

Tuesday, June 14. 2005

### Quick Update: Nikon D2X

As of May 27, 2005, I am the proud owner of a brand new Nikon D2X digital SLR. I have taken almost 2000 photos with the camera already over the last few weeks and the camera is literally an orgasm in a magnesium alloy can - there's no other way to describe it. The ergonomics on this camera are incredible - everything you need frequently is within reach whether you're using the camera in normal orientation or from the vertical grip; focusing is near instantaneous and shutter lag is almost non-existent; write speeds are fast and even with fashion shows I'll run out of memory before I buffer out even when shooting full resolution RAW files in high speed continuous servo mode; metering is dangerously precise, even in horribly backlit situations. For image quality, detail is nothing short of eye-popping. Sure, it's no PhaseOne P25 or Leaf Valeo 22 but I have yet to use a compact system such as the D2X coupled with a few good F-mount lenses that has produced the detail that the D2X has. Add to that a usable ISO 1600, surprisingly clean ISO 800, and relatively noise free images ISO 400 below and you soon realize that you have a very serious piece of machinery that almost guarantees that you are your own barrier to taking good photos. Anyhow, I'll have photos and more info posted shortly but I felt I had to write a quick update and dedicate it to Brian Zinchuk, the only working photojournalist within my circles, and congratulate him on his recent photo-related awards. Nice work, Brian, I'll e-mail you in a bit. Thanks for leaving a comment in my last entry.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Equipment at 06:35

I once described the first 1990s new-style Ford trucks as an 'orgasm on wheels.' I take it the D2X is similar?

I was surprised when the D2X specs said a top end of 800 ISO, but I guess it actually will do 3200, right? Why don't they just call it that???? Is it any good?

Are you keeping your S2 Pro as a backup? (I imagine the smart answer is 'yes.')

In my case, my next big purchases will be high end glass, i.e. 70-200 f2.8 VR, 17-35 f2.8 (maybe), and some other fast lenses. Maybe two years from now, I'll make the big step and pick up a D2x or its successor. Right now just reading about one feels like I'm reading online porn.

I've got to say, I like reading your site because the stuff I see has me saying, 'I'm not there yet, but I can be, and I just need to do a little more analysis as to how...'

I'm thinking of putting together a blog of my own, with my weekly newspaper columns on it. Do you use some sort of template or software package for Serendipity?

Regards,  
Zinchuk

Anonymous on Jun 16 2005, 00:23

Now the question is . . . was this a truck with a canopy and a mattress in the box?

Yeah, there's this ISO boost thing where ISO 1600 is "HI-1" and ISO 3200 is "HI-2". I think that it depends on how you shoot, what you shoot, and how you post process. I'm using Rawshooter Essentials 2005 right now. It's really fast and has made an incredibly positive impact on my workflow but I think that noise reduction features on it aren't as great as those from Nikon Capture. Too bad Nikon Capture is unusably slow. Anyway, ISO 800 - beautiful. ISO 1600 you start to lose some colours and get some more colour noise but for the most part the noise is tolerable (8 x 12 prints from full 12.4MP shots don't show a huge amount of noise except for shadow areas) and ISO 3200 has about the same amount of noise as 1600 but the artefacts look "bigger" if that makes sense. I just shot the opening night of Rapid Fire Theatre's Improvaganza, Canada's largest improvisational theatre competition. Most was shot at ISO 800 but some at 1600 and 3200 . . . drop me a line from an account that can handle large e-mails and I'll reply with some full-res samples. The effect is definitely kind of interesting with the ISO 3200 noise level . . . I kick up the contrast so the background is a solid black and there's huge amount of graininess in the midtones. Sort of different. =P

Yup, I'm keeping the S2 Pro as a backup. It's currently in for a cleaning and a tune up. =)

The 70-200/2.8 VR is worth every penny. Nikon Month at McBain Camera right now, too. I like the extra reach of the 17-55/2.8 DX. I know there are mixed feelings around on this lens - no full-frame compliant, more distortion, etc . . . but it's noticeably sharper than the 17-35 at most focal lengths, renders beautiful colour, is awesome wide open, and you have no idea how handy that extra reach is . . . unless I want to goof off with the Heligon or a Hassey lens with an adapter the 17-55/2.8 almost lives on my cameras. Drop me a line or give me a call again when you're in town; if I'm not shooting anything I'll swap you cameras for the day or something if you don't mind me tagging along on one of your shoots. =)

"Serendipity" is actually the name of the blog software. Visit <http://www.s9y.org/>. The best blog engine that I know and it's free. You'll need a server that runs PHP and MySQL database. The dudes on their support forum are really helpful, too . . . if you hit a rut installing it they're happy to lend a hand. One of the developers walked me through most of my problems and I wanted to buy him something off his Amazon wishlist but it was on the German site and I couldn't figure out how to order stuff. Working on that, though.

Anonymous on Jun 16 2005, 04:12