



Light & Motion - Sola Dive 1200

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SPECS

PRICE 699€ inc. charger and new handles

LAMP Multiple LED

LUMENS 600/1200

BURNTIME 65min at max (at full power)

DEPTH RATING 90m

BATTERIES lithium ion

CHARGE TIME 2.5hr

WEIGHT IN AIR 287g

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DIVER GUIDE ★★★★★★★★★★



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I BECAME EMBROILED in an argument with someone on a forum about the number of lumens originating from a light that I reviewed here recently. My critic claimed that I had not done my research, and that the output specified by the manufacturer, and restated by me, was impossible. Eventually he had to back down and "stand corrected", which in itself is unusual in the world of Internet warriors.

I had done my research and the figure was correct. Another lamp, the L&M Sola Dive 1200, is so named because it has an output at maximum power of 1200 lumens.

Lumens are lumens, but apart from giving a general idea, this measure does not tell you how efficient a light is.

I have no way of measuring lumens, but I have a lux meter with a submersible housing, and I can measure the amount of light (in lux) arriving at a subject. That, for me, is the important bit. However, this is only quantifiable as a comparison when embarking on a test with all the lamps used side-by-side in identical circumstances, such as the controlled environment of an unlit swimming pool. I can say that the L&M Sola Dive 1200 is much brighter than the average LED lamp that pushes out around 250 lumens, and that's about it. I can also tell you that all this light comes from a relatively tiny package that weighs no more than 287g out of the water, and that it was developed from the L&M Sola Video 600 light, which was a runner-up in this year's Newcomer section of the DIVER Awards.

I prophesied when I used the video light that some divers would adopt it as a dive light and, lo and behold, the guys at Light & Motion must have been thinking along the same lines. It's more compact than many so-called back-up lights at only 10cm long, and is certainly brighter.

Light Source

The Sola Dive 1200 employs an array of nine high-output LEDs. These can be switched to use six, providing a 60° even flood of light at either full-, half- or quarter-power settings.

Or you can use the three others to give a 500 lumen spot, again at full-, half- and quarter-power settings.

There are three green LEDs visible at the top of the lamp that indicate the power setting you are using.

Battery

The rechargeable lithium-ion battery is sealed in at the factory. You recharge it by means of an external three-pin connector. It takes 150 minutes to recharge fully from flat.

Burntimes vary from 270 minutes at quarter power to 70 minutes at full power.

The same set of three LED indicators turns from red through yellow to green to indicate charging progress. When it's at minimum charge, it flashes red.

Switching

A sprung-loaded sliding switch mounted on top of the unit is twisted free. This can then be used to activate the power setting and beam you require.

It's magnetic, neatly dispensing with the need for through-body connections. Sliding it to one end and holding it there switches it off. It is twisted back to lock it and stop it being activated in error.

In The Water

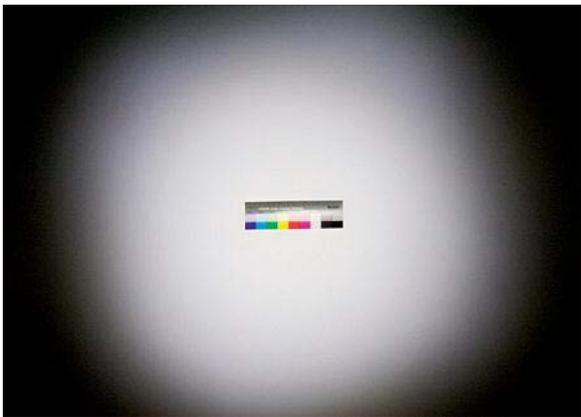
The Sola Dive 1200 comes with a Velcro-covered wrist or forearm mount that allows you to use the light hands-free. The LED indicators dispense with any chance of using it at the wrong setting. The factory-sealed nature of the unit overcomes any fears of flooding it.

I found that this lamp naturally complemented my camera and flash set-up. Although my flashguns have built-in aiming lights, these are a little diffused and point where the flashguns point, so have quite a short range.

The Sola Dive 1200, mounted out of the way on my forearm, allowed me to use its Spot mode and look further into the darkness for other possible subjects. In Flood mode, this lamp could be useful as a light source for those with compact cameras photographing macro subjects.

For technical diving, it's rated to 90m deep, so for most of us it makes a great tool to carry in a pocket, should the need arise, or to be used as a main lamp.

Barring severe misuse, the Sola Dive 1200 seems impervious to underwater disasters. If it seems expensive to buy, think what such a tiny lamp will save in excess-baggage charges.



SOLA1200 in SPOT setting



SOLA1200 in WIDE setting



SOLA1200 Dive - only 287g



SOLA1200 fits right on your hand