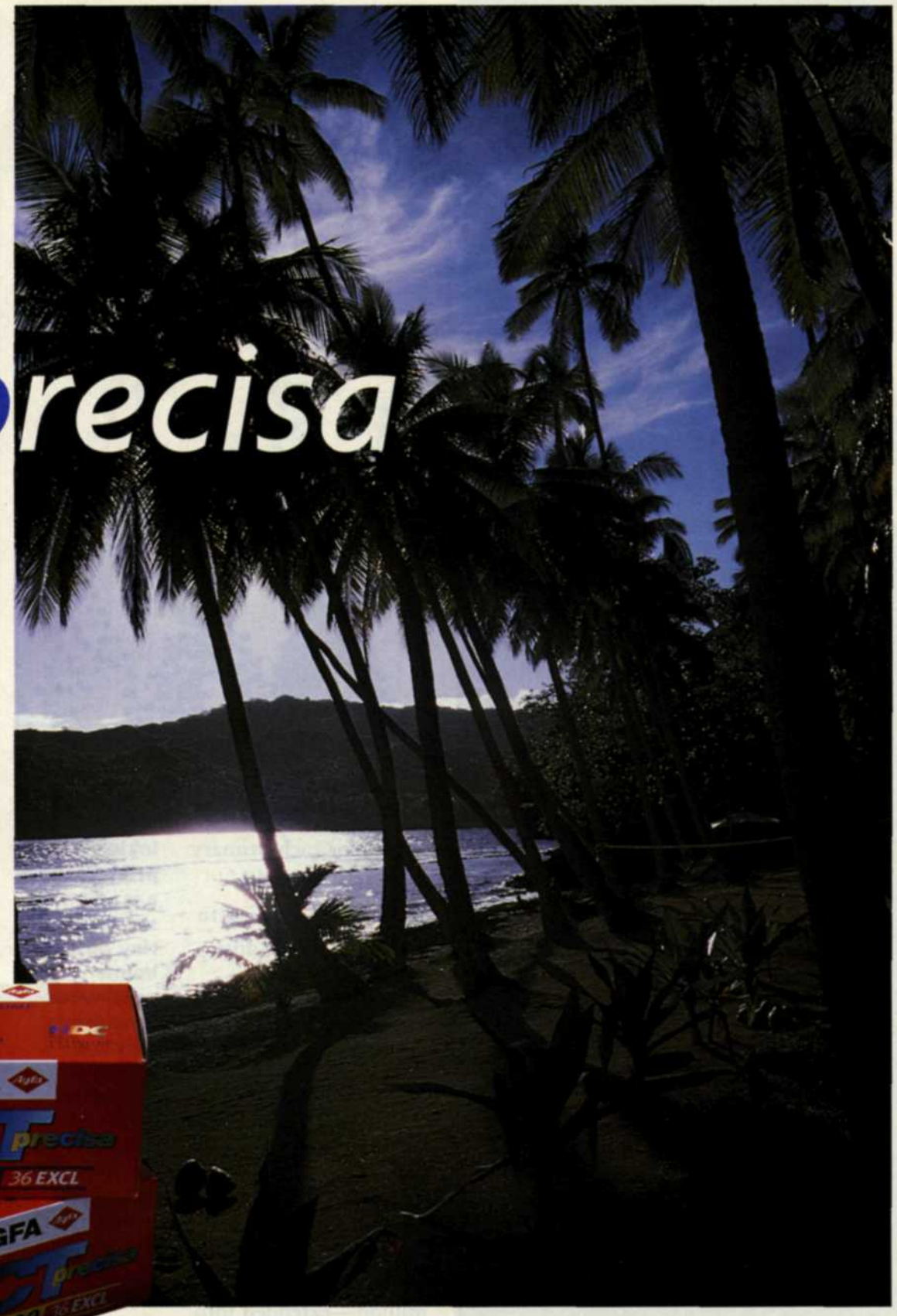
Agfa CTprecisa goes to Fiji

Precision is the word, beautiful photos are the result

Text and photos by Jack & Sue Drafahl



Agfa's new CTprecisa slide films handle contrasty backlit situations very well, as this Fiji beach scene on CTprecisa 100 demonstrates.

Agfa's newest transparency emulsion, called CTprecisa, takes its name from the word "precise," which translates in the thesaurus as accurate, correct, exact, or right. This film emulsion concentrates its improved features in one precise area and is designed to achieve high-quality slides that capture the total color range of the original scene. The resulting strong colors and soft shades are found in both the Agfachrome CTprecisa 100 and CTprecisa 200 film emulsions.

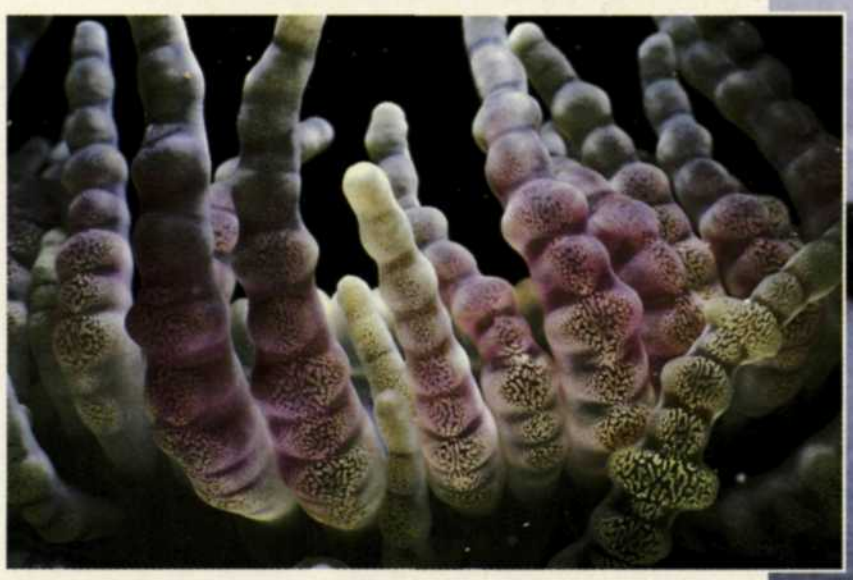
When we received the assignment from *PHOTOgraphic* to test the new CTprecisa, we were about to take a working vacation to Fiji. It seems like all our vacations end up including work, but what the heck, someone has to do it. We quickly scanned Agfa's press release and noted that precise color rendition was the goal of this emulsion. This film was designed to record gray tones from pure white to full black without any color shifts. They also stated that the film will remain neutral even when shot in the shadows or push-processed. Only time and testing would tell the true story.

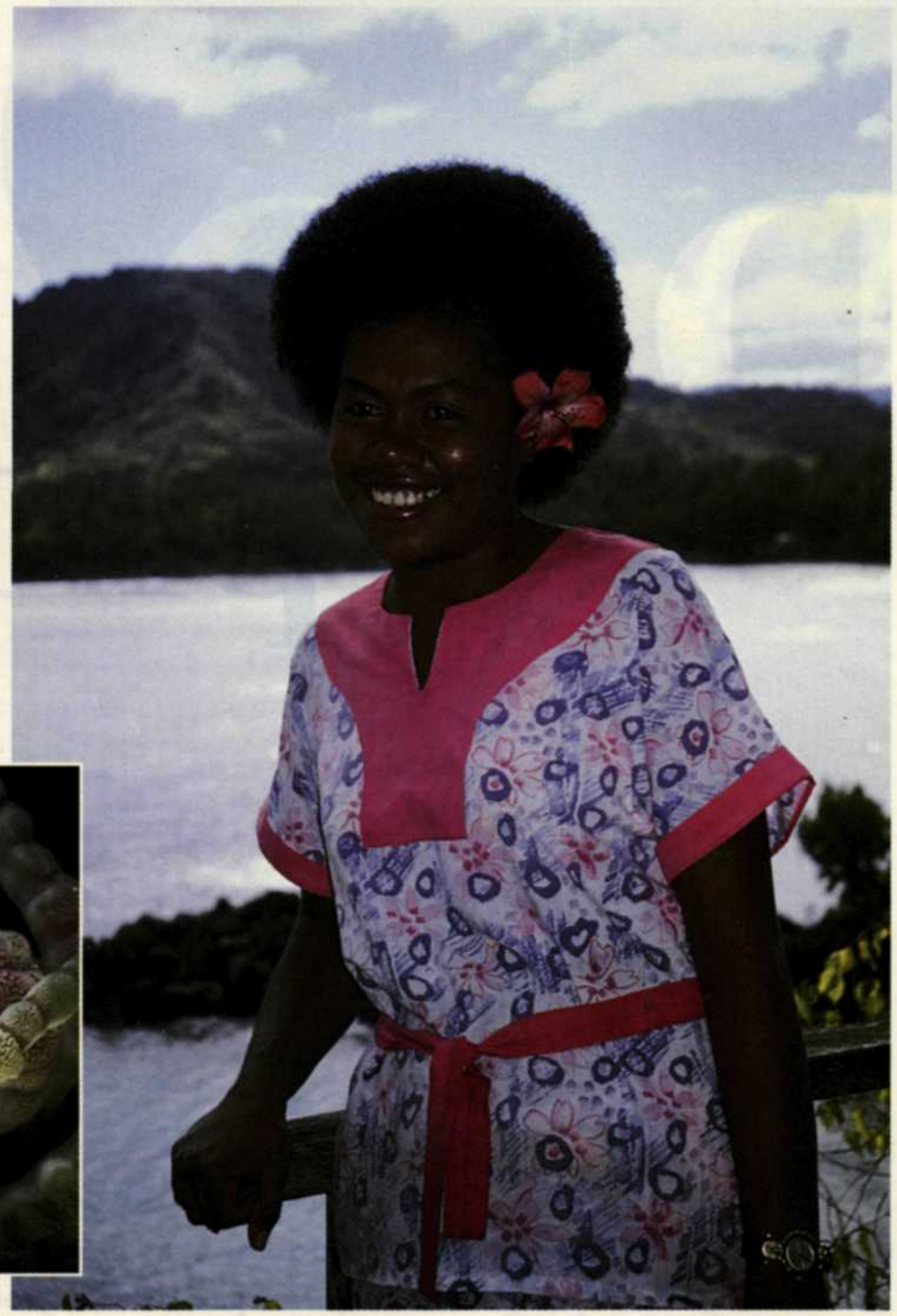
We ran a quick test roll on flowers, our favorite test subjects. The resulting slides were saturated with color. The ISO values seemed to be accurate and the exposure latitude was close to the ±½ stop indicated on the data sheets. We grabbed the film and packed our swimming suits, dive gear, sun-tan lotion, and cameras. Fiji—here we come!

Our Fiji trip was divided between two locations. The first portion of the trip was aboard the Nai'a, a 120-foot live-aboard dive boat. Owners Rob Barrel and his sister Alexx had invited us to present lectures on underwater photography. Since most of our time would be spent underwater, we thought it would be the first place to test these new films.

Underwater photography creates interesting challenges for the adventurous camera buff. The waters below offer some of the most difficult shooting conditions a photographer can encounter. For the close subjects we used CTprecisa 100, and for the more-distant critters CTprecisa 200 would

CTprecisa 100 is a highly versatile film, producing beautiful colors in ambient light (opposite page), outdoors with fill-flash (right) and even underwater with flash as the sole source of illumination (below). Grain is almost nonexistent, even in large sky areas, and sharpness is very high. Neutral tones remain neutral, with no trace of a color cast in highlights or shadows, even when the film is push-processed. Rich colors come out rich, pastel colors pastel, making the film ideal for nature subjects and people.





compensate for the decreased light levels. The Nai'a had E-6 processing on board, so we were able to check our progress after only a couple days of diving. The color saturation looked excellent on the distant shots and was outstanding on the extreme close-ups.

Now we thought we would give the film a whirl above water. A visit to the local village seemed like the perfect opportunity to capture the local color. We were escorted through the village by several of the women with flocks of excited kids in tow. As if that weren't enough photo opportunities, as we returned to the Nai'a, the setting sun created a marvelous silhouette sunset. Talk about the perfect ending to a perfect day!

After a week of being spoiled rotten, we moved to a land-based resort on Vanua Levu, Fiji's second largest island. Namale Resort was our home in paradise for three days. This gave us plenty of time to photograph flowers, local color and friendly Fijian people, and to finalize plans for our 25th anniversary stay for next year. We had such a great time in Fiji that when it came time say goodbye until next year, we had less than 15 exposures left!

As soon as we returned to the Northwest, we were busy processing the remaining rolls of film. Once the film was dry and mounted, we took a loupe to the images to make our final evaluation. Starting with CTprecisa 100, we looked at the close-up underwater images, colorful flowers, dramatic sunsets, and kids in the local village. The reds in the flower shots had excellent saturation without bleeding into adjacent colors. Most impressive were the purple and blue hues of two mating flat worms underwater. The people photos and scenics had uniformity of color from one scene to the next even when the lighting changed, or we added flash-fill. The grain pattern was very tight, even in the blue sky areas where grain normally makes its first appearance. A high level of sharpness in this emulsion was confirmed with the fine lines that appeared in the sunset images of the Nai'a.

We found the CTprecisa 200 images of the clown fish to be precise in their rendition of what we saw underwater. The scenics of the village church demonstrated that the grain pattern was still very tight, and the high level of sharpness produced extremely fine detail. The color balance of CTprecisa 200 so closely matched that of CTprecisa 100 that the only way we could tell them apart was to read the imprinted label on the slide mount!

The exposure latitude of both emulsions matched the

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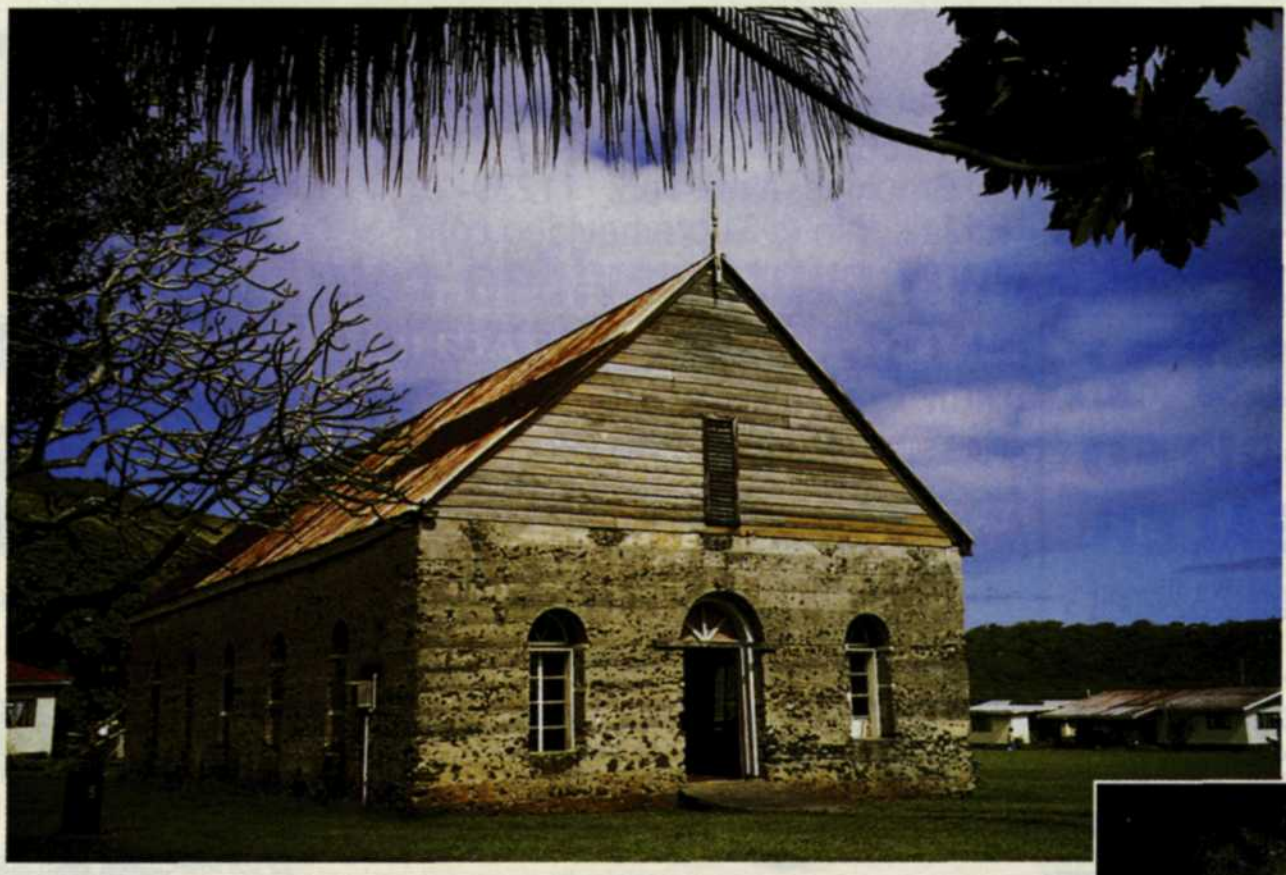
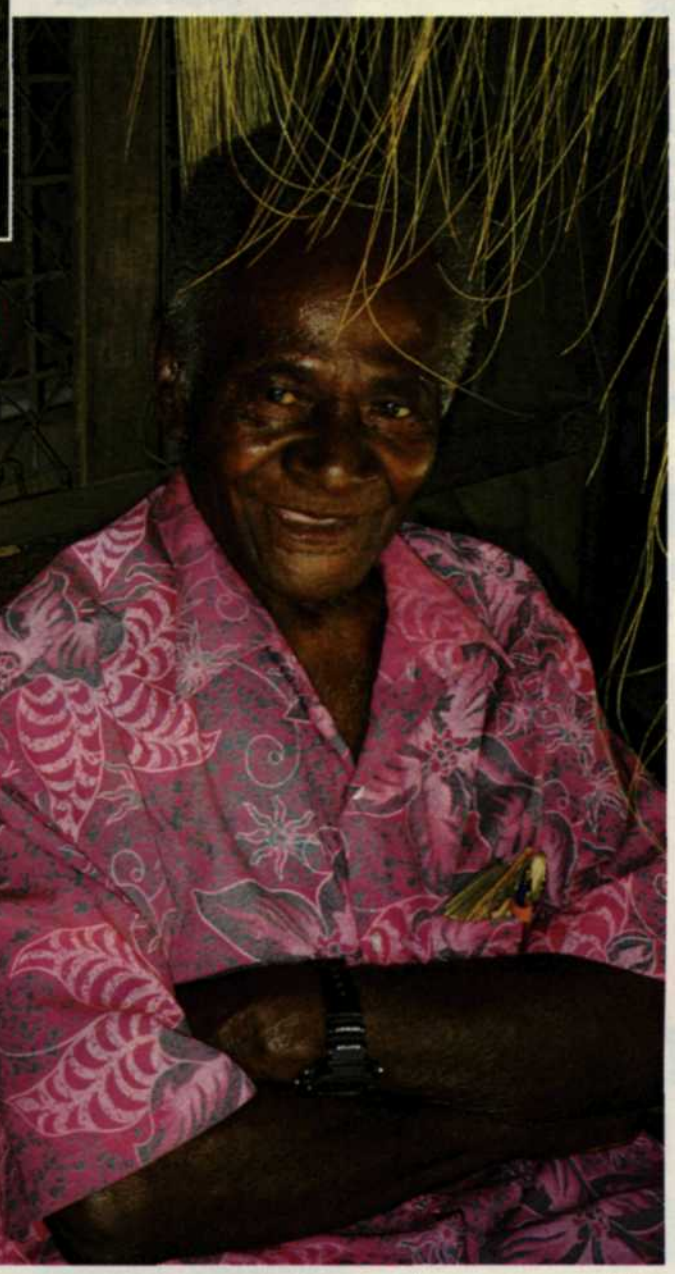


CTprecisa 200 is another very versatile film that can be used in a wide variety of shooting situations. Its extra stop of film speed provides more depth of field or greater flash range, while its image quality is still excellent. The extra stop of film speed also makes for easier existing-light shooting and fill-flash work in open shade (bottom). CTprecisa 200's RMS 12 granularity is as fine as that of any ISO 200 slide film (and much finer than some). This is an excellent general-purpose slide film for land and underwater use, combining good speed, color rendition and image quality in a single product.

target values set by Agfa at ±½ stop. Both emulsions have no reciprocity failure between one second and ⅟₁₀.₀₀₀ and a minor correction at 10 seconds (05Y for CTprecisa 100 and 10Y+05C for CTprecisa 200). Correction for tungsten lighting is with the standard 80B filter, and fluorescent lights will need some testing, but a CC30 magenta filter is a good start.



It seems that most of the slide films introduced today feature pushing capabilities. It's our feelings that pushing should only be used in emergencies, and that shooting film using the indicated ISO is the best way to go. Agfa does indicate that CTprecisa can be pushed, so we pushed both emulsions one and two stops each to see how they would do. Each film handled the pushing test well, so we guess that pushing CTprecisa might not be just limited to emergencies after all!

Without a doubt, we had a great time in Fiji. Agfa's CTprecisa made it possible to capture all the great moments with the fine precision that it was designed to do. All we need is some more Agfachrome CTprecisa and we're ready to go back!

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