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Description

A home theatre must be precisely designed and engineered to provide the greatest experience and mood

By **Maria Deschamps**

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There are many important things to consider when planning a home theatre that will be used to view movies, music concerts, sporting events or to watch the latest Netflix series.

What exactly is a home theatre?

A dedicated home theatre is an enclosed room that is precisely designed and engineered to be used for enjoying any type of media, often reproducing a movie theatre experience and mood, with the help of video and audio equipment in a private home. It's typically a large projected image or a large TV screen, and the audio is augmented with surround sound and low-frequency subwoofers. Seating is strategically positioned to allow unobstructed viewing and room lighting is carefully controlled.



It's important to choose experienced professionals to work with, as there are many technical details to consider. Stay away from the big-box retailers and instead choose a specialized audio/ video store where their personalized service and wide range of products will allow you the best choices.

Location! Location! Location!

Often a home theatre is situated in the basement. A basement is often the “leftover” space in a home where you can afford the space required for a home theatre. It is ideal for a dedicated room because often basements have limited natural light, and if you elect to use a projector the least amount of natural light the better. The only disadvantage a basement can have is a low ceiling height. If you want to create a classic type of theatre room where one row of seating is behind another, and higher in the back, then it's necessary to have adequate headroom for the rear row of seating.

There are many important elements to consider when planning a home theatre that will be used to watch movies, concerts, sporting events or viewing the latest series from Netflix.

TV or projector?

There are two sides to every story. TVs come in Super-size today, you can find 70-, 80-, or 85-inch TVs for at pretty reasonable prices. TVs are user-friendly, semi-easy to install and have a good quality picture. Projectors are typically more immersive, give you a true cinema experience, and allow you a bigger screen size. Viewing when using a projector requires a dark environment, whereas a TV can be used in daylight. You will also have to replace the projector's lamp, whereas a TV has almost no maintenance. So what's the best choice for you? Consider who will be using the room, the lighting control you have in the room, the size of screen that fits the proportion of your room then tie that to your budget





cases, the bigger the picture, the better the result. However, avoid oversized TV sets located too close to the first row of seats. To determine the optimal size of the screen, consider the viewing angle, the distance between the screen and the row of seats and the screen type. Typically, with a viewing angle of 30 degrees, a ratio of 1.6 is optimal for a 16:9 screen. As an example, for a screen of 100 inches diagonal width, seats should be located approximately 13 feet (160 inches) from the screen. The height of the screen is also important; in general, the center of the screen should be located 48 inches from the ground. Of course, these are mere examples, and many other technical specifications must be taken into consideration to determine the distance between the screen and the seats and the ideal size of the screen in a home theatre.

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Multi-function room

Many homeowners today create multi-function rooms for watching TV, entertaining guests, reading and relaxing with some good tunes or as a children's playroom. And these are but a few functions that can be combined in a media room or home theatre room. Hence the reason to have two viewing sources: both a TV and a projector. The best way to create this is to install a TV on the wall and install a motorized screen in front of it. I am personally very careful as to the location and design around the screen when in the viewing positions. Often the sides of the screens are usually not attractive so I design a custom cabinet or wall or panel to hide it. The same goes for the screen casing.

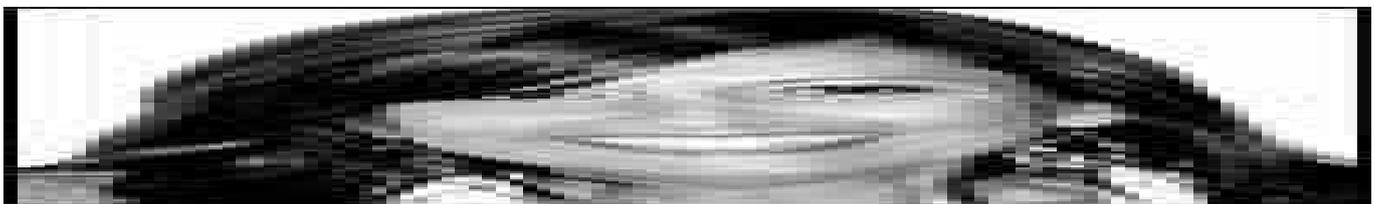
This is the first of three articles. The second will address the issue of obtaining the best sound quality, and the last article will present the choice of options to take into account when selecting the components of your audio and video equipment.

Images courtesy of Maria Deschamps

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