



A FEW DAYS WITH AN OLYMPUS MJU 1000



Brian Usher looks at the 10MP compact Olympus mju 1000 from a serious photographer's point of view. It's capable of producing big files and packs a high resolution 3x optical zoom, but does its interface allow sufficient flexibility?

The Olympus mju 1000 has an extensive range of auto shooting and 'scene' modes: 20 in fact, including portrait, landscape, night scene, night and portrait, sport, indoor, candle, available light, sunset, fireworks, beach and snow. There is even an 'auction' mode, for taking three exposures consecutively in low resolution to produce eBay ready images.

The ISO can be set from 64-6400; various image quality options are available, although not Raw; and there is a choice of ESP or spot metering. There are several macro and flash modes; it makes free stitch panoramas – oh, and it takes movies too! As if all this isn't enough, there's a 'guide' mode, which describes various shooting scenarios and then navigates the menu automatically to

achieve the appropriate settings.

However, while providing the ability to shoot in virtually any situation, the vast majority of these options do involve compromise. I wanted to take a different approach to using this camera, and to highlight some of the features that may be of more interest to the serious photographer.

The problem with using high ISO settings is that 'noise' increases with the ISO number and, on this camera, full 10MP processing power is only available from ISO 64-1600, after which Brightcapture technology kicks in. What I wanted to do was maintain image quality, to minimise noise, even in low light situations, and to use the full power of the processor to my advantage. So this was the plan: set the

camera to 'super high' image quality of 3648x2736 pixels and ISO 64, and then let the camera do the rest on auto. I knew I would need long exposure capability if I was going to survive with a low ISO rating, so I selected the 'night scene' mode when necessary, as this gives the longest shutter speeds while maintaining full pixel resolution. (You do lose control over ISO on night scene mode, but this doesn't change too drastically). I employed image stabilisation in addition.

All the featured shots were taken in this way over a two-day period. I headed down to Southend-on-Sea in Essex, and took a variety of shots, working quickly and randomly in different lighting conditions. The mju coped incredibly well, producing