

Fresh Perspectives with Sinar

The Swiss brand Sinar continues to thrive and offers exciting solutions for photographers. Stefan Steib describes what has happened since the restart two years ago.



Phase One IQ4 with Sinar p3: it doesn't get more perfect than this.

In August 2022, something quite unusual happened in Munich. At that time, Christoph Fries from MacConsult took over the entire Sinar distribution, development, inventory, and spare parts warehouse out of passion for the Sinar system and because Leica didn't quite know how to proceed with the Sinar system. He thus became the Bavarian "Mister Sinar" – and Munich became the "Bavarian Switzerland" in terms of photo technology.

The Sinar history was already covered in digit! 2022, and the outlook for the future was presented. It seemed like a Herculean task at the time, as Sinar was once the flagship manufacturer among professional camera companies: Swiss precision, technologically high-end.

How has it progressed in the last two years, and what has been achieved? Admittedly without millions of euros, but with a lot of enthusiasm and a loyal base of worldwide customers who still earn their living with their Sinar cameras and remain loyal to the system.

A new beginning with innovative product extensions for Sinar cameras

First, many things had to be reorganized: responsibilities and information had to be transferred from Leica, the website, logistics, inventory – all of this required a lot of work. Parallel to the cleanup process, the development of new products was initiated in 2022, initially as 3D prints. Now, the BALPRO adapters for Fuji GFX and Hasselblad X and the mirrorless small-format cameras are ready.

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In cooperation with Novoflex, these can be adapted to the P2 and P3 cameras.

The Sinar adapter plates are equally suitable for front and third-party lenses. This allows, for example, the versatile use of the famous Mamiya RZ/RB optics. All BALPRO adapters from Novoflex are compatible with the newly developed Sinar BALPRO adapter plate.

The Q-Mount bellows adapters, seen as successors to the Sinar SLR adapters, are currently available for Fuji GFX, Hasselblad HAX, and Leica SL. All three camera mounts can be exchanged via magnetic connection. Additionally, there are fixed camera bellows with Nikon Z, Canon EOS R, and Sony Alpha mounts. Due to compatibility with Arca-Swiss profiles, any number of desired combinations of L-brackets and cages are possible. Sinar delivers the set in such a way that an adjustment of all cameras in any direction allows for optimal sensor positioning on the Sinar.

Many existing digital Apo Sinarone lenses can be converted into aperture bodies or Phase One X-Shutter with the most modern available technology.

Collaborations are the new fuel at Sinar

As mentioned earlier, Sinar has begun an intensive collaboration with Novoflex, where Andreas Marx works directly with Christoph Fries to develop many detailed solutions. Many good ideas have flowed into this, which increasingly excites Sinar's loyal customers. As Christoph Fries mentioned in the pre-interview, long-time Sinar customers from all over Europe are now coming to him in Munich for advice – and then also to buy complete customized solutions. Next, in 2022, Phase One and Sinar came together for talks, previously direct competitors – but times change, as Christoph Fries explains in the interview. Now MacConsult – and thus Sinar – is a Phase One dealer and can offer optimal packages with the latest technology and direct system integration advice.

Trade-in of Sinar backs for Phase One

This now also includes the trade-in of Sinar backs and credit for Phase IQ products. Their BSI sensors with up to 150 Mpix currently represent the technological pinnacle in the digital photography sector. And especially with older technical lenses and adjustments,



Optionally, aperture bodies or X-Shutter lenses can be combined with the Phase-One-IQ4-Back (Pictures: © Natalia Kepesz).

these new BSI sensors are now finally "technical camera-proofed," solving the issue of color shifts, especially in the wide-angle range. The trade-in is an absolute win-win situation for the owners of the old Evolution and eXact backs from Sinar. Their support had already ended a few years ago, and as a user, one had to use old Mac hardware and software – this is only feasible for a limited time in production environments. These customers are now fully updated and integrated.

MacConsult as a contact and service provider

The result is extremely positive for all parties. There is probably no other regular dealer with as much know-how as MacConsult, because – now a little drum roll – Hasselblad is also in the portfolio; the new 907X backs are also supported on Sinar cameras.

With the new DJI management, many things have also become easier, more international, and more professional at Hasselblad.

So if you go to a dealer/provider with such a broad spectrum (there are also Alpa and Leica, let's see if Fujifilm will join at some point?), you can be sure to get the right product for the customer and not a solution because it has to be sold brand-specifically.

Another success: there is now also a technical service for Sinar cameras, almost everything can be done with the existing spare parts and the newly acquired workshop (in Germany) – super important and a priority.

Upcoming workshops, e.g., at photography unlimited e.V. in Berlin, form the framework program. What is still missing is a more intensive update of the website, which is still managed from Switzerland as a CH site.

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SINAR-BALPRO- and Q-MOUNT-ADAPTER

The universal **Sinar-Q-Mount-Bellow-Adapter** for mirrorless camera bodies offers the best possible adjustability and compatibility with shorter focal lengths lenses. This depends on the respective camera and lens combination. Adjustable for different sensor positions in portrait and landscape format. The **Sinar-BALPRO** adapter plate can be supplemented with the Novoflex-BALPRO components. Recommended for use with mechanical medium format and 35 mm lenses that allow manual aperture and shutter control. It can also be used on the rear standard for an inexpensive and simple adaptation of camera bodies, although limitations in adjustability and short focal lengths are possible.



Left & Center: Sinar p3 with Q-Mount-Bellow-Adapter for Fuji GFX. Right: Sinar p3 with BALPRO- and Q-Mount-Adapter. (Pictures: © Andreas Marx)

Compatibility of Sinar-BALPRO- and Q-Mount-Adapter	Novoflex BALPRO	Arca-Swiss-Profile	Lenses from 100 mm	Lenses from 50 mm	Sinar p2
Sinar-BALPRO-Adapter plate for Lenses and Sinar p3	+	-	+	+	4 x 5 "-Reduction adapter needed
Sinar-BALPRO-Adapter plate for camera bodies and Sinar p3	+	-	o	-	4 x 5 "-Reduction adapter needed
Sinar-Q-Mount-Bellow adapter for camera bodies and Sinar p3	-	+	+	+	optional 4 x 5 "-Bellow available

- not compatible | o limited | + fully compatible

>>> However, this is really very time-consuming and resources still need to be found. As I said, we are not dealing with a venture capital-financed million-dollar company here, but rather with enthusiasts, a lot of goodwill on the part of Leica in the transfer of rights and goods and a loyal user community.

Bottom Line

This was the only way to not only keep Sinar alive, but also to restore some pink color to his cheeks thanks to targeted heart massage. The patient is alive, developing splendidly and starting to grow.

Overall, it is very encouraging. As you can see, even in difficult times, with conviction, enthusiasm and passion it is possible not only to save a product that may already be under threat, but to actually get it back on track - indeed, to achieve growth. And collaborations in the professional photography industry are exactly the way to continue operating companies in niches - and probably have to. If all those involved make an effort and show good will, I definitely see a good opportunity for Germany as a business location.

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Iconic design and professional workflow combined.



“We consider each request individually.”

Interview with Christoph Fries, Sinar

❗ What is the current status of Sinarback development?

Christoph Fries: Sinarbacks always had unique selling points, no question: multishot, color gamut and neutrality of

of color reproduction. As a result, they have been as popular in cultural heritage museums as they have been in photo studios. However, current developments in CMOS sensors also show that there is little acceptance for compromises in mobile use. We cannot successfully occupy a niche within a niche. I don't see any opportunity for high investments in new backs, electronic shutters and software. We have therefore decided not to develop Sinarbacks any more.

❗ Which backs do you recommend for Sinar cameras?

CF: As a photographer, I used my first Sinar digital back in 1996. With that experience, I can say that I have never photographed with an imaging process that comes close to the quality of a Phase One IQ4 back - including analog large format photography. That's why I'm delighted to be working with Phase One to launch a trade-in offer that will, for the first time, give Sinarback owners up to 19,000 off their current purchase price - making it easier for them to switch to this great technology. For a smaller budget, the

Hasselblad CFV-100-II back is an inexpensive alternative that offers similar sensor technology with slightly less resolution. Further options for adapting camera bodies and lenses from the full and medium format range are available with our Sinar Q-Mount and BALPRO adapters. We know that photographic tasks and the necessary budget can vary and therefore consider each request from photographers individually.

❗ What can you offer owners of older Sinarbacks?

CF: We have a stock of Sinarback eXact and eVolution that will be sufficient for the next few years to cover the needs of existing customers who wish to replace or upgrade their equipment. We are happy to support customers with advice on switching to the latest backs from Phase One and Hasselblad. We accompany the process of converting lenses to XShutter or aperture bodies with perfectly fitting accessories from the Sinar system.

❗ How does the trade-in process for Sinar backs work?

CF: To upgrade to a Phase-One-IQ4-Back, interested customers should contact our MacConsult sales department in Munich. There, all technical questions regarding the conversion and the existing equipment will be examined and clarified. Of course, MacConsult has all devices in its demo stock for testing.