

Title:

Home Theater: 3 ugly secrets revealed!

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1092

Summary:

What you need to know about home theater before you buy into high definition, surround sound, flat screens, and all the other gear that goes with it. A guide to what they don't tell you!

Keywords:

home theater,home theater system,hdtv

Article Body:

Secret #1: WHAT YOU BUY TODAY WILL BE OBSOLETE TOMORROW, IF IT ISN'T ALREADY.

What you should do about it:

Don't sweat it. Just read what you can before you buy to educate yourself so you don't make a terrible mistake. If you shop wisely, you can get a tremendous leap over what you have come to know as television. The good news is the better stuff coming down the pipe is knocking prices down on the stuff out now.

Plus, consumer surveys SCREAM to the electronics companies that people WANT these new, slim, high resolution Home Theater setups. There are billions of dollars to be made. Those surveys snapped the head of every exec in the biz. They geared up to make more. "Make more" equals "economies of scale" equals "make MORE money," even at lower price points! The first one costs a bazillion dollars: research, tooling up, marketing. Then, with volume, the cost per unit plummets. The guys who want to have very latest get to pay the most. Why be that person?

If you've already purchased a particular technology - Plasma, DLP, LCD, front or rear projector, whatever, ENJOY it. It IS important to realize that wide screen aspect ratio does not equal high-definition TV, though. Some think if the picture is wide, they're there. That might be FAR from there. I hate to say this because I'm a guy and guys hate this - you might want to read the instructions.

Secret #2. And this is really, really big: YOU CAN'T TELL WHAT THE PICTURE LOOKS

LIKE FROM WHAT YOU SEE IN THE STORE.

What you should do about it:

What you are doing now. Research. The hard part is cutting through the opinions of weenies who want to see a feather clearly, blowing in the wind at 50 yards. I'll help you there. Read on.

There are three reasons why Home Theater Ugly Secret #2 is true.

1- The sets aren't adjusted right. They are turned way up to dazzle you. The dazzle will bother you when you get home. Worse, it drives the set to what you'd call distortion. The better picture happens when the picture is turned down in brightness, sharpness, contrast, and whatever else has been goosed. Why do they let this happen? It's like a conspiracy that everyone is in on - except you. Because when they are all lined up, 40 sets in a row, the manufacturers know you might think theirs is different and better. But they ALL do it, so it's a wipe. And if a store is a little bit shady, with some hi-def sets to move at a higher profit margin, well, now, those might have been "optimized" to look better than the others.

Yes, most of the hi-def sets CAN be adjusted correctly for you in your home. MAYBE by you.

Did I mention that Bubba the shopper-doofus was there, just before you browsed in, that he found the remote control and screwed up all the settings anyway?

So, you can't trust what you see in most stores. But wait, there's more.

2- Many of the sets are being fed video poorly. A distribution amp or humungous splitter shares the picture among the displays. That hurts the picture. A store might have 40 sets on one distribution, but the ones they really want to move on a purer source, showing a better picture. You'll never know.

3- What you see may or may not be high definition or even good quality. Just as bad, it might be super fidelity you won't likely ever see again. Because, what you watch at home might not be broadcast or cablecast with a good picture. So, you can see misaligned sets fed bad pictures that bear little resemblance to

anything you'd see at home. Ready to drop several THOUSAND on that? Didn't think so. But tens of thousands of people do. Probably WILL this weekend. Eager commissioned salespeople will confide that THIS unit is the superior one. No hidden agenda there, do you think, huh?!

Secret #3. THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH EVERYTHING.

What you should do about it:

Relax. Don't obsess. It's more a matter of things being done different ways by different designers. For example, on this set, the colors are spot on, but the resolution is a little off. On that set over there, the resolution is incredible, but the red... You are still going to love the setup you buy - and remember - you just might have it for 10 years or MORE! You'll look at it more than you look at your wife, husband or kids. I'm talking face time. Relax. We'll get you through this.

A personal note to THE OBSESSIVES:

If you haven't already left this article, I want you to think about the fact that there are millions of screen dots to go wrong. Not that they will, but the 317th one from the left and 119th from the bottom IS a little shaky, don't you think? Time to take a deep breath. One, two, three. Exhale. Even though there's something wrong with everything, if you embrace that thought and LET IT GO you'll be able to enjoy the - uh - big picture. The state of the Home Theater art - even if it IS yesterday's art, is very very nice.

Relax.

Why a Home Theater? And what's it MEAN anyway? Good questions. A Home Theater is simply the natural; evolution of the TV experience. Now that we can, we do. It's how it goes. Basically, you get a shorter, wider picture (more like a movie in a... theater) and the picture is much clearer than the TV you sat too close to as a kid - remember Mom yelling?. And you can have better sound too. It can be all around you, or just in the front. You choose. You can have a box that plays the deep notes - fun things like car crashes, earthquakes, whale farts, cannons.

You get to experience them like never before. It's not essential, but it's there if you want it.

A Home Theater is just like going to the movies. Except the screen isn't that big, but you can get a good seat. You don't have to endure advertisements in the 'pre-show entertainment' if you don't want to. You can go to the bathroom and touch the door handle on the way out. No paying \$5.75 for a bag of stale popcorn. No popcorn bagging zomboid teenagers. No lines. No sticky floors (unless that's the way you live, not that there's anything wrong with that.)

There. Now you know the top 3 Ugly Home Theater secrets.