

Using standard recordable DVDs for your Blu-ray films

by Richard Lawrence



It does not seem to be very widely known that you can use standard recordable DVD blanks for short Blu-ray films of around 20 minutes duration. It is not necessary to use the relatively expensive Blu-ray disks providing your film is not larger than the 4.7 GB capacity of DVD-R disks.

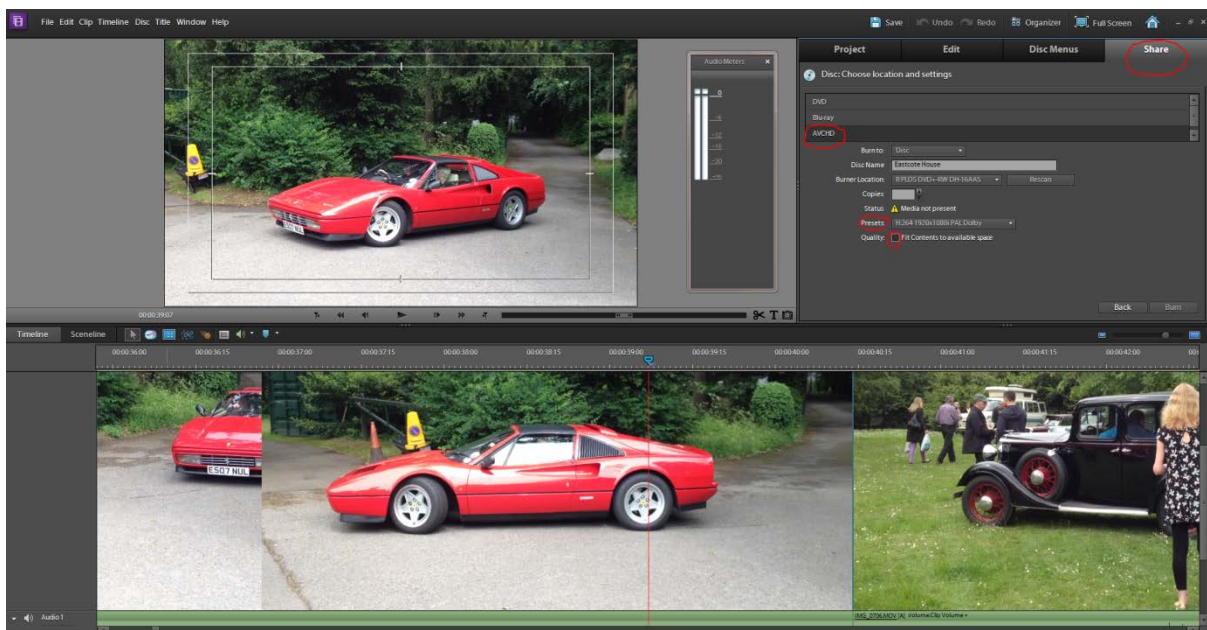
The standard format for Blu-ray video recorded to a DVD is AVCHD. Note that not all stand-alone Blu-ray players are able to play AVCHD discs. Look for this logo **AVCHD** on the player if you are not sure. You cannot play an AVCHD disc on a DVD player however you can create an AVCHD disc on a standard DVD burner.

So how does one produce an AVCHD disc? The first step is to complete the editing of your film using your editing programme of choice whether it be Adobe Premiere Pro, Adobe Premiere Elements, Sony Movie Studio or Cybelink Power Director, to name but a few.

Next render your film with a standard Blu-ray (H 264) template to a Blu-ray folder or single file including the sound track. (*.mts or *.mt2s file) Note that some rendering templates render the sound and video tracks separately. It may be necessary to customise the template to achieve the sound multiplexed with the video. Some editing software, such as Sony Movie Studio, will have an AVCHD template built in. Save the *.mts file or BDMV folder onto your hard disc drive and verify that it plays correctly on your computer.

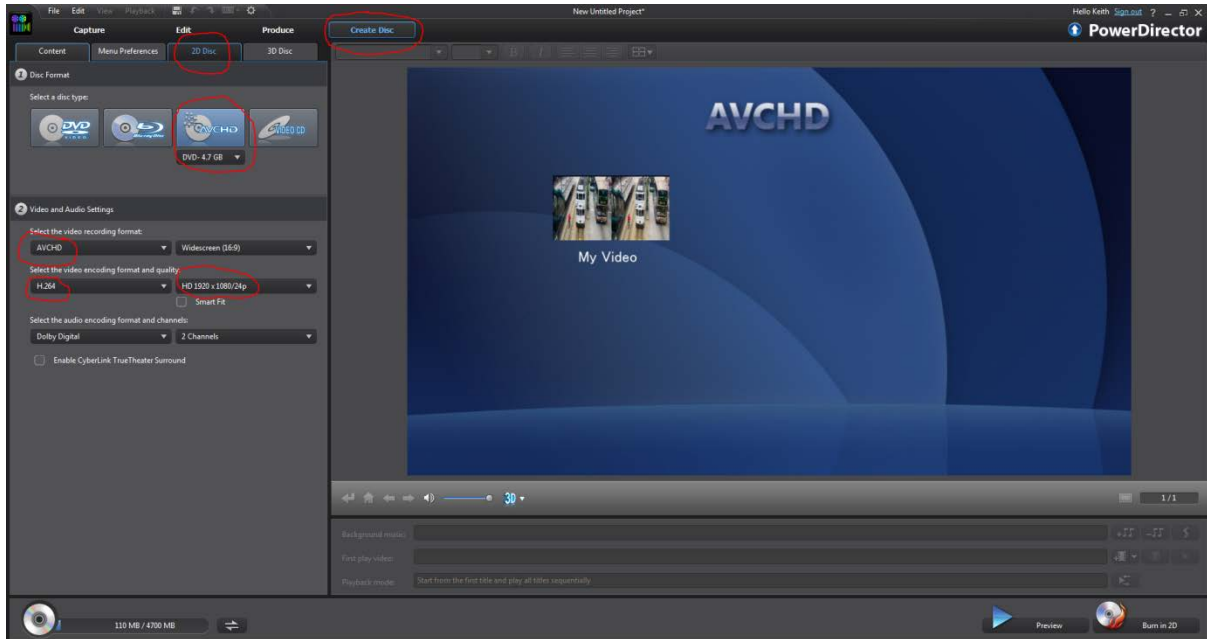
The next stage will depend upon whether your editing software supports the creation of AVCHD discs. Unfortunately Adobe Premiere Pro/Encore does not. An example of one that does is Adobe Premiere Elements v10 (APE10) and later. The following illustrates how to use Adobe PE10 to create an AVCHD disc.

From the main screen select 'Share', then from the available options 'AVCHD' followed by the appropriate H264 PAL pre-set. It is best to avoid ticking the quality box which will further compress your video to fit the available space. Place the media in your DVD drive and select Burn.



This will produce an AVCHD DVD with no menu. If a menu is needed then this needs to be created using the DISC MENU option first.

Another example is the use of Cyberlink Power Director v11 onwards to output to an AVCHD disc. There is a similar set of settings to those in Adobe PE 10. The screen shot below shows this:



The order of selection is, Create Disc, Disc type & format - AVCHD, Encoding - H264, Quality - HD 1920x1080/50i. If Menus are required these are set from the Menu Preferences tab.

If your editing software does not support the creation of AVCHD discs there are number of freely available software applications which can take your rendered *.mts file or BDMV folder and format a DVD with the required AVCHD file structure.

One of the more well known of these is ImageBurn which can be downloaded here: <http://imgburn.com/index.php?act=download> . This application assumes you have the correct BDMV folder created by your editor.

Having installed ImageBurn, from the start page, select "Write files/folders to disc"; then click the "Browse for a folder" button and select the folder containing your full AVCHD structure; select "Device output" via toggle button; uncheck "Verify" box; under the Options tab, select "File System" = UDF and "UDF Revision" = 2.5; use defaults for all other options; click the "Build" button to begin the burn process.

The above should enable you to get started with producing short Blu-ray films on DVD blanks. Note that the AVCHD standard does not provide all the facilities of the full Blu-ray specification. One difference is that the data rate is limited to 18Mbps but this is not likely to have a significant impact on the displayed results in most cases.