

UK Aquatica woe

I read the test of the new Aquatica S2 housing in issue 14 with interest. As a Mechanical Design Engineer working in the opto-electronics industry, I have long admired the quality of Aquatica's aluminium housings and the design philosophy built into sealing the controls, ports, etc.. I have owned an Aquatica 80 for some few years and built up a sizeable portfolio of images from various locations, at home and overseas.

I wonder, however, how many of your U.K. readers and potential Aquatica owners are aware that Aquatica are not represented in this country. When I purchased my housings and ancillary ports, strobes, arms etc., from The Image Centre in London, spares were easily available, usually off the shelf. However, since Aquatica were acquired by Nikon USA, spares for Aquatica housings in the U.K. have become extremely hard to come by. The nearest retail outlet for spares is now Spain. Cameras Underwater Ltd in Devon will place orders for spares with the Spanish agent but even a small order such as an o-ring service kit will take a few months to arrive.

If this letter prompts Nikon U.K. to address this matter to the obvious benefit of Aquatica owners, then something will have been achieved. In the meantime, if anyone is

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contemplating the purchase of an Aquatica housing, beware - sooner or later you are going to need spares, if only just an o-ring, and these will take months to arrive!

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Focal length v Angle of view

In your Back to Basics article you seem to have confused the term focal-length with angle-of-view.

The focal length is the distance between the rear node of the lens and the point of focus when the lens is focussed on infinity. Focal length is often used as a guide to angle of view but this can be misleading. For example, digital cameras with chips smaller than the normal film-size frame appear to give a certain telephoto effect.

The angle-of-view depends on the image-circle produced, the magnification and the medium in which it is used (normally air.)

I have a 165mm Super Angulon lens

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with a wider angle of view on my Sinar than the 20mm Nikkor lens on my Nikon behind a dome port.

How can this be? The image circle of the 165mm lens has a diameter sufficient to cover a 10x8 inch sheet of film (and allow a range of technical camera movements too). The 20mm lens on my Nikon behind the dome port covers only a 35mm frame. Of course, would it be possible to fit the 165mm wide-angle lens to the Nikon it would only use an area of the film the same as any other 165mm lens and not give a wide-angle effect. However, on the Sinar it is certainly a lot wider.

So the reason that Nikon give the focal lens of its Nikonos lenses in the form that it does, is because that is exactly what they are. For an accurate angle-of-view check the spec. for exactly that - not the focal-length.

I hope that is the explanation that has evaded you.

Best wishes, John Bantin
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Many thanks for your explanation John and I must say I have been sleeping a lot better ever since.

I have just checked my article and noted that I wrote "*the angle of coverage is the most important factor in evaluating lens performance*".

Regards
Ed

for Canon 10D and Nikon D100 Digital Cameras

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