



Olympus Gazette

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The OM Generation



By the 1970s, photography was picking up pace, and technological advances meant that SLR cameras were becoming more accessible than ever. From the mainstreaming of the revolutionary ideas of the 60s to the explosion of new styles in music and fashion, the era was characterised by big ideas and a decade of informed innovation. Against this backdrop, Olympus rolled out its OM Series, which it kicked off with the OM-1 in 1973.

An OM so nice, they named it twice

Originally dubbed the Maitani 1 or M-1, the debut OM Series model caused such a stir in the market that Leica eventually asked Olympus to alter its name. The camera then became known as the OM-1, the world's smallest and lightest 35mm SLR at the time of its launch. Olympus employed a number of groundbreaking technologies to keep this model compact, durable and reliable.



OM-2 advertising motif by Helmut Newton

Innovating with the best

As the Apollo and Soyuz spacecrafts were gearing up for a US-Soviet link-up, Olympus was rolling out its own technological marvel, the OM-2, which joined the OM Series in 1975. Featuring an automatic exposure (AE) system with an aperture-preferred shutter, it also boasted the world's first TTL direct metering system. Celebrated icon Helmut Newton even went on to demonstrate the exceptional performance of the OM-2 with an ad featuring a sensual nude that made waves in Europe.



Continuing the trend

By 1983, the world's population had reached 4.7 billion, Gandhi had earned a Best Picture nod at the Oscars and Olympus had unveiled the perfect OM Series camera – the OM-4. Complete with a light-metering system based on up to eight multi-spots, increased shutter speed of up to 1/2000 sec., direct metering technology, and an LCD bar graph in the finder, this model proudly qualified as a high-end single-lens reflex camera.



Soon Olympus was releasing its newest addition to the OM Series – the OM-3. This 1984 model sported a mechanical shutter that could operate at speeds of up to 1/2000 sec. even without a battery, thanks to a shutter curtain travel mechanism. The OM-3 also featured remarkably compact speed control and low-speed shutter systems, plus the option to switch between centre-weighted and spot light metering with multiple spots.

While Michael Jackson's "Thriller" was topping charts around the world, 1984 also saw Olympus put forth the OM-2SP (Spot/Program). It was the first OM Series camera to feature a programmed exposure control system. This advance in single-lens reflex technology was followed quickly by the introduction of exchangeable lenses enhanced for ideal performance with programmed aperture control.