

Fomatone and Foma Retrobrom are the only papers currently in production that can be used for colourful lith prints. Oriental Warmtone is also a Fomatone emulsion since some years.

In recent years, errors have occurred in the lithing of Foma papers. According to Foma, the cause is a different gelatine quality from batch no. 0777 onwards. With development times of more than 6 minutes, both larger circular spots (snowball effect) and structures reminiscent of marble surfaces can appear.

For the SE5 Lith developer I have already pointed out several times how to avoid these defects. For the ready-tuned Easy Lith there is of course also the possibility to prevent this evil by adding Lith D and a modified workflow. For users who want to lith exclusively with Fomatone or Retrobrom papers, I can offer a variant of the Easy A concentrate, which already contains the necessary amount of development retarders.

At first glance, it may not seem plausible to suggest short development times as a solution to the problem on the one hand and to use a higher dosage of retarding substances on the other. For the sake of understanding, I would like to point out the relationship between a high amount of light for coloured results and the resulting necessity of a high dilution of the developer in order to achieve both coloured highlights and deep lith shadows at times between 8 and 12 minutes. Until a few years ago, this is how the process worked. However, to avoid the faults mentioned above, development with the current batches of Fomatone should be completed after about 6 minutes. So if coloured results (as in the past) are desired, the paper needs a strong overexposure. However, the developer must not be heavily diluted to avoid too fast development. With the suggested mixture of 50ml A + 50ml B on approx. 900ml water, the development process would have to be interrupted after 2-3 minutes, a real lith effect cannot be created in this way. If, however, a retarder is added to such fast developers, you will end up with development times of between 5 and 6 minutes for a given amount of light (for high colourfulness). If a second bath is used, be it a pure alkaline solution or another developer, no defects occur, even if the total development time can then be 8 minutes or more.

With the concentrates specially adapted for Fomatone, the working solution can be prepared with slightly less B if a second bath with alkaline solution should be necessary. For example, 5 ml B can be used to prepare the second bath with approx. 500 ml water.

Developer settings:

SE5 Lith A+B+water + D (1+4 diluted) 50ml+50ml+900ml+25-50ml

Easy Lith A+B+water + D (1+4 diluted) 50ml+50ml+900ml+15-30ml

Easy Lith FT (Fomatone Special) A+B+water 50ml+40-50ml+900ml

Exposure:

Expose until a development time of 5 to 6 minutes results with the above-mentioned settings.

Example Fomatone 132

Easy Lith FT 50ml A + 45ml B + 900ml water, development time five minutes, followed by an alkali bath 5ml B to 500ml water one minute.

An alkali bath or a second developer is an option if after a development time of 5 to 6 minutes the shadows already have the desired density, but highlights and midtones still need to increase in density and colour saturation.



Two-bath Lith Polychrome (SE15)

With this two-bath process, the degree of colour intensity can be increased as well as reduced. With an identical approach of the lith developer, the image colour is largely determined by the degree of overexposure and by the mixing ratio of the three polychrome concentrates.

The longer the exposure, the more the tone shifts from yellow to red.

Fomatone 132

Easy Lith FT 50ml A + 45ml B + 900ml water, development time four and a half minutes, followed by Polychrome one minute.

Mix second developer:

Siena (glycine) 20ml + ammonium chloride 10ml + potassium carbonate 10ml + 1 litre water.



If more yellowish tones are desired, the amounts of chloride and carbonate should be reduced by about half. For identical light densities, the second developer then needs a slightly longer development time.

If more reddish tones are desired, the amount of developer concentrate Siena should be reduced by half. In this case, the development time should be 30 to 45 seconds.

Foma Retrobrom

During lith development of this paper, defects such as the snowball effect only occur when development times exceed 12 minutes. If this is taken into account, no special developer is actually necessary. However, there is little to be said against using the Easy Lith FT version with this paper. The only disadvantage could be the long exposure time due to the retarder and the resulting two-colour effect.

The paper already shows a slightly greenish tone during normal development. With lith development after strong overexposure and longer development times, greenish shadows and yellow-red highlights appear. If green shadows are undesirable, they can be toned down to a reddish shade using selenium toning. The usual approach of producing less coloured tones by shorter exposure and longer development is limited with this developer variant because of the high amount of development retarder.



Easy Lith FT 50ml A + 50ml B + 900ml water. The development time required to blacken the shadows is much longer with retrobrome than with fomatone. This print was developed for 10 minutes.

The two-bath version with Lith Omega increases the colourfulness even more. Especially with dense and high-contrast negatives, an "afterburner" can be useful if the high-lights should also have a high level of density. In order not to make things too easy for myself, I also exposed here in contact from a high-contrast and red-brown printed negative on inkjet film. For graded papers like retrobrome, such colours, like the stain of pyro developers by the way, are an additional, often too high light blocker, because the paper is sensitised to the complementary colour. Nevertheless, such negatives are suitable for the lith process, but they need a high amount of light and possibly a second developer to be able to handle high contrasts.



Retrobrom SP 152 with two-bath development.
Easy Lith FT 50ml A + 50ml B + 900ml water, development time 9 minutes, followed by:
Lith Omega 1+100 one minute.