THE
HOLLYWOOD
ISSUE

'DON'T LOOK BACK. DO NOT HESITATE. DON'T FLINCH. COMMIT'

HOW TO BE A STAR BY MATTHEW McCONAUGHEY

Neverland nightmares: Michael Jackson's lost boys speak out

The comfort dogs of LA: officially the world's most pampered pets

Behind the scenes of Roma – the surprise hit of the year

Plan the layout around the screen size: the best viewing distance from an HD TV is about three times the screen height, and for a 4K TV, about 1.5 times the screen height

Blackout blinds are essential in a room with windows: cover them with a fabric that matches the decor

A fabric wallcovering can add colour and pattern, and helps with soundproofing

An oversize sofa and footstools, rather than cinema-style seating, heightens the sense of comfort

Just add popcorn...

From full-on home cinemas to cosy snugs (with a cocktail trolley), media rooms featuring big screens and deep sofas are now the most desirable hideaways in the house. Jessica Doyle explains how to do them in style

AFTER DECADES OF open plan as the layout of choice for the modern home, it seems we are coming back to the idea that the odd interior wall might not be such a bad idea. Any parent who has been relegated to the bedroom while their teenage children and friends colonise the ground floor will no doubt appreciate the benefit of a separate living space – and this is one reason why the media room is now in fashion.

'These days most of my clients request home cinemas or media rooms,' says interior designer Natalia Miyar. 'People have increasingly busy lives and like to have a dedicated space at home for watching movies or sports, to relax and bring their families together.' One spectacular example of her

work has a pink-, gold- and garnet-coloured metallic velvet fabric covering the walls and ceiling, a huge sofa, and a cocktail trolley.

Interior designer Maria Speake makes the point that a media room or snug is a good solution for a small or awkward space that you don't know what to do with, and solves the problem of how to deal with a television screen that jars with the decor of your main living and entertaining space.

One that she recently designed with Bella Freud, for an apartment within the Television Centre development in London, is warm and cosy, with a corduroy sofa and cork-panelled walls – an excellent material for soundproofing, which also adds to the textural feel of the room.

THE DECORATED DEN

HOW TO FURNISH THE PERFECT MEDIA ROOM

1. Plan the layout according to the size and resolution of your screen.

2. Choose seating carefully: daybeds work well, or in a smaller space, pair sofas with an ottoman or two (which can double as tables).

3. Walls don't have to be low-key – Natalia Miyar believes colour is essential and always includes art in a media room, so that it's a pleasant place to be when the TV isn't on.

4. If the room is above ground, use blackout blinds – you can cover them with an attractive patterned fabric.

5. Consider wall coverings that will help with soundproofing, such as leather or padded fabric; cork tiles are a relatively inexpensive option.

These separate spaces can offer the opportunity to try out a slightly different style: if the rest of your interior is light and airy, with pale walls, hard flooring and streamlined furniture, the snug is where you can indulge in a thick carpet and squashy sofa.

Nicole Salvesen, of interior design duo Salvesen Graham, treats a media room like any other room in a house in
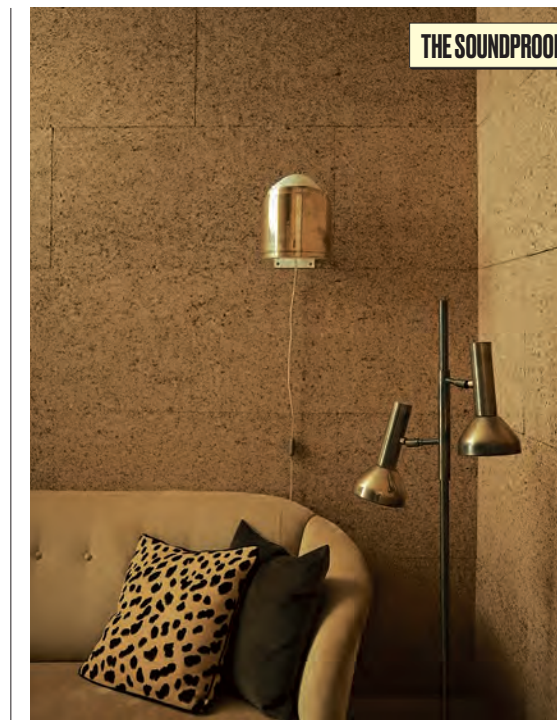
You can create a media-room feel without being hard and utilitarian

terms of decoration. 'Our clients want things to be simple on the technical side,' she says. 'They want that part hidden. You can create that media-room atmosphere without it having to be complicated, hard and utilitarian.' Rather than going bland and low-key so as not to distract from the screen, her approach is to layer up colours and textures, with patterned sofas, decorative wall lights, and soundproof wall

THE SOUNDPROOFED SNUG

From right A home cinema by interior designer Tara Bernerd with customised B&B Italia sofas; a jib door disguised as a bookcase opens into a media room by Equippd

BUYS TO TRY

1 — Oscar armchair, £2,235.50, Matthew Hilton (scp.co.uk).
2 — Velvet ottoman storage footstool, £570, Sofa.com.
3 — Crawford modular sofa, from £1,075, Arlo & Jacob (arloandjacob.com). 4 — Oscar chaise sofa, £1,945, Loaf (loaf.com). 5 — Max footstool, £249, Swoon (swooneditions.com)

panelling covered with printed fabrics.

Designer Lucinda Sanford takes a similar approach, and suggests using a projector and retractable screen to hide the tech – although she points out this isn't practical for casual TV watching.

If you do want to go full-on tech, you can instal a home cinema to rival your local picturehouse, and all in the comfort of your own specially excavated basement. But it comes at a cost: specialist company Equippd quotes starting prices for hardware for a media room at £18,000, and £30,000 for a home cinema. 'It's important to remember that more and more, these rooms are not just for film buffs, but for everyone to consume all types of modern media,' says director Charlie McCourt.

Tara Bernerd, who created the room pictured right, insists on state-of-the-art systems and a design that enhances warmth and texture, with 'sofas on steroids, a mixture of fabrics and textured wood finishes'.

Get it right and it'll be a space you won't want to leave. ◆

THE CINEMA EXPERIENCE

THE HIDDEN HAVEN

PLANNING A HIGH-SPEC HOME CINEMA

— Think about control: rather than having lots of different remotes, go for a universal one or a single-system 'brain' such as Control4.

— Charlie McCourt of Equippd suggests linking your system to an Amazon Alexa, 'so when you say, "Alexa, film time!" the lights dim, curtains close, the popcorn machine warms up and the film starts'.

— Lighting should be considered early on: you can instal automated lights that dim when you press play.

— According to McCourt, sound is often overshadowed by screen size. He suggests Dolby Atmos for 3D surround sound that you can 'feel and hear all around you and through your bones'.