

Sigma 10–20mm

John Henshall looks through this ultra-wide-angle zoom lens for half-frame DSLR cameras

Half-frame DSLRs (often referred to as 'APS-C' size) are great for photographers who want to use long lenses. The small sensor in effect multiplies the focal length by a factor of around 1.5x without any loss in f-stop.

The problem is that the focal length of wide-angle lenses are also multiplied by the same factor. So your expensive absolute wow of an ultra-wide 15mm lens now only looks as though it is a much less impressive 24mm.

It's been a definite case of 'hello DSLR, good bye ultra-wides'. Until now, that is, for new ultra-short focal length zooms have recently been designed to produce superb results with DSLRs having half-frame sensors. One such lens is the



10–20mm f/4–5.6 from Sigma, which makes images equivalent to a 15–30mm on a full-frame camera. At its widest, that's over 100 degrees angle-of-view.

The lens uses three SLD (Special Low Dispersion), one moulded aspheric and two hybrid aspheric elements among a total of 14 for the effective correction of chromatic aberration – a common problem with super-wides.

Pincushion and barrel distortion is particularly well controlled in this lens. Bending of lines at the edges of the image is minimal and virtually impossible to detect in normal use.

The lens produces bright, sharp images with good contrast. Corner sharpness is impressive, particularly at the widest angle. Note the enlarged sections below – one from near the centre of the lens at 200%, the other from a corner at 100%.

Focusing is silent, by Hyper Sonic

Motor (HSM) and is completely internal.

The front of the lens extends by about 5mm when zooming from 10 to 20mm but the length does not change at all during focussing, nor does the front element rotate. This enables a bayonet-style petal-shaped lens hood to be used and also makes the use of a polarising filter (77mm) much more convenient.

The build quality of this lens is quite superb. It carries the Sigma 'EX' label, with a gold ring, which signifies superior optical and build quality.

Using the lens certainly confirms this. All the operations are smooth, solid and reassuringly positive.

There is no doubt that Sigma has produced a stunning winner with this newly designed great value (£369) zoom.

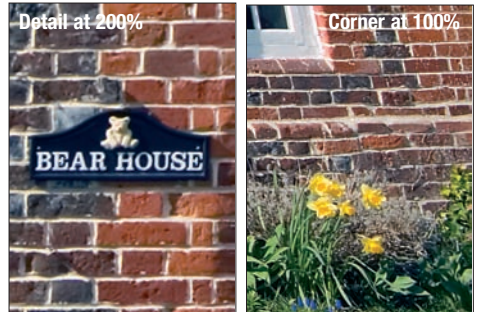
The extreme wide-angles of this 10–20mm zoom produce breathtaking effects which will certainly inspire and extend your photographic creativity.



Looking up from a low viewpoint, verticals converge



At 10mm from within the gate



Detail at 200%

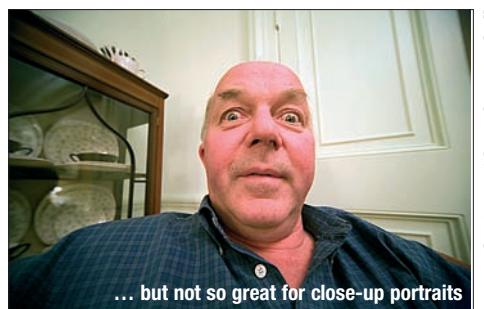
Corner at 100%



Raise the viewpoint using a small pair of steps and keep the camera level and there is no convergence of the verticals



Ultra-wide-angles are great for expansive interiors...



... but not so great for close-up portraits