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A 17-ZONE BEACH HOUSE TAKES AUDIO ACCESS TO ANOTHER LEVEL. SEE PAGE 48



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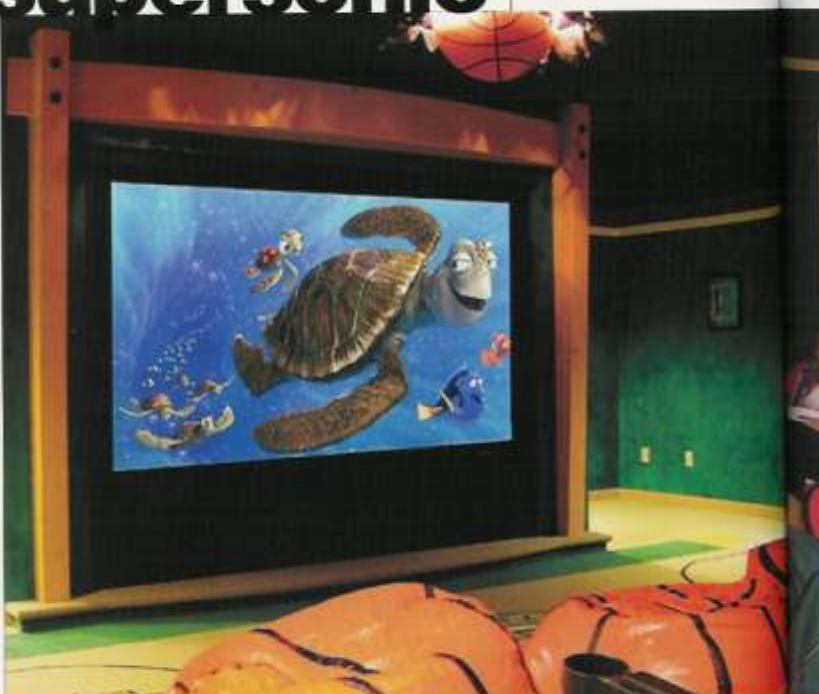
IT KNOWS WHEN YOU'RE OUT OF MILK. BUT IS IT SOUP YET?

a theater that's truly supersonic

EVEN THOUGH the audience isn't courtside at Seattle's Key Arena cheering on the SuperSonics, its view from this Sonics-themed theater is just as good—and the price of admission is about the same as the cost of a stadium hot dog and Coke. The theater was built in a Seattle Ronald McDonald House, where poor families with sick children can stay at the "suggested" rate of \$15 a night, allowing them inexpensive accommodations and easy access to the Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center next door.

Commissioned by SuperSonics star forward Rashard Lewis and Matt Wade, president of the Rashard Lewis Foundation, the project started small and turned into a \$125,000 retreat.

Co-owners of Seattle-based Metropolitan Audio Video Inc., Allan Stevens and Jason Pederson designed the theater. "We were going to do a simple room with seats, hang some of Rashard's jerseys, and create a place for the children to watch movies, but it turned into something bigger than



that," says Pederson.

Metropolitan Audio Video installed a \$10,000, custom-made, laser-cut carpet to mimic the Key Arena floor, and constructed a ceiling that looks as though a giant basketball is crashing through it. Mike Larson, a local artist, painted three Rashard Lewis murals on the back wall.

To feed audio and video to the system, Pederson and Stevens use a Denon AVR-4802



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when the screen is illuminated and it's time to watch a movie.

An Extron IPL series control interface allowed Metropolitan to use a Compaq Tablet PC running on a wireless 802.11 network to control the equipment located in another room. The whole shebang operates

via the Microsoft Windows XP Professional platform. "This was sort of a test run for the new technology," says Stevens. "And, although I can see the possibilities, I understand why AMX and Crestron still drive most high-end systems. The software we developed runs on [the] Windows XP Professional platform, which means if you want to turn on your touch screen, you have to boot up, which takes a fair amount of time, even on a decently fast PC." But the XP Pro platform isn't all bad. If you see something on TV that piques your interest, you can quickly follow up by getting on the Web, even from the sweet spot.

Unlike most theaters, the Seattle Ronald McDonald House's isn't just about entertainment. It brings families in various predicaments together. Rather than retiring to their separate rooms after a long day at the hospital, parents and children can gather in the communal venue not only to relax but also to find strength in each other. "This is the best reaction we've ever gotten from an installation," says Pederson. "It's like they're walking into Disneyland for the first time." ♦



[TOP] Rashard Lewis greets children, parents, and a certain fast-food clown outside the new theater.

[ABOVE] No offense to Ronald, but popcorn appears to be the snack of choice at the McDonald House theater.

[FACING PAGE, TOP] Metropolitan AV really got into the details, including basketball beanbags, a carpet replica of the Key Arena floor, and a slam dunk through the ceiling.

[FACING PAGE, BOTTOM] Almost everything in the theater, such as the basketball murals on the back wall and the stadium seating, reminds kids of the arena.

receiver and DVD-3800 progressive-scan DVD player. The Triad Silver Omni 7.1 system immerses the kids in surround sound. "When you add the Triad speakers to the party, you quickly forget about the basketball coming through the ceiling above," Stevens says of the sound system's impact.

The Dwin TransVision 3 DLP (digital light processing) projector and TransScanner video combo likewise steal the show

