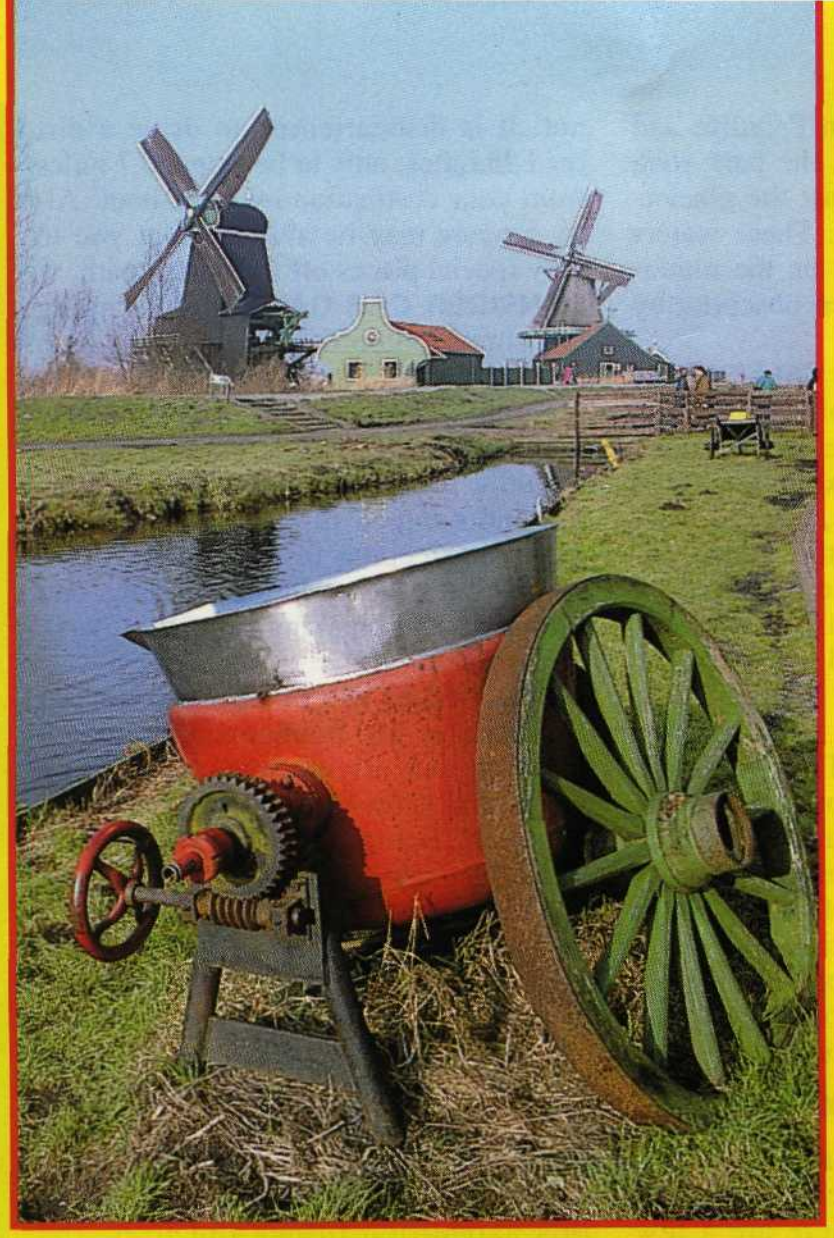
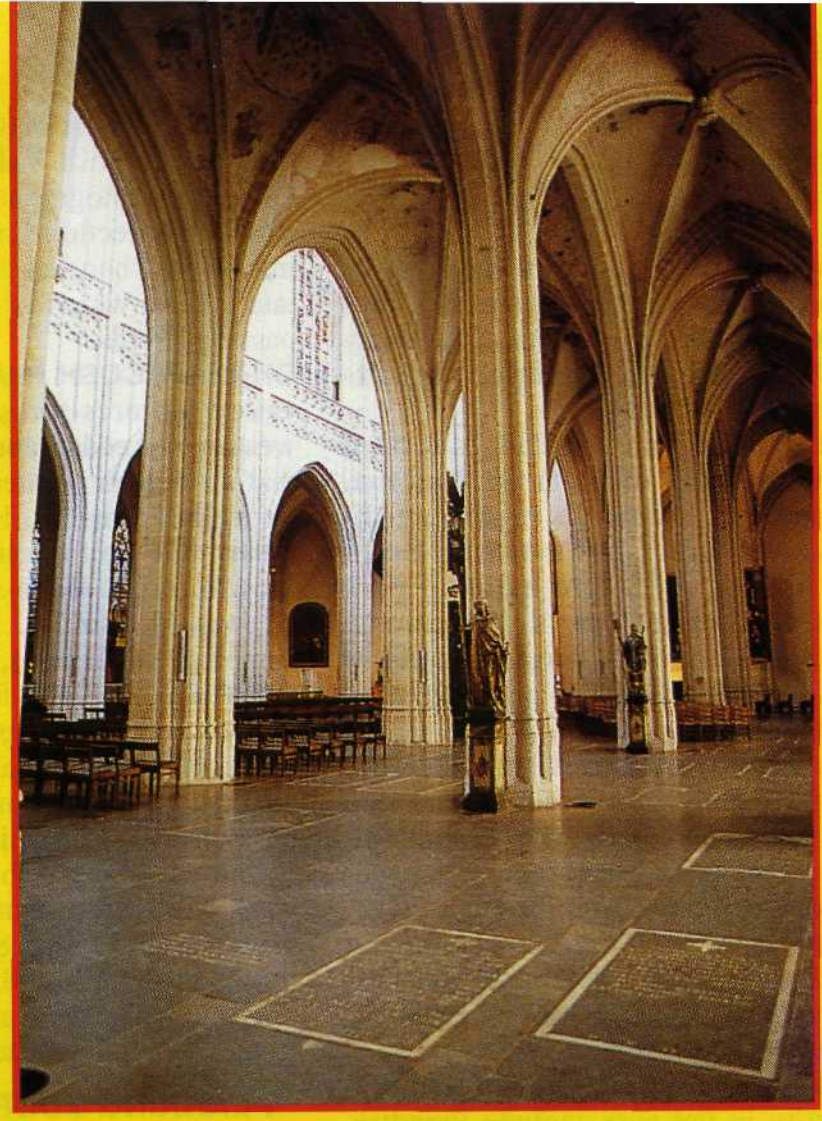


Kodak Gold Plus 100



Kodak Gold Plus 200

KODAK GOLD Plus

by Jack and Sue Drafahl

PHOTOGRAPHIC'S USER REPORT

Consumers may not notice that Kodak's new Gold Plus 100 and 200 films have significant changes to their emulsions. They will only notice that their pictures keep getting better and better. These two new films do sport significant changes, yet the only visible change is the "Plus" added to the box.

TECHNICAL CHANGES

Before we take you through our field tests, we want to give you a little background on the emulsion improvements. Most incorporate the "T-Grain" technology of the Ektar film family. Gold Plus 100 uses this technology entirely, and 200 Plus utilizes it in all layers except the improved, fast yellow layer.

Kodak Gold Plus 200

Kodak Gold Plus 200

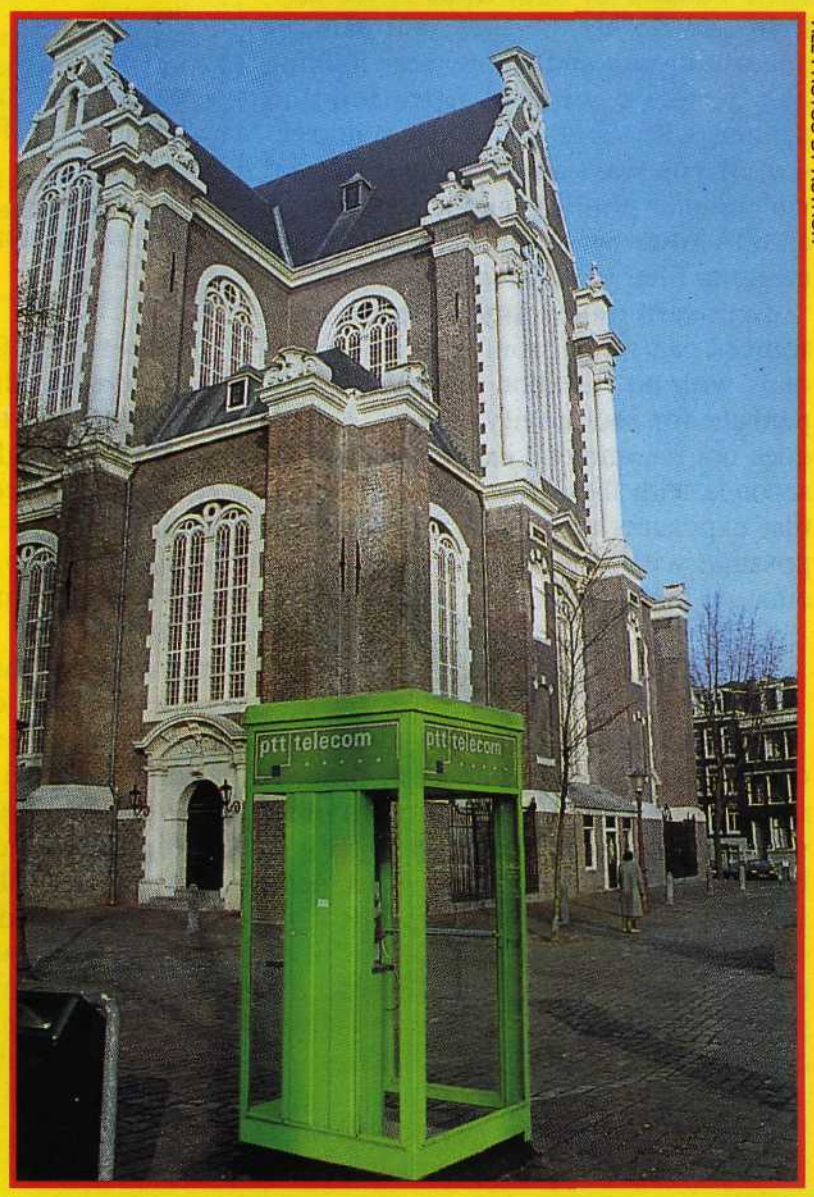
Kodak Gold Plus 100

FILMS

New ISO 100 & 200 Color-Print Emulsions

Kodak Gold Plus 200

Kodak Gold Plus 100



ALL PHOTOS BY AUTHOR

KODAK FILMS

The speed of both films has been increased ⅓ stop, so that underexposures are more easily printed. This will make amateur photographers think they are doing better with their exposures, when, in fact, the film is handling underexposures better than before.

There's also a new magenta dye coupler, which provides brighter and more-saturated greens, and cleaner-looking whites. Improvements to the reciprocity of these films have been made to a point beyond most photographers' needs. This change in reciprocity is most visible when using flash, flash-fill, and long exposures.

Both films incorporate all these improvements, but the ISO 200 film has more significant changes than the 100-speed emulsion. Of all the amateur color-negative films Kodak has released in recent years, the Gold Plus 100 and Plus 200 have the most accurate and true-to-life colors to date.

LIGHTING CONDITIONS

Both Gold Plus films were designed to be used under a wide variety of lighting conditions in which amateur photographers seem to find themselves. The basic balance of both films is for daylight and flash exposures, but pictures under tungsten and fluorescent lighting can be taken without filtration and printed with only minor color correction. If you want all the images to print with similar printing packs, you can use an 80A filter with tungsten and a CC30 magenta filter with fluorescent lights.

Exposure under any of these light sources can range from 1/10,000 to 10 seconds with no filtration needed to compensate for reciprocity failure. Kodak does not recommend exposures over 10 seconds with these films, but we found that exposures up to 3–5 minutes were possible with small adjustments to our enlarger printing pack.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Because of the increased awareness of the environmental impact of photography, Kodak is trying to improve its standings with Mother Nature. First, both Gold Plus films no longer need formaldehyde as the last step in the C-41 process. This is due to stability changes in the emulsion and a new, improved finishing step in the C-41 process. Previous versions of this film required this chemical to keep the dye layers stable over long periods of time. Some other Kodak films still need this final chemical step, but Kodak tells us that eventually, all films will be formaldehyde-free. Kodak has also eliminated the use of mercury, and has reduced other solvents in the manufacturing of Gold Plus films. There are still more hurdles to cross in protecting the environment, but these changes are a step in the right direction.

TEST DRIVE

Testing the new color-negative films becomes more and more difficult, because nowadays you can achieve high image quality from any of Kodak's color-negative-film families. So, when we tell you that the grain structure is better than before, you may not see any difference until you start making enlargements over 8x10.

SPECIFICATIONS

FILM: Kodak Gold Plus 100
TYPE: Color-negative
BALANCE: Daylight/flash
SPEED: ISO 100
EXPOSURE-TIME RANGE: 1/10,000–10 seconds
PROCESS: C-41
LATITUDE: –2 to +4 stops
RESOLVING POWER: 100 lpm (1000:1 target), 50 lpm (1.6:1 target)

FILM: Kodak Gold Plus 200
TYPE: Color-negative
BALANCE: Daylight/flash
SPEED: ISO 200
EXPOSURE-TIME RANGE: 1/10,000–10 seconds
PROCESS: C-41
LATITUDE: –2 to +4 stops
RESOLVING POWER: 100 lpm (1000:1 target), 50 lpm (1.6:1 target)

DISTRIBUTOR: Eastman Kodak Co., 343 State St., Rochester, NY 14650; telephone 1-800-242-2424

Where we did see an improvement was with the greens and yellows. They were much brighter and cleaner than before. On a recent trip to Europe, we found a bright-green telephone booth against a drab, brown church to test these green improvements. We used Gold Plus 200, and were extremely impressed with the resulting negative and print. Not only did the colors match, but the contrast level was actually better than in the original scene!

Our red-saturation test consisted of several red windows and doors on some of the local buildings. The resulting images held full detail throughout the red areas, and did not bleed as with some of the older color-negative films on the market. One particular red door was found in deep shade, with a heavy north light. In past situations like this, printing would have meant large changes in the filter pack to compensate for the blue north light. Using the new Gold Plus 200, we only had to make minor corrections to the filter pack before achieving an excellent print.

We then moved inside a church and found some mixed, dim lighting. The scenic contrast was extreme, but we felt that the film's new latitude would be able to hold most scene detail. What we didn't count on was the film's ability to pull *all* the scene detail. This film acted more like Kodak's VPS film, with its extreme latitude; however, the Plus has finer grain and more color saturation.

Back outdoors, we found a bright sun against a pale blue sky. We loaded a roll of Gold 100 Plus and looked for bright colors. Our first subjects were an old standby—flowers. We started with overall shots and eventually worked up to the close-ups. We found the saturation of all the colors to be excellent, even when photographed in full sunlight. Close-up images taken with flash ended up with the same filter pack, indicating that the reciprocity problem was indeed a thing of the past.

Windmills at the water's edge were our final test. In these tests we used both slide and negative film to see how well subtle tones would be recorded on the color negatives. We used a Nikon film scanner to scan the color negatives and image them on color-slide film with a film recorder. When we compared the original slide film to the image created with the scanned negative, we found both images to be almost identical.

EVALUATION OF PHOTO LAB TESTS

Additional tests in the photo lab indicated that both 100 and 200 Plus films have a solid –2-stop to +4-stop latitude. When we say "solid," we don't mean merely acceptable results, but more along the lines of "excellent." The contrast and color saturation were excellent in prints made from both ends of the latitude range.

Taking a close look at the sensitometry results of Gold Plus 100, we found the overall density slightly higher than with the previous Gold 100 film. This would indicate that the speed increase of ⅓ stop with this film might actually be a little less. The results of the Gold 200 Plus had a very noticeable increase in density, and it definitely is ⅓-stop faster than before.

CONCLUSION

We have said it before, and we're going to say it again. When film manufacturers improve speed, grain, and color reproduction, without sacrificing any trade-offs, photographers gain from the changes. We think these two new films are a definite "Plus" for our side. ❑