

Field testing the Sony Zeiss 24mm F1.8 for NEX cameras

by Phil Rudin

Sony has experienced amazing success with their NEX line of cameras for both above and below water use. The NEX-7 is one of the most soughtafter mirrorless cameras on the planet and the supply of housing for the camera is not keeping up with the demand.

As resolution increases with the APS-C size sensors it is become more and more obvious that high-quality lenses are necessary to take full advantage of the sensors huge pixel count. Of the eight lenses so far released by Sony for the NEX system the Sony Zeiss 24 mm F/1.8 lens has the highest image quality in the range. The 36 mm full frame equivalent lens has the Zeiss optical design with a maximum aperture of F1.8. The lens will focus to a minimum distance of around 6 inches which allows you to shoot very close to the dome port. The lens has very fast autofocus but at the same time is smooth and quiet minimizing noise and image jitter when shooting in movie mode.

I test of the lens in a Nauticam NA-NEX7 using the Nauticam 4 inch

dome port for mirrorless cameras and lenses like the Olympus 9-18mm zoom. In this port configuration the lens sits a bit far back from dome which brings the subject even closer to the dome at minimum focus distance. While the lens seems to work quite well with this port configuration having a port designed for this lens would probably be an even better choice. Shooting stills I found the Lens extremely fast with excellent autofocus accuracy. With a diagonal angle of view of around 63° on the APS-C size sensor the lens is rather narrow for use underwater compared to most wide-angle lenses however because of its close focusing abilities it becomes quite useful as a portrait lens for medium to large size animals. This lens produces stunning fish portraits and works quite well as close focus medium wide-angle lens. It produces rich colors with excellent corner to corner image detail.

At a minimum aperture of F1.8 this lens can also produce very shallow depth of field for creative images with superbly defocused



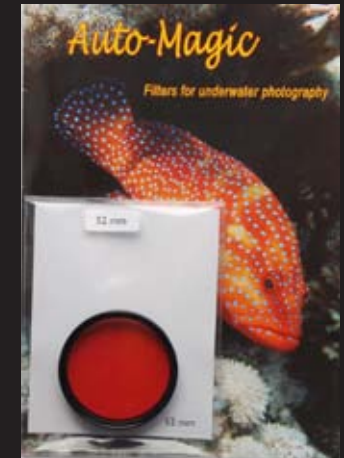
FRENCH ANGELFISH, NEX-7, SONY/ZEISS 24MM, ISO200, F/9, 1/125TH, TWO INON Z-240 STROBES

backgrounds. If you're considering the very best optics available for the Sony NEX system this lens should be high on you're list for consideration. The Sony Zeiss 24 mm is now selling for around \$1100 in the US.



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