

120-SIZE KODAK EKTAR 25

The World's Sharpest Color Film Gets Bigger

by Jack and Sue Drafahl

PHOTOGRAPHIC'S USER REPORT

What would happen if you took the world's sharpest 35mm color-negative film and made it available in 120 format? First, you'd make a lot of medium-format photographers extremely happy; but you'd also set a new quality standard for professional photographers. When 35mm Ektar 25 was introduced, the world was awestruck by its extreme sharpness, which allowed magnifications previously unheard of from such a tiny negative. Kodak has now taken this sharpness to a higher level with 120 Ektar 25. Many situations requiring bulky 4×5 cameras can now be shot using 120 Ektar 25 in the wide variety of versatile and handy medium-format cameras.

FILM CONSTRUCTION

Manufacturing of 120 Ektar is similar to that of the 35mm version, but with some minor changes. The basic structure of the film, which comprises nine layers, takes advantage of special DIR and DIAR couplers that keep the colors from drifting from one layer to another. These time-released inhibitors allow full development of a solid color in one layer, while keeping it from bleeding into the other layers. This creates what Kodak calls "Sharper Color."

The film's magenta layer (green sensitive) uses the highly efficient T-grains; the yellow layer (blue sensitive) uses a combination of tabular and cubic grains; and the cyan layer (red sensitive) uses 100% cubic grains. These very thin layers are supported on a base that is 3.6 mils thick. The emulsion and base sides both have a matte surface, which allows retouching on either side.

MEDIUM-FORMAT APPLICATIONS

Unlike the 35mm version of Ektar 25, the 120 version actually has a variety of negative sizes possible, depending on the camera you use. For

instance, 6×4.5, 6×6, 6×7, and 6×9cm are just a few of the formats commonly found in medium format. In addition, you could use this film in a roll-film back on a 4×5 camera. This would be extremely handy for the photographer who needs the quality of Ektar 25, but demands the swings and tilts found on the 4×5 camera.

Equally impressive are the Ektar 25 negatives shot on the 120 panoramic cameras, which create negatives even larger than the 6×9cm size. Be warned, though: the resolution of this film is so great that it tends to accentuate deficiencies in your camera lenses that you never saw before!

STUDIO PHOTOGRAPHY

Today's studio photographer usually deals with softboxes, umbrellas, and other types of soft lighting. When you shoot a subject against a white background under this type of lighting, you may find that the whites are not white enough in your final print, as a result of having to maintain a dark enough subject density. With Ektar 25, however, the contrast range is higher, thus making the new film an ideal candidate for shooting such subjects. With this extra contrast level, you can keep the background very white and still print the subject as desired.

The same philosophy applies to studio setups with black backgrounds, in which you want to eliminate the background in order to provide the illusion of something being suspended in space. We also found that many types of copy subjects, such as maps and colored line copy, reproduced better on Ektar 25 than on other color-negative films because of its higher contrast.

APPLICATIONS

ARCHITECTURAL AND SCENIC PHOTOGRAPHY: Ektar's higher contrast and extremely high resolution make it a dynamite film for architectural photography. Intricacy and ex-

tremely fine detail can make viewers feel as though they were actually there.

SCENICS: Scenic photographs taken with Ektar 25 produce images with a wealth of fine detail, making such images ideal candidates for photo murals. We found that scenes taken with this film tend to have darker blue skies without the aid of a polarizer. Color saturation in both the architectural studies and the scenes was rich and vivid.

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY: Since good aerial photographs must exhibit fine detail in the enlargements, it's crucial that the film used is able to provide extreme sharpness, fine grain, and high contrast. By using a good-quality medium-format camera and 120 Ektar, you can make aerials that zing with contrast, and have sharpness that matches many of the best aerial camera setups. The only drawback to using this film for aerial work is the slow ISO 25 film speed, but we feel that with the newer high-speed lenses, shutter speeds up to 1/1000 can be attained.

IN THE DARKROOM: Printing 120 Ektar may take some time getting used to. First, you will find that using a grain focuser with one of these negatives is like counting grains of sand from six feet away. Secondly, you will find the resolution of these negatives so high that misalignment of your enlarger, or poor lens quality, will be obvious on your first print. Furthermore, the film is very thin; it takes a bit of practice to load onto metal reels.

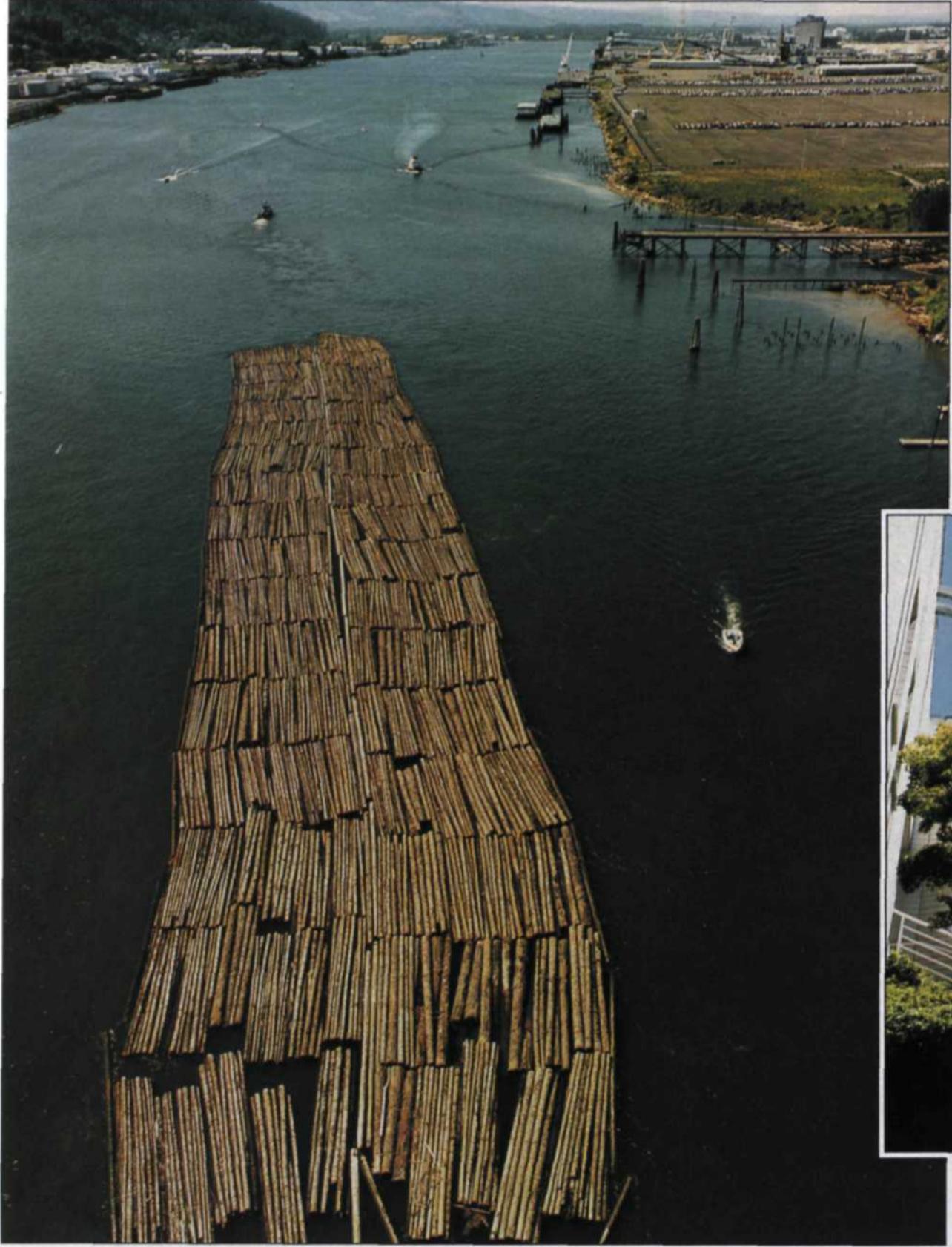
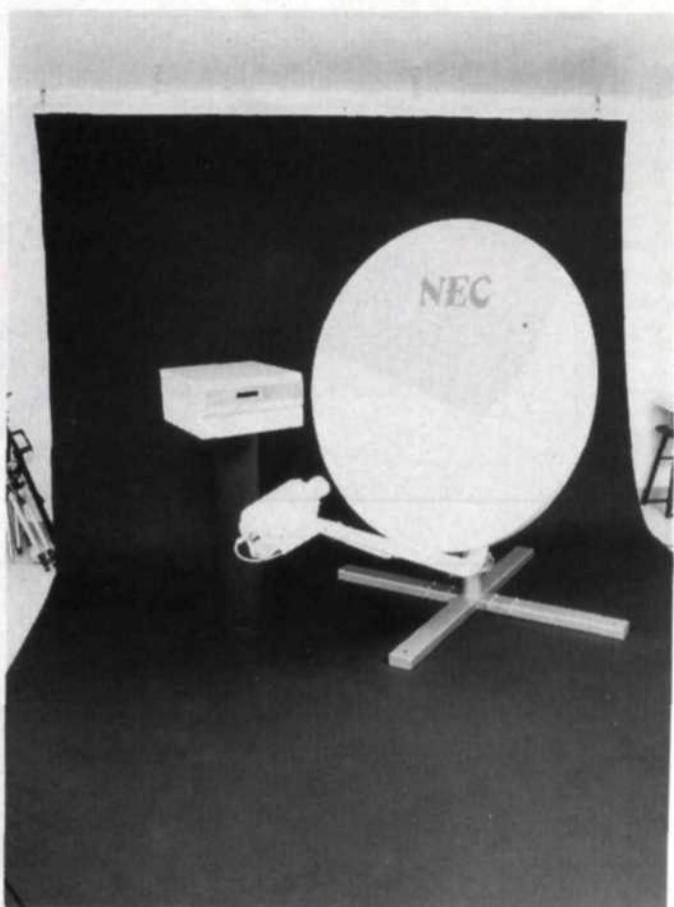
Generally, when you make very large prints from a color negative, the contrast level drops with the scattering of light, and therefore reduces the overall sharpness of the print. With Ektar 25 120 negatives, you are able to maintain the high overall contrast and sharpness levels. These negatives are ideal for the photographer who wants to create backlit displays using Duratrans display material.

Printing 120 Ektar is easy. We use our "Gold Standard" printing pack



ALL PHOTOS BY AUTHORS

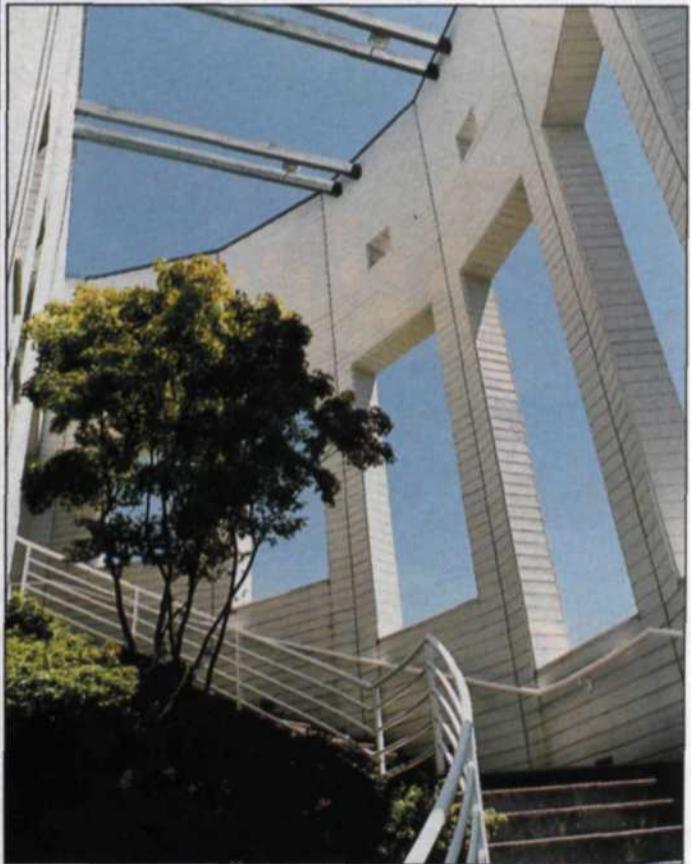
We found Ektar 25 to have some unusual but highly useful studio applications. For example, in the color photo at left, the black paper background and support props are invisible in a normally made color print. In the underprinted version at right, you can see those supports. Ektar 25, because of its increased contrast, produces a black that looks like the background has been "dropped out," making objects appear to float in space. Also, even though the NEC peripherals were photographed with soft lighting, they have a clean "white-enough" image tone in the normally printed final print.

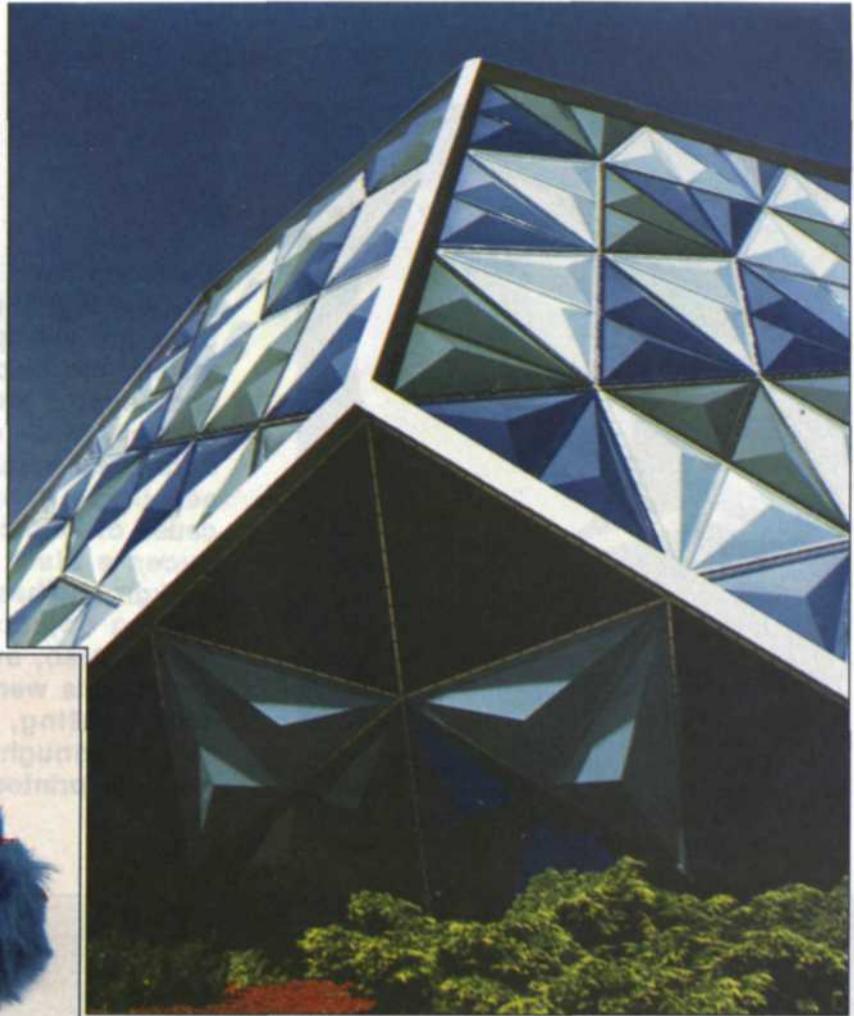


as a reference point when using our Durst miniprinter. Ektar tends to be -5Y and +5M from our normal setting. Almost any custom lab, and even some one-hour labs, can now print the new Ektar 25 120 film.

SPECS

Reciprocity failure with this film is almost nonexistent with a no-correction limit of 10 seconds to $\frac{1}{10,000}$. The film can be used under tungsten lights with an 80A filter, and under photoflood lamps with an 80B filter.





*Presenting the new film that's
making a lot of professional
photographers very happy.*



We found that a 30M filter works quite well under fluorescent lights for full color correction, but a slight correction in the printing process netted excellent results when a correcting filter was unavailable.

We also found that if you wanted even higher contrast for color line copy, or some creative applications, you could push this film to ISO 50 with little image deterioration.

Ektar 25 in the 120 format should be available at your local camera store as you read this. It is available only in single rolls, with a list price of \$ 5.59 a roll. Give this extraordinary new 120 film a try and we bet that your 4×5 camera will begin gathering dust.

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