

Smart Home

Life under control

SMOOTH SAILING IN SAN DIEGO

How a brand-new, family-owned maritime eatery weathered the pandemic storm.

ELEGANCE AND INTELLIGENCE

European sophistication meets high-tech urban living in the Old North State.

BRILLIANT BLEND OF SMARTS & SOUND

An expertly integrated sanctuary anchored on a regal riverway in London.

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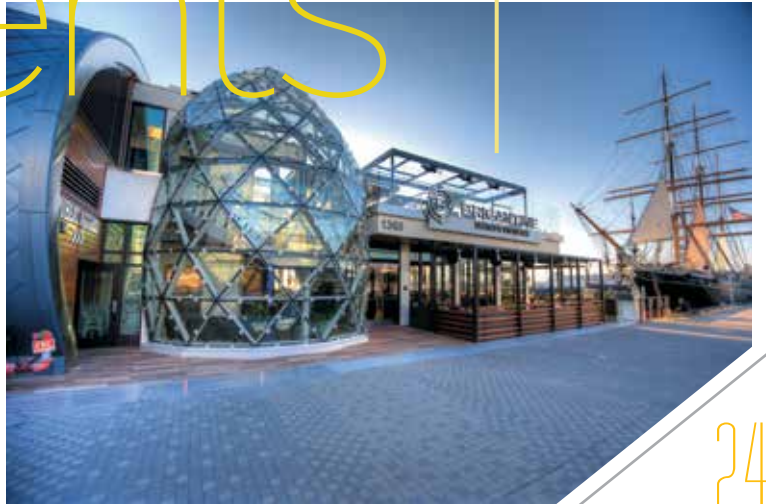
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editor's note

“Life is not always a matter of holding good cards, but sometimes playing a poor hand well.”
– Jack London

It might seem odd to select a poker quote to summarize the past year's upheavals but having spent a significant amount of my time during the "stay-at-home" order with cards in hand, it felt fitting.

I'm an extrovert. I thrive on exploration and connection. So, when we were dealt this unexpected hand, I had no idea how I'd be able to reign in my enthusiastic spirit. It would be a lie to say I handled the first part of COVID with grace; I was a blubbering mess of a human. But once I picked myself up by the bootstraps—in the form of yoga pants—I decided to tackle the ever-increasing list of home projects that had been neglected for nearly a decade. It was time to recharge and channel my enthusiasm into creating a space that my family would enjoy, and one where I felt contented to spend my days tethered to a screen.

Fast-forward through a few challenging months of gutting our home, and we've finally arrived. Our home truly feels like ours now with an aesthetic that suits our style and fills us with joy. The best part of the process, however, was being able to build memories with my kids that I may not have been able to otherwise (kudos to our educators—homeschooling was no easy feat!).

It took me witnessing so many inspirational and fearless people—playing much harder hands than I was dealt—to shift course and follow suit. Now I'm so glad I didn't throw my cards in.

In this issue, we hope to inspire you, as well. Perhaps you'll tackle that home improvement project you've been putting off. Maybe you want to refresh a room to add a new layer of comfort or better networking gear to enable more efficient workdays. Whatever it may be, I think we can all agree that now—more than ever before—our homes should deal us pocket aces.



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NEW & G NOTEWORTHY



Always Ready Always Connected

Control4 Touchscreens are the perfect companion interface for Chime, the video doorbell from Control4. You can use Chime to talk to others inside the house by calling into the touchscreens from your phone while on the go. It's also easy to broadcast messages from touchscreen to touchscreen or make announcements to all touchscreens simultaneously.

From this always-on command center, you'll enjoy a complete view of your Control4 Smart Home and quickly and conveniently control lighting, security, music, televisions, temperature, shades, and more.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CONTROL4 INTERFACES, VISIT CONTROL4.COM.

Know Who's Knocking

(AND TAKE CONTROL!)

Finally, a doorbell built specifically for the smart home in mind has arrived. Chime leverages the power of your Control4 Smart Home to allow you to not only see and speak to visitors from your mobile device or a Control4 Touchscreen, but also take control of your home like no other video doorbell can.

- **PACKAGE DELIVERY**
Simply answer "Chime" from your Control4 app, then ask that your package be placed inside while you're simultaneously unlocking the door. Then secure it again once they've left.
- **PROMPT PREVIEWS**
Chime can deliver you a snapshot whenever someone steps onto the porch— and *only* when they step onto the porch.
- **ENHANCED SECURITY**
When Chime senses movement in the driveway after dusk, it can begin recording, activate exterior lights, and ensure all doors are locked.

READ MORE ABOUT CHIME ON PAGE 54.



A Lofty Look for Smart Lighting

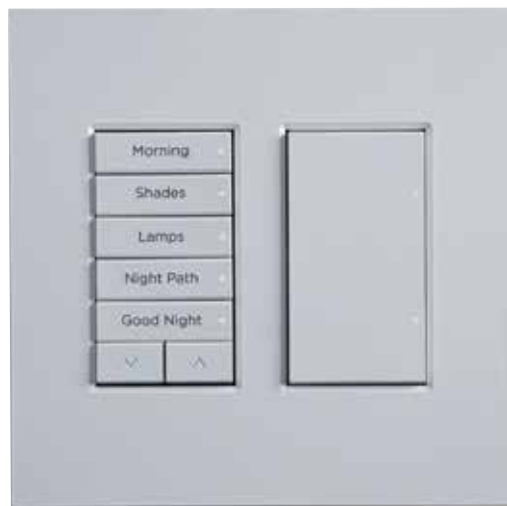
Control4's new Contemporary Lighting is designed to elevate lighting control and aesthetics with a beautiful design that suits the smart home of today. Contemporary Lighting gives homeowners a new, modern and sophisticated design that they'll love in every room of the home. Elegant backlit engraving provides at-a-glance feedback to show if a door is unlocked, the garage door is ajar, or if lights are on in other areas of the house. Premium buttons simplify interaction, and with the choice of ten exclusive finishes, there are plenty of options that will beautifully complement any style and décor.

Control4's Smart Lighting goes far beyond beautiful switches and dimmable bulbs. Never come home to a dark house again, and make your home look lived in—even when you are away—with lights that automatically turn on and off when they should. It provides energy efficiency, added safety and security, and the ability to control several smart products in your home at once with just the touch of a button.

Activate your "scenes" with a simple tap:

- **GOOD NIGHT**
Time to turn in? Tap a button that turns off all music, TVs, and lights, locks the doors, and adjusts the thermostat for comfortable rest.
- **COOKING**
While prepping dinner, a button press brings the kitchen lights to the brightest level, the TV turns to your favorite channel, and an announcement tells the kids to do homework while you work.
- **PARTY**
As guests arrive, put the house into entertaining mode by lighting up the back yard, firing up the jacuzzi, and setting the music to a favorite party playlist in the most frequented spaces.

CHECK IT OUT ON THE NEXT PAGE.



CUSTOMIZING YOUR PAD

(YOUR KEYPAD, THAT IS.)

1. START THE MUSIC!

Why pull out your phone and open an app when a keypad can start your favorite playlist in any room? Even better, a quick double-tap on the same button can start the music playing all over your house!

2. CHOOSE DIFFERENT PLAYLISTS

Different moods call for different music. With some creative programming, you can switch between playlists with a colored light indicating what you've selected.

3. CALLS UNINTERRUPTED

Working from home these days? Simply tap a button that pauses the TV or music in your home office when a call comes in. It sure beats fumbling with any other device when you only have moments to catch that call!

4. GARAGE DOOR STATUS CHECK

Never again leave bed to check if you've closed the garage. A light on your keypad can illuminate green when the garage is closed and red when it's ajar. At a glance, you'll know the door's status—and you can even close it with a simple button tap.

5. ENGAGE VACATION MODE

There's a lot to remember when leaving for vacation, so let your "Vacation" button do the work. It can set the temperature appropriately, arm the alarm, and turn off all of the lights as you walk out the door. When you return home, double-tap the same button to return the home to normal operation.

6. CHANGE VOLUME AND CHANNELS

Rotary volume controls are so 20th century, but a keypad is sleek and modern and can easily adjust your audio system's volume. Or, it can just as easily be used to change the channels on the tube!

7. ADJUST THE TEMP

Fussing with a thermostat can be tricky—especially if it is remotely located. Label a couple of buttons on a keypad "Too Hot" and "Too Cold" and guests and family can easily adjust the temperature to the perfect setting!

Sure, this multi-button keypad can control a virtually unlimited number of lighting devices, but if you are using your keypad for only the lights, you're missing out on a slew of possibilities! Any button can be programmed to control any aspect of your automated home. Take a look at these nine ideas that will get your creative juices flowing!



8. START A TIMER

There are many times when a timer comes in handy, and whether you're cooking or putting someone in "time out," a keypad button can start a timer while you stay with the task at hand. Easily set pre-determined timers of, say, 1, 5, or 10 minutes based on button presses with changing LED lights indicating the length.

9. GOODNIGHT, HOUSE

No longer be forced to roam your house at night turning things off like some character out of a Greek tragedy. With a single button press, you can instantly turn off all the lights, lock all the doors, shut off all TVs and music, set the alarm, lower window shades, adjust the HVAC, and start rain sounds playing in your bedroom. That's one powerful button, Hercules!

PSSSSST! Did you know you can program many of these yourself using Control4's WHEN >> THEN homeowner personalization tool? Enjoy the ability to directly create your own smart home reaction—all without a dealer's help!*

**Homeowners who subscribe to the 4Sight service and are running an EA controller with the latest Control4 OS installed will have immediate access on customer.control4.com.*

DON'T BE A DUMBBELL

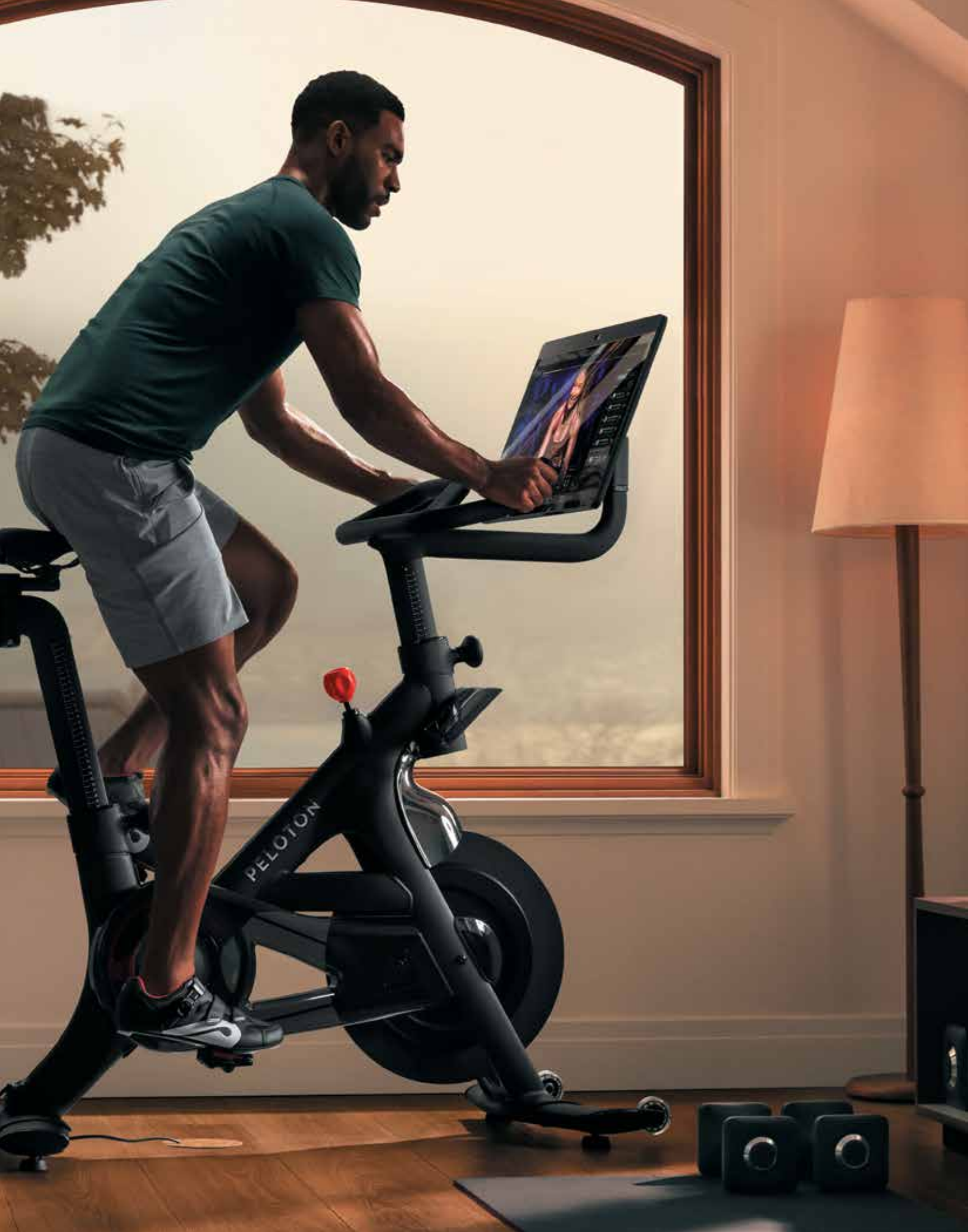
MAKE YOUR HOME FITNESS SMARTER

Christine Hunsaker

Already devoted to the luxury and ease of living in an integrated smart home? If so, you might have a hard time walking into a freezing garage gym or CrossFit box to pump some old-school iron. Fortunately, fitness has come a long way since leotards, Thighmaster, and aerobics step classes, bringing health and wellness into a new age. The home fitness market has exploded with cool consumer products aimed at keeping you healthy from the comfort of home. Keep reading to check out some unique health and wellness advancements that bring your home workout and recovery regimen to the next level, no matter your fitness levels or goals.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PELOTON





ENTERTAINMENT OPTIONS

First things first: If you're going to hit the gym, you need to get your tunes right. At home, this might mean queuing up your favorite playlist over your speaker system. With Control4's multi-room audio solutions, you should be able to hit your WOD without missing a beat. Music while working out not your thing? Simply tap a button that queues up the news and dials back the temperature while you start the day with a run on your treadmill.

EQUIPMENT UPGRADES

While you can't go wrong with classic tools like a selection of dumbbells and a bench, the home fitness market has exploded with sleek, modern gear to help you stay fit in the comfort of your own home. Keep reading below as I highlight some smart fitness gadgets coming out right now to kit out your home with the freshest equipment.

Digital weight

Instead of buying more weight or doing more reps when your gains outstrip your gear, adjustable dumbbells allow you to ramp up the resistance load with the flick of a switch or turn of a dial. Because these products don't rely on having an entire set of fixed-weight dumbbells, they take up far less space, making them convenient to use and easy to store.

Jax Jox digital dumbbells go from 8 lbs. to 50 lbs. with the click of a button, and they track your reps, set, volume, and duration for you from their app. (They also offer adjustable kettlebells, if that's more your style.)

Instead of using gravity and weight to train against, Tonal uses electromagnetic technology to simulate up to 200 pounds of resistance in their product, which touts itself as a gym and trainer in one. Mounted to your wall like a flat screen, it counts your sets and reps and critiques your form. It can be purchased with optional accessories like handles or a bench and bar to strength train at home in a versatile, compact way.

Connected, interactive equipment & community

Maybe your home gym environment is missing the energy of boutique classes, enthusiastic instructors, or other community members to compete/comiserate with. If that's the case, there's a bumper crop of equipment that connects you to friends, community members, or livestream classes directly from your app or a connected device.

Peloton is famous for creating a cult-like community following with guided workouts, killer training playlists, inspiring instructors, and the

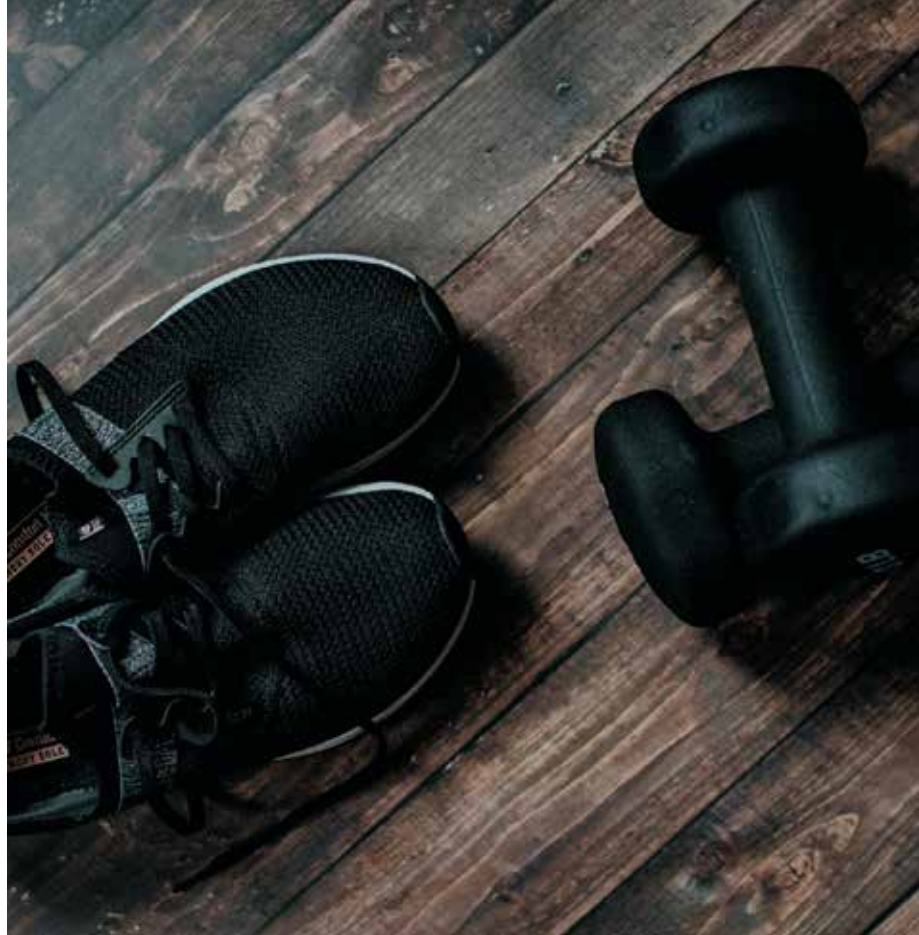


PHOTO BY KELLY SIKKEMA ON UNSPLASH

MIRROR PROVIDES
INTERACTIVE
WORKOUTS, FROM
YOGA TO BOXING
AND BOOTCAMP, VIA
AN LCD SCREEN.



ability to “ride together” with your other Peloton-addicted friends, but many other platforms are building similar connected home fitness products and services.

However, if you’re craving more variety than a stationary bike or a treadmill can offer, check out other integrated streaming services and gear like the Mirror. Similar to Tonal, it’s a low-profile, wall-mounted option, (unlike Tonal, it doesn’t have any attached accessories to strength train), that provides interactive workouts from yoga to boxing and bootcamp via an LCD screen. When it’s off, it acts as a regular reflective mirror, which is perfect for fans of minimalist design in their home gyms.

Smart scales

Old-school scales measure only your total weight. While weight does have a bearing on health, it’s not the best single overall indicator for wellness. New smart scales go a step further, using electrical impulses to measure your lean muscle mass, bone mass, water content, and more. Some connect to wearable trackers via Wi-Fi or Bluetooth to correlate data and give you a fuller picture of your health altogether.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TONAL

PHOTO COURTESY OF MIRROR



Hydration

Getting enough water is essential for life, and the benefits of hydration are myriad, including helping your joints stay lubricated, your body manage its internal temperature, getting nutrients to your cells, digestion, and more. Harvard Health recommends adults get 30 to 50 ounces (0.9 to 1.5 liters, or 2 to 3 pints) a day, cautioning that it's critical especially for older people who may have less-frequent thirst or for people taking medications like diuretics that may cause them to lose fluids. While some of those ounces will come from the water content of the food you eat, most will come from what you drink in a day. Sure, you could just carry a run-of-the-mill water bottle around with you, but several new companies are offering products that help ensure people stay consistently hydrated.

The Hidrate Spark comes equipped with sensors that track your water intake and sync via Bluetooth to their app, but it also lights up to remind you to take a sip. (My favorite feature? The app also comes with a "find my water bottle" function so you can track down your forgotten

bottle before it gets relegated to a lost and found bin at your gym or help you realize it's just rolling around the trunk of your car.)



PHOTO COURTESY OF HIDRATE SPARK

THE HIDRATE SPARK COMES EQUIPPED WITH SENSORS THAT TRACK YOUR WATER INTAKE AND SYNC VIA BLUETOOTH TO THEIR APP.



GET SOME R&R

Rest and recovery are important components of your overall wellness and health. Good workout programs should include rest days to help you prevent burnout, avoid overtraining, and allow your body to restore and recover from your workouts. Additionally, the impact of sleep on recovery cannot be overstated. It affects everything in your day, including stress, mood, and coordination, as well as restoring muscle after a workout. Keep reading for some cool new tech products that will help recover and maximize the time you spend counting sheep.

Recovery

Want some at-home tools you can use to recover from a workout that's left you sore? Fitness fanatics may be familiar with run-of-the-mill foam rollers to ease tired muscles. Hyperice took that basic idea one step further with their Vyper 2.0, adding in battery-operated vibrations to increase the therapeutic value. If foam rolling isn't for you but you still want deep tissue massage, you don't need to hire a masseuse—simply take matters into your own hands. Created by a chiropractor after his motorcycle accident, the Theragun percussive massager utilizes vibration and force to loosen knots and soothe muscles.

Rest

Catch some ZZZZZs

More is more when it comes to a lot of things but, when it comes to sleep, quality matters as much as getting the correct quantity. Getting good rest can be an overlooked metric for overall health and wellness while the importance of sleep cannot be overstated.

Lighting

Your sleeping environment should be a restful one, and an easy way to ensure this is to optimize your bedroom lighting. With Control4 home automation, you can set scenes for bedtime that automatically lower the blinds at sunset and dim the lights to a softer level to help signal to your brain that it's time to wind down at the end of the day. In the morning, set wakeup scenes to open your shades to let sunshine in and start the day off right. Integrations like these can be set up to be timed or added to voice commands on your favorite home assistant to make waking up or going to sleep more seamless and convenient.

Temperature

Sleep.org¹ recommends keeping your bedroom between 60-67 degrees Fahrenheit (15.5 to 19.4 °C) for sleeping. Use a smart thermostat to automatically optimize the temperature for sleep. You can add an adjustment to your bedtime or wakeup automations, so you always have the optimized temperature, whether for sleep or wakefulness.



PHOTO BY MARK CHAMPS ON UNSPLASH

Sleep tech

For the sleep obsessed, there's a plethora of technology available designed to keep an eye on your sleep quality and habits, from wearables and sensors you place on your mattress to headbands that aim to measure brainwave activity. If you're already using an Apple Watch or a Fitbit, you're probably familiar with their built-in sleep tracking functionality. However, there's a couple of new companies offering wearable products that are geared more narrowly towards rest and recovery, like the Oura ring or the WHOOP band. The WHOOP tries to parse out the data taken from your everyday life and break it into three categories—strain, recovery, and sleep—then gives you an overall percentage grade of readiness for more strain so that you have some feedback about whether you're ready for a workout or should be prioritizing rest. The Oura uses a similar system, but their tracker is a minimalist ring with sensors inside the band.

Mattress sensors

If you're dissatisfied with the options available to you from wearables, maybe consider a sensor that gets placed on your mattress. Similar to wearables, these can utilize movement, respiration, and heart rate monitoring to give you a snapshot of your time asleep and coach you in steps to take to wake better rested.

Brainwave headband

It is worth mentioning that there can be criticism leveraged at the ability of commercially available trackers to properly measure sleep. Critics argue that utilizing heartrate or movement data from embedded gyroscopes is inherently flawed and is, at best, a guess as to how your sleep was in a given night. Many people are happy with the information they offer, but for those who want to dive deeper into sleep science at home, there are new options like Dreem and the Sleep Shepherd that you wear on your head while sleeping to measure brainwave activity. Both headbands use EEG sensors like you'd encounter in a sleep lab, as well as accelerometers to give you a more nuanced view and understanding of how you're sleeping at night.

Hit the hay

Mattress technology has come a long way since the hay-filled beds of the Middle Ages or the sloshy waterbeds of the 70s. Newer mattresses are comprised of a dizzying array of options, all contriving to offer comfort and support while

ensuring a good night's sleep. Start delving into materials, and you've got an all-you-can-sleep buffet, from inner springs, latex, memory foam, and more mixed-medium layers than a cake. Techy mattress companies are striving to offer the same kind of sleep tracking as wearables—straight from your mattress—including heart rate, breathing, and movement data. Others, like the Sleep Number 360 beds, allow you to adjust the bed's angle to reduce your partner's snoring. Regardless of your choice, it should allow you to rest comfortably all night without causing pinching or strain to your spine or body. ■

¹ <https://www.sleep.org/temperature-for-sleep/>

PHOTO COURTESY OF OURA



Hi there.



Introducing Chime.

The first video doorbell built for the truly intelligent home.

Control4 Chime Video Doorbell leverages the power of your Control4 Smart Home to provide greater security and keep you connected and in control like no other video doorbell.

Now, you can see and talk to a visitor at the door from the Control4 App or Touchscreen

while simultaneously unlocking the door, turning on the lights, disarming the alarm, or opening the garage. And whether you're home or away, receive notifications on your smartphone when motion is detected or the doorbell is pressed.

Visit [Control4.com](https://www.control4.com) to learn more.

Control4®

4 WAYS VIRTUAL REALITY HAS RESHAPED MARKETING REAL ESTATE

**HOW COOL IS IT TO LAND
IN YOUR DREAM HOME
AND EXPLORE EACH
ROOM IN DETAIL WHEN
YOU'RE NOT ACTUALLY
PRESENT IN THE FLESH?**

**ENTER THE WORLD OF
VIRTUAL REALITY.**

Stewart Dunlop, Paperless Pipeline

Virtual reality (or VR) is the use of technology to create a three-dimensional image or environment that can be interacted with. VR gives users a simulated experience that can be similar to or completely different from the real world.

Virtual reality has been “the next big thing in tech” for quite a while now and is making waves in real estate, thanks to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

People interested in buying a home no longer need to travel for miles to visit the property since they can now visit the property virtually. With VR, buyers can enter any space to experience the scale of the rooms and do much more. In this article, we'll discuss the various ways virtual reality has transformed real estate marketing.

VIRTUAL PROPERTY SHOWCASES

Traditionally, when someone wants to buy property, they will contact a real estate agent, and both will agree on the day and time to view the property. While this approach certainly gets things done, it can be time consuming and inconvenient to both parties. Things can get even more complicated if the property is hundreds or thousands of miles away from where the client lives. And in that case, visiting the property is not only time consuming but expensive, as well. However, you can solve these problems by leveraging technology.

As mentioned by Paperless Pipeline, a transaction management software company, automation saves your business money and clients' time. The same goes for virtual and augmented technologies. With the help of VR, homebuyers can visit the property virtually and from anywhere. By simply putting on VR headsets, clients can experience immersive, three-dimensional walkthroughs of the properties.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PEXELS.COM

And not just walkthroughs—buyers can enter into space and measure the scale of the rooms, determine the height and texture of kitchen countertops, etc. Most importantly, buyers can visit multiple properties while in the comfort of their own homes.

Real estate agents can use virtual tours for marketing their properties more effectively. There are two types of 3D virtual tours that agents can use to market their listings.

Guided visits

Guided tours are more like the typical promotional videos you see all the time on the internet. However, with VR, guided tours are either entirely virtual or 360-degree videos.

Guided tours are perfect for promoting real estate because they are simple to produce—you can even use your smartphone to create them. But for best results, the use of a panoramic camera that can capture 360-degree videos is recommended.

Interactive visits

With these types of virtual tours, clients choose how they want to interact with space.

Prospective buyers choose where they want to move within a property by clicking on unique hotspots in the field of view. While creating interactive tours is more complicated, unlike guided tours, interactive videos let buyers have a better and more immersive feel of the property.



VIRTUAL STAGING

Picture these two real estate agents trying to sell property in a competitive market:

Real estate agent A: Sells the property as is—empty space with no furniture.

Real estate agent B: Promotes the property after staging it with exquisite furniture and other embellishments that make it look cozy and appealing.

Which of these two real estate agents do you think will sell more properties and at a better price? Many buyers would go for real estate agent B. Why?

Homebuyers are more attracted to images and videos with well-furnished interiors rather than those of empty spaces.

And we have the numbers to prove it. According to Betsy Wilber, a professional home stager at Artisan Staged Homes & Room Redesign, a staged home on average sells 17% more and 87% faster than non-staged homes.

By staging a home, you enable buyers to see the property in its very best light. This allows them to visualize how their home will look like once they move in.

And this is where VR comes in. Virtual reality transforms an empty house into a well-furnished home that appeals to the human eye. Today, many real estate agents are using VR technology to boost sales using virtual staging.

ARCHITECTURAL VISUALIZATION

What if the property in question isn't built yet?

Selling a property that isn't constructed yet can be tricky. But with virtual reality, buyers can easily imagine a piece of land as a complete architecture; the exterior and interior of the property can be made visible using virtual reality and augmented reality technologies.

By visualizing the property even before it's built, buyers can get a better feel of what the property will look like. This can help them determine whether the property is worth their investment. The best part: it can help real estate agents reach more buyers and solidify deals.

VIRTUAL COMMERCE

Virtually staging a home helps homebuyers imagine their dream home by seeing a property in all its glory. Besides helping buyers realize their dream home, virtual staging has another, lesser-known benefit; it helps promote V-commerce. So, what is V-commerce?

Virtual commerce (or V-commerce) refers to sales directly stimulated by the virtual environment. For example, let's say you're taking a virtual tour of a property and you thought of



making a few changes to the interior. You just need to go to the online store, select the elements you want to change, and add them to your tour.

You'll be able to make all the adjustments within the virtual environment. And if you're willing to buy something that was shown in the virtual tour, you can do it by visiting the virtual store. Thus, real estate agents can collaborate with the sellers of the home décor furnishings and develop a beneficial partnership.



VIRTUAL AND
AUGMENTED REALITY
HAVE BECOME SO
PREVALENT THAT THE
MARKET HAS GROWN
TO AN IMPRESSIVE
\$18.8 BILLION INDUSTRY.

And that's a wrap

Virtual and augmented reality technologies have transformed the real estate industry so much that virtual walkthroughs have become the industry standard for the top agencies.

One of the reasons virtual reality has gained so much traction in real estate is that it saves time for both the real estate agents and the homebuyer. Besides, an immersive, 3D virtual tour of a property will be available to view around the clock, which means buyers can visit the property at any time of the day or night. ■





9 INEXPENSIVE WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR SPACES AT HOME

Bayleigh Sonkens

AS WE'RE SPENDING MORE TIME AT HOME THAN EVER BEFORE, YOU MIGHT BE THINKING ABOUT DOING SOME MINOR UPGRADES TO CREATE A MORE RELAXING AND CONVENIENT ATMOSPHERE FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY. WE'VE COMPILED NINE MINOR (AND INEXPENSIVE) UPDATES THAT WILL IMPROVE YOUR ENVIRONMENT.

HOUSE PLANTS



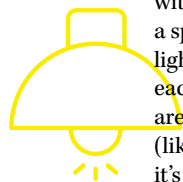
Adding plants, real or fake, can be one of the easiest ways to upgrade your space. Plants bring in a sense of nature and beauty that comes with greenery or anything that is naturally occurring. Whether it is potted or hanging, the focal point of your space or an additive to your own design, plants can lighten up the room or fill gaps where needed. They are a go-to move when searching for ways to improve your home or office, and an affordable and effective way to add life to any space.

DESIRABLE SCENTS



Ambiance can be achieved in many ways, but smell is usually one of the most notable aspects of a space. It adds to the overall feel and experience for guests and homeowners. For guests, it's the smell that they associate with you and your home. For homeowners, it is a scent that feels warm, familiar, and comforting. Candles, scent plug-ins, and incense are all attainable (and incredibly affordable) ways to get your space smelling the way you like.

MOOD LIGHTING

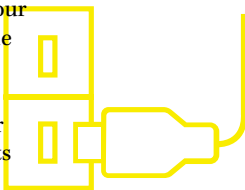


Lighting creates specific moods and a relaxed feeling within any or all rooms of the house. A dimly lit dinner for a special night, a task light to help you focus, scheduled lighting for bedside fixtures that help you rise peacefully each morning, and motion-activated lighting in certain areas of the home that assist with hands-free needs (like closets, bathrooms, and laundry rooms). Whether it's replacing light bulbs or adding new light fixtures to improve the aesthetic of your décor, perfecting the lighting in your space will create both ambiance and comfortability.



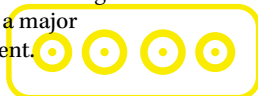
USB PLUGS & CHARGING STATIONS

There is always someone in need of a charge. With a phone in everyone's hand or pocket these days, there seems to always be a need for available chargers in your space. Providing charging pads or USB ports helps the homeowner avoid having to rummage through their bedroom for their daily charger to lend to guests. It's a simple convenience that makes life a little easier for you *and* your visitors. Replacing traditional outlets with USB outlets in the kitchen, living room, or office allows your guests to never have to worry about a dead phone while visiting, and is a major convenience for you and your family.



SOUNDBARS

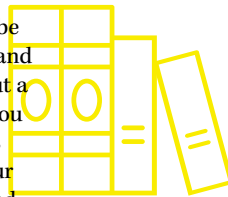
A theater is often the most used room in a home, but if you're not ready to go full-bore with a dedicated home theater or don't have the space to do so, many areas can be improved for better sound with the help of a soundbar. When gathered around any screen to watch a movie with family or take in the big game with friends, enhancing the sound to combat mediocre TV audio is a major plus and certainly worth the small investment.





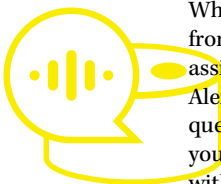
BOOKS

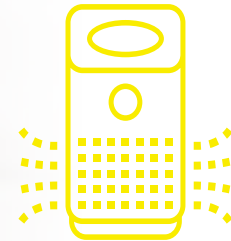
This may sound too simplistic, but books are an underrated design element that can be easily added to a home for a unique flair. Your space is meant to be completely personalized; a reflection of your home and personality. This can be displayed in many forms, but a collection of books is sure to add life to any space. You can choose books to display based on certain colors to enhance the room or add some that highlight your hobbies and interests (perhaps those you've collected throughout your lifetime?). Books, like artwork, tell a story; adding them to your space will help you tell yours.



VOICE ASSISTANTS

Whether you're shouting "Hey Alexa" or "Okay Google" from across the room, a staple of all spaces is a virtual assistant. There for whatever you may need, both Amazon Alexa and Google Home are able to play music, answer questions, make you a grocery list, play white noise while you sleep, and so much more. Even with little experience with technology, these voice-activated additions to your home are easy to use and set up. And, better yet, you can always incorporate them into a larger home automation system (like Control4) when you're ready.





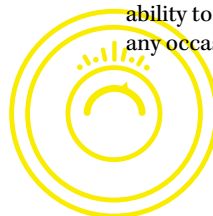
AIR PURIFIERS

An air purifier is a small, plug-in device that can reduce some of the strongest odors caused by any bacteria in your space. Bacteria in the air is filtered through a purification system that allows your space to keep the good smells in and the bad smells out. Whether it's filtering out the smell of last night's dinner or dirty gym clothes laying on the floor, with an air filtration system in your space, you are able to take a deep breath of fresh, clean air with confidence.



COMFORT LEVELS

The temperature in your space is another aspect that adds greatly to the overall ambience. It is hard to be fully comfortable in a space that is too cold or too hot for you. Maintaining the right temperature for yourself and your guests will add that sense of comfort you may be missing. With the help of modern technology, there are many ways to minimize this problem. Provide access to fans for cooling, heat lamps for heating, or even a device that can produce both to give your space the ability to maintain the perfect temperature for any occasion. ■

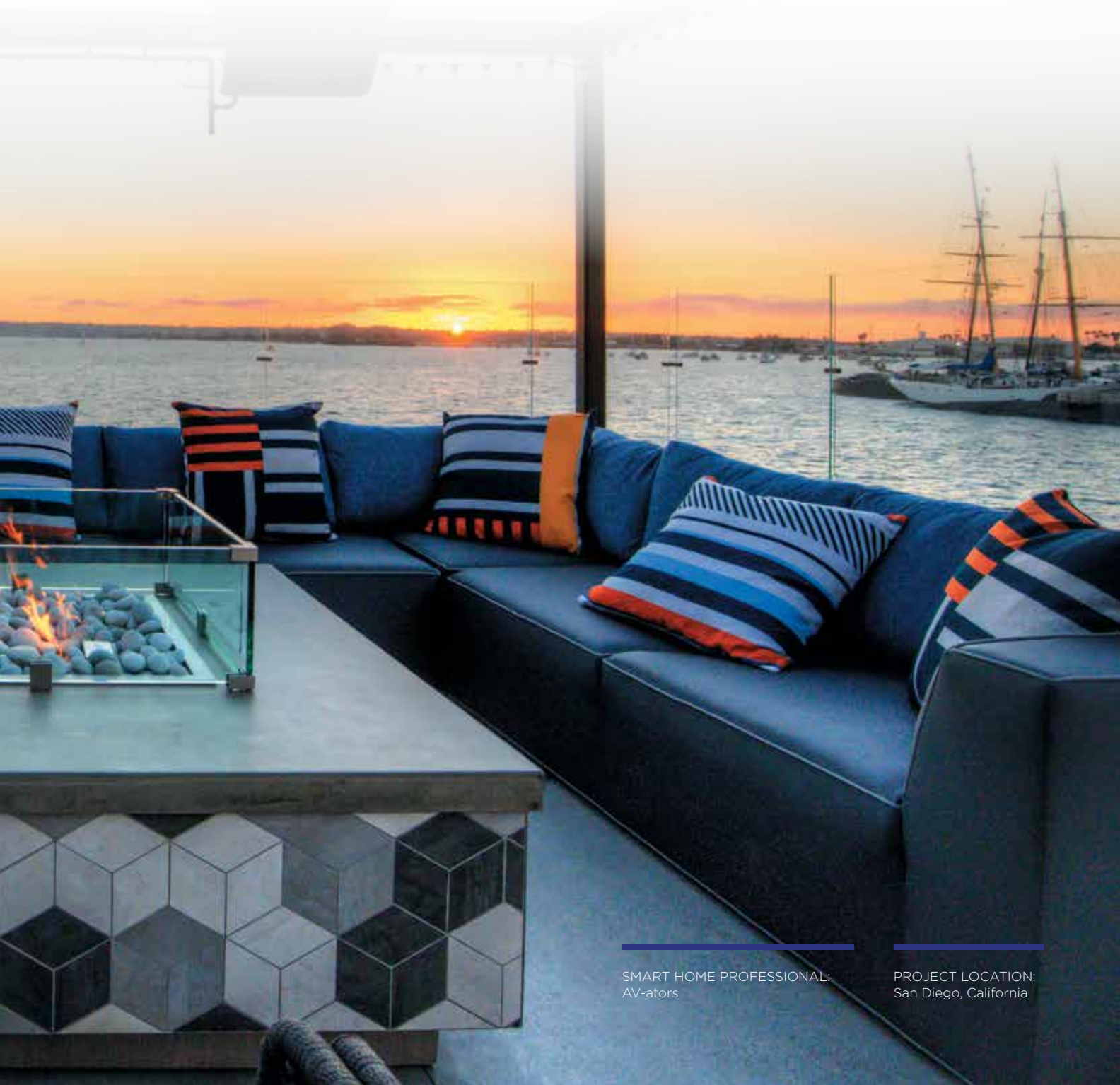


PORTSIDE PEARL



Crystal Watts

THE MIDDLE OF A PANDEMIC MIGHT NOT SEEM THE BEST TIME TO OPEN A 42,000 SQ. FT. SEAFRONT RESTAURANT COMPLEX, BUT SAN DIEGO'S SPECTACULAR PORTSIDE PIER HAS THE SMARTS—AND THE COMMUNITY SUPPORT—TO WEATHER THE STORM.



SMART HOME PROFESSIONAL:
AV-ators

PROJECT LOCATION:
San Diego, California

The Brigantine restaurant chain is something of a San Diego institution. In 1969, Mike Morton Sr. and his wife Barbara opened the original “Brig” on the eastern side of Point Loma by San Diego Bay. With its late-night opening, hearty home-style cooking, and warm family welcome, it quickly became a go-to spot for locals. As time went on, the Brigantine began to expand to more locations, building a solid reputation for fine, fresh seafood—its swordfish and oysters among the chain’s signature fare. By 2014, the family business—now headed up by Mike and Barbara’s son Mike Morton Jr.—employed 1,200 people and included eight Brigantines plus a second chain of five Mexican-themed restaurants, Miguel’s Cocina.

In 2015 the Port of San Diego invited proposals for the redevelopment of a prime waterfront property on the Embarcadero in the bustling Downtown area of San Diego. The location is a testament to the region’s colorful maritime history. It sits beside the 150-year-old merchant ship Star of India (now a floating museum), as well as overlooking a working fishing harbor and a cruise ship terminal.

PHOTOGRAPHY: PINK MEDIA PRODUCTIONS





THE STATE-OF-THE-ART DESTINATION WAS GOING TO REQUIRE STATE-OF-THE-ART SMART TECH.

Since 1965 the site had been home to another popular local seafood restaurant, Anthony's Fish Grotto, whose lease was due to expire in 2017. The Port wanted to modernize the area as part of a wider redevelopment of the San Diego waterfront, and the Brigantine was determined to wow them with something truly spectacular.

A nail-biting contest for the property ensued, with the Brigantine, Anthony's, and a third local restaurant group all making the final shortlist. But the Brig's ambitious \$13 million plan for Portside Pier won the day—a breathtaking, multi-level restaurant complex, designed by San Diego architects Tucker Sadler, which would include several restaurants, a public viewing gallery, and waterside “dock-and-dine” berths to attract seafaring clientele.

Once the proposal was accepted, Mike Morton Jr. brought in Control4 Smart Home Professional Jared Magoon of AV-ators, a local smart tech specialist that he'd been working with since 2009, to help spec out what was needed. The state-of-the-art destination was going to require state-of-the-art smart tech to ensure restaurant staff could get on with the business of serving customers without having to worry about the intricacies of lighting, heating, music, and screens.

SMOOTH SAILING THROUGH CHOPPY WATERS

Although the Port announced the bid winner in November 2015, construction of the new Portside Pier development couldn't begin until the Anthony's lease expired in 2017. Jared says, "Building work didn't start until May 2018. Before that, the old restaurant had to be torn down, the sea floor had to be tested, various environmental reports had to be produced, and pier supports had to be replaced and strengthened."

The Mortons had already built up a high level of trust with AV-atoms and when Mike Morton Jr. introduced Jared to the other contractors, he told them "anything he needs, let it happen."

"That trusting relationship was key to ensuring that the project ran smoothly," says Jared.

Construction proceeded apace and by the time the pandemic hit in March 2020, the building was largely complete and AV-atoms' three-man team had installed around 20 miles of cabling to control all the smart tech. "From that point, only a limited number of people were allowed on site. Each morning, everyone had to have their temperature scanned, answer various questions, and obtain a wristband in order to enter. Once a week, the foreman did a presentation to run through the latest instructions regarding sanitizing, wearing masks, gloves, and so on, which were constantly changing," says Jared.



Far from slowing things down, he says because there were fewer people allowed on site than normal, AV-ators' work was actually more straightforward, since they weren't constantly having to work around lots of other contractors. "Bizarrely, COVID actually worked in our favor," says Jared. "As well as giving us more space to work, it also gave us more time to focus exclusively on the project. We typically do a lot of residential work, and since people didn't want anyone working in their houses during the COVID threat, that allowed us to focus exclusively on Portside Pier, which sped things up."

The finished complex, which opened in July 2020, oozes quality and modernity, while deftly fitting in with the area's maritime heritage. The central arching element of Portside Pier symbolizes the casting of a fisherman's net into a wave, while the steel and glass dome-like structures at either end resemble giant fishing baskets.



THE CENTRAL ARCHING ELEMENT OF PORTSIDE PIER SYMBOLIZES THE CASTING OF A FISHERMAN'S NET INTO A WAVE, WHILE THE STEEL AND GLASS DOME-LIKE STRUCTURES AT EITHER END RESEMBLE GIANT FISHING BASKETS.

There are five eateries in total, all owned and run by the Mortons: The Brigantine for seafood, Miguel's for Mexican, Ketch Grill and Taps for pub-style food and craft beer, Topsail for open-air rooftop dining, and Portside Coffee and Gelato for quick snacks and drinks.

Although all the restaurants have separate entrances and identities, the smart tech is integrated throughout the building. Lighting, heating, air conditioning, music, screens, digital signage, and security systems can all be fully programmed and controlled, both for individual outlets and for the Portside Pier complex as a whole. Because Control4 technology is supplier-agnostic, it integrates seamlessly with all the best-of-breed kit selected for the project, such as the Samsung TVs, LG digital signage boards, and Yamaha amps throughout the complex.

As well as compatibility and usability, Jared says his main reason for favoring Control4 over rival systems is the price. "It reliably does everything we want, while still being 20-30% cheaper than any of the alternatives," he says. It's also remarkably easy to use, meaning there's no steep learning curve for new staff. "Since Control4 smart tech is already well established in the family's other restaurants, the business can move people among outlets as needed, safe in the knowledge they won't have to get to grips with any tricky or unfamiliar processes," says Jared.

SUSTAINABLY SMART

Much of AV-ators' time was spent programming the various scenes that automate everything to ease life for the restaurants' managers and staff—freeing them up to focus on the core business of ensuring a top-notch experience for customers. He explains, "When the cleaning crew arrive at 3am, as soon as they disable the alarm, the lights automatically turn on at the required brightness. When Portside Coffee and Gelato opens at 5.30am, the lights dim to a lower level and the music starts. At 10am, the first morning scene kicks off and throughout the day all the pre-programmed scenes adjust based on exterior light levels. At dinner time, there's a twilight scene that imperceptibly brings up the lights as the sun sets."

When the restaurant staff leave at night and arm the alarm, all the music and screens shut off automatically, and the system makes sure all the electric heaters are off. "The interior lights go off, but the exterior lights stay on for a few minutes to give staff time to get to their cars and load up," says Jared.

Altogether, there are 10 or 12 scenes throughout the day. Easily selectable sports scenes also make it simple to change all the TVs to the local San Diego Padres baseball game or other sporting event that might draw in customers.

THE MOST CHALLENGING ASPECT OF THE PROJECT WAS ENSURING PORTSIDE PIER WAS COMPLIANT WITH CALIFORNIA'S RIGOROUS TITLE 24 REGULATIONS ON ENERGY EFFICIENCY.





Jared says the most challenging aspect of the project was ensuring Portside Pier was compliant with California's rigorous Title 24 regulations on energy efficiency. Among other things, these stipulate that external daylight must be used to light interiors where possible, and all new commercial buildings must include a means to reduce energy use on demand if regulators ever require them to do so, for example, during an energy shortage or crisis.

"We had to learn all aspects of the requirements and program the system to make sure we were not only meeting, but exceeding, the standards. With a 40,000-square-foot restaurant complex, any energy saving translates to a substantial financial saving," Jared says.

The design of the complex means all the restaurants maximize the use of natural light. "When daylight goes above 30%, the system automatically turns off all the lights apart from a few decorative ones. In rooms and hallways without natural light, we have motion and occupancy sensors that turn lights to 20% when no one's there and back up to a preset level of 50% when they detect someone," says Jared. "And we have scenes ready to go which, for example, turn off half the lights should the restaurant suddenly be required to cut energy use in line with the Title 24 'demand response' rules."

SAFE PASSAGE TO SUCCESS

Portside Pier is by far San Diego's biggest restaurant destination, with 1,100 seats, 600 of them outdoors. Opening in the middle of a pandemic, when the hospitality sector faces unprecedented challenges that have already seen many businesses go to the wall, is hardly ideal, of course—particularly when the cruise ships (that the Port hoped would provide a steady stream of customers) remain, at the time of writing, at a standstill.

Nonetheless, Jared believes Portside Pier's design and smart tech will enable it to succeed despite the current difficulties. "San Diego weather is beautiful most of the year, and every door and window at Portside Pier folds open, accordion-style, to give all the restaurants an al fresco feel," he says.



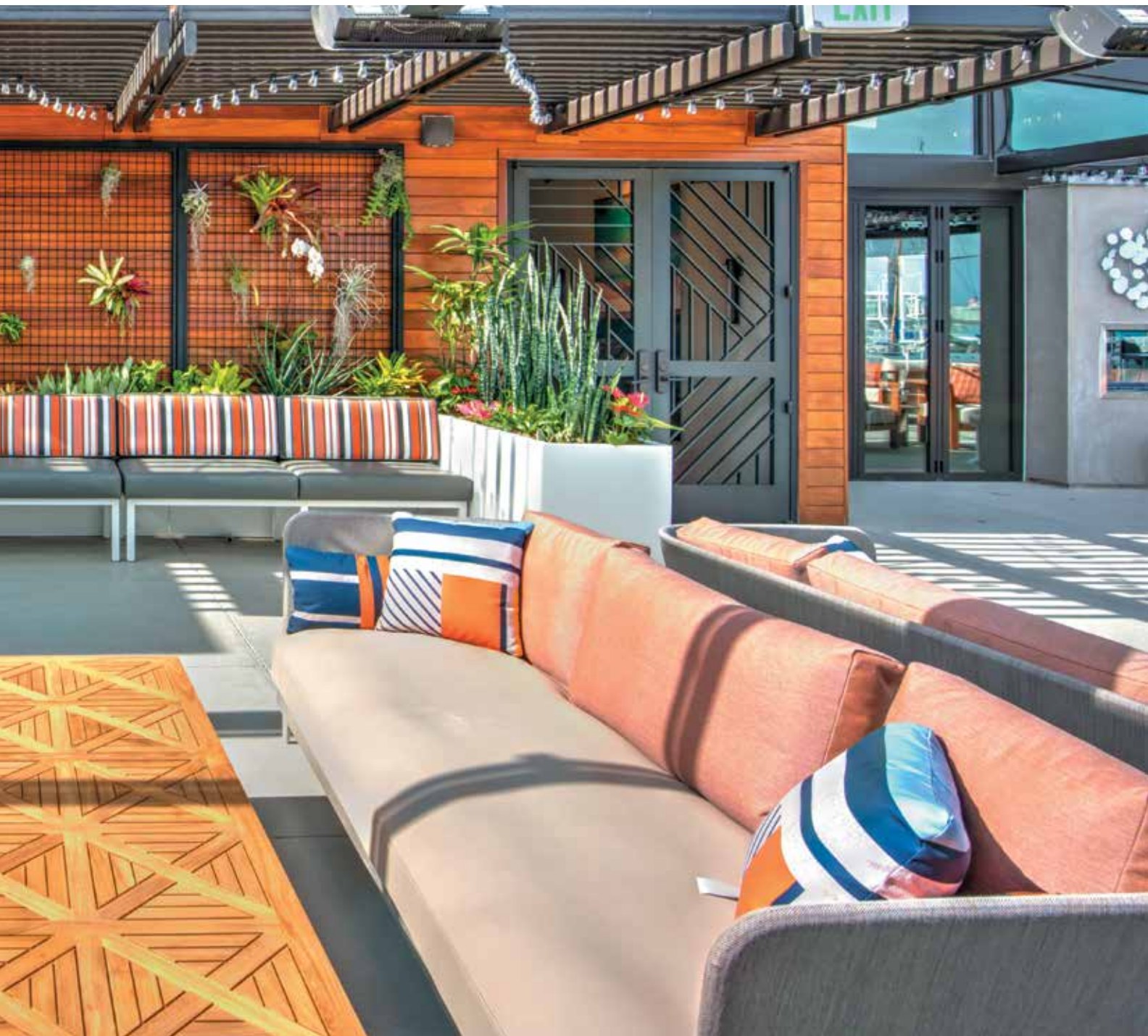
**LIGHTING,
HEATING, AIR
CONDITIONING,
MUSIC, SCREENS,
DIGITAL SIGNAGE,
AND SECURITY
SYSTEMS CAN
ALL BE FULLY
PROGRAMMED
AND CONTROLLED,
BOTH FOR
INDIVIDUAL
OUTLETS AND FOR
THE PORTSIDE
PIER COMPLEX
AS A WHOLE.**







PORTSIDE PIER IS BY FAR SAN DIEGO'S BIGGEST RESTAURANT DESTINATION, WITH 1,100 SEATS, 600 OF THEM OUTDOORS.



EVERY
DOOR AND
WINDOW AT
PORTSIDE PIER
FOLDS OPEN,
ACCORDION-STYLE,
TO GIVE ALL
THE RESTAURANTS
AN AL FRESCO
FEEL.





EXIT

Portside Pier can serve almost 50% of normal occupancy in the outside space alone, and a further 25% inside with social distancing measures in place. The Control4 smart automation also means managing the large space is simple, even with a reduced staff.

If anyone can weather the storm, says Magoon, it's the Mortons. Locals and staff are all rooting for them. "They are the kindest people, well-known throughout San Diego for their generosity, honesty, and hard work," he says.

"For instance, in the final days before opening, Mike Morton Jr. drove up in an old family truck towing a trailer with dozens of tables and hundreds of chairs, which he and his brothers then proceeded to unload and set up. Despite running a sizable company, this family is willing to work hard and never put themselves above anyone."

And thanks to The Brig's loyal following, and the downtown location close to offices and shops, Portside Pier is already doing brisk business despite the lack of tourists. "Every day they open for lunch at 11am, and by 10:30am there are already 20-30 people outside. And on Friday and Saturday nights, there's typically a three-hour wait to get into any of the restaurants," says Magoon.

Long may they sail! ■

THE SMART
AUTOMATION
SYSTEM MAKES
MANAGING THE
LARGE SPACE
SIMPLE.





IT'S TIME TO MAKE A **BIG** IMPRESSION

Quentin McCree

Great home audio is amazing to have. Whether it's a movie or game night, encompassing sound sets the tone for the day and brings us closer to friends and family while creating lifelong memories. Immersive, lifelike sound has a unique way of enhancing life; it adds fun and creates emotions of all kinds, transporting us to an entirely new place. However, finding somewhere to put all this great sound is difficult, especially when you're maintaining a specific design and feel in the room. Nobody wants to put a big subwoofer next to the couch and tuck wires under an area rug.

But alas! This is where the Episode Impression speakers come into play.







AN EYE FOR DESIGN

Episode Impression speakers are scientifically designed for a tremendously lifelike whole-home audio experience while adhering to room aesthetics. These speakers mount directly into your wall using a hole that's much smaller than other speakers, maintaining a minimal aesthetic. They also use a subtle bezel-less grille that's paintable, so they blend right into the room. With Episode Impression speakers, you can create your ideal room ambiance without sacrificing sound quality.

SCIENTIFICALLY ENHANCED AUDIO

Episode Impression speakers adhere to three scientific philosophies on sound: low distortion, wide dispersion, and flat frequency response. A speaker with low distortion gives you cleaner and smoother audio, even at louder volumes. Wide dispersion immerses the entire room in great sound, so you don't have to be directly in front of the speaker to get lifelike audio. And flat frequency response provides more accurate audio that's just as the artist or director intended.



A GREAT SUBWOOFER ELEVATES YOUR LISTENING EXPERIENCE

When watching movies and listening to music, having a subwoofer as a part of your home audio system provides the most realistic and engaging experience. When paired with Episode Impression speakers, our Impression subwoofer provides deep bass for a full range of sound that enhances every listening experience—not just when you're watching action movies and bass-heavy music.

PROFESSIONAL INSTALLATION

Building an amazing home audio system takes a comprehensive understanding of how sound works in various room layouts, which is why professional installation is always recommended. An audio professional has the experience you need when it comes to proper speaker placement, amplifier choice, and flawless installation, giving you a system that will bring your friends and family together with lifelike audio that will last for years to come. ■

To find an Episode professional or learn more about Episode Impression speakers and their complete line of audio solutions, **visit episodespeakers.com**.



ACOUSTICS +
AUTOMATION =
AN ARTISTIC VISION

Eric Gross

**A PRIVATE THEATER, BOWLING ALLEY,
AND BILLIARDS ROOM FEATURE A BLEND
OF SMARTS AND SOUND TO CREATE THE
ULTIMATE INTEGRATED SANCTUARY...**

SMART HOME PROFESSIONAL:
AONYX

PROJECT LOCATION:
London, England







The Dumont, a new luxury apartment building that resides on the River Thames in downtown London overlooking the Houses of Parliament, features not only a prime location but also custom interior finishes and extravagant amenities to create an ultra-high-end experience for affluent individuals. It's no surprise that the developers also chose to outfit the building with the latest technology: a Control4-powered entertainment area complete with an exquisite 18-seat movie theater, a bowling alley, and a billiards room. According to Richard Reid, Managing Director of custom integration firm AONYX, the building's developer knew early on clients of this stature require catered experiences in addition to luxurious residences, so they decided it was crucial to include high-end versions of fun activities to differentiate from other buildings and entice potential buyers.

"The top-end of London's residential real estate market is in a bit of an arms race to provide high-net-worth individuals with customized living experiences, and centerpiece amenities like this incredible movie theater make a statement to potential buyers," says Reid. "Every detail matters here: from color-matched custom-painted grilles for the Triad Platinum Series in-ceiling speakers to the hand-built projector enclosure. The most important thing, however, is that the room and system is always reliable and easy to use, and that's why we chose to install Control4 over other automation and media distribution systems."



“WE WERE ESSENTIALLY GIVEN A CONCRETE SHELL AND THE VISION OF THE DEVELOPER WAS TO CREATE A SUPER-PRIME CINEMA SETTING FOR THE RESIDENTS TO ENJOY. WE HAD A REALLY HIGH BAR TO MATCH THE EXPECTATIONS OF WHAT ARE, NO DOUBT REALLY DISCERNING INDIVIDUALS THAT ARE GOING TO BE USING THIS SPACE.”

Oliver Benson, AONYX



CINEMA GOODIES:

- SEATS 18 PEOPLE COMFORTABLY WITH WHEELCHAIR ACCESS
- FEATURES AN ELEGANTLY ILLUMINATED TIERED SEATING PLATFORM
- 14 SPEAKERS ARE HIDDEN BEHIND THE SCREEN, WALLS, COLUMNS, AND WITHIN THE CEILING
- DOLBY ATMOS SURROUND SOUND PLACEMENT FOR AUDITORY IMMERSION
- PROJECTOR IS DISCREETLY MOUNTED WITHIN A CUSTOM-BUILT JOINERY UNIT
- AUDIO, VIDEO, AND LIGHTING IS CONTROLLED THROUGH CONTROL4 INTERFACES AND MOBILE APP





AONYX knew the best solution for the theater and entertainment areas was a simple, intuitive, and expandable automation system. Using the system's super-simple user interface on mobile devices or a Control4 remote, staff can quickly and easily set up or shut down the entire entertainment area, choose movies or music, and set the volume for each independent area. The theater, bowling alley, and billiards room each have hidden Triad speakers in the walls and ceilings to play any audio a resident desires through the Control4 multi-room audio system. Each room can play the same music or can use different sources for multiple groups.

In addition to the painted in-ceiling speakers, AONYX also installed acoustic treatments and Triad in-wall speakers behind the theater's fabric walls and behind the screen itself to deliver a commercial-grade surround sound experience for every seat. Kaleidescape players in each room offer a custom selection of titles chosen by property management, while Apple TVs enable residents to bring their own content or connect to subscription streaming services.

ALL THE HIDDEN TECHNOLOGY IN THESE ROOMS PRESENTS AN OUT-OF-SIGHT, OUT-OF-MIND EXPERIENCE THAT PROVIDES ALL THE BENEFITS OF TOP-SHELF TECH WITH NONE OF THE HEADACHES.





“In buildings like this, the goal is to ensure residents can live carefree and not have to trouble themselves with details or procedures of building functions,” says Oliver Benson, Operations Director at AONYX. “All the hidden technology in these rooms presents an out-of-sight, out-of-mind experience that provides all the benefits of top-shelf tech with none of the headaches.”

Residents can book the theater and other spaces through a digital reservation system. Because it’s a basement entertainment area, AONYX enhanced the wireless networking with professional-grade equipment so there is plenty of bandwidth to support dozens of guests and the AV system in the cinema.

“Using the latest technologies and finest finishes, we help design and integrate world-class amenities to satisfy the upper echelon of homeowners,” Reid said. “With Control4 and Triad, we can bring commercial movie magic to private spaces in a way that’s intuitive, expandable, and able to blend in with any aesthetic.” ■



OPEN THE DOOR TO PEACE OF MIND

Yvonne Ackerman

**MEET THE
VIDEO
DOORBELL
DESIGNED
SPECIFICALLY
FOR THE
SMART
HOME**

In a year where we've all been spending extra time at home (and watching out for an ever-increasing number of deliveries), there's never been a more important time to keep an eye on what matters most. Enter the Control4 Chime Video Doorbell—the first video doorbell designed for the Control4 Smart Home. Where DIY video doorbells only keep an eye on your front porch, Chime leverages every feature of the smart home to make your life easier and more secure than ever before.



“CHIME CROSSES INTO A TERRITORY WHERE OTHER VIDEO DOORBELLS DON’T TREAD. WHEN SOMEONE PRESSES THE BUTTON, THE PORCH LIGHT FLIPS ON AND THE TV IS PAUSED TO ALERT ME. I CAN EVEN UNLOCK THE DOOR TO LET SOMEONE IN FROM MY PHONE. THE LEVEL OF INTEGRATION IT OFFERS WITH MY HOME IS REALLY QUITE BRILLIANT.”

John Sciacca

Control4 homeowner and tech journalist

Chime gives you the power to create orchestrated scenes or program automated events that bring additional convenience, security, and peace of mind to your Control4 Smart Home experience. Want to greet visitors at your door in style with a scene that simultaneously unlocks the door, dims the lights, and begins their favorite playlist? Maybe you'd like to unlock the door for a friend who arrives early, or receive alerts if there's movement in your driveway after sundown? With Chime, all of that and more is possible with a simple click of a button. Together with your Control4 Pro, you can set up nearly any sequence of smart home events you can imagine.

Whether you're home or away, Chime delivers a seamless smart home experience by allowing you to use your phone to talk to visitors at the door or others in the home from anywhere. Chime also offers crisp, two-way audio that allows you to hear and speak naturally to those at the door, without the hassle of a press-and-release mechanism.

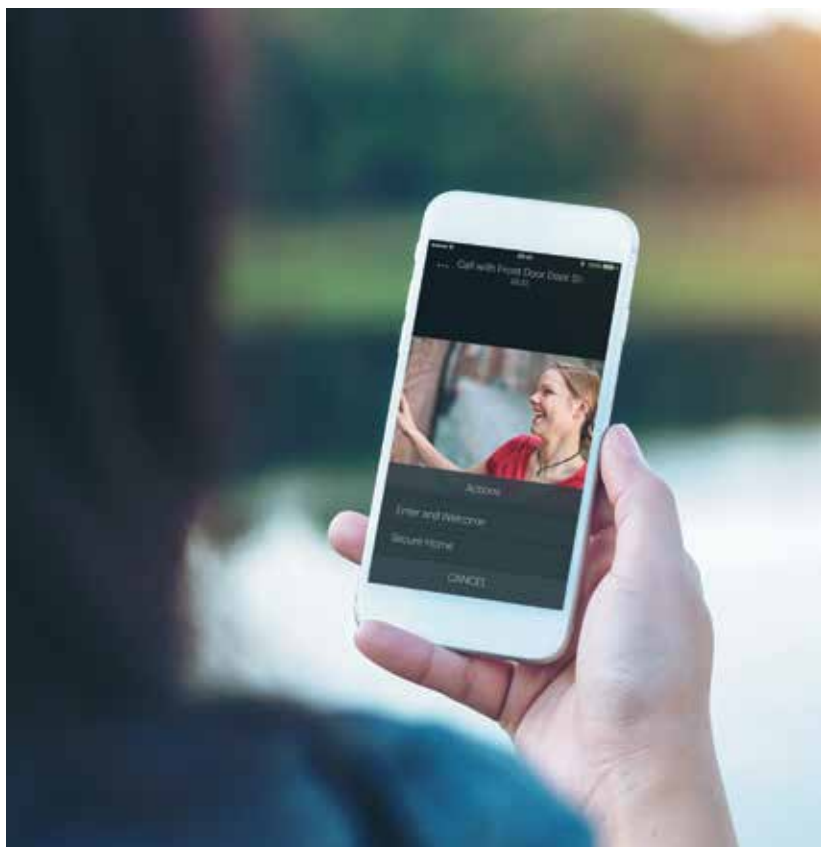
By pairing Chime with the large, high-resolution power of a Control4 Touchscreen, you can see who's at the door from across the room without checking your phone or getting off the couch. You can even use Control4 Touchscreens to talk to other family members inside the house, whether you're calling from another room or on the road.

Unlike other video doorbells on the market, you're not confined to views of your front porch with Chime. A 180-degree field of view and night mode ensure you capture everything that's happening on your property at any time, night or day. Your pro will even help you set up five customizable motion zones to ensure you're in the know when you want to be—and unbothered when you aren't. For example, your pro can set up alerts when someone is in your yard, versus spamming you with notifications when there's simply someone riding by your house on a bike.

If you miss a notification or a visitor at your door, you'll be able to go back and watch up to seven days of video clips from your phone or touchscreen. For longer storage, your Control4 Pro can pair Chime with a network video recorder (NVR). Chime even provides a "History View" option, so you can see everything that happened in your home throughout the day, like when a package was delivered, when someone else in the home armed the security system, and more.

In addition to Chime's ability to supercharge your smart home, you'll finally get to enjoy a video doorbell that doesn't sacrifice form for function. Chime is available in a black or satin nickel finish that fits seamlessly into your home's aesthetic. Plus, a sturdy water-resistant frame will keep Chime looking like new for years to come.

For a truly integrated smart home experience that marries convenience and security, adding the Chime Video Doorbell to your Control4 Smart Home system is a must. ■





“MOST VIDEO DOORBELLS LET YOU SEE AND TALK, BUT NOT *DO*. WITH COMPLETE CONTROL4 OS 3 INTEGRATION, A SLEEK AESTHETIC, AND THE COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE OF PROFESSIONAL INSTALLATION, CHIME GOES FAR BEYOND THE FUNCTIONALITY OF OTHER VIDEO DOORBELLS TO DELIVER THE ULTIMATE SMART HOME EXPERIENCE.”

Kordon Vaughn,
VP Marketing, SnapAV



MAGNUM OPUS

**HOW SMART
DESIGN AND
TECHNOLOGY
BROUGHT
A SLICE OF
EUROPEAN
ELEGANCE
TO ONE LEAFY
CORNER OF
CHARLOTTE,
NC...**





SMART HOME PROFESSIONAL:
Home Technology Solutions (HTS)

PROJECT LOCATION:
Charlotte, North Carolina

When maverick developer Jim Gross acquired a disused university dormitory in Charlotte's affluent Myers Park neighborhood in 2017, many locals were skeptical that he'd be able to realize his vision to transform the compact corner plot into 24 luxury, full-floor condominiums capable of fetching upwards of \$1.25 million apiece.

But with a smart design inspired by the elegant pedestrian streets of Europe, sleek high-end interiors, and a slew of smart technology powered by Control4, Opus Myers Park has already proved Gross's critics wrong. At the time of writing, half of the properties have already been sold, despite the project having been completed just as the pandemic hit.

The condos, which range in size from 2,500 to 3,100 square feet (plus terraces), are spread across four 5-story and one 4-story steel-and-concrete buildings, all linked by a delightful tree-lined, lamplit courtyard that meanders its way through the complex.

Conveniently situated just a couple of miles from the city's uptown business district, Myers Park has a range of

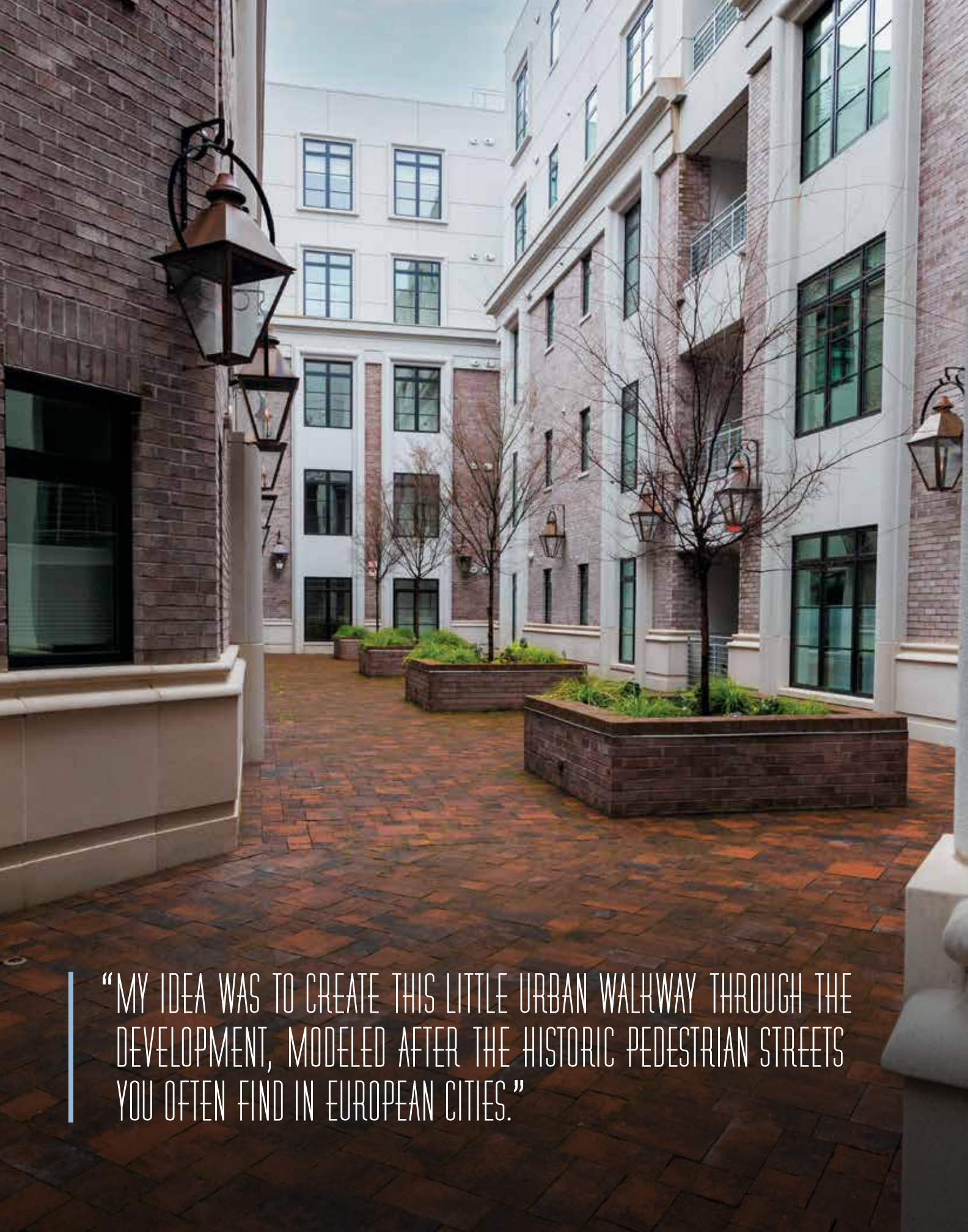
recreational facilities, shops, bars, and restaurants and is one of Charlotte's oldest suburbs. It's peppered with pretty old churches and houses, although the latter are increasingly being replaced with luxurious mansions to cater to the ongoing influx of wealthy high-flyers. Charlotte is one of the fastest-growing cities in the US, and the country's second-largest banking center after New York.

So, when Jim Gross heard Queen's University wanted to sell its old dorm, situated on one of Myers Park's best-known intersections, he bought the site without knowing precisely what he was going to build on it. And, he says, it didn't come cheap. "I started pushing around pencil and paper and figured out it had to be condominiums. But there was a whole list of things I thought sucked about condos—the hotel feel when you walk down the hallway to get to your unit; the odor; the noise; the fact they only have windows on one or maybe two sides," he says.

"I came up with the idea of doing freestanding building stacks over the top of an underground garage. Each condo would have its own individual elevator entrance from the garage, and the four building stacks would be separated by fire escapes so every resident would have their own floor with windows on all four sides."

PHOTOGRAPHY: CARINA TELEHA





“MY IDEA WAS TO CREATE THIS LITTLE URBAN WALKWAY THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT, MODELED AFTER THE HISTORIC PEDESTRIAN STREETS YOU OFTEN FIND IN EUROPEAN CITIES.”



“I LOVE THAT I CAN SEE WHO'S AT THE ELEVATOR WHEN THE BELL RINGS OR LET SOMEONE IN THE GATE WITH A TOUCH OF A FINGER. IT REALLY IS WONDERFUL.”

Mimi Patrick, Homeowner





Pushing the envelope

In the hands of a less visionary developer, the site might have been turned into a claustrophobic, concrete monstrosity. But although Jim has been developing property in Charlotte for more than 30 years, he used to be an architect working under the late, lauded I.M. Pei, who most famously designed the glass pyramid at the Louvre in Paris.

"I'm a bit of a lone-wolf developer," says Jim. "My dad used to work on Wall Street and I've inherited his acumen when it comes to numbers, but because I started out as an architect, I always put the artistic side upfront. Why don't I just build a box, like everyone else? Because to me, that's the most boring thing in the world! I always like to push the envelope. When I start a project people often scratch their heads and ask why, then all of a sudden light bulbs go off and they say, 'Ah, so *that's* what he's up to!'"

And in the case of Opus Myers Park, what Jim was "up to" was proving that it was possible to have dense, urban, luxury living in Myers Park, without it feeling cramped or soulless. "My idea was to create this little urban walkway through the development, modeled after the historic pedestrian streets you often find in European cities. I am a big proponent of maximizing urban space, and I knew that if everybody had their own building and there was a cool walkway running through them, linking Queens and Providence [the two roads at the intersection], I could create something people would love," says Jim.

Beyond the physical design, smart tech is an essential part of what makes Opus Myers Park so luxurious. Early on in the project, Jim brought in Home Technology Solutions (HTS), a Control4 Smart Home Professional he'd worked with on several previous developments, to oversee the extensive installation.

Mike Fitton, president and CEO of HTS, says: "Every condo has at least five automated lights as standard, which can be set up however the owner wants, and people often opt to add more. All the bedrooms and common rooms are centrally wired for TV, and there are four zones of audio with high-end Episode speakers. Everything can be controlled using the Control4 Tabletop Touchscreens in their condo, or from a smartphone. They can even control everything by voice using devices like Amazon Echo or Google Nest if they want," says Mike.

As well as automated lighting and entertainment, thermostats are also connected to the systems, meaning people can easily control their condo's temperature, even when they're not there. And every condo has high-speed Wi-Fi built in.

For Mike, though, the most exciting part of the setup is the automated access and security. “This was the first project where we really maximized the use of Control4 for security, access control, and surveillance. When someone’s at the gate or calls from the elevator in the garage, you can see and speak to them. You can also see live feeds from cameras in common areas like the courtyard and garage. And each condo has a camera in their own vestibule, pointing at their door, which only they can access,” he says.

“Another security feature that some owners have found useful if they’re away a lot is the ability Control4 gives them to make it appear as though someone’s there, by mimicking how and when the owners typically open and shut their shades or turn lights on and off,” Mike adds.

And because the system is powered by powerful Pakedge networking, and HTS has wired up all the condos for potential additions to the setup, there’s plenty of capacity for owners to expand the system as they see fit.

From concept to community

By 2019, people were already moving in, although the entire project wasn’t completed until early 2020.

One owner, who enjoys taking international cruises with his wife, told Smart Home: “We have found the Control4 system quite helpful with security and access already. But when we can travel again it will be very important.”

Another, who lives in one of the penthouse condos, said: “We were impressed with the way HTS explained how to use all the features since we are not very technology savvy. But the built-in automation of our televisions, music, and cameras is very easy to use. In fact, the COVID ‘stay-at-home’ order was quite welcome, enabling us to relax and thoroughly enjoy our home technology.”

Mimi Patrick and her husband Bailey, both long-time Charlotte residents, moved into their condo in November 2019. “We love Opus,” Mimi says. “It is so convenient and so sunny and just easy to live in. We feel safe and I never worry when I’m out of town that something will happen. No more downed trees, flooded basements, yard maintenance—we just get on the elevator and go.”







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“ALL IN ALL, WE LOVE LIVING HERE AND FEEL SO FORTUNATE TO HAVE A SMART HOME.”



“I love that I can click on the touchscreen by my bed in the morning and see what the temperature is outside and get the forecast for the day. I can set the room temperature easily on the same screen. The TVs are huge and awesome. Listening to music in any room is simple. I love that I can see who’s at the elevator when the bell rings or let someone in the gate with a touch of a finger. It really is wonderful and once we got the hang of it, very intuitive,” she says.

And during the pandemic, the tech has certainly been well tested. “Our children were grown and working, two in NYC and one here in Charlotte. Then came COVID. Our daughter has been with us since then (with her puppy) and our son and his fiancée stayed on and off until they moved to San Francisco in August. We were all working from home and—amazingly—it worked out just fine, even with four adults with separate monitors set up around the condominium, not to mention three dogs. But the Wi-Fi never glitched and everyone was able to work relatively easily,” says Mimi.

“All in all, we love living here and feel so fortunate to have a smart home.” ■

STEPS

TO A SUCCESSFUL HOME REMODEL

BEGINNING A HOME REMODEL PROJECT CAN BE EXCITING FOR ANY HOMEOWNER. THE PROMISE OF UPDATES, SLEEK DESIGN, AND ROI ARE REASON ENOUGH TO GO THROUGH WITH A RENOVATION. BUT WHERE DO YOU BEGIN?



Crystal Watts

2020 taught us a lot—including how to hunker down for extensive periods of time. Homeowners around the world sought new ways to improve their living spaces; from large renovations, interior design

refreshes, or simply by adding new types of technology to provide more entertainment options or network speeds. With remodel projects continuing to scale, be sure you're prepared if you're joining the home improvement frenzy.

PLAN AHEAD

Planning is the first step of your renovation process. When establishing your plans and goals of a home improvement project, it's essential to think about the big picture. You want your remodel to make sense and be functional for you and your family. Take into consideration the time of year, as some projects are more suitable for specific seasons, such as roofing in the spring and early summer or refreshing your walls with new paint in the winter. Be sure to make a note of what you envision your home to look like, as it will help you establish a set remodel plan moving forward.





DO YOUR RESEARCH

Your next step should be to complete thorough research on all things home improvement. Understanding return on investment (ROI), potential costs, choice of materials, and upgrade options—like smart home technology—will be beneficial when making decisions further down the line.

ROI and potential costs

Many home improvement projects can increase the value of your home and provide a high ROI. One of the most popular room remodels to date is the kitchen. Kitchen remodels are an excellent investment for many reasons, one of which is that many homeowners label the kitchen as the most important room of the home. Other projects that provide high ROI are bathroom remodels, backyard patios, and deck additions.

While the kitchen remodel is the most popular and has the potential to pay for itself down the line, it can also be the most expensive to complete. Look into the average cost to remodel a kitchen (and other rooms) so that you're able to determine which elements are the most important to you. It's important to remember that many additional factors can contribute to the cost of a remodel, including storage, flooring, drywall, installation fees, hardware, plumbing, and electrical work.

Materials

Materials also play a large part in how much you may be spending on your home improvement project. A wide variety of options are now offered to allow you to customize your home to your liking. Materials come in a wide range of options, such as granite or marble countertops, sustainable materials, and vinyl or laminate flooring. Researching your choices when redoing your home will allow you to create a project plan and assist you later when making a budget.

Upgrades

A popular upgrade for homeowners is the addition of smart home technology into the living space. Implementing home automation products, like smart lighting and entertainment solutions, can be beneficial for a variety of reasons. Products such as home security systems that provide you peace of mind, smart lighting that increases efficiency and creates a comfortable ambiance, and voice control that makes daily tasks more convenient are all smart investments for you and your home.

Researching each of these aspects will allow you to assess your wants and needs for your home. Use this knowledge to then create your project plan, complete with details of the materials, colors, and upgrades you decide on. Having a comprehensive project plan will assist you when you begin to develop your budget.





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TO ENSURE THAT
YOU HAVE A REAL
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THE POTENTIAL COST
OF YOUR PROJECT.

SET A BUDGET

Once you finish your research on the project you're looking to complete and the materials you're going to use, the next step is to establish your budget.

You must establish your list of wants and needs before going into this phase of your renovation. Having an idea of what aspects of your project are necessary will help you decide where you are willing or should splurge versus save some money. For example: if you know that you like the look of marble countertops (but can't find room for them in your budget), you can instead find an alternative—such as quartz, granite, or soapstone—that still looks amazing but traditionally has a smaller price tag.

Researching costs before establishing your budget is beneficial. It allows you to see how much a full renovation would cost—including labor and materials—so that you can decide how much you're willing and comfortable to spend. Be sure to allow yourself extra money for a contingency fund to prepare you for any unexpected occurrences that may arise.

HIRE A PRO

Now is the time to begin your home improvement project by bringing in the professionals. While some aspects (such as demo) may be more cost-effective to do yourself, it's better to bring in individuals with the right skills and knowledge to get the job done correctly.

A few jobs in which you should always hire a professional include:

- Additions or any significant home remodel
- Removal of any harmful substances such as mold or asbestos
- Major electrical or plumbing projects
- Installation of new appliances and smart home technology
- Appliances, such as a refrigerator, can require plumbing work. If you're looking to change the location of your fridge (or any other major appliance), it's much easier for a professional to come in assess the situation and reconfigure things for you.

“THE REMODELING MARKET IS BOUNCING BACK FROM THE INITIAL SHOCKS CAUSED BY THE PANDEMIC, AS HOMEOWNERS CONTINUE TO SPEND SIGNIFICANT TIME IN THEIR HOME AND ARE ADAPTING IT FOR WORK, SCHOOL, AND LEISURE.”

Chris Herbert

Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard¹





The same goes for smart home technology. Smart home professionals, such as those who work with Control4, have a specific knowledge and skills fit for the products you're looking to install, and they'll work with contractors to ensure things like outlets, wall-mounted speakers, touchscreens, and TVs have the correct placements and wiring. Don't forget to bring your Smart Home Pro in on the planning process for this very reason.

Don't be afraid to ask your contractors any questions that you may have. They're there to help you and want the results to be what you envisioned. On the opposite end, don't be afraid to speak up. It's your living space, and if you see something you don't like you need to say something.

ENJOY YOUR NEW SPACE

Now it's time to bring your remodel altogether. Give your walls a fresh coat of paint, bring in new furniture and decor, and enjoy your new living space. Remember that while the renovation process can be long and a lot of hard work, the results will be worth it. As long as you plan, do your research, set a budget, and hire professionals, your renovation will be a seamless process that you may even find to be fun! ■

¹ <https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/press-releases/residential-remodeling-continue-steady-expansion>

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