

## INTERVIEW WITH TOSHIYUKI TERADA

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By: Albert Sierra

Olympus brought to Barcelona Toshiyuki Terada, Product Manager in the DI Product Planning Department in Japan. He talked us about the new 4/3 reflex and about Olympus future developments:

Mr. Terada, the E-500 has a very traditional SLR look, especially if you consider the very unconventional E-300 design. Why? *Well, the E-300 had a very innovative design, this is true, and it has pleased a lot of our customers, but we have found that a lot of people expect a more traditional look in a DSLR, and this is the main reason for this change. But this will not stop Olympus to design new cameras with both way, innovative and traditional, which is not only appearance design wise, but also technology aspect.*

The biggest change regarding the new camera is obviously its new viewfinder. Is it bigger? *No, in fact is slightly smaller than in the E-300. You must be aware that is really difficult to build a big viewfinder from the little mirror of the 4/3 standard. If you magnify too much the image, you will produce distortions and even aberrations in the viewfinder, and we don't want this... We absolutely prefer a good little viewfinder than a big viewfinder with low quality image. And the E-500 viewfinder is pretty good. And its size has helped keeping the body really small and light too. We think it is a best balance of body size, finder quality and magnification size for this catalogue camera.*

The sensor is the same found in the E-300, but, have you improved the low pass filter? *Not exactly. The low pass filter is the same but the Infrared filter is new. Now we are using a quite better IR filter, the same that you can find in some professional cameras. It is a really good component that will help to improve the image quality.*

And have you improved the image processing, especially jpg's? *Yes, of course. We are constantly improving firmware, and with every new product, we include these improvements.*

Auto focus speed too? In our tests we have found that the focus accuracy and reliability in Olympus reflex is very good, better than some of the competition, but the Olympus auto focus are still slow... *This is true. Olympus has not a long run in auto focus making, as other brands have. We know that we must work fast and hard in this respect. We are proud of our auto focus accuracy, and probably it is better than other brands ones, because accuracy mainly remains in the work and integration of the system: lens, mount, sensors... And we have created an all-new integrated system. Other brands don't. But focus speed remains mainly in the firmware, in the algorithms, and we are improving this. I ask my designers for more speed too! But, always keeping accuracy. We try to improve the speed while keeping the accuracy.*

Amateur photographers and especially professionals didn't expect a change in the E-300 series, but in the E-1... I think you know this...? *Yes we know, obviously... Many people ask us why we don't put an 8mpx sensor in the E-1 body and throw it to the market. But is not so easy. We must consider all the pieces as part of one system: sensor, firmware, processor, hardware... and it must work all together. This is how we see it.*

But you cannot wait much longer... *Yes, we must say something about it in the next event, maybe PMA... You must "say" or you must "present"...? Say.*

What is the feedback you have about the needs of pro photographers regarding the design of the new professional camera? *(Smiling) Sports shooters ask for more speed and more focus points, and the new camera obviously will have. There are not many concerns about the body. Wedding and studio photographers are quite happy with the camera.*

Are you tied to Kodak sensors or maybe the new camera will have a Panasonic-Matsushita sensor? *No, we are not tied in any way with a sensor manufacturer. We are seeking suppliers for this component in many directions, any you must not think only in big names, we are very interested in some little companies that are making very interesting advances in sensor development.*

And what about image stabilization? *Stabilization is one of the big points for all camera makers nowadays, and for Olympus too.*

But if we take a look to the current map of Zuiko lenses we see clearly a big effort in tele lenses, with a lot of really good and expensive stuff. You cannot start now to duplicate all this lenses with stabilized versions, it would be absolutely anti-economical... You must be working indeed in body-integrated stabilization! *(Laughs) Ha, ha, ha!!! That's a quite logical thinking, but I cannot talk about it...*

Have you considered the production of a module of stabilization between the body and the lens, for example integrated in a teleconverter? *No.*

Now we have an E-X line for professionals with E-1, an E-XXX line for starting amateurs with E-500. The E-XX line for advanced amateurs will start at the same time of the new professional camera or maybe sooner? *We can not say the plan itself, but we are considering also the middle class for E-xx.*

Thank you very much, Terada San.