



Press Release

New: The Leica Summicron-M 66 f/2

This reinterpretation of the historic spy lens extends the Leica Classic Line by adding the unique 66 mm focal length

Wetzlar, 3 September 2026 – Dr Walter Mandler developed the Elcan 66 mm f/2 at Ernst Leitz Canada in the late 1960s. Designed for use by the US Navy, only around 200 units were produced. This makes the lens one of the rarest in the Leica M-System, giving it special optical and historical significance. To honour this lens, Leica Camera AG is presenting a reinterpretation of it by expanding its Classic Line with the new Summicron-M 66 f/2.

Dr Mandler was already regarded as a leading authority in optical design back then. He developed a bespoke lens for covert reconnaissance photography in response to a US Navy commission. According to Dr Mandler, Head of Development and Vice-President of Ernst Leitz (Canada) Ltd. in Midland, Ontario, at the time: “The Naval Intelligence Service wanted a lens that looked like any other but delivered an unparalleled level of resolution.” The unusual focal length of 66 mm was no coincidence, but rather the result of striking a precise balance between maximum resolution, fine contrast rendition and a compact design. This extraordinary, rare spy lens, with a purely military history, embodies one of the most extraordinary chapters in the history of the Leica M.

Historical accounts also suggest that equipment of this type found use beyond its original US Navy commission, among Western allied partners during the Cold War. Many Elcan 66 mm f/2 lenses are also associated with the Leica KE-7A, the special military variant of the Leica M4. Together, camera and lens formed compact sets for discreet photography in situations where exceptional detail was essential.

The original sets were supplied with an instruction manual that explained how to destroy the camera and lens in the event of capture. Striking in retrospect, this detail reflects the sensitivity of the assignments for which the equipment was created, while the lens itself remains remarkable for the optical performance that made such use possible.

The new Summicron-M 66 f/2 continues this story and represents the first time that Leica is making this focal length available to all photography enthusiasts. While the optical design is based on the original, it has been optimised and adapted to meet today’s standards, just like the lens body. As with the Elcan, the Summicron-M 66 f/2 differs mechanically from standard Leica models: its aperture ring



rotates in the opposite direction to that of standard M-Lenses, and the distance scale arrangement follows military specifications. The engravings are reminiscent of the original design and have been reinterpreted for the Summicron-M 66 f/2. Thanks to a visibly finer typeface, the new 66 mm focal length stands out from current Leica lenses.

The Summicron-M 66 f/2 range is being released in a limited edition of 660 units. The special serial number is engraved on the front ring alongside the optical calculation number B1047 and the 12-digit internal material number. This is similar to the original, which featured the production number and the initial calculation number C283, as well as the 13-digit US Navy order number, in the same position. Additionally, the 'Leitz Wetzlar' engraving on the front ring replaces the previous model name 'Elcan', which stood for Ernst Leitz Canada back then. Another stand-out detail is that the small, engraved number '60' on the side of the lens indicates the exact focal length. This was customary for precision lenses at the time and is testament to the Leica factory's precise manufacturing. In order to specify the focal length with the utmost accuracy, the digit before and after the decimal (without a decimal point) were also engraved on the lens. Therefore, the marking '60' stands for a precisely measured focal length of 66.0 millimetres.

With a maximum lens speed of f/2, the Summicron-M 66 f/2 produces images with distinctive rendering, as do all lenses in the Leica Classic Line. This is characterised by the interplay of soft bokeh and high contrast. When stopped down, its original purpose becomes apparent: maximum resolution for clearly reproducing the finest details. With a focal length between that of the classic 50 mm lens and longer portrait focal lengths, it offers a natural perspective and subtle image compression. This reinterpretation of a classic carries its own history into the present, capturing today's moments in exceptional quality.

The Leica Summicron-M 66 f/2 will be available worldwide from 3 September 2026 in Leica Stores, on the Leica Online Store and from authorised dealers. The recommended retail price is €9,850.00 including VAT.

In November 2026, the Summicron-M 66 f/2 with serial number 001 will be auctioned at Leitz Photographica Auction in Wetzlar. As the first-numbered lens in the worldwide limited edition of 660 units, it holds a special position. The auction offers a unique opportunity to acquire this exceptional example of contemporary Leica history.



About Leica Camera

Leica Camera AG is an international, premium manufacturer of cameras, lenses and sports optics. 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, having its headquarters in Wetzlar, Germany, and a second production site in Vila Nova de Famalicão, Portugal, operates a global network of its own distribution companies with around 120 Leica Stores worldwide.

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).

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Leica Camera AG

Global Corporate Communications

E-Mail: press@leica-camera.com

Internet: www.leica-camera.com