

Kodak Elite CHROME

Near-ISO-100 quality, and pushable

It's hard to believe

that one f-stop can really make the difference between getting a shot or not, but we can tell you from experience that it really does. When ISO 200 slide films first hit the marketplace, their quality was noticeably worse than

that of the ISO 100 films, so most photographers took their chances with 100 film in order to maintain quality. What they ended up with was a fine-grain image that was slightly blurred, or had inadequate depth of field. At PMA 98 (the big industry trade show last February) Kodak introduced Elite 200 CHROME film designed to help photographers solve this problem.

Much of Elite CHROME 200's technology is derived from the improvements in the Kodak Ektachrome E200 Professional film introduced in late 1997. These technological advances have given photographers an ISO 200 film with image qualities usually reserved for its ISO 100 counterparts. Taking a close look at the layering technology, we see that Kodak has incorporated T-grain particles in all three layers, and they have triple coated the cyan and magenta layers. These triple coats include fast, medium, and slow layers to give a smooth continuous



Left and below: New Elite CHROME 200 features enhanced colors while maintaining natural-looking skin tones. The ISO 200 speed gives you an extra stop of depth of field, or extra range for your flash unit, while the film's outstanding image structure maintains excellent image quality.

image. Natural skin tones and brighter colors result from a new solid-particle yellow filter located between the yellow and magenta recording layers. A new emulsion additive gives a compensation-free reciprocity range of 10 seconds to $\frac{1}{10,000}$, allowing the photographer to work

in a broad range of lighting

situations without having to compensate for shifts in color balance.

The idea behind this new film was to entice photographers who normally use slower films to migrate to a higher ISO without feeling that they're trading quality for speed. Since the first thing photographers scrutinize is the grain structure, we ran off a quick roll to check it out. We were surprised



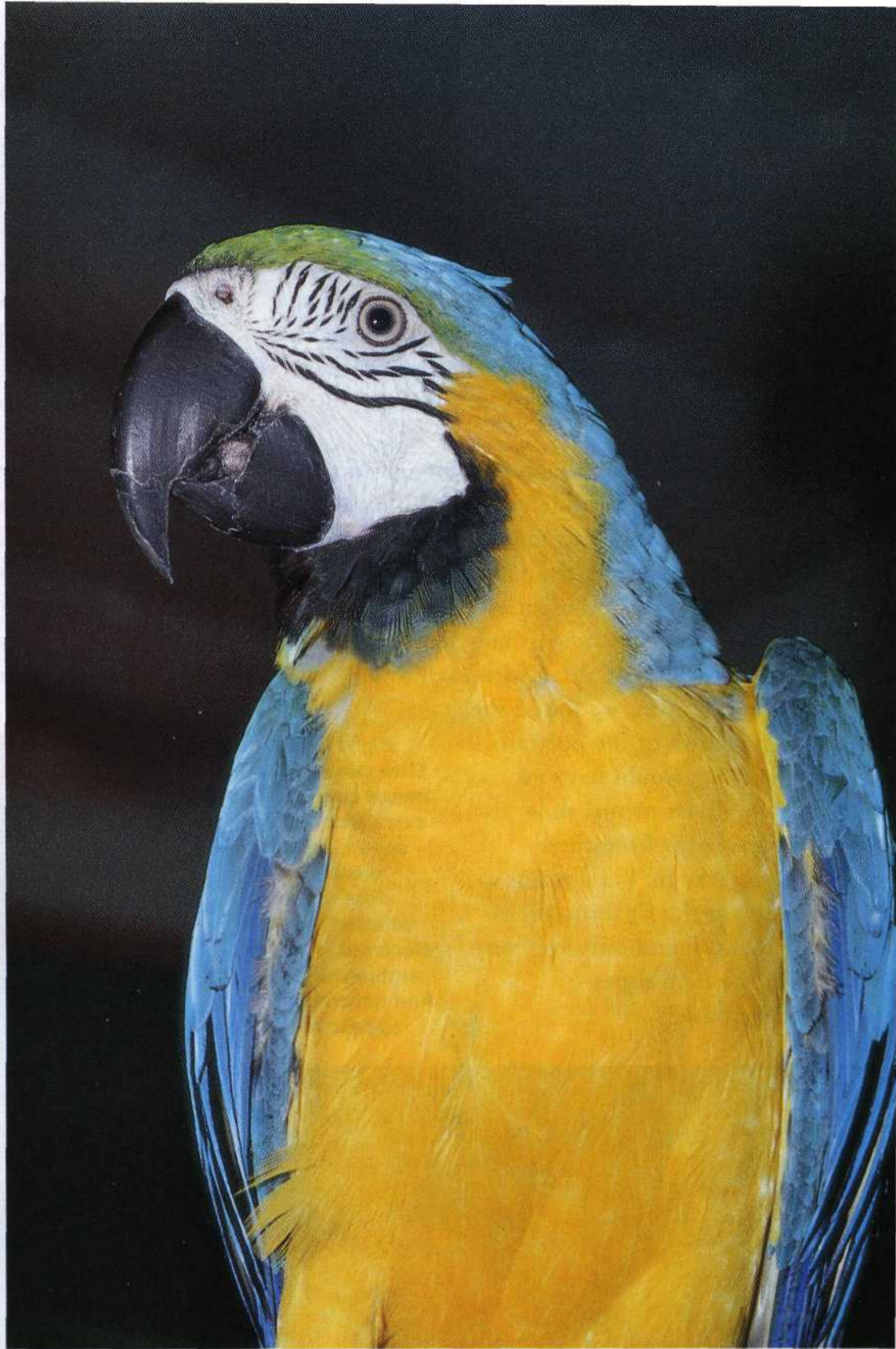


200

Text and photos by Jack and Sue Drafa

because the results were not what we had expected: The grain was really very fine! If that wasn't enough improvement, we instantly noticed that the color saturation was also very good, the film was not contrasty like other 200 films, and the exposure latitude was wide like that of a slower film.

So, we cleared our schedule for the next few days and set off to run Elite CHROME 200 through the paces. Our first stop was an exotic pet show. It sounded like a great idea for some unusual animal portraits, but when we arrived we found that the exhibit was located in a dark building offering absolutely no chance for available-light pictures. Calling on Dr. Edgerton for advice, we pulled out our trusty flash and attached a 105mm macro lens to the camera. We set the aperture to $f/22$ and set the autobracketing to $\pm\frac{2}{3}$ stop. Lizards, camels, ostriches, and parrots were scattered



Above: Elite CHROME 200 is a great film for electronic-flash photos.

Below: Natural colors and extreme detail have not been hallmarks of ISO 200 color-slide films—until Elite CHROME 200 came along.

throughout the building just waiting to pose for us. As the camera ran through the paces, we noted that the flash was cycling quickly from shot to shot. We didn't have to wait long between flash shots, which enabled us to capture the elusive gila smirk. This is another advantage to a faster film—since it requires less light, the flash can recycle faster so you can run through 36 exposures even more quickly.

We returned to the lab, processed the film and waited for the results to dry. The first images to be inspected were macro shots with out-of-focus backgrounds. This is where most high-speed films have problems—as the background becomes de-focused, the grain becomes much more apparent. With Elite CHROME 200, the grain looked like that of an ISO 100 film. We also found that our initial brackets showed that all three exposures were acceptable for use.

As we looked through some of the other images, we

found the color saturation to be among the best we have seen in an ISO 200 film. Normally ISO 200 films are quite contrasty. This film has a lower contrast range which makes it a great candidate for push-processing.

Now that we saw the potential for this new 200 film, we were off again. We decided to take a couple of casual environmental portraits of some friends' children, Ryan and Justin. As our usual luck with the weather held true, we were constantly changing between the sun and rain clouds. Mother Nature sure likes to keep making our film reports challenging.

We finally decided that enough was enough of rain, hail and sleet, and headed inside for a final photo series. A friend's daughter, Becky, was more than happy to cooperate by enthusiastically enjoying the indoor playground at the local hamburger establishment. Hopefully this test would show us how flesh tones, flash, and Elite CHROME 200 got along with each other.

Back at the lab again, we found the color tonal gradation of the portraits to be excellent. We would have no trouble getting direct prints, slide dupes or digital scans from these images. The tight grain pattern was a given. Looking at the final images of Becky at play, we found ourselves very pleased with the flesh tones illuminated by flash.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

Our final test had to be more controlled, so we decided to set up the standard color still life. We wanted rich colors and subjects that remained stationary. We could have used fresh fruit like everyone else, but after looking through the bright colors at the market, we locked onto peppers and jalapenos. Just looking at them said "hot." Even a couple of little old ladies stopped us at the checkout and asked us if we had any idea just how hot those peppers were. They just shrugged their heads as we tried to explain that we were only going to photograph them.

For this test, we use a brand new Nikon F5 with auto bracketed exposures at ISO 200, 400, and 800. Our test was done in early morning low light, in order to simulate conditions that would require the film to be pushed. The ISO 200 frame would be the control image and the one- and two-stop pushes would be the test. We used a Wing-Lynch Model 5 single-shot processor to control our results.

Right & below:
Elite CHROME 200's image quality and extra stop of film speed make it a great film for close-up work, whether you use electronic flash or ambient lighting. And natural colors appear natural.





Kodak has also analyzed film packaging and now offers some great improvements. If you carry a marking pen in your camera bag you can note ISO information, time, or place in the white block on the top of the film can or on the special note area on the side of the film cassette. When you turn the film in to the lab, the folks there should have no trouble reading the processing information right off the side of the cassette. Kodak has also gone to a translucent film canister so you can instantly see if the film leader is inside or outside of the cassette, showing whether the roll has been exposed or not. The clear containers will also

Left and below: Whether you use flash as the main light source or as a fill source, Elite CHROME 200 provides beautiful colors, natural skin tones and clean neutral tones. The film holds detail from highlight to shadow very well, as seen below.

make airport security checkpoints easier to tolerate.

Elite CHROME 200 will replace Elite II 200 and become a member of the Elite CHROME film family. It joins Elite CHROME 100 and Elite CHROME 400 and comes packaged in a special color-coded blue box. The Elite CHROME film family will become part of an even larger group of films called "Kodak Select." Each film family will be color coded for easy identification—

Kodachrome films will in red boxes, Royal Gold in black, and Elite in blue. The Select families will offer film options to photographers who demand films that adapt to a variety of shooting situations, printing applications, or computer digitizing.

Looking back at all the test results, we conclude that Elite CHROME 200 is a super all-purpose slide film. It can be used as a high-quality low-ISO film or pushed to higher speeds to obtain those shots that low light levels demand. The grain is fine enough to pass any loupe test and rival the ISO 100 films.

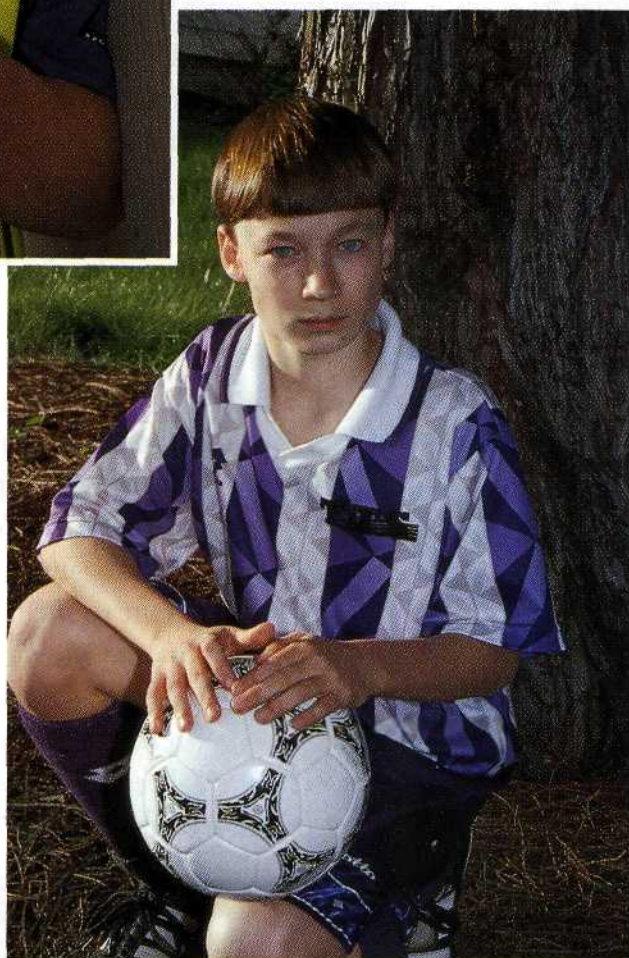
The only way you can lose

is if you don't give Elite CHROME 200 a try.

For more information, call Eastman Kodak Co. at 800/242-2424, or visit their website at www.kodak.com. ■

Each test would have brand-new chemistry so it would not be influenced by the previous test or chemistry.

When comparing the one-stop (to EI 400) push, we found a very slight increase in contrast and grain. Most impressive was that the tonal curve maintained qualities necessary for photo lab reproduction. The quality was excellent and in our opinion, we prefer the film pushed to EI 400 over the normal ISO 200 results.. The two-stop push was not much different than the one-stop push. In fact, we have never seen a film push two stops with so little change. Color saturation was still very high, and the grain structure was similar to some of the older ISO 200 films when they were rated at normal speed. Elite CHROME 200 passed the test—it definitely could be pushed and still perform.



Elite chrome 200 pushes very well. These images were exposed at ISO 200 (left), EI 400 (center) and EI 800 (right, with slight loss of shadow detail).

