

HOME OF THE YEAR OVER \$50,000 BRONZE



SOUND DESIGNS FOR AN ENTERTAINMENT PALACE

Behold a collector car cave, live home theater, and a playroom to die for.

By Steve Castle

Highlights

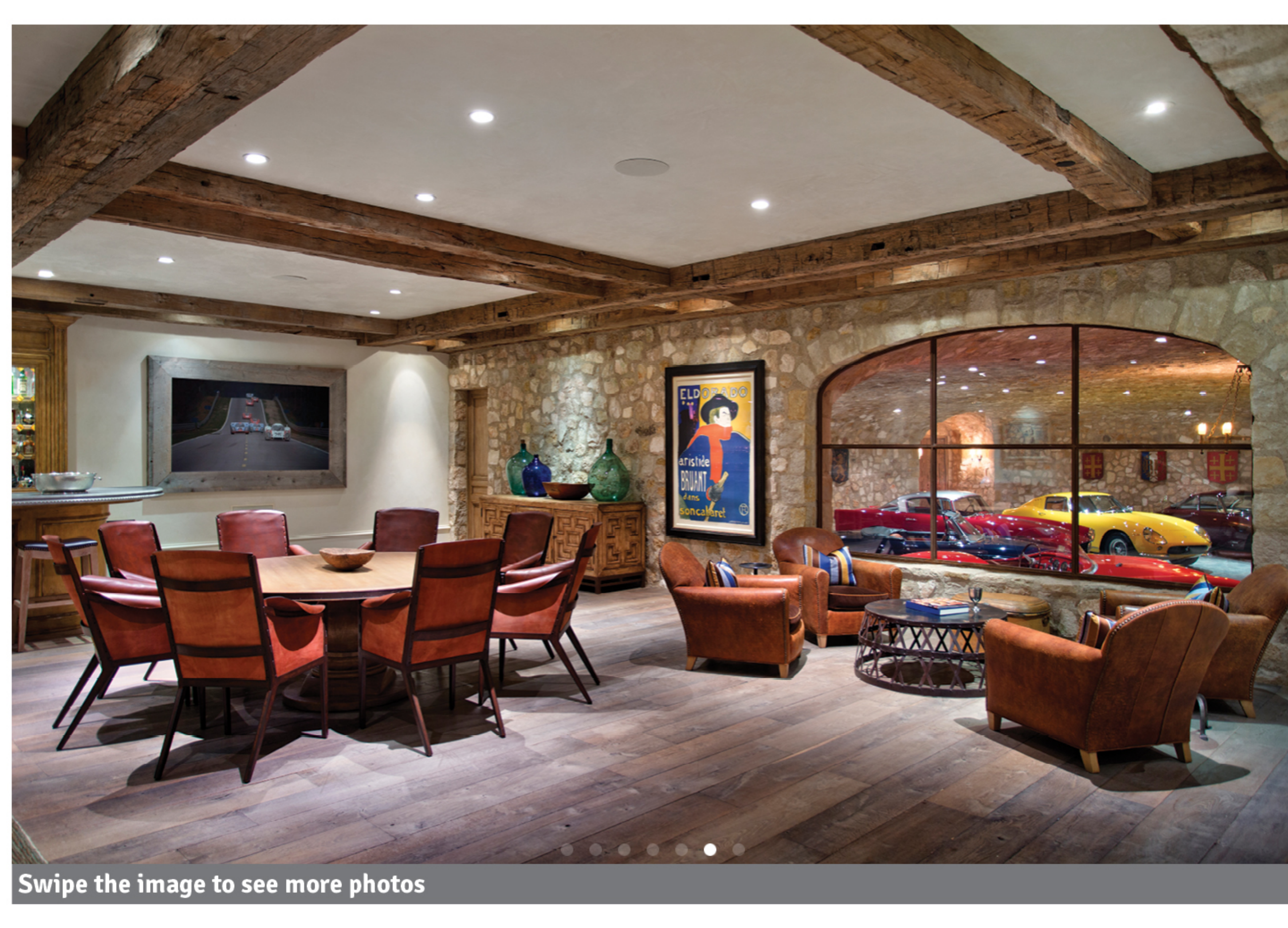
- ◆ Serious sound with subwoofers pervade throughout the house
- ◆ A car cave with a parking area that spins
- ◆ Huge multipurpose entertainment room with three screens, plus a killer theater

WHAT DO YOU GET when you combine a multimillion-dollar car collection with high-quality house-wide audio and a theater with a live performance stage? This

12,000-square-foot entertainment palace. Or maybe we should call it a chateau, as it's designed like a French Provencal farmhouse, complete with cobblestones.

Believe it or not, this is a new house, for which the home systems integrators at Southern California-based [Cantara](#) were called on for their expertise during the framing process. "There's always an educational process with systems in this big of a house. People don't understand the scale of how much we can help them to control all aspects of it, even fireplaces," explains Cantara's Jason Voorhees.

The owner of this newly built home surprised Voorhees, though. "He was very focused on having great sound quality in every room, and actually asked us about subwoofers, without us suggesting it first," Voorhees says. Consequently, most of the rooms, even the formal areas, were fitted with in-wall [Triad](#) subwoofers, in addition to in-ceiling [Sonance](#) speakers to create 31 independent listening zones. "Not only does the music follow you everywhere, but it's deeper and fuller (thanks to the subwoofers)," Voorhees says.



Swipe the image to see more photos

Available to each well-dressed listening zone are hundreds of music choices,

courtesy of an [Autonomic](#) MMS-2 iTunes and Streaming Media Server. To streamline the selection process, Cantara curated some of the owners' favorite Pandora channels and programmed them into custom "SmartScenes" that are accessible from any [AMX](#) touchpanel or handheld remote on the residence. The owners simply go to the SmartScenes page on the touchpanel, and with a tap of a finger can hear a specific preprogrammed Pandora station. For example, the SmartScene called *His House Tour* signals the whole-house audio system to play French classical music throughout much of the house and his choice of Sixties rock music in the car cave. Other SmartScenes include *Her House Tour*, *TV Sports*, *Alone Together*, and *Outdoor Party*. In addition to cueing up the perfect Pandora music, the SmartScenes set the lighting (both indoors and outdoors), security system, heating and cooling system, motorized shades, gas fireplaces, and decorative fountains to create just the right atmosphere.

So let's crank the tunes and start the tour in the car cave that houses car-show-quality classic Ferraris, Aston Martins, and other marques like Bugattis from decades past. A Bat Cave-like entrance with two huge wooden doors leads into the space, where a motorized turnstile in the middle of the floor twists to allow the homeowner to easily back each of his precious vehicles to their proper parking spot.

Adding to the car cave atmosphere is plenty of audio, delivered by in-wall subwoofers and three pairs of 8-inch speakers tucked into the dome ceiling. Good luck finding them, though. The speakers and subs blend right into the stone and reclaimed lumber that pervades much of the room design. For extra assurance of imperceptibility, the grilles of the speakers were painted to match the wall and ceiling surfaces.

Step through the doors, and more Provencal tech aesthetic awaits, in a huge bar/lounge and billiards area containing not one, not two, but three 80-inch [Sharp](#) Quattron LED TVs, which at first glance could be mistaken for artwork. Each are deftly framed in weathered wood and ventilated with slits at the tops and bottoms of the frames so they won't overheat. One screen serves the lounge area, another the game area, and another the billiards area. Presets for favorites like basketball and car racing turn the TVs to the appropriate channels—just tap a button on a touchpanel or remote and the magic happens. Each TV is accompanied by four in-ceiling speakers, and all of the speakers are on one audio zone, which enables them to also function as part of the whole-house audio system.

Through more double doors is a massive 14-seat theater featuring a 187.5-inch motorized CinemaScope [Stewart Filmscreen](#), 3D [Digital Projection](#) Titan projector, and nine studio-grade [Genelec](#) speakers that can rock the room while hidden in the columns and walls to comprise a 7.2-channel surround-sound system. Two speakers are in the rear, four on each side, and the left and right front-channel speakers, along with subwoofers, are tucked into the front columns that flank the screen. The center-channel speaker is attached to a motorized lift that lowers it to the perfect center position behind the screen.

Why use a lift for a speaker located behind the screen? Because the theater is also used for performances, often given by the owners' two daughters. When it's time for a puppet show or karaoke, the screen and center speaker disappear into the ceiling, revealing a 6-foot-deep stage.

There's also a projection booth. "In a really high-quality room that's the only way to do it," says Voorhees. And this is just the start of the show. There's also a smoke machine and professional stage lighting with 40 various preset scenes and colored spotlights.

Cantara's stage lighting partner [Red Fish Illuminations](#), of Newnan, Ga., programmed the lighting, which is accessible on pages on an AMX touchpanel to elicit effects from different colored spotlights, holiday, or seasonal lighting scenes—the works.

The entertainment continues outside, where 46-inch [Samsung](#) LED TVs displayed in dartboard-like cabinets and four audio zones of [Sonance](#) outdoor-rated speakers serve the 60-foot loggia, backyard, and cabana. The outdoor and indoor A/V equipment are all tied together by a massive AMX system that controls virtually everything in the house. It's a grand setup that gives the homeowners an easy, simple, and convenient means of managing all aspects of their enormous house. With the time saved, they're able to fully enjoy all the amazing A/V venues their entertainment palace has to offer. **EH**

PINK NOISE MAKES GOOD MUSIC

Ever heard of having your house-wide audio system calibrated? Although it's doable by simply linking your stereo system to speakers in other rooms and calling it a day, if you want high-quality audio throughout your house, the system should be equalized, especially if subwoofers are involved and powered by different amplifiers than the speakers. "When you add subwoofers it makes the final calibration of the whole-house audio system so much more important," says Jason Voorhees of Southern California-based home systems integration firm Cantara. "One of our commitments to every project we do is to run a "pink noise" generator through the system and use it to analyze, calibrate, and equalize the audio." Pink noise, which can be accessed via an iPhone app, sounds like a test tone and is the type of noise that the human ear roughly perceives as having the same loudness across all frequencies.

Want more ideas for creating lighting scenes in your own home? Tap here.

Systems & Equipment

Control: AMX
Lighting Control: Vantage Controls
TVs: Samsung, Sharp
Speakers & Subwoofers: Sonance, Triad
A/V Components: Autonomic, AppleTV, DirecTV
Home Theater Speakers: Genelec
Video Projector: Digital Projection
Projection Screen: Stewart Filmscreen
A/V Control: Integra
Stage Lighting: Red Fish Illuminations
Networking: Cisco

PHOTOGRAPHY: Andrew Bramasco **SYSTEMS DESIGN & INSTALLATION:** [Cantara](#), Costa Mesa, Calif. **ARCHITECT:** [David Pierce Hohmann Architects & Associates](#), Costa Mesa, Calif. **STAGE LIGHTING:** [Red Fish Illuminations](#), Newnan, Ga.