

PHOTOLESSONS

MARCH 03.2008

BIG CAMERA small camera, which one...

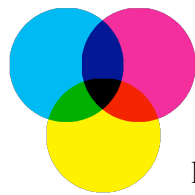
John Pringle



Often times, I am asked to offer my opinion as to which camera is best for this or that person. For most people, the purchase price is the governing weight which camera companies understand, directing them to manufacture multiple models of cameras designed to maximize their target market return.

In real terms, a camera is simply a capture device, a device by manufacture, that differs in its ability to operate within a design parameter set by the manufacturer, as to its real world use. Photographers or testers will then take that device and push or pull it past its (blueprint) operable design parameters, with practical and/or personal preference in mind, to calculate whether or not the design has issues or flaws that will kink in the field of command (operation). Manufacturers will then return to the drawing board to decide for or against general production of such a device, as another department watches the fiscal side of this R/D for signs of over expenditure.

Exposure (latitude) is a measurement of light metered in F-stops, whereas a single candle flame is at one end of the spectrum and sunlight the other. This exposure range is often as extensive as light is measurable, ranging from pure absence of light to full spectrum light. However,



and/or latitude of chemistry developed print paper is designed to display approximately four F-stops of light from pure Black to pure White, rendering all other light sources as out of gamut (for that particular display medium). As much as this may be common practice with printing paper, it is not uncommon for manufacturers to produce capture devices that can manage wider ranges of target (directed) light to facilitate a wide range of capture ability in the photo world.

Proprietary (RAW) software as well as common market software often has the ability to deal with this design parameter. It is the consummate professional that knows how to handle these parameters, maximizing his or her end point quality of the device (tool). As much as this may be so,

it is the manufacturers choice to broaden the capture devices ability to render an out of gamut (lighted) scene manageable.

Film based cameras designed for the common consumer may not be as robust as cameras that are designed for the professional market, they also may not possess the same operating user input parameters immediately available to the common consumer. Consumer biased digital cameras are often devices that have internal hardware and software that can be more in depth than cameras that are specifically targeted at professionals, since they are designed to do much of the thinking for the common consumer. Camera manufacturers will often add these same common consumer based abilities to the professional camera to capture the target market of the amateur whose wallet can be stretched.

Professional biased cameras are often able to be simplified with the best available capture medium (chip) material, the ability to adapt and adjust in minute (F-stop) increments, as well as withstand any or all of the elements it may face, by use of the photographer.