



## Does JVC's fine first entry into the DVD Recorder market mark the death of VHS? JVC DR-M1

N ADMITTING DEFEAT IN THE BATTLE TO keep its invention, the video cassette, alive, JVC has done the DVD Recorder market a big favour. Where we do have a few gripes with the UK's first combined -RW and RAM recorder is its connections, which include a RGB enabled Scart and separate S-Video and stereo audio outputs. However, the second Scart at the back of the unit, which connects set-top boxes, cannot handle RGB sources – it will only accept composite or S-Video sources. An i.Link terminal on front panel allows digital dubbing from camcorders.

Its 'living memory playback' feature – watching a

recording while it's still being made – is unique to RAM compatible machines or those with hard drives (and some DVD-RW machines). Recordings can be made onto almost universally accepted DVD-R discs.

DVD-RW disks can be formatted in video-mode or VR-mode. The latter allows free editing of contents but the former is more widely compatible. That's made up for by satellite control (only with Sky digiboxes) and the great 'free rate' (FR) recording mode, which calculates time left on the disc in various recording modes. This means you can chop and change between bitrates on one (recordable or rewritable) disc. Picture quality in XP and SP mode recordings is clear, while the DR-MI's progressive scan playback works with recordings and PAL software.

With a such a low street price, JVC's DR-M1 is only a hard drive and a RGB input away from perfection.





# **E300** Great features and a familiar VCR look and make this perfect for the newly converted **Panasonic DMR-E55**

T MAY BE AT THE LOW END OF PANASONIC'S DIGA range, but what the DMR-E55 lacks (hard drive, DV input) it makes up for in great picture, sound and a myriad of recording functions.

That's largely down to its compatibility with DVD-RAM and DVD-R formats – but be aware that DVD-RW discs cannot be used for recording. Its four recording modes, XP, SP, LP and EP, range from one to eight hrs of recording time. Picture quality on XP mode is outstanding – as it is with pre-recorded DVDs – while the more flexible SP mode is excellent. Other modes are still better quality than VCR recordings.

Timer recordings can be made manually or with

VideoPlus, and there is also a PDC facility. The DVD-RAM format offers extensive editing and is perfect for daily recording and deleting. It also enables 'chasing playback', allowing you to watch the start of a recording while it continues to record, as well as 'time slip', which means the last 30 secs of live TV can be replayed – a boon for sports fans.

Playback functions include Direct Navigator, which displays full-motion thumbnails of all recordings on a disc, while Playback NR reduces picture noise and Virtual Surround Sound mode does what it says – with only two speakers.

Expansive connectivity comprises component

video output for PAL and NSTC progressive scan, RGB Scart input and output, S-video support, an optical digital audio out and front panel AV inputs for connecting a camcorder. Missing features, like a memory card slot, i.Link digital video connection and hard drive can be found on other Panasonic models.



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What's good Versatility of DVD-RAM recording Attractive design

What's bad

DVD-RW recordings would have been useful No DV input

HI-FI & HOME CIN

#### **DVD Recorders**

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58 ESSENTIAL HI-FI & HOME CINEMA

# sponsored by **MBXEI**

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	10 990			3.9 <u></u>			
		home cinema BEST BUY					
MAKE	MUSTEK	PANASONIC DMR-E55	PANASONIC	PHILIPS	PHILIPS	PHILIPS DVD R615	SONY
MODEL	R100B	DIMIK-E55	DMR-E65	DVD R80	DVD R610	DAD KOT2	RDR-GX300
SPECIFICATIONS							
Price Recording formats	£200 DVD+R, DVD+RW	£300 DVD-RAM, DVD-R	£400 DVD-RAM, DVD-R	£500 DVD+R, DVD+RW	£200 DVD+R, DVD+RW	£230 DVD+R, DVD+RW	£400 DVD+R, +RW, -R, -RW
RGB recording DVD-Audio playback	NO NO	YES YES (2-channel)	YES YES (2-channel)	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO
Video CD/Super Video CD	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/NO	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES
CD-R/CD-RW playback	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES
MP3/JPEG playback	YES/YES	YES/NO	YES/YES	NO/NO	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/NO
Tel	0870 0132017	08705 357 357	08705 357 357	0870 9009070	0870 9009070	0870 9009070	08705 111999
Web	www.mustek.de	www.panasonic.co.uk	www.panasonic.co.uk	www.philips.co.uk	www.philips.co.uk	www.philips.co.uk	www.sony.co.uk
FEATURES							
VideoPlus/PDC	NO/NO	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES
GuidePlus	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
Variable bit-rate recording	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES
Non-linear editing	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES
Playlist editing	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES
Timer	8-event	16 event/one month	16 event/one month	15-event/one month	6-event/one month	6-event/one month	YES
No of recording modes	5	5	5	7	7	8	6
Trick-play functions	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES
Zoom	YES YES	NO YES	NO YES	YES	YES YES	YES YES	NO YES
Progressive scan playback	YES	YES	YES		YES	YES	YES
	We say: Instead of a 'time remaining'	We say: This recorder is ideal for time-shifting TV	We say: This recorder is ideal for time-shifting TV	We say: The first recorder to include	We say: Not yet rated	We say: Similar to the entry-;level DVD R610	We say: Sony's entry- level machine is a basic
	counter, the machine	shows but not for recording	shows as well as recording	GuidePlus, which makes		with the addition of an	model for recording TV
	gives a useless readout	camcorder footage and	camcorder footage and	timer recordings simple.		8hr recording mode	shows with chasing
CONNECTIONS	of of the percentage of space left	digital still images	digital still images	Editing is limited			playback
RGB Scart in/out	NO/YES	YES	YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES
Component video out	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
DVI or HDMI out	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
S-video in/out	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	NO/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES
Composite video in/out	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES
Stereo audio out	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Optical digital audio out	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Electrical digital audio out	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES
i.Link in/out	NO/NO	NO/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO	NO	YES/NO	NO
Photo card slot	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
	We say: Plenty of outputs	We say: Has everything	We say: Basically, this is	We say: No problems	We say: Not yet rated	We say: Not yet rated	We say: Not yet rated
	but recording from	you might need for	a DMR-E55 with the addition of a DV (i.Link)	with connections. There			
	digital TV via S-video suffers from a flawed	recording analogue or digital TV but won't	input plus PC card and SD	is even iLink to take DV camcorder footage			
	MPEG converter	accept DV footage	card slots				
VERDICT							
Ease of Use	**	****	***	****			
Features	***	****	****	****			
Looks	***	****	****	****			
Picture	***	****	****	****			
Sound Value	***	****	****	****			
value	***	****	****	****			
	We say: Despite the	We say: This elegant deck	We say: Like the cheaper	We say: Colourful and	We say: Not yet rated	We say: Not yet rated	We say: Not yet rated
	long specs, this deck is	may not be the cheapest	DMR-E55 this elegant	detail-laden pictures on	The say. Not yet lated	the say. Not yet lated	We say. Not yet lated
	very average when it	DVD recorder out there,	deck is not the most	recordings made in			
	comes to basics like picture and sound. It	but but it's one of the best, thanks to the	affordable but its recording and playback performance	optimum modes makes this a special deck.			
	may be multiregional	combination of DVD-RAM	is so damn good it makes	Others can compete			
	and have lots of inputs,	flexibility and DVD-R	it impossible to seriously	there, but not over the			
	but the lack of VideoPlus or similar	compatibility. The RGB input on the recorder is	fault (though DV camcorder enthusiasts should note	inclusion by Philips of GuidePlus, a seriously			
	programme guide and	vital for anyone with	that there is no DV output	special addition. Editing			
	the fact that the	digital TV (Freeview, Sky	for dubbing edited footage	may be limited and the			
	progressive scan func-	or cable). A great	back to a camcorder).	menu navigation may be			
	tion copes only with NTSC marks this out as	all-purpose recorder for day-to-day use, and	Overall, a great machine if you can justify the price.	a little slow but it's so feature-packed we don't			
	a dubious foreign import	reasonably priced.	y and y as a group and prive.	have any major gripes.			
	clearly not aimed at UK consumers.						
	on consumers.						
OVERALL	***	*****	****	****			

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### **DVD Recorders**

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		S AL			Prophistory	inci
MAKE MODEL	SONY RDR-GXD500	SONY RDR-GX700	THOMSON DTH 8005	TOSHIBA DR-1	YAMADA DVR-8000	HITACHI DV-RX7000
	KDR-GADJOO	NDN-WATOU				DURATOOO
SPECIFICATIONS						
Price	£500	£500	£400	£400	£200	£279
Recording formats	DVD+R/+RW, DVD-R/-RW	DVD+R/+RW, DVD-R/RW	DVD+R, DVD+RW	DVD-R/-RW, DVD-RAM	DVD+R, DVD+RW	DVD-RAM. DVD-R, DVD-RW
RGB recording	YES	YES	YES	NO		YES
DVD-Audio playback	NO	NO NEO N/EO	NO NO (NO	NO NEC (NO	NO	NO
Video CD/Super Video CD CD-R/CD-RW playback	YES/YES YES/YES	YES/YES YES/YES	NO/NO YES/YES	YES/NO YES/YES	YES/YES YES/YES	YES/YES YES/YES
MP3/JPEG playback	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/YES	123/123	YES/NO	YES/YES
Tel	08705 111999	08705 111999	01732 520920	0870 4424424	0870 9063304	01628 643000
Web	www.sony.co.uk	www.sony.co.uk	www.thomson-europe.com	www.toshiba.co.uk	www.umax.co.uk	www.hitachidigital.com
						media.com
FEATURES						
VideoPlus/PDC	NO/YES	YES/YES	NO/YES	YES/	NO/NO	YES
GuidePlus	SOMETHING SIMILAR	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Variable bit-rate recording	YES	YES	NO NO	YES	NO	NO
Non-linear editing Playlist editing	YES YES	YES YES	NO	YES YES	NO YES	YES YES
Timer	YES	YES	16-event	TEO	YES	YES
No of recording modes	6	6	6	3	4	4
Trick-play functions	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Zoom	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO
Progressive scan playback	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
	We say: The only UK DVD recorder with a built-in Freeview digital terrestrial TV	We say: Similar to the GXD500 but with no Freeview tuner - has DV	We say: The high price tag does not include the picture- enhancing progressive scan	We say: Use of DVD-RAM opens-up editing possibilities, but watch	We say: Navigation display is long-winded and of all the recording modes, only HQ is of	We say: Not yet reviewed
CONNECTIONS	tuner	camcorder inputs instead	function	cross-compatibility with other DVD players	any notable quality	
RGB Scart in/out	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/	YES/	YES
Component video out	YES	YES	123/123	YES	YES	NO
DVI or HDMI out	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
S-video in/out	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES
Composite video in/out	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES
Stereo audio out	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Optical digital audio out	YES	YES YES	YES YES	YES	YES YES	YES YES
Electrical digital audio out i.Link in/out	YES NO/NO	YES/NO	NO/NO	YES/NO	NO	YES/NO
Photo card slot	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
	We say: Sports a built-in Freeview digital terrestrial TV	We say: A pity the i.Link is an input only as you can't output	We say: Included on Thomson's earlier media	We say: Neither of the two Scart inputs will accept an	We say: Lacks a DV input but generally well-endowed	We say: Not yet reviewed
	tuner	edited DV footage to a	recorders, USB memory card		with connections	
		camcorder	readers for MP3s or digital			
			pictures have been left out from this model			
VERDICT						
Ease of Use Features			*** ****	**** ****	** ****	
Looks			***	***	***	
Picture			***	****	***	
Sound			***	***	***	
Value			**	****	****	
	We say: Not yet reviewed	We say: Not yet reviewed	We say: With a very muted playback of commercial	We say: With hard disk recorders DVD still relatively	We say: It looks chunky and the remote is clunky, but it	We say: Not yet reviewed
			DVDs, this is an average deck,	expensive, this deck makes a	boasts excellent connectivity	
			although, even coupled with	good substitute. Thanks to	if not editing options, being	
			its underwhelming audio, it would serve a basic surround	DVD-RAM compatibility, its editing features are many	DVD+RW compatible. The one- hour HQ recording mode is	
			sound system adequately.	and extras like 'pause live TV	great, so this deck is for people	
			Lack of digibox control and	are possible. DVD playback	who need to archive and is not	
			memory card or DV-input for camcorders ensures a	is good and much better than most entry level decks	the best for daily use	
			conclusion that this is a no-	than most entry level decks		
			frills unit aimed squarely at			
			the gadget-unconscious			
OVERALL						
OVERALL			***	****	***	

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60 ESSENTIAL HI-FI & HOME CINEMA

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