



ROSCO LITEPAD

Lighting accessory mogul Rosco recently celebrated its 100th anniversary. LitePad represents one of its more recent achievements.

By Jimmy Den-Ouden

LitePad is an LED based lighting panel. Doesn't sound real interesting does it? Be pleasantly surprised - it's actually really cool.

LitePad is available in a range of sizes and colours - well colour temperatures at least. At 8mm thick it might be the slimmest light source we've seen. It's useful in a whole lot of different applications, and to coin a cheesy phrase the possibilities are really limited only by imagination. Thus far it's been used in architectural and film set applications as well as on stage.

The two more common models are HO+ and Axiom, which is basically a ruggedised version of HO+. Axiom units travel in a metal frame, which although it adds a little weight also brings a new range of mounting options. At the most basic level, the Axiom units have rubber feet

on the back so they can sit flat. A quick release spigot mates to suitable stands or Manfrotto style clamps. The HO+ model is already pretty rugged by itself - I've seen it deliberately bent and twisted and it just kept working, though I wouldn't advocate this action as good practice. The most vulnerable part of the whole fixture seems to be the DC input connector.

Power up, or down?

DC input is 12v, and the panels consume quite a bit of juice - the 12"x12" panel pulls 2A. Because the LEDs are built around the perimeter of the panel the power consumption doesn't double as panel size doubles - so the 12"x6" panel still runs at 1.5A. Anyhow, the important bit is that they run from 12V so can easily be used without a mains power source. Standard DC connectors make wiring easy - nice to see Rosco has resisted the urge to install a proprietary power connector. There's a tiny in-line DC dimmer unit available, as well as a 2 channel DMX controllable

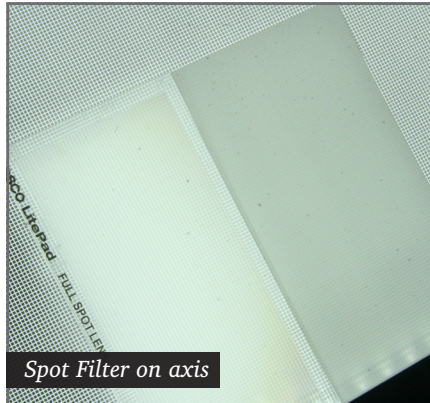
version. The engineering on the 2 channel dimmer is typically Rosco - it's reminiscent of a 1500 series fogger remote.

Dimming is smooth and linear. The lowest output level is very low, and beneath this the LEDs just extinguish. The nature of LED makes it hard to dim all the way down to 0, so the range on these is very good. A bunch of pre-fab cable and power supply accessories are available if you're looking for a quick generic power solution. There's even an 8xAA battery holder, for which a bracket is available to attach it to the back of a LitePad Axiom housing.

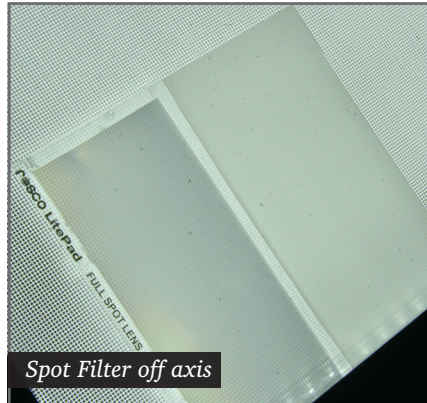
We should probably address light output and quality, given this is a lighting review. Output on the LitePad is very good. We compared it to a cheapo camera light and the light field on the LitePad was flatter and the colour temperature looked much more like daylight than the cheapie could produce. Heat generated on the larger panels is negligible, and while the 3" circle warms up a little it's not so hot you



LitePad Axiom



Spot Filter on axis



Spot Filter off axis

couldn't hold it clenched in your hand for 3 hours comfortably.

LitePad sizing ranges from the very small 3" diameter LitePad disc, through to 24"x24" square. Sizes generally run in 6" increments in either direction, with the 3"x6" and 3"x12" being the exceptions. LitePad is made in two colour temperatures - daylight and tungsten. This means it's easy to colour match to existing lighting conditions, or create contrast if that's the effect you're looking for. I'd probably opt for the daylight model and colour correct down when needed.

Accessories

LitePad is available as single parts or as a kit. Our demo system included bits of both. Rosco has really come up with a complete solution, addressing every accessory you're likely to need. Stands, gels, and diffusers are all available as well as hot shoe camera mounts, and other accessories. My favourite add-on is the super cool spot filter. It's less than 1mm thick, and just slides into the Axiom frame. It turns the light field into a nicely controlled spot with smoothly tapered edges. I don't know how they make it work, but the results are brilliant.

The only real downside here is

price. LitePad ain't cheap. It isn't especially expensive, but the proliferation of cheapie knock-off LED lights makes it look like it is. This said, the quality of the product and the light it generates more than justifies the difference. It comes in 8 standard sizes and Rosco can even do custom panels. The accessories are reasonably priced and just add to the appeal of the product. If you want a quality flat panel LED light source, this is it.

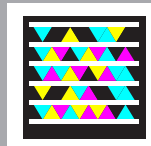
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What and Where

Brand: LitePad
RRP: 3" HO+ Circle \$110, 3"x6" HO+ \$175, 12"x12" HO+ \$660, 3"x6" AXIOM \$235.
Tungsten & Daylight are same price for listed models and all prices inc GST.

Product Info:
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