

Best TVs of 2019

Consumer Reports is testing hundreds of 2019 televisions. These 4K sets have risen to the top.

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With dozens of new 2019 4K models now available and more movies and TV series being presented in 4K and high dynamic range (HDR), it's a great time to buy a new 4K TV.

All of the sets listed below appear in Consumer Reports' TV ratings, and some of them are now at their lowest prices ever. And since we're now heading into the prime TV buying season, with Black Friday, Cyber Monday, and holiday promotions galore, you may find many of these great sets at even lower prices in the coming weeks.

These are some of the best TVs you can buy. We're focusing on 65-inch screen sizes, but most of these models are also available in less expensive (smaller) sizes. While many of these models are pricey, we've also included a great 65-inch 4K set that costs about \$700.

Before you get to the individual models, it pays to understand the two basic technologies used in today's televisions.

LCD vs. OLED TVs

You can choose between two basic TV display technologies: LCDs, which are also called LED TVs for the LED backlights that illuminate the screen, and OLED sets, where each pixel generates its own light.

There are far fewer OLED TVs on the market, and they tend to be more expensive, though prices have dropped significantly over the past year. OLED sets can deliver a truly stunning picture, in part because they do a great job of displaying the blackest parts of an image. The deepest shadows can really look black, as in real life, rather than gray. OLED TVs also have unlimited viewing angles, so the picture still looks great if you view it from the side of a room.

The list below includes 4K OLED sets from LG and Sony that battled it out for the top spot in our ratings. In some instances, the scoring was so close it was difficult to call a clear winner.

A majority of TVs being sold are LCD sets. You can find some highly rated LCD sets for less than \$1,000, even in the largest screen sizes. But premium LCD TVs can cost several times that.

LCD-based sets generally can't deliver OLED-like black levels, but they get better every year, especially models that

use full-array backlights, where the LEDs are spread across the entire rear panel instead of just along the edges.

These models include a feature called local dimming, which divides the backlights into zones that can be separately dimmed or illuminated, depending on the scene. This can help improve black levels.

Most TVs are edge-lit, however, meaning the LEDs are positioned on the sides of the screen. Some of these sets also include local dimming, but this feature tends to be less effective in these sets than in those that use full-array backlights. In general, LCD TVs tend to be brighter than OLEDs, making them a good choice for well-lit rooms.

Each year we test more than 200 TVs from major brands such as LG, Samsung, and Sony, as well as emerging TV companies such as TCL. All of the sets in our ratings go through a battery of objective measurements and subjective evaluations designed to push them to their limits.

And like all of the products that Consumer Reports tests, every TV we evaluate is purchased at retail. We don't accept freebies or handpicked models from manufacturers, so every tested model is just like one you might take home.

We'll be regularly updating this article as more 2019 sets make their way through our labs.

Best TV Overall, Part I

LG OLED55CP9PUA

When it comes to pure performance, this LG is the best TV we've tested so far this year.

It doesn't sit right at the top of the ratings; that honor belongs to a couple of Sony OLED sets (see below) that combine great lab results with Very Good brand predicted reliability ratings. But the 55-inch 2019 LG OLED55CP9PUA earns top scores for HD and UHD picture quality, and does a bit better than the Sony OLEDs when it comes to HDR, or high dynamic range, performance. (LG 4K TVs support several HDR formats used by content creators: HDR10, Dolby Vision, HLG, and Advanced HDR by Technicolor.)

Like all OLED TVs, this model has an almost unlimited viewing angle, and the sound is also top-notch, among the best we've tested. As a bonus, the set supports Dolby Atmos audio, which can give a soundtrack a three-dimensional effect.

LG's updated smart TV platform includes its own voice-enabled ThinQ artificial intelligence platform as well as built-in support for the Google Assistant and Amazon Alexa digital voice assistants.

CR QUICK TAKE

86

RECOMMENDED

LG OLED55C9PUA

- HD PICTURE QUALITY
- ULTRA HD PERFORMANCE
- HDR

Best TV Overall, Part II

Sony XBR-65A9G

LG OLED TVs have dominated our TV ratings in the past several years, but in 2019 Sony's OLED TVs are giving even LG's best sets strong competition. In fact, thanks to its high reliability score, Sony OLED TVs bumped several LG sets from the top of our ratings.

There's a lot to like about the Sony XBR-65A9G, a 65-inch 4K smart TV in Sony's flagship Master series of OLED TVs. You get top-notch picture quality and a great HDR experience. The main differences between this model and the somewhat less expensive A8G-series set is that this TV has a more advanced video processor, plus support for Dolby Atmos sound. Both series support HDR10, Dolby Vision, and HLG HDR formats.

The top-rated Sony also has the company's unique "Acoustic Surface" audio technology, which uses vibrating actuators that turn the entire panel into a speaker and delivers excellent sound quality. Sony 4K TVs use Google's Android TV smart TV platform, which offers access to Google Cast for streaming from mobile devices. It includes built-in Google Assistant and is compatible with the Amazon Alexa digital voice assistant.

CR QUICK TAKE

90

RECOMMENDED

Sony XBR-65A9G

- HD PICTURE QUALITY
- ULTRA HD PERFORMANCE
- HDR

Best TVs That Aren't OLEDs

Samsung QN65Q90R and Sony XBR-65Z9F

So far, our top two 65-inch LCD-based 2019 sets come from Samsung and Sony. Both are flagship sets—the Samsung QN65Q90R and the Sony XBR-65Z9F—that provide top-notch HD and UHD picture quality, along with very effective HDR performance, among the best of the sets we've tested. They also boast Very Good sound scores.

In addition, they both have full-array LED backlights with local dimming, where the tiny LEDs are grouped into zones that can be controlled individually. With local dimming, parts of the screen go truly dark during nighttime or indoor scenes.

Both TVs offer wider-than-average viewing angles for LCD-based sets. The Samsung, though, gets the nod for having the widest viewing angle we've seen on a TV that wasn't an OLED set.

Samsung's smart TV platform includes the company's own Bixby digital voice assistant, plus compatibility with Google Home and Amazon Alexa voice assistants. And at least for now, Samsung smart TVs are the only ones that have the new Apple TV app, which lets you watch iTunes movies and TV shows right from the TV itself.

Sony uses Google's Android TV smart TV platform, which offers access to Google Cast for streaming from mobile devices. It includes built-in support for Google Assistant and is compatible with the Amazon Alexa digital voice assistant. It's also scheduled to get the Apple TV app shortly.

CR QUICK TAKE

86

RECOMMENDED

Samsung QN65Q90R

- HD PICTURE QUALITY
- ULTRA HD PERFORMANCE
- HDR

CR QUICK TAKE

86

RECOMMENDED

Sony XBR-65Z9F

- HD PICTURE QUALITY
- ULTRA HD PERFORMANCE
- HDR

Best Super-Sized TVs

Sony XBR-75X850G, Samsung QN75Q6DR, and Sony XBR-75X800G

When it comes to the jumbo-sized TVs in our ratings, Sony's new 75-inch set, the Sony XBR-75X850G, just edges out the Samsung QN75Q6DR for the top slot. While the two have the same overall score and top-notch picture quality, the Sony boasts a wider viewing angle.

If you're on a budget, you might want to consider the Sony XBR-75X800G, which is \$400 to \$500 cheaper than its stablemate. It delivers the same satisfying picture quality but lacks the wider viewing angle found in its pricier sibling. Also, its sound isn't as good as what you'll find in the other two models listed here.

CR QUICK TAKE

75

RECOMMENDED

Sony XBR-75X850G

- HD PICTURE QUALITY
- ULTRA HD PERFORMANCE
- HDR

CR QUICK TAKE

73

RECOMMENDED

Samsung QN75Q6DR

- HD PICTURE QUALITY
- ULTRA HD PERFORMANCE
- HDR

CR QUICK TAKE

75

RECOMMENDED

Sony XBR-75X800G

- HD PICTURE QUALITY
- ULTRA HD PERFORMANCE
- HDR

and effective HDR performance, something not usually found at this price. Compared with the 2018 model it replaces—the TCL 65R617 sets—its sound is a bit better, though you still may want to get a sound bar speaker so the TV’s audio matches its video performance.

Another option is the TCL 65R613, a late 2018 model that’s mainly available in warehouse clubs and sometimes at Target. It’s about \$100 cheaper than the R625 set but performs similarly, except not quite as well with 4K UHD content.

CR QUICK TAKE

73

TCL 65R625

- HD PICTURE QUALITY
- ULTRA HD PERFORMANCE
- HDR

CR QUICK TAKE

69

TCL65R613

- HD PICTURE QUALITY
- ULTRA HD PERFORMANCE
- HDR

Best TVs for Under \$1,000

TCL 65R625 and TCL 65R613

With a comparatively low price—we’re seeing it for about \$800 this month—the TCL 65R625 may be the best all-around TV buy in 2019, with scores of Excellent for HD and UHD picture quality