Press Release

Noctilux: The Anniversary Book

The technology, image aesthetics and development behind the lens family are explored across 240 pages

Wetzlar, 11 November 2026 – Leica Camera AG is celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Noctilux lens family this year. From the first series-produced Leica lens with aspherical surfaces to the newest wide-angle variant, this book tells the story of how an audacious idea became a legend.

When it was introduced at the Photokina trade fair in 1966, few in attendance could have guessed that a story spanning 60 years was beginning: in short, a lens that sought to capture light at night, where other lenses had long reached their limits. The new book *Noctilux* documents the exciting evolution of the 'king of the night', tracing six decades of research and development characterised by smart ideas, surprising detours and ground-breaking solutions.

For the most part, the book concentrates on the lenses themselves. Introduced in 1966, the Noctilux 50 f/1.2 was the first in the range: two aspherical element surfaces made in series production – a first among lens manufacturers worldwide. Each lens was painstakingly made by hand, and less than 2,000 units were produced. The successor model, developed by Dr Walter Mandler in Midland, Canada, was the only lens in the series to do without aspherical surfaces: seven classically polished elements and one special glass sufficed to achieve a speed of f/1. The Noctilux 50 f/0.95 ASPH. then dared to cross a magical line that had always seemed unreachable: it broke the f/1 speed barrier. The Noctilux 75 f/1.25 ASPH. brought the 75 mm focal length to the series for the first time – perfectly calibrated for portrait photography. The last chapter belongs to the Noctilux 35 f/1.2, the first Noctilux with a focal length of 35 mm.

Further chapters follow the development of aspheric technology – from its inception to production today. Fascinating interviews offer a glimpse behind the scenes of the Noctilux research laboratory: while Peter Karbe, Senior Managing Expert in Optics at Leica, details the history of aspheric lenses, Dietmar Stuible, Head of Optics Development at Leica Camera AG since 2021, explains the 'mechanical intelligence' of M-Lenses.

Diverse photo essays by Ana María Arévalo Gosen, Alisa Martynova, Jason Roman, François Rousseau, Paolo Roversi and Satoru Watanabe are spread across the book's pages, exemplifying why

these lenses continue to be cherished to this day. A gallery of interesting special editions and one-of-a-kind lenses from the past offers another unique perspective on the history of the Noctilux. The volume is supplemented by an overview of all M-Lenses across Leica's history, which also makes the book an indispensable reference for photography and optics aficionados.

The book launch will take place on 27 November 2026 in Wetzlar during the Leitz Photographica Auction. To mark this occasion, Leica Camera AG will also be opening the exhibition '60 Years of Noctilux' in the foyer on the eve of the auction: five past and current Noctilux lenses, as well as photo material, make the series' history tangible beyond the book's pages.

The book *Noctilux* will be available from 27 November 2026 at Leica Stores, the Leica Online Store, specialist retailers and the LFI Online Store. The recommended retail price is £50 incl. VAT.

Content Overview

Hardcover, 240 pages, 195 images, 200 × 260 mm.
German and English editions with silver binding and foil stamping.

- Chronology of the Noctilux: Each lens is presented, accompanied by high-quality product photos, historical context and example images taken with the lens.
- Evolution of aspheric technology: Five chronologically structured chapters provide insight into the production equipment, prototypes and R&D details.
- Exclusive interviews: Optics experts Peter Karbe and Dietmar Stuible combine specialist knowledge with their personal perspectives.
- Select photographic projects by six international photographers showcase the Noctilux's versatility: Ana María Arévalo Gosen, Alisa Martynova, Jason Roman, François Rousseau, Paolo Roversi and Satoru Watanabe.
- Additional striking image series bring the distinctive image aesthetics of the various Noctilux models to life.
- Efficient reference book: The appendix includes an index of all M-Lens, an overview of special Noctilux models and portraits of the main players in Leica optics development.

Quote:

Dietmar Stuible: "Every Noctilux in the history of the lens family has represented a technological milestone, taking lens development to a new level."

About Leica Camera AG

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).

Please find further information at:

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