

Editorial

Fisheye trends

It was whilst working on Alex Tyrell article and Dan Bolt's review in this issue which both contained circular fisheye shots that I was reminded of how effective these lenses can be when their visually quirky photographic capability is harnessed.

Seeing them reminded me of one of the few moments in my life when I have had my breath taken away by an image and that was when I saw Peter Scoones' front cover image in 1988.

OK I'm sorry but I've cheated and rearranged it as a horizontal shot to fit UwP's format but it is reproduced correctly as a Parting Shot and there is a full explanation by Peter himself of the technique used to get the shot.

Circular fisheye shots are not everybody's cup of cocoa but if, as I suspect, a lot of underwater photographers are looking for the next trend, I would recommend the INON lens reviewed by Dan Bolt as a not too expensive route and one which is designed for compact cameras.

The trick then is to harness its exciting capacity to create a unique perspective.

I look forward to seeing the results.

Designs for video

I need to retract a statement I made in the Editorial of UwP 56 (Sept/Oct 2010). I wrote as follows:

In the past, manufacturers have designed SLR housings to be used primarily for stills photography but now, with the advent of HD quality video and stills, they need to build a design which can work ergonomically well with both.

I now realise that would be ergonomically impossible so I would like to see a bold housing manufacturer actually design and produce an SLR housing (preferably for the Panasonic GH2 please!) that provides ergonomic handling for video only.

This would include the ability to stop/start recording without wobbling the footage, smooth control of zoom and focus (including being able to switch from auto to manual focus during a shot) and the physical ability to link up to an external HDMI monitor such as Dive and See's 7" beauty.

It's a selfish request, I know, and you'd be right to accuse me of that and say "If you want to shoot video, buy a video camera" but the quality of SLR footage for the price is so good that it's worth a selfish request every now and again.

Thank you, Mr Fothergill

The BBC's autumn natural history blockbuster series, Frozen Planet, has just started here in the UK and I am delighted to report the Natural History Unit's output is back on track big time.

Thank you so much for making the 4 year investment it took to compile this footage which has a story, is incredibly well filmed by such talented and hardworking photographers and which shows us something we will never see ourselves. By that I mean that they didn't just go to the tourist honeypots for 2 weeks. They spent time so far off the beaten track that only a helicopter could get them there (I hope that really is true!).

I know in the past I have been a BBC Natural History critic but I'm never afraid to take my hat off when I see the real deal.

It was only as the end credits rolled that I saw the reason for this return to form. The Executive Producer was Alastair Fothergill who, since 1986, has produced some of the finest and most consistent programmes to come out of the NHU.

Thank you, Mr Fothergill.

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