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BUYER'S GUIDE:
MONITORS



GOING WILD

FOCUS ON THE FILM'S HANDHELD CAMERAWORK

TECH FOCUS: Blackmagic Design URSA Camera, Marshall V-LCD71MD Monitor, ProAm USA Autopilot Camera Stabilizer



BOB KOVACS

STAYING FOCUSED IN THE FIELD

Marshall's V-LCD71MD Is a Modular, Well-Made Monitor

Quick Take



Product: Marshall V-LCD71MD

Pros: Nice controls. Battery/AC power. Clear screen. Integrated waveform monitor.

Cons: Pricy. Uses batteries quickly.

Bottom Line: Great field monitor that reduces the chance of focus problems.

MSRP: \$1,600

Online: www.lcdracks.com/monitors/model/V-LCD71MD.php

Trying to focus with only a camera's viewfinder or 3.5-inch flip-out display can lead to disappointment at edit time as you discover that critical shots are just a bit fuzzy. Poor focus can ruin a shot and make a video seem amateurish if you're forced to use it.



PHOTO BY MARK ELLEN OWHLEY



There is a cure for poor focus: a bigger monitor, especially one with focus assist features that make it plain which parts of the image are sharp. Many companies make portable field monitors for composing and focusing shots, and a handful feature 1920 x 1080-pixel resolution. The Marshall V-LCD71MD is one such monitor.

Made for field use, the 7-inch Marshall V-LCD71MD features a high brightness (700 nit) LED-backlit IPS panel in a rugged soft-touch plastic case. The face of the display is protected by a screwed-on sheet of polycarbonate that can be easily replaced if it gets scratched or covered with tape goo.

The unit is surprisingly configurable owing to its modular nature. Modules can be added at any time by the user. The standard unit (which I received) has an HDCP-compliant HDMI input with pass-through and a module that provides an additional 3G/HD/SD-SDI input with loop-through. There's also a module that will provide a 3G-SDI output converted from the monitor's standard HDMI input.

The monitor may be powered by batteries or an AC power supply, which is itself capable of operating on both domestic and international power standards.

The V-LCD71MD's battery mounts on a bracket that attaches to the back of the display, and there are bracket options for different battery types. The bracket I received mounts two small batteries normally used by a Canon DSLR camera.

There are plenty of mounting options for the V-LCD71MD itself, which sports a standard 1/4-inch mounting thread on all four sides. You'll need a sturdy mount, as the monitor weighs 1 pound, plus the weight of the batteries and any module you may have installed. Figure on a weight of at least 2 pounds with battery. I do not recommend mounting this monitor onto a camera's shoe attachment—it's just too heavy for that.

The V-LCD71MD has a native 16:9 aspect ratio and supports 1080p 60 over

V-LCD71MD monitor with MDO-3G module, which provides a 3G-SDI output converted from the HDMI input

3G, as well as HD-SDI (1080i/720p) and SD-SDI (525i/625i). Features include waveform display, stereo audio bar display, icon-driven menu system, pixel-to-pixel function, gamma presets and custom screen markers.

To streamline the focusing process, the V-LCD71MD offers focus peaking, which outlines in-focus areas/objects and offers a choice of four color highlights and variable sensitivity. With peaking turned on, it's easy to shift focus with confidence.

The V-LCD71MD's menu structure is comprehensive and gives you control over many of the monitor's settings. Four user-assignable function buttons can be used to quickly recall presets. Menu navigation switches and four rotary controls make it pretty easy to display whatever guides, markers and other information will make your shoot easier. I prefer focus peaking and an on-screen waveform monitor, which was easy to accomplish.

If you have a spare tripod, you can mount the V-LCD71MD on it using the monitor's standard threaded mounting hole. Otherwise, you'll need a mounting bracket of some kind, since the display does not come with mounting hardware. It doesn't even stand solidly on a tabletop, so you'll want to make sure it's mounted securely.

I purchased about \$2.50 worth of hardware bits that let me use the monitor on top of a Canon XF205 camcorder, which happens to have a 1/4-20 threaded mount on its handle.

The display on the Marshall V-LCD71MD is plenty bright for shooting outside on an overcast day, but it's not quite bright enough to withstand full sunlight. If you're shooting on a bright day, you'll need a hood or careful positioning to see proper contrast. Otherwise, using the Marshall V-LCD71MD monitor was a real pleasure and it made it easy to monitor my focus.



When the peaking filter is activated, the monitor's internal processor will display a colored highlight on sharp edges that are in focus.

One shoot I did involved talent walking straight toward the camera from about 100 feet away, ending up 5 feet from the camera. The lens had to be on manual focus and the camera's built-in monitor was simply too small to show accurate focus. With the Marshall V-LCD71MD display connected, it was easy to keep the actor in focus

during the long walk toward me. The final scene had no focus issues and we didn't have to waste time or money on reshoots. If you consider the money you'll save by not having to shoot scenes multiple times to fix focus and other technical issues, a monitor like this will quickly pay for itself.

The V-LCD71MD does this good work while exuding a sense of quality and durability. It worked every time, was not at all fussy, and there was almost never any reason to adjust it once the initial setup was done.

I tested the Marshall V-LCD71MD with 60 fps, 30 fps and 24 fps video, and it worked fine for all three. Panasonic has loaned me a 4K camcorder to review, and I configured it to shoot 4K but output a 1080p signal on the camera's HDMI port, allowing me to use the V-LCD71MD as a decent-sized viewfinder. Maintaining sharp focus is especially important when shooting at high resolutions.

About the only downside of the Marshall V-LCD71MD is that it is fairly power hungry. The batteries I used lasted only

Specifications

Panel size	7" diagonal
Resolution	1920 x 1080
Aspect ratio	16:9
Active area	155.52 x 87.48 mm
Type	LCD panel
Brightness	700 cd/m ²
Contrast	800:1
Color gamut	YUV, RGB
Viewing angles (CR>=10)	170° x 170°
Backlight type	LED
Adjustable backlight	Yes
Frame rates	1080p/1080i/720p/625i/525i
Color temperature	D65, D55 and D93
False color	Yes
Peaking filter	Yes
Pixel to pixel	Yes
Preset gamma points	Yes
Voltage	12V DC
Consumption	1.0A @ 12V DC (10W)
Connector	Coaxial 5.46 x 2.6 mm
Unit dimensions	7.37" (W) x 5.57" (H) x 1.1" (D)
Weight (main body)	1 lb.

about 45 minutes on a charge. If you plan to use this monitor in the field, where AC power is not available, plan to use a big battery or carry plenty of spares.

The 7-inch V-LCD71MD display is not cheap, but it has the level of quality you want for field use. The resolution and reliability are excellent, and you can see at a glance if your focus is sharp.

We've all had shoots ruined when we get ready for post, only to discover that critical footage has poor focus. Using a tool like the Marshall V-LCD71MD will simply eliminate that possibility. With its built-in waveform function, it is also terrific for maintaining proper exposure—another technical parameter that is all too easy to get wrong on a shoot without the right equipment.

The Marshall V-LCD71MD display works without glitches and shows exactly what you need to see. Clear, bright and easy to use, it is what a field display should be. **dv**

