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WHAT'S ON: A ROOM TO WATCH

A JEWEL-LIKE ROOM FROM A RECENT DESIGNER

SHOWHOUSE DEMONSTRATES TODAY'S
HOME ENTERTAINMENT POSSIBILITIES.

*By Nancy Brannigan Painter
Photography by Daniel Eifert*

PLASMA AND LCD FLAT-PANEL TELEVISIONS HAVE STIRRED UP A design revolution inside the home. No longer viewed as a mere appliance, the TV is now an integral part of the room, a design element receiving as much consideration as a piece of fine art.

With units measuring 4 inches deep or less and screens in sizes ranging from tiny to mammoth, placement possibilities are endless. As a result, today's decor-friendly models are everywhere, including the kitchen, bedroom, and bath, and the terms *media* and *entertainment room* have become part of home-design vernacular.

When Tere Bresin of Beret Design Group was invited to par-

ticipate in the recent Designer Showhouse of New Jersey event to raise money for the Cancer Center at Hackensack University Medical Center, she decided that the second floor of the lavish 1910 Mediterranean-style mansion in Englewood needed a media room. She wanted to create a classic space that married high-end technology with luxurious comfort and elegance. Envisioning her client as a woman in the entertainment field—"a diva of sorts," she says—Bresin planned the room as a personal space for relaxing and spending time alone as well as a place for family and friends to visit. "This is an adult's room, a place to center oneself

and relax," says Bresin. "I pictured her curling up on the sofa pouring herself a glass of wine." Fittingly, she titled the room "Her Retreat."

Rather than hanging the 50-inch plasma TV on the wall, as is commonly done, Bresin opted for the warmth of wood cabinetry. The custom-designed mahogany wall unit with Art Deco-style molding houses speakers, accent lighting, and a DVD server as well as the TV. The cabinetry's shallow depth keeps it from overwhelming the room.

Other elements in the room serve as counterpoint to the leading-edge electronics. Cameo-pink and pale-mushroom tones soften the space, while the rock-crystal chandelier adds a dramatic accent. Walls are covered in troweled Venetian plaster finished with luminescent paint. Furniture and window treatments feature lush fabrics but are carefully scaled in size to complement the room. Antiques and artwork complete the classic sensibility.

"I love the balance of materials, the textures, the fabrics," Bresin says. Bresin was one of more than twenty top interior designers and landscapers who contributed their time and talents to the showhouse in its inaugural year. And the results were more than aesthetic. Nearly 5,000 people visited the showhouse during its five-week run, raising much needed money for the Cancer Center.



OPPOSITE: The customized mahogany-stained wall unit with Art Deco-style molding houses a 50-inch Runco plasma TV, speakers, and a server that stores up to 400 DVDs or CDs. The Egyptian Mahal-pattern rug, the luminescent wall paint, and the contemporary painting titled *Beauty School Dropout* by Erin Parish all echo the room's soft-pink and pale-mushroom tones. The tufted ottoman is upholstered in cameo-pink leather from Spinneybeck. Electronics installation and programming by Electronics Design Group, Piscataway.

LEFT: Bresin used fabric to enhance the room's elegant flair. A tapestry material from Kravet covers the custom sofa. Curtains of a cameo-pink Stroheim fabric trimmed in cream flow from beneath pleated Roman shades. Artwork and antiques, including the circa-1880 Venetian mirror, provide counterpoint to the modern electronics. Bleached-maple *Column Revealed* side tables custom-built by Lazarus and Williamson. Mirrored butler stand by Kravet Furniture.

ABOVE: "Art is an important element to me in any of the spaces I design," Bresin says. A large painting by Julie Heffernan grouped with a smaller painting by Watson Barrett brings a touch of nature's lushness to the room. The custom marble desk with steel base expands the room's function beyond entertainment. Venetian glass table lamps from Donghia.

