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Sanyo PLV-Z3000 projector

Smooth operator

by Jamie Carter published on 3 April 2009

One of the main reasons that home cinema projection hasn't really caught on in the UK is because of the products' huge size. Sanyo's latest PLV-Z3000 doesn't solve that problem - it's big and it's ugly - but you do at least get plenty of high-definition goodness for your money.

With two HDMI inputs and two sets of Component video ports, the PLV-Z3000 can act as a conduit for almost anything you can throw at it HD-wise.

As such it's not the kind of projector you'll want to fetch from a cupboard for an impromptu gaming or movie night, though you'll be rewarded if you do.

Perhaps its most impressive feature from the off is its whisper-quiet operation. Many manufacturers claim their latest projectors are almost silent, but in the PLV-Z3000's case that's really true. At just 19 decibels the whir of the PLV-Z3000's cooling fan is inaudible over movies or games.

Although it has a Full HD 1080p resolution LCD panel at its core, the PLV-Z3000's key feature is Smooth Motion. This feature doubles to refresh rate of video to 100Hz, and then intelligently creates and inserts its own video frames to prevent any blur during fast-moving scenes. That's key; what's the point of Full HD resolution if the projector or TV then blurs?

Marry that to a 24-frames-per-second display capability and the PLV-Z3000 is something of a movie mogul for Blu-ray discs. Setting-up the PLV-Z3000 is child's play. The lens can be adjusted horizontally and vertically, so placing the projector off-centre to where you want the image is not a problem. Arguably this does distort the image slightly, though in practice you're unlikely to notice.



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The remote control is just as well designed, with separate buttons to call-up each video input. There's also a backlight that makes it easy to use during a blackout.

Its easy onscreen menu system contains a lot of options ranging from a myriad of preset picture modes to individual gamma tweaks for a top-notch calibration.

The PLV-Z3000's HD images are not blighted by blur, so the Smooth Motion engine isn't strictly necessary on that count. What it does do is bring a smoother appearance to Blu-ray discs. The overall cinematic feel is boosted by the projector's native contrast ratio of 65,000:1, enough to make this LCD model stand out from the crowd. Dark areas of images are as near to black as we've seen on a LCD model, though this doesn't translate to colour, where the PLV-Z3000 is lacking in terms of vibrancy: things can look a little flat.

Standard definition doesn't fare so well, of course, but it's hard to pick holes in what is a great value LCD projector that successfully addresses the technology's main weaknesses.

VERDICT

Sanyo has come up with a decent value projector ripe for those who want to create a mid-range home cinema. Its massive four high-definition feeds - more than on most similar projectors - lend it unusual versatility while its quiet operation and easy set-up make it an attractive product even to the tech-wary. Sharp, smooth and contrast-heavy HD images make this a great option for anyone wanting to take advantage of Blu-ray disc's ability to go large.

At a glance

What is it?

Full HD LCD projector

Good

Great contrast, smooth Blu-ray playback, easy set-up, quiet operation

Bad

Lacklustre colours, bulky design

Verdict

Sharp, smooth and contrast-heavy HD images make this a great option for anyone wanting to take advantage of Blu-ray disc's ability to go large

Price £3000

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10