

Ultrawide Angle Lens Options, Prices, and Observations

by Robert Monaghan

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I thought I would share a recent exercise in pricing ultrawide angle options and some observations. Here are some sample prices for new and used ultra-wide nikon mount lenses from the latest Shutterbug Ads (1/98) Even if you don't use nikon, you can construct a similar decision matrix

Ultra-wide Lenses:

- 7.5mm f5.6 non-AI \$995 (used - condition 8 nikkor (B&H)
- 8mm f2.8 AIS \$1,250 nikkor
- 8mm f4.0 AF \$650 sigma
- 8mm f4.0 AIS \$550 sigma
- 10mm f5.6 OP \$2,700 nikkor used (collectible)
- 14mm f3.5 AIS \$430 sigma
- 14mm f3.5 AF \$610 sigma
- 14mm f3.5 AF \$1850 nikkor
- 15mm f3.5 AIS \$1,450-1,600 (mint)
- 15mm f5.6 AF \$1,275 nikkor (used condition 9-)
- 16mm f2.8 AIS \$575(used) \$699 (mint-) nikkor
- 16mm f2.8 AF-D \$639 nikkor
- 16mm f3.5 non-AI \$350-\$495 (mint-) nikkor (used)
- 17mm f3.5 \$369 (\$334+mount) tamron new
- 17mm f3.5 \$230 (\$198+mount) tokina
- 17mm f3.5 \$370 tokina ATX - AF

- 17mm f3.5 \$189+\$15 mount cambridge manual focus
- 18mm f2.8 AF-D \$999 nikkor
- 18mm f3.5 AIS \$850-899 nikkor
- 18mm f4 AI \$575-599 (mint-) nikkor used
- 18mm f3.5 \$270+\$15 mount cambridge manual focus
- 19mm f3.8 \$95+mount/\$110 vivitar new
- 19mm f3.8 \$125 vivitar used - condition 8+
- 19mm f3.5 \$90+mount cambridge new manual focus

Ultra-wide Third Party Zooms:

- 17-28 F4 \$108 cambridge manual focus
- 17-28/4 \$118 vivitar series I AF? (Tristate)
- 17-28/4 \$99 vivitar (used AIS like new)
- 19-35 \$129 vivitar series I
- 19-35 \$140 AF (Tristate)
- 19-35 f3.5-4 \$160 tokina AF
- 19-35 f3.5-4 \$160 vivitar manual

Used Third Party Lenses - very rare:

- 19mm f3.8 \$125 vivitar used - condition 8+ - 10% over new cost
- 17-28/4 \$99 vivitar (used AIS like new) - 10% under new cost

Fisheye Adapter:

- \$50-60 used - mount on screw thread at front of 50mm or other lenses
- .18x - 50mm becomes 9mm full circle fisheye, 100mm lens has 18mm effect

Notes:

Ultrawide angle zooms may have benefited most from modern lens designs.

Ultrawide market must be very shallow, as so few used lenses are listed

Sigma is main competitor below 17mm to nikkor primes (in Shutterbug ads)

Tamron or Tokina at 17mm, both f3.5 (and a relabeled Cambridge lens?)

Sigma is a third the price of equal speed nikkors (14 and 18 mm lenses)

Vivitar 19mm lenses are lowest cost ultrawides (f3.5, f3.8 same lens?)

Ultrawides are often slow (f3.5), so f4-4.5 zooms aren't much slower

Cosina 17-28mm f/4 zoom remarketed under samyang, vivitar, other names

17-28mm zoom isn't (it is 17.8mm to 25mm per feb 92 pop photo tests)

Given 30% drop in Korean currency, will these ultrawide lenses drop too?

Be wary of add-on costs, for mounts, filters, lens front/rear caps etc.

Spending Range:

\$50	-	-	.18x	fish-eye	adapter
\$100	-	19mm	fixed,	17-28	f4 zoom
\$200		-		17mm	tokina
\$300		-		18mm	sigma
\$400		-		14mm	sigma
\$550		-		8mm	sigma
over - nikkors					

autofocus mounts

\$120+ zooms, \$370 Tokina 17mm, \$600+ sigma 14mm

Discussion:

I can't tell you if the quality of a given nikkor or third party lens will match your photographic needs or pocketbook. The nikkors really are better, but are they worth three times the price to you? If your pocketbook is limited, your options may fall into place rather directly (see chart above).

Realistically, how much can you expect out of a 17-28 f/4-4.4 zoom ultra-wide lens that costs under \$110? Fortunately, the tests show that the lens works best at the widest (17.8mm) setting, poorest at the 28mm setting (actually 25mm optically). If you already have primes in the upper range, consider the similarly priced 19mm vivitar series I. If you don't have any wide angle primes, then the 19mm-35mm zoom seems logical. For around \$200, you can get a 17mm f3.5 prime (tokina) that is far enough from the usual 20mm wide angle to be very useful.

Don't give up on ultrawide fisheye photography! You can get a 180 degree circular fisheye image on 35mm and medium format using one of the .18x fisheye adapters. These adapters screw onto the front of your regular lenses, providing a .18x times 50mm or 9mm f5.6 fisheye effect using normal 50mm lens. Using a short-tele zoom, you can range between 9mm and 18mm (100mm setting). Optically you will get more flare, less contrast, and more uneven light falloff than with a prime circular fisheye that costs 10 to 25 times more. See fisheye article linked below for details. But expect to have a lot of ultrawide fun for only \$50+ (used).

I found out two surprising facts from this study. First, there are very few used ultrawide lenses for sale. Darn! Second, there is a pricing anomaly at 17mm, both for primes and the Cosina 17-28mm zoom. With the drop in the Korean won, there may be a chance to snag a bargain here!

Even if you aren't a nikon lens user, I will bet that a bit of research will reveal a similar pricing and opportunity selection for your brand.

Lens Tested / Date in Popular Photography

- Adorama M-series 21mm f/2.8* 4/96
- Canon EF 14mm f/2.8L USM 1/93
- Nikkor 20-35mm f/2.8 D 5/94
- Samyang 18-28mm f/4-4.5* 2/92
- Sigma 14mm f/3.5 1/93
- Sigma 18-35mm f/3.5-5.6 D 2/95
- Sigma 21-35mm f/3.5-4.2 2/92
- Tamron 20-40mm f/2.7-3.5 2/95
- Tokina AT-X 17mm f/3.5 1/94
- Tokina 20-35mm f/3.5-4.5 5/92
- Vivitar Series 1 19-35mm f/3.5-4.5 7/96

* Manual-Focus lens, rest are autofocus
Thanks to Joseph jc17fl@aol.com for posting this data
Nov. 19, 1997 in *rec.photo.equipment.misc*

Email additions to rmonagha@post.smu.edu

This page is at <http://www.smu.edu/~rmonagha/bronwides.html>

See <http://www.smu.edu/~rmonagha/bronfe.html> for fisheye adapter article

Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm

Subject: Re: Sigma 21-35 opinion

Date: Sun, 11 Jan 1998

Noel J. Bergman wrote...

I am interested in first hand experiences with this lens and/or recommendations for a wide angle zoom. I have already checked photozone and Pop Photo's '92 review. I own a Sigma 28-70/2.8, so for the most part, I would be using the wide angle zoom towards the wide end and stopped down to shoot landscapes.

The Sigma 21-25 I know of is used, but apparently in excellent shape with a B+W 81B and Heliopan UV for circa \$200.

The one I tried was, to be charitable, not up to my minimum standards... I would try for a used Nikkor 20mm f2.8, or maybe a Tokina ATX AF 17mm. Personally, I find tele zooms useful, mid-range zooms less so, and wide zooms pretty useless - and I would rather have high image quality (it is hard enough to find really good wide primes, let alone even decent wide zooms...).

--

David Ruether

<http://www.fcinet.com/ruether>

ruether@fcinet.com

[ED. note: David Ruether posts a very well respected review of Nikon.. lens quality and related topics at his web-site]

Date: Tue, 13 Jan 1998
From: MDDESKEY MDDESKEY@aol.com
Subject: Re: lens hacking etc Re: Medium format equivalents to 35mm

Although I have known for 25 years about the PC lenses for 35mm. They are VERY expensive. I have eliminated much of their need by using a 14mm [watch your shoes!] with the camera back vertical.....a grid screen helps here....and cropping a part of the slide.

14 mm Sigma:

From: Evan Miller evrmiller@postoffice.worldnet.att.net
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: Ultrawide Angle Lens Options, Prices, and Observations

MDDESKEY wrote:

I have the 14mm Sigma and it allows me as an architect to avoid converging vertical lines on pictures of buildings, even though it means sometime using only part of the frame. It is a godsend and amazing

I've had a 14mm Sigma for about 3 years now and agree that it is an amazing and useful lens (awesome for interior shots). There is NO rectilinear distortion at all! I found it to be noticeably better than the Sigma 18mm lens. Sharpness and contrast are very good, there is some vignetting wide open that is pretty much gone by f/5.6-8. I tested it against a Nikkor 15mm f/3.5, which was only very slightly sharper, about the same for flare, but 3X the price, not AF or matrix metering, and not as wide a lens.

Evan Miller

rec.photo.equipment.35mm
From: Klaus Schroiff kschroiff@metronet.de
[1] Re: Tokina 17mm f3.5 differences ?
Date: Tue Jan 20

The AF version is an entirely different design. It is supposed to outperform the MF version by far.

Klaus

Ronen Ashkenazi wrote:

Hi,

I am looking into purchasing an ultra-wide lens and was thinking about the Tokina 17mm f3.5 lens. I noticed that there are two versions the AF and MF. The MF lens costs considerably less and I was wondering if there is a difference between the two. I do not need AF and the price of the MF lens is tempting.

Thanks, Ronen Ashkenazi

rec.photo.equipment.35mm
From: "Fred Whitlock" afc@cl-sys.com
[1] Re: Tokina 17mm f3.5 differences ?
Date: Tue Jan 20 1998

They are completely different designs. The new design is called ATX and has aspheric technology. The lens is quite good, actually. I haven't tested the older one and can't comment on it. My suspicion is that the difference in price between the two is justified in terms of optical quality. I don't think the pricing has anything to do with focusing technology. Good shooting.

--
Fred
Maplewood Photography
<http://www.maplewoodphoto.com>

rec.photo.equipment.35mm
From: David Rosen golem@Delta.capital.net
[1] Re: Tokina 17mm f3.5 differences ?
Date: Tue Jan 20 1998

Rod hotrod4x5@linkline.com wrote:

: On Tue, 20 Jan 1998 14:29:23 +0200, "Ronen Ashkenazi" : Ronen.Ashkenazi@kla-tencor.com wrote: : I am looking into purchasing an ultra-wide lens and was thinking about the : Tokina 17mm f3.5 lens. I noticed that there are two versions the AF and MF. : The MF lens costs considerably less and I was wondering if there is a : difference between the two. I do not need AF and the price of the MF lens is : tempting.

: I find it interesting whenever I hear about lenses of the exact same : focal length with the exact same aperture from different manufactures, : when the said lens is a strange (IE non standard) focal length. I have : a Tamron 17mm f3.5 lens. I didn't know tokina made one too. Anyway, : it is most likely that the lenses are identical as far as glass goes. : I say get the manual focus one.

That's a considerable amount of guessing to pass along as advice. There is nothing non-standard about 17mm, as it has long been available from Canon, Minolta, Tokina, Tamron, while Nikon and Pentax [and Sigma] have long offered 18mm. That Tokina offers one is widely known, as it has been offered for over 20 yrs. OTOH, to suggest that there is no difference between MF and AF versions of a lens you admit that you never heard of is a bit too presumptuous, no ? The AF version is new and quite different from the 20 yr old design of the MF version. The AF version is composed of much greater diameter glass and is longer, so the difference is plain, no rocket science required.

As to the man's concern and desire to economize, I'm very happy with the MF version, and mine has the Vivitar RS label, meaning that it may not see the same QA inspection that the Tokina-labeled stock receives. But it seems to be an excellent design, as I had previously used one with the old Assanuma label, and now with the Vivitar label, but both are sharp and rather free of flare. The corners benefit from a stop or so departure from wide open, and distortion is visible. Evenness of illumination is quite good. Where economy is a concern, another benefit of the MF version is the much smaller filter size.

David Rosen golem@various.sites.net

Sigma Problems Website

Tokina AT-X 17mm f3.5 AF lens review

[note: Fred Whitlock is a well known lens reviewer for nikon lenses etc.]

rec.photo.equipment.35mm

From: "Fred Whitlock" afc@cl-sys.com

[1] Re: Tokina AT-X 17 AF

Date: Fri Jan 30

I wrote a short review of the Tokina AT-X 17mm f3.5 AF lens several months ago on this newsgroup. I was very impressed with both the mechanical quality and the optical performance of this lens for its very reasonable price. This lens incorporates aspheric technology and performs with corner to corner sharpness at f5.6 and smaller apertures. It is high in contrast and makes photos with a lot of what I refer to as "snap" or contrasty brilliance. I carry one of these lenses often. If you would like to see how rectilinear it is take a look at the photo of the 1937 Chevrolet grille on my web site. This photo was made with the Tokina AT-X 17 with the camera held in as close to perfect vertical orientation as I could manage. It's easy to mistake for a shot made with a normal lens. I can recommend this lens without qualification.

--

Fred

Maplewood Photography

<http://www.maplewoodphoto.com>

rec.photo.equipment.35mm

From: clauded535@aol.com (ClaudeD535)

[1] Re: 20mm vs. 17mm

Date: Mon Feb 02

I went through the same agony. I also have a 28-105, and had planned to buy the 20-35 USM. While playing with the 20-35 at the store, I felt the 20mm end wasn't wide enough. So I switched to the AT-X 17mm. It was on sale, and with the \$30 rebate, about \$160 cheaper than the 20-35 (at Samy's). I haven't used it enough to accurately rate its optics, but the first few slides look very good (and ALL NG posts I've seen have been very positive on this particular lens). But after using it a little bit, 17mm is sure WIDE! I'm thinking that I'll take less shots with this than if I had the versatility of a 20-35 zoom, even if it only goes to 20mm. The Canon I hear has a problem with filter vignetting, and since I'm a polarizer addict, I'm not sure if even Hoya's low-profile polarizer will not vignette. The AT-X does not vignette even with a standard (and cheaper) height polarizer. The moral of this story is that even after I bought this lens, I'm still not sure it was the best choice (so this was a lot of help, huh).

cdb

Date: Sat, 24 Jan 1998

From: Steve takumar@juno.com

Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm

Londinium01@webtv.net wrote:

*Hi there I am considering vivitar's 19mm to suplement my other lenses which are:
28 f 2.8, 50 f 1.8, 135 f 2.8.*

Is this lens worth \$109.95 that B&H has it for?

Thank You for any help in advance. End of Line... For now.

Hi

I have this lens. Very sharp and fun to play with. Made some great shot of the kids at the playground with it - made 'em look really goofy, getting close with an extreme depth of field.

It's worth it for me. And it's a fairly low price for a lens of this extreme wide angle, without being a fisheye.

Steve

From: vallebach@aol.com (VAllebach)
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: Vivitar 19mm f 3.8 opinions please
Date: 2 Feb 1998

Greetings:

For the price you can't go wrong. I own two of them; one for my Minolta X-700 and my Nikon FM. They produce good sharpness and no more fuzzines at the edges than do my prime normal lenses. They also have excellent contrast. Now, if you can afford Nikon, Minolta, Canon, Pentax, etc. WA lenses they're probably slightly better and more durable than the Vivitar WA lens. However, I did drop my Nikon version and it didn't seem to faze it .I must admit, though, that I normally stop my WA's down to f8 or smaller.

Vic Allebach

From: Crimescene stephen_h@feldstein.com
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: 20mm vs. 17mm
Date: Thu, 05 Feb 1998

I have a Sigma 18-35mm, and I love it. I bought the Sigma for the quality and the price. And I must say the quality is awesome!!!

Go for it!
Stephen

FrankBruin wrote:

what is everyone's thought on these ultra-wide angle lenses? specifically, I'm looking at the EF 20mm f/2.8 USM (\$480 @ B&H) and the Tokina AT-X 17mm f/3.5 (\$370 @ B&H).

Optically i hear they are comparable. The major issues for me are 1) price, 2) the 'ultra' width of the 17mm, and 3) brand.

1) the 17mm has a wider view, yet cost considerably less than the Canon. Is this simply because it is a 3rd party lense? The Tokina is quite noisy compared to the USM, but who needs silence when shooting sweeping sceneries or interiors? the tokina even comes with the hood.

2) i don't have any experience with either lense, but people have warned me that the 17mm may be too wide and thus more difficult to use. On the other hand, i've heard from people who just love the 17mm.

3) canon vs. tokina. i have a 28-105 and plan on purchasing the 100-300 USM, so obviously i prefer Canon lenses over 3rd party. however, in this case, the cheaper, wider Tokina looks good as well.

I'm considering zooms such as the EF 20-35 USM because i think that'd be redundant with the 28-105.

to wrap things up, i'd appreciate any insight on this issue of wide-angle lense selection. thanks :)

Frank

From: "Malcolm" abtop@thefree.net
Subject: Re: fisheye lens
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Date: 5 Feb 98

Stephen

I've got the Sigma 15mm fisheye & it's very impressive. It covers almost 360deg. & comes with a hood to produce the well-known circular pictures. I've found it useful when photographing architectural sites such as Greek Theatres and ancient buildings from within their courtyards - and Red Square in Moscow! The quality is good, though you obviously get distortion, but used thoughtfully, it's a useful and not too bulky piece of kit.

Malcolm(abtop@thefree.net)

rec.photo.equipment.35mm
From: Stanley Chang changso@eurekanet.com
[1] Re: 20mm vs. 17mm
Date: Mon Feb 02

My widest lens is a 20-35f/2.8 Nikkor. Visually, the 20-35 range is quite short, but the image quality is truly, wonderfully crisp and snappy. I don't have a 28mm in zoom range or fixed focal length so the 20-35 makes sense for me. But you have a 28mm in the zoom so a fixed FL 20mm would seem to be logical in your case. If you opt for a wider 17mm, then you might also consider a 24mm to help fill the gap between 17mm and 28mm. I used to have a 24f/2.0 Zuiko and used it a lot when I had it.

From: Klaus Schroiff kschroiff@metronet.de
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: 20mm vs. 17mm
Date: Thu, 05 Feb 1998

would you mind sharing what you replaced the sigma with? and how's your experience so far with th is new lense?

i'm curious. thanks.

I now have the Canon 17-35L. While it is surely no comparison in terms of costs it is also no comparison in regard to the performance.

Try http://i31www.ira.uka.de/~klaus_s/reviews.htm

for some of my thoughts about the Sigma as well as the Canon.

best regards

Klaus

From: dealfaro@shell16.ba.best.com (Luca de Alfaro)
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: 20mm vs. 17mm
Date: 6 Feb 1998

For the price and quality the Tokina 17mm ATX has an excellent reputation as one of the best 17mm and is highly recommended.

I have the Tokina 17mm, the MF version, not the ATX which is reputedly even better. I am very satisfied with it: it is very solidly built, it has fairly low distortion (less than I expected), and vignetting is not bad at all. It is a bit soft in the corners wide open, it improves by f/5.6, and by f/8 it's quite good - and f/8 is not so hard to use, since I can shoot sharp photos with it even at 1/15. It is not on par with the sharpness of my Zeiss 28/2.8, but I take very nice slides with it. (and thanks to David Rosen who pointed out in some posts the qualities of this lens).

Luca de Alfaro
dealfaro@best.com

From:	"Leon	van	Batenburg"	Leon.van.Batenburg@consunet.nl
Newsgroups:				rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject:	Re:	20mm	vs.	17mm
Date:	Fri, 6 Feb 1998			

If money is the main issue (that is, the lack of it), one could go for the older Sigma 21-35.

It is al lot heavier than the 18-35, but the image quality is also a lot better.

Color balance is neutral, sharpness OK and contrast a lot better than the 18-35.

I have one, and I am quite content with it. I wanted to upgrade to a Sigma 18-35, but decided not to do so after testing this lens for 10 days.

Now I'm planning to use my old 21-35 until I can afford the Canon 17-35.....

Leon

From: Max Ule 76004.277@CompuServe.COM
Subject: Re: ultra-wide-range zoom
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.misc
Date: Wed, 07 Jan 1998

Do not overlook the Sigma 18-35 f/3.5-4.5 zoom. I have had one for two years and have succesfully enlarged prints to 12x18 inches. The results are quite sharp and it is very light weight. Some of the photos on my web site of Ireland and Scotland were taken with this lens.

Regards,
Max Ule

Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: 19-35mm Zooms - Which one?
From: butkusbr@postoffice.ptd.net (Dragon)

I just got for a canon a Pheonix 19-35mm f3.5-4.5 and its Great! great sharpness, and not that expensive, except that the 77mm filters hurt the budget

--
Bruce Butkus

From: "Fred Whitlock" <afc@cl-sys.com>
Newsgroups: rec.photo.marketplace
Subject: Tokina AT-X AF 17mm f3.5 - Nikon mount
Date: 13 Feb 1998

I'm really impressed with this lens. Not only is it sharp and contrasty but it's built like a tank when compared to most modern AF lenses. It's going to make room for a Nikkor 18, though.

This Tokina AT-X 17mm f3.5 AF lens in Nikon mount is like new in the box. It's pretested for you and absolutely perfect in every way. If you'd like to see a photo made with it visit my web site and view the photo of a 1937 Chevrolet grille. If you would like to see a photo of the lens itself just click on this URL

<http://www.maplewoodphoto.com/images/17.jpg>

\$300 firm. I plan to list it on Ebay next week if it doesn't sell here. I hope the Nikkor 18 will be a worthy replacement. Good shooting.

--
Fred
Maplewood Photography

To: rmonagha@post.cis.smu.edu (Robert Monaghan)
From: mddeskey@aol.com (MDDESKEY)
Subject: Re: Ultrawide Angle Lens Options, Prices, and Observations

I have the 14mm Sigma and it allows me as an architect to avoid converging vertical lines on pictures of buildings, even though it means sometime using only part of the frame. It is a godsend and amazing

From: Philip Quaife <pquaife@cisco.com>
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: 19-35mm Zooms - Which one?
Date: Thu, 08 Jan 1998

Although I almost hate to admit it, my Vivitar Series 1, 19-35 produces excellent results and is very cheap. I paid about \$160.- from B&H. I took it to Yellowstone and it became my most used lens for anything but wildlife. The transparencies I took have a lot of "snap" which is what I look for and will willingly trade a little light falloff at the edges (hardly noticeable). The Nikon equiv. is a major investment at \$1300.00 dollars +. If the Vivitar had turned out to be a dud I would have sent it back, but I'm keeping this one.

Have fun.

From: Ronald Mar magnumpc@ix.netcom.com
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: 19-35mm Zooms - Which one?
Date: Fri, 9 Jan 1998

Just to add my 2 cents,

I also agree with the others. I purchased the Vivitar 19-35 zoom 5 months ago and have been very happy with it, and, considering the price, it's a real bargain!

Ron Mar
magnumpc@ix.netcom.com

From: sfzellner@aol.com (Sfzellner)
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: 19-35mm Zooms - Which one?
Date: 10 Jan 1998

Tokina has two wide angle zooms on the market, the 20-35mm f3.5-4.5 at around \$270US (B and H), and the 19-35 at around \$160US. I don't know who makes the 20-35, but the 19-35 is made by Cosina.

Bob Zellner
Mechanicsburg, PA

rec.photo.misc
From: kevin@nnet.ne.jp
[1] Re: help with wide angle lenses
Date: Wed Apr 29 22:36:45 CDT 1998

> B&H offers these two lenses, I'm not sure wich one to buy for my Canon
> EOS....
> Sigma 24mm f/2.8 -- \$178.00
> Vivitar 19-35mm f/3.5-4.5 Series 1 -- \$189.95
> Everybody keeps telling me fixed focal length lenses are always better
> than zoom lenses; I want to have a wide angle and not pay a lot for it,
> so the vivitar zoom seems nice (19mm). But if the loss in quality is big
> when compared to the other one, I guess I should get the Sigma fixed
> length.

I have used both lenses that you are considering.... if the Vivitar is the same manual focus lens that I'm thinking of.

Personally, I thought the Vivitar was a "fun" lens, but I wouldn't have used it for anything serious. It produced decent pictures overall, but there was quite a bit of distortion and noticeable light

falloff at the corners. But, the image appeared to be pretty sharp all the way across... then again, I usually used it at 19mm at f8 or so and it's hard to tell if your image is a little out of focus with those settings.

I'm currently using the Sigma 24mm lens and have generally been happy with the results. The distortion is minimal and overall image quality (IMO) is much better than that produced by the Vivitar. I just think that Sigma should have made the lens hood able to reverse-clip onto the lens... or allow the lens cap to be attached when using the lens hood. It's a pain having them separated in my camera bag!

I'd say that your decision should depend on your intended use for the lens. If you are a hobbyist and just want to take nice shots for your personal photo album, you could probably make do with the Vivitar... the zoom range does give you some options that the Sigma can't provide.

If you're serious about photography, and image quality is important (maybe you want to make big prints or you want to try for stock photo?) then you're probably better off with the Sigma.

-Kevin

From: joe-b@dircon.co.uk.com (Joe Berenbaum)
Newsgroups: rec.photo.misc
Subject: Re: 8mm T-mount fisheye Sigma/Spiratone/Acura users query
Date: Tue, 26 May 1998

rmonagha@post.cis.smu.edu (Robert Monaghan) wrote:
>Greetings,
>I have just bought a 12mm f/8 sigma T-mount fisheye - an oldie obviously,
>and decided I would also be interested in its sister lens - an 8mm
>T-mount lens, sometimes called a 7.5mm f5.6 fisheye lens, under the
>sigma, spiratone, acura or similar brand names. These lenses were only
>\$100-200 new, and seem to be running the same used...
>Has anyone used this lens, and can they report on its qualities - optical
>and mechanical? I would also be interested in anyone who has one they
>want to get rid of that is gathering dust ;-)
>The T-mount is a major benefit to these unique fisheyes, allowing you to
>swap fisheye easily and cheaply. With auto-aperture cameras, and given
>huge depth of field of fisheye, lack of automation isn't such a big problem.
>thanks again to anyone who can share their experience with this
>interesting fisheye lens - regards bobm
>* Robert Monaghan

A year or so ago I ordered a "Spiratone" circular fisheye in Nikon mount- I can't now remember the focal length but it wouldn't have been very much. It didn't focus. It looked like one of those roll-on deodorant sticks in shape- long, maybe 4", and with a protruding semicircular front element. I didn't keep it long enough to test it out- it had marks on the front element that made in-focus (or nearly) black marks in the image and I knew I'd never use it. I returned it for a refund. I did correspond briefly with someone who had one and who used it occasionally- as I recall he said it wasn't too bad if it was stopped down about halfway (which would have been quite far since it wasn't a fast lens in the first place), and if you avoided close subjects. BTW that is how it was spelt- 2 P's and no R. Maybe lenses have typos too.

Since then I found myself a Sigma 8mm circular fisheye in Olympus mount with no lens cap. It has been sitting in a drawer ever since. I really mean to send it off to SRB and get a professional opinion on whether they can alter the mount to something I already use- which would be Leica R

or Minolta AF- and none of those looks that easy for conversion. Or maybe Minolta MD since I use that also for certain strange things, but I don't like to pay good money to convert to Minolta MD- it just doesn't compute, even though I do use it... If the worst comes to the worst, I can buy an old OM-1 and maybe do so for less than the cost of the (hoped-for) conversion, but I don't like to have extra systems where I have a whole new body just to use one lens.

Joe B. (Please remove the ".com" from my address for email)

From: w.j.markerink@a1.nl (Willem-Jan Markerink)
Newsgroups: rec.photo.misc
Subject: Re: 8mm T-mount fisheye Sigma/Spiratone/Acura users query
Date: Wed, 27 May 98

There even seems to have been a 12mm/f5.6 Spiratone, but probably only a small batch of prototypes. With f8, f16 and f22 F-stops, no f11 for whatever strange reason....8-))

--

Bye,
Willem-Jan Markerink

w.j.markerink@a1.nl
[note: 'a-one' & 'en-el'!]

[Ed. note: see [Willem-Jan Markerink's handy list of fisheyes](#) page!]

From Nikon Digest:
Date: Wed, 5 Aug 1998
From: jmgreenland@juno.com (James M Greenland)
Subject: 17mm Tokina AT-X f/3.5 AF

I just got back the first 5 rolls of chromes after adding this lens to the bag and I want to report that I, as a card-carrying sharpness grouch, am more than pleased.

My results pretty much follow the PopPhoto test of Jan '94 except that they are even better than I expected. Yes, I would rather have the Nikor 18mm f2.8, but the Tokina was only 339 US after the rebate (which I don't have yet) and I haven't missed the extra half stop.

At f5.6 and f8 it is very, very sharp and contrasty - at least as sharp as my 20 and 24mm f2.8 Nikors. 16x20 prints should be a snap. I didn't shoot any chromes at f3.5, and the newspaper test I ran on Tri-X was only so-so. I am beginning to think that may have been my fault after seeing the chromes, but am not much worried about it. I don't see much use for small apertures with a 17, so didn't try anything smaller than f8. POP listed it as A+ to 8x10 and A to 16x20 at both f11 and f16.

One carefully leveled shot of the living room looked great to me, but would be surprised if there is not a bit of barrel distortion discoverable in an optical lab.

BTW, the perspectives with the 17mm at a place like the Grand Canyon can be awesome, especially when you have interesting clouds. They seem to wrap overhead in 3-D. Makes a 20mm look tame.

The fixed lenshood is a pain, however. No Cokin holder will fit that I can find. And a decent selection of good 72mm screw-ins will set you back as much as the lens. But it focuses nicely (not much of a problem with a 17mm!) in manual mode (I use an F3 backed up with an FE). There is no switch, you just do it.

So don't despair if, like me, you can't justify a grand or better for a super-wide. This Tokina will not disappoint you.

Jim Greenland
Gold Canyon AZ

Date: 7 Aug 1998
From: Upper East Side Use-Author-Address-Header@[127.1]
Subject: Samyang 18-28mm
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm

From: "Red Rover" Red_Rover@email.msn.com
Subject: Samyang 18-28mm
Date: Thu, 6 Aug 1998 22:11:33 -0700

Not a fast lens, but still very affordable for a zoom in this range. Anyone have this lens?
Comments?

Message Separator

I have this lens, and have been very pleased with it. It is not as sharp, of course, as single focal length lenses or comparable zooms from major manufacturers.

There was a review of this lens in the February 1992 issue of Popular Photography, which stated that:

"Hands on: Somewhat longish physical length and large front-lens elements reflect remarkable zoom focal-length range. Well finished in bright black. All markings large and highly legible.

No infrared focus marking or depth-of-field scale. Rubberized and highly grippable zoom and focusing rings turn smoothly. Metal ribbed aperture ring of good size.

"In the lab: SQF data indicates performance as average at 18mm and 24mm settings but below average at all [other] focal lengths.

"In the field: Test slides were generally well exposed with good contrast but with noticeable edge and corner light falloff from maximum aperture to f/8 at 18mm, f9 1/2 at 24mm, and f/11 at 28mm. Flare was very well controlled throughout.

"Conclusion: Extreme wide-angle but relatively compact zooms are among the most difficult lenses to design and manufacture. Obviously, sacrifices such as in maximum aperture light falloff, field curvature, and SQF results at 18mm are trade-offs for the high convenience of the focal-length selection available."

From: wvl@marinternet.com (Bill Lawlor)
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: Samyang 18-28mm
Date: Sat, 08 Aug 1998

I had this lens in Canon FD mount. I carried it around Europe in 1996 and got quite acceptable 11X14 B&W prints when stopped down to 16. I used Delta 400 film. I paid about \$170 mail order.

Bill Lawlor

rec.photo.equipment.35mm
From: rpn1@cornell.edu (Neuman-Ruether)
[1] Re: Sigma 14mm Lens Differences
Date: Fri Sep 04 19:59:22 CDT 1998

On Fri, 04 Sep 1998 16:26:59 GMT, johnchap@erols.com wrote:

>I am planning to buy either a Sigma 14/3.5, Sigma 14/2.8 or a used Nikon
>15/3.5. Even used the Nikon is about 2x the cost of either of the Sigmas new.
> David Reuther's notes on the Nikon 15/3.5 suggest weak edge performance. It
>will be a relatively low-use lens for me. I suspect no one has even seen the
>new Sigma 14/2.8, but the other HSM Sigmas have been highly praised. Given
>all this, what advice/recommendations can anyone provide in making the
>choice. Again, thanks in advance.

The edges of the Nikkor 15mm f3.5 are fine - its the corners at wide stops with color, and pretty much at all stops with B&W that aren't great (though, I suspect, still better than the Sigmas...;-). The bargain lens in this FL area is the Nikkor 15mm f5.6 - it is a surprisingly fine lens, with truly amazing lack of linear distortion and good evenness of sharpness to the corners, especially around f11.

It is slow, but as with all superwides, it is effectively faster than rating since it is easy to hand-hold at VERY slow speeds (1/8th second is easy with the 15mm). There is more on it on my Nikkor evaluation list (under "I babble" on my web page). BTW, I have four favorite very-wides: 15mm f5.6, 16mm f3.5 (now THAT is a GOOD lens!!!), 20mm f2.8, and 28mm f4PC - all really fine lenses, capable of crisp images everywhere in the frame...!

David Ruether
ruether@fcinet.com
rpn1@cornell.edu
<http://www.fcinet.com/ruether>

From Nikon Digest:
Date: Mon, 14 Sep 98
From: "Rai, Rajendra" Rajendra.Rai@bc-nepal.wlink.com.np
Subject: Lens Test

Hi! The following appeared in the EOS digest. I hope many of you will find it interesting.

Rajendra

> From: Klaus Schroiff[SMTP:kschroiff@BauNetz.de]
> Sent: 11 September 1998 22:57
> To: EOS
> Subject: EOS: Lens Tests ...
>
> Hi,
>

> Some of you probably know that I had to shut down the "Lens Test archive"
> about a month ago. Posting the former "Easy Guide Index" via email should be
Ok I guess so I'll send the updated data to the list once every quarter
year or so - unless, of course, you think this is a waste of bandwidth.

>
> This time here're the ratings for zoom lenses only. Fix-focals will follow
> soon.

>
> Klaus

>
> -----
> The final results represent an averaged mark based on test verdicts from 5
> photo magazines from all over the planet.
> -----
> The results range from 1.0 to 5.0 (5 is best).
> There're 6 textual marks for the optical quality:

>
> 1. (4.26 to 5.00) = excellent
> 2. (3.76 to 4.25) = very good
> 3. (3.26 to 3.75) = good
> 4. (2.76 to 3.25) = average
> 5. (2.26 to 2.75) = sub-average
> 6. (1.0 to 2.25) = poor

>
> A typical result looks like this: 3.48 (3) = good
> The number in brackets shows the number of tests included for the
> calculation. Only results with (3) or more tests are more or less stable!
> Everything less should be taken as a tendency only!

>
> -----

Wide-angle zooms 17-21mm-	Optical Quality
Nikkor AF 2.8 20-35mm D	3.46 (5) = good
Canon EF 2.8 17-35mm USM L	3.30 (4) = good
Canon EF 2.8 20-35mm L	3.13 (3) = average
Tokina AF 2.8 20-35mm AT-X Pro	3.12 (3) = average
Minolta AF 3.5 17-35mm G	3.04 (3) = average
Canon EF 3.5-4.5 20-35mm USM	3.01 (4) = average
Minolta AF 3.5-4.5 20-35mm	3.0 (1) = average
Tokina AF 3.5-4.5 20-35mm II	2.88 (5) = average
Minolta AF 3.5-4.5 20-35mm	2.81 (2) = average
Tamron AF 2.7-3.5 20-40mm ASL	2.74 (5) = sub-average
Vivitar / Cosina / Soligor AF 3.5-4.5 19-35mm	2.27 (4) = sub-average
Sigma AF 3.5-4.5 18-35mm ASL	2.24 (5) = poor

>
> -----

Wide-angle zooms 28-70/2.8	Optical Quality
Nikkor AF 2.8 35-70mm D	4.09 (5) = very-good
Canon EF 2.8 28-70mm USM L	3.98 (5) = very-good
Pentax SMC-FA 2.8 28-70mm AL	3.87 (4) = very-good
Minolta AF 2.8 28-70mm	3.85 (4) = very-good
Tokina AF 2.6-2.8 28-70mm AT-X Pro	3.63 (4) = good
Canon EF 2.8-4.0 28-80mm USM L	3.53 (4) = good
Angenieux AF 2.6 28-70mm	3.48 (4) = good
Sigma AF 2.8 28-70mm	3.35 (3) = good
Tamron SP AF 2.8 28-105mm LD (IF)	3.33 (4) = good
Tokina AF 2.8 28-70mm AT-X	3.21 (5) = average
Tamron AF 2.8 35-105mm ASL	2.75 (4) = average
Sigma AF 2.8-4.0 28-70mm UC	2.64 (4) = sub-average
Sigma AF 2.8-4 28-105mm Aspherical	2.48 (4) = sub-average
Tokina AF 2.8-4.5 28-70mm	2.39 (2) = sub-average
Soligor / Vivitar / Cosina AF 2.8-3.8 28-105mm	2.08 (3) = poor

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> -----
>
>           Wide-angle zooms 28-70/80mm           Optical Quality
> Minolta AF 4.0 24-50mm                          3.64 (3) = good
> Nikkor AF 3.3-4.5 24-50mm                        3.61 (3) = good
> Pentax SMC-FA 4-5.6 28-105mm                     3.23 (4) = average
> Nikkor AF 3.5-4.5 28-70mm (D)                    3.21 (4) = average
> Minolta AF 3.5-4.5 24-85mm                       3.22 (4) = average
> Canon EF 3.5-5.6 28-135mm ImageStabilizer        3.15 (3) = average
> Nikkor AF 3.5-5.6 28-80mm D                      3.14 (2) = average
> Pentax AF FA 4.0 28-70mm                         3.12 (5) = average
> Canon EF 3.5-5.6 28-80mm IV (USM)                3.07 (2) = average
> Nikkor AF 3.5-4.5 28-85mm                        3.03 (5) = average
> Nikkor AF 3.5-4.5 35-105mm D                     3.02 (2) = average
> Minolta AF 3.5-4.5 28-85mm                       2.99 (3) = average
> Nikkor AF 3.5-5.6 24-120mm D                     2.99 (4) = average
> Canon EF 3.5-4.5 28-105mm USM                    2.94 (4) = average
> Sigma AF 3.5-5.6 24-70mm ASL                     2.88 (5) = average
> Minolta AF 3.5-4.5 28-105mm                      2.85 (4) = average
> Sigma AF 3.5-5.6 28-80mm Macro ASL               2.81 (3) = average
> Pentax SMC-F 4.0 24-50mm                         2.77 (4) = average
> Minolta AF 4.0-5.6 28-80mm                       2.71 (4) = sub-average
> Vivitar/Soligor AF 3.5-5.6 28-80mm               2.67 (3) = sub-average
> Sigma AF 4-5.6 28-105mm                          2.64 (4) = sub-average
> Canon EF 3.5-4.5 24-85mm                         2.54 (3) = sub-average
> Tamron AF 3.5-5.6 28-80mm ASL                    2.34 (4) = sub-average
> Tamron AF 3.3-5.6 24-70mm ASL                    2.29 (4) = sub-average
>
> -----
>
>           Tele zooms f/2.8 -210mm           Optical Quality
> Minolta AF 2.8 80-200m APO G                      4.25 (3) = excellent
> Nikkor AF 2.8 80-200mm D new                     4.14 (3) = very-good
> Canon EF 2.8 80-200mm L                          4.06 (5) = very-good
> Nikkor AF 2.8 80-200mm D old                     4.03 (4) = very-good
> Sigma AF 2.8 70-200mm EX (HSM)                   4.0 (2) = very-good
> Canon EF 2.8 70-200mm USM L                      3.96 (4) = very-good
> Pentax SMC-FA 2.8 80-200mm ED (IF)               3.77 (4) = very-good
> Vivitar/Soligor/Cosina AF 2.8-4 70-210mm        3.28 (2) = good
> Sigma AF 2.8 70-210mm APO                        3.27 (5) = good
> Tokina AF 2.8 80-200mm AT-X Pro                  3.23 (3) = average
> Tamron AF 2.8 70-210mm LD                        3.15 (3) = average
>
> -----
>
>           Tele zooms -210mm           Optical Quality
> Micro-Nikkor AF 4.5-5.6 70-180mm ED              3.76 (3) = very-good
> Sigma AF 3.5-4.5 70-210mm APO Macro              3.44 (3) = good
> Canon EF 3.5-4.5 70-210mm USM                    3.13 (4) = average
> Minolta AF 4.0 70-210mm                          3.09 (2) = average
> Nikkor AF 4.0-5.6 70-210mm D                     2.95 (5) = average
> Minolta AF 4.5-5.6 70-210mm                      2.85 (4) = average
> Pentax SMC-FA 4.0-5.6 70-200mm                   2.85 (5) = average
> Canon EF 4.5-5.6 80-200mm USM                    2.80 (3) = average
> Nikkor AF 4.5-5.6 80-200mm D                     2.69 (2) = average
> Tokina AF 4-5.6 70-210mm                         2.44 (4) = sub-average
> Tamron AF 4.5-5.6 80-210mm                      2.40 (4) = sub-average
>
> -----
>
>           Tele zooms >210mm           Optical Quality
> Minolta AF 4.5-6.7 100-400mm APO                 3.42 (4) = good

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> Tokina AF 4.0 100-300mm AT-X II	3.10 (2) = average
> Pentax SMC FA 4.5-5.6 80-320mm	3.06 (3) = average
> Minolta AF 4.5-5.6 75-300mm	3.04 (4) = average
> Canon EF 5.6 100-300mm L	3.03 (3) = average
> Nikkor AF 4.5-5.6 75-300mm	3.0 (3) = average
> Minolta AF 4.5-5.6 100-300mm APO	2.95 (4) = average
> Sigma AF 5.6-6.3 170-500mm APO Asph. RF	2.86 (3) = average
> Sigma AF 4.5-5.6 135-400mm APO Asph. RF	2.85 (4) = average
> Canon EF 4.5-5.6 100-300mm USM	2.79 (2) = average
> Sigma AF 4.0-5.6 70-300mm APO Macro	2.75 (5) = average
> Canon EF 4-5.6 75-300mm IS	2.64 (5) = sub-average
> Canon EF 4.0-5.6 75-300mm USM II	2.64 (4) = sub-average
> Tokina AF 4.5-5.6 80-400mm AT-X	2.46 (4) = sub-average
> Tamron AF 5.6 200-400mm LD	2.19 (5) = poor
> Vivitar/ Cosina/ Soligor AF 4.5-6.7 100-400mm	2.17 (4) = poor

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> -----
>
>               Universal zooms               Optical Quality
> Canon EF 3.5-5.6 35-350mm USM L           2.87 (4) = average
> Nikkor AF 3.5-5.6 28-200mm IF              2.67 (2) = sub-average
> Tokina AF 282 3.5-5.6 28-210mm EMZ        2.61 (3) = sub-average
> Pentax / Tamron AF 3.8-5.6 28-200mm LD-IF Super 2.32 (5) = sub-average
> Tokina AF 4.5-6.7 35-300mm SD              2.28 (3) = sub-average
> Sigma AF 3.8-5.6 28-200mm ASP II           2.03 (3) = poor
> Vivitar/Cosina AF 4-6.3 28-300mm          1.74 (5) = poor
>
> -----

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END

End of nikon-digest V4 #43

Date: Mon, 14 Sep 98 16:37:45

From: "Rai, Rajendra" Rajendra.Rai@bc-nepal.wlink.com.np

Subject: Lens Tests - contd

Further to my email earlier today, here is the second part of the posting which appeared in the EOS digest on lens tests.

Rajendra

Date: Sat, 12 Sep 1998

From: "Klaus Schroiff" kschroiff@BauNetz.de

To: EOS eos@avocado.pc.helsinki.fi

Subject: EOS: Lens Tests (Part II)

Ok, here's part two of my previous mail ...

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> -----
>
>               Fix-focals 14-20mm               Optical Quality
> Canon EF 2.8 20mm                          3.72 (4) = good
> Nikkor AF 2.8 20mm                          3.63 (3) = good
> Nikkor AF 2.8 18mm D                        3.45 (2) = good
> Tokina AF 3.5 17mm AT-X                     3.13 (3) = average
> Pentax SMC-FA 2.8 20mm                     3.06 (3) = average
> Minolta AF 2.8 20mm New                     2.94 (3) = average

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Canon EF 2.8 14mm USM L	2.92 (3) = average
Sigma AF 3.5 14mm	2.20 (4) = poor
Sigma AF 3.5 18mm	1.98 (3) = poor

Fix-focals 24-35mm	Optical Quality
Pentax SMC-F(A) 2.8 28mm	4.07 (3) = very-good
Nikkor AF 1.4 28mm D	4.01 (3) = very-good
Canon EF 2.8 28mm	3.80 (4) = very-good
Canon EF 2.8 24mm	3.72 (3) = good
Nikkor AF 2.8 24mm	3.71 (3) = good
Canon EF 1.8 28mm USM	3.66 (3) = good
Canon EF 1.4 24mm USM L	3.59 (3) = good
Minolta AF 2.0 28mm	3.44 (3) = good
Pentax SMC-FA 2.0 24mm AL (IF)	3.30 (4) = good
Sigma AF 2.8 24mm	3.23 (4) = average
Nikkor AF 2.8 28mm	3.22 (3) = average
Minolta AF 2.8 24mm new	3.21 (3) = average
Minolta AF 2.8 28mm	2.95 (3) = average
Sigma AF 1.8 28mm ASL II	2.94 (2) = average

35mm Lenses	Optical Quality
Nikkor AF 2.0 35mm	4.02 (4) = very good
Minolta AF 2.0 35mm	3.80 (4) = very-good
Minolta AF 1.4 35mm G	3.60 (4) = good
Canon EF 2.0 35mm	3.48 (4) = good
Nikkor AI-S 1.4 35mm	3.43 (3) = good

Std. Lenses 50mm	Optical Quality
(Micro-)Nikkor AF 2.8 60mm	4.62 (4) = outstanding!
Minolta AF 1.4 50mm	4.55 (3) = outstanding!
Minolta AF 2.8 50mm Macro	4.35 (3) = excellent
Nikkor AF 1.8 50mm	4.25 (4) = excellent
Canon EF 2.5 50mm Macro	4.19 (4) = very-good
Pentax SMC F 1.7 50mm	4.13 (3) = very-good
Leica Summilux R 1.4 50mm	4.00 (4) = very-good
Nikkor AF 1.4 50mm	3.97 (4) = very-good
Canon EF 1.8 50mm II	3.89 (3) = very-good
Canon EF 1.4 50mm USM	3.86 (3) = very-good
Pentax SMC FA 2.8 50mm Macro	3.65 (2) = good
Canon EF 1.0 50mm L USM	3.60 (3) = good
Minolta AF 1.7 50mm	3.55 (3) = good
Sigma AF 2.8 50mm Macro	2.70 (2) = sub-average

Fix-focals 80-135mm	Optical Quality
Pentax SMC-FA 1.4 85mm	4.85 (3) = outstanding!
Canon EF 2.0 135mm USM L	4.68 (4) = outstanding!
Canon EF 1.2 85mm USM L	4.60 (3) = outstanding!
Nikkor AF 1.8 85mm D	4.50 (2) = outstanding!
Canon EF 1.8 85mm USM	4.48 (4) = excellent
Canon EF 2.8 100mm Macro	4.46 (4) = excellent
Sigma AF 2.8 105mm macro EX	4.33 (2) = excellent
Canon EF 1.2 85mm USM L	4.27 (3) = excellent
Tamron AF 2.8 90mm SP Macro	4.26 (5) = excellent

(Micro-)Nikkor AF 2.8 105mm	4.24 (5) = very-good
Minolta AF 2.0 100mm	4.23 (2) = very-good
Minolta AF 1.4 85mm G	4.20 (4) = very-good
Nikkor AF 1.8 85mm D	4.19 (2) = very-good
Minolta AF 2.8 100mm Macro	4.10 (4) = very-good
Nikkor AF 2.0 135mm DC	4.04 (3) = very-good
Pentax SMC-FA 2.8 100mm Macro	3.88 (3) = very-good
Tokina AF 2.8 100mm Macro	3.80 (5) = very-good
Canon EF 2.0 100mm USM	3.66 (3) = good
Soligor/ Vivitar/ Cosina AF 3.5 100mm Macro	3.33 (2) = good
Sigma AF 2.8 90mm Macro	3.18 (4) = average

Fix-focals 200mm	Optical Quality
Minolta AF 2.8 200mm APO G	4.53 (4) = outstanding!
Canon EF 2.8 200mm USM L II	4.38 (4) = excellent
Canon EF 1.8 200mm USM L	4.28 (3) = excellent
Canon EF 3.5 180mm USM L Macro	4.18 (3) = very-good
Pentax SMC-A 4.0 200mm ED Macro	4.18 (2) = excellent
(Micro-)Nikkor AF 4.0 200mm ED	4.15 (2) = excellent
Nikkor AF 2.8 180mm ED	4.10 (3) = very-good
Sigma AF 2.8 180mm APO Macro	3.91 (2) = very-good
Sigma AF 5.6 180mm APO Macro	3.43 (3) = good

Fix-focals 300mm	Optical Quality
Canon EF 2.8 300mm USM L	4.50 (3) = outstanding!
Nikkor AF-I 2.8 300mm ED	4.36 (3) = excellent
Canon EF 4.0 300mm USM L	4.28 (3) = excellent
Canon EF 4.0 300mm USM L IS	4.21 (4) = very-good
Minolta AF 4.0 300mm APO G	4.06 (4) = very good
Nikkor AF 4.0 300mm ED	3.90 (2) = very-good
Sigma AF 4.0 300mm APO Macro	3.84 (5) = very-good
Pentax SMC-FA 4.5 300mm ED (IF)	3.70 (3) = good
Pentax SMC FA 2.8 300mm ED (IF)	3.72 (2) = good
Minolta AF 2.8 300mm G	3.90 (3) = very-good
Tokina AF 4.0 300mm AT-X APO	3.64 (5) = good
Tamron AF 2.8 300mm LD IF	3.65 (3) = good
Sigma AF 2.8 300mm APO	3.14 (4) = average

Fix-focals 400mm+	Optical Quality
Canon EF 2.8 400mm USM L II	4.60 (3) = outstanding!
Canon EF 4.0 600mm USM L	4.32 (2) = excellent
Canon EF 4.5 500mm USM L	4.07 (2) = very-good
Minolta AF 4.5 400mm APO G	3.76 (3) = very-good
Sigma AF 5.6 400mm APO Macro (HSM)	3.51 (4) = good
Pentax SMC-FA* 5.6 400mm	3.44 (3) = good
Canon EF 5.6 400mm USM L	3.32 (3) = good
Tokina AF 5.6 400mm AT-X	2.57 (4) = sub-average

END

[Ed. note: I included not just the wide angle lenses, but also the other lenses, partly to illustrate the strengths and weaknesses of sundry lenses, but also to show how relatively small the difference may be in performance between many third party lenses and prime OEM made lenses. You already know that the cost differences are often quite a bit larger!]

From: "Michael L. Pipkin, M.D." mlpipkin@flash.net
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: Vivitar 19-35 3.5-4.5
Date: Fri, 02 Oct 1998

Considering the price, it's very good. In absolute terms, it is sharp and contrast is good but it has significant barrel distortion at the wide end. It's fairly well made, twice the weight of the Sigma, and it's an honest 19mm at the wide end. I have 20mm and 35mm Nikkors but still use the Vivitar sometimes when straight lines and wide aperture are not important.

From: rmonagha@news.smu.edu (Robert Monaghan)
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: photo mfgers name game was Re: Phoenix Lenses...any Ideas?
Date: 24 Sep 1998

greetings,

Welcome to the "name game", in which the same lens is made and sold under different names, sometimes with slightly different or optimistic specs ;-). It is quite confusing, intentionally so, and covers up the relatively small number of corporations actually making lenses worldwide with many more trade names and importers names to protect the guilty ;-).

My understanding is that at least some of the Phoenix lenses are made in Korea, and they may also be marketed under the Samyung and Vivitar name(s). This observation is from some wide angle zoom and fixed lens reviews I saw (see <http://www.smu.edu/~rmonagha/bronwide.html> for summary of results).

These third party lenses are often low cost leaders, optically so-so to very good depending on the design and quality control, possibly a good buy for the usually lower asking price, if they meet your needs etc.

Vivitar lenses are harder to pin down, some are relabeled lenses of others, some are made under their supervision in Japan and China and Korea and ???, and some are their designs made by others etc. Other lens names such as Kalimar are trade names under which lenses may be imported and sold, while names such as Prinz are a particular retailers trademark name for their imports from a bunch of third party lens makers etc.

Some US importers will also import lenses from such third party makers and put their own name on them - Cambridge Camera Corp is one example with its Cambron lens line -

Incidentally, many lenses are sometimes quoted as f3.8 instead of f/4 etc. to imply some minor benefit over the slower labeled lens of buying that importer's lenses. Be aware that lenses vary in specs, and that some importers quote the upper or more positive range for their lens specs, even if it is the same lens another is quoting as an f/4, theirs is (+10% range) an f/3.8 listed lens. A 17mm lens may really be a 17.92mm lens, or a 17-35mm zoom may be really a 18+-32mm zoom on the optical bench. So there are a lot fewer lenses out there than the names and specs might suggest.

On the plus side, the name game makes it possible for some third party lenses to be sold at a discount over higher markup lenses by discounters and may get around some fair trade laws in various countries etc.

hope this helps - bobm

From: Degui Gu degui@geophys.washington.edu
Newsgroups: rec.photo.marketplace
Subject: FS: 18mm/3.2 lens by Soiratone \$120/obo
Date: Mon, 28 Sep 1998

The lens is in excellent plus condition, glass perfect, focusing ring smooth. It is a T-mount lens, and with proper adapter, you can use it on most of the manual focus cameras. An adapter to minolta MD mount is included, and it is readily useable if you have such a camera. \$120/obo plus shipping.

From: wlac@cs.rmit.edu.au (Wai Lun Alan Chan)
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: Which Wide Angle Zoom -- Tokina vs ?
Date: 21 Oct 1998

johnchap@erols.com writes:

>Because the Nikon 20-35/2.8 is prohibitively expensive, I just bought a new
>widely touted Tokina ATX Pro 20-35/2.8 . I have since burned up about 6
>rolls running tests at different distances, focal lengths and apertures. To
>my chagrin I have discovered that my carbonate bodied \$160 variable aperture
>wide angle zoom optically (resolution and distortion) equals or exceeds the
>\$700 Tokina at virtually every focal length/fstop/distance combination --
>particularly at the edges/corners. Additionally, the cheap zoom actually has
>a few mm of additional wide angle coverage.
>The Tokina is truly of professional caliber in terms of construction, but
>does not quite live up to this standard or its price optically. The question
>is whether I should keep the Tokina with its better construction and near one
>stop faster speed, although this 2.8 comes at a cost of marginally
>[un]acceptable edges/corners, or send the Tokina back and stick with the
>cheap one, or, given the possibility that this particular Tokina sample is
>defective, exchange the Tokina for another one and test that one.
>In typical field test slides, it is unlikely the Tokina would look bad.
>However, for \$700 I guess I believe I am entitled to better than that.
>Since I have to return the lens immediately, if I am going to, your timely
>thoughts and input would be most appreciated. Thanks in advance for any
>comments and thoughts.

AFAIK, the reputation of Tokina comes from the famous 28-70mm f2.6-2.8 which was originally designed by Angenieux which is excellent on zoom lens design. Other than that, Tokina has never been the best on producing super sharp lenses compared to Sigma and Tamron, let alone camera brand lenses. I strongly believe many people overrate other Tokina lenses by the fact that they have excellent built quality, and the greatly successful 28-70mm zoom.

=====
=== regards, <http://yallara.cs.rmit.edu.au/~wlac/> ===
=== Alan Chan wlac@cs.rmit.edu.au ===

rec.photo.equipment.35mm

From: buzzeb@aol.com (Buzzeb)

[1] Re: Vivitar 19-35 mm Series 1 lens

Date: Thu Oct 29 22:23:13 CST 1998

I own the Vivitar and think that it's an OK lens. Certainly, considering its range and price, it's hard to beat. It's very light and the focusing ring has little resistance, which gives it a bit of a "cheap" feel. In AF mode, it focuses quickly and accurately.

As for image quality, I would have to say that it's not in the same league as, say, the Nikon 24-50. To my eye, it has less contrast (evident even in 4x6 prints) and a cooler (bluer) color cast than my Nikon lenses. Perhaps this is typical of Vivitar glass, however. I used to own a Series 1 105/2.8 macro in Contax mount, and it exhibited some of the same characteristics.

BTW, Herbert Keppler of Pop Photo apparently owns this lens and uses it frequently, as I've seen it referred to in several of his columns. It also got a fairly good review in Shutterbug a few years back.

rec.photo.equipment.35mm

From: aacprofted@aol.com (AACProfTed)

[1] Re: Vivitar 17/3,5

Date: Mon Nov 02 07:57:57 CST 1998

Has anyone tested this lens? This MF lens looks well built, but the price is low compared to original manufactureres primes. I have not been able to find any tests.

Harold, I used the lens in a Canon mount for several years and was very happyk with the results. Didn't ahve some of the 'snap' of my Zeiss optics on a Contax but well, look at the orice difference. I used it exclusively for indoor architectural stuff, interiors for Real Estate ads and it preformed flawlessly.

Ted Harris

From: "Michael Gelfand" mgelfand@hotmail.com

Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm

Subject: Re: Tamron 3.5 17mm MF or Tokina 3.5 17mm MF ??? For X-700 Minolta

Date: Tue, 3 Nov 1998

I owned the Tamron for several years and found it exceptional. I particularly liked the 3 inbuilt filters in it and its sharpness. It is however extremely contrasty - if you like that sort of thing.

Michael

>Hi,

>

>Which is the better one

>Tamron 3.5 17 mm or Tokina 3.5 17 mm.

From: "toby" zdftokyo@gol.com

Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm

Subject: Re: Sigma AF 3.5 14mm/Tokina AT-X 17mm/3.5 reviews?

The Tokina 17 AT-X has a good reputation, as far as I have heard. I had the pre AT-X and found it very disappointing due to extreme unsharpness at the edges. I have a Sigma 14 3.5. It is reasonably sharp across the field for a lens of this extremity, although not up to the Canon 14. Major problems with this lens are light falloff at the edges and flare. You have to stop down to f8 to get reasonably even illumination across the field (but this is a common characteristic of all extreme wide angles to some extent--don't forget that the fabled Zeiss Hologon 15mm has a max aperture of f8 and comes with a center ND filter). You'll find that the lens is also very subject to flare from any reasonably bright light source, including open sky. All this being said, it is an amazing lens for the price. Sigma just came out with a 14 f2.8--might be worth checking out, too.

Hope this helps,
Toby

rec.photo.equipment.35mm
From: ttsalo@iki.fi (Tomi T. Salo)
[1] Re: tokina 17mm lens
Date: Fri Jan 15 00:12:08 CST 1999

rpnl@cornell.edu (Neuman - Ruether) writes:

> It is not a fisheye, and for my purposes, it
> was also not very sharp... (ATX-AF...).

You mean your specimen was not very sharp ;-) (for your purposes, whatever these might be...) My specimen might also not be VERY SHARP in the extreme corners, but it certainly is sharp (considerably better than the accepted 0.03 (or 0.025) mm circle of confusion standard). Saturation, distortion and contrast are very good. Build is excellent. AF is pretty lame though.

--

ttsalo@iki.fi
Tomi T. Salo

Date: Sun, 17 Jan 1999
From: Neuman - Ruether rpnl@cornell.edu
Reply to: ruether@fcinet.com
To: rmonagha@news.smu.edu
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: tokina 17mm lens

On 14 Jan 1999 02:57:35 -0600, rmonagha@news.smu.edu (Robert Monaghan) wrote:

>see related postings at <http://www.smu.edu/~rmonagha/bronwide.html>
[...]
>
>David's point is well taken- the 20mm f/2.8 nikkor is a fine lens, but I
>find there is quite a bit of difference in 3mm at the ultrawide end, at
>least in how much background you get in and how it looks, with a 17mm vs
>20 mm (or 18mm vs 21mm).
[...]

It appeared to me that the 17mm Tokina was not really very much wider than the 20mm f2.8 Nikkor, perhaps due to FL "fudging" in its rating by the mfgr... For this reason, I also sold my

Nikkor 18mm f3.5 - it was not as good as the 20mm f2.8, and the coverage was greater by only a miniscule amount. BTW, I recently acquired a 20mm f3.5 AIS Nikkor - it

was clearly not as wide as the 20mm f2.8 Nikkor, though the mfgr. and rated FL were the same... Also, BTW, my 15mm Nikkor IS clearly wider than the 20...! ;-)

David Ruether
ruether@fcinet.com
rpn1@cornell.edu
<http://www.fcinet.com/ruether>

From Nikon Digest:
Date: Mon, 18 Jan 1999
From: Ben Harper ben_harper@uky.campus.mci.net
Subject: RE: Sigma 18-35 Aspheric [v04.n200/9]

Miguel,

I owned a Sigma 18-35 Aspheric. It is light and dramatically wide. I took it to France on a week's vacation and it traveled well, produced nice, handheld exposures and was a very nice lens. It requires,

however, 82mm filters, which, at the time, didn't seem to be such a problem. I bought a used B&W UV filter for it to protect the front element, which was long overdue, but 82mm filters aren't cheap and represent a large investment in relation to the cost of the lens. Every time, though, that I wanted to use it I found I needed filtration of some type...either to adjust for tungsten fluorescent light or polarizing to intensify colors, and kept getting frustrated by the 82mm ring. My daughter, however, indicated a desire for a wide-angle lens for Christmas. It was now or never. I boxed up the Sigma, instructions, lens hood and B&W filter, and gave it to her for Christmas. For myself, I bought a Tokina 20-35 f/2.8, w/ 77mm, which I have all the filtration I need for now. We are both very happy. Good luck with your choice.

Ben Harper

rec.photo.equipment.35mm
From: "Fred Whitlock" afc@cl-sys.com
[1] Re: Sigma 14mm f/2.8 (non-fisheye)
Date: Wed Jan 20 09:06:49 CST 1999

You can see a photo made with this lens on the web site. Look for an architectural shot of a glass facade (actually it's the College Football Hall of Fame.) It was made with a Sigma 14 and my shoulder against the glass.

Generally the lens is very prone to flare (almost unusably so in some lighting situations.) It is also a bit low in contrast compared to better ultra wides. It is affordable, though, compared to many and can make some interesting photographs. Good shooting.

Fred
Maplewood Photography
<http://www.maplewoodphoto.com>

rec.photo.equipment.35mm

From: spam-abuse@worldnet.att.net (Tom)

[1] Re: Sigma 14mm f/2.8 (non-fisheye)

Date: Wed Jan 20 10:17:51 CST 1999

I bought the Sigma 14 a month ago, and I immediately ran some tests. Your comments reflect exactly what I would say about this lens except that you omitted the fact that it vignettes pretty badly at 2.8. You must stop down to around 5.6 to eliminate this effect (or do a quasi-fix after the fact in Photoshop).

Tom

Washington, DC

From Nikon Digest:

Date: Sat, 23 Jan 1999

From: Rolland Elliott rolland_elliott@yahoo.com

Subject: RE: Sigma 14mm f/2.8 HSM lens [v04.n210/15]

Someone asked about this lens, so here's my opinion:

I've had the Sigma 14mm lens for about two months now, and I'd have to say that I really like the angle of view it offers. It is very well built, but rather heavy for such a small looking lens. The front glass element is HUGE, and there 's no way you can filter it. The front element makes it look like a fish eye lens. However you can slip gel's in the back of the lens to get some filtration.

As far as optical quality goes, I really haven't done any tests and have nothing to compare it to since this is the first ultrawide angel lens I have ever used. One thing is very obvious though, it has a great deal of distortion. Objects at the edge of the frame are stretched out and distorted looking. (especially noticable with pictures of people) This lens does however keep verticle lines straight (such as buildings) at the edges of the frame as long as the camera is level. If you don't hold the camera level you will get extreme CONVERGENCE of verticle lines. However, I've read that this is typical of most ultrawide angel lenses.

Flare is a very big problem. If you shoot into the sun or bright light source you will get flare 9 times out of 10. Using your hand to block the light is a possible solution, but because the angle of view of this lens is so large it is hard to block the light without getting your hand in the image. Using a smaller aperature will help reduce the flare also.

The AFS motor is smooth, quiet, and absolutely unnecessary! Who needs fast focusing with an ultrawide lens? The depth of field is so great you can basically forget about focusing, as long as your subject isn't extremely close to you. The instant manual override is only useful in singel servo mode. If you try to manually touch up the AF in continuous mode the Nikon camera will constantly try to correct your manual adjustments! Sigma should incorporate AFS technology into their 300mmf/4 and 400mmf/5.6 lenses, not ultrawide angles.

The price is definately right, I got mine for \$690 US, which is cheap compared to other brand name ultrawide angles. Canon's 14mm f.28 lens is twice this cost.

Even though this lens has flare and distortion problems, it is fun to use. The angle of view is just amazing. The best thing about this lens is that it has an extremely small minimum focusing distance. Objects as close as 2 inches away from the lens can be focused upon. By using a small aperature one can get everything is focus along with a really unique perspective. Foreground

objects close to the lens, appear much larger than objects in the back ground. I think it's a great portrait lens if you like wierd perspective! Also very useful for nature closeups of flowers and plants. With the right perspective people's hands can look bigger than their heads.

Using this lens with a flash might be a problem due to it's very large 110 degree view. Most flashes will not cover this area. A solution is to use a barebulb flash like those made by Quantum and Sunpack. Another solution (that I haven't tried) would be to stick one of those omni bounce diffusers over your Nikon flash and point it at about a 45 degree angel. Supposedly this gives your flash coverage similar to barebulb flashes.

Overall I think it's a cool lens. However some photographers wouldn't use such an ultrawide angel lens often, and couldn't justify the cost of such a tool. I for one like the extremes; ultrawide or ultra telephoto.

Peace Rolland Elliott

rec.photo.equipment.35mm

From: golem@shell.acmenet.net (David Rozen)

[1] Re: Sigma 14mm f/2.8 (non-fisheye)

Date: Sat Jan 30 11:43:22 CST 1999

Tom (spam-abuse@worldnet.att.net) wrote:

: PS - I'm curious, do you have any personal experience with the
: original subject of this thread (the new Sigma 14 mm f/2.8 lens)
: and/or do you have any comments on my informal review (1/23/99) of it
: - I know you are quite knowledgable in this area and have reviewed
: other wide angles b4.

I used the Sigma 14:3.5 for a while. Not a bad lens from f:8 onward. Has about 1.5EV falloff over about 20mm, but at least the center isn't sharply hotspotted. The outer regions are never terrific, and you need very healthy contrast in both your subject and your lighting to get pix with some zing.

This means, if you do a lot of fluorescent flat lit interiors and you're so perverse as to want to squooge even more expanse of those ugly scenes into a long-suffering 24X 36mm film chip, the 14:3.5 will not only wedge more scene into your frame, but make it even flatter and uglier. This lens was made for pleasant sparkley days.

Now, I did get some outstanding pix with the 14mm, some of the best are of a freight derailment involving toxic cleanup. Catch: with an ultrawide your front element may be inches from a spray nozzle, making a clear statement only until the breeze puts some spray on your front glass, which cannot be casually wiped clean because it's not just a filter, it's your bulbous front element.

I've been in similar messes with a 20mm and just cleaned the glop off the filter with a paper towel from lunch, several times in a single shoot. This won't instantly ruin a filter, you have to do it for about a year. I'd rather need a new filter every year than a new 14mm lens.

Anyway, maybe the 14:2.8 is a bit better or maybe its worse or the same, but I never got a shot with the 14 that I couldn't just as effectively get with a 17, and a 17 uses regular filters and has reasonable snap and decent evenness of illumination. As soon as a bargain 17 came my way, I sold the 14 [for over twice the cost of the 17]. 17mm seems to be some break point for so-called rectilinear wideangles. I wouldn't quibble over a mm. Maybe a Hologon defies gravity or maybe

18mm is the best compromise, but there's a point somewhere near allowing a focal length of about half the frame width which is the limit for "rectilinear" image projection. Wider than that, and the need to swell objects near the edge and shrink objects into the center just overwhelms the supposed gain in angle of view. You couldn't give me a Nikkor 13:5.6 [I mean of course you can, but I'll just sell it]. The 13 might be a necessity in a 3m length micro-submarine, but I'll steer clear of both, thanks. And anyway, underwater, the 13 is really a 17 by angle of view.

There are behaviors that cannot be imposed on healthy photons. Most healthy photons are in consensus that they don't want to take a 90 degr snap turn on their way to their favorite silver salts, and even just close to 90 degr gives them nosebleeds.

Regards, - dr

rec.photo.equipment.35mm

From: "Rich Shelton" sheltZZZZZZ@nassau.cv.net

[1] Tokin 20-35/2.8 ATX Pro at 24mm vs Nikon 24/2.8 Prime Comparison Shots

Date: Sat Feb 06 09:22:44 CST 1999

With all of the discussion here regarding the Tokina Pro lenses and various Nikon/Canon zooms and primes, I decided to try to compare the Tokina 20-35/2.8 ATX Pro set at 24mm with my Nikon 24/2.8 prime. Admittedly, this is inherently unfair to the Tokina, but should give one a fair comparison of output from a very good WA prime and a third-party higher-end zoom.

My intial test shot was simply trees in snow at f/11 (for focus in the foreground). I found color and contrast to be nearly identical, even with hi-res tiff's viewed in photoshop (although there isn't much color in the photos...), and the Tokina even seemed sharper in the center of the frame! The Tokina's downside was some blue ghosting (chroma?) in high-contrast areas near the edges. This is a clear quality difference, but to me, at least, not particularly bothersome. Does anyone know whether the Nikon 20-35/2.8 has this problem at all?

I plan to do some additional side-by-sides of these lenses as time permits, and hope to add some Tokina vs my Nikon 35-70/2.8 at 35mm shots as well. I'll post a note here when I get those done...

To see the comparison, click on the "Tokina vs Nikon" link on my page below.
Feedback/requests always appreciated!

For comparison purposes, B&H sells the Tokina 20-35/2.8 ATX Pro for \$699 (was \$640 after my rebate), the Nikon 20-35/2.8 for \$1390 gray/\$1569 usa, and the Nikon 24/2.8 for \$275 gray/\$290 usa.

Rich Shelton

rich@ZZZXXsheltons.net (remove ZZZXX on reply!)

<http://www.sheltons.net/rich.htm>

From Nikon Digest:

Date: Sun, 07 Feb 1999

From: Dennis Higgins raskal@execpc.com

Subject: Advice over Sigma 18-35 lens [v04.n235/7] [v04.n236/5]

Filippo, I have used the much maligned 18~35 Sigma for quite some time now. Initially I thought I had made a bad purchase because of the negative posts on this lens. However, with the cost of the Nikon lens of similar size and even the cost of the Tokina, there was no other option. I have since successfully shot several jobs which included slides done with this lens and have had no problems with sharpness or crisp color rendition.

I've handled the Tokina and outside of the greater speed of the lens, see no reason to spend twice the money that I did on this one - I would buy the Nikon, just because it IS The Nikon, but can't afford that and so I am content with the results of my purchase!

As to an 18~70 Sigma f2.8 ... I wonder if that's coming out along with the 20~600 f4 (tongue now removed from cheek)

rec.photo.equipment.35mm

From: "Michael L. Pipkin, M.D." mlpipkin@flash.net

[1] Re: Vivitar Series One wide angle zoom

Date: Sat Feb 13 17:48:23 CST 1999

For the price (now ~\$150?) it is very good indeed. I just sold mine, having subsequently bought 20, 24, and 35mm Nikkors, but had no complaints about the Vivitar in terms of sharpness or color, and it is a true 19mm, no fudging. Some linear distortion, not a lens for architecture (nor are any of the other inexpensive wide zooms), and why it is referred to as macro beats me; it focuses to 1 ft or so like most other wides.

ReedColt wrote

>Any experience out there with the Vivitar Series One 19-35 Ultra Wide Macro
>Zoom....seems very inexpensive for this range. Wondering if it is any good?

rec.photo.equipment.35mm

From: mddeskey@aol.com (MDDESKEY)

[1] Re: Sigma 24mm 2.8 comments

Date: Sun Feb 14 01:35:40 CST 1999

my experience with Sigma has been good, especially with their 14mm

From: spam-abuse@worldnet.att.net (Tom)

Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm

Subject: Re: Sigma 14mm f/2.8 (non-fisheye)

Date: 24 Jan 1999

>How do you find the flare when you shoot into lights or the sun with this lens?
>
>Peter

Below is a review of the lens I recently wrote for another newsgroup. I hope it answers your question.

=====

With respect to your bottom line question of how do I like the lens, the short answer is I voted with my credit card and kept it (grin). Below is my review of this lens.

Immediately after getting the lens, I ran a series of tests. One test involved shooting pix inside a darkened church, directly on axis on the center isle, and shooting directly into a stained glass window which at this time of year, the sun is directly behind. This test was primarily to look for diffuse veiling flare (large angle scattering) and also would show up any geometric distortion.

Other tests included shootin outside, directly into the sun at various stops (to look at aperature diffraction / small angle scattering effects), and some real-world interior architectural shots.

I didn't have another ultra wide with me to do direct comparisons, but I duplicated all shots with a reaslnably new Nikon 20 f/2.8 AF-D.

To summarize the flare results, under the conditions of my tests, which were designed to bring out the worst in a lens, the Sigma 14 f/2.9 lens had noticably more small angle scattering (localized flare around small individual light sources) AND more large angle scattering (diffuse veiling flare) than the Nikon at corresponding angles, contrast conditions, and aperatures. It's hard to be quantitative in such informal tests but I would note that these differences in flare could not be seen under less extreme contrast situations, ie normal interior shots.

Small angle diffraction (aperature "star-bursts") and flair improved somewhat as you go from 2.8 to about 5.6, but then gets worse as you keep on stopping down. This is clearly a lens where the old rule that the optimum aperature is 1-2 stops down from wide open is correct.

Ghost images were troubling. They were *much* worse than those of the Nikkor, and could occasionally be seen in conventional shots (ie, non extreme tests). Thus one has to be careful to scan the frame for ghosts, and take appropriate measures to avoid them. In outdoor shots, if the sun is outside the frame, but at certain angles in front of the camera you get ghosts galore. The newly introduced "Flair-buster" that slides into the hot shoe is made for this lens.

I did not do a lot of work to seek out Geometric distortion. Its obviously fairly small and certainly was not objectionable in any of the test shots or real-world shots I have taken.

With respect to light fall-off, most of my shots are done stopped down so this is not an issue, but focussing and viewing at 2.8 is certainly welcome. In a few cases where I did have to shoot wide open because it was a fast moving, available light situation, strongly uneven lighting also existed and tended to mask the lens fall-off, so I simply overexposed a bit (on neg film) to ensure adequate exposure in the corners and in the shadows, and fixed the overall unevenness in Photoshop. Thus, having 2.8 available when needed is a real blessing.

Finally, I should point out that the large, bulbous front element seems to be a magnet for dirt and is about as vulnerable as they get. I did a shoot inside a farm house, and had to keep blowing off the front element every 15 minutes. I would never use this lens around kids or animals that might decide to thumbprint it or lick it (grin).

After these tests, because of the ghost, flair and light fall-off problems, I considered returning the lens. However, after I started using the lens for real world shooting situations, I decided to keep it and work within its limitations.

It gives pictures that simply couldn't be taken otherwise for the same amount of money, as conveniently, at relatively low light levels, etc.. All in all, I like it and will definitely keep it.

Feedback on my pix taken with this lens has been positive. I've taken a couple of very tight interior shots that subjects have said made their farm house look like examples in "Better Homes and Gardens".

Hope this helps.

Tom
Washington, DC

From: spam-abuse@worldnet.att.net (Tom)
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: Sigma 14mm f/2.8 (non-fisheye)
Date: 22 Jan 1999

The previous two posters on this thread are absolutely correct to worry about softness in the corners potentially could go along with light falloff via a design tradeoff. They were also correct to point out that very good lens designs that require radial ND filters are available but they seriously reduce the effective, on-axis f number of the lens.

With respect to the Sigma 14 f/ 2.8, one of the things that attracted me to this lens is that even wide open, the corner sharpness is adequate (albeit somewhat dim), whereas stopped down, corner sharpness improves to the point where any softness that remains would hardly ever be an issue for my purposes.

I would also contend that for my purposes, I would rather have f/2.8 available (say rather than a minimum effective aperture of f/5.6 to f/11 (perhaps due to use of the radial ND filter) and either stop down the Sigma (in situations that this is possible), or shoot wide open just to get the shot, and then correct the radial fall-off afterwards in Photoshop.

My experience is that with ultra-wides not used in the studio, you almost always have strong non-uniformities in lighting across the large field of view, and that you almost always have to smooth things out in Photoshop anyway, even if you had an ultrawide with absolutely no light fall-off.

Because of the combination of speed and short FL, this lens can make some really unique available light / photojournalistic pictures. People just are not used to being able to see "the whole room" in an obviously available light, hand-held shot, and they seem to subconsciously respond to this novelty in a very positive manner. A couple of people have likened shots taken with this lens to pictures taken in the studio or taken on-location with a full lighting and camera rig (so that lenses like the f/11 Hologon could be employed).

My real concern about using this lens in these on-location situations is damage to the front element. As I said earlier, the lens coating seems to promote buildup of a static charge that attracts dirt like a magnet. However, since the DOF is so great, you absolutely MUST keep the front element pristine, and really don't want to be cleaning it over and over. Hence I now keep the (rather large) cap on it until the moment I shoot.

d Just my \$0.02.

Tom
Washington, DC

From: Evan Miller evrmiller@postoffice.worldnet.att.net
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: Sigma 14mm f/2.8 (non-fisheye)
Date: 22 Jan 1999

Jay Lichtman wrote:

> Is this lens any good? I was playing with it while waiting in line at B&H
> yesterday, and the image was nice and bright and crisp... Does anyone have
> real results to report?
>
> -Jay

I had a chance to shoot some photos through this lens at the Sigma booth at the photo show last October in the Jacob Javits convention center in NYC. I shot on Fuji 800 print film at all apertures to f8. The indoor lighting was very irregular, bright displays, arc lights on the ceiling and dark shadows all over the place. My examination of the negatives shows very fine detail right to the corners, even at f2.8, better than the f3.5 lens I had and sold a couple of months ago. There is some darkening in the corners, without much change after f4, so it's hard to determine how much vignetting there is vs. the lighting effects. There is a carpet strip near the bottom of the frame that shows slight barrel distortion, probably real but could have been a mislaid carpet strip at the show. The old lens had zero distortion, it was perfect for architectural work. The f2.8 shows some flare around the bright ceiling lights, but no large blotches of flare that the old lens was prone to. Overall I get the impression the f2.8 is sharper and less flare, but maybe the same level of vignetting and not as good for linear distortion. I still plan to get one, I had the f3.5 but sold it a couple of months ago.

Evan Miller

rec.photo.equipment.35mm
From: "J Jones" jdj56@hotmail.com
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm,uk.rec.photo.misc
[1] Re: Cheap ultra-wide for EOS
Date: Mon Mar 15 15:01:15 CST 1999

I have the Vivitar 19-35, and have been quite pleased. As with any lens, you get what you pay for, so yes there is a bit of softness in the outer regions of the frame, but for my style of photography it has performed finely. To see an example of this lens and my style, click here:

http://home.talkcity.com/PicassoPI/d_moriarty/creative.html

The photo titled "Limberlost" was taken with the Vivitar @ 19mm.

-

Jason Jones
Rogue's Hollow Fine Art Photography
http://home.talkcity.com/PicassoPI/d_moriarty/home.html

rec.photo.equipment.35mm
From: rpn1@cornell.edu (Neuman - Ruether)
[1] Re: Advice please: fixed wide angle lenses
Date: Wed Mar 17 22:32:40 CST 1999

On 17 Mar 1999 23:22:41 GMT, "no-uce" no-uce@worldnet.att.net wrote:

>I want to buy a wide angle lens, 20 to 28 mm. I will be buying a body
>also -- probably a Canon or Nikon. My subjects are usually landscapes, or
>people in front of landscapes. I don't like autofocus, so it doesn't matter
>if the lens has it or not (if it does have it, I guess USM would be nice).
>
>What is important to me is image quality, including good quality at wide
>aperture. The most I can afford for the lens is about \$500.
>
>I would appreciate any constructive suggestions or advice, pointers to
>specific magazine article or web pages, etc. Thanks in advance.

You can find a Nikkor evaluation list on my web page, under "I babble". Since it is easy to hand-hold wide-angle lenses at slow shutter speeds, I consider good wide-aperture performance less important with wides than with normals. Nikkor wides with unusually good wide-aperture performance are the 16mm *f3.5*, 28mm f2.8 *AIS*, 28mm f3.5 PC, 28mm f3.5 *AI/AIS*, 35mm f2 *AI/AIS*, 35mm f2.8 PC, 35mm f1.4 (all these are MF lenses, BTW, and can be used wide open with good results...).

David Ruether
rpn1@cornell.edu
<http://imperium.bayside.net/ruether>

Date: Thu, 25 Feb 1999
From: Willem-Jan Markerink w.j.markerink@a1.nl
To: panorama-l@sci.monash.edu.au
Subject: Sigma 8mm/4.0 & 15mm/f2.8 EX => AF!

Just to follow up my note on the pan list, cc'd to the EOS list:

Sigma has released two new fisheye lenses in the EX series:

A 8mm/f4.0 EX fisheye, circular image of 22.06mm, and a view of 180 degree in all directions (vertical, horizontal, diagonal, and everything inbetween).

And a 15mm/f2.8 fisheye, full-frame image, and a view of 180 degree diagonally.

Focal length: 8mm / 15mm
Maximum aperture: f4.0 / f2.8
Elements/groups: 10 in 6 / 7 in 6
Aperture blades: 5 / 7
Minimum aperture: f32 / f22
Minimum focus distance: 20cm / 15cm
Maximum magnification: 1:13.9 / 1:3.8
Filter size: rear slip-in gelatine
External finish: EX / EX
Lens hood: / "perfect hood"
Dimensions: 73.5 x 61.8mm / 73.5 x 63.5mm
Weight: 320gr / 370gr

Note that the 8mm has a different optical design compared to its predecessor: the old one had 12 elements in 8 groups, this one 10 in 6. It is also 160gr lighter than before, mostly because of the less complicated filter design: rear slip-in compared to the previous 'inbetween' screw filters, which required the lens to be parted in half (bayonet construction, requiring most of these 160gr I guess).

Both lenses are available in the following mounts:

Sigma SA
Minolta AF
Nikon (D)
Pentax K(AF)
Canon EOS

The production of the old 8mm and 15mm has been seized, which includes the manual-only versions Minolta MD, Contax/Yashica, Olympus and Canon FD mount.

The new version will be available early summer.

This reminds me that I still have a brand new old-style 8mm/f4.0 for sale....;-)) Still in its original Contax/Yashica mount, but intended to be modified to EOS. US\$600 in original mount, US\$750 modified to EOS.

For more info about fisheyes, in particular an overview of nearly all fisheyes ever produced (both circular and full-frame, both 35mm and medium format), as well as some pictorial samples in a sublimation of fisheye, infrared and winter, check my homepage:

<http://www.a1.nl/phomepag/markerink/mainpage.htm>

--

Bye,

Willem-Jan Markerink

rec.photo.equipment.35mm
From: rnatrajan@aol.com (Rnatrajan)
[1] Re: super-wide angle opinions
Date: Mon Mar 22 16:20:18 CST 1999

I saw the Sigma 14mm/2.8 at B&H during a recent visit. It's a real beauty and I am today placing an order for it. It costs \$710.00 with the Nikon mount whereas the Tamron equivalent is \$1199.00 (overpriced?). Since you have a FM2N which is purely manual, do you need an expensive lens like the Sigma 2.8 which has a HSM (motor) to speed up autofocus? Suggest you consider the Sigma 14mm/3.5 which is available in manual focus version for \$549.95. Good luck!

From: "toby" kymarto@gol.com
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: Sigma 14mm f/2.8 HSM
Date: Wed, 05 May 1999

I have the 3.5 old version of this lens, and have read that while the new version (out now for some time and reviewed here in Japan by the photo mags) is improved in terms of sharpness and light falloff, it still has major flare problems. BTW did you know that Tamron also now has a 14 mm f2.8 out (at least over here)? It's significantly more expensive than the Sigma. Still haven't heard anything about the quality.

Toby

From: "Fred Whitlock" afc@cl-sys.com
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: tokina 17mm lens queston
Date: Tue, 27 Apr 1999

Excellent value and build quality. Needs to be stopped down quite a bit to get the corners sharp. I replaced it with a Nikkor 18 so that I could get better performance at wide apertures but that's a pretty expensive lens. For the money the Tokina is a great buy. You can see a photo on my web page made with the Tokina 17mm lens. It is the grill of a 1934 Chevrolet I shot for a brochure cover. If you can hold the camera plumb and level then even an ultrawide can provide the perspective of a normal lens. Good shooting.

Fred
Maplewood Photography
<http://www.maplewoodphoto.com>

From: gpmsu@aol.com (Gpmsu)
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: tokina 17mm lens queston
Date: 29 Apr 1999

There is a new PRO version of this lens. Costs about \$60 more. The original model is now discontinued but still available in many stores. Interested in the performance of the new model, but haven't seen any reviews.

From: SCOTTG JanTamrac@worldnet.att.net
Newsgroups: rec.photo.marketplace
Subject: Re: Tokina AF 235 II 20-35mm f3.5 to 4.5
Date: Sat, 15 May 1999

I've owned mine for about a year now and use it with an EOS Elan IIe. Solid, mostly metal construction. Good saturation, sharpness and contrast. Surprisingly low linear distortion for a zoom in this range. I really like it and think it's the best value in that zoom range.

Compared it to the EOS USM with the same basic specs and found the Tokina had less distortion and better contrast.

hth/Scott Gardner

Date: Sat, 3 Jul 1999
From: Paul Martinez photozs@email.msn.com
To: rmonagha@mail.smu.edu
Subject: Re: 17-18mm lenses

Some light falloff in the corners was observed, irrespective of aperture, which is typical of older wide angle lenses (and some modern ones too!).

All superwide lenses have light fall-off due to the $\cos^4 \theta$ law. Which mainly calculates the light fall-off due to the increased distance the light has to travel to reach the edges of the film from the optical axis, as compared to the center of the film. The farther the light has to travel, the

weaker (darker) it becomes - it is a law of physics. I don't know of any manufacturer that has been able to overcome this. Not the Mamiya 7 43mm (look at the discussion on their website: www.mamiya.com), and not the Schneider 47/5.6 XL. In 35mm, not even the latest Zeiss 16mm Hologon or 21mm Biogon does. A lens manufacturer may *increase* the effect of light fall-off through poor design, but I have not seen a lens that can compensate for the effect off light loss due to the $\cos^4 \theta$ law. That is why they recommend the use of center ND filters. Those filters darken the center to compensate for the edge light loss.

From Nikon Manual Focus Mailing List:
Date: Fri, 31 Dec 1999
From: "Bob Scott" desmobob@capital.net
Subject: Russian 17mm f/2.8

I just received a Russian fisheye from Moscow. It looks great... perfect coatings, no internal dust, smooth operation. It came with a convertible mount: Pentax screw or Nikon K. I installed the Nikon mount ring and found that it fits my F2S perfectly, JUST fits on my FG, ALMOST fits on my F4s, and won't fit my FA. I would say my F2S has the most worn body mount, followed by my FG, F4s's and FA.

(The design of the lens mount prevents damage to the aperture indexing tab on the camera body on bodies that won't take non-AI lenses.)

This leads me to believe the lens mount ring is just a tad out of spec somewhere. I'm guessing the clearance from the face of the mount to the inside of the mounting flanges is just a tiny bit tight.

Does anyone have any experience with one of these lenses? I'm prepared to whip out my trusty Dremel and go to work....

Happy New Year,
Bob Scott

PS After a few minutes work with a tiny Italian file made of Swedish steel, my Russian mount fits my Japanese camera, thus ending the Millennium in a success of international cooperation, sort-of.

From NikonMF Mailing List:
Date: Sat, 01 Jan 2000
From: Piotr Keplicz keplicz@bigfoot.com
Subject: Re: Russian 17mm f/2.8

AFAIK this Peleng is a pretty good piece of optics. Surely it doesn't perform as well as the Nikkor, yet it's said to be better than the other Russian fisheye, Zenitar 16/2.8 (which comes with a regular Nikon AI mount, though).

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| _ . ) | / / |  -- Piotr Kêplicz  -----  Nowy Polski S³ownik Pijacki:  -----  
| _ | | _ | \ \ |  -----  http://rainbow.mimuw.edu.pl/~pkeplicz  --
```

[Ed. note: price is circa \$75-120 US in Russia for Zenitar depending on mount per posters..]

From NikonMF Mailing List:
Date: Mon, 3 Jan 2000
From: "David Bain" dcbain@cwcom.net
Subject: Russian lenses

Re recent posts on twin-fitting Russian lenses. Are those of you who refer to M42 threads sure they are what you think they are? Here in the UK those lenses are sold as "Nikon or T2 fit", not "Nikon or M42". While the thread diameter of Pentax and T2 is the same, the pitch is .5mm (if my memory serves me correctly) different.

Just be careful before cranking them into a Pentax body!!

BFN
David

From Nikon MF Mailing List:
Date: Mon, 10 Jan 2000
From: "Bob Scott" desmobob@capital.net
Subject: Re: Russian 17mm f/2.8

> Any shots yet? How sharp (or not) is the lens?

Funny, I was just scanning the first color negs made with the lens when your message arrived....

The lens is OK. I don't really have anything in a similar focal length (17mm) to compare it to, but it is definitely not as sharp as any of my wide Nikkors (24,28,35).

Here is shot of the back wall of the house at f/11 (this and the other shot were taken on the Fuji Superia 400 that was in the camera I grabbed first)

<http://capital.net/users/desmobilier/TEST.JPG>

Here's a hand-held shot, at f/4, I believe. It shows some corner vignetting that apparently only happens at the widest two stops:

<http://capital.net/users/desmobilier/TEST2.JPG>

I don't think this shot is as sharp as it could be. It is very hard to focus the lens exactly due to it's huge field of view. And, to compound matters, I had it mounted to an F4s with a plain "B" screen. A split-image focusing aid would have helped a great deal.

FOR THE PRICE, I consider it a great buy! I only paid \$140.00 for it. (From what I've seen, used Nikkor 15mms go for about a grand; 18mms for around \$700.) This lens has no auto diaphragm. You must stop down meter with it. It has a third ring between the focus and aperture rings to quickly and conveniently stop down the lens. I figure a 17mm fisheye is neat to have, but will most probably be the least-used lens in my bag, by far. That makes spending the cash on a Nikkor out of the question. This lens will suit my purposes just fine. I'm satisfied (for now!).

I saw one of these lenses going for \$225.00 when I looked in on an Ebay auction.... :-)

Good shooting,
Bob Scott

From NikonMF Mailing List:
Date: Mon, 10 Jan 2000
From: Rich Lahrson trippud@wenet.net
Subject: Re: Russian 17mm f/2.8

Bob Scott wrote:

> This lens has no auto diaphragm. You must stop down meter
> with it. It has a third ring between the focus and aperture rings to
> quickly and conveniently stop down the lens.

Hi Bob!

Thanks for the comments on the Russian 17mm fisheye. I was not aware that it lacked an auto diaphragm. That partly explains the price break compared to the Nikkor.

Cheers,

Rich Lahrson
trippud@wenet.net

From NikonMF Mailing List:
Date: Tue, 11 Jan 2000
From: Piotr Keplicz keplicz@bigfoot.com
Subject: Re: Russian 17mm f/2.8

Rich Lahrson trippud@wenet.net:

: Thanks for the comments on the Russian 17mm fisheye. I was not
: aware that it lacked an auto diaphragm. That partly explains the
: price break compared to the Nikkor.

No, *it* doesn't :-) Zenitar 16/2.8 has a Nikon AI mount with auto diaphragm and lists at the same price as Peleng here in Poland (about a hundred bucks).

Kalimex wants \$260, tho'.

From Nikon Mailing List:
Date: Wed, 12 Jan 2000
From: Godfrey DiGiorgi ramarren@bayarea.net
Subject: Re: Ultra wides

>It's not quite as simple as that. All lenses at that particular focal
>length will display some sort of distortions, usually in the form of bent
>lines and also in most cases light fall off. Fish-eyes just tend to do this
>to a much greater extent. Don't expect perfectly straight images from any
>ultra wide!

Not entirely true. There are rectilinear ultra-wides ... At least one ultrawide Nikkor is a rectilinear. They tend to be very expensive, a couple thousand dollars. Geometric light fall-off is not a distortion, per se. It's due to inverse square law and the ratio of distances from the nodal point to the center of the frame vs nodal point to the corner of the frame.

The Voigtlander Heliar Aspheric 15mm f/4.5 lens is a rectilinear ultra-wide. It's a Leica Thread mount lens. The Zeiss Hologon 16mm f/8 T* is another, in Contax G mount. The Heliar is remarkably inexpensive (\$450), the Hologon is pretty pricey (\$2400). Neither of these lenses can be used on an SLR camera as they sit well into where the mirror box would be.

Rectilinear ultrawides do demonstrate some distortion, even the best of them. Not distortion of straight lines ... that's the point of their rectilinear design, but distortions of 3 dimensional objects off center frame and keystone distortion due to the subject plane and the film plane not being parallel. It takes some careful framing to eliminate these natural optical effects. The Heliar 15 has about 110 degrees coverage across the diagonal and does not bend straight lines.

I'm no big fan of the fisheye lens as the curvilinear distortion doesn't fit the kind of photographs I tend to be interested in. It's useful for photographic hemispherical things, like celestial photography, if you're looking for a "realistic" representation, or for extreme effects photographs, but these represent areas of endeavor which have no bearing on my photography.

>I know Godfrey's home page has some images shot on ultra-wides as does
>Todd's page. They should be able to give you the addresses.

I did a comparison article between the Heliar 15 and the Zeiss Hologon 16mm (Contax mount) which is on my website. There are some sample pictures in that set of pages, but I also have a couple of later pictures which begin to show what it can do as I've become more experienced and comfortable with it.

See <http://www.bayarea.net/~ramarren/photostuff/holhel/holhelcomp.htm> for the article and

<http://www.bayarea.net/~ramarren/photostuff/fshrmn/fshrmn.htm>
<http://www.bayarea.net/~ramarren/photostuff/mpix2/mpix2.htm>
<http://www.bayarea.net/~ramarren e/photostuff/fshrmn/fshrmn.htm>
<http://www.bayarea.net/~ramarren/photostuff/ptlobos/tree-15a.JPG>

for examples of four Heliar pictures.

Godfrey

Date: Wed, 02 Feb 2000

From: "kymarto" kymarto@gol.com

Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm

Subject: Re: Tamron 14mm Rectilinear vs Sigma 14 Rectiliner

...

The Japanese photo mag Capa put these two lenses to the test and rated them about equally. The Tamron had marginally better center sharpness but the Sigma beat it in the corners, and with slightly less falloff wide open. Their conclusion was that these lenses are the optical equivalent of the Canon at a much lower price. As a working photographer for over 30 years I must admit that I have several Sigma lenses and find them OK. If you go to any of the photo ops here in Japan you will see photojournalists using third party lenses, including Tamron, Tokina and Sigma, although admittedly they are usually not the ones working for the big agencies, who usually use original equipment. Still, these guys get published and earn their living with their equipment, so where's the beef?

--
Toby

Date: Tue, 25 Jan 2000
From: joe-b@glopdircon.co.uk (Joe B.)
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: Russian Fisheyes - any opinions?

Asleep Asleep@The_Switch.Com wrote:

>Have you ever handled the lens itself? What did it "feel" like? Do
>you think it is worth the money?
>
>I had a non-photo friend from Moscow look for one for me but he really
>couldn't tell me much about it and, from the reports I've read about
>on the Keiv 88 MF camera, I was afraid that this lens would be of
>questionable quality or way too "rough".
>
>Any feedback is appreciated.

I've had two of the 16mm Zenitars- first an M42 version which I used on a Contax body, then later a Nikon mount version. The first one was more contrasty and seemed sharper, maybe because of this. Both were of slightly worrying construction- when mounting/dismounting the lens the front half had a tendency to unscrew itself from the rest of the lens. Apparently this is normal! The lens cap is an unusual design that fits between the lips of the vestigial hood- this is not a lens cap that would be replaceable by any standard cap. One of those little lens cap strings that goes over the lens barrel would probably be a good idea to stop it getting lost. Remember that a lens caps likelihood of getting lost is directly proportional to its rarity. I think that for the price, you can't really complain, the optical performance is quite good (better than you would expect for this price) and these are fun lenses.

Joe B. (remove glop for email)

Date: Sat Feb 12 06:57:15 CST 2000
rec.photo.technique.nature
From: "Gerard Kingma" g.kingma@hetnet.nl
[1] Re: comments on sigma or canon wide angles?

I bought the Canon 17-35, but I sold it again because of its distortion and mainly because of its closest focussing distance of 25 cm, which is not near enough for my purposes. I now have the sigma 14 mm and the sigma 24 mm, and I love them to death. Have a look at my site at <http://www.kingma.nu> The wide-angle pictures from Ireland were shot with the canon, most of the wide-angle winter images were shot with the sigma's

Regards, Gerard Kingma

Date: Thu, 20 Jan 2000
From: "Les Freed" w4laf@mindspring.com
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: Sigma 17-35/2.8-4

Kevin:

I bought a Sigma a few weeks ago, thinking that I'd trade it in for the Nikon when they become available. After shooting with the Sigma, I've decided to keep the lens -- and the extra \$1000. I have some sample images on my web page at <http://members2.clubphoto.com/les101933> Look under "recent photos" and "Nature pictures" for some sample images taken with the Sigma and scanned on a Nikon LS-30.

Hope this helps...

--Les

From Hasselblad Mailing List:
Date: Wed, 12 Jan 2000
From: Peter Klosky Peter.Klosky@trw.com
Subject: Re: Why not wider than 40mm?

Steve,

I happen to have an elaborate set of tables on view angles. This question is a confusing one, as different formats and print sizes come into play, as has been pointed out.

If we look at the diagonals, a 40mm MF lens has a coverage of 93 degrees or so.

A 21mm lens on a 35mm has a similar diagonal angle of view.

If we look at the horizontal angle, or wider aspect of the rectangular 35mm format, the MF 40mm has about 74 degrees, and the matching 35mm lens would be roughly a 24mm.

If we look at the vertical angle, the MF 40mm has an angle of 74 degrees, still, as it is square, but the 35mm lens would have to be a 16mm to achieve the same angle of view.

On practical terms, this says that the Hasselblad is at its best taking pictures of square objects, in which case a 40mm MF lens is as wide as a 16mm lens on a 35mm cam. For a wide subject, the 40mm MF lens is only as wide as a 24mm on a 35mm camera.

Math aside, in practice, the 40mm gives an expansive view. The early 40mm has more distortion. The SWC has very low distortion, and has worked well in all models.

Peter

....

From Hasselblad Mailing List:
Date: Wed, 12 Jan 2000
From: Peter Klosky Peter.Klosky@trw.com
Subject: Re: Why not wider than 40mm?

Bernard,

I refined the calculations a bit, and include a summary, the calculations and the source for the calculator. Summary follows:

I appreciate your concern over why I came up with "93 degrees or so" when you say "88mm." Of course I am thinking you meant "88 degrees," and see your point that it does make a difference. The first calculation I sent you was based on a 60mm x 60mm usable negative size. I adjusted this to 57mm x 57mm frame size, and came up with a view angle of 90.44, about halfway between 93 and 88. Hasselblad's data may be based on the real focal length longer than 40mm, which may be something other than 40mm, or using a negative size smaller than 57mm square. Refining the calculation, I still get a diagonal equiv to a 21.5mm lens on a 35mm camera. You were right that 93 degrees was an overestimate; 90.44 is closer, by calculation, if not observation.

For the 40mm, I get a vertical and horizontal of 70.94, again more than 67. For 35mm equivs, I get 25mm on the wider aspect, 17mm on the narrow, reading from the chart below. I include view angles for other Hasselblad lenses.

Peter

Date: Sun, 2 Jan 2000

From: Bob Scott desmobob@capital.net

To: Robert Monaghan rmonagha@post.cis.smu.edu

Subject: Re: Ultra wide angle lens options

> I'd be interested in posting any lens reviews based on your experiences
> etc., or make links to your pages. I have promoted the low cost benefits
> of the kiev lenses (see <http://www.smu.edu/~rmonagha/mf/cameras.html> for
> links and pages and kiev buying guide and other related postings...)
>
> see <http://www.smu.edu/~rmonagha/brnccameratest.html> on lens testing tips
>
> in any case, good luck with both your Kiev and russian lenses, and hope
> you have some good news to share... bobm

Bob,

It is a dismal, rainy day here in upstate NY. The lighting was terrible outside, so I shot a roll of T-MAX 400 inside and souped it in T-MAX developer to quickly get an idea of how the lens does... I am very satisfied, so far. -- This was my first use of T-MAX film and developer... I souped the negs for 7 minutes at 68 degrees. The shots look a little low in contrast. I don't know if it's the film/developer/temp/time, the lens, or the lighting [SB-24 off the ceiling]....

I put up a .TIF and .JPG on the web. The .TIF is shot at f/11; the .JPG, wide open (f/2.8). The .TIF file is 900KB, the .JPG is 64 KB.

TIF: <http://www.capital.net/users/desmobob/peleng17.tif>

JPG: <http://www.capital.net/users/desmobob/pelengwo.jpg>

For \$140.00, I think the lens is fantastic! It does lack an auto diaphragm, but it has a convenient stop-down ring between the focus and aperture rings, making it easy to stop down the lens before exposure -- if I remember to do it. The way I look at it from a hobby viewpoint, this will probably be the least-used lens in my bag. My Nikkor 24mm f/2.8 AIS gets used a lot, but I would NOT consider spending several hundred on a nice Nikkor fisheye for occasional use. I am very happy with the performance of this lens, considering the price. Not having an auto diaphragm is not a big deal to me.

I'll have some color negs and more applicable test shots soon.

Good shooting,
Bob Scott
Whitehall, NY

From Rollei Mailing List:
Date: Tue, 04 Jan 2000
From: Bob Shell bob@bobshell.com
Subject: Re: [Rollei] Kalimex Ordering

Oh, you're talking 35mm, not medium format. Saul Kaminsky at Kiev USA has those fisheye lenses. He showed them to me in NYC at the end of October. I don't know what price he has on them, but his stuff does go through his own QC. There are two fisheyes that he sells, one a circular type like the old Nikon ones, and a more modern full frame one which looks like it might be copied from the Zeiss one. I assume that the full frame one is the 17mm. He was going to send me one of each to try out and I forgot about it. He probably did too. I'll have to remind him. As I recall they were available in Nikon mount and M-42 screw mount.

Bob

.....

Date: Fri, 18 Jun 1999
From: "W Scott Elliot" selliot@direct.ca
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm,rec.photo.equipment.misc
Subject: Re: Sigma 17-35 EX HSM

The June issue of Practical Photography, a British magazine, compares 14 wide angle zoom lenses from various manufacturers. The Sigma 17-35 EX receives quite good ratings of 8 out of 10 on handling, auto focus, performance and overall.

The 17-35L gets 9 out of 10 on handling and auto focus and 8 out of 10 on performance and overall.

The surprise is the Canon 20-35 f/3.5-4.5 USM. It rates 9 out of 10 on all four ratings. This is actually the highest number of 9's of any of the lenses rated and the magazine recommends that this is the Canon lens to go for. This is a good deal considering that the 20-35 is the cheapest of the three lenses.

This may not be a fair comparison, because the wide open measurements for the 17-35 lenses are at bigger apertures than the 20-35 so you would expect slightly poorer performance on equal quality lenses. If you just compare the charts for the f/8 settings, the lenses seem to be quite comparable.

I have the 20-35 USM and can vouch that it is a sharp lens. I don't find the lack of a 2.8 aperture to be much of a disadvantage. Most photos taken with this lens have some object in the foreground and I want the background in focus too so I use a smaller aperture. (If I want to blur the back ground, I use a telephoto lens.) I find the 20mm to be quite wide. I don't know how often I would need the 17mm. The widest lens I had before was a 28mm so it is taking me a while to work out good compositions with the 20mm, it quite different.

See if you can give the 20-35 a trial run before you put out the money for one of the 17-35's.

Scott

Carlton wrote in message ...

>Hi, has anyone used the Sigma 17-35 EX HSM lens to comment on it? I'm not much
>of a Sigma fan but for the price compared to a Canon 17-35L lens, makes it all
>the more attractive.
>
>Thanks!

From Nikon MF Mailing List:

Date: Tue, 11 Apr 2000

From: "Roland Vink" roland.vink@aut.ac.nz

Subject: Re: Lens Tests - 16mm fisheye

A while ago there was a discussion on the 16mm fisheye. I recently did a test of some wide angle lenses, which you may be interested in. I tested the AIS 16/2.8, 20/2.8 and AIS 20/3.5.

The 16/2.8 has some marks on the barrel and a dent which indicates a heavy impact. The retaining ring shows signs the lens has been adjusted in the past, so my lens may not be the best sample. Otherwise it is in good condition, with clean glass. The AIS 20/2.8 and 20/3.5 are both in near mint condition.

The test: I used an FE2, mounted on a tripod, with Fuji Velvia film. Each lens was shot at f4, f5.6, f8 and f11. At smaller apertures I figure diffraction will equalise these lenses. I never shoot ultrawide angles wide open because they are usually soft and I prefer greater DOF with these lenses. The lenses were focused at infinity. I shot a scene of a bay with a power line running across it - the power pylon and thin lines across the frame provide an excellent test for sharpness, and the clear blue sky gives useful information on illumination. Slides were viewed on a Leica P150 projector with the Hector 85/2.8 lens (not the best way to critique slides, but it's all I have...)

AIS 20/2.8: slight light fall-off at f4, gone by f5.6. A little soft and lacking contrast at f4, very good out to the corners at f5.6 and really crisp at f8. An excellent wideangle lens. It shows slight barrel distortion in the central area which flattens towards the edges - not very noticeable.

AIS 20/3.5: At f4 this lens is nearly wide open. There is noticeable light fall-off at the corners, less at f5.6 none at f8. At f4 central sharpness is quite good, the corners show noticeable softness. Contrast is quite good. Overall sharpness improves by f5.6 with good central sharpness giving way to slight softness towards the corners. Corner sharpness is good at f8 and f11 although they never seem truly crisp - central sharpness is excellent. I've read that this lens has field curvature which

causes softness at the corners when focused at infinity, and it performs better at medium-close range. My experience agrees with this. Barrel distortion is similar to the 20/2.8, perhaps a tad stronger.

AIS 16/2.8: sharp in the center at f4, quickly becoming soft towards the corners. It improves with stopping down, and at f8 is quite acceptable. F11 may give best overall sharpness. I'm not very impressed by the this expensive lens at wider apertures - maybe my sample isn't very good? However it is hard to be objective - I probably expect to see more detail with this lens because it gets more scene in the picture.

Fisheyes don't suffer from light fall-off like other wideangles.

Hope this is of some interest.

Roland

From Panoramic Mailing List;

Date: Fri, 03 Sep 1999

From: Glenn Barry glenn@acay.com.au

To: panorama-l@sci.monash.edu.au

Subject: Re: the exact focal length of Tokina 17mm Manual focus.

Cheap non OEM extension tubes are also really good for lens mounts, and a lot sturdier than rear lens caps.

I have had no guilt cannabalising them in the past.

Glenn

Sofjan@aol.com wrote:

```
> In a message dated 99-09-01 20:34:40 EDT, you write:
>
> As I was Executive Editor at Popular Photography from 1971
> to 1986, I can tell you that all lens makers lie on the short
> side. I would guess that the Tokina 17 is actually 17.8mm
> If it were 18, they'd say 18.
> .....
>
> Ed Meyers
>
> Actually lens manufacture produce lens either in the longer side or shorter
> side depending on how convinient it is or how easier it is to produced. most
> wide angle will be longer and most tele will be shorter . i remember at one
> time people are debating wheter most 70-210 f2.8 zoom should be label 80-200
> because the tele end is mostly 195-199 mm. 8^)
>
> Okay back to 360'er . So if i cut the roller for 18mm and then reduce the
> dia, meter bit by bit . do i have to shift the position of the roller or do i
> let the Oring take up the slack.
> I really need to get of my behind and start this project because it has
> took me so long without any result. Maybe today or tommorrow i'll try to find
> the airplane modeler here locally that has a mini lathe to make the roller
> for me and mount the motor and place the bearing for the roller shaft.
>
> Okay one last call for opinion before i buy the tokina 17mm (non atx) Here
> is my situation i have Contax and maxxum camera. i have a 20mm f2.8 for
> maxxum but i can't use it for 36 larscan sice it doesn't have manual aperture
> tabs. i want to buy a manual 17mm with contax mount and mount on larscan via
> the rear lens cap that way i can still use the lens daily. at first i have
> two choice either Tokina 17mm (non ATX) $229 from B&H or Tamron 17mm SP $369
> plus 39 dollars for the adaptal mounts. but with tamron i could use with my
> maxxum albeit with extra adaptall mount. right now i'm set on the Tokina since
> i could get any info stating that tamron is superior than the Tokina. that
> plus the price pretty much set me up. what you guys think ?
>
> On the side bar !
>
> yesterday while flipping over this month shutterbug i saw an advertisement
> for Yashica 15mm in one of the used camera dealer. it is advertise for $295
> dollars or some thing like that. i don't know exactly how much it is
> advertise for since i was leaping out of my seat to grab the phone.
```

> Unfortunately(you guys must have guess it) the lens already been sold. and
> the guy told me over the phone that he could have sold at least fifty of them
> by the phone call he got. Bummer. i know yashica 15mm is hard to come by . He
> offer me Zeiss 18mm f4 or 16mm but i couldnt afford to get it.(at \$1100 and
> *1800 respectively)
>
> I truly wish i got the yashica 15mm though. it is hard to comeby and most
> likely the quality is better than either tokina or tamron. plus the advertise
> price is so low. from the tone of the seller at ken Mar (used camera dealer)
> He actually regret selling it at \$295. I bet next time he got the same lenses
> he won't let it go that cheap anymore. But maybe there might not be next time
> .
>
> Thanks.

--

Glenn Barry Photography
E-Mail: glenn@acay.com.au
Web: www.acay.com.au/~glenn

From Panoramic Mailing List:
Date: Fri, 19 May 2000
From: Mike Sinclair sinclair@microsoft.com
To: panorama-l@sci.monash.edu.au
Subject: 16mm Zenitar lens & digital cameras

I purchased one of these (www.russia2all.com) for ~\$200 though now see they're offered in other mounts for \$139. I am very pleased with its performance. Images from film stitching is a bit tricky, especially for landscape formats. PanaVue's Image Assembler thinks the real focal length is 16.34mm which stitches fairly well in IA or Photovista.

Remember the debate a while back about fisheye lenses on slit scan and digital pan cameras? I have tried it on a digital pan camera with impressive results. My sensor, a 5100 pixel trilinear CCD, is ~42mm long.....almost enough to cover the 24 x 36mm film aperture diagonal for 180 degree vertical field-of-view.

When I'm able to shed a dozen or so cables from the homeade camera, I'll take some outside pans and post them.

-Mike-

FRom Pentax Mailing List:
Date: Fri, 26 May 2000
From: "Valery V. Zasedatel" vaza@eudoramail.com
Subject: Re: Fish eye question & Pentax poll

Russian MC Zenitar-K 16/2.8 was reported (from different sources) to be a nice stuff. It is available in Russia NEW for the price of some \$80 (i's not a joke -just \$80!) It is a manual focus lens and has a Pentax K-mount (other 2 options M(M42 thread) and H (or "N" in English - for Nikon mount, but that last is more expensive). It comes together with a case and set of folters (slide-in I suppose) and is fully compatible with Pentax bodies, but of course you will not have an F-sop information in the viewfinder, as there are no electrical contacts.

This summer I am planning to visit Russia and am planning to buy a lot of photo gear. Zenitar-K 16/2.8 is the first in the list.

Valery

FRom Pentax Mailing List:

Date: Fri, 26 May 2000

From: "Juan J. Buhler" jbuhler@pdi.com

Subject: Russian gear (was:Re: Fish eye question & Pentax poll)

On Fri, 26 May 2000, Valery V. Zasedatel wrote:

```
> Russian MC Zenitar-K 16/2.8 was reported (from different sources)
> to be a nice stuff. It is available in Russia NEW for the price of
> some $80 (i'is not a joke -just $80!)
```

Does anybody know of a good source for Russian made lenses and cameras? I was checking a link posted here a couple of days ago, (<http://www.zenit-foto.ru>) and the prices are **really** low.

Now, if you go to a place like Kiev USA, they have these items, but with a **huge** markup, about %300 in some cases.

I'd love to get the Pentax mount lenses made by zenit, and even a Horizon panoramic camera (\$165, as listed in the Russian site!) but it looks like this site is only prepared to sell to dealers.

Juan J. Buhler | Senior Animator @ PDI | <http://www.dsp.com/jbuhler>

[Ed. note: Thanks to Roland for sharing these tips!...]

From Nikon Mailing List:

Date: Wed, 14 Jun 2000

From: "Roland Vink" roland.vink@aut.ac.nz

Subject: Re: Nikon 20mm F/4 AI Lens. Was: Nikkor 20mm Lenses - Comments

```
> My main criteria is the fact that I would like to keep my filter size to
> 52mm and thus I am limited to either the 20mm F/4 or the 20mm F/3.5
> AI/AIS.
>
> I have read that the 20mm F/4 is probably the worst 20mm Nikkor lens out
> there, even worst than the first F/3.5 Nikkor 72mm version.
```

Probably the best review of these lenses is at:

http://www.foto.no/nikon/lens_surv.html

The 20/3.5 (52mm filter) is available in AI and AIS forms. The AI version has a more stretched out focus scale so focusing is slower, but more accurate, and the DOF lines are correspondingly further apart and easier to use. Optically they are the same.

I have always been very pleased with the results from my 20/3.5. My shooting style is to use this lens at around f8-f11 for good DOF and sharpness. At wide apertures light fall-off at the corners is noticeable, and sharpness is not great either, but I never use the lens wide open so it's not a problem.

I often use my regular Hoya polariser - it is not a slim line or wide angle filter - and it only causes the extreme corners to go dark. This is hidden by slide mounts so I don't worry about it.

> I would recommend considering the 20/3.5 AIS version which, although
> lacking CRC as with the 20/2.8, is very close in performance. It is
> reputed to be inferior at closest focus, and suffer some additional
> vignetting wide-open

Actually I think the lens performs better at close range, at infinity the corners are rather soft, probably due to field curvature. I recently compared it to the AIS 20/2.8, which was noticeably sharper at infinity at all apertures, with less vignetting. The AIS 20/2.8 also focuses closer due to CRC.

Even though the 20/2.8 is better I find the 62mm filter size inconvenient - all my other lenses are 52mm size. The small size of the 20/3.5 (and 20/4) is fantastic - what other lens has such a wide field of view in such a small package? Used at medium range and at medium-small apertures (this covers most of my shooting anyway) I think both lenses are very close.

Some alternatives:

24mm f/2.8 - not quite as wide, but shares the 52mm filter size and probably has better performance at wide apertures.

16mm fisheye - the only way to get a wider angle of view in a small package. A fun lens, but not often very practical. Very expensive and rather soft away from the center until stopped well down.

Hope this helps,
Roland

[Ed. note: not an endorsement as I haven't dealt with Vlad, but fyi...]

From Nikon Mailing List:

Date: Tue, 13 Jun 2000

From: kenweissblum@iname.com

Subject: Re: Russian fisheyes revisited

I bought a 17 mm fisheye directly from Vladimir (gritsuk@mail.ru) he was excellent to deal with. I'm very content.

Ken Weissblum

kenweissblum@iname.com

From Nikon Mailing List:

Date: Tue, 13 Jun 2000

From: "C.L.Zeni" clzeni@MINDSPRING.COM

Subject: Re: Russian fisheyes revisited

After some more searching (thru ebay this time) I found that Belshop and Vladimir Gritsuk are one and the same. In addition, he has a web page where you can purchase the lens on line, paying via credit card handled thru CCnow. CCNow has a proper website, a functioning phone number,

the whole schmeer. Price for the lens, with Fedex delivery from Belarus, is \$258.00, considerably less expensive than the \$400 being asked locally.

This includes the Nikon mount, case, filters, etc. The web page is at

<http://www.geocities.com/belshop/>

I've ordered one...we'll see how it goes. I used my Amex card just in case something goes pffft....

Craig Zeni
A Bit Skeptical, North Carolina.

From Nikon Mailing List:

Date: Tue, 13 Jun 2000

From: Godfrey DiGiorgi ramarren@bayarea.net

Subject: Re: 20mm Lenses - Comments

I've been shooting with a Nikkor 20/3.5 AI-S lens since I bought it new in 1982. Wonderful lens, one of my favorites. I know the later ones with the CRC rear element are supposed to be a little sharper close up, but I've never found this one to be deficient at all. It's small and light, wonderful for traveling, and returns excellent results. My usual Nikon travel kit is the 20, 50 and 70-300, toss in an 85 or 105 for a faster medium tele too.

Godfrey

From Pentax Mailing List:

Date: Thu, 08 Jun 2000

From: Joseph Tainter jtainter@mindspring.com

Subject: Zenitar 16mm./f2.8 Fisheye (long)

Here's a copy of a review I just posted to rec.photo.equipment.35mm. I don't want to try Pentax's forbearance by reviewing other lenses here, but several people have been asking about this lens.

"There's been interest in this inexpensive lens in various places. Mine arrived Monday and I went right out to shoot the last ten shots or so of a roll of Agfa RSX 200. Given the interest I thought I'd post my impressions.

"The lens is heavy and solid, and appears to be all metal (except, of course, for the focusing ring). I have the Pentax k-mount version. (It also comes in Pentax screw-mount and Nikon.) The rear end is not finished to the cosmetic niceness of Japanese lenses, but appears sturdy and quite serviceable. It slips on and off my PZ-1p nicely.

"The focusing ring is smooth and a little stiff. That's probably heavy grease. The aperture ring (f2.8 - 22) could be improved. It is rougher than Japanese lenses, and goes slightly beyond f22. There's no click beyond f22 and the aperture doesn't close further. The aperture diaphragm (six blades) closes smoothly, but the blades seem rather short. Between f3.5 and 5.6 the aperture is not a smooth hexagon, but rather is jagged. The points of the blades stick out a bit. This does not appear to affect image quality or exposure (at least on my slides). I've never had a fisheye before, so perhaps the short aperture blades are normal.

"I tested all full stops from 2.8 to 22. Viewing the projected slides, the images appeared sharp, with accurate colors and good contrast, at all aperture settings. If I were to shuffle the slides, I would not be able to tell which f-stop each was taken at.

"There's a Russian-language manual, complete with a signed page that I assume is an inspection certificate. It comes with four rear filters: clear, red, yellow, and green. I'm told that these filters are needed to focus at infinity, so they are integral to the lens. There's a clip-on lens cap, fitted just to this lens, of course. I'm not sure what to do when mine eventually breaks or gets lost.

"Verdict: this lens seems very serviceable at a very nice price (\$80 in Moscow, \$109 in the mail from Moscow, \$139 - \$219 from dealers here). If I needed a fisheye for serious work I would spend the extra money for a Japanese lens. But I wanted this for inexpensive fun. So far I can recommend it for that. I'm impressed enough to write this review."

Joe Tainter

From: "anfield" anfield@england.com
Newsgroups: aus.photo,rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Date: Fri, 30 Jun 2000
Subject: Re: Vivitar 24mm wide angle ok ???

i've used the MF version b4..... it's really worth trying for its low cost while still give u very acceptable quality! but personally i believe u wont find much difference between the 24mm and the 28mm... so i suggest u go something like 20mm or less i've also tried the vivitar 19mm/f3.5 MF, but this lens is quite disappointing in terms of color and contrast.... its ok when performing in bright light condition but really disappoints me when the light is dim.... so i sold both of them and bought the expensive nikkor 20mm/f2.8. this lens offers better color and contrast with less distortion(but anyway there're still some). to be honest i dont feel it worths 4 times the vivitar..... maybe u can try the tokina 17mm where i havent tested it myself.

"Vazquez Chichorro"

> Hello,
> I've been looking at purchasing an extra wide angle lens for my K1000. I
> already have a Cosina 28mm/f2.8, 50mm/1.7 & a 70-210mm.
>
> I have been using the 28mm alot but really would like something abit wider
> for those landscape shots that i like to do.
>
> I've been looking at the Vivitar Wide Angle 24mm/f2.8 from B&H for
> ~US\$80.00. Has anyone tried this lens, or better still are there any reviews
> on it?
>
> tia

From: dan of the north danfunk@my-deja.com
Newsgroups: aus.photo,rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Date: Fri, 30 Jun 2000
Subject: Re: Vivitar 24mm wide angle ok ???

...

Why limit yourself to one focal length?

The Vivitar 17mm-28mm f/4-4.5 ~US\$100.00-130.00 (used) or Series 1 19-35mm f/3.5 - 4.5 ~US\$150.00 (new)

These are relatively inexpensive and allow you to have the option of superwide to wide angle.

The Vivitar Series 1 is generally well regarded.

--
dan

From Nikon MF Mailing List:

Date: Wed, 5 Jul 2000

From: Godfrey DiGiorgi ramarren@bayarea.net

Subject: Re: Peleng 8 mm fisheye

> <http://www.trainweb.org/zeniphotos/pagethree.html>

I've never played with fisheyes, they don't appeal to my sense of aesthetics generally, but these two images are very nicely done. The lens looks to be quite good quality for the money.

Godfrey

From Pentax Mailing List;

Date: Tue, 04 Jul 2000

From: Joseph Tainter jtainter@mindspring.com

Subject: Re: Fisheye help

I have seen these priced in the U.S. from \$139 to \$225. I bought mine for \$175 from:

KievUSA@aol.com Tel. 203-531-0900; Fax 203-531-6229

I was also given the following site in the Czech Republic, but their price is as high as in the U.S., plus you have to pay by Western Union (more on that below):

http://www.dedal.cz/OD_C_EN.html

The Russian supplier I nearly bought from is (with his message quoted):

Rustem Salikhov rustquick@mtu-net.ru

"yes, we have the Zenitar 16/2.8 for Pentax. The \$109 price includes the regular mail shipping. If You want to use the air mail shipping, add \$10. The best way to transfer money is the Western Union transfer to:

RUSTEM SALIKHOV,
ZHUKOVSKY,
MOSCOW REGION.
140180, RUSSIA

Thank You,

Rustem"

I have no reason not to think he is honest. I didn't buy from him because of how the costs added up: \$109 + \$10 + \$22 for Western Union transfer. The total was too close to the U.S. price to bother with the risk of a Russian transaction, and the nuisance if the lens should be defective.

KievUSA shipped very promptly. My lens arrived in a Russian box with a Russian manual, in which is a Russian inspection certificate. Having been to Russia I can make out a few words. Other dealers seem to have an English-language manual, but I don't know why you would really need a manual for this lens.

A used Pentax A 16 mm. fisheye is going now on Ebay for over \$400.00, so \$175 for the Russian lens (which, as I reported earlier, seems to give quite satisfactory results) seemed like a good price. I am having fun with mine.

Hope this is helpful.

Joe

From Nikon Mailing List:
Date: Mon, 24 Jul 2000
From: John Albino jalbino@jwalbino.com
Subject: Re: [NIKON] The Fisheye Question

Zoltan Michael Takacs wrote:

>I would really appreciate if you could provide me with your most valued
>opinion about the Nikkor Fisheye's. Someone just offered a MINT+++ 16mm AIS
>f 3.5, no box, no paper for 430 usd. Is this a good price? Is it a worthy
>lens? If yes, how does it compare to the rest of the Nikkor Fisheye bunch...

I think a better question is "How valuable would this lens be to YOU?" (More below.)

On one hand, I think the seller is overrating the quality of the lens. I think that technically, to be considered "Mint" an item must come with the original box and papers, so I don't think this lens truly qualifies for "Mint" --- and anyway, if something is "Mint" how can it be any better? so the rating of "MINT+++" is pretty much a stretch of hyperbole.

I've owned this lens in the past, and hardly ever used it. I sold it for a pretty big loss, because after the original novelty wore off, it was not a high-demand item. It can be a very difficult lens to learn to use effectively. While not as stylized (and thus subject to "trendiness") as a circular fisheye, it does require a lot of discipline to use as a "straight" lens. By "straight" I mean for normal subjects rather than using the full-frame fisheye effect to exaggerate a subject's lines, quirks, etc.

It can produce quite striking results with sweeping vistas if you can find appropriate subjects.

Personally, I think a far better lens would be a rectilinear 15mm (even though it's a lot more expensive). Many impossible situations can be turned into winners with a 15mm.

You really need to borrow or rent a 16mm full-frame fisheye for a few days and rigorously try it out before committing the money. It is quite a specialized tool, and a lot of money to spend if you hardly ever use it.

- - -

John Albino
mailto:jalbino@jwalbino.com

From Panoramic Mailing List:
Date: Fri, 18 August 2000
From: Willem-Jan Markerink w.j.markerink@a1.nl
To: panorama-l@sci.monash.edu.au
Subject: 12mm/f5.6 Voigtlaender Ultra-Wide Heliar for Bessa-L (M39)

Some spec's are hard to believe at first....but this one is true....a German friend mentioned a new 12mm rectilinear (non-fisheye) Voigtlaender lens, according to the German FotoMag....not having this magazine (yet), I was more than suspicious, until he sent me a scan of the article....not just a rumour, but a fat confident press-release....

To take away the first scare, it's 'only' slightly over US\$1000, not cheap, but still remarkably low for what is essentially an extreme niche lens....

Cosina (the actual factory, Voigtlaender is just a brandname, owned by a chain of German shops (RingFoto)) has gone through great lengths to make this lens as high-end as possible....classical symmetrical (non-retrofocus) design, with a double-aspheric element (is that new??), overall optical quality at least on par with the 15mm Heliar.

121 degree angle of view, 10 elements, 8 groups, 0.3m minimum focus, length 38mm, 162 gramm, optional sun-shade with filterholder. Separate viewfinder (just as the 15mm Heliar), which on itself might be a cute solution for those shooting with the Rodenstock 35mm on 6x12....same angle of view (but of course a much larger view vertically!)

{grin}

Me thinks that some of you will have to fabricate new gears for their homebuild rotating cameras....:))

-- Bye,
Willem-Jan Markerink

w.j.markerink@a1.nl
[note: 'a-one' & 'en-el!']

From: "Ron Benvenisti" doitt@mindspring.com
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Date: Sat, 19 Aug 2000
Subject: 14mm 2.8 Lenses

The newly announced Nikon 14mm 2.8 is selling for around \$1500. It has the same optical specs as the Tamron (elements, groups, glass type). I have heard (from a pretty reliable source) that Tamron makes the 70-300 for Nikon (which also has the same specs and the same Photodo rating - pretty lousy). I got rid of my 70-300 and got the older 75-300 AF which is really much better optically (eventhough 75-300 has the push-pull zoom/focus ring - which I really don't like too much).

I was wondering if perhaps the same was true of the 14 2.8; ie: does Tamron make this lens for Nikon? The Tamron (around \$900 after rebate) fared much less well on Photodo than did the lower priced Sigma (around \$7-800 - shop around... CameraSphere has it for \$709 with no BS - I have seen it for as little as \$659 at the usual crooks who will tell you it is plastic and doesn't have a case, etc... all BS). [Please report these morons to the NYC Dep't of Consumer Affairs... see the website I manage at nyc.gov]. In any case I purchased the Sigma on price, value and performance specs. The lens is of first-class construction and the images are professional quality to large blow-up capability. At 2.8 it's a bit soft at the edges but comes into it's own at 5.6 and beyond. This is a fine professional quality lens IMHO at half the price of the Nikon. And if it is true that Tamron is making the Nikon 14 2.8 then the test results should be the same for both (as they are for the 70-300) which will rank them below the Sigma.

Any feedback here is welcome.

From Panoramic Mailing List:

Date: Wed, 23 Aug 2000

From: Willem-Jan Markerink w.j.markerink@a1.nl

To: panorama-l@sci.monash.edu.au

Subject: Re: 12mm/f5.6 Voigtlaender Ultra-Wide Heliar for Bessa-L (M39)

URL for this beauty:

<http://www.cosina.co.jp/12mm/12-main.html>

(PS, the Seitz pages on spectraweb.ch seem no longer there....never had a factory-link....is there one?....search engines seem just as clueless)

Willem-Jan Markerink wrote:

```
> Some spec's are hard to believe at first....but this one is
> true....a German friend mentioned a new 12mm rectilinear
> (non-fisheye) Voigtlaender lens, according to the German
> FotoMag....not having this magazine (yet), I was more than
> suspicious, until he sent me a scan of the article....not just a
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> To take away the first scare, it's 'only' slightly over US$1000, not
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> Cosina (the actual factory, Voigtlaender is just a brandname, owned
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> (non-retrofocus) design, with a double-aspheric element (is that
> new??), overall optical quality at least on par with the 15mm Heliar.
>
> 121 degree angle of view, 10 elements, 8 groups, 0.3m minimum focus,
> length 38mm, 162 gramm, optional sun-shade with filterholder.
> Separate viewfinder (just as the 15mm Heliar), which on itself might
> be a cute solution for those shooting with the Rodenstock 35mm on
> 6x12....same angle of view (but of course a much larger view
> vertically!)
>
>
> Me thinks that some of you will have to fabricate new gears for their
> homebuild rotating cameras....:))
>
>
```

> --
> Bye,
>
> Willem-Jan Markerink

From Panoramic Mailing List:
Date: Wed, 23 Aug 2000
From: "rof@mac.com" rof@mac.com
Subject: FW: 12mm/f5.6 Voigtlaender Ultra-Wide Heliar for Bessa-L (M39)

From: rof@mac.com Date: Wed, 23 Aug 2000
To: w.j.markerink@a1.nl
Subject: Re: 12mm/f5.6 Voigtlaender Ultra-Wide Heliar for Bessa-L (M39)

tis a handsome looking lens all right but it does not fit the bill for a conventional non-retrofocus lens does. even a biogon, a relatively huge conventional classic semi-symetrial lenses (ever see the 75 compared to any other of its type) would be practically flush with the body. furthermore as i pointed out previously a conventional wa lens of this focal length would be absolutely unthinkable w/o a conventional centre filter of aa least 4x. Next: the back element of a conventional type at this focal length would certainly block the through the lense metering. no one would waste the kind of money involved to producing a lense such as this that blocked any and all through the lense metering systems. whoever translated the spec probably left out something like "equals the performance.etc" anyone care to bet on this?

ralph

....

Date: Sun, 27 Aug 2000
From: Bjorn Rorslett nikon@foto.no
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Full review of AF 14 mm f/2.8 Nikkor ED-IF

I now have completed the full review of the ultra-wide AF Nikkor 14 mm f/2.8 with sample images included. It can be found at my web site <http://www.foto.no/nikon/index2.html> under 'Reviews'. The results are not as everybody would expect. Happy reading.

Regards
Bjorn Rorslett
Visit <http://www.foto.no/nikon/> for UV & IR Colour Photography and other Adventures in Nature and Digital Phootgraphy

From Nikon MF Mailing List:
Date: Mon, 18 Sep 2000
From: "Bob Scott" desmobob@capital.net
Subject: 17mm Peleng vs. 16mm Zenitar fisheye

I couldn't help myself... I picked up a 16mm f/2.8 MC Zenitar to compare to my 17mm f/2.8 Peleng.

My early observations are that the Zenitar has a huge advantage in convenience. It's just a tad larger (longer) than a Nikkor 50mm f/1.8, and has a real AIS mount, complete with auto-stop-down diaphragm and ADR numbers. The Peleng has a primitive lens mount and must be stopped down manually. The Peleng also has a very large front element and weighs probably three times as much as the Zenitar, if not more. The huge front element of the Peleng has only the smallest petal-type hood built in, so the lens cap is a press fit over the outside. It is not a very secure arrangement to cover such a large, protruding and vulnerable front element. The Zenitar has two slightly larger petals located on the top and bottom of the lens front, and a cleverly-designed cap that fits on securely with the familiar spring-loaded tabs that grip the filter threads (Actually, ridges that simulate filter threads. The lens takes only rear-mounted filters --three are included.)

The Zenitar fit, but would not lock, on my Nikon bodies. Instead of sending it back, I broke out the trusty Dremel tool and achieved a tight locking fit. (The slot that the body's lens lock pin fits in was coming just a tiny bit shy of where it needed to be for the pin to pop in. I don't think I took more than a couple of thousandths off the leading edge of the slot before the pin was able to engage properly.)

I have the day off tomorrow, so I'll shoot a roll of T-Max 100 in a casual comparison. I'll be looking for light fall-off, flare, contrast and sharpness differences. I'll shoot a few frames of Provia through both so I'll have an idea of color performance too.

I'm really hoping the Zenitar is a decent performer. The Peleng certainly is, but is somewhat inconvenient to carry and use. After tomorrow, it may be for sale....

Good shooting,
Bob Scott

From panoramic Mailing List:
Date: Tue, 19 Sep 2000
From: Jay Kumler jay@coastalopt.com
Subject: Re: Peleng 8mm fisheye on a digital camera

.....

Coastal Optical Systems has tested the Peleng 8mm fisheye on the Nikon D-1 and measured field mapping, relative illumination and field of regard. The experimental data for the Peleng was compared to six other commercially available fisheye lenses (Nikon 8mm, Nikon 6 mm, Coastal 7.45 mm, Coastal 4.88 mm, and two different Sigma 8mm)

The results were presented in San Diego at the SPIE annual meeting. The paper can be downloaded at:

<http://www.coastalopt.com/ne080400.htm>

The 4.88 mm focal length Coastal fisheye listed above is specifically designed to provide a 185 degree circular image on the 14.9 mm Nikon D-1 and Kodak DCS digital cameras.

Jay Kumler

Date: Wed, 27 Sep 2000
From: "anfield" anfield@england.com

Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: Peleng 8mm Fish-Eyes

Take my personal experience: You should never ever buy this lens!

I've bought this lens, and regret very much!!!

this lens is poor in resolution

poor in color rendition

very severe flare (5mm of the periphery of the circle)

the circle is incompletely recorded on the 35mm film

the lens coating gets dislodged after few days of use, just by its original metal caps

i just felt i've dumped my money into rubbish bin. its advantage is only that it's metal

forget about the mounting, coz u shouldn't buy it, although there isn't any problem with my N6006 (F601)

i'm sure u'll regret if you buy it.

....

Date: Wed, 27 Sep 2000
From: Vladimir Mishchenko vladimir.mishchenko@allianz.ru
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: Peleng 8mm Fish-Eyes

Hi,

Look <http://www.geocities.com/belshop/index.html> for a description of the lens. I personally cannot make any comments because I've never had the lens.

Regards,
Vladimir

Date: Wed, 27 Sep 2000
From: "eMeL" badbatz99@hotmail.com
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: Peleng 8mm Fish-Eyes

Mike Forkash mforkash@legal-aid.org wrote

> Hi,
>
> Does anyone have any (serious) comments about this lens? I'm thinking of
> buying one for my N90s and I would like to know if they are
> compatible/won't screw with the Nikon electronics.
>
> Thanks in advance,
>
> Mike

It is a totally manual lens, so there is no electronic bus at all. Peleng is a preset lens, i.e. lacks the automatic aperture but instead has a ring which allows quick opening and closing of the aperture

to the preset value. I have never used it on anything autofocus, though, but the Nikon mount worked fine on a F3, and a M42x1 screw mount worked fine (with a FD mounting ring) on my Canon F1N. IMO Peleng isn't a serious lens (rather soft in my experience, prone to flare and with very poor contrast) but then again how many "serious" applications are there for a circular fish-eye...? It is fun to use if you like the effect, but it gets old pretty quickly.

My Peleng was rather difficult to dismount from the camera as the entire front of the lens would unscrew itself from the rest every now and then... It could have been my sample, because the factory has no quality control in the western meaning on this word, i.e. they seem to work on the principle that "if it looks like a lens, it is a lens. Ship it!" Test the very lens you are buying before committing your money (or get a firm money-back guarantee from the seller.) If you are paying for it more than 140-150 US dollars - including the mount - you are overpaying, IMO. I bought mine in Poland for approx. 80 dollars. Apparently it costs approx. 240 bucks - including s/h - directly imported to the US from the Ukraine, but some places ask much more than that.

Michael

[Ed. note: you don't often hear of a vivitar ultrawide zoom beating Canon primes...]

From Panoramic Mailing List:

Date: Tue, 10 Oct 2000

From: Andjo andjo@quail.net.au

To: panorama-l@sci.monash.edu.au

Subject: Re:

2 suggestions from a canon user - try to find a Vivitar 17-28mm zoom - cheap and sharp - at least 5 times sharper than the Canon 17 (or even the 20 for that matter). The 14 is fabulous - I still regret selling mine.

And did you know voightlander now makes a 12mm rectilinear lens????????????

Andrew

----- Original Message -----

From: Rudolf KLEIN

To: panorama-l@sci.monash.edu.au

Sent: Sunday, October 08, 2000 9:26 AM

Dear Mr. Wulff!

I need your advice. I am an architectural historian. I have a Linhof 4 x5" that I seldom use. I need mainly 35 mm slides for my lectures and recently my publishers are looking for visual material submitted on CD. Having a Nikon 2000 slide scanner I use mainly my Canon F1N that I adore. My Canon FD 17mm lens was recently stolen. 24mm is not enough. Now what should I do?

Buy a second hand canon FD 14MM lens, or opt for the Cosina Voigtlander Heliar 15mm? (The Canon 17mm lens was not great.)

In terms of weight and price it comes to the same. Only measuring light will be a nightmare with the Bessa and putting to the floor I would not enjoy the detachable prism of the F1N.

IN addition to that having a Bessa and some other 100 gramm lenses my shoulders would be relieved. Of course, my Sonnars adopted to Canon are unavoidable for tele shots. For interiors,

however, and some general shots I could leave the SLR at home. I am often on journeys visiting buildings where I cannot use tripod, so the Zeiss Biogon with its f8 aperture is out of my scope.

What is your opinion?

Many thanks in advance.

Sincerely,

Rudolf KLEIN

[Ed. note: Mr. Rorslett is a noted nikon lens tester and photographer/author, esp. in biological photography...]

Date: Fri, 13 Oct 2000

From: Bjorn Rorslett nikon@foto.no

Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm

Subject: Re: Nikon 20mm/3.5 Manual. Is this a good lens?

j2@cheerful.com wrote:

> I thought the 52mm filter will give it away, but it is a 52mm version with
Original
> AI from Nikon.
> The owner has 18-35, 20-35, 20/2.8 (both manual and AF) and 20/3.5. Basically
he
> almost has all Nikon lens but the 400mm+ range. We've been friends for 20
years and
> he changed my religion from Canon to Nikon since Canon was leaving the FD lens
> behind.
>
> I also notice that all of his (old) lenses do not have any dust or black spec,
> while everytime I order new manual lens from B&H, they always appear. So I
guess
> Nikon's QC was better in the old days.
> Anyway if you think this lens is no good, lemme know. He promises I can trade
it
> for his 20/2.8 for \$200 more:) But so far I like the results, but who knows if
it
> could have been better with the 2.8 version.

Keep it. This is the *only* 20 mm nikkor which is suitable for shooting straight into the sun, with negligible ghost and flare. By adding the ultra-thin K1 ring (from the long discontinued K-ring set), you can make incredible close-ups with a very steep and exciting perspective.

Regards

Bjorn Rorslett

Visit <http://foto.no/nikon/> for UV & IR Colour Photography and other Adventures in Nature and Digital Photography

Date: Thu, 12 Oct 2000

From: "j2@cheerful.com" j2@cheerful.com

Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm

Subject: Re: Nikon 20mm/3.5 Manual. Is this a good lens?

You are right, there are more versions that I thought it was. According to this site:

<http://www.mir.com.my/rb/photography/hardwares/nikonfmount/lens2.htm>

The different between AI and AI-S are:

1. AI-S has 3 screws on the back of the lens.
2. Both the minimum indicators have orange colors
3. An AI-S lens is best recognized by its:

lens type signal notch -the little milled notch next to the lens locking indentation. This indicates that the aperture stop down action is linear as opposed to pre-AI-S lenses.

Based on those characteristics, the lens that I've just bought is an AI-S. So it is not collectible at all:)

Anyway, what does the S stands for? Shoe?

Jon

Rick Walker wrote:

```
> >From: "j2@cheerful.com" j2@cheerful.com
> >Date: 10/9/00
> >
> >Nikon 20mm/3.5 Manual. Is this a good lens?
> >I have the opportunity to acquire it for US$200. Is this a good price?
> >
>
> Nikon made three versions of lenses with this focal length/aperture
> combination
> - the pre-AI 20mm 3.5 UD, the 20mm 3.5 AI, and the 20mm 3.5 AIS. The pre-AI
> lens is physically large, very collectible, and reasonably sharp. It was
> Nikon's first lens of this type (super wide angle), so later lenses did
> improve
> somewhat. The 20mm 3.5 AI and AIS lenses are the same optically. They're
> both
> very sharp and compact, much smaller than the pre-AI lens. To give you a feel
> for relative size, the pre-AI lens has a 72mm filter while the AI and AIS
> lenses take 52mm filters.
>
> Any of these lenses would be a steal at $200, especially if the lens is in
> good
> shape. The AI and AIS lenses are much better from a user point of view, but
> the pre-AI lens is important historically and therefore rates a pretty high
> price.
>
> Rick
```

From: evanjoe610@aol.com (Evanjoe610)
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Date: 12 Oct 2000
Subject: Re: Nikon 20mm/3.5 Manual. Is this a good lens?

Jon,

I wasn't following this thread so therefore I will add additional information to what Rick has written below.

1st Version= 21mmF4.0 Filter 52mm
2nd Version= 20mmF3.5 Filter 72mm
3rd Version= 20mmF4.0 Filter 52mm
4th Version= 20mmF3.5 Filter 52mm
5th Version= 20mmF2.8 Filter 52mm

Now your version was made in both Ai and AIS mount. Your lens was a redesign of the earlier 20mmF3.5 in 72mm. Both lens had an 11 element group. It is the sharpest of the 20mm lens prior to the 20mmF2.8 version. It doesn't have CRC. (Close Range Correction) Only the 2.8 version used this feature. It is a fine lens I and really won't go for the 2.8 unless you are using it to make money as a professional. Just use it and test it out. I feel you will be more than happy. If your friend allows to test both the 2.8 against the 3.5, then I say go for it and let me know the outcome.

Otherwise, enjoy your "cheap and inexpensive" Nikon super wide angle lens.

Evan Dong

...

Date: Sun, 29 Oct 2000
From: John Halliwell john@photopia.demon.co.uk
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: Cosina 12mm tests?

Roland roland.rashleigh-berry@virgin.net writes

>Has anyone done a review of the new Cosina (Voigtlander) 12mm
>rectilinear? I am interested in this lens but I suspect the vignetting
>will be awful.
>
>Roland

The BJP has reviewed it and from what I remember they were very impressed by it.

Quick dig through the 'archives' (pile of mags on the floor) 6th Sept 2000.

Apparently the lens is very good wide open to f/8, slight drop off at f/11 beyond which it drops off quite quickly.

--

John

Preston, Lancs, UK.
Photos at <http://www.photopia.demon.co.uk>

From Nikon MF Mailing List:
Date: Sat, 21 Oct 2000
From: "Gunnar Öberg" famlak@hem2.passagen.se
Subject: Peleng versus Zenitar (v. Nikkor) Result..

Hi Nikkonians,

I will now keep my promise to compare Peleng 17/2.8 with Zenitar 16/2.8. I have included Nikkor 18/3.5 - in spite of the different format.

I shot a series of pictures a cloudy day - the place is the graveyard in Vissefjärda, Småland. The light conditions were about the same all the time. I do not think it will cause any differences in the pictures. My F3T was mounted on a tripod. I shot with cable release the same scenario. The film is Fujicolor Superia 200ASA (It takes some time to get slides developed - that's why I chose negative film.)

I have scanned the negatives in Nikon Coolscan III to as big files as possible (about 26MB TIFF format) and worked on them in PhotoShop - enlargements of two spots, one in center and one in the periphery - all glued together. The pictures were then converted to JPEG to make the files as small as possible. I use 79 dpi for the files shown - close to the "pixel border" - just to look at on the screen!

No method of sharpening the pictures is used of course - and no change of the color or brilliance.

(I will come back later with the shots in the sun to check flare Roland! Its autumn here - foggy, humid, warm... I do not remember last time when I saw the bright sun!)

My conclusions?

The Peleng is a hefty piece of glass - almost as grandmas crystal vase(650 g) with a huge easily damaged front lens - diam. 75 mm. The lens sticks out about 85 mm with the Nikon adapter. You just don't put it in your pocket! The Zenitar is smaller (350g). Front lens diam. 60 mm and it sticks out 45 mm (no adapter needed) - fits well to the pocket!

Both are multicoated. The Peleng comes with an impressive leather case - the Zenitar a little case of woven black nylon. Both with 3 B&W rear filters. The Peleng has a stop down ring - Zenitar only the ring for aperture settings. (No big problem since they are both non AI and purely manual - like PCNikkors.) Both feel good and solid. The Peleng has a front cover that is very loose - falls off all the time and makes you nervous! The Zenitar has a snap on cover that fits nicely and makes you feel better ... ;-)

The pictures?

Judge for yourselves! I think the Peleng is a tiny bit sharper and more contrasty but I hate those vignetting in the corners - the Zenitar pictures have no dark corners.. Both perform quite well for the price. The Nikkor - no comment - it is included just for fun - as to compare apples and pears ... But the vignetting full open surprised me a bit. I forgot - sorry! - to test f4 on the Nikkor!

There is a risk for bias in this amateurish investigation - the Zenitar belongs to me - the Peleng is borrowed back from a friend I sold it to ... ;-)

Here you will find the result - please start with the file "A GUIDE - READ THIS FIRST".

<http://www.egroups.com/files/NikonMF/Peleng-Zenitar+%28Nikkor%29+/>

At last - thanks to Roland Vink for tips off list!

Best wishes

Gunnar Öberg
Ronneby

From Nikon MF Mailing List:
Date: Sat, 21 Oct 2000
From: "Bob Scott" desmobob@capital.net
Subject: Re: Peleng versus Zenitar (v. Nikkor) Result..

From: "Gunnar Öberg" famlak@hem.passagen.se
Subject: [NikonMF] Peleng versus Zenitar (v. Nikkor) Result..

> Hi Nikkonians,
> I will now keep my promise to compare Peleng 17/2.8 with Zenitar
> 16/2.8

Gunnar,

Thanks for doing such a nice job showing the test results! I have both lenses, and my informal tests had results similar to yours....

My Peleng was noticeably sharper than the Zenitar, but I thought the Zenitar seemed to have an edge in contrast in my TMX test negatives. I may get a chance to do some shooting tomorrow. If so, I'll make sure I shoot a few frames of Provia with both lenses so I can compare color results with yours.

Good shooting,
Bob Scott

Date: Sat, 04 Nov 2000
From: Tony Polson tony.polson@btinternet.com
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: Recommendations for Nikon ultra wide angle lens

gmrogers@my-deja.com wrote:

> I've been looking at several options for an ultra wide angle lens -
> either zoom or prime. This would be for a Nikon N80, so MF wouldn't be
> an option. The lens would be used for landscapes primarily and would
> be enlarged to 8x12. My budget is \$600-\$700 max, so the Nikkor 20-35
> f2.8 and 17-35 f2.8 would be too pricey. Here's my list:
>
> Nikkor 18-35mm f3.5-4.5
> Nikkor 20mm f2.8
> Nikkor 24mm f2.8
>
> less seriously considering
> Sigma 17-35mm f2.8-4.0
> Tokina ATX Pro 20-35mm f2.8

The now-discontinued Tokina ATX 20-35mm f/3.5-4.5 (metal body) and the latest 19-35mm version (polycarbonate body) appear to offer better optical performance than the ATX Pro f/2.8. These are inexpensive lenses (\$250) and may be a good way to find out whether a wide angle zoom suits you best, or which fixed focal length lens you might want.

Both these lenses have some distortion that renders them unsuitable for architectural photography. However they are ideal for landscapes where their excellent sharpness and contrast will be apparent.

--

Tony Polson, North Yorkshire, UK

From Panoramic Mailing List;

Date: Sun, 03 Dec 2000

From: Marco Pauck pauck@wmd.de

Subject: Re: lens test, advice

> Rudolf KLEIN wrote:

>

> Is there any test results for the Heliar 12mm?

> Is the Heliar 15mm lens good in terms of distortio? I am an architect

>and this is a crucial feature.

Both lenses were tested by the German Foto Magazin:

- 4.5/15mm in issue 4/1999

- 5.6/12mm in issue 12/2000

For both the overall results were quite good, however both suffer from significant vignetting even when stopped down: about 2 f-stops for the 15mm and about 3 f-stops for the 12mm.

Distortion isn't a big issue (0.3/0.4% for the 15mm and 0.3/1.6% for the 12mm).

Marco

Marco Pauck -- marco@pauck.de -- <http://www.pauck.de/marco/>

From Panoramic Mailing List:

Date: Sun, 03 Dec 2000

From: Rod Sage rsage@bouldernews.infi.net

To: panorama-l@sci.monash.edu.au

Subject: Re: lens test, advice

Rudolf KLEIN wrote:

> Is there any test results for the Heliar 12mm?Is the

> Heliar 15mm lens good in terms of distortio? I am an

> architect and this is a crucial feature. I would

> appreciate very much if you could answer my

> question. Prof. Rudolf KLEIN

Regarding the 12mm Heliar. The Dec. Shutterbug has a good article and rates it very well. They do say that the lens is sharpest wide open at f/5.6 or f/8 and should be stopped down only when necessary for more depth of field, which would be rare. They also mention that there is inevitably true wide angle distortion, where solid objects near the edge of the picture are pulled out of shape and the camera should be leveled carefully.

Rod S.

Date: Wed, 13 Dec 2000

From: Tony Polson tony.polson@btinternet.com

Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: Lisa's Gallery of Rogues.

"John G. Silver" jonsil@tpgi.com.au wrote:

> I'll just dump the WA I used and am ordering a Cosina/Vivitar 19-35 zoom. I
> saw a good report on this in a Practical Photography magazine.

I hope it's not too late to stop you, but this lens is a gamble at best. Unless you are extremely fortunate and find a good example, you would be far better buying the new Tokina 19-35mm f/3.5-4.5. This is a well made lens with non-rotating filter ring and a very good optical design.

The Tokina is not in the same league as a Nikkor AF-S, Canon L or Minolta G, but it is a sharp and contrasty lens with less distortion than the Cosina.

> Does anyone know who makes these lenses and is it available with different
> names?

It's made by Cosina and also sells as a Vivitar or a Soligor. Judging by comments on this newsgroup over the last few months, and reviews elsewhere, you'd be very well advised to avoid all three in favour of the Tokina.

--

Tony Polson, North Yorkshire, UK

Date: Tue, 12 Dec 2000
From: Lisa Horton geek@gatorgames.com
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: Lisa's Gallery of Rogues.

The "really cheap but pretty good" one that sold under \$200 USD is out of production and hard to find. The allegedly optically identical new model, which sells right at \$200USD is different primarily in it's polycarbonate construction. I believe the non-rotating filter ring was absent from the previous model, although I'm not sure.

I have this lens, it's a decent performer. Nice and contrasty, and fairly sharp, it's pictures do have snap. Although it makes a god-awful noise when focussing, it's fairly quick, not surprising at this focal length I guess though.

I'd rate it a good deal, and a worthwhile lens if you don't use this length enough to justify something **really** good.

Lisa

Postscript:

Allow me to correct myself. The lens I'm talking about is allegedly optically identical to the former 20-35, a step above the cheap old 19-35. It's cheaper than it's predecessor due to its polycarbonate construction they say.

Lisa

Date: Wed, 13 Dec 2000
From: Tony Polson tony.polson@btinternet.com

Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: Lisa's Gallery of Rogues.

Lisa Horton geek@gatorgames.com wrote:

> Allow me to correct myself. The lens I'm talking about is allegedly
> optically identical to the former 20-35, a step above the cheap old
> 19-35. It's cheaper than it's predecessor due to its polycarbonate
> construction they say.

Lisa,

There's some confusion here. The "good" 19-35mm that's based closely on a recent 20-35mm design is from Tokina. The confusion arises because, a couple of years ago, Tokina marketed the Cosina/Vivitar/Soligor 19-35mm under the Tokina brand.

The rebadged Cosina/Vivitar/Soligor and the Tokina home-grown products are about as different as can be. There is a huge difference in image quality as well as build quality. No one should risk buying the former while the latter are available for very little more money.

--

Tony Polson, North Yorkshire, UK

From Minolta Mailing List:

Date: Sun, 31 Dec 2000

From: c.p.valentine@open.ac.uk

Subject: Re: User comments on older 14mm f/3.5 Sigma in MD (or AF if same lens)?

--- In minolta@egroups.com, jay.piper@m... wrote:

> Any users who can share impressions of this lens that is now
> being 'closed out' - sharpness, quality at f/5.6 and wider and
> stopped down, build and ergonomics? I am thinking about the MD
> version, would like one ultra-wide for interiors, star trails,
> landscapes - Thanks,

I have this lens in Canon EOS. Very well built, lots of metal. DoF is huge, of course. A bit prone to flare as you might expect. It was bought specifically for indoor architecture photographer (virtual reality) and is excellent for getting floor-to-ceiling shots in vertical format. Excellent value for money. Only niggles: focus ring is very loose in manual focus; doesn't lock into place when I mount it on my EOS1n (!).

Chris.

--

http://met.open.ac.uk/met_vr/

From Sigma Lens Mailing List:

Date: Wed, 21 Feb 2001

From: christophercalabro@yahoo.com

Subject: Sigma 20 mm 1.8 AF DG

Wanted to pass along a few early thoughts on the new Sigma 20mm 1.8 lens. I picked up this lens in a Canon mount and have shot it with an Eos 1-V. The lens is extremely sharp and has excellent contrast. The build quality is the same as all the other EX lenses, which is to say very good. I am not a huge fan of the plastic body and that is further complicated by my extreme dislike of the

stardust speckled finish Sigma uses on the Ex lenses. So it is not the most attractive or professional looking lens in my bag. That aside it is a fast autofocus lens(rear focus) and it is smooth and quiet in the AF mode.

It has a puch ring for fast af-manual mode change. It is this actuation which I would list as my second dislike about the lens. There is a AF/Manual switch as well but the ring shift was a little rough and not as silky smooth as the lens focus actuation. Perhaps one of the biggest real world problems with this lens is the 82mm filter size. Granted the lens has a great 94.5 degree angle of view Sigma could have fit this into a 77mm size at worse. Many of their competitors are achieving the same great results with 72mm filter sizes. I make this a point because if you pay \$330 for the lens a slim hi enf filter make run you 1/3 the cost of the filter. And that is for a UV. Forget about adding a circle. The 1.8 speed is very nice for interior shooting.

In a nutshell I would highly recommend the lens based on performance lone. If the finish is not an issue for you and you either have 82mm filters or do not intend to use more than 1 filter I would make this a solid buy. You will save perhaps 20-25% off the name brand versions and get solid performance in return. The price you pay is on the resale side (longterm) and in the filters (short-term).

From Sigma Lenses Mailing List:
Date: Thu, 22 Feb 2001
From: "Leo" whywhyz@yahoo.com
Subject: Re: Sigma 20 mm 1.8 AF DG

I almost bought this lens, and ultimately went with the Canon 20/2.8 due to te filter size. I shoot mostly lanscapes with it and the extra 1.5 f/stops werent a big issues, as I stop down most of the time.. But it does look like a nice piece of hardware..

From Nikon Mailing List:
Date: Sat, 17 Mar 2001
From: ken rockwell kenrockwell@kenrockwell.com
Subject: [NIKON] Nikon 15mmF3.5 Manual Focus OR 14mmF2.8 AutoFocus

I owned the 15 for a few years and tried the 14 once.

The 15 required that you have a decent staff of assistants to gobo the lighting, because the 15 has a horrendous flare and ghosting problem if any light hits the lens. I did eventually make a 12" x 18" matte box for it that helped. It is not a lens for casual outdoor photography.

I tried the 14 once for a few shots. It seems to share the 15's unique lack of geometric distortion common to almost all Nikkor wide angles, and also seems to lack the flare problems. I wasn't able to get a sharp image out of it, however that may have been because I was shooting indoors at 1/4 sec which I usually can pull off with those lenses.

So, go try the 14 and make sure it's sharp and free from flare and ghosts. If it is it is superior to the 15.

What looks like a built in hood on both of these lenses is not. Those are front element protectors in case you put the lens down on a table or concrete. They are way to small to prevent out-of-image light from hitting the bulbous front element. The problem with the 15 is that once any light

hit the front element that it bounced around and hit your film as a big fat blue blob opposite the source of the light.

I posted more of my drivel at <http://kenrockwell.com/nikon/nikkor.htm>

Ken Rockwell
La Jolla, Calif

From: "Max Perl" max_perl@post11.tele.dk
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Date: Fri, 13 Apr 2001
Subject: Re: Nikon Wide Angles

The 18/2.8 is a mistake in the Nikon line. The 20/2.8 is much better in all respects. I had the 18/2.8 and shifted it very fast to the 15/3.5. I know this is not the 20/2.8 but I have seen many many pictures taken with this lens.

The 18/2.8 has a lot of color fringing in the corners. Especially wide open color fringing is very visible. Edges have these green and red lines.

I don't think my lens was a bad sample because I have heard this from more people (own experience, photo dealers, Bjorn's Rørslett's web page ect.). I have never tried the old 18/3.5 but this lens should be better than the 18/2.8.

It is not always ashp. lens designs are better than conventional ones.....

Max

"Webmarketing" webmarketing@kconline.com skrev

```
> Tony, if the 20mm suffers from soft corners and wavy line distortion, and I
> agree that it does, it is hardly one of Nikon's best optics. You also say
> it has "outstanding sharpness" wide open. That's not consistent with soft
> corners. Actually, this lens is one of Nikons's best values even though it
> isn't a stellar performer. If you compare it to a stellar performer like
> the 18mm f2.8 it doesn't fare well but it's about half the price so it
> represents a great value. To describe it as a great lens, though, would be
> inaccurate, as you point out in other parts of your post.
>
> However, it will obviously outperform any zoom lens with 20mm in the range
> as you point out correctly.
>
> Just trying to temper enthusiasm with some consistency. Good shooting.
>
> Fred
> Maplewood Photography
>
> Tony Polson tony.polson@btinternet.com wrote
> > "Turner Nonnan" snowwmman@hotmail.com wrote:
> >
> > > Which one have better optical quality? and what are your comments?
> > Thank
> > > you.
> > > AF 20mm f/2.8 D
> > > AF ED 18-35mm f/3.5-4.5 D
> >
> > I have owned the 20mm f/2.8 AF-D Nikkor for several months and have just
> > bought the 18-35mm f/3.5-4.5 ED AF-D Nikkor. I will post my comments in
```

> > a few weeks after I have given the zoom a thorough test.
> >
> > However it's worth making the comment that the 20mm f/2.8 is a very fine
> > lens with outstanding sharpness and contrast even wide open. It is one
> > of Nikon's best optics. It's a little soft at the corners at f/2.8 but
> > this has mostly gone by f/4 and it is sharp across the frame by f/5.6.
> > Distortion is very low but it is noticeable in architectural
> > photography. It takes the form of 'wavy line' distortion which is
> > neither barrel nor pincushion, but an unhappy combination of both.
> >
> > I suggest this is probably due to barrel distortion by one element or
> > group of elements being incompletely compensated for by the pincushion
> > distortion of another element or group of elements, or vice versa.
> > Either way, it is there, although it is only noticeable with straight
> > lines parallel and near to the edge of the frame.
> >
> > To put this comment in perspective, I would not expect the 18-35mm
> > f/3.5-4.5 ED AF-D Nikkor to have control of distortion that even
> > approaches that of the 20mm f/2.8 Nikkor, whose level of overall
> > distortion is low for a fixed focal length lens.
> >
> > I'm particularly interested in the comparison between the 18-35mm
> > f/3.5-4.5 ED AF-D Nikkor and the Tokina 20-35mm f/3.5-4.5 lens that I've
> > just sold. The Tokina is a very fine lens and it sells for only half
> > the price of the Nikkor or less.
> >
> > Is the Nikkor really worth double? I intend to find out.
> >
> >
> > --
> > Tony Polson

From: torx@nwrain.com (R. Peters)
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Date: Sat, 14 Apr 2001
Subject: Re: Vivitar 19mm f3.8 WOW!!

Keep in mind that this is a test of ONE particular lens--not all of them and not even 3 or 4 samples. The next lens tested could have been entirely different. The results may be similar for a batch of the same lens...or they may not be.

I bought a 19mm Vivitar 3.8 new for \$108 plus shipping from NY, new with warranty cards. I use this focal length so rarely that if I had to pay \$300 or more for a used 19 or 20mm lens, I couldn't justify having a 19 or 20mm lens. If you can justify 3X the price for a Canon or Pentax, 19 or 20mm lens, by all means, go for it.

You may be right, it may not perform as well as an OEM lens. But, the price is right and, surprisingly, the transparencies I get from mine are quite acceptable for general use. Mileage may vary.

bob

"Jriegle" jriegle@worldnet.att.net wrote:

> See the lens test, click the link...
>
> <http://home.worldnet.att.net/~jriegle/viv19mm.htm>
>

>Regards, John

From Minolta Mailing List:
Date: Mon, 25 Jun 2001
From: "Alexander Koz" alexanderkoz@excite.com
Subject: affordable wide-angles

Hi,

The last issue of FOTO 7-8/2001 publishes test data on two new WA lenses from Sigma: 24/1.8 and 20/1.8 EX DG. Both are pretty sharp (like Minolta 24/2.8), both show very strong astigmatism (unlike Minolta 24/2.8 or 24-50/4), and both have strong wave-form distortions. They have internal focus and non rotating fronts. They are also large (77mm and 82mm filters, respectively) and heavy (about 500g).

I heard Minolta AF 24/2.8 is not distortions free either, and 20/2.8 is too expensive for me. What I used to shoot might be called nature and travel photography and I often feel I need something wider than my Minolta 28/2. What would you suggest? Maybe Tokina 19-35/3.5-4.5 or Minolta AF 24-50/4? The latter is not very wide but I don't like swithing lens frequently. And it might complement 70-210/4 very well since both accept 55mm filters.

Thank you,
Alex.

From Minolta Mailing List;
Date: Mon, 25 Jun 2001
From: "Alex Zabrovsky" alexz@nogatech.co.il
Subject: RE: affordable wide-angles

What about used Tokina 20-35/3.5-4.5 II ? Not bad at all optically, sturdy construction (distinguishable for most Tokina designs), very convenient zoom range, but definitely cannot be considered as distortion-free.

Very affordable when found used (150-200 \$).

Alex

From Minolta Mailing List;
Date: Mon, 25 Jun 2001
From: "Alexander Koz" alexanderkoz@excite.com
Subject: Re: affordable wide-angles

Thank you all for replies. Here is what's been mentioned, ordered by prices:

Sigma	24/2.8	\$ 150 / .	(used/new)
Tokina	19[20]-35	150/200	
Minolta	24/2.8	250/350	
Minolta	24-50	250/350	
Minolta	20-35	./450	
Sigma	17-35	./450	

Hmm.. I've looked it through again and realized that performance goes probably the opposite order! Actually Tokina is very tempting, or old Minolta zoom although it's not 'true' WA. No, I can't decide yet.

Thanks anyway,
Alex.

From Minolta Mailing List;
Date: Tue, 26 Jun 2001
From: "Kent Gittings" kent@ism.com
Subject: RE: Re: affordable wide-angles

I think the old Tokina AT-X II 20-35/3.5-4.5 is better than the Sigma 18-35. The Sigma has major barrel distortion at 18mm while the Tokina no measurable amount of distortion through out the range. and a used Tokina can usually be picked up for something in the \$200 or so range. If you went just by the Photodo rating the best wide zoom is the Tamron 20-40/2.7-3.5. Better than the Minoltas even. However it has some distortion right at the 20mm range. Mainly it is pretty sharp for a wide zoom.

Kent Gittings

From Rangefinder Mailing List:
Date: Sat, 30 Jun 2001
From: "Stephen William FOYLE" swf46@bellsouth.net
Subject: Re: [RF List]Robert Frank 1950's SuperWides

These are the introduction dates for 1950's SuperWides

1950 Carl Zeiss Jenna 25f4 Topogon Contax Mount
1953 Nikon 25f4 W-Nikkor Contax/Nikon Mount
1953 Angenieux 28f3.5 R11 Retrofocus Exakta Mount
1954 Carl Zeiss Oberkochen 21f4.5 Biogon Contax Mount
1957 Angenieux 24f3.5 R51 Retrofocus Exakta Mount
1958 Leitz 21f4 Super-Angulon LTM and M Mounts (Schneider Design)
1959 Isco 24f4 Westrogon Retrofocus Exakta Mount
1959 Nikon 21f4 Nikkor-O Contax/Nikon Mount
195? Leitz 28f5.6 DoNotRememberName) LTM Mount

Best regards, Stephen William Foyle

[Ed. note: another user's view, and a warning on sample variations...]
Date: Sat, 09 Jun 2001
From: Tony Polson tony.polson@btinternet.com
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: Cosina 19-35mm lens - opinion, anyone?

"Vlad P" pvlad@bigfoot.com wrote:

> I have 19-35 Vivitar
> I bought a couple of month ago for Nikon mount.
>
>snip
>

> I am just a beginner, so my quality "threshold" may not be that high,
> I also do not have more expensive lenses/cameras -- therefore my
> comparasings
> may not be up to the standards of other people.

It's a pity you didn't make this statement at the beginning of your posting.

To those who are interested in this Cosina/Vivitar/Soligor/Phoenix lens, it is junk. It has appalling build quality and huge sample variation. If you are lucky enough to get a good one the lousy build quality may mean it doesn't stay good for long.

The best examples of this lens can produce acceptably sharp results when stopped down to f/8 or so, however the barrel distortion at 19mm, and the pincushion distortion at 35mm, are appalling. The distortion at the wide end is so bad that it makes you think you just bought the world's first zoom fisheye lens.

For only about 20% more \$ you can buy the latest Tokina Model AF193 19-35mm f/3.5-4.5 lens which is well made, has minimal sample variation, produces consistently sharp and contrasty results and has well controlled distortion. There is still some distortion, and it is noticeable if you do architectural photography or compose with straight lines near the edges of the frame, but it is very well controlled compared to that of the Cosina/Vivitar/Soligor/Phoenix product.

The choice between the Cosina/Vivitar/Soligor/Phoenix and the Tokina AF193 is a no-brainer. Go with the Tokina AF193, unless you only shoot for 4"x6" prints from a minilab, when you may not be able to tell the difference. But I know I will.

I have tested four examples of the Cosina/Vivitar/Soligor/Phoenix lens and two of the Tokina, and on the basis of the results I bought the Tokina without any hesitation.

--

Tony Polson

Date: Mon, 18 Jun 2001
From: retoricus@hotmail.com (Vagabond)
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: Opinion about Tokina 19-35/3.5-4.5

"Marko B." marko.b@-REMOVE-altavista.net wrote:

>Any on line reviews of this lens? How is the distortion at 19 and 20?

Heavy. It is not a lens for shooting straight lines or buildings with at this end. But neither is the 10x more expensive Nikkor 17-35/f2.8. It is a difference of degrees - no wide zooms are without distortion.

>For that money i'm not expecting any miracles.

The Tokina AF193 is a small miracle when it comes to sharpness and contrast, though, esp. if you consider the affordable price. It is also well built.

Vagabond

From Nikon MF Mailing List:
Date: Fri, 02 Feb 2001
From: famlak@hem2.passagen.se
Subject: Nikkor 18 mm/3.5 AIS

Hi Roberto,

Look at this site - I have published some pictures taken with this lens.
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NikonMF/files/Peleng-Zenitar+%28Nikkor%209+/> (please copy and paste all of this long URL!)

I find the 18/3.5 rather extreme. Quite sharp if stopped down 1-2 steps. Beware of the vignetting full open!

For my kind of shooting I like more the 20/3.5 - extremely good for shooting in the sun! My 20/2.8 is bulkier, heavier, more expensive but I do not need the high speed 2.8 - I do like my 20/3.5 better! Picture quality is about the same but I have not got the experiences of comparing lenses as some of the giants on this wonderful list.... :-)

Summary: I would go for 20 mm/3.5 if I had not won a fortune on lottery ...

Kindest regards
Gunnar Öberg in Ronneby
Sweden

Date: Sat, 05 May 2001
From: Tony Polson tony.polson@btinternet.com
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: vivitar or sigma

"db1" dvdbrml@yahoo.com wrote:

> hi all,
> i am considering buying a 19-35mm lens for my Pentax SF-1, either a Vivitar
> or a Sigma. Any thoughts and or opinions?

The Vivitar is junk, or worse. It has appalling build quality and sample variation is huge. It also appears under the Cosina, Soligor and Phoenix brands, so make sure you avoid all of these. It briefly appeared, a few years ago now, as a Tokina. However Tokina dropped it from their range when they made their own 20-35mm f/3.5-4.5, which is an excellent performer for not much more money than Vivitar.

The Tokina 20-35mm f/3.5-4.5 was discontinued late in 2000 and the replacement is a 19-35mm f/3.5-4.5 which is optically near-identical, but has a polycarbonate barrel to save weight. The 20-35mm f/3.5-4.5 had metal construction, and in my opinion it is a slightly better buy.

The 20-35mm and 19-35mm f/3.5-4.5 Tokinas have excellent sharpness and contrast. Whilst there is some barrel/pincushion distortion (not uncommon in super-wide fixed focal length lenses but particularly common in zooms) it is far better than the Vivitar, whose distortion must be one of the worst of any modern lens.

The Tokina costs 20% more than the Vivitar. It is worth every penny.

There is also a much more expensive Tokina 20-35mm with an f/2.8 constant maximum aperture. It's a good lens but isn't quite as sharp or contrasty as its cheaper sibling. However barrel/pincushion distortion is kept very low and this means it is suitable for architectural photography, which the cheaper Tokina is not.

I don't know anything about the Sigma lens you mentioned. I've owned six Sigmas at various times since 1975, and they have all been poorly made and/or difficult or impossible to get repaired. I recently had to sell my last two Sigmas (a 70-210mm f/2.8 APO AF and a 24mm f/2.8 AF) with the faults declared but unrepaired.

I will never buy another Sigma. Who knows? You might be more lucky.

I hope this is useful.

--

Tony Polson

From: David Littlewood <david@nospam.demon.co.uk>
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: Ultrawides & barrel distortion?
Date: Sat, 1 Sep 2001

Lisa Horton

<Lisa@lisahorton.net> writes

>I don't shoot wide angle a lot, so I have a modest ultrawide zoom, the
>Tokina 193 19-35. It's pretty sharp and contrasty, but it seems to
>have quite a bit of barrel distortion at the edges. Sometimes that's
>useful compositionally, but more often it's not. My question is, is
>this endemic to ultrawide zooms, or just inexpensive ones? If I
>actually forked out for a better lens, would I see significantly less
>of this distortion? TIA,
>
>Lisa

Wide angle lenses are always prone to curvilinear distortion unless a lot of effort is put into correcting it. This is particularly so if the lens is highly asymmetric, as SLR wides generally have to be to keep clear of the mirror. The position of the diaphragm in relation to the optical elements is important.

With fixed focal length lenses, these problems can be solved reasonably well, at least in high quality lenses, and these are mostly low on distortion. With zooms, there is the additional problem of having several groups of elements moving relative to each other through the zooming range, plus the need to also keep other distortions down (spherical aberration, coma, chromatic aberration etc.).

Thus most wide zooms have some curvilinear distortion, even good ones. The better ones may have little or no distortion at some points in the zoom range but a noticeable amount elsewhere. I checked my Canon 17-35L recently and found it had very little distortion except between 30 and

35 mm, where barrel distortion became noticeable (I haven't measured it precisely, but it looks to be around 1-2%). Reports on other examples of this lens have shown significant pincushion at the wide end, which I did not observe. It thus seems that there is a fair amount of sample variation as well.

I guess you will just have to try to avoid placing any high vertical walls or other straight lines near the edge of the picture if it offends you. For the price of the Tokina, it's hard to expect perfection in every aspect.

--

David Littlewood

From: eos10fan@hotmail.com (dan)
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: Ultrawides & barrel distortion?
Date: 1 Sep 2001

Sigma has just released a 15-30 f/3.5-4.5
http://www.sigmaphoto.com/html/pages/15_30_ex.htm

B&H is listing it for \$549.00 (Out of Stock).
I don't have any idea how the new Sigma will perform,
just mentioning it to add to your confusion :)

Rumour has it that Canon _may_ be announcing a new ultrawide zoom this fall.
See "The new season will be hot ? [06/15/2001]" on this page:
http://eosseries.ifrance.com/eosseries/lenscanon/news_en.htm

May the Light be with you.©

dan

From: Tony Polson <no.email@please.com>
Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm
Subject: Re: Ultrawides & barrel distortion?
Date: Sun, 02 Sep 2001

Hi David,

I fully understand your point of view, and am aware of your careful approach to making postings based on fact. I respect them both. However it is clear that there is significant sample variation in all wide angle zooms, of any brand.

Hopefully, in the case of the Canon the variation is not on the scale of that found in the Cosina/Phoenix/Soligor/Vivitar Series 1 19-35mm lens, which is truly appalling. If marketed as the world's first zoom fisheye, which in effect it is, it would garner many more sales. <g>

But even the highly regarded Nikon 17-35mm f/2.8 AF-S Nikkor varies significantly, as Bjørn Rørslett makes clear in his review.

Earlier this year, I participated in a long series of lens tests which used a variety of bench testing, chart shooting and standardised 'real' photographs to evaluate and compare over 140 lenses. I helped with testing the Nikon and independent brands and was marginally involved with Contax (Zeiss Japan) and Leica M tests. But several of my friends who use Canon gear remarked on the variability of the 17-35mm f/2.8 and deemed the overall results of its lens test to be disappointing. Sadly I cannot disclose any of the results, so you will have to trust me.

Personally I have never used the lens, but I know the individuals very well. I would trust implicitly their report of the tests. You yourself posted on here about an unusual pattern barrel/pincushion distortion in your example, and others replied describing a different pattern. I know your style of writing enough to trust implicitly what you reported, and the others who replied described a pattern that was present in two of the three Canon 17-35mm lenses tested.

Let me make this clear: I am not in any way trying to criticise Canon; I am a great admirer of Canon EOS gear and would have bought into that system last year if I'd known more about it. As it is, my familiarity with Nikon won the day. The point I am making is that the Canon has production line variability just like every other manufacturer.

- > The website that gives
- > visitors' opinions is statistically doubtful, as there is no attempt to
- > standardise the expectations. Clearly the purchaser of a £1000 lens has
- > a higher expectation than the purchaser of a £400, and may well
- > therefore make a harsher judgement.

I couldn't agree more.

Of course I assume you are talking about 'PhotographyBEWARE.com'; I am fiercely critical of this site because of the lack of editorial control and filtering. This allows almost any idiot to spout all kinds of crap about almost any photographic item irrespective of whether he/she has ever touched it, or used it, let alone owned it. It is probably the most misleading photo site on the Web.

Of course it survives on advertising placed by "bait and switch" merchants. You are encouraged to buy your camera, lens or what have you by 'simply clicking on this link' or some suchlike.

Another misleading site is the authoritative-looking Photodo.com with its narrow, subjective and surprisingly warped rating system. Although I am very critical of Photodo I still reserve my deepest disdain for 'PhotographyBEWARE.com'. That's mainly because Photodo doesn't try to tempt you towards any hyperlinks to suspect photo dealers.

Back to Canon. My recollection of the "Amateur Photographer" review of wide angle zooms earlier this year is that the Canon 20-35mm did not perform especially well. I no longer have that issue, and would be grateful if anyone could supply more details. What I do remember is that the three joint best buys were the Tokina 19-35mm f/3.5-4.5, the Tokina 20-35mm f/2.8 and the Nikon 18-35mm f/3.5-4.5 ED. I am lucky enough to have owned two out of these three and to have used and helped test the third (the Tokina f/2.8) so I can happily endorse what "Amateur Photographer" said in their review.

Based on Lisa Horton's requirement for lower distortion than she gets from her Tokina 19-35mm f/3.5-4.5 (which is otherwise a very fine lens and unbelievable value for money), the Tokina 20-35mm f/2.8 AT-X Pro looks like a very, very good option. It's about the same price as the Nikon 18-35mm and the Canon 20-35mm, has no greater distortion (and much less than its cheaper sibling) and offers the holy grail: a constant maximum aperture of f/2.8.

Provided it works well on Lisa's Canon bodies, which is always a major consideration with an independent lens, I would strongly recommend it to Lisa ... This is exactly what I did.

Now what was it you objected to again, David? <g>

--

Best regards,

Tony Polson

From: David Albrecht <dNaOvSiPdAcMa@writeme.com>

Date: Sun, 02 Sep 2001

Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm

Subject: Re: Ultrawides & barrel distortion?

I don't get Amateur Photographer, but for what it is worth, I usually like to reference www.photozone.de lens test section which abstracts the results from multiple magazine tests. Note that this is different than their user survey results.

Their rankings are:

Canon EF 2.8 17-35mm USM L 3.26 (5 reviews) = good

Canon EF 3.5-4.5 20-35mm USM 3.12 (5 reviews) = average

Tokina AF 2.8 20-35mm AT-X Pro 3.07 (5 reviews) = average

Tokina AF 3.5-4.5 19-35mm 2.67 (2 reviews) = sub-average

By comparison their reviews put the Nikkor 18-35 at:

Nikkor AF 3.5-4.5 18-35mm IF ED D 2.83 (2 reviews) = average

Note that the Nikkor 2.8 17-35 and 20-35 rate more highly. In fact, the

20-35 heads the list.

Photodo rates the same list:

Canon EF 2.8 17-35 USM L @ 3.2 w/Distortion: -4.43% - 1.13%

Canon EF 3.5-4.5 20-35mm USM @ 3.4 w/Distortion: -4.55% - -0.89%

Tokina AF 2.8 20-35mm AT-X Pro @ 2.5 w/Distortion: -3.03% - 1.97%

Tokina AF 3.5-4.5 19-35mm @ 3.3

If distortion is that important to me I generally figure that I should be using a single focal length lens which usually has on the order of half the distortion of a zoom equivalent.

Dave

From: Tony Polson <no.email@please.com>

Newsgroups: rec.photo.equipment.35mm

Subject: Re: Ultrawides & barrel distortion?

Date: Sun, 02 Sep 2001Hi Dave,

Thanks for posting this.

I'm not in the thrall of *any* of the review sites on the Web, least of all Photodo, and I don't believe that any "review of reviews" can be particularly useful. I've resorted to testing every lens that I buy.

But I *do* tend to trust Dr Stewart Bell's lens test data that is published in "Amateur Photographer". This magazine is perhaps unique in that it derives most of its advertising income from sellers of used equipment, both dealers and individuals. Therefore there is no sign of bias towards, or away from, particular manufacturers. When the magazine gets things wrong, as every magazine does sometimes, they are quick to publish a retraction, correction or apology in order to set the record straight.

I believe that the "review of reviews" you quote does not include the test data that is published in "Amateur Photographer".

I've already said a lot about why I don't trust Photodo's results. Suffice it to say that, as a travel and landscape photographer, their results are of little interest to me, as I most often use the smaller apertures at which Photodo doesn't even bother testing lenses. This is probably the very worst of a long list of things that Photodo get wrong.

Badly wrong!

One fault that Photodo (Sweden) appear to share with Photozone (Germany) is that the overall ratings do not take any account of the range of focal lengths of a lens. A 17-35mm zoom is judged on exactly the same criteria as a 80-210mm zoom, a 500mm telephoto or a 50mm standard lens. This is like comparing apples with oranges.

The 'average' and 'below average' ratings at Photozone are therefore meaningless. Confining zoom lenses to 'average' and below means there are very few levels at which they can be compared.

I was amused to see that the 20-35mm AF-D Nikkor came top. I have been involved in testing three of these lenses (on an optical bench, using lens test charts, and in standardised general photography) including the one I own. Two out of the three had colour fringing, for which this lens is well known, and the third didn't. The distortion figures varied so widely that at first we thought we'd mixed up the results with those of other, completely different lenses. Then the three were re-tested and similar results were obtained.

I was lucky; my lens was the good one.

It's worth pointing out that different magazines use different focusing distances to check distortion, so comparisons are almost meaningless. They can demonstrate clearly that wide angle lenses such as the 19-35mm f/3.5-4.5 Cosina/Phoenix/Vivitar Series 1/Soligor show bad distortion at every focal length and focusing distance, but they cannot tell you much about the better lenses. (Any lens is better than this one!)

In conclusion, it would appear that "review variation" is almost as much of a problem as "sample variation". I'll stick to my recommendations.

--

Best regards,

Tony Polson