

REVIEW

DVD Player

Harman/Kardon DVD 101

With so many DVD players on the market, how do we tell the difference between the good and the bad? Well, besides reading magazines for expert opinions, simply look at the features. Some inexpensive players perform well, but may not have the best build quality (and therefore not last too long), or some players don't have all the features you want. You won't have to worry about either in the case of Harman/Kardon's DVD 101. With a suggested retail price of \$349, it's certainly not the cheapest on the block, but in our experience, you really do get what you pay for when it comes to electronics.

Installation Issues

Hooking up the DVD 101 was very easy, since it offers such a wide selection of audio/video outputs. Seemingly rarely these days, it offers both a coaxial output and an optical digital output, allowing flexible audio hookup. On the video side, there are progressive-scan component video outputs as well as S-Video and composite, in case you don't have a component input on your TV.

The build quality is excellent, with a solid feel to it that escapes many other players. Most DVD players feel like the cheapest of VCRs, but not the DVD 101. It has a high-end feel, which is always a good thing.

Performance/Features

Once the DVD 101 was set up, we watched a bevy of movies and music DVDs. The picture quality on our progressive-scan monitor was excellent. In fact, it was as good as our \$1,000 reference DVD player from last year. While showing challenging DVDs like the newly remastered *The Mission* and *Peter Gabriel's Secret World Live*, it brought both of these films to life in a vibrant, restrained way. On



brighter fare like *Two Weeks Notice*, the outdoor scenes looked natural and realistic, which is the sign of any good DVD player. Overall, we were very impressed by the picture on this DVD player. Using the remote control was also very straightforward, and it worked well in all conditions. It's comfortable in the hand, and is easy to use in a darkened room.

The Last Word

Two features that we felt should have been included in this price range were SACD and DVD-Audio playback. Both of these features are becoming more prevalent as the available software selection increases dramatically, and we were surprised that the DVD 101 didn't include at least one of these options. Otherwise, we were very happy with the DVD 101's performance and abilities. It was easy to use and a pleasure to turn on and enjoy. The sign of a great product: Did we want to send it back to the manufacturer? Not any time soon. **EH**

Info: Harman/Kardon, \$349
516-496-3400, www.harmankardon.com

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THE SCORE

■■■■ Install	■■■■ Ease of Use
■■■ Reliability	■■■ Expandability
■■■■ Overall Value	
4 → broke the mold	3 → playing with the big boys
2 → not such a bad buy	1 → just plain sad

WHY YOU WANT THIS

This DVD player has progressive-scan component video outputs, and provides images as good as a \$1,000 reference DVD player.