

Pretty Green: Carl Zeiss Werra 1

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Since I first saw the Carl Zeiss Werra 1, I really got into this nice small camera. It still delivers a decent quality and offers a few details you will not find every day...

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The Werra is a small handbag camera made in the German democratic Republic built in the early 50s. At that time, Zeiss Oberkochen and Carl Zeiss Jena have been into legal dispute, that is why there is no brand name or icon present on these cameras.

What I loved about it in first place was its design. It has a modern form and an all aluminium body with Olive green leatherette. There are also versions with black leatherette, but green has been the most common color.

As I was searching for a small everyday compact camera with a certain twist, this came in literally.

Even though the look of the Werra is not that different, it still has some unique functions. I was surprised to find that loading the film done upside down into the chamber on the right. Searching a pin or something to pick up the film, I found out that the leader has to be shoved under a metal spring on the left side. After that, initial loading was quite easy.

After closing the back, the next question is: how do I cock the shutter or advance the film? It's easier than expected. There is a ring around the lens that you have to twist. You might not recognize it at first, as it is also used as mount for the lens cap. The twisting is not always smooth, so you have to get a feel for your Werra!

Okay, ready to go now...but wait! Why is there a cap on the lens cap, and why is the inside of the lenscap painted in matte black? Unscrewing the top revealed the answer: you can screw it onto the lens to work as shades. Nice!

So, I headed out to the test area again to see if the lenses are intact.

Tessar Lenses have a good reputation as they are indeed very precise. As always, the first roll was not too good, as those old cameras all behave a bit different. Having no light meter at that time, most of the shots were overexposed a bit, but very sharp with nice tones.





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But nevermind, the second time around is always better! I shot some pictures under different light conditions. Most of the pictures got a bit warmer and when you are handy with it, it is a camera that can still compete with some way more modern cameras around. You can also work with the depth of field pretty well!

F-stops begin at 2.8 and end at 16; shutter speeds are from 1 second to 1/250.





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What I really like about the Werra is that it takes some really crisp pictures with a slightly different contrast and tone setting. The design is still nifty and because of its color, many people will ask you what this is.

Absolutely recommend this one of a kind camera and use it as my secondary camera for hipshots when I am out with [medium format](#).

written by [smu](#)

