







PROFESSIONAL DIGITAL CAMERAS AND CAMCORDERS

Professional digital cameras		Last month's position	First reviewed	Price (ex VAT)	Actual sensor	Optical zoom/ equivalent range	Maximum aperture	Viewfinder/ LCD size	Shutter speed	Storage media/supplied memory	Closest focus distance (macro)	External flash	Weight (inc battery)
Details													
 1 Nikon Coolpix 5000 0800 230 220 www.nikon.co.uk		1	Jul 02	£765	5Mp	3x/28-85mm	f2.8~4.8	Optical/ 1.8in	1/2,000 to 60 secs	CompactFlash/ 32MB	2cm	Hotshoe	414g
 2 Sony CyberShot DSC-F707 08705 111 999 www.sony.co.uk		2	Jul 02	£765	5Mp	5x/38-190mm	f2.0~2.4	EVF/ 1.8in	1/1,000 to 30 secs	Memory Stick/ 16MB	2cm	Sync plug	710g
3 Canon PowerShot G2 Black Kit 0800 616 417 www.canon.co.uk		NEW	Aug 02	£765	4Mp	3x/34-102mm	f2.0~2.5	Optical/ 1.8in	1/1,000 to 15 secs	CompactFlash/ 1GB Microdrive	6cm	Hotshoe	510g
4 Olympus Camedia E10 0800 072 0070 www.olympus.co.uk		3	Jul 02	£851	4Mp	4x/35-140mm	f2.0~2.4	SLR/ 1.8in	1/640 to 8 secs	CompactFlash, SmartMedia/16MB	20cm	Hotshoe, Sync plug	1,170g
5 Minolta Dimage 7 01908 200 400 www.minoltaeurope.com		5	Oct 01	£850	5Mp	7x/28-200mm	f2.8~3.5	EVF/ 1.8in	1/2,000 to 30 secs	CompactFlash/ 16MB	25cm	Hotshoe	603g

Digital camcorders		Last month's position	First reviewed	Price (ex VAT)	Warranty	Image processor	CCD	Optical/digital zoom	Max aperture	Horizontal DV resolution	FireWire in/out	Focal distance	Weight	Multimedia card
Details														
 1 JVC GR-DVL767EK 0870 330 5000 www.jvc.co.uk		1	Jul 02	£680	1-year	1/3.8in CCD	1.02 megapixels	10x/500x	1.8	530 lines	Y/Y	3.8-38mm	640g	8MB
 2 Sony DCR-TRV18E 0870 511 1999 www.sony.co.uk		2	Jul 02	£570	1-year	1/4in CCD	680,000 pixels	10x/120x	1.7	500 lines	Y/Y	3.3-33mm	705g	8MB
3 Samsung VPD77i 0800 521 652 www.samsungelectronics.co.uk		3	Jul 02	£700	1-year	1/4in CCD	800,000 pixels	22x/500x	1.6	500 lines	Y/Y	3.6-79.2mm	590g	8MB
4 Canon MV550i 0870 5143 723 www.canon.co.uk		4	Jul 02	£850	1-year	1/6in CCD	680,000 pixels	22x/440x	1.8	500 lines	Y/Y	2.8-61.6mm	530g	8MB
5 Panasonic NV-DS29B 0870 535 7357 www.panasonic.co.uk		5	Jul 02	£499	1-year	1/4in CCD	800,000 pixels	10x/500x	1.8	500 lines	N/Y	3.6-36mm	510g	N/A



PROFESSIONAL DIGITAL CAMERAS



1 Nikon Coolpix 5000

The Nikon continues to reign with its Coolpix 5000. Weighing in at just 414g, this is a compact device with plenty of features inside. It offers 5Mp (megapixel) resolution, delivering 2,560x1,920 pixel images with sufficient detail to make 13x10in inkjet prints. Images are stored on a 32MB CompactFlash card, which can store 20 high-resolution Jpeg images. The Coolpix's 3x optical zoom has an equivalent range of 28-85mm, which offers much wider-angle shots. Like earlier high-end Coolpix cameras, the 5000 boasts one of the closest macro focusing distances of just 2cm. The 1.8in LCD (liquid crystal display) can



be flipped out and twisted to any angle and there's a huge range of manual settings for exposure, focusing and metering, as well as automatic modes. Other features include noise reduction on long exposures, a hotshoe for Nikon flashguns and a movie mode that can capture up to 60 seconds of basic video with audio.

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DIGITAL CAMCORDERS

1 JVC GR-DVL767EK

The entry-level GR-DVL767EK is a long yet compact camcorder that is comfortable to use, with zoom and record controls within easy reach. It has a side-loading tape mechanism, so that you can replace tapes when shooting on a tripod, and an articulated viewfinder. The 10x optical zoom is smooth and we only noticed grain at around 8x magnification. JVC claims a figure of 500x for the digital zoom and the GR-DVL767EK is capable of higher magnification than the Sony. The JVC's 1.02Mp (megapixel) CCD (charge-coupled device) can capture high-quality stills that can be stored on an 8MB multimedia card. Video quality was also excellent and footage was bright whether shooting indoors or out. Connectivity on the JVC is second to none. It features a bi-directional DV (digital video) port to transfer your footage to a PC for editing and record your final cut back to a tape, AV inputs and outputs, S-Video and USB. The JVC's price may be one of the highest in the chart, but it's worth the extra premium.

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2 Sony CyberShot DSC-F707



This Recommended device has 5Mp (megapixel) resolution, producing images measuring 2,560x1,920 pixels with enough detail to make 13x10in inkjet prints. Images are stored on Sony's Memory Stick format, which, while not as cheap as CompactFlash, has dropped in price recently. The CyberShot's lens barrel houses a pop-up flash and an impressive 5x optical zoom. Since the lens is already extended, the startup and shutdown times are very fast. The macro performance is also good, getting as close as possible to 2cm. Composition is with a 1.8in LCD (liquid crystal display) or an EVF (electronic viewfinder). Battery life is excellent, and Sony's info-lithium pack displays exactly how many minutes are remaining onscreen.



3 Canon PowerShot G2 Black Kit

The PowerShot G2 would normally be in our intermediate price category, but Canon has produced a new version, clad in black and bundled with a 1GB IBM Microdrive for £765. This can store an amazing 500 best-quality pictures, eliminating any worries about storage. The G2 has a wealth of features including a tilt-and-swivel screen, RAW mode, noise reduction on long exposures, an external flash hotshoe and a smooth 50 ISO option for when there's plenty of light. The 6cm macro isn't as close as some, but bundled with a 1GB Microdrive, the G2 has become a no-brainer for enthusiasts who don't need 5Mp (megapixels).



4 Olympus Camedia E10

The 4Mp (megapixels) E10 features an optical SLR (single lens reflex) viewfinder. This allows it to be focused precisely, unlike the LCDs (liquid crystal display) and EVFs (electronic viewfinders) on cheaper devices. The E10 features a 1.8in LCD, but most will only use it for playback. Images have 2,240x1,680 pixels and make great-looking 11x8in inkjet prints. The 4x optical lens is equivalent to 35-140mm and zooming is performed with a mechanical ring that is preferable to motorised control. There's also a pop-up flash and a sync plug for proper studio lighting.



5 Minolta Dimage 7

Minolta's Dimage 7 was one of the first 5Mp (megapixel) cameras on the market and features a 7x optical zoom lens, with a range equivalent to 28-200mm. Its 1.8in LCD (liquid crystal display) and EVF (electronic viewfinder) allow accurate framing and there's decent manual control alongside automatic, although newer models like Nikon's 5000 and Sony's F707 have overtaken it on overall quality and features. Another down side is that the Dimage 7 runs through its batteries at an alarming rate.



DIGITAL CAMCORDERS

2 Sony DCR-TRV18E



Sony's DCR-TRV18E hangs on to its Recommended award due to its combination of excellent performance and professional add-ons. The DCR is comfortable to handle, with zoom and record controls within easy reach of a thumb and forefinger. It features a f/1.7 lens and a 10x optical zoom. Don't be put off by the 120x digital zoom; this figure may be lower than other chart entries, but the DCR doesn't get fuzzy when you push its zoom to the limit. The 1/4in 680,000 pixel CCD (charge-coupled device) captures good-quality stills and stores them on an 8MB Memory Stick. The Sony boasts great video quality, too, with colour-rich sharp pictures.



3 Samsung VPD77i

The VPD77i is a compact and ergonomic unit with a side-loading tape mechanism and easy-to-operate controls. However, as with the JVC, the fold-out LCD (liquid crystal display) lacks clarity and detail. In its favour, the 1/4in, 800,000 pixel image processor captures high-quality images and is suited to shooting in low-light conditions. The 22x optical zoom is impressive, but the picture became fuzzy when using the 500x digital zoom. Autofocus took far too long to adjust when the camera was pointed at different objects and the digital image stabiliser failed to clean up shaky camera work. Connectivity is up to scratch, though, with support for USB and S-Video AV (inputs and outputs), and it also has a bi-directional FireWire connection.



4 Canon MV550i

Canon's vertical model has a sleek, attractive design and plenty of features – but at £850 it's the most expensive in the chart. While it has a surfeit of add-ons, the MV550i lacks some key requirements. The 680,000 pixel, 1/6in CCD (charge-coupled device) captured pictures that lacked detail and were drained of colour. The auto-exposure also coped badly during transitions from low to bright light. Transferring footage via the DV (digital video) port was easy, though, and there are some useful inclusions, such as a bi-directional DV connection.



5 Panasonic NV-DS29B

The NV-DS29B failed to impress us, despite its bargain price of £499. Image quality was good, though, with sharp detail and bright colours. There's a smooth 10x optical and a 500x digital zoom, too, and something we've not seen elsewhere: a tape loader hidden behind the fold-out LCD (liquid crystal display) panel. However, there's a serious lack of features: there are no special effects other than the ability to fade between shots, and DV is out only, so you can't record back to a MiniDV tape. S-Video and serial connections are present, but there's no USB.

