

High-Tech TV

Home Entertainment That Takes You Out Of This World

By Kristen De Deyn Kirk

Once upon a time, home entertainment meant a television. You'd add a comfy chair, a DVD player and a decent-enough sound system, and you couldn't imagine needing anything else besides your Blockbuster card.

But now, well, some people reading this might not have ever stepped into a Blockbuster. Home entertainment means so much more than movies; it means being connected to everything outside the home, in the easiest, most visual, smartest way possible. In other words, in my mind, Apple's HomePod, Intel's True VR, Sling TV and well, OK, an insanely cool LG Wallpaper TV:

Easiest: Apple HomePod As it usually does, Apple waited for other creators to design and manufacture voice assistants, even though it introduced Siri nearly seven years ago. Finally in February 2018, they took a stab at their own version, and early reviews place them at the head of the pack—minus a fault or two. Plusses are the HomePod's small, blend-in design at just over six inches high and a blackish hue that can fade into most decors. (Those preferring to show off can choose white.) The sound and "listening" reception (its ability to hear you!) is supposed to be better than other assistants. Reviewers report that music is concert-quality and that commands are understood immediately. On the negative side: Voice command only connect you to Apple Music (if you want Spotify or something similar, you'll need to work through your phone's Airplay), and repair costs are criminal: The HomePod is priced around \$350; repairs are \$279.

Most Visual: Intel True VR The Olympics presented the perfect opportunity for Intel to step up its effort to connect more people with virtual reality systems, and they did so with a partnership that delivered 30 events in virtual reality. All you needed was a phone (and in one case, a laptop) and one of their ski goggle-like sets (prices around \$400 and up for a complete system), and you were snowboarding with Shaun White. Last year, March Madness was extra fast and sweaty for those who took advantage of the same Intel virtual reality access, and per game prices were mere dollars each. In a few years, we might not remember watching sports without a head/eye-set.

Smartest: Sling TV Saying goodbye to cable, although it's not really "cable" anymore, takes courage. Can another service give you what you need without making you miss that long list of possibilities you see daily on the guide—yet always scroll by? More people are finding the courage to say yes, and Sling TV could be a cost-effective way to do so. Sling offers three main options—\$20 for Sling Orange (would work nicely for someone who watches news staples CNN and FOX; sports necessities ACC Network, ESPN, ESPN 2, ESPN3; and decorating-inspiring HGTV) and \$25

for Sling Blue (a must-have if you like mind-numbing stations such as BRAVO and Lifetime) or Sling Orange and Blue for \$40. A handful of other options—bundles for kids, news junkies and sports junkies—are offered as well. You'll still need the Internet and will probably want an antenna for local stations, but your monthly expenses can be closer to \$100 rather than \$200.

Cooler: LG Wallpaper TV If ever there's an extra \$8,000 you need to spend, consider the LG Wallpaper TV. The screen is as big as most TVs you've drooled over: 65 inches. But it's the small features that make this one so desirable. In depth, it measures about 1/10 of an inch. That's smaller than the thinnest iPhone, and it weighs only 16 pounds. The trick: All the components are located in the sound bar.



On-Trend Interiors

Tips for Choosing the Perfect Paint Colors This Spring

By Chelsea Sherman

This year, neutrals continue to trend heavily in interior design. In keeping with our area's coastal vibe, warm grays with blue and green undertones are still popular paint color choices. Variations of taupe are also trending. But there is a different color that is not overtly coastal coming onto the scene this season: lavender.