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Panasonic Presents Low-Cost AG-HMC40 Professional Camcorder

Handheld, portable, yet still capable of some impressive feats

The Panasonic AG-HMC40 professional camcorder Panasonic

Since the NAB (National Association of Broadcasters) 2009 show is in full-swing over in Las Vegas as we speak, we'll see quite a lot of interesting novelties regarding the professional A/V industry segment over the next couple of days. And one such new release is the AG-HMC40 AVCCAM professional camcorder from Panasonic, which boasts pretty impressive video recording capabilities, all crammed up in a slimmer, lighter body.

According to Panasonic, what we're dealing with here is an AVCHD-based camcorder that uses MPEG-4 AVC/H.264 encoding, capable of providing improved bandwidth efficiency and video performance over the older MPEG-2 compression formats. The device is equipped with a full resolution 2-megapixel, 1/4.1-inch 3MOS imaging sensor that delivers 1920x1080 HD images with high sensitivity, viewable via the 2.7-inch LCD display with touchscreen.

Moreover, the camera is able to capture still images with 10.6-megapixel resolution directly onto the SD card as JPEG images, and also offers a 12X optical zoom (includes 2X, 5X, 10X) and professional image functions like Dynamic Range Stretch (DRS) that helps compensate for wide variations in lighting, and a Cine-Like Gamma mode, which gives recordings a more film-like aesthetic. Other interesting functions include the waveform monitor display, focus assists, time date stamp, user assignable focus ring, auto focus with face detection, zebra display, synchro-scan shutter function, three programmable user buttons, time code/UB recording, remote control terminal, etc.

Panasonic's AG-HMC40 professional camcorder uses SDHC memory cards for storing the recorded video, and supports four professional AVCCAM recording modes, including the high-quality PH mode (average 21 Mbps/Max 24Mbps), the HA mode (approx.17 Mbps), the HG mode (approx.13 Mbps) and the extended recording HE mode (approx. 6 Mbps). Plus, it supports 1080/59.94i (in all modes) and 1080/29.97p, 1080/23.98p native, 720/59.94p, 720/20.97p, and 720/23.98p native (in PH mode only).

As far as the connectivity options are concerned, users will be able to choose from a fairly extensive array of interfaces, either built-in (HDMI, USB 2.0, Component, Composite and audio) or available as separate options (2-channel input, mic/line switchable and +48V).

The AG-HMC40 professional camcorder from Panasonic should arrive in stores at some point in August 2009 and sell for around $3,195, which is a very good price point, at least as far as professional camcorders are concerned.

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