

# Going Mirrorless

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Although DSLR cameras have long been promoted as providing the best image quality, many people see them as too big, too heavy and too complex. But the latest 'mirrorless' Compact System Cameras (CSCs) are seriously challenging most of these perceived performance advantages and providing some quantifiable benefits of their own.



*Today, the differences in performance between CSCs and DSLRs are largely irrelevant. A resolution of more than 16 megapixels from a Micro Four Thirds or larger sensor is of little importance to anyone who doesn't make gallery-sized prints.*

In most situations, CSCs will reproduce fine detail and deliver colour accuracy that's as good as - and sometimes better than - a typical DSLR. Weight-wise, most CSC systems would be a better choice than a DSLR, particularly if you're travelling or hiking.

Most CSCs are modular designs with basic components like shutter mechanisms, sensor and stabiliser, autofocus, viewfinder and monitor modules manufactured as discrete components. If one component fails,

it's much faster and cheaper to replace the module than replacing the defective part. It's also easier and cheaper for camera manufacturers to introduce upgrades and improvements to key components, such as EVFs, AF systems, etc., without requiring a complete redesign.

Most CSCs are equipped for the online world, coming with built-in Wi-Fi and Android/iOS apps that can upload images and movie files to smart devices for easy sharing via email or social networks. They also enable users to remotely control the camera via Wi-Fi from the smart device's screen.

CSCs still have a few weaknesses, however. They tend to be higher priced for equivalent features and have lower battery capacities (most batteries are smaller than DSLR batteries since CSC bodies are smaller) and less capable continuous autofocus systems. These issues are being steadily addressed by succeeding generations of cameras.

Currently, almost all of the innovative developments in imaging technology are taking place in CSCs, and this is likely to continue. In the near future we are likely to see the following improvements.

1. Incremental improvements to autofocus (AF) have already produced hybrid contrast / phase detection autofocus and improved contrast detection algorithms. The gap between DSLR and CSC AF performance is narrowing rapidly.
2. Electronic viewfinders may not be quite the same as optical viewfinders, but the latest EVFs can rival the viewing qualities of most DSLR viewfinders in most respects and provide some advantages of their own. They're also becoming cheaper to manufacture.
3. Third-party lens manufacturers are filling gaps in CSC manufacturers' ranges. Sigma, Tamron, Voigtlander and Samyang (among others) make lenses that can rival (and sometimes better) some camera manufacturers' lenses. And they're often cheaper.

Last year, CSCs were the fastest growing segment of the non-cellphone camera market. They are starting to replace entry-level DSLRs "" and even becoming popular among professional photographers. If you can't find a good camera in this category, you're unlikely to be satisfied with ANY camera.

Choosing a CSC is largely a matter of 'balance' based upon system size and weight vs potential image quality. Effectively, you need to decide which system contains 'the right stuff' for the tasks you want to accomplish. Currently, you have a choice of five sensor sizes from eight major manufacturers.



*CSCs are usually more compact and easier to carry than DSLR cameras.*

Buying a CSC is an investment in a system, so you need to ensure that system will meet your future needs. Look to where manufacturers are expanding their accessory ranges particularly with respect to lenses.

In this pocket guide we provide recommendations on the factors to consider when shopping for a CSC, and we show you how to get the best out of CSCs. You'll find additional information by way of up-to-date news on product developments and reviews of the latest imaging equipment on our Photo Review website ([www.photoreview.com.au](http://www.photoreview.com.au)).

Tips on buying and using digital cameras are also available, along with photo competitions and an online gallery where you can share your best images with others.

Excerpt from [Compact System Camera Guide](#).