

## The HV20: Great for Amateurs, Not so Great for Professionals

written by: Misty Faucheux • edited by: [Rhonda Callow](#) • updated: 9/7/2011



The HV20 from Canon has many great features. It takes great footage, but there are some issues that could hinder it for higher-end consumers. Amateurs may love the [functionality](#), but more advanced users may have to look somewhere else.

### Canon Camcorders

Canon is known for its exceptional camcorders and cameras. One of its latest offerings is the Canon HV20, which the company markets as a high-end camcorder in a small package. The HV20 (\$450 to \$900 online) has replaced the HV10 and improved some of the issues of that model, but there were some additional problems that were made in the recreation. While it does have many [advanced](#) features, it also has some drawbacks that could scare away professionals

### Features

Rating 

First of all, let's go over the good points. The video [quality](#) for this model is amazing. There was very little noise in good light. And, again in decent light, the Auto Focus is very fast. The camcorder takes great footage. It's sharp and clean and great for standard filming.

The Super-Range Optical Image Stabilization actually works pretty well on this model as long as you are not zoomed out too much. It has a great 10x optical f/1.8 to f/3 zoom lens, which makes for better zooming capabilities, and comes with a 2.7 LCD screen. The camera is designed to capture video in True HD (1920 x 1080).

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The 24p mode is meant simulate film's frame rate. This mode is pretty decent. But, you should still probably go with a higher-grade camcorder if you're looking to create your first indie film. The HV20 comes with a nice size three-megapixel and a 1/2.7 inch CMOS sensor, which is great for taking high definition or wide-screen video.

This camcorder also takes 2.76 megapixel in 4:3 mode or 2.07 megapixel in 16:9

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mode still pictures. They come out better than most of the other camcorder stills, but just keep them as snapshots. If

you blow them up, they'll probably be noisy.

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The mic sits on top of the body of the camera, which will help block out the most jarring sounds from what you are filming. But, you need to make sure that you don't block or muffle the sound with your hand. The placement could lead to these types of accidents.

### Drawbacks

Rating 

The Auto Focus crawls in low light, which can be frustrating if you are on a tight deadline. And, the night mode didn't improve functioning in low light. Plus, you may have the problem of the camcorder focusing on something that you don't want when there's less light. For example, you may get the house in focus, but not the black fox in front of it.

While you're shooting, you can't change the white balance. You'll have to stop what you are filming, change modes and start filming again. This could be very frustrating for someone working on a deadline. Even though there's a cine mode, this camcorder will never fully work for more professional-looking videos.

Perhaps the biggest disappointment for this model was the design. In an attempt to improve the zoom lens, the camcorder is too big to fit inside a normal pocket. The hand strap is made of lower grade plastic as opposed to mesh material, and it hangs really low.

Another issue that could lead to trouble is that the Advanced Accessory Shoe door. It's not connected to the camcorder. So, when you go to take it off, you can lose it if you don't stick it in your pocket. You may want to figure out a way to add a string to it and attach that to the camcorder. That way if you take it off, it just hangs off the camera like a lens cover with a strap.

The zoom toggle is also a bit of a disappointment. It's harder to use since it sits right up against the body of the camcorder. While it's responsive, it will

take some getting used to.

### Bang for the Buck

Rating 

If you are looking for an extremely professional-working camcorder, the Canon HV20 may be a disappointment. The controls on the body can be awkward to use because of placement. And, if you need to do things in low light, you may want to skip this camcorder. The low-light settings leave something to be desired. If you are looking for really good [low-light camcorder](#), consider the more expensive, but definitely more professional Canon XL1. It's designed for filmmaking, especially indie films. You can switch out the lens, allowing you to add one that has image stabilization technology.

Amateurs on the other hand will love it. It's fairly inexpensive and takes quite impressive footage. Since most consumers won't be using the camcorder after the sun goes down, the low-light problem really doesn't affect them. Overall, for the average consumer, this is a really good camcorder.

### References

- Image credit: [Cote](#)
- [Amazon.com](#)
- [Canon](#)

