



# BIG STORY

by Judy Buchenot

## Teched-Out *Naperville Homes*

Having telephone jacks in every room plus outlets on every wall was once considered the ultimate in technology. However, in the 21st century, home technology has gone far beyond an ample supply of power outlets. "Once the digital format was integrated and the television could speak the same language as computers, things began to change," says Sean Storin, president of Tech Connectors, a home technology installation company.

One trend in the industry is home automation where multiple functions can be accomplished from one remote for a home that is completely networked. Another trend is the installation of media centers for entertainment, movies, pictures and information. "About 75 % of our business is retrofitting homes to have the latest technology," says Storin. "The home is a big investment and applying technology to a home can save money. People see installing technology as both an investment and as entertainment. When a person can reach over to the nightstand and put the whole house to bed with one remote, it is a money saver."

Jeff and Leslie Korhan in Naperville decided to have a whole house system for music put in their new home. "Everybody has different preferences," explains Jeff. "My wife, Leslie likes to listen to HD radio while she cooks. I can take the remote, change channels and listen to something else in another room or I can slip an iPod into an iPod dock and listen to that while I am on the treadmill. It is very seamless. We can listen to what we want to listen to no matter where we are. I can even turn on music out on the patio. It is a greener solution than blasting music to be heard in several rooms."

The Paluch family turned to technology to help with the care of their special needs son. When building their new home, the family turned to Fry Tech Solutions to install technology in their home. They had both wireless and cable computer connections installed in every room in the house except the bathrooms. They included flat panel televisions in the family room, office and kitchen and a surround sound entertainment system in the family room. The family also had a video system installed in the home that provides views of different spaces in the house on any television.



The Bogner Residence • Photo Courtesy Drury Design



The Korhan Residence by Tech Connectors • Photo by Teri Storm

High-tech but economical appliances, warming drawers, microwaves in easy-to-reach drawers and hands-free operation faucets are just some of the innovations she is adding to kitchens.

Drury Design helped Naperville resident, Gina Bogner remodel her kitchen. "The kitchen was not easy to work in because it had a bad layout," says Bogner. She is pleased with her high-tech six burner range with built in griddle and Subzero refrigerator with separate compressors for the freezer and refrigerator. Her favorite upgrade is a media center. A computer CPU is hidden in a cabinet and the wireless mouse and keyboard slip into a drawer when not in use. The adjustable screen can be used to view everything from television shows to recipes to pictures of the latest family vacation. "It is wonderful at family get togethers. We can show pictures in a slide show that everyone can see. I can also pull up saved recipes from the hard drive."

Marge Nichols wanted a very modern look in her kitchen designed by Casa Bella in Naperville. She chose very clean lines. She has a group of six cabinets with brushed aluminum and smoked glass doors that flip up instead of opening in the traditional manner. "I can see everything all at once," notes Marge. Her cook top includes a burner that can heat at 17,000 BTUs for wok cooking. Pullout drawers in the cabinets, a flat screen television and a hidden button panel for the dishwasher are just a few of the kitchen's unique innovations. One interesting feature that adds to high-tech look in the kitchen is a clock created out of bicycle parts by artist Martin Krannen.

Technology has even invaded the bathroom. Naperville residents Steve and Nancy Farber asked Casa Bella to help them remodel their outdated bathroom that featured an enormous multi-person Jacuzzi. The room now has radiant heat under ceramic tile and heated towel racks for welcome warmth. A deep soaking tub and spacious two-person shower replaced the Jacuzzi. The shower includes a "shower tower" which is a series of six jets for massage topped by a rain shower head. The window in the bathroom has been upgraded to shatter proof glass as a safety feature.

When it comes to renovations, Steve notes that he is "very handy....with a checkbook." He wanted to include a television in the bathroom design so there is a flat screen television mounted above the toilet. The screen position is adjustable. The image on the screen is reflected in the vanity mirror so that it can be seen from most of the bathroom. "Seeing the reflection can be confusing when I am watching sports because things keep going the opposite way," observes Steve. He notes that the television screen is ideal for watching the news while getting ready for the day. "If I am watching something and we are going somewhere, I can keep watching the program while I get ready, which is great." **G**



Universal Remote, Tech Connectors • Photo by Teri Storm



The Farber Residence by Casa Bella Design

"The video system allows us to see our son even if he is in another room," says Russ Paluch. "This has changed how we live. We used to have to keep him an arm's reach away but now we can see where he is. It allows him more freedom and creates a safer environment. I own my own business and work from home so this feature allows me to be more productive. He can be in a room playing and I can be in my office working but still monitor his activity. It was a very economical solution for us."

Technology has also been introduced into kitchen design. Gail Drury, president of Drury Design in Glen Ellyn, has provided her clients with the latest features including the Lutron Lighting system which provides several light settings from touch pad controls instead of switches. Drury also notes that "Computer stations in the kitchen are very popular. There are flip down screens that can go right under a cabinet."