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Volume 21 • Issue 10 • JANUARY 2026

# Smart Photography



Postcards

**Dhansukhodi**

Special Feature

**Bibury**

Showcase

- Dr. Rahul Baxi
- Nitin Naik

Printing &amp; Beyond

**From Film Photographs to Photozines**

Learning

**New Features of Lightroom Classic Ver. 15**

Also Reviewed

- Sigma 20-200MM F3.5-6.3 C
- Viltrox AF 16MM F1.8
- vivo X300 Pro





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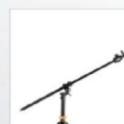
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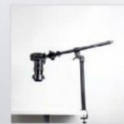
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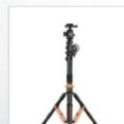
Transverse



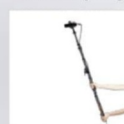
C- Clamp



Top Shot



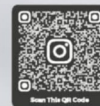
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# WELCOME

## Smart Photography

INDIA'S NUMBER 1 IMAGING MAGAZINE!



With 2026 upon us, it is time to make some forecasts and predictions for the imaging industry.

1. Compact camera sales will continue to increase. In 2025, both the Fujifilm X 100 VI and the Ricoh GR IV sold exceptionally well. Expect new launches from Canon, Olympus, Panasonic and Sony.
2. Nikon should be launching a successor to the Z 9 and the Z 7 II.
3. Sony's Alpha 7 R series may see a successor.
4. A new APS-c camera in the X- Pro series is likely from Fujifilm.
5. Panasonic will launch a successor to the full frame S 9 with more powerful lenses. The S 9 may also be launched in the Micro Four Thirds mount.
6. OM system will launch their first really new micro four thirds camera. Their Tough camera is selling well and may be updated.
7. Sigma and Tamron will be making news with more innovative lenses.
8. Chinese lens manufacturers will make further inroads in the lens market. Viltrox is the one to watch. 2026 may also see the Chinese launch a brand new body in the Micro Four Thirds format. A rangefinder from China can also not be ruled out.
9. Stacked sensors and AI will be found in more and more cameras. Barring unforeseen circumstances, 2026 should be a steady year for the imaging industry.

Smart Photography wishes all its stakeholders and readers a happy, healthy and prosperous new year!

H. S. Billimoria

## HERE'S WHAT MAKES US #1

### WE ARE GLUED TO THE GLOBAL IMAGING INDUSTRY

Our team is updated with all the benchmarks and road blocks that the field of photography and imaging across the globe experiences. This helps us record the changes in the global perspective, thus making us the first to predict which products will be a rage in the Indian markets.

### WE'RE IMPARTIAL

Loyalty towards our readers is a given, and their best interests are always on our mind. Every verdict is honest and not influenced by advertisers or personal favourites. So when we say a product is a 'BEST BUY', then, it is just that!

### OUR TESTS ARE CONDUCTED BY EXPERTS

All equipment go through a series of tests at the hands of our experts. Our reviewers are experts in the field of photography across the country and have many years of experience. That gives us the foresight to distinguish between a passing trend and a big change in the field of photography and imaging. And finally, our reviews are not extended to just fill up the pages!

### WE ARE HERE TO HELP YOU

There is no debate on why we are here. Our sole goal is to provide you options and better your judgement in product purchase while, sharing tips and tricks to improve your images. Our biggest joy is in building a bridge between you and your perfect picture!

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January 2026 | Smart Photography | 5



# CONTENTS

## POSTCARDS

12 | **Dhansukhodi** : Once a bustling town at the end of land in Tamilnadu, Dhansukhodi was wiped out by a devastating cyclone in 1964. Srin Swaminathan gives us a glimpse of what's left of it.



## REGULAR

08 | **NewsWatch**  
News from the industry, fresh from the oven

## SPECIAL FEATURES

22 | **Bibury**: Hoshang S. Billimoria takes us to a highly picturesque village in the Cotswolds, England

## SHOWCASE

30 | **Dr. Rahul Baxi** A dedicated Consultant Diabetologist captures fascinating photos – all with a smartphone

38 | **Nitin Naik** An Engineer who loves to travel and take photos, proves us his photography skills



## LEARNING

48 | New Features of Lightroom Classic, Ver.15, explained by **Ashok Kandimalla**

## PRINTING & BEYOND

53 | **Sumanth Shivakumar** shares his journey from shooting on film to printing photozines.

## REVIEWS

60 | Canon EOS R6 III. Canon's latest hybrid mirrorless camera reviewed by **Rohinton Mehta**

63 | Canon RF 45mm F/1.2 STM. 'Superfast' low-cost lens, reviewed by **Rohinton Mehta**

66 | OM SYSTEM ED 50-200mm F/2.8 PRO, an expensive but superb lens for the professionals & enthusiasts. Reviewed by **Rohinton Mehta**

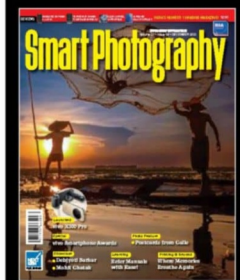
69 | Sigma 20-200mm F/3.5-6.3 Contemporary. An affordable, super-wide to medium telephoto lens, reviewed by **Hoshang S. Billimoria**

74 | Viltrox AF 16mm F1.8. Superb optical performance at a reasonable price. Reviewed by **Ashok Kandimalla**

78 | Vivo X300. **Srin Swaminathan** reviews the VIVO flagship smartphone designed to make photographers drool



Photographer: Srin Swaminathan



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PAGE 58



## DID YOU KNOW

82 | Bestselling cameras in Japan for the months of October and November 2025.

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New lens from Sony

Sony has unveiled the new FE 28-70 mm f3.5/5.6 OSS II lens. The new lens has improved autofocus capabilities that allow it to handle the faster burst shooting rates of the new A 7 Mk V. According to Sony, the new lens is capable of up to 120 fps with AF/ AE tracking and also offers breathing compensation to reduce shifts in angle of view for smooth rack focusing. This lens is likely to be offered by Sony as a bundle along with the new A 7 Mk V.



Sony Launches the A 7 MK V

Sony's A series of mirrorless cameras have been a runaway success for the company and has helped cement the company's place at the top of the mirrorless league. On December 2, 2025, Sony announced the new Mk V version of the A 7. The Mk V represents a steady improvement in specs over the much lauded MK IV. The Mk V is a 33 MP full frame hybrid camera featuring a new partially stacked sensor with a BIONZ XR processor that includes an AI unit. Up to 30 fps blackout free shooting with the electronic shutter, 7.5 stops IBIS and advanced subject recognition are some of the features. The fully articulated LCD features a screen size of 3.2 inches having 2090000 dots, 759 focus points and touch screen ability are included. On the video front, 7K oversampled 4K 60 p video is available. The magnesium alloy body weighs 695 gms. Expect a full review of this exciting camera in SP shortly.



Leica Launches four M lenses

Leica Camera AG has released the Summilux M 35 mm f 1.4 ASPH , the Summilux M 50 mm f 1.4 ASPH and the Summicron M 28 mm f2 ASPH in an eye catching olive green design. Also, the Summicron M 50 mm f 1.4 Classic has been launched in glossy black.

New firmware for Lumix S Series

Panasonic's Lumix S 1 R II, S 1 II and S 1 II X get new firmware for improved shooting performance and enhanced functionality. The new firmware provides enhanced autofocus tracking stability and an improved thermal control algorithm.

All three cameras also get MP 4 (Lite). Along with the firmware updates, Panasonic has also released Version 1.4 of the Lumix Flow App designed for creators shooting video and for filmmakers.



Z R



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Image courtesy: Shubhadeep Das



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NIKON ZR PRODUCT PAGE



SNIPPETS

- For those frustrated with having to buy a new flash each time they changed their camera brand, Godox has an answer. The new Godox IT 32 TTL flashgun features interchangeable hotshoes that also double as TTL wireless triggers. You can also detach the flashgun and the hotshoe will fire it remotely.
- Third party Chinese E mount lenses may not work properly in the new Sony A 7 MK V. A firmware upgrade may be required.
- Lens distributor Pergear has announced a new retro inspired 50 mm f1.2 APS C lens for the Nikon Z mount. The lens focuses manually and has 11 rounded aperture blades for smooth, circular bokeh. 7 elements in 5 groups ensure sharp pictures, enhanced contrast and true to life colour reproduction.
- More and more lenses are being released with Nikon's Z mount. Examples are the Viltrox AF 50 mm f1.4 Pro, the Viltrox 35 mm f 1.2 LAB, a Viltrox tilt and shift lens, a 7 Artisans MF 50 mm f 1.2 APS-C lens and a 6 mm f 2 MF fisheye lens.
- Brightin Star has announced a 24 mm f1.8 full frame autofocus lens for Nikon's Z mount, Brightin Star is yet another Chinese lens manufacturer.
- Firmware updates have been announced by Nikon for the Nikon Z 9 ( update version 5.30) and for the Nikon Z 5 II ( version 1.10)
- Sony's new film simulations introduced on the A 7 Mk V have come in for a lot of praise from critics. Although perhaps not as good as those available with Fujifilm or Ricoh, Sony has made a quantum leap with these simulations.



First Winner : Ankit Thakkar



Third Winner : Sathyan KN

MumbaiOgraphy Photo Exhibition

MumbaiOgraphy' – a photography group started over a decade ago, has over 1200 members. They organise photography workshops, group discussions, and photo walks for their members – thus helping them to upgrade their photography learning skills.

MumbaiOgraphy conducted their recent photo exhibition at the Jehangir Terrace

Art Gallery from 17th -23rd December 2025. Over 500 entries were received and 93 photos were selected. Each displayed photo was of 18 x 12-inch size. The Chief Guests at the exhibition were: Gangadharan Menon, Padma Shri Sudharak Olwe, Ganesh Vanare and Rohinton Mehta – who jointly selected the three best photos. The winners were Ankit Thakkar (1st), Nandakumar Vijayakar (2nd), and Sathyan KN (3rd).



Second Winner : Nandkumar Vijaykar

Phototours around the world!

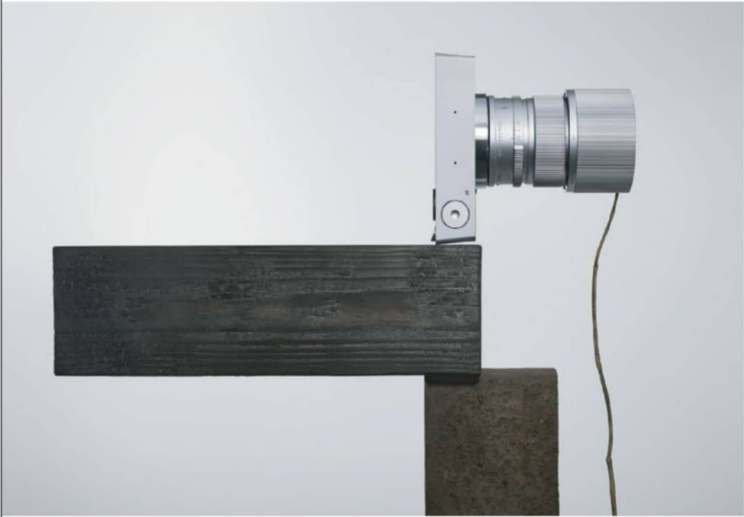
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# Postcards from Dhanushkodi

*Dhanushkodi lies at the end of land in Tamilnadu, flanked by the Gulf of Mannar and seen from above, it looks as if it is gently extending an arm to the island of Sri Lanka. Once a bustling town, it was wiped out by a devastating cyclone in 1964. What remains now are broken churches, abandoned railway tracks, and skeletal ruins holding on to memory. The land meets the sea here with an eerie calm, as if time itself has slowed down. Fisherfolk go about their lives, quietly weaving the present into the ghost of a once-thriving town. It's beautiful, raw, and strangely peaceful.*



The old Pamban railway bridge, opened in 1914, was India's first sea bridge and remained the longest until 2010. Its iconic double-leaf bascule allowed ships to pass, making it an engineering marvel of its time.



**Sridhar Swaminathan**

Sridhar Swaminathan's curiosity has taken him to 50 countries. He began his career on oilfield rigs and is now a marathoner and long-distance cyclist who has cycled from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and Bhuj to Assam. An author and translator, he lives in Chennai and hopes to travel the world carrying his Indie dog, Oreo, in a backpack. He is @sridhar091 on Instagram and X.



Inaugurated by Indira Gandhi in 1988, the old Pamban road bridge was the first to connect Rameswaram to mainland India by road. Stretching over the sea with sweeping views, it brought pilgrims, locals, and travellers closer to the edge of the ocean.



The ruins of the old Dhanushkodi railway station stand as a silent witness to the 1964 cyclone that erased an entire town. After decades of abandonment, Indian Railways is now considering extending the Rameswaram line to Dhanushkodi, bringing tracks back to where time once stood still.



The skeletal arches of Dhanushkodi's old water tower stand like sentinels of a lost era. Once vital for train engines, these ruins now echo the silence of a town claimed by the sea.





At Arichal Munal, near Dhanushkodi, where India ends and the oceans meet, the sunset paints the sky in quiet gold. It's a moment of stillness where land, sea, and spirit seem to blur into one.



This ruined church in Dhanushkodi is one of the few surviving structures from the 1964 cyclone. Though no longer in use, it remains a significant historical marker of the town's past.



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The railway station ruins in Dhanushkodi are remnants of the old metre-gauge line that once connected Rameswaram to Dhanushkodi. On the night of December 22, 1964, a devastating cyclone struck the region. A passenger train, the railway line and station were completely destroyed, and the town was declared unfit for habitation soon after. What remains today are the stone foundations, water tank structures, and skeletal outlines of the station complex, which serve as a historical reminder of the tragedy.



The highway from Rameswaram to Dhanushkodi and Arichal Munai Lands End is an amazing road to cycle on



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On clear days, one can spot Sri Lanka across the calm waters of the Gulf of Mannar

The highway from Rameswaram to Dhanushkodi is often covered partially by the fine sand of the beach on both sides. Swept away by strong winds, one gets a sense of how this road must be during heavy cyclone or storms.



Completed in 1914, the old Pamban Bridge uses a 65-metre lift span weighing about 115 tonnes. Its simple truss-and-lift design shows how engineers solved rail connectivity to Rameswaram in a harsh marine setting in the Indian Ocean.





The town of Mandapam has hosted refugees from Sri Lanka for many decades. It is also popular for tourists who want to stay near the serene beaches.



The facade of the ruins of the Church at Dhanushkodi



You can spot such horses on the way to Dhanushkodi

So many shades of blue at Arichal Munai • Lands End





# BIBURY – THE MOST BEAUTIFUL VILLAGE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

📍 Hoshang Billimoria

Everyone who has visited the English countryside is aware of how pretty villages in England can be. William Morris called Bibury the most beautiful village in England. Recently, Bibury was called the most beautiful village by Vogue magazine.

Bibury is a highly picturesque village in the Cotswolds, England. Lined with historic stone cottages and quaint streets, Bibury has now become a hot favourite of tourists visiting the Cotswolds. The river Coln flows through Bibury and boasts of crystal-clear water. Arlington Row and the Bibury trout farm are also worth a visit. Bibury is a short two-hour drive from London.

Half an hour's drive away from Bibury is the village of Bourton-on-the-Water which is equally picturesque and has some fine restaurants. |SP

















# Sky is the limit



Dr Rahul Baxi

Dr Rahul Baxi – by day, a dedicated Consultant Diabetologist saving lives one glucose reading at a time, and by every spare moment, an incurable phone photography addict who turns the ordinary into pure magic.

With just his smartphone in hand, Rahul chases calm in chaotic city corners, uncovers quiet stories in everyday scenes, and shifts perspectives (literally and figuratively) until the world looks a little more beautiful. His images have caught the eye of the big leagues: featured by Apple and National Geographic, and celebrated in a solo exhibition at Mumbai's prestigious Jehangir Art Gallery.

Instagram: @baxirahul  
X (Twitter): @baxirahul



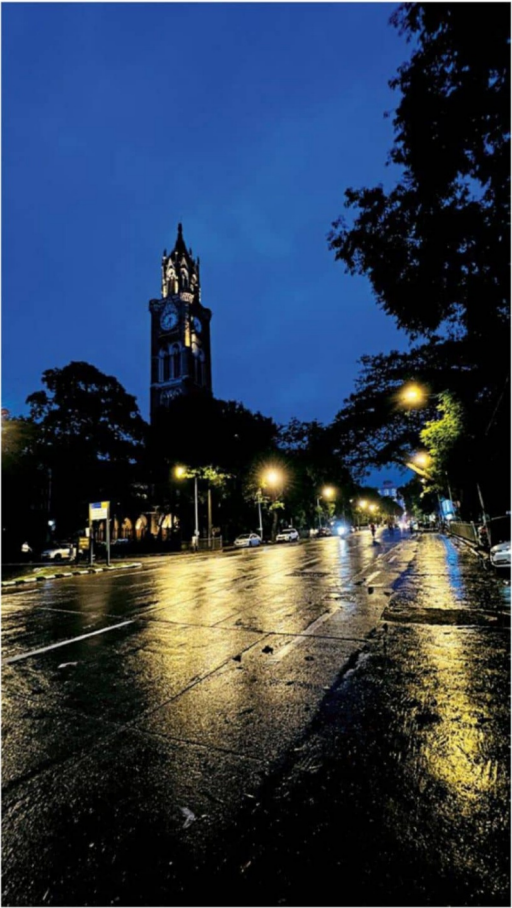














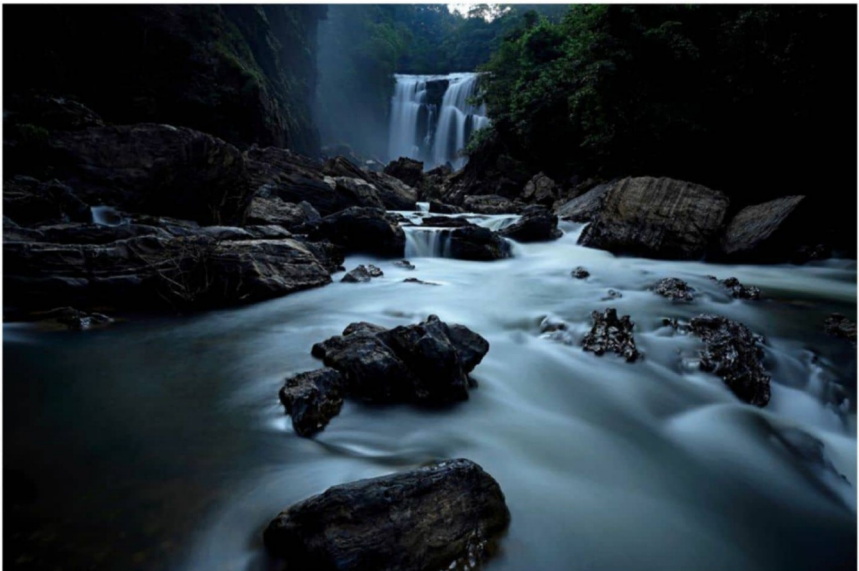
# Engineer's Lens on Wanderlust



Nitin Naik

Nitin is a reluctant engineer who'd rather much be earning a living as a travel photographer. His day job takes him all over the country and around the world, and because he's a glass half full kinda guy, he looks at it as an opportunistic internship for his next career as a travel photographer. Nitin is also a certified Glutton from the World School of Gluttony. Show him a

tasty plate of prawns, and he'll follow you anywhere. So, don't be surprised to find his posts about wildlife, birds, sanctuaries, monuments, destinations or even #bikelife peppered with references of food he ate while on the trip. Instagram - @nitinnaikphotography X (formerly twitter) - @nitinnaik5



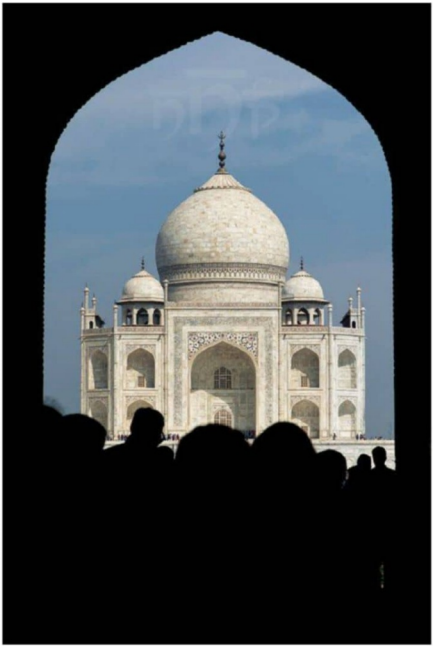










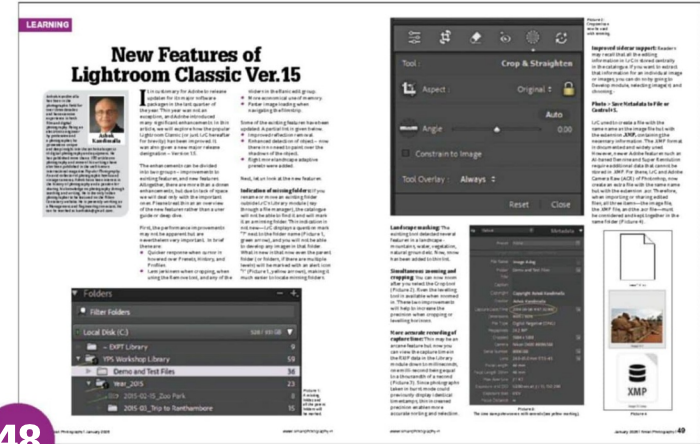




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# LEARNINGS



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# New Features of Lightroom Classic Ver.15

Ashok Kandimalla has been in the photographic field for over three decades and has extensive experience in both film and digital photography. Being an electronics engineer by profession and a photographer, he possesses a unique and deep insight into the technical aspects of digital photography and equipment. He has published more than a 100 articles on photography and some of his writings have also been published in the well-known international magazine *Popular Photography*. An avid collector of photographic books and vintage cameras, Ashok has a keen interest in the history of photography and a passion for sharing his knowledge on photography through teaching and writing. He is the only Indian photographer to be featured on the Nikon Centenary website. He is presently working as a Management and Engineering consultant. He can be reached at [kashokk@gmail.com](mailto:kashokk@gmail.com).



**Ashok Kandimalla**

It is customary for Adobe to release updates for its major software packages in the last quarter of the year. This year was not an exception, and Adobe introduced many significant enhancements. In this article, we will explore how the popular Lightroom Classic (or just LrC hereafter for brevity) has been improved. It was also given a new major release designation – Version 15.

The enhancements can be divided into two groups – improvements to existing features, and new features. Altogether, there are more than a dozen enhancements, but due to lack of space we will deal only with the important ones. Please treat this as an overview of the new features rather than a user guide or deep dive.

First, the performance improvements may not be apparent but are nevertheless very important. In brief these are:

- Quicker response when cursor is hovered over Presets, History, and Profiles,
- Less jerkiness when cropping, when using the Remove tool, and any of the

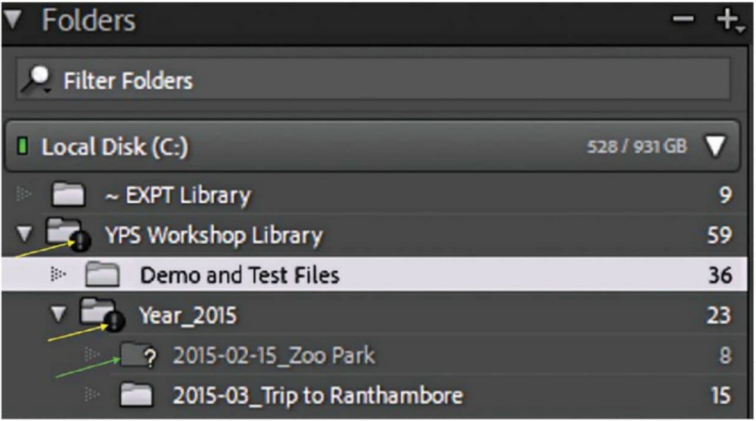
- sliders in the Basic edit group.
- More economical use of memory.
- Faster image loading when navigating the filmstrip.

Some of the existing features have been updated. A partial list is given below.

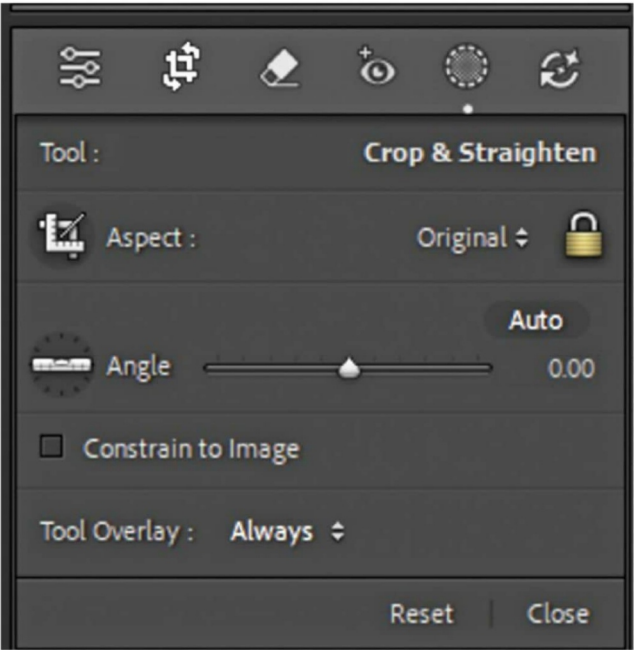
- Improved reflection removal.
- Enhanced detection of object – now there is no need to paint over the shadows of the object.
- Eight more landscape adaptive presets were added.

Next, let us look at the new features.

**Indication of missing folders:** If you rename or move an existing folder outside LrC's Library module (say through a file manager), the catalogue will not be able to find it and will mark it as a missing folder. This indication is not new—LrC displays a question mark next to the folder name (Picture 1, green arrow), and you will not be able to develop any images in that folder. What is new is that now even the parent folder (or folders, if there are multiple levels) will be marked with an alert icon "?" (Picture 1, yellow arrows), making it much easier to locate missing folders.



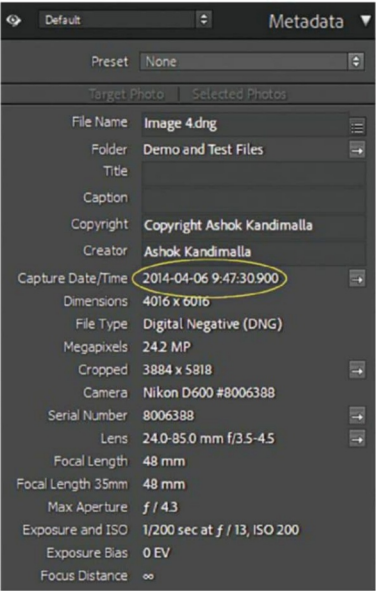
**Picture 1:** A missing folder, and all the parent folders will be marked.



**Landscape masking:** The existing tool detected several features in a landscape – mountains, water, vegetation, natural ground etc. Now, snow has been added to this list.

**Simultaneous zooming and cropping:** You can now zoom after you select the Crop tool (Picture 2). Even the levelling tool is available when zoomed in. These two improvements will help to increase the precision when cropping or levelling horizons.

**More accurate recording of capture time:** This may be an arcane feature but now you can view the capture time in the EXIF data in the Library module down to milliseconds, one milli-second being equal to a thousandth of a second (Picture 3). Since photographs taken in burst mode could previously display identical timestamps, this increased precision enables more accurate sorting and selection.



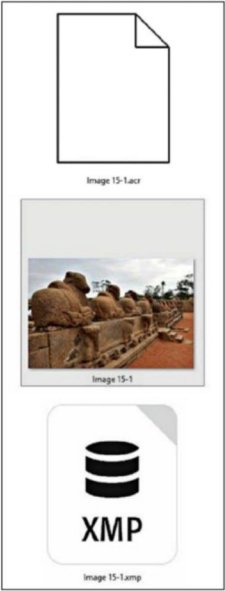
**Picture 3:** The time stamp shows even mill-seconds (see yellow marking).

**Picture 2:** Crop tool can now be used with zooming.

**Improved sidcar support:** Readers may recall that all the editing information in LrC is stored centrally in the catalogue. If you want to extract that information for an individual image or images, you can do so by going to Develop module, selecting image(s) and choosing -

**Photo > Save Metadata to File or Control-S.**

LrC used to create a file with the same name as the image file but with the extension **.XMP**, containing the necessary information. The **.XMP** format is documented and widely used. However, newer Adobe features such as AI-based Denoise and Super Resolution require additional data that cannot be stored in **.XMP**. For these, LrC and Adobe Camera Raw (ACR) of Photoshop, now create an extra file with the same name but with the extension **.acr**. Therefore, when importing or sharing edited files, all three items—the image file, the **.XMP** file, and the **.acr** file—must be considered and kept together in the same folder (Picture 4).



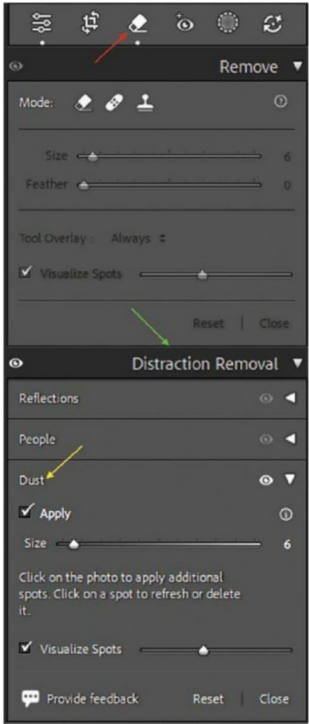
**Picture 4**



**Automatic dust removal:** The Removal group started with the humble Clone, and Heal tools but over time acquired many sophisticated features with some of them taking advantage of AI technology. Within the Removal group is the **Distraction Removal** set which in turn has three tools (Picture 5):

1. Reflections
2. People
3. Dust

The first two are not new to this release, and were described in Smart Photography, 2025, August issue. The last one is partly new. Why partly? Adobe sometimes introduces features first in Photoshop ACR (which is nearly identical to the Develop module) but brings them to LrC only later. The Dust removal tool appeared in the ACR a few months ago and its operation was explained in Smart Photography, 2025, November issue. This article also explained how to use ACR along with LrC, to use those tools that are in ACR but are yet to appear in LrC. Now, you need not use ACR – the Dust tool is available directly in LrC. A note on dust spots, One persistent nuisance for photographers is the appearance of dust spots—often nicknamed “dust bunnies”—caused by



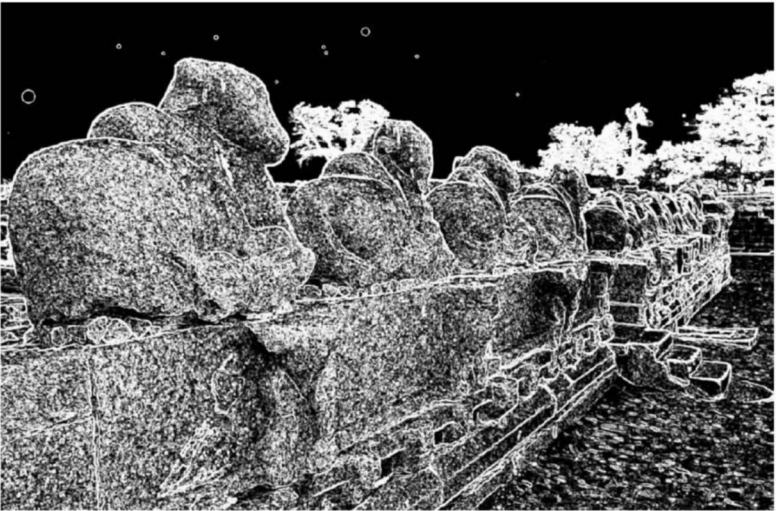
Picture 5

tiny particles settling on the camera sensor. While cleaning the sensor yourself is an option, it's generally discouraged due to the risk of damage. Visiting a service centre for professional cleaning is safer but inconvenient, requiring time, and effort. Dust spots can be removed during post-processing, by manually correcting each blemish using the Removal tool but this is very tedious, and you might miss out some spots. The Dust tool automatically detects and removes dust spots in seconds without any user intervention.

To use the Dust tool:

1. Open an image with dust spots.
2. Go to the **Develop** module.
3. Select the **Remove** tool group (Picture 5, red arrow).
4. Select **Distraction Removal** (green arrow), then choose the **Dust** tool (yellow arrow).

To get a better view of the dust spots tick check box **Visualize spots**. This will convert the image into a high contrast monochrome image that will display the spots very clearly. Moving the slider to the right will increase the contrast even more. I found that the mid position of the slider was adequate for most work.



Picture 6: The small circles show the dust spots.



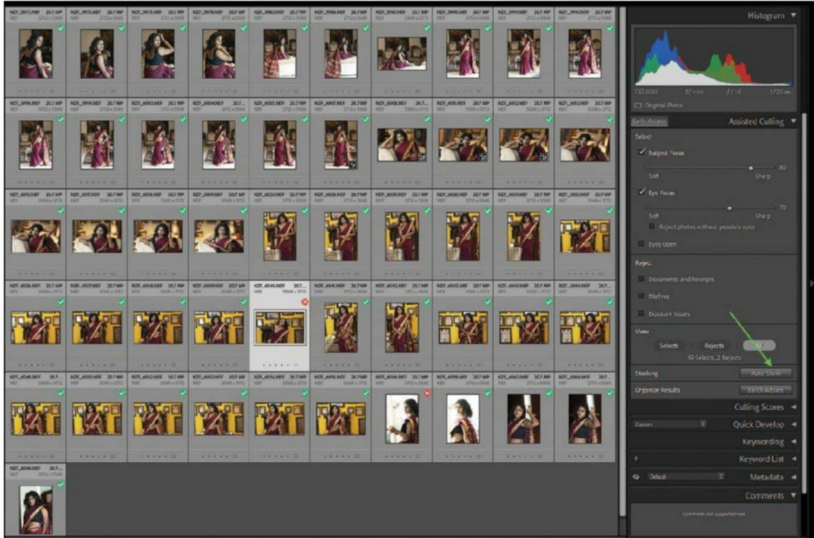
Picture 7: Image after removal of the dust spots.

Next, click on the check box **Apply**. The rest is **fully automatic!** LrC will identify (Picture 6), and remove all the dust spots without any user intervention, thus greatly reducing the processing time you need to spend. The result is shown in (Picture 7). If you find the steps too many, then you can even create a preset. We found that what took several minutes to clean up manually was now done in a few

seconds with the Dust tool. That is not all! This tool is intelligent too. It analyses each image whenever you apply it, and then detects the dust spots, which might appear at different locations across multiple shots. Consequently, you can apply this tool at once in a batch mode to several images using **Sync** or **Auto-Sync** options.

**Automatic Culling:** This is a new

tool (Picture 8) added to the Library module. It has perhaps generated more excitement than any other new feature, especially in the wildlife, and other 'spray and pray' type of photographers. Sorry to rain on the party but this feature works only for portraits! Adobe labelled it as **Early Access** alerting users that it is still a work in progress. In this article I will only touch on the basic features.



Picture 8



There are 3 **Select** parameters (Picture 8). These are

1. Subject Focus
2. Eye Focus
3. Eyes Open

The first two also have associated sliders with which you can fine tune the focus norms. You can make the focus criterion more liberal (to the left) or stricter (to the right). Also, the third parameter, **Eye Open** can be used as an additional filter;

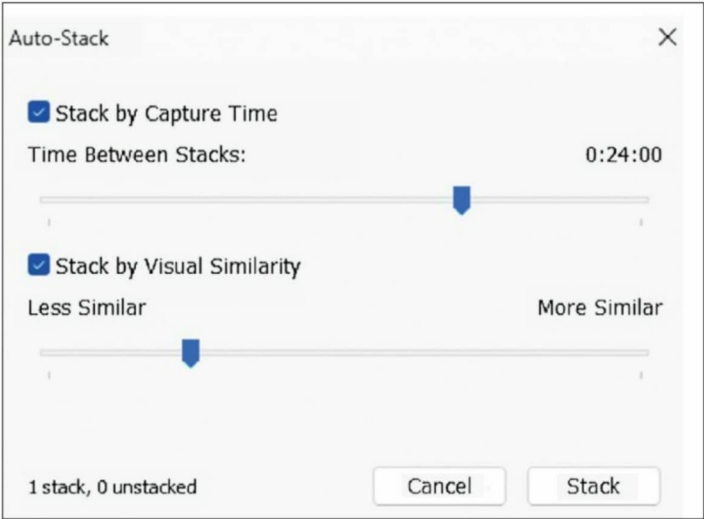
There are 3 **Reject** parameters (Picture 8) too. These are:

1. Documents and Receipts
2. Misfires
3. Exposure issues

There are other options available for viewing. So, does it work well? I found that the Reject conditions were detected, and tagged correctly most of the time. Coming to the Select conditions, the 'eyes open' condition of the person was detected quite well. The other two conditions also worked, but many images were getting a 'pass' with the slider midway. This is not surprising since modern cameras with fast, and accurate eye detect barely if ever, miss focus. On the contrary, making the condition stringent sometimes made the LrC reject images that were in perfect focus. So, I am not sure how much this tool can help but at the same time I will admit some more study, and use will help us understand this tool better;

Tucked in the same Automatic Culling group is another very important tool – **Auto-Stack**. The good news is that this feature works on any type of image!

Readers may recall that LrC has long had a feature called 'stacking' which allowed sets of images say a burst capture of a bird in flight, HDR (High Dynamic Range) imaging sets, panorama sets, etc. to be shown as a stack (like a pack of cards) rather than a long series nearly identical individual images. Stacks greatly reduce the clutter on the screen in the Grid View and Filmstrip, and also keep the images collated together as a group. However, selecting the images that will form a stack would have to be done manually by the user followed by another step to create the stack.



Picture 9

Auto-stack does away with that, and creates stacks depending on the conditions you have set. To use it:

1. Go to the Library module.
2. Select the folder containing the images.
3. Open the **Automatic Culling** tool.
4. Click the **Auto-Stack** button (Picture 8, arrow mark).

Clicking on it will pop a window giving you the choice of stacking by **Capture Time** or by **Visual Similarity**. You can even choose both, to apply both conditions simultaneously. Selecting one or both will show a window (Picture 9).

Due lack of space I will explain only the **Stack by Capture Time** criteria. With the help of the associated **Time Between Stacks** slider we can adjust the time interval between two stacks.

The interval can be set between zero seconds to one hour. If the gap is set to zero, no stacks can be formed, and as we increase the time between stacks, the number of images in a stack will increase. Let us see how this will help us in a practical situation.

I do a lot of HDR, and panorama photographs. For HDR, I mostly use burst mode at 4 FPS with 3 shots taken at -2EV, 0EV, and +2EV exposures. So, this HDR set will be captured in less than one second usually. Let us say that I will maintain an interval of a 5 seconds or more, between the HDR sequences. After importing these images into LrC, I can adjust the **Time Between Stacks** slider to say 5 seconds. This will automatically create stacks for my HDR sets without any manual intervention! **|SP**

CONCLUSION

Adobe has once again updated their software with a substantial set of improvements. All the updated versions are included in the subscription at no extra cost. Some of the tools announced this time like Dust removal, and Auto-Stacking will save us enormous amount of processing time. This will allow us to do what we all enjoy to do – spend more time taking photographs rather sitting in front of a computer.

All text, diagrams, and images © Ashok Kondimalia.



# PRINTING AND BEYOND



**Vimal Parmar**  
An independent marketing consultant and digital print evangelist with over 40 years of experience in the imaging industry.  
[@vimalparmar](#)

## From Film to a Printed Photozine

*As photozines regain relevance, this issue explores their creative potential through a film-based, self-published project.*

**Dear Readers,**

A very Happy New Year 2026 to each one of you!  
Over the past few months, I have been exploring the growing world of photozines. One of the most accessible, cost-effective, and creatively liberating formats for anyone wanting to step into photobook-making. Compact, affordable, and simple to produce, photozines require nothing more than a set of photographs and a basic narrative. A neighbourhood copier outlet can print one for you if you have a ready-to-print file. Even better, many online platforms now allow you to upload 25–30 images with captions, arrange them in templates, and print without any technical expertise. It has never been easier to turn your visual ideas into something tangible.

This month, I am delighted to feature Bengaluru-based IT professional and analogue photography enthusiast Sumanth Shivakumar and his photozine Naga Megha Saga. The accompanying article unpacks



Sumanth Shivakumar

how this title came to life. I first heard from Sumanth through a WhatsApp group dedicated to film photography, a vibrant community of more than 800 members. I had mentioned this column, where I highlight photographers who print their work in photobook or photozine form. Sumanth reached out, sent me a physical copy of his

photozine, and asked whether it might be worthy of a feature. Especially since every image was shot on film, scanned, and then digitally printed.

What struck me immediately was the sincerity of the project. The concept, the flow, the pacing of the images, and the clean, unfussy design all worked beautifully together. Had it been just a set of digital images or an eBook, I would probably have skimmed it once. But this photozine—this printed object—held me. I found myself flipping through it again and again. Print has that effect. It invites you back. It lingers.

So here it is. I hope you enjoy reading about Sumanth, his journey, and his thoughts on photography and printing. More importantly, I hope it inspires you to create your own photozines. If you do, share them on social media, tag me, and who knows—you may find yourself featured in these pages too.

**Happy Printing,**  
**Vimal Parmar**



Front Cover



Back Cover



# A Journey Through Film, Culture, and Quiet Wonder : The Making of Naga Megha Saga

*Bengaluru-based photographer and IT professional Sumanth Shivakumar reflects on his solo travels through Nagaland and Meghalaya, and how analogue photography, human connection, and quiet moments of discovery shaped his photobook Naga Megha Saga.*

## SUMANTH SHIVAKUMAR

Bengaluru  
@milesontfilm\_

Although I come from the world of IT, my deeper calling has always been analogue photography. Film slows me down. It teaches me to observe, wait, and feel more deeply. The charm lies in its imperfections. The grain, the colour shifts and the anticipation of development. Photography, for me, is not just a hobby; it is a way of connecting more meaningfully with the world.

Over the years, I have also grown passionate about nurturing the analogue photography community in India. I want future generations to experience the magic of film and to feel the joy of holding a printed photograph that has travelled through time, light, and chemistry. In 2022, I founded an analogue photography community called Milesontfilm, hosting monthly photowalks that encourage dedicated film shooters while inviting digital creators to slow down, explore grain and texture, and rediscover the tactile poetry of shooting on film.

### The Birth of Naga Megha Saga

The idea for my photobook came from a solo journey across

Nagaland and Meghalaya. I wanted to document culture, landscape, and everyday life with honesty and respect. The title itself captures the essence of the trip: Naga for Nagaland, Megha for Meghalaya, and Saga for the story that unfolded across these two regions.

At the Hornbill Festival in Nagaland, I witnessed the coming together of tribes through food, music, and vibrant performances. In Meghalaya, I wandered through serene villages, lush landscapes, and waterfalls wrapped in mist. These experiences shaped the visual narrative of the book and inspired me to create something permanent.

### Choosing the Soul of the Story

The photobook focuses on the spirit of both states. Their people, culture, food, homes, and nature. I wanted readers to experience the beauty of the Northeast through moments of pride, warmth, and celebration.

Shot entirely in 2024, the book includes 34 photographs captured on 35mm Kodak Vision 250D cinefilm using a

Leica M3 and Pentax K1000. The films were processed by Darkroom8 in Malaysia via the Panchrome Project, and the book was printed using toner-based technology at Printo in Bengaluru.

I designed the 8 x 8 inch, 32-page (including cover) book myself and printed 30 copies. The intention was not commercial; I wanted to inspire my film photography community to create, collaborate, and print their own stories.

### Crafting the Photobook: From Selection to Print

The entire project took around three months. It began with selecting images that revealed the soul of each place. Sequencing them required care, as I wanted the visual journey to feel natural and immersive.

Printing brought its own challenges. Colours shifted from my expected tones, and the first few versions did not meet my standards. I printed multiple test copies before arriving at the final one. These iterations taught me how different physical prints can be from digital files, and how important it is to refine every detail.

Holding the finished photobook for the first time was surreal. It was a mix of joy, gratitude, and fulfilment—a tangible result of months of effort and emotional investment.

### Memories That Shaped the Narrative

The journey gave me memories I will carry forever. In Mawlynnong, a local family hosted me for two nights, refusing payment and welcoming me with genuine warmth. Their kindness reminded me of the beauty of human connection.

At the Hornbill Festival, volunteers insisted I try rice beer and spicy snails, even paying for the meal themselves. Their enthusiasm and generosity made me feel like an honoured guest rather than a visitor.

But the most unforgettable moment came at Phe Phe Waterfalls. I arrived at dawn and spent nearly three hours alone with the landscape. The mist, the sound of the water, and the stillness made it feel like the world had paused just for me. It was a rare moment of solitude that reminded me why I photograph.

### What I Learned Along the Way

This project taught me patience, observation, and the value of slowing down. It reaffirmed that true stories emerge when we spend time with people and places without hurry.

If I were to revisit the project, I would spend even more time in remote villages, understanding daily life and observing quieter, subtler rituals. I would also experiment more with perspectives and compositions to strengthen the narrative.

The experience has shaped my approach to future projects. I now think more deeply about storytelling—how images



Pallavi Hegde, Sumanth's wife, narrates visual stories from Naga Megha Saga to their daughter Advithi, highlighting the intimate power of print.

interact with one another, how they build emotion, and how they guide a viewer through a space or culture.

### Why Print Still Matters

In a digital world, printing gives photographs a sense of permanence and intimacy that screens cannot offer. "The joy of seeing an image in print is incomparable," and working on a printed project encourages me to plan and compose with greater intention.

Print also inspires. It sparks creativity within the community and keeps the culture of analogue photography alive.

### Advice for Aspiring Self-Publishers

For anyone considering a photobook, start with a clear vision. Choose images that speak to your story and sequence them with care. Experiment with layouts, paper types, and printing methods. Allow yourself the patience to refine your work through multiple iterations.

Most importantly, let the book reflect your voice. Self-publishing is more than a final product. It is a journey of growth, discovery, and expression.

### What Drives Me Forward

I am inspired by life itself. The stories people carry, the cultures that shape them, and the silent wisdom in everyday moments. A quote that resonates deeply with me says: "In every photograph, there's a trace of the photographer's journey." And in life, I remind myself of another truth: "Life whispers wisdom in silence; we just need to listen."

Naga Megha Saga is my attempt to listen—to people, landscapes, and the quiet moments that make a journey unforgettable. I hope it inspires others to listen too. **[SP]**





Opening page of chapter one



Opening page of chapter two



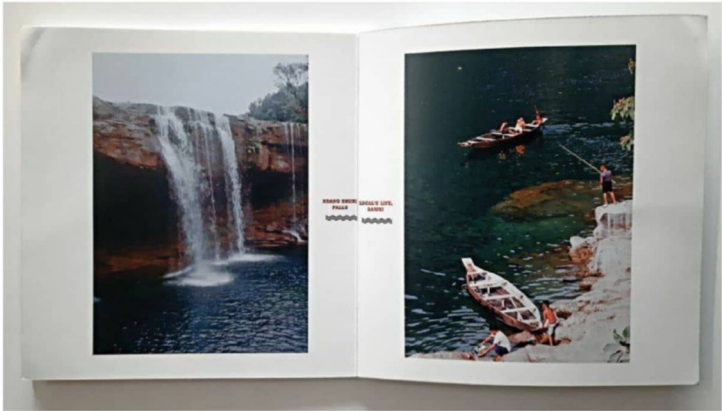
Last two pages of the photozine



Inside pages



Inside pages



Inside pages



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# REVIEWS

## FINAL RATING

The final ratings given in the reviews are not an indication of the performance or features of the reviewed device in isolation. It is a combination of all parameters including the price of the product.



**60**

Camera Review  
**Canon EOS R6 Mark III**

**69**

Lens Review  
**Sigma 20-200 mm f 3.5/6.3 Contemporary**



**63**

Lens Review  
**Canon RF 45mm f/1.2 STM**



**74**

Lens Review  
**Viltrox AF 16 mm f/1.8**



**66**

Lens Review  
**OM System M. Zuiko Digital ED 50-200mm F/2.8 IS PRO**



Smartphone Review  
**vivo X300 Pro**

**78**





Canon EOS R6 Mark III ₹2,43,995/- (Body only)

# A Good Hybrid

In the Box

- ✓ Camera body
- ✓ Body cap
- ✓ Battery
- ✓ Charger
- ✓ Neck strap
- ✓ Instructions

Rohinton Mehta

Canon’s latest offering –the successor to the tried and tested Canon R6 II is the full frame EOS R6 Mark III, targeted at enthusiasts, – is a hybrid camera with high-end photo as well as video capabilities, but, in my opinion, leaning more towards cinematic video. It offers features like 7K RAW Open Gate recording (a fancy term for full-frame, non-cropped video), 4K/120p, LCPM/24-bit/4-channel Audio, and some more goodies. Let’s see how this new baby performs...

Design & Build Quality

The outer body is made with polycarbonate, while the internals use magnesium alloy for greater strength and durability. The body is weather-sealed and appears strong enough for the purpose it is intended. The full-frame body is made in Japan and weighs approximately 699g with the battery and memory card.

The R6 III on the other hand allows video recording up to 7K 60p / 7K 30p with Open Gate enabled; up to 4K 120p / 2K 180p; 4k 60p and 4K 60p UVC live streaming. As per Canon, the R6 III offers 15+ stops dynamic range (in video) and Clog 2 and 3 profiles.

**AF:** The autofocus in the R6 III can recognize humans, birds, cats, dogs, airplanes, trains, and horses.



Key Features

Let’s start with a few similarities and differences between the D6 II and R6 III

|                  | R6 II                 | R6 III                |
|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Imaging sensor   | CMOS                  | CMOS (new sensor)     |
| Image Processor  | DIGIC X               | DIGIC X               |
| Resolution       | 6000 x 4000 px        | 6960 x 3672 px        |
| Native ISO range | 100-102, 400          | 100-51, 200           |
| Video*           | Please see below      | Please see below      |
| IBIS             | Up to 8 stops         | Up to 8.5 stops       |
| EVF              | 1.62 million dots     | 1.62 million dots     |
| Memory cards     | SD (UHS II) x 2 slots | CFexpress + SD        |
| LCD              | 3”, 1.62 million dots | 3”, 1.62 million dots |
| Battery          | LP-E6NH               | LP-E6P                |

*Video\*: In the video section, the R6 III out beats the R6 II by a large margin. The R6 II can record 4K video up to 60p (in 10-bit). It can also record in ProRes RAW in 6K, 60p (externally via the HDMI port. Slow-motion recording up to 180fps in 1080p is also possible.*



Rohinton Mehta

**Video features:** The Canon R6 III introduces a range of improvements over its predecessor. At its core is a new 32.5 MP sensor, enabling several advanced capabilities. Chief among them is 7K RAW video recording at up to 60 fps, captured internally. The camera also supports open-gate recording across the full sensor, even at 7K resolution. Oversampled full-width 4K up to 60p from 7K is now available, alongside additional formats such as 4K at up to 120 fps with audio, and 1080p/2K at up to 180 fps for versatile slow-motion recording, also with audio.

Codec options are extensive, offering XF-AVC and HEVC (H.265), complemented by Canon’s C-Log2 and C-Log3 profiles.

Professional-grade tools are included as well, such as waveform monitoring, false colour, and focus magnification during recording. Proxy and sub-recording features—previously reserved for Canon’s cinema line—are now integrated into the R6 III. Other refinements include tally lights, a full-size HDMI Type-A port, and support for 4-channel audio. Taken together, these upgrades position the R6 III much closer to Canon’s dedicated cinema cameras than the R6 II.

Ergonomics

The Canon R6 III was easy to use. The combined weight (Body + RF 45 mm f/1.2 STM lens) being a shade over 1000g, was not difficult to carry for long hours. The user interface is stress-free.

Performance

The EOS R6 III was reviewed using the supplied Canon RF 45mm f/1.2 STM lens. Auto corrections were enabled. Images were shot in RAW.

The EOS R6 III performed to my entire satisfaction. Colours were neutral, perfect, and not over-saturated – though with a slight loss of contrast when used wide open. Images had lots of fine details.

AF was fast and accurate, with good focus tracking abilities. Auto White Balance did a good job under most lighting conditions. Exposures were on the dot – I used center-weighted averaging for most of my shots.

Camera: Canon EOS R6 Mark III  
Aperture: f/2.8  
Shutter Speed: 1/60 sec  
Focal Length: 45.0 mm  
ISO: 100



Camera: Canon EOS R6 Mark III  
Aperture: f/2.8  
Shutter Speed: 1/80 sec  
Focal Length: 45.0 mm  
ISO: 250



Robinton Mehta

The native image size from the Canon R6 III is 6960 x 3672 px. This means you can get an image of 23.2 x 12.24" at 300 ppi without any interpolation – good enough for day-to-day work.

ISO performance was good, even in low light. Images appeared noiseless up to ISO 800, with some acceptable noise up to ISO 3200, though I would use ISO 6400 when necessary. I did try using a dedicated noise reduction software on higher ISOs (and with ISO 6400), and it did a good job. One point to note is that as you use higher ISO, dynamic range reduces – and that is true with every

camera. Though we have no scientific method of checking the dynamic range, I noticed that it tolerated a good amount of underexposure – about four stops. On the overexposure side, I would say that it recovered a good amount of detail from 2-stop overexposed shots without noticeable loss in colour.

Overall, a good performer.

Value for Money

The Canon EOS R6 Mark III body is available at an MRP of Rs.2,43,995/-. The MRP for the body appears a bit high but street prices would be lower. **|SP**

VERDICT

As mentioned earlier, the R6 III performed to my entire satisfaction. But how does it compare to Canon's own R6 Mark II? Fortunately, someone I know has an R6 II and I borrowed the same for a while. Honestly, I found very little difference in the details and colours, while the increase in megapixels (from 24.2 MP to 32.5 MP – roughly 34%) did show marginal increase (when pixel peeping) in the overall performance. In my opinion, if you are a newcomer or tight on your budget, you may consider the R6 II – which is also an excellent performer. If you want high quality 'stills' as well as better video quality, you could opt for the R6 III.

FINAL SCORE



Design and Build Quality

★★★★☆

Key Features

★★★★☆

Ergonomics

★★★★☆

Performance

★★★★☆

Value for Money

★★★★☆

Overall

★★★★☆

PLUS

- Overall, good hybrid performer
- Great video features – 4K 120p, 7k 60p (oversampled), Open-Gate RAW recording
- Quick and very good autofocus
- Continuous shooting at 40fps with AE/AF
- Pre-capture shooting

MINUS

- High-end RF lenses are expensive
- Limited third-party lens support

KEY SPECIFICATIONS

Processor: DIGIC X  
Lens mount: RF / RF-S  
Pixel dimensions: 6160 x 4640px (32.5 megapixels)  
Sensortype / size: CMOS, full frame (35.9 x 23.9mm)  
AF modes: Sills: One-Shot AF, AI Focus AF, Servo AF, Movie: One-Shot AF, Movie Servo AF  
AF System Points: Sills: Up to 1053 AF frame zones, Movie: Upto 897 AF frame zones

Cont. shooting speeds Mechanical & Electronic 1st curtain: Up to 12fps Electronic shutter: Up to 40fps  
Effective ISO: Sills: 100-64000 (L:50 H:102,400), Movie: Custom Picture (Off): 100-25,600 (H:32,000-102,400)  
Canon 709/PQ/HLG: 400-25,600 (L:100-320, H:32,000-102,400)  
Canon Log 2 / Canon Log 3: 800-25,600 (L:100-640, H:32,000-102,400)

Canon RF 45mm f/1.2 STM ₹40,495/-

# Inexpensive & Superfast

In the Box

- ✓ Lens
- ✓ Front lens cap (E-67 II)
- ✓ Rear lens cap
- ✓ Lens hood
- ✓ Lens pouch (LP1116)

Robinton Mehta

The Canon RF 45mm f/1.2 STM lens was introduced globally along with the Canon EOS R6 III body around the end of November 2025. The lens is targeted at newcomers and enthusiasts who need a superfast lens for low light photography without breaking the bank.

Design & Build Quality

The outer body is made with polycarbonate. The build quality appears to be good enough – if you don't compare it to the expensive Canon lenses. The lens mount is made of metal, Filter size is 67mm diameter. The lens weighs 346g and is made in Japan.

Key Features

The Canon RF 45mm f/1.2 is constructed with 9 elements in 7 groups, that include 1 x PMo (Plastic Molded) Aspherical lens element. The PMo Aspherical element reduces cost and weight yet offers good corrections of spherical aberrations. As mentioned earlier, the lens mount is made of metal. 12 gold-plated contacts transmit power and data to the body and lens. The large f/1.2 aperture, when used correctly, can help in reducing the depth of field and improve the 'bokeh'. The STM (Stepping Motor) aids in quiet autofocus. The manual focus ring is very smooth. Near the filter end is a Control Ring which allows you to set the ISO, control the aperture, and some other settings. A MF/AF switch is available by the side of the lens. There is no built-in image stabilization as that is available in compatible Canon bodies.



Ergonomics

The lens is compact, lightweight and easy to use. The 'fast' f/1.2 aperture allows you to easily shoot in very low light. But do keep in mind, when the light is sufficiently bright, you may overexpose your shots if you try to use f/1.2 without any neutral density filter!

Performance

The RF 45mm f/1.2 STM lens, though comparatively inexpensive, proved great value for money. Even wide open at f/1.2, the center of the frame was passably sharp, with the sides/corners a tad less sharp. Stopped down to around f/1.8 – f/2, showed an improvement, and at f/2.8, the center as well as the sides were reasonably sharp. Could be that this low-cost lens was designed with the premise that most users would use it in low-light, wide open for a soft blurry backdrop.

Stopping down to f/4 will get you the sides/corners sharp.

There is some amount of flare, especially when shooting wide open into the light. Purple fringing could be noticed in some situations. In difficult lighting situations, I sometimes felt that slightly adjusting the manual focus ring after AF was achieved made the picture a tad sharper. Overall, a good performer, especially if you consider that it's a superfast lens at a modest price.

Value for Money

The RF 45mm f/1.2 STM lens sells at an MRP Rs.40,495 /-. Considering that the street price will be even less, I would say this lens is great value for money. One point though – the lens does not come with a lens hood. You need to buy it separately. **|SP**



Camera: Canon EOS R6 Mark III  
Lens: Canon RF 45mm f/1.2 STM  
Aperture: f/5.6  
Shutter Speed: 1/60 sec  
Focal Length: 45.0 mm  
ISO: 1600



Rohinton Mehta

Camera: Canon EOS R6 Mark III  
Lens: Canon RF 45mm f/1.2 STM  
Aperture: f/2.8  
Shutter Speed: 1/160 sec  
Focal Length: 45.0 mm  
ISO: 100



Rohinton Mehta



Rohinton Mehta

Camera: Canon EOS R6 Mark III  
Lens: Canon RF 45mm f/1.2 STM  
Aperture: f/2.0  
Shutter Speed: 1/60 sec  
Focal Length: 45.0 mm  
ISO: 320

FINAL SCORE



Design and Build Quality

★★★★☆

Key Features

★★★★☆

Ergonomics

★★★★☆

Performance

★★★★☆

Value for Money

★★★★★

Overall

★★★★☆

KEY SPECIFICATIONS

Lens designed for: Full frame 35mm format  
Diagonal angle of view: 51° 20'  
Lens construction: 9 elements in 7 groups, includes 1 x PMo Aspherical element  
Diaphragm blades: 9  
Min aperture: F/16  
Closest focus: 0.45m (17.7 inches)  
Max magnification: 0.13x  
AF Actuator: STM  
Coatings: Super Spectra  
Weight: 346g, Dimensions: Approx. 75mm (L) x 78mm (Dia)

PLUS

- Sharp lens, especially when you consider its price
- Allows you to shoot in very low light
- Easy to use
- Affordable 67mm dia. filter thread

MINUS

- Lens hood not supplied
- No built-in IS (Is it really required for such a 'fast' lens?)

VERDICT

A good, value-for-money, superfast 'standard' lens.



OM System M. Zuiko Digital ED 50-200mm F/2.8 IS PRO ₹3,29,990/-

Superb — at a Price!

In the Box

- ✓ Lens
- ✓ Lens hood (LH-82C0), has a filter control window
- ✓ Tripod adapter -- Arca-Swiss compatible, removable.
- ✓ Front & rear lens caps



Rohinton Mehta

The OM SYSTEM M.ZUIKO DIGITAL 50-200mm F/2.8 IS PRO lens was introduced in India in the first week of October 2025. This Micro Four Thirds lens has a constant aperture of f/2.8 and combined with an equivalent focal length of 100-400mm in the 35 mm format, makes it one of the most sought-after lenses with nature, sports and wildlife photographers.

Design & Build Quality

The OM SYSTEM 50-200mm F/2.8 IS PRO lens is very well made. The barrel is made of magnesium alloy for strength and durability. The lens mount is made from metal, and the lens is weather-sealed. The lens weighs 1250g with its tripod collar (1075g without the collar) and is made in Japan.

Key Features

The lens is designed using 21 elements in 13 groups that include 1 EDA (Extra-low Dispersion Aspherical), 2 Super ED, 1 ED, 2 HR (High Refractive-index), and 3 E-HR (Extra High Refractive-index) elements. To reduce flare and ghosting, the front element is coated with ZERO Coating II. It further has a fluorene coating to repel water and stains. The lens offers IP53-certified weather sealing. This allows you to use the lens in inclement weather. Two teleconverters are available: MC-14 (1.4x, light loss 1-stop) and MC-20 (2x, light loss 2-stops) that increase the equivalent focal length to 560mm and 800mm respectively.

The minimum focussing distance is 0.78m (approx. 30.70-inches) throughout its focal range. At 200mm setting, it provides a magnification of 0.25x (1:4) at its minimum focussing distance.

The left side of the lens has five sliding switches. They are for: Focus Limiter (0.78 – 3m, Full range, 3m - infinity); Focus Mode - AF/MF; IS switch - IS On/Off; L-Fn switch / Preset; Set button.

Lens-Fn/Preset switch explanation:

- 1. L-Fn Mode:** In this position, the L-Fn buttons act as lens function buttons. By default, pressing them stops or locks AF, but their function can be customised in the camera menu depending on the camera body.
- 2. PRESET x (Preset – Beep Off):** In this mode, pressing an L-Fn button instantly recalls a previously saved focus distance. The 'x' symbol means there is no confirmation beep when the focus is recalled, making it ideal for wildlife or quiet environments.
- 3. PRESET x (Preset – Beep On):** This works the same as Preset x, but with an audible beep to confirm that the preset focus distance has been recalled successfully.

Ergonomics

At 1250g (with tripod collar; 1075g without), this lens feels heavy to me, but remember, it offers f/2.8 throughout its focal range. Younger generation may not

find the lens heavy. The lens is easy to use.

Performance

The obvious question that would run through a prospective buyer's mind would be, how sharp is the lens when used wide open at f/2.8 and at different focal lengths. My answer is, the lens is visually very sharp at all focal lengths at the center as well as the sides/corners even when used wide open at f/2.8. If there is a slight loss of image quality at the sides/corners, my eyes at least could not easily detect it. Autofocus was fast and accurate. With about 90° throw, you can get from the minimum to the maximum zoom – this is helpful for quick changes to the focal length. But on the other hand, you must be careful; you can get past your required focal length with the small turn of the zoom ring. Image stabilisation worked like a charm. Focus tracking and subject detection was good with this lens/body combo.

Flare and ghosting were very well corrected. There was a very slight barrel distortion at around 50mm and similarly, a very slight pin-cushion distortion at the 200mm end. In practical use though, most users may not even notice. A great performer!

Value for Money

The OM SYSTEM 50-200mm F/2.8 IS PRO is available at an MRP of Rs.3,29,990/-. This is a pricey lens – but with performance to match! **SP**



Camera: OM-1MarkII  
Lens: OM System M. Zuiko Digital ED 50-200mm F/2.8 IS PRO  
Aperture: f/8  
Shutter Speed: 1/200 sec  
Focal Length: 200.0 mm  
ISO: 250

Heavily cropped

FINAL SCORE



Design and Build Quality

★★★★★

Key Features

★★★★★

Ergonomics

★★★★★

Performance

★★★★★

Value for Money

★★★★★

Overall

★★★★★

KEY SPECIFICATIONS

|                     |                                                         |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Lens designed for:  | Micro Four Thirds System                                |
| Aperture range:     | F/2.8-22                                                |
| Angle of view:      | 24° - 6.2°                                              |
| Min. focusing:      | 0.78m (entire zoom range)                               |
| Max. magnification: | 1:4 (0.25x) at 200mm, (1:1 with MC-20 2x teleconverter) |
| Diaphragm:          | 9-bladed, circular                                      |
| Filter dia:         | 77mm                                                    |
| Weather-sealing:    | Weatherproof, dust-proof, freezeproof, splashproof      |
| Dimensions:         | 91.4 x 225.8mm                                          |
| Weight:             | 1250g with tripod collar (1075g without the collar)     |

PLUS

- Fast and accurate AF
- Excellent image quality, even used wide open
- 'Fast' f/2.8 aperture throughout
- Lens IS works with body IS (7-stop advantage with compatible bodies)
- Internal zooming - maintains lens balance
- Great weather sealing (IP53)
- Good closeup capabilities
- Supports Pro Capture, focus stacking

MINUS

- Very expensive
- Heavy (for some)

VERDICT

The OM SYSTEM 50-200mm F/2.8 IS PRO is a pleasure to use. The lens is sharp throughout the focal range and images are sharp even when used wide open at f/2.8. The 'fast' f/2.8 aperture allows you to work in low-light situations (wildlife, sports, and even landscapes) without apparent loss in image quality. Its close-focussing ability and the magnification of 0.25x is another feather in its cap. Using the MC-20 (the 2x TC), you can achieve 1:1 magnification ratio. The superb weather sealing means that the lens can be used in bad weather without fear of moisture seeping into the lens. The lens is excellent for sports, nature and mammals. For bird photography, the 400mm equivalent will fall short unless the birds that are closer to you. Of course, you can use the available teleconverters but that will increase your cost and proportionately reduce the light entering the lens. What about the lens cost? Well, it is expensive, but the images that you could capture with this lens will probably change your mind about it being expensive! In my opinion, it's a Best Buy!



Camera: OM-1 Mark II  
Lens: OM System M Zuiko Digital  
ED 50-200mm F/2.8 IS PRO  
Aperture: f/8  
Shutter Speed: 1/200 sec  
Focal Length: 179.0 mm  
ISO: 200

Heavily cropped

Rohinton Mehta

Camera: OM-1 Mark II  
Lens: OM System M Zuiko Digital  
ED 50-200mm F/2.8 IS PRO  
Aperture: f/5.6  
Shutter Speed: 1/400 sec  
Focal Length: 200.0 mm  
ISO: 200

Heavily cropped

Rohinton Mehta

Sigma 20-200 mm f 3.5/6.3 Contemporary ₹87,000/-

# Super Range

## In the Box

- ✓ Lens
- ✓ Lens hood (LH756-02)
- ✓ Front cap (LCF -72 IV)
- ✓ Rear cap (LCR III)
- ✓ Lens pouch

 Hoshang Billimoria

A large percentage of the mirrorless camera market is controlled by amateurs and enthusiasts who often prefer to have one all-in-one lens rather than several lenses. Their needs were served by several companies that made 24-200 mm and 28-200 mm zooms. Sony was the only one to have a 24-240 mm lens in its arsenal. Tamron, very recently, launched its own 25-200 mm in the market. Sigma has now launched the 20-200 mm f 3.5/ 6.3 lens making it the widest travel zoom in the market. The Sigma is for full frame cameras and is currently available with either Sony's E mount or Panasonic's L mount. A 10 X zoom very often requires compromises. How good is the Sigma? Read on.

## Design & Build Quality

The lens is very much Sigma – well finished but understated in appearance. It weighs only 540g which is light considering its focal range. Polycarbonate has been used in the construction but the mount is made of stainless steel and there are rubber gaskets around the lens mount. The lens is weather sealed but not image stabilised. Dimensions are 77.2 x 117.5 mm. The lens, like all Sigma lenses, is made in Japan.

## Key Features

The maximum aperture varies from 3.5 to 6.3. Some may find that a bit limiting but with increasing sensor quality and



## Performance

The performance of this 10x lens has to take into account how difficult it is to design a high quality lens of this focal range without making it big and heavy. Clearly this lens is aimed at amateurs and enthusiasts who prefer to carry a single lens rather than a cartload.

Having said that, the Sigma focusses well and quickly. The linear motor makes this easy both in stills and video. Focus breathing in video is barely audible. Yes, there is vignetting at the wide end and also some distortion but nothing to be unduly worried about. Also, corners are weak at maximum aperture. The slow maximum aperture is not a source of worry since performance at high ISOs is rather good. Flare was present but well controlled. Nice bokeh can also be achieved. Colours and contrast were also good.

Overall results were rather good across the focal range. The lens, therefore, deserves a firm recommendation.

## Value for Money

The 20-200 mm f 3.5/6.3 Sigma is available in the UK at 799 pounds including 20% VAT. The MRP in India is Rs 87,000. Discounts, of course, should be available. The lens is good value for money. **[SP]**

## VERDICT

Competition for the Sigma comes primarily from Tamron's 25-200 mm f 2.8/5.6. The Sigma has a wider range, is 35g lighter and is more versatile. On the other hand, the Tamron has a wide angle of 25 mm against the 20 mm of the Sigma. It also has a higher maximum aperture and is better in low light. If you need the 20 mm focal length, go in for the Sigma.

use of high ISOs even by professionals, this should not concern you too much. 18 elements in 14 groups constitute the lens. This includes one FLD, 3 SLD and 4 aspherical elements. The angle of view ranges from 94.5 to 12.3 degrees. The lens features a zoom lock as well as a AF/ MF switch. The minimum focussing distance is 9.8 inches at 100 mm. Maximum burst rate is 15 fps with Sony bodies. Sigma's linear HLA motor is specially built for video and assures fast and accurate autofocus. The lens provides half-life size macros and takes 72 mm filters.

## Ergonomics

The lens is light and compact and therefore handles very well. It is also convenient to carry around. The focal range offered makes it very versatile as well.



Hoshang Billimoria

Camera: Sony ILCE-7M3  
Lens: Sigma 20-200 mm  
f3.5/6.3 Contemporary  
Aperture: f/9  
Shutter Speed: 1/2500 sec  
Focal Length: 20.0 mm  
ISO: 2000



Camera: Sony ILCE-7M3  
Lens: Sigma 20-200 mm  
f3.5/6.3 Contemporary  
Aperture: f/9  
Shutter Speed: 1/3200 sec  
Focal Length: 51.7 mm  
ISO: 2000

Hoshang Billimoria

FINAL SCORE



Design and Build Quality

★★★★☆

Key Features

★★★★☆

Ergonomics

★★★★☆

Performance

★★★★☆

Value for Money

★★★★☆

Overall

★★★★☆

KEY SPECIFICATIONS

|                     |                                                                |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mount:              | L-mount, Sony E-mount                                          |
| Sensor format:      | Full frame (DG)                                                |
| Lens construction:  | 18 elements in 14 groups (1 FLD, 3 SLD, 4 aspherical elements) |
| Angle of View:      | 94.5-12.3°                                                     |
| Aperture:           | F/3.5-22 (20mm); F/6.3-40 (200mm)                              |
| Diaphragm blades:   | 9, rounded                                                     |
| Min Focus Distance: | 16.5cm / 6.5" at 28mm                                          |
| Max Magnification:  | 1:2 at 28mm                                                    |
| Filter size:        | 72mm dia.                                                      |
| Weight:             | L-mount: 550g; Sony E-mount: 540g                              |

PLUS

- Widest travel zoom
- Light and compact
- Smooth and quiet

MINUS

- No IS
- A little slow in low light

( Product pics to be taken by Mahesh)



Camera: Sony ILCE-7M3  
Lens: Sigma 20-200 mm  
f3.5/6.3 Contemporary  
Aperture: f/11  
Shutter Speed: 1/4000 sec.  
Focal Length: 136.9 mm  
ISO: 2000



Hoshang Billimoria

Camera: Sony ILCE-7M3  
Lens: Sigma 20-200 mm  
f3.5/6.3 Contemporary  
Aperture: f/11  
Shutter Speed: 1/4000 sec.  
Focal Length: 200.0 mm  
ISO: 2000



Hoshang Billimoria



Viltrox AF 16 mm f/1.8 ₹59,999/-

# An excellent high speed ultrawide lens at an attractive price!

### In the Box

- ✓ Lens
- ✓ Front lens cap
- ✓ Rear lens cap
- ✓ Bayonet lens hood
- ✓ Soft pouch
- ✓ Warranty card

Ashok Kandimalla

The Viltrox AF 16 mm f/1.8 full-frame lens offers a unique combination of an uncommon focal length and a large aperture. The lens ticks all boxes when it comes to size, weight and price, but how does it perform optically? Read on to find out how it performed on our test bench.

### Design & Build Quality

This is an all-metal lens that is solidly built. There are two rings on the lens – the first is for focussing and the second is for aperture control. Two function buttons (programmable) and two switches - AF/MF, and Aperture click stop enable/disable are provided. There is also a display panel with a dash of colour. The lens is sealed against dust and moisture. The lens we tested came with a Sony E mount, and a Nikon Z version is also available.

### Key Features

This is a prime lens with 15 elements in 12 groups. These include three aspherical and four extra low dispersion (ED) elements. The lens elements are given a HD Nano-multilayer coating to reduce reflections and there also an antifouling coating to prevent smudges on the exposed surfaces. The aperture has 9 blades.

The focussing is internal. The aperture ring can be made stepless or click-



of damping. When the click stop feature was enabled, the action felt crisp and positive. The aperture markings were also very clear and easily readable. The function buttons were easily accessible but we felt that they were too close to each other.

### Performance

The centre resolution even wide open is excellent. The edges/corners are slightly behind as one can expect. We found f/4 to be the sweet spot with the lens offering superb sharpness all over the frame. There is a steady drop in performance from then onwards as the aperture is narrowed. The AF was fast and accurate.

stopped using a switch. There are clear aperture markings on the ring, and the aperture is electronically controlled.

The function buttons can be programmed to perform a huge range of functions. The lens does not have any image stabilization, as that function is expected to be fulfilled by the camera through its internal stabilisation (IBIS). There is also the rare but desirable display panel that shows the distance, aperture, focus range settings, and the status of function buttons. The AF function is performed with an STM motor. A USB-C port has been provided on the lens mount for connecting to a computer (or a smartphone) and updating the lens firmware with a just a standard cable.

### Ergonomics

The lens balances well with standard Sony full frame bodies. Both rings were nicely ribbed and had the right amount

Due to the high-tech coatings, flare was very well controlled but we would advise some caution if you are shooting when the sun is in or near the edge of the frame. Vignetting was present wide open and around three stops are needed to correct this. Chromatic aberration (CA) is very well controlled. The most impressive part was the very little barrel distortion. The usual caveat: please remember that what we have written here is after the automatic corrections are applied by the raw converter using the lens-supplied profiles, and in practice, this is what you will also see.

In a continuous shoot of several hours, we experienced one 'freeze' moment that was resolved by the usual camera power off/on sequence.

### Value for Money

The MRP of the lens is Rs. 59,999/-, making it a very good value for money. **[SP]**

© S. Vivekanand



|                              |
|------------------------------|
| Camera: Sony A1              |
| Lens: Viltrox AF 16 mm f/1.8 |
| Aperture: f/8                |
| Shutter Speed: 0.3 sec       |
| Focal Length: 16.0 mm        |
| ISO: 3200                    |

### FINAL SCORE



### Design and Build Quality

★★★★☆

### Key Features

★★★★☆

### Ergonomics

★★★★☆

### Performance

★★★★☆

### Value for Money

★★★★☆

### Overall

★★★★☆

### KEY SPECIFICATIONS

|                                 |                                                            |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Focal length & coverage:        | 16 mm, full frame (available in Sony E and Nikon Z mounts) |
| Aperture range:                 | f/1.8 to f/22, diaphragm with 9 blades                     |
| Lens construction:              | 15 elements in 12 groups                                   |
| Picture angle (diagonal):       | 105.6°                                                     |
| Highest magnification:          | 0.1 X                                                      |
| Focusing Range:                 | 0.27 m to ∞                                                |
| Filter/attachment size:         | 77 mm, Lens Hood: Included                                 |
| Dimensions (diameter x length): | 85.2 x 103 mm                                              |
| Weight:                         | 550 g. Dimensions and weight may vary slightly with mount. |

### PLUS

- Very good value for money
- Excellent optical performance
- Len display shows useful information
- Solid build quality
- Aperture ring can be clicked or de-clicked

### MINUS

- Unusual focal length
- Function buttons too close to each other

### VERDICT

This lens offers superb optical performance and high speed at an affordable price. Overall, lens exhibits, impressive sharpness, low distortion, good flare and CA control and all of it at a very attractive price point. The very low distortion and high-speed make it an ideal lens for architectural work and astro-photography, respectively. There are no direct competitors with the same specification so we are unable to comment on how it compares with the competition.



Camera: Sony A1  
Lens: Viltrox AF 16 mm f/1.8  
Aperture: f/5.0  
Shutter Speed: 1/100 sec  
Focal Length: 16.0 mm  
ISO: 3200



© S. Vivekanand



vivo X300 Pro ₹1,09,999 (vivo.com), Telephoto Extender Kit ₹18,999

# Powerful. Zoomtastic. Pro.

### In the Box

- ✓ Device
- ✓ Documentation
- ✓ Type-C to USB cable
- ✓ USB Power Adapter (90W FlashCharge charger)
- ✓ SIM ejector tool
- ✓ Protective case
- ✓ Protective film (pre-applied)



by Srinivas Swaminathan

The Vivo X300 Pro represents the biggest generational leap the company has made in years, including for someone upgrading from the VivoX200 Pro, this is not just an incremental step; it's a worthy, meaningful upgrade across design, camera technology, battery innovation, and system experience.

Let's begin with the design and craftsmanship, an area where Vivo's attention to detail truly shines. The X300 Pro debuts the brand-new Velvet Glass finish, a surface so refined and elegantly matte that it resists fingerprints almost entirely.

The Vivo X300 Pro positions itself as a photography-first flagship, and one look at its camera hardware makes that clear. At the centre is a 50 MP Sony LYT-828 main sensor with OIS, paired with a 50 MP ultra-wide (Samsung JN1) and a massive 200 MP periscope telephoto lens with OIS and 3.5x optical zoom. This setup is complemented by vivo's ZEISS partnership, with ZEISS-calibrated optics and colour science, and the company's dedicated image-processing chips. On the front, a surprisingly high-resolution 50 MP JN1 AF selfie camera ensures that the phone's imaging strength extends to its front-facing photos as well. In daylight or

good lighting conditions, the Vivo X300 Pro delivers superb colour reproduction, controlled contrast, and excellent dynamic range. The main sensor retains detail without drifting into the oversaturated look. There is a deliberate choice toward realism, something Vivo and ZEISS have been shaping for multiple generations. The ultra-wide camera performs competently, maintaining colour consistency with the main sensor.

The real distinction comes from the 200 MP periscope telephoto lens. This zoom capability sets the X300 Pro apart. Its long-range clarity, accurate colour retention, and ability to pull fine detail even at distance give the device capabilities that are unusual in this price category. These strengths, however, depend on stable shooting. You will need a tripod or rest the phone on a solid surface and use the timer. Even then, extreme full zoomed photos tend to appear over processed and appear almost like a HDR painting.

Portraits benefit from Vivo's ZEISS-tuned depth rendering and the computational isolation of subjects. Edge detection is generally precise, and tones remain believable without smoothing faces excessively. Low-light performance relies heavily on vivo's image-processing pipeline and night shots typically maintain good brightness and clarity.

On the video front, the X300 Pro supports up to 4K high-frame-rate recording with HDR, including 4K 120 fps and Dolby Vision in some regions. Stabilization is strong on the main and telephoto lenses, and colours stay accurate with minimal flicker. Low-light video remains usable for everyday purposes. Selfies are another area where vivo has pushed higher-end hardware. The 50 MP front camera produces crisp, bright images with reliable autofocus, making it suitable for both portrait work and 4K video calls or vlogging. This SoC surpasses 4 million points in synthetic



Abhishek Baxi



Abhishek Baxi



benchmarks, demonstrating both raw power and long-term stability. It is paired with Vivo's custom V3+ imaging chip and the VS1 external chip, forming a dual-engine system that separates general performance from imaging workloads. The result is fast photo capture, nearly instant processing, and consistently cool thermals even during long shooting sessions or high-intensity tasks.

Battery life often the Achilles heel of ultra-premium flagships receives a groundbreaking upgrade. Vivo incorporates its second-generation Blue Ocean semi-solid battery technology, fitting a massive 6510mAh cell into a surprisingly slim 7.99mm frame. Paired with 90W wired and 40W wireless

charging, the X300 Pro easily lasts through extended photography sessions, gaming, and heavy day-long use without anxiety.

One of the most surprising and delightful features is Vivo's industry-first full Apple ecosystem interconnectivity. Seamless file transfers, cross-device syncing, and interoperability with Apple devices create a hybrid ecosystem that's truly futuristic. Overall, the Vivo X300 Pro is built for users who value imaging versatility: a powerful main sensor,

a capable ultra-wide, and one of the most ambitious telephoto lenses in any Android flagship right now but with some caveats.

Its imaging style leans toward realism, its hardware gives it reach and flexibility, and its processing pipeline keeps shots consistent across scenarios. If your priority is a smartphone that handles everything from landscapes to distant subjects to detailed portraits with equal confidence, this is a device that delivers across the board. **[JSP]**

VERDICT

A camera-first flagship, the Vivo X300 Pro stands out for its exceptional mobile photography. Its periscope telephoto, portrait rendering, and low-light performance are good. It may not chase raw specs or headline hardware battles, but it delivers one of the most refined, reliable, and versatile imaging experiences on any smartphone today.



Girish Mallya

Telephoto Extender Kit

The Vivo X300 Pro Photography Kit transforms the smartphone into a seemingly professional-grade camera system, featuring a detachable ZEISS 2.35x Telephoto Extender lens and a multifunctional Imaging Grip Kit. This optional accessory enhances the phone's already impressive 200MP periscope telephoto camera, catering to photography enthusiasts seeking extended reach and tactile controls.

The ZEISS 2.35x Telephoto Extender is an apochromatic (APO) lens co-developed with ZEISS, utilizing a Kepler optical structure and large-aperture design to minimize chromatic aberrations and deliver sharp, high-clarity images. Key specs include 2.35x optical magnification, extending the native 85mm-equivalent telephoto to approximately 200mm, with hybrid zoom options up to 1,600mm equivalent.

It supports optical image stabilization (OIS) combined with software-based stabilization for steady handheld shots, and enables close-focus macro at about 20cm. Benefits include capturing distant subjects like landscapes or wildlife with exceptional detail, versatility across modes such as Photo, Video, Portrait,

and Pro, and seamless integration via the phone's "Telephoto Extender" app mode (requiring an OTA update). It also allows access to all rear cameras through mount cutouts, making it ideal for travel or action photography without bulky gear. The Professional Imaging Grip Kit complements the lens with a retro-styled handle featuring a Type-C port for quick connection. Specs include a 2,300mAh built-in battery for phone top-ups, physical controls like a half-press shutter for focus, exposure dial, zoom lever, video button, and tripod thread.

Benefits encompass pro-level handling for burst shooting and autofocus customization, extended battery life for prolonged sessions, and a ceremonial, ergonomic feel that reduces touchscreen reliance—perfect for concerts or sports or bird photography.

First introduced with the Vivo X200 Ultra, this kit is compatible across the X300 series (X300 and X300 Pro), but differs from prior models like the X100 series, which lacked such accessories. Given Vivo's precedent of model-specific camera evolutions, it's unlikely to work with future versions like the X400 series without explicit support.

FINAL SCORE

Design and Build Quality

★★★★★

Key Features

★★★★★

Ergonomics

★★★★☆

Performance

★★★★★

Value for Money

★★★★☆

Overall

★★★★★

PLUS

- Outstanding camera system with a class-leading 200 MP periscope telephoto.
- Natural, realistic colour science backed by ZEISS tuning.
- Excellent selfies and strong video performance with stable 4K HDR options.

MINUS

- Extreme zoom shots require very steady hands or a tripod for best results.
- Some long-range images can look over-processed or HDR-like.
- low light photography can be a challenge at times

KEY SPECIFICATIONS

|                     |                                                                                                               |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Display:            | 6.78-inch LTPO AMOLED, 2800 x 1260 resolution, 120Hz refresh rate                                             |
| Processor:          | MediaTek Dimensity 9500 (3nm process)                                                                         |
| RAM:                | Up to 16GB LPDDR5X                                                                                            |
| Storage:            | Up to 1TB UFS 4.1 (dual/triple/quad-channel variants)                                                         |
| Main Camera:        | 50MP Sony LYT-828 sensor (1/1.28-inch), f/1.57 aperture                                                       |
| Telephoto Camera:   | 200MP Samsung ISOCELL HPB periscope sensor (1/1.4-inch), 85mm equivalent, f/2.67 aperture, ~3.7x optical zoom |
| Ultra-Wide Camera:  | 50MP sensor, f/2.0 aperture                                                                                   |
| Front Camera:       | 50MP sensor with autofocus                                                                                    |
| Battery:            | 6510mAh capacity, 90W wired charging, 40W wireless charging                                                   |
| Build & Protection: | IP68/IP69 dust and water resistance, flat glass front and back, Armor Glass protection                        |





# Best Selling Cameras

Hoshang Billimoria

MAP Camera of Japan has released its list of best selling cameras for the month of October 2025.

|                                                                                                            |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                          |                                                                                                             |                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <br>1<br>Nikon<br>ZR       | <br>2<br>Sony<br>A7 C II | <br>3<br>Ricoh<br>GR IV | <br>4<br>Fujifilm<br>X-E 5 | <br>5<br>Ricoh<br>GR-III x  |
| <br>6<br>Fujifilm<br>X-M 5 | <br>7<br>Nikon<br>Z 5 II | <br>8<br>Sony<br>A7 IV  | <br>9<br>Nikon<br>Zf       | <br>10<br>Fujifilm<br>X-T 5 |

YODOBASHI Cameras of Japan has unveiled its list of best selling compact cameras for the month of November 2025.

|                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <br>1<br>Panasonic<br>TZ 99  | <br>2<br>Ricoh<br>GR III x        | <br>3<br>Canon<br>Powershot SX 740 HS | <br>4<br>Canon<br>Powershot IX Y 650 | <br>5<br>Sony<br>ZV-1 II      |
| <br>6<br>Sony<br>RX 1 R III | <br>7<br>OM System<br>Tough TG 7 | <br>8<br>Nikon<br>Coolpix P 1100     | <br>9<br>Fujifilm<br>X Half         | <br>10<br>Leica<br>D - Lux 8 |

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <br>AccurioJet KM-1e           | <b>HIGH<br/>PRODUCTION</b>                                                                              | <br>JV3D EVO                     |
| <br>AccurioPress C14000/C12000 | <br>AccurioLabel 400 | <br>AccurioPress 6Z72P           |
| <br>AccurioShine 9800          | <b>MID<br/>PRODUCTION</b>                                                                               | <br>JV3D EVO 52                  |
| <br>AccurioPress C7100/C7090   | <br>AccurioLabel 230 | <br>AccurioPress 7135/7120/6Z72P |
| <br>AccurioPress C4080/C4070 | <b>LIGHT<br/>PRODUCTION</b>                                                                             | <br>AccurioPress C84hc/C74hc   |
| <br>AccurioPrint 2100        |                                                                                                         | <br>AccurioPrint C4055         |

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