



## Upgrading an Old-School Movie Palace

**This home theater uses the best of today's technology to pay homage to the classic days of cinema.**



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The stairs down to this lower level don't just take guests into the most entertaining room in the house; it transports them to another time. When it came to choosing the right home theater, this owner wanted to pay homage to grand movie palaces—without everything being overly extravagant.

The theater is next to a Tuscan old-world-styled wine cellar. The owner wanted a balance so that one room would not overshadow the other. However, thanks to a few Art Deco design influences, the theater shines brightest in our geeky eyes. "Art Deco design style is a favorite of mine, so I have done a good deal of research of that period," says Rob Dzedzy, president and owner of Media Rooms Inc.

The staircase leading down to the theater also opens into a foyer area. Media Rooms Inc. convinced the owners that this would be the perfect spot for a ticket booth and theater-themed entrance doors. "The homeowner wanted something special at the entrance to the theater, but he did not want the theater to over shadow the other areas of the lower level," says Dzedzy. "I came up with the ticket booth and the entrance doors. He was thrilled with the results."

Thankfully, it didn't take much convincing. The only real challenge for the company was that they needed to work within the space available, since the drywall was already in place. This made ideal speaker placement not possible; side and rear surrounds were installed in the ceiling because doorways and structural framing prevented optimal placement. Left and right speakers were built into decorative columns, behind acoustically transparent fabric. The center channel and subwoofer were built into the proscenium directly behind and below the screen. Then, an acoustic liner was packed around the speakers to minimize reflection. Audio calibration was originally attempted for AES (Audio Engineering Society) standards, but slightly modified to accommodate the client's tastes via low-frequency reduction on the sub and increasing the side surrounds within a 3 to 5dB range, respectively.

In addition to the audio and video systems, they designed and fabricated all of the acoustical wall panels, custom columns, wood millwork, proscenium, the ticket booth, and entrance doors.

There is also a closet in the center of the sidewall (opposite the entrance), which has a removable rear panel, for access to the wine cellar. The audio processing and video source components were placed on a roll-out equipment rack to allow access to the panel. The company fabricated a decorative acoustical panel to camouflage the door. "The homeowner wanted a clean, uncluttered house," says Dzedzy. "By locating all of the audio and video components in a lower level mechanical room we achieved his desire."

Of course, some of the add-ons gave them a bit of trouble as well. The owners wanted a star field for the ceiling, which meant that Media Rooms needed to install an acoustical drop ceiling. This provided six inches of clearance to allow space for the fiber filaments. It was worth the effort, however; when the grandkids come to town, they run straight for the theater room—looking for the star field to add that extra touch of magic to their movie-watching experience.



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