



PEBBLE PLACE

REVIEWS - Medium Format - Mamiya 645AF 35mm F3.5

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MAMIYA 645AF 35MM F3.5

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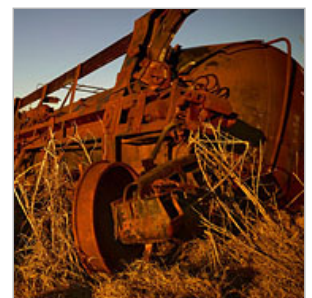
Updated June 4, 2016

OVERVIEW

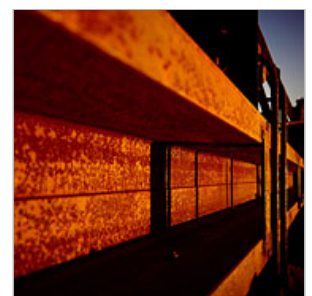
Normally I am not drawn to wide angle lenses with medium format, but the original Mamiya 80mm F2.8 AF and Mamiya 150mm F3.5 AF were both great performers. When upgrading from the original Mamiya 80mm F2.8 AF to the more recent "D" version, the MF/AF switch (ring) on the lens barrel was a great ergonomic improvement. Also, the 80mm "D" version has a metal lens barrel which was a nice improvement over the original polycarbonate (plastic) barrel of the original Mamiya 645AF 80mm. The Mamiya 645AF 35mm F3.5 AF's build quality is the same construction as the newer 80mm "D", so I became somewhat interested in trying the original Mamiya 645AF 35mm F3.5.



Mamiya 645AF 35mm F3.5
Phase One P65+ • F8 • 1/320 • ISO 50



Mamiya 645AF 35mm F3.5
Phase One P65+ • F5.6 • 1/160 • ISO 50



Mamiya 645AF 35mm F3.5
Phase One P65+ • F3.5 • 1/320 • ISO 50

BUILD QUALITY AND HANDLING

The 35mm F3.5 AF's build quality feels slightly nicer than the Mamiya / Phase One 80mm D - which is a pleasant surprise. The difference is the quasi dampened focus ring. It is not as nice as Leica R lens, but it is better than the typical Canon EF lens. Though, I have now owned a couple Mamiya 645AF 35mm's and the focus ring feel has varied. Other observations -

- As noted earlier, the auto / manual focus toggle ring on the lens barrel - much easier to use vs switch between AF/MF on the camera body.
- Solid construction and feel with an all metal barrel.
- Reversible petal shaped lens hood stows easily on the lens.

- Relatively lightweight at just 1 pound, so the lens balances nicely on the camera - does not feel nose heavy.

One drawback to the Mamiya 35mm is its F3.5 aperture which results in a slightly dimmer viewfinder compared to the F2.8 lenses such as the 45mm and 55mm. In terms of "seeing" focus in the viewfinder, the slightly dimmer view plus the wide angle field of view (objects and details are small) can make manual focusing challenging, especially at wider apertures where depth of field will not hide focus errors. Overall I have found the Mamiya 645AF 35mm to be one of the better auto-focusing lenses. Most likely depth of field is masking focus errors, but in all fairness to the lens, the auto focus has worked well on the Mamiya 645AF and Phase One 645AF cameras. Out of the 80mm D, 80mm LS, 150mm F3.5, 210mm F4 ULD and 300mm F4.5 APO - the 35mm AF was the easiest lens to auto focus.

OPTICAL PERFORMANCE

There is some barrel distortion, but that is easily corrected in Phase One's Capture One software because a 35mm AF lens profile is built into the lens correction drop down list. My copies of the 35mm F3.5 did not have any obvious signs of chromatic aberrations (CA) or color fringing. There probably is some, but nothing jumped out when viewing the raw files on a 30" monitor. And if there was, Capture One does a very good job of removing purple colored CA.

I have used the Mamiya 35mm F3.5 AF across a wide range of Mamiya 645AF cameras and Phase One backs, including the P25, P30+, P65+ and Mamiya ZD. I have a warm spot for this lens because its wide open performance at near focus distances has spacious, quasi 3D character. At F3.5 the corners are soft and there is noticeable light fall off. The center region is reasonably sharp. Technically its wide open performance is somewhat ho-hum, but it has a very nice character - a bit of the Leica glow with a mix of the Zeiss 3D look. To force bokeh the subject needs to be relatively close. The bokeh fairly smooth and does not have harsh, double image characteristics.

When the Mamiya 35mm F3.5 AF is stopped down to F5.6, the details really begin to sharpen up. At F8 and F11 the amount of detail captured by the Phase One P65+ is stunning. Corner sharpness depends heavily on the focus distance. If focused at infinity, the extreme corners on the P65+ are blurred and a bit smeared. But if focus is pulled forward somewhere in the 10 to 100 foot range, the corners can be sharp, even at F3.5. Shooting at infinity is not my style. I prefer having the focus point in the foreground (if possible), so the Mamiya 35mm F3.5 AF worked well for my style. The lens hood is very shallow, so the Mamiya 35mm F3.5 AF will veil or flare if shot into the sun.

I have also owned the earlier Mamiya M645 35mm F3.5 manual focus lens. Its build quality and manual focus feel were nice, but its optical performance was poor - wide open results bordered on useable. In my opinion, spend the couple hundred dollars more and get the newer auto focus version.

CONCLUSION

The Mamiya 645AF 35mm F3.5 has been updated to "D" status, but the optical formula is unchanged. Mamiya and Phase One are rather opaque as to what exactly the "D" changes are. The general consensus is improved optical coatings and the electronic pin layout for lens contacts. If it were my money, I would skip the "D" version and save a nice sum of money. The Mamiya 35mm F3.5 AF is a great budget minded lens (usually in the \$600-\$800 price range on Ebay). The Mamiya 645AF 35mm F3.5 lens is no replacement for a technical camera, but the price is orders of magnitude less too.



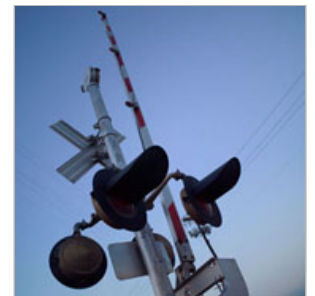
Mamiya 645AF 35mm F3.5
Phase One P65+ • F3.6 • 1/160 • ISO 100



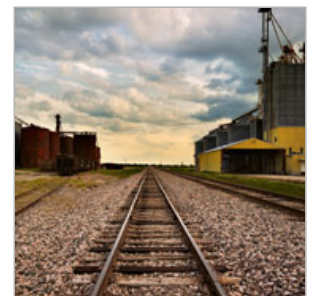
Mamiya 645AF 35mm F3.5
Mamiya ZD dSLR • F8 • 1/125 • ISO 50



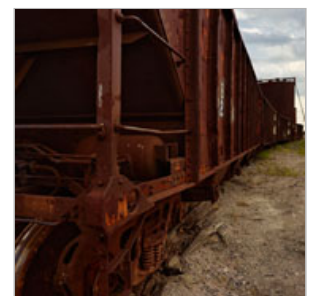
Mamiya 645AF 35mm F3.5
Mamiya ZD dSLR • F3.5 • 1/500 • ISO 50



Mamiya 645AF 35mm F3.5
Mamiya ZD dSLR • F3.5 • 1/80 • ISO 100



Mamiya 645AF 35mm F3.5
Phase One P65+ • F6.3 • 1/60 • ISO 50



Mamiya 645AF 35mm F3.5
Phase One P65+ • F5.6 • 1/80 • ISO 50