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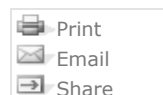
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Age of Hasselblad Lens

John Bennet, Oct 30, 2003; 04:24 p.m.

I've searched the archives and can't find this: Is there anyway to tell the age of a Hasselblad lens by the serial number?



Answers

Q.G. de Bakker, Oct 30, 2003; 06:11 p.m.

John,

The answer is: no.

Zeiss serial numbers are issued in blocks per batch/job lot. They are sequential, though there is nothing in them that is linked to dates (or even lens type).

You can however use the tabulated data in Richard Nordin's excellent book the "Hasselblad System Compendium".

There is another way of telling how old a Zeiss lens is, which works with all but the very latest ones. Zeiss stamped their lenses with a code revealing the date of manufacture in red ink on the wall of the rear lens baffle. It is present in all but the very earliest C lenses, and (or so it seems) the very latest lenses.

Before 1980 the code was a three or four digit number. The last two digits always represent the month of manufacture. The key is the month's number ("1" for January, "2" for February, etc.). The first, or first two represent the year of manufacture, which can be found by adding the "1957" to the code.

Early lenses sometimes are stamped more than once. The date of manufacture will most likely be the one represented by the earliest date found, while later dates may represent the times the lens had returned to the factory for repairs or adjustments.

The code was changed in 1980 to a two digit + one letter code. The two digits are a reversed representation of the year of manufacture. "28", for instance, is (19)82, etc. The letter is a code for the month of manufacture, "A" standing for January, "B" for February, etc.

In later lenses a trailing "A" or "B" was added. The significance of which is still unknown.

But if you don't have Richard Nordin's book at hand, and can't find the date code stamp, just tell us the serial number, and we'll look it up.

seb seb, Oct 31, 2003; 09:06 a.m.

The other solution is to go to the Zeiss web site and ask them :

<http://www.zeiss.de>

You will have the most reliable answer you can find (they even told me the exact day).

Audun Sjoeseth, Nov 03, 2003; 02:06 a.m.

From Q.G. De Bakker's response I found out that my nice CF150/4 with A19 stamped in was made in January 1991, and that my nice CF50/4 FLE with E19A was made in May 1991. Does anyone know what the A in E19A means?

Thank you Q.G. De Bakker!

Contribute an answer

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