

ED WARDYGA



## Samson Zoom H2 Handy Recorder

My immediate need for a small and inexpensive digital audio recorder led me to the Samson Zoom H2 (**Figure 2**) and from the time I took it out of the box, it was love at first sight. First off, everything needed to use the unit is included (except 2 AA batteries). The 512MB SD memory card provides storage for about 47 minutes of standard WAV stereo audio, but that jumps to more than 11 hours when set to 96Kbps MP3 recording. Maximum SD card size is advertised as 4GB. The H2 package includes ear-bud headphones, table stand, microphone stand adapter, foam windsock, USB cable, AC adapter, and cloth carry sack.

Operation is pretty straightforward thanks to a full-featured backlit LCD display, which shows elapsed time, folder/program number, transport status, battery level, time remaining on SD card, and VU (level) meters (also selectable menu when in menu mode). External connections include AC power adapter jack, headphone/line out jack, USB port, line in, and external mic in jacks.

The coolest feature of this handheld device is the built-in mic system. You can choose from four different patterns: 90-degree front pickup, 120-degree rear pickup, and both 2-channel and 4-channel surround sound. It also has AGC, compressor, and limiter functions with multiple settings. Having recorded more than 8 hours of material with it so far, I am impressed. Using line in, external and internal mics, quality is very good with no dropouts and no clipping (using the voice setting on the built-in compressor).

Price is about \$199, available anywhere A/V equipment is sold.

—Ed Wardyga



Figure 2. Samson Zoom H2 Handy Recorder

SHAWN LAM



## Adobe Flash Video

My two honorable mentions for best product of 2007 would have to be the Canon XH A1 and Adobe's Production Premium for improving both the process of acquiring video footage and delivering a finished product. The Canon XH A1 delivers a great picture at an attractive price point, and I enjoyed the switch to a native 16:9 sensor and the added knee point adjustment and black stretch controls as compared to my previous camera of choice, the SD Sony PD 170. That said, I was frustrated by the two XLR inputs that had to both be on either a line or mic level and the camera's reduced low-light sensitivity compared to recent SD models (this is an issue many videographers have had with HDV cameras across the board). Fix those and you have a winner.

Adobe, on the other hand, spent much of its efforts porting Premiere Pro to the Mac platform, so the most notable improvements to the Production Premium suite (**Figure 3**) came via the corporate acquisition of Serious Magic and the introduction of the rebranded Adobe Ultra and OnLocation (née DV Rack).

I can't say that the XH A1 or Premiere Pro changed my business in 2007 (even though I use both of them regularly), so I'm giving my pick of best product of 2007 to the full integration of Flash Video into the Adobe Production Premium package. I found that the triple threat of the On2 VP6 Flash codec, the rise of user-generated video content sites, and nifty export-to-Flash feature in Adobe's Encore CS3 was more significant than any piece of hardware or software package that came on the market in 2007.

—Shawn Lam



Figure 3. Adobe Production Premium CS3

ALAN NAUMANN



## Miraizon Cinematize 2 Pro

As the best product of 2007, I chose and highly recommend Cinematize 2 Pro (**Figure 4**), Miraizon's professional DVD extraction and re-authoring tool, which I began using in my workflow this year.

Recently, I did a project for a nonprofit organization. Its members wanted to include video that was on a DVD they produced for a banquet a couple of years ago, and the original footage was no longer available. Using my newly purchased Cinematize 2 Pro, I was not only able to extract the required video, but I was also able to re-edit it and maintain good quality. Cinematize 2 Pro will also be invaluable as I convert video and audio from DVDs into formats suitable for small, portable devices. Cinematize Pro 2 is an inexpensive (\$139.99), versatile tool that will serve you well when you least expect it.

—Alan Naumann



Figure 4. Miraizon Cinematize 2 Pro