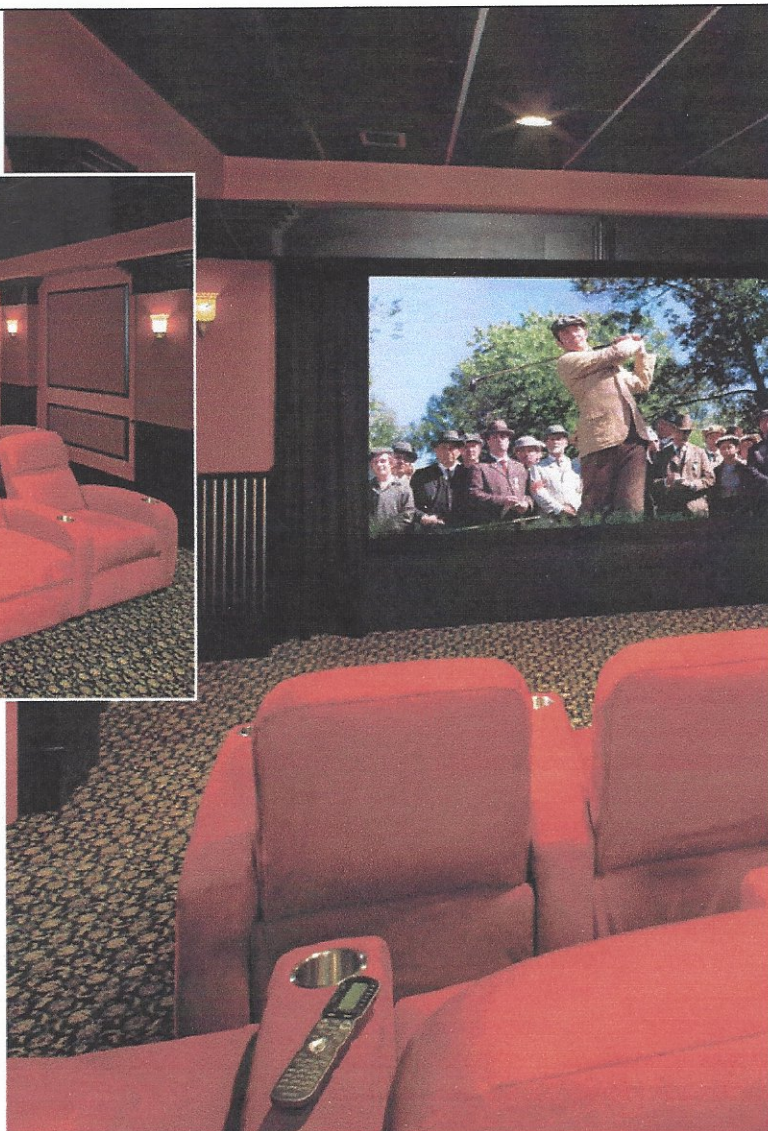


## EH IDEAS



# SPLURGE or SAVE

When you don't have the budget to buy the very best.

by Lisa Montgomery

The owners of this Pennsylvania house splurged on an \$84,000 home theater, complete with customized decor and fine finishings. If you don't have that kind of budget, though, we have some tips from the installer on how you can save.

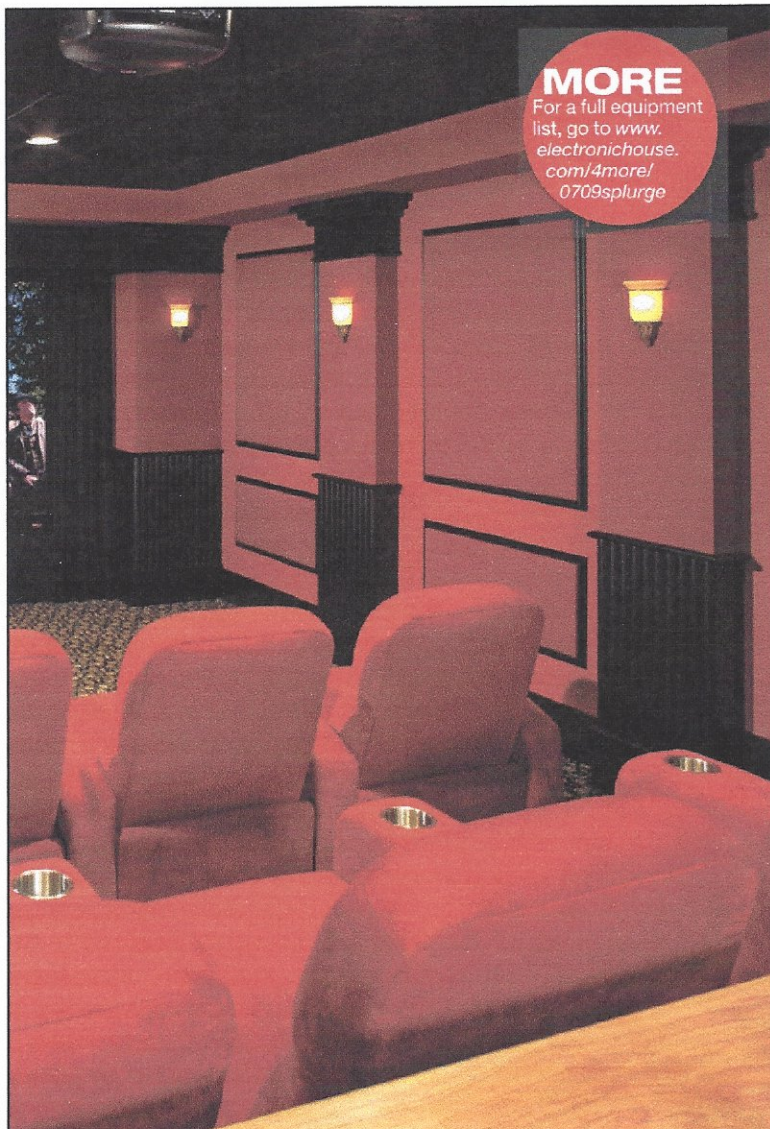
#### SYSTEM AND ROOM DESIGN

Media Rooms Inc.  
West Chester, Pa.  
[www.mediarooms.com](http://www.mediarooms.com)

#### SPLURGE

- Electronics design and installation firm Media Rooms constructed the room and installed the audio/video systems. The first phase was to "build out" the space, which included framing the walls, building the riser for the second row of chairs, installing the pocket entrance door, insulating the walls and ceiling, wiring for electricity and audio/video, installing the drywall, painting the room and installing the acoustical drop ceiling. The build-out portion of the project was \$12,000.
- Media Rooms designed the interior and built all of the elements in its in-house cabinet shop. The company fabricated and installed the decorative columns, acoustical wall panels and molding, proscenium, decorative curtains near the screen, and installed the nine reclining chairs, wall sconces and carpet. This phase of the project cost \$45,500.
- The installation and calibration of the audio/video components included a concealed Triad 7.1 surround-sound speaker system, a Sim2 D80E 1080p video projector, a Denon AVR-4308 audio/video receiver, Blu-ray disc player, surge protection and a universal remote control. The audio/video equipment and installation came to \$27,000.





### SAVE

- The Sim2 projector in this theater is a high-quality 1080p DLP projector, costing \$9,500. Great home theater projectors are in the \$9,000 to \$20,000-plus range, though you shouldn't have to spend that much unless you are a serious videophile. There are many very good video projectors in the \$5,000 price range.
- The nine Pullman Redondo recliners cost \$14,000. Entry level chairs could save \$3,000 to \$5,000, though there be a sacrifice in comfort and in matching the color to the decor.
- Eliminating the acoustical panels would save about \$3,000, though the result could be an unpleasant sound from harsher audio reflections. Adding heavy drapes, thick carpets and padded furniture are lower-cost ways to the soften sound in a room.
- Eliminating the decorative columns would result in an \$8,000 to \$12,000 savings. In-wall or on-wall speakers could be used instead of mounting the speakers inside the columns.
- To reduce the overall cost of the system, consider using a less powerful, less feature-laden surround receiver or downgrading the speaker system from a high-quality audiophile manufacturer.

JOHN JENKINS. THE GREATEST GAME EVER PLAYED © DISNEY. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

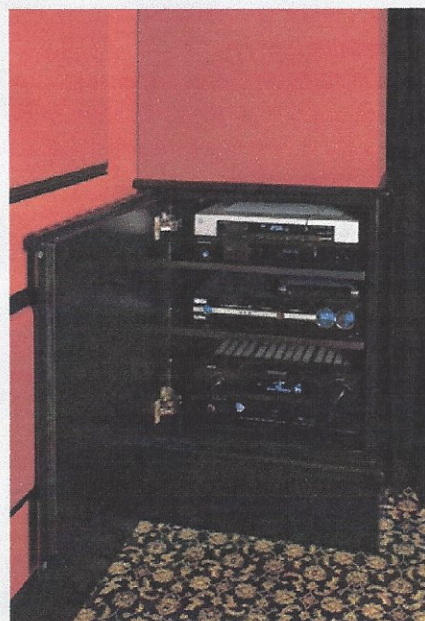
## Where's the Gear?

IF THE BUDGET ALLOWS, HIDE IT IN THE DECOR.

Not everyone likes to see their audio and video equipment blinking in the corner, or big speakers set out on the floor. The owners of this renovated basement wanted absolutely nothing but the screen to be seen in their theater, posing an interesting challenge to the home theater designers at Media Rooms in West Chester, Pa.

"One wall was the foundation with very little space between it and the new drywall, while the other three walls abutted living areas, like an exercise room and a game room," explains Media Rooms president and owner Rob Dzedzy. This design afforded virtually no space for an equipment rack. Dzedzy could have tucked the equipment into a bar at the back of the room, but that idea was nixed because of wiring issues. There were also no available closets. The solution: Design a few decorative columns for the theater and place the components and speakers inside them.

Fortunately for the homeowners, Media Design operates its own custom cabinet shop, so the columns were designed and sized to fit the equipment perfectly. A total of eight columns were constructed. Two were placed on either side of the 119-inch diagonal Draper screen, and three went on each side wall. The two front columns function as storage for the A/V components, DVDs, and other media. Hinged doors open to reveal the contents inside, but they usually stay closed to preserve the room's aesthetic. The remaining six columns were designed to provide just enough space for built-in speakers. "We didn't want to take up any more floor space than was necessary," Dzedzy explains. Two of the 4-inch-deep columns conceal Triad surround-sound speakers that sound through red acoustical fabric. The front three Triad speakers and subwoofer were concealed inside a proscenium below the screen and also built by Media Rooms.



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