Articles

Does It Work? ©2024 Joseph T. Sinclair

A previous article entitled *A 50mm 5x Telephoto?* theorized that using a 60MP full-frame camera with a 50mm lens you could crop five 12MP photos out of one image that could be printed at 240 dpi into one 17-inch print (3:2 aspect ratio) each without enlargement. In other words, as long as one didn't need a print larger than 17 inches, a 50mm prime on 60MP camera could act as a 5x telephoto (250mm) with all the qualities of a prime and none of the deficiencies of a zoom.

> **Standard of quality**
> It was determined in the previous article that a 12MP photo is the standard of quality, as 12MP = 35mm-film quality.

In fact, it does work. Did I need a second mortgage on my house to buy a 60MP camera and a top quality 50mm lens? No. Instead, I sold all my photo equipment on eBay to finance the purchase.

Now I have a mirrorless, full-frame, 60MP, very small camera and a very small 50mm lens, which is a very small package but with a lot of capability.

The manual is 573 pages long. So, it will take three years with diligent study to learn how to use it. But in

a very small camera, I have more capability than in all of the larger and heavier equipment that I sold.

Thus, I scaled down while moving up, so to speak. The bonus is that I now have a smaller and lighter camera case to hang on my neck.

Will this camera improve my internet photos? Not much perhaps. But it will provide high-quality, sharp 17-inch-5x prints and 30-inch-1x prints, each without enlargement.

The cost is about $2,000 less than a good 250mm telephoto lens+camera and about one-half the cost of a comparable *used* Leica camera+lens (which rates no higher in analytic tests).

Hey! But that's not all. Think of the cropping possibilities. You can crop away a huge portion of any photo and still have enough left to make a great print. Or you can crop two or three photos out of one photo to make two or three great photos. On other words, you may be able to find new photos inside photos that you have already taken.

Full photo 9504 x 6336

About 1/8 full photo 3888 x 1788 (8x)

There's an additional benefit. No doubt a careful framing is a good discipline and helps you take better photos. But in many situations, you don't have the time for careful framing. And pointing & shooting can make possible shots that you might otherwise miss. This is particularly true in fast-moving situations where your window of opportunity lasts only a few seconds. With the combination of point & shoot and generous cropping capability, the only thing missing

to get a great photo is your own quick reaction to take the shot.

The way to use 5x purposely is to center your subject (scene) in the viewfinder, take the photo, and crop around the subject (scene) in post-processing. For instance, if you see a deer in the distance in the woods, take a shot with the deer in the center and crop around the deer in post-processing to compose a 5x photo.

But what about enlarging? Depending on what expert you believe, you can enlarge a photo from 30% to 400% without any noticeable degradation in image quality (e.g., sharpness). That means you can crop a 5x photo out of 60MP, enlarge the 1/5th photo to 2x, and get a 24-inch print without any significant loss of image quality.

Full photo 9504 x 6336

About 1/5 of full photo 5675 x 2907 (about 5x)

To put it bluntly, all the experts who say that more MPs don't matter are spreading fake news.

There are some comparable high-end digital cameras (typically small) with fixed lenses that are terrific and are all you need to take great photos. After lugging around big cameras for years, any one of those fixed-lens cameras is an attractive second choice for me.

If you're like me, however, and have been using a big camera with several different lenses, a 60MP camera with just one small lens makes a lot of sense and is also a good choice. It has more capability than a fixed lens camera, and it doesn't cost much more (maybe less) than a big 25MP camera with several lenses. So, I'm happy to scale down and move up.