

HDTVs: Now is a great time to buy!

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If the recent TV promotions surrounding the Super Bowl didn't pull you off the sofa to shop for a shiny new HDTV, we have some great news: This is a terrific time to get a great deal on a new set.



Panasonic's 54-inch 3D plasma TV, model TC-P54VT25

That's because it's the time of year when manufacturers and retailers are looking to clear out inventories of last year's models to make way for the new 2011 sets, which should start arriving next month. And lowering prices has typically been the most effective way to drive sales. Even better, unlike many other promotional sales events, such as Black Friday, where the focus is often on off-brand TVs or stripped-to-the-bone models, this is a great opportunity to get a TV loaded with features, including 3D, Internet connectivity, and in the case of LCD sets, LED backlights and 240Hz technology.

Amazon.com, for one, appears to be particularly aggressive with sales on sets from top brands. For example, we found numerous deals on 2010 **Panasonic TV sets**, ranging from a 22-inch LCD set for \$180 to a 54-inch flagship 3D plasma at less than \$2,200. There are also deals on sets from **LG**, **Samsung**, **Sony** and **Toshiba**, among others.

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Panasonic's 54-inch 3D plasma, model TC-P54VT25, is priced at \$2,182 with free shipping; it cost about \$3,000 during the past holiday season. But if you also add **Panasonic's DMP-BDT100 3D Blu-ray player** and a **3D Starter Kit** (with the movie *Avatar* and two sets of active 3D glasses), you'll get a \$400 instant rebate, bringing the total price to \$2,284. (As with many of Amazon's deals, you have to add the items to your cart and start to check out to see the price.) The 50-inch VT25-series set is \$2,099, though it appears the \$400 discount on the bundle isn't available.

Prices have also been cut on Panasonic's GT25 series of less expensive 3D plasma sets, including a **50-inch Viera TC-P50GT25 plasma** priced at about \$1,000, a claimed savings of 52 percent. The **Viera TC-P42GT25 42-inch** version of this model is \$800.

Other 3D sets include **Toshiba's 55-inch 55WX800U Cinema Series model**—an LCD set with an LED backlight and 240Hz technology—for \$1,500, or the 46-inch sibling for \$1,200, both before tax. Oddly, with the larger set you can get two free pairs of **3D glasses**, but with the smaller set you get both the glasses and a free **Toshiba BDX-3000 Blu-ray player**. Another option is **Samsung's 55-inch UN55C8000**, an LCD set with an LED backlight and 240Hz technology, for \$2,137 before tax.



Toshiba's 55-inch 55WX800U model

If Sony is your preferred brand, Amazon has the **46-inch Bravia KDL46HX800**, a 3D-capable model with an LED backlight and 240Hz technology, for just under \$1,240; its 40-inch sibling (**Sony KDL40HX800**) is priced at about \$1,140. Those looking for an even bigger 3D set may be interested in **Sony's 55-inch KDL-55HX800 model**, now priced at about \$1,812, or **LG's 55-inch 55LX6500 set**, with an LED backlight and 240Hz technology, for just \$1,474.



Panasonic Viera TC-P50G25 50" Plasma TV

For those not in the market for 3D, deals can be had on Panasonic's G25-series plasmas, which are loaded with features, including Panasonic's Viera Cast online service, THX certification, and Skype (when used with an optional camera). For example, the **Viera TC-P50G25 50-inch 1080p Plasma HDTV** is \$930; the 54-inch version, the **Viera TC-P54G25** is \$1,240. Those looking for a more basic 1080p plasma could consider the **Viera 50-inch TC-P50S2 1080p plasma**, which is \$896.

Looking to go even bigger? Then **Samsung's 58-inch PN58C550 1080p plasma TV** may fit the bill, with a price of about \$1,200. **LG's 55-inch 55LE5400 set**, a Web-enabled LCD model with an LED backlight and 120Hz technology, is \$1,240.

In general, many of these sets are now 30 to 40 percent less expensive when compared to the prices we saw before the holidays. Although we used Amazon as the basis of comparison, plug these model numbers into the various shopping bots to get the best price available.

Also, it's possible that prices and availability may have changed since we wrote this post. And remember that while most states still don't collect tax on Amazon sales, Kansas, Kentucky, New York, North Dakota and Washington do—so the final price could be higher in those states.



Samsung PN58C550 58" Plasma TV