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Watching a movie in the media room of this Hidden Hills home is a heavenly experience—and it's got the ceiling to prove it.

CLOUD NINE

BY ANDERSON JONES

LF—AND THAT'S A BIG IF—AMY AND KURT GIBSON GET THEIR HANDS on the fully automated Creston remote control that kick-starts their screening room at the touch of a finger to spend some time alone together, they can recline in seats custom-made for them by their home-theater specialists, Westlake-based Bliss Home Theater and Automation. "We've created a love seat that acts as a bed," says Bliss co-partner, Robert Bliss. "Because how many people want to be held hostage in a chair in their own home? This seat lets you lie down sideways in your underwear."

The Regal Lounger, a signature touch for Bliss' company, is six feet long and 13 feet wide, and cushions the famous tushies of Goldie Hawn, Steve Martin and Cindy Crawford, among other bold-face clients. In fact, Fortress, the furniture firm that manufactures the chairs for Bliss, has even christened the line of enormous comfy couches with Robert Bliss' name. But the Gibsons don't

get to enjoy such luxury very often in their Hidden Hills home, because the room has pretty much become the domain of their four children—a 16-year-old daughter, 14-year-old son and 10-year-old boy-and-girl twins. In it, the kids can screen high-def VCR tapes or DVDs packed into a Sony player that holds 300 discs, or TV beamed to a high-def satellite receiver or blow themselves away with an Xbox.

Only weeks ago, Nicolas, their 14-year-old, celebrated his birthday there, packing 13 teens on those couches built for two (the room seats 10 adults comfortably). Not surprisingly given its 100-inch-wide screen—an awesome landscape for Xbox play—the room has evolved into the neighborhood's after-school clubhouse. It's so popular, Amy had to lay down the law: "No one gets to use the room until all the homework is done." When the Gibsons do get a chance to snuggle up on a lounger, they don't play video games or even both-



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er to put in a DVD. "We just watch TV," says Gibson. "It's fantastic. And the kids love sleeping in there."

Bliss describes his company as a turnkey operation that can deliver a dedicated theater like the Gibsons' in about 16-20 weeks. "We can build a house," he says. Good to know should you want to add a house to your screening room. And Robert's partner and brother George runs the company's automation division, building so-called "smart houses," without thermostats, light switches or visible speakers. They recently wired a \$65 million vacation house in Telluride, Colorado, for the president of Broadcom, with 85 miles of cable, which includes the fiber running through the \$5 million screening room designed by Robert.

Kurt and Amy didn't have to spend that kind of money to create the media room of their dreams. And it looks like just another part of the Gibsons' ranch-style, all-American home. "I wanted it to have a Ralph Lauren feel," says Amy.

Bliss adds, "Everything in the house had a rustic look. She wanted a very Aspen feel."

But those deeply stained paneled walls and cabinets built by Bliss' team specifically to the room's hefty dimensions—23 feet deep by 19 feet wide—conceal acoustic insulation. You'd never know that the space once housed the family's formal dining room before a \$140,000 renovation that transformed it into a media palace. "When Robert came over, we were originally gong to have

the theater in our bedroom," says Amy, "and then we brought him downstairs."

The room has a regal air because of its show-stopping feature: an airy hand-painted domed ceiling. But don't think the Sistine Chapel. Amy commissioned William Rogers, the artist who conceived the relief paintings of clouds and seraphim for the Forum Shops' ceiling at Caesar's Palace in Vegas, to create an original concept for her theater. "I originally had seen the clouds in a magazine, and that's how we got to Robert and that was the one thing I wanted," she says. "Even more than the theater!" She got her wish: Rogers created a vision of a glorious setting sun among billowing amber clouds with a rich cobalt background.

"For most families, the screening room is the centerpiece of the house," says Bliss. "It's like a car that's never driven. But this family is in there four to five hours a day. They use the hell out of it. They love it."

That means the Faroudja projector Bliss installed must stay warm illuminating a Stewart microperforated screen that hides a wall of sound—just like those hanging in a commercial movie house. Those tiny holes in the screen allow the seven hidden 8-inch Genelec speakers to literally flood the room with sound. "The movie's dialogue sounds like it's coming right from their lips," says Bliss. A single subwoofer kicks up the bass. Bliss's team adjusts the sound to the room's measurements so that the audio output performs to THX-level criteria. "This room is maybe double that," he says.

Now, that's bliss! ☺