



TECH REVIEW

by Dr Kenneth Scerri

Mirrorless Revolution



ABOUT 2 YEARS AGO I was faced with a touch camera choice. I had been a Canon user for years having used a number of their DSLRs (a professional camera) and amassed more lenses than I needed.

Nevertheless, mirrorless cameras were starting to interest me with their attractive features. I loved the idea of carrying a lighter, compact camera with DSLR capabilities.

Ok, some explanations for the less geeky: film SLRs required a mirror. The mirror diverts the image to the viewfinder (where your eye can look through) but moves out of the way to expose the film when taking a picture.

Digital SLRs making use of an optical viewfinder still require a mirror. However, there is an alternative. A small display can replace the optical viewfinder. The main advantage being that eliminating the mirror allows for smaller and lighter cameras. There are disadvantages. Older electronic viewfinders are of

low quality — a problem that is disappearing with the latest cameras such as **Sony's NEX**, **Olympus OM-D** and **Fuji X** ranges.

Another disadvantage is focusing speed. Mirrorless cameras adopt slower contrast detection methods rather than the phase systems found on DSLRs. Such problems are being addressed through on-chip phase detection in the **Nikon 1** cameras.

Finally, the smaller sensor size of mirrorless cameras reduces the camera's image quality. Again, Sony's new cameras, the **Alpha 7** and **7R**, provide full-frame sensors in a small and sturdy body.

With the ever-increasing range of high quality lenses for mirrorless cameras, it is tough to ignore them when choosing a new camera. I now find myself picking up my mirrorless camera, rather than my DSLR, more and more often. ●

Gadget rating: ● ● ● ● ●