



Epson

EH-TW3600

BluRay playback is astonishingly clear as is streamed video via the Boxee's HDMI output

Migrating from my ageing 30" old-school CRT TV to a 40" LCD TV a few years back may have been an AV revelation, however when it comes to getting the full cinema experience at home, an HD projector is what we at Tone call the "mutts nuts". Forget measuring your screen in inches, we're talking metres (and yes, contrary to what your significant other may say, when it comes to AV, size definitely matters).

Projectors might have been around for eons, but were typically used in corporate environments to deliver deathly dull powerpoint. This is (thankfully) beginning to change.

Over the past few years, a growing number of projectors have been launched with red-blooded *Tone* readers in mind and HD versions have become more commonplace thanks to the rise and rise of Blu-Ray media HD TV from both Freeview and SkyTV.

This hasn't escaped the attention of Epson, who've launched the pocket-pleasing EH-TW3600 HD LCD projector that's priced to suit the cravings of the average *Tone* mag reader.

Look & Feel

First impressions of the TW3600 are that it isn't small. In fact it's about the size of a small windowless building. Coming in at 450 x 360mm, I began to wonder where on earth I'd house it in my lounge. This said, the TW3600 has a rated throw distance of three to just over six metres, so odds are that you'll be using it in a fairly sizeable room, making stowage

a non-issue. Picking the review unit up also brought home just how solidly built it was.

Weighing in at a chiropractor-pleasing 7.3kg, you'll really want to make sure you've got it securely mounted – especially if suspending it from a ceiling.

Being Epson kit, the TW3600's build quality is superb. Decked out in a high-gloss white, the TW3600 might be a fingerprint magnet, but it is also a doddle to clean and is suitably neutral colour-wise to fit in with the décor of most homes.

Epson has also wisely chosen to keep the TW3600's design as uncluttered as possible, with visible controls kept to a minimum (for maximum tweekage of the TRW3600's ample settings, I used the included remote).

On the connectivity front, about the only thing missing from the TW3600's rear is a kitchen sink. Along with two HDMI outputs, there is a gaggle of analogue sockets spanning component, S-video, Composite and PC outputs. For more advanced home cinema setups, the TW3600 also sports a serial input and a 12V output to trigger for automatic projection screens (sadly the TW3600 doesn't play the *Thunderbirds'* tune as the screen rolls down).

Picture Quality

Hooking the TW3600 to both my PS3 (for Blu-ray output) and my Boxee box (for streamed video media) and an Xbox360 for the odd halo frag-fest, the TW3600 delivered sparkly and crisp 1080p HD video goodness thanks to near-stellar brightness levels (how does 2000 lumens grab you?) and 50,000:1 contrast ratio.

Sitting the TW3600 in my lounge I had to spend some time manually fiddling to get its picture suitably set up (but for most this is only ever likely to be a one-off scenario). The lens controls take the form of two manual adjusters – one for image size plus the other for focus. Sadly there are no focus or image-size adjustment capabilities available from the remote, but given the amount of times I've accidentally trashed focus settings by sitting on the remote, this isn't a bad thing.

BluRay playback is astonishingly clear as is streamed video via the Boxee's HDMI output. Hooking my Xbox 360 via component, a small amount of image blur during fast-moving game sequences is noticeable, but gaming with a screen the size of my entire lounge wall more than compensated.

With 1080p playback, image clarity has to be seen to be believed. Blacks were black, and even in the afternoon, projected pictures remained viewable (ambient light levels in my lounge are reasonably low).

Usability

When reviewing a projector, my biggest pain point is the sheer amount of mucking about required to get it set up. Not only does a projector have to be carefully situated and level, but avoiding cable clutter can be a real mission, as can navigating obscure setup menus to tweak its output to a decent level of watchability.

Thanks to screw-down levelling feet (or mounting screws on its underside should you want to ceiling mount it), getting the TW3600 levelled was a quick

experience. Tweaking image settings using the bundled remote was also straightforward, with the TW3600's front and rear IR sensors allowing me to zap commands to it no matter where I plunked myself in the lounge.

Speaking of screen menus, Epson has also managed to make the TW3600's suitably intuitive, with the number of cumbersome menu layers kept to a sensible minimum.

Unlike a lot of other projectors it was pleasing to find I was able to fiddle about with image settings with minimal RTFM (reading the flipping manuals). Epson has also thoughtfully thrown in several pre-sets which allowed me to quickly get up and running (I also later discovered that I was also able to create my own presets).

Verdict

In short, there's a whole lot to like about the TW3600. Checking pricespy.co.nz revealed a \$3,076 sticker price, which is extremely compelling, especially when compared to other similarly specced full-HD projectors.

Where the TW3600 really shone (pun intended) was its ability to deliver watchable video in an everyday home environment. Unlike other affordable projectors, the TW3600 didn't need a pitch-black room, but managed to deliver watchable results on my lounge wall even during the early afternoon. Adding a half-decent projection screen would have taken a perfectly serviceable image and made it totally awesome. **▼ PAT PILCHER**

EPSON
EH-TW3600
HD PROJECTOR
RRP: \$3,299

SPEC

- Resolution: 1080p (1920x1080)
- Lens (Focal Length): 22.5 mm - 47.2 mm
- Type: RGB liquid crystal shutter projection system
- Focus/Zoom: Manual
- Format: 16:09
- Contrast Ratio: 25,000:1 dynamic, 50,000:1 dynamic
- Rated Lamp Hours: 4,000 hours normal, 5,000 hours eco
- Lens Shift: Vertical: -96.3% to +96.3% (H Centre, Manual), Horizontal: -47.1% to +47.1% (V Centre, Manual)
- Throw Distance: 100" at 2.98 - 6.36m
- Lamp: 200W UHE E-TORL
- Screen Size: 30" to 300"
- Output: White light output: 2000 lumens, Colour light output: 2000 lumens
- Optical Zoom: x2.1
- Inputs/Outputs: 2 x HDMI, 1 x RCA (Yellow), 1 x S-Video, 1 x Component Video, 1 x D-sub 15-pin, 1 x stereo mini-jack
- Output (Audio): 1 x stereo mini-jack
- Power Consumption Standby: 0.3W (communication off)
- Power Consumption Lamp On Normal/Eco: 272/224W
- Noise level: Normal/Eco: 28/22 dB
- Weight: 7.3kg
- Dimensions (D x W x H): 360 x 450 x 136 mm

CONTACT

- <http://www.epson.co.nz>

PROS

- Crispy 1080p output even with average lighting
- Pocket-pleasing price

CONS

- Bulky

VERDICT

- HD projection for the masses, the EH-TW3600 delivers an astonishingly good output at a pocket-pleasing price

