

# entertainment value

*A cramped and dingy attic becomes a chic, sophisticated home theater*

When they tapped Anthony Wilder Design/Build to renovate their Bethesda house, the owners requested that their unfinished attic be transformed into an inviting media room. Working within the existing pitched roof, the designers conceived a home theater that is stylish and sophisticated yet kid-friendly.

Since the original attic was only accessible via a trap door in the ceiling, “the first thing we had to do was figure out how to get up there,” says architect George Bott. They solved the dilemma by removing a linen closet on the floor below and creating a new stairway between two children’s rooms.

The new media room measures 14 by 25 feet, with a 110-inch screen and a projector that suspends unobtrusively from the ceiling. Storage is concealed on the periphery where the slant is too low to stand, and electronic equipment is hidden within the walls. A new HVAC system housed in the attic boasts insulated ductwork to minimize noise, and the floor is padded with sound-proofing rubber, two layers of sub-floor and a carpet.

Interior designer Keira St. Claire-Bowery reflected the client’s traditional aesthetic while “amping up the atmosphere,” she says. Dark-painted wood walls and moldings frame white acoustical panels while acoustical ceiling panels embedded with tiny lights create a twinkling night sky. Behind two banks of seating, cowhide stools by Arteriors pull up to a granite-topped bar. A beverage center on the back wall and a small fridge make entertaining easy. Art Deco-style sconces also contribute to the mood.

*Renovation Architecture & Contracting: George Bott, AIA, LEED AP; Interior Design: Keira St. Claire-Bowery, Allied ASID, Anthony Wilder Design Build, Cabin John, Maryland. Home Automation: Strategic Home Media, Stevensville, Maryland. Photography: Morgan Howarth.*



## GEORGE BOTT'S TRADE SECRETS

- Attention to sound is the most important thing. A quarter of the cost of this room went to A/V equipment. We installed in-wall speakers and integrated the wires for the sound system behind the walls.
- There should be sufficient lighting in the space and it should come from different sources.
- Seating should be a priority. Do you want theater-style or would you prefer to lounge on sofas?
- Consider all uses of the space. This room was far from the kitchen so having a fridge for easy access to snacks and drinks was important, particularly for entertaining.
- Think of the design in terms of the rest of the house. Do you want to match the home’s style, or would you like it to be totally different?