



Lacerta Manual

A photochemical film laboratory inside DaVinci Resolve

CUSTOMER MANUAL

Lacerta Manual

Installation, activation, image-path setup, controls, profiles, LUT export, and stock selection.

A high-end film emulation **plugin for DaVinci Resolve** (OpenFX) - built as a mathematical model of a physical photochemical laboratory, not a LUT pack and not a "vintage" filter.

What it is, and what it's for

Lacerta takes your clean camera log and treats that light as if it were physically striking a film **negative**, being **developed** in chemistry, **timed** under laboratory printer lights, **printed** onto a real print stock, and **projected** to your display. Every stage happens in *density space*, with tonal anchors derived from manufacturer sensitometric and densitometric publications and stock character modeled from published film characteristics.

Because it models the journey of light through a physical medium instead of wearing a film-shaped preset, the image *behaves* like film - it rolls off highlights, holds shadow separation, shifts color as things saturate, and survives extreme exposure gracefully. Modern stocks render clean, sharp, and natural rather than forcing an archival look; more pronounced period character comes from the stocks modeled to carry it.

Use it as the **final step** of your grade, in place of the output Color Space Transform - it is a complete display rendering transform (DRT). Feed it a neutral, balanced log image and let the lab do the look.

Installing

Download the installer for your operating system from the [official Lacerta download page](#). Compare its SHA-256 checksum with SHA256SUMS.txt before installing, especially if your operating system presents a security warning. Do not bypass an unidentified, unknown-publisher, or tampering warning for an unverified download.

macOS

- 1 If the installer is inside a .zip, double-click the zip first.
- 2 Double-click Install Lacerta Demo.app. Enter your macOS administrator password when asked because OpenFX plugins live in /Library/OFX/Plugins.
- 3 If Gatekeeper cannot verify the publisher, stop and confirm that you have the release-approved download and matching checksum before contacting support.

Windows

- 1 Run Lacerta-Setup.exe and approve the Windows UAC prompt.
- 2 The installer places the plugin in C:\Program Files\Common Files\OFX\Plugins and adds Lacerta License Manager to the Start menu.

Security check. If Microsoft Defender SmartScreen cannot verify the publisher, stop and confirm that you have the release-approved download and matching checksum.

Linux

- 1 Make the downloaded `Lacerta-Installer.run` executable if your desktop requires it, then run `sh ./Lacerta-Installer.run`.
- 2 Approve the `pkexec` password dialog or the `sudo` prompt. The installer places the plugin in `/usr/OFX/Plugins`.
- 3 Desktop security behavior varies by distribution. Do not run an installer whose checksum does not match the official release.

After installation on any platform, **quit and reopen DaVinci Resolve**. Find Lacerta under **OpenFX -> Lacerta -> Lacerta Film Lab** and add it to the **last** node of your grade. To reinstall or update, run the current installer for your operating system again.

Supported builds target macOS on Apple silicon or Intel, 64-bit Windows, and 64-bit Linux. GPU rendering uses Metal on macOS and OpenCL on Windows and Linux, with a multithreaded CPU fallback. Test the free demo on the exact operating system, DaVinci Resolve version, GPU, and workflow you plan to use.

Demo and license activation

The demo installer also installs **Lacerta License Manager**. Without a valid license, every CPU and GPU render carries the built-in Lacerta watermark and LUT export is disabled.

- 1 Purchase Lacerta through the [official Lacerta purchase page](#), which continues to Lemon Squeezy after the license terms are acknowledged.
- 2 Open Lacerta License Manager from **Applications** on macOS, the **Start menu** on Windows, or the applications menu on Linux. Linux users can also run `lacerta-license-manager` in a terminal.
- 3 Enter the license key from the receipt or Lemon Squeezy My Orders page and the exact email used at checkout.
- 4 Activate, then restart Resolve or press **Manage License** in Lacerta.

One purchased seat activates one machine. For a perpetual purchase, activation is permanent on that machine and does not require periodic renewal, reopening License Manager, or re-entering the key. Sharing the installer, plugin, or local license does not unlock another machine: its machine identity is different, so it remains in demo mode. Transfer a seat by deactivating the old machine in License Manager before activating the new one. If the old machine is lost or unavailable, [contact support](#) for a verified seat reset.

Lacerta stores activation credentials using the operating system's protected credential service: the device-only macOS Keychain, Windows Credential Manager, or Linux Secret Service when available. On Linux without Secret Service, the license still activates and the signed machine-bound lease is stored locally, but the license key and checkout email are not retained. Keep the Lemon Squeezy receipt because deactivation or transfer may require entering them again.

Lacerta sends an app-specific machine hash to its license service; the raw hardware identifier never leaves the machine. The email is compared with the Lemon Squeezy purchase and is not stored in a separate Lacerta customer database. The plugin verifies the signed local lease without network or credential-store access inside DaVinci Resolve.

Film-data methodology

Lacerta's tonal foundation is derived from published manufacturer sensitometric and densitometric specifications, including official cinema system and LAD references, and cross-checked against available characteristic curves. Stock-to-stock color, grain, and handling are modeled from published film characteristics. A small number of archival stocks for which no public primary curve document could be located are historically informed approximations. Lacerta is an independent product and is not endorsed by any film manufacturer.

Setting it up on a node

- **Input Space** - set this to whatever working space is feeding the node (default: DaVinci Wide Gamut / Intermediate). This tells Lacerta what your light is before the film sees it.
- **Display Target** - your delivery: Rec.709 2.4 by default, plus sRGB, P3, and Rec.2100 PQ / HLG for HDR.

Everything between those two is the lab.

What each control does

Controls are laid out in the order light actually travels through a lab.

Camera

- **Negative Stock** - the film you're shooting on. 57 negatives (see the Stock Tips file). This is the single biggest look decision.
- **Exposure** - stops at the lens. Over- and under-expose the negative; it rolls off and gains/loses shadow the way film does, not like a digital gain.

Development - the chemistry. It's one coupled system: pushing strengthens the interlayer and thickens the toe, and so on.

- **Push / Pull** - process the film hotter or cooler, like pushing a stop in the lab: more contrast, more grain, lifted fog. *Exposure Compensation* keeps mid-gray where it was so a push reads as contrast, not brightness.
- **Interlayer Effect** - the color engine. Real developer byproducts make each emulsion layer influence its neighbors, which is what gives film its saturation and its gentle color *shifts* as tones intensify. Above 1 it deepens; below 1 it mutes.
- **Bleach Bypass** - skip the bleach so metallic silver stays in the negative: more contrast, deeper floor, desaturated with a cool/cyan lean.

Stock character

- **Neg Cross-Curves** - how far the stock's channels drift apart off mid-gray (its highlight/shadow split-toning). 0 = fully neutral; raise it to let the stock's profiled character show.
- **IR Response** - only affects the false-color infrared stocks (EIR / Aerochrome): how strongly foliage's near-infrared "glow" is synthesized. No effect on any normal stock.

Solarization (off by default) - the Sabattier effect: flashing a part-developed negative with light so tones and colors fold and invert past a threshold.

- **Flash Intensity** - depth of the reversal (keyframeable). **Chemical Timing** - when the flash lands in development. **Metallic Sheen** - retained silver's cool, pewtery veil. **Mackie Line Contrast** - the etched bright/dark edge lines along the reversal contour (spatial, so it renders in the image but not in exported LUTs).

Print - the lab printer and the print stock.

- **Printer Points (R/G/B)** - the color timer. Neutral is 25-25-25; one point is the real photochemical step. Raising a channel raises that color in the image (pull Red down -> cyan). The **Lamp Status** line shows your timing versus neutral. The lamps couple like a real printer head, so a timing move carries exposure with it and slides along the print curve.
- **Print Stock** - the release print you're printing onto. 13 prints, plus **None** for direct projection of slide/reversal film (see Stock Tips).
- **Print Bleach Bypass** - bleach bypass on the print: drops the floor and desaturates, without shifting your exposure.
- **Print Cross-Curves** - same idea as Neg Cross-Curves, on the print stock.

Halation - light bouncing off the film base back through the emulsion. The red-tinged bloom around bright highlights against dark surrounds.

- **Film Gauge** (8/16/35/65mm), **Strength** (the base bounce), **Bloom** (the gentle emulsion-scatter softening of bright areas).

Grain - density-domain grain that follows the stock's modeled granularity, scaled in microns by **Film Gauge**. **Strength** and **Saturation** (mono silver <-> chromatic dye clouds).

Utility & Advanced - Show Curves overlay, Export LUT (.cube), Profile save/recall, Halation Threshold, Lock Grain Seed.

The pipeline, in one glance

```
camera log -> linear exposure -> halation -> negative H&D curve ->
development (push/pull · interlayer · bleach) -> grain ->
printer lights (LAD-timed) -> print stock curve -> projection -> display transform
```

Profiles & LUTs

Profiles and LUTs are written to predictable Desktop folders so they are easy to find and move between Resolve systems.

- **Profiles** - *Export Profile* saves every setting as a small .lacerta text file in the Desktop's Lacerta_Profiles folder (~/Desktop/Lacerta_Profiles on macOS/Linux or %USERPROFILE%\Desktop\Lacerta_Profiles on Windows). Files there show up in the **Profile** dropdown at Resolve startup; pick one and **Load Selected Profile**. *Import Newest Profile* grabs the latest without a restart.
- **LUTs** - *Export LUT* writes a .cube (33 or 65) to the Desktop's Lacerta_LUTs folder (~/Desktop/Lacerta_LUTs on macOS/Linux or %USERPROFILE%\Desktop\Lacerta_LUTs on Windows), with a full settings snapshot in the header for on-set monitors and VFX. (Grain and halation are spatial and stay native to the plugin.)

Choosing stocks

Which negative pairs with which print, which films project directly, and the character of each family - that's all in stocktips.md, installed beside this manual in the Lacerta Film Lab folder on your Desktop.

Lacerta Film Lab - a photochemical lab in a plugin.