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Three Rooms. Three Problems. Global Recognition.

Audio Images earns top honors at the 2026 Americas CEDIA Smart Home Awards, winning Best Home Cinema Level II, an Honorable Mention in the same category, and finalist recognition in Best Home Cinema Level I.

IRVINE, CA — September 3, 2026 — Audio Images, one of the most awarded home theater and media room integrators in the world, was recognized in three separate categories at the 2026 Americas CEDIA Smart Home Awards this week. Pinnacle Cinema won the top prize in Best Home Cinema Level II. Avalon Cinema was named to Honorable Mention in the same category. K-Star Cinema was a finalist in Best Home Cinema Level I.

CEDIA is the global trade association for the home technology industry, and its Smart Home Awards are judged by an international panel of working integrators, architects, and interior designers. Being recognized in one category in a given year is significant. Being recognized in three, with three separate projects, is unusual.

What's more interesting than the awards themselves is what each project had to solve to earn them.

Pinnacle Cinema: 32,000 watts inside an Italian estate

Best Home Cinema Level II, 2026 Americas CEDIA Smart Home Awards

The client wanted a reference-quality room loud enough for a metal concert, isolated enough that the rest of the residence would never know it was running, and integrated so seamlessly into an Italian classical estate that the architecture would read as inevitable.

Audio Images built a room-within-a-room-within-a-room at the base of a three-story concrete shell. Resilient framing was decoupled from the concrete with isolation brackets. A separate timber frame carried the substantial dead load of the honed Port Laurent Black marble surrounds without compromising the acoustic decoupling. The floor is a floating raft on rubber suspension. The ceiling is a spring-suspended assembly with multiple board layers. Ambient noise floor came in at NC10. The family upstairs cannot tell the theater is running.

Inside the shell sits a 17.8.8 immersive Grima Systems ensemble driven by 32,000 watts of amplification, feeding a 236-inch Stewart Director's Choice screen from a Barco Nerthus projector. Eight subwoofers — four eighteen-inch and four twenty-one-inch — deliver reference-cinema SPL with substantial headroom to spare.

The most consequential design decision happened twenty-two months before the room was finished. Audio Images installed the 1,300-pound screen frame and the eight subwoofer cabinets first, then the marble, walnut, and arched wall niches were built around them. When the finished room came together, it read as architecture, not as equipment dressed with finishes.

Avalon Cinema: A rescue

Honorable Mention, Best Home Cinema Level II, 2026 Americas CEDIA Smart Home Awards

Avalon came to Audio Images as a rescue. The client already had a theater. It didn't work. Sound bled up into the kitchen and dining room above. The picture was underwhelming. The room rattled during heavy bass. The owners asked for someone to take it down to the slab and start over.

The design brief that came with the rebuild ran counter to nearly every principle of cinema acoustics: leather and wood surfaces throughout, an informal conversation pit at the front of the room instead of a formal tiered layout, and a ceiling that was low for the floor area. Every one of those choices worked against the sound.

Audio Images rebuilt from the inside out. New engineered spring-suspended ceiling. Dual-frame resiliently decoupled walls. Floating floor. Every corner detailed to prevent flanking paths. The finished isolation measures STC 65, genuinely high for a residence, and the kitchen above now runs a dishwasher during a movie without anyone noticing.

Reconciling the leather and wood interior with cinema-grade acoustics took real engineering. Roughly a dozen rounds of perforated leather samples and bench-tested wood slat configurations went into landing on patterns that were acoustically transparent enough to work while preserving the interior designer's vision. Behind the leather sit the speakers. Behind the wood sits the absorption. The room the family wanted and the room the sound required became the same room.

Late in construction, a plumbing failure two stories above flooded the finished space, requiring careful drying and selective remediation to protect the resilient construction underneath. The Barco Freya+ projector, weighing 232 pounds with an off-axis center of gravity, required three separate revisions to its spring-suspended mounting cradle before it held alignment cleanly under real-world bass loads.

Post-calibration video measurements sit well inside reference thresholds across every metric. The room performs at a level the original build never approached.

K-Star Cinema — A theater that opens

Finalist, Best Home Cinema Level I, 2026 Americas CEDIA Smart Home Awards

Most home cinemas are sealed rooms. K-Star was not supposed to be. The client wanted the theater to open — through a full 180-degree double-door archway at the back — into the bar and entertaining spaces beyond. Sports gatherings needed to feel continuous with the rest of the party. The client's two young daughters needed to be able to put on performances at the front of the room. Movie nights still needed to play as a proper cinema when the doors closed.

Engineering a sound-rated dual-leaf door that swings to a full 180 degrees is not a solved problem in the industry. Standard sound-rated door systems rely on a fixed astragal to seal the gap between leaves, and a fixed astragal is incompatible with that kind of swing. Audio Images engineered a sealing approach that delivered the isolation rating without one.

When the doors open, they physically cover the back-channel speakers mounted on the rear wall. Rather than relocate the speakers and compromise the layout, the system dynamically re-routes the back-channel signals to adjacent speakers whenever the doors swing wide. The immersive presentation is preserved whether the room is closed for a film or wide open for a Sunday of sports.

Isolation on K-Star was achieved with Hushframe's newer-generation resilient block system, chosen because it kept wall thickening to roughly one inch rather than the 1.7 inches typical of previous-generation systems. Across four walls of a residential cinema, that difference adds up to meaningful interior square footage the client uses for seating and circulation. Sound isolation the client will never see is still worth engineering carefully. Interior space the client uses every day is worth engineering for.

About Audio Images

Audio Images is a luxury residential technology integrator based in Irvine, California, serving Orange County, Los Angeles, and coastal Southern California. Since 1991, the company has designed and installed award-winning audio, video, lighting, climate, shades, security, and full-home automation systems for homeowners, architects, interior designers, and builders. As Solutioneers of Sight and Sound®, Audio Images merges artistry and engineering so the technology fades and the experience remains. Previous recognitions include Best Overall Home Theater in the World (2013), Best Media Room (2016, 2018, 2019), and Best Home Cinema Global (2020) and over 25 more. For more information: www.audioimages.tv.

Acoustic engineering and calibration on all three 2026 award-recognized projects were performed in collaboration with Anthony Grimani's PMI Engineering team. Video calibration was performed by Matt Smith of Avical.

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