

Canon PowerShot G5

Text and photos by
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Digital camera technology is changing at a rapid pace these days, and one thing is certain: cameras just keep getting better and better. A case in point is the new Canon PowerShot G5. This five-megapixel model includes just about everything you need in a point-and-shoot camera, as well as a few features we haven't seen before.

When we first picked up the PowerShot G5 we instantly appreciated the camera's thoughtful ergonomics. A comfortable grip makes it easy to hold the camera in one hand, with all the primary controls easily accessible. It is compact, but not too small.

Intuitive Operation

We like to judge a camera's ease of use by shooting some images before reading the instruction manual. Who has time to read a manual, anyhow? Well, the G5 passes that test with flying colors. We immediately noticed that some menu icons are red while others are blue. It quickly became obvious that red icons indicate image-capture functions and blue icons denote playback options. This color coding makes it easy to navigate the camera's menu system.

The G5 is powered by a rechargeable lithium-ion battery that loads from the bottom of the camera. Images are stored



on a CompactFlash card that loads from the camera's side. Once those simple tasks were accomplished, we switched the camera on and the powerful 4X (35–140mm 35mm equivalent) zoom lens extended out from the camera and



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Photographic



The G5's multi-mode exposure system delivers accurate results under a variety of lighting conditions.

we were ready to go.

Viewing and framing are possible either through the camera's optical viewfinder or via the color LCD panel on the back. The LCD panel can swing out and swivel in a 270° arc for added compositional versatility when shooting from unusual camera angles.

We received our first big surprise when we took a vertical image and previewed it in the playback mode. The camera automatically rotated the image 90° so that it appeared vertical on the LCD panel. No more turning your head or the camera to the side to view vertical images.

Exposure Control

Exposure control is quite extensive and is represented by a dozen icons on the exposure-control dial atop the camera. In addition to the standard Manual, Aperture-Priority, Shutter-Priority and Auto Program options, the camera offers two custom settings and a choice of five specialty scene modes.

The G5 features user-selectable ISO



Canon's DIGIC image processor contributes to crisp, punchy photos, and very clean blacks that are free from noise and other digital artifacts.

Camera: Canon PowerShot G5	
Category: 5-megapixel Digicam	
AF Performance	★★★★★
Metering Performance	★★★★★
Feature Set	★★★★★
Ease of Use	★★★★★
Ergonomics	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★



settings at 50, 100, 200 and 400, as well as an automatic setting that performed well under a variety of lighting conditions. Other exposure controls include EV compensation or auto bracketing of ± 2 stops in $\frac{1}{3}$ -stop increments. Auto exposure bracketing can be combined with exposure compensation settings to extend the adjustment range.

The G5 also provides comprehensive white balance controls, including Auto, Daylight, Tungsten, Fluorescent, Flash, and Custom settings. Our standard white balance test is conducted at the local Tillamook Cheese Factory where the reddish lighting is extremely difficult to balance. The color shift was far outside any of the standard settings, so we used the custom setting to achieve an almost perfect color correction.

The camera's built-in, multi-mode electronic flash will handle most low-light situations. For improved range, the camera's hot-shoe enables you to use one of Canon's powerful auxiliary flash units.

Panoramic Photography

If you like taking panoramas but find image alignment a problem, the G5 has the answer. It features a function



The LCD panel on the back of the G5 swings and swivels to aid composition when shooting from odd camera angles.

called Stitch Assist that is quite incredible. As soon as you take your first image, it is displayed on the left side of the monitor. A preview of the scene is then displayed alongside the first image, enabling you to align the preview and the first image before taking the second shot. Each new image is added to the display to provide accurate alignment every time.

You can take up to 26 images horizontally or vertically this way, and the final images are then stitched together via software that comes with the camera.

As we worked our way around the camera, we noticed a small button on the front under the lens. When we pressed it, the outer shell came off the lens. We guessed that this meant that the camera would accept accessory lenses. We checked the instruction

manual for the first time, and learned that there are three accessory lenses available: the WC-DC58N wide-angle lens that expands the angle of view by .7X, the TC-DC58N telephoto lens that increases the image by 1.75X, and the 250D close-up lens that permits focusing as close as .33 ft.

When we're testing a new digital camera, we put all our other cameras on the shelf and do all our shooting with the test model. We carry it everywhere we go, and take hundreds of images of just about every subject imaginable. The Canon PowerShot G5 performed beautifully. It was very easy to use and we rarely had to refer to the manual (and even then, it was only to confirm what we already suspected).

The bottom line is that you can't go wrong with the PowerShot G5; it's a real winner. With a suggested retail price of \$899, it offers a big bang for your buck. For more information on the Canon line of digital cameras, check out www.powershot.com. ■