

JVC TH-R3 Home cinema system

by David Smith published on 25 October 2005

JVC's latest home cinema offering is the first, rather strangely, to include an RGB Scart. This attractive system has that vital input, which means that digibox users will be able to record their favourite programmes in all their RGB glory. This is only part of the story, or course. This system comes complete with a sub/sat speaker system, although the satellite speakers are actually floorstanding models. Don't let the size of the speakers fool you, however. The drive units are satellite spec all the way - 55mm mid-range cones with frequency responses quoted at 90Hz -20kHz. Power ratings are optimistic, at 140W for the front stereo pair and 130W for the centre and rears. The sub, carrying a 160mm woofer, has its own 140W power supply. The system is equipped for Dolby Digital, DTS, DTS 96/24 and Pro-Logic II playback, but if you like your Dolby Digital-EX and DTS ES soundtracks you will have to make do with the 'virtual' surround back option because there is no dedicated output for upgrading to genuine 6.1-channel sound. Recording can be done on DVD-RAM, -RW and -R discs and there are four main settings (giving between 1 and 6 hours on a single-sided disc), plus JVC's Free Rate mode, which allows for greater flexibility in recording capacity. Recordings are excellent in 1 hour mode and remain commendable right down to the 6 hour setting, which retains a surprising amount of clarity and detail. Playback of pre-recorded DVDs also exhibits strong picture qualities, especially when engaging the PAL progressive scan output via component video connections. Sound quality is, sadly, a different matter. The small satellite drivers do not convince. They deliver a sound that is at times harsh and never full. The subwoofer makes a game attempt to fill in the missing mid-range and can rumble away quite effectively, but the system does not mesh well. The system is also awkward to set up (thanks largely to a complicated manual) and exhibits some annoying foibles, including intermittent lip-synch errors. Some operations also require complicated and non-intuitive



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combinations of button presses on the overly busy remote.

VERDICT

You can be confident in the quality of recording and DVD playback with this system, but the audio side of things is a disappointment and drags the overall score down.

At a glance

What is it?

Home cinema system

Good

Good recording and playback

Bad

Fairly average sound; some operational foibles

Verdict

A system that fails to deliver in all areas

Price £450

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10