

Sony EX3



The PMW-EX3 is the latest addition to the EX family, and it is basically an EX1, only in a new semi-shoulder mount design and with 'EX-Mount' half-inch interchangeable lenses.

The PMW-EX3 uses all the same components as the PMW-EX1; same 1920x1080 half-inch CMOS chips, same circuitry, same 35mbps codec, same features. So the picture quality from the PMW-EX3 is identical in every way to pictures taken using the PMW-EX1.

The EX3 is the first EX series camcorder to feature an interchangeable lens system. Sony is calling this new half-inch mount the 'EX-Mount'. Although it is half-inch, it is not the same half-inch mount that Sony's full-size XDCAM camcorders use; however, Sony is including a half-inch B4 mount adaptor with the EX3 so you can still use professional half-inch lenses from full size half inch XDCAM camcorders if you choose. The EX3 comes with a standard lens, this is basically the same as the lens that is built into the EX1, only with the new EX-Mount on the back so it is interchangeable.



Apart from the interchangeable lenses, the second most important thing you will notice about the EX3 is the viewfinder. Sony has decided to ditch the somewhat questionable quality viewfinder from the EX1 and do an incredible Monocular viewfinder conversion job to the LCD screen instead. The LCD screen on the EX3 is identical to the superb LCD screen on the EX1, only this one has a special coating on it to improve the viewing image quality even further when it is being viewed through the monocular lens. This design is what Canon uses on their XL series, only Canon's screen is microscopic in comparison and the resolution on the XL viewfinder is nowhere near that of the EX3.



Checking exposure on this new LCD/Viewfinder is also very possible indeed, something that was not really possible (not for serious applications anyway) in the past with LCD screens. The EX3's LCD screen can be viewed from various angles with little change in contrast and brightness, making it ideal for setting/adjusting exposure.

Another great feature of this newly designed viewfinder on the EX3 is that it has dials on the front for Peaking, Contrast and Brightness, as well as a Mirror Image switch, Display Batt Info and a Zebra switch. This design is more in keeping with that of a full-size professional viewfinder. Because of this, setting up and calibrating the viewfinder to 'Bars' is easy.

We all know that the EX1 has an overcrank/undercrank variable frame-rate feature for slow and quick motion, but it has to be accessed via the menus, which can be time-consuming, and a bit of a pain if you use it all the time. The new EX3 has moved this feature out of the menus, and directly onto the body by means of a push button dial. Now all you have to do to change the frame-rate is simply push and hold the Frame dial in for 3 seconds (the 3-second system is done for safety reasons, in case you press it accidentally), it will then light up with a funky blue ring light around it to inform you that you are now in variable frame-rate mode. Then it is simply a case of turning the dial and setting the frame-rate as desired, the frame-rate is displayed and can be checked via the LCD screen display. Like the EX1, the EX3's variable

frame-rate can be set from 1 frame to 60 frames per second in 720p mode, or from 1 to 30 frames per second in 1080p mode. The Frame dial cannot do 'frame cranking' like a proper film camera, that would be asking just a little too much, it would probably put Super16mm film camera manufacturers out of business too.



Other features over the EX1 include professional BNC connectors for timecode in/out and genlock in, as well as the usual HD/SDI out. There is also an 8-pin connector for studio operation camera contro. You can adjust shutter for instance, but no focus or zoom control (lens control is undertaken on the Fujinon lens connector as per the EX1). This 8-pin studio connector is meant for camera engineers to use in conjunction with a camera op, it does not have 'VTR' control though. this controls many features of the lens such as exposure and white balance etc. The rear end of the EX3 looks much more professional due to all these BNC connectors, as opposed to the rather bland rear end of the EX1.



Other connectors have been moved to the side of the camera. The SEL/SET push/dial and the CANCEL button have been moved from the back and put in a more convenient place on the left side. The PICTURE PROFILE and CAMERA/OFF/MEDIA-

buttons have also been moved from the rear end of the camera to the left side. With the STATUS and MENU button also along this same row on the left side, all related buttons/dials are now on the same side of the camera making operation less fiddly than the EX1.



Codec and compression rates have not changed since the Sony EX1 Camera.

