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## A first look at **Liquid Chrome**

**A**sk and you shall receive. Last fall, I reviewed Pinnacle's Liquid Silver NLE (see Post, November 2002) and was thrilled with the software aspects of the editor. But I clearly desired more realtime functionality via hardware options. In fact, I concluded the review with these exact words:

"I can't help but think of the happy marriages that could be fostered between this new feature-rich software and the robust hardware that has made them their name over the years. The only choice left is color: Blue, Silver or Purple?"

Well, you can now add Liquid Chrome to that range of editing choices offered by Pinnacle Systems. Apparently, the product managers over there have been playing cupid, and have successfully matched two soul mates: the Liquid app and the Targa 3000 hardware.

Their first public appearance together is at NAB this month in Las Vegas. In March, I traveled to the home of this newlywed couple, Mountain View, CA, where I had the opportunity to evaluate this revved up NLE.

For reasons of stability and support, I've always felt it best to buy into turnkey solutions. And that's exactly what Pinnacle's senior product manager, Patrick McLean, recommends. Firmly grounded in a Compaq EVO W8000 CPU case, running on Windows 2000, with (currently) 2.2GHz of dual-processing power, and a gig of RAM, the Targa 3000 slides gleefully into the 64-bit PCI slot, and gets accessorized with a clip-on K2 chip — which is Pinnacle's single-chip 3D DVE, and compositing hardware component — which by the way, still only takes up one slot. This tag-teaming powerhouse — that I fondly refer to as "T3K2" is what allows for the realtime processing of four layers of video or four graphical overlays, any combination of video and overlays up to four levels, chroma/luma key, color correction, 3D/2D DVE moves, and even the RT playback of uncompressed video with alpha channel or track mattes. The latest version of the Liquid software app, Version 5.0, provides the middle- to high-end editing market with a raging conglomerate of editing tools and advanced realtime effects at a very reasonable price.

Pinnacle describes Liquid Chrome as a fully professional solution featuring high quality codecs for i-frame MPEG-2 4:2:2 up to 50 Mbps, uncompressed and DV25 video formats, as well as extensive realtime 2D and 3D DVE capability, four realtime video streams, unlimited layering and Liquid's renowned effects processing that renders complex, many layered effects without slowing down your workflow. The included bundle of software gives users an unprecedented suite of creativity enhancing tools, including the powerful TitleDeko character gener-

network storage solutions.

• Liquid Chrome adds to and complements the complete line of Pinnacle Liquid networked editors. The product range now includes Liquid Blue for multiformat broadcast environments, Liquid Chrome for realtime post settings where time is at a premium, Liquid Silver for less effects-intensive MPEG-2 post editing, and Liquid Purple for professional DV editing applications. I currently cut on Liquid Purple in my home suite, and hope to purchase several turnkey Chromes for my editors at work. I love the

### VITAL STATS

**PRODUCT:** Pinnacle Systems' Liquid Chrome

**WEB SITE:** www.pinnaclesys.com

**PRICING:** \$24,995 turnkey (\$6,995 for upgrade from Liquid Silver; \$4,995 upgrade from Targa 3000)

**FEATURES:**

- four realtime video layers
- fast, intuitive interface



ator, Commotion image editing and compositing, Impression DVD authoring, and Liquid CX color correction.

### THE DETAILS

Powerful, realtime highest quality 2D, 3D, color, key and matte effects driven by Pinnacle's Targa 3000 and Pinnacle's K2 single-chip 3D-DVE — the same DVE that drives Pinnacle's top-of-the line live production digital switchers. Additional premium effects capabilities are delivered through sophisticated software-based algorithms such as Liquid's CX color corrector:

- Up to four realtime layers of video and unlimited tracks of audio and video.
- A remarkable multi-pass process that automatically renders composites with more than four layers without taking foreground control from the user. Creativity and workflow are never interrupted.
- A modern interface for fast editing with intuitive contextual menus, no annoying windows to shift around, and an easily configurable environment that is quickly accessible to users accustomed to older interfaces from Avid or Discreet.
- An open networking and exchange model that won't lock customers into a single, proprietary solution.
- Built-in support for Pinnacle's Palladium

idea of doing DV rough cuts at home, and easily exchanging them with the uncompressed timelines at work. That's exactly the kind of workflow I have been looking for. I should also mention that Pinnacle offers some really cool trade-up options from other NLEs. You can check this out on their Web site under the "editing trade-up" icon.

What really gets me excited about Pinnacle in general is: this is only the beginning for them. They have a very bright future. In the last year, look at all the great companies they gobbled up, and most recently, imagine what great audio tools we have to look forward to in the Liquid software now that Pinnacle owns Steinberg — creators of Cubase and Nuendo — which I've been using for years to multitrack my audio and MIDI mixes.

I guess saying that I am thrilled with Liquid Chrome would be an understatement. I mean really, I already knew that I loved the software component, and merely wished for some basic realtime bells and whistles. What I got is a lot more than that!

Pinnacle is obviously sending a message to the software-only community. And it sounds a lot like MC Hammer's "You Can't Touch This". Doo-dooooo-doo-do-do-dooooo. Hardware is back, baby — love it or spend the rest of your life rendering. **POST**



Pinnacle's new SDI breakout box.