

Backgrounder

New Minolta Compact Digital Camera: The DiMAGE S304

Targeted for release in August 2001, the new Minolta DiMAGE S304 will meet amateur photographers' needs for a digital camera that provides high-quality image processing, a dynamic zooming range, advanced autofocus and autoexposure performance and fast, easy operation.

Main Features:

High Resolution CCD

The new DiMAGE S304 is equipped with a high-quality 1/1.8 inch-type CCD with a total of 3.34 million pixels for high-resolution images.

High Performance all-glass 4x zoom Minolta GT LENS

The Minolta DiMAGE S304 features a new, high performance lens class for digital cameras: Minolta GT LENS. Using "G LENS Technology" – the same technology used in Minolta's Maxxum SLR lenses – this zoom lens provides high resolution quality images with minimum chromatic aberration and curvilinear distortion.

The Minolta GT LENS on the camera achieves high performance with an all-glass apochromatic lens featuring both an anomalous dispersion (AD) element and two double-sided aspheric elements. This element combination – rarely available in compact digital cameras – minimizes chromatic aberration and reduces curvilinear distortion.

High 4x Optical Zoom Ratio

The new DiMAGE S304 has a high power 4x optical zoom lens – a range equivalent to a 35mm-140mm zoom lens on a 35mm camera – that has the flexibility to capture pictures ranging from wide-angle landscapes to intimate portraits.

The One-Touch 2x digital zoom gives the Minolta DiMAGE S304 a zoom ratio up to 8x, equivalent to a 280mm lens on a 35mm camera. The macro setting on the camera produces sharp close-up images of the subject as near as 4 inches from the lens.

CxProcess™: Minolta's Image Processing Technology

The DiMAGE S304 features Minolta's proprietary CxProcess, a new image processing technology that provides clear and natural images. In image processing, too much emphasis on natural color produces flat color pictures. Overemphasizing the color range creates an unnatural color scheme. CxProcess balances both extremes by controlling sharpness, color reproduction, tonal gradation and noise to produce pleasing photographs.

12-bit A/D Conversion

The digital camera has a 12-bit A/D conversion that can provide a fine tonal gradation with deep shadows, brilliant highlights and millions of colors, up to 4,096 levels in each RGB channel.

Minolta's 12-bit A/D conversion provides exquisite details in portraiture: smooth complexion, rich shadows and luminous highlights, as opposed to the standard 10-bit A/D conversion with its limited 1,024 levels per RGB channel.

Digital Effects Control

A photographer can easily control image quality before the image file is saved to the CompactFlash card with the camera's Digital Effects Control. This feature controls exposure, contrast and color saturation automatically as the subject is being viewed on the Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) monitor before the picture is taken.

High Performance Autofocus and Autoexposure

Using a wide focus area, the cross-hair main autofocus control accurately and quickly determines subject distance, regardless of the horizontal or vertical subject contrast. With Minolta's Focus Area Selection, photographers can move the focusing point to single out a specific subject from a number of objects at varying distances.

Users have the option of full-time autofocus, which continually adjusts the focus to keep the subject on the monitor sharp and reduce autofocusing time.

The multi-segment metering technology in the camera uses both light values and color information to accurately calculate the exposure. The DiMAGE S304 uses 256 segments for natural and well-exposed images. Spot-metering is also available for precise exposure control.

Digital Subject Program Selection

Digital subject program selections, such as macro mode, portrait mode, night portrait mode, landscape mode and text mode, make creative picture-taking easy.

High-speed LSI for digital imaging and signal processing

The DiMAGE S304 performs quickly from the moment it is turned on. Minolta's new high-speed Large Scale Integration (LSI) chip is responsible for automatic camera performance from startup to autofocusing, recording and viewing. The DiMAGE S304 shares the same high-speed LSI chip found in the new 5.24 million-pixel DiMAGE 7.

Easy-to-Use Control Layout

The camera's controls are positioned and designed for ease of use. Frequently used functions are accessed by the push of a button, while functions controlling advanced imaging or camera operation are set using the four-way controller and simple menus displayed on the easy to read LCD monitor.

Sophisticated Design

The DiMAGE S304's compact design features a lightweight magnesium alloy body, making it the perfect choice for people on the go.

Diverse Functions

To give photographers the control they want, the DiMAGE S304 offers a variety of settings and functions. They include:

- A selection of exposure modes, including programmed autoexposure (AE), aperture priority and manual mode. Bulb exposure is also available.
- High Performance built-in Flash

- Camera sensitivity controls for settings such as auto, 100, 200, 400 and 800 ISO equivalents
- Exposure Compensation and bracketing
- Automatic, preset (daylight, tungsten, cloudy and fluorescent) and custom white balance controls
- Manual focus
- Movie Recording with audio
- Voice memo
- Built-in self-timer for self-portraits
- Remote control (optional)

DiMAGE Image Viewer Utility Software

The DiMAGE Image Viewer Utility Software allows for corrections and manipulations using built-in functions. Based on the user-friendly graphic interface of Minolta's film scanner driver software, photographers can change tone curve/histogram, brightness/contrast/color pallet, hue/saturation/lightness, and sharpness. The Color Correction Job function saves correction settings so they may be applied to different images. In addition, the Variation function allows photographers to choose the best image from a series of automatically bracketed corrections. The unique sharpness correction method is easy and effective. The color matching is compatible with most color spaces for accurate color reproduction with the ICC profiles.

PRINT Matching Technology

The DiMAGE S304 digital camera is supported by Epson's latest PRINT Image Matching technology which ensures that Minolta's digital cameras and Epson's printers work together perfectly to produce photographs that print truer-to-life than ever before.

Specifications are subject to change without notice.

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