



Clear, effortless vision atLast!

A blend of bifocal and progressive lens characteristics wins optical expert Dr Peter Wilkinson's personal approval. **Shelagh Hardy** reports

Dr Peter Wilkinson is used to being at the leading edge of lens innovation, most of all in the UK development of lens coating technology. No surprise, therefore, that a major innovation in the lens market – the composite lens range of US-based PixelOptics – should arouse his keen interest.

This eureka moment came when Dr Wilkinson attended the 2009 pre-Silmo technology symposium organised as part of a regular series, by this journal's fellow title *Optical*

World. Dr Wilkinson spoke about AR coating technology; also presenting was Peter Zieman of PixelOptics, who introduced the company's first composite lens design to launch on international markets, the enhanced multifocal atLast!

Despite his years of involvement in lens making and refining with a succession of Britain's leading companies, Dr Wilkinson had never himself needed a spectacle correction until he turned 40, some 25 years ago. Then, inevitably he began to feel the want for near vision aid. More unexpectedly, he says, he also

found a small distance refractive error developing in one eye over the years, he now wears a low sphere (-1.00D.) in his worse eye, as well as a +2.00D. reading add.

Over these years, as an engineer actively involved with the development of ophthalmic laboratory equipment, he spent an increasing amount of time in front of a computer, matched by long hours travelling in Britain and abroad to business meetings. Both bifocals and a number of progressive lens designs were tried, but, says Wilkinson, 'none gave me clear, effortless vision across the range of tasks – distance, driving, computer work, reading – which I needed'.

Thus, when he heard the PixelOptics briefing in Paris last autumn, Dr Wilkinson was interested at once. Could atLast! with its blend of bifocal and progressive characteristics, be the lens he was looking for?

PixelOptics' composite lenses (together with the electronically activated multifocal the company is developing in collaboration with Panasonic) were originated by US optometrist Dr Ronald Blum.

Over the course of 20 years in his practice in Roanoke, Virginia, Dr Blum encountered many patients, who, like Dr Wilkinson, failed to find the progressive design (let alone bifocal) that entirely met their particular need for all-range vision. Hence atLast!. Made from an intramolecularly bonded composite of 1.67 index organic material and Trivex, atLast! is designed to offer wide distance, far intermediate, near intermediate and reading zones, with the combination of a front surface worked, modified and gentle power gradient and a bifocal power segment embedded in the back surface so as to be virtually invisible on primary gaze.

Transitions options

Although Dr Wilkinson is a former progressive lens wearer, Dr Blum has recommended atLast! first and foremost as an alternative to progressive conversion for bifocal wearers. atLast! is hard and MAR-coating compatible and is

Dispensing atLast!

Dispensing optician Clive Kennell, practice manager at the Amersham practice of Chilton Watson group, comments on Dr Wilkinson's fitting

'I had not come across or heard much about these new lenses before Dr Wilkinson came to see us - I know more now! - but found them straightforward and problem-free. They can be dispensed like a multifocal - rather as you would fit a trifocal in fact, positioning the seg according to the midpoint between the lower rim of the pupil and the bottom rim of the iris in normal consulting room lighting conditions with the patient looking straight ahead.

'I found the PixelOptics atLast! fitting advice leaflet quite concise, specific and well laid out, though I would have liked a little more information on the rationale for the design; this is a very innovative lens, after

all, and deserves it. Personally, I would offer atLast! primarily as an upgrade from a bifocal or trifocal, given its good reading area and generous design for intermediate vision.

'Having said this, the nice large area of computer-range vision the lens offers could also be attractive to former varifocal wearers who have had intermediate problems with the designs they've tried. This was certainly a "tick-box" feature not only for Dr Wilkinson but for the second patient I've now fitted with atLast!, a professor at London University.

'I'm now recommending atLast! more widely. One point I particularly like is the near invisibility of the 24mm round segment [see picture], which is embedded in the back surface. It can be seen quite clearly when you have the lens in your hand, but on the face it effectively disappears.

'The minimum fitting height is 14mm, so I can't foresee any problems finding suitable frames.'





now available with the option of Transitions grey or brown.

Norville, distributor for PixelOptics in the UK and Republic of Ireland, surfaced, finished and coated Wilkinson's lenses, including the Transitions grey option. They were then glazed to the frame he selected under the guidance of Clive Kennell, dispensing optician manager at Chilton Watson Opticians where he lives in Amersham, Buckinghamshire (see panel opposite).

Long-term wear

The verdict, after several months' wear? 'I couldn't be happier!' says Dr Wilkinson. 'In the past, I'd always felt I had to work at adapting to new lenses, and had never wholly succeeded. These lenses were comfortable at once, for all purposes. I don't need any special head movements to access any zone of vision. If I really try, I can detect a minimal amount of distortion right out at the very edge of the lens, but in normal use, I'm not aware of any distortion whatever, nor of bifocal image jump.

'I like the fact that the segment is as good as invisible to the people I meet



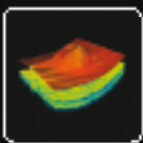
Dr Peter Wilkinson is an engineer by profession. His first specialisation, having gained his first degree and a PhD, was in aeronautics, but he was attracted into optics by the offer to train for a senior technical position in the once mighty UK Optical around the time of its merger with equally famous M Wiseman & Co. He began his optical career at the Wiseman headquarters in central London, went on to be technical manager at Wiseman's Strathleven, Scotland, plant, and then while based at the UKO headquarters in Mill Hill, North London developed both a new progressive lens design and 'Plas Plus', a pioneer in practical lens hardcoating. He later joined Cambridge Optical as technical director. His interest in and experience of AR coating technology then led him to become a top team member with specialists Applied Vision as well as acting as UK representative on International Standards committees on lens coating. He is now an independent optical consultant and also assists the US-based Chemalux company with sales of their AR coating equipment in Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

– including opticians and lab owners – yet gives me all the near add I need.

'For me, because I'm used to all-intermediate correction for computer work, an atLast's large intermediate zones seem less important, but experience has shown that I can use these lenses comfortably and effectively, working on my laptop when travelling, for example. I find

them excellent all round, including for driving: so much so I plan to acquire a second pair perhaps with Transitions brown, to overcome the one problem I found on holiday in the sun last winter. That's the difficulty of finding men's frames deep enough to prevent sunlight shining over the top of a modern frame style. It's no criticism of these lenses! ●

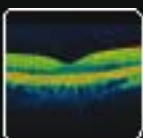
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