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On the **BUTTON**



CEDIA award-winning 007-themed home cinema from Lifestyle Technologies

There is no denying that today's buyers want a home that is as technologically capable as their phone, but how achievable is that desire?  **KATE HAMILTON** reports



ABOVE Gramhams Hi-Fi won 2013 CEDIA award for Best Integrated Home from £100,000-£250,000 for West View, in London

THIS PIC The Axeo Home Finder is the latest generation interactive touchscreen system specifically designed for new homes sales centres



New homes technology has come such a long way in recent years that few people actually know what this phrase now refers to. Is it a home cinema? Super-fast broadband? Or does the term suggest more practical amenities, such as security and heating?

“Many people still associate home automation and smart homes with opulent media rooms – elaborate playgrounds for the super-rich alone – but the reality is that new homes technologies can be far more accessible than that, and are able to provide practical conveniences as well as luxuries,” explains Desirée Webster, marketing manager at NuVo. “Remote security or home climate control can offer increased peace of mind or comfort. Developers can really set themselves apart from the crowd by presenting a multitude of quality new homes technologies, whether they address a single specific need or create entire ecosystems, which enhance the very living experience in a home and can later be tailored or expanded to meet the individual tastes of prospective buyers.”

Kris Hogg, vice-chair at CEDIA (the Custom Electronic Design & Installation Association) and director at technology consultant Konnectiv, agrees: “Home automation can include

anything that’s electronically operated in the home: from high-end TVs, media servers and multiroom audio and video systems, to home networks which intelligently control all aspects of the home, including heating, lighting, blinds and security. These features can be tailored to meet the requirements of the homeowner – a security monitoring system for frequent flyers, content controls for parents with young children, or energy-saving technologies for energy-conscious families.”

So, the question is, where do you start? Well the level of home automation will ultimately depend on your target market and location on the property ladder but, since every new home will require some amount of home technology, then you can’t go wrong if you start off with basic wiring.

CEDIA promotes future-proofing and by this it means installing the correct cabling systems at the beginning of a project. This means that a basic home automation system can be put in place, with the prospect of adding additional technologies to the property at a later date. For further information have a look at CEDIA’s Recommended Wiring Guidelines document, which provides advice on this topic and gives you a great starting point.

Having the correct cabling system is also a selling point in itself, because ▶

even if the property doesn't offer the system that the buyer wants it means that they are able to install it at their own leisure.

"With the right infrastructure during the first fix – cabling and access points, for example – a Crestron system is scalable and can grow to include more elements," says Brian Chapman, Crestron business development manager, residential. "Therefore, we can install energy-saving elements such as Crestron lighting to meet with Part L regulations but later add a cinema room or CCTV for buyers if they wish."

And, thanks to modern wireless solutions, the necessary cabling may not even be as daunting as you might first think.

"The inclusion of home technology can provide a developer with the ability to sell at a higher price, a promotion to help sell homes, or a possible upgrade option to homebuyers," explains Adrian Ickeringill, EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa) general manager at WyreStorm Technologies. "These days, it does not have to include expensive in-wall keypads and touch panels as control can now be obtained from the tablets, iPads and smartphones that the customer uses on a day-to-day basis, minimising the overall cabling cost in each property. Our objective is to provide simple, packaged options to suit particular budgets, along with full support for

show home installations to provide a real complementary offering to the development."

Wyrestorm manufactures HD distribution and control solutions that enable different video and audio equipment to be viewed and controlled in different rooms using smartphone and tablet devices that the end user brings into the home. Cabled using standard cat 5/6 cables to each TV point from a central location, Wyrestorm enables in-house and even remote access to audio and video devices including the likes of CCTV.

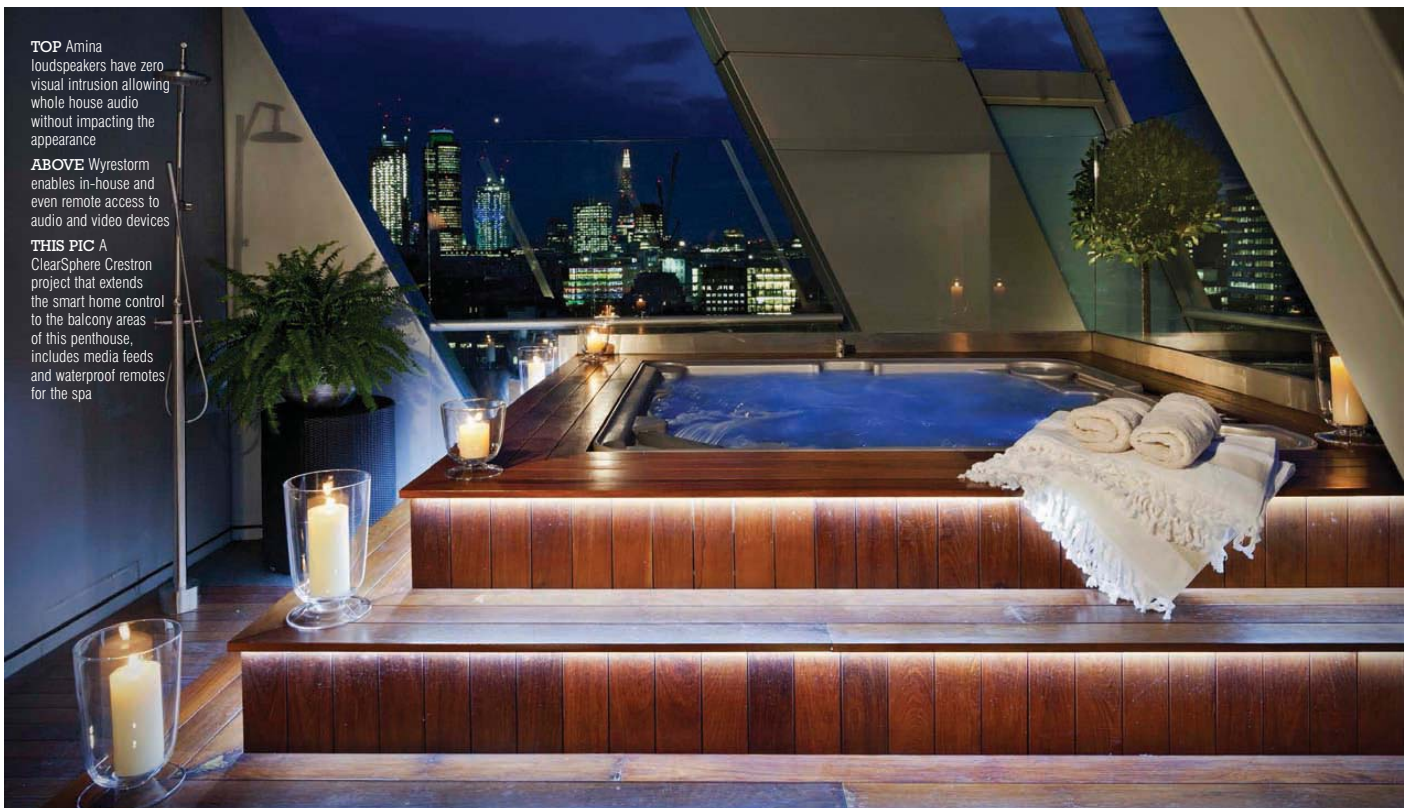
Meanwhile NuVo's sole focus is on entertainment – providing stellar audio and source variety for an exceptional listening experience. Its expertise, fostered over more than a decade of ▶



TOP Amina loudspeakers have zero visual intrusion allowing whole house audio without impacting the appearance

ABOVE Wyrestorm enables in-house and even remote access to audio and video devices

THIS PIC A ClearSphere Crestron project that extends the smart home control to the balcony areas of this penthouse, includes media feeds and waterproof remotes for the spa





innovation, allows NuVo to deliver high-performing audio systems, an attractive selling point for any home.

Amina is another firm that focuses on audio entertainment, this time via 'invisible sound'.

"Our loudspeakers create sound through vibrational panel technology, which is analogous to how acoustical musical instruments, such as violins, work," explains sales director Babs Moore. "This also means the speakers make sound in a similar way and it is a very room-filling sound, again like a violin, and the directionality does not increase with frequency as is the case with conventional loudspeakers. This gives a high-clarity, room-filling sound and, however I try to describe it, listening is the only way to truly believe. The speakers are designed to sound their best when covered with a 2mm final skim of plaster or similar such as wood, wood veneer, leather or even Corian."

However, you don't need to go to such great lengths in order to impress

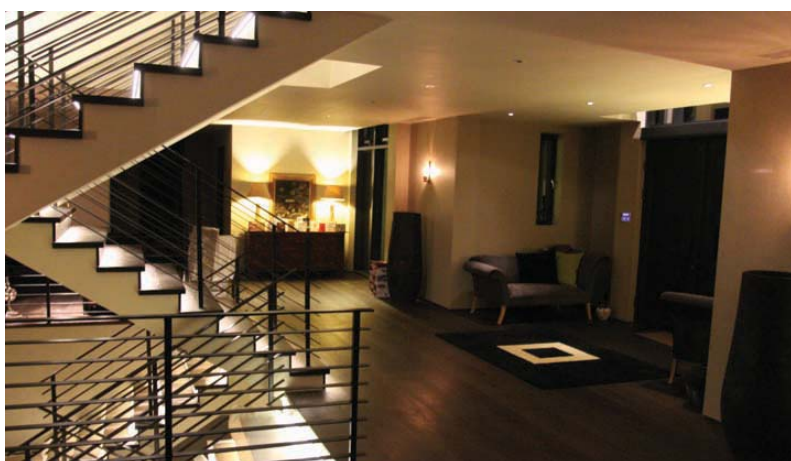
a buyer with technology, as many people believe that the term 'home technology' should also encompass kitchen appliances.

"The role of the kitchen has changed," says Mark Armstrong, national contracts manager at Electrolux. "Homeowners want to entertain, relax and spend time with their family and friends within their open-plan kitchen space, and the appliances they use play a big part in this experience. Internet, cloud and social networks are changing the way people communicate and use technology, allowing them to access images, videos and information anywhere and at any time. People want to make their own ideas happen, create new content and share these experiences spontaneously with family and friends. And they want to do that while cooking, eating or socialising around food in the kitchen."

A prime example of a technological kitchen appliance is the Electrolux InfiSight. This oven will guide the user through a rich database of recipes, helping them to choose between 13 heating modes, 87 preset cooking programmes and 18 functions in order to find the perfect setting. It also has a large, 74-litre capacity.

With growing numbers of house-builders specifying this level of ►

"The inclusion of home technology can provide a developer with the ability to sell at a higher price, a promotion to help sell homes, or a possible upgrade option to homebuyers"



TOP LEFT Zanussi's QUADRO Steam Oven offers desirable technology at a more affordable price

LEFT A beachfront bungalow in southern Spain has been given a welcoming high-tech makeover by smart home integration specialist Future Lifestyle. The result is a luxury, chill-out retreat where the latest technology can be enjoyed at the touch of a button, including high-quality whole home audio from NuVo

BOTTOM LEFT Crestron award-winning project from Custom Controls which combines an energy-saving lighting installation with home entertainment and security features

THIS PIC The AEG PerfektFit American-style fridge-freezer offers complete control for the user plus energy savings

appliance, it is clear that it is an important area for homeowners. However, the benefits of home automation aren't only for the homeowner: used correctly and modern technology can be one of your most valuable sales tools too. The Axeo Home Finder, for example, is the latest generation interactive touch-screen system, specifically designed for new homes sales centres.

The Axeo Home Finder is a powerful off-plan sales tool that provides potential buyers with a fully interactive experience of the development, hosting an impressive array of features, from advanced plot searching, 3D views and virtual tours to customer registration and data capture.

If you're still unsure of whether such home technology is a necessity for your scheme, consider these parting words from Babs Moore at Amina. "In the same way as with cars, extras that initially are only provided with high-end models over time becomes the norm. Embracing technology allows housebuilders to differentiate themselves and provide that all-important wow factor when selling a new home." **Sh**

CONTACTS

Amina
www.amina.co.uk

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CEDIA
www.cedia.org

Crestron
www.crestron.eu/showroom

Electrolux
www.electrolux.co.uk

Konnectiv
www.konnectiv.com

NuVo
www.nuvotechnologies.com

WyreStorm Technologies
www.wyrestorm.com



TOP NuVo project installed by Dark Side of the Room

ABOVE LEFT Amina loudspeakers create sound through vibrational panel technology

ABOVE RIGHT Electrolux InfiSight oven for homeowners that like to take the strain out of entertaining

THIS PIC Wyrestorm manufactures HD distribution and control solutions enabling different video and audio equipment to be viewed and controlled in different rooms

