



MINOX MEMO

The Journal Of The Minox Historical Society

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VOLUME 1, NUMBER 4, SERIES 2

AUTUMN / 2002

MINOX HISTORICAL SOCIETY SPECIAL EDITION EC ANNOUNCED!



**A LIMITED EDITION AVAILABLE ONLY TO MEMBERS OF THE
MINOX HISTORICAL SOCIETY! DETAILS INSIDE!**

Dear Fellow Minoxfans!

Some time ago I hinted that the MHS was negotiating with Minox in Germany for a very special offering for our membership. Since then production has been finished in Wetzlar, the kits are being assembled, the pricing has been set; and the shipping arrangements worked out.

So, it's time to whip the veil off the Special Edition MHS Minox EC Kit.

If you just can't wait, go to

<http://www.minox.org/SSL/MHSEC.html>

to get a look at this terrific outfit!



Minox found a treasure trove of ECs and has assembled them into a never-to-be repeated special limited series of one hundred cameras just for the MHS. The kit includes the camera, a specially made belt case, a beautifully finished wooden storage case for the EC, a copy of the video "The Minox is My Life," the Walter Zapp story, and a Minox display mat to show it all off to best advantage. We've featured the kit on the cover of the Oct. 1 issue of the Memo.

The price? Just €199.00 for the entire kit (depending on the day, that's US\$199, plus or minus a couple of dollars), plus shipping. You can choose between FedEx shipping at about \$50 and ordinary airmail for approximately \$25. This puts this unique camera and its accessories in almost any Minox fancier's budget, and well in advance of Christmas, 2002. A small portion of

the price of the camera will go to the MHS treasury to fund future activities.

The cameras will carry special serial numbers from 001 to 100. Members will be able to select their own numbers on a first-come basis. Sorry, 001 is already taken; it will be placed in Minox GmbH's museum.

Cameras will only be sold to paid-up members of the MHS. There is no restriction on the number of cameras a member can buy, although in order to give every member a chance to own one camera, we will limit acceptance of orders to one per member until October 15. After that we will fulfill orders for additional cameras in the order they were received -- however only one serial number can be selected by each member. You'll find ordering information at

<http://www.minox.org/SSL/MHSEC.html>.

MHS will issue a certificate of authenticity to each purchaser when the cameras are delivered.

At this point you may be asking "Paid-up members. What's that?"

Unfortunately, the MHS has run about as far as it can as a totally free organization. There are many things we would like to do including CDs of our scans of the first series of the Memo, regional meetings, and other things which may turn up -- and they all cost money up-front.



The Executive Committee members have paid all the expenses to date, including domain name registration and server costs out of our own pockets. But we cannot continue any longer. With the greatest reluctance, and after many painful hours of debate, the Executive

Committee has voted to put the Society on a sound footing, charging \$35 per year. That will give you monthly "Minox FLASH" reports, immediate access to the Memo (non-members will only get to see it several months after it's out), and of course MHS bonuses such as the special edition EC. And you'll also receive, as the work progresses, access to the treasure of Minox ephemera (including the first series of the Memo) being scanned, translated, and restored by MHS volunteers.

You can pay your dues on line by clicking on the link <http://www.minox.org/ssl/payments.html>. Because of credit card formalities, the cameras can only be ordered by fax or snail-mail. Full information is on the web pages.

When your executive committee was approached by Minox with the idea of producing a special edition, we thought carefully about which camera our members would like. We picked the EC over the ECX because of its more classic Minox shape, general elegance, and frankly because it's a lot easier to operate unobtrusively using only one hand. The wooden display case was designed for us, as was the special belt case. The display mat is a great way to show off your collection and to demonstrate the MHS's close cooperation with Minox itself. Finally, very few Minox collectors have been offered a chance to own the Walter Zapp video, an engrossing look back at the 90-plus years of the man who invented the camera.

It's great to be able to announce the first special edition Minox ever issued to commemorate a Minox organization! I hope every MHS member will want one – and will take it out of its box from time to time and use it as it was intended: to take spectacular 8x11 millimeter pictures.

Sincerely,




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½ Page	\$35	\$50
¼ Page	\$25	\$35
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Contact John Watson at johnw@minox.org for more information.

An Interview With Thorsten Kortemeier

[John Watson, Jr.](#)

Vice President

Thorsten Kortemeier is the Geschaeftsfuehrer (or President) and majority owner in Minox GmbH. While conducting such interviews is not a common occurrence for him, he was anxious to have the chance to talk to MHS members.

MHS – We very much appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts with us. The new Digital M3 is a real watershed camera for Minox. What do you see as its place in Minox's offerings?

TK -- In the last two years the Minox Classic Camera line was quite successful for us. With it we inspired a lot of people outside of the traditional Minox 8x11 customer group to try the 8x11 system.

Usually, however, the first reaction of somebody who sees the camera for the first time is: "Is this digital?" This made us think that the public is much more open to a digital classic camera, so we decided to add a new product line in that range.

We will keep the 8x11 classic cameras in our program because we see there a different customer then for the digital version and we will introduce more 8x11 models in the future.

MHS -- Are you partnering with Sharan on this as with the other 8x11 Classic Cameras?

TK -- The Classic Camera concept was born by some friends from Japan (Asanuma – a wholesaler in Japan) and Minox during the Photokina of 1996.

Together with the support of Leica it was possible to develop the Classic Camera Leica IIIf. Because of the high labor costs here in Germany we decided to find a partner for the assembly in Japan.



Thorsten Kortemeier

Because Asanuma is a wholesaler in Japan and the distribution in the Japanese market is very complicated for foreign companies we decided that Asanuma would distribute the cameras exclusively in Japan. The version for the Japanese market was called Sharan.

When we made the decision to build the digital camera it was clear that we would have to manufacture this camera in the same countries where all the other Japanese companies produce their digital cameras. Otherwise we would never compete with their prices. So we assemble the DCC M3 in Hong Kong and, so, can offer it under the retail price of the 8x11 Classic Cameras.

The distribution in Japan will be through our Minox agency. For this reason it's not planed to offer a special Sharan version.

MHS -- The dimensions on the digital seem to vary from the other Classic Cameras. Is there a reason for this?

TK -- There will be many small digital cameras presented at Photokina this year. I guess the smallest will be the Fuji credit card size camera or the new Casio "Exilim." The disadvantage of these very small cameras is that they work with a special rechargeable battery inside, so if the battery is empty you have to find a power socket to recharge the battery.

During this time you can't take pictures.

Because of this we decided to use a standard lithium battery (CR2) so that if the battery ran out you just change it.

This allowed us to keep the design of the Classic Camera M3 and only increase the depth by approximately 2 mm.

MHS -- This being exclusively a Minox project, do you see other miniature digital cameras following? There have been rumors of a DLX floating around for some time.

TK -- We have at the moment four more digital camera concepts in preparation, a DLX as well.

Please understand that I can't mention more at the moment, but for a new DLX we need some more time because we think that potential customers have quite high expectations.

MHS -- Do you have any idea when we may see some of these new cameras coming to market?

TK -- The market launch of a DLX camera depends on the availability of the parts and components. At the moment we are in contact with several chip manufacturers, but it seems that we will have to wait a little bit longer than we had expected.

MHS -- With your recent camera offerings leaning so much towards digital, are you planning on updating either the GT or modern 8x11 film camera categories in the foreseeable future?

TK -- I believe that there will be a market for 35 mm and 8x11 mm cameras beside the digital market. Therefore we have several projects running.

MHS -- Since Leica still owns a large minority share in the company, how much does it contribute to development of new products?

TK -- We still have close contacts to Leica. We gain a lot of support for our R&D dept. and most of the parts of the 8x11 and 35 mm cameras are manufactured by Leica.

MHS -- It has been expressed that there have been many issues with parts availability and the availability of certain films. Do you have any comments in this regard?

TK -- Due to the independence of Minox the whole control of production of parts and spare parts comes back to Minox. We have had big difficulties finding manufacturers for many parts. Before 1995, most of them were produced by the old Minox itself.

Sometimes we need parts which have not been

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produced for more than 10 years. If you try then to reactivate the old tools and molds you find out that they don't work any longer and you have to modify them. This takes much time.

So I ask everybody for their patience and if there are serious problems contact Mrs. Claudia Glassl www.info@minox.com for further information.

MHS -- There have been a lot of rumors about the 8x11 accessories and which have been discontinued and why. The developing tank for one has come up, with the general answer being the equipment has broken and a new option is in the works. Another is the discontinuation of some of the old standby accessories such as the binocular clamp and copy stand. Where do these things stand? Might they have a place in an alternative form in the future?

TK -- It's true, the tool to make the old developing tank is broken.

Unfortunately it's uneconomical to develop and produce new tools for a product we sell around 100 times a year. We are in contact with Jobo in Germany and we will offer

a solution for 8x11 film developing in the near future.

MHS -- What else can you tell the members of the MHS about the state and direction of the company?

TK -- Maybe more in the next memo?

MHS -- Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions. We look forward to Photokina and all the new products! It sounds as if Minox is in good hands.



Of Fools, Riga Minoxes and eBay

Charles F. Trentelman
Editor in Chief

Are you a fool?

If not, perhaps it would be best if you would print the words "caveat emptor" in 86 point bold Roman and paste them over your computer before you do your next bit of eBay shopping.

They mean "let the buyer beware." As we enter the new century dealing with a new thing called eBay, you would be a fool if you did not keep those ancient words in mind.

Why? Because eBay is the sales equivalent of a yard sale without all the weeds. Dangers abound.

The situation is so dire that we at the Minox Historical Society feel a need to issue a warning, a guide, a little bit of advice to our membership.

It is this: be very careful. Extremely careful. Assume the worst. Caveat emptor.

Every eBay seller is operating in a system in which there are no laws, no controls, and very little apparent desire on the part of eBay to keep people honest. To be blunt, dealers on eBay can rob you and there is very little you can do about it. The eBay "safe harbor" mitigation system is ponderous, their guarantees hard to enforce.

And, remember, every auction they put up has the words "caveat emptor" on it, in very tiny letters. Scream at them that a bad sale is their responsibility and I bet they

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remind you of those words in very large letters, in a letter from their lawyer.

Examples are easy to find. Consider: You are browsing the submini section and see a really nice Riga Minox. It is "as close to a mint Riga as you can get" according to the description, which goes on to say "to put the icing on the cake, this one comes with the little zipper case, box AND the correct guarantee card, all filled in."

Man! Original box? Original leather case? Guarantee card? What a deal!

But wait. What, really, does it say?

It says THE case and correct box. It does not claim those items are the ones that camera was sold with. It does not, if you pay attention, even say they are old.

Did you notice that?

Those quotes are from an actual sale, completed on eBay in September, for a sum of something like \$2,400. Did the bidder (it was made a private auction so the name was concealed) pay so much because he/she thought the box and case were original? I don't know. Were they? Again, I don't know.

I do know that's about double what you'd expect to pay for a real nice Riga. I do know Minox Riga boxes found recently without proper markings are selling for \$60 or so. I also know replica leather cases made in Italy are sold for a similar amount.

This dealer, Duncan McMorris, a Briton who lives in Sweden, recently had a public complaint lodged against him claiming this sort of problem.

In mid-September of this year a Frenchman, Francois Guinand, posted a notice about Mr. McMorris to the VEFRIGA email list. In it he complained bitterly about having purchased one of Mr. McMorris's "near mint" Rigas in a private sale via computer only to discover, on delivery, that it was dented in two places and had a film cassette jammed in it. Mr. Guinand sent me his correspondence with Mr. McMorris in which there are numerous assurances that the camera is virtually flawless.

Mr. Guinand says he saw it was not, sent it back and, several months later, was still awaiting a refund. Meanwhile he saw the camera, which he still legally owned, put up for sale on eBay in September by Mr. McMorris. The eBay description, very similar to the separate sale cited above, says it is "one from my own

collection" and "one of the best examples." As to flaws, it says "there are no dents or scratches except for a minute mark on one corner, which is so small you could own it for years and not even notice it!"

Years? It took Mr. Guinand only moments.

Mr. McMorris was asked to respond.

Mr. Guinand's problem?: "The email from Francois was a misunderstanding. He first wanted the Riga replaced with another one. When he finally decided that it was taking too long to find a replacement and he would prefer a refund, I was in the middle of getting married and then on my honeymoon, with no email contact.....he will receive his full refund very shortly."

As of this writing (Sept. 16) Mr. Guinand says he is still awaiting his refund. He insists that he first asked for a refund and Mr. McMorris offered a replacement camera, to which offer Mr. Guinand had to insist on a refund, not wishing to wait for Mr. McMorris to acquire another camera somewhere.

The other accusations? Mr. McMorris says the leather case sold to Mr. Guinand is genuine and the box, while "original," is not the one the camera was sold with but is one of a stock of "new" unsold ones recently discovered.

The situation, unfortunately, is hardly unique. eBay horror stories abound. Yes, many people sell perfectly fine equipment on eBay, but some, either through ignorance or malice, do not.

How to protect yourself?

Scott Young, one of the MHS officers, sent me a long list of questions he asks every camera seller before he bids: details of cosmetics, mechanical workings, warranty, and so on. If the answers are wrong, or there is no answer, he does not bid. (See Article Page 8)

And Scott, like me, does not wander in the airy reaches of the \$2,000 auction. Sometimes being poor is a blessing. Con artists rarely go after a \$20 mark. \$2000 is so much more pleasing to the bank account.

Which brings us, full circle, back to our \$2,400 mint Rigas with their pretty little boxes and cases.

Are they real? I don't know, have no way to find out, and don't much care.

I do know that I wouldn't buy a car that cost that much money without having my mechanic check it over. I

would drive it around, kick the tires, feel the engine, and so on. I would check the title, to make sure it was legally owned and legally sold. I would ponder the seller.

Buy a camera that cost that much going solely on pictures on a small screen and the word of someone I don't know who lives in Sweden?

What kind of fool do you take me for?



8 Questions You Should Know the Answer To

D. Scott Young

Secretary / Treasurer

EBay can be a pretty scary place to operate: in spite of millions of buyers and sellers who are genuinely honest, nice people, there are a few out there who will take you to the cleaners, leaving you with a real financial loss and a miserable experience to ponder. I'm a total novice to eBay, having successfully concluded a whopping 16 transactions; I also had serious concerns about dealing on eBay based on numerous complaints and horror stories I read on various subminiature camera group lists. I had a decision to make: either stay off eBay and deny myself the opportunity to participate in acquiring items I desired conveniently and at marvelously low prices, or find a way to navigate the seeming jungle out there with minimal risk.

One of the very first things the Army taught me is this: "No one, but no one, will ever take better care of you than you yourself." It's a valuable lesson, and one that has saved me innumerable times over the years. It is the basis of my success on eBay, for I have never been cheated, nor have I ever lost money in my transactions. I have had very enjoyable experiences in all my transactions, and I have acquired things inexpensively from the convenience of my own home that I might otherwise simply never have been able to otherwise afford.

My protection is a letter, or more accurately, an email that I send to any seller of an item that I have an interest in; in it are 8 simple, clear questions that every buyer of photographic equipment owes it to themselves to know before they part with their money. I reproduce the letter below: read the questions and let's think about the powerful protection it affords you.

"Dear Sir or Madam,

I have a serious interest in placing a bid for the camera you currently have on auction on eBay. As I am looking for a camera in as flawless a cosmetic and functional condition as I can find, I wonder if you would take a moment to answer the following questions for me:

1. Is the photograph in your listing a photo of the actual camera being sold, or is it a photo of a camera like the one being sold?
2. Are there any dents, dings, scuffs, scratches, mars, brassing or discolourations anywhere on the camera?
3. Are there any scuffs, crack, scratches, mars or discolourations anywhere on or in the lens or viewfinder or rangefinder glass?
4. Is there any trace of corrosion in the battery chamber, and are the contacts intact and clean?
5. Do all the shutter speeds work?
6. Do all the lens openings work?
7. Does the exposure meter work?
8. If the camera does not work or is not as described, do you offer a full refund of the purchase price of the item?

Many thanks in advance for your attention to my questions, and good luck with your sale.

Sincerely,"

8 simple questions.

Young's First Law of eBay is this: "You can never lose money if you don't place a bid".

I don't wait until the last day to email the seller with my questions - it doesn't give them a fair chance to respond. I email them immediately when I see the item. However, I refuse to place a bid if the seller does not respond to my questions. Why? Because, sadly, a non-response indicates one of two things to me: Either they have something to hide about the item being offered, in which case a bid is simply too risky; or, they don't have enough interest in my questions to be bothered answering. This is a strong indicator to me that they will not have any interest in me after the sale, when they have my money, and if and when I then discover there is a problem with the camera.

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to purchase these and more through the end of January 2003!

An increasingly common trick that is being reported is the auction description that is peppered with statements like "I really don't know a whole lot about cameras, so I don't know if it works or not, so item is sold 'as is'." or "I don't know if this is the original item, but gee, it sure looks like it might be.". Then they go on to describe how great it looks.

Some people are being honest about this; others are using it as a ruse to allow them to later claim innocence on a defective item by reminding you that they did say they don't know much about cameras. My questions force them to really look at the camera and to commit in writing (in their response) to an accurate assessment of the camera's condition. Those that are honest will generally respond to the best of their ability, and you can see that. Those that are deliberately vague in their responses are avoided: I simply don't bid, and I don't lose any money.

Once you have the response and have decided to bid, you now have documentation (hopefully you have saved your original inquiry email, and the seller's response email - I don't get rid of them until 30 days after I've actually had the camera and put a roll or three through it) that can be used in the event the item is not as it was described. If there are problems with the item when you receive it, you can take photos of what you received, and contact the seller with copies of your original inquiry, their response, and a detailed complaint about what it is you find less than satisfactory. I believe that in the majority of cases, this will be all you will ever need as most sellers will work with you if you have communicated clearly with them throughout. In the very worst case, if the seller refuses to know you after the sale, then your documentation will be invaluable in getting eBay to step in and mediate if needed. You increase your chances of a successful mediation 100% with good, detailed documentation.

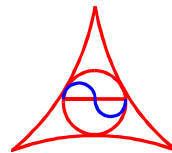
I have never had to resolve a dispute with a seller, or request arbitration through eBay mediation, and I like to think that this fact may be the very best evidence of the effectiveness of a letter like this. In closing, allow me to share just a few of the real results of successes I've had with this letter:

1. In one instance, the seller stated clearly that no refunds were offered, all sales were final; I never bid on items with this statement, but I sent the letter anyway. I got a response that clearly detailed the condition of the camera, and ended with this statement: "I stopped giving refunds because I got tired of all the people who were buying things from me without knowing exactly what they wanted, or without actually reading my descriptions, then

wanting their money back. However, I can tell from your letter that you know what you're doing, so if you're not satisfied with the camera, send it back and I'll give you a full refund immediately". Needless to say, I bid on the camera, and was not disappointed in the slightest.

2. In two instances I received far more detailed and accurate descriptions of the camera, enough to let me know that they truly weren't mint condition cosmetically, but I was able to evaluate them well enough to decide that I could live with what they described. I bid with confidence, and was pleased to receive cameras that were actually better than I expected, and have proven to be wonderful little shooters with no problems.

3. A third transaction involved a lady who truly didn't know anything about cameras, and so her answers were as detailed as she could make them, but not accurate because of what she didn't know. The camera turned out to be trashed; she cheerfully returned my money in full, to include very generously refunding my shipping cost



"In God we trust. All others we monitor."

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Share my love for Minox submini cameras. Visit my webpage, read snippets of history from the world of Minox, read up on the history and characteristics of the various models, learn what cameras and accessories might be the best for your interest, and review cameras and related items for sale.

This is my hobby, not my livelihood; so expect to be treated differently than those who must make a profit on dealing in Minoxes. I buy and sell Minox items, highest prices paid for items in excellent condition. Nearly all cameras for sale have been Cleaned, Lubricated and Adjusted (CLA) by a trained and experienced serviceman. Everything guaranteed, trades accepted.

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and my return shipping cost to get it back to her (neither of which I had requested). I would buy from her again in a minute.

It's a jungle out there; there are people who will look out for you, and make the experience a wonderful one, but remember, no one, but no one, will ever take better care of you than you yourself.



Minox Film Slitters

It is an axiom of photography that you should take lots of pictures because film is cheap.

Minox film costs about \$7 a roll, which isn't bad for someone who goes through half a dozen rolls a year. But for people like me, who have two or three cameras going at once and shoot several dozen rolls a year, it adds up.

Cutting your own film from 35 mm can cut the price to as little as 50 cents.

A variety of slitters are available to do the job and all are pretty easy to use. All you need is one of these, a darkroom and some empty film cassettes and you are on your way.

[John Watson](#) and [Charlie Trentelman](#) have reviewed the four most common. There may be others -- One list a while back discussed how to make a Minox slitler out of an old Exakta Camera, for example -- and we welcome contributions in the future.

The initials of the reviewer follow each slitler name.

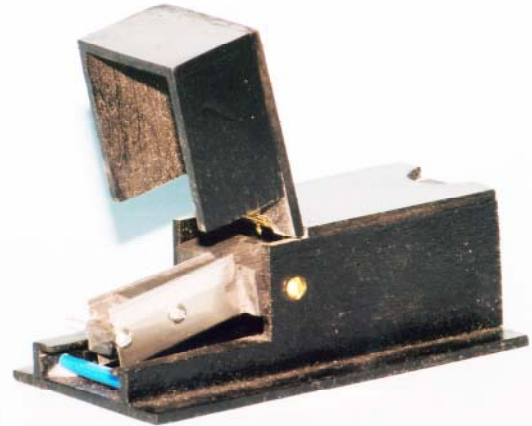
The China Boy Slitler (JW)

Currently I have found three models of this slitler (though there are apparently four), commonly seen on eBay. There are dedicated 8x11 and 16mm versions, as well as a combination version.

Upon receiving my China Boy #1, which is the combo version, I was immediately disappointed.

First, the box it comes in is obviously ink jet printed and cut from card stock. It was not very professional. I was

Photo by Mark C. Brown



The China Boy #1

not buying a box though, so I tore in. When I saw what was in there, the box was very representative.

The CB1 slitler is made of thin ply wood panels, assembled with inexpensive brass screws. It was very poorly painted with black gloss spray paint, and had a very fragile feel to it. This was obviously not made in a factory.

But I did not buy looks. I bought a film slitler. So how was it at that?

The cutting head is billed as "ceramic", which may be true. It appears to be badly molded plastic that has been filed down to size. The blades are standard one-sided razor blades. The width seemed to be good. Unfortunately immediately I saw a major issue. While you can get two rows of 8x11 film strips from standard 35mm stock, this slitler only gave or 8x11 OR one 16mm strip. This effectively cuts the usefulness in half.

The film is fed through channels that run under the blades. There are cutouts so the film cartridge fits right in on one end. The blades are then pressed down and run the length of the film. This is somewhat awkward though as the lid and mechanism don't always want to cooperate. Getting the blades aligned can be quite fiddly, and is an exercise in frustration. My slitler came with a test strip done on adding machine paper, I would recommend having a roll handy.

The concept is relatively sound, but the execution was poor. The strips came out relatively straight, at least usably so, and it was not a nightmare to use. It is necessary to use it in a dark room, and you will be

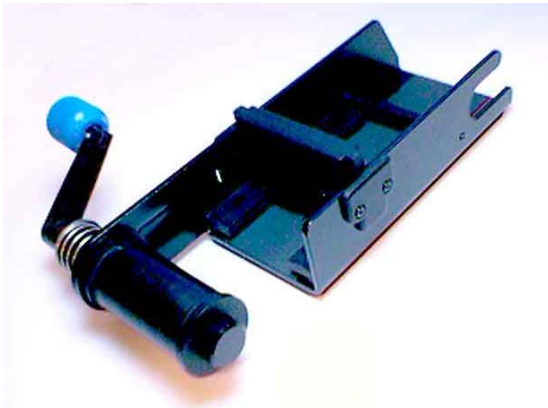
unlikely to be able to use it in a changing bag successfully.

The price has since come down to somewhere in the US\$30-40 range.

The Minox Slitter (JW)

The Minox slitter is by far the most expensive model we have reviewed, both in initial purchase price, and in maintenance. However, it has the look and feel of a precision machine. In every way it is designed to slit film.

The body is mainly heavy gauge steel painted flat black with a minimum of plastic parts. The basic method of operation is that a 35mm film cartridge is placed in one end, the film end is run through two channels beneath the blades, the end of the film strip is taped to a drum, and while pressing the blades down you crank the film through onto the drum. The action is very smooth and precise.



Once the film is slit, the entire take-up drum is removed and the film retrieved. Both precision cut strips of 8x11 film and the scrap with the perfs in it are neatly wound on the drum for easy retrieval.

The cuts are amazingly accurate, and it is very quick. I generally use mine in a dark box while watching TV, or in a changing bag when I am on vacation. Its convenience is very difficult to beat. I will also load a dozen or so cartridges in a sitting quite easily.

On the down side, it is very expensive. When it is available from the usual sources it will run over US\$300.00, but Minox USA no longer shows it on its

web site. It can be found on eBay directly from Germany for between US\$190.00, and US\$230.00.

The blades are also proprietary, and apparently run about US\$30.00. This is not as big a problem as it may seem though, as I have slit upwards of 50 rolls of 35 mm with my first set of blades and they are still going strong.

Would I recommend the Minox Slitter? If you are going to slit a good amount of film, this should be on your shopping list.

ZipSlit (CT)

This is what the China Boy slitter would be if it were well made.

The ZipSlit is made in England by Filmtech and is made of injection molded plastic. Like most "pull-through" slitters, it is fairly simple: two halves with a space between in which are mounted three very sharp blades, so positioned so that when you put the two halves together they form two cutting channels.

You lay the film that is loaded in a cassette across the two halves, put them together, and pull the film out of the can, pulling it through the slitter and over the blades at the same time. The ZipSlit cuts two lengths of Minox-width film out of the center of the 35mm film, leaving you with that and two lengths of skinnier film that holds the perforations.

Labels tell you which side to put the film can. It is pretty idiot-proof. A test roll pulled through produced very nicely cut film, no scratches evident.



The advantages of this slitter design are many. It is compact, about the size of a 35 mm film can. It is simple

to make and, therefore, easy to make well. It is very sturdy, with nothing to break.

The disadvantages are a few, as well. The blades are, according to the maker, replaceable but only with difficulty. They mention keeping a set of calipers handy, and casual inspection does not show how they are held in place. There is a piece of paper over the chamber in which the blades are embedded and, being a non-destructive person, I did not peel it off. The manufacturer offers a second set of blades if you like, but says the ones it comes with should be good for several years.

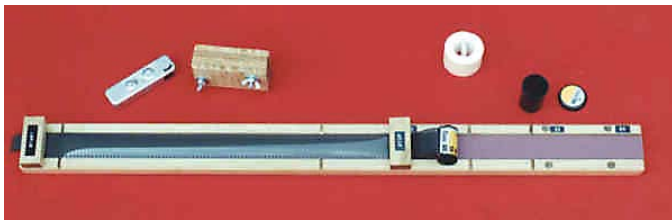
The slitter is sold on eBay or through the maker, john.birkby@eidosnet.co.uk and sells for \$35 plus postage.

Flatbed Slitter (CT)

The flatbed slitter is one of the easier designs to make at home, and a lot of people have. If you are not handy with tools, however, Ray Pepalis makes one that is of high quality and very easy to use based on the design pioneered by [Don Krehbiel](#).

Flatbed slitters have one huge advantage over the other three mentioned here, and Ray's utilizes it: You can pre-measure the film as you cut it.

Here's how it works. Film, whether in a can or cut from a bulk roll, is laid along a wooden track and held down at either end. A piece of paper is then laid along the top of the film to prevent scratches.



To cut the film, a wooden block in which are mounted razor blades set the correct distance apart and at the correct angle is put on the film at one end and drawn to the other end. Ray's slitter cuts two strips of Minox film from a strip of 35 mm film, or one strip of 16 mm film.

The paper is removed and the film lifted up, cut.

Pepalis' slitter uses wooden "start" and "stop" blocks at either end to control the length of the cut. The stop block can be changed for 15, 30 or 36 shot rolls. This means

that, in the dark, you just lift the slit film up, cut the unslit ends off either end, and you have two strips of film in your hand the correct length. No measuring.

Pepalis', like others, mounts his razor blades to cut the film in a sandwich of wood, the blades held apart at the correct distance by pieces of wood cut to the correct width. The wood is held together by screws and wing nuts.

This means the blades are easily replaceable and, as Ray points out, when you are done cutting film you can shave with them because the slitter only wears the extreme ends of the blades. It also means the slitter can be used forever, buying only new double-edge razor blades as needed.

People make these slitters out of many things. Ray uses fine wood, beautifully finished.

The price? \$50 plus \$5 shipping. He has an ad at: <http://www.subclub.org/swapmeet/adf47.htm> or email him at pepalisr@wv-on-line.com



NEWS FROM MINOX

Digital World Novelty - Classic Meets Digital: The MINOX Digital Classic Camera Leica M3

A unique synergy of digital photography and nostalgia – there is just no better way to describe this world novelty presented by the Wetzlar camera manufacturer, which will be on show for the first time at the Photokina 2002. MINOX has equipped this miniaturized LEICA M3 classic camera of the fifties with a digital interior. Extravagance and outstanding precision mechanics have always belonged to the values fostered by MINOX, and which are now being transferred to the ever-growing digital world.

Simple and fast to operate, meaning that the new MINOX Digital Camera Leica M3 is also ideal for beginners entering the world of digital photography and guarantees unlimited photographic fun for all with its innovative, striking looks.



With a resolution of 1.3 million pixels it is able to capture impressive images. All pictures are internally stored and can be downloaded onto a PC in a fast and easy manner using the USB cable which comes with the camera, and then processed with the provided software. The clearly laid out LCD display on the camera back presents information on the number of shots taken, at any time.

"In today's fast-moving age", says MINOX President, Thorsten Kortemeier, "it's good to recollect the good things of the past – and where there's a possibility to combine these with the practical advantages of the latest digital technology, this is going to meet with great enthusiasm among many users."

The many details in the metal housing, which accentuate the design, make this new MINOX DCC Leica M 3 a very special item and an absolute eye-catcher among digital cameras. The exceptionally compact dimensions will make this unique digital masterpiece a constant companion, ready for action whatever the situation.

It's a MINOX – a digital one!

Product Specification

Digital Classic Camera Leica M3

Image sensor	1.3M CMOS sensor
Image resolution	Still picture: 1280 x 960 pixels Video conference: 320 x 240 pixels
Internal memory for image storage	32MB FLASH MEMORY
Image capacity	99 images for 32MB FLASH MEMORY High: 60 images based on 500 KB Low: 99 images based on 320 KB

Viewfinder	Optical, built-in reverse Galilean filter
Status LCD	2 digit LCD
Flash	Compatible with Minox Classic Camera Flash
Lens	5 elements glass lens with IR filter glass, 10,3 mm
Lens aperture	F3.0
Focus range	1.5m – infinity
White balance	Automatic
Exposure	Auto exposure
Self-timer	10 seconds
Power source	1 x CR2 battery USB cable
Auto power-off	Stand by mode (After 30 seconds inactivity)
File Format	JPEG
Support	WINDOWS 98/SE/ME/2000/XP/MAC compatible
Computer interface	USB
Camera dimension	65mm(L) x 48mm(W) x 44mm (H)
Camera weight	95g

System

Microsoft Windows 98SE/ME/2000/XP
Pentium Processor or later
64 MB recommended
Video with 2-MB-RAM for displaying at least 16 Bit (High Color)
CD-ROM with 4x velocity
One free USB-port

A New Star in the MINOX Realm: The MINOX BD 12 x 52 BR A.L.T.

The new MINOX BD 12 x 52 BR A.L.T stands out – like all other MINOX products in the field of binoculars and spotting scopes – demonstrating the classic MINOX quality values of maximum optical performance, precision mechanics and top design. These new MINOX binoculars with aspherical lens technology ideally complement the existing range of binocular products.

The versatile field of application of this top quality product ranges from mountaineering through astronomy up to nature observation of plants and animals. These advantages are particularly noticed at dawn and in twilight conditions, where it is possible to "capture" even

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very shy animals at substantial distances. With the large exit pupil of 4.3 mm this outstanding feature is also made possible by the unique twilight factor of 25 which permits rendering of fine contours and details even in inadequate light conditions.

The high magnification provides the viewer with an outstanding image which is rich in detail, making the BD 12 x 52 BR A.L.T. also suitable for observing celestial bodies and constellations. The practical tripod connection permits attachment of the binoculars to a tripod, using the tripod adapter which is available as an accessory.

The use of aspherical lenses (A.L.T. Technology) increases pin-sharp definition, providing higher contrast and detail resolution across the entire image field. Thanks to the well-established M* coating of the lenses for minimizing optical reflection and phase-corrected prisms, the new MINOX glass also boasts high light transmission. These outstanding features are ideal for people wearing glasses, because the built-in eyepieces specially designed for wearers of glasses provide an extremely large field of view which is also experienced in full by people wearing glasses, in combination with the extendible eyecups.

As with all other binoculars of the MINOX series, the BD 12 x 52 BR A.L.T. is equipped with a body of rubber-armored aluminum which guarantees high stability as well as reliable operation of the inner optical and precision mechanical systems. The new MINOX glass has an incredible weight of just 950g, based on the reduced design length resulting from the aforementioned Aspheric Lens Technology. The nitrogen filling avoids misting up of the lenses from inside.

The scope of delivery includes wide Neoprene straps, the eyepiece and lens covers and also a top-quality leather case.

Altogether these are truly outstanding and versatile top-performance binoculars, which meet the user's every desire!

Technical data MINOX BD 12 x 52 BR A.L.T.

Magnification	12 x
Front lens diameter	52 mm
Exit pupil	4,33 mm
Field of view	84m/1000m / 4.8°
Eye relief	15mm
Close distance	4m
Over run ()	> 4 dpt
Diopter adjustment	> 2 dpt
Twilight number	25
Geom. Twilight No.	18,5
Operating temperature	-10° bis + 45°
Waterproof	yes, up to 16,4ft / 5 m
Height / width / depth	167/120/48 mm
Weight	912g

High performance 3.3 megapixel digital camera - The new MINOX DC 3311 with 3x optical zoom

The popularity of digital products, particularly digital cameras, is booming. With the DC 3311, MINOX now presents its third digital compact camera which will be available at authorized dealers as from mid August. This versatile digital tool has a resolution of 3.3 pixels, providing excellent imaging results. The 3x optical zoom and the 2x digital zoom give the user plenty of scope for creative composition. The shots can either be stored in the internal memory or using an optional compact-flash card. The voice-memo function additionally permits the recording of important information or accompanying text.

Clear and simple menu operation together with a bright LCD display make this camera a pleasure to use. For uncomplicated transfer of the image files to the computer the MINOX DC 3311 has a digital USB interface. Using

the software MGI Photo Suite III, which comes with the camera, the pictures can be directly processed on the PC and passed on to friends and relatives.

Outstanding technical data and the logical design concept of this new MINOX presentation will attract the discerning and creative digital photographer. The MINOX DC 3311 is designed with a special soft-touch lacquer and is a perfect match for today's modern high-performance lifestyle products.



Compact dimensions and easy handling make this lightweight (of just 240 g) the ideal companion for every occasion. The scope of delivery includes a case, CD-ROM, 4 round cell batteries, wrist strap, USB cable and a handbook.

Technical Data MINOX DC 3311

File format: JPEG, EXIF 2,1
Memory: internal 8 MB and Compact Flash Card (Type I)
Image sensor: 3.3 mega pixel plus Sharp CCD 24 BIT (RGB) colour
Image resolution fine: 2048 x 1536
normal: 1024 x 768
Lens: Autofocus 0,2 m unendlich Macro 0,07 – 0,5 m
Shutter speeds: 1/800 – 2 sec
Zoom: 3x optical, 2x digital
Exposure: Automatic program (full-field integral metering)
White balance: fully automatic, preselection of: daylight, lamp & fluorescent
Display screen: 1.5" Color TFT-LCD
Flash program: Automatic, Fill-In and OFF, red eye-reduction
Self-timer: 10 sec.
Continuous mode: time between shots <6 sec.
image reproduction <6 sec.
Supporting languages: German, English, Japanese, F, Sp, I
Software: Driver: PC/MAC
(WINDOWS'98/2000/ME/XP.MAC OS 8.6 or later) MGI Photo Suite and Photo Vista
Connectors: AC power port, USB port;
video output (NTSC or PAL)

Power supply: 4 round cell batteries (AA)
Dimensions: 112 x 44 x 77mm
Weight: 240g (without batteries)
Scope of delivery: 4 AA batteries
Wrist cord
USB cable
CD-ROM and handbook



Tool (Coins) of the Trade

D. Scott Young

Secretary / Treasurer

There's a aura surrounding the mysterious "tool coins" that show up from time to time on eBay and other auctions. The stories about what they are, what their purpose was or is, etc., are many and varied, but Thorsten Kortemeier of Minox, GmbH kindly took the time to answer my questions about them.

The tool coins are actually small, circular brass tokens slightly smaller than an American 25 cent piece, with a hole drilled through the center. The classic Minox "maus" logo and a number are prominently struck into the metal, as is a circular border around the edge.

The coins were first struck and issued by Minox in the mid-50's when they were at the height of their production success. Over 200 hundred workers in the assembly department were issued these coins as a means of controlling the issue and return of highly valuable, custom designed and fabricated tools used in producing the Minox cameras. Each worker was issued a set of 10 of these coins with their own unique number stamped into them.

When work required a particular tool, the worker went to the tool room and surrendered a coin in order to receive the tool. On returning it to the tool room, the worker received his or her tool coin back again. Supervisors periodically did "coin checks" of the workers to aid in proper accountability of both the coins and, more importantly, the valuable tools themselves. This system of tool and



coin accountability continued through the years until the mid-1990's, when it was discontinued.

Thousands of these tool coins have been produced over the years, as the number stamped into this particular sample indicates. A number of them have inevitably made their way into the private auction market as workers retired, left the company or otherwise ended up with the coins outside of Minox.



Minox Projects

[Charles F. Trentelman](#)

Editor in Chief

The Minox Memo would like to begin running quarterly displays of work by members of the Minox Historical Society, something that shows both your skill with the cameras and what sort of photography you like to do.

Editor in Chief Charles Trentelman has gracefully volunteered to kick the project off. If you would like a free display of your own work, along with a brief essay explaining what you do and why, please contact him for submission details.

OK, so you have a spy camera. Do any spying lately? Huh, did ya?

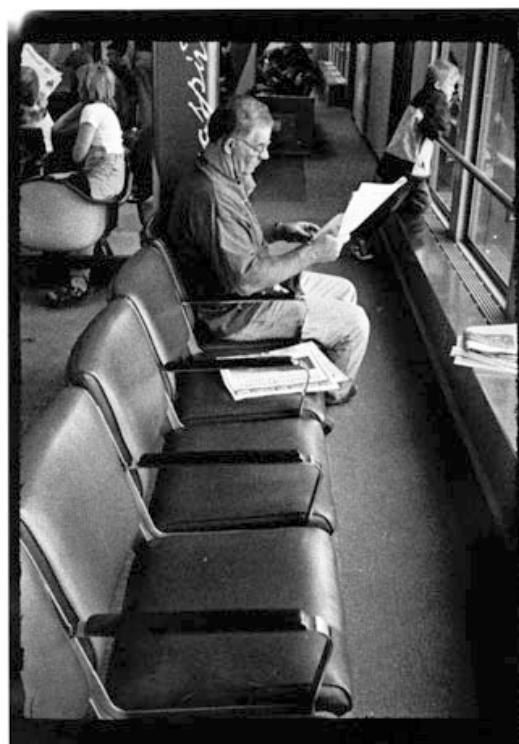
I didn't think so.

You shot your kids. You shot your wife. You shot the freaking Grand Canyon and Grant's Tomb. You even shot your new car's hubcaps.

But have you ever got down and dirty sneaky? Real spy stuff?

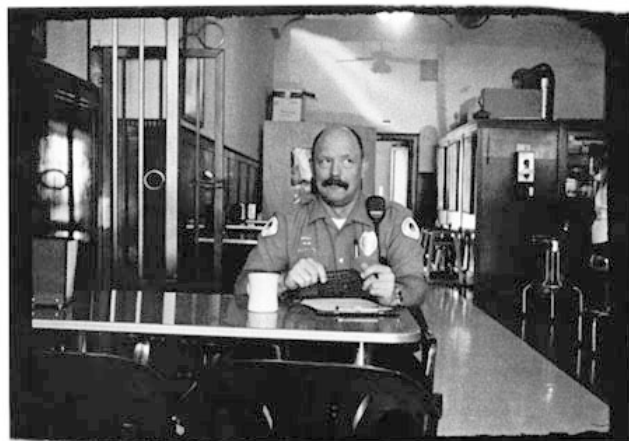
No, I don't mean document theft. God gave us computers for that. Your modern spy uses satellite uplinks and digital downloads. Silver halide technology? Well, it's quaint. James Bond is digital now.

Still, the Minox camera excels at being sneaky.



Consider: In the modern mind, neither does it look much like a camera, nor does it sound much like a camera. With a tiny bit of practice it need not even operate much like a camera, but that doesn't mean you need to hide it in your lapel either.

These qualities have unique value. So much around us can be best photographed if you don't make a big scene doing so.



There are plenty of projects you can choose that a Minox is especially ideal for. Consider: I have a book of photos



by Andre Kertesz called "On Reading." It is nothing but pictures of people reading. People reading on bus benches. People reading in libraries, at work, in parks, wherever. He probably didn't use a Minox, but his work exemplifies the skill of shooting pictures of people without them knowing it. What he did with a Leica or similar "candid" camera must surely be easier with something smaller.

I decided to adopt his idea as a theme to follow as the occasion allowed. A Minox, however, presents obvious problems.

You don't want people to be aware you are shooting, which means no flash. Then again, readers don't always read out in the sunlight. This means existing light in light that is, often, barely existing. With a camera that has an f3.5 lens, that is a problem.

The solution is, of course, fast film. Very very fast film. That has its own problems, of course, since fast film is usually not recommended for smaller formats. Small formats need fine grain and fine grain means slow film, right?

Well, no. There's always ASA 1,600. I mean, what the heck, right?

I was skeptical myself, but loaded some Ilford HP5-plus into a Minox. The instructions that come with it say it can be pushed to 1,600 fairly easily, so I said what the heck. And you know what? They were right.

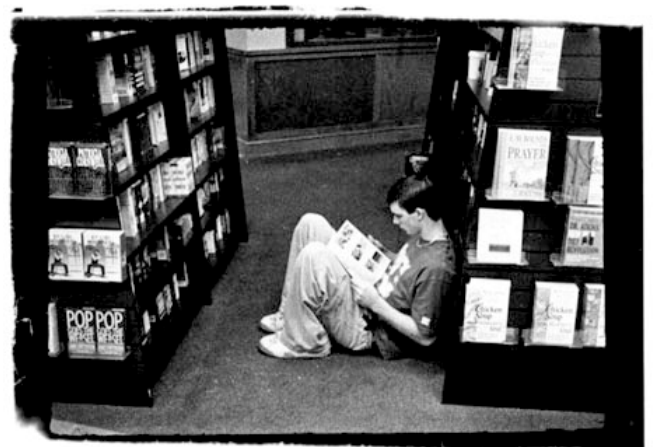
Your basic Barnes and Noble has lighting that allows you to shoot at 1/100th of a second in the moderately lit areas with ASA 1600 film, such as over by the magazines, 1/50 in the dimmer areas and 1/20 when you think it is too dark to shoot. The best technique is to wander around, looking for people reading, and quickly

take the camera out and fire. You should have it preset for the ambient light, set the focus at the hyperfocal distance, and be quick. The camera is so small, and so quiet, nobody will know what you are up to. Usually they are concentrating on what they are reading anyway. Don't waste a lot of time aiming. Learn to predetermine what the camera is going to see.



And the pictures?

Ilford HP5-plus is made to be pushed and does so nicely. I develop it in D-76 stock for something like 14 minutes at 68 degrees. Yes, it is grainy, but not nearly as much as you would think. It holds tones well, detail is very sharp, and the final result quiet pleasing even when enlarged to 5 by 7 inches. Shots with flat lighting don't do well, but most store lighting works well. Look for good modeling light, something with good detail and texture -- books, for example -- and the shot will work well.



Why not try ASA 3200 film, since it's made to be shot at 3200? I did and it was far too grainy and flat, much more than the 400 film pushed.

Is taking pictures in bookstores and other public places legal? I've seen many many arguments about this. It depends on the location and the store policies. Mall cops, for example, never let people take pictures in their malls. Book stores? I've never asked.

As long as pictures are being shot in public places and are not for commercial purposes, you're usually OK. Needless to say, if you get caught, I will disavow any knowledge of this mission.

For me the subject's never come up because nobody's ever caught me doing it.



Eye on the Web

[D. Scott Young](#)

Secretary / Treasurer

<http://www.minoxdoc.com/>

Martin Doctor is well known among the Minox community as a wonderfully helpful, extremely knowledgeable collector of some fascinating bits of Minox history with an enviable collection of some of the most desirable Minox camera and accessories ever produced.

An engineering background later led to his fascination with Minox cameras, guiding him into several interesting projects, most notably the production and sale of sets of replacement Minox shutter blade and spring assemblies of extremely high quality and as meter window glass replacements.

Now Martin has posted his first web site, and an exquisitely well-done piece of work it is. Simply, tastefully laid out, it is both visually appealing and highly informative. The quality of his photography, particularly the detailed work of close-up photographs of Minox cameras and accessories is nothing short of superb.

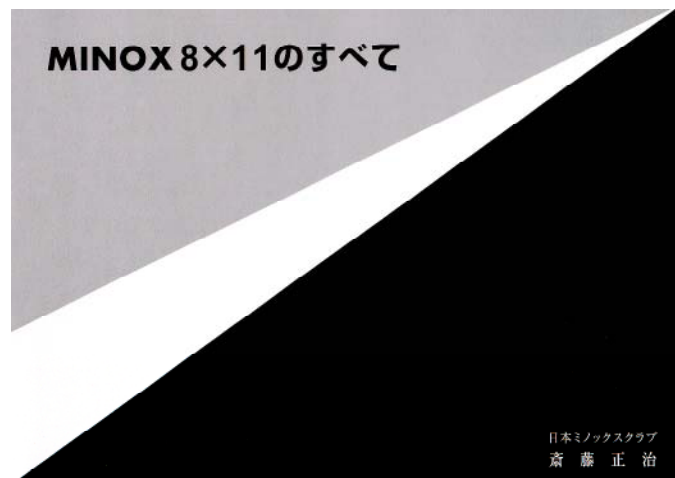
Martin writes in a wonderfully direct and engaging style that makes you feel you're dropping in for a visit with an old and trusted friend. One of the best sites I've seen, check back often as it continues to grow.



Book Review: "All of the Minox 8x11" by Masaharu Saitho

[John Watson, Jr.](#)

Vice President



In my opinion, "All of the Minox 8x11" is the single best Minox reference book I have handled to date.

Don't get me wrong. Other Minox books have their place. "Variations" is a good mix of history and reference material, "Marvel in Miniature" gives an insight and humanity that the others don't, "Spycamera" is a good general book, and the others are good user manuals.

But for a hard-core reference book, NONE of the others even approach the scope or detail of "All of the Minox 8x11". And I say this in spite of it being written entirely in Japanese.

When I first received my copy, I was stunned. Here was the collection of information I had been looking for, and then some. As I flipped through the pages I saw photos of items that I had only seen drawings of, variations delineated that I had never read about, and items I didn't even know existed.

The rest of my day at work was shot.

"All of the Minox 8x11", written by Mr. Masaharu Saitho is an 8 x 6 inch softbound volume with 216 pages on heavy stock. At the front (in much the same style as

"Variations") are several pages of color photos including an extraordinarily complete family tree of all the 8x11 cameras, and other interesting photos.

From page one, the details kick right in. As I said, I don't read a character of Japanese but there are enough numbers and words that are written in western characters that the concepts are still very easy to get.

That and the well done charts and detailed photos make it a wonderful resource that is still very useful.

Starting with the Riga, and going camera-by-camera, accessory-by-accessory, the variations have been photographed and catalogued. Many of the variations are even attributed to specific serial number ranges, a specificity not seen in any other volume.

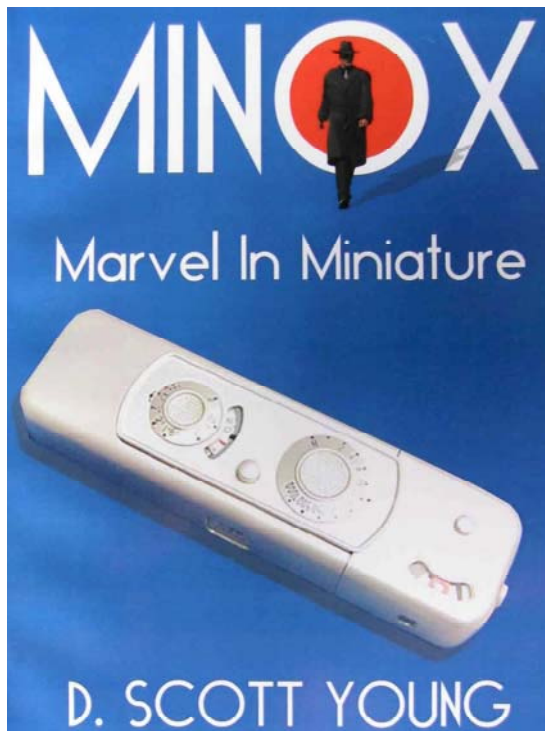
Did you know that there was a simply elegant macro setup for the EC? Or how about not just one, but four completely different stereo attachments? That is correct. Attachments that put two images on one Minox frame, and a matching viewer to complete the 3-D effect.

There are charts that give every conceivable measurement of each camera. Another chart breaks

down the film edge codes for each camera and variant in the 8x11 family. There is even a list of movies and TV shows in which Minox cameras have shown up. This list is almost ridiculously comprehensive.

If you read Japanese, I am envious. If you don't, you still need this book in your collection. It will become one of your most trusted and valuable resources.

The catch? Well, beyond the fact that it is written in Japanese, it is only available in Japan. Not only that, but it is only available to members of the Japanese Minox Club. In spite of this, acquiring the ¥2000 (approximately US\$17) book is well worth the effort it may take to add it to your bookshelf. So either join the Japanese Minox Club and make some new interesting friends, or do as I did and find a member who is willing to do a trade, but get this book.



Large format, soft cover, 193pp, illustrated b&w

Minox - Marvel in Miniature By D. Scott Young

The first new book on Minox cameras in years, this delightful exploration of Walter Zapp's most enduring design triumph, the Minox 8 x 11 camera, shatters forever the myth of the Minox as solely a spy camera. A comprehensive history of the inventor, his cameras and the Minox camera are nicely set against the backdrop of world events, with comparative views of other subminiature cameras to clearly illustrate the place the Minox occupied in history, as well as its impact. Covering every model of Minox subminiature camera and most accessories through to the year 2000, this book will be an invaluable reference to both researcher and collector alike.

A personal interview and correspondence with the inventor himself, as well as reproductions of articles and letters written by Zapp provide the reader with a unique insight into his design philosophy, his motivation and his reaction to his camera earning an international reputation as one of the premier tools of the espionage trade.

New and experienced users of these cameras will relish the user's guide, complete with camera and accessory operating instructions and a primer on beginning photography aimed at new shooters. Every facet of photography, particularly Minox photography, from film selection and loading to darkroom processing and printing is clearly introduced.

The most reasonably priced Minox book to come along in years, **Minox - Marvel in Miniature** can be ordered directly from the publisher for US \$15.00, via the Internet at <http://www.1stbooks.com/>. It can be purchased in any fine bookstore such as [Barnes & Noble](#), Waldenbooks, B. Dalton and others; simply inquire at the counter if it is not on the shelf. International orders can be handled by Petra Keller at www.camerabooks.com.

ISBN 1-58721-068-1 Released June, 2000

Tech Tips

D. Scott Young

Secretary / Treasurer

I've just spent the best \$25.00 I ever spent to dramatically enhance my photography, and I spent it all at Staples - the office supply store chain throughout America! That one purchase has dramatically improved the quality of my photography in ways I can use over and over for a wide variety of photographic situations that are both pleasing and fun.



That's an awful lot to get out of \$25.00 nowadays.

Coloured backdrops - that's the secret. Sitting down and examining carefully the types of photographs I tend to do a lot of, I realized that beyond scenic shots where the background is really far less controllable, I shoot a lot of subjects such as flowers, objects, certain animals, and other static and semi-static things. The backgrounds in these photographs detracts strongly from the visual impact and yet, with very

little effort, it can be easily controlled and used to accentuate and enhance the subject in wonderful ways.

I purchased three coloured foam core poster boards at just under \$5.00 each: dark (navy) blue, forest green and scarlet. These measure approximately 16 x 20" in size. I then purchased for an additional \$5.00 each a five-pack of heavy coloured poster paper, light blue and sunflower yellow.

The rest was little bit of time (about 10 minutes) and patience (with a stapler and roll of black electrical tape). I began by aligning the yellow poster paper (the poster paper was the same width, but slightly shorter than the poster boards) against the white back of the dark blue poster board, and then carefully stapling it around the edges. I put one staple approximately every two inches along the borders, keeping them within an inch of the outer edges of the poster board. Using this many staples was designed to keep the paper firmly attached to the poster board in windy weather, hopefully keeping it from ripping itself free from the poster board. Testing indicates that this works rather well.

I then carefully stretched out a length of electrical tape along one edge, pulling out a full inch or two more than what my eye would normally indicate is needed. This is important, because electrical tape is highly elastic, and will shrink back when released. Then, letting up on it a wee bit to allow it to shrink back to a normal length, which worked out to be the proper length for the edge I was working with, I carefully smoothed it down along the entire border edge, neatly covering all the staples. The edges were trimmed with scissors and neatly folded over each corner. I did the tape border on both sides of the poster board, because the tiny pointed edges of the staple project out of the opposite side enough to snag clothing, skin, etc. This taped edge boarder makes it much easier to work with, and also keeps wind from slipping under the coloured paper and possibly ripping it free.

The other boards were quickly made up in the same way: light blue paper was secured to the forest green poster board (allowing me to use a light blue background in tandem with the dark blue of the original poster board, and increasing the flexibility of my colour selection). The scarlet poster board was left alone, as the backside is pure white, another colour I might find handy in a photographic situation.

This now leaves me with six stiff and sturdy, ultra-light weight and very portable backdrops that can be easily transported to any field setting, and instantly set up (or held by hand) and taken down again.



When shooting flowers in the field, or sometimes in flower shops, it's very easy for me to prop up an appropriately coloured complementary backdrop to isolate my subject for immediate visual impact. When in the field or at flower shows, my wife often holds the board for me as I quickly compose and shoot: bystanders and security people don't seem to object as

long as we're not physically touching anything, working quickly and unobtrusively.

When shooting larger objects in my den, I quickly set up a "floor" and a background board, providing a multi-coloured arrangement that helps isolate the subject. My pet friend Churchill has white feathering and blue eye rings that stand out well against a yellow background and light blue "floor", all set up in seconds on a basic end table for a quick shoot.



Small objects such as the Minox Model IIIs and the Minox meter illustrated here seem to take on a life of their own when shown against a background that is colourful but not overly distracting.



John Watson has a lovely addition to this basic photographer's tool kit: a 6-foot by 5-foot length of white vinyl that he purchased from a fabric store. It makes an easy to set up and take down, elegant backdrop to a number of static photographic situations. Consider it a complement to the poster board solutions which work well out of doors; the vinyl backdrop works best indoors away from breezes or gusts of wind.

Yes ma'am, the best \$25.00 I ever spent!



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