



Gardener's AV world

As a former professional audio bod, I know that acoustics are as important as breathing to a recording or mixing engineer in any discipline, especially film. If the material they create sounds poor in anything but their room, they have failed. This goes some way to explain the lavish acoustic treatments in this stonkingly impressive home cinema it's owned by a chap who is real movie biz aristocracy. I'm only allowed to describe him as, 'A well-known movie sound-mixing engineer.'

The man in question found a simple way to choose his surround system; he made his way to a hi-fi show early in the day (so as to avoid the crowds) and right there in the demo room, at 8:45am, announced that he wanted the very setup he could hear. It was a Procella speaker array, designed from the ground up to be potent enough to act as a demo for DTS's own marketing.

Most people have a compost heap or fairies. This family has a state-of-the-art log cabin movie house. **Adam Rayner** is in heaven



→ Kit Checklist

Yamaha: S2700 DVD/CD/SACD deck

Panasonic: DMP-BD30 Blu ray

Runco: VX2000d Projector C/W
Whitney 2.35:1 Cinewide Option, ceiling
hung

D-Box: 4 x SRR-J10X, motion-system
ready single armchairs (actuator
locations fitted for future upgrade)

Sherbourn: 7010A preamplifier with all
the latest codecs

Sherbourn: 7/2100A seven by 200 watts
power amplifier driving mids and highs

Procella: 2 x P15 15n LFE enclosures on
1Kw Yamaha amplifiers

Procella: 7 x 815-HE single eight +
compression driven horn enclosures
driven by Sherbourn 7/2100A

Procella: 3 x P15 LFE Enclosures
appended to front soundstage 8-HEs
on 1KW Yamaha amplifiers

Screen Research X-Mask screen 118 inch 2.35:1
to 1.78:1 motorised masking, THX
approved

Prophon: DX48 Audio Controller – 4
inputs, eight outputs – performs
crossover functions

Procella: sound absorbent panels ceiling
mounted to avoid reflections

**Custom bass traps with Helmholtz absorptive
panels to control any bass resonance**

Procella: acoustic diffusion panels and
clusters – five areas treated to break
up standing waves

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The Procella 815-HEs are potent speakers with a huge 15in bass driver married to an 8in driver for midband, and a professional audio-quality 1in compression drivers. They deliver vast dynamics, awesome extension and astonishing power and headroom, and it's easy to see why the owner of this install was so taken by them.

Demo time

The crisp hi-def images come courtesy of the thick end of £20,000 worth of Runco projection (a VX-2000D), hooked up to a Panasonic Blu-ray player, but for me they were still the lesser of the impression-creating technologies, so good was the sound.

I was treated to a real projectionists' grade selection of bits of material, starting with stereo and Tracy Chapman singing her heart out. The open sweet 'active' sound of those compression drivers (which have huge dynamic ability when compared to dome tweeters of any make) was like being in a recording

Curtain call: Motorised red drapes hide the THX-approved 118in 2.35:1 X-Mask Stewart Screen – a perfect match for the Cinewide Runco projector



A Serious sound

The system uses seven Procella 915-HE surrounds, and three Procella P15 subwoofers to deliver a super-high end audio experience

B Acoustics

Because the room is purpose built, the installers were able to build acoustic treatments into the design. These panels help diffuse standing waves and direct reflections

C Four's plenty

No point wasting space and money on chairs if you're never going to fill them – this home cinema owner is happy with just four high-quality D-Box-ready armchairs

D Starry starry night

There are 1,050 fibre-optic light twinkling away in the ceiling. Pure set-dressing, but we're not complaining

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studio in front of main, not nearfield, monitors. It was better than mere hi-fi. With a bit of traditional jazz on Super Audio CD – Mel Torme and his big band *When Love Walked In With You* – I could easily hear the greater resolution and tinkliness of the hi-res format over vanilla CD.

Then it was the Eagles' *Life in the Fast Lane* on DVD. Wrinkly rockers they may be, but their recordings are state-of-the-art. This system provided massive, effortless impact and throb from a bunch of geriatrics. Amazing.

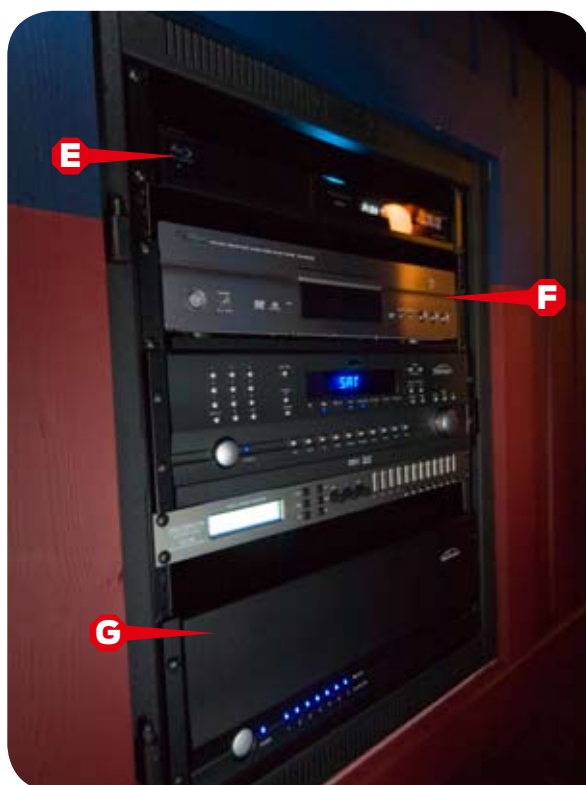
A favourite 5.1 demo is the Crosstown Express sequence from Fox's madcap *Robots* animation. I've heard it many, many times (and even issued five-star reviews for speakers on what they make of it) but this was really revelatory. There were tings, throbs and swells that I hadn't ever noticed before – and not just a few bits, lots.

Finally, my audition ended with the excellent Pixar short *Lifted* and some of the *Ratatouille* BD disc. The short has never sounded so amazing nor looked so cool. I realised the aliens are bags of goo you can see into, and the audioscape from 7.3 system was simply incredible. The sequence in the *Ratatouille* where the woman shoots at our rodent hero with her shotgun almost lifted me out of the D-Box-ready seat, but with taut control.

Attention to acoustics

Part of this performance excellence is down to the room's acoustics. I have heard some awesome rooms in this job, but the perfected balance in this cinema is probably the best. It just goes to show that you can have a baggy drape or two, or even a few panels here and there to stop the nastiest reflections, but **the only thing better than taming a room with the incredible Audyssey MultEQ box is to build a perfect control-room grade cinema in the first place.**

The Screen Research screen is mounted on an acoustically absorptive stud wall; bass traps are hidden in the corners; ceiling absorbers help avoid reflections muddying the first wavefront; and on all opposing walls are a collection of woody, dense curved panels to diffuse sound and avoid standing waves and direct reflections. This cinema sounds better than a screening room at Pinewood. And you can ask the owner. It's a fact and he knows about it first-hand! ●



E Blu-ray beauty

A Panasonic DMP-BD 30 crowns the AV kit rack. It's a good performer, but only Profile 1.1. The owner will need to upgrade if he wants to explore the wonders of BD-Live

F Universal player

DVDs, CDs and Super Audio CDs are spun in this chunky Yamaha deck

G Power house amp

Sherbourn's 7/2100A power-amp was the world's first seven-channel amp to feature seven mono Blocks and seven toroidal transformers, and can deliver 2.1KW. Better watch those electricity bills...

H Picture power

A ceiling-mounted Runco VX2000D projector, with 2.35:1 Cinewide option helps produce bigscreen images up to scratch with the class-leading audio

