

[www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/chi-1106\\_lobbyistnov06,0,4139377.story](http://www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/chi-1106_lobbyistnov06,0,4139377.story)

# chicagotribune.com

**The Lobbyist**

## Screen at the Wit Hotel

By Chris McNamara

Special to the Tribune

November 6, 2009

Most movie theaters smell of stale popcorn and oxidized Dr. Pepper. Screen, the theater inside the fledgling Wit Hotel ([screenatthewit.com](http://screenatthewit.com)), smells like a new luxury car. It handles like one too.



Two dozen plush recliners are situated in front of the 10 1/2-by-24 1/2 -foot screen, which hides a pair of massive speakers and rests above a couple of killer subwoofers that pump bass into the intimate room, adorned with mood lights and cocktail tables.

On a recent night, the hotel's entertainment director, Karen Vock, played the scene from "The Dark Knight" in which Batman and the Joker speed through the Loop. The theater quaked with noise. Explosions felt like they filled the air. Vock beamed brighter than Blu-ray. "We're anxious to see what people want to do with the room," she said.

Since Screen's opening in May, people have been creative. Jarrett Davis, director of audio/visual, can rig just about anything into the state-of-the-art projection system, from a live broadcast of a Blackhawks game to a DVD of "Slapshot." In December he's hooking up a Wii system to transform the theater into a virtual playground.

It's a rather strange concept -- making the public experience of moviegoining a private endeavor. It ain't cheap. Rentals start at \$625 for two hours. Food and drink packages range from the simple -- fresh popcorn and Dr. Pepper -- to the sumptuous -- one group dined on surf and turf while watching highlights of the 1985 Bears season.

But if you've got the scratch and the itch to take over a theater, Screen is available. No lines. No pre-movie commercials. And if a cell phone rings during the film, you know the name of the person to chastise.

Copyright © 2009, [Chicago Tribune](http://www.chicagotribune.com)