



This past year saw plenty of seismic changes in the consumer electronics industry. Televisions added a third dimension. Internet movie and music streaming moved into TVs, Blu-ray players, and A/V receivers at nearly every price tier. The iPad arrived as an A/V powerhouse out of the box, with loads of uses not just for personal entertainment but also for whole-house system control.

Mirroring these changes are the products you see here, which were culled from a list of nominees submitted to **Sound+Vision** by our valued posse of contributing technical editors.

There are 3D TVs, of course, along with Blu-ray players and media servers that do everything short of making your

viewing/listening decisions for you. But just as intriguing are several new takes on that old standby product category, the loudspeaker. You'll find an on-wall model with a mere 1½-inch-thick enclosure that delivers incredibly dynamic performance, a tower speaker that seems to defy physics by putting out deeper bass than its slender cabinet and smallish drivers have any right to, and another tower that simply sounds better than a \$2,500/pair speaker has any right to.

All of this goes to demonstrate that with each passing year, every corner of the A/V world manages to do its part in the push toward making the world a better-looking and better-sounding place.

— Al Griffin

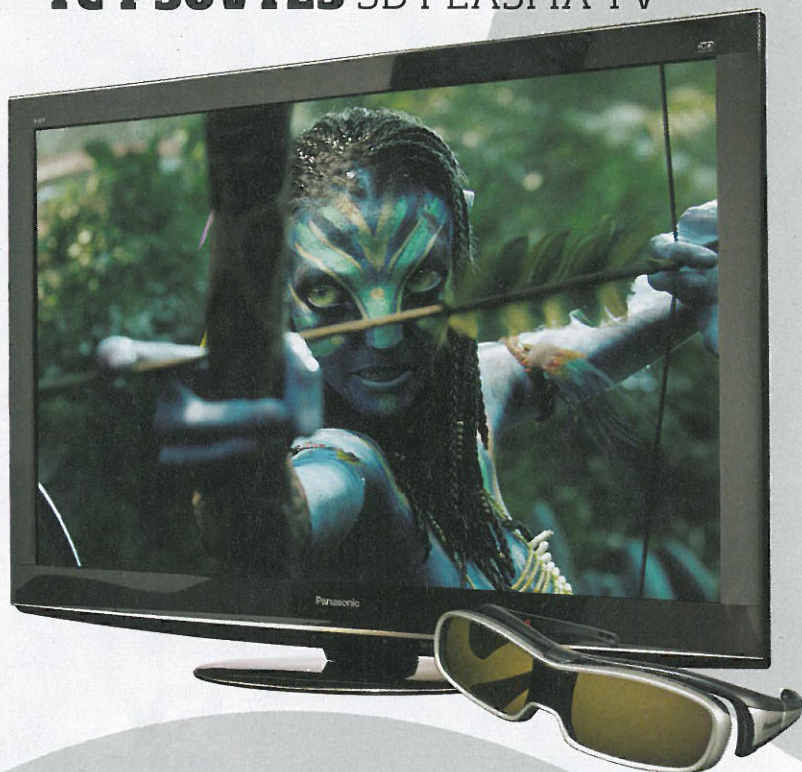
VIDEO PRODUCT OF THE YEAR



SEPTEMBER 2010

Panasonic

TC-P50VT25 3D PLASMA TV



When historians look back on the year 2010, they'll find plenty of events that changed the course of history — everything from an earthquake in Haiti to the launch of Apple's iPad. For me, however, 2010 will be the year that 3D changed the TV landscape. And of the many 3D-capable sets that rolled out, Panasonic's TC-P50VT25 (\$2,600) was the most impressive.

The THX-certified TC-P50VT25 has a Pro picture menu with extensive adjustments and a 96-Hz mode to properly display 24p video from Blu-ray Discs. Its Viera Cast media-streaming suite offers a wide range of connected-TV options — everything from Netflix to Pandora, Twitter, and Skype. The TC-P50VT25 really shines, though, when you settle back to watch a movie. Here you'll see a seamless picture with strong contrast and, once you've tweaked its settings, dead-on accurate color. That excellent performance carries into the 3D realm, with movies looking as solid and crisp as they did in the theater. (Depending on the theater you frequent, perhaps even better!)

With almost nonexistent software support through most of 2010, it's fair to say that 3D TV had an uphill battle. It's a good thing, then, that a set as impressive as Panasonic's TC-P50VT25 was leading the charge.

— Al Griffin

panasonic.com

SEPTEMBER 2010

Finally, a maintenance-free video projector! The Q-750i is one of a wave of new home theater projectors illuminated by LEDs instead of UHP lamps. With these projectors, you never have to replace a lamp, and the manufacturers say the LEDs won't dim or shift color with age, as UHP lamps do. Plus, LEDs can deliver superior color saturation as well as a wider color gamut. What's not to love? Well, the picture's not very bright (yet), and LED-driven home theater projectors are still expensive at about \$15,000 each.

Runco's Q-750i shares the same basic chassis as several other LED-driven projectors, including Digital Projection's M-Vision Cine LED and Vivitek's H9080FD. The projectors are more or less equivalent in performance, but the Runco has a slightly lower list price (\$14,995) than some competitors and by far the nicest enclosure of the bunch. It's also the only one that's THX-certified, which means your installer can get a good picture out of it without a lot of fussy calibration.

Adjusted for a "by-the-book" picture, the Q-750i delivers extraordinarily vivid color. With the Personal Color Equalizer engaged, the colors become eye-popping but not cartoonish. It's a look I found appealing enough to quiet the screams of the video purist lurking deep in my soul.

— Brent Butterworth

Runco

Q-750i DLP PROJECTOR



runco.com