

In January, Michael Reichmann of The Luminous Landscape, led an expedition of 77 photographers and instructors to the Antarctic. Phase One tested the brand new P 65+ under these harsh conditions, - Walter Borchenko talked to 4 of the photographers after returning...



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Antarctica with the P 65+, Why upgrade?

By Walter Borchenko

In January, Michael Reichmann of Luminous-Landscape led an expedition of 77 photographers and instructors to the Antarctic. Many were shooting with a range of DSLRs, and ten were Phase One digital back owners. Kevin Raber, vice president of sales for Phase One US, and a talented photographer in his own right, brought along a number of Phase One camera systems with both P 65+ and P 45+ digital backs for photographers to try.

This type of trip is not for the feint of heart! Severe seas, instant storms, rain, ice, snow and 20- hour days left a grueling mark on both photographers and equipment. This two- week odyssey was Michael Reichman's third expedition to the Antarctic. Even so, there were many surprises, including a significant amount of equipment failure. For details see Michael's article.



Michael Reichmann - Photo by Kevin Raber

Upon their return, seven photographers upgraded or purchased Phase One P 65+ backs and all were impressed with the quality and durability of the Phase One solutions. All of the Phase One equipment performed without failure, under extremely difficult conditions. We asked four of the participating photographers to share their experiences and tell us why they upgraded or purchased the new Phase One P 65+.

Mark Dubovoy

I have a P 45+ on a Hasselblad right now. I looked at some P 65 + files from this Antactica trip and there is a difference. The first thing that struck me was the color rendition. The P 65+ appears to be smoother and more liquid. It appears to capture micro dynamics better. These are the very, very small differences of color and the very subtlest of gradations.

If I were to take a picture of a green leaf with the P 45+, it would be able to deliver 15 to 20 shades of green while the P 65+ would deliver 100 shades of green. To me the difference is instantaneous to the eye and now that I have seen it, I cannot live without it!"

Upon return from Antarctica, Mark Dubovoy has made the choice to upgrade his P 45+ to a P 65+ and at the same time sell off his Hasselblad system and change to Phase One.

Mark Dubovoy's life long passion for photography has been recognized internationally. His images are in the permanent collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Mexico City, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Monterey Art Museum, the Berkeley Art Museum and the

Museum of Modern Art in Nanao Japan. His list of exhibitions and workshops is extensive.

Holding a degree in Physics from the National University of Mexico, an MA and a Ph.D in Physics from the University of California at Berkeley, makes it easier to understand Mark's dedication to flawless technique

The results created at this level are easily affected by nuances in optics, functionality of equipment and the capabilities of the technology.

"I like working with a view camera - no question, hands down. I personally see a big difference with top of the line view camera lenses compared to medium format lenses.

I use two different view cameras. The first is a Linhof 679 CS. I work mostly with Rodenstock HR lenses and I love that camera. It's obviously heavy and slow to set-up compared to a

Incredible colors

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Paul Tornaquindici:

"I downloaded the files to my computer and opened them in Capture One. I was stunned by what was on the screen! I have never seen images on my computer screen with the clarity, resolution and dynamic range that these images possessed. Zoom in as far as you want and they were remarkable."



© Paul Tornaquindici <http://www.paultornaquindici.com>

standard medium format camera but it gives me huge flexibility, more movements than I would ever want and terrific precision.

I am also using an Alpa TC. I give up a sliding back and the camera movements with the Alpa. What I gain is that it is incredibly light, versatile and fast. I like to work with wide angle some times and clearly the full frame P 65+ will be better for that. If I am shooting with wide angle, hand held, I would much rather use the Alpa than a medium format camera.

My photography tends to be deliberate. I find that slowing down and seeing the image up side down makes my rate of success much higher. I also find that graphic content and composition are better. It's a personal choice. Some people prefer to shoot in a photojournalism style. They

take a lot of shots, then find the few that they like. I like to be the opposite. I like to slow down, smell the roses, and very carefully compose."

The way we think and use our tools can push a heavily photographed subject in new visual directions. That's what makes photography so interesting. Mark's thinking is directly reflected in the creative nuances of his work.

"I enjoy the process of capture as much or more than anything in photography. Sometimes, I feel that whether I release the shutter or not, is irrelevant. I am a funny guy because I enjoy the process of capture and then I enjoy the post process immensely. This leads me to believe that I might do things a little differently with the P 65+ because it is the next level of quality. That always makes you act differently.

I believe it's going to make me focus on those small transitions and the subtlety of perfect colors more than I have in the past."

Paul Tornaquindici -
"Kevin handed me the camera, and I began to shoot some images. Making our way through the Gullet provided some remarkable opportunities and extreme challenges for any camera.

I downloaded the files to my computer and opened them in Capture One. I was stunned by what was on the screen! I have never seen images on my computer screen with the clarity, resolution and dynamic range that these images possessed. Zoom in as far as you want and they were remarkable. I called some of the other photographers over to see what I was seeing. My question was, "Tell me have you ever seen a better image, ever?" Clearly the answer was no!

I was scheduled to upgrade my Hasselblad systems to the new H3DII-50 but clearly that would be a step in the wrong direction.

Paul started in photography back in high school and college and then abandoned photography until 2004. Life, a paycheck and a 24-year commitment to teaching inner city kids has been augmented with several successful businesses. In 2004, taking inspiration from images of Iceland that he saw on The Luminous Landscape web site, Paul picked up a camera and has since produced a significant body of work. The focus and passion of his work is summed up by the following quote.

"I look at my images and they are notes of praise for the handiwork of creation! It's a



Paul Tornaquindici Photo by Kevin Raber

Paul Indman

"I brought my Cambo Wide RS with superb Schneider Digitar lenses. While the images using the P45+ back are excellent, I am looking forward to using the P65+. I would not invest in a back that could only be used with the manufacturer's body."



© Paul Indman

privilege and it's very powerful to be in these places and take these images."

For the Antarctica expedition, Paul brought two H3DII-39 Hasselblad systems and 28, 35, 50-110, 210 lenses. Also included were Canon 1DsMK IIIs for when weather/climate did not permit him to use the Hasselblad system. The P 65+ experience has really changed Paul's perceptions. Nothing is more inspiring than confidence.

"The P 65+ will give me the best file possible! In my landscape work I would like to be able to capture all that moved me to make the photograph in the first place without compromise. Phase One's P 65+ frees me from those concerns and instills complete confidence knowing what I have framed in all its beauty will be waiting on the screen.

I love traveling to places that are extreme - Antarctica, Namibia, Iceland -- and Phase One has demonstrated that this is a back that works regardless of the environment and weather. I have had to put my Hasselblad system away many times because of weather conditions. Now, no more missed shots, or settling for a lower resolution file from my DSLR. To me that is very exciting! Actually I am going to use the P 65+ on an Alpa with Rodenstock HR lenses, as this will give me the best possible image.

The experience was remarkable! It was surprising to be handed a camera system without having any prior testing or experi-menting and be immediately comfortable enough with it to produce some fine work. Simple, intuitive controls meant less time scrolling thru menus and more time in the viewfinder. The camera

was well balanced, solid and fit well in my hand. The best compliment was it never got in the way of taking pictures."

Paul Indman
"I used the Phase One P 45+ back, a Canon 1DS Mark III, and was fortunate to be able to use the P 65+ back on our recent trip to Antarctica. I made enlargements from the Canon, and both Phase One backs with equivalent magnification to 40 x 60 inch prints. While the Canon was very good, there is a major leap in image quality using the P45+ back. I was totally surprised to see a noticeable improvement in quality when comparing the P65+ to the P 45+. At this degree of enlargement the increased resolution was easily seen, but even more important, the image just looked smoother, richer, and almost like a large format contact print. This was not a subtle difference!"

Paul has been taking photographs seriously since he was a teenager, using 35mm, medium format and view camera systems. As the collections on his website will attest, a strong passion and a dedication to craftsmanship are a must at this level.

Printing is handled with an Epson 9900, 44" printer. Images are commonly 40x60 inches. At this size, subtle inadequacies in a file become extremely obvious. The P 65+ is not just about more resolution but about a whole new type of sensor that breaks many of the quality barriers. The ultimate impact is that the P 65+ really changes the viewer's experience.

"Although prints this size (40x60) are meant to be viewed at a distance, the ability of the P 65+ to preserve the fine details on closer observation

adds greatly to the feeling the image conveys"

Creative expression is also about choice of tools and options. The experience, perspective and impact of each tool, becomes part of the creative repertoire that photographers can call on. Without this range of choices, the subtle nuances each photographer brings to a particular subject are greatly reduced. The point of photography is for all of us to look different, not the same. Photographers who need to differentiate from one another are investing in more options, not less. Having a choice is becoming both a creative and a competitive advantage.

"The Phase One camera is a system in which there are many excellent affordable lenses. More important is that the back can be used with many camera bodies and lenses. I brought my Cambo Wide RS with superb Schneider Digitar lenses. While the images using the P 45+ back are excellent, I am looking forward to using the P 65+. I would not invest in a back that could only be used with the manufacturer's body.



© Paul Indman



© Christopher Hauser

The P 65+ combines large format image quality with the speed and flexibility of a medium format camera. I was able to photograph penguins on a rainy day, and use the Cambo Wide RS almost as a point and shoot. But the real pleasure comes from looking at the unbelievable quality of the finished prints."

Christopher Hauser

"There were several reasons, which together persuaded me to upgrade to the P 65+. The shooting speed is much faster than my P 45+

and made things a lot easier for me. I always feared that through the move to smaller pixel size, the ISO performance would just stay the same or be worse than on my current P 45+. This is not the case. I was quite surprised when I saw ISO 400 images from the P 65+. I even would consider using ISO 800 if it were necessary. The extra resolution is always handy. I love to print large (up to 40x60) and with the P 65+ I can do that without stitching many frames. Finally, full frame is really nice. Altogether it is not a small upgrade, it really is a step upwards."



Christopher Hauser Photo by Kevin Raber

Christopher Hauser has only recently chosen photography as his creative outlet. In 2004, Christopher picked up his first serious camera and decided that photography is what he wanted to do for the rest of his life. After graduating from high school, he moved to London to further his education. In 2008, Christopher graduated with a BFA in Photography. Working out of Munich Germany presents a unique opportunity to embark on a photographic career in a completely digital age with little or no baggage from the analog past!

"I often get asked how I became drawn to photography. The answer is quite simple, there is nothing more beautiful for me than taking photographs of places that create emotion and make us think about ourselves and our world. Sometimes I want to raise awareness, evoke memories or just show the viewer the beauty of our blue planet."

Generally I leave the long speeches to the masters of words and prefer to use my images to convey how I see our world. As an old saying goes: "A picture is worth a thousand words".

The technical aspects of equipment have quickly become limitations. Possibilities are opening up with the P 65+ that have never been available before, what used to be the quality seen at ISO 200 is today the quality

seen at ISO 400, most aspects are at least one step up the quality ladder. For photographers who are sensitive to the impact of equipment choice on the final image, we are in a new age. Christopher has focused on using the best equipment possible and pushing the limits to understand what's possible. It's all about building the creative repertoire

"A lot of my work is in panoramic format and here the new back shines. It's much easier to shoot longer panoramic images with the P 65+ compared to my P 45+. Sometimes it's not possible to use a tripod, and the faster ISO comes in handy. It's also quite nice that one can finally use the whole viewfinder to frame and not be distracted by a darkened mask."

One important reason I chose the Phase One solution was the whole package. I tried every other system, but the Phase One camera felt just right. It felt rock solid and I have never been disappointed by my decision."

The best part about the P 65+ came when I sat down to look through the images on my computer. The dynamic range is fantastic, the detail amazing, but there is something more. I can't yet put my finger directly on what it is, but the images from the P 65+ look better than anything I have seen so far from my P 45+."

It probably will take some more time and working experience with the P 65+ before I can say exactly why it is so much more magical. In the next few months I will be working on architecture projects. I'm especially eager to try out the new Linhof TECHNO with the P 65+, I expect that this combination reaches a whole new world when it comes to image quality. This summer I have some larger trips planed to the USA, New Zealand and Asia, and the Phase One camera solution with the P 65+ digital back will be my main camera."



© Christopher Hauser

Amazing sensitivity

"I was quite surprised when I saw ISO 400 images from the P65+. I even would consider using ISO 800 if it were necessary. The extra resolution is always handy."

Christopher Hauser

Conclusions
The range of experience, choice of equipment and variety of styles with this group of photographers is diverse. Yet each has found something in the P 65+ that is so compelling that they have either upgraded or purchased.

For many years, new products have only provided incremental changes in quality. The P 65+ represents a major technological breakthrough that heralds back to the beginning of digital capture, when each new product was leaps and bounds ahead of the previous generation.

Read more on P 65+ on www.phaseone.com