

# THE CINEMA CONNOISSEUR

A Paradise Theater Publication



# Dreams Do Come True

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## Dreams. Vision. Destiny. Twenty years in the making, the story of this private cinema has a little of them all.

*"When we bought our home, it included the space for it," recalls the homeowner and private cinema client "We always envisioned that happening."*

In the meantime, a young family with a musician son using the space for recording and a myriad of other uses and priorities made the theater a distant dream. It could be said though, that dream had a little destiny in it. "We always liked having a big screen and having that theater experience and our kids the same. I have two kids in the movie industry now, and probably because we love it so much," adds our client.

Twenty years is a long time to keep a dream alive and many visions fade far sooner, but after nearly two decades the time was right to start realizing the dream. The journey began when the couple was referred by friends to Derek Eitel at Roberts Home Audio Video Inc. Eitel impressed them with "answers to all our questions on the spot!" Eitel remembers, "They didn't have specific details, but they had the space and they knew they wanted to do it right. They knew they wanted to do a high quality room because they were going to use it a lot. So we developed the scope of work together from the start, and each step along the way. That's what made the process so special is the level of involvement and excitement that the couple had for the room." When asked how rare a scenario this presented, Eitel explains, "I don't think it is rare for someone to turn a space into a home theater, there are a lot of home theaters in homes now. What I think is rare is the level that they wanted to do and their

doing it the right way. They knew it was going to be a process to create what they wanted, and they were excited and involved throughout. That aspect is not very common."

That the dream of a private cinema had been kept alive so long is the destiny part of the story but also an indication of self-awareness of their priorities. They love watching movies as a family. They love it as something they all enjoy together. Loving movies is not such an unusual pastime as the industry has shown, it is their recognition of the value of doing it so exceptionally and at home that makes this theater dream such a unique vision.



3D renderings illustrate the vision.

Eitel immediately reached out to trusted partners to help realize that vision. "We like to work with design, engineering and construction partners we trust because we know the client is going to get the highest level of quality that they are looking for in their Private Theater".

The team knew just what to do. Ryan Brown, Paradise Theater CEO explains, "Every private cinema is a bespoke design to meet a particular client's vision, but we do follow a highly developed process that assures extraordinary results. Our client's happiness is never left to chance." Greg Francis, Cinergy Construction CEO adds, "This was an ideal scenario where a client comes to us and says, we have a desire to have a theater, what should we have?" The team knew exactly how they would apply their team-oriented approach to realizing the client's dream and delivering something amazing for them.

Knowing the couple had little prior private cinema experience prior to this journey, it

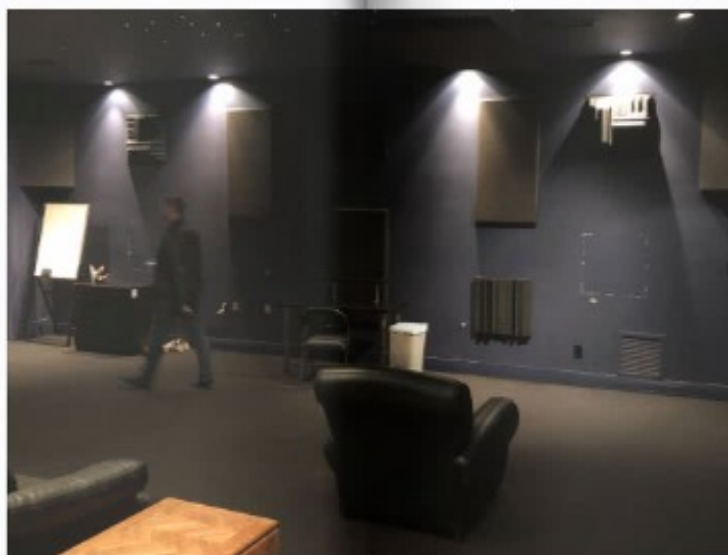
was important for the team to explore the possibilities with the clients to assure everyone was heading in the same direction.

One thing was clear, the clients wanted something special. "It couldn't be like a nice size television in a living room" states the client, "It had to be different. We wanted to truly feel like we were going into an experience, an escape."

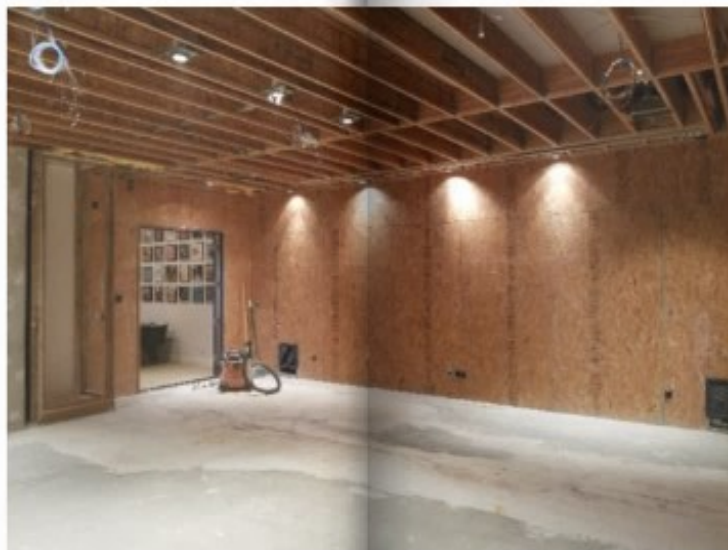
The process of discovery started with demonstrations at Roberts Home AV where the couple experienced various levels of audio and video performance. Eitel describes this as "Letting the clients experience different options and then getting their feedback. From there we have a good idea of what the clients are looking for and can then develop the scope of work together." About selecting the systems, the client recalls, "My husband was really involved with that because that's a priority for him. He did a good job. They did a good job recommending the right stuff."

Meanwhile, there was some investigation to do by the team. Paradise Theater designers and engineers and Cinergy Construction agreed the best route was to demo the existing room to the bare framing. Brown clarifies, "It would eventually need to be removed anyway and knowing the structural, mechanical and other conditions enables our engineers and designers to proceed with confidence and create a room that was both high performance and feasible."

It is at this point in a private cinema journey, especially one in an existing home, that the rubber meets the road! Explains Francis, "We're in a finished home, I mean, a beautifully finished home." He continues, "We needed to protect our pathway from outside the house, through a living room and entryway. So we sealed it off completely and protected the entire pathway for the duration of the project. In addition, we ran air scrubbers, HEPA air filters, in that pathway and the theater and took care to keep things quiet to respect the homeowner." This level of care was appreciated by the client who said "she was sad to see them go" after four months of construction!



Before Demo



After Demo

Brown describes the next steps. "We did a thorough site study to assess the existing conditions, site measurements, existing HVAC and structural." As a result, the team was able to proceed with confidence, efficiency, and creativity. A big item that had to be sorted out was how to efficiently and cost effectively ventilate such a large theater space and maintain the quiet performance needed in a private cinema. Francis recounts, "We started with a dated system that was not engineered to theater criteria. Between our team, our mechanical contractor and Paradise engineers and designers we were able to work it out to fit, perform and look beautiful."

Design, engineering, and construction of the theater chassis were completed swiftly to provide a clean and quiet living environment for the family and to facilitate design development of the theater's function and aesthetics. One item had to be resolved immediately. Always important, seating selection and configuration significantly impact the listening and viewing experience. In this case, it was also meaningful for social settings and aesthetics.

True to form the clients found a way to turn this exercise into a family gathering and an evening of entertainment. Eitel relates, "When they were picking out chairs, the whole family came into our showroom and watched a movie together to make sure the chairs were comfortable for a long period of time. Their whole family enjoys movies together and having the whole family as a part of the process was really fun. I think that's also what makes the room so special for them. It's something that they all really enjoy together."



*"I used to take my kids to The El Capitan across from Grauman's Chinese Theater. It's fun when you see a movie with an audience and everybody claps at the end or something, 'cause it's so good. I don't miss the crowds. But, because of the number of seats that we have, it still feels like that. If we have people over to watch something."*

This firsthand theater experience informed Paradise designers of client preferences and enabled them to custom tailor a perfect solution. Says Paradise's Brown, "We ran through a lot of different options with the seating, ultimately arriving at the curved layout due to the width of the room and the client's desire to have the outside seats angled in towards the screen to present a more intimate setting. They were very interested in details of the seating," Paradise Operations Manager Kyle Brown adds, "Row spacing and sightline studies were performed in CAD and in person.

Roberts mocked up the scenarios in their showroom and we created sight line renderings. The clients decided to go with the row spacing as designed but requested more height between rows to make sure sight lines were clear even when fully reclined." Getting the seating right means more than mere technical correctness for the

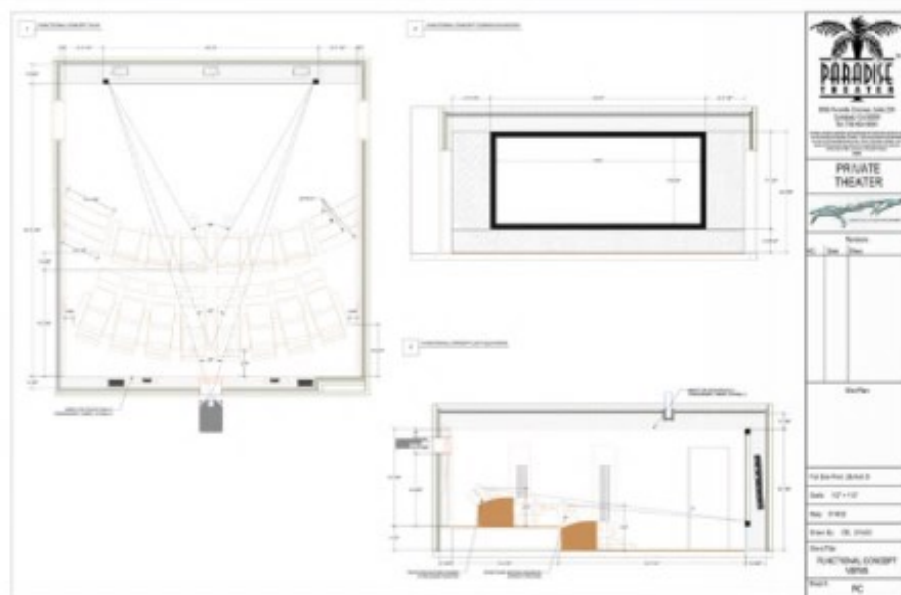
client as she recalls, "I used to take my kids to The El Capitan across from Grauman's Chinese Theater. It's fun when you see a movie with an audience and everybody claps at the end or something, 'cause it's so good. I don't miss the crowds. But, because of the number of seats that we have, it still feels like that. If we have people over to watch something."

Getting it right was a recurring theme for the team. Paradise Theater's interior designer Sarah Reed recalls, "In an early conversation with the clients I saw what they wanted from both performance and aesthetics. That informed the design as it changed based on performance but also maintained an aesthetic that was comfortable and inviting to bring their family into. A special space to share with those that they love. I knew both performance and aesthetics were important to them from the get-go." This mandate

required close collaboration between Sarah and Paradise Theaters engineering and performance design teams.

With the theater chassis in place and a configuration for seating, engineering got busy analyzing the space to create what Paradise refers to as a functional concept. Brown explains, "High performance private cinemas are a design challenge due to what might initially appear to be incompatibilities of construction, aesthetics and performance. The easy solution is to just compromise. Instead, we take an iterative team approach where our engineering, performance design and interior design teams work through the design interdependently. Each team's perspective informs and is integrated with the others resulting in an integrated design solution.

The result is much better than any one team would produce alone." Summing it up Brown states, "In a way, the perfect solution to every client's vision exists, it is our job to discover and extract it. It's like what Michelangelo said about sculpture - 'Every block of stone has a statue inside it and it is the task of the sculptor to discover it.'



A functional concept illustrates how all elements fit within the space prior to design development.

Discovering that perfection was a team effort. Team Paradise interpreted the owners' wishes and presented solutions. "We keep the client apprised with renderings and visualizations throughout, so they appreciate the different options." Says Brown. Reed adds, "We had a lot of interaction coordinating finishes and final details, pulling everything together. I had originally interpreted the traditional style more intricately and we pared some of that back. We provided a photorealistic render to make sure that was the result they envisioned. She was always so excited to see our ideas and forthcoming with feedback. That made it very easy to coordinate with her." When physical samples were needed, Cinergy stepped up as Francis recalls. "Paradise provided millwork and finish specifications and we provided mockups along the way so the client could approve them. The clients were very decisive which was very helpful!"

Any pre-production jitters were swiftly settled as the production phase commenced. The team performed like a well-rehearsed ensemble with everyone playing their part to perfection. This was no accident as Francis relates, "It's always a very collaborative process when our teams work together." Chassis documentation by Paradise is something Cinergy sees often and interprets masterfully. Detailed engineering and interior design drawings guided the players from both Robert's and Cinergy through what could have been a complicated coordination of systems, connections, constructs, and finishes. Instead, the teams performed flawlessly and in concert. Making sure is also part of the process. Kyle Brown reports "We complete QA and PV (quality assurance and performance verification) all along, checking details and testing performance at critical milestones." Brown points out "Cinergy makes it easy, even sending weekly site

photos for our review between visits! The true test of a project though is the client's perspective. The homeowner reports, "Our project went so smoothly, we could not believe it. We finished on time and on budget, that never happens!"

It is often said that the last mile of any journey is the most challenging to complete. For luxury private cinemas, the last mile includes the calibration and tuning of the audio system. It is a step that is often ignored, underperformed, or even deemed unnecessary. In fact, a room as highly developed as this dream theater is well served and responds better to tuning than lesser rooms. Robert's and Paradise make sure this is executed the right way (see insert - A conversation with Ron Rouse on theater audio calibration).

The final step is a celebration. A sharing. The contributions of so many were on display for the first time and presented to the clients with pleasure. Ironically formal unveilings such as this are not always possible. But like so much of this cinema story, it was a fait accompli. With Paradise Theater, Robert's Home AV and Cinergy Construction in attendance the client welcomed all into the theater with a flourish. "Isn't it grand", she exclaimed. And it is grand for Brown, Eitel and Francis who all agree, the delight expressed by their client is what makes it so grand and so very rewarding. The unveiling proceeded with a program designed to roll out the features of their theater, like a Michelin Star Chef presenting a fine dining experience. This time the program included a special surprise. Brown had secretly asked the husband the name of their wedding dance song. And just like that, Crazy Love by Van Morrison ushered in a new chapter in this couple's journey, as proud owners of a luxury private cinema.



Asked if it was worth the effort and investment the response was a grateful but emphatic, yes! 'I feel incredibly fortunate to be able to have what I have. It's certainly not something I grew up and expected to be able to have, so I appreciate it. I would say it's definitely worth it. It does enhance your lifestyle. We've had Oscar nights, I've had girl's movie night, we've had concert nights. Movie night any time the kids are here, western movies with my mom. It's definitely something we look forward to, even when it's just my husband and I, we'll have dinner and then we can't wait to go downstairs (to the theater) and it's a shared experience with us, so it not only brings entertainment to our lives, but also something that we did together, you know, and enjoy together and experience together.'



#### PRIVATE CINEMA TEAM

Paradise Theater - Engineering, Design, Management

Roberl's Home Audio & Video - System Integration

Cinergy Construction - Theater Construction

Wisdom Audio - Loudspeakers, Audio Calibration

## A conversation with Ron Rouse on audio calibration

### We make sure whatever we do retains the art.

An example would be if we are listening to Aretha Franklin, we want to hear Aretha Franklin's voice, not my personal interpretation of what her voice sounds like. That's easier said than done! It takes experience and familiarity with what we call reference material. Music and soundtracks we are intimately familiar with. I've heard Aretha in hundreds of rooms. I know when it sounds correct. We always start by

listening to music first, but whatever is played, whether music or soundtrack, it must sound as the artist intended it to.

We do perform an extensive technical calibration. Settings must be precise in order to accurately listen to the system in the room. This requires the right equipment and taking the measurements properly. It takes a good amount of time. We analyze these measurements after listening, so we avoid 'listening with our eyes'. In other words, it is common for technicians to correct for

something seen on a graph that is not audible. Listening for inaccurate audio performance then referring to the graphs to inform our adjustments helps us from over-correcting. It is a long process and requires experience and skill, but it provides the best results.

How do I know when I get it right? Well, I always perform the full technical calibration, so the fundamentals are right but thanks to experience, I know. The real test is the client. When I'm playing something for them and they turn to me and smile, I know. But it

takes some communication to know the clients are hearing the tuned system with the right level of discernment. Like a sommelier will do with fine wine, we will point out the attributes that are important. It is really a great added benefit to clientele because that understanding will increase their enjoyment going forward. So, when a client knows what to listen for and looks to me with a smile, I am positive that I got it right!