

VCRs

NEED TO KNOW

With so many new ways to record TV programmes – from DVD recorders to personal video recorders – it's surprising that the humble VCR is still with us. But although manufacturers are drastically cutting their ranges and retailers such as Dixons are not stocking them, we still managed to find seven new VCRs for our latest test.

RECORDING FROM DIGITAL TV

Some VCRs include features which make recording digital TV easier. For example, they may include Scart link recording, which allows you to program recordings via your set-top box. Other VCRs let you link your set-top box to your TV via the VCR (Scart loop through), which is handy if your set-top box doesn't have an additional Scart output to link directly to the TV. See our table below for VCRs with these features.



BEST BUYS

None of our seven newly-tested models is as good as our two previous Best Buys, which, thankfully, are still available.

The previously-tested **Panasonic (1)** is easy to use, has good picture quality in both standard and long play modes and has excellent sound. It's available from Richer Sounds for £80.

As well as playing regular VHS recordings, the **Panasonic (2)** can use S-VHS tapes, which are more expensive but produce better pictures. Our viewing panel gave it a top rating for picture quality and rated it good for sound, too. It's also easy to use. It's no longer available on the high street but you'll find it online for around £150.

USING THE TABLE

We've tested the newest VCRs from leading makers and brought forward previous Best Buys.

Specification

Price For Best Buys we give the cheapest widely available high-street price as we went to press. Prices for other models are a guide to what you should expect to pay. The prices for models available only online are in *italics*.

Features

AV/Scart sockets The number of connectors for linking to other equipment. **Video Plus** Programs the VCR using codes shown in TV listings magazines. **Scart loop through** Lets you link your set-top box to your TV via the VCR. **Scart link recording** Lets you program your VCR via compatible

WHICH? EXTRA

The table below shows all newly-tested VCRs, plus Best Buys from previous tests. Twelve other models from previous tests can still be found in the shops or online; go to www.which.co.uk/vcrs to see their details. Last report June 2005

set-top boxes, using an on-screen menu guide.

Performance

Picture Quality during standard play (SP) and long play (LP).

Sound Quality during standard play (SP). **Ease of use** Setting up, programming and playing back video recordings.

KEY

★ ☆ ○ ● ●
Best —————> Worst
■ Best Buy

SCORE

Ignores price and is based on:
Picture quality 40%
Sound quality 25%
Ease of use 20%
Features 15%

| VCRs | Specification | | Features | | | | Performance | | | | Score (%) |
|--------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|------------------|------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| | Price (£) | Size wxdxh (cm) | AV/Scart sockets | Video Plus | Scart loop through | Scart link recording | Picture (SP) | Picture (LP) | Sound (SP) | Ease of use | |
| MODEL | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Panasonic NV-HV61EB | 80 | 44x28x10 | 2 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ☆ | ☆ | ★ | ☆ | 85 |
| 2 Panasonic NV-SV121EBS | 150 | 43x28x9 | 3 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ★ | ☆ | ☆ | ☆ | 85 |
| 3 Sony SLV-SE840 | 130 | 43x25x10 | 2 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ○ | ● | ○ | ○ | 62 |
| 4 Philips VR750/07 | 90 | 44x24x9 | 2 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ○ | ● | ○ | ○ | 59 |
| 5 Sanyo VHR-H805E | 70 | 36x28x9 | 2 | ✓ | ✓ | | ○ | ● | ○ | ○ | 59 |
| 6 Daewoo SV872P | 55 | 36x28x9 | 1 | | ✓ | | ○ | ● | ○ | ○ | 58 |
| 7 Sanyo VHR-H795E | 60 | 36x28x9 | 2 | ✓ | ✓ | | ● | ● | ☆ | ○ | 56 |
| 8 Matsui VN9730 | 50 | 36x23x10 | 1 | | | | ☆ | ○ | ● | ○ | 52 |
| 9 Philips VR550/07 | 60 | 36x25x9 | 2 | | ✓ | ✓ | ○ | ● | ● | ● | 51 |