

Picture perfect: High tech comes to photography

By Kevin Brown
staff writer

The art of photography is going through some high-tech upheaval. Electronic photography, just being made available to consumers, could revolutionize photography by the year 2000, some industry watchers say.

With electronic photography, "It's a lot easier to store images," said Ken Easdon, industrial sales manager for Adray Appliance in Dearborn. That's because images are stored not on film but digitally on magnetic floppy discs.

"It's valuable for professionals in the medical field, for newspaper photographers," Easdon said. "It gives them abilities to send things across wires," he added.

Besides saving storage space, electronic photography could aid in surgery.

"If a doctor is actually in surgery and if somebody is greater versed in an area, he could put it (the electronic photo image) on a phone line and have another surgeon look at the situation."

For those reasons, Easdon said Adray is talking with Henry Ford Hospital management about the hospital adopting electronic photography.

This technology can also aid the newspaper business, in saving storage space, and in speed of photo selection and transmission.

FOR EXAMPLE, after taking several photographs in the field, a newspaper photographer could review photos on a portable video monitor then transmit by telephone the best shots for printing in the newspaper. USA Today and some news magazines have begun using the process.

But for consumers, electronic photography "is still a long way off," said Brad Jacobs, manager of Lysinger Photo Supply in Troy.

Jacobs and others in photography equipment sales say this is due partly to the price — in the thousands of dollars — for equipment used to shoot and print photos taken by electronic cameras.

And to date, the quality of elec-

tronic photography doesn't come close to the traditional kind.

"It's a good two years down the road," Jacobs said. "People want the quality of a 35mm," he said, adding that quality of electronic imaging doesn't match traditional, or silver imaging.

If photo quality is measured in the number of pixels — points of resolution which make up a photographic image — an electronic photo has only about 300 pixels. That's compared to 25 million in a Kodachrome image, said Rich Hammill, camera department supervisor at Adray.

"The picture image must improve," Hammill said. "They're scratching the surface right now. It reminds me of the original autofocus camera six years ago."

Still, several major photography companies are introducing still video cameras on the market, in the \$650-\$800 range. Both Cannon and Sony are banking on the idea that convenience and novelty will create a demand for still video cameras, which resemble one-eyed binoculars and show photos on home TV screens.

AND ROUGHLY six years since their introduction, auto-focus cameras are now being accepted by professionals and serious hobbyists.

While some serious hobbyists early on shunned auto-focus cameras, today, "that's all that's selling," Jacobs said.

Some are offered as cheap as \$100, while the auto-focus version of the Nikon F-4 retails for about \$2,300 and is winning acceptance among professionals.

Susan Small of Woodward Camera in Birmingham said one reason professionals now accept auto-focus cameras is because they're now able to take continuous shots of a moving subject, without having to manually re-focus.

"It makes for much more of a spontaneous camera," she said.

One of their big sellers are auto-focus bridge cameras, selling in the \$300-\$500 range.

"They're filling the gap between the 35mm camera and the point-and-shoot," she said. "They have auto-focus, built in zooms and a built in flash."

White water rafting has adventure, exotic sites

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AWE is a booking and promotion agency for several rafting companies. Holiday River Expeditions do 75 percent of their trips. You can raft from Alaska to Peru, but most of their trips are in the Colorado River plateau near the Colorado-Utah border, where the Colorado River drains toward Lake Powell.

"You have a lot more water around Michigan than we have," Rick said, "but you need elevation to make it white water. There is a rating system from one through six. One is a lake, six is a waterfall. Most of our trips are two and three, sometimes four, and they are available to both beginners and advanced rafters."

"A FIVE rating would be getting pretty technical, and they would expect you to be experienced and have helmets. We don't do fives."

A typical trip with AWE would be 15 to 25 people of various ages in three rafts, each with an experienced guide, for anywhere from two to 12 days. You would camp at different places along the river each night. It is wilderness camping, so they pack everything in and out for you. A single traveler would be matched with a tent mate.

McMahan said rates are roughly \$100 a day, plus your air fare and probably one night's lodging before the trip starts. Costs depend on how much equipment they provide.

Jim Greiner of Wildwater, describes the Chattooga River, which runs between Chattahoochee National Forest in Georgia and the Sumter National Forest in South Carolina, as the "only river in the eastern United States where you can really experience wilderness."

"On a two-day trip you pass only one human spot, and that's the bridge you drove over from Georgia. If you have been in Colorado, you are used to a larger volume of water. Our volume is smaller, but the drops are steeper. Most rafters don't paddle in the west, but everybody paddles on our four- and six-man rafts."

"The Chattooga is a technical river, with a lot of turns, twists. Difficult to navigate."

Wildwater does other rafting trips, especially on the Ocoee River. The Ocoee Rafting Center is 2.5 miles west of Ducktown, Tenn., on US 94 at the edge of Cherokee National Forest. The Chattooga Center is a mile north of Long Creek, S.C., on Academy Road. (That's half an hour south

of Clayton in Rabun County, Ga., an interesting mountain town. The Fox Fire books, which record mountain crafts, were written there.)

CHECK YOUR library for a back issue of River Runner Magazine, which ran an article entitled "Top 10, America's Favorite Rivers" in May 1987. The Ocoee and Chattooga are both listed.

You can also raft on the New River in West Virginia, but I don't have any names or addresses there. Maybe one of our readers will send us information about it, or an older rafting trip they recommend for beginners.

Some of the other adventure travel organizations are SOBEK, Angel's Camp, Calif. 95222. They do exotic trips all over the world, including rafting in Alaska and China.

Dvorak Kayak and Rafting Expeditions, 17921-B, U.S. Highway 285, Nathrop, Colo. 81238, will send you their brochures. Call them toll free at (800) 824-3785.

Also, Western River Guides Association has a free Outfitter Directory — 7800 E. Arapahoe Rd., Suite 114, Englewood, Colo. 80112. Call (303) 771-0283.

And Adventures Afloat (P.O. Box 542, Grangeville, Idaho 83530, telephone (208) 983-2414) just received permission from the U.S. Forest Service to do one-day rafting trips on the Snake River in Hells Canyon.

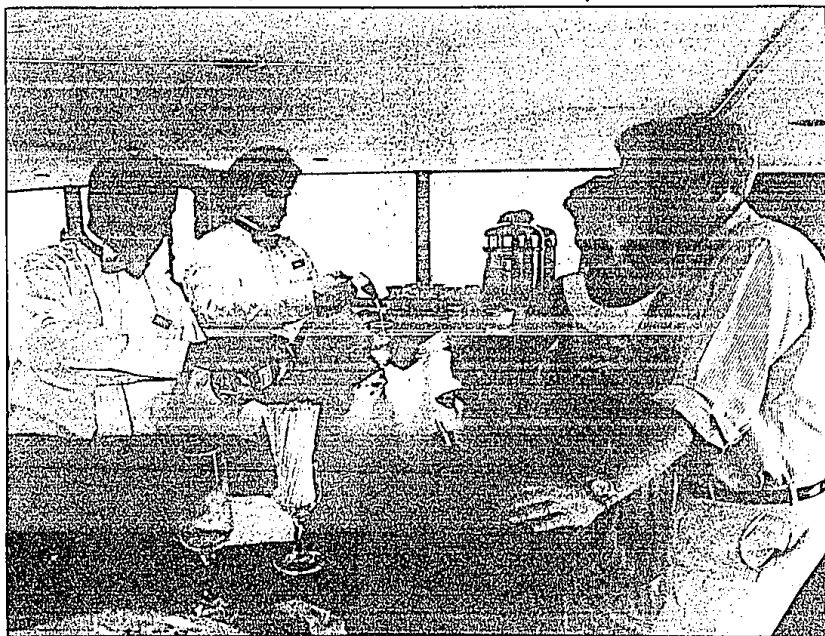
There are also two organizations that do adventure trips for women only. Woodswomen (25 West Diamond Lake Rd., Minneapolis, Minn. 55419, telephone (612) 822-8800) does outdoor trips for women of all ages. They had a White Water School this spring for \$140 in Wisconsin. They canoe and raft in the west, northwest, Minnesota and Costa Rica.

RAINBOW ADVENTURES (1308 Sherman Ave., Evanston, Ill. 60201, telephone (312) 864-4570) does adventure trips for women over 30. They have rafted in Utah and Wisconsin this summer and go down Utah's Green River Aug. 6-13 for \$750 plus air fare.

After you have tried the American rivers, you can start expanding, maybe to the Kicking Horse River in the Canadian Rockies or overseas in Mexico, Asia, the South Pacific, South America.

Let us know what its like when you have taken your first trip.

If you have a travel question, send it to Iris Sanderson Jones, Travel Editor, Observer Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.



photos by ZERRY ZOLYNSKY/staff photographer

Bartender Mark Jefferson handles the drink mixing chores for guests Paul and Cathy Huth aboard the yacht Infinity.

Yachting — Detroit style

By Janice Brunson
staff writer

Rippling waves lapping against the bow, gentle breezes, glistening teakwood and attention to detail — the elements of a memorable gala staged especially for you by Great Events aboard a yacht on the Detroit River.

"We took our parties out of the office and onto the water," said Pat Dupont of Castorini & Company, a Southfield-based film production company that for five consecutive years has staged its annual company party for 150 favored clients aboard a yacht.

"It's an evening just for them, a thank you from us," Dupont said, made all the more special with the unique touch of a floating ballroom.

Dupont normally reserves the Infinity, a 100-foot charter yacht specially outfitted for social events with two complete bars, a sky lounge, an open-air dance floor with room enough for a band and lavishly outfitted restrooms.

In recent years, party themes have featured the 1950s and Motown. On Aug. 11, guests will revel amid Hawaiian decor, complete with a buffet supper based on genuine lulu fare.

All in all, it's a classy way to entertain, according to Dupont. Best of all, she no longer spends hours of time in preparation.

"THE MOST UNIQUE thing about this is the incredible attention to detail (by the catering staff), right down to the kind of special sparkling water I want," Dupont said.

In eight years of business, Great Events, a full catering firm capable of service for any size group, has emerged with a reputation for perfect detail, according to catering manager Sheila Brabant, who said each event is tailored to fit.

"We've celebrated 21st birthdays, 50th wedding anniversaries, bar mitzvahs, many weddings, just about anything you can think of that can be celebrated," Brabant said.

Most customers are metropolitan businesses like Castorini.

Yachts may be rented for day or evening affairs, overnight or even longer from Great Events sister company, Great Water Yachts of St. Clair Shores. In addition to the Infinity, the firm also owns and operates the 110-foot Brownies Three. By summer 1990, the 162-foot Brownies Four is expected to be ready for use, Brabant said.

The firm also operates seven additional yachts, less imposing but equally as lavish as Infinity or Brownies. The smaller boats are privately owned, leased to Great Water for rent as floating party halls.

Yacht rentals range from \$200 to \$1,400 an hour. Catering charges are separate. All trips originate at the Jefferson Beach Marina in St. Clair Shores, the largest privately owned marina in the country, according to Brabant.

"ARE YOU crazy?" was the thought that crossed the mind of Joan de Spelder of Bloomfield Township when her daughter Renee said she wanted to wed aboard the Infinity, complete with three



Their "sailing adventure" at an end, guests receive farewell from the yacht's crew members.

attendants, dinner for 150 and dancing to a six-piece band.

"The groom's mother was apologetic at the idea," said the senior de Spelder. "But as things evolved, the idea started sounding better and better."

"For one thing, it limited the number of guests, kept things in proportion."

And, because neither bride nor groom are church goers, it also solved the problem of where to wed, according to de Spelder.

The end result: "Oh God, it was nice. Elegant. Fantastic. Think of Jackie and Ari and then scale it down a bit."

The wedding was hosted in the main salon on the middle deck. Afterwards, guests moved to the top deck for a champagne toast

while busy caterers prepared the salon for hors d'oeuvres, a lavish supper and cutting of the traditional wedding cake.

"The food service was out of this world," de Spelder said, accomplished with "virtually no commotion." A video of the wedding carefully records the sumptuous meal.

Following the ceremony, the yacht set sail on the Detroit River, wished well by strangers ashore who waved greetings to the festive wedding party.

Total cost? Approximately \$12,000 and well worth it, according to the mother of the bride.

For more information or costs on catering an affair aboard a yacht, call 573-8530.



Infinity crew member John Hacker shares the portside view of Lake St. Clair with guest Bob Driscoll of Northville.