

TOP COLOR PRINT FILMS

by the Editors

Color-print films are by far the most popular with the buying public, from snapshooters to professional wedding and portrait photographers. Even photojournalists love the great exposure latitude and the ability to color-correct when prints are made.

In the last decade, color-print-film technology has made great strides, each new generation far outshining its predecessor. The current films are superb—and there are some 46 of them. So, selecting ten from among them was not an easy task—there are far more than ten great films! But we polled our editors and contributors, and came up with this list of ten top color-print films. We present them here from the slowest to the fastest.



Kodak Ektar 25 (soon to be redubbed Kodak Royal Gold 25) was introduced in 1989 as the sharpest, finest-grained color-print film available, ideal for use when huge enlargements are desired. It's still ideal for this purpose, producing virtually grain-free blow-ups to 20x30 inches from 35mm negatives. Color reproduction is excellent. This is a connoisseur's film—but as such, it does re-

quire special treatment. Its slow ISO 25 speed means you must use a tripod if you are to reap the benefits of its superb sharpness; and it lacks the tremendous exposure latitude of Kodak's Gold mass-market print films. But the careful worker can perform wonders with this superb film. It comes in 12-, 24- and 36-exposure 35mm cassettes. Eastman Kodak Co., 343 State St., Rochester, NY 14650; 1-800-242-2424.

This Monument Valley panorama was shot on Kodak Ektar 25 by Steve Rosenbaum with a Minolta Freedom Vista.





Agfacolor Ultra 50 offers highly saturated, richer-than-life colors, bringing out the brilliance of colors, even in dull lighting. It also offers higher-than-normal contrast, for rich blacks and added snap. Image quality is superb; grain is almost nonexistent. At ISO 50, Ultra 50 provides a full stop more film speed than Ektar 25, allowing handheld shooting in more situations (although, again, to get maximum benefit from the film's great sharpness, it's best to work with the camera firmly mounted on a tripod). Agfacolor Ultra 50 comes in 24- and 36-exposure 35mm cassettes. Agfa Corp., Consumer and Professional Div., 100 Challenger Rd., Ridgefield, NJ 07660; (201) 440-2500.

The roof of a Santa Fe restaurant was photographed on Agfacolor Ultra 50 by Steven I. Rosenbaum with a Minolta Maxxum 9xi camera.



Fujicolor Reala gets its name from its realistic color reproduction (thanks in large part to a fourth, cyan-sensitive emulsion layer that complements the standard red-, blue- and green-sensitive layers to provide this film with a response to light similar to that of human vision), and for this it is our consensus favorite among the superb ISO 100 color-print films on the market. Color reproduction is extremely accurate under a wide variety of lighting conditions, with color rendition under fluorescent lighting the best we've encountered. Skin tones are realistic and smooth, making Reala a

first-rate portrait film. It also handles white well, making it a good film for wedding photographers. Despite the fact that Reala was introduced nearly five years ago, its image quality (i.e., grain and sharpness) is among the best in the ISO 100 speed class, and gradation from highlights to shadows is excellent. Fujicolor Reala comes in 24- and 36-exposure 35mm cassettes. Fuji Photo Film U.S.A., Inc., 555 Taxter Rd., Elmsford, NY 10523; telephone (914) 789-8100.

This sunflower close-up was made on Fujicolor Reala color print film by Contributing Editors Jack and Sue Drafafl.



An original member of Agfa's Triade system of new-generation pro films (ISO 200 and 400 Optima films have since joined this excellent film family), **Agfacolor Optima 125** is noted for its true-to-life color saturation and contrast, and at ISO 125, is an excellent general-purpose color-print film. It's great for nature photography and photojournalism and other situations where natural color reproduction and excellent image quality are required. (With the recent additions of Agfacolor Optima 200 and 400, which share the color and contrast characteristics of their slower namesake, the Triade family designation has been dropped.) Agfacolor Optima 125 comes in 24- and 36-exposure 35mm cassettes.

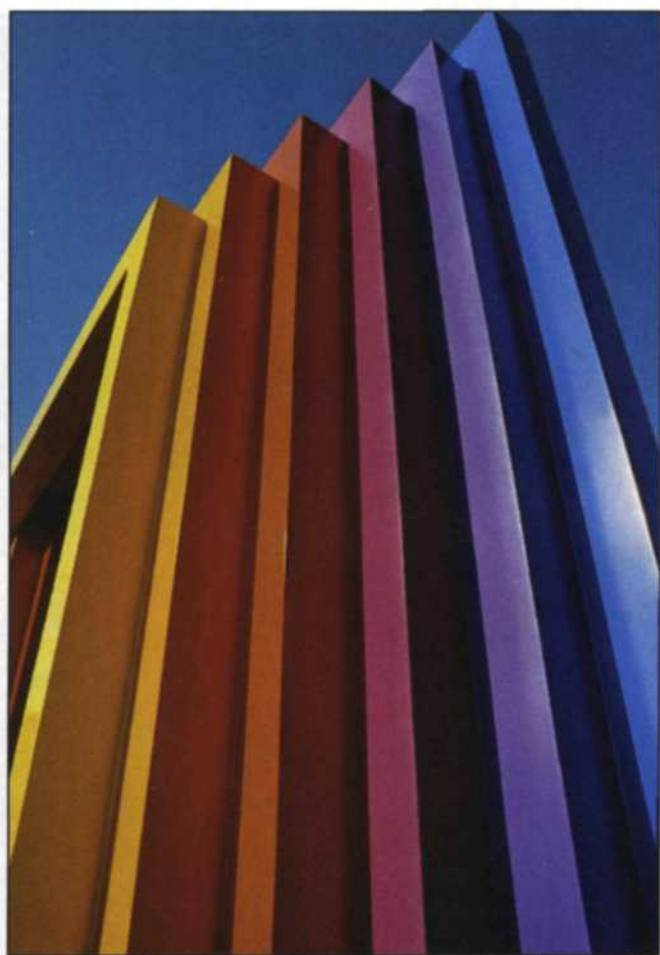
Two girls were photographed with Agfacolor Optima 125 by Jack and Sue Drafafl.



Kodak Gold Super 200 is a great general-purpose color-print film, offering lots of exposure latitude, vivid and accurate color reproduction under a variety of lighting conditions and light levels, and super image quality for the speed. At ISO 200, Gold Super 200 is a full stop faster than the popular ISO 100 color-print films, thus providing

twice the action-stopping power or another stop of depth of field with little cost in image quality. Reciprocity characteristics are excellent. This film has good resistance to changes due to less-than-ideal storage conditions, and its excellent image quality makes it well suited to pro work, as well. Kodak Gold Super 200 comes in 12-, 24- and 36-exposure 35mm cassettes.

Canyon de Chelly was photographed with Kodak Gold Super 200 by Editor Jenni Bidner.



Kodak Gold Ultra 400, the company's mass-market high-speed color-print emulsion, features fine grain rivaling that of not only the full-stop-slower ISO 200 color-print films, but that of many two-stop-slower ISO 100 color-print films, as well. It also provides tremendous sharpness for its ISO 400 film speed. Gold Ultra 400 offers beautiful colors that don't call attention to the fact that such a high-speed film was used to make the picture. Exposure latitude is excellent, and contrast is crisp. In short, this is a great general-purpose film, not only for action and low-light shooting, but even for shooting in bright light when you'd like to use a faster shutter speed for sharper action shots and/or a small aperture for greater depth of field, as in existing-light close-up shooting. Gold Ultra 400 responds well to electronic-flash illumination, and doubles the effective ranges of an electronic-flash unit compared to an ISO 100 film. Skin tones are outstanding—this is a great people-picture film. Kodak Gold Ultra 400 comes in 12-, 24- and 36-exposure 35mm cassettes.

This colorful sculpture was photographed on Kodak Gold Ultra 400 by Jack and Sue Drafa.



Kodak Pro 400 brought Kodak's T-Grain technology to medium-format photographers and originally was available only in 120 and 220 sizes, but now also comes in pro-packs containing five 36-exposure 35mm cassettes. Aimed at commercial and industrial photographers, Pro 400 produces pleasing flesh tones, accurate yet

highly saturated colors and great sharpness and low granularity for its ISO 400 speed. Pro 400 handles a variety of lighting conditions well, with very good color reproduction in dim lighting and mixed lighting. Wedding and portrait photographers like Pro 400 when they want more color saturation than the standard wedding films provide, along with excellent flesh tones.

Orchids were shot under low-light conditions with Kodak Pro 400 film by Jenni Bidner.





Offering the grain, sharpness and rich colors of an ISO 400 film, the ISO 800 **Fujicolor Super G 800** just flat amazed us when we tested it upon its introduction late last year. Here's a film fast enough to allow shooting night football games and indoor events by existing light, yet it totally avoids the drawbacks of large grain, loss of fine detail, weak blacks and muted colors typically associated with such films in the past. While directed at press/professional photographers (and thus sold only in 20-roll pro-packs of 36-exposure 35mm cassettes), Fujicolor Super G 800 makes a good general-purpose film whenever such a high film speed is needed.

This speeding motorcyclist was photographed on Fujicolor Super G 800 at Willow Springs Raceway by Senior Editor Mike Stensvold.



Fujicolor Super HG 1600 is a popular film with wedding photographers, stage photographers, photojournalists and sports-action shooters when they have to work in dim lighting indoors or at night, and it's our consensus favorite super-speed color-print film. It is noticeably grainier and less sharp than slower films, but it produces bright, rich colors even when over- or underexposed. Many low-

light sports and news photos are shot with this film. Super HG 1600, at ISO 1600, provides enough speed to handle most existing-light shooting situations, and it can be pushed a stop to EI 3200 with good results (and two stops to EI 6400 if necessary with satisfactory results). Exposure latitude is good for such a fast film. Increased contrast provides good blacks and rich colors in dim light as well as good whites. Fujicolor Super HG 1600 comes in 12-, 24- and 36-exposure cassettes and 20-roll pro packs of 36-exposure cassettes.

Photojournalist Michael P. Farrell photographed the English band, Doctor Rain, during the filming of a rock video. He used Fujicolor Super HG 1600 film.



The fastest (and one of the oldest) color-print films on the market, **Konica SR-G 3200** still provides remarkably good grain and sharpness for its incredible ISO 3200 film speed. Color reproduction is excellent for the speed in a variety of lighting conditions, and blacks are good. Like its revolutionary predecessor (SR-V 3200), SR-G 3200 is popular with surveillance photographers and astrophotographers due to its high speed and good reciprocity characteristics. SR-G 3200 can be pushed to EI 6400 for surveillance work, and to EI 12,500 for pointillistic special-effects photos. Konica SR-G 3200 comes in 24- and 36-exposure 35mm cassettes. Konica U.S.A., Inc., 440 Sylvan Ave., Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632; telephone (201) 568-3100.

This action photograph of a nighttime baseball game was made with Konica SR-G 3200 by Jack and Sue Drafahl. □