

Introduction

Takumar Super Multi Coated (SMC) 105mm f/2.8 was produced between 1971 og 1976. The 105mm is part of an eksklusiv party of top Takumar lenses most highly regarded.



*Fokusring = Focus ring
Blædering = Aperture ring
Adaptor = Adaptor*

105mm f/2.8 is not a large lens; the weight is just 273 gr., it uses 49mm filters and in use it will only stick out between 7.5 cm and 6.5 cm from your camera. Plus whatever the adaptorring will add. It is a fast lens, providing f/2.8.

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 focusing. And it is a very useful help since your cameras viewer darkens when you step down the aperture.

It is a very pleasant lens to use and to operate. The buiding quality is very high and the lens gives you a distinct feeling of quality and "I can take a beating, if I must". The balance is good and all moving part have the great motion of the very best of Asahi Takumars. It runs like a knife through warm butter. The aperture ring has, however, a little tightness to the move. Not much and just as much you need to keep it from moving more than oone stop at a time.

The focus ring is in metal. That means it might be cold and hard to get a grip of. But not here. Thanks to the large ribs, the grip is excellent. The end of the lens does not turn when focusing.

The focus ring has about 290 degrees turn. That is a lot. Focus between 1.2 meter (min focus) and 2.75 meters takes about 180 degrees. Focusing is therefore very easy at those distances; but not hard at longer distances. But you have to remember that it does take a lot of turning when shifting from a close focus situation and a long focus situation.

The aperture goes from f/2.8 to f/22. The ring is quite thin. But it is very easy to operate – also in action when you are shooting. The aperture ring has good ribs too and that gives you a good grip.

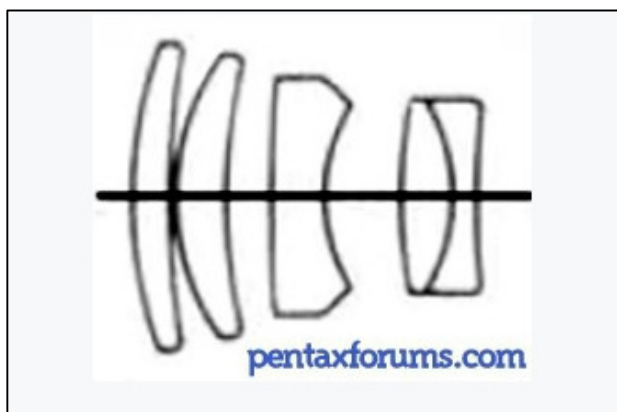
The lens has six blades.

It is not a macro lens. Min. focus is about 1.2 meters. The lens does very well with between 2 and 4 meters to the motive – ideal for portraits and such.

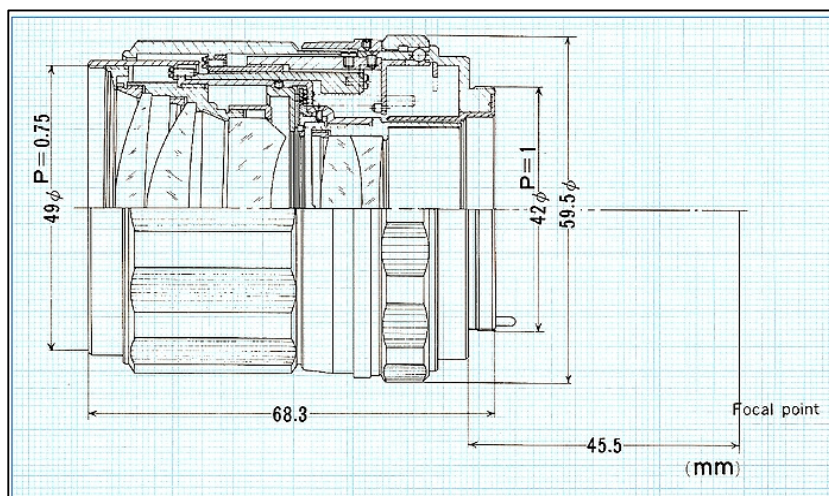
Data

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|--------|
| Focal length | 105mm | Minimum aperture | F22 |
| Maximum aperture | F2.8 | Dimensions | |
| Lens elements | 5 in 4 groups | Maximum diameter | 59.5mm |
| Diaphragm | Fully automatic | Length | 63.8mm |
| Angle of view | 23° | Weight 0.601b (273g) | |
| Minimum focusing distance | 4ft (1.2m) | Filter size | 49mm |

The glass in the lens is placed like this:



And the construction of the lens is like this:



Price

The lens was produced between 1971 and 1976 – it is not a new lens. You might expect that this would give you very low prices; but: The lens was not cheap from the launch and the quality of the lens was soon recognized and that that led to very well preserved 105mm lenses, driving the price upward.

Today buy-now prices at ebay is about £ 130.

No matter how that is turned; it is not a cheap lens. The real question is, however, is the lens worth the money – does it deliver?

The pictures

All pictures are shot using Olympus E-30:

First picture is of the little flower at a distance of about 2 meters using f/4. The house in the background is about 75 meters away.



Also using f/4: The sign telling about high cranes is a good sample of the bokeh from this lens.

Focus is in the center of the sign and as shown, the bokeh runs smoothly both in front and back of the focus point. To my eye: Nicely and silky.





The small gorilla above is shot using $f/8$ and a beauty disc provide the light. The distance is about 2 meters.

To the right: A park in Copenhagen all dressed up in autumn colors. Aperture is $f/4$ and the distance to the boats is about 100 meters.



To the right: A 100%-crop and a little noise is visible; but the sharpness seems to be good at this distance too.



At a distance of about 75 meters the bridge seems very nice and the handling of the light and colors does look very pleasing too.

I have taken 25% mid grey (18%) out of the picture due to the misty conditions.

Aperture is f/4.



The heron is shot using f/4. The distance is just 3 meters. The light was very poor at the time; and I did not have time to change the ISO. Aperture is f/4.





Above: Aperture is f/4.

To the right: Using flashlight and aperture is f/8.

The red square indicates how much of the picture a 1000 x 750 pixels crop is.

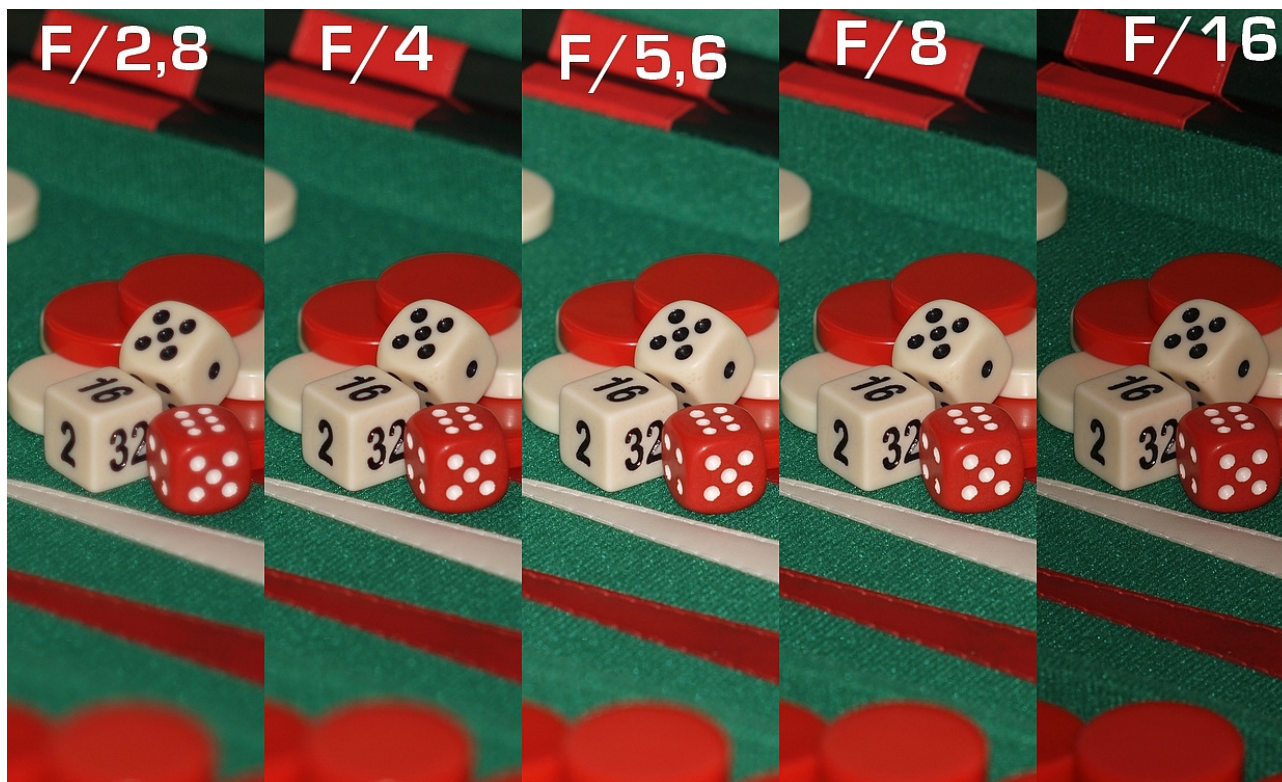
Below is the 1000 x 750 pixels crop:



Sharpness and bokeh

It is always interesting to see how sharp a lens is. I know that not all pictures have to be razor sharp all around, but I like my pictures to be that from the camera – I can always add blur if I want to.

Below a small test. A series of pictures have been taken of the same motive, using the same light and settings – except aperture. Afterwards the pictures are cropped and lined up for comparison.



I think that there are several remarks to be made.

Firstly: The sharpness is good even wide open.

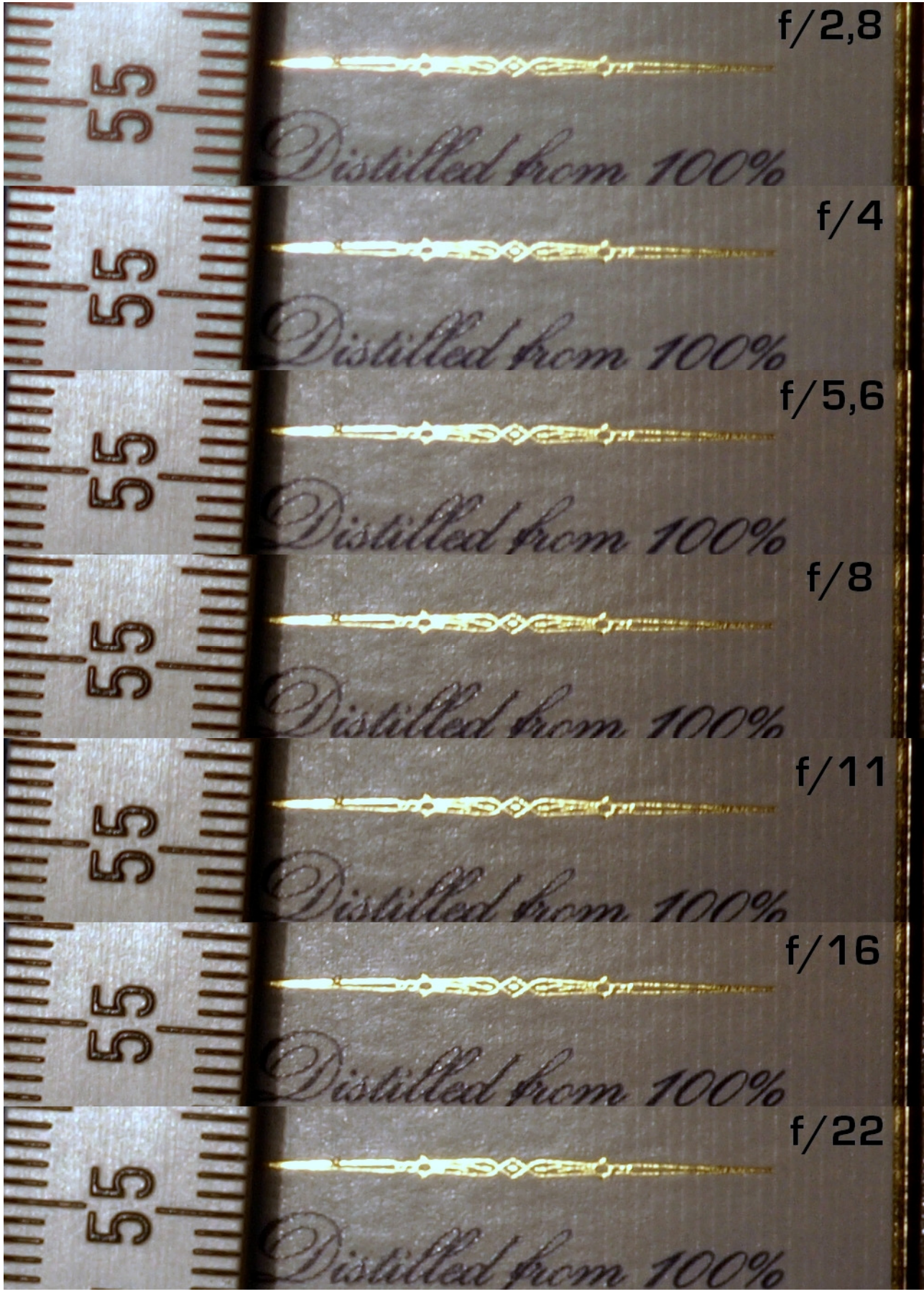
Secondly: The bokeh runs very softly and smooth.

Thirdly: The bokeh does not have the “nervous” look as know from some lenses – e.g. Helios 44-2

It is interesting that the sharpness is good from f/2.8. That puts the lens in the line of portrait lenses where a shallow DOF (depth of field) is possible.

And it is the same impression you get from the next test; next page. Again the sharpness is good from f/2.8 but looking carefully at the picture you will find that it does get even better at both f/4 and f/5.6.

Also an interesting feature is that the sharpness is good even fully closed at f/22.



f/2,8

Distilled from 100%

f/4

Distilled from 100%

f/5,6

Distilled from 100%

f/8

Distilled from 100%

f/11

Distilled from 100%

f/16

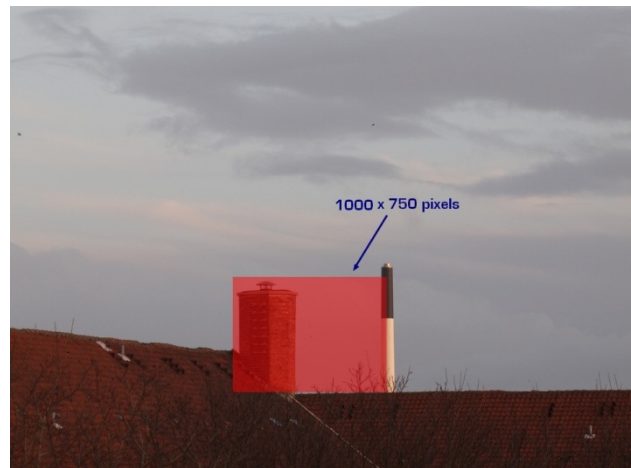
Distilled from 100%

f/22

Distilled from 100%

And a little more:

To the right: A resized picture indicating how much a 1000 x 750 pixels crop is. The distance to the left chimney is about 200 meters; to the right chimney about 1,000 meters.



And the crop: It is clear that even at 200 meters the sharpness of the lens is good. Not fantastic; but you have to remember that the lens is only 105mm:



An extra shot for the bokeh. The aperture is f/5.6:



Conclusion

Many old lenses have some special aura about them. Asahi Takumar 105mm is no different from them; in fact: The 105mm is right in the front of the pool of old lenses, that are very highly sought of – and worth the search.

All my expectations were met.

The sharpness is good. Even wide open. The color rendering is good. The bokeh is nice and the general feeling when using the lens is very good too. In short: It is a pleasure.

It is not a cheap lens. That is for sure. But it is worth some/the money.

On a scale from 0 to 5; (5 being the best), I give the lens: 4.25