

# Canon PowerShot S40

■ £600 ■ DIGITAL COMPACT CAMERA

Take a look at Canon's latest compact, feature-filled digital offering **WORDS RAY ALLEN**

**FOUR MEGAPIXEL** compact cameras are becoming more popular as people demand high image quality in a pocketable form. Canon's representative in this sector is the feature-packed PowerShot S40.

This camera is solidly built. The finish is first-class with good quality switchgear. The feature list is extensive; every manual override is on offer for creative photographers, although you can just use the auto which will result in some sharp and well-focused images. A camera this small should not have so many features, and about the only thing missing is an external flash sync socket.

## Set your sights

Slide across the front lens cover and the camera is ready in around four seconds – not bad. In Auto mode the LCD shows three frames that represent the three point focus system – when you half-press the shutter the frames that remain on indicate the area that it's locked on to. Another nice touch is in manual focus mode, because when you press the shutter halfway, a small section of the image is enlarged, allowing you to set the focus accurately.

## At a glance...

- **PRICE** £600
- **CONTACT** [www.canon.co.uk](http://www.canon.co.uk)
- **PHONE** 0800 616417
- **SPECIFICATIONS**

**Lens:** 35-105mm f/2.8-4.9 **Recording modes:** JPEG, RAW **Resolution:** 4 megapixel CCD, 2272x1704 pixels **Supplied storage:** 16Mb CF **Monitor:** 1.8in TFT LCD **Viewfinder:** Optical, giving 75% coverage **Weight:** 260g (no batteries) **Dimensions:** 112x58x42mm

### LCD MONITOR



1.8in big and bright LCD gives far more accurate framing than the optical viewfinder. The LCD is vital for keeping an eye on the manual settings and the useful 3 zone focus system.

The autofocus system is quite accurate but can take time to lock on to some subjects, resulting in missed action. However, once locked the shutter fires with virtually no shutter lag.

In handling, the main downside is the optical viewfinder which is really inaccurate and only shows around 75% of the actual image. Not what you would expect from a Canon camera. This means you use the LCD more and greater battery consumption. You can use the optical viewfinder, but that's not ideal if you're critical about composition.

A nice feature is Stitch Assist for panoramic views, but what Canon have done is take it one step further by allowing you to select horizontal and vertical so you can create a giant poster if you want to.

Picture quality is outstanding with superb colour in every shot; it's accurate and natural and the white balance is great with only the odd tricky situation resulting in a slightly cool colour cast. Exposure is spot-on and the lens is very high quality. RAW mode is also on offer for the ultimate non-compressed image, although you'll need a big memory card.

### CASE DESIGN



The lens is protected by this sliding front cover, which also doubles as the on/off switch, as well as adding to the lovely finish. Slide it across and the lens racks out into place, all ready to go.

### MAIN MODE DIAL



The mode dial gives you quick access to all the pre set programs and manual controls. Use auto for stress-free pictures.

In playback you can view the image with a histogram to check exposure. It will also flash any areas that may be affected. Battery life seems good; I managed to shoot all day with the LCD screen on – very impressive.

In sum, a camera that can be recommended. ■

## The Verdict

### HANDLING

Because of its small size it could be difficult to get a firm grip. Operation is fast with virtually no shutter lag.

17

### PICTURE QUALITY

Excellent quality pictures are obtained, with superb colour and lots of detail from a great small lens.

19

### FEATURES

Jam-packed with features, and ideal for everyone from beginners to experts.

18

### EXPOSURE

No complaints in this department, even with difficult subjects exposure is consistently good.

19

### VALUE FOR MONEY

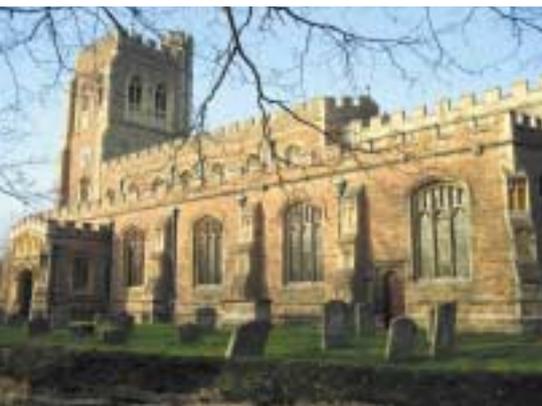
Considering all the features it is good value for money and with quality materials used in construction.

17

### OVERALL SCORE

**Feature-packed in a compact case. Build quality excellent throughout, it even has a metal tripod mount. Picture quality is outstanding. Recommended.**

90



PRINT AT A4



PRINT AT A3

## Picture quality

The lens quality ensures great images any time with superb detail and spot-on exposure. Colour is again another area where the Canon show us how it should be done with bright, natural colours. RAW mode is on offer for the ultimate in picture quality.

# Fuji FinePix 2800z ■ £400 ■ DIGITAL COMPACT CAMERA

Cheerful as well as nicely priced, this is a camera to get you started WORDS RAY ALLEN

**ANYONE TAKING UP** digital photography may well start with a cheaper camera then progress to a more expensive one later. Cheap once meant dodgy in terms of picture quality and camera build, but not any longer. Enter the new two-megapixel FinePix 2800 Zoom from Fuji. Cameras of this resolution are aplenty, but what Fuji have done is introduce features that are lacking on the competition at this level.

## Picture this

The curvy, sculptured body helps greatly in handling, and the 6x optical zoom puts this camera into a different league. Digital zoom is still on offer but, as with any digital camera, image quality does suffer with it enabled, so having an optical zoom this big is a real bonus.

The electronic viewfinder (EVF) is made up from 110,000 pixels which gives a clear and accurate colour image. And because it's electronic it will also display camera settings which can save on battery consumption by not using the larger 1.8inch LCD rear screen.

Using full auto mode this camera is easy to use and the main mode dial has only three settings – record, playback and movie. Set to

### MODE DIAL



If you want simple, no fuss photography, this is a great option. With only 3 settings on offer you can't go wrong. Even though it's simple to use this camera can produce some fantastic pics.



record mode and switch on and the lens moves swiftly into position, ready to take a picture in around three seconds. The electronic viewfinder also displays a handy grid with four lines to represent the rule of thirds and so help with picture composition.

## Top quality lens

The downside to EVF is that in very bright sunlight you need to have the eyecup right up against your eye to stop stray light entering and making the image hard to see, just like when using any LCD screen in sunlight. And when you do take the picture the image is frozen in the EVF until it is saved to the memory card in around two seconds – a pain if you need to recompose another shot quickly.

The 6x zoom is great; the extra optical zoom helps in so many situations. Zoom operation is smooth and features two levels of speed, for a camera of this price range it's impressive.

Fuji's own high quality lens helps produce some great pictures with lots of detail and depth. Exposure is spot-on, colour is vibrant but natural. Only at the wide-angle end do you notice some barrel distortion towards the edge of the images but it's nothing to worry about.

### HIGH QUALITY LENS

The f/2.8-3.0 Fujinon lens gives crisp images. The 6x optical zoom ranges from 38-228mm in 35mm terms, and is amazing at this price point, making the 2800z stand out from the crowd.



Three image resolution modes are on offer and each setting also has three levels of compression. Battery consumption was very good, even with the EVF. Although not for professionals, manual overrides give you some creative freedom. ■

## At a glance...

- **PRICE** £400
- **CONTACT** [www.fujifilm.co.uk](http://www.fujifilm.co.uk)
- **PHONE** 0207 586 1477
- **SPECIFICATIONS**

**Lens:** Fujinon 38-228mm f/2.8-3 **Recording modes:** Fine, normal and basic with 1600x1200, 1280x96 and 640x480 **Resolution:** 2.1 megapixel CCD with RGB filter **Supplied storage:** 16Mb SM **Monitor:** 1.8in TFT LCD AND EVF **Weight:** 270g without batteries **Dimensions:** 95x77x71mm

## The Verdict

### HANDLING

The body sits very nicely in the hand for steady images. Viewfinder annoying in some conditions.

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### PICTURE QUALITY

Overall images are sharp and well-balanced for a 2.1mp CCD. Colours are bright and vivid.

17

### FEATURES

Not designed for advanced use, but very simple to operate and has a great 6x optical zoom.

15

### EXPOSURE

Delivers very acceptable results in a variety of lighting conditions.

17

### VALUE FOR MONEY

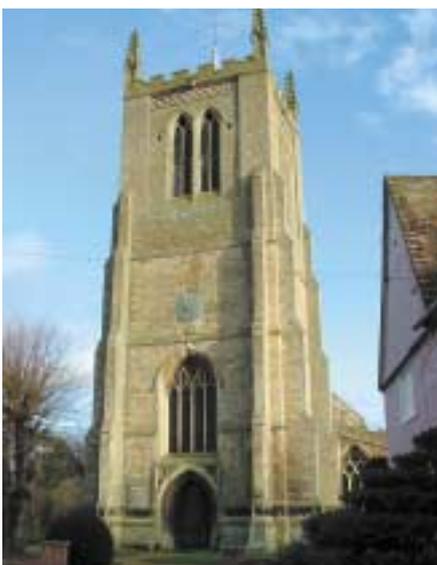
Not the cheapest 2.1 megapixel, but the quality of images and 6x zoom make it worth the extra.

16

### OVERALL SCORE

81

**If you can live with the electronic viewfinder you will be rewarded with cracking pictures. Speedy in use, good battery life and excellent quality lens.**



## Picture quality

The high quality of the lens means your pictures should contain lots of detail, contrast and depth. The exposure is spot on, and colours sing out while still remaining natural. The wide-angle end can produce barrel distortion towards the edge of the image but it's really not that noticeable.