

*Dreams Are Personal,*



*But Not  
Necessarily Private*



“It was a natural,” said Rob Dzedzy (pronounced “Dezi”). “If Mr. Blandings were to build his dream house today, it would have to include a home theater.” Dzedzy is the president of Media Rooms Inc. in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, in the heart of Andrew Wyeth country and the site of the Brandywine River Museum.

The historic area of southeast Pennsylvania and northeast Delaware has a genuine colonial feeling with homes, battlefields, and other visible reminders of America’s birth close at hand. The area also supports an active arts community in addition to the famous museum.

Opera Delaware, located in Wilmington, is one of the more prominent undertakings, and, since opera is an expensive project, every few years the Opera Delaware Guild creates a “Dream House” and raises money through tours.

In keeping with the style of the area, most of the Dream Houses have been newly-renovated colonials. This year’s house was an exception — a recently built French chateau-type home with 13 rooms comprising 4,000 square feet of interior space and a three-car garage.

The builder, Bernard Volpe, president of Volpe Construction, had also built Dzedzy’s home and the two knew each other’s work well. Volpe called Dzedzy and suggested that a home theater in the basement would be an exciting addition to the tour.

“‘A Dream House’ is a great opportunity,” Dzedzy says. “While much of the local style is colonial, my art training and taste runs to Frank Lloyd Wright, Post-Modern, and Art Deco architecture. With this ‘Dream House,’ I got a chance to demonstrate

another approach.”

Dzedzy went over to the house to check the room and develop some preliminary ideas for the home theater. “The basement room was 15 by 20 feet with eight-foot ceilings. Two walls were the cinder block of the foundation and two were standard interior construction sheetrock,” Dzedzy says. “Since we were looking at a single-use room, we could create fantasyland.”

Since the room was going to be a movie theater, Dzedzy took his cue from the great movie palaces of the past — the large-scale Art Deco



Altec Lansing’s THX speaker is placed atop Dzedzy’s custom-built subwoofer.





Controlled by the Lutron Grafik Eye System, the lights fade slowly for a dramatic impact.

auditoriums built in the '20s and '30s. He oriented the room the long way, with the screen at one end and an equipment cabinet recessed into the back wall and masked with curtains. The screen Dzedzy chose is the Draper M2500, a flat screen with a gain of 2.5. "The relatively narrow width of the room meant that I did not have to be overly concerned with off-axis drop off and could concentrate on providing a bright on-axis image. While there are screens, from Draper and others, which provide brighter images, I felt this gave me the proper illumination for the room," Dzedzy says of his choice.

For the sound system, Dzedzy took his cue

from the great movie houses of today, and decided to create a Lucasfilm THX Home Theater.

The equipment cabinet at the rear of the room was also specially constructed by Dzedzy, who has been a professional cabinetmaker for 20 years. Housing a Fosgate Model Three THX Surround controller, Panasonic LX-900 laser disc player, three B&K amps, and one from Hafler, the cabinet has been recessed through the rear wall into the next room to provide a straight and seamless feel to the theater. The video projector is a Runco CinemaPro 750, which Dzedzy ceiling-mounted.

To give the room an authentic Art Deco movie





Plush, burgandy seating adds extra comfort and authenticity to the home theater room.



palace feel, Dzedzy used cherry wood and lush burgandy, teal, and gold fabric to decorate nine floor-to-ceiling columns and the bays created by them which form the visual boundaries of the theater. The columns provide support for the brass-trimmed Art Deco sconces, as well as "hiding" for several of the Altec-Lansing THX Surround speakers.

The front three speakers, left/right/center, are also Altec-Lansing THX models. Left and right flank the screen and are hidden by curtains. The center speaker is located beneath the screen and is masked off with speaker grille-cloth. To complete Dzedzy's speaker array, he custom-built a pair of subwoofers using 18-inch

drivers. Those, too, are positioned flanking the screen and hidden by curtains.

Three separate light systems are controlled by a Lutron Grafik Eye system to provide dramatic impact by slo-o-wly fading the lights. The sconces deliver a standard light level illumination for the room. Soffits around the perimeter hide mini "down" lights, giving warm borders to the theater. The third set of lights are in the rear wall of the theater and about six to eight inches off the floor. They provide rear illumination so that even with a movie running, a viewer can walk around the room safely.

Dzedzy's final Art Deco element is the seating. Two rows of four plush burgandy theater seats face the screen expectantly. Holding to theatrical authenticity, the second row is appropriately stepped higher than the first, so unless the person in front is wearing a large headdress, every-



Sconces deliver a standard light illumination throughout the room.

one can see.

According to Dzedzy, the project was a joy to work on for all concerned. So much so that Volpe is now designing homes with home theaters in mind. "It's not often we get the chance to enact our dreams — and that's a lot of what movies are about," he says of the four to six weeks the project took to create. And costs? About \$50,000. "Not cheap," Dzedzy says, "but isn't that what dreams are about?"

"Shu-ush, the lights are going down."

"I like the music."

"Shu-ush. Pass the popcorn." □

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8335 Allison Pointe Trail, Indianapolis, IN 46250