

Cambridge Audio



# Cambridge Audio DVD89

## Test Data

TEST	READING	RATING
Video jitter:	6ns	Good
Audio jitter:	1424.7ps	Poor
S/N ratio	76.0dB	Excellent
Chroma AM	-75.5dB	Excellent
Chroma PM	-71.7dB	Excellent

### FREQUENCY RESPONSE AT 5.8MHz

Composite	-0.7dB	Good
Component	-1.3dB	Good

For a full explanation of test data, please see page 98

## Details

### FEATURES

HDMI/DVI output	Yes/Yes
Prog scan output	PAL/NTSC
DVD-A/SACD	Yes/Yes
Multiregion from box?	No
Dimensions	430(w) x 55(h) x 263(d)mm
Weight	2.6kg

### WHAT IT PLAYS

DVD; DVD-Audio; Dual Disc (CD side); Dual Disc (DVD side); SACD; CD; MP3; WMA; JPEG; MPEG-4 DivX v. 3.x/5.x; MPEG-4 XVID; MPEG-1 CD/DVD-ROM; MPEG-2 TS CD/DVD-ROM; VCD; SVCD; CD-R/RW/-R/-RW (Video)/+R/+R (Dual Layer)/+RW

### SOCKETS

HDMI; DVI; component video; RGB Scart; S-video; composite video; six-channel output; electrical output; optical output

### CONTACT

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A couple of years ago a DVD player like this would have cost closer to a grand than the DVD89's asking price, but then no player at any price would have offered the battery of features on offer here.

This is the first time a HDCP compliant HDMI connection has featured on a Cambridge Audio player. And, there's something about the way Cambridge Audio bolts its kit together that makes this feature very classy indeed.

The HDMI connection is the ideal way of linking the DVD89 up to a suitable screen or projector, and is capable of outputting video in 480p, 576p, 720p and 1080i resolution. If you don't have HDMI – or DVI – you'll have to make do with component video, which is also supported as well as a six-channel analogue surround sound output.

There are a few other rich highlights on this player: it's a universal device, so if you happen to have any SACD or DVD-Audio discs this player can handle them. The DVD89 can also handle discs loaded with DivX movies. This combination obviously appeals to both the higher and lower ends of the market.

Setting up is simple and the on-screen menus are clean and clear although there are plenty of options. The remote, however, isn't up to the standard of previous controllers.

### performance

We mostly used the HDMI connection to get the best out of the unit, and it rarely failed

During *Star Wars Episode III*, with

its long dark sequences, the DVD89 does a fine job of rendering backgrounds without too much unsightly smearing, while foreground detail is easy to pick out even when it's shrouded in shadow. Switching to the brighter hues of *The House of Flying Daggers*, the DVD89 again delivers, this time with a coherent grip on colour that keeps bright items bright, while presenting less garish colours as muted.

Detail levels are also spot on. We watched *The Life Aquatic* on DVD and then switched to Sky's HD broadcast of the film. The broadcast made the disc version look a bit blocky in comparison, but the general levels of information on screen were delivered with panache, and without any of the jaggedness that some players produce while trying to sharpen up their image.

Unlike many affordable DVD players, this machine is a little demon when it comes to music playback. Okay, so most common-or-garden pieces of kit can output the Dolby Digital soundtrack of a live concert DVD, but the DVD89 manages to perform well with music of all types, not only DVD-Audio and SACD but even more impressively with the bog-standard 30-year old compact disc. There's a clarity and openness to the performance that easily equals that of a budget CD player, and comprehensively outstrips many more expensive DVD players we've listened to.

This is one of the best \$200 DVD players we've ever come across. It offers top-notch picture quality

## Fact File

- HDMI output
- DVI support
- Universal Disc Player
- DivX support
- Dolby Digital decoding

## Also Consider >>

### DENON DVD-1920

Another excellent affordable HDMI capable DVD player, but it's not as good with stereo sound. Reviewed issue 302

### PANASONIC DVD-S97

The king of the digital recorder also does the business with this excellent HDMI-equipped player. Reviewed issue 292

coupled with absolutely excellent sonics – especially if you want a player that doubles as an extremely accomplished CD player as well as a movie machine. A thoroughbred in every sense of the word ■

## Ratings

### WHAT'S GOOD

Fantastic build; stylish design; great picture; amazing sonics; impressive features

### WHAT'S BAD

You'll have to brave Richer Sounds to buy one

Picture	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★

## What Video VERDICT

This DVD player screams quality and is the perfect player if you want a single box that is as adept with music as it is with movies



# Conclusion

Since the HDMI socket became the trendy accessory for DVD players we've seen many models, from budget to high-end, adopt the new 'digital Scart'.

The most expensive decks offer upscaling to near professional standards, and this will remain appealing until the high-definition DVD catalogue grows, but not everyone can afford that level of performance.

The four decks we've looked at in this group test are split into two price brackets – the budget models (Samsung's DVD-HD860, Sharp's DV-SV97H and Toshiba's SD-360) and the more expensive Cambridge Audio DVD89.

Perhaps not surprisingly, it is the \$200 Cambridge Audio DVD89 that caught our eye, but don't think that just because it costs twice as much as the others it is inevitably better.

The DVD89 wins this group test because it offers a noticeably better picture via its HDMI output, and because it delivers excellent audio, including DVD-Audio and SACD playback.

Importantly, the DVD89's picture remains excellent when you connect via the component video outputs or RGB Scart. With many people yet to upgrade their TVs to

HDMI-equipped sets this remains a key feature.

Toshiba's SD-360 comes in a close second. It doesn't have the overall sophistication of the Cambridge Audio entry, but its HDMI feed is clean and it has the added bonus of excellent DivX playback. It does not do quite as good a job on regular video feeds, with minor colour bleed preventing it from getting top marks.

Sharp's DV-SV97H cleans up artefacts well through its HDMI output, and that's enough to secure third place in a very competitive field. Its RGB Scart picture has more artefacts than we'd like to see, so if you are not yet HDMI-equipped and don't plan to upgrade your TV for a while, this is not the best choice.

Finally, Samsung's DVD-HD860 is a nice looking player that delivers a solid performance, but there is nothing particularly eye-catching about its upscaling. It's a solid all-round model, but we like to see a bit more of a step up in quality when switching from an analogue to a digital video connection.

None of these players disgrace themselves. You'll need to consider which one suits your needs best, but if it's an HDMI output you're looking for, you are spoilt for choice ■



CAMBRIDGE AUDIO DVD89

VERDICT ★★★★★

TOSHIBA SD-360

VERDICT ★★★★★



SHARP DV-SV97H

VERDICT ★★★★★



SAMSUNG DVD-HD860

VERDICT ★★★★★

