

AS SEEN IN...

THE ELECTRONICS GUIDE FOR DIGITAL LIFESTYLES

E-GEAR

DECEMBER 2008

PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Carada Masquerade Masking System

SAY GOODBYE TO THOSE PESKY BLACK BARS

PERFORMANCE REVIEW

CONNECT AT WWW.E-GEAR.COM

If there's one question I've gotten more than any other over the years, it's some version of this: "Why are there black bars above and below the picture?" A popular twist on that question is: "Why doesn't the picture fill my screen?" The simple answer is, not all video is shot the same. Movies are typically wider than television shows and some movies are wider than others. Even on a widescreen display or traditional front projection screen, there's no getting around the fact that *The Matrix* and *Gladiator* – like many films – will be wider than your 1.78:1 screen. If those "black bars" (oh, if only they were black) above and below your 2.35:1 image irritate you, you need a masking system. If you already have a fixed wall screen you're happy with, or if you're in the market for a new screen, you'll definitely want to see what Carada has cooked up with their incredible Masquerade masking system.



Engineered to fit over most popular, similarly-sized 1.78:1 fixed screens, the Masquerade is a horizontal mask-

ing system designed to cover those charcoal grey "black" bars, giving your 2.35:1 image a crisp, jet black edge all

Carada Masquerade Masking System • Fits over most popular, similarly-sized fixed screens • Various sizes between 80-142" (custom available) • 6 1/4" Black Hole trim-covered frame • Integrated IR remote sensor • Can be hard-wired or used with cord • Price: from \$2,309 (does not include screen) • www.carada.com

PERFORMANCE REVIEW

the way around. The masking panels can actually deploy down so far as to frame a 2.70:1 image, but you'll rarely need to extend them that far unless you're watching Ben-Hur.

I had the pleasure of installing a Masquerade in my new basement theater/ equipment test lab and the

guide is well written with plenty of photos and support is always a quick phone call away. And once it's on the wall and you see it in action, any minor frustrations you experienced will be immediately forgotten. One thing I will say: make sure you know exactly where your studs are as you'll want to

the backside of the frame, the MMS screen snaps are in the front. The snaps get hidden completely behind the Masquerade's fascia panels and the result is that the screen material is now that much closer to the masking panels. I ordered my 92-inch Masquerade with an MMS screen in Brilliant

White and the results were extraordinary. The Carada screen served up crisp, clean whites, uniform image brightness and the black bars above and below *Batman Begins*, well, they're gone. All I can see is blackness – and not the pastel blacks you get from an LCD flat panel, but a true absence of light. This is what home theater is all about.

Once installed, the masking panels are controlled with a simple four-button remote control. You get one button for 1.78:1 (fully open), one for 2.35:1 (one of the most common film aspect ratios) and jog controls up and down for manual adjustment. The motor is surprisingly quiet

and the slider mechanism is remarkably smooth.

Although the masking panels are the main attraction here, I would be remiss if I didn't point out the Masquerade's massive 6 1/4" wide, Black Hole trim-covered frame and just how impressive this thing looks when mounted on the wall. In short, this is the screen home theater fans have been waiting for.

Greg Robinson



engineering that went into this product was evident at every step of the game. From its ridiculously-sturdy (and heavy!) box to its precision machined joints to its integrated IR remote sensor, this is a quality product if ever I've seen one. The installation is a bit involved, but it's absolutely doable with the help of a friend and considerably simpler than you might expect given the complexity of the device. Also, the instruction

anchor this beast to as many of them as possible when installing the top bracket.

Although the Masquerade has been designed to fit over most similarly-sized fixed screens, Carada has wisely created the "MMS," a new screen that is sold separately and designed especially for use with the Masquerade. Whereas most fixed screens have material that gets snapped to