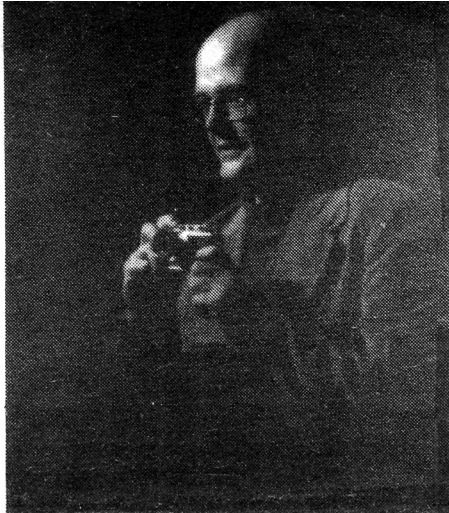


THE VEST

POCKET

EKAKTA

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I have owned two Vest Pocket Exaktas in the 1970 - 74 period. Each took some of my finest pictures. They are much more rugged and dependable than 35mm Exaktas which I have also owned. I used them in combination with a Rolleiflex with the intention that the Exakta would be used with tele or wide angle lenses which the Rolleiflex lacked. But then the local Sears store was selling some wonderful imported B x W film for 15 cents a roll in Black and White. To take advantage of this bargain, I used the Exakta a great deal — with great success. I feel in most ways it **succeeds** in being the kind of camera the Pentax 6x7 and the Norita TRY to be! There is one serious disadvantage. Few 127 films are now available. If you send 127 negative color to a lab, they cannot give you the low cost prints but have to make each 5x7 or 8x10 by hand. Kodak 127 film for some reason seems to fog more easily than German Agfa 127 from light coming through the red window. Thus supply problems have turned a practical modern system camera that has no equal today into what most people consider only a collector's item. Please realize though, the VP Exakta is a reliable well-built dependable camera, not a troublemaker. The film is the only problem.

The full 127 film format has many advantages which owners of the M645 now recognize. It is small enough to have a reliable double curtain shutter, impossible so far in 120 sq. Yet for most pictures you need not enlarge any more than a 120 square format. The 127 format is actually 1 and 5/8 by 2 and 1/2 inches, a quarter inch wider than 120 sq. so the 75mm standard lens gives a really wide angle if you print the full width print. It has a very similar proportion to 35mm. Tall trees in the deep forest, panoramas of lakes and postcard scenes are particularly suited to the VP Exakta.



Romney's VP Exakta B with 3 lenses. Note 127 film roll for size comparison. He regrets selling it.

Vest Pocket Exaktas are the first modern looking SLR'S. They are almost the same size and shape as VX type 35mm EXAKTAS. You identify them by look 1g for the red window. The very first model which is very rare lacks the double pin jacks on the side for flash bulb synch. It dates to 1933. All the earliest cameras are black and in common with very early Leicas, lack the shutter speeds under 1/25 sec. They are called Exakta A's. The 1937 Exakta B adds a wonderful slow speed and self timer with a special dial on the right side identical to the one on 35mm Exaktas giving speeds of from 12 seconds to 1/10 sec. Early B Exaktas are black. Later ones are chrome. A night Exakta is equipped with F2 or F1.9 lens. Since this lens is uncoated with many elements and you have to wind by red window, the "night" Exakta is little more convenient than the Ermanox and no competition for the contemporary Leica or Contax. Exakta Junior, quite rare, has shutter limited to 1/500 sec, no slow speeds and fixed F4.5 Exaktar lens with front lens element rotating to focus. It reminds one of the recent VX 500.

My mention of the 1933 date for the Exakta's inception is not a misprint. For your information, I am quoting the following testimonial indicative of the extremely high esteem in which this camera was held by careful scientific workers. It bears the address of the **Institute for Scientific Photography** of the **University at Frankfurt-on-the-Main** and is dated September 30, 1933. The writer, Dr. A. Busch states: "The Ihagee reflex camera" Exakta: No. 408521 with Exaktar lens F3.5, focal length 70mm which has been sent to us on request, has been thoroughly tested in the above-mentioned Institute for Scientific Photography. The test included the optical equipment, the construction and the range of usefulness. The result of this examination is given below.

The perfectly corrected lens (compare picture No. 1), in conjunction with the possibility to focus very accurately by means of a magnifier, permits a rapid and precise focus on the ground glass which corresponds exactly with the focus of the film (pictures 2-5). It is worth mentioning that the film lies perfectly flat in the focus by means of a new construction and this, combined with the focal plane shutter, which works free of vibration, guarantees pictures of equal sharpness ... This new construction of the Ihagee Camera Works removes all prejudice to the present miniature camera, such as too small negative and too many exposures on one film, separated film and camera lens, parallax, etc., whilst all the advantages of the miniature cameras, such as quickness in operating, ever sharp pictures, impossibility of double exposure, light weight and handy shape, are incorporated in the Exakta in the most perfect manner. (Signed) Dr. A. Busch.

The Exakta literature includes another testimonial by one, **HEINZ MENTRUP**, Assistant at the Physics Institute at Munster, Germany written in 1934 saying, "**The Exakta is the camera for intellectual men!**" In 1977, it still is! Note how these clever German scholars appreciated the SLR principle way before it took on elsewhere ... Isn't it wonderful how, without any expensive advertising or PR campaign, the 127 Exakta by itself has attained the rank of a major collectible. In fact, it is something so desired that a few people will probably be angry that this article has revealed the secret treasure that is Exakta and encouraged others to hunt for these clock-like jewels of photographic precision.

