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Cinematic visuals on a TV screen



Panasonic's TH-65FZ1000S offers good picture quality, thanks to its latest Oled panels and advanced HDR technology

Vincent Chang

Directors Christopher Nolan (Batman films, 2005 to 2012) and Paul Thomas Anderson (There Will Be Blood, 2007) recently suggested that television makers have a Reference Mode in their TVs that would display videos without motion interpolation, a feature that smoothen moving images and reduces motion blur.

This standardised mode, they say, will let viewers watch films on their TVs as they are presented in the cinema.

The two directors would probably approve of Panasonic's top Oled television this year, the TH-65FZ1000S (FZ1000S). It comes with a True Cinema preset that is akin to Reference Mode. Not only does True Cinema display videos without motion interpolation, but it

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is also said to be tuned by visual experts from the movie industry.

The FZ1000S uses the latest 2018 Oled panels and has a new video-processing engine that improves on colour accuracy and picture quality. It is able to display finer gradients while transitioning to black.

In other words, you should see more detail in darker scenes where it would have been uniformly black previously.

It can also dynamically assess the brightness levels of each scene before delivering the most appropriate colours.

For fans of high dynamic range (HDR) videos, the FZ1000S comes with HDR10+, a new, royalty-free competitor to the established and proprietary Dolby Vision format. Like Dolby Vision, HDR10+ is better than HDR10 as it supports dynamic metadata that can vary the brightness, colour saturation and contrast of the

TV on a scene-by-scene basis for more realistic and detailed images.

HDR10+ is supported by Samsung and Panasonic but, at the moment, there is no widely available content, unlike Dolby Vision, which is used by Netflix.

In terms of picture quality, the FZ1000S is right up there with the very best television sets this year.

While the LG C8P Oled TV had a slight hint of banding in the orange sky of Las Vegas in Blade Runner 2049 (2017), there was none with the FZ1000S. Every scene I tested in the movie looked picture-perfect and pristine.

I also liked the screen's anti-reflective layer that reduces reflections and makes blacks look even darker.

Like all Oled TVs, its brightness level, despite improvements, is still far from matching the intensity of Samsung's QLED models.

Thanks to its massive soundbar, which spans the width of the set and holds 14 speakers tuned by audio brand Technics, the FZ1000S has the most impressive built-in audio of any TV set I have tested this year.

It is genuinely window-rattling – a veritable wall of sound. Dialogue

is clear even in the midst of loud action scenes. Its surround mode effectively gave me a sense of where the audio is coming from.

Physically, the new model looks identical to last year's version. The top half is very slim – comprising just the thin Oled screen – while the rear of the set thickens to house the internal electronics.

It comes with four HDMI ports that support 4K resolution at 60 frames per second. However, only the first two HDMI ports have full bandwidth (HDMI 2.0). This should not be an issue for most users, though rivals LG and Samsung support HDMI 2.0 for all ports on their top models.

As usual, Panasonic includes two remote controls. I prefer the traditional version over the touchpad-equipped version. The former may be larger, but it has more useful buttons. It also has a backlight so you do not need to fumble in the dark.

Panasonic continues to use Firefox OS as its smart TV platform, even though its designer Mozilla has long halted all development. Dubbed My Home Screen, it now has a launcher bar at the bottom that can be customised with shortcuts to apps and inputs.

It is not the most intuitive of TV in-

terfaces, though it feels responsive and apps load quickly.

While Panasonic has added the Amazon Prime Video that was missing from last year's model, its app selection is still behind other TV platforms. It is probably time for Panasonic to cut its losses and switch to a different and more vibrant TV platform, like Android TV, for instance.

Panasonic's own TV settings menu could also do with a facelift. This interface looks blocky and archaic. It also disconnected from my home Wi-Fi network on a few occasions. I had to restart the set to get it to re-connect to my Wi-Fi network.

Its high price tag of \$10,999 is what you would expect of a top Oled TV, though last I checked, its street price is about \$8,000.

If you already have your own soundbar or speakers, Panasonic has a cheaper model (FZ950S), which is identical to the FZ1000S, but without the Dynamic Blade Speaker.

Verdict: One of the best television sets now when it comes to picture quality and audio. The FZ1000S deserves a better smart TV platform than its current version.

vinchang@sph.com.sg

SPECS

PRICE: \$10,999
PICTURE FEATURES: Maximum resolution of 3,840 x 2,160 pixels, HDR10, HDR10+, HLG
AUDIO FEATURES: 80W output
OPERATING SYSTEM: My Home Screen 3.0
CONNECTIVITY: 4 x HDMI, 1 x USB 3.0, 2 x USB 2.0, Optical output, Ethernet, Wi-Fi

RATING

FEATURES: 5/5
DESIGN: 4/5
PERFORMANCE: 5/5
VALUE FOR MONEY: 3/5
OVERALL: 5/5

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Dine at Forest and meet celebrity chef Sam Leong and family



Here is an exclusive chance for you to meet local celebrity chef Sam Leong, his mother Mama, his wife Forest and his son Joe and experience their five-course The Leong Three Generations Family Specials dinner.

Diners can enjoy dishes such as king prawn rice vermicelli served with farm cabbage in Chinese wine broth and warm black sesame cake served with black sesame ice cream.

The Straits Times, in partnership with Resorts World Sentosa (RWS), is giving this dining treat worth \$276++ (\$138++ a person) to 10 ST subscribers as part of the ST+ news with benefits programme. The dinner at Forest on Oct 4 will be hosted by ST food correspondent Rebecca Lynne Tan.

To win the dinner for two, take part in this contest, which closes on Sept 26. Winners will be notified by Oct 1.



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New Products

X-mini KAI X1W

BLUETOOTH SPEAKER
\$69.90, availability to be confirmed



If you want an affordable water-resistant portable speaker, X-mini's new KAI X1 W might just be the one. It is rated IPX7, which means it can withstand 1m-deep water immersion for up to 30 minutes.

It has a carry strap and can be mounted on a bicycle handlebar. It uses a 50mm audio driver that delivers audio for up to eight hours. It also has a built-in microphone for hands-free calls.

Bosch Vario Style Freezer-Fridge
HOME APPLIANCE

\$1,499



Looking for a fridge that can be easily restyled to suit any decor?

Consider the Bosch Vario Style Freezer-Fridge, which features interchangeable door panels in 19 colours, including pink, green, red and blue. Furthermore, changing the door panels is effortless with its clever invisible hooks and magnets. Simply pull the door panel gently towards you, lift to remove it and hook on the new door panel.



Sony VPL-VW870ES

4K HOME PROJECTOR

Pricing and availability to be confirmed

Perfect for home cinemas, the Sony VPL-VW870ES 4K home projector combines an advanced laser light source with the brand's 4K SXRD panel technology to deliver crisp native 4K images (4,096 x 2,160 pixels).

The projector contains an All Range Crisp Focus lens – with 18 glass elements – to ensure high precision in every corner of the image, while a Digital Focus Optimiser is said to provide refined image quality and accurate focus without distortion.

Fujifilm X-T3

MIRRORLESS CAMERA
\$2,299 (body only), available from tomorrow



The Fujifilm X-T3 is the world's first APS-C-sized mirrorless camera capable of 4K/60p 10-bit video recording with an SD card, according to its maker.

It features a 26.1-megapixel X-Trans CMOS 4 APS-C image sensor that has more than four times the number of phase detection pixels than its predecessors. It runs on Fujifilm's X-Processor 4 with a processing speed that is three times faster than earlier models.

An enhanced electronic viewfinder allows smoother display of fast-moving subjects for easier shooting.

SuperSolid R270

GAMING MONITOR

\$429



This twisted nematic (TN) gaming monitor is suitable for gamers who prefer fast response times over accurate colour reproduction and wide viewing angles of in-plane switching monitors.

The SuperSolid R270 uses a 27-inch (2,560 x 1,440 pixels) TN display panel with a 1ms response time and 144Hz refresh rate for smooth gameplay. It supports AMD FreeSync for smoother and tear-free gaming experience if you are using an AMD Radeon graphics card. It is equipped with a tilt stand and is compatible with industry-standard Vesa mounts.

Otterbox Defender for Galaxy Note9

SMARTPHONE CASE

\$99



Protect your new Samsung Galaxy Note9 with the Otterbox Defender.

The case's multi-layer design, which consists of a polycarbonate inner shell and a synthetic-rubber outer slipcover, helps to protect the smartphone from drops and knocks. Its port covers prevent dirt, dust and lint from getting into the jack and ports. It also comes with a holster that works as both a belt clip and a kickstand.

Compiled by Trevor Tan