Leica’s SL2-S trades resolution for speed and sensitivity

Leica is expanding its line of full-frame interchangeable lens mirrorless cameras with the new SL2-S. As its name implies, the SL2-S is a variation of the SL2 that came out last year and it shares many features and similarities with that camera. But that S tagged on to the end means it is something different, and it might as well stand for speed.

The SL2-S has the same body, design, build quality, LCD touchscreen, viewfinder, battery, in-body image stabilization, and autofocus system as the SL2. What’s different is its sensor: instead of the high-resolution 47.3-megapixel chip found in the SL2, the SL2-S has a brand-new, backside-illuminated 24-megapixel sensor. That lower resolution allows it to capture up to 25 frames per second with its electronic shutter (9 frames per second with the mechanical), and the backside illumination gives it a greater ISO range and better low-light performance over the SL2. It’s the first backside-illuminated sensor to be used by Leica.



The SL2-S has the same design and weatherproofing as the SL2.

The SL2-S can shoot at up to ISO 100,000, and the company claims it has both lower noise and better color when at extremely high ISO levels. The camera's multi shot mode can combine up to 8 shots into a single 96-megapixel image if you find you're needing more resolution. Thanks to its 4GB internal buffer, the SL2-S can shoot continuous bursts of JPEG images at 9 frames per second until the SD cards in its two UHS-II slots are full.

Like the SL2, the SL2-S has separate photo and video modes, allowing you to customize the camera's functions and settings for each task and switch between them. It can capture 4K 10-bit 4:2:2 and Cinema 4K ProRES footage up to 30fps to an SD card or up to 60fps to an external recorder through its full-size HDMI port. It also has L-log recording with two built-in LUTs to make it easier to see what the edited version will look like. Leica says it plans to release more LUTs in the future as well.

Aside from its internal differences, the SL2-S is almost a

direct clone of the SL2, with the same, chunky milled aluminum top and bottom connected to a magnesium alloy frame. Its 5.76-megapixel OLED viewfinder is only outclassed by the one in Sony's recent A7S III, and the body has IP54 dust and water protection and is guaranteed to work in temps as low as negative 10 Celsius.



The SL2-S has dedicated modes for photo and video settings. Photo: Leica

Leica says that it is planning to release a firmware update in the first half of 2021 that will add a number of new features, including an improved autofocus algorithm, focus tracking, internal 4K 60p recording, Long-GOP recording, segmented video, automatic follow focus, a waveform monitor, tally mode, color bars, and an enhanced live view for low-light shooting. The SL2-S (as well as the SL2 and S3) are now fully supported in Capture One, allowing photographers another software option for tethered shooting in addition to Lightroom.

The SL2-S is slated to begin shipping immediately for $4,895, about $1,100 less than the SL2.

https://www.theverge.com/2020/12/10/22166283/leica-sl2-s-camera-mirrorless-price-specs-features