

Canon G7X mini review

by Alex Tattersall

Last month, in lovely Lembah, I had the opportunity to test Canon's latest gem of a compact camera, the G7X. There were many things to love about this little camera, the image quality, the ability to minimise flash output for fast recycling, the focusing speed, the impressive dynamic range, the high flash sync speed, the diminutive size, the list goes on.

Not quite so lovely is the fact that this compact camera's lens is physically shorter at its widest (24mm) than at its 100mm telephoto end. For land photography this detail would be irrelevant but in an underwater housing it makes a significant difference because it makes attaching wide wet lenses a challenge as the standard housing front results in a significant air gap between the camera's lens and the rear of the wet lens, giving unacceptably poor sharpness with the wide lenses we tested.

To compensate for this, Nauticam have adopted a multi port system which includes a shorter port for use with wide wet lenses, a standard port which works well with no wet lens or a wet macro lens, and a minidome to restore the camera's native 24mm

FOV. When I first discovered this, I thought that this negated the advantage of having a compact camera, wherein the ability to change between macro and wide angle is perennially a source of smugness among compact users watching DSLR shooters agonising over lens choice. Having used the camera though, I am very convinced by its ease of use and image results and will not be selling mine for a long while yet.

The Canon G7X has been brought to market seemingly to challenge the might of the Sony RX100 range, whose three generations have pushed the boundaries of compact camera image quality through large sensors. The Canon G7X has adapted the same size sensor but combines this with, to my mind, a more intuitive user interface. The ability to minimize internal flash output for faster recycle times pushes the underwater advantage of the Canon over the Sony even moreso. Combine this with more effective underwater white balancing (the nemesis of the Sony range) and the super high strobe sync speed through



G7X CMC F11, 1/320 ISO 200, 2x INON Z240

This is an example of where the compact allowed me to take a shot I would have found difficult with the larger DSLR system.



G7X CMC F11, 1/400 ISO 200, 2x INON Z240
Another excellent subject for a compact camera with a strong dioptré, an imperial partner shrimp on a nudibranch.

fibre optic cable and the true potential of this compact camera comes to light. Cited frequently as a negative is the battery life which may be an issue for TTL shooting or video but for stills with minimum flash output, I was never concerned about battery life but changed battery between dives in any case.

I tested the camera with Nauticam's recently released Compact Macro Convertor (CMC) and a soon to be released prototype Nauticam wide angle convertor.

The CMC was used with the Nauticam G7X housing with standard port and a flip dioptré holder. It can be effectively used from about half way through the zoom range until maximum zoom with no apparent degradation to the IQ. Working distance is more than acceptable to allow easy lighting of subject matter but it is of course important to select subject matter appropriate to this combination (i.e.



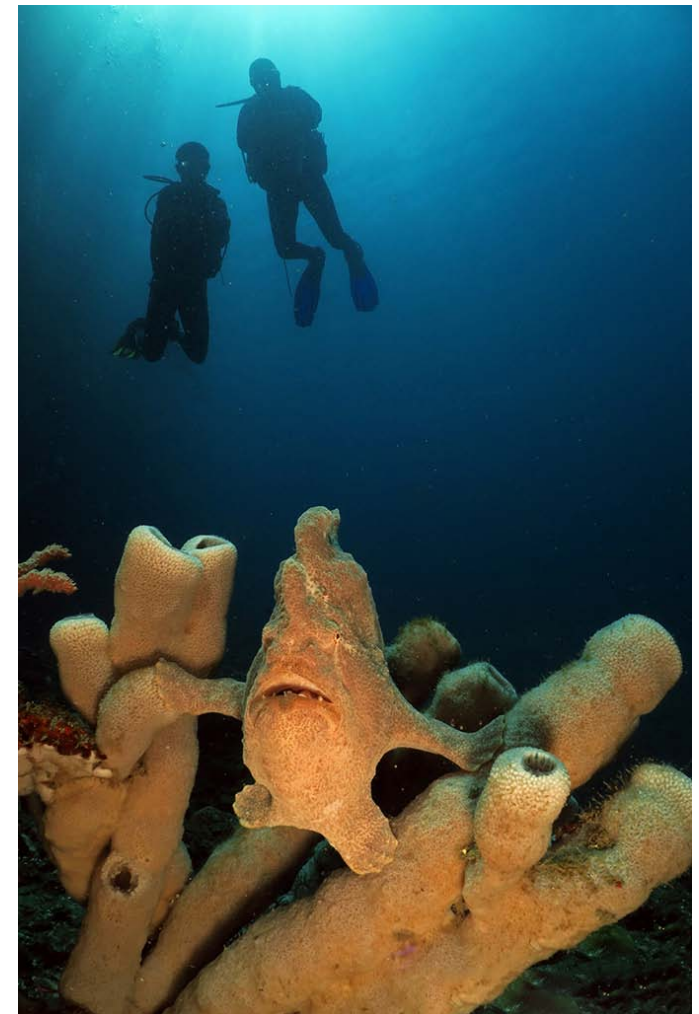
A full size 100% crop

slow moving and not easily spooked).

I also tried the G7X with no external lens with the standard flat port at 24mm. Although very competent, there is some evident chromatic aberration (CA) to the edges of the image as a result.

Finally, I used the prototype wide angle conversion lens with the G7X using the short front port. Uncropped results follow which show corner to corner sharpness, independent testing shows sharpness throughout the aperture range on the G7X. The lens is designed to be used at 28mm and gives a FOV of approx. 120 degrees at 28mm. I suspect the final product will have some modification to this but watch this space.

To conclude then, the results from this little powerhouse of a camera speak for themselves. If polyvalence is what you are after in a compact, the Sony RX100ii may still be a better choice but



G7X, F11, 1/320, ISO 250
Wide angle frogfish and divers

for ease of interface, fast recycle time and overall enjoyment of use, the G7X wins hands-down for me.

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