

Jonah ND-100 Review

By Craig Jones and James Wiseman

Photos by James Wiseman unless noted

Introduction

We were fortunate to receive the “test housing” from Jim Bullitt at Oceanbrite (www.oceanbrite.com) the California distributor for Jonah housings.

Size and Construction

Simply put – this is a small housing. It fits the D100 perfectly, as shown in the photos. I was really surprised at the small size and light weight of the Jonah ND100. It measures 178x160x116 mm, weighs approx. 1700g (w/out port) and is depth rated to 90m.

The housing construction seems very good – with tight tolerances. Like the Aquatica S2, the Jonah uses one main o ring in a groove. The front of the housing also has stabbing guides to help the user line up the front and back before closing. The two locking lid snaps have a recessed area that allows the user to get a thumb underneath to open them—making the combination very streamlined.

Functions

The only major difference between this and other D100



The controls are very well laid out. The focus lock and shutter are right at your fingertips and the front command dial can be turned with your thumb and middle finger.



housings I have used is that the rear command dial control is on the top of the housing. This is nice in that it means you can reach it with your face pressed up against the viewfinder optic.

I especially like the focus lock lever on this housing. The photographer can program the D100 to focus using the focus lock button and then immediately take a photo using the shutter release. This can even be done with one hand. Alternatively, the focus lock can be used with a lens in autofocus that is having a hard time achieving focus lock. Simply

lock focus on a high contrast subject, then move the housing in and out like you would when shooting manual focus. This will be especially useful for macro and super-macro. The only function control that I found missing is a lens release button or lever on the front of the housing; however, I expect to see this on the newer revisions of the unit.

Available Ports and Lens Combinations

I was sent a flat port, an extension ring for the 105mm, a



The fit is very good, leaving just enough space for the moisture alarm.



Here is a photo by Craig Jones showing the comparison to the Nexus D100 housing with 4" dome

I received the 4" dome, the 8" dome, and the 60mm flat port w/ extension ring for the review



4" and an 8" dome with built-in shade.

The port system is bayonet mount and the port bodies are made out of metal and some kind of high density polymer like HDPE. The flat port for the 60mm Micro is extremely small and has a neoprene sleeve on it which makes it easy to grasp and turn.

None of the ports we received for testing came equipped with manual focus knobs or focus or zoom gears. I anticipate that Jonah will be releasing some zoom gears soon, followed by a flat port with focus gear suitable for use with the 60mm and 105mm Micro lenses. I would like to see a zoom gear for the 12-24DX lens first though.

Workability

This housing is light and easy to handle on the boat and in the water. I can't comment on the underwater handling and balance when using the various ports. The placement of the controls is good and allows the photographer to switch focus points quickly, change ISO, and change shooting quality between RAW and JPEG'— all the functions that I find important. Breaking open the housing for servicing is also a breeze. Because the camera mounts to the front of the unit, it is easy to change memory cards. With the quick shoe design, it is also easy to pop the camera out for topsides use, or to change the battery. The viewfinder optic on the ND100 makes full use of the smallish viewfinder on the D100.

Conclusion

Jonah has certainly made quite an impact on the scene with their new housings for the Nikon D100 and the Canon 10D.

They are available at a very reasonable pricepoint making these housings attractive to photographers making the jump to a digital SLR camera. At this time, the available ports accommodate most if not all of the popular lenses used with the D100. I would not hesitate to recommend this housing to friends. Here is a quick bullet list of pros and cons:

Advantages:

- Small and light
- Decent viewfinder
- Excellent window to view mode dial setting
- Reasonably priced
- Ergonomic design
- Good variety of available ports

This is the first digital housing produced by Jonah and they have done an excellent job.

However I have noted here a few small areas that needs improvement and I hope they will be incorporated into future revisions of the housing.

Needs Improvement:

The housing could use a lens release button (I hope to see this in future revisions)

The hot shoe mount has a bit too much elasticity allowing the camera to move within the housing

The handles are fairly small and would benefit



One excellent feature of the Jonah housing is the clear panel which allows you to see the mode dial setting. Photo by Craig Jones.

from some optional extension pieces for people with larger hands.

The current hole spacing on the handles does not match popular USA and Canadian mounting hardware.

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