



THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT!

Stay home in style
with movies, music, television, and more

SPACES

by Candace Karu
Photography Trent Bell

Technology is changing the way we live in dramatic ways, and nowhere is this transformation more evident than in our homes. From a simple speaker dock for MP3 players to an integrated, multipurpose home-theater and entertainment system, there is an audio and video technology solution for every family and every budget.

We talked to Maine's leading audio/video experts about some of their most interesting projects and products. We also asked them to tell us about their favorite solutions for making sophisticated new technologies both user-friendly and affordable.





Tucker & Tucker Associates
Eider Construction
Van Dam Architecture & Design

Custom Home Theater Systems & Automation Oceanside Builders

When a Harpswell homeowner enlisted Eric Smith and his company Oceanside Builders to design and build a home-theater room to look like the captain's quarters on a ship, Eric took him to see Lee Lareau, owner of Custom Home Theater Systems & Automation. Fitting the high-end audio and video system into an existing space presented myriad acoustic and aesthetic challenges, and they took special care to isolate sound from the rest of the house. "It wasn't inexpensive," says Lareau of the mass-loaded vinyl barrier used for the job. "But the product is more effective than lead in keeping theater sounds from traveling." When Lareau and Smith were finished, the homeowners got their perfect at-home getaway (below).





Tucker & Tucker Associates Harborside Design Fine Lines Construction

This seaside bungalow has a hidden secret—a home theater that serves three generations of movie lovers. Tucked into the lower level of a traditional Shingle Style cottage, the room has a ten-foot-wide front-projection video screen, a high-end surround-sound system, raked seating for twelve, and even a theater-quality popcorn machine. Audio/video designer Mike Bouthillette of Tucker & Tucker Associates worked with the homeowners, architectural designer Travis Kinney of Harborside Design, and Mike Maines of Fine Lines Construction to create an entire floor devoted to recreation and entertainment. In addition to the theater, the floor includes a small workout area and a recreation room with gaming tables, including a pool table. “This is the finest personal theater we’ve built in nineteen years of business,” says Steve Tucker. “This theater does have state-of-the-art entertainment components, but it’s the warmth, comfort, and design of the room itself that distinguishes it from all of the home theaters we’ve created.”

Transparent Cable Tucker & Tucker Associates Dale Bragg Custom Builders

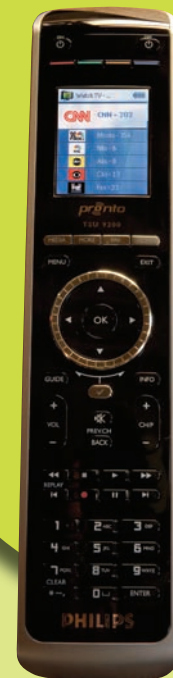
More than twenty-nine years ago, Karen and Jack Sumner founded Transparent Cable in Saco, a business that designs, manufactures, and distributes high-performance power-conditioning products and audio and home-theater systems. Recently they collaborated with Dale Bragg Custom Builders and Tucker & Tucker Associates on the design and execution of their own home theater. Not only does it serve their personal entertainment needs, but the Sumners also use it for research and development. “Our products can be used anywhere from a simple living-room sound system to a professional movie studio,” says Karen Sumner. The carefully designed room is a place where they can relax and watch a video or test new ideas and designs in comfort and style.



SmartHome Solutions David J. Klenk Design and Woodworking Dale Bragg Custom Builders

This Falmouth residence, which was the stage for the Portland Symphony Orchestra 2007 Designers' Showhouse, has an entertainment system designed by Jason Robie of SmartHome Solutions in Kennebunk. Integrated wiring allows the audio and video to play throughout the house and be controlled by touch screens located in living areas and bedrooms. Components and controls for the main level were located behind a panel in the study, a hand-varnished mahogany room crafted by furniture maker David J. Klenk of Gray. The second-floor components were tucked into a small linen closet. "Our challenge was to retrofit modern technology into a house built in the 1920s," says Robie. "I didn't want to disturb the integrity of the architecture." With careful planning and execution, Robie, Klenk, and builder Dale Bragg were able to combine the refinement of a bygone era with twenty-first-century technology.

Today's remote controls offer a wide range of prices, features, and functions. Paul Powers of Harbor Digital in Camden sells a variety of devices to clients whose needs range from controlling a single television to running all the electronics in an entire household. "We can definitely take care of just about every need," says Powers. "Touch-screen technology makes even the most complicated systems easy and intuitive to operate." **MH+D**



THREE MUST-HAVE TECHNOLOGIES

ONE Green Technology—Advances in technology have made it possible to monitor the electrical functions in a home either while on location or remotely. This kind of integrated design helps homeowners keep track of energy usage from all systems—not only for home entertainment, but also personal computing, heating, air-conditioning, appliances, and lighting.

TWO Kitchen Technology—Running out to the store? Ask your refrigerator to print out a shopping list. Need to get dinner on the table in a hurry? Preheat your oven from the office with a command from your cell phone. Searching for the perfect recipe? Press a button on the touch screen in your refrigerator door. Major household appliances will soon be networked into a comprehensive home-technology system, bringing even the most mundane kitchen functions into the twenty-first century.

THREE Hidden Technology—Technology and interior design are now more compatible than ever before. The ability to hide or disguise electronics and components makes it easier to incorporate technology into decorating decisions. Speakers can be completely hidden behind drywall, overhead-projection screens can descend from a recessed compartment in the ceiling, and video monitors and televisions can pop up from a console or be placed behind a framed painting that rolls away to reveal the screen.

For more information, see Resources on page 88.