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## Sony hdr-cx240 user manual

Excellent HDV video; optical stabilisation of the image; good ergonomics no 24p Cinema mode; Confusing sony menus has the widest selection of high definition cameras of any manufacturer. At last count they had 12, ranging from \$999 to \$3,699 USD. The company touches almost all of the high definition format and media bases this year, including HDV (band) and AVCHD using either mini DVDs, hard drives or Memory Stick Pro Duo flash cards. No MPEG-4 720p cheats for them, though, thank you very much. Most OF Sony's HD videomakers – save \$3,699 HDR-FX1 – use CMOS sensors like Canon HV10 and HV20 rather than CCD imaging devices. At first I was skeptical of the manufacturer's hype about improving the quality of CMOS image sensors, but the proof is in low-noise video. Of the latest revised models for Digital Trends, 3-megapixel CMOS sensors do indeed deliver the goods. The new Sony HDV HDR-HC7 has a CMOS 3.2MP ClearVid imager, optical image stabilization and lots of other goodies. As usual, Sony asks you to pay a little more for its gear than the competition-price list anyway. Is Hc7 worth extra? There's only one way to find out... Features and design Sony HDR-HC7 looks like so many other cameras with its horizontal configuration and silver-toned body with black accents. In fact, it looks similar to the Canon HV20 except the tape compartment is slightly more compact. The two companies are fierce rivals, so look-alikes have to come from different factories, right? HC7 measures 3.25 x 3.25 x 5.5 (WHD, in inches) and tips scales at 23.2 ounces, including battery and memory stick Pro Duo card. Tiny isn't, but it feels very substantial. The front is dominated by a 10x Carl Zeiss Vario-Sonnar T\* optical zoom with a reasonably 20x digital zoom; we still suggest you turn off digital zoom because the quality decreases a bit from pure optics. Under the zoom is a stereo microphone and next to it is an entry for optional microphones that fit into the hot accessory shoe. You'll also find an infrared port that transmits light when you're in NightShot mode. With this feature you can record subjects in complete darkness, but they are a monochrome green. My cat's eyes looked pretty cool, but this is best used for sleeping kids or you can use it as a walking light in the dark, checking things on the LCD screen! Next to the Nightshot sensor is an auto pop-out flash for still images. The left side has a bunch of decals proclaiming format (HD HDV) and a few less disturbing markings, including one that states that this is a 6.1-megapixel camera. take Sony a 3.2MP video camera and 6.1 MP images? With interpolation, naturally, a software accessory that cranks up native resolution. Works? We'll let you know on the next page. This part is dominated by a 2.7-inch widescreen LCD monitor rated at 211K pixels. This is is is touch screen, so you have to tap it to access the menu system. I used it a lot and had no trouble smudging. I had a problem with some weird spelling contractions-I think it's just the old english major in me. Connect has a one, not CCONNECT and pretentious stuff like that. And the adjustments could be better organized. More on this in a bit. On the left screen frame are controls to adjust the zoom (wide/telephoto) and to start/stop recording. On the lens barrel, you will find a key to enter manual mode and a dial to scroll through these adjustments. There is also a Back Light key and another switch to turn NightShot on or off. On the body, under the LCD is a compartment for various inputs/outputs, including LANC, Firewire, component, A/V and a headphone jack. HDMI is on the back, in case you're wondering. When the LCD is open, on the body you will find a USB outside, a Pro Duo card slot and a button for the Easy Handycam setting (virtually full auto) and a display/battery info that removes any clutter from the screen; When you're on you'll see how much life is left in the battery at the minute, a terrific feature in the real world. The right side has a comfortable strap, tape compartment and a key to adjust the flash (on/off). At the top is the hot accessory shoe cover, tape ejection button, wide switch/tele zoom and a dedicated button to take photos. The back of the camera has dial ing mode (tape/recording still/play), recording button, HDMI compartment and DC-in for recharging the battery. The battery fits perfectly in a slot so as not to come out (similar to HV20). In contrast, it has a pull-out viewfinder with a comfortable cup of eye, which can be adjusted with diopter control. At the bottom is the tripod holder and the battery release switch. All in all, this is a compact, attractive video camera. HDR-HC7 comes with the basics including a needle adapter, battery, remote, A/V, component, USB and (surprisingly) firewire cables. You also receive a 115-page Owner Manual. The software package is limited with Picture Motion Browser Ver. 2.0.02, which is geared for very basic editing of brass and video. Fortunately, there are many accessible packages available for editing HDV images if you want to go on this route. Once the battery was charged, the tape and card charged, it was time to test this kid out. Image courtesy of Sony Testing and the use of HDR-HC7 is an HDV video camera, which means it takes 1920 x 1080i high definition video, recording on a mini DV tape, 1440 x 1080i for current AVCHD models. Of all the HD cameras I've used HDV offers the best video to date; its only drawback is that it uses a small cassette rather than an HDD like HD Everio or flash memory (Panasonic HDC-SD1) I suffered through the hassles of tape because the pay on the screen is well worth it. That's it, that's it. with HC7, which uses a 3.2 MP ClearVid CMOS sensor - can not be declared enough: the image quality is very good. Yes, rapid transmission and rewinding is annoying, as is the lack of self-generated index points, but that's life in the big city. The video camera feeds very quickly and with a click on dialing mode you can shoot the video to tape or take an al still to the book. As usual, I started in Auto and then moved to the manual options. Sony calls its automatic Easy Handycam setting and when it places you in this setting, you can't change anything but zoom. Focus for the most part was fast with limited hunting to lock in; the unit had no problems shooting through the glass. I took scenes inside and out, moving to mode still (6.1MP) along the way. Removing HC7 from the auto opens up a variety of options, including manual focus, exposure, exposure speed, AE and WB balance change. You can assign the dial on the lens barrel to one of these five options (I chose focus). Then simply turn the dial to adjust. This dial was quite free and I preferred Canon. You can also use the touchscreen to make adjustments as well. The screen, rated 211K pixels, was decent, but I found the colors a little off. Adjusting through the menu is highly recommended. Like all cameras, it has a number of scene modes to match this occasion (portrait, dusk, sunrise/sunset, beach and so on). As better cameras, the HC7 has a zebra pattern for checking the brightness level, a histogram and a lot of other tricks the vast majority of people won't use. But, hey, it's good to know you're available. After the video recording and stills it was time to see they performed. As for the video, I was very impressed. In fact, I liked a shade better than the HV20-just a shade, remember. The images seemed to have a little more depth and detail. The video shot outdoors was very accurate, capturing the vividness of the purple pool floating while shots of the sky had no noise whatsoever. The material taken inside was not as vibrant, but dark corners in the available light, with quite free noise, just a little better than Canon, in my opinion. The HC7 doesn't have a built-in light, so you might want to consider buying one if you're going to do a lot of shooting inside. For that matter the HV20 has a light, but it is so small to make it useless. Of course, you can use Sony NightShot for recording in total darkness, but you get a scene that looks like something out of the pair of night vision glasses. This video camera supports for a wider range of colors, but unfortunately you need a new HDTV that can display (the new Sony-natural-and Samsung HDVs have, among others). My older HDTV does not, so I can't comment on the system. (yes, I know it's time to bite the bullet and get one.) Although it has a native 3.2 MP imager, Sony uses an interpolation variant to resolution at 6.1-megapixel. It's a bit of sleight-by-hand and it shows in 8 1/2 x 11 prints I cranked out-especially the pictures taken inside. I wasn't impressed at this size, but 4x6 and 5x7s would be OK Canon wins the battle here and I hope I don't go the interpolation route in my-spec-is-greater than your game. And for the record, Sony photos were better than 7MP Sanyo photos, but that drive is a clunker. But this is all a sideshow-these are cameras and HDV images is delicious. There is an area where Canon is a winner hands-down-Cinema 24p mode. With it, your pictures take a more-movie-like movie. It's subtle but visible because it tones down harsh video. Sony tries to emulate it with its cinematic mode, but it's not a real deal. Conclusion Like Canon HV20, I have no problem recommending this video camera even if it is on tape. The quality video is excellent and the stills are, well, the still camcgots, whether spec says 6.1MP or 6,000. HDR-HC7 feels very comfortable and the controls are nicely positioned. The LCD touchscreen makes it quite simple to navigate into the menu system, but it's not the most intuitive I've used. In the real world of online legit traders, I found Sony for about \$1000 USD and Canon for \$1,029 USD, basically a difference of \$30. Because little, really comes down to your tastes because the video in both cases is top-notch. Do you like a touchscreen? Go with Sony. Do you prefer to browse menus with a joystick? Opt for Canon. And if cinema mode 24p intrigues you, HV20 is the one. And if it were a thousand dollars, Canon gets my vote with a single pixel or three. Pros: • Delicious HDV Video • Solid Optical Image Stabilization • Nice Feel and Ergonomics Cons: • Touchscreen Could Be a Turnoff • Menus Are A Little Confused • Not True 24p Mode Editors Recommendations