

Hähnel Module Creative Lantern Kit

Michael Topham tests a unique diffuser for speedlights

● £59 ● www.hahnel.ie

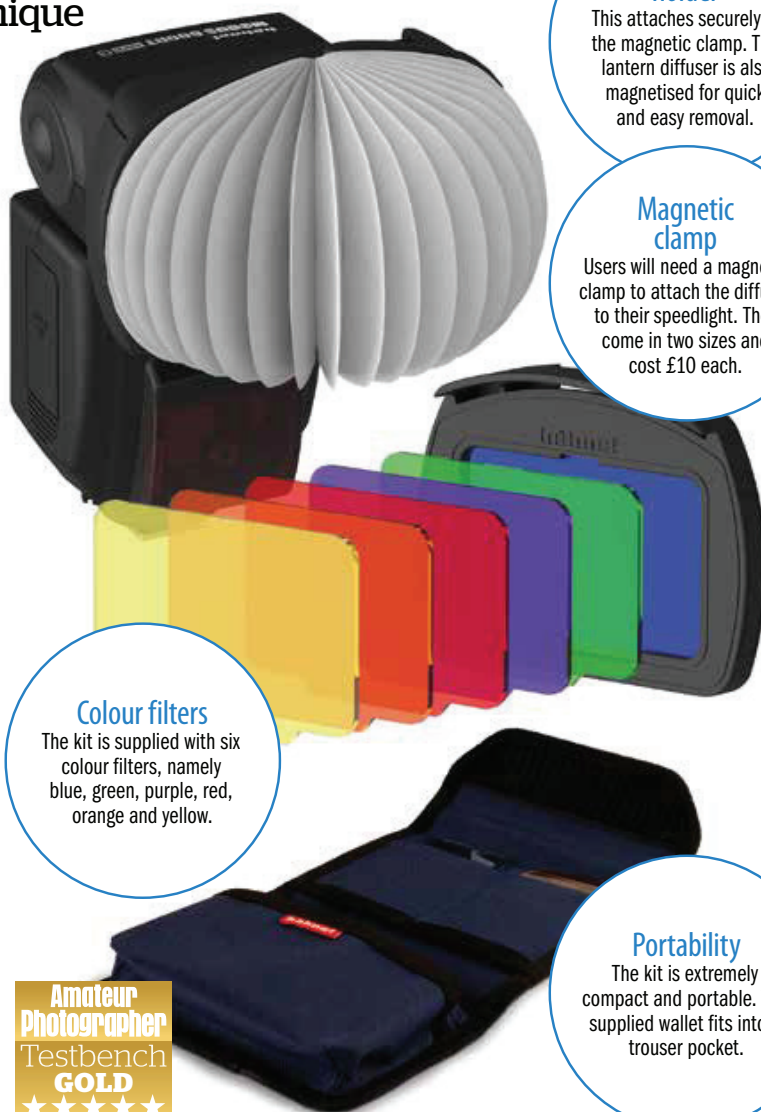
SPEEDLIGHT modifiers and diffusers come in all different shapes and sizes. Just when I thought every possible concept had been made, Hähnel sent me a sample of its new modular speedlight accessory that's quite different from anything I've seen before. Its Creative Lantern Kit is based around an innovative paper diffuser that folds out to create a half lantern shape. The clever part is the magnetic back that allows the diffuser to be attached to a speedlight in one of two ways – either directly to one of Hähnel's Module 360 or 600 magnetic clamps, or via a colour filter holder that comes in the kit and also secures to the module clamp magnetically. With the latter, users have the added benefit of being able to clip in one of six supplied coloured filters to get creative with lighting effects. The Module clamps have to be bought separately and cost £10 each. Although they're designed for Hähnel's Modus 360RT and 600RT, they are compatible with many other units, including the Canon Speedlite 580EX II that I tested it with.

The kit is really easy to use. A pocket-friendly wallet keeps everything neatly together and the diffuser can be attached in a matter of seconds. Shooting without any form of diffuser attached to a speedlight can result in harsh, unflattering lighting, but with the lantern diffuser in place, it's so much softer. Comparing shots taken with it to those captured with a traditional Stofen diffuser revealed it created a more satisfying spread of light into the far corners of the frame, making it particularly effective for close-ups, group shots and portraits where a highly flattering look to flash photography is desired. The idea of slotting in single colour filters works well and will appeal to anyone who works with off-camera flash and fancies adding extra punch, drama or vibrancy to their backgrounds. The resin filters are susceptible to getting a bit grubby from finger marks, though, so it's worth giving them a wipe-over once they're installed.

Verdict

I was slightly sceptical of how effective Hähnel's lantern diffuser might be. It looks rather odd and received some intriguing glances from passers-by, however my tests showed that it does a great job of softening harsh light produced by powerful flashguns. Not only does it work effectively, the kit is super-compact. All in all, it's a practical speedlight accessory that's nicely made and has been well thought through.

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Filter holder

This attaches securely to the magnetic clamp. The lantern diffuser is also magnetised for quick and easy removal.

Magnetic clamp

Users will need a magnetic clamp to attach the diffuser to their speedlight. They come in two sizes and cost £10 each.

Colour filters

The kit is supplied with six colour filters, namely blue, green, purple, red, orange and yellow.

Portability

The kit is extremely compact and portable. The supplied wallet fits into a trouser pocket.

Amateur Photographer Testbench GOLD ★★★★★

At a glance

- Useful for portraiture, macro and interior photography
- Supplied with padded wallet
- Magnetic design
- Requires magnetic clamp (£10 extra)

ALSO CONSIDER

Hähnel's Module Light Effects Kit (£50) employs a honeycomb grid to create a beam of light, along with a large bounce card that clips into the filter holder. The latter is identical to that in the Creative Lantern Kit and comes with six colour gel filters. Again, it requires one of the Module 360 or 600 clamps to attach it to a speedlight.

