

Selfsat H21D

Features

Size: 565mm x 300mm
 Weight: 4kg
 Reception frequency range: 10.70-12.75GHz
 Antenna Gain: 34.5dBi at 12.70GHz
 LNB noise: 0.7dB
 Polarisation: Horizontal and vertical linear polarities (13V/18V selection)
 Local oscillator frequency: 9.75GHz/10.60GHz (0/22kHz selection)
 Current consumption: 150mA

Rating

PLUS
 ■ Compact size and discreet design

MINUS
 ■ No skew 'built-in' ■ Expensive compared with a dish

Build	★★★★★★
Setup	★★★★★★
Performance	★★★★★★
Features	★★★★★★
Value	★★★★★★

Verdict
WHAT Satellite AND DIGITAL TV 78%

The H21D is almost featureless except for the (special) LNB bolted on the back. You can buy different versions of this antenna with twin (£170) and quad (£200) LNBs, and (if you could get hold of one), you can easily change the LNB at a later date.

The antenna itself is completely assembled; only the mounting bracket needs to be put together.

The H21D can be fixed in a number of different ways to cope with different situations. All use a tiny alt-azimuth mount that's fixed to the back of the antenna. This has a base that pivots around one bolt with a bolt-through-a-curved-slot arrangement to lock it in position and a similar locking hinge to provide the elevation adjustment. The attachment to the back of the antenna is a further rotational adjustment to provide for skewing the antenna to account for polarity differences in different locations.

To fix the H21D to a wall, a simple steel bracket is screwed to the wall and a 35cm octagonal-section arm bolted to this. The tiny mount is fixed on the end of this.

For so small an antenna the whole arrangement protrudes a long way from the wall – it has to, to accommodate an installation with the antenna sighting along the wall. What's more, the antenna sits relatively high above the arm so all of the mount shows up to any observer on the ground. A choice of different length arms, and fixing to the top of the antenna would make the whole antenna less obvious.

The same basic mount can be used to clamp the antenna to a window frame, with an additional support for the pole resting on the wall. Whether this will work depends on the build of the window. Instead, you can also clamp the wall bracket to a vertical or horizontal pole – such as a metal balcony balustrade (which are popular on the Continent for which the H21D is mainly intended). Since the mini adjustable mount can be attached either way around on the end of the pole, the whole antenna can be fixed protruding into the balcony if required. Last, the

adjustable mount can be fixed to a small plate for use fixed (or even unattached) on a horizontal surface.

Aligning the H21D is simple enough, although the mini adjustable mount is fiddly to loosen and lock because of its size. There's a compass supplied with the antenna and an 'attenuation pad' to stick onto the front of the antenna (to block off some of the signal so you can more easily find the sweet spot). Then it's just a case of pointing it in roughly the right direction and searching for the best signal, determined by a meter or a receiver's display.

On skew

Getting the skew right is probably the hardest part. The whole antenna is turned and it's quite hard to find the best spot. There's no skew built in, so quite a rotation is required for, say, Astra 28.2°E and this largely prohibits hiding the H21D by aligning it with features of the building.

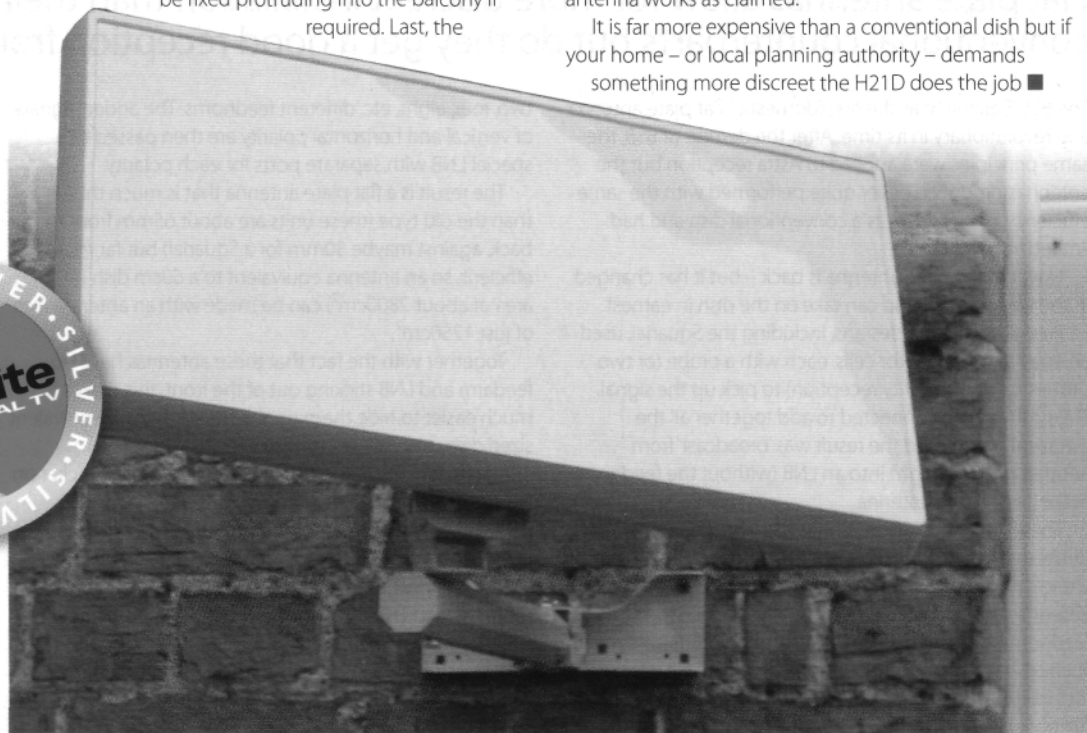
You can do more to hide it by use of a sticker for the front panel from The Satellite Shop (Tel: 01892 548468, www.sqish.co.uk). There's a choice of either 'decorative' designs or custom stickers made from a photograph of the wall (or anything else) behind the antenna. The stickers are produced life-size and can even account for the skew angle. They're matt-finish and UV-stabilised so they should disguise your antenna for many years to come.

Eurosat modestly claims only that the H21D will perform as a zone 1 Sky minidish – for reception of Sky Digital from all but the North and extreme west of the UK – and that it certainly, and easily, does.

Selfsat says it's the equal of a 60cm dish, which is more taxing. But we tried out the H21D on Astra 19.2°E and on Hot Bird 13°E at the Cambridgeshire test site and it pulled in all the signals with relative ease.

A digital signal meter registered a slightly reduced BER compared with a 60cm dish and a few channels on Hot Bird suffered a little in very heavy rain, but basically this antenna works as claimed.

It is far more expensive than a conventional dish but if your home – or local planning authority – demands something more discreet the H21D does the job ■



Stickers can be created from digital photos you provide

