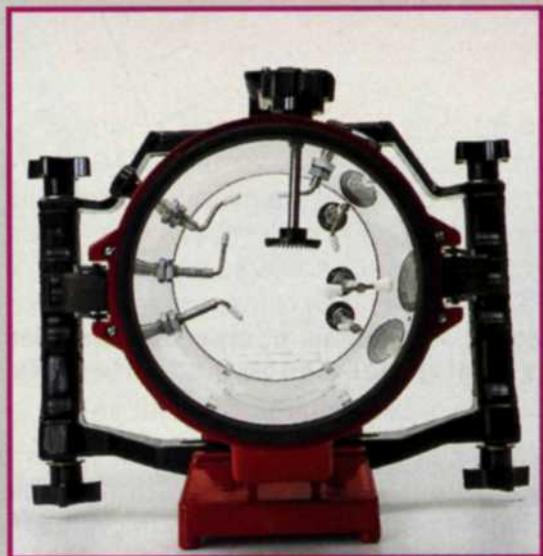


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U/W VIDEOS



IKELITE'S CCD-V101

A SONY HOUSING THAT ALLOWS ACCESS
TO 25 CAMERA FUNCTIONS



TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY JACK AND SUE DRAFAHL

Ikelite's housing for the Sony CCD-V101 accesses 25 camera functions. Having full control allows the diver to manipulate camera settings, exercising more creative control over the images.

For the last 30 years, Ikelite has been supplying divers with some of the finest, most innovative underwater photographic equipment in the industry. Ikelite's key objective in video housings we've reviewed in the past was minimizing the number of controls to make using them simple. However, Ikelite

soon realized that everyone has a different shooting style and some divers want control over all the functions their fancy video cameras feature.

With that in mind, Ikelite created a housing for the Sony CCD-V101 that accesses 25 camera functions. This heavy duty housing is comprised of three ba-

sic materials. The main body or center section is made of high quality clear acrylic and can withstand pressures down to 250 feet. Large aluminum rings at each end of the acrylic tube and six stainless steel rods that run its length hold the housing together. Additional mounting brackets, baseplate and han-

dles—attached to the sides of the housing—complete the package.

Access to the housing is through the front plate, where the camera and its special baseplate are inserted. The front plate is acrylic and has a special O-ring that is compressed between the front plate and housing with two catch and strike clamps to ensure a perfect seal. The high quality optical dome is threaded to the front plate and permanently sealed with a highly visible red O-ring. A black lens hood, attached to the dome, protects it from scratches and improves image quality.

HOUSING CONTROLS

Eight housing control levers allow you to operate almost every conceivable function of the Hi-8 V-101 Sony camera. Each control shaft is stainless steel and penetrates the housing through X-ring and O-ring seals. Each control has a white rubber tip for easy visibility and to protect the camera from scratches. The front control has a flat circular gear at the end of the shaft that meshes with the spring loaded gear around the lens. Turning this control in each direction will change the focus.

Moving back along the top of the housing you will find a pair of controls that operate two of the camera's basic functions. On the left is the power on/off control. Turning it forward turns the camera on. Turning it backward activates the power to the VTR position. The control on the right operates the zoom lens.

There are two more basic control levers under the housing's right handle. The bottom lever starts and stops the camera recording. If you forget to remove the standby cover from the start/stop switch, don't worry. A second control is specifically designed to push the standby cover out of the way so you can activate the start button. It seems Ikelite has thought of everything!

Three of the most unusual controls we have ever seen on a video housing are on the CCD-V101's backplate. The top control is a seven and one-half inch long steel shaft that skirts along the top

side of the camera so it can access the VTR controls. Rewind, play, fast forward, pause, record and data screen can all be operated with this one lever. The control over these functions can become very important to the underwater photographer who has spent most of the dive recording so-so scenes, only to be out of tape when a huge Manta Ray stares him in the face. With these valuable controls the diver can rewind the tape and record new scenes on top of less exciting scenes.

If you are shooting a very important scene, you can record it, rewind it, take a quick look at it and re-record if you don't like the first try. If you have enough time and air you could essentially shoot and rough edit the tape U/W.

Not to be outdone, the second control shaft on the back of the housing is ten and one-half inches long and can access ten special functions on the side of the camera. These include: title 1, title 2, memory, color mode, AE program, iris, shutter speed, gain, focus and white balance. Access to these controls would be a one time operation during the dive or if you set something wrong before getting into the water.

The third and final control on the back of the housing has access to three functions: fader, push autofocus and one push white balance. Reversing the position of this control will also allow access to three of the functions operated by the ten and one-half inch control on the backplate. This overlapping of function controls includes the gain, focus and white balance buttons.

Ikelite recommends that each new housing be tested in the water without the camera installed to ensure you have assembled the basic housing correctly. We agree that all photographic housings should be pre-tested before use. The camera eyepiece must be removed and replaced with the Ikelite Video-Eye, included with the housing. This allows the videographer to see a very bright full frame image.

Next, the lens hood is removed and a focus gear is stretched around the camera lens. The Ikelite Marine Video .5X Lens is then screwed onto the front of the camera. This special auxiliary lens doubles the angle of view, which is necessary underwater. To correct the focusing distance a +4 diopter lens is then attached to the auxiliary lens. Both the auxiliary lens and the +4 diopter lens come with the housing.

Once you have loaded a fresh tape and attached a charged battery, a long black tray is attached to the bottom of the camera, thus completing its preparation. Open the housing by releasing both front plate clamps at the same time. Check the O-ring and pull back all camera controls. Slide the camera in

rear first, until the tray touches the back of the housing. Align all housing controls to their proper positions and close the housing by pushing back on both clamps at the same time. Finally check each O-ring surface and operate all the controls. If all pass inspection then you are ready for the most versatile video dive ever.

CONCLUSION

Because of the high reliability of the Ikelite housing controls and because they add very little bulk or weight, we see no drawbacks to the additional functions. Having full camera control allows the diver to freely manipulate camera settings, exercising more creative control over the recorded images. In effect, the housing becomes the camera, with all its high tech functions—the reason the videographer chose the Sony V101 in the first place!

The Ikelite model 6035.01 housing for the Sony V101 camera sells for \$995. It comes complete with the necessary focus gear, Video-Eye magnifier, and wide angle lens with +4 diopter. For more information contact Ikelite Underwater Systems at 50 West 33rd Street, Indianapolis, IN 46208 or call the company at (317) 923-4523. >

KEY FEATURES

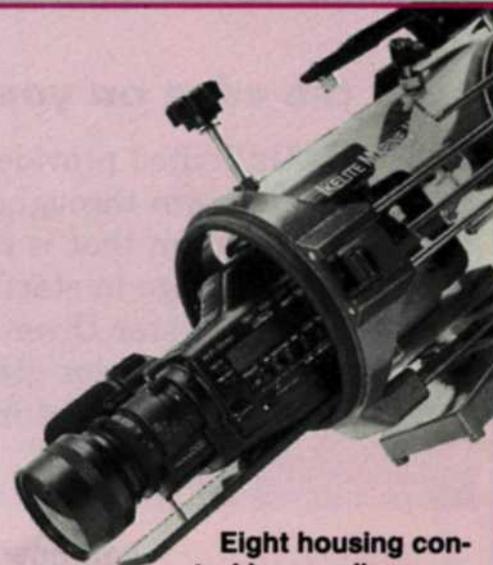
- Full frame viewing
- High quality optics
- Easy to load and use
- Tape editing underwater
- Easy viewing of controls
- Tested to 250 feet
- Hi-8 tape format

OPTIONAL ADD-ONS

- O-ring set \$7.00
- UR Pro color filter \$62.00
- Stabilizer V-wings \$69.95
- Pro Video-lite \$695.00
- Modular Video-lite 45 \$399.95
- Pro Photocase \$399.95

IKELITE HOUSINGS FOR SONY VIDEO CAMERAS

Ikelite has a housing for most 8mm or Hi-Band 8mm Sony video cameras—there were 35 as we went to press! A detailed listing of these would consume the space intended for this article. The material used for the housings is either all aluminum or polycarbonate and aluminum. For specifications and information on a housing for your Sony camera, write Ikelite at 50 West 33rd Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46208 or telephone (317) 923-4523.



Eight housing control levers allow you to operate almost every function of the Sony camera.