

The “thin” Tele-Elmarit

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The 90mm/2.8 Tele-Elmarit “thin” version is the second, smaller and lighter of the Tele-Elmarits. The lens is called “thin” to distinguish from its immediate predecessor with which it shares the same code number and name.

It is the smallest and lightest 90mm/2.8 M mount lens, *c.f.*, the 90mm/2.8 Elmarit weighs 380 grams. It is similar in size and appearance as the 90mm/4 Elmar “CL” but is one stop faster. The lens has rectilinear motion, clicked at the half stops, and a non-removable head.

Optically it is a telephoto design with 4 elements in 4 groups from Leitz/Leica’s Midland Ontario facility. It does not appear to be patented in the U.S. or Germany. If it were it would be in the classes 359/747 or 359/773. The lens is N(a) per Kingslake (1946).¹

This lens is praised and panned by users. When praised it is held as an outstanding travel lens. Some complain that it is soft at $f/2.8$. Puts writes “[s]topped down to $f/4$ or $f/5,6$ it is an excellent performer.” However, Puts being true to form finds the lens gives “a flatter, more dull image, due to a lower contrast and the softness of the very fine textural details,” than current Leica offering.

Of this lens Gandy writes:

[It] has a chronic problem to look out for . . . it can develop a severe etching of the rear element. The problem can be stopped in the early stages by a professional cleaning of the lens elements. If it has proceeded too far, however, cleaning will do no good and the damage is permanent.²

The lens came in a few versions. The rarest and most expensive is the chrome version which was produced in very limited quantities at the beginning of production. There was a special 1983 version engraved “Leica 1913–1983” to match the 70th Anniversary M4-P. Most were produced in Canada but some are engraved “Made in Germany”. The very late production specimens have “90” on lens barrel, while most are without. This lens can be upgraded to include the 6-bit encoded lens mount to interface with the new digital Leica.³

Lens	90mm $f/2.8$ Tele-Elmarit “thin”
Production years	1973/74–1989
Production code	11800
Finish	Black(common) or Chrome(rare)
Mount	M Mount
Barrel	Rigid, non-removable head
Optical Construction	4 elements in 4 groups(+−:−+)
Filter Size	39 mm
Apertures	$f/2.8$ – $f/16$
Angle of View	27°
Minimum Focus	1 m
Lens hood	11250 or IUFOO/12575
Units Produced	??
Serial numbers	2,585,001–3,500,000
Mass	225 g

Users recommend a good hood as the lens is flare prone. There are a variety of useful hoods. The lens was shipped with a 39 mm thread rubber hood 11250. However, many users recommend a 12575 or IUFOO hood. These rigid external mount hoods are designed for use with 90mm and 135mm lenses and are felt lined for added flare suppression.

Much data in the Table comes from Sartorius⁴ and Putts⁵.



Figure 1: The M mount, 90mm $f/2.8$ Tele-Elmarit “thin”.

¹R. Kingslake, 1946, “A Classification of Photographic Lens Types”, *JOSA* **36**, pp. 251–255.

²See, http://www.cameraquest.org/Leica_Lenses.html

³See, <http://www.leica-camera.us/news/news/1/801.html>

⁴Ghester Sartorius, 1999, *Identifying Leica Lenses*, Amphoto, pp. 100, 195, 201.

⁵E. Putts, 2002, *Leica M-Lenses, Their soul and secrets* Leica Camera, Solms.