



SHOWER SCREEN

Helsyn 19-inch waterproof TV \$1999

Silver bezels are definitely in this season, with the likes of the Baumann Meyer and Samsung's \$10,000 Series 9 setting the style. But chuck a bucket of water over those two and you might find yourself in a tricky warranty conversation.

You'll fare better with this Helsyn TV, which at 19-inch diagonal is the smallest of the Australian company's range of entirely waterproof TVs, designed to be fitted into the bathrooms of those who fancy a soak and a soap opera, or perhaps for the wall of a patio area which might get an occasional dampening during storm season.

Out of the box the Helsyn is a looker at the front, and a trail of cables at the back. The screen, which is covered with toughened glass, sits just slightly recessed within that wide stainless steel surround, with four neatly capped bolt-holes around the corners and a small power LED light at bottom left. The steel bezel extends out an inch beyond the main box of the TV, which is about 63mm deep, and a bracket is included to fit between your studs, leaving the Helsyn neatly flush-mounted in a wall cavity.

Connections

There are no sockets on the back. Given that the TV is likely to be boxed within a wet area, Helsyn has sensibly sealed in a great snake of input and output cables so that these can be run through a wall or wall cavity to a cosy dry area before making the signal and power connections. The power connection is dropped to 12V before entering the cable snake ('loom' is the word used by installers), so there's no mains voltage entering the wet area.

The sockets on the end of the loom include the 12V power, your antenna connection, one HDMI input (two are listed on the input menu, but one is not connected; you can request this if you want it), one component video plus audio, one composite video plus audio, a VGA connection and — especially useful for homes with smart control systems — an RS232 connection.

Sound

The TV itself has no built-in speakers, but it comes with a pair of circular silver-fronted waterproof speakers. You can drive these

by running cable from the TV's spring-clip speaker terminals (also hanging from the cable snake). The TV's small internal amp and these 70mm full-range cones should provide enough sound for your average bathroom; if you need more you could use the line-level audio output cables to a separate amplifier and back to more waterproof speakers.

Picture

The Helsyn operates like any other TV. It has one digital tuner and one analog; with our roof aerial connected down the sealed cable loom these tuned rapidly and successfully. Helsyn uses full-HD panels on its 32-inch, 42-inch and 55-inch waterproof TVs, but this is only a 19-incher, so mere HD (1440 x 900) is fine for both SD and HDTV broadcasts (the difference is clear between them), and it had no problem accepting a 1080p/24 input signal, making Blu-rays played from PS3 look crisp and clean. The screen is bright, though we wouldn't say bright enough to use in fully outdoor areas during the day; come late afternoon, though, or at night, or in bathroom areas, it looks great.

Remote

The Helsyn comes with a learning remote control that is fully submersible; it can operate other devices, although in fact some of the legends for the TV itself are squeezed between buttons in grey-on-black text — these can be very hard to use. There was no aspect ratio control, but now we've mentioned it to Helsyn, they've rushed off to add it to future shipments, which shows great enthusiasm (they also sent the IR code, should we wish to add it).

Waterproofing

The learning remote can be fully immersed, and we liked that even the manual came in a zip-top waterproof folder. The TV itself has an IPX5 waterproof rating, which means you can't quite give it a rockstar throw into the pool, but it will withstand fairly powerful water jets from a few metres away. And that's quite fun too.

Helsyn currently has these waterproof designs in four sizes (and promises more to come) all with two-year warranty: this 19-inch for \$1999, a full-HD 32-inch for \$3999, the full-HD 42-inch at \$5999, and a full-HD 55-inch at \$12,999. **Jeze Ford**

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