

Apple Mac Pro and Pro Display XDR: First look

The Mac Pro and Pro Display XDR: First look at Apple's latest products



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I want it. No, not Craig Federighi's hair. I'm talking about Apple's new 6K, 32-inch [Pro Display XDR](#). It's a jaw-droppingly beautiful screen, and its reveal at [WWDC 2019](#) was paired with the new [Mac Pro](#), which is equally stunning in its own way.

I didn't get a chance to lay a finger on either of these two new products from Apple, but boy did I ogle. Here are a few first impressions just from standing mere inches away from these thousand-dollar machines.

POWERFUL IS AN UNDERSTATEMENT

The new Mac Pro and Pro Display XDR will take your breath away. The former, not so much in design but in sheer power, and the latter with its insanely bright screen. Let's start with the Mac Pro; yes, it looks like a cheese grater. It's inevitably the first thing that comes to mind. There's even a handle at the top!

Jokes aside, there's a reason for the design, and it has everything to do with heat dissipation, as it maximizes airflow and keeps the Mac Pro quiet. I watched the machine churn away several intensive tasks and then put my ear close to it — I couldn't hear

anything, despite the three massive fans and a blower inside. Granted, I was in a loud area, but I probably would have still heard the loud whir of a MacBook Air.







The handles at the top are to help hold the Mac Pro, and the case has an option to add wheels if you want to roll it around. You can even rack mount it if so desired. There's a d-latch at the top that you rotate and lift up to remove the stainless steel housing, delivering 360-degree access to the Mac Pro's internals. Why? Because it's modular. You can replace and add components easily, with Apple bringing PCIe expansion slots back into the fray. With eight slots total, the Mac Pro offers a truly customizable experience that can't be found elsewhere in the Mac ecosystem.

Inside, you get an Intel 8-core Xeon processor with 32 GB of RAM powering the Mac Pro, but that's just the base model. It can go all the way to a 28-core Xeon processor, with a whopping 1.5 TB of RAM. Similarly, there's a 256GB SSD by default, but you can bump that up to 4TB if so desired. The ability to just keep adding more power to the Mac Pro makes it daunting but insanely

impressive. This is the kind of Mac Pro some people have been anticipating for over ten years now.

Simply put, the Mac Pro can handle anything.

There's also Apple's MPX Module, which houses the graphics card. The base option comes with an AMD Radeon 580X, but you can go all the way up to Radeon Pro Vega II Duo, which means there are two Radeon Pro Vega II cards, and a ridiculous 28 teraflops of graphics performance. Apple says the module itself uses adds a secondary connector to the standard PCIe connector to integrate Thunderbolt all throughout the system for extra power. Even more impressively, this module is completely fanless, relying on one massive heat sink to keep things cool. Simply put, the Mac Pro can handle anything — without sounding like a typical gaming PC.

And we're not even done. There's an accelerator card called the Afterburner that you can add, which pushes video workflow ahead even more. With it, Apple said you can have three streams of 8K video going, or 12 streams of 4K video as you edit. Overkill? Probably not for the people who actually have the money to buy the Mac Pro.

As for the ports, there are two Thunderbolt 3 ports at the top and two at the back; 2 USB-A ports, a 3.5mm headphone jack, 2 10-gigabit Ethernet ports, as well as a 1.4-kilowatt power supply unit to keep everything churning.

Walking through several demo areas of professionals showing off the Mac Pro's capabilities, the Mac Pro never ceased to amaze. I heard an artist explaining how the power of the Mac Pro allowed

him to render an image in real time — he didn't need to take a coffee break while waiting for his computer to finish the process anymore. I heard a music composer explain how he didn't need multiple computers to do his work anymore; just the Mac Pro.

YOU NEED AN EQUALLY-STUNNING SCREEN







What's the point of incredible performance if the screen you're using is subpar? That's where the new Pro Display XDR comes in. Apple finally has a display that doesn't look stuck in the past. The new screen has thin edges all-around, and it looks ultra modern, and ultra sexy.

The 32-inch screen is insanely sharp thanks to a 6K resolution, and it's plenty large for all sorts of workflows. If you're coming from the 5K iMac, Apple said the new Pro Display is 40 percent larger. I do wish it curved a bit, but that's my own personal preference. It's really thick compared to most modern monitors, and if you look at the back, you'll see a similar lattice design as the Mac Pro. Again, it's to regulate heat — this time to keep the redesigned LED backlighting system cool.

But the spotlight feature is the XDR display. It's a new acronym — as if we needed a new one — [that stands for Extreme Dynamic](#)

Range. High Dynamic Range, or HDR, is what you'll find on most other displays these days, and it allows you to see high-contrast images. The problem is that other computer monitors don't get bright enough to match the standards of HDR like televisions do. XDR is Apple's way of standing out, taking things a step further with extreme contrasts scenarios to deliver extreme brightness. You'll get 1,000 nits of screen brightness indefinitely. On average, most monitors have a screen that can hit between 300-350 nits of brightness, so what Apple has done here is startlingly impressive. Better yet, peak brightness can go up to 1,600 nits, beating what most high-end televisions can achieve.

The new screen has thin edges all-around, and it looks ultra modern, and ultra sexy.

This high brightness really makes the screen come alive. The content on it is clear and easy to see, and the matte glass that Apple etched in via nanotech manufacturing meant I never saw a glare. It does cost an extra \$1,000 for this matte version, though, so be warned.

The screen itself isn't an OLED, but LCD, and you may be wondering about black levels. From the few images I looked at, blacks were deep and helped the colors pop, but comparing the screen against an OLED may better show the difference. Apple claims the monitor can produce a 1,000,000:1 contrast ratio, thanks to that new backlighting, which isn't typically possible on a standard LED screen.

The stand is equally impressive. It's called the Pro Stand, and it's not included, but a \$999 addition. It has a counterbalance that makes the screen easy to move up and down, and you can tilt the

screen for the best angle. It's detachable for easy transportation. Sadly, I wasn't allowed to touch the screen so I couldn't see how "weightless" the stand makes the monitor feel.

IT'S NOT FOR YOU





The Mac Pro starts at \$5,999. The Pro Display XDR starts at \$4,999. Those prices are just for the base models, and I'm afraid to hear what both cost after you max them out with all the bells and whistles. Safe to say, neither of these [devices are for you](#), the average consumer. But they're professional-grade machines that aren't even for "prosumers" anymore, as the prices have jumped up significantly. The "trashcan" Mac Pro launched for just \$3,000 back in 2013, which is \$3,300 when adjusted for inflation.

These new Mac products are in another stratosphere, made for enterprise — for creative studios and large companies. It sadly may be a little too out of reach for prosumers. Nevertheless, the Mac Pro and Pro Display XDR do not fail to impress based on our initial impressions, but there's a great deal more to unpack if we ever get to spend more time with them.

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