

# Professional Photographer

## TEST



Bronica SQ-A with Zenzanon PS Lenses



## LENS TEST

TEMPTING invitation: 'Test the improved Bronica 6×6cm lenses – we think they are as good as Hasselblad, maybe better'. That was the gist of a call from Introphoto Ltd, UK distributor of the Bronica system in its 6×4.5, 6×6 and 6×7cm guises.

We accepted, and soon the glass arrived: a 40mm f/4, a 50mm f/3.5, an 80mm f/2.8 and a 150mm f/4. Each bore the logo, 'Zenzanon-PS', distinguishing the new designs from the 'old', Zenzanon-S lenses.

(See Table on page 33 for specifications.)

Thanks to the good services of Keith Johnson-Pelling Ltd, we were able to compare the new Zenzanons with the Carl Zeiss T\* CF equivalents, which fit the Hasselblad 500-series and 2000-series cameras.

The German-made 40mm and 50mm Distagon, the 80mm Planar and the 150mm Sonnar are bulkier and heavier than the Japanese Zenzanons. Each T\* lens has a matt-black finish, but the PS barrels are finished to a moderate gloss. Turn a T\* focusing ring to the right for a close-up; leftwards, Bronica Zenzanon. Both ranges of optics have a clickstopped aperture ring, depth of field scale and preview, and a leaf shutter. The Zenzanons lack a shutter control ring; that is found on the camera body.

How about the cameras? Many will prefer the elegant simplicity of line of, say, the Hasselblad 500C/M. Its shutter action is gentler and qui-

# BRONICA TILTS AT HASSELBLAD

Terry Scott compares four, improved Zenzanon lenses for the Bronica SQ-A and SQ-Am – 40, 50, 80 and 150mm lengths – with Carl Zeiss T\* equivalents for Hasselblad cameras.

eter by just a little, given mirror lockup in it and the Bronica SQ-A. Lens interchange seems a little smoother and quicker. Within its mirror box are fewer visible items that might cause body flare.

But – the Bronica SQ-A has a decidedly brighter,

crisper focusing screen that is a joy to use and was decisively preferable. Among other 'plus' features on the SQ-A is a multi-exposure switch that is instantly set or cleared. Its film magazines have a built-in ISO dial, of some value if the camera is equipped with a metering viewfinder.

### Colour

After these first impressions, the cameras' film backs were loaded with Fujichrome 100 Professional D, and comparison photo-

graphs were made in the studio – with the aid of two Courtenay Solafash units, the new 4000S and 8000S. A grey card and other still life items were recorded, in order to evaluate colour rendition between the two lenses.

The films were processed by Croydon Colour Services, and to our great interest it would have been a matter of luck to decide which transparencies had been made on which camera – without the aid of the rebate markings' orientation and other small giveaway clues. (The 'Blad images are 'upside down' in relation to the direction of numbering; there is a large notch in the upper-left corner of a Bronica SQ-A image; the SQ-A frame measures 55×55mm, the 500C/M, 56×56mm.)

So, due credit to Bronica. There is a colour difference, but it is very subtle.

Onwards to black-and-white, and rolls of Ilford FP4 and outdoor locations.

Cranking meticulousness into high gear, we used two tripods, positioned close to one another, and a double-cable release. The tripods were set low, and the cameras' mirrors were locked-up prior to exposure. Focusing was done with care, and the tests were made at full aperture and f/8 on each of the eight lenses. Neither filters nor lens-hoods were fitted.

### Printing

Back in the darkroom, the rolls of FP4 were processed in the same tank, using Kodak D-76 at 1:1. The films were printed onto new Ilford Multigrade III glossy paper,



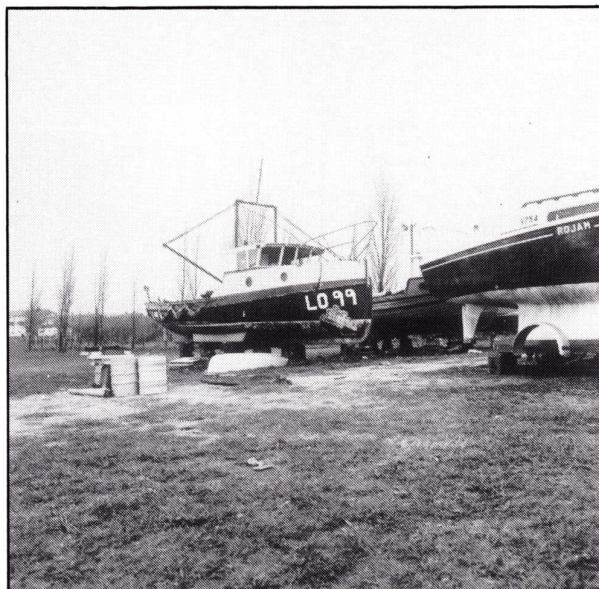


SPECIFICATIONS	Improved Zenzanon lenses:				'Old ZENZANON lenses:				CARL ZEISS T* CF lenses:			
	40mm	50mm	80mm	150mm	40mm	50mm	80mm	150mm	40mm	50mm	80mm	150mm
Aperture range	f/4-22	f/3.5-22	f/2.8-22	f/4-32	f/4-22	f/3.5-22	f/2.8-22	f/3.5-22	f/4-22	f/4-22	f/2.8-22	f/4-32
Angle of view	87°	76°	50.7°	29.5°	87°	76°	51°	30°	88°	75°	52°	28°
Minimum focus	0.4m	0.5m	0.8m	1.5m	0.4m	0.5m	0.8	1.5m	0.5m	0.5m	0.9m	1.4m
Lens elements	Eleven	Ten	Six	Six	Eleven	Ten	Six	Five	Eleven	Seven	Seven	Five
Shutter speeds	8-1/500	8-1/500	8-1/500	8-1/500	8-1/500	8-1/500	8-1/500	8-1/500	1-1/500	1-1/500	1-1/500	1-1/500
Filter size	95mm	77mm	67mm	67mm	95mm	67mm	67mm	67mm	93mm	60mm	60mm	60mm
Length	67.5mm	61mm	52mm	74mm	83mm	62mm	52mm	61mm	102mm	98mm	65mm	101mm
Diameter	98mm	78mm	82mm	83mm	102mm	82mm	82mm	82mm	NA	NA	NA	NA
Weight	650g	590g	490g	750g	660g	560g	470g	590g	915g	795g	510g	785g
PRICE + VAT	£652.17	£543.48	£336.52	£517.39	£594.35	515.56	£336.52	£462.61	£1718	£1038	£742	£1131

Carl Zeiss T\* CF lenses have an integral leaf shutter with a control ring on the lens barrel. They may be used on the Hasselblad 500 - srs - and on the Hasselblad 2000FCW, which has a focal plane shutter with top speed of 1/2000 sec. Zenzanon lenses have a leaf shutter, but timing (which is electronic) and control are built into the Bronica SQ-A and SQ-Am camera bodies.



Above, 40mm; below 80mm Zenzanons



Above, 50mm; below, 150mm Zenzanons



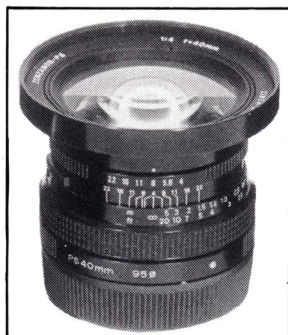


## LENS TEST

and the enlarger was a Durst M605 Color that had been checked for parallelism of negative stage and easel, and for lens alignment.

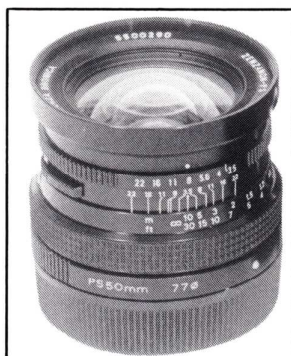
The 7.5X magnification prints were given the minimum exposure to achieve maximum black in the deepest shadows, developer was fresh . . . suffice to say that we took great care.

There is no doubt: the Bronica lenses have an edge on their Carl Zeiss competitors. Each set of lenses is optically superb, however, and the differences are not gross. Following are 'potted' assessments of the lenses involved in this review.



### 40mm

In this focal length, the two brands were comparable in all key characteristics, both at full aperture and f/8. Definition was very even from centre to edge (as in all eight lenses), detail resolution was high, and contrast was high without harshness.



### 50mm

The trend continued: the Bronica, for instance, turned out good results even at full aperture, with pleasing detail and good contrast. At f/8, overall contrast rose a little, improving detail clarity by a small amount.

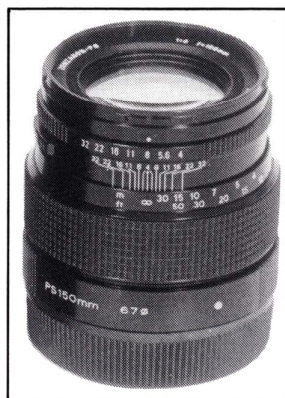


### 80mm

At full aperture, there was marginal superiority in the

Bronica lens – evidenced particularly in deeper tones. Contrast was slightly higher. Each lens had low flare.

Closing down to f/8 obtained enhanced microcontrast in the Planar, giving a more-solid image that matched full-aperture results from the Zenzanon – which, at f/8, showed a small gain in contrast.



### 150mm

At full aperture, the Zenzanon-PS 150mm was generally better than the Carl Zeiss T\* 150mm Sonnar. Detail was rendered more clearly, and there was a benefit in overall contrast.

At f/8, the Zenzanon gained little, but the Sonnar had managed to catch up – and indeed gave a better display of some fine detail.

### Conclusion

In short, the new Zenzanon-

PS lenses are a match for the Carl Zeiss T\* CF opposite numbers – and, often, a trifle better. This should not encourage a Hasselblad owner to tear his garments and sell his gear in a frantic trade-in binge, but it might justify anyone who cannot budget for a new 'Blad cheerfully opting for a Bronica SQ-A.

Bottom line only includes price. Other factors are dependability, handling (personal preference: I believe the lenses handle well in each case, but prefer Hasselblad camera ergonomics), viewfinding (tops for SQ-A), and so on.

All eight lenses tested are excellent, professional optics.

Distributed by

Bronica UK, Priors Way, Maidenhead, Berkshire. SL6 2HP

Fax 0628 771055 Telex 849313