Panasonic Announces World's First Hand-Held Solid-State Memory HD Camcorder

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Panasonic Broadcast announced today that its powerful AG-HVX200, the world's first hand-held high definition solid-state memory camcorder, will begin delivering to resellers on December 29th. The HVX200 uniquely combines multiple high definition and standard definition formats, multiple recording modes and variable frames rates, and the vast benefits of P2 solid state memory recording in a rugged, compact design.

At a press briefing held today, Panasonic announced introductory pricing for the HVX200 including $5,995 suggested list price of the camcorder only, a $7,295 list price for the camcorder and two 4GB P2 cards, and a $9,995 list price for the camcorder and two 8GB P2 cards.

With the ability to capture images in 21 video formats, the ultra-versatile HVX200 records in high definition in 1080i and 720p in production-proven 100 Mbps DVCPRO HD quality. The DVCPRO HD format offers users cost-effective, intra-frame compression, where each frame stands on its own for editing, and its full 4:2:2 color sampling allows the image to hold up under color correction. The camera records video on a P2 card as IT-friendly MXF files in 1080/60i, 30p and 24p; in 720/60p, 30p and 24p; in 50Mbps DVCPRO50 and in 25Mbps DVCPRO or DV. With a pair of Panasonic's new 8GB P2 cards (model P2C008HG), the HVX200 records for 64 minutes in DVCPRO or DV, 40 minutes in 720p, 32 minutes in DVCPRO50, and 16 minutes in 1080/60 and 720/60. The HD and SD video recorded on the P2 card can be rapidly downloaded to a nonlinear editing system or server, or edited virtually instantly from the P2 card by connecting to an IEEE 1394 or USB 2.0 interface. P2 cards mount like a regular hard drive from a NLE system's point of view, which eliminates the time-intensive task of digitizing footage.

The multi-format camera has two P2 card slots, and offers a variety of record modes including hot-swap recording to ensure continuous recording; loop recording; pre-record (up to 7 seconds in DVCPRO and 3 seconds in DVCPRO HD); one-shot record (from 1 frame to 1 second) and interval record (from 2 frames to 10 minutes). With cutting-edge P2, all moving parts are eliminated from the recording path, which ensures that the HVX200 is extremely reliable and resistant to environmental conditions including the shock and humidity that threaten camcorders based on mechanical recording transports. For added flexibility, the HVX200 is also equipped with a Mini-DV tape drive for shooting 4:3 and 16:9 images on DV tape in 60i, 30p and 24p.

The HVX200 inherits the variable frame rate capability of Panasonic's popular, shoulder-mount AJ-HDC27 VariCam HD Cinema camcorder. The HVX200 can capture fast or slow action in 720p at various frame

rates — the first time this function is available in a hand-held camera. The shooting frame rate in 720p native mode can be set for any of 11 steps between 12fps and 60fps including 24fps and 30fps. By using the camera to play back the recording at the normal rate, the shooter can preview the off-speed effect right on the spot, without the need for a frame rate converter. Furthermore, the HVX200 can down-convert off-speed recordings in 720p recorded on a P2 card and copy it to a mini DV tape. This allows the user to create special off-speed effects during DV production — a technique previously possible only with a complete VariCam system.

And like VariCam, the HVX200 offers advanced Gamma modes; the camera has eight gamma modes including Cine-Like Gamma to give recordings the characteristic warm tone of film recordings. For newsgathering, a news gamma curve assists a news photographer by allowing him to suppress over-saturated highlight areas during sudden contrast changes.

For exceptional image quality and flexible shooting, the AG-HVX200 elegantly combines native progressive 16:9 1/3" 3-CCDs and a wide-angle, 13X Leica Dicomar HD lens (with optical image stabilization and a super-smooth, cam-driven manual zoom) to cover a wide range from 4.2mm to 55mm (35mm equivalent: 32.5mm to 423mm). Its large viewfinder and 3.5" LCD monitor make it easy to view content. For example, in 16:9 wide-screen mode, the camcorder can display images on the LCD monitor in letterbox, which allows the user to view vital camera operating information in areas above and below the image. In addition, the LCD permits the shooter to view and select thumbnail clips to speed editing, and allows random access to the thumbnail-displayed scenes (on the P2 card) for instant playback and the creation of an in-camera storyboard.

Audio performance is superb with 4-channel non-compressed

48KHz/16-bit digital audio in DVCPRO HD and DVCPRO50, which is ideal for audio sweetening in post production; and two channels in DVCPRO and DV. The HVX200 is loaded with system interfaces (including IEEE 1394 and USB 2.0), and professional interfaces including two XLR audio (with +48 volt phantom power) inputs, a component (D4) output, composite in/out, S-video in/out, audio (RCA) in/out, and headphone output.

For operator convenience, the camcorder is highly customizable with features including six user scene files, three user setup buttons, and Camera Setup Memory (up to four camera setups can be saved to a SD Memory card for transfer to another camera). Other key features include: jam sync for multi-camera shoots; minimum illumination of 3 lux for low-light shooting; Shot Mark function to speed editing; built-in SMPTE time-code generator/reader; level-adjustable audio levels; ND Filter that increases gain up to 18 dB; a Slow Speed and High Speed Shutter; an Auto/Manual Mode Selector; White Balance with Auto Tracking White Function; and Trigger and Zoom Controls on the camera's upper handle grip.

Established third-party nonlinear editing systems including Apple Final Cut Pro; Avid Newscutter XP, Newscutter Adrenaline FX and Xpress HD; and Canopus Edius HD are compatible with the AG-HVX200.

The AG-HVX200 weighs just over five pounds, and is ruggedly-built with a magnesium alloy diecast chassis for outstanding reliability and durability.

Source: Panasonic

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