

Gadgets: Backup device offers peace of mind, sleek design

November 9 2017, by Gregg Ellman, Gregg Ellman

You might not think of an external hard drive as fun, sexy or cool, but the OWC Mercury Elite Pro Dual mini can be any or all of them. I can say first hand you'll find it useful at home, work, play, and even consider taking it on vacation.

And if you wonder why I feel this way, I'll be happy to tell you. I'll start by mentioning probably the most common topic I get asked about; backups. And my answer is always the same: back up, back up, back up. No exceptions. If you don't, it's not a matter of will you lose your digital files, it's when.

Working as a photographer (my primary professional) brought one of the most grueling schedules I've ever had over the past two months. This included travel to all ends of the country covering a wide variety of subjects and topics resulting in over 160GB of digital image files.

Anyone who deals with digital files knows this is a large amount. It's not a question of storage space on my laptop, which can handle it fine. Add the fantastic Mercury Elite Pro Dual mini to the equation and I had the peace of mind with 4TB of backup RAID storage in a device that easily fits into my backpack (5.7-by-6.1-by-1.1-inches, 1.25 pounds).

The included RAID (redundant array of independent disks) technology provides an additional backup. Inside are multiple drives, allowing your files to back up in separate locations within the same enclosure.

The dual-drive is USB 3.0 in a bus-powered form factor and is stored in a solid aluminum chassis enclosure. With the RAID, you'll get the choice of a few settings, which can be changed on the back of the hardware. RAID 0 will give you super fast data transfer speeds up to 861MB/s, while RAID 1 will allow greater data redundancy from mirrored disks for a secure backup.

While it might sound confusing, it's a simple setup that takes no time at all, making it ideal for professional photographers or families with priceless vacation photos, videos, and digital music.

Swappable hard drive configurations range from 1TB (\$219.99) up to 4TB (\$329.99). Solid state drives start storage starts at 240GB (\$268.99) up to 2TB (\$879.99). USB cables for standard USB and USB-C are included for use with a Mac or PC.

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The OWC Thunderbolt 3 Dock brings your computers, accessories and cables together in any office. It's built with an incredible 13 ports for connecting hard drives, monitors, card readers, laptops or just charging or syncing smartphones and tablets to a desktop or laptop.

The front has a single USB 3.1, an SD memory card reader and expanded analog audio in/out [port](#). The back has four USB 3.1 ports, an S/PDIF pro-grade digital audio output, FireWire 800, Ethernet, dual Thunderbolt 3 ports and a mini display port. An AC power adapter is also plugged into a back port.

Large amounts of data can transfer at incredible speeds, especially with the Thunderbolt 3, which can go up to 40Gb/s. Uses for the dock on any

computer station are endless, especially since it takes just one cable to connect to your computer, instantly connecting all the other ports.

I use a MacBook Air, which doesn't give you a whole lot of ports. Now, with the Thunderbolt 3 dock (3.5-by-9.1-by-1-inches), even on the road, everything I need connected is done without swapping cables.

Along with the ports and usefulness, what I didn't even think of before hand was the organization it brings. Instead of wires coming and going all over my desk, everything is centrally located and without the need of pulling cords in and out since I have more ports than needed. Think of the dock as your computer file cabinet.

eshop.macsales.com \$299, available in space gray or silver

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