

## The rays have it

By Steve Dawson  
October 2, 2003

Some video enthusiasts sneer at the great majority of projectors, which are projector-based on LCD panels or DLP. For them, there is only one kind of projector - the CRT.

A CRT is a cathode ray tube, and a CRT projector has three of them, one each for red, green and blue.

CRTs are usually thought to be inaccessible, costing tens of thousands of dollars. But Barco, one of the biggest in the business, has the Cine 7 LT, an entry-level model for \$13,900. It is cheaper than the current run of widescreen DLP projectors.

However, the Cine 7 LT's performance is anything but entry level. It supports all standard and high-definition signals, and it will display them. No downsampling or anything silly like that. If the standard calls for 1080 lines, the Cine 7 LT will show 1080 lines.

When I first set up the projector and plugged in a DVD player, the picture was unimpressive with black horizontal lines in between the picture lines. But a quick flick through the menus to set the option to triple the number of scan lines and the problem was completely eliminated.

Having done this, what I found was a huge video picture that looked exactly like that from a giant glass-tubed TV set.

Think of a fine European TV, with its black blacks, rich and deep colours, silky smooth presentation, and you get the idea. Except that it is big (I used a two-metre diagonal.)

There is none of the barely visible twinkling pixels that most modern projectors produce: ones that hover near the edge of perceptibility and grate on the optic nerves. Just a smooth moving image.

Do not worry, incidentally, about that 180 ANSI lumens claim. The eye soon adjusts in a darkened room so that it is more than bright enough.

What is far more important is the 15,000:1 contrast ratio. This produces blacks that are absolutely black. It is to this feature that the richness and accuracy of the picture is owed.

It is remarkably quiet. Barco asserts that the Cine 7 LT has a noise level of 35 decibels (A-weighted), which is similar to that of many other projectors. But it seems quieter, perhaps because of the heavy construction of this unit.

Moving it is a two-person job. Ceiling mounting (which is really where this one belongs) is recommended, by a professional installer who has plenty of employees that know what they're doing, because while this projector is incredibly configurable, it is also complicated.

Most projectors support several mounting options: ceiling (upside down), tabletop or rear projection. So does this.

But to set it up, you cannot simply dial up a menu item - you must unlock and open the cover, undo the two screws securing the main processing board, swing it up, pull six plugs from it and plug them back in again, backwards.

Phew.

Even focusing requires opening it, undoing three locking wing nuts and adjusting the three lenses individually. Still, most adjustments can be made using a set of on-screen menus. Even the convergence (making the three tubes produce their pictures in the same place) is automated, with a small built-in camera telling the projector what it needs to know.

If you are in this price bracket, do not need portability, and have a strong ceiling, then do not even consider LCD and DLP.

### SPICKS & SPECS

**PRODUCT** Barco Cine 7 LT home theatre projector

**RRP** \$13,900

**SYSTEM** 3 x 178mm CRTs

**OUTPUT** 180 ANSI Lumens

**CONTRAST RATIO** >15,000:1

**INPUT SIGNALS** Composite video, S-Video, RGB (with sync), Component video, NTSC, PAL, SECAM, 480p, 576p, 720p, 1080i

**DIMENSIONS** 669 x 550 x 302mm

**WEIGHT** 34kg

**PHONE** (03) 9646 5833

**WEB** [www.barco.com](http://www.barco.com)

*This story was found at: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/10/01/1064988258365.html>*