

Motorized Slider

“I was recently challenged in a car spot by a shot of a badge that needed to start clean and resolve in a move across the grill, ending in an heroic beauty shot of the logo,” explains cinematographer Jeff Cronenweth, ASC. “Naturally, we didn’t want to compromise our natural light, interfere with any interactive reflections or worry about seeing our camera in the shot.

“The original Slider’s 8-foot motorized unit was the answer. Not only is it directly attachable to the vehicle in order to reduce any potential stability issues, it also afforded me the opportunity to effortlessly pan, tilt, and slide laterally at will. It was the perfect solution to this complicated shot.”

Cinematographer Rhet Bear explains that his team was prepping for a Toyota Prius commercial (<http://vid.rhetbear.com/Prius.cfm>) when he first discovered the motorized Slider. “We needed a very slow camera move lasting 10 minutes,” Bear outlines. “[The motorized Slider] was not only exactly what we needed for the shoot, it also took our commercial to a whole new visual level. Looking back, I can’t imagine doing the spot without it.”

The idea of the Slider originated in 1998, when camera operator Ron Veto was working on *Small Soldiers*. “I was on a dolly track in low mode, pushing in on 12-inch puppet figures,” Veto recalls. “Between takes, I sat there trying to figure how to make the shot better and less labor intensive.”

Veto and business partner key grip Jerry Giacalone began creating Sliders that could run at a crawl speed for time-lapse photography to action speed for exciting camera movement.

Recently, however, the two added another possibility to their Slider series – a motor. “Now the unmanned camera can move from one position to another, on the fly, in a timely fashion,” Veto says. “It makes it easier and more fun to invent shots otherwise unexplored before, like the one Jeff recently did. The 6-foot or 8-foot motorized Slider works perfectly, giving the grips hard rigging options and still having either 5-feet or 7-feet of useable camera dolly. It can handle virtually any camera, with the only limitations being the type of remote head employed. The motorized Slider can also be a fully repeatable unit, in which camera marks and camera speed are set to repeat, incorporating a smooth stop each and every time. Having a portable motion control system standing by in the truck is valuable ammunition for any type of production.”