

GIFT GUIDE: GADGETS

3D gadgets descend on Christmas

BY NICK CLAYTON

Step into any electrical store and you can't escape the way TV manufacturers have designated this to be the 3D Christmas. There are plenty of sets vying for attention, none of which are definitively the best; although, in this area, plasma screens currently seem to have the upper hand over LCDs.

More exciting are the other devices starting to overcome the obstacles inherent in 3D technology. With much of the content, for instance, originating in the cinema, a projector seems a natural way to view it. The LG CF3D shows 3D in a form that can be viewed using inexpensive, lightweight polarizing glasses.

Although high-definition camcorders are relatively commonplace, the first consumer 3D camcorder, the Panasonic HDC SDT750, has only appeared recently. And for anybody who is regularly stuck in a hotel room with nothing more than CNN for company, the HP Envy-1195ea 3D multimedia laptop could be a welcome gift, provided they've got the shoulders to lug it across the airport concourse.

Outdoors, bringing a birds-eye view from the ground, the DraganFlyer X6 is perhaps the ultimate remote-controlled toy, although it has plenty of serious uses. A pair of Zeal Optics Transcend GPS skiing goggles, meanwhile, will make any serious skier desperate to get on the slopes to try out its real-time display of speed, altitude and location.

Outside the realm of multidimensional offerings are a couple of other notable gadgets for the home. The audiophile will appreciate the Harman Kardon GLA-55 multimedia speakers, which are as loud as they look, while coffee lovers will envy the compact Miele CM5100 free-standing coffee machine, with its variety of easy-to-use programs. Meanwhile, the diamonds around the edge of the £5 million Stuart Hughes iPhone 4 could just solve the phone's infamous aerial problem.



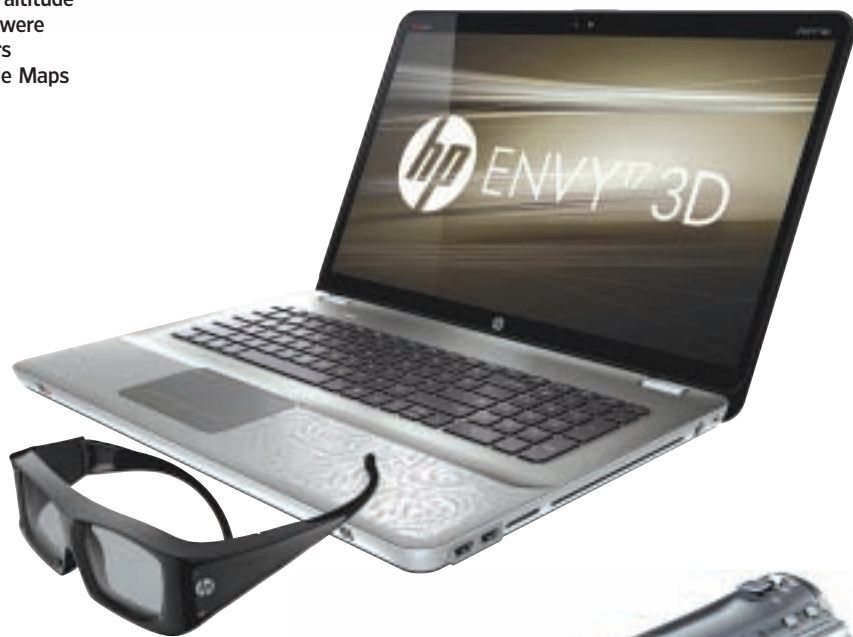
▲ Harman Kardon GLA-55 multimedia speakers; around £500. Love or loath their looks, plugged into a computer they'll render game effects, movies or music at room-shaking volume. The sound quality's not bad either.



▲ DraganFlyer X6 remote-controlled helicopter; £21,000, including training. More than just a big boy's toy, this rugged aircraft is capable of serious aerial photography, with attachments for infrared or high-definition video.



▼ Zeal Optics Transcend GPS skiing goggles; £450. Smart LCD technology displays data—from speed and altitude to your exact location—as if it were floating on a screen two meters ahead. You can even use Google Maps to plot your off-piste route.



HP Envy 17 3D laptop; from £1,559. Sharing the looks, high-quality sound and processing power of the rest of the magnesium-alloy-built HP Envy range, this ups the multimedia ante with a stunning 17-inch HD display and is the first laptop to use ATI's 3D technology. The downside is that, for all its perks, it's heavy. ▼

LG CF3D projector; around £11,000. This full HD 3D projector can easily throw a bright, high-contrast picture up to five meters wide, using "passive" technology, the same as found in cinemas. ▶



▶ Panasonic HDC SDT750 camcorder; from £999. Not only is this the first consumer 3D camcorder, but it's also an extremely capable 2D device. Footage shot through the converter adds a dimension for 3D TV owners, provided they're aware of the zoom limitations of the technology.



Stuart Hughes iPhone 4 handset; £5 million. If everything else seems second best, how about this iPhone 4 covered in 500 diamonds? Two have already been sold to a businessman in Australia, proof perhaps of the continuing strength of its economy. ▶

Miele CM5100 Barista freestanding coffee machine; from £999. The Miele CM5100 fits all the functions of a coffee-shop machine into a compact space. Go from beans, water and milk to a tall, skinny latte at the touch of a few buttons. ▶



Clockwise, Air 2 Air, Hewitt Packard; Panasonic; Miele; Stuart Hughes; Harman Kardon; LG; Firebox