



Zeiss Milvus 18mm f/2.8 ZF.2

£2000/\$2300

A WONDERFULLY CRAFTED PREMIUM LENS

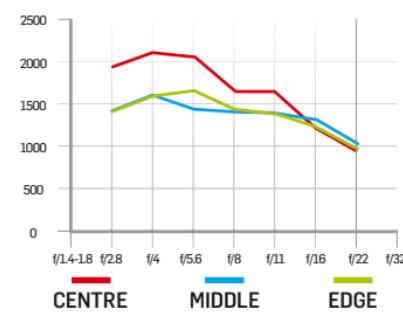
The full metal build of the Zeiss extends to a flock-lined metal hood. The lens is fully weather-sealed, beautifully finished and handles superbly well. It is limited to manual focus, but the long-travel focus ring operates with a fluid feel and is a joy to use. The Nikon-fit edition of the lens features an aperture ring, complete with a de-click facility for seamless aperture control when shooting movies.

Like the metal-bodied Irix 15mm Blackstone, the Zeiss has a flared front section and a relatively heavy build. Unlike the Irix, however, the Zeiss has a rubber-coated focus ring, which improves grip in cold weather. Other wide primes in the Milvus range include 15mm, 21mm and 35mm options, all based on the classic Zeiss Distagon design.

Performance

Sharpness and contrast are stellar throughout the entire aperture range, and overall image quality is simply spectacular. The only caveat is that vignetting is very heavy when shooting wide-open, despite the modest aperture rating of f/2.8.

Sharpness (Higher is better)



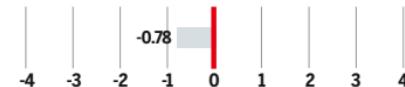
Corner-to-corner sharpness is incredible, even when shooting wide-open at f/2.8.

Edge fringing (Lower is better)

f/2.8 1.05 f/8 1.33 f/16 1.33

As with the Irix and Sigma lenses on test, colour fringing is practically non-existent.

Distortion (Nearer 0 is better)



Extremely little barrel distortion, which is remarkable for such a short focal length.

Verdict

Features



Build/handling



Performance



Value for money



OVERALL



Massively expensive, but build quality, handling and image quality are sublime.