

37IN LCD TV
SHARP
LC-37XD1E

★★★★★
£1400

FOR

Picture improves with HD; sound

AGAINST

DVD and off-air pictures can be bettered by TVs at a similar price

VERDICT

If you can find heavy discounts, it's worth a look, but there are better around

An average spec, an average picture, average looks – no surprise, three stars

Sharp not totally on the ball

LIKE A TYPICAL Liverpool season, this 37in Sharp LCD TV looks full of promise on paper. The price is right, there's a Freeview tuner, it looks the part, and it boasts 1920 x 1080 'Full HD' resolution, complete with twin HDMI inputs.

"It has 1920 x 1080 'Full HD' resolution, with twin HDMI inputs"

However, while the Sharp's image is decent, it's not quite table-topping stuff. Its analogue tuner presents a decent picture, but nothing special as far as colours or clarity are concerned.

Mid-table mediocrity beckons

Spin a dark DVD like *The Corpse Bride*, and there are signs of noise, and a touch of grain. Turn your attention to *Superman Returns*, and the fast-motion sequences, such as when Superman saves the aeroplane above the baseball ground, introduce colour blocking

and stuttering. Watch *Match of the Day*, and the 'XD1E struggles to track the ball, making it look more like a meteor with a vapour trail.

With high-def, the image isn't breathtaking either, but it is a definite improvement: motion-tracking is better, while you'll be impressed by the more natural colours and better depth of field. *Kingdom of Heaven* looks great.

The sound is another positive: it's well-balanced, and digs up enough detail. Bass is plentiful, helping provide atmosphere.

Good, but not quite great

This is a decent TV in many ways, but not quite polished enough to reach the dizzy heights of Premiership glory. On the other hand, if you can get a deal, it's worth a look.



ALSO CONSIDER ?

PANASONIC
TH-37PX60

★★★★★
£1400
Not Full HD, but this HD Ready 37in plasma offers stunning pictures and a stylish design

SONY
KDL-40W2000

★★★★★
£2000
Our TV product of the year is a 40in Full HD set that looks awesome whatever you feed it. Shop around for money-off deals

HIGH-DEF DIGIBOX
HUMAX
HDCI-2000

★★★★★
£300

FOR

Offers high-def reception with no need for a monthly TV subscription

AGAINST

Picture quality could be better; costs are high; only one HD channel on offer

VERDICT

A decent solution for some, but too expensive for what it offers

Humax says Sky's not the limit

YOU'VE NOT SWITCHED to high-def yet? What's going on? Oh, right, you don't want to spend upwards of £600 per year on a subscription to Sky or Telewest, and you're convinced that's the only way of receiving HD material.

Subscription-free high def?

Well, it's not: Humax is here now, tempting you over to the high-def side with its new digibox capable of showing HD material. Currently, there's only one free high-def channel, BBC HD, and though this box is capable of receiving many more, we don't know of any in the pipeline.

Now, there's another catch of sorts, too, in that you need a Sky satellite

dish to receive the signal. If you don't have one already (as a lapsed subscriber or Freesat user) that means a £150 installation cost.

There's also a one-off £20 for a card to allow the box to receive the

to expect from HD sources. Don't get us wrong, you get an acceptable image, but it's just not as sharp as the one from our Sky HD box. The sound, too, is decent – but, again, we've heard better from Sky.

"You get an acceptable image, but not as good as from Sky's digibox"

Freesat channels (about 80 of them, including most of those found on Freeview), but no subscription.

Up and running, the picture isn't especially breathtaking, and breathtaking is what we've come

Free high-def in your lounge

This is something of a niche product. If you must have HD content, but won't pay for a subscription, this will work for you. It's a shame the actual electronics don't perform to the same standard as Sky's kit, and that the cost's so high for just one HD channel, particularly to those without a Sky dish already. However, this Humax box does what it says on the tin.



The Humax does its job, true, but it's pricey and doesn't do it as well as it might

ALSO CONSIDER ?

SKY HD

★★★★★
£300 with subs
TELEWEST
★★★★★
FREE with subs
August 2006
Both offer better picture and sound, include hard-disk recorders, and access a far greater range of channels via subscription