

# Winner 2007 Electronic House Magazine "Best Family/Media Room"

## BEST FAMILY/MEDIA ROOM BRONZE



### VITAL STATS

SYSTEMS DESIGN  
& INSTALLATION  
Surreal Systems  
Placentia, CA  
714-470-2952  
www.surreal-systems.com

## Safe and Sound

Roughhousing may not be allowed, but this theater handles plenty of wear and tear. *photography by Michael Nevuex*

It's hard to imagine a home theater system being dangerous, but those heavy flat screens, blinking black boxes and protruding power strips can be a real hazard to curious 8-, 10- and 14-year-old boys. The owners of this media-equipped family room put safety first when they hired Surreal Systems of Placentia, CA, to design a system for their family of five. The 60-inch Pioneer plasma TV was mounted high on the wall where it would be out of reach, "at least until the kids grow a few more inches," says designer and installer Matt Bernath. The center-channel speaker, which is normally kept closer to the floor, was perched

on top of the screen, while the remaining four speakers were attached to the walls. The big, sturdy subwoofer—a perfect platform for coloring books and games of leapfrog—was recessed completely inside the front wall.

The rest of the equipment, including a Sony 400-disc DVD changer, a Yamaha A/V receiver and a Panamax power conditioner, was stowed inside an existing closet in the hallway. Bernath placed the components on standard wire shelving instead of pricier specialty equipment racks, which allowed the family to put more of its budget toward high-end components like the Definitive Technology in-wall sub-



### EQUIPMENT LIST

**DISPLAY**  
Pioneer PDP6070HD 60-inch plasma TV

**AUDIO/VIDEO COMPONENTS**  
Yamaha RXV2700 7.1-channel network receiver  
Sony DVPCX995V 400-disc DVD changer  
Panamax MS100EX power conditioner  
Straight Wire cabling  
Proflex speaker, Category 5 and RG cabling

**SPEAKERS**  
Definitive Technology rear bipole speakers  
Definitive Technology in-wall subwoofer  
Definitive Technology SUBAMP600 subwoofer amplifier  
Definitive Technology front on-wall speakers (3)

**CONTROL**  
Universal Remote Control MX3000 controller

**FURNITURE, ACOUSTICS AND ACCESSORIES**  
Media Atlantic CLSC0012 closet-cooling fans

woofer and the high-def 7.1-channel Yamaha RXV2700 receiver. "The receiver in particular is a really useful tool for the family," says Bernath. "By relocating their DSL modem and router to the closet, the homeowners can send music stored on any computer in the house to the family room speakers." They can also access the networked Yamaha receiver to hear Internet radio programs or music stored on their iPod.

A wall-mounted connection plate gives the family even more media options. Loaded with connections for a high-def gaming console, a laptop computer, a mouse and a keyboard, they can use their family room plasma TV to play high-def video games or surf the Internet. For safety's sake, the connection plate was placed in back of the couch—the main viewing spot—to preclude having to snake cabling across the floor.

Everything connected to the Yamaha receiver can be controlled from a single touch-

screen-style remote. Bernath programmed the MX3000 touchscreen from Universal Remote Control to be as simple as possible for everyone in the family to use. A button labeled WATCH DVD, for example, sets the receiver to the correct input, activates the Sony DVD changer, and displays a list of available movies on the 60-inch screen. Selecting a movie is as easy as scrolling through the titles and pressing PLAY. Another benefit of the MX3000 is its height. It's significantly larger than a standard handheld remote, making it harder to lose between the cushions of the couch. With a remote that stays where it should, the wiring off the floor and the blinking black boxes locked up in a closet, this entertainment system is about as bottled up as they get. Yet, thanks to a network-friendly receiver, a connection-packed wall plate and an intuitive touchscreen remote, the family has access to a bevy of entertainment options.—LM EH

Accidents are bound to happen in a household with three rambunctious boys, but at least the family room A/V equipment is safe. Surreal Systems kept many of the electronics out of reach by mounting the 60-inch Pioneer plasma TV above the fireplace, placing the center-channel speaker over the screen, tucking the subwoofer into the wall and locking up all of the components in a hallway closet. However, the precautions don't infringe on any of the fun. The family can use a custom-programmed remote to access movies stored on a 400-disc DVD changer or music stored on any computer in the house, for example.

