

**TEST THE BEST**

**“We put them through  
impossible conditions”**

**INDEPENDENT INSIGHTS**

**“People are just discovering  
what this hybrid can do”**



**ILC**

Intelligent Lighting Creations

WE HELP YOU **SHINE**

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**2019** **GEAR**  
**OF THE**  
**YEAR**

# WELCOME



“What gear would you recommend?” That’s a question we hear all the time. Lighting designers, architects, event planners and educators are constantly asking for our insights on fixtures, rigging and other gear. And, believe me, the crew at ILC has some very strong opinions.

You’ll discover that in “Gear of the Year.” Everything in this guide has been used extensively by our team. We hope our insights help make the lighting at your next event truly amazing. After all, that’s why we’re here.

- Scott Falbe, Founder and CEO

# 2019 GEAR OF THE YEAR



# PURPOSE

“Gear of the Year” was developed to offer clear, direct and independent insights on some of the best professional lighting equipment available today. This is the first edition of the annual guide, and has been created to benefit professionals that are involved with lighting design and event planning. The commentary expressed in this guide solely reflects the opinions of the experts at ILC. Their input is based on extensive field experience with indoor and outdoor lighting equipment from a large number of manufacturers.

# CRITERIA

The following criteria and questions were used to evaluate each piece of gear.

- Ratings** How does it perform? How reliable is it? Is it well designed? What is the feature set?
- Cost** Is it a real bargain, a big investment, or somewhere in between?
- Pluses** What are the strengths? Why did it make “Gear of the Year”?
- Minuses** What would we improve on?
- Uses** Where does ILC use this gear?
- Quotes** Candid insights and opinions from the field experts.

# TESTING

For “Gear of the Year,” the test lab is life.

That can mean illuminating a forest of evergreens in 15 below weather, or spotlighting the stage when it’s 95 with high humidity.

It also entails ripping the fixtures apart back at the shop, cleaning them, testing them, then sending them right back into action.

Suffice it to say only the best equipment makes it through the grind. And strictly the best of the best earns the right to be called “Gear of the Year.” It may sound like a high honor. But it comes with a lot of punishment.



# FEEDBACK?

Check out the choices for “Gear of the Year,” then let us know what you think. We welcome your feedback and questions at [sales@ilc.com](mailto:sales@ilc.com)

# PANEL

For “Gear of the Year,” ILC brought together experienced professionals from all areas of their team.



**Scott Falbe**  
Founder and CEO



**Garrick Shanley**  
Chief Operating Officer



**Elizabeth Patterson**  
Vice President of  
Project Management



**Grant Simmon**  
Account Executive



**Joby Benoit**  
Director of  
Process Improvement



**Brandon LaRocca**  
Conventional Lead

# Elation® Proteus Hybrid™

2019 GEAR  
OF THE  
YEAR

## Essentials

Use	Indoor/Outdoor
Voltage	100-240VAC
Total wattage	470W total
Weight	84 lbs.
Fixed gobos	14
Rotating gobos	8
Color	CTB + CTO + CMY + UV
Shuttering fixture	Yes



## Ratings 1 = poor 5 = average 10 = excellent

**Performance**  
9

**Reliability**  
9

**Durability**  
9

**Design**  
8

**Features**  
8

**Total rating out of 50**  
43

**Cost** \$\$\$

\$ = bargain \$\$ = economical \$\$\$ = expensive \$\$\$\$ = premium

## ILC insights

“Because of its ability to mimic a wash light and focus down like a conventional ellipsoidal, it’s extremely versatile. The end user can ultimately use less fixtures.”

“There are very few IP-rated, outdoor-rated, moving lights currently available. This is the best bang for the buck. Probably by far.”

## Where ILC uses it

Outdoor events and music festivals, illumination at the Morton Arboretum, aerial effects and scenics, anywhere that weather is a concern

## Pluses

- + **Versatility:** “It’s a shuttering fixture, so it can be used for pretty much anything. It can light up banners. It can be used as a spotlight on people.”
- + **Value:** “Other premium fixtures that can perform like this would be double the cost.”
- + **Performance:** “Did well being outside for six-odd weeks in what was a not-so-fun winter.”

## Minuses

- **Maintenance:** “Because these fixtures are IP-rated, and lamp rather than LED, maintenance, care, and repair are more time-consuming.”

## Bottom line

**The Proteus Hybrid** is an extremely versatile fixture that’s also an excellent value. It can perform like a spot, beam or wash light.

# High End Systems® Solaframe 750

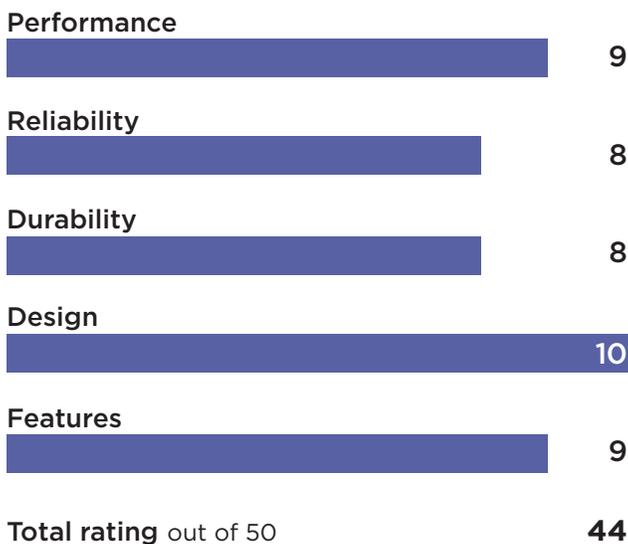
2019 GEAR  
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## Essentials

Use	Indoor
Voltage	100-240VAC
Lamp wattage	270W LED
Weight	63 lbs.
Fixed gobos	-
Rotating gobos	7
Color	CMY + CTO + Wheel
Shuttering fixture	Yes



## Ratings 1 = poor 5 = average 10 = excellent



## Cost \$\$\$

\$ = bargain \$\$ = economical \$\$\$ = expensive \$\$\$\$ = premium

## ILC insights

“It has a huge feature set, including shutters and an LED engine in a very small package comparatively, and a very low draw.”

“It’s a lighter fixture. You only need one person to move it around, which is a huge plus.”

“It’s good in smaller places. It’s still really bright for the size it is. Honestly, for a fixture that has fans, it is so incredibly quiet.”

“A feature packed instrument. Although, you’re giving up some things in terms of intensity and color index.”

## Where ILC uses it

Theatrical performances, corporate ballrooms, smaller trade shows, small clubs, weddings

## Pluses

- + **Design:** “It’s a shuttering fixture, so it can be used for pretty much anything. It can light up banners. It can be used as a spotlight on people.”
- + **Features:** “It’s got everything that this type of light should have...and maybe one or two things you’re kind of surprised it has.”
- + **Size:** “Huge features in a small package.”

## Minuses

- **Very few:** “If we could change anything, I wish it were brighter, I wish it was a better color rendering at depth. But the Solaframe 2000 addresses that.”

## Bottom line

**The Solaframe 750** offers significant features in a very small package. It only takes one person to move the fixture and it has a very low power draw. This is an optimal light for smaller indoor events.

There were very few negative comments about this fixture. The limitations it does have are addressed by the Solaframe 2000 on the following page.

# High End Systems® Solaframe 2000

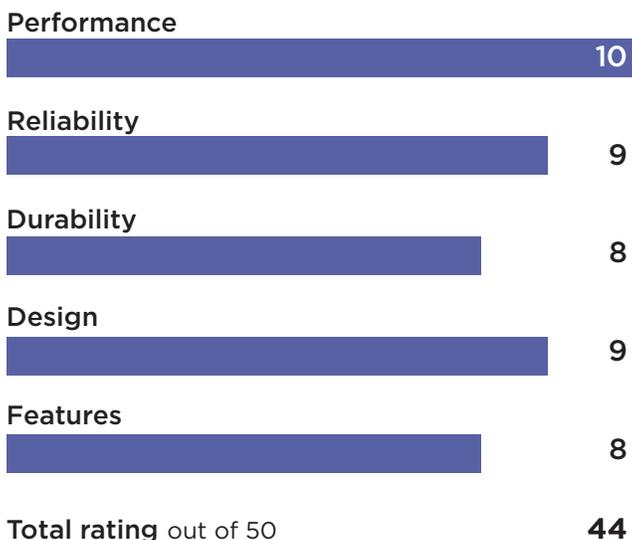
2019 GEAR  
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## Essentials

Use	Indoor
Voltage	100-240VAC
Lamp wattage	600W LED
Total wattage	950W total
Weight	96 lbs.
Fixed gobos	7
Rotating gobos	6
Color	CMY + CTO + Wheel
Shuttering fixture	Yes



## Ratings 1 = poor 5 = average 10 = excellent



**Cost** \$\$\$  
\$ = bargain \$\$ = economical \$\$\$ = expensive \$\$\$\$ = premium

## ILC insights

“Long throw, very bright. So it can play in convention centers. It can play in arenas. It can play in large theaters, large spaces, large ballrooms.”

“The big thing is the overall versatility and universal acceptance. You say, “We’ve got a SolaFrame 2000,” and people are like, “We’re set.””

“We did a shootout with it recently. The difference between the 750 and the 2000, other than brightness, is the 2000 had a better CRI. For just the base model fixture, it does play better in the color market.”

## Where ILC uses it

Everywhere indoors including large spaces; it’s an extremely versatile profile, a real go-to light

## Pluses

- + **Performance:** “Bigger. Brighter. Better.”
- + **Impact:** “It is very, very similar to the 750. It’s just the brighter version. It plays in a bigger field.”
- + **Versatility:** “We talk about large spaces...but it also has the optics to play in small spaces, as well.”

## Minuses

- **Weight:** “It’s a really big fixture. But it’s made for bigger spaces.”
- **More features:** “We would like a continuous animation wheel. That was one of the things that got fixed in the 750.”

## Bottom line

**The Solaframe 2000** is the bigger, brighter version of the 750. It has become a trusted light for bigger spaces and large indoor events. However, several professionals cited its versatility for smaller spaces

Weight was an issue, but also an expectation for a fixture this size. A continuous animation wheel would be a welcome improvement.

# Chroma-Q® Color Force II 72™

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## Essentials

Use	Indoor
Voltage	100-240VAC
Total wattage	800W total
Weight	53 lbs.
Extreme output	36,000 lumens
Optics	Fully homogenized lenses
Dimensions	69.25" L x 6.5" W x 7.5" H



## Ratings 1 = poor 5 = average 10 = excellent

### Performance



### Reliability



### Durability



### Design



### Features



Total rating out of 50 **44**

## Cost \$\$\$\$

\$ = bargain \$\$ = economical \$\$\$ = expensive \$\$\$\$ = premium

## ILC insights

"This is kind of a specialty light for grazing surfaces, like walls or curtains or banners. Basically, any surface or any plane that you need lit...entryways, archways, and you can create pathways with them."

"Not great for lighting people. It's crazy bright and you don't want to get it in somebody's eyes."

"Let's be clear, this is not new gear. But in the last two years it has become the industry standard for LED strip light. And so far, nothing has surpassed it."

## Where ILC uses it

Theaters, trade shows, parties; anywhere you need a light for grazing surfaces

## Pluses

- + **Performance:** "This is the standard. There's not anything brighter out there that looks better."
- + **Reliability:** "Great if you're doing light boxes on sets, you just want to throw a picture underneath and illuminate a backlit thing. They're really versatile for just lighting up a sheet or something similar."
- + **Features:** "It's bright, has great optics, homogenized lenses, and it's compact."

## Minuses

- **Compatibility:** "Color Force and Color Force II don't play well side by side. Although there is a mode to allow a Color Force II to behave like the original Color Force in intensity and color, the optical systems are completely different. If you have some original Color Force equipment, be aware that using it alongside Color Force II will probably require adapting back and forth, and it isn't easy to intermix them."

## Bottom line

The **Color Force II 72™** is a specialty light that is ideal for grazing surfaces, like walls or curtains or banners. It has also become the industry standard for LED strip light because no option is better right now.

# TylerTruss Systems, Inc.

## GT® Plus

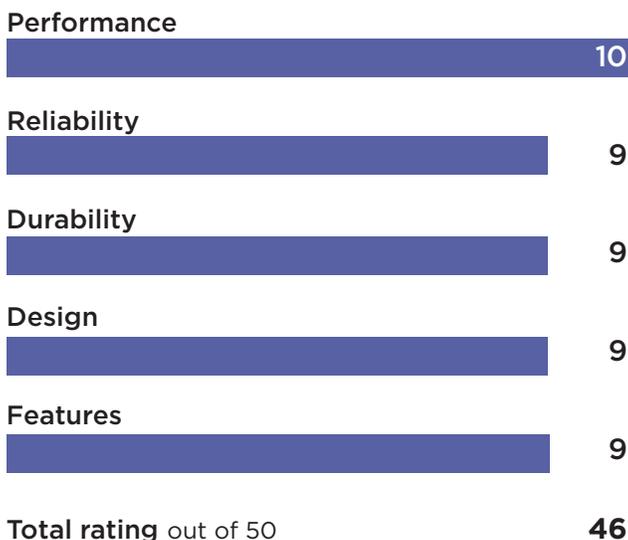
2019 GEAR  
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### Essentials

Use	Indoor/Outdoor
Weight	212 lbs. with legs 144 lbs. without legs
Load	Variable based on span
Length	10 ft.
Height	36.125" minimum/46.125" maximum
Connection type	Spigot, indexable
Color	Black



### Ratings 1 = poor 5 = average 10 = excellent



### Cost \$\$\$

\$ = bargain \$\$ = economical \$\$\$ = expensive \$\$\$\$ = premium

### ILC insights

"This truss could have made Gear of the Year five years ago. But since it came out, there's nothing better."

"It's repeatable which makes it ideal for tours. So if you're doing the same thing every day, you don't have to rehang the same spot every day. You are just clicking your track together and flying it up."

"If you need to load in a show in four hours, you can do it pretty easily. Because it's all there, it's all put together. All you have to do is connect the points and hang it."

### Where ILC uses it

Pretty much everywhere, but "we wouldn't put it on the ground outside"

### Pluses

- + **Performance:** "It saves on time and saves on labor."
- + **Features:** "It takes a lot of that engineering and the brainpower offsite, meaning you take care of all the potential mistakes, all of the potential problems. And you do that before you even bring it to site."
- + **Design:** "If you're in a place where storage space is at a premium, you don't have to worry about hiding the cases. The only thing you have to worry about is hiding the legs."

### Minuses

- **Weight:** "The GT truss, like all pre-rig style trusses, is considerably heavier per linear foot than the truss it's likely replacing. More attention is required when doing your load calculations. What may have been an acceptable rig with traditional box truss might be pushing your point load limit with a GT truss."
- **Protection:** "There is a tradeoff with doing advanced prep. You do open yourself up to more risk of potential damage to lights. They're not in nice foam cases, they are bouncing around more than usual."

### Bottom line

The **GT Plus** is a proven time saving truss. You can take care of any potential issues before you arrive on site. It's also a space saver, because it eliminates the needs to bring so many cases to the site.

On the downside, the weight can be an issue and the advanced prep exposes lights to more potential damage, so extra care is needed.

# Martin® MAC Aura XB™ LED Wash

2019 GEAR  
OF THE  
YEAR

## Essentials

Use	Indoor
Voltage	100-240V
Total wattage	285W total
Weight	14 lb.
Fixed gobos	-
Rotating gobos	-
Color	RGBW
Shuttering fixture	-



## Ratings 1 = poor 5 = average 10 = excellent

Performance  9

Reliability  9

Durability  7

Design  8

Features  8

Total rating out of 50 **41**

Cost **\$\$\$**

\$ = bargain \$\$ = economical \$\$\$ = expensive \$\$\$\$ = premium

## ILC insights

“Probably the most versatile light in the indoor inventory.”

“Small, bright and useful. A real workhorse.”

“Use it for color and effect. Use it back and behind things, and low in the frame. It’s not a light where you have to go up on high. It plays on camera.”

“It has kind of an eye candy gimmick to it. You can point it at the audience, and in the right color settings and in the right zoom, you can use it as a visual piece as well.”

## Where ILC uses it

Everywhere indoors: theaters, trade shows, concerts, touring and retail applications

## Pluses

- + **Versatility:** “We use it to light people. It’s your top wash, it’s your back lights. It’s your general lighting. This is the light I would use anywhere.”
- + **Design:** “It’s fairly small, lightweight and works well in large quantities.”
- + **Performance:** “Brighter than the standard Aura and it’s got a better white.”

## Minuses

- **Features:** “It’s not focusable, which some lights in its class are. It doesn’t really have the kind of lens needed to be a true wash soft edge light. There’s no hard edge to it. So there are features left to be desired, but overall for price point and for versatility, it is in super high demand.”
- **Durability:** “To keep it that small, they’ve made sacrifices and you can’t bang that thing around.”

## Bottom line

The **MAC Aura XB LED Wash** is an extremely versatile indoor light for almost any application. It is small yet very bright and has an eye candy effect when the right settings are used.

There are some features that would make the fixture even better. Its durability can also be an issue if it receives rugged treatment.



WE HELP YOU SHINE



Whether you need turnkey professional lighting or rental gear for your event, contact ILC today at 847.933.9792 or [sales@ilc.com](mailto:sales@ilc.com)

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The views expressed in "Gear of the Year" are solely the opinions of the ILC Team. These insights are based on extensive experience with professional lighting equipment. No one was compensated in any way for their feedback and no manufacturers participated in the development process of this independent guide.

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