

Fashionably wired

Integrate your home electronics into your decor

By **Matt Wake**
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Her husband, Robert, loves watching the 1966 spaghetti Western "The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly." Theresa Miller just knew she wanted their family's home theater to avoid the ugly: speaker wires gone wild, the pillar of electronics components, strewn Blu-ray disc cases, etc.

"We just wanted everything hidden so it would fit into the design of the house, which is very sedate, clean and calming," Miller says.

The Millers called in Jennifer Willis, of Greenville interior design company Postcards From Paris. Robert, chief technology officer at North American Rescue, asked Willis to "think big in a small room."

Willis placed a 7-foot-wide screen in front of the lone window in the 17-by-22 space and had custom dark-wood cabinetry built and installed. The cabinetry matches the Old World style in the rest of the Miller's Simpsonville home and completely contained the Marantz home theater gear. Even the Crestron speakers are out of sight. A mini-fridge and remote control drawer too.

Although the room has six black theater chairs installed in a stadium-seating-type incline, Miller says, "For the most part it feels very simple. Like a nice, warm home theater where you can kick up your feet and watch a movie as loud as you want."

In addition to screening movies like "Despicable Me" for their kids, the Millers watch Auburn University football games in here. (Theresa is an AU grad.)


Perhaps Willis' biggest design coup was devising a plan for the TVs in the rest of the Miller house, as Theresa didn't want them mounted on the wall.

"She housed the TVs in antique armoires," Miller says.

Turns out this is one of Willis' go-to tricks. On a recent morning, she's drinking Chai tea and seated at a long table underneath a futuristic-looking chandelier inside Postcards from Paris (631 S. Main St., 864.233.6622).

The biggest obstacle Willis often faces in integrating home entertainment into home decor is what to do with the speakers.

"When you're dealing with surround sound, they have to be in specific places or it just won't work right," she says. "The aesthetic needs to be there, but it also needs to be functional. Sometimes you just can't hide everything. I have a TV in my house that's on a bookshelf and all my components are below it, and that works great."



Use an armoire or even a closet to hide bulky components from sight.

Designing on a dime

For homeowners without the coin for major renovations, or if you rent, Willis recommends making your home entertainment gear part of the room's surroundings. Use white-finish components instead of standard black in a contemporarily styled space. "That's not to say that if you have a very traditional home with very ornate (furniture) pieces you should get an ornate speaker stand," Willis says. "You want something that goes with your environment but isn't a focus of it."

Plants or books can be arranged near or on top of speakers to make them — or their wires — less of an eyesore. And remember to tie up excess speaker wire to keep things from getting unruly. And unsightly.

Don't have \$5,000 to import a French armoire to house your gear? Scour local thrift stores and yard sales for more affordable vintage pieces, sometimes as low as \$50.

A coat closet can be an effective place to situate receivers and disc players to keep them out of view, with the help of wireless connectivity in some newer models. — Matt Wake



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