

Sigma 8-16mm F4.5-5.6 DC HSM Review



First off I'll come clean, I love wide lenses! It's not been a love affair though, I have spent a very long time trying to master them and I'm still learning! Secondly I'll state upfront that this is not a technical review from a Lens tester's point of view, just from someone who likes to go out and take pictures!

The problem is for a Landscape Photographer, that extreme wide Lenses make any background fade into the distance as to be almost invisible and any foreground feature can end up overpowering the view.

The problem is always one of balance and it is difficult to achieve, enter the Sigma 8-16mm F4.5-5.6 HSM

<http://www.sigma-imaging-uk.com/lenses/dclenses/8-16mm.htm>

K5 Image: <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Calimo>

I have been determined to learn how to use these wide Lenses and currently they don't come any wider than this one.

You can get an enormous amount of Real Estate in your Viewfinder with a Lens like this or you can get up really close to make a particular feature stand out.



On to the lens in practical use:

The big bugbear of a Lens with such a protruding front element like this one does is the inability to use filters popular with Landscape photographers (ND/Grads/Polarisers etc) but with modern Cameras (I'm using a Pentax K5) you have a lot of dynamic Range and with judicious exposure discipline you can usually manage to capture a full range of tones, if not you can always bracket exposures and overlay them later in third party software. Colour can be tweaked to your heart's content and a lot of Camera's are now starting to address Low ISO as well as high, my K5 goes down to ISO 80 and the new Sony A77 as low as ISO 50, Making up somewhat for the lack of a filter thread on your 8-16, if you can't live without them and there are times when nothing else will do! There are some aftermarket filter holders that will work with your 8-16, however they are not cheap and you have to really ask yourself if it's worth it? Only you can answer that one, you're on your own there!

<http://www.formatt.co.uk/showimage.aspx?id=wf3000000682>

The Lens is chunky, solid feeling with a built in metal hood, the Lens cap comes in two parts, a Lens cap??? And a large metal ring that slides over the petals of the hood, treat them as one part, leaving on the metal ring will only lead to wild vignetting! In use you soon get used to this and it just becomes natural to take off both parts at once, now onto the good stuff.

Sharpness, this lens is very sharp indeed! Right across the frame, I'll direct you to a formal review of the Lens by experts and better Men than me!

http://www.lenstip.com/index.php?test=objektywu&test_ob=246



Distortion is also very well controlled for a lens with such a wide field of view and it's resistance to flare in direct sunlight is remarkable for a Lens with such a Bulbous front Element!

For myself as a Landscape Photographer, in the end the real beauty of this Lens is that allows me to bring into perspective large sweeping panoramic views in a way I have never been able to do before, and to cap it all off it's also a lot of fun! **Top Job Sigma!**

Easily my favourite Lens in my current bag of tricks...

Hope you enjoyed this less than technical review from someone who really enjoys his Sigma 8-16...

Cheers Jules...