



► seem confused about many one-way streets, and give directions to make a right turn from the 59th Street Bridge onto Sutton Place – a dramatic move made difficult by the multi-story difference in altitude of the streets at that intersection. But here's a nice feature: type in an address, and "CityGuide" finds the five digit Zip, then zooms in on a neighborhood map.

The online version apes the print version, but somehow the cuteness of the printed guide is less forgivable in software. And only popular restaurants appear, so your corner Chinese take-out probably isn't there. (The Zagat folks draw a distinction between "eating" and "dining"). Rather than re-examining what a new medium can do, it's a repackaging of the existing printed data with some new and useful ways to access it. For example, it can display all popular Chinese restaurants open late within a mile of here. But it's still faster to use the book to look up individual items.

This product has an auto-centric view of a city fundamentally hostile to cars, where Midtown is often gridlocked and many residents never even learn to drive. But the maps are ignorant of subway and bus lines, even when they're the best way to get there. Today you might be uncomfortable whipping out your notebook computer on the subway, but it won't be long before they're as ubiquitous as Walkmen.

Attractive technology, but is it worth \$99 per city when the print version costs \$20? Naah. Any program that claims to be "intelligent" but doesn't know about the subway may make it in La La Land, but not in New York. – *Mark Seiden* ●

Zagat-Axxis CityGuide, \$99, Axxis: +1-215-896-6000.

► Lynch clone, with its deliberately unexplained plot developments, quixotic asides, and melodramatic revelations involving a killer mother (Angie Dickinson), cradle-robbers, brainwashing cults, and secret trapdoors that may or may not lead from the bottom of Belushi's swimming pool to a network of tunnels beneath Los Angeles.

Belushi struggles manfully to seem involved in a plot built on the principle of random contrivance. He is tortured throughout by nightmares about a hippopotamus. Delaney, as his wife, drinks too much and wonders if her son is really someone else's child. David Warner has some wonderful speeches as her long-lost father, and Dickinson travels with Loggia's hit squad in a Range Rover, paying a midnight visit to artist Nick Mancuso and pulling on rubber gloves before blinding him, setting up the obligatory next scene, in which Mancuso of course screams "My eyes! The bitch blinded me!" If only more of the plot were explained as carefully. – *Roger Ebert* ●

Toon Town: No Goggles Required



At the gates to Toon Town, Disneyland's newest addition, a census sign covered with absurd symbols revolves like a stunned slot machine. Within the town's three acres are two centers. A Roger Rabbit fountain in one center sets the tone for an elaboration on the film's premise, in which the Toons have their own concurrent universe separated from the straight world by a semi-permeable boundary. Here, a horizon constructed of roplex, plywood, and paint is a convincing rendition of the multiple-plane look of the animated film. Across town in the other center, a Mickey Mouse monument anchors the whole concept: This is where Mickey, Minnie, and the original Disney cast members live and work.

Toon Town's design does indeed evoke a cartoon-based reality, more so than the rest of the park. Disneyland's overall architectural perversity and the density of the merchandising lays over the park like smog in the Valley. The stimuli sweep you along and make you want to belong. People who work there have told me of recurring dreams in which they have the whole place to themselves. This world is convincing not because it evokes nostalgia but because this is where Mickey lives – this is where he makes his movies. The illusions of Toon Town are present tense and three dimensional. Perception and sensation are not separated by goggles and gloves. When a kid hits a tree full of acorns, they actually fall.

Toon Town is a tribute to the popular assimilation of psychedelic design, and a fine point of departure for those thinking about contemporary immersion entertainment. Here, interactivity is as accessible as a doorknob. – *Stuart Cudlitz* ●

Disneyland one-day pass: \$28.75, Anaheim, California: +1-714-999-4565.

The Ultimate Camcorder

I negotiated my \$30,000 video rig to the back seat and motioned for the Canon L1. The tight cockpit of the plane makes it tricky to get steady aerial videography without stabilization equipment. I was sure that I could handle the L1 more easily, but could it deliver professional-quality video from 2,000 feet?

Canon's standard 15X lens uses the VL mounting system, which allows interchanging with a series of lenses designed for half-inch standard CCD videocameras. A user changes lenses or adds adapters as easily as with a 35mm SLR camera. Even better, if an alternate VL lens supports auto iris and focus, the L1 will also. The 15X (8mm to 120mm) lens provides a maximum aperture of f1.4, typical of professional glass. This is not your father's camcorder.

The video professional knows Canon best for lenses, and it's optics that distinguish the Canon L1 from other compact Hi8 camcorders.

The Hi8 format records a highband signal similar to

the S-VHS format and provides astounding image quality for its size. Most pros would use Hi8 only for acquisition, later dubbing to a broadcast format, but



The Canon L1: Hi8 heaven.

producers regularly use Hi8 footage when compact or expendable equipment is required.

The L1 offers all the latest electronic gizmos. It automatically controls the iris, focus, and white balance, and Canon provides the operator with various levels of manual override for each function. The camera includes all the required accessories, including a wireless remote control that operates the zoom lens.

No self-respecting high-tech company would market a product that was not "digital," but the L1 offers features that are justifiably called "digital effects," including freeze frame, art freeze, close-up, and strobe. You can apply effects to an image as you record it and apply other effects during playback. An LCD reads-out vital signs like audio levels, tape mode, counter, and tape type – Hi8 or standard 8mm.

So I raised the featherweight L1 up to my eye and leaned toward the plane's open window. Was this easy! But wait – the wind pulled at the shot I was trying to get. The wind hadn't bothered my big rig. I backed away from the window, but every slight shift in the plane's position transferred into my video.

Even though the video captured by the remarkable L1 looks better than the first pro camera I paid \$10,000 for ten years ago, I won't be counting on it for my aerial shoots. But I look forward to using it this summer. I'm going to Disneyland! – *Chris Allain* ●

Canon L1, \$3,000 (list), +1-516-488-6700