



# HOME SWEET HOME THEATER

## ELECTRONICS DESIGN GROUP, PISCATAWAY, NEW JERSEY

In the world of home theaters, you can either go big or go home...to a small theater. When it came to the Silver Screen Sophistication home theater project, Electronics Design Group, Inc. (EDG) went gigantic, filling an enormous room with plush seating, the newest audio and video components, and a surprisingly streamlined and intuitive Crestron control system.

"When you look at the dimensions of this room, you would think it has to be filled with multiple control servers," says Joseph P. McNeill, Senior Systems Consultant, Electronics Design Group. "In fact, we were able to do so much with just a single MT-1000C MiniTouch Handheld Wireless Touchpanel and a CP2E that the client can control literally everything in this magnificent theater with a minimal number of button pushes."

The lightweight, ergonomic design of the MT-1000C was literally handpicked by the homeowner when compared, side-by-side, with other, similar Crestron controllers. Electronics Design Group met with the homeowner in advance of the project to compare and contrast different controller styles. Based on that meeting, the homeowner found that the MT-1000C was the ideal controller from both a functionality

standpoint, as well as a style standpoint.

"The homeowner uses the theater for a wide range of functions, from movie and television watching to game day get-togethers and other entertaining," explains McNeill. "It's more of a multi-purpose room than a theater. So the controller needed to be equally as versatile and provide an interface



that the homeowner could use to quickly and easily change presets and set the appropriate mood. Understanding that the room incorporated some very high-end components, Crestron was the obvious choice."

EDG was then able to program some very effective presets into the system that automated various elements of the theater. With the touch of a button, the homeowner can start a movie, open the curtains, and slowly dim the lights. As a part of the fully integrated screen, EDG was also able to incorporate control functions for the 150-inch Stewart Screenwall Electrismask system so that the homeowner can adjust the horizontal masking panels to allow for multi-aspect ratio capabilities. The Crestron control system also provides the ability to make HVAC adjustments.

The other key feature that the homeowner liked was the ability of the MT-1000 to provide dynamic feedback. Instead of a basic one-way remote, anyone in the family can use the MT-1000 to start a movie, see the lighting levels, drape and masking panel positions, and room temperature, among other features.

Located in Piscataway, NJ, EDG is a custom systems design and engineering contractor that specializes in the integration



and installation of state-of-the-art electronics technology for home and business. For this project however, it was the engineering side of the firm's expertise that really helped the project shine.

To cut down on heat production and noise from the theater's projector, EDG designed a unique solution to have the projector located outside of the room. Using CAD technology, EDG engineers laid out the precise design of the room with the projector located in a hidden spot from behind the bar area. To test the drawings, the team then visited and constructed temporary risers to simulate where the seats would be located. By masking out the screen and using string to simulate the throw from the lens to the screen top and bottom, EDG was able to pinpoint the best location for the projector, as well as prove to the homeowners that it could be done.

McNeill also notes, "We had to take a few extra steps to ensure clear sight lines as well. For instance, the middle row of seats is actually recessed 6 inches into the riser we installed so that extra guests can sit at the bar and watch TV. It really feels like you're in an actual theater when you enter this space. It's very luxurious."

EDG then situated the two theater

equipment racks and lighting loads, along with the projector, in a hidden equipment room behind the bar. Behind the bar is a smaller, easily accessible rack where the HD-DVD/Blu-ray player and

Microsoft Xbox are located.

The project also benefited from a Crestron Integrated Partner Program module for the Microsoft Xbox. With it, Electronics Design Group was able to seamlessly integrate the gaming system into the Crestron solution so that the homeowner can access games as well as DVDs and audio.

The Crestron solution was the perfect match for the homeowners. McNeill recounts, "Their requests were quite straightforward: ensure that the theater is simple and easy to use. When the project was finished, we simply had to do a 30-minute training session with the family and that was it. Needless to say, they were very happy about that. That's a level of intuitiveness that you just can't get with other control systems.

"My entire team did a fantastic job with this project, especially Ross Anderson, one of our Senior Project Managers at EDG," adds McNeill. "Ross was instrumental in laying out the room with me and the client, and in lending his experience in calculating the site lines, projector throw, and all other critical measurements that need to be dead on for the room to work." ■

