

# Canon AL-1

**TYPE:** 35mm eye-level single lens reflex.  
**LENS:** 50mm f/1.4 or f/1.8 Canon FD in interchangeable Canon breech-bayonet mount, stops to f/22, focus to 24 in.

**SHUTTER:** Electronically-controlled cloth focal-plane with speeds from 1/15 to 1/1000 sec. plus B, X sync, electronic self-timer.

**VIEWING:** Non-interchangeable eye-level prism with fixed full-area laser-matte focusing screen with central framing marks to delineate quick-focusing area.

**OTHER FEATURES:** Two AAA batteries power silicon photocell above eyepiece, providing shutter-preferred auto exposure and CCD arrays of electronic quick-focusing system. Shutter speeds, focus indicators, and over-, underexposure warning signals in finder, 1½-stop back-light exposure compensation, accepts most A series Canon accessories.

**PRICE:** \$466 with 50mm f/1.8 Canon lens, \$535 with f/1.4. Body only \$335. Black body \$22 additional.

**MANUFACTURER:** Canon Camera Co., Tokyo, Japan.

**IMPORTER:** Canon USA, Inc., Lake Success, NY 11040.

**PHYSICAL DIMENSIONS:** 3½ in. wide, 3¼ in. high, 3¼ in. deep.

**WEIGHT:** 1 lb. 10½ oz.

Canon's AL-1 is the first moderately-priced SLR with electronic focus indication and has been, uniquely, designed to aid and abet users who loved reflex viewing but found focusing on a groundglass a bit of a challenge. Unlike its only SLR competitor (as this is written), Pentax's ME-F, the AL-1 lacks in-body contacts to run a motorized lens. The goal here seems to have been to produce a camera both sophisticated and easy to use at a price moderate enough to appeal to the neophyte.

Built on the chassis of the AV-1 aperture-preferred SLR, the AL-1 pulls off the trick with the addition of a few oz. and a larger bulge to the right-hand grip side of the body. Within the bulge hide twin, easily-obtainable AAA cells to power the whole shooting match. A laudable solution—batteries of this type are both reasonable in price and easy to find outside of camera stores.

Electronic focusing as used here requires that the user turn the lens manually in the direction indicated by one of two LED illuminated arrow heads in the finder. When you're in focus, a central, green LED signals go. While the system may not out-perform the seasoned eyeball of a pro, it certainly makes life easier for the average person.

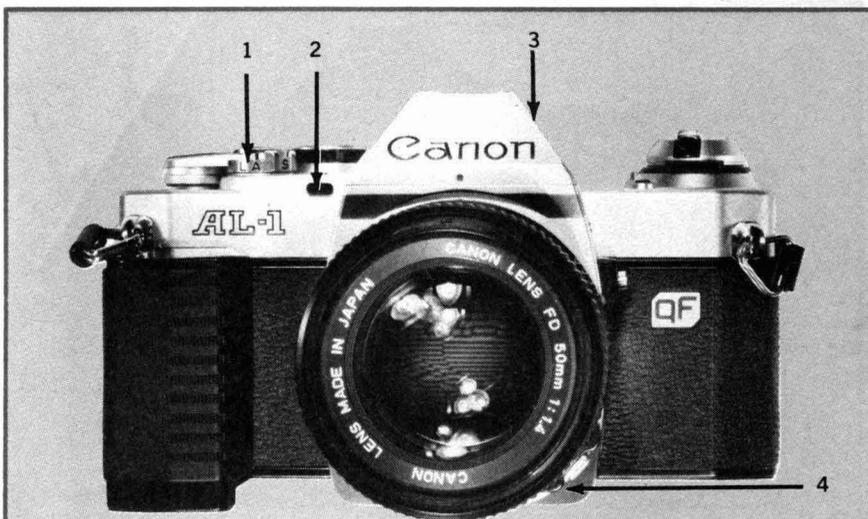
How does it work? Three CCD sensors, the image detectors used in solid-state video cameras, sample the content and contrast of the image at the focal plane, and just in front and in back of it. When contrast is maximized at the focal plane, the system lights the green go-ahead light. For more details on the system and its working tolerances, see our comprehensive "Modern Tests" report (Aug. 1982, page 94).

The camera handles well in practice. Centering the focusing brackets in the finder and coming to focus is markedly faster than focusing visually. Shared with other Canon A-series cameras is the comfortable, easy-to-hold body shape (here the addition of the batteries actually improves handling), the well-designed wind lever and finger rest, use of A-series dedicated electronic flashes and the new Power Winder A2.

Missing from the body are slow manual speeds below 1/15 sec., a depth-of-field preview lever, readouts of manually-set speeds and apertures in the finder—although the meter continues to indicate recommended

speeds in manual. A back-light compensation button and LED-signaling 10-sec. self-timer ease work under difficult conditions. Automatic speeds extend to 2 sec.

The AL-1 succeeds well. It is a non-tricky camera, easy to use and accurate enough in focus for almost all purposes. Only the most experienced user will outfocus it even now at this early stage in its development. The camera that will outfocus the eye is still in the wings. As it is, we have moved a step closer to rangefinder focusing speed and certainty, if not accuracy at the shorter focal lengths. Keep your sensors peeled for further developments in this area.



1. On/off self-timer setting ring. 2. Self-timer LED indicator. 3. In finder, auto-focus sensing area, green in-focus and red focus-correction LED indicators and shutter speed readouts keep you on top of things. 4. Bayonet release lock (on lens). 5. Rapid wind lever with finger rest. 6. Combination hand grip/battery case. 7. Shutter release. 8. Selector dial for B, 1/15 to 1/1000 sec. manual speed range and aperture-preferred automation. 9. 50mm f/1.4 Canon lens. 10. Back-light compensation button. 11. Battery check button. 12. Rewind crank and ASA dial. 13. Dedicated hot shoe. 14. Release for ASA setting.

