



£50 inc VAT

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Specification

Internal SATA optical drive; 4x BD-ROM/-RE/-R DL; 8x DVD-R DL/+R/+R DL; 32x CD-ROM; 160ms access time; 2MB buffer; CyberLink PowerDVD 8.0 BD

Build: ★★★★★☆

Features: ★★★★★☆

Value: ★★★★★☆



BLU-RAY DRIVE

Lite-On iHOS104

It's fair to say that Blu-ray hasn't exactly grabbed the market by the throat as industry experts predicted two years ago. Much of the reason for this is cost.

With many a Blu-ray burner costing in excess of £150, it's simply too expensive to add such a drive for storage purposes - especially when any modern DVD drive can copy up to 8GB at a fraction of the cost. USB storage, meanwhile, and particularly hard drive-based units, provides huge amounts of space with an ease of use that optical drives can't get close to.

So what do you do if all you want is to watch Blu-ray films on your PC? Well, you could do a lot worse than slipping in this budget-priced Lite-On BD-ROM drive.

The key to the Lite-On's low price is its read-only credentials - in every department. Whereas more expensive BD-ROM drives offer the ability to write to DVD and CD blank media, Lite-On reasons that you don't want to pay extra for

duplicating facilities; you'll almost certainly already have a good DVD writer to run alongside the Lite-On. And even the cheapest dedicated DVD writers have vastly superior write speeds to those offered by Blu-ray/DVD combo drives.

The iHOS104 can still play DVDs. But you're unlikely to be buying it for those reasons. Rather, you'll be wanting it for its strong four-speed Blu-ray playback. The drive slots easily into the case, and its polished bezel gives it a distinctive look. Install the bundled CyberLink PowerDVD 8.0 BD software, and you're ready to start watching films in HD.

There's little evidence of the iHOS104's low price tag in the quality of the playback. Our test movies ran smoothly and with no glitches, with video always looking vivid and realistic.



CyberLink seems to be the software choice of the majority of Blu-ray manufacturers, and this is understandable, given the slick and logical interface. Its TrueTheater technology even makes a stab at upscaling standard-definition DVD video to HD quality.

Verdict

If you want to add strong Blu-ray and high-quality DVD playback to your PC, but don't want to pay a three-figure sum, the iHOS104 will be £50 well spent. **Robin Morris**