

# Lastolite Studio Cubelite

**Could this be the perfect solution for all your product shot dilemmas? We put Lastolite's latest to the test** WORDS Ian Farrell

**T**HERE ARE A NUMBER OF GOOD lighting solutions on the market to help make product photography more simple. Many tents and tables are available that enable a horizon-less, white background, and some generate flat even lighting too. The Studio Cubelite, from Lastolite, does both of these tasks and, like many of the company's lighting accessories, folds down into an unfeasibly small package for transportation and storage.

The Cubelite comes in two forms. The first is a tent-only set-up comprising a two-storey structure – the upper one being the studio area and the lower one acting as a table to raise the thing to a decent working height. This is all held in place with rods that bear a striking resemblance to tent poles. The idea is to then light the contents of the tent with two studio lights: one underneath inside the table section, the other on top of the structure pointing vertically downwards into the tent. The latter of these two is encased in a (supplied) softbox, whose somewhat fiddly construction is not typical of Lastolite's usually slick pop-up affairs.

The second, more complete option is a kit that comes bundled with two Lastolite tungsten lamps, the idea being that you use a grey card to fine-tune the white-balance of the warm tungsten lamp output. The advantage of tungsten lights in the Cubelite is that you really do see what you are going to get. The disadvantages may outweigh this, though: the amount of heat generated is considerable (the output of two 500W lamps is roughly half that of an electric kettle!) and the brightness inside the tent is only enough for hand holding at apertures of f/2.8 (assuming ISO 100 sensitivity). Most product photographers will use a tripod, though, so this last point isn't

worth getting too uptight over. Just don't photograph ice cream in it!

The Studio Cubelite features an acrylic base to add strength and rigidity to the set-up. Lastolite claims that this means loads of up to 8kg can be supported by the tent. The structure can sway a little when fully laden if the supports aren't at right angles, but not excessively so.

In use, the quality of the light is excellent. We've used it for many of the product shots in this month's *Pro*, and are very pleased with the results. There is even a curtain on the front of the light tent so that the camera and tripod can be partially hidden when shooting reflective objects. There is quite a lot of contrast inside the Cubelite, even though the light is very soft and shadowless. It's easy to retain the white-out back and foreground while simultaneously creating deep, rich

blacks. By pointing the lower light up or down, it's possible to change the quality of light inside too. The Cubelite can be used with just the top light, for a less 'lost in white space' look.

For those who make still life or product photography part of their work, this is a good investment: small enough to set up in the corner of the room, and affordable enough to pay for itself with one decent job. Those photographing still life all of the time will likely find it limiting, although it has such a small footprint that it could stay erected in the corner for when an invisible white background is needed in a hurry.



## SUMMARY

70cm version: Kit with two tungsten lights **£450**; enclosure alone **£230**

100cm version: Kit with two tungsten lights **£550**; enclosure alone **£300**

A fairly inexpensive set-up for those taking product shots for business. Tungsten lights mean a lot of heat, but lighting is superb. Could be the only set-up you need.

### PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER RATING

FEATURES	★★★★
HANDLING	★★★
PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★
OVERALL	★★★★