

Holiday Home Entertainment

Home for the Holidays

Entertainment systems bring the movie theater into your living room

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Give the gift of home entertainment this holiday season or treat yourself to a high-performance system. The latest technology — including HDTVs, Blu-ray and DVD players and home theater speaker systems — are bringing the movie-theater experience right into your living room.



PIONEER DV-410VK DVD Player

For an authentic theater experience this winter, be on the lookout for an HDTV. While there are three main categories of big-screen TVs — flat panel, rear projection and front projection — flat panels, whether they use LCD or plasma technology, are typically the most popular.

The main selling point for HDTVs: higher-quality resolution — in fact, HDTV offers more than twice the resolution of standard programming.

And here's another shopping tip: Bring along a couple of your own DVDs (preferably those with dark scenes) to select a new set that's just right.

HD FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Known for its blacker blacks, faster response times and ability to display billions of colors, **Panasonic's VIERA PZ85** series, with 42-inch (\$1,500), 46-inch (\$1,900) and 50-inch (\$2,300) models, offers top-notch resolution, plus Game Mode, VIERA Link, an SD Memory Card slot, a PC input, three to four HDMI connections and hidden front speakers.

Pioneer's KURO plasma aims to achieve absolute, pure black, providing finer detail, greater contrast and the ability to produce deeper colors. With six unique sound settings — Standard,

Movie, Sports, Performance, Game and Dynamic — Pioneer's 50-inch (\$4,000) and 60-inch (\$5,500) KURO HDTVs offer a listening experience comparable to a movie theater. KURO's Optimum Mode, a feature that monitors video and room lighting, adjusts the picture and sound automatically — no need to fiddle with the remote.

LG's PG60 series includes 50-inch (\$2,500) and 60-inch (\$3,800) models, which deliver deeper blacks and superior shadow detail, and also features high-tech perks like Dual XD Engine, THX Display Certification, four HDMI inputs and built-in A/V modes to customize picture and sound settings based on what you're watching.

SHADES OF BLU-RAY

As the latest-and-greatest 2.0-profile Blu-ray players, coined "BD-Live," hit the market, this holiday season is shaping up to be many shades of Blu.

Even if you have an extensive DVD collection, a Blu-ray player can make for a good investment. First of all, most Blu-ray players are backward compatible and actually improve the resolution of DVDs — so your collection will look better than ever.

Secondly, a Blu-ray player is the single best way to get a crisp image onto your new HDTV. Additionally, the surplus of storage capacity found on Blu-ray discs

allows room for extra content and special features, including BonusView (picture-in-picture) — which allows you to view added content or commentary in a small window while watching the movie — and BD-Live, which provides access to interactive content from the Web.

Panasonic's DMP-BD35K Blu-ray player featuring BD-Live (\$299) boasts true-to-life colors and lifelike surround effects in one of the slimmest heights available, just 49 mm. The SD-memory-card-equipped player also makes it easy to transfer holiday photos or videos from a digital camera or camcorder to your flat-panel display.

The **Pioneer BDP-51FD BonusView** Blu-ray player (\$599) provides picture-in-picture interactivity and delivers possibly the most cutting-edge video processing on the market. The player also offers jitter-free playback of CDs, a center loading tray for reduced vibration and high-performance DVD playback, all backed by a one-year warranty.

As the winner of PC World's Best Buy award, the **BDP7200 from Philips** (\$399) boasts features such as Deep Color (utilizing more than 1 billion colors and eliminating on-screen color banding to create vivid images), BD-Java compatibility, picture-in-picture and EasyLink.

LG's BD300 (\$350) is the first Blu-ray player to wrap up Blu-ray and Netflix into one shiny package, allowing Netflix subscribers to instantly stream more than 12,000 movies and television shows via a high-speed Internet connection.

For a more budget-conscious holiday season, check out HD-compatible DVD players, such as **Pioneer's DV-410VK** DVD player (\$99), which when used in conjunction with an HDTV can upgrade your DVD collection to a higher resolution at a fraction of the cost.

The **Roku Netflix Player** (\$99) is compatible with every type of television from the latest HDTVs to a standard set and is a must-have for Netflix junkies. The player provides Netflix customers unlimited access to a library of more than 12,000 movies and television shows, and they can stream titles straight to their televisions at no additional cost. It's simple to set up and requires only a broadband connection (wired or wireless).

A SEASON OF SOUND

A quality sound system can make your entertainment system come to life. While speakers can be purchased piecemeal, for optimal sound quality, choose a setup that includes five to seven speakers, including main speakers (front left and right), rear speakers (surround sound), a sub-

woofer and center speakers.

With unique champagne-glass styling and audio expert Mark Levinson's tuning, **LG's LHT888** Home Theater System (\$650) packs a punch at an affordable price. Comprised of a 700-watt 5.1-channel DVD receiver, floor-standing front and rear (wireless) speakers, a tabletop center speaker and a subwoofer, the LHT888 offers superior image quality and audio performance.

"Minimum exposure and maximum



LG PG60 60-inch Widescreen HDTV

excitement" is the driving force behind **Mirage's MX 5.1** Home Theater System (\$1,200). With five palm-sized, two-way bookshelf speakers and a compact 8-inch subwoofer to tackle the bass, this system provides 360-degree sound.

The **JBL CS480** Home Theater Loudspeaker System (\$799) features four wall-mountable satellite speakers, a wall-mountable center channel speaker. And an 8-inch, 125-watt subwoofer, and with its high-gloss black finish and chrome trim, it can mesh with many types of home décor.

Mirage MX 5.1 Sound System



Roku Netflix Player