

DLP PROJECTOR • FREE

# WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION

DLP PROJECTOR  
THEMEScene  
HD73  
★★★★★  
£ 1395

**FOR**  
Crisp and clean picture; better with movement than most; easy to set up; well laid out remote

**AGAINST**  
Detail is good, rather than great

**VERDICT**  
The HD73 is a fine projector, though the class-leaders edge ahead for picture quality

Easy to set-up and use, a tidy remote, and decent picture add up to quality

## Polish

IT'S SOME MEASUREMENTS that have become the benchmark for a projector. The ThemesScene (formerly known as Optoma) HD73 can't 'only' manage four stars.

That doesn't mean you should write this projector off: there's much to admire here. Let's start at the basic specs. It's equipped with a

**"This projector has no trouble with rich colours and brightly lit whites"**

DarkChip 3 DMD – resolution of 1280 x 768 – and a five-speed, six-segment colour wheel. The technology is competitive, but it's picture quality that really counts. Connect to either the DVI or HDMI digital inputs, and you'll see an impressively crisp image.

There's little picture noise, even in some of the low-lit club scenes in *Dreamgirls* – some rivals lose a fair degree of fine detail in the shadows, but not the ThemesScene. And when things turn brighter, as in

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Unlike some rivals, motion is handled well: true, there's still an element of blurring with rapid movement, but it's better contained than most, and unless you're particularly sensitive to such problems (as we try to be), chances are you won't even notice it.

So far so good, but judged against the likes of Panasonic's PT-AX100E or InFocus's IN76, there's a marginal loss of definition and a smidgen less contrast. As a result, pictures have slightly less visual punch than

on this projector's star rating.

**Look out for any deal on this**  
Still, there's much to admire here. The HD73 is well made, relatively quiet and very easy to set up. We also like the remote control: it's got a sensible button layout, is nicely made, and simple to use.

All these things – plus that good picture – make the HD73 a projector you certainly shouldn't ignore, particularly if you can find it on sale with any kind of discount.



**ALSO CONSIDER ?**  
**PANASONIC PT-AX100E**  
★★★★★  
£1300  
March 2007  
This LCD design stands up against the best that DLP can offer at the price... and wins

**INFOCUS IN76**  
★★★★★  
£1400  
March 2007  
This remains a great projector with an impressive array of talents; easy to set up, too

USB FREEVIEW  
TUNER  
AUGUST  
DVB-T201  
★★★★★  
£ 25

**FOR**  
Excellent with a strong signal; easy to use and an intuitive recorder

**AGAINST**  
Needs more signal than the antenna can supply, so only really suitable for home use

**VERDICT**  
Works well, but only in areas with a strong signal

This unit is supplied with its own aerial, but it works better with stronger signals

## Cheap PC Freeview?

**IF YOU FANCY** adding TV tuning and recording to your home computer, this inexpensive device might appeal. It combines Freeview and digital radio tuners in a small USB 2.0 'stick', coming complete with remote control and antenna, and a software package including the

**"It works well attached to a good rooftop aerial via a supplied adapter"**

BlazeVideo HDTV Player, which will record and play programmes using either an electronic programme guide or a manual timer. And yes, it's compatible with future DVB HD broadcasts.

It's simple to set up, – though it's PC-only and you need to be running Windows 2000 or XP – and once installed, delivers very good pictures and sound, more than good enough to be run full-screen on a normal computer monitor, and pretty respectable even

when run out onto a plasma or LCD panel, depending on the video capabilities of your computer.

There is one significant caution: there's a small antenna provided, but we found it impossible to get the unit to tune using this, in three locations in three different TV regions. It works well connected to a good-quality rooftop aerial via the supplied adapter, but that's it. With a strong signal, this unit is something of a steal.



## JVC noise-cancellers fold under pressure of rivals

NOISE-CANCELLING  
HEADPHONES  
JVC  
HA-NC80  
★★★★★  
£ 40

**VERDICT**  
Not awful, but £20 more will buy you Shure's vastly superior E2C isolating in-ears, and £40 extra lands Sennheiser's superb PXC-150s

**WE'RE STARTING TO** see a lot more choice in noise-cancelling headphones (designed to mask music-spoiling environmental sounds) but we've yet to hear a convincing budget pair.

These JVCs do an okay isolation job, but with a lacklustre, oddly nasal-sounding delivery – which even manages to dampen the drive of Motorhead's *Ace of Spades* – you might not want to hear more music.

The HC-NC 80s have some neat, travel-friendly features – including fold-flat earcups – but a little extra money buys much more in-flight enjoyment.

A flight-friendly 'wide' mode is among the JVCs' neat features

