Konica Super SR 200

Comparing The Top ISO 200 COLOR-NEGATIVE FILMS

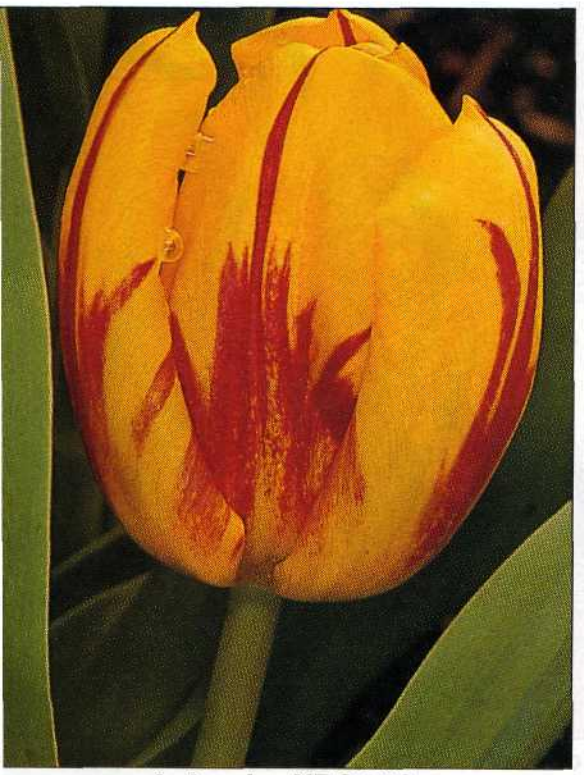
Which One Does What?

by Jack and Sue Drafahl

PHOTOGRAPHIC'S USER REPORT

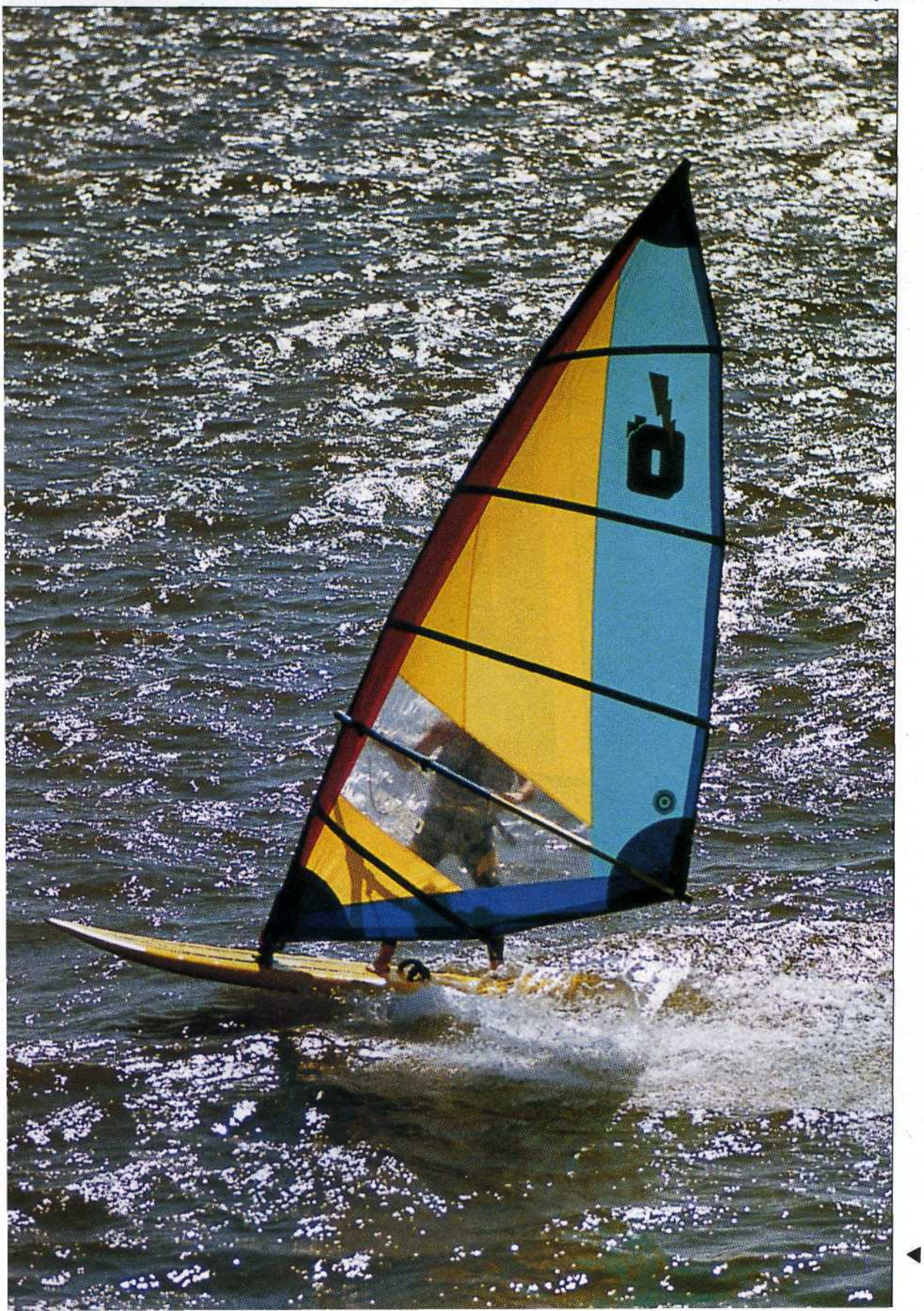
ISO 200 color-negative films have a unique purpose in the photo environment. We find that they are generally used by photographers who prefer a single film for all situations. They want a film that has excellent quality, but offers enough film speed to cover most of the photographic situations they encounter. Film manufacturers realize the importance of offering photographers exactly what they want, and each has developed their own version of an ISO 200 color-negative film.

For this review, we took one roll of each ISO 200 film and photographed a Macbeth color chart in full sunlight. A single Nikon N8008S with a 105mm AF Nikkor Macro lens was mounted on a sturdy tripod. Using the special feature of the Nikon MF-21 back, we made a 19-exposure bracket at .5-stop intervals. This film report is the result of examining those negatives as well as others that we made outdoors with



Agfacolor XRG 200

Fujicolor Super HG 200



each of the films.

KODAK GOLD 200

Kodak Gold 200 film (which arrived after our color deadline—hence the box of its predecessor, Kodacolor Gold 200, in our color lead shot) has gone through a variety of changes before reaching its present state. Using advanced DIAR technology, Kodak has come up with a film that maintains the quality of its Gold 100 film, but adds that extra stop of speed. We found the contrast of Gold 100 to be slightly above normal, yet it produced an excellent reproduction of neutral tones. Photos taken in both shade and sunlight have good color rendition throughout the image. Sharpness and grain were very similar to Gold 100, making Gold 200 a good candidate for action photos of your family, pets, or sporting activities. Gold 200 also works very well with flash, and has a close color balance between sun and flash in fill-flash situations.

In the darkroom, we found Gold 200 negatives easy to print with little variation from one negative to the next. Using our 19-bracket film test, we determined that the exposure latitude in sunlight was about –2 stops to +4 stops (EI 12 to EI 800). Under tungsten and fluorescent lighting we recommend No. 80A and CC30 magenta filters for color correction, but found that these color shifts could be corrected in the darkroom.

Kodak's Gold 200 is available in 12-, 24-, and 36-exposure 35mm cassettes. Eastman Kodak Company, 343 State St., Rochester, NY 14650; telephone (716) 724-4000.

FUJICOLOR SUPER HG 200

Fuji's solution to the battle of the ISO 200s is a sophisticated 14-layer

ALL PHOTOS BY THE AUTHORS

Polaroid OneFilm

Agfacolor Professional XRS 200

ISO 200 FILMS

emulsion that takes advantage of Fuji's new RIR (Reactivated Inhibitor Releaser) coupler. A variation of the DI-AR coupler, this new RIR coupler migrates to the correct layer before being activated. The result is extremely sharp edges between adjacent colors. Fuji has also reduced the size of the silver-halide crystal, using sensitivity-speck-formation technology. The shape of the crystal has been changed so the emulsion is thinner. The result is a very-fine-grain, high-resolution color-negative film.

We found Super HG 200 to record saturated colors in almost all lighting situations with little color shift, especially in the shadows. The film works extremely well with flash, fill-flash, and tungsten lighting. Our bracket test indicated that acceptable prints could be made from exposures of –2 to +4 stops (EI 12 to EI 800).

Fuji's Super HG 200 is available in 12-, 24-, and 36-exposure 35mm cassettes. Fuji Photo film U.S.A., Inc., 555 Taxter Rd., Elmsford, NY 10523; telephone (914) 789-8100.

SCOTCHCOLOR 200

3M throws its ISO 200 hat into the ring via a new and improved version of ScotchColor 200 color-negative film. This film includes a new Super DIR coupler that improves greens, and a new cyan coupler that corrects for cyan highlights that occur in some processing labs. Contrast and color saturation for this film are high, which makes it ideal for shooting in overcast or shade.

Upon close examination of the test negatives, we found the grain structure to be very close to that of ScotchColor

100. We also found that the film is slightly underrated, with an extra ½ stop of speed. We assume that this is due to the fact that 3M packages this film under 70 different labels, which are available to all levels of amateur photography. This extra ½ stop ensures that the user will get a high percentage of good exposures. Contrary to previous tests on the exposure latitude of this film, we surmised that its exposure latitude is 6½ stops (4 stops over and 2½ stops under). With this kind of latitude and the new autoexposure cameras, correct exposures should never be a problem.

ScotchColor 200 is available in 24- and 36-exposure 35mm cassettes. 3M, 3M Center, St. Paul, MN 55144-1000; telephone 1-800-695-FILM.

AGFACOLOR XRG 200

Agfa's contribution to ISO 200 color-negative technology comes in the form of an improvement to its DIR couplers. These improvements increase the film's overall color saturation and prevent color contamination from one layer to the next. Changes in the film's emulsion reduce light-scattering characteristics and intensify edge effects, giving this new film a much sharper look. Agfa has also included a new cyan coupler that improves stability in the printing process, and a new protective layer that helps keep the film from being scratched. All these new features are to counteract any abuse that might come from the photographer, and/or processing lab.

Looking at our 19 bracketed frames of Agfacolor XRG 200, we found exposure latitude to be from –2½ stops to +4 stops. We found XRG 200 to be well balanced under sun/flash combinations, as well as difficult tungsten-light situations. When the film is exposed under tungsten light, however, there is a slight loss of film speed. This can be corrected by adding ½–1 full stop of exposure. Printing from one negative to the next seemed to be very consistent, even when conditions changed from sunlight to shade.

Agfacolor XRG 200 is available in 12+3, 24+3, and 36-exposure 35mm cassettes. Agfa Corp., 100 Challenger Rd., Ridgefield Park, NJ 07660; telephone (201) 440-2500.

POLAROID ONEFILM

Polaroid feels so strongly about the use of one film for all situations, that they offer only one conventional color-negative film, OneFilm. It is targeted toward a variety of situations that most point-and-shoot photographers would run into. The contrast range of this film has been lowered to accommodate the many types of mixed-contrast lighting amateur photographers seem to encounter. Polaroid feels that these uncontrolled lighting situations normally cause a loss of subject detail, especially when sun and shade are involved.

Since the primary goal of most amateurs is to frequently record scenes for sentimental reasons, OneFilm keeps the contrast lower and the color saturation down, so the picture has a better chance of making it. The results are prints that hold detail in both shade and sunlight. The ISO rating of OneFilm is a true ISO 200, compared to most of the competition, which tends to rate its films lower. Polaroid is able to do this because of its lower contrast range. By rating OneFilm at its true ISO, its exposure latitude (–1½ to +4 stops) is slightly less than that of its competition.

Polaroid OneFilm is available in 12-, 24-, and 36-exposure 35mm cassettes. Polaroid Corp., 549 Technology Square, Cambridge, MA 02139; telephone (617) 577-2000.

KONICA SUPER SR 200

Konica has concentrated its high-tech film efforts on reducing the thickness of the ISO 200 film. Using computer simulations and advanced crystallographic analysis, Konica was able to design a multistructure crystal that is smaller and more efficient than before. In addition, Konica has developed new color couplers that have higher intensity and act faster. This, in turn, reduces the amount of color couplers required to make an image. The result is a film that has fine grain, high resolution, and excellent color saturation.

Analysis of Super SR 200 negatives and prints showed us that the film has less contrast than many of its counterparts. We would assume that Konica has gone for this level of contrast to ensure that subjects photographed in both sunlight and shade will be properly recorded. We found the exposure latitude of –2½ stops to +4 stops, plus the lower contrast, to be the insurance most amateur photographers need.

Konica Super SR 200 film is available in 12-, 24-, and 36-exposure 35mm cassettes. Konica U.S.A., Inc., 440 Sylvan Ave., Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632; telephone (201) 568-3100.

AGFACOLOR PROFESSIONAL XRS 200

For the professional photographer, Agfa offers XRS 200 color-negative film. This high-quality film emphasizes the professional characteristics needed to make prints of the highest quality. Very tight production tolerances are used to ensure uniformity of the emulsion, a necessary ingredient for professional photography. Studio photography, for example, requires consistency from one photo shoot of a product to the next, two months later. An extremely balanced gradation curve for each emulsion layer ensures no color crossovers in the final print. The reciprocity characteristics are impressive, with little effect on color or exposure, even with exposures over ten seconds.

Contrast and color saturation of XRS 200 are almost identical to Agfacolor XRG 200 amateur color-negative film. Exposure latitude is also identical at –2½ stops to +4 stops. We found the printing pack and color balance very similar to XRG 200, but the rendition of subtle colors to be a little better than with its amateur counterpart.

Agfacolor Professional XRS 200 is available in 24- and 36-exposure 35mm cassettes and 120. Agfa Corp., 100 Challenger Rd., Ridgefield Park, NJ 07660; telephone (201) 440-2500.

PRINTING THE ISO 200 COLOR-NEGATIVE FILMS

When we laid all seven color-negative tests down next to each other, the difference in orange color masks became obvious. Agfacolor XRG 200, Agfacolor Professional XRS 200, and ScotchColor 200 all had very similar color masks. These three film masks had the least amount of orange tint. Polaroid OneFilm, Fujicolor Super HG 200, and Konica Super SR 200 all had a very similar bright orange color mask. Kodak Gold 200 stood by itself with a color mask halfway between the two other groups of films. Printing tests demonstrated that these films could be grouped in this manner for starting your color printing packs. ■