First Impressions - The 28mm f2.8 PC-Super Angulon-R

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I'd read about Perspective Control lenses, and like most of us; I know the theory of a view camera with its rising lens boards. However, I suspect that I am also like many who have never had the opportunity to play with such a toy. In fact, until the other day, I'd never even *seen* such a thing!

Thanks to Leica's ***"Leica on Loan"*** program offered at the Victoria Spring Shoot, I was able to borrow their 28mm PC - Super-Angulon-R lens.

Manufactured for Leica by Schneider, the 28mm f2.8 PC-Super Angulon it is a superb performer and finished to Leitz/Leica standards in every way. With an image circle some 63mm in diameter, it yields a high contrast image and is stunningly sharp!

Because of the shift (11mm vertical and horizontally, 9.5 mm diagonally), it was not possible to include the auto-matic diaphragm linkages, so the PC/SA is a pre-set lens, with a very convenient, spring loaded lever on the side of the lens, rather than the usual pre-set stop down ring.

The lens is also equipped with 'null cams' for all Leica Reflex cameras.

We all know that when you point a camera upwards, you're going to get converging verticals. (See photo 1)

Yes, you can cure this in PhotoShop, but PS inserts pixels when changing perspective. The better way is to fix it in the camera and the 28 Perspective Control Super Angulon does just that!

If you keep the camera level, you'll never get converging verticals, but you will get far too much foreground and too little height (see photo 2).

With the 28/f2.8 PC-Super Angulon, you simply rotate the lens to the vertical position (the whole lens rotates to any orientation on a thin, knurled disc next to the lens mount) and rotate the spring-cushioned knob until the photo is as you envisioned! (See photo 3.)

If the camera is truly horizontal to start with, you'll see the verticals stay true, and the camera simply "looks up when you turn the knob. Weirdest thing I've ever seen, but delightful!

If you simply eyeball the camera to horizontal, you'll find that you can actually over correct and make the walls of a building diverge (or get wider at the top)! For this, using the 14306/14346 ground-glass (with grid divisions) will help - though, I mostly use mine to keep my horizons level!

The PC-Super Angulon is also good for panoramic shots. On a tripod, shift the lens full left, shoot, then full right and stitch together in Photoshop.

All in all, the 28mm / f2.8 PC-Super Angulon-R is one terrific piece of kit!


Photo 1 – looking up.


Photo 2 – looking straight.


Photo 3 – looking up – properly!

Macro work with the 400mm f6.8 Telyt!

When I went to photograph the 28mm SA-PC for this article, I discovered that I did not have the correct equipment for the job. The 90 Summicron with extension tubes got too close to get it all in. The Nikon 6T double element close-up lens on the 80~200 f4 Vario-Elmar had the same problem. In fact, every lens combination I tried came up short! Finally, I ended up using the 14134 extension tubes on the 400mm/f6.8 with about 12 feet working distance! Because of the focal length, use of f16 and a very slow shutter was needed. The R8's mirror pre-fire proved handy. I'm sure it looked ridiculous, but it did the job -- as you can see in the photo at the upper left. Never fear to experiment!