

SOFA

entertainment@home magazine

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Scoring Tips for DVD Players

Use these tips to as a guide when filling out the buying scorecards in Sofa. These let you when assess the merits of the products you are contemplating buying and will help you shortlist a range of suitable products, thus making investing in home entertainment equipment a whole lot more enjoyable and rewarding.

Brand

This is the name of what's usually the full range of equipment from the relevant manufacturer. It's often trademarked.

Model

This is the number or word that references the relevant product within a range.

Features

The function or performance parameter under which the product under scrutiny is being judged.

Warranty

The extent that the manufacturer, distributor or retailer (or, some, or all parties) guarantee a product from failure in operation under normal conditions.

Cosmetic Design

How the products look and how they will integrate with your system and into your home environment.

Single/multi-play design

Simple enough - is it a single disc machine or can hold multiple discs?

Region compatibility

Is it Region 4 only or can it play discs from other regions?

Anamorphic enhancement

It really should be able to generate widescreen images.

On screen menu system

How easy is driving the set-up system from the television display?

User convenience features

Rate the zoom control, angle view facility and anything else that arises.

Play functions

The way the machine starts, stops, pauses and searches.

Dolby Digital (AC3)

It must have the facility – is the decoder on board?

DTS Digital Surround

Can the player handle discs with this format.

Dolby Pro Logic

Should be standard – but check to be on the safe side!

Lucasfilm THX

A high end option and one that could become important.

Display operation

Can you see what your doing with the remote control on the readout?

Component video outputs

The best picture transfer option – go for it.

S-Video outputs

A viable connection option where component is unavailable.

SCART facility

If you have a European television you'll want it.

MPEG multi-channel

It can be a 5.1 or 7.1 channel option and is welcome.

Optical digital facilities

Takes all the worry out of connecting up.

CD-R compatibility

I always appreciate the capacity to play my compilations.

DVD-Audio

A high end option but one which could quickly become very important.

Image quality

Simply – do you like what you see?

5.1 surround quality

Does the surround sound good to your ears?

Music sound quality

How do music discs sound when you turn the television off.

Pseudo surround system

A lot of players have this facility – is it worth it?

Remote Control Operation

Is one supplied? And how easy is it to use both in daylight and in limited light conditions?

Dimensions

Do the measurements match existing components and will they fit cupboards, shelving and other storage options?

Weight

Can the player be stacked safely with other components?

Total Points Awarded

The tally of all scores awarded which gives you a numerical value of the relevant product's worth.

Comments

Where you place notes of your personal experiences when auditioning the relevant products.

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