



Fujifilm FinePix S602 Zoom

Full-Featured Digicam for the Seasoned Photographer

Text and photos by Jack and Sue Drafa

One of the most recent digicams from Fujifilm has given camera design a new twist. At first glance the FinePix S602 Zoom camera looks like just another digital zoom reflex camera, but not so. The S602 Zoom is a new breed of digital camera that features a color LCD monitor on the back of the camera, as well as an electronic viewfinder which is particularly effective when shooting

under bright lighting conditions.

The S602 Zoom uses a third-generation $\frac{1}{1.7}$ -inch Super CCD that has become a hallmark of Fujifilm's line of digital cameras. With 3.1 million effective pixels, the camera can create images up to 2832x2128 (6.03 million pixels) using Fujifilm's proprietary enhanced file system. Memory options include both SmartMedia and Type II CompactFlash

(including IBM's 1GB Microdrive), as the camera has slots for both.

The S602 features a choice of sensitivity settings, including ISO 160, 200 and 400. You can even expand your imaging potential with ISO 800 and 1600 settings at 1280x960-pixel resolution.

The FinePix S602 has a very comfortable ergonomic grip which provides easy access to the shutter release, Command and Mode dials. The camera has a powerful built-in 6X optical zoom, equivalent to 35–210mm in the 35mm format. With a maximum aperture of $f/2.8$, the lens is great for low-light shooting.

The feature-rich S602 may, at first, seem a little overwhelming to the novice digital camera user. However, the camera comes with a helpful quick-start guide designed to



This Blue Heron posed patiently for 40 exposures until the sun dropped below the horizon. The S602 did a great job, despite rapidly changing and often difficult lighting and focusing conditions.



The Fujifilm FinePix S602 provides two options for composing and reviewing your images; a color LCD panel on the back, and a sharp, 180,000-pixel electronic viewfinder. The latter is handy when shooting under bright lighting conditions. The camera also features three continuous shooting modes, ideal for capturing fast-moving subjects like this wind surfer.

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| Camera: | Fujifilm FinePix S602 |
| Category: | Advanced Consumer Digicam |
| AF Performance | ★★★★ |
| Metering Performance | ★★★★ |
| Feature Set | ★★★★★ |
| Ease of Use | ★★★★★ |
| Ergonomics | ★★★★★ |
| Value | ★★★★★ |

The built-in pop-up flash atop the camera is activated by pressing a small button on the left side of the flash. The flash settings are selected with the flash button and Command dial.

One of the camera's most impressive features is the speed at which it operates. There are three continuous shooting options: The Top 5-Frames Continuous

ease you into using the camera with the least amount of effort. Once you feel comfortable with the camera's basic features, you can begin to explore its many advanced capabilities.

Many of the S602's controls are found on its comfortable, ergonomic hand grip. In addition to the shutter button, you'll find a three-position switch for power on/off, record and playback functions. The Command dial enables you to adjust exposure compensation, flash options and continuous shooting functions. The Mode dial is used to select the desired exposure mode (options include Manual, Aperture-Priority AE, Shutter-Priority AE, Auto, and Program). There's also a Program Scene option which optimizes aperture and shutter speed settings for landscapes, portraiture, sports, night, and black-and-white photography.

Shooting mode allows you to capture up to 5 frames at 5 fps while the shutter is depressed; the Final 5-Frames Continuous Shooting mode permits an infinite number of shots at 5 fps while the shutter is depressed, saving only the final 5 frames taken prior to releasing the shutter. The Long-Period Continuous Shooting mode allows you to capture up to 40 frames at 1.8 fps with 1280x960 resolution.

The S602 also features a movie recording mode that enables you to capture VGA movie recordings with 640x480 resolution at 30 fps. You can also record movies with sound at 320x240 resolution.

If your subject is closer than the standard minimum focusing distance of 1.6 feet (in the wide-angle position), simply press the Close-up button on the left side of the lens



The full-featured FinePix S602 features an ergonomic handgrip that provides easy access to the shutter release, Command and Mode dials. The camera offers a wide variety of manual and automatic exposure options, as well as a choice of user-selectable ISO settings for additional creative control. The f/2.8 maximum aperture is great for low-light photography,



that enables you to view images on a television screen.

We borrowed the FinePix S602 Zoom for a month, so we had plenty of opportunities to experiment with its many features. One of the first tests was an early-morning photo expedition where we encountered beautiful flowers heavily laden with dew. The Close-up function and built-in flash were a perfect combination that allowed us to capture the flower's intricate color and detail. We used both the LCD monitor on the camera back and the electronic eyepiece viewfinder, and preferred the latter for shooting close-up subjects.

A few days later we took a walk on the beach with our daughter Kristy and her German Shepherd. They seemed like perfect subjects on which to test the video features of the camera. After taking a couple of high-speed still images, we switched to the video function. The sun was very bright so we used the eyepiece viewer to compose and capture our scene. Then we reviewed the images using the larger LCD monitor with our backs to the sun.

Our next stop was a hangout for wind surfers in the Columbia Gorge. We stopped enroute to experiment with some long exposures of cascading waterfalls and wide-angle scenics. When we finally reached our destination, we were pleased to see several daring wind surfers. The camera performed well on our fast-moving subjects.

and you can now take photos of subjects from 3.9 inches to 2.6 feet. Press the Close-up button again and you'll enter the Super Macro mode which permits you to shoot as close as 0.4 inches. The camera's precise autofocus system functions well in either Macro mode. You can also switch to manual focus and rotate the focus collar on the lens the old-fashioned way.

The S602 boasts several shortcuts for quickly activating camera functions with the press of a button and/or a twist of the Command dial. For example, if you press the Shift button for more than one second, a special menu will display control functions for white balance, ISO, image quality, self-timer and LCD brightness. There's also a handy Information button that displays data about image sharpness, resolution, ISO, and other variables that pertain to the image in question.

A small door on the side of the S602 hides the USB port that's used to connect the camera to the computer for downloading your images. There is also a Video Out port

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A few days before the camera was due to be returned, we decided to take it with us for one last walk. For days we had been watching an elusive Blue Heron fishing in the lake. Although he had always remained well out of range, today was different; he was standing only about 50 feet away. We quickly turned the camera to Program mode, zoomed the lens to its extreme telephoto position, and snapped the shutter. Then we quickly took another and another, certain that the bird would fly away at any moment. For some reason, on this day the Heron seemed very willing to have his picture taken. He stood still for vertical and horizontal shots, wide-angle compositions, overexposures, underexposures, and just about every other possible combination for some 40 exposures.

We only stopped when it became too dark to continue shooting. What a great way to end our testing. Priced at \$799.95, the Fujifilm FinePix S602 is a high quality, full-featured camera that delivers great results. For more information, visit Fujifilm's website at www.fujifilm.com. ■

We used our daughter's dog Pepper to test the S602's many still and video capabilities.

