

We Review the Elinchrom FIVE Monolight

By **Jason Vinson**
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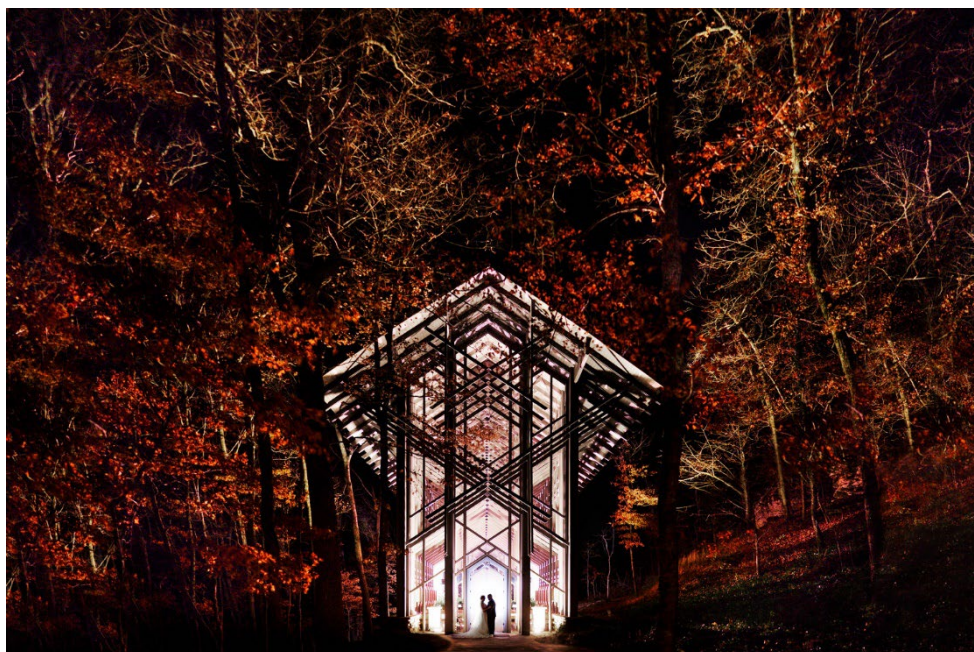
Elinchrom has long been known for their amazing lights and modifiers. But does their newest release, the Elinchrom FIVE, live up to the hype?

If you have been following along and paying attention, you may have noticed back in 2021, when Elinchrom released the Elinchrom ONE. At the end of the announcement video (think Marvel movie end-of-credits type tease), they showed a sneak peek at the Elinchrom FIVE. Well, in late 2022, the Five was made official.



Since the release of the light, I have used the FIVE on a handful of jobs, from weddings to studio work and even on-location portraits. While there are some things about this light I wish were a bit different, as a whole, the light is pretty amazing.

Sporting 522 Ws of power, a bi-color modeling light, and 450 full power flashes on a single battery, there is plenty of power and flexibility for almost any job. And at full power, you get a recycle time of a blazing 1.6 seconds. That's more than half a second faster than the Profoto B10X, and you even get slightly more power output with that faster speed.



Elinchrom FIVE inside chapel, Elinchrom ONE between couple and door.

The FIVE also has an exposed flash tube, which makes it ideal for uses with modifiers such as reflectors, softboxes, and umbrellas. This exposed flash tube is also conveniently protected by a glass dome so you do not have to worry as much about accidentally hitting and breaking it.



Another feature that I absolutely love about the FIVE (which is also on the ONE) is that the light charges with a simple USB-C cable. So, no need for proprietary cables or giant battery brick chargers. This makes traveling with the kit way more convenient, especially since I use an Android phone, meaning I can simply use one charger for all my devices.



This USB-C port not only charges the battery but can also double as continuous power to use the light in a studio environment. The best thing about this setup is that the light actually has active charging. This means the single USB-C cable charges the battery and powers the light independently, so you're not pulling power from the battery while trying to charge.

This is ideal if you use up all 450 full-power flashes, as you can simply shoot in a location where you have a power supply to let the battery charge and not have to worry about that work taking away from the charging. You can also use a USB-C battery pack to charge the battery while on location, which is very convenient when you have a long shoot.



Elinchrom FIVE as main light. Elinchrom ELB 500TTL for both rear lights.

More great features that the FIVE has that I have come to love are TTL, high-speed sync, and manual lock. So, as long as you are using the appropriate Skyport Trigger for your camera, you don't have to worry about shooting at or below your camera sync speed. You can also set the light to TTL and let the light figure out what the power it should be set to. But then, switch over to manual and have that power locked for more consistent output moving forward or to fine-tune the power to your specific needs. Letting TTL get you most of the way there can really speed things up, and then using the manual lock lets you still have the consistency most off-camera flash users like to have.



The last standout feature that is worth mentioning is the bi-color modeling light. While most modeling lights are meant to do what their name implies, this modeling light is much more functional. So, instead of just getting an idea of what the flash will look like, you can actually use the LED modeling light to take photos or videos. The bi-color functionality means that you can actually adjust the output to vary between warm and cool color temperatures, too.

This is ideal when trying to match the color of other available light sources, but it's also very useful for situations where you want to push the other available light temperatures in one direction or another. An example of this is if I take a photo of a couple with the modeling light set to the warmest temperature. Then, once I take the photo into post (or you can do a manual adjustment in the camera if you'd like) to correct this warm temperature back to neutral, all other available light temperatures will go much cooler than they really are.



As I'm sure you are aware, no product is perfect. And the FIVE does have a few things that I wish were different. For one, it sports a similarly exposed flash tube and glass dome protector as the Elinchrom ONE, but unfortunately, they have different sizes and functionalities. So, while the ONE has the ability to use the Elinchrom frosted abs color domes, these accessories don't actually fit in the FIVE.

Next up is the screen and user interface. The ONE has a new and pretty awesome color touch screen. Unfortunately, the newer and more powerful FIVE reverts back to a regular screen with knobs and buttons for control.



Elinchrome ONE on the left. Elinchrom FIVE on the right.

Lastly, I wasn't initially a fan of the large handle on the FIVE. But in use, I did find it very useful, and it felt much better in my hand than other light handles usually feel. That said, I do still wish it was possible to remove this handle when needed. While possibly making usability a little less ideal, it would make the packing footprint much more manageable when space is limited.



What I Liked

- High power with faster recycling times than the competition
- Bi-color LED modeling light
- Very good battery life
- USB-C active charging is extremely nice to have

What I Didn't Like

- Non-removable handle
- Didn't get the better screen and user interface found on the ONE
- Glass dome accessories for the ONE are not compatible with the FIVE



About Jason Vinson

Jason Vinson is a wedding and portrait photographer for Vinson Images based out of Bentonville, Arkansas. Ranked one of the Top 100 Wedding photographers in the World, he has a passion for educating and sharing his craft.

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