

JANUARY 29, 2020

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# The Fun of It: Adventures in Paradise With the KeyMission 360

It sounds like a dream assignment for multimedia storyteller and Nikon Ambassador Lucas Gilman: take the KeyMission 360 and some surfers, divers and paddleboarders to Hawaii and Tahiti and make some pictures and videos as you check out the action camera's capabilities.

And, in fact, it was kinda fun, though it wasn't a vacation. "I set out to put the camera through real-world paces, to test it as I would any new camera," Lucas says.

As the locations suggest, Lucas's focus was the 360's on-, in- and under-water performance, which is one of the camera's strongest features, as it requires no housing to be waterproof to 98 feet below the surface. "We did cliff diving in Hawaii, swam with reef sharks in Tahiti and went surfing, paddleboarding and snorkeling.

I basically strapped that camera to anything I could think of just to find unique angles and see what we would come up with."

The mission, then, was to capture exactly what the 360 is designed to capture: images new, different, cool and fun.

And, sometimes, startlingly different. "In Tahiti, among the Blacktip reef sharks, we had the 360 on the extension arm, and weighted it down, left it on the bottom and came back in ten minutes. The thing is, this camera will see what you see when you're holding it, but it'll see what you can't when you leave it." What it saw in Tahiti was a large boat heading right toward it. "When we went back to get it, it had been pushed over—it was okay, but when we checked the footage we saw

the boat coming straight on—coming right at us!—the propellers getting closer and closer. I've said that working with the 360 is an immersive experience—and it was. Looking at that footage, we were right there."

And that's pretty much the magic of the 360: it'll tell the story of where you are and why you were there. It'll capture the experience, all 360 degrees of it, in virtual-reality fashion.

"Take it on your vacation," Lucas says, "and swim around the reefs—not only are you capturing a bit of the underwater world, you're putting yourself in the context of that world. With the 360, you can show yourself in the moments that were so special to you."



## Take a Test Run

The first thing you realize about the 360 is that it's not anything like your Nikon DSLR, Nikon 1 or COOLPIX camera. It'll see everything—and so will viewers of the often startling still and video perspectives. Which is pretty cool in itself: from the 360-degree view of the location, viewers can choose what interests them.

For the best results, familiarity with the 360 is suggested, which is why it's a good idea to make your own backyard the first location for your 360 shooting. Get to know what the camera will do and all that it's capable of before taking off to Hawaii or Tahiti or wherever your adventure takes you.

"The big difference with this camera is in creative placing and the unusual, even strange angles that take advantage of the wide-world view," Lucas says. "The sky is the limit, and you should be thinking outside the box—at one point I strapped the 360 on the paddle of a paddleboard—because the idea is always, Where do I put this to make a wow image?"

Sometimes the answer is easy, as it was in Hawaii when Lucas used the camera's

optional accessory extension arm to capture a cliff diver in action from the straight-down perspective. "I just pushed the record button and extended the arm up above the diver as he went off. Even after you're familiar with the camera, it's always a matter of just playing around and seeing what ideas occur to you—and no matter how far out they are, they're still in the realm and the view of this camera."

## Top 10 Tips For Best Results

Lucas returned with still images, video clips and suggestions for making the most of the 360 action cam's potential. Here are his top ten tips.

- "Download the SnapBridge 360/170 app to your compatible smartphone or tablet. Everything is controlled from the app—the 360 has no screen—and you'll fire the camera or start the recording from your hand-held device. You'll see on the app what the camera sees, so when you set the 360 on the front of your sea kayak, for example, and want to check the angle to be sure it's straight, you'll be able to see it. Your manual will clue you in on pairing to your device and the range requirements."
- Be sure the settings on the camera are what you want them to be before you start shooting. Underwater mode is fine for underwater, but if you leave it there from your last trip and take the cameras to the amusement park, your images won't look the way you want them to.
- "Get the accessories that are right for your activities. A base adapter and adhesive mounts come with the camera; others are optional—like the extension arm, a mini tripod and chest, helmet and wrist mounts. Be sure to have the ones that tie-in to your favorite activities.
- The accessories will suggest interesting ways to view what you love doing—and more interesting ideas will come. Even familiar activities can be captured in different and exciting ways."
- "As with any camera, the best results for me were either earlier in the morning or later in the evening simply because the light was more interesting. This is a sunrise to sunset camera, which is ideal for outdoor activities."
- "You're giving people a chance to choose where they look as the video plays. The whole visible world at that moment is there to peer at or peek into and explore visually. Keep that in mind when you choose your location."
- "Always have extra memory cards. This camera is so much fun, you're going to be shooting lots of video clips and stills, and you'll be surprised how quickly the cards fill up."

- "You want your 360 video clips to be rather long and stable. Keep shooting, and keep the camera as steady as possible as you tell the story. You're showing viewers all aspects of the scene, so keep it steady and go long to give people a chance to look around within the frame. Give them time to choose what to look at and follow."
- "The 360 has two lenses; that's how it records 360 degrees—two views, stitched in the camera. The Nikon logo is above the front lens of the camera: whatever that logo is pointed at is what you're going to see first in your video. There's a NIKKOR logo above the other lens—that's the back of the camera. Think of what you're going to say with the clip or still. Do you want to show where you are and what you're seeing, or do you want to show yourself first? What's your opening?"
- "Make a plan, figure out the mounts you want to use and what you'll need for your activity. The 360 is a lot of fun, and with a little bit of preparation and practice, you'll be able to enjoy the activity without thinking too much about the camera. The 360 is a companion, not the reason you're there."