

CAMEO ROOT® BAR SMD

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MRSP £399

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Every DJ knows the transformative power of light. It's the silent storyteller, the mood setter and often the unsung hero that elevates an event from merely memorable to truly magical. We're constantly on the lookout for that next piece of gear that not only fits our budget, our vehicle and our storage, but also unlocks new levels of visual artistry.

Like most mobile DJs, I've been on somewhat of a journey with lighting. I started out with the most I could possibly assemble in a reasonable time, and this included a starlight booth surround, a huge 3-metre coordinated backdrop, an overhead bar with a centrepiece, two additional effect lights, and a laser. I thought this was incredible. And it was. In a way.

The two things that changed course for me were, first, realising that less is indeed more. What truly matters is the effect any lighting adds to the atmosphere, rather than just lots and lots of different colours and shapes for their own sake. Second, having your lighting do exactly what you want, rather than relying solely on built-in programs, is an absolute game-changer. This leads to the fundamental question: what exactly do I want my lights to do?

First, I want them to look good in stand-by mode. A lot of that desire is driven by seeing regular "Gear Junkies" entries; some of the rigs are absolutely incredible to look at, right at the start of the evening, before the music even kicks in. Then, in order to truly shape atmosphere, an element of precise control is essential. Like during a first dance. Sweeping beams of light or a perfectly timed colour change at key points in a song can provide a drama that profoundly lifts emotion. Without fog or haze, the effect is diminished somewhat, but it can still be very effective.

And, finally, there is what I refer to as "my happy place". This is a packed dance floor with more jumping than dancing taking place, arms in the air, lots of chanting and singing. How can lighting genuinely add to an atmosphere like that?

This is where the lighting effect, commonly called "blindness", comes into its own. It's an interesting way of putting it – and accurate. You really shouldn't look directly at the sun, and these lights are the same.

Capable of intense lighting, they are generally limited to producing just one vital function – a full, bright wash for those big beats and super-intense moments. Recently, the flexibility of micro-LED lighting combined with clever design means that these powerful lights can also produce lower-intensity colour washes and also act as eye-candy at the start of the night. The latest of which is the Cameo ROOT® BAR SMD.

The Root® Bar series is a collection of three linear LED bars, and I first saw the SMD version at PLASA Leeds. I knew I wanted to have a better look at it as soon as I could. And I'm glad I did. This is a bar that will add to all three of the scenarios I've described above but also has many more uses.

The ROOT® BAR SMD is a well-engineered piece of kit. It's equipped with 720 SMD LEDs, consisting of 480 x 0.2W RGB LEDs and 240 x 0.5W white LEDs. This combination is key. Unlike traditional RGB or RGBW fixtures that might use larger, fewer LEDs, the sheer number of smaller SMD (Surface Mount Device) LEDs allows for incredibly smooth colour mixing and a very even output across its one metre length. The inclusion of dedicated white LEDs is a significant advantage, providing crisp, clean whites that RGB-only fixtures often struggle to achieve. This also means you can create pastels, warm whites for elegant settings, or cool whites for a more modern feel.

The fixture boasts a luminous flux of 5,200 lumens, which for a compact LED bar is a serious amount of light output. The beam angle is 102° and the field angle is 127°, creating a broad, wide wash of light. This wide dispersion also makes it ideal for wall washes as well as general atmospheric lighting.

The fixture comes with LED PWM (Pulse Width Modulation) frequency at 12 kHz. A high PWM frequency virtually eliminates flicker, making it perfect for video. This is vital for events where videographers are often capturing key moments. Featuring 16-bit dimmer resolution, you get smooth fades and transitions.

There are Linear, Exponential, Logarithmic, and S-curve dimmer curves, allowing you to tailor dimming response, whether you need a quick, punchy snap or a long, theatrical, imperceptible fade.

There are multiple DMX modes, giving you granular control over various parameters. The most commonly used are likely to be 4-channel (basic RGBW), 6-channel (adding master dimmer, strobe) and 8-channel (with more advanced features like chases), whilst higher channel modes like the 20-channel, 52-channel and 88-channel will provide fine-tuned pixel mapping. The extensive channel count allows for individual control over segments or even individual pixels, enabling dynamic chases, intricate animations, and unique eye-candy effects.

Beyond DMX, there are several standalone operating modes, including Sound-controlled, Autorun, Master/slave, Static, and Endless Loop.

This is fantastic for mobile DJs who might not always run a full DMX controller but still want dynamic lighting. Master/slave mode is particularly useful, allowing multiple units to synchronise their effects without complex programming.

For quick adjustments on the fly, an optional IR remote control is also supported.

One particularly clever innovation is the patented EZchase® DMX delay function. This feature allows for chase patterns and colour transitions with minimal programming effort. Instead of programming each step of a chase across multiple fixtures, EZchase® adds a subtle, controllable delay to the DMX signal as it passes through daisy-chained units, naturally creating flowing effects. This can save significant programming time, especially for intricate or extensive setups.



CAMEO ROOT® BAR SMD



Connectivity features XLR 3-pin In/Out, and Neutrik powerCON-compatible TRUE1® In/Out connections for power. The case is made of a durable aluminium and plastic housing, finished in black, designed to withstand the rigours of mobile use. It's passively cooled via convection cooling, meaning no noisy fans, making it perfect for intimate wedding settings. Its physical dimensions are 1024mm (W) x 116mm (H) x 106mm (D) and it weighs 5kg. It also comes with frost and neon tube filters, plus a glare shield, providing even more creative options right out of the box.

In terms of placement, Cameo seems to have thought of everything. A neat trick is that you have the ability to attach multiple bars together. Each fixture comes with two brackets – these will clamp lights in a row and are also used to hang from rigging. Then there are the extendable “feet”. This makes it easy to place the lights on the floor at varying angles, making the units ideal for wall wash (this is where the included shield comes into its own), or for the placing at the front of your set on the floor.

How does all this translate into your actual setups, specifically addressing my three key lighting scenarios?

1. Standby mode aesthetics & visual presence:

You can programme incredibly subtle, warm white glows that mimic architectural uplighting, or soft, static colour washes that perfectly complement the venue's decor or a client's chosen colour scheme.

2. Dramatic control for first dances & key moments:

For a first dance, you're not just looking for light, you're looking for emotion. Instead of just a static wash, you can slowly build colour gradients as the song progresses. As the chorus hits, you can transition from a soft, romantic pastel to a richer, more saturated colour, or use the pixel control to create a slow, elegant wave of light that sweeps across the floor, perfectly synced with a vocal swell or a crescendo in the music.

3. My happy place:

This is where the ROOT® BAR SMD truly lives up to its “blinder” potential. The 5,200 lumens of output from those 720 SMD LEDs translate into an intense, punchy full white wash that can flash on the beat, creating that exhilarating effect we all love. However, unlike traditional single-purpose blinders, the ROOT® BAR SMD's full RGBW colour mixing capability means you're not limited to just white. For those moments when the energy is building but not yet at its peak, you can unleash vibrant, saturated bursts of red, blue or green.

The Cameo ROOT® BAR SMD is a genuinely impressive piece of kit. It caters to the DJ who wants their rig to look immaculate in standby, who craves dramatic control for those unforgettable first dances, and who lives for that electrifying, blinder-infused energy on a packed dance floor. I'm genuinely impressed, and I can see these becoming a staple in many mobile DJ setups. ☑

