



Photography

How to capture awesome action shots

Getting the perfect action shot can be a difficult task but the rewards are worth it. **Simon Thomas** explains how he took this fantastic image

Words: Simon Thomas
Image: Lisa Thomas
Photo credit: Simon & Lisa Thomas. 2ridetheworld.com



Who's writing?

Simon and **Lisa Thomas** have ridden their way into a life that most of us can only imagine. This year is the start of their twelfth year on the road and in those years the duo has amassed an insane 420,000 kms on their ride through 78 countries and six continents. Along the way they've traversed 27 deserts, survived a broken neck in the Amazon Jungle, cheated death and become professional photographers, writers and public speakers. www.2ridetheworld.com

We've all seen a thousand images of gorgeous bikes in exotic locations. You know the kind of shot, a lone rider sits on his or her bike at sunset, atop a high mountain pass. These are the bread and butter adventure shots that always provoke emotion. But let's be honest the drool worthy bike pics we all really love are the action shots. Bikes are about speed, energy, lean angles and defying the pull of gravity with a twist of the throttle. Freezing a moment of time, when a bike and rider are totally in-sync, now there's your money shot. Allow me to tell you how to get that shot.

Ready, camera, action...

This one's all about speed. The speed of the bike, how fast you can get set up for the shot and of course how fast your camera can fire off a series of photographs. Speed is the natural enemy of photography. Without the proper set up photographing anything at speed just creates a blurry mess. However, with the right settings dialled into your camera, capturing 'speed' and, more importantly your mate on his or her bike, can create some of your best shots.



Location:
Arambol Beach,
Goa, India.

Camera set up

Put your camera in speed mode, this is normally signified by an 'S'. In this mode, you're going to select how fast your camera's shutter fires and the camera will work out all the other complicated stuff like exposure. Now, bear in mind you are probably going to make several practice runs at getting this shot and with each run, you'll tweak the settings. Turn whatever dial or you need to, to set the exposure speed above 1/1000 of a second. If your camera will allow you to increase the ISO setting, turn it up to above 400. If it's a dark or grey day then you may have to go higher with the ISO.

Most cameras these days have a setting that will take consecutive photos if you hold the shutter button down. Most manufacturers call this 'burst mode', put your camera into burst mode and you're ready to go.

Shot set up

Speed and movement are always the issue with photography so we need to eliminate as much of it as possible. If you have a tripod, now's the time to pull it out. If not then brace yourself against something solid. If you're using a tripod and your lens or camera has 'vibration reduction' turn it off.

Lens type

If you have a zoom lens, that's the one to use. If you're using an automatic (point n' shoot) then zoom in using the zoom button. Give yourself between 30-60 feet between you and the rider. This'll give a nice out of focus effect to whatever is behind your rider. It'll look great.

The next bit's pretty cool. Looking through the viewfinder, identify the spot on the road or track where you want to photograph your mate. Now, with autofocus tuned 'on' press the shutter release button half way down to set the focus. Release the button and turn your camera's autofocus off. The focus is now

locked and you're good to go!

Getting ready for the shoot

Give your rider the signal to set off and get yourself ready to create great photos.

Tip: anticipate your subject/mate riding into the focus area and make sure you press the shutter release button a few seconds before they hit the sweet spot. Make sure you hold for a second or two after they leave it too.

Check your images and zoom in 100% to make sure it's sharp. If there's any blur, do a rerun. This time increase the shutter speed and/or increase the ISO.

You're going to get some great shots! **ABR**