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Acer H5350 home cinema projector

Under £600 for a projector - has something got to give?

by Katie Scott published on 4 July 2008

When a projector has a price tag under £600, you automatically want to know what's going to be missing and whether you are going to lose out on picture quality. Not so with the Acer H5350 home cinema projector.

First up, this machine is compact at 267 x 187 x 80mm and weighs 2.3kg.

While you can just hear the fan when it is projecting, and obviously more so when the machine is cooling down, it really won't distract your movie watching. In fact, the noise level is just 32 decibels in normal mode and under 28 decibels in power-saving mode.

The projector is supplied with an infrared remote control so you can take control without having to move from your favourite armchair., which is a nice touch.

The projector delivers 2000 ANSI lumens brightness or the eco conscious among us (or those with black out curtains), have the option of 1600 ANSI lumens in power-saving mode.

The picture isn't bright enough for daytime viewing, despite Acer's Colorboost technology, which is claimed to provide "more than a 50% increase in mid-tone image brightness".

The projection distance delivered is between 1 -10.4m and you can get a screen size of between 67-762cm (around 300 inch if you want to compare to flat TV screen sizes).

Obviously at this price point, the zoom is manual, you get a slightly disappointing 2000:1 contrast ratio, and the projector only has vertical keystone control, but the adjustment tools in the menu system were easy to follow, although you don't get the detailed adjustment options possible with



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the more expensive projectors out there.

But you do get HD-ready 1280 x 720 resolution so a 720p cinema experience, and the colours are vivid (but not overpowering) thanks to the six segment colour wheel - although we did occasionally see colour-wheel flashes, which, as a general rule, you don't get with LCD projectors over DLP models like this one.

Connections-wise you get PS3/Xbox 360 and Blu-ray friendly HDMI (though this doesn't take sound), Component, S-Video, one analogue/RGB, one PC audio stereo mini jack port and VGA.

The projector is equipped with SmartFormat technology, which means that you don't have to change resolution when you change the input device because the projector will do it for you (so great if this is your first projector and you're still experimenting).

Replacing the lamp is one of the biggest disadvantages of owning a projector. The Acer H5350 has an Osram 180W P-VIP lamp, which you can at least replace yourself without too much hassle, and is claimed to deliver 3000 hours of viewing in standard mode or 4000 hours in power-saving mode.

The H5350 comes complete with a 2-year carry-in warranty and was priced £589 upon its launch, but a quick check online and you're sure to get it for as much as £80 less than this, which makes it even more of a bargain.

VERDICT

Projectors - once the privilege of people with swanky flats, high white walls and loads of cash, are coming down in price all the time, and this latest launch from Acer is indicative of this.

For under £600, you get a 720p cinema experience that you simply cannot fault for this amount of cash.

At a glance

What is it?

Projector

Good

Compact, pretty much silent, great price

Bad

Some colour wheeling seen but nothing that distracted from our movie viewing

Verdict

Great value for money, and a fantastic viewing experience for projector first-timers

Price £589

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10