

# HOMECINEMA

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the ultimate home entertainment magazine

# Choice



**100th Issue Special: we predict the future!**  
We preview what's next for home cinema - and look back at its explosive history

## Year of the disc

D recorders from cutting-edge to cheap as chips!

Two  
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decks to  
be won!



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<<< confidence in each other. By reflecting our customers' requirements to them, we can develop new products and work out ideas together.

'Let me give you an example. Our customers tell us that there is a big demand for DVD. There is also a big demand for the internet. By discussing this with the IC suppliers we think we can integrate the functions of a DVD player and a set-top box. I can tell you that we plan to launch such a product by the end of this year.

'It will use the new ZIVA 5.0 chipset from C-Cube which has high integration requiring a much smaller PCB; so we can put the MPEG decoder and servo circuit together. But that's not all. The same product could include a DVB receiver. So you could get DVD, internet and digital TV all from one box.

'Also, as circuit boards become smaller, we are discussing with some Japanese companies the 'thin' loader. This is an ultra-small transport mechanism that could be used for a portable DVD player. We would like to introduce it, but to do so requires a deck mechanism at affordable cost.'

'The other issue about portables that affects cost is the TFT screen. The technology is no problem - only the cost.'

MiCO also revealed it has a capacity of manufacturing around 10,000 VCD players per day, or around 5000 DVD machines. Until recently its main market had been China, Hong Kong, Singapore and other parts of Asia. But since the growth of DVD, it was now concentrating on export markets such as the US and Europe, with Britain becoming one of its most important markets.

That is what's happening now with a two-pronged attack, firstly with a UK shipment of 100,000 DVD players for a customer that is a household name in the High Street, and then with the continued development of its own MiCO brand, the jewel in its crown being a deck that will offer a VCD recording facility ■



Regional marketing manager Steve Leung (left) and MiCO's general manager Joe Chen have been the driving forces behind MiCO's recent innovations

合康精密電子廠  
HCC ELECTRONIC FACTORY



World exclusive

# CD-R Disc recorder revealed

Just as you were preparing for a format war between incompatible brands of DVD recorder, along comes an affordably simple alternative. HCC was first to see it in action



**W**hen HCC visited MiCO Electric in China, the firm threw its doors open in welcome. Why? Because it has developed an amazing new invention of which it is rightfully proud. It wants to show the West that China's reputation for making low-quality 'copy' merchandise is soon to change.

MiCO proposes to introduce a product that it calls a VDR - video disc recorder. Using regular computer CD-R and CD-RW discs it will allow MPEG1 and MPEG2 video recording and make discs that are compatible with VCD (Video CD) and SVCD (Super Video CD) standards.

Because the technology for CD writing is so well-established, this product promises to be highly affordable and MiCO says its VDR will sell for under £500 - that's around a third of the predicted price of a DVD recorder.

It's not only the machine that's cheap. Currently, CD-R discs can be purchased for as little as 50p each and CD-RW media sells for around £1.30 when purchased in bulk. Contrast this to the current £25 asking price for a DVD-RW disc in Japan. MiCO's VDR has taken many industry observers by surprise.

And there's more. In keeping with MiCO's philosophy of 'adding value' to its products it plans to make its VDR product DVD-playback compatible. In essence you'll be able to buy a region-free DVD deck that plays virtually all disc formats including DVD, CD, CD-R, CD-RW, MP3-CD, VCD and SVCD. Plus, it will offer a VCD and SVCD record facility, all for the cost of a mid-price DVD player from a typical Japanese competitor.

And if you think that's clever, MiCO let us into a further secret. It plans to make a machine that does all this and offers SEGA 16-bit games playback. It also has plans for a DVD deck that has an on-board Internet set top box.

And, in case you think such revelations are more fiction than fact, MiCO has EXCLUSIVELY presented HCC with a working sample of its video disc recorder (in fact, the only prototype ever outside China) and full technical information on how it works.