



ON TEST / PERSONAL VIDEO RECORDER

Verdict ★★★★★ Approx price **£200**

Humax PVR-9300T

Long-awaited follow-up twin-tuner PVR delivers the goods

⊕ Ease of use; picture quality; unusual features; flexibility; remote control

⊖ USB function removed; glitchy edits



The rivals

Topfield TF5810PVRt

★★★★★
An incredible PVR with a 500GB hard disk alongside 1080i upscaling. Reviewed: Issue 333



TVonics DTR-Z250

★★★★★
Less flexible with no HDMI output, but just as easy to use, offers Freeview+ features. Reviewed: Issue 338



HUMAX'S INCREDIBLE PVR-9200T raised the bar for twin-tuner PVRs when it launched back in 2005, and as a result, the follow-up has been more eagerly awaited than the Second Coming in some quarters. Well, the wait is over with the launch of this model, which hopefully builds on the brilliance of its predecessor.

For a start, the design is leaner and more compact, with a snazzy black finish and an improved display panel that clearly shows the entire channel name and time.

Features ★★★★★

Inside there's a 320GB hard disk, which holds up to 200hr of TV.

Also onboard are two Freeview tuners that enable you to record one channel while watching another, or record two and watch a third. When recording two channels on the same multiplex, you can also watch a third, but if the two recordings are on different multiplexes, the third channel is limited to the same multiplex as the other two.

A group of features under the Freeview+ umbrella, such as series link, automatic schedule tracking

and alternate instance recording, make missing a favourite programme pretty hard.

The PVR-9300T is the first Humax model to sport an HDMI able to output 576p and 720p, although not 1080i. But the big socketry mystery is the USB port. We hoped this would allow transfer of recordings to a PC for editing, or MP3 and JPEG files to the hard disk as per the 9200T, but sadly the port was redundant on our unit. Humax says this non-functional oddity will eventually be removed, as users apparently don't regard USB as a key feature.

A few unusual features do make up for it, though, including the ability to edit out unwanted scenes, a picture-in-picture mode, subtitle recording and a quartet of games.

Ease of use

★★★★★

The 9300T's operating system oozes user-friendliness across the board, with top-notch menu design, ultra-fast reactions and a magnificently intuitive remote that

you can use with your eyes shut.

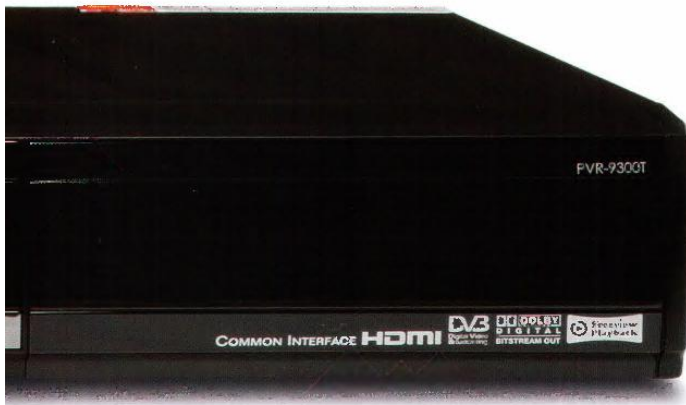
Auto channel tuning snaps into action from the first power-up, while the setup menu is so straightforward that any tweaks can be carried out without consulting the manual.

During TV viewing, you can summon the 'iPlate', which provides more information about the current programme than any rational being could ever need. There's also a handy Time Bar for checking the current recording or playback status, while the superb EPG makes it easy to browse the schedules and plays live TV in a box while you do. Digital text is blissfully fast,

Recorded onto the hard disk, programmes look exactly the same as the live broadcast"

channels change almost instantly and the pause live TV/chase playback functions work well.

Selecting a recorded programme from the list is slightly cumbersome; pressing play or OK starts playback



in a little insert box, but you have to exit the menu before it'll expand to full screen. When that's the only thing we've got to moan about, though, you know that you're onto a genuine winner.

Picture ★★★★★

Sharp, well-defined and richly coloured pictures are the order of the day through the HDMI output, thanks largely to the unit's effortless 720p upscaling of live TV pictures. Coverage of the Olympic games in SD looks magnificent as the unit handles the frenetic splashing of swimming races with surprising stability. A few areas of blockiness surround some fast-moving objects, but on the whole, movement is tracked smoothly.

When recorded onto the hard disk, programmes look exactly the same as the live broadcast thanks to the use of a single high-bitrate recording mode.

Edit points look a little clumsy, suffering from a distracting pause and sound drop-out so you may like to keep faith with an external DVD/HDD recorder for editing.

Sound ★★★★★

The unit produces dynamic stereo sound from the HDMI and Scart sockets, or through either of the dedicated audio outputs. Just as well, because in operation the PVR-9300T emits a loud whirring noise that could interfere with your listening enjoyment, particularly at night with the volume subdued.

Value ★★★★★

Considering the Humax's wealth of talents and its price, it offers better value for money than its Topfield rival. Performance is first class, it's easy to use and it delivers its wealth of features with a slickness missing from most Freeview PVRs on the market. Buy one ☺

STABLE MATES

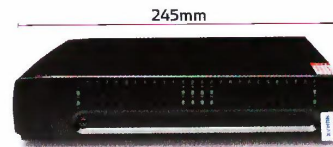
If 320GB is too big for your needs, the PVR-9150T costs £50 less, has 160GB and is identical in every other way.

You could also pick up the USB-equipped PVR-9200T for a bargain price.



Lab report

/ Time in Lab: 7 days
 / Serial No: 61 6003967 01826



Max Rec
200 Hrs



1x HDMI™
 HIGH-DEFINITION MULTIMEDIA INTERFACE



Spec check

Hard disk capacity: 250GB	upgrades; 7-day EPG; digital text; favourite channels; instant replay; commercial skip; slow motion playback; video editing
Recording modes: 1	
Max recording time: 200hrs	
Non-linear editing: Yes	
TV tuners: 2 digital terrestrial	
Timer: Yes	
Dimensions: 360(w) x 50(h) x 245(d)mm	
Weight: 2.9kg	
Other features: 720p video upscaling; series link, record and playback; record two channels and watch a third; picture-in-picture mode; pause live TV; over-the-air software	
Sockets: Outputs: HDMI; 2 Scarts (1 RGB); composite video; optical digital audio; stereo audio; RF in/out, RS232 port; USB port (not activated); CI slot	
Contact: 0870 247 8800 www.humaxdigital.co.uk	

techradar.com www.techradar.com/460642

WHAT TV We say

It may have been a long time coming, but this Humax is a slick, easy-to-use and flexible twin-tuner offering exceptionally good value for money

