

Giving It Their All



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Lighting and Much More Were the Focus Of Innovative Audio's Oceanside, California Project
by karen mitchell

Call it the house of everything. For Innovative Audio Inc., of Oceanside, California, the success of a 22-month long project is defined by the way it sheds light on each and every detail in the house. The project earned IA a 2005 Crestron Integration Award for Brilliant Lighting Design.

In 2004, IA president and founder Tony Ellis was referred to a client who had purchased a spec home, still under construction, overlooking the southern California coastline. Customized construction designs for the two-story contemporary home were being finalized, and the client, a software designer/publisher, wanted A/V, a media room, and distributed audio throughout the house.

Tony Ellis offered the prospective client an outline of what the A/V integration industry had to offer. "The possibilities grew during our conversations," Ellis said. "By the time the first draft was done we had included intercom features via the phone, gate controls, and an alarm system. At that point he hired us and asked us to refine the systems."

Ellis then detailed the ways in which a Crestron-powered system could grow along with the home and the client's desires. The more Crestron's capabilities were uncovered the more the client started asking for additional functions. By the time a final systems draft was completed the project had doubled in size to about \$400,000 in costs, excluding programming.

"It was the most intense project we've done because of many changes on the fly initiated by the homeowner," Ellis said. "He warned me up front that he would be making them, and he felt he needed to trust the contractors the most because he didn't want to be bothered with nickel-and-dime changes. This client brought his own team aboard including an interior decorator and a lighting designer, and everyone involved realized the amount of time and effort that would be required. We were into that, attention to detail is one of our strong suits."

The finished project features a media room/theater with a 63-inch plasma, a Yamaha DPX-1200 DLP projector, and a 108-inch Draper motorized screen. Two Crestron BIPADs and two Crestron PVIDs distribute A/V throughout the home and property via three Crestron 12X60 amplifiers. Other gear includes a Crestron FM tuner, two Audio Request Fusions, cable/DMX music, two cable DVRs, a ReQuest DVD server, and DVD recorder/player in 13 audio-only zones and five A/V zones. The system also includes 39 assorted Crestron CLX keypads, 10 TPS-3000s, six ML-500s, and one WPR-48 weatherproof remote.

Founded in 1989, IA has been a Crestron dealer for more than two years. Crestron was ideal for this application, Ellis said, because of the Pro2's ability to integrate, delegate and share information. Each processor, including the Pro2 and a PAC, has delegated systems such as alarm, pool, shade and drapes, gate and garage door

inputs/outputs, and HVAC.

The lighting designer initially chose a lighting system other than Crestron, but Ellis felt it was his responsibility to make a pivotal point by changing the plans. "I talked with them and explained that it was important to have a complete Crestron system," he said, "so that we could take responsibility for the whole house system."

The CLX system, used for virtually every interior and exterior light on the property as well as for the drapes and shades, represents the largest lighting project undertaken by IA, with some 160 lighting loads. In the master bedroom, the system controls a unique treatment of both sheer and blackout curtains over an arched window that protrudes toward the ocean beyond. "We even controlled the jamb switches for closets and ceiling, bathroom exhaust and humidity fans so that when the house is on vacation mode everything can be off," Ellis explained.

The Crestron TPS-3000s integrated with the A/V and whole-house system provide for individual control of every load with independent dimming control of each as well as virtual depictions of all physical keypads plus several virtual ones. Numerous scenes provide custom control of all inside and outside lighting. Automation includes window treatments and lighting based on both time-based and astronomical clocks as well as integration from the whole house system and integrated subsystems. Many scenes were tracked so that scene two over-ruled scene one if already in effect, turning off scene two reinstates the first scene for common loads if active. The vast number of control graphics allow for individual monitoring and control of every load and physical

keypad buttons on touch panels. The system also controls a projector on the roof, aimed down at the rear lawn, to provide templates of various shapes and patterns for entertaining.

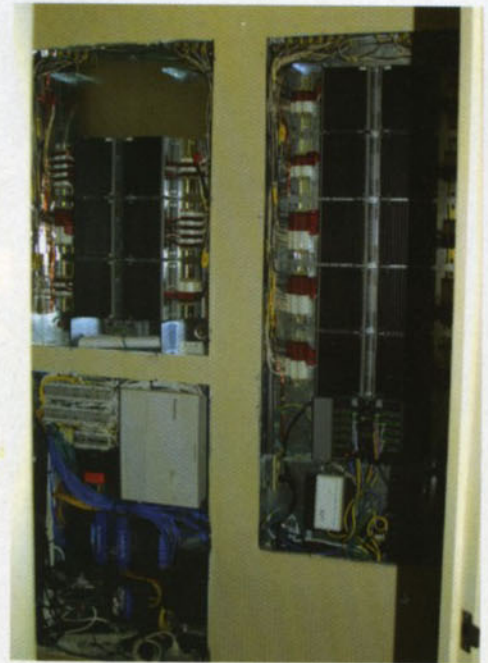
The media room/theater, with an intimate four-seat viewing area and a rack room tucked behind acoustic panels, opens to a spa/pool/fireplace area with Rockustics and SpeakerCraft product. SpeakerCraft is also used throughout in the interior. In the dining room, IA installed "invisible" speakers behind the drywall.

Outside, Jandy controls fiber optics for color effects in the pool, heaters, jets, and bubbler functions. A second Jandy controller for a water feature in front of the house synchronizes with the rear unit, and both are integrated into the Crestron system. Audible functions via touchscreens connect to the pedestrian and driveway gates, and a mix of cameras with IR blasters for night vision provides surveillance.

One of the last choices in the project was the selection of his and hers DVRs and server in the rack room so the clients could share access anywhere in the house except the guest room. This did away with the need for multiple cable boxes and provided access from touchscreens.

The most detailed change requested by the client involved the GUIs. When the client didn't like the colors of their Crestron interfaces, IA changed the schemes. Then, upon delivery, the client felt that the edges of the GUIs were jagged and asked that they be redone. Morgan Strauss, of GuiFX, accommodated by providing resized JPEGs to IA.

"The strength of our pre-wire crew, led by Jay Buchwald, was essential to this project," Ellis



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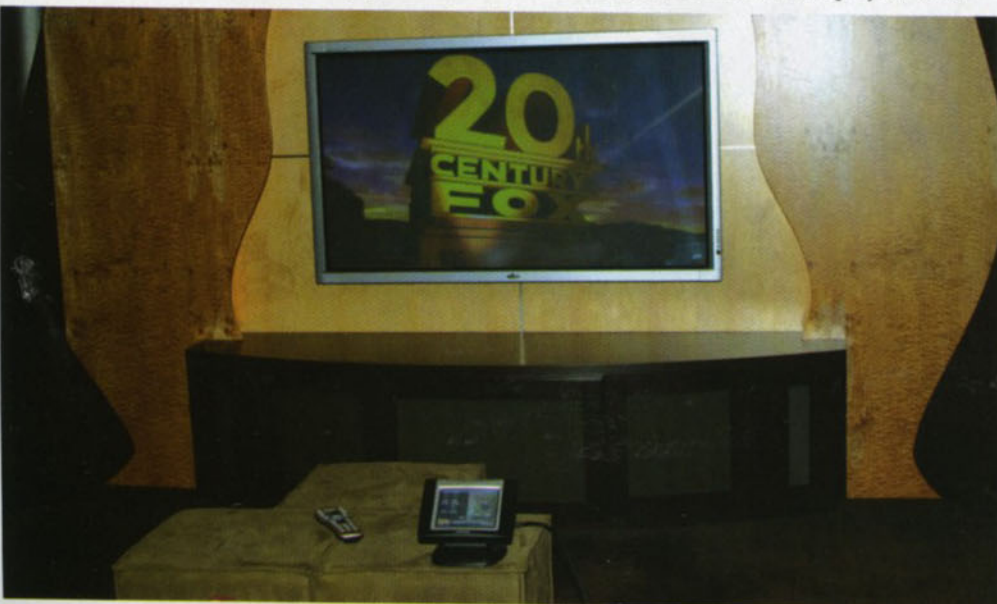
said. "They gave us extra wires and paths for the expandability we needed for the future, and a lot of it was used up by the end of the installation. Changes were still coming in to us after the house was dry-walled."

Jeff Ellis, co-owner of IA with his brother, programmed the complex system. "This is a sophisticated system that grew as time went on," he said. "One reason for its success was that we understand right from the beginning that it was a technical client. This is the most sophisticated Crestron system I've seen to date and we're very proud of it."

Tony Ellis said that the flexibility in the whole-house project will be carried into other IA jobs. "The chemistry with the design people also is paramount," he said. "You have to be candid with them to keep any project moving smoothly."

When he founded IA there were but a handful of integrators in the San Diego area. "Now there are about a dozen within a 20-mile radius, including electricians who want to do it and hundreds more in the county," Ellis noted. "We are CEDIA trained and certified, and we look to that certification to set us apart. From the client's perspective, that's what they recognize, so we use the logo on our uniforms and advertise it. You have to be competitive. And the clients have to have everything on the table to make that choice."

Karen Mitchell is a freelance writer in Boulder, Colorado.



Crestron TPS-3000s integrated with the A/V and whole-house system.