

Barco Cine 6

A second look By Max Christoffersen

Barco Cine 6 CRT projector.
\$20,299

Does CRT still have anything to offer the home theatre enthusiast? 'Hell yes!' I say.

Wanted to buy

Home theatre projector: low running cost, no screen-door, no dead pixels, no rainbows, no fan noise, accurate colours and must do true black.

To the modern home theatre projector buyer, the description above may seem an impossible ask. But as more and more first time buyers get into home theatre, the features that really make for long term satisfaction in image quality come into sharp focus.

And the Barco Cine 6 delivers on these image quality hot buttons in a big way.

But let's back the tubes up a bit. The Barco Cine 6 is not a new machine to *AudioEnz*. The first appearance of the Cine 6 was back in October 2001.

Since then the unit has been updated and transformed, in part I suspect, to take on the high-end digital projection market. And what a transformation it is!

In many ways, this is a very different beast from the first review sample. The image is tighter, cleaner, more dynamic and with a more obvious 'WOW' factor than the earlier model.

What a difference a year makes

Things have changed. Put it down to the upgrade in the on board LiDo line doubler, the newness of the tubes (this model was manufactured in September 2002) or the set-up. Whatever it was, any lingering doubt about its quality vanished faster than the America's Cup from the Auckland Viaduct basin.

Today the revised Cine 6 is a knock out. Seldom have I enjoyed a review product so much and, in equal measure, dreaded the e-mail saying its time to pack it up for the return home. The Cine 6 was a revelation both in the simple excitement and the satisfaction it delivered.



Image body and 3D

If I'm enthusiastic, it's because there is so much to like about this projector. It's silent, the image has a real 'see-into' 3D quality. It's very seductive in its rendering of colours while the overall body of the image seemed to be beautifully balanced between image sharpness and image body.

Sometimes there appears to be a trade-off where sharp edge definition contributes to viewer fatigue. Not so here: Simply, I just wanted to see more and more of what the Cine 6 could do.

Cosmetically, it's still a large machine compared to the small hand-held digital projectors, with much of this size being the over-generous plastic casing. The same specs still apply: 140 Ansi lumen with 1000 lumen total light output; 1000:1 contrast ratio. It weighs 32kg and measures 639x318x660 mm (lhxwx). Maximum scan rate is 38 kHz, with resolution of 800x600 through 7" CRTs. (The Cine 6 lenses are colour corrected but not colour filtered). It's fan free although there is a very minor power supply buzz that is audible up close.

Standard connections including composite, S-video and RGB/component via gold plated BNC inputs (one or the other not both at the same time) are on board. Control is via a back-lit remote.

Digital CRT projection?

The image focus is the most 'digital' I have seen from a CRT projector. The edge definition and detail the 7" tubes produces is outstanding. It is among the tightest I have seen from a CRT. Combine this with image controls including a three-band EQ, digital noise reduction and split screen capabilities

(to compare processing vs non-processing) and the ability to customise the image to individual taste becomes the icing on the image quality cake.

There is a very clear high frequency lift resulting in an image with whites that appear to be over bright and some instances of 'ringing' around edges and faces. I simulated the same effect with a video enhancer on my own CRT projector and while it is obvious when doing a near A/B comparison, in normal viewing, it may not be immediately noticeable.

The lasting image I have from the too-short-a-time with the Barco Cine 6 was of the Corrs *Live at Royal Albert Hall*. The up close images of Andrea Corr were so detailed that every skin pore was visible, as was the face glitter and the eyelashes.

It simply looked like a window on reality, rather than a projected image onto my 96"x54" perf screen. Home theatre projection really doesn't get too much better than this from a DVD source.

At this price point, there isn't another projector that can do what the Cine 6 can. See it before you part with your money for anything else.

And tell me why this doesn't confirm there's life left in the old CRT dinosaur yet!

