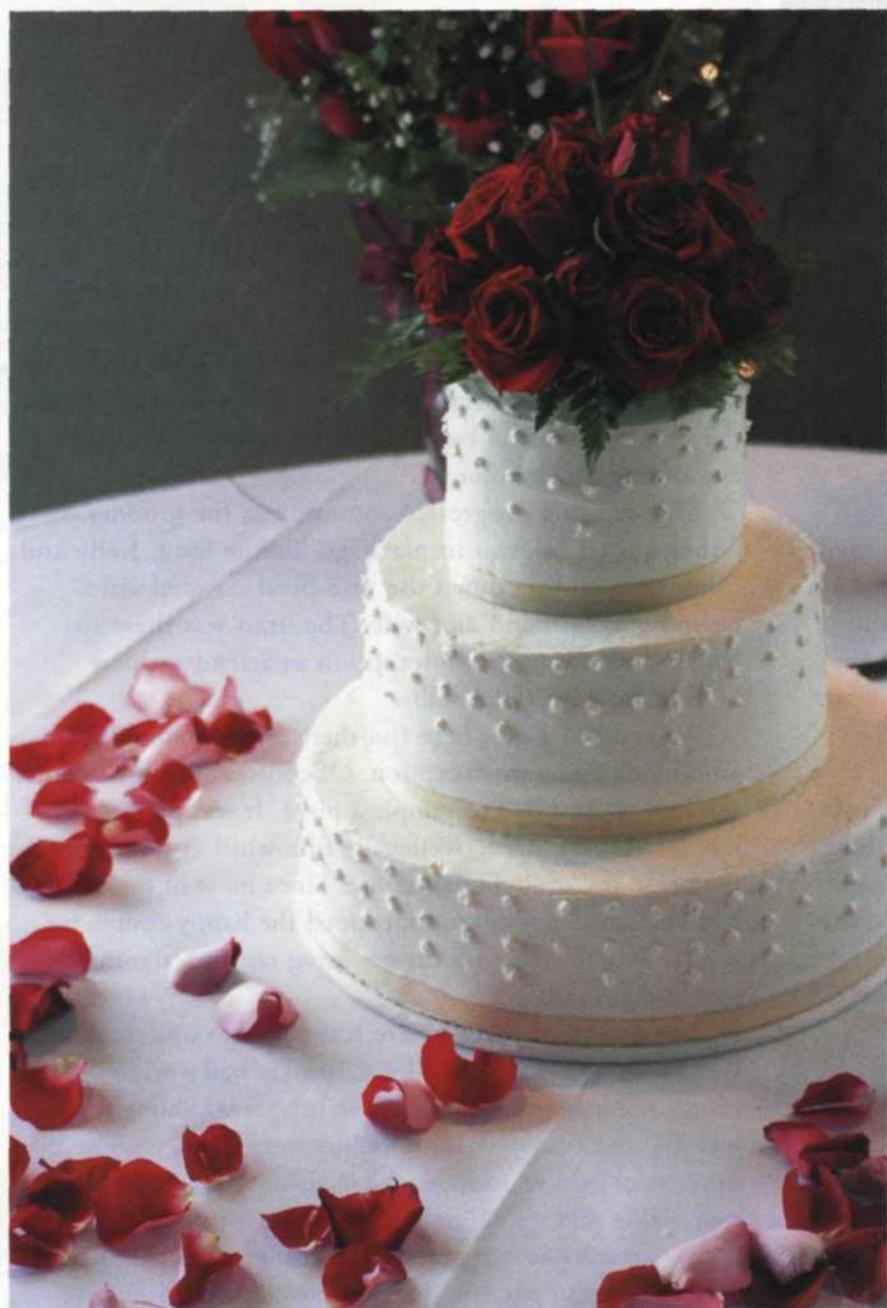


Newly improved Fujicolor NPH 400 Portrait Film is a terrific choice for available-light wedding and portrait photography. It works well with electronic flash, too.

50–1600 with minimal change in image quality.

All four emulsions come in 35mm, 120 and 220 sizes. The medium-format versions of all four emulsions now include the Easy End-seal self-adhesive tape that eliminates the need for moisture when securing the end of the film leader.

For previous users of NPH 400 Professional, the ISO rating of this new and improved emulsion is a true ISO 400 speed. You don't have to modify your shooting methods, but Fujifilm does recommend that you start with the NPS printing channel instead of the older NPH printing channel. You can identify the new emulsion by a



NPH 400 was designed specifically for available-light portrait and wedding photography (its full name is Fujicolor NPH 400 Portrait Film), so you'd expect it to handle skin tones, white wedding gowns and black tuxedos very well. It does indeed, in daylight and even under fluorescent and tungsten lighting, thanks to the newly added fourth, cyan-sensitive emulsion layer. This is a first-rate film for available-light people and wedding photography. We even found that images shot unfiltered under tungsten lighting in the church were very easy to print beautifully.



small dot next to the NPH 400 on the rebate edge of the processed film negative. Scanning your NPH 400 negatives is easy, and you can use either your previous NPH 400 setting or the NPZ 800 scanner setting to zero-in the improved emulsion.

No exposure changes due to reciprocity are necessary at exposure times from $\frac{1}{4000}$ second down to one second with NPH 400. Longer exposures will need $+\frac{1}{2}$ stop for four seconds and $+1$ stop at 16 seconds. If you shoot under tungsten lighting using the 80A filter for correction, the film should be rated at EI 100. Wide flexibility in color correction allows you to



Left: NPH 400's high speed means you can shoot without flash for natural-look wedding photos. Yet the image quality is superb, with excellent colors, fine grain and a full range of tones from white through black.

Below: The same features that make NPH 400 a first-rate existing-light wedding film also make it a first-rate scenic-photography film: good tonal range, ability to handle unusual lighting conditions, accurate color rendition and high speed.



make excellent color corrections during printing or the scanning process.

It was obvious from all of Fujifilm's promotional material that the new NPH 400 Professional is particularly suited for weddings and portraits. Well, this might be a problem as we don't usually photograph weddings and take very few portraits, except for underwater critters. Luckily, a close friend had just invited us to her daughter's wedding, which was scheduled just a few weeks away. We explained about the film test and asked if it would be possible to take some shots for the magazine. It seems that the wedding photographer was a friend of the bride, so a couple of extra photographers capturing the special day was warmly welcomed.

After checking out the technical sheets that came with the film, we ran a quick roll just to make sure everything was working. We headed up the mountain with film and tripod to capture some cascading waterfalls. Stopping the lens down, we then used the program mode, changing the settings until we had covered the gamut of shutter-speed and aperture combinations. Although we weren't photographing people, this test would determine the accuracy of the ISO and show us the film's exposure range. These initial tests told us that no bracketing was necessary as the ISO was accurate and the exposure latitude wide.

We decided on a Nikon F5 and older Nikon N8008 to document the event. If we found the noise from the F5 was too great, we could easily switch to the older, quieter

N8008 body. The cameras were ready, film packed, so now all we had to do was wait for the happy event.

When we arrived at the church, we found it to have high ceilings and low light levels. The only choice was direct flash and a small amount of available light if possible. Since this film had the ability to balance mixed lighting, we used the Program mode so we could quickly vary the shutter speed and aperture combinations with electronic flash. We set the flash to slow sync and kept a careful eye on the shutter speed until it dropped to levels we could no longer hand hold. Luckily, Fujifilm had been generous with the film they sent, so we could try several variations before and during the ceremony.

The wedding progressed smoothly as the groom's father united the two in marriage. Before long, Kelly and Eddy were gliding down the rose-petal-covered aisle, beaming as husband and wife. The limo was there to whisk them away to the reception as attendees blew bubbles to wish them well.

We grabbed a shot here and there as everyone milled around, enjoying the reception. Of course, once the cake was cut, we just had to sample a piece. It was part of our job description, right? We let the film whirl as we captured the bride and groom's first dance. Since most of the events had been inside, we even kidnapped the happy couple for several outdoor flash-fill images using rain-threatening skies as a background.

The processed images were scanned into our computer system for analysis. This film definitely had a wide exposure range—even some of the images we thought we lost due to extreme lighting ranges were all there. The skin tones remained neutral yet the exposure range provided rich blacks and white highlights. When we enlarged the images to achieve extreme magnification, they displayed a very tight grain pattern. This improved NPH 400

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provided the best of both worlds—fine grain and an extreme exposure range. What more could we ask for?

Most impressive of all the images were those taken under heavy tungsten lighting in the church. Each had a slight red shift because of the lighting, but it was easily corrected. When we color-balanced the whites in an image, the blacks, whites and all the colors in-between quickly fell into line. No longer was it necessary to use correction filters and slow down the ISO.

The bottom line is that this enhanced Fujicolor NPH 400 is an excellent mid-speed film that can tackle a lot of difficult lighting situations from weddings to commercial applications. It allows accurate color reproduction without additional filtration. The film's fine grain makes enlargements easy, and the tonal range allows you to capture detail from highlights to shadows.

We mentioned that we don't normally photograph weddings, so now we have an even greater respect for wedding photographers. They have the task of capturing the most special day in two people's lives with all its stress and emotional tension. Whew! It is a tough job, but thanks to Fujifilm and their improved Fujicolor Portrait Professional NPH 400, it just got a bit easier.

For more on this emulsion and other Fujifilm consumer and professional films log onto www.fujifilm.com. ■

Right: While NPH 400's specialty is people, it works very well with a wide range of other subjects, too.

Below: This scene contains tough lighting and a tricky exposure challenge, but it was no problem for NPH 400.

