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THE ELECTRONIC HOME ENTERTAINMENT AUTHORITY FEBRUARY 2000



NEW FEATURE

## The Do-it-Yourselfer Installing the Right Wire

HOT PRODUCTS

Lexicon's MC-1 Processor

REVIEWED

High-end Surround Sound from Westloke Audio



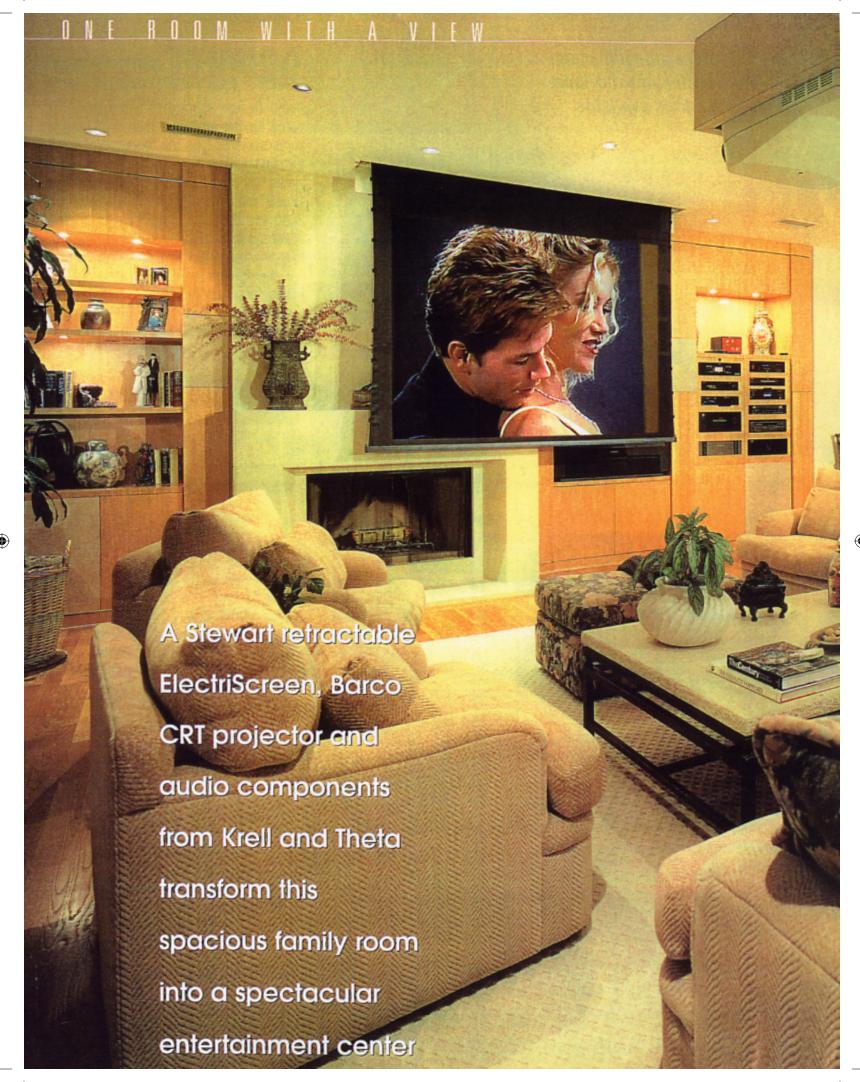




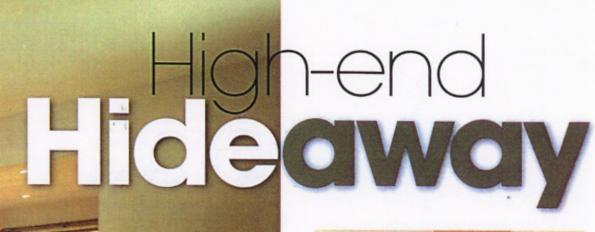














STORY BY KATY KOPPENHAVER PHOTOGRAPHY BY ADAM CROCKER

ituated in the hills of Calabasas, California, this bright, Mediterraneanstyle home provided custom audio/video designer Robert Bliss with the challenge of repairing a media room installation gone wrong. "It never performed properly and it never looked good," recalls Bliss, co-owner of family operated Bliss Enterprises in Agoura, California. "When you come to clean something up, it's actually twice the work."

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Luckily, he had the help of master cabinet maker and 21-year design veteran, Jay Meepos of Concepts by J. Along with Meepos, worked closely with the home's owners, commuexecutive, nications Michael Horland and wife, Ivee, to reconstruct their vision of the perfect entertainment space. Horland's interest in audio/video systems combined with his technical background made him a natural collaborator. Technology is his business," says Bliss. "He is

very much into the equipment and its performance. He's also very detail oriented."

The clients wanted to turn their 21 x 24-foot family room into an entertainment center complete with front projection, surround sound and 1-touch control. The result is a very user-friendly, accessible media room relying on automated relay and current-sensing devices that create a "domino" effect between the system's components. "When you turn on a piece of gear via the Pronto remote, current-sensors say, 'Hey, I'm on,' which turns on another piece of gear which says, 'Hey, I'm on,' which turns on another piece—it's a chain of events," explains Bliss.

The owners' decision to take more of a mechanical approach to the automation process resulted in this easy-to-operate, cost-effective relay method. The process, explains Bliss, "is very robust for one little remote." The Pronto remote sends an IR code to a Niles current sensor so that when the Faroudja video processor turns on, it then sends a signal for the screen to drop down, which signals the projector to turn on. "It's a very solid handshake," notes Bliss.

In addition to correcting the mistakes of a since dismissed installation company, Bliss addressed the room's lackluster acoustics and difficult lighting.



"Because it's not a dedicated room, you can't control the acoustics that well," says Bliss. "There are cavities that flow into other rooms so we used chenille fabrics to dampen the space as much as possible."

The room's brightness makes using the Stewart stealth ElectriScreen strictly a night-time activity, so during the day the Horland family watches the Mitsubishi 50-inch rear-projection television. For evening viewing, the Stewart screen drops from a trap door in the ceiling. Bliss lauds the Stewart screen as "the only screen to use" largely due to the fact that it's a "true white" screen. "You can put a color analyzer up to it, and it will show true white coming off the screen."

Three in-room Triad Gold L/C/R speakers flank the micro-perforated screen, which is acoustically transparent, according to Bliss. "When the dialogue comes from the center of the screen, it's so much more convincing and natural," he explains.

The customized cabinetry, created from figured Anigre wood, was designed to accommodate all of the equipment, including Bliss' custom cabling not an easy task considering the number of components and size of the room. The Anigre wood, according to cabinet maker, Jay Meepos, is a favorite Invisible by day, a

Stewart ElectriScreen is
stealthily stored inside a
trap door in the ceiling.
Housed in figured Anigre
cabinetry are a Mitsubishi
so-inch rear-projection
TV and high-end
components from Theta
and Krell.



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## High-end Hideaway

Installation by Robert Bliss, Bliss Enterprises, 5533 Spanish Oak, Ste. G, Agoura, CA 91377; (818) 706-2794; fax: (818) 706-3751; website: www.blissenterprises.com. Cabinetry by Jay Meepos, Concepts by J, 834 East 108th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90059, (323) 564-9988; fax: (323) 564-4332.

### Media Room

Barco 808 S CRT projector Sony Hi 8 EC 2000 Faroudja VP 400A VCR processor Stewart 1.3 60 x 80-inch 1.3 micro-perforated screen Theta Casablanca preamp/processor Krell KAV 500 amplifier Faroudja DV 1000 DVD player Theta Data III laserdisc player Triad Gold in-room L/C/R speakers Triad Gold in-wall speakers (2) Triad Platinum subwoofer Sunfire True subwoofer Pioneer PD AP 1 CD controller Pioneer Elite PDF 109 100-disc changer Sony SLVR 1000 VCR Sony SAT-A2 DSS receiver Sony CDX color video printer capture card Mitsubishi 50-inch rear-projection television Tice Symphony Series 3 power management Philips Pronto remote with Niles APC 2 current-sensing

choice because of its beauty. The figured grain of the wood shows the wavy twists and turns of the tree growth. "He did a wonderful job," reports Bliss. The cabinet style was continued through the outlying kitchen and bar area. The light hue of the wood only added to the brightness of the room—in keeping with the home's clean lines and Mediterranean flavor.

Bliss praises his favorite piece of equipment in the system as the Faroudja video processor for its "actual sheer performance." Combined with a Barco CRT projector, Faroudja DVD player, Sony SLVR VCR, Theta Data III laserdisc player, and a Krell KAV 500 amplifier, the system has all the elements of A-list performance.

Though he was limited acoustically by the room's overflow into other areas, Bliss says he tried to maintain the balance between style and function. "We used high-end electronics in terms of quality and performance, so the audio component level is very good," he concludes. "We could get



more performance by simply tweaking the room, adding more panels or by changing the structure, but it's a compromise between aesthetics and acoustics. It's a compromise the client is very happy with."

