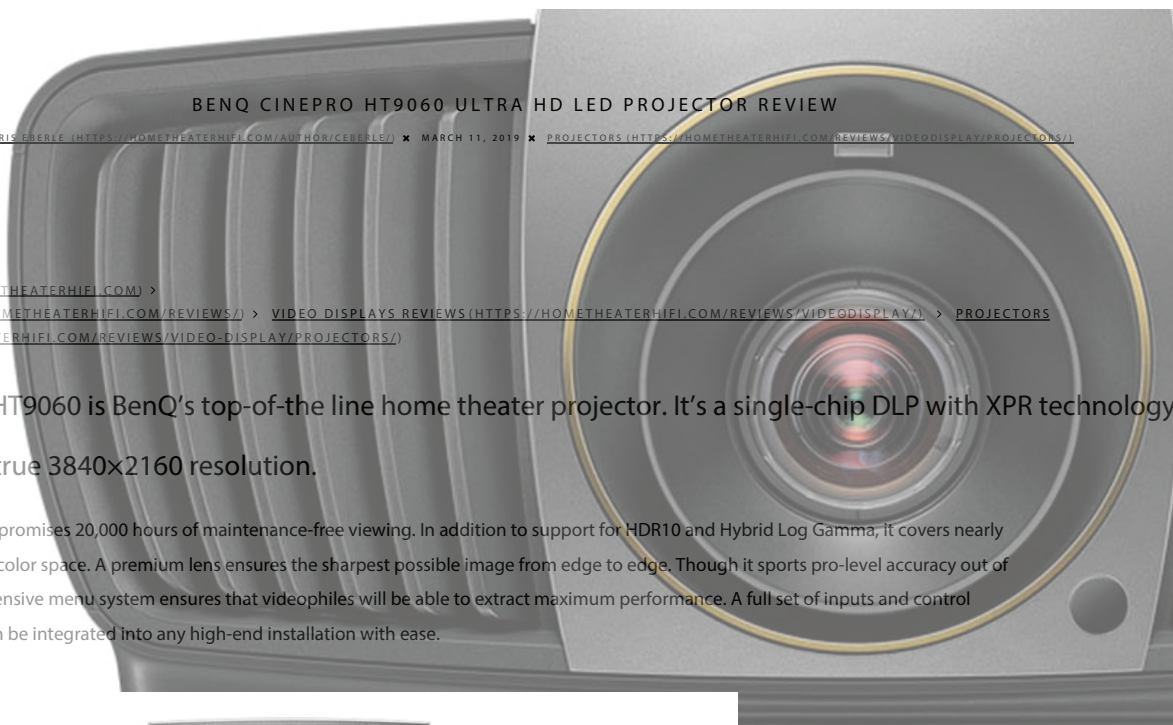




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BENQ CINEPRO HT9060 ULTRA HD LED PROJECTOR REVIEW

CHRIS EBELER (<https://hometheaterhifi.com/author/ceberle/>) x MARCH 11, 2019 x [PROJECTORS \(https://hometheaterhifi.com/reviews/video-display/projectors/\)](https://hometheaterhifi.com/reviews/video-display/projectors/)

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The CinePro HT9060 is BenQ's top-of-the line home theater projector. It's a single-chip DLP with XPR technology that delivers true 3840x2160 resolution.

An LED light source promises 20,000 hours of maintenance-free viewing. In addition to support for HDR10 and Hybrid Log Gamma, it covers nearly 100% of the DCI-P3 color space. A premium lens ensures the sharpest possible image from edge to edge. Though it sports pro-level accuracy out of the box, a comprehensive menu system ensures that videophiles will be able to extract maximum performance. A full set of inputs and control options means it can be integrated into any high-end installation with ease.



Highlights

BenQ HT9060 Ultra HD LED Projector

- Single-chip DLP with XPR delivers 3840×2160 resolution
- HDR10 and HLG support with projector-optimized HDR-PRO technology
- Renders almost 100% of the DCI-P3 color gamut
- Premium lens with low dispersion elements
- Generous lens shift and zoom range for flexible installation
- High-output Philips ColorSpark LED light source with 20,000-hour service life

Introduction

In 2017, I reviewed BenQ's first offering of the flagship CinePro series, the HT9050. It was one of the first DLPs to offer Ultra HD resolution with 8.3 million individually-addressable pixels. That review caused a bit of controversy because the projector didn't offer HDR or the correct tone mapping for Ultra HD content. Though it produced stunning images, it had unrealized potential. Today though, all past sins are forgiven. BenQ has sent me their latest gem, the HT9060. Like its predecessor, it's a single-chip DLP with XPR technology and offers 3840×2160 resolution. But now, it incorporates a properly-engineered HDR feature with support for HDR10 and Hybrid Log Gamma. It also covers nearly all of the DCI-P3 color gamut with professional-grade accuracy right out of the box. A premium lens ensures razor sharp Ultra HD images with maximum contrast and color saturation. I'm anxious to dive in so let's take a look.

BENQ HT9060 ULTRA HD LED PROJECTOR SPECIFICATIONS

TYPE:
single-chip .67" DLP w/XPR

NATIVE RESOLUTION:
3840×2160, 16:9 aspect ratio

COLOR GAMUT:
DCI-P3

HDR:
HDR10, Hybrid Log Gamma

3D:
Yes

THROW RATIO:
1.36-2.03

MAX IMAGE SIZE:
300"

LENS SHIFT:
65% vertical, 27% horizontal

LIGHT SOURCE:
Philips HLD

LIGHT OUTPUT (MFR):
2200 lumens

FAN NOISE:
23-32dB

VIDEO CONNECTIONS:
1x HDMI 2.0 w/HDCP 2.2, 1x HDMI 1.4, 1x VGA

ADDITIONAL CONNECTIONS:
RS-232c, 1x USB, 2x 12v trigger

LED SERVICE LIFE:
20,000 hours

DIMENSIONS:
18.5" x 8.9" x 22.2" (WxHxD)

WEIGHT:
40.8lbs

PRICE:
\$8999

COMPANY:
[BenQ \(/av-directory/benq/\)](#)

SECRETS TAGS:
benq, ht9060, 4k, ultra hd projector, LED projector, dlp projector, hdr, ultra hd, Projector Review 2019

Design



In the DLP category, there are currently two chip designs that can render Ultra HD resolution. The first is found in smaller projectors like BenQ's HT2550 and upcoming HT3550. It has a native pixel count of 1920x1080 and uses a pixel-shift technique called XPR to achieve Ultra HD. The second chip, as seen in the HT9060 and a few other high-end displays also uses XPR but starts at a native resolution of 2716x1528 and doubles that in a diagonal overlap to create Ultra HD.



It's a bit like the pixel-shift technology used by JVC and Epson but with one important difference. The 8.3 million pixels are individually addressable with a gap of less than one micron. And I can tell you from personal observation that the pixel gaps are so small you have to literally press your nose to the screen to see them. I've seen native Ultra HD projectors both in my theater and in demos, the HT9060 looks as good or better than all of them.

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Some credit must go to the premium lens. It's all glass of course, with 14 elements in 6 groups. It has a low-dispersion coating that ensures edge-to-edge clarity with perfectly uniform luminance and color. With the proper screen material, you won't see anything but a smoothly-toned image that looks great from any seat in the theater.

Like its predecessor, the HT9050, the HT9060 supports the DCI-P3 color gamut. In fact, it covers more of it than any other display I've reviewed except the VIZIO PQ65-F1 TV. My tests show 93.8% coverage which means Ultra HD content will have the most vivid color possible in a consumer display.

The big star here is HDR which is supported in HDR10 and Hybrid Log Gamma formats. Unfortunately, there is no Dolby Vision yet. Since projector HDR is something of a challenge given the lower contrast ratios involved, BenQ has optimized their tone-mapping with something called HDR-PRO. Most projectors simply process HDR signals and leave you with an image that's only slightly better than SDR. BenQ's approach optimizes content along with a fast-switching LED light source to make a more significant improvement.

Speaking of light, BenQ has managed to throw off the stigma of dim LED projectors with Philips latest ColorSpark LED. There is more than enough output for the HT9060 to anchor large theaters. In my modest space, I recorded over 200 nits at 10 feet from the screen, 92" image size, for both SDR and HDR signals. For old-schoolers, that's over 60 foot-Lamberts. When using the SmartEco lamp mode, which imitates the action of an auto-iris, contrast was around 4500:1.



Physically, the HT9060 is a large projector, weighing over 40 pounds. It has generous ventilation in the front and back, but a well-baffled fan runs very quietly. Even with the projector right behind my head, I heard only a whisper. The lens is center-mounted and features manual controls.

[/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/fig-4-benq-ht9060-ultra-hd-led-projector.jpg](https://wp-content/uploads/2019/03/fig-4-benq-ht9060-ultra-hd-led-projector.jpg)

I had hoped for motorized adjustments but when I set the projector up, I was impressed by their smoothness and precision. It felt like operating the lens on a high-end camera. Zoom and focus are tweaked with lens barrel adjusters while lens shift is controlled by dials on top. It took me only moments to size and focus the image on my 92-inch Stewart screen.



The input panel is on the side of the HT9060 and sports two HDMI ports (one 1.4 and one 2.0) along with a VGA connector. This can be used with a computer or a breakout cable for three-wire analog component sources. Also here are RS-232 and two 12v triggers for integration with a wide variety of control systems.



The remote is a premium handset with a solid feel. It features a soft orange backlight that comes on when you press any key or a dedicated button on the side. You get discrete power controls and a toggle for the signal source. After the menu navigation pad there's a group of buttons for direct access to image controls. Sadly, though there is a button labeled "Dynamic Iris", there isn't one in the projector.

The HT9060 supports 3D signals which can be viewed with DLP Link glasses. Light output in 3D mode is good, around 21 nits (8fL), with no visible crosstalk or artifacts. To view 3D, you enable it in the OSD which in turn disables Ultra HD compatibility. When you return to 2D mode, you must remember to turn 3D off again to re-enable UHD operation.

Setup

The HT9060 is easy to install by either DIYers or professional integrators. With plenty of lens adjustment, you can throw a gorgeous picture from any reasonable distance either from a projector stand or ceiling mount. I used the former from around 12 feet and had no trouble filling my 92-inch Stewart Studiotek 130 Luminesse. Focus, zoom, and shift controls are super-precise and will not drift once set.

Signal compatibility is pretty much anything you want thanks to both digital and analog inputs. HDMI 1 is version 2.0 and supports HDCP 2.2 content protection. That's the one to use for Ultra HD signals. The HT9060 can accept full 10-bit formats with both HDR10 and Hybrid Log Gamma tone-mapping. For my purposes, an Accupel signal generator was connected for testing and calibration, then I switched to an OPPO UDP-203 for all viewing.

The OSD will be instantly familiar to BenQ users as it was to me. The Picture menu has all the calibration options including multiple gamma presets, fully-adjustable color temps, and a color management system. Changes can be made independently for each of the four picture modes, or you can create your own settings in the two user modes. 3D and HDR have their own separate modes that appear when the appropriate signal is preset. One control that's unique to HDR is HDR Brightness. It shifts the tone map either up or down and can be used to tailor the HT9060 to your environment. For a darkened space like mine, zero is the best and most-accurate setting.

The LED has three output modes, Normal (brightest), Economic, and SmartEco. The last one acts like an auto-iris to increase contrast. In practice, it more than quadruples the measured dynamic range, mostly by lowering the black level. I also found that it doesn't negatively affect gamma the way many auto-irises do. I used SmartEco for all viewing once calibration was complete.

The HT9060 ships in its Cinema mode and I found it measured well out of the box. At this price point, I expect owners will want to opt for a professional calibration and it is worth doing. I improved color accuracy and contrast with my adjustments. With a stunning image dialed in, it's time for a few movies.

In Use

Naturally, at this price point, comparisons to other high-end projectors are inevitable. I've reviewed the JVC's RS4500 and RS640 as well as the LS10000 from Epson. Each offers something different and it's tough to pick one above the others. I quickly discovered that the HT9060 has some qualities that are very compelling. I restricted my viewing to Ultra HD native content and a single 3D film.



It's hard not to watch *Planet Earth II* for every display review I write. It truly is reference video and it makes the most of HDR and Ultra HD's large color palette. I focused on the Deserts and Cities episodes for different reasons. Deserts is awash with warm reds, oranges, and yellows – colors that really benefit from the larger gamut. Thanks to the HT9060's nearly full DCI-P3 coverage and flawless 10-bit color processing, I saw every shade and nuance without any moiré or fringing artifacts. Detail was off the charts, especially in the cactus scene where closeup shots of needles literally made my skin crawl. I also noted a sequence in Cities where a raccoon is backlit against a city backdrop. Her fine hair glowed brightly against the night sky. As she climbed down a chimney, I couldn't help but be wowed by the fine texture of the bricks. BenQ's flavor of HDR really works here.

Moving on to *Mission Impossible Fallout*, I enjoyed the superb motion resolution in all the various action scenes. Moving objects never blurred or broke up. Here, I played with some of the Cinema Master settings. Pixel Enhancer 4K defaults to setting 3 but I found that accentuated film grain to much. Dialing it back to 1 added just enough pop without making things look artificial. The other options in this menu are best left off or at their zero levels.



I loaded up *Solo, A Star Wars Story* to check out dark material and spaceflight sequences. Despite the HDR treatment, blacks were never quite as inky and deep as those found in the best LCoS or LCD models. But detail was always strong and as soon as a few highlights appeared, the perception of contrast improved. The HT9060 works best with medium to bright content where highlights and color are dominant. There, it is unmatched with high output that is never fatiguing to the eye.

Next, I tried some early Ultra HD material in the form of JJ Abrams' first *Star Trek* film. The white-toned bridge of the Enterprise really popped and dark areas like the view screen and control panels looked appropriately black. The Romulan ship interior was also very effective with fine detail emerging from foggy backgrounds and bits of bright red and green peppering the foreground. This film has a strong grain structure that while visible, does not detract from the presentation. Again, the HT9060's clarity is unmatched in my experience.



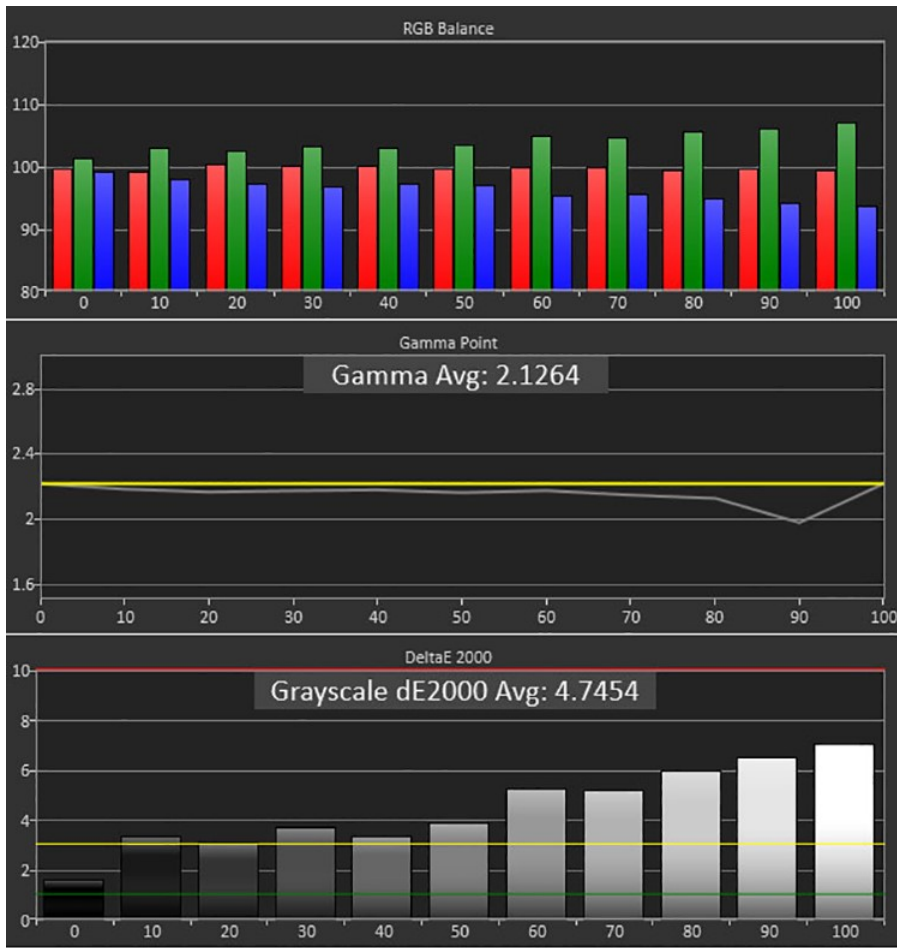
After turning 3D on, I loaded up my copy of *Avatar*. A bright DLP projector is the best way to watch this movie and I was mesmerized by the depth of the effect. The 3D stage is very large with no visible crosstalk. Motion resolution shines in every scene as objects move with a fluidity that's simply not possible with LCoS and LCD projectors. If you're a 3D fan, you won't find a better home theater projector for it than the BenQ HT9060.

After several days of movie-watching, I dug through the archives to check out notes from my reviews of the JVC RS4500, RS640, and the Epson LS10000. One thing the HT9060 has over all these is clarity. It is easily the sharpest projector I've ever seen, both in static and in moving images. Color quality is equal to all three displays with superb accuracy and saturation. The LS10000 does not support HDR though it has around 10,000:1 contrast so it pops nicely with SDR content. The dynamic range king is certainly the RS640 where I measured over 44,000:1. But the BenQ's DLP light engine and high output make it uniquely compelling. It is brighter than its competitors and sports a sharper image with far better motion resolution. Does that make up for its lower contrast? It comes down to personal preference. I've always been a contrast guy but the HT9060 might just take my preferences in a new direction.

On The Bench

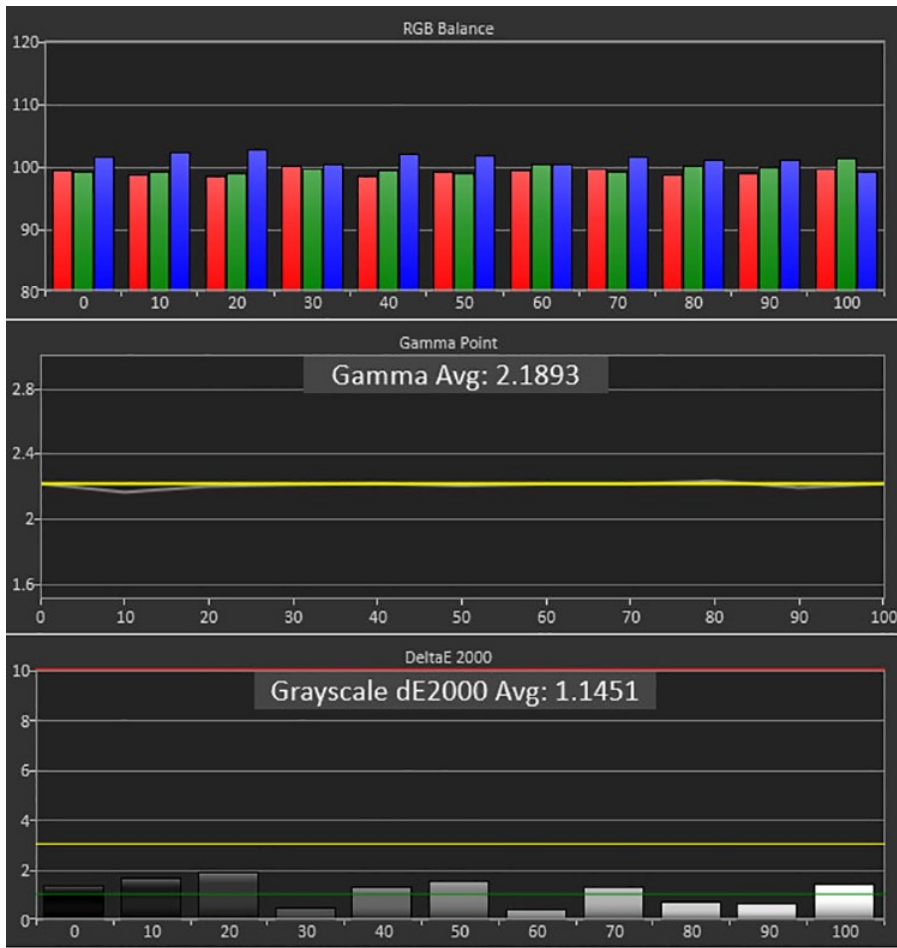
To test the BenQ HT9060's color accuracy, I measured from the lens with an X-Rite i1 Pro spectrophotometer fitted with a diffuser attachment. Luminance readings were taken with a Spectral C6 tri-stimulus colorimeter facing a 92" diagonal Stewart Filmscreen Luminesse with Studiotek 130 material, gain 1.3, from a 10-foot distance. Patterns were generated by an Accupel DVG-5000 and controlled with CalMAN, version 5.9.

SDR Grayscale & Gamma Tracking



BenQ HT9060 Grayscale & Gamma Tracking - Cinema Mode, pre-calibration

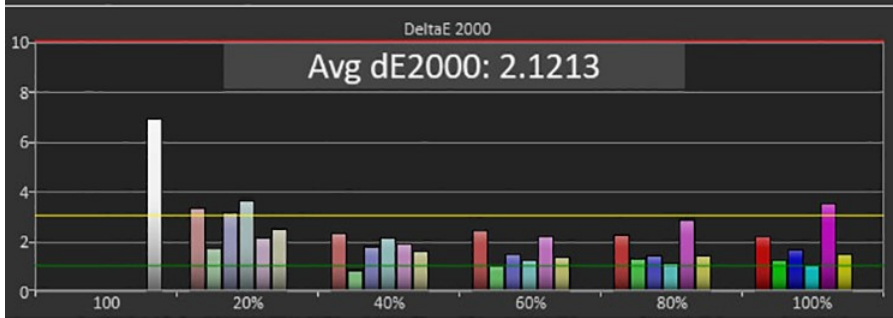
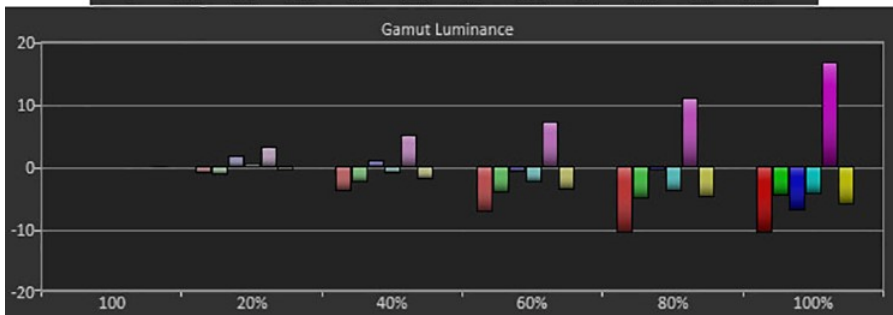
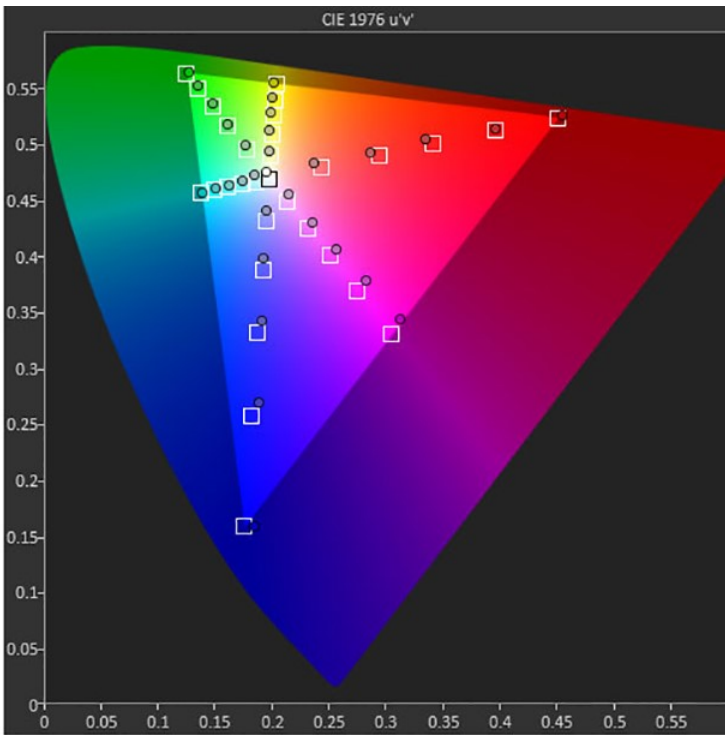
The HT9060 comes out of the box set to its Cinema picture mode. My first look at test patterns indicated an accurate display and my first round of test results agree with that assessment. Grayscale runs just the tiniest bit green from 60-100% with near-perfect gamma tracking. The dip at 90% is caused by a contrast controls that's set too high. One could happily use the projector without calibration but at this price point, it pays to get every bit of performance from it.



BenQ HT9060 Grayscale & Gamma Tracking - Cinema Mode, post-calibration

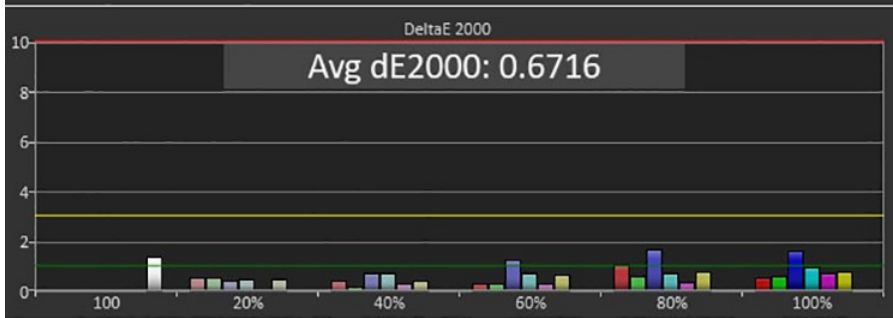
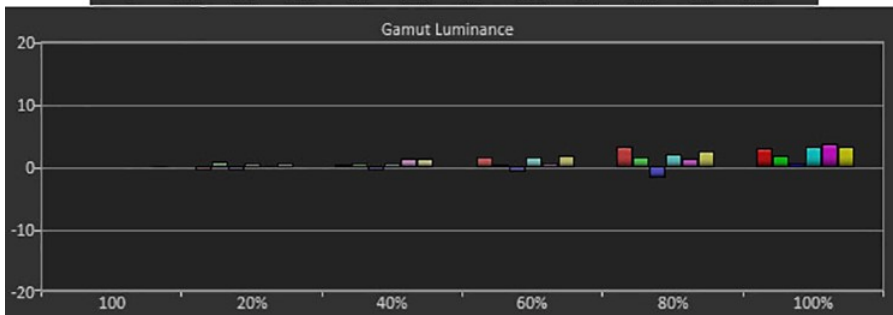
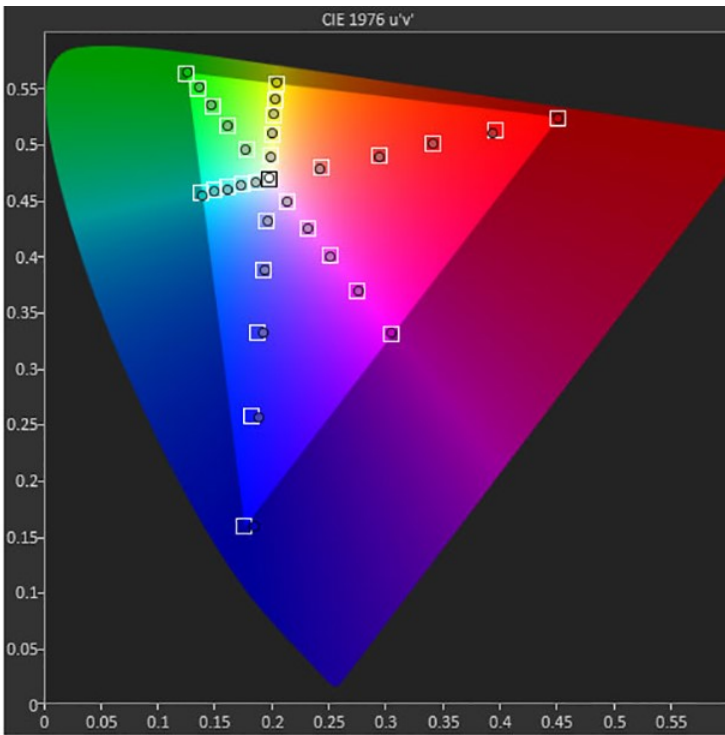
A few minutes spent with the HT9060's precise RGB controls brings all errors to well below the visible threshold. Reducing contrast two clicks cures the gamma error as well. This is reference-level accuracy that I only see on the best projectors or professional computer monitors.

SDR Color Gamut & Luminance



BenQ HT9060 Chromaticity - Cinema Mode, pre-calibration

My only concern with the pre-calibration gamut measurement is the cyan secondary which is a little off in hue. Otherwise, I have no complaints and the average error level of 2.12dE means you can't actually see anything but perfect color. I'm still going into that CMS though...

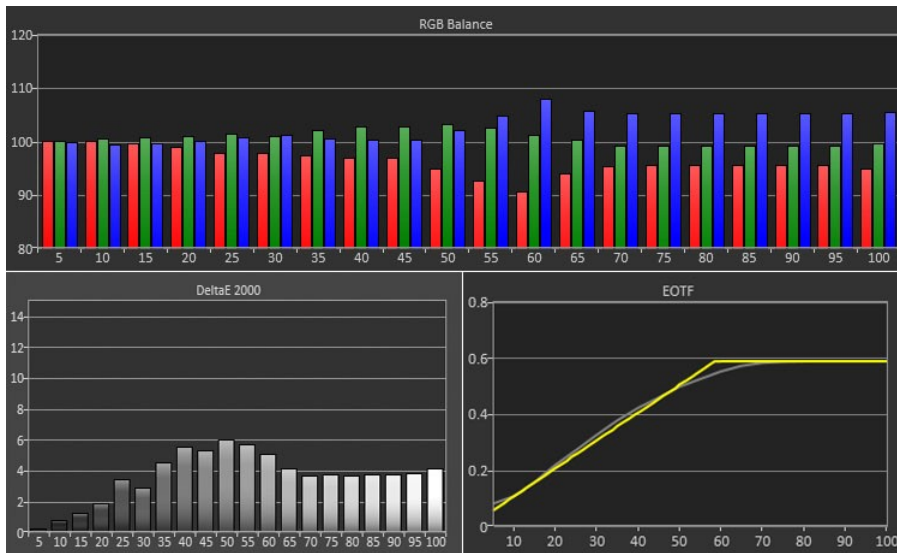


BenQ HT9060 Chromaticity - Cinema Mode, post-calibration

Wow just isn't a sufficient adjective to describe my final calibration result. The CMS controls are extremely fine and require large changes to have even the smallest effect. That allowed me to achieve a super-low average color error of just .67dE. It really doesn't get better than that. Every point is within its target box and luminance levels are perfectly neutral. I expect a lot of video pros will be equipping their studios with BenQ HT9060s.

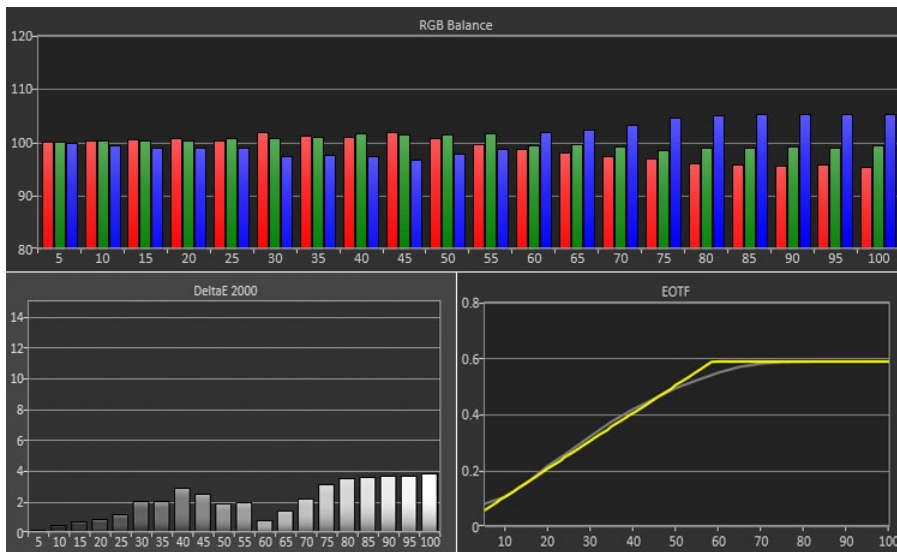
HDR Tests

To simulate an HDR10 signal, I added an HD Fury Integral into the signal path. It creates the proper tone map to allow HDR measurements using CalMAN's special workflow. The HT9060 allows for a full and independent HDR calibration with two-point grayscale, HDR brightness, and color management controls.



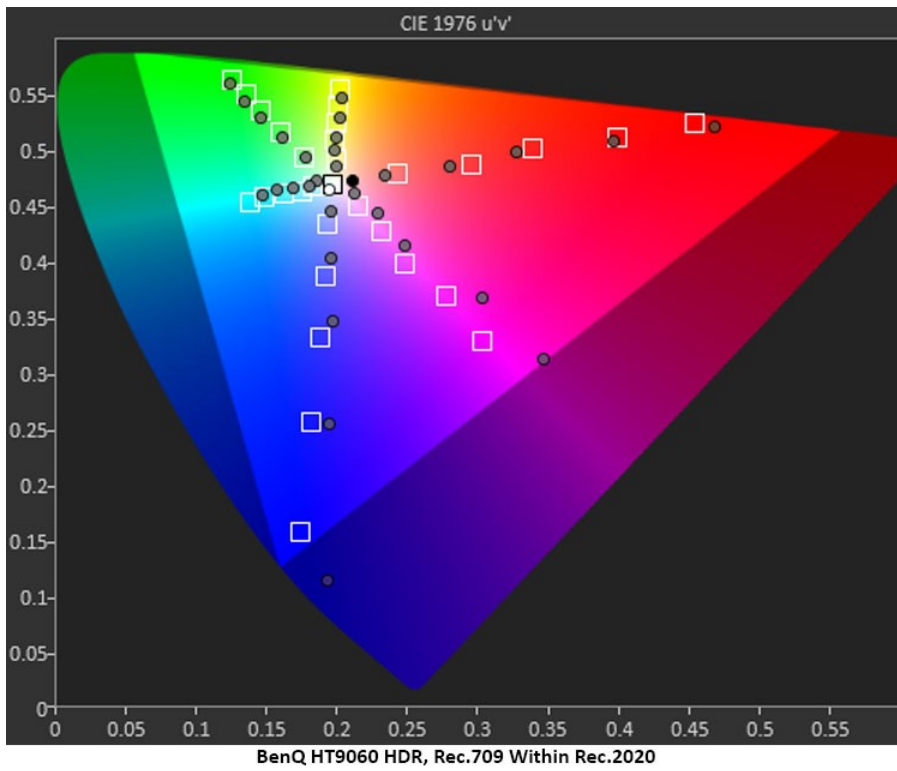
BenQ HT9060 HDR Grayscale & Luminance, Pre-calibration

Based on the measured white level, the HT9060's clip point is around 58%. That means all incoming material will conform to that dynamic range. Grayscale tracking is mostly fine with just a bit of coolness happening at the brightest steps. The EOTF luminance curve tracks the spec perfectly with a soft roll-off at the clip point. Calibration isn't really necessary but since it can be done, it will be done.

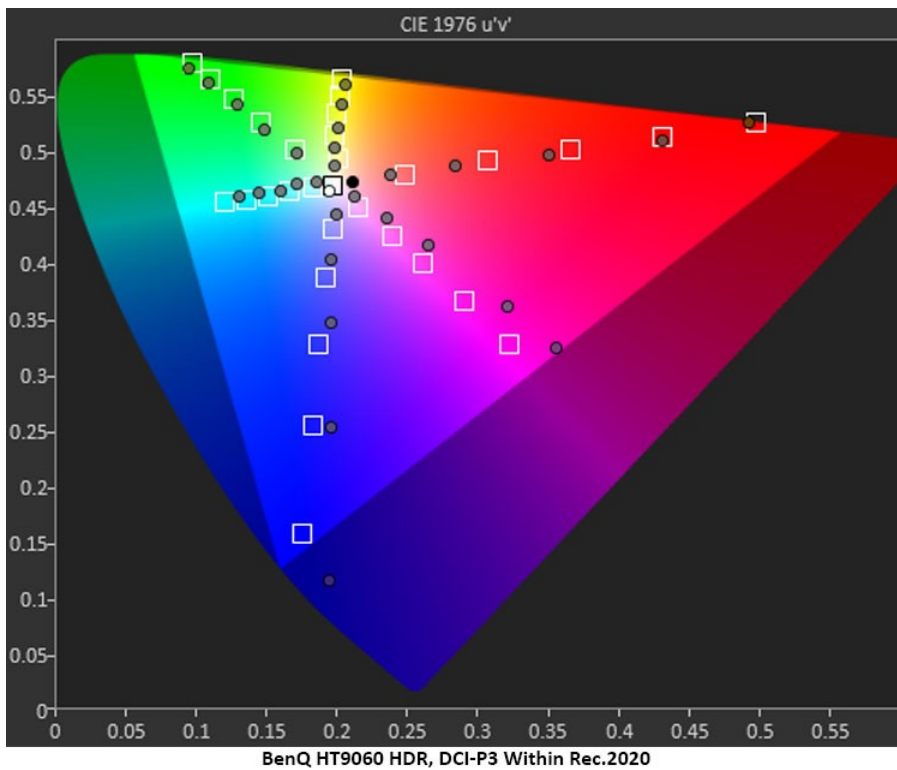


BenQ HT9060 HDR Grayscale & Luminance, Post-calibration

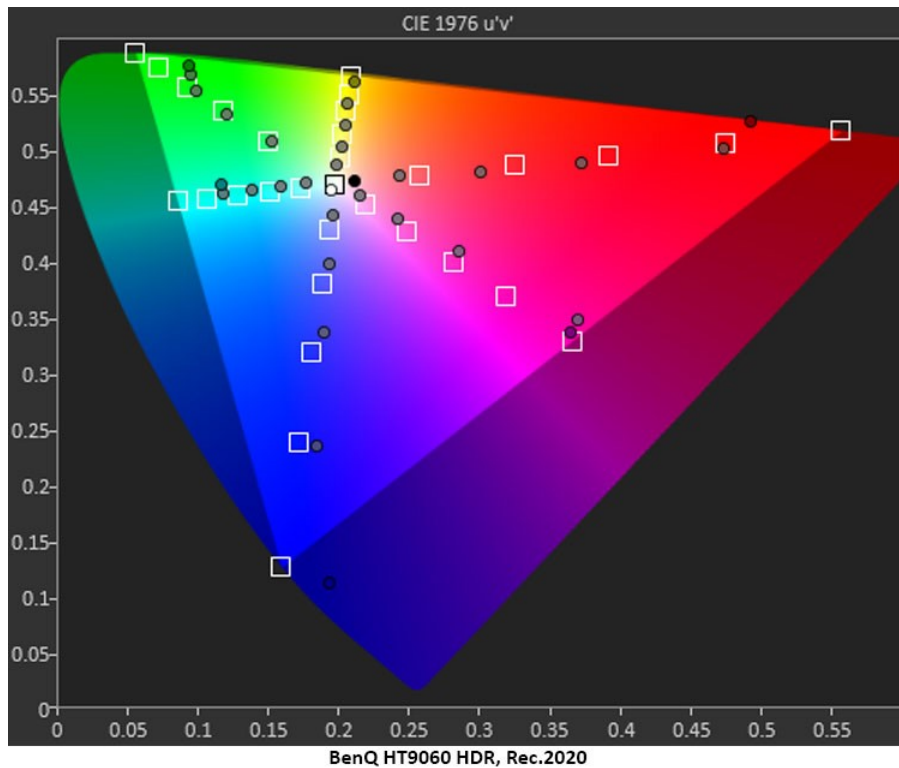
A couple of tweaks to the RGB gain sliders takes care of any visible errors. The EOTF curve remains unchanged. I left the HDR Brightness setting on zero but if one wants a darker or brighter presentation, there are three settings on either side of neutral. They won't produce an accurate tone map, but some viewers may prefer the look in their particular viewing environment.



I was anxious to see the HT9060's handling of HDR color accuracy. With Rec.709 material, which is rarely combined with Ultra HD and HDR, the projector has slightly over-saturated reds and blues but nothing to cause concern. Blue is a bit off in hue which affects magenta but again, this is not a major issue. Given what I've seen from HDR displays in the past, the HT9060 offers superior HDR color accuracy to most of them.



DCI-P3 is the most important gamut to get right for an HDR display. Since we don't have full Rec.2020 at the consumer level, this is all the color we're going to see in most home theaters. The HT9060 does an excellent job at rendering almost the entire colorspace. My volume calculation shows it covers 93.8% of DCI-P3 which is higher than any display I've measured to date save the VIZIO PQ65-F1 TV. This ensures the best possible color from Ultra HD sources.



I'm including a Rec.2020 measurement run here just for reference. No consumer display can show the entire gamut but we're getting closer all the time. The HT9060 comes close to the inner saturation targets before it runs out of color at the 80% perimeter. This is the right way to engineer a DCI-P3 display. Once content appears with the full 2020 gamut incorporated, projectors like this will show it well.

Video Processing

Company	BenQ		2/12/2019		Overall Score				100.0%	
Model	HT9060	Player Used	OPPO UDP-203							
	Overscan	WTW	BTB	Luma Burst	Chroma Burst	Luma Plate	Chroma Plate	Score	Maximum Score Possible	
4:2:2	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	130	130	
4:4:4	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	130	130	
RGB Video Level	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	130	130	
	2:2 Pulldown 60p	3:2 Pulldown 60p	24p Pulldown	Jaggies					Score	Maximum Score Possible
HDMI	Fail	Pass	Pass	Pass					100	100

The HT9060 exhibits perfect video processing with correct scaling and deinterlacing of lower-res sources. Only the 2:2 test is a failure but that's common to nearly every display on the planet. Regardless of signal format, you'll see full detail in the deepest blacks and brightest whites. Resolution in both static and moving patterns is superb. That is an area where DLP really shines.

Light Output & Contrast

All luminance values are expressed here in nits, also known as candelas per square meter (cd/m²). For those needing a frame of reference, 1fL equals 3.43 nits, or 1 nit equals .29fL.

The HT9060 throws off the stigma of dim LED projectors with plenty of output in all light modes. After calibration, with the lamp in Normal mode, the peak white was 212.614 nits, black was .2079 nit, and the contrast ratio was 1022.8:1. This is the projector's native contrast ratio.

Reducing the lamp to its Economic mode takes the white level down to 150.1421 nits with a similar contrast ratio of 1015.7:1.

The best way to run the HT9060 is in the SmartEco mode. Then, the LED is varied dynamically to maximize contrast. I measured a peak white of 213.8895 nits, a black level of .0475 nit, and a contrast ratio of 4505.1:1.

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HDR performance was similar with a peak white of 210.3494 nits, a black level of .0483 nit, and a static contrast ratio of 4356.7:1

The HT9060 is great for 3D material with a peak white of 21.0878 nits, a black level of .0111 nit, and a contrast ratio of 1903.8:1

Maximum output can be found in the Vivid mode with 230.2298 nits peak, .048 nit black, and 4797:1 contrast. It should be noted that gamma is less accurate in this mode making it unsuitable for critical viewing.

Conclusions



The BenQ CinePro HT9060 DLP LED PROJECTOR is in many ways the best projector I've ever reviewed. It isn't cheap, but I think it's worth every penny.

LIKES

WOULD LIKE TO SEE

- Unmatched clarity and light output
- Superb color accuracy
- Premium build quality
- Excellent HDR implementation
- A manual iris for more control of contrast

After a very enjoyable time spent with the BenQ HT9060, I have a hard time letting it go. I've been watching an Anthem LTX-500 for almost 10 years and during that time, a lot of really nice projectors have come through my theater. Only one of them made me want a new display, the JVC RS640 – until now. The HT9060's incredible clarity is truly a sight to behold.

I am not about to call it, or anything else, the perfect display. I always marvel at the sharpness of most DLP projectors but wish they could deliver the contrast of an LCoS or LCD model. But BenQ has done a really good job with its HDR implementation and the use of a switching LED light source to increase contrast. It certainly beats out every other DLP I've reviewed for dynamic range.

Color quality and accuracy are at reference level. Not only does the HT9060 hit all the marks out of the box, it calibrates to an even higher standard. This is an area BenQ takes very seriously and it shows here for sure. While professional calibration is always recommended for high-end displays, it isn't terribly necessary in this case.

In my review of the JVC RS640, I said it was the best projector I'd ever reviewed. The BenQ HT9060 now shares that title. It throws a stunning Ultra HD image that is simply unmatched by anything else I've seen. It receives my highest recommendation.

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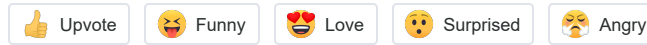
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Chris' passion for audio began when he took up playing the bassoon at age 12. During his third year at the New England Conservatory of Music, he won a position with the West Point Band where he served for 26 years as principal bassoonist. He retired from the Army in 2013 and is now writing full time and performing as a freelance musician in Central Florida. As an avid movie lover, Chris was unable to turn away the 50-inch Samsung DLP TV that arrived at his door one day, thus launching him irrevocably into an obsession with home theater. Dissatisfied with the image quality of his new acquisition, Chris trained with the Imaging Science Foundation in 2006 and became a professional display calibrator. His ultimate theater desires were realized when he completed construction of a dedicated cinema/listening room in his home. Chris is extremely fortunate that his need for quality audio and video is shared and supported by his wife of over 25 years. In his spare time he enjoys riding his recumbent trike at least 100 miles per week, trying out new restaurants, going to theme parks and

spending as much time as possible watching movies and listening to music. Chris enjoys bringing his observations and discoveries about every kind of home theater product to as many curious and well-informed readers as possible. He is proud to be a part of the Team and hopes to help everyone enjoy their AV experiences to the fullest.

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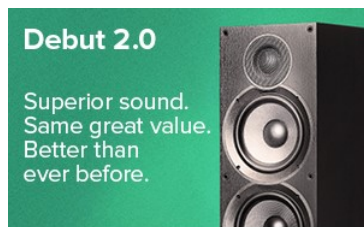
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