

# Set & match

Wintal's DVD recorder sets the standard, writes Peter Familiari

**W**INTAL'S first DVD recorder continues the Aussie brand's tradition of low-cost, well built and feature-studded audio-video and multimedia gear.

The new model is the DVDR-X5, a \$499 recorder that joins Wintal's range of DVD players, tube and LCD TVs, MP3 players, home-cinema systems, headphones and wonderfully compact digital TV set-top boxes.

That's a big range — a point worth making since the DVDR-X5 is clearly a great match with Wintal TVs and home-cinema systems.

But, thanks to universal connections, it also slots in nicely with equipment from all the other major and minor brands.

All it takes to move from a VCR to the new world of DVD recording is to wire the Wintal's picture and sound connections to the matching ones built in to your family TV.

It's that easy.

And so is recording a TV program or transferring camcorder images on to a blank DVD disc.

All that's required for either is to press the record button on the front panel of the Wintal.

And yes, you can also record images from digital still cameras on to blank DVD discs.

But not just any discs.

The DVDR-X5 supports the Philips-backed DVD+R/+RW format, which means you'll have to feed your new recorder blank discs labelled DVD+R/+RW.

Discs recorded using the digital languages spoken by DVD+R and



DVD v easy: the DVDR-X5 (above) is simple to use and will become a benchmark in its price range.

Well connected: the player's front-panel connections allow for easy linking of camcorders and computer games.

rival format DVD-R are said to play back in many existing DVD players.

The DVDR-X5 is a solid machine with upmarket styling. I especially liked the row of blue LED lights on the front panel.

And it is a model that also sports these connections: i-Link (also known as FireWire); composite; S-video; component; optical; coaxial; and 5.1 channel RCAs for surround sound.

The Wintal records video in four levels of quality, is a progressive scan model, has a built-in tuner and Dolby 5.1 channel decoder and plays back PAL and NTSC DVDs.

It's also a clever unit that will handle a huge number of discs, including — get this — those recorded using the rival DVD-R and DVD-RW formats.

Other formats compatible with the Wintal are CD-R, CD-RW, SVCD, MP3, JPEG and Kodak picture CD.

The DVDR-X5 obviously has a decent tuner and video-processing technology because recordings made using the two higher-quality settings seemed to be identical to the original content.

The two lowest-resolution settings were easily better than those made on an average VCR.

So what's not to like?

Not much. The DVDR-X5's remote is small and the buttons can be a bit of a fiddle for the first couple of weeks.

And Wintal has programmed the unit to default back from the TV station it was recording to the DVD menu when it's switched off.

Minor glitches apart, the Wintal DVDR-X5 can be regarded as a benchmark at its price.

Wintal International: 1800 377 366

## THE VERDICT

### DVD RECORDER

Model: Wintal DVDR-X5

Price: \$499

Pros: Good-looking, easy-to-use DVD+R/+RW machine plays back a huge range of formats including DVD-R/-RW.

Cons: Takes a few weeks to get used to the huge range of keys on this ultra-compact remote.