

Fujitsu monitors the plasma position

While other companies embrace LCD, Fujitsu forges ahead with plasma monitors. Chris Jenkins takes in the company's latest stunner



Fujitsu's P50XHA58EB featured with Universal Pictures' Crank. Check out our DVD review on page 117

Fujitsu has carved out an impressive position in the custom install field, and the company's 50-series HD Ready plasma screen range has recently seen two additions; a 42in, the P42XHA58EB, and the 50in P50XHA58EB you're looking at here.

Both panels feature a number of developments including a choice of piano-black or silver bezel, an enhanced AVM II processor, a new type of glass, and improved performance in the shape of a claimed 900cd/m² brightness and 3000:1 contrast ratio.

The P50 is a 1366 x 768 pixel high-definition panel which will display signals up to 1080i. The set looks stunning, almost featureless from the front except for a small panel of controls including power, input and volume to one side. On the back, spring-clip speaker connections are exposed, and other connections are concealed under a shelf. Connections include two HDMI inputs, an RS-232C terminal to interface with a PC, a D-Sub VGA connection for PC video, two sets of component video inputs, composite video input, S-video input, three sets of audio inputs, and the power lead socket.

The remote control is minimal and rather unimpressive, but does its job.

The set's nested menu functions are almost exclusively concerned with setting picture parameters. Settings include colour focus, which allows you to adjust individual hues so you can fine-

tune elements such as skin tone or sky colour. There are eight user memories to store favourite settings.

Features

This is a pure monitor rather than a TV, so it has nothing in the way of TV tuning functions, and only the most basic audio functions built-in - which explains why almost all the control parameters deal with the picture.

Fujitsu's new AVM II processor is designed to deliver improvements to both high-definition and standard video and TV signals, particularly interlaced formats

RATINGS

Highs: Gorgeous design; great HD picture
Lows: Not cheap; unexceptional SD picture

Picture	★★★★
Sound	★★★
Features	★★★★
OVERALL	★★★★

which have to be transformed to progressive format for display. Since Sky's HDTV services are initially opting for the interlaced format 1080i, the new Fujitsu screens should be ideally suited.

Also featured are Noise Reduction circuits to minimise block noise, 'mosquito' noise and 'ghost edges', and Image

LAB REPORT

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
Colour	✓			
Black Level	✓			
Contrast	✓			
Resolution		✓		
Colour temperature (pre-calibration)			9,500K	
(post-calibration)			6,200K	
Luminance (pre-calibration)			17fL	
(post-calibration)			17fL	
Contrast ratio (pre-calibration)			460:1	
(post-calibration)			450:1	

SPECIFICATIONS

ITEM	SUPPORT	DETAILS
HD Ready	○	All requirements satisfied
Progressive Scan	○	480p, 576p, 720p
Digital TV Tuner	×	Nor analogue either
Composite video	○	1 phono input
S-video	○	1 input
Scart	×	Not a sausage
Component video	○	2 inputs
HDMI/DVI	○	2 HDMI
PC input	○	1 VGA
Headphone	×	Nope

Sound: None built-in, optional 2 x 10W speakers

Resolution: 1366 x 768

Brightness: 900cd/m² (claimed); **Contrast:** 3000:1 (claimed)

Dimensions: 1216(w) x 726(h) x 100(d)mm; **Weight:** 45kg

Also featuring

AVM II processor; picture presets; manual control of luminance, brightness, colour, tint, sharpness, black level, colour temperature, colour focus; audio bass, treble, loudness, balance; image noise reduction; Image Adaptive Processing, Natural Colour Tuning, Natural Light Sensor; screen position, progressive scan modes, auto-off timer, all-white and orbit screen savers

Tried & Tested... Plasma Monitor



'Its SD performance may not break new ground, but in handling HD material we think it's a significant leap'

Adaptive Processing to separate and process on-screen text/graphics and video images simultaneously. The set also features a second DCDi-based processor (Directional Correlation Deinterlacing), which eliminates the jagged edges that can appear when standard interlaced video is viewed on progressive scan displays. Essentially, DCDi, by Faroudja, applies improved techniques to replacing missing lines of video from interlaced sourced material. Results should include less picture noise and blurring on VCR and analogue sources.

Performance

We tested with a number of sources including an HD media server, and a conventional DVD player with upscaling HDMI output.

Initial impressions were excellent; with default settings, HD demo material displayed stunningly realistic colours with tons of detail and no sign of any fuzz or blurring. We were particularly impressed by skin tones, and by the realism of colours generally; some plasma displays over-cook colours to the point of nausea, but watching HD demos on this Fujitsu

was just like looking out of a window on a sunny day (assuming your window was in Miami, not NW1).

The story wasn't quite as bright for conventional DVD. Watching the Director's Cut of *Kingdom of Heaven*, using a Philips DVD player with HDMI output, we found the Fujitsu's picture relatively dark and colourless, with annoying line effects, and grain in background detail. Adjusting the monitor's settings introduced enormous improvements in contrast and brightness, but didn't seem to be able to improve the basic DVD picture quality.

Similarly, noise and MPEG blocking from standard digital TV broadcasts could appear exaggerated on the Fujitsu.

We won't say much about sound performance, as the optional PSP1000H speakers (priced around £180) are hardly going to be the sole audio source for anyone buying this screen. They're basic, but adequate.

Conclusion

This monitor certainly isn't cheap – you could get a fully-specified 50in HD Ready plasma TV for less – but you are paying for the Fujitsu's superior processing power, so it's a case of swings and roundabouts. Standard-def performance may not break new ground, but in handling HD material we think it's a significant leap forward ■



Two component video inputs and two HDMI sockets mean the Fujitsu is well connected. There are no Scarts, though



Only power, input and volume controls disrupt the sleek bezel



Fujitsu's typical Plasmavision remote is plain and simple