

Fantasea FG15 housing for the Canon G15 compact

By Peter Rowlands

I became a convert to Canon compact cameras when I did a review of the S95 a while ago. It was the first time that I had seen images from a compact camera which had definition in the definition, if you get me. I have a family heirloom pair of Zeiss binoculars and a pair of humongous Strathspey Giant 20x90 Binoculars and, whilst the latter are physically impressive, more powerful and far less expensive, I can actually see more with the former because they resolve more. As a result I own a Canon S100 and I never cease to be amazed by its lens performance and, for me, its manual white balance capability.

Whilst the S100 is a very capable camera it is still fairly 'menu driven' which can be a bit tedious if you need to change a setting quickly and that is where the Canon G15 comes in. This chunky category leader has dedicated dials and buttons to make quick changes much easier as well as an optical viewfinder for sunny days when the LCD is hard to view. But rather than go into detail www.dpreview.com has a full review. Let's concentrate on the housing.

Rather like the camera it houses the Fantasea FG15 has a very solid, chunky feel, helped by the black polycarbonate front section and it looks like it would survive a hard life and still perform flawlessly. It is rated to 60 metres/200 feet.

A solid rotating knob with safety lock opens the housing to reveal a beautifully finished interior. The only thing you need to do is lift the Mode control and align it with the camera's setting. Sliding the camera into position is silky smooth and very reassuring. There is a double O ring seal and a very neat (optional) leak detector on the right hand side which emits a high pitched whine and flashes an LED should any moisture get in. Once again, very reassuring.

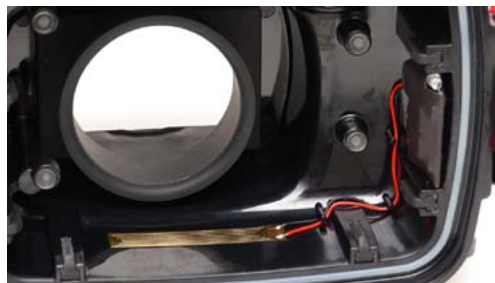
The external controls are chunky and well spaced even for gloved hands and the front and rear grip contours make holding the housing a breeze. As primarily a video user the stop/start button is well positioned for thumb control and should ensure wobble free activation. A nice design touch is the shroud around this button to save accidental activation.





Speaking of nice designs, the ergonomics are really excellent and the pop up flash control is particularly impressive because it incorporates a locking mechanism so that the pop up flash cannot be accidentally opened. That may be a small thing but it is this attention to detail for which the designers should be praised. They should definitely be praised again for their execution of the rear control dial. This needs a delicate balance of grip without pushing and the internal ribbed rubber dial achieves that beautifully.

For those who do want to trigger external strobes there are 2 fibre optic ports and there is a cold shoe for attaching aiming lights. If the internal flash is sufficient for you there is a



large diffuser which can be attached to give even coverage.

The rubber shade for the LCD screen is particularly effective in shallow, brightly lit water.

Continuing the solid theme the tripod base has 3 holes rather than just the usual 1 so attaching baseplates and handles will be very secure. Fantasea also produce a range of accessories including wide angle lenses, strobes and filters so you can expand the



system to suit your specific needs.

The housing price starts at \$499.95 and up depending on region and warranty coverage so it's cheaper than some aluminium housings but more expensive than Canon's own brand housing but I think it's definitely worth the extra for such a reassuring, solid housing.

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In the UK, Canon cameras and Fantasea housings are available from Bristol Cameras.

www.bristolcameras.co.uk



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