



# Photography: Kit and gear

Over the past six issues, Simon Thomas has been sharing his secrets to get the perfect shots, but what equipment does he use? Here he explains the perfect set-up for the aspiring motorcycle travel photographer...

Words and images: Simon Thomas

As motorcyclists and photographers, we constantly struggle to find that perfect balance between the kit we *want* to carry, in order to capture great images and our very limited ability to safely carry it.

The goal is simple enough, minimal gear for maximum flexibility. Therefore, after years of fine-tuning, we thought we'd share what we use on a daily basis and importantly why we choose to use the lens and bodies that we do.

### Nikon D3 Flagship DSLR digital FX body

The D3 is one of the most sophisticated bodies I have ever used. It shoots an amazing nine frames per second at full FX resolution. I love to shoot portraits and the D3 captures incredibly high levels of detail and performs brilliantly in low-light situations. You never know when a photo opportunity is going to present itself.

### Nikon D90 Pro-Level DSLR DX body

Lisa uses the D90 on a daily basis and it performs day in and day out. It captures incredible detail at 12.3-megapixels. The self-cleaning sensor does a great job of keeping dust and crap at bay, which can so often screw up a great capture.

### Nikon AW100 Digital Camera

We use the AW100 for shooting portraits of kids or just when it's inappropriate to pull out a big DSLR with a lens on. Sometimes less is more! It also shoots great HD video.

### AF-S NIKKOR. 16-35mm f/4G ED VR

A great wide angled lens is essential if you really want to capture the scale and size of the landscape you're riding through. This lens isn't cheap but the glass is top of the line and there's very little stretch out towards the edge of the lens. All-around a stunning lens.

### WHO'S WRITING?



#### Simon and Lisa Thomas

have ridden their way into a life that most of us can only imagine. This year is the start of their 12th year on the road and in those years the duo has amassed an insane 420,000 miles on their ride through 78 countries and six continents. Along the way they've traversed 27 deserts, survived a broken neck in the Amazon Jungle, cheated death and become professional photographers, writers and public speakers. [www.2ridetheworld.com](http://www.2ridetheworld.com)

### AF-S NIKKOR. 70-200mm f/2.8G ED VR II

Now and again you'll see a portrait that you want to capture and this lens does a stunning job. When I want to distance myself from my subject, be they a person or a tiger and cub, this is my go-to lens. Super sharp and again, top-notch glass goes into making this baby. This is probably my favourite lens.

### AF-S Teleconverter TC-20E III

When I need to zoom in closer than my 70-200mm will let me, I throw my tele-converter into the mix. With my 70-200mm in tandem with the 2xtele-converter, I now have a 400mm lens. Here's the clever part, if that's doesn't get me close enough, I can throw this combo onto Lisa's D90 DX body. A DX body provides a 1.5 x level of magnification based on the internal sensor magnification. Just nod and pretend that this makes sense. Right, the result of that magnification combined with the 70-200mm lens, plus the tele-converter, is that I have a 600mm lens equivalent. The results are spectacular. An original 600mm lens would be impossible to carry and cost a whopping £6,000. Check out the image of the tiger to see the results.

### AF Nikkor 50mm f/1.4D

If I'm shooting critical portraits or I'm looking to capture a sharp image with a very shallow depth of field, this is my lens of choice.

### AF DX Fisheye-Nikkor. 10.5mm f/2.8G ED

Occasionally we're in a landscape that is so overwhelmingly vast that a regular wide-angled lens won't do. This is when the 10.5mm comes into it's own. It captures the widely impossible.



### AF-S DX NIKKOR. 18-200mm f/3.5-5.6G ED VR II

If there was a 'do-it-all' lens that worked perfectly with a DX (non-full frame body) then the 18-200mm lens would be it. Wide enough to capture the most open and majestic of landscapes (the Mongolian Steppe for example) and yet with enough zoom to capture the most intimate of portraits: A super piece of glass.

### SB-910 AF Speedlight

The 910 Speedlight, commonly known to most as a 'flash', is one of Nikon's premier flashes. I've used this flash to capture super sharp bike shots of Lisa passing me and the camera at speed on dull days. The extra light just allows me to nail the shot. Although I have to admit a flash is a luxury when it comes to travel photography.

Lisa and I are lucky enough to have two bikes and the ability to carry all of the gear listed above. We stick all of this in our tank bags: it's proven to be the safest, most convenient location. You'll probably want to carry less and in reality a good

camera body will serve you well and you'll most likely be thrilled with the results you get from carrying just two lenses.

If you're wondering whether to spend your hard earned cash on a better body or better lens, my advice would be to spend 2/3 of your budget on the lens and 1/3 on the body. The lens ultimately con-

trols how well your images are caught as all the light and detail you capture has to pass through it. An expensive body alone will perfectly capture the 'crap' that a crappy lens produces.

Have fun, enjoy your travels, take photos and share them. We're looking forward to seeing your results! **ABR**

