



Canon

Is Canon's fastest 50 really worth \$2,500?

Hands on: Considerably larger and heavier than average 50mm lenses, Canon's rotund, mostly matte-black 50mm f/1.0 is well-finished in a rubber-like material patterned to resemble leather. Its amply sized, red-accented manual focusing ring is smooth-turning and finished in finger-friendly, ribbed rubber. The filter ring does not turn during focusing.

Calibrations include dual focusing scales (feet in green, meters in white), plus a depth-of-field scale for apertures f/4–16, and a red IR focusing mark. All numerals are large and easily legible; distances in meters are in a somewhat larger typeface than feet. A sliding, three-position auto-focus/manual focus switch offers two autofocusing ranges: full (23³/₈ inches to infinity) and limited (39 inches to infinity).

In the lab: SQF data indicate good performance at all apertures. Barrel distortion was slight (0.9 percent), and exposure accuracy at the film plane was extremely accurate, with about 1/10-stop underexposure across the aperture range, except for 1/2-stop underexposure at maximum aperture due to light falloff. At the closest focusing distance of 23¹/₄ inches (1:8.96), center sharpness poor from f/1–2, and excellent from f/4–16. Corner sharpness was poor from f/1–8, and acceptable from f/11–16. Optimum performance was at f/11.

In the field: Test slides were very sharp and contrasty from center to corner at every aperture, except for center and corners from

images made at f/1 and f/1.4, where image quality was deemed slightly soft—par for the course for a super-speed lens. Flare was very well controlled at all apertures; light falloff was gone by f/2.8. AF action was somewhat slow; extremely quiet.

Conclusion: If you absolutely need what an f/1.0 50mm can deliver, this lens will provide it. Whether it's the extra-creamy defocused

backgrounds created by ultra shallow depth of field, or handholdable shutter speeds in dismal light, or extended flash range, Canon's 50mm f/1.0 won't disappoint. These benefits come at a price, however. Only you can decide whether the unique look this lens can provide is worth the price you pay in weight, sharpness, AF speed, and dollars.



SPECIFICATIONS

50mm (51.52mm tested), f/1.0 (f/1.06 tested), 11 elements in 9 groups. Focusing turns 310 degrees counterclockwise. **Diagonal View Angle:** 46 degrees. **Weight:** 2lbs 4⁵/₈ oz. **Filter size:** 72mm. **Mount:** Canon AF. **Lenshood:** Included. **Lens pouch:** Included. **List price:** \$4,210. **Street price:** Approx. \$2,530.

MAG	@50mm					
	5	6	8	12	17	22
Size	4x6	5x7	8x10	11x14	16x20	20x24
1.0	93.7	92.5	87.9	73.6	55.4	45.5
1.4	93.9	92.8	88.3	74.6	57.1	47.3
2.0	95.1	94.2	90.8	80.4	66.2	57.3
2.8	95.7	94.9	92.0	82.9	70.5	62.7
4.0	96.4	95.7	93.3	85.9	75.5	68.6
5.6	96.7	96.2	94.0	87.6	78.1	71.4
8.0	96.8	96.3	94.3	88.1	78.9	72.1
11.0	96.5	96.0	93.8	87.1	77.0	69.4
16.0	96.1	95.4	92.9	85.1	73.6	65.1