

Bravia engine 2 promises more colours on Sony's screens

Sony TV shows its colours

LCD TV

The KDL-40W4000 is the latest 40-inch addition to the hugely successful Sony Bravia range of LCD TVs, and will be hitting both the high street and our testing labs soon – once we get our hands on one we'll publish the full results, but first impressions are good.

The picture quality of the earlier W series has been good, and we'd be surprised if Sony hasn't repeated that with its new Bravia 'engine 2' digital picture processing software.

Sony says that the new 10-bit Bravia engine can process 64 times as many colours as an 8-bit model. Bear in mind that broadcasters use fewer colours in their programmes, so it's unlikely that you'll see more colours when watching terrestrial broadcasts. But more colours is an indication of better picture quality.

With a high 1080p resolution,



New energy-saving features are promised for the W4000 series

this model is capable of delivering smooth Blu-ray footage without image judder. It has Freeview integrated, plus there are three HDMI and two Scart RGB sockets.

Sony promises low standby power consumption and an energy-saving light sensor. Sony usually delivers the goods and the

brand has always performed well in our reliability surveys. The W4000 series is available in screen sizes of 32, 40, 46 and 52 inches.

VERDICT Sony's picture quality, its track record and promised energy-saving features – as well as brand reliability – make this one to watch for in the future.

Cracking Tefal toaster brings eggs to the boil

TOASTER

If your poached eggs are normally more puddle than perfection, then the £39 Tefal Toast N Egg may be the gadget for you.

Hot on the heels of its innovative Actifry fryer and Quickcup hot-water dispenser comes the Toast N Egg, a toaster and egg steamer in one. Tefal says it will revolutionise breakfast time, so we got one in the office for a tryout.

Available in matte black plastic, along with a silver control panel,

the toaster comes with a poaching tray, boiled egg rack, warming tray (for pre-cooked meats) and plastic measuring cup.

First impressions are promising. In a few minutes a well-cooked poached egg is ready for your toast. Boiled eggs are easily steamed in the rack. This appliance is great for when time is short, and we found it far less hassle than boiling a pan of

water. But you will have to adjust the water level to get eggs cooked to your liking.

It's straightforward to use, and simple to clean the removable poaching attachments.

But we found that larger-sized bread won't fit easily into the toaster slots, and the control panel icons, buttons and red indicator lights are small. It's also tricky to see when the water's been used and a bit fiddly moving between settings. It is available from John Lewis.

VERDICT We found it simple to use and convenient, but it doesn't take all bread sizes.



Route to success

SATNAV

TomTom's latest top-of-the-range model, the £399 Go 930T, delivers new features over its older models, including advanced lane guidance and IQ Routes. We took the 930T on the road to put it through its paces, and took along a Which? Best Buy satnav, the Go 520, for comparison.

IQ Routes takes into account how local variations, such as rush hour, affect the time taken to make a journey, and plans a route accordingly. We found the 930T got us to our central London destination on time, but we weren't travelling during peak times, so can't comment on this feature until we test it fully.

Advanced lane guidance uses a representation of the road layout and flashing green arrows to direct the driver through motorway junctions, and we found this to be the most useful new feature. Bar one complicated junction on the M25, its guidance was spot on and, coupled with an updated direction indicator on the status bar, we felt it would improve driver confidence at all intersections.

A further feature, enhanced positioning technology (EPT), switches in when the satellite signal is lost, and senses changes in direction and speed to help the 930T calculate its location. The unit we tested lost its signal more than the 520, but EPT seemed to do its job and keep us on route. The 930T was slightly better in heavily built-up areas, despite both models losing their positioning in central Bristol.

VERDICT The 930T is an evolution from previous models, but the only feature we found really worthwhile is advanced lane guidance.

10 billion

the number of eggs consumed
in the UK in 2007

BRITISH EGG INFORMATION SERVICE

27.6%

the number of UK households
with three or more TV sets

BROADCASTERS' AUDIENCE RESEARCH BOARD

Nintendo injects some fun with its innovative fitness gadget

Virtual gym works out

GADGET

Nintendo's Wii Fit virtual fitness centre is aimed at owners of Nintendo's Wii video games console, and promises to bring a digital gym into your living room. We took this virtual fitness centre for a workout.

The package includes a balance board that is placed in front of your TV, and connects wirelessly to the Wii games console. The board feels sturdy, though it does have a weight limit of 150kg.

It measures body mass index (BMI) and weight, and checks your balance and fitness level, before revealing your 'Wii fitness age'. It stores this on a calendar, where you'll set a date to hit a target BMI.

Wii Fit offers four types of workout – yoga, aerobics, balance and muscle conditioning – with the majority of the 40 exercises and games controlled by moving and balancing on, or applying pressure to, the balance board.

It is easy to get disheartened from the off, as the exercises are designed



Follow a virtual yoga instructor with Nintendo's Wii Fit

to be challenging and the balance board takes some familiarisation before you can begin to master balance tasks.

But, while it won't replace a visit to a gym, the fact that it charts your

progress, suggests sensible goals and gently encourages progress makes it an engaging product.

VERDICT We can't rate its long-term fitness success, but this is a fun workout gadget.

Brush up on the Dulux PaintPod

PAINT SYSTEM

Dulux wants to change the way you paint with its £69.99 PaintPod. Powered by a 12V transformer, it has four control buttons: paint, pause, drain and clean.

To use it, you insert a tub of specially formulated paint – there's a choice of 33 colours of matt emulsion in five-litre tubs (brilliant white is £19.99, while colours cost £29.99). You use the included triangular brush for wall edges first, then the roller. Pressing the trigger

pumps paint to the roller via a tube. There's no hassle of refilling the roller tray, and fewer drips and splashes.

A ten-minute self-cleaning function sucks paint back, then pumps warm water through the roller before you give it a final rinse by hand. Cleaning results were good. However, it weighs up to 12.5kg when full, and the pump tube needs replacing after every 50 litres of paint.

VERDICT Innovative but expensive. It should save time, but you'll still need to do some roller cleaning.



Just out

Bosch Tassimo

£99.99

Bosch's Tassimo brings the café directly into your home. At the push of a button you can make coffee, espresso, cappuccino, latte, tea and hot chocolate using separately bought 'beverage discs'. It is widely available.



Roberts Stream 202 £149

Roberts' neat DAB digital radio can access more than 6,000 internet stations through an ethernet or wireless connection, and play music files wirelessly from your computer. It can connect to an MP3 player, and has an FM tuner. It is widely available. More digital radios tested on p72-p75.



Whirlpool AquaSteam ADP 8800

Following on from its Best Buy steam washing machine, Whirlpool has released the steam dishwasher. Using 'AquaSteam', created during the wash cycle, the dishwasher is able to soften up dried-on food, claims to be ideal even on delicate items and helps to eliminate bacteria, sanitising dishes as they are washed.



Sony MDR-NC500D

Sony claims that these are the world's first digital noise-cancelling headphones that will cut out 99 per cent of ambient noise. The headphones have three different modes to suit your surroundings, whether on a plane, train or bus, or in the office. The headphones can automatically select the most appropriate setting. They're available at www.sonymstyle.co.uk.

