

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/2342/viewsonic-pj358-projector-cinema-review>

## Viewsonic PJ358 projector

Can you do big screen movies at home on a budget?

by Paul Lester published on 18 May 2007

Viewsonic has recently expanded their range of projectors quite considerably; we have one on test here in the reasonably priced PJ358. It's touted at mobile workers or businessmen, but its strengths, which include a short throw lens, help it double up effectively as a low-priced solution for home entertainment.

It's a pretty light and compact device, capable of projecting a 60-inch screen from just 1.5 metres away. This rises to an impressive 300-inch diagonal at maximum distance, but at this sort of range it's far more difficult to get optimum results.

Really intended as a portable solution, you'll find a carry case in the box along with the remote control, and weighing in at just 1.8kg it's perfectly suitable for lugging around. The 2000 lumens rating is reasonable for something this size, but the 500:1 contrast ratio suggests you'll be limited in establishing a dynamic picture for video playback.

In practice we saw this to be the case, while the screen size is very impressive it's really far easier to get a watchable picture in an optimum environment with no lighting. During the day or in ambient lighting it'd pass ok in terms of presentations but doesn't really have the clout do to justice to movies.

You do get a handful of picture presets, including a cinema mode, which improves things quite a bit, but expect to be fiddling with manual image correction for a while to get the best possible results. There are a range of aspect control options on the remote but zoom and focus must be changed manually from the projector itself.

The selection of settings for adjusting the projector and altering the image are extremely good, especially for something in this price range.



...cont.

Despite perhaps being targeted more at business use and offering 1024 x 768 resolutions, you'll find that smaller text can still be difficult to read, particularly if you're using the projector at a distance.

If you have the benefit of a dedicated pure-white screen you will see better results here, but otherwise be wary of expecting complex presentations to flow with ease.

Image quality, particularly via a computer (rather than a DVD player or other source) is pretty good though, and for additional support in this area you'll find a USB port for connecting storage devices directly. Elsewhere there's composite and S-video in, and component is possible via the 15-pin mini D-sub with support for HD resolutions up to 1080i.

## VERDICT

All in all this is a pretty well featured projector for the price, but if you're looking for something to use intensively, particularly in the case of video playback, you might find it a bit of a strain on the eyes. The PJ358's strengths lie in the large display and short throw lens, and good degree of control you have over tweaking and adjusting settings.

---

## At a glance

### What is it?

A low-priced portable projector

### Good

Fast startup and shutdown, range of effective settings for improving quality, large display with short throw lens, HD up to 1080i

### Bad

Poor contrast ratio, video playback only really possible in dark environments, better suited for occasional use

### Verdict

You can't expect high-end performance in this sort of price range, but despite the PJ358's faults you still get some pretty good video images in the right environment and as a carry-around solution for occasional use it works well

**Price** £629

**Our score**

**7/10**

**Your score**

**?/10**