

PORTABLE LIGHT

Frezzi DSLR-1 Light and Support

by Carl Mrozek

Even though they are generally more light-sensitive than most video cameras, DSLRs do require portable lighting, whether it's simply for highlighting a face, head and shoulders, or for lighting a small room. While most of the cameras have shoes for mounting small camera lights, they have a unique problem in terms of power supply. The newest lithium ion camera batteries can power DSLRs for many hours, but don't have the extra capacity to handle a camera light.

One solution has been panels of low wattage LEDs powered by AA batteries. Another, pioneered by Frezzi Energy Systems, is to create a mobile power supply compact enough to mount on DSLRs, and with enough capacity to power their smallest camera light—the Mini-Fill—for a full working day.

FEATURES

Frezzi calls the system the "Power Block," perhaps due to the fact that it resembles a small building block. The size is a mere 3.5 x 3.2 x 1.6-inches, and it easily mounts on a camera's hot shoe, or atop the handgrip of a stabilizer arm packaged with Frezzi's DSLR light package. The unit weighs in at 16 ounces and is just heavy enough to counterbalance a DSLR attached to the stabilizer bar. The 14 Volt Power Block outputs 65 Wh, which can power the Mini-Fill with an 8 Watt LED for a full day of shooting. Conversely, you'll get barely 2 hours with the 35 Watt tungsten lamp (also included), running at full capacity. However, you can double that by dimming down the light by approximately 50 percent.

The Mini-Fill lighting instrument is a thick blue barrel with large cooling slits on top. At only 12 ounces and measuring four-inches in length and with a two-inch diameter, the Mini-Fill is perfectly

sized for a DSLR. Optional extras include mini-barndoors and filter holder, a softbox, and a dichroic filter and bracket.

Frezzi has packaged the Mini-Fill and Power Block and a charger into three different DSLR lighting packages. Each includes a pair of bulbs: 35 Watt

offers more options for positioning the camera vertically and horizontally on the rig.

IN USE

For my evaluation, I received the DSLR-1 package containing a Mini-Fill light, tungsten and LED lamps, a 14-Volt/65-Wh Power Block with meter, a single-channel quick charger, battery mount holder, hand grip/ DSLR stabilizer, bar and a shoe mount. The package also contained barn doors and a diffuser filter.

I got off to a fast start and was impressed with how smoothly the Power Block slid into the battery mounting holder with its three shoe mounts (one per side), yet how secure it was, once in. Anyone experienced with mobile lighting gear could readily hook up and mount the Mini-Fill light and Power Block

together. Deploying them separately aboard the camera and adjustable the stabilizer arm was more involved though, as there were multiple options.

I tried several, and each had its pros and cons; however, this approach was better than trying to operate with the light and battery piled atop the camera without a stabilizer arm.

The stabilizer arm can also pivot through 360 degrees, which changes the Mini-Fill from a frontal fill to a side light. The beam can be tilted through a 90-degree arc and also pan more than 180 degrees. There's also the option to dim the light from either the tungsten or LED bulbs by up to 95 percent. Glare may be softened with a diffuser or other soft filter with the (optional) barndoor set.

I really loved how easy it was to keep the DSLR



The Frezzi DSLR-1 dimmer light kit and support

tungsten and 8 Watt LED.

The first two DSLR packages feature a stabilizer arm with a rubberized handgrip which fastens to the base of the camera creating a DSLR support rig. The DSLR-1 package has one Power Block and a single channel fast charger, while the DSLR-2 package includes two Power Blocks and a dual-channel charger. Both include a battery mount holder and a shoe mount.

The DSLR-3 package has a beefier mounting rig—the Frezzi Stable Cam—and includes a dual-handled grip and a 100-Watt Power Block, along with a matching fast charger. StableCam is a shoulder-style rig that mounts the battery behind the user's shoulder on the "tail end" of the shoulder brace in order to provide proper balance. It also

