

HAMPTONS

REAL ESTATE SHOWCASE

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There are certain amenities that are obligatory in every high-end (\$5 million and up) Hamptons' home: En-suite bedroom-bathrooms, check. Wine cellar, of course. Home theater, naturally. Movie night for friends and family has become as requisite as dinner at Nick and Toni's. And with the latest technology – a \$35-thousand PRIMA Cinema Player – hosts have access to the latest film releases, even if they're currently in theaters (though there's an extra fee in that case). Heaven forbid that any South Fork homeowner's view

should be blocked by some big-haired person in the seat in front. For the most up to date home theater, don't even think about spending less than half a million dollars or more (a million plus) on the latest audio video equipment and extravagant home décor. "A digital projector can cost up to \$300 grand," according to Chris Brody of Crescendo Designs in Southampton, who cites companies such as Digital Projection and Runco. The Runco projector that Oliver Stone installed in his home "provides as close an experience as I've had to being in a top-flight motion picture theater," the celebrated director is reported to have said. It's all about optics and how they impact picture quality. The price of speakers is nothing to sneeze at either. A pair of Meridian speakers can cost \$125,000, according to Alex Karoussos, owner of Southampton's Home Technology Experts, and are so true to life you might think you're listening to a live orchestra, or that Kanye West has paid you a visit.

But projectors are no longer the last word in home theater technology. While projection screens can be as big as 20 feet, TVs are catching up fast and replacing their predecessors. Just this month Samsung debuted a massive 105-inch bendable UHD TV, which flexes from curved to flat at the touch of a button. Concave screens add to your viewing pleasure. If you want to know why, you'll have to master concepts such as "trapezoidal distortion" and "keystone effect." Suffice it to say they're used in IMAX theaters. As you'd expect, they cost a pretty penny: circa \$200,000.

One of the reasons TVs haven't been the go-to choice in home theaters in the past is that they have required total darkness. However, these days "some are even powerful enough to work in daylight conditions," said Mr. Brody. Such advancements have allowed home theaters to the move out of the basement and up to the main floor. Yes, the majority of home theaters still reside on the lower level where they are often outfitted like a public cinema, only more luxurious. Think: leather-swathed reclining seats and heated cup holders, Deco-style pilasters and wall sconces, motorized curtains, illuminated poster cases and concession stands sporting popcorn machines. However, more and more are simply blending into the upstairs decor.

These upstairs rooms are often given the moniker, "media room," but make no mistake, they are as sophisticated as can be. "Media rooms are more functional than theaters and more widely used to view sports events like the World Cup and Super Bowl when friends and family wish to gather on the main floor not the basement," said Judi Desiderio, founder of Town & Country Real Estate. On the other hand, she recommends going back downstairs "for private screenings of new releases."

By Zoe Langstrom

Zoe Langstrom is a former public relations exec turned Hamptonite who can be found hiding out in Sag Harbor, dining at the American Hotel, swimming at a secret bay beach, and attending everything at Guild Hall.