

Denon 1730 DVD player

Can Denon beat off the urge for a next generation DVD player?

by Paul Lester published on 22 September 2006

If you're in the market for a DVD player that can do justice to your new HDTV or Home Cinema setup, but you're on a budget, you're probably used to grudgingly side-stepping the likes of Denon for more affordable (but infinitely less brag-worthy) makes.

Thanks to rivals like Samsung releasing reasonably priced players with impressive features, Denon has come up with their own "budget" option, the 1730. Available for around £150, it's in the right ball-park for people try to keep cost down without sacrificing functionality.

The metallic grey case and familiar front panel layout is unmistakably Denon, yet they've found a way to keep just about every modern audio and visual technology built-in to accompany the low price. They've even kept the model number subtly tucked away in the corner, so if you're particularly eager to impress you could scratch this off and claim your player cost the best part of £300. The best thing about this is, nobody (including you) would be inclined to disagree.

The 1730 has just about every conceivable connection for modern HD standards, it's compatible with progressive scan and includes optical and coaxial digital outputs, standard composite video and audio out, component, S-video and an impressive HDMI interface that you'll need to take advantage of the upscaling feature. Having set the standard in upscaling technology it'd be nearly impossible for Denon to leave this out. For those of you who are unfamiliar this means that if your TV has an HDMI interface, which you'll need to get the most from this player, you can improve a standard DVD's picture quality to 720p/1080i by filling in the gaps to give the impression of HD resolutions. It does a decent job of it too, particularly impressing on the 42" LCD TV we used for testing. Sound is also impressive



...cont.

thanks to the Burr-Brown 24-bit/192kHz audio DACs, and this is perhaps an area where Denon overtakes rivals with similar functionality.

You'll also find support for DivX, MP3/WMA and JPG files across regular DVDs, audio CDs or video CDs, so this is far from just a standard DVD player.

The range of menu options for tweaking audio and video playback and player behaviour is also very good. You're able to create a playlists for your music or photographs, you'll find repeat functions for DVD and a decent amount of picture control.

Denon hasn't made any major breakthroughs by offering a player this rich on features at the price, Samsung's HD-850 has similar features for less (and you get an HDMI cable bundled in). We were more impressed by the quality of the Denon overall, but whether or not it's worth the extra money is a decision for you and your wallet to resolve.

If you don't have an HD-ready TV or at least aspirations to buy one, much of the excellent functionality available with the 1730 will be lost. If you've recently jumped into the HD arena or are considering it in the near future, get your hands on a Denon 1730 and you won't be disappointed.

VERDICT

With all the support you'll need for the range of audio and video standards and an entire range of optical media, the 1730 is a great choice and comes recommended, but there are cheaper alternatives available.

At a glance

What is it?

High-end features at a mid-range price

Good

Upscaling HDMI to 720p/1080i, all the A/V connectivity you'll need, range of optical disc and file format support

Bad

HDMI, S-video or component cables not included, there are cheaper players with similar functionality

Verdict

The 1730 has everything you need for the modern A/V era, it's only £150, and it's a Denon

Price £150

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10