

10 BEST Color-Print Films

We pick our favorites

by the Editors

While you really can't go wrong choosing any of today's excellent major-brand films, everyone has his or her favorites. So, as we do at this time each year, we polled our editors and contributors as to their favorite color-print films, and present you with the results on these pages. And as always, the films are listed from slowest to fastest, in alphabetical order by manufacturer.



PHOTO BY LYNNE EODICE

Agfa Vista 100

Replacing the excellent Agfacolor HDC Plus 100 (a member of last-year's "favorites" list), Vista 100 features Agfa's new Eye Vision Technology, which sensitizes the emulsion to "see" things more as the human eye does (without utilizing a fourth emulsion layer). The result is an even better film with enhanced color reproduction, especially in the blue and green areas, and better results under fluorescent illumination. You get high color saturation along with accurate reproduction of pastel tones. Retained are excellent image quality, exposure latitude (from -2 to +3 stops), and reciprocity characteristics (no compensation is needed with exposure times from one second to $\frac{1}{10,000}$, and just a $\frac{1}{2}$ -stop increase is needed at 10 seconds. Agfa Corp., 100 Challenger Rd., Ridgefield Park, NJ 07660; 201/440-2500; www.agfaphoto.com.



Kodak Royal Gold 100

Kodak offers the Royal Gold series as its "elite" consumer-film family, and Royal Gold 100 has the finest grain, the greatest sharpness and the richest colors in the line. This film can yield excellent huge enlargements (best results for huge enlargements come with a tripod-mounted camera so camera shake doesn't negate the film's great sharpness), and produces accurate skin tones for people pictures, along with its bright, vivid colors. Eastman Kodak Co., 343 State St., Rochester, NY 14650; 800/242-2424; www.kodak.com.



Agfacolor Portrait XPS 160

PHOTO BY MIKE STENSVOID





PHOTO BY JACK AND SUE DRAFAHL

Konica Color Centuria 200

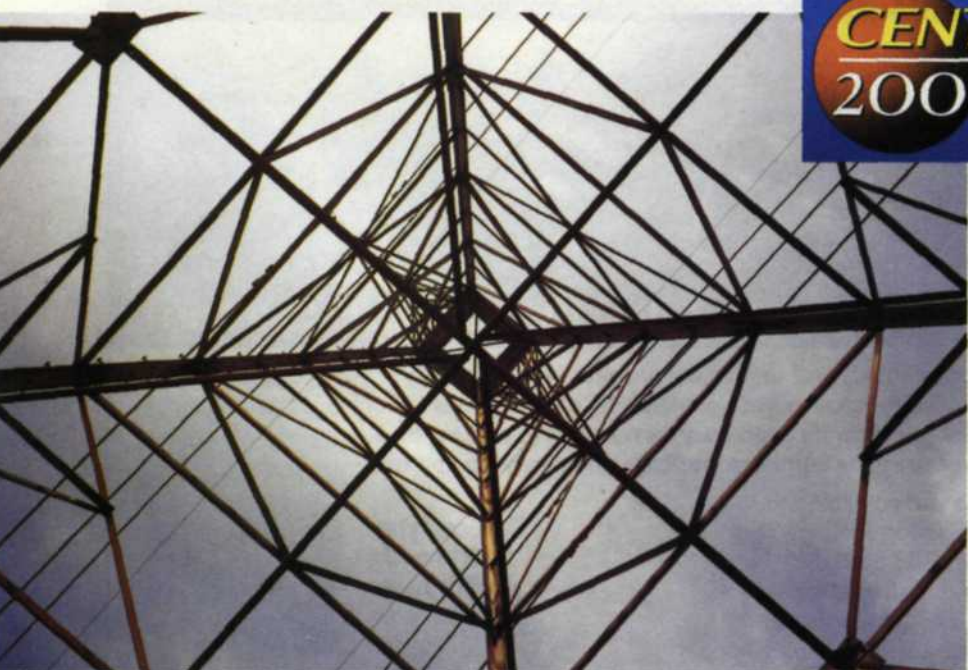


PHOTO BY MIKE STENSVOLD



While it's not the best-known film brand in America, Konica makes some fine films. Featuring three Centuria technological advances, the Color

Centuria line provides fine grain and good performance. Centuria Crystal yields grain 30% smaller than that of Konica's previous VX print-film line. Centuria Coupler doubles the reactivity of the film for more sensitivity and greater stability. Centuria DIR Coupler precisely controls diffusion for sharper images with more-vivid colors. It all works. We especially like the ISO 200 emulsion in the line—a popular film speed with consumers. Konica Photo Imaging, 725 Darlington Ave., Mahwah, NJ 07430; 201/MY-KONICA; www.konica.com.

Fujicolor Superia X-TRA 400

With its RMS 4 granularity and 125/50-lpm resolving power, Superia X-TRA 400 offers the image quality of an ISO 100 film—with four times the speed. X-TRA 400 incorporates Fuji's Fourth Color Layer technology, adding a cyan-sensitive layer for extremely accurate color rendition under a wide variety of illumination types (including tricky fluorescents and mixed lighting). Colors and skin tones are beautiful, and the film performs equally well in ambient light and with electronic flash. It's a great combo of high film speed and excellent image quality.



PHOTO BY MARY MCGRATH

Though it's been around for several years, Portrait XPS 160 still has the lowest published RMS granularity rating of any general-use color-print film (RMS 3.5), along with the highest reported resolving power (150 lines per millimeter with a 1000:1 ratio test target). Besides all that, it's a great people film, as you'd guess from its name. Its lower contrast and slightly muted colors produce beautiful skin tones. XPS 160 is also handy for shooting contrasty scenes and subjects.

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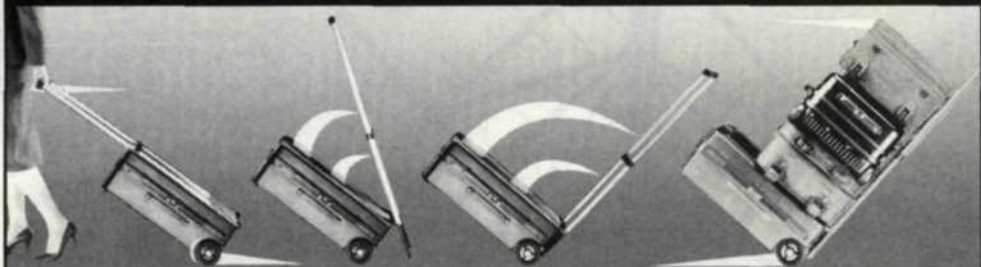
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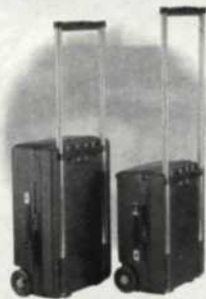


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Kodak Professional Portra 400VC

A terrific available-light portrait film, Portra 400VC has it all: 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). And it handles those hard-to-reproduce colors very well—a purple dress and a

purple flower might look the same to the eye, but they'll often photograph differently. Portra films reproduce colors



much as they appear to the eye. Portra 400VC is a little grainier than Supra 400 (and Portra 400NC, 400VC's normal-color counterpart), but image quality is excellent, and skin tones are beautiful. This is our "standard" available-light portrait film.

Fujicolor Superia X-TRA 800

The latest incarnation of our long-time favorite ISO 800 color-print film, Superia X-TRA 800 produces image quality darned near as good as that of the best ISO 400 films. We love this film for handheld shooting with supertelephoto lenses as well as for low-light action photography and extending the range of an electronic flash. It produces beautiful colors with existing light and with flash, and can be pushed to EI 1600 when necessary. (Another excellent 800-speed Fuji film is NHG II 800 Professional, which has a Real-based fourth emulsion layer for realistic colors under a variety of lighting sources, and is optimized for wedding and portrait photography, but for all-around shooting we love X-TRA 800.)

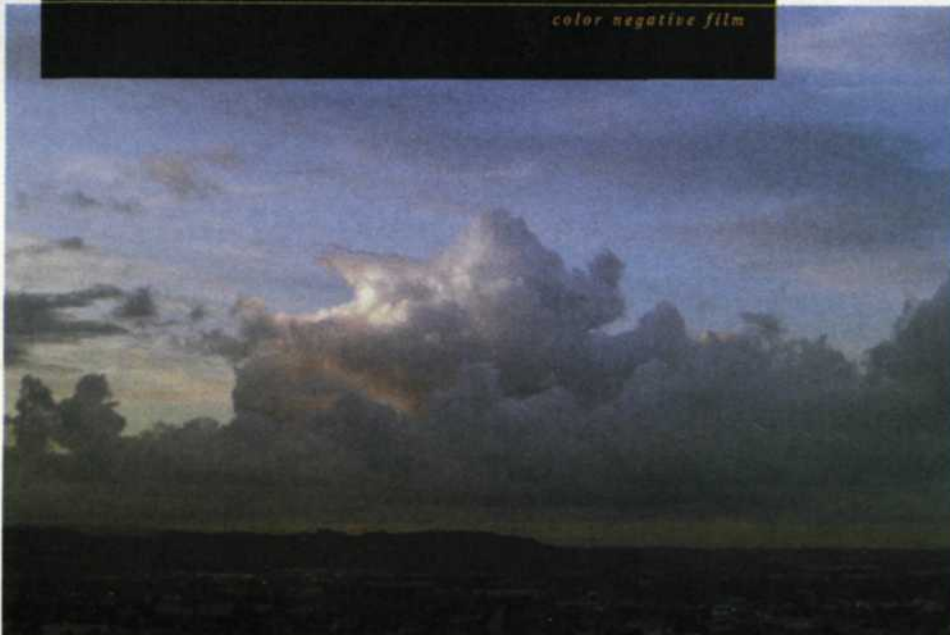


PHOTO BY MIKE STENSVOID

Kodak Professional Supra 400

Kodak's finest-grained ISO 400 pro color-print film, Supra 400 replaced Ektapress PJ400 as a workhorse photojournalism film with excellent image quality, color rendition and versatility—it produces great results with nature, action, products, people and just about anything. This is a terrific choice when you need to be prepared for existing light or unknown conditions. And it can be pushed to EI 800 with good results.

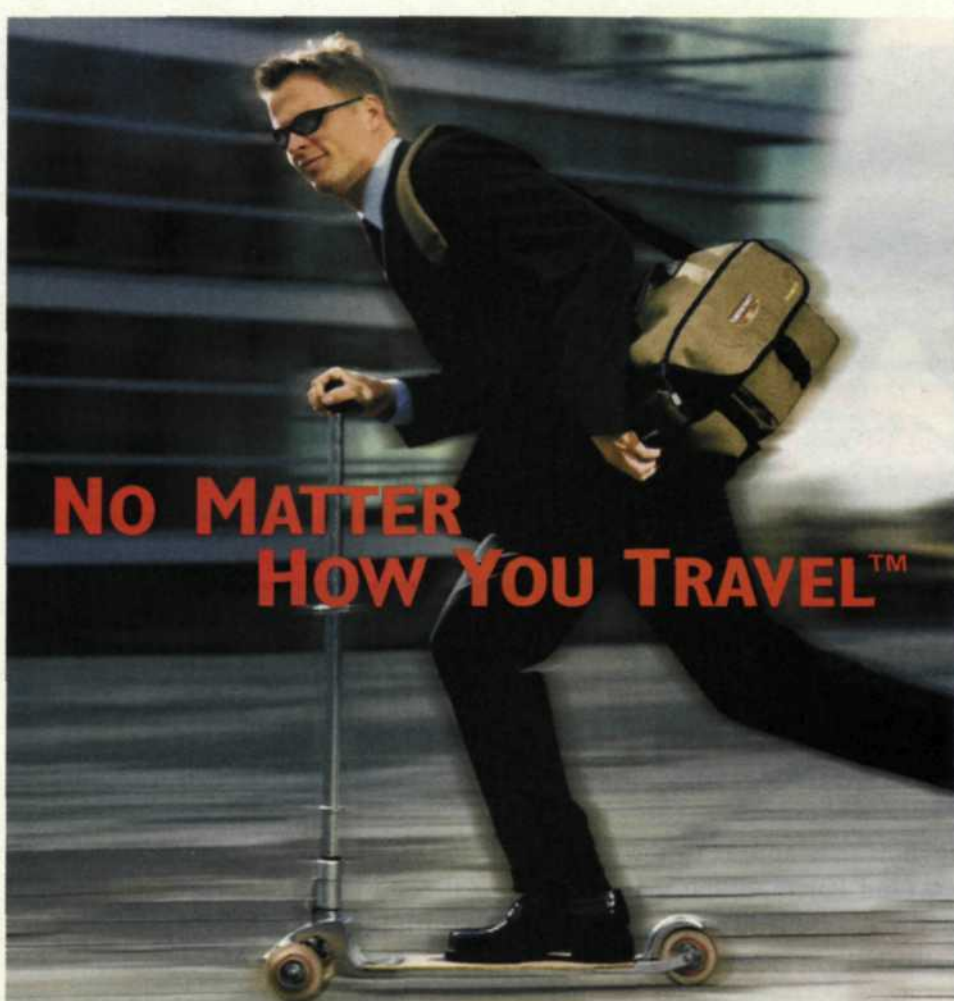


Kodak Professional Portra 800

Like Portra 400VC, Portra 800 is a beautiful "people" film—at ISO 800! This is a fine available-light wedding and portrait film, but it's also great 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 Supra 800's amazingly fine grain. Like Supra films, Portra films scan very well—important for anyone who wants to use their images digitally. Note: Portra 800 has a normal color balance, like that of Portra 400NC, rather than Portra 400VC's vivid colors. ■

Fujicolor NPS 160 Professional

Fuji's Reala, the first color-print film to incorporate a fourth emulsion layer to give it a spectral response similar to that of the human eye, was a perennial member of our "favorites" list until the introduction of NPS 160—which provides all of Reala's benefits plus $\frac{2}{3}$ stop more speed. NPS 160 even retains Reala's excellent RMS 4 granularity and 125/63-lpm resolving power. Who says you can't get something for nothing? NPS 160 is optimized for portrait and wedding photography, works very well in available light and flash, and is great for general photography, too. And since its introduction, Fuji has improved NPS 160's exposure latitude and enhanced its contrast and skin tones. A great film! Fuji Photo Film U.S.A., Inc., 555 Taxter Rd., Elmsford, NY 10523; 800/800-FUJI; www.fujifilm.com.



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PHOTO BY RON LEACH

Viewfinder

(Continued from page 18)

Pet Photography Contest

PhotoAlley.com has announced their pet photography contest. Beginning August 1, PhotoAlley community members may submit their most treasured images of pets and domesticated animals. PhotoAlley will award a \$1000 cash Grand Prize, a \$300 First Place Prize and a \$200 Second Place Prize. These three winning images, as well as 12 Honorable Mentions, will be featured in an online showcase on the website. Photographs can be made with traditional film or digital cameras, but they must be submitted in digital form (100KB, JPEG) as uploads to the PhotoAlley site. The contest deadline is October 31. For more information and contest rules, visit PhotoAlley.com. Membership to PhotoAlley is free.



PHOTO BY JOE A. SANDLER

"Indivisible" Exhibit at CCP

The Center for Creative Photography (CCP) at the University of Arizona is presenting "Indivisible: Stories of American Community," a collective vision of local life and action in America through the experience of 12 diverse communities and their citizens. On view through September 30, the exhibition features nearly 200 original photographs by 12 distinguished photographers including Dawoud Bay, Bill Burke, Lucy Capehart, Lynn Davis, Terry Evans, Debbie Fleming Caffrey, Lauren Greenfield, Joan Liftin, Reagan Louie, Danny Lyon, Sylvia Plachy and Eli Reed. On September 21 and 22, the CCP welcomes the "Indivisible" photographers for a special weekend of talks by the artists and an Artist's Reception. For more information, contact the University of Arizona at 520/621-7968 or visit the CCP's website at www.creativephotography.org. ■



PHOTO BY JOAN LIFTIN

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