SanDisk Introduces World's Fastest Flash Memory - SanDisk Extreme™ III

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SanDisk® Corporation (NASDAQ:SNDK) today introduced the world's fastest flash memory cards – the SanDisk Extreme™ III line of CompactFlash, SD™ and Memory Stick PRO™ digital film cards. The CompactFlash and SD cards have minimum write and read speeds of 20 megabytes per second. Memory Stick PRO has minimum write and read speeds of 18 MB/sec. The SanDisk Extreme III cards, which range in capacity between one and four gigabytes (GB), have essentially double the performance speeds of SanDisk's predecessor Extreme product line which currently has the fastest working cards in many of today's leading digital single lens reflex (SLR) cameras.

The SanDisk Extreme III product line was introduced at a SanDisk press conference at the Photokina imaging show.

The new SanDisk Extreme III cards are targeted primarily at advanced and professional photographers who require high-performance flash memory storage cards for new high-end digital cameras. The cards will start shipping worldwide in October-November to high-end, retail photo specialty stores.

About Flash Memory
Flash memory stores information on a silicon chip in a way that does not need power to maintain the information in the chip. This means that if you turn off the power to the chip, the informaton is retained without consuming any power. In addition, flash offers fast read access times and solid-state shock resistance. These characteristics are why flash is popular for applications such as storage on battery-powered devices like cellular phones and PDAs.

Yoram Cedar, SanDisk's senior vice-president of engineering, said, "SanDisk has developed a new ESP (Enhanced Super-Parallel Processing) technology that gives our new SanDisk Extreme III line its performance advantages. ESP technology is a major technology breakthrough that combines our in-house design of both NAND flash memory chips and controller chips using advanced 32-bit RISC processing and leading edge algorithms. Our engineers worked closely with major camera manufacturers in developing our new ESP technology."

Cedar also explained, "ESP has super-parallel write and read operations that are coupled with an accelerated flash data bus architecture to allow data to be transferred at twice the rate of most competitive cards. In addition, the ESP architecture streamlines every aspect of read and write data transfer operations through advanced hardware automation. The

ESP architecture effectively removes the card as the bottleneck in data storage applications."

Rob Galbraith, photojournalist and author of www.robgalbraith.com who was the first to test engineering samples of the new cards, said, "SanDisk Extreme III CompactFlash and SD cards are the fastest we've ever tested in card-to-computer transfers, by a significant margin, and at minimum appear to about match the original Extreme's write speed performance in current digital SLR cameras. As new digital SLR models are designed to utilize the faster transfer modes, it's likely that we'll then see Extreme III cards able to write pictures in the camera significantly faster than the already speedy Extreme line. In short, Sandisk appears poised to remain the maker of the fastest CompactFlash and SD cards for the serious and pro digital photographer."

With many professional and advanced photographers shooting pictures in extreme weather conditions ranging from African deserts to the Arctic, the SanDisk Extreme III cards also boast the industry's widest guaranteed operating temperature range from a freezing minus 13F (minus 25C) to a scorching 185F (plus 85C). The cards also include RescuePRO™ software that allows photographers to easily recover accidentally deleted images, lost digital images or data.

Michelle Slaughter, director of digital photography trends at the InfoTrends/CAP Ventures market research group, said, "With more professional photographers and advanced amateurs increasingly using high performance digital cameras, there is a growing market for flash memory cards that allow the cameras to perform to their maximum capability. With their high performance ratings, SanDisk's Extreme III cards certainly should enable the cards to keep up with the speeds of the cameras so professional and advanced photographers don't miss any important images."

Kazuyuki Kazami, general manager, marketing department, imaging company, Nikon, said, "High performance memory card products are necessary for the high features and performance of digital still cameras, so that Extreme III would be a very welcome product for the market."

Tanya Chuang, a SanDisk retail product marketing manager, said, "We have designed our new SanDisk Extreme III product line for advanced and professional photographers. We have significantly improved the speed of our cards and added all the bells and whistles that these high-end photographers need. These features include RescuePRO data and image recovery software, for recovering accidentally deleted images, and our extended operating temperature range, which enables them to shoot pictures anywhere in the world under virtually any conditions. And the dedicated technical support included with SanDisk Extreme III provides the fast help they require to keep shooting."

SanDisk Extreme III CompactFlash cards will be sold in 1, 2 and 4GB capacities with suggested retail prices ranging from $139.99 to $559.99 (€135 to €540, excluding VAT). The SanDisk Extreme III SD card will be sold in a 1GB capacity at a suggested price of $139.99 (€139, excluding VAT). And Memory Stick PRO Extreme III cards, sized in 1 and 2GB capacities, will carry suggested price tags of $279.99 and $559.99 (€289 and €576, excluding VAT).

SanDisk Extreme III cards will carry a 10-year warranty in Europe, the Middle East and Africa but will have a lifetime limited warranty in the rest of the world. Photographers who purchase the cards also will have access to a dedicated toll-free number for technical support questions. The RescuePRO image recovery software on the cards is compatible with both Windows and Mac and requires no driver download or special card reader.