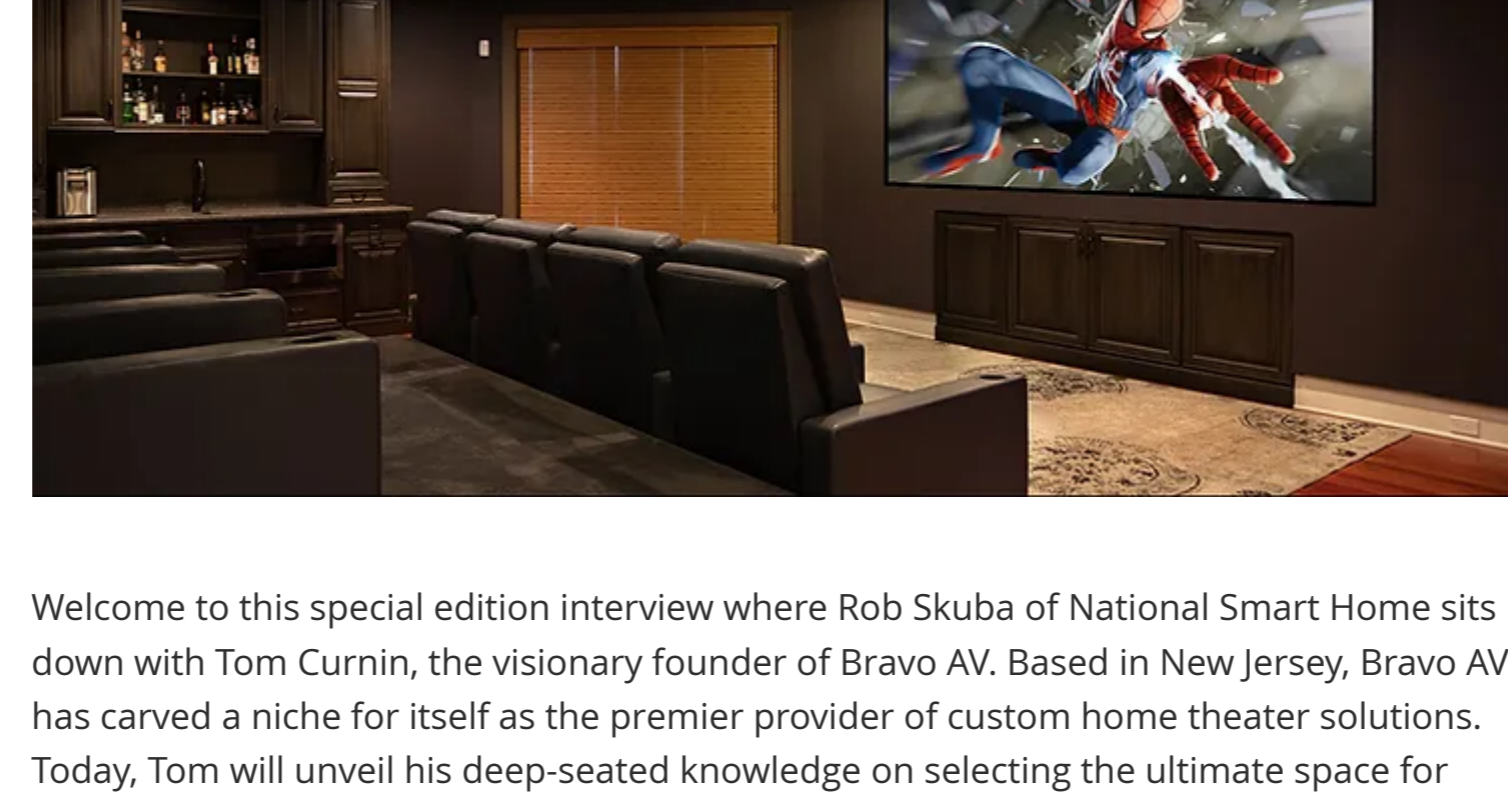


Tom Curnin · 19 hours ago · 6 min read

# Choosing the Perfect Space for Your Home Theater: An Expert Guide by Tom Curnin of Bravo AV

Unlock the Secrets to Optimal Home Theater Dimensions, Acoustics, and More with Industry Expert Tom Curnin



Welcome to this special edition interview where Rob Skuba of National Smart Home sits down with Tom Curnin, the visionary founder of Bravo AV. Based in New Jersey, Bravo AV has carved a niche for itself as the premier provider of custom home theater solutions. Today, Tom will unveil his deep-seated knowledge on selecting the ultimate space for your home theater, exploring the nuances of room dimensions, and shedding light on the groundbreaking design concept known as the Golden Trapagon. Whether you're an avid home theater aficionado or a seasoned industry professional, this interview is set to be an invaluable resource. So, make yourself comfortable and prepare for an enlightening conversation!

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### 1. Introduction: Setting the Stage for Your Home Theater

**NSH:** Welcome, everyone! Today, we're going on a cinematic journey with Tom Curnin, a certified THX Level 1 home theater professional and the owner of Bravo AV. Tom, it's an honor to have you here.

**Tom:** Thank you, Rob. I'm thrilled to be here and share some in-depth knowledge on creating the ultimate home theater experience, from location to lighting and everything in between.

**NSH:** Fantastic! We're not just talking about a big screen and a popcorn machine; we're diving into the nitty-gritty details that make or break a home theater. So, let's get started!

### 2. Why Location Matters: The Best Places for Your Home Theater

**NSH:** Tom, let's kick things off with location. Why is it so pivotal?

**Tom:** Location is the cornerstone of your private cinema. It's not just about the room's size or shape; it's also about its position within the house. An isolated room like a basement is ideal for fewer distractions, but some may prefer a central location for family gatherings. The location also affects the room's acoustics, light control, and even your home's overall value.

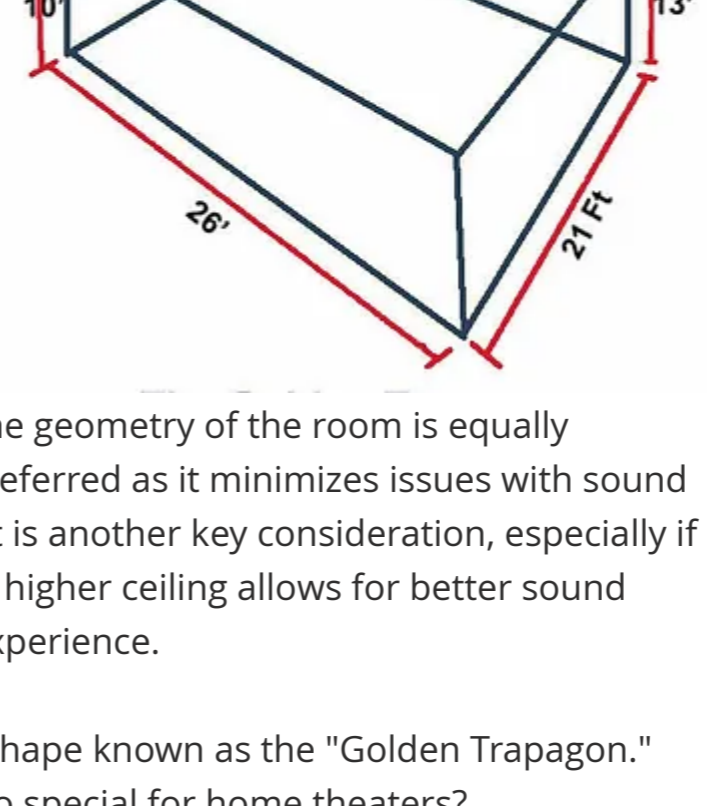
**NSH:** So, it's a multifaceted decision that goes beyond just picking an empty room.

**Tom:** Absolutely. And let's not forget about the room's proximity to noisy areas like mechanical rooms or busy streets. These factors can significantly impact your theater's sound quality.

### 3. The Ideal Home Theater Dimensions: A Comprehensive Exploration

**NSH:** Let's shift our focus to the dimensions of the room. What are the optimal sizes and shapes for a home theater?

**Tom:** Dimensions play a pivotal role in the home theater experience. THX suggests a room size of at least 15ft x 20ft for the best audio-visual results. However, it's not just about square footage; the geometry of the room is equally important. A rectangular layout is generally preferred as it minimizes issues with sound reflection and visual distortions. Ceiling height is another key consideration, especially if you're planning on multiple rows of seating. A higher ceiling allows for better sound dispersion and a more comfortable viewing experience.



**NSH:** You mentioned earlier a specific room shape known as the "Golden Trapagon." Could you delve into what makes this shape so special for home theaters?

**Tom:** Certainly, this particular shape is inspired by the Golden Ratio, a mathematical principle that's been used in art and architecture for centuries. In a room designed according to this principle, you'll find that the walls are not parallel. This unique configuration minimizes sound reflections, which in turn reduces echo and enhances overall audio quality.

**NSH:** How does this unique shape contribute to the visual aspects of a home theater?

**Tom:** Excellent question. The angled walls in this specific room shape help to reduce light reflections, ensuring that the visuals on the screen remain vibrant and clear. It's a win-win situation—improved audio and visual quality.

**NSH:** So, if someone has the opportunity to design a room from the ground up, this is the way to go?

**Tom:** If you're building a new room and aiming for the ultimate home theater experience, this shape offers the superior blend of audio and visuals. It's the go-to choice for those who want the best!

### 4. The Science of Sound: Acoustics and Soundproofing

**NSH:** Sound is often the unsung hero of the home theater experience. How do we ensure immaculate acoustics?

**Tom:** You're absolutely right, sound is half the experience. To achieve the best sound quality, you need to consider acoustic treatments and soundproofing. Positioning your theater away from daily distractions like traffic or noisy neighbors is the first step. If that's not possible, soundproofing becomes your best friend. You also need to consider the room's materials. Hard surfaces reflect sound, while soft surfaces absorb it. Balancing these elements is key to achieving the optimal experience.

### 5. Location, Location, Location: Basement vs. First Floor vs. Second Floor

**NSH:** Let's talk about the pros and cons of placing a home theater in different locations within the house, like the basement, first floor, or second floor. What are your thoughts?

**Tom:** Each location has its own set of advantages and challenges. Let's break it down:

**Basement:**

- Pros: Basements are often isolated, making them ideal for soundproofing and minimizing distractions. They also usually offer more freedom in terms of layout and design, as they're often a blank canvas.
- Cons: Basements can be prone to moisture issues, which could affect the longevity of your equipment. They are also out of the way and not easily accessible or convenient.

**First Floor:**

- Pros: Easy access for the family and guests. It's also easier to integrate a first-floor home theater into the home's existing HVAC and electrical systems.
- Cons: Noise from the kitchen, living room, or other busy areas could be disruptive. Soundproofing becomes more critical here.

**Second Floor:**

- Pros: Like the basement, a second-floor room can be more isolated, providing a quieter environment.
- Cons: Structural integrity becomes a concern, especially with heavy equipment and seating. Soundproofing between floors is also a challenge to prevent noise from traveling to other rooms.

**NSH:** That's incredibly insightful, Tom. It sounds like the location could significantly impact the home theater and everyday living experience.

**Tom:** Absolutely, Rob. The location isn't just about where you have space; it's about optimizing that space for the best possible experience.

### 6. Budgeting: Is It a Factor When Choosing a Space?

**NSH:** Some might think budget is a factor when choosing a space. What's your take on this, Tom?

**Tom:** While budget is often a consideration in the overall project, when it comes to choosing a space within your home, it's less about budget and more about suitability. The costs for soundproofing, acoustics, and equipment will be there regardless of the room you choose. What's more important is selecting a space that aligns with your vision and can accommodate the technical requirements for a high-quality private cinema.

**NSH:** So, it's more about the room's potential than the cost involved in converting it.

**Tom:** Precisely. The focus should be on the room's ability to deliver an exceptional experience. Budget considerations come later when you're selecting equipment, seating, and other features.

### 7. The Science of Sound: Acoustics and Soundproofing

**NSH:** You've touched on the importance of sound quality. Can you delve deeper into the science of acoustics and why soundproofing is crucial?

**Tom:** Absolutely, acoustics is the science of sound, and in this space, it's critical on how sound behaves in the room. You want to minimize sound reflections and absorb unwanted frequencies. Materials like acoustic panels, diffusers, and bass traps can help achieve this.

**NSH:** And soundproofing?

**Tom:** Soundproofing is about isolating your theater from external noise and also preventing sound from leaking out. Techniques include adding mass to walls, sealing gaps, and using acoustic insulation. Some higher end projects allow us to "suspend" the room within a room, this is where you build an envelope into the room that holds the entire theater; this creates insulated cavities between the exterior and interior walls of the theater. It's not just about enjoying your movies; it's also about being a good neighbor!

### 8. The Visual Experience: Screen Size and Projectors

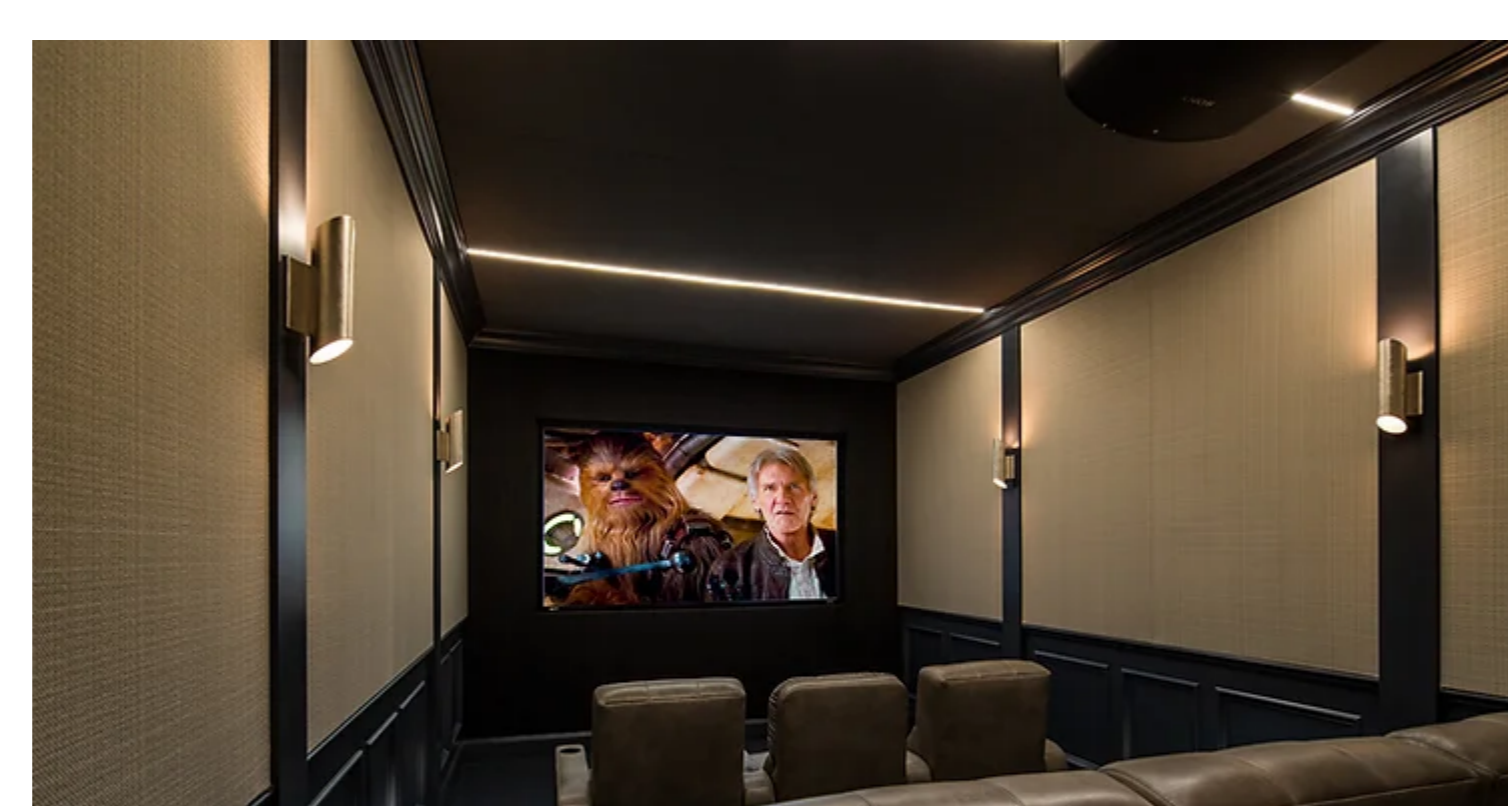
**NSH:** Let's switch gears and talk about the visual experience. How do you determine the ideal screen size and the type of projector to use?

**Tom:** Screen size is determined by the room's dimensions and the viewing distance. The THX standard recommends that the viewing angle should be about 36 degrees from the viewer's position. As for projectors, it depends on the room's lighting conditions, the screen size, and your budget. There are various types, like DLP, LCD, and even Laser projectors, each with their pros and cons.

### 11. Final Thoughts: The Ultimate Home Theater Experience

**NSH:** Any final words for our audience, Tom?

**Tom:** A home theater is more than just a room; it's an experience. From the visuals and sound to the comfort and ambiance, every detail matters. And remember, the best home theater is the one that brings you and your loved ones closer through the magic of cinema.



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](#).

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For additional resources, please visit our Home Theater web page. Tom Curnin, a member 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. **Stay tuned for more expert interviews on all things tech and entertainment!**

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