

The Canon G9 - A Point And Shoot For Professionals?

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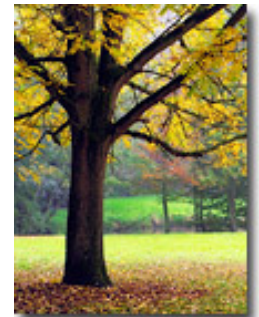
In October I went to Belgium to visit relatives. I was torn about what camera gear to take. Originally I was going to take my Canon 1Ds Mark II with a 24-70 f2.8L and a 70-200 F4L lens, but when that gear was gathered up in a daypack it was bulky and weighed a ton. I was anything but inconspicuous! Two days before I left, I decided this trip would be about family first and photography second, so I would take just a little point-and-shoot for "memory shots". I picked up a Canon G9 that seemed to have nice specs (12.1 megapixels, a 35-210mm image stabilized lens, and RAW capabilities) and an even nicer price (under \$500).



In Belgium, I took the camera everywhere and pulled it out when something interested me. I looked like just another point-and-shoot tourist – not a “serious” photographer. The images on the big LCD looked great and the list of pro features on the camera was impressive. I wondered if this camera had more potential than just being a “snapshot” camera. For example, not only does the camera have manual mode, exposure compensation, a great macro mode, RAW capability, and a live histogram, but it also has 3-frame auto bracketing in 1/3-stop increments up to 2 stops, over and under. I could easily do HDR (high dynamic range) images with the G9 if I wanted. The camera also has an optional filter adapter and I could use my polarizer and grads on the camera. I am lost without filters and the ability to use my arsenal of camera filters on a point-and-shoot is really important to me. This camera had the potential to produce photos I could use professionally with its pro-like controls and a big pixel count



Back home I studied the quality of the images and did further tests in various light and ISO settings. I found that when properly exposed and processed, the images from the G9 made sharp, clean files that produced amazing 12x16 enlargements that easily rivaled that from 35mm film. Wow, a snapshot camera that could make big photos! The lower ISO settings made the best quality images (ISO 80-200) but I was still impressed by the higher ISO settings given the huge pixel count on the small sensor.



The real test was to see if my stock agents would accept the G9 files. I made a submission including a mixture of images from the G9, the Canon 1Ds Mark II, and medium format film scans. To be sure that the agency would not be unduly influenced by the camera model, I stripped out the camera EXIF data. To my surprise, they happily accepted the G9 files! For me as a professional, there is no point making photos if they can't be published.



Now I am addicted to the little camera. I have found that I often leave my big, heavy camera bag behind in favor of the tiny G9. I feel free and unencumbered and can shoot anywhere without drawing attention to my gear. I plan to use the G9 as my backpacking, day hiking, and travel camera. No longer will the big 1Ds Mark II and heavy lenses slow me down on the trail! The fact that I can travel super light but still make publishable images really excites me.



Is there anything missing from the camera? Sure, it would be nice if the lens was wider than 35mm. You can buy a wide angle adapter lens that gives you about 28mm, but that just means hauling more gear around which counters the reason for owning the camera. Also it would be great if Canon returned to a swiveling LCD for low-level, macro, and surreptitious photography. I also wish there was a cable release socket on the camera. I can work around all these issues, but overall, this little camera has ignited a renewed passion for photographing the world around me.



Editor's note - For additional information on the Canon G9, including full specifications, available accessories and current pricing visit the [B&H website](#).

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