

## **Freshly Squeezed Review**

Light Cubed

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Several months ago I reviewed the benefits of Bias Lighting, not just for setting ambience but regarding taxing your retinas. Lately, I have found myself being a creator of video not just a consumer. Appearing on the occasional podcast (what were they thinking?) and creating a short project for a film festival. Plus time-to-time I video chat with my daughter on the other side of the continent and friends around the globe. (This is all that my Film degree has gotten me.)

For drone-fanatics you are probably already familiar with [Lume Cube] as not only do they manufacturer lighting for taking shots in a multitude of situations, they have recently released anti-collision lighting to apply to your drone when night shooting. But I was in the market for an inexpensive, versatile light to mount on my iMac for video conferencing and aforementioned activities. That's when I stumbled into the world of Lume Cube.

I already knew of lighting setups for TV and film work, and their myriad of benefits such as drastically reducing heat generated by the lighting (when recording an interview in a small room, a Tungsten light could turn said room into an oven extremely fast).

Lume Cube has many solutions for a vast number of situations from regular video conferencing, chatting on your mobile devices, to lighting for your drone shots and now The Strobe - Anti-collision Lighting For Drones. Plus there is an incredible amount of accessories for the amateur to the professional (honestly, a snoot for use with a light on your iPhone).

I purchased the [Lume Cube Air VC Lighting Kit for Video Conferencing] (for brevity, I'm going to refer to the Lume Cube Air VC as LCAVC) which I use for daily activities as well as for my short film projects. I'll base my review on that unit. (As Lume Cube has an astonishing selection of devices and assortment of accessories, I enthusiastically suggest that you visit their site.)

### **##The Good**

Let's begin with the packaging which has more of a 'Whoa' factor than anything Apple has produced. A simple white box but it opens and closes in a unique fashion. Instead of sliding cardboard 'ears' into and out of slots, the box unfolds. How? The right side has a small piece of cloth which you pull on to release magnets imbedded in the cardboard and some metal in the body of the box. This keeps the box securely closed. It's ingenious. I've never seen anything like it.

Once opened, you'll find your LCAVC, a powerful suction cup mount, two diffusion bulbs, and a micro USB charging cable.

You use the suction cup to mount your LCAVC to any flat surface. For conferencing that most likely would be your iMac, MacBook, iPad, even your iPhone.

The brightness is incredible. You can adjust it by pairing it with their free iOS app, Lume-X, which will ask for access to both your camera and microphone. You also use it to register your light's serial number. This is handy in the event you should switch whatever your cube is mounted to so you can use the app without constantly refilling your information.

The interface is very intuitive, allowing you to turn the cube or multiple cubes on and off, adjust the brightness, the duration of the flash for photography, giving you the amount of battery life left, and more. A very useful feature is you can switch to your selfie camera, allowing you to adjust the aim and brightness to your liking.

### ##The Bad

I wish they had made the button on the cube itself more prominent (fortunately, you can turn the cube on/off with the app once you have turned it on via the cube). I don't have the greatest tactile sense, so locating and operating it without being able to see it (mine is mounted on my iMac) is difficult. The button also seemed somewhat wobbly.

The biggest problem that I found was mounting the cube to my iMac. Mounting it to a perfectly flat surface such as my iPhone or iPad was a breeze as their backs are perfectly flat. But in the case of the iMacs latest form factor, there's an ever so slight curve. It took me repeated attempts and some seaman's lingo to get it to adhere to the back of the iMac. Regrettably, I ended up placing it where it would grip and not where I wanted it.

Another is their "gotcha" sales tactic when buying accessories. As an example, I wanted to buy barn doors for my cube. I paid and received them within several days. I unpacked them, went to mount them to my cube only to find that I couldn't without a special mounting bracket. I returned to their site to find that the mounting bracket was sold separately! The barn doors were only USD \$15. Coincidentally, so was the "AIR MODIFICATION FRAME" that I now had to purchase. Why wouldn't you sell the two as a bundle as neither is functional without the other piece? You could nickel and dime yourself to death. (They do have kits but you wind up buying extra things that you may have no intent of ever using.)

Nowhere on the site did it mention that I needed the aforementioned bracket. I later found that they have entirely separate ecosystems for the LCAAV as opposed to their other similarly looking cube. It would have been nice if they had placed the two ecosystems on separate pages. (Be fair, there is a button on the home page, "SHOP THE KIT." But if you aren't sure what you need to fulfill your requirements, it's a crapshoot.)

### ##Conclusion

I don't regret my purchase. The output of light is impressive. Regrettably, trying to mount to it the iMac wasn't a pleasant experience. (Is there a trick that I don't know? All the users in the promo shots seemed so happy!) If need be, I can gerry-rig it somehow if need be.

(img)

Lume Cube has a vast assortment of products to choose from. While I don't condone their business model, I definitely feel you should consider giving them a look and see if they have something that will fit your lighting needs. But pay close attention to the details.

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