

Frezzi Tailors Dimmer Micro-Fill to Fit DV Camcorders

By Lou Bruno

The increased sensitivity of today's compact camcorders means less light output or wattage is required than with their larger and heavier forerunners. The need for the overpowering, on-board 100w camera light is waning.

Taking aim at small DV camcorders, Frezzolini Electronics, has released the Dimmer Micro-Fill on-camera light. I recently had an opportunity to evaluate the new unit. The kit I acquired contained the 35W Dimmer Micro-Fill, Barn-Door Combo, Frezzi NP-1 12v 2.3 Ah battery and charger, battery pouch, softbox, and a dichroic filter (a 20w bulb is also available).

Once the light was placed on my Sony VX2000, I was astounded by the balance and feel. I no longer had that uncomfortable wobbly feeling that results when a heavy or over-sized light is placed onto the accessory shoe. The camera did not pitch forward or backward, as it does with heavier types of light.

Operationally, all of the controls are located in the rear of the lighting unit, with easy access to the dimmer and On/Off switch. A blue LED light acts as a status indicator light. The camera can be attached to the accessory shoe and also comes with a 1/2-inch stud. Frezzi was very careful to use the round style universal mount, one that locks the light into the accessory shoe. In years past, some videographers used a screw-type mount that damaged the small circuit board located under the VX2000's accessory shoe. Frezzi addressed this situation with the introduction of a universal shoe mount.

The Frezzi Dimmer Micro-Fill weighs only six ounces—and is half the size of the Mini-Fill. As a matter of fact, the Micro Fill is much lighter than my Sony dual light with a 960 battery. It's approximately 3.72" in length

The Frezzi Dimmer Micro-Fill can be purchased as part of a kit with battery and charger (MRF-KIC-NP1 pictured below) or as a separate lamp head (MRFIC-NP1 at right). Various mounting and light control accessories are available, along with different output bulbs.

and about 2" in width. The total distance above the camera is about 3.32" in height. It appears to be a very rugged, lightweight light. I especially liked the heat resistant wrapping located at the rear of the unit.

This allows the operator to tilt and move the light without burning the fingers or hand—very well thought out. The amount of tilt can be fine-tuned via the locking mechanism located on the light's cradle.

Changing the bulb is fast and easy. Simply unscrew the front diffusion of the light and push the bulb out utilizing the bulb notches located

next to the bulb area. Push out the bulb and replace it 1-2-3. It should be noted that my Dimmer Micro-Fill came with an NP-1 style cap that attaches to any Frezzi, Switronix, IDX, Aspen or any off-brand NP-1 style battery, regardless of voltage! However, you can request any power cord configuration, such as cigarette, XLR connectors etc. to attach to the provided ample power cord. I was also impressed by the Frezzi battery pouch that appears to be made of a military grade nylon with strap.





Using the Frezzi Micro-Fill at 35 watts, this object scene is well-illuminated. Notice the drop-off points.



Here's the same scene with the dimmer less than half-way down. There is no color balance shift to red.

Light Output and Color Characteristics

Let me get right to the point. I am impressed that such a small looking light can have such a long "throw" and still reveal objects and colors vividly.

Though the larger and heavier Frezzi Mini-Fill has a wider beam, the Dimmer Micro-Fill is no slouch. The beam gave me enough light in width as it did in length while taping in a darkly lit room. The dimmer knob, located in the rear of the light, adjusts the light so as to not overpower your subject.

Using a 1/3-inch CCD camcorder, one must always be aware of two important factors affected by lighting: contrast and color balance. I noticed the Dimmer Micro-Fill performed very well in this regard. The dimmer was "on the money" as it relates to both contrast and color balance when the dimmer was lowered half way. I did not notice any appreciable change in color balance. In fact,



Here's the Frezzi with its combo diffuser in place. The subject is well-illuminated, with good, even lighting all around.

no redness occurred in the picture. However, I did notice that it's essential to lower/dim both the light and "ride the iris" on the camera manually, in order to overcome over-exposure as it relates to close-up shots.

I also used the softbox during an interview, which allows a subject not to appear blown-

out by close, point lighting. The softbox "evens-out" the skin tones during interviews. However, it should be noted that the softbox significantly reduces the 35W output to obtain this result. Perhaps Frezzi will introduce a softbox for the lower-wattage Dimmer Micro-Fill, with various levels of diffusion and color correction filters like the one used with the Mini-Fill.

The MRFA combo accessory (priced at \$175) includes two-leaf barn doors, flip-down dichroic filter and flip-up diffuser. The diffuser did an excellent job of spreading the light; as a matter of fact, the MRFA Combo tops my accessory wish list.

The dichroic filter displayed the proper outdoor balance. Due to the fact that 35 watts is the limit, I would suggest that this light be used in the evening, in shadowy areas or for close-ups. Videographers who need to shoot under a skylight with sunlight appearing on the dance floor will find the dichroic filter a godsend for close-up work.

Illuminating the Bottom Line

I tested this the Dimmer Micro-Fill on both people and objects. The skin tones recorded by my VX2000 were saturated perfectly. Objects appeared to display the proper contrast. When the Dimmer Micro-Fill was placed at the one-half point, the colors were still true. It wasn't until I was dimming the light substantially that I did observe a color shift. This is a normal occurrence with any light using a dimmer system, but seemed less so with the Micro-Fill.

In closing, if you want a rugged, versatile light for your smaller camera, I highly recommend the Frezzi Micro-Fill. This light should last for years. It's a good investment. The price on the Standard light alone is \$195. The Dimmer is \$295. ©



The Frezzi Dimmer Micro-Fill (\$295) and its combo accessory (MRFA;\$175) are a good investment for MiniDV shooters who don't need powerful on-board lights.

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STANDARD MICRO-FILL KIT

ITEM# 91501, MODEL# MRFK-NP1

PRICE \$475

Qty.	Item#	Model#	Description
1	91301	MRF-NP1	Standard Micro-Fill w/35W bulb
1	93103	FNP-1S	12V, 2.3Ah battery
1	94201	FTC-NP1	Overnight charger
1	96607	NP1-POUCH	Nylon pouch w/belt loop and shoulder strap for FNP-1S

DIMMER MICRO-FILL KIT

ITEM# 91601, MODEL# MRFKIC-NP1

PRICE \$575

Qty.	Item#	Model#	Description
1	91401	MRFIC-NP1	Dimmer Micro-Fill w/35W bulb
1	93103	FNP-1S	12V, 2.3Ah battery
1	94201	FTC-NP1	Overnight charger
1	96607	NP1-POUCH	Nylon pouch w/belt loop and shoulder strap for FNP-1S