

A Blueprint For Success

FEATURE

Los Angeles. One of the most successful high-end installers in the country, Robert's has long been known as "the installer to the stars." So in addition to his clients being wealthy, they can also be quite demanding especially when it comes to technology in their homes.

Eitel offered up the Crestron TPMC8X touch-panel, which can be used free-standing, floating, or built in. He described it as, "a very important product for my business because my clients love it. So almost every one of my projects has at least two, sometimes more. For my installers, the TPMC8X is easy to program and versatile so it works with everything. For my clients, they find it super easy to use so they enjoy having them in their kitchen, home theater, master bedroom, and home office."

Eitel described the design of the Crestron touchpanel as "beautiful" and said that there is never a problem placing them in multi-million dollar homes. "Architects are the pickiest people in the world and even they don't have a problem with it," he added.

DAVID KING, KING SYSTEMS

Flat-panel video displays continue to be a red-hot category, but proper mounting can be tricky, especially in producing an aesthetically pleasing result. David King of King Systems in Denver, Colorado, sings the praises of the Peerless IM760, an in-wall mounting solution that delivers a virtually no-profile look while allowing the option of articulating functionality all in one easy-to-use and install mount.

Supporting his choice of the Peerless IM760, King stated, "This product solves many problems in the field with articulating wall mount installations. So many people want the functionality of



"[The Peerless IM760] solves many problems in the field with articulating wall mount installations"

—David King, King Systems

Qsonix's Q110 system includes a four-zone music server and integrated touchscreen controller.



See Qsonix Profile starting on next page

these mounts but they do not want the aesthetic property normally associated with installing an articulating mount. The IM760 also solves the problem normally associated with recessed articulating wall mounts in that they do not fit in a normal 16-inch stud bay."

The new Peerless articulating, recessed wall mount, is designed to be field installed, between 16-inch stud bays, without the need to consult a structural engineer, tear down studs, or involve a dry wall contractor as long as you make the proper cuts in the wall.

THAD FORRESTER, FORRESTER TECH

Surprisingly, the only speaker in this round-up was Artcoustic and that was chosen by Thad Forrester of Forrester Tech in Springfield, Missouri. Forrester appreciates Artcoustic for its audiophile quality sound in a slim, aesthetically pleasing enclosure. The speaker allows dealers to incorporate high-quality audio into almost any environment regardless of aesthetic or design concerns.

Forrester noted that Artcoustic's custom art options allow endless possibilities for integrating the speakers into any space. "The unique design really reflects the personality and taste of the customers with all their custom options, with each having one thing in common—a love for superb

Artcoustic allows us to show our customers we are not only committed to providing them with the best quality listening experience possible, but equally as important, we are committed to seeing their aesthetic vision for the space fully realized."

For these dealers, industrial design is clearly a major factor in their decision making on which brands and products to support. Their reasons

"We are committed to seeing our customer's aesthetic vision for the space fully realized"

—Thad Forester, Forrester Tech

and preferences vary and they recognize that outstanding design is a combination of many things that can have different values to different people. One thing they agree on: great design is a blueprint for success.

Peter Hoagland is an industry marketing consultant based in Warrenton, Virginia.

ble shade system, a deluxe user interface, a wall switch/vacancy sensor, and an on-wall loudspeaker. The choices and reasons behind the selections were as diverse as the products themselves. Clearly, this is only a small sampling of all the dealers who appreciate industrial design as well as the many excellent products in our industry. Yet it's useful to continually see top custom retailers and systems integrators that value industrial design, the diversity of their choices and all the benefits that they bring.

TIM ROONEY, ALL AROUND TECHNOLOGY

For Tim Rooney of All Around Technology in Rockville, Maryland, of all the number of products that came to mind for this topic, one stood out: Lutron's Sivoia Shade System. The Sivoia QED (Quiet Electronic Drive) family of controllable shading products includes roller shades, Roman shades, and drapery track systems. All systems operate with ultra-quiet precision, low-voltage drives, and offer many options for fabrics and controls. Sivoia QED allows interior designers, architects, builders, and homeowners to utilize a custom-built shading system with various configurations and fabrics that are suited to their specific application.

"The Lutron Sivoia shade system is a great alternative to standard motorized blinds, which are incredibly loud and difficult to integrate both electronically and aesthetically," Rooney explained. "In addition to being sexy and high tech, they have the industry's lowest profile dual-shade system. This is an important benefit because most shades require close to seven inches of window depth, while the Sivoia only needs three and a half inches. It's a very well designed product that for all my customers who have them, love."

ERIC ROSSI, INTEGRATED ELECTRONICS

In multi-room audio, many agree that the most important

component is the user interface. For the end-user it represents the system and is what will be shown to the neighbor or brother-in-law rather than the rack of equipment in the closet. User interfaces, including keypads, touchscreens, and remotes, must be attractive, intuitive, and above all, easy to use. If they are not, the system may never get used. Perhaps of all products in custom today, UI's have received the highest attention to industrial design.

For Eric Rossi of Integrated Electronics in Brookfield, Connecticut, he chose the Niles IntelliControl ICS, a multi-room audio system that accommodates all of today's popular sources.

ICS delivers detailed information to and from its keypads, touchscreens, and wireless remote controls. The system can also accommodate subsystems, such as lighting control and music servers.

Rossi, who after working for 14 years for a large AV firm, started his own company in 2000, commented, "The programming interface, ease of set-up, sound quality, variety of user interfaces, and perceived value of the ICS make it the best system I have ever sold. To date, I have over two dozen of these systems out there, and every client loves their system. They find it nice looking and easy to use, so I have had no negative feedback. For me, that is huge."

JAY FRANK, EVOLUTION AUDIOVIDEO

Ease of use and an intuitive user interface showed up big in this survey. Ease of installation, ergonomics, and simplicity of operation are critical in to-



Niles IntelliControl ICS, a multi-room audio system that accommodates all of today's popular sources.



The WattStopper RD-200 is a passive infrared dimming wall switch vacancy sensor, making it a good fit for energy-conscious homeowners.

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—Eric Rossi, Integrated Electronics

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day's market of high tech gadgets. Consumers are bombarded with so much technology that they readily appreciate electronics that are user friendly with easy access to the features they want, when they want them.

For that very reason, Jay Frank of Evolution AudioVideo in Agoura Hills, California, selected the Qsonix Digital Music System. The company's Q110 music management system offers a reliable and friendly solution with a unique touchscreen-based graphical interface that enables the entire family to store, organize, and play their music library throughout the house. The Q110 system includes a four-zone music server and integrated touchscreen controller that can optionally be integrated with many home automation solutions as well.

Frank described the Qsonix user interface as "the most inviting of any audio server on the



"With the current economic and energy, situation more and more consumers are looking for eco-friendly (green) design for their new homes but they also want value and versatility in a product that looks good"

—Shawn Smith, S&S Electric

market today." Clients, he said, are instantly drawn to it because of its attractive and colorful design. In fact, Evolution keeps the touchscreen portion of the system in its reception area for all to see. "Everyone that walks through our door gravitates to it and begins using the Qsonix on

their own," Frank said. "Within a few minutes, most clients have mastered how to play songs without any instruction from us. Obviously, if this unit is so easy to use, this can help calm any preconceived 'techno' fears and help smooth the way for other lines we carry."

WHY THE RESI AWARDS?

AV MOUNTS

- Chief Manufacturing's Thinstall Series
- OmniMount's Power 40
- Sanus Systems' VF5023

AV PROCESSOR/RECEIVER

- Classe Audio's SSP-800
- Denon's AVP-A1HDCI
- Niles Audio's ZR-6

CD/DVD PLAYER

- Denon's DVD-3800BDCI
- Marantz's BD8002
- Samsung's BD-P1500

COMBINED PRODUCT SYSTEM OR FAMILY

- Meridian's AD88
- Samsung's HT-X715
- Sooloos' Sooloos system

CUSTOM INSTALL ACCESSORY

- iPort's FS Series
- OmniMount's Prism 50
- Sanus Systems' VF2022

MEDIA SERVER

- Escient's VS-200
- Kaleidescape's 1080p Mini Player
- Niveus' Pro Series n9

POWER AMP

- Denon's POA-3012CI
- Marantz's MM8003
- Sunfire's Theater Grand Amp

POWER MANAGEMENT

- Furman's Elite i-Series
- Panamax's MAX PM Family
- Richard Gray's Power Company's Extender

PROJECTION SCREEN

- Beamax's X-series
- Screen Excellence's Acoustically Transparent Screen
- Screen Research's LeWing

REMOTE CONTROL — HANDHELD

- RTI's T3
- Universal Electronics Inc.'s NevoS70
- Universal Remote Control's KP-900

SPEAKERS — BOOKSHELF

- Boston Acoustics' SoundWare
- Boston Acoustics' TVee Model Two
- Sunfire's HRS

SPEAKERS — ON-WALL OR IN-WALL

- Samsung's HT-X810
- Snell Acoustics' OH-LCR7
- Wisdom's Sage L75i

SPEAKERS — TOWER

- B&W's CT8.4 LCRs
- BG's Radia Z-92
- Niles Audio's PB6Si

TOUCHSCREEN CONTROL PANEL

- AMX's MVP-5200i
- Control4's 7-inch Panel
- ELAN Home Systems' VIA!Valet10.0-EM

VIDEO DISPLAY DEVICE

- Samsung's Series 7
- Sharp's LC-52SE94U AQUOS LCD TV
- SunBriteTV's Model 4610HD

VIDEO PROJECTOR

- Cineversum's CVBW3
- Panasonic's AE2000
- SIM2's Grand Cinema C3X

To recognize excellence in industrial design, *Residential Systems* created the Resi Awards—the industry's first annual awards dedicated solely to product design. This competition will honor the most innovative residential electronic product designs as judged by an expert panel of dealers and design professionals.

Criteria for the judges are aesthetic appeal, solutions-based innovation, user friendliness, and ease of manufacturing. This combination of rigorous judging and discerning criteria has made the Resi the pre-eminent manufacturer's design award in the industry.

Finalists were notified in late July. Category winners will be awarded their Resis at CEDIA EXPO in Denver at a special awards ceremony on Wednesday, September 3, 2008. The winners will then be featured in the October issue of *Residential Systems*. At left are the list of finalists.



To find out more about each of these finalists, visit www.resmagonline.com and click on the Resi Awards logo.