

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/2313/canon-hv20-hd-ready-camcorder>

Canon HV20 camcorder

Your TV's HD so why not your camcorder? Canon hopes this model will fix that

by Stuart Miles published on 8 May 2007

With the world going high-definition, is only fair to expect any footage you shoot should be too.

The HV20 is Canon's second HD camcorder aimed at consumers and builds on the pocketable HV10. But has the upgrade added anything of any worth? We get filming to find out.

Breaking away from a compact design as found in the HV10, the new HV20 looks more like a traditional camcorder rather than something you could fit in your pocket. Because of it, it does lose its appeal as a device that you can impress your mates with on first glance, however with a series of new additions, better specs and more functionality that disappointment is soon over.

Sporting the same image sensor and digital processing chip found in the company's EOS DSLR range the HV20 packs plenty of punch when it comes to image quality.

Rather than opt for a hard disc, Canon has opted for DV tape and because this is an established format, the quality is excellent. This is helped further by the camcorder's 24P mode or its 25P mode in something Canon calls Cinema Mode, according to company it helps you reproduce the look and feel of film.

Our test footage, using both the Cinema Mode and regular mode was crystal clear, and the high quality means you can do what you like with it afterwards rather than just being restricted to show it on the web.

Helping you show off that 1080i image quality, Canon has now added a HDMI socket to the HV20. The all-important addition means you can connect the camcorder directly to your HD-ready television and enjoy your footage in high-def.



...cont.

When it comes to controls, the HV20 sports plenty of buttons, whether its controlling playback via the rotating swivelling screen, recording or selecting auto or program mode there are plenty of options.

Most useful is the addition of a manual focus dial that allows you to fine tune your focusing options. The P mode, which is virtually identical to Canon's digital camera range, also comes in handy if you're looking for greater control and allows you to set aperture controls and the like as well as giving you more control over the cameras manual settings such as white balance, however, you can't change it while filming.

A new 10x optical zoom that allows you to zoom into the action has been added. It's one of the main reasons for the change in design and certainly a welcomed addition although as you might expect unless you are using a tripod, holding the camera steady when zoomed in full can be hard work.

Also new to the camcorder is the ability to add your own mic via the mic input connection and this also gives you manual audio controls. Furthermore the camcorder now sports a Hot Shoe slot on the top of the model and this allows you to attach and power a range of accessories as you would a professional camcorder such as a mic or light.

Just like still cameras boast movie capabilities, the HV20 boasts a still camera feature able to capture photos using the cameras 3.1 megapixel sensor. Images, which can be taken while filming, are saved onto the miniSD card and can then be transferred to a computer or directly to a printer using PictBridge using the camcorder's Direct Print button.

Results are as you would expect from a 3 megapixel camera are okay but not great and if you are planning on printing anything more than 6 x 4 prints then we would recommend reverting to

At a glance

What is it?

HD 1080i camcorder

Good

Video quality, options, 10x optical zoom

Bad

Size, limited cables in the box

Verdict

When it comes to video performance the Canon HV20 is very impressive. As we start to live in a HD world this is on the very cutting edge

Price £959

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10

...cont.

a standalone digital camera.

VERDICT

When it comes to video performance the Canon HV20 is very impressive. As we start to live in a HD world this is on the very cutting edge.

So what's the catch? There are three main problems with the HV20, first up is the price.

Getting the latest gear is going to hurt the bank balance and this is by no means a budget offering at £959.

Second is the battery - it's shocking. With only 65 minutes available you've got to be careful when you're out on a shoot as we found in our tests.

The third is the lack of any useful cables to get to started in the box. No HDMI to connect to a HD -ready television, no Firewire for transferring to your computer, no miniSD card, no DV tape and while we are on the topic of extras, the software isn't that great either.

Having just shelled out almost a £1000 you would expect that the least Canon could do is bung in some cables in the box?

The final question is whether you actually need the power of HD, if your about to make a movie then the answer is probably yes, HD is the future and this will certainly get you there, but if its just filming little Emily in the park then a regular camcorder will probably do and you'll be able to get into HD when the price comes down.

Don't get us wrong, this is still a great camera, but not with out its problems.