

THE 10 MOST INDIE-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS FROM NAB 2017

Beyond the bells and whistles, this new equipment will really deliver when it counts

BY JOHN BUCHER AND JEREMY CASPER

WHEN YOU ENVISION typical National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) Show attendees, you might picture television broadcasters, camera operators, lighting technicians, software engineers and other equipment nerds. Those gadget-loving technicians do make up a large portion of NAB's yearly attendees—but the tech set isn't the only group that descends upon Las Vegas every spring to gobble up the latest from the world's leading film and video manufacturers. Exhibitor booths and product showcases are teeming with indie moviemakers determined to add to their storytelling toolboxes.

Even amid the latest advances in technology, a good camera, some lights, an audio recorder and a portable editing system are still the center of the low-budget moviemaking universe. Exhibitors at NAB 2017 offered a slate of new products to beef up that core production package and boost cinematic street cred at the same time. Despite the fact that camera leader RED was a no-show this year, NAB royalty like Blackmagic, Adobe, Sony, Panasonic and Canon, along with more than 1,700 other exhibitors, ensured that attendees were treated to a good show.

A word to the wise: To avoid technology overload, a trip to NAB requires a bit of forethought and planning. Figure out your overarching objectives for the week and stick to them. It helps to do a little pre-NAB research—decide what you want to see beforehand, come up with a game plan, and then tailor an NAB experience that suits your professional and artistic needs.

No matter what you're searching

for—data security options, cloud servers, virtual reality rigs or drones—you'll find it in Vegas. Go ahead, dream on about owning that top-of-the-line 3D VR camera rig—but today you're an independent filmmaker, you've got a script in hand, and you're ready to shoot. These 10 products might become your new best friends.

ROTLIGHT AEOS LED

The integrated aluminum handle on this bi-color LED, which comes in at just under \$1,000, allows moviemakers to position the light in ways not previously possible. The aluminum ball head supports the full weight of the light and provides a complete 360-degree rotation and 200-degrees of tilt when mounted to a light stand. Weighing in at just over three pounds and at only one centimeter in thickness, the AEOS can run for three hours on a single 95W battery, and has a tunable color temperature range of 3,150-6,300K. Providing 5,750 lux at three feet, it's a versatile tool suitable for a wide variety of scenes and environments, and won't take up much room in your gear bag.

EASYRIG CINEMA FLEX VEST

Because men have, for far too long, made up an overwhelming percentage of cinematographers, women in the field have had to adapt to equipment designed for the male body. Until now, that is. Easyrig has introduced its first vest specifically designed for female DPs. The system is reinforced to distribute the weight of the rig over a female frame, with straps crossing the user's chest like a life

jacket. The adjustable torso sits higher on the waist and can be mounted with all Easyrig support arms. It comes in both small and standard sizes, and retails for around \$1,877.

BLACKMAGIC DAVINCI RESOLVE 14

"We realize there's a whole generation of moviemakers that are working off Macs or custom PCs they've built," says Jason Druss, a product specialist at Blackmagic Design. "We're happy to announce that with DaVinci Resolve 14, we have up to 10 times faster performance across the board through the whole software—10 times faster performance with HD, 4K and beyond." The latest release from Blackmagic Design represents arguably the biggest game-changer they have ever unveiled. Resolve 14 provides an overhaul of the beloved editing and color correction software, complete with multi-user collaboration tools for editing, color grading and audio mixing from multiple systems. Retailing at \$299, it's a product that moviemakers should take a serious look at. There are few systems this powerful, with this many options, at this price.

BROKEN ANCHOR ZERO FOLLOW FOCUS RING

Finding a workflow between your lenses and the rest of your gear can be challenging, especially if, like many indie creators, you rely on converting your photo lenses into geared lenses with follow focus units. ZERO (\$299) is the first universal, seamless

▼ **PACKING A PUNCH: THE DJI RONIN 2 THREE-AXIS STABILIZER IN ACTION**



COURTESY OF DJI



> SENNHEISER'S MKE 2 ELEMENTS MIC ON A GOPRO

and toolless follow focus gear. It installs in nearly an instant and has a large gearing ratio for increased focus throw. Fitting any lens diameter from 60-92mm, ZERO uses a scissor-action and tensioning system to offer a fast and versatile alternative to other spoke systems. The founder of Broken Anchor Design, Josh Turner, says "Filmmakers benefit from having one piece of gear that will always work with any lens in their kit, while leveraging the cost savings of using still glass without compromising their workflow and time on set."

ZEISS CP.3 LENSES

When the Zeiss CP.2s were released, they quickly became one of the most versatile and powerful lens sets that a moviemaker could employ. The CP.3s are set to stage a sequel to their predecessors' popularity. With color matching and the ability to cover full frame across the 15-135mm range, few scenarios and environments would fall outside these lenses' capacities. Their consistent T-stops (T2.9 for 15-21mm, T2.1 for 25-135mm) simplify lighting and exposure compensations. Also, because lens settings are digitally captured on every frame, you won't need to manually record them on set—an invaluable time-saver when working with a small crew.

DJI RONIN 2 THREE-AXIS STABILIZER

Redesigned with a carbon fiber ring, the payload for this updated gimbal has increased to 30 pounds at speeds as high as 75 miles per hour, making it an option that

many indie moviemakers can consider for the first time. One of the other significant upgrades to the Ronin includes a new dual battery system that allows you to hot-swap batteries on the fly. There is also a dedicated OLED display that will make tuning and other settings easier to adjust.

WRAPAL

Wrapal is a site that connects moviemakers to production-friendly properties. Showcasing more than 1,600 locations in the Los Angeles and New York metro areas, the company hopes to expand its vast portfolio of commercial, industrial and residential properties to other cities in the near future. Wrapal's pre-vetted selection saves time and money by taking a lot of the guesswork out of the scouting process.

"Let's face it, finding locations is a pain," says Brian L. Tan, Wrapal co-founder. "We're trying to help make people's films possible. Like Airbnb, deposits and insurance protect both sides and paying for a location is as simple as entering a credit card."

SENNHEISER MKE 2 ELEMENTS MICROPHONE

GoPro filmmaking is at an all-time high. However, capturing quality audio when using the action-friendly cameras can be

tricky, especially for sequences that involve water. Sennheiser has introduced a solution for such occasions. The waterproof MKE 2 elements microphone, which goes for \$199.95, attaches right to the side of the GoPro HERO4 Black or Silver and allows high-quality audio to be recorded in any environment the camera is capable of entering. The mic can also be useful in icy and windy conditions, or even if the elements aren't a threat at all.

SMALLHD FOCUS 5-INCH FIELD MONITOR

A quality field monitor is massively useful on set, though price has made many models out of reach for lower-budget productions. (And bright exterior locations often leave lesser monitors useless.) SmallHD's FOCUS 5-inch field monitor—at \$499—was designed for bright outdoor location use with an 800-nit display (two to three times brighter than your typical camera's LCD screen). Powered by Sony L-Series batteries, which many moviemakers already own for other gear, the monitor is also compatible with most cameras. The unit includes a number of professional shot assist tools, including a waveform monitor, false color and focus assist. It can be loaded with 3D lookup tables for field previewing.

INSTA360 PRO VR CAMERA

The Insta360 Pro caught the attention of VR-makers this spring with the ability to create 360 3D imaging and stitch in real time at up to 4K. The camera can also capture stills at 8K with real-time stitching and live streams using H.265 compression—which, Insta360 claims, reduces bandwidth needs by 60 percent. The ability to capture slo-mo at 100fps in high-speed shooting mode is another great feature in this \$3,499 unit.

"The virtual reality industry needs steady content from a strong base of creators to keep growing, but before now, high-performing cameras have been overly complicated or cost-prohibitive," says Max Richter, global marketing lead of China-based Insta360.

"With the Insta360 Pro, we're giving filmmakers the all-in-one tool they've been asking for." **MM**

< THE INSTA360 PRO IN SILVER



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