

RØDE NTG-1/NTG-2 shotgun mics

REVIEW BY JAMES NOWICZEWSKI

These are the same shotgun (directional condenser) microphone, however, the NTG-2 offers the option of battery powering, while the NTG1 needs 48V phantom power (commonly found on higher end cameras and mixers).

These mics are firmly targeted at the professional end of the market, but the price may fool you. Sturdily constructed in aluminium, they employ the same mic element as found in the VideoMic, but the longer interference tube gives a better directional response.

While not as wildly innovative in appearance as the VideoMic, they are still different enough in appearance to have their own identity. The mic is supplied in a great carrying pouch, with a standard mic-stand (not suspension) mount, and a foam windscreen for moderate wind conditions.



NTG-2 with "Dead Cat".



A naked NTG-1.

A suspension mount is absolutely essential when this mic is mounted on a boom, but RØDE has you covered. By the time this article is published, RØDE expect to have their own affordable suspension mount available for separate sale. I've seen it, and it's a little ripper.

Both mics have a high-pass filter to cut out low-end rumble, and the NTG-2 takes an AA battery that will give approximately 500 hours of life (I assume battery consumption only occurs if there is a completed circuit between the mic and the mixer/recorder/camera, but I couldn't find it anywhere in the manual).

When I picked up this mic, I was told that it was aimed to compete with the big European boys in this market. I mounted the NTG-1 (my mixer supplies 48V powering) on a T-bar with the most popular shotgun in the professional market today, and recorded in a number of different situations to really test it out.

The first thing that I noticed is the mic has a really low self-noise, actually much quieter than the other mic. I then tested this against a few different mics to ensure that there wasn't a problem with my mic, but no, this baby is quiet. A great start.


Like the VideoMic, the mic has a full warm sound with that RØDE presence. I really liked it. Just out of curiosity, I placed the mic as a drum overhead and it worked really well, far surpassing the famous brand European mic.

The only point the high-priced European mic won on was the directional characteristics. In really noisy situations, the NTG-1 was slightly less effective at "picking-out" the dialogue, but perhaps only about 5% less.

What was certainly far better about the RØDE was the off-axis response. Shotgun pattern (or super-cardioid) microphones can drastically colour the sound that is not aiming directly at the microphone, making placement/angle

crucial. The RØDE was far more forgiving, which makes it great for trying to capture dialogue from a group of people.

Another characteristic of shotgun mics is that they can emphasise "roomy" or echoey environments. The RØDE also won hands-down here, giving a much more forgiving "picture" of a horrible environment.

To round out the line, RØDE is also offering their own line of accessories for the mics, including a high wind cover (seriously called the Dead Cat!), an extension lead for the VideoMic and a mini-plug to XLR adaptor. By the time of publication there will also be a boom pole, and suspension mount for the NTG-1/NTG-2. 

James Nowiczewski has been a professional sound recordist and post-production engineer for 13 years, and still loves it.

IN SUMMARY

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AVAILABILITY > www.rodemic.com

PRICE > NTG-1 \$425, NTG-2 \$475.

VERDICT > I really wanted to criticise this mic, to try to find fault. I couldn't, which is really frustrating when you consider that it costs a fifth of what my regular boom mic costs. Whilst RØDE haven't re-invented the wheel with this mic, they have certainly come out with their own product at a price-point that makes it unique.