**Startup Failure Post-Mortems 2017 First Update (2/10/17)**

### Lily Robotics

~~Title: [The Adventure Comes to an End](https://www.lily.camera/adventure-comes-end/)~~ **~~(~~NOT WORKING)**

Title\*: The autonomous Lily drone is dead and buyers are being offered refunds  
Title\* Link: <https://www.theverge.com/2017/1/12/14248988/lily-drone-tracking-dead-refunds>

Product: [Lily Robotics](https://www.cbinsights.com/company/lily)  
Product Link: <https://www.cbinsights.com/company/lily>

In the past year, the Lily family has had many ups and downs. We have been delighted by the steady advancements in the quality of our product and have received great feedback from our Beta program. At the same time, we have been racing against a clock of ever-diminishing funds. Over the past few months, we have tried to secure financing in order to unlock our manufacturing line and ship our first units – but have been unable to do this. As a result, we are deeply saddened to say that we are planning to wind down the company and offer refunds to customers …

# Lily Robotics

CONSUMER PRODUCTS & SERVICES | Consumer Electronics  
[lily.camera](https://lily.camera/)

## Stage

Dead | Dead

## Total Raised

$15M

## About Lily Robotics

Lily, founded in 2013, is a technology company that makes flying cameras. The company's flagship product, the Lily Camera, is the first autonomous, throw-and-shoot imaging device in the world. It is a camera on a small quadcopter that autonomously follows owners and shoots pictures and videos.The company had also raised $34 million for pre-orders in January 2016 on its website and not via Kickstarter or Indiegogo.

## Lily Robotics Headquarter Location

216 Park Lane

Atherton, California, 94027,

United States

# **The autonomous Lily drone is dead and buyers are being offered refunds**

**By James Vincent Jan 12, 2017, 4:29am EST**Title\* Link: <https://www.theverge.com/2017/1/12/14248988/lily-drone-tracking-dead-refunds>



Photo by Amelia Holowaty Krales / The Verge

Another ambitious crowd-funded drone has died — this time, the autonomous Lily camera drone. After collecting more than $34 million in pre-orders from 60,000 customers, the company behind Lily has closed after failing to secure financing for full-scale production.

In a blog post titled “[The Adventure Comes to an End](https://www.lily.camera/adventure-comes-end/),” Lily founders Antoine Balaresque and Henry Bradlow said they would be offering refunds to all customers, and that they were “sorry and disappointed” about the company’s demise.

“We have been racing against a clock of ever-diminishing funds,” write the pair. “Over the past few months, we have tried to secure financing in order to unlock our manufacturing line and ship our first units — but have been unable to do this. As a result, we are deeply saddened to say that we are planning to wind down the company and offer refunds to customers.”

Customers should receive refunds over the next 60 days, though if the card used to preorder the drone is now expired, they’ll need to fill out a [form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeR7wBVy3-XqjgwzWmjVTqKaRBtm1gAQ0SLVGZyrQA0GOJEoQ/viewform).

The news will be a blow to backers enthused by the Lily’s promise. Early promo footage of the drone offered a persuasive case of how smart sensing technology could turn quadcopters into [powerful photography devices](http://www.theverge.com/2015/5/12/8586105/lily-drone-throw-flying-camera-autonomous). Activating the drone was as simple as throwing it into the air, and the Lily could automatically follow users with a tracking puck, shooting pictures and video along the way. The drone was supposed to be waterproof and offer battery life of up to 20 minutes, with a pre-order price of $499.

But as we’ve seen in the past with [failed drone projects like the Zano](http://www.theverge.com/2015/11/19/9759834/zano-drone-bankrupt-liquidation-kickstarter) (Europe’s biggest Kickstarter failure), the step from prototypes to full-scale manufacturing is a difficult one. And in an industry where margins are tight and even well-established firms like Parrot are [downsizing](http://www.theverge.com/2017/1/9/14219400/parrot-bebop-drone-maker-layoffs-job-cuts), the Lily’s failure is a disappointment rather than a surprise.

Lily Robotics

**Lily** was a [California](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California)-based [drone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Micro_air_vehicle) brand, currently owned by Mota Group, Inc., headquartered in San Jose, California.

History

Lily Robotics was founded in 2013 in [Berkeley, California](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berkeley,_California) by [UC Berkeley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UC_Berkeley) alums Antoine Balaresque and Henry Bradlow, with the goal of designing and manufacturing a [quadcopter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quadcopter) camera drone. Both founders worked together at the UC Berkeley Robotics Laboratory.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lily_Robotics#cite_note-forbes2015-1)

The idea for Lily's first product, the Lily Camera, came in Summer 2013 after Balaresque returned from a family trip to Yosemite and noticed that his mother was missing from all of the photos because she was behind the camera.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lily_Robotics#cite_note-forbes2015-1)

The founders secured a seed round[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lily_Robotics#cite_note-2) in Spring 2014 led by Shana Fisher and SV Angel, and in 2015 the company expanded to employ approximately 50 individuals.[*[citation needed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)*]

In May 2015, the company announced the Lily Camera, an autonomous flying camera that combined [GPS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GPS) and computer vision technology to record stills and video of users autonomously via a wearable tracking device.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lily_Robotics#cite_note-forbes2015-1) The company received approximately 60 thousand pre-orders for the device,[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lily_Robotics#cite_note-3) collecting over $34 million in pre-sale revenue.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lily_Robotics#cite_note-4)[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lily_Robotics#cite_note-5) *[International Business Times](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Business_Times)* compared the new startup to the [Zano](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zano_(drone)), a similar camera-drone project which was still in development at the time, but later failed and closed down.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lily_Robotics#cite_note-6)[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lily_Robotics#cite_note-7)

In December 2015, Lily reportedly closed[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lily_Robotics#cite_note-8) a Series A funding round of $14m, led by [Spark Capital](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spark_Capital).[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lily_Robotics#cite_note-9) Other notable Lily investors were the Stanford [StartX](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/StartX) fund, the DJ [Steve Aoki](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steve_Aoki) and the former San Francisco 49ers quarterback [Joe Montana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joe_Montana).[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lily_Robotics#cite_note-10) Additionally, the founders announced that the original February 2016 release date for pre-order customers would be delayed until Summer 2016.[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lily_Robotics#cite_note-11)[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lily_Robotics#cite_note-12)[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lily_Robotics#cite_note-13)

Closure, lawsuit, bankruptcy, and asset-acquisition

On 12 January 2017, around 4AM UTC, Lily sent an email to all their customers notifying them that the camera could not be produced and they would receive a refund. The company closed owing $34 million.[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lily_Robotics#cite_note-14)

On the same day, the [District Attorney of San Francisco](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Francisco_District_Attorney%27s_Office) filed a lawsuit against Lily alleging that the startup intentionally deceived customers. According to the lawsuit, Lily faked demonstration videos using products from other manufacturers.[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lily_Robotics#cite_note-15)[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lily_Robotics#cite_note-16) In late January 2017 the San Francisco police, seeking evidence for criminal charges related to the company's failure, conducted a raid of the Lily Robotics offices.[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lily_Robotics#cite_note-SFBusTimesRaid-17)

On February 27, 2017, Lily Robotics filed a voluntary petition for relief under chapter 11 of the United States Bankruptcy Code in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware. The company also issued a notice to customers stating: "We will try to refund all of our customers' pre-order payments during the bankruptcy. However, we need Bankruptcy Court approval of a refund process to make those payments. To begin the process, the Company filed a motion on March 13, 2017 asking the Bankruptcy Court to approve the refund process."[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lily_Robotics#cite_note-18)

On May 30, 2017, Mota Group Inc acquired assets of Lily and its brand. The company, already managing other brands and drone lines, introduced Lily Next-Gen™ with superior 2017 technology based on the original Lily approach of simplicity and market.

The Lily Camera

Lily's original flagship product, the Lily Camera, was a [quadcopter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quadcopter) drone designed to be used as a self-propelled camera. The device has a waterproof rating of IP67. It is built out of black [polycarbonate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polycarbonate) and brushed [aluminum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aluminum), and weighs approximately 2.8 pounds (1.3 kg). The Lily Camera contains 7 types of sensors: an [accelerometer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accelerometer), a three-axis [gyroscope](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gyroscope), a [magnetometer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magnetometer), a [Barometer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barometer), GPS, a front-facing camera, and a bottom-facing camera.[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lily_Robotics#cite_note-19) The camera captures video with 1080p resolution at 60 frames per second, and 720p at 120 frames per second.[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lily_Robotics#cite_note-20)

Like the Lily Camera, the wearable tracker has a waterproof rating of IP67. The tracker contains 5 sensors: an accelerometer, a barometer, GPS, a [microphone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microphone), and a small [vibration motor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vibrator_(mechanical)).[*[citation needed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)*]

Lily Next-Gen™ included the same type of form factor but with 4K camera, a standalone remote and up to 36 minutes of flying time with combined battery.

See also

* [Zano (drone)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zano_(drone)) - a similar project to create a quadcopter drone with a camera, which failed under similar circumstances

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