



**NEXT ONE DOWN
LE40F86BD**

This 40-inch version of the F86 has the exact same feature set and spec as its bigger brother, but at a svelter 1,094 x 290 x 675mm, it's more suited to smaller rooms. That's not to say it's small, mind, 40 inches is just big enough to make full 1080p compatibility worthwhile.



**THE SAME PRICE
PIONEER
PDP-428XD**

This plasma television might be smaller and less pixel packed, but its black levels truly are the best around. Black levels affect colour reproduction and sharpness, making this one of the finest HDTVs ever produced.



**STANDOUT FEATURE
1080P
RESOLUTION**

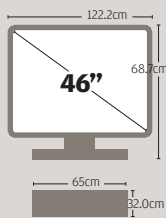
The LE46F86BD's Full HD resolution means that it can display 1080p pictures from a Blu-ray or HD DVD player without downscaling them by a single pixel. This means sharper detail, and more of it, too.

£1,500 THIS DARK DESTROYER DELIVERS HIGHLY DETAILED 1080P PICTURES

SAMSUNG LE46F86BD

UNIT DETAILS

Manufacturer: Samsung
SRP: £1,500
Screen size: 46 inches
Screen type: LCD
Contrast ratio: 25000:1
Max resolution: 1920 x 1080
Ports: Rear: 2 x HDMI v1.3, 2 x SCART, 1 x component video in, 1 x PC in, 1 x RF in, 1 x optical audio out, 1 x analogue stereo out, common interface slot. Side: 1 x HDMI v1.3, 1 x S-Video in, 1 x composite in, 1 x headphone, 1 x USB 2.0
Speaker wattage: 2 x 10W
Max viewing angle: N/A
Unit Dimensions: 1222 x 111 x 687mm
Unit Footprint:



**2ND TEST
THE TUDORS
(BBC HD)**

The sumptuous colour palette of the jousting tournament was delivered in strong, vivid style here, while the more muted tones of the candlelit indoor scenes retained plenty of detail, thanks to the TV's high contrast ratio and strong black levels. The Full HD resolution of the screen ensured that the fine details remained sharp, whatever the scene.

THE LATEST ADDITION to

Samsung's HDTV range is a hulking, elegant number with the Korean firm's customary gloss black finish. Add the soft blue light on the stand and the glowing white, touch-sensitive controls, and you've got something that certainly looks the part. But there's much more to this 46-inch gogglebox than an elegant exterior.

LCD TVs have always struggled with motion, which in the past has resulted in pictures as juddery as a bag of frogs in a dodgem car. To combat this, Samsung has developed 100Hz Motion Plus, which doubles the frame rate of the screen by slipping a cheeky extra frame between the originals. It's not a new concept, but this version works slicker than most. There is the occasional artefact around the edge of a moving object, but you can tone it down or turn it off.

The screen has a stonking 1920 x 1080 resolution, and is able to display full 1080p pictures, including those from a Blu-ray or HD DVD player running at film's native 24p speed. This means you don't get the jarring judder that's sometimes associated with high-definition movies, with films displaying at the exact speed the director intended. It's a must-have feature if you're going down the HD DVD/Blu-ray route.

HD material, whether from disc or Sky box, looks jaw-dropping here. We've never been a fan of LCD TVs' black levels, but the Samsung shatters preconceptions by rendering dark, murky scenes excellently – shadows retain detail and look black rather than washed-out grey. It's not up to the standards of Pioneer's new plasma range, but then, what is?

Colours are bright and rich, and the detail in high-def movies and TV shows is crisp, although we have seen sharper on other full 1080p screens of a similar size. It's very capable with HD games too and, thanks to the slick motion handling, you'll have



“HULKING AND ELEGANT, THE SAMSUNG SHATTERS PRECONCEPTIONS BY RENDERING MURKY SCENES EXCELLENTLY”

an irritation-free blast with even the fastest-paced titles.

The screen isn't so good with standard-def material, though. DVDs look acceptable, but most digital TV channels are either soft, noisy or both.

The 20W of audio power sounds a bit weedy, but the two 'invisible' speakers provide more than adequate sonic accompaniment. You'd be better off with external speakers, though.

SAM KIELDSEN

PICTURE ★★★★★
AUDIO ★★★★★
AESTHETIC ★★★★★
EASE OF USE ★★★★★

A big screen with an even bigger selection of features and stunning HD picture quality.

VERDICT ★★★★★

**REMOTE
PLAY**

**THE
LE46F86BD'S
CLICKER
DISSECTED**

SOURCE SELECTION
This tiny button flips between the different external sources – useful when you've got lots of gear connected up.

VOLUME CONTROLS
Probably the most used keys after the on/off button, so Samsung has helpfully put them right in the middle.

P.MODE
This toggles between different aspect ratio settings, allowing you to make sure 4:3 material isn't stretched out over the whole screen width.



LG HT902TB

■ **£269** A BUDGET-PRICED UPSCALING HOME CINEMA SYSTEM WITH 5.1 SURROUND AUDIO

UNIT DETAILS

Manufacturer: **LG Electronics**
SRP: **£269**
Unit type: **Surround speaker/DVD system**
Output mode/Channels: **5.1**
Frequency range: **25Hz-20,000Hz**
Power Output: **1,000W**
Ports: **HDMI, SCART, component, composite, optical**
Speaker wattage: **225W (sub), 5 x 155W (satellites)**
Special Features: **Plays back compressed audio and video formats, upscales DVDs to 1080i**
Unit dimensions:
Main: **430 x 310 x 70mm**
Front speaker: **280 x 280 x 1,200mm**
Centre speaker: **450 x 102 x 161mm**
Rear speaker: **280 x 280 x 1,200mm**
Subwoofer: **258 x 401 x 406mm**

HOME SURROUND SYSTEMS

that also offer DVD playback are gaining in popularity, and with LG offering a 1,000W setup that also upscales video to 1080i for under £300, it's easy to see why. You'll find four tower speakers (which, rather strangely, only offer the option of floor mounting), a decent sized centre speaker and a rather oversized sub in the box, which all wires up neatly to a DVD player/amplifier with an impressive range of connectivity. Putting everything together is fairly straightforward and you'll find a range of ways to tweak the audio environment via the remote control.

There's also a number of virtual surround modes that can help achieve an effective pseudo surround experience from a stereo signal. Luckily, you can achieve some fairly impressive results simply by playing with these various modes. However, adjusting the volume of individual speakers is far more awkward than

it needs to be, requiring you to trawl through set-up menus on the DVD menu. We also had some issues with A/V synchronisation, which can be compensated for by adjusting the HD AV delay, although it's a tricky process.

Making up for these issues, though, is the performance, range of connectivity and support for compressed video, audio and photo files burnt to DVD or stored on an external USB device. When you take the low price into account, this is an extremely well-featured system that would be ideal for the less discerning HD consumer.

PAUL LESTER

STANDOUT FEATURE DIGITAL MEDIA SUPPORT

Many of the LG's most impressive features are fairly standard on 5.1 systems, but support for compressed media formats such as .avi and .mp3 is a bit harder to come by. The 902TB allows you to either play back files burnt to DVD or copy them to external USB storage, which can then be connected directly to the player.

PICTURE ★★★★★
AUDIO ★★★★★
AESTHETIC ★★★★★
EASE OF USE ★★★★★

If you're looking for a low-priced upscaling/surround-sound solution, the 902TB is one of the best around.

VERDICT ★★★★★



PHILIPS 32PFL9632D

■ **£800** WILL IT LIGHT UP YOUR LIFE?

UNIT DETAILS

Manufacturer: **Philips**
SRP: **£800**
Screen size: **32 inches**
Screen type: **LCD**
Contrast ratio: **8000:1**
Max resolution: **1366 x 768**
Ports: **Rear: 2 x HDMI v1.3, 2 x SCART, 1 x component video in, 1 x PC in, 1 x RF in, 1 x coaxial audio out, 1 x analogue stereo out, common interface slot. Side: 1 x HDMI v1.3, 1 x S-Video in, 1 x composite in, 1 x headphone, 1 x USB 2.0**
Speaker wattage: **2 x 8W**
Max viewing angle: **176 degrees h/v**
Unit dimensions: **829 x 125 x 543mm**

THIS SPANKING NEW set has not one, but two Philips innovations stuffed into its shiny black and silver hide: a revamped Ambilight system (see 'Standout Feature' box) and a completely redesigned picture-processing engine called Perfect Pixel HD.

Perfect Pixel HD takes anything you feed it, chews it up with a little technical wizardry and spits it out looking better. Standard-definition pictures are upscaled to HD resolutions, extra frames are added to smooth out motion, noise and artefacts are eliminated and so on.

Pretty much every flat panel has some form of processing, but Perfect Pixel HD is among the best we have seen. HD images look astoundingly clear and clean here and motion is faultlessly even – plus, without the artefacts. The colours also look natural here rather than falsely oversaturated.

Sound quality is perfectly acceptable but nothing to get very

excited about, while the TV itself is easy to use and even comes with a step-by-step set-up wizard that will help configure the picture settings to your personal tastes.

With a great set of connections thrown in – no fewer than three HDMI's as well as component video – and a smart, stylish design, this is one of the best mid-sized HDTVs around. The only criticism could be the lack of a Full HD screen but, in our opinion, a 1080p panel is unnecessary on this size of TV.

SAM KIELDSEN



STANDOUT FEATURE AMBILIGHT

This backlighting system was made to improve viewers' perception of colour and reduce eyestrain. Lamps project light onto your wall, which changes to match the dominant colours and tones on screen.

PICTURE ★★★★★
AUDIO ★★★★★
AESTHETIC ★★★★★
EASE OF USE ★★★★★

A fantastic, premium quality 32-inch packed with clever technology and a spectacular HD picture.

VERDICT ★★★★★