

Essential **INSTALL** MAGAZINE

The essential magazine for the custom install industry

August 2012 Issue

CONNECTING TECHNOLOGY TO YOUR WORLD CI SIGNAL MANAGEMENT FROM ATLONA IS HERE TO RESOLVE YOUR CABLE AND COMPATIBILITY ISSUES



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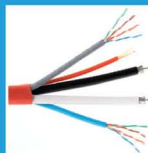
The *Essential Install* Trade Awards and Christmas Extravaganza is launched, A Day in the Life, C-MAX Systems Case Study and the new *EI* Q+A takes a bow

INSIDE

ESSENTIAL INSTALL
LIVE! NORTH:
A SOLD OUT SHOW!



CABLES AND
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TECHNOLOGY



PROJECTORS AND
SCREENS:
SERIOUS HOME
CINEMA





HIDDEN GEMS

El recently spent the day with AMINA Technologies, pioneers in the hidden speaker sector, to learn a little more about how the company and its technology are perfect for the CI sector.

■ The Amina concept is perfect for period properties where planning and aesthetic concerns negate the use of conventional speakers



Amina believes most people just want to hear their music or film audio to a good standard and in a way that does not interfere too much with their living space. This is the principle the company is founded on, delivering space filling sound through 'plastered over' speakers which become part of the fabric of the room.

Richard Newlove, founder of Amina explains: "We knew from the early days that there was big potential for NXT (the technology Amina speakers are based on) to produce a high performance product perfect for the CI sector. The technology uses 'exciters', which act like electronic tuning forks and are attached to thin high-tech light weight composite panels. The exciters deliver information to the panels causing them to vibrate and produce audio. The panels are placed in the walls of the property as it is built or renovated and are plastered over in the same way as the rest of the room."

The company admits that its approach to sound has a different character to audio produced by the more 'direct' approach of a conventional 'front firing' speaker. However, Richard says: "We are confident that once experienced, the more 'natural' room filling sound makes converts of those who hear it. We refer to the sound as 'natural' as the technology works similarly to a conventional musical instrument, such as a violin which uses a sound-box to vibrate multi-directional audio into a space, rather than the

approach of a conventional speaker, which uses a diaphragm to fire the sound pistonically into the space."

Richard adds: "Our approach delivers great aesthetic benefits, but this is high quality audio also. The system offers less reduction in sound over distance than conventional speakers and also makes positioning of the speaker less crucial. Using our technology also means any given space needs fewer speakers than with conventional drivers. Our products also work very well in reverberant spaces, making them ideal for modern minimal interiors and also spaces such as bathrooms, swimming pools and patios."

The product is ideal for high-spec, new build residential properties and has obvious advantages for those renovating period properties, providing a complete solution for planning regulations.

Amina Evolution in product and support

New for this year is the Evolution series, which looks to build on the company's reputation with advancements in audio performance.

Technologies exploited by the new range include Opti-drive which utilises mixed exciters, designed to improve high frequency quality and dispersion and Opti-damping, which creates a flatter frequency response in the low and mid frequencies. The range offers the AIW350E,

AIW550E and AIW150E, plus a new top end specialist product, the AIW750E, targeted at the connoisseur who wants the ultimate in invisible sound quality.

The team gave *EI* a full demonstration of some of the new range at the company's demo room in Huntington and the sound quality is undeniably impressive, detail and range are particularly good and bass delivery has been taken up a notch. A sub is still necessary for the full-on home cinema effect, but the speakers on their own can handle a surprisingly wide variety of audio to a high standard.

AMINA is active in attending exhibitions and providing courses to spread the word on the concept outside the CI universe. The aim is to deliver a 'push-pull' model, so that installers can tap into demand for the products as well as introduce them to their own customers. The company provides CPD courses for RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) and also gives a CPD approved course for the British Institute of Interior Design (BIID).

Amina has also come up with some unique ways to demonstrate its concept. Designed for use at exhibitions and events, the Amina touch-wall invites people to place their hand on the wall and feel how the audio is produced via the hidden speakers in the unit, delivering an immediate understanding of the concept, which then allows a conversation to begin. Another option is the flight-case demo pack, which is light and portable making it great for on-site and in-home demonstrations. There is also the fully transparent acrylic unit, which is like a scaled down version of the touch-wall, but also shows the inner workings of the technology and again is suited to exhibitions and demonstrations. Amina charges all these sales tools at cost and effectively throws in the speakers themselves for free. Amina also supports installers at events identified as good potential exposure for the brand and always offers a discount for product intended for use in a showroom or demonstration capacity.

Amina also provides selection guides to allow each project to be supplied with the right choice from the range and there is also a SQSE (speaker quantity and spacer estimator) on-line to help installers select the right number of speakers for each room.

Amina is also about to embark on major new training programme with a half-day course including sections on specifying and installing in residential and commercial settings as well as hints and tips to ensure the best possible result. A comprehensive demonstration of the range and options on installation positions, with discussion on benefits of different positions will also be provided. The aim is to help installers sell, specify and install Amina with confidence whether they have past experience of using DML technology or not. The first courses take place at the Huntington HQ on September 12, with a further course taking place in central London on September 27 with the next session taking place on October 17 at Redline distribution at Wickford, Essex.

Installer endorsement

The best measure of any manufacturer is of course to talk to its customers and Amina is not short of installers willing to give the company a ringing endorsement.

Doug Wood, design director at Sound Ideas, says: "For us, reliability is paramount and the concept of a build-in product failing in one our interiors doesn't bare thinking about. Amina is unique in having off board protection (APU), so that any failings don't mean digging out the speaker. We love working with Amina as they not only listen to our feedback, but act on it too. In response to our request for a bit more bass, we helped them develop the ALF40 Bass Enhancer. There are not many CI companies who respond this well and their customer service is second to none. With a market that is becoming increasingly awash with invisible solutions, it's great that Amina are a British success story that we are proud to back."

Chris Knight from Perfect Integration, adds: "Our recent CEDIA award winning installation features Amina loudspeakers exclusively. The success of this installation may not have been possible without Amina's unique products and support.

"The property is a large, open plan barn conversion which is listed, so original features and building materials had to be retained. One of the plus points with the Amina loudspeakers is that they can be plastered over with

traditional lime based plasters (not just modern finish plasters) which were required as part of the listed building constraints. "There were no normal plasterboard walls, but Amina helped us come up with a bespoke install method for the specially constructed timber/expanded metal lath wall sections that have a thick lime render applied before the 2mm finish lime plaster skim."

Chris adds: "In terms of customer support, Amina are excellent. They are always keen to help as much as possible on specific projects and the applications/technical team are quick to respond to enquiries and always really enthusiastic."

Contact Amina direct for more information on becoming part of the company's growing fan base of installers.

More Information: Amina,
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www.amina.co.uk



■ Amina says its technology copes well with reflective sound environments, so is great for pool areas and unforgiving modern minimal interiors



amina[®]
TECHNOLOGIES LTD
**EVOLUTION
SERIES**

Setting a new standard for invisible sound

AIW750E



Experience the Evolution!

AIW750E

Amina are delighted to announce their brand new audiophile flagship product, the bi-wire, AIW750E. Building on the success of the new Evolution range launched at the start of this year, the AIW750E is the most powerful, smoothest power response and widest bandwidth totally invisible speaker on the market, creating a new industry standard.

By using two separate optimised panels fed via an external crossover, increased bass extension is ensured whilst the dedicated mid-range/treble panel delivers a highly detailed and open sound stage.

Specify for high-end stereo and surround sound applications.

‘Hearing is believing’

Contact us and arrange a visit to our upgraded demonstration facilities and experience the new Evolution Series!

