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DREAMVISION DREAMWEAVER TWO ◆ £4,495 (APPROX) ◆ 020 8971 3909 ◆ www.dreamvision.net

DLP for the style set



ALVIN GOLD AUDITIONS DREAMVISION'S DREAMWEAVER TWO DLP PROJECTOR – THE BRAND'S FIRST TO BE BUILT AROUND THE PAL-CENTRIC MATTERHORN CHIPSET

HCC Practical Tip

Home Cinema Choice uses a Stewart Filmscreen Firehawk screen optimized for DLP and LCD projectors

Lab Report

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
Colour		✓		
Geometry	✓			
Frequency response		✓		
Contrast		✓		

Compatibility

DVD (NTSC) 480i	●
DVD & DVB (PAL) 576i	●
NTSC/PAL progressive 480p/576p	●
High definition 720p	●
High definition 1080i	●

FEATURES

Specifications: DLP projector, TI Matterhorn DMD with 12° deflection mirrors, 1024 x 576 pixel native widescreen resolution, 6 segment, 5x colour wheel, sealed optical system, Carl Zeiss Projection Lens: F/1.9, 26.7–36.8mm focal length, 1100 ANSI Lumens brightness, manual zoom/focus, vertical keystone adjust, Faroudja DCDI scaling and noise reduction, 1.86 – 2.60 throw ratio,

contrast ratio 1500:1, calibrated to D65 colour mastering standards, three colour temperature presets 6500, 8200 and 9300°K, manual and auto source selection, Carl Zeiss f1.9 26.7mm – 36.8mm lens, 200/250W UHP lamp life, 3000 hours rated lifespan, supplied with remote control, available in white, silver or black
Connections: 1x composite video, 2x S-video, 2x component video, 15-pin

D-SUB M1-DA VESA, HDTV analogue – 15-pin D-Sub, USB, RS232 control interface – 9-pin D-SUB, 2x 12V trigger outputs, IR receiver input
TV formats supported: 480p, 576p, 720p, 1035i, 1080i/p, SECAM M, NTSC 4.43, PAL B, G, H, I, M, N
Dimensions: 439(w) x 439(h) x 127(d) mm
Weight: 4.4kg

In the current hierarchy of DLP chips, a great deal of excitement surrounds the Matterhorn DLP DMD. It sits in the middle ground of DLP performance, but in Europe – where we are in no imminent danger of being blessed with high definition television – the Matterhorn, with its native widescreen resolution of 1,024 x 576 pixels, is a near perfect match with our existing TV standard (standard PAL has 575 visible scan lines). The chip promises minimal artefacts due to scaling, alongside useful cost savings.

Projector manufacturers have not been slow to take advantage of this technology. The Infocus Screenplay 5700, SIM2 Domino 20 and Sharp XV-Z200E are just three examples from a number of models which embrace the Matterhorn configuration. The DreamVision DreamWeaver Two now joins that list.

THE STUFF OF DREAMS

This is no bargain basement projector, and is not intended to compete directly with the likes of the aforementioned models. It is powerfully equipped with a strong feature set, but some of its key attributes are cosmetic, which is important when sharing living space with any product. The best way to describe the appearance of the DreamWeaver Two

is that it is like a Smartie on a grand scale, but available in white, silver and black finishes. Half of the top of the 'Smartie' detaches to provide access to the inputs and when in position leaves a gap for assorted cabling to be routed neatly. The wide range of inputs includes two component and two S-video inputs, and a non-HDCP compliant DVI (Digital Video interface) input.

Plonked on a projector table, the DreamWeaver Two has a sleek, futuristic appearance every bit the equal of the dramatically styled SIM2 projectors, but it really comes into its own when ceiling mounted. In its optional white finish, and matching ceiling mount kit, the projector blends into most surroundings remarkably well and is likely to even impress the most verbose design-snob with its aesthetic design.

Another key attribute of the DreamWeaver Two is the noise it makes – or rather doesn't make. The specified 27dB figure only tells part of the story. It is smooth, benign and whistle-free, setting it apart from most rivals – including the SIM2 model, despite recent improvements. With a moderately long-throw lens, it is quite likely that the residual fan noise will go unnoticed in most rooms.

RATINGS

Highs: Looks to die for, quiet, bright and fine quality picture
Lows: No encrypted DVI-D, slight contrast shortfall

Brightness	★★★★★
Clarity	★★★★½
Features	★★★★½
Overall	★★★★½

However, there are a couple of minor weaknesses in this design. First, there is a significant amount of light spill through the ventilation ducts – although not towards the screen, so it is unlikely to be noticed in practice. Second, and in common with the Infocus Screenplay models (which also use Zeiss optics), the inside of the lens barrel is light and reflective, contributing to a contrast ratio which is significantly poorer than some of the competition. This is something that can and should be addressed on future designs.

On the other hand, the DreamWeaver Two appears to be one of the brightest projectors in its class, at least at the time of writing. It can be used in rooms which are less well blacked-out than they should be (for instance, during daylight with significant light passing through only moderately thick curtains) and because it is not capable of truly black blacks, a certain amount of light spilling on to the screen appears to be sustainable. A proprietary DLP-friendly screen, like the Stewart Firehawk, should be used to compensate for this mild contrast deficit.

The DreamWeaver Two has a wide range of picture adjustments, including three colour temperature settings and



'A pleasing DLP projector that justifies its price-tag by superior aesthetics'

presets which can be used to store various adjustments. There has been little attempt to shield the user from the more esoteric menu settings and some options can appear impenetrable to the uninitiated user. Most of these are not properly explained in the rather skimpy instructions - colour space, overscan, a full set of gamma adjustments, various noise reduction settings (with or without skin tone bypass!), ADC calibration (sic) and more besides. But in practice, the

projector needed little setting up to produce a fine onscreen picture straight from the box. A little judicious tweaking of the contrast and brightness, and setting the colour temperature to 6500°K were sufficient to deliver convincing, cinematic images.

BETTER BY DESIGN

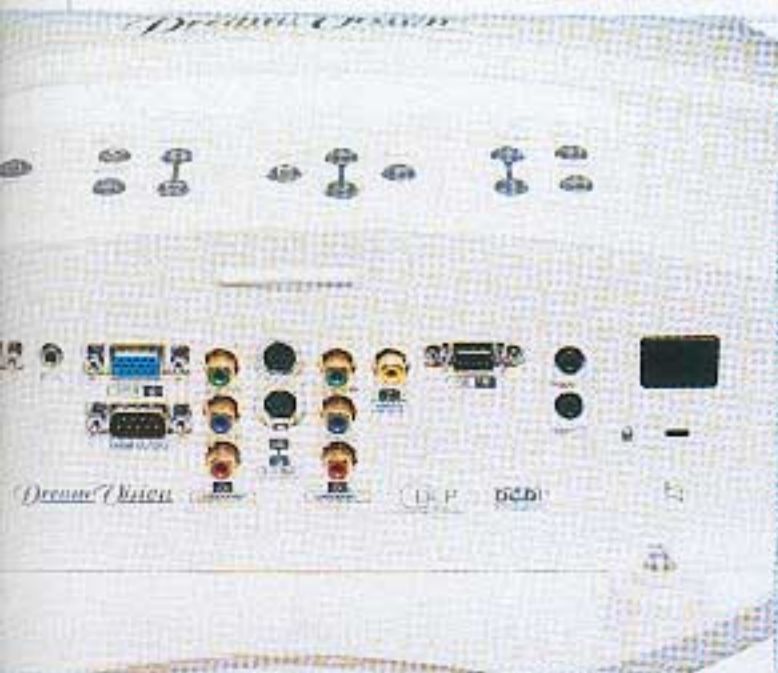
In use, the Dreamweaver is decidedly fine. Although compatible with higher definition sources (which are downscaled

to fit the Matterhorn chipset), the model is at its best with good DVD material. Images look clean and subtle, with excellent skin tones, and there's good differentiation of subtle shadow detail. At the other end of the spectrum, the myriad of subtle variations on white that can be seen in snow scenes, for example, is remarkable. Yellows look bright and pure, or as pure as you'll find with any of the current display technologies. Image processing is also first rate, with little indication of motion artefacts that cannot be directly related to the source signal.

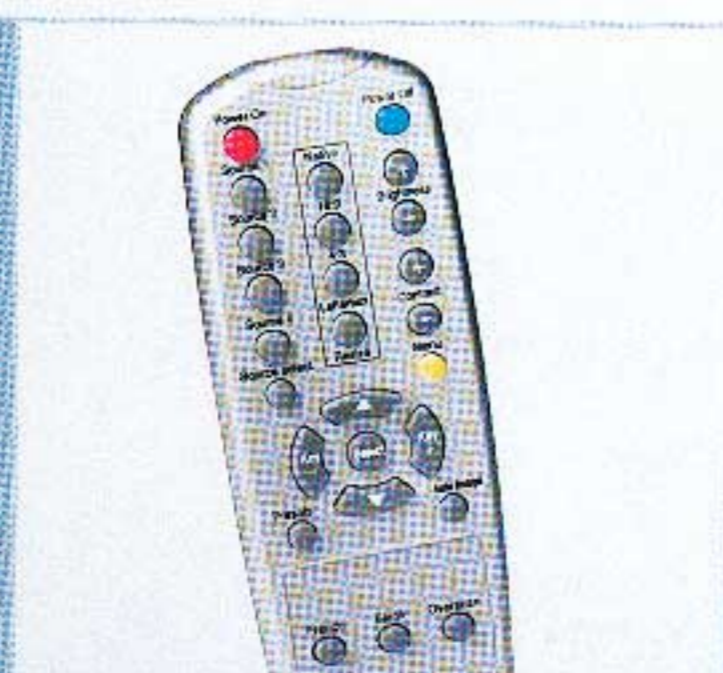
All things considered, this is a pleasing DLP projector that justifies its price-tag by superior aesthetics. If the contrast issue could be addressed, this could end up as something of a design classic... ■

HCC Practical Tip

Choosing the right screen is crucial. A projector like the DreamWeaver Two works best with screens up to 7 m/2m in width and it is generally best to avoid screens which have a high gain - that is higher than 1.3. There are two reasons for this. High forward gain makes the screen directional and off axis views will get short shrift; even those on axis will tend to see uneven results with 'hot spots.' Second, high gain screens tend to work unevenly at different wavelengths and mess up the colour balance. Lower gain screens tend to be more colour neutral and accurate. Finally, if the screen is to sit in a window cavity that is not perfectly blacked out, go for a screen which is back-treated to make it opaque.



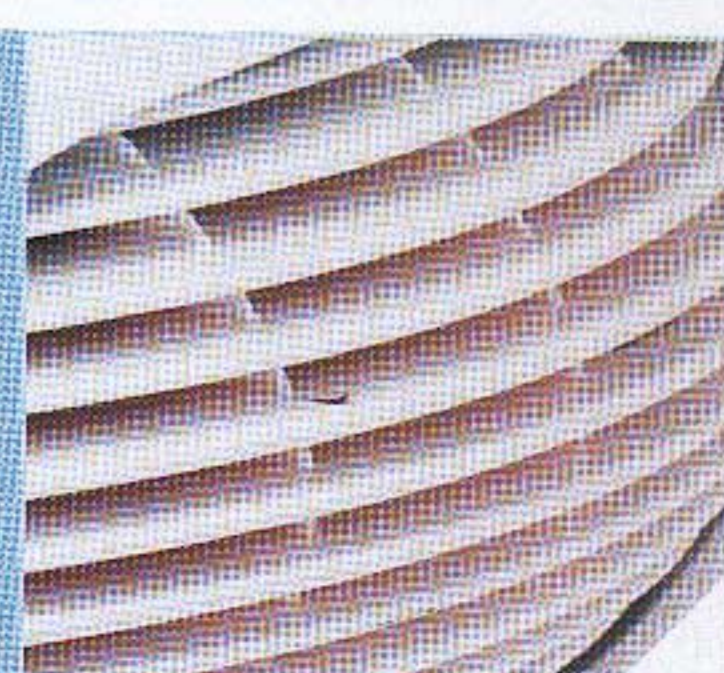
Connectivity is very good and includes a DVI input



A simple remote is offered



Carl Zeiss optics deliver maximum clarity



Watch for light spillage from the ventilation ducts, though