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WE PICK THE BEST



AWARDS EDITION



WHEN IT COMES TO INNOVATION, LG IS A CLEAR LEADER

With six awards at this year's Smarthouse Smart Awards, including the prestigious 'Vendor of the Year' Award, LG's smart thinking and imagination is certainly bearing fruit.

In just 15 years, LG has transformed the Australian market with a wealth of innovative products that allow for a more efficient home.

More than just the ultimate in design, LG products deliver positive change to everyday life through superior, intuitive technology.

Find out more lg.com.au



Winner Product of the Year
LG 84" Ultra HD 3D TV

Winner Best TV over 75"
LG 84" Ultra HD 3D TV

WINNER

VENDOR OF THE YEAR



**Winner Appliance
of the Year**
LG door-in-door
GR-D907SL Fridge



Winner Best Monitor over 23"
LG IPS277L Monitor



Runner Up Best Value Home Theatre
LG BH9520TW Home Theatre

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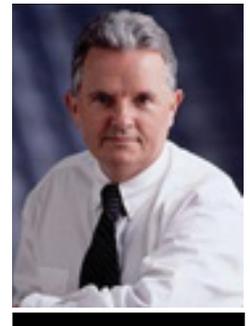
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DAVID RICHARDS
CEO & EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

COMMENT

SOFTWARE DRIVING GREAT DESIGN

This year's SmartHouse Awards reveal consumer technology is heading in a new direction where software is as important as the physical hardware.

Functionality wrapped around beautiful design is not new. Sony was doing it years ago but somehow they forgot what was important. They also failed to recognise that software was the means by which users had access to functionality.

It took Apple with their iPod to change all that and what we have now are products that not only look good, but deliver a great user experience.

This year we have two Product Of The Year Awards: the LG 84 inch Ultra High Definition TV and the Samsung Galaxy Note 2.

The LG 84 inch TV has established a new benchmark for TV quality and as new Ultra High Definition movies become available, such as the soon to be released *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*, owners of this TV will be able to take advantage of the stunning picture quality this TV delivers.

We have also given LG Electronics our Vendor Of The Year Award. This was not an easy choice as both Samsung and LG have delivered some excellent products to market this year.

LG won the award because we have witnessed a major turnaround in not only their products, but their go-to market strategies.

Their standout products include their new range of French Door Fridges, their Smart TV range (which has led to them comfortably slipping into the #2 TV slot), their Cinema 3D Sound Home Theatre kit

and their IPS monitors.

On the other hand Samsung has been driving the market with innovations spanning their communication product range with the Galaxy S3, their 75 inch Smart TV and their PC range which is now outselling several other PC brands in the market.

They are also pushing the design envelope with their new Smart refrigerators.

Other categories that have driven the market in 2012 have been tablets where Apple has excelled, headphones where Sennheiser still has a very strong presence and the docks market where brands like Pioneer, Samsung and Bowers & Wilkins have delivered new high performance devices.

Another standout product is the Sonos subwoofer which delivers a new level of capability to what was already an award winning brand.

A late entrant to this year's awards was the Samsung Galaxy Camera. This device is a stunner as it houses a full Android Jelly Bean Operating System and a Quad-core 1.4GHz processor that stitches several panorama images together in seconds.

At the top end of the digital camera market Nikon has again stolen the show with their highly popular D3200 camera.

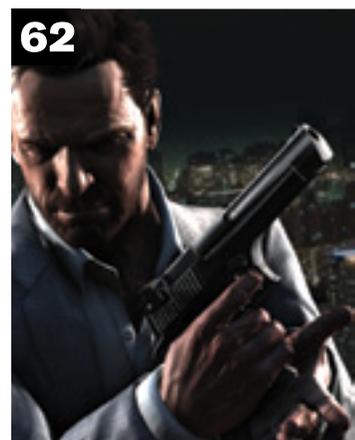
The one thing standing out is competition is pushing manufacturers to deliver a new generation of technology and that by marrying software functionality with great design, everyone is a winner.



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Introduction

2013 Smart Awards

TWENTY-TWELVE WAS THE YEAR TELEVISIONS WENT ULTRA, COMPUTERS LEARNED TOUCH GESTURES AND LOADS OF GEAR WENT WIRELESS. OVER THESE DIGITAL PAGES ARE THE BEST PRODUCTS THE YEAR HAD TO OFFER, MAKING THEM THE PRODUCTS WE RECOMMEND GOING INTO 2013. PLENTY OF RESEARCH, SCRUTINY AND OFFICE BANTER WENT INTO PICKING THE WINNERS AND WE HOPE YOU HAVE JUST AS MUCH FUN READING ABOUT THEM.



Smart Awards

Vendor of the Year: LG

A Brand Going Places

A BRAND NEW MANAGEMENT TEAM, NEW PRODUCTS AND A WHITE HOT DESIRE TO DELIVER A NEW LEVEL OF SERVICE AND CAPABILITY FROM THEIR PRODUCTS HAS PAID OFF FOR LG ELECTRONICS WHO IS THE WINNER OF THIS YEAR'S VENDOR OF THE YEAR AWARD.

By David Richards



A household name for more than a decade, LG Electronics started life in Australia as Lucky Goldstar, from offices in Rydalmere, NSW. The Company has grown to become a billion dollar operation in Australia.

This year LG pushed Sony out of the #2 TV slot with a new range of Smart TVs, which includes their award winning 84 inch Ultra High Definition TV.

Early in 2013, LG Australia will launch their new Optimus G smartphone which some observers are tipping to be a market leader.

In Australia, LG has regained their competitiveness by introducing their Optimus series of smartphones and allocating more resources to high-end phones. The company is set to take on arch rival Samsung, who

have sold over 30 million Galaxy S3 smartphones globally this year.

Globally LG's smartphone shipments in the three months to end-September jumped 59 percent on a year ago and 23 percent on the previous quarter to a record 7 million.

In a show of growing confidence, LG recently compared its Optimus G at a product launch with Samsung's flagship Galaxy

S3, boasting the Optimus has a longer battery life and a camera that delivers sharper picture quality.

Dubbed "monster phone" in the market, the Optimus G is the result of LG's cooperation with its component units, including Apple-suppliers LG Display, LG Chem and LG Innotek. Together these LG divisions have worked together to deliver a smartphone



that could well shake up the Australian market.

In 2011, the Korean Company launched their Cinema 3D strategy in Australia. Backed by heavy TV advertising, the Company has been able to grow sales of their Cinema 3D Smart TV range, especially in the over 55 inch market.

While most 3D TV manufacturers were launching

THE COMPANY HAS BEEN ABLE TO GROW SALES OF THEIR CINEMA 3D SMART TV RANGE, ESPECIALLY IN THE OVER 55 INCH MARKET

improved versions of their active 3D panels, LG chose to launch Cinema 3D TVs featuring passive 3D eyewear and Smart TV functionality. The strategy worked.

LG claims the switch which was made after they studied why people were not buying 3D TVs. They discovered active shutter glasses were uncomfortable, heavy, and were expensive. LG's Film Patterned Retarder (FPR)

technology was then developed to resolve most of these problems.

Back at the 2012 CES Show, LG revealed a new range of appliances. Among them was their new French door fridge range, which is proving highly popular in Australia to the point some retailers have it on back order, despite its \$4599 plus price tag.

[CLICK HERE TO PLAY VIDEO](#)

Smart Awards

Vendor of the Year: LG

A Brand Going Places

By David Richards



During the past year LG has moved to enhance its competitive advantage in the refrigerator and washing machine market. They have invested in smart appliance technology along with new marketing programs.

On top of that, LG is pushing the boundaries of smart appliances with new and improved Smart ThinQ technology, which they claim

delivers enhanced convenience and smarter savings.

Smart Shopping offers online grocery shopping directly from the refrigerator's LCD panel or by way of a smartphone.

LG's Smart Appliances, combined with the upgraded Smart ThinQ technology, is allowing the Company to grow appliance sales at the expense of their competitors.

IN 2013 LG PLANS TO PROVIDE UPGRADED PREMIUM LINES OF THE COMPANY'S ENERGY EFFICIENT, LARGE-CAPACITY REFRIGERATORS

In 2013 LG plans to provide upgraded premium lines of the company's energy efficient, large-capacity refrigerators equipped with LG's Linear Compressor technology, and washing machines equipped with the Inverter Direct Drive motor, raising the bar as they compete for sales.

In 2013, LG aims to be the top selling washing machine brand in



the globe for the fifth consecutive year, as it has done since 2008. Refrigerator production is expected to top ten million units for the third consecutive year.

When LG first moved into the Australian market trading as Lucky Goldstar, they sold big, bulky and expensive monitors. Recently LG launched a new range of IPS monitors that are light, reasonably priced and

above all, are brilliant in quality.

LG has already garnered a strong reputation for demonstrating impressive advances in displays and monitors. It has earned praise for its 3D technology and the benefits of IPS monitors were also recognised at a number of game conventions recently.

One of the best advertisements that we saw this year was for

the LG IPS monitors. The new LG advert promotes the new IPS monitors capable of producing life-like display. To prove this, they replaced the floor of an elevator with their new monitors and simulated the floor giving way. The reactions of participants are a testament of the monitor's convincing display quality.

Already 16 million people have seen this advertisement. Take

a look for yourself, you will be amused.

These monitors, along with their Cinema 3D Smart TVs, energy efficient appliances, Smart thinQ technology, linear compressors and direct drive motors are reasons why LG has been chosen as Smarthouse's Vendor of the Year.

[CLICK HERE TO PLAY VIDEO](#)

Smart Awards

Products of the Year

EVERY FEW YEARS A PRODUCT COMES ALONG AND PUSHES THE TECHNOLOGICAL BOUNDARIES. THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT LG'S 84LM9600 AND SAMSUNG'S GALAXY NOTE II HAS DONE

By Tony Ibrahim



LG 84 inch UHD TV (84LM9600) | \$17,999 | lg.com/au

Its screen spans a whopping 84 inches diagonally. Put it in a room and it will command attention, but you design the room around it because it retains the striking looks LG has become known for. It doesn't matter which angle you look at it from; even from a bird's eye view it's an artistic feat.

But because it's the first television compatible with the Ultra High Definition standard, its exceptional feature-set has been overlooked.

An Ultra High Definition television can produce an image

four times clearer than that of a Full HD television. Its 3840 x 2160 resolution results in 8 million pixels being crammed into a single panel—this is in comparison to Full HD's 2 million.

There is a downside: at present there is a lack of UHD content and delivery methods. Granted, supporting content is limited, but we prefer to look at it differently; in our eyes, the 84LM9600 is simply future-proofed.

In the meantime, LG has gone the extra mile by including software that presents Full HD content—

content that would otherwise look stretched on an 84 inch screen—impressively.

If you walk up to most similarly sized TVs, the individual pixels can be seen. Seeing how an image is produced—the tiny grids of pixels working together to falsify an image—ejects you from the viewing experience. Because LG's UHD TV has four times as many pixels, it's harder to identify an individual pixel. The magic of television is restored and viewers can indulge in an 84 inch home entertainment experience.

The wondrous display is matched by downright exceptional sound. It's delivered by a 10 speaker, 2.2, 50 watt audio system and it is amongst the most powerful we've seen on board a television.

In addition to being compatible with Ultra High Definition, the 84LM9600 retains the ingenious features of a smart TV, including compatibility with LG's Magic Remote, Dual Play Gaming, exceptional 3D capabilities and broad connectivity.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)



Samsung Galaxy Note II | \$899 | samsung.com/au

Samsung's second generation Galaxy Note takes the ethos of the original and takes it to another level. For starters the Note II is powered by Samsung's quad core processor, but it has been overclocked to out 1.6GHz. This is but the beginning of a spec frenzy.

The next impressive Jelly Bean is the RAM which has been doubled to 2GB and internal memory that goes up to 64GB. Throw in a 3,100 mAh battery and the Note

II begins to resemble more tablet and less smartphone, but I guess Samsung anticipated that when they upped the screen to 5.5 inches.

For the screen, Samsung has used a Super AMOLED panel with a resolution of 1,280 by 720 (HD).

Entertainment is a huge part of the Note II's allure and the screen, coupled with its 4G technology, will make it a powerhouse device to watch movies or stream videos on.

As expected, Samsung's S-Pen has returned. Not only does the stylus ease the transition between old-fashioned hardcopy and modern-day digital, it imbues Samsung's products with a sense of individuality.

On the back of the Note 2 is an 8MP camera capable of Full HD recording, and a secondary 1.9MP camera is featured on its front.

There's a host of connectivity features on board, including WiFi, WiFi Direct,

NFC, A-GPS (which has access to Russian Glonass satellites) and Bluetooth 4.0.

The final noteworthy difference is the Note II runs on Android 4.1 (Jelly Bean) out of the box, equipping it with optimised speech recognition software and Google's intuitive Now interface.

Samsung's Galaxy Note II is available in two colours, Marble White or Titanium Grey.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

Smart Awards

Television Winners 2013

TELEVISIONS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A PORTAL TO A NEW WORLD WE COULD ESCAPE TO, BUT OVER THE PAST YEAR THAT WORLD HAS RAPIDLY EVOLVED. SMART TVS DELIVER EFFORTLESS ACCESS TO CONTENT AND APPLICATIONS, AND OFFER INTERACTIVE WAYS TO USE THEM, WHILE THE LAUNCH OF ULTRA HIGH DEFINITION TELEVISION DISPLAYS THIS WORLD IN UNPRECEDENTED, REACH-OUT-AND-GRAB-IT CLARITY.

By Tony Ibrahim



Best Television Over 75 Inches

> LG 84LM9600 | \$17,999 | lg.com/au

This television is a pioneer for a myriad of reasons, the most obvious of which is its compatibility with Ultra High Definition (UHD) content. UHD television offers four times the clarity of a Full HD television by doubling the number of horizontal and vertical pixels on a screen.

Let it sink in: it's four times clearer than a Blu-ray movie watched on a 1080p television.

As a result, minute details that would otherwise be lost are rendered in unparalleled clarity, to the extent where it's difficult discerning the individual pixels

gluing the image together, even if you were standing a mere foot away from the screen.

Throw in a content upscaler, extraordinary 3D skills including dual play gaming, an internet savvy persona, a reputable application portal, a remote akin to a magician's wand and enough intelligence to transcribe vocal instructions and you begin to understand why this television reigns in this category and has been awarded SmartHouse's Product of the Year.

Highly Recommended
Sony KD84X9000



Smart Awards

Television Winners 2013

By Tony Ibrahim

Best 65 to 75 inches

> Samsung ES9000 | \$9,499 | samsung.com/au

Samsung's ES9000 is a triple threat television as it models the largest panel Samsung has ever introduced in Australia, features a powerful dual core processor and sets the benchmark in image quality for a Full HD television.

With this set, image quality is paramount and Samsung has gone all in with a suite of software designed to improve black levels, colour vibrance and 3D technologies. Combined with their uber bright LED panel, the

ES9000 dominates televisions 75 inches and below on the picture quality front.

Potent processing innards helps the ES9000 breeze operations, whether it be a quick look at the application store or taking advantage of its gesture controls. In addition to it responding to your hands is its receptiveness to voice instructions.

Highly Recommended
Sharp LC70LE735X



Best 55 to 65 inches

> Panasonic TH-P65VT50A | \$5,999 | Panasonic.com.au

Although it's been years, Panasonic's plasma panels continue to produce "black levels that have been consistently recognised as among the best in the industry." Like a fine wine, Panasonic's revered picture quality has matured as it is now has a 100,000 hour lifespan, and is free of mercury and lead.

Its environmentally friendly bravado hasn't come at the expense of performance. It has a leading 6,000,000:1 contrast ratio, a 2,500Hz focussed field drive and 24,576 equivalent steps

of gradation. Together, these technologies produce incredibly coloured pictures that maintain focus during hurried scenes, such as sporting events or car chases. The 65 inch screen still acts as a gateway to Panasonic's ViErA connect internet platform which now features cloud-based architecture for "an infinite number of apps."

[CLICK HERE TO PLAY VIDEO](#)

Highly Recommended
Samsung UA65ES8000





Best Over 32 Inches

> Hisense XT770 | \$1,999 | hisense.com.au

Right out of the box, Hisense's XT770 looks absolutely stellar. The LED edge lit LCD panel aids in keeping this 55 incher impressively thin, and its fine transparent border only adds to its minimalist charm. Then you press the 'On' button.

Doing so populates the screen with vibrant, fluent colours, perfectly capable of handling 3D movies or anything else broadcast in Full HD. It

has a 4,000:1 contrast ratio, a 100Hz refresh rate and a 6.5ms response time.

As you'd expect from a smart TV, the XT770 is application savvy. It comes preinstalled with SBS' video-on-demand application, and its remote wears dedicated buttons for YouTube and a tailored Opera browser (bonus points for the later), while also offering access to Facebook, Twitter, arty HD movies with the

Vimeo App and a number of other applications.

Wireless technologies enable access to these applications and other devices. Users have the option of jumping onto a WiFi network or plugging an Ethernet cable in, while DLNA technology enables the XT770 to display your pictures, movies and eBooks from compatible DLNA smartphones and tablets.

Plug a hard drive into one of

its USB ports and the XT770 functions as a proficient Personal Video Recorder (PVR). An on-board electronic program guide aids in scheduling the shows you want recorded in Full HD or HD resolution, and we're particularly fond of its economical ability to record programs from standby.

[CLICK HERE TO PLAY VIDEO](#)

Highly Recommended
Toshiba 55VL900A



Samsung Give-Away

WIN This 75" Samsung ES9000

Smart TV worth
\$9,499

IF YOU WANT TO WIN YOUR VERY OWN 75 INCH SAMSUNG ES9000 VALUED AT \$9,499, SIMPLY TELL US IN 25 WORDS OR LESS: WHAT'S THE ONE FEATURE YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT THIS TV?

At 75 inches, the ES9000 is the largest TV Samsung has ever released in Australia. It's exquisitely crafted, engineered to produce true-to-life images and has

intuitive Smart TV features, including voice control, gesture control and access to Samsung's world of content.

Visit www.smarthouse.com.au/win to enter



Smart Awards

Projector Winners 2013

FOR THAT GENUINE CINEMATIC FEEL YOU CANNOT GO PAST A HOME THEATRE PROJECTOR. DIM THE LIGHTS, GRAB SOME POPCORN AND EXPERIENCE MOVIES THE WAY THE DIRECTOR INTENDED.

By Tony Ibrahim



Best Home Theatre Projector

> Panasonic AE8000 | \$3,899 | panasonic.com.au

The latest projector to lead Panasonic's home cinema range is the AE8000 and it has the goods to do so admirably. This includes a 220W Red Rich Lamp capable of producing 2,400 lumens of brightness and a rich contrast ratio of 500,000:1. The high-brightness and vast-contrast duo results in popping colours against gradual shades of black.

The AE8000 projects images that are 20 percent brighter

than its predecessor and yet ensures there's less crosstalk in 3D viewing, (this is a particularly impressive feat as brighter images tend to show more signs of crosstalk). It also features a suite of 3D software; one of which automatically corrects unnatural 3D movements.

[CLICK HERE TO PLAY VIDEO](#)

Highly Recommended
BenQ W7000+





Best Projector Screen

> Carson Screen Selina Pro (140 inches) | \$3,800 | digitalcinema.com.au

With visual content being injected with more vivid colour, higher resolution and extra dimensions, viewers are pushing their home theatres for a more immersive experience. A big chunk of that experience comes from the size of the screen, with larger offerings authentically replicating the movie spectacle. In our opinion no other projector screen facilitates an experience as convincing as Carson Screen's Selina Pro.

The Selina Pro line-up offers one of the simplest installations in the fixed

screen arena and can be customised up to 400 inches. The build quality is exceptional with premium US materials like the four-layer silicone matte white backing and the Asian-built bevelled frames. These extra-thick 120mm frames keep the tension while making an aesthetic statement. Hidden behind the frame are 40 mounting points that hold the backdrop material in place for longer, avoiding sag that pulls away picture quality and ejects you from the experience.

Highly Recommended
Stewart CineCurve





Smart Awards

Home Theatre Winners 2013

YOU NO LONGER NEED TO BE A SOUND-GEEK TO VALUE SOPHISTICATED HOME THEATRE SETUPS. NEW APPLICATIONS MAKE THEM EASY TO UNDERSTAND AND EASIER TO CONTROL, WHILE A HOST OF NEW WIRELESS TECHNOLOGIES ENRICH THEIR FUNCTIONALITY AND CONTENT PORTFOLIO.

By Tony Ibrahim



Best Premium Surround Sound System

> MKSound 750THX 5.1 | \$5,799 | qualifi.com.au

It's with good reason the MK 750 was the first product to receive the THX seal of approval. It's a 5.1 home theatre system designed by the company George Lucas turned to when making Episodes I, II and III of Star Wars. The 750 is MKSound's attempt

to bring reference grade audio into the every-day household, and their system delivers audio that effortlessly handles voices, percussive effects and musical instruments with life-like impact.

Highly Recommended
KEF 350T



Best Value Surround Sound System

> Samsung HT-E6750W | \$1,199 | samsung.com/au

Samsung's HT-E6750W is a bold entrant by Samsung, mainly because it looks to yesterday's technology for inspiration. Beating at the heart of this 7.1, 1,330 watt system are old-school vacuum tubes responsible for delivering warm sound. The tubes might be

an old trick, but the E6750W is far from it. Samsung has modernised this technology by coupling it with a digital amplifier to produce, basically, louder sound. Additionally, it has a strong 3D Blu-ray repertoire and access to Samsung's vast content/app bank.



Smart Awards

Home Theatre Winners 2013

By Tony Ibrahim

Best Premium SoundBar

> Yamaha YSP-4300 | \$1,999 | au.yamaha.com

Yamaha was the first to identify the need for a space saving entertainment system capable of producing theatrical sound. They tended to this need by introducing the soundbar category back in 2005, and they've been at the forefront of it ever since.

Their latest offering, the YSP-4300, solidifies their leading home theatre technologies into

one elegantly styled soundbar. Inside its shallow body are 22 array speakers—of which two are 6.5cm woofers—engineered to produce realistic sound. A wireless 130 watt subwoofer ensures low end frequencies are justly played, while keeping your room's decorum intact

Highly Recommended
Harmon Kardon SB16



Best Value SoundBar

> Panasonic SC-HTB550 | \$599 | Panasonic.com.au

Panasonic's SC-HTB550 is a sound bar with a nifty party trick: it snaps clean in half. Adopting a rare form factor, this speaker can be parted in two and by using the inclusive stands, can transform into a classic 2.1 theatre setup.

The complementary woofer is wireless and can be positioned

anywhere in the room without any compromise to audio performance. The total power of this 2.1 system is 240 watts, of which 120 watts are pumping the sub.

[CLICK HERE TO PLAY VIDEO](#)

Highly Recommended
JBL SB200





Highly Recommended Surround Sound System

> LG BH9520TW | \$999 | lg.com/au

LG's flagship home theatre system brings together insane sound, proficient 3D technology and a vast content portfolio.

It manages to pump 1,100 watts of power through 9.1 hearty channels. No one wants 9 tower stands cluttering up their living room, so thinking ahead, LG has planted an upward firing speaker on each tower stand. As a result, the sound is even more immersive as it cascades down upon listeners.

The Blu-ray player plays 3D movies and will add a third dimension to ordinary films. 3D sound zooming compliments the

onscreen action by zooming in and out in synchronisation with the depth of 3D images.

In addition to its tactful handling of 3D Blu-rays, the BH9520TW is distinguished by a slew of connectivity options. Pictures, videos and music on Apple devices can be played through the home theatre system when they're plugged into the front USB port, while simultaneously charging them.

The BH9520TW can replay content wirelessly from smartphones and tablets compatible with DLNA technology. It actually takes remote control

TO KEEP YOUR ROOM DECORUM INTACT, LG'S BH9520TW HAS WIRELESS REAR SPEAKERS.

functionality a couple of steps further, firstly by working with LG's smartphone application, and secondly, by offering WiFi Direct. With WiFi Direct the BH9520TW will establish its own wireless network with compatible devices, eliminating the need for a wireless home network.

However, LG's BH9520TW is WiFi friendly and connecting it to your wireless home network will reap many rewards. It can access LG's content portfolio and applications, delivering catch up TV services like ABC's iView to your big screen.

Smart Awards

Home Theatre Winners 2013

By Tony Ibrahim



Best Premium Receiver

> Denon AVR-3313 | \$1,799 | audioproducts.com.au

You can see Denon's passion for sound in the AVR-3313 and that's partly why we love it so much; the other part has to do with its simple, smartphone-friendly personality. Simply connect the AVR-3313 to a home network via Ethernet and you can wirelessly stream content to it via AirPlay or DLNA. Additionally there's the option of controlling the AVR-3313 with ease from your smartphone or tablet through a dedicated Denon

Android or Apple iOS app. Being a high-end Denon receiver you can of course expect stunning sound. Each of its seven speaker channels operate at optimum performance levels regardless of the action in other channels. Each channel has a clean 125 watts, and for faster audio processing with less interference, Denon use the latest 32-bit Digital Signal Processors (produced by Sharc). The AVR3313 is packed with

clever features such as in-built Spotify, 4K Video Scaling, Audyssey calibration and compressed audio restoration. It's also powerful enough to manage content across three zones. In other words, this receiver can transmit one film to one television; a sporting match to a second screen; and then some music to a third area, the outside entertaining deck perhaps, all simultaneously. It's a case of making sophisticated

technology simple and accessible. It all begins with Denon's Advanced Set-up Assistant. This appears on the TV and walks you through the options for complete customisation to suit your individual needs and room, and protects the receiver during the process.

[CLICK HERE TO PLAY VIDEO](#)

Highly Recommended
Pioneer SC-LX86-K



Best Value Receiver

> Marantz SR5007 | \$1,320 | qualify.com.au

Combining network capability and audiophile sound, the Marantz SR5007 Home Theatre Receiver is an ideal media centre for any home theatre system. It can manage 7 channels with 100 watts of power each, hosts an Ethernet port for networking media to other devices, is AirPlay compatible and can access 14,000 internet radio stations worldwide. Audyssey's technology helps calibrate your setup easily, while Dolby's TrueHD

and DTS HD Master Audio gets the best possible sound from your speakers. Ultra High Definition compliant, it's ready for the next generation in content and will appease audiophiles looking for better custom integration by using a RS232 port, a DC trigger and Flasher input

[CLICK HERE TO PLAY VIDEO](#)

Highly Recommended
Yamaha RX-V573



Best Blu-ray Player

> Panasonic DMR-BWT820 | \$999 | Panasonic.com.au

Panasonic's DMR-BWT820 performs the ordinary things extraordinarily and then goes one further by expanding the functionality of the traditional Blu-ray player. It'll record Full HD and 3D content straight to its 1TB hard drive; will allow you to view your personal pictures and movies on your TV by slotting in your camera's SD card; and will wirelessly access Blu-ray info and Panasonic's Viera Connect

platform through WiFi. We're particularly fond of how Panasonic has taken advantage of smartphones and tablets. Through the use of a twin tuner, DLNA wireless connectivity and Panasonic's iOS/Android app, smartphone users can scroll through channel lists and then watch the channel of their choice right on their smartphone.

Highly Recommended
Yamaha S473



Smart Awards

Sound System Winners 2013

THE RIGHT SOUND GEAR WILL RIP YOU AWAY FROM THE EVERYDAY GRIND AND TRANSPORT YOU TO A MORE EXCITING PLACE, WHETHER IT'S THE MOSH PIT OF A CONCERT OR A MEMORY YOU THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER RELIVE.

By Tony Ibrahim



Best Small Speakers

> KEF LS50 | \$1,999 | advancedaudio.com.au

The LS50s stand a mere 30 centimetres tall, but these monitors aren't hampered by their dwarf-size. Similarly sized speakers tend to suffer in lower frequencies, producing bass that sounds disproportionate to the mid and high-range, but the LS50s overcome this crippling shortfall.

They sound balanced, tending to the soundstage equitably and dazzling audiophiles with their terrific volume and clarity. Even though they borrow the Uni-Q driver from KEFs much larger (and more expensive)

flagship, you don't expect sonic performance this proficient from speakers this small.

The Uni-Q drive unit might look like one complete component, but it's actually an intricate arrangement. It consists of a 25mm aluminium dome tweeter in the centre of a 13cm magnesium/aluminium-coned mid/bass. Covering the tweeter is a waveguide responsible for managing high frequencies.

These components have been assembled in a way that optimises sound while conforming to KEF's

distinctive styling. Of course, the rose-gold colouring contributes to the LS50s undeniable charm.

The result is a pair of monitors that sound as good as they look: fantastic. Sound is enlivening, even across the range and for their size, impressively voluminous. The LS50s don't just celebrate 50 years of KEF's heritage, they present an argument suggesting KEF will go on to celebrate 50 more.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

Highly Recommended
B&W PM1



Smart Awards

Sound System Winners 2013

By Tony Ibrahim

Best Large Speakers

> Focal Electra 1038Be | \$14,999 | audiomarketing.com.au

Focal's Electra 1038Be is the result of an obsession, a need to evolve every component to its best for near-perfect sound reproduction. Characterising these elegant floor standers are five drivers: three woofers, one midrange driver and a tweeter, taking advantage of the 1038Be's true three-way bass reflex design. The three woofers measure 7 inches, the

midrange stretches 6 and a half and the upgraded tweeter employs beryllium over the previous aluminium/magnesium composite. By using beryllium, the tweeter is lighter, more rigid and can play past 40kHz without break-up, while the drivers can handle a frequency response range of 33Hz to 40kHz.

In the studios music might be

an engineering feat, but along the way it translates into an emotive pleasure. Focal mirror this in lavishing the 1038Be's in real wood coated in four desirable finishes, including champagne, basalt, mahogany and black laquer.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

Highly Recommended

Jamo S606



Best Sub-woofer

> Bowers & Wilkins PV1D | \$1,899 | bowers-wilkins.com

The B&W PV1D is a real pocket rocket; it produces great sound from a relatively small enclosure. It benefits from new drive units and amplification, allowing it to discharge deeper bass quicker than the previous model. On the front is a touch OLED panel that allows users to nominate a variety of pre-sets, but those in the know-how have the option of manually tuning the sound. These more advanced tuning options can be managed via B&W's SubApp PC software.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

Highly Recommended

KEF R400B





Best Network Music Player

> Musical Fidelity M1 CliC | \$1,999 | audiomarketing.com.au

The best things in life are simple and doesn't Musical Fidelity know it. From the look of it, the M1 CliC looks like an understated box, but in reality this simple console delivers a versatile music portfolio. It is a high-quality streaming music player, an internet radio, a 24-bit/192KHz Digital-to-Audio Converter (DAC) and a pre-amplifier in one minimalist body.

The understated front hasn't influenced its versatility as the M1 CliC's rear bristles with connectivity options. Odds are any device you're using is supported, including disc players, tape players, power

amplifiers and preamps. Of course, support for the digital age is present by way of generic USB ports, optical cables and networking jacks. Finding your way through your music collections is easy as it uses an intuitive, aesthetic and evolving interface. Music can be gleaned from wired and unwired sources, but the quality will be enhanced, whether it is from an Apple iPod/iPhone/iPad, USB drive, notebook or a more traditional source.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

Highly Recommended
Cambridge Audio
Stream Magic 6



Best In Ceiling Speakers

> Focal IC1002 S | \$1,299 a pair | audiomarketing.com.au

This premium in-ceiling speaker achieves its high fidelity sonics by borrowing the aluminium/magnesium alloy inverted dome tweeter, along with the 'W' sandwich woofer cone, found in Focal's famed Electra series. Its inconspicuous design accommodates adjustments for tweeter response from -3dB to Zero to +3dB, in addition to the tweeter mount being steerable. Its performance is more impressive

when you recognise its economical handling of power. Being efficient at 88dB, a recommended power range of 25-150w gives plenty of scope for matching to various amplifiers; however, these top-tier ceiling speakers deserve premium amplification.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

Highly Recommended
Speakercraft AIM8 Five



Smart Awards

Sound System Winners 2013

By Tony Ibrahim

Best DAC

> Arcam rDAC-kw | \$775 | arcam.co.uk

Arcam has always known how to convert digital signals into high quality music and they continue the tradition with the rDAC-kw. More often than not, music streaming comes at the expense of audio quality to the distaste of audiophiles. Arcam's rDAC-kw will stream music while upgrading tracks to the best possible quality, delivering vast music collections in pristine quality. The 'kw' separating this device from the introductory

model is its wireless capabilities. By simply plugging in a dedicated USB dongle into a computer, it will stream audio files directly to the rDAC while it nestles out of sight, behind the HiFi system. Combining ease of use with a premium finish makes this DAC a standout for serious music enthusiasts.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

Highly Recommended
Musical Fidelity M1 DAC



Best Turntable

> Project Debut Carbon Phono (with USB) | \$599 | project-audio.com

The first Debut turntable, introduced in the late 1990s, was a revolution for the hi-fi industry. The new Debut Carbon lives up to its pedigree. The design has changed and the inclusion of a Carbon Tube for the tone arm, increases stiffness and decreases unwanted resonance.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

Highly Recommended
Rega RP6



AWARD WINNING SOUND IN THE MAKING.



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The Pursuit of Perfect Sound

Smart Awards

Docks & Radio Winners 2013

YOUR SMARTPHONE KEEPS YOUR PERSONAL MULTIMEDIA AT HAND, BUT IF YOU WANT MUSIC THAT MESMERISES YOU'LL POP THAT PHONE OR TABLET INTO A DOCK. THIS YEAR'S WINNERS LOOK FANTASTIC, ARE HIGHLY FUNCTIONAL AND BREATHE LIFE INTO EVERYDAY CHORES BY EMANATING SPIRITED SOUND.

By Tony Ibrahim



Best Dock

> Samsung DA-E750 Wireless Audio Dock

If you are looking for a dock that delivers big sound with a touch of old fashioned theatrics, then you can't go past the Samsung E750. It is finished in mahogany, with chrome and dark silver accents for the front-facing speakers, but best of all has twin vacuum tubes which subtly glow when in use. Uniquely it's fluent in docking

Samsung and Apple devices, equipped with each company's respective wireless standards and offers support to the masses through USB and Bluetooth.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

Highly Recommended
Bowers & Wilkins Zeppelin Air





Best Wireless Audio System

> Pioneer XW-SMA4

What we have here is the result of a very special recipe. First Pioneer has taken some high end hardware, wrapped it up in an enclosure that is gentle on the eye and then equipped it to speak with virtually any device. The result is a powerful speaker which can be used independently or can form part of a larger, modular speaker system, allowing for various speakers to be scattered across the home as they ooze the same, synchronised

melody at the touch of a button. It doesn't matter if you have a smartphone, tablet, PC or Mac, through AirPlay, DLNA, WLAN and WiFi Direct you can stream high quality music wirelessly to the XW-SMA4; Pioneer's flagship modular speaker and SmartHouse's Best Wireless Audio System Winner.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

Highly Recommended
Loewe AirSpeaker



Best Wireless Audio Product

> Sonos Sub

The new Sonos Wireless sub looks like a stylish doughnut monolith. It dispenses impressive sound compliments of two force-cancelling speakers positioned face to face, dual acoustic ports and two Class-D digital amplifiers specially tuned for the

hardware. Whether it sits upright or flat on its back, it will deliver forceful low frequency sound when connected to the Sonos audio system, filling rooms with the welcomed shudder of powerful bass.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)



Smart Awards

Docks & Radio

Winners 2013

By Tony Ibrahim



Best Digital Radio

> Pure Contour 100Di | \$199 | pure.com/au

Shaped like a semi-sphere and equipped with a swivelling Apple dock, Pure's aptly named Contour 100Di is a digital and FM radio that'll leave a lasting impression.

Inside its contoured body are two full range 3 inch drive units capable of producing enough sound to fill a run-of-the-mill room. The curvaceous shape looks great, easily accommodates the two speakers and harbours an intriguing dock.

Touch the right side of the Pure logo and it automatically rotates 180 degrees, presenting a dock compatible with Apple's iPod, iPhone or iPad. All of the Apple devices comfortably nestle on the dock, which will simultaneously charge your device while you play music.

If you ever tire of your native

collection, Apple and Android users can access thousands of internet radio stations and on-demand programmes by downloading the free Pure Connect app. Internet radio offers a vast amount of constantly ripe music, and if you'd prefer a data efficient option, the Contour 100Di's Digital and FM radios are ideal for you. Non Apple devices can make use of the Contour 100Di's speakers through the customary auxiliary input or its USB port. The USB port will also come in handy when it's time to update the 100Di's software. For wireless control, a remote is included in the bundle kit.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

Highly Recommended
Vita Audio R2i



RELT-9

Whilst REL strive to produce beautiful designs in a category not known for them, our engineering team ensures that every REL is built to the most rigorous standards. The result are products both beautiful to behold, and offer industry-leading performance.

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Smart Awards

Headphone Winners 2013

THE ADVENT OF PORTABLE MUSIC PLAYERS HAS SEEN HEADPHONES RAPIDLY GROW. THIS YEAR'S WINNERS ARE AT THE FRONT OF THE PACK IN PERFORMANCE, STYLING AND VALUE.

By Tony Ibrahim



Best In-Ears

> Sennheiser IE 80 | \$599.95 | sennheiser.com.au

Sennheiser's IE 80s nestle inside your lobe, forming a seal that keeps your music in and the distracting outside world out. An unbridled enthusiasm will see your ears ache from the loud volumes before any distortion kicks in and, whereas conventional in-ears dangle down, these wrap around the back of your ear for a

more comfortable fit. The brushed-metal housing is rugged, the cable is interchangeable and you can tune the bass-response to your liking.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

Highly Recommended
B&W C5





WE'RE FANS OF THE WIRELESS FM TRANSMITTER, FINDING IT A MOTIVATOR WHEN HANDLING HOUSEHOLD CHORES.

Best Wireless Headphones

> Philips SHC8535 | \$149.95 | philips.com.au

These headphones from Philips deliver surprising sound and incredible value, even more so when you recognise they're wireless. Ideal for watching television without deafening the sleeping family, these headphones build upon Philips' expertise in wireless technologies to deliver sound in a practical range of 35-40 metres. After some 15 hours of use, an on-board indicator lets you know it's time to pop them on the rechargeable stand. Sometimes the simple solutions are the best, and Philips' SHC8535 make the complex technologies look simple. Take the stand for instance, elegantly holding the headphones upright while they recharge the on board batteries. But they don't look like a foreign piece of tech-wizardry, resembling a mantle simply there to present the headphones to passer-bys. Throw in the premium finish and these

headphones earn a spot alongside your home entertainment gear. The headphones themselves are characterised by plush leatherette cups eager to hug your ears, passively blocking out external distractions. The brace shares the same leather dressing and can be adjusted to fit one of three settings. Voluminous sound is clearly articulated by 40mm speaker drivers made of a composite mylar-material chosen for its aversion to distortion. They're equipped to handle a broad range of musical genres and add a sense of theatricality to movies by subtly enhancing the bass, doing all they can to involve you in the experience.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

Highly Recommended
Sennheiser RS220s



Smart Awards

Headphone Winners 2013

By Tony Ibrahim



Best Headphones

> Sennheiser HD 800 | \$1,699.95 | sennheiser.com.au

Visually bold with their metallic, industrial design and sonically refined with some of the best sound you'll ever hear in a pair of headphones, these cans will cocoon you in a sea of phonic bliss. They output quality with a frequency response of 6-51,000Hz and less than 0.02% harmonic distortion. In other words, they deliver a higher band of frequencies than your ear can even pick up. These aren't for pumping up that little iPod, but for getting the full experience warranted on a 300 ohm headset out of a lossless audio set up.

These earcups are massive, but they have to be with the large 56mm headphone transducers. The earcups

swivel and tilt slightly to sit comfortably around the ears without actually touching them. From here you're greeted with an expansive soundscape that immerses you in whatever you're listening to. As the speakers fire sound at a slight angle toward your ear, you perceive the sound on a multidimensional level that replicates the real sound – and not in the 7.1 surround kind of way. Bass is powerful but never distorted, treble is articulate and crisp and the mid-range is natural throughout.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

Highly Recommended
Bowers & Wilkins P5

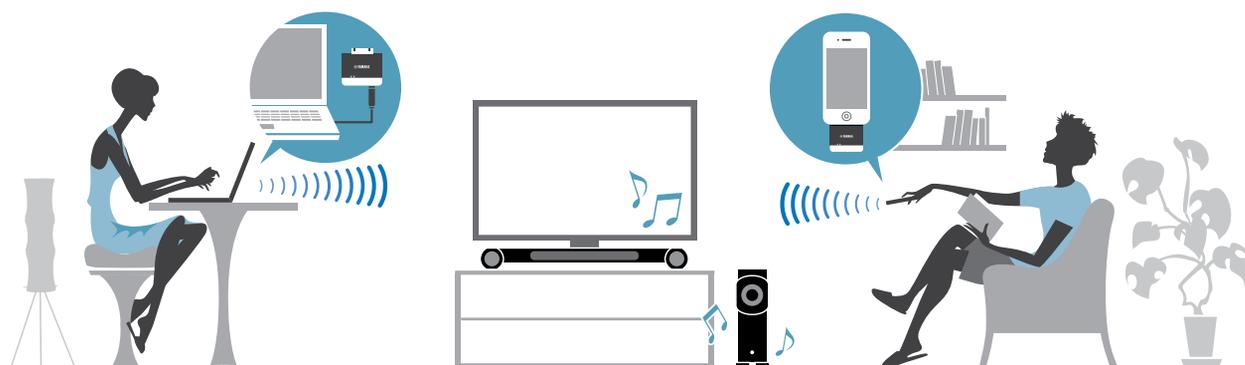




Yamaha Sound Bars

True Wireless Surround Sound

Experience the excitement of surround sound without speakers and wires cluttering the room. Yamaha's range of elegantly designed sound bars replaces the need for complicated multi-speaker systems, immersing you in the action with exhilarating surround sound.



Wireless streaming

Stream music wirelessly from iOS devices and computers with Yamaha's patented AirWired technology.

Wireless subwoofer

Experience tight and deep bass while enjoying the versatility of being able to position the subwoofer anywhere in the room.

Smart Awards

Home Automation Winners 2013

By Tony Ibrahim



Best Premium Home Automation

> Control4 | control4.advanceaudio.com.au

Over the years, the interface used to manage a Control4 home automation system has become easier to use and available on more devices. People can control their entire Control4 home automation system directly from the biggest screen in the house; their television. The option of controlling the system from a PC is available, but the promise comes from Control4's

Android and Apple applications. With the technologies in your home working harmoniously, every experience is a little better, starting with the device-cluttered home theatre system. With the touch of a button, your television, Blu-ray player, receiver and speakers swiftly apply the best settings for watching a movie, while the shades close and the lights subtly fade.

If someone else is using the home theatre setup there's no need to stress. A Control4 system can distribute your HD video to any room in the house, in addition to playing any song at any volume in any room, from in-wall and in-ceiling speakers that are virtually invisible. The same diligent approach is applied your home's security, climate, lighting, and music. But their

system does more than reap the best performance from your home's technology; it does so economically. The brains of a Control4 system are its controllers and they offer three different solutions. They're unobtrusive hubs which make it possible to build your ideal home-control system over time.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)



Best Value Home Automation

> Push Controls | pushcontrols.com/australia

Push earns this year's award for delivering previously sophisticated home automation on a budget the majority can afford. Their system has been tailored to work on Apple's iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch. Their applications are easy to use and can be customised to accommodate your precise needs. A downloadable widget allows Android users to also manage

their home automation system. One of two controllers are offered by Push: the powerful PC1 and the PC4, both of which are qualified to manage your home theatre setup, climate, lighting, blinds, irrigation system and security system. With each device working in harmony, day-to-day operations are more efficient, environmentally

friendly and enjoyable. In the warm summer months, a Push Control system can be instructed to close the shades at the hottest time of the day, and maintain the cooler temperature by turning on the air conditioning just before you arrive home. Alternatively it can warm the place up when winter nears. Security is an area effectively

managed by a Push Control system. Multiple security camera feeds can be viewed remotely on your tablet and smartphone, providing you with the option of zooming in and panning. It's a valuable additive if you want to keep an eye on your kids while on-the-go or in case of an emergency.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

Smart Awards

Digital Photography Winners 2013

A GREAT DEAL OF INNOVATION HAS BEFALLEN CAMERAS: TOUGH CAMERAS ARE SMALLER AND YET BETTER EQUIPPED; MIRRORLESS CAMERAS ARE PUSHING THE ENVELOPE ON ALL FRONTS; AND MANY OF THEM ARE SPEAKING WIFI WITH OTHER DEVICES.

By Tony Ibrahim



Best Compact Camera

> Samsung Galaxy Camera | \$599 | samsung.com/au

Samsung's Galaxy Camera earns this award for converging polished smartphone technology with respectable photographic capabilities. From smartphones, the Galaxy Camera borrows the refined Android operating system, versed in multi-touch gestures, connectivity and a 600,000 strong application store. These features have evolved much more on smartphones and are a significant improvement over any compact cams usability and interface. Most of the computing hardware is borrowed from Samsung's Galaxy S3, such as its HD screen, quad core processor, 1GB of RAM, and

microSD memory. But it combines these technologies with a 1/2.3-inch backside-illuminated CMOS sensor that'll snap photos at 16MP resolution and record Full HD video. The lens has a 23mm wide angle and features 21 x optical zoom, which is respectable for any compact cam. The result is a camera the vast majority knows how to use, can operate independently from a computer and can capture finite moments with more than enough detail needed for today's digital age.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)





Best DSLR

> Nikon D3200 | \$TBD | nikon.com.au

Nikon's intro D3200 DSLR uses a newly developed Nikon DX-format CMOS sensor and Nikon's famed Expeed 3 processing engine to deliver Full HD videos and 24.2MP images which are crisp with clarity, bursting with colour and true to life. An intuitive menu and an ergonomic layout helps budding photographers take advantage of its intelligible shooting options. The software

perpetuates this ease-of-use by including an enhanced guide mode—which will lead you through the process of set-up and shooting various scenarios—and six scene modes will educate users on the right settings for most lighting conditions.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

Highly Recommended
Canon EOS 5D Mark III



Best Mirrorless Camera

> Panasonic GH3 | \$1,599 | panasonic.com.au

Panasonic's mirrorless flagship offers a commentary of the industry: you can have the photographic prowess and versatility of a DSLR in a smaller body. The GH3 is a testament to this, coming equipped with the very latest technologies Panasonic as a company has to offer, including WiFi and two OLED screens. At the camera's core are a 16MP Live MOS sensor and a Venus Engine. The two work hand-in-hand to

capture high resolution images quickly, up to 6 frames per second, while ensuring the snapped pics are free from noise. It has a wide ISO range stretching between ISO 125 to ISO 12,800, but in extended mode it'll reach ISO 25,600, proving adept to a variety of lighting conditions.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

Highly Recommended
Fujifilm X-Pro 1



Smart Awards

Digital Photography Winners 2013

By Tony Ibrahim



Best Tough Cam

> Panasonic Lumix DMC FT4 | \$499 | panasonic.com.au

Panasonic's FT4 is waterproof to an industry leading 12 metres, can withstand 2 metre drops and temperatures up to -10°C. With such a rugged persona, you'd expect the FT4 to compromise on the mechanics and resemble a bomb shelter (albeit smaller). Instead it's advantageous on the size front, with its new body thinner and lighter than its predecessors, made possible by a

Leica DC vario elmar (24mm wide-angle) lens which Panasonic insist is the "slimmest in its class." Captured pics are snapped at 12MP and it features 4.6 times optical zoom, while Full HD videos are captured at 50p in AVCHD format.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

Highly Recommended
Olympus TG1



Best Video Camera

> JVC GZ-GX3B | \$1,099 | jvc.com.au

JVC's GZ-GX3B is a credible Full HD camcorder that nudges ahead of its competition by featuring built-in WiFi. With WiFi on board, live footage can be viewed on a smartphone, letting you capture natural phenomenon from afar, such as a bird feeding its young. Additionally, your photos and videos can be transferred to an iOS or Android device easily. Apart from hosting WiFi, the GZ-GX3B records

video at 1920x1080/50p, has 32GB of internal flash memory and has a SDXC card slot. Videos can be viewed right from the camcorder's 3.5 inch 'frameless' touch-receptive LCD screen and its peripheral support is top-notch.

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Highly Recommended
Sony HDRPJ260V



LUMIX G

BUILT-IN GENIUS | Panasonic

The ultra compact Lumix GX1.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A GREAT PHOTOGRAPHER TO TAKE GREAT PHOTOS.



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Smart Awards

Communication Winners 2013

WE NOW CONTROL OUR MULTIMEDIA, DOCUMENTS, EMAILS, WEB BROWSING AND HOME AUTOMATION FROM A DEVICE THAT SITS IN THE PALM OF OUR HANDS. IT'S A BRAVE NEW WORLD.

By Tony Ibrahim



Best Home Phone

> Panasonic KX-TG856 | \$149 | panasonic.com.au

Just when we all thought the advent of smartphones and unlimited plans deemed the landline obsolete, Panasonic adds an innovation essential for

any new parent. The company's 856 series home phone doubles as a baby monitor by automatically detecting when a baby is crying and notifying

a paired handset (or pre-registered external line). It will also operate during a blackout by simply placing the handset on the base, and if the blackout

occurs while on the phone, they'll dig into their 1 minute reserve.

Highly Recommended
Uniden XDECT R055 + 1



Smartphone of the Year

> Samsung Galaxy S3 4G | \$899 | samsung.com/au

The Galaxy S3 doesn't feel like a smartphone as much as it feels like the thing missing from your hand. There are other powerful smartphones, or smartphones that are easy to use, but we take our hat off to Samsung for marrying the two so well. Recently this 4.8 inch quad core monster scored a 4G update, making it a master of all trades. It's intuitive, intelligent, powerful and best of all, simple.

[CLICK HERE TO PLAY VIDEO](#)



Smart Awards

Communication

Winners 2013



Highly Recommended

> HTC One XL | \$799 | htc.com/au

HTC emerged as a serious contender in 2012, releasing a handful of quality smartphones that rivals could not afford to ignore. Of its smartphone portfolio, we were most impressed with the company's One XL.

A lot of the One XL's genes come from its sibling, the One X, but it benefits from a spirited 4G modem. With 4G internet speeds, it sifts through webpages and streamed videos up to five times faster than most smartphones on

the market.

The other noticeable difference between the One X and the One XL is the processor. Inside it has a dual-core processor clocked at 1.5GHz, 1GB of RAM and a reputable 32GB of internal memory. These powerful components handle the Android 4.0 (Ice Cream Sandwich) operating system diligently, facilitating the seamless use of applications and games.

Even though it's rich in hardware, the One XL is more about the

experience being greater than the sum of its parts. The quick processor and internet speeds would be wasted if it didn't feature a quality screen. Fortunately it's an all-rounder, catering to visuals with a 4.7 inch, high definition (720x1280) display.

The One XL's camera was a noticeable standout because HTC chose to improve its functionality and not just its resolution. The 8MP rear cam captures still shots mid video, features a burst shooting

mode and will record videos in Full HD (1080p).

Understanding the soundtrack is just as vital as image quality, HTC turned to the pros at Beats Audio. They equipped the smartphone with a variety of sound profiles that are optimal for different genres, but their finesse isn't limited to music playback as it shines through movie playback and even internet content such as YouTube videos.

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Security

Uniden Guardian



> \$549.95 | uniden.com.au

Uniden's Guardian is the first true plug and play security solution. It's a basic setup, consisting of two weatherproof cameras and a 7" tablet-styled monitor that dons an intuitive touch screen interface.

The Guardian system can support four cameras in total, and its recording patterns can be set to a schedule, triggered by motion or instructed manually. The footage is

stored on the local SD card (4GB is included in the kit) and in an industry first, up to four cameras can record simultaneously.

No matter the conditions—rain, hail or shine—the cameras will continue recording. By equipping the cameras with Infrared LEDs, Uniden's cameras can record video within a 12 metre range in pitch black night.

Uniden boast the security

system takes just minutes to setup. The weatherproof cameras can be mounted onto a wall or a ceiling, allowing you to record from the very best vantage points, such as at the front door, gate, garage or side of the house.

Once up and running, the system will transmit interference-free video and audio signals within a 150 metre range. To protect users from eavesdropping and

hacking, Uniden put to work the latest digitally encrypted FHSS technology.

Users can log into the home monitor remotely via a Mac or PC, feeding live footage to them wherever they are. If they can't get to a computer, they can view the feed directly from their Android or iOS smartphones compliments of Uniden's app.

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Smart Awards

Computing Winners 2013

2012 WAS A BIG YEAR FOR COMPUTERS. IN A BRIEF 12 MONTHS IT WAS THE YEAR OF THE ULTRABOOK, THE YEAR OF THE TABLET AND THE YEAR OF THE HYBRID. THESE DEVICES ARE FASTER, LIGHTER AND DEFINITELY BETTER ENTERTAINERS THAN THEIR ANCESTORS.

By Tony Ibrahim



Best Notebook

> Samsung 900X3C | \$1,599 | samsung.com/au

The 900X3C is one of a few products you come across and ponder “how did they do that?” Even though it is the smallest notebook in the world, every part of it—including the most mundane details—has

been meticulously engineered, (even the SD slot is a thing of beauty). The screen is blindingly bright; the keyboard and mouse are sumptuously comfortable; and it is bite the back of your hand beautiful.

Rather than condemning it to the dark quarters of your bag, you'll gladly brace it under your arm with the Samsung logo pointing outwards.

[CLICK HERE TO PLAY VIDEO](#)

Highly Recommended

Apple MacBook Pro with Retina (15 inch)



Best Ultrabook

> Toshiba U920T | \$1,699 | Toshiba.com.au

We're harsh critics of the new Windows 8, but Toshiba has managed to suckle the most functionality by adopting an entirely new form factor. It's a full functioning Ultrabook—modelling an excellent array of ports and powerful innards—but the screen slides over the keyboard, helping it morph from a lightweight notebook into an

Intel powered tablet. There are a few hybrid Ultrabooks available but the U920T wins us over by not gutting its computing capabilities at the expense of its tablet mobility. It manages to do both at once, and best of all: it does both well.

Highly Recommended
Asus UX32D



Best All In one

> Apple 27 inch iMac | From \$1,999 | apple.com/au

Apple's 27 inch iMac has long set the benchmark for all-in-one computers. Much of its charm stems from every component working together in harmony, especially because Apple make the hardware, the software and a vast number of supporting apps. The result is an all-in-one computer that is versatile and fun to use.

In its latest form, Apple's iMac continues to make ground on its Windows rivals. It might have ditched the optical disk drive, but the new iMac makes up for it and then some with a screen that is a ridiculous 5mm thin. We're surprised it doesn't come with a wall mount.

Highly Recommended
Acer 7600U



Smart Awards

Computing Winners 2013

By Tony Ibrahim

Best Tablet above 9 inches

> Apple iPad | From \$539 | Apple.com/au

It's no surprise Apple has won this award for the second year on the trot. The company injected new vigour into the category and has been leading ever since. The iPad has managed to maintain a monopolistic-like lead over its rivals by having superior application support, an incredibly vivid screen and a mature operating system. It's a case of synergy, with each part of the iPad being perfectly refined to produce a flawless user experience.



[CLICK HERE TO PLAY VIDEO](#)

Highly Recommended
Asus Transformer Prime TF700T

Best Tablet below 9 inches

> Google Nexus 7
From \$249 | google.com/Nexus



The Nexus 7 is the by-product of a great collaboration between Google and Asus. Together, the two companies managed to produce a powerful 7 inch tablet characterised by a high resolution screen, powerful quad-core processor and next-generation software (Android Jelly Bean) all from \$249. When

it was released, the Nexus 7 sent shockwaves through the industry, letting the players know that a quality tablet can be sold at a bargain.

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Highly Recommended
Apple iPad Mini

Best eReader

> Amazon Kindle Fire HD
\$329 | Amazon.com



The Kindle Fire HD from Amazon blurs the line between tablet and eReader. Its feature-set might resemble a tablet's, but its custom skin is a nod to its eBook heritage. On top of its articulate eBook portfolio, the Kindle Fire HD is compatible with apps, games, magazines and movies from Amazon's own app store, giving it an advantage

over its monochrome rivals. With a dual core processor, 1GB RAM, 1280x800 resolution screen and a 1.3MP camera, the hardware helps this eReader-meets-tablet deliver big value for money.

[CLICK HERE TO PLAY VIDEO](#)

Highly Recommended
Kindle Touch

Best Webcam

> Creative Live! Cam Connect HD 1080 | \$99.95 | au.creative.com

As its name suggests, Creative's Live! Cam Connect HD 1080 records video in Full HD 1080p resolution, but it'll also snap still shots in 18MP. Just like Creative's SoundBlaster Axx, this webcam suppresses noise outside of an established zone, allowing the user to hold a conversation free from whatever interference fills the background. It's a wonderfully focussed product fulfilling its few duties extraordinarily well.

Highly Recommended

Logitech HD Pro Webcam C920



Best Portable Drive

> Seagate BackUp Plus
From \$139 | seagate.com/au

This is a great portable hard drive versed in the prompt transfer of files and optimised through idiot-proof software. The ability to back up your digital life (Facebook, Flickr) is an option envied by its rivals and gives it the deal-making advantage. The drive itself is small, lightweight and very practical. It measures just 14.5mm thin, weighs 224 grams and is short enough to fit in your jacket pocket comfortably. File transfers are painless due to the use of USB 3.0 technology and you can upgrade your connection by way of a swappable adapter.

[CLICK HERE TO PLAY VIDEO](#)

Highly Recommended
WD Slim



Best Network Storage Drive

> Western Digital MyBook Live Duo 6TB
\$649 | wd.com

By connecting the MyBook Live Duo to a router, you create your own personal, secure cloud. This provides all of your devices—smartphones, tablets, gaming consoles, notebooks, PCs and Macs—with access to your content when you need it. Better yet, with the WD2GO app for iOS and Android, your mobile and tablet can log onto your personal cloud wherever there's an internet connection, essentially granting you access to terabytes of data on the go. Rounding off this solution is RAID mirroring: a second inbuilt hard drive that automatically makes a copy of your work in the unlikely

event the first drive fails. *A backup of a backup?* Talk about ease of mind.

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Highly Recommended
Seagate GoFlex Desk
External Drive 3TB



Smart Awards

Computing Winners 2013

By Tony Ibrahim



Best Monitor Over 23 inches

> LG IPSS27 | \$499 | lg.com/au

You don't ever work on LG's IPSS27 monitor because the bland nature of work is enriched by exuberant colours, rich shadowing and exact lines. The 27 inch LED-backlit LCD monitor uses LG's IPS panel technology for rich colour reproduction and a wide 178 degree viewing angle. A simple look under the skin reveals a variety of impressive specifications. Although we're taken specifically by the 27 inch

model, every-one in the range has a Full HD (1920x1080) resolution, a high contrast ratio of 5,000,000:1 and a response time of 5m/s. These credentials are actually better than those featured in some notable televisions. By combining 250 nits of brightness with a matt-finished screen, the IPSS27 reduces the amount of legibility loss under sunlight and keeps colours wholesome.

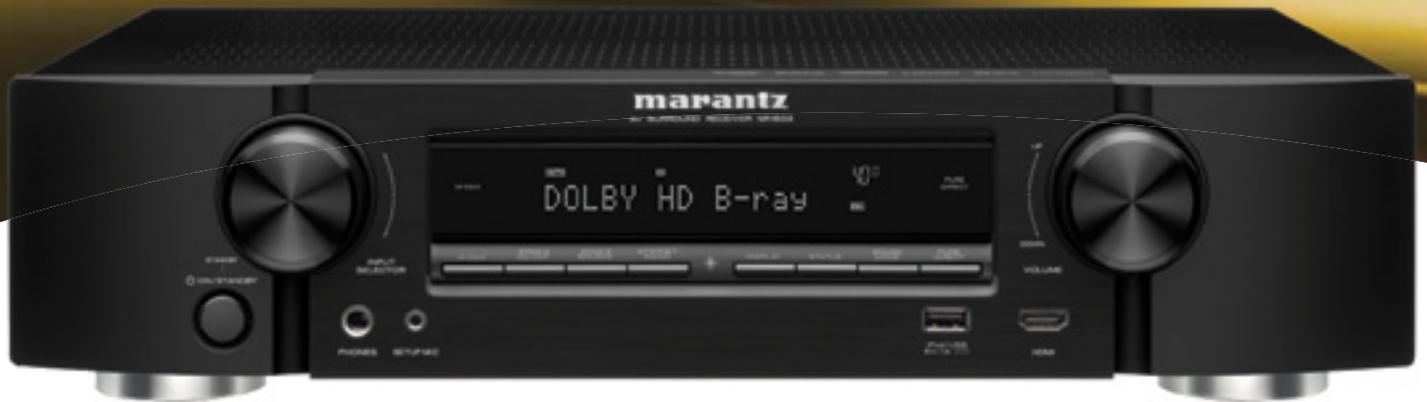
On the outside, the IPSS27 merges its deep black screen with its 1.2mm bezel. The entire look is inconspicuous, but by using premium materials the IPSS27 evokes a sense of quality craftsmanship. It also extends to the IPSS27's stand which is a subtle nod to LG's televisions. Recognising more people are using their smartphones and tablets to store multimedia, the IPSS27 features Mobile High

Definition Link (MHL) technology. MHL enables the viewing of photos and videos on the monitor's screen through a single cable. You don't have to worry about draining your battery either, because the IPSS27 will charge your smartphone and tablet simultaneously.

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Highly Recommended
BenQ EW2730V

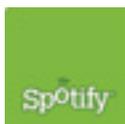
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Smart Awards

Navigator Winners 2013

TO GET THERE QUICKLY. TO GET THERE SAFELY. TO DISCOVER NEW AREAS.
TO LEARN NEW THINGS. TO SEE BEYOND THE CORNER. TO HAVE FUN DRIVING.

By Tony Ibrahim



Best In Car Navigation

> TomTom 2050 | \$399 | tomtom.com/au

TomTom's 2050 isn't just a great GPS unit; it's one of the few products we consider an all-time great. It has a 5 inch capacitive touchscreen fluent in multi-touch gestures, an easy click magnetic

mount and an accelerometer, which will automatically rotate the screen the right way up. Complementing the robust hardware is TomTom's mapping system. It is focussed, detailed and intuitive,

without distracting drivers from the task at hand. But clinching victory for TomTom is their HD Traffic software. It's a continuously updated traffic feed (by an impressive 2 minute interval) which helps drivers

avoid areas that are congested, navigating around the city's clotted arteries to get people on their way quicker.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)



Highly Recommended

> Navman My350LMT | \$279 | navman.com.au

Whereas other GPS systems demand you learn their lingo, Navman's My350LMT speaks plain English. It recognises the streetscape around you and tells you where to go based on details like the colour of a building, notable points of interest and landmarks. "Before the Coca Cola sign turn right into Victoria Street" is just one example. It's a feature Navman call 'Landmark

Guidance Plus' and these simple, conversation-style instructions makes it feel like you have a buddy in the car riding shotgun rather than another computer.

The point of a GPS system isn't just to take you to your destination; it's to get you there safely. That's why keeping your eyes on the road is imperative, and the My350LMT's ability to respond to your voice is one way it

helps you focus. It's a subordinate system that will happily adjust the volume or tweak the brightness when you tell it.

There are a slew of features, but a notable addition is bluetooth. With mobile phone laws becoming more stringent, the ability to manage calls wirelessly—and legally—without having to buy and manage a separate bluetooth loudspeaker is a

definite perk.

We value its ability to think ahead for you. For instance, if you drive for over two hours straight, the My350LMT won't just remind you to stop nearby, it'll go one further by detailing all of the available options, such as petrol stations, public restrooms, food outlets or rest areas.

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Smart Awards

Gaming Winners 2013

UNLIKE EVERYTHING ELSE IN THIS WORLD, THE WHOLE POINT OF GAMING IS TO HELP YOU GROW DOWN. OVER THE COURSE OF A YEAR WE'VE SEEN SOME STELLAR GAMING TITLES, NEW GAMING TECHNOLOGIES AND THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE GAMING CONSOLE INTO AN ENTERTAINMENT HUB.

By Tony Ibrahim



Game of the Year

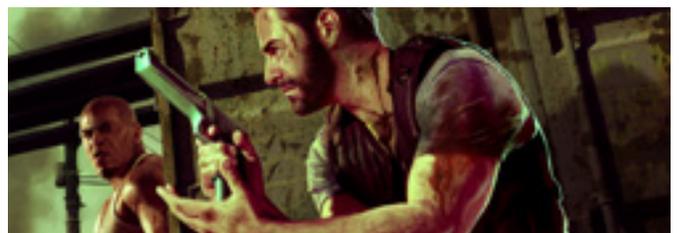
> Max Payne 3 | \$99.95 | rockstargames.com/maxpayne3

Between the colourful language, unapologetic plot, smooth-as graphics and the fleshed out characters, the successor to the Max Payne series faithfully recreates the hard-boiled attitude gamers around the world fell in love with. It brings a level of engagement familiar to profound cinema, and will leave an

impression that resonates longer than usual. Max Payne 3 then is a worthy addition, carrying the beloved legacy forward and not just cashing in on the name.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

Highly Recommended
Mass Effect 3





Best Gaming Console

> Microsoft Xbox 360 4GB Console with Kinect | \$299 | xbox.com.au

In the week Nintendo's brand new Wii U launched, Microsoft's Xbox 360 outsold it 2:1, thanks in part to its gaming pedigree, but also because Microsoft has done an amazing job at amassing a vast content portfolio for Xbox Live subscribers. The Xbox 360 wasn't our console of choice when it launched,

but Microsoft's ongoing support, their unbelievable Kinect camera and now the new content portfolio has pushed it ahead of its rivals.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

Highly Recommended
Sony PlayStation 3



Best Handheld Console

> Nintendo 3DS XL | \$249.95 | nintendo.com.au

Traditionally we'd balk at the idea that bigger is better, but in the case of Nintendo's 3DS, the gaming legends are on the money. The screen is 90% bigger, the battery life has gone up and the existing game catalogue takes advantage of the improved hardware. These upgrades are

ontop of its glasses-free 3D and the unique experience of playing a game with two screens.

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Highly Recommended
Apple iPhone 5



Smart Awards

Accessories Winners 2013

ACCESSORIES ARE THE UNSUNG HEROES OF THE TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY. THEY HELP US SQUEEZE MORE PERFORMANCE FROM OUR FAVOURITE GEAR AND OFFER INEXPENSIVE WAYS OF MAKING THEM REFLECT OUR UNIQUE PERSONALITIES.

By Tony Ibrahim



Best Portable Speaker

> Jawbone Big Jambox | \$359 | jawbone.com/au

If this product had a face, it would ALWAYS be smiling. It's a lovably loud, stylish and elegant solution to portable sound, without skimping on the sound. Connect it to your smartphone, tablet or PC via bluetooth and it'll fill any room with party-grade ambience. Then when you're done, throw it in your bag and take it out doors without having to worry about charging it because it's good for 15 hours straight, or 500 hours on standby.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

Highly Recommended

Yamaha PDX-11





Best HDMI Cable

> Crest ProHD2 | \$129.95 | Crest.com.au

The last thing you want from a home entertainment setup is to waste some of the video and audio quality. To ensure you get the very best results, a quality HDMI cable is needed. In this area, Crest's ProHD2 sets the benchmark. Crest has 35 years of AV experience and are an official HDMI Associate Member ensuring every cable meets an exact standard.

The ProHD2 is a well-built cable that can transfer data at a rate of 10.2 gigabits per second. It uses 24K gold plated connectors, High Gauge Oxygen Free Copper for the best transfer rate, and is braided and

shielded with Aluminium and Copper foil for extra protection against Electro-Magnetic Interference. This makes the ProHD2 the ideal cable for intensive applications, 3D gaming or even the upcoming Ultra High Definition (HD) standard. Ultra HD might not be commonplace today, but the ProHD2 is future proofed to spare you from spending money on a replacement. Additionally, the ProHD2 can manage sound with the use of a built in Audio Return Channel. This feature makes it possible to hear the sound of your TV, Blu-ray player or other device through your surround sound system, while also enabling audio from the TV's

inbuilt HD tuner to travel upstream through the HDMI cable to your sound system, removing the need for a separate Toslink optical cable. Recognising the next generation of home entertainment equipment is internet savvy, the ProHD2 can be used to network a wide range of IP-enabled home entertainment devices, from TVs and gaming consoles, to DVRs and more. Crest's Pro HD2 is available now from the Good Guys and Bing Lee.

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Highly Recommended
Kordz EVX





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