

A tropical villa with a thatched roof and large windows, set against a clear blue sky. The villa has a sandy path leading to it, and there are some green plants in the foreground.

# HOME Smart Home

Life under control

## PUSH BUTTON PARADISE

It's a great escape  
to an island—or two!

### HOME SHOPPING

Texas takes on Main Street, USA.

### GOING PRO

Takes a team to build  
dreams like these...



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## HAVING A BALL

This pro player gave us an all-access pass to his unbelievable Indiana abode with all the bells and whistles. Plus, go inside a fan cave built for a real Cub!

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El Secreto is the getaway that can help you relax, restore, and replenish—automatically. Grab your UV protection, and let’s hit the beach.

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# EDITOR’S NOTE

“It’s a funny thing about life,” begins a quote that left an indelible impression on my high-school self: “If you refuse to accept anything but the best, you very often get it.” Spoken by the English dramatist and novelist W. Somerset Maugham, the words capture a sentiment that some people on this planet, especially those featured in this issue of Home Smart Home, not only believe but truly embody. And oh, what a wonderful life it can be. A life worth living and thoroughly enjoying, because you’re the one in charge, deciding exactly what bells and which whistles should accompany your drummer self as life’s beat goes on and on... I don’t know about you, but that sounds like music to me.

So keep that in mind as you breeze through the following pages and enjoy a peek into a few other people’s lives from all over the globe. You’ll read how home automation technology is making its way to a pocket (or two) of paradise to ensure island dwellers always stay stress-free. You may also learn a tip or two from an NFL’er on how to keep games front-and-center, even when you’re off the field, and downstairs in the basement. And if you’re impressed by such a man cave, just wait until you see the *fan* cave we captured and documented near Chicago!

You’ll wonder what Mr. Rogers would think of the neighborhood we visited in Spring, Texas, where every home has a purpose and every purpose, well... you can actually *purchase* for your own home—right from a touch screen tablet. This version of “Main Street” may go mainstream in a town near you before you know it. And finally, in a land far, far away, we’ll make sure you feel like a sultan as you slip through secret passageways and enjoy a soak with a view in this Middle East masterpiece of a penthouse.

Ah, living, according to “the best.” Just accept it, I say.



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## HOME Smart Home

Life under control

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Reuben Maness, John Anthony Foley,  
Darryl Wilkinson, and Patric Dean.

# WHAT'S NEW?

## Make a Splash with OS 2.6



By far the coolest—and coolest looking—Control4® operating system released to date. Explore new artists with ease; enjoy favorite albums; find obscure songs from online streaming services; and play, save, and groom playlists. Control your pool or spa and set heating options from your mobile device with a sleek, new-look interface. And put new sensors for door locks, water, smoke, carbon monoxide (and more!) to work as you control them from any device. Learn more about the elegant and exciting new possibilities for your Control4 system at [control4.com](http://control4.com).



### The Key to Your Ultimate + Smart Dream Home

Recognizing tech-savvy homeowners expect convenience and control in this internet-connected world, Toll Brothers, a leading national builder of luxury homes, joins a host of regional and local builders to give home buyers the option to include Control4 smart home automation technology into their new homes. The combination of form and function, particularly with personalized automation solutions, is transforming new houses into dream homes.



### This App is on FIRE!

Is it getting hot in here? The Control4 App is among the first apps available for customers on the new Amazon® Fire phone! Now Control4 customers can command and control their homes from virtually any mobile device or tablet, including iPhones, iPads, Android smart phones or tablets, or a web browser.



### Stay in Control

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REBECCA HENRY PHOTOGRAPHY

# The Importance of Earnest Media Distribution

Darryl Wilkinson, Guest Contributor

My father was a pioneer in multi-room audio, although he had no idea of it at the time. In fact, even today, if you mention the terms “multi-room audio” or “media distribution,” he’ll wonder just what the heck it is that you’re babbling about. Thankfully, that’s not due to any age-related forgetfulness. For him, having music and television in multiple places throughout the house is such a basic concept that it doesn’t require a special name. He’d give you the same quizzical look if you’d said “multi-room electricity” or “HVAC distribution”—although, interestingly enough, when he was a kid his family’s house didn’t have either.

I, on the other hand, can’t remember a time when we didn’t have radios in the bathroom, the kitchen, and the garage, as well as a console stereo plus a TV in the living room. As time went on, the living room TV grew larger (and dad finally bought a color set), with smaller TVs appearing in the kitchen and a of couple bedrooms. In its most basic sense, I always lived with multi-room audio/video. But, that version of having music and TV in more than one room of the house wasn’t much more than a collection of independent electronic gadgets, each operating as if it were the center of its own media universe. Using this whole-house “system” was easy because it never involved much more than flipping the power switch and twisting the knob of an analog tuner. It wasn’t terribly convenient and it was definitely not very flexible. (And those mono AM/FM radios and tiny TV speakers didn’t sound that great, either.)

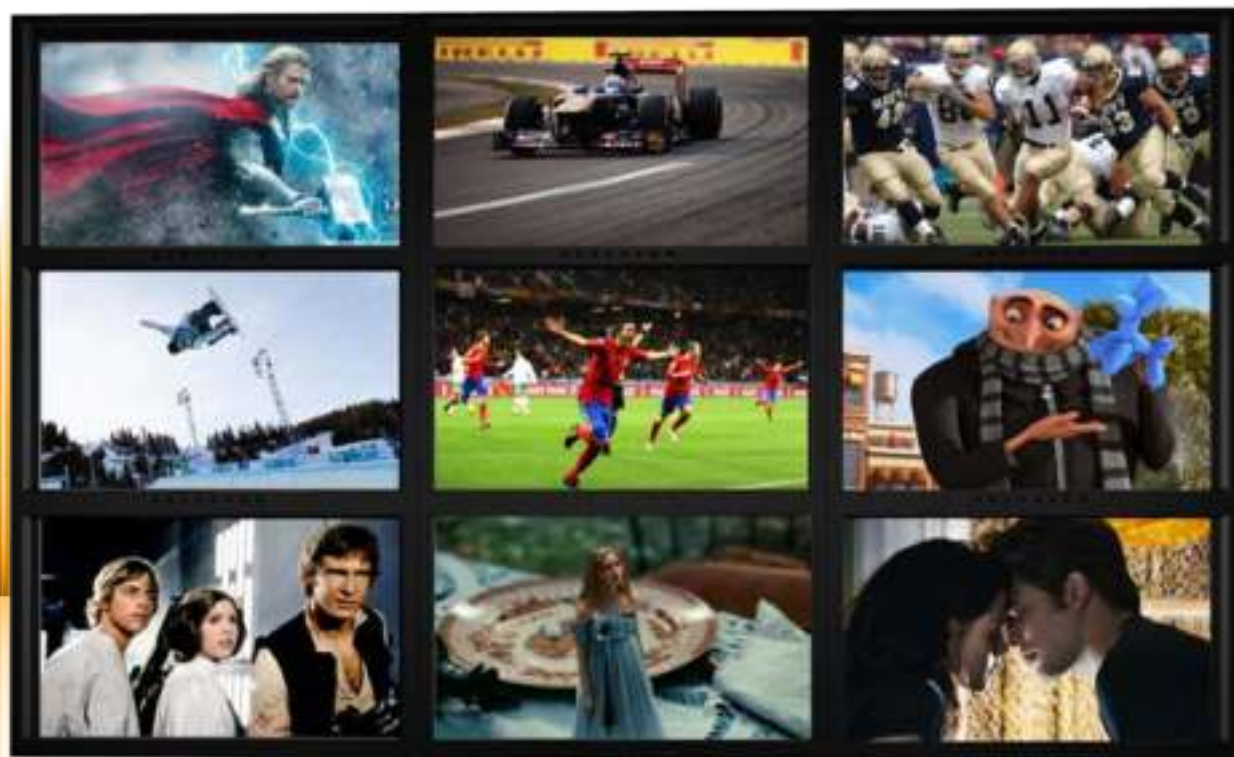
The modern version of multi-room audio/video—or whole-home media distribution, if you will—is just as simple (often simpler) to use, sounds way better, is much more useful, and



Fewer components, more entertainment: Store your satellite receiver, Blu-ray player, TiVo DVR, Roku player, etc. in one centralized location but enjoy them anywhere in the house.

has the big bonus of being highly adaptable and expandable. Think of how one of Apple’s current iPhones stacks up against one of last-century’s venerable Sony Walkman portable cassette players. In a way, portable media devices like Walkmans and iPhones were/are the epitome of “multi-room media-distribution,” they go anywhere you go. But of course, the Walkman was limited to playing analog cassette tapes. And you could forget about randomized playback...or changeable playlists...or instantly downloading new music...or playing movies...well, you get the picture. (And better sound, too.) Not to mention the fact that listening to music through headphones isn’t exactly the kind of thing that makes you popular at parties or during dinner with your family.





You see, it's an incredibly elevated experience to have separate (built-in or in-room) speakers in multiple rooms—and maybe a TV too—all connected to the home's media distribution system. It's not only that your listening choices suddenly border on the infinite—including satellite or terrestrial radio stations, streaming internet services (such as Napster, Rhapsody, TuneIn, Pandora or Spotify), podcasts, your entire digital music collection, or potentially music and podcasts stored on a family member's or friend's smartphone. Thanks to the magic of matrix switches, you can listen to (or watch) different sources simultaneously, too.

In my case, the touch screens and keypads that are part of the Control4 home automation system installed in my house are programmed with buttons that provide one-press access to my family's most popular sources. But if one of us is in the mood for

something different—say I want to listen to BBC news in the kitchen as I make breakfast and my daughter wants to listen to a Pandora station while she's in the bathroom—it's only a matter of a few more button presses to get to what each of us is looking for. Because of the multitude of things to watch or listen to, it's a system that all of us want to use. Just as important is the fact that it's quick and convenient to use, which is why all of us actually do use it. And because the system isn't limited to one single room at a time, we often get double, triple, and even quadruple benefits out of it whenever we're not all in the same room at the same time.

Every now and then when we actually do find ourselves in the same room together, it's usually in the home theater room. One of the most recent times included my newly-married son and daughter-in-law. We took the opportunity to go through all of the wedding photos we had. But rather

than crowd around the small screen of a laptop or hand our smartphones back and forth, we sat comfortably on the couch and—thanks to the ability of the whole-house media system to reach into every digital nook and cranny where each of us had stored our photos—relived the event on the 55-inch flat-screen in the front of the room. It made me think of the times when my dad would fire up the slide projector to look at vacation pictures. Unfortunately, the whole process back then was such an ordeal that we didn't do it all that often.

Can a person live a complete and fulfilling life without a whole-home media distribution system? Well, sure. I guess. But, as my early-adopter father can testify, life is so much nicer with it. And now that electronic media has become such an integral part of our daily lives, I don't think it will be long before people start being surprised when a house doesn't have a media distribution system. ■

# LIGHTS, CAMERA, AUTOMATION!

If there's one town where the home automation craze caught on early, it's Hollywood. For more than 60 years, movies and TV have been showing us home automation at its best, and worst. Most of these depictions are portrayals of what were, at the time, only imaginary technologies. My how times have changed!

What was once possible only in the fevered imaginings of Hollywood screenwriters is now an everyday reality, thanks to Control4. With that in mind, we thought it would be fun to take a look back at home automation in film and television, and see how the anachronistic representations of yesteryear compare with the modern realities of today.

## |||||The House of Tomorrow



A seminal vision of the thrilling (and hilarious) possibilities of home automation, Tex Avery's animated short showed us the future—and it was funny. A wry satire on modern family life, this cartoon features a house with everything: from an automatic sandwich maker to an all-electric razor to a multi-screen TV. Just be careful of that exploding super-atomic oven!

Not ready for a super-atomic oven? With Control4 automation and luxury appliances from manufacturers like Sub-Zero and Wolf, your kitchen will make the year 2050 seem like the Stone Age.

MGM



# BITS & PIECES

*For big laughs & little-did-you-knows*

In 2013, Yahoo ranked the “Most Asked Questions” which included the likes of:

 1 “WHEN DO THE CLOCKS CHANGE?”

 2 “WHAT IS MY IP ADDRESS?”

 3 “HOW DO I CHANGE MY PASSWORD?”

54%

of internet users have posted original photos or videos to websites.

47%

share photos or videos they found elsewhere online.

Roboticians at MIT have created a robot that can put flat-pack IKEA furniture together all by itself. It has a specialized gripper hand that can grab the pieces and put the product together with no human help.



“I am not allowed, for security reasons, to have an iPhone.”

—US President Barack Obama, in a speech to some young folks at the White House



IN 1979

a Brit named Kane Kramer submitted a patent that almost perfectly resembles an iPod. He even went as far as predicting a need for DRM and a way to distribute the music.

NO KISSING COUSINS!

An app created by three University of Iceland software engineering students helps natives avoid accidental incest. By touching phones, the app detects whether you are too close to each other on a family tree!



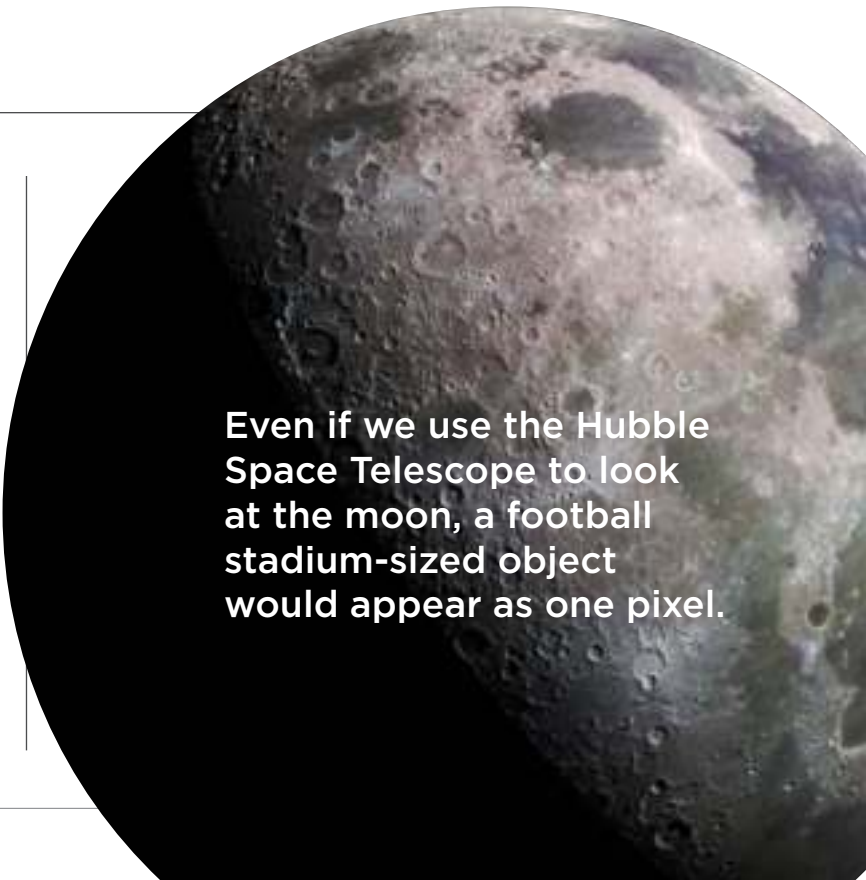
Whatever your heart desires. Literally. Musical Heart, part of the Septimu project going on in Microsoft Research, is a smart earbud that—based on biofeedback—tells a smartphone to recommend, play, and share music that is suitable for the user’s mood, health, and situation.

Si•lent dis•co \sīlənt diskō\

*n*: A modern dance event phenomenon in which the music is broadcasted and distributed via FM-transmitter to the participant’s headphones rather than speakers.



MC10, a Cambridge, Massachusetts based startup, is developing virtually invisible, conformal, and wearable electronics made of micro and nano-scale electronic structures one fifth the width of a human hair!



Even if we use the Hubble Space Telescope to look at the moon, a football stadium-sized object would appear as one pixel.

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# GAME CHANGER

A FORMER NFL PLAYER USES  
SMART-HOME TECHNOLOGY  
TO KEEP TABS ON A NEW HOME

**H**ow do you tackle building a smart home when you're a former NFL star? You have a ball. We can't tell you the name of this retired athlete (he'd prefer to remain anonymous), but we can say that he is thrilled with how Control4 simplified his large and luxurious family home. Let's kick things off and check out this stately spread.

Just outside of Indianapolis you'll find Carmel, Indiana, where gated communities nestle near touches of country—trees, creeks, and fields. It's here in Carmel where our homeowner decided to build a home for his family of four (with another on the way) four years ago. And, from the very beginning, the project was a true team effort. "We worked with TJ West Designs," explains the owner. "TJ really did a fantastic job, working with me and my wife, getting

The automation system works behind the scenes, letting the homeowner's decor take center stage: lively colors, NFL memorabilia, and all that jazz.



Project installation by  
Millennium Sounds



both of our styles, bringing them together and making the house modern and contemporary, but still very relaxing for our family.”

As the homeowners strategized, they decided automation was a critical part of the plan. Having a pre-game strategy was necessary, given the size of their future dream home—17,000 square feet. “This is a very big project,” says Bill Lehman of Millennium Sounds, the project installer. And how did Control4 get on the roster? “We knew we wanted a control solution. There was a budget in mind, and Control4 did everything that the owners wanted within their budget.”

“When we saw Control4, we really fell in love,” the owner notes. Right away, the team from Millennium Sounds began its pre-game workouts, huddling up with the builders, going through the blueprints room by room, incorporating the customer’s wishes into each area. “We also worked very closely with the interior designer,” explains Lehman. “They helped with touch screen placement, lighting control, everything. We wanted the house to look as good as they did.” Two years later, the house was completed.

Automation touches nearly every room. “We have twenty TVs throughout the house, with several sources of video,” Bill notes. “We also have several zones of audio throughout, and touch screens in most every room.” That ease of accessibility really makes a difference in the family’s daily activities, as the owner explains: “This house is lived in. We use every square inch of the home. And it’s

Individual audio zones keep the wacky kids’ music separate from the piano room (mom’s in-house hideaway), *above*. Outdoor music, the poolhouse TV, and backyard lights can all be fired up from the owner’s phone, *below*.



# The future is now

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Living room loungers can access their own personalized video options on the big-screen TV, while others watch a separate source in the adjacent kitchen.

really useful to have those buttons on the wall. A lot of times it's a challenge to find those remotes. Just to be able to go to a TV screen or any of the buttons on the wall, is very helpful."

The media distribution system is a certain future hall-of-famer. "The HDMI matrix switch distributes video throughout the house, there are several satellite receivers and Blu-ray players, and in each room they can pick the receiver and Blu-ray player they want to use." That comes in handy in rooms like the kids' playroom on the second level which features three TVs. "Someone will want to watch one

show, another will watch a different show or play a video game," the owner notes. "We really have the capabilities to make sure that everyone is happy."

There's a similar game plan in the adjoining kitchen and living room area on the main level. "We knew we were going to spend a lot of time in the kitchen, and the kids are going to be right there in the living room," explains the owner.

With a house this huge, the one-touch button convenience saves a lot of legwork. "They don't have to walk throughout the house to check things or know if things are on or off," Bill explains. "When they

go into a room, they have lighting scenes and music scenes. They can just push one button and have everything turn on." It's a whole new ball game from the owner's previous pad. "In my old house," notes the owner, "you're backing out of your driveway and the upstairs light is on. You're not going to go back in the house and go upstairs to turn that light off. Here, before I leave the house, I just press one button to make sure all my lights are off."

The owner's favorite features include the door station intercom ("no more of those solicitors at the front door," he says), and the ability to access the system remotely.



One touch of a button prepares the basement "man cave" for a superbowl party, poker night, or post-game cocktails.

"I can be somewhere else around the world, and I can still access my Control4 system," notes the owner.

"I can look at the cameras in my house, flicker on lights and scare the heck out of my wife," he adds with a hearty laugh. "It's just great to have that ability, and Control4 definitely got it done for me."

But there's one part of the house that we haven't even mentioned yet, though clearly it's an area that would make the highlights reel: the basement, built out as one of the most impressive recreational areas we've ever seen. It's a bar, a theater, a workout room, a gym, a trophy room, a casino...In short, the

ultimate man cave.

"It's fully automated," says the owner. "We put on a lot of different kinds of viewing events—Super Bowl, fight parties, whatever it is. I hit the ALL ON button and all the TVs come on. I hit the PARTY button; it sets up the back of the room and the music will be playing, and then we're all set to go." In the exercise room, the system is set up so that the owner can simultaneously pump iron, watch ESPN and listen to his music. There's a golf simulator, also on the Control4 system, which means the owner can also use the simulator screen to call up television or play

video games. But even within this top-of-the-line man cave, there's an ultimate room—call it the house MVP—the gymnasium.

You descend even deeper into the basement to find it—a shiny, glass-enclosed gym, complete with basketball court, wooden floor, and multimedia on every wall. "It's one of the coolest rooms in this project," installer Bill notes. The owner agrees. "A lot of my friends come over, we're competitive and we play basketball." Millennium Sounds even added a custom feature to the system: Press the BBALL button, and Michael Jordan's voice booms through, challenging: "You want



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a piece of me? C'mon!" A Jay-Z track thumps and bumps and gets the adrenaline pumping as the TVs come to life and the lights shine bright. It's a super-charged moment straight out of the beginning of a pro sports game—something this owner is very familiar with.

And so, even though this football family has a lot going on in their palatial pad, they are breathing easy, thanks to an automated system that lets them stay in control. "We absolutely love the system," the owner notes. "It's easy, it's simple, it lets you control a lot of different devices and it really makes living in this house a lot easier for us." ■



Hoop dreams come true in the private gymnasium, complete with all-star walk-on music and television screens. Televisions and audio abound in the workout room as well.



# THE ULTIMATE “FAN CAVE”



Project installation by  
Sonic Low Voltage Inc.

The only thing Stewart McVicar loves more than the Chicago Cubs themselves is watching the Cubs at his favorite sports bar, Club 400—a.k.a., his basement. But compared to most man caves, this one's a guaranteed Hall-of-Famer.

Named after the center field post at Wrigley Field, Stewart's private pub has all the fixings of a commercial establishment, and then some: TVs everywhere, arcade games, even separate men's and women's restrooms (including the



essential 24" flatscreen TV above the urinal). You'll also find theater seating, two bars, and Cubbies memorabilia everywhere you look.

The entire system is integrated and controlled by Control4 products, so Stewart can operate everything from his remote, or the 7-inch Touch Screen. That includes eight audio feeds for 16 outputs, an 8x8 video matrix with dual outputs (for 16 different displays), and four different satellite boxes, so Stewart can watch four different live games at any time. Lighting is also integrated,



so when it's time to play ball, the TVs fire up, the lights dim, and audio from the game is broadcast throughout the entire basement. There's enough space—and entertainment—to occupy Stewart and 40 of his closest buddies. It's a

sports nut's dream come true, but what does Stewart's wife think? "She's been 100% supportive of the entire project," says Stewart. "But I met my wife at a Cubs game, so she knew what she was getting into when she met me." ■





# THE SECRET TO PARADISE

Project installation by  
TEKHAUS Central America



*Take a journey  
to the heart  
of happiness*

**Y**ou deserve a break. Quite frankly, so do I. What do you say we make a quick escape together? I've got the perfect tropical paradise in mind—a location sun-drenched in restorative energy, an oasis of palm trees, white sand, and turquoise waters that glisten like a beacon to the overstressed and work-weary. (It also happens to be the finest in romantic getaways, if you're so inclined.) Pack only comfortable, light clothing and prepare for temperatures in the 80s. We're going to Belize.

Now the mainland of the leading tourism country in Central America, and former empire of the Mayans, is not our final destination. No, we are going someplace that can only be approached by boat. Hop aboard and enjoy the ride as we motor eleven miles through the Caribbean Sea to our port of call. Full speed ahead to El Secreto!

This brand new hot spot is a barefoot luxury resort located on the Ambergris Cay, a small isle situated along the second largest barrier reef in the world. Yes, there's scuba diving, snorkeling, fishing, kayaking, windsurfing, and plenty more water activities that bring you

Aerial view of Central America's best kept secret, *top*. The Spa Villa, ready to host you and your most indulgent fantasies, *below left*. Lounge poolside in a tropical paradise, *below center*.





A bedroom in one of the Sea Villas, *above*. First class amenities and services ensure that you never want to leave, *below*.

face-to-fish with that spectacular reef, but the land amenities make an equally impressive splash. Namely, the 13 individual villas spread throughout the property—we can choose a “tropical villa,” a “sea villa,” a “lake villa,” and the much-coveted “spa villa.” With only one party to a villa, and only 13 villas, we’re guaranteed an intimate retreat.

El Secreto owner Abraham Roffe opened the resort to the public just months ago, and he is proud that Conde Nast’s Traveler recently named it one of The Best New Hotels of 2013. He designed the gorgeous island getaway to be a 4-star experience, giving his guests the very best in personalized service every step of the way, from fresh-squeezed juice waiting outside your door every morning to complimentary 5-minute power massages by the pool. For Abraham, it was a no-brainer to make Control4 the backbone to El Secreto’s operation.

“I have been a Control4 customer and user in my own home for about five years, and I love the system,” says Abraham. “Guests use it for the control of their own villa, everything from air conditioner control to TV, lighting, music, and door locks. Each villa has its own iPod dock, so guests can play their own music or the Rhapsody music that we provide.”

Each El Secreto villa comes equipped with an Apple iPod Touch, the guests’ “one remote” for everything. There are also specifically-placed keypads throughout the villas to control various lighting scenes. “All villas have keypads in the entrance, in each night stand, and the bathroom entrance,” adds Abraham. “We have an All-On, a bathroom light, a romantic scene, a turndown service scene, an All-Off, and many others.”

Abraham’s Control4 dealer is Hiram Portilla, CEO of Tekhaus

PHOTOS BY JOSE LUIS ZAPATA

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Creativity  
Progress &  
Excellence



El Secreto's social area by night. Balmy weather courtesy of Belize; lighting by Control4.

Central America. With three business channels—residential, commercial, and corporate—Tekhaus implements Control4 products as the fundamental control system for each. “Abraham and my customers have all they need with Control4,” Hiram tells us, “Because it is the most user friendly and at the same time the most powerful control system. Control4 is unique in that it’s the best way to control third-party devices while also having the flexibility to do all that our customers need. This is the first hotel

project for Tekhaus, and it opens the doors to other kinds of business Tekhaus didn’t have previously.”

Hiram and Abraham have teamed up to bring the world a truly one-of-a-kind, sophisticated experience. The high-tech conveniences are state-of-the-art yet as easy to use as a coconut Mojito is to drink (El Secreto’s signature cocktail, FYI). The resort itself is eco-friendly, built using local artisans and resources, and serving fresh food grown in its own gardens. There, ahead—see those thatched roofs along the

shore? Our boat ride to El Secreto is almost at an end. As we near the resort’s private pier, we can feel the tension of our work and days begin to drain away. By the way, each villa has a thatched roof, or palapa, as a tribute to the Mayan ancestors of this land. “We have a man-made lake,” says Abraham, “and our guests love it. All the palapas are illuminated by the lighting we set in the lake using Control4, and it looks spectacular.”

And speaking of ambient lighting, he adds, “We’re able to change colors in all the common areas of the



All guests arrive via El Secreto's private pier, seen here by candlelight.

resort and achieve various scenarios, so the guests have a different experience every night." So not only is Control4 front and center for the guest-facing services, but the staff uses it too. "The management uses the Control4 system as much as the guests do, for lighting and music in the common areas, as well as some back-end programs to control door locks, security, and reprogramming technology in case a controller falls from the network at some point."

"As to the nuts and bolts of the lighting system," Hiram informs us, "We have Sylvania lighting integrated with a DMX512 system. We integrated the Control4 system using an Extra Vegetables driver and ENTEC hardware."

"It's tricky to install a control system in a commercial project," Hiram continues, "Because you don't have just one customer, you have an endless array of guests and every one of them is different. I'm very proud of the stability of Control4 and the easy way the guests so easily accept it." There you have it. Paradise's operating system. As we take our much-needed down time to restore our health and well-being, and we let ourselves be pampered like royalty, we can feel secure in the knowledge that, with Control4 and Abraham's attentive staff, we're covered.

The boat is docking now. And here is our El Secreto greeter standing on the pier waiting to welcome us with a cool scented towel and complimentary cocktail. Take off your shoes and put them away; you won't need them for several days. I see you eyeing that hammock over there. Go for it. Welcome to El Secreto. ■

Even though the sun is setting, the water is never too cold for a dip, *above*. The Lake Villa, here showing off one of its lighting scenarios at dusk, *below*.





# BAHAMA MAMA

Property developers in paradise build a high-tech home for their most challenging client—themselves



Project installation by  
Master Audio Cameras

At the Bahamas: Sunny paradise of sleepy beaches, thatched roofs, and... 103-inch projection televisions? Yes, one can live large on a tropical island, several hundred miles from the mainland. Case in point: This sprawling residence in the Bahamian capital of Nassau. It's a 10,000 square-foot beauty overlooking the shores of Lake Cunningham,

complete with swimming pool, cinema, two kitchens, luxurious gardens, and a grand piano. It's a magnificent manse, but it isn't one of those museum-type estates full of cold, expensive things. This is a real home, kept warm by a real family—a family, by the way, that uses home automation to keep their big and beautiful house humming. With three

kids, three dogs, and a successful property development company to manage, the owners, John and Ghandi Kane, had a one-word vision when it came to designing their home—usability. “We tried to design every inch of it to reflect us as a family,” Ghandi, a seventh-generation Bahamian says. “We didn’t want wasted space.”



Sure, living large on an island is luxurious, but soaring energy costs and sweltering tropical weather make managing this home a challenge.





Being in the real estate business, the Kanes were well aware of the power of home automation. And they had tried several other brands in the past, with mixed results. “The other systems tended to be afterthoughts, rather than start-to-finish solutions,” Ghandi notes. After experiencing Control4 for themselves at the ARIA hotel in Las Vegas, they were drawn to its simplicity and power. “We were sold.” Now, Control4 runs throughout

the house. From thermostats to televisions, security to intercoms, Control4 does the heavy lifting, leaving the Kanes free to focus on living large on their own piece of paradise.

## HOME TOUR

This family is without a doubt, tech-friendly. Both parents and kids are comfortable popping an iPhone on a deck and broadcasting their

own music, or firing up a movie from the Control4 app on an iPad. John is certainly a gadget nut as well, but, it turns out, he’s even more of a TV nut. “Being British, he watches a lot of sports on television,” says Ghandi. “He’ll have something on one TV, and then in another room, something else. At the same time, he’s checking his iPad for all the scores.” The Control4 system manages all of the home’s televisions. “There’s a television in just about every room.

PHOTOS BY JIM TOSHIO INOKUCHI

I’m not entirely sure why, but I think he thinks it’s a good thing,” she jokes. As frequent travelers, John and Ghandi love the remote access capabilities of the system as well. They’ll check in from abroad to see whether the cleaners came, or if the dog is digging in the garden. Regular visitors have their own door lock key codes. “I don’t think I even have a key,” Ghandi says. When the family is in town, they’ll all gather for movie night in the home theater, complete



The Kane family gathers weekly in their home theater to watch a feature on their automated 103-inch projection screen, *above*. The supersmart family piano can be broadcast throughout the house, and, can be played remotely from such faraway places as Japan, *below*.

with a 103-inch projection screen.

Automation makes entertaining easier too, and that’s something the Kanes do a lot of. (With a beautiful spread like this, wouldn’t you?) “Guests love the fact that when we’re sitting out on the deck, we press a button and the volume is changing, the lights are changing,” says Ghandi. “I don’t have to get up and run around and try to be entertaining. We have everything laid out for us right there.” Guests are also dazzled by the

Yamaha grand piano, which yes, looks beautiful, but is also a “smart piano,” and linked into the system. That means, when someone plays the piano, it can be broadcast through the audio system throughout the house. That came in handy when the Kanes hosted a children’s piano recital recently. “We went to the deck downstairs and my husband pressed a button, and the music was flowing through the garden,” Ghandi notes. But this piano gets even snazzier;



because it's wired to the system, you can play it remotely. So, someone else playing another linked piano somewhere in the world will cause this piano's keys to play on their own. "If I wanted somebody to play it from Japan it would come through the piano, and I would have the entire house flooded with music," explains Ghandi. The inventors of the original "player pianos" of the 1890s likely didn't foresee THAT possibility!

John and Ghandi's three children are even more tech-savvy. "My daughter has changed the timing in her bathroom for the light now that she's standing in front of the mirror longer," Ghandi laughs. "She reads at night and she can just use her iPad to turn off the lights and not get up. Each kid gets to set their own door lock code to keep out those pesky siblings." ("Mommy has the master code," Ghandi assures us.)

FORM AND FUNCTION

Living in paradise presents its own challenges. One particular prickly point is the high cost of electricity in the Bahamas—which can leave a monthly financial dent, especially on a property of this size. At the Kanes, the Control4 system helps keep the utility bill down in a number of ways. First, the AC is, of course, on the system and can be controlled to turn on and off at specific times automatically, so the family never has to "remember" to turn it off at less relevant hours. It can also be operated remotely.

Another cost-saving superhero? Motion-activated light timers throughout the house. "That's a huge benefit in this country," notes Ghandi,

Let there be (LED) light: Besides adding a flash of color to the master bedroom, LED lights save the Kanes a bundle on energy costs....a significant savings on an island where electrical power is pricey.



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“Considering it’s probably one of the highest costs in the world for electricity here.” Yet another power conservation tool: LED lights. “We have used LED lights everywhere. It’s really a cost saver for us. Our electricity bills are so much lower, the air conditioning works better, you don’t have light bulbs heating up the house, you don’t have issues with changing them every five minutes because they’re blowing, and it’s really worked out for us.” And because all of the lights are on the Control4 system, John or Ghandi can climb into bed at the end of the day, hit one button, and easily shut the whole house down.

Another challenge to having an automation system in a remote area is, the installer isn’t exactly next door. In fact, he lives in Miami, over 250 miles away. He can do much of the maintenance on the system remotely, from anywhere. So, he doesn’t have to visit the house as often—a huge time and cost saver.

### WHY CONTROL4?

Having experienced mediocre results from previous systems, the owners knew what to avoid when it came to home automation systems. “My mother-in-law wasn’t comfortable with them,” explains Ghandi. “The housekeepers would come home and wouldn’t know how to put the blinds up. Control4 answered all those issues that we had. It’s easy for everyone.”

And if Control4 is a success with these seasoned smart-homers, that’s saying something. “We did our research, and we think it’s paid off,” says Ghandi. “I’ve been very happy.” ■

Automated lighting comes to life when Ghandi walks into her sparkling closet. LED lights also illuminate the wine rack without heating up the vino.





# THE TRUTH ABOUT DEALERS

A Control4 dealer is a professional installer that has been trained to design and service your automation system for as long as you both shall... enjoy such control. But here are a few other fun-facts that might come in handy as you explore the endless possibilities of the automated life... together.



## THEY'RE CREATIVE

Inspired by projects they have previously completed or even by living with a system in their own homes, authorized Control4 dealers can very likely suggest some clever ideas that you may not have even considered, like having your home lock itself at 10 pm, or shades close the second the sun hits. Be sure to ask your dealer what features they think might benefit you in everyday life, and what features just might "wow" you every minute of every day.

## THEY'RE O.C.D., IN A GOOD WAY

From working within the budget and parameters you set for them, to gingerly handling your 105" curved ultra-HDTV from one end of the house to another, to transforming the endless twists and turns of CAT5/6 cables into a "rack masterpiece" you won't even want to keep in your closet because it looks so good, these guys (or gals) know the devil is in the details. They obsess. They compulse. And you will learn to love them all the more for it.

## THEY'RE PLUGGED IN

Let's be frank: These guys (and gals) are geeks. They love everything about technology and they've got their finger on the pulse of what's trending (and not just the #hashtag kind). Their extensive knowledge on hardware, software, networking and all things electronic aside, Control4 dealers complete rigorous training and are sure to stay on top of every tech innovation. Feel free to call them every three to four months and demand an update on what's new. From a new, blazing-fast controller to feature enhancements that bring a whole new level of comfort and security to your home, you'll appreciate the opportunity to grow as you go... as your schedule and budget allow.

## THEY'LL HOOK YOU UP

As Control4 customer, you should know that you're always taken care of, so if you find yourself tempted by the latest and greatest solutions and software that will take your Control4 system to a whole new level, chances are that you're eligible for a special offer to boot. Which makes adding to your smart home a real no-brainer. Enjoy!





# A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

A suburban street in Texas has no residents, but lots of smarts

Sometimes, Mike Feigin questions his own sanity. And really, who could blame him? Who in their right mind, after all, would build an entire neighborhood that's designed just for show? But there is a method to Mike's madness, and so far his crazy creation is a huge success.

About 20 miles north of Houston, just off Highway 45 in Spring, Texas, you'll find Mike's project, 12 years in the making—Main Street America. From the outside, it looks like a giant shopping mall. But walk through the gated archway and you enter a quietly charming suburban scene: Twelve beautiful homes line a quiet street. The lawns are gorgeous and green. There's designated stroller parking on the sidewalks. All that's missing are the residents. That's because there aren't any.

Project installation by DataSmart

PHOTOS BY REBECCA HENRY



Main Street America isn't a place to live. It's a place to dream. The pristine homes are showcase homes that would-be buyers explore to be inspired. There is also a furniture store, an accessory store, a cooking school, and two restaurants. And to top it all off, Main Street America is also automated.

"There's a lot to do here," says Mike, Main Street's founder and



Mike Feigin

creator. After a stint selling computers, Mike craved the outdoors and got into the home-building business. Then, the idea hit him: Create a showcase neighborhood. Soon after embarking on making his dream a reality, Mike upped the ante by automating his Main Street America. But, he didn't know what exactly to DO with home automation. So, he asked his long-time installer, DataSmart Home Technologies, to sign onto the project.

"It has been a pretty overwhelming project, but it's turned out to be a great success," notes Randall Duncan, Managing Partner at DataSmart. Jonathan Ping, one of the lead installers who built the automation system at Main Street, agrees. "We were involved with the groundbreaking, so we've been here since the beginning, working with Mike, to see his vision through. We kind of had free reign to make it come alive." It was then that DataSmart suggested teaming up with Control4, a project



*We were involved with the groundbreaking so we've been here since the beginning, working with Mike, to see his vision through. We kind of had free reign to make it come alive.*



Visitors get hands-on experience using smart home systems, touchpanels, and iPad controls, and can check out live system hardware up close and personally.

partnership that has paid off.

Much of the park is now automated. Main Street staffers can control the audio in each of the 12 showcase homes, and the outdoor speakers throughout the park from their iPhones. The restaurant boasts automation as well. But the star features, at least from an automation perspective, are two of the model homes—the Italian-inspired Villa Lago, and the sleek and urban Midtown—each have been fully automated from head to toe—er, from roof to cellar. "Having these homes out here with their electronics is amazing," Mike says. "And the neat part is, it's the whole house, not just a tiny part of one room." So in a sense, Main Street America is like a showcase of new homes, crossed with high tech, and with a dash of theme-park flavor. Call it the Main Street Electrical Parade of Homes.

"It's given us the opportunity to bring our clients here and actually show them a six-thousand-square-foot smart home in action," notes DataSmart's Rocky Flores. "Also, it's a great place for builders to come get ideas, to walk the homeowner around and show them the things you can't go to Home Depot and see."

Main Street even provides a personal guide, who will take you on a one-on-one tour through the park, telling you everything you want to know about whatever piques your interest. His name is "TED."

Ready to visit? Here's how it works: As you enter Main Street America, the first thing you do is grab your TED guide. TED is actually a tablet, designed specifically for the Main Street America experience. Every time you see a designated logo on a tag or placard, you're welcome



The Villa Lago model home is one of two properties in the park that is fully loaded with automation.





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to scan it with TED and learn more about whatever you're looking at —be it a piece of art, a couch, or a Control4 door station. It's an audio headset tour at a museum, but with the added option to build a wishlist of things you just may want to buy. The system goes by the name TED. "That stands for Technological Educational Device," notes Mike. "It's a 7-inch Android device. All the products have radio frequency identification tags. Consumers walk up to a tag, place the tablet next to the tag, then it reads it and gives you more details about that particular product."

DataSmart's Rocky Flores agrees that the TED system is a hit. "You can go to furniture stores and

get a salesperson; or you can go to your standard retail store and talk to an electronics guy; but you're on your own time. You can travel the park at your own pace, learning everything at your own speed. It's a plus for everyone."

"It's the automated elements that really stand out to Main Street America visitors. DataSmart's Jonathan Ping notices it every time he's at the park. "The first thing visitors say is "wow." "They didn't necessarily come here to see automation, but they find it, and it ends up being their main focus as they're walking through the park."

Jonathan helped install some of the park's more unique automated features, like seasonal

Using their TED devices, visitors can scan all kinds of things in the Main Street homes—furniture, A/V equipment, automation gear—to get descriptions, learn more, or (for the impulse shoppers) Buy Now.







Automation is everywhere in the park, from in-house audio and video systems, to exterior speakers that line Main Street.

“announcement” settings that can trigger hallways to flash and play haunted sound effects during Halloween, or holiday decorations that can come to life—inside and outside the houses—with a touch of a button. Because the property is something of a theme park (“It did become what some people call Disney-like,” Mike admits), Main Street America staff has a lot of prep work to do in the mornings and evenings. Some of the houses can take up to 45 minutes to turn off properly! Thankfully, automation helps considerably lighten the load. “Of

the two homes in the park outfitted with Control4,” notes Jonathan, “there’s one button that can control the whole home, so in the morning, the staff comes in, they press the Home button, it turns on the lights, it sets up the TVs, it turns on the audio for them, and they don’t have to walk around the house and turn on each individual thing separately.” And, it’s not just homebuyers and staffers admiring the high-tech here at Main Street. Builders, too, are taking notice. “It exceeded my expectations,” says Stephen Hann, chairman of the Custom Builders Council of Houston. Scott Sensat of

DesignTech Homes, the main builder on Main Street, agrees. “It’s exciting. It’s good to have a place where people can go and actually see what automation features are available.” Todd LeBlanc, a homebuilder in the Houston area, is similarly impressed. “I think it’s great. I would definitely encourage my customers to walk through and take a look.” “There’s no place like this in the world,” notes Mike. And that’s true—at least for now. There are plans to build a second Main Street America within the next five years. Maybe Mike’s mad vision of a neighborhood with no residents isn’t so crazy after all. ■



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# MIDDLE EAST MASTERPIECE

## IN A LAND OF OPULENCE, THIS DUBAI PENTHOUSE STILL STANDS OUT

Apparently, having the tallest building in the world isn't enough for Dubai. Now, it's also the home of what could be the most high-tech residence on the planet.

Perched on the edge of the man-made Palm Island, this 11,000-square foot penthouse was originally two separate residences. The current owner, a Brit who works in the fashion industry, combined the two units into one giant, sparkling, futuristic, swanky home. It's opulence at its finest—sleek glass, white onyx floors, handmade ivory furniture... you name it, this posh pad got it. And, in addition to its drop-dead good looks, it's teeming with the best in accessory automation.

The doorbell triggers audio throughout the house, and pinhole

cameras spring to life to capture visitors. Automated doors open to greet welcomed guests. Once inside, you face difficult choices—should you A) listen to music on some of the world's finest speakers, B) watch an action flick in the top-of-the-line home cinema room, or C) take a soak in the infinity pool on the deck? (If choosing Option C, don't forget to trigger the waterproof TV which raises out of the floor and positions itself perfectly overlooking the Dubai skyline.) In the hallway, a secret pushbutton triggers under-floor motors to open door panels and reveal a Roman spa, complete with Italian columns, an infinity bath, and a steam room inside a mirrored cube.

The system itself truly is awe-inspiring. "This project is arguably the highest specification residential



While it's practically invisible, automation abounds in all rooms of the penthouse, *left*. Relax by the pool and watch a movie on the self-positioning TV, or, take in the sweeping Dubai skyline, *above*.

Project installation by  
Redwood General Trading





The Roman spa features vaulted ceilings, Italian travertine columns, and a steam room adorned with an automated waterfall.

fit-out in the Middle East,” notes Nathan Williams, Director at Redwood General Trading, the system installer. “The client has spared no expense or sacrifice.” The installation, which took nearly a year and a half to complete, features high-tech goodies that you won’t find anywhere else. For instance, the doors—in a futuristic home like this, ordinary doors just wouldn’t do. Instead, the entire residence is fitted with sleek, Star Trek-esque doors that slide open as you approach. “The owner insisted the doors shouldn’t have any door handles,”

says Brodie Clement, whose company, Leaf Audio, supplied the Control4 system. Instead, the owner—and all penthouse visitors—wear high-tech wristbands. The wristbands are tied to a custom-built RF identification tagging system, which triggers the space-age doors as a person approaches. That is, if you have clearance. Some areas of the house are only accessible by the owner. But, because there aren’t any traditional doors, visitors may not even know those off-limits areas exist. For the owner, however, coming home is one seamless,

effortless breeze. When he steps off the elevator, the front doors automatically open. His music of choice fires up. As he walks through the house, his music follows him from audio zone to audio zone. Imagine Jean-Luc Picard walking gallantly through the halls of the Enterprise, but with better music. It all makes for one pretty impressive system—and the best part is, it’s basically invisible. “The biggest challenge was in meeting the client’s very strict, no compromise approach to aesthetic perfection,” notes installer Nathan Williams. “The technology shouldn’t be on show.” Instead of countless user panels and interfaces, Nathan and his team hid 110 motion sensors and other hardware in the walls. “Although highly sophisticated and

PHOTOS BY: OLIVER MARSHALL DORAN

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Invisible sensors detect when someone approaches any room, and automatically turn on lights in anticipation, *above*. The living room, transformed into full cinema mode, *right*.



Every room adheres to the owner's strict aesthetic direction: sleek, futuristic, and modern, *right*. Aside from a few touch screens, the automation system works entirely behind the scenes, *left*.

complex processes are running in the background, this was always intended to be a project that “simply works, simply,” he notes. “Without the owner even considering it, the technology lives in parallel with him and his guests. Every scenario is anticipated and reactive so the only real interaction needed is when absolutely necessary, such as selecting a playlist, movie or even ‘I’m going to sleep now.’

In almost every aspect, this system goes above and beyond the usual. For instance, while many systems feature motion-triggered lighting, this penthouse goes one step further. “We don’t want lights to turn on when entering a room; lights should be on *before* opening the door,” says Nathan. “Simply occupying an adjacent space predicts the

movement and reacts accordingly. If that room doesn’t become occupied, the lights simply shut off again. Don’t worry about sleeping guests; each room has a ‘sleep’ mode to prevent occupancy triggers.”

Nathan and his team chose Control4 as the brains and heart of the automation system, primarily because of two factors: Robustness, and ease of use. “We can’t escape the thousands of hours of programming of course,” Nathan notes with a laugh, “But Control4 handles the rest very easily, and provides the simplicity necessary to operate the system when those interactions are required.” That means while Control4 does the heavy lifting Nathan and his crew can focus on the hidden beauty of the system, and the homeowner is

able to simply and easily access the system’s power and issue commands.

Unlike some installations, this homeowner was intimately involved in the project from conception until completion. “My reactions were a mix of astonishment and pleasure as each component came online,” says Philip Gamett, the owner. “It’s difficult to choose one favorite feature,” Philip notes, but he is most impressed with how the technology is all but invisible throughout the penthouse, except for the control tablets themselves. “It all adds a modern, even futuristic touch to the apartment.”

And so it seems, we must admit it: Dubai, you win again. We can only hope that granting you the Crown of Cool gets us on the invite list to the next party at this spectacular pad. ■



# IT'S ALWAYS THE SEASON FOR MORE CONTROL

Holidays & automation go together like red & hot, stars & stripes, cake & ice cream. The previous issue of Home Smart Home featured 10 great ideas from Control4 dealers, customers and employees on how to make your smart home even smarter for a few end-of-the-year holidays. To help you fill out the rest of your calendar year, here are a few more suggestions:



**1.** For many countries, ski season alone is reason enough to celebrate for a few months! Chalet owners of One Happon in Hakuba, Japan use sensors to trigger the heated roof and driveway to melt snow on impact. That way, their best winter hours are spent skiing, not shoveling.

**2.** The same clever couple enlists a strategic Control4 wakeup scene to get them on the slopes as soon as possible: Starting at 5:00 am, the shades silently rise, the lights gradually come up and then...- Boom! Every speaker in the house pulses with just the music to move them out of bed and get them first in line on the Happone mountain.

**3.** A bachelor in Massachusetts had his Control4 installer program a “Barry White” button to set the mood—or is it “intention”?—of his high-rise condo in one touch: Lights, fireplace, and the music of everyone’s favorite R&B baritone all work in harmony to help fan the flames of romance for him and his lucky guest. How’s that for a first, a last, an “everything” button?

**4.** Yes, your Control4 smart home is so smart, it can also remember birthdays, year after year, automatically. Make sure that certain someone feel special from the moment they rise with a birthday wakeup scene: Use the Wireless Music Bridge to rouse the sleepyhead with the “Birthday” by the Beatles and have the TV turn on to a photo collage featuring the birthday boy or girl.

**5.** If you’ve got smart door locks integrated with your Control4 system, you can keep the surprises going all day long: Program the lock to trigger a special song (how about They Might Be Giants’ anti-anthem “Older”) approximately 30 seconds after the honoree keys in his or her unique passcode. You could also record a custom greeting to be triggered upon arrival.

**6.** Invest in a few good wireless Speaker Points and a Wireless Music Bridge so that your soundtrack to summer doesn’t just follow you everywhere in the house, but out by the pool, too. Even friends can contribute to the waves of the party mood by streaming music straight from their phone to whatever audio zone may flow.

**7.** If you have a vacation rental property, this one’s for you: In addition to appreciating 24/7 access to your cameras thanks to 4Sight with Anywhere Access, your Control4 system also makes it possible to receive instant alerts on your mobile phone when certain events take place, like a water leak, or every time someone enters the property. “It’s great to feel so connected,” says one customer. “I’m never left wondering.”

**8.** If you celebrate a nationalistic holiday, queue up some pride, fully automated, with your smart home: Try a patriotic playlist, or humor visitors with a doorbell chime that plays the opening notes of your country’s anthem.

**9.** If both mom and dad work in an office vs. a home office, invest in a few good smart locks so you’ll always be the first to know the second your child gets home from school. With unique codes to identify users, smart locks can trigger automatic and immediate messages to let you know who got home and when. Getting kids to do their homework, however, remains manual labor...

**10.** Falling into shorter days also means returning home to a darker house. A garage door sensor can add equal parts comfort and security. As you pull into the garage at the end of a hectic day, the Control4 system can trigger certain events—from turning on the house lights to automatically queuing up your favorite relaxing playlist in your den, or tuning the television to ESPN.



# SMART HOMES...

## MODULAR HOMES GET MODERNIZED WITH AUTOMATION

# TO GO

**M**odular homes—prebuilt homes that are fabricated off-site and then delivered to the home site—have been an attractive alternative to building on-site for decades.

But the pre-fab world has a bit of a stigma... when people think of modular homes, they often think of ugly trailer homes—low-quality design and poor aesthetics. But that's changing, and it's companies like Irontown Homes that are driving the change. They're making modern, hip, eco-friendly modular homes, and, to sweeten the deal, they're making these modular homes smart, too.

Walk into a contemporary creation from Irontown Homes and you realize immediately, these are not your grandfather's modular homes. Flat roofs, big windows, clean lines. Gone are the tacky materials, replaced with contemporary flourishes like barn wood and granite countertops. "We've learned over the years what the trends are, and where they're going," notes Kam Valgardson, Irontown Homes vice president. These homes are gorgeous—and they're green, too. The models feature renewable bamboo flooring, eco-baths, formaldehyde-free fiberglass insulation, eco-conscious sealants and coating, and fluorescent lighting throughout the home.

Gone are the days, it seems, of the "shoe box" modular home. Companies like Irontown Homes use designers and architects to truly customize a homebuyer's plan. "As long as it can be broken down into pieces and moved down the road, we can put it together," promises Kam.

Kam's father Richard started the company in 1984, after having worked moving homes with his dad after World War II. Richard realized there

Built by Irontown Homes and located in Healdsburg, Calif., this 4 bedroom, 2,500 sq. ft. modular home features impressive modern design and sustainable features throughout the home.





was plenty of room for improvement in the construction of those early modular homes, so he started building them himself. After building more than 1,500 homes in 10 years, Richard changed the company focus, from quantity to quality. They started working on custom builds, incorporating higher-quality products into their projects. That enticed a new audience of customers—younger, hipper homebuyers—to consider going modular. “If you’re going to build a custom home it’s going to take you a year and a half, two years,” Kam says. “We can do it in about half the time and at a lower budget, usually 20 to 30 percent less.

Today, Irontown Homes builds modular homes in a 60 thousand square-foot facility in Spanish Fork, Utah. The facility is two stories tall, so they can build two-story sections of homes there before shipping them out to the home sites. “Irontown fills that niche of modular high-end custom construction,” Kam remarks. Modernizing the modulares has certainly paid off for Irontown...and now, they’re adding another tantalizing feature to their pre-fabs—automation.

The newest Irontown Homes builds homes that feature Control4 systems—security cameras, rolling shades, home theater, multiple audio zones inside and outside the home. Like all smart homes, owners don’t have to walk

around turning everything on and off: They can control everything from a touch panel, or their phone. Control4 switches and hardware match the contemporary style of these modern modulares. And, like traditionally-built homes, automation assists with various aspects of home life—energy use, lighting, heating and air conditioning. If it’s got a switch, Control4 can probably control it.

It may seem odd to think of automating a modular home, especially if it’s on the smaller side. What’s the point of automating a 500 square-foot studio, for instance? Kam has an answer. “If your goal is to have a space that is easy to control and comfortable to be in, it doesn’t matter how big it is, it can be 10,000, 2,000, or 500 square feet.” Also, many modular homes are guest homes, and automation makes remote monitoring easy. “If the owner’s in the main home and he doesn’t want to go out in his pajamas to check the guest home, he’s just going to pop on his phone and turn things off, and he’s saving energy.”

Modular homes and modern automation? Sounds like a match made in home-building heaven. “In order to be on the cutting-edge, you need partners that are on the cutting-edge, and Control4 is definitely ahead of the curve,” says Kam. “It’s very easy to control, and we feel it’s a big part of our business going forward.” ■



Homeowners of this modular home can take in the expansive views from the almost floor to ceiling windows, enjoy every meal in their custom kitchen and spend time relaxing on their deck. By building modular homes with open floor plans, custom designs, advanced technology and luxurious finishes and features, Irontown Homes is changing the way people think about modular homes.





# PERMANENT VACATION

A FAMILY'S SECOND HOME IN FLORIDA IS SO SMART, THEY MIGHT MOVE IN FOR GOOD

Pulling into David Meyer's vacation property in Sarasota, Florida, is an experience. The electric gates open and a winding road leads you past moss-covered trees. Exotic birds walk across huge meadows. Cows graze in the distance. And then you arrive at the sunny, sizeable house. It's a nice spot for a vacation house—so nice, in fact, David is thinking about moving the family here full-time from New York. What exactly is tempting the Meyers to become full-time snowbirds? Yes, David grew up in Sarasota, and sure, the Northeast winters can be brutal. But we think the Florida home's fully loaded, all-inclusive Control4 automation system is the real lure.

When David and his family bought the house, it already had a rudimentary automation system. David hired Mike Thoma at BrightSky to do a little upgrading—at first, just the audio. But before very long, David asked Mike to go ahead and switch everything over to the Control4 platform.

"I've always been a gadget guy," notes David, "and the Control4

system has really changed how we live our life." Mike and his team went all-out on the house, incorporating everything into the system they could—HVAC, audio/video, property gates and garage doors, for starters.

"This is a full-blown Control4 automated project," Mike says. His favorite feature? The new lighting and keypad system. "Every light in the house is controlled by Control4," he adds. That includes 12 outdoor circuits and seven relay circuits devoted to the grounds alone. Mike has been particularly impressed with the engravings and back-lit features, making it easier than ever to read what each switch does before you press it.

You could easily sprain a finger, flicking so many switches on and off in a house this size. Thankfully, Mike incorporated a variety of scenes that control multiple elements into one simple button. Lights and music spring to life with a touch of the "WELCOME HOME" button by the front door. In the theater, pushing one button lowers the shades, turns on the projector, and sets the correct input for the movie, so by the time

The front entrance to the Meyers residence. Automation keeps the home comfortably cool in Florida's sultry climate all year long.

Project Installation by BrightSky



IT'S MY FOURTH HOUSE OR BUILDING  
WITH CONTROL4. IF I EVER END  
UP WITH ANOTHER BUILDING, OR  
MOVING TO A NEW HOUSE, IT'LL  
HAVE CONTROL4 IN IT TOO. IT'S  
JUST AN EASIER WAY TO LIVE.

David is sitting in his chair, the room is ready for showtime. Many rooms feature "DAVID" and "KERRI" music buttons, which activate his music (pop) or hers (country) with one touch—no more searching through station lists or playlists. A "Good Night" scene prepares the kids' rooms for bed, and the parents can hit the "KIDS OFF" button to darken the kids' rooms on their way downstairs.

It doesn't take long to get used to the convenience that automation delivers, but David still appreciates it, a year and a half later. "I come home and not only do the lights come on, but the TV turns on to my favorite channel," he notes. "When I go into the bedroom at night, the house can shut down behind me, the TV in the master bedroom is already on, and the lights are on. We get to just live our life without constantly turning

things on and off."

Kerri, David's wife, loves one feature in particular: the "ALL OFF" button. At the end of the day, she can

lean over in bed and press it, and the entire house shuts down. No need to wander through the house, making sure everything is off.

The new breed of engraved switches makes it easier than ever to control anything from anywhere. "We have light switches that turn on TVs and music and firepits and pool lights and everything else," says David. "It's great not having to deal with a

different interface on each thing."

Another perk of the new system? Being able to customize and configure the switches. When the system was new, David and his family made some initial decisions, choosing which switches controlled what. After living with the switches a while, they made changes and improvements based on how they were actually using them. "A lot of switches started as 3-button, but when we finished they ended up being 6-button, because we thought of all the things we needed it to do," says David.

Although the systems behind the scenes are complex, the user interface has remained simple. "I tell people all the time, the reason I went with Control4 is because it's easy," David notes. "The interface that people use is very consistent from room to room, from house to house." He likes the fact that the layout on the remote is the same as the onscreen display, which mirrors the touchscreens. That's a relief to those the Meyers family who are not self-admitted techies like David. "Everyone can use the system," David says, "because it makes sense."

Even David's three kids—ages five and under—are automation-savvy. "They like to customize their switches," David laughs. His oldest daughter recently requested a dedicated "Frozen" button for her room, which now plays music from the hit Disney movie at the touch of a button.

So...will the Meyers family be moving in for good? It's certainly a sunny proposition. "I'm definitely happy with the product," David says. "It's my fourth house or building with Control4. If I ever end up with another building, or moving to a new house, it'll have Control4 in it too. It's just an easier way to live." ■



Upstairs, family members can control lighting with the touch of a button. Televisions, touch panels, and light switches all offer access to the automation system.



# AIR, WATER AND LIGHT

IN THIS RETIRED  
COUPLE'S DREAM  
HOME, AUTOMATION  
IS ELEMENTARY

**P**unta Gorda, Florida: here, the living is easy. Throughout the neighborhoods near Charlotte Harbor, a network of canals ensures that everybody can park their boat behind their house, and have access to the Gulf. It's the kind of place retired folks come to live the good life...perhaps none as much as one couple—the owners of a smart home decked out with one serious panelized lighting system.

These owners removed three houses from adjacent properties to build their home at the end of a cul-de-sac, so they would be nearly surrounded by water. The owners (who wish to remain anonymous) had one vision when designing their house: “the concept was light, bright, and

fun,” notes the husband. In 2010 they started building, and from the very beginning, home automation was a part of the plan. “We knew, in a house of this size—ten thousand square feet—we were going to have a lot of lighting,” he continues. Both the husband and wife had noticed that at the homes of many of their friends, the electrical system and lighting panels were overly complicated. With a background in electrical engineering, the husband knew that panelized lighting was the only way to incorporate complex lighting options, while maintaining the clean and sleek décor he and his wife wanted in their interior design.

“I’ve always tried to stay up with the latest gadgets out there,” the owner notes. “I liked the Control4 system



Extra-large windows and an open-air design allow copious amounts of natural light into the home.



Project installation by  
Armor Systems



because of its simplicity, and the user interface that I could have in controlling the lights myself.”

The homeowners chose Barry Dorsey with Armor Systems to install the automation system. “This gentleman wanted to have the home of his dreams,” Barry says. Initially, the homeowner tested Barry on his technical knowledge, without letting on that he had a background in electrical engineering. “Barry and his people were very technical though,” the owner remarks. “They did a great job, we communicated very well together. He really knew his stuff.” Barry helped design a complete Control4 panelized lighting system that packed enough power and versatility to respond to the tech-savvy owner’s desires. “He wanted state of the art, and wanted to be able to have fun with it too,” Barry continues. Barry and his team worked together with the builders and the interior designer to transform the vision into a reality. “Everybody

worked together, everybody was a team,” he notes. And while the husband is a self-admitted tech geek, the wife definitely is not. “When she pushes a button, she just wants it to work,” says Barry.

24 months of hard work later, the house was ready. Wires, speakers, and plugs are hidden behind crown molding. There are no vents in the ceilings. The speakers are invisible. Each room sports a television, through which anyone can access the media library and live television options. There’s a theater with a 185-inch movie screen (the wife’s favorite room in the house.) It’s a beautiful home—spacious, sunny, and modern. It’s super-smart too, but you may not notice that, even if you walk through it. There are no touch panels, no remotes lying around, no long and complicated light switches. Instead, each room sports a clean and elegant 6-button light panel. “There’s a term in our industry called wall acne,” Barry



The home theater features a 185-inch movie screen, three rows of extra-large theater seats, and countless video sources.



notes. “This owner didn’t want that. He’s after a very clean look, but also a functional house—the only way to do that is through panelized lighting.”

The Control4 light switches work on many levels. The top button (featuring a blue light) always turns on the main lights in whatever room you’re in. When a light is on, a green light next to that button lets you know it’s on. When you leave a room, the bottom button is always the “ALL OFF.” Beyond that, the options are limitless. Several rooms feature scenes that control not just the lights, but music, televisions, and more. And then there’s the customized scenes.

“At nighttime when I come home, I push “HOME,” it lights up a path for me from one end of the house to the other,” the owner notes. “That’s probably my favorite feature. You could never do that without a smart home system.” He and his wife also love the “WELCOME” feature—at night when the doorbell rings, they can hit “Welcome,” and the front area of the house (inside and outside) light up to greet visitors.

The owner’s wife has her own favorite features. “It’s a party house,” she explains. “The best part is, we can have every light in the house on, and when the party ends, I can hit one switch and all the lights in the house go off. I don’t have to run around to every room.” Ever social, this couple can host a pre-party, stop at the back door on their way out, hit “HOUSE OFF” and they’re on their way to the next soiree.

Security is a big part of this system as well. The owner can access the house from anywhere in the world through his phone or computer to check on the security cameras, or adjust the lights or temperature. “When I’m away from the house,” he notes, “I can still control what’s going on, inside and outside.”

After experiencing less than stellar results with other systems, this owner is pleased to have found Control4. “It’s a difference between night and day,” he notes. “I’m 100 percent happy with Control4, and if I ever built another house, I’d use it again.” ■



All of the technology is hidden behind the scenes, allowing the home’s maritime theme and luxurious lighting to take center stage.



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## STORAGE WOWS

The guys from Storage Wars would lose their marbles if they had a peek into this Rocky Mountain garage. Beyond the usual—bikes, ATVs, a motorboat—this storage space in Castle Rock, Colorado also features a commercial kitchen, a massive master bedroom, and a hot tub party room. From its unassuming exterior, you'd never know that it's been transformed into a fully-functioning residence. And what's more, it's loaded with automation.

"In 30 years in the AV business, I've never seen anything like this," notes Duke Pitts of Envision Enterprises, who installed the system. It features four TVs, two DIRECTV receivers, five audio zones, automated lighting, and security. The owner—an unabashed tech and toy freak—can watch any of his 700 stored movies on the TV in the hot tub room (next to the tractor, of course) or stream music while cooking in the industrial kitchen.

It's a truly bizarre combination of man cave,



mechanic's garage, and luxury living... but it works. "The owner and his wife both love the system," Duke says. In fact, the owners were so happy with Control4, they hired Duke to automate their second home—the monster RV parked out front.





# DREAM BIG SAVE BIGGER

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From the minute you start designing the smart home of your dreams, expect nothing short of excellence from Control4 home automation solutions—and your authorized dealer. Not only is it easy to add more features and functionality to your system as inspired, it's practically impossible to pass on an opportunity to upgrade to a little more magic since you qualify for special savings\*, just for being an existing Control4 customer. Call your dealer today to learn more about the latest and mind-blowing greatest Control4 solutions and software that will take your system to a whole new level.

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