

Choosing a Big Screen for Your Home Cinema

Is it time to upgrade that old 68cm TV to something bigger and better? You've got lots of options. Back when I was young, selling a new television was pretty easy. Customers would come into the store, stand in front of a wall of televisions and from a relatively few brands, select the one that was the right size for the money and that was about it. It would then be loaded into the car, taken home and plugged in. No hassle, no fuss. How things have changed!



Today, if you are like many of our clients, television buying seems to be both a confusing and difficult experience. You are confronted by a dizzying array of large televisions in a variety of shapes and sizes. Really cool flat screen Plasma and LCD televisions are replacing traditional sets. Beside them are the really big Rear Pro TVs, which come in all sorts of new technologies including DLP, LCD or LCOS. Of course, they all do digital widescreen television – SDTV or HDTV depending on model and appropriate STB.

Most people recoil in shock at all this techno-babble. "Why did the consumer electronics industry create all this confusion?" they ask. We have heard that "it's consumer driven." Possibly! The fact is that we're all in it together and if we want to make the right choice then it behoves us to engage in a little simple education. So let's take a few minutes to sort it out.

This section, 'Choosing a Big Screen for Your Home Cinema' provides information on the various technologies that are available to help you better enjoy the whole experience at your place. There are a number of choices, each with its own unique

set of advantages. However, not all technologies are suited to every home.

After you read this introductory article, you will be able to click on any of the individual topics that interest you. After reviewing these no-nonsense articles, it will be easier for you to enter our store, know the differences and better understand what are your needs and priorities.

Please note: this section only deals on material relevant to the Visual aspect of Home Cinema. Please see 'Choosing an Audio System for Your Home Cinema' for more information on what is important in audio selection.

To choose the best technology for you, it is wise to first consider your priorities. Take time to carefully consider your priorities and why they are important to you.

Toshiba 86cm CRT TV

■ **Size:** The largest direct-view CRT (analog TV) is now a maximum 86cm diagonal picture, whereas a Projection system can be 2 metres wide, or more. As a guide, multiply the diagonal measurement of your intended screen by 2.5 to get the minimum viewing distance. A smaller picture will always be more detailed than a larger picture. The number of seats in the room will also impact on the size of the screen.



■ **Picture quality:** Brightness, black level, colour saturation, colour accuracy, greyscale accuracy, uniformity, correct geometry, freedom from artefacts, freedom from visible scan lines or pixels, smoothness of motion, and others.

▪ **Your room and lifestyle:** Some technologies require a completely dark room with special light control while others are amenable to ambient room light. Light control is definitely a factor with projectors

▪ **Price:** Some technologies are quite a bit more expensive than others, and although the cost of an item may be important, it must always be remembered that "quality is long remembered when price is soon forgotten."

Choosing the best product for your needs also requires a familiarity with all the relevant technologies and all the latest product models. We recommend that you consult us early in your project. As a general guide, we've outlined some of the options below. Note, in our articles, we refer to high-performance equipment, equipment that in our opinion meets minimum standards of performance. Low performance products have different profiles. Funnily, the better products often don't cost much more!



Now is an exciting time to be shopping for a TV. If your home is like most, the TV is the audio/video component that gets the most use. With such a big spend and so many 16:9 widescreen and high-def models, there is sure to be one that's just right for you!

▪ **Direct-View:** Traditional CRT (cathode-ray tube) TV's are still a popular choice. We stock Loewe and Toshiba. Their sharp, bright images provide a vivid viewing experience in virtually all rooms and lighting conditions. The largest size usually gives a 76cm viewable picture.

▪ **Rear-Projection:** Nothing beats the impact of a big picture – especially for movies and sport. The latest DLP and LCOS models have very slim cabinets and picture quality that has to be seen to be believed. All are 16:9 widescreen and many are 1080i HDTV ready when used with a HD STB.

▪ **Flat Panel:** Plasma and LCD performance and reliability has improved *dramatically* over the past couple of years. Prices have also come down. A Plasma or LCD panel's space-saving size and light weight allow you to enjoy their crisp, bright images just about anywhere. Hang on the wall TV is here!

▪ **Projection:** Once only for the rich and famous, the market is now inundated with Projectors. However, a word of caution. Cheaper units are basically Data products capitalising on the growth in Home Cinema. What are the differences and how much should you spend? We are ready to help.



SIM2 C3X Projector

Conclusion: In summary, go for the best 'quality' picture you can afford! It is better to purchase a really good Direct-View Television rather than a poor quality Projection system. Your viewing options will depend largely upon what type of room you have available, your seating arrangements and how far you intend to sit from the screen.

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