

Compact and clever

Lastolite has a worthy reputation for producing ingenious accessories which can go anywhere, and its portable HiLite backdrop is the ideal solution for event photographers in a tight spot

Event photographers will know only too well that there is no such thing as the ideal location, and so often they will turn up to a venue to find that space is limited and there is scarcely room to set up the PC and printer, let alone a conventional paper backdrop.

As one of the most high profile names on the event photography circuit, Keith Trainor knows all about these problems more than most, and they are compounded by the fact that he has made his trademark look the pure white background, which requires extensive lighting to make it luminous. "So often I'll arrive at a venue and will find that I've only got a tiny corner in which to set up," he says. "If I'm using a paper backdrop and my usual six lights I need around five to six metres of space, and very often this just isn't available."

Fortunately Lastolite has come up with a solution to the problem in the shape of its HiLite Illuminated Backgrounds, and these can fit into a space just 18ins deep if necessary, with lighting coming through gaps in the sides and illuminating the hollow structure from inside to ensure a completely shadowless result, even if the subject is standing just ahead of the background. They even throw back a certain amount of light on to the subject as well, so that it's feasible to work with just one light inside the unit and one from the front to illuminate the subject. The icing on the cake is the fact that the HiLite is designed to fold up into a circular pack so that it is small and light to transport and they come in a variety of sizes to enable pretty much every situation to be tackled.

"I usually work with the largest 8x7 foot size,"



says Keith, "although I've also got the 5x7 foot version for head shots. I can use a very simple set up when I need to: for example I've just done a job at the Ascot Races Ladies' Day where it was just me, the 5x7 foot HiLite and two lights, one inside the unit and the other from the front. I wanted to photograph the Ladies and their hats and so I knew I would be able to handle the very compact space I would be working in."

Another big advantage of the HiLite is the Bottletop cover with train, which can be fitted over the unit. Once this is done the HiLite becomes a conventional backdrop and can be lit from the front in the normal way, and there are four colours available: Black, Mid-Grey, Chromakey Blue and Chromakey Green. "I use the Chromakey Green Bottletop on a regular basis to give me a green screen," says Keith, "and it only takes a matter of moments to convert the backdrop or to take it back to white again."

In a busy event business this kind of speed and versatility can be a real life saver, and Lastolite is committed to providing the clever solutions that the professionals need. ■

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LASTOLITE KICKERLITE SOFTBOX

It's not just the backgrounds that Lastolite can help the event photographer with. The company's latest KickerLite Softbox is a low level 90x120cm floor softbox that is ideal to use as a fill light to bring out the detail in areas around the face that might be in shadow, such as under the chin and around the eyes. The KickerLite features an 'H' frame support to accommodate the studio flash head, effectively doing away with the need for an additional light stand, and the softbox also features a two stop diffusion layer and internal baffle to allow further light manipulation. For those really on the move the KickerLite can even be used in conjunction with a battery operated flashgun.

