



# HOME Smart Home

Life under control

## LAVISH ON LAKE TRAVIS

A home that's not just bigger,  
but also brighter, in Texas

## TECH-SAVVY HOME BUILDING

One Canadian builder is outsmarting  
the competition

## A CELEBRITY SUPERMOM

With a secret weapon



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# editor's note

For six years, Home Smart Home has inspired people across the globe with stories of lives that have been transformed by automation and smart technology. As the editorial hands shift, I want to extend my personal appreciation to the founding Editor in Chief, Shanan Carney, for her creative vision and admirable work over the years.

In developing my first-ever issue, I quickly realized how easy it is to get swept up by the beauty and brains of these amazing homes.

The stunning architectures.  
Insanely, innovative designs.  
And the “cool” elements that bring them to life.

But as I sat down to chat with some of the homeowners—and home creators—I was quickly brought back to reality. This collision of design and technology is offering more than just visual appeal. These homes are delivering *real* experiences for *real* people.

For a busy, celebrity mom in Los Angeles, a beach-style sanctuary provides a break from the chaos of everyday life. It's a bright and airy space where memories are being created with her small, lively children. And the smarts inside lend a helping hand and added peace of mind.

For a developer in Canada, beauty and innovation is always top of mind. Every build is as an opportunity to delight a new homeowner with features of technology they may have never thought possible. Elements that add another layer of security, comfort, convenience, and overall enjoyment to their new dream home.

These homes are not only aesthetically striking, they're intuitively-personalized for the owners behind their walls. A *tech*-nique that makes them true works of art.

Go ahead, kick up your feet.  
Pour that glass of wine.

And let this issue of architecture and automation inspire you.



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# New & Noteworthy

## YOUR HOME, IN YOUR HANDS

Home control like never before

You know what they say; the only thing that stays the same is that everything changes. A job changes with a new schedule, your tastes in music evolve, and the seasons come and go. Your smart home should keep up and adapt right along with you.

Hands-on personalization has long been a top request from Control4 homeowners, so we are enthusiastic to introduce When/Then automation programming for homeowners. It's a simple way for you to personalize your home.

Now, you can easily change the brightness of a light or schedule a series of lights. Update the playlist that kicks on when you tap a certain keypad button. Even change the door chime to play a holiday jingle. It's the convenience of do-it-yourself, but with the stability of a professionally installed smart home system. You'll need a dealer to get your system updated, but then you'll experience all of the fun of this phenomenal new capability—all on your own.

## HERE. THERE. INTERCOM, ANYWHERE!

It's like Facetiming with your house

From anywhere in the world, you can receive calls from your porch, the gate, or from anywhere inside of the house, right to the palm of your hand. Your doorstation will ring you when a service worker has arrived, and you can give instant access to the house from the same convenient app. Alternatively, use your smartphone to call any touchscreen in the house, so you can see how the kids are doing with the new caretaker. Peace of mind is now always in the palm of your hand.



## TRIAD: CHANGING THE RULES OF AUDIO

The beauty in the unseen

What's that you hear? That's the collision of art, science, and precision. And boy, does it sound goooooo! From streaming sources to speakers, and now everything in between, it's time to get immersed in the all-new Triad Entertainment Experience.

With killer new amps and audio matrix switches, a vast collection of unobtrusive, high-quality indoor and outdoor speakers, and the absolute easiest way possible to access and play your high-resolution, streaming content, Triad is literally changing the way you consume sound in your home.

When you can enjoy all of your favorite audio in any (or every) room of the house with unsurpassed quality—and all at the touch of a button—you'll never again sacrifice quality for portability.



## Smart Home Surveillance

Stay connected regardless of where you are.  
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Redundant power option



Surveillance Hard Drive



Linux based



HTML 5



Windows 10



Chrome



RAID Redundancy



Mac OS X

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# LET'S GET WIRED!

*Getting connected isn't as hard as it may seem*

Crystal Watts

If you're building a new home and your wish list includes overhead music throughout the house, distributed video in your favorite rooms, a robust networking platform to let you stream to your heart's content, or you're going full bore with a whole-home automation system—it's absolutely critical that structured wiring is a part of your grand plan.

Looking to wire up a pre-existing home? While it may prove to be a bit more work, it's still very common and just as important as wiring a home in the new construction phase.

Regardless of whether your house is new or pre-existing, wiring that is done correctly can save you time, money, and frustration. Whether you choose to run the wires yourself or hire a pro, here are some tips to help you get started.

## CONSIDER A 10-YEAR PLAN.

Will the wiring that you install now still work for you in 10 years? Think about the devices that you may want to add to your house through the years.

## START WITH A FLOOR PLAN.

Pencil in where your devices will be installed (from streaming devices to smart lighting keypads) and what types of solutions you'd like in each room. Do you often use your family room to listen to music and watch movies? Would it be beneficial for you to control and manage the entire house from the kitchen while making dinner? Do you want to communicate via audio or video from room to room? Think about what would make life easier and more enjoyable, and jot down the touchpoints.

## MARK YOUR WIRING AND OUTLETS.

On your floor plan, mark where the wires will run and where wall outlets are located in the rooms you will be automating. Which devices will require an Ethernet cable and which will require a coaxial cable? Which devices will be wireless? An audio/video technician, such as a Control4 Dealer, or your builder or an electrician can help with this.

## RUN SPEAKER WIRES TO EACH ROOM THAT WILL RECEIVE MUSIC.

Speaker wires should be a minimum of 16-gauge wire and no more than 300 feet (about 91 meters) in length. Be careful not to run the speaker wires too close to power wires to avoid interference.

## RUN ALL WIRES CONSISTENTLY TO EACH ROOM IN THE HOME.

At a minimum, your "structured" wiring will consist of two pairs of unshielded twisted pair CAT5e or CAT6 cables for Ethernet connections, and two coax cables. The coax cables provide downstream and upstream signals for cable and satellite channels. The Ethernet cables support up to 100 Mbps for your networking devices.

## FOR A PRE-EXISTING HOME, USE THESE WIRING METHODS.

Ethernet and coax cables will need to be run to each applicable device. The Ethernet cable needs to be attached to devices that require a network connection—like home automation controllers, touch screens, or door stations. However, thermostats and lighting can use their existing wires. Coax cable needs to be attached to a TV or other device that requires this cable type.

PHOTO GETTY IMAGES



## NOTE FROM A PRO

“Wireless has come a long way, and we use it in almost every smart home and audio/video system we install, but we still want the wire to do the heavy lifting. Think of it like trucks vs. cars. The wiring can be compared to trucks—it does the heavy lifting. For example, carrying 4K video content, hardwiring the network into your TVs, delivering high-resolution audio to your speakers, etc. Wireless, on the other hand, we compare to cars—it does the light work. Lighting and climate control, and door locks are an example of that. We want a combination of both in the homes we install, but most certainly wire.”

Matt Montgomery, TYM Homes





# Building high-tech **DREAMS** —one home at a time

PROJECT INSTALLATION: Premier Smart Homes  
PROJECT LOCATION: Toronto, Canada

*Rose Barroso, Barroso Homes*

My career first began in interior renovations. About 12 years ago, I started Barroso Homes after a real estate agent told me that I should follow my vision and passion for beautiful things. I love to turn creative thought into beautiful places that will be admired and remembered.

Over the years, our projects have become increasingly larger, more complex, more beautiful, and ultimately more technology focused. I have an awesome team backing me up all the way. We all have one common goal—to make beautiful, innovative communities one custom home at a time. We all take great pride in our jobs while we focus on being a leader in innovation, technology, and energy efficiency.

Control4 has become a staple in all of Barroso Homes' builds. We want to stand out. We want to be at the forefront of what technology has to offer. And we want to keep thinking outside of the box. The Control4® technology, along with our outstanding Control4 Dealer, Premier Smart Homes, allows us to do just that.







Clean lines and bright decor make Hillside House beautiful and inviting. And large windows showcase the captivating forest views.

In our builds, it's not about the "Jetson" way of life. The way I approach every project is by asking myself: "How can I improve on something that is already pretty spectacular? Where do I find that next new material or piece of technology that will keep us fresh and innovative?"

At times, home automation can be quickly disregarded by clients. But as the benefits are introduced and explained, the interest barometer rises significantly. Once they understand how home automation can add a layer of security, comfort, and convenience to their lives, it becomes clear, and they become instant enthusiasts.

PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF BARROSO HOMES

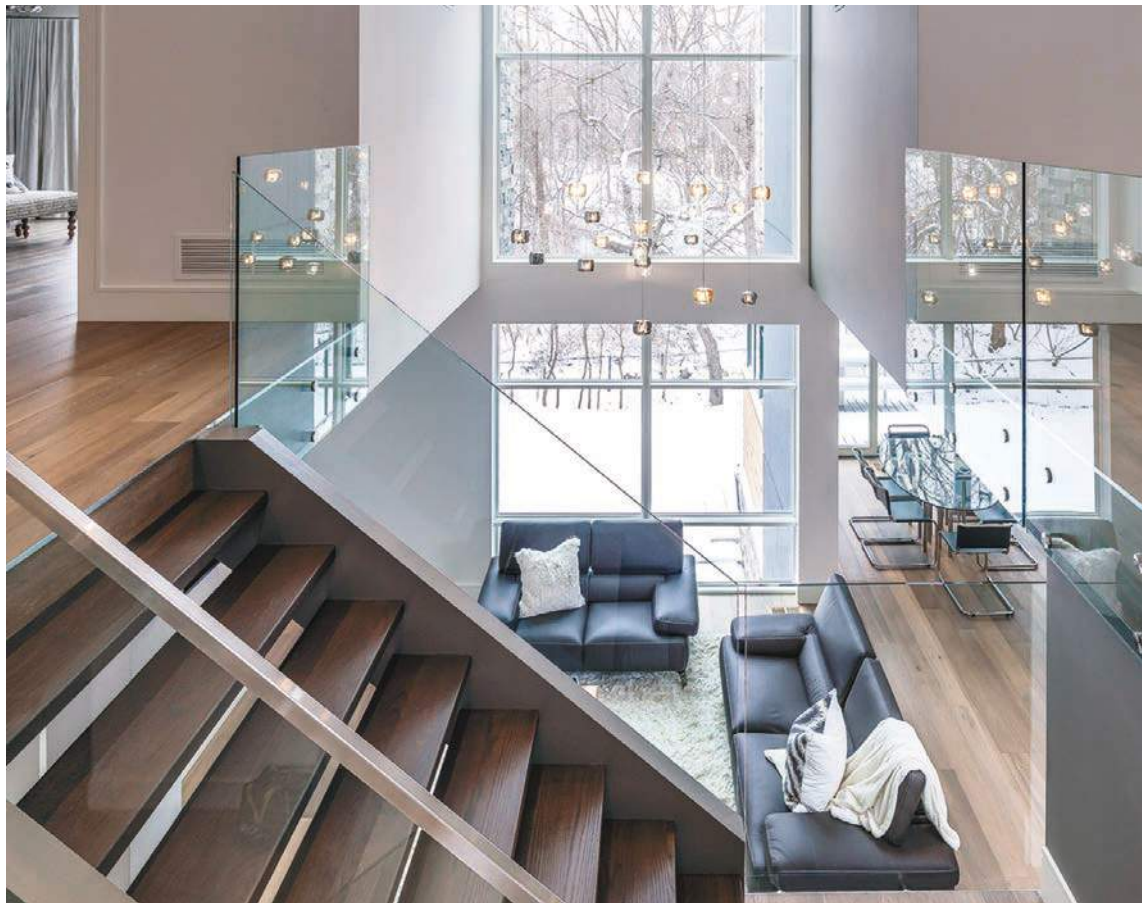


Arthouse7 was inspired by California living. With grand spaces, open concepts, and massive numbers of glass walls, it also boasts a backyard oasis to be envied.





ArtHouse7



Luminoso home



Hillside House, perched atop a hill, was inspired by the views and natural surroundings. The house feels as if it's floating within the trees.

Our clients generally have younger children, are tech savvy, and entertain often. For these clients, home automation was/is a perfect fit. They appreciate that they can check security cameras while they travel abroad, see who is visiting upon arrival, receive notifications as their children come and go, and—of course—it's a huge bonus to be able to fully control their music, lighting, and other features as they host events without ever leaving their guests' presence.

Each project is 100% different and special in its own way. Although I certainly have “my muses,” I’m proud to say that Control4 has played a significant role in all of our builds. ■





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Luminoso home



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# WI-FI: WHAT IT IS, WHY YOU NEED IT, AND HOW TO MAKE IT BETTER.

*Rob Dzedzy, Media Rooms, Inc.*

## **WiFi used to be considered a nice convenience in the home—now it’s an absolute necessity.**

The number of connected devices will reach about 50 billion in the next five years, according to Dave Evans, former chief futurist at Cisco. In addition to your personal computer and iPad, many home devices already are and will continue to be connected, including thermostats, lights, door locks, ovens, coffee makers, motorized shades, and home entertainment systems. Some people may think there’s little reason to have a home with so many connected devices, but most product manufacturers are headed in that direction, so it’s good to be prepared.

WiFi is typically built into a router, which most homes already have. The device that many people call the router is actually two devices in one box, if it’s a modem-router combo (also called a “gateway”). The router itself has multiple connections, or ports, that allow the wired connection of several devices, but it also includes wireless capability (the WiFi radio). The second part of the modem-router combo is the modem, which communicates with your Internet Service Provider, or ISP, and provides access to the Internet.

Wireless networking is also known as WiFi, which is the industry name for wireless local area network communication technology compatible with IEEE (the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) 802.11 wireless network standards.

Basically, WiFi is a radio signal. But unlike the big radio towers blasting high-powered signals to thousands and thousands of cars, homes, and businesses, the WiFi signal only travels short distances. The WiFi signal from your router generally travels about 150 feet (about 46 meters). However, since the signal is weak, it is affected by physical structures in the home such as walls, metal ductwork, steel I-beams, and stonework. This means the WiFi in your home may work great in one room but be spotty in another.

I like to compare the WiFi signal from a router to the light from a lightbulb. The farther you get from a lightbulb, the dimmer the light becomes, and if there

are walls blocking the pathway, no light gets through. (WiFi signals can travel through walls, but they get weaker.)

There are ways to improve the WiFi signal throughout your home. You can add a wireless access point (WAP), which is typically hardwired to the router and serves as an extended antenna. In addition, there are weatherproof WAPs that are mounted outside and extend your WiFi signal to outdoor patios or pool areas. WAPs and high-quality routers are typically installed by custom home electronic integrators and audio-video and home technology specialists.

In large homes, several WAPs can be installed to spread coverage throughout the home. Coverage of large areas can be tricky because the system needs to be designed properly to provide maximum coverage. The best solution for large area coverage is to hire a home technology expert to correctly design the WiFi system.

Demands on your home’s WiFi will increase as more and more products become connected. A few years ago, a typical home may have had a laptop or two. Today the average home has eight to 10 devices on the network—and that number will continue to grow.

Many homes have tablets, printers, video games, laptops, and Blu-ray players that are all competing for the WiFi signal. If we add smart home devices such as Alexa or Google Home, plus WiFi-connected door locks, lighting controls, thermostats, and motorized window shades, the burden on the WiFi system becomes substantial.



WiFi not up to par? Are you falling into the “buffer” zone far too often, with video interruptions that are cramping your style? Ask your dealer if they offer Pakedge networking—built purposefully for the connected home.





# THE VALUE IN THE VOICE (ASSISTANT)

Paul Williams, Vice President of Product Management at Control4

Voice assistants like Amazon Alexa and Google Home are still relatively futuristic-feeling to us, but they have grown in popularity mostly because of how convenient and easy they are to use. It's for this reason that they are one of the first smart devices that consumers add to their homes. Smart home device manufacturers know this and are quickly jumping on board to enable their small appliances and lighting devices to be controlled by a voice assistant.

The kitchen is a no-brainer space for voice assistants, giving people a way to do things hands-free. Home chefs can ask questions about measurements, set timers, and cue a podcast or their favorite playlist. And voice control is a general convenience, where it can even be a tool for maintaining cleanliness; instead of hitting the light switch or turning a fan down with an elbow or dirty hands, homeowners can give a voice assistant a shout. But being able to turn on a light here and there isn't exactly a smart home, just added control and convenience. There's still a lot of talking back and forth to the assistant: "Alexa, turn on the dining room lights." Then, "Alexa, turn up the heat." "Alexa..." very quickly this can become tiring instead of fun when the smart devices still require separate commands and skills.

Using voice commands really starts to become useful when we give voice assistants the power to do some real work. When there are errant devices linked into the system but not tied together, there's still a lot of talking for the user to issue commands. A whole-home smart home system solves this problem with one command that can trigger actions from multiple devices simultaneously through the use of scenes. When the lighting, television, speakers, and climate control are tied together as a cohesive unit, the voice

assistant becomes much more helpful to the homeowner.

It is this kind of system where devices communicate harmoniously, where the user starts to see real value from their voice assistant. As an example, with Control4's programmed home automation scenes, a single voice command can get the room ready for an afternoon of cooking: "Alexa, turn on cooking" can turn the lights up over the kitchen island, turn on a cooking show, turn up the TV volume, turn on a fan, and anything else you program it to do simultaneously. Simple commands that don't include manufacturer names are important, because it's our natural way of speaking and the most intuitive for control.

The kitchen is a unique room in our homes as it combines lots of devices; aside from the oven, fridge, and small appliances, many households also incorporate speakers, a TV, a fan, and automated shades. And lighting plays a big role in the kitchen; with options for bright during actual cooking and dim for ambience. The kitchen holds a lot of action: sharp knives, hot pans, raw meat, mixers, and other things that require lots of close attention. As homeowners incorporate more tech into the kitchen, it's important to have a feasible way to control it all that is not overwhelming to command all at once.

Voice control is certainly becoming a fun and handy tool, but a family home needs more than one method of control. There are some use cases for voice input that are more compelling than others. It might not make sense to tell your voice assistant to change the channel if you're sitting on the couch, but if you're handling raw meat, it makes a lot of sense. Then there is the issue of distraction, noise, and responsiveness. If someone's sleeping, on the phone, or there's a lot of noise in the house, a voice assistant

still isn't perfect. This is where the other control methods, such as by smartphone, remote control, or keypad, become important for seamless smart home use.

Ideally, a smart assistant would be able to predict what devices in the home should be set to based on past user interactions. For instance, if the oven is turned on it could trigger a cooking scene, or use weather data to modulate the temperature control in the home. Until this level of intelligence is built in, systems have to be flexible and able to interact conveniently with the inhabitants. Sometimes that might be from a cell phone, when you're web browsing on the couch or want to control the home when on the road, or from a simple keypad as you walk by. One thing is clear: consumers will expect voice control for all aspects of their tech someday soon, but the kitchen is acting as the gateway to the voice assistant for many homes today—and for good reason. ■



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PROJECT INSTALLATION: Shultz Audio Video  
PROJECT LOCATION: La Jolla, California

# SPEC MEETS SMARTS

*Lisa Montgomery*

When a speculative home spans 7,249 square feet and carries a price tag of \$15 million, certain amenities are to be expected.

Granite countertops—check. Marble flooring—check. Luxurious landscaping—check. But Richard Simis took luxurious living to another level by adding a full-blown, soup-to-nuts Control4 automation system and hiring Glenn Shultz and his team at San Diego-based Shultz Audio Video to handle the design and installation of the gear. “Potential buyers of a premiere property like this demand an atmosphere of luxury, and Simis is a custom homebuilder who recognizes that home automation is critical to achieving this overall goal,” Shultz says.

For this project, the builder gave Shultz Audio Video carte blanche, his only specific requirement being that the house would blow the socks off prospective buyers the second they would step over the threshold. Using Control4 as the brains of the operation, and connecting dozens of light switches, high-end AV components, smart thermostats, electronic door locks, a comprehensive security system, surveillance cameras, motorized gates, and more, Shultz Audio Video was able to deliver the prerequisite “WOW factor.”

Colorful mood lighting blankets this exquisite spec home and is sure to stun its future owner.





Prospective buyers can experience lifestyle enhancements with convenient, one-touch control of the entire home environment.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SHULTZ AUDIO VIDEO

Meant to impress is a “house on” command, which can be engaged from a wireless touch screen or a mobile app on an iPad or smartphone. Crafted by Shultz and intended to be employed by real estate agents who show the house to prospective buyers, the edict synchronously unlocks the front gate, disarms the security system, sets every light in the house to the perfect intensity level, and turns on the whole-house audio system to a predefined Pandora station. The two elegantly mounted 90-inch Sharp flat-panel TVs join the show, presenting a menu of video options provided by a well-appointed rack of equipment stowed in a special utility room in the lower level.

These mega-TVs, other smaller displays, and a bevy of low-profile ceiling speakers are tied to a powerful AV matrix switcher—a solution that “helped maintain the clean, uncluttered

look that the builder wanted,” says Shultz. “Minus cable boxes, Blu-ray players, and other equipment in each viewing area, the only noticeable technology in this home are the flat-panel TVs.”

Today, the smart home system and the “House On” command effectively showcase the elegant design and luxurious amenities of the residence. While admiring the custom home’s magnificent features, prospective buyers can easily envision how a Control4 system would be able to enhance their lifestyle through convenient, one-touch control of the entire home environment.

While dramatic in effect, the housewide sweep of lights, music, and more is only the beginning of what’s in store for the future owners of the seaside home. After the home is purchased, the team at Shultz Audio Video



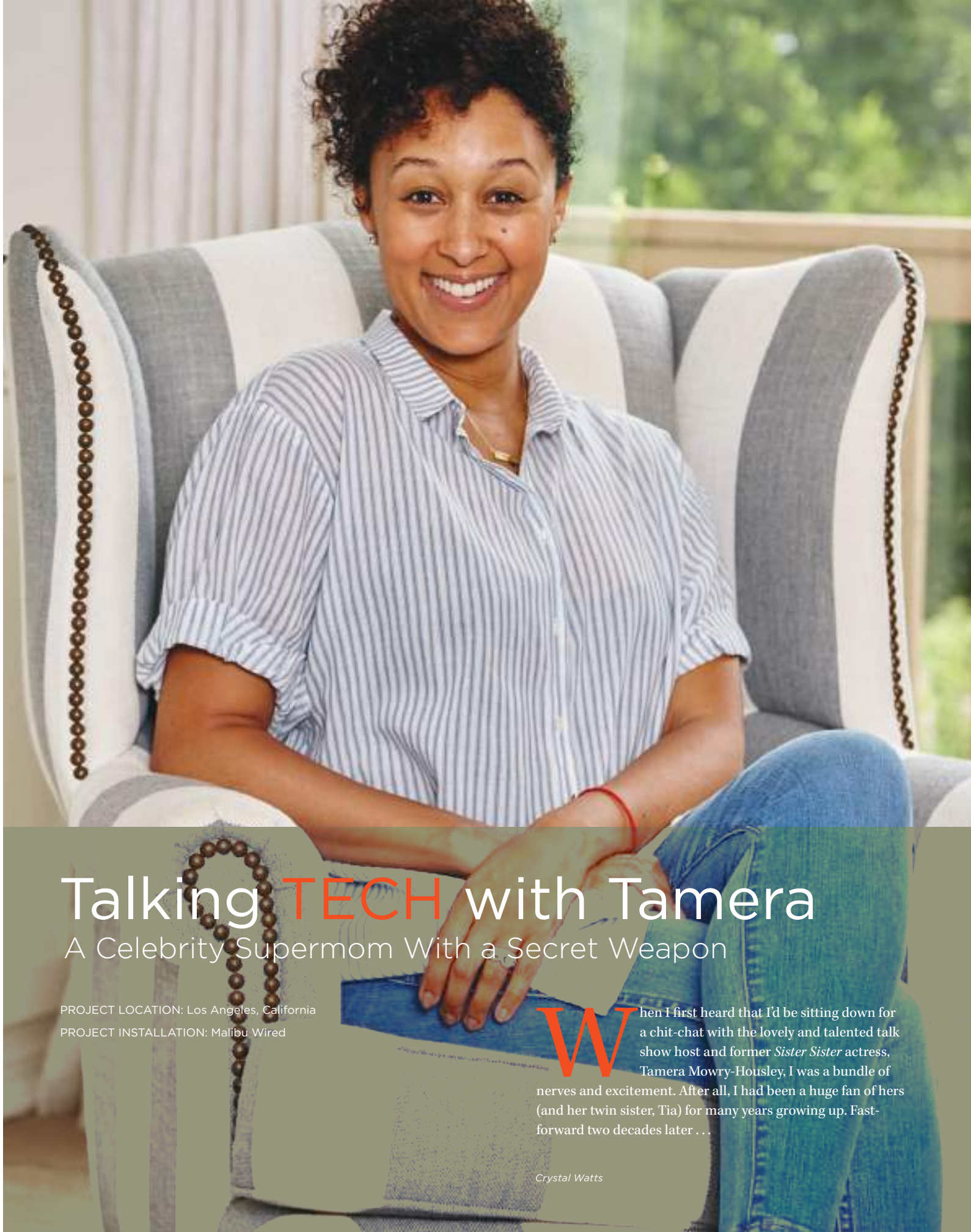


will be able to fine-tune the Control4 program to meet the specific needs of the new homeowners. “After the residents move in we will meet with them to find out exactly how they’d like the system to operate and will also tie in the spa and automatic doors,” Shultz says. “We’ve outfitted the home with more than \$100,000 worth of electronic gear, so most of our post-sale work will likely be adjustments to programming.”

Granted, not all builders are willing to go to these lengths to implement smart home technology, but for Simis, it makes good, solid business sense. There’s no doubt that home automation features are helping get potential buyers in the door of this elegant residence, and once they’re inside, the system continues to impress visitors with high-caliber smarts that have come to represent the epitome of luxurious living. ■



If the smarts don't sell this home, the sweeping views will.



# Talking TECH with Tamera

## A Celebrity Supermom With a Secret Weapon

PROJECT LOCATION: Los Angeles, California  
PROJECT INSTALLATION: Malibu Wired

When I first heard that I’d be sitting down for a chit-chat with the lovely and talented talk show host and former *Sister Sister* actress, Tamera Mowry-Housley, I was a bundle of nerves and excitement. After all, I had been a huge fan of hers (and her twin sister, Tia) for many years growing up. Fast-forward two decades later . . .

Crystal Watts





and we're sitting at her kitchen table, conversing like old friends. We quickly realize we have much in common. We're close to the same age, and with kids nearly the same ages (each of us with a boy and a girl). And we're both busy, full-time working moms. She just happens to have the *much* cooler job.

I wanted to glean a little insight into her life. Her home. Motherhood. How she consistently manages a full plate. And the role that smart tech plays in it all.

**HOW WOULD YOU EXPLAIN YOUR HOME?**  
I see it as my beach cottage. I wanted it to be airy, cozy, and bright. And definitely practical—because we have two children under the age of five.

**TELL US WHAT MADE YOU CHOOSE THIS HOUSE.**  
Well, we chose the area because it was close to the beach. My husband has asthma, so he has to be particular about air quality, and the air is usually much better near the ocean. It's in Los Angeles but "away" enough from Los Angeles, as well. Since he's a correspondent and I'm a talk show host, when we come home we like to get away from that and live like a normal family.

**WHAT WOULD YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE MOST IMPORTANT SPACE?**  
The kitchen, because it's truly where the heart is. We love to cook and gather here.

**WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE FEATURE?**  
Just to feel safe. That's the reason why Control4 is perfect for us. We have everything at the tip of our fingers, wherever we are. We travel a lot, and when you feel safe, you feel more comfortable.

**DO YOU USE THE REMOTE ACCESS PART OF CONTROL4?**  
Yes, I do. Oftentimes, I'll check in on the cameras around the house while I'm away. Another cool thing is, say I hear a noise while in bed, I'll just open the app and see all of



the camera locations to be sure it's nothing to be concerned with. It puts my mind at ease.

**AS A WORKING MOM, TELL ME ABOUT HOW YOUR SMART HOME AIDS YOUR DAY-TO-DAY LIFE.**  
We have assistants and caretakers to help with the children, and it has helped tremendously that we haven't needed to make copies of keys. Instead, they use personalized codes to arrive or leave, and I'm alerted each time. We know if someone comes on time or if they don't—we have it, all right here on our phones. And we even know if there is a visitor at the door that isn't supposed to be there.

Oh! Here's another feature I love. I'm one of those people who always get cold, so my husband will adjust the temperature from his phone before we get home. The moment we walk into the house, we never have the uncomfortable feeling that it's too cold or too hot. 15-30 minutes before we get home, he puts on the air conditioner or the heat and it's ready for us so that we can walk into a comfortable home.

**WHERE DOES YOUR FAMILY SPEND MOST OF THEIR TIME?**  
I would have to say the playroom upstairs. I love it because the kids have everything they could ever need up there—a desk, a chalkboard, games, a television—Apple TV is





huge in our home. The kids always want to watch Disney. When we wake up on the weekends, we live there and it's perfect. They can have breakfast up there, my husband and I have breakfast up there, we have a couch, a table and chairs...and we just watch TV. It's great. It's a great way to wind down—it's really a family oasis. I absolutely love it.

**WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF YOUR SMART HOME SYSTEM?**

Whole-home audio. The coolest thing is that we can have music in any area of our home. Say I'm downstairs cooking and then I have to get ready really quick. If the music is playing one of my favorite songs, I can just go upstairs, click on Control4

and connect to whatever we were listening to downstairs, and it's like I never left.

**DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE CONTROL4 "SCENE"?**

My husband always gets on me for not turning off all of the lights in the house. I've been doing it for years. So it's really cool to have our "Goodbye" button when we leave the house that all I have to do is press that one button and it turns everything off. So we're not wasting any money or electricity. He really taught me how to go "green" in that sense. His pet peeve is seeing things plugged in when we're not home. He'll say, "Tamera, you're not only wasting money, you're wasting energy which then is not good for our planet." And

I'm like, "You know what, you've got a point there." But it's our mom-brains; we're always thinking and moving in so many different directions at once, we tend to forget. So it's cool to have a button that when pressed, it's done for you.

**HOW DID HE "SELL" YOU ON IT?**

I've known him for 12 years, I've never doubted him when it comes to technology. He knows his stuff. He has a segment online, has his own show, and just knows gadgets and tech. It's his world. It's what makes him happy. He just said "Tamera, trust me. It's going to be awesome and make our lives easier. You're going to love it." And I was like, fine, go ahead. Let's do it.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALEXIS ADAM PHOTOGRAPHY



**WHAT DO YOUR KIDS THINK OF THEIR SMART HOME?**

The benefit of our smart home for them—since they don't really understand the concept yet—is that they can say "mommy, I want to watch this", and I don't have four remotes that I have to say to myself, OK—wait a minute—I've got Hulu, I've got Apple TV, I got this or that. I press that one button and BAM it all comes up, I scroll to what they want, click, done, and they're happy. And that's great for me, so I don't have a toddler screaming because Moana isn't up yet.

**IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT US TO KNOW?**

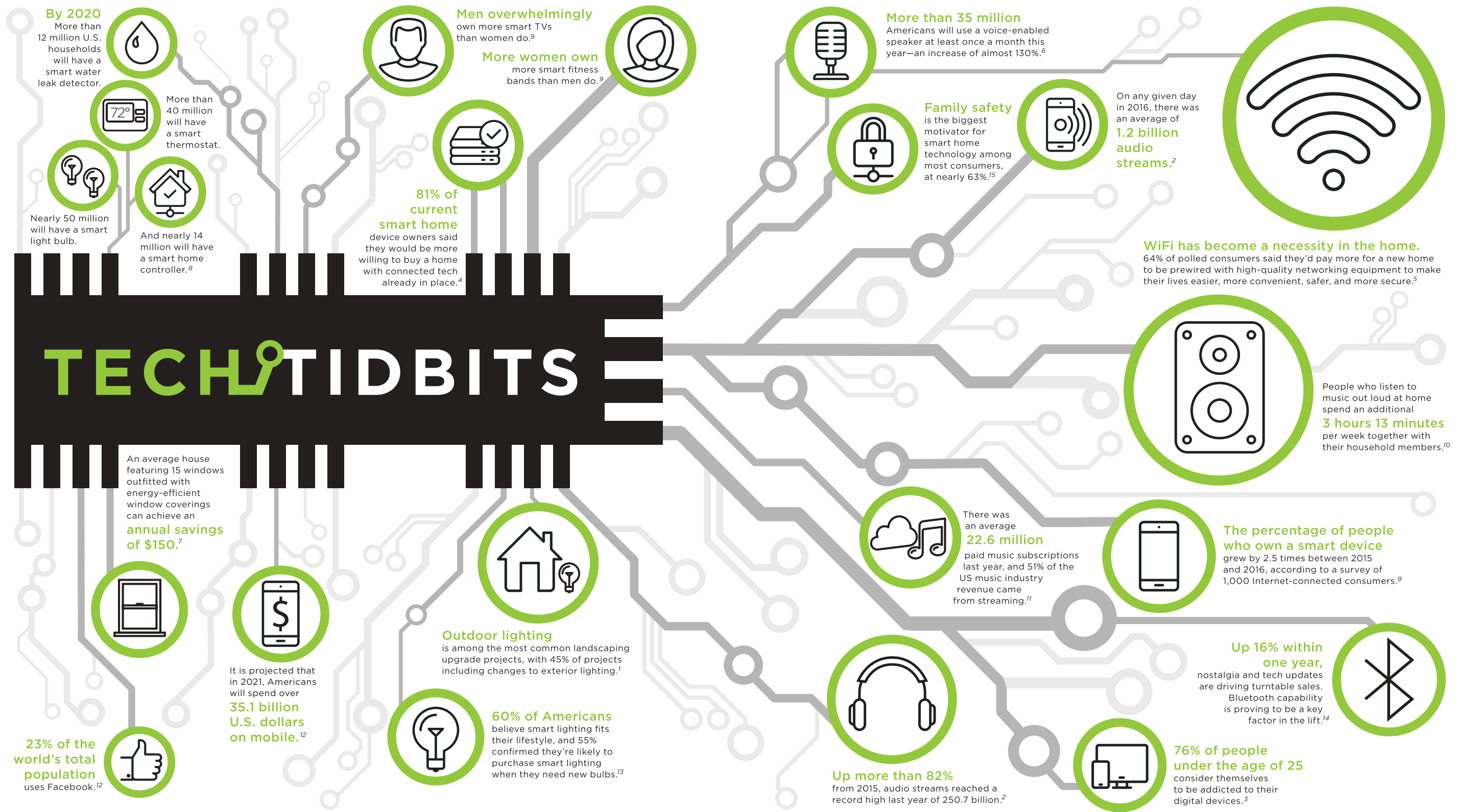
My husband is a tech nerd. I wasn't into technology like I am now before I met him. So he taught me about the benefits of having all of these cool things in the house. I don't even know how to use my iPhone sometimes. But because of his intelligence—and the great installers at Malibu

Wired—I've reaped amazing benefits from Control4. I didn't think I took it for granted, but I kind of did. Now if I didn't have all of these really great things at my disposal, I would probably freak out.

In a way, it makes life easier. It just does. Especially when you're a family of four, have a lifestyle like we have, and you live in two different places. It just makes life easier. You know you're safe and have everything at the tip of your fingertips. We can see what's going on in the house while we're away. When we want to entertain, we have really cool speakers. Sometimes I put on toddler music for the kids when I'm cooking and every which way they go, they hear the music and it helps them express themselves. I love that. I don't go to the movies a lot because of time, but when you have a great system like this, you feel like the movies come to you. And it just makes life easier as a whole—and more enjoyable. I just love it. ■







1. 2017 U.S. Houzz Landscaping Trends Survey  
2. BuzzAngle Music 2016 Report  
3. CivicScience  
4. CNET & Coldwell Banker

5. Data from Lennar wi-fi consumer survey  
6. eMarketer  
7. HouseLogic  
8. Parks Associates NUMBERS service

9. PlumChoice and the Z-Wave Alliance  
10. PR Newswire  
11. RIAA  
12. Statista

13. Sylvania  
14. The NPJ Group  
15. The Safe & Smart Home: Security in the Smart Home Era Report



# THE COLONY

PROJECT INSTALLATION: Living Systems  
PROJECT LOCATION: Wilmslow, England

Outfitted with state-of-the-art technology and striking decor, this is no ordinary work space.



“WHEN YOU DRIVE IN YOU THINK—‘**WOAH!**’ THIS IS VERY DIFFERENT.’ THAT’S WHY WE CALLED IT THE COLONY.”

**D**riving along a quiet A-road a few miles from Manchester in the northwest of England, you glide past a patchwork of fields on the outskirts of the upmarket Cheshire town of Wilmslow. You pull into a stunning complex set amid the rolling countryside. It announces itself with modernist confidence, yet at the same time blends unobtrusively into the lush, green landscape beyond.

This is The Colony, a unique office development and business members’ club serving Cheshire’s so-called Golden Triangle—one of the most affluent pockets of the UK, renowned for its pastoral beauty, luxury houses, and high concentration of rich and famous residents. Developer Edward Kershaw says: “When you drive in you think—‘Woah!’ This is very different.’ That’s why we called it the Colony—it has an almost otherworldly presence, like some high-tech outpost in space that has evolved separately from the rest of civilization.”





The first thing you notice is the stunning, wood-and-glass-fronted Colony HQ, a long, rectangular building whose two stories house the members' club, meeting rooms, serviced offices, and a state-of-the-art smart home showcase called 'The Design Works'. The vast, frameless window forming the end wall of the HQ twinkles in the sunlight, as if inviting you to sample the luxury, high-tech delights within.

The HQ overlooks a serene courtyard garden with a spherical stone sculpture at its center. Two

complementary office buildings frame the rest of the courtyard. The fact that the complex does not seem out of place in its rural setting is due to the judicious combination of natural and contemporary materials used in its construction. "Our starting point was to try to echo the look of high-end glass barn conversions," says Kershaw. "We used traditional materials such as reclaimed Cheshire brick and quarried slate, then pushed the boundaries with ultramodern glazing and finishes."

Before The Colony, Kershaw's



Welcome to Colony HQ, Manchester's most unique office development and business members' club.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE COLONY HQ

business Nomadic Construction had focused almost solely on luxury residential developments. But having helped plenty of affluent clients realize their dreams of creating impeccably designed, state-of-the-art homes—kitted out with all the latest innovations in smart home automation—he noticed that it wasn't only soccer superstars and celebrities that craved luxury. Many of his clients were successful entrepreneurs, and in 2013 an idea began to form. What if he could offer local business people a working environment as luxurious as the residential homes he was creating for them?

"My clients were living in high-spec, multi-million-pound houses, but many had to drive to work in very ordinary offices. I wanted to create a convivial, luxury office space that didn't feel like they were stepping down," says Kershaw. "Given that many of them live close by, I also wanted a location outside the city centre. There are long lines of traffic in Wilmslow every morning, queueing to get on the motorway to Manchester, and no one wants to do that if they can avoid it."

Working with his partner Adel Lababedi, Kershaw secured the plot and set about fleshing out the concept.





“Originally, we intended just to have multiple large offices, but I knew a lot of business people in the area regularly worked from home and couldn’t necessarily justify the expense of a standalone office. So, inspired by the growth of business members’ clubs in the US, I came up with the idea for the HQ—a bespoke, luxury space featuring the latest smart technology and superfast Internet, where members could work, invite clients, hold meetings, and socialize,” he says.

Nomadic Construction teamed up with smart home technology specialist Living Systems, architects McNulty, and high-end interior designers. Working closely together to ensure the construction, design and technology were all seamlessly integrated, they went about creating the most luxurious, high-tech business space they could imagine, with more than 22,000 square feet of

office space across the complex. Living Systems installed Control4’s smart automation technology throughout, as well as top-end audiovisual systems. Using touch screens, wall-mounted keypads, smartphones, iPads, or even voice commands, you can control the blinds, interior and exterior lighting, heating, air conditioning, big screens, and audio. There’s no visible clutter or cables—the technology is subtly incorporated into the design. Big screens drop down from the ceiling or pop up from the furniture on command. People can wirelessly cast their laptop, phone, or tablet display onto these if they want to deliver a presentation, conduct a demonstration, or show a video. Music can be streamed directly from the Internet through crystal-clear surround sound systems. Preset ambient lighting schemes can be applied to specific areas of the



The Colony’s builder, architect, designers, and smart automation team worked closely together to ensure the construction, design, and technology were all seamlessly integrated.







complex, inside and out, at the touch of a button (or, using Amazon's Echo technology, the utterance of a voice command).

Lately, most of the team's focus has been on putting the finishing touches to the HQ, which is The Colony's pièce de resistance. A sumptuous reception area greets members and visitors. The first floor houses a stunning lounge with hardwood and stone flooring, designer leather and upholstered seats, marble coffee tables and surfaces, various private booths, and an outdoor terrace with heat lamps, a fire pit, barbecue and sunken seating. There's also a fully serviced bar offering drinks and snacks, an event space, and a kitchen.

Upstairs there's a board room and meeting room, several serviced offices equipped with sleek, white workstations, and a shower room. "I'm a terrible control freak. I get stressed about the details and it has to look perfect. We haven't cut any corners with development or design and everything is top spec. I know what I'm trying to achieve, and Control4's technology was the perfect

fit because it's so subtly incorporated into the design that it's essentially invisible," says Kershaw.

The wow factor reaches its peak when you enter The Design Works, a separate space on the second floor of the HQ that houses The Colony's own offices and those of several other companies that worked on the development. It is, essentially, a multi-room apartment that serves as a joint showcase for the team's luxury architecture and design and for Control4's smart technology—somewhere they can all bring potential clients to demonstrate what's possible when you marry the best in design and architecture with state-of-the-art tech. "Potential clients are always asking to see these systems in place, but clearly our high-end residential clients don't want strangers traipsing round their luxury homes. Which is why I thought it would be really cool to use the HQ as a kind of center of excellence, with a showcase built in," says Kershaw. Control4 dealers across the country will also be able to use The Design Works to demonstrate the technology.



Less than a month before the official opening, most of the Colony's space had been snapped up, vindicating Kershaw's decision that originated from simply "a hunch."

Living Systems' Chris Mitchell explains: "Nomadic, McNulty, and ourselves wanted something that was still an office, but at the same time had a lounge, kitchen, bedroom, dining room, and social area. As you enter The Design Works, you're greeted by a lounge area, which has a 7.2 surround sound system hidden in the ceiling. At the push of a button, the room becomes a home cinema. There's a TV in there already, but if you decide to watch a movie, which

you can activate by voice or at the touch of a button, a big screen drops down from the ceiling."

There are also several preset automated setups that can be activated depending on who is being shown around. "In one mode, for example, as you walk into the bedroom, the speakers will be reading a book while the light slowly dims and the blinds come down. Throughout the Design Works, absolutely everything is automated—







Bruno and Jennifer,  
Colony UK Business  
Development  
Managers.



from lighting to heating to music to TV to blinds. “The HQ’s not even officially open yet, and already three or four projects have come out of early visitors seeing the stuff here and wanting it in their own offices. The fact they can immediately see it, try it, and talk about it is fantastic,” says Mitchell.

Home Smart Home spoke to Kershaw less than a month before The Colony’s official opening in May 2017. Most of the office space had been snapped up well in advance, vindicating his decision to build the complex on what he admits was “really just a hunch.” Among the businesses taking up residence are branding agency Russian Doll (which masterminded the marketing of the Fitbit sports tracker), Bulthaup kitchen dealer Kitchen Architecture,

a couple of private equity companies, some high-end wealth managers, and a cosmetic treatments company with a raft of celebrity clients.

“It’s a very good mix that fits perfectly with our high-end, luxury focus. Everyone who visits has been very impressed—and most people find it quite breathtaking. There’s really nothing else like it at all,” says Kershaw. ■



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# Giving “House Music” a New Meaning

*Experiencing  
sophisticated  
sound, in  
every space  
of the house.*

John Sciacca

There are a variety of ways to pipe music around the twenty-first century home. You could get a massive boombox, crank it to 11, and stand in your foyer all John Cusack *Say Anything* style. You could snag a bunch of cheap clock radios on Amazon, carefully tune them all to the same station and volume, and then enjoy some sweet (and nostalgic!) FM as you move about the house. You could carefully scatter Bluetooth speakers in different rooms and then play a fun little technology game called “How far is 33 feet away?” Or you could go with a professionally designed and installed audio system carefully crafted to maximize the performance for each listening area.

If the last approach sounds like the way you like to roll, then read on to learn what kinds of primo audio experiences you can create in different areas of your home!

## DEDICATED HOME THEATER

If you love movies—and I mean you really, really love movies—then a dedicated home theater should be on your radar. The benefits of a dedicated theater are numerous, but primarily it offers the perfect space to optimally recreate the commercial cinematic experience, i.e., getting you as close to what the director intended when he made the film.

From an audio standpoint, the current reference surround sound standard is 3D audio playback in the form of Dolby Atmos, DTS:X, and Auro-3D. These systems all use multiple speakers—up to a mind-numbing 48 channels—positioned in a



circular configuration around the listeners with additional speakers placed overhead to create a true, hemispherical surround experience. With all of these speakers, audio designers can aurally “position” objects around the room with pinpoint accuracy, creating sounds like rain that is truly pelting down on you from overhead, or a helicopter swirling all around the room. The result is truly immersive sound that will have you ducking for cover when the bullets start flying or planes go ripping right past your head!

High-performance speakers are available in a variety of styles, from massive, freestanding towers to bookshelf speakers concealed inside fabric-wrapped columns, to invisible in-wall speakers hidden behind a projection screen. Coupled with a large, Ultra HD image, these theater systems can rival the experience of any movie theater...but with way better snacks!

## MEDIA ROOM

Don’t have an area in the house you can commit to your own personal Cineplex but still want to enjoy

terrific movie watching and music listening experience? Then a media room is right up your alley!

According to HGTV, the term media room “has evolved into a generic definition for a multipurpose space that is outfitted with a large, flat-screen television, surround sound, and cozy seating.” Translation: It’s the perfect space to watch the big game with friends, enjoy a cozy family movie night, chill out for a sweet gaming sesh, shame-watch the latest episode of *Teen Mom 2*, or just relax with a nice adult beverage and stream some great high-resolution audio.

Since media rooms are generally in family or living rooms, your decorating style is going to play the largest part in how it looks. If you want something sleek and modern, low-profile, svelte speakers bordering your large flat panel TV creates a chic and minimalist-cool look. If you have a large wall unit or built-ins flanking a fireplace, some nice bookshelf speakers can deliver big sound in a small form factor. As an added bonus, some speaker companies like Triad offer custom paint matching options to make sure your speakers are the perfect color. Can’t stand the idea



of taking up any wall or floor space with speakers? Specially constructed in-ceiling speakers can direct the sound towards you instead of firing straight into the floor, giving you surround sound that is out of sight but definitely not out of mind.





## TV SOUND OR “WHAT DID THEY SAY?!”

If you’ve purchased a flat-panel TV in the past five years, you’ve probably experienced “Sucky TV Audio” syndrome. First off, understand that no matter how good your TV is, you are almost always buying it for its picture performance and not for its audio quality. Yes, I know you paid a lot for your TV, and I know it is has a giant screen, but I’m sorry to tell you that your TV’s speakers suck. (There are some exceptions to this, such as some new LG OLED or Bang & Olufsen models.)

Further exacerbating the TV audio problem is that flat-panel designs continue to get even flatter, meaning there is no depth to install a speaker of any size. The final design straw was the goal of an all-screen, bezel-less design which literally eliminated the one place for a speaker to be installed. Now most TVs place the speaker behind the screen, literally firing away from you and into a wall! If this sounds like a recipe for producing terrible audio, give yourself two points!

Fortunately, a whole new product category has been born to address this issue: the soundbar.

Like any speaker, soundbars come in a range of price and performance

levels, and you typically get what you pay for, i.e., don’t expect that \$99 bar you saw at Walmart to sound much better than your TV’s speakers.

While a premium bar not only improves your ability to understand dialog while watching TV, it can use multiple drivers to create pseudo-surround that can turn a bedroom into a mini-theater, can incorporate with a wireless subwoofer to create real cinematic stomp, and also be terrific for music playback, letting you enjoy your favorite Pandora or Tidal station.

Soundbars can sit on a shelf, cabinet, or wall mount below the TV. Many also require only a single digital audio cable connection to the TV and can be controlled by your television’s remote control for totally simple, no-fuss operation.

## THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Pool parties, grilling out, evening drinks by a fire pit, or simply hanging out on the patio. If you’ve watched any home design, flip, or remodel show recently, you know more and more living is taking place outside the house, with people transforming their backyards from ho-hum into Hot Dayum! entertaining oases!

Music plays an important part in creating the perfect atmosphere

outdoors, letting you set the vibe with a favorite station or playlist, and the days of just slapping up a pair of speakers and calling it good are over.

Distributing audio outside can pose its own set of challenges, including creating balanced and even sound levels so a person sitting by a speaker isn’t deafened while someone on the other side of the pool can’t hear anything. Other difficulties include directing music towards listening areas so as not to disturb the neighbors, controlling the music without having to keep running into the house, and creating a look that blends in and complements the landscape design. Fortunately, technology is here to address all of these issues.

A well-designed outdoor audio system can be camouflaged into your landscaping to the point where it is nearly invisible. Subwoofers can even be buried in the ground, providing subterranean bass that delivers true, concert amphitheater-quality audio. Similar to lighting, by using multiple speakers at lower volumes you can focus audio to just the areas you want to hear it and enjoy smooth and even audio no matter how large your back yard is. And with an automation system controlling everything, you can adjust the volume and change from The Beatles to Beyoncé by just pulling out your smartphone!



## DISTRIBUTED AUDIO

Whether your home is under construction, just built, or has been around for thirty or more years, there are tons of options for filling it with music.

The most common type of speaker used for distributing audio inside a home is a recessed in-wall or in-ceiling model. While there is no hard and fast rule, typically round speakers go in the ceiling and square speakers in the wall. Many new architectural speakers feature a micro-thin bezel design that blends in beautifully with the wall or ceiling. To make it practically invisible, the speaker can be painted to match your room color!

Creating listening zones in the house and letting each family member personalize their own listening are key to getting the most out of your distributed audio system. With zoned audio, dad can enjoy some cerebral jazz in the study, mom can get her sweat on to some workout grunge in the exercise room,



your tween can enjoy a wicked Taylor Swift/boyband mash-up in her room, and Bob Marley can make it all irie out by the pool.

With an audio system that taps into the power of streamed audio sources like Pandora, Rhapsody, TuneIn, or Deezer, you can have literally millions of songs right at your fingertips! And don’t think “streaming” means poor quality, as services like Tidal are starting to stream in better-than-CD quality, letting you enjoy every note.

Tying your audio system into your automation system makes it easy to switch from entertaining to relaxing. Imagine sitting at the dinner table and just saying, “Hey, Alexa, turn on dinner time,” and watch as lights automatically set to your perfect levels throughout the home and the music magically switches over to a dinner-suitable station or playlist. Or press a “Good Morning” button on a bedroom keypad and have the kitchen lights come on, the window shades raise, and the thermostat set to your preferred level, while some restful classical





# Lavish ON LAKE TRAVIS

John Sciacca

When building the ultimate vacation getaway on Texas' famed Lake Travis, it was a top priority for the homeowners that every detail and design element was to their exact specifications. And since this is their vacation home, they wanted time spent here to be 100% hassle free, allowing them to focus on relaxing and entertaining with friends and family and not on fixing or figuring out how to use their new home.

To ensure that the home worked with them and not against them, the owners turned to Derek Boyls and Jason Lowery, co-founders of Dynamic Integrations, Inc., to handle the vast array of technology needed to give this home a brain and turn it into a virtual project manager for the home. Dynamic Integrations worked closely with the homeowners to design the perfect system to fit their needs and to anticipate future growth. Boyls tapped into the company's years of experience to design and install a system comprised of multiple sensors and sub-systems, all driven by the advanced Control4 automation system that controls and manages virtually every element. The end result is that even the most complicated of tasks is often reduced to a single button press, from within the home or anywhere in the world.

PROJECT INSTALLATION:  
Dynamic Integrations, Inc.

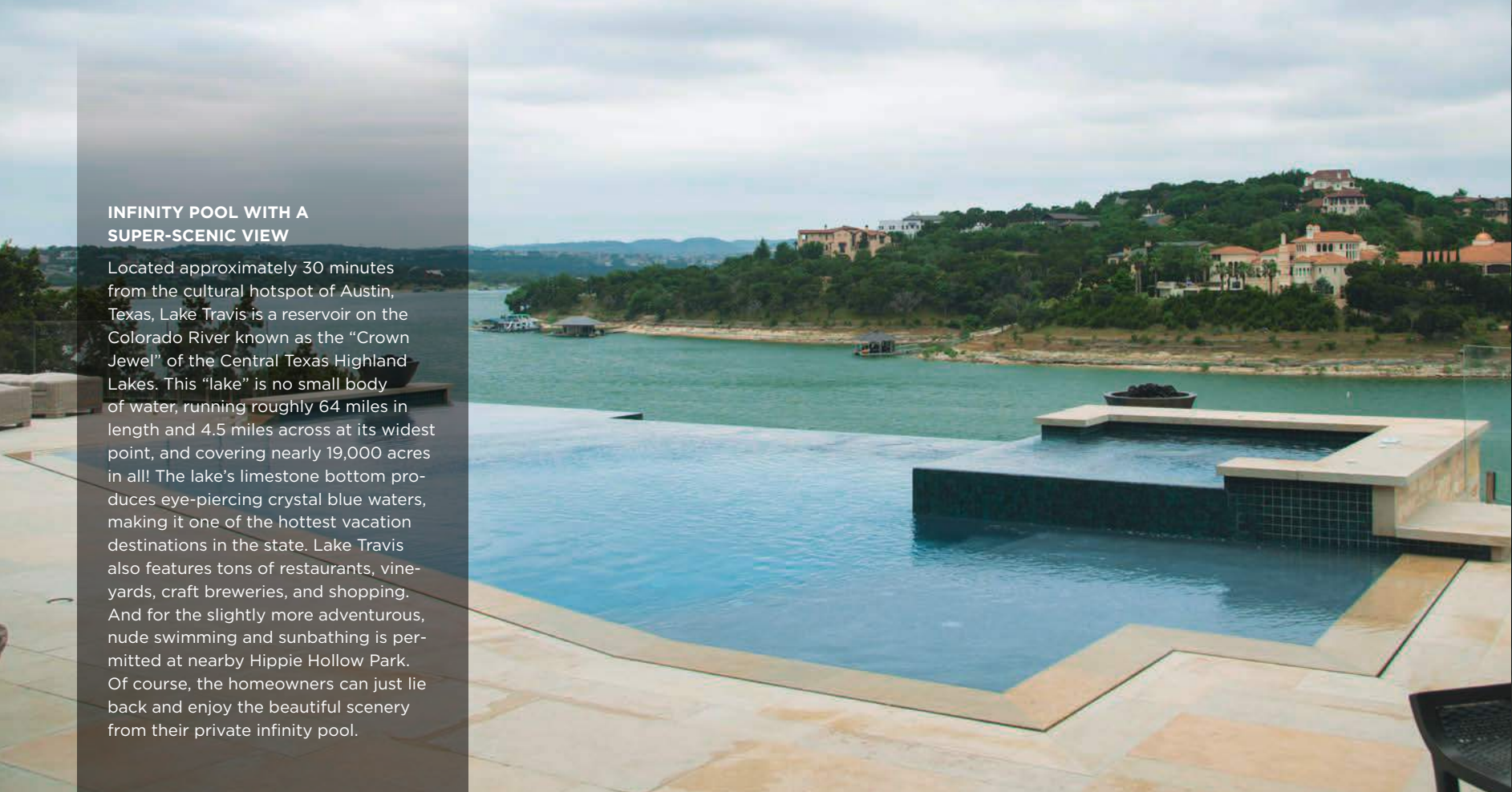
PROJECT LOCATION: Austin, Texas

DESIGN AND INGENUITY  
COALESCE TO CREATE  
THE PERFECT PARTY HOUSE  
ON THE COLORADO RIVER



This ultimate vacation getaway is situated on a beautiful, secluded lot backing up to Lake Travis. To ensure that their time is spent having fun and not figuring things out, the homeowners rely on the automation system to manage all of the audio/video entertainment, the elaborate lighting system, a multi-zone HVAC system, an advanced security and surveillance system, and complete water leak detection throughout. Of course, all of the home's features can be fully controlled from one of the many touch screens inside of the home or from a smartphone or tablet anywhere in the world.





### INFINITY POOL WITH A SUPER-SCENIC VIEW

Located approximately 30 minutes from the cultural hotspot of Austin, Texas, Lake Travis is a reservoir on the Colorado River known as the “Crown Jewel” of the Central Texas Highland Lakes. This “lake” is no small body of water, running roughly 64 miles in length and 4.5 miles across at its widest point, and covering nearly 19,000 acres in all! The lake’s limestone bottom produces eye-piercing crystal blue waters, making it one of the hottest vacation destinations in the state. Lake Travis also features tons of restaurants, vineyards, craft breweries, and shopping. And for the slightly more adventurous, nude swimming and sunbathing is permitted at nearby Hippie Hollow Park. Of course, the homeowners can just lie back and enjoy the beautiful scenery from their private infinity pool.

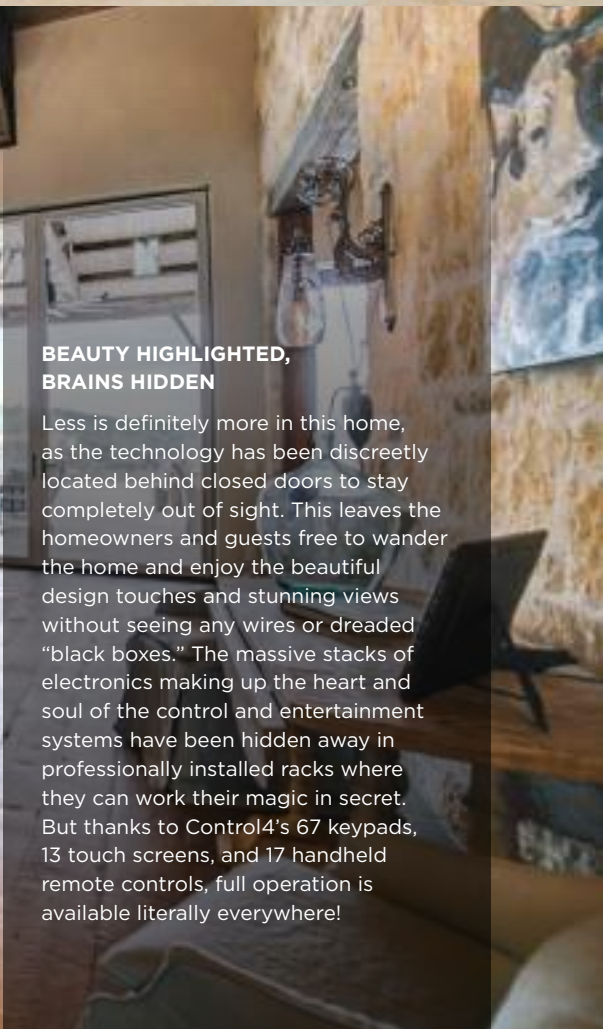
### ENTERTAINING IN THE OUTDOORS

P-a-r-t-WHY? Because this house was built for it! When you want to take the entertaining outside, this house is ready! Dynamic Integrations designed a multi-zone, multi-source audio system that streams all the latest tunes from the cloud to 23 zones and more than 30 pair of speakers at the touch of a button. And they’ll never miss a second of the big game. This home rocks a cutting edge, 4K Ultra HD video distribution system with 18 zones, utilizing screens ranging from 49 to 85 inches! Game on!



### BEAUTY HIGHLIGHTED, BRAINS HIDDEN

Less is definitely more in this home, as the technology has been discreetly located behind closed doors to stay completely out of sight. This leaves the homeowners and guests free to wander the home and enjoy the beautiful design touches and stunning views without seeing any wires or dreaded “black boxes.” The massive stacks of electronics making up the heart and soul of the control and entertainment systems have been hidden away in professionally installed racks where they can work their magic in secret. But thanks to Control4’s 67 keypads, 13 touch screens, and 17 handheld remote controls, full operation is available literally everywhere!



### A SMARTER CELLAR

Is a lake house ever truly complete without its own private wine cellar and barrel tasting room? Of course not. Here, the owners can cellar bottles in a perfectly temperature-controlled environment, waiting for that Chateau Margaux to hit the perfect maturity, or just hosting an intimate evening of tasting with friends. If temperature changes fall outside a safe range, the system notifies them immediately, so not a single drop is lost.

Taking over two years to complete, the home covers 17,000 square feet, with 10,200 square feet of living space and features seven bedrooms and seven bathrooms. With beyond-gorgeous lake views and privacy, the home is also a visual and technological marvel that practically takes care of itself, allowing the owners to check in on the home while away, or even notifying them of any problems as soon as they occur. One of the home’s many skills is monitoring the levels and pressure within the four 2,500-gallon water storage tanks and 1,000-gallon propane tank. If anything falls outside of range, the home immediately dispatches emails to the owners and the house manager so things can be resolved before they become a problem.

Smart house? More like genius house!





#### BRILLIANT BATHROOMS

The flooring throughout the home has been hand scraped and sealed, and the walls are finished in rustic stone and wood beams, creating a wonderfully warm and inviting feel throughout. To avoid any potential issues from water damage due to leaks while the homeowners are away, the automation system monitors every source that has water supplied to it: refrigerators, washers, ice makers, coffee makers, toilets, and even this gorgeous bathtub. In total, 67 locations are monitored every second of the day, and if the system detects a leak, the water supply to the home immediately cuts off and the homeowners are notified. Relax—this house has everything covered.



#### PERFECT PLACE TO PARTY

The homeowners didn't like having to use multiple apps to control different functions, so all aspects of the home's entertainment system are controlled on one system. Depending on the type of party they are throwing—and even who is throwing the shindig—the home is ready to roll with the punches. The “Dinner Party” scene cues up different lighting, music, and HVAC settings based on whether it is a ladies' night or a guys' night, or if the couple is entertaining together. Custom buttons on the keypads around the home let them choose which scene to set, and the LEDs even change colors to let them know which party scene is playing. Brilliant!



#### KEYPADS FOR ONE-TOUCH CONVENIENCE

Pop quiz! You've got five wired lighting panels controlling your home's 115 dimmed loads and 34 non-dimmed loads. You walk over to a bank of six switches and need to turn on the lights in the foyer. What do you do? Relax! With this system, it's as simple as just pressing the button that is clearly laser-engraved with the name of the lights being controlled. The system even has a built-in astronomical clock that adjusts the lights based on the time of day, in unison with the sunrise and sunset. With a single button press, every light in the home turns off or on, or the perfect lighting levels are set throughout the home for their next dinner party.

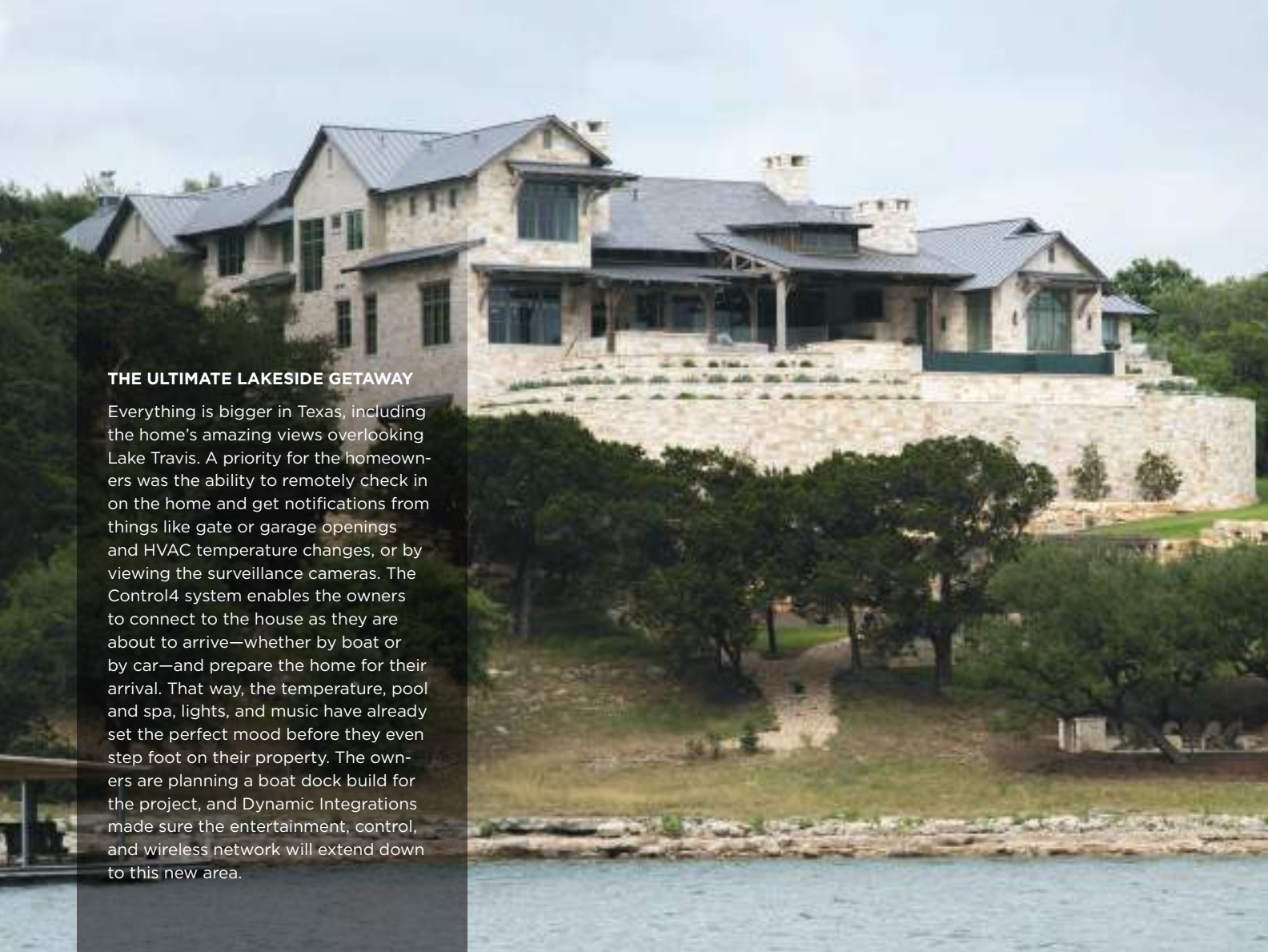
#### TOUCH SCREENS FOR QUICK COMMUNICATION

What can be controlled with the home's 13 touch screens? Practically everything! Every light in the house, multiple HVAC systems, audio/video entertainment, the 94-zone security system, multi-camera surveillance, the main gate, garage doors, window coverings, the plumbing, and more! And finding someone in this huge house is surprisingly easy. The touch screens double as video intercom stations, allowing the homeowners to page throughout the home. The homeowner especially loves being able to see who is at the door or gate while they are at the lake or out by the pool.

PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF AUSTIN MARTI PHOTOGRAPHY







#### THE ULTIMATE LAKESIDE GETAWAY

Everything is bigger in Texas, including the home's amazing views overlooking Lake Travis. A priority for the homeowners was the ability to remotely check in on the home and get notifications from things like gate or garage openings and HVAC temperature changes, or by viewing the surveillance cameras. The Control4 system enables the owners to connect to the house as they are about to arrive—whether by boat or by car—and prepare the home for their arrival. That way, the temperature, pool and spa, lights, and music have already set the perfect mood before they even step foot on their property. The owners are planning a boat dock build for the project, and Dynamic Integrations made sure the entertainment, control, and wireless network will extend down to this new area.

“A definite selling point for my husband and I was the ‘All Off’ button. When we leave the house, there’s no running from room to room turning off lights, air conditioners, TVs, and music. With the touch of one button on our way out the door, we have the confidence that everything is off while we’re away. This confidence and the convenience is what makes this system the only choice for us.”

— Lake Travis Homeowner

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# Offset accent pieces with **LIGHTING SCENES**—*a bright idea for home decor*

Erin Vaughan, Modernize.com

There’s a lot more to lighting than your standard-issue overhead lights and lamps. When used thoughtfully, lighting can highlight artwork and sculptural pieces, direct attention to an accent wall or interesting feature in your home, or add drama to your landscaping and hallways. And now, with smart lighting, it’s easy to program multiple settings for a single room—so you can switch between low light and back light with a single tap.

## A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF HOME LIGHTING TECHNIQUES

Unless you have a background in interior design, you probably rely on your intuition to guide your lighting decisions for your home. If it seems dark in one part of a room, you put a lamp there, and so forth. But well-structured lighting designs actually balance three elements: ambient light, including natural daylighting and overhead lights; task lighting, which are concentrated light sources like table lamps; and accent lights, which function mostly as decoration, directing the eye to certain features.

Accent lights span the gamut from spotlights, picture lights, and wall sconces to strip lights and backlighting meant to illuminate a wider surface area. A couple of general rules for accenting with lights: Use picture lights and overhead spotlights to light artwork or other framed pieces hung on the wall. Backlighting, on the other hand, works better when you want to call attention to a larger area—furniture, accent walls, and so forth. Uplighting adds drama to a pathway and visual interest to outdoor features like trees and bushes.

## LED STRIP LIGHTS ARE THE SMART HOME’S BEST FRIEND

Whether it’s around a bathroom mirror or below the kitchen counter, backlighting outlines the showiest parts of your home. LED strip lighting is one way to get the look—plus, smart LEDs are much more energy efficient than standard incandescents. You can even use automated strip lights, which allow you to program them to a timer or switch between cool and warm light temperatures.

Strip lighting in unexpected tints adds a spacey, futuristic

appearance to your decor, while whites and yellows have a more classic appearance. Whatever you do, though, don’t go any lower than 2,700K when selecting your color hue if you’re lighting around works of art.

## AUTOMATED DIMMERS: LIGHTING CONTROLS ON A DIME

Accent lights draw your eye to a specific part of the room, which is great if you’re just showing people around. However, in multifunctional spaces, all that illumination can seriously cramp your style (think: living rooms and dens, where all that lighting can easily put you in TV purgatory).

Meanwhile, color temperature and intensity can also affect your sleep cycle. There’s evidence that exposure to bright blue or white light keeps you alert, while soft yellowish light preps you for sleep in the evening. Smart dimmers on the walls allow you to control the brightness of any light in the room—with keypads, multiple lights at once—and some even have adjustable color temperature dials to keep in tune with natural circadian rhythms. In this way, you can program lighting controls for different “scenes” throughout your day: one for when you give guests a tour, one for dinner conversation, and one for movies on the couch. Automated controls open a wide range of decorative lighting options to explore—since there’s no need for manual switches, lighting a portrait or a kitchen backsplash just became that much easier to manage.

So let there be light—just make sure to make them smart!





# 5 innovative ways to disguise your television

We all love nice TVs. One thing you may not love, however, is having your television be the focal point of the room. Luckily, several companies have created options to conceal even massive TVs from view.

Some of the innovative solutions for television concealment range from simple TV frames to TVs that double as mirrors or artwork. Here are five of the most innovative products on the market today.



## SAMSUNG: THE FRAME TV

The Frame, a new TV from Samsung, takes a different approach. This TV features a natural wood frame, and inside the frame is a TV that displays artwork rather than a blank screen when off. There have been other TVs that display art, but not on this level, notes CNET's David Katzmaier in a review. "The Frame takes the concept further than any TV I've seen," he says.

What's especially innovative about The Frame is that it uses motion sensors to detect when people are in the room. If it detects movement, the screen will remain on and display a programmed selection of artwork. The library includes over 100 pieces of art, including landscapes, wildlife, and action scenes. The TV is scheduled for release this spring in 55" and 65" sizes (140 cm and 165 cm). No pricing has been announced yet.



## SEURA: VANISHING TV MIRRORS

If you don't mind buying a whole new TV, Seura is an American manufacturer with some seriously innovative products. The company's flagship products are the Vanishing TV Mirrors. Available in two varieties—Entertainment and Vanity—these TVs feature unique mirrored covers that allow a TV picture to show through when on, and completely hide the screen when off. Both TV models are available with a choice of over 100 different frames to match any decor and style.

The Vanishing Entertainment TV Mirrors put "television brightness first and mirror reflectivity second," according to their website. That means they will give you the optimal picture through the glass. These TVs are intended for living rooms and bedrooms, with 4K-resolution screens ranging from 42" to 65" (107 cm to 241 cm). The Vanishing Vanity TV Mirror has more of a focus on mirror reflectivity. These TVs have screens that appear to float within the mirror, and TV sizes range from 10" to 27" (25 cm to 67 cm). The mirrors are 36" (91 cm) tall and range in width from 24" to 45" (61 cm to 114 cm). Pricing for the Entertainment TVs starts at \$5,499, while the Vanity TVs start at \$2,499. Specific quotes are available upon request.

## NEXUS 21: TV LIFTS

Another option for disguising your TV is to just hide it altogether. This can be accomplished with a TV lift from Nexus 21. These gadgets can be built into cabinets, countertops, or even ceilings. They then raise or lower your TV on demand for a totally clutter-free experience. Nexus 21 is one of the leading providers of such lifts, with a client list that includes Sony, Oakley, Pixar, and NASA.

There are two basic styles of lift: Pop-up and drop-down. The pop-up lifts hold up to 103" TVs (252 cm), while the drop-down lifts can handle up to 75" (191 cm). There is also a flip-down version that can hold up to 75" (191 cm) TVs. The company claims the lifts are nearly silent, and it backs them with a 10-year warranty. Pricing is on a case-by-case basis.



## FRAME MY TV: FRAMES AND COVERS

If you already have a TV you like and you just want to make it disappear, Frame My TV has a solution for you. The company, based in Massachusetts, specializes in disguising TVs. You can choose to have a custom frame built for your TV, or you can take things a step further with mirror or art covers.

There are several frame styles to choose from—everything from premium hardwood to artisanal 22-karat gold. The Framed TV Mirror options use the black of the TV screen as the backing for a special mirror glass that is reflective when the TV is off but lets the light of the screen through clearly when on. Different glass options are suitable for living rooms, bedrooms, and bathrooms.

Frame My TV's TV Art Covers are another unique option for TV concealment. Instead of covering the TV with a mirror, these frames feature your choice of canvas painting. A motor rolls the canvas up when you're ready to watch TV and then rolls it back down when you're finished. There's a wide variety of artwork to choose from, too—you can even have your own custom art integrated into the frame. "This is a truly unique approach to disguising your TV," says Matthew Palermo, a home services expert at ATTSavings.com. "There's nothing else quite like it on the market."

Pricing starts at \$750 for the frame alone, \$1400 for a mirror cover, and \$3,250 for the art cover.



## BALLARD DESIGNS: SHUTTER TV WALL CABINET

The Shutter TV Wall Cabinet by Ballard Designs offers a more charming look to your home than other TV disguises. One customer stated, "It looks lovely in my nautically themed room." The design works well above a fireplace, in a sun room, and even in an outdoor patio setting.

While the shutter is not the most innovative on the list, it provides a warm and natural ambiance to a room. The shutter cabinet goes perfect in virtually any home including a cabin in the mountains, a house in the country, or an apartment in the city.

Out of all the TV disguises that we reviewed, this is the most affordable at \$449.

There are many other great options out there for disguising your TV, but these are five of the top options out there. Evaluate your home setup to find the one that works for you.



# THE JEWEL **IN** THE CROWN

A smart home fit for a king (and his queen) in the heart of a historical retreat for England’s royalty

PROJECT INSTALLATION:  
Ingham Intelligent Solutions  
PROJECT LOCATION:  
New Malden, United Kingdom

For many centuries, the leafy neighborhood of Coombe in New Malden, on the outskirts of west London, has attracted those who like the finer things in life. Once the site of a grand Tudor manor house, it has long been a hot spot for royalty and high society. Queen Elizabeth I stayed here in 1602 during a stag-hunting trip, and Coombe’s natural springs—which were said to have restorative powers—supplied water to the nearby royal palace, Hampton Court. In the 18th century, the manor was replaced with a Georgian mansion, Coombe House, which later became home to 19th century British Prime Minister Lord Liverpool, as well as a favorite hangout of his regular guests, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.





By the turn of the 20th century, Coombe was firmly established as one of the most fashionable and desirable places to be in the south of England. And although Coombe House was finally demolished in 1933, the area has lost none of its exclusivity in the near-century since. Dotted with historical buildings dating back to Tudor times, much of the neighborhood is today a designated conservation area.

Modern day Coombe-dwellers of note have included Rolling Stone Ronnie Wood and businesswoman Elisabeth Murdoch (daughter of media mogul Rupert). On land where kings and queens once hunted, today's residents swing their clubs on one of Coombe's two exclusive golf courses, or walk, jog, and cycle in nearby Royal Richmond Park. Here, more than 600 wild deer still roam freely—although these days you won't see the Queen chasing them on horseback with a bow and arrow.

Properties in Coombe unsurprisingly command premium prices, typically in the millions of pounds. Tranquil, tree-lined avenues and expansive green spaces belie the area's proximity to the busy capital (the heart of the City of London is just a 25-minute train hop away).

For more than 20 years, professional couple Iqbal and Nazlim Meghji have lived in one of those tree-lined avenues, set in a delightful private estate just a stone's throw away from the surviving boundary wall of the original Tudor manor. They love the area, where they brought up their two grown-up sons (one of whom still lives with them), but as the years wore on they began



to crave the luxury of a more modern property. “The house really belonged to the 20th century,” says Nazlim.

Newer properties are uncommon in Coombe due to the rarity of available plots and strict restrictions on development, but the Meghjis had no desire to move elsewhere. So they decided to do what the aristocratic owner of Coombe House had done almost 300 years earlier: knock down their existing property and build a new one in its place—one that was more fitting for the new century, complete with state-of-the-art smart home automation.



PHOTOS BY LEANNE BRACEY PHOTOGRAPHY

Every room has built-in speakers, and a multi-room music system allows anyone to play the music of their choice instantly from whichever room they are in.

The couple designed the new property and managed the project themselves. Work began in July 2016, and the family stayed in nearby rented accommodation while the build was under way. They moved back in early 2017 and the entire project—including the furnishings, interior design, and smart technology installation—was all complete by the start of May.

The results are stunning. The house is set over three floors and features five bedrooms, all with bathrooms. There's also a study, main room, family room, and two kitchens. The property is three times bigger than its predecessor. “Since we entertain a lot, space was of the utmost importance to us,” Nazlim says.

The hub of the house is the large, open-plan Alno kitchen, kitted out with sleek, top-of-the-range Gaggenau appliances. Designer furniture stands out against the gleaming white walls and floors, exuding minimalist elegance, while smart lighting and funky blue bar stools punctuate the space with warmth and personality. “I am a firm believer in minimalism, but at the same time I wanted to ensure we achieved a homely environment,” says Nazlim. Indeed, throughout the property, this duality is evident, as minimalist monochrome is softened by a muted palette of creams, pale grays, and natural wood, with the odd splash of color and pizzazz provided by rugs, cushions, light fittings, decorative pieces, and designer furnishings. “We went for modern Roche Bobois, Cattelan Italia, and Natuzzi furniture to fit our lifestyle,” says Nazlim.





But it's the clever incorporation of smart home automation technology that really marks out this house as a truly post-millennial property. From the outset of the project, Nazlim knew she wanted the family's new home to feature the latest smart technology, after being wowed by the systems in several hotels she'd stayed in. "I became absolutely obsessed about the technology, and it was very important that we had a smart house that was eco-friendly, where the lights, heating, and music were all centrally controlled," she says.

After a series of conversations with local smart home automation specialist Ingham Intelligent Solutions, she opted for a customizable Control4 system that could hook into devices and appliances from different high-end manufacturers and would allow the Meghjis to tailor their home automation system precisely to their requirements. Company owner David



After being wowed by the systems in several hotels she'd stayed in, Nazlim became "obsessed" with the technology.

Ingham says: "Originally, the family were just looking at automating their music and entertainment systems, but when they found out they could incorporate blinds, lighting, heating, security, and entertainment in one system, they started to get excited."

Ingham worked with the builder to ensure the technology was discreetly built into the property.







There are 25 automated Lutron blinds throughout the house, a Heatmiser heating controller, Control4 wireless lighting system, wall-mounted flat-screen TVs, and a home cinema sound system, as well as CCTV and secure entry. Every room has built-in speakers, and a multi-room music system allows anyone to play the music of their choice instantly from whichever room they are in. “They have about 10 separate music zones, plus a surround-sound cinema system in the main TV area off the kitchen,” says Ingham. “We brought automated control of these disparate systems together using Control4. This gives the family central control of all the different elements of their home technology, which they can operate from discreet, wall-mounted keypads and touchpads, or from their own smartphones and tablets.”

Ingham also installed the latest Control4 wireless lighting system, which significantly cut the cost and time of building the new property. “Originally, we were looking at putting in a wired system, but that would have meant the builder had to wire everything back to a central point, which would have extended

the build and involved significantly more expense,” he says.

The wireless lighting system, which can easily be installed into new and existing properties without any fiddly in-wall cable work, allows the Meghjis not only to switch lights on and off and control dimming, but also to create ambient lighting scenes incorporating groups of lights for different areas of the house. Again, this can be controlled by either a quick press of one of the square, wall-mounted keypads or from a smartphone app. “The family can easily add new lights to the system, scene-set, and control groups of lights together or separately. In total, there are about 65 lighting circuits throughout the property encompassing bar lights, pendants, unit lights, and LEDs. That includes the front and back gardens and the porch,” says Ingham.





For their part, the Meghjis are delighted with how the system is improving the quality of their lives. Nazlim says: “After a stressful day at work, I like to listen to classical music in a relaxing ambiance in the bath. Control4 enables me to de-stress every night at the touch of a button. Meanwhile, in the morning I can have a shower while remotely switching on the lights and TV in the kitchen, ready to have breakfast sitting at the Cattelan breakfast chairs.”

She also loves the luxurious automated blinds that enable the family to control the amount of sunlight in the rooms without having to leave their seats. “We can control everything from our phones when we’re away, too, which improves security,” she adds.

The family have entertained on several occasions since moving back in and say guests have been amazed by their striking new home with its state-of-the-art smart features. “Everyone’s been really impressed, particularly with the audio system, home cinema, and ambient wireless lighting,” says Nazlim.

There’s also no chance of this defiantly 21st century home falling behind the times in the foreseeable future. “The system really is easy to use, and new Control4 or third-party features and devices can easily be

incorporated in future,” says Ingham. As a result, the Meghjis are already planning how to make their home even smarter. “We are looking to integrate eco-fires in the front rooms and the garden, as well as installing voice control,” says Nazlim.

While such technical wizardry would no doubt have had Tudor residents of Coombe marching up to the house with pitchforks and flaming torches with cries of “witchcraft!” Queen Victoria’s husband Prince Albert—a champion of science and industry who masterminded the Great Exhibition of 1851—would have seen the Meghjis’ stunning smart home as the height of fashionable progress. And cutting-edge developments like this are set to enchant many more people over the coming years, thinks Nazlim. “Smart homes have arrived,” she says. ■



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