Exploring the Sony Alpha DSLR-A200

Knowing your camera is one of the keys to being a better photographer. It could be argued that it is more important than understanding exposure or even composition. The A200, after all, has a great auto setting that sets the exposure for you, and composition can be a matter of opinion, but not knowing where to set the Flash mode or how to access the white balance setting can severely hinder your photography. Knowing your camera enables you to adjust the white balance settings, change the ISO, switch metering and autofocus modes, and adjust any setting without having to spend a lot of time finding the right button, switch, or menu option.

Chapters 1 and 2 help you learn about all the settings, controls, and menus of the A200. It takes time and can seem daunting, especially because some controls have more than one function. But the first step is to learn where all those buttons and switches are located on the camera.

One of the things that always seems to impress people when I am photographing is that I know where and how to change the settings I want, quickly. If the time comes to switch between Single image drive mode and Continuous drive mode, I know that it can be done with a single button. And you will, too.

Camera Controls

Holding the camera as you would when shooting, you can see that the layout of the buttons and the controls all are well thought out. Use the following figures as a guide to the locations of all the various controls on your A200. After time, accessing your most commonly used controls should be second nature.

On the front

The most important part on the front of the A200, shown in figure 1.1, is the lens mount opening. This is the most vulnerable part of the camera, so if a lens is not attached, a body cap needs to be used. The less time this is open to the elements, the better. I leave a lens attached most of the time. This keeps the camera ready to be used at a moment's notice and doesn't let any dust and dirt into the camera when stored in my camera bag.

Built-in flash

Lens contacts

Self-timer lamp

Handgrip

Lens mount release button

Mirror

Lens mount

1.1 The front of the A200 without a lens mounted

The features on the front of the camera also include:

✦ **Built-in flash.** Pressing the flash button on the left side of the flash manually opens the flash. The flash also automatically opens when the camera is in Auto mode and the built-in light meter determines that the scene is too dark and the flash is necessary. To close the flash, just push down from the top until it locks into place. Figure 1.1 shows the flash in the open position.

✦ **Self-timer lamp.** The Self-timer lamp flashes when either the 2-second or the 10-second Self-timer mode is used. The Self-timer is accessed in the Drive mode, which is covered later in this chapter.

✦ **Handgrip.** The ergonomic handgrip houses the battery. The grip is comfortable and secure for horizontal and vertical shooting.

✦ **Mirror.** The mirror reflects the light that comes through the lens up to the viewfinder letting the photographer see the same view as the camera. When the Shutter button is pressed, the mirror flips up out of the way so that the light can reach the sensor. The mirror is located inside the camera body and should not be touched.

✦ **Lens contacts.** These are the contacts that communicate between the camera body and the camera lens.

✦ **Lens mount release button.** This button, when pressed, unlocks the lens from the body and makes it possible to remove the lens.

✦ **Lens mount.** This is where you attach the lens. The Sony lens mount is based on the Minolta

A-type lens mount and can accept all Sony camera lenses and a variety of older Minolta A-type lenses. You can read more about lenses in Chapter 5.

On the top

The top of the A200 has three of the most important controls you'll use, the Mode dial, the Control Dial, and the Shutter button. There are also dedicated buttons for the drive mode and ISO along with a hot shoe for external flashes.

✦ **Hot shoe.** The hot shoe lets you attach an external Sony flash unit such as the HVL-F58AM, HVL-F56AM, HVL-F42AM, or HVL-F36AM, along with flashes from third-party vendors such as Promaster, Metz, and Sigma.

✦ **Mode dial.** This is where you set the recording mode on the camera. The choices are Auto, a fully automatic mode; P, Program Auto mode; A, Aperture Priority mode; S, Shutter Priority mode; M, Manual mode; one of the six scene modes; and an Auto mode with no flash.

✦ **Control dial.** The control dial is where the photographer changes the shooting settings. When in P, Program Auto mode, rotating the dial adjusts the shutter speed. When in A, Aperture Priority mode, the dial controls the aperture. When in S, Shutter Priority mode, the dial controls the shutter speed. When in M, Manual mode, the Control dial alone controls the shutter speed, and when combined with pressing the Exposure Compensation/AV button, it controls the aperture.

Control dial

Mode dial

Shutter
button

Hot
shoe

Drive
button

ISO
button

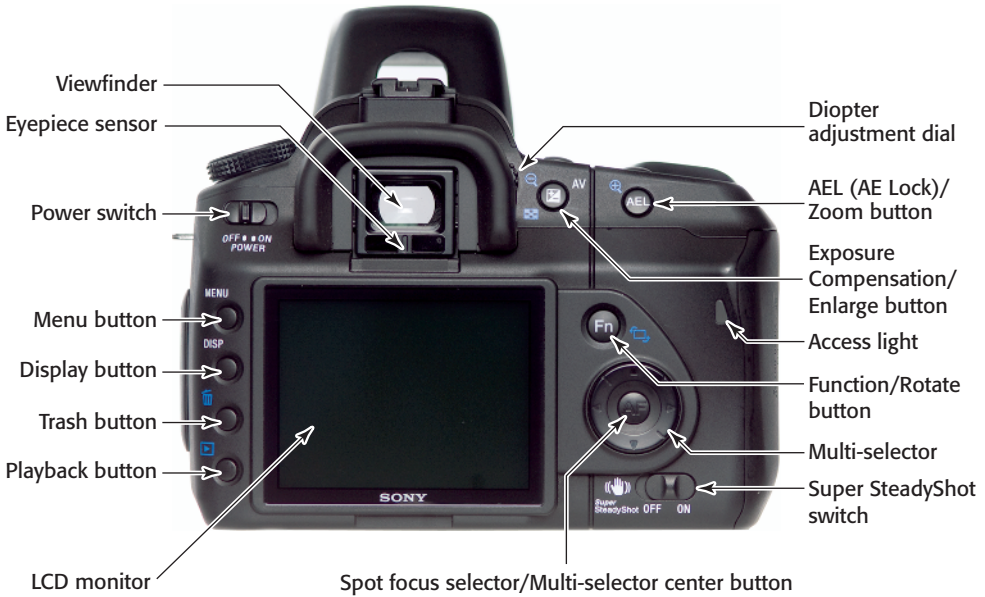Image sensor
plane indicator

1.2 A top view of the camera

✦ **Shutter button.** When you press
this button all the way down, the
shutter releases and the photo is
taken. When pressed halfway down,
the camera autofocuses using one
of the nine autofocus sensors.

✦ **Drive button.** This button opens
the Drive mode menu on the LCD
screen.

✦ **ISO button.** This button opens the
ISO menu on the LCD screen.

✦ **Image sensor plane indicator.**
This marking on the camera body is
used if you need to measure the
exact distance from the subject to
the image sensor.

On the back

The back of the A200 is intelligently laid out
with the Function button, Multi-selector,
Super SteadyShot switch, Exposure com-
pensation/Enlarge button, and AEL Lock

button all easily accessed with your thumb.
This lets you change the picture-taking set-
tings without having to change your grip.

✦ **Power switch.** This turns the cam-
era on and off. The A200 has a
built-in sensor-cleaning mode that
vibrates the sensor to shake off any
dust every time the power is turned
off. The slight vibration when turn-
ing the camera off is normal.

✦ **Menu button.** The Menu button
opens the Main menu on the LCD
screen.

✦ **Display button.** The Display button
enables you to switch between the
detailed display and the enlarged
display in the Recording mode. The
Display button also cycles through
the different display modes when
in the Playback mode. The bright-
ness of the LCD screen can be
adjusted by pressing the Display
button for a few seconds.

Viewfinder

Eyepiece sensor

Power switch

Menu button

Display button

Trash button

Playback button

Diopter adjustment dial

AEL (AE Lock)/ Zoom button

Exposure Compensation/ Enlarge button

Access light

Function/Rotate button

Multi-selector

Super SteadyShot switch

LCD monitor

Spot focus selector/Multi-selector center button

1.3 A rear view of the A200

✦ **Trash button.** When you are reviewing images on the LCD screen, pressing this button opens the Delete Image screen. There is a choice to delete the image or to cancel, which returns the display to reviewing images mode.

✦ **Playback button.** The Playback button is pressed to view on the LCD screen the images already taken.

✦ **LCD screen.** The 2.7-inch LCD screen displays different information depending on the mode.

✦ **Viewfinder.** The viewfinder shows a bright clear view of the scene shown through the lens.

✦ **Eyepiece sensor.** This sensor right below the viewfinder can determine if you are looking through the eyepiece. The default setting is for the LCD screen to turn off when the sensor determines that you are looking through the viewfinder.

✦ **Diopter adjustment dial.** This lets you compensate for farsightedness and nearsightedness. Adjust the dial while looking through the viewfinder until the image is sharp. If you are farsighted, rotate the dial downward; if you are nearsighted, rotate the dial upward.

✦ **Exposure Compensation/Enlarge button.** Pressing this button opens the Exposure Compensation menu. When in Viewing mode, pressing the button enlarges the image on the LCD screen.

✦ **AEL (AE Lock)/Zoom button.** This button has two purposes depending on which mode the camera is in. When the camera is in Shooting mode, this button locks in a certain exposure. When you focus on an area or subject that you want to be metered for exposure, even if it is not going to be the main subject of your photograph, and press the AEL

button, those exposure settings are then locked. You can reframe the image and take the photograph. This setting is cancelled when the button is released. When in Playback mode, this button zooms into a photograph.

✦ **Function/Rotate button.** When in Shooting mode, the Function button switches between the Recording Information screen and the Quick Navigation screen. In Playback mode, this button opens the Rotate Image menu that is then controlled by the Multi-selector.

✦ **Access light.** This red light is on when the camera is writing information to the memory card. Do not turn the camera off while this light is on as it can disrupt the writing of the data from the camera's internal buffer to the memory card and you can lose your images.

✦ **Spot focus selector/Multi-selector center button.** This button is used to enter choices that are selected in menu choices. When in Shooting mode, pressing this button causes the focus spot to be set back to the center focus point.

✦ **Multi-selector.** The Multi-selector lets you select and execute a variety of different functions. The Multi-selector works like a miniature joystick: It can be moved left, right, up, and down. It is used to navigate the Quick-navigation screen and the A200's menu choices. The Multi-selector is also used to select a focus point when the autofocus area is set to Local.

✦ **Super SteadyShot switch.** This turns the Sony Super SteadyShot vibration-reduction technology on or off.

On the bottom

The bottom of the A200 houses the battery and a tripod mount. Even with the A200's compact size, the bottom has a nice flat surface that allows you to use even the biggest tripods.

✦ **Battery compartment.** The battery compartment is accessed by a recessed latch on the bottom of the camera. When the battery is fully inserted into the camera, it is held in place with a small blue latch so that even if the battery door is opened, the battery will not fall out. The battery compartment is spring loaded, so when the latch is pushed in the battery pops right out.

✦ **Threaded tripod socket.** The Sony Alpha A200 comes with a standard tripod socket that is aligned with the center of the lens.
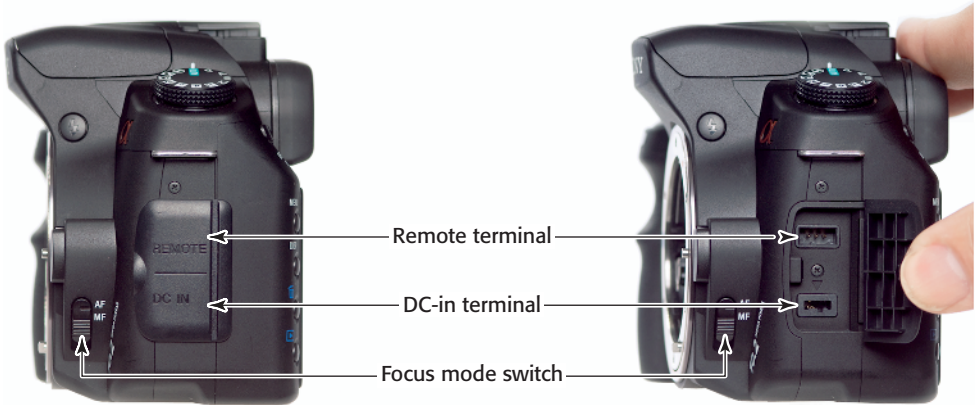
On the left side

On the left side of the camera is a rubber door that covers the remote terminal and the DC power in. The left side is also the location of the Focus mode switch, where you can change from manual to autofocus.

✦ **Remote terminal.** The RM-S1AM Remote can be used with the Sony Alpha A200 by opening the cover and inserting the plug of the remote. The remote lets you release the shutter without touching the camera or the Shutter button.

Battery compartment
(closed)

Threaded tripod socket

Battery compartment
(open)
with battery inserted

Battery retaining lever
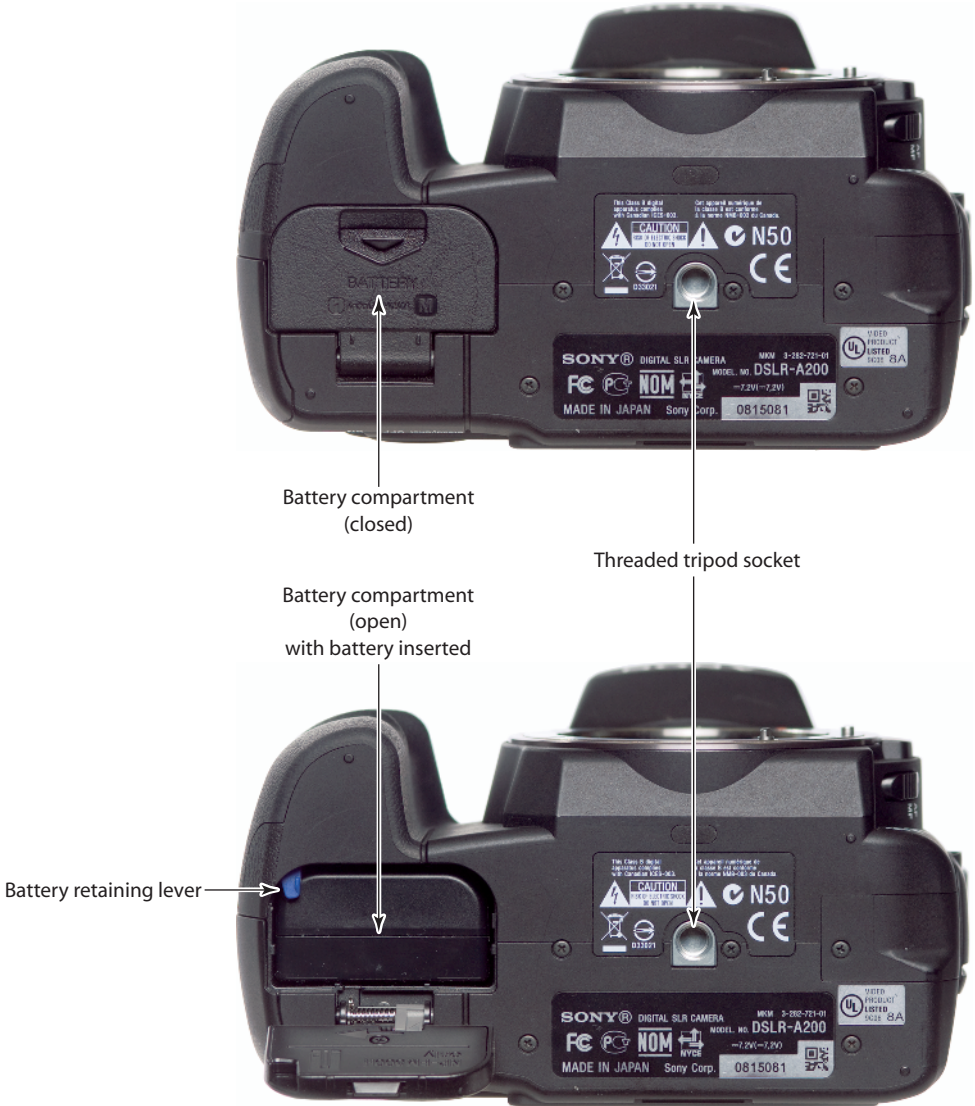
1.4 A bottom view of the camera

✦ **DC-in terminal.** The optional
AC-VQ900AM AC adapter/battery
charger can be used to power the
camera using an ordinary house-
hold power outlet. To use the
adapter, first turn off the power to
the camera and then plug the
power cord into the DC-in terminal.
You can then turn the camera on.

✦ **Focus mode switch.** This is where
the focus mode for the camera is
set. The focus can be set to manual
focus (MF) or autofocus (AF).

Remote terminal

DC-in terminal

Focus mode switch

1.5 The left side of the A200

On the right side

The right side of the camera houses the memory of the camera. This is the place where the digital "film" goes. It also is the location where the camera can be connected to a computer or a television.

✦ **Memory card cover.** Sliding it toward the back of the camera opens the memory card cover. The door is spring loaded and opens easily. To close the cover, fold it back toward the camera and slide it forward until it clicks into place.

USB port/ Video out

CompactFlash slot

Memory card cover

CompactFlash card eject button

1.6 The right-side view of the camera

✦ **CompactFlash slot.** The Sony Alpha A200 can use CompactFlash media, and this is where it is inserted into the camera. The CompactFlash card needs to be inserted with the label toward the back of the camera. Push the card until it is firmly seated.

✦ **CompactFlash card eject button.** To eject a CompactFlash card, push down on this button until the card can be removed from the slot.

✦ **USB port/video out.** The camera can be connected directly to a computer or television using a USB cable with a mini USB jack to plug into the camera and a regular jack to plug into the computer, or the supplied mini-USB-to-video RCA plug that enables the A200 to be connected to a regular television.

Viewfinder Display

The viewfinder in the Sony A200 enables you to compose the scene by seeing 95 percent of the view through the lens. The viewfinder display is broken into two parts — the main viewing area and the information display along the bottom of the viewfinder. The A200 does not have a Live View preview, and you cannot use the LCD screen to preview the images before taking a photo, so the only way to compose an image is to use the viewfinder.

The main display

The main display is where you compose your photograph. Being able to see what the sensor will record makes composing your photo easy.

✦ **AF area.** There are nine autofocus indicators: two on the left, two on the right, four around the center, and the Spot autofocus area in the center.

✦ **Spot AF area.** This is the small square directly in the middle of the viewfinder. It is the focus indicator for the Spot autofocus setting. When the focus has locked on, the indicator turns red for a moment, indicating that the setting is in use. This autofocus sensor is different from the other eight as it is a cross-type sensor that senses focus on both the X and Y axes, making it capable of achieving focus slightly more quickly than the other sensors.

✦ **Spot metering area.** The circle around the Spot AF area defines the spot metering area. This is the total area of the scene used in spot exposure metering.

✦ **16:9 shooting area guidelines.** These crop guidelines are there to help when composing in the 16:9 aspect ratio Crop mode. Any information above or below the crop marks is not recorded when the 16:9 aspect ratio is set.
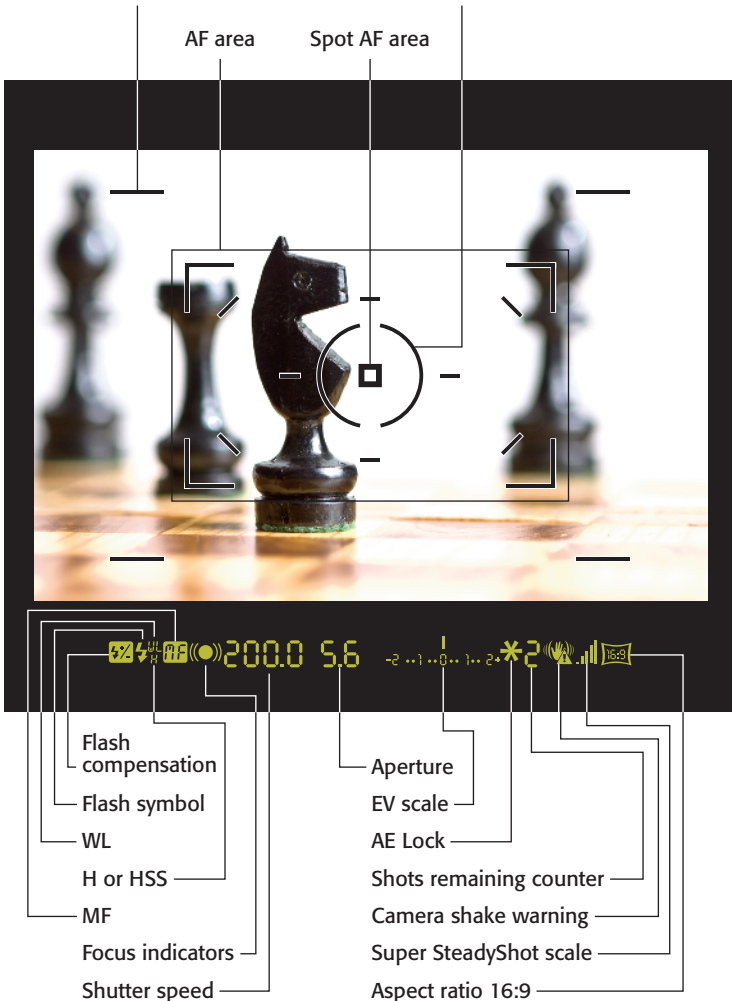
The data display

The data display across the bottom of the display gives you instant access to the most important settings without having to take your eye away from the viewfinder.

✦ **Flash compensation.** When using the flash, you can adjust the amount of light without changing the exposure. When any flash compensation is used, the flash compensation indicator is visible in the viewfinder.

✦ **Flash symbol.** When the flash symbol is flashing, the flash is being charged. When the light turns solid, the flash is charged and ready to fire.

16:9 shooting area guidelines   Spot metering area

AF area   Spot AF area

Flash compensation

Aperture

Flash symbol

EV scale

WL

AE Lock

H or HSS

Shots remaining counter

MF

Camera shake warning

Focus indicators

Super SteadyShot scale

Shutter speed

Aspect ratio 16:9

1.7 The view through the viewfinder

✦ **WL.** When an external flash is used in Wireless mode, the WL indicator is lit.

✦ **H.** Some external flashes can use a High Speed Sync mode. When in the High Speed Sync mode, an H appears in the viewfinder.

✦ **MF.** When in Manual focus mode, this indicator lights up.

✦ **Focus indicators.** The focus indicators show whether the focus is locked and ready to shoot, focused on a moving subject and ready to shoot, in the process of focusing, or unable to focus on the subject.

✦ **Shutter speed.** This shows the current shutter speed.

✦ **Aperture.** This shows the current aperture.

✦ **EV scale.** The EV or Exposure Value scale in the viewfinder shows the exposure set by the photographer and what the camera's metering system believes to be the correct exposure. The small bar over the scale shows the current exposure setting in regard to what the camera believes is the correct setting. The EV scale also indicates when the bracketing is active by showing three bars above the scale.

✦ **AE Lock.** When the AEL button is pressed, the exposure value currently determined by the camera becomes the standard value. The AE lock indicator is visible in the viewfinder when the AEL button is pressed.

> **Cross-Reference** *Exposure Value is covered in detail in Chapter 2.*

✦ **Shots remaining counter.** This shows how many photos can still be taken. The display starts at 9 when shooting large fine JPEG, 6 when shooting in RAW only, and 3 when shooting RAW & JPEG, and counts down as the photos are taken; as the images are written to the memory card, the counter goes back up. When the memory card is full and no more images can be saved, the counter reads 0. If you try to take photos after the card is full, the word "FULL" flashes across the display and the counter reads 0.

✦ **Camera shake warning.** This indicator flashes even if the Super SteadyShot is turned on. The camera calculates the likelihood of camera shake using the focal length and shutter speed.

✦ **Super SteadyShot scale.** The scale is shown when the Super SteadyShot is activated. The higher the scale, the more shaking is present. To get the sharpest image possible, there should be as few bars as possible all the way down to only one bar. When the Super SteadyShot is turned off, there are no bars even visible.

✦ **Aspect ratio 16:9.** This indicates when the camera is set to the 16:9 aspect ratio.

LCD Screen

The LCD screen on the back of the A200 provides a single display area that keeps all the pertinent information in one place. This means that the display changes depending on which mode the camera is in. Because the LCD screen is the only display on the camera, it does double duty. In the recording information mode, it shows the current camera settings; in the Playback display mode, it shows a review of the images already taken.
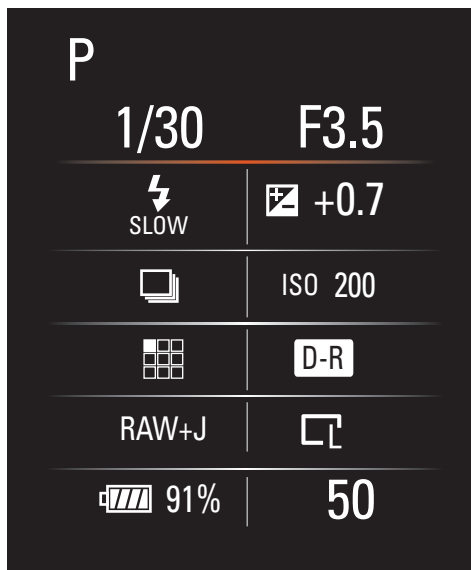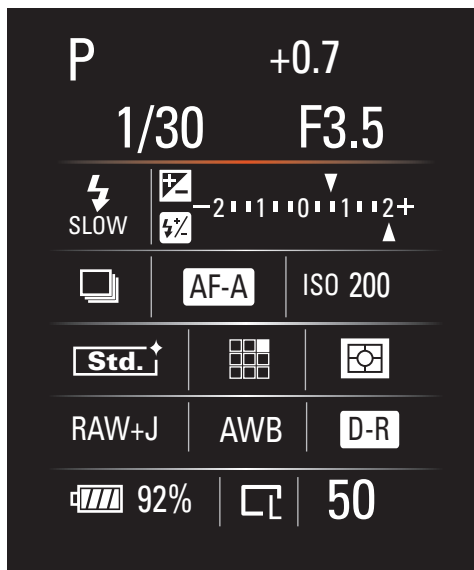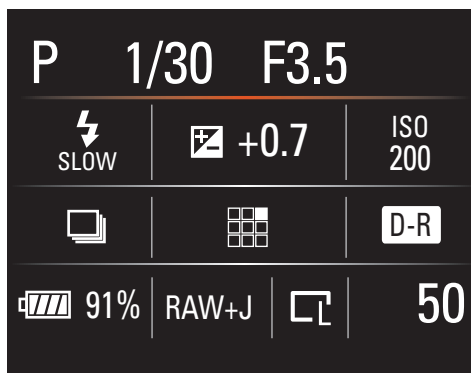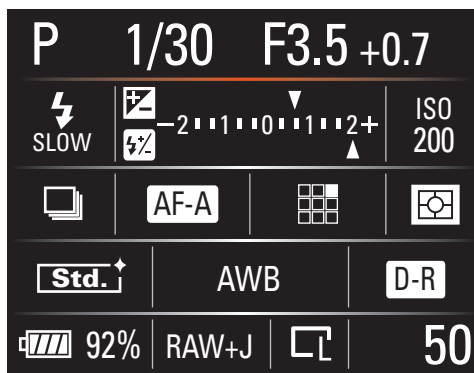
Recording information display

The recording information mode shows the current settings of the A200. When you turn on the camera, the recording information display automatically opens. This display is visible for 5 seconds and then turns off. This can be adjusted using the info.disp.time. setting located in the Setup Menu 1.

> **Cross-Reference** *Chapter 2 has more details on changing menu settings.*
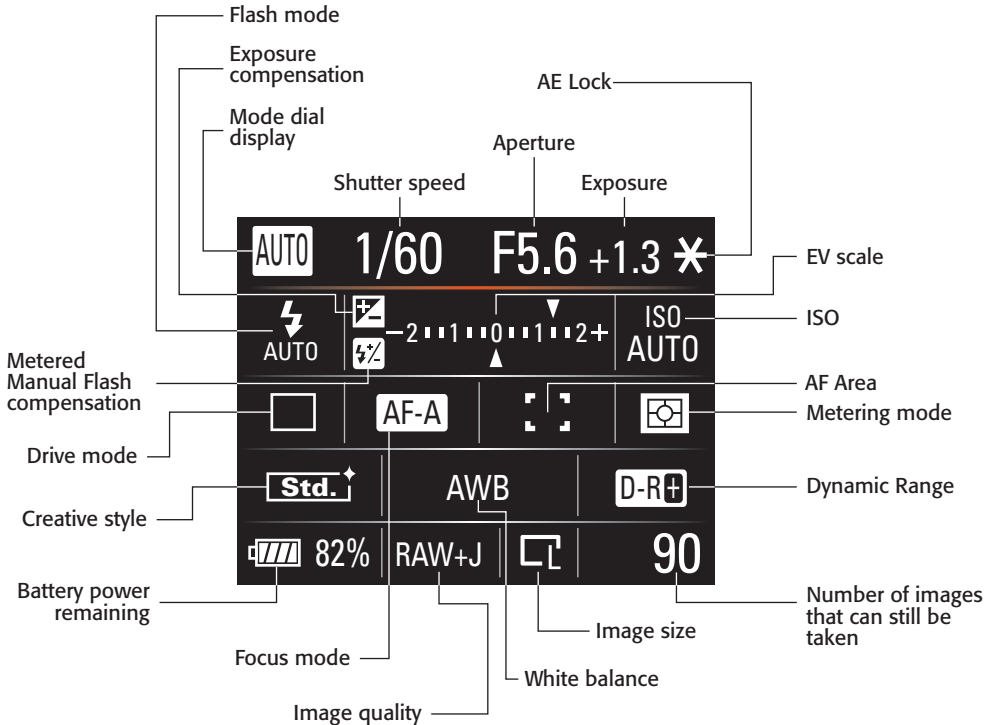
The recording information display has two modes — a Detailed mode and an Enlarged mode — that are cycled through by pressing the Display button. The Enlarged mode shows some but not all of the information in the Detailed mode. In the Enlarged mode, the information is presented in a larger format, making it easier to read quickly.

One of the great little touches of the A200 is that when the camera is rotated from horizontal to vertical, the display changes its orientation automatically, so you can easily read it no matter how you are shooting. When you use the Display button to cycle through the recording information modes, a third option is for the display to be turned off completely.

1.8 The LCD screen's detailed recording information display in the horizontal mode and in the vertical mode — the display rotates to match the orientation of the camera.

1.9 The LCD screen's enlarged recording information display in the horizontal mode and the vertical mode has less information visible than in the Detailed mode, so it is easy to read even in low light.

Flash mode

Exposure
compensation

Mode dial
display

AE Lock

Aperture

Shutter speed

Exposure

AUTO 1/60 F5.6 +1.3 ✱

EV scale

ISO

ISO
AUTO

AUTO

2 ▪ 1 ▪ ▪ ▪ 0 ▪ ▪ 1 ▪ ▪ 2+

Metered
Manual Flash
compensation

AF Area

Metering mode

Drive mode

AF-A

Creative style

Std.

AWB

D-R⊞

Dynamic Range

Battery power
remaining

82%

RAW+J

90

Number of images
that can still be
taken

Focus mode

Image size

White balance

Image quality

1.10 The detailed recording information display

✦ **Mode dial display.** The display
here shows the Mode dial's setting.

✦ **Shutter speed indicator.** Displays
the current shutter speed.

✦ **Aperture indicator.** Displays the
current f-stop.

✦ **Exposure.** This display is blank
unless the photographer has made
any exposure compensation adjust-
ments; then it shows the amount
of exposure compensation set.

✦ **AE Lock indicator.** Displays an
asterisk when the AE Lock is
pressed and the AEL is in use.

✦ **Flash mode.** The indicator shows
whether the Flash mode is set to
Autoflash, Fill-flash, Rear sync, or

Wireless mode. It also shows if
Red-Eye Reduction has been set or
if the flash has been turned off.

✦ **Exposure compensation/Metered
manual indicator.** The display
shows a small arrow above the EV
scale that shows what the camera
believes is the difference between
your exposure and the correct expo-
sure. When the arrow is above the
0, the EV scale, the camera meter,
and the photographer's settings
agree. The arrow appearing toward
the right indicates overexposure,
which causes the photo to be too
light. The arrow appearing to the left
indicates underexposure, which
causes the photo to be too dark
(not shown in the Enlarged mode).

✦ **Flash compensation indicator.** If any flash compensation is set, a small arrow appears under the EV Scale, showing the amount of compensation (not shown in the Enlarged mode).

✦ **EV scale.** The EV or Exposure Value scale shows what the camera believes is the correct exposure, which is set at 0. The scale also shows 2 stops of overexposure and 2 stops of underexposure. The scale is also used as a guide for exposure compensation and flash compensation (not shown in the Enlarged mode).

✦ **Drive mode indicator.** The Drive mode indicator shows what Drive mode the camera is in. There are six modes that can be set.

✦ **Focus mode indicator.** This shows which of the four focus modes is selected: AF-S, when the camera is set on Single-Shot Auto Focus; AF-A, when the camera is set to Automatic Auto Focus; AF-C for Continuous Auto Focus; and MF for Manual Focus.

✦ **Creative style.** There are eight creative style settings: Standard, Vivid, Portrait, Landscape, Night view, Sunset, B/W, and Adobe. The Creative Styles are discussed in depth in Chapter 2 (not shown in the Enlarged mode).

✦ **ISO setting.** The current ISO setting is shown here below the word ISO. The ISO is shown as a number from 100 to 3200. The word AUTO appears if the ISO is set to Auto.

✦ **Metering mode indicator.** Shows if the Multi-segment, Center-weighted, or the Spot-metering mode is being used (not shown in the Enlarged mode).

✦ **Auto focus (AF) area indicator.** Shows if the Wide, Spot, or Local Auto Focus area is selected.

✦ **White balance indicator.** This shows the current white balance setting (not shown in the Enlarged mode).

✦ **D-Range Optimizer setting.** When the D-Range Optimizer is turned on, the mode it is set for is shown here — D-R for Standard, D-R+ for Advanced Auto, or blank when it is turned off.

✦ **Battery power remaining indicator.** The remaining power in the battery is shown as both a graphical representation and a numerical percentage.

✦ **Images quality setting.** This display shows the image quality setting as RAW, RAW+J, FINE, or STD.

✦ **Image size setting.** This displays the size of the image: Large, Medium, or Small in either the 3:2 aspect ratio or the 16:9 aspect ratio.

✦ **Shots remaining counter.** This is pretty self-explanatory. Shows the amount of shots that can still be saved on the memory card using the current settings.

Playback screen

Digital cameras let you review the images that you have just taken. This ability to look at the images you have just taken means that you can see immediately if you got the shot. The A200 has six display options.

Pressing the Playback button on the rear of the camera accesses the Playback display mode where you can review your images. When in Playback mode, press the Display button to cycle through four Viewing modes: the image alone, the image with shooting data, the histogram view, and the image with a thumbnail display of the last five images taken. There are also two other views that are accessed using dedicated buttons and can be used at any time when reviewing your images, these are the Index view and the Zoom view.

To access the different display modes, press the display button when viewing an image. The order of the display modes is:

✦ Image alone view

✦ Image with shooting information view

✦ Histogram view

✦ Single image with thumbnail strip view

Image alone view

In this view, the entire display is filled with a single image. The Control dial or the multi-selector can be used to cycle through the images on the memory card in the camera. This view is great for a quick review of your images and the best way to display images when attached to a television.

Cross-Reference *For more on connection and viewing images on a television, see Chapter 7.*

Image with shooting data view

When the display is in the Image with shooting data view, the shooting data is superimposed across the top and bottom of the displayed image. This gives you basic information on the image, including the shutter speed, f-stop, ISO, and date and time the image was recorded.

**1.11** The screen in the Playback mode showing an image with the shooting data

✦ **Folder and file number.** This shows the folder number followed by the file number.

✦ **Protect display.** If the image is protected, the protect symbol appears.

✦ **DPOF.** Images can be marked for future printing. If the image has been selected to print, the DPOF3 symbol appears; the number — 3 in this example — indicates the number of prints you want of that image.

✦ **Image quality.** The image quality of the photo appears.

✦ **Image size.** The image size of the photo appears.

✦ **Image.** The image appears.

✦ **Shutter speed.** The shutter speed of the current image appears.

✦ **Aperture.** The f-stop of the current image appears.

✦ **ISO sensitivity.** The actual ISO of the current image appears, even if the photo was taken using AUTO ISO.

✦ **Date of recording.** The date and time that the image was taken are shown.

✦ **File number/total number of images.** This shows the sequence number of the selected image and the total images taken.

Histogram view

The histogram view has the most amount of information about your image. The Histogram display has a full set of shooting data on the left side of the display with the histograms on the right.

✦ **Folder and file number.** This shows the folder number followed by the file number.

✦ **Protect display.** When the image is protected using the protect menu, the key symbol is displayed.

✦ **DPOF.** This symbol appears, along with the number of prints that have been selected, when images have been marked for future printing.

✦ **Image quality.** This shows the image quality of the photo.
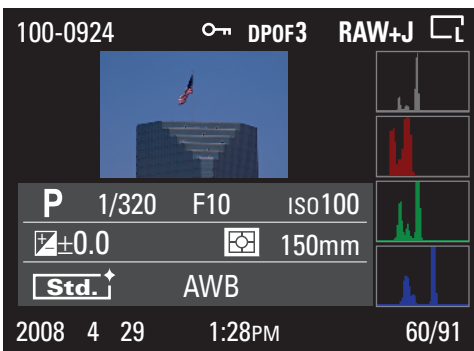
1.12 Image review with the Histogram view shown

✦ **Image size.** This shows the image size of the photo.

✦ **Image.** The image appears. Both overexposed and underexposed areas blink between black and white.

✦ **Mode indicator.** This shows the mode that was set when the image was taken. The display matches the setting on the Mode dial.

✦ **Shutter speed.** This displays the shutter speed of the current image.

✦ **Aperture.** The f-stop of the current image appears.

✦ **ISO sensitivity.** The actual ISO of the current image appears, even if the photo was taken using AUTO ISO.

✦ **Exposure Value.** This displays how much over or under the exposure compensation was set, compared to the 0 of the standard exposure.

✦ **Flash compensation indicator.** This displays the flash compensation, if any, used in creating the photo.

✦ **Metering mode indicator.** This displays the metering mode that was used to capture that image.

✦ **Focal length indicator.** The focal length that was used appears.

✦ **Creative style.** The creative style used when the image was captured is shown.

✦ **White balance.** The white balance used for this image is shown.

✦ **D-Range Optimizer.** The D-range setting is shown.

✦ **Date of recording.** The date and time that the image was taken are shown.

✦ **File number/total number of images.** This shows the sequence number of the selected image and the total images taken.

✦ **Histogram.** This histogram itself is broken into four graphs. They are, from top to bottom: Luminance, Red, Green, and Blue. Each shows the luminance distribution from darkest to lightest across the bottom of the graphs, with the amount of pixels being affected in the heights of the graphs. The overall luminance of the scene is shown in the top graph, and each of the color graphs shows the luminance for that color. The more information that appears on the left of the chart, the darker the image, and the more information that appears on the right on the chart, the brighter the scene.

Image with thumbnail strip view

This view has a five-image thumbnail strip across the top of the image and a limited set of shooting data across the bottom.
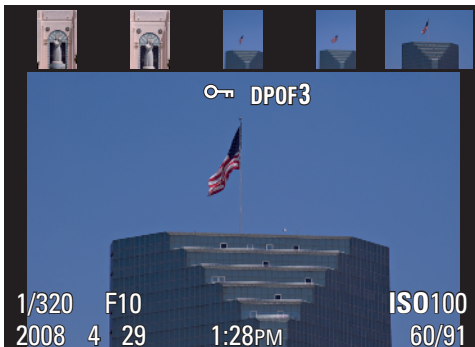
1.13 Image preview with the thumbnail strip shown

The top area has a thumbnail strip that holds up to five images. The image that is currently selected has a red bar beneath it. The Multi-selector can be used to navigate between images. The bottom area has the following shooting data:

✦ **Shutter speed.** The shutter speed of the current image appears.

✦ **Aperture.** The f-stop of the current image appears.

✦ **ISO sensitivity.** The actual ISO of the current image appears, even if the photo was taken using AUTO ISO.

✦ **Date of recording.** The date and time that the image was taken are shown.

✦ **File number/total number of images.** This shows the sequence number of the selected image and the total images taken.

Index view

The index view is opened by pressing the Exposure compensation/Index button when in any of the playback modes. Pressing this button will not display this view when the Zoom view is being used. The view changes to an index screen showing nine images — three columns of three images. Navigating through the images can be done with the Multi-selector, and pressing the Multi-selector center button selects that image and opens it in the Playback screen.

If you are looking for a particular image on a card with many images, this is the easiest way to do it. This is also a great view for looking through the images when connected to a television.

1.14 The index view showing nine images

Zoom view

The Zoom view is one of the most useful modes for checking your work. Being able to zoom in on a specific section of the image helps to make sure the image is in focus. To zoom in on any photo, press the AEL/Zoom button.
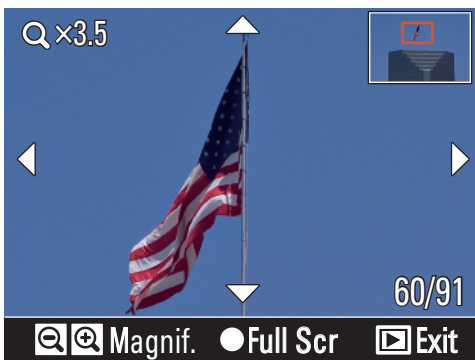
1.15 Zooming in on the flag lets me check that it is flying the way I want it to.

When in Zoom mode it is possible to do the following:

✦ **Zoom in.** Pressing the Zoom button zooms in more until the view is x12.

✦ **Zoom out.** Pressing the Zoom out button will zoom until the view goes to the Index view.

✦ **Move around.** The Multi-selector moves the view around in the direction the Multi-selector is pushed.

✦ **Full screen.** Pressing the Multi-selector center button displays the full image on the screen with an orange box around the zoomed area. The area in the orange box can be adjusted by pressing the Zoom in and out buttons and can be moved around the image by using the Multi-selector. Pressing the Multi-selector center button a second time displays the zoomed view of the selected area.

ISO Sensitivity

The ISO settings determine how sensitive the image sensor is to light. ISO on film cameras used to be set by using different ISO films. The higher the ISO of the film, the less light was needed to get a properly exposed image. With film, the ISO was changed by using larger grains of silver halide, which gives the film a higher sensitivity to light. In digital photography, the ISO is adjusted by setting how much the light hitting the sensor is amplified. The more this signal is amplified, the lower the amount of light that is needed to create a proper exposure. The downside is that the more the signal is amplified, the more digital noise is introduced into the image. Digital noise appears in your images as unwanted spots of random color in areas that should have a smooth color. This shows up more in dark areas than in light.

The A200 has an ISO range from 100 all the way up to 3200, with 100 being the least sensitive to light and 3200 being the most sensitive to light. The A200 also has an Auto ISO mode that sets the ISO value between 200 and 1600.

To set the ISO on the A200, follow these steps:

1. **Press the ISO button to open the ISO menu.**

2. **Press the Multi-selector to select the desired ISO.**

3. **Press the Multi-selector center button to select the highlighted ISO.**

I like to use the lowest possible ISO in any given time, but the Auto ISO setting is great, especially for times when the light is changing often. The camera will try to use the lowest ISO setting but starts to use higher ISOs as the light gets lower.
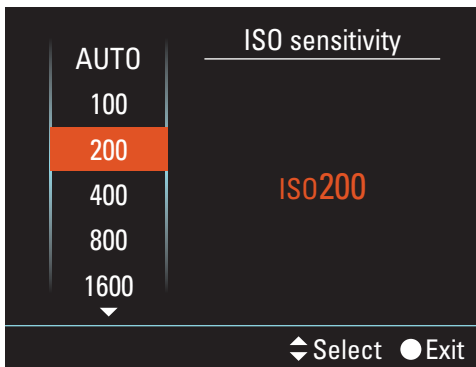

1.16 The ISO menu

Metering Modes

The A200, like all modern cameras, has a built-in light meter that reads the light in the scene and determines what the proper exposure should be. For example, when you photograph using the Shutter Priority mode, you set the shutter speed and the A200 uses the built-in light meter to set the aperture. The A200 has three metering modes, each reading a different part of the scene to

determine the proper exposure. The Sony A200's three metering modes are Spot metering, Center-weighted metering, and Multi-segment metering.

✦ **Multi-segment metering.** The A200 uses a 40-segment metering system. There are 39 sensors in a honeycomb pattern for the main area and one sensor that covers the surrounding area. The metering system is linked to the autofocus system so that the main subject is exposed correctly.

✦ **Center-weighted metering.** The entire scene is metered, but the center of the scene is given greater emphasis over the outer areas.

✦ **Spot metering.** This mode uses the light measured in the center area to calculate the exposure. This is used when the exposure of a part of the subject is more important than the whole scene. The center area used to calculate this exposure is shown on the viewfinder.
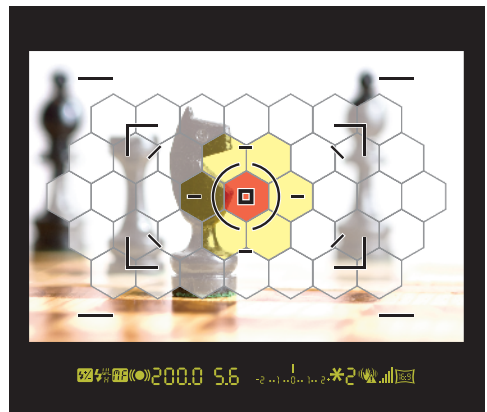
1.17 Multi-segment mode uses all 39 of the honeycomb sensors and the outside area as the 40th sensor. Center-weighted metering mode uses the red and yellow segments, and Spot metering uses the red center sensor area.

I usually keep the metering mode set to Multi-segment metering as this mode works for the majority of situations. To set the metering mode on the A200, follow these steps:

1. **Press the Function button on the rear of the camera to open the Quick navigation menu.**

2. **Use the Multi-selector to navigate to the Metering modes menu choice and press the Multi-selector center button.** The Metering mode menu gives you the choice to pick one of the three metering modes.

3. **Press the Multi-selector center button or the Shutter button to select the highlighted choice.**
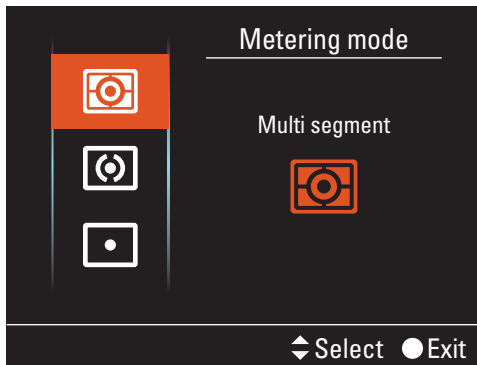
1.18 The Metering mode menu with the Multi-segment mode highlighted

Drive Modes

The A200 has six drive modes. The drive modes control what happens when you push the Shutter button. Want to take a sequence of photos without taking your finger off the Shutter button or set the camera to use the Self-timer mode? This is the place to do it. The drive mode is also the spot where the bracketing modes are set. The bracketing modes take a three-image sequence with the exposure of each shot adjusted slightly, automatically.

✦ **Single frame advance.** In this mode, the camera takes one exposure every time the Shutter button is pressed.

✦ **Continuous advance.** In this mode, the camera continues taking photos as long as the Shutter button is held down and there is room in the buffer and on the memory card. The A200 can take unlimited photos when shooting using the JPEG file format, six images in a row when shooting in RAW, and three images when shooting in the RAW+JPEG format.

✦ **Self-timer.** There are two modes in the Self-timer mode: a 2sec timer mode and a 10sec timer mode.

- **2-second mode.** This mode moves the mirror up just before taking the photograph, making it useful in reducing camera shake. After you engage the 2-second mode, it can be cancelled by pressing the Drive button before the photograph is taken.

- **10-second mode.** This mode is useful when you want to be in the photograph. The self-timer lamp located on the front of the camera flashes before the shot is taken in the 10-second mode. The 10-second mode can be cancelled by pressing the Drive button before the photograph is taken.

✦ **Continuous bracketing.** There are two Continuous bracketing modes available on the A200. Holding the Shutter button down takes three shots in rapid succession.

- **0.3ev.** This setting lets you take three photos continuously with the exposure shifted by 0.3 stop. The order of the images is correct exposure, underexposed by 0.3 stop, and overexposed by 0.3 stop.

- **0.7ev.** This setting lets you take three photos continuously with the exposure shifted by 0.7 stop. The order of the images is correct exposure, underexposed by 0.7 stop, and overexposed by 0.7 stop.

✦ **Single frame bracketing.** Single frame bracketing is the same as Continuous frame bracketing except that the Shutter button must be pressed for each photo. When shooting in the Single frame bracketing mode, make sure you take all three photos of the same scene. If you don't, you end up with exposure problems.

- **0.3ev.** This setting lets you take three photos, one at a time, with the exposure shifted by 0.3 stop. The order of the images is correct exposure, underexposed by 0.3 stop, and overexposed by 0.3 stop.

- **0.7ev.** This setting lets you take three photos, one at a time, with the exposure shifted by 0.7 stop. The order of the images is correct exposure, underexposed by 0.7 stop, and overexposed by 0.7 stop.
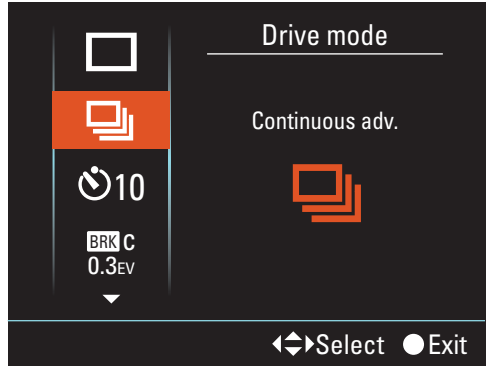
1.19 The Drive menu is accessed by pressing the Drive mode button.

✦ **White balance bracketing.** White balance bracketing takes three photos every time the Shutter button is pressed. The three images are identical except that the first photo has the set white balance, the second has less red and is paler, and the third has more red. The amount of change between the three can be set in the Drive menu using the Lo and Hi choices. The Hi setting adds and subtracts greater amounts of red than does the Lo setting.

To change the drive mode, follow these steps:

1. **Press the Drive button on top of the camera.**

2. **Select the desired drive mode by pushing up or down using the Multi-selector.**

3. **Push the Multi-selector left or right to adjust the selected drive mode.**

4. **Push the Multi-selector center button to activate the selected drive mode.**