

THEMED THEATER SILVER



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PASSPORT TO *Prime Viewing*

Theater brings classical Japan to suburban Philadelphia. *Photography by John Jenkins*

WE SEE A LOT OF FAR-OUT home theater themes at *Electronic House*. Theater rooms styled after favorite movie genres or grand classic cinemas are common, but what's just as interesting is when a specific design aesthetic is developed to work in tandem with the theater room. It's then that you get a magical meeting of form and function. That marriage is what happened in this home theater, and it's a mix of technology, tranquility and ingenuity.

The owner of this special room in southeast Pennsylvania has an affinity for classic Japanese culture. He does business there and has a second home in that country, so he wanted his new show-off space to show off his Japanese interests. Rob Dzedzy of Media Rooms Inc. in West Chester, Pa., helped the homeowner get the room of his dreams, and a little more.

This retrofit job started out as a partially unfinished basement. A portion of the space had drywall and basic laminate flooring, but it wasn't good for anything more than stor-

SYSTEM DESIGN AND INSTALLATION

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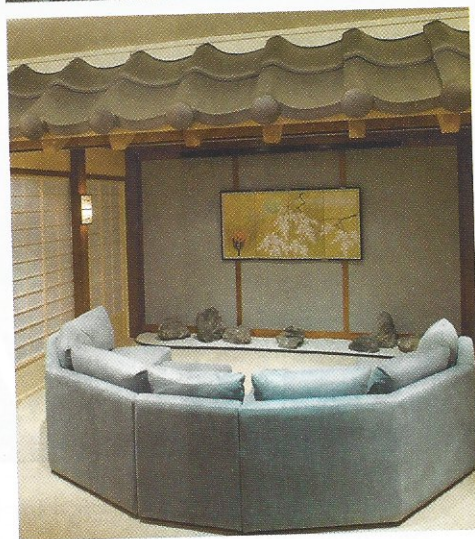
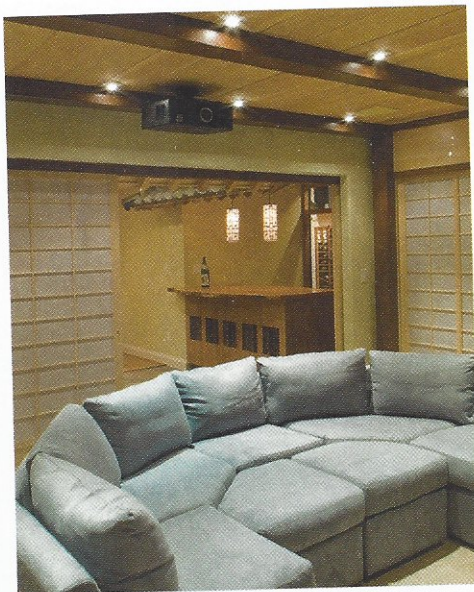
age. Besides the theater, the owner hoped for a group entertaining area and a wine room, but everything had to work in harmony, and share the same aesthetic qualities.

To accommodate the multiple uses of the basement, Dzedzy oriented the theater so that the back would open up to a bar/entertaining area, and also adjacent to what would be the wine room.

Many custom design touches went into creating the Japanese appearance. The walls were fashioned after traditional shoji paper and wood screens. Behind the shoji screen on one wall is a storage space that also holds the theater's electronics. Cherry wood beams accent the walls and the cypress wood ceilings of the theater, while a stone meditation garden sits underneath the projection screen. The projection screen itself retracts into one of the wood beams and reveals a piece of Japanese artwork. All of the room's Triad Bronze/4 speakers are hidden behind fabric panels. The room is lit by recessed can lights, mostly hidden by the ceiling beams, and Asian-themed wall sconces. For a room built to house a high-tech theater, it has the surface appearance of simplicity. You may think you've walked into a Buddhist hall in Kyoto until you pick up the remote and press play.

From there, the technology takes over. The 106-inch Draper motorized screen is served by an M-Vision Cine 260-HC DLP projector from Digital Projection. The owner presses the MOVIE button on his URC MX-980 remote, which automatically lowers the screen and fires up the necessary equipment. The Triad speakers are powered by an Integra DTA-70.1 amplifier and an Integra preamp/processor. The two Triad in-wall subwoofers get their power from Triad rack-mounted amps. For movies, the owner uses an Integra Blu-ray player, and for music a ReQuest MP Plus media player, which can pull content from an NAS server in addition to streaming from Netflix, YouTube and Hulu. Lutron's Grafik Eye provides the lighting control functionality.

Just outside the theater, accessible by movable shoji screens, is the bar area with a custom cherry top accented with LED lighting. A border on the ceiling of traditional Japanese clay roof tiles creates the impression of being in another environment. The roof tiles weigh 15 pounds each, so Dzedzy had to provide extra structural reinforcement to keep them safely in place. A bamboo garden plus bamboo accents on the bar complete the scene. If a user wants to close off the theater from the bar area, sliding shoji doors do the trick. The theater doors look like ordinary paper shoji doors, but between the paper is a quarter-inch thick layer of plywood to help create a bit more privacy for this relaxing home theater escape. —G.C. EH



Electronics and Design in Harmony

Rob Dzedzy of custom electronics pro Media Rooms Inc. notes his particular interest in this theater, because, as an audio/video enthusiast, he often thinks of the gear before the design. In this room, design definitely took control, but Dzedzy made sure it didn't create compromises in the system's performance. Every piece of electronics was selected because it not only worked well, but it made the whole room work well. For instance, Dzedzy likes the DP projector because of its great picture and also because it's quiet, and since it would not be concealed he needed a projector that didn't sound like an air conditioner. The Triad speakers were a good choice because they're totally sealed and narrow, which made them fit well into a wall with limited depth. Media Rooms Inc. does its own design work, construction and cabinetry, so Dzedzy knows intimately every part of the process. The intent was to make this not simply a home theater or media room, but a comfortable place to gather and spend down time. The homeowner has told him that this is his favorite part of the house.

SYSTEMS & EQUIPMENT

Control: URC
Screen: Draper
Projector: Digital Projection
Sources: Integra, ReQuest
Speakers: Triad
Audio: Integra
Lighting: Lutron
Wire: Straight Wire

HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Well-integrated Japanese design theme.
- ◆ Custom construction touches enhance experience.
- ◆ Motorized screen among remote-controlled A/V syncing.

