

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/507/mustek-pvr-a1-compact-media-player>

## Mustek PVR-A1 media player

by Charlie Brewer published on 13 July 2004

Now here really is a device that wants to be all things to all people. Mustek describes its newly launched PVR-A1 as a personal media centre, which translated, is a hard drive with wings. The acronym PVR actually stands for Personal Video Recorder in this case and although that is one feature of this device it does offer considerably more to the user.



For the technology you get, the £120.00 price tag seems very reasonable. But in order to get the product to market at this price I can only presume that Mustek kept things pretty lean in its production department, the first casualty being the outer body. The PVR-A1 shell resembles a Swiss cheese, with 5 different inputs down the right hand side. These slots are for the SD or MMC card, a power adapter, a USB, AV-IN and a standard headphone jack. The left flank, holds the rechargeable 3.7V lithium ion battery. The battery cover is possibly the flimsiest I've ever handled and great care should be exercised if changing the battery is required. Controls for the functionality of the PVR-A1 are on the predominantly on the front, with the addition of a rather small, awkward, jog-wheel in the right-hand side.

The literature supplied with the PVR-A1 tells you the size of the display screen while choosing to rather ominously ignore the resolution, and while the 2.5" screen offers viewable clarity of images, both moving and still, the menus are another story. The internal operating system applications resolution is chunky to be kind and obese if being honest. Graphical menu objects are verging on geometric shapes, due to the lack of clarity in their definition and the over all effect looks very amateurish.

Looks aside, the PVR-A1 generally behaves quite well. The core of the product is a 32Mb hard drive onto which various media can be loaded, organised and then played back. Formats

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supported are MP3 & WAV for sound, JPEG for still images and MPEG4 for TV and Video clips. Images can be arranged into slide shows and manipulated in the most basic of manners and voice memos can be added. The PVR-A1 has an internal speaker that will allow you to listen to MP3s and voice notes without headphones but in order to get volume, clarity and conserve power, headphones are required.

Naturally the 32Mb of onboard memory is a pittance when it comes to storing moving images so the SD / MMC expansion slot can be used to bolster the device into a useful and practical size. Strangely though, once you insert an additional media card you can no longer access the content stored on the internal memory. The only way to retrieve this material is to remove the card and the PVR will default back to internal memory, and your content is restored. When connected to a PC, via the USB cable provided, the PVR-A1 is identified as two separate removable drives, (internal memory and card) thus allowing you to move the content around on screen. As an aside, it would be much more practical to allow the user to toggle between internal and card memory on the device as well.

One of the more unusual features is the direct record AV-IN feature the PRV-A1 offers. By connecting the provided cable to the three TV-out connections you can directly record TV into the device. Well, if you had three outputs on the rear of your TV you could, in most cases an adapter will have to be purchased. You can also connect the PVR-A1 to the DVD recorder and record films, memory capacity allowing. You can also set a pre-record function to grab content at a specific time.

Besides the media playback function a calendar and games menu can be found. The calendar has a clock function but is only designed to give the pre-record function a time grip. The ability to use the calendar a little more like a PDA would have been a nice enhancement but not this time round. Strangely, when setting the calendar the date is

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## At a glance

### What is it?

A compact, light-weight, personal media device

### Good

Cheap, loads of functionality, reasonably easy to use

### Bad

Cheap, poor graphics and image resolution, poor button function, strange functionality

### Verdict

The device is cheap, and it shows while the chances of it being in one piece a year on, are slim

**Price** £120

**Our score**

**6/10**

**Your score**

**?/10**

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entered as YY:MM:DD, which can lead to frustration. Mustek use the word games loosely as the offering tic-tac-toe (noughts & crosses) and a puzzle. The six-page instruction manual did not allude as to what, how or why you would want to play the puzzle, and my interest waned faster than the first games count down clock.

## **VERDICT**

Overall You get for what you pay for with the PVR -A1. The body reflects the price and the controls are not the easiest to use. The functionality of the application is adequate but the operating system is plain ugly. If you are on a budget and want to get plenty for not much then this is a good entry-level media player.