

Generelt indtryk

Carl Zeiss Jena 135mm, f/3,5 is the same lense as the Carl Zeiss Sonnar 135mm, f/135. The two names is a consequence of a name "battle" between the east and the west part of the Zeiss factories. Sonnar was registered in the West, Jena in East Europe.



Carl Zeiss (CZ) Jena 135mm f/3.5 has the same size as many of the 135mm's of the time. And it equals lenses like Asahi Takumar 135mm f/3.5, Jupiter 11A and Zuiko 135mm f/3.5 in both length and weight.

The lens will stick out between 8.4cm and 10.5 cm from your camera – plus the width of your adaptor ring. If you choose to pull out the lens hood, you might add another 2.3cm to the length.

The old lens does carry a built-in lens hood, which is very convenient. You always have the hood with you, it's always near and (most importantly): you don't drop it somewhere. It's a cost saver too; because an old lens hood does cost money – and original ones do easily run up to £10-20 on eBay.



CZ 135mm f/3.5 is built to fit the hand. It's pleasant to operate and the building quality is top notch. Metal and glass melt together and you always have the feeling that you might use the lens as a hammer, if needed. Fine balance and all moving parts run smoothly. The focus has just enough stiffness to help you avoid turning the ring too far. The aperture ring moves with clear clicks and the switch between manual and automatic aperture has a nice firmness.

The focus ring is in metal, could be slippery. But it's not. A great diamond-shaped pattern provides a good grip. When turning the focus ring, the end of the lens doesn't turn. That's good, when using a POL-filter.

Turning the focus ring takes about 280 degrees. That is a lot. Almost a full turn. Focussing between 1 meter and 2.3 meter takes up the first 180 degrees. It's easy to find focus on the short runway. And it isn't

difficult wither to find it at the long runway. The downside of the full circle turn is that you really have to turn and turn sometimes to get focus. But you can't really have it both ways.

Aperture is from f/3.5 to f/22. The ring is thin, but still quite easy to operate. There are some good and effective grooves to help you get a good grip and they work. The movement of the ring is nice. The lens has a switch between manual and automatic aperture. I use that switch to help me find focus; because the viewfinder does go dark when you step down aperture – and sometimes it gets too dark. So I focus with the manual/auto switch in Auto (Aperture will stay open) and when focus is found, I turn to the switch to manual and the blades will spring into the right position. The lens has six blades.

It is a M42 lens. That means you need an adaptor ring before you can mount the lens on your DSRL. It is possible to get adaptor rings with focus assistance. That's a contrast sensor letting the camera give the characteristic beep sound when focus is found. That is a great help, if you haven't got superman skills in the art of focus. And it is a very useful help since your camera's viewer darkens when you step down the aperture.

CZ has multicoated the lens for better control of the flares. I have never before seen a lens with such violet front glass. But it doesn't (of course) affect the pictures with wrong colours, it just reflects very strongly when looked at.

Data

Summary	
Lens Composition	4 elements in 3 groups
Angular Field	18 degrees
Minimum Focus	1m/3.3ft
Focusing Action	MF
f-stop Scale	f/3.5-f/22, manual
Filter Size	49mm
Lens Hood	Built-in
Weight	430g/0.94lbs
Dimensions	51x89mm/2x3.5"
Lens Case	N/A

Price

The quality of the lens does spell out that the price has to be a little more than "very cheap". And adding the brand "Carl Zeiss" also adds to the price tag. Zeiss does simply just cost a little extra. Take it or leave it.

At this moment I find 22 CZ 135mm's lenses for sale on eBay.uk. The "buy now" prices begins at £49.95 and ends at £99.99. The main bulk from £60 and up. The normal price you have to expect is about £50 for a lens in good condition. It is not a cheap lens. Sometimes it can pay out to wait for the lucky auction where you get the lens for less.

Pictures

All pictures are taken with my Olympus E-520.

CZ 135 f/3,5 is not with macro capabilities at all; but it does provide some very nice close ups never the less. The bumblebees are caught from about 1 meter and that doesn't look bad at all, I think.

Aperture is f/5.6.

The pictures show very nicely what this lens will give you: sharp pictures, well defined colors and a nice and pleasant bokeh.



The same is to be said about the next four pictures below. Fine sharpness, nice colors –maybe a little on the warm side- and again: a very pleasant bokeh.



On the right handside we look at the corner from about 5 meters. Aperture is f/5.6. Still a very nice reproduction rich on details and a fine soft bokeh.



The two pictures below takes us a little further from the motive. At left we have about 10 meters and at right we have about 20 meter.

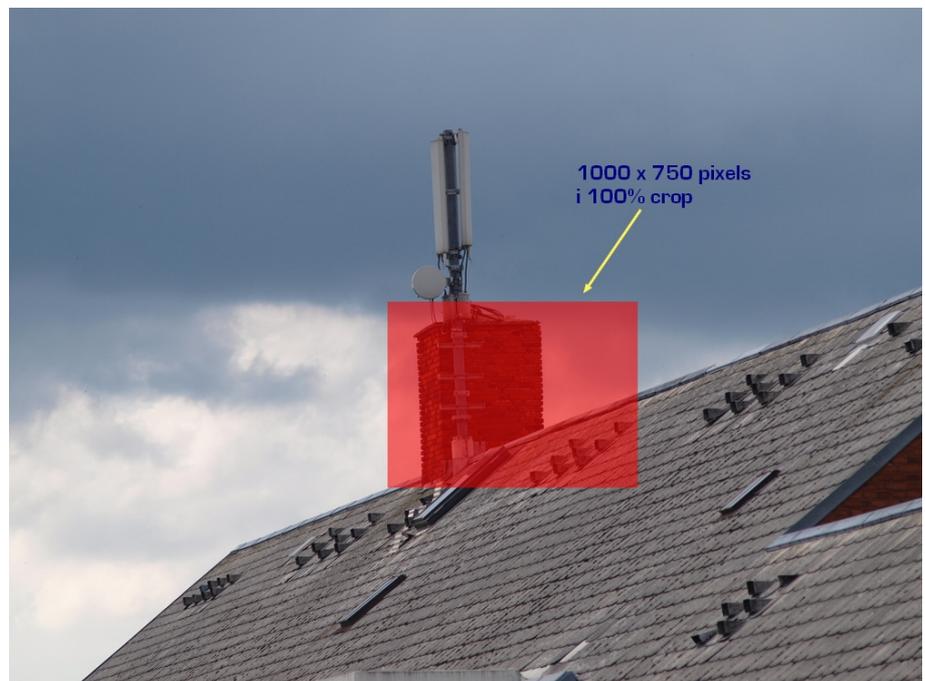


Below you find some nice rowingboats from a former royal garden: Frederiksberg Have. The garden of Frederiksberg Castle, situated in Copenhagen. Again I find the picture very pleasant.



At 100 meters it still look very good. Here at the right you have a picture taken using f/5.6 – and its handheld.

The red square indicates a 100% crop with 1000 x 750 pixels.



Below the crop. Nothing has been done to the picture besides cropping. A very fine picture, nicely sharp, fine and clear details and colors. Nothing to complain about here, I think.



Sharpness

Most of the happy photomanias I know does consider sharpness an important issue when it comes to lenses. Me too. Not that all pictures have to be razor sharp, but because I want the opportunity to make all pictures razor sharp. It is often better to add blur to a picture than sharpness.

That's why I always conduct a simple test of sharpness. It is not a scientific test; but is a passionate one.

Below you find my setup. I take a picture for each step on the aperture ring. I have the camera in A; and the light is fixed. The distance is about 2 meters. The red square is showing the size of the samplearea: 1000 pixels x 200 pixels:



Below the test:

The lens seems fairly sharp wide open (f/3.5). Not razor sharp. But at f/5.6 the lens shows us what stuff it's made of. The pictures are razor sharp using f/5.6, f/8 and f/11. At f/16 and f/22 the lens has lost some sharpness; but that is really no surprise. Most lenses follow a pattern like this – although it is not most lenses that produces pictures as sharp as the CZ 135mm f/3.5 does.

My test does differ from the test shown at srlensreview.com. Here the lens is tested to be razor sharp wide open too.



Conclusion

I had some great expectations about this lens from the very beginning. The CZ brand and the reviews/comments I had read about the lens was very positive.

And I am not disappointed at all. The lens deliver the pictures and the quality of the lens construction and build is at the best.

It is a nice lens to operate. The feeling is spot on and the pictures are razor and very sharp with nice colors and a smooth bokeh. I like the build in lens hood.

In my book this is a quality lens. And quality lenses don't come cheap – and they don't have to. At eBay the range in "buy now" prices runs from about £50 to £100. In my opinion that is a fair range; but I like the cheap end best (when I am a buyer).

On my scale from 1 to 5 (five being the best) and considering the price (CZ 135mm f/3.5 does cost more than most other M42 135mm's) the CZ brings home:

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