



EPSON

tone ★★★★★

EH-TW3000 LCD Home Theatre Projector \$4499

Recession: it's just about the only topic on the lips of most people these days; jobs are going south and the exchange rate has dropped like a stone.

What are we to do? Unless you are in an essential service (police, health, takeaway food) you'll quite possibly spend the next two years awaiting the dreaded pink slip.

Life has to go on of course, but a drop in spending on luxury consumer products is usually a result of bad economic conditions as expendable income begins to dry up.

To counter this financial atrocity I reckon the manufacturers of home entertainment electronics should do the only sane thing possible: drop their prices.

It's an absurd notion, especially considering the terrible state of our Pacific peso against the US dollar, but some wise heads at Epson must have heard my feeble plea for mercy from Down Under, as the new EH-TW3000 has landed at a stunningly low price for a true HD display.

But while it's an all-time low price point for a high-resolution HT projector, Epson hasn't scrimped on the build quality or facilities – the 3000 is packed with decent colour management options, as well as the obligatory lens shift and a juicy 2.1x zoom.

On the back there are two useful HDMI inputs (version 1.3 of course), Component, composite and S-Video inputs, a computer input, rs232 and a 12-volt trigger for those automation-minded videophiles out there.

The TW3000 has class-leading brightness for a 1080p device (1800 lumens in high-brightness mode), meaning it'll handle situations where there is some ambient light – the average lounge, for instance.

Contrast ratio is a pretty good 18,000:1, but it isn't quite up to the lofty specs quoted by the more expensive options (including Epson's own EMP-TW2000) and could explain the 'too good to be true' price tag.

That is until the TW3000 is fed a signal, and then the apparent lack of contrast ratio was forgotten as I began to drown in an orgy of hi-res moving pictures.

Picture quality from my growing library of Blu-ray discs was generally excellent; straight from the box the TW3000 impressed with very good detail and stable, lifelike colours. Dark scenes from discs such as *Underworld: Evolution* were extremely easy to watch and there was plenty of detail to be had lurking in the shadows of every scene.

So in isolation I didn't miss the extra 50,000-odd contrast ratio numbers, and although the Panasonic PT-AE3000 and Epson's EMP-TW2000 do black scenes better, the 3000 was by no means disgraced – especially at almost half the price of the competition.

The 3000 is a barnstorming best buy at the asking price. Certainly, the more costly projectors possess better performance on blacks and possibly have a slight advantage in terms of out and out resolution, but it's not enough to topple the new Epson in terms of value for money. Oh, and to sweeten the pill, it's available in white – no more brooding black spaceships on the ceiling. ■ **GARY PEARCE**

WHAT THEY SAID:

"We have chosen the Epson as our recommended unit."
www.projectorreviews.com.au

"Good value at this end of the market, which a few short years ago was reserved for the very rich, and you're getting a 1080 HD projector from the makers of the LCD engine even the diehard DLP brands now use."
www.homecinemacentral.com.au

TECH SPECS

TYPE: 3-LCD, 10-bit digital processing with 12-bit LCD driver

RESOLUTION: 1080p

CONTRAST RATIO: 18,000:1 (with auto iris control on)

BRIGHTNESS: 1800 lumens (high-brightness mode)

OPERATION NOISE: 22dB (Whisper mode)

LENS: Vertical/horizontal lens shift with 2.1x zoom

CONNECTIONS: HDMI x 2, Component x 1, S-Video, composite, VGA, RS232/12v trigger

DIMENSIONS: 450 x 360 x 136mm (W/D/H, excluding feet)

WEIGHT: 7.4kg

PROS

- + Yummy picture quality
- + Yummy price

CONS

- * Nothing at the price

VERDICT

Epson has a kick-arse budget smart bomb in the shape of the new EH-TW3000 1080p HT projector

ALSO CONSIDER:

Epson EMP-TW2000
Mitsubishi HC-5500
Panasonic PT-AE3000

CONTACT:

www.epson.co.nz

