

Source: http://www.digital-images.net/Lenses/body_lenses.html#45P (January 6, 2010)



Nikkor 45mm f/2.8P (also see photo at top of page): The 45mm is a very simple, yet highly-refined lens design. The lack of numerous air-to-glass interfaces of the modified-Tessar design, combined with the coatings, make the contrast of this lens very high when shooting into adverse lighting conditions -- which seems to happen a lot when shooting normal-range outdoor work. The focus throw is very short, it is a small, well-built piece, and the 45mm is an extremely easy lens to operate and predict. It is my contention that for many shallow-DOF situations, closeups, and wide-aperture work, manual focus is not a hardship... it is more often a necessity to be assured that the focus point is placed properly. Of course I use AF when it makes sense to do so, but there are several lenses that I find myself focusing manually quite often. The 135/2DC at f/2-f/2.8 has a depth of field character like that of the 300mm f/2.8 lenses -- quite shallow yet with good transitions. The shallow DOF requires extreme care in placement of the focusing point, and it can be so shallow that it is not all that rare that AF misses the actual spot by enough to alter the composition. The same can be said for the 85/1.4D at f/1.4-f/2, and about macro lenses when focusing close. The fact that I do not have the option of AF with the 45mm does not hurt as the lens can be focused as fast and as precisely (sometimes more precisely with greater ease) than an AF lens. The shadow-detail retrieval is exceptional.

The lens is very, very sharp across its range of operation, and between f/2.8 and f/11. It is extremely versatile, and is definitely the sharpest Normal lens at f/2.8. It also reveals quite a bit of fine detail, although it is eclipsed in some respects by the 60/2.8D Micro at some apertures and distances.

The defocused character is important in certain kinds of shots, at various apertures dependent on distance from the lens-to-subject-to-background. When there are highlighted background or foreground elements, the character of the defocused region can become an important part of the subject itself as well as either enhance the quality of an image, or become distracting to an extreme and thereby detract from the image quality. I feel that this sort of thing is almost as important for certain sorts of Normal-lens uses as it is in telephoto work, and the 45mm has by far the best defocused character of all of the Normal lenses.

The fact that it is small and lightweight, built like a precision instrument, and extremely cool, has nothing much to do with anything other than user-pleasure and confidence in the lens's construction quality, for what that is worth.

What I like most about this lens in comparison to others in the Normal Range is that the character is similar to that of other lenses in the top category at a sometimes extremely-useful focal length. Yes, I agree that often a wider or longer lens is a better option, and I regularly make use of a kit consisting of the 17-35 and 85mm (or 28 and 85) and avoid the Normal Range altogether, but it says a lot for this lens that you can put it to many of the same uses as those fine tools without loss of quality, just the change in perspective (and the need for some foot-framing). The fact that it is exceptional at wide-aperture closeup work, wide-aperture scenic, near-far compositions at medium-to-small apertures and long-range scenics at apertures around f/8-f/11 (all in the same lens) makes this little featherweight a very versatile single-lens option.



Chrysler PT Cruiser shot with the 45mm f/2.8P at f/5.6
click to open the linked image in a second window (1504 x 960)

Also see the [Bunker Hill](#) page for more image examples.

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