

Fujichrome Provia 100F



A new color-slide film yardstick

by Jack and Sue Drafaahl



Sound the drum roll and clang the cymbals, for the long-awaited Fujichrome Provia 100F (RDP III) is finally here. Normally a new film release is not such a big deal, but in this case it really is. This new high-tech film boasts some pretty heavy-duty accomplishments. With an ISO of 100 and an RMS granularity value of 8, this film is said to surpass the quality of all slide films, including those at the ISO 25–50 levels. If this proves true, then we have a new yardstick by which to measure all other

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slide films. Besides the super-fine grain, this new emulsion has the ability to be pushed 1–2 stops in exposure. That's nothing new, except that Provia 100F can maintain consistent color balance and tonal rendition during the pushing process. Rather impressive, don't you think?

So, how is all this advancement possible? The answers lie in Fujifilm's capable photo research labs and two new Fujifilm innovations. Fujifilm uses a film technology called Super-fine Sigma-crystal to reduce the size of the crystals

control the blue-sensitive layer. The results are controlled color temperature tolerances to provide better color balance stability during the push process. Fujifilm's Advanced DIR Technology also helps minimize changes in color balance during the push process and optimizes the emulsion's response to the color spectrum. Thanks to all these improvements, Provia 100F captures the natural hues from vivid colors to delicate pastels.

We love fine-grain films, and when a manufacturer

Opposite page: The F in the new film's designation stands for fine grain. But besides its superfine grain (the finest of any color-slide film), Provia 100F offers beautiful and accurate color rendition, great sharpness, snappy contrast—it's a terrific slide film! With ISO 100 speed, it's suitable for a wide range of



shooting tasks, including outdoor, flash and close-up work. You definitely should give this hot new slide film a try.

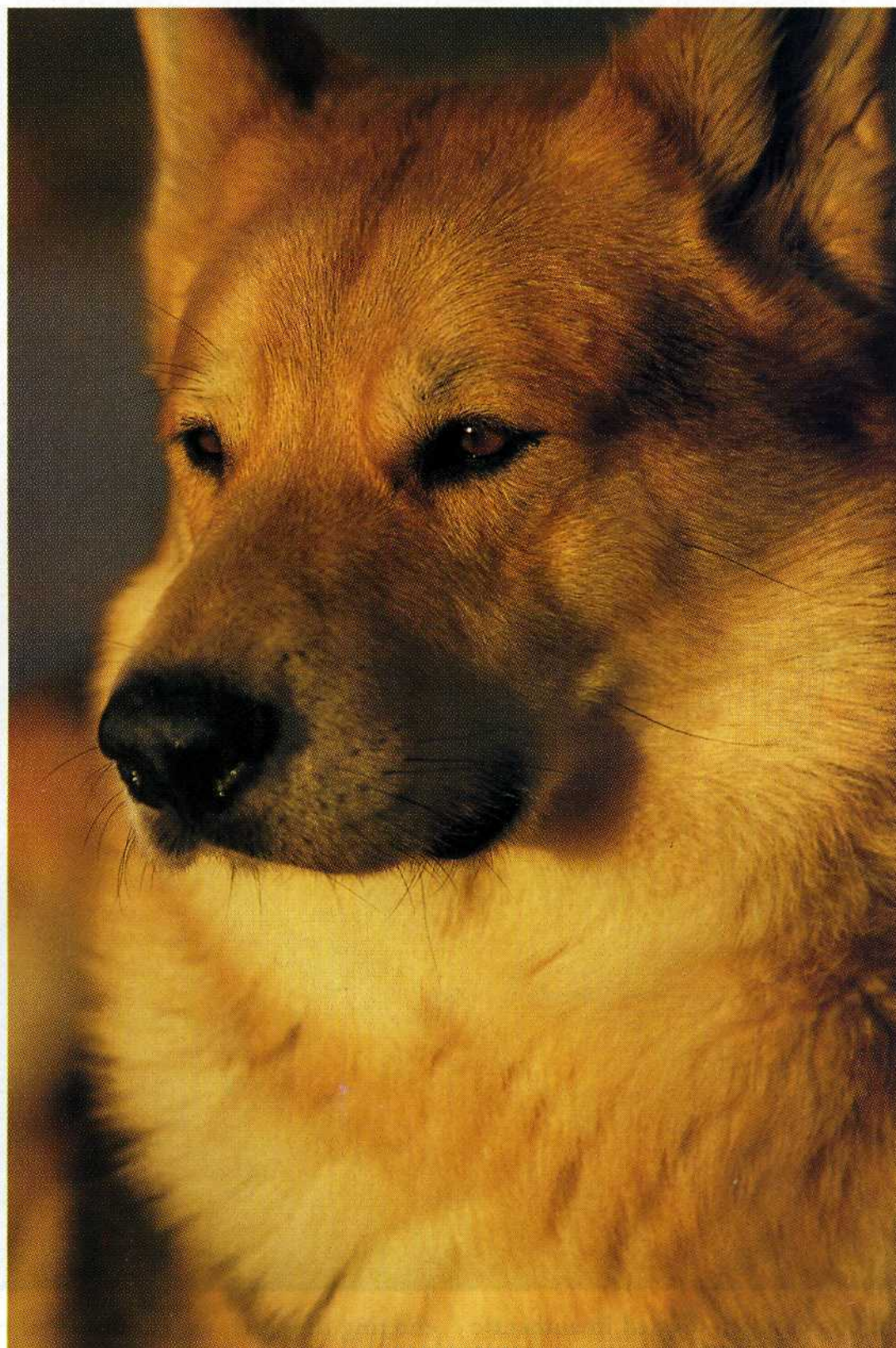


PHOTO © ROBERT HERKO

claims that they have a better one, we get impatient for its release. While waiting for the film to arrive, we looked through the data sheets supplied from Fuji. At first we couldn't believe our eyes because it said that Fujichrome Provia 100F had an RMS granularity value of 8. We checked again and found that it wasn't a misprint. Velvia has a 9 and Astia a 10, so we knew Provia 100F was going to be amazing. Eventually the first rolls arrived and went directly into our camera

Pro shooter Robert Herko used 35mm Provia 100F to photograph this captive wolf in late-afternoon available light, and the film captured exactly what he saw—what more can one ask?

without even passing GO. Our initial tests were very impressive, but

and create a more even pattern throughout the film layers. This results in greater light absorption to give RDP III a true ISO 100 and decreased grain size. When the film is developed, the Micro-grain Solubility Control Technology maintains the quality of the grain. This all translates into an extremely fine-grain film with the ability to resolve minute detail.

Fujifilm also decided to replace the yellow dye layer with one having sharper spectral characteristics to help

more extensive testing was warranted.

We have often joked about the difficulty of testing film during the cold, rainy downpours we have in the Pacific Northwest. Well, this time we would outsmart Mother Nature and go back to Fiji, the land of sun, sand and palm trees that gently sway in the breeze. After six days of torrential downpours of warm rain, we finally got a single day of sun. We were scheduled to visit a traditional Fijian village, and RDP III was on the guest list. We encountered

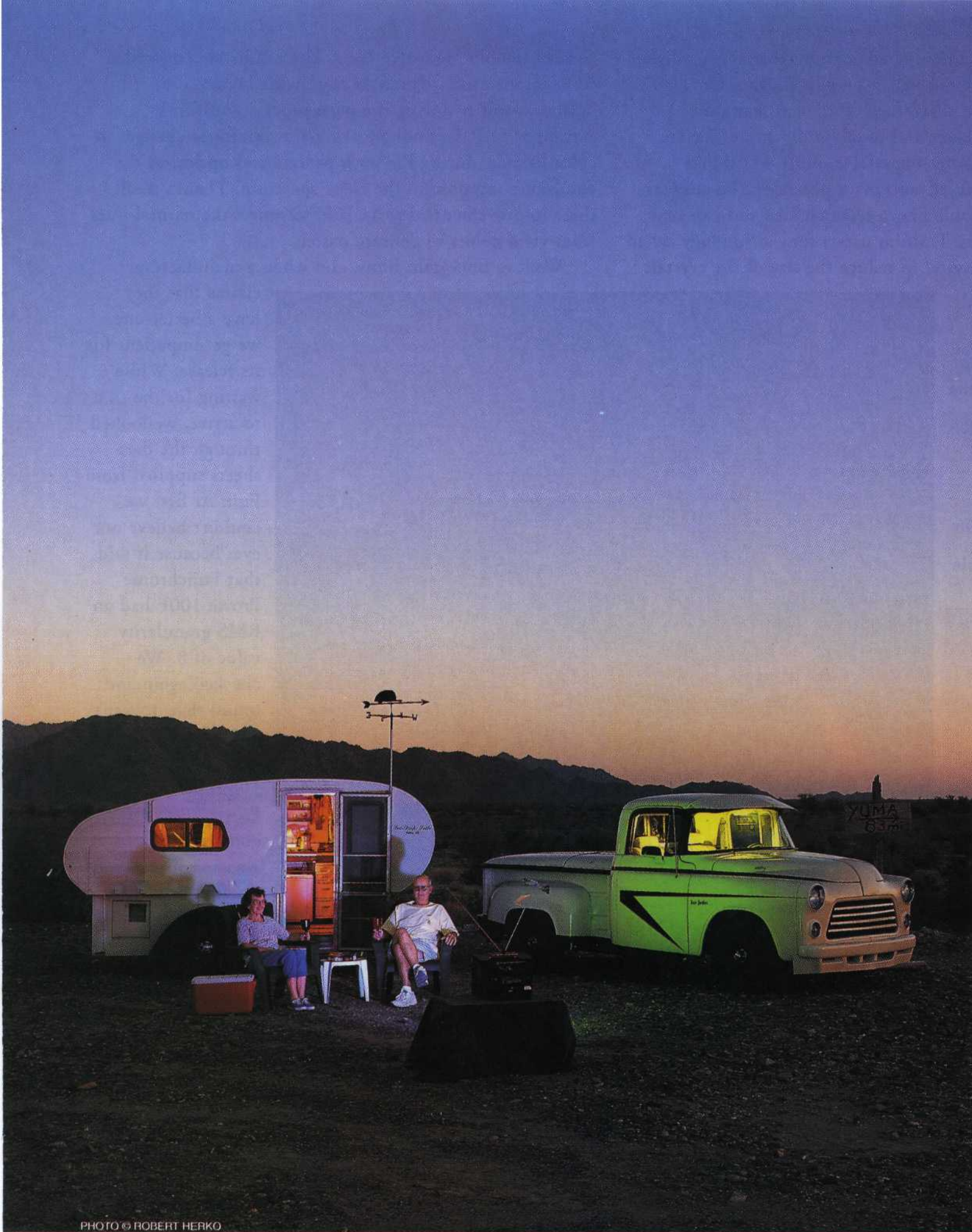


PHOTO © ROBERT HERKO

Here, Robert Herko used 120-format Provia 100F in a 6x7-format camera to shoot an image for the frontispiece for the RV Park section of the Southern Arizona Tourism Guide. The shot was made combining available light with Balcar Super A2400 flash units (with generators). Provia 100F's superfine grain, excellent color, snappy blacks and ISO 100 speed all helped make the tricky shot work.

shouted, "Beam me up Scotty." That's it! We remembered a bird store called Bird Gardens and a quick call gave us the green light.

Upon

contrasty lighting and smiling children dressed in authentic costumes raising their voices in song. Those moments made the whole trip a success. After exposing three rolls of RDP III, we were leaving on a jet plane.

We arrived home only to find that the past week had been bright sunshine and that huge storms were moving in. Mother Nature just doesn't seem to like us very much. Since the weather wasn't cooperating, we knew we had to move our photo sessions indoors, but couldn't decide where. We still needed more photos of subjects with bright colors and extreme detail, but what would it be? Just then, Bart, our African Gray parrot, started laughing at us and

entering the store, we found several bird models sitting on perches ready for our film tests. Most of the time we spent on head shots, but one bird kept turning his tail toward us. We didn't take offense, but rather used this opportunity to get some extreme macro shots of his feathers. A couple more rolls and we were ready to return to the lab. Bart was sure a happy bird when we returned with his new toys and seed.

For our next test we ventured out into the woods and captured some long exposures of streams and fall colors. This should tell us about the film's color balance in low light, and how reciprocity failure affected Provia 100F. We

(Continued on page 142)



used the bracket backs on our Nikon F5s and set them to ± 0.7 stop.

push had no change in color and a very slight increase in the D-Max level. The change in grain size was almost negligible.

Most of the exposures were in the 5–10 second range.

No film test would be complete without the official push-processing testing. We used a flower vase and color chart for the final test. We set the ISO to 200, the bracket back to ± 1 stop and then shot the entire roll of bracketed exposures. In the darkroom we split the roll into thirds and processed them at normal, push one stop and push two stops.

Well, the film is all processed, and it is show time. Grab the loupe and let the fun begin! Can we have a drum roll please? And the winner is...Fujichrome Provia 100F Professional (RDP III). This film is incredible! There is virtually *no* grain. We couldn't find a loupe strong enough to even see any grain. You would have to enlarge this film a long way before you even get a hint of grain. The image sharpness was very impressive and the color balance was very neutral. Wow!

The long exposures were outstanding, offering great tonal range, super fine grain, and extreme detail. We saw no change in exposure or color with these long exposures.

All three images in the ± 0.7 -stop bracket were usable, which told us that the film had good exposure latitude.

The pushing results were evaluated on our computer system using an Adobe Photoshop feature called a histogram. We were able to chart the D-Max differences and color shift in each image. We found that the one-stop

The two-stop push did have a slight red shift in the lowest part of the shadows, but that disappeared when we auto-corrected the image before making a print.

The grain structure was still very small for a two-stop push. We see no problem with pushing one stop whenever you need the speed, but still recommend minimal use of two-stop pushes.

Sorry Fujifilm, but we do see one major problem with this film. It does not seem to have any drawbacks

and seems to outperform all of your other slide films. It looks to us like Fujifilm is competing with itself. The best part for all us photographers is that Provia 100F is available in 35mm, 100-foot bulk rolls, 120, 220, and 4x5, 5x7, 8x10 and 11x14 sheet-film sizes. Grab yourself some Fujichrome Provia 100F Professional, your new yardstick of quality, because nothing else measures up!

For more information, contact Fujifilm at 800/800-FUJI; or on the Internet at www.fujifilm.com. ■



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Top left and right: Provia 100F is a fine all-around film, rendering a wide variety of subjects accurately and beautifully. Right: Robert Herko made this supertele shot on 120 Provia 100F in a 6x8-format camera for an article on the U.S. Border Patrol. The ISO 100 speed let him put the existing light to good use.