

Leica revives iconic Soviet Zenit camera

September 26 2018



A Russian special police officer with a Zenit camera around his neck seen standing guard in February 2000 at a Chechen-Ingush border checkpoint

German camera manufacturer Leica is reviving the legendary Soviet Zenit camera more than 30 years after its mass production ended, with a new digital model unveiled on Wednesday.

The [new camera](#), showcased at a photography exhibition in Cologne on

Wednesday, will be available from December in Europe and from January 2019 in Russia.

The design of the new Zenit M is inspired by the Soviet Union's Zenit and Zorki cameras—which, in turn, had ironically been inspired by Leica.

The new [camera](#) will be jointly produced by Russia and Germany and will sell for 5,000 to 6,000 euros (\$5,900-\$7,000).

"The main target audience is luxury and amateur photographers," a spokesman for the Russian holding company Shvabe told AFP, insisting that the cameras will be worth their price tag.

"The price of the product will be absolutely adequate, taking into account the brands that are taking part in this project," the spokesman said.

Shvabe—which is controlled by Russia's state conglomerate Rostec—describes the project as a "synergy" between Leica technologies and the Krasnogorsk plant, the maker of the original Zenit and Zorki cameras.

The partnership will allow the Russian group to resume the production of the camera under the Zenit brand name, while embarking on a new digital course.



The design of the new Zenit M is inspired by the Soviet Union's historic models

Production of Zenit cameras flourished in the Soviet Union. They were also widely exported to the Eastern Bloc and eventually became available in the West.

Mass production of the camera stopped in 1986. A limited number of cameras was still made at the plant until 2005, when it stopped assembling whole cameras and began making lenses.

The new camera will be based on the Leica M 240 platform, with a lense "completely designed and manufactured in Russia," the Shvabe holding said.

"The new optics will be manufactured according to the new quality standards set by Leica Camera, but at the same time will preserve that unobtrusive artistic picture received on the lenses of the Krasnogorsk plant," its spokesman said.

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Citation: Leica revives iconic Soviet Zenit camera (2018, September 26) retrieved 9 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-09-leica-revives-iconic-soviet-zenit.html>

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