



Press Release

100 Years of Leica: Witness to a Century (1925–2025)

For 100 years, the Leica brand has been profoundly influencing the technological and cultural development of photography

Wetzlar, 26 June 2025 – For Leica Camera AG, this year is defined by the 100th anniversary of the Leica I. First presented to the public at the Leipzig Spring Fair in 1925, it was the first series-produced Leica 35 mm camera. With its compact and handy format, it opened up a new range of photographic applications and revolutionised the world of photography. In celebrating this epochal anniversary of an iconic camera with the motto “100 Years of Leica: Witness to a Century”, Leica Camera AG is also commemorating the visionary entrepreneur Ernst Leitz II, who established 35 mm photography through his brave decision to mass-produce the Leica camera. The centenary anniversary is not only a retrospective of fascinating company history but also a glimpse into the future of photography.

“I hereby decide to take a risk!” With these fateful words, the entrepreneur Ernst Leitz II decided to mass-produce Oskar Barnack’s ingenious invention, the Ur-Leica. A completely new camera system was added to the production range. Barnack, a precision mechanic and head of the research department at the Ernst Leitz factories, had long pursued photography as a hobby and worked on a wholly innovative compact 35 mm photo camera. He produced his Ur-Leica prototype as early as 1914. However, the challenging period around the First World War delayed its further development.

The launch of the Leica I at the Leipzig Fair on 1 March 1925 proved to be a visionary and decisive business move. The fair had already developed into a very popular international platform for technical innovations. The Leitz booth acted as a springboard for a revolution in photography. Paired with the Anastigmat 50 f/3.5 lens, the Leica I was a runaway success, establishing the 24×36 mm compact camera format as the global standard.

Renowned photographers like Alexander Rodchenko, Gisèle Freund and André Kertész quickly recognised the possibilities opened up by the compact, inconspicuous and efficient Leica camera. For the first time, a camera made it possible to capture real life – immortalising the decisive moment. This sparked a paradigm shift in photography: the birth of modern photojournalism and fine-art photography. In the first year alone, the Leitz factory sold around 1,000 cameras, laying the foundation for the Leica brand’s iconic status in the world of photography.



By continuing to develop the Leica I and adding innovative interchangeable lenses in the years that followed, Leica consolidated the success of its camera system. The first Leica camera with a screw mount and three interchangeable lenses was launched in 1930. The Leica II, introduced in 1932, featured the first rangefinder, enabling fast, precise focussing. Seven interchangeable lenses with standardised screw mounts were available at that time. The network of avid Leica photographers also grew steadily. Today, they remain a cornerstone of Leica's company culture, thanks to their unwavering commitment to promoting culture.

With innovative products and investments in forward-looking technologies, Leica Camera AG keeps on writing the entrepreneurial success story that began with the Leica I. The company continues to forge innovative paths today to strengthen the brand and reach new target groups by expanding its business horizons. A particular area for development is the mobile segment, which opens the door to the "World of Leica" experience. Most recently, the Leica LUX grip was launched: An innovative camera grip that, together with the Leica LUX app, enables a unique photography experience when using an iPhone.

100 Years of Leica: Leica – Witness to a Century

Leica Camera AG is celebrating 100 years of the Leica I in 2025. It was presented to the public for the first time at the Leipzig Spring Fair in 1925 and, as the first series-produced 35 mm camera, exceeded all expectations. Because with its compact and handy format, it opened up a whole new range of new photographic applications. All around the globe, under the motto "100 Years of Leica: Witness to a Century", Leica Camera AG will be celebrating this camera, which revolutionised the world of photography. At international events held by the Leica national organisations in metropolises such as Dubai, Milan, New York, Shanghai and Tokyo, cultural attractions and outstanding special edition products will be presented throughout the year. The anniversary week, taking place in Wetzlar, the company's headquarters, in June, marks the high point of the celebrations. On top of that, visitors can look forward to top-class exhibitions in the worldwide network of Leica Galleries with works by outstanding photographers.

About Leica Camera

Leica Camera AG is an international, premium manufacturer of cameras, lenses and sports optics products with a company history stretching back over 150 years. As part of its growth strategy, the company has expanded its portfolio to include mobile imaging (smartphones) and the manufacture of high-quality spectacle lenses and watches, and is also represented in the home cinema segment with its own projectors.

Leica Camera AG, with its headquarters in Wetzlar, Germany, and a second production site in Vila



Nova de Famalicão, Portugal, has a worldwide network of its own distribution companies with over 120 Leica Stores.

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

Please find further information at:

Leica Camera AG

Ann-Kristin Schneider

Global PR Manager

E-Mail: Ann-Kristin.Schneider@leica-camera.com

Internet: www.leica-camera.com