

# The Fun Room

The home theater isn't the only thing to play in this space.

Perhaps you'd like a place in your house where people can gather, have some fun, watch a movie or take in a sporting event while others socialize or play games. What you need, good friend, is a multipurpose home theater or recreation room. That's right: a home theater system in a rec room. It's that simple.

You can watch your favorite show while lovey chats with some friends or plays her mean game of poker. Or you can shoot pool with the guys while you all take in the big game. Junior and his friends can play games, watch *The Incredibles*, play some games of their own and go back to watching *The Incredibles* faster than Dash can run.

Rec rooms are becoming increasingly popular places for people to put their home theater systems, because—let's face it—most of us don't want to use a whole room just for watching TV and movies. Home theater is fun, and we want to put it with other fun things. You can have pool tables, poker tables and ping-pong tables. You can have bars and counters. You can have casual jump-on furniture and stools and banquettes. A multipurpose room offers a wonderland of family fun.

Most multipurpose theaters are located in basements, bonus rooms (if they're big enough) and rooms over garages. Converted garages and pool houses or cabanas are great places as well—wherever you can grab a lot of space for a viewing area. If you want any sort of bar or pool table, think in dimensions of 20 feet or more. You'll need a decent amount of space.

And remember, this is going to be a popular room. A lot can go on here. You can have a front-projection system, but it may be best to opt for a flat-panel or rear-projection TV. If kids—or adults, for that matter—are going to be running around in the space, stay away from floorstanding speakers

that could be knocked over or any kind of breakable equipment shelving. It's best to store the home theater gear in a nearby closet or equipment room. If you must have an entertainment cabinet, look at low credenza-style cabinets that can house equipment inside sturdy wooden frames. Many of these can also function as flat-panel TV stands.

## Advantages

**Press Play, and Play.** Want to shoot some pool while watching the big game? Or perhaps play ping-pong or just sit around the bar with some buds? Just press PLAY on the remote control, and resume playing your game. A multipurpose recreation room/home theater is your ticket to constant fun.

**Anything Goes.** You can watch the game. The kids can hang out. Friends can play poker at a card table. And you can share your favorite movies with friends and family in a casual, convivial atmosphere. Nearly anything goes in a rec room theater.

**Gamers On.** A rec room is a great place for video gamers to gather and take part in the action on a big-screen—with surround sound. You've never experienced *Grand Theft Auto* this way. Those itchy joystick fingers will be sore from all the action.

**Remember the Dip.** Like hosting family gatherings? You may be hosting them all in a room that doubles as a home theater. Just be sure there's plenty of seating. Varied seating is best, as it allows some people to sit in the home theater area, some at tables or counters in the back, and some along the sides.

**Drinks, Anyone?** Bars make great additions to multipurpose rooms, no matter how you and your guests quench your thirsts. They also offer an area to socialize. Many people add flat-panel TVs over the bar area for easy viewing. Bottoms up!

**Like to Dance?** If moving your body to the

music suits you, designate an area where you can shake it up or sway with your honey to something slow and sexy. You can always move some chairs or tables out of the way, too.

## Disadvantages

**Bright Light Fright.** This room is going to be used a lot—and not just for watching movies. That means the lights are going to be on much of the time, and the picture on a front-projection system can get washed out. Most of the newer types of projectors are bright enough to be viewed in lit conditions, but the picture will still be compromised. It may be best to opt for a plasma or LCD screen or a rear-projection TV that can easily be viewed

in the light. If you must see your movies in the dark, either schedule time when everyone's in bed, or consider building a dedicated theater space.

**What Was That?** Sound from your audio system can be compromised by other things going on around you. You may not catch every bit of movie dialogue, and if you set aside one side of the room for a home theater, the sound won't spread evenly in the space and could cause acoustical problems. But by far the worst problem that can occur is the system drowning out calls from your better half. (Some may lobby us to call this an added benefit, but for the sake of domestic tranquility, our official position will be to list it as a disadvantage.) **HEI**

You don't need a cavernous space for a multipurpose home theater. This one efficiently packs in a casual viewing area, home theater loungers, a pool table, foosball and more. Video comes from both a 50-inch plasma screen and a projection screen that drops from the ceiling. Design and installation by Signals Audio/Video of Playa Del Rey, CA.

