

Exploring the Sony Alpha DSLR-A100

If you've gone through the Quick Tour and gained some basic familiarity with the layout and controls of the Sony Alpha A100, you've probably gone out and taken some initial pictures with your camera. Even a few hours' work with this advanced tool has probably whetted your appetite to learn more about the A100's features and how to use them.

Even if you're an old hand with digital single lens reflex (dSLR) cameras or have previously used Konica Minolta cameras with similar layouts, I think you'll find the roadmap features of this chapter especially useful for locating the key controls amidst the bewildering array of dials and buttons that cover just about every surface of the A100.

Of course, many new A100 owners are not old hands when it comes to dSLR photography. Learning to use the A100 as your first dSLR poses a bit of a challenge. For Alpha owners in this category, I provide a bit more detail on controls and features in this chapter and those that follow. It's likely that you find the information in this book more accessible and easier to understand than the descriptions in the manual furnished with your camera. However, this book isn't intended to completely replace the manual—you still need it to look up seldom-used settings and options—but it should help you use your camera effectively more quickly.

CHAPTER

1

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Although you may have reviewed your A100's buttons and wheels in the manual, this chapter's illustrations are designed to help you sort through the A100's features and controls quickly, especially when you're out in the field taking photos. It concentrates on the buttons, dials, and other controls that you can access directly, without visiting menus.

three-quarters-view looks at each half of the front of the camera, which I've color-coded green (the left side of the camera when looking at it head-on) and red (the right side of the camera when seen from this angle).



This chapter does not cover the A100's menu and set-up options. To learn more about the menu and set-up options, see Chapter 2.

Up Front

The front panel of the Sony Alpha A100 is shown in figure 1.1. You can't see all the buttons and controls from a straight-on perspective, so I'll show you separate,

You activate many of the controls on the A100 with your left hand. However, there are a few controls within the reach of your right hand's digits, as shown in figure 1.2. These controls and features include the following:



1.1 The business end of the Sony Alpha A100.



1.2 The Sony Alpha A100's left-front side, viewed from the subject's position.

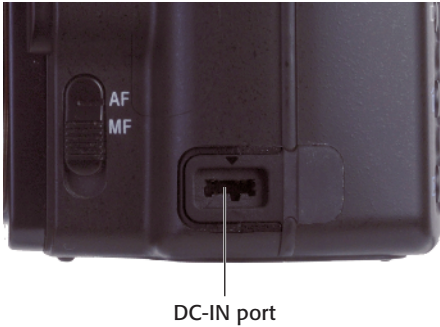
- ♦ **Hand grip.** The grip is the housing for the A100's battery, and also serves as a comfortable handhold for your fingers. You can hold the grip for both horizontal and vertical photos.
- ♦ **Depth-of-field preview.** This is the lower button (see figure 1.2) next to the lens mount. Press and hold the depth-of-field preview button. The lens stops down to the taking aperture, the view through the finder might dim a little (or a lot), and you can see just how much of the image is in focus.
- ♦ **Control dial.** This is the dial used to dial in settings such as shutter speed (by default) in manual or program shift modes. You can redefine its behavior in the Custom 1 menu so that it changes the aperture instead in both modes.
- ♦ **Self-timer lamp.** This front-mounted source of illumination serves as the count-down indicator for the self-timer.

The other side of the A100 has a few more controls, as shown in figure 1.3. These include the following:



1.3 The Sony Alpha A100's right-front side, viewed from the subject's position.

- ♦ **Neck strap lug.** You can loop the neck strap of the A100 through this piece to more conveniently transport your camera.
- ♦ **Lens release.** Press and hold this button to unlock the lens so you can rotate the lens to remove it from the camera.
- ♦ **Focus mode selector.** You can flip the autofocus mode lever on the camera body to set the focus mode to either Autofocus (AF) or Manual focus (MF).
- ♦ **DC-IN terminal cover.** On the side of the camera, you can see a rubber cover that protects the A100's external adapter port. Flip open this cover and connect the external power source when you need extra juice for long exposures or taking photos over an extended period of time (say, in the studio).



DC-IN port

1.4 DC power from the adapter connects here.

The internal electronic flash unit (figure 1.5) must be elevated manually as required by the lighting conditions but fires only when required. If you want to ensure that the flash is used, set the Function dial to Flash, and choose the Fill Flash option, as I describe in Chapter 5. The elevation of the flash helps reduce the possibility of red-eye effects.



1.5 The built-in flash is elevated high above the lens, which helps reduce the possibility of red-effects.

On Top

A bird's-eye view provides the best perspective of some of the controls on the lens. You can see the basic controls found on many zoom lenses in figure 1.6.

Not all these controls are found on all lenses, however, and some of them might be in different positions on different lenses (particularly those not produced by Sony). The key components are

- ♦ **Lens hood.** This is a removable circular device that bayonets onto the front of the lens and protects it in two ways: it shields the lens from extraneous light outside the picture area that can cause flare that damages your image (producing reduced contrast or unwanted light artifacts), and it serves as protection for the glass if you should happen to bump the camera lens against something.
- ♦ **Focus ring.** This is the ring you turn when you manually focus the lens when the camera is set to MF (Manual) focus.
- ♦ **Zoom ring.** This is the ring you turn to change the zoom setting. With many lenses, turning this ring to the right increases the focal length, but you might find that the opposite is true with some lenses, especially those from third parties (which can be very frustrating!).



1.6 The top and rear views of the 18–70mm kit lens.

- ♦ **Focal length indicator.** These markings on the lens show the current focal length selected.
- ♦ **Lens bayonet mount.** This is the mounting flange that mates with a matching flange on the camera when attaching a lens.
- ♦ **Lens mount aligning indicator.** Line up the red dot on the lens with the matching red indicator on the camera body's bayonet mount when attaching a lens.

- ♦ **Electrical contacts.** These connectors convey focus and exposure information between the camera and lens.

The top surface of the A100 has its own set of controls, as shown in figure 1.7. They include:

♦ **Function dial.** This dial is your access to a variety of functions not related to choosing a shooting mode. You access any of the functions by turning the Function dial to the desired position and pressing the Function button in the center of the dial. This activates a selection menu on the LCD screen for choosing that function's options. Functions available on this

dial include Meter, Flash, and Focus options, ISO/zone settings; White Balance; D-R (Dynamic Range) optimizing (to improve tonal values); and DEC (Digital Effects Control for color, saturation, and contrast adjustments).



Learn about each of the Function dial's settings in Chapter 2.



1.7 Key components on the top panel of the A100.

- ♦ **Accessory shoe cover.** After removing this cover, you can mount a Sony external electronic flash on the slide-in shoe. The shoe includes multiple electrical contacts to trigger the flash and to allow the camera and flash to communicate exposure and other information. You can also attach other flash units made by other vendors, but not all functions may operate.
- ♦ **Mode dial.** Turn this dial to set the A100 to Manual, Shutter-Priority, Aperture-Priority, or Program semi-automatic exposure modes, or to one of the fully automated modes such as Auto, Portrait, Landscape, Macro, Sports Action, Sunset, or Night View/Night Portrait.
- ♦ **Control dial.** This is the dial you use to change settings such as shutter speed (by default) in manual or program shift modes. You can redefine its behavior in the Custom 1 menu so that it changes the aperture instead in both modes.
- ♦ **Shutter button.** Partially depress this button to lock in exposure and focus; press it all the way to take the picture. Tapping the shutter release when the camera has turned off the auto exposure and autofocus mechanisms reactivates both. When a review image is displayed on the back-panel color LCD, tapping this button removes the image from the display and reactivates the auto exposure and autofocus mechanisms.

- ♦ **Drive button.** Press this button to produce the Drive mode menu on the LCD, where you can choose self-timer, single shot, continuous shooting, and several different single/continuous shot bracketing mode options.



Learn about each of the self-timer, continuous advance, and bracketing drive functions in Chapter 2.

On the Back

The back panel of the Sony Alpha A100 is studded with more than 15 controls, many of which serve more than one function. Where other cameras force you to access a menu to make many basic settings, you just press the appropriate button on the A100, turn the command dial or use the multi-selector, and make the adjustment you want. I've divided this crowded back panel into three color-coded sections.

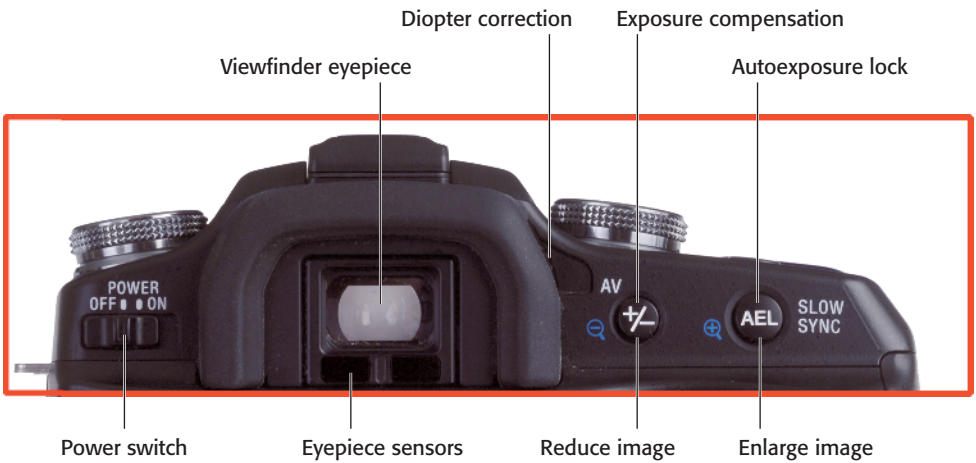
Top

The top quarter of the back panel includes a few frequently-accessed controls.

- ♦ **Power switch.** Turns the camera on and off.
- ♦ **Viewfinder eyepiece.** The rubber eyecup shields the viewfinder from extraneous light, much like a lens hood—a necessary component because light entering the viewfinder can affect the exposure meter. The eyecup is removable.



1.8 Key components on the back panel of the A100.



1.9 Key components on the top of the back panel of the A100.

- ♦ **Eyepiece sensors.** These sensors detect whether or not the photographer is looking through the viewfinder. In Custom menu 2 (see Chapter 2), you can set the A100 so that the LCD turns off automatically when you look into the viewfinder (the default), or so the monitor stays on. In addition, in Setup menu 3, you can change the length of time the LCD remains on (whether or not you're looking through the viewfinder), with settings of 5, 10, 30, or 60 seconds. Activate the LCD again by tapping the shutter release button or performing another operation that requires the LCD.
- ♦ **Diopter correction.** Rotate this knob to adjust the diopter correction for your eyesight.
- ♦ **Exposure compensation/Reduce image.** While shooting, you can hold down this button and spin the Control dial to the left to reduce exposure, or to the right to increase exposure.
- ♦ **Autoexposure lock/Enlarge image (AEL).** While shooting, pressing this button locks the exposure at the current setting. During playback, this button zooms in on the image on the LCD.

Lower left

This is the A100's hot corner, because it has a collection of some of the function buttons you may use most frequently. They each can have multiple functions, so you need to keep your camera's current mode (playback/shooting, and so on) in mind when you attempt to access a specific feature. A more complete description of each

button's functions appears later in this chapter. The buttons include:

- ♦ **Menu.** Use this button to access the A100's multilevel menu system. You can find two pages each of Recording, Playback, and Custom menu items, plus three pages of Setup menu options. Note that Sony has configured the menus in both vertical and horizontal formats, and when you tilt the camera from one orientation to another the menus adjust to a new layout. I use the landscape orientation exclusively when showing menu entries in this book.



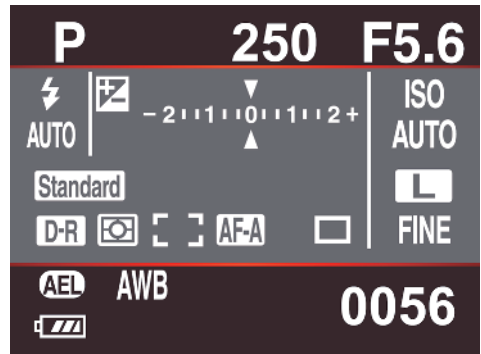
I explain all the Custom menu items and Setup menu options in Chapter 2.

- ♦ **Display.** This button changes the amount of status information shown on the screen in Recording mode, and the image display in Playback mode. Unlike some other dSLRs you might be familiar with, the A100 lacks a monochrome status display that shows the current shooting settings. Instead, this information, including shooting mode, shutter speed, and aperture, appear on the LCD display. The Display button changes from a detailed display, such as the one in figure 1.11, to an enlarged display of the same basic information with larger letters. Both views rotate when you hold the camera in vertical orientation. In Playback mode, the Display button shifts between a single screen image with recording data, a single screen image without recording data, and an index screen showing several thumbnails.



1.10 Key components on the back left panel of the A100.

- ♦ **Trash.** In Playback mode, press this button to delete the displayed image. A dialog box reading “Delete this image? Yes No” appears. Select Yes with the Controller keys and press the center key to delete the image.
- ♦ **Playback button.** Use this button to enter the picture review (Playback) mode. Press again or press the shutter button halfway to return to shooting mode.
- ♦ **LCD.** The color LCD displays your images for review and provides access to the menu system.



1.11 The LCD menu displayed in detailed, horizontal mode.

Lower right

You'll find a second cluster of controls and components in the lower-right corner of the back panel:

- ♦ **Controller.** You use this cursor-pad type controller to navigate menus as well as scroll through photos you're reviewing using the left/right

keys. The up/down keys have secondary functions, too. Pressing the up key produces the information display with a histogram for the current image; the down key rotates the current image.



You can read about histograms in Chapter 3.



1.12 Key components on the lower-right corner of the back panel of the A100.

- ♦ **AF spot button/center button.** This key embedded in the center of the Controller pad changes the autofocus area to the center spot in the viewfinder when you press it; it also serves as an “enter” or “set” key when you navigate menu options.

Cross-Reference

Chapter 2 contains coverage of choosing focus area modes.

- ♦ **Access lamp.** This lamp blinks while an image writes to the Compact Flash or Memory Stick Duo cards, when the camera is first started, goes to sleep, or is turned off.
- ♦ **Super SteadyShot.** Slide this switch up or down to activate or deactivate the A100’s anti-shake feature.
- ♦ **Remote control jack.** Hidden under a rubber cover, this port can be connected to a remote control triggering device, such as the Sony RM-S1AM Remote Commander.

One additional port tucked out of sight is the Video/USB jack, located beneath the Compact Flash/Memory Stick Duo Adapter door. Using one of the cables supplied with your Sony Alpha, you can use this port to connect to the video port on your television or composite monitor. Another cable plugs into the same port and connects to a USB port on your computer; you use it to transfer photos directly from your camera to your computer.

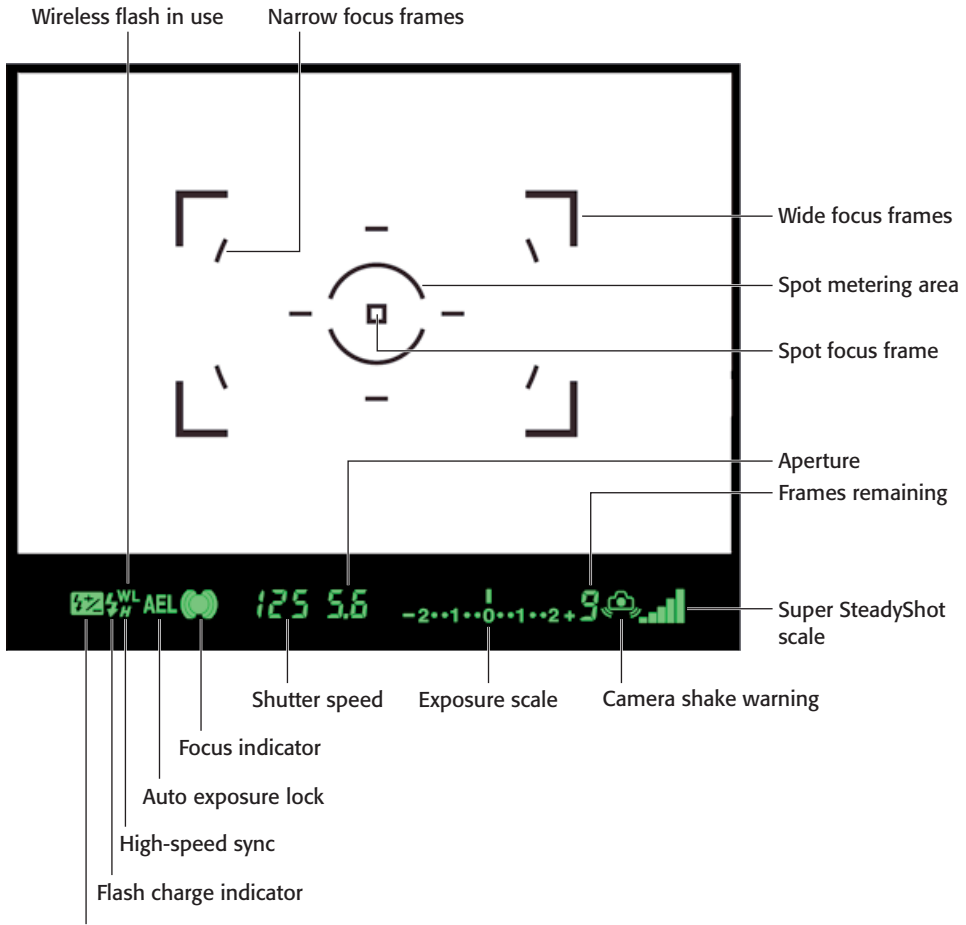


1.13 The video/USB jack enables you to connect your A100 to your video monitor or computer.

Viewfinder Display

The A100 provides a lot of status information in the viewfinder, as you can see from figure 1.14, although not all of it is visible at one time. Here’s the skinny:

- ♦ **Wide focus frames.** This is the boundary within which the nine focus frames used for autofocus (shown in blue and black in figure 1.14) reside.



Flash compensation

1.14 The viewfinder includes these readouts and indicators (with color added for clarity).

♦ **Narrow focus frames.** These are the eight focus frames used when Wide AF area autofocus is selected, as I explain in Chapter 2. The focus frame selected by the camera is illuminated in red when you press the shutter button halfway. In this mode you can switch to the center Spot focus frame by pressing the AF/center button of the controller.

♦ **Spot focus frame.** This is the focus frame used exclusively when you've selected Spot AF area focus mode, or when you're using Wide AF area or Focus Area Selection modes and you press the AF/center button of the Controller.

♦ **Spot metering area.** This marks the area used for spot metering.

Cross-Reference

Chapter 2 explains more about spot metering.

- ♦ **Flash compensation.** This shows the amount of added/reduced exposure for electronic flash shots (see Chapter 5).
- ♦ **Flash charge indicator.** This blinks while the electronic flash is charging for use; it remains lit when the flash is fully charged.
- ♦ **Wireless flash in use.** This is displayed when HVL-F56AM or HVL-F36AM flash units are being used off-camera in wireless mode.
- ♦ **High-speed sync.** This appears when HVL-F56AM or HVL-F36AM flash units are being used at shutter speeds higher than 1/160th second.

Cross-Reference

See Chapter 5 for more information about using High-speed sync to shoot at shutter speeds shorter than 1/160 second.

- ♦ **Auto exposure lock.** This illuminates when you press the autoexposure lock button.
- ♦ **Focus indicator.** This indicator changes to show the focus status. When focus is locked, a green dot appears. When the green dot is surrounded by round brackets (as in figure 1.14), focus is confirmed but the focus will follow a moving object. When the round brackets are illuminated, but the green dot isn't visible, the camera is still autofocus and the shutter release

is locked out. A flashing green dot indicates that the A100 is unable to achieve focus (you might be too close to your subject).

- ♦ **Shutter speed.** This displays the currently set shutter speed.
- ♦ **Aperture.** This displays the currently set f-stop.
- ♦ **Continuous frames remaining.** This indicates the number of continuous frames that can be shot. As photos are moved into the buffer and then out to the memory card, this number changes dynamically. For example, a 9 may appear when you begin shooting, then decrease until it reaches 3, and then increase again as the camera off-loads shots to the memory card. When you're shooting JPEGs at any resolution, the A100 generally "keeps ahead" of the available space in the buffer, so there is no limit to the number of shots that you can take continuously at 3 fps (frames per second) until the memory card fills. The camera can take about three images continuously using RAW+JPEG, or six images using RAW alone.
- ♦ **Exposure scale.** This readout shows the calculated ideal exposure (in the center of the scale) with a marker showing the selected exposure, if it's plus or minus two f-stops from the recommended setting. When the camera is bracketing, a set of three markers appears showing the range covered by the bracketed exposures.

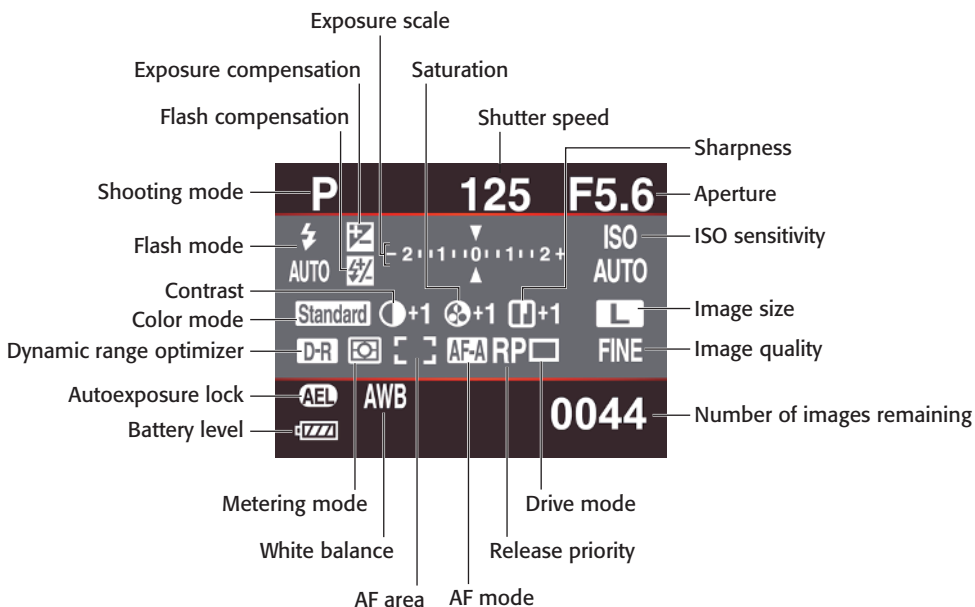
- ♦ **Camera shake warning.** This indicator flashes whenever the camera detects a shutter speed setting slow enough to cause blur if the camera is hand-held or Super SteadyShot is not activated. When you see this warning, you should either turn on Super SteadyShot (if it's not already activated) or use a tripod.
- ♦ **Super SteadyShot scale.** One to five bars appear showing the degree of camera shake detected by the Sony Alpha A100.

LCD Display

The LCD status display shows a broad range of current status information. This display is a bit much to bite off in one chunk, as you can see by the full display in figure 1.15. In practice, only a fraction of this information appears at any one time.

Along the top edge, you can find:

- ♦ **Shooting mode.** This indicates whether the Program, Aperture Priority, Shutter Priority, or Manual exposure modes; Auto mode; or one of the Scene modes are in use.
- ♦ **Exposure scale.** This readout shows the calculated ideal exposure (in the center of the scale) with a marker showing the selected exposure, if it's plus or minus two f-stops from the recommended setting. When the camera is bracketing, a set of three markers appears showing the range covered by the bracketed exposures.
- ♦ **Shutter speed.** This displays the currently set shutter speed.
- ♦ **Aperture.** This displays the currently set f-stop.



1.15 LCD status display readouts and indicators.

Along the left side, you'll find:

- ♦ **Flash mode.** This shows whether Auto, Fill Flash, Rear Sync, or Wireless flash mode is in use. (In Auto mode, Front Sync is used by default.)
- ♦ **Exposure compensation.** This shows the amount of added/reduced exposure.
- ♦ **Flash compensation.** This shows the amount of added/reduced exposure for electronic flash shots.

Cross-Reference

For more on flash modes, see Chapter 5.

- ♦ **Color mode.** This indicates which color mode is being used, from Standard, Vivid (extra saturation), B/W (black and white), Adobe RGB (red, green, blue), Portrait, Landscape, Sunset, or Night View.
- ♦ **Contrast.** This shows the amount of contrast adjustment made, on a scale of plus or minus 2.
- ♦ **Saturation.** This shows the amount of saturation adjustment made, on a scale of plus or minus 2.
- ♦ **Sharpness.** This shows the amount of sharpness adjustment made, on a scale of plus or minus 2.
- ♦ **Dynamic range optimizer.** This appears if D-R Optimizer or D-R+ Optimizer tonal adjustments have been activated.
- ♦ **Metering mode.** This shows whether multisegment (matrix), center-weighted, or spot metering is active.

- ♦ **AF area.** The Autofocus area indicates whether Wide AF area, Spot AF area, or Focus area selection (user-selectable focus area) is in use.
- ♦ **AF mode.** Autofocus mode shows whether AF-S (Single-shot Autofocus), AF-C (Continuous Autofocus), AF-A (Automatic Autofocus), or DMF (Direct Manual Focus) have been set.
- ♦ **Release priority.** In Custom menu 1, you can set whether the shutter is locked when focus is not confirmed (the default value, AF), or specify that you can release the shutter even when focus is not set. In that case, the RP icon appears here.
- ♦ **Drive mode.** This shows whether single shot, continuous shooting, self-timer, continuous exposure bracketing, single shot exposure bracketing, or white balance bracketing is selected.

Along the bottom edge, you can find:

- ♦ **Battery level.** This shows the amount of remaining battery power.
- ♦ **White balance.** This indicates whether auto white balance, a white balance preset, a precise color temperature, a color correction filter adjustment, or a custom color balance has been selected.
- ♦ **Autoexposure lock.** This appears when you press the autoexposure lock (AEL) button.
- ♦ **Number of images remaining.** This shows the number of frames that can be taken using the available memory card space.

Along the right side:

- ♦ **ISO sensitivity.** This displays the current ISO setting, Auto setting, or Zone matching (Lo80 or Hi200).
- ♦ **Image size.** This indicates whether L (10 megapixels (MP), 3872 x 2592 pixels), M (5.6MP, 2896 x 1936 pixels), or S (2.5MP, 1920 x 1280 pixels) have been selected.
- ♦ **Image quality.** This shows whether Fine or Std (standard) JPEG (only), RAW, or RAW+ (RAW plus JPEG Fine) have been selected.

Viewing and Playing Back Images

The A100's Playback mode lets you review your images, delete the bad ones, and decide on exposure or compositional tweaks to improve your next shots.

Follow these steps to review your images:

1. **Press the Display button.** This cycles among a display of the image with basic shooting information (see figure 1.16), no information, or an index screen.



1.16 Review your photos using the color LCD.

2. **Press the left/right keys to scroll forward and backward among the images taken.** In Index mode, use the left/right/up/down keys to find the image you want. If your memory card contains several folders of images, you can also navigate between the different folder names, using the Reduce key to highlight a folder name.
3. **When viewing a single image, press Enlarge to zoom in, or Reduce to zoom out.** While zoomed, you can use the controller keys to scroll around within the image.
4. **To delete an image or folder, highlight the image or folder and press Delete.** Choose Yes when the dialog box appears, and press the center button of the controller to confirm.
5. **When viewing a single image, press the Up key to display the histogram, a thumbnail of the image, and a summary of the exposure information.**

Set the Function dial to Flash, press the Function button, and adjust to one of the following flash modes.

- ♦ **Auto.** This is the default mode and causes the flash to fire under low light conditions, or when your subject is backlit. This mode is not available when you use A, S, or M shooting modes.
- ♦ **Fill Flash.** The electronic flash always fires.
- ♦ **Rear-curtain sync.** The flash is delayed until just before the shutter closes. This records the flash image after any *ghost images* have faded. Ghost images result from a secondary exposure from ambient light when objects move during exposure so that the secondary images seem to trail the flash image. Unless you select this mode, the A100 uses front curtain sync, in which the flash fires as soon as the shutter opens.
- ♦ **Wireless.** Use this mode when you use an off-camera flash (either the HVL-F56AM or HVL-F36AM) in wireless mode.

Activating the Onboard Flash

The Sony Alpha A100 has a built-in flash unit you can activate by flipping it up manually with your finger. The camera uses the flash only when it detects low light levels suitable for flash photography and calculates the proper exposure for you.

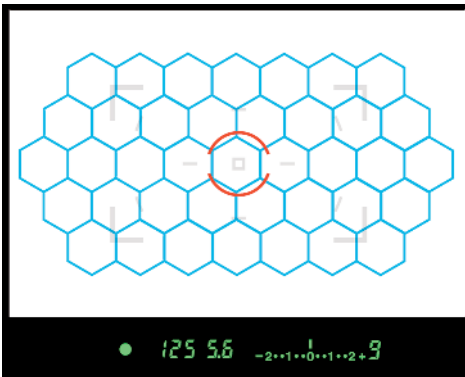
Cross-Reference

Chapter 5 contains more information about using flash.

Metering Modes

The A100 can use any one of three different exposure metering methods when it's set to P, A, S, or M exposure modes (which I discuss later in the chapter). Select the metering mode by turning the Function dial to the Metering icon, pressing the Function button, and choosing from these three options in the dialog box that appears:

- ♦ **Multisegment (matrix).** The camera examines 40 different zones in the frame and chooses the exposure based on that information. Figure 1.17 shows 39 of the zones highlighted in blue; the 40th zone is the area surrounding the honeycomb-shaped zones.
- ♦ **Center-weighted.** The camera collects exposure information over the entire frame, but when it makes its calculations, it emphasizes a central area of the screen.
- ♦ **Spot.** The exposure is calculated entirely from the center spot area (highlighted in red in figure 1.17).



1.17 Multisegment and spot-metering zones.

Semiautomatic and Manual Exposure Modes

The Sony Alpha A100 has three semiautomatic exposure modes that enable you to specify shutter speed, aperture, or combinations of the two; and a Manual Exposure mode that gives you the complete freedom

to set the shutter speed and aperture. You can also set these four exposure modes using the Mode dial. Your choices include:

- ♦ **Program.** In this mode, the A100 automatically chooses an appropriate shutter speed and f-stop to provide the correct exposure. However, you can override these settings. You can change to an equivalent exposure using a different shutter speed by spinning the Control dial; the A100 adjusts the aperture automatically using a feature called Program Shift. You can also change the behavior of the camera in Custom menu 1 so that rotating the Control dial changes the aperture, with the A100 adjusting the shutter speed. You can also add or subtract exposure from the metered exposure by pressing the Exposure Compensation button and rotating the Control dial.
- ♦ **Shutter Priority.** In this exposure mode, you specify the shutter speed with the Control dial, and the A100 selects an appropriate f-stop. If a correct exposure cannot be achieved at the shutter speed you select, the aperture value in the viewfinder flashes.
- ♦ **Aperture Priority.** In this exposure mode, you specify the f-stop to be used with the Control dial, and the A100 selects the shutter speed for you. If this isn't possible because there is insufficient or too much light, the A100 flashes the shutter speed value in the viewfinder. Change to a smaller aperture if there is too much light, or a larger one if there is too little light so the Aperture Priority function can operate.

- ♦ **Manual.** You can select both the shutter speed and f-stop using the Control dial (for shutter speed) and Exposure Compensation button + Control dial (for aperture). You can watch the exposure scale display in the viewfinder as a guideline; when correct exposure is achieved, the indicator is centered in the scale.

Programmed Exposure Modes

The A100 has six automated Scene modes, plus full Auto, which make all the setting decisions for you. You can choose these modes from the Mode dial. They include:

- ♦ **Auto.** In this mode, the A100's brains take care of the settings, based on what kind of shot you've framed in the viewfinder. For example, the camera knows how far away the subject is (from the automatic focus mechanism); the color of the light (which tells the camera whether you're indoors or outdoors); and from the multisegment metering exposure data and other information, the camera can make some pretty good guesses about the kind of subject matter (landscape, portrait, and so forth). After comparing your shot to its picture database, the A100 decides on the best settings to use when you press the shutter release. Auto is the mode to use when you want one of those fumble-fingered neophytes in your tour group to take your picture in front of the Eiffel Tower. Don't use this mode if you want every picture in a series to be exposed exactly the same. If you change shooting angles or reframe your image, the A100 might match your shot with a different image in its database and produce a slightly different (but still "optimized") look.
- ♦ **Portrait.** In this mode, the A100 assumes you're taking a portrait of a subject (or two) standing relatively close to the camera. So, it automatically focuses on the nearest subject and uses a wider lens opening (which can help throw the background out of focus). Don't use this mode if your portrait subject is not the closest object to the camera.
- ♦ **Landscape.** Scenic photos are usually taken of distant objects, with vivid colors and sharp detail highly desirable, so that's what your A100 adjusts its settings to produce. However, you can assume that electronic flash isn't of much help in shooting your vistas, so Sony recommends lowering the flash unit when using this mode.
- ♦ **Macro.** Your A100 makes some adjustments suitable for close-up photos when you choose this mode. For example, the automatic focusing mechanism concentrates on the center of the frame (because that's where most close-up subjects are located), and doesn't seek sharp focus until you partially depress the shutter release button.

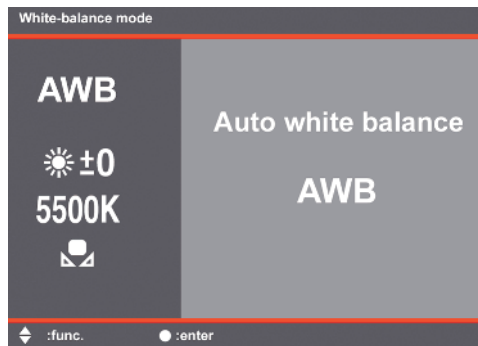
- ♦ **Sports Action.** The A100 switches into a Continuous Autofocus mode (AF-C) that tries to track moving subjects to keep them in focus. The A100 is switched into continuous shooting mode so you can capture action sequences at up to three frames per second. This Scene mode also uses higher shutter speeds.
- ♦ **Sunset.** In this mode, color, saturation, and exposure are optimized to reproduce the reds of sunsets and sunrises brilliantly.
- ♦ **Night Portrait/Night View** In this mode, the A100 uses shutter speeds as long as two seconds to allow dark backgrounds and shadows to be properly exposed. You can use flash if you want to illuminate subjects in the foreground, but don't use it for night scenes at a distance. For longer exposures, use either a tripod or make sure Super SteadyShot is turned on.

ISO Sensitivity

The A100 can choose the sensitivity setting (ISO) for you automatically, or you can choose a setting manually. Just turn the Function dial to ISO, press the Function button, and choose Auto, 100, 200, 400, 800, or 1600 from the menu. If you want to use the Zone Matching feature, select Lo80 to keep dark scenes from becoming underexposed, or Hi200 to keep extra bright scenes from becoming overexposed.

Setting White Balance

To more closely match the A100's color rendition to the color of the illumination used to expose an image, you can set the white balance. Turn the Function dial to WB, and choose one of the following selections: Preset value (daylight, shade, cloudy, tungsten, fluorescent, flash—each with plus/minus three fine-tuning settings); Color temperature (from 2500K to 9900K); or Recall/set a custom white balance.



1.18 White balance options.



For more information on ISO and white balance, see Chapter 2.