

Gadgets: Roll like the pros with Lowepro rolling camera bag

June 24 2009, By Gregg Ellman

My friends at Lowepro asked me if I wanted to try their new Pro Roller x-Series rolling camera bags and I jumped at the opportunity. They are not expected to be in retail outlets until August, but when they are they should be a big hit.

I saw prototypes at the Photo Marketing Association show in Las Vegas earlier this year and I liked what I saw there. Executives from the company said they listened to what many of their customers were saying they wanted in a rolling bag and it looks like they succeeded in delivering an excellent product.

The suitcase-style rolling bags are packed with features, but I think the best thing is the newly designed wheels. I've gone through many types of rolling bags and almost always I move on to another one due to problems with the wheels. They either break or just wear down way too quickly. I've even had some that can't be replaced once they wear out.

Lowepro has made these new bags with wheels designed with premium housings for extra stability and, best of all, they are removable. Lowepro will not sell replacement wheels, but they will be covered and replaced under the [warranty](#). Past that, looking at them I would guess rollerblade replacement wheels would work and those are readily available.

I took the rolling bag on the road for three weekends of NASCAR race photography (my other job) and from home to airports to hotels, to tracks, the bag held up great. The wheels let me pull my gear like no

other rolling bag I've had; it was smooth as can be.

Another very handy feature is the Lock & Go System of security. This is a TSA approved security lock, which is mounted on the side of the bag and is accessed with a self selected 3-digit combination lock. A single retractable cable pulls out of the lock and attaches to all the zippered compartments to lock 'em up safe.

Inside the bag, your camera gear is Lowepro's Reserve Pack. This is designed with six-inch deep padded compartments, which are all adjustable with Velcro dividers. It takes a little while to figure out the proper configuration to store everything snug and tight, and every user will have their own setup.

Other compartments built into the inside will store memory cards, travel documents and a padded area for laptops. They come in three sizes to accommodate a different sized laptop.

I used the smallest, the Pro Roller 100, and I had no problem fitting two camera bodies, two wide-angle and two telephoto zoom lenses, two flashes and a bunch of other small items. The bag met the guidelines for carry-on luggage.

The reserve pack has another handy feature. It can be removed and used away from the outer shell as a camera backpack. In addition, if you are traveling on some of the smaller computer planes, carry-on space is extremely tight. Just remove the reserve case and store that. The larger outer shell can be checked in, while still keeping the camera equipment safe and within sight.

Another feature is the Telepod handle attachment. This adapter attaches the handle of the bag to turn it into a tripod. Users can easily attach a camera, light or other accessories.

The bags will come in three sizes, (Pro Roller x100, Pro Roller x200, Pro Roller x300) ranging in price from \$359.99 to \$479.99.

Details: www.lowepro.com

For those who've gotta have their tunes no matter where they are, the compact Memorex Travel Speaker System is a good choice.

If you are looking for a loud party atmosphere sound system with controls for bass or treble, this is not for you. But if you want something light and portable to play some music or even watch a movie, this will deliver just that.

The system folds up flat and slides into the included protective carrying sleeve for storage in a suitcase or laptop bag. Once opened, it has two 1.5-inch neodymium speakers that fold up to angle for directional sound.

It doesn't weigh much since it's made of plastic, but I look at this in a positive manner. Since it's designed for travel, these days lighter is better. When folded, it measures about 9 inches by 6.5 inches by 1 inch.

Dockable iPods (30-pin dock connector) fit while other MP3 players along with non-docking iPod devices are connected via the line-in jack on the back of the unit.

An LCD backlit display is on the front. It has clock functionality, which allows it to function as an iPod alarm clock. Volume controls sit on both sides of the dock

Users can power it by loading in battery power (four AA) on the bottom of the unit or with the included AC adapter. While using it with

batteries, it can give up to 12 hours of audio playback time.

It's available in black and white for \$59.99.

Details: www.memorex.com

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