

Tech review: Samsung QLED TV is picture perfect

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It's time to make a confession about my television. I only have one TV in

my house, and it's a 10-year-old, 42-inch Panasonic plasma set.

It's huge compared with the TVs of today, it throws off a lot of heat and it uses more electricity, but the picture is gorgeous and there's nothing wrong with it, so it stays.

I learned years ago that moving big TVs isn't easy in my small Honda, so I don't say yes to many TV reviews, but when Samsung offered its QLED for review and offered to deliver it to my house, I had to say yes.

I reviewed the 55-inch Class Q7C Curved QLED 4K TV (QN55Q7CAMF) along with a Sound+ soundbar (HW-MS650) and an Ultra HD Blu-Ray Player (UBD-M9500).

This was quite a step up from what I've been watching.

I have been worrying about my next TV purchase. Plasma TVs have disappeared and LED TVs have always looked a little weird to me. You have probably noticed the "soap opera effect," where things tend to look a little too sharp and unnatural.

After having the Q7C (\$2,199, www.samsung.com) in my house for the last month, I'm not worried about LED TVs any more.

What is QLED?

You may have heard of OLED TVs, which stands for Organic Light Emitting Diode.

OLED TVs can produce absolute black, which provides contrast ratios that are unmatched. OLED TVs produce very realistic images and are still expensive.

But what's QLED?

It's an acronym for Quantum Dot Light Emitting Diode.

To find a clear explanation, I went to [TrustedReviews.com](https://www.trustedreviews.com): Quantum dots are tiny particles of between two and 10 nanometres in diameter. They're employed in displays due to their ability - in conjunction with other materials - to give off different colors according to their size.

The advantage of this is that they're capable of emitting brighter, more vibrant and more diverse colors - the sort of colors that really make HDR (high dynamic range) content shine, thanks to the high peak brightness that can be achieved.

These early QLED sets apparently don't have the contrast of OLED, but they are cheaper to make and the picture is terrific.

In fact, the picture quality of the Q7C is like putting on your glasses first thing in the morning. The world might look pretty good when you wake up, but put on your glasses and wow - the world is really sharp and colorful.

DESIGN

The Q7C has a stunning design. The gently curved jet black screen reaches to within a quarter-inch of the edge of the panel, which is surrounded by just a few millimeters of silver bezel.

Of course the design of the screen means there are no visible speakers. The TV's built-in speakers sounded fine, but there is a reason Samsung wanted me to use the Sound+ soundbar along with the Q7C (more on the Sound+ later).

The TV is supported by a single bracket in the center, which worked well for my smallish TV cabinet. I've seen other 55-inch sets that have legs on the ends and I would have needed a larger surface to hold such a set.

I was not a fan of curved screen TVs when I first saw them, but I've come to like them.

Our TV is in a corner, and the curve of the panel really plays off the corner placement well. I also found there was much less glare from lights, windows or other shiny surfaces.

The Q7C comes with a skinny silver remote that's made of metal. It feels substantial in your hand, and it has a simple design dominated by a circle of four buttons. Most of the navigating is done on the screen.

To enter a number to tune to a specific channel, you have to call up a number pad on the screen and use the left and right buttons to select the number, which is tedious.

The remote also lacks simple playback controls like rewind and fast forward. It does have a play-pause button, but to get to any other playback button, you have to press the OK button, then press the left or right buttons to find the onscreen button you want. Again, it's tedious.

Here's a tip: Download the free Samsung SmartView app on your phone and use it to control the TV. It's a lot easier, and all the functionality is there.

The panel is about half an inch thick at the edges and the panel stays thin because there are no ports built in.

Samsung has moved all the ports from the back of the TV to a small

breakout box that connects to the panel via a very thin optical cable. You can place the box with the ports inside your TV cabinet next to your peripherals. You still need a traditional power cable from the TV to an AC outlet.

Making the ports portable means that once you put the TV on a stand or mount it on a wall, you'll likely never have to access the back of it again. Genius design.

SPECS

The Q7C has a 54.6-inch diagonally measured screen with a resolution of 3,840 by 2,160 pixels (4K Ultra HD). The refresh rate of the screen is 240 hertz, which means you get very smooth motion. The Q7C supports HDR10 and UHD upscaling.

The built-in audio has 40 watts of power with Dolby Digital Plus and DTS Premium Sound 5.1. The TV can broadcast its sound to a pair of Bluetooth headphones.

Connections to the internet are wired (Ethernet) or wireless.

Ports include four HDMI, three USB 2.0, digital optical audio out, Ethernet and coax for your OTA antenna.

Physically the TV is 48.2 by 31.1 by 11.8 inches with the stand. It weighs 47.6 pounds.

The Q7C uses 195 watts of power while powered on and under 0.4 watts in standby.

The TV turns on almost the instant you press the power button.

SMART TV

The Q7C can connect to the internet through Wi-Fi or Ethernet.

The TV's interface is called SmartHub, which allows you to see all your connected sources (like OTA, U-Verse, Apple TV, Roku, Fire TV) along with built-in streaming apps (like Netflix, Hulu, Amazon) in one place.

Hit the Home button on the remote, and you can quickly navigate to any video source.

Connected video sources and streaming apps really do work side by side.

SmartHub is one of the easiest interfaces I've used. I like it so much that a Samsung TV might just be my next choice.

SOUND+ SOUNDBAR

Sitting just in front of the Q7C in my living room was the Sound+ soundbar (\$399 for a straight Sound+ and \$429 for the curved model).

Each Sound+ has nine speakers, each with its own amplifier, to provide full sound without a subwoofer. I did turn it up pretty loud a few times, and I was happy with the sound.

The Sound+ connected with an included optical audio cable, and it can stream music from your phone wirelessly.

ULTRA HD BLU-RAY PLAYER

Samsung's Ultra HD Blu-Ray Player UBD-M9500 (\$329.99) was simple to use. It also has Wi-Fi or Ethernet connectivity and can put the SmartHub interface on 4K TVs that don't have it.

The UBD-M9500 can also upscale DVDs to make them look as good as they can on your 4K TV.

CONCLUSIONS

The Q7C is a wonderful TV. The QLED technology is very impressive and a worthy competitor to OLED.

Choosing a new TV is all about how it looks to you. I advise you to take a little time and do some comparison viewing. Seeing is believing, and when I had some friends over last week, one remarked he'd never seen the color green reproduced so accurately on a TV. I agree.

Samsung's QLED TVs rival the best video displays I've ever seen.

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Pros: Stunning design and crystal clear picture quality. Great smart TV interface.

Cons: Not cheap. Remote might a little too simple.

Bottom line: If you want a top-tier TV, Samsung QLED is on that list.

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