



# Life in the fast lane

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Lencarta's flagship studio kit offers big power, versatility and affordability. Does it stand up to the rigours of pro use?

Lencarta has built a solid reputation in recent years, consistently upgrading and releasing new ranges to bring photographers feature-packed offerings at mid-range prices. Taking on bigger brands such as Elinchrom and Bowens, Lencarta has held its own, especially with the success of the brand's portable Safari series, which drew popular acclaim for its solid spec at a competitive price.

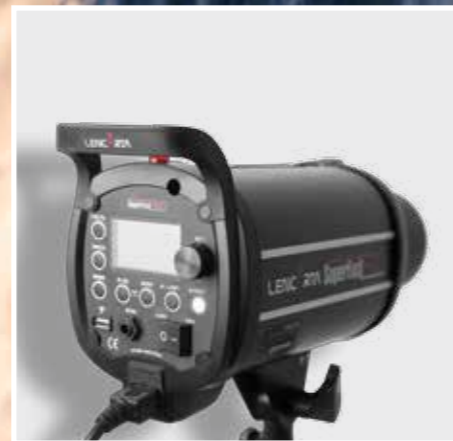
Things get more serious with the SuperFast Pro 800W kit though, as it's positioned in a more competitive market where expectations from photographers investing close to a grand are higher –

understandably. So can Lencarta match its portable lighting kit success in the higher-spec studio flash head sector?

The name of the SuperFast Pro 800W kit comes from the fact that it consists of two 400W heads. The rest of the kit consists of two stands, two umbrellas, two standard reflectors, power and sync leads along with the Lencarta WaveSync trigger. Sold separately, the SuperFast Pro 400W heads cost £499 each, though at the time of writing Lencarta was running a promotion that lowered that price tag to £389.

The lighting stands are lightweight, air cushioned for protection and have

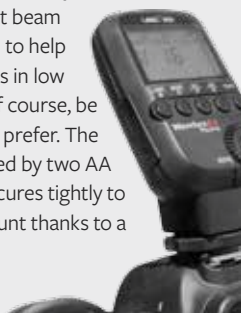
useful oversize handles that make it easier to adjust the height, from 110cm to 254cm. The build of the flash heads can be best described as robust. At 2.96kg, they are heavy, but not the heaviest on the market. One niggle I do have with the design is the size of the glass dome that protects the flash tube. It leaves little room to slide over accessories to connect with the S-fit mount. This dome is removable, but then it leaves the flash tube exposed. The casing around the power lead connector is reinforced, which is pleasing, and the button layout on the rear of the head has been well thought out and clearly labelled. ↘





## WAVESYNC TRIGGER

Lencarta's latest incarnation of the WaveSync trigger, WaveSync Mach, is an impressive item that will make a big difference to your workflow in the studio. Along with the ability to change the power of each flash head independently, you can also remotely turn on the modelling lamp, switch the Beep feature on or off, test-fire the lights and switch between groups of lights. Information is displayed on a large backlit LED display on the rear of the trigger. At the front you'll find an infrared AF assist beam that can be used to help the camera focus in low light. This can, of course, be turned off if you prefer. The trigger is powered by two AA batteries and secures tightly to the hotshoe mount thanks to a locking wheel.



## KEEPING COOL

The heads are fan cooled. In my studio, they kicked in after around ten minutes of use and were very quiet. Thanks to the S-fit mount, there's no shortage of third-party options when it comes to softboxes and modifiers. The flash tubes are rated to last for at least 50,000 exposures and the kit is backed up by a three-year warranty and a 30-day money-back policy.

The SuperFast Pros are capable of exceptionally fast flash durations, topping out at 1/35,000sec, before instantly recycling, ready to go again. This impressive feature will appeal to those keen to use flash to capture action sequences; think models splashing paint or spraying water. 400W per head is a lot of power and is a suitable for those with larger studios shooting group shots or bigger subjects such as cars.

The heads boast seven stops of power – from full to 1/128th which lowers the power output from 400W to just 3W. This means you can perfectly light a subject while shooting wide open on a large aperture lens, bringing shallow depth-of-field images into

reach. I captured the test portraits using my Sigma 50mm f/1.4 Art lens with a Canon EOS 6D and was able to perfectly exposed images shooting wide open.

Colour temperature was consistent throughout the different shooting modes. According to the specification, the temperature shifts from 5000K at full power to 4800K at minimum power. In practice, these specs stand up well; studying images at either end of the power spectrum shows very little difference. What's more, being able to monitor changes in power via a digital screen rather than old-school markings next to a knob takes the guesswork out of adjustments.

## MULTIPLE MODES

Switching between modes is easy too; you just hit the Mode button. Manual mode is self-explanatory and of course gives you full control over the power output, but while using Manual mode, you can also enable one of four additional functions, which include Timer for rear curtain sync captures, Speed for shorter flash durations, Mask that offers more options when using ↵



**IMAGES:** Above: Setting up in the studio with the SuperFast Pro kit is simple enough, with or without the WaveSync 2.4G triggers. The fans kick in after ten minutes, but they're quiet so won't disturb your shoot

## SPECIFICATIONS

- **PRICE** £859.99
- **OUTPUT** 400W (per head)
- **OUTPUT SETTING** 7 stops (full power to 1/128)
- **FAN COOLED** Yes
- **POWER** Mains
- **FITTING TYPE** Bowens S-fit
- **DIMENSIONS** 39cm (length)
- **WEIGHT** 3kg



the flash head as a slave and a standard Modelling Light function.

Moving on from Manual mode, Multi mode sends out a pulse of flashes to help you capture subjects achieving multiple movements in a single frame. The SuperFast Pro's last mode is HSS, which enables the flash to be used at shutter speeds faster than the camera's quoted flash sync speed.

The versatility continues when it comes to communication between camera and flash heads. With both a USB and 6.2mm sync port, virtually any third-party trigger can be used, including Lencarta's older generation WaveSync Commander unit. Which leads us nicely onto the newer WaveSync Commander 2.4G (see panel, previous page). Both heads have built-in 2.4G receivers, so there's nothing to plug in to the back of the flash heads. You simply slip the WaveSync trigger onto the hotshoe and off you go. Power adjustments can be made from the trigger.

The WaveSync trigger never missed a beat during my testing sessions – there were no premature flashes as I slipped the trigger on and off the mount and no blank fires.

## VERDICT

This kit offers excellent value for money. As a comparison, the Bowens Gemini 500R kit retails for £949. The Lencarta has a wider range of power adjustments (7 versus 5 stops), lighter heads (3kg v 3.4kg) and more triggering options. That said, the Bowens has a more powerful modelling lamp (250W v 150W).

Those looking to kit out a large studio, or upgrade to more powerful heads will find the SuperFast Pro 800W kit to be a savvy buy. The addition of the WaveSync Commander trigger speeds up operation, helping you fine-tune exposure in seconds. Personally, although I like the oversize handles, I'd like the stands to be heavier and sturdier, but they are functional enough. The rest of the hardware seems sufficiently robust to stand up to the rigours of pro use. The decent price tag should leave most pros with budget to invest in modifiers; on the subject of which, I tried the heads with a large after-market octobox. It worked fine, whereas other heads fell forward because of the weight. **PP**

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