

Sea and Sea YS-D3 strobe review

by Mike Bartick

DEMA 2019 BC, Sea and Sea unveiled their new professional grade YS-D3 Lightning strobe. With great anticipation, I was able to get a set underwater and begin using them to see if they lived up to their namesake of "Lightning" strobe.

At first glance there is a resemblance between the slightly smaller D2 series of strobes and the D3 but make no mistake, this newly engineered strobe is anything but an old strobe in a new cover.

What I look for when considering a new strobe isn't anything different than the average shooter where decisions are based on simple categories around what or how I like to shoot the most. Of course wide angle is the real test but other key features include color temp, recycle times, beam angle and spread, an easy to understand user interface and of course, budget.

The YS-D3 Lightning strobe is freshly designed from the ground up as the new flagship strobe from the engineer team at Sea and Sea. On the spec sheet, the innards of this "high performance strobe" includes

a precision ground aspherical shape trooidal lens which assists the dual flash elements to increase the guide number to 33 (land test) while spreading the beam evenly and smoothly without a diffuser.

To accommodate the increased power output, a complete re-design of the electronics was necessary in order to achieve this vital upgrade. Larger capacity condensers and a newly designed charging circuit increases reliability and durability while simultaneously decreases the lag time between flashes or recycle times. In addition to the newly designed inner workings, the outer strobe-head also underwent serious design changes including a collar for bayonet mounting accessories.

Whats in the box:

1 YS-D3 strobe and standard 110° diffuser, O-ring, lube, YS mount and straight ball mount

Spec sheet:

- Guide number measured on land is 33 or 28 with flat 110° diffuser.
- Battery 4 x AA- 6V Ni-MH: 4.8volts
- Color Temp: 5600k | 5250 with diffuser



*An aggregation of snappers, sheltering behind a small patch of reef along the Punta Sur area of Cozumel Island.
Nikon D850 | Sigma 15mm | Sea and Sea Optical Dome | f,11 @ 1/160, strobe power EV 1.5 (3/4 power)*



- 11 steps of light
- Travel ready weight with 4 Eneloop batteries and ball mount- 26+ oz.
- Underwater-Nearly neutral fully loaded.
- Exposure control-DS-TTL, Slave TTL and/or manual with 11 steps
- LED adjustable spotting light- 2 steps of power (does not turn off when strobe is fired)