

# Action! Camera!

By  Brian Berkman

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Not often a product comes along that does everything you want it to and then a whole lot more you did not know you wanted.



This is how I feel about the new Olympus Tough TG2 so if this reads a bit like a love letter, it is. I was given the camera to try out while in [Madagascar](#) where I needed something that would take publication-ready images but double up as an all-purpose camera. Given that we were camping and kayaking I didn't want to take our Canon SLR along. When I compare the images taken with this pocket camera and the Canon SLR I usually use, I am not aware of any benefits using the SLR.

## Versatile

On this score alone, The Olympus TG-2 must be given its due and, here's the kicker, it allows one to add other lenses too and to set manual aperture, which is why most people prefer the SLR.

The big benefit in this all-in-one camera is that it has a light-greedy sensor that makes low-light capture pin sharp and vibrant in colour. This is achieved by an f2.0-4.9 wide-aperture high-speed lens and a 4x wide optical zoom (25-100mm\*). In high-res imaging there is little to detract from the digital zoom. I don't know what 12 Megapixel backlit CMOS sensor, TruePic VI image engine or iHS technologies mean but the camera has those too.



These images have been extracted from the Olympus website.

[click to enlarge](#)

## Low light, great images

I would recommend this camera simply based on its ability to take brilliant images in low light. So, the fact that it is waterproof to 15m and takes superb underwater images, can withstand -10°C and takes video is why I sound like a love-sick puppy.



It can survive a drop from 2.1m, is crush proof to over 100kg so you can sit on it but the benefit that I most love is the GPS and Manometer which allows you to plot every image you took on download and, if you get stuck and need an airlift, you can determine your exact coordinates wherever you are. I'm not sure why I like knowing what the air-pressure was at the time I took the shot but I do.

## Food for thought

I found shooting on Auto gave excellent results but more and more I'm using the Scene modes that produce results, especially the macro setting with which I'm able to photograph food detail with the blurry background usually only available with a long lens, that impressed the professional photographers with me.

Although a gimmick, the cat and dog settings recognise that the pooch is looking right at the camera and snaps the shot. This works especially well for eye-to-eye images. You depress the shutter button, wait for kitty to glance your way, and viola you have a perfect imagine of cat indignation.

**'Go ahead, make my day, punk!'**

There are also "magic" settings like punk and soft focus which are fun but I hardly use. The one setting I use a lot is HDR which creates a composite image with optimal brightness which is very useful if you want the foreground and background equally bright in the image when they aren't so. The downside of this setting is that the image resolution isn't as high as a standard image is but all except for very large prints I haven't noticed a loss in quality.



One of the drawbacks of using a digital camera without a view finder is that it is near impossible to see the screen in bright sunshine. This unit has 3.0" OLED (610,000 dots) display which I could see even on a tropical beach.



## Don't get caught with a flat battery

There are two downsides to this camera. When using the GSP functionality and taking video, it chews battery life and you will need another battery or time to recharge midday and, and I suspect this is a user problem rather than a camera problem, that some images of mountains, for example when some are in light and others in shadow, do not come out as well as they do with a usual SLR.

I used a 16GB SanDisk Extreme SD card that is designed for tough conditions but the camera is Ey-Fi ready if you have a Wi-Fi enabled SD card in it.

The TG2 sells for around R5,000. I loved the camera so much I bought one.

See [Olympus](#) for more information.

## ABOUT BRIAN BERKMAN

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