

HP R837 digital camera

Can HP's usability focused camera impress?

by Stuart Miles published on 15 March 2007

The HP R837 is HP's latest digital camera. Announced at PMA in Las Vegas the company has opted to focus on usability rather than megapixel count. But does the point and shoot live up to its claim? We took the camera out to the Grand Canyon to find out.

Small and compact, HP has opted for a design similar to the Sony's Cyber-shot T range and the digital camera comes with a front slider that slides downwards to reveal the lens capable of 3x optical zoom without protruding out of the front of the camera.

It's here we encountered two problems. Firstly that you had to use two hands to bring the slider down without getting jammed and that, as helpfully pointed out by a HP representative, that if you don't do it carefully you can smudge the lens with your thumb.

At the rear of the camera is a large 3-inch display and this pretty much dominates the back of the model. To the side there are the usual array of buttons to access menus and images, and the camera has opted for a three way switch to toggle between still, moving capture and playback.

On the whole, bar the front slider, the camera is easy to use, comfortable in the hand and not too bulky in the pocket, although that sliding lens cover doesn't help in that department either.

When it comes to taking pictures the R837 is responsive. Start up time was too a minimum and its ability to cope with different light sources and focusing good. We took a range of pictures at and above the Grand Canyon.

Unfortunately it was a cloudy day and so our images do look a little flat and some of the images did feature a lot of noise. Overall we think



...cont.

the R837 coped well with the plethora of browns and when it came to detail the results were okay but not excellent.

HP has also included an anti-shake feature that promises to help prevent blurred photos in lower light, this didn't really work as well as we had hoped.

Other specs worth noting are the camera's 32MB internal memory and a VGA video option with audio shoots at 24 frames per second.

We do however like the camera's ability to be charged via a USB socket on a laptop or desktop computer meaning its one less cable in the bag if you travel with both.

Where the camera excels however is not in its photography skills, we would rate it about average rather than exceptional, but in its ability to do stuff once you've taken your image.

New to this model is something HP are calling Pet Fix, an option to remove red eye from your dog, cat, snake, guinea pig or elephant and most animals between. Also new is the ability to touch-up (no not that kind) your friends and relatives with the cameras in-built software. While you can't remove someone from the frame completely is it possible to remove the odd spot or blemish allowing you to print directly to a printer (be it at home, online or in store) without having to worry about getting to a computer to remove that unsightly zit.

VERDICT

While we wouldn't recommend this camera to those looking for great pictures no matter what the setting, we would recommend it for first time buyers looking for a very consumer friendly model to get them started in the world of digital photography.

HP has focused this camera to usability and for the most part it succeeds, the menus are easy to

At a glance

What is it?

7 megapixel digital camera

Good

Pet Fix, Touch-up tool, ability to tag images on the fly, 3-inch LCD screen

Bad

Sliding lens cover can get stuck, picture quality is average not excellent

Verdict

An average design and average picture quality let this model down

Price £200

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/2195/HP-r837-compact-digital-camera>

...cont.

understand, the picture taking on-board help helpful and the ability to tag images on the fly for easy storage later (including creating your own tags to import back from a PC) really useful.

However an average design and average picture quality let this model down.