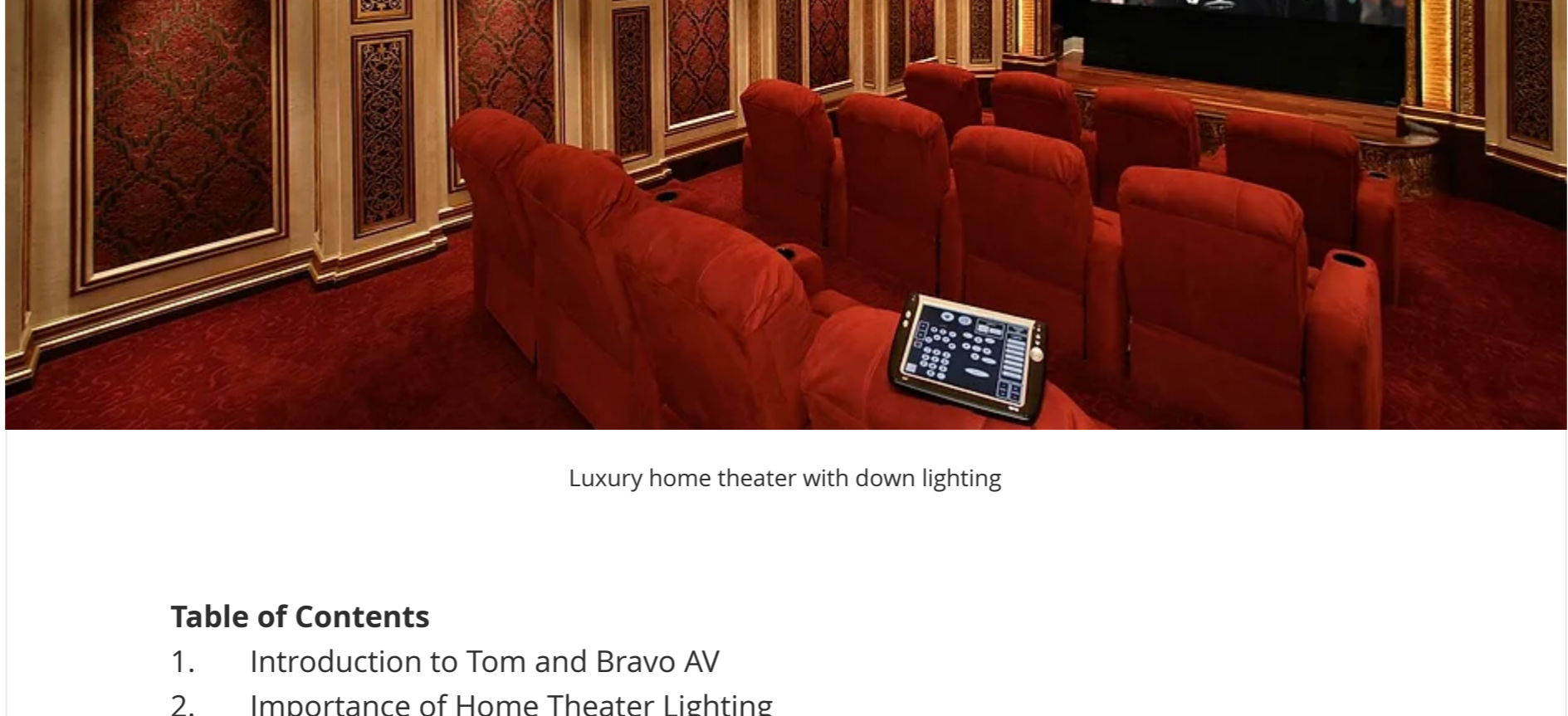


Tom Currin · 22 hours ago · 6 min read

# Everything you need to know about Home Theater Lighting, your questions answered!

Updated: 11 minutes ago

Welcome to a comprehensive guide on illuminating your private theater, featuring Tom Currin, a seasoned AV expert and the owner of Bravo AV.



Luxury home theater with down lighting

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Rob Skuba of National Smart Home (NSH) was thrilled to sit down with Tom Currin, the mastermind behind Bravo AV. Tom's not just any expert; he's certified by industry giants like CEDIA, THX, and the Home Technology Association. Bravo AV is the go-to name for those seeking a luxurious, immersive home theater experience, particularly when it comes to specialized lighting design.

In this exclusive interview, Tom will demystify the often-overlooked art of home theater lighting. He'll delve into its importance, explore the range of sophisticated options available, and offer insights on making the best choices for your space. If you're considering a premium home theater installation, this conversation is your essential guide.

### Importance of Home Theater Lighting

**NSH:** Tom, we often focus on the big screens and sound systems in home theaters. But lighting seems like the unsung hero. Why is it so crucial?

**Tom:** You're spot on, everyone's eyes go straight to the 4K projectors and Dolby Atmos sound systems, but lighting is what ties it all together. It sets the mood and ambiance, enhancing the visual quality of whatever you're watching.

**NSH:** Makes sense. So it's not just about aesthetics, then?

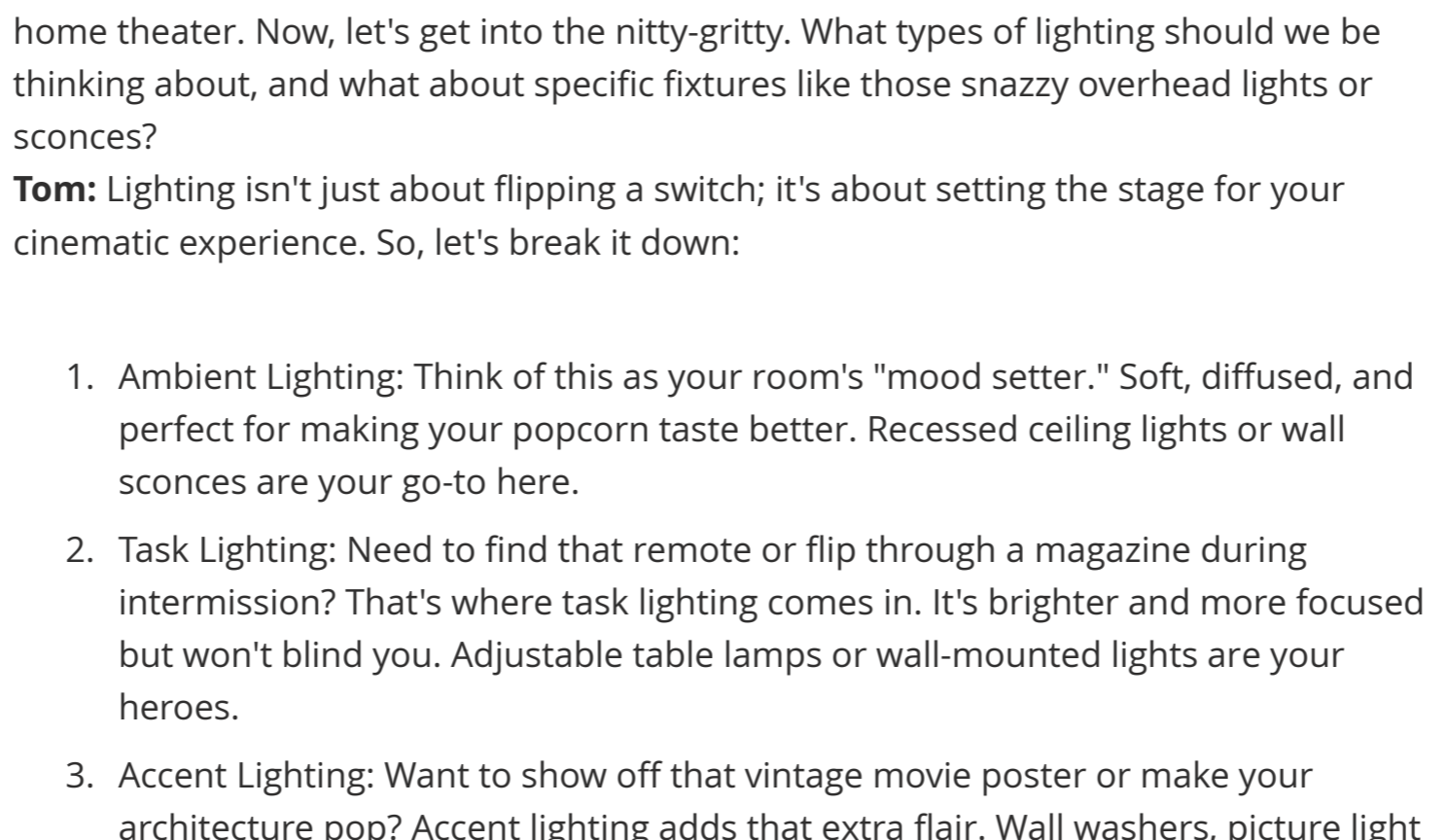
**Tom:** Right, it's not just about making the room look good. Proper lighting reduces eye strain, which is a big deal when you're watching a three-hour trilogy. It also helps in creating a more comfortable and immersive setting by minimizing distractions and focusing your attention on the screen.

**NSH:** What about safety? I've been in some home theaters where it's pitch black, and I can't see where I'm going.

**Tom:** Excellent point. Safety is often overlooked, but it's vital. Imagine navigating through the dark to grab a snack or go to the restroom. That's where step and aisle lighting come into play. They guide you safely without disturbing the movie-watching experience.

**NSH:** So, it's like a full package—mood, comfort, and safety.

**Tom:** Exactly. It's all about enhancing your overall experience, from the moment you walk into the room until the credits roll.



Private Upscale Theater with elegant sconces

### Types of Home Theater Lighting

**NSH:** Tom, you've already got us all lit up about the importance of good lighting in a home theater. Now, let's get into the nitty-gritty. What types of lighting should we be thinking about, and what about specific fixtures like those snazzy overhead lights or sconces?

**Tom:** Lighting isn't just about flipping a switch; it's about setting the stage for your cinematic experience. So, let's break it down:

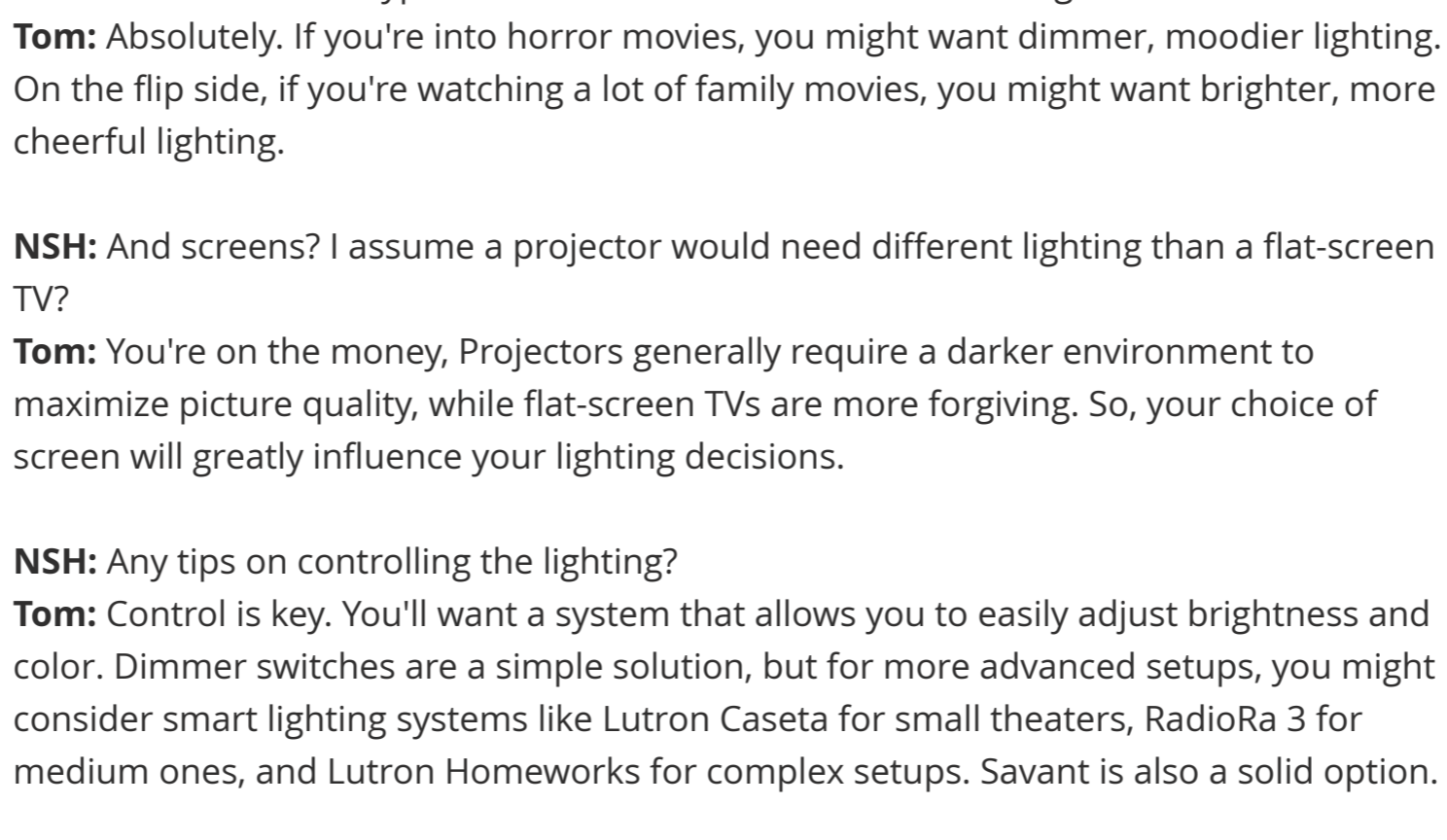
1. Ambient Lighting: Think of this as your room's "mood setter." Soft, diffused, and perfect for making your popcorn taste better. Recessed ceiling lights or wall sconces are your go-to here.
2. Task Lighting: Need to find that remote or flip through a magazine during intermission? That's where task lighting comes in. It's brighter and more focused but won't blind you. Adjustable table lamps or wall-mounted lights are your heroes.
3. Accent Lighting: Want to show off that vintage movie poster or make your architecture pop? Accent lighting adds that extra flair. Wall washers, picture light fixtures, or even track lighting specifically designed for accenting can really make things stand out.

### Specific fixtures

1. Overhead Lights: These are your "lights, camera, action!" kind of lights. Great for when the credits roll, and you need to find your way to the snack bar. Dimmable and versatile.
2. Sconces: These are your wallflowers, but in a good way. They add a cozy, cinematic vibe and can even highlight your room's best features.
3. Track Lighting: Got aisles? Got steps? Track lighting has got you covered. It's like having a spotlight where you need it, without stealing the show. LED strip lights are also a popular choice for these areas.

**NSH:** So, what you're saying is, it's not a one-light-fits-all kind of deal?

**Tom:** Bingo, Rob! It's about layering these different types of lighting and fixtures to create your own blockbuster experience. Each has its role, and when they come together, it's showtime!



Over head chandelier in a luxury private cinema

### Choosing the Right Home Theater Lighting

**NSH:** So, we've got different types of lighting. How do we go about choosing the right one for our home theater?

**Tom:** The first thing to consider is the size and layout of your room. That'll dictate the type and placement of your lighting fixtures.

**NSH:** What about the type of movies or content we'll be watching? Does that matter?

**Tom:** Absolutely. If you're into horror movies, you might want dimmer, moodier lighting. On the flip side, if you're watching a lot of family movies, you might want brighter, more cheerful lighting.

**NSH:** And screens? I assume a projector would need different lighting than a flat-screen TV?

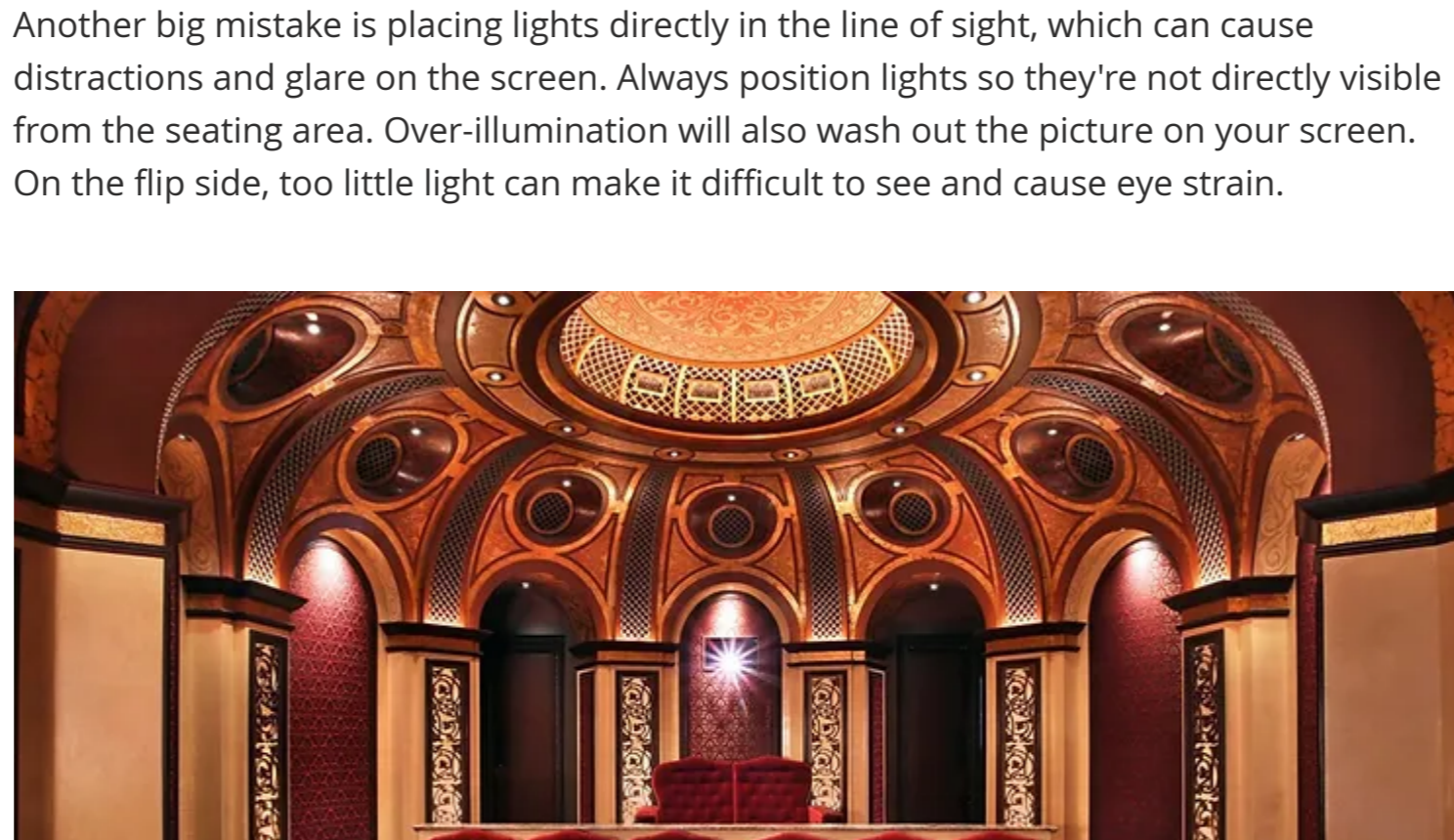
**Tom:** You're on the money, Projectors generally require a darker environment to maximize picture quality, while flat-screen TVs are more forgiving. So, your choice of screen will greatly influence your lighting decisions.

**NSH:** Any tips on controlling the lighting?

**Tom:** Control is key. You'll want a system that allows you to easily adjust brightness and color. Dimmer switches are a simple solution, but for more advanced setups, you might consider smart lighting systems like Lutron Caseta for small theaters, RadioRa 3 for medium ones, and Lutron Homeworks for complex setups. Savant is also a solid option.

**NSH:** So, it's not just about picking the lights, but also how you control them.

**Tom:** Exactly. Control is what takes your lighting from good to great. It allows you to adapt the environment to whatever you're watching, making the experience truly immersive.



High End Home Theater With Track Lighting

### Avoiding Glare and Shadows

**NSH:** Tom, let's talk about something that can ruin a good movie night—glare and shadows on the screen. How do we avoid that?

**Tom:** Ah, the dreaded glare and shadows! They're the villains in the story of home theater lighting. The key is in the placement of your lighting fixtures.

**NSH:** So, it's all about where the lights are positioned?

**Tom:** Exactly. You want to position your lighting fixtures behind the seating area or along the side walls. This minimizes direct light on the screen and reduces the chances of glare.

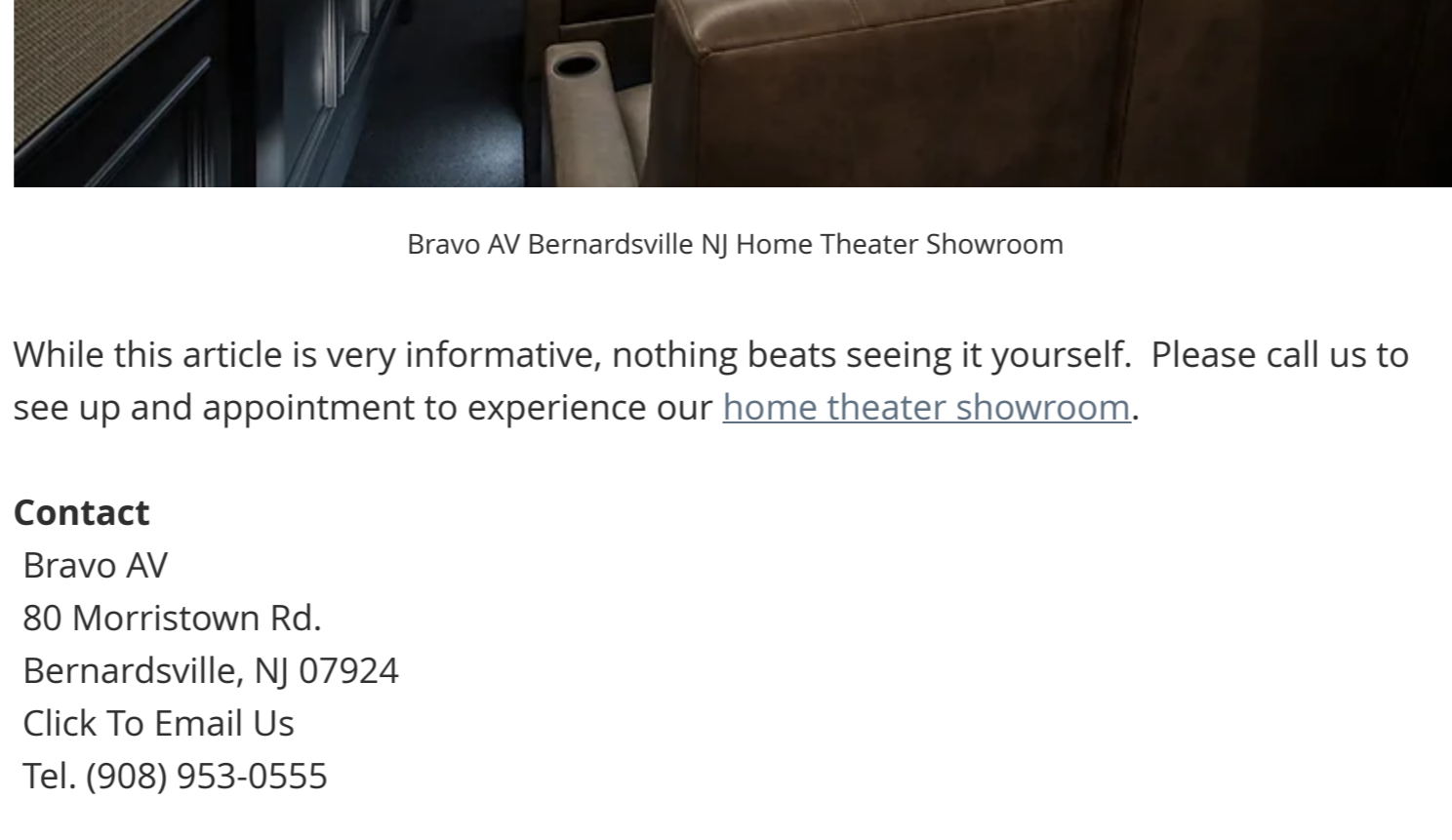
**NSH:** What about dimmable lights? Are they a good idea?

**Tom:** Dimmable lights are a game-changer, Rob. They allow you to adjust lighting levels based on your preferences and what you're watching. It's all about creating a more immersive experience.

**NSH:** Any other tips to avoid these lighting pitfalls?

**Tom:** One thing people often overlook is external light. If your home theater has windows, make sure to use blackout curtains or blinds. This helps create a dark and immersive environment for the best viewing experience.

Another big mistake is placing lights directly in the sight, which can cause distractions and glare on the screen. Always position lights so they're not directly visible from the seating area. Over-illumination will also wash out the picture on your screen. On the flip side, too little light can make it difficult to see and cause eye strain.



Upscale Private Theater with Multiple Layers of Lighting

**NSH:** So, it's about finding that Goldilocks zone, huh?

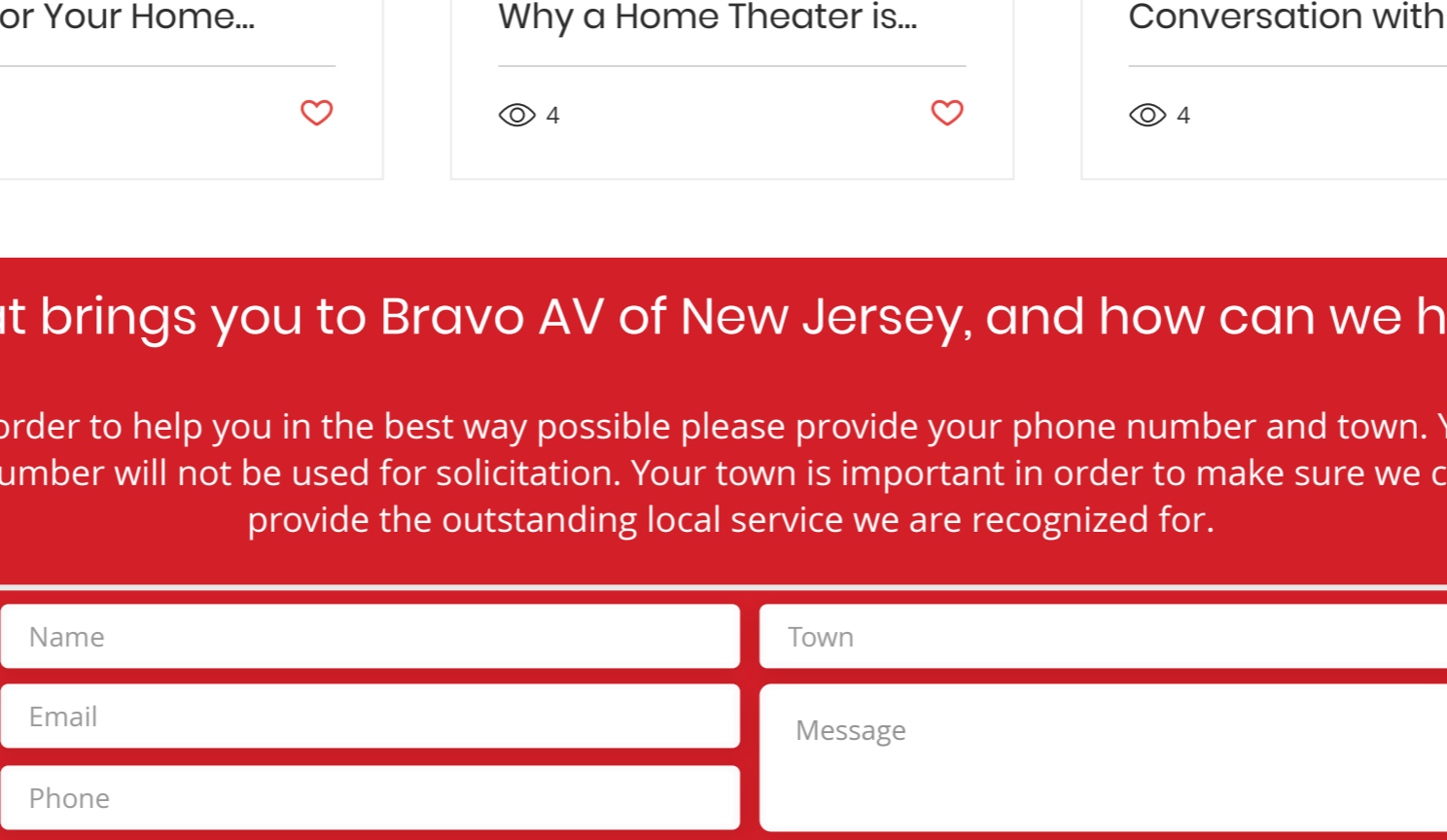
**Tom:** Exactly, it's all about balance. You want enough light to see clearly but not so much that it interferes with the screen.

**NSH:** Any other tips?

**Tom:** One more thing to consider is the type of light bulbs you use. Harsh or bright lights can cause eye strain and discomfort during long movie sessions. Opt for softer, diffused lighting options to create a more comfortable atmosphere.

### Closing Remarks

And that's a wrap, folks! A huge thank you to Tom for sharing his expert knowledge on home theater lighting. We've covered everything from the importance of lighting to common mistakes to avoid, and even delved into specific types of fixtures. It's been an illuminating discussion, to say the least!



Bravo AV Bernardsville NJ Home Theater Showroom

While this article is very informative, nothing beats seeing it yourself. Please call us to see up and appointment to experience our [home theater showroom](#).

### Contact

Bravo AV  
80 Morristown Rd.  
Bernardsville, NJ 07924  
Click To Email Us  
Tel. (908) 953-0555

For additional resources, please visit our Home Theater web page. Tom Currin, the owner of Bravo AV, is a CEDIA Professional Designer, a certified THX Level 1 home theater professional, and a member of the Home Acoustic Alliance trained to Level II. You can contact Tom directly at (908) 953-0555 or through email at [Tom@BravoAV.com](mailto:Tom@BravoAV.com). **Stay tuned for more expert interviews on all things tech and entertainment!**

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