

ZEN DP-170MM Dome port for Nauticam Mini

By Phil Rudin

Zen Underwater the high quality optical glass dome port manufacturer Located in Ft. Lauderdale Florida USA has recently introduced a new line of 170mm glass ports for Nauticam DSLR and Nauticam Mini (mirrorless camera) housings. This release follows the success of the highly regarded 230mm, 200mm, 100mm and Olympus Pen line of optical glass ports.

I have used a 170mm glass port for years with several DSLR systems and found the size to be excellent for most of my wide angle lens needs. I particularly like this port size for traveling with my ThinkTank Airport roll-on bag because I can put the port in a Rubbermaid three liter square serving container, secure the top and stand the container on its side in my roll-on bag. This takes up far less of the limited packing space compared to

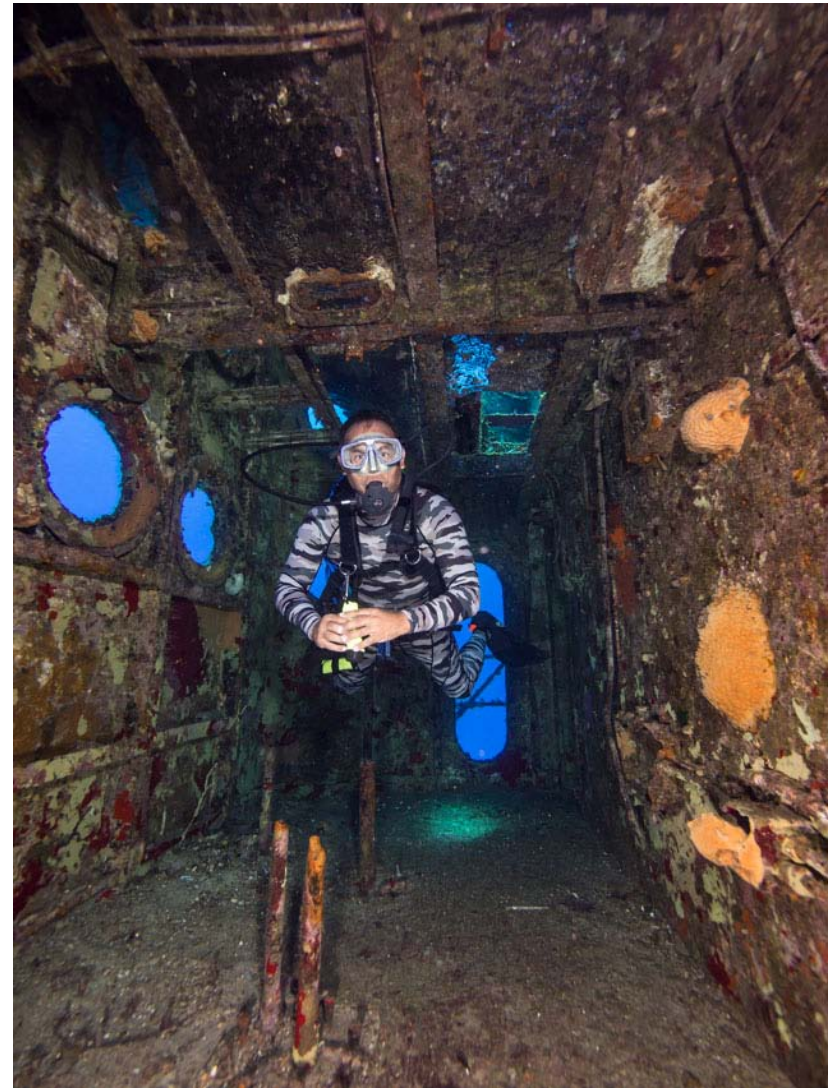
having to lay a 200mm to 230mm port flat in the same roll-on case without the protection of the container.

On a recent trip to Cozumel Mexico for the 2013 MexicanDiver.com Digital FiestaI workshop I had a chance to use the new Nauticam DP-170mm port for Mini with the Nauticam NA-NEX-5R and NA-EM5 housings. The lenses tested for this review were the Sony 10-18 F/4 zoom, Sony 16mm with the Fisheye adapter and the Panasonic 7-14mm F/4 zoom. The Sony 10-18 zoom and the Panasonic 7-14 zoom were used with the Nauticam 20mm port extension which fits between the housing and port to accommodate the longer zoom lenses. The Panasonic 8mm fisheye for M4/3 cameras does not work well with the 170mm port because the lens sits to far back in the port and will vignette badly. Lighting was

with two Inon Z-240 and two Inon S-2000 strobes. At the time of this review I was unable to obtain the zoom gear for the Sony 10-18mm so I pre-set the focal length to the 10mm setting before each of my dives to see how the wide end of the lens preformed with the large glass port.

While I have not had a chance to test all of these lenses I expect that the Olympus 9-18 zoom, 14-42 zoom, 12mm F/2 new 17mm, the Panasonic 12-35mm zoom, 14-45 zoom, the Sigma 19mm, the Sony 16-50mm, 18-55mm, and the Sony/ Ziess 24mm along with the soon to be released Ziess 12mm should also work well with this port. Which port extension lengths may be needed with the zoom lenses is yet to be determined.

Like all of the Zen Underwater ports the DP-170mm port is made from the



Nauticam Olympus OMD EM-5, Panasonic 7-14mm zoom at 7mm, Iso-200, F/5.0, 1/250th sec, two Inon Z-240 strobes





Nauticam Sony NEX-5R, Sony 10-18mm zoom at 10mm, ISO-200, F/10, 1/125th sec, two Inon Z-240 strobes

highest optical quality glass which is coated on both sides to provide the greatest transmission of light and color through the glass. The aluminum mount has a single O-ring and the same excellent port locking system used with all Nauticam ports and port extensions. The DP-170 has a removable dome shade which is secured to the port by four allen screws at the top, bottom and sides. The top side of the hood is engraved with the unmistakable white Zen Underwater logo.

With four current and two

retired Nauticam housings for M43 cameras, four current and two retired housings for Sony NEX cameras the combinations of cameras, lens and housings for the ZEN 170mm port is impressive. With the wide range of both prime and zoom lenses covered by the Zen DP-170 port this may well be the only port you will ever need for your wide angle photography needs.

I found the housing balanced well on a flat surface with the port facing down and resting on the dome shade. This allowed me to open the housing and make last minute changes



Nauticam Olympus OMD EM-5, Panasonic 7-14mm zoom at 7mm, Iso-200, F/13, 1/100th sec, two Inon Z-240 strobes

to camera controls, battery or SD cards. With dual strobes mounted to my Nauticam tray the system looks and feels very well balanced and is easy to control both above and below water.

This port allows you to get very close to larger subjects and all three of the lenses I used during the review appeared to focus all the way to the port glass. As with all rectilinear zoom lenses best corner results were

obtained when shooting at F/stops of around F/8 and above. This also holds true when shooting with the equivalent Nauticam acrylic ports for the same zoom lenses. The larger port also allowed me to get better split (over/under) images compared with the four and six inch Nauticam acrylic ports.

My most frequently used wide angle lens is the Panasonic 7-14 zoom and the results with this port