

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/3290/Samsung-BD-P1500-Blu-ray-player>

## Samsung BD-P1500 Blu-ray player

How does this Blu-ray player stack up?

by Chris Hall published on 11 July 2008

Samsung have been making noises in the Blu-ray market for some time now. But does their latest player offer enough to convince you to switch from your humble DVD? We get watching to find out.

Samsung have a reputation for delivering affordable technologies and the uptake of their LCD panels over the past few years is testament to this. But are too many corners cut in the delivery of their Blu-ray player? Fortunately, we think not.

The unexcitingly-named BD-P1500 replaces the P1400 before it and improves on the design of previous Samsung players, ironically, by being less fussy and taking a more minimal approach. Now you'll find a simple black gloss front, with only a bare minimum of controls.

Around the back of the player connections give you the option of the preferred v1.3 HDMI, Component, with 2-channel analogue audio and optical digital outputs. There is also an Ethernet connection, which is a significant addition at this price, allowing firmware upgrades, and the player boasts that it is "BD Live ready", so it is Profile 2 compliant and waiting for a firmware upgrade. Upgrading the player is as simple as navigating to the menu and picking the upgrade option. In addition there is a USB port for offline upgrades.

Sound formats are also adequately supported, with DTS, Dolby Digital Plus and Dolby TrueHD; the claim of being DTS-HD upgradeable also appears in the spec sheet and this remains to be seen.

The P1500 also fits into the Anynet+ system, so integrates seamlessly with other Samsung devices. This is good in theory, but you'll find that most existing TV remotes don't natively support the Blu-ray player, but the supplied remote does



...cont.

feature main controls for your TV. However, all the clever functions work, like if you start the player, it switches your TV to the right input, and if you switch off the TV, your player also shuts down: little features that are not unique, but make things easy.

The remote features fluorescent buttons for the main controls, which is a bit of a gimmick like the light-up controls from their TV range. Overall the remote is a little light in the hand and lacks that quality feel. It is also very close in design to generations of previous Samsung remotes, so easy to grab the wrong one. You can program the remote to take over basic TV functions and a list of manufacturer codes are supplied for this purpose.

Loading times were a little on the slow side, and a on a simple Blu-ray title you'll find you have about 40 seconds to wait from loading the disc, and then you are into whatever loading delay the actual menu system on the disc introduces, which is often based on the complexity of the Java menus. On DVD you have a similar delay, but as the menus don't need so much time to get going, it is slightly faster. It is a little noisy on loading as the disc spins up and the head skips around, but once the film is loaded this seems to die down.

The picture quality, however, was very impressive. We tested the player with a 40-inch Samsung M87 LCD, and a 50-inch Pioneer PDP-LX5090 plasma and the results were fantastic. Full HD 1080p playback from Blu-ray was smooth and glorious with great colour and incredible detail. The player also supports 24p, so together with the Pioneer provided excellent "as the director intended" movie playback.

The menu system also looks and feel like an impressive next-gen solution and a welcome step up from the dire performance of Samsungs older upscaling DVD player menus. Pop-up disc menus work without causing any disruption to playback, so you can skip to other features if you like. The

---

## At a glance

### What is it?

Profile 1.1 Blu-ray player

### Good

Price, Ethernet connection, upgradeability to Profile 2, simple to use

### Bad

Loading times, remote feels a bit cheap, no HDMI cable supplied

### Verdict

The Samsung BD-P1500 is a great way to get access to high-definition movies without breaking the bank

**Price** £249.99

**Our score**

**8/10**

**Your score**

**?/10**

...cont.

menus look great overall, and there is a resume function so you can stop the film and enter the setup menus before going back to your film.

Upscaling quality is also good, we perceived it to be better than the results delivered by Samsung's DVD players upscaling to 1080p, and the results on the 50in plasma were more than acceptable, but not up to the standard of the Blu-ray, of course.

There are also a range of other interesting features, including markers allowing you to log index points in DVDs, which may find a business use but probably not much else. You have a dedicated BonusView button too. BonusView features, as well as a range of language and subtitle options, can also be selected through the Info menu, although this depends on the disc you have playing.

Besides Blu-ray and DVD support, you can also playback CDs as you'd expect. You'll also find AVCHD compatibility to play back content from your digital camcorder. You won't find a raft of support for a wider range of other file formats however, so this is a player that concentrates on movies with audio CD playback if you wish.

The only gripe here, and one that seems to be a persistent theme, is the lack of HDMI cable in the box.

## **VERDICT**

There is nothing in the design to offend and we found that the Blu-ray playback was excellent. The upscaling performance was pretty good and the major audio bases covered, at this price, the Samsung BD-P1500 is a great way to get access to high-definition movies without breaking the bank.

It might not offer all the comprehensive audio outputs of some other players on the market and perhaps lacks some of the processing technology that you'd pay a premium for, but the foresight to

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/3290/Samsung-BD-P1500-Blu-ray-player>

...cont.

sell this as an upgradeable device is commendable.

Thanks to Currys.co.uk for the loan of the Samsung BD-P1500.