

# Designing a Media Room

It's about more than just seating and screens

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Plush seating and mood lighting creates an elevated cinematic experience for a private screening room at 125 Greenwich Street in New York City by March & White.

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## Designer's Corner



*Each week Mansion Global tackles an interior design topic with an elite group of designers from around the world who work on luxury properties. This week we look **athow to create a well-designed media room.***

Whether you're a bonafide movie buff, an entertaining guru, or simply love to put your feet up (who doesn't!), a media room is the ultimate space to kick back and relax.

“An in-house cinema is a space to savor with family and friends,” said Andrew Wilford, Senior Technical Designer at Taylor Howes Designs London. “The experience should be an exciting one, and a space the family will regularly want to use,” Mr. Wilford said.

Beyond comfortable seating, which is a must, there are also some technical aspects to consider about the design. Follow this advice from the pros to make your movie room a classic.

## **Know the Technicalities**

“While comfortable seating—like large, deep sofas and armchairs, beanbags for children, or, for the film enthusiast, traditional fold-down cinema seats purchased at auction—is key, for some clients, an armchair isn’t enough. We are increasingly installing 4D immersive technology into seating solutions that can include vibration, seat tilt, air and/or water spray—all integrated into the seating and linked via the A/V system to provide a truly immersive film experience.

"No matter the scope of the system, all our clients are wanting full integration, speakers and projectors to be non-visible and non-intrusive. Our advice is to involve an A/V specialist from the outset. As designers, knowing the size and specifications of any A/V equipment ultimately makes it an easier task when having to accommodate them within proposed designs.



This media room, designed by Andrew Wilford, merges form and function thanks to bespoke elements like custom cabinetry for curio and comfortable seating.

*Taylor Howes*

"Many large houses these days allow for the inclusion of an A/V room where all equipment can be stored and networked from. However, when this is not an option, storage can often be accommodated within the paneling or screen housing.

"Acoustic recommendations should always be consulted through a specialist. The big consideration to be aware of when incorporating acoustic paneling within a design is space. Depending on the specification or requirements, acoustic paneling can be quite thick, and once it is incorporated into a wall or panel design and fixed in place, the overall floor space of the room will be reduced, potentially affecting the number of seats that can be accommodated.

"A cinema space will generally have two lighting levels, one for general lighting and a second lower level of lighting for the duration of a screening. We often use a combination of decorative wall lighting and softer LED lighting that can be concealed within steps, coffers, or paneling to provide a low-level glow during a film.

"Cinema spaces tend to be where clients may be more adventurous with designs, and this is often seen within the lighting selection. Large bespoke lighting solutions are often designed to complement the design of the room and make a real statement."

**—Andrew Wilford, Senior Technical Designer, Taylor Howes Designs in London**

## **Think About the Style**

"The media room is always more complex to design than any other room, as it has to follow a certain number of rules to be successful. This is why I always try to keep the design simple, playing with noble materials and textures, as well as the lighting. In addition, I add art pieces to make it more personalized. If you have the space, it can be nice to add a bar somewhere at the back of the room from which you can serve your guests.

"I like to have extra comfort with a couple of cushions as well as cashmere throws. A small side table for food and drinks is always a good addition, as well as a large, color-rich screen.

"Hiding the electronic equipment is still a challenge for many people. In my case, I hide all the equipment in a false wall behind the screen or have the screen drop down from a hidden compartment in the ceiling.

"The lighting needs to be uniform in the room and ideally controllable from the seats. I also like to use warm lights instead of white ones in order to enhance the atmosphere, and I sometimes place small side lamps by the seats."



Designed by Achille Salvagni for a yacht, this luxe media room offers bed-like seating and a panoramic movie screen.

*Massimo Listri*

— **Rome, Italy-based architect and designer Achille Salvagni**

## **Think Outside the Box**

"We are seeing a trend toward media rooms that incorporate bar elements as well, which make the space more social and interactive, as well as functional.

We tend to design spaces that don't typically look like media rooms. Seating should be seriously comfortable yet elegant.

"We love spaces that create mood and ambience. We mix up the lighting with picture lights above art, wall sconces, and most importantly, low-level floor lighting for wayfinding.

"We also always work with a specialist A/V consultant to include the best sound system into the design of the room. We try to eliminate any visual clutter and always look to incorporate clean, built-in solutions where possible."

— **Elliot March of March & White, based in London, New York, and Los Angeles**