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MIDWEST  
EDITION

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## Electric Ballroom

When Marc Franken set out to design one of his latest projects—a 30,000-square-foot home in rural Pennsylvania—he had an interesting challenge. The homeowners wanted a place that would accommodate day-to-day family life as well as a high-volume social and charitable life; it is not uncommon for the couple to host 2,000-person charity balls.

The home, which was custom-built from the ground up, is a palatial sprawl with a ballroom, public gardens, 24 zones of music and a professional-quality tiered home theater.

The centerpiece of the house is a ballroom that accommodates both live and recorded entertainment. This was achieved by sound expert Steve Haas and his company SH Acoustics, which has Carnegie Hall on its list of clients. Windows, ceilings and moldings feature acoustical traps to help distribute and contain sound, as do the art gallery balcony and coves. Since heating and cooling a space this large can be difficult and expensive, Franken designed a system based on ground wells, which—combined with the 54 au-

tomated thermostats—help keep the interior at a comfortable temperature at all times.

The homeowner also requested a pub area for small gatherings. This space features a flat screen that supports a Panasonic rear-projection high-definition projector and four satellite video feeds. “The homeowner can watch one event in full-screen and bring up three others down the side of the screen through an AMX Modero touchscreen on a bar,” explains Franken. If they miss part of the action, they can rewind and view it again, since all four satellite receivers have DV-R technology built in. The pub area—called the cabana—feeds into an outside swimming pool complex and the grand entrance to the \$400,000 home theater.

Franken cut into the ground to accommodate a tiered seating plan, a 12-foot screen and a projector for the theater. A final touch: a full concession stand and box office. □

*Frankentek, 609.654.6888, [www.frankentk.com](http://www.frankentk.com); SH Acoustics, 203.877.6340, [www.shacoustics.com](http://www.shacoustics.com)*

*A Pennsylvania home received an acoustic makeover for its double-height ballroom from the company that worked on Carnegie Hall.*