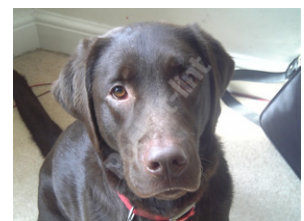


Sharp 902

by Stuart Miles published on 7 April 2005

Digital cameras are fast becoming the norm on mobile phones, but are they any good? Should the camera market start to worry, and more importantly do we actually need a 2 megapixel camera phone? Sharp has long been tied to Vodafone in this country with its GX range. The new model, the Sharp 902, doesn't change this one bit and the Sharp 902 is again an exclusive to the Vodafone network. The model builds drastically on the GX30, becoming larger, but offering 3G connectivity among a host of other options. The main feature is a large 240x320 pixel 262,000 colour display and a 2 mega pixel camera. It is Sharp's first 2 mega pixel camera phone and one of the first to come onto the UK market (Sony Ericsson and others have models out later on in the year). The screen as you would expect from the figures above is bright, crisp and large making a viewfinder larger than most digital cameras. Wanting you to use the phone as a camera, Sharp has taken a leaf out of Sony Ericsson's book and gets you to hold the phone horizontally. On the side (or the top when held upright) is an option button, a shutter button and two further buttons to control the 2x optical and digital zoom making the whole experience camera like through and through. The response time of the screen is very good and it coped in our tests adjusting to different light sources as we moved the camera around. Images themselves can be adjusted in quality from 1224x1632 to 120x128 and you can save them either to the phone in its 26 MB shared memory or a SD card that slots inside the phone. The phone comes with a 32Mb card and with a maximum file size of around 670Kb there is plenty of space to cram images on if you aren't planning on filling it up with MP3 tracks. The camera also offers a series of photographic options - the ability to change the exposure levels, the use of a flash, four scene modes - including night, sport and characters and three picture quality modes - super fine, fine and normal. The images on the highest setting for a 2 mega pixel camera were very good (see images



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(including one of the webmaster's first love - SubEd) and we were surprised at how well the camera coped. Okay, so they aren't a replacement for a 3 or 5 mega pixel camera from one of the big camera makers, but they would be good enough for using on the web or sending to friends. Images also carried a lot of noise, but again we would expect this from a camera integrated into a phone. However it's a long walk away from 640x480 from last year. Once you've taken your shot, you have a number of options through the phone and Vodafone. You can either MMS it to another phone, send it as a picture postcard or more useful send it via Bluetooth to a computer or printer. In our tests we were unable to browse the 902 from our Apple PowerBook however we were able to receive the images via Bluetooth as a standalone file. Images were automatically transferred into our documents folder and ready to be viewed transferred to the web or emailed. The Bluetooth connection also meant that we could use the phone as a modem, and with the addition of 3G data speeds obtained can be up to 384Kbps (half broadband). Aside from the camera element the phone is your standard mobile phone packed full of features. The clamshell device is large, make that very large and compared to GSM models this is worth two handsets at least. Added to the clamshell is a 180-degree swivel screen (see product images) again so you can use the camera more effectively. The menu system is similar to the GX30 and strangely the Sony Ericsson V800 (it must be a Vodafone thing). The keypad is easy to use and there is a shortcut button, back button (again like the V800) and a button that takes you straight to its music and video file.

VERDICT

If you find yourself needing to take pictures when out and about, but don't want to take you camera with you wherever you go then this will certainly fit the bill. We can easily see this becoming an estate agent's dream. View a property, take some pictures, Bluetooth it back to your PC when you're in the office, up on the web in no time. The

At a glance

What is it?

3G 2 megapixel camera phone

Good

2G, 2 megapixel camera, large crisp screen

Bad

size of handset

Verdict

If you're after the ultimate camera phone this fits the bill, just make sure your pocket is big enough to fit

Price price dependent on contract

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/929/sharp-902-mobile-phone-3g>

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addition of Bluetooth and the ease at which we were able to transfer images across to our laptop made us realise how much digital cameras were missing out on this trick. Yes the file sizes are smaller, but with no need for cables it's only got to be a good thing. So should the camera market be worried. Definitely. The Sharp 902 is just the beginning of a range of 2 mega pixel cameras and beyond (expect 3 mega pixels next year). The images are crisp, clean and for web use, perfect. Therefore, the overall package is good, although the Sharp is let down by its sheer weight and size 102 x 50 x 26 mm and weighing 149grams. If you just have to have this phone right now in order to show off, we're sure you'll just buy sturdier combat pants to carry it though.