

TV Shootout! How the Experts Do It...

Written by Bob Snyder
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It brings back memories of the old days, when A/B demonstrations were the preferred way to sell. But this was more than a demo: American-integrator **Robert Zohn** of Value Electronics has grown his annual

V Shootout

into an international event.

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In this 12th year, the shootout was held in conjunction with the New York City **CE Week** activities and drew more than 100 invited guests including TV experts, reviewers, and calibrators from around the globe. Only a handful of top TV models from leading brands were selected in 65" and 75" screen sizes (LG, Sony, Samsung, Vizio).

The moderator this year was **Joel Silver**, founder and president of The **Imaging Science Foundation**. Silver added commentary and advice to the attendees on the critical points of TV evaluation, with a focus on the very new and incredible high dynamic range (HDR), and wide color gamut (WCG) featured in these flagship TVs.

Evaluation categories included:

- Black quality
- Perceived contrast
- Color accuracy

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- Moving resolution (sharpness)
- Off-axis performance
- Screen uniformity
- HDR/WCG
- Overall day (high ambient light)
- Overall night (low ambient light)

The challenge going into the event for organizer Robert Zohn was (and likely is every year) how to keep it unbiased. Zohn, a retailer and AV integrator doing business in Scarsdale New York, keeps it fair by not taking any samples for free. All TVs are off the shelf and purchased via open market channels the same way a consumer would buy any one of these TVs.

What was particularly challenging this year was distributing the same signal to each TV in HD, UHD and UHD with HDR so that the experts could make unbiased decisions. Plus verifying the signals distributed to each TV were in the proper format, timing, bit depth, color space, and proper HDR signal (Dolby Vision or HDR-10) and verification of the actual signal bandwidth in GBP/Sec. for each signal sent to the TVs.



Panasonic provided five of their new UHD players (not available in the US yet) for review of UHD movie content in UHD SDR and HDR.

Murideo provided reference test signal generators to produce test patterns required for several of the categories being evaluated and for a source to calibrate/touch up the displays during the event. Additionally, the Murideo generators and analyzers were used to turn on HDR and to validate and review Dolby Vision and HDR-10 capabilities.

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Zohn reached out to several major connectivity manufacturers to provide a matrix/distribution system for the shootout and was told it was not possible-- and would not be possible until the 2017 shootout.

This worried Zohn who reached out to startup **AVProConnect**. They had been working with Joel Silver on developing an 18 GBP/Sec solution for his own high-end clientele, and for distributing high value HDR content at his popular **ISF Seminars**

But the new UHD/HDR 18 GBP/Sec matrix had never before been used in public, so there was not a lot of confidence this could be pulled off. Zohn put several backup plans in place.



(From Left to right: Joel Silver, Brent McCall, Matt Murray, Robert Zohn, Jeff Murray, and Jay Catral.)

To ensure the HDMI cables would also be able to support the full 18 GBP/Sec of the matrix, AVProConnect in turn suggested the Metra Home Theater Group's **Velox** series of Active HDMI cable-- and the GA1 Gigabit Accelerator for the longest Passive cable runs. (AVProConnect had seen and tested these cables at both CES and ISE, and knew they were up to the challenge.)

During a number of 4-hour sessions, 80 experts poured over test patterns, movie clips and measurements—to rate the televisions (on a scale of 1 to 10) for black quality, perceived contrast, color accuracy, moving resolution, off-axis performance, screen uniformity, HDR/WCG, and overall day and night performance.

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Each display had its own strengths and weaknesses...and, the event went off without a hitch and a winner was crowned at the end of the second day.

Who won? No spoilers here-- you'll have to click the link...

Go [80 Experts Compared This Year's Hottest US TVs Side By Side, And The Winner Was...](#)

Go [18 GBP/Sec Cables, Metra](#)

Go [Reference Signal Generator and Analyzer, Murideo](#)

Go [18GBP/Sec Switching, AVProConnect](#)