

Guarantee quality video with these two accessories (Photos)

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BY: DOUG BARDWELL
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When you shoot [video](#), getting the focus right and getting the audio right are two critically important tasks. Your focus directs the viewer's eye to what you want them to see (or not see) and if the audio is bad, no one will make it to the end of the video (other than maybe your mom.) I had the opportunity to recently test two devices from Marshall Electronics that help in both regards.

If you are trying to record only one sound source, like a singer or other performer, what you want is a very directional microphone to eliminate the noise clutter coming from the audience on either side of you. A shotgun mic is ideal for this purpose, and the [MXL FR-310 Hot Shoe Shotgun Mic](#) is one to consider.

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The FR-310 is a compact shotgun, just the right size for the hot shoe above your DSLR. Some long reach shotguns are so large that they show up in the top of your viewfinder. Not the FR-310. With a triangular shaped windscreen, this mic works well inside and out. A three position switch sets the recording



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recording environments. A selectable high-pass filter helps get rid of those annoying background hums.

Did you ever consider that if you are using a shotgun mic and your speaker moves, you

can re-aim your microphone without moving your camera? Suppose you are shooting a presentation and you want to capture the whole PowerPoint on the screen at the front of the room, but your speaker is wandering around – in front and behind your tripod position. With an external mic like the FR-310, you can leave your camera locked on the screen with the PowerPoint, but you can follow the speaker with your microphone.

Another advanced option of shooting HD video on your DSLR is the capability of getting that "soft-focus" background look with extremely fast lenses. However, when your depth-of-field is so shallow, your focusing becomes extra critical. Trying to check focus on that little 2 or 3" LCD on your camera back is not the best way to do it – what you should have is a field monitor. Here again, Marshall Electronics has a product really up to the task – the M-CT6-CE6 6" Field Monitor.

Made to mount on a hot shoe, this monitor is big enough to give critical evaluation of your shot; but, not so heavy that you can't handhold the combined rig. The M-CT6-CE6 connects to your camera with an HDMI cable and lets you check focus on a nice, bright 800 x 480 resolution screen. It works equally well with your video camera.

Now you can see what you couldn't see before. Doing nature [photography](#), down low to the ground? Where you probably couldn't see very well before, now you'll know exactly how your framing and focusing look before you take the shot.

Marshall was thinking of the photographer when they designed this unit, providing alternate ways to power it. Since a portable monitor requires yet one more battery, at least you can use the Nikon or Canon batteries you already have – provided you are shooting with a [compatible model](#). There are also options for JVC, Sony and Panasonic.

Built-in brightness controls and volume controls on the front of the monitor make it easy to get just the right playback so you can check everything in the field. This is something you'll surely enjoy if you do a lot of serious shooting.

Both units are available from the Marshall site at <http://www.marshallmonitors.com>.

Both these products are included in my travel photographers 2012 Gift Guide. Consult it anytime for great gift ideas.

Doug Bardwell, based in Cleveland, OH, feels that photography greatly enhances the joys of traveling. With the right equipment and technique, those views can be captured and shared with friends for a lifetime. Feel free to drop him a line at travel.dougbardwell@gmail.com with suggestions for future stories. To get his stories delivered to your inbox, click the RSS feed or the "Subscribe" button above or follow him on Twitter @photodb. To read Doug's disclosure notice, click [here](#). To read more of his stories, enter "Doug Bardwell" in the search box above or click below for his other features:

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