

Rokinon 14-24mm F/2.8

by Phil Rudin

Since 1979 Samyang Optical Company LTD, the Korean based company has continued to push the boundaries for innovation and craftsmanship in the camera lens industry.

Rokinon is owned and operated by Elite Brands Inc. which is the sole provider of Rokinon, Xeen by Rokinon and Samyang branded products in North America, Central America and South America. Samyang/Rokinon lenses and accessories are distributed in over fifty countries world wide. Samyang has focused on manual focus fixed focal length camera lenses and the XEEN Cinema lens line for years.

This review will be the fourth in a series of lens reviews using third party "budget" lenses for high resolution cameras. The lenses I will be testing cost anywhere from one-half to one-third the price of the camera manufactures proprietary lenses. In addition to third party lenses, bargain hunters can also find many last generation camera bodies which are discounted as well.

My first experience with a Rokinon lens was for a review of the Sony A7R II and Ikelite housing for



UWPMAG.com May/June 2016 back issue #90 using the manual focus Rokinon 12mm F/2.8 ED AS IF NCS Fisheye. Fast forward to May 2026 to the Samyang/Rokinon announcement of their first ever auto focus lenses exclusively for Sony full frame mirrorless cameras.

The first offerings were the Samyang 50mm F/1.4 AS IF UMC and the 14mm F/2.8 ED AS IF UMC. Rokinon/Samyang have now partnered with the venerable lens manufacture Schneider-Kreuznach to develop the first 14-24mm F/2.8

Sony A1 II, Marelux MX-A1II housing, Rokinon 14-24mm at 14mm, Marelux one Apollo III strobe in TTL, ISO-800, F/722, 1/200th sec. ND filter



wide zoom for Sony EF mount full frame cameras. This is an outstanding rectilinear zoom range for underwater photography but many past 14-24mm zooms and fixed 14mm's have come up short when it comes to U/W IQ especially corner sharpness. I find this to be largely related to minimum focus distance in past offerings.

The Rokinon 14-24mm F/2.8 has a minimum focus distance of only 18cm (7.1 inches) while other current lenses like the Leica 14-24mm F/2.8, Nikon Z 14-24mm F/2.8 and Sigma 14-24mm all focuses to 28cm (11 inches). The 10cm MFD difference between the Rokinon and the other lenses makes it much more user friendly in ports from 200 to 250mm with the proper extension placement.

In addition the Rokinon retails for \$1199.00 (now on sale in the US for \$959.19) while the other three lenses range from \$2885.00 to \$1539.00 with the Nikon Z lens reduced from a retail of \$2696.95 to \$2096.95 currently in the US.

The Rokinon 14-24mm F/2.8 AF is a wide angle zoom lens with a 114.2 to 84.1 degree rectilinear angle of view on full frame. The lens is currently only available in the Sony FE mount but Rokinon has made AF lenses for Fuji and Nikon in the past so the 14/24 could be offered for other brands going forward.

The lens is very compact at just

84X98.6mm (3.3 X 3.9 inches) and weights in at only 445g (17.7 oz.). The lens has fifteen elements in eleven groups. Because of the short 18cm minimum focus distance the lens has a 1:3.85 max macro reproduction ratio with 0.17 to 0.26X magnification.

There are nine aperture blades which creates great sun stars at the higher aperture ranges that top out a F/22. Unlike the other three lenses that have no front filter threads and use rear gel filters or no filter at all, the Rokinon accepts standard 77mm front filters. This is useful because you can mount filters like the Sea&Sea Conversion lens which improves corner sharpness for many zoom lenses. As a footnote I have not tested the S&S conversion with lens or as wide as 14mm. I intend to test the S&S lens in the coming months however the only way to get one these days is in the used market.

What I did find very useful was the ability to use a 77mm graduated neutral density filter for shooting splits. My ND filter threaded nicely onto the front of the 14/24 lens and was rotated for use in landscape (horizontal) orientation. I needed a bit of flat black tape to insure that the filter would stay in place. The disadvantage with these filters is that they can't be moved once closed in the housing so you are stuck in landscape of portrait orientation for



Florida Pan Fish also called Brim or Bluegill, Sony A1 II, Marelux MX-A1II housing, Rokinon 14-24mm at 24mm, two Marelux Apollo y strobes in TTL, ISO-500, F/8, 1/100th sec

the entire dive. Because of the added thickness of the ND filter I had slight vignetting in the corners at 14mm. I still found the ND filter very useful for splits and other situations.

For land photography the lens has a smooth manual focus ring which works very well for things like astro photography. I have manual focus set on my Sony bodies so that as soon as I turn the focus ring the area around the focus box is magnified about ten times in the viewfinder. Once I achieve critical focus and half press the shutter the image in the viewfinder returned

to the full frame view.

I also have focus peaking set to red which assists with achieving critical focus although not as prescience as I would like it to be.

Currently the Rokinon AF 14-24mm F/2.8 is not included on the Sony A7-series, A9-series or A7c-series port charts for Aquatica, Ikelite, Isotta, Marelux Meikon/Sea Frogs, Nauticam, Sea & Sea or Subal housings. As a result I was on my own to come up with a dome port and extension combination to support the Rokinon 14-24mm lenses. I like to



test extension lengths for unsupported lens/dome/extension combinations in a swimming pool before venturing out for field testing. It gives a far better idea of what end result to expect than testing in a tub of water.

Field testing the Rokinon 14-24mm F/2.8

I started this review by having Shen Collazo at oceaninnovations.com make a custom zoom gear using the gear tooth section from a Marelux gear I already owned. Shen's work is always superb and always completed in a timely manor. Since the purpose of this review is to offer less expensive options that offer excellent high resolution image quality I opted to use the Marelux 210mm acrylic dome port (about half the cost of like glass ports). I would also suggest several other acrylic dome ports like the Ikelite eight inch port which should also



Left at 24mm, right at 14mm. Tom in Ginnie Springs Ballroom entrance, Sony A1 II, Marelux MX-A1II housing, Rokinon 14-24mm at 24mm, two Marelux Apollo y strobes in TTL, ISO-500, F/11, 1/60th sec

work well with the proper port extension.

I chose to use two Marelux extensions a 15mm and 40mm (55mm total) with the acrylic dome port. You can also choose the ports and extensions you already own if they support this lens.

Larger acrylic ports have a tendency to turn port up putting an extra strain on the wrist while the optical glass ports are much heavier but still have a large air pocket. Weights can be added to the dome shade for acrylic ports to help offset the added port buoyancy.

I prefer the optical glass ports for split images because they appear to shed water better and I see less ghosting and reflection in the images however they are much heavier than acrylic.

Acrylic ports can work well if you keep the sun at your back and use a coating like mask defog to help shed water.

I used the new Marelux MX-A1II housing and 50MP Sony A1 II camera which I had in house for this review. All camera settings were manual and two Marelux Apollo Y strobes in TTL were used for fill

flash.

Once in the water I found the auto focus to be quick and accurate using AF-C and auto subject recognition. I opted for ISO settings in the 100 to 400 with wider aperture rather than bumping ISO in favor of higher F/numbers.

I have included two images taken from exactly the same vantage point to give an idea of the difference in AOV between 14mm and 24mm ends of the lens. The split shots were at F/16 and F/22 using the ND filter.

While I did find the acrylic port buoyed up during use it was not overly annoying and can be easily mitigated with a small amount of weight to level out the port. For splits the acrylic has the advantage of being much lighter than glass so it handles better all things considered.

My rule of thumb for full frame wide angle lenses is to stay in the F/13 to F/16 range for best corner sharpness. In reality I often shot wide lenses at F/5.6 without major issues if the subject matter is interesting. In open water the corners are much



Karen, Ginnie Springs, Sony A1 II, Marelux MX-A1II housing, Rokinon 14-24mm at 14mm, two Marelux Apollo y strobes in TTL, ISO-500, F/16, 1/200th sec

less problematic and rarely noticed.

Corner sharpness is an issue that has been debated on many forums too ad nauseam. I have seen hundreds of U/W photo contest winners over the years that have had less than stellar corners which were overlooked by judges, myself included because of the impact of the overall image.

If you are not a fan of the bent lines in wreck photos



Florida Springs, Sony A1 II, Marelux MX-A1II housing, Rokinon 14-24mm at 14mm, two Marelux Apollo y strobes under in TTL, ISO-200, F/22, 1/200th sec. ND filter.

or the distorted shapes of some animals using fisheye lenses the 14/24 range could be the lens you have been seeking. The impact of close-focus wide angle images is impressive with this lens because of its very close focusing ability the port size not withstanding.

I have used a 45 degree viewfinder for many years and had no issues with this wide lens. My go to wide angle lens testing site is the many springs in north Florida a three hour drive from my home. When the

night temperature gets into the low 40's (4.5c) you can consistently expect to see Manatees gathering at some of the head springs which makes the trip worth the drive.

I like the extended ability of the Sony A1's 1/400th second max shutter sync for all of the wide lenses I use. I understand that the A1 II is a very expensive camera but you can get similar results using cameras like the Sony A7C II/R with a HSS enabled flash trigger.

I use the UW technic

external trigger for TTL, HSS (above 1/400th) and Marelux MTL for multi frames per second. I chose the external trigger because it can be used with the Marelux FlashFuel 2100 to extend the cameras battery life by about double.

The FF2100 fits above the camera hot shoe with room for the UWT and a mini USB goes from the FF2100 to the camera USB for charging. This allows me to shoot all day including high frame rates without worry about camera battery life.

When the digital files are downloaded into LightRoom all of the EFIX data appears but the lens profiles are not yet accessible. The LightRoom library meta data always lists the lens as a Samyang 14-24mm F/2.8.

The Rokinon/ Schneider 14-24mm F/2.8 AF collaboration is its first offering using the outstanding Schneider lens design. The lens performance was superb by any standard across the entire frame with excellent corner sharpness at F/11 and beyond behind a properly placed dome port.

For the under \$1200.00 price point I would highly recommend this lens for wide angle rectilinear underwater photography.

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