

# TVs get bigger, fancier, pricier

July 5 2012, By Mike Snider

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Buyer's remorse may be a thing of the past for purchasers of new television sets.

You know the feeling: plunking down cash or a credit card for a new display, only to find a better bargain in a few months that leaves you resentful.

So far this year, the average retail price of flat-panel displays and the average price that [consumers](#) are paying for TVs is rising. Retailers and [TV makers](#) like selling higher-priced models because they make more money off them. And shoppers increasingly are willing to pay for sets that are bigger and have more features.

"The person who comes in wanting to spend \$500 ... will spend \$1,200 or \$1,900" if a set has what they want, said Tom Campbell of Video and Audio Center, an L.A.-based chain. "In that price range now you can get a smart TV."

For years, the [TV industry](#) trained consumers to expect price decreases, says analyst Paul Semenza of NPD DisplaySearch. "It is just hard to keep driving down the costs so rapidly."

The average [retail price](#) of sets for sale has risen to \$1,243 from \$1,124 last year, says research firm IHS Technology. Consumers are spending on average about \$881, up from \$865.

"If consumers have more expensive TVs offered to them, they also tend

to spend more," says analyst Tom Morrod of IHS.

TV makers are starting to cater to that shopper.

Sharp is shipping a 90-inch TV (\$10,999) to select retailers, the largest LCD TV with a full array of LED [backlighting](#) for better images. Sharp already offers 80-inch displays (\$4,999.99), as well as high-end Elite [LCD TVs](#) in 60-inch and 70-inch sets (\$5,999.99 and \$8,499.99), part of a joint operation with Pioneer.

"This is a rich segment for the industry right now," said Mark Viken, vice president of marketing at Sharp Electronics.

Consumers are replacing their TVs faster, too. The average set being replaced this year is 7.6 years old; last year it was 8.4. And as they become accustomed to high-definition TV, consumers are opting for bigger sets when they replace or add a set, [Semenza](#) says.

Other TV makers touting 50-inch or larger premium-priced sets:

-Sony with its 65-inch Bravia XBR (\$5,499) and Corning Gorilla Glass frameless display.

-Samsung LCD and plasma Smart TVs with voice control and face recognition, starting at 51 inches (\$2,199.99).

-Panasonic's Smart Viera 55-inch VT50 plasma display with eight built-in speakers for improved audio (\$2,499.99).

-LG Electronics' top-of-the-line 55-inch Cinema 3D Full LED [Smart TV](#) (\$3,599.99) with gesture-controlled and voice-recognition "Magic Remote" control.

But the influx of larger, higher-priced sets into the marketplace doesn't mean shoppers won't find good sale prices. "It is still a very competitive landscape," said Shawn DuBravac of the Consumer Electronics Association. "There are going to be promotions headed into July 4th, but more importantly, immediately following that you have the Olympics. It's a big viewing event."

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