



MOVIE MACHINE

THE ART AND TECHNOLOGY OF DIGITAL FILMMAKING



ISSUE 4 - AUGUST 2013

MONTHLY ROUNDUP OF NEWS AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DIGITAL FILMMAKERS
KILLER BLADE * BLACKMAGIC CINEMA CAMERA PRICE DROP * MAKING A MUSIC VIDEO



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Photos: Ellen Young

WELCOME TO MOVIE MACHINE MAGAZINE ISSUE 4

JUST ONE MORE SHOT...

I'm filming on a lonely outcrop of rocks which jut out into the sea. It's a beautiful place right up the top of Scotland. I've been here before. This is one of my favourite places for testing cameras. Beautiful blue ocean with matching sky, yet deceiving in its beauty. Many fishermen have perished in storms in the sea and there is just as much potential for danger for swimmers and adventurers in these waters.

Not that the area should be dangerous. Take precautions. Don't do anything stupid. The real danger is not paying attention and getting trapped on the rocks as the sea rushes in and the tide rises.

I'm not testing a camera this time. I'm testing the Samurai Blade by Atomos. I'm rammed to the gills with gear. Sony F3 with monster 18 - 252mm Powerzoom. A heavy lens and heavy camera; Sachtler tripod and Cinesaddle to film off the rocks. I've got what I need to capture stunning images and watch my footing as I clamber over the rocks that meet the sea.

I can tell the tide is coming though the water is calm. No massive swell, no choppy waves breaking against the rocks. Peaceful and serene, dangerously so.



Photos: Ellen Young



I COULD BE IN REAL TROUBLE...

I film through giant boulders, get as close to the waters edge as I dare. On a rough day I'd be smashed to pieces where I am. The sea is anything by rough - but it is rising. I know I should get out of there. Just one more shot. One more shot turns into another 5 or 6 shots. I'm caught in the moment, knowing I should get out of there. I wrench myself away. Got what I need.

Climbing out of the rocky outcrop is just as dangerous as getting to the location in the first place. It's slippery and steep. I'll be okay. Just get past the main rocks, onto the beach area, and then a short walk to the main beach.

The area between the rocks and the main beach is where the water rises. I'm off the rocks and walking angle deep in water. The sea is coming is now - not scary but enough to make me nervous. I've got two choices: scramble across the water, depth unknown, or make my way back onto the rocks and try to make it through to the opposite side without getting caught in the water. The problem is I can't see behind the rocks - this is the longer way. If the rocks and sea meet I could be in real trouble.



I decide to go across the water, depth unknown...

It is so slippery, one false move and camera and lens go underwater. We're talking around £10 000 of gear upwards in my hands and I'm now 2 feet below waste deep. I realise I'm perilously close to submerging my iPhone in the pocket of my jeans. I shove this in my coat pocket and keep moving forward. The beach is only 30 feet away, safety is what the beach offers. 30 feet seems a long way.

This isn't easy, one slip and the equipment is finished. No exaggeration.

Why did I put myself in this position? Is it some crazy thought that I'm immortal and the sea will spare me? Am I a total idiot - one of those people you read about who the coast guard has to come and rescue. Or worse, I'll be swallowed up by the sea and my efforts will merit a paragraph on a radio report about how the northern seas claim another victim. None of this is to be. I make it to the beach, camera and the rest of the gear intact. I'm wet to the core but not caring about the discomfort.

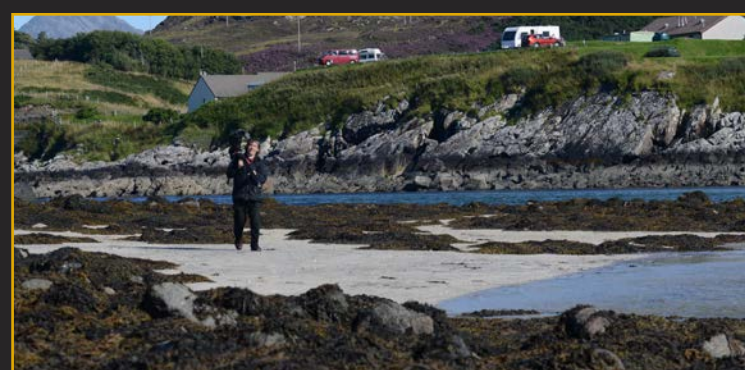
I know what I did wasn't smart but also not the dumbest thing I have ever done. I made it without too much danger. The truth is another 15 minutes and the danger would have been so much more real...

There's a craziness that overtakes us when we film that makes us push it for just one more shot. In the moment where the camera is in position, you've expended so much effort getting there, it seems criminal not to keep filming.

There's no moral to this story, no words of golden advice. Just watch it out there. No matter how brilliant the shot, it sure isn't worth losing your gear, getting trapped, or, worst of all, becoming one with the ocean. Watch it out there. The thing that is most likely to wipe you out is your own stupidity. Much better to sacrifice a shot or two than to be stuck with no way out. I got my shots and enough of a fright to make me think twice or three times about what I had done. Even now I shudder thinking about what could have happened...



Photos: Ellen Young





NEW YORK CITY: NIGHT AND DAY. FILMED WITH THE BLACKMAGIC CINEMA CAMERA



WATCH THE VIDEO >>

Filmed on location in New York using 2 Blackmagic Cinema Cameras, this piece shows the tremendous quality offered by Raw and ProRes recording. Featured is Times Square at night, a look at Greenwich Village, overlooking the Manhattan Skyline from below the Brooklyn Bridge, and testing audio recording using the Sound Devices Mix Pre. Every shot and all of the audio in this film was recorded with the Blackmagic Cinema Camera.

SONY PMW-F5 & PMW-F55: CODECS AND WORKFLOW



WATCH THE VIDEO >>

Sony Product Specialist, Tom Crocker, talks about the Sony PMW-F5, PMW-F55, and the codecs supported by these cameras. From XAVC to S-Log, XDCAM at 50 MBPS, and RAW to an external recorder, or, in the case of the F55, RAW can be recorded internal to the new SxS cards. These cameras represent a leap into the future while catering to the demands of today.

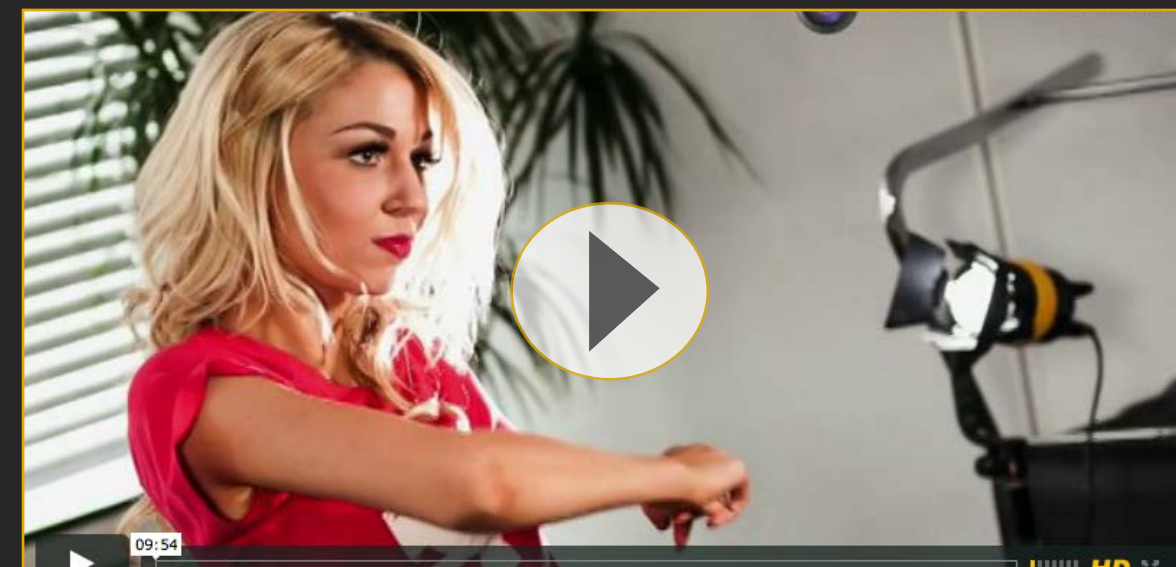
DIGITAL ANARCHY BEAUTY BOX: SKIN RETOUCHING TECHNOLOGY



WATCH THE VIDEO >>

Ever had a client complain about the lines in their face, the imperfections that HD brings out so well under the glare of bright lights? Beauty Box is designed to help you add a layer of "digital make-up" to take some of the hard edges away. In this demo by Jim Tierney, we see just how quickly and effective Beauty Box is in making on-camera talent look more pleasing to the eye. Digital Anarchy's Beauty Box Video Plugin is a powerful tool for any production that requires people to look their best.

THE MAKING OF A MUSIC VIDEO: USING LED LIGHTS CREATIVELY



WATCH THE VIDEO >>

There's a revolution going on in the world of lighting. Hot lights are still used in many situations, in studios and for other interior filming, for the filmmaker who needs to be able to move quick, shoot and light anywhere, and travel without a truck-load of equipment, the LED lights of today offer versatility and potential which has not been available before.

Using the Felloni LED lights for the production of a music video - and also the Dedolight DLED4, filmmaker Scott Wright, of Dreamshock Design Studios, was able to shoot effectively, quickly and with the minimum of hassle.

HUGE PRICE DROP FOR THE BLACKMAGIC CINEMA CAMERA!



Customers can choose from either the EF or passive MFT lens mount, compatible with amazing optics from the worlds leading lens crafters such as Canon, Zeiss and more. For high end work, filmmakers can shoot in uncompressed 12 bit CinemaDNG RAW. The incredible resolution and dynamic range means that more of the scene is captured, giving greater creative control for Hollywood style color correction with the included DaVinci Resolve software.

Blackmagic Design has announced a new lower price for the Blackmagic Cinema Camera to US\$1,995.

Now in the hands of thousands of film makers all over the world, the Blackmagic Cinema Camera is globally recognized for its amazing 13 stops of wide dynamic range and 2.5K sensor for true digital film quality shooting. With RAW, ProRes or DNxHD recording, files can be opened directly in popular editing software without conversion! The multi award winning design has the features customers need to start filming straight out of the box including a super fast SSD recorder, rechargeable battery, and a large 5 LCD touchscreen. This large touchscreen monitor allows easy monitoring, metadata entry, camera settings and fast accurate focus.

Available in two models, customers can choose from either the EF or passive MFT lens mount, compatible with amazing optics from the worlds leading lens crafters such as Canon, Zeiss and more. For high end work, filmmakers can shoot in uncompressed 12 bit CinemaDNG RAW. The incredible resolution and dynamic range means that more of the scene is captured, giving greater creative control for Hollywood style color correction with the included DaVinci Resolve software.

"The response to the Blackmagic Cinema Camera has been incredible," said Grant Petty, CEO, Blackmagic Design. "The tremendous support we received encouraged us to work even harder to make the camera available to more videographers and filmmakers. Its amazing to see the projects that have already been completed and I cant wait to see what the creative community delivers next!"



KEY FEATURES:

- The Blackmagic Cinema Camera is available in either EF or MFT lens mount models.
- Super wide 13 stops of dynamic range allows capture of increased details for feature film look.
- High resolution 2.5K sensor allows improved anti aliasing and reframing shots.
- Built in SSD recorder allows high bandwidth recording of RAW video and long duration compressed video.
- Open file formats compatible with popular editing software such as CinemaDNG 12 bit RAW, Apple ProRes and Avid DNxHD. No custom file formats.
- Includes no custom connections. Standard jack mic/line audio in, BNC 3 Gb/s SDI out, headphone, high speed Thunderbolt I/O technology, LANC remote control and standard DC 12-30V power connection.
- Capacitive touch screen LCD for camera settings and slate metadata entry.
- Supports 2.5K and 1080HD resolution capture in 23.98, 24, 25, 29.97 and 30 fps.
- Thunderbolt connection allows direct camera capture via included Media Express software and supports live waveform monitoring via the included Blackmagic UltraScope software.
- Includes a full copy of DaVinci Resolve color grading software.





This revealing post by Jim Jannard details the initial vision and the impact RED Digital Cinema has had on the industry; the production models from the RED One through to Epic; and some of the difficulties presented by those with other opinions in the world of digital cinematography.

Written in a post titled "My Final Post..." on reduser.net, by the Founder of Red Digital Cinema, Jim Jannard, in which Jannard announces that he will no longer post on the forum – and does not plan to be the "face of RED". Rather he will still be actively involved with RED Digital Cinema, behind the scenes.

Below is an excerpt from Jim Jannard's final post on Red User:

"WITH THE RELEASE OF THE DRAGON SENSOR... I HAVE FINISHED MY MISSION. I AM DONE POSTING. I WILL NO LONGER BE THE FACE OF RED. MERCIFULLY, JARRED WILL TAKE MY PLACE AND HE IS WORTHY TIMES FOREVER. JARRED IS ME... ONLY 30 YEARS YOUNGER."



"MY FINAL THOUGHTS..."

"I have done my best. I saw a fatal flaw in the camera industry. We did our best to address it.

I will now sink into the background, I hope with my reputation intact. I will work on the future of digital cinema... behind the scenes."

This revealing post by Jim Jannard details the initial vision and the impact Red Digital Cinema has had on the industry; the production models from the Red one through to the Epic; and some of the difficulties faced by other opinions in the world of digital cinematography.

Jim Jannard has a total of 8119 posts on reduser.net

[Read the complete final post by Jim Jannard on Red User >>](#)





[READ THE FULL STORY >](#)

TELESTREAM TO LAUNCH POST PRODUCER AT IBC 2013

Telestream has announced a major new product to be launched at the International Broadcasters Convention (IBC) in Amsterdam this September. Post Producer is a post-production and delivery engine that automates repetitive production processes, which would otherwise tie up editors and NLE workstations. Based on user templates, Post Producer assembles a segment or spot, compositing video, graphics, titles and captions or subtitles, and applying audio processing as required. Alternate versions are automatically created by simply substituting the necessary elements. Running on the latest version of Vantage 6 software, Post Producer will be available for purchase prior to IBC.



[READ THE FULL STORY >](#)

EYEHEIGHT TO INTRODUCE COMPLIANCE SUITE APP PLUG-IN LEGALISER FOR ADOBE PREMIERE PRO AT IBC2013

Eyeheight's complianceSuiteAPP adds a complete plug-in legaliser, safe-area generator and graphic measurement toolset. It enables users to verify and conform their content prior to submission to any file-based quality control system, all from within their familiar Premier Pro graphic interface.

The legaliser is designed for use with high end video source files used for broadcast content production. It supports any combination of file formats and source colour-space available in Premier Pro.



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EYEHEIGHT ANNOUNCES COMPLIANCE SUITE FCX PLUG-IN LEGALISER FOR APPLE FINAL CUT PRO X

The legaliser is designed for use with high end video source files used for broadcast content production. It supports any combination of file formats and source colour-space available in Final Cut Pro X. Capabilities include composite, RGB, RGB-plus-Y and simultaneous composite-plus-RGB legalising, all with user-adjustable soft clipping at high and low thresholds. High-precision colour-space conversion allows accurate limiting to ensure gamut compliance while keeping the full gamut available for creative use.

Eyeheights proprietary clobbering non-linear predictive filtering process further reduces visible luminance overshoots common on computer-generated or highly graded content and significantly reduces the risk of content rejection.



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MATROX TO SHOWCASE 4K PRODUCTS AT IBC 2013

Matrox Video will showcase video streaming and recording appliances, 4K video monitoring cards, multiviewers, live production streaming systems, scan converters and developer products. Matrox Graphics Inc. will present new KVM extension solutions and 1080p60 video over IP encoders/decoders.



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APPLE UNVEILS LOGIC PRO X

Apple® has unveiled Logic® Pro X, the most advanced version of Logic Pro to date, featuring a new interface designed for pros, powerful new creative tools for musicians, and an expanded collection of instruments and effects. Logic Pro X has been designed with a modern new look while preserving and expanding the power and features that professional users rely on.

The streamlined interface provides access to advanced tools and functionality for more technical tasks, or can be hidden to allow musicians to focus on being creative.



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RED GIANT SHIPS BULLETPROOF V1.0

Now shipping is BulletProof - a complete footage prep and delivery solution that simplifies the tedious tasks facing filmmakers every day on set. Bridging the gap between camera and editor, BulletProof combines all backup, organization, color and delivery tasks while handling footage from multiple cameras and media cards. Red Giant also announced it is launching two new product suites for filmmakers: Red Giant Shooter Suite, and Red Giant Color Suite replacing the Magic Bullet Suite product.



[READ THE FULL STORY >](#)

BEAUTY BOX VIDEO 3.0 FOR AVID RELEASED! PROVIDES FAST, REALISTIC DIGITAL MAKEUP FOR FILM, 4K, AND HD

Digital Anarchy has announced the first release of Beauty Box Video for the Avid Media Composer family of products. Avid editors will now have access to the industry leading plug-in for removing blemishes and wrinkles from film, 4K, and HD. In addition to Avid support, Beauty Box Video 3.0 introduces new masking algorithms that improves automatic masking, and greatly increases the quality of the automatic retouching. It also further refines OpenCL support and increases rendering speed on ATI and Nvidia graphics cards. There are now over 35 preset Styles that video editors can choose from to make things even easier when getting the perfect look for a feature films, commercials, and music videos.



[READ THE FULL STORY >](#)

SAMURAI BLADE BY ATOMOS NOW SHIPPING WORLDWIDE

Samurai Blade adds essential set up tools with full waveform monitor functions, including vectorscope, RGB and LUMA parades with transparent overlay and bottom right, lower 3rd or full screen positioning, making it an extremely flexible tool. The new Samurai Blade offers a stunning 1280 x 720 SuperAtom IPS touchscreen. On the fly screen calibration is built into every Samurai Blade so you are always accurate in any shooting environment.

DIGITAL ANARCHY'S BEAUTY BOX NOW AVAILABLE FOR AFTER EFFECTS, FINAL CUT PRO X, PREMIERE PRO, AVID MEDIA COMPOSER

Jim Tierney of Digital Anarchy explains how useful Beauty Box is in improving the way talent appears on-camera. This solves the never ending problem of clients not being happy with lines in their face or their on-screen appearance.

Beauty Box is an effect which works inside of After Effects, Final Cut X, Adobe Premiere or Avid Media Composer. It's been available for three years, and the latest version 3.0 provides much better automatic masking and the ability to identify the skin tones within the video - you do not have to go frame by frame and rotoscope. It makes the whole process of digital retouching very easy. You just dial in how smooth you want the face to be, the algorithms in the software figure out what the skin tones are, and then you just process it.

One of the things about HD is that when you're filming somebody and especially when you're watching that person on TV, this is a very passive viewing experience. When speaking directly to a person face to face, you think about what the person is saying, you're listening and thinking about what you might say, but we're not staring at somebody's face and analysing what they look like. When a person is recorded on video, especially lit with bright lights, it becomes this passive experience watching it, and especially if you're showing it on a 60" TV screen, their head is larger than life, and you see a tremendous amount of detail that you don't really notice in real life. So when somebody says, 'Oh I don't photograph well,' usually the joke is, 'Well you don't look that well.' But the reality is, in a lot of cases, we're just not used to seeing ourselves or a person with bright lights on them, and in a static, passive viewing experience. So you just see this detail that you just don't normally see and that's one of the things that Beauty Box does really well. It keeps things looking realistic but takes that edge off of what HD adds. And that's where it's really just a layer of digital makeup. The idea is not to airbrush people, not to make people look different, not making your eyes bigger or your nose different or whatever, it's really just his layer of visual makeup to just take that edge off.

Beauty Box has been designed to be very easy to use and very simple. Editors don't have a lot of time, they don't want to tweak endless amounts of parameters to get things working, and so it's really all about just clicking the analyse frame button, letting the software do the work of figuring out what the skin tones are, building a mask for you, so you don't have to go frame by frame, no need to rotoscope, you don't have to do any of the hard work. You just have to click that analyse frame button, figure out what the smoothing settings are, and then just render it out from there.

ORIGINAL



MASK



RESULT



FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE ATOMOS, SAMURAI BLADE

I've had the new Samurai Blade in my hands for less than a day. This is a quick overview of this new product, which operates as a fantastic viewing monitor and also as a ProRes or DNxHD recorder. This bumps up the quality of your camera to broadcast standard at the same time giving you an accurate display for colour rendition. This is a very desirable product.

I've been looking forward to getting my hands on the Samurai Blade, by Atomos, since I saw this at NAB in April. The screen – its all about the screen! That's what stayed in my mind after seeing and holding the Blade in April – the crispness, sharpness, beautiful colour rendition – compared to the fold-out LCD panels attached to the cameras I shoot with, the screen on the Blade impressed me greatly.

The screen on the Blade is 5 inches in size, runs at a native resolution of 1280 x 720, and also works as a touchscreen.

Beyond the screen the ability to switch on a waveform monitor/vectorscope and other functions such as peaking, zebras, blue only, false colour, these are also provided. I want the waveform monitor vectorscope like you wouldn't believe.

Seeing a working unit at NAB created a hunger in me which has now been fulfilled now that the Blade is in my hands.



The screen is no disappointment. It is perhaps the brightest screen I have had to work with, and this is particularly good for shooting in most conditions. You're certainly not going to stand in the desert sun and marvel at your images, however, most of the time you can see your images extremely well, and when using indoors, in the shade or at night you have a spectacular view of your images. For shooting in sunlight outside, Atomos have a sunshade (optional) which will significantly make shooting in bright conditions, well and truly viewable.

The waveform monitor/vectorscope with parade and other functions is fantastic. Simply switch it on and choose full-screen, bottom right as an overlay, or show the scopes as a horizontal strip down the bottom of screen.

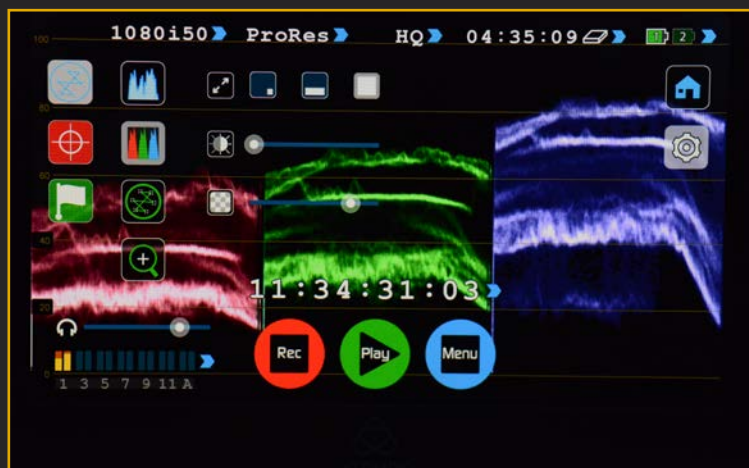
Fullscreen viewing of the scopes is great though I couldn't work out a way to view these as transparent over the images being filmed; bottom right does give you transparent video through the scopes which are then quite small to view; as a strip along the bottom is another transparent option though really, for me, I love viewing the Waveform monitor large! I can then use the sidescreen on-camera for viewing, or, switch back and forth on the Blade between full-screen image and Waveform monitor.

Nothing like an accurate screen and accurate scopes for accurately capturing images on location.

The BNC connectors are full-size, industry standard. This is an improvement on the connectors on the Samurai, which used mini-BNC. The same essential function works using either connector, though full-size BNC is more robust and is found everywhere through the broadcast world. You don't need to remember to bring a set of mini-BNCs with the Blade. This device is built to connect to anything in a post production or broadcast environment.

The unit feels light and solid. It gives you the power to record 10-bit ProRes HQ, standard or light, Avid DNxHD; the recorder will trigger over SDI from camera giving you seamless start/stop recording; you can also dual record in-camera and on the Samurai Blade simultaneously; you can use 2.5 inch spinning discs or SSDs; the screen is fantastic (did I mention that already...)

Beyond the many features already discussed, the Blade is a great unit for reviewing and pre-editing your footage. Other models by Atomos, the Samurai, and Ninja 2, also feature this ability. However, the wonderful screen on the Blade changes the experience in a major way. You can quickly review footage, marking clips as Favorites or Rejects; you can also mark "in" and "out" points for each of the clips you select – this information can then be exported as an XML file readable by Apple's Final Cut Pro X.



For those who work with Final Cut Pro X this is a big deal. However, for me, the big deal, is that the wonderful quality of the screen on the new Samurai Blade is so great to work with, it makes you want to use the Blade for the purpose of reviewing and pre-editing.

If you already have a Samurai you have a great recording and playback device, however, with the Samurai Blade you have so much more...



IN SUMMARY...

With the Samurai Blade you now have a great recording and playback device with superb visual monitoring and full broadcast scopes.

My view on the Blade is that it is so good as a monitor I would use it for this reason alone – the ProRes recording is something I don't always have to have – though good monitoring is essential. I love the fact that the unit is light and portable and runs off light-weight Sony batteries or compatible batteries. You can use the Blade on-camera, off-camera, or attached to an arm and position wherever you wish.

Atomos have done something major here. There are other ProRes and DNxHD recorders on the market though Atomos have provided an affordable solution that is amazingly portable, powerful, fun to use, uses affordable media, and uniquely gives the means to view and pre-edit your content. Not only is the screen beautiful to view, it also works a fully responsive touch screen for accessing the controls and functions. There is also a tally light to indicate recording on the side of the unit – nice touch!



KEY FEATURES:

- Super-bright 5 IPS 1280 × 720 touchscreen monitor
- Full waveform vectorscope with zoom & RGB/luma parade
- Adjustable gamma, contrast & brightness
- Standard BNC connectors
- Real-time monitoring, playback, playout & edit logging in the field
- Focus assist, zebra & false color monitoring
- Record direct from the sensor to 10-bit, 4:2:2 ProRes or DNxHD
- S-Log/C-Log recording
- Trigger REC/STOP from camera (Canon, Sony, ARRI, Panasonic, RED, JVC)
- Timecode from camera
- Uses inexpensive 2.5 HDD/SSD media
- AC/DC/battery with patented Continuous Power

PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- 1x Samurai Blade Unit (in Retail Box)
- 1× 2600mAh 2-cell Sony N, L Series Compatible Battery
- 1x D-Tap included (no cable)
- 1× 1000mA single-plate AC battery charger
- 1x USB 2/3.0 Docking Station including cables
- 2x Master Caddy (HDD/SSDs not included)
- 1x AC Adapter included



INTERVIEW WITH JOE TORELLI, VETERAN CAMERAMAN FROM 16MM FILM TO PRESENT

JVC GY-HM650: DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGY

RY: I'm speaking to a gentleman by the name of Joe Torelli. Joe's been shooting and editing for many years. He worked for NBC, he's been involved with work for Avid, he's done work with Apple, so he knows his stuff, he's been around for quite a long time. Joe I want to specifically talk about the GY-HM650 and the 600, tell me what your involvement is with this particular camera?

JT: I was really excited when I was called to ask if I could help out at the show based on my background, and some of the things that really excite me about the camera are how this camera folds technology into that next generation, this is disruptive technology. The fact that it's got the two codecs allows the camera to be able to do two different things at the same time, and it's great to be able to record high definition in a proxy, or high definition and a standard definition, and I don't want to say that that's boring because there's a lot of other people that can't do that yet, but when you start thinking about what it does on the streaming aspect of it, taking that second codec and being able to stream and record at the same time, it's just incredible. So back in the '80s they had a TV show called Max Headroom and I've talked about this with some of the customers that have come by the show. This has GPS built into it, so you think, 'Well Max Headroom had something that we didn't know was called GPS at the time.' The fact that he could stream video back to the station live all the time is there, and then add to that the fact that he can be shooting a story at the same time as it's streaming, so every time you're starting, stopping, starting stopping in HD, the stream is still going back to the station for the people to be able to see. Now if that signal gets interrupted somehow, he can feed, ftp the files back. 'Oh my goodness, this is fantastic!' So this opens up a whole, new world for people being able to do storytelling, being able to get that material on the air as fast as possible, and that's probably my primary, major thing that this camera does. There's all kinds of other stuff that it does as well.

RY: Funny you mention Max Headroom, I remember Max Headroom with Edison Carter and all those amazing things that were going on back in those days. It's funny to think that that was actually looking forward, not deliberately –

JT: 30 years

RY: Yeah, it's amazing, and now that sort of technology exists.

JT: Right



"THE FACT THAT IT'S GOT THE TWO CODECS ALLOWS THE CAMERA TO BE ABLE TO DO TWO DIFFERENT THINGS AT THE SAME TIME."



RY: I particularly love the form factor of this camera. It's all solid, the zoom is wonderful, the focus is great.. So when you use this camera, what's your impression in your hands, do you just feel like you want it to be part of you as you work?

JT: So the form factor is something that's a little different for me coming from the TK76 and the CP16 days, where it's on my shoulder, so when it's out in front of me it's a little bit different, you know, you want to have it on a monopod or sticks, kind of thing, but when you're getting into the functionality, the focus assist to me is delightful, because the thing that I hate the most, even on major broadcast shows, you'll have the subject just slightly out of focus, and the background is in focus because somebody didn't have something like focus assist. When I saw that three years ago on one of the predecessors of this camera, I was blown away and I used it all the time. When you look at the ability to have independent controls, user settings, that are definable, the menu structure that's on here is fantastic, because you can easily reassign some of the user settings for things that you're going to do for that particular shoot. You can save those settings, have them on a card, and be able to say, 'I'm going to be doing documentary today, I need to be able to work on metadata, I need to make sure that stuff is already preloaded, here's my format.' If I want to be able to, you know, some of the light, I want to do low lux straightaway, I want that one over here because I'm going to be doing night time stuff.' Being able to have the communication between the camera and other people, whether it's somebody on an iPhone,

a producer on an iPhone, using metadata upload, this is an incredible thing. So form factor in itself is fabulous for the person using it, but the fact that the delivery of data to the card, can be from the lens, or from an iPad. And then when you've cut it, it's, 'Woah wait a minute, what's that mean?' it's because somebody can sit at a desk and type in titling, metadata information, script information, and have that go over the 4G connection to the camera, so that gets to the form factor, but they can also, a producer can be sitting in a truck, can be sitting somewhere, and adding metadata to it, so that their camera has rich information that then transports back to the station or back to the card, for import into Final Cut and that will be whatever, and all that stuff is absorbed into it. So that their camera has rich information that then transports back to the station or back to the card, for import into final cut and that will be whatever, and all that stuff is absorbed into it. So when you think of the workflow, the metadata, the handling of mass quantities of media, and being able to isolate and identify, that makes everything different today in 2013.

RY: Two things that absolutely, seriously impressed me, now we talked about the fact that it can record HD and SD, or it can record HD and a proxy, but it can also do dual recording, so if you want to hand the cut over to a client, keep a copy for yourself, or just have a backup, it's all there. And also the fact that it's got the smaller sensor, gives us that wonderful 23 times lens.



DC bureau and they want to have a streaming segment to drop into the show for the rest of the people,' hit the button, DC stream could be what I call one of the pre-sets, DC ftp could be what I call the other one. And I can have all that set up, set it up on an iPad, replicate it to all the cameras with and SD card memory user settings, and I'm off and rolling.

RY: That's absolutely fantastic, in some ways I never would have dreamed that that sort of facility would have arrived, and the fact is, with what's gone on, you mention 4G, it's very timely, the camera's come out at the right time, has the right technology, has the right means to transmit those signals, it's there. There's been other ways to beam signals in the past, but that's always been outrageously expensive and you'd need a van, you'd need the dishes, to be able to do it straight off the camera is an amazing thing.

JT: When you look at what the codec's doing, as the light is hitting the sensors, it's being digitised. That digitised signal is going straight to the codec, so it doesn't have to go through a video to make it... you know, somebody's backpack, so the purity of that signal hitting that codec is incredible, allowing us to create a really good transport stream H.264 that allows us to get a really good quality picture back over 4G, and it's just phenomenal. And I don't think anybody else can do anything like it right now.

RY: And the fact that the BBC have ordered over 500 of these, is what has been reported, is testament to the need for this technology.

“WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO SHOOT EVERYTHING ON ONE LITTLE PIECE OF SILICON... WHY WOULDN'T YOU WANT TO RECORD LESS ONTO MORE CARDS.”

JT: So I'm a still photographer from way back, and I used to have, I had access to, I couldn't afford a 300mm 2.8 Beseler Topcon lens. The front end was about this big, so when you think about the fact that this has a 35mm equivalent of 667mm, with F3.0, that would be a garbage can lid, when you think about trying to get something like that. So the reduced size of the sensor, the fact that it can go to a nice, wide 29mm, and go all the way out to 667, 1.6 at 29mm, 3.0 at 67, it's fabulous, I just find that to be so amazing. When you then consider the fact that you've got the interval recording, you've got the pre-record capability, I live in Minnesota and I shot a time lapse of the snow melting on the roof of my shed over two days, I just took two days and I set it up, I put a little shielder at it, and I shot one frame every 30 seconds for two days, 48 hours. Obviously I was plugged in to the power outlet, but when I watched this thing it was fantastic, because I can set it up, I can do whatever I want, I can shoot the time lapse in the camera, I can do the pre-record, so I don't miss certain events, set it up to 15 seconds. This is technology that everybody needs to have and it's becoming now, it's starting to become ubiquitous, it's like, 'We have to have all that stuff, because Canon does it in their DSLRs.' So when you look at what some of those added features are, that this camera has, the user-settings, the ability to have everything definable, using the display, it's really great, it's not something where you have to hunt, you can find things easily.

RY: And many years ago, we spent so much money to buy cameras that did so much less, so to see the progression in this area's really, truly amazing.

JT: I've got one other quick thing on the dual record. The ability to have your built-in archive is something that everybody has wanted and the fact that media costs so little today, high quality media costs so little. I've had people come up to me at the show saying, 'Can you put a 64-gig into it?' and I go, 'You can but why? Why would you want to shoot everything on one little piece of silicon... why wouldn't you want to record less onto more cards, because it's more efficient to be able to do that?' I can shoot different stories and have one story per card, because it may go to a different edit room when I get back. So being able to do all that, gives me the ability to have, if I'm shooting ABC HD on both cards, great, one of them goes onto a shelf, the other one gets used and burned until the other one gets released two weeks later for the hold period they may have at the Station, who knows? But being able to shoot a MOV native XDCAM EX, being able to shoot an MP4 native XDCAM EX, plug it straight in the editing system, have two copies of it, great. Being able to send a proxy back, if I've shot the proxy on the second card, I can actually go in and do good shot marks, or a producer can do good shot marks on the proxy, and then I can push those back and then start shooting again. So as it's pushing back over the 4G connection, I can begin shooting and continue shooting my story while they're getting the good quality... they're getting a proxy to look at. They can then say, 'You know what, we need that one shot at full XD cam, can you send us that one?' Hit the button, go back to shooting, and it's gone back. The fact that I can have ftp destinations loaded up, and I can have six streaming destinations loaded up, gives me the ability at a Station group to be able to say, 'I'm in Cleveland, Ohio, and I've got





SONY PMW-F5 AND PMW-F55: CINEMA CAMERAS

Interview with Sony Product Specialist, Tom Crocker. Tom talks about the Sony PMW-F5 and PMW-F55, the codecs supported by these cameras, and just how suitable these cameras are for digital cinema work.

RY: We're speaking to Tom Crocker, Product Specialist from Sony Europe. Tom, I want to talk about the development of some of the big sensor technology in Sony, the hot cameras at the moment, F5, F55. Can you talk about the development of these cameras and some of the unique capabilities that they offer?

TC: So the F5 and 55 are two fairly ground breaking, I'd say, new cameras, both of them have Super 35mm 4K sensors. But the stuff which is really exciting about them I think is particularly around the codecs and the workflow that comes from those cameras. So of course we had after the very successful F3, we had a lot of requests for something like that but that could do our 50MB, 422 codec, and that's the first of the codecs in there. But what we also added was XAVC. Now, XAVC is Sony's new implementation of the H264 codec family, but we've taken the highest level of that, the 5.2 standard from that, which means that we can go quite a long way with that. So in the F55 for example you can also record an XAVC 422 intra-frame at 100Mb at 422 10-bit. But you can also go beyond that, so you can for example increase the raster to 2K or 4K, the 2K coming with a future firmware upgrade. But you can also go to much higher frame rates, so up to 120p and beyond.

RY: Now speak about XAVC, is this an edit friendly codec or when you take it into your NLE will it need to be transcoded?

TC: We've already got XAVC implemented in Final Cut Pro X, in Avid Media Composer 6.5 and the new version that they're talking about here at NAB, and in Adobe Premiere. And they're all working very, very nicely without transcoding. So it isn't that heavy; people have been working on other H264 based codecs for quite some time now. So in terms of editing on them it's not that tricky. Of course, once you get to some of the much larger bit rates and rasters and things like that you might want to start thinking about doing an offline workflow. So for example something like if you're running the 4K at 60p, you're then working with some very, very large files. So of course that's going to become a consideration, but in terms of an HD workflow and things like that it's absolutely a possibility.

RY: I know that the F5 and F55 are both 2K and 4K capable, F5 you need to use the external recorder, F55 you can do it in camera to the new SxS cards.

TC: That's right.

RY: But what I want to know is you talk about 2K and 4K capable, but we also talk about RAW. Now, where does XAVC fit in with the whole RAW thing? I mean do you get a whole lot more by going to RAW? I imagine you would, but I want to hear it from you.

"SONY PMW-F5 AND PMW-F55"



Tom Crocker

"TOM CROCKER, PRODUCT SPECIALIST FROM SONY EUROPE."



"FILMLIGHT IS WORKING VERY, VERY WELL."



TC: Yeah, so XAVC is great, XAVC is a compression system; you take the information coming off the sensor and you compress that into something that's easy to work with, and for a lot of tasks XAVC is going to be very good. For getting all of the information off the sensor then we have the RAW option. Now, you've got a lot more options with RAW. You can change a lot of settings afterwards and generate some really dramatic images with it. But of course on the other side you've got to work with some much, much, much larger files. So while I was talking earlier about the 4K XAVC file, that can run up to 600Mb/s, the RAW can run at just over 2Gb/s. So then you're working with much, much, much larger files, which presents different workflow possibilities but also different workflow challenges as well. But yeah, it can do some very interesting things with the RAW.

RY: Now, what's the solution for working with the 4K files in a postproduction environment? I know you can do it in DaVinci Resolve, I'm sure there's other things out there; what can you tell me?

TC: So DaVinci is one which supports us completely, Baselight, FilmLight is working very, very well. We've got things running into the NLE as I mentioned earlier, the entire Adobe package and SpeedGrade and things like that is also working completely. So really most of the workflows these days you'll find are working perfectly well. There are a couple of places where we're waiting on a couple of things, there are a few things being announced at this show which I need to go and check out. But yeah, a lot of the industry is really getting behind these cameras and the codecs in them. We've worked with and have had a very close

relationship with all of the NLE grading compositing manufacturers for a very long time, so they've been aware of and have been developing the support for these codecs for quite a while now. So yeah, really it's just get shooting and put it into post and you'll be fine.

RY: Excellent. Now, from the top end to the lower end side of things what is this XAVCS all about? I've heard it's like a consumer implementation of XAVC?

TC: Basically you're right. XAVC is a very broad church basically, and XAVC in its first implementation is a professional format, the only ones we've released at the moment are 422 10-bit implementations of it. But the specification allows us to go lower than that as well, and indeed higher. So XAVCS is then a more heavily compressed version of 420 8-bit generally implementation of the same codec family, but then much more highly compressed which can then be put into some of our consumer products and the lower end products like that, so while people can still work with the same codec. So the XAVCS will be wrapped as an MP4 file, whereas the traditional XAVC will be wrapped as an MXF.

RY: We're being very techy here in this interview with all sorts of terminology, so let's continue...

TC: I'm a very techy guy.



RY: I spent my money last year on a PMW F3, which I absolutely love and I really like the fact that it does 35Mb/s, because it's light and it's easy to work with. Now, the new cameras, the F5 and F55, they don't do 35Mb/s, am I correct?

TC: They don't do 35Mb/s, you are correct in that.

RY: So it's 422 at 50MB/s?

TC: Yeah.

RY: And the thing I love about my F3 is I've also got the S-LOG option which lets me go to 444 if I want, I can also do S-LOG over 422 and S-LOG straight to SxS if I want. What's happening with S-LOG? Where is S-LOG these days?

TC: So S-LOG, you will also find that in the F5 and F55, but it's S-LOG 2 which is an updated version of that which first appeared in the F65, our 8K cinema camera. And really the idea behind that is to make sure that you've got as much latitude to work in as possible. It's colour space which works very well with the information coming off the sensor. Of course the sensors have 14 stops of dynamic range in them, and being able to see that, bring things into grading for example and have that latitude is very important, so.

RY: Would you use S-LOG with RAW or would you just use RAW on its own? I'm just trying to get where S-LOG gets used and where it doesn't get used.

TC: Well, RAW is RAW and S-LOG will be a particular

way of debayering the RAW information into a particular colour space... to get technical! So yeah, I mean RAW will be RAW, it just depends how you look at it. S-LOG would then be a different way of applying that colour telemetry to a given baked-in colour profile to a codec. So for example, you might want to apply that to an output in order to be able to record that, but you might want to be filming in for example Rec. 709 or viewing in Rec. 709 while recording in S-LOG so that you've got an idea where you're going but you know that you've got more flexibility on the card.

RY: Let me explain that the way I understand it how it might work in my workflow and tell me if I've got it right. If you were to use S-LOG it would be really good in a 422 environment for example and if you're going to use RAW it gets really big as we've already discussed and it gives a lot of challenges as you've described it in the postproduction environment. With S-LOG, and I'm talking about my experience with the F3, and tell me if this applies to the F5 and F55, with S-LOG you can record up to 422, you can either do it at 35Mb in the F3 but I know that doesn't exist in the newer cameras. But even so, you can give yourself that extra latitude, that extra exposure range and extra two to three stops of exposure just by switching on S-LOG and that lets you work with files that are not gigantic, which is what you're going to get in a RAW colour space. Have I got it right in my mind?

TC: Well, RAW doesn't really have a colour space. RAW is essentially a representation of various voltages which have been gathered by the sensor. That then goes through a debayer process and that debayer process defines how these voltages based on the pattern of colour filters which are applied to these are then mixed together in order to create a given pixel. Because of course you don't have pixels on the sensor, you have

picture sights, and you have quite a lot of picture sights with then work together in order to create one pixel. So that then has a colour value which is defined by the pixels or the picture sights around it. (Caught myself out there!) So really what we're talking about is the process of defining how those are mixed together in order to create the final image.

RY: OK, I think I got something out of it. It's so techy it's hard to get my head around a lot of this. Now...

TC: And we've got some of my Japanese colleagues around here somewhere who can go a lot deeper than I can, so.

RY: I'm sure. Now, something I can understand, F5, F55, where does cinema begin and where does cinema not begin? The F55, would that be seen as a cinema camera and would the F5 be suitable for cinema; that's my question?

TC: Yeah, I mean I think both of them could absolutely be used. We'll see more of the F55 doing that, but we've got a number of customers around in Europe who I've been talking to who are looking at the F55 and are beginning to use the F55 in that type of production. I mean we've got of course the F65 at the top and that's the most advanced cinema camera in the world, there isn't anything that comes close to that on basically any statistic it has. And that might have distorted some people's perceptions of how high up the F55 is, because the F65 is so powerful that the F55 can feel a little bit eclipsed by that. But it absolutely isn't. The F55 is a full blooded cinema camera, you're working with the RAW in native 4K. I mean that's more than comparable to any of our competitors in terms of that.

RY: We're living in amazing times, cinema cameras were always outrageously expensive and then you had to run film through them, and now you can buy a camera that's reasonably affordable compared to what we had to pay before and you can do amazing things with it. So you have to sit back and just take stock of where you need to go and what you're producing for. But it seems that even something like an F5, which is quite well-priced could be used at those levels, even though it may not be suited to it, it could still be used at those levels if you needed to?

TC: Absolutely you could. The reason I focus more on the F55 than the F5 is that the colour space, the number of colours that the sensor itself can detect is much wider on the 55 than the 5, so you might get a more cinematic effect out of that. And the other thing is that you have the global shutter on the 55, so you don't experience any of the CMOS rolling shutter type artefacts or flash band type artefacts which you might do, which is why I think more people particularly from the cinema industry will tend towards that one. But the F5 is and of itself an exceedingly capable camera as well.

RY: Talk to me about the shutter on the F55 and what the big difference is, I mean just in terms of technically; how does it work compared to what the F5 has?



TC: Well, some Japanese people have done some magic. And I'm not completely aware of the exact way that it works, but I can explain the principle behind it. So basically on an ordinary CMOS sensor as you have in many of this type of live sensor camera these days, it will scan each line one after the other. And for example with rapid movement you'll get skewing as the movement passes and the scan goes down, things can skew. The trick which they've achieved is being able to make the entire sensor capture at the same time, which gives you a much more cinematic feel to the movement as you get a full progressive scan on the capture.

RY: And why don't they just do that on all cameras? Why does it have to be for the higher end cameras? Is it more difficult to achieve?

TC: It's substantially more difficult to achieve, it's really quite a lot of engineering magic that's gone into making that work. So of course it needs to cost a little bit more, and some people don't need that. Of course today's CMOS sensors are very good anyway, so a lot of people are perfectly happy without that, so we don't need to charge them to have that if they don't need it.

RY: Do you think this is the sort of thing, given a number of years, the technology will filter down because it'll be more established?

TC: This tends to be the way. So I haven't seen any road maps myself but I can't imagine that won't become more widespread.



LET THERE BE LIGHT! ANYWHERE YOU NEED IT.

Digital filmmaker Scott Wright talks about the journey from photographer to filmmaker, the impact of DSLRs, and how the lighting techniques he learnt from still image creation translates to the moving image. Using battery powered Felloni LED lights in combination with the DLED 4 by Dedolight, Scott has been able to light in situations where traditionally powered lights would never have been able to be used. This is Scott's story...



"I first started photography about 10 years ago, and it was when the first digital cameras came out. I first used the Sony Mavica - it used to take floppy discs, record straight onto a floppy disc and it was kind of the first digital camera that came out. I started using that for quite some time, photographing everything I could possibly think of: photographing people, photographing landscapes, anything really at the time. That progressed onto the next camera, which recorded onto memory cards. And that then progressed onto DSLRs in the Canon range. I've always been a Canon photographer, always used Canon equipment, it's just that's what I've done, I've always had their lenses and stuck with those.

Because I use DSLRs a lot for still photography, someone once said, 'Why don't you try motion?' I'd never really thought about it before, I found extending my photography into motion was a really innovative

idea to me. It was all new. I thought I'd love to give this a try and at first it was just experimenting at home, playing around with the kids, filming with the kids, but it was amazing getting that shallow depth of field with a camera and seeing it all move and come to life. So it was like progression for me, from still photography onto video, it was like the next, natural step, and it was a great challenge to overcome keeping that still shot, but turning it into movement and seeing how it all moves in real life.

Photography is all about capturing the story as a still moment in one frame, video motion however is telling the story through a series of motions, when you've got to think about what's coming up next, what happens before, and I think that's the challenge I enjoy, telling the story in not just one frame, but in a moving frame and in motion.



I'm very much used to still photography, I've had experience in a studio and on location shoots, but that's very much strobe photography and it's one burst, one shot, you see the light once the picture's taken. So moving on from that to continuous light was great for me, because you can actually see the light, you see what you're working with, you can turn the lights in different directions, see the reaction and see what's going on, while all the action's taking place. Whereas with strobes you've got one chance, well not one chance, but you've got that one take, look at the back of the camera, reposition, retake, so with continuous lighting, it's very much you see what you get and you can shoot it straight away, that's the good thing about continuous lighting. Originally with continuous lighting there was a lot of heat and that caused a lot of problems in small, confined spaces, but now we've got LEDs, they don't give off as much heat. There's very little heat given off and it's a lot more comfortable for people to work under.

With strobe lighting you can get a brighter light quite quickly, with video lighting, it seems to be a lot more lower-power for a continuous light. However I use the same basic principles from still lighting to video lighting, try and position the lights in the same way that I think they're going to work, but a lot of the time it's quite experimental, you never really know what you're going to get until you turn up on location. So turn up, assess the room, assess the venue, assess the location where we are, and adjust the lights accordingly, dependent on how I see the shot going.

One of the locations for this music video was a barn in quite a remote location. I knew I wanted to light this for the music video, but there was no power there, it was quite a derelict, remote location. So the only way was either to use a generator, which I've got no experience with and don't want to mess around with on a shoot, simply because of the time aspect. I really wanted some kind of battery powered solution and traditional lights and battery just wouldn't work, so that's why I wanted these new LED panels to give me the continuous light, the power for the duration of the shoot and to keep going and do exactly what I wanted without messing around. So there's no cables, no power issues, just battery pack on the back and they lasted for the entire duration of the shoot.

I've previously used some other LED panels before, however this was the first time I'd actually used the Felloni lights, and I was quite impressed by how bright they were. They were a lot brighter than LED lights which I'd previously used. And the battery life also gave me probably two hours additional lighting than what I had before.. That means I could work with the lights and not worry about them, not have to worry about battery life. They were just beautiful and simple to use. So without power cables running down the back, they're quite easy to pick up, move to a different location. Easy to get the shot and spend all the time you want shooting rather than lugging around equipment and plugging in power etc.

The Fellonis were brilliant, they were better than I expected to be honest. I could adjust the colour temperature exactly how I wanted. We were shooting quite late into the evening at the barn, the sun was setting, so the colour temperature was changing subtly, but we could just simply turn a dial on the back of the panels, then adjust the white balance accordingly. The ability to use daylight or tungsten at will, made it a lot easier to balance with the sun setting behind the barn. With the Felloni's you've got the power on at the back, you've got the dimmer with brightness, which really helped get exactly the shot I was looking for, and adjust the colour balance. I could go from really cool to really warm and get the exact shot that I was after.

The great thing about the Fellonis, which I didn't realise previously, is the fact that you can use them like traditional studio lights: you can use grids, you can use soft boxes, you can use a variety of tools to enhance the light and make it look just how you want, similar to how I've experienced with studio lighting. The power is dimmable to any brightness you need and the colour temperature can be changed to meet your exact requirements, meaning you can get exactly the shot you're after and it saves time, and you can just do what you want to do, which is shoot.

I'm now totally used to being free, to being able to move where I want with these lights. Going back to traditional cables I think is just going to be a headache for me, it's going to be a chore, I don't want to experience any more. Another great thing about these is that they're free to just take off the stand, if you've got someone nearby, an assistant to help, they can just grab these, point them however you want them lit, and they can move with you, with the camera, and with the subject that you're filming. It's just great, portable and easy to get exactly where you need.

One thing I specifically came into with video lighting was back lighting, I really liked the look of getting the rim light around the back of the person, so I specifically for this shoot, wanted a hard light to fire behind the subject, to just give a bit of a nice back light. Typically how I would if I'm shooting into the sun with photography, just to get that back lighting in a dark environment, a shadow environment - to bring out the subject with a back light. The Fellonis didn't have enough power to do this, so I really wanted a hard light, which is what I used the DLED4 to achieve.

The DLED4 is focusable, so you can flood the light, you can have a nice, wide spread if you need to, and of course you can use the barn doors in a typical way you would with any traditional Dedo light. What you've essentially got is an LED version of the DLH4s, exactly the same flexibility, except you're mobile. You've got a battery pack, you don't need to be powered, you can use it anywhere.

Having come from a still photography background, I'm used to being very lightweight, having small flashes, no cables attached and I'm quite mobile when I'm shooting. However moving to video with powered lights, I found it was quite slow to move around, change position, change location, because I was forever working out where the plug sockets are, running cables, and lighting was generally a bit more of a chore than what I'm used to. With these LED powered, battery powered lights, I can pick them up, move them and be as mobile as with my still photography.

My whole ethos behind my photography has always been to capture that photo that the average person wouldn't, to stand out amongst the rest. I make use of shallow depth of field, use wide angle lenses, zoom in tight with a real long lens... I guess that's what I'm trying to do now, with video, is to get a different look, to get a different feel to what everyone else is doing. This is what the DSLRs enable you to do. You can get all the interchangeable lenses, you can go wide, you can go long, you can go short, you can get all the different types of shot quickly and easily and it's just so portable. And quite often I do photography jobs and video jobs on location at the same time, so having the same camera, switching from video to stills and stills to video, is just beautiful. And now I've got lights that enable me to be mobile, without having trucks and trucks of equipment, I can be a one-man team, I can be a three-man team, and it's just great having the portability and the flexibility that these LED lights now give me.

You get very much two looks, you get stylised and you get natural looks. Stylised is very much in a studio, you can see it's lit properly, it's lit beautifully, and you've got the natural look where you almost don't want the lighting to be seen, you just want to make sure the picture is exposed right, the viewer can see the subject correctly, and it doesn't look so obtrusive.

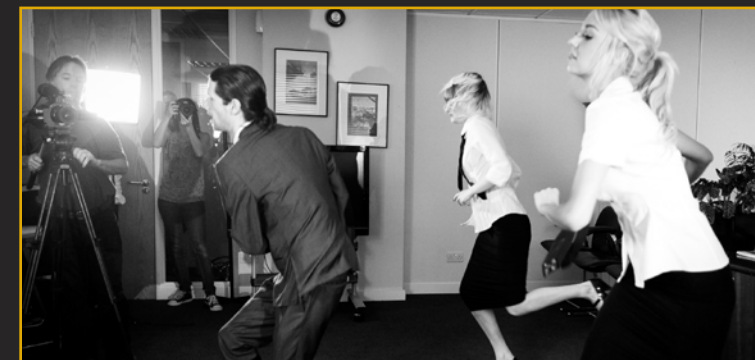


I'm a stills photographer primarily, as opposed to a videographer, so I'm not used to having so much kit, I want to be mobile. With these lights you can move everything around by yourself, everything's lightweight, everything's mobile. So for me it was perfect.

[Watch the video >>](#)

I'M NOT USED TO HAVING SO MUCH KIT"

[Check out more of Scott's work www.dreamshock.com >](http://www.dreamshock.com)





UNTIL THE NEXT TIME...

OPINION: WHY THE PRICE DROP FOR THE BLACKMAGIC CINEMA CAMERA AND WHAT IT MEANS?

Blackmagic totally dropped a bombshell in early August when they announced the price of the Blackmagic Cinema Camera EF and MFT would both be slashed by \$1000.

Usually a price drop of such magnitude is an attempt to clear inventory for a new model, though I don't think for a moment this is the case here. I believe there is a something else going on here which reaches to core of what Blackmagic Design are about as a company and reveals a strategy, which I predict, is going to be a major success.

Let's jump back in history. It was 2004 and I bought a Blackmagic Decklink Extreme card and installed this inside of a G4 Mac. This served me well, enabling computer to connect to professional high-end decks and letting me work with many formats which, otherwise, would have been totally out of reach without paying expensive rates at a facility house. The card costs me a few hundred pounds, from memory less than £500. Over a six month period I earn't good money from that card and computer and then sold the whole set-up for more than I paid. Because of the philosophy of Blackmagic to provide high-end solutions at affordable prices, this enabled me to step up in the quality stakes and work at levels which I couldn't easily do otherwise.



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I'VE INTERVIEWED THE CEO OF BLACKMAGIC, GRANT PETTY, SEVERAL TIMES. THE FIRST TIME I INTERVIEWED GRANT WAS IN 2007. THIS IS WHAT HE SAID TO ME:

"For years I lived in post production and I couldn't get the tools myself, because they were so expensive. And unless the guys who ran the post house sort of like, funded it, you couldn't get these tools that you wanted... The reason I'm really big about making it low cost is because I remember what it was like when I was working in post production. I couldn't get it. I had friends that were really creative and they couldn't afford it."

"I wanted to take away that problem where if you don't have the money you can't do video. It's a creative medium, it's supposed to be a creative business. If you wanted to be creative, you're inspired and you want to push the boundaries in this medium, you should have full access to it and the best quality possible. It's really important."

Those words from Grant Petty, recorded in 2007, encapsulate the philosophy of what Blackmagic Design is about. They are a company who have changed this industry many times over, however, this time - with the camera technology in combination with DaVinci Resolve - they are reshaping the industry like never before.

The fact that it is now possible to buy a Blackmagic Cinema Camera EF or MFT for \$2000 USD or just over £1300 in the UK (ex-vat) makes this camera, which records RAW or ProRes to SSD, almost irresistible to both fledgling and established filmmakers.

I already have a Blackmagic Cinema Camera EF which I love. I also love the idea of having more of these cameras, though may well choose the MFT model next as I have many lenses which would work beautifully, via adapters, with the MFT mount.

The result of this massive 33% price drop, in my opinion, will be tremendous infiltration of the Blackmagic Cinema Camera at all levels of the industry. This would have happened regardless - many said to me they would have paid twice the cost of the camera, and that was before the price drop. The infiltration will now be accelerated.

I am very confident of the above statement because I know just good this camera is. The results are truly stunning.

Check out the footage >>



Interviewing Grant Petty, 2007

This is the most recent footage I have filmed with the Blackmagic Cinema Camera. I don't know of any other affordable camera that can produce results of this quality.

So given that the product is good, the price is extremely competitive, and the camera shoots well above broadcast quality all the way up to cinema quality, and sells for just over £1300... I would expect these cameras to be sold in abundance to content creators everywhere.

I have to say, having a smash hit of a camera is one thing, though longevity of a camera system is another. This is where the other Blackmagic cameras come in - the Pocket Camera and Production Camera. What Blackmagic have created here is a system, not just a camera. Choose the camera which works best or if you prefer shoot multicamera. You can have 3 of the Blackmagic Cinema Cameras for less than the cost of other, cinema type cameras on the market (and these don't shoot RAW). I have spent endless amounts of money on cameras which produce lesser quality to the Blackmagic Cinema Camera. Of course, there are other cameras out there that will outperform the Blackmagic camera, though you will pay a lot of money to do so. We're talking 10 times or more the price of the Blackmagic Cinema Camera. I would say that estimate is being very conservative.

I've heard it said before that you need to change your camera equipment every 2 years to keep up with technology. I would argue against this! Rather I would say you need to produce quality results for your paying clients, every time, at a decent but not outrageous cost. Whether you change your camera every 6 months or every 6 years is entirely up to the camera owner to decide. Yes, there are times when a particular camera, format, lens system is demanded - and there are many times when the equipment is provided by the production facility or single operator with no questions being asked about which camera it is, what format it shoots, and whether the results are good enough for cinema, web, or anything in-between.

Of course, it all comes down to choosing the right tool. And having a Blackmagic Cinema Camera in one's toolkit lifts the potential in a major way of what one can achieve in the realms of affordable acquisition.

I am not suggesting the cameras built by Blackmagic are going to replace all the other cameras out there - there is room for many different models and systems, each with their own strengths and capabilities. Though I am quite sure the Blackmagic Cinema Cameras (EF, MFT, Production Camera, Pocket Camera) are going to be a major force for a long time to come - and who knows what further camera creations Blackmagic will come out with in the future.



To sum up the essence of my thoughts - Blackmagic, though their policy of providing extreme value, matched by amazing capability, sheer quality, and the power and simplicity which their cameras offer, in combination with DaVinci Resolve for grading and output, have ensured their place in the market (in a major way) for a long while yet. I'm sure the other camera manufacturers are scrutinizing the Blackmagic cameras trying to work out how on earth they can compete with this tidal wave which Blackmagic has unleashed.

Until the next time.
Rick