

Cameras We Use: The Wollensak Stereo 10 and Revere Stereo 33

by Ray Moxom



Revere Stereo 33 ↑

← Wollensak Stereo 10

What do these two stereo cameras have in common?

Well to start with they look alike and share a common body. The Wollensak Stereo 10 and the Revere Stereo 33 were the same basic camera fitted with different lenses and shutters. The Wollensak Stereo 10 has superior lenses and a higher top shutter speed.

Both the Revere and Wollensak companies had been established for many years, when in the early 1950s they decided to share design and tooling so that they could each market a stereo camera in the boom period of 35mm colour stereo photography that had been created by the Seaton Rochwite designed Stereo Realist. Components and resources were sourced from the two companies and from Germany.

A BIT OF REVERE & WOLLENSAK COMPANY HISTORY

Born in Kiev, Ukraine Samuel Briskin came to the United States in the early 1900's and founded the Excel Radiator Company. The name Revere came from the copper supplier that extended him credit for his radiator business. The company moved into many other areas including radios, tape recorders, movie cameras, projectors, still cameras and an electric drill similar to a Dremel. Samuel Briskin died in 1961.

Andrew Wollensak joined the lens maker Bausch and Lomb as a machinist in 1882 and was involved with the design of the Iris Diaphragm shutter. In 1899 he and his brother establish the Rauber & Wollensak company which quickly became well known for their high quality reasonably priced camera shutters and later for their lenses. Rauber was a financial backer whose name was dropped when he died in 1901. Andrew Wollensak died in 1936. Wollensak made lenses for Leica cameras during WW2 and many of the 50s era press and large format cameras had Wollensak shutters and lenses.

Eventually the Revere company took over Wollensak, but by 1963, the few remaining products were referred to as made by Revere-Wollensak Division of 3M company.

Specifications for the Wollensak 10 and the Revere 33 are given below.

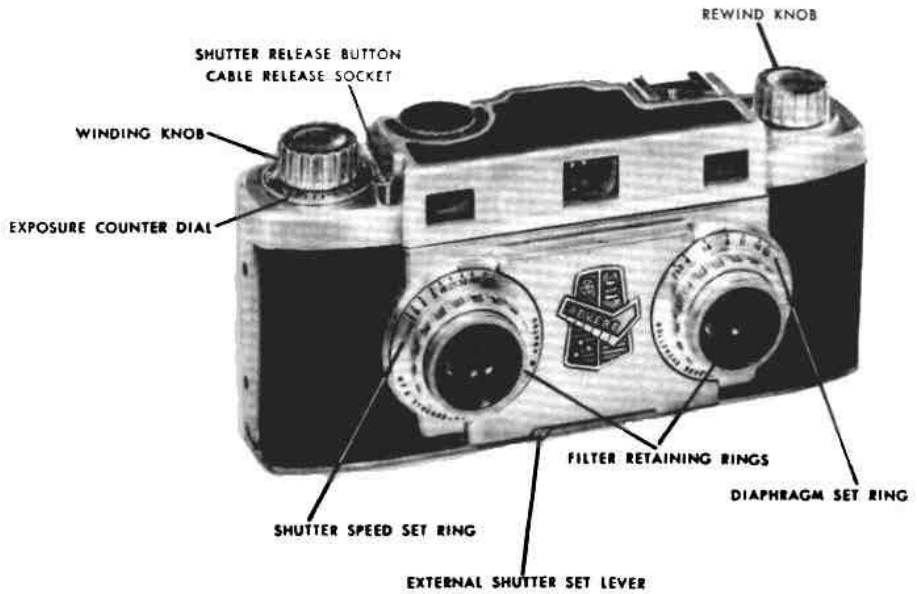
Camera:	Revere Stereo 33	Wollensak Stereo 10
Manufacturer:	Revere Camera Company, Chicago, IL, U.S.A.	Wollensak Optical Co., Rochester, NY, USA
Year Produced:	early 1950s	early 1950s
Size:	172 x 78 x 60 mm	172 x 78 x 60 mm
Weight:	760 grams	780 grams
Film Format:	35mm	35mm
Type of Lenses:	3 element Cooke type	4 element Tessar type
Lenses:	Coated 35mm f/3.5 Revere Wollensak Amaton Lenses Later models had Coated 35mm f/3.5 Enna Chromar Lenses	Coated 35mm f/2.7 Wollensak Amaton Lenses
Lens Separation:	70mm	70mm
Shutter Speeds:	1/2, 1/5, 1/10, 1/25, 1/50, 1/100, 1/200, T, B	1/2, 1/5, 1/10, 1/25, 1/50, 1/100, 1/200, 1/300, T, B
Image Size:	Dual 24mm x 23mm	Dual 24mm x 23mm
Stereo Pairs:	29 (on 36exp film)	29 (on 36exp film)

The bodies of the Wollensak and Revere cameras are solidly made from cast and machined aluminium.

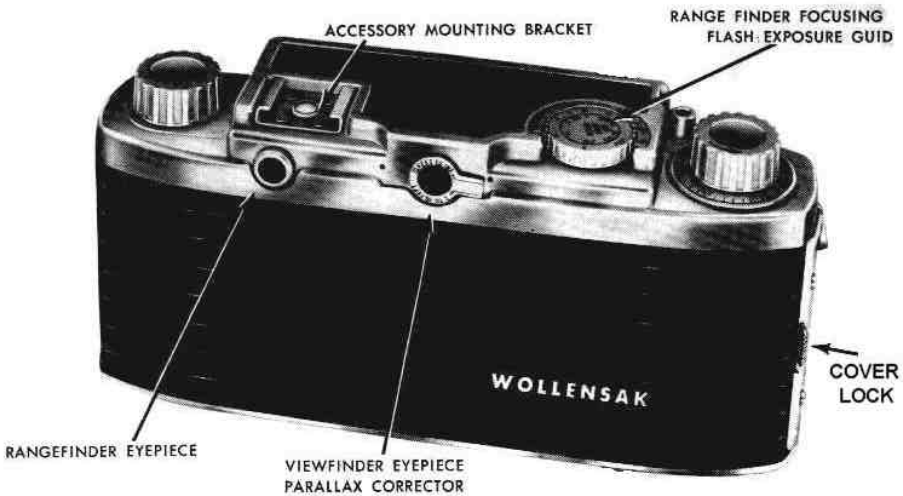
The 3 element f3.5 lenses on the Revere vignette at small apertures. As with the f3.5 lens on the Realist and many other stereo cameras it is best to avoid using f22 and f16 aperture settings. This means that the 1/200 sec shutter speed needs to be used for most shots in bright sunshine. It is interesting that this is not a problem with the Kodak Stereo 35 as the Kodak Anaston lenses do not vignette.

The Wollensak 10 is highly sought after and is one of the better stereo cameras of the '50s. My understanding is that the f2.7 Wollensak Amaton lenses are the superior 4 element in 3 group 'Tessar' type lenses whereas the f3.5 Wollensak Amaton lenses used on the sister Revere stereo camera are of 3 element 'Cooke' type design. It does seem strange that two different lens designs would both be called 'Amaton'. Vignetting is not a problem with the Wollensak 10. The Wollensak also has a higher 1/300 sec top shutter speed.

The various parts of the Wollensak 10 and Revere 33 stereo cameras are shown in the figures below.



Above is the front view of the Revere 33
and below is the rear view of the Wollensak 10



Like most 1950s cameras the shutters tend to get “Sticky” and require cleaning, lubrication and adjustment if they have not been used for some time. Also lenses may need to be cleaned if the camera has not been stored under optimal clean dry conditions.

The Revere 33 initially had Wollensak Amaton f3.5 lenses. Later models had Ennar Chromar f3.5 lenses. Both were 3 element 'Cooke' type lenses.

Focusing is via the Focusing Knob on the top of the camera which moves the focal plane. It was this feature that made it easier for the Wollensak or Reverensak lens hacking mentioned later, as there was no focusing mechanism at the front of the camera.

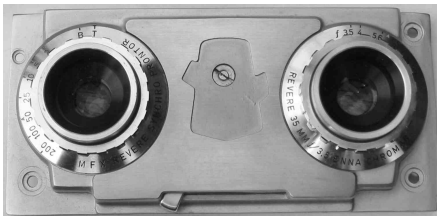
These stereo cameras had a number of features that owners still find useful.

They include:

- An 'X' Sync hot shoe that works with electronic flash.
- A coupled rangefinder.
- Viewfinder parallax correction.
- Film winding cocks the shutter.
- Ability to make intentional double exposures via a shutter set lever at the bottom of the lens panel.
- A spirit level in the viewfinder - this can be one of the most useful aids available to the stereographer.

The camera bodies are distinguished by the black heavily embossed leather on the Wollensak 10 and the brown lightly embossed leather on the Revere 33.

When production of the Revere and Wollensak stereo cameras ceased in the late 1950s it seemed that lens board production was well ahead of camera production and the two companies sold off a large number of surplus lens boards. These were a combined lens and shutter panel. The lens boards that I have seen have either the Ennar Chromar f3.5 lenses (below left) that were used on later production Revere 33s or the Wollensak Amaton f2.7 lenses (below right) that were used on all Wollensak 10s.



Some Revere owners had their cameras updated with the superior f2.7 lenses and higher spec shutters made for the Wollensak. This lens hacking was not a simple task as it required machining of the surface of the revere camera to allow the correct lens to film spacing. These upgraded Revere stereo cameras are sometimes referred to as Wollenveres or Reverensaks. They have the brown leather covering of the Revere with the lenses and shutter of the Wollensak. If the job has been done correctly, these hybrid cameras are technically as good as a Wollensak 10.



Both cameras have provision for filters. The Wollensak Stereo 10 has an adaptor ring for 'Series V' filters (photo above) while the Revere Stereo 33 takes 'Series IV' filters.

While both companies were prolific manufactures of movie cameras. The name Revere appeared on a couple of non stereo still cameras and the Wollensak Stereo 10 was the only still camera that ever carried the Wollensak name.



The Wollensak name did however, appear on the shutters and lenses of many quality cameras. Most Speed and Crown Graphic press cameras of the 1940s and 50s had Wollensak shutters and lenses (photo at right).

It is a great pity that progress has seen the demise of two great names - Wollensak and Revere (Revere 33 logo below).

Revere³³



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