



## Vidikron Vision 60 Projector

*A Close Competitor to Film Quality*

By Grant Clauser

While most of the front projector momentum in the past couple of years has been fueled by Texas Instruments' DLP technology, it's not the only alternative to the nearly extinct CRT projector. LCoS (liquid crystal on silicon) is used in an increasing number of high performing products. JVC, with its D-LA projectors and Sony with its SXRD projectors, as well as the much smaller Brillian, all produce high quality video displays based on LCoS. **Vidikron**, a brand some home theater aficionados may associate with CRT projectors that looked like race cars, offers a number of LCoS projectors that rival anything with a DLP light engine in the same price range.

First off, the model 60 is no do-it-yourself projector. This 40-pound unit is designed for professional installation, not a weekend warrior project. At \$12,999, it's positioned with the better single-chip DLP projectors from brands like Marantz, Sharp and Sim2, yet it has some distinct benefits over those. All LCoS products use three imaging chips (one each for red, blue and green) while DLPs in the same price range use a single chip and a color wheel to separate the colors. For some viewers, the color wheel in a DLP unit can produce a visual color artifact. This isn't possible with LCoS projectors. LCoS technology also produces a greater fill rate between pixels, which means that there's less space between one picture element and the next.

The Vision 60's three chips create a 1,400 x 788 widescreen (16:9 aspect ratio) high definition image. Uncalibrated, it sports a contrast ratio of 1500:1 and brightness of 1,000 ANSI lumens. It's 250-watt lamp is stated to last about 2,000 hours when run at a temperature of

6,500 K. It's got the standard assortment of video inputs including composite, S-video, component (with BNC connectors and horizontal and vertical sync), a 15-pin RGB, 1 DVI, and one RS-232 for a Crestron, AMX or other control system.

I used the projector with a 100-inch screen from Screen Innovations. All the inputs, including the power cord, as well as the projector's controls, are hidden inside the case. When ceiling mounted, the case opens up and swings out like an open car hood, resulting in a better looking installation.

I didn't do a full calibration, but did spend time adjusting it with some Digital Video Essentials test patterns and a Sencore color meter. With the color temperature set to 6,500 K, it didn't take me long until I was satisfied with the picture. The first movie I tried out was I, Robot. Right away I was impressed. The contrast between the dark portions of the picture and the bright metallic of the robots was very realistic (despite the obvious fact that most of it was produced by computers). The tunnel chase scene which pits Will Smith against a hundred or so robots looked incredibly smooth. There was not a jagged edge to be found anywhere, owing to the projector's excellent internal video processor. Moving on to something brighter (sic), I put in the Japanese anime film Vampire Hunter D, because I love the animation and the subtle juxtaposition of color with blacks and grays. Red, blood mostly, was deep and vivid, while bright greens jumped off the screen. Again, blacks were as black as I've seen them in any projector in this price. High definition programs coming from an LG HD set-top-box looked as good as they get. What really stood out for me was how smooth the picture looked. Sometimes digital projectors can produce a noisy, or gridy (yes, I just made up that word) picture, but the **Vidikron** looked about as near to film as you're going to find for under \$20,000. A co-worker, who is a dyed-in-the-wool CRT believer, couldn't believe he was looking at a digital projector.

As good as it is, this projector isn't everything to everyone. First, it's a bit loud. If your home theater installation requires that the projector hang right over your head, then see about insulating it, or ask the dealer to recommend a quieter model. Since it has a fairly long throw ratio, you'll probably be installing a ways back from the seating position, so the noise won't be a factor. Also, this isn't a projector for people who want to do it with the lights on. At a 1,000 lumens, it's best used in a dark room. Turn the lights up and you'll lose some of that precious contrast. If you want a projector to use around more ambient light, then look into **Vidikron's** model 100, which boasts 3,500 ANSI lumens.

**Vidikron** Vision 60  
 \$12,999  
 Three-chip LCoS light engine  
 1,400 x 788 resolution (16:9)  
 Manual zoom and focus  
 1,000 ANSI lumens  
 1500:1 contrast ratio  
 Imagix Video processing  
 Discreet input selection  
<http://www.vidikron.com>