

# LEGEND OF HAPPY HOLLOW

Home automation may have been an afterthought at Happy Hollow, but now the owner couldn't be happier with his new showroom, writes Paul Skelton.

**S**ituated in the middle of bush fire territory in Plenty, Victoria, Happy Hollow has been described as one of the more challenging jobs for custom installers Connected Living.

Having already had traditional wiring installed, Sasha Apel of Connected Living was approached by owner/occupier/builder Michael Watts, of Edge Build, as an afterthought to retrofit an integrated system to control the indoor and outdoor lighting.

"Half the house was already built – the electrician had to rerun cables throughout the house," he says. "Of course, the ideal time to put in automation is from the planning stage, well before you build; however, the retrofit that was necessary to integrate traditional technology with IControl proved to be fairly straight forward."

The project slowly transformed from a basic wiring job into the installation of a system that showcased new trends in home automation technology and Connected Living were able to integrate traditional wiring with IControl to complete the custom installation.

"What we were able to do at Happy Hollow really shows the flexibility of the installed system as most home automation systems can only be installed at the start of a project," he says. "The true value of the system is revealed when you're controlling more of the home."

The IControl unit, designed and manufactured by HPM, makes it possible for the owner to dial into the network via their phoneline to turn on air conditioning, spa heaters, lights, automatic floor-to-ceiling window washers, and a rooftop sprinkler system implemented as a method of fire protection.

Edge Build director, and home owner, Michael Watts believes that the results of the custom installation are impressive enough for him to use his own property as a showroom.

"Originally, I wanted only a very limited system. But gradually we added more features," Michael explains. "Once you use it you no longer regard the system as a luxury but as a necessity."

"The best feature is that you can change any of the functions at any stage – you just have to alter the computer program," he says. "It's a very flexible system and something we should have considered sooner. There are obvious benefits in including home automation at the planning stage."

"Two things that convinced us to expand the system were the ability to turn on the air conditioner by phone as well as using the timer. The initial idea behind the system was having the ability to be sitting on a beach in St Kilda and be able to heat the spa and have the water ready for when we arrived home."



The pool area features two pairs of Bose Freespace 51 environmental garden speakers. The impressive bass response and 360 degree sound dispersion of the speakers deliver impact sound to the entire pool and lower deck area.



"It definitely minimises electricity use because you can dim the lights and turn down the air conditioning as you need it," he explains. "Home automation is something that more and more people are considering when building their own homes. I wanted to build a home that showcased this technology that I can show to prospective home builders."

No home automation project would be complete without an integrated home theatre network, and, with a dedicated cinema room, Happy Hollow doesn't fall short.

Fitted by Rob Stevenson and the team at the Bose store in Camberwell, the installation is complete with cinema quality picture and sound including high definition projector, 110" fixed wall screen, 5.1 Digital Surround Sound, DVD playback and recording, HDTV and Foxtel Digital.

"All components are hidden in custom joinery at the rear of the room and are controlled by a single universal remote," Rob explains. "The living room includes a Hitachi 37" high-definition screen with a premium Bose audio system. This system not only provides quality sound for TV, DVD and music performance, but also supplies audio to the nearby external deck via weather-resistant flush-mount speakers."

"The downstairs bar offers the perfect opportunity to entertain a large group of guests, with dynamic audio via a powerful amplifier and premium 8" flush-mount ceiling speakers," he says.

Happy Hollow's dedicated cinema room features a 110" fixed wall screen with a universal remote controlling the components, which are all hidden in custom joinery at the rear of the room.



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HPM's iControl lets Michael Watts call home on his mobile to turn on the air con or the spa. "It minimises electricity use because you can dim the lights and turn down the air cond as you need it."

"The excitement from the bar extends out to the pool area, where you will find two pairs of the unique Bose Freespace 51 environmental garden speakers. The impressive bass response and 360 degree sound dispersion of the speakers deliver impact sound to the entire pool and lower deck area."

The home cinema was fitted with a Hitachi PJTX-200 projecting onto a 110" LP Morgan fixed screen while a Velodyne DD12 digital subwoofer partners with a Yamaha RXV1600 surround receiver with learn remote. Also included in the installation was a Pioneer SHDT HD set top box with a Pioneer DV645 DVD Recorder-HD and an IRR-500 kit to control components located in a cupboard. All of this equipment was integrated with existing Dynaudio Audience 42 front speakers, a Dynaudio Audience 1221C centre channel speaker and Mission Reflex speakers in the rear.

Automation in the bar included one pair of Niles CM8AT high performance flush-mount speakers inside, while outside on the pool deck are two pairs of Bose Freespace 51 speakers, a Pioneer PDM427 6 CD changer, and a wall mounted Sony TV, all of which are integrated with an existing Denon AVR-3801 multi-zone amp and Aaron 12" subwoofer.

Meanwhile, in the living room and on its balcony there is a Hitachi 42PD960 42" plasma with in-built digital tuner, a Yamaha RX797 100w two-zone receiver, and a Bose Acoustimass 3 speaker system. Once again, behind cabinet doors sits an IRR-500 kit to control components such as a Niles CM8.5SI single speaker for background music on the balcony integrated with an existing Pioneer DV 344 DVD player.

"BOSE suggested placing four outdoor speakers under the deck near the pool and that has turned out to be my favourite thing about the installation," Michael explains. "It blows me away every time we use it; it creates this almighty surround sound which doesn't split between left and right speakers."

"The guys at BOSE at Camberwell had been recommended to me in the past, but they really proved to me that there is nothing that can't be done." ■

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