

Primera's Bravo SE Disk Publisher

By David Hurd

Having never owned a robotic disk publisher before, I didn't quite know what to expect. It sounded complicated. As it turned out, **Primera's** newest "all-in-one" disk publishing system, the Bravo SE, is both easy to use and a great tool to have available. It combines fast, automated robotic CD/DVD duplication with full-color, 4,800-dpi direct-to-disk printing... all in one compact desktop unit.

I needed to make 100 copies of a Promo DVD, which would usually be a boring ordeal. Instead, I loaded the software into my laptop, plugged in the Bravo SE via USB, and dropped 20 blank DVDs into the tray. (Models include both Windows-based PC and Mac duplication software.)

The Bravo SE comes with both a labeling and a burning program. A few minutes with the labeling program produced a nice, professional looking label layout. Since I already had a master DVD that I had burned from the timeline of a Matrox

AXIO System, I was ready to start with the duplication end of things.

I brought up the duplication program and told it that I wanted 20 copies. It asked for my master disk, what label I wanted to have printed on them, and started duplicating.

Meanwhile I edited TV shows, and did other productive work, while my little Bravo SE robotic slave did the boring stuff. From time to time it would prompt me to add another 20 blank disks, and a few hours later my TV show was edited, and my 100 disks were copied and printed... too cool.

When I needed a one-off copy printed from a different master, I just used the printing program. The resulting full-color label looked much more professional than my usual Sharpie pen scrawl, and took less than five minutes to complete.

The Bravo SE opens up new ways to make my production company more profitable. Now when I need make DVDs for my clients, I can keep the job "in-house" and avoid having to take the time to send out for duplication. The turnaround times

can be measured in hours instead of days, making for happy clients.

If you are worried about the labels washing off, try Primera's new TuffCoat™ with AquaGuard™ surface (matte finish) or TuffCoat with WaterShield™ surface (glossy finish). Both are highly water-resistant, and should do a nice job.

The Bravo SE is a standard-definition device. If you are into HD work, Primera now offers professional-grade disk publishing systems for Blu-ray Disk Media with its Bravo SE Blu Disk Publisher.

Try one — they are easy to operate, fun to use, and pay for themselves quickly.

MSRP: Bravo SE \$1,495 (Bravo SE Blu Disk Publisher \$2,995)

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The Miller DS20 Solo Tripod Systems

By David Hurd

The **Miller DS20** Tripod comes in two flavors: carbon fibre and alloy. The difference between them is about 10 ounces and a bit of money. Since I really don't carry tripods much, I opted for the alloy model.

The first thing I noticed about the DS20 is that it uses round legs with twist locks instead of the average flat legs with pushdown clamps. The result of this change is a tripod that goes higher, stores smaller, and can actually be faster to set up. The round legs are also less prone to dents, which tend to make smooth operation difficult.

Another rugged feature of the DS20 is that it has no actual fluid in the head. The drag components are made of metal, which gets rid of a lot of problems for you videographers who travel a lot, or just have to work in extreme conditions.

Setup is easy, since the DS20 is designed with a two-way "flick-of-a-switch" selectable counter-

balance for use with light or heavier cameras. All you have to do is pick one of them... switch... and go.

The camera plate features a choice of 1/4-inch and pin or 1/4-inch and 3/8-inch screw mounts, with a sliding quick-release mount for lens and battery changes.

Both versions use a 75mm ball-and-bubble leveling system, can handle cameras weighing from 11-22 pounds, and are both within an inch of the 33-inch transport length and the height range of nine to 69.4 inches. The difference is in the weight: the carbon fibre model weighs in at 11.7 pounds with its case, versus the alloy model that weighs 12.5 pounds.

The DS20 handles a wide range of camera heights. Over 69 inches gets you up for high shots, and being able to spread the legs out and get your camera plate down to nine inches off the floor is also a very useful feature.

The alloy DS20 that I tested handled my **Panasonic HVX200** camera, a **Petroff** mat-

tebox on rails, and a **FS100 Firestore** easily. At first it seemed a bit stiff, but the stiffness really helped to smooth out the starts and stops involved in panning.

Adding a seven-inch **IKAN** prompter monitor on top of the camera and a **Varizoom** controller to the handle turned my HVX200 into a mini-studio camera. The DS20 didn't seem to notice the extra weight at all, and kept performing flawlessly.

Light, compact, and sturdy, the DS20 Solo system makes for smooth shooting. It's a keeper!

MSRP: 1643 Alloy \$1645
1514 Carbon Fibre \$1895

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