

Star Sat SR-X2500CUCI

A Newborn Star With Numerous Pay-TV options and USALS

Like they often say, even a good chef can ruin his first pancake. The same might be also true with receiver manufacturers. It takes an enormous work to create a perfect receiver that everyone would be truly satisfied with. And we're not only talking about hardware engineers nowadays, in the digital world the software can be more impor-

tant. But if the hardware is perfect, and something went wrong in the software kitchen, the overall impression for the product could be worse than it deserves. Luckily, when receivers like StarSat SR-X2500CUCI hit the market, both hardware and software are normally brought as close to sophistication as possible.

tion. To get to this submenu or other "branches" of the Installation "tree", the usual "0000" PIN code should be entered each time, until you decide to change it to something your kids won't guess so quickly.

The Receiver

Looks like the days of huge and ugly black boxes are now gone. With its compact and stylish silver case, the modern receiver like SR-X2500CUCI, can really become a "star" of your TV cabinet. The buttons, available on the front panel (Standby on/off, "OK", "Menu", "Cancel", and last but not least the round button for moving the cursor left, right, down or up) allow the user to get access to the majority of receiver's functions. If in your area the FTA is not so popular, or you just would prefer to see one of the latest movies on your local Pay-TV channel, open the flap on the right side of the front panel. If the package you're interested in uses Viaccess, Irdeto, Cryptoworks, Nagravision, Conax or Mediaguard (Seca) to encrypt its transmissions, go ahead and insert the smart card you have in the upper slot behind the flap. It's an universal smart card slot, and should properly handle the above-mentioned conditional access systems. Should the card you have belong to any other system, just get the needed CI module. With 2 CI slots of

SR-X2500CUCI, you are seconds away from watching the channels you've paid for.

But before we can go that far, let's first connect the LNBS, TV set, VCR and a HiFi system. The back panel of SR-X2500CUCI has one LNB input (with loop-through output), two scarts, three RCA outputs for video and audio, while the fourth is used for a 0/12V switch. Let's also not forget about the serial port for connecting your receiver to PC, as well as the terrestrial antenna input and a modulator output. Not bad, but nowadays it wouldn't hurt also to have the outputs for S-Video and digital audio.

The remote control can really be called ergonomic - it's lightweight and all buttons are located where you would intuitively expect them to be.

Installation

When you power on your new SR-X2500CUCI for the very first time, prepare to answer a lot of questions on the "User Setting" screen. But don't worry, they

are quite simple. Like what language would you like the menu to appear in (you can choose from English, German, French, Turkish and Arabic), what would be your preferred audio and subtitle language, and if you would like the satellites listed in other menus to be sorted by name or position.

If you don't like to spend your time endlessly reading the user manual (which is not that bad after all, but is available only in English), simply browse through the available menu items. One of them, called "Easy Installation", would surely attract your atten-

Channel Search

Pre-programmed satellites cover mainly Europe and Asia, from 55 West to 148 East. These satellites, as well as four blank positions, called "Addsat 1-4", can be renamed or otherwise reconfigured. There are mainly two channel search modes - the expected automatic and manual search, with various sub-options. Unfortunately, the blind scan is not available yet.

As far as our tests showed, it makes more sense to choose the Network search. It takes almost the same time as the regular

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	Channel Memory	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Channel Scan Speed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Channel Switching Speed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Video Quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Audio Quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Tuner Sensitivity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>



one, but results in much more channels saved in your receiver's list. For example, on Astra 1 at 19.2 East the regular automatic search takes 4 minutes 18 seconds, saving 573 TV and 315 Radio channels, while Network search, taking just one minute longer, adds another 53 TV and 28 Radio channels. On less popular satellites, like Eutelsat W4 at 36 East, there is no visible difference between the two search modes. Both bring 74 TV and 3 Radio channels in 2 minutes 12 seconds. It is quite fast, but if you're looking for some particular channel, it might not be in the final list. Even though we upgraded the firmware shortly before performing the above described tests, some important transponders were missing on both satellites. And, traditionally, the only way out is to use the good old Manual Search, which can be easily done thanks to always-up-to-date Sat-codX chart.

SR-X2500CUCI locks to both SCPC and MCPC carriers flawlessly, and its tuner sensitivity also needs to be complimented – such linearly polarized channels, as Lider TV and 2M from Eutelsat Sesat were perfectly received, while for 36 East position we used an LNB set up to receive circular polarizations. Two other receivers in our lab were unable to receive them because of insufficient signal, while SR-X2500CUCI perfectly locked to both carriers.

Everyday Use

Zapping speed differs notably, from 0.3-0.5 seconds, if you are switching between the channels of the same transponder, 0.7-1 second, if you are selecting the next FTA channel from a different

transponder, and it takes up to 1.5-2 seconds for the next PayTV channel.

Once the channel is selected, an information bar would appear in the bottom of the screen. Selecting encrypted channels, conditional access system of which is understood by the universal smart card slot of SR-X2500CUCI would also display the used encryption systems' names. However, if something more exotic, like Z-crypt is used, the receiver will just say "Scrambled Channel", unless you have the needed CI-module and a smartcard for it.

Actual versions of SR-X2500CUCI firmware have a lot of nice features, which both DXers and regular users would appreciate. For example, the fastest way to find the channel you're interested in is no longer browsing through your endless channel list. Simply click the "FN" button on the remote control and enter the first letters of that channel's name. Two more clicks and voila – you are already watching it.

Electronic Program Guide (EPG) is fast, however, you have to get used to the way it's presented in SR-X2500CUCI. Once the EPG button on the remote control is pressed, the same channel list would appear, as after pressing "OK", but with different options. The main disadvantage of such

EPG presentation is – it's not possible to see at the same time what is being broadcasted by other channels as well – the classic grid presentation would still be more preferable.

Even though the menu of the receiver can be only displayed in 5 languages at the moment, special characters (like Russian) are

correctly displayed both in the Channel List and in EPG. However, with channel names transmitted in a font different from Latin, it would not be possible to use the "FN" function to quickly locate channels in a long list. Renaming them in the "Edit" mode is also unfortunately impossible, while in the Channel List mode only Latin letters can be used.



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	Website	http://www.star-sat.com
	E-mail	starsat@emirates.net.ae
	Fax	+971-4-2287765
	Model	SR-X2500CUCI
	Function	Digital Satellite Receiver with 2 CI slots and an universal integrated module
	Channel Memory	4000
	Symbol rate	2 – 42 Ms/s
	DiSEqC	1.0/1.2/1.3/USALS
	0/12V Output	Yes
	Scart Connectors	2
	Video/Audio Output	Yes, RCA
	Digital Audio Output	No
	Color System	PAL/NTSC
	S-VHS Output	No
	Modulator	Yes
	C/Ku-band Compatible	Yes
	SCPC Compatible	Yes
	EPG	Yes
	Teletext	Yes
	USB 2.0 Connection	No
	Power Supply	90-250 V, 50/60 Hz
	Power Consumption	Max. 30 W



Expert conclusion

SR-X2500CUCI is a good choice both for regular users and DXers. Presence of 2 CI slots plus an universal smart card slot means great flexibility for the fans of PayTV reception. DiSEqC, USALS support and 0/12V output make multi-satellite reception easy. Nice features, like the "FN" function, make the operation of this receiver even more pleasant.



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It would be nice to have digital audio and S-Video outputs. Majority of users would still prefer to have the EPG presented as a grid. Although letters other than Latin are supported, in some menus they are still not displayed correctly. And unfortunately, the recording timer is also missing in current firmware. Hopefully, such slight software minuses will be shortly fixed in frequently appearing firmware updates.



Channel List |



Automatic Channel Search |



Channel Searching |



Teletext |