

Conclusion (8 / 10)

Like many, I never expected DVD±R writing speeds to reach 18x, let alone 20x. Nevertheless, Lite-On has pulled off this impressive feat with the LH-20A1H. Aimed squarely at enthusiasts, the drive offers features like SmartWrite, LightScribe and some of the fastest DVD writing speeds available. However, even with all this, it's hard to ignore the fact that there are still a few rough spots that need to be worked out.

When writing to **DVD-R** and DVD+R media at 20x, the LH-20A1H's performance can be summed up in one word: fast. At this speed, it took the drive a little more than five minutes to write an entire 4.7GB DVD. While this was enough to put the LH-20A1H on top, the performance difference is quite small, especially when compared to some of the faster 18x DVD writers, like the **LG GSA-H22N**. The LH-20A1H also turned in some very good times with DVD-RAM and DVD±R DL media. However, due to its Z-CLV writing method, it wasn't as fast as some of the other drives when writing to DVD±RW discs.

When it came to media compatibility, the LH-20A1H gave us some mixed results. While the drive wrote to all of our test media at its rated speeds or better, only three types were supported at 20x. On the other hand, the LH-20A1H's writing quality was fairly good, at least with most single layer DVD±R discs. Unfortunately, the same can't be said for DVD±R DL media as there were a few cases where the results were not as good as we would have liked. Hopefully, Lite-On can address this in a future firmware update.

Lite-On's new drive did very well in our DVD read tests. It was able to read single layer DVD-ROM's and DVD-Videos at 16x and had some very good seek times. The LH-20A1H also reached some pretty impressive transfer speeds with other types of DVD media. In our tests, it read DVD±R discs at 16x and DVD±RW, DVD±R DL and DVD-RAM media at an impressive 12x.

The LH-20A1H was also fairly quick when reading CD's. In our tests, the drive read pressed and CD-R media at speeds as high as 48x and CD-RW discs at 33x. On top of that, it was able to rip audio CD's at an impressive 48x. The LH-20A1H also performed pretty well when writing to CD-R media. The drive not only turned in some impressive times, its writing quality was quite good. Unfortunately, the LH-20A1H's Z-CLV writing method put it at a slight disadvantage in our rewriting tests.

Like Lite-On's previous DVD writers, the LH-20A1H isn't short on features. Along with old favorites like SMART-BURN and SMART-X, it supports two of Lite-On's more advanced technologies, SmartWrite and OverSpeed. The drive also has a good number of writing and rewriting speeds to choose from and has the ability to set the book type of DVD+R/RW and DVD+R DL media. Last but not least, the LH-20A1H features HP's LightScribe Direct Disc Labeling system. An alternative to markers and stick on labels, LightScribe lets you burn graphics and text onto the tops of specially coated discs.

In the end, it usually comes down to price. For what it offers, Lite-On's new drive is surprisingly affordable. Current prices vary depending on the seller, but the retail version of the LH-20A1H can be picked up for less than \$50 on [Pricegrabber](#).

<u>Lite-On LH-20A1H</u> <u>20x DVD±RW/RAM</u>	
Features:	10
Installation:	8
Performance:	7
Overall:	8

Highs:

- Writes to DVD-R and DVD+R media at 20x
- Writes to DVD+RW media at 8x
- Writes to DVD-RW media at 6x
- Writes to DVD+R DL and DVD-R DL media at 8x
- Reads and writes DVD-RAM media at 12x
- Reads single layer DVD-ROM's at 16x
- Reads DVD±R media at 16x
- Reads DVD±RW and DVD±R DL media at 12x
- Features 48x CD-R and 32x CD-RW writing speeds
- Good selection of writing and rewriting speeds
- Excellent DAE speeds
- Low seek times
- Supports SMART-BURN, SMART-X, ABS, SmartWrite and OverSpeed technologies
- Good selection of writing and rewriting speeds
- Supports bitsetting for DVD+R/RW and DVD+R DL media
- Includes software from Nero

- Supports 99 minute CD-R media
- Includes both black and beige bezels
- Affordably priced

Lows:

- High media requirements when writing at 20x
- LightScribe bug limits DVD writing speed to 6x
- Questionable writing quality with some DVD±R DL media
- Slower than other drives when writing to DVD±RW and CD-RW media
- Reads CD-RW media at only 32x
- Has a 2048KB buffer

