

SPECIAL ISSUE: 2011 HOME OF THE YEAR WINNERS

ELECTRONIC HOUSE

May/June 2011

YOUR SOURCE FOR AUDIO, VIDEO, HOME TECHNOLOGY & DESIGN

THE BEST

Automated Homes, Media Rooms, Home Theaters and Master Suites

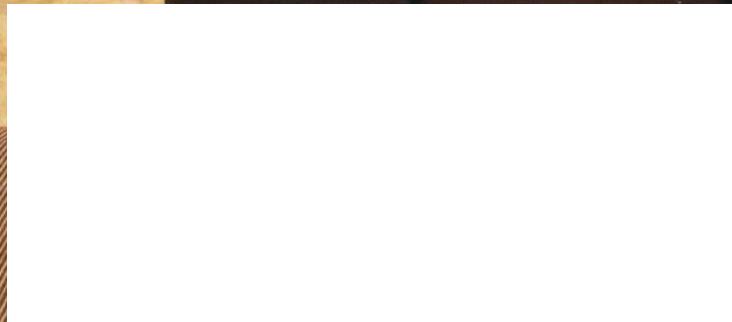
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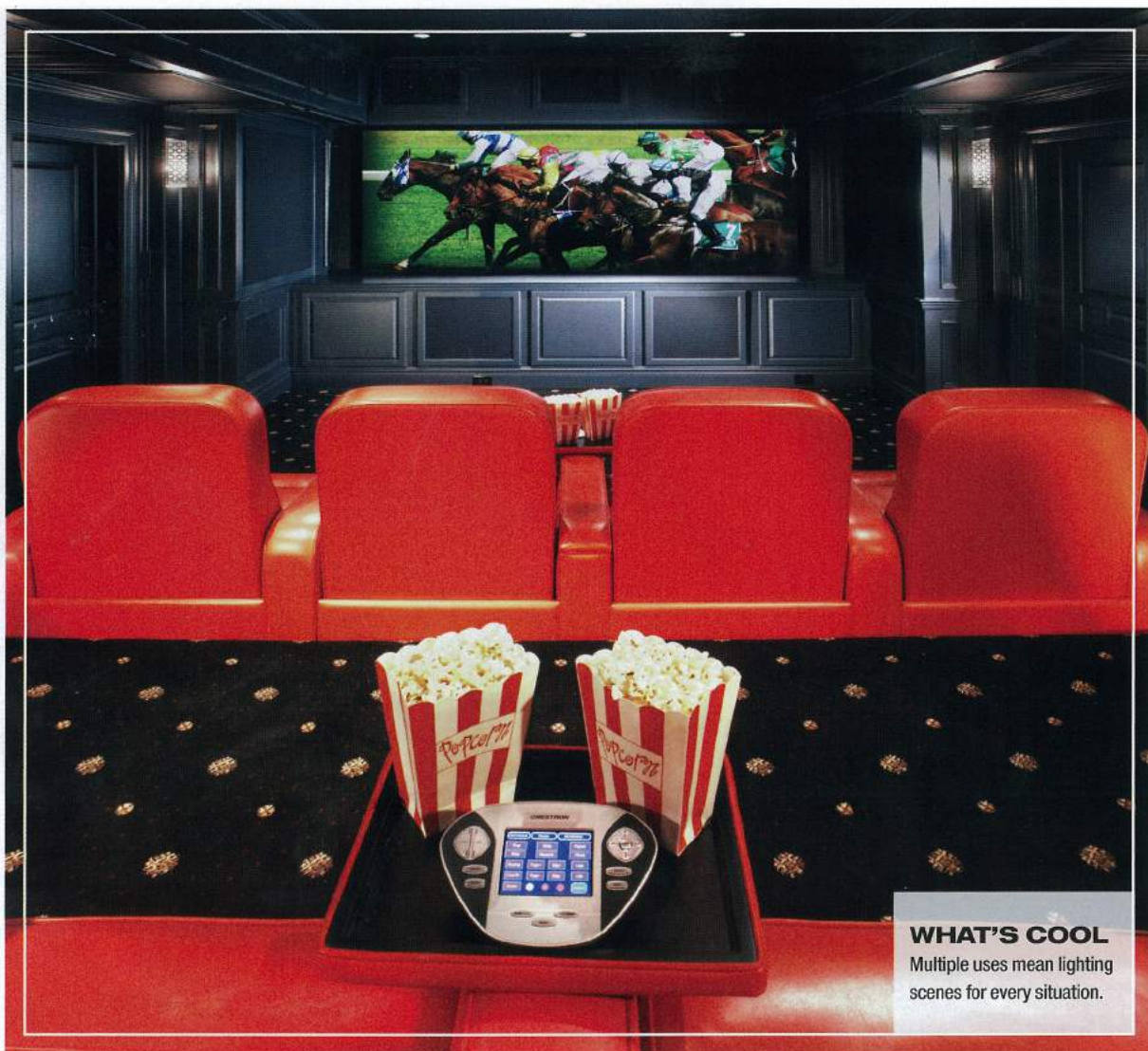
APPLE LOVERS'
HOME GRABS
THE GOLD *p.8*

iPADS AND iPHONES
RULE THE ROOST

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WHAT'S COOL
Multiple uses mean lighting scenes for every situation.

Double Feature

DOUBLE FEATURE

This dual-personality theater quenches the passions of movie and sports lovers. *by Rebecca Day, photography by William J. Psolka*

THE LUCKY HOMEOWNER of this 11-seat theater wanted a space that was as comfortable for an action-packed thriller as it was for a Triple Crown race. Rows one and two deliver cinema-style comfort—with contemporary red styling—while the third row offers more informal seating for the sports crowd.

Providing two different experiences was important to the homeowner, so he asked the architect and builder to design separate entrances. One entry is through the bar area where guests stream back and forth while watching a game. For a night at the movies, guests are directed through the foyer past the formal lobby lined with movie posters, where they can grab a bag of popcorn from the popper.



That Vudu You Do

This home theater incorporates a Vudu XL movie server that's built around a 1-terabyte hard disk. That's enough to hold 500 standard-definition movies from Vudu's 17,000-title library. Movies are available either as purchases or as low-fee rentals on a case-by-case basis. Purchased movies are stored on the box permanently. Rentals are available for 30 days after purchase. Once the owners press **PLAY** for a movie rental, they have 24 hours to view it.



Systems & Equipment

Speakers: B&W
Audio: Rotel
Video projector: Runco
Screen: Stewart Filmscreen
Lighting control: Lutron

Details

Room Size (L x W x H):
29 x 16 x 19 feet
Cost: \$69,000 (includes installation and labor)
Project Duration: 30 months
Construction: New

Highlights

- ◆ Screen masking system for CinemaScope movies.
- ◆ Separate entrances to the theater for formal and informal events.
- ◆ Computer-aided design ensured optimal audio quality.

Electronics Design Group (EDG), Piscataway, N.J., designed the rows and risers so everyone would have an optimum view of the screen, a challenge in this room where a large structural pillar is prominent.

On the audio side, computer-aided design software helped the planners deliver balanced sound to each seat. EDG met the owner's request for exceptional sound with an array of B&W loudspeakers built into the walls around the theater. Front left, center and right channel speakers are positioned above the screen behind fabric grills, while two powered subwoofers are built into the enclosure beneath the screen to provide the crash and boom movie lovers expect.

The owner wanted to enjoy movies in super-widescreen 2.35:1 or 2.4:1 CinemaScope formats, the way many big blockbusters are filmed. So EDG combined a Runco projector and an anamorphic lens, which is used to produce the superwide images. A Stewart Filmscreen masking system ensures the full CinemaScope experience—without seeing black bars when viewing standard movies or TV shows.

The Lutron lighting control system provides various preset scenes for different viewing material.

In **SPORTS** mode, the lights are brighter for socializing. A **MOVIES** setting dims the lights over 30 seconds so viewers can settle into their seats. When the movie is over, a tap on the remote slowly ramps the lights back up.

All distribution equipment, processors and amplifiers are stored in a rack that sits in an equipment room adjacent to the theater and cooled to preserve the life of the electronics. Source equipment is housed in the theater for easy access. Video components include a Blu-ray player and a Vudu high-definition streaming movie player for video on demand. Music is provided by an audio server and XM radio. A gaming jack is threaded into the system so the video game du jour can be accommodated at any time. Always looking ahead, EDG ensured there's room in the equipment stack when the owners are ready to upgrade. This should be a simple task for EDG installers, thanks to the company's labeled wiring diagram. **EH**

SYSTEMS DESIGN & INSTALLATION: Electronics Design Group, Piscataway, N.J., www.edgonline.com **ARCHITECT:** Hiland Hall Turner Architects, Bernardsville, N.J., www.hhta.com **BUILDER:** Palomar Associates, Warren, N.J., 908-730-9772 **INTERIOR DESIGN:** Chandani Design, New York, NY, www.chandandesign.com



The challenges of creating a theater in this space presented some dynamic design opportunities. *photography by William J. Psolka*

YOU DON'T NEED to build a new house to gain a home theater. The owners of this New Jersey home tapped into unused space in the basement, and now they're enjoying a big-screen, big-sound cinema experience without leaving the comforts of home.

If only building this theater was easy. At only 11 feet wide by 17 feet deep and just 7 feet high, the space presented several challenges. Custom electronics firm Electronics Design Group (EDG) of Piscataway, N.J., was hired to survey the space and provide a floorplan for a theater that could comfortably seat five. EDG expanded its plan to

include structural considerations to provide the best theater experience possible. EDG made suggestions for blocking out windows, rerouting the heating and air conditioning ductwork and running wire for lighting and electrical needs. Then it handed off the construction work to a contractor and architect and hunkered down with plans for the audio/video gear.

EDG brought in specialists from RPG Diffusor Systems to create a sound control system using diffuser panels and absorptive materials on the walls and ceilings. RPG measured the room and created panels that would scatter sound in



MEDIA YOUR WAY

Today's home theaters have to be flexible. Content can come from cable, satellite, phone lines and the Internet, not to mention traditional packaged media. In this home theater, custom electronics installation firm EDG of Piscataway, N.J., satisfied all of the household's video needs—from gaming to movies to TV programming—through one simple interface on the family's Crestron home control system. A shortage of content will never be an issue, thanks to the family's access to Internet-based YouTube clips, movies from Netflix and a collection of DVDs and 1080p Blu-ray discs. The system even plays discs from short-lived Blu-ray rival HD-DVD.

an organized way and eliminate any distortion and unwanted reflections.

The room's surfaces were one challenge; the low ceiling was another. EDG would typically mount a projector to the ceiling and shoot the image onto the screen at the front of the room. Here, the 7-foot height of the room wouldn't allow for headroom beneath a projector.

The original solution was to place the projector on the floor, which created a new set of seating problems. Then some technical serendipity occurred when the owner decided to upgrade to a 1080p projector. A Runco VX-22d 3-chip DLP projector with a longer throw distance (the distance a projector can be from a screen) enabled the EDG installers to position the projector behind the back wall in a mechanical room. This was a win-win, as the projector was out of the way and invisible—except for a small hole cut into the wall for the lens—though it could still project a bright, sharp image. As a bonus, heat and noise from the machine were confined to the adjacent room.

The room height also affected the seating. Since there wasn't enough height to install tiered, stadium-style flooring, the homeowners chose the next best

thing: comfy pod-shaped gamer seats. The brown chairs blend with the earth tones of the room, and the muted shade prevents visual reflections that might interfere with images on screen.

With the 1080p projector strutting its stuff on the 110-inch Stewart Filmscreen, the family is ready for anything high-definition that comes its way, including the latest Blu-ray discs and HD cable programming. We didn't forget the powerful audio portion of this theater. Seven studio-grade Genelec AIW25 in-wall speakers are driven by seven Genelec amps and accompanied by a Genelec subwoofer for a rockin' 7.1 surround-sound experience.

Thanks to a finely tuned room, a high-octane sound system and a top-notch projector, whatever is on screen keeps viewers strapped to their seats. —*R.D. EH*

SYSTEMS DESIGN & INSTALLATION: Electronics Design Group, Piscataway, N.J., www.edgonline.com **ACOUSTICAL TREATMENTS:** RFG Diffuser Systems, Upper Marlboro, Md., www.rfginc.com **BUILDER:** MDK Contracting, Livingston, N.J., 973-615-1758 **ARCHITECT:** Stern-Ring Associates, Florham Park, N.J., <http://sternring.com> **INTERIOR DESIGN:** Karen Bowen Interiors, Short Hills, N.J., 973-467-1124

Systems & Equipment

Video projector: Runco
Screen: Stewart Filmscreen
Lighting control: Crestron
Speakers: Genelec
Cooling system: Active Thermal Management
Control: Crestron

Details

Room Size (L x W x H):
 20 x 12 x 7 feet
Cost: \$133,000 (includes installation and labor)
Project Duration: 27 months
Construction: Retrofit

Highlights

- ◆ The Runco projector's long-throw lens allows it to be located in an adjacent room.
- ◆ Pod seating replaces the need for traditional theater chairs.
- ◆ Sound diffusers and absorbers control sound in a room with difficult acoustics.

Minimum Intrusion MAXIMUM TV

A Manhattan living room remains a living room—in cinematic style. *photography by William Psolka*

BIG TVs CAN BE A PAIN. Even flat-panel displays can take up a lot of space and protrude from the wall a few inches, interfering with the clean, uncluttered look of a modern minimalist decor.

That's something that the owner of this New York City apartment couldn't live with. He wanted a living room that looked like a living room—yet he also wanted a big, cinematic video experience.

Under the guidance of Piscataway, N.J.-based Electronics Design Group (EDG), the homeowner selected a whopping 85-inch plasma display by Panasonic. This TV is bright, allowing for viewing in all lighting conditions, which was necessary in a living room where the family doesn't want to dim the lights to enjoy the picture.

So what does it take to mount a plasma the size of four 42-inch TVs and not make it look like a beast? "There was a ton of reinforcement work that needed to be done," says Ross Anderson, senior project manager for EDG. Plasma TVs are

heavy, and an 85-inch plasma is one of the heaviest, so reinforcing the wall to bear the 250-pound TV was a challenge. In addition, the homeowner wanted the TV to be mounted flush with the wall. The builder, Rich Churchill, designed a 14-inch-deep recess in the wall to accommodate both the TV and mounting hardware. Electrical lines had to be rerouted, and there needed to be enough space to allow for the connections. "He also created a shroud that keeps you from seeing back to where the mounting portion is," says Anderson.

Due to the open design of the room—it connects to a dining area and a ceiling that rises from 9 feet in the TV area to 14 feet behind the sofa—speaker placement and audio decisions required some creative solutions. The main left, center and right B&W CT7 speakers were built into a custom cabinet, which also houses most of the components under the television. The rear speakers, B&W VM1 monitors, were mounted directly over the viewers' seating position, on the wall that rises from the lower to higher ceilings. These are





Mini Me Kitchen TV

When the homeowner saw the results of the flush-mounted monster plasma, he asked EDG if it could do the same thing for his kitchen TV, a considerably smaller 22-inch Samsung LCD. The TV in the kitchen is primarily used for watching cable TV, and the owner wanted it to be visible but out of the way of the active family. The kitchen TV is fed by a cable box housed in the custom cabinet in the living room, where the rest of the family's electronics are located.

monitor speakers that can be mounted vertically or horizontally. In this case, EDG mounted them horizontally to blend with the ceiling lines. From the living room area, they're not even noticeable. An active B&W 500-watt subwoofer is also hidden out of sight on the floor behind a couch.

All of the living room speakers are driven by a Rotel 100-watt-per-channel home theater receiver.

The dining area, adjacent to the living room so diners can view the big TV from the dinner table, has two of its own B&W M1 speakers and is wired as a second audio zone.

Of course, being the family's living room, this space isn't just for home theater. A Control4 multiroom audio system supplies music to the room as well as the rest of the house. The system accommodates four iPod docks so the whole family can tap into the music of their choice.

While it was perfecting the living room, EDG also upgraded the audio and video systems in the rest of the house. This included new wireless and wired networks. EDG used a wired network for the control system to ensure reliability.

The home's bedrooms were outfitted with B&W in-ceiling speakers, iPod docks and Control4 touchscreens. While not yet completed, the bathroom is scheduled to get the treatment in the form of a 4-inch Control4 touchscreen and a Control4 two-way in-ceiling speaker.

The family controls the audio and video system for the living room with a Control4 SR250 remote. Separate 3.5-inch touchpanels throughout the apartment let the owner control the music in other rooms. —G.C. **EH**

SYSTEMS DESIGN & INSTALLATION: Electronics Design Group, Piscataway, N.J., www.edgonline.com **GENERAL CONTRACTOR:** 3A Painting, 718-468-9924 **WOODWORKER:** Rich Churchill Woodcraft, 917-519-9980

Systems & Equipment

Home controls: Control4

Multiroom distribution/entertainment systems: Control4

Video displays: Panasonic

Speakers: B&W Loudspeakers

AV amps, pre-pros & receivers: Rotel

Blu-ray & DVD players: Samsung

Details

Room Size (L x W x H):

40 x 20 x 9–14 feet

Cost: approximately \$30,000 (includes installation and labor)

Project Duration: 4 months

Construction: Retrofit