

"Welcome to the Fall issue of Volume 7 of our newsletter. It's another New Holiday Season with all sorts of new technologies! In the spirit of the information age, we're offering some of our insights into our fun and exciting industry. Thank you for your interest."

Products or People?

In a given system, what's more important, the brand and reputation of the equipment or quality of set up and installation? Early experiences convinced me the latter was more important than I would have ever imagined!

Around 1980, I purchased a now legendary "Kloss Novabeam" one of the first front projection systems (78" diagonal image) to be manufactured on a reasonably large scale. Henry Kloss was a longtime "Hall of Fame" engineer and the reviews describing his "Model One" were fabulous.

I was very excited. Once set up at home, the picture looked quite respectable, but I was not quite *blown away* as one might expect from the reviews.

As fortune would have it, the store I was working at had just hired Cris Metzler, a new video technician. Metzler had collaborated with Kloss to improve a Novabeam predecessor, so he knew the category inside and out. After describing my concerns, Cris suggested bringing my "Beam" in for a "tune up".

I boxed it up and delivered it to Cris' bench at the service center. As a "newbie" to TV technology, I was amazed at how fast Cris tore into a product he had barely seen before. No manuals, just a vast knowledge of the product and how it functions. I watched as he disregarded "do not adjust" labels; twisting magnets on the proprietary picture tube design.

After about an hour, he popped the top back on and pronounced he had made some small improvements. I rushed home, made the required connections and fired it up. YIPES! Now we are talking! Small improvements?!? This was the best video I had ever seen!

My Novabeam was a whole new projector after the "tune up"!! Now the great reviews made more sense. This was an "eye opening" experience for me; establishing that performance of many "out of the box" designs can be greatly improved.

Not just projectors, either; most audio and video equipment can benefit from "tweaking". It would seem that manufacturers of mass produced equipment simply can not afford to "fine tune" each device coming "off the line".

So, it's easy to suggest that buying a respected "Name" is not a guarantee of a great result. An experienced and knowledgeable technician with the right test equipment can take the product's performance to a much higher level.

We promise to spend the extra time and effort to get the most out of any system we install. Whatever "brand" it happens to be. If you want the most for your money, don't just buy products, buy the best results! Call Supercalibrations!

You Need a Bigger TV!

It seems like every television manufacturer is promoting "1920 by 1080" resolution or "Full HD" flat panel and rear projection technology. All the technology "acronyms" including: LCD, DLP, SXRD, DILA and plasma, feature this "maximum" resolution for their upscale models.

How will this impact your decision when looking at a new HDTV for your home?

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Well, there are some relatively little known facts that effect how this increase in resolution will impact your viewing experience.

Anyone who has taken an eye test knows that from 20 feet, the smallest letters on an eye chart are difficult to see. "It could be a C... or maybe an E?" A very familiar situation for the myopically inclined.

If you can read line 8 or "D E F P O T E C" of the 11 progressively smaller eye chart segments, you are considered to have 20/20 vision.

OK, you just purchased a new 50 inch (diagonal) display with 2 million pixels ("1920 by 1080"). How close do you have to sit in order to take full advantage of all the tiny picture elements?

It turns out that when sitting any further than 6.5 feet, your 20/20 eyes are not able to resolve all 2 million of these very small pixels. The quantity of elements *visually* diminishes at longer distances.

Except for the smallest of rooms, a seating arrangement less than 6.5 feet rarely works with interior design scenarios.

This "eyesight" insight allows for a couple of additional considerations:

1. Save money and get the lower resolution, but still high definition "1368 by 768" version of a 50 inch display
2. Entertain the purchase of a larger display

Of course, I strongly recommend the latter!

It easily follows that the more pixels you can see, the more realistic the image becomes.

A 70 inch, "Full HD" TV provides 2 million BIGGER pixels. Now at 10 feet, all the pixels are visible!

Are these displays affordable, and high performance? I would say yes, with one caveat. 70 inch, "rear-projection" displays are roughly the same price as premium 52 inch flat panels, but will not "hang on the wall". These require around 15" of depth. In many rooms, this should be quite acceptable.

As a testimony to the quality of their designs, many top technicians in our industry own larger rear-projection sets. These slightly "thicker" displays provide the highly desirable "larger" screen while maintaining low price, high performance, and "1920 by 1080" resolution.

What did I do? I installed a "roll down" 110 inch screen and a Sony "Full HD" front projector. Wee - Ha! The images on this combination are truly life size. This is the ultimate home viewing experience.

I do, however; have to close the window blinds during the day for quality viewing. The only other downside? It becomes *really* difficult to leave your seat ;)

As the title of this column indicates. I hope you now agree, "You need a bigger TV"!!

The "10/10" Rule

How much money should be spent when you endeavor to accumulate a "Best Value" combination of Audio/Video equipment?

Conceivably converting an extra room into a "fun for the whole family" Home Theater experience?

In almost any field, there is a point where you have to spend a lot more to procure a small improvement in quality.

NAD, a manufacturer of home electronics, and a prominent line at Supercalibrations, likes to quote their famous engineer, Bjorn Erik

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Edvardsen: "You have to spend 10 times more to get a 10% improvement". It's his mantra when designing "BEE" versions of NAD electronics.

Bjorn is right! Buy anything designed by this world class engineer and I predict total audio "nirvana" will be shortly forthcoming - at a bargain, no less.

This 10/10 rule applies to many aspects of our business. We pride ourselves on recommending products providing the highest performance for the least outlay.

Many times our favorites are not the lowest priced choice in a category. We are confident, for example, that spending \$400-\$450 /pair on ceiling speakers will provide sound very close to products costing much more. Spending anything less however, tends to compromise results more than we like. Especially when they are permanently cut into the walls & ceilings of your home!

It's also important to note that the "performance" of products actually amplifying or reproducing the music and movies in your home is determined by their (mostly invisible) "internal" components.

Many less exciting products look identical to the 10/10 models we prefer. It seems it's much less expensive to cosmetically "copy" a better product than actually manufacture a comparable model.

Lots of experience and research is required to determine the mix of components to produce results with a 10/10 ratio. And, although I really do not like to be reminded, I installed my first audio system over 30 years ago! Unfortunately, lots of experience and lots of time tend to go together :)

We love to discuss our fun business! Feel free to call and find out more about getting the most from a home A/V system.

Hey, we love to play in the 10 percent better area, as well. If only the best will do, our crew will set the standard as high as you like. Ferrari anyone?

BETA or VHS?

Remember Beta? The loser in the battle for the home video format title? It's really is only a memory, now. Actually VHS, ultimately the big winner, is starting to fade at a startling rate, too. Our buddies at Best Buy no longer handle VHS-only machines. If you want a new tape machine it is going to have a DVD player included as well. So are the vagaries of the Home Electronics marketplace: King of the world one minute. \$29.50 at the close out counter the next.

We have not picked a favorite in the current HD-DVD vs. Blu-ray format war. Both provide the ultimate in High Definition performance. Even better than HDTV programming provided by satellite and cable companies!

Of course, the big problem as you probably have heard, is you cannot play a Blu-ray disc in an HD-DVD player and vice-versa.

Deja Vu! Beta vs. VHS, all over again

Considering the compatibility concerns, we have been advising clients who are on the fence, to maintain a "wait and see" approach in regard to purchasing either of the competitors.

Recently however, it seems the prices for both have been reduced to the point that, if you need a new DVD player, and own a high-resolution display, it might as well be a Blu-ray or an HD-DVD model.

Both versions are "backwards compatible" and play standard DVDs flawlessly. So, one will never really follow Beta to the "extinct" pile. The other cool thing is: thousands of titles have been released; and you can rent either format from Netflix or others.

The video and audio performance improvement over standard NTSC DVD players is very dramatic. Blu-ray and HD-DVD add a new "Hotness" of realism and excitement not available on the "Old and Busted" standard DVDs.

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Current pricing shows Toshiba HD-DVD players under \$200 and Sony Blu-ray models under \$400. In addition, both are offering a selection of free discs at time of purchase, to help offset the initial costs.

If you have any questions about which way to go, feel free to call. We enjoy discussing the virtues of both formats!

Have a Great Holiday Season!

From everyone at Supercalibrations

I hope this gives everyone some insight into the current home electronic trends. We actually find it to be great fun. We hope it shows in our work. We also know that most of our business comes from referrals. We would like to thank everyone for their continued support. We promise to stay committed to being the best in the business.

I will (as usual) be available as much as possible. So if you have any questions, feel free to call anytime. My number is 612-868-6129. We have found that many problems are usually resolved quickly and easily over the phone. I'm always available for further discussion.

One last thing; if you do give us a referral that generates new business, we have a new program to provide a few perks to your own home entertainment system. They make a nice reward for giving us a recommendation. Thanks again for your business!

- Dallas

Contact Information

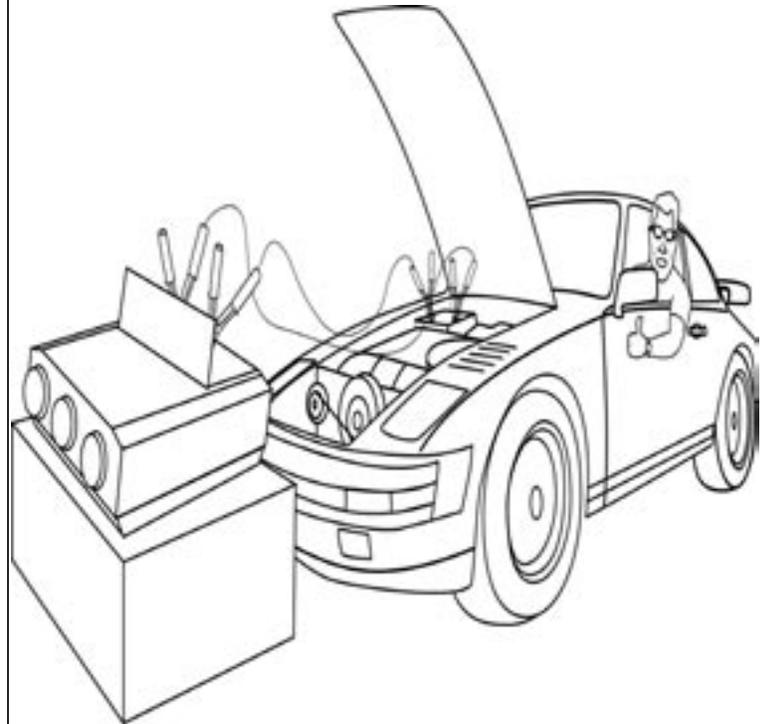
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Dallas finds a unique way to resurrect an old NovaBeam!