

Other controls include, 3 x zoom, ISO, white balance, flash mode, close-up option, bracketing, sharpness, exposure compensation and exposure lock.

Quality wise I set the camera on what Fuji call 3M (2048 x 1536 effective pixels) this gave me 19 images on the 16Mb card supplied. What were the results like? It has to be said that they were pretty similar to other top end 3 mega pixel cameras I have tested. The image didn't particularly leap out and shout huge dynamic range. I suspect this perception was probably due to the fact that I had hyped myself up on Fuji's market blurb to expect a quantum leap in technology that gave rise to this disappointment. However, that doesn't mean the F700 produces poor results. There is more than enough quality for a home print up to A4 size. I'm sure if one was to use

this camera without the expectation of its new CCD it would appear at or near the top of any comparative test.

In the studio we played around using the RAW and the 6M settings. There was a slight increase in quality between the 3M and 6M but no appreciable change between the 6M and RAW. Thus unless you particularly need more pixels that take up valuable space on the memory card I would recommend the 3M setting.

All said I liked this system. The housing is well made fairly indestructible, compact enough to fit into most BC pockets and easy to use. The camera is stylish, idiot proof but sophisticated enough for the enthusiast.

Connecting to my iMAC was simply plug and play although I did require the software provided to

use the propriety RAW setting.

The Fuji Finepix F700 puts up a respectable challenge to the similar offerings from Olympus and Pentax.

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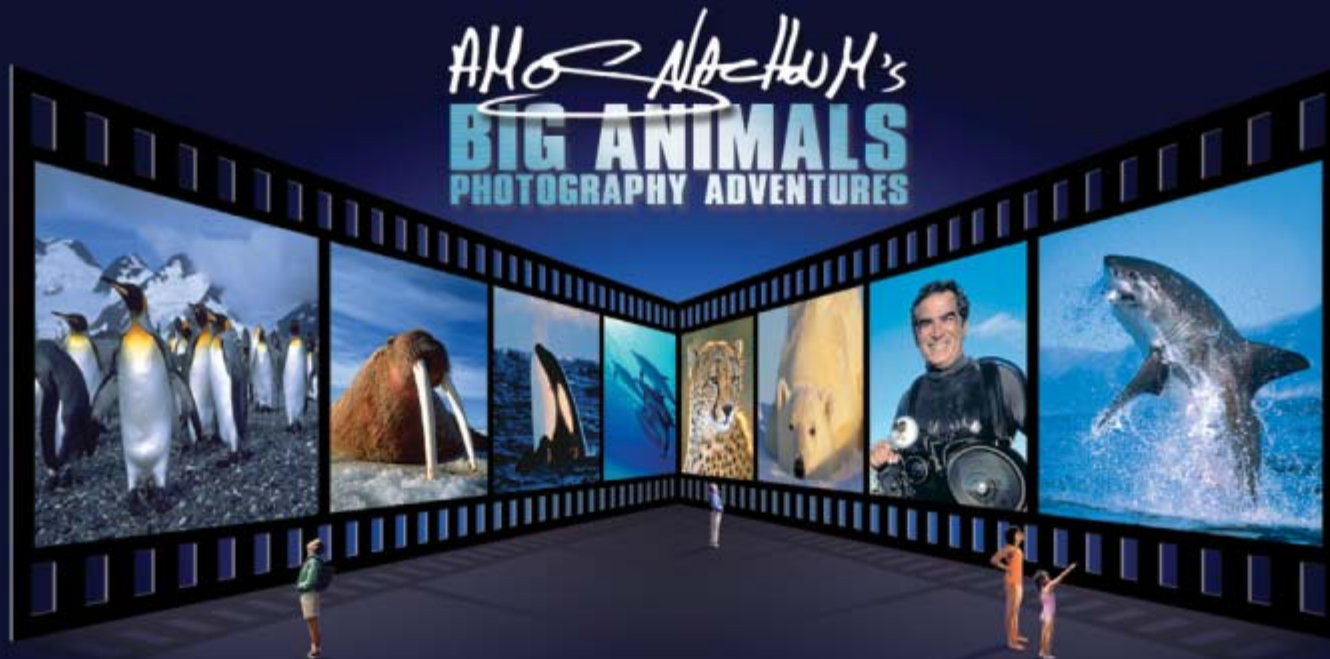
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Top Dawg Mini/StingRay 111 Sport review

by Peter Rowlands

With new video cameras still arriving to the market on a regular basis it makes it difficult for housing manufacturers to keep up with the new models and their changing shapes. Back in the 1970's Ikelite solved this problem by investing in a polycarbonate housing which could be configured to accommodate most popular SLR still cameras.

A decade or so later Berkely White of Backscatter in Monterey commissioned video housing manufacturer Light and Motion to produce a housing to solve the problem of ever changing video cameras. And so the Top Dawg was born - a simple housing which could house a long list of video cameras without any modifications.

There were four main design features which accomplished this.

Firstly the front port was large and flat so it could allow a wide variety of lens positions to be tolerated. Secondly the rear window was similar so that it could cope with the ever changing viewfinder positions and thirdly the remote Lanc connector was used so that the main camera functions could be controlled from fixed positions on the housing using maintenance-free magnetic controls. The final part of the equation was a multi-drilled baseplate to allow a wide range of video cameras to be mounted in the right position.

The result was a perfect solution and led to worldwide sales because, as a new camera appeared, the Top Dawg design could not only accommodate them but could allow them to be handled ergonomically.



The aluminium extrusion hull beautifully machined and finished and the fixed handles are well positioned to allow access the the four main control switches.



The rear plate is double o ring sealed and retained by two very simple but effective rotary closures.

The video market continued to move on apace and miniaturisation breakthroughs led to a new breed of smaller video camera which, funnily enough, were just too small to be used effectively in the original Top Dawg housing.



The rear viewfinder port is large enough to allow for the varying positions of the cameras viewfinders.



The baseplate looks like it was in the St Valentines Day Massacre but it allows a wide variety of cameras to be accommodated.

Ever responsive to the needs of the market Backscatter and Light and Motion went back to the drawing board and produced the Top Dawg Mini which Light & Motion also market as the Stingray



There are four main controls, two on each side as well as the Power on button at the front.



The optional extra 2.5" monitor back is well worth considering as it will improve the quality of your footage/composition.



The addition of two SunRay Mod lights will add colour and detail to your macro shots

111 Sport. (I'm going to abbreviate these from now on to TDM and S3S)

The new housing continues with the successful design concept of the original with an additional improvement to the main Power switch which is now provided on the front of the housing.

The best way to sum up the TDM and S3S is simplicity. Load the camera onto the baseplate, set the camera's focus switch to "Auto" and the power switch to "Camera" and plug in the Lanc plug. Slide the baseplate into the housing and close the rearplate with two rotary clips and you're ready to shoot underwater.

The camera is turned on by pressing the silver button on the front and the camera will be ready to respond to commands in 5 seconds. The TDM and S3S has four magnetic controls which are ergonomically positioned next the the two main handles. Back right is 'Stop/start record' (push forward) and 'Power off' (push back and hold for 5

seconds.

Rear left is 'Momentary Autofocus' (forward) and 'Autofocus lock' (back) with 'Focus' at the front left and 'Zoom' on the front right. All of these controls fall very easily to hand and you can operate them without having to take your eye from the viewfinder.

If you are considering one of these housings there are a couple of accessories you should definitely consider.

The first is the PAL/NTSC Monitor back which gives you a 2.5" LCD screen to view your subject from further away. This means you can view the image you are filming but still be able to look over the housing to see how the action is shaping up. The second is the addition of a couple of SunRay Mod lights which will add important colour and detail into your close up shots. If you decide to go for these accessories you will get a Travel Package which includes a fitted Pelican case.

The housing is depth rated to 150 feet and is 9.3"l x 7.2" w x 6" h. It weighs just 5 lbs in air and about 0.25lbs underwater (depending on camera weight).

The TDM and S3S is a very simple package which will accommodate a wide range of cameras. The build quality and design are top class, the ergonomics excellent and its value for money would be difficult to beat.

Peter Rowlands

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For further details check out
www.uwimaging.com
www.backscatter.com
www.fep.co.uk

Think Digital



NEW Digital SLR Housing

For
Canon Digital Rebel
Canon 10D
Canon D60
Nikon D100



To extend the capabilities of these cameras Ikelite has designed a new underwater housing. This new housing was specifically designed for the smaller digital SLR cameras. Injection molded of clear polycarbonate for strength, visual access to the camera, lcd screens and camera controls. The ergonomic design places camera functionality at your fingertips for the ultimate in creative control. The interchangeable port system accommodates a wide variety of lenses from super-wide angle to super-macro. The rubber handles offer excellent grip and a quick release system for Ikelite's new SA-100 Arm system. An external Ikelite connector is provided to connect single or dual Ikelite Substrobes.

Digital SLR Housing features:

- Clear Molded Polycarbonate
- Corrosion Free
- Interchangeable Port System
- Clear View of Info Window
- Clear View of LCD screen
- Most Camera Functions Available
- Weighted for Neutral Buoyancy
- Quick-Release Strobe Mounts
- Rubber Hand Grips
- External Connector for Substrobes
- Super-eye Magnifier for Enhanced Viewing with a Dive Mask.
- Weight 6.6lbs. (2.9k)
- Dimensions 7.5"L x 4.75"W x 7.25"H (19cm x 12cm x 18cm)



Ikelite also offers a full line of housings for Non-SLR digital cameras. Beginner, amateur, or pro, simply get an Ikelite housing for your favorite digital land camera. Choose from Canon, Kodak, Nikon, Olympus or Sony, Ikelite makes housings for several camera models from each of these manufacturers.

Ikelite supports their underwater digital housings with a full line of accessories. Choose from trays with single or dual handle and quick release of strobes. The DS50 Substrobe is ideal for cameras with zoom lenses or choose the DS125 for use with wide-angle lenses. The DS Sensor duplicates the camera's internal flash for full TTL automation, or use our new EV Controller that gives 10 power settings in 1/2 stop increments for complete lighting control. Ikelite also offers a choice in versatile arm systems to meet your needs and budget.

New digital cameras are being introduced at a rapid pace. For the latest information on new digital housing models visit our web site.

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