

pitched at the home user wanting to record to disc the programmes broadcast on TV – basically a high quality replacement for the old VHS VCR. All have built-in tuners and all feature their own type of re-recordable media so that programmes can be erased at will and even edited and shuffled around. For the video and film maker, important features are the external inputs, i.e. the possibility of feeding video footage into the unit from an external source, thereby transferring video onto DVD. There are no lengthy rendering times involved with these units – as video is played into the recorder, the DVD is being created.

PHILIPS DVDR 1000

This unit uses DVD+RW format and was the first stand-alone recorder, which is now slightly dated compared to the rival Panasonic and Pioneer stand-alone recording systems. The unit is not particularly easy to use with icons hiding various subroutines and menus. The build quality of the machine is good. Unlike the other two stand-alone recorders, the Philips is not yet supported by a cheaper, once only recording media format as it uses only the DVD+RW (rewritable

discs). When DVD+R media is released it will make the permanent archiving of video more viable on this unit.

Look out for new models from Philips to be released soon.

PIONEER DVR 7000

Pioneer has been involved with DVD creation for a long time and was the first company to offer commercial DVD recorders. The DVR 7000 uses the DVD-R and DVD-RW format and has wide compatibility with its DVD-R recordings. Recordings off air are virtually indistinguishable from the original broadcast. For the video enthusiast the DVD-R format is good news as these discs are cheaper and more readily available than other formats. Playback compatibility of discs created on the Pioneer in home DVD players is good.

PANASONIC DMR E20

The Panasonic DMR E 20 uses the DVD-R and DVD RAM formats. DVD-R discs created on this unit share the same excellent playback compatibility as on the Pioneer. The DVD RAM format is a rewritable disc housed in a plastic cartridge, and cannot be played

back on a conventional DVD player. The DVD RAM disc is designed to be used for time shift recordings on the Panasonic. Time shift is the ability to, for instance, set the timer on the unit to record a movie at 22h00. You arrive home at 22h30 and while the unit continues to record the programme, you can watch the already recorded part of the programme from the beginning – amazing stuff!

DVD WRITERS FOR YOUR PC

Many of the DVD writers are, when using the appropriate software, capable of writing VCDs and SVCDs as well as DVDs.

The first company to market a commercial DVD recordable drive was Pioneer. This unit was the Pioneer 201 and was equipped with a SCSI interface and cost in the region of R60 000 about 18 months ago. Pioneer's breakthrough came with the A03, boasting an IDE interface that cost about R12 000. Look out for the A04 that has just been released. Other manufacturers have followed suite and today recordable DVD drives are available from the leading companies.

To create your DVDs using a PC you will need a video capture card i.e. a way of

