By Marius Panduru, Technology and Science Editor

Olympus E-420, the World's Smallest DSLR

The company also announced a Zuiko Digital 25mm 1:2.8 "pancake" lens

Our previous **E-430 report** might have been a rumor, but Olympus' quiet release of the E-420 is as real as it gets. The new camera stands as the smallest DSLR in the world, its minute dimensions allowing to fit into a purse or a jacket pocket.Powered by a 10.0 Megapixel Live MOS sensor and a TruePic III image processor, the E-420 comes with most of the goodies found in the latest Oly Four-Thirds DSLRs and some improvement as well. As expected, it features the already ubiquitous Live View, but with a major difference. The previously released E3's Live View AF system implied lowering the mirror; the E-420 comes with a new contrast AF system that fixes the inconvenience. However, note that full contrast AF performance is available with new Olympus lenses including the Zuiko Digital 14-42mm 1:3.5-5.6, the Zuiko Digital 40-150mm 1:4.0-5.6, and the new Zuiko Digital 25mm 1:2.8 "pancake" lens (which we shall discuss later on). A free firmware update can be downloaded from the Olympus homepage to enable this feature for lenses that were purchased previously. Speaking of Live View, the tiny DSLR sports a 2.7"/6.9cm HyperCrystal II LCD, which provides 100% coverage and makes image composing and reviewing a breeze. Other technologies aimed at easing the photographer's job include the Face Detection and Shadow Adjustment Technology, which need no further detailing. Announced together with the E-420 is the Zuiko Digital 25mm 1:2.8 Pancake with a picture angle equivalent to that of a 50mm lens on a standard 35mm camera. With a maximum aperture of f/2.8, an impressive 95g weight and 6.4cm in length, this Zuiko is an excellent solution for this Lilliputian DSLR. The E-420 will hit stores in late April 2008 with prices ranging from $500 to $700, depending on the kit. The body alone will be priced at $500, the kit with the 14-42mm f/3.5-5.6 Zuiko will have a price tag of $600, while the configuration with the newly announced pancake lens (Zuiko 25mm) will be available for $700. All in all, Olympus might have struck gold with this model, as there are many amateurs who crave for DSLR image quality that comes in tiny packages and the E-420 might be what they have been waiting for a long time.

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