

AURAL

**A TAW CRT projector,
96-inch Stewart screen
and Vandersteen surround
sound keep this southern
dentist smiling**

STORY BY MICHAEL WADDELL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JERRY BLOW

After living in their home for more than 25 years, Richard and Janet Pence learned that the city was planning to intersect a new highway practically in the middle of their living room. Obviously, it was time to build a new house. "Since the new home was scheduled to be built at the same time television was beginning to go digital, we had our new home set up so every room could receive high-definition signals along with broadband Internet," says Dr. Richard Pence, a dentist and an avid audio/video enthusiast. He and his wife now live in a gated development in the small, rural community of Iron Station, North Carolina, just outside of Charlotte.



FIXATION



Pence has been hooked on audio/video technology ever since his father bought the family's first television in the 1940s—the only TV in a 550-mile radius. Pence bought his first big-screen television in the 1970s. "I had to put that TV into a tiny 10-foot by 10-foot den," he remembers. "All of my friends and family would cram into that room to watch *Mystery Science Theater 3000* every week."

With the construction of their new home, Pence knew he had the opportunity to create his own ideal theater space. Using the art and architecture knowledge he acquired during his college days and advice from his favorite home theater magazine, *Audio Video Interiors*, he set out to design the dedicated theater that he had always dreamed of. "I wanted the look of a classic English club," he says. He sketched out what he had in mind and took his drawings to Franco Goodman at Goodman Millworks, Inc., in Salisbury, North Carolina. The 100-year old family-owned millwork company fabricated, finished, and installed the beautiful mahogany woodwork and equipment cabinetry.

The theater's rich décor also features antique brass wall sconces, an antique Persian rug, as well as designer cloth wall coverings with acoustic batting. Accentuating the private club feeling are two rows of leather club chairs, comfortably seating six guests. "We found three original French leather club chairs but needed three more to fill the room. So we hired a local furniture company who matched the leather and created three identical chairs," he says.

For video, Pence chose TAW's HD-800 CRT projector. "It was the highest rated projector in my price range, and it handles HDTV beautifully," he explains. Since TAW did not have a dealer in North Carolina at that time, Pence went straight to the internet to order his components. He paired his projector with a Stewart Studiotek 130 (96-inch) screen. He adds, "I chose a smaller screen because the picture simply looked much better. If I had used a larger screen, there would have been a loss of resolution."



This custom wood-paneled library with coffered ceiling is an irresistible spot for a good read—or a good listen. Sources from Onkyo and Kenwood translate into top drawer audio.





Likened to a classic English club, the dedicated theater is home to a Stratart Studiotek screen and a Vandersteen speaker system. The components are hidden just right of the screen and, like the motorized movie curtain, are controlled by a Philips remote.

Once he had decided on his theater's main components, Pence needed someone to come in and help him get it all sorted out. Thanks to a recommendation from one of his patients, he hired Joe Barnhill, owner of Audio Essentials in Sherrills Ford, North Carolina. Barnhill mounted the projector, installed the speakers and handled the satellite,

antenna, cable, and Cat-5 high-speed computer wiring for the whole house. The new construction of the home allowed all of the wiring to be done ahead of time. Finally, Dave Harper, a TAW dealer and video expert, flew down from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to calibrate the projector and set up the processor. It took a day and a half to calibrate

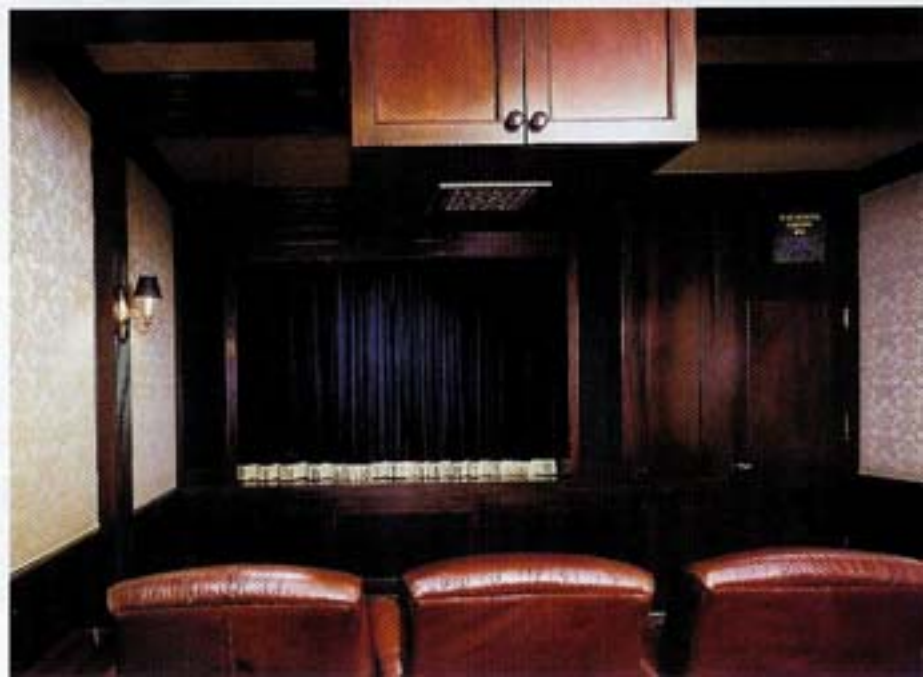


the system. "The calibration was very tedious work," says Pence. "He did a great job and really got the maximum performance out of my system."

Pence carefully considered a wide range of speakers and eventually chose Vandersteen speakers not only for their musical reproduction but also for their accuracy in recreating the small details. "Everything

from the sound of a door hinge, to a can opener, to the musical notes of a violin are amazingly accurate with the Vandersteen speakers," says Pence. Richard Vandersteen even paid a special visit to the Pences' home to listen to his speakers in action. Instead of getting overly technical with the speaker setup, Pence took a simpler approach. He took the seven Vandersteen speakers that make up the 7.1 surround sound and hung them where he thought they sounded best. For his subwoofers, Pence definitely did not want booming bass and found that the Vandersteen subwoofers were flexible in their placement. He installed them at the quarter and half points of the room behind custom grille cloth. "I am absolutely thrilled with the sound right now," says Pence. Barnhill adds, "And eventually, we should arrive at 10.2 surround sound, and the system is set up so he can easily make the necessary changes when that time comes."

Since one of the main goals in creating the system was to allow for a variety of future upgrades, Pence decided to have the equipment cabinet to the right of the film screen so he could have rear access through a private office adjacent to the theater room. Among the components hidden from sight are a Richard Gray 1200 Power conditioner, a Toshiba SD-9200 DVD audio and video player, an Onkyo TX-DS989 7.1 surround receiver, and a Zenith HDTV satellite receiver. A recent addition to the





Theater

TAW-HD800 CRT projector
 TAW Rock+ scaler
 Stewart Studiotek 130 (96") screen
 Onkyo TX-DS989 7.1 surround receiver
 Zenith DTV1080 HDTV satellite receiver
 JVC HM-DH30000 D-Theater VCR
 Sony SLV-R1000 SVHS VCR
 Toshiba SD-9200 DVD player
 Vandersteen VSM-1 speakers (6)
 Vandersteen VCC-1 center speaker
 Vandersteen V2W powered subwoofers (2)
 AudioSource 5.3 monoblock amplifier
 Clark Synthesis Platinum 1 transducer
 RGPC 1200 power conditioner
 ChannelMaster 9537 antenna rotor
 Makita Drapery Controller
 Lutron Grafik Eye lighting controller
 Philips Pronto TS1000 remote
 AudioQuest cabling

Library

Onkyo TX-8511 stereo receiver
 Onkyo DXX-M505 CD changer
 Kenwood KX-3510 cassette deck
 FMI-100 speakers (2)

Dining Room & Master Bath

SpeakerCraft 8.5 CRS ceiling speakers

Breakfast Room

Luce LCTV-2201A 22" LCD HDTV
 Onkyo TX-DS595 5.1 surround receiver
 Zenith DTV1080 HDTV satellite receiver
 SpeakerCraft MT Four in-wall speakers (3)
 SpeakerCraft CRS Four in-ceiling speakers (2)
 Panasonic SB-WA100 powered subwoofer
 Monster Cable HTS800 power center
 AudioQuest cabling

Master Bedroom

RCA MM36110 HDTV CRT monitor
 RCA DTC-100 HDTV satellite receiver
 Onkyo TS-SV909 5.1 surround receiver
 MSB MDP-3X surround processor
 Panamax 1000+ power conditioner
 Vandersteen VLR-1 front speakers (2)
 Mordant-Short 3.2 center channel spkr
 SpeakerCraft 8.8 MT (2) in-wall surround spkrs
 M&K MX-70 powered subwoofer

Guest Bedrooms

Luce LCTV-1701A 17" LCD HDTVs
 Sony SAT-HD 100 HDTV satellite receivers

theater, a JVC HM-DH30000 D-Theater digital VCR, adds yet another means of digital programming to the room, and Pence is already looking forward to adding blu-ray, or high-definition DVD, to the mix. "The blu-ray technology is still about four years away from hitting the market, so we have a little time to wait on that one," says Pence.

A second major goal of the project was to have a system that his wife, Janet, could easily operate. He found that a Philips Pronto TS1000 controller

tied in with a Lutron GrafikEye lighting controller met all of his needs. "It is very simple and neat," Barnhill explains. "With the touch of a button, the lights dim, the curtain automatically pulls back, and either a DVD or the satellite will start right up. They can download logos for all of the satellite channels from the Internet, making channel surfing amazingly simple."

The theater is not the only room in the house that has HDTV. The breakfast area, master bed-