Inside...

Basic Shooting Skills
Which Mic? When?

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Publisher's
message

Thank you for reading this first edition of FV^VR & Australian Videocamera - "Social Media / Enthusiast" edition.

Our aim is to make an easy read, bite-size – but useful – issue of articles, reviews, tutorials, hints and tips etc. The intention is to bring one out every 4 weeks or so and cover smartphone shooting, creating social media videos, shooting and editing basics for the beginner and intermediate level enthusiast plus let you know of the latest cameras and camcorders, software, plug-ins, hardware such as cases, lighting and microphones and of course tutorials to help make you a better film maker.

If you are at a "higher" level than is in between these pages, our next edition due out in a week or so, is designed for the Short Film Maker and Professional Videographer and then 10 days after that, our final "specialist" edition is for Broadcast and Electronic News Gathering (ENG) professionals.

At this stage, we also intend to bring out a 4th version of the magazine, that has something of interest to everyone, similar to the original FV^VR / Australian Videocamera mag, but just like our "target" versions, instead of the customary 48 pages, will also only be 14-18 pages of easily digestible information.

The reason we have gone down this track is twofold. Firstly, based on our reader surveys, you prefer less information in a single issue as it is easier to read and absorb. Secondly, as there is so much ground to cover in the wonderful world of video, you wanted a distinction between the enthusiast, professional and broadcast markets. But just as car fans like seeing a Ferrari or Lamborghini or McLaren on the front cover of their magazine, even knowing they will never afford one, people like to see more advanced cameras and software, read how others use them and get some ideas for their next projects. And of course, to dream!

But there is a catch to all this, due to commercial necessity.

For the next 12 editions of this combination, you will receive them free of charge, emailed to you as an interactive e-magazine, just like this one. After that time, there will be a nominal charge per edition on a 6 month subscription basis of $1.60 per copy. You may choose which edition(s) you want, and if you would like all four, then a discounted figure of $19.20 is offered and you will receive all 24 editions.

Subscription is only by PayPal (that also accepts credit cards).

We have had to do this simply as without it, we could not exist. Pure and simple, and I am sure you understand.

We carefully thought about the way we need to go forward to survive – we are only one of a handful in the world now covering this market and the only one, we believe, in Australia - and felt this was the best course of action and have kept the costs as low as we can.

Finally, on a happy note, we have been running a competition over the last few weeks to win a fabulous Sony Cybershot DSC-RX0 camcorder worth around $1000. It is my pleasure to announce the winner – Ms Amanda Allan!

Congratulations! We will be in touch in order to send the Sony Cybershot DSC-RX0 to you by Express Post.

As always, thank you for supporting us – we greatly appreciate it. Please **email** or phone me with any questions or suggestions.

David Hague
Publisher / Managing Editor

aperture , iso
shutter speed

We ran this story last year and the response was phenomenal to say the least. As our subscription list has grown dramatically since then, and this edition is the first in our new "Social Media / Enthusiast" editions, we thought it timely to run it again.

Aperture

How wide the lens (or as someone called it, they "eye") is open. The wider it is, the more light gets in. Oddly, the lower the number eg 5.6 or 2.8 say, the wider it is.

Shutter Speed: The amount of time the shutter is open letting light in. Think of an eye blinking if you like. Of course, then, the lower the shutter speed (in seconds and down to fractions) the more light is getting in.

It stands to reason then, there is a balance between aperture settings and shutter speed, right? On most cameras today, you can cheat and just set the camera to automatic, and the brain of the camera will sort all that nonsense out for you. So why did you spend good dollars then on a flash new camera when you could spend a fraction of the money and get the current version of the old "Instamatic"?

A lesser cheat is to choose an aperture setting (the big 'A' on the rotary dial on the top of the camera usually) and let the camera work out the shutter speed. Alternatively, select 'S' (yep, for Shutter Speed), and the camera will work out the correct aperture. These are called 'Priority" settings by the way.

But here is the kicker. The camera can only work on the info it has and is certainly not infallible, so

these are guides only. Many times, they will work, but not in all circumstances, so be aware of that.

Most commonly is another wobbly that gets thrown into the system, one known as "*depth of field*" or **DOF**.

In simple terms, the wider (lower number) the aper-

Understanding these key basics is fundamental to video and photo shooting

ture, the lower the depth of field gets. This means that objects close to the lens are in focus and those further away are out of focus. Close down the aperture (make the aperture smaller, with a higher number) and the "i*n sharp*" distance is larger. And this is another case of the balance needed between shutter speed and aperture.

Is there a way to learn this? Why, yes, yes there is! I give you the unpatented David Hague Emu Bitter beer can method.

Setup an Emu Bitter beer stubby / can on a table in the open in daylight.

Option: *Open and drink first. Highly recommended.*

Place your camera, ideally on a tripod (when should you use a tripod? Whenever you have one) about 2 metres away. Set the ISO for 400 (more on this a little later, for now, just do it OK).

Open the aperture to its widest – probably f8 – and set the shutter speed to 1/60th (or 125th in very bright sunlight) and focus on the can. (Why the f? Each set-

ting is called an f-stop. Yes, but WHY? Since you asked:

The f-number of an optical system (such as a camera lens) is the ratio of the system's focal length to the diameter of the entrance pupil. … It is also known as the $f$ocal ratio, f-ratio - or f-stop.

Get a notepad and pencil.

Take a shot, note down the settings of aperture and shutter speed. Review the shot in your camera's pop out LCD (there is usually a 'Play' button marked as a right facing arrow head somewhere on the camera top or back. To exit playback, usually a half press of the shutter release will take you back to "take photo" mode.

Now, keeping the shutter speed where it is, change the aperture to the next highest, refocus and take another shot.

Repeat the above, until you have reached minimum aperture (usually f22)

You will see that as the aperture decreases in size (a higher number remember), the image gets darker and darker to the point that eventually, you probably won't see anything but darkness. You'll also note that as you refocus, more and more of the background, not just the Emu Bitter stubby, comes into focus.

Now repeat steps 1-7 but start the shutter speed at 1/1000th and set the aperture to f16 and keep THAT constant. With each step, DECREASE the shutter speed to the next lowest through 1/500th, 1/250th, 1/125th, 1/60th and so on down to about ½ second. Don't forget to take notes for each shot describing the settings used and what you saw in the camera's LCD when put in playback mode for each shot.

This is the best way I have found to come to grips with the twins of aperture and shutter speed and become used to them. Eventually, as you experiment in real life taking photos (or video as the same principles apply except you may

find aperture called "iris") and take multiple shots with different settings of the same subject, rather than a one-off shot on automatic, it will become second nature to pick an average setting for say a sunrise or sunset and deviate from that average a little with a shutter speed or aperture change due to distance, bright light or some other factor. The same applies for shots over snow, in dull, overcast conditions, or with a water proof camera.

In other words, there is nothing in photography that is "average". And it is the use of these combinations that causes creativity in photography – along with camera angle, light placement, framing etc of course.

ISO

Now before you are overwhelmed, let's just touch lightly on a term I mentioned earlier, ISO. In the "old days" of film cameras, this was also known more commonly as "ASA" and is a measure of the film's "speed". The higher the number of the ISO, the more sensitive it is to light.

Above, I suggested ISO 400, and this is a good setting to use for every day type stuff. If the sunlight is especially bright, you might want to knock it down to 200.

But why not increase the shutter speed you ask? Simple, because then you might alter it too much for the f setting, or going the other way, and SLOWING the shutter speed, may cause a fast moving object – a flying bird, jumping, breaching whale – to be blurred.

The drawback of ISO is that with the higher film speed, while being able to work in lower and lower light, a factor called 'grain' is brought

into the equation. And 'grain' is exactly what is sounds like; the image looks grainy. If you are mainly shooting every day stuff, I'd stick to ISO 400 and playing with aperture and shutter speeds along with focus to start with. You may want to up the ISO if say shooting at an outdoor night time BBQ, but as always, take a few test shots first with different settings to see what the results will be.

If you are after the ubiquitous night time star shot while parked in the middle of the Simpson desert, by all means have a play – after all that is what it is all about. A high ISO and L-O-N-G shutter speed with an appropriate aperture can get some amazing photos (and video) any pro would be proud of.

Summary

1. TRY and read the manual. It really is worth it in the long run.

2. Don't be intimidated by your camera or camcorder. You own IT not vice versa!

3. Don't be afraid to experiment, it's the best way to learn.

4. Take copious notes of the shot settings you have used (when you get more conversant and confident, you'll start shooting in a mode called RAW+JPG that will assist here as the settings are saved with the shot and you can view them later and even modify the shot in Adobe Photoshop or Corel Paintshop Pro and other image editing applications).

5. At the end of each day, copy ALL the shots / videos from your camera's SD card to a removable hard disk for safe keeping. Create a folder for each day. Label MEANINGFULLY.

6. This means you can go through your shots at your leisure and discard the ones that didn't work, and keep this that did, while still keeping the camera free to take more photos / video.

7. Invest in a tripod or failing that a smaller Joby Gorilla Pod tripod.

comment:

I swore blind that as the years passed, I would not morph into a grumpy old man. And I haven't. I'm not old.

But right now, I am bloody grumpy! And I am grumpy because of a number of things all transpired together to cause a job to be aborted for no REAL valid reason.

Imagine the scenario; a licenced entertainment venue that is playing host for a booking for an end of year party. There is wine, beer and spirits flowing, and the food – a set down do – is plentiful and very good (I have partaken at the particular location numerous times).

Someone whips out an iPhone to take some video or piccies for Facebook or Instagram – whatever - and no-one bats an eyelid. Others follow suit.

I am there to get some footage for promo purposes, legitimately asked by the owner / manager. But ONE person, rolls up to me and demands me to explain what I am doing with a camera. When I explain briefly, I am told in no uncertain terms that "*I do not want my photo taken*". And they were in no mood to listen to what I consider "common sense".

Well that's fine, I am not taking your photo. Off they hoof, to come back in 5 minutes to state they have checked all the people on their table and nor does anyone else.

This is escalating to level "silly". I point to the owner / manager to air the beef at and keep shooting – a discreet Ricoh Theta V 360˚ camera by the way, not a shoulder mounted ENG beast. And I am hidden in the background, not wandering around among the punters or anything.

15 minutes later, the owner / manager tells me to desist. And that is that.

It appears the complaint escalated up the line to the manager (I'll refrain from the correct title as that will immediately give away more than I want. Suffice to say they are public servants).

Suggesting this is between the devil and the deep blue sea is an understatement. To the owner, they are very good clients and he doesn't want to upset them. A crowd of 50+ people is not to be sneezed at.

What I do not understand, is why people react like this?

"*I don't want to be identified*" is the usual retort. For goodness sake, in this case it is a public front line servant in a country bloody town! Everyone knows who they are!

"*I don't know what you are going to do with the footage*", is the other common one. What do they think? If I do ANYTHING that is nefarious with that footage, then I have committed a criminal offence and I'll accept the consequences. But I am not going to do any such thing. A crowd of people – where it is hard to pick out individuals anyway – at an event is hardly material that could be used for any sort of funny business.

Has this attitude been caused by media frenzy whipped up paranoia that has invaded us? Or simply that we are all too precious these days? All this stuff about "privacy" has gone overboard it would appear, as has our reactions and attitudes to normal sedate circumstances.

And good old fashioned logic and common sense.

I mean, apart from the plethora of smartphones taking pictures and video all around you all day long, there are CCTV cameras, dashcams and more covering you just about everywhere you go.

I wonder too, if I said I was from the local newspaper doing the "social scene" column, or from the local TV station doing a puff piece for the local TV news, would I have had the same reaction? Experience tells me no. In fact, experience tells me they would downright chuffed to be on the telly or in the paper.

So much for being recognised!

Perhaps I should wear a Jimmy Olsen trilby with a "PRESS" sticker on it? Would that help?

So, I have two questions: if you are the public, are you worried about others taking video or stills of you inadvertently or as part of a crowd, and if so, why?

Or if you are a pro cammo put in this situation all the time, how do you handle it? Tell 'em to sod off, you are just doing your job? Try and explain? Or just sigh, pack up, have a beer and go home?

I've checked the law by the way, and you can photo or video anyone you want in a public place. That is NOT illegal. It only becomes so when /if you do something illegal with the photo / video.

But next time, I might use a miniature camera hidden under a discreet full-length black plastic raincoat and wear a hat over my eyes with sunglasses, a wig and a false nose.

I bet no-one notices.

Review: proDAD ERAZR

Do you have a need to remove unwanted objects? Easy as ERAZR!

Back in the 'old' days – around 1997 - there used to be a piece of software called Commotion from a mob in the US, Puffin Software, that as one of its party pieces, allowed the removal of objects from video.

It was expensive. Very expensive. Over USD$1500 as I recall. And complicated. In fact, there was a whole suite of video training tapes for it.

But it was also ground breaking at the time (along with AVID's Elastic Reality but that's a whole another story).

Today, we have **ERAZR V1** from proDAD, who also make four of our favourite utility applications, **Hero-glyph**, **Mercalli**, **Vitascene** and **ProDRENALIN**. It's a stand-alone Windows application, not a plugin, and boy, is it effective! And you can learn it from only a couple of online 7-minute YouTube tutorials, not 3 hours of video training!

There are a few caveats I must admit, not the least being that you do need to sit down and come to grips with how the program works. There are some serious technologies at work here folks (including AI), but once you master them, the usage of ERAZR comes very quickly and easily to you. At first it can seem a little daunting as quite probably, you have never quite had to do something like this before. But the effort is worth it.

Wazzit Do?

Simply put, ERAZR allows you to track an object in a scene – including any extraneous bits such as shadows – and remove them completely. A lot of what ERAZR does is performed automatically by the system, but when, for example, objects get too small for the program to track accurately such as a vehicle coming from or going to a distance, you may need to step in and perform some manual tracking and keyframing to get the very best results.

The example used way back when in Puffin's Commotion removed a seagull flying (off memory), through a scene. With the computing power available back then, pre- multicore days and we are thinking Adobe Premiere version 4.2 or 5 – whilst it worked, it was slow as, while each frame was painstakingly calculated and rendered.

No such issue with ERAZR, and even on a modest i5, it honked along quite nicely thank you! ERAZR supports a multitude of frame rates (24p / 25p / 30p / 50p and 60p and then some more) and resolution up to 8K.

Unlike other applications that do object removal by clone stamping from previous scenes that can be very work intensive and time consuming, once you have the workflow of ERAZR sorted, you can rip through creating a sequence very quickly.

Wazzit NOT Do?

Yes, there are limitations, but these are hardly ERAZR's fault; for example, a vehicle moving from left to right across your scene (or a seagull!) is easily extracted as the program 'knows' what the scene should look like without the object there. But if the vehicle is coming towards you for example, then ERAZR has no idea what is behind it, and so cannot do its thing under those circumstances. Similarly, an object must be moving.

The workflow is quite straight forward, as mentioned, just different to perhaps your norm. First off, the object to be removed has to be tracked and ERAZR provides the tools to create different types of masks for doing this along with keyframing any changes.

Creating the initial mask to track
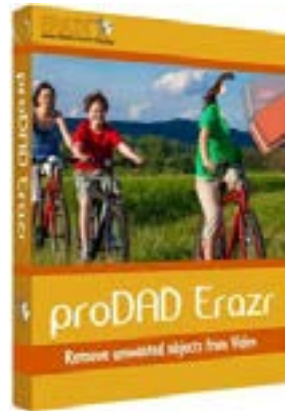
So HOW Do You Do It?

First you define the in and out points of the completed clip. ERAZR calls this the Work Area.

Next you find a good position in the clip that allows you to define by the mask the whole object to be removed. You can adjust the mask using supplied tools

Tracking along the timeline

to get the exact fit you need. The mask is then adjusted during the clip work area to create the required key frames. The mouse and keyboard arrow keys are used to fine tune this as needed.

Once you have completed the tracking and are happy with the result (you can check through frame by frame and adjust the automatic selections of the masking as needed), then you switch to the Result View of ERAZR to make sure there are no errors.

If you want to be really clever, ERAZR even lets you fade in a removed object and then fade it out again. This is a neat trick for those "ghost images that appear to show people walking through walls for example.

The end result of removing our scooter guy as can be seen from this video.

Click the image above to play the video

What Does It Cost?

I won't pretend ERAZR is a $49 product as it's not. It is USD$499. But if you have been on location and got the exact shot you want and then back in post see that there is a glitch that should not be there – that blasted seagull again - then it is a damn sight cheaper and a lot more convenient than a re-shoot.

Another opportunity is where you have clips that are totally unrelated to a current project, but with a bit of tweaking by removing a moving object, they can fit in. This may save having to do a specific shoot, and therefore save budget.

I for one can think of many areas I can use it in the latter case alone!

Anyway, proDAD as always, let you have a play to see what you think. I suggest you download the trial and have a play; I suspect ERAZR might just become another very useful tool in your video editing toolbox!

To get the best, you can also get a downloadable PDF manual, Quickstart and Workflow documents, and proDAD has kindly put together a number of tutorials to help in the learning curve. All this stuff including the Trial version can be had from www.prodad.com.

More than likely we'll create a few ourselves as this is a fun program to play with!

You can get a trial version of ERAZR from the proDAD website by **clicking here.**

Need a clip cataloguing system? Check out the freebie Mync.

One of the biggest issues facing the videographer, especially those that shoot LOTS of video and have folder after folder full of clips, stills, graphics and other assets, is storing, cataloguing and then being able to find just the clips or imagery you need quickly and easily.

I know I was always struggling to find a decent system, but then when doing a totally un-related Google search I came across an application called Mync (pronounced "mink" apparently).

Mync is from the same folk that make the EDIUS video editing software, and a version called "Standard" is bundled with that application when you buy it. But for the rest of us, there is a basic version of Mync that – at the time of writing anyway - is a freebie and can be downloaded for both Windows and MacOS from **www.myncworld.com**.

You can buy the Standard version if you find you need more functionality and it is $49. A comparison datasheet of the two is at **https://myncworld.com/up-**
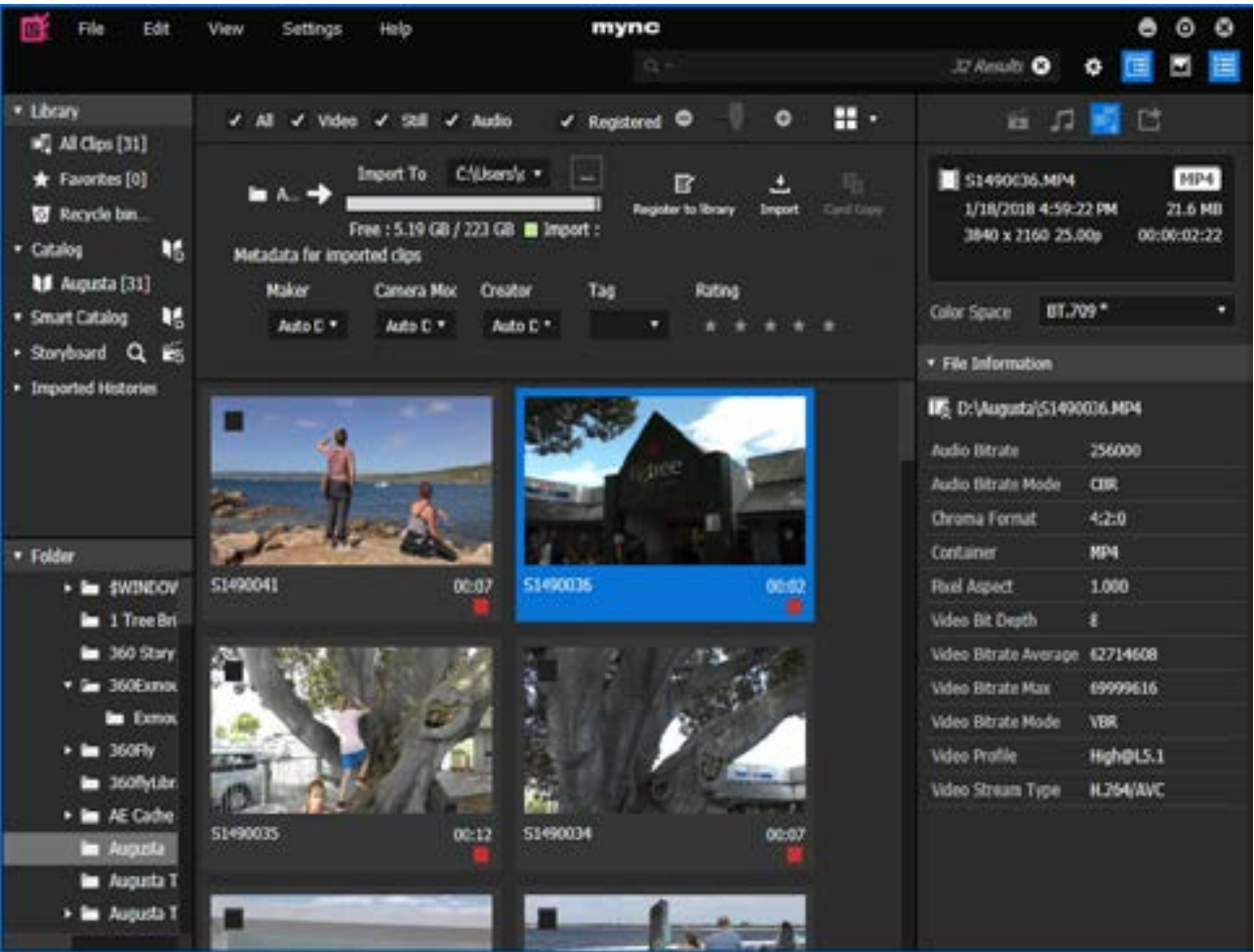
dater/1.11/GVB-1-0632E-EN-DS_Mync.pdf

So, what do you get for nothing? Well, quite a lot actually. After installation which is dead straightforward, and running the program, you are first presented with a pop-up window detailing any updates and a list of 9 quick tutorials you can access online giving you the
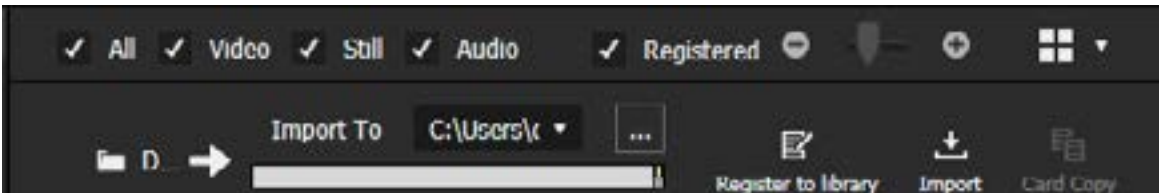
basics of using Mync. These cover everything from an overview to importing and organizing, sharing and management of clips and Mync's direct interaction with EDIUS. I strongly recommend running through these tutorials as you very quickly get up to speed.

The main interface window is split into 3 main parts; the current library, a list of folders on your computer (think WIndows Explorer) and a clip details window on the right. Filters can be applied to show only those clips you want to see, such as Video, Still or Audio for example and a slider lets you increase or decrease the thumbnail size if you chose that option. You can also display clips by filename, timeline or one I like, in a calendar format based on the shooting date embedded as meta data.

Clicking on the Settings menu bar option opens up a new window letting you fine tune Mync to your specific tastes. Options include the type of timecode displayed, which hardware decoder to use, a theme type and much more.

Clips need to be registered to the Mync library, and once registered, the clip will show a green square at the bottom right of the thumbnail.

The actual files are not moved somewhere else, just their positions and details are stored in the Mync database.

You can set specific clips as "favourites" and a yellow star will appear in the top left corner.

You can also directly import clips to the Mync database if you wish. This is useful if you have clips on external or removable drives for example. Clips that are imported these are automatically registered and a catalogue created, initially names as the device they came from. You can rename later of course.

The real power of Mync is when you create a Catalogue. Note that a catalogue is different from the Library. A catalogue is a group registered clips that exist in the Mync library, For example, I have a catalogue based on all the clips I have created on trips to Augusta in the South West of Western Australia.

These clips include standard MP4 footage from my Panasonic camcorders (PV100 and WFX1), 360°, degree clips from GoPro, Samsung and Ricoh VUZE cameras, stills from a Panasonic GH5S. audio and titles and images I have created.

These clips have all been previously registered to the Mync library.

To create a catalogue, simply click the catalogue icon on the left-hand side in the Library section, and a new
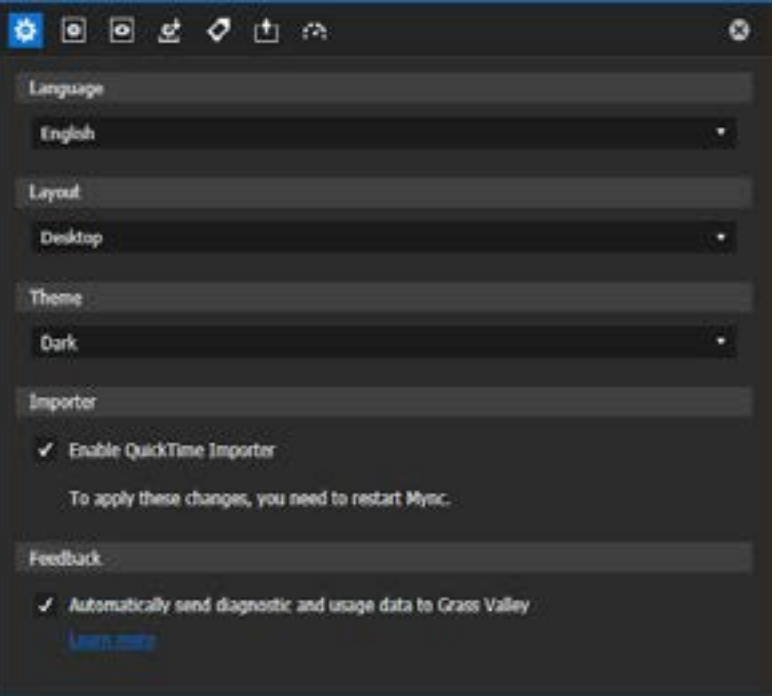
one is automatically created you can rename.

Single or multiple clips can then be dragged from the Mync library the required catalogue. It is impossible to duplicated clips in a catalogue by the way as again, only a reference to the clip is created in the catalogue.

Once in a catalogue, a variety of functions can be performed on clips. Tags can be applied so in the case of my Augusta catalogue say, I can tag our location (**Wrenwood Chalets**) shots, fishing videos, scenery stills, wildlife imagery and so on.

Another of these is to create favourites, much as you can with clips from the Mync database.

But a neat trick is that you can then create a new catalogue based on these favourites and export them to a new folder on your hard drive or to an external drive. In this way, clips can be shared, or are all in one spot for using in a specific project.

A storyboard function in Mync lets you build basic storyboards which aidis in planning your projects. Rough in and out points can be set for videos in the storyboard, or stills can be set for a specific time.
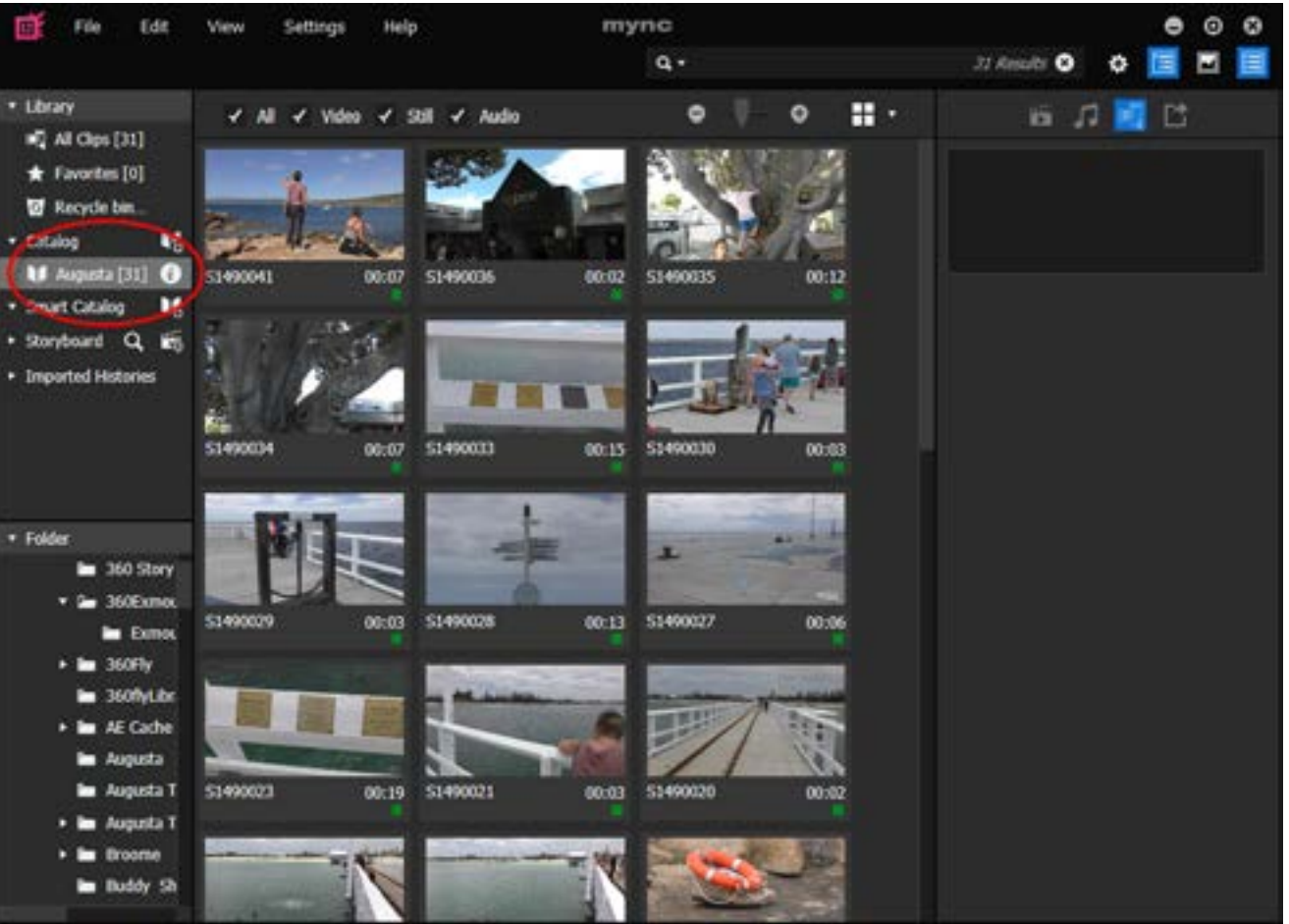
You can also change the order of clips or stills in the storyboard. The storyboard function is very useful if your video editing package of choice has no storyboard option of its own.

If you use Mync that has come with EDIUS, the Catalogue and Storyboard functions can be displayed on the source browser of EDIUS or registered to the bin of EDIUS.

There is a lot more to Mync than covered here, especially the Standard version.

You can check out the online manual at **https://myncworld.com/en/manual/** and there is a 189Mb downloadable ZIP file that contains training videos available at **www.myncworld.com**.

A

t some point in time you are going to need a microphone.

The problem lies in the question, which one? Shotgun mic, radio mic, highball or lav? On-camera or off-camera, handheld, on a boom – there are so many choices. So where to start?

Well we decided to ask an expert so got in touch with Sennheiser Australia to ask their thoughts.

Firstly though, let's work out what microphone type should be used under different circumstances. For example, if you are filming a landscape and simply want ambient noise, that is a totally different microphone than you would use as say, interviewing a person in a closed room.

Similarly, if you are filming a live band at a music concert, that is different again and so another type of microphone might be used depending on whether you're indoors or outdoors.

Shotgun Mic

Shotgun microphones are ideal for several different things on the production set. They are very directional so you simply need to point the microphone in the direction sound is coming from. As a result, a shotgun microphone is ideal for capturing dialogue of a scene (as against a person), and avoid any ambient sound and Foley effects that may be happening. Shotguns are also commonly the mic used at the end of a boom where you see a sound assistant holding the long pole with the microphone on the end of it and over the top of the subject, but out of shot.

Lapel Mic

Also called a lav which is short for lavaliere, a lav is designed specifically for capturing dialogue and so is used often on interviews for television documentaries. If you are not familiar with a lav, the next time you're watching someone being interviewed, notice that on the lapel they will often have a small black object - perhaps two of them. This is the microphone and can be either wired, usually to a small transmitter attached to a belt, or more commonly these days uses wireless transmission. The signal is sent via a transmitter to a receiver often located on the top of the camera. Sometimes a lav is placed underneath the clothing and held in place with a tiny bit of gaffer tape. Of course it stands to reason that when applying a lav mic to someone you need to be courteous and professional.

Video Mic

These are an on-camera microphone with a direct connection into the camera for recording audio to the recording medium, whether it be tape or SD card. They are probably the most common microphone in use and if you're looking at buying a microphone and just want a general-purpose unit, this is the way to go as a starter.

Handheld Mic

As the name suggests this microphone is held in the hand and is most commonly used by reporters in the field and connected directly into a recording device or to the camera. They are also often called a reporter mic.

Smartphone Mic

These are a new breed of microphone and designed specifically to be used with a smartphone where the phone is being used as a recording device, whether it be an iPhone or Android based. In the basic form, they act a little bit like a reporter but more sophisticated units such as the Sennheiser Memory Mic we gave an award to last year also have onboard memory, can work wirelessly and even have phone-based software for later editing and syncing.

Which Model?

As mentioned, we spoke to the experts at Sennheiser to ask them what model they would suggest for each of the above categories. For the on-camera shotgun mic, the MKE 440 is the suggested model and if the microphone is to be a boom, the Sennheiser MKE 600 is considered ideal.

For a (reporter) microphone, a choice of two models depending on application was put forward. The HandMic digital can be used with smart phones as it has a USB connection as well is a Lightning (iPhone) and micro USB port. For more traditional use, the MD 46 is a high-quality dynamic cardioid microphone designed for live reporting and broadcast environments.

For a lav microphone, Sennheiser suggests a wireless unit such as the EW 112P G4. This is an all in one wireless system with broadcast quality and comes with all the gear you need including microphone, receiver for mounting on camera, a transmitter for the talent and cables. It has a range of 100m which is plenty, and the batteries are said to last for up to 8 hours. Importantly it is easy to setup and use unlike some others I've played with!

Budget

Of course, a lot depends on your budget, but never underestimate the quality of your audio. This is one area where going cheap is not a good option. Sennheiser is not a retailer, so we checked around and got our prices from Melbourne-based Videoguys.

»	Sennheiser EW 112 GP4	$759.00
»	Sennheiser MKE 440	$422.00
»	Sennheiser MD 46	$272.00
»	Sennheiser HandMic	$268.00
»	Sennheiser MemoryMic	$321.00

We have dealt with Melbourne based VideoGuys ourselves and we have been very happy with their service, but as always check around as you might pick up a bargain elsewhere.

STABILITY

The DJI OSMO Mobile 2 gimbal takes all the jitter and wobble out of your handheld smartphone video shoots.

I am in the process of a video job for a mate of mine. He owns a few chalets down at Augusta in the SW of Western Australia (just past Margaret River where the good wine is grown.

(And chocolate, olive oil, gin, whisky and beer too for good measure by the way).

Let's called him David. Well it IS his name after all, and the location is called **Wrenwood Chalets** on Cave's Road, Deepdene if you are interested.

Anyway, this job entails some SEO work on his website and creating some 360° video and imagery, still shots and aerial drone video to promote and show off the place.

The weekend just past, me and Jacqui popped down there – it's a 90 minute drive from here – with an armoury of cameras (**Panasonic WFX-1 4K video**, **Panasonic GH5S mirrorless**, **Ricoh Theta V 360°**, **GoPro 4**, **Sony RX0 compact**, **Karma drone (with a GoPro 5**) and a Samsung 7 Android phone).

GIMBALS AIN'T GIMBALS

I also had been sent an Osmo Mobile 2 gimbal to have a play with, a first I admit.

There was no manual with it, and even the actual unit has no identification other than OSMO, so it took a bit of digging to work out exactly which model I had and how to set it up.

It was a bit finicky getting the balances right with the Samsung Galaxy 7 I use, and the operation of the Record button on the unit had me flummoxed for a while until I discovered there is a Bluetooth app for the OSMO / Android combo, and then we

Click image above to play video

were up and sailing.

It's impressive. Very impressive. For the work I wanted to do inside the chalets, the OSMO Mobile 2 and Samsung 7 made a good pairing, letting me walk around and capture the interior of the different rooms, and the chalet as a whole.

A walk around the outside of the circular chalet was also a breeze, and you could look where you were stepping and just let the camera and gimbal do its thing of keeping straight or flowing smoothly around corners.

JOE BLAKE

(The look where you go is important here as Wrenwood Chalets is in 100 acres of pristine bush, and with the start of summer, it is possible there might

be a Joe Blake coming out of hibernation, being a bit drowsy, but still mightily pissed off if you step on him).*

At AUD$209 (DJI Official Store) this a great buy for anyone who wants to shoot with a smartphone.

It's a shame the design of the OSMO Mobile 2 does not accommodate an action / compact camera such as the Sony RX0, but I guess the new OSMO Pocket is designed to cover that market, albeit with DJI's own camera.

We checked and Melbourne based **Videoguys have stock of the Mobile 2 at the moment** so if you think you could use one, go and pester for a trial run.

Make a good present for yourself too.

Review: VUZE XR 360 / 180 VR Camera / Camcorder

On occasion, we are lucky enough to get a scoop on a new product – in Australia at least. And we have one right now as we believe we have the first of the new Vuze XR 360° cameras anywhere in the world.

Over the past few months, we have tested a few different 360° cameras – the GoPro Fusion, Samsung Gear, Ricoh Theta V and 360Fly – and they all have their pros and cons we found.

The Vuze XR is different though, in that instead of a single top mounted lens (360Fly) or opposing fixed lenses (Ricoh Theta V, Samsung Gear and GoPro Fusion), it instead has a pair of flip-out F/2.4 210° fisheye lenses that perform differently dependent on the way the camera is used.

360 AND 180 DEGREE SHOOTING

When the lenses are clipped back (the default position), the camera is a true 360° unit; when the lens release button is pressed, the lenses pop out to the horizontal and the Vuze XR turns into a 180° VR camera. In both modes, it can shoot in various resolutions up to 5.7K (although your favourite video editor may not be able to handle this!) This resolution gives stills at 6000 x 3000 pixels!

The controls on the Vuze XR are deceptively simple. A mode button switches between the two modes of still or video, a Wi-fi button connects to a paired smartphone and there is a record button.

And that is it, meaning the Vuze XR is very quick to whip out and start shooting.

Storage is via a microSD card (not supplied take note!) and there is a USB-C port for connectivity and charging purposes. The cable is supplied as is a protective pouch.

(Take note Vuze; an external loop facility on the pouch letting you to attach it to a belt would be very handy!)

The camera "handle" has a soft, almost rubbery feel to it letting you grip it without any slippage. S standard tripod thread is in the base of the handle, and this doubles as a point to screw in a wrist strap. The Vuze XR is only available in black by the way. This is handy if you want to remain inobtrusive when shooting but a varied colour range might be attractive to some.

If you want more control over your shooting, the almost mandatory APP (iOS and Android) gives extensive control over video, photo, camera, wi-fi, application and camera settings. The only slight annoyance we have found so far is that the camera has to be "connected" via Wi-fi each time as against an automatic connection, We suspect that this is an Android issue rather than the app or the camera as we also have problems in this area with the Ricoh Theta V and some other devices such as our brilliant little Sony DSC RX0.

Using the app, you also have control over previewing video and stills, basic editing and even uploading directly to social media. On top of this, there are photo and video filters available, virtual stickers, ability to add text, colour correction and a track and follow mode letting you set the viewpoint adjustment (Vuze call this the "Director's Cut mode), Little Planet, fly in / fly out effects and more.

In short, the Vuze XR app is one that every other manufacturer has a lot of catch up to do to emulate its functionality.

For the more technically minded, ISO ranges from 100 to 1600, bit rates up to 120Mb/sec are available with frame rates of both 30 fps and 60fps. The codecs used are MP4 and H.265. For audio, there are no less than 4 MEMS 48KHz microphones built in each recording an AAC track.

The footage shot on the Vuze XR is very stable; a 6 axis gyro system keeps track of all camera movement while shooting and compensates accordingly. Vuze claim the stability is so good, that the footage is more than suitable for playback in VR headsets, something we plan to try in the near future with our Samsung Gear headset.

There is also a desktop app supporting both basic and advanced editing and stitching for both 180° and 360° content. You can also live stream in both 180° and 360° and share directly to social media.

The Vuze XR is an amazing camera. In the short time we have had a play – and we are still coming to grips with some of the nuances when getting light perfectly balanced when shooting 360° - it is by far and the best over any other on the market at the moment in our opinion.

If it has a drawback, it is that there is no water resistance at all, but a quick chat with Vuze tech support assured us that a waterproof housing is imminent. Hopefully it will not cost an arm and a leg as the one for the Theta does. The GoPro is of course already waterproof as is the 360Fly 4K.

If you want a cheapie 360° / 180° camera, at AUD$439 the Vuze XR is not in the bargain bin category to be sure. But it is $250 cheaper than the GoPro Fusion and a full $400 cheaper than the Ricoh Theta V. The Samsung is cheaper by around $200, but has nowhere near the functionality, capability and ergonomics of the Vuze XR.

This makes it a no-brainer in our opinion. Of course the pricing is a bonus over the quality of the content you can shoot and the versatility and functionality of the camera, app and desktop software.
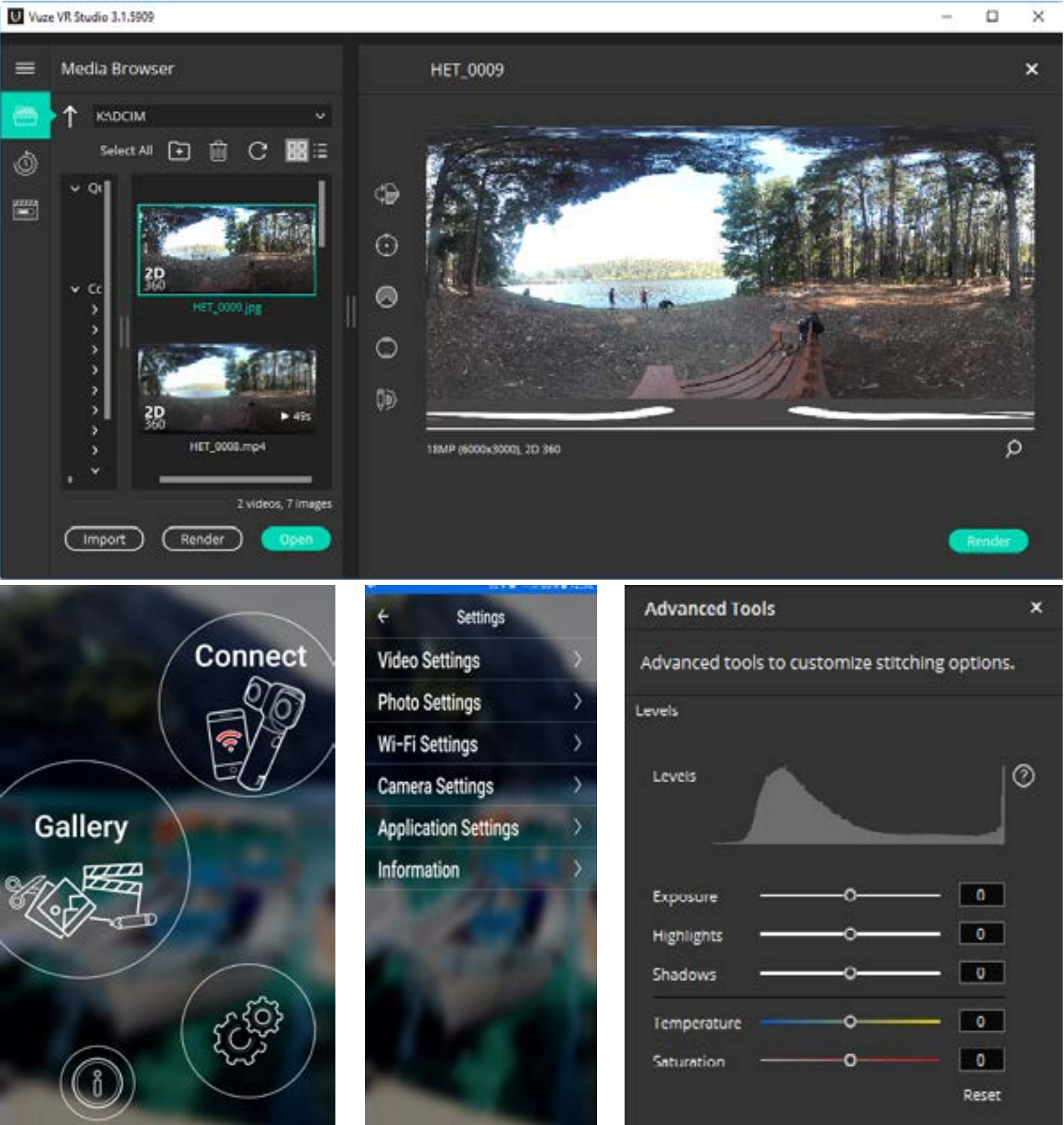
At this stage at least, you'll have to buy directly from the company - **https://vuze.camera/store/cameras/** is the website for the online shop – but trust us, you won't regret it. To see a 360° sample from the Vuze XR, **click here**.

Helpful Tips

When shooting with your smartphone, make sure it is held horizontally to get the full screen width captured

When recording audio of someone speaking, do NOT zoom in on them with the camera. It just looks weird!

To get a different look with smartphone video, tilt the phone forwards or backwards when shooting

To show keyframes in Premiere Pro use CTRL-Click the FX badge of a clip

If your camcorder or camera has the ability to show the grid in the view finder or LCD turn it on to aid in framing (Rule of Thirds)

When editing in FCP X, use the Snapshot command to create a duplicate of your project

pixelan dissolvemaster

While it looks on the surface just like a video transitions tool, DissolveMaster is so much more as it can organically animate and flow any video effect within a single clip. These effects include colour changes, tonal adjustments, blurs and visual effects. DissolveMaster can even utilise effects from other third-party plug-ins so flexible easy it.

As the Pixelan website states "Now you can easily reveal or fade video effects in a way that relates visually to your scene's content rather than the standard approach of ramping a video effect's strength uniformly over an image".

If you use an NLE from Adobe, Vegas, Cyberlink or even Windows Movie Maker, then USD$49 is a brilliant investment.

Now we could blather on for ever about how good DissolveMaster is – we have been using it and its sibling SpiceMaster since the late 1990s. Indeed, Pixelan's founder, Michael Ferrer is somewhat of an icon in digital video editing circles as he wrote the very first book on the subject, a tutorial handbook on Adobe Premiere 4.2 (Premiere with a Passion published by Peachpit Press).

But the best way to see just what DissolveMaster can do for you is for you to download the trial version for your particular video editing host (we are using Vegas Pro 16 here), install it and have a play.

The following steps will give you some idea, but there are complete steps for each host application on the Pixelan website.
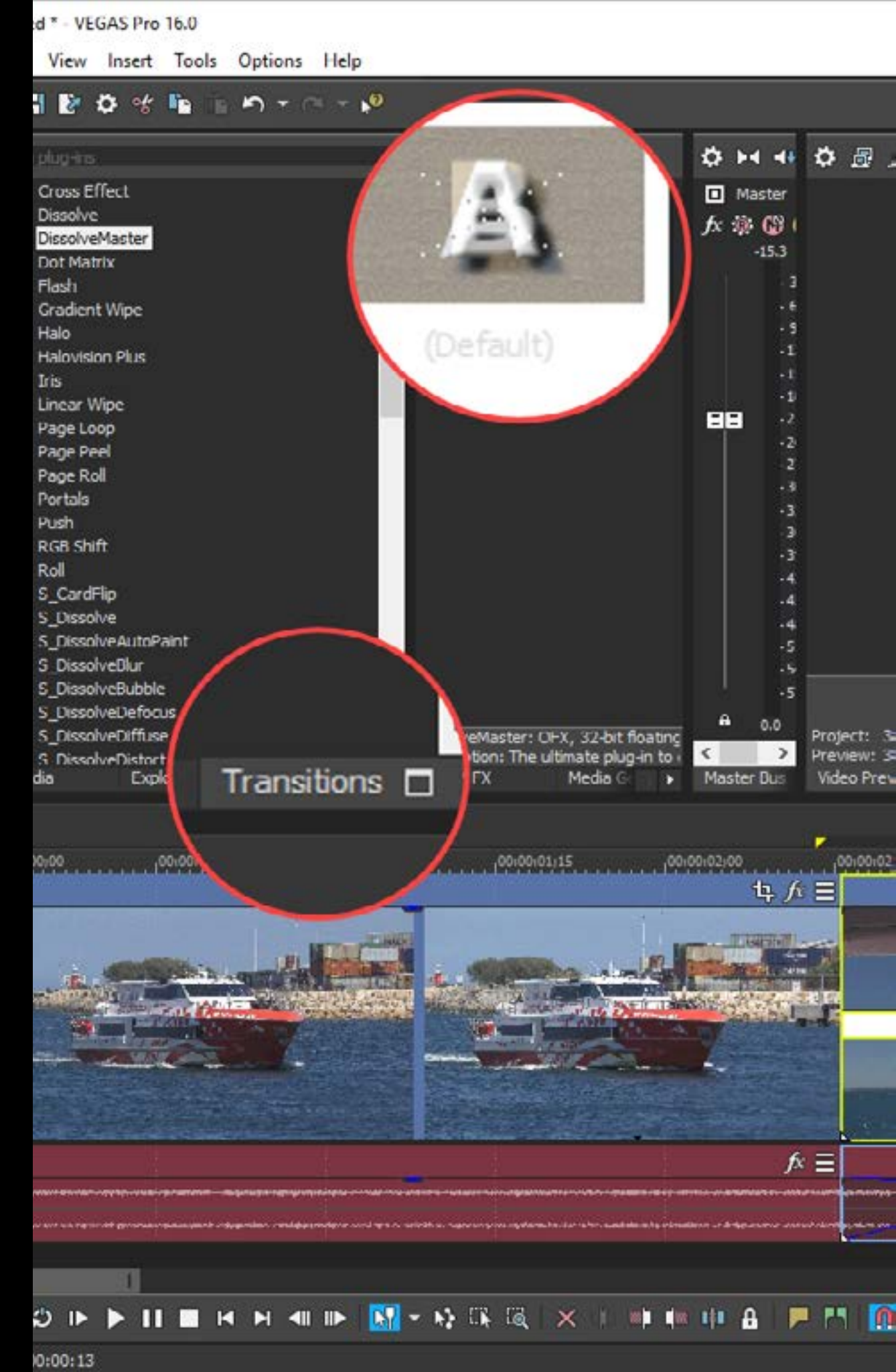
Step 1:

Drag two clips onto the SAME track on the timeline and overlap them.

Step 2:

Select the DissolveMaster plugin from the Transitions tab to open the DissolveMaster parameters window.

Step 3:

Here's where the fun starts – you can either choose a preset for each of the available options, or play with the sliders, drop downs and so on to fine tune the transition and DissolveMaster just the way you want it.

Or, as mentioned, there are dozens of powerful "section" presets you can quickly click and mix into hundreds of fresh looks, and a large animated Effects Browser window to easily compare/choose presets and effect variations.

Or you can even click its Recent button to instantly access a recently applied effect.

DissolveMaster is available for **Vegas Pro and Movie Studio**, **Adobe Premiere Pro, Elements and After Effects**, **Cyberlink Power Director** (so ideal for **Samsung Gear 360** camera by the way) and even **Windows Movie Maker**!

For more information go to **www.pixelan.com** (and have a look at all the other fabulous products with sample videos Michael and his team has put together while you are about it.