

# KODAK EKTACHROME 50 HC

## A Surprise New 50-Speed Slide Film from Kodak

by Jack and Sue Drafa

PHOTOGRAPHIC'S  
USER  
REPORT

When Kodak releases new films, especially at PMA, there is generally a lot of fanfare. This year was different. A new Ektachrome was announced, but with such little publicity most people didn't know it. This film is so new that very little technical information is available at this writing.

This new emulsion is very similar to Kodak's 100 HC film, but 50 HC offers extra sharpness along with its reduced speed.

In the past, photographers needing lower ISO films reached for the Kodachrome 25 or 64. But today's photographer needs his film the same day it is shot, usually, and unless you live in a large metropolitan area with same-day-Kodachrome-service-type labs, you will have to wait a few days to see your exposures. 50 HC offers the photographer high sharpness, color saturation, and fine grain, yet the E-6 film can be processed quickly anywhere in the world.

According to Peter M. Palermo, vice president and general manager of Kodak's Consumer Imaging Division, "We have determined that a reversal film with the color characteristics of our popular Ektachrome 100 HC film at a lower ISO speed and featuring a higher degree of sharpness would be welcomed by slide enthusiasts. Ektachrome 50 HC film is the emulsion to use for sparkling scenic photos, informal portraits, and colorful close-ups of subjects possessing fine detail. The film's characteristics will reward the discriminating SLR user with outstanding slides."

### TESTING & RESULTS

Since we were also reviewing the new Fuji slide film this month, it was natural to shoot similar, and in some cases, identical, subjects. Although a comparison of Fujichrome Velvia and Ektachrome 50 HC is logical on the surface, it is really an unfair com-

parison. Fujichrome Velvia is a professional film available in sizes from 35mm to 11×14 sheets; 50 HC is designated by Kodak as an "amateur" slide film. (As an amateur-designated film, no refrigeration before or after exposure is required for normal use.)

One instance where our testing overlapped was in pictures we made of a local parade we found while scouring the locale for suitable test subjects. We photographed a veteran in a green sweater (see photo at bottom right). While both versions shot of this man were acceptable, the 50 HC version had flesh tones that were natural and gently gradated. Even though the image was made in afternoon open shade, there wasn't a hint of a color bias. This, to our way of thinking, makes 50 HC an ideal slide film for amateurs who will frequently use open shade as a main light source.

Interestingly enough, despite our rather neutral results in open shade using Ektachrome 50 HC, Kodak (in their technical bulletin E-124) recommends using a skylight filter or Wratten filter No. 1A in those situations to diminish the overall "bluishness." Other scenes for which Kodak recommends filtration are distant scenics and aerial photography.

After the parade, we decided to take a picnic and get out and enjoy the sun. We drove down to the coast and walked around the harbor. We put 50 HC film through the "3-B's" test—buoys, boats, and beaches—just what the editor ordered. But wait. What about our picnic lunch? We set off and found a beautiful meadow with new flowers blooming everywhere. Forget the picnic, grab the macro lens!

We found the film to deliver crisp, contrasty, slides with bold color saturation. Sharpness is excellent as you can see in some of the takes reproduced here. The film also handles the

delicate range of tones often found in floral subjects with great ease.

Once we were back in the studio, we decided to try our hand at a few setup shots. We wanted to see just how 50 HC would record strobe-lit subjects.

Again the film performed admirably, producing images with excellent sharpness and color saturation. Image detail, even in weakly lit shadow areas, held up well, and the range of tones, in most cases, matched those of the subject. Even under our White Lightning strobes, there was no discernible color bias with 50 HC.

Although we did not run any significant tests for reciprocity failure, Kodak states that the film has an intended exposure range of  $\frac{1}{10}$  to  $\frac{1}{10,000}$  second. Because of its fine grain and good sharpness, this film would be an excellent long-exposure twilight film. Some individual testing for color balance and necessary filtration would be in order to use it for this and other long-exposure techniques. Kodak's initial starting point for a one-second exposure is to use a CC05R filter and increase exposure by  $\frac{1}{2}$  stop. Exposures longer than one second are not recommended by Kodak. (Note: It has been our experience that all film manufacturers do not recommend exposures longer than one second, except with tungsten-balanced films, because of color-crossover problems.)

One other use this film might be put to is to photograph interiors by available light. Although we didn't have the lead time to test the film for that purpose, here are some starting recommendations for filtration when shooting under fluorescent illumination: With Daylight tubes, use 50M + 50Y with  $1\frac{1}{3}$  stops of exposure increase; with White tubes, use 40M and a  $\frac{2}{3}$ -stop exposure increase; with Warm White tubes, use 20C + 40M with one stop of exposure increase; with Warm White Deluxe, use 60C + 30M plus two stops additional ex-



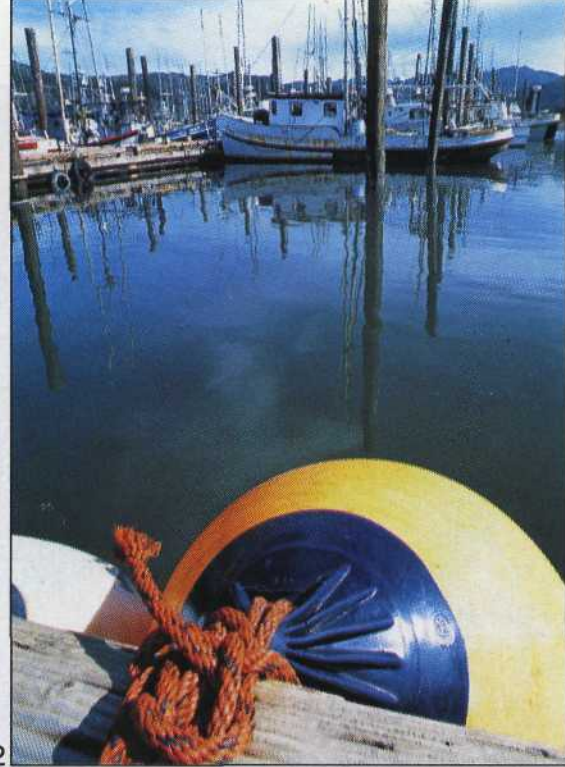
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1. Our brilliant-color test: Using our daughter's Skittles as a prop, Ektachrome 50 HC delivered about as much bold color and snap as one could ask for.

2. Part of the "three-Bs" test, the buoy part. We discovered that Ektachrome 50 HC handles sky and sea scenes with aplomb.

3. A sunlit architectural study in Portland, Oregon shows that the film handles reds, blues, and neutrals exceedingly well.

4. Our "parade test" produced people pictures with a surprising absence of what Kodak calls "bluishness."



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posure; with Cool White tubes, add 40M + 10Y plus one stop of exposure increase; with Cool White Deluxe tubes, use 20C + 10M plus 2/3-stop exposure increase. When making additional tests, increase and decrease filtration by at least a 10CC filter from those suggested above. When you don't know the type of fluorescent lamps that are in use, try using a 30M filter and increase exposure by 2/3 of a stop. Keep in mind, however, that color rendition will be

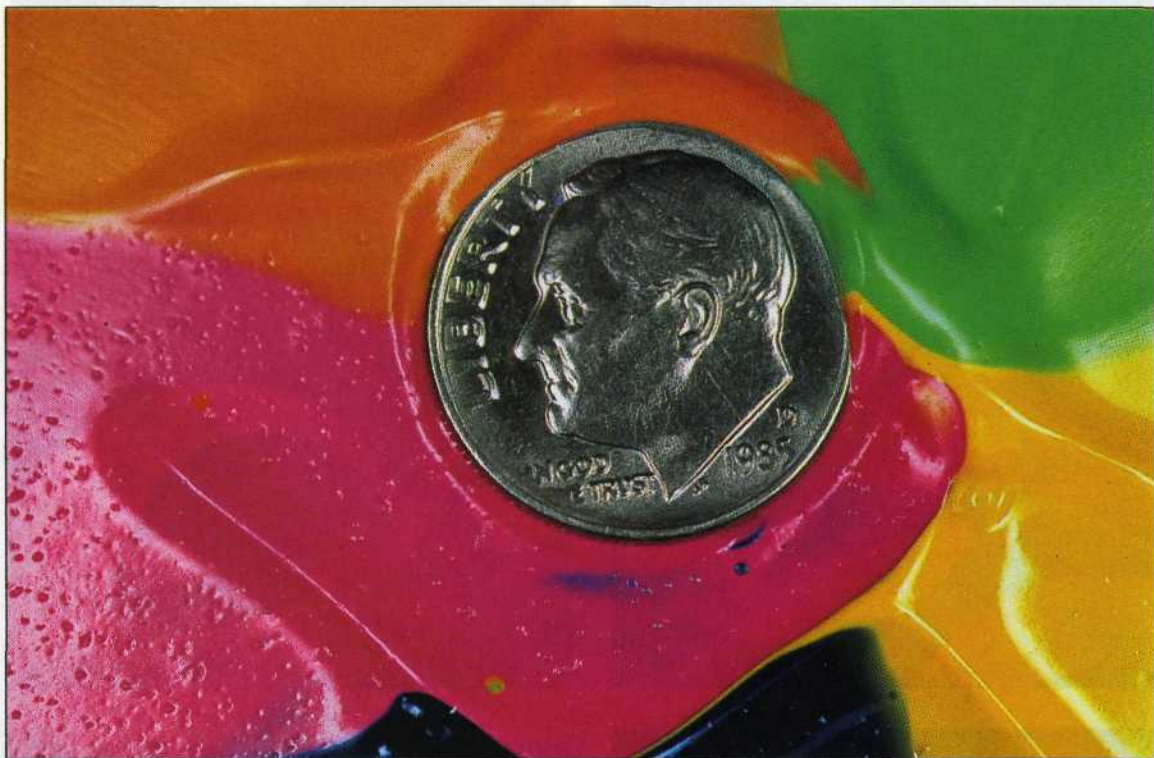
ALL PHOTOS BY AUTHORS



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1. Here is a macro study that we did with a brightly colored background and a dime (to test for neutralness under flash illumination). We also ran the same test with Ektachrome 100 HC to see if there were any differences. We found there is very little difference.

2. Color saturation is an area where Ektachrome 50 HC really shines.

3. Edge separation in adjacent colors is crisp and clean with Ektachrome 50 HC.

4. A frontlit fishing boat proved to be even more vibrant in the slide results than we recalled from the original scene.

5. This scenic was used to test the film's ability to render fine detail.

less than optimum. Also, keep in mind that exposure times of  $\frac{1}{60}$  or longer should be used with fluorescent and high-intensity discharge lamps to avoid the brightness and color variations that occur during a single alternating-current cycle.

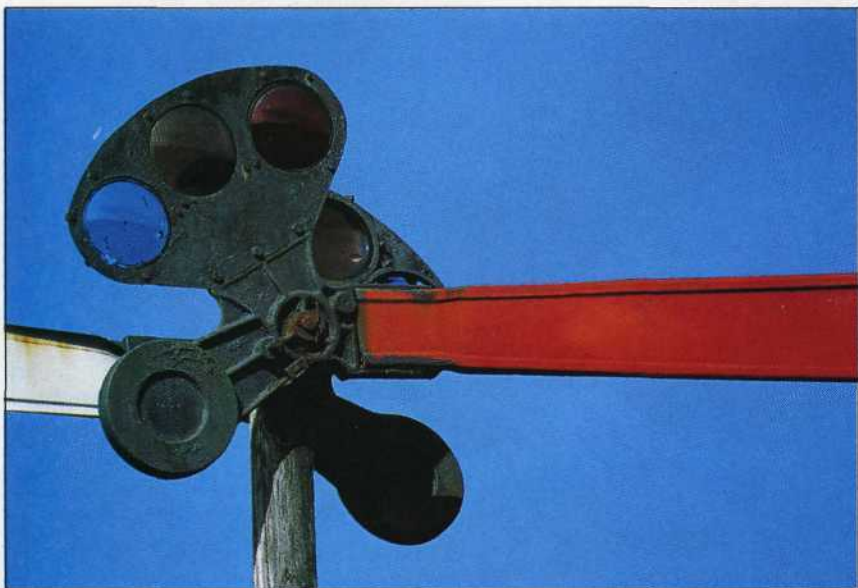
Ektachrome 50 HC was originally



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destined to be sold only in the European and Japanese markets; however, the demand for release in the U.S. forced it to surface at PMA. 50 HC will probably be available soon.

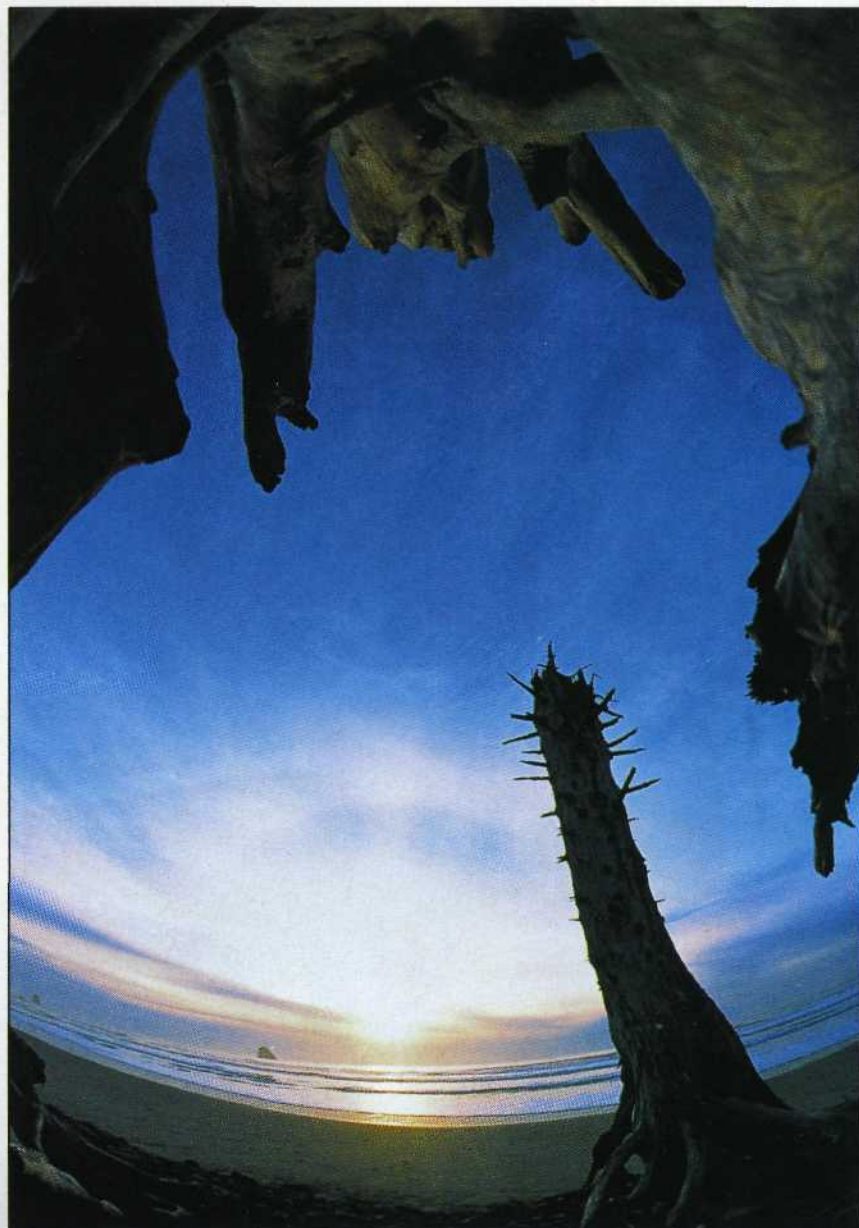
Kodak's Ektachrome 50 HC will be available in 35mm in both 24- and 36-exposure lengths. For further information on this exciting new film, stay tuned. Or if you're the impatient type, give Kodak's Information Center a call at 1-800-242-2424. ■



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