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Sony BRAVIA 46XBR45 LCD

Is LCD finally catching plasma?

Black is
the new black
in Sony's
latest LCDs.



Sony

www.sony.com.au

\$6,399

- Outstanding image quality; good remote; connectivity. ✓
- Sound is pretty average; lost its design impact. ✗

SPECIAL FEATURES

- LED backlighting
- 100Hz motion engine
- Integrated HD tuner



LCD and plasma TVs have been sitting on the opposite sides of a scale. On one side, we have LCDs, which have fulfilled the need for bright colours in bright environments, and on the other we've had plasmas offering deep blacks and a cinema feel when you can turn the lights down.

The issue has been LCD's backlighting, an array of lights behind the LCD panel that provides the luminosity and allows you to see what's going on. LCD panels had to work hard to block these bright lights for an on-screen black, with varying success.

Sony's new range of BRAVIA screens (the XBR45 line but only in the 46in and 55in sizes) have gone to extremes to offer new levels of contrast and deeper blacks not seen in LCDs to date. They've cleverly used LED backlighting in three different colours (red, green and blue) which

can be turned off or toned down when black is required, and shone in any number of colours to help the LCD panel pop with colours. It does a great job.

Set up with a Blu-ray player running the ubiquitous Pixar "best case scenario" film, the colours almost burst out of the screen, while black and darker areas retain some of the detail usually lost on an LCD. There's almost no issue with jaggies, ghosting or other LCD bugbears thanks to a 10-bit panel and a 100Hz motion engine. The integrated HD tuner works fine, if a little touchy with reception for our liking.

Connectivity includes four HDMI connections, Ethernet, two component, three composite and a USB port (for images off memory

stick). The unit's RF remote is quite large, though this allows larger buttons and is surprisingly comfortable in the hand.

Is it a perfect LCD though? Sadly not. The design over all seems quite staid, considering Sony's history with the BRAVIA X series TVs being quite visually stunning. We weren't hugely impressed with the new embedded speaker design, with the sound being quite average. So you'll definitely want to pair the screen with a proper surround sound system.

Nick Race