

ALL-IN-ONE OPTION

CBC Europe's
SpotCam

The market trend for cameras with integral varifocal lenses is continuing at a pace, and CBC Europe is another company eager to establish itself in this sector. As the manufacturer of Computar lenses, an integral camera from CBC is bound to raise interest amongst a number of installers. We took a look at two of the Spotcams; the ZC-L1210PHA colour unit and the ZC-I1210CHA monochrome option, to see whether they offered performance worth following up.

When you first see a Ganz SpotCam, it looks more like a funky torch or table lamp head than a CCTV camera. This is both a good thing and a bad thing, depending upon where you and your customer stand on the 'surveillance cameras should look the part' debate. Design is a very subjective thing, and with the SpotCam being heavily influenced by design, it really will fall into the likes and dislikes of the customer if you consider these units for an application.

The cameras are claimed to be high resolution models, with both a colour and a monochrome unit being available. The units feature a 2.8–10mm varifocal lens, and utilise a 1/4 inch interline CCD.

The rear of the camera makes it pretty clear that the unit has been manufactured with simplicity in mind. There is a push-fit connector for power (our units were supplied with 24V AC Ganz-branded power supply units, although the manual suggests that a PSU is not included), a BNC video output, and a modular video output for use with an optional bracket.



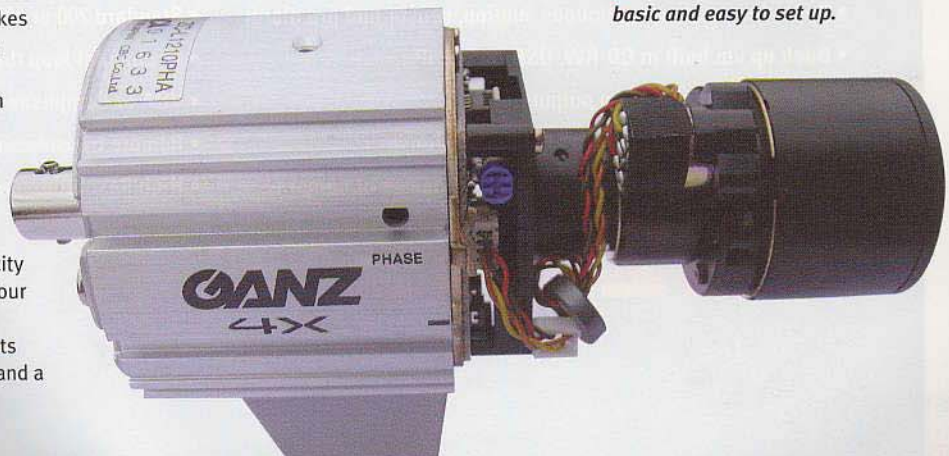
Lens adjustments and DIP switches for setting features are accessed by simply twisting the main lens cover off from the body of the camera. There's not a lot under there; basically the lens adjustments, a potentiometer for adjusting the DC iris level, and four DIP switches to set additional functions. The first DIP switch has no function; the second instigates a flickerless mode on the colour camera, or AGC on the monochrome unit; the third switches backlight compensation; the fourth selects the synchronisation. Essentially, that's all there is to it!

Performance issues

The image from the monochrome unit is crisp and sharp, although we did notice slightly more barrelling from the lens than we had expected. The backlight compensation feature worked well, and being an

on/off

■ The SpotCam units are very basic and easy to set up.



PROFESSIONAL TEST

choice, gave an option of black silhouettes (BLC off) or easily viewable objects with a whited out background (BLC on). Low light performance was impressive, as it should be from a high resolution monochrome camera.

The colour unit gives a good strong image with clean lines, although it too shows slight barrelling from the lens. Colour fidelity is pretty accurate, although some of the colours did seem slightly warm. Backlight compensation again works well, as does the flickerless mode. Low light performance is average, with usable images still being generated in poor conditions, but with fairly increased noise levels.

All in all, the cameras perform as you would expect for low cost integrated units. The minimal features make them ideal for simple installations, and the cost saving of an integral lens will appeal to many.

In summary

It could be argued that cameras with integrated lenses are somewhat limited by the lack of flexibility on offer, and to a degree such cameras try to be all things to all men – or, more accurately, as many things as possible to as many men as possible! The SpotCams are built to a budget, and as such will predominantly appeal to smaller installations. Certainly, if used internally, their design will eradicate the need for housings where a user does not want cameras to be obvious.

In terms of performance, these cameras are not intended to be compared with fully functioned high resolution cameras, so there's no point in doing that! As low cost simple-to-fit cameras, there's not a lot wrong with them.

SPECIFICATION

Manufacturer: CBC Europe
Model: Spotcam Colour/Mono
CCD: 1/4 inch IT CCD
Resolution: 480 TVL/580 TVL
Sensitivity: 1.5 lux/0.5 lux
Signal/Noise: 50dB
Sync: Internal or Line Lock
Focal Length: 2.8–10mm
Power Input: 24V AC/12V DC

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PSI RATINGS

Product Design	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ □ □ □ □	Instructions	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ □ □ □ □
Build Quality	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ □ □ □ □	Installer Friendliness	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ □ □ □ □
Ruggedness	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ □ □ □ □	Set-up	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ □ □ □ □
Ease of Installation	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ □ □ □ □	Video Quality	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ □ □ □ □
Functionality	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ □ □ □ □	Overall Security	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ □ □ □ □