

When Two is Better than One

SIM2's two-piece Grand Cinema C3X Lumis HOST projector provides exceptional detail and clarity. *by Dennis P. Barker*

AT A GLANCE

Specs:

- > 3-chip DLP using DarkChip4
- > Resolution 1920 x 1080/24p
- > Picture size 50 to 300 inches
- > Contrast ratio 35,000:1
- > 3000 ANSI Lumens brightness
- > 280-watt dimmable lamp
- > Alphapath light engine with precision glass optics
- > DynamicBlack technology and user iris system
- > Fiber optic connections up to 250 meters
- > 6 HDMI ports (1.3 with Deep Color)
- > Prices: \$39,995 (with T1 short-throw or T2 long-throw lens); \$41,995 (with T3 extra-long throw lens); SCOPE Anamorphic Lens Kit: \$14,995

Pros:

- > Great blacks with enhanced realism
- > User-adjustable iris system
- > Flexible installation with 2-piece system

Cons:

- > Got bucks?

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If you're a home theater aficionado looking for larger-than-life visual experiences, the latest technology and a flexible setup, take a look at SIM2's new modular projector system. The Grand Cinema C3X Lumis HOST pairs a reference-quality 3-chip DLP projector with a discrete outboard control module/video processor to provide some of the finest blacks and color you will see anywhere—and it better at its \$40,000 to \$42,000 base price.

The C3X Lumis HOST is based on a trio of the Dark-Chip4 DLP chipsets that yields improved overall picture quality with better blacks and increased brightness. It utilizes SIM2's proprietary Alphapath light engine that features precision glass optics to deliver a Full HD 1920 x 1080 image with a contrast ratio of 35,000:1 and light output of 3,000 ANSI lumens.

The two components in the system, the projector and rack-mountable control module, are connected via a proprietary three-line optical-digital High-Definition Optical Signal Transfer (HOST) system that offers a special fiber-optic lossless cable for runs up to 250 meters. The module utilizes 10-bit video processing with high-definition scaling and deinterlacing, and its on-board LCD panel displays all vital information: brightness, contrast, gamma, signal type, etc.

Within the projector itself is the proprietary Dynamic Black technology, which dramatically increases black levels and dark details. That means midtones become bright tones and dark details become quite visible. Through the use of an optical aperture, the system can then reduce the light output to the correct amount while maintaining the dynamic range and boosting the black levels.

So how was it? The C3X's precision-matched light intensity adjustment resulted in significantly better blacks and shadow detail. This added a new sense of realism to images, noticeably in the dark scenes from *The Dark Knight* and *Independence Day*. Images from satellite and Blu-ray Disc sources showed superb clarity and definition. High-definition images in particular produced a lifelike effect, especially when viewing all forms of nature on DiscoveryHD Theater.



Two films on Blu-ray, *Speed Racer* and Disney's newly restored *Sleeping Beauty*, threw us colors that were so rich and vibrant that they seemed to leap off the screen. In *Across the Universe*, the colors were very natural and realistic. And films like *South Pacific* and *The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor* have color palettes all their own, which the C3X rendered beautifully.

For the home theater aficionado, the SIM2 Grand Cinema C3X Lumis HOST is just the ticket for years of viewing splendor. If it is properly installed and calibrated, you won't be going to the multiplex any time soon. **EH**

Dennis P. Barker, formerly of Consumer Reports, has specialized in evaluating audio and video systems since the 1980s.