



Proudly presents a look back at an old friend- Optoma HD33.

Satelliteguys.US Look back-Optoma HD33 by James Jarvis.

Optoma has long been known as a company that makes a high quality product, with prices lower than any of their competitors. They constantly put out projectors and theater equipment that could easily be put in higher price brackets based on its quality, but Optoma continues to amaze me by putting their cutting edge projectors in price brackets that are crazy to think. That tradition continues today with the HD33 projector, the first 1080p true 3D projector to break the \$1,500 dollar mark, coming in at a MSRP of 1499.

Last year when I reviewed the 3DXL I said more and more products will be coming out that will push the prices down. Never did I think that the price would come down this fast! Surely the quality must take a hit right? Read on to find out if this projector can fill the promises it makes, or whether Optoma fails to reach such lofty goals.



The first thing that always hits me when reviewing Optoma products is how much they care about their consumers and products. The HD33 comes wrapped in a VERY sturdy cardboard box, with a thick bubble wrap, a Plastic bag, and then a film that is stuck on the projector. Everything is VERY neat and orderly when you open the box with plenty of room. Along with the projector the box includes a Power cable, a RF emitter, a backlit remote, and your usual pamphlets and warranty information. The review unit that was sent to me included a pair of RF glasses which are normally sold separately. Let's look at the unit itself.





After taking the projector out of its protective layers, I was very impressed by its design. You can tell Optoma listens to their consumers and makes changes based on the feedback they receive. Some of the changes I noticed were that the front facing vents that let light out are now gone, as are the loud fans. Along with louder fans, Optoma has also removed the physical menu and taken out every directional button on the projector itself. You now have to use the remote to navigate the menu. I love the design of the unit, it is large but it is not a eye sore, it has very nice edge lines and curves that make it a good looking unit, and with the buttons gone on the unit itself makes it not stand out as it normally would.

Another Feedback that Optoma has listened to is unlike the prior unit; Optoma now includes a backlit remote. Gone are the days of fumbling with the remote in the dark and eventually having to turn on a light to make changes to your projector. The remote is the best layout of a remote I have seen. Every button on the remote is meant to cut the time it takes to make adjustments to the picture, and amount of time it takes to get in and out of the menu. Overall this is a very clean looking unit that I am proud to hang in my theater. All connections in the back of the projector are made to look clean and have plenty of space to make the connections so it's not all crammed into one little tight spot. The connections include (per Optoma's website) Two HDMI v1.4a, VGA-In, Component Video, Composite Video, RS-232, +12V Trigger, VESA 3D Port, and USB.



For this review I used my Universal Ceiling mount. The Optoma HD33 projector fit like a glove on the brackets. It has a nice weight to the projector and setup was a breeze...literally this thing is ready to go out of the box (more on that later). After setting my zoom levels and focus to fit my Elite matte white 100" screen, with 1.1 gain we were ready to make the connections needed. On the connections side compared to past Optoma setups and many other setups (720p) out there its nice to have just a straight run to the projector. No more 3DXL boxes to create a HDMI nightmare, which we know the HDMI standard is a very touchy one with its handshake issues and general failures to sync properly. My pioneer vsx-820 k was already ran from my previous setup with high speed HDMI cables from Monoprice, so it was just a matter of plugging in the HDMI cable and we were set to see how this projector preformed!



I love reading other reviews; people try to throw as many big spec. words at you as they can as if that is going to sell a projector. I am sure there are a certain number of people that buy a projector simply because of its hardware, but if that hardware doesn't perform as it should what good is it? I like to look at TV's and projectors in use before I buy, and yes I am that guy that asks my local stores to see something playing other than their demo, and change the settings on a TV so it's more like what I use at home, not demo modes. So when I hooked this projector up and turned it on for the first time, I was shocked to see such a nice picture. There was little to NO tweaks made or needed to get an outstanding picture. The unit was set on cinema mode from the factory and it is razor sharp. I popped in my favorite Blu-ray Sherlock Holmes, to check out the detail this projector can put out. Right away I was shocked by what a difference there was between my hd66 720p projector and this 1080p projector. The detail and sharpness level was incredible. Again for no adjustments being made out of the box, this projector displays an incredible picture that can keep up with projectors well out of its price range for 1080p projectors. The only negative here and I use that term very loosely is the blacks were a very soft black, I don't want to say gray but there weren't the black levels I have seen on other projectors. There was very little noise in the picture and both HD and SD content were outstanding! The reason Sherlock Holmes is one of my favorite Blu-rays to watch

when reviewing a product is simply because of the detail level and the dark scenes. The HD33 did a fantastic job on those scenes, and the color that it produced was fantastic without being too much. I am sure with a small couple tweaks made this projector will be able to do a perfect 6500k.



Next up was Avatar in 3D. The HD33 is a full 1080p 3D projector, meaning when the 3D is on there is no degradation in the resolution or sound. The results with this projector were one of the nicest and sharpest 3D images I have seen. The clarity and detail will still be there from the 2D image, the only change will be a slightly darker image due to the active shutter system of the glasses. The HD33 does a fantastic job with the picture quality and sync issues and the lack of cross talk results in a very enjoyable 3D picture. I have recently had family over and everyone was blown away by the level of detail and the depth of field this projector puts out, one person even commented, "I always thought your picture was good before, but the detail on this one is incredible". There are some things that Optoma has put in the HD33 that helps with the 3D picture. Pure Motion has been introduced in this projector and it helps stop the jerky effect, or slight delay in some of the films you see. Usually these are only evident in fast moving scenes, and with this in place it makes for a very smooth picture. I wanted to try some video games on this system to see if it could handle the really fast paced action and see how it responded. I popped in Call of Duty and was again reminded of just how good this projector does with colors and detail. If you have never played Call of Duty or Halo or any other first person shooter on a home

theater setup, then you are missing out. The picture is so immersive and with this projector it just really blows you out of the water. I fired up the game wanting to see how bad the lag was going to be, and also wanting to see if it pixelated at all on the Dark to light scenes of a video game. Again the Optoma handles it all with ease, at this point I can say this projector will be very well worth the money that it costs. At the price point it's at and several above it, this projector will match up against any and hold its ground.



RF glasses were included with my review unit and I tested those last as I think they deserve a little more attention to. Right now projectors use DLP-Link, which utilizes white flashes in between frames to keep glasses synced to the source. There are several flaws with DLP-Link which can be a headache for some. The sync problems are a huge nightmare, first if the glasses start sync on the wrong eye (left when it should be displaying right) then you have to invert the 3D sync which means going through the menus while a movie is playing to get the sync to where it should be. If you don't you will be watching "faux 3D." as some have said. Also another sync problem is the fact that if you turn your head the glasses themselves lose sync and cause headaches for some. Well, Again Optoma has come to the rescue with the RF glasses they have put out. All I can say about them after using them on this setup is get them. They are well worth the extra cost (less than 20 dollars per set) to get them. They performed to 100% of my expectations. No more losing

sync with just a small head turn and also a big one, no more faux 3D with the sync being on the wrong eye! If you are going to have a top notch projector, it's my recommendation to pair it with the best glasses.



Conclusion: If you are looking for a 3D, or even just a 1080p Projector, no matter the price point, I would give this one a VERY long look. This projector displays one of the sharpest pictures I have seen, and the colors are spot on. This projector will fit in any room with its design (think a family living room, a basement, or a dedicated home theater) and the performance is top notch. There are not many cons if any to this projector that I personally could find, and I make this a very HIGHLY recommended projector that will be hard to beat. The only negative that I Have is the fact that they don't include glasses with the projector, but at this price point I don't think people will be yelling too loudly!

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