

N1 Incompatibility with Manual Zeiss™ Lenses

You will undoubtedly receive questions from your dealers regarding the fact that the new N1 is not compatible with our existing line of Zeiss™ lenses. The following information will be helpful to you in explaining our reasoning for designing a new Auto Focus (AF) lens mount.

In order to make the AF lenses for the N1 focus as rapidly as possible, the ultrasonic motors were incorporated into the lens rather than the camera body. As motors in the body are separate components from the focusing elements in the lenses, they would not provide optimal speed or responsiveness. As a result of designing the motors inside the lenses, the diameter of the lenses increased, necessitating a new lens mount. Additionally, the electronic contacts to send power to the lens motors are large and needed a larger mount to accommodate them.

Larger mounts also give us the opportunity to design faster lenses. By utilizing the larger mounts, we can design AF lenses with larger glass elements in order to produce lenses that are f1.2 and faster. Our existing mount is too small to accommodate both the lens motors *and* the large glass elements required for a very fast lens.

Although Nikon retained its existing F-mount in its AF line, the manufacturer made a trade-off in doing so. By preserving that mount style, Nikon limits the speed of the AF lenses they can produce. The F-mount is too small to accommodate a larger glass element to produce a faster lens. The Nikkor 50mm AF lens is rated at f/1.4. However, the Nikkor *manual* 50mm lens is rated at f/1.2. Nikon does not currently make an AF lens faster than 1.4.

In contrast, Canon currently produces an AF f/1.0 lens utilizing a large lens mount similar to the type used by the N1. Without such a mount to accommodate the larger glass elements, the lens could not be that fast.

All major camera manufacturers faced the dilemma of either maintaining or upgrading their technologies as they developed new AF SLR systems. Canon, Minolta and Pentax all chose to upgrade their camera systems for use with faster AF lenses. Through feedback from both photographers and our dealers, Contax recognized that our market had a strong demand for more advanced AF Zeiss™ lenses. Therefore, to provide consumers with the sharpest and fastest AF lenses possible, we are utilizing the latest technology to create new AF SLR systems with enhanced lens mounts.

The Contax N1 is the first in our new line of AF SLR systems. Through its new mount, we created the opportunity to offer consumers not just faster AF lenses, but also the *only* precision AF SLR lenses available today manufactured by Zeiss™. If we made the N1 backwards compatible with our existing system, such responsive lenses would not be possible.

An adapter would not make our manual lenses work efficiently with the N1: too large to be practical, it would force the glass elements in the lens to be seated too far away from the film plane. This would necessitate the use of additional lens elements to accomplish both focus and aperture control. With a large AF adapter (with motors operating the focus and diaphragm), a manual lens would need to be focused on Infinity to operate, but the focal length would increase and the lens would lose one to two stops of light. Using a manual adapter, the lens would have to be manually focused, and stop-down metering would need to be used instead of auto metering.

The N1 is an entirely new system designed to utilize the cutting-edge of today's technology. However, Contax is by no means abandoning its current SLR lines. We will continue to produce manual lenses to support all our SLR cameras. For photographers requiring AF capability with our existing lenses, we will continue to offer the Contax AX.