

CEDIA Makes Electronic Design a Trendy Necessity at designEx 2002

By Sherrie Morreall

Having a home with a marble bathtub, cherry wood floors and an Oriental rug is all well and good... but let's face it. A home isn't a home without a proper home theatre installed. The designers, architects and artisans at the annual designEx expo also agree—AV is the way to go in residential and commercial architectural design.

DesignEx, hosted this year in Sydney Australia, is an annual event celebrating the latest developments in design and architectural fashion for residential and commercial properties. Showcased this year, among the latest in carpet, cabinetry and porcelain, we find a strong CEDIA (Custom Design and Installation Association) presence along with audiovisual designers and installers.

"Architecture is yet another industry being effected by the latest developments in the electronics industry," said Kerrie Basha, Regional Coordinator of CEDIA Australasia (www.cedia.com.au). "Everything from HVAC to mood lighting in the dining room has been affected by the boom in presentation electronics."

"Up until now, we had all of these black entertainment boxes that were eyesores," adds Gordon Anderson of Andersons AudioVisual (www.andersonsav.com.au) and vice president of CEDIA Australasia. "But now, by working with architects and designers, a properly installed entertainment system adds to the atmosphere of the overall room environment. It doesn't detract from the design and style of the room in any way."

"New home construction and home renovation has been especially effected," agrees Basha. "Internationally, real estate values can increase or decrease according to the level of automation within a home."

Peter Hay, Managing Director of Hay Property Consulting agrees. "People will pay more in a commercial market if the advanced cabling is there than if it is not there," he said. However, he does note that it is still in the early days for the same value to be added to residential properties. "It takes a longer time for consumers to be technologically literate. But more and more, there is a marketing advantage in a home that is technologically advanced."

As per real estate appraisal or valuation definition, in an average depressed market, a residential property takes more than 3 months to sell. "In a depressed market," continued Hay, "technologically sophisticated properties have a marketing advantage over properties that are not prepared to handle advanced electronics."

"Over the next 5 years," added Hay, "the appeal to have this capability will widen. It is easy to add in ground-up construction, so existing properties will suffer."

With this in mind, it appears that we are on the verge of a real estate/technology revolution as overall AV integration becomes more and more relevant based on these economic, consumer and professional demands. So while it still may be somewhat conceptually new to think of electronics manufacturers, designers and installers participating in such a architectural design expo, we also see that it is necessary. The revolutionary home theatre installation forerunners were there to share their wares with the design community.

“It’s important for us to be here. We have been members of CEDIA for five years, working to develop overall home integration,” said Tim O’Hanlon, national sales and marketing manager of Silent Gliss. “Now that people are more aware of overall home automation, they realize that electronics come with an option to grow, rather than an inactive obvious necessity.”

“This is fun with expensive toys,” adds David Vale, design and installation manager at Len Wallis Audio. “We want to be a part of the building project before dry wall or gyp rock are installed. Otherwise, we have to rip it all out to lay cables and start over. If we work in the period of development on the home, we can create a total concept: building, design and architecture. That is what we want, the exclusive concept of i-home, a fully integrated home environment.”

So once again, AV finds itself in the role of education. And although a new concept, a primary part of the education is to get professionals and consumers to recognise electronics manufactures, designers and installers as vital participants in construction design.

“Our goal here is to introduce ourselves to architects and builders,” said Craig Hicks, managing director of Home Theatre Technologies (HTT). “That way, when a homeowner decides they want to install a home theatre system, or they want sound through the house, the house is pre-wired and ready for us to develop.”

Gaining recognition for AV certainly was an important task to accomplish at such a trendy show. The icing on the cake for CEDIA was in being awarded the 2nd best booth distinction at the expo. “We are really honoured to have been awarded this distinction,” adds Basha. “With so many exclusive stylists represented here, we are flattered to not only participate in such a fashionable expo, but to be recognised by them as well. Recognition by our peers is a tribute to CEDIA and all of the CEDIA members.”

Relevance of the AV role steadily increases based on consumer, professional and economic demands. But all of this aside...your home is your castle. And installation of a home theatre system guarantees your home as being the coolest castle on the block.