

# CCM<sup>®</sup>

CENTRAL COAST MAGAZINE

## LIVE WELL

ON THE CENTRAL COAST

*April Showers*  
BRING ECO-GARDENS

*Local Tea*  
GLOBAL ROOTS

*HOT  
SPRINGS,  
HEALING  
WATERS*





PHOTO BY THOMAS PLOCH, COURTESY SHANNON SCOTT DESIGN

Home theater entertainment systems have become the modern comparative benchmark for keeping up with the Joneses. Besides providing you with high quality television and movie viewing, a home theater recreates the enjoyment of a cinematic experience in the comfort of your living room. If you are interested in bringing the excitement and energy of the big screen to your home, here are some things to consider: »

## Choosing a Room

Determining the appropriate space for your home theater depends, largely, on how “dedicated” you are to accurately recreating the movie theater experience. Brad Van Housen of Creative Residential Controls in Atascadero identifies three types of home theater room categories: the dedicated home theater; the multi-use room conversion; and the default room.

The dedicated home theater room is designed so that the room’s dimensions and shape are properly proportioned for optimal sound quality. In addition, the environment is controlled in such a way that ensures the room is free of distractions such as telephones, lighting, appliances, pets, and other disturbances.

The multi-use room conversion, Van Housen notes, is typically the family room that functions as a living room by day, and can be converted to a theater at night. This type of room may incorporate, for example, a large projector that drops from the ceiling as well as in-wall/ceiling speakers. “This gives you the big screen element, but it lacks environmental control,” he warns.

The default room is the most common type of home entertainment space and is “usually the only reasonable choice based on the home’s floor plan, client’s lifestyle, and/or budget,” he says. “There are usually few or no options for speaker or video display placement and seating arrangements. This home theater is *what it is.*”

*“There are many creative solutions available through mouldings, fabrics, furnishings, color, lighting, and accessories to blend both technology and design for the highest quality of function and aesthetics.”*

To determine which room you are working with, consider factors such as the layout of your house, available resources such as time and money, and your level of commitment to attaining the true cinematic experience.

## Creating Atmosphere

Another important consideration in home theater design is how to recreate the atmosphere of a movie theater. “All of the

usual design elements of color, scale, and texture must be considered,” says Francine Van De Vanter, owner of Harmony Design Interiors. “However, acoustics and lighting are extremely important.” She asserts that all lighting should be dimmable, and general ambient lighting should be switched separately from decorative sconces and other accent lighting. Heavy-weight fabrics and

draperies (such as velvet curtains) can be incorporated into a room with windows to block outside light and give the room the feeling of a true theater. Shannon Scott of Shannon Scott Design also adds that upholstering walls in heavy crushed velvet creates texture and visual interest while adding additional soundproofing and warmth. Additional amenities such as a candy counter, water fountain, popcorn machine, and vintage



On previous page and at left:

Shannon Scott designed this home theater with an Art Deco theme. Colors were limited to red, gold, black, and mahogany, with a touch of cream. Motorized window shades and dimmable light fixtures are used to darken the room. A rising movie screen unveils the stage area. Carved wooden faces at ceiling arches (taken from an old monastery) mask hidden light fixtures which highlight the arches throughout.



The lobby is complete with a candy counter, water fountain, and popcorn machine. Vintage movie posters and movie star photos were used, as well as Hollywood stars embedded in the black granite floor. Powder room was upholstered in red velvet.

PHOTOS BY THOMAS PLOCH

movie posters can help to recreate the feeling of a classic movie theater, she notes.

### **Technicalities**

Technical components are critically important when building your home theater. Elements such as audio systems, climate control, lighting, and projector/film screen type must all be taken into consideration. Perhaps the two most critical elements are projector type and audio systems. "Audio system type, speaker placement, and ability to meet or exceed established performance standards are essential for accurately recreating the movie soundtrack," Van Housen states. He insists that most home theaters have a minimum of two subwoofers (with four being ideal) to help create smooth, tight bass. In addition, he notes, "A properly calibrated audio system will improve clarity, focus, and envelopment and should be performed on all home theater sound systems." A calibrated video display is equally as important in achieving a more natural film-like look, accurate color, and better dynamic range while reducing eye strain and increasing the life of your display, he says. Employ the help of a Central Coast THX, ISE, or HAA certified professional when installing these systems.

### **Design and Functionality**

One of the most challenging tasks in home theater design is incorporating the system's technical components with elements of interior design. "If one wants optimal sound and viewing qualities, the technical components take precedence," says Van De Vanter. "There are many creative solutions available through mouldings, fabrics, furnishings, color, lighting, and accessories to blend both technology and design for the highest quality of function and aesthetics."

Van Housen agrees, stating that the technical designer and interior designer must understand the tolerances and relationship between acoustical treatments and speaker, screen, projector, and seating placement. "The placement and implementation of these items," he says, "can be the difference between a marginal home theater and an exceptional one."

•••



An ordinary room transforms into a luxurious entertainment space. Francine Van De Vanter custom designed this home entertainment center with framed, hinged access door for flat panel television and audio/video component storage. Custom upholstered furniture and dimmable lighting fixtures create mood and atmosphere.



Francine Van De Vanter and Brad Van Housen worked together to create this Atascadero Home Theater Showroom that coordinates aesthetics with audio/video components. Functional and decorative lighting with controls and mood settings and motorized draperies provide an authentic movie experience.

**Brad Van Housen**  
Creative Residential Controls, Inc.  
2580 El Camino Real  
Atascadero  
(805) 461-3100  
www.creativeres.com

**Francine Van De Vanter**  
Harmony Design Interiors  
6717 Morro Rd., Ste. A  
Atascadero  
(805) 462-8931  
www.harmonydesigninteriors.com

**Shannon Scott**  
Shannon Scott Design  
2933 San Marcos Ave., Ste. 205,  
Los Olivos  
(805) 688-6286  
www.shannonscottedesign.com