

# SPLASH *home*

A CHICAGO SUN-TIMES<sub>.com</sub> PUBLICATION

SEPTEMBER 4-10, 2014 | NORTH SHORE

## *Haute* homes

WHAT'S TRENDING FOR FALL — **PLUS**, 4 MEDIA ROOMS JUST IN TIME FOR FOOTBALL SEASON



### **INSIDE**

SPOTS THAT  
ROCK IN  
**HIGHLAND  
PARK**

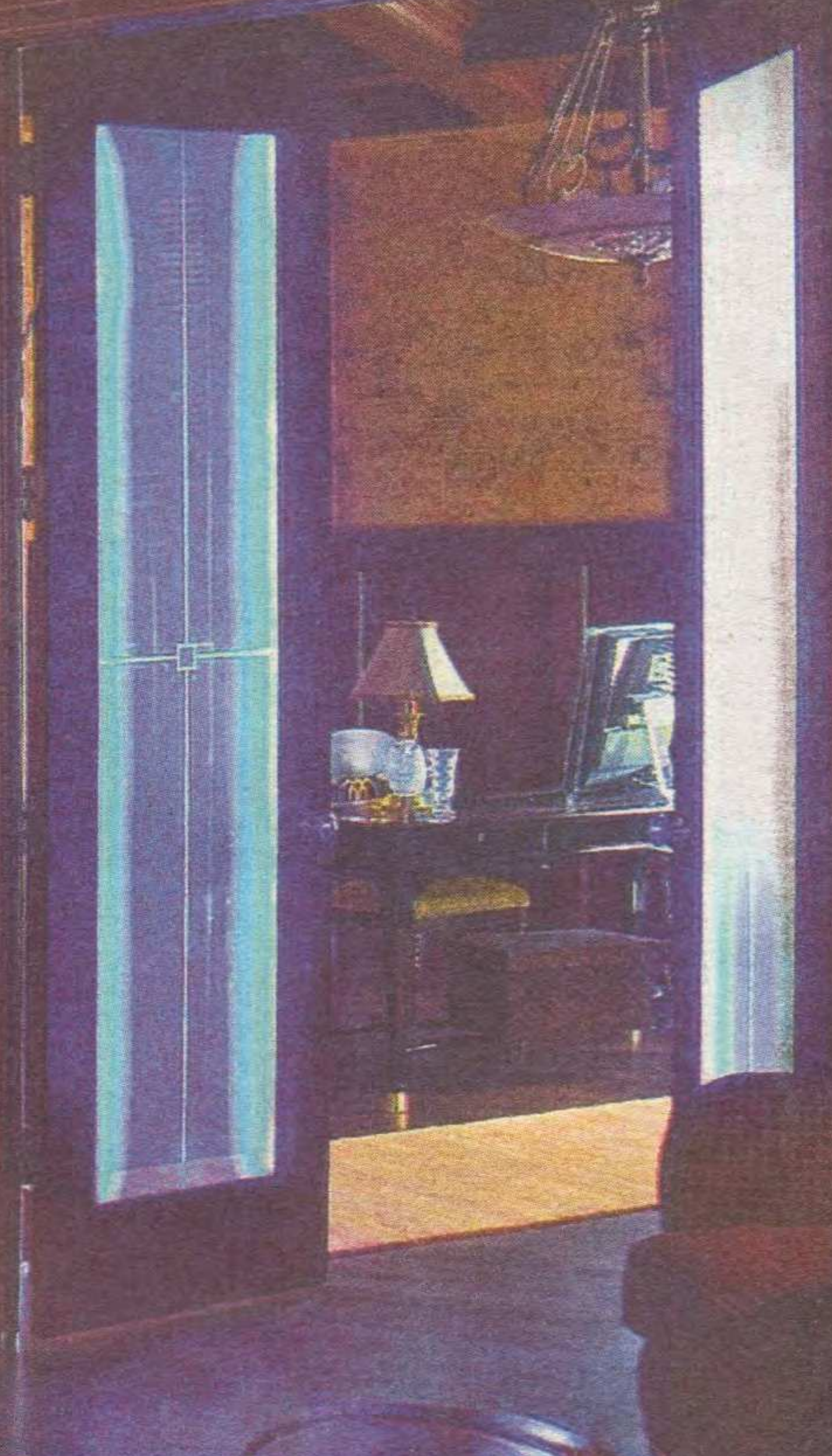
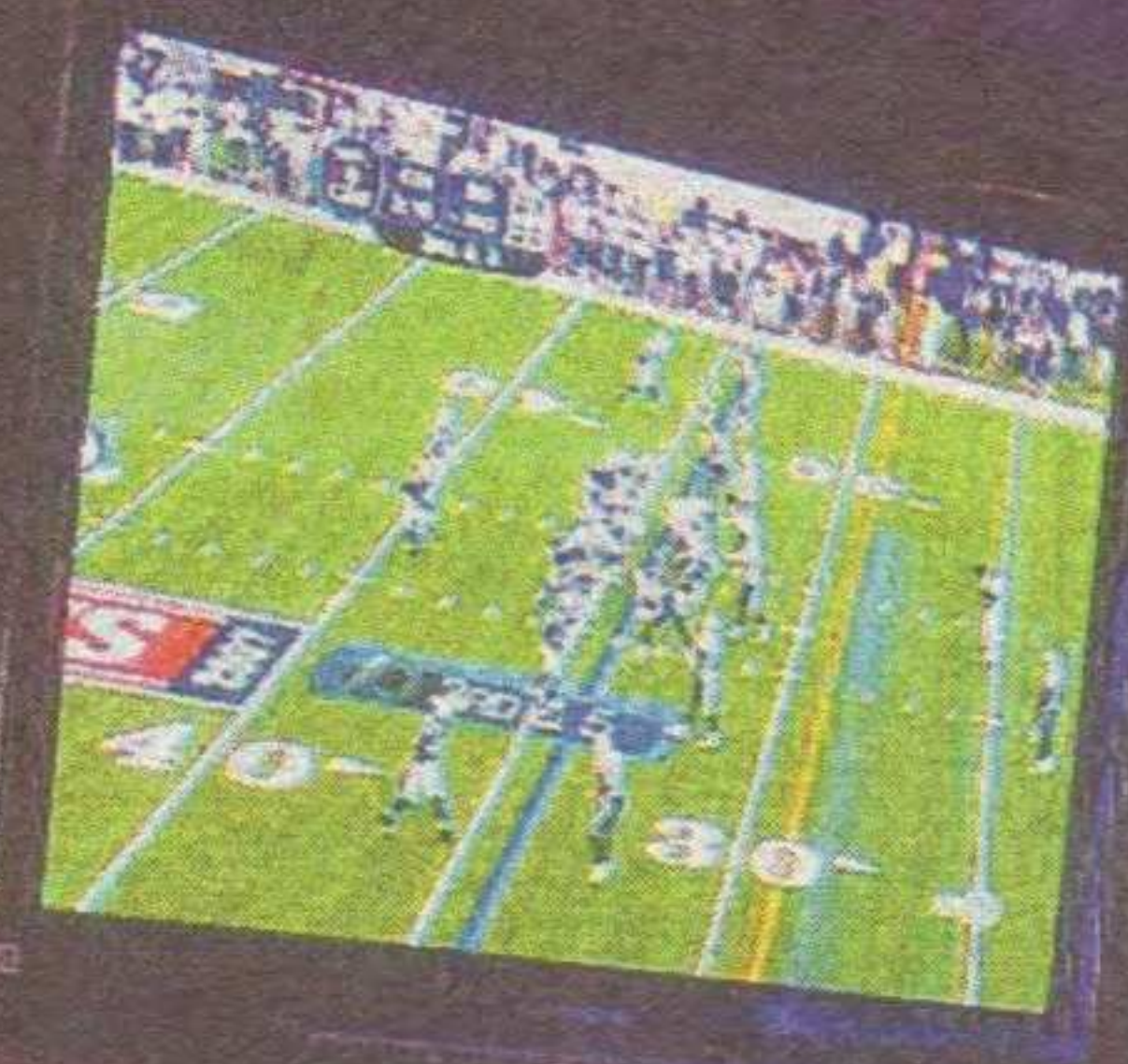
A CLOSER  
LOOK AT  
**HIGHWOOD**

& MORE

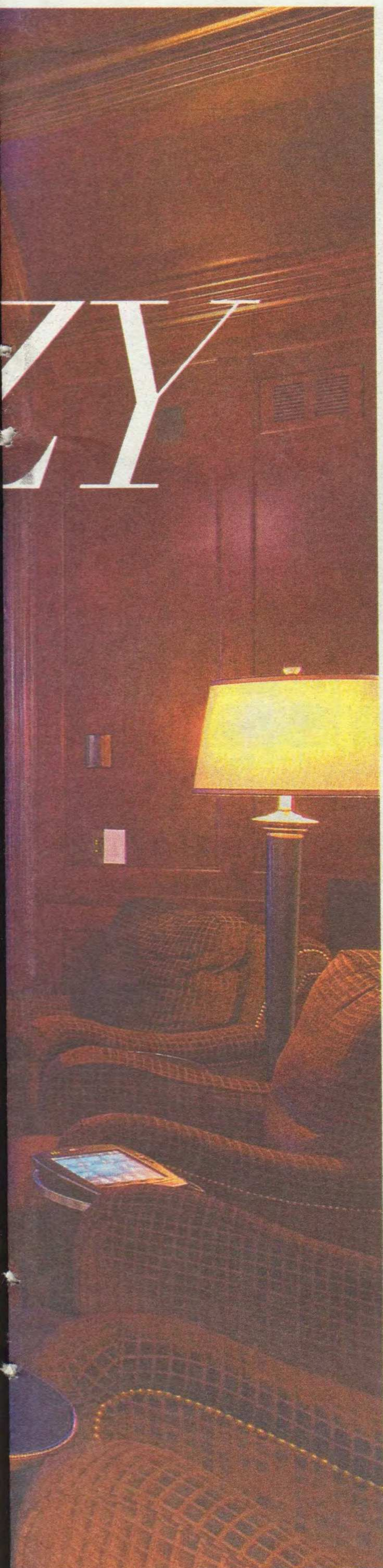


feature

# MEDIA FRENZY







**LEFT:** This Highland Park man cave is the perfect place to watch every NFL game at one time. Plus, the room is private, enclosed by a glass door that can be frosted with the push of a button.

## Home theaters are becoming a must-have in North Shore living

BY ASHLEY DEVICK

The latest requirement in luxury listings is the media room. Beyond the standard flat-screened man cave, these mini-theaters showcase top-of-the-line sound, seating and projection. So what makes a media room stand out? According to **Steve Aisen**, founder of Newgard Custom Homes (181 Beach, Glencoe, 773-505-2556; [Newgardhomes.com](http://Newgardhomes.com)), it's all about creating the "going out to the movies" experience right in the comfort of your home. It starts with the big picture — literally: Since these are ultimately movie rooms, opt for a screen size between 100 inches and 140 inches. "We recommend an HD projector, and sometimes people even want 3-D," says Aisen. And since technology is always changing, it's important to plan for the future. "We're putting in cabling and wiring with the capacity that can handle equipment that hasn't even been marketed yet," he adds.

Once the visual technology is in place, homeowners strive to create lounge-like spaces — the more comfortable the better. A stadium configuration adds to the experience. Opt for big, plush chairs with cupholders and reclining backs. Aisen recommends implementing seats for somewhere

**ABOVE:** Pickell recently helped create this "Star Wars"-themed media room in the North Shore. The theater, which took more than two years to complete, is equipped with 12 leather chairs, 7.1 surround sound, a CineWide screen and hand-painted murals of images from the "Star Wars" movies.

between six and eight people, and cautions against creating a room much bigger than that. "You don't want to create an empty stadium experience, if the views from the back are too far away."

Finally, a media room should be equipped with an excellent audio system to create "an ambient space that surrounds you, like [in] a theater," says **Orren Pickell**, president and CEO of Orren Pickell Building Group (550 Frontage, Northfield; [Pickellbuilders.com](http://Pickellbuilders.com)). Given the expense of adding a media room, Pickell suggests finding ways to make it multi-functional. One of his clients created a "Star Wars"-themed media room that doubles as a stage where musicians can play during parties and the acoustics are already in place.

Either way, adding a personal touch can give a home theater extra legs. "When you're doing a media room, you can choose your own color palette, going with something more contemporary or old film noir or something a little bit more 1950s and '60s," says Aisen. Why not make it your own? It's all about fun, after all.

Grab some popcorn and sit back while we show you some on-the-market homes with the ultimate media spaces.



## feature



A mile from downtown Wilmette, this 2007 construction features an array of built-in amenities and smart features, like automated lights and window shades and a kitchen TV that rises from the countertop.

The lower-level media room is set up with seating for nine, but has room to pack in many more. The rest of the lower level is finished with a workout area, rec room and full bathroom. "No corner of the house is untouched," says realtor **David Kipnis** (Coldwell Banker, call 312-375-9669).

There's an in-law suite on the first floor, and three more bedrooms upstairs. The master suite boasts Brazilian cherry floors and plenty of sunlight. Plus, "the bathroom has a soaking tub, double granite sink and separate steam shower," says Kipnis. Every bedroom has its own bathroom and there are two additional half baths.

An enormous second-floor sundeck spans the length of the house and the garage offers space for two cars plus storage.



### Divine details

2015 LAKE IN WILMETTE,  
\$1.793 MILLION



### The lakehouse

22 LAKEWOOD IN HIGHLAND  
PARK, \$7.999 MILLION

For a family that loves to entertain, this home is a dream come true. Outside, there's a phenomenal boathouse — the only one of its kind on the North Shore — with a deck, entertainment room, full bath and sweeping views. What sets it apart is the electric boat launch, a feature that's been grandfathered in and cannot be recreated in the area.

Inside, the home is packed with amenities, including an exercise room, music room and regulation size racquetball court. The movie theater boasts stadium seating and a 10-foot screen. "This room was built as a media room, with sconces on the walls, overhead lighting and surround sound," says realtor **Vikki Wolin** (Coldwell Banker, call 847-310-5535).

The seven-bedroom, 8.2-bathroom home features an enormous master suite with his-and-her bathrooms, amazing lake views and a "closet the size of an apartment," says Wolin.

The main level includes a living and dining room, family room and a large porch designed for feeling the lake breezes. The cook's kitchen is spacious, with an island that seats five and every imaginable amenity. To top it off, there's also a heated four-car garage.

