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Mustek R580 DVD+R/RW Recorder

by Stuart Miles published on 4 October 2005

Sky+ is great, but if you want to transfer your recordings off the digibox on to a DVD you are stuck. Likewise if you want to transfer your camcorder footage, you are stuck. But what's the solution? Mustek thinks it has it in the shape of the Mustek R580 DVD+R/RW Recorder with built-in hard disk drive. Shiny and silver, the slimline DVD+R/RW Recorder packs an 80Gb hard disk drive, time shift capabilities and an electronic programming guide. Getting your source into the recorder is very easy. The front boasts a FireWire connection, alongside s-video and the standard RCA phono for video and audio left and right. The back doesn't let the side down either and it includes further a/v connections including SCART, s-video, composite, coaxial digital, optical digital, component video and coaxial. Recording from a third-party source, i.e., a games console or camcorder is straightforward and the big red record button is hard to miss. Recording can either be done straight to the HDD or DVD disk by pressing the button and you can even record from a DVD+R/RW disc directly to the HDD if you've already got your source disc. The Mustek R580 allows you record in five different quality settings: HQ, SP, LP, EP and SLP. HQ will give you approximately 21 hours of recording at 720x576, SP 34 hours at 720x480, LP 52 hours at 360x576, EP 69 hours at 360x480 and for those really trying to pack in the hours SLP, which will give you 104 hours of recording albeit at the rather poor 352x288. In our tests unless you are planning on watching soaps all the time we wouldn't venture below the SP setting. Of course for the purists out there this player doesn't support High Definition and if you are looking to upgrade to HD in the next year this is something to bear in mind. Playback of regular DVDs was very good. Both quality and sound (5.1 Dolby Digital in fact) performed on the test films we tried - Spy Game and The Matrix. The recorder is also compatible with a number of disk formats including Playback of DVD+R/RW, DVD-R/RW, DVD, CD, CD-R/RW, (S)VCD, MP3, Kodak



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Picture CD and JPEG discs.

VERDICT

With its built-in TV tuner, progressive scan playback, input and output options, the Mustek R580 offers plenty of punch. It's not until you see the price that you realise that whilst the name might not be as recognisable as Sony or Panasonic, the features certainly match up. The catch? It's not HD ready, but then at a price as low as £180 online, you can worry about that later.

At a glance

What is it?

DVD HDD recorder

Good

Easy to record, plenty of input options

Bad

Not HD Ready

Verdict

It's not HD ready, but at this price you can worry about that later

Price £269

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10