



Press Release

100 years of Leica: Witness to a century (1925-2025)

Leica Camera AG celebrates the anniversary of the first series-produced Leica 35 mm camera

Wetzlar, 12 December 2024. For Leica Camera AG, the year 2025 marks the 100th anniversary of the Leica I. First presented to the public at the Leipzig Spring Fair in 1925, it was the first mass-produced Leica 35 mm camera. With its compact and handy format, it created new photographic applications and revolutionised the world of photography. Leica Camera AG's celebrations around the world are therefore being held under the motto "100 Years of Leica: Witness to a Century" with numerous cultural highlights and exciting new products.

'I hereby decide: we will take the risk', with these formative words the entrepreneur Ernst Leitz II decided to mass-produce the ground-breaking invention of the "Ur-Leica" by Oskar Barnack. Barnack, a precision mechanic and head of the testing department at Ernst Leitz Werke, had been continuously dabbling in photography in his spare time and was working on a completely new and compact 35mm camera. He completed the prototype of the original Leica as early as 1914, but further development was delayed due to the challenges of the world war. After its presentation at the Leipzig Spring Fair in 1925, the Leica I triggered a revolution in photography. As the first compact and lightweight Leica camera with a 24x36mm 35mm format, it made photography a natural part of everyday life. For the first time, it was possible to take pictures of real life - capturing the decisive moment - and thus created completely new possibilities for use and expression. The genre of reportage and documentary, as well as street and artistic photography, was born.

The Leica I is considered the first milestone in the Leica product portfolio and laid the foundation for the continuing success story of Leica Camera AG. To this day, the company proceeds to play a key role in shaping the technological development of photography, investing in groundbreaking technologies and consistently expanding into new business areas. Like no other brand, Leica stands for durable, high-quality products "Made in Germany", an unmistakable image culture and an extraordinary commitment to the cultural promotion of photography.



Leica Camera Group is celebrating the Leica | 2025 anniversary with a global community of photography enthusiasts. The programme includes international events organised by Leica subsidiaries in major cities such as Dubai, Milan, New York, Shanghai and Tokyo. In addition, the worldwide network of Leica Galleries will host high-calibre exhibitions featuring the work of outstanding photographers. The highlight of the anniversary year will be the celebrations at the company's headquarters in Wetzlar in June. International guests can look forward to a varied programme of cultural highlights during the anniversary week. As a tribute to the region and the city of Wetzlar, the birthplace of Leica, further local cultural projects are planned in the city. The anniversary year will be accompanied by the release of a number of 'Special Edition' products that celebrate the groundbreaking invention of an icon of the century. A cinema film on the development of 35mm photography by Reiner Holzemer will be presented as well as an exhibition by the renowned photographer Sebastião Salgado at the Ernst Leitz Museum.

About Leica Camera

Leica Camera AG is an international premium manufacturer of cameras, lenses and sports optics products with over 150 years of company history. As part of its growth strategy, the company has expanded its business to include mobile imaging (smartphones) and the manufacture of high-quality eyeglass lenses and watches and is represented in the home cinema segment with its own projectors. Headquartered in Wetzlar (Germany) and with a second production site in Vila Nova de Famalicão (Portugal), Leica Camera AG has a global network of its own sales companies with over 120 Leica Stores. The company employs 2,400 people and achieved a turnover of 554 million euros in the 2023/24 financial year.

The Leica brand stands for excellent quality, German craftsmanship and industrial design combined with innovative technologies. An integral part of the brand culture is the promotion of the culture of photography with around 30 Leica Galleries worldwide, Leica Academies and international awards such as the Leica Hall of Fame Award and the Leica Oskar Barnack Award (LOBA).

Please find further information at:

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