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Canon XEED WUX10 projector

Does the performance match the £10k price?

by Jamie Carter published on 14 May 2009

As anyone who's ever sneaked one out of work to bring home for the weekend will know, most projectors just can't handle movies. Designed to be hooked-up to a laptop, these ultra-bright, basic resolution and often 4:3 shape beamers disappoint; when it comes to the sharpness, the low-lit scenes and the delicate nuances of colours needed for movies, almost all are left wanting.

We say almost. After years of division between the home cinema and data camps, Canon has decided to call a truce with its XEED WUX10, a (gulp) £10,000 model that claims to bridge the two worlds and offer pin-point accuracy from whatever source you feed it.

Yes, the price. Hmmm. It costs more than a brand new car, maybe even two. What's certainly true of the XEED WUX10 is that it's something out of the ordinary in several ways.

First-up, it uses LCOS technology. Most data projectors use three LCD panels, while home cinema models usually rely on either LCD or DLP, the latter being a series of minute mirrors. In contrast, LCOS - or Liquid Crystal on Silicon - is a kind of halfway house. Historically LCOS projectors have been too expensive to produce in large numbers, something that's hinted at by the XEED WUX10's heavy price tag. They've also tended to be much higher resolution than either DLP or LCD could manage, and that remains the case.

JVC currently makes a so-called 4k2k - that's 4000 x 2000 pixels, more than four times the detail of a Full HD or Blu-ray image - projectors using a LCOS idea (it's called D-ILA by JVC, but we're splitting hairs). And the XEED WUX10 does have a higher resolution than any other projector we've tested, boasting a 1920 x 1200 pixel panel - that's a jot more than is even on a Blu-ray disc.



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If that resolution suggests that the XEED WUX10 is more suited to using with computers (which can pump out a higher resolution than Blu-ray players straight into the XEED WUX10's DVI-I input), so does its 3200 lumens of brightness - a figure more than double that claimed by most exclusively home cinema models.

The XEED WUX10's multimedia, know-it-all status is confirmed by its multitude of ins and outs. If you do want to use it for presentations (personally we don't fancy lugging a £10,000 around town, even if it does weigh just 5kg and come with a tough and well made shoulder-strapped carry bag), it's also got a couple of mini-jack audio inputs, as well as an output. Though for an actual presentation you're unlikely to need them because the XEED WUX10 also has a speaker beside the inputs panel. That said, its 1W of power is unlikely to offer you much in the way of enveloping audio.

A Composite video input is also supplied for legacy laptops, while its dual control options of an Ethernet network port and a RS-232 port make it possible to fit within high-end control systems.

The remote control, although rather small, is more commanding than most. It's fitted with individual buttons for almost every feature the unit has, aside from its generous picture settings that offer endless tweakability.

An auto set-up button on the remote focuses the lens, selects the live input and tweaks the colour for you, though it's best to change the focus yourself, something that's also done straight from the remote.

Used with a Blu-ray player, the XEED WUX10 does impress. Colours are subtle and perhaps less saturated than we expected, but well suited to movies. A Fleshtone mode helps out with an otherwise troublesome shade while a dedicated Movie mode does a reasonable job as an easy-to-use preset. What is startling is the detail. Forget

At a glance

What is it?

Home cinema and multimedia projector

Good

High brightness for any-time viewing, extra resolution for PC use, ultra-sharp detail from Blu-ray

Bad

Some blur, muted colours, slight lack of contrast

Verdict

Though it's hard to ignore the exquisite detail on offer, its pure home cinema performance is on a par with projectors half its price

Price 10,000

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10

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its higher resolution panel - the XEED WUX10 can produce the sharpest picture you're yet to see from Blu-ray.

As well as the extra finery on show, edges are so well defined and stable, which makes it all the more disappointing to see some blur and judder when the action kicks-off. Moving characters and objects do lag slightly, reminiscent of many LCD home cinema projectors. There could also be a dollop more contrast, because at this price we want to be totally convinced.

If the picture quality is a slightly mixed bag, set-up is a cinch. There are no manual lens levers to yank the picture far from where the projector is physically sat, but there is some keystone correction. A 1.5x zoom lens is pretty much the best available, with a 100-inch image guaranteed from about 3 metres.

Probably the XEED WUX10's best quality - and one that will appeal to anyone who thinks home cinema projection is a tad troublesome - is that you really can use it in daylight. The more the ambient light, the less impressive the picture, for sure, but vivid fare such as most games and animated movies are no trouble.

Where the XEED WUX10 does falls down is with noise. Although there's no spinning colour wheel, as found on DLP models, even on Quiet Mode the XEED WUX10 produces around 31 decibels, which can be distracting. It's a side effect of the XEED WUX10's otherwise conveniently small size.

VERDICT

Is the WUX10 worth £10,000? For the casual user wanting high-def action from games and movies at unpredictable times if the day, it performs remarkably well. Though it's hard to ignore the exquisite detail on offer, its pure home cinema performance is on a par with projectors half its price. But if you're after a portable product that can do just about anything, the XEED

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WUX10 makes for an attractive - if pricey - proposition.