

There's nothing rustic about the technology in this upscale log cabin

the **FULLY** **AUTOMATED** **HOME**

BY SHARI HELD



Providing the latest in home technology for a roughly 20,000-square-foot log cabin presented an unusual set of challenges for *TRIPhase Technologies*, an electronic-integration company based in Carmel. Today, you'd never know it. This home, nestled in the hills of Southern Indiana, is a showcase for the convenience and easy lifestyle a fully automated residence can provide.

Though the home employs top-of-the-line systems and features, Robert Haecker, *TRIPhase's* president and founder, says home-automation systems have never been more affordable and feasible, whether a home is 2,000 or 20,000 square feet.

The unique construction of the log cabin was the first challenge. Regular wire wouldn't work with the large logs and framing technique. *TRIPhase* worked around that issue by using fiber-optic wiring, which is one-tenth the diameter of standard wiring.

Another major challenge was getting high-speed Internet to the property, Haecker says. After undergoing a lengthy process of obtaining permits and approvals, the necessary infrastructure was installed. High-speed access makes it possible for *TRIPhase* to monitor the security, lighting, and audio/visual systems 24/7 and service them remotely, if needed.

ENHANCING SIGHT & SOUND

Visitors cross a bridge to enter the lodge-inspired great room, which features a waterfall that spills into a stream stocked with live trout. The waterfall's impressive, but the noise interfered with the sound system. To achieve an even flow of music and sound, *TRIPhase* worked with the architect and designer to strategically place speakers throughout the entire main level. A combination of 10 speakers—some built into cabinetry, some recessed into the ceiling, and some built into the drywall—did the

trick unobtrusively.

A climate-regulated, central control room on the lower level keeps most of the A/V technology behind the scenes but still accessible throughout the home. HDMI video distribution uses fiber optics to send multiple sources of digital high-definition video to all displays, allowing all 32 televisions throughout the home to have optimum video and audio quality.

The side of the cabin facing a private lake consists of a bank of windows that showcases the fantastic view. The homeowners didn't want anything to block the

they could watch TV whether shooting pool, playing poker, or having a drink at the bar.

Surveillance cameras, which can be viewed from any of the home's televisions, were requested at the front gate and around the home and property. The cameras can be controlled by a touch-screen panel or a remote within the home and from anywhere in the world by a wireless tablet or smartphone.

The homeowners and guests can also broadcast music from their smartphone's playlist throughout the home or display photos from their phones with



Features in the lower-level game room can be controlled from a touch-screen panel.

vista they enjoyed from the great room and the bedrooms, but having access to television from those rooms was also important. One solution satisfied both scenarios.

"In five separate areas we designed the cabinetry and installed motorized lift systems for these televisions," Haecker says. "When the family wants to watch TV, the screen motorizes up, but when it is turned off, it slides back into the cabinetry."

In the lower-level family room, however, visibility was key. Here, the owners wanted five wall-mounted televisions, each displaying a different channel, so

the push of a button. It's all set up via wireless sync, so there's no need to dock the device.

Another caveat from the homeowners: The technology had to be so intuitive that someone could use a remote or a touch-screen panel, such as the one on the bar top, with ease the first time. Preset "scenes" allow users to turn on the TVs to selected channels at the preferred volume and adjust the lighting levels with one button.

"We've actually created a program that allows the homeowners to create preset scenes themselves," Haecker says. "That's unique in the industry."

VIEWING MOVIES IN STYLE

The elaborate lower-level home theater, also on the homeowners' "must-have" list, is where sight, sound, and comfort converge to create the ultimate cinema experience. It features state-of-the-art 10.1 surround sound, Klipsch speakers, and a 140-inch screen.

One handheld remote lets the homeowners tap into their extensive movie collection, watch satellite TV, play Xbox, view the surveillance cameras, and even open their front gate.

of a row of standard reclining seats and a row of six reclining loungers.

Two eye-catching panels feature movie reels that are backlit with color-changing LED lights. In addition to creating a focal point, they function as doors to the equipment rooms.

"We went to extra measures to isolate the sound within those rooms so once the doors are closed you can't hear any mechanicals whatsoever," Haecker says.

LED lighting is used throughout in the form of sconce lighting and small "eyeball" accent lights recessed in the

At the far end, an 80-inch, flat-screen TV gives bowlers access to their favorite broadcast while they're in action.

COMBINING AMBIENCE AND PRACTICALITY

Specialty lighting was used to emphasize focal points within the home. LED lights placed underneath the onyx bar top in the family room make it glow—literally. And when other bulbs in the family room are dimmed, strategically positioned LED lights in the cockpit of the racecar suspended against one wall make it appear as if the car is ready for action.

All switches and dimmers throughout the home are "smart dimmers" and can be programmed to create numerous pre-set "scenes." For instance, a "good night" button in the master bedroom can trigger a good-night scene that turns off most interior lights, dims hall lights to 10-percent capacity, and activates the outdoor landscape lighting.

"In a 20,000-square-foot home, an automated lighting system is critical," Haecker says. "We created many scenes—good morning, good night, away, vacation, entertain, and green. All they have to do is push one button and the preferred lights turn on at the desired levels."

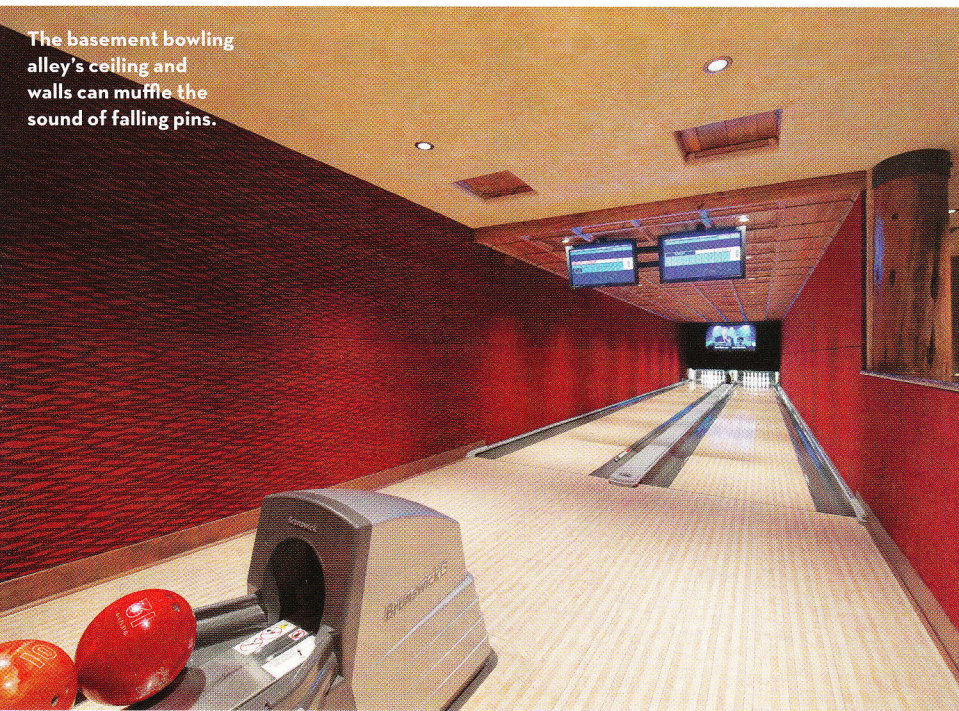
Besides convenience, the system saves energy since lighting can be programmed to operate at various levels instead of 100 percent.

Indianapolis-based Doherty Design Group designed the lighting system. *TRI*-Phase then provided the automation and programming. Doherty also designed the home's built-in shades, and *TRI*-Phase automated them so they can be operated by a remote or a wall-mounted keypad.

The lighting system may not have the same visual impact as the specialty lighting, but it's the workhorse element the homeowners couldn't live without—even though it wasn't on their original "must-have" list.

"They've mentioned many times how wonderful the automated lighting system has been," Haecker says. ■

The basement bowling alley's ceiling and walls can muffle the sound of falling pins.



*TRI*Phase designed the room and installed all the major components including the electronics, the 3-D fiber-optic ceiling that gives the illusion of watching a movie underneath the stars, sound isolation that ensures the din doesn't travel beyond its walls, and fabric wall panels that enhance the sound quality within the theater. The company worked closely with the builder to create custom panels that allowed for even heating and cooling of the room.

"Basically, it was a turnkey project from start to finish," Haecker says.

The company also designed and provided the theater seating, which consists

sidewalls.

"Little tricks like that really help the ambiance of the room," Haecker says.

LET THE PINS FALL (QUIETLY)

One unique feature in the lower-level family room is the two-lane bowling alley. *TRI*Phase employed sound-isolation techniques above the wood-paneled ceiling and covered the walls with custom acoustic panels wrapped with rich red velour so the sound wouldn't spill into adjoining areas. An invisible door, located on the left-hand side of the lanes, provides access to the control room.

The latest technology for home and grounds can make life easier, safer, and more enjoyable

NEW AND IMPROVED

BY SHARIHELD

Here's a look at some of the newest and most popular technologies for your home and grounds, and what the experts have to say about them. And they aren't all just techno toys—they'll make life safer and easier, as well as more enjoyable.

THE A/V SCENE

"What's new and super hot is the 4K television," says Jason Barth, CEO and managing partner with The Premier Group. These next-generation ultra-high definition televisions are capable of displaying eight megapixel images—that's four times the resolution or pixel count of a Blu-Ray disc viewed on today's standard high definition televisions. Premier Design Group displayed an 84-inch LG 4K television in its showroom at the Indiana Design Center earlier this summer, and Barth says its incredible picture quality drew a lot of traffic.

"All the manufacturers are supporting it, and they will all have a version out before the holidays," Barth says.

The tradeoff is the hefty price tags. The 84-inch LG in the showroom is \$17,000, or \$200 per inch diagonally, and Barth expects the 55-inch 4K televisions coming out this fall to be in the \$4,000 to \$5,000 range.

When it comes to technology, what you *don't* see is as important as what you *do* see. That's especially true of speakers.



Homes can be controlled by a simple wall-mounted screen.

They're literally fading into the woodwork—and the walls and ceilings.

SAFE AND SECURE

Security equipment is pretty much standard. What's new is the ability to control everything using an app on your smartphone or wireless notepad. As long as you've got your phone or tablet with

you—and who doesn't these days?—you can arm the system, unlock and relock doors, and view the security cameras.

Today's security systems can also be programmed to send phone alerts when someone turns off the alarm and enters the home.

"It lets the homeowners keep tabs on what's happening at home," says

Robert Haecker, president and founder of *TRI*Phase Technologies. "This security technology is really nice for people who travel a lot."

LIGHTING AUTOMATION

The good news is prices are coming down for LED lighting and automation systems to control it.

"LED lighting fixtures are about the only thing you can put in your house besides a geothermal heating and cooling system that will 100-percent pay for themselves in energy savings," Barth says. "We've found payoff in as short as two-and-a-half years. And you never have to replace light bulbs."

Automated lighting systems also make life easier for homeowners. They can be programmed for different scenarios, be dimmed, or set to turn on and off at specific times.

"Lighting control is 30 to 40 per-

cent less expensive than it was seven or eight years ago," Haecker says. "There are now affordable solutions for every homeowner."

TAKING IT TO THE GREAT OUTDOORS

The demand for LED landscape lighting has also increased as it has become more affordable.

"You can put more lightbulbs on a smaller transformer to gain more lighting in an area," says Lowell Rolsky, president of Pro Care Horticultural Services.

But he advises passing on solar lighting for now.

"Unfortunately, truly good solar lighting is very expensive still," Rolsky says, adding that what's available at big-box stores isn't as dependable, as durable, or as intense as low-voltage lighting.

"What people seem to be most interested in from a technology standpoint

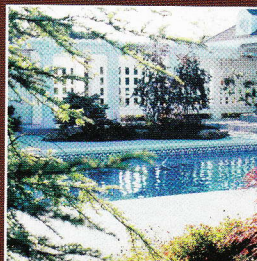
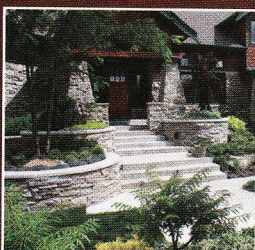
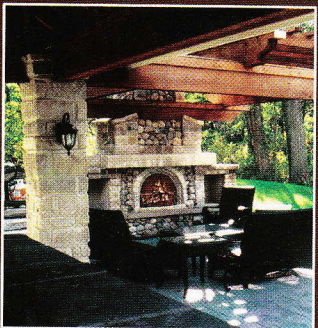
is having television and stereo systems outside that are comparable to what they have inside," Rolsky says.

Comparable doesn't mean the same though. It's weatherproof TVs with super-bright displays for easy viewing on the sunniest of days. Or high-quality audio systems specially designed for the outdoors. One of the hottest speaker systems is the Landscape Series by Sonance. The small satellite speakers can be mounted in trees or placed on stakes, and subwoofers are buried with only a "mushroom cap" showing above ground.

"We use a ton of them," Barth says. "We'll surround the whole area—fire pit, patio, sitting area, swimming pool—and hide them in the landscaping."

No matter what kind of outdoor technology you have, one thing is true: "People want to control everything—landscape lighting, fountains, TV, and music—through their mobile phone," Rolsky says. ■

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