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Adventure Nomad



Saturday, May 24, 2008

Weapon of Choice: Nikon D300



Khukuri. Nikon D300, 18-200mm at 29mm, 1/320 f/9, ISO 200.

I have a Nikon D300. My frequent readers will know that I advocate lightweight DSLRs, and yet I carry a heavy D300. Why? I bought it because I wanted to carry only one body that would not fail on me in the field. Nikon has a reputation of building pro-spec bodies that are tough and weatherproof. Obviously there are no such guarantees, and even my D300 has failed on me before.

The best advice I can give my fellow travel and adventure photographers is to go with the lightest DSLR that you have confidence in. If you don't need two control dials, look at the Nikon D60 and Canon XSi/450D. If you do need the two control dials, look at the Nikon D80 or Canon 40D (...or wait a while. Nikon is expected to release news on the new D90 soon). If you need or want higher build quality, the D300 is the camera to get. Having used the D300 for a while, I'd pick it over the Canon 5D, which had been on my wish list for a while.

My pet peeve is the [re-engineered Matrix Metering System on the D300](#), but the fact is that any photographer can work around it for proper exposure control. There are other reasons I chose the D300: Great battery performance - I'm getting about 500 12-bit compressed NEF shots per charge (about double the D200); good high ISO noise characteristics; outstanding autofocus system; 100% viewfinder accuracy; a huge, high quality LCD screen; superb dynamic range; a built-in flash.

Adventure Nomad

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About me

I'm Kenneth Koh, a travel and adventure writer and photographer, and a former airline pilot.
[Email me](#)

Photos



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Nikon D300, 18-200mm at 32mm, 1/250 f/13, ISO 200, matrix metered at -1 1/3 EV, flash with 1/4 CTO gel.

Many photographers shun the built-in flash, and some camera's, like the Canon 5D, don't have one. For a photographer who needs to travel light, having a built-in flash that can throw in some fill light in a pinch is better than not having one at all. I never liked the cold, harsh light quality from my pop-up flash, and using a tip from [Strobist](#), I taped a ¼ strength CTO gel to the flash. This warmed up the flash a little and, by dialing down the power, it gave me a nice balanced fill light that worked out well for me in Nepal.



Laura (left) with the Newswear Body Pouch aka Replacement Galen Rowell Chest Pouch. Me (right) with the Lowepro TLZ1 clipped the backpack shoulder strap.

I carried the D300 in a Lowepro TLZ1, which I clipped using mini-carabiners to the shoulder straps of my backpack. I got the idea from pro mountain bike photographer, [Seb Rogers](#). It's a bit complicated working out what comes on and off when you want to remove the backpack, but you quickly get used to the routine. My wife carried her Canon XT/350D in a Newswear Body Pouch. I wrote about this earlier as a replacement for my old 'Galen Rowell' camera case. This works well for a lightweight setup, but I prefer Seb's system for my heavier DSLR. Neither of these camera bags is waterproof, and so I stuffed a couple of Ziplock bags into them in case it rained.

Around Annapurna 2008: Days 15-16
April 26/27: Tatopani – Sitka – Ghorepani



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Nikon D300, 18-200mm at 18mm, 1/320 f/9, ISO 200.

We left Tatopani after a quick dip in the famous hot springs in the morning. It's all uphill from here to Ghorepani and, although you can make it to Ghorepani in a day, we decided to take it easy and broke the journey up into two days.

Sitka Moonlight Lodge: Rooms ***1/2 Food **

Ghorepani Hungry Eye: Rooms *** Food ***

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Posted by Ken at 11:59 PM

2 comments:

Jungle Runner said...

Thanks for the picture on how you carry your pouch!

May 26, 2008 1:06 AM

Kenneth Koh said...

I'm glad I could help!

May 26, 2008 3:33 AM

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