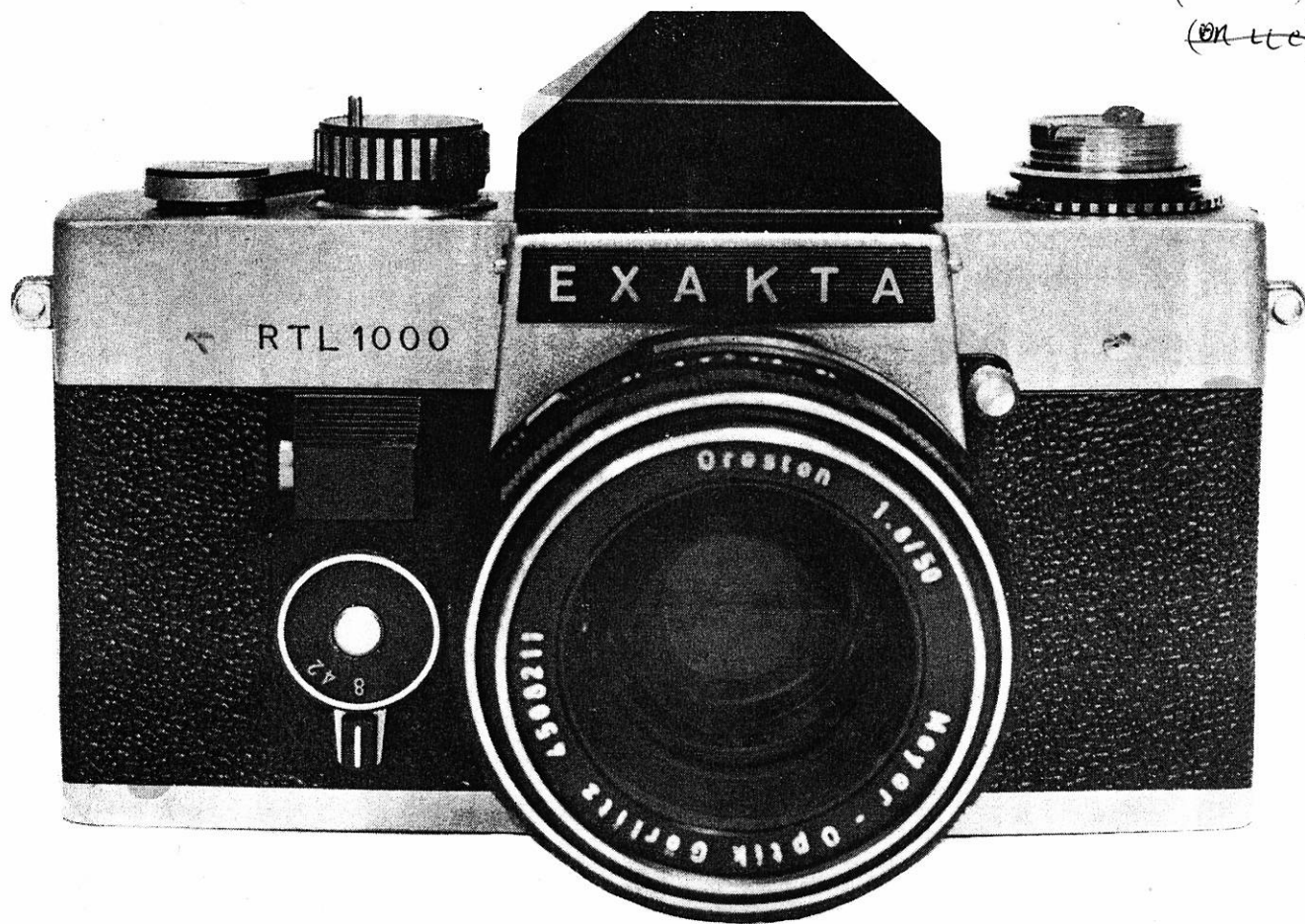


On Test Exakta RTL 1000

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THE most apt description I can think for the new Exakta RTL 1000 is 'a most considerate camera'. Considerate because Exakta have not forgotten all the other Exaktas that have gone before it. They have not forgotten the tens of thousands of pounds worth of lenses and accessories that have been bought by photographers during the past thirty years since the Exakta system was first introduced. As the new Exakta is a complete departure from the original Exakta design, the manufacturers could have easily said, 'New camera, let's start from scratch and forget all the old equipment! This will give us complete freedom to do what we want.'

Although all the Exakta lenses and accessories still fit the RTL 1000 no camera could be more different in terms

of its looks and convenience. The last model of the Exakta to be made to the old design was ugly and inconvenient to use. The RTL 1000 is a 'good looker' and superbly easy to use—the styling is as modern as any design conscious photographer would wish for and the specification has everything that a serious worker could ever want. Some diehards of the Exakta may bemoan the disappearance of the film cutter and cassette to cassette loading but all in all the camera is a tremendous improvement over earlier models.

The camera body is made from one basic diecasting upon which a satin chrome top and bottom plate have been fitted—the main body is covered with leather cloth fabric. The East Germans have never been able, or just

don't want, to produce a real fine finish satin chrome. Although it is good, the finish on the Exakta RTL 1000 is still not as fine as that of similarly priced Japanese SLRs.

The layout of the controls is pretty much the same as other top quality SLRs—to the right of the pentaprism are the shutter speed dial, film wind lever and self resetting film counter. The lever wind has two positions, one with it flush to the body of the camera for storage, the other protruding over the top plate for easy use. A film-type reminder dial has been incorporated into the centre of the lever wind.

The shutter speed dial is very ordinary, except for a small pin which protrudes from the top of the dial, designed to couple up with the TTL

pentaprism housing which is available as an accessory. Speeds from 1 second to 1/1000 are provided plus B, and a special setting for electronic flash. Naturally, the shutter speed dial is non-rotating and is large enough for the most ham handed photographer.

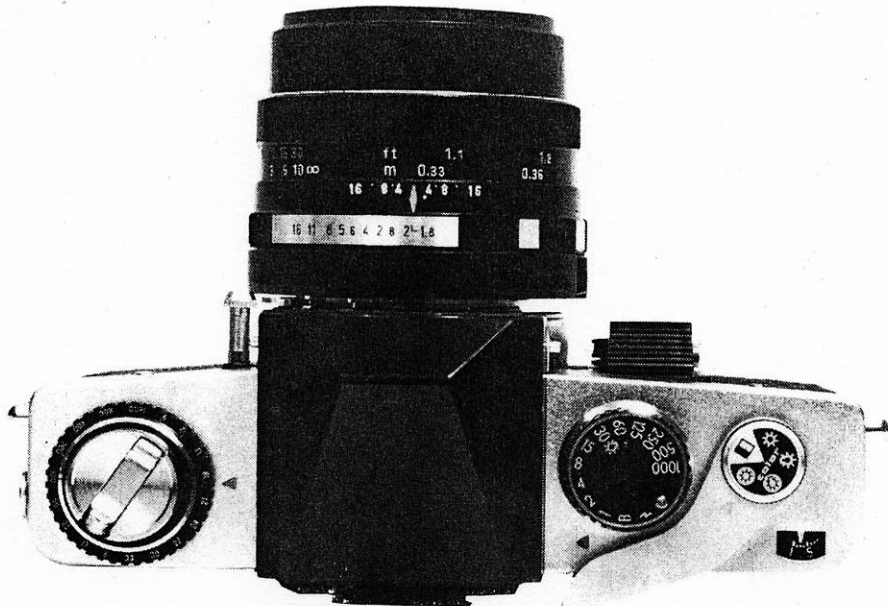
The foldaway rewind crank is at the other end of the top plate and incorporates a film speed reminder dial. To open the back of the camera the rewind crank is tugged upwards—this releases the camera back lock. The flash sync coupling is located on the edge of the top plate and is a standard 3mm coaxial fitting.

Before discussing the optical features of the RTL 1000—this is by far the most interesting area for the writer—we will discuss the remainder of the shutter mechanism. The original Exakta had, as a major feature, shutter speeds from 12 seconds to 1/1000 (remember that one of the major selling areas for Exakta cameras was with scientific establishments who needed speeds as long as this for macrophotography and photomicrography). It would have been very easy for Ihagee of Dresden to do away with this facility but, I'm glad to say, they haven't although we can say goodbye to the 12 second setting. The long exposures use the mechanism of the delayed action release to determine their duration. On the front of the D/A control are three markings 2, 4 and 8. To bring the time exposure mechanism into operation the required speed is set against a marker point and shutter speed dial set to 'B'. Once the delayed action has been 'wound up' pressing the shutter release triggers the time exposure. This may sound a little complicated, but in practice it is very easy, and considerably easier to use than the mechanism fitted to the earlier Exakta cameras!

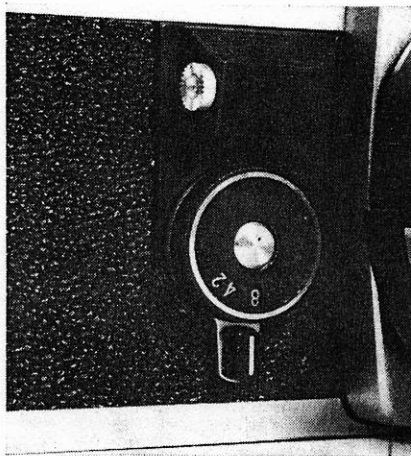
Another improvement is the three blade metal shutter which has been fitted instead of the conventional cloth blind. With it comes higher synchronisation speeds for electronic flash—1/125 second.

The shutter release is novel in its design—instead of a button there is an angled plastic wedge—angled to fit the index finger perfectly. On the side of the shutter release panel a lock has been fitted and is brought into action by twisting a small knurled knob into the lock position. Rewinding the Exakta is quite conventional and easy. Loading is even easier. Exakta have fitted a similar mechanism to the Praktica range of cameras, in fact I would suppose that there has been very close co-operation between Exakta and Pentacon (they are both located in Dresden) as the RTL 1000 has a lot of little things that remind you of Pentacon and Praktica cameras.

Now we come to the optics of the camera—by far the most interesting area to discuss, not because they are out of the ordinary but because of the problems that had to be overcome in reconciling the old Exakta's optical system with the new one, so that



The layout of the Exakta RTL 1000 is quite conventional. From the left : rewind crank, pentaprism, shutter speed dial and lever wind. The film counter is self resetting.



The delayed action release mechanism also incorporates the 2, 4 and 8 second time exposures which are a unique facility of the RTL 1000. The mechanism is triggered by the centre button.



Releasing the lens of the new Exakta is the same as earlier models — a small lever to the right of the lens mount. The pentaprism is released by depressing the small catch at the side of the pentaprism.

earlier accessory lenses fit and couple. For readers who are not familiar with the old Exakta let me briefly recap, otherwise the original way that Exakta have solved the problem will be lost.

On most modern SLR cameras the auto iris mechanism of the lens is activated by a lever or plunger from inside the camera. The plunger strikes a pin at the back of the lens and stops down the iris to the predetermined aperture. When the first Exakta came on to the market this degree of sophistication had not been reached so another way to provide an auto iris mechanism had to be found. This was done by incorporating a protruding pin or plate on the left hand side of the lens, which linked up to the internal iris mechanism, so by pressing this

plate the lens was stopped down to its predetermined level. When the lens was fitted to the camera this plate went directly over the shutter release button. Therefore, to fire the shutter you had to press the aperture plate first. This stopped the lens down and, as the pressure was increased, the shutter fired. For many years this method, although somewhat crude, was used effectively. Now, of course, the RTL 1000's main shutter release button is on the right hand side of the body and a conventional auto iris triggering mechanism has been fitted. But (so that all the lenses made for earlier Exakta's will still fit and have auto iris operation) a second shutter release has been fitted on the right hand side. Problem solved! This release button can be un-



The basic Exakta body can be built on by drawing from the very comprehensive range of accessories which are available. The lens mount is exactly the same as all previous Exakta models — consequently all lenses will fit. The secondary shutter release can be removed so that the auto iris mechanism of older lenses will still operate.

screwed and a cable release put in its place.

The last remaining thing to discuss in terms of the camera's specification is the viewing system. On the camera we have had for test a pentaprism housing was fitted. If you want to save a bit of money a waist level viewfinder is available as standard. The focusing screen was a fresnel type with a micro-prism centre spot surrounded by a ground glass collar. Naturally, the focusing screens are fully interchangeable and a full range is available.

Performance

Let me tell you the criticisms that I have of the RTL 1000—these will take far less space than the praise that I intend to bestow on it. A plastic housing should not have been used to encase the pentaprism—a bad point and the sooner it is altered and a pentaprism with a metal housing is made available the better. Plastic is far too fragile. The only other criticism I have

is not really a criticism, more a comment on change. In my opinion it's a great pity that it was not possible to retain the cassette to cassette loading that was a feature of the old Exaktas and, of course, the built-in film cutter. With these it was easily possible to change films half way through a roll with only the loss of two frames. If anything was dropped for design sake it's almost certain that these were — the film cutter on the old models was rather primitive and, I must admit, to incorporate it would disrupt the smooth lines of the RTL 1000's top plate.

Now for the good points. Without any doubt Exakta have produced a highly desirable camera. A camera which will, in my opinion, capture a good and hefty chunk of the camera sales market. It is well styled; a styling which can only be described as rugged and masculine. The standard of manufacture lives up to the high standard that Exakta have always set themselves and the convenience of handling is

incomparably better than earlier cameras. When tested the shutter speeds were all found to be within accepted tolerances and all of our resultant negatives were consistently even in density. The extremely wide range of shutter speeds will appeal to many workers, particularly those who do a lot of microphotography. Of course the Exakta system as a whole is ideally suited to this kind of work. Although the metal "Copal Square" type shutter should be more reliable over a longer period of time the main advantage is of course that the photographers are able to get high levels of synchronisation for electronic flash. For indoor work, this does not really provide any genuine advantage but it does give the photographer more flexibility when doing any type of synchro-sunlight photography.

Loading and rounding is simple and easy. The quick loading system is very reliable and did not fail us once.

The lens fitted to our camera was the f/1.8 50mm Oreston which is the same

lens as is fitted to the Prakticamat and the Praktica Super TL. We have commented on the very high quality of this lens on previous test reports. The one I had proved no exception — high contrast, biting sharpness (even at $f/2.8$) edge and centre. Stopping down further than $f/4$ gave no easily apparent increase in performance and the $f/4$ performance was excellent. An extremely good lens.

Focusing could be a little better. I found that the micropism was a little too fine and the shimmering effect not apparent enough to indicate to the user that image was critically sharp. In terms of evenness of illumination the screen and optical system is good. Changing either the viewing system or the focusing screen is easy — two small catches either side of the pentaprism are depressed and the whole unit lifted off.

Summing up let me say that I think this camera will, over the next twelve months establish itself at one of the leading SLR system cameras carrying with it, not only the present Exakta converts, but many new ones as well.

Specification

Lens: Fitted with an $f/1.8/50\text{mm}$ Meyer Oreston lens focusing from 1ft to infinity. Exakta mount. Auto iris mechanism and depth of field preview button.

Shutter: Metal foil shutter travelling vertically. Speeded from 8 seconds to $1/1000$ and B. Electronic flash sync at $1/125$ sec.

Viewfinder: Interchangeable pentaprism with interchangeable focusing screen featuring a micropism centre spot surrounded by a ground glass collar. The remainder of the screen has a fresnel surface.

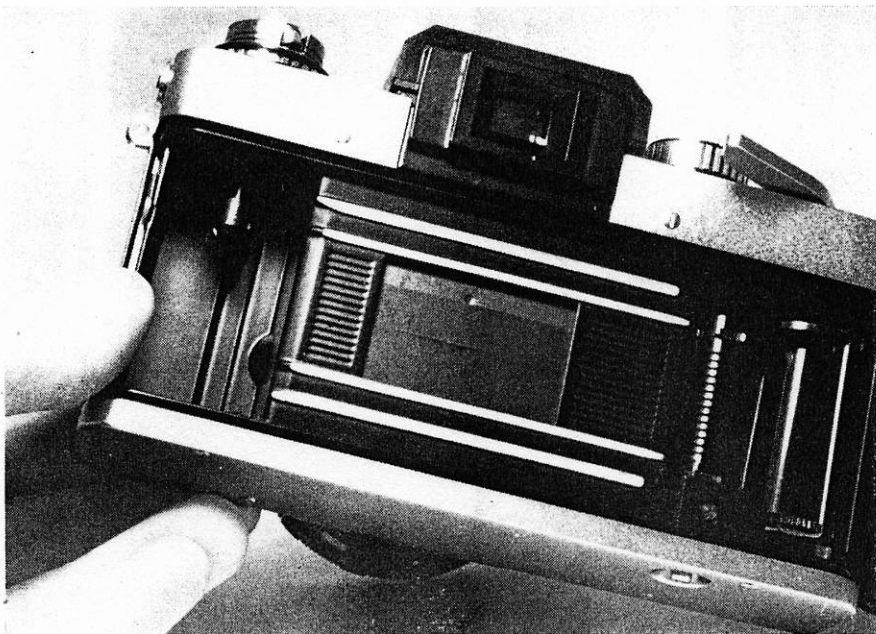
Film Loading: Semi-automatic film loader is positioned against a green marker and the lever wind advanced, the film is then taken up automatically.

Film Advance: Lever wind with two positions — one for action one for storage. Non ratchet type action.

Delayed Action: Delayed action device fitted to the front of the camera giving a variable delay — maximum 10 seconds.

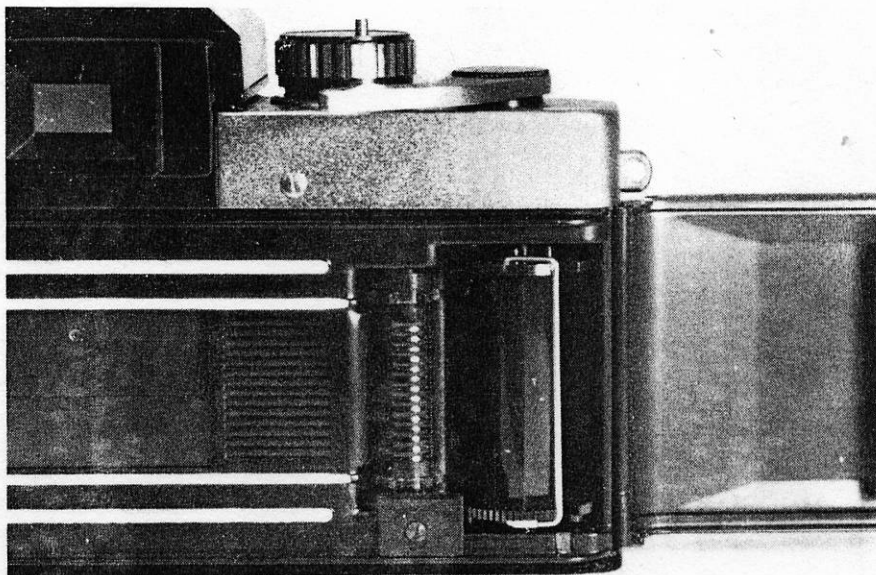
Price: £89-12s-0d.

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For the first time Exakta have fitted a Copal Square type shutter to their cameras. This enable electronic flash sync at speeds up to $1/125$ sec.

A semi automatic film loading device has been fitted to the RTL 1000. The film loader is positioned against a green marker and the lever wind advanced, the film is then taken up automatically.



Meet Exakta. 1970 Style.

The big happening in the SLR world. Exakta RTL 1000. New, sleek, streamlined, glamorous, exciting. Styled for today people. Yet upholding the great Exakta tradition of total versatility. Accepting all current lenses in the Exakta range and practically all the accessories that go to make up the comprehensive Exakta System. With a sparkling new 50mm f/1.8 Oreston standard lens and super accurate through-the-lens metering system. The TTL meter pentaprism is interchangeable with waist-level and standard pentaprism viewfinders. Shutter speeds are 1 sec to 1/1,000th plus B, and there's a separate slow speed dial with speeds from 2 to 8 secs and delayed action. Find out more about the new Exakta RTL 1000 by writing to the address below for a free leaflet or see it at your dealer. We think it will be just your style!



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