



Olympus Gazette

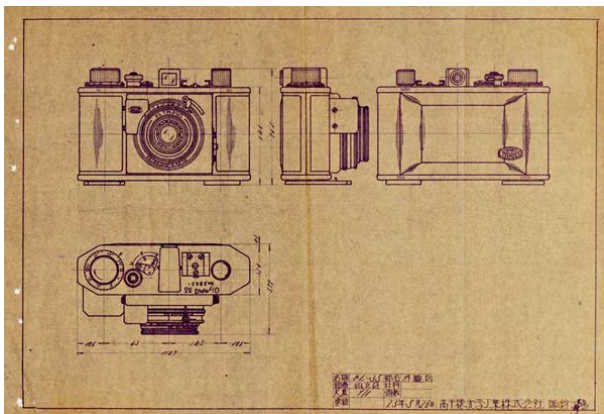
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Photography comes to Olympus



Photographic history at Olympus begins with the development of camera lenses. In 1936 the Zuiko lens is born and the company introduces the Semi-Olympus I, its first camera. The medium format cameras that followed laid the foundation for Olympus' role as a popular manufacturer. Production, however, was delayed in 1940 with the advent of WWII. It was therefore not until 1948 that the first 35mm camera saw the light.

In the blink of an eye



First named "ickpocket" after its ability to take pictures as quickly as pickpockets steal valuables, the Olympus 35 I was introduced to the Japanese market as the first 35mm camera. At that time, the segment was still in its formative stages. Olympus had to continue selling and producing both medium format and twin-lens cameras. However, the 35mm segment would eventually dominate the market.

The evolution continues

After changing its format from the original 24x32mm to the present 24x36mm size in order to accommodate American conventions, the 35mm continued to evolve. Launched in 1955, the Olympus 35 S-3.5, for example, was a high-end 35mm camera packed with innovative ideas. It was the first Japanese lens/shutter camera with a film advance lever. This groundbreaking series reached its culmination with the Olympus 35V.

Rise of the wide-angle

Olympus introduced another camera in 1955: the Olympus Wide. Designed specifically for wide-angle photography, it was an Olympus 35V camera fitted with a wide-angle lens. It soon became hugely popular because it provided an affordable and easy way to take superb, wide-angle photographs without needing to exchange lenses.

The Olympus Wide helped pioneer the subsequent wide-angle camera boom. This saw both the Olympus Wide E and the Olympus Super Wide launched in 1957. The former was, among other things, the first Japanese camera with an uncoupled exposure meter and featured a lever-type film advance mechanism. The latter, a high-end Olympus Wide model, was the first camera equipped



with the “free light value” system. This allowed the photographer to set the shutter speed and aperture combination simply by reading the light value in a small window between the shutter and aperture rings.

The last revolutionary 35mm model in the years leading to The Sixties came in 1958 with the introduction of the Olympus Ace. It was Japan’s first 35mm lens/shutter camera that could be used with exchangeable lenses.

