Tokina 35mm f/2.8 DX Macro

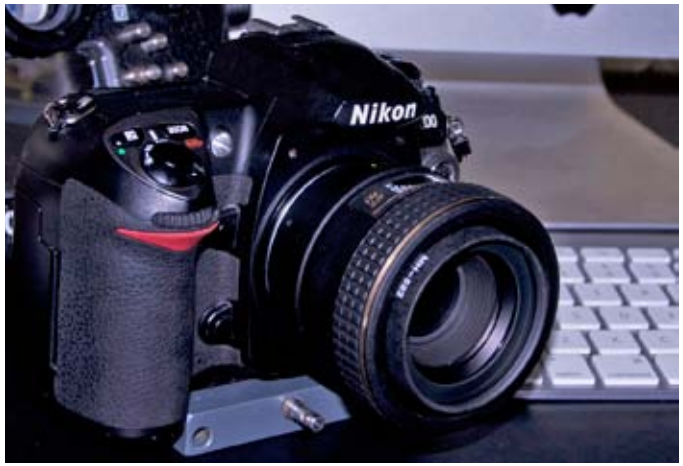
by Tim Rock

Before the days of various sized sensors, I used to like using my Nikkor 60mm Macro for fish and macro subjects. I still use a Sigma 50mm underwater as it is close to the 60mm focal length. But I also like to shoot models observing macro subjects and have wanted something with macro capability but wide. Until now I have been forced to use the Tokina 10-17mm at 17mm and crop or hope for clear water and use the 50mm Sigma with the model very close to the subject. Although I haven't tried it yet, I am pretty sure the 35mm Tokina will now fill that void. It certainly works well for regular macro subjects.

The Tokina 35mm f/2.8 AT-X M35 Pro DX Macro is a macro lens capable of life-sized (1:1) reproduction at an amazingly close 5.5" (14cm). Designed exclusively for use with digital SLR cameras, this lens features a fast constant aperture of f/2.8, and provides a focal length equivalent to 52mm in 35mm format.

As part of the AT-X line, this lens is designed to provide excellent optical quality, and offers advanced features like the WR (Water Repellent) front element, its One-touch Focus Clutch Mechanism, and a 9-bladed aperture.

Since I bought this lens primarily for underwater use, the water repellent front element is something I hope never gets tested. And the One-touch Focus Clutch Mechanism is actually kind



of a pain. This slips the lens into manual mode. You have to watch that it doesn't pop into this mode while you install it. This cannot be unpopped underwater.

I have heard underwater photogs say they like the 35mm macro as fills a major gap. Nikon's 60mm is insufficient at times when you need to get close to a larger subject, but also require the flexibility of 1:1 on a good macro dive.

Two things that are apparent are that this nicely priced lens is very sharp. And, the 9-blade aperture makes out-of-focus elements appear more natural. This is an intentional part of the lens design. This lens has very nice bokeh.

Bokeh doesn't mean mojo and or karma. Take any of your macro lenses and find a distant point of light. Try this at night by finding a distant streetlight. As you focus, if you see perfect round disks your lens has neutral bokeh, if you see soft-edged shapes you have good bokeh, and if you see doughnuts you have bad bokeh. Photographers prefer soft out-of-focus areas to hard ones. This way each blur circle tends to be a bright spot that gets

dimmer gradually towards the edges and all the blur circles blend nicely. This lens does that and thus has good bokeh.

I was shooting wide angle at low tide and stumbled across some of those very stunning longnose filefish. They are not that common here in Guam or even Palau and make colorful subjects so I grabbed the 35mm Tokina with an Aquatica flat port and Ikelite strobes and headed back to try to find them. Along the way I shot a pair of pipefish,

blennies, wrasses, Moorish idols at lots more.

The filefish are rather shy and elusive and it took a good hour to get them used to me and to watch them in their habitat. I was able to move closer and closer and got some nice individual, pair and group of four images of these great little fish. The lens focused quickly enough and even though they were small, didn't miss focus very often.

On my way back, I also found a tiny humbug damsel hiding in the feathery appendages of a Christmas tree worm. I was able to get in very close to get the worm and the tiny fish.

Although I won't be testing it on a model until I get to the Philippines at Club Paradise/Dugong Divers where we will look for ghost pipefish, I think I have found my new favorite macro lens. It is versatile enough for many different sized fishes from macro to hefty, is good for portraits and is small and light and very sharp. In all, this is a really welcome lens to my arsenal.

Tim Rock
www.doubleblue.com

Red Sea Relish

by Andy Deitsch

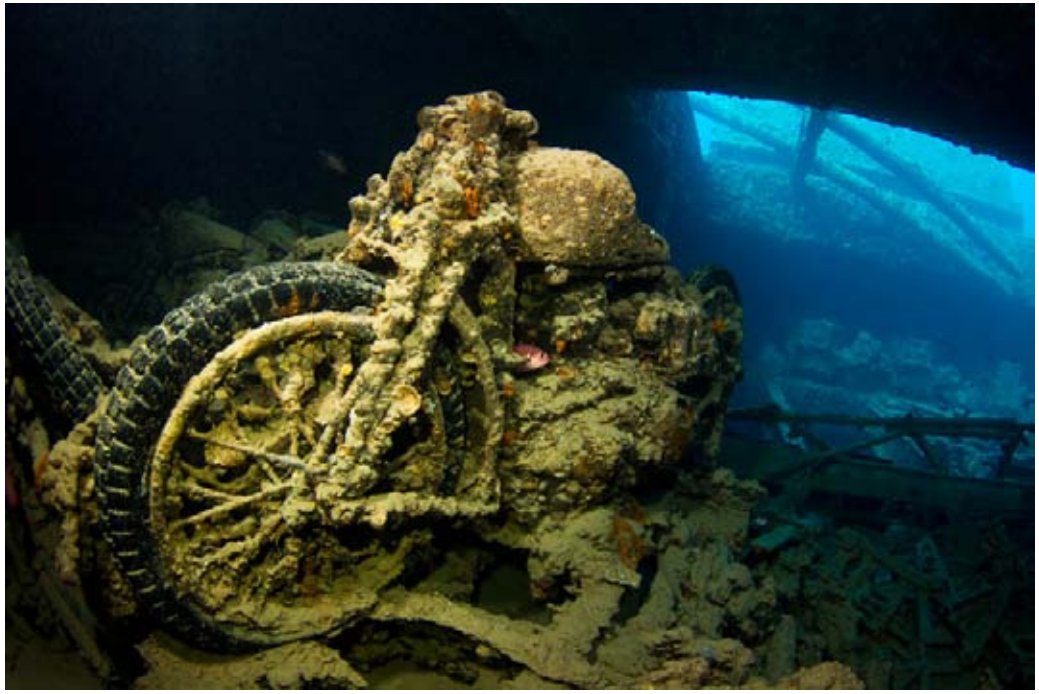
I am relatively new to underwater photography having only dived on three trips with an underwater camera in hand. After my second week of underwater photography (borrowing my cousin's kit), I decided this hobby was for me and I purchased a new camera, housing and all the accessories. I was eager to use my new equipment and spoke to my cousin Julian Cohen, to see if I could join him on one of his upcoming underwater photography dive trips.

Initially, I had thought that I would enjoy a trip to PNG to practice more of the macro photography I had been doing in the Caribbean. Julian however, suggested that if I want to learn a lot, and expand my photography skills I should join him for an upcoming workshop in the Red Sea with Alex Mustard which was focused on wide-angle photography.

For me, this would be the first time that I'd be taking a camera with a wide-angle lens and dome port underwater. In this article, I hope to share some of the important early lessons I learned for this technique.I had heard Julian talk about Alex's workshops and I thought it would be an exciting opportunity to learn from Alex and from the other photographers on the trip, many of whom have had years of experience shooting wide-angle.

The workshop was divided into two distinct phases. The first 3 days was spent diving on the wreck of the SS Thistlegorm, one of the most well-known wreck dives in the world. The objective was to spend a significant time photographing both inside and outside the wreck, learning various lighting techniques (such as rabbit ear and off camera strobe positioning), shooting different aspects of the wreck and identifying subjects within the holds that would make good compositions. The purpose of spending 3 days on the same site was to try various techniques and refine those techniques by learning from mistakes and reshooting the same subjects until we got it right.

The trip was timed for neap



IMG_0757-Edit: BSA Motorbike (Ele's bike) in hold 2 of the Thistlegorm. 1/20th sec at f/8.0, ISO 640, Canon 7D, Tokina 10-17mm at 10mm, Nauticam Housing, 2x INON z240