



AMC

DVD7 DVD PLAYER & R9 AV RECEIVER

AMC importer Hi-Fi and Video Marketing has managed something of a coup with this pair. Normally, the two would retail for well over two thousand dollars (see panel) but if you purchase them as a pair, you can expect to pay just \$1999. One reason for this deal on price might be that although both components are made by AMC, they are not exactly a 'perfect' cosmetic match, as you may be able to tell from our photograph. The panel widths are slightly different (only a few millimetres), the front panels are slightly different shades and, whereas the R9's front panel has a single outward curve, the DVD7's panel curves two different directions. We don't know about you, but if someone offered us a \$300 discount on a couple of components we wanted just because the front panels didn't match perfectly, we'd take it!

Equipment

The receiver has a sufficient number of inputs and outputs to suit just about anyone. Analog audio connections are provided for three devices, one of which has a matching set of outputs for an audio recorder (cassette, MD, CD-R). There are also three sets of analog audio/composite video/S-Video inputs. Two optical and two coaxial digital inputs are provided and these can be assigned via the set-up menu to the CD, DVD or VCR2 inputs. All the 5.1-channel inputs you'll ever need are also on-board.

Surround signal handling is provided with three basic settings: Surround, DSP and Stereo. Dolby Digital or DTS signals are

delivered to their respective speakers or, if the input is two-channel (analog or digital), the R9 switches to Dolby Pro-Logic processing. The AM/FM tuner section has thirty presets and automatic station seek. The tuner proved especially powerful in FM mode, dragging in even very weak stations.

The R9's amplifier section is rated at 105 watts for each of the five channels into 8 ohms, but this is only for one channel at a time. In stereo, the R9 is rated at 100 watts per channel.

The DVD7 is well-made and also well fitted-out, with optical and coaxial digital outputs, twin analog outputs, and composite, S-Video and component video outputs. The front panel is a joy, because of a joystick that enables you to access all the DVD7's features. Better still, the on-screen menuing system is so good that even first-time DVDers won't need to use the manual.

Performance

The performance of the DVD7 was very, very good. Track/chapter access was blindingly fast — in fact switching from any mode to any other was blindingly fast. AMC must have the DVD7 on steroids! Picture quality was impressive in all modes, with super-crisp resolution that's as sharp as a tack, but it was the video quality in the special play modes that blew us away. At 100x search speed, the images were rock-solid and razor-sharp. If it were not for the speed of the action (and the lack of audio) we'd have sworn the AMC was in play mode.

The AMC R9 receiver seemed to have its feet in both home theatre and stereo camps because while we could adjust the centre, surround and sub levels with the remote, we had to set left/right balance from the front panel. Also, balance adjustments can be made only in 2 dB steps: 1 dB would be better. Video signals are handled a little unusually. Whereas most receivers pass video signals straight through, doing nothing more to them than perhaps adding an on-screen display signal, the R9 senses whether or not an S-Video signal is present and if so, it switches the composite signal off. This is a plus for most users since it means they can't inadvertently switch to a lower quality signal. Even bass management is a little unusual: when the signal is set to stereo, the subwoofer is not used at all if your main speakers are set to 'large'.

DVD7/AMC R9

\$ \$1399/\$899 (see copy)

2 years electronics and 1 year laser

- ▲ • DVD7 is a stand-out
- Excellent picture and sound
- Flexible inputs and outputs

- ▼ • R9 doesn't match DVD7
- Balance steps 2 dB (R9)
- R9 won't accept 96/24 signals

Hi-Fi & Video Marketing Pty Ltd
(02) 9319 6877
hifivideomktg@one.net
www.amchome.com

Circle 0461 on our Reader Service Card.

DTS, Dolby Digital and PCM digital decoding all worked precisely as they should except for a small latching delay with PCM and Dolby Digital signals — something that's common with auto-selectors. It means you may miss the first half-second or so of music when skipping tracks.

Conclusion

As a package, this pair make very good buying. We'd give full marks in the value-for-money stakes to both components, but would have to say we were most impressed by the performance of the DVD7. **Bb**