

HOME DECOR

DID YOU KNOW? Home theater systems can cost anywhere from \$500 to \$30,000 depending on the quality of the equipment. – powerfulhometheater.com

Tips for a do-it-yourself home theater

Look at the room, audience and system before starting a project.

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Want a home theater but can't afford not to do it yourself? A quick scan of the Web (gotta love Google) shows that there are endless places to get advice and resources. Below is the best of the tips gleaned from the web.

But first, all the build-it-yourself home theater advice sites will tell you to consider hiring a contractor or professional theater installer rather than doing it yourself. In the accompanying box are some resources for finding a reputable contractor or installer.

Meanwhile all the sites give the same basic list of things to consider when planning/building your home theater:

1. The size of the room. Here you need to decide if you are using this for family only or for larger social gatherings. The size of the room will help determine how many seats you can have as well as where to place the screen. It will also help to determine whether you want an in-wall audio system, wall mounted or stand alone, according to about.com.
2. Where your audience



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will sit in relation to the screen. This is easy to want to make sure you "audience" has an unobstructed view of the screen. They are sitting in an ergonomic position (i.e. craning their necks to see the movie) and enough leg and arm room to be comfortable.

If you have more than one row of theater seats, you need to make sure the

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consider how much outside noise gets into the room you are converting and construct the theater to minimize such noise and increase the theater experience.

display system to be used. PC Perspective (www.pcperspective.com) advises that this is a defining factor when choosing where in the home to put a theater (if you are using an existing room).

a basements. How much light gets into the room also determines whether you get a front-projector or a bright flat panel TV that will give a clear picture despite ambient light.

Home theater resources

More tips and resources: Custom Electronic Design & Installation Association (cedia.net)
allhometheaters.com
builderonline.com
hometheaterfocus.com

5. Whether a projection system or large screen television will work best. PC Perspective advises using a front-projector for movie buffs. If you want a theater/party room, a large-screen, bright flat panel television connected to audio and DVR hook up is probably better because it doesn't require absolute darkness, says PC Perspective.

6. PC Perspective also gives this warning: "One of the things that is frequently overlooked or forgotten during remodeling or new construction is supplying adequate electrical power to all the home theater components. A standard 15A branch circuit may not provide enough capacity to power all your new audio/video gear. Depending on the equipment requirements, you may need to have one or more dedicated 20A circuits run from the main circuit box to various locations in your home theater, especially if you are planning to have several large power amps and multiple subs."

Compiled by Julie Gallego

THEATER: Devoted high-end room a pleasure for the senses

FROM PAGE 1

Beyond the double-door entrance are red velvet walls around 21 seats with curtains that draw back at the front to reveal an enormous 180-inch screen.

Gary Sorley hasn't been out to the movies much and his wife, Debie, hasn't been at all since they completed the renovation of their home. What was once a one-story, 1,960-square-foot home on a 6,000-square-foot lot in Huntington Beach is now 4,200 square feet and sports a pretty hefty home theater at 675 square feet.

The market for high-end home theaters is growing and is expected to continue to grow, according to a 2008 report from Parks Associates. In 2009, there were projected to be 210,000 high-end home theater and multi-room audio system installations in the United States ramping up to 277,000 installations in 2012.

When it comes to home theaters, each person has his or her own set of goals to accomplish. Some may try to bootstrap it and piece-meal a home theater together, shopping around for the best components that fit their needs and putting it together themselves. Others at the high end of the spectrum may spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to build a theater that performs the absolute best acoustically and visually while still looking at place in the rest of the home.

"The ultra high-end people are doing rooms that are architecturally significant to the home," said Aaron Andrew, sales manager at Audio Video Design, a company that designs and installs home theaters in some of Orange County's multimillion-dollar homes. "Even the guys that do it cheap – they look for inspiration from the high-end home theaters."

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years and might not improve the value of a home.

"A home theater can't be in lieu of a great kitchen or a great master bath," Mackenzie said.

With the Sorleys, they don't plan to sell the home and building it was all about bringing the feeling of going to the movies back home. That's why they chose red seats that look like those in a real theater rather than comfy couches or giant leather recliners.

"This is a theater – we're going to sit like we're in a theater. If you want to lie down, go watch in the family room," said Debie Sorley.

It was a battle to decide just how big to make the theater. Gary Sorley insisted on the 180-inch screen rather than something smaller and Debie insisted on 21 seats instead of 15.

How does a family ever have need for 21 seats?

The Sorleys, married for 37 years, have two children and six grandchildren between the ages of 1 and 16 with another on the way.

There's also both Debie's and Gary's parents and other family members who live nearby. When you add in the friends kids will bring over, they start getting close to a full house.

"It keeps the family together," said Debie Sorley of their nearly weekly viewing parties.

The female grandchildren like to watch "Grease," "High School Musical 3" and "Mamma Mia!" – over and over again.

Their teenage grandson likes to play the video game "Call of Duty" on the massive screen when it's not a school night; otherwise, he's trying to top his uncle's score at pinball.

The family watches the Super Bowl, the Olympics, the Academy Awards and, around Christmastime, every Christmas movie there is.

"Some people put in a home theater because they think they want it," Gary Sorley said. "We put it in because we knew we'd use it."



PHOTOS: ROSE PALMISANO, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER
Gary and Debie Sorley wanted a comfortable home theater with premium seating that everyone would enjoy. Their granddaughter Laura Sequeira likes to watch "Grease," "High School Musical 3" and "Mamma Mia!"



The miniature Walk of Fame features stars devoted to John Wayne, Katherine Hepburn and Humphrey Bogart.



A journey to the second floor ushers visitors into the home theater, a concession stand and a Walk of Fame.



Gary Sorley works the system that controls the curtains, sound, lights and the movie on the screen.