

Barger-Baglite GT-6 V2.0

Over the years, Ed Barger, a 25-year cinematography veteran, found himself struggling to create large, soft sources in limited space and with limited power on a number of low-budget shoots. An entrepreneurial spirit with an engineering background, Barger decided to tackle the problem head-on and created the Barger-Baglite, a flat, open-faced, multi-lamped fixture designed to work with Chimera softboxes to maximize light output while minimizing the power and space necessary to do so.



The Baglite is an octagonal fixture with a configuration of six FCM-HIR 650-watt globes, all independently switched with their own custom-designed reflectors. The Chimera tension poles fit directly into receptacles on the Baglite so there is no need for a speedring. The GT-6 (six-light) Baglite is designed to work with both medium and large Chimera quartz softboxes.

Barger recently released Version 2.0 of the GT-6, and the update features a few minor modifications that improve the fixture greatly. I recently tested the GT-6 V2.0 side by side with its predecessor.

The new fixture is slightly larger all around, but it is nearly twice as deep as the original, with air vents completely surrounding the face of the fixture, behind the globe housings and in front of them. This — in addition to nylon washers that separate touch points from the main body and reduce direct-contact heat transfer, and new aluminum “fins” attached to the lamp sockets to disperse heat — significantly refines the heat efficiency of the unit, making it run much cooler and making it much easier to handle than the original GT-6. There is a lot of light spill coming from the back through all the ventilation holes, but in most applications, I don't think this would bother the user because the punch coming out the front is so strong.

The old version is a big, hot source. With a medium Chimera attached to the original GT-6, I was reading 118°F after 30 minutes of burn time at the face of the Chimera. If I'd had a raw egg handy, I almost could have cooked breakfast on the Chimera's front diffuser. The handle in the back of the fixture is made of wood to keep it cool, but the original GT-6's handle is narrow, and in taking hold of it you're very likely to make contact with one side of the aluminum mount that attaches it to the fixture's body. I measured 189°F at these points — no fun to touch with bare skin.

In the new fixture, the heat around the handle has been greatly reduced. Nylon washers separate the aluminum handle mounts from the body to reduce the

transfer of heat, and the wood handle has been widened and its position lowered (away from the rising heat). The aluminum sides, which with a wider handle are harder to accidentally hit, were reading a mere 116°F after burning for more than 30 minutes, a full 73°F cooler than the original fixture. At the face of a medium-bank Chimera on the V2.0, I was reading 108°F. With slightly better light output, the temperature was 10° cooler than the original.

At first, I thought the three 15A Edison plugs coming out the back of the fixture were odd. Barger originally designed the fixture to run on low-budget productions, where generator power is rarely an option. Three separate, standard 15A Edison plugs for power is of considerable value, to say the least. If you don't have a generator, you can easily separate out each 15A circuit and run this fixture on standard household power. That's pretty smart. It's also easy to make a 60A Bates-to-three-15A-Edison adapter for standard stage or location use where power isn't a concern.

I really like the independent switches for each globe. Being able to decide whether I want one or six globes (or anything in between) is a fantastic feature that makes the Baglite GT-6 V2.0 extremely versatile.

One of the outstanding features of the Baglite is that any single globe completely and evenly fills the Chimera face. This was true whether I was using a medium or large Chimera. No more tweaking with spot/flood to maximize the light output; the Baglite is very clean for the optimum light output and softest quality.

The setup is quick. With the Chimera ring permanently attached to the Baglite face, it actually made expanding even a large quartz Chimera easier than struggling with a speedring.

I did miss the ability to spin the Chimera bag horizontally or vertically. With the Baglite's fixed mounting points, the user is locked into one choice (horizontal or vertical), and if you want to change, you must remove the bag and reattach. This isn't such an issue if the lamp is cool, but after it's been burning, this isn't a practical operation, even with the cooler operation of the new fixture.

At first, I was a little thrown that my photometrics for the large-bank Chimera nearly matched the medium bank, but that merely goes to show how efficient the light output is. Even though the fixture is optimized for the large Chimera, you're not losing any punch when you cut off some of that light with the medium bank, because the globes are closer to the Chimera's face. As a result, the fixture is equally efficient with either a medium or large Chimera — nearly identically so, which is very impressive. That means you get the same punch for either softbox, and you can choose the level of softness you want based on the size of the bag attached.

With a large-bank Chimera on, the footprint from back of fixture to Chimera face is 3 feet, 7 inches — not bad. After working with the Barger for a bit, I noted that the position of the Edison pigtails off the back of the fixture can often interfere with tilting, anything more than a few degrees of tilt downward. This may be intentional, as the fixture shouldn't burn in a serious downward tilt, but it does make setting the fixture a little frustrating at times, especially with a large Chimera, where extra tip down eases the setting of the tension poles in the top of the fixture. Once the fixture is set and running, however, the position of the pigtails was no longer a concern.

Other small details include integrated aluminum notches in the side of the Baglite to accept the Chimera side flaps and keep them tight to the unit, and an aluminum faceplate that protects the lamps during transport. Both of these features are the kinds of details I like to see in fixture design, because they prove the designer is seriously considering the end user.

The Baglite is an extremely efficient fixture that is well designed for its intended purpose, but it appears to have few usage possibilities without the Chimeras. Unlike a Fresnel, however, the Baglite isn't a fixture you'd use for too many other applications. It packs quite a punch and takes up very little room on the truck; you can easily fit three of these units in the space where a Baby 5K would normally go.

by Jay Holben

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Movietube: Better Lenses for DV

The German company Kinomatik introduced its Movietube product to the U.S. market at the 2006 National Association of Broadcasters show in Las Vegas. This modular lens-adapter system docks with compatible prosumer DV, HDV and HD fixed-lens cameras and provides a mount for 35mm cine lenses. I recently had the opportunity to test a Movietube with a Panasonic AG-DVX100 and a Zeiss 35mm T1.3 prime lens.

