

Don't Get Stung When Buying

With an almost endless array of cameras offered, and sources varying from your local dealer to distant mail-order firms, buying an expensive item like a camera can be a rewarding experience or a nightmare.

Here are some tips, found out the hard way, to guide you through the maze of desire to the glories of happy ownership.

Learning what you want: Ask knowledgeable friends who are happy with their cameras. Read all the photo magazine test reports and camera literature you can. Handle the camera yourself. Look at your friends' results. Do you think they're good? Go to a store, ask to see similar cameras. If some other camera looks better and seems a better deal, don't go for it on the spot. Take time to think. Ask others about the camera. Read up on it. Make sure any camera you select is convenient to use and handle.

Selecting the right store: Most photo stores near campuses are reliable because bad ones are quickly put out of business by word of mouth. Ask your knowledgeable friends what stores they deal with. Yes, you probably pay more than at a big dis-

count or mail order store but you will get better service right where you are.

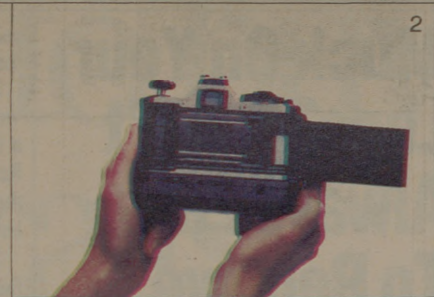
You can buy by mail from the big stores that advertise in photo magazines such as *Modern Photography*, but ask your friends for the names of reliable ones they've dealt with. Don't be surprised if there are delays in getting your equipment because the mail-order stores are out of stock or they try to persuade you to switch brands. Stick to your guns. The advantage of mail order shopping is big savings.

Catalog houses are reliable, although prices are slightly higher. Big-city gift shops and stores handling all sorts of general merchandise such as watches, rugs, tape recorders, radios can be real gyp artists with exorbitant prices and discontinued merchandise. Beware of unknown brands: Quality may vary or be poor, and repairs almost impossible.

Buying the camera: Try to get a camera in an unopened box if possible. Cameras come with various accessories: batteries, lens caps, cleaning cloths, which mysteriously disappear from opened boxes. Have the dealer open the camera box and try all controls at all settings before you pay your money. If something isn't working properly, ask for another camera. Examine the store warranty carefully. If the merchandise is faulty, does the store promise to give you your money back or exchange the camera? How many days do you have? Many stores promise nothing and refuse to have anything to do with a non-functioning camera after it's sold!

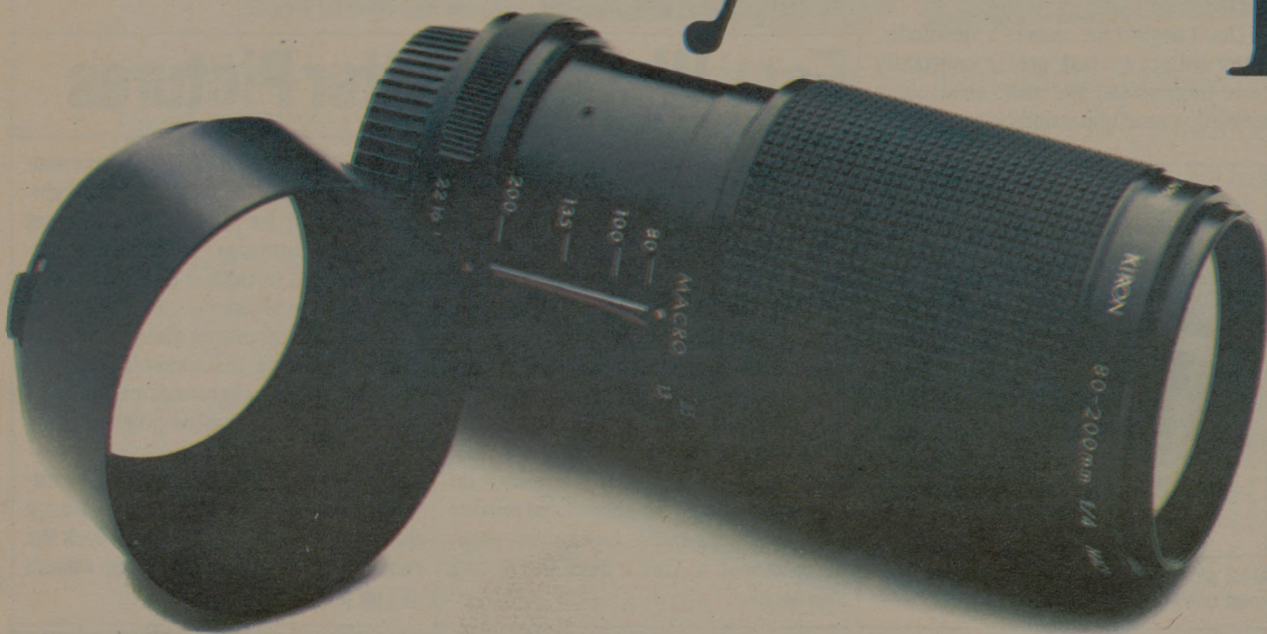
Checking the camera: Once you and

the camera are back in your room, do not fill out the warranty card that comes with the camera until you have tried the camera with film, have seen the results and are satisfied. Most camera stores won't accept a camera back for exchange if the warranty card has been filled out. Load the camera with slide film (print film can still yield reasonable prints even if the camera underexposes or overexposes). Improper exposure will immediately show up on slides. Shoot pictures under all sorts of light in conditions indoors and out at closest focus, at middle distances and at infinity. Try it at every possible setting. If you can, make all your tests with a tripod. Examine your processed slides with a slide projector or with the aid of a good magnifier of at least 5X power. Pictures should be well exposed, the main subjects and detail crisp. Fill in the warranty card only after you're certain there is no nagging doubt in your mind about anything connected with the camera.



1. Image sharpness, lens distance scale should agree. If not, there's trouble.
2. Check camera body for dents, nicks in leather, bare metal spots.
3. Lens openings should change smoothly, front surface be scratch free.
4. Check all shutter settings. Problems usually show up at slow speeds.

Give something really sharp.



Kiron's™ 80-200mm Macro Focusing Zoom. At 80mm, it's a portrait lens. At 200mm, it's a telephoto lens. At macro focus, it's a close-up lens. And it's everything in between. Give one to your Nikon, Canon, Pentax, Olympus, Minolta, Konica or Yashica/Contax this Christmas. And consider the possibilities.

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