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Magazine

From the Archives



6. Kodak Professional Portra 400VC

The fourth repeat member of our list, Portra 400VC is our favorite available-light portrait film, offering a combination of speed, fine grain, beautiful skin tones, wide exposure latitude and a little extra color punch for those drab existing-light situations (the VC stands for Vivid Color). Portra 400VC handles hard-to-reproduce colors well: A purple dress and a purple flower might look the same to the eye, but they'll often photograph differently—or the dress and flower might appear different to the eye but photograph the same. Portra films reproduce colors much as they appear to the eye. Portra 400VC is a little grainier than Supra 400 (and Portra 400VC's natural-color counterpart, Portra 400NC), but image quality is excellent, and skin tones are beautiful.

Photo by Lynne Eodice



7. Konica Color Centuria 400

Offering super-bright colors, fine grain and great sharpness, Color Centuria 400 employs Konica's Centuria Crystal, Coupler and DIR Coupler technologies for improvements in every area over its fine VX400 predecessor. It's a great general-purpose film, equally adept indoors (with and without electronic flash) and out. Konica Photo Imaging, 201/574-4000; www.konica.com.

Photo by Renee Chodor



8. Kodak Professional Portra 800

Another repeater from last year's list, Portra 800 is a beautiful people film with a speed of ISO 800. It's great for low-light wedding and portrait photography, but it also serves admirably for action in harsh sun (with its good tonal scale) and under cloudy skies (with its high speed). And unlike

its slower "brothers," Portra 800 matches the amazingly fine grain of Kodak's same-speed Supra film. Like Supra films, Portra films scan very well—important for anyone who wants to use their images digitally. Portra 800 has a normal balance, like that of Portra 400NC.

Photo by Mike Stensvold

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Digital Camera HQ: See prices and reviews of digital cameras.





9. Fujicolor Portrait NPZ 800 Prof.

Fujifilm's 800-speed color-print film knocked our socks off when we first tried it back in 1993, and each generation has got better and better. Today, there are several versions, and the newest and best is Portrait NPZ 800. Color rendition, grain and sharpness are all amazing for an ISO 800 film—so good that you can use this as a general-purpose film rather than just using it when high film speed is needed (although fast films cost more than slower films). And the great image quality translates well into digital form—NPZ 800 scans beautifully. Wide exposure latitude (-2 to +4 stops), good skin tones and fine performance in unusual and mixed lighting are bonuses.

Photo by Mike Stensvold



10. Fujicolor Superia 1600

Sharing the title of "fastest color-print film available today" with Fujicolor Press 1600, new Superia 1600 utilizes Fujifilm's 4th Color Layer and Fine (Sigma) Technology for accurate colors in a wide range of lighting and remarkably fine grain for the ultrahigh film speed. If high film speed is the

main requirement, this is the one to use.

Photo by Jack & Sue Drafahl



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