

smart life

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INTERNATIONAL



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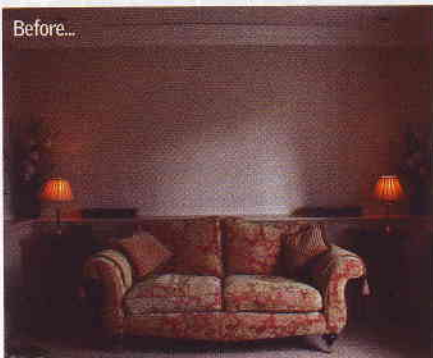
ULTIMATE COCKTAIL GUIDE • SAT-NAV SYSTEMS • FINE CIGARS • TESLA ROADSTER • GOURMET CHOCOLATE • LUXURY WRISTWATCHES • TOP-END TRAVEL IN THAILAND AND ALL THE FINEST THINGS KNOWN TO MAN!

gone in 60 seconds

Take a sympathetic Victorian period renovation, add a demand for a full home cinema system, mix with a need for discretion and what do you get? An all-singing, all-dancing cinema experience that disappears at the touch of a button. MARK TRENT investigated...



An example of pop-up screen excellence. Also an example of serious furniture misplacement...



Renovating a period home often calls for some degree of compromise: particularly when AV technology is concerned. But in this 1850s house in the historic fishing town of Deal, the owners refused to accept this – their vision involved nothing less than the latest kit, but “on-demand” the room would revert back to unblemished period home without any trace of the technology. Consequently, the project began with a conundrum: the owners found a cinema room very appealing, but devoting a whole room not practical. One solution was to combine it with the lounge but wouldn't that in itself result in an unhappy compromise?

In the end, the upshot was a simple specification: install a 50-inch plasma TV, fully functional home cinema and blackout blinds in a room that would erase all evidence of their presence at the touch of a button.

Sound of success

The clients needed a high quality sound source for viewing movies and to also faithfully relay the tones and timbre of their CD collection, while still being ultra discreet. The solution was Amina's Invisible Plaster-In loudspeakers. Just as the name might suggest, Amina's fine fare were ideal for this job – mount within a plasterboard wall opening or in a ceiling, skim over with 1-2mm plaster, let the plaster dry, decorate and the speakers are completely invisible. Plus, because of the cunning science behind the speakers (they create a vibrating element in the panel face, in the same manner

in which pianos and acoustic guitars work) the process is just as simple when it comes to installing them in for solid walls.

Steve, the owner, give was delighted: “The Amina loudspeakers are amazing. As well as being invisible they are non-directional. When you listen to them they give you the impression of the sound enveloping you.” Five Amina speakers were plastered into the walls to provide the surround sound system (two in the front, two at the rear and one in the centre).

Screen test

One of the keys to the project was finding a partner who could not only install the

technology, but also sympathetically blend it into a period property. Luckily they found Coveney's who managed it all, including the provision of the furniture and architecture that camouflaged the AV.

The first job on the agenda was the 50-inch plasma TV. This is hidden in panelling and, when summoned, rises up through the top of the unit. To do this a special “heavy duty” lifter had to be commissioned that was powerful enough to lift the unit, lid and all.

After the brute power there was the need for thought. As both the plasma and projector screen were located on the same wall the two screens had to be co-ordinated to avoid potential clashes. The set-up also meant they shared the same centre speaker. This was fine for the plasma, as the speaker was located above it, but when the cinema screen was lowered it would cover the speaker and mask the sound.

The solution was invisibility again... but this time acoustical. An acoustically transparent screen was used that allows the sound to penetrate through the material. So, in this installation, it gives the remarkable impression that dialogue is coming directly from the mouths of the actors!

Parlour trick

To maintain the blemish-free parlour, the ceiling was lowered to provide a home for the projector and screen. When raised up and stowed away, their presence is completely hidden by matching ceiling panels – a completely successful assignment! And, of course, the clients are delighted with the installation.

“We now have our dream solution”, said Mrs C. “An easy to operate, dual purpose living space. Now watching a film is a real event. When you're enjoying a movie you get the full effect, and when you have finished it's all gone in 60-seconds and you would never have known it had been there.”

This well thought out installation is a real testament to the way in which AV has moved on, not just in the quality and clarity of the sounds and images that reach us, but also in the ability to be discreet.

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