

ENGLAND NORTH

Abbey Photographic	Blackpool	01253 29400
Dale Photographic	Leeds	0113 245 4256
H.A. West (X-Ray) Ltd	Gateshead	0191 487 6633
H.A. West (X-Ray) Ltd	Leeds	0113 257 3378
H.A. West (X-Ray) Ltd	Manchester	0161 272 8822
Jacobs Photo & Video	Manchester	0161 834 7500
KJP	Leeds	0113 277 7783
KJP	Manchester	0161 832 4957
KJP	Liverpool	0151 922 9922
Leeds Photovisual Ltd	Leeds	0113 245 6313
Leeds Photovisual Ltd	Manchester	0161 274 4455
Wilkinsons	Preston	01772 556250

CENTRAL

Jacobs Photo & Video	Leicester	0116 255 0111
Jacobs Photo & Video	Birmingham	0121 233 4196
KJP	Nottingham	0115 958 6888
KJP	Birmingham	0121 326 7636
Leeds Photovisual Ltd	Birmingham	0121 200 3139
Bob Rigby Photographic	Macclesfield	01625 575591
M.R. Warner & Son Ltd	Wolverhampton	01902 26581

SOUTH WEST

KJP	Bristol	0117 942 2000
Robert White Photographic	Poole	01202 723046

SOUTH EAST

Allphotos Ltd	Worthing	01903 202542
City Camera Exchange	London	0171 7992181
FFordes Photographic Ltd	Southend on Sea	01702 335213
KJP	London	0171 380 1144
K.P. Professional Sales Ltd	Cambridge	01223 214514
Leeds Photovisual Ltd	London	0171 833 1661
Pictorialist Euro Foto Centre	Cowley, Middlesex	01895 448224
Teamwork	London	0171 323 6455
Williams of Hove Ltd	Hove	01273 777576

SCOTLAND

H.A. West (X-Ray) Ltd	Edinburgh	0131 313 2686
KJP	Aberdeen	01224 780080
KJP	Edinburgh	0131 228 1999
KJP	Glasgow	0141 353 0875
Williamsons	Glasgow	0141 332 3381

WALES

Leeds Photovisual Ltd	Newport	01633 279440
Walters Photo Video	Merthyr Tydfil	01685 723419

NORTHERN IRELAND

KJP	Belfast	01232 777770
-----	---------	--------------

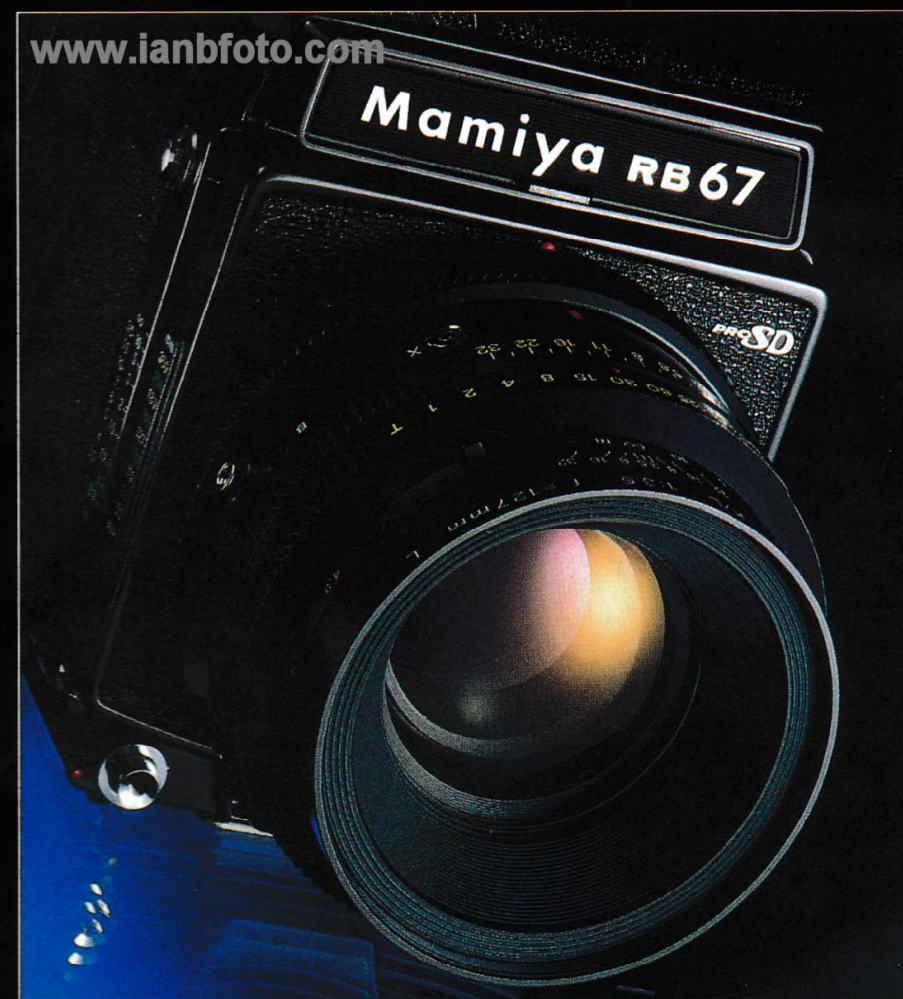
In addition to the stockists listed, our products are available from selected branches of Jessops. Details of branches can be obtained by phoning their head office on: 0116 232 0432

Mamiya stockists

The Mamiya

Guide to Medium Format

www.ianbfoto.com



medium format

The medium format **ADVANTAGE**

In this age of superb quality 35mm cameras and films, is there still a good reason to buy medium format? Yes there is, says Jonathan Eastland, a long-time user of both formats



Wherever photographers gather in numbers, you can be sure of one thing. Someone will be debating with another the pros and cons of medium format against the smaller and much loved 35mm miniature. I know – I once spent almost a decade of my photographic life believing in large doses of self administered emotional clap-trap.

I was seriously convinced that with care and attention the technical quality of my 35mm work could be dramatically improved. Occasionally, I came close to producing print quality at least the equal of and, in some

instances, better than work I had seen from medium format negatives. But achieving such high standards day after day in a busy press agency darkroom was not easy. Much of the time, even a mediocre medium format negative could be coaxed to produce excellent print quality with little or no effort. When something better than excellent was needed, it wasn't difficult to attain.

I was weaned on negatives bigger than the palm of my hand as a youngster and used everything from a Burlington Burroughs to a Rollei long before 35mm entered my life. I knew all

medium format

the pros of medium format, but it took a long time to come to the realisation that different formats can be used in the same way as the different tools in a carpenter's box. Each has a purpose, its efficiency dependent on the user's knowledge of its limitations.

Miniature photography still plays a very large part in my life, but it is medium format photography which has played the larger part for several years. One of the reasons for this has to do with the understanding that a photographer can, after all, combine that almost indefinable and subjective phenomenon of creativity with the more objective aspect of technical quality.

Let's look at that a bit further. To me, 'technical quality' is associated with the clarity of detail in a photograph, either in its

original negative or positive form, or in the published version. Greater clarity communicates more information to the viewer but it can also be used as a device which helps to extend the range of my ability to create in a purely abstract or expressionist manner when I choose. If I rely solely on the 35mm miniature format as the vehicle for this expression, geometric restrictions impose limits on my creative thought. It means that on the occasions when I only use the smaller, miniature format, that fixed geometry tends to be the driver; the brake is on the imagination before I even start.

Medium format permits a variety of negative sizes using standard 120 film. These range from 4x4cm through 6x4.5, 6x6, 6x7 and 6x8cm to 6x9, 6x12 and 6x17cm. Off-the-shelf production

cameras cater for all these different shapes in one way or another, from special film backs for the smallest to specialist cameras for the longest.

By far the most popular frame sizes, however, are 6x4.5, 6x6 and 6x7cm. You can see here just how much bigger medium format is than the miniature 35mm frame. Technical quality is directly proportional to the size of the film image area. The 6x4.5cm frame gives an area which is 2.7 times the size of 35mm; 6x6cm is 3.6 times greater and 6x7cm is a whopping 4.5 times larger than 35mm. The bigger the negative, the greater the clarity, the finer the detail.

It is certainly not the case any longer that the majority of professional 35mm single lens reflex cameras are lighter or less bulky than medium format types. Nor is it true that medium format is less well catered for in the choice of lenses. Leading brand manufacturers feature both the ordinary and exotic in their lens ranges. Some current medium format cameras, especially the rangefinder and 645 models, are relatively compact and in recent years have been given the same ergonomic styling treatment

medium format



enjoyed by 35mm. So the argument which always put the versatility of 35mm to the fore is largely obsolete.

As to cost, a glance at new and used prices of the baby of medium format, 6x4.5cm, shows little difference between medium and small formats. Materials and processing costs are higher on a frame for frame basis, but the practitioners of 35mm often overlook the fact that the medium format user is buying considerably more film area per frame; the subsequent costs are therefore bound to be more when an equivalent number of medium format frames are used.

Another argument which is often conveniently forgotten is that there are currently no 35mm

(NOT TO SCALE)



35mm Negative



4.5x6cm Negative



6x6cm Negative



6x7cm Negative

medium format

cameras which provide a range of interchangeable film backs. In medium format photography, owning a second or third back is akin to owning extra camera bodies without the burden of the higher relative cost of a 35mm body and extra weight. What is more, separate film backs for some medium format cameras come in a range of format sizes and sometimes include special versions for the standard 35mm format as well as for the extra wide 57x24mm panoramic format.

Nearly all of my work is produced for editorial clients who cover a broad product base from newspapers to books, calendars and posters and include several publishers of high quality reprographics. These are magazines based on the A3 format where the frequent use of colour photography as double page spreads can produce stunning results. These clients rarely indicate a preference for a particular format, but feedback suggests they recognise the higher technical quality obtained from medium format.

Requests for library material often cover a range of subjects which are nearly always supplied in a mixture of formats;

occasionally, 35mm and medium format frames of the same or similar subjects duplicate one another. At the end of last year I calculated that of all the material issued from my library over a 12 month period, 65 to 70 per cent of the photographs published were reproduced from medium format transparencies. In 80 per cent of cases where the client was faced with an option to choose the same subject from 35mm or medium format, the latter won the day.

In an age when the sophistication of computer image manipulation software knows no bounds, one could say that these comparisons are about as much use as a 0 to 60mph car test – meaningless and practically useless for everyday life. I believe there is a lot of truth in this. After all, thousands of professional photographers use nothing but 35mm and the reproduction quality of their work is, in most cases, excellent. Computerised pre-press applications have made these great advances possible, but without the wizardry of electronics, much 35mm colour reproduction would still be just mediocre.

In the past, picture editors often screamed for a 'good big 'un'

because faults in film positives for plate making were less apparent if the original was on medium format. Applying modern technology to the manufacture of separations, film positives and plate making eliminates many of the human-error variables of the past with the result that the reproduced quality obtained from near perfect medium format originals is nothing short of superb.

It doesn't end here. Many wedding, portrait, commercial and industrial specialists know full well that what their clients want is a professional looking product. The larger frame size permits greater client flexibility when shooting sets and products, allowing blank space for advertising typography or other inserts.

In effect, this often means losing up to 30 per cent of the frame area, but that which remains occupied by the image is still significantly greater than would be available shooting the same job with the smaller format. 35mm machine-made print packages have improved dramatically over the years, but so too have medium format packages using the same process;

the distance gap in technical quality is as great as it ever was. The last thing you want to hear from a client is that a print lacks clarity and detail; the more knowledgeable the buyer, the more likelihood he/she will find a hole to pick in the inferior product. Why give them the opportunity?

Mamiya cameras and lenses

Countless professionals and advanced amateurs around the world have benefited from Mamiya's pioneering spirit. 'Innovation' is the word which probably best describes the company's medium format camera design philosophy. High quality engineering, the production of world class lenses and wide ranging accessory systems, has been the hallmark of a name synonymous with photographic excellence for more than 50 years. Who can forget the functional and versatile Mamiya Universal Press camera of the 1960s, or the superb C type twin lens reflex models? Durable, reliable and built like the proverbial battleship; many are still in use today.

Mamiya's current range comprises five medium format

medium format

cameras, including new versions of two of the world's most popular single lens reflex models first introduced in 1970 and 1975; the Mamiya RB67 and 645. The RZ67 followed in 1982 using the latest technology in electro-mechanical hybrid design and optical engineering.

More recently, in 1989, the Mamiya 6 rangefinder camera was reborn. Based on the company's original 1940s 6x6cm format folding camera, the new version won hearts and minds with its tough looking exterior and uniquely compact design with interchangeable lens facility. It was an immediate success and was

soon followed by an outstanding larger sibling, the 6x7cm Mamiya 7. All models are fully supported by a generous selection of accessories and their own comprehensive range of lenses. The company's development of professional quality optics for the various formats includes a number of unique high performance, high speed apochromatic telephoto, zoom, perspective control and soft focus lenses which remain unmatched by other manufacturers.

Perhaps the most famous of all Mamiya medium format cameras is the RB67. Launched in 1970, this camera heralded a new era for the



company with its innovative revolving back system which enables the user to switch between the horizontal and vertical, while the camera remains in its normal viewing position. Its large format appealed to fashion and advertising photographers because it is perfectly proportioned for most magazine pages.

Today, the latest all-mechanical RB67 Pro-SD is as popular as ever, boasting the simple operation of its predecessors and complete system compatibility with all earlier accessories and lenses, as well of course, as its own current range of multi-format backs, seventeen interchangeable flash synched Seiko shuttered lenses, TTL metering prism finder and other accessories.

One interesting aspect of the RB67 Pro-SD is that while remaining compatible with older optics, its lens mount diameter is larger than in previous models. This allows the fitting of the latest 75mm PC shift and 500mm APO lenses. Three other APO lenses are in the current line-up. Special application optics include the 150mm f4 Variable Soft Focus and the 100-200mm f5.2 zoom.

The RZ67 Pro II has many of

the RB's features including the revolving back and built-in rack and pinion focusing bellows for functional close up work. This allows continuous focus from infinity with all lenses to the closest range without the need to stop and insert extension tubes. Useful for those dynamic, tightly cropped portraits on either the 6x7 or 6x4.5cm back.

Where the RZ differs from the RB is in its hybrid electro-mechanical operation, a sophisticated combination which permits TTL average/spot metering linked to the precision timed fully flash synched electromagnetic lens shutters in all 16 ultra-high performance lenses. The shutter in each lens is controlled in 1/2 stop increments and timed from 8 seconds to 1/400 second with an emergency mechanical override. A single action lever cocks the shutter and advances the film in one stroke.

This model is slightly smaller and fractionally lighter than its older brother whose lenses, finders, backs and some accessories are compatible with it. Since its introduction in 1982, the RZ67 Pro II has become a favourite for many of the world's leading photographers. Attach the



Model 2 RZ winder and you'll find this camera a real joy to use, in or out of the studio, on or off the tripod.

Sooner or later, even the most loyal 35mm photographers find time to ponder the obvious benefits of medium format. Lesser mortals think about these things more frequently but are often apprehensive when it comes to making the final commitment to change. The experience can be psychologically devastating, as well as expensive, if you choose the wrong model.

Mamiya recognised these problems more than 20 years ago when it revitalised the popular 6x4.5cm format which

featured in pocketable folding cameras of the

medium format

Bolt

favourably in price with sophisticated 35mm equipment.

The current Mamiya 645 Pro System is a very different camera from its pioneering predecessor, but still offers great value for money, rapid 35mm style handling, instant return mirror, 21 high performance lenses including two superb APO telephotos and many accessories – a complete shooting match which easily rivals some of the best smaller format systems. If you don't want to go the whole hog immediately, opt for the economical Mamiya 645SV Pack which will get you up and running with a complete camera and lens, AE finder and single shot power drive grip.

Today's 645 has an electromagnetic focal plane shutter speeded from 4 seconds to 1/1000 second, plus three optional leaf shuttered lenses for full flash synch operation. The AE prism finder with TTL average/spot metering and +/- exposure compensation permits

Pack Film holder. And the 35mm photographer can take advantage of the 645 system's super optical performance with the standard 35mm magazine.

Sports and fashion photographers will appreciate the camera's Power Drive grip which simply plugs into the right hand side. The electronic shutter release and winder controls easily fall to the finger tip with this superbly sculptured grip. It transforms an already compact modular design into a stylish ergonomic package. For those that prefer a more measured approach to their craft, the manual film advance crank can be interchanged with the winder.

The 645 system is backed with a comprehensive array of accessories including six viewfinder screens, a revolving tripod adaptor, remote control device, auto bellows and extension rings. An impressive lens line-up includes two 500mm telephoto lenses as well as the excellent 300mm f2.8. In addition,

medium format



It wasn't until the late 1980s that Mamiya's first modern multi-format rangefinder camera appeared. The 6MF was the camera travel photographers and photojournalists had been demanding for years. A classic, surprisingly small and lightweight 6x6cm model accompanied by three high performance interchangeable lenses formulated using Mamiya's special ultra low dispersion glass.

The camera has built-in metering offering aperture priority AE in 1/6 stop increments, or manual metering modes linked to fully flash synched, electromagnetic lens shutters which are virtually silent in operation. The lack of an instant return mirror reduces vibration and increases the potential for

shake free, pin sharp photographs, even at the slower shutter speeds.

Rapid, accurate focus and picture composition is assured with the camera's fully parallax compensated coincident image rangefinder. Automatically activated suspended bright line frames appear in the viewfinder, showing the field of view as each of the three lenses – 50mm, 75mm and 150mm – are fitted. One of the great advantages of any rangefinder camera is the way in which the subject matter is viewed through a frame which cannot be interrupted at the moment of exposure by mirror black out.

While designed essentially as a 6x6 square format camera, the 6MF features a 6x4.5cm frame insert. The camera can also be fitted with a standard 35mm

medium format

cassette adapter kit and special rewind crank which allows the user to shoot stunning 24x54mm panoramic images.

With its built-in hand grip and collapsible lens mount, the 6MF is the ideal companion for the outdoor photographer; but for those who demand even greater versatility, the more recently introduced Mamiya 7 is the answer.

Conceptually, the 7 is similar to the 6MF, but produces the larger 6x7cm format and offers a wider range of lenses including the ultra wide 43mm f4.5 – a focal length equivalent to 21mm in the 35mm format – with its own special

viewfinder. You can focus the coupled rangefinder in a split second, even under the most appalling light conditions. What you can see with your eyes, you can see through the viewfinder.

The Mamiya 7 viewfinder incorporates a silicon photo diode based, aperture priority exposure measurement system which automatically interfaces through gold plated contact pins in the lens mount throat with the electronic lens shutters speeded from 4 seconds to 1/500. The manual film advance lever and shutter speed dial are easily reached when grasping the built in hand-hold. Each of the compact



medium format

lenses has a substantial milled distance ring to ensure accurate focus. A panoramic 35mm adapter kit, similar to that used in the 6MF, is also available for the 7,

producing an image size of 24x65mm and, like its smaller format sibling, this too has standard capacity for 120 or 220 type film. ■



For further details on the **Mamiya**
Medium Format Cameras call:

01782 717100