



MINOX MEMO

The Journal Of The Minox Historical Society

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FALL / 2001

MINOX MEMO RETURNS!



Photo by [Gerald McMullon](#)

During the 1950's and 60's, the Minox Memo was published by Don Thayer, Sr. as part of [Minox Processing Laboratories'](#) effort to spread the allure of the Minox subminiature cameras. Given freely to registered owners of Minox cameras, this publication set a high standard for excellence in offering articles that were interesting, informative and fun. Readers could learn how to use their cameras in imaginative and new ways, find out what interesting things others were doing with their cameras, and even peek into the lives of celebrities of the time who were successfully using Minox cameras of their own.

In that same spirit, the Minox Historical Society decided one of it's early goals was to publish an electronic newsletter of our own that would also be interesting, informative and fun. We were therefore extremely surprised and grateful when Don Thayer, Jr., the current President of Minox Processing Laboratories, very graciously offered us permission to use MPL's registered

name "Minox Memo" as the title of our publication. It is thus with no small amount of pride that we offer to our members the "series II" edition of the venerable "Minox Memo".

Further thanks are should be expressed to Thorsten Kortemeier at [Minox GmbH](#) for his support. He has given us permission to use Minox's copyrighted materials, provided us valuable information and given us much needed moral support.

We would also like to thank all those who have given their support for what is being accomplished. From you, the members of the MHS, to those who have provided invaluable information from the various newsgroups and around the world, it has been a great adventure.

As we embark on this new project we call on each of you to help both with this publication and the website. Our goal is to make every piece of information about Minox, no matter how small or insignificant, available to as many people as possible. As the Executive Committee and Minox Memo staff, we will be here to bring your knowledge, experiences, and especially your photos to life. We look forward to sharing them.

Thanks for joining us in this adventure.

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The Minox Renaissance

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Photos by [Minox GmbH](#)

Over the past twenty years Minox has struggled to maintain its place in the industry, and recapture its glory days. While there have been significant successes, factors ranging from politics to technology have plagued these efforts.

This seems to be changing. Under the caring hands of Thorsten Kortemeier and Don Thayer, [Minox GmbH](#) and [Minox Processing Labs](#) are making great strides in guiding both endeavors back from obscurity. This has created a very eventful year, and much to look forward to. In separate interviews, the future of Minox was laid out.

Minox GmbH

Perhaps the most significant event of the past decade was the Management buyout of Minox from [Leica](#). In doing this Leica retains a 49% stake, while management hold a 51% share. This arrangement still maintains the support of Leica and its distribution channels, but gives Minox the freedom to develop in its own best interests.

Several shifts in the product assortment have also been beneficial. The sports optics lines have increasingly grown in importance and respect, while the classic cameras and MX series have brought badly needed revenue and new markets. Recently Minox made its first foray into digital photography, with plans to grow this segment in the future.

The Minox binoculars are almost universally heralded as one of the best values in optics. With excellent design, fantastic performance and reasonable prices, hunters and sportsmen around the world have been spreading the news.

To capitalize on this, Minox plans to expand its range of binoculars with the introduction of a new series of 58mm binoculars in 5,10, and 15x magnification. Additionally, spotting scopes are in the works, with rifle scopes considered a possibility in future introductions. Current plans are for eyepieces in 20-45x, and fixed 22x or 40x. By growing its line of offerings, Minox hopes to maintain

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the excellent reputation it has built in this growing product category.

As a parallel project, Minox is teaming up the technology of the Windwatch series with their monoculars into a fusion project. Expect to see the 6x16 monocular sporting many of the Windwatch features. At this time the size penalty is only about 2mm for the added functions. It is projected to be named the MD6x16A.

"8x11 is not dead!" say both Thorsten Kortemeier and Don Thayer. To make the point, look forward to the broadening of the classic camera series. These miniature reproduction cameras are a partnership between Minox, Asanuma and Megahouse of Japan. Minox and Asanuma provide the parts, while Megahouse does the final assembly. Surprisingly to many, these cameras are very often used as shooters with respectable results. (See *The "Cute" Minoxes on Page 7*) The MX and classic cameras have become a very significant growth market for the company. By fostering this entry-level market, more resources are being made available to develop the enthusiast lines.

This partnership will also provide the possibility to grow the 8x11 offerings beyond the "collector" cameras.



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Expect to see more introductions in this format over the coming years.

Minox has also added to its 35mm offerings. Plans for a successor to the GT-E and GT-S are in the works, but still most likely several years off. The compact camera series has received the CD-155. This has a longer zoom range of 38-155mm, and expands the capabilities of the series.

Marketed as part of this compact series is the new digital CD-1311. Forays into digital have been avoided to date, due to image quality and camera size issues. Noting that the 8x11 format resolution is very near the 1.3 megapixel range, this was set as the minimum starting point. The CD-1311 is an attempt to gain marketshare and experience in this new technology.

The next installment in this line will be a 2.1 megapixel version, presumably named the CD-2111.



With this experience, Minox has set its sights on a digital TLX. Still a couple of years out, this has become a quest for the right components. Currently production CCD's and processors are too large and consume too much energy to effectively miniaturize to this size. Even with partnerships this is deemed to be a difficult leap, but it will happen soon.

Expect camera in the TLX formfactor. Likely, it will sport some form of removable media. It is presumed it will be named the DLX in the LX tradition.

Minox Processing Laboratories

Primarily a processor of film, MPL has hung on through slumping sales over the last several years. Adding insult to injury, digital is expected to outsell film in 2002. What could have been the last nail in the coffin has become MPL's saving grace. With great vision, acceptance of change, and a loyalty to the 8x11 format, a new business plan is well underway to being implemented.

As many have heard on the newsgroups, Don Thayer has begun Epixel.com. This parallel company will eventually envelop the MPL structure. This shift will be gradual, but it will also give a broader base from which to service Minox customers.

Don has been working closely with Fuji to create both hardware and software that can rapidly process Minox film and print it digitally. Currently many of the black and white negatives going through MPL are using portions of this technology, with color film and slide film coming online soon.

Going to a digital format, flexibility is built in. The new scanners will allow for high resolution scans of almost any format, Minox being a main beneficiary. By scanning in the film directly, images can be processed in many ways. Currently images are posted to the Epixel website for viewing after processing. You can then either download the images, have them sent on CD, or have prints made using the latest laser technology and mailed to you.



It is also possible to upload digital images for professional printing. These can be from PhotoShop or straight from your digital camera, but the laser processing should allow for truly remarkable results.

Color saturation should be a real beneficiary of this process.

By having all of these options, prices should go down, and Minox photography should become more affordable. Also note that Epixel can work with most common film formats, and many obscure ones. Don't limit them to your 8x11 exploits.

And yes, the contact sheets are coming back! Expect to see Minox GmbH take advantage of the capabilities of these new technologies in future offerings.

All in all Minoxers can look forward to a very fruitful future. With both sides of the ocean and worldwide partners all coming together, there are some very interesting and innovative products are on the horizon.



Minox Service D.A.G.ed

[Peter Zimmerman](#)

President

Many of the most serious Minox hobbyists, those of us who need to have our Riga Minoxes, or perhaps Minox II cameras with black blades restored, already know [Don Goldberg](#) of [DAG Camera Repair](#) in McFarland, Wisconsin. Quite simply, Don is the guy who can fix anything Minox, modify anything Minox, and restore the oldest treasures.

Now, all U.S. Minoxers are going to become acquainted with Don's superb abilities to make almost anything "Minox" whole and operating again. Don is taking over the responsibility of being the U.S. authorized Minox repair center from Minox Processing Labs, freeing MPL to concentrate on its core business: making beautiful pictures from Minox subminiature films.

Some time back I was in the Madison, Wisconsin area on business and had a little spare time in my schedule. Fortunately Don did too, and graciously invited me over for a tour of the workshop.

He's a wiry guy, perhaps 5 feet 9 inches, give or take, with a full black beard and long-ish black hair, a bit biblical looking. Enthusiastic in the extreme about his profession, he took the time to show me how several Minox models work under the skin. After deciding to go into camera repair, Don served a two year apprenticeship in the Leitz "Feinmechaniker" program in Wetzlar, and after qualifying as a precision machinist and repairman on Leicas, he moved to Heuchelheim

where he studied for several months at the Minox factory. This was in the 1970s.

Spread from one end of a large basement to the other are more than 100 cameras in various stages of repair, waiting to be repaired or on their way out the door to happy owners. Don works on only two breeds of cameras: Minoxes and Leicas, at both of which he is an acknowledged master. [if you need new "Vulcanite" on a Leica or a Leica lens, send it to Don for perfection -- this in addition to mechanical repairs on Leicas.]

The most interesting to me was the treasure trove of parts for Riga Minoxes, and the incredible complexity of the camera compared to modern models. All the parts are hand fitted, beautifully, but perhaps the most unusual part of the construction are the shutter blades themselves. A modern Minox shutter blade is just that, a very thin piece of steel. A Riga-Minox shutter blade comes in two parts: a light weight frame shaped a bit like a capital P, except that the round part of the frame is longer (taller) than it is wide unlike on the letter. A thin groove is milled into the face of the frame, the oblong top of the P. The shutter foil is then carefully placed into the groove and gently patted into place. Then the shutter foil is soldered into the frame! This must, of course, be done for each of the two blades!

Waiting for restoration was a Minox II, or perhaps more accurately a Minox II, model 1, because the filter and shutter blades were changed part way through the production. The older version has black-finished shutter blades (see Heckmann for a description), and the inner surface of the cover plate is blackened, perhaps to improve light absorption. The filter is green and yellow instead of green and orange, the yellow glass being left over from the parts saved from the VEF factory in Riga. My own II is a Minox II, model 2, with shiny blades but a black circle (instead of the modern white circle) to indicate a cocked shutter. The black blades have, of course, a white circle. I didn't actually get to see the black blades on the model 1; that camera's problem was a jammed shutter! I left my Minox II in Don's capable hands to have a CLA and get the viewfinder prism replaced. This was then a \$75 job, which I think is pretty darn reasonable considering that the camera is 40 years old. Yes, DAG has parts.

Did you know that the way the Minox C knows the ND filter is in place is because a tiny ND filter slides over the photo cell when the filter slides over the lens? The film speed is set by moving a wedge in front of the cell. The long thin triangle cut into a thin metal strip changes width to allow more or less light to reach the cell. This isn't a surprising or even a novel way to set film speed, but the

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precision of the tiny parts is remarkable. Well, heck, the precision of all the tiny parts of a Minox is remarkable.

Don held out an "egg crate" compartment box, each cell containing screws, springs, levers, washers, or gears. This and a couple of other similar containers are just about the world supply of Riga Minox spares. I felt a cough coming on and turned away; some of the parts were light enough to have been blown out by one good "hack".

Finally, I looked at the saddest Minox I have ever seen: a brand new TLX purchased at a swap meet for \$150. Before you congratulate the owner on a great deal you should know that the camera had been gutted before it was sold.

Although the film chamber could be seen, there was no mechanism under it; no electronics; only a filter and one shutter blade jammed in place in front of where the lens ought to have been.

DAG can rebuild this mess and give its owner a working TLX at, perhaps, a lower cost than it would have commanded at a dealer. It was a good reminder that if the price on anything looks too good to be true, it probably is. Was this camera stolen? Stolen from the factory? What happened to the insides? There aren't many who could benefit from using the guts as 'spare parts'. Your guess is probably better than mine or Don's. (Long after my visit I found out that the unit belonged to a well-known Minoxer and was in fact built as a show-room dummy, not intended to work.)

Did you know that "in extremis" you can strip parts out of a disposable camera with built in flash and use those components to fix the Minox 8x11 electronic flash?

Some of you may remember the "old" Popular Photography magazine, before it became a resurrection of Modern Photography. In those days Pop's camera tests involved a complete strip down and a torture test which really told the reader how well a camera would stand up and perform. The author of those articles was Norman Goldberg -- yes, Don's father.

DAG and I are both believers in the idea that if a cluttered desk indicates a cluttered mind, an empty desk must indicate, well you know. Out of the chaos of DAG's workshop comes some of the best submini and Leica repair work on earth. And in the workshop is yet another one of the really nice people who seem to dominate this hobby!

After an hour I finally reminded him of my promise to get in and get out in half an hour so as not to delay

anybody's repairs by too long and to let him get back to his business. For both of us the time had flown by. I left Don's shop to find that the weather had deteriorated badly, and that the Wisconsin winter had struck again. Snow had covered my car, and the roads were about to freeze over. It was rush hour, and I carefully picked my way into Madison to my hotel. Yes, I took a bunch of pictures of DAG, with a Minox of course, and if I can find them in the mess which is my current filing system for Minox photos, one will appear with this column. Artistic shots, no, but a great reminder of my visit. 

The "Cute" Minoxes

[Charles F. Trentelman](#)

Editor in Chief

Photos by [Charles Trentelman](#) and [Minox GmbH](#)

Man, they sure are cute, but many of you have probably wondered: Are those new collectible Minox cameras any good?

Well, yeah.

OK, you wouldn't want to use one to shoot your favorite sister's wedding. They're a bit limited for that. But they do have some capabilities. Photo albums the world over are full of perfectly fine pictures taken with cameras capable of no more, and many less.

And, don't forget they're cute.

My sister said "cute" is defined as "anything smaller than you expect it to be." These qualify nicely. People smile when you point these at them. In addition to several Leica models, you can now purchase them from Sharan in Nikon, Pentax and Rolleiflex models, some



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several models. Minox, so far, only sells three different of the Leica models (III_f, II_f and M-3) which are badged as Minox.

And every one of them is, I say again, cute as buttons.

As I understand it, they are assembled in Japan from parts produced by both Minox and Sharan.



Technically, they are box cameras, just like grandma used to use only cuter. They are fixed focus (3 feet to infinity) fixed aperture (f 5.6) and fixed shutter speed (1/250). With an ASA 100 film this gives you a one stop overexposure for bright sunlight. Most modern films have latitude to spare and handle this nicely. It also helps you out with shadow details.

The lens is a 15 mm Minotar, a three-element in three groups lens which gives you, as every other Minox, the equivalent of a 35mm lens on a 35mm camera. The viewfinder on my Minox/Leica III_f has chrome plating on the inside of the front frame which makes it a bit confusing to look through, but you get used to that. The Leica film advance knob advances the film (duh!) but the rewind knob is just for show, as are the rangefinder windows and slow speed knob. The shutter release is where you expect it to be. It loads from the bottom, just like a Leica.



Unlike standard Minox cameras this does not push the pressure plate against the film during exposures. You put the film in the camera and it slides into a slit that, you hope, keeps the film at the proper distance from the film.

Amazingly, it does that. The pictures are remarkably sharp and detailed. I have been shooting Ilford Delta 100 and the only limiting factor is the grain. When I manage to get development right, the results are equal to what you get with a Minox EC. Birds on telephone poles 300 yards away are distinct. Tones are held nicely.



Because of the fixed lens and shutter, you are pretty much stuck with an ASA 100 film. I am pondering trying Ilford XP2 in it, thinking its very wide latitude will give extended flash range and more usage outdoors in iffy light.

You can buy a flash with these. It is a potato-masher type that screws onto the bottom of the camera and extends to the side. Like the camera, it is very cute. Its connection is like no other in the world so you cannot use a standard flash unit with this camera, which is a pretty cute way of selling flash units, if you ask me.

Powered by a single double-A battery, the flash unit also has pretty poor range, about 6 feet with ASA 100 film. This does allow you to take snap shots indoors. It also allows you to use a fill flash out of doors. I used it to take pictures of people in open shade and the results were excellent.

The flash unit also gives you something to hold onto when using the camera. A Leica camera is an ergonomic masterpiece, but shrunk to 1/3 its normal size your fingers have a problem finding things to grip.

Every ad I've seen for these cameras says they have a standard tripod thread. They do not. The screw hole on the bottom is only for the flash unit. A standard tripod bolt will not fit it. Since the camera does not have a "B"



shutter speed, and 1/250 is sufficient to hand hold, there is no need for a tripod.

the added diameter the film adds to the take-up spool as you expose. This means the camera has negatives about 2 mm apart at the beginning of the roll and about half a centimeter at the end, but you still get all 36 exposures.

So, you ask, is it worth it?

Well, I bought one with the flash, spending close to \$500 which might have bought me a used TLX. I bought it anyway. I was smitten and had no option.

However, this is no TLX and I am most definitely not buying a second although, as a Rolleiflex user, I do find myself lingering over that one in the Sharan line. Sigh!

Having said that, I do not regret buying it at all. It is great fun to play with and produces very good images. It is solidly made and very high quality. It comes in a spiffy wooden box.



They also sell an ever-ready case for the camera. It, too, is cute, but costs somewhere around \$150.

That's a lot of cute. I passed. (MHS)

Tech Tips

[D. Scott Young](#)

Secretary / Treasurer

I recently had an opportunity to talk with Donald Goldberg, the top Minox repairman in America, about an issue with shutter brake assemblies in early model Minox 8 x 11 cameras. It seems that over time he has noticed a number of enthusiasts sending cameras to him with a request to replace the shutter blades and/or shutter blade springs, thinking that these parts might have worn more over time. Here are his thoughts on the matter.

First, the issue is primarily restricted to Model II, III, and IIIS cameras; you could sometimes see this with a Model B camera, but this is not as likely as the Model B's are still comparatively young. As they get older, they may start to exhibit this problem as well, but that won't be for a while yet.

While it is possible for shutter blades and springs to wear out or break, Don indicates that more often than not the underlying problem is the shutter brake assembly. As its name implies, this assembly "brakes" or slows down the gear train armature at the end of its travel so that the shutter blades don't slam to a stop and cause shock, wear and tear unnecessarily. When the brake assembly fails, the blades and springs are subjected to much more shock and could get damaged or break entirely as a result.

The critical component here is actually a very, very small black rubber washer, or "bumper"; for size comparison, this part is less than half the size of the tiny buttons near the collar of a dress shirt. In cameras that haven't been opened in years for service, the rubber can dry rot and come apart, pieces falling about inside the camera. The critical problem for do-it-yourself home repairpersons is the extremely micro-fine tolerances used in making these bumpers very difficult to do at home. Although deceptively simple in appearance, Don states firmly that if you make the bumper too small, it won't to its job properly and shutter damage could result; make it just a micro-bit too large, and you'll find your picture taking definitely hampered as the 2nd shutter curtain will not release.

Don also cautions the home repairperson that if you are disassembling your Minox to replace shutter blades, you should visually inspect the removed blades carefully to determine if any piece of it has been torn off. Chances

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are that the broken or torn off pieces are now somewhere inside the camera works, and need to be located and removed. One of the more common problems is a bit of broken blade being caught inside the guide slot, out of sight, where a new blade can then slam into it and damage itself.

Don routinely checks the shutter brake assembly during every CLA (clean, lubricate and adjustment) he performs on Minox 8 x 11 cameras sent to him, and will advise the owner if he sees any problem with it that needs to be addressed.

For those of you who really do have bad or broken shutter blades and/or springs, you might consider purchasing a replacement set from Martin Doctor. Martin has been making replacement shutter blade/spring sets for some time now, and reports from the field have been very positive. His blades and springs are of uniformly excellent quality and finish, and as the blades are made of a stainless steel that is just slightly thicker than the factory original part, seem to be a little stronger overall. Very reasonably priced at \$25.00 for a set of blades and springs, the user must specify the exact model camera they are intended for so that he can send you the proper set that will allow the shutter cocked indicator to display correctly through the lens window. Martin can be contacted via email addressed to nhdoc@aol.com.

Don thinks quite highly of the Doctor blades, having used them himself, and will quite willingly install them (when supplied by the customer) in a users Minox on request. 

Minox Web Watch

[D. Scott Young](#)

Secretary / Treasurer

There are a number of excellent Minox oriented web sites already on the Internet, just a "maus" click away, and it seems like more are coming every day. Each issue of the Minox Memo will spotlight one of these excellent sites.

www.minoxclub.de takes you to the location of the 1st German Minox Club's home page, a dual language (English and German) web site put together by the club and posted earlier this year. The site is focused primarily on the club and it's activities, with a brief history, charter, officers roster, and application form being readily available through the links on the left sidebar. The 1st German Minox Club is the publisher of "Der Minox Freund" (The Minox Friend) magazine which is made

available periodically to members; a comprehensive description of the magazine and advertising procedures for members is covered. There are several links that bring up information directly from the Minox, GmbH website for reference material, i.e., the family tree of cameras and PDF format instruction manuals. This is a very "clean" site, thoughtfully laid out: links on the left, a scrolling frame for the main view. The design is eye-catching and very tastefully done. Check back as it continues to grow, it promises to be a good one! 

Purchasing a Minox 8 x 11

[D. Scott Young](#)

Secretary / Treasurer

So you've made your mind up to get one of these miniature marvels, a Minox 8 x 11 camera. You may, as time goes on and your appreciation for the history of these unique cameras grows, want to purchase more than one with the discerning eye of a collector. For now, however, you want a good, useable camera to be always with you, a "shooter" to be used, not displayed. Where do you go from here?

The first question to be answered is, "New or used?"

If you've set your heart on a new Minox, you have several choices:

A Minox ECX set, which includes the clip on electronic flash unit. This makes a really great starter set at a street price of about \$300.00.

If you want an LX series camera, be prepared to pay a bit more: the TLX set with flash unit has a street price of about \$850.00. You may, if you're willing to really look, find some silver tone or black LX models, new and unsold, still on some dealers shelves at a street price of about \$700, (without the flash) but again, you'll have to really look.

There are several other LX series cameras that can be purchased new, but these are largely considered



collector editions, and are priced accordingly: the CLX is a chromed commemorative (about \$1200.00), a Millennium edition is black with gold trim (\$1500.00), and a gold Walter Zapp signature model can get uncomfortably close to \$3,000.00. While top-notch cameras, none of them are recommended for the new enthusiast in the market for a good shooter.

The really important thing to keep in mind when purchasing one of these from a store other than Minox is to check the box and verify that the original factory warranty card is in there with the camera, if not, you are probably getting an illegal, "gray market" camera. And, just because it is new, doesn't mean you shouldn't put the battery in the camera and cycle it a few times to ensure that meter, indicator lights and shutter all work properly.

If you're willing to consider a used Minox, your choices broaden considerably among models and price ranges. Some judicious looking can net you a fine condition Model III's for a street price of \$130.00, up to \$400.00 for an excellent Model C, add \$100.00 to \$150.00 for black finish models. Excellent LX models can be found in the

\$500.00 range, more for black. B's can be had for \$200.00, but BL's can start at \$800.00 or \$900.00 for a silver tone model, with black going as high as \$2,000.00, making the BL a little less affordable to many as "shooters". Remember, these are street prices for those willing to do some walking about and looking. You can find all of these cameras priced considerably more in other places, so it pays to shop about.

I don't recommend Riga or Model II cameras as shooters to new enthusiasts, they have considerable collectors value and are priced accordingly; conversely, I also tend to steer new enthusiasts away from the Model III and toward the II's. For the few extra dollars you get the flash contact for mounting a flash unit, which is well worth it. Otherwise, the III is an excellent camera as well for a beginning shooter.

If you must purchase your camera via mail, call ahead and make an arrangement with the store for a 30 day money back guarantee. If they won't consider that, then walk away and find another store. I insist on this, explaining that it will take me a few days to shoot a roll of film through the camera and at least 3 weeks to mail the



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 www.1stbooks.com. It can be purchased in any fine book store 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.

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film out to [Minox Processing Labs](#) and get it back to examine the prints. The more reputable stores will readily agree to this.

The best way to purchase a used Minox, of course, is to examine it in the store. An even better way is to take along a friend who already has a Minox and knows a little something about them. This person may very well be pleased to allow you to handle and operate the one you're interested in so that you have a little working experience before you get to the store, and if they'll accompany you, you can tap their experience as well. Here's a guide to some of the things to pay attention to when examining the camera:

1. Examine the outside body shell carefully, discarding any camera that has obvious dents, dings or cracks in the shell. This is indicative of a camera that has been

dropped and could leave you with expensive shutter and other adjustment repairs.

2. Shake the camera (on BL and earlier, all mechanical models): it shouldn't rattle at all. On the other hand, a soft click or clicking sound is perfectly normal (when the camera is closed) as one of the shutter timing components is designed to move freely inside. Rattling indicates broken parts. Note that the electronic shutter mechanism in Model C cameras is different, and a soft clicking may be heard or may not be; clicking is fine, obvious rattling is not. LX series cameras use a totally different electronic shutter mechanism and normally make no clicking sound when shaken.

3. Open and close the camera several times: it should work smoothly with no binding. Newer cameras that have not been used much may seem a bit stiff, but still

MHS Inaugural 8x11 Photo Contest!

Win a Minox EC Camera, and other great prizes!!!

Have some gems in all those strips
of film lying around?

**Print it up, scan it in, and send it off. It may be worth a
Minox EC camera, provided by Minox GmbH.**

In each issue of the Minox Memo we will have the best photos in 8x11 photography. Winners will be selected in two categories, color or black and white. In the last issue of the year the "Best of Show" will be selected to win the Minox EC.

If that isn't enough, each issue will have prizes for the category winners. Next issues winners will each receive a copy of D. Scott Young's "Minox - Marvel in Miniature", donated by the author.

Deadline for submissions is February 28th, 2002.

So get those photos in, and get ready to win!



All photos must be taken with a Minox camera in the format specified. Images should not exceed 4x6 inches at 300 dpi. (about 225-250kb)
Files should be submitted in .JPG format. All pictures must be submitted by email to webmaster@minox.org.
The decision of the judges is final. Prizes are the responsibility of those providing them.

should be smooth. Older cameras that have been used can show a certain amount of looseness, or "play", but if the amount of play makes the camera feel "sloppy", then move on.

4. Open the battery compartment on BL, C, LX series, EC and ECX cameras and examine the battery contacts. They should be clean, free of corrosion and not broken or excessively pitted. Badly corroded contacts indicate past battery leakage, some of which could have gotten inside the camera and caused more damage to the electronic circuitry.

5. Operate the shutter speed, focus and film setting knobs, and the shutter release button. They should all function smoothly with no binding. Fire the shutter at least half a dozen times or more. Any sticking or failure to fire could indicate a future shutter failure repair. Be certain to have fresh batteries in the cameras that need them to operate the shutter when performing this test.

6. With the lens facing you and the camera open, operate the focus control from far focus to near focus while closely looking at the viewfinder window. As you reach the near focus ranges (8 to 10") you should see the prism in the viewfinder move. It will be a small, but

definite movement; this indicates that the parallax correction mechanism in the viewfinder is operating properly.

7. With the lens still facing you, operate the shutter through the range of speeds from slow to fastest, moving through every other marked speed. For example, go from 1/2 second to 1/10th second (skipping 1/5th second), then to 1/30th second, etc. The idea here is to perform a rough check of shutter speed accuracy with the naked eye. While the eye can not accurately tell the speed difference between every marked speed, it should be able to discern speed differences between every other marked speed at the lower ranges (along with your ear, as you listen) to about 1/125th or possibly 1/250th of a second.

8. Slide the neutral density filter into place (or one of the colored filters if no ND filter is present) and examine the lens carefully from several angles. This will help detect any dirt, or, more importantly, scratches on the lens window. Reject any camera with scratches or nicks in the window as they will show up on your prints forever. 9. Open the film back and examine the film chamber. Push the camera closed an 1/8th of an inch and then open it again: on B and earlier model cameras you should see

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the film pressure plate open and close again. On C and later models, the film gate opens completely when the back is fully opened, not requiring the user to give that 1/8th inch push closed to disengage the film pressure plate.

10. On B and BL cameras, open the back and check the toothed gear that protrudes from the meter side of the body shell, ensuring that none of the teeth have been broken off. Close the back gently, advance the shutter speed to another mark, and check again. Do this along the entire range of shutter speeds to ensure that all teeth are present and not chipped off or excessively worn.

11. Check the meter function and accuracy of B and BL models against a handheld meter. B models can be off a full stop or two over many years as the selenium used in their meter construction normally degrades over time. This should not deter you from buying an otherwise fine camera as D.A.G. camera repair can replace these elements easily enough for a modest fee. BL cameras should meter accurately, to within at least one F/stop of the hand held test meter. Checking meter function on C, EC and LX series is going to be more difficult as there is no marked readout per se, but you should be able to swing the camera to a bright, outside area and then into a darker, inside area of the store while checking the over and under exposure warning lights.

12. Take a ruler to the store with you, or at least an accurate tape measure. Lay out the measuring chain and measure where the beads are along the chain. It is not unusual for the chains to stretch out of shape over the years, leaving it less than accurate for measuring at the near focus points where precise measurements are most vital for sharp, clear photographs. While you're at it, examine the mounting end of the chain and make certain the proper mounting lug is on it (LX chains have no lug, just a clip, the mounting chain adapter is an accessory).

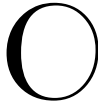
13. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, run a roll of film through the camera, get it processed promptly and examine the results closely, for this is the best proof of full camera function you can find.

If you do all of these things carefully, you can be confident that you're buying an excellent, precision camera that will give you a lifetime of pleasurable shooting experiences. Happy shooting! 

Service It!

[Charles F. Trentelman](#)

Editor in Chief

K, you bought it. It's lovely. It's a jewel. It's your baby.

Now get it serviced.

Seriously.

OK, go ahead, run a roll through it. Marvel at the feel. Luxuriate over the slow speed gear train. Exult over the viewfinder frame.

People will think you are strange, but let them. This is first love and you should enjoy it for a bit.

Then get it serviced. Why?

Unless your camera is less than five years old and brand new and came with one of those "Inspected by..." certificates from Minox, initialed in German script, you have no idea what is inside it.

Jimmy Hoffa? Could be. The Loch Ness Monster? Perhaps. Dead grease? Almost certainly. Dry oil? Absolutely. Corroding electrical parts? You don't want to even go there.

Look, I know you don't want to hear this. A service on a Minox is \$75, maybe \$100, plus parts and shipping.

You just blew a bundle on the camera, your wife is saying "You spent how much on what?" and the guy you bought it from DID say it was "Mint" right? At least he assured you it was wonderful, really. He swore!

Doesn't matter. You gotta hear this.

Cameras are mechanical, like your car. Mechanical things have parts that move. Parts that move need lubrication.

But lubrication gets old. Oil dries, grease gets hard, both migrate to where they shouldn't be. Little rubber thingies get hard and brittle, like some ancient rubber band. All these things quit doing what they should do.

And dust? Do we need to discuss dust and grit and grunge? Airborne acids? Smog? This thing was carried

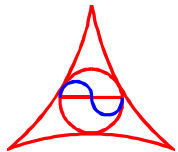
around in someone's pocket, for crying out loud. Look in your pocket. Now think, "This is inside my camera."

But, you say, the camera works great! Listen to it! It sounds smooth as silk!

I hear. I don't care. It is anywhere from five to 50 years old and you have no idea, really, what it looks like inside. It could go from silk to gunny sack in two seconds.

I speak from ugly experience here. Two kinds of ugly experience.

First, because I collect cameras, all sorts of cameras, this has happened to me over and over and (sigh!) over. In 25 years I have yet to find a used camera that could, under normal use, keep working as I wanted it to for an extended period. They click along and then they go "ka-phittt!" and die.



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

SWS Security

International purveyors of well cared for modern and vintage Minox equipment.

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. Transactions worldwide by an experienced and reputable collector. Numerous references from my Minox friends can be reviewed on the webpage.

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Proud sponsor of the Minox Historical Society!

Man, do I look stupid standing there with a dead camera.

And, needless to say, when they fail they do so at the most exquisite time: Middle of a wedding, middle of Christmas dinner, middle of Most Important Event Of My Life.

You'd think I'd learn. Which brings up the second reason.

The last two Minoxi I bought, I did not follow this advice.

They were a III-S and an EC. They were lovely. They were jewels. They were my babies. The guys I bought them from said they were, really, wonderful. I luxuriated in their slow speeds and silky feel.

Six months later, "ka-phittt!"

At least it wasn't during a wedding. But then, I shoot weddings with my Leica and I have my Leica serviced, need it or not.

And so should you with your Minox. 

What Is It?

[John Watson](#)

Vice President / Technology Manager

Upon the introduction of the Minox B, The Flash Lock Plate was introduced.

Many owners had the M2 BC fan flash unit. This unit being designed for the IIIs was not compatible with the B's newly metered end. By placing this plate over the meter button, a groove was now available for the flash's clamp to grip the camera.

These plates generally come in a manila envelope with detailed instructions printed on it.



Designed by Don O. Thayer, Sr., this is one of the few "approved" Minox items made in America with Minox GmbH's blessing. This is shown by the maus logo appearing boldly on the top. 