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Carl Zeiss Camera Lens Division



In the future,
the **CLN** will also
be available as a
BLOG
on our homepage!
More on this on
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Camera Lens News



We make it visible.

A newsletter for anyone who enjoys using, writing about, buying and selling Carl Zeiss camera lenses.

The Great Outdoors

As a chemist and natural scientist, Italian Riccardo Polini is particularly fond of flora and fauna. He always takes along two ZEISS lenses on his excursions into the great outdoors: a Makro-Planar T* 2/100 ZF.2 and the Distagon T* 2,8/ 21 ZF.2. The nature photographer was raised in Rome where he still lives. Enjoy reading his report.

Some time ago, I replaced my 105 mm f/1.8 lens with a Makro-Planar T* 2/100 ZF.2. I was looking for a high-speed, medium format tele lens for portraits that delivers outstanding quality at full aperture.

On top of that, the Makro-Planar T* 2/100 ZF.2 seemed ideal for close-ups in nature in addition to the portraits. I was completely impressed by the quality of the images which are really crisp with amazing Bokeh.

Focus on the details

I began taking close-ups at full aperture using the Makro-Planar T* 2/100 ZF.2 to satisfy my curiosity; the results were simply remarkable. I achieved a very beautiful blurring effect around the subject (see photo of wild orchid) and the subject itself was perfectly isolated from the background.

Taking pictures at full aperture is not very typical of macro photography because you usually only get sufficient depth of focus with a closed aperture. In fact, the depth of focus with a reproduction ratio of 1:2 and an f-stop of 16 is also only a half centimeter and this value is virtually

independent of the focal length (see Infobox 1). When I took close-ups with my Makro-Planar T* 2/100 ZF.2, I was that much more astounded by the clarity of the image in the viewfinder and by the unbelievable contrasts that reflect the quality of the lens.



Wild Orchid (*Orchis purpurea*); Makro-Planar T* 2/100, f2,8, 1/2000s, 200 ISO (D300)

Nature photography is nothing without a good tripod

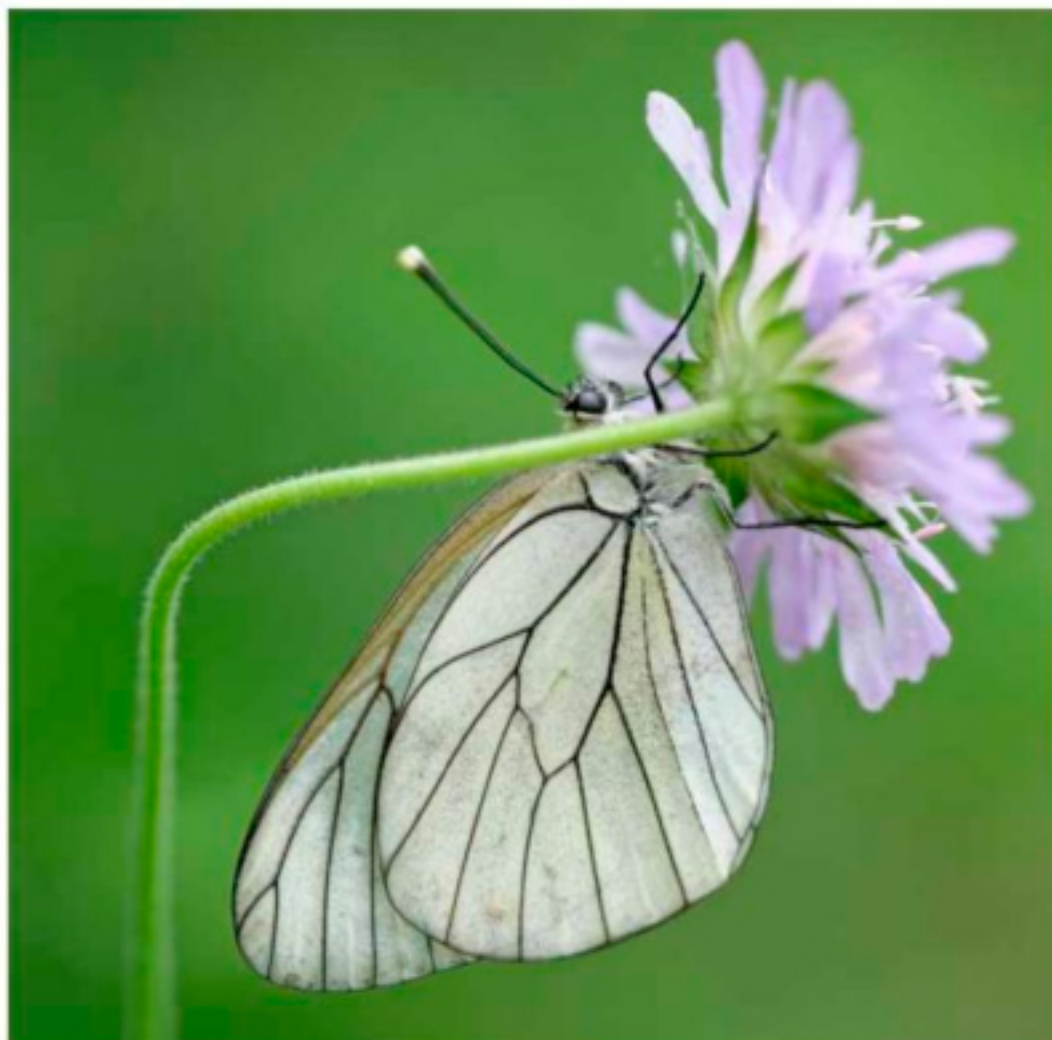
A good tripod is the basis when I take pictures with my Makro-Planar T* 2/100 ZF.2, even in sunlight. The outstanding helicoid focusing on the Makro-Planar T* 2/100 ZF.2 provides very good control. I have also had good experiences with the live view setting; much better than with my AF lenses. The live view mode means it is time for manual focusing.

Fixed on the tripod and zoomed in as far as possible on the live image, the camera and the Makro-Planar T*

2/100 ZF.2 enable optimal focusing – ideal for landscape photography. It is the most razor-sharp, lightweight tele lens in my collection and delivers amazing resolution for long-range shots. Instead of using my (much heavier) tele zoom, I mount the Makro-Planar T* 2/100 ZF.2 on my APS-C or full frame camera, depending on the perspective. Believe it or not, I bought a macro lens which quickly became one of my most frequently used tools for nature photography (for further technical details see Infobox 2).

Pushing the boundaries with the Distagon T* 2,8/21.

My other companion in the great outdoors is the Distagon T* 2,8/28. It is a lens for cityscapes, street photography and landscapes. I have to admit that I was fully intent on only buying a full format digital camera if there was a high-quality super wide-angle lens for it. I can now say that the Distagon T* 2,8/21 is one of the best super wide-angle lenses for full format 35 mm cameras on the market. The pictures exhibit wonderful clarity and very low distortion throughout the focusing range for this focal length. Unlike most other Distagon lenses, the ZEISS Distagon T* 2,8/21 is internally focused and does not change its length when you change the range setting from infinity to the close-up range of 22 cm where you achieve its maximum reproduction ratio of 1:5. This provides great flexibility when tackling very dynamic perspectives, even if you cannot get as close as with the Distagon T* 2,8/25 (17 cm with a reproduction ratio of 1:2.3).



Black-veined White (Aporia crataegi); Makro-Planar T 2/100, f/4, 1/250s, 800 ISO (D700)*

Infobox 1

For detailed technical information about depth of field, please also read our article "Depth of Field and Bokeh" in CLN35 from Dr. Nasse (page 16–18).

<http://www.zeiss.com/C12567A8003B0478/ContentsWWIntern/3BA838BC82180811C12576F6004F4511>

I took the pictures for the Camera Lens Newsletter in the regional parks near Rome. I often visit these places. Nonetheless, thanks to my ZEISS lenses, I am able to see things with new eyes and I am able to discover fascinating new details every time. Like Marcel Proust said: The only real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.

Infobox 2

To achieve a reproduction ratio better than 1:2 with the ZEISS Makro-Planar T* 2/100 ZF.2, I use either the Nikon PN-11 extension ring or the 500D close-up lens.

The PN-11 is an extension ring with AI diaphragm coupling that provides an extension of 52.5 mm and was originally developed for the 105 mm f/4 AI to achieve 1:1 magnification. Coupled with the PN-11 extension ring, the Makro-Planar T* 2/100 ZF.2 can achieve life-sized (1:1) magnification. At 1:1 the close focusing distance is 37.5 cm and the working distance is 14.5 cm. What makes the PN-11 so special and unique is the tripod collar which makes it very easy to

change the format from vertical to horizontal.

The 500D is a very good close-up lens designed as an achromat for lenses. The 500D close-up lens is available with a diameter of 77 mm and can be mounted to the Makro-Planar T* 2/100 ZF.2 with a 67-77 mm step-up ring. Combined with this close-up lens, the ZEISS Makro-Planar T* 2/100 ZF.2 allows me to achieve a reproduction ratio of 1:1.3 (=0.77x magnification, i.e. a certain reduction) with a close-up range of 35.5 cm and a resulting working distance (distance of the filter thread of the lens to the subject) of 15 cm.



Distagon T 2,8/21 ZF.2, f/11, 1,3s, D700, 200 ISO (D700)*