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First Impressions Review: Using the Canon PowerShot G16

Published Sep 26, 2013 | Barney Britton

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When the Canon PowerShot G16 was [announced recently](#) there was a general sense of mild anticlimax, both on the part of the journalists assembled at Canon's HQ in Long Island, and among some of our readers here at dpreview.com. To a casual glance the G16 might look like 'just' a G15 with a new processor, tweaked movie settings and Wi-Fi, making it a decidedly *iterative* upgrade.

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On the other hand, the G15 was (and still is) a camera that [we liked a lot](#), and has proven itself a solid and reliable performer in all of the conditions in which we've used it. The G15 is fast, turns out good images, and has a decent feature set. It's the kind of camera we recommend to friends.

Canon PowerShot G16 - Key Features

- 12MP CMOS sensor
- 28-140mm (equivalent) F1.8-2.8 zoom
- ISO 80-12800
- Fixed, 3in 622k-dot LCD screen
- DIGIC 6 Processor
- 1080p/60p video mode
- Up to 9.3fps continuous shooting
- Built-in Wi-Fi

The G16 isn't a vastly different product, it's true. But it is a better one. The G16 still offers 12MP and, while Canon USA is saying it's the same conventional CMOS sensor as the G15, Canon Japan says it's a BSI CMOS design, which should mean improved low-light performance. The DIGIC 6 processor delivers what Canon claims is a ~50% increase in speed where it counts - shutter lag and AF acquisition, and the convenience of built-in Wi-Fi has the potential to appeal to a lot of people.

Beyond this, the G16 becomes the first Canon compact to offer focus peaking, to aid manual focusing and it continues with the G15's impressively bright F1.8-2.8 zoom lens - which should help make the most of its low light capability, despite it also finding room to offer one of the broadest zoom ranges in its class.



The G16 is Canon's first compact to offer focus peaking, which makes manual focus much more useful than it has been previously by highlighting in focus areas. Red is the default highlight color (shown here).

Handling and Performance

The G16 is about as mature a 'new' product as it is possible to make, being the latest in a long series of G-series cameras going back more than a decade, which all share the same basic design tenets. These are a fast zoom lens (28-140mm equivalent in this case), an optical viewfinder, full PASM control and plenty of buttons and dials to attract 'hands-on' enthusiasts. And of course very good image quality, in this case from a 12MP 1/1.7" CMOS



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sensor - a step up from the one featured in the last-generation G15, and still an outstanding performer alongside peers like Nikon's [Coolpix P7700](#) (and the more recent [P7800](#)) and the Fujifilm X20.



The G16's top controls are (left to right) an exposure mode dial, exposure compensation dial, shutter button and combined zoom control, and the main on/off switch.

In this view you can also see the red movie record button on the camera's rear, the ISO button to the left, and the playback button on the extreme left, adjacent to the exposure compensation dial.



The rest of the G16's controls are clustered to the right of the LCD screen. A combined 4-way controller and dial sit at the center, with options at its cardinal points for setting manual focus, flash mode, display mode and macro/normal focus. The 'FUNC/SET' button at its hub brings up the old familiar Canon func., menu, for adjusting commonly-used settings.

Beneath the 4-way controller are buttons for AF point placement (which doubles as the Wi-Fi button in playback mode) and the G16's main menu.

Although the sensor is the same, Canon has updated the processor in the G16 to DIGIC 6, which results in a claimed 50% improvement in speed, and should also (we're told) make a difference to JPEG image quality at high ISO sensitivity settings.

As far as performance goes, one of the main areas in which the G15 (and indeed G12) won out over Nikon's P7100 and P7700 was speed. Specifically, burst depth, and write times when shooting in Raw mode. When we reviewed the P7700 recently, we recommended the purchase of a high-end UHS-I card with the camera for anyone intending to shoot Raw. The G15 on the other hand was pretty much always ready to shoot, regardless of file format.

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The G15 also offered a brighter lens than the P7700, which helped it stay competitive in low light, despite using a more conventional sensor design. Its F1.8-2.8 lens gives it a roughly 0.7EV aperture advantage over the P7800, across most of its zoom range.

In short, we never thought speed was a major issue with the G15, but we're always pleased to see improvements, and the G16 is a very 'snappy' camera. Focus acquisition



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Join us in our forums to discuss all the new Sigma announcements

Sigma just announced quite a few exciting pieces of gear, and we'd love to know what you think.

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Sigma BF, a mirrorless camera unlike anything you've seen

Sigma has announced the BF, a 24MP full-frame L-mount mirrorless camera with built-in memory.

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Sigma announces 16-300mm F3.5-6.7 DC OS, a lens with a huge 18.8x zoom ratio

The new lens will be available in L-mount, E-mount, X-mount and RF-mount.

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Sigma I-series primes get a rework, including silver versions for L-mount

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happens within a second at any focal length even in marginal lighting conditions (the difference in AF speed between the G16 and G15 is minimal though - the G15 was a fast camera when it was announced, and it still is), and shutter lag is effectively non-existent. Shot to shot time is negligible, even when shooting Raw. The G16's 'stunt' high-speed capture modes of 12 and 9fps are JPEG-only, but Raw shooters will be pleased to note that with a midrange UHS-I card installed, the G16 can shoot Raw+JPEG captures continuously at approximately 1.6fps for as long as you can hold your finger down, and doesn't lock up when the images are being written to your memory card.

Wi-Fi

A full rundown of the G16's various features is beyond the scope of a quick article like this, but I do want to quickly go over arguably the most important *new* feature, which is Wi-Fi. Canon has steadily been adding Wi-Fi to its consumer and enthusiast-model cameras over the past 18 months or so, and with this autumn's new releases, the feature has matured a little. In fact, a full 24 pages of Canon's (download only) G16 user manual are devoted to the function. The Wi-Fi component of the G16 allows you to do three main things:

- Connect to the Internet/Social media (via Canon Image Gateway)
- Connect to a smartphone or tablet computer to view/save images and append GPS data
- Connect to another (Canon Wi-Fi-enabled) camera to share images

Connecting to a smartphone or tablet computer is very easy once you've installed Canon's (free) Picture Window app. The on-screen directions are clear and concise. I managed to pair the G16 with my iPhone in a couple of minutes. From the app, you can view images on the camera's memory card, and save them from the same window, or 'send' them from the camera to the phone. Images can be sent/saved in medium, small or full-resolution. You can connect the devices over a pre-existing Wi-Fi network, or if you're out and about, the camera can become a node, and your mobile device can connect to it in much the same way.



The first step to pairing the G16 with a smartphone or tablet, once you've downloaded Canon's Camera Window app is to name the devices. Despite the G16 lacking a touchscreen its on-screen keyboard is easy and quick to use (so long as you don't enter a really really long 'nickname' for your camera).

You can also use your smartphone's geolocation logs to append GPS data to the images captured on the camera, via the Camera Window app. The app has to be running, at which point you take your pictures, connect the camera to the phone wirelessly, and then hit the option to 'add locations to images on the camera'. The process (when we could get it to work) is rather confusing, and ultimately a poor substitute for a GPS system built into the camera itself.

 Sigma unveils 24MP BF camera and new lenses

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We're in Tokyo Japan at an event organized by Sigma. We'll be reporting live on the announcements.

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For our February Editors' photo challenge, we asked you to show us what winter fun looks like through your lens. Put on your hat and gloves, and check out our favorites.

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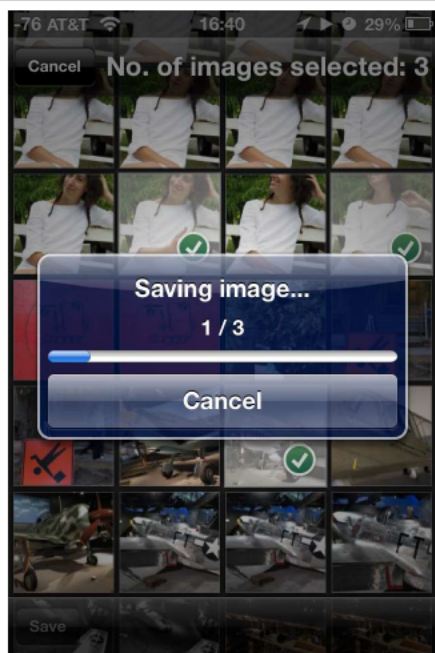
The winners of the Underwater Photographer of the Year 2025 contest showcase majestic whales, thirsty camels and diverse underwater wildlife.

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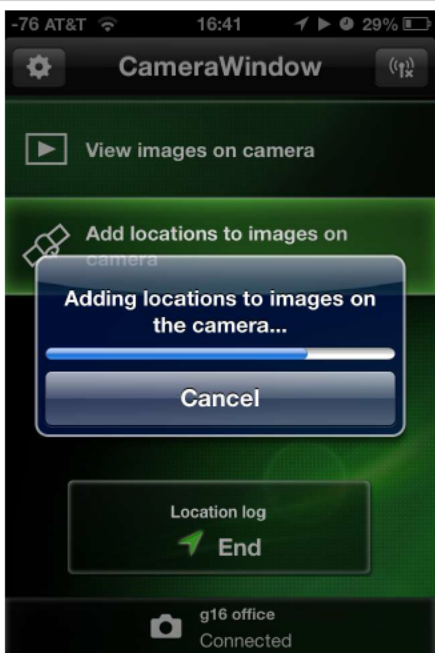
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Once my iPhone was connected to the G16, I could view, select and save images from the camera onto my phone, directly into the camera roll.



Because smartphones know where they are at all times, Canon's CameraWindow app can take geolocation data from your phone, and append it to images captured on the G16.

Theoretically, the G16 can also be connected to the cloud via Canon's Image Gateway service, and to a computer for automatic or manual backup/transfer of images. For reasons unknown (possibly because the camera is so new) we've been unable to complete the process of product and service registration to test these features on the G16. That's something we'll be working on as we move forward. Watch this space...

Tags: [first-impressions](#)

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Canon has announced the PowerShot V1 large-sensor vlogging compact, but has yet to announce plans for the model outside Asia.

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Apple's newly announce iPhone 16e comes at a more budget-friendly price, but with sacrifices to the camera setup.

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The good people at iFixit publish product-specific disassembly guides, written to help common folk make simple repairs to their own electronic devices. They're also a great way to peek inside a digital camera without voiding your warranty. This week we look inside the Canon PowerShot G16. [Read more](#)

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After plenty of rumors, GoPro has announced a new version of its Max 360, though with only minor changes.

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Show us what 'Winter Games' looks like through your lens, whether it's winter sports, building a snowman, or just enjoying the year's coldest season.

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Accessory Roundup: lights, camera, action

Today we're looking at lights, ultra-portable SSDs, and more.

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Cosina's latest lens for M-mount is ridiculously thin and lightweight.

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Dec 18, 2013

2013 was a busy year for high-end compact cameras, which saw everything from iterative updates to established lines to brand new options from manufacturers entering this market segment. We've used almost all of them, reviewed a few, and in the process we've taken thousands of pictures and formed plenty of opinions. But now it's your turn - what was the best enthusiast compact camera of 2013? Click through for our selection, and a chance to cast your vote.

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Nov 25, 2013

The holidays are a great time to take pictures — and they're a great time to get a camera for yourself or for a loved one. With more than 50 cameras going through the hands of the DPReview team over the year, we've seen it all (or so we think). Based on our collective knowledge we hope this guide will help you make an informed decision on which camera will fit your needs. In part 3, we look at enthusiast compact cameras.

 Canon PowerShot G16
updated with test scene samples

Canon PowerShot G16 updated with test scene samples

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Oct 28, 2013

We just updated our first impressions review of the Canon PowerShot G16 with our studio test scene showing image quality in both JPEG and Raw capture modes. It includes downloadable Raw files of both the daylight and low light scenes. As usual this allows you to compare the G16 with other cameras.

 Canon announces Japan-only
special-edition PowerShot S120
and G16

Canon announces Japan-only special-edition PowerShot S120 and G16

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CAMERA NEWS Oct 15, 2013

Canon has announced special edition versions of its PowerShot G16 and S120 digital compact cameras. The 'premium' versions appear to be intended for the Japanese domestic market, and will be available in different color finishes, with a custom engraving option. Color customization appears to comprise the option of red, gold, silver and black finished on select components and both cameras are supplied with unique accessories - a cowhide leather pouch for the S120 and a leather hard case for the G16. Click through for pictures.

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First released for Sony E-mount, the Tokina atx-m 11-18mm F2.8 will soon be available for Fujifilm X-mount users.

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We got our hands back on Nikon's new 'environmental portrait' lens, to add more people pictures to our gallery.

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