New Zuiko lenses add a broad range of capability to the Olympus E-System.

BY JOE FARACE

Wide to long

ZUIKO DIGITAL ED 7-14MM F/4.0 & ED 150MM F/2.0 LENSES

With a minimum working distance of less than four inches, the Zuiko Digital ED 7-14mm f/4.0 lens gets you extremely close to the subject. I was just a few inches away from one of Thunder Valley's custom motorcycles, photographing with an Olympus E-1 camera mounted on a Manfrotto tripod, exposing for 1/2 second at f/20, ISO 400, in Aperture Priority mode.

In real-world assignments, including photographing the U.S. Grand Prix in the pouring rain and shooting Fashion Week in New York on a seriously overcrowded riser, the Olympus E-1 has proved to be a camera that can handle tough use.

Part of what makes a camera system professional is the availability of compatible high-quality optics. Two new specialized Zuiko lenses for the Olympus E-1 and EVOLT E-300 make the Olympus pro system even more versatile. As with all lens components of the E-System, both are built to the Four-Thirds System standard.

ZUIKO DIGITAL ED 7-14MM F/4.0

The wide-angle Zuiko Digital ED 7-14mm f/4.0 lens has a zoom range equivalent to a 14mm-28mm lens on a 35mm camera (see box, p. 45). By incorporating large-aperture aspherical elements and a two-sided aspherical ED element, this lens corrects the kind of distortion and astigmatism that's typical of wide-angle lenses, especially zooms.

Mounted on the lightweight EVOLT E-300 body, the 7-14mm f/4.0 is a hefty yet not bulky lens that's well balanced, and with the optional battery grip attached, almost perfectly so. The Zuiko Digital ED 7-14mm fits the E-1 like a glove. It will be a favorite for architectural photographers. At 7mm, it has an extended depth-of-field that's useful for interiors, and is easily increased by stopping down, making it possible to capture foreground and background focus at the same time. Its wide angle of view lets you shoot multi-storied

Photographed outdoors with an Olympus E-1 at ISO 200, this portrait of Jamie Lynn was captured with the Zuiko Digital ED 150mm f/2.0 lens in Manual mode for 1/640 second at f/4.0, demonstrating that the lens's sharpness, even shooting wide open, is spectacular. This lens and camera combination is a natural for fashion photography.

buildings from a relatively short distance while holding the camera vertical to avoid converging lines.

At almost $1,800, the Zuiko Digital ED 7-14mm isn't cheap, but as every professional photographer can tell you, at times there's no substitute for shorter focal lengths. That's where the Zuiko Digital ED 7-14mm f/4.0 delivers, and why it belongs in the toolbox of every Olympus E-system photographer.

ZUIKO DIGITAL ED 150MM F/2.0

The Zuiko Digital ED 150mm f/2.0 lens is a high-performance telephoto lens designed for digital photography. With

specs:
Zuiko Digital ED 7-14mm f/4.0

FOCAL LENGTH: 7-14mm (14mm-28mm equivalence)
LENS CONSTRUCTION: 18 elements in 12 groups, including ED glass aspherical lens, ED lens and Super ED lenses
ANGLE OF VIEW: 114 to 75 degrees
CLOSEST FOCUSING: 9.84-inches
IMAGE MAGNIFICATION: 0.11X maximum
APERTURE: f/4.0 maximum; f/22 minimum
FILTER: None
DIMENSIONS: 3.4x4.7 inches
WEIGHT: 27.5 ounces
ESP: $1,799

specs:
Zuiko Digital ED 150mm f/2.0

FOCAL LENGTH: 150mm (300mm equivalence)
LENS CONSTRUCTION: 11 elements in 9 groups, including ED/Super ED lens elements
LENS MECHANISM: Front focus with floating mechanism
ANGLE OF VIEW: 8.2 degrees
CLOSEST FOCUSING: 4.6 feet
IMAGE MAGNIFICATION: 0.13X maximum
APERTURE: f/2.0 maximum; f/22 minimum
FILTER SIZE: 82mm
DIMENSIONS: 4x6 inches
WEIGHT: 3.39 pounds w/tripod adapter
COMPATIBILITY: Teleconverter EC-14; Extension Tube EX-25
ESP: $2,500

the 2X conversion factor of the E-series, this lens has the telephoto equivalence of a 300mm lens. The extra-low dispersion (ED) glass elements in this new lens correct the chromatic aberration (which manifests as a color halo or blur) that's otherwise inherent to telephoto lenses.

Weighing over 3 pounds, the lens has a built-in tripod collar, but I found it easy to handhold. A monopod would be a perfect compliment in low-light situations.

To speed up autofocus, the lens has three working distance settings, so focusing is performed only in specific ranges: close-up, 4.6 to 13.1 feet; distance, 13.1 feet to infinity; and normal, 4.6 feet to infinity. I stayed mostly at the latter setting and never found the AF to be sluggish. The four "focus stop" buttons on the rubberized ring at the end of the lens temporarily disable AF, and fix the focus as indicated. This feature is useful for focusing on a spot where you know the action is about to happen.

At $2,500, the Zuiko Digital ED 150mm isn't cheap either. But its knife-edge sharpness and snappy autofocus performance with the Olympus E-1 and E-300 are superb, and it's well worth the investment. ■

Thanks to Shelly Erdmann of Thunder Mountain Harley Davidson (www.thundermountainharley.com). See more photos taken with the Zuiko lenses in the August Bonus Content at www.ppmag.com.

THE LENS CONVERSION FACTOR

Only a few digital SLR camera models have sensor chips measuring 24x36mm, the format used in 35mm film cameras. Most have smaller chips, which affects the effective range of the lens in use. How much depends on the camera model. In the Olympus Four-Thirds E-System, for example, a 50mm lens attached to an EVOLT E-300 covers the equivalent area of a 100mm lens on a 35mm film camera, which is expressed as a 2X conversion factor. Because the actual focal length of the lens doesn't change, it's more accurate to describe the effect as cropping an image caught digitally with a 50mm lens to the angle-of-view of a shot caught with a 100mm lens on a 35mm camera.