A STEP UP FROM NIKON’S STANDARD ZOOMS

Nikon makes a variety of FX standard zoom lenses with ranges of 24-70mm, 24-85mm and 24-120mm. So why buy this 24mm lens, considering there’s no gain in viewing angle?

One advantage of this lens is its wider aperture rating of f/1.8, compared with the f/2.8, f/3.5-4.5 or f/4 of the zoom lenses, making it anywhere from 1.33 to 2.33 stops faster. Even so, it’s still two-thirds of a stop slower than the competing (and cheaper) Sigma 24mm lens.

It doesn’t feel as robust as the Sigma 24mm either, but, while neither camera is weather sealed, the Nikon does at least feature a rubber sealing ring on its mounting plate.

Performance

Autofocus isn’t quite as quick as in the Sigma lens, but is similarly accurate. For image quality, there’s no real improvement in sharpness compared with using Nikon’s standard zoom lenses at 24mm, but the prime lens does better in terms of colour fringing and barrel distortion. Vignetting is very noticeable at f/1.8, but the Nano coatings do well to resist ghosting and flare.

Features

Build/handling
Performance
Value for money
OVERALL
A useful addition to a standard zoom lens, but not a class leader.

THIS SIGMA GOES EXTRA-WIDE IN EVERY WAY

A world first for SLR lenses, this Sigma Art lens combines an ultra-wide viewing angle with a wide aperture rating of f/1.4. This is made possible by a highly complex, large-diameter double aspherical element, which is a challenge to manufacture.

Considering this, the purchase price is very reasonable, but you do pay for it in size and weight. It’s the biggest lens in the group by quite a margin and, at 950g, nearly three times the weight of the Nikon 20mm f/1.8 lens.

Like the Samyang 14mm lens, the Sigma 20mm has a built-in lens hood that protects the bulbous front element from physical knocks, as well as helping to reduce ghosting and flare. Again, fitting filters isn’t straightforward, but Lee Filters makes an adaptor for both lenses, to enable use of its SW150 Mk II filter system.

Performance

Given the extreme viewing angle, image quality is excellent, with superb sharpness right into the corners of the frame, negligible colour fringing and fairly modest vignetting despite the fast f/1.4 aperture rating.

Features

Build/handling
Performance
Value for money
OVERALL
The best 20mm lens in the group, if you can live with the hefty size and weight.