

OLYMPUS MJU DIGITAL 800

quick view

PRICE £299

- CCD Total 8.3MP, Effective 8.0MP
- LENS 38-114mm f2.8-4.9
- SHUTTER SPEED 4-1/2000sec
- EXPOSURE MODES PAS+19 scene
- ISO Auto, 64-1600
- FLASH Built-in, Auto plus 3 modes
- VIEWFINDER/MONITOR None/2.5" 215,000 pixel TFT
- OTHER 640x480 15fps Video, xD card and 19MB int
- POWER Lithium ion cell
- DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 103x58x33mm/181.5g

8 mega pixels



Olympus Mju Digital 800

Joël Lacey tests Olympus's compact 8MP 3x zoom model

I've tested some great Olympus cameras in the prosumer sector but have not really come across a compact or mju model that I've been able to recommend unreservedly.

Now Olympus has come up with a model that on paper at least seems to offer all things to all photographers except the really keen enthusiasts.

From a theoretical image quality point of view, the mju delivers images that are 3264x2448 in size, which should allow you to print up to 16x12 inch prints at 200 pixels per inch. My experience, thus far, of eight-megapixel models is that they have not quite offered the same levels of punch per pixel as a very good camera of a lower resolution. What I mean by this is that a good 5MP camera will give you A4 prints and bigger with no problem while most eight megapixel models will not offer you the same quality at 60% bigger.

But back to the mju. Its 38-114mm f/2.8-4.9 zoom lens works in conjunction with a focusing system that offers both macro and supermacro functions. The latter takes you closer than an inch from the front of the lens. The shutter speed range of 4-1/2000sec is wide enough for most situations. Probably the only thing missing from a specification point of view is that there is no optical viewfinder, but the public has rather voted with its wallet in terms of wanting bigger screens like the mju 800's, so this is merely a response to public demand rather than an oversight.

On the handling side there are a couple of minor criticisms I would level at the emphasis on shininess of the mju 800. The first is the background on which

the four buttons on the left of the back of the camera sit. The curviness of the left hand area means you are virtually guaranteed to get light reflections from it. Unfortunately all the writing under the buttons is in white... so it all disappears. The second issue is a common one among digicams, that the light reflecting from the LCD makes the image harder to see. This is less of an issue because the screen itself is nice and bright.

Otherwise, the camera handles rather easily. Functions are generally where you expect to find them.

Exposures are universally excellent with not a single shot over two testing periods being either underexposed or overexposed. Focusing is generally excellent but there were two occasions (out of well over 100 shots) where the graduated tones on a softly lit flower head stopped the camera from establishing a focus quickly.

Lens quality is excellent, though there is a touch of barrel distortion on close shots at wideangle. But generally, the images taken were ones you would be very pleased to see on A4 borderless prints, which I suspect is the maximum size users would want to see these pictures generally being used at.

VERDICT

This is a good looking camera that feels as good as it looks. The images it produces are out of the top drawer for compact digital cameras – which is, after all, the competition it faces. Add a matte finish on the backplate controls and it would be a doddle to use as well. All in all a good performance. **WDC**

top



The mju Digital 800 has only its name, power button and shutter release on the top-plate

front



The sliding lens cap cannot be slid open when the camera is switched off

side



The Lithium ion cell hides beneath a sliding flap, which also covers the USB/AV and DC power-in sockets

up against

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RICOH CAPLIO GX8

£250



scores

↑ PROS: Image quality, LCD screen, construction quality

↓ CONS: Left hand side backplate button visibility in bright light

features	18
ease of use	16
image quality	17
design	17
value	18

86%

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www.whatdigitalcamera.com

LCD MONITOR

The dominant feature of this camera is its huge LCD, protected by an even larger slightly too-reflective cover



MODE DIAL

The mode dial's shake reduction mode reduces the resolution from 8MP to 3MP to reduce the effects of camera shake