



Take your camera into dark

There's a time in your photography when it's OK to be in the dark. When is this time? Between sundown and sunrise!

Most photographers concentrate their shooting during daylight hours and miss the excitement and challenge of taking photos at night. Night photography will produce pictures quite unlike those taken during daytime, even of the same subject.

Furthermore, the variety of subjects and how they can be treated by night photography will astonish you.

TO GET GOOD quality night pictures, you must have a tripod and cable release.

Long exposures are almost always required, and the only way to get them is to place your camera on a tripod. Make sure your tripod is sturdy and always a little heavier-duty than what

you think you'll need.

Most exposure meters will not work at night. The long exposures needed are beyond the capability of the meter. Besides, built-in camera meters are designed to measure reflected light and not the light source that dominates many nighttime subjects.

So how do you expose? Experience, judgment and by using the following as a guide:

● Floodlit buildings and monuments — two seconds at f/4.

● Brightly lit streets — 1/30 second at f/2.8.

● Spotlit acts — 1/60 second at f/2.8.

● Fireworks — at f/8, leave the shutter open on "bulb" for several bursts.

These recommendations are for 64 ASA film. To convert these exposures to different speed films, use the simple mathematical relationship between ASA ratings. For example, a film that is twice as fast will require exactly half the exposure.

BESIDES THE popular street scenes and floodlit buildings, here are some different ideas for your nighttime photography.

Position yourself near a busy street and set your camera on "bulb." Light patterns from passing automobiles will produce striking results.

In a dark room, have a friend (or yourself) face the camera and make patterns with a flashlight. Again, leave the camera on "bulb" for as long as you want. You'll capture many fascinating designs.

You can even shoot moonscapes for that special mood. Here you will need a

long exposure of about four minutes to give you a dramatic result.

For a special effect, don't wait until it's totally dark. There's a 15-minute period before total darkness when the sky becomes a beautiful midnight blue. When used as a backdrop behind an interesting subject, the dusk sky will give you a picture full of impact.

ONE FURTHER idea: Make your own nighttime photos during the day. By drastically underexposing (up to six f/stops), you'll give a moody, dreamlike quality to your pictures.

Nighttime photography is fun, exciting and rewarding. So get out into the dark — and you'll begin to see the light.

© 1981 by Monte Nagler. The writer will teach a photography course at the Farmington Community Center beginning March 3. Register by calling the center at 477-8404.

Thursday, February 12, 1981

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