

SNAP, CRACKLE OR FLOP

Our testers put this Fourth's fireworks through their paces

Ratings are on a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 the highest



JUPITER 2 FOUNTAIN (Phantom)
\$9.99 - New this year

What they say: "No danger Will Robinson" - just a cool fountain featuring red-blue torch with silver spray... red-green stars and chrysanthemums.

What we say: The flying saucer shape was pleasing to the eye, but it never really took orbit.

Length of show: 47.8 seconds

Boom factor: 2.1

"Oooh" factor: 2.3



Brew Haha (Phantom)
\$29.99 - New this year

What they say: Loaded with effects, including pine needles, crackles, whistles, chrysanthemums and pearls.

What we say: Tastes great, more filling. This winner made us want to order another round.

Length of show: 2:21

Boom factor: 4

"Oooh" factor: 4



Night Treasure (TNT)
\$11.99

What they say: Emits beautiful showers of red, green, blue, silver and yellow stars, snow pines, yellow flowers and titanium crackles.

What we say: Like a good Lionel Richie song, it seemed like the show lasted all night long. But there was a lull in the middle where it felt like the show was, you know, gonna last all night long.

Length of show: 2:00

Boom factor: 3.4

"Oooh" factor: 3.2



Jumbo Powder Keg Fountain (Phantom)
\$19.99 - New this year

What they say: Eight colors, crackles, torches, stars and the burn time (almost three minutes) makes this new fountain a must-have!

What we say: Really cool colors, but this powder keg kinda blew.

Length of show: 2:41

Boom factor: 3.3

"Oooh" factor: 3.1



Delirium (TNT)
\$39.99

What they say: Everyone is sure to be delirious with this awesome fan-shaped fountain with multiple colors and effects! Great finale!

What we say: With a doozy of a starter and three fountains going nuts at once, this surefire finale will make your eyes cross.

Length of show: 1:48

Boom factor: 3.5

"Oooh" factor: 3.6



Soda Pop Fountains (Phantom)
\$14.99 for four pack - New this year

What they say: Four flavor bottles: cherry, orange, lemon-lime and grape. Each bottle starts with a flare the color of its flavor and then is followed with secondary effects featuring the same color.

What we say: All four lit together was a refreshing show, but they lost their fizz a bit too soon.

Length of show: 52 seconds

Boom factor: 2.6

"Oooh" factor: 2.5

Mad Dog (TNT)
\$9.99 - Buy one, get one free

What they say: Beware of dog! This fountain is a fierce display of red and green with bright, crackling stars and whistles.

What we say: The bark was ho-hum for a while there, but the bite at the end was a real tooth-sinker.

Length of show: 1:25

Boom factor: 3.3

"Oooh" factor: 3



CityFest Fountain (Phantom)
\$24.99 - New this year

What they say: Features six different effects, including whistling, crackles and assorted color pearls and chrysanthemums.

What we say: More Cincinnati than Sin City, this show nonetheless had a great finish, though one of our firefighter friends remarked that he didn't like the idea of a city on fire.

Length of show: 2:35

Boom factor: 3.3

"Oooh" factor: 3



Laugh Out Loud (TNT)
\$12.99 - New this year

What they say: Emits shower of golden and silvery chrysanthemums, yellow, purple and green stars ... snow pines, whistles, flashes and crackles.

What we say: L.O.L.? W.O.W. A big bang plus a funny surprise had us giggling.

Length of show: 1:20

Boom factor: 3.4

"Oooh" factor: 3.5



Komodo 3000 Fountain (Phantom)
\$39.99 - New this year

What they say: With more than four minutes of burn time, this is one of the longest consumer fountains available! Spectacular multi-effect fountain with brilliant color combinations and whistling effects and a crackling barrage finale!

What we say: With repeated showers of sparks keeping things interesting, this one wasn't, um, draggin'.

Length of show: 3:46

Boom factor: 3.8

"Oooh" factor: 3.5



PINK DIAMONDS (TNT)
\$5.99 - New this year

What they say: Emits showers of pink and blue stars, silvery chrysanthemums and crackles.

What we say: This pretty in pink show could very well be a girl's best friend. Now where'd we park our unicorn?

Length of show: 45 seconds

Boom factor: 2.75

"Oooh" factor: 2.8



Apache Firedance (Phantom)
\$14.99

What they say: With a burn time of 3:30, this is one of the longest-lasting consumer fountains available in the United States! Brilliant colors of red, green, blue, gold and bright white stars, tons of crackle, six whistles - you name it, it does it! The effects change at 12- to 15-second intervals.

What we say: An entire fireworks show in one, this good buy wins points for longevity, but the firedance got a bit waltzy in the middle.

Length of show: 3:30

Boom factor: 3.6

"Oooh" factor: 3.5



By Lisa Heyamoto • Bee Staff Writer

Fireworks may be giving apple pie a run for the money when it comes to textbook all-American-ness.

After all, Wikipedia says fireworks made their Fourth of July debut in 1777, a time when the American version of the aforementioned pastry was barely a gleam in the apple's eye.

So, let's throw off the shackles of the flaky crust and embrace pyrotechnics as the ultimate symbol of patriotism. And hey, we're here to help.

State-approved fireworks go on sale today, and The Bee has assembled a crack team of inexpert experts to judge this safe-and-sane variety, lighting them off recently at a fire station in Rancho Cordova.

We rated 'em on an overall oooh factor, and this year added a boom factor for the ignition-inclined.

It's all to assist you in getting, ahem, the most bang for the buck. So go forth, with lighter in hand. 'Cause fireworks, after all - say it with us now - are as American as brightly packaged, Chinese-made bundles of gunpowder.

And don't let anyone tell you different.

Reach Lisa Heyamoto at (916) 321-1261 or lheyamoto@sacbee.com



To see video of our top three choices, go to www.sacbee.com/links.



GALACTIC ORBITER (TNT)
\$6.99 - New this year

What they say: Emits beautiful shower of blue and red stars, golden chrysanthemum and crackle.

What we say: It looked like a bomb but it wasn't, you know, da bomb.

Length of show: 30.2 seconds

Boom factor: 1.9

"Oooh" factor: 1.7



American Spirit/Sizzler (TNT)
\$16.99 for the pair

What they say:

• **American Spirit** The American Spirit ... will burn brighter than ever. This long-lasting fountain is a series of red, white and blue stars and flowers with crackles and whistles. Great value!

• **Sizzler** The hiss of fiery silver rain sizzles from this 9-inch fountain that burns with gold, pink, green, red and blue stars. For more than a minute, it continues to shimmer with big silver chrysanthemums, whistles and crackles.

What we say: The American Spirit earned a salute or two, but the Sizzler was a fizzler.

Length of show: 2:03

Boom factor: 2.6

"Oooh" factor: 3

