

Arcam plays a digital trump



At this price you expect some really special pictures and sound: well, the DV29 delivers in both arenas, with blindingly good images as well as cracking multichannel audio

Arcam FMJ DV29 £1600

DVD PLAYER

↑ FOR

Incredible detail; stunning sense of three-dimensionality; great playback of CDs and multichannel music discs

↓ AGAINST

The remote is a pain in the posterior

→ VERDICT

Awe-inspiring visuals and impressive music delivery make Arcam's DV29 a DVD player not to be missed



audio data from a compatible source (see the panel below for more on this). Progressive-scan images are achieved through the unit's Zoran Vaddis 5

“High-grade video DACs provide the video in progressive-scan or interlaced form”

processor. Pictures are displayed in both 480p and 576p resolution but, unusually, they can be sent in their native interlaced forms if required.

High-quality 12-bit/216MHz Analog Devices video DACs allow for the simultaneous output of interlaced component, S-Video and composite video signals.

There are some impressive audio features. The DV29 is equipped with an integrated Dolby Digital, Dolby Pro-Logic II and DTS decoder. It's DVD-Audio-compatible, as well, and uses top-spec 24-bit/192kHz Wolfson DACs for all six audio channels. It even has the luxury of separate PAL and NTSC audio delays to provide perfect lip sync with digital displays.

One gripe is that although the remote is alleged to be 'new and

improved', we're not convinced by the latter claim. It's frustrating to get a response from – we wanted to hurl it out of the window in frustration.

But once you see the picture quality on offer, you'll be too busy picking your jaw up off the ground to give two hoots about the remote. The DV29 is capable of producing some of the best pictures we've ever seen from a DVD player at this price.

Send a signal from the HDMI output and prepare to be mesmerised by the stunning images. The depth of field and realism that the Arcam portrays keep you riveted to your seat.

The final battle scenes in *Van Helsing* are rendered with magnificent accuracy and detail, despite the high speed of the action.

“The final battle scenes in *Van Helsing* are rendered with magnificent detail... you have ringside seats”

It's as if you have ringside seats at the best fight in town.

If the video excellence isn't enough, even two-channel and multichannel

music playback are impressive. Spin Eminem's *Stain* and the rendition is superb by DVD player standards. A livelier DVD-Audio track such as Linkin Park's *Pts of Athrity* allows the DV29 to express a more barnstorming side to its nature, with a punchy, energetic and effervescent delivery.

Arcam has built an outstanding DVD player here. The DV29 is a visual and sonic diva that'll be tough to beat.

TECH SPECS

FORMATS SUPPORTED DVD-V/A
VIDEO DAC 12-bit/216MHz
AUDIO DAC 24-bit/192kHz
VIDEO OUTPUTS HDMI, RGB Scart, component, composite
AUDIO OUTPUTS Stereo, six-channel
DIGITAL OUTPUTS Coaxial, optical
DIMENSIONS (HWD) 9 x 43 x 34cm

Denon DVD-A11
£1600 ★★★★★ February 2004
A formidable universal player that provides an excellent picture

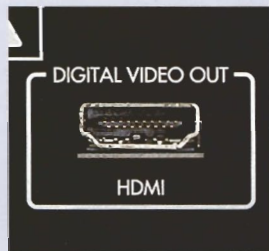
Arcam DV79
£1000 ★★★★★ November 2004
A fine alternative to the more expensive DV29, but not as good

ALSO CONSIDER

WHAT HDMI IS AND WHY YOU'LL LOVE IT

Those initials stand for High-Definition Multimedia Interface: that's a bit of a mouthful, but get used to seeing the acronym on just about every piece of home cinema electronics in the next couple of years. Think of HDMI as the Scart of this millennium, as it can carry both pictures and sound. It's not for today's standards only, either. This interface has the bandwidth to carry a high-definition video

signal plus eight uncompressed channels of digital audio. The idea is that you have one lead going from your DVD player to the display and another from the player to your amplifier. That's it: two leads and all the electronics of your system are wired. Take a look at the cable thicket behind your TV and you'll see what a step forward this is. Component, Scart, S-Video and analogue interconnects, your days are numbered...



Instead of a tangle of separate video and audio leads, HDMI needs just one connection

