



September, 2012

R. I. P.

During the past month the world lost 2 photographic giants - Ritz Camera and the Eastman Kodak Company. Each enormous entity was founded by a single individual, George Eastman and Benjamin Ritz.

For longer than a generation Kodak owned every aspect of photography in the western world. This one company controlled film, processing, sales, service, cinematography, cameras and more. They controlled their industry on the research, development, manufacturing, wholesale and retail distribution of their products and services. They earned the nickname "Great Yellow Father" for their size, influence, and paternalistic approach to their employees and community. Kodak Park in Rochester was a city within a city with its own railroad, sports facility, hospital and other family services. For a while, Kodak owned or had applied for more patents than just about any other American manufacturer.

In the later years of the 20th century they faced increased competition along many flanks, from companies such as Agfa, Konica, Canon, Xerox and Fuji. Kodak also lost several expensive, drawn out lawsuits to the extent that word on the street was, "Need money? Sue Kodak."

Kodak's bankruptcy and struggles to reorganize have caused them to cease manufacturing and selling cameras as well as abandoning its waning film processing and printing operations. Last week, Kodak announced they were selling all parts of their business involving photographic products.

Benjamin Ritz started Ritz Camera in the Ritz Hotel in Atlantic City during 1918. In 1936, the Ritz family started their own processing lab in Washington, DC. During the decades which followed,

Eddie Ritz assumed more responsibility and expanded Ritz Camera to over 100 locations, becoming the largest photo retail chain in the U.S. As Ritz grew they even opened a store in Japan, where they forged new relationships with many Japanese manufacturers. This started quite a growth spurt, during which Ritz bought many of their competitors, including Kits Camera (140 locations), The Camera Shop, Inc (72 stores), PRO-EX, Inkley's (17 stores), Cameras West and Wolf Camera (once having over 800 locations) as well as some 60+ Fuji PhotoFilm stores. At its apex, Ritz had about 1200 locations. Ritz was also a major online presence, buying many online competitors as it had in physical locations.

Although never documented, inferences were made that Ritz allied themselves with Fuji, using Fuji film, chemicals, paper and lab equipment exclusively while enjoying financial "assistance" from Fuji in exchange. Wolf Camera, originating in Atlanta, had built its empire based on a similar relationship with Kodak, during which it was forced to absorb the 450 store Fox Photo chain (Kodak's largest film, paper and lab subsidiary).

Varying parts of the Ritz empire have been declaring bankruptcy since 2009 and in early September, 2012 began liquidation.

The bigger they are ...





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Nikon's Best Photo Hint

So far, here's what we think we know, rumors, or leaks about upcoming products ...

According to Nikon's D800/D800E Technical Guide, "Use a tripod to reduce blur when photographing static subjects. It should be as sturdy as possible; avoid extending the legs or center column farther than necessary. A large head helps keep the camera steady."*

Two issues ago, we presented an extensive report on tripods. It's so nice to see Nikon aim all photographers in that same direction that we offer the first ten readers the following special:



A four section, full height, **carbon fiber** tripod with ball head and case for only

\$169.99

There are only 10 at this very special price, so if you want one, don't dally.

Photokina

Photokina will fill 9 buildings in Cologne, Germany, Sept. 18-23, making it the world's largest photography show. 200,000 people are expected to attend. Photokina is a trade fair, not open to the public - it's all business. Manufacturers gauge demand, float ideas and concepts, and look for subcontractors, software developers, distribution channels, marketers, and most of all orders. Sometimes there are deep, dark secrets, red herrings, controlled media leaks, or full disclosure about imminent product releases.

*http://www.nikonusa.com/en_US/o/Y6wrkA9OU_z04IreazIXI_22UII/PDF/D800_TechnicalGuide_En.pdf 2

Nikon is rumored to have the D600, a full frame SLR as a step down model from the D800. They have already introduced 2 new lenses and 3 new Coolpix cameras, one of which uses the popular Android operating system. Nikon already announced a new mirrorless camera, the Nikon 1 J2.

Rumors abound that Pentax will have a second generation Q (tiny, mirrorless, interchangeable lens camera) and a new zoom lens for the system. Two new lenses are said to be added to the regular "K" series SLRs, 1 of which is expected to be an 18-270. Also rumored are 2 new versions of their flagship K•5 and a revamped 645D body.

Canon is thought to be showing their own lower priced version of the 5D Mark II full frame SLR. Canon recently announced 2 new Powershot models with long zoom lenses. It seems certain they will also be showing their new mirrorless EOS M system.

Sony will introduce the RX1 compact camera featuring a full frame sensor and fixed 35mm f/2.0 Zeiss Sonnar lens. Also expect the Alpha A99 full frame SLR body and 2 new NEX cameras. The NEX 6 will be a polycarbonate (plastic) stripped down NEX body. The NEX VG-900 camcorder will also be shown.

Panasonic is rumored to show a new G5 SLR body along with an updated GH3. Both mirrorless bodies use the micro 4/3 sensor and lens system. Also anticipate a slew of point and shoots from Panasonic.

Pundits claim Olympus will have 2 new PEN series cameras, a XZ-2 high speed lens compact camera and 3 or more new micro 4/3 lenses including a 25mm f/1.8 macro and a 60mm f/2.8 macro lens.

MadisonPhotoPlus the Photo Summit



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Most industry folk are expecting Tamron to show a new 70-200 f/2.8 zoom with vibration control and piezo autofocus allowing full video use as well as still photography. Rumors have also been circulating connecting Tamron with micro 4/3 system lenses.

Fujifilm just announced the X-E1 baby brother to the X-PRO1. While accepting all the lenses from the X-PRO1, it will be available with the new 18-55 zoom. Also in the wings is the XF1 ultra compact model shown below. Expect Fujifilm to update most or all of their point and shoot cameras to include GPS and WiFi.



If these products are announced, don't expect them to be available immediately. Some could be had in a few weeks, some a few months, some sent back to the drawing board, and some will never be seen again. Again, these are insiders' rumors.



Taking you into the light!



In case you missed it, we are attaching our fall 2012 schedule of classes. We have responded to requests that all evening classes be held on a constant week night by scheduling them all for Thursdays at 6:30. We have also added some new Saturday morning sessions.

Space is limited for these classes, so please reserve your seat now! ePHOTO Newsletter readers have a week's advance notice and enrolment privileges. We hope to see you at a class this fall.

Have a great September!

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