

Catching the Rays (revisited) by Alex Mustard

After the last issue of UWP came out I have received a few emails asking my opinion on how far away digital really is from slide film when it comes to capturing sunbursts. My answer is not much, particularly when the transparency must be scanned before it can be used (does anybody still print without scanning?). Many people seem very happy to pass on the message that you can't do sunbursts on digital, and this is a misleading message I strongly disagree with.

I think a common mistake is to assume that all sunbursts shot on film are perfect - they aren't. Many slide images actually have poor sunbursts, especially when judged by the rather harsh criteria that digital images seem to be examined with these days. What has always been key to good sunbursts are the right environmental conditions. When these are conducive, both digital and slide, when exposed www.uwpmag.com



Two sunbursts. Which one is digital? They both are! Nikon D2X, Subal Housing, 10.5mm. Both shot on F8, Aperture Priority with -0.7 exposure compensation.

correctly, do a fine job. I would say that digital probably struggles more than slide when the conditions are not ideal, but this is hard to prove.

I would also add that the newer digital cameras do offer a substantial improvement over older models because their image processing is more adept at maintaining highlight detail. It seems that these days digital cameras are only judged on their pixel count, but there is much more to choosing the right camera than

Megapixels.

So in conclusion I would say that it is not, as is often quoted, impossible to shoot sunbursts on digital. Rather that both digital and slide will do the job well, when the conditions are ideal.

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