

FUTURE FILM GADGETS

text by Gerard T. Barry

Want your friends to believe you are the next Steven Spielberg? Thanks to some new products on the market, you can look like you just might be. We review some products that can make your personal videos look more like a Hollywood movie than an in-home production.

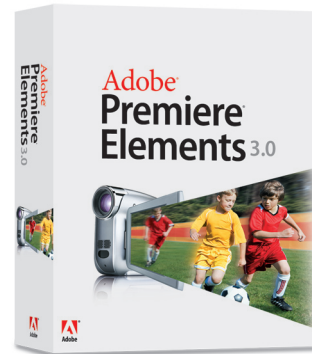


NOKIA N93 The Nokia N93 is a part of the Nokia N Series and, as a consequence, is labeled with the moniker “multimedia computer.” While thinking of this mobile phone as a computer is a stretch to most users, the N93 is an impressive video recording device that will also make and take phone calls.

The phone was designed around the impressive video capabilities it incorporates. Using the built-in Carl Zeiss lens, you can record DVD quality video at 30 frames per second. One of the first things that will impress you is the brilliant color of its 2.4-inch swivel display screen — as big as some digital cameras! Digital video stabilization makes for better videos whether you go into video mode at a club or on vacation. The phone comes with up to 50MB of internal memory and uses an insertable memory card that can add up to 2GB of memory. You can even use special connections to connect to most TV sets.

Overall, the N93 is heavier and larger than most phones on the market today. The flip style opening makes it seem even larger when you are holding it up to your ear for a call. But if you want the ability to take high quality videos on the go and you don't want the inconvenience of carrying a camcorder, the N93 is hard to top.

THE NOKIA N93 SELLS FOR: \$699.99, WWW.NOKIA.COM



ADOBE PREMIERE ELEMENTS 3.0 In the Fall of '06, Adobe released version 3.0 of this home video editing software. Premiere Elements is without a doubt one of the simplest ways to edit your personal videos. Premiere Elements is the consumer version of the far more powerful Adobe Premiere Pro product, and the benefit is that you can import a variety of file formats into this easy-to-use editing software.

Like it's Microsoft Windows competitor, a free product called Movie Maker, Premiere Elements uses an easy timeline interface to create videos sequentially. You simply drag and drop your videos on to the timeline and then cut and paste the video segments like you would words in Word document. A variety of sound files, including MP3s, can be added along with video transitions to give the final video a personal touch. Don't forget to play with the transitions - they are fun and easy to use. You can even create stop-motion animations if you have the time and desire.

What separates this software from other consumer-oriented video editing software is how you can save the videos you edit. You cannot only export the final movie to a variety of formats for your computer, but you can also save it to a DVD. The DVD that Premiere Elements creates is not simple video or data DVD for computer use only. Rather, you can save and create an entire graphic menu with chapters in your video just like the movies purchased in the store. Take the finished disc to any DVD player and press play from an easy-to-use start screen.

ADOBE PREMIERE ELEMENTS 3.0 SELLS FOR \$99.99,
WWW.ADOBE.COM/PRODUCTS/PREMIEREEL



SONY DCR-SR40 If you travel or want an “easy to grab” camcorder, consider the Sony DCR-S40. This camcorder is part of the new wave of camcorders that are using built-in hard-drives to record video, instead of removable DVDs or tapes. While it appears that mini DV tapes take better quality videos, the hard-drive based camcorders have a lot to offer.

Not having to worry about tapes or DVDs has allowed the hard-drive based camcorders to be sleeker and lighter. Without having to incorporate a holder for a disc or tape, this camcorder is smooth all around. Though somewhat boxy, it has very few buttons and a nice clean feel in your hand. Most of the camcorder controls are on the 2.5-inch pop-out screen which is the only way to view what you are shooting, as the traditional viewfinder has been removed. The small touch screen may annoy those with large fingers or long nails, but the menus on the screen are highly intuitive.

The SR40 is an entry-level camcorder in the Sony hard-drive camcorder line. It can record about seven hours of video in its highest quality setting. In lowlight, the quality of the video is questionable compared to other camcorders. But for the price, it is hard to find a more feature-rich and easy-to-carry hard-drive based camcorder on the market today.

SONY DCR-SR40 SELLS FOR \$599.99, WWW.SONYSTYLE.COM



SHOZU/GOFISH Once you capture and edit all your film content, it's time to share it. Rather than relying on the mail service or choking an e-mail account with a multiple megabyte file, there are some easy and unique ways to share your content.

If you are prone to leaving photos and videos on your mobile phone until you delete them, to create more memory, consider using a mobile media service like ShoZu www.shozu.com. Open an account with ShoZu and, in a single click, you can upload your photos and videos to a variety of websites including, blogger, flickr, YouTube, Kodak EasyShare Gallery, and more. Instantly, you share your content and can even take a call while your images upload.

If you want to share your edited videos online, GoFish is a service like the more ubiquitous YouTube, that allows registered users to upload videos and share them publicly. The purpose of the site is to allow people who create videos of any kind, to show off their skills in five easy steps. Just select your video on your computer, give it a title and a description, define your own search tags, select a category, and voila, your video is online in minutes.

In the last few years, the ability to take and edit high quality videos has moved to the palm of your hand and your home computer. No longer do you need to spend over \$1000 for a bulky camcorder and hours converting and editing your videos before you can share them. With the products reviewed here, you can be on the go, add some creative flare and share your creativity with your friends and family in minutes.