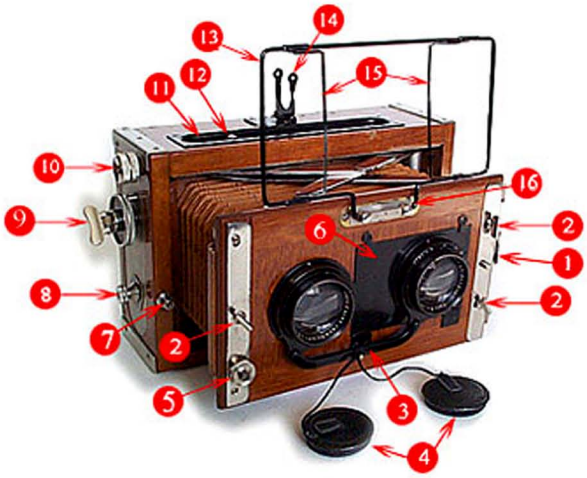
Contessa-Nettel Deckrullo Stereo Tropical

A circa 1921 camera manufactured by Contessa-Nettel using the original Nettel design. An absolutely beautiful camera by design and function, it is superbly crafted from the finest of materials. The "tropical" version combines teak wood, leather, brass and nickel plated parts that are very resistant to rust and very durable in humid climates. In addition to an elaborate shutter/exposure mechanism, the camera takes both stereo and panoramic photographs

Specifications:

- Teak Body s/n S40XX
- Leather bellows with folding strut
- Metal parts – brass nickel plated brass or brass painted black enamel
- Two Carl Zeiss Jena Tessar Lenses - 12cm, f/4.5 (f4.5, 6.3, 9, 12, 18, 25 & 36) s/n # 4352XX & 4352XX
- Vertical shift + 5 mm
- Horizontal shift + 5mm
- Deckrullo Shutter – Cloth focal plane shutter with two speed ranges, plus time "Z". Roller blind shutter mechanism made by FW Deckel – hence the name "Deckrullo"
  - Slow speeds – 1/10, 1/15, 1/20, 1/25, 1/35, 1/50, 1/100
  - Fast speeds – 1/120, 1/180, 1/250, 1/500, 1/1200
- Size – closed 19 cm (7.5 in) W x 11.3 cm (4.5 in.) H x 7.8 cm (3 in.) D – 12.5 cm (5.25 in) deep when opened and focused at infinity.
- Film format - 6 x 13 producing – two 6 x 6.25 cm images on the same plate or one 6 x 12.5 cm image
- Weight – 1360 g. (3 lbs) – without film holder



1. Bellows release catch
2. Wing nuts for vertical shift (and lens board removal)
3. Connecting bar (removable) - adjusts both f stops at the same time
4. Lens Caps (black leather – blue velvet lined)
5. Locking knob for vertical shift
6. Reversible lens plate (for panoramic photos)
7. Shutter release (threaded for cable release)
8. Shutter speed range selection knob
9. Shutter speed selection knob and shutter winding knob
10. Focusing knob
11. Focusing scale
12. Button for bellow release (when closing bellows)
13. Wire frame viewfinder (adjustable)
14. Viewfinder sight
15. Adjustable viewing field wire frames
16. Spring loaded wireframe viewfinder attachment mechanism

17. Release catch for focusing back and film holders
18. Leather handle
19. Push button (holds lower shutter curtain open for ground glass focusing
20. Focusing hood release catch
21. Finger grip for back removal
22. Bellows release catch
23. 3/8-16tpi threaded tripod socket (second tripod socket on bottom of camera body)
24. Camera strap release button (allows access for tripod mounting)

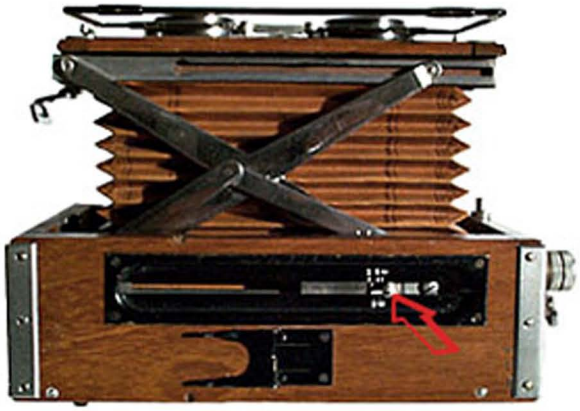
Focusing Hood open for viewing ground glass. This is the more accurate means to frame and focus. However, the wireframe viewfinder could also be used for framing the subject once focusing is complete and the film holder is in place.

Removing the back (and ground glass) to allow for insertion of a film holder.

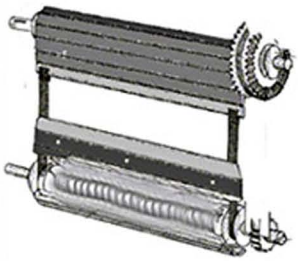
Glass plate film holder in place with darkslide removed.

Left – Wire frame adjusted for stereo photos (only the center portion is used for framing the subject). Right – Wire frame adjusted for panoramic view.

Removal of the wireframe viewfinder is accomplished by pushing in on the center mount of the wire frame and then pushing to the left. The photo on the right shows the spring on the mount and the two locating key holes on the lensboard.

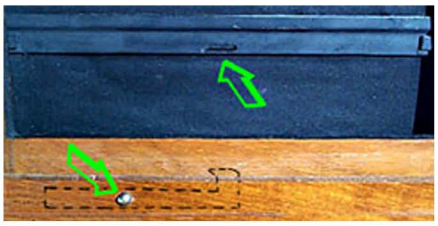


Top view of camera with close up of focusing scale (printed in meters). When the bellows is opened a small catch, attached to the end on one of the metal bellows arms engages with the distance indicator. As the camera is focused the scissor struts moves the lensboard forward or back while moving the focusing indicator from side to side. The red arrow points to a push button release. When pressed the catch releases and allows the bellows to collapse.



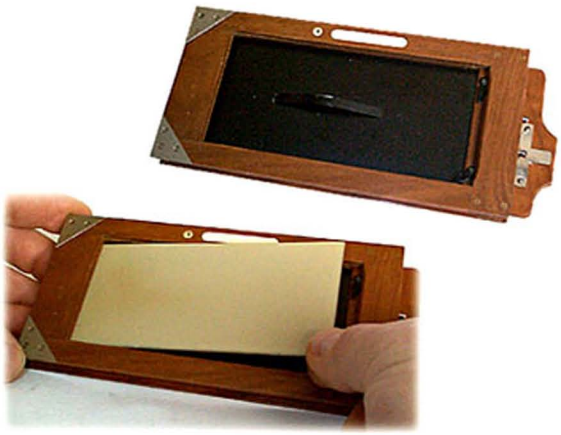
Located on the right side of the camera is the shutter speed control. The upper dial sets the shutter speed while the lower dial selects the speed range. With the lower dial set to 1 of the 2 speed zones, the outside ring on the upper dial is depressed and rotated until the indicator mark is positioned next to the desired shutter speed (in this case 1/50 sec is selected). The no. 2 speed range is slow speeds and the no.1 speed range is high speeds. Z is for time exposure.

After the speed dial is set, the winder key on the top dial is turned clockwise until it reaches a full stop. At this point the shutter is cocked and ready to be fired. Inside the camera there are two sets of shutter curtains that ride up and down on two narrow ribbon tapes located on either side of the curtains. The position of the dial determines how far apart the two curtains will be when the knob is turned to cock the shutter. The smaller the horizontal slit between the two curtains, the faster the exposure will be. The two speed ranges are controlled by an ingenious gear train. By turning the lower knob the slower speed range engages a second set of gears that creates the second speed range. The shutter mechanism travels at the same speed for all of the times in any one speed range with the curtain slit width determining the speed. The tension for the entire shutter mechanism is provided by a roller blind spring hidden inside the lower shutter curtain reel. This same type of mechanism was used in the Zeiss Contax 35 mm cameras.



In order to focus with the shutter wide open, a small button located on the bottom of the back is pressed while the upper timer knob is turned. A small lever engages a slot in the lower shutter curtain holding it in the down position. The upper curtain then is wound to the wide open position and viewing and focusing takes place. The curtain is shown here at the mid point in order to show the slot in the curtain frame. The ground glass back has also been removed.

A very ingenious feature of this camera is the ability to convert from stereo to panoramic. The conversion is accomplished in just a few minutes. First remove the bar between the two lenses. Next, remove the right hand lens (mounted on its own mini metal lensboard), rotate 180 degrees and reinsert into the wooden lensboard. This places the lens in an almost central position. Shifting the entire wooden lens board slightly completes the centering. Finally, place a lens cap over the fixed lens and you are half way there. The rest of the conversion takes place at the back of the camera



This is a glass plate film holder with the dark slide removed. Note the arched spring in the center used to place forward pressure on the back of the glass plate and hold the plate in firm register.

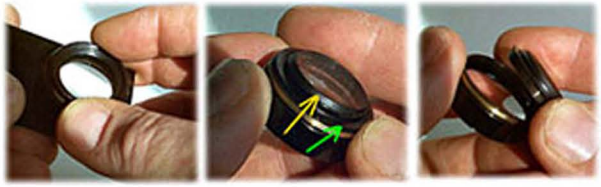
In the dark the glass plate is inserted under a lip on the left side and then pushed down flush with the frame before two small tabs on the right side are rotated to hold the plate in place.

The loaded film holder ready for insertion of the dark slide. Although glass plates are no longer available one can use the glass plate as a template and cut a piece of sheet film to fit. It is then necessary to set the sheet of film on the glass plate prior to insertion in the film holder. The spring behind the plate holds the sandwiched film nicely in place.

The film holders are precision made from teak wood with nickel plated brass hardware. Triangular metal corners inserts on the opposite add strength and rigidity to the whole assembly.

The Carl Zeiss Jenna lenses used are of the Tessar design. The last 4 serial numbers on the front lens element are engraved on the back lens element to provide a matching set.

These particular lenses are very easy to take apart for cleaning. No tools required. Simply unscrew the front element to expose the inside surface



The back assembly unscrews in a similar fashion. The assembly can be completely dismantled by gently turning the bezel (green arrow). Be careful of the black paint on the rim of the glass (yellow arrow). It will chip off very easily and if that happens it is important to replace the paint in order to restore the proper optical properties of the lens (the paint absorbs internal reflections).

Original handmade carrying case for the Contessa. The excellent condition of the camera owes itself to the years of proper protection. Too bad today's cameras are sold without cases.

A = Ga[illegible]ige Beleuchtung: Sonnenschein, weiße Wolken
B = Mi[illegible]ere Beleuchtung: hell ohne Sonne oder im Schatten
C = Ungünstige Beleuchtung: trüb, neblig, regnerisch.

Aufnahme-Gegenstand	Objektive mit Öffnung 1:4,5			Objektive mit Öffnung 1:6 bis 6,8		
	A	B	C	A	B	C
	Sekunde	Sekunde	Sekunde	Sekunde	Sekunde	Sekunde
Landschaft	1/100	1/35	1/15	1/50	1/25	1/10
Personengruppe im Freien	1/100	1/50	1/25	1/50	1/25	1/15
Bewegte Straßenszene	1/120	1/100	1/50	1/120	1/100	1/25
[illegible] Pferd	1/500	1/250	1/250	1/500	1/180	—
Renn-Pferd, Auto, Aeroplan	1/1200	1/500	1/500	1/1200	1/500	—

A = Sunny days
B = Slightly Overcast Days
C = Overcast

	aperture f/4.5			aperture f/6 to f/6.8		
	A	B	C	A	B	C
Landscape	1/100	1/35	1/15	1/50	1/25	1/10
Persons in group or alone	1/100	1/50	1/25	1/50	1/25	1/15
Moving Street Scenes	1/120	1/100	1/50	1/120	1/100	1/25
Walking Horse	1/500	1/250	1/250	1/500	1/180	-
Running Horses, Auto, Airplane	1/1200	1/500	1/500	1/1200	1/500	-

Exposure Chart (with translation)

Stereo-Deckrullo-Nettel

Universal Camera for Stereo- and panoramic pictures using plates or film 10×15 cm, 4×6 in.

The Deckrullo-Nettel 3¼×4¼ and 5×7 can also be fitted for Stereo- and panoramic pictures on special order.

Model A.

One of the Stereo lenses comes with an eccentric convertible plate, so that it can be used for panoramic pictures, the dividing blind being readily removable.

Page from a Nettel catalogue showing the Model A Stereo 5 x 7 cm format