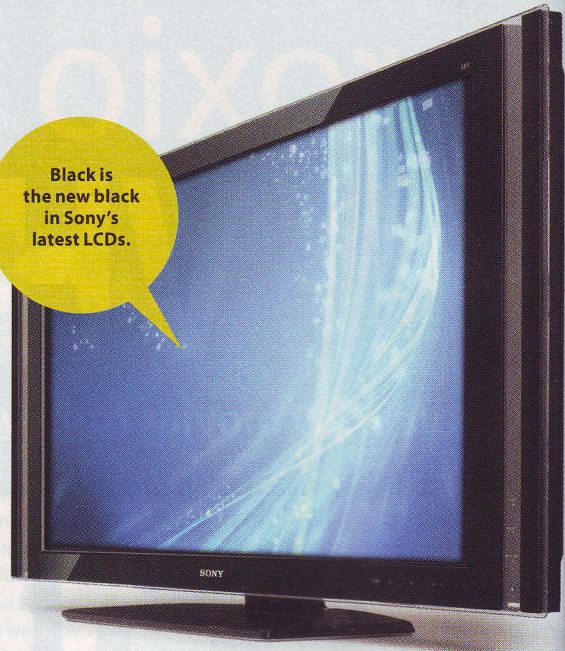


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# Sony BRAVIA 46XBR45 LCD

Is LCD finally catching plasma?

Black is the new black in Sony's latest LCDs.



Sony   
www.sony.com.au   
\$6,399

Outstanding image quality; good remote; connectivity.

Sound is pretty average; lost its design impact.

**SPECIAL FEATURES**   
LED backlighting  
100Hz motion engine  
Integrated HD tuner



LCD and plasma TVs have been sitting on the opposite sides of a scale. On one side, we have LCDs, which have fulfilled the need for bright colours in bright environments, and on the other we've had plasmas offering deep blacks and a cinema feel when you can turn the lights down.

The issue has been LCD's backlighting, an array of lights behind the LCD panel that provides the luminosity and allows you to see what's going on. LCD panels had to work hard to block these bright lights for an on-screen black, with varying success.

Sony's new range of BRAVIA screens (the XBR45 line but only in the 46in and 55in sizes) have gone to extremes to offer new levels of contrast and deeper blacks not seen in LCDs to date. They've cleverly used LED backlighting in three different colours (red, green and blue) which

can be turned off or toned down when black is required, and shone in any number of colours to help the LCD panel pop with colours. It does a great job.

Set up with a Blu-ray player running the ubiquitous Pixar "best case scenario" film, the colours almost burst out of the screen, while black and darker areas retain some of the detail usually lost on an LCD. There's almost no issue with jaggies, ghosting or other LCD bugbears thanks to a 10-bit panel and a 100Hz motion engine. The integrated HD tuner works fine, if a little touchy with reception for our liking.

Connectivity includes four HDMI connections, Ethernet, two component, three composite and a USB port (for images off memory

stick). The unit's RF remote is quite large, though this allows larger buttons and is surprisingly comfortable in the hand.

Is it a perfect LCD though? Sadly not. The design over all seems quite staid, considering Sony's history with the BRAVIA X series TVs being quite visually stunning. We weren't hugely impressed with the new embedded speaker design, with the sound being quite average. So you'll definitely want to pair the screen with a proper surround sound system.

Nick Race

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# Kworld DVB-T 395UR

Great-value basic HD tuner stick.

Kworld   
http://au.kworld-global.com   
\$79

Works with Eee PC and netbooks; easy-to-use; good value.

Single HD tuner only; no analogue reception or inputs.

**SPECIAL FEATURES**   
USB tuner stick  
Remote control  
TV antenna



The Kworld DVB-T 395UR is a fairly basic HD tuner card that allows you to watch HD digital TV on your PC or notebook. There is nothing flash such as dual tuners, analogue inputs or a built-in radio, but as a tuner, it works well.

Inside the box is the USB tuner stick with retractable cover (so you don't keep on losing the cap), remote control, TV antenna (which is useless unless you live in an outstanding reception area) and software bundle. The USB stick is larger than most since it allows you to plug an antenna cable directly into it without needing an adaptor or special cable.

The remote control is credit card sized with membrane buttons that are functional but have a squishy feel to them. The remote does give you control over most software functionality including channel, volume, recording and time slip playback. The first 1,000 units shipped come with CyberLink PowerDirector 7 and PowerProducer 5,

which allows you to edit captured video and optionally burn it to DVD. After these bonus units are sold, the software bundle will only include Kworld Hypermedia software, which is a functional PVR package with fairly standard features such as timer recording and time slip. If your machine supports it, the software allows you to put the computer to sleep or wake up from hibernation when a recording occurs. The software may be basic but it does the job.

The killer reason why you would buy this card over the others is that Kworld have produced a lite version of Hypermedia, which works on the Eee PC and other netbooks (such as the Acer Aspire One which we tested it on). Now don't expect to get the full HD experience on a tiny 1,024 x 600 screen, but being able to use your netbook to watch and record TV is really cool. For this feature alone we highly recommend this card.

David Neiger



All you need to watch HDTV on your PC, laptop or netbook.